



W4CALOG



Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club – since 1932

Roanoke, Virginia

October/November, 2007

Volume 4

Issue 4

Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club
W4CA
P.O. Box 2002
Roanoke, Virginia 24012

Officers

President: Floyd Ponton KB4WYW
Vice President: Charlie Draper AB4SK
Secretary: Karen Anderson KI4GOT
Treasurer: Leroy Maxey AG4RW

Board of Directors

Phil Roark K4WFO
Kathy Page KG4PBX
Ray Crampton AB4YZ
Ron Ramsey AB4A
Ray Pillow KK4HR

Appointed Positions

Net Manager: John Anderson K4JKA
Honorary RVARC Chef:
Bob Anderson K4UMK
Membership: Fred Krack K4HVB
Club Call Trustee: Ray Crampton AB4YZ
Log Editors: Floyd Ponton KB4WYW

The Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club meets the second and fourth Friday of the month at the Roanoke Red Cross Building at 352 Church Ave beginning at 8pm. In addition, the club sponsors a weekly net every Wednesday at 8 pm on the W4CA 146.985- repeater, tone 107.2. Check in five times and receive a net number and certificate. Everyone is welcome. The W4CA Log is published bi-monthly by the RVARC for it's membership.

The RVARC owns and maintains the following open repeaters:

Voice

146.985- tone 107.2
442.50+ tone 107.2

Packet Digipeaters:

145.050 Rke5 – 1200 baud
145.710 Mill – 1200 baud

Internet Homepage:

www.w4ca.net

**Our 75th
Year**

Mill Mountain Star Event

Charlie Draper AB4SK

We met for our annual picnic at the shelter on Mill Mountain on July 21. Attendance was down a little from last year but the food was great and everyone seemed to have a fine time.

We celebrated Leroy, AG4RW's, birthday and shared his cake. I'm not sure Leroy wants his age discussed. I understand, though, it was a significant milestone.

As always, we had W4CA on the air. The antenna team faced some challenges getting the G5RV up. They struggled but persevered.

Conditions on 40 were unusual, very short skip. We worked Charlottesville, the eastern shore, Richmond and other close-in Virginia and North Carolina locations. Lots of fun! I'm already looking forward to next year. ◇



Leroy enjoys his birthday cake



Karen, KI4GOT and Terry, KI4HDJ get the food ready

The President's Corner

Hello Everyone,

As I sit here, attempting to organize my thoughts; (not easy), this is always a time when I think about what we might accomplish in the next year. We can all remember individuals who, in the past, have contributed so much to the club. At the risk of leaving someone out, I won't attempt to list names. We all know who they are, and how much we appreciate them.

All of us who have served the R.V.A.R.C. for so many years realize the importance, and the enjoyment of serving such an important asset to our community and to our hobby. There comes a time, however, for various reasons, when we must "pass the torch" to those who will lead us into the future.

Election of Officers is upon us. This is of extreme importance to all of us.

I have been at this awhile, and unfortunately, it seems to get tougher every year to find members to lead us into the next year.

Again, we all know individuals who, in the past, have contributed so much to the club. As we lead into the next "75 Years", this is a good time for all of us to think about what we, individually, have contributed, and to decide what our contribution will be to the future success of our club.

The bottom line: EACH of us, as R.V.A.R.C. members, is responsible for our success. Our success depends on YOUR participation!

Well, I have "rambled on" enough for now!

Oh, by the way, keep this in mind. We always need interesting articles for the Log. Contact Charlie AB4SK. Let's help him make our Log the best ever!

Best wishes to all.

Floyd, KB4WYW

Really Rare DX

Your Editor, AB4SK

Two spacecraft, Voyagers 1 and 2, were launched in 1977. 30 years later, they are still on the air from beyond the outer planets. In March 2007, Voyager 1 and 2 were 12.4 billion and 9.8 billion kilometers, respectively, from the sun. If, at that time, you called a ham on each, **how long would you**

Backbones of a Club

Reprinted from QUA/HAMnews March 1991, published by the Bluegrass Amateur Radio Society, Inc. Lexington, Kentucky.

Submitted by Bill, W4ABKW

The structure of an organization is made up of four kinds of bones. There are Wishbones, who spend all their time wishing somebody else would do something about this, or something about that. There are the Jawbones, who do all the talking, but very little of anything else. Next comes the Knucklebones, who knock everything that others are trying to do. Finally, there are the Backbones, who get under the load and do the work. What part of the organization's structure are you? If you are a Wishbone, Jawbone, or Knucklebone, what kind of a Ham are you? Are you happy?

Take a good look at the Backbones in your radio club. These people are not always the board members, but they certainly are the "doers" in the club. I can well imagine that the Backbones also have happy family lives, because it seems that hard work and self-confidence seem to extend into family and working partnerships as well. What constantly amazes me is the number of Backbones who spend long hours representing or working for the club. They seem to never tire making the Club's activities successful.

We hear a lot about getting involved. Take it from one who knows, getting involved is the best therapy there is for adjusting to the life of a Ham. You'll see a change for the better not only in yourself, but in your hobby and your club. You'll suddenly find people are friendlier, there is no spare time to wonder how to fill as there is work to do for each and every one of us in the club. But, most important of all, you will suddenly realize what you are doing for others. What a beautiful example to set for your children.

So why don't you take a personal inventory? If you are honest with yourself and find you are a Wishbone, Jawbone or Knucklebone, there is no time like the present to make the change so you, too, can become a Backbone. The dedicated, hard working Backbones will welcome you joining them. Only in this way can the Club continue to serve amateur radio and the community. ◇

have to wait for a reply? (That assumes there are hams on them which, of course, there aren't.)

Post your answer on the W4CA web site and check the next W4CALOG. ◇

2007 Roanoke Hamfest

By *Phil Roark K4WFO*

The annual Roanoke Hamfest, sponsored by the Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club, was held at the William Byrd High School in Vinton, Virginia on Saturday, August 4 2007. Many thanks to Richard Turner, KZ4VT, principle of William Byrd High School, for allowing his school to be used as our hamfest site. Richard is also the trustee of the high school amateur radio station, WB4HS, and the William Byrd Middle School station, K4WBM.

The Roanoke Hamfest has become the social event of the year for western Virginia ham radio operators. We are the westernmost remaining hamfest in the State of Virginia. We are an ARRL sanctioned event. Several of our door prizes were donated by the league. Glen Sage, W4GHS, our Virginia SM conducted a combination ARRL/ARES forum along with Henry Wyatt K3AYR, our Virginia SEC.

Spouses and youngsters enjoyed a free Bingo game while other members of the family shopped through the outside tailgate and inside vendor areas. More than 100 prizes were won by the lucky Bingo players. Attendees enjoyed great food served by Liz (mother of Michael KF4PHW).

The weather forecast had been for scattered thundershowers, but they did not appear. We enjoyed a clear day although very hot.

The main door prizes were awarded at 1pm. The Yaesu FT-2800M was won by Chris Abbey (wife of Russ, KG4MAV). The Icom IC-2200H was won by Mac Debusk, KI4AMD. The Alinco DR-135T was won by Bill Hickman, W2BZO. Everyone already has plans for their radio. The P. Buckley Moss print, "A Child is Born", donated by the Moss Society, was won by Nancy Wood KG4ETP. A total of 41 other hourly door prizes were given away during the day.

Our vendors this year were Tower Electronics from Wisconsin, Cedar City Sales from Tennessee, DBJ Electronics from North Carolina, Hamfestors from Texas, Quicksilver Radio from Connecticut, Ingle

Electronics from Bassett, VA and RPC from Virginia Beach, VA. Many others individuals and vendors were located in the tailgate area. A Kenwood TS-130S with power supply and accessories was donated to the RVARC by Gene Kitts, WA4ZSU. It was sold during the hamfest. Many club tables were manned including groups from SERA, QCWA, ARRL, and ARES.

A test session, conducted by Ray Pillow, KK4HR, and his VE test team yielded one new Technician and two upgrades. (*See Ray's report elsewhere in this issue. Ed.*)

The equipment testing table was manned by Jimmy Powell, KS4KX, and Pat Lewis, N3AYW. I believe that the only equipment tested was the Drake TR4C that I have for sale.

Attendees enjoyed two movies in the video forum. They were the ARRL productions "When Disaster Strikes" and "Field Day Fever".

The attendance was down from last year. 270 tickets were sold. The club will realize a profit of \$778 from this event. ◇

Recent VE Exam Results

By *Ray Pillow, KK4HR*

August 4, 2007 Vinton, VA RVARC Hamfest

- Steven Greene, KE4SBE of Vinton VA upgraded to General.
- Jennifer Via, KI4YOI of Roanoke earned her Technician license.
- Richard Vassar, KA4TUE of Newport TN upgraded to Amateur Extra.

August 19, 2007

- Jeff Witten, KI4ZAD of Roanoke earned his Technician license.

If you see or hear any of these folks congratulate them on their hard work. ◇

ARRL Certification-Continuing Education (C-CE) and Amateur Radio Emergency Communications

By Ray Pillow KK4HR

If you are wondering what the two subjects in the long title of this article have in common here it is. The C-CE actually began in January 2000 with “Antenna Modeling” Distance Learning Course (DLC) and has since grown to at least twelve courses. Three of these are Amateur Radio Emergency Communications I, II & III.

Each DLC has been developed in segments – learning units with objectives, informative text, student activities and quizzes. Courses are interactive and include direct communications with a Mentor/Instructor and other students. Mentors assist students by guiding them through the course. Students in each DLC are required to pass a final exam of 25 multiple choice questions with a score of 80% or better. Students who successfully complete the course requirements earn an attractive certificate. Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course Certification also includes an ID card.

Costs for each DLC varies from \$45 (for ARRL members, \$75 for non-members) to \$85 (for ARRL members, \$115 for non-members) plus the book for that course \$19.95 to \$39.95. For more information refer to: <http://www.arrl.org/cce>

To be completely involved in ARES, in accordance with Homeland Security, one or more of the Emergency Communications Courses are required depending on how deeply you wish to be involved. For an ARRL member this can total around \$200 for all three courses. The good news is, you can also purchase the manuals, self study and take exams at a test session similar to VE sessions. This reduces the cost to \$19.95 for the manual then \$10 for each level test taken. You may also wish to share manuals with others, further reducing out of pocket expense. Exam sessions will be held in conjunction with regular test sessions so stay tuned for dates.

Remember, the training requirements and ID cards have been set up by Homeland Security and we will have to adhere to those regulations. However, the Emergency Communication Courses don't appear to be too difficult so I recommend obtaining the level I manual and get ready for the first exam.

Attention VEs: If you would like to be certified to give the C-CE exams simply go to the ARRL website and register.

<http://www.arrl.org/cce/ciceapp.html?form=CE>. It is that simple, no test, just fill out the form and 24 hrs later you will become a CE and can help out with testing. Thanks Guys and Gals.

For information on FEMA Independent Study Program (ISP) go to:

<http://training.fema.gov/IS/> ◇

Foreign Postage (Or You Can't Get There From Here)

By John Anderson K4JKA

Recently I noticed my pile of outgoing QSL cards was growing out of control. I decided to get on top of things and went to the office supply warehouse on my lunch break. I purchased a supply of envelopes, and then went by the Post Office to buy postage. I figured a roll of one hundred first class stamps would hold me for a while for my domestic QSL's.

Then came the subject of IRC's for my overseas contacts. “What's an IRC?” said the clerk at the Post Office. I should have expected that. I explained what they were, that they were kept in the safe, and told her to check with her supervisor. I was planning on buying ten IRC's, but they only had nine. I should have expected that too, I guess. The supervisor brought out the IRC's and added the extra postage to cover the recent price increase.

Then came the subject of return postage from Canada. The clerk and the supervisor were clueless. They knew that you could send a first class envelope to Canada with US postage, but didn't know how to go about arranging return postage from Canada. The clerk and the supervisor were polite and tried to help, but in the end I left unsatisfied. I guess that's what you get for \$0.41 these days.

I really didn't want to use an IRC to get a QSL back from Canada since I figured the postage would be less than half the cost of an IRC. Call me a tightwad if you will, but it seemed a waste to me. I drove back to work determined to find a less expensive alternative. After pondering the situation for a bit, I decided to call Phil, K4WFO. Maybe he would know of a creative solution.

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Phil didn't have an answer for me, but did offer up a good suggestion. "Aren't you an ARRL member?" he asked. As a matter of fact I am. So I went to www.arrl.org and dug around a bit.

Once again I came up short. I figured I'd just call and ask someone. I went to the contact page and there was a phone number there for Sharon Taratula, the QSL service contact. I called her and she said "I don't know either, but hang on a minute." I heard her typing in the background and a few seconds later she came back on the line. "I went to www.google.com and typed in Canada postage. There's a link to their website there." Now why hadn't I thought of that? Too simple, I guess. I chatted with Sharon for a few minutes more and thanked her for her help.

I "Googled" Canada postage and sure enough, the search results pointed me to www.canadapost.ca "Now I'm getting somewhere!" I thought. I searched around a bit and discovered that you could send a First Class letter from Canada to the USA for \$0.93 Canadian. That sounded a lot better than \$2.00 US for an IRC to me. I went to the online order page and all was going well until the page asked me for my shipping address. The website would only let you enter a Canadian address. All of this progress only to come up against a wall. I wasn't about to come this far only to give up. I found a contact phone number and called it. The lady that answered the line was very polite and told me that since she didn't actually work for the Canada Post she couldn't help me. It seems the contact number put me in touch with the private company that runs the website. She did however give me another number to call. Here we go again... The second lady I spoke with actually worked at the Canada Post, although I had gotten in touch with the wrong department. She was also very polite and offered to transfer me. I figured "Why not?" since all of the calls I had made up to this point were toll free. I listened to the hold music for another ten minutes or so until someone answered. This time it was a home run! The clerk that answered the phone said she could take my order for Canadian postage, I could pay directly with my credit card, and they wouldn't even charge me for delivering the stamps to my QTH. I ordered twenty \$0.93 Canadian stamps and paid with my Visa card. Success at last!

Sometimes it pays to be persistent. I now have the direct toll free number to access the right department at Canada Post, and even have a customer number in their system so next time I call they can pull up my information without hassle. **Call 1-800-565-4362, Canada Post direct order line.** ◇

Canadian Special Event, September

Information provided by Bob Cooke, VE3BDB

A demonstration of cooperation in emergency communications preparedness between Canadian radio amateurs and those in the United States is planned for September 29-30 with a special event station VO1ARES <<http://www.rac.ca/fieldorg/aresjointevent.htm>>. It will be located at the Marconi memorial station on historic Signal Hill, St John's, Newfoundland, where reception of the first transatlantic wireless transmission occurred in 1901. Sponsored by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) and Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC), the facilities are provided by Parks Canada and coordinated by the Society of Newfoundland Radio Amateurs (SONRA).

The objectives of the special event are threefold: To highlight the capabilities of Amateur Radio in providing emergency communications in times of crisis, to illustrate the cooperation between Canada and the United States on emergency preparedness within the context of the Security and Prosperity Partnership signed by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada in 2005, and to create a database of communications "first responders" that the Government of Canada could contact for emergency communications assistance in times of crisis.

Radio amateurs from across Canada and the US are being invited to participate in this first-time official activity, with opening festivities scheduled September 29 from 1430-1730 UTC. In particular, ARES units in both countries are encouraged to take part and to "talk up" the value of Amateur Radio as a community resource. Officials from the Canadian government have been invited, and ARRL Joel Harrison, W5ZN, has confirmed his intention to attend. Operations will feature virtually all transmission modes on most HF bands over the two-day period. Times and frequencies are yet to be determined.

A commemorative QSL card will be issued. QSLs may be sent direct to VO1ARES via VE9GLF, G. L. Friars, 35 Upper Quaco Rd, Baxters Corner, NB E25 2S2, Canada. All replies from VO1ARES will be via the bureau. Those wishing a direct reply, including Short Wave Listeners, must include an envelope and sufficient postage. Within Canada, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope. If outside of Canada, please include sufficient

Special Event Cont.

international Reply Coupons (IRCs) to cover the cost of a letter from Canada to your country. (See K4JKA's article in this newsletter. Ed.) This is imperative in order to receive a card directly; otherwise it will go via the bureau. Listen for VO1ARES both before and after the special event. The call sign will be active September 27-October 1.

Upcoming issues of RAC's The Canadian Amateur (ICA) magazine and the RAC Web site <<http://www.rac.ca/>> contain further details of the event. ◇

CU at the club meetings at 8 PM on:

- September 28
- October 12
- October 26
- November 9 (Last meeting of the year)

And on the net every Wednesday evening at 8 PM, 146.985 – , 107.2 Hz tone.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Blue Ridge Bonanza, September 22 & 23**
- **Smith Mountain Lake Triathlon, September 22**
- **Poor Mountain Hill Climb, October 14**
- **School Club Roundup, October 15 - 19**
- **VE Test Session, October 21**
- **VE Test Session, November 18**
- **ARRL Phone Sweepstakes, November 17-18**
- **RVARC Christmas Dinner, December 1**
- **Salem Christmas Parade, December 7**

RVARC – W4CALOG

P.O. Box 2002

Roanoke, VA 224009