



# W4CA Log

January - February 2010

## New Club Officers



(from left)

Treasurer – Ray Pillow KK4HR

President – Ron Ramsey AB4A, Secretary – Nancy Wood KG4ETP

Vice President – Phil Roark K4WFO

The Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club is a not for profit club that has supported Amateur Radio in the Valley area for over 40 years, by have training classes for new Ham Radio Operators, working with local High School and Middle School radio clubs, working with local Emergency groups in case of problems to help furnish communications in and out of the local area. The club also has an Annual Auction Fundraiser each April and a Hamfest (buy, sell and trade event) each summer to help support the radio repeater located on Poor Mountain. In June of each year there is a Field Day event held to test communication. The RVARC meets at 8:00 p.m., the second and fourth Friday of each month at the American Red Cross Chapter House located on Church Avenue in Roanoke. Anyone interested in Amateur Radio is welcome to attend the next meeting in January 2010.

For more information concerning the RVARC please contact, Ron Ramsey, President of the club at 540-774-9474 or his e-mail at [AB4A@arrl.net](mailto:AB4A@arrl.net). The club also has a website that can be found at [www.w4ca.us](http://www.w4ca.us)

## It's Ladies Night...and the Feeling's Right - JT Flannery, KF4ONR

During one Wednesday night net, unnoticed by me, my XYL listened in. After awhile, she asked me if anyone had mentioned the two new Extra class hams who had just passed their requirements the previous Sunday. She also asked if a certain 2 or 3 hams had checked in. She was listening for them but had not heard their calls. Then I knew she was not only listening, but was actually interested in the net activities.

Taking advantage of the situation, I told her she should take an interest in the hobby and get her ticket. She quickly told me she never hears any women on the radio; that it is a male dominated hobby. Sometime early next spring I hope to expand my ham shack. It sure would be easier to do that if she used those new items as well.

I began thinking a "ladies" net, perhaps on a Tuesday or Thursday evening, might be a good idea. It doesn't necessarily have to be concerned with how high the antenna is or what kind of coax is better for DXing...typical hamspeak. Perhaps it could be called the Ladies Friendship Net. They could talk about anything, such as a favorite recipe, a special good buy at the grocery store, the grand kids first steps (hopefully not about toilet training! Ha ha) or some fantastic accomplishment they have done. Just regular ladies talk, not necessarily about band openings or radio stuff. Oh man! Listen to me telling women what to talk about! Terrible situation! But, I hope all of you get the gist...we need to entice more activity from our XYLS into the hobby.

Ladies, please help me out on this. I feel sure it won't be any problem getting repeater time for this function, and maybe even a little help with net control and procedures. I would appreciate your feedback.

73's, J.T.

## VE Test Session Results - Ray Pillow, KK4HR

November 2009

Roger Tabor WB3JJT of Hollins upgraded to Amateur Extra Class

E Drake Breeden KJ4QOF of Buchanan passed Technician and General and said he would return before too long to try for his Extra ticket.

Kenyon Hooven KG4YJC of Roanoke upgraded to General.

Fred Mahone KE4RBT of Salem upgraded to Amateur Extra.

Austin Warren KJ4QOE of Daleville earned his Technician license.

Thanks to Leroy AG4RW, JT KF4ONR, Lee WA4AJG, John K4JKA, Karen KI4GOT, Ken N4LYO Phil K4VPI and Charlie AB4SK for helping with this session.

Respectfully submitted, Ray

### Schedule of Events

- Jan 8 - First Meeting of 2010
- Jan 17 - VE Test Session, 2pm at Red Cross
- Jan 22 - Club Mtg
- Feb 6 - FrostFest, see [www.frostfest.com](http://www.frostfest.com) for details
- Feb 12 - Club Mtg
- Feb 21 - VE Test Session
- Feb 26 - Club Mtg

## January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## February 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

## New Technician Class Question Pool

The Question Pool Committee (QPC) of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) released the new Technician class (Element 2) question pool on Monday, January 4.

This new question pool will become effective for all examinations administered on or after July 1, 2010; it will remain valid until June 30, 2014. The current Technician question pool that became effective July 1, 2006 will expire June 30, 2010.

The new Technician pool contains approximately 400 questions, from which 35 are selected for an Element 2 examination; it will contain graphics and diagrams, something new for this element. The current General class question pool was effective July 1, 2007 and is valid through June 30, 2011. The current Amateur Extra class pool was effective July 1, 2008 and is valid until June 30, 2012.

## Ham Swap-n-Sale

**FOR SALE - ICOM 706 MK II** - Like new with original box and manual also reduced manual and charts to keep with radio. Also comes with The Better RF Co. Tune Controller, Comet CF-360 Duplexer and a Waterproof, foam lined military-type carrying case. Priced to sell, all for **\$675.00**. Below are the specs on all:

### ICOM-706 Features

- .03-200 MHz Receive
- Alpha memories
- RIT
- Preamp/ATT
- VFO A/B
- 1 Hz Display
- IF Shift
- Scanning
- S/RF Meter
- 100 Watts HF+6M
- 20 Watts 2M
- 100 Memories
- All band Multimode
- Removable head
- Preamp/RF Atten.
- Mini Spectrum Scope
- Electronic Keyer
- SSB Carrier Point

Description: **Duplexer** designed for 1.3 to 30 MHz on one port and 49-470 MHz on the other port. Common port has a coax pigtail. **706 Tune Control** By: The Better RF Co. [www.betterrf.com](http://www.betterrf.com). Make your TUNE/CALL button work on your ICOM IC-706 (all models) and IC-718. Push once - the transceiver emits 10 watts, steady carrier and side tone through the speaker (internal or external). Use the signal to tune your antenna, an antenna tuner or check SWR. Press twice more - the transceiver reverts to previous mode and power. Small PC board that plugs into the IC-706 Molex connector on rear. No radio modification required. Works 160 through 10 meters. Warranty is 90 days.

**Astron RS 20A Power Supply** – Like new used very little. 16 Continuous Amps, 20 ICS Amps, 5"X9"X10 1/2" and 18 lbs. Sorry I can't find original box. **\$75.00**

**OPEK HVT-400B High Performance HF/VHF/UHF Multi-Band Mag Mount Mobile Antenna**-To view picture and reviews go to: <http://www.eham.net/reviews/detail/5633>. Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, 2, and 70cm. Low VSWR. Vertical polarization. Impedance: 50 Ohms. Power Capacity: 120 Watts. Connector: UHF Male (PL-259). Use Jumper Lead to Change Frequency Bands. Trunk Lip Mount is recommended for the lowest VSWR on this antenna. **\$75.00**

Contact LeRoy (AG4RW) 540-966-5903 or 540-354-8452.

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 2 Used BP-34 batteries & Charger - (Previously used in Kenwood HT) If you or someone that you know would like them, let me know.

73, Dave Potter - W4RPI





# News from HQ

## 2009 Sees Surge of New Amateur Radio Licensees

This past year was a banner year for new Amateur Radio licensees. According to ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, the FCC issued more than 30,000 new ham radio licenses. "In 2009, the demand for Amateur Radio exam sessions remained elevated and is still running at a higher rate than before the FCC's restructuring of the license requirements in 2007," Somma said. "This high level of exam session activity has produced an elevated influx of new applications, far outpacing recent years."

A total of 30,144 new licenses were granted in 2009, an increase of almost 7.5 percent from 2008. In 2005, 16,368 new hams joined Amateur Radio's ranks; just five years later, that number had increased by almost 14,000 -- a whopping 84 percent! The ARRL VEC is one of 14 VECs who administer Amateur Radio license exams.

"When looking at the statistics over the last 10 years, these are some of the highest numbers we've seen," Somma explained. "Additionally, our total number of licensees across all three classes has grown each year." Currently there are 682,500 licensed Amateur Radio operators in the US, an almost 3 percent rise over 2008. In 2008, there were 663,500 licensed amateurs; there were 655,800 in 2007. Broken down by license class, at the end of 2009 there were 17,084 Novices, 334,245 Technicians, 150,970 Generals, 60,795 Advanced and 119,403 Amateur Extra licensees.

"The ARRL VEC has been busy meeting the needs of the Amateur Radio community by helping people to become radio amateurs or upgrade their existing licenses," Somma said. "In 2009, ARRL VEs administered 44,595 exam elements at 6369 ARRL VEC-sponsored exam sessions. The number of amateurs who want to be Volunteer Examiners and who want to teach Amateur Radio classes is also going up -- we've seen a spike in the number of applications from General and Extra class radio amateurs who want to give back to their community by serving as ARRL examiners and instructors."

Somma applauded all the volunteers whose "hard work and contribution of countless hours of time helps to ensure the future of Amateur Radio. The ARRL VEC thanks our 32,411 VEs from around the world whose dedication and service helped to contribute to the success of Amateur Radio. I am delighted by these important achievements. 2009 was a very good year for Amateur Radio and I am excited by the promise of 2010."



## Silent Key - Richard L. Anderson, K4JCY

Dick passed away Saturday, November 14, 2009 surrounded by his family after a long illness. He will be remembered with love and respect. Born July 27, 1930, he was raised in Hutchison, Kansas and lived in the Roanoke Valley for the past 41 years. He enjoyed golf, coaching little league football, and amateur radio. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Margaret; his son and daughter-in-law, Jack and Sara Anderson of Blacksburg; daughters and sons-in-law, Kimberly and Bobby Dalton, Marlee and James Kauffman all of Roanoke, and Keely and Mark Richardson of Blue Ridge; four grandchildren, Lacy, Emily, Kimberly, and Willie; a great-grandson, Robert. Many thanks to the Virginia Veterans Care Center for the loving care he received. The family will celebrate his life at a private memorial service.

Dick had been a member of the Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club until he became too ill to be active in the hobby.



## The President's Corner - Ron Ramsey, AB4A

It is a dark and stormy night as you return from a family emergency call. It's late at night, you have the road to yourself, and hopefully all of the other idiots that don't need to be out are at home. Hail is starting to pile up on the windshield wipers and hitting the hood, 20 mph under the speed limit, please just let us get home safe. You have the 2m radio on Weather Watch (745) but no traffic is heard. Sharp turn to the left, watching for black ice; no problem. Slight turn to the right, you are across the solid line, turning into the slide with your foot solid on the brakes, thankful for new antilock brakes. A controlled slide keeps you from hitting anything solid but you are a good 5 feet off the shoulder and



it's going to take a four-wheel-drive to pull you out. \*#&\$@&!!! Try the cell phone, NO SIGNAL!! Try the 146.745, cannot make the repeater! Try the 146.985; it comes up with a strong S5, say a short prayer thanking for remote receivers. "Break, break, break emergency traffic WA4BC", no reply everyone's in bed! Bring up the auto patch; call your friend with a four-wheel-drive. We have a happy ending; no damage and everyone home by 1am. RVARC has one of the most reliable repeater systems in the area, while the remote receivers give us great coverage it makes it very complicated to work on. We as club members take the repeater for granted. At our Christmas party, the officers and executive board received certificates of appreciation. But it is my job, to pick the club member for our highest honor, "Ham of the Year". This year's "Ham of the Year" is the person that keeps both of our repeaters on the air and does a great job, but receives very little thanks for his hard work. He's been; KE4PSY, AE4YD, KS4KX (two times), K4YD but currently is James (Jimmy) L Powell K5JCT the "Ham of the Year" for the Roanoke of Valley Amateur Radio Club. Congratulations and thank you for all your hard work and dedication to RVARC. I want you to know everyone appreciates your late-night works on the repeater and the many miles you have to drive to get there.

Club members supported the Raleigh Court Christmas Parade and the Salem Christmas Parade. At the Raleigh Court, we were the primary communications for a small family oriented Parade and at the Salem Parade we were merely back up for the State Police and Salem city, at both parades we demonstrated ham radio to the public and performed a public service. I thoroughly enjoyed the Raleigh Court Parade and all the children but understand we were needed just as badly at the Salem Parade in case anything went wrong. At Sweepstakes I ate brown beans and cornbread but at Coach & Four I ate a fine prime rib. The camaraderie and friendship was great at both locations but I guess I'm just a country boy, because I liked the brown beans and the wood fire best. While operating Sweeps, I worked Hawaii (H6), but had a much better experience watching one of our new hams working Hawaii the second time. If you missed these 4 activities, you missed a great time; at the first meeting in January we want to have as many dates as possible for this years events. Some dates we already know like Field Day, which will be discussed January 8<sup>th</sup>, we will be returning to 4A and need to start preparing now. Virginia QSO party will be March the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>, if you're planning on attending you need to reserve your cabin at Douthat State Park

From the last President Corner, please check W4CA.US, Karen has added a tab at the top with the preamble and instructions to run the net. In case you are needed to be net control, you need to practice reading the script and using the spreadsheet. I would urge you all to check into the net a little more diligently, because this is were we get the most up to date news on all club activities in the area.

There are two bills in the Congress and Senate, HR 2160 and S 1755 called *The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009*. Please write your representatives with a request to support these bills. I know you feel that you can't make a difference but from many years of lobbying I can tell you that they do listen to your personal letters. It has cleared the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee with a favorable recommendation by voice vote.

As we enter the New Year, please remember all the camaraderie and friendships at ham radio has offered to us all. Try and make this year a little better for someone who is already a ham and introduce just one person to ham radio. It's been noted that our meetings are strictly business oriented; I'll try to add a little more fun to the meetings as long as it doesn't get out of hand. Thank you all for a wonderful experience this last year, and here's hoping our next year will be even better. See you on the air 73 Ron AB4A

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## Log Editor's Supplemental - Kennie Harris, KJ4GWO

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*I found this great article at the 10-70 Repeater Association of Northern New Jersey and thought I'd share it with everyone. I have changed some of it to make it more pertinent to us.*

**"Dropping Your Call" (or how to let folks know you're out there)** When you want to chat with anybody who might be around on the repeater, typically you'll do what folks call "dropping your call". That means that you'll key up the repeater and just announce your callsign, sometimes followed by "monitoring" or "listening" or perhaps "mobile", if appropriate. If there's a conversation already in progress, wait for the courtesy tone after someone finishes their transmission, and just say your callsign. If the machine isn't active, and you've dropped your call but nobody has responded, wait a few minutes (3 or 5 minutes) and try again. If nobody comes back, it could just be that there's nobody around, or at least nobody around who is interested in having a casual conversation. You can keep trying every few minutes, but there are times when there just isn't anyone around who can chat. Please don't drop your call over and over and over if nobody answers, especially not without waiting a few minutes. As mentioned, there are sometimes folks out there, but they just aren't able to chat, and hearing someone "pleading" over and over gets tiresome. Make sure that you give your callsign clearly and not so quickly that you can't be understood. On the other hand don't speak so SLOWLY that it takes more than about two or three seconds to give your callsign. Unlike on an HF frequency, where it's desirable to give a long CQ to give another station a chance to find your exact frequency, when you're on a repeater, you're on a fixed frequency and any other station doesn't have to "find" you.

**Use of Jargon & Q-Codes** One very easy habit to fall into is the use of jargon. Instead of saying "I've arrived at my destination" you'll hear folks say things like "We're destined". Good practice is to just say, in plain English, what you mean. If someone doesn't understand, they'll ask you. Q-Codes (QTH, QSY, QSL, QRT, QSO, etc.) were developed for use solely on CW (morse code) where keeping things as short as possible is obviously desirable. A number of the Q-signals (the ones mentioned here in particular) have found their way into common use on phone (voice) modes. To some degree that's ok and probably unavoidable, but when you can try to just say what you mean. In particular though, don't start every sentence with "QSL" (or its "plain-English" equivalent of "Roger"). Think about a telephone conversation with someone; you wouldn't say "Yes, I understand" every time it's your turn to speak, right? That's what's you're doing when you say QSL or Roger at the beginning of your transmission.

**Use of phonetics** Generally speaking, because most signals are relatively strong into (and hopefully, out of) the repeaters, you don't normally need to use phonetics when you are identifying (or calling another station). On FM repeaters, good operating practice is to simply identify using standard English, so that I'd simply say "KJ4GWO" (which would be pronounced "Kay Jay Four Gee Doubleyoo Oh"). If another station asks for clarification because they couldn't make out what you were saying, at that point, it's probably OK to use phonetics to help the other station understand your callsign. Although mentioned above, I would like to stress that you really never need to call someone using phonetics on the repeater. Just to clarify a little, the above rules really don't necessarily apply when you aren't using a repeater, and in particular, it's often necessary to use phonetics a lot more when using single-sideband on a noisy HF band. Also, the use of phonetics during certain types of nets is a lot more common, and is used when precision is a lot more important. On a final note on the subject, the phonetic for the letter "Z" is "Zulu". The American English pronunciation for that letter is "Zee", but the British (and possibly other dialects) pronunciation of that letter is "Zed" which is sometimes used to make the letter sound less like the letter "C". It's relatively common to use the British pronunciation, and that's not considered phonetics.

**The Timeout** Repeaters normally have a 3 minute "timeout" setting. It's considered good etiquette to keep your transmission length shorter than this, especially if there are a lot of people in a QSO, or during busy times on the repeater. If you exceed the 3 minute limit, the repeater controller will cut off your transmission, and when you unkey, you'll hear a message from the controller letting you know that you have timed out the repeater. Intentionally dropping your carrier just long enough to allow the courtesy tone to reset repeatedly is considered extremely rude, since you are then monopolizing the repeater.

**Over/under ID'ing** According to the FCC rules (Part 97.119), a station is required to identify "at the end of each communication, and at least every ten minutes during a communication". It's certainly important to make sure that you comply with this rule. The 10 minute part is pretty obvious, but the "end of each communication" rule can be something of a grey area, particularly if you're in a large roundtable conversation and one party leaves. Does that mean the communication is over? To make sure that you're in compliance with the rules, you should certainly ID at least every 10 minutes (many folks use the repeater ID as a cue to ID themselves). Just to be on the safe side, many of us also ID whenever someone leaves a rotation. (Maybe someday someone will figure out, definitively, if that's necessary, but it's better to be overly cautious.) Of course, before you leave the air, as part of your final transmission you must ID. It is not necessary to ID or "clear" if you've merely dropped you call and not spoken with any other stations. In other words, if I come on the air and say "KJ4GWO, listening" and nobody answers my call, when I decide to stop listening (or turn off my radio, get out of the car, etc.), I do not have to "KJ4GWO, clear" since I satisfied the part 97.119 requirements simply by putting out my call. It is almost never necessary to ID at the end of every single transmission (in other words, just before you unkey your microphone), and it's really just a waste of time to do so. The primary exception to this is during a controlled net where you know you will be making a single transmission and probably won't be given another chance to ID before the 10-minute rule would apply. If you're in this kind of situation, you'll probably know it. The other exception to this rule is if you're in a fairly large rotation and there's a chance that you might have to leave the air before you have a chance to give a final ID.

### Net and Repeater Usage/Protocols - Net Manager: Russ Abbey, KG4MAV

The net control operator will specify how the net will run. In the case of the Wednesday night W4CA net on the 146.985, we used to go by net numbers. Now we go by the last letter of your suffix in your call sign. KG = prefix, 4, MAV = suffix, so when the net control asks for the first letter of your suffix the in my case it's "M". You need to listen to the net control operator for guidance on how he or she is doing the net check in. You only need to check in once unless the net control didn't hear you then use your call sign again. When you're called on and have made your comments, don't check in again unless you have a response to someone else's comment or question. If you don't know the order of the check-in's "LISTEN" for a minute to see what is going on. The net control will ask for the letters in your call sign more than once, and you need to follow what is going on. In the case of repeaters, the proper way to get in on a conversation is to use your call sign! Do NO USE BREAK or CONTACT! Should you or a net station declare an Emergency, they will check in with the word EMERGENCY, or use the international call MAYDAY or break break followed by listening for a couple of seconds and wait for net control, to call on you. Then you need to state your emergency and wait for the help coming from others. Contact is from the 11 meter or CB talk and should NOT be in use on the repeaters. Yes, I know that other repeaters use it but the owners are going to be clamping down on this practice. Always use discretion on the repeaters. If you're not sure of what to do, ask. Any amateur radio operator worth their salt will help you. There is also very good information in the Technicians book from either the ARRL or from W5YI, READ THEM and you should have no problems.

**Formal vs. Informal Nets:** A formal net is just that; formal. Do not break in or do unnecessary talking on the net. If you have an emergency or information, by all means interrupt the net for this. For a formal net, use just your call sign or tactical call for the remainder of the net, a tactical call is whatever the net control wants it to be, BUT at the end of a conversation you must use your call sign, per FCC rules. An informal net is a relaxed net. Use your name and call sign and wait to be called on by the net control. Then make brief comments on what is going on with you. In either case, you need to stay with the net until you are excused by net control in case you are needed.

**Normal repeater use:** To use the repeaters or simplex in the area, you wait to make sure the repeater or frequency is free, and then you should ask if the repeater or frequency is in use. Yes you need to do this on 2 meters and up besides HF. This is good operating procedures for not only you but for anyone that might be listening. Now you throw out your call sign and wait for a few minutes, if no answer, try again, if still no answer, wait awhile and throw out your call. Signing off of the frequency, you use your call sign with 73's right? Wrong! You do use your call sign but only use 73. 73 stands for best regards, so 73's is best regardsss? Using proper English on the airwaves is as important as proper operating.





W4CA LOG  
P.O. Box 2002  
Roanoke, VA 24009-2002

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January—February 2010

## Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club W4CA

### Officers:

President, Ron Ramsey AB4A  
Vice President: Phil Roark K4WFO  
Secretary: Nancy Wood KG4ETP  
Treasurer: Ray Pillow KK4HR

### Board of Directors:

Phil Roark K4WFO, David L Kinsey KS4BO, Ray Crampton AB4YZ, Jerry D Haislip K1SO

### Appointed Positions:

Net Manager: Russ Abbey KG4MAV  
Honorary Chef: Bob Anderson K4UMK  
Club Call Trustee: Ray Crampton AB4YZ  
Log Editor: Kennie Harris KJ4GWO [kj4gwo@arri.net](mailto:kj4gwo@arri.net)  
Technical Analyst: Charlie Draper AB4SK  
Web Master: Karen Anderson K14GOT

The RVARC meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month at the Roanoke Red Cross Building at 352 Church Ave at 8pm. Dues are \$35 per year. In addition, the club sponsors a weekly net every Wednesday at 8 pm on the W4CA repeater, 146.985-, tone 107.2. Check in 5 times and receive a net number and certificate.

Everyone is welcome. The W4CA Log is published bi-monthly by the RVARC for its membership. The Club also sponsors a V.E. test session every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 2pm at the Red Cross. Contact Ray Pillow KK4HR at [kk4hr@arri.net](mailto:kk4hr@arri.net).

**The RVARC owns and maintains the following open repeaters:**

146.985- tone 107.2      442.50+ tone 107.2

<http://www.w4ca.us/>

Look for our group on Facebook