



THE RICHMOND HAM

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April 2013

The RICHMOND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB will meet Friday, April 12th 2013, 7:00 PM, at the Bon Air United Methodist Church, 1645 Buford Road.

PROGRAM: The music of the English-Dutch musical group "Ham Band"

Coming Events:

April Meeting, April 12, 7:00 PM.

RARC Annual Yard Sale and Silent Auction
May 11th 8:am to 1:pm

VE Testing Session, May 11, 2013 9:am at the Bon Air United Methodist Church.

Tailgate Fest, April 27th at the Scottish Rite Temple at 4204 Hermitage Rd.

Public Service: April 27 Ashland Railroad Run Ashland 7 to lunchtime contact Rick Cook AB4U AB4U@arrl.net

May 5th March for Babies Innsbrook 7 to lunchtime. Contact Roy Schultz KI4MCX

royschultz@hotmail.com

June 1 & 2 Bike MS Contact Mike Hackett AC5PT ac5pt@yahoo.com

June 7 & 8 Virginia Special Olympics

Club Members!

If you are not receiving your copy of the Club's monthly newsletter, please contact Richard, WA4FEH, RARC's Treasurer, at wa4feh@gmail.com or phone 743-3899.

Getting to know this month's speaker

Bruce MacAlister, W4BRU, got his ham ticket in 1995 after he became an empty-nester and took on a traveling job. Getting on the air made those nights in motels more enjoyable. He'd always considered getting a license but learning code, the trip to the FCC examiner, and the rest of his life got in the way. Elmers, Bob Williams, AA4SV, and Charlie Slade, W4ZUV (SK), did much to encourage him and shamed him into learning code. Bruce's start came when his father gave him one of those 20-in-1 electronics experimenters kits when he was 10 years old. That led to building kits as a teenager and then into the Navy to become an electronics technician. From the Navy it was off to college and a career as what is now called a "software engineer" with IBM and later with two companies that he helped found. He fully retired in 2010. He helped start the amateur radio emergency network for the eighteen hospitals in the central Virginia region. What he likes most in ham radio is chatting on 2-

meters from his old truck and teaching the FCC exam prep classes for the RARC. When he gets on HF he prefers the digital modes like PSK.

From The Prez

As you know, I do a bit of travel, both for work and for fun. My wife wants to see the world before we are too decrepit to get around. Last week I made a rather quick business trip to Kuwait (9K2 land). I was on a direct flight from DC to Kuwait City. I was probably the only non-military, non-contractor on the plane.

If you work 20 meter sideband, you will likely hear some of the big gun signals out of Kuwait. Check out 14.200 MHz around 2000 local time. The first contact I made on my XR-5 antenna a couple of years ago was with Abdullah, 9K2GS. It was like talking on the phone but with better fidelity. Check out his QRZ page for some pictures of his impressive setup of stacked Optibeam antennas on a tower mounted on the roof of an equally impressive house. Before my trip, I had assumed that Abdullah was probably unique among Kuwaiti citizens given that house, but I saw a number of equally impressive homes in my brief forays outside of the hotel.

A week before my trip I worked 9K2MU on 20 meter sideband. We chatted about the weather and the usual ham talk. I mentioned that I was heading to Kuwait in a few days. Murtada asked if I could bring some cool weather. Apparently I did for it was a delightful 82 degrees each day compared to the 115 degrees that is typical during the summer. I even managed to witness a rare event in Kuwait: a brief sprinkle of rain.

Murtada also gave me his email address and said to shoot him a message if I had time while I was in his country. Unfortunately, my schedule was full with the work assignment and one dinner with some Kuwaiti friends who found out from my wife that I was in the country, so I did not reach out to him. But it was neat that this new ham friend had expressed interest in meeting me in his country. Just another sign of what a great hobby ham radio is for making new friends, even in rather exotic places.

73

Win

March Meeting Minutes:

Meeting Date: March 8, 2013

Meeting Time: 7:00 PM

Presiding Offices: Win Grant, WA4SSG, President; Richard Arnold, WA4FEH, Treasurer; and Maylon Pearman, KG4RPQ, Secretary

Win Grant called the meeting to order and welcomed guests Grayle Hunley Jr., Thomas Ariel, and Wil Braithwaight, WB4ZOT.

The February minutes were approved.

The February Treasurer's report was provided by, Richard Arnold, AA4FEH.

He reported the Verizon phone line is being dropped thanks to the work of repeater group. One new member was accepted, Daniel Morgan, KK4MRN. Welcome to the club Daniel.

Bruce MacAlister, W4BRU, reported on the spring classes. Tech class had 7 people signup and general class has 3 signed up as of 3/12. Only two have signed for antenna modeling class.

There was one upgrade reported by Steve Leslie,

Joe Palsa, K3WRY, reported that John Watkins, NB4B, had suffered a stroke and was in the hospital in Newport News and to keep him in our prayers.

Win reported that Field Day will be a joint event with the Rats again this year and are looking for a volunteer to coordinate the event.

Marshal Ervine, N4XBP, asked members to donate items for the silent auction at the May 10th meeting and the annual yard sale on May 11th. Household items, house plants, and ham radio gear are needed. About 25 percent of the clubs' budget comes from the sale of these items.

Win reported that at one of the fall meetings there will be a project that members will build to take home. The mystery device will use Anderson power poles.

Grayle Hunley, KF4USV, is looking for volunteers to help give rides for older members to club meetings. He has members listed by zip codes to find those nearest to you. Call Grayle if you can help.

There was no further business, so the meeting was adjourned and turned over to the speaker for the evening, Anthony Harbour, KG4YXR, who spoke on the Va Capital District ARES.

RARC VE News

The next VE testing session will be Saturday, May 11th at 9:00am, at the Bon Air United Methodist Church.

If you have questions about a session, please see our website, www.rarclub.net/ or contact Allan, WA3J, at 804-399-8724, or wa3j@arrl.net.

Club Info...

- RARC meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:00 PM, at the Bon Air United Methodist Church, 1645 Buford Road.
- We offer 10-week license prep classes in September and March with exams following.
- Members provide VE testing sessions on odd-months during the year.

FCC EXAMS EVERY MONTH on the SECOND SATURDAY. For January and all odd-numbered months: Bon Air United Methodist Church, 9 AM. Call coordinator, Allan Johnson, WA3J, 399-8724, or visit <http://www.rarclub.net/>.

For February and all even-numbered months, FCC test sessions are provided by the RAVE group. Coordinator, Pat Wilson, W4PW (932-9424) has information on his website <http://w4pw.org>.

RARC has the first D-STAR digital repeater in the area. 147.255 (+) and 443.7125 (+). We now have the gateway tied into the worldwide D-STAR network.

The Club sponsors several radio nets each week. Join in for the informative discussions and fun.

Sunday	7:00 PM	50.135	USB
	7:30 PM	52.525	FM
Wednesday	7:00 PM	28.475	USB
	8:00 PM	147.255	D-STAR Repeater
	8:15 PM	145.730	Packet

Join the Richmond Amateur Radio Club. You don't have to have a ham license, just have a genuine interest in the hobby.

Annual Dues are:

80 and over	\$0
Age 12 and under	\$5.00
Age 13 to 18	\$10.00
Regular Membership	\$15.00

- Lots of information about the Club and our activities is available on our website, www.rarclub.net. Check it out!

Refreshment Schedule

We currently have the following commitments for upcoming meeting refreshments. Wouldn't your name sure look great on the list?

- March - Bruce MacAlister
- April - Pete Fundinger
- May - Marshall Ervine
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October - Dave Thomas

Spring Tailgate Fest

The date has been set for April 27 and the time, as usual, will be from 8:00 A.M. until 12:00 noon.

The location is the same as before, in the parking lot of the Scottish Rite Temple at 4204 Hermitage Rd. Richmond. There is no charge to participate and all are welcome to bring anything you want to sell or just browse around and greet old friends or get to know the people you talk with on the radio but have never met in person

RARC YARD SALE
Saturday, May 11, 2013
8:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Bon Air United Methodist Church,
Fellowship Hall

Please help make this a great fundraiser for the Club!

Bring donations of clean, usable items of any kind with you to the May 10th Club meeting.

Suggestions include: household items, children's toys, books, pet items, computers, kitchen appliances, dishes, electronic items, sporting goods, decorations, crafts, tools, exercise equipment, plants, DVD/CDs, jewelry, watches, and furniture. Please price as many of your items as you can. Please note on your electrical/electronic items if they work.

Donated items that are not sold will be given to a local charity unless they are picked up prior to 1:00 PM on the day of the sale.

If you have any questions, please call Winn Grant at 301-8847 or Marshall Ervine at 320-8629.

RARC's Annual Yard Sale

Each year, we count on our members to donate "stuff" to be offered at the club's yard sale and auction. The Yard Sale and Silent Auction are the club's only fund raising events, and the proceeds help fund club activities such as the repeater, meeting refreshments, and the newsletter. Please start looking around your house for items that you would like to donate. These are fund events, and the money raised makes up a significant portion of the club's annual budget. We can also use help at the sale, so volunteers are most welcome. *More info on page(?)*

Silent Auction

The Club's annual Silent Auction has been a great fundraiser for the Club for the last couple of years. We have been blessed with generous donations of nice ham gear from many sources. This year, we are asking our members and friends to consider donating any ham gear that they think they will never need or use again. There are many new hams in the Club who could use some gently used older gear to help them get started. You can't write off the donation on your taxes, but it's a great feeling to know that you have helped a fellow ham and the Club at the same time. Please let Marshall, N4XBP, know if you have any gear that you are willing to donate. He will need to know by the end of April, so that the auction items can be listed in the May newsletter. Thanks to all who donate, and also to those that bid!

**"The Ham-ateur or There and Back Again"
by Jimbo Baggins
with apologies to J.R.R. Tolkien**

March, 2013

Part - 1

As long as I've had an interest in VHF+ sideband, I've wanted to visit the Blue Ridge mountains and "play radio." The idea of being several thousands of feet above sea level has great appeal. My QTH is located in something of a VHF hole, in fact, it's very much like Get Smart's "Cone of Silence" - very little RF gets in or out!

I've often thought about what it would be like to sit on a ridge with a beam or two facing East and swinging around to the North-East as the day progressed. The challenge of working ANYBODY on 2m/70cm/23cm just remains as intriguing today as it did when I "learned" that sideband and cw weren't just modes for HF!

My youngest son is involved in Boy Scouts and the Charlottesville Boy Scout organization decided to hold a Merit Badge workshop day.

Since a couple of the merit badges were requirements for my son, he and I agreed that it would be a "good thing" for him to attend the all day workshop. He needed to be at Charlottesville High School (CHS) at 8:00am and would be there until 6:00pm. That sounded pretty good to me too - I'd be very near Skyline Drive and Afton Mountain. The date was set, the next task was figuring out what and where to work!

I really enjoy planning out an activity like this; you get to dream about ideas like this, like that, or what if I did this too. I spent a lot of time chatting about "what might/could/should work" on my daily commute. I'm sure that I bored my QSO partners with mindless drivel - but they were all very polite and let me talk about my ideas ad nauseum. A lot of really good suggestions were made, one of which was talking with another ham who lived in that part of the state and subsequently provided great advice regarding some really good locations! The lesson learned is that you're probably not going to do something new, listen to the guys who've "done that already" and roll with it! I ultimately boiled my options down to 2 primary decisions: Location and Band/Mode.

I really wanted to go up Skyline Drive.

There were a couple of reasons: A. I'd never been on Skyline Drive; B. The "scenic viewpoints" were all more than 2,000 feet above sea level! The big concern about Skyline was the weather. I read all the National Forest information about Skyline, did

a little bit of terrain mapping with Google Earth, and decided that Beagle Gap would be the place for me. But I was still concerned about the weather...

Starting when I was 7 years old, Dad would pack up the VW van and haul me, (and eventually my brothers, and occasionally friends) to Bath or Highland County in March/April for the opening day of trout season. It was an annual pilgrimage for our family. We did that until the great state of Virginia decided that trout would be an open season thereby cancelling the "opening day" event. It was the chance to get out my ultralight rod (or fly rod as I got a older!), 6 lb test line, and go through my little tackle box filled with Mepps spinners. We'd always drive over Afton Mountain; sometimes in 2nd gear!

VW van's never had heat, air conditioning, or power! So I had plenty of time to stare at that hotel at the top of the mountain - but until this year, I never took the exit off the Interstate.

Plan B would be the top of Afton Mountain.

The locations had been mapped out; the decision now was what bands and modes to work. There were a couple of very simple answers: 1.2Ghz has ALWAYS been on the top of my list. Since acquiring a transceiver capable of that band, I've NEVER made a real contact. Having a QSO in my yard doesn't count. Gotta put that band on the list...

900Mhz is also in the radio mix; however, I don't have any SSB 900Mhz gear. I only own FM & P25 and the P25 is an HT which does all of about 3 watts - not very promising, BUT, the beam is nice and small and the gear is light and pretty much self contained. That band and couple of modes make the list...

Now, what about 70cm and 2m - yep, that's an easy call. I have a couple of Yagi's for each, one of them is a piece of junk Diamond for 70cm. I purchased it by mistake; it was designed for the SSB part of the 70cm band and I intended to use it to hit the Richmond W4FJ 70cm D-Star repeater. Well, I had the opportunity to redeem myself - the yagi was coming along. I also own an M2 2m yagi that'll fit in the back of my car. The antenna sizes are now starting to make a difference; 2m is taking much more space than my 1.2Ghz and 900Mhz yagis! Looks like 70cm and 2m are on the list as well - wow, this is starting to get to be a lot of gear...

6m antennas, now this is challenge. I own a 3 element M2 yagi, but it's pretty big for packing up in a car. But, there are a LOT more folks on 6m SSB than anything else I'm likely to find. I also own a 6m vertical whip; it has an NMO mount and I use it on my car when

I'm likely to be able to check into the 6m net (50.125 @ 07:00 or 08:00!) It's not super, but it is small and would be ok. I decide that I've got enough beam antennas and the whip makes the list; the 6m yagi will have to stay at home.

How about HF you ask? The buddipole and Buckmaster will stay at home, I've already got too much gear as it is and since there is only 1 (one) operator, I'm going to stick to my VHF purpose. HF can be fine at low altitudes and that keeps it off the list.

So, I know where I'll be working: Beagle Gap on Skyline Drive or the top of Afton Mountain. I'll have the following bands covered: 23cm, 33cm, 70cm, 2m, and 6m.

That's also 3 radios, a bunch of coax, speaker stands for the Yagi's, chair, table, and as Arlo Guthrie might say, other "implements of destruction." That's a lot of gear... Time to wait for the date on the calendar to arrive!

Until next time - 73 de KJ4WLH

The International Code

From the 1969 ARRL "The Radio Amateurs Operating Manual"

Although Samuel F.B. Morse's code achieved nearly universal use on the landline telegraph systems of America, the Europeans never did like it. They felt that the "space" characters were likely to cause errors in receiving. (The letter "O", for example, was sent "dit dit" and the letter "I" was sent as in the now familiar International Code: "didit".) The Europeans developed a number of binary dot-dash codes to suit their own needs.

The code in use on the wires of the Prussian Empire in 1852 bore a strong resemblance to the present International Code, but it used the American Morse numerals. Seven years later the "European Code" was formulated, using the Austro-Prussian alphabet and adopting the numerals we now use. This was adopted for use by all European countries and the name was changed in 1912 to "International Code", although it is also known, even today, as the "Continental Code".

The numerals themselves are interesting. No known code of the European continent shows anything which resembles them. They just

showed up in the European Code. However, the Bain Code, used on many lines in the U.S. circa 1846, had numerals which closely match those of the International Code. From one through five, Bain and International are identical. Reversing the Bain Code numerals six through zero produces the International numerals. There is nothing to prove that the Bain Code was the basis for the International numerals, but the conclusion is almost inescapable that someone at the Vienna conference at which International was adopted, was familiar with Bain's numerals. Bain's code was a modification of the Davy code of 1836, so it is possible that the numerals we now use are older than any of the alphabets.

CQ

From the 1969 ARRL "The Radio Amateurs Operating Manual"

The telegraph call CQ was born on the English Telegraph nearly a century ago as a signal meaning "All stations. A notification to all postal telegraph offices to receive the message." Its meaning was close to the present meanings of QNC and QST. Like many other telegraph terms which originated on the landlines, CQ was brought over into radio and used as a general call to all ships by the Marconi Company. Other companies used KA until the London Convention of 1912 which adopted CQ as the international general call or "attention" signal. CQ still means, literally, "attention" but in amateur radio its meaning is perhaps more accurately described by Thomas Raddell who compared it to yelling "Hey Mac!" down a drain pipe.



The SWAP SHOP

Club members may list their wares in the newsletter. Send descriptive information to Armand at wa1ugo@arrl.net, or call me at 804-454-0564. The Swap Shop is presented in the newsletter as a benefit to our members. RARC takes no responsibility for items sold or traded in this newsletter. The ad will appear three times unless extended. Interested parties will contact you directly. **You must be an RARC member to place an ad.**

Thought for the Day

Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.

73 de:

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