



THE RICHMOND HAM

Published Monthly by the Richmond Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 35279, Richmond, Virginia 23235

February 2026

THE RICHMOND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB RARC Meeting in person!

Our monthly meeting is on Friday February 13th, 2026, 7:00PM, at the Bon Air United Methodist Church, 1645 Buford Road. This month's meeting will be in-person and also on Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88518058584>

QR Code for Zoom Link



February Program: This month's program will be from Gordon Miller NQ4K on the Virginia QSO Party Rules. Gordon is with the Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club.

Richmond Amateur Radio Club (RARC) Monthly Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 9, 2026

Call to order: President Darrell Basinger WW4F called the meeting to order at 19:03 followed by recognition of guests and introductions.

A motion was put forth and seconded to put the program first followed by the business meeting. The program followed presented by Jason Rausch, K4APR. The program concluded at 20:07 followed by a short break.

Business meeting started at 20:07 and began with the approval of the December meeting minutes.

Ken Leidner, WV0L gave the treasurers report and indicated a balance of \$15,180.97 in the treasury.

New Members voted in unanimously were Jason Sewell, KR4ANZ, technician and Bill Schiffli, W4YX, Extra.

Congratulations to both and welcome to the club! We now have 164 members.

Bruce Mac Alister gave a school update and reported that they are setting up to be teaching in early March.

Win Grant went to the D-Star site on the week before Christmas and performed a firmware update. All is working great.

The club's remote station also working fine. Announcements: Winter Field Day is January 24th and 25th with the RATS organization. All are welcome to join them at the Pocahontas State Park. Some club badges still have not been picked up.

The RARC Groups io has been successfully rolled out.

The club is looking for a volunteer to fill the position of club secretary. If interested, please contact President Darrell Basinger, WW4F. Meeting was adjourned at 19:00.

From The Prez

I'd like to remind members who requested a RARC member badge this past Fall that there are still several badges awaiting pickup.

If you requested a badge and haven't yet picked it up, an open box of badges will be available at Friday's meeting. Please stop by to collect yours, or feel free to have someone pick it up on your behalf.

For members who missed the Fall sign-up and would like a badge, please stand by. We anticipate a second run of badges later this year. I
73, Darrell / WW4F

RARC VE News

We have two different groups that provide testing.

One is free, but only offers testing sessions on the second Saturday of odd months except June (Field Day) replaces July. The next session will be on **Saturday March 14th 2026** at 10:am

**Chesterfield Library Bon Air Branch
9103 Rattlesnake Rd
North Chesterfield, 23235**

The other one cost \$15.00, but offers testing sessions on the 1st Saturday of every month.

THE RICHMOND HAM February 2026

RARC offers Free VE Testing Sessions on the second Saturday of odd months except June (Field Day) replaces July. Currently all testing starts at 10:00 AM and is at: Chesterfield Library Bon Air Branch 9103 Rattlesnake Rd North Chesterfield, VA 23235.

Pre-registration Required. Walk-ins Accepted. Pre-Registration required for Techs and for special needs applicants. Anyone taking the Tech exam needs a FRN from the FCC (Google obtaining a FCC FRN) and bring that info to the session. If you have questions about a session, please see our website, www.rarclub.net or contact Allan, WA3J, at 804-399-8724, or ve@rarclub.net

KC4TS Cats Vet (Cats Volunteer Examination Team) offers VE Testing Sessions that cost \$15.00 on the 1st Saturday of every month. Currently all testing starts at 10:00 AM and is at: Gospel Light Church 2109 Anderson Hwy Powhatan VA. Check-in is between 10am and 12pm and we stay as long as needed to finish all the exams. Walk-in candidates are welcome! You just need a valid ID, an individual FCC FRN, and the testing fee of \$15 which goes directly to the ARRL (cash or check made payable to "ARRL VEC"). We can provide pencils and a very simple calculator or you can bring your own. See <http://kc4ts.org/> for more information.

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.

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:

18 yrs or younger and 80 yrs and older \$0

Regular Membership \$22.00

Family Membership \$33.00

Lots of information about the Club and our activities is available on our website, www.rarclub.net.

QR Code to RARC Website



Nets

RARC has the first and only D-STAR digital repeater in the area: 147.255 (+ 600), 443.7125 (+ 5) and 1284.0000 (-20). In addition to our Wednesday local D Star net (below), we link Module C (VHF) on Tuesday nights at 9pm, to REF 054C for the North Carolina D Star Net. The RARC D Star Net meets on Wednesday nights at 8:00pm and is accessible on our three D Star modules, all of which will be linked together via REF 097B. So if you are in RF range of the repeater, you can join the net on any of the three RF modules and be heard by everyone.

If you participate in the net via DVAP, DV Dongle or a Hotspot (such as Pi Star), you should link your device to REF 097B rather than to any of our modules which will allow you to be heard by everyone.

Any questions, contact Win - W4WIN at wingrant@gmail.com

| | | | |
|------------------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Sunday | 7:00 pm | 50.135 | USB |
| Wednesday | 7:00 pm | 28.475 | USB |
| | 8:00 pm | 147.255 | D-Star Rptr |
| Thursday | 7:00 pm | 52.525 | FM |

MRA

Interested in information or support of the Metropolitan Repeater Association (MRA)?

The sole business of the MRA is to own, operate and maintain the **145.430** and **224.42** repeaters.

For information please visit our website at <https://sites.google.com/view/kg4mra/>

50.215Mhz @ 8:00am daily Central VA Six Meter Group Taigates

Will be held on April 11 and September 19, 2026; 8:00 am to Noon. The fenced rear parking lot of Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church, 2300 Dumbarton Road, Henrico, VA. Located on Clarke Street, between Hermitage Road and Wilson Avenue, directly behind the church building.

Show and Tell!

If you have an item, idea, latest and greatest, or whatever gizmo; please bring it to the RARC meeting. We have a table (usually) set up near the front where you can place your item and share/discuss it with others as they arrive. We also have a section of the agenda set aside for members to discuss their "Show and Tell" item(s). No need to be tentative; we are INTERESTED in what you are doing, how you are doing it and, in true Ham fashion, how much it cost.

Everyone has a story to share.

Your first rig, your first contact, your most memorable QSO? How about a description of your shack with a picture? Old to the hobby – New to the hobby, there are lots of interesting stories out there to share. Consider writing an article for the newsletter. Any topic, any length any format, all will be welcomed. Any questions, send me an email at wa1uqo@gmail.com or call @ 508-838-8353



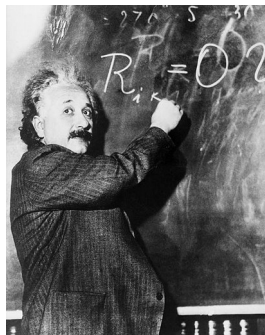
Mentors and Elmers available!

RATS (Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society) has organized a group of 20 mentors (aka, Elmers) to assist hams. There is one group especially for new hams but they can find an expert in almost anything ham radio. The connection is from their website <https://www.rats.net/home>. Scroll down the page and you will find the rat pointing to "RATS offers Resources for New Hams." The link leads to a contact form.

For not-so-new hams the help desk email lets a hams say what she-he needs help with. It's at helpdesk@rats.net.

Many of us in the RARC are also members of RATS so you can send a note to the help desk and add your name to the 20 or more mentors serving Richmond hams.

Bruce MacAlister, W4BRU



New Battery Technology Protects Expensive Electronics

We all have expensive electronic devices that use AA and AAA (1.5 volt) batteries. I'm thinking of some Fluke, Agilent and Simpson multimeters and my antenna analyzer. Despite our best efforts, we often fail to inspect the batteries in devices we don't use regularly.

Even brand name alkaline batteries will eventually break down over time and leak corrosive potassium hydroxide solution which will literally destroy metal battery contacts in the devices and sometimes damage or destroy circuit boards.

Lithium-ion rechargeable batteries are less prone to leakage than alkaline chemistry, but sometimes a rechargeable battery is not ideal. The charge does not last long enough to be practical for the application, or maybe we just don't want the hassle of removing batteries and charging them frequently.

Energizer is now selling the Energizer Ultimate Lithium AA and AAA disposable batteries that are very unlikely to ever leak. They have other advantages over alkaline disposable batteries:

- 2700 mAh capacity, compared to 500 mAh for alkaline in the AA version
- Voltage stability for life of the battery
- Performs well down to - 40 degrees F
- Weigh one third less than alkaline
- Handles short bursts of up to 4-5 amps for a few seconds in the AA version
- 25 year shelf life

Energizer Ultimate Lithium AA batteries cost about \$1.57 each in a 24 pack compared to Energizer's Alkaline AA battery at \$0.62 each. I'm replacing all the AA and AAA batteries in my test equipment with disposable lithium batteries. It is cheap insurance against corrosion that will eventually occur if you leave an alkaline battery in the device for too long.



Win Grant, W4WIN

Checking in to the RARC D Star Net – From the Indian Ocean

In my 20 years of using D Star, one of the truly fun things to do is talk to hams in other countries on this crystal clear digital voice mode. What's even more fun is to talk to your friends from some remote locations. It's not quite the same as being real DX, but still fun.

In my foreign travels, I have often taken an Icom HT programmed for the D Star repeaters I expected to encounter. Often, I am not in range of a D Star repeater as when I am on a cruise ship at sea. To connect to the D Star network I used to bring along a laptop computer and a D Star hotspot. The original DVAP served me well for years. A few years ago when boarding a cruise ship in Sydney Australia, I was told that "walkie talkies" were not allowed and mine would be returned to me after the cruise.

Our D Star networking guru, Jim Bates, K8OI, told me about the DV Mega stick, a USB device that looks like a memory stick. With free Blue DV software on my laptop and an internet connection, I am able to connect the laptop to the D Star network. No radio is involved. The computer's speakers and built in microphone handle the audio.

I primarily bring this gear to check in to the RARC weekly D Star Net. The problem I faced on my recent trip was that the ship's Starlink connection, while acceptably fast, had blocked some of the ports I needed open for the DV Mega to connect.

The solution was to connect my laptop to the internet by turning on the hotspot feature of my cellphone, avoiding the ship's internet connection altogether. The phone's hotspot only works when it is close enough to land to connect to a local cellular network.

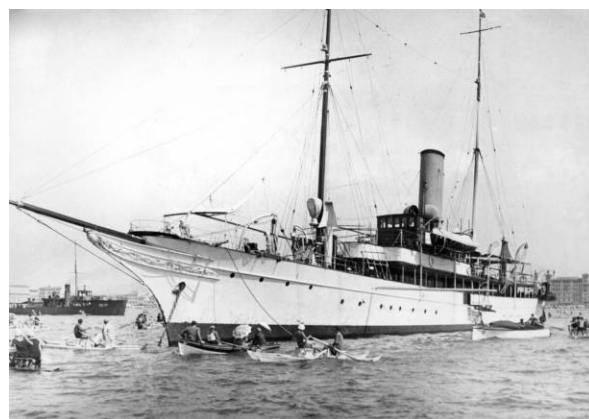
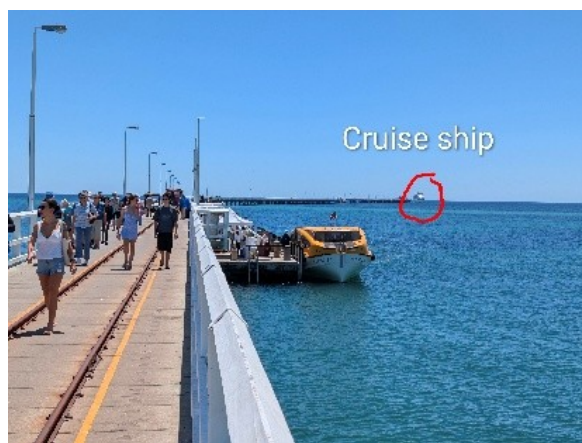
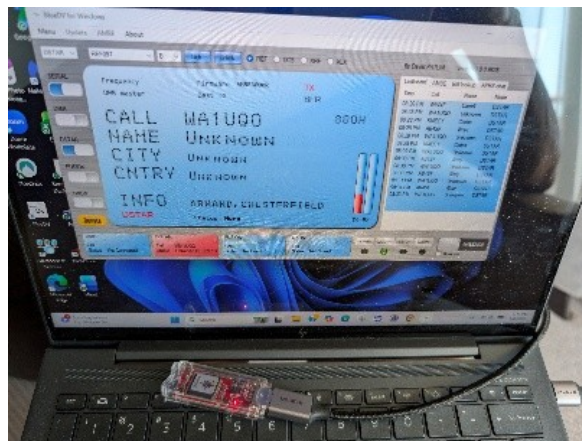
For the February 4, 2026 RARC D Star Net, all the stars aligned for me to participate. When it was 8:00 pm on Wednesday in Richmond, it was 9:00 am on Thursday where our ship had just anchored in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Busselton in Western Australia. The ship parked about five miles out from the town. I had one bar of LTE 4G signal on my phone if placed in just the right spot.

To my delight, when Armand, WA1UQO, called the net, I could hear everyone using the combination of cellphone, laptop, DV Mega and the W4FJ repeaters which were linked to Reflector 097B. And they could hear me.

The challenge was getting a cellular connection so far from land. The picture below gives an idea of the distance. The Busselton Jetty is over a mile long, built in 1865 and is the longest timber-piled jetty in the Southern Hemisphere.

I guess the moral of this story is that as technology advances, we sometimes encounter obstacles, but hams are creative, and we eventually make contact.

Win – W4WIN



The SWAP SHOP

Club members may list their wares in the newsletter. Send descriptive information to Armand at wa1uqo@gmail.com, or call me at 508-838-8353. 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.***

EQUIPMENT REQUEST:

I'm a new Ham part of the Ham Radio Chicks. The original group started during our Technician License Course at the Bon Air Church offered by the RARC in October 2024. Some of us passed the exam and some went on to get the General. One of us is studying to get the Extra. We have invited other new "ladies Hams" to join us, so we are nine in total now.

We are all trying to set up our shacks and could use some unused equipment that most experienced hams may have in their closets, such as antennas, power supplies, coax cables, connectors, etc.

Thank you so much. Nora Vimala Pozzi, N4POZ (vimalap@yogahelps.com)

For Sale:

\$60 - Thunderbolt Magnum 45W solar panel kit - worked great with two batteries connected and running QRP for Field Day. Batteries not included.

Contact: Ronnie Bolton, WU4G 804-651-3504 or wu4g@comcast.net

For Sale - Swan 350C Transceiver in working condition.

I have an exceptionally clean, operating Swan 350C set including the original 1117-C power supply, the VOX accessory and two original operation and maintenance manuals, one with schematics and one with directions for the VOX. I have tested it for reception and powered up with a Variac.

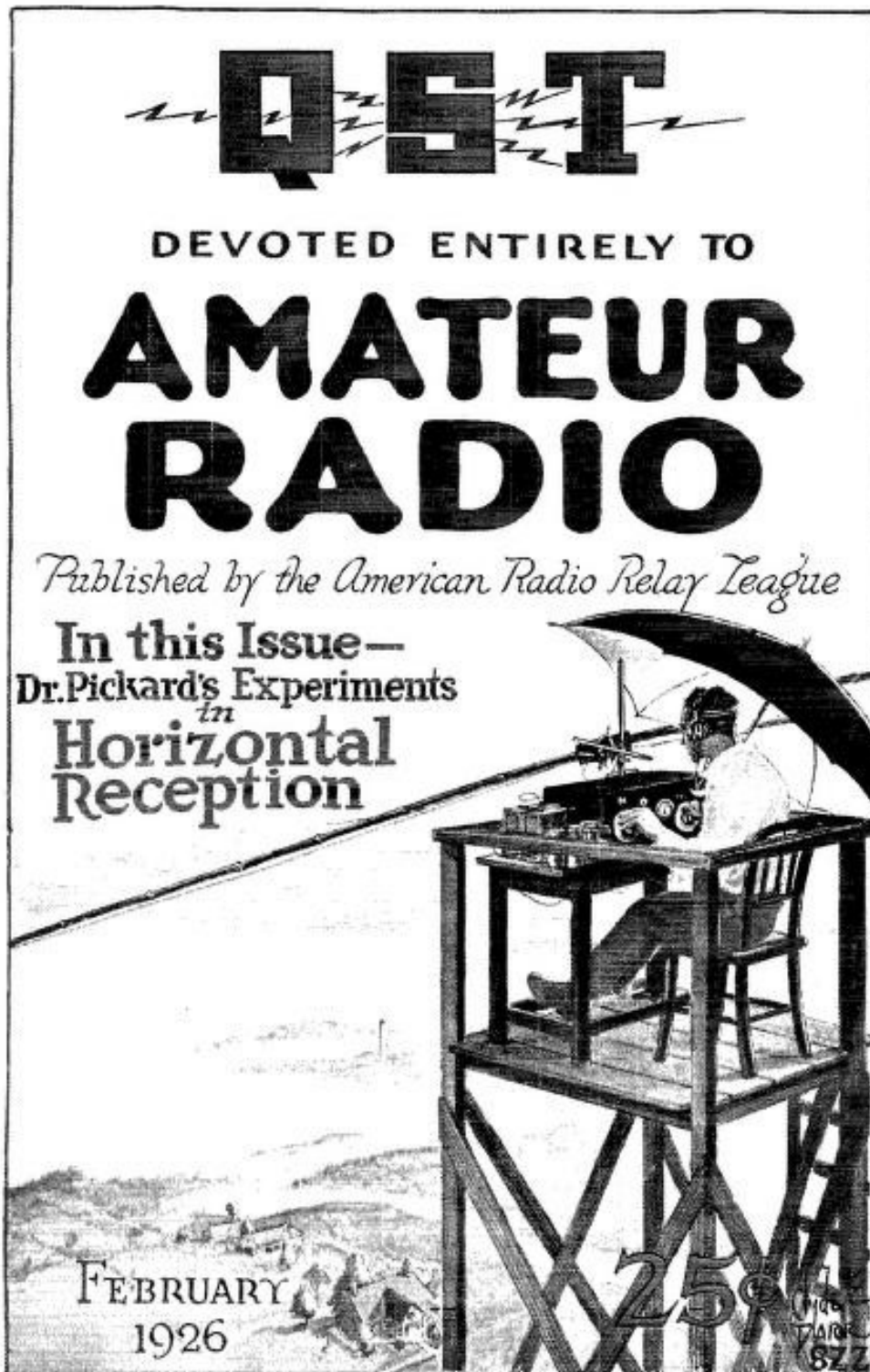
Photos, and videos of operational tests at http://rarcpio.net/Swan_350/

Contact Rob Thomas, KC4NYK at 804-633-4470 or via email at QRZ

Thought For The Day

"You know you're getting old when the candles cost more than the cake."

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|--|
| Darrell Basinger | WW4F | President | (804) 219-8167 | president@rarclub.net |
| Lauren Ware | W4LEW | Vice President | (804) 513-4950 | vicepresident@rarclub.net |
| Ken Leidner | WV0L | Treasurer | | |



The Little Black Box of jewels and rocks
with lanterns that flicker and glow,
make lighter the gloom in my little back-room
where often I hasten to go.
An anthem it peals of whistles and squeals
and voices so ghostly and dear
that you'd never decry, should you chance to pass by-
what a brotherhood foregathers here!

Each separate tone has a soul of its own;
each voice is the voice of a friend.
United through space in this gathering-place
at the radiant signal's end.
Reverberant sounds ride the wave that rebounds,
like the waves of the sea from afar,
reporting the doings, the comings and goings
of brothers... wherever they are.

A curious band, spread over the land,
yet joined from equator to poles
disperses the gloom in the little back-rooms
by this magic communion of souls.
I could part with a lot of the things that I've got,
but I'll carry my love to the tomb,
of that little black box and the joys it unlocks
... when I enter that little back room.

By Max P. Vander Horck, WA6HUW
Published in QST, November 1966, page 33