



THE RICHMOND HAM

Published Monthly by the Richmond Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 35279, Richmond, Virginia 23235

March 2026

THE RICHMOND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB RARC Meeting in person!

Our monthly meeting is on Friday March 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



March Program: This month's program will be from John Michael Watkins-Pitchford K4XQC. Antennas for Portable Operation, using Chameleon HF loop and portable telescopic loaded verticals and rotatable telescopic dipole for 80m and 40m. All guided by mini 1300 VNA

Richmond Amateur Radio Club (RARC)

Monthly Meeting Minutes Friday, February 13, 2026

Call to order:

President Darrell Basinger WW4F called the meeting to order at 19:02 followed by recognition of guests and introductions.

Business meeting began with the approval of the December meeting minutes.

Ken Leidner, WV0L gave the treasurers report and indicated a balance of \$14,283.86 in the treasury. The memberships stands at 162 (25 quorum), of whom 123 paid dues.

Member ages range 14 – 96 years, averaging 68.2, with a median of 71.

School Report: Bruce MacAlister W4BRU, 1 signup for the next General class, and 2 for the Extra. 4

Seminars are planned. Minimum numbers needed for each.

Remote Station: W4BRU reported it to be working well, and much used.

D-Star working well, even during Win's absence.

Club Nets: President noted the Club has now 9 nets, including 80m, two on 40m, 6m, 2m and D-Star.

KD4CMK requested help with running these nets. President recommended nets as way to meet club members. W4BRU welcomed new hams to the NewHams net, with rotating net control practice. Old Business: Dan presented new brochures for the Club and School. President congratulated and remarked on their benefit to the Club and School. ARRL Year of the Club – outlined in handout. Discussed and noted to be fine opportunity for welcome

Club national publicity. Details from Dan.

New Business: WV0L gave notice of bylaw changes – Roster keeping transferred from Secretary to

Treasurer, and Secretary to keep records and correspondence relating to Board and Meetings.

Expenses over \$200 to need Board approval annually, at beginning of year if possible.

Proposed

changes accepted by membership.

Announcements: KX4QC to Club Secretary.

Trustee Mike Owens transferred to Win Grant W4WIN.

Club badges need to be picked up.

Kathleen kindly offered a selection K5HTZ(sk) parts for members to take free

All Virginia Hams hamfest at Manasses, Saturday June 20, 13833 Dumfries Rd (new location at High School).

Respectfully submitted,

JMW-P

KX4QC

Secretary.

March 2, 2026.

From The Prez

Greetings,

This is a reminder that the 2026 Virginia QSO Party will take place on March 21-22. This is a great opportunity for all club members to get on the air, make contacts across the state, and proudly represent our club.

Key Points:

• The event takes place March 21-22. Full details are available here:

https://www.qsl.net/sterling/VA_QSO_Party/2026_VQP/2026_VQP_Main.html

- Operators of all skill levels are welcome.
- A great chance to practice operating, test your station, and work toward awards.
- Please be sure to log your contacts and submit your results after the event.

There will be an award of points for contacting ARRL affiliated clubs in Virginia. This is in support of the ARRL "Year of the Club" celebration. The Richmond Amateur Radio Club (call sign W4ZA) is an ARRL affiliated amateur radio club. Please consider making contacts using the club's call W4ZA.

Let's show strong participation from the club this year. Hope to hear you on the air!

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.

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 Hey 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

Spend \$1 – promote ham radio

When we show off ham radio at MakerFests, etc. we have people say "My uncle used to be a ham. Does anyone still do that?" It's mostly because we can't have antennas visible at our homes like those I used to see when I was a kid. But you can use your car or truck to promote ham radio.

For \$1 per year more than the usual cost of a Virginia license plate you get one issued with your call sign. I use a search of "virginia dmv ham radio" to get directly to the DMV instructions shown in the image.

There are two requirements:

1. Bring a printed copy of your FCC license to DMV when you pick up the plate
2. Have a working ham radio transceiver in your vehicle for emergency communications. That's why the low fee. The DMV folk don't check for a radio. For the 20 years before I installed a mobile rig I kept a mighty 5-watt HT in my car connected to an external antenna. I could hit almost any repeater in the RVA with no problem. For a "permanently" mounted antenna the trunk lid "lip" mount with coaxial feedline is about \$30. The three-axis mount for an SUV is about \$60. A tri-band antenna for 2m, 1.25m, and 70cm bands is \$25 to \$50. A basic dual-band HT is under \$30. I run the coax under the floor carpet from the antenna at the back to the HT in the front.

There is one caution. Your call sign is not private, a knowledgeable person can look it up on the FCC or QRZ system and get your address. If that is a concern for you, try a Google search of your name and see if your address shows up that way. Mine does and that's a lot easier than going to the FCC website. It's already out there on the internet.

An "Amateur Radio" license plate plus the antenna is a noticeable promotion.

Amateur Radio



Personalization Available	Yes
Plate Fee (in addition to registration fee)	\$1 Annually
Personalized Plate Fee (in addition to registration fee)	\$0 Annually
Disabled Symbol Available Upon Request	Yes
Number of Character Combinations Available on Plate	6

[Purchase Plate](#)

Requirements
 Must provide a printed copy of your amateur radio station license to show that you are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission.

Bruce MacAlister, W4BRU

Bon Air Victorian Day

On May 9th we have another opportunity, like MakerFest, to show off ham radio and what it can do at the Bon Air Victorian Day.

This show includes a parade. Doug Rumburg, KK4LSE, is putting his truck with its a variety antennas in the parade. If any of you have an antenna-strewn vehicle you want to parade, send me a picture and I'll pass it on the officlalom of the parade for an invitation.

There will be tables for businesses and organization like we see at MakerFest. Our setup at RVA MakerFest with two or three tables with antennas behind them worked well so I suggest we do that for this. The variety of open circuits, Morse code keys for the kids, and working radios were popular.

73, Regards, Bruce

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/

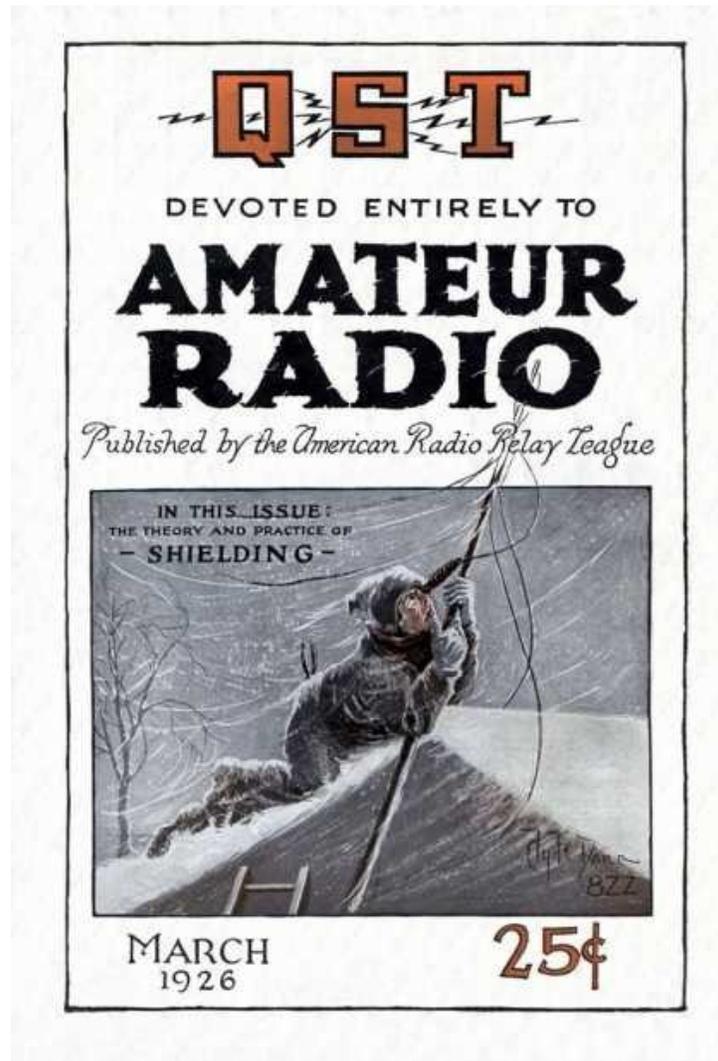
Contact Rob Thomas, KC4NYK at 804-633-4470 or via email at QRZ

Brand new G5RV antenna that covers 40 meters to 6 meters. The antenna is fully assembled and ready to install. The antenna is 56 feet in length and can be installed as a dipole or inverted V. From the center insulator there is 15 feet of 300 ohm ladder line to the 1:1 current balun which is then attached to 50 feet of RG8X. There is a PL259 connector on the end of the RG8X. I purchased this antenna for \$150 but will sell for \$125. Contact Dave (WB4DES) at wb4des@gmail.com

Thought For The Day

“A bargain is something you don’t need at a price you can’t resist.”

Darrell Basinger	WW4F	President	(804) 219-8167	president@rarclub.net
Lauren Ware	W4LEW	Vice President	(804) 513-4950	vicepresident@rarclub.net
John M Watkins-Pitchford	KX4QC	Secretary		
Ken Leidner	WV0L	Treasurer		



What's on the bench? — WW4F

In 1980/81, I built a Heathkit AR-1515 Stereo FM Receiver. It was one of Heathkit's most popular mid-power receivers, featuring approximately 60 WPC, a clean layout, an excellent tuner section, and very serviceable construction. I used it for many years before eventually upgrading.

Recently, I decided to set it up in our guest room. However, I noticed several intermittent problems and I was concerned that aging electrolytic capacitors might fail and cause serious damage. To address this, I purchased a replacement capacitor kit from the eBay seller- HiFiAudio.

I removed each printed circuit board to clean the contacts and connectors, replaced all electrolytic capacitors, and closely inspected and reflowed any suspect solder connections. I am happy to report that all issues are now resolved and the receiver sounds better than ever. Hopefully, it will last another 45 years.



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