



Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

April 2020
Edition



ACARC

President

Pete Long
(WB3FYR)

Vice President

Jeff McCulloch
(K4JEL)

Secretary

Norman Clemmons
(KI4YSY)

Treasurer

Anita Jacobs
(KG4IIL)

Azalea Coast
Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 4044
Wilmington, NC 28406

www.ac4rc.org

From The Editor

COVID-19. Coronavirus. Whatever you want to call it – it's affecting our daily lives now. Gatherings and events cancelled. Socializing discouraged. Crazy runs on toilet paper and water. But for every cloud there is a silver lining...more time to cozy up to your radio and do the old-time social networking. Been wanting to try a new mode of operation? Thinking about doing a homebrew project? Invest your newly created idle time in research, building, repairing, operating. Keep an eye out for important announcements on the club email!

Have a question you want answered? Curious about something ham related but need some ideas or guidance? Stumped about something and need help? We have mentors that can give you the advice you need. Please see the link on the home page of ac4rc.org.

73!

Upcoming Important Club Events

April 11th VE testing **CANCELLED**

April 21st Monthly club meeting, 7:00 PM
No in-person meeting – on the air on the club's 2 meter repeater
147.18MHz, +0.600 offset, 88.5 tone

Every Monday 2 Meter Rag Chew, 9:00PM
147.18MHz, +0.600 offset, 88.5 tone
Norman (KI4YSY) is net control



VE Testing

by Jeff (W4BIX)

Due to the college's closing of the campus because of COVID-19 concerns, the April VE testing session has been cancelled.

At the last VE testing session held February 8th, Steve (AJ4JJ) reported that there was one new General and one new Extra from the testing held that day. We also had 7 VE to come out for administering the test. Great support!

2020 NC QSO Party Results

by Allan (KX2H)

Many thanks to the half dozen operators who put NI4BK on the air once again for the NC QSO Party. We had two stations on the air continuously on 20M SSB and 40M CW racking up a total of 157 QSO's.

First Club Meeting of 2020

by Pete (WB3FYR)(ACARC President)

Ed note: Pete sent me this article some time ago but apparently the email goblins ate it!

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club meets the third Tuesday of every month except December, and this January was no exception. The meeting was held as usual in the North Campus of Cape Fear Community College and it was well attended. Besides the committee reports, there were discussions including the excellent Monday night "ragchew" on antennas, potential 10m PKS31 net for all members including Technicians, Linwood/NT4F's making the club aware of a donation of HAM equipment to the club, Steve/KN4GVV's budget radio and amplifier purchased off the internet, and Bob/WA3IRG's selling a SK's (silent key) HAM equipment for benefit of the family. Viewing this all was a potential new HAM and club member Bill (no call...yet).

The January program was led by our own Bill (N2COP), Vice Director of the ARRL's Roanoke Division. His presentation included discussing the Congressional action on HOA antenna restrictions (Amateur Radio Parity Act). He also discussed changes to ARRL policies such as the price of life membership for HAMS age 70 and over taking a substantial drop.

One major ARRL change was the addition of a new bimonthly magazine "On the Air" (focus : new HAMS) that will complement "QST" (first published 1915), "QEX" (Forum for Communications Experimenters) and "NCJ" (The National Contest Journal). Once a year ARRL members will have the option of changing which print magazine they wish to receive in the mail. However, other magazines will still be available online at the ARRL website.

Bill also brought a 2019 copy of The ARRL Handbook for Radio Communications in its new format; instead of one book covering all topics, the topics have been divided so the Handbook comes in a 6-volume set. The 6-volume set that Bill brought was used as a door prize for club members attending the meeting ... and the winner was Larry (WN4M).



Larry (L) and Bill (R)

All is well that ends well

by Robert (KN4AME)

Early on a Sunday morning I was up with a cup of coffee and the newspaper sitting in the sunroom enjoying both when I hear my wife calling my name from the second floor. I got up and went to the stairwell to see what the commotion was about. My wife informs me I have an owl entrapped in my antenna in the backyard. I move to where I could see, and lo and behold, there is an owl totally wound up in the antenna.

For those of you who attended last year's field day at Ogden Park, you might remember the hex beam Jack Jacobs and Steve Wilder assembled for the event. This antenna has string and wire running in a circular cobweb pattern. The owl had basically exhausted himself trying to remove himself from his entanglement. Not knowing what to do, fascinated at his attempts to free himself, I called the police dept. They were very helpful and gave me the phone numbers of two organizations who might be able to help. I called the first number given which was Skywatch and was amazed how responsive they were.

Within the hour, a couple appeared, without protective clothing. They brought with them a net basket, normally used for fishing and a dog crate carrying device. The man walked over to the owl, stood what I thought was very close, having a staredown. In a few minutes, the man slid the net over the owl's head, without any fuss from the owl. His wife cut him free from his entanglements. The rescuer then carried him to the dog crate and gently slid him inside without a fuss! What a wonderful rescue event! Hopefully, Mr. Owl has recovered and is back to normal activity.

Interesting Sunday morning!

RARS Fest 2020 Cancelled

by Linwood (NT4F)

The annual RARS Fest in Raleigh has been cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Here is a copy of an email:

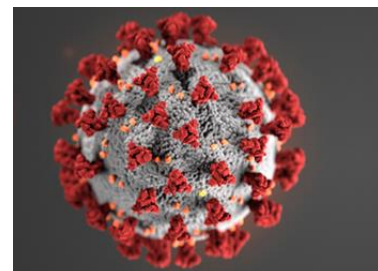
A lot has changed since I wrote you on Friday, so RARSfest has now been cancelled for 2020. Saturday afternoon, the Governor essentially ordered that all events at the Fairgrounds for more than 100 people be cancelled. The fairgrounds management contacted us on Saturday with a choice to cancel now or wait and see, since we don't know how long the Governor's cancellation will last.

On Friday and Saturday, some of our biggest vendors and some attendees cancelled their participation out of concern for the virus. We reasoned that even if the virus turns around quickly, we will not have time to reschedule all the vendors and resume selling tickets in time for April 11.

We met late Saturday and decided to cancel. We announced it on the RARS net last night, so you've probably heard by now, but I just wanted you to hear from me that while on Friday morning we had hoped not to cancel, things changed so fast that by Saturday night cancelling seemed like the best decision. We plan to refund everyone's money as quickly as we can.

73, and I hope to run across you on the air sometime soon.

*John Honeycutt - N8ZU
RARS President*



NA SSB Sprint Contest

by Jeff (W4BIX)

The Spring 2020 NA SSB Sprint Contest is this coming weekend on April 4th! Local east coast time for the sprint is 8:00PM – Midnight Saturday night. For those that have never tried it it is a short four hours of SSB operation trying to make as many North American contacts as possible. Just to make it interesting there will be 4 state QSO parties going on at the same time.

The rules are fairly straight forward. The 51 US Multipliers are: [Lower 48 States, DC, AK/KL7 and HI/KH6]. The 13 Canadian multipliers are [AB, BC, MB, NB, NL, NS, NT, NU, ON, PE, QC, SK, YT]. Non-North American countries do not count as multipliers but do count for contact credit for North American stations.

A specialty of this Sprint is the QSY rule. If any station solicits a call (eg, by sending “CQ,” “QRZ?” “going up 5 kHz” or any other means of soliciting a response, including completion of a contact where the frequency was inherited), that station is permitted to work only one station in response to that solicitation. The station must thereafter move at least 1 kHz before calling another station, or at least 5 kHz before soliciting other calls. Once a station is required to QSY, that station is not allowed to make another contact on the vacated frequency until or unless at least one subsequent contact is made on a new frequency. In a nutshell, no parking on one frequency & calling CQ for the entire contest.

The website for more information, rules and log submittal is <https://sbspsprint.com/>

Consider Winlink Express

by Jeff (W4BIX)

Email via ham radio...that’s what Winlink is all about. In these days of COVID-19 closures, school at home and work-from-home necessities it brings who knows if the internet can handle

the sudden and overwhelming load. Can the internet ever go down? Sure – that’s always a possibility. When large outages occur, a sizeable portion of the Internet or even an entire country may be affected. Winlink provides you email capability via radio, cutting the internet out of the process.

Winlink is a worldwide radio email service that uses radio pathways where the internet is not present, and is capable of operating completely without the internet--automatically--using smart-network radio relays. Winlink provides its users email with attachments, position reporting, weather and information bulletins, and is well-known for its role in interoperable emergency and disaster relief communications. Licensed Winlink operators/stations use both amateur radio and government radio frequencies worldwide.

To help Winlink's newbies overcome software fright when operating Winlink Express for the first time, San Diego, California ARES created a series of 24 short videos to help newcomers find the right button to click in the Express software menus. The topics of the short videos range in difficulty from simple, such as sending a Winlink email to a Gmail account, to challenging, such as using software tools to locate a neighbor operating in the vicinity.

The 24 videos range in length from one to five minutes and cover the tasks that a deployed operator might be expected to accomplish in the field.

The video content gives operators experience sending messages with and without attachments. For example, ICS Forms become .xml attachments for transmission; however, the Radiogram and Race Tracker templates re-format data but do not result in an outgoing attachment. The videos demonstrate sending both types of messages.

The videos provide tips for creating neatly-formatted, automatically-generated ICS Form 309 Comm Logs which are impressive documents

to turn over to a Served Agency as soon as an exercise concludes.

The San Diego ARES Winlink video playlist is open to the public and is located at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-7mirT-kjfs84FQzLr-qv066KI94rtYM>

Go here to download Winlink Express and give it a try!

<https://www.winlink.org/WinlinkExpress>



Enhance Your HandHeld Mobile Radio Reception

by Jeff (W4BIX) & Linwood (NT4F)

As you've probably noticed there are locations in our club's area that people struggle to hear or struggle to transmit to the club's repeater. The purpose of this article will be to give you some ideas to enhance your coverage in an effort to bring in the repeater to your H/T a lot clearer and enable you to hit the input from a location you cannot hit it from now.

Right out of the gate, some H/T's have dual power capability for TX, a high and a low power selection. Dive into your menu selections and make sure you have high power selected. Next we'll discuss antennas. Some H/T's in use come with a rubber ducky antenna that is crap. Consider upgrading your antenna to one with more gain like a Comet or Diamond brand aftermarket replacement antenna. Pay special attention to the connector type when ordering!

One such dealer (& there are many more...) is The Antenna Farm:

[\(https://www.theantennafarm.com/catalog/antennas-191/hand-held-antennas-717/amateur-radio-ht-antennas-713/\)](https://www.theantennafarm.com/catalog/antennas-191/hand-held-antennas-717/amateur-radio-ht-antennas-713/)

An outside 2M antenna is a possibility to add to your antenna farm. There are dozens of designs out there...Google can be very helpful in a search if you specify exactly what you're looking for. Use the search term "2 meter ham radio antenna design" and the world of 2M antennas is right there. Some you can add to your attic, some are as simple as a 2M mobile whip with a magnetic base – plop that on top of a metal file cabinet and you're good to go! Just keep in mind any adapters you might need like a SO-239 to SMA male to mate it with your H/T. Some have had success by adding a "tiger tail" to their antenna connection. Some have made cheap tape measure handheld yagi antennas.

Watch some of these helpful YouTube videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szmQmCn1tH4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAEoB8EyU04>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Qve78EwXjC>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agRkWWcUzOU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkBX2ZqUbl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViodMxV77eM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tafy51yUzQo>

April 2020 Contest Calendar

Click on the [±](#) symbol next to the contest name for more information about that contest.

± QRP Fox Hunt	0100Z-0230Z, Apr 1
± Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 1
± CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 1 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 1 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 2
± UKEICC 80m Contest	2000Z-2100Z, Apr 1
± NRAU 10m Activity Contest	1800Z-1900Z, Apr 2 (CW) and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 2 (SSB) and 2000Z-2100Z, Apr 2 (FM) and 2100Z-2200Z, Apr 2 (Dig)
± SARL 80m QSO Party	1700Z-2000Z, Apr 2
± SKCC Sprint Europe	1900Z-2100Z, Apr 2
± NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Apr 3
± QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Apr 3
± NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 3
± LZ Open 40m Sprint Contest	0400Z-0800Z, Apr 4
± PODXS 070 Club PSK 31 Flavors Contest	1000Z, Apr 4 to 0400Z, Apr 5
± Nebraska QSO Party	1300Z, Apr 4 to 0100Z, Apr 5 and 1300Z-2200Z, Apr 5
± Missouri QSO Party	1400Z, Apr 4 to 0400Z, Apr 5 and 1400Z-2000Z, Apr 5
± Florida State Parks on the Air	1400Z-2200Z, Apr 4 and 1400Z-2200Z, Apr 5
± Mississippi QSO Party	1400Z, Apr 4 to 0200Z, Apr 5
± Louisiana QSO Party	1400Z, Apr 4 to 0200Z, Apr 5
± SP DX Contest	1500Z, Apr 4 to 1500Z, Apr 5
± EA RTTY Contest	1600Z, Apr 4 to 1600Z, Apr 5
± North American SSB Sprint Contest	0000Z-0400Z, Apr 5
± UBA Spring Contest, 6m	0600Z-1000Z, Apr 5
± RSGB RoLo SSB	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 5
± IQRP Quarterly Marathon	0800Z, Apr 6 to 2000Z, Apr 12
± 144 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 6
± RSGB 80m Club Championship, CW	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 6
± ARS Spartan Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, Apr 7
± Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 8
± CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 8 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 8 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 9
± NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Apr 10
± NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 10
± QRP ARCI Spring QSO Party	0000Z-2359Z, Apr 11
± JIDX CW Contest	0700Z, Apr 11 to 1300Z, Apr 12
± FTn DX Contest	1200Z, Apr 11 to 1200Z, Apr 12
± F9AA Cup, PSK	1200Z, Apr 11 to 1200Z, Apr 12
± SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Apr 11 to 2400Z, Apr 12

+ OK/OM DX Contest, SSB	1200Z, Apr 11 to 1200Z, Apr 12
+ New Mexico QSO Party	1400Z, Apr 11 to 0200Z, Apr 12
+ Georgia QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 11 to 0359Z, Apr 12 and 1400Z-2359Z, Apr 12
+ North Dakota QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 11 to 1800Z, Apr 12
+ Yuri Gagarin International DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 11 to 2100Z, Apr 12
+ WAB 3.5/7/14 MHz Data Modes	1000Z-1200Z, Apr 12 (FT8) and 1200Z-1400Z, Apr 12 (RTTY) and 1400Z-1600Z, Apr 12 (PSK) and 1600Z-1800Z, Apr 12 (FT8) and 1800Z-2000Z, Apr 12 (RTTY) and 2000Z-2200Z, Apr 12 (PSK)
+ International Vintage Contest HF	1200Z-1800Z, Apr 12
+ Hungarian Straight Key Contest	1500Z-1600Z, Apr 12
+ 4 States QRP Group Second Sunday Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Apr 13
+ 222 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 14
+ NAQCC CW Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, Apr 15
+ Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 15
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 15 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 15 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 16
+ RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 15
+ NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Apr 17
+ NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 17
+ Holyland DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 17 to 2100Z, Apr 18
+ ES Open HF Championship	0500Z-0559Z, Apr 18 and 0600Z-0659Z, Apr 18 and 0700Z-0759Z, Apr 18 and 0800Z-0859Z, Apr 18
+ Worked All Provinces of China DX Contest	0600Z, Apr 18 to 0559Z, Apr 19
+ YU DX Contest	0700Z, Apr 18 to 0659Z, Apr 19
+ QRP to the Field	0800-1800 local, Apr 18
+ CQMM DX Contest	0900Z, Apr 18 to 2359Z, Apr 19
+ Texas State Parks on the Air	1400Z, Apr 18 to 0200Z, Apr 19 and 1400Z-2000Z, Apr 19
+ Michigan QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 18 to 0400Z, Apr 19
+ EA-QRP CW Contest	1700Z-2000Z, Apr 18 (10-20m) and 2000Z-2300Z, Apr 18 (40-80m) and 0700Z-0900Z, Apr 19 (40m) and 0900Z-1200Z, Apr 19 (20-10m)
+ Ontario QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 18 to 0500Z, Apr 19 and 1200Z-1800Z, Apr 19
+ Feld Hell Sprint	1800Z-2159Z, Apr 18
+ ARRL Rookie Roundup, SSB	1800Z-2359Z, Apr 19
+ Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	1900Z-2400Z, Apr 19
+ SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Apr 22
+ Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 22
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 22 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 22 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 23

+ 432 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 22
+ RSGB 80m Club Championship, Data	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 23
+ NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Apr 24
+ NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 24
+ 10-10 Int. Spring Contest, Digital	0001Z, Apr 25 to 2359Z, Apr 26
+ SP DX RTTY Contest	1200Z, Apr 25 to 1200Z, Apr 26
+ Helvetia Contest	1300Z, Apr 25 to 1259Z, Apr 26
+ Florida QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 25 to 0159Z, Apr 26 and 1200Z-2159Z, Apr 26
+ BARTG Sprint 75	1700Z-2059Z, Apr 26
+ QCX Challenge	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 27 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 27 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 28
+ RSGB FT4 Contest Series	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 27
+ Phone Fray	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 29
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 29 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 29 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 30
+ UKEICC 80m Contest	2000Z-2100Z, Apr 29