Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society
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NOVEMBER 2000

RADIOACTIVITY

NOVEMBER MEETING !!! NOTE CHANGES !!!

Friday, November 17, at 7:00 PM - one hour earlier than usual. Brief business meeting. We will tour the Henrico County Division of Police Communications Department. The Henrico Public Safety Building is located on the corner of E. Parham & Shrader, across from Health South Hospital and London Town Apartments. Turn onto Shrader from Parham, then turn left into the parking lot. Turn into the left lot and park near the corner of the lot near the building. Don Richardson, Communications Officer, Police Personnel Unit, will talk to us about their radio system and other items and allow us to tour the facility.

VE EXAMS

Saturday, December 9, 2000 , 9:00 AM, J. S. Reynolds Community College, 1651 East Parham Road, Building B, Room 201. Pre-register with PAT WILSON, W4PW at 932-9424 or email at w4pw@arrl.net . Pat's test information web page is: http://www.w4pw.org/hamtests.htm

MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you have not already sent in your membership renewal, please do so ASAP.

OCTOBER PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The October meeting was held at the Henrico Volunteer Rescue Squad building in Sandston due to the remodeling going on at our customary meeting place. 30 members packed the meeting room.

Pat Wilson, W4PW, presented the program on ARES/RACES. Pat showed a video from ARRL which described the role of amateur radio in emergencies. The talked about the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service and their differences.

The following exerpts are quotes from a handout from Pat regarding ARES:

- "In the event of a communications emergency all amateurs are dedicated to serve in the public interest, within their ability, to provide temporary communications for a stricken area until normal facilities are restored.

- "The ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Service is composed of licensed amateurs who voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communication duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

- " Every licensed amateur, whether or not a member of the ARRL, is eligible for membership in the Emergency Service. The only other qualification is a sincere desire to serve."

- "Before an emergency, amateurs should prepare themselves and their equipment. Set up a transceiver with a reliable emergency power source. Test your equipment and your operating skills in the yearly ARRL Simulated Emergency Test and other yearly on-the-air contests and events such as Field Day. Register with your local EC.

- "During an emergency, always listen before you transmit. Cooperate with those we serve. Be ready to help, but stay off the air unless there is a specific job to be done, that you can handle more efficiently than any other station. Comply with FCC regulations. Net Control should be the supreme authority for traffic routing.

- "After an emergency, report to ARRL Headquarters as soon as possible and as fully as possible so that the Amateur Service can receive full credit."

Thanks Pat for sharing this information with us in a very enjoyable program.

Jamboree on the Air

Thanks to the efforts of Bill Stewart, KG4IJH, a number of RATS club members turned out at Dorey Park on October 21 participating with Scouts worldwide in their Jamboree on the Air. Operating under field day conditions with a generator supplying power, and antennas hung in trees, we had about a half dozen rigs on the air. About 100 Scouts, Scout leaders and parents participated. Bill had prepared handouts with the phonetic alphabet, Morse code characters, and activities for the younger Scouts, as well as displaying posters and providing leaflets obtained from ARRL about amateur radio.

The Scouts arrived at designated times so we could work with them in small groups. A club member talked to the Scouts as they arrived, explaining what amateur radio is all about and how signals travel. Scouts practiced giving their names phonetically, and some tapped out their names in Morse code using a practice key and the sheet provided. Those I observed showed no reluctance trying their hand at sending code.

After the brief orientation, Scouts were dispatched individually or in small groups to work with an operator and try to make contacts. Scouts

talked to other Scouts and other control operators as their leaders and parents watched.

The event was a resounding success. There was a lot of enthusiasm from all involved. Parents and leaders had lots of questions about how it all happens. This event will give us a foot in the door to work with Scouts on their merit badges in radio/communications.

COMING EVENTS

Christmas Social -- December 15 at 7:00 PM Golden Corral, Providence Road just south of Midlothian Pike. (Note: this is one hour earlier than our normal meeting time.) The Board decided to hold our social at a restaurant since we do not have kitchen facilities in the building where we meet, and to relieve the extra task of preparing a dish to bring at this busy season. Dinner cost is the responsibility of each member. A 15% gratuity will be added to each check.

FrostFest 2001

FrostFest/ARRL Roanoke Division Convention January 21, 2001.

Jim Stallings, KD4ZOT, has secured the URL for a FrostFest web site, http://www.frostfest.com. Visit the web site for information and to order advance "VIP" tickets through our secure web site or go directly to the secure site at http://tickets.frostfest.com.

Your VIP tickets will allow you to enter at 8:00 AM, 30 minutes before general admission ticket holders. VIPs will have a separate entrance without waiting in the long line. You will get to browse and purchase before the crowds. There will be special door prize drawings exclusively for VIP ticket holders.

FrostFest will need lots of help with security and other things. Volunteer your services by contacting Jim Clark, N3JJF, FrostFest Director, or Pat Wilson, W4PW, FrostFest Co-Director, or sign up on the website.

SILENT KEYS

James T. Green, W4ML, formerly K4ITQ and a long time area ham radio operator, became a silent key on Saturday morning October 28, 2000. Jim was 55, had been a ham for 40 years and lived in the Mechanicsville area with his wife Prudence. Jim was a member of the prestigious international group known as the Firstclass Operators Club (FOC), the Central Virginia Contest Club (CVCC) and the Richmond Amateur Volunteer Examiners (RAVE).

Jim and his wife Prudy had just returned from a trip to England to attend a yearly FOC function.

Not only was Jim a long time ham radio operator, but he also owned and operated repeaters for use by the surrounding amateur community. The 146.715 repeater located in Walkerton was the envy of many repeater operators and was known for it's clean signal and wide coverage

area.

There will be a memorial service at the Episcopal Church of the Creator, 7159 Mechanicsville Turnpike in Mechanicsville on Saturday, November 11th at 1 p.m.

Needless to say, the entire ham community has lost a valued member and we will all miss his expertise and friendship.

73 old friend Submitted by Pat, W4PW

T. Garrett Solloway, K4ISM, of Varina, died Friday, November 3. Garrett was a Navy veteran and worked for Virginia Power for 35 years. He was an avid radio amateur for many years. Friends will remember Garrett as the teller of some amazing stories, among other things.

A graveside service was held on November 6 at 2:00 p.m. at Four Mile Creek Baptist Church.

We will miss Garrett.

RULES & REGS
News from the ARRL and FCC

COMING SOON: FIRST HAM OPERATION FROM ISS

"Amateur Radio is poised to mark an historic milestone. Operation from Amateur Radio's first permanent foothold in space is expected to debut soon after the all-ham Expedition 1 crew arrives November 2 aboard the International Space Station. The ISS crew could be on the air by mid-November. "The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station--or ARISS—initial station gear already is aboard the ISS awaiting the arrival of Expedition 1 Commander and US astronaut Bill Shepherd, KD5GSL, and Russian Cosmonauts Sergei Krikalev, U5MIR, and Yuri Gidzenko. The equipment includes VHF and UHF hand-held transceivers as well as a TNC for packet, a specially developed headset and signal adapter module plus power adapters and interconnecting cables.

"The Expedition 1 crew is set to blast off October 31 aboard a Russian Soyuz rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan and will arrive aboard the ISS a couple of days later. Once on board, the crew will begin a four-month stay aboard the ISS--the first permanent occupancy of the international complex.

"Two US call signs have been issued for Amateur Radio operations as part of the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station program. The FCC granted vanity call signs NA1SS and NN1SS to the International Space Station Amateur Radio Club on October 11. The NA1SS call sign will be used on board the ISS, while NN1SS will be for ground-based ISS communications from Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. A Russian call sign, RZ3DZR, and a German call sign, DL0ISS, also have been issued for use aboard the ISS.

"The initial station gear will be installed temporarily in the Zarya Functional Cargo Block of the ISS and will permit operation only on 2 meters--FM voice and packet. Tentative operating frequencies are: Worldwide downlink for voice and packet, 145.80 MHz; worldwide packet uplink, 145.99 MHz; Region 1 (Europe) voice uplink: 145.20 MHz; Region 2 & 3 voice uplink, 144.49 MHz. Yet to be determined is the ARISS operating schedule, which will depend on the crew schedule. The ARISS Team anticipates multiband, multimode operations with the crew and regularly scheduled school group contacts.

" For more information about Amateur Radio on the ISS and SAREX, visit the ARISS Web site, http://ariss.gsfc.nasa.gov/."
Tnx ARRL Letter, October 27, 2000 & ARRL

FCC TO MONITOR AUCTION SITE FOR ILLEGAL ITEMS

"The FCC says it has reached an agreement with the eBay auction site that's aimed at curtailing the sale of clearly illegal radio equipment.

"FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth says eBay has agreed to cooperate in removing advertisements in which the item for sale 'is clearly non-certified' under FCC rules. Hollingsworth said most of the equipment involved falls into the CB category, including illegal amplifiers.

" Hollingsworth agreed to publicize the initiative at the urging of the ARRL Regulatory Information Branch's John Hennessee, N1KB. 'I've got a whole folder of people who have been complaining about this and will be delighted to know that the Commission is taking action,' Hennessee said.

"Hollingsworth said a review team within the Technical and Public Safety Division of the FCC Enforcement Bureau is screening eBay ads each week. He said the practice could be extended to other auction sites if the FCC learns of similar problems.

"Hollingsworth credits complaints from the Amateur Radio community with getting the new system in place. 'I've been collecting complaints for a year, but the amateur community really generated it,' he said. Hollingsworth says he sees about 10 complaints a week about auction site radio gear advertisements--sometimes several about the same ad. He cautions that complaints should be based on clear-cut FCC rules violations, such as attempts to sell illegal linear amplifiers.

" Amateurs can send items to fccham@fcc.gov, Hollingsworth said."

Tnx ARRL Letter, October 27, 2000 & ARRL

CHANGES, CHALLENGES LOOM AS 2000-2001 CONTEST SEASON NEARS

"As the 'contest season' approaches, ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, is reminding ARRL contest participants of changes that become effective this year. His department also is gearing up to face the challenges that lie ahead as the Contest Branch starts

implementing new log-handling methods.

"Starting November 1, 2000, the ARRL standard file format for electronic submissions will be the Cabrillo format. ARRL November Sweepstakes will be the first operating event to fall under the new electronic logging standard. The CW weekend is November 4-6 and the SSB weekend is November 18-20 this year. (Rules appear in October QST, page 102.)

"Henderson also reminds contest participants that with the addition of West Central Florida this past January there now are 80 ARRL/RAC sections.

"First announced more than a year ago, the Cabrillo format will result in electronic logs that adhere to a uniform standard that allows them to be processed more expediently. Henderson says the change to the new format will mean the Contest Branch can post the list of 'Logs Received' for a given contest much sooner--once the non-electronic logs have been processed into the database. 'The Cabrillo format will allow us to verify entries and initialize the database more efficiently, with fewer data entry errors,' Henderson said.

"Cabrillo--pronounced kuh-BREE-oh--is not a program but an electronic file format that specifies what information is contained in certain fields in the file document. Henderson says major contest logging software programs have incorporated the Cabrillo format into their products. 'If you're using a current version of one of those programs, you should have the ability to generate the Cabrillo file already,' he said.

"Details on the format appear in the 'General Rules for all ARRL Contests' in the November 2000 issue of QST. Additional information is available at http://www.kkn.net/~trey/cabrillo/ .

"Faced with more 18,000 contest entries during the 1999-2000 contest season, Henderson says his department's biggest task is routine data entry. 'Right now data must be entered by hand--a very time-consuming process,' he said. Contest Branch staffers estimate that approximately one out of every five contest entries--electronic and paper--arrives incorrect or incomplete.

"'The most common error is omitting required information that allow staff to properly code the entry, such as not listing a valid entry category, not listing power level, giving a state of residence or ARRL division instead of ARRL section for location,' Henderson said.

"Henderson hopes to use computer automation to reduce the time needed to score submitted contest logs. For example, to cut the time needed for initial data entry, the Contest Branch is developing a 'robot reader' that will take information from the Cabrillo format header and initialize that entry into the database.

" For more information, contact ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, 860-594-0232 or n1nd@arrl.org or c/o ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111."

Tnx ARRL Letter, October 27, 2000 & ARRL

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