W4CALOG

Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club – since 1932

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Radio Room in the Red Cross

By Ron Ramsey, AB4A

The Ft-7800 is our VHF / UHF FM transceiver. Button #1 has W4CA 146.985 Pl 102.7 on the display, but turning the large tuning knob on the right will display all repeaters in Southwest Virginia (W4CA is #7, please reset and leave it on the display when finished operating), Button #2 has K4ROA the weather-watch repeater, Button

#3 has W4CA 442.500, Button #4 has EchoLink 444.175, Button #5 has IRLP 443.675 Pl 110.9 Node #4208 KS4BO and the other button is Wires, be careful not to press it. Buttons #4 & 5 are discussed below. We had used them in the past to link repeaters to pass simulated emergency traffic for our SETs (Simulated Emergency Training). The UHF side of this transceiver can also be used for WinLink to free up the 2 m transceiver for voice traffic. Cable to hook radio to TNC is under the radio.

Rather than relying on ionospheric propagation for long-distance communication, we are using the Internet in combination with VHF or UHF FM transceivers to span thousands of miles. The amateur VOIP are EchoLink and IRLP. They are configured, to involve *repeater linking* where two distant repeater systems share signals with one another or *simplex linking* where one or more users with handheld or mobile transceivers communicate directly with a "base" station (or *node*) that is linked to the Internet. The one element that all amateur VOIP systems have in common is that the Internet acts as the relay between stations.

When you start the EchoLink, your computer taps into the Internet to connect to an EchoLink server (presently we are going to have to use 444.175 EchoLink on Poor Mountain, #4 on Ft-7800 until we get the port open on the computer). The EchoLink server acts like a telephone switchboard in cyberspace. You can request a connection between your computer and that of another amateur. When you

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connect to an individual station; the custom is to call in the same fashion as you would during a traditional on the air conversation (You need to hesitate about 2 seconds before speaking to compensate for the delay.) The EchoLink servers also support *conferencing* where several amateurs can converse in roundtable fashion.

With IRLP—the Internet Radio Linking Project—we enter a VOIP network that can only be accessed by radios (#5 on the Ft-7800; 443.675 Pl 110.9 node 4208 KS4BO). Using an IRLP node is a lot like using a repeater autopatch. The first thing you must do is obtain the access code from the node operator or group. To connect to an IRLP node, you usually begin by identifying yourself and sending the DTMF access code. If you are successful, the node will respond. After that, it is a matter of stating your intentions and sending the 4-digit code for the distant node you wish to access. Once the connection is set up, you'll hear a voice ID from the target node. When you hear the confirming ID, you're free to make your call and start a conversation. IRLP also supports roundtable conferencing on *reflectors*. These reflectors allow only one person to talk at a time, but quite a few stations can connect simultaneously.

Our first HF radio is a Yaesu Ft-990 with matching SP-980 Speaker and the following accessories; Bencher BY-1 iambic paddles, Heil mic & head-set with foot peddle and VK64 voice/cw keyer. Presently, the antenna is hooked to the Kenwood radio. When setting up the Yaesu please follow Leroy's on the VK64 and select CW mode, then press VOX button on radio (you can change the key from right-handed to left-handed in the VK64 menu). If you want to use the headphones plug them into the external speaker, not the radio (I usually leave the

headphones around my neck so everyone can hear from the speaker).

Cont. right col.

Our first computer and latest acquisition is next. It presently has WinLink 2000 installed on it and the TNC hooked to the Ft-2600. It uses the HP laser printer. It will eventually have APRS, CW GET & CW type, Digipan and other digital modes installed with a TNC to the Ft-990. Use the RVARC sign in (no password).

Next we have the Astron RS-35a power supply, which powers all the 12volt gear and it is powered from the APC UPS (battery backup power). When entering the radio room, please turn on power supply first thing and remember to turn it off when you are done operating the radio room (the cleaning ladies get very upset when they hear voices in the building in the middle of the night). The newest radio is our Yaesu Ft-2600 and Kantronics KPC-3plus TNC. It is a 2 m transceiver and can be used on the repeaters or digital. Please leave it on the weather watch repeater K4ROA when finished operating it, but you can select other repeaters in Southwest Virginia by turning the large tuning knob on the right. The button to the immediate left of this tuning knob will cycle through home frequency (146.58 simplex), VFO (set on 145.570) and repeaters. This is the radio we normally use digitally for Winlink 2000 (Airmail).

To operate WinLink 2000; log in to our first computer as RVARC, then select airmail. Once airmail has loaded, select on the ft-2600 "VFO 145.570". Select MODULES, then Packet Terminal; this will drop down a new window. After the TNC initializes, click on the green button far left hand side. It will connect and check for mail and automatically disconnect when finished. You may read your mail; the same is if you were on your e-mail browser. If you wish to write an e-mail; click on the third button from the left, in the second row (it looks like a sheet of paper). Write your e-mail, as you normally would, then click on the mailbox. Click on the outbox to see there is a mailbox beside your message, then select Modules, then Packet Terminal; this will drop down a new window. After the TNC initializes, click on the green button far left hand side and your e-mail will be sent. After your e-mail is sent, it will automatically check for new messages and disconnect.

Our second HF radio is a Kenwood TS-850S/AT; it operates off the power supply, with a hand mic. Currently it is hooked to the antenna, so please utilize this operating position.
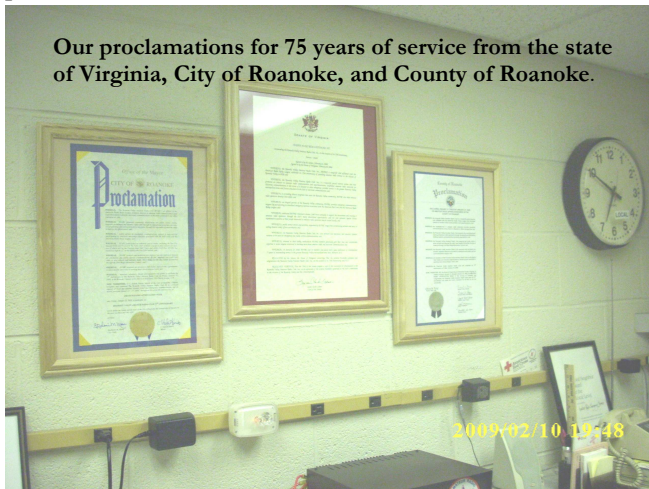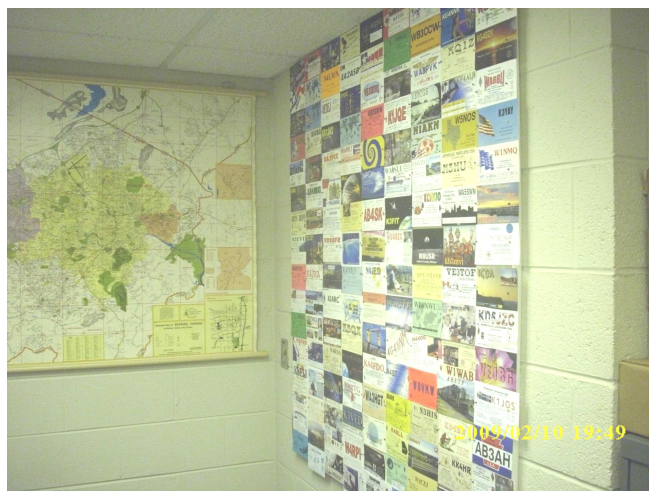
TS-850S

Our second computer is the Red Cross radio room computer, while it has Internet access, it also requires a password. It will be used for EchoLink.

Our proclamations for 75 years of service from the state of Virginia, City of Roanoke, and County of Roanoke.

A sample of our QSL collection; prepared by Ray AB4YZ

And our Radio Room ◊

VE Exam Results

By Ray Pillow, KK4HR

January 2009: Sarah Prescott, KJ4JBS of Dublin, VA earned her Technician License. Frank Palmieri, KJ4JBT of Rocky Mount, VA passed his Technician Test. Jeffery Gruver, KJ4JBU of Roanoke came to get his Technician license but we urged him to take the General test as well and he left with a General License.

Onnie Carr, KJ4IVA of Roanoke passed her Technician test at a VE session in late December. Onnie is the wife of Willie Carr, N4XE.

Please look out for these new hams and congratulate them for their achievement. My thanks to Bob KJ3Y, Phil W4VPI, Leroy AG4RW, Ken N4LYO, Karen KI4GOT, Lee WA4AJG and John K4JKA for handling the session this month.

February 15, 2009: Scott D Pritchard, KJ4JRC of Christiansburg passed two tests and earned his General License. John M McIntosh, KJ4JRB of Blacksburg earned his Technician License. Congratulations Guys.

On another note, Onnie M Carr, K8MIH (formerly KJ4IVA) has a new vanity call. It just happens to be Willie Carr's old call when he lived in "8 land". Back then if you moved into another call area you had to apply for a new call so Willie lost K8MIH and got a new 4 area call. Now K8MIH is back in the family again. Welcome to the ranks Onnie.

Thanks to Bob KJ3Y, John K4JKA, Fred K4HVB, Dave KS4BO, Bill W4PLS, Floyd KB4WYW, Leroy AG4RW, Phil W4VPI, Lee WA4AJG and Willie N4XE for a fine job at the February test session. ◊

The President's Corner

Ron Ramsey, AB4A, President RVARC

Our Christmas party was in January because of scheduling conflicts. It was held at the Coach and Four Restaurant. We have tentatively scheduled it for the first Saturday in December this year. All of the officers were presented with certificates of appreciation printed by Floyd WB4WYW. High point of the evening was John K4JKA receiving our top honor <u>Ham of the Year</u>. While the food and service was great, the overall cost was over what was expected (my meal was $54 but the gratuity added to it made it $66.50). A few of the club members commented on the costliness of the meal, and I'm afraid this will keep people from attending in the future. I would like to have feedback on this issue.

As announced in the last LOG, the radio room is being opened at 6:30pm before meetings and the regular meeting room opened at 7:00pm for technical discussions. Presently, neither is being well attended. We need to get the word out about these changes.

There have been some new additions to the radio room. A second 2 meter radio with TNC connected to a second computer to be used for the digital modes. See the article on the radio room for more information. The Proclamations from the state, city and county have been mounted on the wall, along with Ray's AB4YZ's QSL card display. A new clock donated by Jerry K1SO is being ordered. We are currently looking for a replacement vertical antenna so both HF radios may be used. The radio room needs to be used more for Red Cross to be able to justify us being part of the emergency preparedness group. If anyone wants to operate let us know when you need to get in.

Spring School Club Roundup was well supported by our ham club, with participation by Hidden Valley High School, William Byrd High School, William Byrd Middle see articles in the LOG from sponsors of these events.

The board has chosen for our top priority this year to complete the filing of our nonprofit status 501 (3) (c). This has drawn on for too many years.

We are currently offering Technician, General and Extra Classes on Thursday evenings at Red Cross. I feel that the numbers are down on the classes; we have three fine individuals who have put a lot of work in preparing these classes. Between all three classes, they have less than 10 people attending. Three weeks prior to the classes, fliers were placed at 100 locations around the Valley, they were announced on four different repeaters at least three times each and an article was placed in the Roanoke Times.

Changes to the W4CA Net

By Russ Abbey, KG4MAV

The net is held every Wednesday at 8pm on the W4CA repeater. The repeater is on a frequency of 146.985 with a ctcss tone of 107.2. We talk about what is going on in the Club and take traffic if there is any. We can also use the net for training and the repeater for emergencies.

There are changes coming to the net. I'm hoping that we can set it up so that instead of net numbers we can go by the last letter of your call sign. In the case of my call, KG4MAV, when we call for check ins for T-Z I would be able to send in my call. It will probably be A-F, then G-K, L-P, Q-U, and finally V-Z. At the last meeting there was a discussion about doing a second round of calling to have more input to the net and to also make it last a little longer. If you have any comments about that please give me a call at 540-651-4072 or an email at kg4mav@arrl.net.

So, is their something you'd like to see incorporated into the net? If so give me a call or call any of the officers in the Club. I also would like anyone interested in being a net control operator to give me a call. You don't need a computer, just a pencil and a piece of paper It's not rocket science you know. ◊

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Winlink in Floyd County

By Russ Abbey, KG4MAV

Floyd County has set up a Winlink 2000 station at the home of Tom King, W4VZH. He has satellite internet and an automatic generator so he's always on the air. We also have two digipeaters; one is at Dave Larsen's, KK4WW, home on Route 8. That is W4VZH-5. Then we have another Digi at Don Clemens, KE4UGF, home. That one's ID is KE4UGF-5. Then there is mine, I'm an Airmail station at Russ Abbey's place, KG4MAV.

I can send and receive Email through Tom's RMS Packet station. The two Digipeaters can relay traffic between them selves or to Tom's RMS Station, I can go through him or through the two Digi's to send any traffic that the Town of Floyd or the County of Floyd needs in an emergency. Also we can deploy as portable stations. Tom, W4VZH, has a portable RMS Station that he can take to any place in the County or in the surrounding areas for an emergency. I also have a portable Airmail Station that is Airmail only but I'm working on setting up an RMS station at my home and a portable one for the mobile.

If we are going to grow our club, we need to license interested individuals. How can we accomplish this?

Our net manager has cited a lack of net participation from the club members and an overall lack of repeater use. Every club members should monitor the repeater and participate in the net each week. It is our best method of gaining information about club events, special needs of the club, our members or the community. Likewise our club net manager, and his weekly net control operators work hard to produce this net, and we should participate. An idea, we are considering, is a new contest. It's called the "985 Coloring Book Contest".

There is a great opportunity for everyone to operate the club station. We will be supporting the Virginia QSO party by operating from Bath County. Since everyone else in the United States is trying to work all of the counties in Virginia, Bath County being a rare county, we will have a lot of people looking for us. This is a low pressure contest with an easy exchange, making it a great contest for newcomers. We will be operating at Douthat State Park on March the 21st and 22nd, if you cannot stay in one of the beautiful rustic cabins come and visit for at least part of the day. If you are visiting for a day, make sure you get a parking pass at the Rangers office.

Our next major event will be the club auction at Red Cross, April 25. This is one of our main fundraisers and a great time to pick up used equipment. Be sure to add both of these events to your calendar. Our most important event is the Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Hamfest. It will be held at William Byrd high school on Saturday August the first with John K4JKA and Karen KI4GOT co-chairmen of the event, assisted by Ron AB4A. ◊

Fox Hunts Scheduled

By Pat Lewis, N3AYW

The dates for the RVARC FOX HUNTS this year are March 14, July 25th, and October 10th. These events ARE REALLY FUN and they get even WILDER if you work as a team. Most winners (and everyone wins something-- trust me) would rather hunt than be the FOX. But some of our past Foxxxxes have gone to great lengths to become invisible......and HE or SHE really kicked our posteriors. Technology just doesn't seem to hold up as well as trickery and tactics. Many people using just a handheld, a map, and some patience have come in first. First place is won by the hunter (or team) with the least mileage no matter who gets there first; AND THE REAL WINNERS ARE THOSE WHO TAKE HOME NEW TRICKS. ◊

All you need for Airmail is an old packet modem of a certain kind and a dedicated radio that you can put on certain frequencies. Then go to www.winlink.org. Read up on the installation and download the program and install it. It's not too hard and can be a lot of fun. There is also a program that is called Paclink that will interface with your normal email program and you can just type your message then send it by radio or email to anyone. If you have any questions on Winlink or Airmail, give me a call or send me an email and I'll answer or get the answer for you. ◊

Hurray for Our Instructors

By Pat Lewis, N3AYW

Hurray! For those Hams and soon-to-be Hams who braved the bitter cold on the first night of RVARC's Amateur Radio classes. Thanks to volunteers and welcome students who make the volunteer teacher's time well spent. And of course thanks to the RED CROSS for the warm building; lighted, comfortable classrooms and don't forget access to a very functional Radio room.

Technician (in one classroom) and Extra Class (in another classroom) start the first hour (7-8pm). Then, General Class follows the second hour (8-9pm). The instructors are hams just like you and me, but have chosen to give up their time to share the fun, technology, and experience of being a licensed Amateur Radio operator.

Wow! Lots of handouts, recommendations, references, links, and the ARRL study guides are available at a discount. The caliber of slides and questions and presentations used in the classes reflect the many hours of work and preparation of not only the present instructors but those who taught in the past. The success rate is proven with the near 100% exam passing rate demonstrated by the students that made it to all of the classes. The classes will finish allowing the students to test at the VE test session on the 3rd Sunday in April. Listen to Wednesday night NET at 8pm for updates of course.

Kudos to Ray- KK4HR, John-K4JKA, and Gary-AJ4GL carrying on this fine Ham tradition with "class" ◊

School Club Roundup, 2009

By Charlie Draper, AB4SK

All three Amateur Radio school clubs in the valley participated in School Club Roundup contest February 9 through 13. William Byrd High School, WB4HS, William Byrd Middle School, K4WBM and Hidden Valley High School, N4HVH were all on the air.

The William Byrd High School Amateur Radio Club operated all five days of the contest. Phil Roark, K4WFO; Dave Kinsey, KS4BO; Richard Turner, KZ4VT; David Jones, N4JED; LeRoy Maxey, AG4RW; and Woody Thompson mentored the students and served as control operators.

WB4HS summary:
> Operating Hours: 24.03
> Voice Contacts: 327
> Digital Contacts: 43
> Score: 86,317
> 40 States Contacted
> 5 Provinces
> 20 Countries
> 7 Radio Clubs
> 26 Schools
> About 15 students participated

The William Byrd Middle School Amateur Radio Club operated all five days of the contest. John and Karen Anderson, K4JKA and KI4GOT; Lee Moseley, WA4AJG ; Doug Moore, K4WVS; Coy Weaver, W4GMX; and Charlie Draper, AB4SK coached the students and served as control operators.

K4WBM summary:
> Operating Hours: 23.94
> Voice Contacts: 125
> Digital Contacts: 85
> Score: 53,395
> 34 States Contacted:
> 4 Provinces
> 17 Countries
> 8 Radio Clubs
> 22 Schools
> 23 students participated

Hidden Valley operated two days of the contest this year. They put 15 students on the air. Gary AJ4GL, Winston W4IXC, and Ron AB4A served as mentors and control operators. Josh, KI4HDI was the School Sponsor.

N4HVH Summary:
> Operating Hours: 9.64
> Voice Contacts: 54
> Digital Contacts: 0
> Score: 3,078
> 14 States
> 2 Provinces
> 6 Countries
> 2 Radio clubs
> 6 Schools
> 15 students participated ◊

Photo by David Jones, N4JED
Above: At K4WBM, Doug, K4WVS, assists 7th grader, Aaron Britton, operating PSK-31 while 6th grader, Winter Blake looks on.

Photo by David Jones, N4JED
At WB4HS, L/R. Brent Townley observes, Robert Jones logs, and Alex Thompson operates the HF station. Standing Ron Ramsey, AB4A

UPCOMING EVENTS!

It's already February! Spring is almost here.

The spring Amateur Radio Classes have already begun (Feb 5) and will continue until mid April. Thanks go out to those teaching the classes: Ray Pillow KK4HR Technician, John Anderson, K4JKA – General and Gary Yohe, AJ4GL – Extra.

The next club meetings will be March 13th and 27th, April 10th and 24th, and May 8th and 22nd.

In March we have the Virginia QSO Party coming up on the 21st and 22nd. The club will be operating this contest from Douthat State Park in Bath County. A number of club members will be staying in cabins at Douthat for that weekend, many with their own radios set up as well. The club will be operating from cabin 28, so if you'd like to come up and participate or just visit, please make sure you stop at the Park Office for your parking pass. If you would like to stay for the weekend also, cabins may still be available. The # for reservations and information is **1-800-933-PARK** and a link for a map of the park is available on the website - **www.w4ca.us**.

In April we have our Annual Auction. This will be on April 25th at the Red Cross on Church Ave. Doors will open at 8am, the auction will begin at 9am. Food concessions will be available as well.

The Annual Kite Festival is on April 18th, and volunteers will be needed to handle communications and parking. I have not gotten details yet but in past years volunteers were asked to be there by 9am. Lunch will be provided. Make sure you bring sunscreen and a 2M HT.

And although it's still a little ways off, don't forget the ITT Scout Safety Day May 9th, where Boy Scouts from around the region gather to get their Radio Merit Badge (and others). Volunteers will be needed to help these scouts learn about Amateur Radio and make their first contacts.

Also in May will be the annual Festival in the Park, Memorial Day Weekend. The RVARC will have a special event station up on the hill near the flag pole. Operators will be needed for both Saturday and Sunday.

Please show your support for the Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club by participating in these events.

A full list of events for the year can be found on the website as well under the "Events 2009" tab.

Thanks and 73   Karen Anderson   KI4GOT

PICTURES FROM THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

John Anderson – K4JKA received "Ham of the Year"

This is EVERYONE at the Christmas Party
Sorry John & Nancy, there ALMOST wasn't room.
-KI4GOT-

For Sale

For Sale – Yaesu FT-890 AT – in box like new – limited hours used.
Full HF – 100 watts – hand mic and power cord with Anderson power pole connections.
Asking $ 825.00 firm.

For Sale – Yaesu FT-857-D – in box like new – limited hours used – also, only used mobile.
Full HF and UHF/VHF – 100 watts – hand mic – power cord with Anderson power pole connections.
Asking $ 550.00 firm.

Contact Jerry/K1SO at K1SO@aol.com or call home phone and leave message 540-774-3454.

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