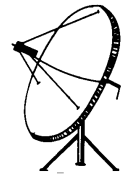




THE JUNKBOX



The Official Newsletter of The Albemarle Amateur Radio Society

Post Office Box 1217

May 2014

Elizabeth City, NC 27906-1217

<http://www.taars.us>

WA4VTX Repeaters 146.655/444.300/147.330 PL 131.8 APRS 144.39

Next TAARS Meeting

Our next TAARS meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 15th, 2014, 7:30 PM at the COA Building "c" C109. Our dinner location is the Golden Coral at 6:00 PM.

Minutes

The club vice president, Ron N4WYR, called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. The minutes of the previous meeting, March 2014, were approved. Three visitors were present, Coleman Motes, KG4FSE; Charles Carter, KI4PIC; Stewart Braunagle.

Old Business

- Approved minutes from March 2014 Meeting.

New Business

- Testing session scheduled for Saturday, April 19th.
- SKYWARN Training is scheduled for May 6th.
- Weekly digital modes discussed.
- River City Cycle Club, Saturday April 26th, volunteers needed.

Attendance

Al Onley, K4VHV; Tom Wilson, KK4WQG; Dean Patsel, AK4TW; Albert Ryder, KI4BQI; Katina Ryder, KG4SPP; Terry Simonds, WB4FXD; Champ Cox, K2IUN; Cynthia Cox, KG4SPH; Mike Cohoon, KB4TOH; Scruff Harrison, KK4SDL; Ron Thomas, N4WYR; Joe Wallace, K4EIT.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn at approximately 8:30 PM.

Testing Session Report

Our TAARS 2nd quarter testing session was held on April 19th. Our very own Scruff Harrison KK4SDL now K4SDL upgraded to general. Earning Technician Licenses were Zack Vestal and Matthew Mushrush both of Elizabeth City, Kelvin Roberson of Perquimans County and Stewart Braunagle of Columbia. Congratulations to all! Thanks to Ron N4WYR, Kerry KD4CEB and Joe K4EIT who served as volunteer examiners for the session. Our next session will be on July 19th.

Contributed by NO4Y.

Repeater Report

The April 25th tornado outbreak caused some local repeater problems. Hertford 147.330 failed due to power outages. That site has a backup generator that also failed. Power was also interrupted on Elizabeth City 146.655 but the battery backup held at reduced power. The backup battery was just replaced last month, good timing!

The 444.300 repeater is operating at low power due to amplifier failure during the same period, the amplifier is being sent out for repair.

Contributed by NO4Y.

TarWheel Century Bike Event

The TAARS group provided radio support for the Tarwheel 2014 Bike ride. The event started Saturday April 26th 7:30AM at Camden High School and ended at 4:30PM. There were 210 riders with almost half doing the 100 miles ride.

Kerry, KD4CEB, acted as net control using the club call NC4EC. We used 146.655 repeater which was operating in emergency mode after the storms on Friday evening cut power to the site. Everyone did an excellent job keeping the repeater use down on Saturday since we thought the system was operating on battery. Edgar K4YF helped monitor the repeater

and remind folks that the system was in emergency mode. Even in the low power mode we had coverage of the entire event route. The course changed this year, instead of going up to Dismal Swamp Visitors center, the 100 mile went to Highway 168 though Shawboro in Currituck. AL KI4BQI and Katina KG4SPP diverted from the rest center to the newly discovered Currituck sag without a problem.

One accident occurred. It seems one of the rider's bike mechanically failed when he hit some storm debris on the road. He was transported to Albermarle Hospital latter moved to Sentra Norfolk. I learned the next day that he died at Sentara hospital. I am proud of the way the radio group handled that incident especially Tom N8GUN was right there when asked to investigate, very professional. He was there with EMS siren in background over the repeater. Under Al K4VHV's experience of many years of lead roving, the group checked that the riders came in safely.

We wish to thank Al K4VHV, Ron N4YWR, Champ K2IUN, KI4BQI Al, KG4SPP Katina, KD4VRI Ronnie, N8GUN Tom, K4SDL Scruff who did an excellent job of patrolling the "new undiscovered Currituck loop"

Thanks to all for a very professional job.

Oh and even though I did not see any deviled eggs, the sweet potato and ham biscuits were an excellent replacement

Contributed by Kerry, KD4CEB

Skywarn & Perquimans County Report

Friday evening started about 7:45 PM. The weather was getting nasty and I took two hailreports from Greg, N4QLD and Ronnie, KD4VRI on dime sized hail in their areas. Entered them into the Net control Operator Dashboard. Then the lights and phone went out.

About two minutes after that, tones started going off for Bethel Fire Department with the forst calls to Bethel Fishing Center off Snug harbor Road. Initially it was for a tree down on a house with people inside. It only got worse when they got there. Since it is ten miles to Bethel Fishing Center from my house, I figured I'd stick close to home to see if anything else was happening. Sure enough, two minutes after the first call, we had another call for

Holiday Island Road and Rayburn Lane for a person stuck in a car tangled in wires. I headed that way, and going up Holiday Island, I heard a 'thump' from the roof. Realized that one of my antennas was hitting wires; sure enough, all the utility poles on that stretch of road were leaning at a 45 degree angle over the road. So, I went back and blocked traffic for the next two hours. After the road was opened, I checked the Plantation for damage, got my generator going, then headed for the firehouse.

All of Bethel's operations were being dispatched from the firehouse with one of our Captains keeping track of all the activities. With all the radio traffic and the heavy rains, VHF radios were not working well. I could see one of our engines a half mile up the road, bit couldn't talk to him. I could not hit the county repeater in Winfall using 40 watts and a quarter wave antenna on my truck roof. Even trhe engine couldn't get through. We both eventually used our cell phones to call the fire house.

Finally got home at 1:00 AM. Back to the Emergency Operations Center at 7:30 AM and spent the rest of the day running around for Jarvis Winslow, our EM Coordinator. Finished the day doing an interview for Channel 13 at about 9:00 PM. Sunday and Monday were repeats of Saturday: a lot of running around doing damage assessment, delivering tarps and water and answering phones in the EOC.

A few thoughts on radios. The Hertford repeater was down after the power went out, or, at least, I couldn't hit it from Holiday Island Road. The County repeater was OK if you could hit it, but coverage was spotty. The County is looking at another repeater for the Holiday Island/Snug Harbor area with a separate "tactical channel" for us. This would free up the main dispatch channel for the other departments. Communications among units in the Snug harbor area were chaotic and could have used "formal net" procedures, which I'll propose to our Chief and President.

Contributed by Tom, WB1CZX

Ideas for the Newsletter?

Send ideas to k4eit@arll.net.