The SKYHOOK

HOLIDAY CITY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Our President's Message

An interesting experience might be had by making contacts with amateurs in different parts of the country and the world to see how they spend the holidays. The different customs and favorite foods enjoyed during this time of the year by these amateurs may be surprising and fascinating.

As many of you know by now, our Holiday Party has been rescheduled for January 2. *Contact Larry Puccio (see page 3) for a reservation (required).* I hope to see you there and share some belated Holiday Wishes. Until then, please have an enjoyable and safe celebration.

Doug Poray KC2TZC

Happy Birthday To:

(none on the list!)

Happy Anniversary To:

Ray & Pamala Barton

OUR NEXT REGULAR MEETING:
Thursday February 6th
at 7:00 PM
Holiday City South Clubhouse A
Santiago Drive at Mule Road

Ocean County ARES® News

December 2024

The next meeting of Ocean County ARES will be Wednesday, December 18th at 7:00 PM. This will also be the annual Holiday Party. The meeting will be held at the Ocean County EOC, Robert J. Miller Airport, Berkeley Township. All are invited.

Last month I announced that Tom – N2XW would be giving up his position as SNJ Section Manager (SM) and I just recently learned that Tom – WB2ALJ, SNJ Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) will also be giving up his position on December 31, 2024. No replacement has yet been named for WB2ALJ. We wish both the best of luck in future endeavors and thank them for their service in ARES.

As most of you know, Windows 10 will no longer be updated by Microsoft as of October 2025. Ocean County ARES uses Windows 10 operating system to control our VARA FM Winlink system and all the computers currently in use are NOT Windows 11 upgradable. I would like to address two particular computers, which are part of our VARA FM system that would be deployed at shelters or emergency comm stations during an emergency.

Both computers are Lenovo M900 ThinkCentre units with the VARA system built around them. Neither PC is Windows 11 upgradable, but contain Intel i5-6500 CPU's and 16 GB of RAM. It would be a real shame to dispose of these units and would be very costly to replace with Windows 11 PC's.

Last month I started looking at alternative solutions and the one that really looked the most promising and with the least cost was converting both PC operating systems to Linux. Linux is free, open source software. In all honesty, I knew nothing about Linux and had no clue how to begin.

I contacted Jim – W2YG, who used to be a member of Ocean County ARES, but relocated to Orlando, Florida. Jim is a retired IT Specialist and I asked him for help

and guidance. Jim knew a little about Linux (which was a ton more than I knew) and he pointed me in the right direction of some reading material to educate myself. The book is Linux for Beginners by Ethem Mining, which I purchased and to my surprise was just released in October 2024, so it had to have up to date information. At the same time, Jim started to experiment in Florida with an old, outdated PC, by Installing Linux Mint and started to document his steps.

I told Jim that our goal was to be able to operate VARA FM and Winlink RMS Express software, which are both Windows applications. They do not run directly in Linux and research soon showed that really nobody has gotten these two programs to successfully run together in Linux. This did not stop Jim and pressing forward he discovered step by step what needed to be added and removed from Linux to make this work. In a nutshell, a program called Wine needed to be added to Linux, but that was the easy part. There are dozens of "Tricks" that need to be tweaked in Wine to get a particular Windows application to run and Jim finally figured them all out from Linux open help forums.

Finally, we got the two programs to launch, but a major glitch turned up. Our Master Communications DRA-30 boards, which interface the PC to the radio could not be keyed through Linux. This turns out to be an issue with the way the code for C-media PTT was written in VARA and has screwed up a lot of developers.

While I was using DRA-30 boards, Jim in Florida was using DRA-65 boards. The 65 differs because it has the ability to use VOX to trigger PTT. I soon ordered and built two DRA-65 boards to replace my two DRA-30 boards and through much experimentation and tuning Jim and I were able to make the transceiver PTT activate in VARA FM in a Linux environment.

The final glitch was trying to get RMS Express to recognize a puck style GPS that we use for easy position reporting. Once again, Jim solved the issue with some fancy code and for the better. In Windows you are limited to 4800 baud for a GPS. In Linux we are able to run 38400 baud with no problems. Much faster updating.

To make a long story shorter, both VARA FM portable stations for Ocean County are now converted over to

Linux and successfully run VARA and Winlink. Several other useful apps were also loaded to each desktop making it easier for operators such as FLMSG so amateur radio forms are at your fingertips.

Jim is working on a final document on how to load Linux and all the software and tricks and it will be released to any interested amateur radio parties. Thank you very much W2YG for your outstanding effort! Now if I only had some operators in Ocean County willing to pitch in like Jim.

73 de WX2NJ

Bob Murdock

Ocean County Amateur Radio Emergency Service® EC

Ocean County ARES Training Nets And Meetings

Training Nets are suspended during emergencies and disaster relief efforts

Net Schedule A: 1st , 3rd, and 5th (if needed) Wednesday every month except during meetings (see "Meetings", below):

7:30pm 145.170 MHz,   8:30pm 449.825MHz

Net Schedule B: 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month:

7:30pm 449.825 MHz,   8:30pm 145.170 MHz

Meetings:

7:00 am on 3rd Wednesdays of even-numbered months (Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, & Dec).

How I Got Started In Radio

by Steve Jackson N2WLH

During my Junior year of High School, I had friends that were on Citizen Band radios, and I thought that was for me but then found out I needed a license. Well then, I found out I wasn't old enough to have my own license so I had to coheres my dad to get his license so I could use it as a family member.

Finally, the license arrived but I still had no radio for Citizen Band. I scrapped up what I thought was a gold mine in money for my first radio. I brought it home in two grocery bags. When I walked into the house with my dad asked what I had and looked in the two bags. His eyes met mine and with a slight sideways glance asked how much did you pay for it? My reply was $5. He looked back at the bags and all he said was "I hope you got your money's worth".

Yep, I had my first CB radio. It was a Lafayette HE-20C. After looking over the schematic I started getting rid of all the mods that had been done to it. It took me about two weeks, but it was finally done. Standing there with the power cord in one hand and a fire extinguisher in the other I finally got up enough nerve to plug it in…. It Worked.

Like most boys that grew up in the 50's and 60's we always listened to the radio of one type or another. I liked listening to WABC 77 when I was a teenager. I used to read everything I could get my hands on that pertained to radios and electronics. Of course, I didn't understand lots of it at that age.

When I was in high school, I took electronics drafting and worked part time at Fort Monmouth doing drafting. While I was doing electronics drafting in school, one of my drafting instructors asked why I didn't join the radio club. What!!!, a radio club and nobody ever told me about it.

I immediately looked up the teacher that organized the club in the school. When I told him I wanted to join the club he asked…. "How much math have you had" and then told me I just wouldn't be able to join without a certain amount of math already under my belt. Dejected, I moved on.

A few years later I found myself at Ching Chuan Kang (CCK) Air Base, Republic of China. After being there about 30 days, I was sent to Vietnam maintaining a C-130. First at Cam Ranh Bay, then at Ton Son Nhat. At night when the propagation was good, I would turn on the HF radio and tune in WLS out of Chicago. I would always pipe it into the onboard speakers and point them out the back of the aircraft so our security police could hear it. It brought a touch of "The World" to everyone listening.

Now to get to the point of Amateur radio. After basically being told I wasn't smart enough to get my amateur radio license or join their radio club at school, I was determined to learn and get my license. As chance would have it, I was talking with a friend who worked in the instrumentation calibration section at the Naval Air Warfare Center (NAWC) in Trenton, NJ.

He mentioned he was studying to get his No-Code Technician class license. He then told me I could get this license and then go back and study the code to upgrade for the Technician class license. So that was my progression, No-Code Technician, 5 WPM code to Technician, General and 13 WPM code, Advanced, Extra and 18 WPM code.

So if someone ever tells you can't do something, tell them to stand back and watch. You can do it if you put your mind to it.

RA Mobile Fox Hunt December 7

Delaware Valley Radio Association

By KD2NHG Anthony November 26, 2024

DVRA will host one last Mobile Fox Hunting Session of the 2024 season. Join Huntmaster Glen, NK1N, for this event Saturday, December 7th at 9:00am ET. Hunts are usually done by 12:00 noon.

The starting point for this hunt is the Chapin School South Parking Lot located at 4101 Princeton Pike, Princeton NJ 08540

Please listen to the DVRA 70cm repeater, W2ZQ, on 442.650 MHz, positive (+) offset, CTCSS (PL) 131.8 Hz as that is how you will receive the day's foxhunting instructions.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at foxhunts@w2zq.com.

Fox Hunting is a receive-only event. Participation does not require an amateur radio license. The only requirements are a 2m FM receiver and some means of motorized transport (it takes too long to walk)

In case the DVRA 70cm repeater is unavailable, W2MER on 147.105, positive (+) offset, CTCSS (PL) 123.0 Hz will serve as a backup.

ELECTRONICS CIRCUIT SEMINAR

Delaware Valley Radio Association

By KD2NHG Anthony November 26, 2024

As part of our ongoing series of seminars and workshops, the DVRA will be holding its next seminar on Saturday, December 7th at 10am at the W2ZQ station.

The seminar will be based on selected topics in the Components and Circuits section of the ARRL General Class study guide. Topics, along with demonstration, will include how to use Decibels, Peak Envelope Power, transformers and power supplies circuitry. Test equipment will be used to demonstrate some of the discussed principles.

DVRA Monthly Meeting

Delaware Valley Radio Association

By KD2NHG Anthony November 26, 2024

On Wednesday, Decemer 11th, 2024 at 7:00PM, the Delaware Valley Radio Association's monthly membership meeting will feature a presentation "Ham or Not Ham presentation", by DVRA member Cliff Green, WA2TMF.

"Ham or Not Ham" is a popular annual holiday presentation by the DVRA, now in its fifth year.

Cliff, WA2TMF, under advisement from the propagation Guru, has chosen to present Ham this year.

Of course Cliff has promised to bring back some of the traditional cast of characters we have all known to love over the years but, only for a short visit.

 "DUGA, The Russian Woodpecker"

This year's episode, focuses on a mysterious Cold War-era radio interference that plagued ham radio operators and the military.

The presentation will explore the Soviet project's purpose, origin and eventual demise and promises to solve the mystery surrounding this significant event.

DVRA monthly meetings are open to the public. Feel free to join for all or part of each meeting.

There will be a Pizza/Social Hour prior to the meeting at 6PM. Folks are asked to bring their own (soft) beverage.There is no charge for the pizza, but we do ask folks to give what they wish to help cover the cost.

Announcements at 7:00 PM

Elections and Introduction of New Members

Featured Presentation at 7:05 PM

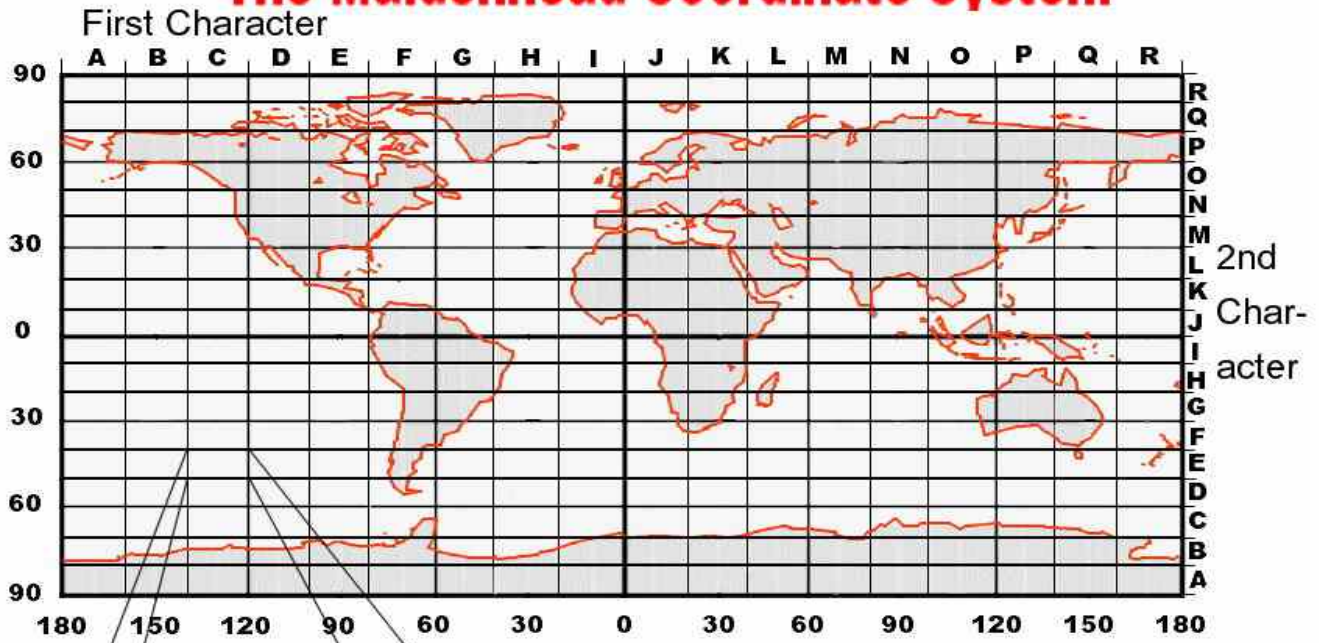Combined Directors/Business Meeting

1/2 hour social gathering after the meeting

In person monthly meetings are held at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, 137 W Upper Ferry Rd, Ewing Township, NJ 08628 (Driving Directions)

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting!

Contact k3ea.dx@gmail.com with any questions.

The Maidenhead Coordinate System

First Character

Third Character

Fifth Character

Some DX Opportunities

Opportunities shown in alphanumeric order of callsigns.
Mode codes: 3 = PSK31, 4 = JP4, 8 = JT8, C = CW, D = "digital", F = FM, O = Olivia, R = RTTY, S = SSB, T = Image (SSTV)
Many thanks to Bill Feidt NG3K for ADXO. Also to Wikipedia, the ARRL, the RSGB, DX World, The Daily DX & QRZ.com.

START	FINISH	ENTITY	PFX	CALLSIGN	IOTA	BANDS	MODES	QSL via	LOC	MILES	DIR	INFO by
2024 Dec24	2024 Dec30	Monaco	3A	3A/TK4TH		40 20 10m	S D	LoTW	JN33rr	4033	ENE	QRZ.com
2024 Nov30	2024 Dec02	Fiji	3D	3D2NB	OC-016	160-6m	C	LoTW W7YAQ	RH82qf	7956	W	DXW.Net
2024 Nov08	2024 Dec12	Fiji	3D	3D2TP	OC-016	80-10m	S C	PA3CBH	RH91fu	7914	W	DXW.Net
2024 Nov15	2024 Dec04	Rotuma	3D2	3D2Y	OC-060	160-6m	C S 8	M0OXO	RH82xe	7927	W	DXW.Net
	2024 Dec31	Croatia	9A	9A100RKZ				9A1ADE	KM64lo	5506	NE	ARLD004
2024 Nov27	2024 Dec08	Sierra Leone	9L	9L5A		160-6m	C S	LoTW OQRS	IJ38ke	4333	ESE	OPDX
2024 Nov27	2024 Dec10	Singapore	9V	9V1CF	AS-019	40-10m	S 8	OE3OGC	OJ11wh	9576	N	TDDX
2024 Nov25	2024 Dec06	Tonga	A3	A35GC	OC-049	160-6m	C S 4 8 R	LoTW	AG28js	7707	W	LZ1GC
2024 Dec02	2024 Dec07	India	AU2	AU2K	AS-079	40-10m	C S 8	AU2K OQRS	ML88pq	7349	NNE	VE3LYC
	2024 Dec31	Philippines	DU	DU3/F4EBK	OC-042	20-10m		F4EU0	PK04kw	8515	NNW	ARLD024
	2024 Dec31	Armenia	EK	EK/RX3DPK		160-10m	8	RX3DPK	KO85vt	4716	NE	ARLD001
2024 Dec26	2025 Jan04	Dominica	J7	J75K	NA-101	160-6m	S C 8	LoTW IV3VJ	FK95hk	1862	SSE	DXW.Net
2024 Dec30	2025 Jan03	Mariana Is	KH0	KH0/AJ6VJ	OC-086	40-10m	C S 8	LoTW /OQRS	QK25vg	7829	NW	TDDX
2024 Dec13	2024 Dec19	Bangladesh	S2	S21DX		160-10m	S R 8	LoTW EB2DX	NL51iu	8052	NNE	OPDX
2024 Dec01	2024 Dec10	Cuba	T4	T46W	NA-204	160-6m		LoTW CO6QK	FL02lp	1228	SSW	DXW.Net
2024 Nov22	2024 Dec09	Cen. African Rep	TL	TL8ES		160-6m	S C 8 4 R	IK2DUW LoTW	JJ94gi	6168	E	DXW.Net
2024 Dec20	2024 Dec31	French Guiana	FY	TO0J	SA-020?	80-10m	8 c s	LoTW OQRS	GJ35pe	2749	SE	OZ0J
2024 Nov30	2024 Dec13	St Martin	TO9	TO9W	NA-105	80-10m	C S 4 8 R	LoTW W9ILY	FK88lc	1650	SSE	TDDX
2024 Oct31	2025 Jan31	Gabon	TR	TR8CR	F6AJA	30-10m	C	F6AJA	JJ40rj	5864	E	TDDX
2024 Dec05	2024 Dec17	St Kitts & Nevis	V47	V47NH	NA-104	40-10m	S	LoTW KC1NGS	FK87qe	1719	SSE	425DXN
2024 Nov29	2024 Dec13	Marshall Is	V7	V73WE	OC-029	40-10m	C S 8	OQRS	RJ57pd	7153	WNW	TDDX
2024 Dec08	2024 Dec18	Br Virgin Is	VP2V	VP2VMM	NA-023	10m	C S D	LoTW KU9C	FK78tr	1579	SSE	TDDX
2024 Nov27	2024 Dec11	Andaman & Nicob.	VU	VU4A	AS-001	80-10m	S 8	Club Log OQRS	NK68jl	8308	NNE	OH3LCH
2024 Nov19	2024 Dec02	Vietnam	XV	XV9X	AS-128	160-6m	C S 8	See web	OK10xf	8961	N	DXW.Net

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 ARES A nets	5 **No HCARC Meeting Scheduled**	6	7
8	9	10	11 ARES B nets	12 10 meter band activity test 7pm	13	14
15	16	17	18 ARES Meeting	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Merry Christmas	26 Happy Hanukkah	27	28
29	30	31				
					Updated on	**11/27/2024**

QSO Parties

The US state QSO parties are on their winter vacation, and will resume in February.

Thank You All

Many thanks to:

Doug Poray KC2TZC, Larry Puccio K2QDY, Bob Murdock WX2NJ, Mike Larkins WA2CWX, Carl Lee W2PTZ, Bill Feidt NG3K, QRZ.com, and the ARRL.