

M A R C H 2 0 1 4

N4LNR

News & Views

P. O. Box 3276
Lenoir, NC 28645
<http://lenoir-arc.org>



*Serving Amateur
Radio in Caldwell
County*

Save the Date!

Next LARC Meeting

March 13, 2014

Thursday, 7:00 PM

Gamewell Fire Dept
2806 Morganton Blvd SW
Lenoir

LARC Weekly Net

Thursdays 9:00 PM

146.625 MHz Minus PL 94.3
Alt 147.330 MHz Plus PL 141.3

CARES Net

Sundays 9:00 PM

147.330 MHz Plus PL 141.3

Catawba Valley Hamfest

April 19, 2014

Morganton Fairgrounds

LARC Previews New Website

A prototype website was previewed to the Club at the February meeting by Phil KG4BCC, Tanner KK4SZI and Michelle KD4YTU after they agreed to review the current Club website and other radio club websites and make recommendations for that will encourage greater visibility and use of the website by public and private users. Suggestions were made to the prototype website, including a common theme emphasized the Blue Ridge area, an events calendar, digital and radio resources. Members are asked to access the prototype website at N4LNR.com and send comments to Tanner at tannergreer@bellsouth.net or Phil at philcrump@gmail.com.



President's Message

2014 is starting with lots of activity and good stuff within the LARC. Each meeting seems to present an atmosphere of excitement and progress. There is a quote that goes "Attitudes are contagious, is yours worth catching?" Well there are a lot of good, positive, active attitudes within LARC and it really is contagious! For example, our most recent meeting included a presentation of the new website. The website tag-teams with our awesome newsletter to present our club not just in a professional manner, but they reveal the talent and activity each of our members possess and contribute.

I have the privilege of a title for a season, but the real heart of the LARC is found within those members who each bring talent and "attitude" to the table. I can see the drive of motivation in members as they exercise their skills to push forward the goal of progress within amateur radio - and it is contagious! After the meeting was done and we were walking out, one of the members briefly told me about a technology I wasn't aware of (you'll hear more about it in future meetings/articles). I was like a trout caught on the hook listening to this new (well, to me it is new) technology topic. As soon as I got home I did some "goggling" and ordered some equipment and I'm anxious for it to arrive.

Excitement! What happened to that feeling of anticipation of getting that first radio and turning it on to make that first QSO? That excitement is what we need to cultivate and keep active both individually, as well as in mass within LARC and I've been seeing more of that excitement in the last few months. Of course, it's not realistic to expect anyone to maintain a "top-of-the-mountain" attitude 24/7/365, but in general, the heartbeat of any club is based on the pulse of each member. Check your pulse.... feel anything? If not, you need to hang around someone who is riding that wave of excitement and I'll guarantee it will infect you.

If it's been a while since you attended a club meeting or event/activity, perhaps this is a good time to "drop by" for a visit or pick just one activity to participate in to "knock the dust" off your skills and equipment. Planned activities include ARES training and upcoming practice sessions; community event support; ham fests; technology demonstrations; and maybe even some time just to get together to eat. Now is a great time to rekindle that excitement and "glow" by becoming radio-active. I look forward to seeing you soon. 73 KF4FLY

Renew your LARC membership for 2014
Pay your dues in person to the Treasurer or by mail
at the LARC address shown on Page 1

Full Member \$15/year Family Member \$25/year
Associate Member \$10/year Family Associate \$15/year
Life 10 times/year

From The Last Meeting...

Attendees. Ted KF4FLY, Tom KA4HKK, Irv W4IWK, Phil KG4BCC, James N4NIN, Tanner KK4SZI, Michelle KD4YTU, Ro K4HRM, Will WB4Y, and Mark N4YWW

Callsign Trustee. James N4NIN was elected to serve as the Trustee.

Club Trailer. Good progress is being made. Two coats of primer were done on Jan 11 workday and a Feb 22 workday was set to do two coats of finish paint. Members were encouraged to come out on the workday even if they did not plan to work.

Donations. Club received a 5500 watt generator donation and 4 power strips from Blue Ridge Electric.

Club Equipment Inventory. Club continues to develop an inventory list of all Club equipment. If you have any Club equipment in your possession, please make a list and get the list to Ted KF4FLY <Ted.Manuel@alexlee.com> or Irv W4IWK

<kanode@mindspring.com> at or before the next meeting. You don't have to return the equipment, just provide a list so we know what we have and its location. If you know of any inactive members with equipment, please forward this request to them.

Repeater Upgrade/Professional tower climber. James N4NIN to check external controller board for possible problem. Phil KG4BCC and James N4NIN will run some diagnostics on the repeater on the Feb 22 workday. Phil KG4BCC will talk to possible tower climber and suggested alternative source for coax and connectors. Phil KG4BCC to bring a 2-Meter repeater antenna to next meeting for discussion.

Website. Phil KG4BCC and Tanner KK4SZI presented a proposed revised Club website for member consideration. Feedback was requested, access the website at N4LNR.com.

Constitution/Bylaws Committee. The proposed amendments to resolve the conflict between the Constitution and Bylaws were approved.

ICS 200 Class. Irv W4IWK and Ro K4HRM attended the ICS 200 Class offered by Caldwell County CERT on Jan 23.

ARRL Centennial Yearlong QSO. Phil KG4BCC, Tom KA4HKK and Tanner KK4SZI reported making a number of contacts thus far during the Centennial QSO Party.

Public Service. Ted KF4FLY contacted the Blue Ridge Horseman's Association but has not heard back on dates and planning. Mark N4YWW reported that the Bridge-to-Bridge event might get new life with a different sponsor. Will continue to monitor. Tom KA4HKK reviewed several events he identified thru ExploreCaldwell and agreed to make contact to see if LARC can have a booth or provide radio support. Discussed adding local events to website calendar.

Catawba Valley Hamfest. Agreed to provide door prize of an ARRL membership and to raffle a Baofeng radio for the event on April 19 at the Morganton Fairgrounds. Agreed for Tanner KK4SZI to purchase radio. Members to work the LARC table are needed.

Training. Discussed classes offered by CERT and FCW. Information will be sent to email list and included in Newsletter and on Website.

Program. No program was presented since Tom KA4HKK conducted the quarterly meeting of Caldwell ARES. Reviewed the Western Branch meeting goals, the development of the CARES emergency action plan, and AUXCOM.

Getting Started With PSK31

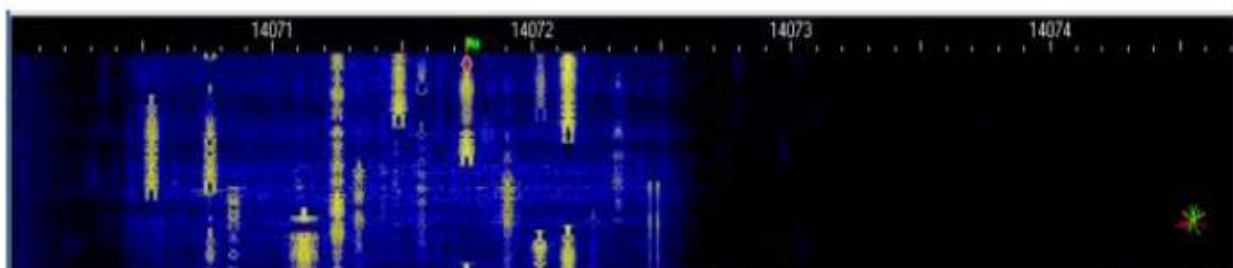
Guest Article by Stan Zawrotny K4SBZ

Why PSK31? PSK31 is popular for many reasons. It has a narrow bandwidth of only 31.25 hertz compared with 2,500 to 3,000 for phone, so it can punch through where often even CW cannot. That makes it great for working DX. I have worked all states and all continents using that mode. Most people operate with fewer than 25 watts and elaborate antennas are not required. Because it is keyboard-based and makes considerable use of macros, it is a great mode for people with physical disabilities, especially speech or hearing. You can carry on a complete QSO using macros or you can sit and carry on a lengthy rag chew directly from the keyboard.

What Do I Need? Operating PSK31 is not expensive. All you need is your standard transceiver, antenna, PC, a soundcard interface and some software. Out of that, the only thing that might cost you some additional money is the soundcard interface. I am assuming that you have the transceiver, PC and antenna. The software can be free.

The soundcard interface interfaces between your computer's soundcard and your transceiver to convert the information you type on your computer to generate an audio Upper Sideband SSB signal at the proper frequency and modulated the correct way for PSK31.

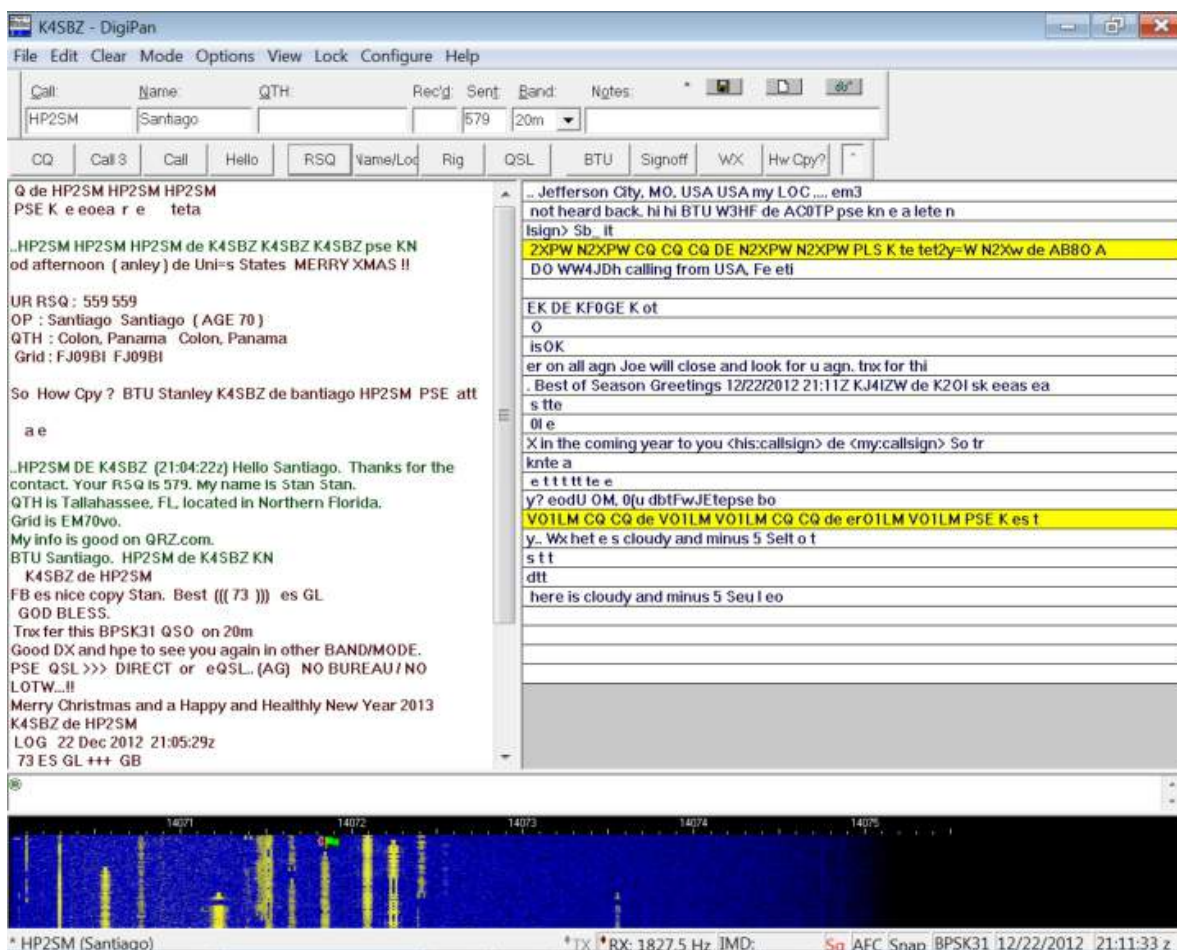
The most common ones are the *Tigertronics Signalink USB* or the *Rigblasters* from *West Mountain Radio*. The *Signalink USB* is only \$109.95 and is the most popular, so you can get started in PSK31 for a little over a 100 bucks! There is even a *SCI-6 PC Sound Card Interface Kit* available for \$24.95, but I haven't read any reviews of it. The *BuxCom Rascal* is also available for about \$49 and has been around for a while. Check eHam.net for reviews.



The soundcard interface is connected between your PC and your transceiver. The exact connections depend on which one you use. For example, the Signalink USB connects to the PC's microphone and earphone jacks and a USB port and to the transceiver. The one thing you should be aware of about the Signalink USB is that you must order the cables for the specific brand of transceiver that you own. The Rigblasters are not brand specific, but are more expensive.

The Software. There are many software packages available for PSK31 and most of them can be downloaded free. The original and still most popular is *Digipan* (www.digipan.net). Others include *fldigi*, *WinPSK*, *MixW*, *MultiPSK* and *HDR/DM 590*. Googling PSK31 will find more information on the subject than I could possibly cover here.

Using Digipan, you set your transceiver to a fixed frequency (e.g. 14.070 MHz) and all active stations show up as vertical bars on the "waterfall." They are also simultaneously decoded and the text of each station is continuously shown on a separate multichannel display. CQ calls can be instantly highlighted in color, and color alerts for any other two strings of text (e.g., your call sign or name) is also available. Clicking on the text (or one of the vertical bars) of a station calling CQ automatically tunes your transceiver to that frequency without you moving your dial. Clicking on the station's callsign places the callsign in your macro enabling you to answer that call. Most other software has similar functionality, although not all have the multichannel display that is so convenient for seeing what is going on around the entire band. Most of them have simple logging capabilities and even rig control.



Get Started Now! Pull out your credit card. Order *Signalink USB*. While you are waiting, download *Digipan* and set up your macros. Read the instructions and learn how you can set up to listen to PSK31 and learn a little more about it. There are some books in the ARRL and CQ Magazine bookstores on digital communications that will provide additional information about PSK31 and the other modes. In a week you will be working DX and rag chewing with the rest of us. Once you are hooked on PSK31, you can move on to JT65 and the other exciting HF digital modes. Their software is also free. *They are fun. They are contagious!*

Stan Zawrotny K4SBZ received his license first in 1958, and after lapses caused by military and work; he re-upped in 2007, passing the Technician, General and Extra in one sitting. He operates on all bands SSB and digital and enjoys rag chew, DX and contests. He is active with public relations, emergency communications and is an ARRL VE.



NC Gets New ARRL Section Manager

Karl Bowman, W4CHX, of Raleigh, is the new ARRL North Carolina Section Manager, effective on February 20. Outgoing SM Bill Morine, N2COP, of Wilmington, decided not to run for another term after serving since 2010. Although his term did not end until April 1, Morine asked to step down early, due to business and personal commitments, and let Bowman step in. Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager Dave Patton, NN1N, reviewed Morine's recommendation and consulted with Roanoke Division Director Dennis Bodson, W4PWF, before making the appointment official.

FEMA Adds Disaster Reporter Feature to App

FEMA has added a feature to their disaster app whereby citizens can send photos of disaster scenes to FEMA from their smartphone. After a quick vetting, the photo is geo-referenced (added as a GIS layer) to an interactive map for emergency managers. Here is the link to the story:

<http://howtomobile.apps.gov/2014/01/16/fema-app-adds-disaster-reporter-feature/>

Ham “Doctors” Search for Repeater “Flu”



LARC is embarking on a project to upgrade the Club Repeater, including replacing the coax and antenna. In the meantime, efforts continue to identify and mitigate the intermittent issues caused by the aging wiring and antenna. James N4NIN, Phil JG4BCC, and Tanner KK4SZI worked on the repeater during the Feb 15 workday. They checked the SWR with an antenna analyzer and observed that it is high -- a little over 2 on the Receive and near 3 on the Transmit. The measured wattage out of the duplexers was 28 watts. The Repeater was first put in service in xxx and the wiring and antenna are original components.

The Club is seeking a tower climber to assist in this project.





Caldwell CERT Classes

March 22, 2014, 12:30-6:00 PM

CERT Mass Food Preparing and Exercise

In the event of a serious community emergency, it may be necessary for CERT members to assist with food preparation and serving for large numbers of people. This class and exercise will prepare CERT to assist with large group food prep safely and efficiently.

Where: First United Methodist Church 309 Church Street NW, Lenoir, NC 12:30 pm Registration and Greeting

1:00 pm Food preparing for the masses (Caldwell Health Dept. Staff

3:00 pm Prepare the Food for Supper 80-100 people

4:00 pm Mass Feeding.

CERT members participating in this free class and exercise may voluntarily contribute a homemade dessert for the dinner.

To register, call or email Kenneth Teague at Caldwell County Emergency Services. Office: (828) 757-1419 Email: kteague@caldwellcountync.org

May 12, 6pm, First Aid Training, Smith Memorial Church, Lenoir

June 21, 1:00-4:00 pm, Disaster Triage, Bethel Colony, Lenoir

A good turnout for the CPR class on Feb 22. Among the 16 attending were IRV W4IWK and Ro K4HRM. Kenny Hall did a good job of instructing the class. It was interesting to learn about the changes in protocol and techniques in the past couple of years. We also learned that in a case of cardiac arrest, it is critical to have more than one person doing CPR -- 200 chest compressions in 2 minutes is tiring! Thank you, Kenneth Teague for making this class available to our community. It may save a life.



Foothills Community Workshop Classes

Fridays, March 7, 14, 21 6-8PM

Ham Radio: Technician License Prep

Summary: These sessions provide the material to take the Ham Radio entry level (Technician) license exams. Topics include Rules and Regulations; Station Setup; Basic Electronics; Operation; Radio theory; and safety.

Pre-req material: None

Instructor(s): Michelle Suddreth

Duration: 3 sessions, 2 hrs each

Saturday, March 15, 12 noon-3PM

Introduction To Electricity: Component Identification

Summary: This session includes the construction, purpose, identification, and testing of basic circuit components including: resistors, inductors, capacitors, transformers, switches, lamps/leds, batteries and connectors.

Pre-req material: Fundamental Concepts

Instructor(s): Dave Propst

Duration: 3 hrs

Saturday, March 22, 12 noon - 2PM

Ham Radio VE exams

These are the exams to obtain or upgrade an Amateur Radio (Ham) license. These are given by WCARS VEC and the cost is \$10 per attempt. All levels will be available and you do not have to have taken FCW's prep class prior to taking the exams. Study materials for all levels may be found at <http://qrz.com/hamtest/>

Foothills Community Workshop is located in the old Shuford Mills building in Granite Falls, 10 Falls Ave, Bldg. 10B, Suite 1, 828-351-4225 <http://foothillscommunityworkshop.org>.
Contact Michelle 828-754-5002 828-729-4071 michellesuddreth@bellsouth.net

Great Progress Made on LARC Mobile Command



The "hammers" finished painting the ceiling of the communications trailer and prepared the walls for carpet at the February 15 and March 1 workdays. Additional hands are always needed so come one out to help on the next workday – it's great entertainment!

We've got an app for that! ReadyNC

North Carolina now has a mobile application that will help its residents and visitors prepare daily for everything from minor traffic emergencies to severe storms. This all-in-one tool can provide the latest weather, traffic and hazard information and tells you what you need to know to be safe in all types of emergencies. The app, ReadyNC is free and can be downloaded from the App Store for iPhones and Google Play for Android devices.

Using this app does NOT replace calling 911. It is not intended to report emergencies to local officials, but it can be used to find life-saving information. Some of the features include:

- real-time traffic and weather information
- critical information on how to be safe during different hazardous events
- real-time information about opened shelters for evacuees (including addresses, capacity, directions and if the shelter is pet-friendly)
- real-time updates on flood levels of major nearby creeks and rivers
- phone numbers and links to all North Carolina power companies to report outages
- basic instructions on how to develop emergency plans and what to put in your emergency supplies kit
- real-time information on which counties have issued evacuation orders
- contact numbers and links to websites for those who need help recovering from a disaster
- direct links to the ReadyNC.org and NCDPS.gov websites and social media accounts

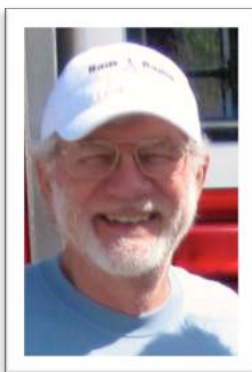
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KF4FLY



Tom Land
Vice President
KA4HKK



Irv Kanode
Secretary
W4IWK



Phil Crump
Treasurer
KG4BCC

Editor for a Final



Recently, a ham friend (Frank WQ1O) sent an email to other members of my old Florida radio club, which stated in part, "We are now learning that some of those ecosmart LED bulbs are causing RFI all over the place. Not just the 8 watt models, but several dozen different ones. I tried one of the 8 watt today...it wiped out both low band 47 MHz and 144 MHz, including our statewide emergency management VHF repeater system at 15 MHz. It wiped out my HT and mobile from over 200 feet away. This is serious stuff".

I had heard similar statements before but had not taken them seriously since I had no need to install LED lights and lived in a remote area with no nearby homes. But having moved to Lake Hickory, I have neighbors! And worst of all, I was contemplating replacing the small interior ceiling spotlights with LEDs and installing LEDs at my boat dock. Now, with these words of warning coming from someone whose opinion I respect, it's time to rethink my interest in LEDs. Do I really need a light bulb that has a life expectance greater than my own? What is your experience? I recall Tanner KK4SZI talking at the holiday gathering about having RFI in his new radio station and am wondering if he has added those spooky little LEDs to his home. Or maybe, James N4NIN has added an LED floodlight at the repeater shack. Probably not, but we do have a new little bugger to chase around the radio shack.

**Send comments concerning the LARC NEWSLETTER
to Ro K4HRM hrmaddox@nettally.com
Suggestions and your articles are appreciated.**

Know someone who is interested in amateur radio? Invite them to come with you to the next LARC meeting. Send their email address to the Newsletter Editor so they can receive the monthly Newsletter. Membership in LARC is not a requirement to receive the Newsletter.