

March, 2021

LARC NEWS & VIEWS

N4LNR



Lenoir Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

Events

Mar. LARC Meeting

Thu. Mar. 11, 7:00 pm
Webex Online Meeting:
APRS

Next LARC Meeting

Thu. Apr. 08, 7:00 pm
Webex Online Meeting:
Moon Bounce

Greeneville TN Hamfest

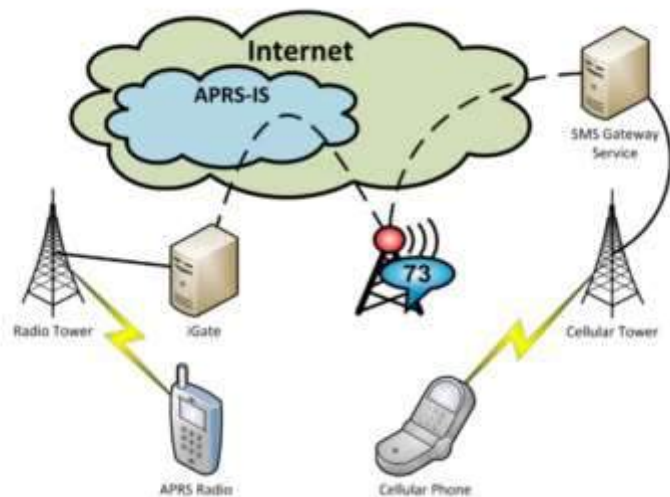
Sat. Apr. 17th, 06:00 am EST
<https://greenevillehamfest.com/>

ARRL Virginia Section Convention

Sat. Apr. 24th,
09:00 am - 02:00 pm EST
<https://viennawireless.net/wp/events/winterfest/>

What is APRS?

At the last Lenoir Amateur Radio Club meeting *Tanner Greer KK4SZI* gave a presentation on APRS. What is APRS? Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS) is a real time digital communications of information, where data packets are sent via radio frequencies. The data can include object Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates, weather station telemetry, text messages, announcements, and queries. APRS data can be displayed on a map, which can show stations, objects, tracks of moving objects, weather stations, search and rescue data, and direction finding data. APRS data is typically transmitted on a single shared frequency (depending on country - in the US it's 144.39 MHz) to be repeated locally by area relay stations called Digipeaters. APRS iGate is an application that listens on APRS packets heard by the radio, and relays them to the APRS-IS network on the internet.



A few years ago LARC members volunteered their amateur radio skills in a bike race using APRS to help track racers. So APRS is popularly deployed in bike races, marathons, or parades. But why would an Amateur Radio Operator want to use APRS on a continuous basis? Well, some Hams may refer to it as "Ham Radar", "Lojack", or "Spouse Tracker". Here are some ways a Ham can use APRS:

- If you are a severe weather spotter, your local weather office or Skywarn can receive your location and observations.
- If you've rigged up your car with a mobile radio with APRS and if your car was stolen, you might be able to track and locate your car. If it's your family member's car, your family member would have to be a Ham.
- If your family member is a Ham, you can use APRS for their safety when they travel alone. You could see if they are stuck on the road, they've slowed down for some reason, they went in a direction they normally wouldn't, or they have stopped somewhere unusual.
- If you are driving a long distance and bored, and want to talk to nearby Hams, you can find other Hams with APRS for simplex contacts while on the road. This would be good for truckers.
- If you are in an area where there are no cell signal but there are Digi repeaters, you can communicate. So if you are lost, or have a medical emergency, you could call for help, or text message for help, and APRS provides them your location.
- If you are traveling to visit family they can trace your route on the road in real time.
- If you are on a road trip RV-ing, you can track your position, set Departure and Destination as waypoints to show distances. Also track course, speed, altitude, and get info on local nets and repeaters along your route.

Hope this peaked your interest in APRS. If you want to get started there are many websites and videos on the internet about APRS. You may also talk to LARC members and other amateur radio operators who use APRS. One good thing about APRS is that the tracker receiving

the data don't have to be a Ham, nor have a radio.

Here is what an APRS Network may consists of:

RF User - Equipped with a base station transceiver and APRS Terminal Node Controller (TNC)

Portable User - Equipped with an APRS-compatible Hand-Held radio

Mobile User - Equipped with a mobile transceiver and APRS TNC

Weather Station - Connected via the Internet

Fill-In Digipeater - Provides extra coverage for a Wide Repeater

Wide Digipeater - Wide area node

IGate - Equipped with a base station transceiver, APRS TNC and Internet connection

APRS Database and Web Server - APRS Internet Service (APRS-IS)

Internet User - Mobile Device with APRS app connected to the Internet



FCC Fees



Last year, news came out that the Federal Communications Commission was proposing to charge a \$50 application fee for Amateur Radio Service. This FCC proposal was contained in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in MD Docket 20-270, which was adopted to implement portions of the “Ray Baum’s Act”. The Act requires that the FCC switch from a Congressionally-mandated fee structure to a cost-based system of assessment. The FCC proposed application fees for a broad range of services that use the FCC’s Universal Licensing System (ULS), including the Amateur Radio Service.

The FCC has agreed with ARRL and other commenters that it was “too high to account for the minimal staff involvement in these applications”. In a Report and Order released on December 29, the FCC reduced the fee to \$35 for a new license application, a special temporary authority (STA) request, a rule waiver request, a license renewal application, and a vanity call sign application. All fees are per application. But there will be no fee for administrative updates, such as a change of mailing or email address.

Here’s what ARRL Roanoke Division Director *George W Hippisley W2RU* have to say:

Contrary to what you may have heard or read, the collection of application fees for the amateur radio service and certain other services will NOT begin on April 19, 2021.

Although April 19, 2021 is the date the rules in the FCC Report and Order adopted last December generally take effect – i.e., one month after the R&O was published in the March 19, 2021 Federal Register – certain parts of those rules, including collection of the application fees for the amateur radio service, will NOT begin on that date.

The effective date for new amateur radio fees has not yet been established. The FCC explicitly states in the published Notice that the fees will not take effect until:

- *The requisite notice has been provided to Congress*
- *The FCC’s information technology systems and internal procedures have been updated*

- *The Commission publishes [FUTURE] notice(s) in the Federal Register announcing the effective date of such rules*

The League’s counsel for FCC matters estimates that the effective start date for collecting the fees will be sometime this summer, but regardless of the exact timing we will have advance notice.

Bud Hippisley, W2RU

For more information go to:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-not-yet-collecting-35-application-fee>

NCVEC QPC Wants Your Input

Have you ever encounter an Amateur Radio licensing exam question that you thought wasn’t quite right? Have you ever wish you could write the exam questions? Now it’s your chance to help out the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) Question Pool Committee (QPC). The QPC is requesting input from the amateur radio community on new or modified questions for the 2022 – 2026 FCC Element 2 Technician Pool, effective on July 1, 2022.

Your suggestions may include: new questions, changes to current topic areas, or changes to existing questions. The QPC wants questions to focus on enhancing public interest and understanding, use of amateur radio, STEM hands-on education, new technology, digital modes, station setup and operation, antennas, and emergency operation as well as non-emergency operation.

The committee asks that questions have no more than two 70-character lines, including spaces. Distractors (answer choices) should be no more than 70-character lines. Each multiple-choice question must be accompanied by four possible distractors and only one is the correct answer. The choices may be in any order, but the correct answer must be indicated by the letters A, B, C, or D at the beginning of the question. Those submitting suggestions should provide the resource information that supports the correct answer or the FCC Part 97 rule. Submissions are accepted by email to: QPCinput@ncvec.org

Greeneville TN Hamfest

If you long to attend a Hamfest in person after months of staying home due to Covid-19 restrictions and Hamfest cancellations, you'll be glad to go to the Greeneville Hamfest. The event will be outdoors on Saturday, April 17th, 2021 at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Greeneville, TN. Covid-19 social distancing rules still applies. Admission is \$5 per person and Children under 12 are admitted free.

Here is your chance to take your Amateur Radio license exam in person. WCARS VEC will be giving exams at 10 am. Announcements will be made where the exam will be given on the fairgrounds. Please register online with the FCC for an FRN and bring it if you are testing for the first time or do not have one. Cost for an exam is \$10 and you need to bring ID, a copy of your license if licensed, and any certificates for previous exams if you have upgraded and it is not updated in the FCC database. The \$35 FCC fee is not in affect at this time.

For more information go to:

<https://greenevillehamfest.com/>

ARRL Virginia Section Convention

If you enjoy virtual Ham events in the comfort of home, avoiding crowds, and free of charge, then the ARRL Virginia Section Convention 2021 is for you. It will be online Saturday, April 24th, 9am - 2pm EST. This virtual event will be via Zoom meeting sponsor by the Vienna Wireless Society.

Go to this website <http://bit.ly/VaSecConvSchedule> where you'll see the 3 track program and the Zoom Access ID To Be Announced when it's time. There's a track for Beginners, a track of Hot Topics, and a track for ARES and AUXCOMM .

For more information go to:

<https://viennawireless.net/wp/events/winterfest/>

<http://www.arrl.org/hamfests/online-arrl-virginia-section-convention-2021>

Sevier County Hamfest

LARC member *Rick WK4R* attended the Sevier County Hamfest 2021. If you are a new Ham and/or if you have not been to a Hamfest, this is what it's like to go to one. Here is a link to a YouTube video made by the Clay County Radio Club– a walk through of the event.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BpZt75v1wc&ab_channel=ClayCountyRadioClub

It was like an indoor and outdoor "Tailgating Party/ Flea Market/ Fair" environment, and the biggest Hamfest in East Tennessee.



A Ham's Story

Clickity-Clack Clubs

By: Dwayne Kincaid WD8OYG

One of the hardest things for a new ham to do when getting their license is making new Ham friends. This is particularly more true today as it's very difficult to meet in person. Back in the day, you could check the local county library and there was a very good chance there was a Ham radio club on the schedule to use the media room. All you had to do was show up at the designated time, talk to a few folks in person, get to know them a little better, and could easily find a place to fit in.



Sometimes it doesn't work out. You have to watch out for the clubs that not really clubs, but are actually "cliques". My first radio club meeting was in the mid-70's. I went to one at my local library back home and it left me really confused. They spent the whole time talking about a thing called a repeater. It seems the club had saved up some money and wanted to make and install one. It also seems there were people that were viciously against this repeater building thing.



You have to remember, I was just 14 years old and my mom had dropped me off in the library parking lot. Being the shy, electronics geek, I snuck in the meeting room trying not to draw any attention, and mostly stayed near the cookie table. The "adults" went through the minutes and argued over these important things which I knew probably came down to money.



Being from rural West Virginia, I have heard my fair share of family arguments over money, particularly the repetitive words and phrases used. Everyone is jockeying for positions of self-importance while looking for leverage to use against anyone in sight. It ain't purdy. Needless to say, it was not an atmosphere I would have fit in with, so I never asked my mom to take me to the library on radio club meeting nights again.

Forward 10 years to my second radio club meeting ever. You would think that the odds of another radio club, in another town, at another library, arguing about the repeater would be small. This time, it was about something called a phone patch. Funny thing is, the words and phrases didn't change. It was still the same political ladder climbing and leveraging. I didn't go back to that club either.

Surely to the heavens above, my third club five years later would be better, right? No... and don't call me Shirley. There has to be humor brought into this as no one would believe a word if it was told in a serious voice. So...I kid you not, there was a coup. Some of the key officers were out of town, and they were kicking repeater committee members out, and putting their own representatives in place. I sat in amazement through my introduction to radio club repeater politics. They all high fived and were still talking in the library parking lot about their achievements when I left.



At this point, I was so intrigued at the coup attempt, I “had” to check it out for a second meeting to find out what was going to happen. I was not disappointed when the adults came back from out of town and kicked out the



coup members, then passed new rules so a coup could not be accomplished so easily. It was a master class on the Parliamentary procedure. There may have even been “interns” running documents back and forth to the twenty-five cent copier at the other end of the library.

For those of you within range of the LARC News and Views, we are fortunate that the Lenoir Amateur Radio Club doesn't have these special interest cliques driving the direction of the club. LARC is structured so that everyone can be included in something and politics is kept to a minimum. This is by far, the most enjoyable and engaging organization I have ever been associated with.

Some may say “Well, that's just great!” and it is. Others may ask “Why?” and that is a fantastic question. Klick-Klubs are almost always just a naming mistake. It was a bunch of guys that wanted to do something technical, so the leadership was made up of techno-weenies that had no interpersonal working skills.



They called it a club by default, but they really only wanted like-minded techno-weenies. To keep from looking like buttheads, they let everyone in, but didn't have the skills to handle it and never asked for help. The result is a mess with total miscommunications and an inverted command structure where the worst leaders are at the top. It's the exact opposite of the CCC leadership theory: its Command, Control, and Communicate to complete the mission.

So how do you know if you are at a real club, or a just a clique group? Obviously, if your first introduction to their “club” is anything like my first three experiences, run the other way as fast as possible.



There are certainly positive things to look for. Make sure your organization loves many aspects of the hobby and they are willing to share that information. Note there are plenty of good DX and Repeater clubs that will share information for their particular interest. The clique groups usually won't share their info in fear there are members that can do a better job and make them less-important. Engagement and encouragement are the number one items newbies are looking for. If you show up at the meeting and there is a part-time Walmart greeter-type person at the door, you know these people are conscientious about how you interact with the group.

When checking out a new club, take a look around the meeting and see if people are generally happy. Nothing throws cold water on a party more than two old grumpy guys taking pots shots at every topic on the agenda just because they can. LARC does a great job with an argument-free agenda that is moves the business side of the meeting out of the way as fast as possible.

If there has to be politics, and sometimes it's unavoidable, be sure it's always handled at the sub-committee level. It's hard to have more of a turn off than seeing in front of you, grown people arguing over things that you have no interest in.

That's really it. The “Engage and Encourage” mentality will take a real club a long way in making sure they don't become a Clickity Clack Club on a one way track to disaster.

Frequencies

146.625- 94.8

Club Repeater (N4LNR)

147.330+ 141.3

Hibriten Mountain Repeater
(KG4BCC)

145.535

Simplex

29.6

Simplex FM

28.374

Simplex USB

Nets

LARC Weekly Net

Tuesday, 7:00 PM
146.625 Minus PL 94.8
Alt. 147.330 Plus PL 141.3

Caldwell ARES Net

Sunday, 9:00 PM
147.330 Plus PL 141.3

DMR Digital Net

Tuesday, 8:00 PM
Lenoir Local DMR

Lenoir Amateur Radio Club, Inc

P O Box 3276

Lenoir, NC 28645

N4LNR.org

Serving Amateur Radio In Caldwell County Since 1986

Become a member or renew your membership

Pay your dues in person to the Treasurer or by mail

Full Member \$15/year

Family Member \$25/year

Ask about our Life Time memberships

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