

**ESARC Minutes –May 15, 2014 Meeting, held at the Sage Restaurant, Only**

9 licensed members came, who together brought an additional 4 guests (separate list of attendees available). A quorum was, thereby, established.

We welcomed new member Dave Grebe (WA4LM) of Harborton who enjoys both HF and VHF/UHF. He's particularly interested in 2m sideband, both DX and QRP. We also welcomed back Matt Ertle (KB3TIP) and Wayne Tindle (KB3RJS), who we haven't seen/heard in a while, and both of whom expressed intentions to be more active going forward!

Meeting was called to order at 19:00 EDT. Minutes of previous meeting were accepted as written and previously mailed out to the membership

**TREASURER & MEMBERSHIP REPORT (Eric Dodge):**

	<u>March 10 2014</u>		<u>May 14,2014</u>
Bank balance	4,024.66		3,821.13
Cash	145.35		50.35
Accts receivable	<u>15.00</u>		<u>72.24</u>
Total	<b>4,185.01</b>	(241.29)	<b>3,943.72</b>
<b><u>TRANSACTIONS</u></b>			
Interest		1.05	
Dues		105.00	
Trailer		(223.32)	logo
Clothes purchase		66.24	
Events-		(190.26)	Banquet Net
Club maintenance		<u>-</u>	
NET CHANGE		(241.29)	

**MEMBERSHIP**

<b>49</b>	<b>Total Roster, including members in 2010-2012</b>
<b>34</b>	<b>total in good-standing (2014 dues paid)</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>non paid in roster, but we're still considering active</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>considered inactive</b>

*(During the meeting, dues were collected from 2 more members, so 36 are so far paid up for 2014)*

**TRUSTEE'S REPORT:** (Eric Dodge for Al Dunahoo)

## **License Exams Session**

A test session was held the 10<sup>th</sup> of May at 9 am in room A47 at the Eastern Shore Community College. According to Ken Sterling, on Monday's net, several candidates showed, including 5 from Tangier Island. A couple passed their tests, although no one from Tangier, so our VE's spent some time reviewing some of the material and giving them a sense of what more they should be studying for next time.

## **Repeaters**

The repeaters seem to be working great, and there have been no problems of which I am aware. John Floyd (KN4GE) was able to get one of the three VHF repeaters the club got from the county, up and running. We plan to use that system as a model for the putting together the other 2 systems. When completed, we'll install one of the 100 watt repeaters in Eastville, and hopefully it won't be subject to the same interference the current repeater has suffered from.

The current Accomack VHF-FM voice repeater system covers virtually all of Accomack County, while the VHF-FM voice repeater system at Eastville covers most of Northampton County. It has been a major goal of the ESARC to link the 2 repeater systems together, thus providing reliable amateur radio coverage along Route 13, between the Bay Bridge Tunnel to well north of the Maryland/Virginia state line. Originally, to meet this goal, the ESARC planned to connect the Accomack and Eastville repeaters via a UHF radio link. Because of the distance between the 2 sites, multiple UHF hops would be required thus negatively impacting the system reliability.

But now we have a better solution: Jeff Flournoy, Director, Eastern Shore of Virginia 911 Center, has been overseeing an upgrade that includes connection of various communications sites throughout Accomack and Northampton Counties via the fiber optics data system installed and managed by the Eastern Shore of VA Broadband Authority. Jeff's a ham, by the way (KG4PEX), and supports our activities, and has found and offered to us a spare channel for the purpose of linking our two repeater sites through a combination of fiber optics and landline cable pairs. Concurrently, the ESARC is building 2 interface boxes that will connect the 2 VHF-FM voice repeater systems together via the termination points at each tower. When completed and installed, these interface units will be a full time amateur radio connection between Accomack and Northampton Counties, providing a backup communications system during emergencies. The one caveat is that we will have "secondary priority" for this connection, but it would only be extraordinary circumstance that would pre-empt our use.

This is an excellent example of local government and amateur radio working together to support the citizens in Accomack and Northampton Counties, with an emergency backup communications system. Once we get the new repeater installed and operating properly, we'll focus on our plans to link the Accomack and Eastville sites. If anyone is interested in helping with setting up the Eastville repeater and links, let me or John know. We can use all the help we can get. Stay tuned, literally!

## **Mobile vhf and uhf radios still available**

While we have re-programmed and given away about half of the 150 Motorola GM300's given to the Club by Accomack County last year because they went to narrow-band, we still have >70 more. Most of these radios are 16 channel, 45 watt, VHF units and are good utility mobile radios. We also have a few UHF ones. Please let me know if you'd like one or a couple of these radios and John Floyd or I will gladly program them for you.

## **Emergency Preparation**

Last Shelter Testing (March 12, 2014) was super and all sites were successfully tested. The next quarterly test session is scheduled for mid to end of July, and we'll try to get the Virginia EOC in Richmond to participate. Please try to attend if you can. We always need as many trained volunteers as we can get when activated by the County.

Also, the county supported a Skywarn class at 6pm the 24 of April at the Fire Training Center in Melfa, VA. The 2 hour session was free and taught by a meteorologist of the National Weather Service from Wakefield, VA. Five of the 25 students were hams from the Eastern Shore Amateur Radio Club. The bulk of the class focused on identifying different types of storms and how to report the observations to the National Weather Service. Subject such as "shelf winds", "straight line winds", "shear winds", "hail size", and "how to determine if you're observing a tornado" only scratched the surface of the knowledge a Skywarn spotter needs to know. The National Weather Service plans to teach an advanced spotter class in the fall of 2014. Accomack Dept. of Public Safety will let us all know when and where this advance class will be available.

## **Public Service and Emergency Communications Trailer**

We continue to make progress on the ESARC public service and amateur radio information trailer. We've installed 2 antennas in the 2 mounts on the tongue of the trailer, 2 power supplies, coax, 2 pushup masts, and 2 desktop computers donated by the Eastern Shore Community College. We'll eventually get software loaded for operating the HF radios, the HF and VHF TNCs, and Field Day logging. We still need a couple of 12 VDC switching power supplies, VHF & UHF radios, HF antennas, and carpeting in the trailer. With Eric's help, we pulled together a couple of decals and a plan for placing the decals on 2 sides of the trailer. For the decals, computer work, and the Club installing the 2 decals, we were able to get the cost down to \$235. Ken (N4TIK), Doug (K4LSK), Eric (WA2AIC). Anna (N4AS), we were able to successfully install the decals on the right and left sides of the trailer. If you were at the yearly banquet you saw the decals, and if you helped with the Seafood Festival or March of Dimes, you saw the decals on the sides of the trailer. They really look great and will tell people throughout the Shore who we are.

It's been a fun Club project. Thanks again to all who have donated time and \$ to the effort, including Fran Kubrick, Franklin Young, Jim Davis, Ken and Anna Sterling, Doug Buckley, Matt Ertle, Evan Catlin, John Floyd and Eric Dodge; and not to forget Accomack County for the trailer itself, generators, cables and a power supply. There's still work to do, so let Al know if you want to participate.

*(see Past Events and Field Day discussions for additional considerations about the trailer project)*

## **PAST EVENTS**

### **Chincoteague Seafoodfest, May 3, (Chesser)-**

6 members volunteered for this event, and Accomack County delivered the trailer for our use and "first-testing." We frankly weren't given much to do, and Herman suspects we may not be invited next year since with cell phones and the like, things seem to work fine without our help, and yet we are given free tickets to attend.

But, during the day, several of our participants worked with the trailer, testing this and that. There are some lessons learned that will be passed on to the Field Day participants (*see that discussion further below*)

### **March of Dimes 5km Walkathon, May 4 ( Dodge)**

3 members volunteered for this event (Jim Davis, Ken Justis, and Eric Dodge). Sharon Turner and the local police were very appreciative. By having our radios on, we were able to liaise with Sharon at the school, while traversing the course and checking in with their various volunteers at the three water stations, and the two potentially dangerous stop-street intersections. As we've done in the past, we followed the last walkers to the finish line.

Since the trailer was delivered late in the "race," we didn't set it up for use. But it was prominently displayed near the finish line. (*More transport lessons learned covered below*). Accomack County apologized for being late, having been pre-empted by several EMT calls earlier in the day.

### **Other BUSINESS, OLD AND NEW**

**Club Website** – *K4BW.org* (Steve Simpson et al)

No report this month

### **ARRL Field Day (June 28-29) – (Dempsey Bruton)**

Last meeting we re-introduced the idea of relocating Field Day to other than Parksley, (1) for variety sake, and (2) to be exposed/available to a greater audience, ie – at a potentially "busier" location for more public participation, one of the goals of Field Day. Based upon some members' research prior to this meeting, and discussions held at the meeting, it was decided to try the 4 Corners Plaza as the site for this year's event. We have tacit approval from the owner to use the site, which requires a confirmation letter with some details on our proposed operation. Ken Sterling and Eric Dodge will follow-up in that regard after doing a little more research on just where to locate, grounding and antenna options, etc. Preliminary thinking would have us near the Royal Farms facility, since they are open 24 hours a day – so presumably we will have access to both food and toilets. We will obviously need to coordinate with them also.

Dempsey then walked the assembled through our checklist. Many of the checklist items are now provided for ("automatically") once the trailer is included, since much of our Field Day equipment is now part and parcel with the trailer. But for all the other items, Dempsey was able to assign a person to each line item, and will call certain proposed assignees not present.

However, relative to the trailer, a new checklist emerges that includes the following, partly based the experiences at Chicoteague and March of Dimes events:

- ✓ Secure the monitors better for transport. One of them broke loose from the plastic connection to its stand. Consider buying monitor wall mounts, available rather inexpensively from WalMart.
- ✓ Obtain a second computer before Field Day. One of the two computers is apparently "dead" or in a coma after experiencing a brown-out from the generators.

- ✓ Re-route computer connections so as not to have to exit the cabinet door. Ken S has apparently indicated to Evan that he will do this.
- ✓ Obtain a UPS for the computers to preclude brown out issues. (We are not counting on shore power at 4 Corners, at least not as-yet) (Matt Ertle has indicated he may have an extra, small capacity one he can donate, to be confirmed).
- ✓ Consider options for operating from the trailer during hot summer days. Fans, swamp cooler, moving outside under the ten, etc. Details to work out. Evan will research cost and feasibility of the swamp-cooler option. (power needs, water need – acquisition or disposal?)

Matt also has one more 12v supply he can donate, and will email us accordingly. Finally, Matt and Evan would like to set up one of the Icom 710's to handle digital communications; they will investigate feasibility of doing so by Field Day.

One of the lessons learned so far has been to remember to open the air valves on the gas tanks of the generators before running! There are probably other orientation items that should be catalogued for the new user. With all this in mind, it was felt imperative that we hold a dry run, or at least a pre Field Day test session of the trailer, at some location. The group wasn't sure, but we think the trailer is back at the Fire Training Center. Hopefully when Al returns, we can pull all interested parties together for such a test session.

### **Upcoming Events**

Shelter Test - 911 Center – July TBD

Next Club Meeting- Wednesday, Jul 9, 2014; Sage restaurant, Onley: dinner at 6pm, meeting at 7:00 pm.

Ham Licensing – Next license test session is TBD. Please send John Floyd ([jfloyd@es.vccs.edu](mailto:jfloyd@es.vccs.edu)), Ken or Anna Sterling ([annasterling@verizon.net](mailto:annasterling@verizon.net)), or Al Dunahoo ([w0add@verizon.net](mailto:w0add@verizon.net)) a note letting them know what test level you'd like to take.

ARRL Field Day – June 28-29.

Tall Ships, Cape Charles – unknown if we will be needed

Breakfasts – (third Saturday of the month, 8am, Sage restaurant in Onley.) – May 17 next

Club Net, every Monday evening @ 8:30 EST. 147.255/147.855 MHz, PL 156.7(Accomack), 162.2 (Mappsville), 151.4 (Craddockville); and 444.300/449.300 MHz PL 156.7 (Accomack).

### **Meeting adjourned at 20:30**

Respectfully submitted, and 73, Eric Dodge, WA2AIC