

The OVH ARC Newsletter
"OLE VIRGINIA HAMS" AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.
Post Office Box 1255, Manassas, Va. 20108
FM Repeaters - W4OVH - 146.970- & 224.660- & 442.200+
D-STAR Repeater - W4OVH - Coming by September 2009: 442.5125+
OVH Packet - Port 1: 145.730 Mhz, Port 3: 223.540 MHz - Sysop: Bill/N4SV
<http://www.w4ovh.net>

OLE VIRGINIA TIMES

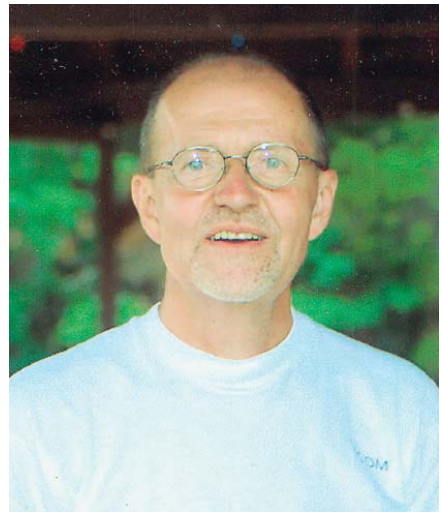
August 2009

Next Meeting: August 17, 2009

PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

Greetings, with an unusually cooler July behind us, I hope everyone is keeping cool with the August heat in full force - two days ago the peak daytime temperature got up to 99° F.

Later this month, on August 29th, I hope everyone (or at least many of you) will come out to participate in the OVH Special Event Station commemorating the Second Battle of Manassas at Signal Hill Park in Manassas Park. Al / KB4BHB and John / KG4NXT have done an excellent job coordinating the event, and Elizabeth / KG4NXV and Theresa / KG4TVM have prepared a beautiful QSL card and certificate for this event. We hope we can count on you for setup, operations, contacts, and tear down. Mark your calendars now: Saturday morning, August 29th – setup at 7:00 a.m., start of operations at 8:00 a.m. The location is a high visibility area and provides an excellent opportunity for OVH members to introduce ham radio to the public at the Signal Hill Park. Operations will be interesting too as the schedule for this Special Event Station is listed in QST as well as on the ARRL web site. This mean that the special event station hunters / QSL collectors will be on the HF bands looking for us!



The ongoing OVH D-Star repeater has been time consuming, but the repeater is on schedule to become live next month. Most recently, we have placed the new antenna on the Mt. Pone water tower, completed the in-building AC wiring, and placed the new rack into the small equipment building. Some pictures of this work appear later in this Newsletter. The cooling system (fans) installed have been keeping the equipment building cool. We placed liquid crystal thermal recorders in strategic areas to record max temperatures in order to measure the effectiveness of our cooling system. The recording starts at 105 degrees F, so far they have not tripped, this indicates the temperatures have kept below the trip-point. We met with Verizon and located the termination point for the DSL line into the equipment building. Hopefully Verizon will complete its part of the hook-up later this week. Keith / KM4AA has been diligently working on setting up the software and configuring the

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Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Post Office Box 1255
Manassas, Virginia 20108

OFFICERS

President: George Tarnovsky	K4GVT	791-5956
Vice Pres: Wayne Kline	AG4ZZ	791-2100
Secretary: Wayne Phillips	N7QLK	393-8447
Treasurer: Joe Dobes	KI4OHR	369-2639

DIRECTORS

Don (Butch) Blasdell	W4HJL	369-2877
Art Whittum	W1CRO	791-4330
Charlie Dale	WA4YGI	361-3091

WEEKLY NETS

Thursdays - 8:00 PM	JOHN H	257-3566
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HAMFEST 2008

Chris	KI4POT	361-3257
Bruce	AB8CI	361-8873

FIELD DAY 2008

Joe	KI4OHR	369-2639
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877

CLUB ROSTER

Blaine	KB4RKL	369-2877
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EDUCATION

Mark	WA4KFZ	818-8033
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CLUB EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Meola	KI4AZX	393-6681
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ARES AREA EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Lane	KG4GIY	361-3042
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F.A.R. REPS.

Ruth	KU4WH	331-1234
Mary Lu	KB4EFP	369-2877

FINANCE

Mary Lu	KB4EFP	369-2877
Joe	KI4OHR	369-2639
Ruth	KU4WH	331-1234

GENERATORS

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
Al	KB4BHB	368-4794

HISTORIAN

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3566
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WEBMASTER — W4OVH.NET

Bill	N4SV	590-9562
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EMAIL REFLECTOR — w4ovh@googlegroups.com

David Lane	KG4GIY	361-3042
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JOTA

John H.	KG4NXT	257-3566
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LEGAL

Pete	KB4RME	369-2436
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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Bruce	AB8CI	361-8873
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NEWSLETTER

Paul	W4ZB	754-0910
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NEWSLINE

John H.	KG4NXT	257-3566
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PACKET

Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844
Bill	N4SV	590-9562

PROGRAMS

TBA

PUBLICITY

Trisha Wells	KI4PCM	335-1096
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QUARTERMASTER

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
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REPEATER CONTROLLERS

Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
Art	W1CRO	791-4330
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
David	KG4GIY	361-3042
George	K4GVT	791-5956
Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844

W4OVH / W4PVA — TRUSTEE

Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
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SCHOLARSHIP

Jim	W4JTP	392-0150
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SUNSHINE

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3556
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TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

George	K4GVT	791-5956
Art	W1CRO	791-4330
Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844
Bill	N4SV	590-9562
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Karl	W4KRL	802-1527
David	KG4GIY	361-3042
Bob	K4HJF	335-1939

All telephone numbers listed above are for Area Code 703 unless otherwise noted.

The OVH Times newsletter is the official monthly publication of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club, Inc., a §501(c)(3) organization, dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Amateur Radio. This edition of the OVH Times is Copyright © 2008 by the Ole Virginia Hams.

The OVH ARC meets at 7:30 p.m. local time every third Monday of the month at the NOVEC Tech Center, 5399 Wellington Branch Road, Gainesville, Virginia 20155. Members, prospective members and all other interested persons are invited to attend. Local information can also always be obtained through the OVH's FM repeaters on 146.97 & 224.660 Mhz. Up to date information about OVH activities and meetings is also available on the OVH web site at <http://www.w4ovh.net>.

Articles and quotations in the OVH Times newsletter may be reprinted if credit is given to the OVH ARC and any other noted source. Proposed materials for publication including pictures, articles, letters to the editor, classified ads, notes about specific errors, complaints or the like are solicited from all readers. Forward such items to the OVH Times Newsletter Editor: PAUL@W4ZB.COM as soon as available at any time, but the cutoff deadline for the OVH Times each month (usually the second Monday of the month) may preclude publication/correction until the following month.

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repeater hardware – special thank to Keith - who again this month provides a status update later in this Newsletter. Some resources with technical information about D-Star also appear below and those will be helpful for those of us who are still trying to understand and learn about D-Star.

The DV-board parts are continuing to dribble in; I'll let everyone know once they all arrive. Shortly after that we'll begin the Digital Voice builds to provide a low cost way for D-Star voice access.

My comments in the July, 2009 Newsletter about the two young lady operators of OVH's GOTA Field Day station in June caused a brief, internal "tempest in a teapot" about whether I had publicly admitted to some FCC or other rule violation such that radio police might take notice and take some adverse action against us. Upon hearing that, I immediately checked further into the "facts," including with the individual who raised the issue. Our final conclusion almost immediately: at least one control operator was always close by observing the young ladies whom I referred to as having "taken over" the GOTA station and no rules violation occurred.

The regular OVH meeting this month will be on August 17th at 7:30 PM at the NOVEC Technical Center in Gainesville. Hope to see you at there!

73 George K4GVT

Sunshine Corner:

Birthdays this month: Dale / N4EDE, Karl / W4KRL, Anthony / KJ4FZJ, DC / WD4FOX, Jim / WD4OJY and Bob / N4SCK. Here's hoping you all have and enjoyable day and get to do a lot of celebrating!

Best wishes to all our students going back to school in the next few weeks. Here's hoping they have a great school year!

Welcome to our newest member Verne Eubanks / KØLVS voted in at our July meeting.

David / KI4AZX just chaired another MiniTri on August 9th; it was a very well run event and the last one for this summer. Thanks to David / KG4GIY and all of the OVH members that showed up this year to help out.

Don't forget the OVH Special Event Station operation to be held on Saturday, August 29th across from Signal Hill Park to commemorate the Second Battle of Manassas. Al / KB4BHB is the chairperson for this event and we have had great participation in the past; the location also provides a good opportunity for PR and public exposure for the OVH. Try to stop by! If you can't stop by and operate, at least please fire up your radio from home and make a contact with one of the stations on the air! The HF SSB frequencies to be used by this Special Event Station are listed in the notice in QST and at the ARRL's web site.

Hope everyone is having a great summer! The dog days of summer are here; it's been very hot locally for the last few days. Please send your news for next month via email to kg4tvm@hotmail.com or telephone me at 703-257-3566.

73 Theresa KG4TVM

Minutes of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club Meeting July 20, 2009:

George / K4GVT called meeting to order at 1930 Eastern Time.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, all present stated their names and call **Continued on page 4**

signs. There were 29 OVH members present.

BUSINESS MEETING

The minutes of the June 2009 meeting were approved.

Treasury report: Balance is in good standing-\$48,068.69. Report approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership: Vern Eubanks / KØLVS, read-in last month; was voted in.

ARES: Steve / N4OGR National Night-Out will be held on Saturday, August 1st at the Prince William County Government Center, i.e., the James J. McCoart Center. The will provide the equipment needed.

Repeaters: All analog repeaters are working; work on installation of the D-Star repeater is continuing. The following discussions led by Keith / KM4AA and Butch / W4HJL took place: The 440 packet node is being discontinued to make way for the D-Star repeater at the Mount Pone equipment building site. The Autopatch service available on the OVH's analog repeaters has been used very infrequently in recent years most likely because almost everyone now has and uses a pocket cellular telephone for telephone calls. The considerable monthly expense of maintaining a dedicated "business" telephone line to the analog repeater site at NOVEC on Lomond Drive to support the Autopatch service is deemed no longer justified now that almost everyone has a pocket cellular telephone; remote control of the analog repeaters is, in fact, accomplished routinely by very reliable radio link methods; the business telephone line is rarely used for that and then only as an occasional convenience. Those operators without pocket cellular telephones who might occasionally want or need emergency access for a telephone call through the OVH's analog repeaters will still be able to make an emergency calls on the input to the repeaters to reach an operator(s) monitoring the repeater; an OVH member is often listening and can respond and relay a message for any such emergency call heard. The cost savings which would be achieved from elimination of the business telephone line to the analog repeater site is proposed to be used to obtain a DSL Internet connection (\$200 to install, \$43 / month thereafter) at the equipment building for the D-Star repeater at the Mount Pone Water Tower. Such DSL connection at Mount Pone will allow and support future low cost VOIP telephone service at that location which may eventually be extended via microwave link back to the nearby analog repeater site to permit the Autopatch service to be reinstated at the analog repeaters should that make sense to do after further study. Accomplishing that would require additional technical study and work and cost justification. After this discussion, upon motion duly made, seconded, and passed it was decided that DSL service be obtained at the equipment building at Mount Pone; and that the existing business telephone line and the Autopatch service at the analog repeater site and through the existing analog repeaters be discontinued in September or soon thereafter. A work party for installation of D-Star antennas and other work is proposed for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 25th at the Mount Pone site. Six volunteers were already identified who will to assist with that; others are welcome to come and help.

Training: Mark / WA4KFZ - a General Class course is in the planning stages at the Nokesville Fire Department in the Fall.

Scholarships: No report.

Hamfest: No final financials yet. For 2010, George / K4GVT solicited the idea of a pig roast; no objections (roasting might have to begin the evening before). Other food vendor(s) would need to be informed of the roast in advance.

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Field Day: Joe / KI4OHR all had fun; no injuries; everyone fed well. Joe suggested a portable tower be acquired for use next year; Joe will head up feasibility committee. Joe also volunteered to be chairman for winter field day.

Sunshine: Theresa / KG4TVM – Announced July birthdays; scholarship recipient received another scholarship from NOVEC. OVH received cards from the Red Cross for bake sale proceeds, and from Bette Fritsch in response to the memorial fund for John / N4YOB.

Webpage: Bill / N4SV – the OVH web site is functioning.

Announcements / Remarks by George / K4GVT: Status of DV kit project :- parts still coming in, but still mañana for the assembly work, hopefully sometime in August. Keith / KM4AA is the new trustee of the W4OVH repeaters. He and Mark / WA4KFZ especially are to be commended for their work and support of the upcoming D-Star repeater.

PROGRAM

Karl / W4KRL displayed and discussed the history of his altered GE power supply, showing the D-Star 12V DC power supply (Astron), back up battery, charger and inverter, and power pole connections.

OLD BUSINESS

Al / KB4BHB - Special Event Station at Signal Hill Park Monument to commemorate the Second Battle of Manassas will be held on Saturday, August 29th. It is advertised in the QST Magazine and on the ARRL's web site. Volunteers are requested to assist the operation. Setup will be at 7:00 am, and operation is expected from 8:00 a.m. until about 4:00 p.m. Ed. note: an image of the W4OVH QSL card for this Special Event Station appears on the next page, thanks to Elizabeth / KG4NXV.

Al / KB4BHB - Mini-Tri support landed on Al this past Sunday morning. Thanks go to Art / W1CRO, Steve / NØDWB and his wife, Steve / KB4OF, and Theresa / KG4TVM, for coming in at the last minute to help out. The next Mini-Tri will be on August 9th and volunteers are needed for that.

NEW BUSINESS

Steve / N4OGR: Inquired about interest in supporting Manassas Parks' Christmas Parade of Lights (date is unknown). Positive interest was shown so Steve will research and advise further.

50/50 for \$10 (\$20 total received): Winner was Al / KB4BHB - all was donated back to the club.

There was no Mystery box raffle.

Meeting adjourned at 20:50.

Reminders about some upcoming events / calendar dates:

HAMFESTS AND CONVENTIONS:

September 12 & 13, 2009 (Saturday and Sunday) - the Virginia Section Convention (Hamfest and Electronics Flea Market) in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Details at <http://www.vabeachhamfest.com>.

September 25-27, 2009 (Friday through Sunday) - ARRL/TAPR Digital Communications Conference, Chicago, Illinois at hotel near O'Hare Airport, same as last year. Check arrl.org or tapr.org for details.

OPERATING EVENTS AND CONTESTS

August 29, 2009 (Saturday) - OVH Special Event Station, W4OVH, will operate at the entrance to the Signal Hill Park to commemorate the Second Battle of Manassas which occurred nearby 147 years ago (in 1862). The HF SSB frequencies to be used are listed in the QST notice and in

the listing of upcoming Special Event Stations at <http://www.arrl.org>. The HF SSB frequencies to be used will be 3.825 MHz, 7.225 MHz and 14.225 MHz. The OVH 2 meter analog repeater (input on 146.970 MHz) will also be monitored and used for local calls.

There are many operating contests almost all of the time! The excellent web site maintained by WA7BNM lists most of them! See <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/>

PUBLIC SERVICE / TRAINING / ARES EVENTS

Check the online Calendar by David / KG4GIY at <http://www.pwcares.org> for latest updates. David maintains a comprehensive calendar for upcoming events at that web site.

Below: front side of the color QSL card to be available for stations contacting the upcoming W4OVH Special Event Station on August 29th:

Special thanks to Elizabeth / KG4NXV for her Photoshop work to create this card.



A further status update on the OVH 440 MHz D-Star Repeater

The implementation of the new OVH 440 MHz D-Star repeater is still progressing on schedule and is expected to be fully operational by September. Mid-July through mid-August has been a very active time during which the following additional steps were accomplished:

- Installed ventilation fans and ducting in the shed. The shed has been a sealed box with direct exposure to the sun. Needless to say it got quite hot in there.

- Trenched and ran main power to the shed. We had been sharing power with the water authority. This worried us, in that if we were to trip a breaker. We did not have access to reset the breaker. We now have a separate power box and can experience a mishap without shutting down Manassas water supply.
- Pulled the Packet digi-peater cabinet and 440 gear out. The digi-peater is running 2 meter and 220 and rests in a new cabinet.
- Put up a new dual band vertical (2m/440). We have requested D-Star coordination for 2 meter, but this may be a long time coming. As the Northern Virginia area is saturated with 2 meter repeaters. We made an intense study of the existing coax. Replaced the top end connector and inspected the bottom end connector. Not wanting to replace heliax unless we were certain of the need. It appears to be operable for our present band of operation. We will of course, as we do with all our repeaters, monitor it for indications of deterioration.

Some images (pictures) taken during the work on Saturday, July 25, 2009, at the Mount Pone Water Tower site follow in this Newsletter; also following is a note by Bill / N4SV about the current and impending changes to the packet radio system supported by the OVH. Special thanks to all who helped out. Following are the main items still underway and needed to complete the installation - before OVH's new 440 MHz D-Star repeater can go live:

- Some additional final configuration of the D-Star gateway
- Configuration of a PC to replace the existing digi-peater PC
- Check out, field testing, and install the site linking transceivers.
- Install the landline network connection and verify operation

As you can see, we've made good headway and the tasks in front of us are getting fewer. Good work and thanks to everyone who has come out to assist with the many efforts. Your time was well spent and your support much appreciated. I provide a separate technical note (below) for those of you who are acquiring new D-Star equipment and who are perplexed in trying to figure out the needed (or best) initial settings to use the new repeater.

Feel free to ask any questions at the upcoming OVH meeting on August 17th. 73 Keith / KM4AA

A few pictures relating to work at the Mount Pone site on July 25, 2009

Many more images are at http://k4gvt.com/mt_pone_work/.





A few recommended technical resources for D-Star

The D-Star system is supposed to have been designed by a JARL (Japanese Amateur Radio League) affiliated group so that equipment supporting D-Star can potentially be provided by any number of independent equipment manufacturers. Having said that, it must be noted that the digital voice system used in D-Star, in fact, uses just one of many proprietary and patented DV systems; the proprietor of that DV system, however, supposedly licenses and provides chip sets for that DV system to equipment manufacturers (e.g., to cellular telephone manufacturers) on an unrestricted, non-discriminatory basis. Regardless of these details, the only substantial equipment manufacturer supplying D-Star gear to the amateur radio user market at present is ICOM.

What are some good sources of technical information about D-Star equipment and D-Star systems?

ICOM offers an array of handheld transceivers, mobile type transceivers and radio repeaters with built in D-Star capabilities. Go to <http://icomamerica.com> and look under Amateur Radio products and then under D-Star to find those ICOM D-Star products. In exploring the ICOM site, you will note that the user manuals as well as the marketing literature for each ICOM D-Star product is available as a “free” PDF file download. The information in these PDF user manuals (including the programming and set up manuals) are a good source of information about the technical capabilities of the current level of D-Star equipment. An essential source for technical details about D-Star!

The ARRL web site [arrl.org] also has a considerable amount of information and provides pointers to various technical references about D-Star and its capabilities. Search D-Star. Recommended.

Additionally there are quite a few amateur video clips available on YouTube relating to specific D-Star as well as the capabilities of the D-Star system overall. To find out about that, go to youtube.com and search for “D-Star” to find that.

Some notes about operation of the current OVH Packet Station(s)

To support the pending installation of the OVH 440 D-Star repeater, the OVH packet station has undergone some changes. Currently it is operating in a temporary mode only, having only one station running on 145.73 MHz. It is not running the packet “node” software, but rather as just a Kantronics TNC. The “mailbox” on this station - which is there for simple messages between club members - runs under the callsign W4OVH-1. While there will be changes and enhancements to the temporary station, with the hope of eventually returning to a 2-port, 2 meter and 220 MHz configuration similar to what was there before, there is currently no “node” connectivity. So, if you wish to use OVH as an intermediate connection point, you will need to use it as a “digipeater”. To do that, use the standard digipeat connecting format, inserting a “via OVH” in your connect string.

I hope to enhance the temporary station with the addition of a KANODE. Those of you familiar with packet and Kantronics, in particular, know this will work very similar to a standard packet node. You first connect to the KANode; then you obtain a list of the “stations heard” by that KANode, and then you can issue connect commands to connect to any of those “stations heard.” I’ll send out an update when the KANode is active, but for now, utilize the station as indicated above.

In addition my personal station is in operation in much the same mode on 145.73 MHz as a simple Kantronics TNC. My mailbox is N4SV-1 and my KANode is N4SV-7. I hope to have the BBSNVA back in operation soon, again I’ll update everyone via the OVH reflector.

Feel free to ask any questions at the upcoming OVH meeting on August 17th.

73 Bill / N4SV

Two images of OVH participation at the “National Night Out” event at the Prince William County Government Center on August 1, 2009

More pictures are at <http://k4gvt.com/ovh/nno/>



Note about “settings” for new D-Star equipment

I provide information for those of you who are acquiring new D-Star equipment and who are perplexed in trying to figure out the needed (or best) initial settings to use the new OVH D-Star repeater. This is important to know because if you don't have it right, you may find yourself locked out and unable to connect! ICOM's documentation indicates the following are the basic settings to use unless you are also expecting to use the gateway (if / when one is available):

- MyCall: [YourCallsign]
- UR: CQCQCQ
- R1 or RPT1: W4OVH
- R2 or RPT2: not used

This seems to work, that is until a gateway is configured to operate with the radio stack. Then even though you still only want to talk locally on our repeater, these settings should get you up and running - at least so you can call someone for more help with this!

- MyCall: [YourCallsign]
- UR: CQCQCQ
- R1 or RPT1: W4OVH^^B
- R2 or RPT2: W4OVH^^G

Note: the “^” symbol(s) indicates spaces to place between the callsign and the letter. Confusing?

Feel free to ask any questions at the upcoming OVH meeting on August 17th. 73 Keith / KM4AA