

Loudoun Amateur Radio Group

Regular Meeting Notes February 20, 2021

Venue: Due to the ongoing national health crisis, the meeting was held virtually using Google Meet

- 8:00-8:30 The Google Meeting connection was active for informal discussions.
- Pledge of Allegiance
- President welcome and meeting overview.
- Jim N4FAF reported that the minutes from the January meeting can be accessed via the club web site.
- Steve KN4HOZ was absent, so the President presented the Treasurer's report.

The starting balance since the previous report was \$9,096.76.

Deposits were \$1,204.65 and disbursements were \$176.00.

The ending balance is \$10,125.41

- Steve KS1G reported that Sterling Middle School had a contact with the International Space Station using a telebridge connection. Twenty questions were answered by the station crew. Steve is working with the school faculty to make a presentation about amateur radio. Paulson KG4TIH and Rick N1RM participated in setup of the audio used for the station contact.
- Dave KE4S reported that there had been a Board meeting since the last regular club meeting. The discussion during the meeting centered on club events during this year with a focus on what might be possible if the pandemic restrictions are lifted.
- Rick N1RM reported that a class to prepare for the General test will begin on March first. The class sessions will be held on Monday and Wednesday nights using virtual meeting technology. The ARRL General book will be used as the class reference. Details can be found on the LARG club website.
- There was a suggestion that technical presentations should be recorded and be made available for club members. It was noted that the current virtual meeting technology used for regular club meetings does not allow recording, but alternatives will be researched.
- Jim KG4OAP presented information about returning to ham radio after an eight-year break. Jim was first licensed in 2001. He became inactive because of priorities caring for his family. He returned to ham radio in 2020. Much of his equipment didn't work due to lack of maintenance. Since Jim was licensed when CW was a requirement, he was proficient before his period of inactivity. His CW skills were very rusty when he returned to operations, but he is progressing on a path to relearn his skills. He also had

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to relearn how to program his radios, and he could not find the printed manuals for his equipment. When he returned to the hobby he found that the radios were much smaller, and many include USB interfaces to allow computer control. Digital modes such as FT8 have also proliferated.

Jim reported that factors contributing to his reduced interest in the hobby included the fact that his homebrew antennas were no good quality. Most of his operating was done from the car which posed significant limitations.

He returned to the hobby because he had some friends that are hams and found that the quarantine is a good reason to have a hobby like ham radio. He also had more available free time since the kids were out of the house. He had decided that he must stay current with operation skills of his radios and other gear. He also wants to develop his skills using APRS and Winlink.

- It was suggested that when inactive hams are approached to become more active, digital modes should be presented to help fight mic fright.
- It was mentioned that a Paraset radio kit is available on the internet. It is a solid-state design to implement the functionality originally implemented using vacuum tubes. These radios were dropped behind enemy lines during WWII to be used to spy on the enemy and report intelligence to the allied forces.
- Slow scan video images from the ISS can be decoded using an app on a smart phone. The phone is held next to the radio speaker to process the signal.
- The Virginia QSO party will be held during the weekend of March 20-21. The March club meeting will be held on the 13th.
- The meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.
- Attendance

Chris	KT9N
Bob	KJ4NXG
Chris	W4PMP
Dave	KE4S
Doug	K4AIU
Ed	KK4WXO
Eric	KO4MBI

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Jim	N4FAF
Jim	KG4AOP
John	WB4UNA
Marc	W4PSO
Merc	N4TGA
Mike	KO4ANI
Mike	N4PDY
Denny	KF4TJI
Paulson	KG4TIH
Steve	KS1G
Steve	N1ESD
Tareck	K9TRE
Bill	K3WD