



eNEWS Dec. 2010

www.nfarl.org

eNEWS is "what's happening" in **North Fulton!** Check the headlines of each item and mark your calendar. Go to arrl.org or eHAM.net for the national news, but here is your **North Fulton ARL eNEWS** for **December, 2010.**



Summary of Upcoming Events and Dates

- **Every Wednesday** - Hungry Hams Lunch Bunch - 11:30 AM - Slopes BBQ
- **Every Sunday** - **NF ARES net** – 8:30 PM - 147.06 MHz (PL 100) for weekly ARES updates
- **Every Monday** - **Tech Net** – 8:30 PM - 145.47 MHz (PL 100) for technical Q & A
- **Every Friday** - **Youth Net** – 5:00 PM - 145.47 MHz (PL 100) - Join AJ4JQ and others...
- **Second Tuesday** - **NF ARES meeting** – 7 PM at the Sandy Springs City office complex
- **December Club Meeting** - **No meeting this month – NFARL Holiday Party!!**
- **January Club Meeting** - **Jan. 18 – Neil Foster, N4FN on Ham Radio Deluxe**
- **Pre-meeting Dinner** - **5:45PM @ Dickey's Barbecue Pit, 13075 Hwy 9 N, Alpharetta, GA**
- **Mid-Month-Madness** - **Jan. 8 – GARS TechFest - NFARL Kit Building with Youth**

President's Corner for December



NFARL celebrated the season in grand style at our annual **Holiday Party** on Saturday, Dec. 11. By all accounts it was a fun event for hams and spouses alike. Wes W3WL and the Holiday Party host team went all out to ensure the food, fun and fellowship were top notch. The food provided by Oscar's Villa Capri restaurant was outstanding with antipasto salad, chicken, grouper, Italian sausage, ziti and vegetables topped off with tiramisu and Italian cookies for dessert. Boy Scouts from Troop 1717 graciously provided table service while members of the host team served food to all the hungry NFARL hams and spouses. The team did an outstanding job of making the event

one to remember for years to come! Check out www.nfarl.org for photos.

Our repeater team of Mike W5JR, Mack WB4MAK and Fred N4CLA have been busy over the past month on upgrades to the Sweat Mountain repeaters. Be sure to check out Mike's article in this issue to learn more about the exciting changes.

As 2010 draws to a close, I can't help but think back over the amazing things that have happened during the year. Who could have imagined that NFARL would be selected as the Dayton Hamvention Club of the Year, and even better, that Jim W4QO would be selected as Amateur of the Year and inducted into the QRP Hall of Fame!

And, how about those terrific monthly programs: *Ten Reasons to Try Morse Code, Electricity's Greatest Hits, Blue Lightning, Antenna Modeling, Ham Radio 2010 from Friedrichshafen, VHF and UHF DXing, Mobile Rig Installation and Youth Night with Chris, Edward and Frances.*

President's Corner (continued)

Don't forget the road trips to hamfests in Orlando, Dayton and Huntsville plus the excellent hamfests in the Atlanta area. Couple that with Mid-Month Madness activities like the GARS TechFest, the ham basement sale, NFARL day at the Atlanta Braves and JOTA with the Scouts, and there was never a dull moment. Plus, we had three SIGS on CW, Antennas and Kit Building to teach and learn new skills.

And did I mention that NFARL enjoyed the largest Field Day participation of any club in the nation ... for the second straight year! Plus, we scored highest in the Southeast Division in our category. Along the way we helped 87 hams earn or upgrade their licenses through HamCrams and VE sessions, and we offered mentoring to new and older hams alike to help them learn new skills

The icing on the cake for 2010 was HamJam sponsored by NFARL and SEDXC. Three world-renowned speakers brought the Atlanta ham community together for an outstanding event that will be remembered for years to come.

It has been my distinct pleasure to have served as your president for 2010. You are the best! The new officers and exec team are ready to go for 2011 with lots of great plans already in the works. It's going to be another terrific year. I look forward to sharing ham radio with the NFARL gang for a long time to come.

Happy Holidays and 73,

Chuck AE4CW

NFARL Repeaters Update -- Mike Roden W5JR

The repeater maintenance group has been busy the past few weeks. A new antenna was installed at the Roswell water-tower site for the 147.060 repeater. Performance hasn't been what we hoped (the 443.150 repeater at the same site works great by comparison) so another trip was made to the top of the tank to test the feedline and antenna. The good news is the feedline passed the tests -- that would have been a large undertaking to replace. A commercial-style antenna is in the works but changeout is dependent upon good weather. Additionally, we plan to boost the receiver sensitivity (pre-amp now on hand) and do some cabling updates during December. Thanks to Jim N4SEC, Bob KI4SBL, Mack WB4MAK and Chuck AE4CW.



The Sweat Mountain site also received some recent TLC. KI4SBL and WB4MAK repaired the UHF and VHF repeater amplifiers. Fred N4CLA, WB4MAK and I installed them the week of Thanksgiving, retiring the lower power back-up units that had been pressed into service. You might notice a bit stronger signal around town. While there, we also upgraded several interconnecting RF cables on the 2m, 440 and 222 repeaters. We investigated a performance issue with the 440 repeater that had appeared. Measurements revealed a receiver desensitization problem that could not be solved with parts we had with us but we knew we were coming back a few days later to finish other work so we would be ready. Parts were exchanged and the de-sense was gone -- woohoo, a 12 dB improvement in sensitivity!! There is still a nagging issue from another transmitter on the mountain that can cause good signals to get noisy but, for the most part, users are talking in from places not possible before. Two full days in one week but a lot was accomplished.

NFARL Repeaters Update (continued)

And the big news of something that ought to be in service by the time you read this is an upgrade to the repeater controllers at Sweat Mountain. This brings lots of new capability to the NFARL repeaters at the site, including the ability to connect them together as needed. You may hear a few different beeps and boops (and familiar voices) as the final configurations are worked out. You'll also notice new voice announcements thanks to Chuck AE4CW. Look for other club members to lend their voices to club announcements in the future. With the new controller installation, it was an opportunity to change the repeater call signs to the club call sign NF4GA. NF4GA is a great call sign that clearly indicates you're talking on the North Fulton Georgia club repeaters. Coming soon we will announce new macro commands that can be used with DTMF touchpads to do some repeater control. Enjoy the great new capabilities this controller gives the club, including the ability to link all of the repeaters on Sweat Mountain, 2m, 220, 440, and 900 during nets or other events where desired.

Next month - Echolink for Roswell 147.060.

Program Update – John Kludt K7SYS, Program Committee Chair

I again want to thank Walt Woron KJ4HE for his efforts over the past few years in placing interesting and entertaining programs on the agenda. Planning for 2011 is under way and this is an opportune time to hear from the NFARL membership. Is there a presentation you have heard recently that you think might be enjoyed by your colleagues here? Is there a program that you have given that you would like to share at a club meeting? Is there something we haven't heard about for a while that we should think about adding to the program series? Please send your ideas and comments to John Kludt K7SYS, the incoming program person, at k7sys@nfarl.org.

The January program will look at the Ham Radio Deluxe suite of computer programs designed to automate many of your station activities. As a follow-up to his Q&A session on TechNet, Neil Foster N4FN will be walking us through some of the functions and features of HRD.

January Mid Month Madness is the annual GARS TechFest. This is always a great event and we will have several NFARL sponsored events as part of the day. Please join us Saturday morning Jan. 8, 2011, in Lawrenceville. Details can be found at www.gars.org

DL8MCP / AJ4ZS returns to Germany

Hermann Wagner DL8MCP / AJ4ZS has returned to Germany following conclusion of his work duties in the United States. While here, he was an active Honorary member of NFARL as well as the North Georgia QRP group and brought enthusiasm and knowledge to the many activities he participated in.

Hermann dove vigorously into club activities and was a frequent participant in Alive After 5, staffing hamfest booths, taking part in Field Day, Sunday afternoons in Leita Thompson Park and Hungry Hams, as well as helping other members with antenna installations. An ardent homebrewer and tinkerer, Hermann shared antenna projects and clever gadgets he devised with other NFARL members during show-and-tells at club meetings and Hungry Hams.

Before Hermann's departure, Mack McCormick WB4MAK presented him with a Hams Helping Hams certificate for his many contributions to the club and fellow members.



Hungry Hams

Come join us at **Slopes BBQ** in Roswell, Wednesdays at 11:30 AM!! Over 35 Hams regularly enjoy great B-B-Q and swap the latest information. Click [here](#) for a map.

ARRL Sweepstakes in the Smokies with Scott KD4YDD

I'd like to share my radio/contesting adventures to the Smoky Mountains over the November ARRL Sweepstakes weekend.

This trip, first and foremost, was an anniversary trip for my XYL Stacy and me. She was kind enough to let me bring some equipment and operate from the cabin.

This trip was from Thursday Nov. 18 through Sunday Nov. 21. Upon arrival, it was already dark and I was eager to get my wires and equipment set up. So, I trekked through briars and up the side of a massive hill to get my wires up. Success and I am on the air!

I used two antennas on an older Kenwood antenna tuner. A 300-foot random wire, which surprisingly worked amazingly well on 40 and 80 as well as a Falcon 40-10 shorty Windom-style dipole in a inverted V configuration. It tuned great on 80-20 and I really did not go much higher than 20 meters while at the cabin.

My first contact after getting everything set up was with my friends on 3916 (The Freewheelers). I tried out 20 watts first off on the random wire and got great reports, so I backed it down to 5 watts and nobody even noticed!

I wanted to get another radio check, from my neighbor Peter W4IMD back home in Dacula. So I met him on 40 meters on Friday morning and ran QRP. He was getting me 20 over back home! Amazing!

Excited with these results, I was set to go for ARRL Sweepstakes QRP!

I leisurely worked it: A few hours here and a few hours there. In all, I contacted 59 sections QRP! Everyone I had a QSO with was surprised that I was QRP. Height was for sure on my side. Total score was 18,998, including QSOs with W1AW and the Virgin Islands.

This has sparked a renewed interest in contesting and a whole new world of QRP to me!

Scott Brown

KD4YDD



NFARL Elmer Program

An Elmer is a person you can call up and get help on any ham radio subject you may have questions about. We have at least 13 Elmer volunteers in the Club: Bill Reed – K4YJI, Neil Foster - N4FN, Gary Bush - W6GB, John Kludt - K7SYS, Tim Lemmon - WK4U, Joe Camilli - N7QPP, Bill Hampton - W4OO, Mike Roden - W5JR, Steve Mays - KS4KJ, Jim Stafford - W4QO, Wes Lamboley - W3WL, Chuck Catledge - AE4CW, and Mack McCormick - WB4MAK.

We need additional volunteers. Contact Wes, W3WL at w3wl@nfarl.org to volunteer.

NFARL's motto is "Hams Helping Hams" - give it a try if you have not already!

HamJam 2010

HamJam 2010, sponsored by NFARL and SEDXC, was an overwhelming success. HamJam featured three outstanding speakers. Joe Taylor K1JT told about his breakthrough work with weak signals and ham radio. Ward Silver N0AX discussed the future of ham radio and contesting. Finally, our own Hal Kennedy N4GG gave a short overview of the birth of spark gap transmitters and demonstrated his museum quality "Blue Lightning" spark gap transmitter. More than 200 hams attended the annual event from over 12 clubs and four states. All three presentations can be found at

www.hamjam2010.com. We had two grand prize winners in the raffle drawing: Mike Herod KJ0R won the Elecraft K-3 100W transceiver and Ed Roddy WD4MVL won the Flex Radio 1500. Thank you to everyone who attended the event on the Georgia Tech campus in downtown Atlanta and those who supported the raffle. Net proceeds from the raffle will be going to youth education.



NFARL Youth Member Recognized by CQ Magazine

NFARL youth member Chris Howard WA4YG was recognized in the December 2010 issue of CQ magazine for his rapid growth and development in amateur radio.

Chris has advanced through the Technician, General and Extra Classes and is becoming proficient in CW, QRP operations, DX chasing, kit building, and speaking out for youth in amateur radio.

Jim Stafford W4QO is his Elmer.



Service Opportunities

Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society TechFest 2011 Saturday, January 8, 2011, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

The NFARL club will host a kit building experience for youth - 8 to 18 - at Techfest this year.

Mentors/Elmers will assist each "builder" with learning soldering skills and assembling a simple electronic kit. And it's FREE to kids so invite/bring your kids, your grandkids, your neighbor's kids, Scouts - Cub, Girl and Boy - to the RadioActive YOUTH area for an hour of kit building FUN. Each kit will light up, make noise, or something else totally "cool".

Volunteers for Mentors / Elmers will be needed. Contact Jim W4QO at w4qo@nfarl.org for more information and to volunteer.



Quickie QSO

A monthly feature aimed at helping NFARL members get to know each other

Name, call: John Kludt, K7SYS

QTH: Johns Creek

Personal: Married, five grown children; lived in Atlanta for 20 years. Currently retired, well, kind of retired

First licensed/other calls: 1962 in Seattle as KN7SYS. Calls also held include, WB0UCJ and N9ENG

Main equipment: TenTec Orion II (HF), Yaesu FT-8800 (2 and 440), Yaesu FT-817 (QRP). Never have owned a linear.

Favorite hangout: My hamshack in the basement

Favorite activities: PSK-31, certificate hunting, building new vertical antennas

I'd like to know more about: Radio astronomy

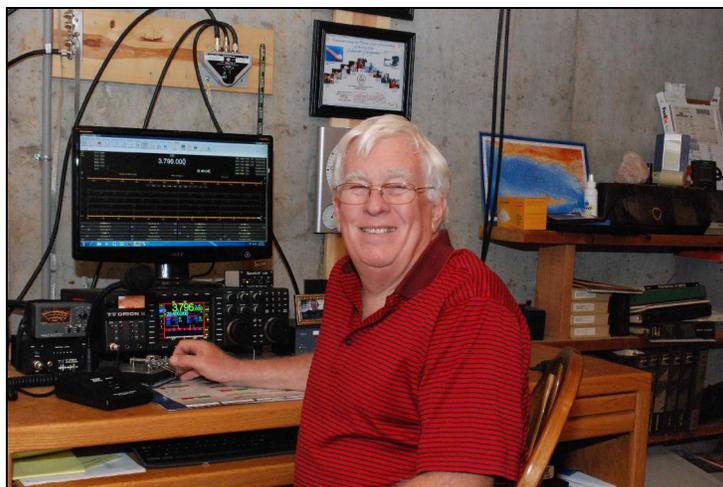
Fantasy: The CCR's under which I live magically disappear and I wake up to one humongous tower and beam in my backyard!

Memorable on-the-air moment: My random QSO with a KH6 when I was living in Colorado over OSCAR 7 mode J (now called U/V). The mutual visibility window (the time we could both see the satellite) was a bit less than 2 minutes.

My elmer: "Pop" Brown, K7LED (sk) and Ken Jackson, K7PZX (sk) both of whom were founders and very active members of the Mike and Key Radio Club in south Seattle

When not in the shack: Reading books, on my bicycle, or out in Montana fly-fishing and shooting my black powder rifles

Something you might not know about me: I volunteer 20 hours per week as the Medical Director of the Good Samaritan Health Center Gwinnett. We like to say we are a faith-based clinic for those too rich for Medicaid and too poor for real insurance.



John Kludt K7SYS enjoys working PSK-31 as well as certificate hunting from his basement shack in Johns Creek.

CW SIG Update -- Jim W4QO

The NFARL CW SIG will resume on January 20 and run for six Thursday nights through the end of February. This will be our third CW class in as many years and those who have participated have enjoyed the experience (for the most part!). Many are active or at least semi-active in CW now. The goal of the CW class is to take you from 0 to 5 wpm. Of course, you cannot learn CW in six one-hour lessons so the class is a "weigh in" class where we check progress, encourage participants and suggest methods for improvement. So if you know "no code" or a perhaps have tried, but given up while you know a few letters, the CW SIG class may be for you.



The class meets in my home dining room so there is room for only 10 but we also have what we call CW 101 where you study on your own with an effort to keep up with the class doing the same exercises. So you can learn CW which can open up this intriguing mode (and much "bandwidth") by learning Morse code. The class starts at 7:00 PM and runs for 75 minutes each week. If you would like to enroll in the "classroom" version or commit to CW 101 "distance learning" version, please send an email to cw@w4qo.com to enroll.

Since you may be excited about getting started, here are some suggestions to do during the holidays:

1. Load Just Learn Morse Code (the program), onto your computer and learn some of its features. While you are at it, load in our first pack of letters - ESTONIA - one at a time and learn what they sound like sent at 16 wpm but spaced to 5 wpm. If all this sounds confusing, don't worry - just ask your questions.
2. Figure out how to make Morse code sounds with a telegraph key. Some of you can use your high-priced oscillator (your HF rig with the VOX turned off) and some of you will want to acquire an oscillator. Depending on your level of interest in building, I have some parts to make a practice key or you can order one from my friend Marshall Emm at Morse Express and get this nifty kit: <http://tinyurl.com/28xbg8e>. It is hands down the best buy in code oscillators.
3. Of course, there is the key. Some of you will want to start with a \$150 Begali (good for you - the more you spend - the more likely you are to use it!!) But you can start with something simple you build such as <http://tinyurl.com/bsbx7>. You can also buy keys from HRO or Marshall but I like the surplus keys you find on eBay such as the military J-38. These cost a bit more than the small plastic ones (which are fine by the way) but they do have that history aspect to them and they are excellent. If you shop carefully, you should be able to find one for around \$30 to \$40. They do not have to be "pretty" as cleaning them up is part of the fun.
4. Some of you may have noticed that we "serious" operators use a paddle to send CW. From my experience, it is possible to start with a paddle and skip the straight key but some prefer to start with the old J-38. You may build a paddle as NB6M shows at: <http://tinyurl.com/2364e2s>. I have some PC board material if you want to tackle one of these. Of course, there are a million variations on this such as: <http://tinyurl.com/2ddqxd0> or you can invent your own. Here is also another simple one and easy to build: <http://www.eham.net/articles/7863>. But if you want to get the "best value" in your Christmas stocking, get the KENT iambic paddle. They are around \$90 on eBay or around \$140 at HRO. This paddle is very rugged.

CW SIG update -(continued)

These tips should keep you busy until the class starts. If you want to get more tips, go to the club website and look under CW SIG. Be sure to look through my blog which is referenced there. After the class begins, there will "on air" practice sessions on the 145.47 repeater several times per week. Have fun with it. And join me "on the air" for some CW fun.

North Fulton ARES Update



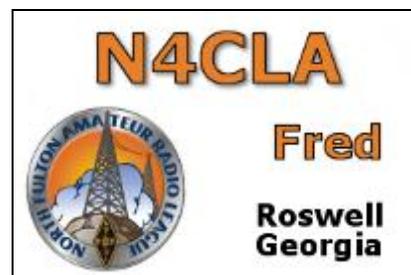
The next NFARES meeting will be at the Sandy Springs Municipal Complex on Tuesday Dec. 14 at 7:00 PM. The program will feature a live demonstration of WINMOR (WINlink Message Over Radio), which utilizes a sound card interface to link the computer to the radio and runs a "virtual TNC."

Anyone interested in amateur radio emergency radio activities is welcomed to attend.

There is usually an informal gathering for dinner before the meeting at the nearby Tijuana Joe's restaurant at about 6:00 PM.

Name Badges

If you have been considering ordering your NFARL Name Badge, now would be an ideal time to do it. These badges have magnetic backs so they will not poke holes in your clothing. They are NOT etched badges, they are made using a photographic full color process and the information on the badge will NOT wear off. To the right is an example of what the badge will look like, but with rounded corners and NO black border. So if you are interested, they are \$9.00 each. Just go to [NFARL](#) and click on the badge icon after you log in. We accept PayPal, personal credit cards, and checks sent to the club mailbox: **NFARL, PO Box 1741, Roswell, GA 30077**. See Fred N4CLA at the meeting or go to the [Mart](#) and place your order.



NFARL Membership

We currently have **269** active members. The following members have joined since October/November.

Call	Fname	Lname	License Class	Mbr-Since
W8KHK	Richard	Maxwell	Amateur Extra	2010-11
N2EYI	Brian	Mallard	General	2010-11
KS4EJ	Norris	Gaynor	Advanced	2010-11
KD4APR	Kathie	Coleman	Technician	2010-10
KJ4VPJ	John	Jones	General	2010-10
	David	Bourne	Not Licensed	2010-10

Please greet our newest members and welcome them to the organization

ARRL Membership



Thank you for supporting our National organization, ARRL. Our current percentage of ARRL membership in the club is now at **70.6%**, up from **64.7%** two months ago. That represents **190** ARRL members out of **269** club members.

We highly encourage you to become an ARRL member and support your National organization. These are the people that help protect our/your frequency allocations with the FCC. They also provide a nice monthly publication for your membership. It is called QST. If you are not a member of the ARRL, please consider supporting them.

You can join or renew your ARRL membership through NFARL at www.nfarl.org/mart. If you renew directly with the ARRL, thank you, and please send me an email to n4cla@nfarl.org indicating that you did renew so we can update your club record and also keep current on the memberships.

NFARL and ARRL Renewals

This is just a friendly reminder regarding your NFARL and ARRL memberships. It has now been a year and a half since we moved all of our membership records to the www.nfarl.org web site from the QuickBooks environment. We have tried to make sure that all the bits and bytes are in their proper places for your membership record.

You should now be receiving automatic renewal notification for your **NFARL** and **ARRL** memberships **30 days before your membership expires**, and **then one after it does expire**. This should give you plenty of time to renew on line before your expiration occurs. As with all database migrations, there will be exceptions. So if you feel that your name is not on the membership rolls, and should be, or it is incorrectly categorized, please send a note to n4cla@nfarl.org. Your membership is good for 365 days from the date you renew or join.

The other piece of this is that your name will automatically fall off the membership rolls after 365 days if you do not renew. You can, however, renew your membership at any time prior to the expiration and the renewal is just added to the current expiration date. Please, if you change your email address or are not sure that it is correct, or you have a question about why you are not receiving notifications, please log into your account at www.nfarl.org/mart and ensure your email address is correct. We DO NOT ask for any personal information, credit card numbers or bank account numbers. All we need are your phone numbers, email addresses and mailing addresses.



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Contact Us

President	Chuck Catledge, AE4CW 770-641-7729	ae4cw@nfarl.org
Vice-President & Training and Education Leader	Wes Lambole, W3WL	w3wl@nfarl.org
Secretary & Community Service Projects	Bill Reed, K4YJI 404-406-5674	k4yji@nfarl.org
Treasurer & Repeater Trustee	Fred Moore, N4CLA 404-434-4499	n4cla@nfarl.org
Past President & Special Events	Mack McCormick, WB4MAK 770-753-4202	wb4mak@nfarl.org
Program & Mid-Month-Madness Chairman	Walt Woron, KJ4HE	kj4he@nfarl.org
Field Day Chairman	Ian Kahn, AK4IK	ak4ik@nfarl.org
ARES Liaison & Community Relations	Jim Paine, N4SEC	n4sec@nfarl.org
Repeater Operations	Mike Roden, W5JR	w5jr@nfarl.org
Webmaster	Bill Cobb, K4YJJ 770-396-5007	k4yjj@nfarl.org

Club Repeaters

145.470 (-) Echolink Node 381631	100 Hz	Sweat Mountain
147.060 (+) Primary ARES repeater	100 Hz	Roswell Water Tower
224.620 (-) Joint Venture with the MATPARC club	100 Hz	Sweat Mountain
443.150 (+)	No Tone	Roswell Water Tower
444.475(+)	100 Hz	Sweat Mountain
927.0125(-)	146.2 Hz	Sweat Mountain