



NFARL eNEWS

March 2013

www.nfarl.org

eNEWS is "what's happening" in **North Fulton** and surrounding area! Check out each item and mark your calendar. Go to arrl.org for national news, but here is this month's **North Fulton ARL eNEWS**.



Summary of Upcoming Events and Dates

- **Every Wednesday** – Hungry Hams Lunch Bunch – 11:15 AM – Slope's BBQ, 34 East Crossville Road, Roswell
- **Every Sunday** – **NFARES net** – 8:30 PM – 147.06 MHz (PL 100)
- **Every Monday** – **Tech Net** – 8:30 PM – 145.47 MHz (PL 100) – Check [NFARL Nets website](#) for "how to"
- **Second Tuesday** – **NFARES meeting** – March 12, 7:00 PM – Brandon Hall School, 1701 Brandon Hall Drive, Sandy Springs
- **Third Tuesday** – **NFARL club meeting** – March 19, 7:30 PM – Alpharetta Adult Activity Center, 13450 Cogburn Road, Alpharetta. Kevin King, KC6OVD, will speak on Digital Mobile Radio (UHF/VHF)
- **Mid-Month Madness** – **Johns Creek International Day** – March 23, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, Northeast/Spruill Oaks Library, 9560 Spruill Road, Johns Creek. For more details, see [Johns Creek International Day](#)
- **VE Testing Session** – Saturday, March 9 – 10:00 AM – Alpharetta Adult Activity Center

Program Update / Joe Camilli, N7QPP



At our March meeting, Kevin King, KC6OVD, (photo at left) will tell us about the exciting world of Digital Mobile Radio (DMR), a relatively new communications technology first introduced in Europe more than a decade ago and now in the United States.

Among the benefits of DMR are improved spectrum efficiency (more signals in existing space!), more efficient use of equipment, greater system flexibility and more. Because of these advantages, DMR is being widely adopted by public safety agencies.

Come hear Kevin's presentation on this exciting new development at this month's NFARL meeting on March 19.

And, don't forget that our own Christian Kuhtz, AK4VV, will be guest speaker at the April meeting. Christian, who heads up the Summits on the Air program for Georgia, will be telling us about the latest developments in this interesting new aspect of the hobby.

As always, if you have an idea for a program, or have seen an interesting presentation elsewhere, feel free to [contact me](#).

President's Corner / John Kludt, K4SQC

It was a very busy and successful February for many of the members of the North Fulton Amateur Radio League. Under the direction of Jon Wittlin, K4WIT, we conducted another Boy Scout Radio Merit Badge session. Attending in addition to the usual scouts was a group of Tiger Cubs. In the words of their leader Petra-Kate Califano, the outing was a "huge success!" Thanks to all who helped make this event so great.

Several NFARL members braved the elements to attend the Dalton Hamfest in late February. While a bit soggy, all had a good time and we sold a fair amount of excess NFARL gear. John Tramontanis, N4TOL, has led a masterful effort to catalog all of our NFARL gear and place it into four categories: 1) Items suitable for lending to NFARL members; 2) Field Day equipment; 3) Surplus equipment; and 4) Ham radio treasures, otherwise known as "junk." So far we have raised more than \$1,100 to be placed in the club treasury through the sale of items no longer of value to NFARL. Well done, John!



Dave Brackett, AK4CL, is starting a new company and moving to Cumming. Given these events he found he did not have the time to devote to activities manager for NFARL. We all want to thank Dave for his efforts and wish him the best of luck in his new venture. Having almost completed the equipment inventory process, John, N4TOL, has agreed to fill the rest of Dave's term as activities manager. Thank you for stepping up, John. If you have ideas for future club activities, please feel free [to contact John](#). His first activity will be to coordinate International Day at the Northeast/Spruill Oaks Library in Johns Creek. This is our third year at Spruill and it is a great way to showcase amateur radio.

At the last meeting of the NFARL Board of Directors, we approved a couple of upgrades to the repeater system. The 2-meter repeaters at Sweat Mountain and the Roswell water tower will have their messaging systems moved to new software that will greatly improve their flexibility and ease of use. We realize that we have increasing membership east of Georgia 400 in the Johns Creek area. To better serve that portion of the NFARL population and to better cover all of us when mobile in the Chattahoochee River "repeater valley of death," the board approved the installation of a remote receiver for the Sweat Mountain 2-meter repeater in Johns Creek. For those of you not familiar with remote receivers, this is basically a receiver on the standard frequency of the repeater input, 145.470, that is then fed back to Sweat Mountain via remote link. There, something called a "voter" picks the best signal for rebroadcast on the repeater output. Our thanks to the repeater team for taking this project on.

Monday evenings have been more active of late thanks to the efforts of Jim Stafford, W4QO, who has been putting some real energy into TechNet. In addition to technical questions, Jim always has an additional topic for discussion. For TechNet to work over the longer term, it is important that everyone not just listen. I think I have used the analogy to 10 meters before: If everybody listens and nobody calls CQ, how will you know if the band is open? If everyone listens and no one ever asks a

question on TechNet, how will knowledge of things radio be spread? So please help Jim make TechNet a success and don't be afraid to ask your question. And Jim, thanks for your efforts with TechNet.

There is a lot going on with NFARL. It is a pleasure to be taking my turn as the president of such a vibrant organization. Thank you all for your participation and your support of NFARL and all of its activities. I hope to see each one of you at the next monthly club meeting.

Help Needed for International Day / John Tramontanis, N4TOL

NFARL will be supporting the Friends of the Northeast/Spruill Oaks Library, 9560 Spruill Road, Johns Creek, during the annual International Day celebration on Saturday, March 23, from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

The club will provide an operating HF station that will be used to demonstrate international communication and allow attendees to talk with someone on the radio. This is a great opportunity to introduce ham radio to youth and adults who will be visiting the library for this special event.

We need volunteers to set up the shack and antenna, assist attendees with radio communications, promote our great hobby and answer questions, then take down the antenna and shack. To sign up for this event, contact [John Tramontanis](#).



**International Day
always enjoys a good
turnout of people
interested in learning
about ham radio.**

Pick Your Field Day Slots Now / Scott Straw, KB4KBS

The online sign-up forms have now "gone live" and are ready for you to pick your operating slots. We have sign-up slots for both SSB stations, the CW station, the digital station, the VHF station and the GOTA station. There is also a place to sign up for the slow-speed CW station that will be part of the digital station.

Here's how to do it:

1. Go to [SignUpGenius.com](#).
2. Across the top banner, click on the green FIND A SIGN UP button.
3. Enter the email of the Sign Up List's creator:
kb4kbs@nfarl.org
4. Click search.
5. Select the station you want to sign up to operate.
6. Read the notes at the top of the page and select the times you wish to operate by clicking your mouse on the gray sign-up button.



7. In the blank below "NEED LOGGER (Y/N) or COMMENTS *" enter Y or N and/or any comments.
8. NEW THIS YEAR: You do not have to be a SIGNUPGENIUS member to sign up, so you can select "I do not have a SignUpGenius account" as an option.
9. Put your first and last name in the FIRST NAME blank.
10. Put your call sign or "No Call" in the LAST NAME blank.
11. Enter an email address for reminders (twice).
12. If you would like to create a SIGNUPGENIUS account, check that box.
13. If you would like an iCalendar (.ics) file and a link that will allow you to edit your item later, check that box.
14. Click the SIGN UP button and you are done.

If you have trouble, [email me](#) with your phone number and I'll walk you through the process.

Field Day is June 22-23 and will be at Waller Park Extension in Roswell. The FIELD DAY tab on the [NFARL website](#) has been updated and has more [details](#).

NFARES Focuses on Programming Radios / Mike Cohen, AD4MC

One of the goals of NFARES is to have our VHF/UHF radios programmed with the frequencies that we use for North Fulton police and fire departments and for the annual Simulated Emergency Test (SET). Getting these frequencies consistently programmed into our many varied brands and models can be a challenge.



Wayne Chapman, KG5WU, researched the issue and found that Dan Smith, KK7DS, who wrote the D-RATS software that is used with D-STAR, also wrote a program called CHIRP that allows cut-and-paste programming between different radios. You can download the software and see a list of the supported radios [here](#). The CHIRP software also includes repeater information

for all 50 states plus Canada.

If you check out the [NFARES user group](#), you will see the CHIRP .img files that we have started to upload. They have the NFARES frequencies plus other gems that have been stored by some of the local hams.

We will be discussing how to share and improve this info during our Sunday nets and NFARES meetings.

Mark Your Calendar: Georgia QSO Party April 13-14

The weekend of April 13-14 is the annual [Georgia QSO Party](#) (GQP). The goal is to get every Georgia county on the air either with fixed stations or with rovers. This is your chance to "be the DX." It is a real opportunity to practice "running," calling CQ and letting them come to you. Every year, "The Gavel" award is given to the club with the highest score. NFARL won "The Gavel" two years in a row, then dropped out of the competition last year for the "Spell NFARL during the GQP" adventure. This year we are back in the hunt for "The Gavel." We need your help, so please save the date.

***Browsing the Library* / Keith Plossl, K4KRX**

Why make a reading list for newly licensed hams? Partially because my late father taught me that we learn everything in three ways. The first way is to take a formal course with a person who teaches you, like an apprentice, what you need to know. The second way is to read books and publications to learn what we need to know. The third way is to learn by doing and failing, often called learning by trial and error. Personally, I believe that is the hard way.

How many new hams have an Elmer who provides formal education and assignments to learn amateur radio? Probably not as many nowadays as in the “good old days” when this was often the usual route to a ham ticket. (If you want an Elmer, or want to be one, the [NFARL Elmers program](#) is a valuable club resource.) We all learn the hard way, or by trial and error, so that method isn't new. We also learn from what others have written but figuring what to read is sometimes a lot of work. Several hams, at my prompting, have provided a suggested reading list so figuring out what to read might be a bit easier.

Let's look at the list.

The first four items and the last two are available on the Internet. The four resources we have in the library are available at nearly every monthly meeting. Our club meetings are also educational, so attending can get you a library resource and education from those who speak at our meetings. That is a win-win in my book.

One of the other articles is a humorous, sarcastic look at bad habits hams acquire that result in being labeled a “lid,” ham jargon for an operator who exhibits poor on-air practices. And, yes, the term is an insult.

“Best of the New Ham Companion” is a compilation of selected QST articles on all aspects of ham radio, from a beginner's perspective. The next resource (“200 Meters and Down”) is a history of ham radio from beginning to current. The last two are two versions of the history of amateur radio.

If you are new to amateur radio, consider trying this reading list.

Recommended Reading

1. [“Ham Ways - A Primer.”](#) Ward Silver, ARRL
2. [“Making Your First Contact,”](#) ARRL 2012
3. [“Communicating with Other Hams,”](#) ARRL 2012
4. [“Ethics and Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur,”](#) John DeVoldere, ON4UN
5. “On the Air with Ham Radio,” Steve Ford, WB8IMY, 2nd Edition, ARRL 2001*
6. “The ARRL Operating Manual for Radio Amateurs,” 9th Edition, ARRL 2001*
7. “FCC Rules and Regulations for the Amateur Radio Service,” 2nd Edition, ARRL 2008*
8. “The Best of New Ham Companion,” ARRL 1997
9. [“So You Want to be a Lid,”](#) A.J. “Buddy” Massa, W5VSR
10. “200 Meters and Down,” Clinton DeSoto, ARRL 2001*
11. [“USA Amateur Radio History and Licensing,”](#) compiled by AC6V
12. [“History of Amateur Radio,”](#) presentation by Neil Heft, KC2KY

* may be checked out from the NFARL library

Mid-Month Madness: NFARL Goes to the Dalton Hamfest

The rain stopped and the wind died down just in time for the Dalton Hamfest. Quite a few NFARL members took part in our February Mid-Month Madness activity.



Club President John Klutt, K4SQC, (left, in photo above) assisted by Gary McConville, WB4SQ, rings up a sale at the NFARL table, where surplus equipment was being sold to benefit the club treasury. Photo by Bill Hampton, W400.



Jim Paine, N4SEC, (left) and Terry Joyner, W4YBV, make the rounds. Photo by Jim Smith, W4JDS.



Walt Woron, KJ4HE, (from left) John Tramontanis, N4TOL, Neil Foster, N4FN, and Jim Stafford, W4QO, examine the offerings from Mack McCormick, W4AX. Photo by Jim Smith, W4JDS.



Bill Hampton, W400, (right, in photo above) drops by to see what items Mike Roden, W5JR, has for sale while Dave Higdon, KD4ICT, (left, in photo at left) and Jerry Sullivan, KD4LZL, look for bargains. Photos by Jim Smith, W4JDS.



Welcome to the Wonderful World of _._. _._!

With the Dalton Hamfest in February as a backdrop, Jim Stafford, W4QO, presented Mike Birmingham, KK4LJG, with a QSL card to mark Mike's first CW QSO the night before. Mike learned code by using the free [Just Learn Morse Code software](#) along [with W4QO's practice files](#), both of which he downloaded from the Internet.

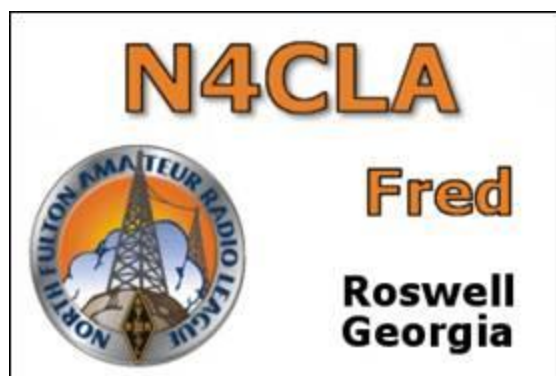
Mike says he checked out other ways of learning code but found the NFARL method was the fastest way to get on the air. If you need help with code (or any other ham topic), click on the NFARL [Elmers link](#) or send an [email](#).

**Jim Stafford, W4QO,
presents Mike
Birmingham, KK4LJG,
with a card
commemorating Mike's
first CW QSO. Photo by
Bill Hampton, W4OO.**



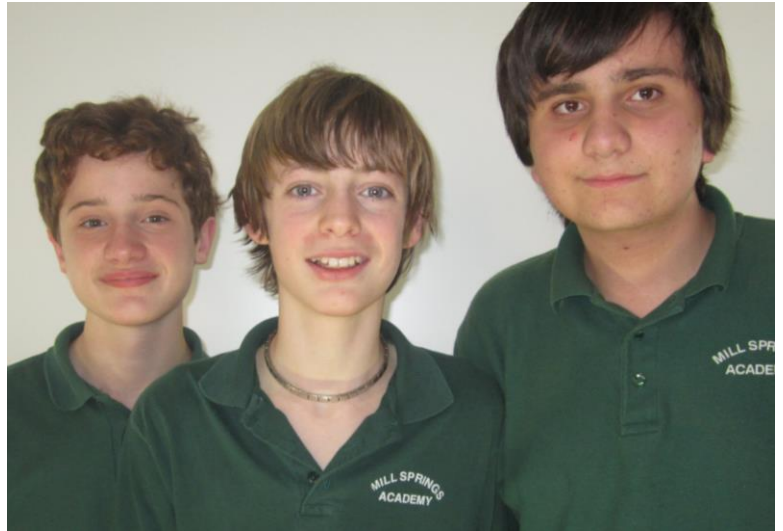
Name Badges Available at NFARL Mart

For those of you who have recently joined NFARL, as well as our newly licensed amateurs, you may not be aware that NFARL has a Name Badge available for purchase at [NFARL Mart](#). It is not your typical two-color engraved badge with a pin back. It is a very nice, multicolored, rounded corner badge with a magnetic back so it does not pierce your clothing. It contains your name, city, state and call sign for \$9.00. Order yours today!



Mill Springs Gains New Hams, ARRL Grant / Chuck Catledge, AE4CW

Congratulations to three new hams who earned their Technician licenses following a mid-term ham radio seminar and NFARL HamCram in January. Alasdair Boney, KK4NVH, Sam Wolff, KK4NVJ, and Joseph Murphy, KK4NVI, are charter members of the Mill Springs Academy Amateur Radio Club, along with their science teacher, Martha Muir, KK4DBL, who attended the ARRL Teacher Institute in 2012. These three young hams are now coaching other students at the school who expect to become licensed before the school year ends. Now that is Elmering!



As icing on the cake, Mill Springs Academy was the recipient of an ARRL 2013 grant (one of only three) to fund a ham radio station at the school. The station is now “on the air” and consists of a Yaesu FT-897 transceiver, Astron power supply, Buckmaster 80-6M OCF dipole, Cushcraft 2M/70CM beam and Ringo Ranger 2M vertical. Thanks go to Mike Cohen, AD4MC, Neil Foster, N4FN, John Kludt, K4SQC, and Chuck Catledge, AE4CW, who assisted with the station installation.

New hams at Mill Springs Academy are (from left): Alasdair Boney, KK4NVH, Sam Wolff, KK4NVJ, and Joseph Murphy, KK4NVI. Their science teacher is Martha Muir, KK4DBL.

Club Repeaters

145.470 (-) EchoLink Node 560686 NF4GA-R	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

Contact Us

President	John Kludt, K4SQC 770-891-8091	President@nfarl.org
Vice President and Program Chairman	Joe Camilli, N7QPP	VicePresident@nfarl.org
Secretary and NFARL eNEWS Publisher	Bill Reed, K4YJI 770-993-5758	Secretary@nfarl.org
Treasurer and Repeater Trustee	Fred Moore, N4CLA 404-434-4499	Treasurer@nfarl.org
Past President	Wes Lamboley, W3WL 770-642-2087	PastPresident@nfarl.org
Activities Chairman	John Tramontanis, N4TOL	Activities@nfarl.org
Membership Chairman	Bill Weathers, K4WSW	Membership@nfarl.org
HamCram and Mentoring	Chuck Catledge, AE4CW 770-641-7729	HamCram@nfarl.org
Field Day Chairman	Scott Straw, KB4KBS	kb4kbs@nfarl.org
Scout Coordinator	Jon Wittlin, K4WIT	k4wit@nfarl.org
ARES Liaison and Community Relations	Jim Paine, N4SEC 770-475-4454	n4sec@nfarl.org
Repeater Operations	Mike Roden, W5JR 404-781-9494	Repeaters@nfarl.org
Web Master	Bill Cobb, K4YJJ 770-396-5007	Webmaster@nfarl.org



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