SILVERCOMET SKYWAVE

W4RSC "RADIO SILVER COMET"   ARRL SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB

Ham Radio in the 21st Century

SilverCometARS Inc. "NEWS" PO Box 1873 Hiram, Georgia 30141 April-May 2023

SilverComet ARS " PREZ SEZ "

To all who are members of the BEST Amateur Radio Club in the SouthEast (and beyond)   de Dan W4DTO

One of the things I have heard repeatedly over the last few months is that we would like for our club to have more activities outside of nets and monthly meetings. We did our second "Day In The Park" recently, and I've heard comments that suggest it was a very good day. The general consensus, it seems, is that we want to get out and play radio more! I'm all for that. The weather is beautiful today and I would much rather be sitting outside or in a park with a radio instead of sitting here at my desk! The next big event we have planned is Field Day the last weekend in June. Following that is World Ranger Day at Pickett's Mill Battlefield at the end of July.

Planning and successful execution of events like our Day In The Park or like Field Day takes a fair amount of hard work and dedication of club members, and we've all got busy lives. So, I'm going to change my question to you and challenge our membership. Over the last few months I have asked, "What kind of events and activities would you like to see us hold?" I'm changing that now to "What kind of events can you help us plan and execute?" You don't have to be an expert in technology of radio or field operations to serve on the Field Day team.

We need people who can set up tables, roll out feedline, help the experts set up antennas, AND we need folks who can stay until the bitter end (or come onsite toward the end) to help pack all of those things up. Of course, if you are an expert in the technology and toys, we need you. But we also need people who are experts in other things; things like organizing and coordinating, setting up, packing up, marketing, creating written content.

We are all experts in the things we do every day. I want to challenge you, if you want to see us get out and have more hands on activities, suggest what you want us to do AND tell us how you can help us do those things.

Troy Davis is heading up the Field Day Team, and I think he would say we could still use more help. If you are interested in participating in Field Day - whether it's for the entire time or for a couple of hours - please reach out to Troy. We will soon be planning our participation in World Ranger Day at Pickett's Mill Battlefield State Historic Site. We need all of the experts in both technology and planning to help put that one together. Watch for info.

Whether you can volunteer to plan, stay up late to work the night shift, or come back and help us pack everything away, we need YOU to help us get the Silver Comet Amateur Radio Society out of the meeting room and on the air! What can you do to help?

Please join us In Person at 7pm on the 1st Tuesday of each month

OUR NEW HOME FOR MEETINGS

Nebo United Methodist Church 3685 Nebo Road Dallas, Georgia 30157…. *You may also join us on ZOOM at 7pm on the 1st Tuesday of each month.*

Editor's Notes:

Newsletter Editor WB4QOJ Lee wb4qoj@gmail.com
Don't forget to send me your stories, articles, ideas and questions for Our Newsletter. You can send to me in any format I can always fix spelling or other errors. This is your Newsletter and it's your Ideas and Articles That make it BETTER.

All Copies of past SKYWAVE Newsletters can be found at the club website: *http://www.silvercometars.com/newsletter.php.*

 # SCARS Media Center:

Web: http://www.silvercometars.com/index.php
Groups.IO: https://silvercometars.groups.io/g/main
Facebook: https://en-gb.facebook.com/groups/2360561620926754/
QRZ: https://www.qrz.com/db/W4RSC/
Info: Info@silvercometars.com or Silvercometars@gmail.com
Contest/Status:https://www.silvercometars.com/hamlogs/SCARS-Contest-Summary.html
Hamdash Scorecard: https://hamdash.affirmatech.com

Send SCARS website corrections, comments, or suggestions to our WebMaster Troy (K4JDA) at troy.davis@hotmail.com
_____

Monday – "SCARS Night Out" Net !

Please join us *EACH MONDAY* on the 146.955 (-77Hz) and 443.475 (+77Hz) Repeaters at 7:00pm & EchoLink #3026 and on Zoom. Check the SCARS Groups.IO calendar for meeting and Zoom link information.

It's fun and informative. Suggestions for Topics of Discussion are always solicited. You don't have to dress up because it's very informal and you can bring your dinner and eat it too.

Additional Moderators are needed. If interested in helping out, please contact Troy K4JDA at troy.davis@hotmail.com

_____

SCARS Community Food Drive!

 Let's keep up the good work in 2023. Monetary donations are easy to make on our website at ***http://www.silvercometars.com/about.php***

Helping Hands of Paulding County will gratefully appreciate your thoughtfulness. For more information on this great organization: http://hhpcga.org/community-support/food-pantry-clothing-donations

SCARS 9th Annual AM Broadcast Band DX Contest

 Coming Soon!   It's Free!   It's Fun! BYO Food & Drinks
0001-UTC on 1 October 2023 and ends 2359-UTC on 31 October 2023
Capture the Trophy for your Listening Post/Ham Shack
(picture) K4TXA Cheri accepting Trophy for John W4TXA 2022

Additional Information and Rules will be published September NewsLetter

--

Breakfast @......

Ready to join us for casual conversation, informal Q&A, problem solving and occasional humiliation? We have decided to resume our social breakfasts at least until the next pandemic comes along.
Contact Chuck K4CGA for weekly Time and Place **k4cga.ga@gmail.com**
Visitors, spouses and friends are welcomed.

_____

Why a Ham Radio subset has such appeal

Chaz Cone W4GKF SEDXC

   I've been a ham for 70 years (WOW! It doesn't *seem* that long!) and I've watched the hobby evolve at a pretty steady rate all that time. For me, the best part of all this is one's ability to focus on some number of subsets. You can develop and enjoy interests in, for example, QRP, SSB, CW, Satellite, Digital modes, construction, antennas and on and on. In my case chasing DX was what kept me interested and active all these years. I remember clearly the thrill of my first DX contact on my Harvey-Wells Bandmaster running 50 watts into a 40m dipole. And a renewed burst of joy when that QSL card from England arrived a few weeks later. "Look, Dad! I can talk to the WORLD!"

   While I belong and have belonged to a number of general interest Ham Radio clubs, my passion for DX drove me to find like-minded folks to gather with. Enter the Southeastern DX Club (SEDXC).

   Founded in 1958, members enjoy chasing DX, talking about DX, *being* DX and on and on. Aside from the camaraderie, making sure that hard-to-work entities get on the air is a clear mission.

   DXpeditions are expensive. When I led one to Navassa Island in 1972, the DXpedition cost was $5,000 - and this is when average family income was just over $11,000/year. Recent DXpeditions have cost $500,000 and more. None would be possible without financial support from companies, organizations, individuals and, yes, DX clubs. Sponsoring/supporting DXpeditions is a primary function of SEDXC. Without that financial support, there'd be no more DXpeditions.

   And, another important function of SEDXC is to "Elmer" folks new to the hobby to get into chasing DX. We have a section on our website where you can get mentoring. It's **DX Elmers**; try it!

   If you care at all about DX or think you might be, I encourage you to consider joining SEDXC. You can learn more at **sedxc.org** and join by going here: **join.sedxc.org**
_____

Paulding EMA Lost Person Full-Scale Exercise

April 29th 2023   **Dave K4DMF - EC**

Over two months of planning went into developing this exercise, including several Zoom meetings and a site visit before the final plan was ready. The development team discussed several possible scenarios and multiple situational injects. When EMA Deputy Director Eve Cogsdell shared the plan with the participants, it was one of the most well-written plans ever developed in Paulding County for a full-scale exercise. In this exercise, we had a new person filling the role of the lost person (Chief Steve Garner) and a new CERT Team Leader (Ruth Leber) filling those critical roles. The Paulding ARES team was led by Dan Ozment (W4DTO). Paulding ARES members participating were Dianne DaLee (KY4BN), Chuck DuVall (K4CGA), Kunal Mitra (KO4HGP), Ed Rutledge (KO4BWN), and Ron West (WB3ILX). After setting up the ARES Trailer on site, I filled the role of evaluator and did not participate as a player.

Following a Code Red announcement on Saturday at 9 am, all players assembled at the Paulding EOC for the initial briefing and team selections. Everyone re-assembled at Paulding Meadows Park for the on- site briefing. Since the Paulding EMA bus was out of commission, the ARES trailer served as the exercise MCV (Mobile Communications Vehicle). Upon arrival at the park, we were joined by two tactical dispatchers who work for the 911 center. All ARES members participated in setting up the ARES trailer. The CERT logistics team set up the EMA pop-up tent with a table and chairs just outside the back door of the ARES trailer, as there is not enough room inside the trailer for five communicators. This setup allowed sufficient space to communicate effectively without crowding.

As the exercise commenced, Dianne, Kunal, and Ed were embedded with the CERT teams, and we also had a CERT team member (Mark Roumillat KF4ESP) who brought his radio and served as liaison with the 4 th team of searchers.

Thanks to a great idea by Ed earlier in the week, we decided to experiment using the unique characteristics of the ID 51 Icom radio to send a signal using RF containing the latitude/longitude info of the radio. This capability allowed real-time tracking of each team's location on a computer display map.

The experiment was an overwhelming success, with four of the five radios successfully tracking position in real-time. Unfortunately, two other exercise objectives on our list were not successful.

The first unsuccessful objective was to use RDF equipment to track the sensor worn by the lost person.

We could not decode the digital signal or even identify its frequency. The Sherriff's department has Specialized Equipment that allows them to locate the position of the lost person in about 5 minutes. The second unsuccessful objective was visually finding the missing person using a drone. With the leaves in full deployment, seeing anything not out in the open was impossible. Using its FLIR capability, the drone could not distinguish a usable heat signature to guide rescuers. One initial goal we could not exercise this time was to set up a mesh network between the ARES trailer and the County MCV bus. As the bus was out of commission, there was no other vehicle to establish a shared network. We will try this next time.

During the debriefing, our lost person (Steve Garner) said he moved around and clocked 3.86 miles of walking while evading search teams. Steve stated he heard teams close by several times and the drone overhead once but was not found until he returned to the campsite. We were lucky with the weather during the exercise, with nearly ideal conditions for searching.

Eve and Director Stephen Dooley gave an on-site debriefing to solicit initial feedback. A more thorough and detailed after-action meeting will be held later in May to solicit additional feedback, allowing us to improve the next one.

For the ARES group, we responded in near real-time by picking up the trailer at Fire Station 7 on Saturday morning just before the briefing. Set up at the site went quickly, and we were on the air before the searchers disbursed into their search areas. Our equipment worked flawlessly using the PLD 6 simplex frequency for voice communications and the digital channel (PLD 12) for radios to send their position reports. All in all, it was a very successful day for communications.

This exercise was the first full-scale exercise planned for 2023. Stand by for an announcement of the active shooter exercise in early June as planning for that one continues. If you want to give back to your community (and isn't that one of the reasons we have ham radio), joining the ARES team and participating in these exercises makes this community a better and safer place to live. We are a force multiplier with unique skills and capabilities this group brings to Public Safety. Come join us and have some fun!

WB3ILX Ron, K4CGA Chuck, KO4BWN Ed, KY4BN Dianne, W4DTO Dan, K04HGP Kunal

by Troy K4JDA

Preparations Underway for ARRL Field Day 2023

We are preparing for a bang-up Field Day this year, to be held June 24-25 (setup starts Friday June 23).

We will be at Fire Station 7 in Rockmart again this year, and will have up to four stations set up for Voice, CW, and Digital operating. For those of you who haven't attended a Silver Comet ARS Field Day, it is a weekend of Amateur Radio fun, operating, socializing, and learning. All of the equipment and food is provided, so all we need is YOU! I personally learn more at Field Day every year than any other event. So plan on joining us!!

If you are interested in helping, we need as many volunteers as we can get for setup, operating, food, training, and tear down / clean up. Many hands make light work for everyone, so please consider pitching in an hour or two. We will teach you everything you need to know - it's a great opportunity to learn.

Check out http://field-day.arrl.org for information on Field Day in general, and Email Troy K4JDA at troy.davis@hotmail.com for more information or to volunteer for Silver Comet ARS' Field Day.

Coming up This Weekend

Reminder: Field Day Site Visit and Planning - FS7 everybody is welcome, come if you can

When:
This Saturday May 6, 2023
8:30am to 10:30am

Where:
296 Crossroads Church Rd, Rockmart, GA 30153

Organizer: Troy Davis 770 329 0592

_____

Rubber Ducky? *by* Chuck DuVall, K4CGA

A *rubber duckie* is a toy shaped like a duck, that is usually yellow..... Whoops, wrong "ducky".   A *rubber ducky antenna* is an electrically short monopole antenna that functions similar to a base-loaded whip antenna and consists of a helix shaped springy wire sealed in a rubber or plastic jacket.

Rubber ducky antennas are typically used on portable or handheld radio equipment at VHF/UHF frequencies in place of quarter wavelength whip antennas which are inconveniently long and cumbersome at these frequencies.

Invented in 1958, the rubber ducky antenna soon became the antenna of choice for most portable communication devices like transceivers, scanners and especially walkie-

talkies. The rubber ducky is quite short and flexible compared to earlier rigid telescoping antennas making it more suitable for handheld operation, especially when worn on the belt or in crowded spaces.

 To make an antenna more compact or electrically short (shorter than 1/4 wavelength, i.e., rubber ducky), and to make them resonant at the operating frequency, an *inductor* (loading coil) is added in series with the antenna. Antennas which have these inductors built into their bases are called base-loaded whips. (144/440mHz shown in photo)

The rubber ducky is an electrically short quarter-wave antenna in which the inductor, instead of being in the base, is built into the antenna itself in the form of a narrow helix of springy wire. This functions as the needed inductor. The springy wire is flexible, and is enclosed in a plastic or rubber-like covering to protect it while remaining flexible.

The technical name for this type of antenna is a normal-mode helix. Rubber ducky antennas are typically 4% to 15% of a wavelength long; that is, 16% to 60% of the length of a standard quarter-wave whip.

Like other electrically short antennas, the rubber ducky has poorer performance (less gain) due to design losses and considerably less gain than a quarter-wave whip. However, it has somewhat better performance than an equal length base loaded antenna. This is because the inductance is distributed throughout the antenna and therefore allows somewhat greater current in the antenna.

A rubber duck antenna will have lower gain than a full-size quarter-wavelength antenna thereby reducing the range of the radio in either a simplex or radio to repeater environment. Their design is a compromise between antenna gain and small size.

Rubber duckies are difficult to characterize electrically because the current distribution along the element is not [sinusoidal](#) as is the case with a thin linear antenna. The rubber ducky has a high Q factor and thus a narrow bandwidth which means that as the frequency departs from the antenna's designed center frequency, its SWR increases and thus its efficiency falls off quickly. It is possible to design a rubber ducky antenna that has about 50 Ω impedance at its feed-point, but a compromise of bandwidth may be necessary.

Some rubber ducky antennas are designed quite differently than others. One type uses a spring only for support where the spring is electrically shorted out. The antenna is therefore electrically a linear element antenna. Some other rubber ducky antennas use a spring of non-conducting material for support and comprise a collinear array antenna.

Such antennas are still called rubber ducky antennas even though they function quite differently (and often better) than the original spring antenna.

Summary: Choose your rubber duck carefully! If it has eyes and a beak, it may float if placed or dropped into water but will not work well or look good on your HT. If it has an RF connector, it probably will work well on your HT but may not float unless it is connected to a floatable device.

Note: Some statements are excerpts from Wikipedia.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

_____

Interesting Links

Rig Crtl - Icom/Yaseu/Elecraft- Win4IcomSuite / Win4YaseuSuite / Win4k3Suite
icom.va2fsq.com

Ham Cockpit
https://ve3nea.github.io/HamCockpit/

MULTIPSK Version 4.48.1 ◈ *Multimode digital transceiver*
http://multipsk.fr

FLDigi Soundcard Suite Sound Card Digital Modes
https://sourceforge.net/projects/fldigi/

Ham Radio CAT, PSK31, FT8, JT9 and JT65 Interfaces
http://www.xggcomms.com/Icom-Interface-Shop(2066628).html

Installing RMS Express on Linux with Wine
http://k6eta.com/linux/installing-rms-express-on-linux-with-wine

IC7100/IC7300 control
https://www.maniaradio.it/en/ic7100bkt.html and
https://www.maniaradio.it/en/ic7300bkt.html

ARES Southeastern US Situational Awareness Map
https://www.prc-77.com/2022/07/ares-southeastern-us-situational.html

---

Congratulations to our Neighbor to the North 1st Place in Georgia "Parks on The AIR"
ET0WAH Valley Amateur Radio Club W4EVC

Congratulations to the Top Scorers for the Inaugural Georgia State Parks on the Air event.

Category	Top Finishers
Activator	1st – AA5JF Andrew Goss (7693 pts)
	2nd – KO4IZK Colin Cameron (6000 pts)
	3rd – W1RCP Robert Pitts (2684 pts)
Club	1st – W4EVC Etowah Valley Amateur Radio Club (1332 pts)
	2nd – K4B Glynn Amateur Radio Association (747 pts)
	3rd – W4R Middle Georgia Amateur Radio Association (595 pts)
Out-of-State Hunter	1st – WB8CPG James Popovich (6407 pts)
	2nd – KO4SB Chuck Herring (1482 pts)
	3rd – WA4JA John Almon (380 pts)
In-State Hunter	1st – W4AEW Javier Maldonado (2166 pts)
	2nd – WE4BE Bobby Evans (1072 pts)
	3rd – W8VYM John Fickler (962 pts)

"For the Newbie or the Experienced Ham"
  "What to Buy and Why"   *by Ron WB3ILX Part 1*

OK, so you have put in the time and earned your amateur radio Technician license.

Hopefully you will continue to study and go all the way up to Amateur Extra, but for now think about what you want to do with this brand new Technician license.

What are your interest? You probably aren't sure because there are a lot of areas of interest to choose from in this hobby. There is just the general talking to other hams and learning from their experiences and now with the new digital modes available you can talk anywhere in the world using DSTAR, C4FM, Fusion, and DMR radios. Then if you are interested in public safety there is ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service). No matter what your interest is you only want to buy a radio to meet your current needs and hopefully as those interests expand that same radio will have the features you will need in the future, especially as you continue to upgrade your license and you get more band privileges.

So staying in the VHF/UHF band portion, what equipment features are available and what are the advantages? There are single band either VHF or UHF radios either in Handy Talkies or Base Mobile units. These radios operate only in the desired band either VHF or UHF. Then there is the dual band dual receive HT, the best option in my opinion.

Wow, two types of dual band VHF/UHF radios. There is the basic dual band VHF/UHF radio that transmits and receives only on one band at a time. Then there is the dual band dual receive radio that can also have a cross band feature, this is where I would start. The cross band feature is a great feature especially if you have a dual band dual receive Handy Talkie (HT). You can link a Handy Talkie on a simplex frequency to your base mobile dual band dual receive cross band radio and now you have a relay radio with 50 watts of power talking to a repeater and sending the receive signal from the repeater back to your Handy Talkie. This application is great if you can't hit the repeater from your home using the HT but you can with a your base radio. This set

up is available in both analog FM radios or in a digital radio HT and base mobile configuration. The analog FM radios are less expensive by a few hundred dollars.

Just, remember if you Buy CHEAP YOU GET CHEAP!!!!

Learn from others. Talk to other hams, be sure to get more than one opinion then make your decision. My suggestion is buy a dual band dual receive analog or digital HT, a mobile dual band antenna, and a dual base station antenna. You will need an sma to bnc adapter so you can connect these antennas to the HT. Now your HT will function as a portable, mobile and base station radio. Staying with the 3 primary manufactures of radio equipment, Yaesu, Icom, and Kenwood for radios, the dual band dual receive HT will cost about $200-$300, dual band mag mount mobile antenna about $100, base station antenna, something at least close to 6ft., tall about $200 with some wiggle room in the price and of course 100ft., of coax for the base station antenna, about another $100. So for a SWAG (scientific wild ass guess) you can get on the air, portable, mobile and base station all in your HT for a mere, $500-$800. For this hobby that is cheap. The reason I mentioned the 3 primary manufactures, Yaesu, Icom, and Kenwood is they have been making amateur radio equipment that will last 20 plus years for over 70 years. The new Chinese radios are a lot cheaper but do not have some of the standard compatible and important features like a 6 pin mini din connector that is available on the dual band dual receive base mobile Japanese radios. This feature allows you to attach a digital interface to your base mobile radio. My best advice is talk to fellow hams and read. You only want to buy each piece of equipment once and you want it to last.

" Why MAC OS "　　　　　　　　　　　　　*by Larry K4LDC*
　　　(Club MAC Guru and Solar Propagation Expert)

Ham radio operators, also known as amateur radio enthusiasts, use radio equipment to communicate with other ham radio operators around the world. While ham radio can be enjoyed on any computer platform, using a Mac OS can offer many advantages. In this article, well discuss some of the benefits of using Mac OS with ham radio.

1. Ease of Use
Mac OS is known for its intuitive and user-friendly interface. This is especially true for ham radio operators who use software to communicate with other operators. Many popular ham radio software programs, such as WSJT-X, Fldigi and MacLoggerDX, have been developed specifically for Mac OS. These programs are designed to be easy to use and offer features that are not available on other platforms.

2. Stability and Reliability
Mac OS is known for its stability and reliability. Unlike other operating systems that require regular updates and maintenance, Mac OS is designed to be low-maintenance. This means that ham radio operators can rely on their Macs to work consistently and without issues. This is important for ham radio operators who need their equipment to be reliable for emergency communications.

3. Security
Security is a major concern for all computer users, but it is especially important for ham radio operators. Many ham radio operators use their equipment for emergency communications, which means that security is critical. Mac OS is known for its strong security features, including its built-in firewall and automatic software updates. This helps to ensure that ham radio operators can communicate safely and securely.

4. Integration

Mac OS is designed to integrate seamlessly with other Apple products, such as iPhones and iPads. This makes it easy for ham radio operators to use their Macs to control their radios remotely or to access their logbooks from their mobile devices. This integration also makes it easy to transfer files and data between devices.

5. Flexibility

One of the great advantages of using Mac OS with ham radio is its flexibility. Mac OS is capable of running multiple applications simultaneously, which allows ham radio operators to run multiple software programs at the same time. This is especially useful for operators who need to monitor multiple frequencies or modes simultaneously. Additionally, Mac OS can run Windows applications through software like Parallels, VMware, VirtualBox or Bootcamp, which means that ham radio operators can use both Mac and Windows applications on the same computer.

In conclusion, using Mac OS with ham radio offers many advantages. Its ease of use, stability, security, integration, and flexibility make it a great choice for ham radio operators. Whether you're a seasoned ham radio operator or just getting started.

<p style="color:red; text-align:center">Digital SoundCard Modes Part 1 VaraAC
Part 2 Next Month Will feature Olivia SoundCard mode on HF</p>

What is the New Ver. 7.1.4 of VarAC ?

VarAC is HF/FM Digital chat reinvented. It is a FREE, modern HF P2P real-time chatting application for the amateur radio operators with some GREAT NEW ENHANCEMENTS

VarAC V7.1.4 is here! (From VarAC Group)

With QSY recovery, Granular alert tags, Auto antenna tuning, TCP based CAT and more!
Hi VarACiers!
Auto-QSY has transformed the way we work with VarAC. The CF (Calling Frequency) is now more available for CQs and Beacons while QSOs and VMails exchange are happening mostly on slots.
But I always felt there was a missing part in that mechanism. Sometimes your partner doesn't QSY along with you (for various reasons) and the link is dropped. So...

📢 Introducing: QSY Recovery
VarAC will now wait to receive an "I am alive" signal after the QSY sequence. If that does not happen in 20-25 seconds, it will fall back to the previous frequency so the link remains (Both sides need to run the latest version for this to work)

But that's not all...

let's talk about alert tags. They are super useful, BUT not useful enough... at least not until today.

📢Introducing: Granular alert tags

V7.1.4 extends the coverage of alert tags and so they cover all incoming data channels : Data stream, Beacons, Broadcasts and CQs. So you can now set a callsign as an alert tag and VarAC will alert you (with sound and visual) that it has just called CQ or beaconed. But hey - that's still not all.

VarAC lets you move between frequencies... and the missing piece in that puzzle was always the antenna tuner.

📢Introducing: Auto Antenna Tuning

VarAC can now trigger your RIG antenna tuner every time it moves between frequencies or only between bands (band-skip). This only works with supported rigs that has a CAT command that triggers the tuner.

you will need to deploy the new VarAC_cat_commands.ini file in the VarAC ZIP file to enjoy this.

And no, its still not all there is in V7.1.4.

Here is the full list of features and improvements.

A list of fixed bugs can be found in toward the end of this email.

New features

Auto QSY recovery: in case one of the sides failed to QSY both sides will return the me main frequency. This is done by new QSY accept / reject tags. Both sides need to be on the latest version for this to work.

Extended Alert tags: now searched in all broadcasts elements (FROM/TO/MSG), CQs and Beacons. You can now get alert for specific prefixes calling CQ/Beacon, set a Broadcast alert group etc.

Granular Alert tags: Enabling/Disabling alert tags per element (Beacon / CQ / Broadcast / DataStream) Auto antenna tune upon frequency change. You can set to always or only during band skip. (works with CAT & FLrig with and only with supported rigs).

TCP based CAT control (For all those modern SDRs)

Frequency offset calibration - for those rigs with a drifted VFO

VarAC Start CAT command. CAT file now has a new parameter you can customize "VarACStartCmd=". This CAT command will be executed upon VarAC startup incase you want to put your rig in a certain state prior to start using VarAC.

"In QSO with" now shows the name of your QSO partner if already had a QSO with him in the past. For Developers - New SQLite tables (Find more info HERE)

- "qso" - all VarAC QSOs.

- "contact" - all callsigns you ever connected with.

New VarAC.ini parameters (Only available by manually editing the INI file)

- Show NoCat QSY Popup: Suppress QSY popups when no CAT control is available

- FrequencyListCustomFilePath: Set a custom frequency list file using a new VarAC.ini parameter
- Safety PTT Off Every Minute: enable/disable the safety mechanism of PTT OFF every minutes while idle
- VarAC LogFile Retention Days: How many days to keep entries in the VarAC.log file (default 30 days)
- PTT Disable After Freq Change Seconds: Temporarily disable PTT for X seconds after frequency change (for those antennas that need a long tune cycle before TX)

Enhancements/Changes

QSY Back now also prompts for user confirmation with Auto selection with a countdown timer.

Incoming ping is narrated as "Ping from..." Instead of "Connected to..."

Detecting misconfiguration where VarAC VARA modem type is not the same as the actual connected VARA modem.

Changing "DISCO" gesture to "RING!" which will create a long phone ring to drag an op attention.

"DING" gesture is now "DING!"

Keeping Broadcast windows always on top while open.

Forcing the use of VARA V4.7.3 or higher.

"Callsign block list" feature not also applied to incoming broadcasts.

"Callsign block list" now perform upper-case to all callsigns.

Reducing the max time for QSO on CF to 4 minutes (now with auto-QSY there is no need for CF Long links)

Disabled manual typing into the QSO-Log dropdowns RST-S, RST-R, BAND

Disabling VARA monitor for VARA-FM.

To upgrade from an existing VarAC version:

Download the VarAC Zip file.

Unpack to a temporary directory.

Copy ONLY the VarAC.exe file to your existing VarAC installation directory.

As always - we are always there for you on our Forum, our Facebook group, and also on our new Telegram group.

I would like to thank our Beta team for investing their dedication in contentiously testing and bug-reporting so you can gave a smooth VarAC journey. TU guys 🙏🙏

73,

Irad 4Z1AC & the VarAC team

More info: **https://www.varac-hamradio.com/**

WHAT IS A DX CLUSTER Part 1   by Lee WB4QOJ

From Wikipedia
A DX cluster is a network of computers, each running a software package dedicated to gathering, and disseminating, information on amateur radio DX (long-distance contact) activities. The computers comprising the network are called nodes, the network itself being termed a cluster of nodes.

    If you have never used a DX Cluster like WB4QOJ for spotting, it can be overwhelming. Most logging programs that are used have the ability to connect to a DX Cluster. Most Hams are able to see all the latest spots World Wide. But, you can set filtering to only show what you are interested in seeing. Say you are looking for a specific DX Expedition or Grid Square, Country, State or Mode, those filters can be setup. If you leave the Filtering off you see everything coming across the network. The WB4QOJ DX Cluster utilizes all of the most popular Networks in one connection (not all DX Clusters have all), CC CLUSTER, ARCluster, DX Spider and the Reverse Beacon Network (RBN). The RBN is setup in a Skimmer configuration that is normally off unless it is set in filtering for FTx and CW.
It can REALLY be busy especially on FTx Spots.

On any given day you will see connected to the Network:

**Cluster: 324 nodes 21 Locals 7215 Total users   Uptime 15 days 16:27
WB4QOJ de WB4QOJ-8 25-Mar-2023 1204Z   CCC >**

   Also, the WB4QOJ Cluster has a command "WWV" (Solar info) DX Bulletins, and Messages. Examples : SH/WWV will give you the last 8-10 hours of Solar Activity. The "List" command will give you DX Bulletins from 425 DX News, ARLPropagation, ARLDX Bulletins and others.

EXAMPLE:
SH/WWV
Date						
24-Mar-2023	21	158	66	5	Severe w/G4 -> Moderate w/G2	<W0MU>
25-Mar-2023	0	158	66	4	Severe w/G4 -> Minor w/G1	<W0MU>
25-Mar-2023	3	158	66	3	Severe w/G4 -> Minor w/G1	<W0MU>
25-Mar-2023	6	158	66	3	Strong w/G3 -> Minor w/G1	<W0MU>
25-Mar-2023	9	158	66	4	Minor w/G1 -> Minor w/G1	<W0MU>
25-Mar-2023	12	158	66	4	Minor w/G1 -> Minor w/G1	<W0MU>

LIST

 In the next SKYWAVE News Letter I'll do Part 2 with many of the more popular Filters and some special filtering that you will not find in many of the filter examples on the web.

wb4qoj.no-ip.org   port 7373
DX Cluster Node Since 2014

SCARS Amateur Radio Licensing Schedule

SCARS/BHBC Test Session (aka East)

K4ELI and the VE Team will be testing at 7 PM at Burnt Hickory Baptist Church, 5145 Due West Road, Powder Springs, 1st Thursday of each month.
No walk-ins. Register or call ahead. See sign at Front Desk for Room #.

2023 Schedule

Feb 2 * Mar 2 * Apr 6 * May 4 * Jun 1

For more information: Steve Walls, K4ELI: swalls46@att.net (404) 697-9849

All classes of license exams will be available.

SCARS/Paulding Test Session (aka West)

W4TXA and the VE Team will be testing at 7 PM at the 2735 Hiram Acworth Hwy (Hwy 92), Dallas, GA 30157, 2nd Tuesday of each month.

2023 Schedule

Feb 14 * Mar 14 * Apr 11 * May 9 * Jun * 13

For more information: John Reynolds, W4TXA, w4txa.john@gmail.com (770) 715-9640

All classes of license exams will be available.

BRING:
- Original and copy of existing license.
- Copy of FRN # if you have a GMRS license or some other license.
- $15 cash----exact change
- Photo ID

See the following web sites for more details:

SCARS http://www.silvercometars.com/about.php#TEST_SESSION

ARRL http://www.arrl.org/licensing-education-training

Silver Comet Amateur Radio Society

2023 Calendar

** Don't forget our club breakfast every Thursday morning around 8:30am **

	February	March	April	May	June	July
Meeting 1st Tuesday Date/Time:	2/7 7:00 PM	3/7 7:00 PM	4/4 7:00 PM	5/2 7:00 PM	6/6 7:00 PM	7/4 7:00 PM
Meeting Location	Mount Nebo Methodist Church	Mount Nebo Methodist Church	Mount Nebo Methodist Church	Mount Nebo Methodist Church	Mount Nebo Methodist Church	Mount Nebo Methodist Church
Meeting Activity	160 M by Salyers AJ8B	Weather by Tupin N5IMC	Weather by Tupin N5IMC	RFI/VHF Propagation	TBA	TBA
Additional Activities	TBD	TBD	Georgia Parks on the Air	TBA	Field Day	TBA
Hamfest & Conventions	Dalton Hamfest	TBA	Calhoun Hamfest	Forsyth Swap Meet	Atlanta Hamfest	TBA

This calendar is "Subject to change". Submit change request to K4ELI Steve

V2023.3

SILVER COMET AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY, INC.

CONTACT US:

Groups.io Request:
SilvercometARS@groups.io

Repeater:
146.955 (-) (77hz)

Contact: Club President
Dan Ozment, W4DTO

Email: dan@ozment.net

_____

SILVERCOMET ARS, INC.
PO BOX 1873
HIRAM, GEORGIA 30141