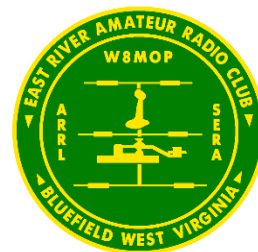


East River Amateur Radio Club
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Club HQ: 704 Bland St. Room 523
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W8MOP



November 11, 2024

Fellow citizen,

Considering recent events, specifically natural disasters, I would like to take this opportunity to share the importance of amateur radio (ham radio) to our community with you. Recently, Hurricane Helene caused many problems for our area, but nothing like it did in Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee. Shortly after the disaster, it became clear that many in the area were not only without essential needs, but communications were significantly disrupted as well. Within hours after the storm had passed, amateur radio operators in the affected regions had established communications with many other amateurs and responders and set up and maintained a network that could reach the greater area, which helped to assist in many operations, including search and rescue, welfare checks, locating needs, and relief distribution. All this was done by volunteers, who tirelessly gave their time and equipment to assist their fellow man. Many of these were affected themselves but assisted anyhow.

Amateur radio requires a license to operate. However, during particular emergencies, this requirement is lifted, and as a result, some were able to get assistance just by picking up a radio and asking. The East River Amateur Radio Club in Bluefield began to monitor this network, as it was available on certain frequencies and even over the internet. During the first few days, a request was made to get handheld ham radios into the hands of those without communications to ensure no one else was lost or injured during operations. Our club reached out to our community, and within a couple of days we purchased 48 handheld radios and delivered them by airplane to Avery County Airport, NC, right in the heart of the affected area. Once on the ground there, we put them directly into the hands of other amateur radio operators, who immediately started to charge and program them so they could be placed in the hands of those who desperately needed them.

As a result of the disaster, many more people have expressed an interest in becoming a licensed amateur radio operator. Our club actively helps with test preparation and our Volunteer Examiner team administers exams right here in Bluefield.

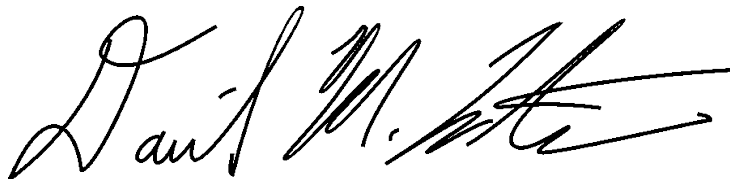
Due to the increased interest in amateur radio, I wish to inform you of our service to the community, and to point out that we are 100% nonprofit. We rely on sponsors and club

members for finances and resources to maintain our infrastructure, which among other things, serves our area in the event of a disaster or any communication failure. To continue to assist those wishing to become an amateur radio operator and to expand our provided services, I'm pleased to provide you with a list of opportunities that will help us serve the community:

1. Simply share this story with others! Even though amateur radio has been around for over 100 years, many aren't aware of its existence. Others may consider it a hobby using ancient and dated technology. However, many new developments in communications come from amateur radio. Those who are computer, radio, electronics, or maker enthusiasts (arts, crafts, 3D printing, etc.) usually find amateur radio a gratifying and rewarding hobby that serves as a civic service.
2. Become a ham! Come to one of our meetings or reach out to us. We can demonstrate what all amateur radio can do and help you find study materials, a class, and an exam location. Email: erarc@erarc.com Website: <https://erarc.com>
3. Donate. As a nonprofit organization, we accept donations and will happily provide you with a tax receipt. You can find our mailing address at the top of this letter.
4. Sponsor us! Our area businesses are so very good to us. A sponsor (any amount or anything) is so helpful to our cause. They enable us to maintain repeaters (used for local communications), HF radios (long distance), education, training, and community events for practice, community exhibition, and involvement.

In closing, please allow me to thank you for your assistance in getting the word out. We think we are more than just a "geek club". Our club is made up of diverse people who all share an interest in helping others through radio technology. This region is very blessed to have amateur radio operators who have a heart to serve. It certainly adds a special element to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Lester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David M. Lester, N8VFR
President
East River Amateur Radio Club
dave@n8vfr.radio