

ROANOKE DIVISION REPORT

JANUARY, 2018

North and South Carolina were the last states in the U.S. through which the August 21, 2017 solar eclipse transited, and thousands of Hams in the Roanoke Division got on the air during the two-hour window of partial coverage which culminated in the 2+ minutes of totality in a roughly 60 mile wide band. Over 700 Hams uploaded their logs to HAMSci, the academic collaboration measuring the propagation impact of the eclipse. Lead scientist for the Solar Eclipse QSO Party sponsored by HAMSci is Nathaniel Frissell, W2NAF, a Ph.D. graduate of Virginia Tech and now a professor of physics at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). In November, the YASME Foundation bestowed its 2017 Excellence Award to Nathaniel and Magda Moses, KM4EGE, a Virginia Tech undergraduate, for their analysis of propagation effects from the solar eclipse. As hypothesized, HF band conditions temporarily took on darkness characteristics, but many of those effects lingered when the sun's full strength returned. A comprehensive report on their findings will be presented in late February.

The second half of the year is traditionally quieter, but the two largest hamfests in the Roanoke Division take place in August and over Labor Day weekend. The Berryville, Virginia hamfest occurs the first Sunday in August at the confluence of Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland, about 60 miles west of Washington, DC. Many Hams from the Atlantic Division come to the northwestern corner of Virginia to join their Roanoke Division brethren at the Clarke County fairgrounds for the event which last year drew almost 1,500 attendees. For three days over the Labor Day weekend, the division's largest hamfest is the Shelby Hamfest, which last year celebrated its 61st anniversary. Another prominent hamfest in the second half of the year was the West Virginia State Convention, held over three days at Jackson's Mill, the West Virginia 4-H conference center which is managed by West Virginia University.

The Roanoke Division is proud to be at the forefront of youth Ham Radio activities, and in the second half of 2017, three prominent events took place. On Labor Day, September 4, West Virginia University's Amateur Radio Club, W8CUL, hosted an ARISS event, Amateur Radio on the International Space Station. Thanks to careful planning and a long pass, twenty elementary students asked questions of the ISS team. WVU also worked closely with local media to obtain wide ranging coverage of the event and Amateur Radio's role in making the contact. The Antietam Elementary School in Woodbridge, VA was another lucky ARISS participant. On December 11, twenty of its students also had the chance to query astronaut Mark Vande Hei, KG5GNP, about life in space. Like the WVU ARISS event, careful planning and coordination with the school's public relations department resulted in excellent coverage, including how Amateur Radio as a STEM tool (Science, Technology, Engineering and Technology) provides the vehicle to communicate with the ISS, as well as teaching basics of physics and geography.

In addition to ARISS, the Roanoke Division was host to the quadrennial Boy Scout National Jamboree, which took place in July at its permanent home at the Summit, a 20,000 acre reserve outside Beckley, WV. West Virginia Section Manager Dan Ringer, K8WV, and Roanoke Division Vice Director Bill Morine, N2COP, traveled to K2BSA, the Jamboree's onsite station, to give an award of appreciation. Accepting was K2BSA Director Jim Wilson, K5ND. K2BSA's results over the ten days of the National Jamboree were:

| Description | Number |
|--|---------------|
| Amateur Radio Demonstrations - Number of Scouts | 2,457 |
| Amateur Radio Two-Way Contacts Logged (HF, VHF, UHF, Satellites) | 1,399 |
| Radio Merit Badges Earned | 305 |
| ARDF - Foxhunting - Number of Scouts | 200 |

Source: k2bsa.net

Scout related Amateur Radio continued with the 60th annual JOTA, Jamboree On The Air, held the weekend of October 20-22. An estimated 50 scout troops and councils in the Roanoke Division sponsored JOTA stations for scouts to learn more about the world of Ham Radio. JOTA is a unique event in scouting because it is global and not confined to just the U.S. or Canada, and it's open to all scouts – Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts. The North Carolina section has a scout leader – Dave Price, K4KDP – who is appointed as Assistant Section Manager for Youth, and coordinates JOTA activities in the Tar Heel state.

Wrapping up the youth theme, the Roanoke Division is pleased to see many of its schools place well in the semiannual School Club Roundup (SCR). The aforementioned Antietam Elementary School placed 6th nationally in the SCR Elementary category, bookended by W4ATC, the North Carolina State University, securing 4th in the college rankings. Where schools in the Roanoke Division shined, however, was in the Middle School charts. Perennial powerhouse Schofield Middle School of Aiken, SC operating under its school call of N4SMS, came in first in its division, with Virginia and South Carolina middle schools placing 3rd, 5th and 9th. Congratulations to the dedicated educators, volunteer Hams and students themselves who embrace Amateur Radio as a STEM tool to complement their classroom learning.

The Roanoke Division has two awards to recognize outstanding hams. The Roanoke Division Service Award is given out the first half of the year. In the second half the Miriam Smith Award is bestowed to the ham who has contributed the most to emergency communications and public service in western North Carolina. Director Dr. Jim Boehner, N2ZZ, was one of the presenters to this year's recipient, Tony Jones, KJ4CRO. This year's late July ceremony was meaningful because the creator of the Miriam Smith Award – Carl Smith, N4AA – was too ill to attend. Carl subsequently became a Silent Key in October. Carl created the award in 1996 after his wife Miriam, KB4C, and former Buncombe County (Asheville) NC ARES® Emergency Coordinator, passed away. Carl is best remembered as the publisher and editor of *DX Magazine* and *QRZ DX*. His passing is a blow not only to the Roanoke Division, but to all Hams around the globe.

On a final note, many Roanoke Division Hams have filed with UTC to operate on 630 and 2200 meters. Ralph Wallio, W0RPK, of Greenville, North Carolina has been tracking 630 meter activity, and finds that at least six stations in the division have earned their Worked All States (WAS) awards, with most operating digitally on JT9 and FT8, as well as CW.

2018 is destined to another busy and engaging year for the Roanoke Division. We send our best to all our fellow ARRL members and to all hams everywhere.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jim Boehner, N2ZZ
Director

Bill Morine, N2COP
Vice Director