

State of the Club

From Our Club Officers

The Somerset County Amateur Radio Club has had a great and challenging few years. Since it is time for nominations and nearing the end of 2021, we thought we would do a recap of our club's progress to help the newer members understand and refresh memories of others where we are now as opposed to just a few years ago.

Thanks to our county commissioners, county Emergency Management and our officer's efforts we have obtained a clubhouse and are now in our third year at our "Club House", Room 27 in the County's Founders Hall. This room has enabled us to have a regular location for meetings and events, as well as a station setup. Permanently mounted outdoor antennas for VHF/UHF and HF have been installed. We have a Kenwood 710 dual band transceiver that has been donated for use on VHF and UHF. This allows us access to many repeaters in the area and also fairly good simplex coverage. For HF, we are using a Region 13 Kenwood TS-480, power supply and Signalink interface that has sat in a pelican case in the county communications trailer most of its life. A windows 10 laptop has been donated. This allows us CAT control of the TS-480 for access to the new digital modes and connection to one of the two big screen TV's. This setup would have been impossible a few years ago.

During our social meetings we have presentations on many topics of interest. We have a great amount of knowledge within our membership of now over 50 members. We have several club sponsored repeaters located throughout Somerset County. We can provide almost perfect radio communications from anywhere in the county back to the Emergency Operations Center when needed. Our main repeaters have been rock solid the last couple of years. We did the upgrades, added UPS back-up and purchased an LP generator in case of site power failure for the main repeater system or emergency power use in the field. We also support repeaters at Mt. Davis and Hays Mill that operate UHF FM standalone or digitally giving us coverage in much of the southern part of the county. Digitally they are linked to each other but also can be linked worldwide via internet connections. They are very versatile and are capable of operating many modes including DMR, Fusion, D-Star and P-25. We also support Yaesu repeaters working standalone as FM or Fusion at Statler Hill and Shaffer Mt.

One of the Club's greatest strengths is our willingness to try new things. Some good examples are when faced with COVID19, instead of canceling Field Day, we combined our individual efforts from our homes to have club multi-operator Field Days. During the height of COVID-19 our meetings were conducted by Zoom Session. We have continued our Zoom Sessions since restrictions were lifted and we began meeting in person again.

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This has enabled members and associates from the Club to join in our meetings and presentations when they are unable to attend in person, including some members who live out of the area. In the clubhouse the large TV's have contributed to the enjoyment of Zoom meetings and presentations for those attending in person.

It was a lot of fun to participate as a group in the PA QSO Party. The Flight 93 Special Events Station went very well despite the problems that came up with very short notice due to government intervention. All in all, we have risen to the circumstances that have presented themselves and we have become stronger as a result.

Through a lot of effort and time by many of our members and officers we have come a long way in the last couple of years. We are a very diverse group and this is a very diverse *HOBBY*. There are CW clubs, contest clubs, repeater clubs, digital clubs, boat anchor clubs, etc, etc. And we are a little bit of all these clubs. Although we have done a lot, we need to continue to improve and adapt to new technology that interests the club.

We have discussed some improvements that we should work on in the coming year. A few of which are:

- A.) Improve the appearance of the club house by reorganizing things
- B.) Improve the operating position of the station.
- C.) Improve the station equipment.
- D.) Improve the structure of business meetings.

Other suggestions should be presented for consideration. Suggestions are always best when accompanied by a solution.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our club activities over the last few years. Without you we would not be able to keep our club growing with new technologies, improved systems and new members. Let's keep up the good work!

Thank you and 73,
The Officers
November 18, 2021