



## ICARC NEWSLETTER

March 31 2025

Thanks go to the ARRL  
Foundation  
for it's support of ICARC's  
future tower and repeater  
upgrades at it's remote site

### Officers for 2025:

President – Craig Bigler, AB3XA  
Vice President - Cass Fitzgerald-N3FLO  
Treasurer - Chris Edwards, N3VFK  
Secretary - Larry Freeman, N3LT

### Additional Board Members for 2024

1. Bill Robinson-KC3ZAF
2. Stuart Younkin-WB3FBL
3. Phil Kopczyk -K3PJ
4. Robert Zugates-KB3JOF
5. Elmer Sorisio-KB3WG
6. Larry Freeman-N3LT

### LOCAL HAPPENINGS:

The Ghost Town Trail (GTT) propagation study event came off very well on March 29, 2025 after being postponed from the previous weekend due to poor weather. The participants were, Phil Kopczyk (K3PJ), Craig Bigler (AB3XA), Cass Fitzgerald (N3FLO), Dave Dzelsky (N3DZ), Bill Robinson(KC3ZAF), ; see the photo later within this document. The intent was to test the viability of unbroken communications throughout the trail route along an approximate 19 mile section, on the ground, between Josephine, PA and Vintondale, PA. HF and vhf stations, fixed, mobile (vehicular) and portable (handhelds). Both simplex and repeater operation (N3FLO & W3BMD) were checked out. Net control was set up at Dilltown, the approximate center of the trail section with both, independent, hf and vhf/uhf capability. In addition three mobile hf /vhf stations were setup: one near Vintondale/Rexis, one near Heshbon, and two near Josephine. Net control had good two-way communication via hf (40 m) and 2m repeater to Heshbon and Josephine with 2m simplex a bit sketchy. Two-way HF, 80m, between Josephine and all other sites was impossible due to high noise at Josephine (S9+20 peaks) however, HF (40m) communications between net control at Dilltown and Josephine were solid, and likewise between Heshbon and Josephine. The Eastern most section between Dilltown and Vintondale/Rexis may be the most challenging, but there was solid communication between net control on 40 m, 80 m and 2m simplex, but repeater access was sketchy and impossible with handhelds along the trail, on foot, in that section of the trail. Bill Robinson set up a cross band repeater (uhf/vhf) in his vehicle at the central location to mitigate the lack of repeater access using handhelds on the trail. He performed a limited walk on the trail to test the system and it worked well. There were not enough participants to test this option extensively but it appears to be a viable technique for enhancing the communication ability for those walking or riding the trail with handheld radios. We will likely do another operations like this when the leaves bloom on the trees and can, hopefully, get folks walking or riding the trail in both directions for longer distances for a more in-depth test. All in all it was an excellent exercise and provided much good information indicating that ICARC will be able to assist in providing communications along a large section of the GTT for any organizations that may need our assistance in the future. See the photo below to get a perspective on the positions and distances along the trail.

Many thanks to those who organized, provided equipment and setup (and take down) everything for this event. Also, as at all ICARC events, there was plenty of food and drink available. In particular, I must comment on the quality of the Kielbasa and Sauerkraut provided by Ms. Sandy Bigler to the delight of us all. It was fantastic! We thank you Craig for making sure we got to partake of this delight.

The Motley Crew : From left to right: Cass, Dave, Larry, Bill, Craig, Phil.



The third formal meeting of the ICARC Grant Committee happened on 03/25/2025. There were also two grant subcommittee meetings (03/01/2025, and 03/18/2025). Several major decisions have been made and some equipment has been ordered so things are starting to accelerate.

### **Announcements:**

There will be an ARRL Amateur radio exam session (Technician, General, Extra class exams) administered by ICARC affiliated Volunteer Examiners (VE) on April 19, 2025 at 10:00 am local time at the Emergency Management Agency building on 85 Haven Drive, Indiana, PA. The ARRL charges a VE Coordinator examination fee of \$15.00 (\$5 for those less than 18 years old) to be collected at the time of the exam. This fee goes to the ARRL, not ICARC. If you are a first time examinee it is REQUIRED to obtain your FRN from the FCC BEFORE attending the session from: <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/>. Previously licensed candidates must also provide their FRN. You will later pay a \$35 licensing call sign fee to the FCC via their secure web payment system. You will require a valid government issued photo id such as your drivers license as well as a copy of any previous, valid, amateur radio licensing documents. It is suggested that you preregister for the exam. Contact: N3QM, Bill McMillen 724-397-2702 [n3qm@comcast.net](mailto:n3qm@comcast.net)

If you are new at this and contemplating getting your ham radio license, check out the following web site <https://hamstudy.org/extra2024>

Cambria Allied Radio Operators (CARO) will be offered on April 13, 2025 see details at : <https://facebook.com/events/s/caro-amateur-radio-testing/9333403146737079/>  
Courtesy of Thomas Brew, K3WS

**Reminder:** ICARC membership renewal time is upon us, don't forget to pay dues and receive a membership card for 2025. See final page of this document for a renewal/application form. This form can also be found online at: <http://www.qsl.net/w3bmd>

**Reminder:** The ICARC Public Service and Information Net happens on each Monday night starting at 8:30 PM using the W3BMD repeater on 146.91/146.31 Mhz. (ICARC is an ARRL affiliated club). In recent weeks it has also been repeated at approximately 8:45 PM on the new N3FLO repeater on 146.655/.055, tone of 131.8 Hz. Check it out. After the net a few operators hang around and carry on for a while on whatever topic of interest is brought up.

**Reminder:** The ICARC meetings are scheduled for the FIRST Tuesday of each month; next meeting is Tue, April 1, 2025, located at the Indiana Eat n' Park restaurant in the backroom at 6:30 PM. Hope to see you there. Also, in the same room, there is usually an informal breakfast each Saturday morning starting around 08:30 am. Come and join in the camaraderie, it's great fun.

**Current Net Control Operators: Phil Kopczyk, Chris Edwards, Stuart Younkin, and Bill Robinson. We thank you fellows very much. We can always use more.**

**Attention Technician and General licensees (and prospective hams),** have you thought about upgrading? Do you have trouble making it to an in-person ham exam? Now you don't have that excuse. Groups holding online ham exams have greatly expanded. Some groups are having exams daily. Reportedly it is an easy process if you have a laptop, desktop or tablet with a camera and microphone. Below are websites where you can look into testing online.

<https://wm7x.net/> One of the most popular. They have videos explaining how it's done.  
<https://kl7aa.org/vec/remote-testing/>  
<https://hamstudy.org/sessions/remote> Lists remote and in person test sessions.

### **From the ARRL Members Only Bulletin:**

#### **Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act Re-Introduced**

#### **Legislation Will Increase Communication Options During Natural Disasters**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Roger Wicker, R-Miss., and Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Representatives August Pfluger, R-Tex., and Joe Courtney, D-Conn. announced their joint re-introduction of legislation in the Senate and House to restore the right to Amateur Radio operators to install the antennas necessary to serve their communities. Homeowner association rules often prevent Amateur Radio operators from installing antennas at their homes even though Amateur Radio has proven to be essential in emergencies and natural disasters such as hurricanes when other means of communication fail.

“Mississippians should have access to every possible means of warning for natural disasters, including amateur radio operators. In an emergency, those warnings can mean the difference between life and death,” Senator Wicker said. “The Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act would remove unnecessary roadblocks that could help keep communities safe during emergencies like tornadoes, hurricanes, and fires.”

“When disaster strikes, amateur radio operators provide vital, often life-saving information, which shouldn’t be hindered by prohibitive rules or confusing approval processes. The Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act eliminates obstacles for ham radio enthusiasts, allowing them to continue their communications and serve their communities in the face of emergencies,” said Senator Blumenthal.

“Natural disasters and other emergency situations that hinder our regular lines of communication are unfortunately unavoidable, which is why we must bolster our emergency preparedness by removing the barriers amateur radio operators often run into when installing antennas. Amateur radio plays a vital role in public safety by delivering critical information to people at all times. My district is home to dozens of amateur radio operators ready to volunteer in the event of an emergency, and I am proud to lead this legislation,” said Congressman August Pfluger.

“As we know from recent natural disasters, amateur radio operators in Connecticut can be a critical component of disaster response and emergency management. It is in our communities’ best interest that we give them the capabilities to operate at the highest level, and with the re-introduction of this bill, we’ve taken a strong step in that direction,” said Congressman Courtney.

### **Background:**

The Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act of 2025 (H.R. 1094 and S. 459) would require homeowner associations to accommodate the needs of FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators by prohibiting the enforcement of private land use restrictions that ban, prevent, or require the approval of the installation or use of Amateur Radio station antennas. Homeowner associations have often prevented installation and use of such antennas through private land use restrictions. This has hindered voluntary training for emergency situations and blocked access to necessary communications when disaster strikes.

Among other provisions, this legislation would:

- Prohibit homeowner association rules that would prevent or ban Amateur Radio antennas;

- Specify an approval process for installing Amateur Radio antennas;

- Provide a Federal private right of action to Amateur Radio operators in disputed cases.

On behalf of America’s Amateur Radio licensees, Rick Roderick, the President of The American Radio Relay League, re-confirmed the ARRL’s full support for the passage of the



Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act of 2025 and extended his thanks and appreciation to Senators Wicker and Blumenthal and Congressmen Pfluger and Courtney for their unflagging leadership of the bi-partisan effort to support and protect the rights of all Amateur Radio Operators.

The text of the House version can be found at this link: [https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Advocacy/HR1094\\_House\\_Private\\_Land\\_Use\\_Bill.pdf?\\_zs=ab8x1&\\_zl=9x1E3](https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Advocacy/HR1094_House_Private_Land_Use_Bill.pdf?_zs=ab8x1&_zl=9x1E3)

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ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio

### **Other Announcements of potential interest:**

**From the ARRL WEB Site:** Grants to Amateur Radio Organizations: The ARRL Foundation grants program awards limited funding to organizations for eligible amateur radio related projects and initiatives, particularly those with a focus on educating, licensing, and supporting Amateur Radio activities. Youth-based projects and initiatives are especially encouraged. The ARRL Foundation grants program accepts proposals on a cyclical model three times a year.

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#### **2025 Grant proposals are accepted from:**

- February 1 - February 28
- June 1 - June 30
- October 1 - October 31

**Attention:** If other ICARC members would like to contribute to this Newsletter, please contact or submit articles to the Newsletter editor, N3LT via email at [n3lt@arrl.net](mailto:n3lt@arrl.net) or [wd4hoz@gmail.com](mailto:wd4hoz@gmail.com) by the middle of each month. Preferred document format is ".doc", for editing purposes. **All submissions are subject to the approval of the editor.**

## Summary Minutes of Feb 4, 2025 ICARC Meeting

**Attendance:** AB3XA, N3FLO, WA3BDR, KC3FVU, N3DZ, K3FSE, N3VFK, N3LT, KA2YOS, WB3DUD, K3PJ, N3ARA, K3VAR, KC3ZAF, KB3WG, W3CDH, WB3FBL, KB3JOF

The President called the meeting to order at 1829 hours.

The pledge of allegiance was presented and the roll call was taken as usual.

### **Treasurer's report-** Chris Edwards N3VFK

Reported the beginning year and current balance along with transfers and payments out for each of the following funds: General Fund, and Maintenance Fund

ICARC currently has 23 paid members.

A motion was made to accept the treasurer's report; it was voted upon and unanimously passed.

### **Trustee's report-** Elmer Sorisio KB3WG

Elmer reported that the .655 machine was working well but the .910 was very noisy for some located at a distance from Indiana during the Monday night net. This was corroborated by several other members including Phil Kopczyk K3PJ who specifically noted that for a long time now the signal from the .910 repeater is significantly down from what it was months earlier. Elmer indicated that it was likely due to the duplexer cans, suggesting that they may need to be re-tuned. Others indicated that the antenna placement on the tower may be a problem and had noticed, at one time earlier, that it was askew from its normal orientation, possibly from high wind, but seems to now be properly oriented. Elmer suggested that we visit the EMA site of the .910 unit to troubleshoot the issues.

There was also a report by Dave Dzelsky N3DZ that on his trip in for the current meeting, from Homer City that the .655 repeater showed signs of "noise" and weak signal on his mobile unit. No actions were suggested specifically to this issue other than the proposal by ICARC President Craig Bigler AB3XA that we monitor both repeaters continuously and document any issues as they might occur.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report. It was voted upon and unanimously passed.

### **Secretary's report-** Larry Freeman N3LT

Attendance sheet passed around.

Larry read the minutes from the January ICARC Meeting. The President noted some incorrect information and directed that it be amended.

Larry reported that he attended the Tom Ringler benefit event and delivered the original allotted money plus some additional added by other club members, to the Ringler family. It was well received and the food was good and the overall attendance was very large. He was able to spend some time with Tom and his grandson Dylon Curtis.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report. It was voted upon and unanimously passed.

### **Old Business:**

Craig, AB3XA inquired about the VEC & SKYWARN training. Stuart, WB3FBL reported that he would contact Bill McMillen about specific dates for exams. As for SKYWARN training, Stuart also reported that Thursday, April 3 at 6:00pm is the primary date and Tuesday, April 22 (same time) as the alternate date. The SKYWARN and VEC events will be held at the EMA building, address: 85 Haven Drive, Indiana, Pa. Stuart indicated that the length of the training session would likely be approximately two hours. The capacity of the EMA room is 30 people.

Winter Field Day was reviewed. Larry reported 327 contacts including 60 cw contacts. That was 56 more than last year. John, KA2YOS donated the food expense to ICARC. That is a very generous donation plus he indicated that it was all great fun. Bill Robinson, Walter Ligas, Robert Zugates, and others gave good reports on the operations and the location at the Blue Spruce Lodge. Everyone enjoyed the event, especially being inside.

Grounding issues were discussed as well as common mode chokes for the feed lines and using different feed line. Craig, suggested that we expand our ways of getting antenna lines into the trees when necessary. It was pointed out that for this event, only one way was available and that we all should work on a variety of creative ways of getting antenna lines into the trees if we continue work in forested locations. It was pointed out that we could do it the old way with a series of stacked 9 ft poles. The club was prepared to do that if necessary for this event. In that case it would have prevented the effective use of the 160m folded dipole. Cass, N3FLO, pointed out that the feed line and antenna boxes need to be re-organized and that new more appropriate feed-line for field operations be obtained to make transport, and installation less fatiguing and time consuming. The example given was that we don't need feed-line like LMR400 for high frequency work. It is too heavy and inflexible for the agility necessary for field work.

### **New Business:**

In the discussions about WFD with the positive comments by those involved, and the fact that Jerry Kiehl, WB3DUD pointed out that in order to guarantee the lodge again for next year for WFD a reservation had to be made within two weeks of the final day of the current event. Therefore, a motion was made and seconded to make the reservation for next year. It was voted upon and was passed. The president indicated that he would call and carry out the request for the reservation of the Blue Spruce Lodge for next year's WFD.

**The ICARC general meeting was adjourned by the president at 1918 hours..**

# Indiana County Amateur Radio Club

## Membership Application

CURRENT DATE (M/D/Y):        /        /        Membership Status(I,A,S,F): New \_\_\_\_\_ Ongoing \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership (I) — \$35.00      Associate/Student Membership (A, S) — \$20.00

Family Membership (F) – \$50.00 {Two voting members per family}

\*\*\* Please complete the applicable information below: \*\*\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ (Year Optional)

Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL: \_\_\_\_\_ FISTS: \_\_\_\_\_ ARES: \_\_\_\_\_ RACES: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ (Year Optional)

Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL: \_\_\_\_\_ FISTS: \_\_\_\_\_ ARES: \_\_\_\_\_ RACES: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ (Year Optional)

Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL: \_\_\_\_\_ FISTS: \_\_\_\_\_ ARES: \_\_\_\_\_ RACES: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you belong to **A.R.E.S. / R.A.C.E.S.** of another County, if so which one: \_\_\_\_\_

Is it OK to put your name onto the **R.A.C.E.S / A.R.E.S.** emergency call list? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of the ARRL? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form along with a check or money order payable to ICARC, to:

Indiana County Amateur Radio Club  
Attn: Treasurer  
PO Box 2020  
Indiana, PA 15701

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Cash) (Check) (MO) Number \_\_\_\_\_

The club info & newsletter is available on our web site at: [www.qsl.net/w3bmd](http://www.qsl.net/w3bmd)