



The Listening Post



Voice of the Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club - AC4RC

June 1999

Presidential Preamble by President Bill Morine, N2COP



June is an exciting sports month. The NBA has its final games, and even the NHL holds its Stanley Cup championship in June. Like the NBA and the NHL, ham radio has its championship during the 4th weekend in June. The granddaddy of ham radio events is Field Day, and this year's spectacular will take place June 26th and 27th on the grounds of the U.S.S. North Carolina Battleship State Park. But there are other events on the calendar you should note. Here's a listing in chronological order of this very, very busy season::

June 12th - Examinations at 10:00 A.M. at Morton Hall, 2nd floor, on the UNCW campus. All Volunteer Examiners (VEs) remember: you must participate in at least one exam session per year to keep your ARRL VE certification valid. If you didn't receive this newsletter in time, keep in mind the next session on August 14th. Thanks to our co-VECs, Jack Jacobs (WD4OIN) and Jeff Jolly (KE4LKB).

June 15th - Monthly Meeting. McAlister's Deli, 740 South College Rd. at the corner of Fountain Drive. Dinner begins at 6:30 PM, and program starts at 7:00 PM. Our first dinner meeting at McAlister's in March was very successful. Everyone liked its central location in the county, and the menu of sandwiches, soups and salads provided ample portions for reasonable prices (\$5.-\$10. Per person). This month we'll focus on Field Day and upcoming events.

June 19th - Kids Day. Wrightsville Beach Park (2:00 PM - 8:00 PM in the shelter at the rear of the park) Look at pages 32 and 33 of June's QST. Bill Wetherill (N2WG), Frank Ebbinghouser (N2EMR) and I formed ham radio clubs this past year at Bradley Creek Elementary and Myrtle Grove Middle Schools. These kids were fun to work with, and it made us realize that the future of the hobby has to start with the young. Kids Day is not a contest, but just kids talking to kids. ACARC is providing introductory information from the ARRL on ham radio for kids and their parents. Come have fun, and watch some faces glow along with the radio's tubes (just kidding - we'll be solid state).

June 26th & 27th Field Day. U.S.S. North Carolina Battleship State Park. Please plan to join us for the three "F"s - fun, fellowship and food. Here's the rundown:

Sat. 0800 - Convene at the traditional starting point for all great ham activities, K&W cafeteria in Hanover Shopping Center on Oleander Drive across from Independence Mall. It'll be a long weekend so we need lots of proteins and carbohydrates to keep our energy levels up.

Sat. 0915 - Depart for the Battleship,

Sat. 1000 - Begin setup on the southern field towards the bow of the Battleship. The gazebo by the Cape Fear River, our traditional location, is booked until mid afternoon for a wedding. We'll start in the southern field on battery power.

Sat. 1200 - Operating begins for next 24 hours

Sat. 1500 or so (3:00 PM) - New Hanover County Emergency Services will drop off one of its

portable trailer-mounted generators. We'll start migrating from the field to the gazebo. If we're lucky, we may find some leftover slices of wedding cake.

Sat. 1730 (5:30 PM) to 1930 (7:30 PM) - The Azalea Club's annual Field Day Food Fest. Like last year, we are in the process of asking vendors to donate food. In 1998, we enjoyed complimentary pizzas from Domino's, soda and cookies from Hannaford and ice from Harris-Teeter. There will be no charge for food so come and bring your family. All XYLs and harmonics are welcome.

Sat. 1930 to Sun. 1200 - The club will work through the night. Those who want to set up a tent or bring cots are welcomed to. We'll have plenty of soda, cookies and coffee.

Sun. 1200 - Most important. Take down. This is a time we need the most help. Band conditions should be humming, so come on out, and let's see AC4RC's call sign listed prominently in QST!

July 10th ACARC Kids Day (Part II) Learning Express, 5704 Oleander Drive, 12 Noon to 4:00 PM). ACARC was approached by Ed & Shelly Hobson, owners of the Wilmington franchise of this progressive children's toy chain. Learning Express emphasizes educational toys and experiences, especially in the sciences. This will be an informal continuation of the format of Kids Day. We are grateful for Learning Express's interest and support.

July 17th Museum Ships Day, U.S.S. North Carolina.

This event is being coordinated by the radio club of the U.S.S. Salem in Quincy, Mass., which hopes that the radio clubs of some 30 plus retired U.S. Navy vessels around the U.S. will be on the air simultaneously. Hams love to collect QSL cards from ships, so any signal from our battleship will undoubtedly will cause pile ups. Jack Jacobs (WD4OIN) is heading up this event, which will take place from the ship itself. Details later.

July 20th Monthly Meeting.

New Hanover Regional Medical Center's AHEC center, basement conference room B, C or D (they're all adjacent. Enter through the hospital's temporary main entrance, which is also the main entrance for AHEC itself). We are delighted that Bill Hays (KD4GHQ) will show us how to construct his successful and very popular PVC encased 2 meter J-pole antennas. With hurricane season around the corner, these little beauties provide a gain of 3 db, and should be a staple in every ham's cupboard, especially in hurricane season. I borrowed one of Bill's J-Poles and used it during the Arab Shrine Fish Fry several years ago. With my handie-talkie set on 2.5 watts I worked other hams on 146.52 simplex DFQ over distances of 3+ miles. This is one meeting you'll definitely want to attend.

Other upcoming events include Lighthouse Weekend (Aug. 21st and 22nd at Oak Island Light-

house) and the 42nd annual Boy Scout Jamboree On-The-Air (Oct. 16th and 17th - location to be determined).

Who says we're not busy? Despite all these fun events, keep in mind please our week-to-week obligations. Check in on the weekly Monday night ragchew net at 9:00 P.M. on 147.18 has been sparse. Besides this newsletter, that is the forum through which we get out most of ACARC news. We are very pleased, and grateful, that the New Hanover ARES net on Wednesday nights on 146.67 seems to draw a steady crowd. Jot down Monday night's time and check in.

Finally, eminent hurricane predictor Dr. William Gray projects a very active Atlantic storm season ahead. Now is the time for you to get your emergency power supplies, antennas and other equipment up to emergency operating levels and keep them there until the hurricane season ends on November 1st. Be sure to keep on top of ARES issues by monitoring 146.67, and check into the New Hanover County ARES net on Wednesday nights at 8:00 PM on 146.67. Our New Hanover County Emergency Coordinator (EC), Bill Murrell (AD4DN) will be keeping us updated on emergency ham operations, so make listening in ARES a habit. Even the National Hurricane Center in Florida has already held a training session on its HF emergency frequency of 14.325 Mhz. Stay hurricane alert!

The weather has been pretty

good, 6 meters has been humming and even the fishing has been pretty good. Remember - greet our ham visitors by jumping in and answering out of area hams who call on our area repeaters. I just returned from Denver, where I put out calls on no less than 10 repeaters with no hams calling me back. This was an unpleasant experience, and contrasted from my April trip to Boston where hams came back to me *on my first call every time*. We are a tourist area - let's send hams home with pleasant memories. See you at Field Day and other events.

73,

Bill - N2COP

Comments for the net...

Now that 1 June has past, I find myself wondering if I have too much food in my freezer. I don't feel much better after talking to Tom Matheson (KC5GSE) of the Wilmington Weather Office at last Saturday's Hurricane Expo at UNCW. Tom expects at least one "visit" from a tropical system this year. Guess I should think about those pine trees again.

I saw Lonnie (KC4DPB), Bob (W4LWS), Buddy (N4CTJ), Stanley (KC4DPC), Grace (KC4DPA) and other hams at the R/C Model gathering last Sunday. I find it a lot of fun to watch, and enjoy the group. Humm... would not a Heli with an ATV camera be nice. (A nice way to crash a lot and spend many \$\$\$'s that is.)

One of the side effects of hav-

ing one's house painted is the relocation of the coax to outside antennas. Since the radios could not be used, I have yet another problem. Stuff... too much stuff has now found it's way into that room, while the space was not active. I guess there is never a lack of projects in my life. In the mean time, work a band opening for me.

Do the bands seem any better with the increased FCC enforcement? I would like to think I could listen to 75 meters again, much less in public. I have put up antennas and all at remote locations, and then not turned the radio on. The fear of someone hearing that mess and being embarrassed and more, was too high.

Take in one of the many events this summer... see you there!

73 de Jeff - KE4LKB

VE News

The next VE Test Session will be 12 June at Morton Hall, UNCW. Test fees are now \$6.45.

The Question Pools will not change again until after any licence changes are approved and take affect, maybe sometime in the Fall.

The group meets at K&W at 8am for breakfast before the Test Session. Come join the group. This is an important Club function, and deserves your support. It is a benefit to all members and local hams and hams to be. We can not do it without you.

Jack, WD4OIN

Jeff, KE4LKB

ROSTER INFORMATION

Many members have been asking for a list of Azalea Coast members. The reason that we haven't published one yet is a technical one. The previous database was kept in a format incompatible with most IBM PC database programs. Since much of the Azalea Coast Club's information is now available on the club's website (www.ac4rc.org), we are in the process of posting the membership roster there in a format where it will be accessible only to members. Please be patient. Until then, please add the names of the following new members, and welcome them:

NOTE: If you haven't yet listed your e-mail address with the club, jot a message with your e-mail address to Bill Morine at n2cop@arrrl.net.

We will use e-mail addresses from time-to-time to remind you of club events. Your address will remain with the club, and will not be shared with other organizations or companies.

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Raleigh 1, Wilmington 0

One of the hardest working members of ACARC will soon be leaving the area. Joe Johnson (KE4ALE) will be going to the Raleigh area in the next few weeks. Joe has been very active in setting up our AHEC meeting rooms, Special Events, and much more for a number of years. So good in fact, no one has been willing to "fill his shoes", as the position has been open since he stepped down.

Join us all in thanking him for all he has done, and our best for the future the next time you see or hear him on the repeater.

From The ARRL Letter:

MORSE DEBATE MAKES
PAGE 1 OF WALL STREET
JOURNAL

Hams checking the prestigious Wall Street Journal for the latest

business news and stock quotes June 2 also found some Amateur Radio news--smack in the middle of page 1 and above the fold. A story by Staff Reporter Lee Gomes headlined "TO HAM OPERATORS, MORSE CODE TEST IS LIKE LATIN EXAM; Does It Keep the Barbarians At Bay, or Is It Fueling The Decline of a Culture?" discusses the current code versus no-code debate in Amateur Radio.

"Morse Code is a dying language in the Digital Age, but it's still required reading for amateur radio buffs," Gomes' story begins. His report outlines the broad strokes of the controversy and the impending FCC streamlining that is expected to address future Morse code requirements for amateurs. It also quotes the FCC's Bill Cross, W3TN, as "the FCC's lead staff person on the question," and reports that the FCC "is contemplating relaxing the Morse Code requirement."

Gomes cites Bruce Perens, K6BP, of No Code International, who--in Gomes words--considers Morse code "an antiquated technology" and "a turnoff for young people." "Perens is in the minority," Gomes asserts. "Most licensees don't want any change in the requirement--especially since they have already passed the test themselves."

Taking the opposite viewpoint in Gomes' article is Nancy Kott, WZ8C, of FISTS, which Gomes describes as a "militant pro-Morse group." Gomes says Kott "all but accuses the no-coders of taking

bribes from ham radio makers" and claims they want the code requirements dropped to attract more hams and sell more equipment.

Gomes reports that FISTS members fear a lot of bad, on-air behavior "without the screening provided by the Morse Code requirement." Perens, Gomes says, is not concerned about a "post-Morse ham world inhabited by barbarians." Perens points out for the article that applicants still will have to pass "rigorous tests" to get a ticket. Besides, Gomes quotes Perens as saying, "The riff-raff have no reason to leave the Internet."

The article is silent on the issue of ITU regulations requiring a demonstration of Morse proficiency for HF operation and on the fact that a codeless class of Amateur Radio license already exists. And, at one point it refers to Morse code as "dits and duhs."

In the course of researching his article, Gomes contacted the ARRL for background information. The complete article is available via the Web for a fee to registered users of the Wall Street Journal's interactive page, <http://www.wsj.com>.

Propagation Forecast

From Tad Cook, K7VVV
Seattle, WA June 4, 1999
To all radio amateurs

Sunspot counts and solar flux rose this past week, with the average daily sunspot number up nearly 46

Continued on Page 5...

Nets, Meetings and Hamfests:

(Please Note: Some may be subject to change.)

Every Monday	ACARC Net, 9pm - 147.180
Every Wednesday*	ARES Net, 8pm - 146.670 (*Except meeting nights)
Every Day	NC ARRL Tarheel Emergency Net, 7:30 - 3.923 MHz
As Needed	Skywarn Net - 146.820
June 12	ACARC VE Testing Session, UNCW 10am, Morton Hall
15	ACARC Dinner Meeting - McAllister's Deli, 7:00pm
26-27	Field Day
July 20	ACARC Meeting - AHEC, Room D, 7:30pm - Topic: TBA
August 14	ACARC VE Testing Session, UNCW 10am, Morton Hall
17	ACARC Meeting - AHEC, Room D, 7:30pm - Topic: TBA

1998 Special Events:

Field Day	26-27 June, Battleship U.S.S. North Carolina Park
U.S.S. North Carolina Museum of Ships Event	17-18 July, Battleship U.S.S. North Carolina
International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend	21-22 August, Oak Island Lighthouse area??

Propagation continued...

points and flux values up nearly 19 points, compared to the previous week. The big day was June 2, when the sunspot number was 214, a big jump.

Contesters were elated when the poor conditions predicted for last weekend's WPX contest did not materialize. A coronal mass ejection sent charged particles our way, but they missed Earth, and conditions were excellent last weekend. Instead of a high A index, the planetary A index for Saturday and Sunday was only six and five, and the mid-latitude numbers, which affect most of the readers of this bulletin, were even better at three and three. In the mid-latitudes, there were many periods when the K index was

zero, which is very stable.

Expect more good conditions this weekend, with solar flux June 4-6 predicted at 175, 170 and 170, and the planetary A index at 8, 7 and 7.

Beyond the weekend look for solar flux to drift down to 150 by June 10, bottom out around 140 from June 18-20, then rise to 165 toward the end of June. Unsettled geomagnetic conditions could return on June 9, with active conditions June 14, and unsettled to active conditions around June 21.

Earlier in the week there were several wire service stories about the predicted peak of solar cycle 23 next year, and how solar flares

could disrupt various communication systems and even the power grid. One article quoted Richard Altrock of the Air Force Research Laboratory in Sunspot, New Mexico, saying that this cycle should peak between January and April of next year. He also said that the number of sunspots at the peak should roughly equal the activity during the peaks of the two previous cycles.

Sunspot numbers for May 27 through June 2 were 154, 146, 151, 169, 157, 190 and 214 with a mean of 168.7. The 10.7 cm flux was 155.2, 152.1, 148.6, 156.8, 165.4, 176 and 173.1, with a mean of 161. The estimated planetary A indices were 10, 9, 6, 5, 4, 8 and 11, with a mean of 7.6.



AC4RC

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Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club June 1999 Newsletter



Affiliated
Club

Officers and Committee Chairs for 1999

President: Bill Morine / N2COP

Vice-President: John Braswell / AF4GA

Secretary: Martha Eason / KD4PSU

Treasurer: Shirley Peay / N4LFV

Net Control Coordinator: Vacant

Newsletter Editor: Jeff Jolly / KE4LKB

VE Testing: Jack Jacobs / WD4OIN; Jeff Jolly / KE4LKB

Social Events Planning: Cathy Murrell / KD4WOF

Public Affairs: Frank Ebbinghouser / N2EMR

Special Events: Vacant



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