

THE LISTENING POST

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

P. O. Box 4044

Wilmington, NC 28406

<http://www.ac4rc.org>

147.18 Repeater

March 2010

We had another great meeting in February with good attendance and a great program. Ed's (now W3NZ) presentation from his father's spark era video and the demonstration equipment was extremely interesting and afforded us an opportunity to look back to our roots so to speak and also to reflect forward. Listening to the talk when highlighted by watching the old spark generation equipment sound off really demonstrated how exciting even a single contact in the evening must have been back in those days. It was a real undertaking and the operator of that era had to put a lot of work into a contact. Then thinking about today, the equipment we have and what we can do really lets one marvel at the technology that has grown in really only a very short period when you think about it. The thrill of amateur radio continues to live with us today and each time a new frontier is approach there are new opportunities for excitement and enjoyment.

The NC QSO operation on the USS North Carolina was great and fun was had by a lot of people that had the opportunity to get down and operate. We also made good contact with a number of members of the public as there were a lot of visitors on the ship that afternoon. A big THANKS to all that supported that activity.

The activity on our Monday night 2-Meter Net continues to grow. While there a lot of members that still do not check-in, the group is growing and this is good news for the club and the club members. There is a lot of good information being passed on through the discussion and comments by those checking-in. I hope that more and more of the club members will find their way on to the repeater on Monday evenings.

Propagation for Cycle 24 continues to pick up. There are quite a few more openings of greater distances on the higher frequency bands now and the higher frequencies are staying open longer. At least one of our club members has reported a QSO with Europe on 10 Meters and that is a wonderful sign as that generally has to signal F-layer propagation which is a direct result of ionization from the sunspot activity of Cycle 24. We are into March too and the vernal equinox is approaching the 21st of March – the time when the sun is directly over the equator and headed our way. Either side of the equinox the propagation is typically better than other times of the year and the grey line is a ring around the earth crossing both the north and south poles. This time of year we hear enhanced trans-equatorial band openings (north and south) and with the increasing ionization, east-west F-layer openings are improving. So we are having the best of both worlds now. It is time to get those rigs turned on and warmed up and enjoy the improving conditions on the higher bands.

Remember we have another great program lined up for the March meeting. Yours truly the President is going to discuss logging programs to support your ham operations and I am looking forward to seeing a big turnout of that meeting.

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, March 16 at 7 PM at the Cape Fear Community College North Campus!

73, Charlie Vaughan K4UWH

ACARC Club Meeting Minutes **January 2010**

The minutes for the February club meeting have been published on the club website and are available there for you to read. Follows is the link directly to them: <http://ac4rc.org/Club%20Meeting/meeting%20report2010.html>. If you have any questions regarding them please bring them to the meeting on March 16.

AC4RC Website Addition

Jack Jacobs has added a new set of reference links to the website titled **DX Resources** <http://ac4rc.org/dx/dx.html>. I know some of you are not interested in DX, however, even non-DXers should find some valuable information on that page. A brief discussion of the resource links there should be helpful to those wishing to investigate the information further.

We have talked about the *Gray Line* a good bit. This is the band of twilight that exists between the part of the world that is in darkness and the part in sunlight. Generally radio wave absorption drops in this region while the ionization remains at a high enough level to support D and F layer propagation. As a result of this lower absorption for a short period during twilight, there is an enhancement of radio signals along paths through the twilight region and it supports some enhanced communications and can give you a competitive advantage when you and the target station are simultaneously in the twilight region. The link here is to a map which graphically shows the light and dark areas of the earth and from this you can see the gray line regions as well. It updates every 5 minutes. Watching the grey line and spending some time on the air during this period will demonstrate the effect that can be very useful for all communications – domestic as well as DX.

The link to ARRL Propagation Charts is also helpful in giving you an idea about communications to some of the key portions of the world from your general location. These charts are predictions and therefore they are not perfect but using them coupled with your own personal observations is very helpful in understanding the best times to communicate with different places around the globe.

The ARRL sponsors as one of their awards, the DXCC Awards Program. The link to the ARRL program information will tell you all you need to know about that award and how to go about getting it. The ARRL DX Bulletin link and the Announced DX Operations links will give you some hints of operations to keep your eye out and look for as they are generally some of the more rare areas to get contacts with and these links will give you good planning information.

For up-to-the-minute information on DX you need to use the Digital DX Spots (specializing in digital modes), DX Spots and DX Scape Spots all of which give up to the minute spots of where people are working different DX stations. All of those sites have different ways to sort the information and so it pays to check them all out and understand what you can find where and learn to use them. They can make finding the ones you need to work and working them easy.

The DX QSL Information link will help you get that confirmation you need. The art of QSLing and getting confirmations in today's environment is complex and worthy of a whole club program and discussion in itself. But using the information here on this link can be helpful.

I encourage you to use this information and if you have questions please bring them to the club meeting or enter them on the website to get the answers you need.

Good Hunting – Jack Jacobs WD4OIN and Charlie Vaughan K4UWH

REPORT OF VOLUNTEER EXAMINER TESTING

The February 16, 2010 test session at the Cape Fear Community College North Campus produced three candidates for testing – all of which passed their respective tests. There were six examiners present. The VE program continues to seek a few additional people willing to become volunteer examiners.

CONGRATULATIONS

Hutch, NK0S has been awarded three **CQ Magazine** awards.

- **DX Field Award - SSB # 67**
- **DX Field Award - CW # 58**
- **DX Field Award - DIGITAL # 17**

The CQ DX Field Awards are issued in four categories – Mixed, CW, SSB and Digital – for confirmed two-way contacts with 50 or more Grid Fields based on the Maidenhead grid system. There are 324 grid fields, each 10-degree latitude by 20-degree longitude rectangles. All contacts must have been made after January 1, 1980. To find out more about this award go to the CQ Magazine website <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com>.

GENERAL FIELD DAY PLANNING

ACARC is planning to hold Field Day at Ogden Park again this year. A group of club members have volunteered to help plan and implement Field Day in response to solicitation at the February meeting and a letter sent out to all club members early March. This group will soon start work on the detailed plans. If you want to participate in the planning process please let Don KJ4OFF know. The ARRL is again encouraging clubs to operate in public places and make as much contact with the public as possible to help

get out the good work about ham radio and what ham radio contributes to the public. The rules and objectives for Field Day, the 2010 rules are now posted on the ARRL website <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/fd-2010-packet.pdf>. I strongly recommend that you read through them so when we do begin to have discussions you are up-to-speed on what we are discussing. The dates are June 26 and 27 and we will most likely have a social event Saturday evening at the FD site. There will be plenty of opportunity to get a lot of people involved in this fun operating event this year. Start thinking now about where you will fit in and what you can do to contribute to the fun and club's success in this operating event.

2010 ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Each Monday Evening – 8 PM local – 146.18 Repeater - - ACARC Local Net

HAM FEAST – Typically Saturday Mornings 8AM K&W on Oleander (NK0S)

Friday Noon Lunch Bunch – As announced – Contact NC4ER for current week

March

6 – 7th ARRL International DX Contest SSB

<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2010/intldx.html>

7th DARC 10 Meter Digital Contest

13 -14th Charlotte Hamfest <http://www.w4bfb.org/hamfest2010/hamfest.html>

13th EA PSK 31 Contest

13th Idaho QSO Party

14th Wisconsin QSO Party

16th Club Meeting – Program: N3FJP Computer Logging (K4UWH)

20th 10-10 International Mobile Contest

20th Oklahoma QSO Party

20th Virginia QSO Party

April

3rd Raleigh Hamfest <http://rars.org/hamfest/>

10th Azalea Festival Weekend

10th Azalea Coast Hamfest at the Battleship USS NC (W3NZ)

20th Club Meeting - Program: Digital Communications Techniques (David KB4FXC)

May

18th Club Meeting – Program: AC4RC Field Day Plan (Field Day Planning Team)

June

13 – 14th ARRL June VHF QSO Party

15th Club Meeting – Field Day Final Details and Training (Field Day Planning Team)

26 – 27th ACARC Field Day <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/fd-2010-packet.pdf>

CLUB VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As you can see we are making a lot of progress in getting the ACARC program going for 2010. We still need a number of key volunteers to fill in some of the key roles that need attention at this time and of course we will need more help as the year unfolds. Some of the things we need now are as follows:

Newsletter Editor

Anyone interested in presenting a club program

So if any of this looks like something that you would be interested in please come forward and let the officers know of your interests. Remember, the club will only be as good as we make it.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

We welcome anyone who would like to become a member of the Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club. We also try to maintain an e-mail mailing list for anyone that would like to keep track of our activities. Keep your e-mail address up-to-date.

CLUB MEETING

The next club meeting is March 16, 2010 at the Cape Fear Community College North Campus – 7 PM. The room is typically on the 3rd floor but ask security. ***BE SURE TO PRINT A PARKING PASS FOR YOUR CAR, FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS AND PLACE IT IN CLEAR VIEW ON YOUR DASHBOARD.*** Just As we did at the last meeting, we will have introductions and while we want to know your Name and Call Sign, please come prepared to mention something about your ham radio activities in the last month. The monthly meetings are becoming a place where “Ham Radio is Spoken”. So this is the place to let people know what you are doing and get your questions answered. No one gets a free pass so come prepared. **Looking forward to seeing all of you there.**

ACARC Swap Meet

Don't lose sight of the date for the ACARC Swap Meet here in Wilmington. The word is getting out and is being received well. We will need a great turn-out by our club

members to support this effort. The prizes for the raffle are increasing and anyone who would like to donate a prize may do so. The following are currently in the raffle:

- ICOM IC-220H VHF Transceiver (Donated by the Azalea Coast ARC)
- ARRL Frequency Chart (Donated by Linda, KD4TXY)
- ARRL Grid Locator for North America (Donated by Linda, KD4TXY)
- ARRL World Grid Locator Atlas (Donated by Linda, KD4TXY)
- ARRL Hints & Kinks For the Radio Amateur (Donated by Linda, KD4TXY)
- ARRL Software Library for Hams CD-ROM (Ver. 3.0) (Donated by Linda, KD4TXY)

73,

Charlie K4UWH