

THE LISTENING POST MARCH 2011

AZALEA COAST AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
PO BOX 4044
Wilmington, NC 28406

VIEW FROM THE PRESIDENT

We had another active month with club activities. The main event was the operation on the USS North Carolina as a Bonus station in the NC QSO party. We made over 300 contacts on a number of bands and on both SSB and CW. Everyone that came out got some good operating experience and the equipment all worked great. Even the old 1940 transmitter was perfect - well a perfect T8 that a number of people commented on. Jack Jacobs and the crew that works with the Battleship did a great job pulling all this together.

This month I am actually going to make it to a meeting. Don tells me the attendance has been great while I have been gone so I am expecting a good turn-out to continue. The program this month will be about my operation from Sint Maarten last fall. I have given it once and the group that heard it seemed to enjoy the discussion and it precipitated a lot of good questions.

We are going to need to be talking about Field Day which is rapidly approaching us. It is the largest national event of the year and a great test of emergency planning and operations. Typically it is a time of hard work but good fun. We pretty much know how we are going to set-up. But everyone needs to get on board and be prepared to help as they best can.

One thing we need to work on and that is getting our club dues up-to-date. We have insurance payments coming due and those bills are a bit of a drain without having our dues in to cover them. It is now March and since they were due January 1 we are a bit behind what would be expected and what is needed to make our required payments.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at the next meeting.

73 and Good Hamming,

Charlie Vaughan K4UWH

CLUB OFFICERS FOR 2011

President-Charlie Vaughn—K4UWH; Vice-President-Don Hall—N4OFF; Treasurer—Allan Pellnat—KX2H;
Secretary—Norman Clemmons—KI4YSY.

REGULAR CLUB ACTIVITIES

Monday 9:00PM-ACARC weekly Local Net on the club's 147.180 repeater (offset +.600; tone 88.5).

Friday noon Lunch Bunch-location changes weekly-location announced on club reflector.

Saturday morning breakfast at at 8:00AM at K&W Cafeteria on Oleander drive.

Third Tuesday of every month- club meeting at 7:00PM at CFCC North Campus-see web page for directions and parking pass.

Second Saturday of even months-VE Test Session at CFCC North Campus-see web page for details and requirements.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

The ACARC March meeting will take place this coming Tuesday evening (3/15/11) at 7:00PM at CFCC North. We are most often to be found on the third floor of the McKeithan Center, which is the building directly to the front as you enter the campus. Check with the security guard at the main entrance.

We have been requested to provide a Volunteer Examiner team at Roger Bacon Academy in Leland on Saturday, April 2nd. Several club members and other local hams will be involved in demonstrating to the students many of the various aspects of ham radio—SkyWarn, Emergency Ops, APRS etc.--so we will need a good turnout of VEs to make sure the young ladies and gentlemen have a good testing experience. This is an excellent opportunity for the local ham community to put its best foot forward.

The next regularly scheduled VE Test session will be April 9th (second Saturday-even month) at CFCC.

Just over the horizon is the Wilmington Air Show 2011 on April 16/17. Plan on attending the club meeting next Tuesday evening to learn details. We have supported this activity in past years and our efforts have been much appreciated. The Air Show also provides an excellent opportunity for real time tactical communications support training.

Museum Ships weekend is coming up on June 25th & 26th. Retired (i.e. "Museum") military and civilian ships, aircraft, museums and memorials from all over the world come up on the amateur band waves, providing an opportunity for the ham community at large to make contact. Participating ships and other entities usually number over 90. There is a contest within the event as the "Museum" entities attempt to contact each other. The ACARC has just recently received 2 certificates from the Battleship New Jersey (BB-62), the sponsor of the event, confirming not only our participation in the event, but also our prowess in contacting the required number of other "Museum Ships" to qualify for the award. (Most of the entries use modern ham equipment to make contacts. The North Carolina is one of the few to fire up an original Government Issue 1930s technology morse code transmitter. The North Carolina's call sign during her WWII service was NIBK. Today, our club puts her signal out on the amateur band waves as NI4BK.)

Just a little further over the horizon is Field Day 2011—always the last full weekend in June. Come to the meeting next Tuesday evening for initial planning.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

13th-If you forgot to set your clocks ahead at 2:00AM Sunday Morning, you are one hour late. The vernal

equinox also provides a timely opportunity to check the batteries in your smoke alarms.

15th-club meeting

17th-Saint Patrick's Day-another opportunity to choke down some corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, parsnips, turnips, carrots, Guinness and Harp!

19th-10-10 Mobile QSO Party

19th-Russian DX Contest

Oklahoma QSO Party

19th-Russian DX Contest

19th-North Dakota QSO Party

19th-Virginia QSO Party

20th-Wrightsville Beach Marathon—Volunteer Comms needed-contact Bob K.

26TH/27th-CQWW WPX SSB Contest

APRIL

2nd-Special VE Test Session at Roger Bacon Academy

2nd/3rd-Missouri QSO Party

9th-regular ACARC VE Test Session at CFCC

19th-Club April Meeting

ODDS and END NOTES

Last month, club members once again put the USS North Carolina Battleship Museum and Memorial on the air for the North Carolina QSO Party. This year, BB-55 was one of only four bonus point stations. We had 11 participants—Charlie—K4UWH; Jack—WD4OIN; Allan—KX2H; Norm—K14YSY; Don—N4OFF; Bob—WA3IRG; Jeff—K14JDE; Bill--N2COP; Mark—K14JJK; and your humble correspondent. We operated 3 stations, SSB 40 and 20 meters, and CW on one of the ships original equipment transmitters, the TBM-4, placed into service on board in 1941. Thanks to all who turned out to operate and log and to Ron—W4VMX--who provided spots over the internet.

The crew made 348 total contacts on 20, 40 and 80 meters, the majority on SSB and 82 on CW We reached well into Europe .

We had a slight problem with the results of the 2/12/11 VE Test Session. Of late, license grants and upgrades have been coming promptly—within a week or so—after the test date. Two weeks or so had passed and our candidates had not been notified. Our SM—N2COP--was asked to make inquiry and the awards were promptly effected.

Man is made of dust—dust settles—are you a man?

Payment of dues to the club has been somewhat slow this year. We are well into the first quarter of the year and returns have not been what would be expected at this point. It is certainly understandable that, in difficult times, disposable income is not as great as in better times. However, we would ask that if you have not paid your 2011 dues to the ACARC, if you possibly can, please send \$20.00 for individual or family dues to—ACARC, PO BOX 4044, Wilmington, NC 28406. The club's regular and recurring expenses for liability and equipment insurance are coming due and must be paid soon. Our club has always kept membership dues to the minimum necessary to fund club operations. At every monthly meeting, the club Treasurer presents a report to the membership as to the club's finances at that date: i.e income, outgo, and current balance.

Field Day is fast approaching with its accompanying expenses for generator fuel, ice, water and soft drinks and food for the Saturday evening dinner. The club also incurs regular and recurring expenses for postage, a Post Office box, as well as miscellaneous equipment purchases. The club's primary radio, the ICOM 746, is in need of repair. This will most likely require shipping expenses and insurance to and from Seattle.

So, if you can, please pony up as soon as possible.

This month's QST presents yet another episode in the ongoing BPL (Broadband over Power Lines) saga. The ARRL has consistently argued over the years that the FCC's regulatory approach to BPL standards for the BPL industry has been woefully inadequate, with regard to preventing interference to amateur radio operators. The ARRL has also consistently argued, in presentations to the FCC, that the BPL industry has consistently violated even the lax standards set by the FCC and the Agency has refused to acknowledge valid, scientific real time data from the amateur community in general and the ARRL specifically which present compelling evidence that BPL, as presently allowed by the FCC, not only interferes with amateur radio communications wherever it has been deployed, but also calls into question whether the FCC is performing its assigned function or carrying out a political agenda. The "It Seems to Us" column is particularly scathing in its discussion of both the FCC and the BPL industry.

On a more positive note, CQ magazine has a very nice article about PSK-31, a low power digital mode that does not require an elaborate antenna array or a lot of power to make DX contacts. PSK does require a computer and a computer/radio interface—which need not be a burdensome expense—and will enable contacts when other modes fail.

The 2011 Field Day Packet is available for download on the ARRL web site.

The average daily number of sunspots and the average daily solar flux have been increasing as solar cycle 24, finally, heats up. Operating conditions should improve on the quieter bands above 30 meters.

See you at the club meeting Tuesday night.

73 Bill AG4PA