

THE LISTENING POST

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 4044
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August, 2012

EYECATCHER!!!

The next Club meeting will be Tuesday August 21, 2012 at Cape Fear Community College North Campus. See the web site for directions. Also, it is time to pay Club dues for 2012. \$20.00 please, either mailed to the P.O. Box or brought to the meeting. Make sure your call sign is on your check. The Club roster and reflector list has been culled to reflect only paid up members. It is not too late to get off the disabled list and back on the active roster.

CLUB OFFICERS for 2012:

President Charlie Vaughn K4WUH; Vice-President Don Hall N4OFF; Treasurer Allan Pellnat KX2H; Secretary Norman Clemmons K4YSY

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Charlie K4UWH is away on assignment. His comments and observations will return next issue.

REGULAR CLUB ACTIVITIES

Monday 9:00PM local net on the Club's .18 repeater.

Friday Noon Lunch Bunch, location changes weekly, announced on Club web site and via Club reflector. There are in fact three lunch Friday groups in the local amateur community. You can pay your money and take your chances.

Third Tuesday of every month, Club meeting at CFCC North. See web site for directions and parking pass.

Second Saturday of even months, Volunteer Examiner Test session at CFCC North, 10:00AM. See web site for directions and what to bring with you. Next scheduled Test Session 8/11/12.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES and EVENTS

Things should be fairly quiet locally as far as Club activities go, until late September/early October when we are able to return to the Battleship North Carolina. We will be anxious to learn the progress of generator repair for the Ship's three main CW transmitters. Also, some small progress has been made on the "Home Brewing" of a backup DC power supply. Needless to say, we are anxious to get "the Showboat" back on the amateur radio bands with her original CW equipment.

August

21 Club Meeting

31 through 9/3 Special Event Fort Bridger (WY) Mountain Man Rendezvous

September

1&2 Shelby Hamfest

18 Club Meeting

PRIOR ACTIVITIES

The joint WVFHA/ACARC/NHCARES Field Day effort in June was quite a success. Turn out for the Club meeting this coming Tuesday night to hear the details.

At the August 11 Volunteer Examiner Test Session, We administered 9 Exams to 7 candidates. Three passed the Tech exam and one of these also passed the General. Two others passed the General, among them our own Matt—KK4EQM. The other successful General candidate also passed the Extra Class exam.

In summary, we gave four Tech exams, three passed; three General exams, all passed; and two Extra exams, one passed.

Four VEs were present, as well as Keith—KB7RUZ--who most generously gave up several hours of his vacation time to proctor the exam for CFCC.

Our next Test session will be Saturday, October 13. However, watch the Club web page for a probable change of location. CFCC usually has a major Firefighters Training/Certification event on the second Saturday in October. We should know soon.

ODDS AND END NOTES

Contributions to the Club Newsletter are not only welcome but solicited. If you wish to submit an article for inclusion in the Newsletter, please prepare it in Times New Roman font with a font size of 12.

We are well into hurricane season here in mid August, but “the heart of the batting order” is now looming. The late Summer months through early Fall present the greatest danger of landfall along the East Coast. To be precise, the Atlantic Hurricane Season extends through November 30.

It is never too soon to think about preparations for a hurricane landfall in our area. Whether you choose to evacuate or “ride it out”, prior planning for a potential hurricane landfall could very well prove to be of inestimable value. A good starting point would be the New Hanover County Department of Emergency Management webpage. Click on the Boy Scout motto--”Be Prepared” to find advice pertinent to your situation.

SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE CLUB TREASURER KX2H

“THERE HAS BEEN AN ACTIVE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB IN WILMINGTON SINCE 1914. PLEASE REMIT YOUR ANNUAL \$20.00 DUES TO ACARC, PO BOX 4044, WILMINGTON, NC 28406.”

FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA SECTION MANAGER

The ARRL North Carolina Section Manager's e-newsletter can be found on the ARRL web site. You can also sign up to have it arrive directly in your e-mail box. The SM's newsletter provides a good overview of ham activities in NC and a heads-up on national matters affecting Hams at large.

Here is this month's installment of the history of commercial radio in “Our Fair City”.

A Sampling of Wilmington’s Earliest Radio Businesses

A 1924 radio business statistical survey estimated that the annual value of the sale of parts for repair replacement and home construction was equal to the annual value of the sale of factory built sets at one hundred million dollars. This figure was based on an estimated listening audience of ten million people in three million homes and of course included hams. Classified business headings for “Radios” and “Radio Supplies” make their first appearance in the Wilmington city directory for 1924.

Electric Maintenance Company (EMCO)

In 1922 just one block east of the Southern Bell Central Office was the Electric Maintenance

Co. (EMCO) at 215 Princess St. EMCO was started c1918 listing its business then as “Electric Repairs & Storage Batteries”. The following advertisement appeared in 1922.

ELECTRIC MAINTENANCE CO.
215 Princess St. Phone 2191

Electric Wiring and Installations Made on Contract or
Service Agreement

Elevator and Electric Machinery Inspection and Service at
Reasonable Cost

Armature and Motor Windings Done Properly
at Right Prices

Sunbeam Mazda Lamps
Wireless Amateur Specialties
WILMINGTON, N. C.

EMCO continued doing business primarily as an electrical contractor through the early nineteen thirties but was no longer included under radio related classified headings after 1924. This reference to Wireless Amateur Supplies in 1922 makes EMCO the earliest to enter the radio business locally.

Radio-Electric Company

The Wilmington Morning Star for December 3, 1922 carried an item captioned: “Radio Concern Opens for Business Monday”. This was Radio-Electric Co., the first with radio in its name as its primary business, directly across the street from EMCO. It is described as being the first full line radio store in Wilmington. The store manager was Charles F. Jones formerly of EMCO and Western Electric (See also A.B. Blake Electric Co. below). Mr. Jones was assisted by Gordon S. Smith a recent graduate of New Hanover High School (NHHS) and operator of licensed amateur station 4BX 1920.

A.B. Blake Electric Company

The Wilmington Star-News reported the following on August 10, 1919:

“J.W. Blake Electrical Co. received a state charter. The company is capitalized at \$50,000 with \$10,000 paid in by J.W. Blake, President; A.B. Blake, Vice President and C.F. Jones, Secretary.” (NOTE: C.F. Jones was also later employed by EMCO, Western Electric Co. and Radio-Electric Co.)

In 1911 John W. Blake first appears in Wilmington doing business as an electrical contractor. In 1914 he is still in the electrical contracting business and residing on Castle St. along with A. B. Blake and

Alonzo T. Blake, both employed as electricians. These are John W.'s sons.

From 1917 through 1920 J. W. Blake Electrical Co. was located at the same street address occupied by EMCO. Mr. Blake bought the building in 1918 and sold it to EMCO when he retired in 1922. There is no indication of either A. B. or Alonzo T. Blake living or working in Wilmington in this period. (Two who went off to fight the war to end all wars?)

In 1922 A.B. is now Allie B. Blake, again an electrician, but no longer residing with John W. (Women had just gotten the vote in 1920 and we can surmise that he may have married before that but the city directories didn't begin to list the names of wives of married men until 1928).

The 1924 City Directory lists A.B. Blake as an electrical contractor with general offices at 225 N. Front St. along with “Radios at 127 N. Front St. Room 516”, the address of the Southern Building. In a June 1924 full page advertisement encouraging readers to patronize a long list of home town businesses A.B. Blake is listed as providing “Electrical and Radio Supplies”.

By coincidence, in that same year the first AM broadcast station in Wilmington, WBBN, had its studios and transmitter located in Room 503 of the Southern Building just down the hall from A.B. Blake's Radios. WBBN was under the control of A.B. Blake Radio & Electric Co. with Richard A. Dunlea as Station Director.

Today A.B. Blake Electric Co. headed by Eddie Blake, the fourth generation of the Wilmington Blakes, is still in business as an electrical contractor under his family's original 1919 state license number 75-U. When I interviewed him for this article he was completely unaware of his family's involvement in bringing radio to Wilmington.

McGrath & Company

In other related research I have found that some of the earliest radio entrepreneurs on the local level were opticians. I speculate that their background in the physics of light could have led to an interest in the physics of radio or perhaps almost anything associated with “radio” in 1925 seemed like a good money maker. See below for some other mixed product lines such as the business of Samuel C. McGrath (McGrath & Co.) advertised in local media as a Radio and Pet Shop in 1926 and 1928.

By the early nineteen-thirties selling, installing, building and repairing of radios was a thriving business attracting entrepreneurs across the country. Here are a few of the more interesting Wilmington entrepreneurial efforts at making it big in radio:

The Crosley Shoppe

902 Market St. Founded by Manley D. Williams c1929.

By 1932 Mr. Williams is demoted to Salesman and the shop manager is Elmer E. Boegli Jr. This shop went out of business c1935, the middle of the depression era.

James R. Hughes

213 Princess St. Appeared in 1930 classifieds under Radio Sets and Supplies – Retail. His address places him right next door to EMCO. He lasted just one year.

Buck's Service Station

In 1924 Morris G. Allison operated out of his home advertising as “The Battery Man”. Beginning in 1932 at three different Dock St. addresses he expanded out to “Radios and Batteries” and in 1934 dropped the batteries completely. In 1938 Mr. Allison’s business name changed to Buck’s Distributing Co. a wholesale distributor of electrical appliances lasting into the 1950’s.

Luke French's Radio Service

130 Market St. First appeared in 1932 owned and operated by Llewellyn “Luke” French. Luke had held amateur station license 4SU since 1926.

He continued in the radio servicing business into the fifties, operating out of his home during the depression years and later in a 13th St. storefront across the street from New Hanover High School where Bob Hodges, W4LWS (SK) recalled that “When I was in high school I spent a lot of lunch money at Luke’s”.

Radio Service Co.

Operated at 114 Princess St. for just one year c1932 by John R. Dobson who briefly held amateur station license 4TQ in 1925. In 1932 he renamed the business as the Dobson Radio Service Co. In the middle of the depression he operated out of his Grace St. home. John R. died in 1938 but his son Richard continued the radio repair business.

Clyde Leonard

One feature of the radio boom in the early days was the appearance of construction articles in newspapers and magazines attempting to explain the new art to the public. Men's magazines frequently carried full page ads for radio repair correspondence courses. The most notable of these were offered by the National Radio and De Vry Institutes. Graduates received a large diploma declaring them to be "Radiotricians". The 1936 Wilmington City Directory business classified section under "Radio Repairers" listed one Clyde Leonard at 208 ½ Princess St. bearing the title Radiotrician. Mr. Leonard had apparently upgraded his original working skills as a typewriter repairman through a radio correspondence course and established his own repair business, which flourished before WW II and included Clyde Leonard Jr. after the war years.

Allan KX2H

While processing QSL cards from our last Battleship activity, Museum Ships Weekend, I came across the following bit of "doggerel" from Clyde—N3JXG. Even in this digital age of E-QSL, there are yet "diehards" who still send and collect physical QSL cards. The much photocopied version of the poem (?) contains what appears to be a copyright symbol from VO1TX and is dated 1998. Enjoy!

There is a list of calls I know
All written in my logbook
And every month about this time
To the P O Box I go to take a look
And that is when I realize that
These calls are now a part
Not of the book they're written in
But of my very heart.....
For each call stands for someone
Who has touched my life sometime
And in that meeting they've become
The "Greatest Friends of Mine".....
I really am composed
Of each remembered Call...that
My life is so much richer
Than it was before our chat
So never think my QSOs
Are just a mere routine
Of Calls upon a list

Forgotten in between
So when I send a QSL that
I addressed to you
It is because you're on that List
Of Folks I'm grateful to
And whether I've known you
For many years or few
In some way you had a part In shaping things I do
So every day when the mailman comes
I realize anew
The Biggest Gift that I could get
Would be a QSL from You!

All for now, more (“doggerel”) later.

73 Bill AG4PA