

THE LISTENING POST

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

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www.ac4rc.org

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February, 2012

EYECATCHER!!!

The next Club meeting will be Tuesday, February 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. Our Club Treasurer requests prompt payment of dues so that the Club can meet its obligations.

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 Vaughn K4UWH
President, ACARC

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.

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.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES, EVENTS and CONTACT OPPORTUNITIES

February

ARRL CW DX Contest 18-19

Worldwide Antarctic Program Antarctic Activity Week 20-26

Club meeting 21

CQ WW 160M SSB Contest 24-26

NA QSO Party Digital 25-26

Mississippi QSO Party 25-26

North Carolina QSO Party 26

March

ARRL SSB DX Contest 3-4

Charlotte Hamfest/Roanoke Division Convention 10-11

Saint Patrick's Day Festivities 17

Club Meeting 20

Also in March, W5WWL will be commemorating monthlong the 90th anniversary of AM Radio 870 WWL in New Orleans; the Newport News, Va. Mariners Museum—W4OT--will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the battle of Hampton Roads, Monitor vs. Merrimack (CSS Virginia), first battle of “ironclads”, from the 9th through the 11th; NI6IW (USS Midway CV-41) celebrates the birthday of the “SeaBees” on the 10th; K9TAL observes the 93rd anniversary of the founding of the American Legion from the 15th through the 17th.

Of interest closer to home, the Greensboro NC Amateur Radio Association—N4G--will commemorate the March 1781 Battle of Guilford Courthouse, on March 17th and 18th. The Colonials under General Nathaniel Greene, although outnumbering the British forces under General Cornwallis by more than two to one, were forced to abandon the field thereby giving the tactical victory to Cornwallis. However, the Colonials inflicted such staggering losses on the victor, twenty-five percent casualties, that Cornwallis was forced to evacuate the Carolinas and move his army northward into Virginia. At Yorktown, Va. Seven months later, as they say, history was made.

Many of the radio activities listed immediately above offer certificates for participation. Details are to be found in QST. While not meat and potatoes for contesters, these events often offer historical perspective, local color and yet another aspect of the amateur radio hobby/service. Events can

sometimes be “quirky “. As we go to press (2/19), the Portage County (Ohio) Amateur Radio Service is holding its “7th Annual Freeze your Acorns Off” event.

PRIOR ACTIVITIES

The “Radio Guys” were on board BB-55 on January 14th for “Hidden Battleship”. A goodly number of folks paid a goodly sum to see parts of the Ship which are not generally open to the public. Radio Two is on the tour and offers the paying customers an opportunity to see a WWII Battleship's communications equipment and learn of the Club's efforts to restore the radios to operating condition on the amateur radio bands. Since the Ship receives no taxpayer monies and is entirely self supporting, the Club's support of the Ship's fund raising activities is well received.

The TBM-4 and TBK-7 CW transmitter motor generator units have been disassembled for removal and shipment for repair. We have been advised that the repairs have been approved, and planning for removal and shipping is underway.

Although the TDE motor generator unit is not operating at 100%, it is functioning. The low voltage side of the generator is putting out the specified 550 volts DC, the high voltage side, designed for 2,000 VDC, can only muster 1250 VDC. Nonetheless, on January 31, KX2H on a straight key at 1426Z made contact with HK0NA, the DXEpedition on Malpelo Island, 235 miles off the coast of Columbia. On 2/14, W9QH in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, operating an S-Line Collins XCVR, gave a signal report of 599. Usual cautions concerning signal reports apply. Estimated output from the TDE at present is 45 watts+/_.

The Naval Historical Society, in its February 14, 2012 Newsletter Editon, offers a very complimentary description of the Club's efforts in restoring the original WWII CW transmitters to operating condition on the amateur bands. It is worth a look at www.navyhistory.org. Click on Latest News, Newsletters, then enter North Carolina in the Search Box.

Radio Two also contains a TAJ-8 CW transmitter which hasn't received much attention since its frequency range does not fall within previously authorized amateur frequencies (175-600KC). However, the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference has approved a secondary MF allocation for amateur use from 472 -479KHz. This new allocation will not be effective until it is codified by the WRC and, in our case, the FCC, probably not until 2013.

The VE team administered two exams on February 11th, both upgrades. Our esteemed Vice-President Don—N4OFF, earned his CFCC for General, and one candidate upgraded to Extra Class. There were nine Ves present.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The North Carolina QSO Party will be this coming Sunday, February 26, from Noon to 10:00PM(local). The Club will be on board BB-55 to participate. The event, sponsored by the Forsyth (County) Amateur Radio Club (W4NC), essentially invites Hams throughout the world to contact as many of North Carolina's 100 counties as possible. The scoring scheme for the contest involves 4 “Bonus Point” opportunities, Cherokee County (mountains), W4NC (the sponsor in Winston-Salem), Dare County (on the Northeast coast), and the Battleship North Carolina, right here in New Hanover County on the Southeast coast. This event has traditionally been one been one of the Club's major

operating events and provides an excellent opportunity for members without HF radios or privileges to get on the air from a WWII battleship and enjoy being on the good end of a “pileup”. Loggers are needed. Logging at an event such as this provides an excellent opportunity to ease into HF communications. We will most likely meet in the Ship's parking lot at about 11:30AM on Sunday morning. Look for more info during the week on the Club's reflector.

ODDS AND END NOTES

The new rules for 60 meters (5MHz) become effective at 12:01 AM (EST) on March 5, 2012. See the March issue of QST for discussion of specifics.

The “Payroll Tax Bill” (Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012), recently passed by both houses of Congress and awaiting the President's signature, contains a provision for studying the value of the Amateur Radio Service in emergency situations. While we have been down this road before, it is nonetheless interesting to note Section 6414 (b) (2) (A) & (B) of the Act.

“an identification of impediments to enhanced Amateur Radio Service communications, such as the effects of unreasonable or unnecessary private land use restrictions on residential antenna installations;.....and recommendations regarding the removal of such impediments.”

You will recall that PRB-1 applies only to antenna restrictions imposed by local governments, and that the FCC has refused to apply the provisions of PRB-1 to private contracts i.e. covenants, codes and restrictions imposed by homeowners associations.

Further, there was initially some concern that portions of the 440MHz amateur band allocation would be auctioned off to the private sector to partially cover the cost of the legislation. A cursory review of the legislation indicates that the affected portions of the spectrum are at 472MHz and above.

Sunspot activity has been erratic of late. K7RA's latest Solar Update (2/17) discusses sunspot cycle predictions from NASA.

“Two weeks ago, NASA released a revised prediction stating the cycle should peak in late 2013 at a smoothed sunspot number of 96. The latest outlook estimates a peak in early 2013 at 63, about 35 percent lower than the prediction from two weeks ago. We hope it isn't true.”

Finally, there has been a bit of excitement about the ABC TV sitcom Last Man Standing airing on Tuesday nights. The lead character, Mike Baxter, is played by Tim Allen, ex of Home Improvement/Tool Time where his character was named Tim Taylor. Mike is a Ham—KA0XTT (ex Tim Taylor, get it?), and his amateur radio activities apparently serve as background to flesh out his character. The February issue of QST has a discussion of the show.

FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA SECTION MANAGER

At the risk of repeating my remarks from the last newsletter, I congratulate ACARC for working with the Forsyth Amateur Radio Club, sponsor of the North Carolina QSO Party, to make the Battleship, NI4BK, a bonus station. Many may not realize that the NC QSO Party almost went into extinction several years ago, and was revived by the Forsyth club., and most especially by Henry Heitmann,

W2DZO. Henry is a surprisingly young fellow, so I'll hope he'll spearhead the QSO Party for years to come. Also, I am very pleased to see that ACARC is the sponsor of one of the 11 award categories, MOBILE/IN STATE/SSB, which is operation from a motor vehicle while moving. If you have been following the NC QSO Party reflector, there are many operators who plan to rove around the state in their cars, so this is an exciting category to support. So come out Sunday, February 26th to the Battleship and help out the Showboat on the air for the world to hear.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Cabarrus Arena in Concord on March 10 and 11 for the Charlotte Hamfest, which doubles this year as the Roanake Division convention. Until we meet next, get on the air and have some fun.

73 de Bill N2COP

All for now, more later. 73 Bill AG4PA