

# THE LISTENING POST

## Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 4044  
Wilmington, NC 28406

[www.ac4rc.org](http://www.ac4rc.org)

147.180 (+.600 88.5)  
442.500 (+5 88.5)

September, 2012

### EYECATCHER!!!

The next Club meeting will be Tuesday September 18, 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 10/13/12.

(Watch the Club website and e-mail from the Club reflector for a probable change of location for October to the New Hanover County Public Library Northeast Branch.)

### UPCOMING ACTIVITIES and EVENTS

WE are looking forward to returning to “duty” aboard USS North Carolina within the next several weeks, or as soon as the temperature in the Cape Fear River water allows the lower decks to cool off a bit. Once we are able to get back on board, we’ll have an update on the status of motor generator unit repairs. Progress continues on the creation of a backup DC power supply for the Ship’s World War Two Morse Code transmitters.

We will have another visit this Fall from our friends in the Wayne County ARC under the joint USS North Carolina/ACARC Guest Operator Program, probably on Veterans Day, an appropriate occasion to put the Old Girl on the amateur bandwaves.

We are also planning amateur radio operation aboard the North Carolina on the weekend after next (29/30 September). The USS Wisconsin (BB 64) Radio Club is running a Special Event Station to commemorate the Final Decommissioning of the last US Navy Battleship. She was decommissioned in 1948 after WWII, recommissioned in 1951 for the Korean War, decommissioned for the second time in 1958, again recommissioned in 1988, and decommissioned for the final time (?) on September 30, 1991 after service in Operation Desert Storm.

Since 2001 she has been a Memorial in Norfolk, Virginia.

(Barring unusual atmospheric conditions, She is in our “skip zone” on 20M but easily reachable on 40M.)

Watch for updates on the Club website/reflector in the next several days.

As above, watch also for a change of location for the October 13 VE Test Session.

Finally, we have received some indication that the Club will receive recognition from the Forsyth ARC, the Sponsor of the annual North Carolina QSO Party, for the Club’s amateur radio activities aboard the North Carolina, specifically during the NC QSO Party. Club President Charlie K4UWH several years ago arranged for BB-55 to be added to the then 3 “Bonus Point Stations”, (one in the State’s western mountains, one at the Sponsor’s station, and one on the State’s Northeast coast.). The Ship’s designation as a “Bonus Point Station” has proven extremely popular and the recognition is scheduled to be presented at the October Club meeting.

### PRIOR ACTIVITIES

We are indeed in the near final clutches of the “Summer Doldrums” regarding Club activities. Not much has happened since “Field Day” in June. However, do keep in mind that the WHFVA does conduct an on air Swap Net on Thursday evenings at 8:00PM on

the 147.345 repeater (+0.600—88.5).

### ODDS AND END NOTES

Contributions to the Club Newsletter are not only welcome but also 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.

The Atlantic Hurricane Season extends through the end of November. We have already had 14 named storms this year. Fortunately for us, most have either petered out, tracked to the South, or, as in the case of several of the most recent, sheared off to the North/Northeast after encountering the weather pattern surrounding Bermuda.

(For you geography freaks, Bermuda is at lat/long 32.3N, 64.78W; Wilmington, NC is at 34.2N, 77.9W. Keep rooting for that “Bermuda High”.)

However, as this letter is prepared, there are 75 days remaining in the Atlantic Hurricane Season. Keep an eye on weather patterns as they form off the West coast of Africa and steam Westward across the Atlantic Ocean. An excellent reference point is the web site of the National Weather Service’s National Hurricane Center at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>. You can monitor development, progression, and more importantly, strengthening of tropical storms that have the potential to affect our area.

The usual precautions apply during the latter stages of the Atlantic Hurricane Season. The old Boy Scout motto of “Be Prepared” applies. Look after your home and family first, and, if you can do so safely, “Be Prepared” to offer your communication skills as amateur radio operators to your community, if and as necessary.

Keep your radio batteries charged, and make sure, whether you stay or go during a threatening storm, that you have a plan for either evacuating or “riding it out”.

### 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

Our own N2COP has given us an early alert for a most worthy amateur radio event—the Boy Scouts Jamboree on the Air—Air being the amateur radio bandwaves. This is an annual event, and, in the past, we have had several years of participation in the event. Regrettably, not so this year.

However, as Hams, we can still encounter and encourage a new generation of Hams by participating in the event from our home stations. The event runs from Noon to Noon on the weekend of October 20/21. More discussion will follow in next months Newsletter.

Bill's Correspondence follows.

LOCAL PERSPECTIVE from Bill Morine, N2COP

ARRL North Carolina Section Manager

October is not only my favorite month weather-wise, but also there's a lot going on in Ham Radio. Fall kicks off the contesting season, many clubs host special event stations, and even young people have Ham activities. One of my perennial favorites is JOTA, Jamboree-On-The-Air. This year marks the 55<sup>th</sup> annual event to be held October 20-21. According to World Organization of the Scout Movement, the international body based in Geneva, Switzerland which coordinates global Scouting programs, over 500,000 Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, scout leaders, former scouts and just plain folks participate in JOTA. Two facts about JOTA make it unique: 1) it's one of the few global events in which U.S. scouts can participate with foreign counterparts, and 2) it's also one of the few jointly sponsored events between Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. For the past twenty years, the Azalea Coast club has participated periodically in JOTA. As a former Scout leader myself who used to coordinate these events in the Wilmington area, the local Cape Fear Council of the Boy Scouts of America has candidly been lukewarm in its support of JOTA. The last time Hams formally participated in a local council sponsored event was the 2010 Parent-Son weekend at Camp McNeill in Bladen County. Regrettably, nothing formal is scheduled for the 2012 JOTA. However, informal JOTA stations are very much encouraged. If you know a local Cub, Boy or Girl Scout leader, invite them over to the shack on the Saturday or Sunday afternoon of JOTA weekend. You'll be amazed at some of the conversations. Boy Scout leaders will thank you because getting scouts on the air is one of 8 requirements for the Radio Merit Badge. Cub Scout leaders will likewise be appreciative because watching Ham Radio in action helps to fulfill elective and activity badges respectively for Bear and Webelos ranks. Many will recall that Bill Wetherill, N2WG, has helped many area youth get their Technician Class license over the years. While many of those are now inactive, they went on to pursue other interests and careers in science and engineering. So when you hear young voices on the air the weekend of October 20-21 calling CQ, don't tune away. Have a QSO with the future of our hobby.  
73 es TNX  
Bill N2COP

Here is the latest chapter in the history of commercial broadcasting in Wilmington, NC.

### **AM Broadcasting Comes to Wilmington**

On my return trip from the annual AWA conference in August I stopped at an antique consignment mall outside Richmond, VA. In addition to a very good condition copy of LIFE magazine from the week I was born I bought an item of radio ephemera dated 1934.

Originally priced at ten cents and folded like a typical road map it was jointly produced by RCA Radiotron and Cunningham radio tubes and titled "World Wide Radio Tours". One side is a map of the world showing short wave broadcasters call signs and power levels on all the populated continents. The other side is a map of the USA with the licensed AM broadcast stations for each city along with their frequency and power level.

The first thing that struck me was that where Wilmington should be on the map instead was labeled as Durham and the single BC station there is identified as WRAM on 1370 KHZ and less than 250 watts of operating power. This is half right however.

AM Broadcasting in Wilmington began in February of 1924 when the Wilmington Morning Star reported on the 20th: "Local station is Ready for Operating". A preliminary tune-up was heard the

previous evening by Major Ewart W. Smith, the Secretary of the Wilmington Amateur Radio Association. This was WBBN licensed by the A.B. Blake Electric Company. Its station manager was Richard A. Dunlea. The first transmitter had no more than 10 watts input power was probably homemade.

WBBN was short lived. It was replaced as reported in a Wilmington Morning Star front-page headline of July 11, 1924: "Station WRBT Formally Opens With Pleasing Program". The operators of WRBT are a group of Wilmington businessmen calling themselves The Wilmington Radio Association. The article states that the station is operated at a power of 50 watts on a Wavelength of 227 Meters. (Approx. 756 KHz). The station manager of WRBT is Richard A. Dunlea.

In October 1931 WRBT was moved to the Cape Fear Hotel where it became WRAM. Later that year the WRAM transmitter was moved to a site on the Princess Street Road, then just outside the city limits. The power was increased to 250 Watts. Richard A. Dunlea was the station manager. In 1934 WRAM went off the air and was moved lock stock and barrel to Durham, NC where it became WDNC, which is still on the air today.

Wilmington had no hometown AM broadcaster for a short span of time between the demise of WRAM and the start-up of WMFD in April of 1935 by none other than Richard A. Dunlea now as station licensee as well as general manager. Once again atop the Wilmington Hotel, this station began with a 100 watt transmitter and evolved over time into "The Powerhouse of Southeastern North Carolina" in the forties and fifties.