

THE LISTENING POST

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

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

March, 2012

EYECATCHER!!!

Early edition this month. The next Club meeting will be Tuesday, March 20, 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

Greetings All-It was good to see quite a number of local hams at the Charlotte Hamfest this weekend. The crowds were adequate and the flea market was full of fleas and a few interesting buys but it was mostly fleas. The vendor representation was OK but nothing to write home about. If you needed fundamental equipment or supplies you could most likely find them. The DX Forum on the just past HK0NA Malpelo operation was very interesting and attended by an overflow crowd. It is amazing how the group got on that rock sticking 900 feet out of the water and operated so effectively making some 192,000 QSOs and a new record for a Dxpedition. The logistics and the money involved in such an operation is difficult to get your arms around. They got back some \$18,000 in debt and expecting to make that on contributions that come in and the QSL card requests. Is that faith or what?

Of course, there was a nice presence at the hamfest by the ARRL including our own Bill, N2COP-NC SM and our Assistant Division Director.

I got a lot of nice comments from guys who worked me as PJ7/K4UWH and in particular the fact that I upload my logs to LOTW in a timely manner. LOTW is really gaining a lot of positive support. It is of course not the only way to do QSLing but it is one great way to get confirmations for a number of I awards at present and support is growing. I strongly recommend using it as much as possible. I finally talked one of my friends in Tennessee into it in the past month. He had been keeping his contest logs in an XL spreadsheet and converting them to cabrillo format for submission. So he was able to upload from his cabrillo files to LOTW. He is working on five band CW awards for a number of things. He had quickly roughly 50% of his contacts confirmed and this is really filling in a lot of his needs in all the award categories.

The operation from the Battleship during the NC QSO Party was great and it was really good to see so many local hams out supporting the operation. I am sure the NC group sponsoring the QSO Party will be very happy with our support for the effort. The more activity there is the more popular an activity becomes. The NC event is clearly growing in popularity.

I hope that everyone is reserving the weekend of June 23&24 which is the annual Field Day weekend. You need to be thinking how you can fit in. Everyone does not have to be a high pressure operator. There are many jobs to make Field Day a success. The key is to have the support of a large ham population and have everyone contribute in their area of expertise. And, of course, there is nothing wrong with stepping out of your comfort zone. That is the way you grow as a communicator. I expect our county wide operation will again be fun and very successful.

I hope to see everyone at the March meeting.

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 and EVENTS

March

17 St. Patrick's Day Festivities

20 Club Meeting

24-25 CQ WW WPX SSB Contest

April

7 ARRL NC State Convention/40th Annual RARS Fest

14 VE Test Session

17 Club Meeting

PRIOR ACTIVITIES

14 local Hams were aboard the USS North Carolina (BB 55) for the NC QSO Party. CW & SSB efforts resulted in 486 contacts. While the contact logs are still being “data mined”, it looks like we had contacts in about 40+ US States, maybe half a dozen Canadian Provinces, and several in Europe. The highlight of the day was a 59 contact on SSB with a VK7 station in Tasmania. Further details will follow on the Club reflector.

The Ship's staff today began the arduous task of removing the malfunctioning motor generator units for Radio Two transmitters requiring repair from the generator room to bring them up to the “weather deck”, enabling ready access for shipment. We reported last issue that the TDE generator remained operational, albeit at reduced output.

Further bad news. The TDE generator which was last reported as functioning marginally has now given up the ghost, and must be sent out for repair also.

As for CW radio transmissions from Radio two, BB 55 is now under enforced “radio silence”.

The joint BB 55/ACARC Guest Operator Program continues to draw interest. Next month, a group of Hams from Wayne County, NC will make a return visit to the ship for the 4th or 5th time as guest operators. The guys from the Wayne County ARC seem to enjoy visiting the Ship and “gas bagging” with the “Radio Guys” about working with the WWII radio gear. The Wayne County ARC has made a \$200.00 donation to the ACARC toward its efforts to keep the Battleship's WWII transmitters on the air. We are most grateful for the contribution and will put it to good use.

ODDS AND END NOTES

There certainly has been a flurry of Solar activity in the past couple of weeks. While the sunspot numbers have been high, coronal mass ejections and solar flares have been wreaking havoc with the Earth's atmosphere. Hopefully, the CMEs will abate and the sunspot numbers will increase.

Several weeks ago we did manage to get the Club 147.180 & 442.500 repeaters linked thanks to David KB4FXC. The linking worked well, as designed, for a short time. It was subsequently determined that the 442 repeater was being activated by and transmitting massive electrical noise interference and was accordingly shut down. Last week the 442 repeater was temporarily reactivated and monitored, and when all seemed well, the link between the two repeaters was reestablished. Shortly thereafter, the interference returned and the link was shut down, and then the 442 itself was shut down.

Whether the problem has resulted from the recent energetic activities of “Old Sol”, interference from the RF environment at the repeater site, or a defect in the hardware/software in the repeater itself remains to be seen. When Solar activity abates, we will pursue a solution. In the interim, the now unlinked 147.180 repeater continues to function as usual.

Licensed Amateur Radio is 100 Years Old

The existence of radio “Hams” was documented in the early years of the 20th century. However, by 1912 the airwaves were already becoming crowded and subject to turf disagreements between amateur and commercial interests. The Radio Act of February 1912 imposed licensing requirements on both commercial and amateur station owners and operators and initiated the process of Government assigned call signs.

The first published lists of licensed amateur stations was issued by the U.S. Commerce Department of Commerce in July of 1913. Here is the listing for Wilmington's first licensed amateur stations.

4BB Rankin, Robert G., jr...3 North Ninth St...Wilmington, N.C...16
4BF Rankin, Robert G., jr...Chadbourn St., Wrightsville Beach, N.C...22

Mr. Rankin, at this time was the Purser of the Carolina Yacht Club located on Chadbourn St. in Wrightsville Beach. Station 4BF's spark transmitter was licensed for a maximum power of 22 watts. His home station at the corner of 9th and Market Streets, also a spark transmitter was limited to 16 watts. Mere peanut whistle stations competing for bandwidth with the Marconi station HA on Cape Hatteras and wireless equipped ships entering and leaving the cape fear River.

There was a privately owned wireless telegraph station atop the 5 story Maffitt's Marine Wireless Building at the northwest corner of Water and Princess Streets as early as 1911, originally intended for communication with the Frying Pan Shoals Lightship. However, there seems to be no record of a Commerce Department issued callsign until 1919 when it came under Navy control as station as NWN. The building was torn down in the middle 1960s.

Allan KX2H

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

I recently compiled North Carolina section statistics, and discovered some interesting numbers and trends:

The total number of Hams is at an all time high in North Carolina at 18,870, but the number of Technicians is going down, and the number of Generals and Extras is going up.

Over the past two years, four more ARRL sanctioned hamfests have been added in North Carolina, bringing the total number across the state to 18.

North Carolina now has the highest concentration of ICS credentialed ARES operators in the U.S.-450- who have completed ICS courses 100, 200, 700, and 800. 58 of North Carolina's 100 counties have ARES Emergency Coordinators (Ecs) who have finished all four ICS courses.

The Downeast Hamfest in Kinston on June 30th is shaping up to be the largest in eastern North Carolina in years. More details later, but the theme is expected to be HF Digital.

Finally, keep an eye out for Dennis Motschenbacher, K7BV. Dennis is the head of Yaesu's USA Amateur Radio operations, and he and his wife are relocating to Turkey, NC, just outside Wallace. Dennis can run his operation from anywhere, and he and his wife have tired of the southern California scene. He will have 6 acres with a 190 foot tower (already approved by local zoning). I hope once he gets settled we can extend a warm Wilmington welcome to our new friends just 40 miles up the road.

Above all, thanks for letting me as a local Wilmington boy represent you as the ARRL Nort Carolina Section Manager.

73 de Bill N2COP

All for now, more later. 73 Bill AG4PA