

THE LISTENING POST

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

July 2013

Editor's Note – Well, we have made it through another Field Day. This year's event was just my third, so I realize I am hardly qualified to offer a critique, but I cannot resist.

If I am correct, the primary objective of Field Day is to test each participating club (and individual operator-participant) in their capability to operate in simulated emergency conditions: no power from the grid, limited time for preparation, and antennas erected for the occasion. Underneath that premise, the test is aimed at the club ability to think through and manage the process. To me, that implies involvement of the maximum number of club members.

The fact that this year the Wilmington area effort was a cooperative venture linking the ACARC and the VHF club seems to me to emphasize a heightened need to communicate schedules and assignments leading up to Field Day.

Too many of us who turned out on Friday afternoon, and even Saturday morning, did not have an assignment or even know what was needed. As a consequence, some manpower was not utilized. More importantly, there was not a strong sense of teamwork in getting the pre operation tasks completed. From my perspective, we need to improve our efforts at managing and involving a broad base of our membership.

Finally, on a theme I have voiced in other club events, creating an operator/logger schedule ahead of time allows members to do some personal planning, avoids gaps in operation or overly long duty stretches, and allows less experienced operators to work with more experienced ones. We missed that opportunity on the weekend.

We had a great positive example of meeting the objectives in the GOTA unit. The Weatherill clan took the responsibility, joined by Hutch (NK0S) and delivered an operating station, antenna, operators, public information materials, and power supply and were on the air very close to kickoff time. By Sunday morning the younger contingent had racked up bonus points for the club. Bravo.

David (KB4FXC) and his generous commitment of time and equipment was the core of our antenna network, emergency power supply, and SSB operations. Without his time and involvement we would not have been on the air.

One other example of how delegating tasks works well, in this case another volunteer effort, is Chef Brad (WD4FTR) and his Saturday evening spaghetti feed. It was good

food, plenty of it, and delivered when promised. Another Bravo!

I think the ACARC can be justly proud of the Field Day results. But, we should continue to evaluate every aspect of how we stage and manage our events and strive for full involvement of the membership and a more evenly shared work-load.

Jeff Wingfield, KI4JDE

PRIORITY MESSAGES - The next meeting of the club will be Tuesday, July 16, 2013 at Cape Fear Community College on the North Campus. Our ACARC web page has directions.

The next VE Test Session will be held on August 10, 2013 at the McKeithan Building, Cape Fear Community Collage North Campus. Testing will start at 10:00 AM. Steve requests that all ACARC members who are designated Volunteer Examiners join him. If you can, meet the team at K&W Cafeteria for breakfast at 0800 before the exam session.

Club dues (\$20) are now payable to Treasurer Allan Pellnat, KX2H. Bring a check or cash to the meeting or mail a check to him at the club address. Put your call sign on the check.

CHIEF RADIO OPERATOR MESSAGE - COMMENTS FROM OUR

PRESIDENT - Another successful Field Day exercise is behind us and we did very well with great support from the majority of the ACARC members and the ham radio community as a whole. I think it is a perfect example of how the FD exercise should be structured where all the local clubs and the ARES organization come together to work on a communications project much like things would be in many real emergencies. I also applaud Bill and Karen Wetherill, and Hutch Hutchison for getting together a good group of GOTA operators and doing a great job there. Overall the performance this year was better than last year, primarily on the merits of the GOTA activity and the strong performance on CW.

As we improve we continue to identify things that need attention to achieve continued improvement. We need to develop operators who can multi-task, meaning operating the rig and simultaneously logging the QSOs – it is the fastest way to log contacts as it reduces a step and reduces confusion between the operator and the logger.

We also need to have better familiarity of the rigs by the operators that are going to operate them and probably someone who is familiar to be close at hand most of the time. We also have a little work to do on the logging network.

Most of these refinements call for work and attention during the year and clearly before

Field Day week and weekend. My personal opinion, and I am only 1 person, is that we need to spend less time putting up time-consuming antennas and more time on some of the basics as I mentioned above until the whole team reaches a higher level of proficiency. But these are all things that need to be hashed out during a full-blown critique of this year's efforts, including some of the experience from past years.

Please do not take my comments as negative criticism but rather constructive thoughts on how to grow in emergency preparedness. Find simple solutions that work and use them.

I hope to see everyone at the next meeting. We will have the 50/50 drawing and another door prize or two.

Charlie Vaughn, K4UWH

FROM THE RADIO ROOM - The battleship crew has ceased work on the battleship for the summer months. We are still getting guest operators on the ship and have more scheduled to come. The word is getting out that we have a guest operator program. We will return to the ship in late October when the steel cools down.

Jack Jacobs, WD4OIN

PRELIMINARY FIELD DAY REPORT - I have the results just about ready for submission. Our (preliminary) score is 6,634 for this year. That's up from 6,126 last year. A big, big improvement--particularly since the band conditions were not fantastic.

Incidentally, the other regional Field Day groups I have talked with had a score decrease this year.

Field Day 2013 was clearly an excellent event for our combined efforts. Most of the planned aspects came together this year, including the GOTA station and dinner on Saturday.

More details to follow- 73

David McGough, KB4FXC

CLUB ACTIVITIES - Several activities for club members occur regularly. Every one is encouraged to participate.

- Club Net at 2100 EST on 147.18 each Monday
- Noon Lunch Bunch at a location announced via e-mail each week. Often includes a show and tell or discussion of topic of interest. Dutch treat.

- Alternative weekly ham-oriented lunch groups. Ask at club meeting about getting on the announcement list.
- Ham test sessions conducted by Volunteer Examiners at 1000 EST on the second Saturday of even months at Cape Fear Community College. Check the ACARC web site for February details.

SAY AGAIN - Other items of interest to club members might include:

- Weekly swap meet managed by the Wilmington VHF Association takes place on Thursday evenings at 2000 EST on 147.345. A great place to find what you need or unload what you do not.
- The Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club web site (ac4rc.org) has an abundance of information about the club, events, and links to other amateur radio activity.

CORRESPONDENCE - As QSL manager for NI4BK I get to see the remarks that other operators write on the QSL cards they send to us on the battleship. I have processed 83 incoming QSLs from the June 1st and 2nd Museum Ship's Weekend operation. Most operators say thanks for putting the ship on the air or nice job and so on. One operator, however, George Joyner, KD4QMY, took the time to include a short note of thanks with his QSL card. Here is what he had to say:

Please extend my thanks to all who put forth the hard work to put the USS North Carolina on the air for the 2013 Museum Ships Weekend. You guys were number 13 of 43 vessels that I logged this year.

Allan Pellnat
KX2H