

THE LISTENING POST

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

September 2013

Editor's Note – I would like to say that it is good to be back home and involved again with ham radio. It is good to be back home; I am not involved with ham radio.

Early in our trip to the Northeast to pick up a boat and bring it south to Wilmington, we had a disturbing telephone call. Our house had been struck by lightning. The good news was that, outwardly, there was no real damage to the house. However, the bad news was the report of "a mess of burned wire in the back yard and some parts on the ground that look as if they were attached to your antenna."

Neighbors were eager to talk about the "spectacular fireworks display" as the tree or the antenna (I am still unsure) took a direct hit. This past week I have had to replace the circuit board on the garage door opener, the same for the irrigation system controller and a number of dimmers and halogen fixtures inside the house. So far as I can tell, the radio gear was not damaged; I had disconnected the equipment from the antenna lead before we left town.

So, I feel cut off from the world. A new G5RV is ordered as well as supporting parts and the call has been made for help putting it back together. I did not realize how much I enjoyed the hobby until I cannot play at it.

Jeff Wingfield, KI4JDE

PRIORITY MESSAGES - The next meeting of the club will be Tuesday, September 17, 2013 at Cape Fear Community College on the North Campus. Our ACARC web page has directions.

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 - Well the club has not done much during the last month; all of you know how summer is.

I have been trying to get an addition to the new house built for a ham shack and figuring out how to downsize from this house and into a smaller one. What a process.

Vivian said she didn't want me to put up my Rohn fold-over tower again because she felt it was too dangerous based on watching me wrestle with it. I found a self-supporting crank-up tower (70' as before) and bought it. Well, I didn't realize the engineering work needed to get the base of that thing in the ground and I really needed to do that while they were pouring the concrete for the addition.

For a bit of a program at the upcoming meeting I will talk about the engineering on the base of this tower as I suspect a number of people are as unknowing as I am.

Charlie Vaughn, K4UWH

FROM THE RADIO ROOM - The battleship crew is getting ready to return to work on the ship after the summer's heat has passed.

A few weeks back the generator shop in Rocky Mount called Norman, KI4YSY, and said they have the generator for the TDE transmitter repaired. A trip to Rocky Mount to pick up the generator is in the planning.

The ship has requested our help on an up-coming hidden battleship tour. Normally we man the transmitter room and explain radio operations and how crew did their job. We also explain our work on the transmitters in the room. Most of the visitors are amazed that we have the vintage transmitters working.

We have another group of visiting operators coming over to the ship in October to work

the guest operator station. Anyone wanting to help out is always welcome.

Jack Jacobs, WD4OIN

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 - NOTES FROM OUR ARRL SECTION MANAGER -

Field Day results won't be released from ARRL headquarters until late October or early November, but preliminary indications show the Wilmington team has a lot to be proud of. Once the dust settles, we may come in 2nd or 3rd in the state. There has been talk of holding "Elmer Days" aboard the battleship so newly licensed and rookie Hams can gain valuable HF experience, especially in pileups which NI4BK would bring. I hope we will follow through on that idea so on Field Day next year we will have not only great equipment and antennas, but prepared and seasoned operators too.

Wilmington, as a city, ranks 10th in size in North Carolina. We live in a very pleasant place with a high quality of life. In my travels as Section Manager, I must confess that I enjoy the Ham radio amenities which larger markets offer. As I drive through the

Triangle, the Triad and Charlotte, it's nice to see a steady stream of chatter on area repeaters. Many of you know I own a D-Star rig, and I thoroughly enjoy D-Star QSOs when I'm west of Raleigh. One of the things I like best about D-Star is that the majority of D-Star repeaters are connected to "Gateways", which are internet VOIP links much like IRLP and EchoLink. It's fun to easily connect with a Ham in Durham, NC, or Durham, England, while driving down the highway. I realize it would be a large investment, but Wilmington could use a D-Star repeater. There are now 12 D-Star locations in North Carolina, but none east of Raleigh. The nearest D-Star repeater is in Myrtle Beach. D-Star is not a proprietary technology, but Icom is presently the only commercial manufacturer of this technology. Nor is D-Star the only digital voice mode available, It is, however, the market leader and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. I hope the dialogue to consider D-Star in Wilmington will continue.

I strongly feel the need that all Ham organizations in Wilmington need to develop and maintain strong training programs. For example, I ran across a local Ham who's been inactive for the past seven years. He wants to explore PSK31. He was having trouble hooking up his Signalink interface and had questions on ALC reduction on this rig. He said his job often has second shifts and this prevents him from attending weeknight meetings. He wanted to know if there were any weekend programs or training sessions locally. Except of a couple of recent antenna building projects offered by the Wilmington VHF Association, I couldn't think of any. As Section Manager, I get to see the newsletters of many clubs across North Carolina. The Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society (MARS) lists in its newsletter subject matter experts by manufacturer (Icom, Yaesu, Kenwood, Ten-Tec, Elecraft, etc.) and by mode (QRP, amplifiers, high gain antennas, PSK31, RTTY, etc.). The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society (RARS) often has 2-3 hour programs where training in modes are offered. Maybe we should think about offering some "clinics" which would entice operators to try new directions in our hobby.

Finally, our greatest point of visibility to the public these days is through Public Service. I hope many of you can help out again this year with the 6th annual PPD Beach 2 Battleship (B2B) Triathlon on Saturday, October 26th. We especially need operators from 12 noon to 9 PM at Aid Stations in the city along the run course. If you can help, please send an email to Bob Kiehlmeier, WA3IRG, at bob28405@bellsouth.net In case you think our efforts don't amount to much, consider this. ARRL has a form called FSD-157, which is the "Public Service Activity Report". It captures the equivalent value of personal equipment and repeaters Hams use, along with the time Hams donate if they were paid. The current volunteer donation rate is \$19.09 per hour in North Carolina (See http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time). So when you add up all three components over a 17 hour race like the B2B the results on the FSD-157 are a staggering \$36,000.00 in donated equipment and services. I have shared this number

with the recipient of the proceeds for the race, the Wilmington Family YMCA, which uses the money raised for scholarships. They appreciate it, and you should feel good too when you help.

Bill Morine
N2COP