

THE LISTENING POST

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

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January, 2012

EYECATCHER!!!

The next Club meeting will be Tuesday, January 17, 2012 at Cape Fear Community College North Campus. See the web site for directions. Also, with the arrival of the New Year, 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.

CLUB OFFICERS for 2012:

President Charlie Vaughn K4WUH; Vice-President Don Hall N4OFF; Treasurer Allan Pellnat KX2H; Secretary Norman Clemmons K4YSY

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I want to welcome all members back for the 2012 season. I hope everyone had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year.

It was great to see the large crowd at the Christmas party meeting in December 2011. That is probably the largest gathering we have had in quite a while. A great big THANKS to Ed, W3NZ for setting up the arrangements.

It is my hope that in 2012 we can have more club activity. After all the reason we have clubs is to support one another in the hobby and at the same time have fun working together. It makes all of us better hams. There are a number of on the air activities in January and while propagation is not the greatest, there is enough activity to make things interesting. February 26 brings us to the NC QSO Party and we plan to operate NI4BK which will be a bonus point station in the contest-a big hit last year. ACARC is also sponsoring a plaque for high score: Mobile/Instate/SSB. So make your plans now to operate some at NI4BK that Sunday.

A bit further out we have the annual Field Day emergency test. It will be at Ogden Park as it has been many times. So reserve the weekend of June 23 and 24.

There are a lot of good hamfests coming up –Charlotte (March 12 & 13), Raleigh (April 7), and Dayton (May 18-20). You can learn a lot at one of these events.

The program for January 17 will cover the trials and tribulations of converting CB sets to cover the 10 Meter ham band. David McGough will be the presenter and possibly we can get him to tell us about fake transistors from China-we understand they are cheap.

Also remember our club dues are now due.

Looking forward to seeing everyone!

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.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Saturday January 14th “Radio Guys” will be on board BB-55 down in the main transmitter room participating in Hidden Battleship tours, a significant fund raising activity for the Ship, which generates not only operating capital for the Ship but also a great deal of publicity and good will for the Club. Secretary Norm advises straw poll indicates “Radio Guys” are highlight of tour.

Club meeting January 17th.

North American QSO Party (Phone) January 21-22

CQ WW 160M Contest (CW) January 27-29

South Carolina State Convention/Hamfest February 4.

Virginia State Convention/Frostfest 2012 February 4.

Minnesota QSO Party February 4.

Delaware QSO Party February 4-5.

PRIOR ACTIVITIES

The “Radio Guys” continue their maintenance efforts in Radio Two aboard the USS North Carolina Battleship Memorial and Museum. The Main Transmitter Room and its Morse Code XMTRS have been the focus of the group's attention since “enlisting” in the year 2000. As reported here earlier, we are currently without CW capability due to generator problems. We are hoping that the Ship will soon approve sending out the three generators (TBM-4, TDE, TBK-7) for repair so BB-55 can get back on the air with Her original Government Issue late 1930's technology.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The North Carolina QSO Party is scheduled this year for 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 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”. Look for more discussion and info as the event approaches.

ODDS AND END NOTES

CQ Magazine for January (p.98) contains an informative article discussing Solar Cycle 24 and projections for DX band conditions between now and the peak of the cycle, variously predicted to occur between 2013 and 2015.

QST for January (p.77) provides a discussion of the FCC's latest pronouncement (Second Report and Order, October 24, 2011) concerning Access Broadband over Power Line (BPL) systems. The R&O was issued in response to a federal appeals court decision (2008) which, in turn, resulted from a court challenge filed by ARRL to the Commissions original BPL “final” rules of 2004. The issues essentially involve the degree to which BPL systems must provide protection from pollution of and interference to amateur radio portions of the HF spectrum, and appropriate distance/measurement protocols. The article indicates that ARRL will file a Petition for Reconsideration.

Monitoring Times for January (p.6) also discusses the FCC R&O, summarizes the history of developments in the matter, and, without addressing the merits, concludes that the march of technological progress and the marketplace have rendered BPL obsolete.

(QST also notes the verdict of the marketplace, but essentially argues that the issue should be pursued to ensure protection of the amateur HF bands from currently operating systems and potential future applications of the technology.)

With the improvement in propagation conditions as solar cycle 24 unfolds, 10 meter DX has been

receiving a lot of attention. Recollection of a homebrew 10 meter antenna constructed some 5 years ago prompted a search of the bookshelf for an old copy of the ARRL publication "Best of the New Ham Companion." One of the articles, from QST of April 1994, was titled "An Indestructible Dipole for 10 Meters".

The parts list consists of 2 10 foot sections of ½ inch galvanized electrical conduit, 2 stainless steel adjustable hose clamps, and 1 5/8 inch wooden dowel.

Tools required are a hacksaw or pipe cutter for the conduit, a small saw and coarse sandpaper or rough file for the dowel, a small soldering iron and a small amount of tape or caulk.

Construction takes less than half an hour.

I built this antenna, stuck it in the ground as a stealth vertical among a stand of shrubbery, and almost immediately made contacts in southern Chile and southern Argentina.

The dipole is not quite "...indestructible..." however, unless moved indoors after use. If left outside, the elements will rot and weaken the dowel separating the dipole elements and the remaining dowel piece used to support the antenna above ground. Plastic substitute? Spar Varnish or other sealant/protectant for the dowel?

The antenna can be hung either horizontally or vertically, or stuck in the ground with appropriate isolation as a vertical. Think low angle of radiation for DX.

The parts list above can currently be purchased at a local big box home store for \$10.00 +/-.

A Google search for "BEST OF THE NEW HAM COMPANION" indicates that while it is out of print, used copies remain available at bookstores and other sites favored by hams for as low as \$4.00. I can also make copies of the article available upon request.

During the past week an informal HF "chat group" was initiated at 8:00PM on Monday and Wednesday evenings on 3.915MHz. No net, no net control, just free wheeling discussion on topics radio and otherwise.

For the past several months, the WVHFA has been running a Thursday evening "Swap Net" on 146.820 at 8:00PM. A summary of the offerings and wants/needs is e-mailed to those interested shortly after the net closes. Give a listen to learn how to participate.

FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA SECTION MANAGER

I'm very excited and encouraged to see for the second year in a row that NI4BK aboard the Battleship will be a bonus station for the NC QSO Party. I am very glad that ACARC officers worked this arrangement out with the Forsyth ARC, the sponsor of the event. I hope many ACARC members will turn out on Sunday Feb 26 from 12 Noon to 10:00 PM local time to be part of the contest. This is the one day each year that North Carolina's 19,000 Hams are showcased to the world-let's have a great turnout.

The Charlotte Hamfest March 10-11 doubles this year as the Roanoke Division Convention. The convention rotates among the four states comprising the division-North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. We don't know yet but suspect that ARRL President Kay Craigie, N3KN, may attend. The Charlotte Hamfest is always among the top Hamfests in North Carolina, and this year it will be even better.

A reminder that I will bring to Tuesday nights meeting the 6 Repeater Directories I forgot as gifts at the club Christmas Party. To refresh your memory, the six winners are:

Jay Barton N3QH
Julian "Brad" Bradberry WD4FTR
Martha Eason KD4PSU
Sam Franklin KB4IL
John Oberlin KJ4GDX
Steve Wilder AJ4JJ

If anyone misses the meeting, I will make arrangements to get to them.

Also, I will be bringing with me past issues of QST, CQ, and QCWA Journals for members to take home. What's left over I will place in packages to be sent to troops overseas.

See you Tuesday night. Happy New Year.

All for now, more later. 73 Bill AG4PA