

THE LISTENING POST

Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club

February 2013

Editor's Note – Our January meeting had a better than usual turnout, fifteen hams, including a brand new licensee. Congratulations, and I wish I had been more diligent and copied his call sign. I hope he will return.

Three of the new faces were residents at Plantation Village. Linwood (NT4F) and Jack (WD4OIN) have already visited with them to lend a hand in getting them on the air, or on the air with a better signal. Way to go. And we hope we can add all three, and more, to the membership roll.

We have a big club event coming up this month (February 24) as we man the battleship radio rooms for the North Carolina QSO Party. Let's have a good turnout to keep up our reputation and tradition of a strong signal from NI4BK.

Jeff Wingfield, KI4JDE

PRIORITY MESSAGES - The next meeting of the club will be Tuesday, February 19, 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.

Steve Wilder (AJ4JJ), our Volunteer Examiner lead reports that two applicants were tested on February 9. Stan White went from Technician to General, and Duncan R. Humphrey went from General to Extra.

Linwood Todd (NT4F) is helping the Usher family by brokering the sale of Bill's amateur radio equipment. See or call Linwood for a list of items available

FEBRUARY MEETING PROGRAM - Harvey Hutchinson (NK0S) will conduct a presentation/introduction to JT-65-HF. It promises to be a good insight to this relatively unknown operating mode.

PRESIDENT'S RESONANT CIRCUIT - See the March issue.

North Carolina QSO Party Update (from the Raleigh club newsletter) - The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society has assumed leadership of the North Carolina QSO Party as of its 2013 running. Check out the website, the new rules are posted. We made some changes for 2013.

We moved the time up two hours to go from 10 am to 8 pm. We kept the duration of 10 hours, but felt this gives us more daylight to work the upper bands. Also, by ending earlier folks have more time to get ready for work Monday. Activity always slowed down past 8 pm in our experience, possibly for that reason.

Added 6 and 2 meters. Now the small signal VHF guys can participate using their native mode if they wish. So, welcome small signal VHFers! No specific categories exist for VHF yet, you'll compete with everyone else. If participation is strong on these new bands a new category may be considered in the future.

W4DW will be operating 6, but its up to you small signal VHFers to get the propagation gods to cooperate.

We have "normalized" the point structure for all participants. 2 points for all phone QSOs and 3 points for each CW QSO. It doesn't matter who your QSO is with. This greatly simplifies our job to score your log. Everyone sounds the same on the air, so you don't need to keep track of it either!

Added a QRP Expedition Class. With the success of expeditions we're giving the QRPers a chance to compete for an award. And speaking of expeditions, we cleaned up most of the early problems with managing this class by making the points the same as everyone else. We didn't want

the expeditions to become a “super mobile” and attempted at first to write restrictive rules to prevent someone from creating efficient ways at blowing through counties like a mobile. We'd like expeditions to consider going to rarer counties and putting up an antenna that works pretty well and stay a while to really activate that county. But in the end, we decided to keep the restrictions out and allow each one to decide what strategy is best for their situation and fun factor. A competitor will have to determine the trade off of getting their QSOs by working fewer per county with a small antenna but moving to new counties to work 'em again, vs. putting up a more substantial temporary antenna and moving less, staying a while in the county to really activate it.

For mobiles, and expeditions also, the rules were left to enable county sitting. So, be careful with safety being the top priority, if you want to do it, remember that you can only have one QTH per QSO. So, you will have to manage your pile up in a way to have multiple QSOs with callers if you are doing this. We provided the link in the rules to the MARC county hunter site to help you with determining the county line and how to sit on it.

We added DC as a multiplier and clarified the 14 Canadian provinces.

We will be awarding new plaques for the winners. They are really neat transparent monoliths that refract a cool Carolina Blue hue. Marc, W4MPS, did a great job securing them. Marc has also revamped the certificates with a new battleship NC header.

We really want to get logs electronically. But, we realize that there are still folks logging manually and we don't want to dissuade them from participating and sending in their log. So, continue to send in your log however you have it!

We're going to have some really cool tools on the new website to enter your log, and I suppose the day is coming sometime that all logs will have to be submitted electronically. We on the committee want to be ready for it.

We are keeping the established map to track activations that are announced. This surprised me how popular this was, so we are giving it high priority. If you don't see it quite yet, Andy, AA9P, our IT guy will have it up shortly.

The things that have made NCQP unique and great are staying. NI4BK aboard the battleship USS North Carolina will be one of the bonus stations, and they tell me they will again be using the original WW2 era radio equipment during the event. The other bonus station, W4DW, will be activated at the super station of NILN and staffed by seasoned operators to give out as many QSOs as humanly possible. And if you've seen the NILN station, you know they can do it!

We kept the CHE/DAR bonus as is, a very cool way to get another bonus and an incentive to expeditions and mobiles top go to these rare ones.

Lastly, I'd like to put a word in for one style of operating that is quite effective in QSO parties. That is calling CQ. In regular contests, searching and pouncing can be just as fruitful as calling CQ, especially in the early going. But QSO parties are different. In ours, everyone out there is looking for you! They won't know you're there if you're not calling! Ninety six percent of those outside NC are searching and pouncing, so it's best if you are calling CQ. Think about it. Why should someone out there call CQ when only 1 out of 50 states count for credit? (Some do it, yes, but not many) Believe me, if you're calling CQ you'll get answers back from more than you thought!

So that's it. Mark your calendar, and get on the air! It's lots of fun!

Early Ham Licensing and Interference - When Wilmington radio broadcasting pioneer Richard A. Dunlea wrote to the Revenue Cutter Service on 15 May 1913 offering to volunteer for the service as a 2nd Class Radioman he claimed to have three years of amateur experience as an electrician and wireless operator in his hometown of Brockton, MA. The passage and signing of the Radio Act of 1912 on 17 August brought the first governmental licensing to the amateur community.

U.S. Commerce Department licensing of all wireless operations came about to some degree because of the interference to commercial wireless signals caused by unlicensed amateur operators. In Clinton B. DeSoto's *200 Meters and Down* he writes that: "Amateurs began to get in trouble with the government in 1909." The complainants were of course the Marconi and DeForest companies and also the U.S. Navy.

Mr. Dunlea's name doesn't appear in the Commerce Department's first listing of some 2,000 amateur licenses it had issued by June of 1913. There is no documentation indicating that he ever held an amateur license even though he was an active member of amateur clubs here in Wilmington after 1919 when he was discharged from the U.S. Coast Guard.

Those first licenses were actually two separate documents: an operator license and a station license with a call sign. The international wireless community had not yet agreed on the allocation of call sign prefixes to each country. Amateur call signs were simply a number and at first just two and later three letters. The earliest amateur licensee in Wilmington was Robert Rankin, 4BB at 3 N. 9th St.

The start of World War I in 1914 caused the silencing of all amateur operations in April 1917 followed by a requirement for complete re-licensing in 1919. Wilmington ham William A. French, 4CM, whose call sign was listed in QST's monthly report of "Calls Heard" in early 1917 became 4AQ when re-licensed in 1919.

The number plus two letter format of amateur call signs continued up through 1928 when the "W" prefix was added to all U.S. amateur stations. "K" prefixes at first went to U.S. possessions such as Puerto Rico. Donald Parsley licensed in 1923 as 4FT became W4FT in 1929 and held that call up through 1947 when he was present at the formation of the postwar Wilmington amateur radio club.

Amateur frequency bands, kept with the 200 meters and down dictate but limited amateur bands to just 1716 KHz to 2000 KHz, a little more than today's 160 meter band, and today's 80 meter band of 3.5 MHz to 4.0 MHz.

Early licensing included tests of sending and receiving International Morse at 10 WPM for an operator license and complete description of the station transmitter, receiver and antenna system for a station license and call sign assignment. All licensed stations were subject to inspection by a Commerce Department "Radio Inspector", especially if disputes over interference arose.

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.
- Field Day is our annual challenge to simulate emergency communications. It is also a competition between clubs in which we did very well in 2012. This June event is a great opportunity to learn, operate, and get better acquainted with each other. Planning is under way. Volunteer.

FROM THE RADIO ROOM - The ACARC will be participating in the North Carolina QSO Party from the battleship USS North Carolina on February 24, 2013 (1000 to 2000 EST). This is one of the major annual events that allow radio amateurs in the Wilmington area to enjoy the flavor of contesting while operating from an historic and unique setting. If you have not joined us before, plan on coming out this year.

We will be operating two stations and possibly a third. This year we will again be a bonus point station and should enjoy a lot of traffic.

On Sunday morning, the crew plans to meet for breakfast at the K & W Cafeteria on Oleander at 0830, then on to the ship by 0930. If you cannot make the breakfast, meet at the break room of the landside building (facing the ship, take the walkway on the left side of the building past the restrooms).

If you come to the ship later in the day and do not know how to find the radio rooms, contact us at 147.180 (NI4BK) and we will send someone to escort you to the operating area.

For answers to any questions, contact Jack Jacobs (WD4OIN) at wd4oin@arrl.net or call him at 910 791 1566.

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.

73, KI4JDE