

Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society
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FEBRUARY 2000

FEBRUARY MEETING

Friday, February 18, at 8:00 PM, Welborne United Methodist Church, Maybeury Drive at Patterson Avenue. The meeting will be a Frostfest wrap-up and possibly a guest speaker.

FROSTFEST HIGHLIGHTS

Frostfest 2000 was held on January 16 at The Showplace. Jim Clark, N3JJF once again did a fantastic job as Director organizing the event. Pat Wislon, K4OW, did a tremendous job as Co-Director/Personnel Chair and Prize chair of setting up fourms, securing door prizes and making many phone calls to secure volunteers. Andy Anderson, KB4JXS, assumed the duties of Security Chair, and did a super job organizing the security detail. Dan Anderson, WU4U chaired Reservations, Ticket Sales and Drafting and Layout with his usual efficiency. Arlo Amstutz, WA4RLO, ably assisted as Exhibits Chair and Treasurer. Jim Stallings, KD4ZOT, adroitly acted as Software and Staging Chair and Announcer. Martin Gary, W2MG, spread the word as Publicity Chair. Jay Silvio, N9WMU, Talk-In Chair, provided directions for those needing them. Dennis Wyman, KW4DW, guided visitors to parking spaces as Parking Chair. Gene Harris, in charge of Hospitality and Vendor Support, made sure there was plenty of food and hot coffee.

It takes many hours and many people to put together an event of this magnitude. We could not sponsor this quality event without the help of all those who serve in one capacity or another. Thank you to each of you who helped for a job well done.

A MESSAGE OF THANKS!

Space does not permit me to list all of the people that deserve recognition for their service at Frostfest this year. The FrostFest army of volunteers is what makes this event the amateur radio community program that it is. By having a large number of volunteers, we were able to schedule their assignments so that they saw limited service time and could see the show and participate in other events.

I hope you to see everyone at the wrap up meeting, Feb. 18 and be sure to put Saturday & Sunday, January 20-21, 2001 on your calendar for FrostFest 2001!

Jim Clark, N3JF

"THE ENFORCER" PACKS THEM IN

Frostfest 2000 was fortunate to have Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, commonly know as "The Enforcer" conduct a forum on FCC rules enforcement and other FCC issues at the Showplace. It was standing room only.

The following is a summary of his remarks:

Hollingsworth began with some entertaining statistics and quotes from experts in their fields regarding technology predictions. He pointed out that even the so called experts sometimes miss the usefulness of new technology. Examples included the computer and that the fad would not last, even the bold prediction that computers might someday weight under 1.5 tons. Television was another invention that would not be widely accepted, according to many experts.

One startling statistic was that we who live in industrialized nations take for granted things that are considered a major luxury in many developing nations. An example is that over 50% of the world's population has never talked on a phone and many have never even seen one. (Tell that to your teenagers!)

Most of the public have no idea of the valuable services that amateur radio provides - emergency disaster communications, phone patches to missionaries and armed service personnel - just to name a couple. Hollingsworth further stated the need to advertise to our community and to inform government figures of the many things we provide as a free service.

Switching to his enforcement specialty , Hollingsworth assured us that enforcement is here to stay. The FCC will be less tolerant of operating violations, the abuse of multiple club call sign holders and invalid testing session reports in the future. He cited the reason for enforcement neglect on the amateur radio bands was the 1980s explosion of commercial communications, including, cell phones, mobile, fax, and 2 way radios used by businesses. He also stated that we need 3 to 5 years at the current pace to make up for the 10 to 12 years of neglect.

The FCC can require any ham to retake exams at its discretion. According to Hollingsworth, 85% of those recalled for examination never show up. Some top reasons for being recalled include complaints from others at a testing session: "At 4 PM he didn't know anything, and at 9 PM he was an Extra" and complaints from VEs that they did not sign paperwork themselves or were never at the examination session as reported. Riley also mentioned that having a code exemption from a podiatrist, hearing an Extra on the air asking, "What's a dipole?" or hearing "I bought my license in New York." might lead to being recalled for testing, too.

Hollingsworth suggested that we read 97.1 and think about our responsibilities. The way some US operators sound to foreign stations is an embarrassment. Also think about how we sound to the general public listening on a scanner. What kind of radio service is it if we are embarrassed by what minor children might hear? Amateur radio was not meant to be a training ground for talk show hosts (you can fill in your favorite name). Shun poor operators and do not engage those who are operating illegally. We cannot tolerate the electro-magnetic

equivalent of road rage. We are a central part of the radio spectrum and as long as we are not an embarrassment, it would not be sensible to take away spectrum.

The best way to predict the future is to invent it ourselves. Remember when we are on the air that there may be a 15 year old or someone getting their first experience listening to amateur radio. We stand on the shoulders of those who experimented and developed equipment and we owe them something. We need to teach youngsters and get them interested and involved with the hobby. The radio hobby they get is what we hand them. Remember, too, that we don't know when a teacher's influence ends.

Hollingsworth's remarks were well received and he was applauded roundly at the end of the forum. A line formed to congratulate and question the FCC enforcement officer and had to be moved out of the meeting space for the next forum.

VE EXAMS

Monday, March 6, 2000 at 7:30 PM at C. E. Curtiss Elementary School, 3600 W. Hundred Road (Route 10), Chester, VA. Pre-register with TONY AMATO, KR4UQ, at 717-5237. Tony's web page for test information: http://www.kr4uq.org/Pages/ve_exams.htm.

Saturday, February 12, 2000 9:00 AM at J. S. Reynolds Community College, 1651 East Parham Road, Building B, Room 201. There may be a change from this site. Pre-registration is required for this session with PAT WILSON, K4OW at 932-9424 or email at k4ow@arrl.net. Pat's test information web page is: <http://www.mindspring.com/~k4ow/hamtests.htm>

FEEDBACK

Comments from Members

AN OPINION

After hearing about the restructuring of the Amateur Radio Service licenses, I was a little taken aback at the drastic changes that would be going into effect in April 2000.

Now that I have been able to think about it a little longer and mull over the potential consequences, I have come to a decision and I would like to share it with others in the ham community.

The real concern about the continuation of our complex hobby should not be about whether or not a single operating mode is one of the elements we consider in testing prospective new licensees, but should be about the lack of mentoring for new hams. Mentoring in correct operating procedures and helping develop skills and abilities that will further the service and lead us into the future. This mentoring may take the shape of how to operate on two meters, how to operate on HF voice, how to operate using CW, how to do RTTY and even PACKET. But it should never be about trying to force a specific mode of operation. Rather,

show all the different ways to communicate with each other and allow the natural progression or attraction to specific modes take place. Mentor someone in the art of kit building, show how to use an oscilloscope, teach someone to use an antenna analyzer or show someone how to solder (an art unto itself, when done properly).

Code is not the all and everything some of us would like to believe and reducing testing speed will not cause the death of anything. Code was the beginning of ham radio and should be revered for that, but not idolized. I will continue to use it almost exclusively, because I gravitated to it, not because I had to learn it to get a license and it was HARD for me, more than you can imagine.

I hope I become a better mentor and Elmer for those who take the time to pass the exams and become licensed Amateur operators and join this wonderful village of hams. I hope I can convince some of them to join ARES/RACES, operate CW and Packet, and HF voice and RTTY and all those other things, but I hope I can do it without disparaging those who don't appreciate the particular modes I like best.

What the changes do to our Amateur Radio Service is up to us. So keep that in mind when you start becoming bitter and negative in your thinking. The changes won't kill CW, Ham Radio, or anything else, but our attitude and lack of enthusiasm can, if we aren't careful.

Thanks for reading and I wish us all luck as we move into the future.

Patrick Wilson, K4OW

RULES & REGS

News from the ARRL and FCC

ARRL REQUESTS RESTRUCTURING RECONSIDERATION

The ARRL will ask for the FCC to reconsider two points - both involving Technician-class operators - under license restructuring.

The League recommends that the FCC continue to maintain records indicating whether a Technician licensee has passed a Morse code exam, thus earning HF privileges. Currently Technicians are designated by a "T" and Tech Plus by a "P" in the FCC database.

"We're going to try to persuade the FCC that it made a drastic error in deciding to change all those Ps back to Ts in the database," said ARRL Executive Vice President David Sumner, K1ZZ.

Technicians would have to prove, if asked, that they successfully passed the 5WPM code test according to the FCC. The ARRL wants the FCC to agree that any amateur who provides proof of passing an FCC-recognized Morse code exam prior to April 15 would get credit for that element when applying for future upgrades. "The FCC has indicated to the ARRL that after April 15, code credit for Technician applicants passing the 5 WPM test would not survive beyond the 365-day term of a Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination--or CSCE."

Under both current and new rules, only Technicians licensed before February 14, 1991 have permanent credit for the Morse code element.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, January 28, 2000.

ARRL ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

Jim D. Haynie, W5JBP of Dallas, Texas will succeed Rod Stafford, W6ROD, becoming the 13th president of the ARRL. Haynie holds an advanced class license. He has been a ham for 27 years and an ARRL Board member for 12 years. "Calling the recently announced FCC restructuring plan 'a positive thing,' Haynie said his presidency will focus on the future of Amateur Radio, and he suggested amateurs take the opportunity to regroup. 'Now that restructuring is behind us, I think it's time for all amateurs - League members and nonmembers alike - to pull together to see what we can do to make our hobby a thriving and vibrant hobby.'"

The President-elect pledged to work with the Board, his fellow officers, and with all amateurs to bring respect to Amateur Radio and to enhance its stature here and abroad. 'I think it's time the League started changing,' he said. 'I think there's a lot we can do.' While not offering specific programs at this point, Haynie said he favors even greater promotion of Amateur Radio, especially among youth and in schools. He also said he'd like to see programs to rekindle interest and activity among current licensees."

"The Board also elected new vice presidents. Vice President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, was elevated to First Vice President. Current Atlantic Division Director Kay Craigie, WT3P, and Roanoke Division Director John Kanode, N4MM, were picked as Vice Presidents. Current Vice President Hugh Turnbull, W3ABC, was elected Honorary Vice President.

ARRL President Rod Stafford, W6ROD, was elected to succeed past ARRL president Larry Price, W4RA, as International Affairs Vice President. Price now serves as president of the International Amateur Radio Union and did not seek re-election."

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, January 21, 2000.

STATES-WIDE-RADIO

HRO ANAHEIM STORE DESTROYED

The Ham Radio Outlet store in Anaheim, CA burned in fire of suspicious origin on January 23. It appears the fire broke out in a dental office in the Euclid Avenue strip mall. The flames spread into the attic, destroying the dental office, the HRO store and two other businesses. Two other stores were damaged.

Janet Margelli, KL7MF, store manager at the Anaheim HRO store, told ARRL of feeling "helpless and hopeless" and said the store and its contents were a total loss.

Over 80 firefighters were called out to fight the four-alarm blaze. It took almost two hours to battle the fire. When Margelli arrived flames were shooting 200 feet into the air. There were no injuries reported.

Arson investigators will examine the remains of the dental office and also why a car parked in an alley several hundred feet away caught fire and exploded since it appears that the fire in the mall did not cause the car fire.

Margelli is working on opening a new store in an undamaged area of the same mall. Hopes are to open the new store within two or three weeks.

The only item to survive was a plastic owl decoy which will become the store's new mascot. "Smokey" had been suspended from a display tower and was being used to scare birds away from towers and beams. Smokey will get his own display case in the new store.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, January 28, 2000.

DIXIE CALLS ON ARES

Winter storms in the Southeast closed many schools and businesses, created traffic nightmares, stranded travelers and left many homes and businesses without power. The weather also caught some ARES members off-guard. The ice that brought down power lines and telephone lines also laid claim to HF antennas at some stations, hampering ARES' ability to coordinate between the ARES HF net and local areas. Georgia SEC Tom Rogers, KR4OL, recommends that ARES members have a spare, emergency HF antenna. Several repeaters were also out of service because of the ice, resulting in loss of VHF coverage in many areas.

"Rogers pointed out that in winter conditions, things taken for granted can and do fail. 'Create a plan for backup and exercise it,' he suggested. 'Winter icing creates conditions for amateur radio we can overcome if we plan ahead.'"

'The surprise nature of the ice storm gave rise to another 'lesson learned,' Rogers said. 'Don't assume you are going to have time to prepare your station before an event happens,' he said. 'Prepare now! Do not take the threat of winter weather to your station lightly.'".--Tom Rogers, KR4OL

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, January 28, 2000.

"HAMS FILL VOID FOR HURRICANE FLOYD"

The January 2000 edition of QST has an interesting article beginning on page 81 titled "Hams Fill Void for Hurricane Floyd". The article gives accounts of happenings on several days during a two week period - from preparation during the days anticipating the storm through the first days of recovery. Some Richmond area and other Virginia amateurs are mentioned. The city of Franklin is also mentioned.

DITS 'N DAHS

A column about miscellaneous topics

SPREAD SPECTRUM INVENTOR DIES

"Hedy Lamarr, the sultry, sexy screen star of the 1930s and 1940s who also conceived the frequency-hopping technique now known as spread spectrum, has died. She was believed to be 86.

Born Hedwig Kiesler in Austria, Lamarr came to the US in 1937 after being signed by MGM. Among her most successful films was the 1949 Samson and Delilah, directed by Cecil B. DeMille.

In her 1992 book Feminine Ingenuity, Lamarr describes how she came up with the idea of a radio signaling device for radio-controlled torpedoes that would minimize the danger of detection or jamming by randomly shifting the frequency. She and composer George Antheil developed the concept and received a patent for it in 1942.

The concept never saw fruition during World War II, but when the patent expired, Sylvania developed the idea for use in satellites. Spread spectrum also has found applications in wireless telephones, military radios, wireless computer links, and Amateur Radio experimentation.

"I read the patent," Franklin Antonio, chief technical officer of the cellular phone maker Qualcomm Inc, said in 1997. "You don't usually think of movie stars having brains, but she sure did." Lamarr lived in an Orlando, Florida, suburb in recent years and shunned publicity.

A more-detailed version of Lamarr's role in spread spectrum is described in the IEEE book Spread Spectrum Communications, published in 1983. --thanks to André Kesteloot, N4ICK and Bill Ricker, N1VUX

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, January 28, 2000.

ARRL BUYS COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY

The ARRL has purchased the Amateur Radio technical journal Communications Quarterly from CQ Communications and will merge the publication with the League's technical journal QEX. The change becomes effective for subscribers starting with the March/April issue of QEX. The new combined publication initially will serve a joint readership of more than 7000. The magazine will bear the legend, "QEX, incorporating Communications Quarterly."

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, January 14, 2000

NEW DXCC AWARDS AVAILABLE

Two new DXCC awards will be available from the ARRL as we enter the new millennium. The DXCC Challenge is open only to holders of 5-Band DXCC. Individual standings in the DXCC Challenge are based on accumulated contact credits made on all eligible bands within the DXCC program using only current DXCC entities. This includes credits already received by DXCC for contacts with current DXCC List entities made after November 15, 1945.

Challenge standings will be updated each year. The deadline to submit is September 30, 2000. Standings will be reported as numbers. Plaques are available for those who accumulate 1500 DXCC Challenge credits. Endorsement bars are available in increments of 500. This year, eligible bands are 160, 80, 40, 20, 10, and 6 meters. The band list will be increased each year until all bands (except 30 meters) are included.

Starting this year, the DeSoto Cup will be awarded to the DXer who is at the top of the DXCC Challenge list on September 30 of each year. The cup is named for Clinton B. DeSoto, W1CBD, who wrote the 1935 QST article that inspired the original DXCC program. A DXer may only be awarded one cup.

The 20-Meter Single-Band DXCC Award is the first of several new single-band awards to be phased in over the next year or so. Contacts with current DXCC entities are eligible for credit, beginning with any QSOs made on or after November 15, 1945, on any mode. DXCC reports returned after August 1, 1999, show 20-meter contact credits. Those with a 5-Band DXCC issued before April 1, 1992, may submit up to 100 current 20-meter cards with no per-card charges applied.

Here's a DXCC award for everyone. To qualify, work 100 or more current DXCC entities during the calendar year (UTC), any combination of bands or modes is allowed. Here's the best part: You don't have to submit any QSL cards!

Applicants must certify to the authenticity of log extracts submitted, however. The DXCC 2000 Millennium Award period began 0000 UTC on January 1, 2000, and continues through 2359 UTC on December 31, 2000.

The DXCC 2000 Millennium Award is separate and apart from the traditional DXCC awards program. Qualifying for this award does not give credit for traditional DXCC awards, but DXCC rules still apply. The DXCC 2000 Millennium Award certificate is available to ARRL members and nonmembers.

Official application forms may be down-loaded at <http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc>. Forms also are available for an SASE (or an SASE plus one IRC for hams outside the US). Send requests to DXCC 2000 Millennium Application, ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111. Completed applications must be received at ARRL HQ within one year of the close of the DXCC 2000 Millennium Award period. Applications should be accompanied by \$10 (US funds) to cover the costs of printing, postage, and handling.

For additional information on these new programs, see "New DXCC Awards for the New Millennium" in December 1999 QST, page 47, or <http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/00rules.html>.

If you have questions about any of these new awards, contact DXCC Manager Bill Moore, NC1L, bmoore@arrl.org."

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, January 14, 2000.

WHO IS N4LID???

Rusty Bumpers, N4LID, author of the much talked about article "How to Sound Like a Lid" which was reprinted in the January Solid Copy, has made his identity known to me. Rather than just telling everyone who Rusty really is, I thought it might be fun to see if anyone out there knows Rusty's identity also. If you know (or think you know) Rusty's real identity, email me at editor@rats.net or let me know at the February meeting.. I'll reveal the answer in the next issue. In the meantime, if you have not read the "Lid" article, please consider doing that. It is entertaining as well as being a great guide to two meter operations.

*Members of the Bumpers family, The N4LID Foundation and their employees are not eligible.

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