

SOLID COPY™



Spring 2004

The Bulletin of the
Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society
P. O. Box 14828 - Richmond, Virginia 23221



FrostFest 2004 Revisited

BACK TO BASICS

This year's club hamfest marked the beginnings of a refreshing step forward in leadership for RATS in the local ham community.

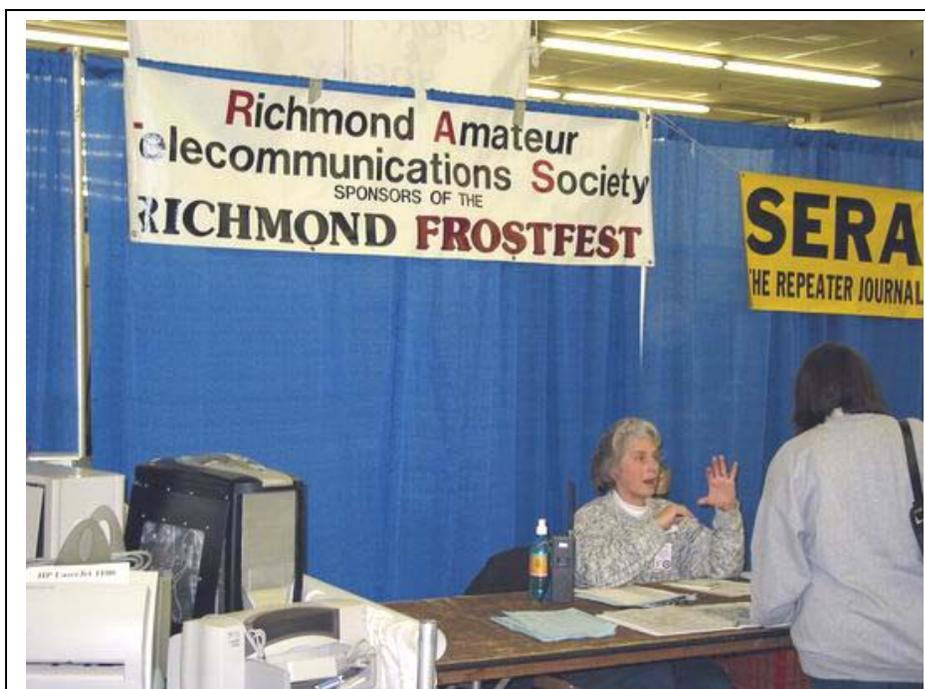
Last year *FrostFest* hosted Riley Hollingsworth, Special Counsel for the FCC. He spoke on courtesy on the air then, but often emphasizes the need for us to be "self-policing."

This year two vendors were asked to leave, early in the show, by club president Jerry Williams, KJ4IT, because they were selling illegal equipment.

VOLUNTEERS

This year we had a better response for volunteers than we did the year before, but only about "half the number we'd like to have had," according to Andy Anderson, KB4JXS. Many worked two and three shifts (3 hours each) on Sunday. Many of the core membership worked all night Saturday and through the day on Sunday.

With the new repeater system about to go online and the new expenses related to that, it is increasingly more important for *FrostFest* to succeed. However, *FrostFest* can only succeed if an



Marie Long, K4KML, talks to visitors at the RATS table, Sunday, February 22, 2004, during *FrostFest*. This year's club hamfest was held at The Showplace on Mechanicsville Turnpike as it has been for the past several years.

adequate participation of the membership takes place.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow RATS members. As you know, last month prizes were awarded to the *FrostFest* Volunteers. I believe I speak for the entire club when I say I appreciate the

effort put forth by our volunteers and the *FrostFest* Committee led by Jim Clark, N3JJF, and Pat Wilson, W4PW. Without the efforts of the *FrostFest* Committee we would not have the state of the art repeater that we enjoy. I would especially like to recognize prize winners Mac Edwards, KE4AUG, 1st Place; Guy Carlsen, K4CNF, 2nd Place; Bill Edwards, KE4CIO, 3rd Place and Warren



Jay Silvio, N9WMU, appraises the deal Dave Kiefer, N4DWK of the club's Technical Committee, just got on rope from *Radio Works* while Jim Thompson, W4THU, ponders that last sale.

Every other month when the newsletter goes out about 100 copies are sent. Printing expenses for this is about \$45. Add to this \$37 for first class postage and you can see that this has been a significant expense for the club.

With the new repeater being installed in a new building and on a new tower we are incurring some expenses we didn't have before—an electric bill for one thing.

As with any budgeting process you choose what's important and what can go by the wayside. The Board of Directors decided in March to utilize the web site as the primary venue of distributing *Solid Copy*. Only those without access to the internet will get a printed copy, and as ubiquitous as computers and the internet has become, we expect there to be very few of those.

Personally, I welcome this idea. There are several constraints to the printed newsletter versus an online version.

Using color photographs costs no more monetarily than black and white. It does use more memory online, but would be prohibitively expensive on paper.

Before, in the printed version, I had to come up with 75 column-inches of editorial content. That's three pages of text—this first of which was only two-thirds of a page due to titles and logos. Once I did cheat and use a bit of the fourth page by shrinking the masthead, but the fourth page is reserved for the masthead and mailing information.

Now I can add or subtract a full page because I don't have to make sure four 8.5X11 panels are filled. I can go to a fifth or sixth panel, or cut back to three if need be.

Solid Copy should be online by the beginning of the meeting week of even numbered months. I would love to see it go back to monthly, but

Winner, W4UIE, 4th Place. Each of these gents deserves their prizes and I thank them for the double shifts they all worked at the *FrostFest*. Due to an oversight, an additional worker prize that was misplaced will be awarded this Friday.

We are planning on having some interesting programs for members to participate in for the coming year now that the *FrostFest* is behind us. Did I say participate? Yes I did! We plan on having members put their hands on equipment and learn new things about their hobby by actually doing them. For this month, we are planning on having a brief explanation of direction finding (DF), that is the process of finding hidden transmitters. This is a skill that is not only fun but useful in locating downed aircraft and in search and rescue. Don't have any DF gear you say? Well this is not a problem, the RATS has a lot of DF equipment and you'll get to see and use some of it this Friday. Later on during the summer we plan to have a fox hunt for members.

In May, we plan on having a meeting called 'Club Station Night'. At this meeting members will be divided into two groups and, working under direct supervision of appropriately licensed amateurs, set up 2 operating HF radio stations and make contacts 'on-the-air.' The stations will be the two Kenwood TS-570 owned by the RATS. This will be an especially good meeting for those wishing to get a jump on participating in Field Day in June.

Well that is all for now. I look forward to talking with you on the air and seeing you at the meetings.

73,
Jerry, KJ4IT
President, RATS.

SOLID COPY GOES ELECTRONIC

This will be the last issue of *Solid Copy* being distributed primarily by the United States Postal Service. Since I have been editor of the newsletter we have tried to get people to peruse their copy of *Solid Copy* from the web site online.

that would require much more contribution of articles by the general membership than we are currently getting.

So, just as you know that meetings are the third Friday of the month at 7:30PM, you now also know *Solid Copy* will be posted on even numbered months by the meeting week.

If you provide me your current email address, I will send you a notice of when the newsletter is posted online. Otherwise, just look for it as indicated.

73,
Mike, K4AUR
Editor, *Solid Copy*

VE EXAMS

Exams for licensing or upgrading are as follows. There are two locations, the W5YI VEC sessions in Chester and the ARRL VEC testing in Richmond. Bring \$12.00 cash (exact change) to the W5YI session in Chester. The fee for the ARRL session on Parham Road is \$13.00. Both testing groups also require two

forms of ID, one of which must be a photo ID. If you are upgrading, you must bring the original of your current license *and* a photocopy of it.

If you have credit for previously passed element(s) bring your original CSCE *and* a photocopy of it unless your current license reflects these endorsements. Arrive 15 minutes early. Preregistration is preferred, but not required (unless you are taking the CW element in Chester, then required). Walk-ins are welcome if seating and materials are available.

The first exam is April 10th at 9:00 AM at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, 1651 E. Parham Road, Richmond, Building B. For more info contact Patrick Wilson, W4PW, (804) 932-9424 or go to:

<http://www.w4pw.org/hamtests.htm>

The next testing will be on May 5th at 7:30 PM at Pietro's Restaurant at the corner of Jeff Davis Highway and Osborne Road in Chester. For more info call (804) 768-2255 or visit:

http://www.kr4uq.org/V__E__EXAM_S/v__e__exams.html.

The third test session will be at the J. Sargeant Reynolds location on June 12th at 9:00 AM.

CQ, CQ, *SEEK YOU!* AT THE NEXT RATS MEETING

The Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society meets the third Friday of the month at 7:30 PM at the West End Volunteer Rescue Squad building at 1802 Chantilly Street, Richmond.

From Broad Street, Chantilly is the first block east of Staples Mill Road. The WEVRS building is ½ block south of Broad on Chantilly.

RATS ONLINE:

<http://www.rats.net/>

<http://membership.rats.net/>

<http://www.rats.net/forums/>

<http://www.frostfest.com/>



An unidentified *FrostFest* visitor comes upon Parke Slater, N4KFT of the club's Technical Committee, and Club President Jerry Williams, KJ4IT.

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Please feel free to contact any of us regarding RATS business, information, and ideas.

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