



THE JUNKBOX



The Official Newsletter of The Albemarle Amateur Radio Society

Post Office Box 1217

January 2008

Elizabeth City, NC 27906-1217

<http://www.taars.us>

WA4VTX Repeaters 146.655/444.300/147.330 PL 131.8 APRS 144.39

Next TAARS Meeting

Our next scheduled TAARS meeting is slated for Thursday, January 17th, 2008, at 7:30 at COA building "C" room C109. Our dinner location is the Golden Corral at 6pm.

Minutes

No meeting last month.

Hamming in Maine

We've been up here, in some fashion since 2005. So far, we have missed any ice storms. It is the tenth anniversary of the great 1998 Ice Storm and local hams have tall tales to tell about it.

Winter hit quick this year with colder temperatures in November and an early December snow storm of 17 inches. Climbing the tower in the teens requires a bit of planning to get up a 2 meter beam and hang the Christmas tower lights. Many of the ham supplies are out in the barn and that requires either a quick run or a warm coat, hat, and gloves.

Our "local" repeater is much like Columbia. The W1LH 147.330 repeater is up at 800 feet MSL on Cooper Mt. in Alexander, Maine. Not too far West of the Canadian border. It covers out at least forty miles, and on good days on hill tops, mobiles can be heard out to 55 miles. There are many repeaters in the area, but spread out. Coastal Maine is hilly, but has a fairly level set of hill tops, so repeaters carry far. There is a VHF linking system that ties in most of the state. The State ARES net meets on Sunday nights on 3940. We run a weekly ARES net on the W1LH repeater every Monday night at 7 PM. Interest in Packet Radio has boomed this winter. We have been talking it up locally for ARES use, but it is fun just to get on and play.

6 meter opening have been fun here. I've talked to Connie NG4C a few times during the openings. As Ed, W4RVZ has warned, grid FN64 will attract callers. Have made a few grid chasers very happy. It seems the band is very open to the central states. 40 meters gets eaten up early in the afternoon by the broadcast stations, but we only have another year of that. Several VHF band openings have had KB4TOH and NC4EC APRS digis show up on the APRS map. A few times direct! Europe is easy to work from here. Lots of traffic on the data modes such as RTTY. 17 meters, in the summer has been very good to work. A funny thing about 80 meters: Last fall, I worked the Tarheel Net one night and no one could talk to each other down there so I relayed a bit. We also seem to have a problem with 80 meters band going long by 5 PM. Bad for the net at the same time. Time to get out the NVIS antenna books!

That's all for now from here, keep warm, it's a long winter. 73 Dave N1DP, Candie N6BAF, and Elizabeth KG4HRC.

Linking 101

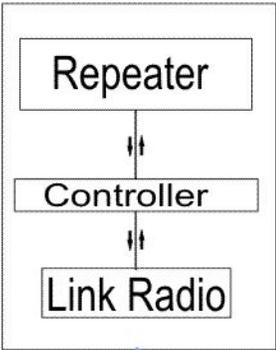
Some of the new hams are asking about the linking system we use here in Northeastern NC. I know it took me a long time to understand what is going on with 'Link Radios' the 'Backbone' and 'Linking Codes', so I will attempt to explain some properties of the Linking System.

Repeaters are 'Linked' together using a 'Link Radio'. This radio takes the input from repeater 1 and transmits it to repeater 2 using an entirely different frequency, in our case here 443.300. This frequency is used by all the repeaters in our linking system, and is called the 'Backbone'. To link two (or more) repeaters, a 'Linking Code' is used. A Linking Code is a series of DTMF tones transmitted to a repeater, the controller at the repeater hears these codes and connects the UHF link radio to the VHF repeater. Now, anything that is transmitted to the repeater is also sent out on the link radio, down the backbone frequency to the UHF repeater at Columbia. Link radios all over our area are listening on the same frequency, the 'Backbone'. So now your VHF repeater is connected through its linking radio to Columbia's UHF repeater. Any transmissions made on your repeater are also heard on Columbia's UHF repeater. All radios in the Columbia linking system link to the Columbia UHF repeater, making it possible to link to three or more repeaters at one time, as done every Wednesday night at 9:00 PM on the CERA net.

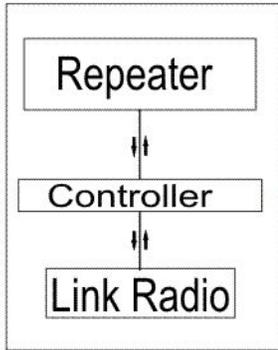
Lets say you are in Elizabeth City with an HT and want to talk to some one on the Greenville VHF repeater, piece of cake (see diagram below). First you must link Elizabeth City to Columbia, so on your HT you would punch in 51. The EC repeater controller hears this code and knows you want to link to the Columbia backbone, so it connects the UHF link radio (which is always set to the Columbia UHF repeater frequency) to the VHF repeater at EC. Now you are talking to Columbia, via the link radio frequency 443.300. Since all repeaters in the linking system are listening on that frequency, you can now punch in the code 351 on your HT. EC hears it and sends it down the backbone to the Columbia repeater who in turn repeats it on the backbone for everyone to hear. Now all the repeaters in the linking system hear the code, but only the Greenville repeater will respond to that particular DTMF code by connecting its UHF link radio to Greenville's VHF repeater. You can now talk from EC on an HT to someone in Greenville. When you are finished with the QSO, don't forget to take down the links, in the reverse order. On your HT, you would punch in

350, the code to take down the Greenville link. You'll hear a message stating the link is down. Now punch in 50, the code to take down the EC link, once again you will hear a message stating the link is down. Yeah, I know, clear as mud. Use the system a couple of times and you'll get the hang of it, and if you still have questions, ask Herman, NO4Y, he's the expert. You can obtain a complete linking map showing all the linking repeaters and codes at <http://taars.us/cera/link.htm>

Elizabeth City Repeater
146.655



Greenville Repeater
145.350



You Tube Videos

Take a look, at these videos. They are about amateur radio antennas.

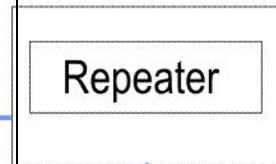
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC_EeWSKJII

Cynthia Cox, KG4SPH

WX Spots

For you weather types, you might want to check out N3FJP's Severe Weather Observation Program at www.wxspots.com.

Columbia Repeater
443.300



73's
Greg/N4LD