



# THE JUNKBOX



## The Official Newsletter of The Albemarle Amateur Radio Society

Post Office Box 1217

May 2006

Elizabeth City, NC 27906-1217

<http://www.taars.us>

WA4VTX Repeaters 146.655/444.300 PL 131.8 APRS 144.39

### Next TAARS Meeting

Our next scheduled TAARS meeting is slated for Thursday, May 18th, 2006 7:30 at COA. Our dinner location is the Golden Corral at 6PM

### Minutes from March Meeting

Ron, N4WYR called the meeting to order at 7:45 there were 9 members present. Herman, NO4Y gave a Treasurer report reporting a balance of \$2593.92. Ron Talked about upcoming events and instructed Herman to talk to Dave concerning our part in the Tar Wheel bike event. Motion made and passed to order T Shirts for Field Day 2006. Greg and Herman to decide on number and sizes to order. A discussion was held on Field Day. Zeb, K4ZVM is going to take care of securing our normal site at NHS Athletic Complex. Ed, W4RVZ discussed the idea of having a Ham Class it was decided that we will conduct one in the fall. Ed, W4RVZ ask about interest in the June VHF contest to be held June 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>. He was thinking of doing mobile operations. Albert discussed a mass mailing to our area hams before Field Day. Herman is to follow up on that. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 followed by a X Beam demo from Ed, W4RVZ.

Herman, NO4Y

### From the President

First of all, thanks to one and all who came out to help with the Tar Wheel Century bike event. We have Field Day in June, and we need to make final plans for that. Also elections are this month. So come on out, and vote for a president who is not me. I'm taking Calvin Coolidge's campaign slogan, "If nominated, I will not run, if elected, I will not serve". Seriously, it has been great being your president for the past few years, but enough is enough, and you need some new blood with new ideas.

#### **Portable Battery Power**

I read with interest the article in the April QST concerning a new Black and Decker portable power unit, because I had just bought a similar item early in March. I got mine at Sears, but Black and Decker makes a similar model, and I think both of them are superior to the one in the article, at least for my purposes.

Mine is called a Power pack 400 Plus, and I paid \$99 on sale for it. The Black and Decker model I looked at sells at Wal-Mart for a comparable price. Mine has a 20 AH AGM (absorbed glass mat) sealed battery, the other one has a 19 AH battery of the same

type. Other features include a 400 watt AC inverter with 2 outlets, a cigar lighter outlet, a flashlight, an air compressor, and of course jumper cables. There is a digital readout that shows state of charge, or power draw from the inverter. The inverter is rated for 10 minutes at 400 watts output, or 320 watts continuous. The air compressor is rated for 10 minutes, and has a built in pressure gauge. Both brands have a better model with a built in radio. They were out of those the day I bought mine.

One feature I particularly liked is that you can use an external deep cycle battery to extend the time before it runs down. You just connect the external battery with the jumper cables. It does say in the directions that you should not charge it when connected in this manner, the batteries should be charged separately. The Black and Decker model is recharged through an extension cord (sold separately) from the AC house current, the Sears model uses a wall wart transformer. Both also come with a double ended cigar lighter cord to recharge from your vehicle (while it is running).

Sears now carries a line of deep cycle batteries using the AGM technology, they start at about \$100, and are sold under the Optima brand. The advantage here is that they can't be spilled, and can even be used on their side.

I've owned portable jump start units in the past, I usually forget to keep them charged, and the batteries eventually die. These units are made to be recharged continuously, if using the AC charger.

Ron, N4WYR

### Upcoming Events

TAARS officer elections. Elections take place in May and new officers begin terms in June.

TAARS annual membership dues. TAARS membership runs from June through May. Dues are \$30.00 with an additional 2 dollars per family member.

Field Day 2006. June 24<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>. It's time to start planning. Lets make it a great Field Day weekend.

TAARS quarterly testing session takes place Saturday July 22<sup>nd</sup> 9am at COA room 110 building "C". Walk ins are welcome.

## CERA Quarterly Meeting

The regularly Scheduled quarterly meeting for CERA took place on Saturday May 13<sup>th</sup>. Dave, N1DP was presented a couple of appreciation awards for his contributions to CERA and the entire amateur community.

Dave has served as President of CERA, President of TAARS for multiple terms, and Secretary of TAARS for several terms. He was voted TAARS ham of the year in 1999, 2000.

Dave has traveled as far as Florida to help in times of disasters, including hurricanes both in out of the state, ice storms, and the 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Dave is the EC for Camden County and has been instrumental during any local emergency situation.

There is no question Dave's departure from North Carolina and TAARS will leave a big void and Maine will gain a valuable asset.

Herman, NO4Y



photo courtesy of Rod KA2TQY

## AROUND THE BANDS

FINALLY!!! Despite the reports of its passing, 6 meters is alive and well. The last 3 days have seen the beginning of the "E" season with openings happening several times a day. I even got to work my friend Vince, NOVZJ up in MN last night despite the thunderstorms. It sure has been a long wait. And the activity is picking up on "The Continent" so hopefully we'll see some European openings before long.

But even HF has been better for me. Several new countries have been added to the list including Indonesia and Aves. Island, all on 15. That is in part due to the addition of a new antenna to the landscape of my yard. I recently built a 15 meter X-Beam and sure seems to work good. I really appreciate Al, K4VHV telling me about the antenna and sending the plans over.

And as you might guess, I also built a 6 meter version of it that also performs really well and that is the antenna that I intend to use during the ARRL VHF Contest in June, when I try contesting as a rover for the first time. And I can use that same antenna on 2m if I can get a 2m SSB rig between now and then.

Well that's it for now. If you're not on the air, and making some contacts whether it is on VHF, UHF or HF, you're missing something special...Because This Stuff is FUN.

Ed/w4rvz

## Hamfest Calendar

Winston Salem Classic Hamfest  
June 10, 2006 [www.w4nc.com](http://www.w4nc.com)  
Home and Garden Building Dixie Classic Fairgrounds  
Winston Salem, NC

## Repeater News

It recently came to light that there are some minor bugs with the repeater controller. Some phone numbers will not dial and a few macros will not run. I intend to reset and reprogram the controller in the near future to correct these errors.

On a different subject I recently adjusted the linking system levels. Reports that I have heard indicated that the audio is much improved.

Herman, NO4Y