



THE JUNKBOX



The Official Newsletter of The Albemarle Amateur Radio Society

Post Office Box 1217

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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, February 15th, 7:30 at COA building "C" C109. Our dinner location is the Golden Corral at 6PM.

Minutes from January Meeting

January's meeting was called to order by Ron, N4WYR at 7:30 PM. We had 7 members present and 2 Visitors. Herman, NO4Y read the treasurer's report and it was accepted. A discussion was held on the upcoming testing session. Herman, NO4Y made a motion 2nd by Al, K4VHV to pay for an upgrade to the 7K controller that is now in Hertford. The cost is 73 dollars. The motion passed. Al, gave an overview of the linking system. Herman is to publish the codes in the next newsletter. A discussion was held on the Tar Heel Century bike event coming up in April. Zeb, K4ZVM is going to attempt to get a program for next meeting on project lifesaver. Al, K4VHV is going to have something to auction off at the next club meeting. Ron, N4WYR talked about some of the digital programs and propagation forecast programs he is using. He will be doing a demo of them at a future meeting.

Herman/NO4Y

From the President

It is time for the February meeting. I hope to see all of you at dinner, then the meeting. As most of you have heard, the FCC has eliminated the Morse Code requirement, and it goes into effect 2/23. I've seen a lot of criticism of this decision, but I think it will be a good thing. Personally, I think it would have been nice, for nostalgia's sake, to keep some sort of code requirement for the Extra class, but they decided to do away with all of it. This can be a plus for the hobby, if we make it that way. And there is certainly nothing to prevent someone from learning the code and getting on the air, anyway. For those of you who currently hold Technician licenses, without code, remember that you have now been granted Tech Plus privileges, and can use voice, cw, and data on 10 meters, and cw on 80, 40, and 15 meters.

I don't know yet if the club is planning to hold an exam session to upgrade the people holding a CSCE, it will depend on the demand for one, and when all the VE's can get together to hold the session. Don't forget you will need your original license and a copy, your original unexpired CSCE and a copy, a photo ID, and \$14. If anyone wants to be the last (or nearly last) person to obtain a license with a Morse code exam, you need to let us

know as soon as possible, time is running out. We can't give the code exam for official credit after the 23rd.

However, there is a way to get unofficial credit, and you don't need a VE team or \$14 to do it. There is a computer program called RufzXP, and it measures Morse code proficiency. It has training modes and an exam mode. It plays call signs through your computer speaker, and you type them in as you hear them. It keeps track of your speed and accuracy, and when you copy 50 call signs in a row at a particular speed, it uploads your call and score to a web site. The program is free.

See you at the meeting,

Ron /N4WYR

Upcoming Events

Frostfest 2007 February 18th Richmond Va

NC QSO Party February 25th and 26th

<http://www.w4nc.com/2007ncqsoparty.html>

March 10-11:North Carolina Section Convention/Charlotte Hamfest

March 25: Down East Hamfest, Kinston, NC

April 1: North Carolina State Convention/Raleigh Hamfest

Repeater News

146.655 amp is once again back from the dead. The repeater is operating at normal output.

CERA Linking Codes From any repeater to backbone

Ecity	51 UP 50 Down
Columbia	11 Up 10 Down
Williamston	41 Up 40 Down
Ahoskie	131 Up 130 Down
Greenville	351 Up 350 Down
Hatteras	151 Up 150 Down

Herman/NO4Y

Digital Rediscovered

After a very long absence from HF digital modes I've rediscovered them. Can't remember why I quit operating HF digital. Darn it's fun! N4WYR, K4VHV, N4QLD, W4RVZ and myself have been having loads of fun with HF digital modes. I've managed to work 12 new countries in the past 2 weekends.

Ron, N4WYR worked several new countries while making near 100 contacts on HF bands during last weekends RTTY contest. I worked N1DP twice last week on 20 meter pactor, which is a wonderful error free digital communications mode. There are modes available to anyone who has computer with a sound card and an HF or VHF radio. More sophisticated sound card interfaces are available for \$50.00 and up. Slow Scan Television is an easy mode to start with. All you need is some software and an audio connection from your rig to the mic in on your sound card and the speaker out connection to your rigs receive audio. Free software like <http://mmhamsoft.ham-radio.ch/> is available all over the internet. Take some time this winter to look at all the modes available.

Disaster Relief Training

Cathy Taylor reported disaster relief training at Corinth Baptist Church on Saturday the 17th. This was discussed at her church. More information is available at their website. <http://www.ncmissions.org>

Sponsored by NC Baptist Men

Around The Bands

Well, this has been an interesting and fun month. I have spent some time experimenting with a "rotatable dipole" made from 40m Hamsticks. I took a yagi support bracket, drilled two holes and mounted a pair of 3x24 thread mounts facing opposite directions and screwed in the ham sticks. Then I fed one with coax and the other I simply grounded to the bracket. SWR's are 1:1.2 - 1:1.4 throughout most of the band and impedance is 45-60 ohms. I have worked several states up in the New England area as well as MN. Now another set of sticks in 80m and I should be ok.

Speaking of MN, I had a lot of fun working the MN QSO Party also. It was good to work a bunch of guys on HF that I talk to a lot on 6m. And speaking of QSO Party's, the world-renown NC QSO Party is 2 weeks. Ok, maybe it's not that famous, but it is a very enjoyable and I would heartily encourage you to take a Sunday afternoon and evening and get on the bands and participate. It begins at 1700z on Feb. 25th and ends at 0300 on Feb. 26. For more details go to <http://www.w4nc.com/2007ncqsoparty.html> and check out the rules.

But the most fun this month has been the increase in digital HF in this area. RTTY, AMTOR, PACTOR and maybe even HF PACKET have been heard in this area, especially on 10m. 28.125LSB is the unofficial home of the guys doing digital, which includes, N4QLD, N4WYR, NO4Y, K4VHV and yours truly. We have been on a lot the last month or so and we're really having a good time. In fact, Herman and Ron spent some time in the recent WPX RTTY Contest making a bunch of contacts. Good job guys.

So remember, there's all different types of modes to work, Phone, CW, ATV, HF, VHF, SSTV, RTTY and many others. And you're guaranteed to have a good time, but there is a catch. First thing you have to do is turn on that rig. And there's always the chance that this could be habit forming.....if you're lucky Ed/W4RVZ

From W1AW

"W1AW will be on the air all weekend for this special event to celebrate the fact that so many amateurs have gained or will earn new privileges as a result of the rule changes," he said. "The station will operate starting at 12:01 AM Eastern Time on Friday, February 23, continuing into the wee hours and resuming operation during the day. Then W1AW will be on the air on both days of the weekend, from 10 AM until 5 PM -- perhaps longer as conditions and enthusiasm dictate."

Operation will be on both SSB and CW. W1AW operators will concentrate their activities on the Technician and General class HF sub bands. On SSB, the station will use its normal phone frequencies -- 1.855, 3.990, 7.290, 14.290, 18.160 and 21.390 MHz. On 10 meters, W1AW will operate SSB on or about 28.480 MHz.

Henderson says operating will be casual unless pileups develop. "The purpose is to welcome newcomers to new privileges," he said.

"First Contact" certificates will be available as part of this event. ARRL invites anyone making a first contact or first HF contact to enter the contact information on the ARRL "[Welcome Weekend](#)" Web site and receive a certificate in return. "If the first contact is with W1AW we will also be including a W1AW QSL card for the contact," Henderson added.

The ARRL anticipates a huge influx of upgrade applications once the Morse code requirement disappears. In addition, all Technician licensees will have limited HF privileges starting February 23, whether or not they've passed a Morse code test.

Amateur Radio exam sessions both before and after the zero hour will offer an opportunity for applicants either to upgrade under the outgoing licensing rules at the last possible opportunity or under the new licensing rules at the first possible opportunity.

"Dual exam sessions are scheduled at ARRL Headquarters around the effective time of the new licensing rules," says Brennan Price, N4QX, a former ARRL staff member and an ARRL VEC volunteer examiner. "At 11 PM on February 22, a session will be held for candidates wishing to upgrade under the existing rules. A few folks have expressed interest in such a session." Price says all Amateur Radio written and telegraphy elements will be offered until midnight.

"At 12:01 AM February 23, a second session will begin under the new licensing rules," he said. "Examiners will not only be evaluating previously earned Certificates of Successful Completion of Exam (CSCEs) for upgrades, but will be offering all written elements." Two teams of volunteer examiners will be on site until all applicants have been served.

On or after February 23, applicants upgrading on the basis of a valid CSCE must present the certificate for element credit, fill out an application and pay any applicable exam session fee, which most VECs charge. Only after the VE team has issued a CSCE for upgrade credit may applicants actually use their new operating privileges on the air.

Additional Welcome Weekend information will be available on the ARRL Web site in the days leading up to February 23.

From ARRL Headquarters