

DELTA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

SPARKS Web Edition

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W 4 B S R E P E A T E R S Y S T E M

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Happy New Year to everyone, and I hope you all entered the new millennium with very low SWR.

I have some very large footsteps to follow as President of Delta Amateur Radio Club, but I know I will have a lot of assistance. As you will find out, much of that help will be coming from you. Go to your physicians early, get that burisits in your shoulder treated, because I expect to see a lot of hands being raised this year. The club has such a rich reservoir of talent that we will be tapping this year.

Freddy Bratton, KF4ZGJ, Director of Programs, already has a number of programs lined up to whet your appetites to get on those HF bands. Tom, K4TTA, Director of Training, is formulating classes to help you upgrade your license in order to use the HF bands. Also Net Manager, Tom is planning to use the Traffic and Information Net to pass a lot of information to you on a daily basis about classes and events, so be sure to turn on your radio around 8 o'clock each evening. You might even want to check in since you're listening!

We've changed the date of the board meeting to the Thursday before the Club meeting for two reasons. First, this will allow the Board to conduct business and almost immediately report it to the membership, rather than have to wait most of a month to report it to you. Second, it gives Ken, K4DIT, Director of Publications, time to get the SPARKS printed and mailed out at least one week earlier than before. As always, the board meetings are open, and anyone can attend.

Every year Delta Club elects a very creative and enthusiastic Board of Directors whose main purpose is to conduct business for the club. The club demographics includes a diverse group of individuals. There are those who only use the UHF/VHF bands to talk around town. Then you have members who do extensive work on 2 meter sideband. We then have a contingent that spends significant time contesting on the HF bands, while others use the HF bands to chase DX. We have CW "die-hards" and those who won't touch the code if their lives depended on it. Also in our club demographics you have individuals who join the club year after year for the camaraderie but never get on the repeater. Finally there are those members that are infrequent users of our club's repeaters, you only hear them each evening at 8:00PM when they check in to the Traffic and Information Net.

Every member is an integral component that collectively makes the Delta Amateur Radio Club the most interesting, the most challenging, the most engaging, and fun-loving group that I have had the pleasure of being associated with. Come to the meetings. The programs are informative, instructional, and the fellowship is fun. How can you become a key component of this well oiled machine? By participating.... Participate in special events, participate in Field Day, volunteer to assist in the many public service activities that we are involved with. There is always something you can do. Check into the nets. You'll soon find yourself saying, "I haven't heard him in a long time." You may even hear someone saying that about you! If you have a "hankerin'" to get involved, just tell any of the board members, we don't know until we hear from you.

I'm looking forward to seeing every one of you at the meetings this year. It should be a doozie!

Kathy, KE4UYU

PAST PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I hope that everyone in the club had a tremendous holiday and ushered in the new millennium with little or no adverse affect. It's very difficult for me to refer to the new year as the year 2000. I'm sure that this change will take longer than previous new years because of the change in the century.

I think that we have an excellent Board of Directors this year. I think that the leadership that they will provide will put Delta Club way out front and a "benchmark" that many clubs throughout the Mid South and the rest of the country will want to emulate. I think that Kathy (KE4UYU) and Melinda (KE4DXN) will do an outstanding job molding the future of Delta Club. They, along with their directors and other officers will soon be meeting to plan the strategy for the next twelve months. With the creative juices of such people as Tom (K4TTA), Freddy (KF4ZGJ), and Ken (K4DIT), we are going to see a lot of new and creative ideas in training, programs, and newsletter format.

As is the normal process in the transition of office in Delta Club the Past President is assigned certain responsibilities by the President to perform throughout the year. Since we haven't had a board meeting or a planning session I am not aware of what Kathy has in store for me. Even though she is my XYL she hasn't informed me of my upcoming duties.

There are a number of activities that Delta Club is involved with over a twelve-month period. A lot of the work that is required is generally performed by the various members of the Board of Directors. I support Kathy's desire to get more involvement from the general membership. She wants and needs the help of every member of the club to accomplish some of the activities that we will be involved with. As she said in her article, "If you want to get involved, just contact one of the board members."

In closing, I am urging every Delta Club member to mark the second Tuesday of each month, our meeting night. Plan to attend as many meetings as possible. I look forward to seeing you at the January meeting.

73,

Ben, KU4AW

VE CORNER

The December 14th testing session was very busy. Without the wonderful help of Don KJ4PO, Jim K14I, Steve N4SG, and the newest member of the team Tom K4TTA, testing would have been difficult. We administered 15 elements to 7 persons and had 7 passed including a SWPM code exam. A wonderful surprise that I have not seen in quite awhile, was a NOVICE CLASS ticket upgraded to a Tech Plus. For those that do not remember a Novice Ticket has the written part of the no-code tech exam and the SWPM Code exam - so they have HF capabilities but not VHF/UHF. This class can operate on the 220 repeater which Delta Club does have available.

Remember test fees go up January 1st to \$6.50 at Delta testing sessions. Some other session that you may attend could have fees of \$6.65. The next Delta testing session is January 11th, see you then. Hope everyone has a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

Joan, KN4PM
ARRL VE Liaison

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Well, I jumped the gun last month when I said it was my last article for the year. But it is this time!!!

By the time you read this, you will hopefully have had a wonderful Christmas and New Year, and survived entering into the millennium. And I hope we all can forget that word within another week!

This coming year in Delta Club looks to be an exciting one and I hope, if you haven't already, that you renew your membership in DARC to share in the fun. As Secretary for the club, I looked forward to seeing each one of you walk through the door for our monthly meeting, and I would hate to miss you this year.

Thanks for all your support and encouragement and help all these years.

*73 to all.

Kathy, KE4UYU

THE YEAR OF THE UPGRADE

As most people are aware, the Chinese calendar consists of "The Year of the (different animals)." I'd like to propose that we of Delta Club make 2000 THE YEAR OF THE UPGRADE. Wouldn't it be fantastic if EVERYONE in Delta Club upgraded at least one license class during this year! (Hey, Tom, I already hold an Extra class license and there ain't no way to upgrade! -- "Elmer" somebody who needs it!) As Director of Nets and Training, I want to do everything I can to achieve this goal and make it as easy as possible to accomplish it. This is what's in the works thus far.

Beginning in January, we'll be holding Code practice on Monday and Thursday night AFTER the Traffic and Information net. We'll be sending a QSO at 15, 10, and then at 5 words per minute, a QSO similar to the ones on the actual test. The NCS for the CW practice net will read the text at the conclusion of the SWPM run.

We're forming an "ELMER BANK," and Don, KJ4PO, has agreed to coordinate this activity. I have long maintained that we have a GREAT wealth of knowledge distributed among the members of Delta Club and now we are going to try to marshal it and make it available to those who can benefit from it. "Elmers" having volunteered so far are K14I, KJ4PO, WA4MJM, K4DIT, KU4AW, and K4TTA. If you are willing to be an "Elmer" or you need an "Elmer," contact Don or me.

For the "Man, I missed it by ONE STINKING QUESTION" group, Joan, KN4PM has graciously agreed to hold a special Saturday testing session on the second Saturday of the month (the Saturday following the regular meeting and testing session) for those that "BARELY FLUNKED." The testing session will be preceded by a "cram course" conducted by members of our Training Sub-committee (see below) to go over the areas you need help with. If you find yourself in this group after testing for an upgrade, go the Delta Club webpage <http://home.mem.net/~melindat/delta.html> and click on the "Amateur Related Links" link. Go to the AA9PW link and generate yourself a test. It will score it AND let you know your number of correct and incorrect answers in each element. Bring the results with you to the Saturday training session and we'll do the rest - except take the test for you! Of course, the Saturday testing will be open to others, but Joan will need to be notified in advance if you want to re-test. The location for this activity will be announced at the January meeting.

We are developing a Training Sub-committee and Ben, KU4AW, is chairing it. Volunteers so far are KB4KA, KJ4PO, WA4MJM, K4DIT, KU4AW, and K4TTA. We could sure use some more. Contact Ben in this regard.

Would you be interested in some "SATURDAY SEMINARS" meeting for about an hour on Saturday morning of the month (and, of course, leaving time to get to the "Candy Store" afterwards!) dealing with specific topics of interest, such as Packet, DXing, Contest Operation, Traffic Handling, Antennas, Power Supplies, etc.? Let me know.

If you (1) want to upgrade, (2) need help preparing for an exam, (3) need an "Elmer," (4) have any suggestions for our training programs, and/or (5) want to help, then WE NEED TO TALK.

73 de K4TTA

JANUARY MEETING

The January meeting will be on the correct way to handle traffic. The proper NTS procedures for handling traffic will be discussed by Alex Graham KE4GYR. He will share with us an in-depth insight into the art of traffic handling. He will discuss the differences and similarities in the NTS and MARS procedures as well as other aspects of the art. This will be an opportunity for many of us to learn first hand about the "traffic service". I feel a personal debt to the ham community for passing traffic down to me from my son Keith, KD5ESS, when he was in the Navy and out to sea for seven months at a time. Weeks would go by with no mail getting to or from his ship and the only way I had any contact was when I would get messages through "hams" who volunteered their service to handle traffic. There will be many others in our meeting room who have experienced the same service. It will also be a chance for those of us who are preparing to train for traffic handling to see more of what is in store for us. This is a great opportunity for us to learn about an extremely important public service aspect of our great hobby.

Freddy Bratton, KF4ZGJ
Director of Programs

SIMPLIFY YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

Did you know that the ARRL provides its members with an excellent email forwarding service that forwards your mail to your email box regardless of what server you use? Would you like to have an email address that everyone can remember and that you can give somebody over the air and they will probably be able to remember it WITHOUT even having to write it down? It's really simple, just go to the ARRL webpage (<http://www.arrl.org>) and click on the Members Only link. Follow the instructions and you'll have your own, KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid!) email address consisting of your call@ arrl.net (For example k4tt@arrl.net). Several of us have already taken advantage of this excellent service and it sure beats having to remember a bunch of email addresses. I would strongly encourage every Delta Club member who is active on the internet and is also an ARRL member to take advantage of this excellent member service.

73 de K4TTA

THE SHRINK IS IN

"Well, Doc, it's like this. I've had my ham radio license for a long time and I really want to upgrade so I can have more privileges, but I just can't seem to find the time. What can I do?"

Simply put, MAKE time, just like all of the rest of us who have managed to upgrade. It's going to require some work, but it is worth it. For the majority of us, the time over which we have the most control is that time between when we get up to start the day and when we have to leave for work and/or get the kids off to school. Try getting up thirty minutes earlier than usual and devote this time to studying for your upgrade. The house should be quieter as you'll be the only one up and your thinking will not be cluttered with what has been happening all day. Have an extra cup of coffee and start a regular study program. You'll be surprised how quickly you can manage your CW and/or theory upgrade for that new license. The key to learning the material is REGULAR study.

73 de K4TTA

PACKET UPDATE...

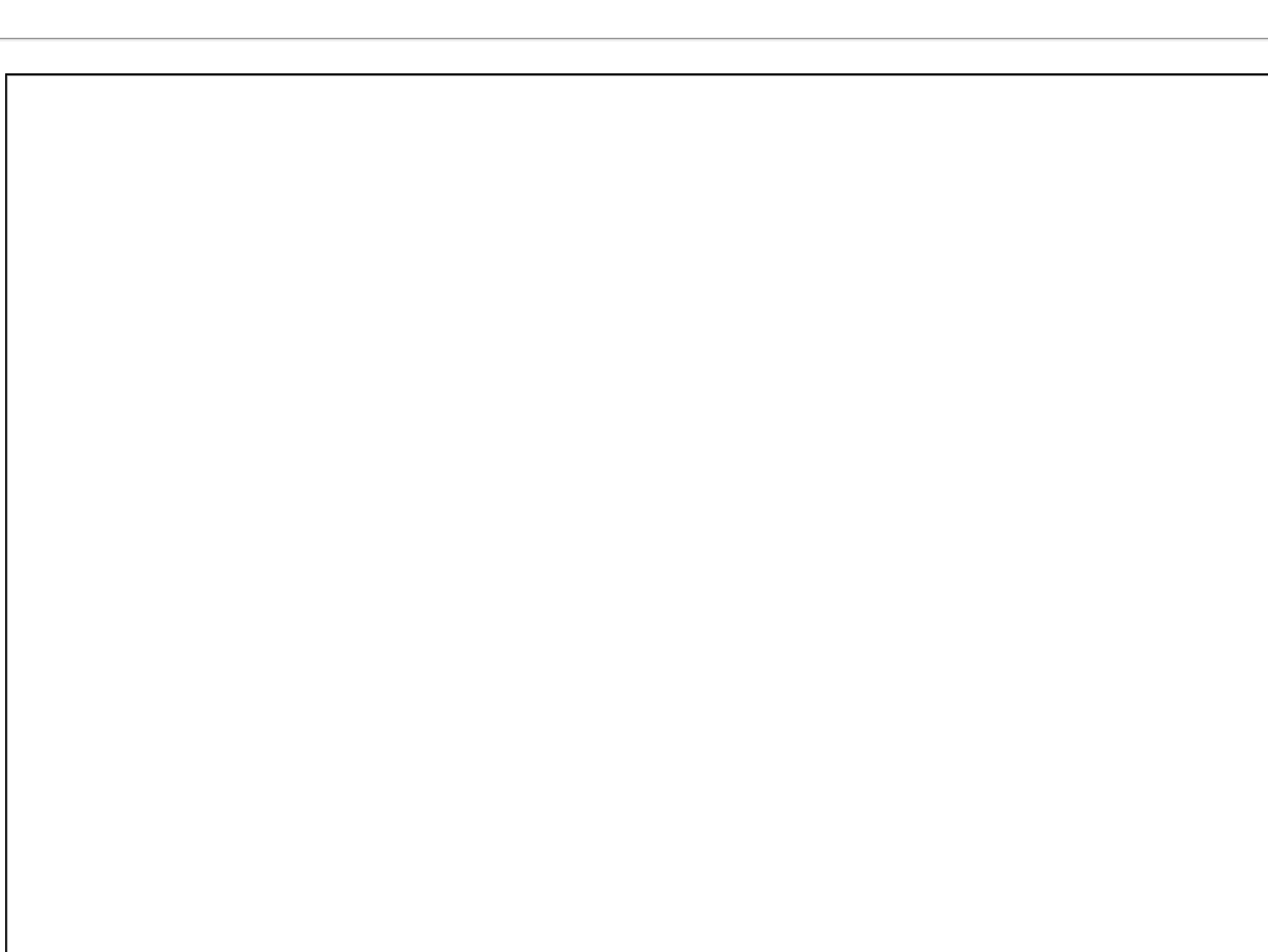
Personal Database Applications has come out with a new software program for digital modes that combines other software to make it better and easier to use. The program is called LOGic 5 for Windows 95/98 and NT4. The program does database logging, online awards tracking, contesting, digital communications for all modes, and packet spotting. The program can also control your radio via RS232 port. The program can control your antenna by computer if your rotor supports it. LOGic 5 has a built in grayline propagation chart along with capability to print out QSL cards and labels. A free demo of the program is at their web site (<http://www.hoseense.com>). If you need a new communications program that has it all take a look at LOGic 5 from Personal Database Applications.

James Butler KB4LJV

AMATEUR HARDWARE UPDATE

More and more new HTs being produced are the new extra small style. To get them to run on the newer small battery packs they run on a lower voltage than before. With no room inside the case for a voltage regulator they will not run directly on 13.8 volts. Radio makers offer a cigarette lighter plug adapter to run the HT but at \$40 to \$50 they are no bargain. This month's project is the LOW VOLTAGE HT MOBILE ADAPTER. This will allow you to hook up your HT in the car. The unit consists of a couple of capacitors and a voltage regulator to drop the voltage. I used a LM340K 5 volt regulator with a heat sink. This gives me 5 V.D.C. output to power the HT. Most of the new HTs operate in the 3.5 to 6.0 volt range. The adapter is mounted in a surplus computer mouse case to prevent shorting. When hooked up to a fused lighter plug it makes your mini HT mobile ready. The project is easy to build up and saves money over buying a factory unit. I will have the LOW VOLTAGE HT MOBILE ADAPTER at the meeting to show and answer questions on for those who wish to build up their own. SEE YOU AT THE MEETING ...

James Butler KB4LJV



Y2K Delta Club Dues

It's that time again. Dues time that is. We know that in the past that many of you have paid your dues at the Memphis Hamfest. Since there was no hamfest in October this year, we are placing a membership form in this newsletter for your convenience. This membership form must accompany your dues payment. This form is needed each year so that we can update the records on all members. You can mail your dues to:

Delta Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 750482
Memphis, TN 38175-0482

or pay them at the meeting. Forms are also available at the meetings for your convenience. Don't wait. If you have not paid by now, your dues are past due. Remember, if dues are not paid by February, your extra repeater privileges are denied. See you at the meeting.

DARC Membership Committee

The ARRL Letter, Vol 18, No 50

KENWOOD ASKS FCC TO RULE ON "SKY COMMAND" SYSTEM

Kenwood Communications Corporation has asked the FCC either to declare that its "Sky Command" system complies with Commission rules or to waive applicable sections of the rules to make it legal.

The "Sky Command" system, which Kenwood has been marketing for about two years, lets the user control a fixed HF station via a remote dual-band transceiver. Sky Command operates in full duplex, using a 70-cm frequency to transmit audio and control commands to a dualband transceiver at the remote station and a 2-meter frequency to transmit received audio via the remote station's SkyCommand transceiver to the operator's duplex. Sky Command's VHF link also includes a Morse code ID.

The ARRL has declined to permit Kenwood to advertise its "Sky Command" system in QST, maintaining that the system is not legal to use as it's configured. The League says that Kenwood's use of a 2-meter frequency would cause amateurs using the system to violate Section 97.201(b), which limits auxiliary operation to certain frequencies above 222.15 MHz.

The League in the past has opposed lowering the minimum frequency for auxiliary operation. The Sky Command issue arose during the ARRL Executive Committee meeting December 4. After some discussion, the EC requested that Executive Vice President David Sumner, K1ZZ, prepare a paper to explain the rationale for the present rule and to provide a basis for future discussion on whether the restriction was still needed.

In its petition for a declaratory ruling or waiver--filed November 4 but not released until December 15--Kenwood claims that the Sky Command VHF transmission link "should be viewed as merely providing third party communications" and not as part of an auxiliary link.

"Kenwood is confident that the Sky Command System fully complies with the remote control, telecommand, and auxiliary station provisions of Sections 97.109(c), 97.213, and 97.201," the manufacturer told the FCC. Kenwood wants the FCC to confirm in a declaratory ruling that the Sky Command System complies with those rules. But, Kenwood said, if the FCC does not concur, then Kenwood requests a "blanket waiver" of those rules for amateurs using Sky Command.

Kenwood also asks for either a declaratory ruling or a blanket waiver with respect to Section 97.111, which covers authorized transmissions. The manufacturer says the VHF link complies with the rules because it only carries audio from the HF station receiver, is not involved with telecommand of the remote station, and is under the supervision of the control operator.

Comments on the Kenwood petition are due by January 31, 2000. Reply comments are due by February 14, 2000. Commenters should reference DA 99-2805.

CASH ONLY FOR W1, W2 BUREAUS

The W1 and W2 QSL bureaus no longer accept stamps and/or envelopes. Funds sufficient to cover the mailing or anticipated cards should be sent by check or money order (or cash, at your own risk). Addresses of all ARRL QSL bureaus are at <http://www.arrl.org/qsl/qslm.html>.

UK TO ALLOW AMATEUR RADIO-INTERNET LINKS

The Radiocommunications Agency in the UK has announced that it will allow interconnection between Amateur Radio and the Internet starting in late January. The action followed consultation with the Radio Society of Great Britain and a number of interested individuals. David Hendon, the Agency's Chief Executive, made the announcement in response to requests from the Amateur Radio community to be permitted to link their radio equipment through the Internet. The RA said it recognized the need to encourage young people to become involved in Amateur Radio as "a valuable training ground for future careers in radio and electronics" and expressed hopes that its decision would "open up whole new avenues into Amateur Radio." Connection of ham equipment to nonamateur networks in the UK will require written permission from the Secretary of State.--RA via Ian Abel, G3ZHI

THE Y2K SONG (with apologies to "Santa Claus is Coming to Town")

You better watch out,
The lights might go out,
The TV shuts off,
Then everyone shouts
Y2K is coming to town

They say that we'll be
Safe as can be
But don't drink the water, naturally
Y2K is coming to town

If everyone is ready
Why do we hold our breath
They're telling us to hoard water
And it's scaring folks to death!

So you'd better prepare
Your grab-and-go kit
If everything fails guys
Looks like we're it

Get those batteries charged!
Y2K is looming!
Amateurs are ready for Y2K!

--Kim Paquette, N8YWX (Asst EC, Adams County, Ohio)

APRS News

APRS - Automatic Position Reporting System - originally developed by Bob Bruninga, WB4AAR, has now grown into a worldwide amateur radio application with radio links into the internet accepting and reporting positions, messages, bulletins, and email. Software versions are now available for DOS, Windows, MAC, and Palm Pilot.

around the Memphis area, several packet digests are currently operating and relaying information from east of Jackson, TN., south to Hernando, and just west of Forest City. Other digests are planned to increase the coverage. On a limited basis, several HF gateways and igates (internet gateways) are operated.

Many web sites are available which offer the software, general information, and live position reporting. Check out the following sites:

<http://www.kc4prg.org>
<http://www.tapr.org>
<http://web.usna.navy.mil/~bruninga/aprs.html>

In future articles we will inform you of upcoming APRS covered events (such as balloon flights), new digests in the mid-south, the latest enhancements to software, and radios/TNCs available. There is a scheduled APRS forum at the upcoming Dixie-Fest (N35&ddeg: 07.279' W89&ddeg: 59.017'). Hope to see you there.

Whit Crowley KD4LTR
David Campbell KD4NOQ

WE WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE AN EMAIL VERSION OF SPARKS?

We are going to start a test program, where an email version of the SPARKS newsletter will be sent to interested club members each month. This will be a text-only version of the full newsletter and will not replace the printed version. You will still receive the printed version. If you are interested in participating in this program, send an empty email message to: k4dt@arrl.net with the words SUBSCRIBE SPARKS as the subject.

Ken K4DIT

CONTEST CALENDAR

Here are some of the contests coming up in the next few weeks...

2000 CW QRP Contest, sponsored by the Michigan QRP Club.
1200Z Jan 15 to 2359Z Jan 16.
CW only, 160 80 40 20 15 10 6 meters.
More information is available on the Web at: <http://www.tjr.com/~k8dd/miqrp.htm>

Hunting Lions in the Air Contest, sponsored by the International Association of Lions Clubs.
0900Z Jan 15 until 2100Z Jan 16.

ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes. See your December QST, page 101. Jan 22-24.

CQ WW 160-Meter DX Contest, CW, sponsored by CQ Magazine.
2200Z Jan 28 until 1600Z Jan 30 (phone is 2200Z Feb 25 until 1600Z Feb 27).

YL International QSO Party, CW, sponsored by YL International SSBers Inc.
0000Z Jan 29 to 2359Z Jan 30 (SSB 0000Z Feb 26 2359Z Feb 27).

Kansas QSO Party, 1800 UTC Saturday January 29 to 1800 UTC Sunday January 30.
For more information on these and other contests in January, please visit the ARRL contest page on the internet at: www.arrl.org/contests/months/jan.html

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