

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

146.82, 147.36, 224.42, 443.2 & 145.03 Packet

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

By the time you get this issue of SPARKS and read this article, hopefully, three things will have happened. First, you will have renewed your membership with Delta Amateur Radio Club, or you wouldn't be reading this. Second, you will have attended DixieFest 2000, because this is a happening and a hamfest and you couldn't have NOT been there! And third, you will have felt inside you a small sense of being part of a new era in amateur radio, not only in the Mid South, but in the entire hobby. Let me explain this last one. The ARRL had their annual Board of Directors' meeting in Memphis January 20-22, held at the Marriott. Henry Leggett, WD4Q, Vice Director of the Delta Division, made a statement in an email to Pat Lane, MARRA President, and me that a hospitality suite was done in another city for a previous meeting. Being still a bit wet behind the ears in my new position as President of DARC, Ben, KU4AW, encouraged me to run with the suggestion.

Since many of the area's clubs were already meeting regularly to plan the DixieFest 2000, the groundwork was already in place to include these clubs as well. I invited the Board members from the following 7 clubs to be involved in the hospitality suite on January 22: Delta Amateur Radio Club, MidSouth Amateur Radio Association, Tri State Repeater Association, FedEx Amateur Radio Club, Hickory Withe DX Club, Dixie Amateur Radio Group, and Olive Branch Amateur Radio Club. Ben suggested getting a history of each club so that the ARRL Board members could get to know what kind of amateur radio and what kind of ham operators we have here in the MidSouth area. So he collected all the histories, had them reproduced on different colors of paper for each club, had them bound nicely, and gave one to each ARRL Board member. Melinda, KE4DXN, prepared a beautiful buffet with cheese and vegetable trays, dips, some ham (what else), and soft drinks.

The ARRL Board meeting adjourned a bit later than we expected, but as the Board members began to trickle in, it became obvious it was worth the wait. They were quite surprised and very impressed by the number of hams present to meet them as well as what we had set out for them. It was a wonderful opportunity to speak to the ARRL Directors and Vice-Directors. Many of them remarked they've never had as warm a reception in other cities. They were really impressed that so many clubs could work together to put this on. Many photographs were taken. Maybe some of them will end up in QST. There was also a small write-up in the Feb. 7 ARRL Letter on their website. Check it out!

Then there was the DixieFest 2000. This is the first time since I've been in the hobby (mind you, that's only 5 or 6 years) that the club has been involved in planning a hamfest. As I said earlier, six clubs were sponsoring it, and have been working together since July of last year. In the beginning and right up to the hamfest, we all offered ideas and concepts as to how we each thought a hamfest ought to be done, what pitfalls to avoid, and what standards to adopt. What was the most amazing and rewarding concept was that we worked as one entity, all working toward a unified goal. We all wore black golf shirts with DixieFest 2000, our names, and callsigns embroidered on it, with no club affiliation indicated. No one club was any more important than another because of size, or because of responsibility, or because of number of hams working the event. We were working as one, and I think it showed.

These two events, the hospitality suite for the ARRL Board of Directors and the DixieFest 2000, have set precedence in strengthening the amateur radio hobby. What once had been a geographical area that contained many clusters of hams that practiced their hobby exclusive of other groups, has become a community of hams all working together toward common goals, all sharing the excitement and expertise and experience they have acquired over the years of being in the hobby.

73, Kathy, KE4UYU

MARCH MEETING: APRS (Automatic Position Reporting System)

KD4LTR, Whit Crowley and KD4NOQ, David Campbell will present a program on APRS at our March meeting. When I asked the membership to give me some notes with ideas of what you would like to have, this was the hands down most requested one. So here it is.

Both Whit and David have been involved in this for some time. They put on an absolutely excellent program at the DixieFest 2000. They will tell us what APRS is and what it isn't as well as teaching us just what equipment is needed and how to use it as well as what we had set out for them. It was a wonderful opportunity to speak to the ARRL Directors and Vice-Directors. Many of them remarked they've never had as warm a reception in other cities. They were really impressed that so many clubs could work together to put this on. Many photographs were taken. Maybe some of them will end up in QST. There was also a small write-up in the Feb. 7 ARRL Letter on their website. Check it out!

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Freddy Bratton, KF4ZGJ

ARRL VICE DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The First Annual 2000 Board of Directors meeting has ended. There are several things that came out of the meeting and I will discuss a few high pointers. Of course, QST and the ARRL Web will have our minutes soon.

A new President was elected and all Vice Presidents are new with the exception of the First Vice President and the International Affairs Vice President.

I will advise you of only some of the high points that were passed. A sufficient number of hams are studying for the Amateur Extra class license. Due to that, all extra class manuals are on back order. The only other manual that is selling real fast is the General class manual.

A "Window of Opportunity" was discussed in detail. This will allow the amateur radio operator to achieve a certificate based upon additional studying and testing for that level. Now that the FCC has passed the amateur restructuring rules, we feel the amateur community would like something additional. A ham can enter on his/her QSL cards "ARRL Level 4" or "ARRL Level 2" certificate. It is in hope that there will be some Cue's (Continuing Education Units) offered for this additional study. We know that most of us do not like what is called dumping down, however, let's make something positive come from this FCC change.

Be aware that some states have legislation pending to ban cellular phone usage while operating a vehicle. Will this affect mobile amateur radio operation? I don't think it will. One thing to keep in mind is that mobile amateur radio operating is half-duplex and cellular telephone operation is full-duplex.

We had a discussion on improving relations with the FCC. What can we do to improve this relationship? We need to reorganize our goals in dealing with the FCC. Our new President has committed to improving this relationship.

DXCC Card checkers will be different than previous assignments. If you are currently a DX card checker, that individual will have to become a DXCC card checker again. The Section Manager will appoint one and one will be appointed from each DX club in the section. There will be some additional requirements that a DX checker has to meet.

The Board authorized a Club 2000 Achievement Award program to reward clubs after accomplishments of ARRL Affiliated Clubs. This award is designed for clubs in four categories, large, medium, small and school clubs. This awards program is being submitted as a new incentive for clubs. It was initially conceived as a competition, but soon evolved into a program that emphasized the unique strengths of individual clubs in light of their achievements.

A program should be upcoming for increasing knowledge of and interest in the A-1 operators program. Special attention should be paid to the program that would be attractive and useful to technicians. This is no means the complete minutes of the Board of Directors meeting in Memphis. The minutes will be in QST and on the ARRL Web very soon.

Henry R. Leggett, WD4Q Vice Director, Delta Division ARRL

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Many members of Delta Club participate in Community Service activities such as walks, runs, special events stations etc. I have enjoyed being a part of these. Alex, KE4GYR, Tommy, KD4TJO, and others do a great job with SKYWARN, another fantastic Community Service activity. I check into the SKYWARN Net frequently as many of you do. Other Delta Club members are active in the ARES/RACES Organization. Some are Hahn, W4GMM, who is WTC EC; Robert, KD4SKT, the RACES EC; WA4MJM, the Fayette County ARES EC; Billy, KD4FTS, who is a Fayette County RACES officer, Barry, KE4KAG, and Ned, KA4BLL, who is the ARES EC. I, along with other hams, also are part of this Vital Community Service, and, we would like to invite all Delta Club members to consider becoming active in, the ARES/RACES Group.

The ARES/RACES public service group is composed of Licensed Ham Operators who volunteer to provide essential communications and warning links to supplement State and local government agencies in times of extraordinary need. Our ARES/RACES organization provides or supplements communications during emergencies where normal communication systems have sustained damage. It may be used in a wide variety of situations, including:

 • Natural Disasters • Technological Disasters • Nuclear Accidents • Nuclear Attack • Terrorist Incidents • Bomb Threats • MedMERS

Our ARES/RACES organization may be utilized during drills and exercises in order to train members and exercise an emergency plan. Special ARES/RACES drills and exercises serve as a mechanism for honing skills in emergency communications procedures in general and for training in any specific or unusual protocols which may be used. As a special part of the amateur operation sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), ARES/RACES personnel are called upon to perform many tasks for the government agencies they serve. Although the exact nature of each activation may be different, during any activation, the common thread is communications.

As ARES/RACES members, you would be indispensable for emergency communications; you can help save lives. For Applications contact Ned, KA4BLL, NSSavage@juno.com or Barbara, KE4BUU, abrams@ao.com. We invite you to join us and see what we are about. We meet the 4th Tuesday of every month, 7 PM, at St Francis Hospital.

Barbara Abrams, KE4BUU

THE YEAR OF THE UPGRADE - CHAPTER ONE

After our first training class (General Class Theory), it looks like Delta Club is going to have several new HF ops! Congratulations Class! Ya' done GOOD!

Current plans include getting code practice going on Monday and Thursday nights after the Traffic and Information net. Check into the net for further details, 8:00 p.m. on the 146.82 repeater. The next theory training class will be for AMATEUR EXTRA and we're going to try to begin on Saturday, February 26th at 9:00 a.m. at Ellendale United Methodist Church ­ corner of Fonta and Centralia in Bartlett (old Ellendale part). The idea here is that we have several folks in the club that hold Advanced Class license and want to get upgraded by April 15th. Per the ARRL webpage, if you've passed the 5wpm CW exam, the Novice, the Technician, the General, the Advanced and the Extra class theory exams, you can upgrade to Amateur Extra after April 15th. So if you now hold a Tech Plus license and can accumulate CSCE's for General, Advanced and Amateur Extra dated after 4/15/99 and before 4/15/2000, then you can do the upgrade to Amateur Extra. The CSCE's do NOT have to be obtained in any certain order. So if you hold, even a Technician license, you may find the Amateur Extra class useful. As soon as we finish the Amateur Extra Class, we'll be starting a class for Advanced Theory. The Advanced and the Amateur Extra theory are fairly independent in that they cover different areas of our hobby and the Amateur Extra questions don't "build" on the Advanced questions as much as in some of the other license classes.

Under Net Business, we need some alternate net control stations to act as NCS when the regular NCS cannot do it. If interested, let me know.

As a follow-up to KB4KA's excellent program on Dx'ing, there are a couple of websites of interest. DX-Central posts DX spots from all over the world at <http://www.dx-central.com> and there is also a fun IRC chat group, complete with DX spots. Check their webpage at <http://dx.qsl.net/cqdx> for details on how to check in.

73 de K4TTA

VE CORNER

If you have seen the hallway filled to the max at the Ellendale Church Testing site - then you were obviously at the last Delta Club testing session. I had expected about 10 people to come to the session and Mike and I had agreed to open and set up about 5:00 PM. All these arrangements were made after the January session where 3:15 was late setup time. Welllllll, I knew that I was about to have the biggest session aside from a training class ever - when at 4:40 there were already two cars in the parking lot - that is almost an hour early for registration. In all we had 35 people take 43 elements in the hallways and classrooms that evening. We had 5 people take Morse code elements with 5, 13, and 20 WPM being passed. It looks like next month we may have to have the testing session downstairs, if the volume keeps increasing due to the restructuring changes taking place. A BIG THANK YOU to the following VEs who came and helped at that testing session - Don Cook KJ4PO, Steve Greer N4SG, Bill Hancock WA4MJM, Jim Pierce N4ZCO, Tom Richardson K4TTA, Francis White WA4ZYN, and the newest member of the team Arlene Cline AA5GX. Without these seven helpers I know that we would not have ever made it down to the meeting. A "Thank You" for the patience of all those that tested that night. Congratulations to all those that tested and earned a new license, or upgrade, or passed an element for future upgrade.

Congratulations to the following people who tested at the February 8th testing session before the Delta Club meeting:

Virginia Dale - KD5HQ (Tech)
Kimberly Jones - KB5LIN (General)
Timothy Jones - NSPYQ (General)
Austen Onek ­ KG4GKE (Tech Plus)
Jesus Rivera - WP4JBG (General)
George Stroupe - WA5TOD (Extra)

73, Joan KN4PM
ARRL VE LIAISON
kn4pm@arrl.net

DIXIEFEST 2000

After the success of the planning, the DixieFest 2000 event is history. There was an awful lot of work required to put this event on but it was well worth it and showed in how smoothly things operated during the event. Before I get into more detail about the six months I want to share with everyone a little history of how this all came to pass. In July of last year, the idea was fostered. It initially started with two clubs, Dixie Amateur Radio Group from West Memphis represented by Jeff Crumb and Mike West, and Delta Amateur Radio Club represented by Tommy Thompson, Ned Savage, Melinda Thompson, Kathy Troughton, Tom Richardson and myself. I'm sure I have missed someone from Delta Club because there were so many involved at the first meeting.

After a little discussion among those in attendance it was decided that we wanted to have as many of the local area clubs involved as possible. So, word went out to such clubs as FedEx Amateur Radio Club, Olive Branch Amateur Radio Club, Hickory Withe DX Club, and the Tri State Repeater Association. Each group expressed an interest in being a part of this new approach to a hamfest in the Memphis area, so now we were up to six clubs wanting to work together to hold a hamfest.

We were immediately faced with a problem, and this problem was where to hold the hamfest. You see, the DixieFest originated in West Memphis, AR with the Dixie Amateur Radio Group in 1999. It was a very successful hamfest and had outgrown its location in one year. Every effort was made in the very beginning to hold the event in West Memphis, the home of DixieFest but no locations could be found that were large enough to handle the event. There was a lot of discussion about moving the hamfest to Memphis but all parties involved agreed that if this event was to grow it needed a larger facility. We had checked with the dog track in West Memphis and that was unavailable, so finally it was decided that we should check locations in Memphis. After searching around the Memphis area for a location it was decided that the Fair Grounds was the best location available based on the funds we had available. So we secured the Shelby County Building for the second week-end in February.

Our next obstacle was to decide on a name. Many, many names were tossed into the hat and each and every one was turned down but one, DixieFest. Again we had a lot of discussion because this was the name of the hamfest that originated in West Memphis, Arkansas. The representatives from the Dixie Amateur Radio Group felt that there would not be a problem using the DixieFest name. It was decided that since the name of the hamfest originated in West Memphis, Arkansas, that the Dixie Amateur Radio Group would have top billing on any publication we created. The people who were involved in the planning of the event felt that this would only be fair. The last thing we wanted to do was give the appearance that we had stolen the name from them.

As the months went by each of the clubs and/or organizations started to get more involved. Pretty soon we started seeing people like Lionel LeJune and Cecil Reddit in attendance. Then Steve Greer and Terry Cox showed up. And finally we had Melvin Jenkins and Brian Kusler from the Olive Branch club attending. Now that a location and name had been decided upon the biggest element of any hamfest had to be addressed, money. To this point we had no money. One of the advantages of holding the hamfest in West Memphis, AR was that the city of West Memphis contributed "seed money" for the event. By moving the event to Memphis, this was no longer available. To compensate for this shortage we approached the six clubs to see if they might approach their Board of Directors to see if they would loan the DixieFest "seed money" so that we had something to work with. We were able to accumulate approximately \$4,000 from our request. It was agreed upon by the DixieFest Committee that this money, which was in essence a non-interest loan, should be paid back to the clubs before any profit was declared. We also pointed out to the Board of Directors of these clubs that there was an element of risk involved, there was the possibility that the DixieFest would not make money and they stood the chance of losing these funds. Fortunately the clubs were willing to take the risk, so we now had the "seed money" that we needed to start moving forward.

As the days and months went by more people became involved, and old barriers that had been around for years started to crumble. We were becoming one big family working toward a common objective. Soon any reference to a club or organization became non-existent by the time we held the DixieFest 2000.

We were now at a point in our planning that responsibilities had to be assigned. That word assignment wasn't necessary because people started volunteering for tasks. Tasks like Webmaster, Talk-in, forums, volunteers, etc. Once a person assumed responsibility for a task they went about their way to make it happen.

One of the final tasks that we wanted to complete was getting DixieFest shirts and, to a person, we all bought a DixieFest Shirt. I don't know how many people noticed it, but nowhere on the shirt did you see any reference to club affiliation. It simply stated DixieFest 2000.

Well the months of planning and in some cases lack of sleep came to fruition on February 12th and 13th. To a person, I think we were pleasantly surprised at the number of food market tables and vendor tables that were sold. Unfortunately, we were unable to get folks like Kenwood, Icom, MFJ, Alinco, and Yaesu to attend because of a previous commitment and the fact that we got started planning this event so late in the season. For those that weren't aware of it, DixieFest was in conflict with Orlando, FL hamfest. All the manufacturers and dealers that I mentioned were going there and could not come to Memphis.

Were we successful in our first attempt to organize and hold a hamfest? Did we make a profit or did we lose our shirts? Well, the answer to these two questions is "yes". Yes, our first attempt at a hamfest was successful. And yes, we did make a profit. On the success side of the coin, many if not all of the vendors said they were very pleased with our event. One vendor from Florida, before pulling out to drive home, said that there was no way he could be upset with us. He had never been to a hamfest where the people had been so friendly and concerned about him. He said he couldn't count the number of people who stopped by his booth and asked if everything was alright, or could they get him something. He had said he has been to other hamfests where once he got there it was as if he hadn't existed.

Now for the detailed information that I mentioned earlier. We had roughly 115 flea market tables and 35 vendor tables sold by the time we opened the doors Saturday morning. The testing session had in excess of 90 people who took a variety of test elements for either upgrading or getting their license. And finally, we have between 1,600 and 1,700 people pass through the doors during the two day event.

From a financial perspective, we were very successful. Before paying back the "seed money" that a number of clubs had loaned us, we had made \$6,000 after all expenses had been paid. That means we were able to pay the building rental, the tables and chairs rental, the postage, which itself was in excess of \$1,200. Then, we deducted the "seed money" and DixieFest cleared over \$2,000. Not bad for a group of folks that didn't get started on this event until six months before it was scheduled to happen.

I want to thank all those folks that were on the DixieFest Committee for their hard work and dedication to achieving the objective. Without this dedication and, in a lot of ways, perseverance, we wouldn't have had a successful hamfest. I want to thank each and every person that attended DixieFest regardless of club affiliation.

Below are the people who planned DixieFest 2000.

Vendor Chairperson, Mike West (KC5DCJ)
Flea Market Chairperson, Steve Greer, N4SG
Engineering, Robert Greene (KE4HFF) and Steve Campbell (KF4LUR)
Prizes and Drawings, Ben Barth (KF4GNC)
Forums, Terry Cox (KB4KA)
VE, Liaison, Joan Thorne (KN4PM)
Webmaster, Tommy Thompson (KD4TJO)
Auction, Gerry Bailey (N9SCJ), Tom Richardson (K4TTA), and Ned Savage (KA4BLL)
Secretary, Kathy Troughton (KE4UYU)
RV Parking & Hamfest Shirts, Melinda Thompson (KE4DXN)
Talk-In, Tommy Thompson (KD4TJO) and John Wood (WV5J)
Volunteers, Lionel LeJune (WA4KOG), Cecil Reddit (AF4KN), Melvin Jenkins (W4STI), Randy Wilder (WB4LHD)
Communications, Freddy Bratton (KF4ZGJ)
Publications, Wendy Kusler (KC4YIK)
Voice of DixieFest, Jack Parnell (K4BSJ)
Treasurer, Joe Lowenthal (WA4OBO)

Well, there you have it. The first hamfest in a long time that was created and managed by a group of local ham clubs. These are the people who worked to make the DixieFest a success. My hat's off to each and every one of them. They are truly a top-notch team.

Ben Troughton, KU4AW
DixieFest Chairperson

PACKET UPDATE

Packet radio is an easy mode to learn. Once you get the Terminal Node Controller hooked up to your radio and computer you are ready to operate. Luckily there are several books that have been published on Packet Radio. These show hookup diagrams as well as different uses for Packet. One of the new books to come out is PROH: Packet Radio Operators Guide by MFI Enterprises. This book talks about Rose, Roundtable, and 9600 Baud operation along with other new developments. The MFI part number for the book is MFJ3036. If you want some good reading on new Packet developments get this one from MFI.

James Butler, KB4LJV

AMATEUR HARDWARE UPDATE

Many manufacturers are coming out with new power supplies for use by amateurs. These include the standard linear supplies and the new switcher supplies that are smaller and lighter. One new feature they are including on some of these new designs is a cigarette lighter socket on the front for hooking up along with the standard terminal hookups. This is very helpful when we need to test a rig or equipment that has a cigarette lighter plug. This month's project is the CIGARETTE SOCKET ADAPTER. It allows you to make the connection to your existing 12 volt power supply and the cigarette lighter socket allows you to test your accessory by just plugging in at the test bench just like you would in the car. The adapter is easy to make with a replacement cigarette lighter socket, some wire for hookup, and jumper clips to hook to the power supply terminals. It makes testing of the radios and accessories much easier on the test bench. I will have the CIGARETTE SOCKET ADAPTER at the meeting to look at and answer questions on for those who wish to build up their own units.

SEE YOU AT THE MEETING

James Butler, KB4LJV

NO-CODE, NO-THEORY, NO-LICENSE AMATEUR RADIO?

Most of us hope that is not the case, but consider this: Prior to the very early 1980's the FCC required that all commercial broadcast stations have a Personal Class commercial operator who was responsible for ensuring that the station complied with all rules and regulations. Such an operator was required to pass a very stringent theory exam. Under the guise of deregulation and citing budget/personnel shortages, this requirement was dropped. Now, commercial stations must have someone designated as a "Chief Operator" but there are no license requirements for such operators. Similarly, Citizens Band (CB) licensing requirements were dropped entirely at about the same time. Now, the FCC, refusing to heed the recommendations of the ARRL, has chosen to reduce the licensing requirements for Amateurs. Is this the first step towards "No License Required" Amateur Radio?

Just food for thought!

Ken, K4DIT

CONTEST CALENDAR

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

ARRL International DX Contest, Phone Mar. 4-5. See Dec. '99 QST Page 99

QCWA QSO Party, Quarter Century Wireless Assn, from 1900Z Mar 11 until 1900Z Mar 12, <http://www.teleport.com/~qcwa/qsoparty.htm>

Wisconsin QSO Party, West Allis RAC, 1800Z Mar 12 until 0100Z Mar 13, <http://www.warac.org/>.

World Wide Locator Contest, Czech Contest Club & OK DX Club, 0000Z Mar 11 to 2400Z Mar 12, <http://www.okdx.cz/>

Alaska QSO Party, South Central ARC, 0000Z Mar 18 to 2400Z Mar 19, <http://www.servcom.com/vorvester/srv.htm>

Virginia QSO Party, sponsored by the Sterling Park ARC, 1800Z Mar 18 to 0200Z Mar 20 Bermuda Contest, Radio Society of Bermuda, 0001Z Mar 18 to 2400Z Mar 19, http://www.bermuda-shorts.com/rsb/rules_1.htm.

CQ WW WPX Contest, phone, sponsored by CQ Magazine, from 0000Z Mar 25 until 2400Z Mar 26, <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/n8bjq/>

For more information on these and other contests in March, please visit the ARRL contest page on the internet at: www.arrl.org/contests/months/mar.htm

MARCH 14

CLUB MEETING

7365 HWY. 70

BARTLETT, TN

MEETING STARTS AT 7:00 PM

The March program will cover APRS operations
along with software setup and usage

presented by

Whit Crowley, KD4LTR and David Campbell, KD4NOQ

VE TESTING:

Don't forget the monthly Volunteer Examiner testing session. Registration begins at 5:30p.m. and testing begins promptly at 6:00p.m. Please remember to bring two forms of identification the original and copies of any existing licenses or CSCE's you might have. Please be on time for registration, as you will not be allowed to enter the testing session after 6:00 p.m., so our volunteer VE team can finish in time to attend the club meeting. Call Joan Thorne 366-9722, if special testing arrangements are required.

W4BS REPEATER SYSTEM

146.82 net 8:00 PM

147.36 tone = 107.2

(BACK ON THE AIR AT A TEMPORARY LOCATON)

224.42 1.25 m repr

443.20 patch, 107.2

145.03 packet / bbs

Other Important Contacts

VE Liaison
Joan Thorne, KN4PM
737-5795
joant@mem.net

Membership Chairpersons
Ben Barth, KF4GNC
Eloise Barth, KF4GNB
eloiseb@aol.com

2000 Board of Directors

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