

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

The twenty-fourth month in a twenty-four month term is finally here. This will be the last article that I will write as President of Delta Amateur Radio Club. It has been a fun and exciting time, with a lot of ups and downs, but all in all I have enjoyed every minute.

I want to thank all the folks that have helped with various activities from programs to organizing Field Day and Special Event Stations. It is virtually impossible to name everyone and so I won't even try. However, I do want to thank each of the members of the current board for their support, their contributions, and most importantly, their friendship.

The new board is once again comprised of a group of very talented individuals and I feel very confident that they will take Delta Club to new heights and contribute significantly to amateur radio. With the election of Kathy Troughton, KE4UYU, and Melinda Thompson, KE4DXN, as President and Vice President a milestone in Delta club history has been achieved. It is not only the first time that we will have a female President, but it is the first time that we will have a female Vice President. The two key positions in the club held by two very competent and dedicated YL amateurs. I firmly believe that next year will be the best year Delta Club has ever experienced. I believe that you will see more activities and I am certain that the many YL's out there that haven't come to a meeting before will start to attend. The decision by the membership of Delta Amateur Radio Club to elect two women to the President and Vice President positions shows that it is committed to electing the best individuals for the job regardless of gender.

I want to thank everyone that attended the November meeting and want to congratulate Chuck Neal, W4VAC, for winning the grand prize, the "Cool Blue" Kenwood VHF/UHF mobile radio. I have never heard Chuck lost for words, but he sure was that evening. Enjoy the radio Chuck!!!!

I also want to offer my congratulations to the winners of the Ham of the Year, Newcomer, and Marconi awards. This year, we had two individuals win the "Ham of the Year" award. Joan Thorne, KN4PM, was one recipient. Her significant contributions to furthering amateur radio thru her performance as VE Liaison are extraordinary. Every month, with the exception of November, Joan has been at the Ellendale Church of Christ at 5:15PM to setup VE testing. Her dedication and perseverance to coordinate one of the best VE Teams in the Mid-South is above reproach.

The other recipient of the "Ham of the Year" award was Tommy Thompson, KD4TJO. When I handed him the plaque he whispered to me that I wasn't suppose to do this, I wasn't suppose to present him with an award. Well, I felt that he deserved it. His work in finding a site for the .82 repeater, his creativeness in approaching one of the organizations at the old repeater site to donate their "hard-line" to Delta Club, and finally the organization of moving the repeater and erecting the new antenna, qualified him for this award. This is just one of the events that he handled on his own. There are so many other activities like the community service that he coordinates that I felt he was most deserving. So Tommy, I know you told me I shouldn't have done this, but you deserve the recognition that you received for all the effort you put into supporting Delta Club.

The "New Comer of the Year" award went to Freddy Bratton, KF4ZGJ. Freddy, although he doesn't like to admit it, has been a contributor ever since he got into ham radio about two years ago. Whenever there is a Special Event or a community service event scheduled, Freddy is there. He helped put up the Novice Tech station at Field Day; he helped operate at the Bartlett Celebration to name just a few. Whenever assistance was needed Freddy was one of the first to volunteer.

Finally the Marconi Award recipient for 1999. This year's award went to David Campbell, KD4NOQ, better known as "No Q". David is like a silent partner, he doesn't say an awful lot but when he does say something it can have significant impact on the direction the club is going. David won the award not just for his contribution to Delta Club but to amateur radio as a whole. He is very active in packet radio and has been one of the mainstays in advancing that aspect of the hobby in the Memphis area. His wealth of information about antennas, both VHF/UHF and HF, is incredible. His interest and knowledge in slow scan TV and his ability to communicate it at a level that most of us can understand is admirable. David is like one of the commercials for an investment firm, "When David speaks, people listen."

Each of these award winners truly deserved the recognition that they received. Without their contribution to Delta Club and amateur radio we wouldn't have one of the best repeaters in the mid-south. We also wouldn't have as many new amateurs entering the hobby and we wouldn't have a resource to turn to when we have questions about packet radio, antennas, and slow scan TV.

There's just one more activity this year, the Christmas Party. As you all know, Mike Richardson, KG4BVK, has been busy organizing this for a couple of months now. I think it will be a lot of fun and some mighty find food is going to be served. So, mark your calendar for December 16th and plan to join us for a nice Christmas get-together.

Well, that's it. Kathy just pointed out to me that when I started writing this article I said it was going to be a short one. I guess once I start writing I start thinking about all the things that I need to communicate to the club. I want once again to thank everyone for your support over the past two years. I have enjoyed it have made a lot of good friends because of it. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Happy New Year to everyone.

73,

Ben, KU4AW

Christmas Party Reminder

With any luck this issue of SPARKS will reach those of you living close enough to attend our annual Christmas Party in time for this to be a reminder not to forget to be there. Tickets had to be purchased by Dec. 1st in order for us to tell the caterer how many to cook for so if you don't already have your tickets, it's probably too late. If you don't have them and would like to attend, contact Mike, KG4BVK at 386-6268 to see if he can squeeze you in.

Don't forget that we will not only have a great meal and a lot of good holiday fellowship, but we will also be drawing for several hand made goodies that have been donated. That's not to mention the special drawing for the beautiful handmade quilt.

Looking forward to seeing everyone there in your best holiday attire.

73,

Tommy, KD4TJO

SECRETARY¹S REPORT

We had a good turnout for what is always an exciting November meeting. All the awards and all the prizes, some wonderful goodies graciously brought to the meeting and lots of hams always make for a fun evening. I appreciate all those who helped sell tickets for the drawing, Betsy Freeman, KD4KOM, for selling tickets for the beautiful hand stitched quilt to be raffled at the DARC Christmas Dinner, Mike Richardson, KG4BVK, for selling tickets for the Christmas Dinner itself, and Tom Richardson, K4TTA, for just sitting at the table keeping the chaos from overtaking me.

We had a number of hams renew their memberships: Steve Muir, KF4IVY, Frank McDowell, KA4SJM, Don Cook, KJ4PO, Gary Blineckman, WA2IQC, and his wife Karen, Jim Cissell, K4I, Ann Cissell, WB4FAA, Ben Cissell, KC4VRS, Dick Cookenham, K3ORS, Lee Cole, KA4ACD, James Butler, KB4LJV, Rebecca Butler, KC4MTN, Ben Barth, KF4GNC, Eloise Barth, KF4GNB, and Ray Hyatt, KD4IKL.

Three years is a long time to hold an office, and all the minutes I've written over the years can fill a file cabinet. But I have really enjoyed being at the greeting table and speaking to everyone who walks through that door each month. I get a kick out of seeing the regulars who make just about every meeting, and the surprise of seeing faces of those who join us only once in a while. Speaking to first time visitors, so they know they are welcome to join the meeting, or special event, was definitely a challenge. Just ask Melinda, KE4DXN. I've come a long way... This will be my last Secretary's report to you. I appreciate the trust you all have had in me to do the job of Secretary. I hope I can serve you and the Delta Club as well, as President for the next year.

73,

Kathy, KE4UYU

VE Liaison

As usual in the December newsletter I give a report on the activity of the VE Team. This year we have had 13 testing sessions serving 68 candidates and administering 122 elements. Among those having been served are 28 NEW Technician Class Hams. 9 of those techs came from classes that Delta Club held throughout the year. Congratulations to all who have tested with us and either earned a new license or upgraded their class ticket.

Your VE Team this year included:

Barry, N4QW
Ben KU4AW
Ben KF4GNC
Bill WA4MJM
Dick K3ORS (formerly WA2CPY)
Don KJ4PO
Eloise KF4GNB
Francis WA4ZYN
Jim N4ZCO
Jim K4I
Steve N4SG
Tom N4TV

Many of these people have come at a moments notice, others have come frequently, and some have come on the only day that they were not working and were available to help. My HATS OFF TO YOU for being so faithful to this cause.

Because of these wonderful aids I have been able to successfully care for the many testing needs of this club. We are in the process of getting ready for our biggest task of all - the Hamfest in February. Anyone that would like to help in anyway please call me - 737-5795, e-mail me at joant@mem.net or see me at one of the meetings. You need not be a VE in order to help. There is plenty of paper passing that will need to be done. Probably the non-VEs will be needed about 1 to 1 1/2 hours. I am still trying to see if there is an interest in holding a two-day session or just a one-day session. With a two-day session anyone not passing an element on Saturday will then have the opportunity to take it again on Sunday. This is so much better than repeats on the same day. If, however, there is no interest in helping on the second day, there will only be a one-day test session. At this time I am thinking that the session will be about 10:00 with the doors to the Hamfest opening about 9:00. That will give u about one hour to browse before our work begins. This also gives those testing time to search for the good buys while the team is finishing checking and making out the CSCE's.

With all this in mind I have to humbly and with great gratitude, thank the officers of this club for awarding me the Ham of the Year Award at the last meeting. There is so much behind the scene work that is not visible to the club that this came as a huge surprise. I thank my team for making this possible - one person cannot do it all, Again THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart.

Til the December meeting, I remain your continuing VE Liaison.

73,

Joan KN4PM

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.

Membership Renewal

Many people have used Delta Club booth at the October hamfest as a good opportunity to renew their membership for the following year. Since there was no hamfest in October this year we need to remember to get that application mailed in as soon as possible.

As the Secretary elect for next year, I ask that everyone please take the time to get your renewal dues in promptly. I know that the holidays are upon us and there are a lot of things on our minds right now, but it will save the club money for every reminder letter that we DON'T have to mail out. While the board has historically allowed a grace period each year to get your dues in, according to the by-laws, your membership will expire on Dec. 31, 1999 unless you have already renewed for 2000. In this month's issue of SPARKS you will find a membership application. Please take time to fill it out and mail it in to renew your dues for year 2000. Some people say "why should I fill out the application every year, I'll just mail my check." There are a number of reasons that it's important to send the application. First of all it gives us a record to go by as to who has renewed and who hasn't. If you just mail a check and we deposit it, the check is returned to you but should we have a database crash we would have no record as to who has renewed and who hasn't. Also, you will either move or change phone numbers or our license class changes and we forget to tell the Secretary. By filling out the application each year, you ensure that your information listed with the club is more accurate.

Please take a few minutes and fill out the application included with this issue of SPARKS and send it in NOW, while you are thinking of it.

Thanks,

Tommy, KD4TJO

DECEMBER 14 CLUB MEETING

7365 HWY. 70

BARTLETT, TN

MEETING STARTS AT 7:00 PM

The December program is Holiday Fellowship

PACKET UPDATE...

OB Communications has come out with a new data controller designed for HF digital work. The PTC-II is a digital signal processor based controller. The DSP allows the PTC-II to copy very weak signals on the HF frequencies. The PTC-II supports Factor 1 , Factor 2, RTTY, AMTOR, and CW. The controller supports speeds up to 1200 BPS. The PTC-II is housed in an aluminum case with status LEDs for modes and a Bar Graph LED tuning indicator for tuning Space and Mark frequencies. If you are looking for a high end DSP based controller for these modes on HF check out the PTC-II. Their Web address is WWW.SCS-PTC.COM

James Butler KB4LJV

AMATEUR HARDWARE UPDATE...

Many times during testing or monitoring with our radios we need a small portable test antenna. This usually ends up being a wire or coat hanger stuck in the antenna connection. This month's project is THE PORTABLE ANTENNA.

The antenna has two advantages. One is the design allows for multiple sections to be plugged together to create different lengths and a tip section with a quick wire connection for tuning if needed. The antenna uses wire mounted in short lengths of small water supply line with test plug connectors at each end. I mounted a PL259 at the end with 90-degree connector for connection to mobile rigs. The antenna makes an excellent test and monitor antenna and can be used for transmitting if tuned to the frequency used.

I will have THE PORTABLE ANTENNA 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

Silent Key

Paul Madison Wilson W4HHK Collierville, TN

Our dear friend and fellow amateur, Paul Wilson, W4HHK became a silent key on Monday November 29, 1999. Paul was well known for his work in EME and had many "firsts" in his life when it came to his work in amateur radio. Please keep Paul's family in your prayers.

FCC Denies League's Request for Stronger Federal Preemption Policy

The FCC has turned down a 1996 ARRL petition asking the Commission to go further in compelling state and local governments to reasonably accommodate Amateur Radio and apply the least restrictive means to regulate amateur antennas and activity. However, in denying the petition, designated RM-8763, the FCC did offer some words that may be helpful to amateurs.

The requested rules changes would have expanded and clarified PRB-1, the Federal preemption of state and local regulation spelled out by the FCC in 1985 and since incorporated into the laws of several states.

Specifically, the League called on the FCC to amend Section 97.15(e) of its rules to say that any state or local antenna restrictions limiting ham radio antennas to heights below 70 feet would be "presumed unreasonable" unless the state or local authority could show its restrictions were necessary for health, safety or aesthetic reasons.

Further, the ARRL asked the FCC to clarify that local government's role in applying PRB-1 was to accommodate ham antennas rather than to balance local interests against Federal interests in "effective public service amateur communications." The League also wanted the FCC to acknowledge that it "has no less interest in the effective performance of an Amateur Radio Station" in an area regulated by deed restrictions, covenants, or condominium regulations than by zoning ordinances. It also asked the FCC to preempt overly burdensome conditions and excessive costs localities might require in connection with amateurs antenna installations.

In its denial, in an Order released November 19, the FCC said it would not be "prudent" or "appropriate" to set a height standard or amateur antennas and supporting structures "because of varying circumstances that may occur" for differing antenna configurations. "We believe that the policy enunciated in PRB-1 is sound," the FCC said, noting that PRB-1 does not specify a height limit. The Commission also said it did not want to mandate specific provisions that localities must include in zoning ordinances.

"We continue to believe that the standards the Commission set, that is 'reasonable accommodation' and 'minimum practicable regulation', have worked relatively well," the FCC said. The Commission applied that same philosophy to the imposition of fees, zoning laws and other conditions that localities might impose on amateur antenna installations.

The FCC also said its policy with respect to restrictive covenants already is clearly stated in PRB-1, which excludes restrictive covenants in private contracts as "outside the reach of our limited preemption." The FCC did say that it "strongly encourages associations of homeowners and private contracting parties to follow the principle of reasonable accommodation" with respect to Amateur Radio. But it drew the line at proposing specific rule changes to bring private restrictive covenants under the umbrella of PRB-1.

The part of the FCC's Order that may prove most helpful is the assertion that PRB-1 precisely stated the principle of "reasonable accommodation." Some courts have held that a local authority can merely balance its own interests against those of the amateur. PRB-1 states that local regulations involving placement, screening, or height of antennas based on health, safety, or aesthetic considerations "must be crafted to accommodate reasonably amateur communications, and to represent the minimum practicable regulation to accomplish the local authority's legitimate purpose." In its Order, the FCC said that given PRB-1's explicit language, "it is clear that a 'balancing of interests' approach is not appropriate in this context."

The ARRL Executive Committee will review the Order at its December 4 meeting to determine what further action is appropriate.

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DixieFest

The NEW Hamfest for the NEW Millennium

February 12-13, 2000

Shelby Co. Building at the Fairgrounds
Sat. 9-5 Sun. 9-2

W4BS REPEATER SYSTEM

146.82 net 8:00 PM

147.36 tone = 107.2

(BACK ON THE AIR AT A TEMPORARY LOCATION)

224.42 1.25 m reptr

BACK ON THE AIR

443.20 patch, 107.2

145.03 packet / bbs

Other Important Contacts

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Ben Barth, KF4GNC
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