

Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society
SOLID COPY
MAY 2000

RADIOACTIVITY

MAY MEETING

Friday, May 19, at 8:00 PM, Welborne United Methodist Church, Maybeury Drive at Patterson Avenue. A. J., W4NM, and Warren, KO4XB will be presenting the program on packet and APRS. Also, refer to the next article for information which will be discussed. Let's have a LARGE turnout. See you there.

APRIL BOARD MEETING

At its April meeting, the Board of Directors considered an offer for a new meeting place for RATS. The Board met at the proposed new place in Mechanicsville. It is centrally located with easy access from the interstates and Route 360, has adequate meeting room, ample parking, and would have no cost for use. The building is owned by a communications company. Several of the owners are hams.

The Board's reaction to the new site was positive. More details will be discussed at the June meeting.

THANKS

Thanks to everyone who assisted with the Ashland Railroad Run which was held April 29.

COMING EVENTS

The Henrico County Division of Police is hosting SKYWARN severe weather training, provided by the National Weather Service's Wakefield WeatherForecast Office.

The training, approximately 3 hours in length, is designed to assist the NWS in providing accurate, timely warnings to the general public and emergency management officials by utilizing trained persons to make reports of real-time observations directly to the Weather Service.

This session open to governmental personnel, the amateur radio community and the general public with weather interest, and is free of charge.

The training will be held at 1830 hours on Thursday, May 25, 2000 at the county's Confederate Hills Recreation Center near Richmond International Airport. Refreshments will be provided.

Pre-registration is required as seating is limited. For registration and directions, contact Officer J. P. Slater at sla08@co.henrico.va.us or leave a message at (804) 501-4109, mailbox 6300#.

Special Olympics will be held in mid-June at the Robins Center, University of Richmond. Volunteers are needed.

Field Day June 24-25

Andy, KB4JXS, has graciously agreed to chair Field Day this year.

We need willing helpers to set up, operate, cook, etc., perhaps with a family picnic on Saturday evening. We have a suitable site in mind.

Contact any board member and let them know you want to participate.

VE EXAMS

Monday, June 5, 2000 at 7:30 PM C. E. Curtiss Elementary School, 3600 W. Hundred Road (Route 10), Chester, VA. Pre-register with TONY AMATO, KR4UQ, at 717-5237. Tony's web page for test information is: www.kr4uq.org/Pages/ve_exams.htm.

Saturday, June 10, 2000 9:00 AM J. S. Reynolds Community College, 1651 East Parham Road, Building B, Room 201. Pre-register with PAT WILSON, K4OW at 932-9424 or email at k4ow@arrl.net. Pat's test information web page is: <http://www.mindspring.com/~k4ow/hamtests.htm>

YOU READ IT HERE FIRST

The article titled "An Opinion" by Pat Wilson, K4OW, which appeared in the February issue of Solid Copy also appeared in the April issue of QST in the "Correspondence" Column, page 24.

HAMMING IT UP AT THE MOVIES

Saturday, April 29 Jerry, KF4UUJ, and I, KF4UUI, set up a special event radio station for the opening of the movie Frequency. I received an

email from Fredricksburg ARES/RACES EC Michael Lussier. He had received a request from a theater manager to set up an amateur radio station at the theater for the opening of the movie Frequency. I contacted Lee Milstead, publicity manager for Regal Cinemas at Virginia Center Commons and agreed to attempt to set up a station if I could get an antenna.

My only experience on HF has been in the Novice portion of 10 meters. Knowing that 10 meters can be unpredictable, advice from Elmer Tony, KC4AUF, supported the direction I was considering--20 meters. Jerry talked with Tony and he suggested constructing a 20-meter folded dipole. Jerry cut spacers from some PVC pipe we had. We measured and cut the wire and assembled the dipole in a matter of minutes.

We arrived at Regal Cinemas at Virginia Center Commons around 11:30 a.m. Saturday morning. A display was in place in the lobby in front of the ticket collection area. We had a table in the center of the display area to set up our station. To our left was another small desk with a vintage Hammerlund, a boom mike, some tubes and other parts. To our right was a display case with a variety of equipment provided by Mobile Music and a table with brochures from the Fire and Police Museum. On the wall in back of us was a large Frequency poster, several smaller ones, a sign requesting pictures of fathers and sons, and a 2-meter/440 beam.

We took our Icom 706 MK II since it is so easy to transport and will operate on 2-meters as well as HF. For display, we took a practice code key, a world map with call signs, my notebook with operating aids. Our 2-meter Diamond mag-mount antenna, was set on an air conditioner on the roof. Lee helped Jerry to string up the 20-meter antenna on the roof and run the coax from both antennas over the suspended ceiling and down to the rig.

The Icom 706 MKII proved an interesting contrast to the Hammerlund. I explained to several visitors that the Hammerlund was only half of the receive/transmit equipment, and that the operator had to tune each separately so that they would do their respective parts. The 706 does the work of both larger pieces and covers more frequencies. (Whether the 706 is a "real radio" is still debated by some.)

We alternated between using several local 2-meter repeaters and 20 meters. We apparently were not being heard north and south. We tried responding to several stations in Florida and some W1s without any luck. We did not make a lot of contacts but we did make some interesting ones.

One notable contact was with W9DK, the USS Cobia submarine (SS 245) in the Wisconsin Maritime Museum, Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Coincidentally, the movie U-571 was also playing, so we tied in with a second film as a bonus.

I heard one station say that their special event station for Frequency was supposed to be active on 15 meters, so I began searching for them. I never did find them, but I decided to try giving my call sign to see if I would be able to transmit on 15 meters, and found that the SWR was within acceptable limits. I heard a "JA" and called him. Someone passing by asked me if the Japanese station really could hear me. Although our signals were not the best, we exchanged information for several rounds before signals faded to where I could no longer copy.

Lee invited me to accompany him into the theater prior to the start of each show. He made a brief announcement about the various associated

activities that were going on. I also made a brief statement on behalf of RATS and described what we were trying to accomplish and a bit about amateur radio.

It was a learning experience for Jerry and me, our first attempt at setting up and operating a portable station. We both had a fantastic time and would welcome future opportunities. I now have a list of equipment and related items to take with me on future events. I plan to prepare some handouts to distribute explaining the purposes of amateur radio, operation modes, and ways that amateurs help during emergencies.

Marie, KF4UUI

Photo courtesy of Lee Milstead,
Regal Cinemas, Virginia Center Commons

FREQUENCY

Movie Review

Wonder where the signal goes when the aurora extends south to New York and HF is absorbed? Back and forth in time, according to the writers of Frequency.

A New York firefighter and ham in 1969 calls CQ on 15 meters and talks to his adult son in 1999. No QSL cards get exchanged, so no "Worked Three Decades" or "Defied All Time Zones" awards are made. Excusing some bad operating practices and suspending disbelief will reward you with a great adventure film.

Using time travel is not a new concept in film, but using "time communications" is. When the son saves his father by offering advice by radio, he sets a whole new history into effect. While father and son work on solving a crime, they create a new problem every time they solve a piece of the case.

With a clearly evil villain and two heroes that can only succeed by working as a "cross decades team" the tension is maintained throughout. All the cast exhibit strong character development, and Dennis Quaid is very good with regional dialect. The film shows solid family values, parental and filial devotion, and keeps the action moving.

Starring Dennis Quaid, and Jim Caviezel and featuring Shawn Doyle and Andre Braugher, Frequency provides entertainment, shows ham operators to be dynamic, and makes for a great break away from reality.

Take your favorite OM or YL (your own XYL please) and any junior operators as the film will be a real treat.

By Jerry Long, KF4UUJ

RULES & REGS

News from the ARRL and FCC

"BIG PROJECT" PLANS FROM HAYNIE

ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, has proposed a corporate-education partnership that would put amateur radio in the middle schools. The framework, Haynie told ARRL HQ, is being developed now and represents "nothing less than a bold investment in the future of Amateur Radio."

"The Big Project", under the guidance of ARRL Vice President Kay Craigie, WT3P, will try to raise \$1 million in corporate and foundation contributions, with the idea of developing an amateur radio curriculum and "to provide equipment to bring it to life in the classroom. "

"Haynie said the League does not want to reinvent the wheel. The Big Project hopes to borrow from the best of what's already in place in terms of programs that integrate Amateur Radio into the curriculum. As he sees it, Amateur Radio could play a role in helping to enhance knowledge of geography, math, electricity and electronics, and physics. "

"We've consulted with a lot of teachers throughout the United States to help us with the curriculum," he said. The initial pilot project could involve from 300 to 600 middle schools across the US. "It's time to do some bold things," Haynie declared.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, May 5 , 2000

HF HUMMING

For the first time in over 60 years, 13 WPM was not a requirement for full HF privileges. The first weekend after restructuring found many hams trying out their upgraded privileges.

ARRL Hudson Division Director Frank Fallon, N2FF, among others, urged veteran hams to put out the welcome mat to all newcomers. "They will need to learn things that have never been part of any FCC test," he said, advising generous help, tolerance of mistakes and to be "friendly and tactful when you offer suggestions for improvement"

Over the weekend of April 15, thousands of hams took advantage of special upgrade and paperwork processing VE sessions. Some sessions were held at the stroke of midnight. ARRL VEC alone had about 250 sessions registered for April 15. Some sessions had as many as 135 attendees.

Also heartening is the number of hams who went into overdrive in the weeks before April 15 to make their upgrade under the old rules.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, April 21 , 2000

NEVER TOO OLD

A VE from Maryland reported a moving experience from a VE test session conducted at the Greater Baltimore Hamboree and Computer-fest. The team tested 148 applicants who took 205 elements. "The high-light was when Charles A. Earp, Jr, W3DKT, came through the door. He had in his possession his 1933-issued license. At 83 years and one month he upgraded to a grand Extra by passing Elements 4B and 1C. His CSCE was signed by all 23 VEs who worked the session. What a day!"

John Creel, WB3GXW

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, April 21 , 2000

STATES-WIDE-RADIO

RT SYSTEMS

RT Systems in Huntsville has exited the ham radio business. Their remaining inventory was sold to Amateur Electronic Supply. RT Systems will concentrate on software development and sales.

INTERNET InSITEs

Amateur Radio, Electronics and Technology Related Websites

Frequency www.frequencymovie.com Pictures, cast, trivia and more.

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