



The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

Special points of interest:

- Project "Hello"
- January Program
- Short Skip
- Christmas Vacation
- Hamfests
- 2006 Award Winners
- 2007 NADXC Calendar

How to Join

- * Come to a club meeting;
- * or send in an application by mail (form on www.NADXC.org)
- * or call Jason Amos at (256)963-6833

Project "Hello" Grand Finale

By Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Hams at the Space and Rocket Center rang out 2006 by introducing amateur radio to six Space Camp classes of some sixteen students each. Under HARC's club call K4BFT, 25 HF QSOs (SSB, CW, and PSK-31) were conducted, MARS messages sent over VHF, and a 2 meter IRLP QSO held with Australian hams, all part of the culminating event for ARRL's "Hello" project.

The 100W HF and 50W VHF stations were set up in the new Space and Rocket Center education building, with plenty of room for participating hams, space camp students, and their instructors. Classes were scheduled for 30 minute presentations, each beginning by recounting the story of Reginald Fessenden's 1906 Christmas Eve and AM phone broadcast, explaining the historical significance, and links with today's communications milieu.

Around noon on Friday, December 29th, Melissa, KI4CWU and Tom, KG4CUY began assembling and erecting the 20 and 40 meter inverted vees on a temporary 40' mast. Robby, KG4PLK soon joined the fun. The stations were conveniently located next to a pair of doors with perfect clearance for runs of RG-8X. With perfect weather, everything was up and running by 2:00 pm—0200 UTC, the event's starting time.

Conditions on 20 meters were fairly poor that afternoon, but we soon contacted Dennis at W1F in Brant Rock, MA—Fessenden's 1906 QTH. This was one of the three "keystone stations", the others being W1AW, and GM3TNT at Fessenden's intended "other end" in Scotland. This was a warm-up QSO to say hello to W1F and let them know we would be calling again as space camp groups passed through. We did this five more times on 20 and 40, depending on conditions.

Groups did not come through in steady streams, leaving substantial periods of time to wander around on 15, 20, and 40 meters. On Saturday, 15 meters had a very nice period during which I played in the RAC winter contest, both SSB and CW, easily working all the southern tier Canadian provinces, and the maritimes. A class overheard me working CW while Andy, KG4PAE, and Rebekah, WG4Y gave them the Fessenden story. When this was finished and students came over to the station, many were interested in "those beeps" and with a little help, a few sent their names themselves—with the transmitter disabled.

We closed up shop Friday evening at 8:00, and began Saturday morning at 8:30. The first

See "Hello" on p. 2

Low-band Receiving Antennas

Program by Jerry Montgomery, K4SAV

Are you plagued by low-band noise? Tired of looking for that spark gap transmitter which seems to crank up every time you switch to 160m? Not certain you have the acreage for Beverages in all directions? The January program will be just what you need. Get to Ryan's around 6:15 for dinner, business meeting at 7:00, and program around 7:30.



The LongPath Staff

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Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

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Tom Homsley, N4WBS, Short Skip

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space camp session was treated to a QSO with W1AW on 20 meters SSB — with Steve as the op at the W1AW end. Rounding out the HF modes, we worked Spain and the Azores on PSK-31.

Dan, KI4PMW, served as our guide to VHF MARS and IRLP. Students were able to send messages through a carefully-controlled MARS traffic net, and several took advantage of this opportunity. Dan connected to an IRLP node in California through on which several Austrian ops were rag chewing. We joined in with this group, and space camp students seized the opportunity to ask the full range of questions about Australia. Thanks go out to Chris, VK3AML for fielding these questions, ranging from Australia's contributions to space exploration, to the brain capacity of vegetarian marsupials, including the priceless observation "it doesn't take many brains to sneak up on a carrot".

So by 2:00 Saturday afternoon, it was all over. Nearly a hundred space camp

students, from fourth graders through high school, had their first taste of ham radio—indeed the first taste, since based on their response to our questions, none had parents or siblings who were hams. Hams helping out at the Space and Rocket center included

KI4PMW	Dan
KG4PLK	Robby
WG4Y	Rebecca
WN4C	Angie
NN4C	Truman
KI4CWU	Melissa
AI4QT	Wil
KBOIW	John
KG4PAE	Andy
KG4CUY	Tom

A good time was certainly had by all, and it was I believe an educational success. Thanks to all the participants, at both ends of QSOs, and to those whose contributions I've failed to mention.

73,
Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

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Miscellanea

By the LongPath Staff

Congratulations **Jerry Montgomery, K4SAV**, for 261 DX Marathon countries, in 40 zones. Honorable mention goes to **Tom Russell, N4KG**, with 254 Marathon countries. Jerry has 10 more on the WARC bands, and Tom has 4 more, which don't count for DX Marathon 2006, but will in 2007.

Nancy Morris, K4JD mentioned at the Christmas party (and previously) that 2006 was the 40th anniversary of the NADXC. Who among current NADXC members were charter members? Perhaps we can put together a NADXC Retrospective.

Long-time ARRL Southeastern division director **Frank Butler, W4RH** has announced his retirement from the post effective December 31, 2007. Thank

you, Frank, for 28 years of service, including countless hamfests to which you have carried the ARRL banner.

Like "ham", "**lid**" is a term whose origin is shrouded in mystery. Many of us have at one time or another interpreted a poorly-spaced "so lid copy" as an imperative. In the January 1985 issue of QST, Doug DeMaw, W1FB, ex W1CER clarifies:

A "lid" is a poor operator, or one with a bad-sounding signal. The term comes from the early days of Amateur Radio and is rumored to have been inspired by a bad CW signal that sounded like the lid on a kettle of boiling water.

Morse Code (SK)

The FCC will modify the Amateur Radio Service rules, eliminating Morse code exam requirements. Announcement of the pending historic rule change arrived with no fanfare December 15 in an FCC public notice. A full-blown Report and Order (R&O) in the proceeding, WT Docket 05-235, followed December 19. The best estimate of when the Morse code requirement will go away officially is sometime in February – 30 days after the R&O appears in the Federal Register. The rule changes will grant limited HF operating privileges to Technician licensees on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. This is a great opportunity to encourage Technician licensees to upgrade. Once the new rules take effect, Technicians can upgrade to General by passing the Element 3 written exam and to Amateur Extra by also passing the Element 4 written exam. No Morse code test will be required.

For more information, visit the ARRL web site at www.arrl.org/fcc/morse/.

Do Something New This Year

If you're interested in modeling circuits, a free set of software tools is available at www.linear.com/designtools/softwareRegistration.jsp.

SwitcherCAD III includes LTSpice - a new SSPICE that was developed for modeling board level switching regulator systems. Incorporated into the new SPICE are circuit elements to model practical board level components. Capacitors and inductors can be modeled with series resistance and other parasitic aspects of their behavior without using sub-circuits or internal nodes. Also, a simulation circuit element was developed for power MOSFET's that accurately exhibits their usual gate

charge behavior without using sub-circuits or internal nodes. The January/February 2006 edition of QEX included a paper on the use of LTSpice along with example circuits and Spice models. The models can be downloaded at <http://www.arrl.org/qexfiles/> as [1x06Evans.zip](#).

There are also a lot of EZNEC files by L. B. Cebik from his "Antenna Options" column that appears in each issue of QEX.

Propagation

Annual average daily sunspot numbers for 2006 were running nearly 23 points lower than 2005, which is down 46 percent, and the annual average of daily solar flux was around 12 points, or 13 percent lower. When will Cycle 23 officially end and Cycle 24 begin? By the measure of smoothed sunspot numbers, Cycle 23 began in May 1996, although other measures of the solar cycle suggest the real onset of the cycle took place later in the year. The smoothed sunspot number then rose steadily, reaching a peak in April 2000 with a value of 121. Solar scientists suggest that Cycle 23 is much like Cycle 20, in the way it rose and fell. Cycle 20 took about four years to reach peak, and about seven years to descend to minimum. If the two are alike, it could mean that Cycle 23 will reach bottom in 2007. The peak of Cycle 24 could then come in 2011.

Frequency Reallocation

The change in the 75-meter phone band allocation also changes the frequencies available for RTTY. The ARRL RTTY Roundup is the first big RTTY contest under the new allocations. (ARRL Contest Rate Sheet)

January Contests

Lots of contests to keep you busy this month and take your mind off having to go back to work after a long Christmas vacation. More information concerning these events is provided in the January issue of QST and on the ARRL web site at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/months/jan.html>.

Another Shot at VU7

Lakshadweep Islands (VU7) hosted a team of operators in December. A second team of international operators sponsored by NIAR will be active as VU7RG for a ten-day period beginning January 15. Lots more information on this operation can be found on their website <http://www.vu7.in/>.

Contest University.

Registration is now open for the Dayton 2007 Hamvention Contest University. Go to <http://www.contestuniversity.com> and sign up fast. Slots are filling up and space is limited. Instructors include Jim K8MR, Dean N6BV, Randy K5ZD, Dick N6AA, Dave W9ZRX, Andy N2NT and Jeff N5TJ. This looks like a great reason to get to Dayton a day early!

Transition

Thanks to Myron W4UR for writing the column for the past five years and for his help and support during the transition to the new writer. You did a great job OM!

73 es gud dx . . . de N4WBS

January 13

Lawrenceville, GA (GARS)
Orlando, FL (UCF)

January 20

Fort Myers, FL

January 21

San Juan, PR (PRARL)

January 27

Arcadia, FL
Greenville, AL

February 9-11

Orlando, FL

February 17

Sebring, FL
Brooksville, FL

February 24

Dalton, GA

March 10

Port Charlotte, FL

March 17

Marietta, GA (Kennehoochee)
Fort Walton Beach, FL
Stuart, FL

March 24

Plantation, FL

March 31

New Port Richey, FL

April 7

Pace, FL (Floridatown)

April 15

Defuniak Springs, FL

April 21

Tampa, FL
Mobile, AL
Gainesville, FL

April 27-28

Atlanta, GA (SE VHF Conference)

April 28

Calhoun, GA

May 5-6

Birmingham, AL

May 5

Titusville, FL

May 12

Byron, GA

May 18-20

Dayton, OH

June 2

Atlanta, GA

June 2

Fort McCoy, FL

June 9

Fort Payne, AL

July 7

Gainesville (Lanierland), GA

July 13-14

Milton, FL

August 11

Ellijay, GA
Fort Pierce, FL

August 18-19

Huntsville, AL (ARRL National Convention)

August 25

Tampa, FL (Tampa ARC)

September 8

Oxford, AL

September 15

Dallas, GA

September 22

New Port Richey, FL
Orlando, FL (Shrine Club)

October 6

Jacksonville, FL
Plantation, FL

October 13-14

Melbourne, FL

October 13

Starke, FL
Augusta, GA

October 20

Rome, GA

November 3-4

Lawrenceville, GA

November 3

Sorrento, FL
Titusville, FL

November 11

Montgomery, AL

November 24

Okeechobee, FL

December 1-2

Palmetto (Tampa), FL

December 8

Ocala, FL

Note: Some of these dates are estimates, based on previous years' dates. Please send corrections to W4RH@arrl.org.

NADXC Officers

President: **Tom Duncan**, KG4CUY
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Director: **Vic Holland**, K4RVH
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NADXC 2006 Award Recipients

By the LongPath Staff

2006 NADXC awards were announced at the Christmas party, December 12th, 2006 at Green Hills Grille.

Once again, Tim Pearson, KU4J was the NADXC DXer of the Year recipient, based on votes cast at the November meeting. All these plaques could be a major structural component of his new QTH.

The David L. Reasoner award was given to Myron Manker, W4UR for his contributions over the years, not the least of which is Short Skip.

Congratulations, Tim and Myron. Your plaques have been sent via mail.

2007 NADXC Calendar

By the LongPath Staff

Happy New Year! Time to pass out the calendars.

The handy wallet version isn't yet available, but the LongPath staff hope this will tide you over. Black boxes highlight monthly club meetings, held each month except December at Ryan's beginning with dinner around 6:15, business meeting at 7:00, and program at 7:30. Red letter days in-

clude Field Day in June, and the Huntsville Hamfest/ARRL National Convention in August.

Some months have notes at the bottom, e.g., you are gently reminded that 2007 dues of \$15 are now payable. Send them to

Jason Amos
1323 Dan Ave.
Albertville, AL 35950

Similarly, expect a budget proposal in next month's LongPath, with a vote at next month's meeting.

Ample space is provided between the boxes and in the margins to write the names of programs you intend to present. Copies of such suitably annotated calendars may be submitted to any NADXC officer or director.

73, the LongPath Staff.

January 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
Dues Payable						

February 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			
Budget						

March 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

April 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

May 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

June 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
Field Day						

July 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

August 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Hamfest & Banquet						

September 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
Annual Mtg & Elections						

November 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
DXer of the Year						

January 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
Christmas Party						