



The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

Special points of interest:

- A Little Project
- Short Skip
- Volunteers Needed
- Banquet Tickets
- DX Contests
- DXers and Public Service?

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

A Little Project

By Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

I read an article entitled "The Novice License Helped Shape the '50s Ham Generation" dated July 28, 2006 in the Amateur Radio News column of the ARRL web site. It opines the Novice license opened ham radio, previously an adult's hobby, to youngsters by virtue of somewhat easier code and technical examinations, and the ability to take tests from local hams instead of traveling to the nearest field office, often hundreds of miles away.

Whatever the reason, there were clearly a great many ham licenses granted in the era of the original Novice grade, many of whom are very active hams to this day, and no small number are members of clubs like ours. This is in contrast to the rather high incidence of "ham dropouts" who receive a technician's license, but go no further in their assimilation into the larger ham community. Previous articles here and elsewhere have bemoaned and explored this phenomenon.

Around Field Day, I was introduced by George Howard, NW4G of Gigaparts to Karl Henry, AI4PJ, chairman of Engineering Technology at J. F. Drake State Technical College right here in Huntsville. Karl requires that those wishing to graduate from his

department take the Technician license exam unless they are already hams. Toward the end of April, his graduating class produced ten new members of the local technical workforce, each armed with a sheepskin, a ham license, and motivation. Although they are no longer his charges, he hopes they make good use of all three. Not wishing this to happen entirely by chance and the unaided efforts of his individual students, Karl has moved from preaching to meddling, and suggests we find a way to keep these new hams interested in ham radio—to their benefit and ours.

So here's the plan, born over fifteen minutes or so conversation among Karl, George, and myself. The three of us, with help graciously accepted from all who may be interested, will put together a series of sessions aimed at hitting the "look what I built with my own hands" hot button. Karl will invite his recent graduates to these sessions, which will perhaps be held weekly. In the end, attendees will get on the air with entirely homebrew equipment, possibly for their first QSOs.

Our thought is to begin with a fox hunt as the first goal after a few sessions: this will require 1) building a simple IDer to keep the unattended fox transmitter legal, and 2) building a directional

"A Little Project", Continued on p. 4

403T, KH8SI (and maybe others)

Program by Mike Maples, K4ADK

What happens when a new country emerges? How about when DXCC rules change? When do new QSOs count? Ask our own resident card checker Mike Maples, K4ADK, following this month's NADXC business meeting. Get to Ryan's around 6:15 next Tuesday for dinner. The business meeting begins at 7:00, and we should be ready for Mike around 7:30. See you there!



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Meeting began at 19:11 local, after Field Day pictures were shown.

Eighteen members and no visitors were present. Numerous attendees had worked new country Montenegro.

Treasurer's Report: 3278.13 on Deposit was approved. The Treasure apologizes for the delay in cashing checks.

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Motion was made to raffle off a DX World Map for the banquet. The proceeds would be split between the NADXC and going for the cost of the Peter 1 DXpedition. The motion was made by Chuck Lewis and seconded by John Winter. Further discussion was instead of keeping the audience limited it was suggested to give it away at the banquet, but leave it available for pickup only on Sunday if someone wanted to buy chances and was not attending the banquet. Motion carried.

Vic Holland made the suggestion that all the money go toward the Peter 1 cost if the banquet was positive and spilt if negative. This motion was tabled until the next meeting.

Chuck was putting together a column for the Long Path, but ran short on time. It may appear in a latter issue [*in fact, this issue—see p. 6—Ed.*]. The topic was related to the severe hurricane season last year and that we should be getting prepared for this year. Chuck mentioned that the skills of the DXer and Contesters could be used in times of emergencies as we are proficient in getting a contact and message through. Chuck passed out a sheet containing a list of net frequencies of interest to the DXers. These included HF as well as local VHF

nets. See Chuck if you are interested in more info.

Ron Shaffer presented a short demo of the new D-Star radio and its capabilities. Ron's demo included some recorded audio comparing the difference from the same location in both analog and digital modes. The digital modes were quite clear as compared to the voice embedded in static from analog. Ron also mentioned some details about the data portion of the D-Star network. For more information, please check out the following link:

<http://www.icomamerica.com/amateur/dstar/dstar2.asp>

Michael Werner asked Tom before the meeting to present to the club a proposal to become affiliated with the Courage Handi-Ham System. This is an organization formed in Minnesota, which aims to aid in removing obstacles to make it easier for those who have disabilities. Michael is expected to provide further details at the next meeting where we will vote on becoming affiliated. For more information please see: <http://www.handiham.org/article.php?sid=56>

Also brought up was a chance to sponsor the Young Ham of the Year Award. It would mostly be us purchasing a plaque for the recipient. Motion to do so was made by Bill Grimwood and seconded by Nancy Morris. Members in attendance voted in favor of sponsorship.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason
KD4BJW

Another DXCC Entity!

Right on the heels of the Republic of Montenegro having been added as the 336th DXCC entity comes Swains Island as the 337th. Pretty unusual to have back-to-back additions like this. Hopefully, many of our NADXC members have been able to work KH8SI that represented the initial group operators on the island. Even though their period of operation was rather short, it did enable lots of folks to immediately log the newest entity.

Operating Courtesy – Or Lack Thereof

Concerning the KH8SI Swains Island operation, permit me to add an “editorial” comment regarding some observations made as I listened to them on the bands. Maybe it was the compelling urge to get the newest entity in the log, but I was struck by the chaos that was often present. Typical examples were: (1) people who apparently had no idea what was going on and called on KH8SI’s transmitting frequency rather than his listening frequency; (2) the “frequency police” were out in force to fend them off, often making the situation even worse; (3) stations that wondered what the pile-up was all about would break in asking what his call sign was; (4) a couple of

KH8SI ops appeared to have little or no experience in a fast-paced operating environment; and (5) quite a bit of obviously deliberate QRM was contributed from sources unknown. It’s not the first time I’ve noticed this sort of situation, but it is still disappointing to see it when it occurs.

Intentional Grounding!

No, it’s not a football penalty. The August issue of QST includes an informative article on the subject of grounding. Written by Joel Hallas (W1ZR), QST’s Technical Editor, the article deals with some fundamental grounding issues facing every amateur’s station. It’s not an in-depth treatment of everything about grounds, but it does reacquaint us with the important basic considerations.

Have an Extra Class License – Want a Nice Certificate to Show It?

I’ve mentioned this before, but if you’d be interested in obtaining a handsome certificate that evidences your Amateur Extra class license, the ARRL has one. To learn more about it, take a look at www.arrl.org/awards. It is suit-

able for framing and looks great on the wall.

A Nostalgic Look Back

As one of many “mature” hams who has been licensed for a long time, I particularly enjoyed an article that recently appeared on the ARRL’s website. It reflects on the experiences of those of us who were first licensed as “Novices” in the 1950s. You can find it at www.arrl.org/news/features/2006/07/28/1/?nc=1, and I consider it very worthwhile reading.

See You at the Hamfest

The Huntsville Hamfest is now only two weeks away. Plan to attend if you can. The DX Banquet should be especially interesting this year, since Bob Allphin (K4UEE) will be our guest speaker. We’ll get a true insider’s perspective of the 3YØX Peter I DXpedition as only Bob can provide. Order your banquet tickets ASAP from Jason Amos, NADXC Treasurer. Hope to see you there!

73 es gud dx . . . de W4UR

Officer, Director, and Nominating Committee Volunteers Needed – Last Notice!

By the LongPath Staff

Check your calendars. It’s August, and August brings with it not only hamfest, but as the NADXC constitution and bylaws require, the need for the board of directors to appoint the nominating committee.

Elections are held at the October Annual Meeting, and the newly elected officers and directors take office at the December meeting. The Nominating Committee, in consultation with pro-

spective candidates, produces a list of candidates which is reported to the board in time for publication in the September LongPath, and presentation at the September regular meeting. September is next month!

Of course, the nominating committee’s best efforts are stymied if prospective officers and directories cannot be found. Volunteers for these positions will be welcomed by the nominat-

ing committee. Should there be multiple volunteers for an office or director slot, we can be most accommodating. Believe it or not, there was a time in recorded history when HARC had a horse-race for president.

Volunteer for an officer or director slot, or for the Nominating Committee. You will have a hand in determining the direction of the NADXC in coming years.

A Little Project (continued from p. 1)

antenna. The fox hunt will use HTs not produced by the attendees. This is just for starters: they will build two simple but important pieces of equipment, and learn a little about antenna patterns during the hunt.

Subsequent session will build a transmitter, and then a receiver. Because these technician-class licensees have no HF privileges, the equipment will be VHF or UHF, something George and I will wrestle with, to find simple but reproducible circuits. In the end, armed with a transmitter, receiver (kept separate in case the fox hunt bug bites hard), and antenna, they will have a simplex QSO with one of the volunteers. No, we will not have given them a high quality radio, but we hope they will see the magic of ham radio—whether that be building equipment or time on the air—is all within their grasp.

As you see, there are a million blanks to be filled in and holes to be plugged as this plan is fleshed out. Coming up

with simple-to-construct VHF or UHF FM phone equipment will be a real challenge. Feeding enough carrots to keep the interest level high will be crucial—this is after all discretionary time from all parties.

This batch of ten new hams is only one year's crop: Karl intends to stick with the license requirement, so there will be more each year.

If you have suggestions on how this program might be run, ranging from general direction and scope down to specific circuits or antennas, we welcome your input. If you would like to help out, there will be a place for you. Contact me at duncant1@ds-s.com. Look for periodic updates as things progress.

73,

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Hamfest Banquet Tickets

By the LongPath Staff

Do you have your NADXC Hamfest banquet tickets? Those little white things, you remember. If not, Jason would be glad to hear from you at 256-963-6833 or kd4bjw@bellsouth.net. Make sure to bring them with you to the banquet—they're needed for door prizes. Jason will have tickets at next Tuesday's meeting, and until the next Monday, August 14th. At that time we must commit the number of meals to the caterer.

We need to sell about ten more tickets to reach our banquet break-even point. Do your part, and tell other hams. Tickets are a steal at \$29 per person.

While the menu (sirloin tips and chicken), date (Hamfest Saturday, August 19th), time (6:30 pm) and place (Von Braun Center Ballet Room) are the same as last year, presenter Bob Allphin, K4UEE assures us his program "3Y0X—the Peter I DXperience" does not recount a cruise ship-style DXpedition to a friendly nearby island.

Come find out why Peter I isn't activated every year. It's a great way to rest your legs after a day of forums, bargain hunting, and drooling over new equipment.

Robby Lock, KG4PLK

Alabama YH0TY

Robby Lock, KG4PLK has been named Alabama Young Ham of the Year. Currently Secretary of the Huntsville Amateur Radio Club, he has been active in emergency communications and public service events for several years. After a recent upgrade to General class, Robby has already plied the HF airwaves, where his first QSO was DX!

The Alabama Young Ham of the Year award is sponsored this year by NADXC, and will be given at the Huntsville Hamfest.

Congratulations Robby!

2007 ARRL National Convention

It's official! The 2007 ARRL National Convention will be held at next year's Huntsville Hamfest, August 18-19. This is a great catch for Huntsville through the diligent efforts of those who work behind the scenes to bring us the hamfest. Their work supporting the convention will be more intense and begin earlier than usual.

Thanks to the dozens of local hams involved every year with hamfest, and with superb coordinating effort, one of the country's foremost hamfests is in our own back yard.

Congratulations, OMs and YLs behind Huntsville Hamfest.

Your Ad

can appear in next month's Long-Path. Contact the Advertising Department at duncant1@ds-s.com.

DX Contests

By Chuck Lewis, N4NM

European HF Championship, (CW/SSB), 160-10 Meters

Aug. 5, 1200Z - 2359Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus last two digits of first year licensed

See Page 88, Aug. QST

WAE CW DX Contest, (CW), 80-10 meters

Aug 13, 0000Z to Aug. 14, 2359Z

Exchange: RST plus serial No.

See page 88, August QST

SARTG WW RTTY Contest, 80-10 meters

Aug 19, 0000Z to 0800Z and 1600Z to 2400Z; Aug 20, 0800Z to 1600Z

Exchange: RST and serial No.

See page 88, Aug. QST

YO-DX Contest (CW/SSB), 80-10 meters

Aug. 26, 1200Z to Aug. 27, 1200Z

Exchange: RST and serial No.

See page 89, August QST

OTHERS:

TARA Grid Dip Shindig

0000Z-2400Z, Aug 5

SARL HF Phone Contest

1230Z-1630Z, Aug 6

National Lighthouse Weekend QSO Contest

0001Z, Aug 5 to 2359Z, Aug 6

Keyman's Club of Japan Contest

1200Z, Aug 20 to 1200Z, Aug 21

SARL HF CW Contest

1230Z-1630Z, Aug 27

SCC RTTY Championship

1200 Aug 26 to 1159 Aug 27

All Asian DX Contest, Phone

0000Z, Sep 2 to 2400Z, Sep 3

Russian RTTY WW Contest

0000Z-2400Z, Sep 2

RSGB SSB Field Day

1300Z, Sep 2 to 1300Z, Sep 3



DARC 10-Meter Digital Contest

1100Z-1700Z, Sep 3

Dates & times often change or are misprinted in the journals; beware.

Chuck, N4NM

NADXC Officers

President: **Tom Duncan**, KG4CUY

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Vice President: **Bob DePierre**, K8KI

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Secretary/Treasurer: **Jason Amos**, KD4BJW
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Director: **Mike Maples**, K4ADK

mmaples9@comcast.net or 256-534-6563

Director: **Vic Holland**, K4RVH

k4rvh@arrl.net or 256-721-9106

NADXC Booth Sitters Needed

By the LongPath Staff

Hamfests are tough work. Hosts start planning months in advance, and they're not done until all the bills are paid. Forum presenters must develop, organize, and practice their presentations. Flea market, vendor, and dealer participants have a strictly-constrained period in which to unload, set up, move the goods, tear down, and get out. And attendees pound ruts in the hard concrete (thank goodness for the carpeting!) searching for bargains and toting out the booty.

If you fall into any of these categories, take heart: the NADXC booth is an oasis amidst the mania. Booth sitters will occupy a position of awe and respect behind the white-draped table, where our own Mike Maples, K4ADK,

will be checking cards. From this position they may occasionally be called upon to answer questions about the club, or to proudly display the NADXC Honor Roll plaques.

The NADXC booth will again be centrally located near the ARRL, HARC, NARA, and Repeater Council booths, so sitters may enjoy lively conversation with the other booths.

Michael Werner, KF4BOG, and Steve Werner, AG4W have already signed up for the 1:00–2:00 pm Saturday slot, but other slots are still available. Sign up for yours today! Contact KG4CUY at duncant1@ds-s.com or 705-2147 with your preference.

DXers and Public Service?

By Chuck Lewis, N4NM

My experience with Katrina and its siblings last summer caused me to do a little thinking about the Amateur Service and why we're so successful in getting the job done "When All Else Fails". The answer, of course, has several aspects, but the thing that kept popping up is a unique characteristic that goes back to the very basic charter of the Amateur Service: Part 97 has always acknowledged two components of the Amateur Service: the hobby component and the public service component. We've always accepted that as a natural pairing; but when you think about it in the context of recent events, it stands out as a brilliant stroke made many years ago by folks who were either true visionaries or made some darned good guesses!

Imagine what the amateur service would be today without the justification for its existence provided by a great public service track record over the years. If we think we're fighting to retain frequency allocations, and battling restrictive antenna covenants now, imagine the situation if our local and national image weren't supported by a strong positive perception of past and potential public service. On the other

side, it's clear that the hobby component has driven the Amateur Radio marketplace to produce equipment with frequency and mode diversity; and with backwards compatibility, giving us the interoperability that's crucial to maintenance of communications in a disaster situation. It's this symbiotic relationship between the hobby and public service components that stands out as the one of the key factors in our longevity. We need to make certain we maintain that balance as we compete for spectrum and community support.

Several years ago, when a neighbor asked me whether I used my antenna for "those emergency things", I had a hard time answering...I stayed mostly on HF and rarely used the local repeaters; but the question was a wake-up call. Soon I found that there were HF nets that activated as needed, and some, like the Maritime Mobile Service Net, that had regularly scheduled sessions. Last year during hurricane season there were scores of HF nets active, handling real emergency traffic. As DXers and contesters, we consider ourselves to be among the elite operators in the Amateur Service. Those skills,

coupled with our experience in getting the message through, were critical then and are needed now! We can actively support the system by periodically checking in to these nets and by lending our experience, skills and leadership to our local emergency organizations. Let's not let "the other guys" set the standards!

The table below is a short list of HF and VHF/UHF nets that are active locally, regionally and nationally. Take time to check in occasionally, especially to our local nets; they really need check-ins during weather events to maintain a good geographical distribution of stations around our area. There's no need to be a member of anything... it's just like DX: listen to the net control station, follow his or her lead, and use your noggin!

The next time my neighbor asks whether I use my station for "those emergency things", I'll be able to say, "Yes!"

HOW ABOUT YOU?

HF & VHF Emergency Frequencies

National

3965.0 (LSB) Alabama Emergency Net
3950.0 North Florida Emergency Net
3980.0 Tennessee Emergency Net
3862.5 Mississippi Emergency Net
3975.0 Georgia Emergency Net
14265.0 Salvation Army SATERN Net M-F 1400
14300.0 Maritime Mobile Service Net Daily 1600
14325.0 Hurricane Watch Net, primary freq, amateur and govt, ****ALWAYS MONITOR THIS ONE**** but unless invited, do not xmit!

Local

Frequency	PL	Description
146.94	100.0	Madison County Emergency Response Net/ARES Net (Training on Thur., 7:30 local)
147.18	100.0	Madison County Emergency Response Net/ BACKUP
147.22	136.5	Madison County RACES Net
147.24	82.5	North Alabama/Southern Middle Tennessee SKYWARN Net (Huntsville repeater)