



THE JUNKBOX



The Official Newsletter of The Albemarle Amateur Radio Society

Post Office Box 1217

January 20, 2005

Elizabeth City, NC 27906-1217

<http://www.qsl.net/taars>

WA4VTX Repeaters 146.655/444.300 PL 131.8 Packet 145.710

Christmas Party a Success

I would like to thank Cynthia and everyone who helped her for making the Christmas Party a big success. We had a nice turnout, and everyone who came had a good time. Although Dave was unable to attend and fulfill his usual role as Santa Claus, Albert graciously filled in at the last minute and passed out the gifts in the raffle. The highlight of my evening was presenting Ham of the Year to Ed Leicester KG4QMI. *Ron N4WYR*

Next TAARS Meeting

Our next regularly scheduled TAARS meeting is slated for Thursday, January 20, 2005, at 7:30 PM at the College of the Albemarle, somewhere near room C109. **Our dinner location is changing.** We will now meet at the restaurant beside Office Max on Halstead Blvd. This is the old location of Best Steaks in Elizabeth City and we will meet at the same 6 PM time. **This will be an important meeting. The PARK (Pasq. Amateur Repeater Klub) will also meet and there will be several items of business to discuss.**

Next Exam Session Scheduled for January 22, 2005

The next TAARS sponsored Amateur Radio test session is scheduled for January 22, 2005. This is the normal Saturday after our monthly meeting. The session will be from 9:00-12 Noon and the location will be in or near Room 110 in C-Building at the College of the Albemarle Dave, N1DP Test Liaison.

A Word From the President

Well folks, it is time for our January meeting. One of our main orders of business will be the proposed merger of PARKS with TAARS. Please be ready for discussion and questions. I finally got a working HF antenna put up in mid December, and it is working great. I've made quite a few RTTY and PSK31 contacts, although I was not able to work the RTTY contest the weekend of the 8th due to having the grandkids here for the weekend. But I did work a PSK31 contest near the end of the year, and there was also a small RTTY contest that weekend.. I have been using the DXLab suite of amateur software, and still like it. It includes a program which does PSK31/RTTY/CW/Voice all through the soundcard (transmit only on the last two modes), a logging program with built in

awards tracking which also supports eQSL and LoTW, a QSL route program, a propagation forecaster, a DXCluster program with Telnet capability, a DX map program, a rig control program, and a program to launch and terminate the rest of them. All the programs interact with each other, for example, clicking on a DXCluster spot will tune the rig to that frequency, display the location on the world map, and fill in the beginning part of the logging sequence. They used to be on QSL dot NET, but have recently moved to the KY1V web site. The URL is <http://dxlab.ky1v.com>

See you all at the meeting,
73,
Ron N4WYR

Dates set for NC QSO Party.

This years NC QSO Party will be held beginning on Feb 27 at 1700z and ending on the 28th at 0300z. There are categories for SO, Mobile and Club stations and there is a 100 watt output limit. Bands to use are from 80m – 10m. You can find more information a www.w4nc.com. Support our state QSO Party!!!

Around the Bands

Wow. What a last couple of months. Since my last column, I've managed to finish WAS on 40m and also on 10m. 40 meters was a struggle. Many late nights were spent trying to work west coast stations after the band went long and also trying to work as many contests as possible to pick the 50 states needed. But 10m's was another story. I have never spent much time on 10m in the past and as of the end of Sept., I had only logged two contacts. With a lot of luck and decent band conditions, I was able to work all states in just a little less than 4 months. Now, if I can just get all the cards back in, we can concentrate on 80m, the last band needed for 5 Band WAS.

A look at the log shows some good DX contacts on 10m and 15m during the CQ WW contest as well as at other times. Greece, Panama, Liechtenstien, Anguilla, the Azores and the Marshall Islands are just a few of the newest DX entities to find there way to my logbook.

6m has also been reasonably active. Activity seems to pick up in the Fall and typically lasts until January. There was even a couple of Aurora openings thanks to some X-class solar flares. Openings to Canada and New England, and also from MN

down to TX have occurred several times in December and early January.

And don't forget the **NC QSO Party** slated for Sunday Feb. 27 beginning at 1700z (12pm). Support our states "Party" by getting on the air and making some contacts. And while you're at it, make a New Years Resolution to spend more time on the bands. It's a great hobby, full of many interesting things to do. From 6m to 160, from ATV to satellites, from RTTY to PSK or just calling CQ and rag-chewing, "This stuff is fun"!!!
Ed/KG4AMI

Columbia Repeater News

The Columbia Tower has seen many coming and goings as of late. Mike, KB4TOH, has been busy installing a new VHF repeater and adjusting levels to the VHF, UHF backbone/link and to the microwave link. The "old" Kenwood VHF repeater will be going to Greenville. After a few ups and downs on the elevator and with the levels, Mike has the VHF sounding good and the UHF audio just a tad weak if listening directly from it. Up and down the links, the backbone sounds pretty good. The VHF has had the new PA installed for the last month, replacing the failed Motorola PA. As always, we are looking for signal and quality checks from all parts of the service area. Mike hopes to improve all the audio on the linking system as have many repeater operators on the linking system have been trying to do.

After an ice storm during the holidays, the wind meter on the platform lost a cup. Randy, W4HAT was kind enough to donate a replacement and it was put back up last week. The original, donated by Greg, N4QLD has "survived" the elements at 1200 feet for the last two years. You can hear the winds and temperature at 1200 feet on the tower by punching in, on VHF, 83505 DTMF. Codes 83501 thru 05 give a variety of reports including wind, high/low temperatures inside the cabinet and outside.

ATV continues to be lots of fun during the winter months. Especially on cold clear days and nights, the latest event is "Visual DX" for our small band of ATV'ers. The tower camera is getting a workout. Just a reminder; it's pretty easy to tune in. We are often talking into the ATV repeater on 145.750. You can hear the audio from the repeater output on 431.750. Your cable ready TV tuned to cable channel 58, connected to a vertical 440 antenna is a good start to see a picture. Elevation is important, as is good quality coax. A Yagi antenna is best. We are getting good results at about 30 miles away using Yagis, but some signal can be received using a dual band vertical.

Packet and APRS are also up in the cabinet. APRS can be heard on 144.39. The Kenwood mobile radio donated by William, WB4YNF and set up by David, KE4MIZ, has helped improve our APRS digi "ears." The packet link to Raleigh and the Outer Banks is holding strong since Herman, NO4Y replaced the microwave side TNC with the LAST TNC from his cupboard. TAARS purchased an ICOM IC-207 last year for the packet backbone. It is doing very well running on the packet backbone frequency of 445.900.

The next meeting of the Columbia Emergency Repeater Association (CERA) and the ARES areas 1 and 2 meeting will be 12 February 2005 at 1000 AM at the Masonic Lodge, on RT

64 just West of Columbia, NC Talk-in on 146.835. 73, *Dave, NIDP*

Soldering Tips

Here I am, proudly working on my first soldering repair:



Soldering is one of those skills all Hams are going to have to master some day. For readers who feel a bit intimidated by it all, here are a few "Solder Tips" to make your job easier.

1. Select the right size soldering iron for the size of the job.
2. Select the right temperature.
3. Always keep a clean tip.
4. Use an electronic flux, rosin based, not pipe solder flux.
5. Use the correct solder. Don't use pipe solder.
6. Always wear safety glasses
7. Clean off excess flux from your work.

In a future meeting, I will bravely demonstrate a few "soldering tips" and hope to not publicly butcher another PL-259 connector. *Dave, NIDP*

Event Calendar

- Jan. 22 – **VE Test session at COA**
- Jan. 22-24 – ARRL January VHF sweepstakes
- Jan. 29-30 – CQWW 160m Contest
- Feb. 5 – Minnesota QSO Party
 - N. New York QSO Party
 - New Hampshire QSO Party
 - 10-10 Winter QSO Party – Phone
 - Delaware QSO Party
 - Vermont QSO Party
- Feb. 12 – CERA/ARES Mtg. In Columbia
 - Louisiana QSO Party
 - OMISS QSO Party
- Feb. 19 – ARRL International DX Contest