

VOX



HUNTSVILLE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 45, Number 2

February, 2005

Huntsville Amateur Radio Club Information

Club Officers

President:

Woodie Zeigler, K8GNM
tzeiglerjr@aol.com

Vice President:

John C. Hilliard, K4JCH
k4jch@aol.com

Secretary:

Rolf Goedhart K4RGG.
k4rgg@arrl.net

Treasurer:

Heath Thorson, KC4HRX, 489-1240
hthorson@knology.net

The club's address is Box 423, Huntsville, Ala. 35804. Meetings are held each Friday night at 7:30 P.M. at the American Red Cross Building, 1101 Washington Street. Dues are \$12.00 per year, family memberships are \$15.00 per year. The club maintains a Web Site at "http://www.harc.net"

The North Alabama Repeater Association operates repeaters on 146.34 / 146.94, 147.78 / 147.18, 223.34 / 224.94 and 448.5 / 443.5. NARA dues are \$16.00 per year and may be sent to NARA at P.O. Box 18941 Huntsville, AL 35804-8941.

The club's packet radio interest group, HUNTSPAC, maintains an extensive packet network for the Huntsville area. Dues for use of this network are \$15.00 per year, and can be paid through the HARC Secretary-Treasurer listed above.

The club's ATV special interest group, TVATV operates an ATV repeater. It's input frequency is 439.25 MHz and its output is 421.25 MHz. A voice coordination repeater is operated with output frequency of 145.33 MHz, input 600 kHz down.

The Vox is published the third Friday of each month except for August. Editor of the Vox is Frank Emens, W4HFU, 3714 Lakewood Circle, Huntsville, Ala. 35811 or femens@hiwaay.net. Material of interest to the HARC membership should be submitted to the editor by the second Friday of the month of

"Vox", Vol 45, Nr. 2, February, 2005
A Newsletter published monthly except for August by the Huntsville Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 423, Huntsville, AL 35804

From The Veep

On February 25th Ernie Blair WA4BPS is going to treat us to a tour of the E-9-1-1 Center. The Meeting will be held there at 7:00 PM in the conference room. Ernie has told me some of the things is going to demonstrate for us. It sounds interesting, but I'm going to leave it for a surprise. Just in case you don't know where it is, take Research Park Blvd. ("Rideout Road" for those us who still remember it as such) to Oakwood Road. You should see their tower and a half covered building on the West side of the road as you approach Oakwood Road.

I had put in the VOX sometime back that Ron Rateno from ICOM would be giving us a radio demo in February. I sent an email to Ron trying to set this up. I got a reply back from ICOM letting me know Ron had resigned and no one was currently holding his position. If anyone knows what happened to Ron please email me and whether or not you want me to share the information.

I do have some more good stuff lined up for March. Most of you know about the NARA's part 2 of getting help with repeater runners. What only a few of you may know is that Chris Reed KF4MMF is gladly going to give us a tour of the EMA. Please check the March issue of the VOX for more information. For those that might be planning a vacation in March, March 4th - NARA Runners and March 11th for EMA.

k4jch@arrl.net

Nara Notes:

This is my first NARA Notes as the newly elected president. Ron W4VM has done a great job as the past president. This was his second time around in this position. I applaud him for his endless efforts for NARA. It will be hard to fill this position in his place. I appreciate everyone's support and look forward to an exciting year for NARA. We also appreciate Gary Dion N4TXI stepping forward to fill the vacant position I left as Technical Advisor. He has al-

ready been busy brewing up some neat projects for NARA. Finally, thanks again to John Zeiler, Todd Freestone and Charlie Emerson for rounding out the crew for this year.

We held our first 'repeater training' class on January 7th. Attendance was great and we look forward to working with those that signed up for the new 'repeater technical committee'. The follow-on training is scheduled for March 4th. This will be specifically on GE Master II radios, our standardized radio of choice. You don't want to miss this one, as it shows you everything you need to know about these radios. Thanks to those that accepted the plea for help and accepted the four 'cable kits'. These will help us construct our repeater systems and remote voter link radios.

We have another busy year ahead of us. First and foremost is to get 146.94 back on track with a new antenna and feedline. We have some exciting plans

CAVEC License Exams

Exam sessions are held at 9:00 AM the first Saturday of each month unless a holiday causes the session to be delayed for one week.

*Upcoming sessions are:
Saturday, February 5
Saturday, March 5*

For information contact:

*Larry Frost, KR4GU, 864-3244
kr4gu@hamfest.org*

Or

*Don Tunstill, W4NO, 536-3904
dontunstill@hamfest.org*

Exam Sessions are held the 3rd Saturday of each month at 1:00. In even numbered months they are held at the Athens EOC. In odd numbered months they are held in Madison at Intergraph, Building 15

*For information contact Bob Hudson,
W4RKH, 461-7905*

in the works. It will be an expensive project and we'll have to watch our budget closely this year.

As many of you have heard, we have a new remote receiver for 146.94 in the testing phase. Currently it is located in South Huntsville at Ron's QTH on a 50' tower. It fills in our south 'rf black hole' surprising well. To use it, just program another memory channel in your radio with a 107.2 Hz PL tone instead of the regular 100 Hz tone. By using 107.2 Hz, you'll activate the remote receiver which is UHF linked back to our main site. Give it a try and see if it works for you. This hardware will eventually be deployed to a mountain top location. Behind this we have plans this year to complete the hardware for a second remote receiver which will cover another hole to the east of town towards Scottsboro.

I enjoyed the eyeball qso's with many of you at the Jan. 14th kick off meeting. I would have liked to have visited with more of you in the short time available.



Ron Shaffer, W4VM (standing) and Greg Sarratt, W4OZK at the joint HARC/NARA meeting

Thanks to all who have supported and continue to support NARA!

73 Ralph Hogan W4XE

The Giggle Box

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYBODY THAT WAS BORN IN FEBRUARY!!

A note from Giggles: While writing my article, I ran across an email that was sent to me. It reminded me of the SK's and/or their relatives in the club that we have lost in 2004. Sometimes I hear of a friend that is sick at home or in the hospital. I say that I'm going to go see them and then I hear that it is too late. It really doesn't make a good day when you really had good intentions. Drop whatever you are doing and either make a call or go by for a few minutes. You could really be the turning point in their lives.

I have found in the past that you can learn a lot from people that are older than you. It's not book smarts that they have, its EXPERIENCE. Just listen! One day you might wish that you had. Re-

| HARC ACTIVITY CALENDAR FOR February, 2005 | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| 30 | 31 | 1 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33 | 2 SE Linked Repeater Net at 2000 on 147.240 | 3 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000 | 4 HARC Meeting | 5 *TWIAR CAVEC Exams 0900 at Red Cross Bldg. |
| 6 | 7 | 8 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33 | 9 SE Linked Repeater Net at 2000 on 147.240 | 10 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000 | 11 HARC Meeting | 12 *TWIAR |
| 13 | 14 | 15 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33 | 16 SE Linked Repeater Net at 2000 on 147.240 | 17 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000 | 18 HARC Meeting Vox & Social Night | 19 *TWIAR |
| 20 | 21 | 22 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33 | 23 SE Linked Repeater Net at 2000 on 147.240 | 24 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000 | 25 HARC Meeting At E911 Cenmter for tour starting at 7:00 | 26 *TWIAR |
| 27 | 28 | 1 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33 | 2 SE Linked Repeater Net at 2000 on 147.240 | 3 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000 | 4 HARC Meeting | 5 *TWIAR CAVEC Exams 0900 at Red Cross Bldg. |

*TWIAR -- This Week In Amateur Radio, +442.775 PL203.5 Hz 8 PM Every Saturday
 ATV Net @ 20:00, Check in on 145.33, Tuesdays
 Southeast Linked Repeater Net on +442.775, PL 203.5 Hz @ 20:00, Wednesdays
 Madison County Emergency Net on 34/94 @19:30, Thursdays
 SkyWarn Net on 147.24 @ 20:00, Thursdays

GigaParts®

www.gigaparts.com

☑ Huntsville's Only Amateur Radio Store

Visit our
new web
page for
updated
pricing!











Lowest prices, best service!

4925 University Drive # 140 (256) 535-4442
The Gallery Shopping Center 10 - 7 Mon-Sat, 1 - 4 Sun

Come see us next to Chili's!

member, you will be an senior citizen too one day. After raising a child and watching my granddaughters grow, I realize now that when a child needs your attention, the TV (or the radio) can wait. It really make their day when you reach for the remote and turn it off because they know that they have your full attention. Currently, I am helping at school with a class of 3-4 year olds and you have to really listen and you will hear them say the funniest things.

Remember, they are only little for a little while. Now for a happy note. Since this is the February issue of the VOX, I hope everyone does something nice for someone they love. Happy Valentines Day!!

A Joke or Two

*** KILLER BISCUITS WANTED FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER (the actual AP headline) Linda Burnett, 23, a resident of San Diego, was visiting her in-laws and while there went to a nearby supermarket to pick up some groceries. Several people noticed her sitting in her car with the windows rolled up and with her eyes closed, with both hands behind the back of her

head. One customer who had been at the store for a while became concerned and walked over to the car. He noticed that Linda's eyes were now open, and she looked very strange. He asked her if she was okay, and Linda replied that she'd been shot in the back of the head, and had been holding her brains in for over an hour. The man called the paramedics, who broke into the car because the doors were locked and Linda refused to remove her hands from her head. When they finally got in, they found that Linda had a wad of bread dough on the back of her head. A Pillsbury biscuit canister had exploded from the heat, making a loud noise that sounded like a gunshot, and the wad of dough hit her in the back of her head. When she reached back to find out what it was, she felt the dough and thought it was her brains. She initially passed out, but quickly recovered and tried to hold her brains in for over an hour until someone noticed and came to her aid. Linda is a blonde, but I'm certain that's not relevant.

***The Importance of Time A young man learns what's most important in life from the guy next door.

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College, girls, career, and life itself got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams. There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past and often no time to spend with his wife and son. He was working on his future, and nothing could stop him.

Over the phone, his mother told him, "Mr.. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday." Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days. "Jack, did you hear me?"

"Oh sorry, Mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but I honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said.

"Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce about the many days you spent over 'his side of the fence' as he put it," Mom told him.

"I loved that old house he lived in," Jack said.

"You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said.

"He's the one who taught me carpentry," he said. "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important. Mom, I'll be there for the funeral," Jack said. As busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before he had to return home, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time. Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension, a leap through space and time. The house was exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture.... Jack stopped suddenly. "What's wrong, Jack?" his Mom asked.

"The box is gone," he said.

"What box?" Mom asked.

"There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever tell me was 'the thing I value most,'" Jack said. It was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered it, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken it. "Now I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said. "I better get some sleep. I have an early flight home, Mom."

It had been about two weeks since Mr. Belser died. Returning home from work one day Jack discovered a note in his mailbox. "Signature required on a package. No one at home. Please stop by the main post office within the next three days," the note read. Early the next day Jack retrieved the package. The small box was old and looked like it had been mailed a hundred years ago. The handwriting was difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention. "Mr. Harold Belser" it read.

Jack took the box out to his car and ripped open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope. Jack's hands shook as he read the note

inside. "Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing, as tears filling his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch. Running his fingers slowly over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover. Inside he found these words engraved: "Jack, Thanks for your time! - Harold Belser."

"The thing he valued most...was...my time," Jack held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days.

"Why?" Janet, his assistant asked.

"I need some time to spend with my son," he said. "Oh, by the way, Janet...thanks for your time!"

*** Did You Know: Beards are the fastest growing hairs on the human body. If the average man never trimmed his beard, it would grow to nearly 30 feet long in his lifetime.

The Reminder for the Month of February :

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.

Solve the puzzle: **VELO AT RTSIF GSIHT**

73 Peggy Bell (Giggles) K4EGB
pbell@hiwaay.net SEW LONG!

Is There An Electronic Vox In Our Future?

There's been a lot of discussion among the QRP branch of Amateur Radio about the idea of distributing publications like our newsletter by electronic means instead of on paper. It has me at least wondering what everybody thinks of the idea.

Advantages

- **Saves money**

A 6-page Vox takes about \$95 to print and mail, an 8-page Vox costs about \$114. Printing and distribution costs for an electronic version would be just about nil.

- **More readable (when at the computer)**

The paper version of the newsletter is printed in ten-point type, mostly suitable for reading by mice. The reason for the mouse type is to keep the page count down (and therefore cost) down.

An electronic version could use larger type for easier reading — and the reader could adjust the viewing size up or down if needed. An electronic version would also be formatted differently. It would be a single column with larger type. If you've tried reading one of the Vox PDF* files on the "www.harc.net" site, you've experienced the frustration of scrolling down to read one column, then scrolling back up to read the next column, etc.

- **Easier for the visually impaired.**

Most have software capability to convert computer text to audio or some other way to enable reading computer documents.

- **Much better for photographs**

The quality of photographs printed in the Vox is pretty poor — partly because the printing process doesn't produce very high quality (and is limited to black & white) and partly because space considerations require keeping the image size down

- **Could allow adding August issue**

Without the need for a work session to assemble the Vox with its interference with hamfest planning and preparation, we could probably reinstate an August issue into the schedule and go back to 12 issues per year.

- **Faster distribution**

Almost immediately after the Vox is considered finished, it can be lodged in the mailboxes of the membership.

Disadvantages

Some members can't be reached via email

We don't have (and never have had) good email addresses for some of the members. Some (very few I'd bet) don't have email capability and some may be reluctant to disclose their address because of spam possibilities, and some just haven't bothered to keep their address data up to date. Every time I've been asked to forward an email to the HARC membership, I can depend on getting a bunch of bounce responses.

- **You have to be at the computer to read it**

An electronic version of the Vox can't be stuffed into your lunch box or briefcase to take to work, but a Vox would fit easily on a 3.5 inch floppy. Very few folks have a computer setup in their bathroom, and, unless you have a laptop, it may not be amenable to taking with you on a trip. BUT - most folks who have a computer also have a

printer and could produce a hard-copy of the Vox if they really need one.

One might consider doing a dual distribution, electronic to some and hard copy to others, but if we drop below 200 hard copies a month, we lose the benefit of bulk mailing and we lose the quantity discount at the copy shop. I have not yet analyzed what mix of hard copy and electronic distribution would be workable, but there'd be some less than obvious problems. The layout format that works well for electronic distribution would drastically increase the page count, thus the cost, for a hard copy version and trying to manage two different layouts would be prohibitive in the effort required.

How would an electronic version be distributed?

One way would be to send it as a PDF* (Portable Document Format) file attached to an email to all the membership.

The other option would be to upload it to a web site where members could access it at their leisure. That would probably also require an email to let members know it's available.

What do I think?

It's not gonna work unless we can get valid email addresses for everybody who has one and identify those who don't have addresses simply because they don't have computers or internet access. If we still have to distribute a significant number of hard-copy versions, it wouldn't do much to decrease the effort involved or the cost.

It could free up "Vox Night" for possible programs or maybe for a monthly strictly business session or other activity. (It used to be "Vox & Social Night" with a lot more emphasis on chat and visiting than there seems to be lately.) Though I think the monthly "Vox Night" session is not a bad thing for the club's cohesiveness.

***What the heck is a PDF file?**

The Portable Document Format (PDF) file was developed as a way to make documents available to anybody with a computer. It is read by a program called Acrobat Reader, which is available as a free download from Adobe Software. There are free versions of the reader available for just about any computer and operating system platform available today. Unix, Linux, Apple and any but the oldest Windows version.

To get an idea what an online version of the vox could look like, I've cobbled up a quick & dirty re-format of this month's Vox and have it posted on my web site. Aim your browser at <http://home.hiwaay.net/~femens/voxdemo.pdf>.

73, Frank Emens, W4HFU



As Corry Smith, K4DOH was making the pictures used in this Vox, Dick, W1TV, started an episode of "Duelling Digicams".



The multitude assembled ready for the 2005 Joint HARC/NARA meeting. Note the honorable Leigh Bartlow, WD4CPF in the foreground.

Huntsville Amateur Radio Club
P. O. Box 423
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

Labels must be parallel to the bottom of the mail piece within 5 degrees. Please affix labels carefully. Cover this block completely.

NON-PROFIT ORG
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
HUNTSVILLE, AL
PERMIT # 637