

VOX



HUNTSVILLE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 46, Number 2

February, 2006

Huntsville Amateur Radio Club Information

Club Officers

President:

Chris Best, KB3DXR
kb3dxr@yahoo.com

Vice President:

John C. Hilliard, K4JCH
k4jch@aol.com

Secretary:

Rolf Goedhart K4RGG.
k4rgg@arrl.net

Treasurer:

Heath Thorson, KC4HRX, 340-9531
hthorson@bellsouth.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 Wednesday before the third Friday of the month of publication.

NARA Notes

I appreciated everyone's vote of confidence in reelecting me to my second term as President of NARA.

I want to thank everyone that attended our annual HARC/NARA kick-off meeting the beginning of January. Since we had accomplished so much, it did take time to go through all the details of our efforts at the meeting. If you couldn't make it to the meeting and are curious about what you missed, please feel free to drop me an email. I'll send you a couple of pages of our accomplishments for the year.

It was an exciting year for us in 2005. A lot of projects were completed. We were very pleased to report the reinstallation of 146.94 at Channel 31 with 100% operation of the main hardware and the new antenna. I feel its finally come home after a long hiatus while we worked out the technical challenges after the main Channel 31 tower fell. We keep tabs on the activity level of the NARA repeaters. We've noticed a definite increase in 146.94 usage since the system went back online at Channel 31. We are glad to see this increase. We encourage the ham community to use 146.94. It is open to everyone.

The other good news was that the 147.18 crackle on weak signals only during certain phases of the moon, wind and moisture was resolved by going to split antennas. This system has several regular groups of users and we again encourage the use of 147.18 as it is also an open repeater system.

One thing we mentioned at the meeting was utilizing the Doug Hall four-channel voter board for transparent use of the remote voter site. This is on the bench now. The Doug Hall isn't as flexible as we'd like it to be. So we're working on a little interface PCB board design and layout to allow the Doug Hall to plug and play with our standard NARA signals we use.

In the mean time, the remote receiver on Green Mountain is operational by using a 107.2 Hz PL tone. We're working on 'audio quality' right now. This is matching up the various multiple audio pathways so they 'sound' the same. This may involve using an audio equalizer. We are looking at a couple of different circuit designs to evaluate.

There was one thing I didn't have time to discuss at the meeting. I wanted to ask for any inputs that the club members might have about the direction you want to see us take. We've been busy standardizing all of the systems to common hardware and working out technical issues along the way. We are still providing auto-patch access on some of the repeaters. We've added IRLP, which is a fun new way to reach out and talk to people around the world. We now have the capability of linking several of our repeaters together for special events. Emergency

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 4

Saturday, March 4

For information contact:

Larry Frost, KR4GU, 864-3244

kr4gu@hamfest.org

Org

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

"Vox", Vol 46, Nr.2, Feb., 2006

A Newsletter published monthly except for August by the Huntsville Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 423, Huntsville, AL 35804

battery backup has been added to two of the main repeaters. Finally the voter deployment will happen this year. We welcome any thoughts you'd like to share.

There is a lot of time, effort and funds required to keep our repeaters alive and performing top notch. We appreciate the support of the club members.

73, Ralph W4XE
NARA President

IMPROVISE!

Greetings. Rumors of my retirement from Ham Radio are 100% true. This is my last article to the VOX and I hope at least you've enjoyed the articles over the years 1/10 as much as I enjoyed writing them, it's been fun but now it's time to move on.

WHAT are Hams doing today to advance the hobby? Not much. Yeah..the occasional public event for exposure, but it's just show from what I can see. In "the old days" Hams led the way with autopatch, packet radio, and then even APRS. Today we have cellphones, internet, and GPS. Boring. And slowly, our last argument for existence is fading away; "emergency communications in the event of a disaster". More and more of the infrastructure has emergency power in place like UPSs and generators today. There is still a limited need for HF and UHF during extreme disasters like Katrina and the Tsunami, but the need is slowly going away. We all know that. What's the "next big thing" in Ham Radio? I don't think there is one.

The spirit of Ham Radio is building stuff! At least it used to be a long time

ago. Most Hams today are just appliance-operators and the club has turned from a service organization into a mere social club over the years. Which is all fine and good, but most people don't have time for that. To me, talk of "incorporation" was the last straw. It only means the lawyers have won. I've dealt with lawyers in the past... I'd rather clean my ears with a drill bit. Once fun becomes paperwork, it ceases to be fun.

What DO we have time for? About 30 minutes to fix a problem with the coffee-situation here. Using only parts on-hand. Yes, it involves actual electronics and moderate soldering skills as well as math to figure out watts and ohms and other pesky details. (cold coffee=bad hot coffee=good)

I like for my mug of morning coffee to stay warm for about 20-30 minutes but

HARC ACTIVITY CALENDAR FOR February, 2006						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	1 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	2 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	3 HARC Meeting Program on CERT(Community Emergency Re- sponse Team), Chris Reed Feb 3 & 4, Jackson MS Hamfest	4 *TWIAR CAVEC Exams, 0900 Red Cross building Jackson MS Hamfest
5	6	7 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	8 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	9 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	10 HARC Meeting Program: Digital Modes, Chris Best	11 *TWIAR
12	13	14 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	15 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	16 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	17 HARC Meeting Vox & Gabfest night	18 *TWIAR
19	20	21 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	22 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	23 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	24 HARC Meeting	25 *TWIAR Dalton, GA Hamfest
26	27	28 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	1 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	2 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	3 HARC Meeting	4 *TWIAR CAVEC Exams, 0900 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
The Gallery Shopping Center

(256) 535-4442
10 - 7 Mon-Sat, 1 - 4 Sun

Come see us next to Chili's!

it refused to do that, so I found myself a simple solution...the 30-minute science-project. Sure, most people would just go to Wally World and *buy* a coffee-cup hot-plate for \$9.95. No problem, right? Wrong! That model was made by starving Mexican children in China working for \$1/day. The correct solution is DIY!

All you need is a 1960's vintage Lambda switching-supply from the junk-box and some load resistors and a piece of tile. Connect the 8 one-Ohm resistors in a 4:2 configuration. At 1/2 Ohm load, adjust the supply for a 6V output. Turn on the supply ahead-of-time to warm things up! It's E/R so 6V at 1/2 Ohm is 12 Amps. Power is $I^2 \cdot R$ so that's about 62 Watts of heat. Which is exactly right.

For the the modern non-technical/politically-correct version: Referring to the picture, 115VAC comes in from the right but since it isn't politically correct it gets straightened-out by the orange cow pasture and run through a transformer, and then through a rec-

tum-fire gadget, followed by a switcher-gadget. Then the pulse-width modulator does its thing by adding Yak-Fat trickle-current to the regulator thingamajig at the left side after running through a bunch of different-colored wires into various places. Then



some semiconductor things turn the metric (AC) electrons into DC (standard) ones which are now very angry from being forced into large green wires. All this anger causes stress which causes friction and thereby, heat. The heat is released into the coffee-cup and then returned to the atmosphere where it returns back to TVA in order to re-appear on the electric bill through osmosis (commonly known as the dielectric effect). This system works well as long as the furlongs per fortnight going into the system equals the disgruntled electrons leaving the system, +/- 10%. Yak-Fat seems to be the key to system-integrity, as always.

See picture for details.

Chris Teuber,

The Giggle Box

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYBODY THAT WAS BORN IN FEBRUARY!! A note from Giggles: How about all this c-o-l-d weather we are having? I was hoping that we would get some snow last night, but just an aggravating frost. I went out to my car

ARRL Alabama Section Leadership Team.
Check www.arrl-al.org/officers.htm for address and phone info.

Section Manager: Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, w4ozk@arrl.org
 Affiliated Club Coordinator: Jeff L OBrien, KV4CX, jeffo@zebra.net
 Assistant Section Manager for Youth Activities, Rebekah A. Dorff, WG4Y, wg4y@arrl.net
 Bulletin Manager: William K, Hensley, WG8S, whensley11@comcast.net
 Alabama Frequency Coordinator - Liaison Alabama Repeater Council: Ron Shaffer, W4VM, w4vm@comcast.net
 Official Obsaerver Coordinator: Ken Magnant, WA4WEY, kmagnant@att.net

Public Information Coordinator: James Spann, WO4W, wo4w@jamesspann.com
 Section Emergency Coordinator: Jay Isbell, KA4KUN, sec@arrl-al.net
 State Government Liaison: Richard D. Doll, KU4PY, ku4py@arrl.net
 Silent Key Coordinator: Doc Gordon King, W4XI
 Section Traffic Manager, Randy Cox, AI4FP, ai4fp@yahoo.com
 Technical Coordinator, Tim Winingar, KY5R, timky5r@direcway.com

and thought that I would get to work early, but my car had other ideas. It said "No, you aren't going anywhere right now." Oh, well. I know that I couldn't make it in a colder climate. This is February and Valentine's Day is coming up. I hope all of you either get taken out to eat, flowers or candy or all of the above. Don't you think that we are worth all of it? I especially enjoy watching the school children when they receive and give Valentine cards to each other. When I think of Valentines, I know that daffodils and Spring isn't too far away. Thank goodness, we can plant a few pansies and have a little bit of color. I better go. Happy Valentines Day!!

A Joke or Two

During a visit to the mental asylum, a visitor asked the Director what the criterion was which defined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized. "Well," said the Director, "we fill up a bathtub then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."

"Oh, I understand," said the visitor. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup."

"No." said the Director, "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a room with or without a view?"

*** A young woman was pulled over for speeding. As the Pennsylvania State Trooper walked to her car window, flipping open his ticket book, she said "I bet you're going to sell me a ticket to the State Troopers' Ball."

He replied, "Pennsylvania State Troopers don't have balls."

There was a moment of silence while she smiled, and he realized what he'd just said. He then closed his ticket book,

got in his patrol car and left. She was laughing too hard to start her car.

*** Subject: Can You See God?

SOMEBODY'S RAISING THEIR CHILD RIGHT! One Nation, "Under GOD"

One day, a six-year-old girl was sitting in a classroom. The teacher was explaining evolution to the children. The teacher asked a little boy:

TEACHER: Tommy, do you see the tree outside?

TOMMY: Yes

TEACHER: Tommy, do you see the grass outside?

TOMMY: Yes.

TEACHER: Go outside and look up and see if you can see the sky.

TOMMY: Okay. (He returned a few minutes later) Yes, I saw the sky.

TEACHER: Did you see GOD?

TOMMY: No.

TEACHER: That's my point. We can't see GOD because HE isn't there. HE just doesn't exist. A little girl spoke up wanting to ask the boy some questions. The teacher agreed.

LITTLE GIRL: Tommy, do you see the tree outside?

TOMMY: Yes.

LITTLE GIRL: Tommy do you see the grass outside?

TOMMY: Yes!

LITTLE GIRL: Did you see the sky?

TOMMY: Yes!

LITTLE GIRL: Tommy, do you see the Teacher?

TOMMY: Yes

LITTLE GIRL: Do you see her brain?

TOMMY: No.

LITTLE GIRL: Then according to what we were taught today, she doesn't have one.

INFO ABOUT CLOTHES DRYERS:

The heating unit went out on my dryer! The guy that fixes things went in to the dryer pulled out the lint filter. It was clean. We always clean the lint from the filter after every load of clothes. He told us that he wanted to show us something. He took the filter over to the sink, ran hot water over it.

Now, the lint filter is made of a mesh material - I'm sure you know what your dryer's lint filter looks like. WELL...the hot water just sat on top of the mesh!!! It didn't go through it at all!!! He told us that dryer sheets cause a film over that mesh that's what burns out the heating unit. You can't SEE the film, but it's there.

This is also what causes dryer units to catch fire & potentially burn your house down with it! He said the best way to keep your dryer working for a very long time (& to keep your electric bill lower) is to take that filter out & wash it with hot soapy water & an old toothbrush (or other brush) at least every six months.

He said that makes the life of the dryer at least twice as long! How about that????!!!! Learn something new everyday! I certainly didn't know dryer sheets would do that. So, I thought I'd share! Note: I went to my dryer & tested my screen by running water on it. The water ran thru a little bit but mostly collected all the water in the mesh screen. I washed it with warm soapy water & a nylon brush & I had it done in 30 seconds. Then when I rinsed it the water ran right thru the screen! There wasn't any puddling at all! That

repairman knew what he was talking about!

The Reminder for the Month of February Don't give out your credit-card number over the phone; unless you have made the call; so you know it's the credit-card company or other business you want to have the number. Scammers often will call saying they are checking your record and numbers. Never give out info without confirming the caller's ID.

Solve the puzzle: **TI SI TTEEBR OT EEPK LENSIT DNA EB TTHHOUG A OOLF ANTH OT EAKSP PU DAN VEOMRE LAL OUTBD** - Source Unknown

*Peggy Bell (Giggles) K4EGB
pbell@hiwaay.net*

Bob Bynum, NK4I (ex W4USM) SK

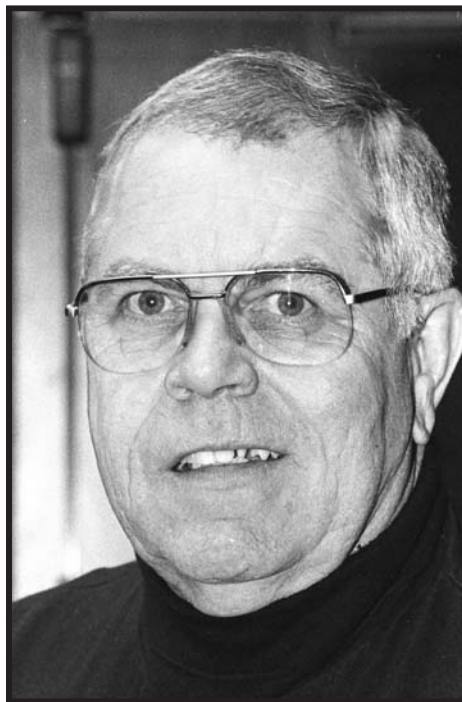
It saddens me to report that Bob Bynum, one time member of HARC, became a Silent Key on Dec 27. The term SK is especially appropriate in Bob's case, since he was an outstanding and ardent CW operator. Fifty WPM was not really a challenge for him.

As seems to be common with folks very good with CW, Bob was also a musician, very able with fuitar and banjo and into country music.

I first met Bob over 50 years ago when we were both in school at Auburn. He was involved in a bad auto accident that cost him a leg and dropped him out of school for a year or so, but then went back and got his degree and came to Huntsville to work with ABMA and then NASA. He worked in the Measurements/Instrumentation Lab and was especially proud of his part in developing a bicycle ergometer (an exercise bike with instrumentation to measure the amount of work being done by the pedaller) which flew on the Skylab mission and was used by the crew on orbit.

Bob was very active in the National Traffic System, especially the CW nets and it was his influence that got me involved to the point that I put in some years with the NTS. He was also a DXer and a presence on the 75 Meter Alabama phone nets and ragchew frequencies.

Although he was still interested in getting on the air, his activity was re-



stricted for the past few years because he lived in an apartment where it was not possible to erect any kind of antenna.

Bob's passing is a great loss to the Amateur Radio Fraternity.

73, Frank Emens, W4HFU

Flea Mart.

1) Yaesu FT-900 Hf rig. It has an auto antenna tuner inside the rig. I have the box it came in and the manual. Also will include the relay to key an amp. I'm asking \$550.00.

2) Heathkit SB-200 amp. Excellent condition. I bought it 18 months ago from the original owner and builder (KQ4C - Jack Schmitt, Brentwood, TN). It is rigged for 110v. Caps in great and very clean. I'm asking \$400.00

3) MFJ-986 Differential T Tuner. Excellent condition. I'm asking \$175.00

I'd be happy to answer any questions and/or arrange a time for anyone who wants to look at the equipment. I would like to give the local folks a shot at the items first before I list them on Ebay.

Martin Soprano/NM4S 883-6074,
after5pm m.soprano@comcast.net

From The Editor's Wastebasket

Over time I've gotten pretty cynical about the stories that circulate on the internet. I make it a practice to check them out on "www.snopes.com" which

is one of the best sites for differentiating between "Urban Legends" and fact. So, when I first saw the story about the dryer lint trap, I hit the Snopes site and found they describe it as TRUE! That got me interested. My dryer has been taking longer and longer to get a load of "stuff" dry. First I tried putting water on the filter grid. Sure enough, the water wouldn't run through. After rubbing the filter down with soapy water and rinsing well, water would run through it OK. I'm not sure that means air will go through it easier, since it is not bothered by surface tension like water is. Anyway, I tried drying my next load. Sure enough, it got dry about 10 to 15% faster. I still have problems with the dryer, but I think it's proven that periodically washing the lint filter with soap & water is a good practice.

What is the future of Amateur Radio? Chris Teuber raises some interesting if unwelcome points in his article. With the increasing complication and sophistication we want to see in our radio equipment, we get further and further away from the possibility of homebrewing our equipment or even building it from kits. One thing that started the downturn in homebrewing was SSB. A SSB rig is much more complex than a straight AM rig. One of the last bastions of "homemade radio" is in the QRP field. Many of the QRP fraternity delight in building up and operating simple (sometimes pretty sophisticated) rigs. The emphasis on CW makes that process easier. It doesn't take nearly as much complication to get a good clean 5 Watt CW signal as it does a good SSB signal.

What needs to be done to ensure a future for Amateur Radio? Somehow we have to capitalize on the feeling of satisfaction that comes from having a conversation with someone in East Remotia that is interested in the same "stuff" you are and doing so with equipment that you built up yourself. Sure, you can dial up East Remotia on a cell phone and talk to someone, but what does that satisfy? Besides, calling CQ and having no idea where an answer might come from has a lot of appeal. Much more than dialing a random number on your cell phone and wondering who is going to answer. Besides, there is no toll charge on amateur radio QSOs.

This is a good month to check the expiration date on your Vox mailing label. Make sure you're paid up or we might disappear from your mailbox. Let's don't repeat the scary session we had last year when late renewals threatened to drop membership below the point at which we could use bulk mail.

I'll especially miss Bob Bynum. Up until a few months ago we, along with some other NASA Astrionics Lab retirees, used to meet for lunch every Thursday, and we kept in touch via email after the lunch sessions stopped.

The photo of Bob on page 5 was from my "archives", I'm guessing it was from some 15 to 20 years ago.

Bob was a ham's ham and will be missed by everyone who knew him.

73, Frank Emens, W4HFU

STOP! Before you open this Vox

**Check the expiration date on your mailing label
and do what is required to keep us in touch with you!**

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

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