

# VOX



## HUNTSVILLE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 46, Number 1

January, 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.

"Vox", Vol 46, Nr.1, Jan, 2006

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

### NARA Notes

My first term as the new President of NARA is almost complete. The year sure has flown by so I guess I have been having fun. I hope that the club membership has been pleased with our progress this year. Things do not always happen as fast as we would have liked. But I understand everyone has a job and family to contend with. Yours truly included. The ham radio hobby has to take 2nd seat sometimes. I will be summarizing the years activities at the next club meeting. Several long-term projects were accomplished this year, so I am very pleased with our progress. To all of you who helped contribute money, time and effort for NARA this year I wanted to say thank you very much! Without the club membership support, we wouldn't be able to accomplish our goals. Speaking of activity, we have had another busy month for NARA.

Bench work continues on the 146.94 hardware cleanup. Replacing some of the 'hardwired' cabling and installing our standardized DB9 connector scheme on the GE Master II and CAT-1000 controller. Added another DB9 for a standard remote base connector. I believe this is the last of the three main NARA repeaters to be standardized on the connector scheme. This will allow plug and play of controllers and RF hardware between sites and backup equipment.

I have reprogrammed and tuned up two GE Phoenix SX UHF radios. One will be on the .94 remote base port for bi-directional linking to 147.18. The other will be a voter receive radio only for remote voter site linking project.

We are also taking a hard look at what is involved to get the Doug Hall four-channel voter board installed while we have .94 on the bench. Probably take some external interfacing circuitry to make it all plug and play. This effort has delayed replacing the backup

146.94 equipment up at Channel 31 with the main equipment. This will make using our Green Mtn remote voter site transparent to the user. You won't have to switch PL encode tones to access a remote voter site. The voter will automatically pick the best signal and switch to that receivers audio for broadcasting to the .94 transmitter. As we add more voter sites, we'll fill in all those black holes where a user is shadowed by the hilly terrain we have around here.

We worked some more on the 147.18 repeater site this last month. We removed some unused antennas and feed line from the tower. This will reduce wind loading so that we can keep our split-antenna setup long term at the site. The split-antennas seem to have cured the crackle issue. We had to work around the deteriorating weather lately for a 'good' tower day. A quick call went out to the repeater helper list for .18

### 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, January 7

Saturday, February 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

help. We will need another day or two of tower work to complete the task, but may have to wait for better wx in the spring.

Bill was also on hand at 147.18 to check out the GE Master II hardware while we were up there. The GE passed with a clean bill of health. We appreciate all that participated in this effort!

HARC provided the Rocket-City Marathon with communications on 146.94. (Thanks to all the participated!) Since we temporarily have the uhf link between 147.18 and 146.94 down on the bench, we used 443.500 as an interim link between those two machines. Linking these two together allows us to have a better coverage area for these type events and fill in some of those black holes. The system worked as we had planned. Perhaps not as slick as the original uhf to uhf direct link. Some

Rome Georgia .94 DX was sneaking in occasionally but it wasn't too disruptive. I'm anxious to see how well the system will perform next year when we have the full blown voting system operational.

Reminder we'll have our bi-annual joint NARA / HARC membership drive meeting on January 6th at the Red Cross facility. . Both organizations can use your continued support. Elections of officers and a status update will be given. Hope to see you there!

Happy holidays to you and yours!

73, Ralph W4XE  
NARA President

**2005 Rocket City Marathon**

The 29th running of the Rocket City Marathon thru the streets of Huntsville, Alabama is history. Held on December 10, 2005, it will go down as one of the

chillier runs. Race start temperature was in the mid 20s, but warmed to the mid to high 40s as the last of the 1000 runners returned downtown. Even so, there were very few non-finishers. A light southwest wind helped some, after the runners turned north onto Chaney-Thompson. The first finisher came in at 2:23.

15 operators assisted on course: Thanks to Kris KE4AHR, Chris KF4MMF, Woody K8GNM, John N5AYD, Lee KD4TSV, Tom KG4CUIY, Andy N4PDQ. Marilyn N4PCW, John N5DF, Christopher KB3DXR, Charles KG4UWE, Dick W1TV, Paul WB4UEE, and John KC4ZXX. Our thanks also to the North Alabama Repeater Association for the use of the 94, 18, and 443.5 repeaters, and the many hams who stood by during the race operations.

HARC ACTIVITY CALENDAR FOR January, 2006						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	4 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	5 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	6 HARC Meeting HARC / NARA Joint Kickoff Meeting	7TWAR CAVEC Exams, Red Cross Bldg, 0900
8	9	10 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	11 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	12 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	13 HARC Meeting Balloon Chases, John Piccorillo	14 7TWAR
15	16	17 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	18 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	19 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	20 HARC Meeting Vox Night	21 7TWAR
22	23	24 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	25 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	26 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	27 HARC Meeting	28 7TWAR
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	4 7TWAR  CAVEC Exams, Red Cross Bldg, 0900
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	11

\*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

Visit our  
new web  
page for  
updated  
pricing!

## Huntsville's Only Amateur Radio Store

hy-gain

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!

And a 'remember when' - As a side note, this operator visited briefly with the RCM record holder (2:12.21), Louis Kenny, of Johnson City, TN, who was on hand to commemorate his win in 1980, 25 years ago.

*73 Leigh Bartlow WD4CPF*

### Marathon Thanks

Rocket City Marathon Aid Station 2 was manned by the Spring City Cycling Club. While I was handling communications, Mike Holderer and Dan Kruvand, at separate times and unbeknownst to each other, came up and thanked HARC for the job they were performing. The Huntsville Track Club handles one of the aid stations for the SCCC All-you-can-Eat 100 in September. SCCC believes clubs should work together, and is quite willing to acknowledge help they receive, and help out in return.

Thanks Mike, Dan, and the SCCC!  
*Tom Duncan, KG4CUY*

### New's Years Resolutions

It's hard to believe it, but 2006 is already here. 2005 was a great year for Amateur Radio. 2006 can be even better. With all the hurricanes, tornadoes and other disasters, amateur radio had to spring into action. We rose to the challenge of getting through when all other forms of communication failed.

In 2006, as part of your resolution list, please include amateur radio. Join ARES and register to support emergency communications. You never know when your equipment and skills may be badly needed to help others. You can register on the ARRL Alabama Section webpage at: [www.arrl-al.org](http://www.arrl-al.org). Just navigate to the ARES registration page and fill out form listing your equipment and training. It just takes a few minutes of your time. Plus, it provides information about your capabilities to your county Emergency Coordinator and the Section Emergency Coordinator at the State level.

Another resolution could be to check in to your local net or other nets. Many nets provide great training opportunities and the chance to check your equipment or emergency power before the next emergency happens. In Madison County our training net is each Thursday night at 7:30 on the 146.940 repeater.

As EC in Madison County, I would like to thank everyone who got involved in ARES and Amateur Radio over the past year. Your services help to save lives and recover from many disasters. On the fun side of things, your involvement in the bike races, marathons, space camp and other activities help sharpen your skills for the next event. The wonderful bonus to these activities of course is a tremendous amount of fun!

Wishing you and yours a Happy New Year,

*KF4MMF Chris Reed*

### The New APRS Paradigm

Some of you may have heard about the new APRS Paradigm changes that

**ARRL Alabama Section Leadership Team.**  
**Check [www.arrl-al.org/officers.htm](http://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 Observer 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

have infiltrated the APRS network earlier this year. The evolution took place from January through April. Several changes were made with the way digipeaters operate and how the end users route their packets.

Why were changes made? There are several differences in the way many of the TNCs and APRS programs operate. Unfortunately, these differences were causing some unnecessary packet duplication. Thus, a collective gathering of the minds took place on the APRS SIG earlier this year to come up with a plan that could reduce the unnecessary redundancy and increase the available bandwidth.

For the end user the changes are simple. The paths RELAY and WIDE have been made obsolete. You will find that these paths are no longer supported throughout North America. So, if you are using the path RELAY or WIDE on your APRS home station or mobile, now is the time to change it because they will not work like the same way as they have in the past.

The path RELAY has been replaced with WIDE1-1.

The path WIDE has been replaced with WIDE2-1.

Home stations that have RELAY in their ALIAS must change RELAY to WIDE1-1 to support the new APRS Paradigm.

Mobile users who currently use a path of RELAY, WIDE or RELAY, WIDE, WIDE must change these paths to WIDE1-1, WIDE2-1 or WIDE1-1, WIDE2-2 respectively.

Home stations who currently use WIDE, WIDE or WIDE, WIDE, WIDE should change these paths to WIDE2-2 or WIDE3-3 respectively. Two hops are recommended for home stations, so

WIDE3-3 is one hop over that recommendation.

Most stations do not need to use a path that requires more than 2 hops, especially home stations. Most of the digipeater systems on the new APRS Paradigm will limit paths to three hops or ignore them completely if they specify more than 3 hops. This may sound a bit drastic, but APRS has evolved into a new era with all the Internet gateways. Once a packet has made its journey to an internet gateway it does not need to go any further. The Internet Gateways supply the intelligence and link for long paths across the country and around the world.

There is a secondary routing path that limits traffic within the boundaries of the state. This is the ALn-n path. Most weather stations on the network use a path of AL2-2. This is a 2 hop path that will only propagate within the state of Alabama. This is another way of confining traffic so that it does not spill out of the state boundaries.

*73 and Happy Packeting! Tim, N8DEU*

### **Jackson County Amateur Radio Club In Annual Christmas Parade**

Again this year, the Jackson County Amateur Radio Club (JCAR) participated in the annual Christmas parade in Scottsboro on 12/5/2005.

We do that, to advertise the fact that there is an Amateur Radio Club in the area, and that we provide public service functions.

We had very nice music playing on our float, with another sound track on top that said in Morse Code "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from JCAR, with a voice following it explaining what the message said. Jim Sharp

kg4tun who also has created and maintains the jcar.us web site did that recording. I think that he did a great job with it.

We had a yagi and a dish antenna on the float, but it is harder to notice on the dish antenna in pictures. Please go to <http://www.jcar.us> and see the pictures..

*73 de Dieter kx4y*

### **From The Editor's Wastebasket**

STOP! Before you read further, can you give the names of Santa's reindeer?

I always came out a couple of deer short when I tried it, so I did a Google session to resolve the question. They are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Donner, Blitzen, Cupid, and Comet. If the WX is bad, Rudolph also serves as navigational aid.

While I was Googling, I ran across a comment that it is now believed that Santa Claus has caches of presents and reindeer food stashed all over the world. Without the caches, it would be difficult to make the schedule calling for a visit to everybody in a 24 hour period. His sleigh simply wouldn't hold enough at one time to do the whole job and 24 hours without replenishment would be more than the reindeer could stand..

What the item didn't mention is that a vital component of those stashes is Yak Fat. It is used in two ways. At each replenishment stop, the sleigh's runners are quickly coated with a fresh application of Yak Fat. This supplements the natural levitation powers of Mr. Claus and his reindeer to make the rooftop to rooftop travel possible. The oats provided for the reindeer at each stop are also laced with a small quantity of Yak Fat to enhance their speed and

levitation capabilities and improve their stamina.

It looks as if the Rocket City Marathon and HARC's support of the effort was a success. All of you who worked the event deserve thanks for their efforts to provide a public service and, incidentally, polish the image of HARC and Amateur Radio with the public.

Be sure to make the joint HARC / NARA Kickoff meeting on January 6.

Remember too that. With the new year, dues for most of you come due. This Vox is being prepped for mailing at the same time some 1850 letters are being readied for the Joint membership

mailing. These letters will go to each household containing one or more hams in the 358 zip codes and most of those in the 357 Zip code range. Take heed of the letter. Check the mailing label on this copy of the Vox to see just when your membership expires and do what's needed to get right with the Treasurer.

It's my hope that Santa finds it appropriate to leave each of you at least a small vial of Yak Fat. It should have a marked salubrious effect on the quality of your life in "Ought Six"

The image printed below is certified to be great fodder for crayon wielding

Jr. Ops (or Senior Ops for that matter.) I recollect being being taken to task one time for printing the Christmas issue of the Vox on colored paper. Seems Mr. Bill Owens, W4YXW, who used to do the covers liked to color in his cover drawings when he received the Vox. The colored paper interfered with that process.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

*73, Frank Emens, W4HFU*



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