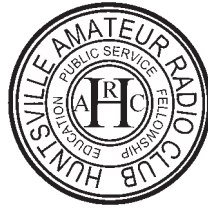


VOX



HUNTSVILLE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Huntsville, Alabama

Volume 48, Number 8

September, 2008

From The Prez

Boy these last 2 months have flown by. I was traveling for 12 days, was home for just one day, and then took my 3 girls and grandson to the family cabin on Smith Lake for a short vacation. Sorry you missed me for several weeks at the club meetings. I feel so out of touch.

But the roller coaster continued, we had the traditional ARES / RACES picnic on Monte Sano and the next day Hamfest started.

On top of that 2 anniversaries: on 8/8/8 my 20th of being in the states and the 20th Kim and my 3rd wedding anniversary, which for a change did NOT fall in the middle of hamfest.

Speaking of hamfest, I hope you did enjoy it, I sure did. For me it as much looking at/buying stuff as it is to reconnect with people. You all remember Ed Tyler, KI4GKS who inspired us to get Ham included in schools. Steve Conklin, AI4QR who ran with it and already is in touch with Bob Jones High School. Ed brought 2 of the teachers to a Hamfest Forum, who presented their truly inspiring progress. There were a great many forums. I hope you attended several of 'm.

I want to thank everyone who helped at hamfest personally, but the list would be endless and the VOX too small, however we will spend one of our future HARC meetings on that subject. It was sure great to see Don Tunstill, W4NO at the fest! Charlie N4OKL, you did an outstanding job, once again. Thank you major Lorreta Spencer for being with us!

The 115 year old Spring City Cycling Club of Huntsville, Alabama is hosting the 24th Annual All-You-Can-Eat Century on September 20, 2008. Last year they had over 400 riders, and they are hoping for an even bigger turnout this year. See: <http://www.springcity.org/century/in->

[dex.shtml](#) We have supported this event for several years now and I hope you will help out this year as well, and on a side note. they feed us well. I actually bought a 30 ft mast at the hamfest for this event, but I just discovered I will be in California once again ?. If you need to borrow it, you are welcome to it.

Thanks Travis, KE3Y and Tim, N8DEU for the APSR article in this and next Vox and Peggy, K4EGB and Frank, W4HFU for your unwavering dedication to making the VOX happen as well as GigaParts for your support.

A cool fall season is starting up; it's going to be exciting!

73 de K4RGG Rolf Goedhart Your Prez

APRS: TRIED IT, DIDN'T LIKE IT

by Travis Hardin, KE3Y

Responses by: Tim Cunningham, N8DEU, Alabama APRS Coordinator

A. I fell under the spell of our talented and persuasive local - if not national - APRS guru Tim Cunningham, N8DEU, so I spent a month reading and setting up a 2-meter APRS station.

TIM: Travis took the bait and entered the uncharted world of APRS. The sales job worked.

B. All full of enthusiasm and public service juices, I started with AGW Packet Engine and UI-View32 APRS software, the usual computer to radio interface box, and the Web site of APRS developer Bob Bruninga, WB4APR (<http://aprs.org/>). Among his many recommendations is the optimum number of relay hops to enter into the program which in the case of a fixed station is WIDE2-2. The goal is to beacon your presence to your "ALOHA circle" (local area) but to avoid you beacon being seen two states away.

TIM: The whole goal of the APRS Tactical Communications System is to contain traffic to local hubs or

digipeaters. Information that is relevant to your local area may not be useful or wanted in other APRS areas. For instance, Atlanta could care less about our local activity, unless it has relevance to them. When thing about routing paths and digipeaters, one should keep in mind the "Laws of 4" meaning that every digipeater may hear 4 digipeaters in 4 different directions. Thus, a packet with a path or WIDE3-3 is not desirable because it ties up 36 different digipeaters with data. As long as the information is relevant to that area, then this may not be a problem but this is not generally the case. If the first digipeater transmits the WIDE3-3 and decrements it to WIDE3-2, that is one digipeater responding to the initial packet and then 4 responding to that digi. Now we have 4 digipeaters in different directions that pass the WIDE3-2 decremented to WIDE3-1 each in 4 different directions (that is 21 responders, keep up with the math, initial digi plus the 4 that heard it and the 4 that heard those 4). Now the 16 digi's that respond decrement the WIDE3-1 to WIDE3-0 or simply WIDE3. Now these 16 take up bandwidth used by 64 different digipeaters (16 x 4) as far as Atlanta and beyond. To maximize bandwidth a 2 hop path like WIDE2-2 or WIDE1-1, WIDE2-1 for mobiles is suggested as the goal in reality is to reach an Internet Gateway.

With everybody on the North American continent on the same frequency of 144.390, packet transmissions need to be short. The usual position information, the system's main application, is compact. Plain text can be sent with a limit of 67 characters per transmission, forcing messages into the "cell fone txt msg style." LOL.

TIM: The idea is to keep messages short and to the point. While it may seem like "cell phone" text messaging it can be more. APRS provides a broad-

(Text continued on page 3)

Huntsville Amateur Radio Club Information

Club Officers

President:
Rolf Goedhart, K4RGG
K4RGG@arrl.net

Vice President:
Woodie Zeigler, K8GNM
tzeigler@aol.com

Secretary:
Doshia Wilson, KI4VFU
wilson.00.doshia@comcast.net

Treasurer:
Heath Thorson, KC4HRX, 325-2507
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", and a discussion forum at "http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/harc-al"

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. They have a web site at "http://www.qsl.net/nara"

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 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.

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, September 6
Saturday, October 4
For information contact:

Larry Frost, KR4GU, 864-3244
kr4gu@hamfest.org
Or
Rick Earl, AA4II, 256-653-0101
aa4ii@bellsouth.net

Athens Exam Sessions are held the 3rd Saturday of each month at 1:00. They are held at the Athens EOC.

For information contact Dean Thompson, WW0I, 256-230-0270 or Rick Earl, AA4II (see above)

HARC ACTIVITY CALENDAR FOR September, 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	3 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	4 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	5 HARC Meeting	6 *TWIAR CAVEC Exams, Red Cross Bldg, 0900
7	8	9 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	10 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	11 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	12 HARC Meeting	13 *TWIAR
14	15	16 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	17 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	18 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	19 HARC Meeting	20 *TWIAR Athens Exams, 1300 at Athens EOC
21	22	23 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	24 SE Linked Rptr Net 2000 +442.775/PL 203.5	25 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	26 HARC Meeting	27 *TWIAR
28	29	30 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, Red Cross Bldg, 0900

*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**

NEW LOCATION!

Map showing location at the intersection of University Dr. - Hwy 72 and Research Park Blvd. Landmarks include Back Yard Burgers, Providence, and Target.

**Mon - Sat
10am - 7pm**

(256) 535-GIGA

Logos for HEIL sound, ICOM, KENWOOD, YAESU (Choice of the World's top DX'ers™), ALINCO, and DIAMOND ANTENNA.

cast protocol system (unconnected packet) that allows messages or bulletins to be sent to multiple stations in the tactical listening area. A single packet can reach billions of people in a concentrated area of the tactical communication setup. This allows for getting information to the public masses instantaneously much like the NWS weather bulletins reach an APRS station. You will receive the NWS message on your APRS station before your weather radio can speak the information as it is real time. Multiple-line bulletins or messages are supported in APRS if you need to send a paragraph or multiple paragraphs of data it can sent as intended. The packet routing path needs to keep data local, but the message length can be long and verbose if desired. We do not want our local hub to swamp other networks outside a 2 hop range as the IGates can handle that traffic. This is by design.

D. At mid-summer I put the APRS station on the air on 144.39 and station icons begin popping up on my map from Birmingham to Louisville, with 6

or 8 appearing in Madison County and vicinity. Thus began my disillusion. Without assigning fault, here are some shortcomings I experienced.

Problem 1: There is no one to communicate with. Stations are either unattended or mobile with no extra hands available. I spent weeks pinging, messaging, and otherwise hollering "Here I am!" I was "IM'ed" but once, by Tim, N8DEU (Thanks!). Several one-liner exchanges took a leisurely half hour. (He was driving, I was receiving him only on the Web during lunch.)

TIM: I watched Travis sending messages to various places and quickly realized that it was not intuitive to know if somebody was attending a station or not. It does take some experience in this area you are looking to chew with somebody on a keyboard. The key to keyboard chewing is to send a message addressed to "ALL" or "CQ" indicating that you are looking to make a contact. Do not have any higher expectations than you would have calling CQ on a

local repeater. If the calling station does not make it into an IGate, then they will be limited to local or tactical communications by RF only. When I seen Travis looking for a contact on my mobile display I picked up the microphone on my Kenwood TMD-700 and sent a message while I was driving to the K4GIG-7 digipeater site to evaluate a technical issue. Of course, I did this with one hand driving carefully, so my response was a little slower that using a high speed keyboard. Exchanges are usually short for a mobile station on the move. The point is digital communications worked from the mobile as expected and I was in an out of the car multiple times to slow the response process.

Problem 2: There's no way to know when someone is at their station. Tim must have seen one of my messages by chance. All messages are public, and all messages from stations visible from Birmingham north to Indiana should appear on my screen. But I never saw more than two messages a day besides those I sent - one-liners like "Leaving Huntsville now" or "Hi, I see you." By

appearances, no one is ever at their station.

TIM: It is true that you may not know when somebody is at their station. In a tactical communications environment this would not be an issue, because operators would be assigned a task of being at their station to communicate or watch the situational awareness in an emergency. Not seeing more than 2 messages a day in a tactical network is not necessarily a problem. In fact, contrary to what you might expect, the system is working normally. You should never see a lot of traffic if you are working primarily from the RF network where the intention is to limit traffic to a local hub or defined area. The band does open on 2 meters so you can expect to see some distant stations on the network from time to time. If you are working APRS from an Internet Link with a full data feed you would see numerous stations messaging. Incidentally, the PROPnet got its start from APRS and the idea of tracking propagation on different bands.

Problem 3: Map symbols can be added by anyone at any location for any purpose - such as event or frequency announcements - "Hamfest Aug 16" or "Repeater 146.94 tone 100" or "Tornado" or "Best Homebrew in AL," since the system is equally useable via Web. (You can make included/excluded lists.) The alarm telling you when new symbols appear comes from the sound card, which is not audible when using AGWPE because it's the audio feed to mic-in of my radio. To hear audio generated by the UI-View32 program, the station would need a separate hardware TNC. New symbols can easily be missed unless one is poring over the screen constantly, an activity I am less and less inclined to do.

TIM: The APRS map display can fill up quickly. UI-View can be unimpressive if you use the basic maps. UI-0View is more suited for Precision Mapping Streets and Traveler versions 7 & 8. This would allow you to zoom in an out of the display for street level detail or a birds-eye view. If you want to see some impressive mapping without purchasing a mapping program, I would suggest trying AGWTracker by SV2AGW, the same guy who wrote the sound card modem to Packet driver. AGWTracker can use online maps like

Google Maps, Virtual Earth, and Yahoo Maps which can also provide astounding satellite view detail with the streets overlaid on the map display. Incidentally, UI-View32 will never be updated since the author passed away. It is still a great APRS program but it is considered stagnate in the software world. You can also right-click on any of the symbols for more information or to send a message to that station. Generally, when you zoom in on a tactical area (the focus) there is less clutter and fewer symbols on your screen. APRS+SA has a feature to map only certain symbols of interest. Some APRS programs have more features and some have less.

Problem 4: Packet signals interfere with nearby 2-M FM voice radios. Almost every packet station is a little repeater, and mine transmits every few minutes in addition to my half-hourly beacon. Packet antennas should be separated from other VHF antennas or high-Q packet frequency traps installed. I have not solved the problem.

TIM: It is true that the packet signals can interfere with a nearby 2M radio. Keep in mind it does not interfere unless you are sending data from the APRS station or an occasional position report. This should not typically present a problem. Otherwise, the radio is simply listening and providing situational awareness from signals it captures on the RF link. If you plan on adjacent 2M activity, you will need more antenna separation, lower power setting, or a bandpass filter.

Problem 5: When you turn on, presence of stations are not known for up to half an hour, and often the distant stations come up before the local ones. You can send a "query all stations" to trigger all beacons, but you generate a flurry of activity in a channel already busy. A "query all" is a useful thing for a net control station in a defined group. See positive point one.

TIM: By design this is how APRS works. Bandwidth is freed up by infrequent station position reports. This allows data information of greater importance to take priority. Fancy that, a system that has priority data traffic designed into it. Not all stations will respond to a "query all" request when you first start your station, but it is a

quick way to get your map filled up quicker on an RF link without waiting for their position report. This can also let you know what digipeaters are working on the network. Although, you would not typically see this used very often in a tactical network. On the flip side, if you do note that a digipeater is down (lighting/storm damage) and it is required for a tactical network, then the beauty of APRS is a temporary digipeater is only an HT, TNC, battery, and mobile antenna away from hanging in a tree. The Porta-digi was documented by Bill Nolle, WA8INZ, God rest his soul, many years ago. The Porta-Digi then becomes a digipeater that can be hung from a tree on any mountaintop to quickly restore communications. This is quick, effective, and low cost. A TNC can be interfaced to nearly any 2M FM radio (non-vendor specific radio, think cheap...).

Problem 6: Display of station icons is inconsistent, possibly due to lack of relays or Internet gateways. I haven't seen anything south of Cullman in two weeks, though I see Indiana stations, likely due to my direct reception of the high Nashville digital repeaters (APRS-speak: digis). One night I saw no in-county stations. Next morning Birmingham and Georgia stations became visible without explanation.

TIM: Great news! You have confirmed that our APRS network is operating as designed! You should not be seeing DX stations on a consistent basis, unless it is required or desired. Unless Cullman data is required in Huntsville some distance away, we do not want to see it on our local activity consuming our bandwidth unless it is needed. If required, we can change our digipeat path to reach Cullman and visa-versa. The could be via AL3-3 instead of WIDE3-3 which would take 3 digipeater hops to move data strategically to only Alabama instead of using WIDE3-3 which would send unnecessary data to TN, MS, and Georgia eating their bandwidth unnecessarily. You can also use the direct digipeater call sign to contain the packet path to a known route which would be network friendly to other users by narrowing your focus. IGates can also be setup specifically to allow certain stations in a strategic network to be routed automatically via a local IGate. Now, if you

know who you want to contact at a distant location outside of your local area you can send a message to a specific callsign. Even though you cannot reach the end station by a digipeater directly, the magic of the IGates will route your message automatically provided each end station can reach an IGate in 2 hops. Another important thing to keep in mind is that some digipeaters will limit your WIDEN-n packet routing to WIDE2-2 or 2 hops or less. If you specify WIDE3-3 many digipeaters will only digipeat it 1 time and it will go no further. So, it is recommended not to use a path greater than WIDE2-2 if you want it to go anywhere. This configuration was implemented in the network as more IGates became available as most would be 2 hops or less from an IGate. Under adverse conditions (all IGates down) then alternate routing can be used to overcome the obstacle.

Problem 7: Private weather stations generate timely information, and NWS Weather bulletins (such as "Activation not anticipated") are integrated into the system and visible on the maps. That's good, but the information is almost useless unless it is integrated into a whole weather pattern on an NWS Web site.

TIM: What may be useless information to one may be extremely valuable to others. Check my article about the Federal Grant for Morgan County to install 22 APRS weather stations at Volunteer Fire Department across the county. In fact, all the weather stations on APRS are indeed integrated on the NWS weather site. Check out MesoWest and you will see the APRS weather stations integrated on the map. The FINDU server on the APRS-IS collects the weather data and sends it out every 15 minutes to NOAA. You have hit the golden nail on the head and the weather station usefulness is already integrated.

Ed. Note: This exchange of comments about Travis's venture into APRS turned out to be too long to run in its entirety this month. Tune in for its conclusion with Travis's positive comments about his experience with APRS next month. W4HFU

NARA Notes

We held our bi-annual joint HARC/NARA meeting July 18th. We had a great turn out. I presented a power point slide show going over the

status of all the NARA repeaters. We discussed the possibility of interfacing the 146.94 repeater to Echolink. The group agreed it would be interesting to have as long as it didn't interfere with other activities.

In more recent news, the 146.94 repeater site had a bad roof leak which allowed rain water to get into the building. In particular leaking right over our repeater equipment rack. This caused some problems with the equipment, so we had to install the backup repeater hardware. It was pretty seamless once installed so I don't think many folks could tell it was running on the backup system. It took a couple of weeks to repair the damage to the main system on the test bench, mainly due to business travel keeping me away from the bench. There was corrosion damage to the connectors between the repeater and the repeater controller. A new wiring harness had to be fabricated. We also lost audio from the main receiver. A replacement audio/squelch board fixed that problem. We've bypassed the voter system for now, as water also got into our custom built voter interface box. That is next on our agenda to repair the voter box and make sure the rest of the voter hardware is operational. I am hopeful that we don't experience any more latent issues as a result of water damage. Fortunately the co-located 220 repeater was fine as it was up off the ground and not right under the leaking area.

The main 146.94 system performed flawlessly during the Huntsville Hamfest talk-in this last weekend which always gives it a full three day workout. So it looks like our recent repairs were a success. Friday before the Hamfest the system was still in PL decode mode, so I hope it wasn't too much of an issue. Once the Hamfest page was loaded into the repeater controller for Saturday/Sunday net talk-in operations, it was in the usual No-PL Hamfest mode. It was great seeing many of you at the Hamfest. I think I spent half my time there visiting. At the Hamfest we were offered some donations of some more spare GE Mastr II equipment (thanks Chris!) and also some hard-line jumpers. We greatly appreciate donations, thank you!

We are about ready to do some repairs to the remote base 443.500 system as soon as some cooler tower work weather arrives. The two remote base antennas have a higher SWR than we would like so we are going to replace both of them. At the same time we will be replacing some of the mounting hardware which is showing some signs of aging. If you want to participate as ground crew, please contact me. These repairs should bring the 443.500 remote base system (6 mtrs through 440 MHz) back up to full operational status.

73, Ralph W4XE NARA President

Ares / Races Update.

Thank you Ernie Blair WA4BPS, for facilitating our annual picnic on top of Monte Sano. The food was great, the company was great and so was the weather. Thank you all who brought all the goodies, whether it was chicken, salad, spaghetti, desert etc it was great!

The timing was kind of odd this year as the 2nd Thursday fell right before hamfest. hope you attended both! It was good to reconnect with Robert Boyd KC5ZJO, our Ham meteorologist at the National Weather Service at the hamfest and even better to see Don Neville K4RSB, our RACES repeater trustee visit at the Hamfest as well as Ken Magnant W4WEY, our previous Radio officer! Thank you Scott, Jared, Chris for putting up the ARES/RACES/CERT booth at the hamfest.

The Red Cross training, including damage assessment is scheduled for a Saturday at the end of September. Make sure you do your Red Cross background check before then on www.mybackgroundcheck.com then click on the Red Cross logo or directly: <http://www.mybackgroundcheck.com/>



Robert Boyd, KC5ZJO

order/ArcVts/
Thank you Shirley for arranging this for us.

Our next meeting will be a regular at 6 o'clock on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Huntsville Madison County Emergency Management Agency at their Emergency Operations Center at Fountain Circle in Huntsville. More information on:

[Http://madisoncountyma.com/RACES.htm](http://madisoncountyma.com/RACES.htm)

Or

<http://www.madisoncountyares.com>

73 de K4RGG@arrl.net Rolf Goedhart
Emergency coordinator Madison County

APRS - News

Morgan County has obtained a Federal Grant to install 22 APRS Weather Stations at Volunteer Fire Departments spread across the county. There are 2 more counties that may follow if all goes well.

The APRS weather station systems will consist of a Davis VantagePro Weather Station, a Davis WeatherLink for APRS, a Yaesu 50W 2M radio, a 1/4 mobile antenna, a Byonics TinyPack, and a power supply.

Morgan Amateur Radio operators will construct and install the APRS Weather stations and an Amateur Radio Operator will be responsible to maintain each weather station site.

This is a pretty extensive undertaking to get the systems going and making sure each station will be able to get their data into the network.

The FINDU server on the APRS network sends data collected from each APRS weather station every 15 minutes. Take note Weather Station operators! If you are transmitting data in more than 7.5 minute intervals, it may not get reported back to NOAA as often as you might think. I actually pulled a log from MesoWest and confirmed the 15 minute interval from an APRS weather station that reports at 3 minute intervals. Another thing to keep in mind is that APRS Digipeaters may limit your APRS packet path to 2 hops.



Ken Magnane
W4WEY

Anything more than 2 hops using "WIDE2-2" or "WIDE1-1,WIDE2-2" or "AL2-2" is generally not necessary. However, every situation is different. In fact using WIDE3-3 under the new APRS Paradigm may only get you 1 hop instead of 3 as many digipeaters are set up to restrict how many hops a signals can take. This does not affect the ALn-n routing for containing data to the state. The goal is to get to an IGate. Once your packet makes it to an IGate it has accomplished its general mission in making it to the world-wide APRS information highway.

Jeff, KB2M, has reported that he has successfully interfaced a Kenwood RC-D710 interface to an ICOM 2820 DSTAR Radio to combine DSTAR and APRS on the same radio. The Kenwood RC-D710 can bring a Kenwood TMD-710A like function to nearly any 2M FM non-specific vendor radio. It has a 1200 and 9600 baud TNC built-in and a GPS port. Basically, you have a Kenwood D710A style information display now available for almost any 2M FM radio. The word on the street is the RC-D710 is being discounted for just under \$200. Then again, if you have a PalmPilot or a PocketPC you already have a display device if you add the APRS software to it. I am using a PocketPC with a built-in GPS and some APRS software to be completely radio free by directly accessing the Internet all in the palm of my hand.

Unfortunately, I ran out of time this month to respond to Doug Hilton's reply in last months VOX, but I will respond next month, so stay tuned. We will not fail.

73's and Happy Packeting!
Tim - N8DEU

Another great Huntsville Hamfest!!

I received many complements during and after the Hamfest. Some said that they can't wait to next year, even before they left the VBC. There were numerous visitors that traveled many miles to attend the Hamfest.

The Huntsville Hamfest offering many great activities and forums is a major draw. The forums lineup was well distributed and well attended. Over 45 people attended the Wouff Hong ceremony at 11pm on Saturday night.

Thank you to everyone the worked and attended the 2008 Huntsville Hamfest and ARRL Southeastern Division Convention!

Greg Sarratt, W4OZK Director,
Southeastern Division American Radio
Relay League

THE GIGGLE BOX

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE GUYS AND GALS THAT HAVE BIRTHDAYS IN SEPTEMBER!! Hi guys, it sure was good to see all the people at the Huntsville Hamfest. If you missed it, you missed a lot of fun. As usual, I saw a lot of people that I only see once a year. I also learned that some of the people that come to the Hamfest were Silent Key. They will be missed. Again, the vice-president of the Hamfest, Charlie Emerson did a fantastic job with all the questions and answers. I even saw him sitting down a couple of times. When he was needed, it seemed he was only a few steps away. I know that sometimes his patience run thin, but I never saw it. Thanks, Charlie, we appreciate what you do.

A Story or Twoà (Just for memories-sake.)

THE FLOUR SACK

LONG AGO TIMES WHEN THINGS WERE SAVED, WHEN ROADS WERE GRAVELED AND BARRELS WERE STAVED, WHEN OUR WORN-OUT CLOTHING WAS USED AS RAGS, AND THERE WERE NO REYNOLDS WRAP OR PLASTIC BAGS, AND THE WELL WITH THE DRAW ROPE WERE WAY OUT BACK, A VERSATILE ITEM, WAS ALWAYS THE FLOUR SACK. PILLSBURY'S, MOTHER'S BEST AND GOLD MEDAL, TOO STAMPED THEIR NAMES PROUDLY IN PURPLE AND BLUE.

THE STRING SEWN ON TOP WAS PULLED AND KEPT; THE FLOUR EMPTIED IN A BARREL AND SPILLS WERE SWEEPED. THE BAG WASHED, IRONED, FOLDED AND STORED IN A SACK THAT DURABLE, PRACTICAL ITEM, THE FLOUR SACK. IT COULD CARRY YOUR BOOKS AND BE CALLED A SCHOOL BAG, OR IT COULD BECOME A MAIL SACK SLUNG OVER A NAG. IT MADE A VERY CONVENIENT PACK, THAT ADAPTABLE, COTTON FLOUR SACK.

BLEACHED AND SEWN, IT WAS DUTIFULLY WORN AS BIBS, DIAPERS, OR HANDKERCHIEF ADORNED. IT WAS MADE INTO SKIRTS, BLOUSES AND SLIPS. AND MOM BRAIDED RUGS FROM ONE HUNDRED STRIPS SHE MADE RUFFLED CURTAINS FOR THE HOUSE OR SHACK, FROM THAT HUMBLE BUT TREASURED FLOUR SACK!

IT WAS USED AS A STRAINER FOR MILK OR APPLE JUICE, TO WAVE EVERYONE IN FOR DINNER, IT WAS A VERY GOOD USE, OFTEN USED AS A SLING FOR A SPRAINED WRIST OR A BREAK, AND IT WAS A MUST TO HELP MOM ROLL UP A JELLY CAKE, NOTHING BETTER USE FOR A WINDOW SHADE OR TO STUFF A CRACK, SO MANY THINGS IT WAS USED FOR, THE COMMON FLOUR SACK!

DISH TOWELS, EMBROIDERED OR NOT, THEY HELPED PASS PANS THAT WAS SO HOT, TIED UP DISHES FOR NEIGHBORS IN NEED, AND FOR A GREAT USE TO HOLD THEIR FARM SEED. DISHES WERE DRIED WITH THEM AND NOT IN A RACK THAT MOST ABSORBENT AND HANDY FLOUR SACK!

WE POLISHED AND CLEANED THE STOVE AND TABLE, SCOURED AND SCRUBBED FROM CELLAR TO GABLE, WE DUSTED THE DRESSER AND OAK BED POST, MADE COSTUMES FOR OCTOBER (A SCARY GHOST) AND A PARACHUTE FOR A CAT NAMED JACK. FROM THAT LOVELY USEFUL OLD FLOUR SACK

SO NOW MY FRIENDS WHEN THEY ASK YOU AS CURIOUS YOUNGSTERS OFTEN DO, "BEFORE REYNOLDS WRAP, ELMER'S GLUE AND PAPER TOWELS, WHAT DID YOU DO?"

TELL THEM LOUDLY AND WITH PRIDE AND DON'T SLACK

GRANDMA HAD THAT WONDERFUL, COLORFUL FLOUR SACK!

Memories...

THREE LITTLE PIGS

This is a true story, proving how fascinating the mind of a six year old is. They think so logically.

A teacher was reading the story of the Three Little Pigs to her class. She came to the part of the story where first pig was trying to gather the building materials for his home. She read . 'and so the pig went up to the man with the wheelbarrow full of straw and said: 'Pardon me sir, but may I have some of that straw to build my house?'

The teacher paused then asked the class:

'And what do you think the man said?'

One little boy raised his hand and said very matter-of-factly ...'I think the man would have said - 'Well, I'll be!! A talking pig!'

The teacher had to leave the room.

Two little boys, ages 8 and 10, are excessively mischievous.

They are always getting into trouble and their parents know if any mischief occurs in their town, the two boys are probably involved.

The boys' mother heard that a preacher in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys.

The preacher agreed, but he asked to see them individually.

The mother sent the 8 year old in the morning, with the older boy to see the preacher in the afternoon. The preacher, a huge man with a deep booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly,

"Do you know where God is, son?"

The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there wide-eyed with his mouth hanging open. So the preacher repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God?!"

Again, the boy made no attempt to answer. The preacher raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "WHERE is GOD?!"

The boy screamed & bolted from the room, ran directly home & dove into his closet, slamming the door behind him. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "What happened?"

The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, "We are in BIG trouble this time!" GOD is missing, and they think WE did it!"

Just Five More Minutes Author Unknown

While at the park one day, a woman sat down next to a man on a bench near a playground.

"That's my son over there," she said, pointing to a little boy in a red sweater who was gliding down the slide.

"He's a fine looking boy" the man said. "That's my daughter on the bike in the white dress."

Then, looking at his watch, he called to his daughter. "What do you say we go, Melissa?"

Melissa pleaded, "Just five more minutes, Dad. Please? Just five more minutes."

The man nodded and Melissa continued to ride her bike to her heart's content. Minutes passed and the father stood and called again to his daughter. "Time to go now?"

Again Melissa pleaded, "Five more minutes, Dad. Just five more minutes."

The man smiled and said, "OK."

"My, you certainly are a patient father," the woman responded.

The man smiled and then said, "Her older brother Tommy was killed by a drunk driver last year while he was riding his bike near here. I never spent much time with Tommy and now I'd give anything for just five more minutes with him. I've vowed not to make the same mistake with Melissa.

She thinks she has five more minutes to ride her bike. The truth is, I get Five more minutes to watch her play."

Life is all about making priorities, what are your priorities? Give someone you love 5 more minutes of your time today!

The Thought for the month of September

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.

Mark Twain

The Puzzle for the month of SEPTEMBER

**NEHW OUY REA NUORDA OURY
VEDLO ESNO, KAME PAHPY
MMOREESI HATT UOY NAC NKHIT
CKAB NO DAN ELMIS.**

From The Editor's Wastebasket

How 'bout that Hamfest?! I was a bit worried that our crowd would be significantly off this year because of the gas price situation. Saturday's turnout was really good, even though Sunday's did seem a bit less than last year's.

Got to see a lot of the folks that I only see once per year. Didn't get to attend any of the forums, but the selection seemed bigger and more varied than one would find at any hamfest within hundreds of miles of Huntsville.

Will soon be time for us to settle into our Fall/Winter schedule of activities. I presume everybody will be getting over their Summer-Vacation mode of operation and ready for the change.

Oh well, another year in which the ticket drawer failed to get one of mine out of the barrel. Maybe better luck next time.

73, Frank Emens, W4HFU