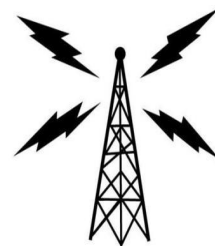




DFARG Signal



Why I Love Ham Radio

If you're reading this, you are almost certainly in one of two categories: either you have or have had an amateur radio license, or you're preparing to test for an amateur radio license. Either category suggests some affinity for the hobby. Maybe love is too strong a word, but I know that, at least in my case, like is nowhere near strong enough a word! I do not think I am unusual in this. As I look around the shack on meeting nights, I see a group wildly diverse in education, background, and profession (even increasingly of late in age!), their only common connections being a love of ham radio and a residence in South Carolina. That said, even the former is split into many different, sometimes even mildly antagonistic threads. For every digital enthusiast, we are sure to have someone who sees FT8 as the "end of ham radio." For every fan of repeater nets, there is a die-hard HF fan who scoffs at contacts closer than 150 miles. Every member pushing the limits of legal power is balanced by a QRP operator. To make things even more complicated, many, even most of us, have interests that span all of these facets of amateur radio, and more. Yet, month after month we gather, sometimes chaffing at one another, but always united in our hobby. Clearly, I cannot speak

for every ham or even every member of DFARG/PARC in answering the question, Why do I love ham radio? I can, however, attempt to answer it myself, in hopes that my own love of the hobby echoes yours. Unlike many of our members, I had no family connection with amateur radio. I may have had an uncle or a cousin somewhere who was licensed, but if so, it remains a secret to me. As a child, my only family connection with radio was building a crystal receiver, with an actual crystal, when I was 9 or 10 years old, a memory I still treasure. Although the FT-450D sitting in front of me right now is a far cry from that crystal receiver, every time I power it up, I am reminded of that magical moment when my Dad and I tuned in the Erie radio station on that crystal set. I don't think 'magic' is an exaggeration. I still get a thrill every time I hear my callsign on the air or see a green row on a digital mode display. Incongruously, I think, given the image of the ham as an isolated figure, hunched over a mic in his shack, I find our hobby to be an incredible social experience, beyond the obvious in-person interactions in our shack. When I am calling CQ from a park, I know I will hear from N9MM, KG8P, W6LEN, F1BLL, IW2BNA, or DL1EJA or another of dozens of callsigns I have worked over and over again over the years. If I am on a peak, WOM-NA, WOERI, or KF9D are sure to come back to my CQ. Is it any less social because I've never seen any of these people in person? Beyond the sheer magic of bouncing signals off the ionosphere and the

social networks we have built, the boundless opportunity to experiment in our hobby is enchanting. Yes, some of my experimentation has produced massive failure. My first homebrewed "portable" antenna mast was huge, heavy, unwieldy, and a tad expensive. Doggedly I hauled it up several peaks before relegating it to the scrap heap. However, I am sure many of you can relate to the fact that, though it was heavy and unwieldy, a) it worked, and b) it was undoubtedly the product of my imagination and my own hands. Other experiments have fared better (few were worse!). Beyond the opportunities to experiment with "stuff," the variety of operating modes and bands is stunning. Pinging a satellite, working the ISS, bouncing a signal off the moon, digital modes, RTTY, Slow Scan TV, Fox Hunting, VLF, HF, VHF, UHF, portable ops, mobile ops...all of these and more are available to each of us without huge expense (for some value of huge). All of this and I realize I have not even begun to discuss the practical and essential nature of our hobby in emergency response. It is hard to imagine an activity that offers so much, such a wide variety of experiences for such a small investment of time and money. What I love most about ham radio, though, is its people. Whether someone on the other side of the planet that I only know by callsign, or one of my many friends in the DFARG/PARC shack.

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July 24, 2024

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Upcoming Regional Hamfests and Conventions

07/26/2024 - 07/27/2024

Milton Ham Fest

Location: Milton, FL

Website: <http://miltonarc.org>

08/03/2024 - Roanoke Hamfest

Location: Vinton, VA

Website: <https://roanokehamfest.info/>

08/10/2024 - 25th Annual Cape Fear
Amateur Radio Society Swapfest

Location: Fayetteville, NC

Website: <http://cfarsnc.org>

08/10/2024 - Florence Amateur Radio
Club Tailgate Style Hamfest

Location: Florence, SC

Sponsor: Florence Amateur Radio Club

08/10/2024 - Tri-State Amateur Radio
Association Hamfest

Location: Huntington, WV

Website: <https://www.qsl.net/w8va/>

08/24/2024 - Cedars of Lebanon
Hamfest

Location: Lebanon, TN

Website: <http://www.smrclub.com>

08/24/2024 - TarcFest

Location: Tampa, FL

Website: <http://www.hamclub.org>

08/30/2024 - 09/01/2024

68th Annual Shelby Hamfest, ARRL
North Carolina State Convention

Location: Shelby, NC

Website: <http://shelbyhamfest.org>

July 18 Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order by President Rick Senkowsky at 1855, as the weather was kind of sketchy and he and the veep figured everyone who was coming was already there. Officers present were himself, the veep, Charlie Brown, and Treasurer John Seibels. CB regaled the attendees with a tale of Summits on the Air (SOTA) activation conducted at Yonah Mountain, in Georgia, a few days before. The presentation seemed to be well received and resulted in a number of questions and discussion about SOTA, generally. President Rick called for a motion to accept the June minutes as published in the newsletter. Motion made, seconded, and passed without objection. Treasurer John reported revenue of \$35 and expenditures of \$12.84 for the gas bill and \$180.96 (for construction of the tower base enclosure by Ron Schnell-which was a great job, by the way!) since last report leaving a balance of \$2851.29. Motion made, seconded, and passed without objection to accept the report. VE honcho Malcom reported three candidates already signed up in ARRL for the next license examination on August 3. Malcom also reported the continuing struggles of ARRL to get their automated systems back

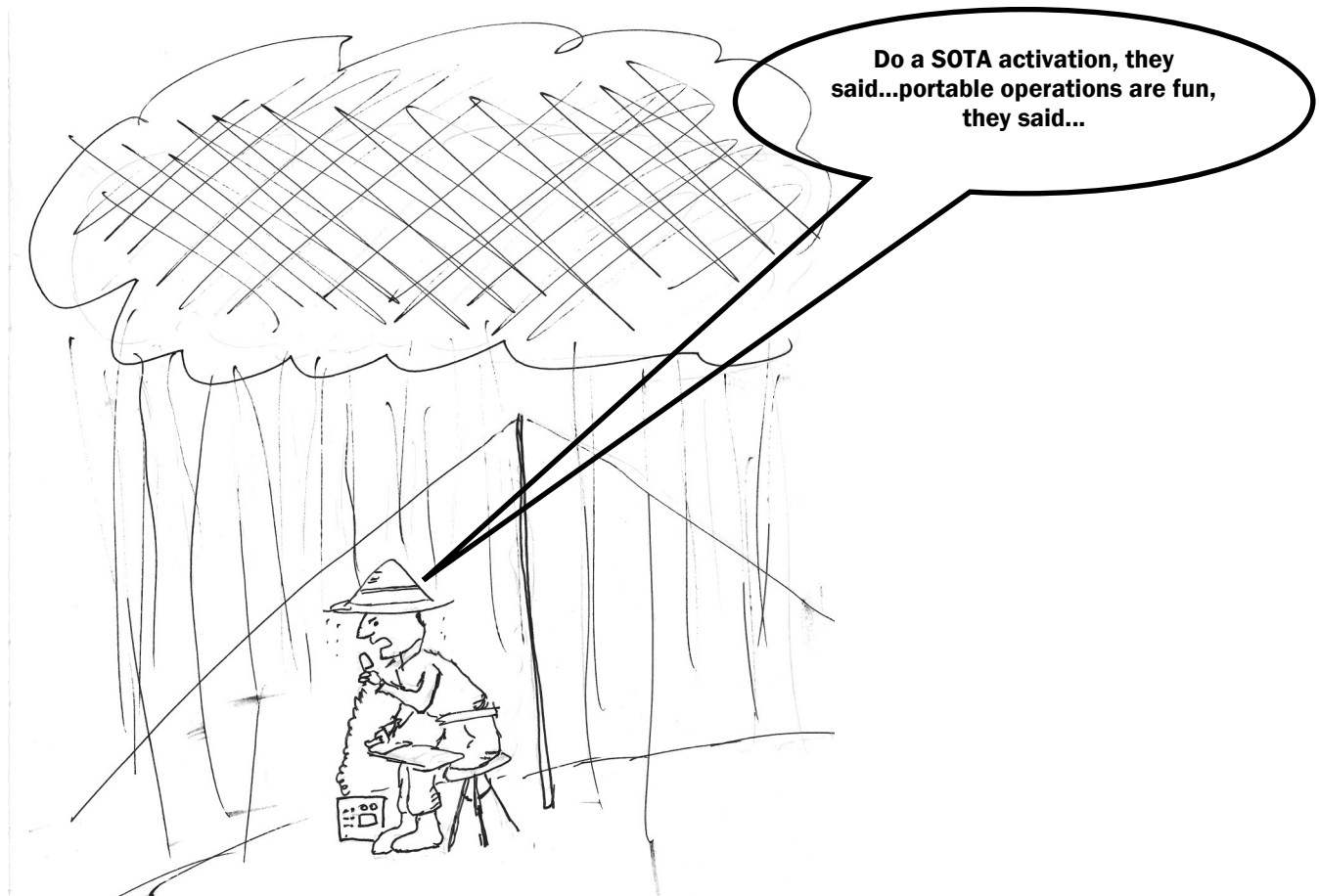
on line. The VE certification system is still hosed up, but license applications are processing. Session counting is still off, which has a low potential to affect our standing as a permanently stocked testing site. Inquiry from the membership involved our switching to another certifying organization, such as WCARS. Malcom pointed out that WCARS requires an ARRL VE credential as well, so no advantage to be gained. Former VE honcho John Miller reported that the Extra exam update was fielded on 1 July and we have it. Under Old Business, President Rick thanked everyone who participated in Field Day. We scored 116 QSOs, including a swath made by Dave Hawkins mobile in his Jeep from the parking lot, for at least 582 points, and possibly 200 more pending some challenges. He also thanked everyone who had participated in the shack and antenna overhaul, noting that every station now has an up to date computer (though they are not connected to the transceivers) and our beam antenna is up and running. Rick also noted, with gratitude, John Miller's activity as W4MN and W4DFG achieving Clean Sweeps in the 13 Colonies Special Event. Finally, under Old Business, Rick noted the superb work on the website by Sabrina Schnell. Turning to New Business,

Upcoming DXpeditions:

For more information go to <https://www.ng3k.com/>

Start	End	DXCC	Call
Jul27	Jul31	South Cook Is	E51
Jul29	Jul31	St Kitts & Nevis	V4/GM5RDX
Aug01	Aug04	Scotland	MM0UKI
Aug01	Aug06	South Cook Is	E51
Aug03	Aug09	Botswana	A25UX
Aug03	Aug13	Maldives	8Q7GG
Aug05	Aug17	Palmyra Jarvis Is	N5J
Aug10	Aug17	St Lucia	J6N4XTT
Aug10	Aug22	St Pierre & Miquelon	T08FP
Aug13	Aug20	Kyrgyzstan	EX/SP9DLM
Aug14	Aug24	Turks & Caicos	VP5/K5SL
Aug15	Sep15	French Polynesia	FO/F1SMB
Aug17	Aug30	Timor Leste	4W/VK2MET
Aug20	Aug27	Vanuatu	YJ0VK

Ham Humor



Upcoming Contests

July		
20-28	Maidenhead Mayhem	17-18 ARRL 10GHz and Up
27-28	MARAC US Counties QSO Party	Keyman Club of Japan
	Alabama QSO Party	NA QSO Party SSB
	RSGB IOTA	CVA DX CW
August		18 ARRL Rookie Roundup
3	European HF	
3-4	10-10 Intl Summer USB	
	NA QSO Party CW	
	ARRL 222 MHz and Up	
10-11	YB Bekasi Merdeka	
	MD-DC QSO Party	
	KY SPOTA	

License Examinations

The next exam session is August 3 at 0900 at the shack,

Rick noted that having achieved his goal of shack renewal in his first six months, he would like to focus on fundraising and increasing membership in the next six months. He reported that we are adopting an online dues and donation collection system and he is interested in pursuing grants from ARRL and other entities. He also brought up making presentations to area Middle School students regarding Ham radio, noting that Brandon Hawkins' wife, a school teacher and aspiring Ham, has already done some ground work in that area. Lively discussion ensued on these two topics and, frankly, it was pretty hard to separate the two. As a proof of concept, Bruce related the history of a young man in the Columbia ARC who was exposed to ham radio this way, got licensed, and subsequently several members of his family all got licenses as well. The upshot of all this was that a motion was made, seconded, and passed without objection to investigate both the pursuit of grants and of conduct-

ing activity in area Middle Schools with STEM programs. It was noted by the membership that our August 3 testing session occurs simultaneously with the Little Mountain reunion. Rick reported that the city government had asked if any of our members had, and were willing to drive golf carts during the reunion to transport attendees from parking areas during the reunion. Some talk arose about having a demonstration table at the reunion, and even selling some hot dogs from, or adjacent to said table. As we will not have a meeting before the event, anyone interested in either activity should contact Rick directly, ASAP. The meeting was ended somewhere around 2000, but I was furiously writing all this down and did not note the exact time.