

SVARA Harmonic

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Amateur Radio Association

April 2005

HF = Historically Fascinating

My name is Aaron Stella (KD8AVA), and I had the privilege of participating in the international phone contest, Saturday, March 5th, using HF for the first time. My many thanks to Keith Delong (N8XD) for his willingness to spend his free day for the purpose of giving people like myself a chance to experience a new face of this mysteriously exciting hobby.

What is so fascinating about communicating around the globe using RF? To be honest, as I've stirred over this perplexity, I haven't come up with one solidifying reason; yet I am fascinated. I was excited about this hobby long before I knew what it was. Perhaps it's just another area of technology I've yet to explore; perhaps it's the fact that there are multiple facets of this hobby that can engage you. Whatever the reason, I'm sure my wife knew me to be slightly insane. After all, this was an "old-person" hobby, and it was out-of-date right?

After a working through a class taught by Lee (KC8ITI) and Keith (N8XD) this past December, I was able to pass my technician and code tests, and I was ecstatic. Continuing to work hard, I passed the General and Extra exams by the end of February. This does not mean that I've learned what I need to know; I've always just been a good test-taker I guess. Learning from others has always been more beneficial to me than reading from books, which is the reason I joined the SVARA club in the first place, and the phone contest that Saturday was a delightful, and at times nerve-racking, opportunity to do just that. Though I do not have the official list of who made an appearance, there was a perfect mix of newbie's and long-time operators.

Standing in the back room at the American Red Cross with three other first-timers, I became hesitant. We coaxed Rodger (KB8QO) into showing us how it's done, and without any hesitation he made a contact in about 6 seconds on 15 meters. He made it look easy. With the tension eased a bit, Gordon (KC8YVD) took the captains chair and made a contact. It all took about 10-20 seconds. So I give it a try and made two contacts. It was actually very fulfilling!

Congratulations were exchanged all around, and with a swelling of pride and confidence we kept going, sharing the helm. The anticipation grew with each contact to see who could identify which country they were from. Wales, Africa, Caribbean? What a thrill to think that we just spoke with someone from Wales, and that an invisible signal that I was "in control of" just made it there and back in a matter of micro-seconds! Sure I felt geeky getting excited over such a thing, but I was proud.

I went home after a few hours to go about my Saturday, and had hopes of catching a movie that night since my wife was out of town. I went about my business for a few more hours, randomly checking repeater activity, until I heard Joe (K8CQF) speaking of the contest still going on at the Red Cross. It was about 7pm when something happened. No longer did I desire to spend my night relaxing in front of the television eating junk food I would inevitably regret the next day, I wanted to go back and be with the people at the club and continue to explore this newfound passion. So I went back!

I stayed until about 10pm working with a wonderful gentleman, Bill (call sign unknown), on 80 meters. He shared a wealth of knowledge and experience with me with patience and kindness that taught me a deeper level of what Amateur Radio is all about, and I left that night amazed that some can think this hobby out-of-date. It is leading the communications world. After all, where would cell phones be if amateurs hadn't come up with the technology?

I look forward with much anticipation to the many wonderful learning experiences that lie ahead of me.

Aaron Stella, KD8AVA

Birthdays

April 5 – Roger Steffes, K8DVX
April 6 – Judy Hannon
April 11 – Bill Schuetter, KB8ANV
April 15 – Louis Vescio
April 23 – Fred Kleinfeld, K8EMQ
April 27 – Eileen Vescio

Anniversaries

April 6 – Charlotte, WD8RIM and Dennis, K8DO, O'Connor
April 9 – Muriel, KD6TVY and Wayne, W7KEH, Humbert
April 14 – Alice, N8RCC and Jack, N8QNV, Brown
April 19 – Suzanne and Dennis, KA8PRX, Poletti

S.V.A.R.A.
General Membership Meeting
March 4, 2005
American Red Cross

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM sharp. 45 members and guests were present.

There were some brief announcements (I.O.T.A. April 1st, MS Walk May 7th & Care Break, May 27th – 30th).

Keith, N8XD continued by showing the club the updated Silent Key plaque as well as presenting Carl, KC8YVI a plaque for achieving VE status within a year of becoming a ham. He also surprised Judy, KC8BYI and Jeff, KC8BDQ with printed coffee mugs (what else?) recognizing their efforts with Care Breaks.

Richard Pollman from the National Weather Service conducted SkyWarn training and finished around 9:30 PM.

It was announced that the Red Cross would be open Saturday March 5th.

Jennie, KC0RBV won \$34.50 in the 50/50 drawing.

George, N8NPW won a book donated by Joe, K8CQF in a second chance drawing.

The club voted unanimously to accept two new members. They are: Richard, KC5ELY and Duane, KD8AUY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Weirauch, KC8BDQ
Secretary

Board of Directors Meeting
March 22, 2005
American Red Cross

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM

The Secretary's report was accepted as presented on a motion by Rick, KC8VOA and seconded by Keith, N8XD.

The Treasurer's report was reviewed.

Repeater Committee: 6 meter rigs in Traverse City for repair. 220 Mhz and 2 meter antennas have been purchased for Rosein Tower expending half of the funds allotted for repairs.

It was agreed the club would pay \$50.00 for the multi-coupler we had been using on loan. The club will not participate in I.O.T.A. this year.

The board agreed to that the club would pay for dinner for the April guest speaker and his assistant at the Davenport Inn.

Sign-up sheets for the MS Walk, Care Break and field day will be at the April meeting.

Keith, N8XD reported that the club had received donations of a new Yagi antenna from Dave, N8ERL and a Drake rig from Joe, K8CQF.

The May and June Board meetings will be moved to May 11 and June 15 respectively facilitate the board members who are involved in the General Class session.

There will be testing April 9th in Midland. Check the club website.

QSO party at the Red Cross April 16th from noon to midnight.

Jeff, KC8BDQ asked the board if he could schedule regular roster updates, say twice or three time a year, to reduce errors. He noted the difficulty of republishing the roster every time someone upgrades or wants to change their phone number, etc.

Keith, N8XD noted that we need to appoint a representative to the Red Cross. They need to know we have manpower and resources available to them.

On a motion by Rick, KC8VOA seconded by Ron, KC8YVF the meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Weirauch, KC8BDQ
Secretary