

DON'T FORGET: OUR HOLIDAY PARTY IS THIS MONTH'S MEETING!



NFARL eNEWS ***December 2012***

www.nfarl.org

eNEWS is "what's happening" in **North Fulton** and surrounding area! Check out each item and mark your calendar. Go to arrl.org for national news, but here is this month's **North Fulton ARL eNEWS**.



Summary of Upcoming Events and Dates

- **Every Wednesday** - Hungry Hams Lunch Bunch - 11:15 AM - Slope's BBQ, 34 East Crossville Road, Roswell
- **Every Sunday** - **NFARES net** - 8:30 PM - 147.06 MHz (PL 100)
- **Every Monday** - **TechNet** - 8:30 PM - 145.47 MHz (PL 100) - Check [NFARL Nets website](#) for "how to"
- **Second Tuesday** - **NFARES meeting** - December 11, 7:00 PM at the Brandon Hall School, 1701 Brandon Hall Drive, Sandy Springs
- **NFARL Holiday Party** - Saturday, December 15, 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM at Alpharetta Adult Activity Center, 13450 Cogburn Road, Alpharetta. See details on [NFARL website](#)
- **Third Tuesday** - **Club Meeting** - **No meeting this month, replaced with NFARL Holiday Party**
- **VE Testing Session** - Saturday, January 12, 10:00 AM - Alpharetta Adult Activity Center

President's Corner / *Wes Lamboley, W3WL*

As the year comes to a close I look back and realize what an honor it has been to be your president and to be associated with such a wonderful group of people. Ham radio has been a major part of my life, and it continues to bring me great joy. I urge you all to click on the link provided and revisit our roots; it still gives me goose bumps!

<http://nfarl.org/hamvention/hamvention.html> then click on the sound bite next to Jim Stafford's photo) My thanks to all of you for making it so!

Another HamJam has now been successfully completed, with more than \$3,000 being raised for youth activities and scholarships. The speakers were highly interesting, informative and entertaining, and the money earned was icing on the cake! All the prizes awarded at HamJam (more than \$6,000 worth) were given totally free of charge, indicating the extent that ham radio suppliers are interested in and supportive of our focus on youth. That said, the NFARL



table at TechFest coming up on January 12 will provide youth an opportunity to learn to solder with an electronic kit-building activity. Additionally, your new NFARL president, John Kludt, K4SQC, will be presenting a forum on "Amateur Radio on the International Space Station." There will be many other interesting activities at TechFest as well (see <http://www.gars.org/w4gr/techfest> for more info), and it is all FREE! Sounds like a good thing to mark on your calendars.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the Holiday Party on Saturday, December 15, and sharing the joy this time of year brings to us.

73,

Wes, W3WL

Time to Plan for Field Day 2013 / Scott Straw, KB4KBS

The results for Field Day 2012 have been published and overall we did quite well. Our "operating event where a score is kept" measured up well. Most importantly, we managed to ward off the annual challenge by our friendly arch-nemesis, the Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society.



NFARL again had a good Field Day turnout in 2012. Planning is under way for FD 2013. Photo by Bill Hampton, W4OO

Most probably under duress or "influence," and certainly without prior spousal approval, I have agreed to chair the Field Day effort again for 2013. The dates this year are June 22-23, the *fourth full weekend* of the month (not the last weekend!). I have received a lot of good feedback about the event just concluded, and ideas for improving the upcoming event. Some are quite practical and some are quite radical. All were (and are still) welcome.

One strong suggestion was that we start planning earlier. I agree. Not having done FD planning before, I underestimated the amount of effort required to pull off an event of this magnitude. I owe a debt of gratitude to several folks who jumped in and helped

to keep things on track. To that end, we will begin meeting earlier in the year.

If you would like to help make FD 2013 a success, you are invited to attend planning meetings that will be held on the first Thursday of each month beginning in February. Mark your calendars now for 2/7, 3/7, 4/4, 5/2, and 6/6. My intention is to hold the meetings at a value-priced restaurant with a room where we can meet with some degree of sound isolation. I hope to see you then.

New to Ham Radio? Find a Mentor / Michael Birmingham, KK4LJG



It was a nice spring day in New England in 1962. I was a young boy and I was visiting a friend at his house. He had an older brother – 14 or so – and he brought me up to his brother's radio shack in the attic of their parents' house. His brother had a headset on, hunkered over his radio tapping away, sending code. He stopped and took the time to tell me about his hobby and show me around his shack. This was my first glimpse of amateur

radio and the memory stayed with me for all these years.

In August, I passed the Technician's exam and became KK4LJG. I have since passed the General test.

In September, I went to my first NFARL meeting. Although I had a great time and members were friendly and encouraging, I didn't ask any questions. I didn't "listen" to Gordon West's advice to find a mentor/Elmer. I took the first step by going to a meeting, but instead of asking for help, I relied on the Internet and my own research when it came to making radio equipment purchases.

The radios I bought are working out fine, thanks to the helpful staff at HRO. But when it came to an HF antenna I really didn't know what to do. I opted for a vertical. It was expensive but, I thought, something that cost so much must work well. I installed the antenna per the instructions but I didn't hear many stations and I wasn't making any contacts. I assumed the problem had to be my location.

Fortunately, I had also started going to Hungry Ham lunches. The setting was relaxed and I was encouraged to take part in the conversations. It was there that I began to talk about my poor on-air results. One ham invited me to drop by his shack. I learned a great deal and left with far more confidence. But when I got home, I still wasn't successful.

Later, this ham and I tried to have a QSO from his house to my house, about 5 miles. It was almost impossible to hear each other. There was something drastically wrong. A few days later, my friend enlisted another ham to try to contact me. This ham lived just 3 miles away. It wasn't until he boosted his power to 600 watts that I heard him!

The next day was a Wednesday so I was back at Slope's. The ham I now considered to be my mentor was there and he lent me a homemade wire antenna. I strung it up about 20 feet as an inverted V. This was not a great installation, but the difference was remarkable! I heard more stations and I made my first HF contact.

In November, I attended my first hamfest and bought a dipole antenna. My mentor came by the next day and brought a slingshot. He was able to get the antenna up over 70 feet above the ground. The difference in this antenna and the expensive vertical was striking! I went from not making any contacts to making contacts all over the world, including Japan, Russia, the Ukraine, Puerto Rico, and so on, using this simple antenna.

Sometimes we seem to miss the obvious. I know I did. Amateur radio is, by its very nature, social. It is all about communication. I encourage every new ham to get involved in a local club. Ask questions. Get involved. Your fellow hams love to share their knowledge with you. Don't think you are imposing on them!

I waited 50 years to get involved in this hobby. The 14-year-old I met so long ago stopped what he was doing just to share his excitement with me. Fifty years later and the people involved in this great hobby are willing to do the same. Get involved and enjoy this wonderful hobby and the people associated with it. And don't be bashful to ask for help/advice. Remember, you have to ASK to GET!

My mentor, Jim Stafford, W4QO, is just one of many NFARL members who offer help and advice to newcomers. For more information and a full list of mentors, go to the [Elmers tab](#) on the NFARL website.



Don't be shy about asking for help as you get up and running in our wonderful hobby, says Michael Birmingham, KK4LJG.

Browsing the Library / Keith Plossl, K4KRX

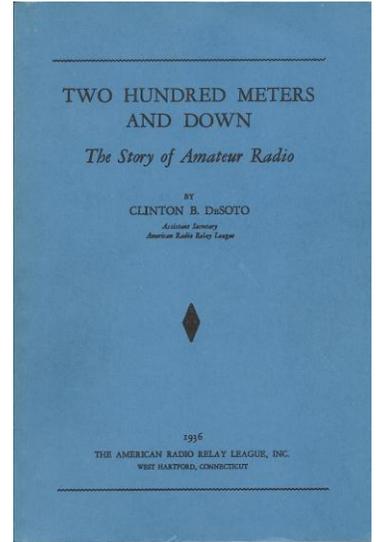
200 Meters and Down, The Story of Amateur Radio by Clinton B. DeSoto, W1CBD, (the same fellow who came up with the notion that “entities” such as Scarborough Reef should count as countries for DXCC credit) tells the story of amateur radio from a mid-1930s perspective. Note that the triode tube was invented in the 1930s and B-17 bombers were designed by engineers using slide rules in the mid-1930s. The ARRL was barely 15 years old and messages were being relayed across the country by

amateur radio operators without radio products corporations or government help. Many amateur radio stations were home-built so radio product businesses were often not involved in message relays.

The history begins with spark gap transmitters before the development of CW and the early development of vacuum tube technology. The book also describes how amateur radio was nearly wiped out by the U.S. Navy in the period surrounding World War I (1914–1918). DeSoto explains why the Navy failed to control all wireless communications and laid the foundation for the current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which began in 1927 with the Radio Act (which created the Federal Radio Commission). The FCC was formed by the Communications Act of 1934 a mere seven years later.



Clinton B. DeSoto



This book explains clearly that amateur radio exists today because our predecessors worked together to achieve this outcome. It's a good read. You can check it out from the NFARL library at our next club meeting.

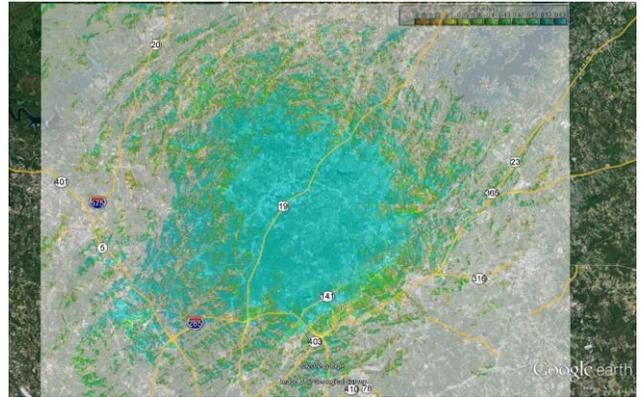
Brandon Hall Students Sample EchoLink / James Vaught, KK4IZN

Utilizing EchoLink, available through the NF4GA 145.47 repeater, middle school science students at the Brandon Hall School in Sandy Springs were able to contact amateur radio stations on the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea. Students asked questions about the island's local activities, the geology of the island and other earth science related topics. One of the eighth grade students, Abby Bean, KK4MAF, recently passed her Technician class exam. The students enjoyed their first ham radio experiences and are excited to use their HF and VHF radio to contact other stations around the world in support of their academic studies.



NFARES to Take a Peek at Radio Mapping Software

Dave Brackett, AK4CL, will be giving an introduction to Radio Mobile software at the NFARES meeting on December 11 at 7:00 PM at the Brandon Hall School, 1701 Brandon Hall Drive, Sandy Springs. Radio Mobile is network planning freeware by Roger Coudé, VE2DBE, designed to help understand ground-wave propagation characteristics in planning emergency communications options. Various propagation performance maps using digital terrain data can be generated by the program, including 3D views, stereoscopic views, and animation. Potential uses by the NFARES group will be discussed.



NFARL Activities

NFARL volunteers with soldering equipment are needed to guide youth in an electronic kit-building exercise at Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society's TechFest, Saturday, January 12, 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM.

Contact Dave Brackett, AK4CL, for more details and to volunteer at his [e-mail address](#).

GARS TechFest will be held at the Gwinnett Medical Center, Resource Center, 665 Duluth Highway, Lawrenceville 30046. There is no admission fee.



Club Repeaters

145.470 (-) EchoLink Node 560686 NF4GA-R	100 Hz	Sweat Mountain
147.060 (+) Primary ARES repeater	100 Hz	Roswell Water Tower
224.620 (-) Joint Venture with the MATPARC club	100 Hz	Sweat Mountain
443.150 (+)	No Tone	Roswell Water Tower
444.475 (+)	100 Hz	Sweat Mountain
927.0125 (-)	146.2 Hz	Sweat Mountain

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