

HAMMIN' IT UP

North Fulton Amateur Radio League wins award



Staff / Todd Hull

From left, North Fulton Amateur Radio League members Mack McCormick, Chuck Catledge and the Amateur of the Year Jim Stafford scan the radio waves at Mack's hi-tech home on Friday.

By Rachel Kellogg

rkellogg@neighbornewspapers.com

The North Fulton Amateur Radio League was honored with the title of club of the year at the Dayton Hamvention, the largest gathering of ham radio enthusiasts in the world.

According to club president Chuck Catledge, the club has grown from having about 50 members in 2007 to having 250 active members.

"In 1990, I saw amateur radio was on a list of things you'd never see in 20 years," he said. "But we've got a fairly large and growing number of youth."

Two of the club's youngest members have achieved the highest level of Federal Communications Commission licensing.

The club, which is looking for new members, helps newcomers get

started with building antennas and with obtaining their FCC licenses.

"We like to appeal to people who want to start from scratch," Catledge said.

Roswell resident Jim Stafford, who was named amateur of the year at the convention, serves as the club's youth liaison, promoting amateur radio as a scientific hobby.

"I got into this as a teenager, and once I plugged in, I got really excited about science and technology," he said. "I want to raise awareness about the importance about math and science for youth, and show them a practical application."

The retired engineer said he also likes to promote the sense of accomplishment that the hobby brings.

Stafford, who grew up on a farm in Indiana, has a shortwave radio that reaches across the globe.

"We've all got friends all over the world that we talk to," he said. "And we do everything without the help of satellites or the Internet."

Stafford said he believes his club was chosen as club of the year, not only because of its overwhelming growth, but because the members pride themselves on being friendly and helpful.

"We provide classes and activities, and the club is supportive and educational," he said. For more information about signing up for classes visit the club's website at www.nfarl.org.

The club also focuses on providing communication public services and will participate in Field Day, an operating event to show radio capabilities during these disasters and emergencies, June 26 and 27 at Waller Park Extension in Roswell.

Information: ae4cw@nfarl.org.