Trip Report

Southeastern Division Convention

Huntsville Hamfest

www.hamfest.org

August 18-19, 2012

The Southeastern Division Convention was hosted by the Huntsville Hamfest at the Von Braun Center in downtown Huntsville, Alabama. The event is supremely well organized and does an outstanding job of making life easy for exhibitors.

There is an extensive program of forums, one of which I presented on Saturday about my visit to the WRC earlier this year. One of the key points I made was the importance of the IARU in protecting and advancing the interests of Amateur Radio at the WRC. Three other forums were ARRL / IARU related: A Southeastern Division / ARRL Section forum conducted by the Director and Section Manager, a public information forum led by Ed Tyler N4EDT, the Alabama PIC, and an IARU forum presented by President Emeritus Larry Price W4RA. The public information forum presentation was very thought-provoking. Unfortunately the attendance was less than a dozen people. The points made by N4EDT deserve much wider circulation.

The ARRL table was in a good location and had many visitors. Bob Inderbitzen NQ1R had brought publications as incentives for new memberships and renewals. I don’t know the ultimate tally, but I believe that about 65 memberships were in the stack by the end of Saturday alone.

The distressing news about Joel Kleinman’s death was received on Sunday morning. We were all upset but did our best to put on a brave face and continue the interaction with members.

I did two interviews during the event. One was on Ted Randall’s “QSO Radio” shortwave program (http://www.tedrandall.com/). This one was a challenge because Ted likes the ARRL so much that he did most of the talking. However, the opportunity was appreciated. Another interview was done with Tom Medlin W5KUB on his live streaming Internet program (w5kub.com). Tom is a better interviewer and the format allowed responding in real time to listeners’ questions.

The convention was visited by a number of present and former ARRL officials. I met our new Southeastern Division Vice Director and his wife. Because it is a small world, I discovered that they are fellow Atlanta natives, and I believe I surprised them by knowing what high school they attended when one of them mentioned that it was on the edge of the Georgia Tech campus. Also at the convention were Honorary Vice President Frank Butler N4RH and President Emeritus Larry Price W4RA. Since so many Delta Division members go to Huntsville – the city is just a few miles from the Tennessee border -- Director David Norris K5UZ attended.

On Saturday evening, the North Alabama DX Club held a banquet which they kindly invited me to attend. The speaker was Bob Allphin K4UEE, showing slides and video from the Malpelo DXpedition. Bob is a delightful speaker, and no one was asleep or fidgeting at the end of his talk. That is important because he concluded his talk with a slide about the ARRL’s Second Century Campaign. When he asked the group to think about what Amateur Radio means to them and to think about translating those feelings into action, an approving buzz went through the room. His words were heart-felt and therefore effective.

There were a few questions about the National Convention decision but no anger underlay them. I explained that the two proposals were discussed carefully and at length by the Board. That answer was satisfactory and it was not necessary to go into any detail.

The Huntsville people put on a fine convention, and I hope we are able to agree with them to host a future National Convention early in the ARRL’s second century.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Craigie N3KN