Trip Report

Ohio State Convention

Columbus, Ohio

August 11, 2012

The Ohio State Convention was held in conjunction with the Columbus Hamfest sponsored by the Voice of Aladdin ARC (W8FEZ). The club is associated with the Aladdin Shriners and the convention was held at the Shriners’ large facility located a few miles from the Columbus airport. Also at the ARRL table were Section Manager Frank Piper KI8GW, Vice Director Williams, Director Weaver, with others helping out from time to time. A volunteer was checking award applications.

The hamfest opened at 8 AM, and forums began at 9 AM. The program schedule is no longer available online; however, there were three concurrent forums at 9 AM, 11 AM, and noon. At 10 AM the ARRL forum had no other forums scheduled opposite. The event formally closed at 2 PM, but most vendors and buyers had departed before then.

The ARRL forum was very well attended. Every chair was filled. Section Manager Piper presented awards in the newsletter competition sponsored by the Section and also presented an achievement award named in honor of past ARRL Great Lakes Director Al Severson AB8P (SK). After that, Director Weaver introduced me.

After reminiscing a bit about Al Severson, who was GL Director when I began as Vice Director of the Atlantic Division in 1990, I spoke about the ARRL’s domestic and international advocacy work. I explained a little about the background of the IARU and how it has benefited American hams. I encouraged people to read the stories about Dick Baldwin W1RU to understand more about the IARU’s significance.

The forum ended with some Q&A, all of it very constructive in tone. The Section Manager awarded me the Key to the City – a Morse code key mounted on a Plexiglas base. That was very clever and got a good laugh from the group.

The sponsors said the paid attendance was about 500, which was an improvement over last year.

At 1 PM I played one of the roles in the Wouff Hong ceremony. I cannot say more since I don’t know for certain that everyone reading this report is an initiate of the Royal Order.

Fred Osterman N8EKU, one of the owners of Universal Radio (the main commercial vendor at the hamfest) came over to thank the ARRL for the help his business has received from Debra Jahnke in developing advertisements. Universal Radio is one of five businesses in the HamPROS group, and Fred complimented Debra for her skill in working with the members of the group to create ads that are agreeable to all. I got the impression that this has not always been a piece of cake.

*Postscript: Roanoke Valley ARC Hamfest, Vinton, Virginia*

On August 4, I went as a civilian to the Roanoke Valley ARC’s very small hamfest in Vinton, VA, which is something over an hour from my home town. It is the only hamfest in southwestern Virginia and hams from my home area go there to buy and sell. It is held at William Byrd High School, which has been one of our Education & Technology Program schools for a number of years.

I was not able to go last year, but in some previous years there was not an ARRL table worthy of the term. The literature supplied by the League was just tossed on a bare table in a hallway. Realistically, the event is much too small to expect a Director or Vice Director to be there. Although he is invited, the Section Manager usually does not attend, saying he is too busy. This year, one of Director Bodson’s Assistant Directors took the initiative, got display materials from the SM, and put together a very attractive ARRL table that located in a good position in the room. I spent some time there with him and other volunteers. They did a good job for the ARRL.

At this hamfest a member made a point of telling me how much he appreciated Staff’s help in getting started with Logbook of the World. We sometimes hear complaints on that score, so it is only fair to report good news, too.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Craigie N3KN