



Our mascot, the "Taz," wishes everyone a

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



My Visit to Ameritron

I have been in Florida for most of February, visiting my youngest daughter, Maureen and two grandsons, Bobby-14 and Reilly-11. I took the long way to Florida, swearing never to ride through traffic-choked Atlanta again. I hopped on the highway and headed to Mississippi to visit MFJ-Ameritron in Starkville. I went to the combined factory and repair facility to drop off an antique 811 amp that once belonged to a good friend, Tom-KC8QGJ-SK. The unit is about 40 years old and since receiving it from Tom's XYL 9 years ago, I have been breathing life into this beast to keep me on 40 meters daily. There are things I can repair but since the old band switch gave up the ghost, I let the crew at Ameritron give it a good going-over. I drove through Starkville to find, on a side street, an unassuming building with the Ameritron logo on the front door. Now you won't see photos from the inside of the factory as they frown on

The "Chew"

SEVENTY-TWO



“Where Choosy People

Choose to CHEW!”

NEWSLETTER March 2024

people doing photography. I met up with the chief technician, Bob and handed over the beast. Bob was kind enough to walk me through the factory and let me watch the units being constructed from scratch. The workforce is mostly women, and I chatted with a few as I walked through. This day they were in a production run of their AL-811 amps. It is impressive to see these coming together on an assembly line where one station builds the coils, the next installs the power supply boards and so on until completion. All units are tested and packed for shipment all over the world. We reached the repair shop and there were a few amps awaiting repairs.

I asked Bob what was the biggest problem with the amps? He stated “simple misuse!” The amps, especially the solid state units, are not made for constant *key down* operation such as PSK-FT8 and other constant carrier uses. With this bit of advice from the horse’s mouth, I pass it along to our friends as a small warning directly from the shops. My amp may be ready when I drive home but, if not, they will ship it back to me in Wisconsin for more airtime on the Chew.

Orlando Hamcation 2024

I went to Orlando on Friday February 9 to see what was available. A few hundred hams lined up early as the early bird gets



the worm, or ham goodies before they are scooped up. I met up with long-time friend,

Ken-W3XAF and a few others to roam around the back flea market areas to check out the offerings. Ken has the blue hat while I, Loby have the red Chew cap. We ran up



and down the aisles looking for a few things friends on the Chew wanted.

I am always on the lookout for interesting old microphones for my collection, and this year I didn't leave empty-handed. I bought a vintage late 1930s/early 1940s Electro-Voice desk mic. It will be cleaned up and given a home on my collection shelves.



I joke about finding everything, including the kitchen sink for sale in the vendor area. I was not disappointed this year either.

There was a large swap-meet building where there were

piles of rigs and other useful electronics that any ham would like to buy. This is where I picked up my mic.



One enterprising ham had a table full of transmitting tubes for sale. If you didn't need one for your station, he was glad to turn it into a unusual and useful table lamp for your shack.

Down the aisles in the main building, we found Randy-KB3IFH at his QSL card booth. Business was brisk as many hams looked through his many styles of QSLs, and placed orders. Left to right: Randy-KB3IFH, Vic-K4ZEE, Ken-W3XAF, Loby-WA2AXZ



Continuing through the main building, we saw many of the major manufacturers showing off their new transceivers. Surprisingly, even Kenwood had a presence after being absent from last years Dayton and Orlando hamfests.

ARRL was there hawking memberships and various activities within the organization. The President of ARRL, David Minster NA2AA, was meeting and greeting the members.



ARRL held several educational forums during the event too.

A perennial visitor, K0NEB-Joe Eisenberg, also known as the ham "Cat in the Hat," has been seen at just about every hamfest I have attended. How's that for dedication from our ham friend from "Whoville" ?

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MFJ set up their wares in the main building proudly showing off just about every item they make from antennas to amplifiers. One side of the exhibit was a sale table where one could purchase items from open boxes to repaired goods.



Ham Radio Outlet enjoyed brisk sales on the east side of the building. Many of the sales people came from various HRO stores across the nation. Many of the major suppliers from Tower Electronics, DX Engineering and others were on site

So many connectors and so little time. One of the major reasons many hams gather at these hamfests is to stock up on the many parts that keep our stations operational. From the purveyors of new equipment as well as the flea market tables selling vintage parts, many happy hams went home with a full bag of goodies.



Ken-W3XAF decided to visit the hat maker as he said his old hat was getting tired. After placing the order, the machine operator loaded his name and call into the embroidery computer and within a few minutes, a spiffy new hat was ready.



There were a handful of special event stations



in operation on the grounds. A few showed off their satellite communications skills with fixed and handheld antennas.



All-in-all, everything at the Orlando Hamcation was just "ducky" and the smiles seen spoke volumes.



## ~~~~~ Volunteer NCS's Wanted



Recently we have had the good fortune of having an almost full roster of Net Control Operators. We are always on the lookout for great people to step up to the mic and help fill-in when openings occur. If you would like to help out, please contact our net scheduler, KB3LGO-Walt