

LINE OF SIGHT

A Message from the Editor

The 2008 TAPR/DCC Conference

In all my years of attending conferences, I have never seen such a well-organized event as this year's TAPR/DCC conference. Three factors contributed to the success of the conference. First was the leadership provided by TAPR president David Toth, VE3GYQ, and TAPR vice-president Steve Bible, N7HPR. They saw to it that all of the oversight details were handled well.

Next was the on-the-ground leadership of Kermit Carlson, W9XA, and Mark Thompson, WB9QZB. Kermit and his crew were responsible for making sure everything worked properly at the venue, the Chicago Holiday Inn hotel. Among their responsibilities were making arrangements at the hotel, setting up and operating the audio/visual equipment. The A/V equipment was provided by Ron Steinberg, K9IKZ, of RC Communications (more about his part appears below). Mark was responsible for working with local clubs and the local publicity for the conference. Both Kermit and Mark were recognized for their hard work during the banquet (see photo).

Finally, as mentioned above, Ron Steinberg, K9IKZ, was responsible for the A/V—and superb is the best way to describe his setup. Two large screens with flame-thrower projectors were positioned on opposite sides of the stage area in the main ballroom. In addition, two remote, large-screen LCD monitors and speakers were installed in the hallway and the demo room, which allowed participants in those areas to keep track of presentations.

As part of the A/V presentation, during breaks a rotating PowerPoint slide presentation was projected and featured each of the significant supporters of the conference. Because *CQ VHF* was a sponsor, I was quite pleased to see our logo as part of that rotation.

All of this superb organization provided the setting for the excellent presentations that were made throughout the weekend. Thanks to Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, a DVD of each of the presentations will be available for purchase in about three months. Watch for an announcement of its availability in my "VHF Plus" column in *CQ* magazine.

On a personal note, I would like to say thank you to all concerned for their very gracious hosting of my wife, Carol, W6CL, and me during our all-too-brief stay at the conference. Because of my church commitment on Sunday morning, we had to fly back on Saturday evening. Even so, the hospitality shown by all to us during our stay was deeply appreciated.

Next Year's Conference

The leadership has agreed to hold the conference in Chicago at the same hotel in 2009.



The TAPR/DCC banquet recognized some of those who contributed to the success of the event (left W9XA, right WB9QZB).

A strong factor in this decision was the use of the excellent A/V equipment this year, which Ron agreed to make available again next year. What helped make it possible to use the A/V equipment for the TAPR/DCC conference was that it had been used for the W9DXCC convention the prior week. In discussing the A/V availability with me, Ron commented that it made economic sense to keep everything in place for both events.

A New Way of Hosting Ham Radio Events?

Ron added that what would make even more economic sense in these times of belt-tightening was for ham radio organizations to plan back-to-back-to-back events. He suggested that next year the W9DXCC convention could be followed by a midweek event organized by an antique radio organization, which would then be followed by the weekend TAPR/DCC event. The benefits could be a possible hotel package for some who would want to take in all three events, plus some sort of discount price that could be negotiated for all three events. Also, having the same A/V equipment in place for the whole week would be much less costly than installing and then tearing down after each event. A final benefit would be the cross-pollination of the hams attending each others' events. Hams attending one event could learn about what other hams are doing and maybe get some new ideas for their own niches in the hobby.

Ron concluded his conversation with me by suggesting that I consider promoting his idea

of multiple events being held consecutively during a particular week. Perhaps other organizers could follow Ron's suggestion in other parts of the country. For example, a QCWA chapter could piggy-back on a regional hamfest to draw hams to both events.

Growing Use of Technology

Certainly, the A/V equipment used by both the W9DXCC and TAPR/DCC organizations raised the bar for future events. Several of the attendees with whom I spoke at the TAPR/DCC said that they had never experienced such quality in A/V production. With the bar set so high, what could be next?

In a conversation I had with Kermit Carlson, W9XA, about that subject, he informed me that as the president of the Central States VHF Society, he hopes to be able to present online video streaming of the conference at next year's event, which will also be held at the Chicago Holiday Inn. By making the video streaming available, he plans to also offer online registration for the event so that hams who are not able to travel to Chicago will also be able to participate in the conference. He added that the online arrangements would include a talkback feature so that online participants would be able to ask questions of the presenters.

In making next year's CSVHFS conference available online, Kermit is borrowing from the growing interest in online and distance education. For a variety of reasons, people are not able to travel to central locations to take courses. The answer to this dilemma is the use of the evolving internet technology to make it possible for students to receive comparable education at their distant locations.

A collateral benefit for what Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, and Kermit are doing (Gary with his DVDs and Kermit with his online access) is the archiving of the presentations that were made at the events. By way of Gary's DVDs and the subsequent downloading of the videos from the CSVHFS conference, hams will have access to technical presentation in ways that never before have been available. Both local hams and hams in far-away DX locations will be able to gain knowledge and insight from the presentations made during what had previously been isolated conferences.

It could very well be that along with setting the bar for future A/V commitment to a conference, the TAPR/DCC conference may have also provided the germination point for the future of knowledge transfer and cross-pollination for the Amateur Radio Service.

Until the next issue... 73 de Joe, N6CL