



# MARS NEWS

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society



## INDEX

Program .....	1
Pres. Letter ....	1
ARES .....	2
Board Meets ...	4
Events .....	4
NC Party .....	5
Tip .....	5
Club Info .....	6

## THE PROGRAM FOR THE APRIL MEETING HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED UPON.

IT'LL PROBABLY BE A GOOD ONE SO.....  
SEE YOU THERE!!

### President's Letter

April is almost done and we are now heading into May. The Mecklenburg County Senior Games is coming up on May 1st at UNCC. We will need around 6 or 7 HAMs for that event, and usually goes into the afternoon. It's a fun event, low-pressure, and they provide free food and drink! Contact Jeff, KA4WYC to sign up and assist with this event.



President  
Shawn Goodin  
K4RSG

Many thanks to Vince DiCarlo for presenting the Advanced Weather Spotter class at the March Club meeting. We had a great meeting with many visitors, and congratulations to Bill Heybruck and Robbie Finger for winning the Hamfest Worker Prizes.

Thanks to all who helped with the MS Walk on Saturday April 17th. We had a good time, beautiful day, and minimal problems. Despite the loss of the 145.29 repeater (due to electrical problems at Wachovia), we rolled with the punches and used the 146.94 machine, which worked very well for us.

In June, we will have Field Day and the MS Challenge coming up. We will need plenty of help for those events, so look for details at the upcoming club meetings.

See you at the meeting!

### BPL Comments

The deadline to file comments to the FCC on BPL is May 3. This NPRM is separate from the "Notice of Inquiry" hams may have already commented on, so if you, have already responded to the NOI you also need to comment on the NPRM. Comments are accepted on the FCC's web site at  
<<http://gulfoss2.fcc.gov/ecfs/Upload/>>.

### For Sale

**Club members get first Dibs.** If you went on a radio weekend with the club before 1985, you might remember the Pincor 3000 Watt generator we used (it's been in the storage trailer since then). It gens both 118 & 240 VAC with a 7 HP Tecumseh engine. The varnish is cleaned from the gas tank, new gas line and carburetor, plug and condenser, so now it runs pretty good.

**Call WB2NHQ, 704-366-5375**

**Or email [wb2nhq@w4bfb.org](mailto:wb2nhq@w4bfb.org)**

**Come see it and make an offer.**

### Upgrade

Upgrade your license on Saturday May 1 at the VE testing to be held at East Baptist Church.

**Volunteer Net Controllers  
needed for the Metrolina  
Emergency 2-mtr net.**

**Contact Jim Payne,  
1 [n4jbp@arrl.net](mailto:n4jbp@arrl.net), Net Mgr.**



## 2004 Mecklenburg County ARES Update

### Who/What is Mecklenburg County ARES/RACES

The ARES unit in Mecklenburg County, NC is composed of volunteer amateur radio operators, who provide emergency communications during times when normal communication systems are disrupted or overloaded. Our primary served agencies are Charlotte-Mecklenburg Emergency Management (EOC), Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, Charlotte Fire Department, MEDIC, American Red Cross, Carolina's Medical Center, Presbyterian Hospital system and the Salvation Army. Our goal is to serve these agencies, the general public and our fellow man as volunteer emergency communication specialists.

The ARES program is designed to train amateur radio operators in emergency communication skills, maintain a usable network of local FM repeaters, be capable of providing HF and digital communications in the field or at pre-installed amateur radio stations, and to learn how to function as a unit. We conduct several drills per year, to include the following:

- Catawba or McGuire Nuclear Drill with Emergency Management
- ARRL Simulated Emergency Test
- ARRL Field Day

Our most recent activations were due to telephone communication outages during the 2002 ice storm and the 2003 US Air commuter airplane crash at Charlotte-Douglas Airport (this activation only lasted about 1 hour). We serve as a secondary communication system for the core infrastructure of emergency and public service agencies, as well as provide a level of inter-agency communication. For more information on Mecklenburg Co. ARES, use one of the following means:

- Mecklenburg Co. ARES web site: <http://www.mcares.net>
- Email the EC at [w4oh@arrl.net](mailto:w4oh@arrl.net)
- Call EC on the telephone
- Monitor daily M2MEN nets on 146.940 (-) W4BFB repeater

### Mecklenburg Co. ARES Organization Structure

There are various ARES appointments or roles that are defined within our local area of jurisdiction. The list below describes ARES officials for Mecklenburg County and constitutes our local ARES planning committee:

<b>Appointment</b>	<b>Appointee</b>
North Carolina Section Manager (SM)	John Covington W4CC
NC Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC)	Bernie Nobles WA4MOK
NC Assist. Section Emergency Coordinator Western Branch	Vacant
District Emergency Coordinator AREA 12	Paul Robinette KD4OZI
Mecklenburg Co. Emergency Coordinator	Daryl Sampson W4OH
Assistant Emergency Coordinator – Digital Communications Liaison	Steve McCabe KE4IYH
Assistant Emergency Coordinator – American Red Cross Liaison	John White WB2NHQ
ARES Call Roster Captain	
Assistant Emergency Coordinator – Salvation Army Liaison	Randy Hill KA4WIM Brian Mulder KF4VOO
Assistant Emergency Coordinator – Civil Air Patrol	Dave Holbrook KC4YPB
Assistant Emergency Coordinator - Local Hospital Liaison	Steve McAtee NØJJO
Assistant Emergency Coordinator - EOC Operations Support	Tim O'Rourke W4YN
ARES Public Information Officer – Mecklenburg Co	Mike Gates KF4UVO
ARES Call Roster Captain	
ARES Web Site Mgr. – Mecklenburg Co.	Jim Payne N4JBP
Net Manager - Metrolina 2m Emergency Net (M2MEN)	
ARES Call Roster Captain	
MEDIC Representative	Michael Stanford KG4SQR
MEDIC Representative/Mecklenburg County EOC Liaison	Monroe Hicks WA4BCN
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Emergency Management Representative	Stephen Norman KF4CXB
Salvation Army Representative (Director of Emergency Services)	Mike Patterson KG4PDA
ARES Call Roster Captain	Shawn Goodin K4RSG

Continued on Next Page

## Continued from Previous Page

ARES Call Roster Captain

Mike Miranda W4DXL

ARES Call Roster Captain

Greg Onachila KG4IOE

### Current Unit Status

Over the last few years, our Mecklenburg County ARES program has maintained slow growth. For the most part, we have reached a plateau of 115 registered operators. Of these folks, we have about 12 operators who serve consistently and effectively, which puts us at a 10.4% capability level of our total potential. As you can see, we have a long way to go in regards to training and recruitment of solid ARES operators. The goal of our program is not necessarily a large roster, but to be functional enough to meet our served agencies' needs. Unit effectiveness and capability is a constant struggle and on-going problem for our Mecklenburg County unit.

If you analyze the FCC database, you will see we have a tremendous amateur radio resource pool (in terms of numbers of licensees) in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. I'm not sure why there is not more of a volunteer spirit amongst our ranks locally. I'm inclined to think people who live in large metropolitan areas tend to think someone else will take care of the core business needs, while they sit back and watch from the sidelines (only becoming involved when they see an immediate need which fits their personal schedule). In my personal opinion, what these folks do not realize is the ARES/RACES and public service aspect of amateur radio IS the amateur radio service which is described in Part 97 of the FCC rules. This is the "give back" that keeps our licenses, bands and modes available to us as we daily enjoy the hobby aspect of amateur radio. So the next time, you're rag-chewing, contesting, Dxing or just having fun on the air remember the ARES/RACES guy's contribution because he/she is the one that keeps these privileges available to you as a US citizen. Also, if you're not involved with ARES, why don't you think about becoming an active part of the ARES/RACES program locally and help us "give back" a little more? We need a few good men and women. This means YOU!!!" J

### ARES Happenings

The following events are planned for 2004:

#### Recent activities

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| • January 31st  | 1st quarter Mecklenburg County ARES Planning Meeting           |
| • February 21st | Mini-Field Day Exercise at Reedy Creek Park                    |
| • TBD           | CMPD Law Enforcement Center 911/Command Center Tour            |
| • March 13th    | Western Branch ARES Meeting at the Charlotte Hamfest           |
| • March 16th    | Catawba Nuclear Drill w/ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Emergency Mgmt. |

#### Upcoming events

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| • May 22nd 8:00am      | 2nd quarter Mecklenburg County ARES Planning Meeting (Tentative) |
| • May 22nd 9:30am      | Mecklenburg County ARES Training/Meeting (all ARES ops invited)  |
| • June 26-27th         | ARRL Field Day 2004 (all weekend)                                |
| • August 9th 7:00pm    | 3rd quarter Mecklenburg County ARES Planning Meeting (Tentative) |
| • October 2004         | Mini-Field Day Exercise (Location TBD)                           |
| • November 6th 8:30am  | ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (Tentative)                        |
| • November 20th 9:00am | 4th quarter Mecklenburg County ARES Planning Meeting (Tentative) |

### Current ARES Projects

One of the major responsibilities of the local ARES program is to create a core infrastructure of served agency stations, local repeaters and the Discovery Place station. To do so, we work closely with served agency representatives from Emergency Management, CMPD, CFD and MEDIC. Fortunately for us, many of these representatives also possess an amateur radio license. Some of the current projects we have under way to continue this effort are:

- CMPD Command Post Station – We currently have a 2m/70cm FM station available for the 911 center located at the Law Enforcement Center downtown. We have been working with CMPD to install a second 2m/70cm FM station in the new Command Post facility. Digital communications (packet) may be added to the capability of this station in the future. This project has been on hold due to funding issues since July 2003. We hope to reinitiate it soon after rethinking our installation design to find an easier route for our coaxial cable.

# Minutes of the Last Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met at the  
Red Cross Building, on April 6th

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## Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society

### Present:

Shawn Goodin, K4RSG; Bill Turner, W4WNT; John White, WB2NHQ; Dave Stewart, AF4ZK; Tom Nicholls, W4NCU; Scott Ellis, KG4UDX; Irv Hoechner, KF4KHN, Greg Onachila, KG4IOE

### Absent:

Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC

Meeting called to order at 7:16 PM.

### President's Report:

Gaston County ARES sent a note thanking us for the use of the 145.23 repeater. They have found it very useful.

### Vice President's Report:

A meeting may be scheduled at the Aviation Museum on West Blvd. at the airport in the future.

Vince diCarlo will tentatively be scheduled for May with the Weather Watcher's Radar Course.

### Secretary's Report:

The database has been updated for e-mail addresses.

### Treasurer's Report:

John went over the budget and balance sheet to date as well as the preliminary information on the Hamfest income. A Hamfest critique meeting will be held this month.

The phone line at the Red Cross is not used, and will be cancelled.

### Public Service:

MS Walk on April 17 is staffed; Elena Maya-Scott will be net control.

### Repeaters:

Nothing new on repeaters. Gaston County is happy with the 145.23 repeater for ARES net.

### Holiday Party:

Dave Stewart reported that the Christmas Party will be on Saturday Dec. 11 at the Pine Lake Country Club in Charlotte. The reservation payment has been paid. The room holds 60-80 people. The country club has a buffet price and a "plated meal" price, which is less. There is no dance floor in the room we are renting.

### Old Business:

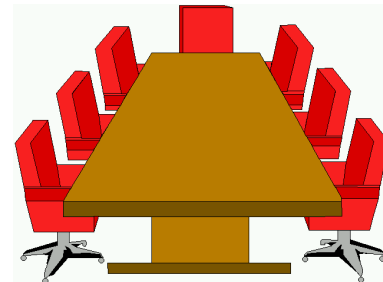
The 3KW generator has been cleaned and reworked. It is proposed to sell the generator by putting an ad in the newsletter.

### New Business:

At Crisis Assistance Ministry, Tom Nicholls says, there are people with limited English who may want to contact family back home. Tom suggests setting up an Echolink system to facilitate these contacts.

**Meeting was adjourned at 9:20PM.**

**Submitted by Bill Turner, W4WNT, Secretary.**



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## **EVENTS**

- April 17** MS Walk - Freedom Park
- April 20** Hamfest Critique, 7pm, Red Cross
- April 27** Mo. Meeting at E. Baptist, 7:30 pm
- May 1** VE Test Session at East Baptist Church
- May 1** Senior Games at UNCC
- May 4** Board Meeting at the Red Cross
- May 25** Mo. Meeting at E. Baptist, 7:30 pm
- June 1** Board Meeting at the Red Cross
- June 4** MS Challenge Walk
- June 5** MS Challenge Walk
- June 6** MS Challenge Walk
- June 19** MS Dollar Ride #1
- June 26** Field Day
- June 27** Field Day
- June 29** Mo. Meeting at E. Baptist, 7:30 pm



## The NC QSO Party, or how I escaped the snow

by Bill Turner - W4WNT

After 18 inches of snow the week of Feb. 29, it did not take much for me to decide the beach was beckoning. The NC QSO Party ran on Sunday Feb. 29 and on Saturday I headed for Wilmington to operate as a mobile in the contest. I had run four counties east of Charlotte last year and wanted to do more counties on the shore this year. I drove to Wilmington on Saturday, leaving the snow behind; as I got further east beyond I-95 there was no snow. The weather in Wilmington was in the 60s and clear blue sky. I was using Hamstick antennas for 20m, 40m and 80m. The antennas were helped out by an LDG tuner borrowed from Tim O'Rourke, W4YN. The radio is an ICOM 706MkIIG. The tuner broadened out the useable range of the Hamsticks, allowing Phone and CW use on the same antenna. The transceiver ran about 70 watts taking power from the power outlet while the tuner took less than half a watt from the cigarette lighter. I started out in Craven county, driving north on Rte. 17. I did a short side trip into Pamlico county, then north through Onslow and Beaufort counties. At Washington in Beaufort county, I turned east on Rte. 264 driving through Beaufort and into Hyde county. Although I was mobile, I stopped to make contacts working both Phone and CW. Due to the distances from county line to county line, the number of contacts I was able to make was reduced. One of our CDXA members, Ron Bailey, AA4S, was in the western part of North Carolina operating CW while driving and copying everything on to a tape recorder, so his QSO count per hour was very much higher. Mecklenburg ARS members AD4IE, WB2RHM, and W4GRW contributed contacts to my log. One savvy contester parked on the point where Rockingham, Guilford, Stokes and Forsyth counties come together, giving out 4 counties with every contact. I learned the importance of bringing your tool kit, when my paddles started acting up on the way south after dark. Some adjustments and I continued to make CW contacts. Finding parking lots to operate from or wide spots in the road is more of a challenge after dark. If you have a mobile capable rig, this is an operating event I'd highly recommend. The trip was very enjoyable and while the score was better than last year, the journey was the best part.

Bill Turner, W4WNT



## ARES - Continued from Page 3

- Charlotte Fire Communications Station – We are currently working with CFD Communications and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Emergency Management to install a 2m/70cm FM amateur radio station at the CFD Communication headquarters co-located at CFD Station One. This station will be capable of working FM simplex, FM repeaters, as well as digital (packet) communications. This project is expected to be complete by end of April 2004.

### Final Emergency Coordinator Comments

As the Emergency Coordinator for Mecklenburg County, I am greatly appreciative to the men and women who serve in our ARES unit, especially the core folks and members of our planning committee. Your contributions have transitioned our unit from absolutely nothing (January 1998) to an ARES unit, which is recognized across North Carolina as a preferred way to operate. This is not my doing by any means, but yours and you should be proud of your accomplishments. Thank for your time, talent, equipment and dedication. My hat is off to you!

73,

### Daryl Sampson W4OH

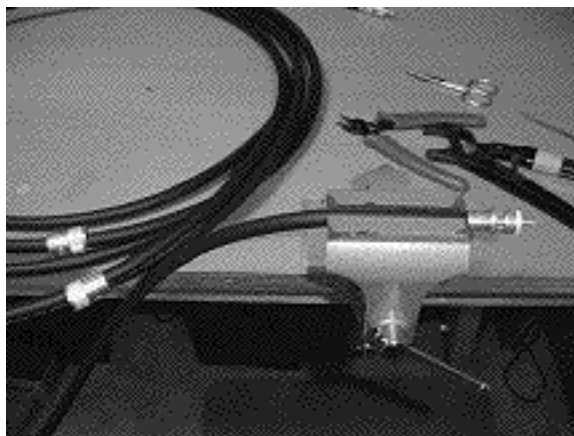
ARRL Emergency Coordinator – Mecklenburg County, NC (1998-Present)



### A Soldering Tip

by Paul Ponak - AD4IE

I just came across this idea the other day in a magazine. It's a great way to solder the coax shield to a PL-259 when the spool of wire doesn't want to cooperate.



**Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society, Inc. - Officers and Board of Directors -2004:**

President - Shawn Goodin, K4RSG, Email Address: k4rsg@w4bfb.org

Vice President - Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, Email address: ka4wyc@w4bfb.org

Secretary - Bill Turner, W4WNT, Email Address: w4wnt@w4bfb.org

Treasurer - John White, WB2NHQ Email Address: wb2nhq@w4bfb.org

Directors - Irvin Hoechner, KF4KFN; Greg Onachila, KG4IOE; Dave Stewart, AF4ZK;  
Scott Ellis, KG4UDX; Tom Nicholls, W4NCU

**Meetings** @ East Baptist Church, 6850 Monroe Road (next to East Mecklenburg High School, near Conference Drive) - Last Tuesday of each month at 7:30 P.M.

**Clubroom** - Red Cross Building, 2425 Park Road, RM 023, Charlotte, NC Telephone 704-334-3900

**Club Repeaters**

**W4BFB Web Site**

146.34/146.94 w/Autopatch. 144.69/145.29 w/Autopatch.  
144.63/145.23, no Autopatch  
449.60/444.60 w/Autopatch and P/T 100.0  
Autopatches Access \*(don't unkey)+phone number. Disconnect #  
222.80/224.40 w/Autopatch 145.01 Packet Digipeater, W4BFB-1

**<http://www.w4bfb.org>**

Webmaster: Wayne Setzer - WB4BXW  
<wlsetzer@att.net>

**METROLINA 2m EMERGENCY NET:**

9:00 PM local time, daily on 146.34/146.94 featuring the ARRL Audio News feed on Sunday night.  
Alternate frequencies announced. Net Manager: Jim Payne, N4JBP, <n4jbp@arrl.net>.

Next Meeting - April 27, 2004