



# MARS News

April 2013

Volume 64, Issue 4

Mecklenburg  
Amateur Radio  
Society™

## Inside this issue:

Member Spotlight	3
Public Service	5
Committee News	
MARS Meeting Minutes	10
Board Meeting Minutes	11
Ask Your Elmer	11
Net Information	12
Ham Happenings	13

## Upcoming Events

- ◆ Charlotte Motor Speedway Time Trial Series for CCTA: Wednesday, May 8th
- ◆ Charlotte MS Walk: Saturday, May 18th
- ◆ Field Day: June 22nd & 23rd
- ◆ Lake Norman Excursion: Saturday, July 13th
- ◆ Bike MS: Breakaway to the Beach: September 21st & 22nd

See [www.ridemaps.com](http://www.ridemaps.com) for more information on these events!

## PREZ SEZ - A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Andy Hawkins (K4GKK), President

Hello Fellow Members,

After last month's frantic activities, this month is rest and relax time (albeit briefly). This month, we start back with some public service events. The CCTA starts up shortly, along with a short ride that the MS Society has arranged for its "Top Bananas". We also have the MS Charlotte Walk at the beginning of May, so get your volunteer caps on and be prepared to help out when called upon.

We are currently planning our Field Day operations and have yet to decide on a site. We are thinking about the Belk Scout Camp again, but we are looking for somewhere with more public access to try and promote our hobby. A couple of other spots have come to mind but if you have any suggestions, they would be considered accordingly. We are looking to improve on last year's great scores, but we can't do this without your involvement. This is not only a FUN event to participate in, but it is

also a training event to assess our readiness for emergency operations. The more people we have participating, the more rewarding it becomes. Like last year, we are planning on putting four stations on the air, along with a separate GOTA (Get On The Air) station for the newly licensed and visitors. We will also have a picnic lunch for you to enjoy on Saturday.

This month's meeting promises to be very interesting; a presentation on D-STAR is planned. We are also bringing one of the club's go-boxes for members and visitors to use after the formal session of the meeting. We hope to have this set up and ready to go so that you can experience checking into the M2MEN at 9pm or just learning the controls. At future meetings, we hope to have an HF station set up.

Be sure to check out the *W4BFB Members Message Board* at the front of the room at all future club meetings. This is for the use of all club members to advertise any ham equipment you are looking to sell/trade at the meeting, as well as any equipment you may be looking to purchase. This is also a place where you can leave us helpful comments and/or suggestions.

Here's hoping you have great April, both Ham and otherwise.

Best 73,

Andy Hawkins, K4GKK

## GENE "ALAN" RICHARDS - KF4NJP

On March 25, one of our dear HAM brothers, Gene "Alan" Richards (KF4NJP), lost his fight with kidney failure. Below is a copy of the eulogy that was written and read by Bryan Ferdinand (K4NET) at Alan's service on March 30 to honor and celebrate the wonderful person that he was, both inside and out.

*I stand before you today and will tell you that I may not have known Alan as well or for as long as many of you here today, but I can say with assurance it was a pleasure to know him - as a person, friend, and fellow Ham. As many of you are well aware, it never took pomp and circumstance to get to know Alan; just keying up the mic and saying 'Hey Alan, how are you today?' is all it ever took to get to know Alan, as he was a very easy-going person in his daily life. That is one of the unforeseen beauties of amateur radio: you never know whom your next conversation will be with. Needless to say, there is always a friend or new friend to be found on a repeater... just say "HI".*

*I had the pleasure of meeting Gene "Alan" Richards about two years ago when I became a newly minted technician HAM and barely knew anything about a net, HAM radio, or who was who in the CLT Metro.*

*One of the first nets I checked into was Alan's Metrolina 2M Emergency Net on the 146.94 machine at 9pm, where nightly you can find at least 20 different hams all gathering in a nightly display of friendship and collaboration just to share a recap of their day, no matter how good or bad it was. As we all know, Alan certainly had the gift of gab and could always get more out of you during a net, even if you were not in the mood to chat that day. In the end, Alan would always give the repeater finals a good run for their money by running a net that would average an hour, putting many of the other net controllers to shame.*

*Over the course of two years, I once again realized the phrase: "A friend in need is a friend indeed." This is because no matter how many times I reminded Alan by stating, 'don't go out in the rain with your scooter', he would never listen and repairs would surely need to be made once again. Without hesitation, I would stop by and pick up his scooter for a rather quick overhaul, whether it was drying out the electronics or adding a Titleist golf ball to make it easier for him to race Pam to the next stop. The one thing that he was not happy with though was the fact that I never installed the promised 300HP V-8 he was wanting for greater top speed.*

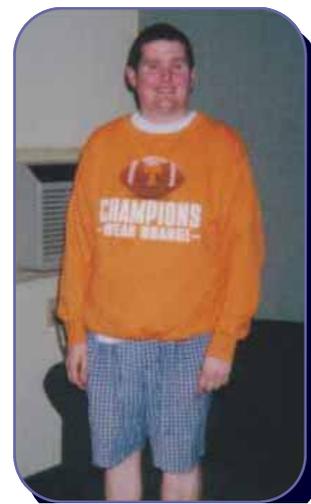
*We have all heard the many stories that Alan chose to share with all of us during the nets or throughout the day - stories like him keying up his HT while on a commercial airliner and wondering if he would get yelled at or cause the plane to nose dive. Stories like his beloved Roger Rabbit escaping in an act of magic only to appear a few days later and say, 'Whala, here I am again! Thought you could find me, huh?'*

*Alan and his wife Pam also participated together in other non-ham related activities such as Bingo night where he would win a Chick-fil-A gift card, his various talent shows, or supporting Pam during a Special Olympics outing.*

*No matter who you are - Ham, non-Ham, friend, wife or family member of Alan's - we will all miss him being the voice as a net controller on the local Charlotte Metro machines. He was certainly loved and will be greatly missed by all that were lucky enough to get to know him.*

*Rest in peace, Alan. You will be missed by all.*

*Please keep Alan's wife, Pam (N8PAM), and their families in your thoughts during this difficult time.*



Gene "Alan" Richards, KF4NJP

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

In our March 2013 MARS newsletter, we introduced the “Member Spotlight” section in the newsletter, which contains short biographical information about the newest members of the club so we can get to know them better, while learning more about MARS and the diverse amateur radio interests within the club. In addition, we will also profile veteran ham members of MARS so new members (and some not so new) can learn more about those who have been around for a while.



Eric Webner, K4FAN

**Eric Webner, K4FAN** (previously KA8FAN) is one of our new members who joined MARS in February. However, Eric is not new to amateur radio. He was licensed in 1979 in Columbus, Ohio where he grew up; “Go Buckeyes”, says Eric. One of his uncles, David Dennis, W8DDD, holds an amateur radio license. As a seasoned ham, Eric’s primary interests in amateur radio fall along the lines of DX, D-STAR, antennas, and restoring radios. In addition to his love of amateur radio, Eric enjoys outdoor sports - bicycling and running (especially with his dog, Nina) - music and gardening. The interest in gardening came at a young age; when he was growing up, a neighbor gave Eric space to use for his own garden. Among the plants he grew were peanuts and potatoes. Eric has held leadership positions in amateur radio. He is a past President and Field Day Manager in the Ashland (Ohio) Area Amateur Radio Club and was Assistant Emergency Coordinator for the Ashland (Ohio) County ARES. His involvement in community volunteer activities includes involvement with “The Soundman” - running sound and lighting for Praise-style worship at his church - and was a leader in starting and seeding Praise worship services. Eric lives in the South Charlotte area and is an electronic security professional. We welcome Eric to the MARS family.



Hal Bouton, N4QT

**Hal Bouton, N4QT**, while new to MARS, is not new to amateur radio. He was licensed in Chicago in April 1958 (pop quiz – do the math), obviously at a very young age. While Hal is originally from New York, Charlotte has been his home for many years. Subscribers or viewers of Channel 42, WTVI, will remember him from his many appearances on the station. He was President and CEO of the station for 20 years before retiring in 2003. Overall, Hal spent 38 years in the broadcasting industry. Part of his broadcasting career began with his Air Force service in the American Forces Radio and TV Service. He served in Turkey and West Germany. On the air as a Disc Jockey (D.J.), he was the Dick Clark of North Bavaria. (We wonder if Hal hosted a “Rockin’ New Year’s Eve” in North Bavaria?). Hal gave much back to his community, in addition to quality programming. He served on many community boards of directors, including the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, and was a member of Rotary for many years. Hal is the President of the Carolina DX Association, which meets for lunch every Wednesday at 11:30 on South Tryon at the Skyland Restaurant. Hal says everyone is invited. His initial interest in amateur radio began in his New York neighborhood. He said a local doctor who ran the Full Collins radio in the mid 50’s was a catalyst in his life-long involvement in the hobby. According to his profile on QRZ.com, his main interest has always been SSB DX, but is now getting into PSK31 DX. He says he really enjoys the mode. MARS is happy to welcome Hal into the club and looks forward to many years of fellowship.

## WHY DOES ARES HAVE EXERCISES?

The word "exercise" can sound like a bad test that we all had to take when we were in school.

Let me put everybody's mind at ease. When ARES uses the word "exercise", it means to practice emergency net operating procedures while having fun at the same time.

The reason why we have exercises is to test our radio equipment, digital modes, our own radio operating skills, and how well we work with other agencies. During all exercises, we come up with a scenario and try to make the exercise as real as possible, even though it is not.

We begin by opening an "Exercise Net" and explain the purpose of

the net. We then begin taking check-ins.

The Exercise Net is run the same way as if it was an actual event or an actual emergency. All Exercise Nets are what we call a "Directed Net". In a Directed Net, the net control station is in charge of all net activities.

All traffic and contacting of other stations must go through the NCS (Net Control Station).

There is no informal session in an Exercise Net. All activities are formal.

At the end of the Exercise Net, the Emergency Coordinator (EC) will review what went right and what can be improved upon; yes, all of

us will make mistakes, but this is how we learn and improve our skills.

We are all on the same team and have one goal in common: assisting our served agencies by providing emergency communications when regular communications fails.

As you can see, by having more "Exercise Nets", it will help all of us to become better emergency communicators and be ready if an actual event or an actual emergency does occur.

Jerry Brewer / N4MIU

Mecklenburg County ARES  
Emergency Coordinator

COML Trained



David Holbrook - KC4YPB  
Tom Moore - K4DRV  
Bill Newsome - AC4ZR  
William Richarz - N4DH

Wayne Setzer - WB4BXW  
Robert Teague - WA4RT  
Eric Webner - K4FAN





Mary Hunt (N4MH),  
Chairperson

## PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE NEWS - MARY HUNT, N4MH

We will again be supporting the **Carolina Cycling Time Trial Association** out at Lowe's Motor Speedway starting in April. The ham radio operators are the track marshals. Our job at this event is to be out on the track to make sure the cyclists follow the rules for riding, as well as to notify the track medical team immediately if there are any injuries. The cyclists go around the track 7 times/10 miles and are timed. A cyclist leaves the start line every 15 seconds. Their time is tracked via a microchip they wear.

We have two operators in each turn, one on the front stretch and back stretch, and one at the start/finish line. Normally when you work the event for the first time, we have you work with an experienced operator so you can learn how we support the event.

We use a simplex frequency for this event. The event starts at 6:30 pm each month, so we are in place and set up by 6:00 pm. We drive into the Speedway through the infield and you are required to sign a waiver before you drive in. If you are interested in participating in this event, please let me know by sending an email to [mhuntbc@gmail.com](mailto:mhuntbc@gmail.com).

The dates are:	Thursday, April 18	Wednesday, July 24
	Wednesday, May 8	Wednesday, August 14
	Wednesday, June 5	Tuesday, September 10

On May 18, we will be supporting the **MS Charlotte Walk**. This is a five-mile walk that leaves from South Park. For this event, we have a ham radio operator at each rest stop. The radio operator is the communications from the rest stop back to net control. You check in with net control when you arrive and introduce yourself to the rest stop captain. If they start running low on supplies or are missing supplies, they notify you and the information is passed onto net control. We also have radio operators on bicycles or in vehicles that drive along the route. The purpose of this position is to make sure the walkers are okay. As the SAG vehicle, if a walker motions to you, you stop and pick them up. For all the MS Events, we put orange MS Arrows on the vehicles so the walkers can easily identify them as an official MS Vehicle. The event starts at 9 am and we are in position by 8:30 am. The walk normally finishes up by noon that day. If you are interested in supporting the event, go to [www.ridemaps.com](http://www.ridemaps.com), scroll down to the event, and click on the button for ham operators to sign up.

On Saturday, July 13, the **Red Cross Lake Norman Excursion** will be held, with the start point being in Mooresville. John White, WB2NHQ, coordinates the volunteers for this event.

September 21 and 22, 2013 will be the **MS Break Away to the Beach**. This is the largest Public Service event that we support each year. We leave from Monroe, NC on Saturday morning and the finish point on Saturday is Francis Marion University in Florence, SC. On Sunday, we have two start sites - Florence, SC and Green Seas, SC – with the finish line at Sunset Beach, SC. We also have a start line on Saturday in Columbia, SC that is supported by the Columbia Amateur Radio Club. So, mark your calendars early and plan to join us for this great event.

October 26, 2013 is the **Cystic Fibrosis Cycling Event** in Waxhaw, NC. Tim Slay, N4IB, coordinates the volunteers for this event.



## HOW TO GET INTO A NEW MODE WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

It's funny how fate or chance can take your life in new directions. Such a thing happened in 2010 when my long-time friend Tim K8IAT called me to let me know that I had won the Grand Prize Drawing from the Dayton Hamvention. The voice mail, which came while we were driving home from the Hamvention, had the exclamation, "You lucky dog! You won the top prize!" At first, I thought it was a phone scam, but something told me to call this number back. I had won a D-STAR repeater! The news certainly made the return trip to North Carolina a bit more exciting!

A few weeks later, I received my prize, which included a repeater controller as well as the RF deck for both two meters and 440. I bought a D-STAR radio but didn't really learn how to program or use the thing right away. Life got busy as my wife and I built a home and

moved twice, and D-STAR got "back-burnered" for a while.

Fast-forward to the end of 2012 when I was put in contact with Fred WB4QOC who, with his contacts in the commercial radio industry, helped me find a home for this repeater. Word got around and we formed a group called the **D-STAR FAN Club (W4FAN)**. The core of our "club" consists of Fred, Johnny WB4U, John KG4WAC, Mike W4DXL, Roland W9HPX and Eric K4FAN. This group brought together knowledge, skills, equipment and contacts and we were able to inexpensively put the D-STAR repeater 440 deck on the air at the Union County Sheriff's Department radio tower. We also had tremendous assistance from Steve KA4YMY and Ken KC4YOZ. Many thanks go to the Union County Sheriff's Department for hosting us, as well as

everybody whose hard work made this come together. I couldn't be prouder! This repeater is now serving Union County and surrounding areas, and has quite a bit of activity.

Needless to say, I did get my own radio programmed and have been enjoying D-STAR for awhile now.

**D-STAR (Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio)** is a digital voice and data protocol specification developed as the result of research by the [Japan Amateur Radio League](#) to investigate digital technologies for [amateur radio](#).(1)

Ok, that description either lit up some neurons, or made your eyes glaze over. The bottom line is this: with a D-STAR radio, you can communicate with other amateurs using digital voice (DV) and low-speed digital data (you can send your name, location, etc.) over VHF and UHF frequencies.

Not only can you talk to your friends that are on the same repeater, you can talk to hams on other repeaters around the world. This is accomplished by linking repeaters together through a connection to the internet. Several linked repeaters make up a reflector. There is much that you can do with D-STAR, and there are many clever methods of accessing the D-STAR network.

Want to learn more? Steve Koone KA4YMY and Roland Kraatz W9HPX will be giving a presentation on D-STAR at the April MARS Club meeting. For hams old and new, you won't want to miss it!

1 - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D-STAR>

Eric Webner / K4FAN

## THE GREAT CHARLOTTE EARTHQUAKE: PART TWO

On Saturday, April 27, 2013, Mecklenburg County ARES will be conducting Part II of "The Great Charlotte Earthquake" exercise. This is a continuation from our last exercise, which took place on January 26, 2013. Our goals for Part II of this exercise are to have actual agencies being involved and passing more traffic.

The exercise will begin at 7:00pm and will last approximately one hour. We will be using frequency 146.940 Mhz. with a tone of 118.8. \*(This information is subject to change.)\*

More information will be provided closer to the exercise date. For any questions or concerns regarding this event, please contact the Mecklenburg County ARES Emergency Coordinator, Jerry Brewer (N4MIU), at [jerry.n4miu@gmail.com](mailto:jerry.n4miu@gmail.com).





**WE NEED YOU**

## CQ, CQ, CQ! CALLING ALL HF OPERATORS!

Although we are a General Service Club, which operates primarily on VHF/UHF bands, it has been discussed during many board meetings that a large percentage of our club holds licenses beyond the Technician class. With so many members being able to operate on HF bands, we would like to incorporate information into the newsletter which can be useful, informative, interesting, and educational to these persons. At the same time, we hope it may encourage those who do not hold licenses which allow full-operation on HF bands to study and take their tests to achieve those higher class licenses.

In order for us to make this happen, we need your help! We are looking for anyone with HF skills that would be willing to write an article or two that can be published in future newsletters. They can be technical articles or include information such as common HF nets and contests. Please email the newsletter editor with any information you would like to share.

## AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE EXAM SESSION - APRIL

Address:

YCARS Clubhouse  
2119 Squire Rd  
Rock Hill SC 29730-7593

There is an upcoming license exam session in Rock Hill, SC on Saturday, April 20, 2013. This event will be sponsored by the YCARS club. Testing will begin at 9:30am and walk-ins are allowed.

Contact Information:

Jason R. Starnes  
(803) 980-2342  
jrstarnes@gmail.com



## AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE EXAM SESSION - MAY

Our local WCARS VE Team will have a VE Test Session on Saturday, May 25 at 9:00am. The exam session will be held at East Baptist Church on Monroe Road.

Please arrive at the church by 8:30 am to complete your paperwork. If you have a current license or CSCE, bring the original and one copy. Also, bring a Picture ID. The test fee is \$10.00. All classes of tests will be administered.

This is a walk-in session so you are not required to register. If you need additional information, call our VE Info Line at 704-948-7373.



## CAROLINA DX ASSOCIATION BONEYARD



Don't forget about our partnership with CDXA and their Boneyard. They have a page on their website ( <http://www.cdxa.org/boneyard.shtml> ) for CDXA and MARS members to list their equipment for sale or swap. A maximum of 5 pieces of equipment can be listed on the Boneyard, per person, at any one time. Pictures of equipment are welcome. Equipment will be listed for a maximum of 180 days unless notified by seller that equipment has been sold or traded. After the 180 days, items may be removed from the list. Members wishing to list equipment can send the information to [wb4bxw@gmail.com](mailto:wb4bxw@gmail.com).

## MEET YOUR EDITOR

**Stefanie Comerford**, KK4LZR (or the "Lazer"), most graciously accepted the assignment of Editor for the MARS newsletter. In order to prepare the monthly edition, Stefanie will need the cooperation of any MARS member who is approached for help and information.



Stefanie is originally from Toms River, New Jersey. Today, she lives in Monroe and is a frequent voice on the nightly 146.94 net. In addition, she has been a Net Controller on occasion. The MARS editor is a college student and will receive her Associate Degree in May. While going to school and enjoying the amateur hobby, she also works part-time handling medical records for an Optometrist. She is a member of the Alpha Xi Delta sorority, whose philanthropy is *Autism Speaks*. This is how Stefanie's passion for volunteering with *Autism Speaks* began.

While attending the Rock Hill Hamfest last October, Stefanie took her Tech exam and passed it. Her primary interest in amateur radio is VHF. She also enjoys volunteering at the many Public Service events with which MARS is involved. Stefanie said she started going to hamfests and radio events with Charles shortly after he received his license and decided that she liked what she saw and heard and thought it was "pretty cool", so she started the process to get her license. She sees the value of amateur radio as a way to help her community. Amateur radio runs in her family. Her Great Grandfather, Ellwood Hendricks, is WB2QWP. Her father, Scott, is KG4LWA. All club members know her brother, Charles, KK4HOK - another Net Controller in the Comerford family. She was a full-time volunteer at the Charlotte Hamfest and was a member of the Hamfest Committee, providing valuable support for the 2013 event, especially in the area of social media marketing. MARS shares Stefanie with our fellow hams in Union County, as she is also a member of the UCARS club. Both clubs will benefit from her enthusiasm and support of amateur radio.

Stefanie sends a special "thanks" to her brother for his support and encouragement for her to become involved with ham radio and she looks forward to the opportunities and learning experiences that lie ahead for her within this hobby.



All articles for the May newsletter must be submitted to the newsletter editor at [w4bfbeditor@w4fbf.org](mailto:w4bfbeditor@w4fbf.org) by **Saturday, May 4th!** Thank you for your cooperation.

## K4NET JABBER CORNER - ECHOLINK PRIMER

I have received many e-mails asking how EchoLink works and what type of device you need in order to make it work. This particular writing will give you an overview of EchoLink for smartphones and tablets. Here is some basic information to help you get started.

EchoLink software allows licensed Amateur Radio stations to communicate with one another over the Internet by using streaming-audio (VOIP - Voice Over IP, also known as ROIP- Radio Over IP). The program allows worldwide connections to be made between stations, or from PC, Smartphone or tablet to another station - greatly enhancing Amateur Radio's communications capabilities. There are more than 200,000 validated users worldwide — in 162 of the world's 193 nations — with about 5,000+ online at any given time.

As you may already know, our 46.94 machine is connected via an RF link at my QTH through call sign *K4NET-L*, which operates 24/7/365 (periodically down for maintenance). You can download EchoLink for FREE from the Apple App Store or Android Google Play Store by simply searching for it. It is important to note that the Android version will NOT install on every Android tablet on the market today due to a vast array of hardware and compatibility issues. Check the forums or do a search on Google if you have compatibility questions concerning your device, or go to <http://echolink.org/> for additional information.

In order to ensure that our 46.94 machine is adequately available for our local RF audience, I have restricted access of the node at this time to North America and Canada only. There was previously an issue where multiple folks from other foreign (non-English) speaking countries would connect to my node and tie up the repeater for a lengthy period of time. Remember, when connected to the *K4NET-L* node, anything said there goes out on the 46.94 machine. The same FCC rules apply here as to the RF side.

Once you have installed the tablet or smartphone version, it is important that you run the application before the validation step. Audio tweaks can be made along the way at any time. You may need to go into the "Settings" menu in EchoLink and bump up the mic gain to a +6db as the default 0db setting is usually very quiet. Overall, audio quality sent to the repeater has been enhanced on my end with a 6-band EQ that drops low-end below 500 Hz and accentuates the highs from 1 kHz up for better clarity.

Validation of the application is needed before you can actually use the application. By simply running it from your device for the first time, your call sign is registered on the EchoLink relay servers. An additional validation step is completed by going to: <http://echolink.org/validation/>. Once there, type in your call sign and it will tell you if validation is needed. There are multiple ways to accomplish this, depending on your situation, but most people opt to spend the \$1 on the credit card method. You can also choose to scan your license and send them the scan. This step in the validation process is mandatory. I am glad to see they are keeping the system and our repeaters secure.

Bottom line - EchoLink is FREE and is a GREAT way for you to stay in touch with your friends in Charlotte or to check-in to the Metrolina 2 Meter Emergency Net nightly at 9pm while you are away from home. Many, including myself, have used it from remote places such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, Alabama, Minnesota, and Nevada. We even have Brian, KF4VOO who checks in with us periodically from Calgary, Canada after moving from Charlotte a few years back.



Till next time, 73 and keep the repeater finals warm-

Bryan / K4NET



## MARS MEETING MINUTES: MARCH 26, 2013

**New Members:** David Waldro, KK4BGQ and Hal Bouton, N4QT

**Visitors:** Danny Young, N4XHT; Will Roberts, AA4NC; Clarence and Evelyn Norris; Mike

**Meeting Topic:** Bryan spoke about Hamfest 2013 results.

**Public Service:** Mary Hunt, N4MH discussed volunteer opportunities with the Carolina Cycling Time Trial Association (CCTA). CCTA events will begin on April 18. They are evenings at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord. All that is needed is an HT. Hams are used as marshals for the event, looking out for cyclist safety and reporting rule violations, such as drafting. Email Mary Hunt at [n4mh@w4bfb.org](mailto:n4mh@w4bfb.org) if you are interested in volunteering. Mary also discussed the upcoming MS Charlotte Walk at Symphony Park at South Park Mall on Saturday, May 18. Rest stop volunteers and bicycle mobiles are needed.

**Hamfest:** Hamfest was positive and well-received this year. We have applied and been approved for Hamfest next year. There was a meeting between ARRL and MARS; any issues of the past seemed to have been resolved positively. Bryan put out a vendor survey about the new format, etc. Input from those was overall good: 4.6/5.0. They like the no Sunday format, hands-on antenna workshop, and the go-box contest. The SOTA and Swains Island forums were especially popular. In addition, they liked the new website and that we added PayPal, providing 100 more ticket sales. They disliked some of the Friday hours, no battery dealer, and no Girl Scout cookies. Bingo was popular as well. Shelly won the prize for most working antennas built. Raleigh Hamfest is this weekend. Also popular were Facebook and Twitter. QRZ banner offered expanded advertising. The "portable program" was also new. Ticket sales were down as they were

throughout the country. Extra prize ticket sales stayed strong thanks to George and Mary. Yaesu donated the grand prize. Everyone helped answer questions so folks were happy with "customer service." *2014: What's Next?* Bryan doesn't know if he will be able to commit to Hamfest for next year due to his regular bank job requirements. He gave accolades to Tom and Mary for their great job throughout the years. Some new ideas for next year included alternative energy, a full-service radio dealer, e-mail flyers and more advertising. Charles suggested an increase in the digital wave of the future. There is a link on the website to submit new ideas for next year. Bryan read a letter from Stephen Koone, KA4YMY to Andy Hawkins. They promoted Charlotte D-STAR at Hamfest and were pleased with the coverage. Mitch added that the next meeting will include a presentation on D-STAR. We appreciated the help from the other local clubs.

**Miscellaneous:** Tom introduced himself as treasurer and offered to speak with anyone who had suggestions for the budget. Jerry Brewer described the process with ARES and opportunities available for member practice sessions. Andy announced that Paul Jones is the new Public Information Officer. Paul described the new member feature we are starting for the newsletter and asked members to fill out a short bio to give to Stefanie. Andy announced the annual Field Day is coming up in June. He asked for thoughts on other possible locations, possibly something more public than the Belk Scout Camp. There will one practice run. Stan Bagwell asked for alternate net controller volunteers.

Submitted by Sandra Jones, KK4DAW  
Secretary - MARS

*\*Official minutes available upon request.*



### CLUB MEETING

The Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society™ club meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm. Our meetings are held at East Baptist Church (next to East Mecklenburg High School, near Conference Drive). The address is 6850 Monroe Road, Charlotte, NC 28212.

Everyone is welcome, even those who do not have their license yet! We love seeing new faces, so come out and join us and see what our club is all about!

**April Meeting Topic: D-STAR**



## BOARD MEETING MINUTES: APRIL 2, 2013

### Treasurer's Report:

Tom presented the treasurer's report.

### Vice President's Report:

April 26 club meeting will be about D-STAR with Eric Webner, K4FAN presenting. An email will be sent to everyone to bring their D-STAR radio. There was discussion about whether to continue to bring the go-box to meetings as it is cumbersome. Additionally discussed was the club meeting furniture and sound setup. People seemed generally pleased but want more time to socialize and possibly a break in the meeting for refreshments as opposed to having them at the end. We need a wireless mic and less club meeting interruptions from those not in our group.

### Secretary's Report:

107 total current paid members, including 5 life members. Robbie Finger was formally established as a life member.

### Committee Reports:

**Repeater/Packet Committee:** The 444.600 machine is down. It is being repaired and should be fixed by the April club meeting. Bryan is buying a weather radio to go on 146.94 that breaks in and automatically broadcasts urgent transmissions. It will be on within 30 days. The board is pursuing a line of inquiry as to possibly relocating the Anderson Mountain NC node to other facilities in the same geographic area. We are currently exploring what we need to fortify the current packet network as it is today, as well as goals for future enhancements and upgrades.

**Public Service Committee:** April-September we will be participating with CCTA. On April 21, MS Society will offer a short ride for their Top Bananas. May 18 will be the MS Charlotte Walk and the Lake Norman Red Cross Excursion is

July 13. September 21-22 is the MS Breakaway to the Beach and the Cystic Fibrosis Ride is October 26. See [www.ridemaps.com](http://www.ridemaps.com) for more information.

**Grants and Resources:** There was continued discussion of the process of the getting a 501(c)(3) tax designation. The board discussed some of the pros and cons and who/what might be good resources for best making this decision. On October 7, 1943 during WWII, the "Forgotten 98" were killed on Wake Island Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. The CDXA is supporting this effort of commemoration. A motion was made by George and seconded by Tom to make a donation on behalf of W4BFB toward the effort. More info can be found at [www.wake2013.org](http://www.wake2013.org).

**Field Day Committee:** Board discussed location for field day that would have more public exposure. Several locations were looked at as possibilities.

**Hamfest Committee:** All the bills are not in yet; it is still ongoing. We will then be able to calculate our total profit.

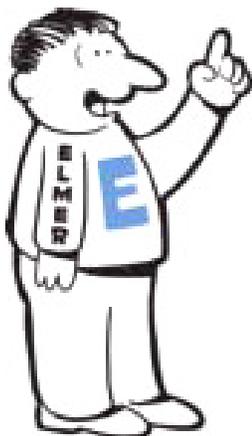
**New Business:** Board voted to send Pam Richards a gift card in memory of Gene Alan Richards. Stefanie, our new newsletter editor, gave an excellent presentation about the upcoming changes and format she is working on to add features and make our club newsletter more appealing and useful.

Submitted by Sandra Jones, KK4DAW  
Secretary - MARS

\*Official minutes available upon request.

## ASK YOUR ELMER

They say one of the best ways to learn something is to ask questions and some of your best resources are right within our club. These club members are willing to share their knowledge with you to help you become a better, more informed ham. Please email them with any questions!



Antennas	Bob Ferdinand, K9TMU; Bill Miller, KT4YE; Mike Wentz, KE4EHC
Digital Modes	Stan Bagwell, AJ4ZL
D-STAR	Eric Webner, K4FAN
ICOM Radios	<b>We're still looking for someone to put here... let us know if it can be you!</b>
Kenwood Radios	Bob Ferdinand, K9TMU; Bryan Ferdinand, K4NET
Packet Radio	Bill Newsome, AC4ZR; Seth O'Neal, KF4LLF
Ten-Tec	George Hohas, W4GEH
Yaesu Radios	Mitch Barbato, KX4MB

## METROLINA 2-METER EMERGENCY NET™

### Net Controllers

Sunday: Jerry, N4MIU

Monday: Bryan, K4NET

Tuesday: Stan, AJ4ZL

Wednesday: Dave, KJ4SJV

Thursday: Charles, KK4HOK

Friday: Don, KJ4ATJ

Saturday: Pam, N8PAM

\*John, WB2NHQ, is presently covering Saturday night's net until further notice.

Join us for the Metrolina 2-meter Emergency Net™ every night at 9:00 P.M.! The primary frequency is our 146.94 repeater and the alternate backups are our 145.29 repeater or 146.52 simplex. The tone is turned off during this net.

### Alternate Net Controllers

Bob, K9TMU

Carl, KJ4VLC

Jerry, N4MIU

John, WB2NHQ

Sandra, KK4DAW

Shelly, KJ4ATK

Stefanie, KK4LZR

\*If you are interested in becoming an alternate net controller, please contact our Net Manager (Stan Bagwell) through email at [M2MENNetManager@W4BFB.org](mailto:M2MENNetManager@W4BFB.org).



JOIN US ON  
THE AIR...  
WE'D LOVE  
TO HEAR  
FROM YOU!

## OTHER LOCAL NETS

### Sunday

Simplex Net, 8:00pm  
(147.505)

### Thursday

220 Jabber Net, 8:00pm  
(224.400- & 146.940-)

UCARS 2m Net, 8:00pm  
(145.390- PL 94.8)  
(444.425+ PL 94.8)

### Saturday

ARES Net, 7:00pm  
(146.940-)

The Dixie Radio Pirates  
Weekly Net, 8:30pm  
(145.410- PL 136.5)

### Nightly

Piedmont Emergency  
Training Net, 8:00pm  
(145.350- PL 131.8)  
Rock Hill Net, 8:30pm  
(147.030+ PL 88.5)

## ECHOLINK/PACKET RADIO NODES

**EchoLink:** EchoLink is available for download on your computer through [www.echolink.org](http://www.echolink.org), as well as for use on your smartphone (Android and Apple iPhone) through the app store. To access our repeaters, connect to **K4NET-L** or node number **625440**.

### Packet Radio:

W4BFB & Local 1200 Baud Packet Radio Frequencies:

145.010 / 145.090 / 223.400 / 446.500

W4BFB-9 = Charlotte BBS / W4BFB-2 = World Wide Chatroom

(All W4BFB packet nodes have links to all listed frequencies)

More info: <http://www.w4bfb.org/packet.htm>



EchoLink application on a smartphone.



# Ham Happenings

## April 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 MARS Board Meeting 6:30pm	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 <a href="#">7th Annual TARC Tailgate Party</a> 9:00am
14	15	16	17 Charlotte Hamfest 2013 Follow-up Meeting 6:30pm	18 <a href="#">CCTTA Time Trials</a> 6:00pm	19	20 <a href="#">Catawba Valley Hamfest</a> 8:00am
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 ARES Exercise "The Great Charlotte Earthquake: Part II" 7:00pm
28	29	30 W4BFB Club Meeting 7:30pm				

See more at <http://w4bfb.org/calendar>

# Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society™

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society  
ATTN: Stefanie Comerford  
2425 Park Rd, Room 023  
Charlotte, NC 28203

Phone (Call or Text): (704) 750-9QSO  
Email: [w4bfbeditor@w4bfb.org](mailto:w4bfbeditor@w4bfb.org)



**Stefanie Comerford**  
**Newsletter Editor**  
**KK4LZR**



Visit us on the Web!  
[www.w4bfb.org](http://www.w4bfb.org)

## Club Repeaters

Input	Output	Offset (KHz)	Tone
146.34	146.94	-600	118.8
144.69	145.29	-600	118.8
144.63	145.23	-600	118.8
222.8	224.4	-1600	None
449.6	444.6	+5000	118.8

## Club Officers & Board of Directors

### President

Andy Hawkins, K4GKK  
[k4gkk@w4bfb.org](mailto:k4gkk@w4bfb.org)

### Vice President

Mitch Barbato, KX4MB  
[kx4mb@w4bfb.org](mailto:kx4mb@w4bfb.org)

### Secretary

Sandra Jones, KK4DAW  
[kk4daw@w4bfb.org](mailto:kk4daw@w4bfb.org)

### Treasurer

Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ  
[ka3vvj@w4bfb.org](mailto:ka3vvj@w4bfb.org)

### Directors

Charles Comerford, KK4HOK  
[kk4hok@w4bfb.org](mailto:kk4hok@w4bfb.org)

Bryan Ferdinand, K4NET  
[k4net@w4bfb.org](mailto:k4net@w4bfb.org)

George Hohas, W4GEH  
[w4geh@w4bfb.org](mailto:w4geh@w4bfb.org)

Dave Holbrook, KC4YPB  
[kc4ypb@w4bfb.org](mailto:kc4ypb@w4bfb.org)

John White, WB2NHQ  
[wb2nhq@w4bfb.org](mailto:wb2nhq@w4bfb.org)