



Mars News

August 2012

Prez Sez

Hello Everyone,

I am writing to you this month from across the "Pond" in G-land, and my brain is also on vacation, so apologies up front if I have missed something important. It is a nice relief from the high temperatures of Charlotte and surroundings, but the humidity is quite high over here. Must be all that rain they have been having.

July's meeting went down very well with a good informative talk from Greg Houser CFD Communications lead. Hopefully the first week of September will be a quiet week communications wise. But we will be prepared and will follow the lead of John White-WB2NHQ and Jerry Brewer-N4MIU.



Andy Hawkins

Bryan Ferdinand-K4NET gave us a run-down of the upcoming Charlotte Hamfest, and asked for any ideas that may improve the attendance, any ideas for marketing the event, and anyone wishing to chair some of the committees. This is our major source of income for the club, and it needs everyone's help for it to be a success.

The August meeting will be taken up by talking about the clubs biggest public service

event of the year, the Multiple Sclerosis Break away to the Beach. This is one event where we need a lot of volunteers to help out with Rest Stops and SAG vehicles. Mary Hunt -N4MH will be handing out SAG kits to those of us that have already volunteered. Please sign onto Elena Maya-Scott's -KS4OX website at www.ridemaps.com or follow the link through the W4BFB.org website.

Well I suppose I'd better get along with doing nothing, it gets quite tiring after a while..... best 73's and see you all at the next meeting on the 28th.

Andy Hawkins-K4GKK

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Working the CQ Worldwide VHF Contest with 10 watts

I have a confession to make - my name is Bill, W4GRW, and I am a tester.

Conventional wisdom says VHF is “line of sight”, well I like to break those rules.

I have worked Canada and South Dakota on two meters, the old school way, station to station, without the use of repeaters, or Echolink.

The middle of July means one thing to me, the CQ Worldwide VHF Contest.

This year’s dates were Saturday July 21st & Sunday July 22nd.

The CQ WW VHF has become my favorite VHF Contest for several reasons.

- * Only two bands, Six Meters and Two Meters, means less equipment required.
- * Shorter 27-hour contest period, as compared to 33-hour ARRL VHF Contests.
- * Middle of July time frame usually means good band conditions.
- * Many different operating classes, designed to get more people involved.

Unfortunately, my normal mountaintop operating QTH suffered a severe lightning strike, so I had to scramble to make some last minute plans. Several hams, Wayne, N4HWH, John, W4PAY, and David, KI4PWO had gotten permission to operate overnight from Roan Mountain on the NC/TN border, so I tagged along.

Over the years, I have operated in several of the classes, from Single Operator- Single Band (SOSB), Rover, to Multi-Operator with great success. Wayne N4HWH was going to be operating as a two meter Single Operator-Single Band (SOSB), so to eliminate interference I joined John and David in the Hilltopper class on six meters. The Hilltopper class is an interesting one, because of the limitations, a maximum of 6 hours of continuous operating, and a maximum power of 10 watts (QRP). This was a new experience for me, operating low power. I usually believe that life is too short for QRP, especially in a contest.

In VHF Contesting, location, location, and elevation, elevation, are key factors and the 6000 foot Roan Mountain certainly didn’t disappoint. John, David & I drew straws and I got the 6 hour shift at the beginning of the contest on Saturday afternoon, so was on the air from 2:25 - 8:25PM. In contesting there is a lot of strategy involved: “Hunt and Pounce”, where you scan the band and work the strongest stations or “Park” on a frequency and call CQ. Operating for the first time with extremely low power, I decided to try and ‘Park’. Imagine my surprise when I turned the rig on and heard lots of signals on the band. Miraculously, I was able to stay on 50.127 for 6 hours and was shocked with the signal reports I was receiving. My little 10 watt signal was not only being heard, but getting 5/9 & 5/7 reports and compliments from stations in Colorado, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

When my shift ended I had over 190 stations in my log, 3 foreign countries and a 3525 kilometer contact with K6COL in Los Altos, California, CM87, all on 10 watts.

Was it worth shivering in a tent at night with temperatures in the 50’s, wind blowing the rain sideways and strong enough to blow down four antennas and a tent?

You bet it was!

The next VHF Contest is the ARRL September VHF QSO Party on September 8th and 9th, so mark your calendars.



Charlotte Motor Speedway Time Trial Series



John Patton

August 15, CCTTA

The monthly CCTTA Event was held on August 15 at the Charlotte Motor Speedway. It was a special event this month because there were individual time trials as well as the team time trial event.

Prior to the event starting the event officials were a little concerned after checking doplar radar and seeing a cell heading towards the speedway.

Bill Heybruck, WA2EDN, reviewed their lightning procedure with us. The procedure is as follows:

If the time trial officials detect lightning they notify Mary at the start line to clear the track immediately. The following positions on the track were responsible to direct those cyclists off the track at their location and not let them continue the rest of the way around the track.

Front Stretch – exit them towards Pit Row.

Turn #1 – turn the cyclists back to pit row to exit the track.

Turn #2 and Back Stretch – exit them through the gate on the Back Stretch.

Turns #3 and #4 – Exit them down Pit Row immediately.

The cyclists were still doing their warm up laps on the track when lightning was detected and the lightning procedure was put into action immediately. All cyclists were cleared off the track in a very timely manner. We were complimented by the event officials on our quick action. I also want to add a special thank you to the team for the quick action when we received the word to close the track.

**Special thanks to the following hams who participated in this event:
Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ; Auford Neal, KU4PF; John Eigenbrode, W3SA; Bryan
Ferdinand, K4NET; Charles Comerford KK4HOK; Stan Bagwell, AJ4ZL;
Sandy Jones, KK4DAW; Perry Garris, KF4UVL; and Dave Holbrook, KC4YPB.
Charles' sister, Stephanie, was our honored guest!**

Talk to Mary about helping out, you'll have a great time and see Lowe's Motor Speedway like you never have before. You might have to put up with K4NET but no day is perfect! (Comment from KK4DAW)



Men and women teams compete



Public Service Committee News from Mary Hunt, N4MH, Chairperson

CQ, CQ, CQ, CQ, We need your help!!!! Our largest Public Service Event is right around the corner. -- The MS Break Away to the Beach will be held on September 22 and 23, 2012. EVEN if you can only volunteer one of the two days, we can use your help!!!!

Do you want to learn more about this event? The program for the August Club Meeting will be the MS Bike Tour. We will have representatives from the Multiple Sclerosis Society at the meeting. If you are going to be a SAG for the event we will have your SAG kit available at the meeting. We will also give out t shirts for those of you that do not already have the MS Green Communications Volunteer Shirt.

On Saturday we will have two start sites this year – Monroe, NC and Kershaw, SC. Both routes will meet up in Hartsville, SC and continue on as one route to Florence, SC where we will over night.

On Sunday we will have two start sites – Florence, SC and Green Seas, SC with the end point being at Sunset Beach. The route from Florence is 100 miles and Green Sea is 50 miles. The cyclists will be taken by bus from Florence to Green Sea. Their bicycles will be transported to Green Sea on Saturday night.

The Columbia Amateur Radio Club will again be helping us with the route from Kershaw to Hartsville, SC. They will also be bringing the SC Heart Trailer that will be used for Net Control.

The rest stops for Saturday on the Monroe route are listed below,. Please note that these rest stops are subject to change.,

Rest Stop #1 – Stack Road VFD – at Mile 12.4

Rest Stop #2 – Davis Residence – at Mile 18.8

Rest Stop #3 – Central High School in Pageland – Mile 28.9

Rest Stop #4 – Fairview Baptist church – Mile 35.4

Rest Stop #5 – Bay Springs VFD – Mile 46.4

Rest Stop #6 – Easterling Residence – Mile 56

Rest Stop #7 – Lunch Stop – Coker College, Hartsville, SC Mile 66.4

Rest Stop #8 – Darlington County Schools – Mile 80.2

Rest Stop #9 – Lighthouse Church – Mile 90.3

Finish – Francis Marion University – Mile 101.3

Public Service Committee News from Mary Hunt, N4MH, Chairperson (Cont.)

Rest Stops for Sunday are:

Rest Stop #1 – Williams Residence – Mile 9.9

Rest Stop #2 – Marion Fire Department – Mile 17.4

Rest Stop #3 – Gapway Baptist Church – Mile 26.7

Rest Stop #4 – Sunny Mart Exxon – Mile 34.8

Rest Stop #5 , Start Site for 50 Mile Ride and Lunch Stop for 100 Mile Ride – Green Sea Floyds Elementary School – Mile 48.5

Rest Stop #6 – The Todd House – Mile 60.6 and 12.1

Rest Stop #7 – Guideway Elementary School – Mile 73.0 and 24.5

Rest Stop #8 – Outdoor Wildlife Bait & Tackle – Mile 78.7 and 30.2

Rest Stop #9 – Calabash FD – Mile 89.2 and 40.7

Finish – The Village at Sunset Beach – Mile 99.1 and 50.6

We need volunteers for SAG vehicles, Sweep Vehicle and Rest Stop Volunteers. If you cannot work both days but can work just one day, we will be glad to have your help with the event.

To sign up for the event go out to Elena's website: www.ridemaps.com. From this website you will also be given a link to go over to the MS Web Site and register. We register at the MS Web Site for MS insurance coverage. Once you have signed up for the event and all route maps are final, Elena will be sending you a password so you can go in and download the route maps. This will be closer to the event date so we can ensure you have the latest and greatest maps.

MARS CLUB MEETING 7/31/2012

*The meeting was called to order by
Andy – K4GKK at 7:35PM.*

Visitors:

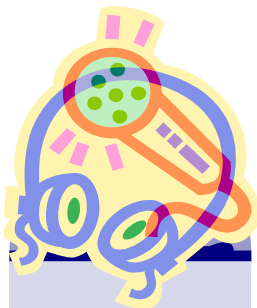
Paul Jones
Larry Howard
Chip Pettit

New members were voted into the club:

David Kever, K8IP
Anthony Lewis, KE4VVF
Paul Jones (Associate Member)
Marks Ryan, N4INE
Chuck Porter, K4VZA

Upgrades:

Congratulations to
Vince Livengood,
N4NYG on his
upgrade to Gen-
eral.



**Join us at
the next
club
meeting
Tuesday,
August 28**

There was a good turnout
for the first annual **CF
Ride in Waxhaw**. 150
riders participated along
with several club volun-
teers.



W4BFB
members,
along with
others,
support
the rest
stop.



Mary Hunt reported that
there are plenty of vol-
unteer opportunities for
the MS-150 bike ride.
SAGS and rest stop vol-
unteers are especially
needed. Go to

www.ridemaps.com to
sign up to volunteer.

MARS CLUB MEETING 7/31/2012 CONT.

Meeting Topic:

Greg Hauser, W3FIE, with the Charlotte Fire Department and COML for the upcoming event, discussed ham radio's role in communication support for the event. With many visitors expected, Greg emphasized keeping the airways clear of unnecessary chatter during the event. He also requested that up to and including that week, we always listen for unusual (suspicious) activity on the bands, and report these to either N4MIU or WB2NHQ.



Other News:

The annual budget was unanimously re-approved by the membership.

Bryan Ferdinand asks that anyone interested in volunteering to be on the **Hamfest** committee or to chair a committee contact him. Bryan is looking for ideas for future forums and ways to make the 2013 Hamfest the best ever.

Jerry Brewer reports that the new **Mecklenburg ARES HF Net** will be at 8:00 every Wednesday on 3.926.

**Join us at
the next
club
meeting
Tuesday,
August 28**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00PM.

*Submitted by Kevin Keyes,
K4YYD*

Secretary MARS

MARS BOARD MEETING 8/07/2012

Meeting called to order at 6:35PM.

Attendees included :

Andy Hawkins – K4GKK;
Tom Hunt – KA3VVJ;
Dave Holbrook – KC4YPB;
Bryan Ferdinand – K4NET;
George Hohas - W4GEH;
Barry May – KC4SSS;

Absent: John White,
WB2NHQ and Shelley
Eaves, KJ4ATK

Visitor: Sandra Jones,
KK4DAW

Bryan proposed the minutes for the Board Meeting of July 3, 2012 be accepted as presented and Barry seconded.

Treasurer's Report:

Tom presented the treasurer's report. Tom reported total Hamfest income. George motioned to accept, seconded by Barry and approved by the Board.



Tom reported a total Hamfest income of \$7,826.11.

Vice President's Report:

No report as Shelley not present.



Vice-President Shelly Eaves KJ4ATK

Secretary's Report:

131 total current paid members including 4 life members. The Board voted that following a lapse in membership of a year or more, an applicant must apply as a new member.

Committee Reports:

Public Service Committee:

MS-150 Breakaway to the Beach bike ride from Monroe to Sunset Beach is September 22 & 23. Volunteers are still needed.

Equipment:

Andy continues to inventory club equipment. Bryan will continue to keep the club's RV trailer at his home until another location can be found.

MARS BOARD MEETING 8/07/2012 *CONT.*

Repeater Committee:

Bryan is liaison to the repeater committee. Bryan is programming new macros for Skywarn alert. Bryan continues to work on a system for wireless control of the repeaters to avoid monthly phone line charge.

Field Day Committee:

The club had a successful Field Day this year. Thanks again to Mitch for his work at keeping the club's generator running like new. A suggestion was made to use an amplifier next year to boost the signal output on phone to 150 watts.

Entertainment Committee:

Christmas Party to be held on December 1st at the same location as last year.



Old Business: *none*

New Business:

The board has agreed to purchase a weather radio to enable automated weather alerts for the 146.94, 224, 400 and Earl's 144.35 machine. Research is underway to find the best possible solutions for our new controllers.

Explore changing club's tax exempt status from 501(c)7 to 501(c)3.

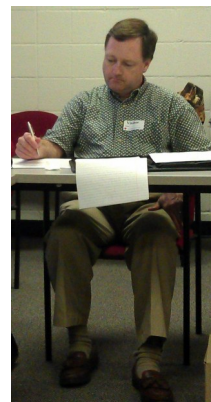
Mike Wentz, KE4EHC would like to buy the club's ADI AR 2 meter mobile radio for \$50. George made motion sell the radio to Mike for \$50 seconded by Barry.

The Lincoln County Amateur Radio club has requested the use of the club's 145.23 repeater for their net while their repeater is down for repair. George made a motion to approve this request seconded by Barry.

There being no more business for the evening's meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Submitted by Kevin Keyes, K4YYD
Secretary MARS

**Christmas
party,
Let's eat!**



MECKLENBURG AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

Club Repeaters

Input	Output	Offset (KHz)	Autopatch	Tone
146.34	146.94	-600	No	118.8
144.69	145.29	-600	No	118.8
144.63	145.23	-600	No	118.8
222.8	224.4	-1600	No	none
449.6	444.6	+5000	No	118.8

Club Meetings: The Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society meets on the last Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM

We meet at:

East Baptist Church

6850 Monroe Rd

Charlotte, NC 28212

(Next to East Mecklenburg High School, near Conference Drive)

Clubroom

Red Cross Building

2425 Park Rd, Room 023

Charlotte, NC 28203



www.w4bfb.org



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*Mecklenburg 2m Emergency Net
9:00 PM local time, daily on 146.94
(-600)*

Alternate frequencies announced