
◆ MARS NEWS ◆

Volume 53, Issue 02

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society, Inc

February 2002



FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting will be on the Hamfest. You will be able to find out anything you ever wanted to know about the Hamfest and the different volunteer jobs that we need help for. All of the committee chairpersons will be there and will do a presentation on their committee.

FROM THE EDITOR:

Our annual Hamfest is right around the corner. I have been involved in one role or another with the Hamfest for the last 18 years — that's a long time folks!!!

I want to encourage everyone to volunteer their time to help us make this a great Hamfest. If you are a new ham and are not sure what to do, come on out and volunteer. We will be glad to have one of the veteran workers show you the ropes.

We will need lots of volunteers for the internal security committee as well as some folks to sell tickets. You can contact Shawn Goodin, K4RSG or Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC about the security committee. John White, WB2NHQ handles the ticket sales on the show weekend. Then also on Friday we have to set up the flea market area — Bill Turner, W4WNT will be glad to sign any volunteers up for this event.

We had our February VE test session on Saturday, February 9th at the church. This is the first session I ever remember that we had a 100% passing rate. We had 15 applicants show up for the session.

Mary Hunt, N4MH



From the President:

THE PREZ SEZ--

Hello to all!

HAMFEST — I can't believe that our hamfest is so close upon us. We still have to put the finishing touches to our plans, make sure all jobs are covered, etc. This just can't wait until Friday of hamfest weekend, so PLEASE come to the meeting this month if at all possible and sign up to help.

TIME OF MEETING — It has been suggested that if we started the meetings at seven, it might make it a bit better for those who live far away. They could get home a bit earlier. Let me hear the pro's & con's on this on this one.

See you at the meeting!

Wilton- WB4PCS

FOR SALE:

Ten-Tec Corsair SSB Xceiver

Yesu FT-101 EX SSB Xceiver

Swan equipment...

Swan Cygnet Model 270B SSB Xceiver
 Swan 750 CW (bands 3.5 7 14 21 28) Xceiver
 Swan 508 VFO
 Swan 117XC Power Supply

DenTron GLA-1000B 10-80m 1200w amp

Siltronix 1011D Comanche 10-11 m Xceiver

MFJ electronic keyer CMOS-8043

a JC Penny CB w/USB & LSB could be mod for 10m

+ 3 old volt meters and a small 0-scope.

if you have a serious interest in any of this equipment, contact K. D. Wentzel, KD4ITI

MINUTES OF MEETING
January 28, 2002

President Wilton McAllister, WB4PCS called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM

President McAllister introduced the new officers and their functions to the membership.

Vice President, Vincent Mates — The Vice President arranges the program for the club meetings

Secretary, David Stewart — The Secretary takes care of new membership applications and membership renewals.

Treasurer, John White — The Treasurer takes care of the club's finances.

The next test session was announced for Saturday, February 9th at 9:00 am. Please be early enough to get the paper work complete so the session can start promptly.

Planning and organizing for the upcoming hamfest is well underway. Shawn Goodin, K4RSG and Tim Slay, N4IB stated the next months meeting will focus on staffing efforts to assure availability of adequate personnel to operate the several hamfest functions.

The main part of the meeting was then devoted to the auction of various items of ham equipment deemed surplus by its owners. Wilton McAllister served as auctioneer and some twenty-five items were sold for a total of \$341.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM

Dave Stewart AF4ZK

MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JANUARY 8, 2002

Present: Wilton McAllister, WB4PCS, President; Vincent Mates, KF4LVC, Vice President; John White, WB2NHQ, Treasurer; David Stewart, AF4ZK, Secretary; Board Members: Bob Cole, KD4IIN; Sherry Conrad Frye, KE4LZE; Rick Hampton, WD9KEL; Visitors; Shawn Goodin, K4RSG, Past President; Daryl Sampson, W4OH, ARRL EC.

Wilton McAllister called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Reports from the officers:

President Wilton McAllister introduced Daryl Sampson who proposed the club's involvement in a new public service effort. Daryl and Vince will investigate the technical and economic questions and report back to the board.

Vice President Vince Mates reported that the January meeting program will be the annual auction.

Treasurer John White reported that income and expenses are in line with the budget. A discussion was held on updating the club's inventory records. The physical labor involved is the principle problem with improving inventory accuracy.

Secretary Dave Stewart reported that the club's membership was 159 people as of early January.

New Business:

A discussion was held on ways to improve member interest in the monthly meetings. The main suggestion was to establish various interest groups that would better target specific member interests. It was suggested to try this in connection with encouraging member participation in the upcoming hamfest.

Dave Stewart, AF4ZK

Stealth Antennas

The most common complaint that I hear from people who are new to HF goes something like “I don’t have room for an antenna”. By this I think they mean that they can’t put up a 100 foot tower and a six element triband beam on their city lot or on the balcony of their apartment.

As I pointed out last month, loops can do a great job in a small space and are low to the ground. I’ve been playing with another alternative this month. Tim, KG4CHX, our Hamfest forum chairman, is also a backpacking QRP operator. Putting aside hauling your transceiver up the mountain (he uses an Yaesu FT-817), there is the little matter of an antenna.

I borrowed his QRP antenna, which is called an MP-1 “SuperAntenna” and is made by W6MMA. I was quite impressed with its performance. The antenna is a vertical with coil(s) in the middle, sort of a manual screwdriver antenna. The radiating element is made up of a section of aluminum rod, maybe 18” in length, screwed into the base of the coil. The upper part is made up of the rods used in gun cleaners. These are threaded on each end and screw together to form the upper part of the antenna. The base connection is a 3/8x24 threaded coupling, using an adapter with a PL259 incorporated into it for connection to the coax, all in a mounting bracket. The tripod base I used is aluminum (sold separately, more on that later) and four radials made out of computer ribbon (3 lines/radial) cut to 10 feet long. Disassembled, it fits into a box about 3”x3”x18”. With one coil in place, it covers 40m to 450MHz; with the second coil installed, it adds 75/80m.

I put this thing together on my deck (wood, 10 feet above real ground). After one slider adjustment with the antenna analyzer, the antenna was resonant in the 20m band. First contacts were F6IQC, EA6/SP4AOC, Balearic Is., and TI2KAC, Costa Rica. Later that evening, I set my FT-890 to about 40 watts and looked around. After two calls, KC4USV at the McMurdo Sound returned my call. I carried on a conversation with Mike at 50 and then 100 watts. Unlike most of the Antarctic operators, Mike doesn’t do signal reports an jump on to the next station, he does talk to the folks who reach him.

In an effort to use what is available, I put the antenna back up configured as before, but using a metal camera tripod as a base. It’s shorter and more adjustable in height and angle than the previous base. With it, I worked CO7HU in Cuba and PJ2/N7BG in the Netherlands Antilles.

Note that most of these contacts were made at less than 50 watts and all were made in the General Phone or CW portions of 20m.

This antenna certainly looks like it would do nicely in the limited space category or in the put it up when you need it and take it down when you’re done category.

73, Bill Turner, W4WNT

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, February 26, 2002 — Club Meeting, East Baptist Church, Monroe Road

Friday, March 8, 2002 — Set up for Charlotte Hamfest and Computer Fair

Saturday-Sunday, March 9-10, 2002 — Charlotte Hamfest and Computer Fair

Tuesday, March 12, 2002 — Board of Directors Meetings, Red Cross Building, 7 PM

Saturday, March 16, 2002 — March of Dimes Walk A Thon

Tuesday, March 26, 2002 — Club Meeting East Baptist Church, Monroe Road

Saturday, April 20, 2002 — MS Walk America

Saturday, April 27, 2002 — Mecklenburg County Senior Games

Saturday, May 11, 2002 — VE Test Session, 9:00 a.m., East Baptist Church

Saturday, June 8, 2002 — American Lung Association Triathlon—Latta Plantation Park

Friday, June 21-Sunday, June 23, 2002 — MS Challenge Walk

Saturday, June 22-Sunday, June 23, 2002 — Field Day

Saturday, September 28-Sunday, September 29, 2002 — MS Break Away to the Beach

LICENSE RENEWAL INFORMATION

Within 90 days of expiration date, you can submit your renewal via the internet at:

www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls (first register in ULSA by following the “REGISTER, TIN/Call Sign” tab procedures, then choose the “FILE, ULS Filing” tab procedures.

Renew by Mail: Mail Form 605 to FCC, 1270 Fairfield Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325-7245. The form has a main form plus Schedule D with two parts. Main form is all that is needed for renewals. Form 605 is available via the internet at: www.fcc.gov/formpage.html.

Any ARRL member can send Form 605 to ARRL for renewal which is a free ARRL Members only service.

MESSAGE FROM THE EC

One of the biggest hurdles we face as emergency communicators is the element of surprise involved with an emergency situation. Often, we have no advanced warning that an impending emergency will occur and thus ARES responds to the event as a reaction verses being proactive. Therefore, we should strive to acquire a certain level of readiness and preparation for such events. Some of the ways we can do this is to prepare personal ready kits, complete ARECC training courses and practice emergency communication plans. One of the main areas that should be of primary concern to all ARES operators is to hone our individual operating skills. A recent event in our local area demonstrated this concept to me, and I thought I'd share it with you via this medium.

"The Call One Morning"

Last fall, the American Red Cross contacted me via cell phone one morning on my commute to work. The Red Cross had just received an emergency call from a Charlotte resident, whose mother's health was deteriorating quickly. The caller needed to reach her sister to inform her to come home because their mother's time was short. Normally, this would be an easy request for the Red Cross. The problem here was that her sister lives on a remote island called Norman's Cay. All telephone and most other communication routes to this location were inoperable due to the damage from the storm. I came to learn that even when things work, telephone service is limited to a local restaurant business. The Red Cross asked if ARES could help reach this person via amateur radio. This call was the first time in four years as an EC the Red Cross had asked me for anything. I didn't want to let them down. I told them we would do our best... E

After gathering further information from the Red Cross and caller, I immediately called our Discovery Place Amateur Radio Station, because I knew it is staffed daily by local hams and possesses a vast array of communication abilities. John Scott K8YC happened to be on duty that morning and took the call. John and I formed an NTS message and John immediately started working the problem. I went back to work at my job. Later that day, John had made contact on 14.300Mhz USB with the Maritime Mobile guys. They provided information on a station that runs a Search and Rescue (SAR) operation near Norman's Cay, who also checks into some of the Maritime Mobile nets daily. The next opportunity to catch the station was the following morning on 40 meters. John and I talked via telephone later that day and we exchanged the information he had received that day.

The next morning around 8:00am, I fired up my Yaesu FT-840 running 90 watts to a 75m Carolina Windom antenna hidden in my back yard (those blasted deed restrictions). With a tuner I loaded the antenna to 7.268 Mhz LSB and listened to the net already in progress. After listening to a few rounds of the net, I figured out this net was for tracking and supporting maritime mobile stations at sea. During the next round of checkins I gave my call and listed one piece of priority traffic for Normans Cay. The Net Control Station (NCS) acknowledged and decided to handle other underway station traffic first. I waited patiently for about 5 minutes, which felt like hours. Finally, my turn came and I explained what I needed to the NCS. He immediately instructed me to contact Carolyn C6AGG who was checked in and listening on frequency. I called and Carolyn answered with about a S2 signal. I was the same signal strength on her end. After explaining the situation, I discovered that some of the guys from 14.300 had told her about the traffic the day before. I passed her the

(continued on page 8)

Message from EC (continued from Page 7)

message using a lot of standard phonetics because her copy was difficult. After the message, she told me to stand by. After about 20 minutes, C6AGG returned to the frequency and told me the message had been delivered via maritime networks. The recipient would be on a plane to Charlotte that afternoon and was leaving immediately for Nassau. The message had arrived about 24 hours following the original call from the Red Cross.

To finish up, the sister arrived in Charlotte that afternoon on a US Air flight. Unfortunately, her mother had passed away early that morning while we were trying to reach her. However, both sisters were glad they could be together during such a time and were both very thankful for our service. I think most of the non-ham folks involved with this effort were somewhat surprised that we could actually pull this off. And maybe this EC was a little bit too. ☺ But, it just goes to show you what a few hams can do when we put our minds and abilities into action. It wasn't who had the best station or one particular net that got this message delivered. It was the willingness of a few good hams to serve as a team and use the communication abilities at their disposal when needed (some amateur based and some not).

That's what ARES is all about... emergency communicators who know the how's, why's, what's and when's to make a communication system work when the normal stuff don't. That's not an easy task, yet one that we should do our best to be prepared to accomplish when the time comes.

73,

Daryl Sampson W4OH
ARRL EC - Mecklenburg Co., NC

HAMFEST COMMITTEE REPORT —

The 2002 Charlotte Hamfest and ComputerFair is only weeks away! We're all excited about plans for a great show this year! Ted Goldthorpe has been busy lining up a special event for the hamfest. Bob Heil will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of Heil Sound at the 2002 Charlotte Hamfest! Heil will be introducing a new product, as well as providing several door prizes and Bob's famous "Science of Sound" forum. Also, for the first time in many years Ten-Tec will be exhibiting at our hamfest and will introduce their new Orion transceiver. I understand the dealer booths are almost sold out and flea market table sales are going well also. So, it should be a great hamfest, and the only thing missing is YOU! We need lots of help and we'll reward hamfest volunteers with a chance to win one of three Garmin GPS receivers! You'll need to work at least 2 hours to qualify for this special drawing. We'll be recruiting at the next club meeting. If you can't make the meeting, send me a note at n4ib@w4bfb.org and we'll get you signed up!

73,
Tim Slay, N4IB
Hamfest Chair

About This Newsletter

MARS News is published monthly for the members of the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society. Permission is given to re-print any article, provided that credit is given to Mecklenburg ARS and the respective author. Subscription to the newsletter, via US Mail, is provided to club members. Complimentary copies are available to guests and prospective members.

The deadline for submitting material is the 10th of each month. Please submit newsletter material to: **Mary S. Hunt, N4MH, 16007 Wynfield Creek Parkway, Huntersville, NC 28078 948-6006 or office 892-3270, Fax Number 892-8326**

You may submit material via Electronic Mail to: n4mh@w4bfb.org or on 3.5" diskette. The files should be in TEXT or WORD format.

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society, Inc.

Officers and Board of Directors:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| President | Wilton McAllister, WB4PCS, Email Address: wb4pcs@w4bfb.org |
| Vice President | Vince Mates, KF4LVC, Email Address: kf4lvc@yahoo.com |
| Secretary | Dave Stewart, AF4ZK, Email Address: af4zk@att.net |
| Treasurer | John White, WB2NHQ Email Address: wb2nhq@w4bfb.org |
| Directors | Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, Bob Cole, KD4IIN ; Sherry Conrad Frye, KE4LZE; Rick Hampton, WD9KEL; Mac McCray, K4PDY; |
| Meeting Place: | East Baptist Church, 6850 Monroe Road (next to East Mecklenburg High School, near Conference Drive) |
| Meeting Time: | 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: | 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 |
| | 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 |

MARS News
Mary S. Hunt, N4MH, Editor
16007 Wynfield Creek Pkwy
Huntersville, NC 28078

See you at the next meeting —
Tuesday, February 26, 2002