



MARS News

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A Letter from the President

Hey Everyone,

Here it is February already. I hope that everyone had a great Valentines Day.

February may be a short month, but we have lots of things we are working on inside the club, and a lot more things that must get done before the middle of March.

This month, we are holding a VE Test Session on February 21st. For details, see a notice about it later in this newsletter. Good Luck to everyone who is trying to advance or begin their ham radio career that day. Also, remember that there will VE exams conducted at the Hamfest. We hope to see some new or upgraded Hams at our club meetings soon.

On Sunday March 1st we are hoping to participate in the North Carolina QSO Party from the MARS club room in the Red Cross building. We will gather starting around 11:00 a.m. to prepare to start contesting around noon and hope to go until 10 p.m. Note that this whole contest happens on Sunday. Please come out and have fun with us. We have done this event for the past three years running and it is a great, low-stress, chance to learn about contesting, running the 'new' Jupiter Radio, and many other very important things about operating radios from the MARS home-QTH station. But we need some critical help in order to do this. The control operator we used for the past three years cannot participate this year, so we need one or more General class, or higher, MARS members to volunteer to come out and attend this event. If you would like to be the control operator or be one of the contest operators please email Bill, W4GRW, our Contest Chairman W4GRW@w4bfb.org to let him know you are coming to help us out as control operator or contest operator, and when (we will have to stop operating if we do not have a control op present).

The most important thing I would like to talk about this month is that the 2009 Charlotte Hamfest needs your personal contribution of help. Most of us on the Hamfest Committee have been working very hard for almost a full year now at making this year's Hamfest a great one. But, we still need lots of help at the Hamfest to make everything a success. All it takes from you is a couple of hours of your time and we give you a Free Hamfest admission ticket.



The Hamfest still needs some more 'Yellow Jackets'. The various jobs that the Yellow Jackets will be doing at the Hamfest will be: helping secure all door entrances, taking tickets at the doors, answering any questions folks may have about the Hamfest, and patrolling around the dealer areas. Yellow Jackets work two-hour shifts. You can sign up for as many of the available shifts as you wish. You will be issued a snappy yellow vest to wear while you are on-duty. You will receive a free Admission ticket if

Letter from the President (cont.)

you give 2 hours of your time to help out. Please sign-up for a shift or two to help out our club.

This year, we have a superb Pre-Registration Prize, for advanced purchase tickets, and a great selection of hourly prizes. We have some great forums set up for Saturday. Visit our club Hamfest web pages for all the details about the 2009 Charlotte Hamfest <http://www.w4bfb.org/hamfest.html> to show your support for the club, and all the other club members, volunteer to help, by signing up to work at the Hamfest at the next club meeting or send an email to HamfestInfo@W4BFB.org You can also volunteer for some of the Hamfest jobs at <http://RideMaps.com>.

We will have a special event station, W4B, set up and operating at the Hamfest.

You can see our Hamfest announcement in the March issue of QST on page 98

As a special one-time Hamfest extra this year, we will have a Special Event Station, W4B, set up and operating inside the Hamfest. For the stations that work us, we have a special QSL card designed by Ben, WB2RHM. All of this is to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of MARS (March 1949 – March 2009). W4B will also be operating from the MARS clubroom at various times between March 8th and March 21st. See an article about this later in the newsletter.

Once again this year, I want to have an area set aside at the Hamfest where people can sit and rest a while. One of the new and exciting things I am working on is to have some flat-screens or TVs at the rest area, where we can show our visitors pictures or slide shows of MARS events, or other MARS activities, showing the kinds of things we do as Hams. But I need your help with this, I am asking all of you if you have any pictures of MARS or Ham activity events that you could copy onto a CD, DVD, or memory stick, would you get them to me by the February meeting or before. I think this is good public relations, since there are a lot of people who do not know us, or what MARS does. If you can help me with this project, email me or call me.

And with that, I say a heartfelt THANKS to each of you for your help and support.

73,

Jodie KI4CXO,

President - Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society

VE Test Session - February 21st

The Mecklenburg ARRL VE Team will be conducting an Exam Session for all classes of FCC Amateur Radio License on Saturday February 21st., beginning at 9AM at the East Baptist church 6850 Monroe Road Charlotte, NC (East Baptist Church is located next to East Mecklenburg HS, near the intersection of Monroe Rd and Conference Drive)

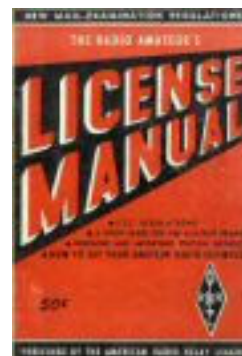
Applicants are requested to arrive by 8:30AM, to complete the registration process before testing begins. They should bring a photo ID (drivers license OK), the original and a copy of any current amateur license, the original and copies of any current CSEs, plus the 2009 ARRL VEC testing fee of \$15.00.

Walk-ins are welcome, but we would appreciate it if you register by sending an email to MecklenburgVETeam@W4BFB.org or call 704-948-7373 if you need additional information.

Thanks,

73,

WB2RHM



Help Wanted - Flea Market Setup

HELP WANTED: 4 or 5 more folks with strong backs, work gloves, and positive early morning attitudes!

Position: Team Member on 2009 Charlotte Hamfest Flea Market Setup team.

Task: Set up the folding tables for the Flea market Area and set up the folding chairs in the Hamfest Break Area.

Duration: 2-3 hours of labor, beginning 9AM on Friday March 13th at the Cabarrus Arena and Event Center.

Reward: One Hamfest admission ticket – good for two days admission, in exchange for only one morning's work.

We should be done by noon, depending on how fast we all work. A good time is usually had by all....

Please sign up at the February MARS Club Meetings, or easier yet, go to <http://RideMaps.com> to volunteer... please!

Remember: The 2009 Hamfest cannot happen without YOU!

One Hamfest admission ticket - good for two days admission, in exchange for only one morning's work



73, WB2RHM ...-.-

MARS 60th Anniversary Special Event Station

We will be holding a two-week "on-air" celebration of the anniversary of the founding of the **Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society** from **March 7th through 21st.**, including a portable station operating at the 2009 Charlotte Hamfest.

On March 25th, 1949 the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society was founded and chartered in Charlotte, North Carolina. This March marks the 60th anniversary of MARS' founding. Over the past year, discussions took place about how to celebrate this important event. The idea of getting a 'special event' callsign and sharing our 'anniversary' with hams worldwide became the top choice. So, the call W4B was obtained for MARS to use during the period of March 7th through the 21st. This time window was picked to overlap with the 2009 Charlotte Hamfest because the idea of having a station set up and operating at the Hamfest also sounded like a great way share our birthday with our friends and visitors.

Many hams around the world actively listen for and work special event stations so they can receive the QSL cards or certificates of the special event. Since our current W4BFB club call QSL cards are running low, we decided to try to get a new QSL card that might be used for our W4B special event as well as for everyday W4BFB QSOs. After some considerable design work, here is the 'new' W4BFB/W4B card:



In tribute to our club founders, their 13 names are listed on the reverse side of our new QSL card.

☐ **W4BFB**
☐ **W4B** Special Event Station
 QRV 3/07/2009 - 3/21/2009

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society
 2425 Park Road Rm 023
 Charlotte, NC 28203
 USA

Confirming QSO's with				
Date	UTC	MHz	2-way	RST

North Carolina
 ★ Charlotte
 Mecklenburg County

The Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society became an incorporated organization on the 25 th day of March 1949. Some think that thirteen is an unlucky number but many consider it to bring luck. There were thirteen individuals who were the charter members of this club, twelve of whom held valid amateur licenses.

Earl J. Gluck W4CQ
 Robert E. Dawson W4DSY
 Fred H. Hardy W4KZG
 Bernard Walker W4DIS
 A.L. Blalock W4CAY
 J.C. Gleason W4DLK
 Avery Kimbrell W4CLB

James (Jimmie) MacLeod W4NHV
 Clark Prather
 Roy Sprague W4CKS
 W.J. (Buck) Workman W4CYB
 C.A. (Pete) McKnight W4CFL
 S.S. (Sam) Mcintosh W4FUA

PSE QSL TNX

SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB

W4BFB
 MECKLENBURG AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY, INC.
 CHARLOTTE, NC

<http://www.W4BFB.org> email: W4BFB@W4BFB.org

Special Event Station (cont.)

The front side is high gloss 'postcard' printing, and the back is a grayscale matte. The printing is sharp and clear on the actual card; these images have been scanned and compressed for sending over the internet.

Beginning on March 7th 0000Z, and running through the 21st 2359Z, we can operate our club station on all authorized bands and sign the call W4B. We can tell the folks who work us that W4B is a special event call, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society. Every 30 minutes or so you need to add that you are using the call W4B on behalf of W4BFB, so our regular call is given. There will be some 'cheat sheets' you can use to 'work the bands' if you want. The main idea is to have some fun and make contacts all around the US and the world. BUT, we have to keep good logs of all the contacts. This is to keep track of who worked us, so we can know who is honestly asking us for our QSL card.

We hope to operate W4B using all ham modes, PHONE, CW, PSK, RTTY, FM, HF, VHF, UHF, etc. We are looking for members who would be willing to come to the clubroom to operate the station during this period. Operation can be whenever it is convenient for the operators. The important thing is that the control operator be licensed for the bands and modes used during the operation and must keep a log of all the contacts. On Thursday March 12th, the Jupiter, its power supply, and the antenna autotuner will be removed from the clubroom to be relocated at the 2009 Charlotte Hamfest, where we plan to operate the station on 20m during the Hamfest. We need some operators who would like to operate W4B during one to two hour shifts during the Hamfest. Hamfest operation will be mostly PHONE, but a CW key will be available if wanted.

Our W4B Special Event announcement appears in the March issue of QST magazine on page 94 and on-line at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/spev.html>

If you would like to operate W4B, at the clubroom or at the Hamfest, send a note to Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM <mailto:WB2RHM@W4BFB.org> He will coordinate the W4B operations and try to 'match' control operators with folks who need a higher class 'partner' for their W4B operation.

73 – WB2RHM





Announcers & Stage Liaisons Needed

Here is an opportunity for a sit-down job at the Hamfest. No funky jackets, no running around all over the place, and a two hour shift gets you a free ticket to the Hamfest! Sounds like a deal to me.

The following slot is open for a Public Address Announcer:

Sunday from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

The following slots are open for Stage Liaisons:

Saturday 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Saturday 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Sunday 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Please consider helping out and contact me at w4wnt@yahoo.com or sign up on Elena's website www.ridemaps.com. We will be making announcements over the PA system, handing out hourly prizes and making those "move your car, you are blocking traffic" announcements. The stage liaison person will be in contact with the office to receive any announcements that need to be made by the PA person.

We'll also have membership renewal applications for W4BFB as some folks renew at the hamfest. All this sitting down, remember!

Bill Turner,

W4WNT

***Please consider helping
out and contact me at
W4WNT@yahoo.com***

Or

***Sign up on Elena's web
site www.ridemaps.com***

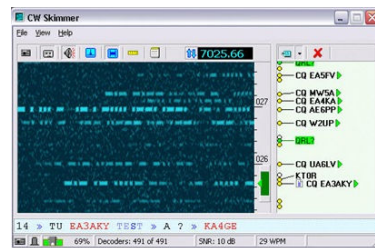
January and February Meetings

Our featured presenter for January was Steve Kiser from WCNC TV36. Steve is the director of technology at WCNC. He gave a presentation about Channel 36's transition to digital television (DTV). Steve stated that channel 36 has been testing and using DTV since November 1999. Steve gave a PowerPoint presentation of the arrival of DTV. He showed several models of converters you can use if you don't have cable or satellite TV already. He stated the funds the government had set out to offset cost of the boxes had been mostly used up. So if you want to have 'over the air' reception after the cut over date, (which is now June 12th) you would need to buy a converter box now, and be reimbursed when more funds become available. Steve went over what type of antennas would work. You could spend lots of money or next to nothing for an antenna. If you have a vhf/uhf antenna from say the 70's, it would still be ok to use for the digital converter box. You may even be able to use a 'set top' antenna like the old rabbit ears. Some of the amplified 'set top' models have remarkable performance. One of the reasons Steve came to our meeting was to seek help from technical groups like amateur radio to help our friends and neighbors who are having trouble setting up their converter boxes. So seek out those not as smart at hooking up wires to receivers as we are! Thanks Steve for a great presentation!

For the February meeting, Dick Williams (W3OA) will give a presentation on CW Skimmer. This program allows you to decode CW signals using your computer and its sound card. This should be a very interesting presentation.

73,

Jeff - KA4WYC





February Board Minutes

Board Meeting started on 2/3/2009 at 18:45 with a special called meeting. Present were Jodie KI4CXO, Bill W4GRW, Jeff KA4WYC, Tom KA3VVJ, Ben WB2RHM, Kevin K4YYD, Andy K4GKK, Mary N4MH, & Jerry N4MIU.

Bill said that Dick W3OA would give a program on CW skimmer for the February club meeting. This is a digital program that uses your sound card to interface with your computer to understand CW.

Jodie had the minutes approved for the January board meeting.

Tom gave out a balance sheet and went over a balance sheet and profit loss. Andy asked about the phone charge and Tom said the phone charges haven't changed, and not sure if it will.

Jeff went over the membership drive. He gave out a list for board members to 'remind' lapsed members we would like for them to renew their membership.

Ben stated the club will soon have a Pay-Pal account. It will be for renewals or donations only. New members still have to go through the membership process to be voted on by the membership.

Ben gave a report on the repeater committee for Earl K4KAY. The packet system is working in the club room. Several members met in the clubroom and upgraded the computer and packet system. Earl was called and asked a question on one of the repeaters. Earl stated all the repeaters were working at this time.

Andy asked about the TV in the club room. It belongs to Discovery Place and will go to the storage building with the rest of the equipment from DP.

Ben said he and Wayne are working hard on the web pages. Lots of new stuff on the Hamfest pages.

Jodie brought up an idea for a club picnic. There was a discussion on FD and where to have it. Jodie also asked those on committees to ask club members for their help on these committees.

Kevin asked if we wanted t-shirts for FD. We have several months to worry about this.

Andy gave a report on the club equipment & trailer. We have some equipment that needs to be replaced and be sold to club members or at the Hamfest. Andy is working closely with John WB2NHQ.

Ben and Bill stated the club may operate the NCQSO party at the end of February. But, more planning is needed. Check the M2MEN net at 9:00 pm for information.

Andy said FD would be discussed at the next board meeting.

Mary gave a report on several public service events coming up in May.

Kevin didn't have anything for nominating committee.

Old business - Kevin got some info back from Marsh on our professional liability policy. We

February Board Minutes (cont)

should get about \$300.00 back from insurance that we didn't need.

New business – Andy will get up with John to update the list of approved names to get the RV located at the EOC.

Jodie asked if there was any other business, having none we adjourned at 20:27.

Respectfully submitted by

Jeff KA4WYC

Secretary of the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society – W4BFB

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society— <http://www.w4bfb.org>

**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)

**Club-
room**

Red Cross Building
2425 Park Rd, Room 023
Charlotte, NC 28203
(704) 334-3900

**Club Re-
peaters**

146.34/146.94 (w/autopatch)
144.63/145.23 (no autopatch)
144.69/145.29 (no autopatch)
222.80/224.40 (no autopatch)
449.600/444.600 (no autopatch) PL 100.00

Mecklenburg 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

**Club Officers and Board of
Directors**

President

Jodie Rowland, KI4CXO, ki4cxo@w4bfb.org

Vice President

Bill Fisher, W4GRW, w4grw@w4bfb.org

Secretary

Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, ka4wyc@w4bfb.org

Treasurer

Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ, ka3vvj@w4bfb.org

Directors

Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM, wb2rhm@w4bfb.org

Jerry Brewer, N4MIU, n4miu@w4bfb.org

Mary Hunt, N4MH, n4mh@w4bfb.org

Andy Hawkins, K4GKK, k4gkk@w4bfb.org

Kevin Keyes, K4YYD, k4yyd@w4bfb.org



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