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# ◆ MARS NEWS ◆

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Volume 54, Issue 01

Mecklenburg Amateur

Radio Society, Inc

January 2003

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## JANUARY MEETING

The January meeting will be our annual equipment auction. Jerry Malin, N2HV has agreed to be our auctioneer. So get all your equipment and goodies together that you want to have auctioned off.

We will also have to have a special election as we have one board position open since Jeff Blythe is now Vice President.

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## FROM THE EDITOR:

Our annual holiday party this year had to be rescheduled because of the ice storm. The party was held on Friday night, January 20. It was a nice party and hopefully everyone that attended had a good time.

Daryl Sampson presented the Ham of the Year Award to John White. Daryl also presented several certificates to hams who supported the ice storm.

We held 4 test sessions last year with 47 participants taking 72 elements and 35 new or upgraded licenses. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the VE Team volunteers who assisted with the test sessions during 2002. We could not have held the sessions without your support.,

Jerry Malin, N2HV  
Dave Stewart, AF4ZK  
Bill Turner, W4WNT  
Dave Leonard, AD4AT  
Barry Mulvaney, K4QW  
Irv Hoechner, KF4KFN  
Rick Hampton, WD8KEL

Paul Ponak, AD4IE  
Jack Guion, W4JG  
Ed McKnight, W4EJM  
John Scott, K8YC  
Tim O'Rourke, W4YN  
Daryl Sampson, W4OH  
Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ

**Mary Hunt, N4MH**



## From the President:

Another year is now upon us, and 2003 will be another great year for our Club. As I write this note, the Label Party is a few days away -- it's a big job but the success of our Hamfest depends in part on it. Thanks in advance to all who came out to enjoy a Saturday morning peeling labels and sticking them on the flyers.

Please begin thinking about volunteering for our Hamfest in March. The Club website [www.w4bfb.org](http://www.w4bfb.org) already has news about the Hamfest -- we expect Riley Hollingsworth to join us this year. The Hamfest Committee will be looking for help beginning next month, so please give us a hand.

Jeff Blythe and I are looking for more ways for us to have FUN using our radio toys. One event which is tentatively scheduled for sometime in February is a Fox Hunt. We'll try to have several this year, the first one being a sort of "Novice Fox Hunt", for folks who have never done it before. Listen on the 9:00 M2MEN in February for additional details.

The ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes is coming up January 18 - 20. See <http://www.remote.arrl.org/contests/rules/2003/01vhfss.html> for details and rules. That's the weekend before the Super Bowl.

It's also the weekend for the Charlotte Observer Run for Peace Marathon, which will be on January 18th. Amateur radio operators are still needed for that event too. The route goes from Davidson College in Davidson and ends near East 2nd St and Davidson in Charlotte. Contact Jeff Blythe at [ka4wyc@w4bfb.org](mailto:ka4wyc@w4bfb.org) if you have questions or want to volunteer.

I hope to have a schedule of Board Meetings published soon. All Club members are welcome to attend our Board Meetings at the Red Cross in the Club Room. We normally meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, but that may change slightly this year due to scheduling difficulties.

As always, this is YOUR Club. Let us know what you'd like to see, let us know if we're doing a good job (or a bad job too) and help us be of the best possible service to our members.

73,  
Shawn K4RSG

## **A Little Bit of Ice Goes a Long Way**

The following article depicts the events of a winter ice storm that struck the Mecklenburg County area on December 5, and the ARES response that followed:

### ***The Problem***

On Wednesday December 5<sup>th</sup>, the Mecklenburg County area experienced a winter ice storm that lasted about sixteen hours in duration. While the ice did not cause dangerous travel conditions on the roadways, it did play havoc on many trees and power lines in our area.

Electrical power was lost to some local customers for a period of up to ten days. As the lack of electrical power and downed trees continued over the first days of this event, new problems began to occur for our community. The Mecklenburg County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was opened early during the storm period. The American Red Cross provided a heads-up to ARES on Thursday that it was opening shelter sites within the county and may need assistance. At this time, telephone service was functioning fairly normal. Thursday night was a cold one for many people. By Friday morning, telephone and cell phone service was experiencing problems across the county. The American Red Cross contacted EC Daryl Sampson W4OH around 8:30am EST Friday requesting communications assistance between the EOC, Disaster Services office and four shelter sites. Telephone and cell phone service between these locations was failing or intermittent.

The shelter sites were located at Providence High, Vance High, East Mecklenburg High and Metro Center schools. The Disaster Service center was located on Park Road. The EOC was located at the MEDIC facility at 4525 Statesville Road.

### ***The ARES Response (from an EC's perspective)***

After a second cold night in the house, I woke up to the same scenario... no power and no heat. By now, our residence had been out thirty-two hours. Realizing this might go on for a while, the evening before I had made a trip to the local home improvement store for supplies. I quickly realized there was not much to be had as the battery selection was low, fireplace logs were hard to find, fuel-burning heaters were non-existent and folks were waiting twenty deep in line for the next delivery truck containing generators. Of course, there was ample supply of electrical heaters but no way to run them. Our house has gas heat and hot water, so I was thankful for a morning shower. The Indian dance I did after each shower in the cold was impressive; fortunately, only my cats saw it as the wife usually took her shower first and was gone. The wife (being the more intelligent species in our household) would run from the shower with a towel wrapped around her hair like a turban, jump in her car and speed to a friend's house (who had power) to dry her hair and finish the beautification process. (I'm just glad someone didn't mistake her for a terrorist, because I bet she drove like a mad woman. Bad hair day prevention is job #1). We are on the city's water system so our toilets flushed and we had drinking water. Many folks didn't even have that as they were on wells or electrical hot water heaters. I also notice my residential telephone wasn't working Friday morning, but my cell phone seemed to be working most of the time. Occasionally, I was getting system busy messages.

My employer decided we were going to work a normal daily schedule as our work place had power. Our team had major project deadlines that were coming due in less than two weeks and we had a lot to do between now and then. In preparation for a long day at work, I was in the middle of my shower ritual Friday morning when my cell phone rang. On the other end of the line was the American Red Cross. The Red Cross needed our assistance as soon as possible to support them between their sites of operation. I hung up and immediately made contact with Lee Price KD4GCF. Fortunately Lee's telephone service at home was working. Lee and I had spoke the day before and he had agreed to activate should something come up on Friday as he had availability. I requested he mobilize the Red Cross Disaster Services site using one of the W4BFB club's emergency radio kits, which happened to be located across the parking lot at our club station location. Lee obliged and started mobilization procedures immediately.

**(continued on page 4)**

## Ice Storm (continued)

I phoned work and asked off for the day. Luckily, this was Friday and I was only on call for emergencies at work over the weekend. The request was granted and I was much appreciative. I immediately started preparing myself for the activation, grabbed my ready kit, EC stuff and got on the road not sure where I was heading. About the time I reached the end of my subdivision, my cell phone rang again. This time it was our county liaison requesting communications assistance for the Red Cross at the EOC. As I headed for I-85 in route to the EOC location, I noticed most of our primary ARES repeaters were either off the air or were experiencing interference problems.

I went to a local repeater I normally hang out on (444.950 WA1WXL) and discovered it was on the air. Prior to this incident, I had worked out an agreement with the repeater owners for emergency communications usage. They were very nice to have given us free reign any time we needed the machine. I found KD4GCF on 145.290 and we QSYed to 444.950 for mobilization activities. I knew the 444.950 machine would be easier to hit with an HT radio from a shelter site, as the 145.290 machine is located in between other tall buildings in downtown Charlotte. I arrived around 0900 EST at the EOC and worked with KG4SQR and WA4BCN to get our EOC station set up. Lee shortly arrived and mobilized the Red Cross station. By 0915 EST, we had communications from the EOC to the Red Cross location, which dispatched logistical supplies to shelter sites. Prior to this, telephone service was not working and cell phone service was intermittent.

Shortly thereafter, I received the list of shelter sites needing a radio operator. N4JBP and KB5WY were the first to respond to this request following implementation of our call out procedures. They quickly got two of our shelter sites online at East Mecklenburg High and Vance High Schools. WB2NHQ (who is a Red Cross volunteer and was assisting with shelter site establishment) discovered that WA2TKS was a client at the Providence High School site and was available to assist; however, he did not have equipment on site. We quickly ascertained K4RSG to transport the W4BFB club's second emergency radio kit to WA2TKS's location and we now had five of the six sites on the air by 1300 EST. KE4IYH and W4CC agreed to assist KD4GCF at the Red Cross site. After going through our ARES activation list, I realized that resources were going to be sparse. My District EC KD4OZI contacted me and over the phone we started discussing my request for additional resources from Area 12. Needless to say, I was frustrated that our county with 95 ARES operators on the roster could not produce more than a handful of operators. Around 1430 EST, KF4UVO and KD4OZI mobilized the Metro Center site to bring us up to full strength on our network. The Red Cross needed twenty-four hour support but based upon the call up response I could not commit ARES to this schedule. I negotiated a 16-hour per day schedule and started relieving operators at sites as possible up to midnight. During the first day, we passed several NTS-style and tactical messages for the Red Cross; several of which had a large impact on the efforts of various county, city and disaster-relief agencies in making field decisions.

We continued sixteen hour per day operations from these sites on Saturday. However, the EOC location moved to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Command Post. Fortunately, our ARES team had recently built emergency radio kits for this site and 911 Communications co-located at this facility in a different room. We moved our net to the 444.675 W4WBT machine because the Vance High School station experienced difficulty reaching the 444.950. Throughout the weekend, we rotated three schedules per day at the six sites. Many new operators assisted with this activation as we continued to run our call list daily along with on the air requests for operator assistance. All of the normal ARES repeaters and telephone service was mostly restored by Sunday night. We continued operation on Monday at only three sites (2 shelter sites and the EOC were secured the previous day) and secured our net at 2359 EST that night. Over the entire event, we deployed 37 different ARES operators, passed 18 pieces of priority traffic and expended 323 total man-hours of ARES effort.

Most of the major issues occurred during our efforts on Friday and Saturday including:

The transportation of an expectant mother to a Red Cross shelter site.

The transportation and lodging for victims of a local hotel fire to a shelter site.

The transportation of numerous shelter clients from a standard shelter to the special needs shelter, where they could receive the appropriate medical or mental attention.

The transportation of food, lodging and logistical supplies to American Red Cross shelter sites.

Ability for Red Cross shelter managers to communicate important statistics to the EOC.

The American Red Cross expressed many thanks to me on Monday for our assistance. Likewise, did Charlotte-Mecklenburg Emergency Management.. (continued on page 5)

## Ice Storm (continued)

### *A Thankful EC*

A blessed ARES unit is one in which it's operators possess many types and level of talent to meet the needs of performing emergency communications. The number one requirement to be a good ARES unit is for its' operators to have kind hearts, and a willingness to serve their fellow man. In the Mecklenburg County area, I feel we are blessed in these areas by many of our operators. Here are few examples of what I mean:

Alan (KF4NJP) and Pam (N8PAM) Richards rode a Charlotte Area Transit System bus to the East Mecklenburg HS shelter site, operated the shelter radio for a six-hour period and caught the last bus that night back home. Jim Payne III N4JBP, Lee Price KD4GCF, Roger Meyers WA2TKS and Steve McCabe KE4IYH worked at least 40 hours over the four-day period at shelter sites. Jim also worked a normal day at his employer on Monday. KB5WY donated his equipment to be used at a shelter site for the entire operation when there wasn't enough equipment available to cover all the requested sites. K4RSG transported equipment to various sites, worked 31 hours at a shelter site and made at least one trip from Charlotte to Anderson Mountain in Gaston County to fuel an emergency generator for the 145.230 repeater. WB2NHQ worked numerous hours for the Red Cross setting up shelter sites, transporting equipment and delivering food to shelter sites. He also occasionally kept in touch with us to pass information as available. Several operators gave up time with family, church or work to provide emergency communications assistance throughout the period.

I am grateful to the thirty-seven operators and their families who assisted in some capacity for this activation. Please know that every contribution either large or small is greatly appreciated.

Very 73, Daryl E. Sampson W4OH  
ARRL Emergency Coordinator – Mecklenburg County, NC

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## HIGH FREQUENCY KERNELS

By N4MQU

I was inspired to write this article because of an incident that happened on my way from a trip to Charlotte.

I enjoy scanning the High Frequencies while I am traveling from point to point. Using my Icom 706 and my Tarheel Screwdriver Antenna I can chat with my ham friends all over the world. I went to visit my Uncle in Charlotte the day before Thanksgiving, and on the way back I tuned my radio for the Maritime Mobile Net on 20 meters. They offer phone patches for maritime mobile stations and as their preamble says offers assistance to ships in distress. When I tuned in that day the first thing I heard was a station asking What is the nature of your emergency. I did not hear the response but the station I could hear repeated that a 49-year-old woman had stomach cramps and the engine had quit, and needed the U.S. Coast Guard to medivac them out. The ham that I heard was able to get the Coast Guard on a phone patch to ask the vessel questions. Apparently the vessel had sent out a distress signal on some kind of electronic device. At that time I could hear the Coast Guard loud and clear but the vessel in distress was light copy. The Coast Guard had asked them if they sent the signal out earlier and they indicated they had. Another Coast Guard official got on frequency and asked some medical question. She wanted to know the victims condition, i.e., pulse, respiration, color, etc. No other information was available but the lady had been suffering cramps for two days, and could not keep any food down. She had no pre existing conditions and had tried to take Dramamine but couldn't keep it down. After conversation it was determined that the 2-crew members and the dog needed the Coast Guard to take them to port not to the hospital. The captain said it would be nice if they could tow the vehicle but said he could get the salvage company to come and get it. About the time I got home (3 hours after the initial call), I heard the ham ask the captain of the boat if they had heard from the Coast Guard and the captain said yes. By this time conditions had improved enough for me to hear all the stations. Shortly after this it was reported the helicopter had arrived and about the time I got home it was confirmed that the victims including the dog were picked up.

Continued on page 9

Dear Mecklenburg County ARES Operator:

The American Radio Relay League and your fellow Mecklenburg County ARES operators appreciate your contributions as an emergency communication specialist. As your local ARRL Emergency Coordinator, I sincerely thank you for using your skills, talent and equipment in support of our recent emergency communications activation for the American Red Cross.

On Friday 12/6/2002, I received a call from the American Red Cross Disaster Services office (via cell phone) requesting ARES assistance. Our mission was to provide communications support between the Red Cross Disaster Services office, the Mecklenburg County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and four American Red Cross shelter sites located at East Mecklenburg, Providence, Metro Center and Vance High Schools. Telephone service at my residence had already failed and telephone communications between the sites mentioned above had failed or were unreliable. Electricity, telephone service and often water sources requiring electrical power were failing county-wide, following one of the most devastating winter ice storms our area has experienced in some time. Although the physical damage to personal property was not that great, the loss of electrical power for an extended period of time had a major impact on our local community.

On Friday, ARES was the primary communications for the American Red Cross between these sites as we passed formal/informal messages and allowed third party traffic between Red Cross officials. Our communications network on the 444.675 W4WBT and 444.950 WA1WXL repeater systems helped with the coordination of many situations making a difference in our community. Here are just a few of them:  
The transportation of an expectant mother to a Red Cross shelter site.  
The transportation and lodging for victims of a local hotel fire to a shelter site.  
The transportation of numerous shelter clients from a standard shelter to the special needs shelter, where they could receive the appropriate medical or mental attention.  
The transportation of food, lodging and logistical supplies to American Red Cross shelter sites.  
Ability for Red Cross shelter managers to communicate important statistics to the EOC.

As time progressed, public service communications improved as power was slowly restored to telephone offices. By Monday 12/9/2002, normal communications was sufficient for our ARES unit to stand down. During this four-day activation, ARES maintained a tactical network between the Red Cross sites for sixteen hours per day.

As I've said before, YOU are the most important part of our ARES unit. Contributions come in many shapes and sizes that make our unit capable of supporting served agencies. Whether it is passing traffic between field locations, fueling a generator at a tower site, transporting equipment or being a liaison between repeaters, we could not have accomplished our goals without you and the support of your family.

Very 73,

Daryl Sampson W4OH  
ARRL Emergency Coordinator – Mecklenburg County, NC

## MINUTES OF MEETING NOVEMBER 26 , 2002

Vice President Vincent Mates, KF4LVC, called the meeting to order at 7:45 PM.

Vice President Mates said that President McAllister had decided not to run for re-election because of his wife's illness.

Mary Hunt, N4MH, announced that the Christmas Party would take place on December 7.

Shawn Goodin, K4RSG, discussed linking repeaters through the Internet via IRLP and asked if there is sufficient interest to warrant the investment in time and additional expense involved.

John White offered to take orders for public service vests.

Vincent Mates said that he would serve as club secretary. It was noted that all ballot positions are running unopposed, so the election was held by voice vote with the following results.

President —	Shawn Goodin, K4RSG
Vice President	Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC
Secretary	Vincent Mates, KF4LVC
Treasurer	John White, WB2NHQ

### Board Members (Two Openings)

Irvin Hoechner, KF4KFN  
Gregory Onachila, KG4IOE

Bill Heybruck, WA2EDN, gave the evenings presentation on the Anderson Power Pole connector set up as the ARES standard.

Earl Fortner, K4KAY, won the door prize drawing which was a Vectronics 20m Receiver Kit and a 30w soldering iron.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Dave Stewart, AF4ZK, Secretary

# MINUTES OF MEETING BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOVEMBER 12, 2002

Present: Wilton McAllister, WB4PCS, President; Vincent Mates, KF4LVC, Vice President; Dave Stewart, AF4ZK, Secretary; John White, WB2NHQ, Treasurer. Board Members: Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC; Sherry Conrad Frye, KE4LZE; Bill Turner, W4WNT.

President McAllister called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

## Discussion:

Dave Stewart said that a Technician license class is planned in cooperation with the W4CQ club starting Jan 23, 2003. Formal notice for the class will be posted via email on the MARS and CARC member reflectors about the first of the year.

Jeff Blythe said that the Special Olympics will be held in Winston-Salem next year.

Wilton McAllister said that ARRL is planning classes on traffic handling and that a traffic handling certificate may be required to participate in emergency communications.

John White reported that expenses are running within budget. John also noted that it would be desirable to acquire a Heil "Classic" microphone for hamfest and other use.

## Action:

Wilton McAllister presented a motion to authorize John White to negotiate for a Heil "Classic" microphone. The microphone has a custom call sign plate. There was interest in obtaining two plates, W4BFB and NC4DP. The second plate would be used when the microphone was used at Discovery Place. The motion was carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

Dave Stewart, AF4ZK, Secretary.



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Saturday, February 15, 2003** — VE Test Session, 9:00 a.m., East Baptist Church

**Tuesday January 28, 2003** — Club Meeting, Monroe Road, 7:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, February 11, 2003** — Board Meeting, Red Cross Building, Park Road

**Saturday-Sunday, March 8-9, 2003** — Charlotte Hamfest and ComputerFair

**Saturday, March 29, 2003** — MS Walk A Thon

**Friday-Sun, May 30-June1, 2003** — MS Challenge

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### About This Newsletter

MARS News is published monthly for the members of the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society. Permission is given to reprint 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](mailto:n4mh@w4bfb.org) or on 3.5" diskette. The files should be in TEXT or WORD format.

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### High Frequency Kernels (continued from Page 5)

At one point a boat on the gulf coast indicated he didn't have a ham license but gave a recommendation about where the boat should place his anchor. The sailor said he had been helicopter rescue pilot in the NAVY. I didn't hear net control this time but based on a conversation I heard another ham say he thought the net control could talk to him since he was assisting a vessel in distress. I think by that time the Coast Guard had the situation under control and the other vessel was not going to rescue it but just offering verbal help. I think the net control action was proper.

It was a most interesting afternoon and my trip from Charlotte seem to fly by. I didn't have my tape recorder and could not write call signs down but those hams handled everything in a professional manner.

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## Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society, Inc.

### Officers and Board of Directors:

**President**

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

**Vice President**

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

**Secretary**

Vince Mates, KF4LVC, Email Address: kf4lvc@w4bfb.org

**Treasurer**

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

**Directors**

Sherry Conrad Frye, KE4LZE; Irv Hoecher, KF4KFN, Greg Onachila, KG4IOE  
Bill Turner, W4WNT

**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**

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### MARS News

Mary S. Hunt, N4MH, Editor

16007 Wynfield Creek Pkwy

Huntersville, NC 28078

See you at the next meeting —  
Tuesday, January 28, 2003