



MECKLENBURG AMATEUR  
RADIO SOCIETY, INC

# MARS News

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## A letter from the President

I would like to say thanks to everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President this year. I am looking forward to a very exciting year with many new things to come.

The first thing we are looking to do is making sure everyone has a Club name badge with the W4BFB logo on it. We will be taking pictures at our January 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting and February 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting, so please plan on being there. We would like to give them out to you, so you will have them before Hamfest.

Tim Slay-N4IB, NC SECTION MANAGER, will put on our presentation for January.

The topic will be on the ARRL.

I am also interested in finding out at the club meeting, who would like to participate in some of the VHF contests that are coming up. Every member can participate in these VHF contests and we can have lots of fun operating. We will have a sign up sheet circulating around during the meeting.

We are thinking about having a mini field day in May with a cookout to bring out the whole family. Let us know if you want to help out in this club activity.

**So if you think you would be interested in these contests or any other ham radio events or activities, please let us know so we can plan more events for this year.**

With the FCC eliminating the Morse code requirement and granting all Technician class licensees identical band privileges, our Technician class license holders should consider upgrading their licenses so they can use even more of the HF bands. This year, let's get everyone talking on the radio.

I would like to say we are looking for a very exciting year. We have put together a lot of Committees for our Club and will need help with them.

The MARS Committees are:

Repeater Committee  
Grants and Resources  
Equipment Management and Inventory  
Public Service Activities  
Budget and Planning

Contest and Operating Events  
Membership Committee  
Holiday Party and Picnic  
Web Site Committee  
Nominating and Election Committee



(Continued on page 2)

# Letter from the President (cont.)

**We want you to be a part of the Club!** We want to see new things happening, so **join a Committee.**

Let us *work together* to make our Club the best Club it can be. We will have a sign-up sheet for the Committees at the meeting. **We need to work together to make this year prosperous.**

And... as an enticement to come, we will be serving some refreshments at the end of the meeting. Hope to see all of you all there on the 30th.

Thanks for your support,

73 - Jodie Rowland - KI4CXO



## ATTN: V.E. Team Needs Feedback

### (From Potential Licensees and those Upgrading)

Thanks to the FCC's upcoming changes to eliminate CW testing, the Mecklenburg VE Team looks forward seeing more Technician class licensees on the HF spectrum. If you have passed Element 2 (the Technician exam) and not Element 1 (the CW exam) you will soon gain voice and data privileges in portions of the ten meter band as well as CW privileges in portions of the 15, 40, and 80 meter bands. In addition, licensees may upgrade to General and Extra without taking Element 1. These changes will take effect 30 days after the FCC has them published in the Federal Register.

Note: If you are a Technician class licensee who has not passed and will not be taking Element 1, we recommend that you do not take the General exam before the new rules come into effect. Your upgrade to General would not automatically take effect with the rule change. Once the new rules take effect, you would have to apply for an upgrade at yet another VE testing session which would mean paying a second \$14 test session fee. By waiting, you would only have to pay the fee one time.

In order to better prepare ourselves to help you, the Mecklenburg Volunteer Examiner (VE) team would like to know how many Technicians are planning to upgrade in the near future. If you are a Tech please answer the following three questions and email your answers to me:

- 1- Now that Element 1 (Morse Code) has been removed, do you plan to upgrade by taking the General exam? If so, do you have an idea of when that might be?
- 2- If it were offered, would you attend an exam night at the East Baptist Church?
- 3- Would you attend a meeting about basic HF operation? If so, you may also indicate if you would like a certain topic (or topics) discussed.

Please email the answers and any comments or questions that you have to [ad4ie@w4bfb.org](mailto:ad4ie@w4bfb.org) or give me a paper with your answers at the club meeting on January 30th.

Thanks,

Paul D. Ponak, AD4IE ([ad4ie@w4bfb.org](mailto:ad4ie@w4bfb.org))

Mecklenburg V.E. team

# Would You Like to Have a 75 Meter Antenna with Gain?

If so, consider building a 160 meter loop. I have been using a G5RV dipole multiband antenna for several years with excellent results. Most of my operating is done on 75 meters SSB. There is a group of us that hang out around 3.927 midmornings. Several of the folks are antenna gurus. WD4CQ convinced me that a 160 meter loop cut to 1.9 MHz would give at least 2 db gain over a 75 meter half wave dipole and that gain would increase on the higher frequency bands. Yes, this is a multiband antenna! I believe the gain at ten meters is approximately 28 db but the lobes become so narrow it is not very good on that band. Now I know you old timers know that 3 db gain is the equivalent of doubling your power. For example: if you are running 50 watts to an antenna with 3db gain then the effective radiated power will be 100 watts. Or 500 watts becomes 1000 watts. With that said a 2 db gain on 75 meters was enough motivation to build a 160 meter loop.



**160 meter loop feed point with choke coil**

This project took several weeks to come together. First I choose which trees I would use. getting the rope up in trees 70 foot tall would take some doing but my buddy KA4WYC stopped by with his slingshot fishing reel rig and after numerous tries was able to get my anchor lines up in the trees.

For the lines I used 3/16" black parachute cord (available at Army/Navy Surplus Stores). I used a commercial feed point with a SO239 connector so I could change the coax easily if I needed to do so. For the antenna I used number 12 solid copper wire. WD4CQ did the calculations for the antenna. At the 1.900 MHz center of the 160 meter band I would need 532 feet of wire (no, that's not a typo).

Several weeks later my friend Gordon, W4URU came over and we set out to put the antenna up. We used 150 foot tape measure and some masking tape on the driveway to mark 127 ft. We walked off 127 feet of wire 4 times to come up with a single piece of wire 532 feet long. After getting this done we laid the wire out in the approximate position it would be in the air. If you have ever had some wire tangle you can probably imagine the difficulty trying to get the wire laid out without kinking it.

We finally succeeded and soldered one end of the wire to the center feed. A split bolt was used for the other end of the wire so it could be tuned with out having to resolder each time.

I used some 1/2 inch Plexiglas and cut insulators for each corner. This done; we proceeded to pull each corner of the antenna up and began tuning the antenna. I used the MFJ antenna analyzer to find the resonant point of the antenna. It really is much simpler than using an SWR meter to find the resonant point. It resonated around 1.8 MHz and we ended up trimming approximately 30 ft to get it resonant at 1.9 MHz.

Bear in mind, the antenna had to be lowered at two points each time we trimmed. After getting this done I removed the split bolt connector and soldered the center connection.

My antenna is being fed with RG 59 coax but you could use ladder line for less loss in the feed line. All the signal reports with this antenna on 75 Meters have been excellent. The only problem I have had was causing some touch lamps to turn on and off in my home while transmitting.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## 160 Meter Loop (cont.)

*(Continued from page 3)*

Kenneth Sanders, WD4CQ suggested I put a choke coil in the antenna feed line. I lowered the antenna again and unscrewed the PL259 connector from the feed point, made a six turn, eight inch diameter coil with the RG59 coax and taped it up after reconnecting it to the feed point of the antenna. This solved the lamp problem and made life with my wife easier.

So there you have it. I would recommend it to anyone and would build another. One of the advantages is operation on 160 meters. I had never operated there before but I tell you it is an excellent band. When 75 lengthens out at night and you can't communicate; you will find 160 meters very good for local communications and also working 300 to 400 miles.

You will find the band quite active with a lot of CW on the lower portion and will have to search for a clear frequency if you want to call CQ.

73 de K4KAY

## Ditz and Daz



by

Jeff - KA4WYC



OK – before you start, why am I writing a column on CW? Well, just some of the ramblings that I have been doing lately. I joined a group called the SKCC – Straight Key Century Club. It's free!! You join for life! And you have fun with CW. I have always liked listening to Morse Code. But never really studied it before. Yeah, I passed my 5 WPM FCC test back in 1981. I even tried to take a test, in Charlotte, at the Post Office in 1983, to upgrade to General! What can I say, LARGE room, LOTS of people milling around, and the clown beside me was coughing and dropped his pencil when they started the tape. I never had a chance...! At best I was 10 WPM, but I was going to take a chance. Well I stayed a Tech Plus until the FCC changed the requirements in 2001(?) and I paper upgraded to General. That's all history now!

I saw an article in QST about the SKCC and looked them up and joined. They have a Web Site [www.skccgroups.com](http://www.skccgroups.com), and you can get all the information you need. They have contests (Sprints) each month. Awards you can get. Hey if you are brave, you can join their High Speed Group on Wednesdays – they start out at 20 WPM and go up from there. If you are like me and fumble along at 5 WPM, that's ok too, they will slow down for you. They believe in having FUN!!

# Ditz And Daz (cont.)

If you don't work CW and may like to try it, there is a great program to get your CW up and running. Google G4FON, and look for Morse Code Training Program. **You set the speed you want to end up at and go from there.** It seems kind of backwards, you start listening to Code at, say, 20 WPM! I am currently working at 20 WPM. OK, OK, 2 characters at a time!! The next best part is, **IT'S FREE!!**

If you have ever heard of an ARRL event called Straight Key Night – SKN, it is a lot of fun. No pressure, just good rag chewing on CW. It starts at 00:00Z on January 1 and runs for 24 hours. That's December 31 @ 7PM EST to January 1<sup>st</sup> (for those that don't have a headache!) I bet a good number of you folks are out partying or are like me, in bed around 10PM! I wanted to go to a DX'er friends' house and make one contact with a friend I met on the SKCC list. But I didn't go and so I set my rig up and listened for 4 hours – but didn't make one contact! I froze!! I really didn't remember much of the Code. So I made a promise to myself, a New Years Resolution – **to be at 20 WPM by field Day 2007!!** So how am I doing it? By listening to the G4FON program, and listening on the air. The FCC may be doing away with the Code for testing, but it ain't dead yet!! The Bands are crowded with CW.

One of the great things about Amateur Radio is, someone is always in the same boat as you are. I have spoken to others who wish their Code Speed were better too. Some time soon, I would like to get a Code Practice net on the 146.940 Repeater, after the 9PM M2MEN Net. Maybe two nights a week, and send CW. What do you think? Want to join me? Send me an email and we will work something out. [jblythe@cetlink.net](mailto:jblythe@cetlink.net)

Oh – a little bit about the keys on the previous page. On the left is a key I got from a good friend, Mike – WA4EQM (SK), his widow gave me some of his keys. It is a 1946 British Admiralty key. The one on the right is by J. A. Hills, W8FYO. Sometime around the early 60's era. This was the predecessor to the Benchers Paddles. I brought this at a Club auction for \$25.00. I understand it is somewhat of a collectors' item. I like to collect keys of all kinds. So if you have one sitting in a box, get it out and use it, or send it my way, and I'll put it on the air. That's all for now, hope you liked the article! If you would like to add something you like about Amateur Radio, give Richard - KG4PBG a call, I am sure he needs the fodder for the Newsletter!

*A Funny Email Signature from Kev K4VD SKCC #605:*

*“CW. Everything else is QRM. Can you hear us now??!!”*

*73 - Jeff KA4WYC SKCC # 1889 dit dit dit dit dit, dit dit!*

## January Meeting - Tim Slay N4IB

The January W4BFB club meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 30th and the East Baptist Church on Monroe Rd (Next to East Meck High School). Tim Slay (N4IB), our ARRL section manager, will give the feature presentation.

Considering all of the change going on right now in the Amateur Radio world, this should be a very interesting presentation. So, please do plan to attend.

# V.E. Testing Session –February 17th

The W4BFB club will be holding a V.E. testing session on February 17th. Testing will be held at East Baptist Church at 6850 Monroe Rd in Charlotte. Testing begins at 9:00 am. So arrive a little early to allow for registration.

You must bring the following:

A picture ID (Drivers License is fine)

Your original Amateur Radio license plus a copy

Any CSCE's plus copies

\$14.00 examination fee

Walk ins are welcome but pre-registration is appreciated. Please contact:

Mary Hunt N4MH  
N4MH@w4bfb.org  
704-948-7373

## New Club ID Badges

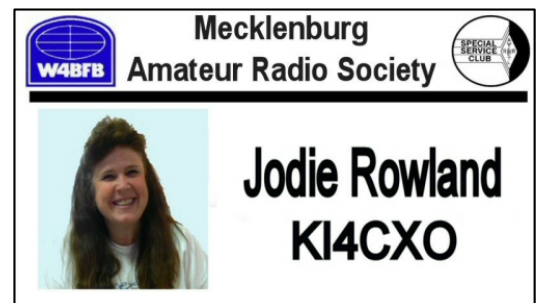
The Membership & Membership Support Committee of W4BFB is pleased to announce that new club ID badges will be made for all current MARS club members. The new IDs will feature your name, callsign, photo, the W4BFB logo and ARRL Special Service Club logo.

One goal of this effort is to have as many members as possible wearing their new IDs to the

2007 hamfest and to all future club meetings and events. Wearing your ID to meetings allows another club member, who may know only your call or only your name, to easily recognize you when you meet. Wearing your ID to the hamfest, allows our visitors see all the MARS members showing their support for our club.

The initial batches of photographs will be taken at the January and February club meetings. IDs will be made in a first-come, first-served order and distributed at club meetings. Please try to attend the January and February meeting so we can spread out the workload before the hamfest. After that, photos will be taken, and IDs will be made, as required.

73 - KA4WYC, WB2RHM - MARS Membership & Membership Support Committee



**Here is a sample of the ID design that will be used, featuring our new club president**

# January Board Meeting Minutes



Board Of Directors Meeting of the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society W4BFB 1-2-07

Opened by Jodie Rowland – President @ 7PM

Officers present were: Jodie KI4CXO-Pres., Don-N4IZ-VP, Greg-KG4IOE-Tres., Jeff KA4WYC-Sect. Board Members present were: Ben-WB2RHM, Paul-AD4IE,

Kevin-KI4KFS, August-N6TYE, Irvin-KF4KFN. And guests that were present were: Auggie-KI4KKE, John-WB2NHQ

Jodie welcomed the members of the board.

Don – gave information of future programs for the club.

Jeff- reported on mail from USPS, to renew bulk sort box. Mary-N4MH with the Hamfest Committee had been contacted and stated she didn't need the box. Jeff will send a letter back to cancel this box.

Greg handed out a financial report. Trailer storage to be paid this month.

Old business – 10 new chairs are here and the clubroom has been cleaned. Thank you Jodie!

Paul asked about MOU for Gaston ARES. We need to look for this document. Shawn will be contacted. Jeff will handle this.

New Business-Ben stated he would like to purchase cables for Club laptops to Club radios. Ben was authorized to purchase 4 cables.

Don asked about ID Badges. This was an item Jodie was working on. Ben stated he has the camera and the Club printer and laminator. A design was provided by Ben and all members present picked the one they liked. A consensus picked one design and Ben and Jeff will take pictures on the Meeting night. John asked if he could get some ARES pictures too. The Board didn't have any problem with this. We won't be using film, but digital pictures and then copied to Club Printer and Laminator. Ben will notify Richard to have this in the Newsletter.

Special Service Club status was questioned and Jeff will look into this.

John brought up a request to coordinate making code keys for the Scouts. And purchasing some new licensing manuals. This was tabled for further review.

Jeff brought up 3 new members for membership status, all were approved.

Jodie brought up New Committee appointments. Repeater Committee, Contest and Operating Events Committee, Grants and Resource Committee, Equipment Management and Inventory Committee, Holiday Party and Picnic Committee, Public Service Activity Committee, W4BFB Website Committee, Budget and Planning Committee, Nominating and Election Committee. Paul requested a look at our By-laws. Jodie stated we would table it for now.

Ben made a motion, which Paul seconded, that the Committees stated by Jodie, be approved by the Board. Which was approved unanimously.

A discussion was held on Contesting and Field Day events. We are in need of a Field Day Captain.

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# Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

*(Continued from page 7)*

Jodie brought up a Meritorious Service Award. All were in agreement.

Jodie brought up to search for a better meeting place and for our equipment storage.

Jeff brought up ARRL Membership and how a small part of your renewal dues comes back to the Club. Jeff will bring the information to the Club Meeting and requested info be placed in the Newsletter.

Jodie wants this year to be a better time for the Club membership and their families.

Jodie stated she wanted the Board to more active and no one will be sitting on their hands! (The last statement was paraphrased by this editor!)

Paul made a motion, with August seconded to adjourn. @ 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Jeff Blythe – KA4WYC Secretary

## ARRL Members —Join/Renew via W4BFB!



I would like to share something I brought to the Board Of Directors Meeting in January. It is a program that turns money back to the club when you renew or become a member of the ARRL. The club will get \$15.00 for each new membership to the ARRL. Or we get \$2.00 for each renewal. (Sorry, no family memberships. A renewal is considered a member with a membership less than 2 years expired.) You must request the new or renewal membership through W4BFB.

We will be having a membership drive in the near future. So more will be coming on how to sign up as a new ARRL member or renew if you are a returning member of the ARRL. There are many good reasons for being a member. The magazine QST is worth the cost alone. If you will soon be joining ARRL or renewing a membership or if you have any questions or comments, please send an email to [jblythe@cetlink.net](mailto:jblythe@cetlink.net)

Thanks, Jeff KA4WYC

## Hamfest Committee Meeting - Jan 18th

The Hamfest Committee will be meeting on Thursday, January 18th at 7:00 pm at the East Baptist Church.

All Committee Chairpersons are requested to attend the meeting. Also, any club member who is interested in helping with the Hamfest should try and attend the meeting.

Thanks,

Mary Hunt, N4MH

Shawn Goodin, K4RSG



# January ARRL VHF Sweepstakes

The ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes contest is coming up soon. So please be ready to join the fun!

**When:** Saturday Jan 20 @ 2PM local until & Sunday Jan 21 @ 11PM.

**Where:** All bands above 50 MHz, including 6M, 2M, 220, 440 and up

modes CW / SSB / FM Simplex / Digital modes.

most popular FM Simplex frequencies (6M) 52.525

(2M) 146.490, 146.550, 146.580 (note 146.520 national simplex freq is taboo)

(220) 223.500

(440) 446.000

FYI : The Dixie Radio Pirates ([www.dixieradiopirates.com](http://www.dixieradiopirates.com)) will be operating from the top of Anderson Mountain.

For more information <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2007/jan-vhf-ss.html>

73 -Bill -W4GRW

## Items for Sale

The following items are listed for sale by:

Bill N4DH

(704) 545-9368

1. MFJ Deluxe Electronic Keyer. Can be used with

Iambic A/B or semi-automatic keying. Either grid-block

or direct keying for the transmitter. Front panel

controls are speed, weight, tone and volume,

with a tune button. Keyer is as new with original box and

instruction manual. \$45.00.

2. Bearcat BC-786 Trunk Type III scanner. Operates 25MHz

to 1.3 GHz. Has 500 programmable channels.

Now programmed for the Charlotte/Mecklenburg area.

Too many other features to list. Is in excellent condition with

AC PS, ant., cigarette plug in cable, manuals and original box.

never been mobile and in non smoking environment; \$175.00

## 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)

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

**Club Repeaters** 146.34/146.94 (w/autopatch)  
146.63/145.23 (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.

## Club Officers and Board of Directors

### President

Jodie Rowland, K14CXO, [ki4cxo@w4bfb.org](mailto:ki4cxo@w4bfb.org)

### Vice President

Don Biltcliffe, N4IZ, [n4iz@w4bfb.org](mailto:n4iz@w4bfb.org)

### Secretary

Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, [ka4wyc@w4bfb.org](mailto:ka4wyc@w4bfb.org)

### Treasurer

Greg Onachila, KG4IOE, [kg4ioe@w4bfb.org](mailto:kg4ioe@w4bfb.org)

### Directors

Paul Ponak, AD4IE, [ad4ie@w4bfb.org](mailto:ad4ie@w4bfb.org)

Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM, [wb2rhm@w4bfb.org](mailto:wb2rhm@w4bfb.org)

Kevin Keyes, K14KFS, [ki4kfs@w4bfb.org](mailto:ki4kfs@w4bfb.org)

August Flassig, N6TYE, [n6tye@w4bfb.org](mailto:n6tye@w4bfb.org)

Irvin Hoechner, KF4KFN, [storm-qrz@stormcrow.org](mailto:storm-qrz@stormcrow.org)



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