



# MARS News

## Inside this issue:

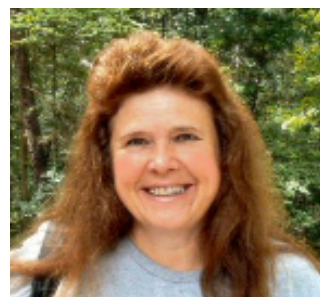
NC4DP Transition	3
M2MEN	4
VE Test Session—Feb 21	5
November and January Meetings	5
Security Volunteers Needed	6
Flea Market Setup Volunteers Needed	6
UNCC 440 Repeater in Place	6
November Board Minutes	7
January Board Minutes	8
Equipment for Sale	9

## A Letter from the President

Hello Everyone,

I Hope that everyone had a great Christmas and the start of a very Happy New Year.

I can't believe that it's already January 2009. I want to start out by saying that I "Thank" everyone for all their support and help they gave me last year. We could not have accomplished all the things that we did last year without the help of the club and its membership. I am very excited about what we can do for 2009.



Since we didn't publish a newsletter last month (I gave our editor Richard K4KRW a holiday vacation), I want tell you some of the notable things that happened last month that would have been in the December Newsletter.

I want to start out by saying that I personally think that on December 6th we had one wonderful Holiday Party. If you didn't get to come, you really missed another great MARS event. It was a time of meeting and greeting and sharing the spirit of the season together with the members of the club. We are like one big family and you can't ask for anything better than that. And did I mention that we have some of the finest cooks in several counties in our club. The food we had was great. I think we had about every kind of dish you could think of. And then there were the desserts. The desserts were so good there was nothing left at the end of the evening. We had some really great music thanks to Mike W4DXL. He played some great songs and I even got to dance to a few. Now, that made my MARS Holiday Party night complete! And I don't want to forget to give an extra special thank you to all of the very hard working folks who came out and helped us set-up, serve, and clean-up after the party!

One of the special traditions of the MARS Holiday Party is the annual presentation of the MARS Ham of the Year Award. Since I was the Ham of the Year for 2007, it was my job to select the 2008 Ham of the Year. Gosh, was that a tough job! It turned out to be too tough a job for me to pick only one club member who deserved to be called the 'Ham of the Year'. So I decided to give two Ham of the Year awards for 2008. The 2008 MARS Ham of the Year is Earl Fortner – K4KAY, and the 2008 MARS Ham of the



2008 Ham of the Year recipients. Andy G4GKK and Earl K4KAY.

## Letter from the President (cont.)

Year is Andy Hawkins – K4GKK. They both earned their own awards for all the extra special effort they put in for the good of MARS. Congratulations to Andy and Earl!

Another great thing that happened in December was that we got to help out a 13 year old boy at the orphanage in Wilkesboro N.C. with almost everything he wished for, including the bicycle he wanted. Thanks to one of our wonderful club members for working so hard to make that part of his wish come true. And we also got to help out a needy family at the church with lots of canned food, a Food Lion gift certificate and the warm clothes that were on their wish list. We could even provide them a game system with about 20 games for the family. So, you can see what wonderful things we can do to help each other when we work together as a club and do good works.

Well, enough said about 2008. I predict we are going to have another great year in 2009.

Now that it is January, we must start to work much harder on our 2009 Hamfest. It's coming up really quick - March 14th and 15th. We are going to need everyone's help to make it a success. It's a lot of hard work doing the hamfest and only with each and every one of our club members' help can we make it happen. Everything will be different than in years gone by. We have a chance to make OUR HAMFEST better then ever before. We will be in a new place. And with more volunteers helping out in different areas, we can plan on making more fun things happen at this hamfest than we ever could in the past. We can create the kind of hamfest that makes everyone look forward to coming back next year.

So with that, when the signup sheets start going around at the two remaining club meetings before the hamfest, please sign up for a job at the event. If you don't know what to volunteer for, just ask. There are lots of fun things to do. If you don't get to come to any of the club or hamfest meetings just email me (jrowland@comporium.net) and I will make sure you have a time slot to help. Your help will be greatly appreciated.



Just like last 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. We can show our visitors pictures or slide shows of MARS events or other Ham Radio activities. It will be a great way to show them what 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 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 a good public relations project to look into, There are a lot of area people who do not know us, or what we do. 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

***I predict we are going to  
have another great year  
in 2009***

## NC4DP Transition

Many of you have heard or read about the refurbishment of Discovery Place that is in progress this year. As those plans evolved recently, we tried to keep current on how it affected the Amateur Radio Education Center. Finally, the news came that our radio room had to close (temporarily we hope) and the space will become part of an enlarged food service where (the CEO of Discovery Place told me) the goal is to offer healthy food choices to visitors instead of primarily hamburgers and French fries. It was difficult to accept the letter I received in mid-December saying the radio room had to be cleared and there was no plan at this time for a radio room in the refurbished Discovery Place. We had completed seventeen years of showing visitors from all parts of the world about Ham radio including the history, science, math, geography, political science, and public service, which are all part of Ham radio.

An agreement was made that the equipment, fixtures, and amateur radio designated funds, would be transferred to the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society who has been our primary sponsor from original concept, to design, implementation, staffing, and funding. The intent is that the station will be used as it always has been, to show Amateur radio to our community and to motivate visitors to learn the applied sciences and principles we operate with. The huge job of dismantling, packing, transporting, and storing the station has been completed with the help of some great volunteers. Special thanks go to our packing crew KG4ENP, K8YC, AD4IE, and our moving crew K14CXO, W4GRW, KA3VVJ, W4PVT, WB2RHM & Anne. I must add that throughout this task, I've had great support from many of the Discovery Place staff. And when the dust settles a bit, we plan to discuss again a refurbished Amateur Radio Education Center at Discovery Place where I still think it belongs. With that in mind the antenna systems are still intact on the roof so we can just replace those seventeen year old feed lines.

Here is the important part, more important than equipment, location, or money. Before we discuss a new Ham radio room at Discovery Place (or anywhere else) we need a team of great volunteer operators. I have visited with many Hams and their families who have come to Discovery Place just to see us. It's not acceptable to have an exhibit where visitors make the trip and just get a look through a glass window at stuff, when they were expecting to see Ham radios in use. A station that's open for visitors just one or two days a week does not justify the space and effort.

There are some of us who have spent many rewarding days operating the station and talking with visitors and we will continue to do so if we get the chance. I really ask each of you to consider if you could dedicate a regular schedule of time each week or month. Every individual Ham and his particular area of interest is important. An attitude of teaching and interacting with young people of all ages is the most important qualification. One day a week works well for me just because I can. It makes the schedule easy to remember and the drive worth the trip. Some also devote the same half-day each week, or the same weekend half-day each month.

Any level of Ham license is sufficient; you use your own callsign privileges. It's also a great place to use modes and antennas that you don't have at home for things like: Worked All States, DXCC, the new ARRL "Triple Play", or just a regular schedule with some of the various nets. Within the next month or so, before we have discussions with Discovery Place management about a new station at Discovery Place, we really need to know who our volunteer operator team is. Our volunteers are VIP's. I urge you, please let me know about your thoughts, concerns or ideas. I'll be at club meetings, at wb2nhq@arrl.net, or at 704-366-5375. 73, John WB2NHQ, Station Manager



***Before we discuss a new  
Ham radio room at  
Discovery Place (or  
anywhere else) we need  
a team of great  
volunteer operators.***

## CQCQCQ M2MEN

I was a new kid in town in 1978, I came to town with a Novice license and a '2' in my callsign. Several guys I worked with also were new in town, had callsigns with '2's, and we were all learning about local Ham activities. The first Charlotte Hamfest I went to was the second weekend of March 1979 at the old Civic Center about two blocks from where I worked. The FCC came to town to administer Ham exams. And that's where I got my Technician license and my first new radio. It was a synthesized Kenwood 7600 2 meter FM rig with 10 watts of power. I used a simple dipole antenna taped vertically to the wall beside my desk.

We noticed the 2 meter net on 146.94 every night at 21:00 local, I wondered how long the net had been on the air, but knew it had to have been for many years. A couple of my co-workers had become alternate Net Control Stations (NCS). One had to go on a business trip for a few weeks so he gave me his script (called it a preamble) with orders to fill in for him. I must have read that thing ten times before net time wondering if a new kid with a new Tech license was up to it. It must have sounded like a loose wire in the microphone, but it was really just my shaky finger on the PTT. When my 'friend' returned, another NCS had gone so he took that night leaving me with Tuesday. That's how I got started about 30 years ago.

***When we get used to each other, we can understand better when conditions are much worse than normal and when accurate communication becomes important.***

Of one thing I am constantly reminded; when we hear a station regularly, it's easier to understand the voice characteristic, the accent, the weak, over-driven, or perfect signal, the station's location, and the best part we get to know is the person (therefore the informal QSO part of our net). When we get used to each other, we can understand better when conditions are much worse than normal and when accurate communication becomes important. (I call it voice printing). It really does matter 'when all else fails'.

Today many VHF/UHF nets meet very few times each week. M2MEN has a long history of being there every day. Before the days of email and websites there was plenty of formal traffic and bulletins on the net with many stations regularly originating, delivering, and taking traffic to other HF nets. We all learned from the voices of experience. Because of that, I think it's important to handle formal traffic with correct protocol, like we try to do during ARES events, drills, and an occasional piece of formal traffic on the M2MEN. (A hint to all operators, I'd love to hear more of that now). Today we can still listen and talk with those 'traffic pros' on the daily HF nets, and it's worth the time to do that. We used to deliver our daily net reports using formal traffic protocols. Because there wasn't other formal traffic to handle, the net reports got very repetitive with a limited variety of content, resulting I thought, in learning too many bad habits. That's why now we just do informal net report traffic. Beware, there is a difference between formal and informal traffic.

Today we have some new operators who naturally sound unsure whilst transmitting, many newcomers to our community who need to be welcomed and invited to our activities, and many 'old-fogies like me' who just need to get on the air more, so they know if their radio still works and we know how their station sounds. We also need some (new or old) Net Control Stations; currently there are a few days of the week needing a regular NCS. I love to hear new people jump in as NCS because they learn so much and we get to know them. As I well remember, experience is not required. We have a M2MEN legacy to continue. We still meet each evening at 9:00 local, and still on 146.94 repeater. Be there!

73, WB2NHQ clear

## 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 3850 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 (a driver's license is OK), the original and a copy of any current amateur license, the original and copies of any current CSCEs, 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.

If you have been a VE with the Mecklenburg VE Team in the past, or if you have current ARRL VE credentials, and would like to be active with the Mecklenburg VE Team, please send an email to MecklenburgVETeam@W4BFB.org or call 704-948-7373. You can be added to our VE rotation list for future exam sessions.

Thanks,

73,

WB2RHM

## November and January Meetings

Scott - KI4FAU was the featured presenter for the November club meeting. Scott gave a presentation on software for programming radios. Scott demonstrated several applications that allow you to easily program frequencies into your radio. He also demonstrated software that allows you to find repeater frequencies along a route and automatically program them into your radio. Scott, thanks for a very interesting presentation.

The featured speaker at the January meeting will be Steve Kiser from WCNC TV 36. Steve is the Director of Technology for the station. Steve will be talking about the transition that is currently going on within the broadcast industry from analog to digital broadcast signals. You will definitely not want to miss this as this should be a very interesting topic.

73,

Bill - W4GRW





## Security Volunteers Needed

The Charlotte Hamfest at its new location at the Cabarrus Arena is looming just around the corner. And, as usual, we will need a lot of people to help with the security. Security volunteers are now known as the “Yellowjackets” as the club provides a very nice yellow bib for them to wear whilst they are volunteering.

The tasks involve manning the various entrances around the show hall, checking tickets and generally helping out with any questions the guests may have. We also encourage volunteers to wear the yellow bib whilst they are wandering around the Hamfest looking for those “cannot do without” items.

There will be two hour shifts throughout the Hamfest opening hours. (We will have a sign up sheet going around at the next two club meetings). Volunteering for any shift allows you FREE entry into the Hamfest. Please see either Jeff Blythe KA4WYC or Andy Hawkins K4GKK.



## Flea Market Setup Volunteers Needed

HELP WANTED: 6 to 10 folks with strong backs, work gloves, and positive early morning attitudes J! Position: Team Member on 2009 Charlotte Hamfest Flea Market Setup team. Task: Set up the folding tables for the Fleamarket Area and set up the folding chairs in the Hamfest Forum and testing rooms. Duration: 2-3 hours of labor, beginning 9AM on Friday March 13th at the Cabarrus Arena and Event Center. Recompense: one Hamfest admission ticket – good for two days admission, in exchange for only one morning’s work (AND you will also get free parking for the Hamfest weekend!).

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 January or February MARS Club Meetings, or easier yet, Contact: Ben Antanaitis – WB2RHM direct at WB2RHM@W4BFB.org to volunteer... please!

Remember: The 2009 Hamfest cannot happen without YOU!

73, WB2RHM ...-.-

## UNCC 440 Repeater in Place



The UNC Charlotte Amateur Radio Club has finally put their 440 repeater on top of the library tower. The coverage looks to be about a 20 mile radius with the 13 watts out. They will run it like that for a month or so checking for interference with other radios in that location. This machine used to be at the IBM location and was given to UNC Charlotte by the IBM club.

The frequency is 442.650 with a tone of 88.5 Hz. The audio on the machine needs some work and the engineering students will get to work on it right after the holidays.

The club received a 2Meter repeater from facilities and is in need of a 2 meter frequency. If you know of a frequency owner who is not currently using their assigned frequency and would like to donate that frequency to UNC Charlotte Amateur Radio Club, send an email to their advisor,

Bill Heybruck at wfheybruck@uncc.edu

## November Board Minutes

Jodie started the board meeting at 6:10. We had to move the date and time of the board meeting due to the elections. We met at the Tryon House Restaurant on Monday, November 3rd at 6 pm. Present were Jodie, Bill, Tom, Jeff, Kevin, Ben, Andy, Perry, and Dave. Also as guests were Carol and Libby.

The items on the agenda were to approve the slate of officers for the board and to discuss the Christmas party.

Andy presented a ballot of candidates to run for the different offices for the club. See attachment of the ballot. This was made as a motion by Andy and seconded by Jeff. This was passed unopposed by the board to present to the club membership.

Next Jodie brought up several ideas for getting something for several people for Christmas. We will be helping an orphanage with the W4CQ club. Also the two churches where we have our club events and meeting place. Toys, clothes and gift cards were discussed. We will ask club members to give gifts and donations or food products to the next club meeting.

Next, Jodie brought up the club Christmas party. Jodie asked if we wanted to cater the party this year. After a discussion it was decided to leave it like last year, a family style covered dish dinner. Several members will bring a ham, smoked turkey, and the club will provide the chicken. We will ask the club members to bring their favorite desert or covered dish to share with everyone.

Next, we talked about having a DJ to provide music. last year's wasn't as good as it should have been. After a lot of discussion it was decided to ask a club member to see if he would be willing to provide a music CD. He was asked and accepted to do this for the club.

The deadline to RSVP for the Christmas party is November 25th at the club meeting. Please bring your donations and gifts to the club meeting. The cost of the Christmas party is \$5.00 per person. Children under 13 are free.

There will be a phone calling campaign for the Christmas party.

Having no other business Jodie adjourned the meeting 7:19

73 - Jeff - KA4WYC

## December Board Minutes

The December board minutes were not available at publishing time.

They will be made available at a later date.

Richard - K4KRW





## January Board Minutes

W4BFB Board Meeting 1-6-09

Jodie started the meeting at 6:54 PM. Present were Jodie, Bill, Tom, Jeff, Andy, Ben, Kevin, Jerry & Mary. Also as guests were John WB2NHQ and Johanna KJ4GDD.

Jodie started by welcoming the new members of the board.

Bill stated the club meeting will be on the new Digital TV change over. He said the NC QSO Party is Mar. 1<sup>st</sup> 2009. There was a discussion on doing this contest. Ben said we need the Ten-Tec updated with software. Ben will take care of updating the radio.

Tom gave a financial report. He also read a profit/loss report. He went over the Christmas party.

Next John gave a report on the renovation of Discovery Place closing the radio room. There was a discussion on where the equipment will be stored. So far all of the equipment has been boxed and wrapped up. The DP accountants will go over the funds collected for the radio room and will be given to MARS. From different sources John came up with a figure and will have a better feel after the accountants look it over.

Friday morning we need to move the equipment to the storage place. John is going to pick up the moving truck and will have a storage place before Friday. We all plan to meet around 10 or 11 to start loading the truck at DP.

Jeff had nothing on membership, other than we are in our renewal period and have been collecting renewal memberships. There was discussion on having an area at the Hamfest to collect renewals.

Jodie went over the committee chairmanships. *(Those listed in italic are standing committees)*

Earl – Repeater Committee

Wayne - Ben – Web Master and Web Minder

Jodie – Picnic and Christmas Party

John – Andy – Equipment

*Jeff – Kevin – Membership and Membership Services*

*Tom – Budget and Planning*

Kevin – Grants and Resources

Bill – Kevin – Andy - Operation Events & Field Day

Mary - Public Services

Kevin - Nominating and Election Committee

Ben made a comment that a motion was needed to accept the list of committee chairs given by



## January Board Minutes (cont)

Jodie. Kevin made the motion and seconded by Bill. This motion passed.

Jodie went over a report from the Repeater Committee chair Earl. There is a small group that wants to get packet up and running. We need someone to take charge of our packet system. We have several people who want to help, but no one to lead this group, at this time. Contact Earl if you have an interest in taking this position.

Old Business: Kevin sent a note to Marsh Insurance Company to cancel our professional liability policy on December 9<sup>th</sup>. There was a discussion on this and more information to come.

Bill asked about an issue that needed to be resolved, Jeff will check on that this is taken care of.

New business – there was no new business.

Having no other business Jodie adjourned at 8:40

73 - Jeff - KA4WYC

## Equipment for Sale

Yaesu Ft-847 Earth Station (all mode 70cm, 2m, 6m and HF including WARC bands and has built in support for the 2m/70cm amateur satellites)

FC-20 auto antenna tuner for FT-847 or FT-100D

FC-20 control cable and RF coax pigtail

Operating Manual

Microphone



I would like to sell the above as a complete set as it is useless to me pieced

apart. I'm Asking \$800 for the whole thing or best offer (OBO). My contact info is below.

73,

Daryl Sampson W4OH

704-877-3505

dsampson@caroilna.rr.com

**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](mailto:ki4cxo@w4bfb.org)

**Vice President**

Bill Fisher, W4GRW, [w4grw@w4bfb.org](mailto:w4grw@w4bfb.org)

**Secretary**

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

**Treasurer**

Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ, [ka3vvj@w4bfb.org](mailto:ka3vvj@w4bfb.org)

**Directors**

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

Mary Hunt, N4MH, [n4mh@w4bfb.org](mailto:n4mh@w4bfb.org)

Andy Hawkins, K4GKK, [k4gkk@w4bfb.org](mailto:k4gkk@w4bfb.org)

Kevin Keyes, K4YYD, [k4yyd@w4bfb.org](mailto:k4yyd@w4bfb.org)



**Mecklenburg Amateur  
Radio Society, Inc**

Richard Y. Dodd, K4KRW, Editor  
7000 Heatherford Dr.  
Charlotte, NC 28226

E-mail: [k4krw@w4bfb.org](mailto:k4krw@w4bfb.org)