



# MARS News

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## A Letter from the President

News from the President – January 2010

Hello Everyone,

Here's hoping that 2010 has started off to be a great year for you and yours.



On January 5<sup>th</sup>, the new MARS Board and Officers got together for the first time. We welcomed new MARS Board members Barry - KC4SSS and Bill - K4AHK, and also Andy - K4GKK to his new job as MARS Secretary. Then, we held our annual 'planning and organization' meeting. This is when we try to look at what club activities and events will and might be coming up during the new year (Gosh, there are a lot of them!) Then we see who might want to help/lead the efforts needed to make them all happen. Some of our club committees are required by the MARS' By-Laws, and others the President and the Board create when we find out what needs to be done to make our club run OK. We looked at what we think the club wants to do and the things that the club has to do. When we were done, we found out that we really need more club members to join all the committees, and that there are a couple of committees that need someone to lead them up as chairperson. This is a great opportunity for you to be an active part of the club, by making a personal contribution of a small amount of time. This will go a long way in keeping MARS-2010 smoothly running and active. (See the minutes of the Board Meeting on page 8 for more info on 2010 MARS committees) (See the By-Laws, Article V, for info on committees [http://www.w4bfb.org/pdf\\_files/bylaws\\_20060620.pdf](http://www.w4bfb.org/pdf_files/bylaws_20060620.pdf))

Tom – KA3VVJ, Andy – K4GKK, Bill - K4AHK, and Ben – WB2RHM are working to complete the job of having a complete 2010 MARS membership roster put together as soon as possible. All of the information from the 2010 Renewal form is needed to update the MARS membership database kept and used by the MARS Secretary. The Secretary's database is how we keep and maintain the required club records, keep the reflector membership and email address lists accurate (so you can receive notices and announcements via email), and be able to contact you if there is club business or emergency need. Second, we will use only your name, callsign, and a hyperlink to your QRZ.com listing (all public information), on the Club 2010 Roster page on our web site, just like it is today. And third, and this is the new part, we will create a paper printed-only MARS membership roster with callsign, name, address, license class, email address (only with your permission), phone number (only with your permission). The printed roster will be available only to MARS members and only if requested. The *most important part* of this effort **needs you** to renew your MARS membership, using the new MARS Renewal Form, as soon as possible, if you haven't done it yet. (For more info on the renewal campaign, see page 3.)

## A Letter from the President, cont.

You can now help MARS earn rebate funds when you join or renew your ARRL membership through MARS. MARS will process your ARRL application/renewal and gets to keep a small portion of the annual ARRL dues. For more info on this MARS member benefit, see: <http://www.w4bfb.org/arrl-renewal.htm>  
Thanks.

We held a 2010 Charlotte Hamfest meeting on Wednesday January 13<sup>th</sup>. A wide variety of things were discussed about the Hamfest, to be held less than two months from now, on March 13 and 14. We have been working hard for almost a year on making sure the 2010 Charlotte Hamfest will be great. Just take a look on the Hamfest web pages and see what Wayne and Ben have been working on. <http://www.w4bfb.org/hamfest> We now have lots of specific tasks and committees we need help with, we need lots of volunteers to **sign-up NOW** to help. So please, now is the time to commit to take a part in the effort to help our club and make our 2010 Hamfest a success. (See pages 4 and 5 about opportunities to help at the Hamfest.)

The next event that MARS is trying to support is the Sandblast Rally (website at <http://www.Sandblastrally.com>) on February 5 and 6. They need a lot of Ham volunteers to assist with this event. They will also be signing Ham volunteers up at this month's MARS meeting. This is our first time helping at a road rally, so come out and support this exciting event.

Please watch our website <http://www.W4BFB.org> and newsletter for more things to come.

I want to say Thanks to everyone who supports the Club and me by coming to our club meetings and helping with our events and projects. I want to see our Club continue to grow and prosper.

73,

Jodie - KI4CXO

President, Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society

## MARS - 2010 Membership Renewal Campaign



2010 marks the first time that all MARS members need to renew their annual membership at the start of the calendar year. We used to have the membership renew at the end of June and the beginning of July, but that was changed a year and a half ago by the MARS Board of Directors to make it easier to remember when renewal time was.

We began our renewal campaign in October and the renewal rate has progressed steadily since then. Currently (1/13/10), we have about 101 renewals of members in the 2009 member database. And that is *GREAT!* But we are still about 30% off the mark to get a 100% renewal success. So, if *you* have not renewed your MARS membership yet, you are urged to go to the MARS web site, or click here to get a renewal form ([http://www.w4bfb.org/pdf\\_files/application-renewal-form.pdf](http://www.w4bfb.org/pdf_files/application-renewal-form.pdf)) Then, fill out the renewal form, print it out, and get it to Tom Hunt – KA3VVJ, our Treasurer. Mail your form and dues to Tom, or give them to him at the club meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Life members only need to fill out the form for member database updating.

This year, especially, *it is important* to fill out a renewal form **completely**. Early in 2010, we are going to provide a printed membership roster to any MARS members who request one, and we want to allow everyone the option of having their phone number and/or email address included in the listing, **OR NOT**. Permission options appear on the renewal form for you to state your preferences.

In connection with the renewal campaign, it has been decided that the combination to the MARS clubroom door will be changed at the next Board Meeting and only current 2010 MARS members will be given the new combination, at their request.

Here is a list of the callsigns of members who have renewed their MARS membership as of 1/13/10:

K4PDY, KI4YV, W4FKT, W4NHV, WC4T, AA4ZR, AC4ZR, AC4ZX, AE4AT, AE4PX, AF1E, AF4ZK, AJ4CN, K1CY, K4AHK, K4GKK, K4IZE, K4JMS, K4KAY, K4KRW, K4PVS, K4QW, K4RSG, K4SKB, K4YYD, KA3VVJ, KA4FWR, KA4IUO, KA4LFX, KA4TCF, KA4WYC, KB9JYC, KC2SQP, KC4SSS, KC4YPB, KD4GCF, KD4HSL, KD4IIN, KD4ITI, KD4QGP, KD4QGW, KE4CSZ, KE4HOX, KF4KFN, KF4UVL, KF4WGW, KF4ZWI, KG4ENI, KG4JVE, KG4NOW, KI4CXO, KI4FAQ, KI4FAU, KJ4ATJ, KJ4ATK, KJ4EDG, KJ4EVY, KJ4QXR, KJ4QXT, KJ4QXU, KJ4QXV, KT4YE, KU4PF, N2CMD, N2HV, N3BW, N4APR, N4DFW, N4DH, N4DOX, N4ECY, N4IB, N4ILK, N4MH, N4MMQ, N4PAC, N4WIK, NC1G, NK4X, NV4A, W4CC, W4DXP, W4GRW, W4JDR, W4PUA, W4PVT, W4TYR, W4WJF, W4WNT, WA2EDN, WA4OBO, WB2NHQ, WB2RHM, WB4BXW, WB4MKC, WB4NCQ, WD4BLG, WW4CP, WW4TED

## The Hamfest is Coming: March 13-14!



As Jodie says, it's time for us to get geared up for the Hamfest. There are many opportunities to help, so please take a look at the following, and volunteer for whatever you can do!

### HAMFEST FLEA MARKET SETUP -HELP NEEDED

Yes, we are asking for your help. We need 8 to 10 people to help setup our Flea Market area with tables and chairs. Please become one of the most important people for the 2010 Charlotte Hamfest. *By helping for 2 to 3 hours you will be given an admissions ticket good for the two day event.* **WHAT A GREAT DEAL!!!!** We will be starting at 9:00am on March 12. The setup should only take about 2 hours or so, **WOW I CANNOT THINK OF A BETTER WAY TO GET INTO A HAMFEST!**

So mark your calendars for setup day, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 @9:00am at the Cabarrus Arena & Event Center.

Please contact Barry May,-KC4SSS at 704 756-8912



### HAMFEST YELLOW JACKETS - HELP NEEDED

Yes, we are also again having the Charlotte Hamfest "**YELLOW JACKETS**"!!! You don't know about the "**YELLOW JACKETS**"??? Shame on you, they are at all the entrances of the event center to assist you with all your questions. ...They're the ones wearing the cool yellow jackets, of course!

The "YELLOW JACKETS" were formed back in 1995. And they have been a mainstay of the Charlotte Hamfest ever since. All hams are invited and encouraged to become apart of this special group.

So mark your calendars for March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 2010 @ 9:00am at the Cabarrus Arena & Event Center.

Please contact Barry May-KC4SSS at 704 756-8912 to volunteer.

## The Hamfest is Coming: March 13-14! ...and so is a VE Test Session Feb 20th

### STAGE LIAISON HELP NEEDED

We also need help with Stage Liaison. (Those are the folks who sit up on the stand in the middle of everything answering questions and helping out in general.) We will need two people per shift and there will be four shifts Saturday and two shifts Sunday. If you can help, please contact Mark Thornburg- NC1G at [nc1g03@gmail.com](mailto:nc1g03@gmail.com). The shifts should be 8:30 - 10:30, 10:30 - 12:30, 12:30 - 2:30, and 2:30 - 5:00 on Saturday and 8:30 - 10:30, 10:30 - 1:00 on Sunday

Please contact Mark-NC1G

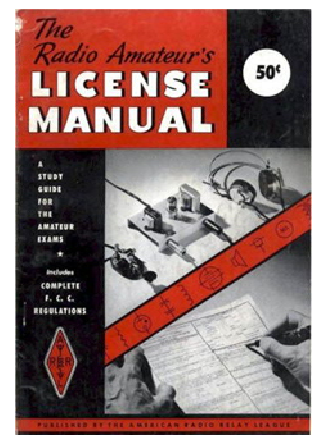
And one important non-Hamfest item:

### VE Test Session February 20th.

The Mecklenburg VE Team will be conducting an Exam Session for all classes of FCC Amateur Radio Licenses on Saturday February 20<sup>th</sup> 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 CSCEs, plus the 2010 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](mailto:MecklenburgVETeam@W4BFB.org) or call 704-948-7373 if you need additional information.



## When was the last time you checked YOUR tower bolts?

A Cautionary tale from Bill Heybruck-WA2EDN

My tower was a deal. Twenty years ago when HUGO hit the area and took with it a number of ham radio towers. I found my tower. One of my regular morning travel radio companions was Bob-KB4QR. He had a nice 50 foot Universal Aluminum tower with a Tailtwister Rotator and a couple of nice beams. When Hugo went through his neighborhood it twisted the top 10 feet off his tower and set the top section and remaining twisted aluminum of the antennas in his back yard. Fortunately he was well insured and it was not long before he had a new 50 foot tower installed and new antennas and rotator positioned on the tower. I happened to ask him what happened to the old tower and he told me that it was in a scrap pile at one of his friend's shops. I went to the pile and there it was, so I loaded my truck with the lower 30 feet. I asked Bob what happened to the top section and he said that was for sale with the old rotator, so I bought it from him. A couple of months later I had the concrete poured (3x3x6 ft deep) and put the tower together with all new grade 8 bolts. I had taken the twisted top, with the rotator plate and rotor in it, and overlapped it to the top of the standing tower using 3 U bolts. See picture below.



Last March, Earl-K4KAY, found a deal on a nice TH7-DX beam. When he told me about it I said he should buy it for his tower. Later that day he decided that he was concerned it was too big for his setup so I offered to buy the beam for my tower and sell him my Explorer 14 for his tower. We both ended up with new antennas (to us) and all I had to do was put the beam together and get it on my tower. It took me a few months to get the missing hardware for the beam, assemble it and get it ready for the tower. Thanks to Earl and a few other hams, we planned to lower my tower, remove the Explorer 14 and put the TH7 on it. This made it a great time to finally get rid of that overlapped section so I ordered a pair of rotator plates for the larger section and picked up a new 8 foot aluminum mast and thrust bearing. One plate would be for the rotator and the other for the thrust bearing.

The day of reckoning came and Earl volunteered to remove the 4 base tower bolts so we could tilt it over till the back of the beam contacted the ground.

It was then that he took two of the bolts out and asked me to check them out. I was really surprised (check out the picture on the next page.) Even though the ends of the tower were clear, and water could have drained out, the bolts were not in good shape. The center of the bolts were severely eroded. We completed the work for the day and the tower went back up using the old bolts for a short term.



## When was the last time you checked YOUR tower bolts?, cont.



The good news about this is that these bolts are loaded in shear. That means that the tower is trying to slice through them near the heads and nuts. If they were loaded in tension, meaning that the forces were from head to nut or vice versa, then these could have failed. In my case the center part was only holding the two ends together and in place so that the tower leg and base stayed together. Had the bolts actually rusted in two, the failure mode would be if both ends fell out. That leg then would be free to fold over.

The next day I ordered new stainless steel bolts, and in a few days they arrived, and I swapped out all 6 grade 8 bolts with the new SS bolts. See the picture below.

It took almost 20 years to corrode those bolts that badly. I think the new ones will last that long and more.



How long has it been since you checked your bolts? Maybe it's about time.

Bill-WA2EDN

## Board Meeting Notes, January 5th, 2010

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society Minutes for Board Meeting of January 5<sup>th</sup> 2010.

1- The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Attendees included: Jodie Rowland-KI4CXO, Ben Antanitis-WB2RHM, Mary Hunt-N4MH, Tom Hunt- KA3VVJ, Bill Fisher-W4GRW, Kevin Keys-K4YYD, Bill Harding-K4AHK, Barry May-KC4SSS, Andy Hawkins-K4GKK. Guest: John White-WB2NHQ.

2- Minutes for the Board Meeting of December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 were accepted as presented in the December newsletter.

3- Treasurer's Report: Tom presented the accounts report. This was accepted by the Board. Tom mentioned that the newly elected officers have to provide signatures to a local branch of the club's bank, per the club's articles.

4- Vice President's report: Bill has set up the club Auction for the January meeting. Jerry Malin-N2HV will act as auctioneer, Tom and Andy will record the winning bids.

5- Secretary's report: Nothing to report membership-wise this month. The roster is currently being updated and set up in the club's laptop computer.

### Committee Reports:

Membership Committee: This will be headed up this year by Bill Harding-K4AHK. Bill will be calling those members from 2009 that have not yet renewed their subscription. A note to all current members: the Board intends to change the clubroom access code at the next Board Meeting.

Repeater Committee: Earl Fortner-K4KAY has volunteered to head up this committee. Jeff Blythe-KA4WYC, Brian Mulder-KF4VOO and Bill Newsome-AC4ZR have been working on getting the Clover packet Node up and running. Tim Slay-N4IB is trying to re-establish the Packet Node on the downtown Duke Energy building.

Public Service Committee: Mary Hunt-N4MH will again head this committee. She will publish a calendar of events in each newsletter. This will help prospective volunteers plan ahead. Mary will act as the main liaison between the club and the MS society. we have at least three major events with the MS society each year, culminating in the Bike ride to the beach in late September. The club also helps with the Lungstrong event in October, and we have been asked to participate in marshalling a car rally in Cheraw, SC this coming February.

Equipment Committee: This was headed up by Andy last year. A new Chairman is requested. There are a lot of issues that need to be discussed and sorted out including Ideas about what to do with the equipment we have, where to store equipment that is not currently being used, and what equipment can we cull from our inventory. These are but a few of the topics that need to be addressed.

Grants and Resources: This committee will be headed up by Kevin -K4YYD. Kevin has set up a relationship between the club and Food Lion whereby we receive a small donation from Food Lion, the amount of the donation is dependent upon the amount spent by the members of the club who shops at Food Lion and uses their MVP card. For further details, see Kevin at the next club meeting.



## Board Meeting Notes, January 5th, 2010

Field Day Committee: Kevin-K4YYD will head this committee again for 2010. Details to follow.

Entertainment Committee: Jodie-KI4CXO and Mary-N4MH will be heading this committee. The Christmas Party Venue will be arranged earlier this year, with a survey sent to the membership on how it is to be catered.

Website: This is under the stewardship of Ben-WB2RHM and Wayne-WB4BXW.

Please note that ALL the committees are open for anyone to provide support and ideas that will help this club be successful in all its endeavors. If you see or hear anything that you have an opinion on or feel you can improve upon, please do not hesitate to contact any of the committee members and discuss accordingly.

Old Business: No Old Business.

New Business:

1- Club Room combination. As mention above this will be changed at the next Board meeting.

2- John White-WB2NHQ attended the meeting with a few subjects to go over.

A). The Charlotte Fire Dept has a communications team whose members have gained their Technician licenses. They are interested in gaining the General license and are hoping the club can help out with classes.

B). The CFD communications team requires training on setting up its antenna trailer. John has requested help with both volunteers and some of the club equipment to show how it's set up.

C). John is conducting a safety class for the Red Cross and has requested the use of the club's projector and screen.

D) A discussion was held about the prospects of returning to Discovery Place to set up the N4DP exhibition station. The conclusion was that we would not be allowed to return to the site. The equipment and furniture is currently being stored in a climate controlled storage unit. A decision was made to sell the furniture and some accessories at the Charlotte Hamfest, and find a smaller storage unit to store the remainder of the equipment. Discussion was also had about using some of the surplus equipment to set up a portable Emergency/Educational unit. This would be shown and operated for the Scouts, Girl Scouts, Schools, Civic Organizations, emergency drills, etc.

The board accepted the above requests for help and tabled for further discussion the fate of the Discovery Place equipment.

3- The W4BFB VE team is changing its affiliation from the ARRL format to the WCARS format. For more information on this contact Mary or Ben.

There being no more business for this evening's meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm

Respectfully submitted by

Andy Hawkins-K4GKK  
Secretary, MARS

## January Club Meeting, Jan 26th



Nope, this is NOT really Jerry!

The January meeting will feature the first W4BFB Club Auction in a few years. It has always been a fun event and this year should be no exception.

WHAT: The W4BFB Club Auction

WHO: Everyone is encouraged to bring any ham radio-related gear and electronic gear to be sold at auction.

There is no charge for the auction, and when you check in your gear you will be asked what is the minimum price you will accept.

No gear will be sold below your minimum, without your permission. Buyers will pay the club cashier, and at the end of the auction, the sellers will receive their money from the cashier. Anyone can make bids on the items, club members or guests, so bring your friends..

Jerry-N2HV will be our auctioneer, and Tom-KA3VVJ will be our cashier. If anyone has any questions, please check into the 9PM net on 146.940.

WHEN: The January W4BFB club meeting, Tuesday January 26th @ 7:30PM

WHERE: East Baptist Church, **6850 Monroe Rd** (next to East Mecklenburg High School, near Conference Drive)

If you have any questions, please let me know

73, Bill-W4GRW

## Editor's Notes

Next month we're going to feature an article on "Hamming in the 60's" by Roger Meyers-Wa2TKS. It's a bit of a follow-up to the article that Earl-K4KAY had in the November Newsletter on getting your license in the 50's. I know that there are a lot of us who were hams back then, so if anyone else would like to contribute their memories of "the good old days" please send me something. ....either your thoughts, copies of some of your first QSL cards if you have them, etc. Also, I'd still love to find pictures of your shacks or your antennas from back then, or now.

73

John, NV4A

**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 Repeaters**

Receive	Send	Offset (KHz)	Autopatch
146.34	146.94	-600	Yes
144.63	145.29	-600	No
144.69	145.29	-600	No
222.8	224.4	-1600	No
449.6	444.6	5000	No

Mecklenburg 2m Emergency Net  
9:00 PM local time, daily on 146.94 (-600) 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**

Andy Hawkins, k4gkk@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)

Bill Harding, K4AHK, [k4ahk@w4bfb.org](mailto:k4ahk@w4bfb.org)

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

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