



MARS News

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A Letter from the President

Hello MARS Members,

March is one of the busiest and important months of this year for our club. It has our official 'fundraiser' – the Charlotte Hamfest, and also has the first Public Service event of the year – the MS Walk.

A hamfest takes many months of planning and effort to make happen.

Most members of MARS don't know just how long and hard the members of the Hamfest Committee work each year, year in and year out, so we can have our Hamfest every March. I want to tell each member of the Hamfest Committee how deeply I appreciate the service they give to MARS. I also want to personally thank everyone who volunteered their time to come out to work at the Hamfest on March 7th, 8th, or 9th. I think everyone who came to the 2008 Charlotte Hamfest had a great time. It was so nice to see the many folks that I hear on the radio but seldom get to actually see in-person.

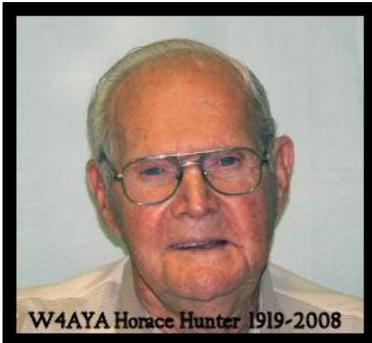


My friends always told me that 'when you get into amateur radio and belong to a club like MARS, you are part of one big family.' Since joining the club, first as a member, then as a Board Member, and now as President, I have come to realize just how true that statement is. We really are like one big family. We share the fellowship of being members of MARS as well as being Amateur Radio operators. And MARS tries to provide something special for each member of the MARS family... So - we offer Public Service events, Emergency Communication nets and drills, ARES, the Hamfest, Field Day, GeekFest, Jamboree-On-The-Air, interesting programs at each meeting, Picnics and the Holiday Party, HF as well as VHF Contesting, our Newsletter, the radio stations in the Clubroom, the W4BFB Repeaters, and now we are supporting the CCTTA events. BUT... all of this takes time and effort to make work. The club officers, board members, and committee members cannot make this all happen by themselves. Everyone in the club needs to try to lend the club a helping hand, as often as you can. This could be easy, if members just help out with more than one type of club activity – for example: contesters need to help out at Public Service events.... Public Service fans need to help at Field Day... everyone should send one article or idea to the Newsletter Editor... Hamfest people should help with JOTA/GeekFest... everyone should check into the 9PM net... etc. The club needs more members to get involved with club activities. I really hope to see everyone working together so we all can have fun. If we can pull together, we can keep our club successful and growing (we now have over 160 members). I have heard a lot about the ole times that W4BFB had, and all the fun things they did together. Gosh, that makes me get excited about the future of MARS and I want you to get excited about the future of MARS too..... and get involved in helping me bring lots of those fun times back by pitching in!

On Saturday morning March 29th, we will be providing Radio communication support for the MS Walk right here in Charlotte (see an item about it in this newsletter). Please plan on coming out to

Letter from the President (cont.)

help in this event. Please sign-up in advance so we can plan for the event. The MS Society needs your help and we need your help, it only takes a little bit of your time and it will be greatly appreciated. It's for a great cause. Thanks to all.



On March 10th, we lost a very special member of our club, Horace Hunter, W4AYA. Horace was 88 years old when he passed on, and he had been a MARS member for over 50 years. In 2007, we presented Horace with a plaque commemorating his being a Lifetime Member of MARS. Last weekend, Horace came to the Hamfest on Saturday (and he returned on Sunday) and, after giving me a great big hug (and he gave me another one on Sunday), he told me that he read our newsletter each month and was very happy with the way the club was going. He also said that he was very proud of the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society and being a member of it. When he said this to me, I want you to know that he brought a tear to my eyes. I feel so lucky, to have gotten to know him, even if it was only for such a short time. He touched my heart, with his honest friendship and his words... I will always remember them. Please, keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, about anything you would like to see happening in the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio society now, or in the future, feel free to contact me KI4CXO@W4BFB.org or the Board Board@W4BFB.org.

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

73,

Jodie (KI4CXO)

Thank You!—2008 Hamfest Setup Volunteers



No More HELP Needed(...this year): You signed-up and you came out, and we completed the Flea Market Area setup at an **all-time record pace!** We got over 300 tables set up in 1 hour and 20 minutes! We also finished setting up over 200 forum chairs well before noon! We came, we saw, and we set them up! **BooYah TEAM!**

A hearty Thank you! from all of us, to all of you, who worked so hard, and then remembered to sign the 'sign-up sheet': **KG4GMI, KI4CYG, KG4ENP, WB4PCS, K4KRW, KE4IYH, N4OUT, AI4YQ, W4WNT, KA4WYC, MRS-WB2RHM, K4YYD (formerly KI4KFS), K4SFI, AD4IE, and KI4CXO.**

Remember: The 2008 Hamfest could not have happened without YOU! Thanks, again!

73,

Ben (WB2RHM)

(FleaMarket Setup Chairman. See you all next year!) ...-.-

2008 W4BFB Hamfest Raffle Big Success!

WB4OTP is the winner Congratulations!

In conjunction with the 2008 Charlotte Hamfest, the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio society (MARS) sold raffle tickets for an MA6V Restricted Space Vertical Antenna that was donated by the Cushcraft company.

During the Hamfest, Fred Carroll, AJ4CN, 2008 Raffle Chairman, and Anne Antanaitis, Mrs-WB2RHM, staffed a raffle table at the W4BFB club booth. They offered to sell raffle tickets to all who passed by for \$3 per ticket, or \$5 for two. Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM, and Andy Hawkins, G4GKK, created, printed, and posted raffle posters throughout the Hamfest halls.

In the closing hour of the Hamfest, the ticket stubs were placed in a barrel, and Jerry Malin, N2HV, drew the winning ticket at high noon on Sunday March 9th. Buck Escott, WB4TOP, was the winner. And MARS was a winner also, having raised over \$450 dollars from the effort.

73,

Ben (WB2RHM)

**The Mecklenburg Amateur Radio society
wishes to thank Cushcraft for their generous
donation.**



W4BFB to Help CCTTA



MARS has agreed to supply 3-5 radio equipped amateurs to the Carolina Cycling Time Trial Association to assist in marshaling their Cycling Time Trials at LOWES MOTOR SPEEDWAY.

There are NINE Wednesday nights that are involved throughout the summer. Our mission is to sit at an assigned spot and look for accidents and rules violations. Marshals will be trained to identify rules violators and will report them to the CCTTA HQ official via radio.

All you need to volunteer is a 2 meter or 440 radio (HT OR MOBILE). You are asked to be visible (sit outside of the vehicle) and observe riders. The CCTTA has promised to reward MARS with a donation of c\$800 after the last event if we meet the obligation.

SO WE NEED SOME HELP. You can bring relatives and friends. You can even ride the track before the event on your bike. You just have to make sure you are available to watch the riders from 6:30 to 8:45PM

If you have any questions, contact me (Bill WA2EDN) or Earl Fortner. My phone number is (704)904-4706.

Here are the dates: The July 30th event will be a TEAM TIME TRIAL (TTT) and will last until c9:30PM All others are 10Mile or 40Km (25mi).

- 1-10M - Apr 09, 2008 - Wed.
- 2-10M - Apr 30, 2008 - Wed.
- 3-10M 40K - May 28, 2008 - Wed.
- 4-10M 40K - Jun 11, 2008 - Wed.
- 5-10M 40K - July 09, 2008 - Wed.
- 6-10M TTT - July 30, 2008 - Wed.
- 7-10M - Aug 13, 2008 - Wed.
- 8-10M 40K - Sep 10, 2008 - Wed.
- 9-10M 40K - Oct 01, 2008 - Wed.

CCTTA has promised to reward MARS with a donation of \$800 after the last event if we meet the obligation.

Contact Earl Fortner to sign up for a date. Remember, we ONLY need 3-5 people PER EVENT. So, contact Earl quickly with the dates you would like to volunteer.

Thanks and I'll see you at the track.

73,

Bill (WA2EDN)

February and March Club Meetings

The presentation for the February meeting was given by Bill (W4GRW), Kevin (K4YYD—formerly KI4KFS) and Richard (K4KRW). The presentation was about sound card interfaces. The team provided samples of various types of sound card interfaces for members to take a



look at. Bill gave a powerpoint presentation showing an even more varied sampling of the types of sound card interfaces available on the market these days. He talked about offerings like those from West Mountain Radio (Rigblaster) and the MicroKeyer devices.

Richard gave a second powerpoint presentation where he talked about things you should consider when choosing a sound card interface. Examples would be things like: Do you want a combination sound card interface and CAT interface.? Do you want to hook into your radio via the microphone jack or via data and cat ports? Do you want an interface with a built in sound card? He also talked about things to look out for when using a sound card interface. For example: You don't want to overdrive any link in the chain (Radio, sound card interface, computer) as it will show up in your transmitted signal. The other biggie. Read your radio's manual and fully understand how to best use it with a sound card interface. Know things like "is your radio's data port always active (even in non digital modes)?" If it is always active, and your radio is in VOX mode you could inadvertently broadcast any sound coming from your computer.

For the March meeting, the featured presentation will be on sound card modes. Modes like PSK-31, RTTY and WSJT will be covered. Some of the available software programs that encode and decode signals with the help of the sound card will be covered as well.

73,

Richard (K4KRW)



Know things like "is your radio's data port always active (even when not using digital modes)?"



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society
Mid Atlantic
Chapter

MS Walk—March 29th

I hope you got your new radios, HT's and batteries at the Hamfest because the Communication Teams of 'BFB are at work again! We will be helping the MS Society to provide communications on Saturday the 29th. We will have 3 rest stops and a start point and end point. We will need a Net Control, a great job for someone wanting to work from his or her home. I think 4 Sags would work well more would be better. The MSS will have two routes, a 5-mile and a 2-1/2 mile route. The courses will be in and around the South Park Mall area. There are a couple Shadows for Directors, a few have already signed up. We also have some Bike Mobiles signed up! Elena, KS4OX, has a sign-up sheet, with a link to route maps, on her website at:

<http://walkmaps.com/mswalk/hams.shtml>

Listen up on the Metrolina 2 Meter Emergency Net on the 146.94 repeater each night at 9 PM for updates or new info. It would be good to get more check-ins anyway!

Give me a call or note if you're interested. Cell phone is 704-5773619 and email is ka4wyc@gmail.com.

Thanks for volunteering!

73.

Jeff (KA4WYC)

Board Minutes

Board Minutes. March 4th 2008.

Attendees: Jodie, Bill, Tom, Kevin, Ben, Dave, Perry & Andy. Absent was Jeff

Jodie opened the meeting @ 7.00pm. Jodie brought up the successful NC QSO party

contest that was held in the clubroom earlier in the month. She asked for any ideas about holding the contests other than at the Red Cross.

Bill agreed with Jodie on the NC QSO party and said that the score was 12% up over last year's effort. The upcoming club program would be the second in a series about soundcards and their applications.

Tom gave the financial report. All bills are paid up to date and the Hamfest insurance has been acquired. The Phone bill had tripled; our present carrier says that all Non Profits have been re-classified to a Business class account. We will look into changing carriers.

Ben reported that Kenwood had pulled out of the Hamfest due to family concerns.

Antenna problems were possibly the cause of R.F. on our audio during the NC QSO party.

Kevin reported that the last club meeting Food lion sign up blitz had increased the present participation to around 40. Ben offered to add the application to the website to try and automate the process.

Dave and Perry reported that the MSS had established a few routes for the September MS150. Perry said that there was a possibility of using just one repeater for the whole event from Rock Hill down to Greenville. They were going to contact the repeater owner. Perry is going to compose an article for the newsletter for an early recruitment drive; a discussion ensued about providing an incentive to the membership for participating in public service events.

Andy has the club equipment list (as of September '07) and will be looking at providing a supplementary list of equipment that is surplus to requirements that could be sold off to the membership or scrapped.

Hamfest preparations are progressing well with Bill having all the forums lined up. Shawn will provide the PA system for the forums. Ben brought up the donation by Cushcraft of a vertical HF antenna to be raffled off at the Hamfest. Cushcraft was unable to attend this year's Hamfest and graciously donated the antenna to W4BFB to do with as we wish.

OLD BUSINESS

Jodie reported that Alan's Mother had passed away and a peace lily and card had been sent to the Funeral home on behalf of W4BFB Membership. A proposal was made for a standing order to be included in the W4BFB rules book for the Secretary of the club to provide a bouquet, plants and/or a card to the funeral home. This would be provided for any of the immediate family of a W4BFB Member. This was proposed by Andy, Seconded by Ben, agreed by all present. A copy will appear in a later Newsletter.

The club roster was discussed with a possibility that it could be published on the club website as a PDF file. This will be a more complete roster than that currently available on the website. A PDF format should be used to prevent easy accessibility by outside influences.

Jodie and Ben brought up the proposal by Bill Heybruck WA2EDN to provide marshals for the Carolina Cycling Time Trial Assoc. The board approved this unanimously.

Bill mentioned that Back Creek Church might be still available for Field day operations.

A discussion continued on our Non Profit Status and how we can take advantage of some of the available donations provided by various companies.

Respectfully submitted by Andy Hawkins G4GKK



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

Mecklenburg 2m Emergency Net
9:00 PM local time, daily on 146.34/146.94 featuring the ARRL
Audio News feed on Sunday night.
Alternate frequencies announced

Club Officers and Board of Directors

President

Jodie Rowland, KI4CXO, ki4cxo@w4bfb.org

Vice President

Bill Fisher, W4GRW, w4grw@w4bfb.org

Secretary

Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, ka4wyc@w4bfb.org

Treasurer

Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ, ka3vvj@w4bfb.org

Directors

Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM, wb2rhm@w4bfb.org

Perry Garris, KF4UVL, kf4uvl@w4bfb.org

Andy Hawkins, G4GKK, g4gkk@w4bfb.org

David Holbrook, KC4YPB, kc4ypb@w4bfb.org

Kevin Keyes, K4YYD, k4yyd@w4bfb.org



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