



MECKLENBURG AMATEUR
RADIO SOCIETY, INC

MARS News

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A letter from the President

I would like to give a warm Welcome to all of our new members and a Thank You to all of our current members who have renewed their membership in MARS. Your participation and your dues help to make this the great club that it is.



Which brings me to an announcement about membership dues. The MARS Board of Directors has voted to change the term of individual membership from a July 1st based to a January 1st based annual cycle. In addition, as a bonus, the Board has decided that if you renew your 2008 membership dues by July 31st 2007, your current membership will not expire until December 31st 2008. That gives you a bonus six months to your membership. So if you haven't already paid your 2008 dues yet, get yours sent in soon.

I hope everyone is starting to enjoy the summer-like weather and getting involved in outdoor activities. Many of us are getting really excited about our mini Field Day event Saturday May 19TH. We will begin to set up our stations about 9:00 am and be on the air with our radios shortly thereafter. Come on out and learn how to use our new Jupiter Radio. When Field Day arrives in June, you will be an old pro and will be able to hit the ground running. We will be having a family picnic at our mini Field Day event. The club will supply Hamburgers and Hot dogs, cooked on the grill. Drinks will also be supplied. Members will bring side dishes and desserts. The picnic will start around 12:00 noon. BUT we do need you to RSVP so we know you are coming and how many folks will be coming with you. *Please remember that we are asking everyone to bring a side dish of your choice.* To SIGN-UP via the Internet, send an email to Minifd@W4BFB.ORG to let us know how many people are coming with you and what kind of side dish you would like to bring. Sign-up ASAP for this event so you won't miss this opportunity to have a great ham radio time as well as a chance to have fun with family and friends.

Speaking of ARRL Field Day..... June 23 and 24th are the dates of our ARRL Field Day effort This is 'The Big One' operating event we all look forward to. We will be having more fun, with more stations set up, plus we will be working all weekend making contacts all over the world. And we will be grilling Hamburgers and Hot dogs that weekend too. So make sure you plan to come out and have fun with us on Field Day. Let's all take part in various types of W4BFB events to support the club. Its like being part of one big Family having lots of great times together.

I would like to say 'thank you' to each and every one who regularly comes out to take part in our

Letter from the President (cont.)

events and monthly meetings. Your participation and attendance serves as the reward for the hard work of the club officers, committee members, and the folks who give the club meeting presentations each month. MARS means a lot to me, I enjoy every minute that I am a part of it. My goal as president is to see the club continue to grow in membership while having lots of ham radio fun and exciting activities for all members.

Let's make our club the very best it can be. We can do it. if we do it together.

73 - Jodie KI4CXO

Club Membership

I am happy to report that membership in the club continues to grow. The club has approved the following individuals for membership in the last month. Welcome to the club. Have fun!

John Bell - KI4UEK

Scott Andrews - W4CLT

The following members recently upgraded

Randy - K4RKZ upgraded to Extra

Chris - W4HYY upgraded to Extra

Red - AI4XM got Extra out of the gate. He will be officially joining the club next meeting.

The following member has recently changed his call sign.

Jerry Brewer - KI4UFQ is now N4MIU (welcome back to the old call sign)

If you upgrade, change your call sign or change your email address, please let the club know so we can help you spread the word. We also need to keep our database up to date.

73,

Jeff Blythe - KA4WYC

Another Month - Another New Arrival

The MARS W4BFB station at the Red Cross has been upgraded with the purchase of a new automatic antenna tuner. An LDG AT-1000 auto-tuner has replaced the Nye manual tuner.



No more looking up the recommended settings for 40 and 80 meters and then dialing them into the antenna coupler. The AT-1000 autotuner enables automatic, computer controlled, near perfect matches across all the bands available on the various antennas within seconds. After you select which antenna you are going to use, you place the Jupiter or the Kenwood into 'tune' mode and then press the 'Tune' button on the AT-1000..... click click buzz and within seconds the cross needle meter tells you you have a near 1:1 match. At this point, you can turn on the Hercules amplifier and instantly transmit into a matched antenna system for optimum power transfer.

The AT-1000 is powered by the TenTec power supply that also feeds power to the Jupiter. When the AT-1000 is powered off, it enters a bypass mode with the tuner switched out of the antenna path.

HOWEVER, just as with the Jupiter, READ THE MANUAL FIRST.

73 - Ben - WB2RHM

MS Challenge Walk - Palm Key, SC

The Multiple Sclerosis Society - Mid Atlantic Chapter's M.S. Challenge Walk occurred on April 27 - 29. The event was held in Palm Key, South Carolina which is near Beaufort. This was a 3 day, 50 mile challenge walk. The following MARS members were there to help with the event: Mary N4MH, Tom KA3VVJ, Sparky KE4TES, Frank N4WIK and Shawn K4RSG. The event also had good support from hams in the Beaufort, SC area.



Frank N4WIK's vehicle leads the walkers during the final mile of the event. Shawn K4RSG trails the group in his vehicle.

The event went very well. There were 140 walkers this year. Some of the walkers can be seen in the picture above. Walkers with M.S. wore bright orange shirts. The other walkers all wore the light blue shirts. The walkers raised over \$300,000 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

73,

Mary Hunt (N4MH)

April and May Club Meetings

At the April meeting, Shawn K4RSG gave a presentation on APRS technologies. He explained the usefulness of APRS for Bike rides, walks and Public Service events. Also he showed how dangers, such as a bridge that is out, can be beaconed so they show on APRS maps. He also talked the National WX Service using weather reports from weather stations connected to APRS equipment. He demonstrated several mapping programs including UIVIEW, Precision Maps, WinAPRES, Street &Trips 2007 and Street Atlas 5. Shawn brought several GPS receivers, and various radio equipment and keyboards to show to the attending members. He talked about some of the challenges integrating the various hardware, computer and software components to create a complete APRS station with mapping capabilities. Thanks Shawn for a very interesting program.

The May meeting presentation will be the Advanced Skywarn class presented by Vince DeCarlo KF4ZOQ. Vince is a meteorologist for the National Weather Service out of Greer-Spartanburg. He has given Skywarn classes for our club many times over the years. They are always interesting presentations. Also, the content of the training courses does change from time to time. So please do plan to attend.

Even if you have not taken the 'Basic Skywarn' class yet, you will still want to attend this meeting. Vince has a lot of great information regarding weather safety. It would be good for you to review John White's Basic Skywarn article from the April newsletter before attending.

73,

Richard - K4KRW

North Carolina QSO Party Results

The results of the NC QSO party were just released by the W4NC club. W4BFB showed a very strong effort and placed second for clubs within the state. Considering the club is just starting to re-enter the contesting fray, this is a great finish.

Other results of note include the following: John WB2NHQ placed 10th in the single operator in-state category. Bill W4WNT placed 5th in the mobile in-state category.

Congratulations to all club members who participated in this contest. Great job!

73,

Richard - K4KRW



BS7H DXpedition Complete

The BS7H DXpedition to Scarborough Reef is now in the history books.

Scarborough Reef is far out in the South China Sea between Vietnam and the Philippines. The first operator was QRV on the 29th of April and the last stations went QRT on 6th of May. They could usually be heard on 20 meters in the morning from around 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Eastern time. The airwaves were absolutely roaring with CW signals and SSB signals from operators in the U. S. trying to reach the small reef. The group logged 45,830 QSO's.

To say that this is not your typical DXpedition is the understatement of the year. There was good reason to fear for the lives of these operators. They set up four stations perched on top of four rocks sticking up out of the water. Just changing operating shifts was quite hazardous. They had to maneuver over a coral reef with many deep holes and sharp edges to get to their stations. Add to that, having to deal with people on small fishing boats who are looking at your gasoline and water rations as potential resources for themselves. Place this setting in a no-mans land suitable for a Mad Max movie and you have Scarborough Reef.

Now, more on the deluxe accommodations. A Platform had to be built above each rock to hold the operators and their equipment. There was room on each platform for one person to operate while another rested. From the pictures, it looked like a really good wind or a really good wave would put the platform in the water. Some of the operators worked the entire time with a life vest on. At night, the operators could not see each other. Shift changes could only occur during the day. So, if you had the night shift, you were out on the rock all night long.

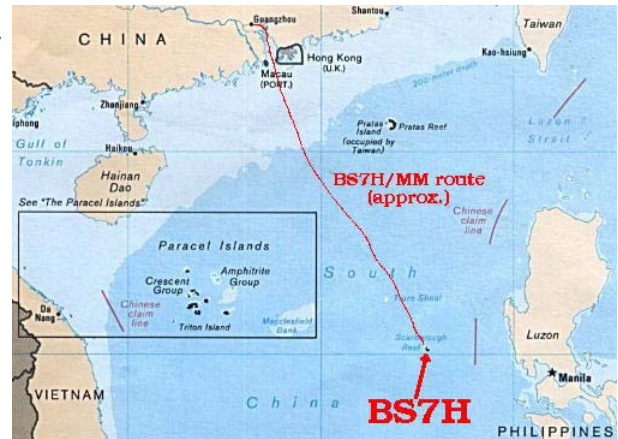
Clearly, there was a lot of interest from the ham community in this DXpedition. I attended a few Wednesday lunches with the Carolina DX Association before, during and after the event and it was just about all that anyone was talking about. Everyone was having a good time comparing notes on when and how to try to make a contact. Some were fortunate enough to actually get a contact or two. Many did not though. With my modest station, I was barely able to make out their calls on voice but could hear their CW signal fairly well.

CDXA provided some funding for the DXpedition and one of the CDXA members (Joe AA4NN) was one of the BS7H operators. He said he sent out his first CQ and immediately heard a huge flood of responses. I imagine it must be very interesting and challenging working that side of the pileup. I imagine Joe will be making some presentations in this area and sharing his experience.

Scarborough Reef DXpeditions do not come around very often. The one prior to this one was in 1997. There is a great video from that DXpedition on YouTube. Just search for BS7H on YouTube.com. You won't believe your eyes.

73,

Richard—K4kRW (photo courtesy of www.scarboroughreef.com - Thanks!)





HR-1340 Passes the N.C. House

The North Carolina House of Representatives passed HR-1340 on May 8th. It will still have to pass in the Senate. HR-1340 is what is known as a PRB-I bill. PRB-I is coded into the FCC regulations as part 97.15(e).

The ARRL describes it in the following way: “a limited preemption of local zoning ordinances. It delineates three rules for local municipalities to follow in regulating antenna structures: (1) state and local regulations that operate to preclude amateur communications are in direct conflict with federal objectives and must be preempted; (2) local regulations that involve placement, screening or height of antennas based on health, safety or aesthetic considerations must be crafted to reasonably accommodate amateur communications; and (3) such local regulations must represent the minimum practicable regulation to accomplish the local authority's legitimate purpose.”

HR-1340 will put North Carolina state law in line with PRB-I. While 1340 does not give amateur radio operators everything they want, it is a major step in the right direction. There are cities in North Carolina where erecting any kind of tower has been impossible due to highly restrictive county or city regulations. This bill will help address these situations.

The one area where it does not help is restrictive covenants. The FCC views these as ‘voluntary’ agreements that buyers enter into when they purchase a home. Many do not view covenants as being voluntary at all. If you want to buy a new home in a new housing development, you have to agree to the covenant restrictions or you cannot buy the house. There are no new neighborhoods without them. The only way out is to buy in older ‘pre covenant’ neighborhoods. But, that is another battle for another day.

For now, pay attention and contact your representatives when items like this one need sponsorship or are coming up for a vote. You will usually hear from the ARRL or the MARS club in some form when items like this need your attention. When you do, make yourself heard. Put this representative democracy to work for you. A representative who knows nothing about you will not represent you very well at all.

73,

Richard - K4KRW

May Board Meeting Minutes

Jodie started the meeting at 7:01

Those present: Jodie, Greg, Jeff, Andy, Ben, Paul, Kevin, Bill, Don. And our guest was Editor Richard.

Greg gave a Financial Report. We need to bring a budget to the Membership for the June meeting. Members who want to bring items for the budget should contact Greg or a Member of the Board.

Don states Vince DiCarlo with NWS will have an Advance Skywarn training for the May 29th Meeting. He brought up a need for a budget item for Repeaters. This was referred to the Repeater Committee.

Jeff said that our Membership is up to 133 + Members. Renewals are in process.

Repeater Committee will need to be more motivated. Earl K4KAY will control a list of those on the Repeater Committee.

Ben spoke on Events for May - Mini FD at Back Creek Presbyterian Church on May 19th. Jodie and Jeff will head the Picnic up.

Kevin spoke on Food Lion – we have 29 + members signed up. We made the 25 minimum for getting revenues in the next quarter.

Jeff brought up several new Members for a vote to the Society. Ben made a motion and Don seconded, were approved unanimously.

On Public Service Jeff, stated Shawn said the MS Challenge Walk was successfully. He stated they had several local hams helping. Thanks go to the Island Amateur Radio Society for the use of their Repeater.

Ben stated our server host was working correctly, this month.

Paul needs to get QSL cards for the Club contests. He will work on this.

Old Business – Ben talked about a tuner for the Jupiter. After a brief discussion, Ben made a motion to purchase the tuner, an AT-1000, for \$500.00. The motion was seconded by Bill. We are to sell the Nye Viking tuner for the best price, possibly on Ebay.

Bill will have the new door lock for the Red Cross club room in 2 weeks.

On a discussion to refurbish the Club, Bill and Andy brought figures to clean up the Club Room. Change the carpet on the walls, new lights and paint, is what's in store.

A discussion was held on the cost of refreshments at Club Meetings. Jodie brought up the fact she likes to have refreshments at meetings. The Board asked Jodie to bring the receipts in for refreshments at Club Meeting.

Paul brought a motion to change the current Club Membership cycle from July 1st to June 30th to January 1st to December 31st. It passed by Majority vote. The plans are for Members to pay dues by July 1st, and they will be good until December 31 2008. This will mean a Member will be given an extension till the end of 2008 of free Membership.

Jodie stressed if you take on a project, that you finish it. If you find you can't continue the project, please pass it along to someone else and to don't just 'give it up'. A discussion was held on communication.



Board Meeting Minutes (cont.)

Bill held a discussion on the QSL bureau. This was postponed to next month.

A motion was made to adjourn the Meeting @ 9:10

Respectfully submitted by Jeff KA4WYC Secretary W4BFB



W4BFB Field Day T-Shirts

In addition to the ARRL T-Shirts offered each year for Field Day, the MARS club is selling a W4BFB Field Day T-Shirt. The shirts are white and are printed with beautiful large graphics on front and back in dark blue. Shirts are available in the following sizes and prices.

Small through XXL shirts are \$13.00.

XXXL shirts are \$14.50.

If you would like to order a shirt, see Bill W4GRW at the May club meeting or send an email to:

minifd@w4bfb.org

73,

Bill - W4GRW



Graphic on Front of the Shirt



Graphic on the Back of the Shirt

Membership Renewal

The 2007 MARS membership renewal drive is swinging into high gear. The club board has made a strong effort this year to get memberships up to date. You will hear a lot about getting your renewal applications in for the next year. The good news is that with your next renewal, you will get a little bonus. The club is switching the membership year from July to June to January to December. So, in order to change the membership cycle, this year's renewal will carry you for a year and a half. The next time you will have to renew will be January of 2009.

It is very important that you get your renewal applications in promptly. Jeff (KA4WYC) is getting the members database up to date and if members don't renew, they will be marked as inactive. In the past, this didn't mean much. The bad side of it not meaning much is that the club lost out on membership dues that members gladly would have paid if they had just realized they were not current. Since nothing ever changed, they often never knew. From now on, if you are not current, you will know.

Keep in mind that at \$20.00 a person or \$25.00 for a family, membership in the club is quite a bargain. So, what do you get for your money? I would say that the thing to keep in mind is that the main thing you get for your membership dues is the club itself.

How many scout troops could participate in Jamboree on the Air without clubs like MARS to provide equipment and expertise? Where would entities like the Multiple Sclerosis Society go for help with communications for public service events without clubs like MARS? Where would amateur radio operators living in covenant restricted neighborhoods or in apartments go to operate on HF if there were no stations like the MARS club station? Think about all of the repeaters the club keeps running.

The club provides resources and opportunities that few of us as individuals could provide. Also, the club helps to foster a local, vibrant ham community where hams know what other hams are doing. Club meetings, the web site, emails and this newsletter help you keep the pulse of the local ham community. If you know what others are doing, you are much more likely to look for opportunities to join in and have a little fun yourself. You are also much more likely to look for opportunities to share the fun things you do with others.

In summary, this club is worth supporting. So show your support by renewing in a timely manner.

73,

Richard – K4KRW

Mini Field Day

If you have not yet signed up to attend Mini Field Day, please do. We'd love to see you there. In addition to be a trial run at our new Field Day location, it will be a great opportunity for members and their families to get to know others in our community. Hamburgers, Hot Dogs and drinks will be provided by the club.

We do need an accurate head count in advance so the club can have enough food on hand. Also, the club asks that you bring a desert or side dish if you can. You may send an email to miniFD@w4bfb.org to tell us how many are coming and to coordinate any food you are bringing to the event.

Information about the event is available on the club web site (www.w4bfb.org).

73,

Jodie - KI4CXO

Southeastern VHF Society Conference

The tenth annual conference of the Southeastern VHF Society was held in Atlanta on April 27th & 28th. Being an avid VHF'er, I was introduced to the society when they held their 2005 conference here in Charlotte. I was blown away by the extremely well organized two day conference. I also attended the 2006 conference in Greenville, SC.

Presentations this year were given by hams from across the USA, from Canada and from the United Kingdom. Presentations were given on many different aspects of our hobby ranging from receiving deep space NASA transmissions from over 500 million miles away to home brewing a digital radio that's compatible with Icom's D-Star system. Many of the presenters are trailblazers in the microwave bands. This year, Joe Lynch - N6CL (editor of CQ VHF magazine) and Rick Roderick - K5UR (the ARRL's 2nd VP) joined Nobel prize winner Dr Joe Taylor - K1JT and current ARRL president Joel Harrison - K5UR, as guest speakers.

VHF today must be like HF was after WWII, but instead of hams using surplus military equipment; they experiment with surplus satellite and cell phone equipment. A lot of information is shared about which components can be best modified for amateur use.

On Friday morning, there is an antenna testing range setup to test gain on home brewed and commercial antennas. This is a real world test where actual performance figures are often much lower than those claimed by the manufacturers.

There is an inexpensive antenna design called an H Doublebay, that is a bidirectional wire antenna. It looks very similar to a 3 rung rope ladder. Several of us have been experimenting with these antennas for a while and we know how well they work. We wanted to see how they did on the antenna range. I am proud to say that our group came home with the awards for the highest gain in 222mhz and 432mhz classes.

The Saturday evening banquet dinner is always a highlight. This is where the awards are given out for several of the competitions. In addition to highest gain by home brewed antennas, there are awards for lowest noise figures on home brewed preamps and a \$1000 cash award is given for the best micro circuit design.

It looks like the VHF conference may be coming back to Charlotte in 2010. Orlando, FL will have it 2008. I would highly recommend that hams interested in the many aspects of VHF and UHF operating attend this conference. If anyone has any questions about the society, the conference or those H Doublebay antennas, feel free to contact me or check out these websites www.svhfs.org, and

<http://wvfisher.googlepages.com/hdoublebay>.

73,

Bill - W4GRW



The author and Ron Baily (AA4S) have their H Doublebay antennas ready for testing.

(Photo courtesy of John Grimsley - KE4ENI - Thanks!)

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.

Alternate frequencies announced

Club Officers and Board of Directors

President

Jodie Rowland, KI4CXO, ki4cxo@w4bfb.org

Vice President

Don Biltcliffe, N4IZ, n4iz@w4bfb.org

Secretary

Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, ka4wyc@w4bfb.org

Treasurer

Greg Onachila, KG4IOE, kg4ioe@w4bfb.org

Directors

Paul Ponak, AD4IE, ad4ie@w4bfb.org

Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM, wb2rh@w4bfb.org

Kevin Keyes, KI4KFS, ki4kfs@w4bfb.org

Andy Hawkins, G4GKK, g4gkk@w4bfb.org

Bill Fisher, W4GRW, w4grw@w4bfb.org



**Mecklenburg Amateur Radio
Society, Inc**

Richard Y. Dodd, K4KRW, Editor
7000 Heatherford Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28226
E-mail: k4krw@w4bfb.org