



MARS NEWS

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society



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**Next Meeting - Tue. Nov. 30
7:30pm - East Baptist Church**

**Election of Officers and Directors
will occupy most of the next meeting.**



Editor's Letter

This year's election of officers and two directors is an important one. The direction the club takes depends mostly on what your officials think and do. Come early to the next meeting and talk with the candidates to find out what their interests are. Do they have similar interests to yours?

If you are an avid DX'er, chat with prospective board members about what they do DX wise. If you are an ARES guy, is the candidate one also? Are they interested in VOIP, Digital Techniques, Repeaters, Contests, etc. etc.

This is your club! Elect the folks you think will take it the the best direction.



The FCC has come down pretty heavily on Ham Radio with their decision about BPL (broadband over power lines). In effect we seem to now have a secondary position on our HF bands, not primary as we have had in the past. Due to the election results, it is unlikely that will be a change in the make up of the FCC directors. If any one would like to comment please write me a note and I will publish it here.

There will not be a December Club Meeting as the Christmas Party will replace it. There will be a December Newsletter but it will considerably shorter.

Tom - W4NCU

**Volunteer Net Controllers needed for the
Metrolina Emergency 2-mtr net.
Contact Darryl Sampson, Interim Net Mgr.
W4OM@arrl.net
Net meets nightly @ 9pm**

Learning Morse Code

Morse Code will probably no longer be required for most classes of Amateur Radio licenses except possibly the Extra. Even the Extra class applicant needs only know morse at a speed of 5 wpm.

Morse however, is still quite popular on the bands. Every day you can hear it on most bands and sometimes at speeds up to 35-40 wpm.

It is not often heard at speeds of 5 wpm or less. For the serious CW OP, 5 wpm is too slow for most things. Can you imagine having a conversation with someone and over five minutes and you could only say 25 words (5 characters each)? Then it takes another 5 minutes for the ham you are talking with to answer with his 25 words.

There is a pride in accomplishing getting your code speed to more than 5 wpm. Copying 10, 15 or 20 wpm is not that hard to learn to do. There are several ways to do it. You can purchase recordings where you are taught to progress from one speed to another. If you have an HF transceiver, you can try listening to CW QSO's on the air. There are fast and slow speed CW traffic nets where you not only can learn to increase your speed but also how to handle traffic.

Morse Code has a way of polarizing hams, they either love it, or can't stand it. CW(or Morse Code) has been decreasing in popularity over the last several decades as voice and other digital modes become more popular. But a listen across the CW portion of the ham radio bands will find thousands of hams still using this vintage communications technique.

I believe that learning and using Morse Code is very similar to learning a foreign language. Don't try to learn Morse Code the way a Boy Scout might do it. Don't memorize a list that tells you "A" is "dot dash" or "B" is "dash dot dot dot". This method will stunt your progress and lead to frustration.

Ideally, when you hear the "dot dash" sound in your ear, your mind will immediately recognize that as "A". Inserting a third step, where your mind first translates the "dot dash" sound into the written dot dash you learned from a list, and then into the letter "A", is one thing that makes learning Morse Code so difficult for so many people.

There are a number of techniques suggested to help learn Morse Code. Among these are:

- * Learn the code in groups, beginning with letters comprised of all dits first, then on to letters with all dahs next, then finally learning letters with both dits and dahs.
- * Learn the code in groups of letters that have related sounds. For example, U(dit dit dah), F(dit dit dah dit), and the question mark(dit dit dah dah dit dit).
- * Learn the more frequently used letters and characters first, and the more difficult ones last.
- * Listen to the Morse Code characters sent at a high speed, with long pauses between each. This is known as the Farnsworth method.

Learning CW from a practice tape is, I believe, one of the best ways. Many companies offer these audio tapes or CD-ROMS, although they can be a bit dry and boring, and I recommend a bit of live CW listening with a shortwave receiver. Try 40 meters 7100-7150 kHz and 80 meters 3675-3725 kHz for practice.

Learning CW with the personal help of another ham is also a great idea, as is taking a class in CW operation. Our club has offered classes for beginning hams in licensing, including Morse Code. There has even been practice on the 2mtr repeater.

The Morse Code used today by amateur radio operators is also known as the International Code.

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HAPPENINGS

By definition, the duration of the dah is three times as long as that of a dit, and the space between dits and dahs inside an individual character (such as dit dit dah or U) is equal to the duration of one dit. The space between characters is equal to three dits, and the space between words is equal to seven dits. During a CW QSO nobody is checking to see if you are using the correct spacing, just do your best. It takes practice. Code sent with the correct spacing sounds better and is easier to copy.

Forcing yourself to listen to Morse Code that is slightly faster than you are able to copy comfortably is a good way to increase your code speed. You don't need to copy every letter, just concentrate on better learning the CW letters and symbols you already know, and the others will follow.

Actual on-the-air CW contacts are probably the best way to increase your code speed and CW proficiency. And to have fun while practicing.

Hams often send their callsigns several times at the beginning and end of a transmission, making it easier to copy. Everything else they send is usually a blurr. You might keep a running list of the different countries you have heard, just to see how many countries you can get. This might help you increase your code speed.

I have added a software tool on my web site that you might want to download to help you either get started with code or to increase your speed.

<<http://www.w4ncu.com>>.

Look for the link to Morse Code where you will find another link to download Code.Class.zip. This is a windows program and has many excellent features for learning code.

W4NCU - Tom

**Election of Officers - November Club Meeting**

The following have been nominated to run for office for the year 2005 (An **Absentee Ballot** may be used. It is located on the last page of this newsletter):

President: Shawn Goodin, K4RSG

Vice President:

Secretary: Bill Turner, W4WNT

Treasurer: Greg Onachila, KG4IOE

Directors: (2 positions to be filled)

Jodie Rowland, KI4CXO

Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM

MARS Christmas Party will be held at the **Pine Lake Country Club** on Saturday evening, **Dec. 11** starting with a social period at about **7 PM** with dinner to follow at 7:30. Reservations are required and the cost will be \$10 per club member, \$10 for member's significant other and \$25 for non-member guests. **See John, WB2NHQ, to make reservations.** See Oct. MARS News for map to Pine Lakes CC..

Shopping for gifts or for yourself this Christmas?. Try <www.w4ncu.com>, "**Buy Almost Anything**".

HAMFESTS

30 Oct 20004 **HAMFEST** Grand Strand ARC
<http://www.w4gs.org> Contact: Jim Wood, KF4CJE
 PO Box 14581 Surfside Beach, SC 29587

Phone: 843-238-0800

Email: kf4cje@w4gs.org

Conway (Myrtle Beach), SC

21 Nov 2004 **JARFEST** Johnston ARS
<http://www.jars.net> Contact: Bill Lambert, AK4H
 8917 NC 50 N Benson, NC 27504

Phone: 919-894-3352

Email: ak4h@nc.rr.com Benson, NC

Minutes of October 5 Board Meeting
(Not Previously Published)

Present: Dave Stewart, AF4ZK; Tom Nicholls, W4NCU; Scott Ellis, KG4UDX; Irv Hoechner, KF4KFN; Greg Onachila, KG4IOE; John White, WB2NHQ; Shawn Goodin, K4RSG; Bill Turner, W4WNT

Absent: Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC

Visitor: Ben Ananaitis, WB2RHM

The meeting was called to order at 7:13PM.

President's Report: The October meeting will be a presentation on the new Echo Satellite, by a Vice President of AMSAT. The Hamfest will be the NC State Convention in 2005.

Secretary's Report: A spreadsheet of attendance for the year has been compiled and provided to the board to determine who is eligible to run for office for 2005. This is based on 2005 dues being paid and participation in seven club activities.

Currently, we have Greg Onachila who will be a candidate for Treasurer, Bill Turner, who will run for the Secretary's position, and Ben Ananaitis who will be a candidate for a board position.

Proposed changes to the Bylaws were prepared and are ready for discussion.

Treasurer's Report: The projector and screen have been purchased. They will be used for club meetings and for the Hamfest.

John White has an inventory of club equipment. One item, a 50-foot extension cord has been missing since Field Day.

The brake cable on the RV has been repaired, and the RV has been cleaned and winterized. Currently, only 5 people are authorized to haul the trailer. We need some more truck owning members to get on the RV hauling list.

Committees:

Christmas Party: Dave Stewart The event will be on Saturday Dec. 11 at 7:00PM (Social Hour) and 7:30PM (Dinner) at the Pine Hill Country Club. The room holds 60 people, but we can add some more in an adjoining area. Full information will be published in

the Newsletter.

Cost: \$10 for a club member, \$10 for a club member's significant other, \$25 for non-members. Tickets will go on sale at the October Meeting.

Nominating Committee: Dave Stewart and Shawn Goodin The committee went over the spreadsheet and discussed several possible candidates. Tom Nicholls asked that those who are running for office provide him with bios for the November Newsletter.

ByLaws: Changes to the By Laws to incorporate e-mail balloting and e-mail absentee ballots were discussed and moved by Bill Turner, seconded by Greg Onachila, the changes were approved for presentation to the membership.

Repeaters: The PALS network experienced overheating during the MS-150 in the linking radios at Timmonsville, SC. The club will send a \$100 check to the PALS organization to assist in the maintenance of the network and in appreciation for our use of the system.

Club Room: Shawn is costing out the upgrade to the ceiling and lighting of the Clubroom at the Red Cross.

New Business: JOTA will be held at the Girl Scout site with coordination by Cynthia Sampson and the Hornet's Nest Council. 75 Girl Scouts are expected to participate. VHF, HF, RTTY and PSK31 stations will be set up for the Oct. 17 event.

Tower: We have one unused tower on the antenna trailer, which was proposed for use at the new Red Cross Disaster Services building going up next to the Red Cross Blood Center building on Park Road. After discussion, it was moved by Bill Turner and seconded by Irv Hoechner to donate the unused steel tower to the Red Cross provided that the Red Cross will provide the base and the other requirements to set up the tower. Motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28PM

Submitted by Bill Turner, W4WNT, Secretary

Minutes of November 3rd Board Meeting

The W4BFB Board of Directors meeting was conducted in the Red Cross Clubroom on Wednesday November 3, 2004. Called to order at 7:10 PM by president Shawn Goodin K4RSG, also present was vice president Jeff Blythe KA4WYC, treasurer John White WB2NHQ, directors Dave Stewart AF4ZK, Irvin Hoechner KF4KFN, Scott Ellis KG4UDX, and Greg Onachila KG4IOE. Secretary Bill Turner W4WNT was not able to attend, and Ben Antanaitis WB2RHM was a welcomed visiting member.

In the President's report: Shawn expressed his concern about the rather thin list of nominees for club officers. The Board of Directors needs more club member participation, all of us should seriously consider contributing a few years as a board member to help share the month-to-month responsibilities and the direction of club activities. A confirming letter was received which approves our Hamfest-2005 as the ARRL NC section Convention. Our w4bfb.org email reflector has been updated again, any member email address changes or newsletter distribution changes should be communicated to k4rsg@w4bfb.org. In repeater news, SERA rescinded the requirement of tone access on all repeaters. Our repeaters however will be tone capable if interference becomes a problem.

President of Vice report: Jeff reports that the November meeting will primarily be election of officers for 2005. He is also trying to obtain a power-point presentation about Internet Repeater Linking Protocol. Jeff is not able to continue Vice President activities next year due to some very demanding college courses scheduled in addition to his 'normal' work schedule.

Treasurer report: No significant activity this past month, the normal phone bill and the normal club raffle receipts resulted in very little change to the bottom line. A treasurer transition diskette is being compiled containing details about bank accounts, insurance policies, liability assignment forms for outside activities, budget and accounting system procedures, tax filing requirements, critical dates, clubroom key holders/deposits tracking, budget preparation, etc. Also will have to decide if the current 6 yr old version of Quickbooks is still adequate without an upgrade.

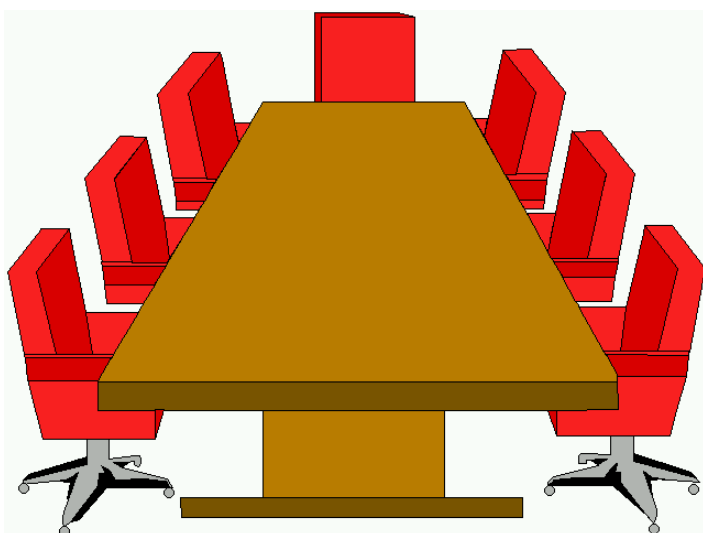
Committee reports: A Hamfest committee meeting will be scheduled probably for Wednesday Nov 10 depending on members' schedules and room availability. The Hamfest committee needs more participation, specifically a Forums coordinator. Hopefully forums will include AMSAT, DX activities, Bob Heil audio, ARRL section and ARES updates.

Holiday party update: Scheduled for Saturday Dec 11 at Pine Lake Country Club on Lebanon Rd, Mint Hill. The reservation form will be in the November newsletter, reservations and contributions are accepted at either October or November club meeting, or may be returned to Dave Stewart by December 4. If someone has a favorite holiday CD, bring it. Due to budget constraints the entertainment will be CD music and fellowship so also bring your own HAM story of the year.

The 2005 officers and directors **absentee ballot** will appear in the November newsletter, and will be available early enough to meet the bylaws-required days for absentee ballot submission from members. Those who wish to use the absentee ballot and receive email newsletters should print the ballot and mail it per instructions on the ballot.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted, WB2NHQ



Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society, Inc. - Officers and Board of Directors -2004:

President - Shawn Goodin, K4RSG, Email Address: k4rsg@w4bfb.org

Vice President - Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, Email address: ka4wyc@w4bfb.org

Secretary - Bill Turner, W4WNT, Email Address: w4wnt@w4bfb.org

Treasurer - John White, WB2NHQ Email Address: wb2nhq@w4bfb.org

Directors - Irvin Hoechner, KF4KFN; Greg Onachila, KG4IOE; Dave Stewart, AF4ZK;

Scott Ellis, KG4UDX; Tom Nicholls, W4NCU

Meetings @ East Baptist Church, 6850 Monroe Road (next to East Mecklenburg High School, near Conference Drive) - Last Tuesday of each month at 7:30 P.M.**Clubroom** - Red Cross Building, 2425 Park Road, RM 023, Charlotte, NC - No telephone.**Club Repeaters****W4BFB Web Site****146.34/146.94 With Autopatch. 144.69/145.29 NO Autopatch****144.63/145.23 NO Autopatch 222.80/224.40 NO Autopatch****449.60/444.60 NO Autopatch and P/T 100.0**

Autopatch Access *(don't unkey)+phone number. Disconnect #

145.01 Packet Digipeater, W4BFB-1**<http://www.w4bfb.org>**

Webmaster: Wayne Setzer - WB4BXW

<wlsetzer@att.net>

Next Meeting - November 30, 2004
 Meeting After Next - January 25, 2005
 There will be no meeting in December.

MARS News
 Tom Nicholls, W4NCU, Editor
 4004 E Providence Rd.
 Charlotte, NC 28211
 w4ncu@att.net

*** * * * * A B S E N T E E B A L L O T * * * * *****MECKLENBURG AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
ELECTION OF OFFICERS, NOVEMBER 30, 2004****PRESIDENT:**

_____ Shawn Goodin, K4RSG

(Write-in) _____

VICE PRESIDENT:

(Write-in) _____

SECRETARY:

_____ Bill Turner, W4WNT

(Write-in) _____

TREASURER:

_____ Greg Onachila, KG4IOE

(Write-in) _____

BOARD MEMBERS: Vote For Two

_____ Jodie Rowland, KI4CXO

(Write-in) _____

_____ Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM

W4BFB W4BFB

If you cannot attend the November 30 club meeting, this ballot may be used to vote ABSENTEE. Enclose the ballot in a separate sealed envelope marked "BALLOT", then put this envelope into another envelope and mail it to the secretary. This mailing envelope shall contain the name and callsign of the club member submitting the Absentee Ballot.

In accordance with the bylaws Absentee Ballots shall be mailed so that they are received no later than 4:00 pm., November 29, 2004, which is the day before the meeting date. Any ballot received thereafter WILL NOT COUNT. The envelopes marked BALLOT will be opened by the tellers at the meeting. If the person sending an Absentee Ballot attends the meeting, said person shall not vote at the member meeting.

The secretary's address is:

Bill Turner, W4WNT
4000 Horse Shoe Bend
Weddington, NC 28104