



MECKLENBURG AMATEUR
RADIO SOCIETY, INC

MARS News

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A letter from the President

Hello W4BFB Members,

This has been a very exciting year for me, being the President of such a wonderful club with so many great people in it; people who I now call family and friends. I am grateful to you all, for the support that I have had this year. I also want to say that I hope 2008 will be even more prosperous, with more

exciting club events happening than ever before. If there is something you want to see the club doing, then you need to let me know. I welcome any and all suggestions because I want to see W4BFB be the best club it can be for all of its members.

On Saturday evening November 17th, I was asked to attend the annual meeting of the MS Society. I was honored and excited to accept the award for 'Volunteer Organization of the Year', presented to all of you, the members of the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society. I am so proud of all of you and our club.

Election time is here. On November 27th, immediately before the regular club meeting, we will be having a business meeting where we will hold our annual elections. For 2008, we have a great slate of candidates. Make sure you come to the November meeting to vote. If you cannot attend, make sure you send in your proxy ballot.

After the election, we will be having an interesting program about D-Star technology. If you want to learn more about it, join us. During the meeting, you can also sign-up for the 2007 MARS holiday party on December 8th. The club will be providing the roast turkey, baked ham, and fried chicken. We need to know: Will you be coming? How many will be with you? And, what meat preference will each person attending have? Oh, let's not forget - what kind of side dish or dessert would you like to bring? The cost for the evening is only \$5.00 per person with children 12 and under free. We will have a wonderful time together. Please come out and be part of the fun. Any questions? Contact Jeff KA4WYC or email us at <mailto:Party@W4BFB.Org>.

At the last club meeting, I told everyone that MARS was teaming up with the W4CQ club to help make this a Merry Christmas for the orphans at the Ebenezer Christian Home in Wilkesboro, N.C. Our club has 'adopted' a 15-year-old girl named Brittany, to help fulfill her Christmas wish list. We are still in need of your help. Some of the items we need are Christian CD's, and gift cards from places like Wal-



Letter from the President (cont.)

Mart, Kohl's, Goodys, or Target. If we find that we have more than enough to fulfill Brittany's Christmas wishes, the orphanage will pool our extra gift cards to help other, less fortunate, children in the home. Please be generous this holiday season and help these children who are in need of our help. We will be collecting all the MARS items at our November 27th club meeting. Once again, thank you for your help.

I want to wish each and everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. We are all so blessed and have many things to be Thankful for.

73, Jodie KI4CXO

Need a Project Box?

The September newsletter had an article about an S-meter I made for my FT-897D. This month, I wanted to put it in a nice enclosure. But, I just couldn't find one that I liked. My friend Dave (K8ZK) and I were discussing this and he suggested I look into using a cigar box. Dave likes a good cigar from time to time and had noticed that they sell empty leftover boxes at the Tinder Box at South Park Mall. Sure enough, they were selling the unfinished boxes (usually made from some type of cedar) for \$2 each. I was very surprised at the variety of shapes and sizes. I found one that looked like it would be perfect for the FT-Meter.

The box measured 5" by 5" and 3.5" tall. Rather than having a hinged top, the top slid open. So, there were no hinges or latches. The box had adhesive labels on it. I had to use an adhesive remover (Goop Gone) to remove the labels and the residue. Also, the box had impressions on the sides and top (brand markings). They were quite deep and were clearly there to stay. I was happy to leave them there as I thought they added character. I decided that the box would rest on one of its sides rather than on its bottom. I used a hole saw to drill a 2.75" hole in one of the 5" by 3.5" sides and then drilled a small hole on the opposite side so I could run a wire out the back. After one coat of pre-stain, I applied one coat of a red oak stain. After letting that dry I applied and then sanded two coats of polyurethane. That was followed by a third coat of polyurethane. The end result looks great. Not bad for a \$2 box!

73, Richard - K4KRW



The unfinished cigar box



Ready for the meter



The FT-Meter mounted this way sits at about the same height as the radio face when the radio's front bail is deployed.

October and November Club Meetings

For the October meeting, the featured presenter was John Covington. John did a presentation on building and operating QRP kits. He brought in some of his favorite kits so club members could get a good look at them. The kits included a Tuna Tin II transmitter, a Heathkit HW-9 transceiver, an Elecraft K-1, plus one each of the Small Wonder Labs Rock Mite and SW+ transceivers.

You could definitely tell that building and operating these rigs is something that John enjoys very much. He had some great construction tips. He also had a lot of information about the types of kits that are available today from simple transmitters like the Tuna Tin II all the way up to a small software defined receiver (the Soft Rock) that many have been experimenting with in recent years.

John's radio's were a pleasure to look at. The quality of construction was superb.

Interest in the evening's presentation topic was clearly very high. The members present for the meeting asked a lot of good questions about the radios and also about operating at such low power levels. Hopefully, we will have some club members bringing in their own QRP projects in future months to show everyone. Thanks John for another wonderful presentation!

The November meeting will be another great one. First off all, you will want to be present to participate in the club election. Then, you will definitely want to see our featured presenter, Steve Koone - KA4YMY. Steve will be giving a presentation on D-Star. Steve is extremely knowledgeable when it comes to this topic. He has been working very hard with Ken Johnson - KC4YOZ and others to make D-Star a reality in Charlotte. He has put a lot of his own time and money into an ICOM D-Star repeater that was just recently moved to Spencer Mountain. He really has his finger on the pulse of D-Star as he is constantly keeping in touch with others around the country who are working to install and improve ICOM D-Star repeaters. He has also been keeping up with all of the efforts to create alternate solutions to the ICOM hardware.

Even if you can't imagine yourself buying one of these radios anytime soon, you should hear what Steve has to say. This is truly an interesting topic. There is a lot of pioneering work going on with D-Star. Plus, technologies such as D-Star have the potential to significantly change emergency communications, especially when it comes to transferring data.

The November meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on the 27th at the usual location (East Baptist Church on Monroe Rd). See you there!

73,

Jeff - KA4WYC and Richard - K4KRW



Tuna Tin 2 QRP Transmitter Kit

MARS 2007 Holiday Party



If you have not yet signed up for the MARS 2007 holiday party, please do so at the November meeting. The date and time for the party is Saturday December 8th from 6PM until 9PM or so. We will be holding our party at:

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
3601 Central Ave.
Charlotte NC 28205

St. Andrew's is on Central Ave. just a short distance from the Eastway Drive intersection (headed into town).

In response to requests from the MARS membership, this year's event will be an 'old-fashioned family social' type of party.

You and your family, or a single guest, are invited to attend. The charge for the night is \$5 per adult; children under 12 may attend for free.

For your listening and dancing pleasure, we will be featuring a DJ from Bass FX this year. For the entire evening,, our DJ will provide a wide selection of music from across the decades. He will take song requests.

In keeping with the 'old-fashioned family social' nature of this year's party, we are asking that everyone bring a 'side' dish. We will need things like salads, potato dishes, casseroles, vegetable dishes, breads and rolls, condiments, and desserts. Also, make sure you bring your favorite non-alcoholic beverage. MARS will provide the 'meat course' offering everyone a choice between sliced roast turkey, sliced baked ham and fried chicken. We will need to know everyone's meat course preference in advance so we can ensure we have enough of each for everyone.

Make sure you see Jeff - KA4WYC at the November meeting so you can sign the sign-up sheet, specify the number attending with you, pay the fee, and list everyone's preferences. You can also find out what food items are needed, so you can sign-up for one to bring.

You can contact the committee members with ideas and suggestions by sending an email to:

<mailto:party@w4bfb.org?subject=2007 MARS Holiday Party>

73, Jodie KI4CXO and Jeff KA4WYC



GeekFest 2007

A Supercooled Banana - A Segway - W4BFB?

It's Halloween morning and it is colder than a ... (well, let's just say it's cold). It is GeekFest 2007, held at the Levine Campus of CPCC in Matthews, NC! We're up before sunrise, preparing for the event. W4BFB - MARS, is there for its fourth GeekFest appearance at the fourth annual CPCC GeekFest event. It is only 36 degrees and barely light at 7AM when John - WB2NHQ, Ben - WB2RHM, Jodie - KI4CXO, and Anne - (Mrs. WB2RHM) arrive with the W4BFB RV and all the equipment necessary for demonstrating how ham radio today is still a technologically vital hobby.

Wedged in between the Discovery Place liquid Nitrogen display, the Segway advanced transportation exhibit, the NC State BioFuel bus, and the CPCC Welding Club, MARS began setting up the W4BFB RV. A 20m dipole spanned the rooftops of two separate CPCC buildings. The usual complement of 2 meter and 70 centimeter antennas were in place as well.

The intent of CPCC's GeekFest is to show to all the students, staff, guests and visitors at the event that there is a lot of 'tomorrow's technology available TODAY' on display at the Levine Campus of CPCC through the exhibits of the varying featured guests. Due to our participation at all previous GeekFest events, MARS was one of the specifically invited guests for the 2007 event.

The W4BFB demonstrations included a working 20m PSK31 (Phase Shift Keying at 31 baud) computer controlled station, a working APRS (Automatic Positioning Reporting System) computer controlled 2m station as well as a 2m and 70cm FM Repeater based station.

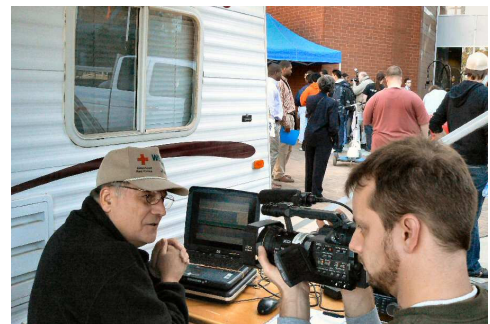
As visitors arrived, the team would explain how today's ham radio was far different than 'Grandpa's' old shortwave radio in the basement or attic. Modern ham radio technology melds with today's computer technology to yield 21st century capabilities that are not tied to phone lines or other infrastructure. Several video interviews were given to various media outlets, both commercial and internet based.

Around 3PM the W4BFB crew closed out the exhibit and concluded another GeekFest. We were asked if we would come back again next year to once again show off our capabilities. Of course, we will be there!

73 – WB2RHM (Photos taken by Anne Antanaitis, Mrs-WB2RHM)



Ben - WB2RHM and John - WB2NHQ setting up



John shows how it's done (PSK31 on 20 meters)!



Ben and Jodie - KI4CXO get a little camera time.

Amateur Radio on Vacation

It's amazing how the physical size of our equipment keeps decreasing and yet the features continue to increase. No longer is it necessary to take a hundred pounds of equipment in a crate to set up a portable station. For our vacation this year, which just happened to include some scheduled amateur radio time, I managed to pack my entire station (excluding antennas) inside of a battery box for a 90 amp hour gel cell. The total weight of the box was 14 pounds. My goals this year were to see what contacts I could make on Wednesday evening on the 432 MHz sideband frequencies and to check into the East Coast 70 Centimeter Net. The station would be set up at a location 5000 feet high near Mount Pisgah along the Blue Ridge in EM85oj.

In years past I had taken the trusty Icom IC-706MKIIG for 2 meter operation. But, this year I elected to take the IC-7000 which transmits 35 watts on 70cm compared to the 20 watts from the 706. The antenna system was comprised of a stack of two omni-directional PAR Electronics loops fed by twelve feet of low loss RG8X (CQI 18). Normally this wouldn't be the coax to use at UHF frequencies due to the loss characteristics, but the short length and portability factor made it the coax of choice for this station. A 25 watt MFJ switching power supply, a Heil headset, and a key completed the station.

Total setup time in the mountains took less than ten minutes- my practice at home had paid off. Beginning at 8:30 PM on Wednesday evening I made contacts with stations in Taylors, SC (42 miles); Charlotte, NC (112 miles); Stanfield, NC (132 miles); and Gold Hill, NC (136 miles); plus I heard many of the stations checking into the 70cm net. I did not hear the low power station in Florida with the attic antenna (antenna restrictions) who checks in regularly, but net control, W4NUS in Charlotte, did. Yes, 70 cm SSB can experience some exciting propagation. Also, with VHF/UHF height is everything and the altitude of my station helped to balance out my low power and modest antennas.

Next October I plan to add a stack of 2 meter sideband loops to my station and possibly a 6 meter dipole. When you head out on the road, don't forget to include some time for amateur radio.

East Coast 70 Centimeter net: <http://www.w4dex.com>

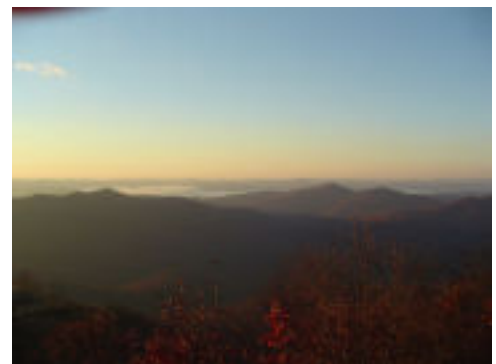
Cheap and easy to build VHF/UHF antennas:

<http://www.fredspinner.com/W0FMS/CheapYagi/vjbcy.html>

73, Paul D. Ponak - AD4IE



Everything except the antenna fits in the box at the upper right



A beautiful view towards Charlotte!

2007 Field Day Results

The results have been published for Field Day 2007, and the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society did very well overall. Here are some of the numbers.

Nationally, several all time records were set including, 2,331 submitted entries, 34,833 participants and 467 GOTA stations. The participant count includes operators, helpers and visitors. Note: GOTA stations are the special (Get On The Air) stations where visitors and Novices and Technician class licensees are allowed to get a taste of contesting on HF under the supervision of a control operator.



The Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society operated in the 2A class, which means we had two HF transmitters on the air. We also took advantage of a bonus VHF station and a GOTA station. Nationally, the 2A class was the largest class with 518 entries. In North Carolina there were twenty 2A class stations.

How well did W4BFB do on Field Day? We had a total of 1,512 QSOs and 5,248 points. Nationally, in the 2A class, of the 518 entries W4BFB was number 71. Out of the twenty 2A stations in North Carolina, W4BFB was ranked at number 5.

The W4BFB Field Day site had 58 visitors and participants. This was the highest of all of North Carolina's 59 Field Day entries. Only 77 of the 2,331 entries nationwide had greater a participant count than our club. Wow! A special thanks to everyone who came and operated as Whiskey Four Big Fat Boy. An especially big thanks goes to those of you who did all of the planning and hard work that made the club's participation possible.

73,

Bill - W4GRW

Board Minutes



Jodie started the meeting at 7:03. Present were: Jodie, Don, Jeff, Greg, Ben, Kevin, Paul, Andy, and Bill. Guests were Perry and Dave.

Jodie gave a run down of past events; like Geekfest, JOTA,

Don stated Steve KA4YMY would do a program on D-Star at the next meeting Nov. 27th.

Greg gave a report on money. He stated the taxes have been sent out.

Jeff gave a report on membership. We have 149 members to date.

It was noted that there was an epidemic of maleficent emails that involved viruses embedded in PDF files (Editor's note: The club newsletter PDFs do not contain any viruses. However, some internet service providers have been blocking any email with a PDF attachment. So it has been causing the club problems in newsletter delivery). Having seen other groups experiencing this same problem, Ben made a motion, seconded by Paul, to change the way we publish the newsletter. It was moved that we send only a text email to all members telling them that the newsletter is available on the W4BFB web site. The members can then download the newsletter from there. This new procedure would be implemented on January 1, 2008. The motion was passed unanimously. Note: Those receiving the newsletter by US Mail will not be affected.

Jodie had a report from Earl on our repeaters and he stated the controllers have been repaired and are back, and will be installed when time permits. He will probably have a new repeater at the next club meeting.

Jodie didn't have a report from the Equipment Committee. The TS-60 we loaned to Discovery Place is back in the club room.

Bill stated that the Nye tuner was sold for \$350.00, and it will be picked up later.

Contests – Ben stated we wouldn't have any contests for November.

Bill stated BFB was 5th in the states ranking for class 2A (Field Day).

Grants and Resources – Kevin stated we got \$13.24 from Food Lion share the wealth.

Public Service – Jeff stated there will be an award from the MS Society at a dinner on November 17th at 5PM, which Jodie and Jeff will go to represent the club to receive an award.

Jodie called on Kevin and Ben from the nominations committee. Ben has to send out the ballots to the membership. The board approved two members who didn't meet the tenure requirement to run for a board slot. The board approved this unanimously and Ben will send it to the membership. Andy made a motion, and Jeff seconded to accept the slate, as presented to the board, which passed unanimously also.

Board Minutes (Cont.)

Jodie talked about the holiday party. We had 35 members and guests who have signed up and 6 have already paid. Ben said the club website has the holiday party link on it and they should click on the snowman image to be taken to the holiday party info.

Old business – the lock is still not in, Bill will check on it.

Andy said he still wants to work on painting the room.

New business – Paul will be taking pictures of our club room for our website.

Jodie brought up – we are going to help a 15 yr. old girl from the Ebenezer Orphanage, to sponsor for gifts she has on her wish list. We are teaming up with the W4CQ Club. We helped them with book bags last year. Greg asked if we could send \$50.00 donation. This passed by a unanimous show of hands! Ben will send something to the reflector.

Having no further business, Jodie asked for a motion to adjourn. Made by Bill and Paul. We adjourned @ 8:05

Respectfully submitted Jeff KA4WYC – W4BFB Secretary

Riley Hollingsworth Retiring - Not!

Last time I checked, it was November. It was not April. It definitely was not April First. Despite that, the news of Riley Hollingsworth's retirement from the FCC apparently was a little premature. After re-evaluating the situation, Riley decided that he'd like to hang around a little longer. I'm sure this is a good thing for the Amateur Radio Service. But, it certainly was about as big a surprise as the initial announcement that he was going to retire.

So Riley, what are we to do? Everyone in the ham community put all that hard work into composing all of those wonderful comments about your tenure as Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement. I even held off sending out the October W4BFB newsletter so I could include the big news. Now you're just going to make us do it all over again when you really do retire.

Welcome back Riley. It's like you never left :-).

73,

Richard - K4KRW

2007 Candidates

President

Jodie Rowland - KI4CXO



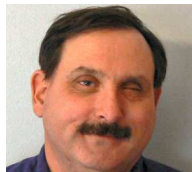
Vice President

Bill Fisher - W4GRW



Secretary

Jeff Blythe - KA4WYC



Treasurer

Tom Hunt - KA3VVJ



Board of Directors (3 open seats)

Randy Zongker

AA4ZR



Andy Hawkins

G4GKK



David Holbrook

KC4YPB



Perry Garis

KF4UVL



2007 Club Election Proxy Ballot

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society- -W4BFB--

Notice of Annual Business Meeting to Elect 2008 MARS Officers and Directors

On Tuesday November 27th, 2007, a Business meeting of MARS will be held immediately prior to the regular monthly club meeting, for the purpose of holding the annual election of MARS Officers and Directors. The current slate of declared candidates is:

President:
__Jodie Rowland, KI4CXO __ (write-in) _____

Vice President:
__Bill Fisher, W4GRW __ (write-in) _____

Secretary:
__Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC __ (write-in) _____

Treasurer:
__Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ __ (write-in) _____

Directors: Three (3) 2 year Directorships:

*(Select **three only** or use write-in!)*

- __ Perry Garis, KF4UVL
- __ Andy Hawkins, G4GKK
- __ Dave Holbrook, KC4YPB
- __ Randy Zongker, AA4ZR
- __ (write-in) _____
- __ (write-in) _____
- __ (write-in) _____

To submit a proxy, you may present one at the meeting, mail one, or Email one to the **MARS Secretary: Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, 1122 PINE KNOT CT. CLOVER, SC 29710-9677** OR via email: <mailto:BALLOT@W4BFB.org>.

NOTE: Proxies must be received before **Monday November 26th**

You may use this notice as a written proxy, by printing it, signing it, and returning it to KA4WYC with a check mark next to those candidates you will be voting for, a cross out through the name of those you vote against, and/or a write-in name for alternate candidate(s). (Write-ins are subject to qualification review, their agreement to hold office if elected, and a seconded nomination at the election.)

To file an email proxy, send an email with your name and callsign plus the names of your choices for the positions to: BALLOT@W4BFB.org

73, MARS Election Committee

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)
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

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, wb2rhm@w4bfb.org

Kevin Keyes, KI4KFS, ki4kfs@w4bfb.org

Andy Hawkins, G4GKK, g4gkk@w4bfb.org

Bill Fisher, W4GRW, w4grw@w4bfb.org



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