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MARS News

A Letter from the President

News from the President – November 2009

Hello Everyone,

Busy, busy, busy. This time of the year things get so hectic for everyone. But I feel that no matter how hard it gets at times, we all have a lot to be thankful for in our lives. So, I want to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving.



Speaking of busy, November is a busy month for our club too.

We held a 2010 Charlotte Hamfest meeting on November 18th and lots of progress is being made toward the big event next March 13 & 14. But we can still use more help with the organizing work done by the Hamfest Committee. If you would like to join this part of the hamfest effort, ask me about it or send me an email KI4CXO@W4BFB.org

On November 21st we will be holding a VE test session for anyone who would like to get a new license for Amateur Radio or upgrade their current license. So mark your calendar and tell all your friends to study, come out to take the test, pass it, and enjoy the best Hobby around. Look for more details further down the newsletter.

I hope everyone will come out on Tuesday the 24th to attend the monthly club meeting and also cast your vote in our annual election for your 2010 club officers and 3 board members. (See an election article later in the newsletter for details and candidates.)

At this month's club meeting, we will be collecting donations of toys to contribute to the Toys for Tots campaign. Everyone knows someone who has been hurt by the economy and the widespread loss of jobs and homes. Families are hurting, and at this time of year the feelings of pain and defeat get worse when parents cannot give their children the kind of holiday happiness they wish for. Please, bring a toy to be given to a child during the Holidays. You have been generous in the past, when MARS came together to help those less fortunate. Let's all help take a personal part in this effort too. Bring a toy to add to the MARS donation pile. We will also accept your toy donations at our club Christmas Holiday Party.

Letter from the President (cont.)

And I hope lots of you will sign up to take part in our Christmas Holiday Dinner on December 5th. We will be holding it at East Baptist Church, and plan to start eating around 6:00 PM. We plan to have a great time with friends and family that day. So please sign up and join us for a great time. Read on for more details.

As always, 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 know we have the best club in Mecklenburg County, and I hope to see our club continue to grow and prosper. I feel like all of you are my family and I appreciate each and every one of you.

Hope to see you at the meeting and the Christmas Holiday Dinner,

73,

Jodie - KI4CXO



Public Service Events

Lungstrong 2009

First I want to thank the following hams for volunteering:

Ben - WB2RHM

Jeff - KA4WYC

Tom - KA3VVJ

Kevin - K4YYD (and his son)

Jodie - KI4CXO

None of this would have been possible without your help. I received many compliments from runners, volunteers, and believe it or not even cops. I also appreciate how every one of you was working together as a team. It is very hard to find a group of people who are so dedicated to a fundraiser like this.

Other then parking problems the event went pretty smoothly. We didn't have even close to the traffic problems this year that we had in 2008.

I have not heard yet approximately how much money the fundraiser raised. I will send a notice to the club once I hear.

Finally, I would like to thank all the ham radio operators and families who helped in contacting the legal officers in Cornelius. With your show of concern, as well as that of many others, the fundraiser was finally granted permission to use the area. We could not have done it without you.

With everyone's teamwork we have raised the awareness of lung cancer another notch. We still have a long ways to go, but we are making our way. Many of the runners/walkers will not only remember how well the race was organized, but will pass on the information they learned about the awareness to another person and so forth. With this help, it can become the norm for people to realize that lung cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer in the US and that half of the population affected by the disease have never smoked before in their lives.

Again on behalf of the race committee, I would like to say it has been on honor and privilege working with you. Thank you for all your help. We could not have done this without you.

Sincerely,

James Patterson, KJ4CIW



How to Become a Ham...in 1955



A Philco Cathedral

In the mid-to late 1940s my mother bought a Philco Cathedral radio. It was a fascinating thing to a kid. We had no TV back then. When school let out I could not wait to get home to listen to the Lone Ranger, The Shadow, Green Hornet and so on.

As I got older I would tinker with radios. Once I put up a wire antenna and attached it to an AC/DC radio and hooked a ground wire to the chassis: wrong thing to do! Big bang, smoke and a putrid smell. That could have been the end of my tinkering if my parents had found out, but I continued to tinker and found if I turned the screws on the tuning capacitor it would receive signals other than broadcast. I began hearing W4YPZ who was talking to others I could not hear, and that led to my interest in ham radio. I purchased a book at the newsstand titled How to Become a Radio Amateur put out by the ARRL. In 1955 I was a 17-year-old sophomore in high school who knew it all. Despite that I managed to learn how send and receive Morse code. I contacted the FCC and requested the exam for a Novice license. It was sent to me with instructions threatening a large fine and jail time if I opened it. The deal was to take it to a licensed amateur radio operator holding a General class license and he/she would open it and administer the exam. I made arrangements for my dad to take me to Furman James' (W4YPZ) home where he gave me the 5 wpm code test. I passed the code test. He opened the sealed package, and I answered the 25 questions and mailed the test to the FCC. I soon received the call sign KN4KAY that was good for one year and not renewable.

My first rig was a WWII Surplus ARC-5 Command receiver that covered 3 to 6 MHz and a breadboard 6AG7 transmitter running a couple of watts. I built it from my How to Become a Radio Amateur book. I have misplaced my log over the years, but the FCC required that you log every contact with time, date, frequency, mode and call signs, which I did. I have to say that when the first station answered my CQ on CW I was as nervous as a hen guarding her biddies in a pit full of alligators. I wanted more power, and I soon built a transmitter with a 6146 tube running around 60 watts. As a Novice, you were allowed to run 75 watts input power. Using Ohms law ($P=EI$); a milliamp meter in series with the RF choke, and measuring the current draw to the 6146 tube using approximately 600 volts DC would give me the input power. I still have some of the QSL cards from back then. I probably had more fun that first year working CW as a Novice than any time since.

In 1956 I was able to upgrade to a General class license and drop the N from my call. The FCC office was located in VA, but several times a year they would come to Winston Salem and give tests for all amateur and commercial radio licenses. They had a tape recorder, which was set up in the middle of the room. They gave everyone a pencil and sheet of paper; the tape recorder was started and ran about 5 minutes at 13 words per minute. The text was a simulated amateur QSO. The papers were then collected and graded. If you passed, you were invited to send CW at 13 wpm from text they provided. If you passed the sending test, you were finally given the written test, which consisted of 100 questions. No multiple choices here, you were asked to draw several schematic diagrams of transmitter circuits with components and values of resistance and capacitance. The circuits were of oscillators, class B modulators, tank circuits, etc. Some of the questions related to operating, frequencies, and rules and regulations. I failed the first time but passed on the next session.

Once you had the General class, it opened up a whole new world of frequencies and modes of operation such as AM, Teletype and that new mode called SSB but there were still limits on your area of operation within the bands. You could only operate on the entire band if you had the Extra Class license. That was a challenge, with a 20 wpm code test and a much more technical written test consisting of just 50 questions. It was probably 15 years before I passed the Extra, but in the meantime they came out with the Advanced class license which required the 13 wpm code speed and 50 multiple choice set of questions that were less technical and more about operating rules and regulations. I never took the Advanced test, but went for the Extra, and after two tries I got the Extra class license

How to Become a Ham...cont.

and all the privileges that went with it.

Amateur Radio has come a long way since then, and drastic changes have taken place. CW is no longer required, and while I personally think that was a huge mistake, it has opened up a hobby to a lot of folks who would not be hams today if changes had not taken place, and that's a good thing. On the technical side, we now have transceivers that weigh less than five pounds that outperform those 50 lb. receivers and 300 lb. rack mount transmitters you see showing up at ham-fests year after year.

It seems to me that Morse code is on the upswing, and I would urge you to try it. It takes a little effort and is sort of like learning to type by touch. It does open up a new mode of communications, and I am sure you would be as excited and nervous on your first CQ as I was 59 years ago.

Some other thoughts:

Now I'll switch hats and invite every member of W4BFB to join the Hamfest Committee. It doesn't matter if you have been a member for 50 years or 5 days, we need your help and input. It is not hard and no one will twist your arm to be on a committee. Just sitting in on a meeting and listening to the Committee Chairmen report on the progress of getting programs, forums, dealer commitment, postage, flyers, tables or whatever; there will always be problems to solve and questions to be answered, and you might just have a great idea no one has thought of. You could be the one that could get the Chief of the FCC to visit our hamfest, or some other idea that could appeal to the masses and create a great turnout. The profits from past hamfests allowed this club to put up a network of repeaters, buy radios and antennas for our club station, antennas, trailers, and a camper for field day and emergencies, Discovery Place and donations to the Red Cross, MS and many others. We really do need your input and help.

And last but not least John, NV4A, needs some articles for the newsletter. Most any subject will do, and John will do the spell check and editing for you. Anybody else who wants to share their early ham experiences?or even have some really exotic QSL cards you'd like to scan and send to John?

73,

Earl Fortner, K4KAY

Election of Officers Nov. 24



The annual election of Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society officers and directors is scheduled for 7:30 PM on Nov 24th, during a MARS business meeting held immediately before the regular monthly club meeting. All members of MARS who are current 2009 members may vote in the election during the business meeting if they have not already cast an electronic or proxy ballot in the election. Kevin Keyes K4YYD and Mary Hunt N4MH are the Nomination and Election committee and responsible for the election process this year.

All MARS officers are elected yearly. Either 3 or 2 (alternately) of the 5 MARS directors are elected to two year terms. This year 3 directorships are open for election.

This year the slate of candidates for office is:

MARS 2010 Ballot

President



Vice President



Secretary

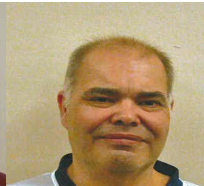


Treasurer



K14CXO – Jodie Rowland W4GRW – Bill Fisher K4GKK– Andy Hawkins KA3VVJ – Tom Hunt

Board of Directors: 3 open seats—Two year term



Ben Antanaitis

Bill Harding

Barry May

Joe Mayer

Roger Meyers

WB2RHM

K4AHK

KC4SSS

K4JMS

WA2TKS

Official MARS 2010 Proxy Ballot -

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society- -W4BFB--

Notice of Annual Business Meeting to Elect 2010 MARS Officers and Directors

On Tuesday November 24th, 2009, 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:

___Andy Hawkins, K4GKK ___ (write-in) _____

Treasurer:

___Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ ___ (write-in) _____

Directors: Three (3) 2 year Directorships:

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

___ Ben Antanaitis, WB2RHM
___ Bill Harding, K4AHK
___ Barry May, KC4SSS
___ Joe Mayer, K4JMS
___ Roger Meyers, WA2TKS
___ (write-in) _____
___ (write-in) _____
___ (write-in) _____

To submit a paper proxy, you may present one at the meeting, or mail one to the MARS Election Co-Chair: **Kevin Keyes, K4YYD, 12200 Parks Farm Lane, Charlotte, NC 28277**

OR using email: BALLOT@W4BFB.org

NOTE: ***Mailed or electronic Proxies must be received before Monday November 23rd***

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ CALLSIGN: _____

*You may use this notice as a written proxy, by printing it, signing it, and returning it to **K4YYD** 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 cast an email proxy: you may send an email containing your name, callsign, plus the names of your choices for positions to: BALLOT@W4BFB.org

73, MARS Nomination and Election Committee

MARS HOLIDAY PARTY - Dec 5th

Sign-up soon!



The MARS Holiday Party will be held on Saturday, December 5th at [East Baptist Church](#) 6850 Monroe Road, Charlotte. This is where MARS meets each month for meetings. Join us any time after 5:00 PM and we plan to eat around 6:00 PM.

Reservations are \$5.00 per person with those under 12 free. We also ask that each group bring at least one dish or dessert to share. You can sign up for the party at our club meeting on November 24 or send an email to party@w4bfb.org. Due to possible space limitations, *make your reservations early* and please let us know the total number of attendees in your group.

The club will furnish the meat, drinks and the paper goods. Listed below is our menu. Please select the item you would like to bring and email it to party@w4bfb.org. The dish that you bring should serve 12 people or more. Anyone with special dietary needs, please take them into consideration when you are planning your side dish or dessert. Sugar-free beverages will be available.

Roast/Smoked Turkey – Club furnishes

Fried Chicken – Club furnishes

Dressing – 3 Mary Hunt

Gravy – 3

Mashed Potatoes or Potato Casserole – 2

Macaroni & Cheese – 2

Vegetable Dishes – 6 Shelley Eaves – Mixed Vegetables

Salads – 3

Cranberry Sauce – 3

Rolls & Butter – 3

Desserts

MARS HOLIDAY PARTY, Cont.



If you have questions, or need more information, contact Mary Hunt at 704-948-6006 or send an email to party@w4bfb.org.

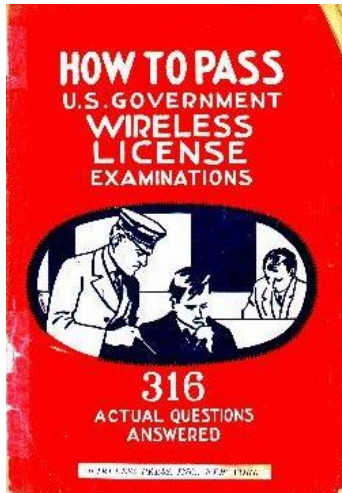
73,

Mary Hunt and Jodie Rowland, Holiday Party Co-chairperson

MARS Membership Dues Reminder



Your 2010 MARS Membership term begins January 1st. **Your 2010 Dues are due BEFORE January 1st.** This year EVERYONE must fill out a renewal form to provide MARS roster permissions! Go to http://www.w4bfb.org/pdf_files/application-renewal-form.pdf to download the new renewal form. Then either mail in your 2010 dues or see MARS Treasurer Tom Hunt - KA3VVJ at a club meeting before 01/01/10.



V.E. Testing Session Nov. 21st

The Mecklenburg ARRL VE Team will be conducting an Exam Session for all classes of FCC Amateur Radio License on Saturday Nov 21st, beginning at 9 AM at the East Baptist church 3850 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 8:30 AM, 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 CSCs, plus the 2009 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 or call 704-948-7373 if you need additional information or visit <http://www.w4bfb.org/tests.htm>

November Board Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM, November 3rd 2009 .

Attendees included:

Jodie Rowland- KI4CXO, Ben Antanitis-WB2RHM, Mary Hunt-N4MH, Tom Hunt-KA3VVJ, Bill Fisher-W4GRW, Kevin Keyes-K4YYD, Roger Meyers-WA2TKS, Andy Hawkins-K4GKK. Guest: Gene Merklein-KB9JYC.

Absent: Jeff Blythe-KA4WYC.

The minutes for Board meeting of October 6th 2009 were accepted as presented in the October Newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: Tom presented the accounts report. The report was accepted by the board. There was some discussion about the Time Trial donation and keeping a separate accounting of these funds for repeater replacement.

Vice Presidents report: Due to unforeseen circumstances the speaker for the October meeting cancelled at the last moment. The November meeting was to be the auction, however this has been moved to the January meeting and the board of directors election and a speaker to be announced will be the November meeting.

Secretary's Report: Not available, as Jeff was absent from the meeting.

Committee Reports:

Nominating Committee: Mary N4MH and Kevin K4YYD have provided a slate of officers for 2010.

They are:

President:	Jodie Rowland, KI4CXO
Vice President	Bill Fisher, W4GRW
Secretary:	Andy Hawkins, K4GKK
Treasurer	Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ
Board: (3 Positions Open)	
	Ben Antanitis, WB2RHM
	Roger Meyers, WA2TKS
	Barry May, KC4SSS
	Bill Harding, K4AHK
	Joe Mayer, KJ4JWM

The Board has accepted the slate of officers as presented.



November Board Minutes, cont.

Voting will be available via e-mail through the website www.w4bfb.org , via proxy with the form provided in this month's newsletter or via ballot at the November club meeting.

Repeater Committee: On November 1st 2009, the 146.940 repeater went off the air during the evening 2m emergency net. It was determined to be the power supply and a backup one was installed by Earl, K4KAY and Jeff, KA4WYC. A replacement commercial power supply will be purchased and installed at the site.

Public Service Committee: The Lung Strong event held on October 17th was a great success. The MS150 bike ride was also a great success for 2009, however the MS Society has announced a return to the beach ride for September 2010. Mary, N4MH will be the liaison with the MS Society.

Membership Committee: Tom, KA3VVJ, reports that we have had 54 renewals for membership for the 2010 year, a very encouraging sign.

Equipment Committee: Andy, K4GKK reported that two on-going projects are currently being discussed. A hard copy CD/DVD of Microsoft Office Suite will be acquired and provided to the newsletter editor.

Donations Committee: Kevin, K4YYD, there have been no new donations to date.

Net Managers Report: John, WB2NHQ has provided updated information that will be included on the club web page. A suggestion was made that he could provide a monthly report of net activity to be included in the newsletter.

The MARS Christmas Party was discussed, and it was concluded that it will be held at the Belle Johnson Community Center in Pineville, NC on December 5th 2009.

Further details will be in the upcoming newsletter.

No other business was discussed, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM Nov. 3rd 2009.

Respectfully Submitted by Andy Hawkins, K4GKK

Secretary's Note: Due to a scheduling conflict discovered after the board meeting was held, the Christmas Party will not be at the Belle Johnson Center in Pineville, it will be held at East Baptist Church, the same location as our club meetings.

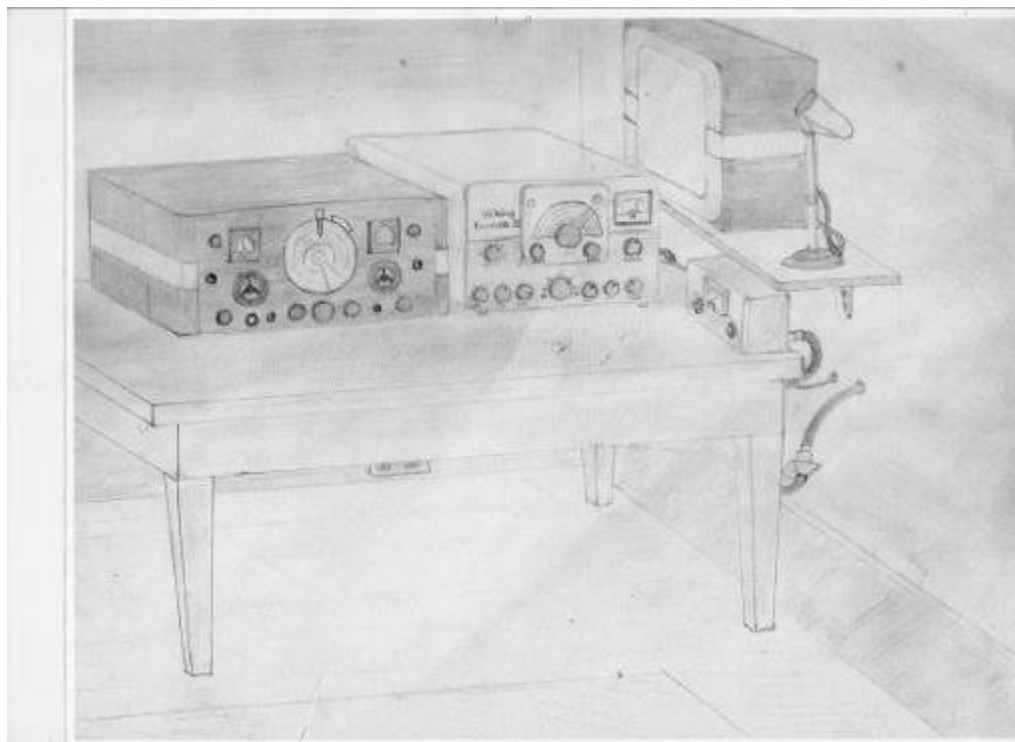
Request for Articles ...again

I'm still looking for more articles, outlines for articles, ideas for articles, pictures of your shack, images of interesting QSL cards you've received over the years, or even pictures of your pets. You can send articles/ideas/email to me at W4BFBEditor@W4BFB.org. So, please send me something. And thanks to Earl, K4KAY for this month's article. (...which really brought back some memories for me ...check out the sketch of my 1963 station.)

Also, last month I forgot to give credit to Richard, K4KRW for all his hard work as the previous Newsletter editor. Without his help and all the great work he did, this would be a lot harder. Thanks Richard!

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

Vice President

Bill Fisher, W4GRW, w4grw@w4bfb.org

Secretary

Jeff Blythe, KA4WYC, ka4wyc@w4bfb.org

Treasurer

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Kevin Keyes, K4YYD, k4yyd@w4bfb.org

Roger Meyers WA2TKS wa2tk@w4bfb.org

Newsletter Editor

John Forbus, NV4A, W4bfbeditor@w4bfb.org



**Mecklenburg Amateur
Radio Society, Inc**

Newsletter Editor:
John Forbus, NV4A
4586 Lynwood Rd.
Sherrills Ford, NC 28673

w4bfbeditor@w4bfb.org