



MECKLENBURG AMATEUR
RADIO SOCIETY, INC

MARS News

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A letter from the President

Hello W4BFB Members,

I hope that everyone's enjoying the fall season. The entire month of October has been and will continue to be busy for MARS.

First of all I would like to mention that a lot of us went to the Rock Hill Hamfest on October 6th. Jeff KA4WYC, Ben WB2RHM, and I set up a W4BFB space in the fleamarket area and sold some tickets for the 2008 Charlotte Hamfest. We decided to start selling tickets a little earlier this year at various area club meetings and hamfests. Our hope is that we can sell a lot more pre-registration tickets than we did last year. Would you like to help? Get some pre-registration tickets from John White WB2NHQ and sell them at the club meetings you attend. Wouldn't that be a great way to meet people and help the hamfest succeed?



As you can tell, we are already getting excited about our 2008 Hamfest, scheduled for March 8th and 9th of 2008. If you haven't yet come out to one of our Hamfest planning meetings, please join us at the November meeting. *Give us your input on what you would like to see and hear at the forums at the Hamfest.* We currently still have some open positions to fill for activities that make 'hamfest weekend' happen. For example, this year we are calling our 'wandering hamfest hosts': "Yellow Jacks". You know who they are, they are the club members wearing our yellow hamfest vests and walking around the hamfest area observing and answering questions. We need to staff these 2-hour shift positions with enough personnel to patrol the hamfest exhibit halls for the entire time the hamfest is in operation. Commit to just two hours of serving as a Yellow Jack and you earn an admission ticket to the hamfest. We really need help from all of our members to make the 2008 hamfest successful.

On October 16th we participated in the McGuire nuclear drill. As usual, it was a great opportunity to find better ways to be prepared to serve the community in the case of a local emergency. Make sure you check out John's article about the drill later in this issue.

On October 20th we participated in JOTA (Jamboree on the Air) with the girl scouts. We set up stations in North Carolina and South Carolina for this event. This was a wonderful opportunity expose today's youth to everything that we love about the amateur radio service.

Letter from the President (cont.)

The next October event we will be helping out with is the annual GeekFest at CPCC Levine Campus in Matthews. On October 31st, we want to see some of our members out there at the college helping us set up the RV and several of our stations. GeekFest gives MARS an opportunity to show the students, faculty, and guests how interesting our technology is and how much fun Amateur Radio can actually be. So plan on coming out to GeekFest; it's Halloween and we are going to have fun.

Please let's not forget it's the time of year for club elections. This year, our present club Treasurer Greg KG4IOE cannot run again for that office, so *it is vital* to the club operation that someone volunteers to accept a nomination for the position of club treasurer. If you would like to run for any of our Officer positions or our 3 open Board positions, please contact Kevin KI4KFS or Ben WB2RHM to let them know. There's something for everyone to do at W4BFB. All you need to do is step up and take the opportunity to give back to the club in return for what it gives to you. Everyone has a role in making our club be all that it can be.

Guess what's coming up on December 8th from 6PM till 9PM? We will be having the MARS Holiday Party for all of our Members and their Guest at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church 3601 Central Ave. Charlotte N.C. The cost is \$5.00 per person and children 12 and under can attend for free. The club will be supplying the meats such as Ham, Turkey, Chicken and all we ask of the members is to bring a side item of their choice or a dessert and a non-alcoholic beverage to drink with their meal. We need you to RSVP as soon as possible. We will be passing around a sheet to sign up at the club meeting on October 30th. We will be having a DJ at the Holiday Party to entertain us. So, after we eat, we may want to shake a leg, as us older folks say. Lets make this a great Party... come out and have fun with us. It's going to be a Blast...

73,

Jodie KI4CXO



September and October Club Meetings

We had a very nice September Club meeting. The club was honored to have John Covington (W4CC) as the featured speaker. John is a former president of the MARS club and also was our ARRL section manager prior to Tim Slay taking the position. John gave a very interesting program on the National Traffic System (NTS).

Unfortunately, attendance was a little light compared to recent meetings. Considering the number of new participants in the amateur radio service, it was hoped that we would have a few more people show up. While traffic handling might not seem as glamorous as some other aspects of the amateur radio service, it is an extremely important skill. This is a skill that you will need to be proficient in when you are called upon to perform the very service that is the primary justification for the existence of the amateur radio service.



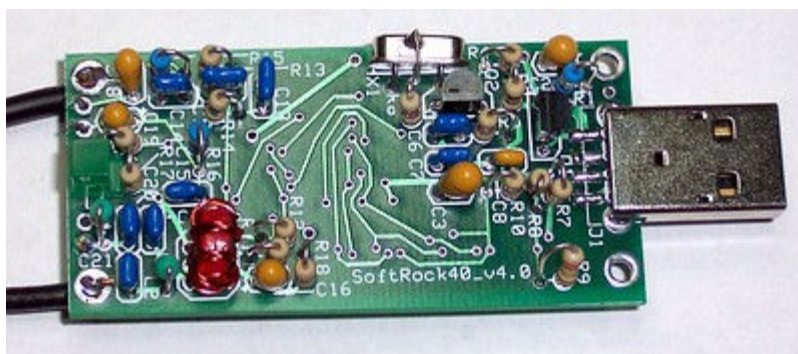
John Covington Presenting NTS

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<action>
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</action>
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(A little software developer humor)

John gave a wonderful overview of how NTS works. He talked about all of the various nets (local, section, regional and area) and how traffic makes it through all of them to arrive at their destination. John talked about formatting the message. He talked a lot about and answered a lot of questions about the most difficult part of handling message traffic (composing and communicating the message in such a way to insure that the word count is correct). John made up a couple of sample messages to show newer hams how it is done. I think everyone there (even the old pros) learned something about NTS that they did not previously know. Thanks John for a wonderful presentation.

Members, when you show up to the October meeting, the featured presenter will again be John Covington (No, we did not ask him to come back and give a makeup NTS presentation). 😊 He just happens to have another presentation for the club. And, it is about one of the more interesting diversions you can find in the amateur radio hobby. John will be talking about QRP radio kit building. He will be bringing some of the radios he has built over the years to the meeting. Members, you may want to bring your favorite QRP kit so you can compare notes with other members after John's presentation. This meeting should be a lot of fun. Thank you John for once again taking the opportunity to 'give back'.



Richard (K4KRW) and Jeff (KA4WYC)



MARS 2007 Holiday Party

Even though it's only October and the temperature is still hanging around the 90's, the Entertainment and Holiday Party Committee is happy to announce that a lot of the details of the 2007 MARS Holiday Party have been set. 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 our 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 preference in advance so we can ensure we have enough for everyone.

To make this easier for all, Jeff KA4WYC will be circulating a Holiday Party Sign-up sheet and collecting the fees during the next two club meetings. The sheet will allow you to let us know how many of your family members will be attending and your meat preferences. It will also allow us to let you know what food items are needed, so you can sign-up for one to bring. Updates will be sent out via the reflector so everyone will know what items are still needed.

You can also contact the committee members with ideas and suggestions by sending an email to:
party@w4bfb.org?subject=2007 MARS Holiday Party

73, Jodie KI4CXO and Jeff KA4WYC

McGuire Nuclear Exercise

It was Tuesday October 16. I had known about what was coming for a few weeks. It wasn't the "real thing big one", but the McGuire Nuclear Exercise was upon us. The challenge was: how do we put together an adequate response to a communication request, on a typical work day? Of course, we can do it by calling on a dedicated group who will volunteer their time and show our community that ARES can be relied upon.



The Emergency Operation Center was activated with many agencies represented: Meck Emergency Management, CMPD, CFD, MEDIC, Carolinas Hospital System, Presbyterian Hospital, Meck Sheriff department, DSS, Charlotte-Meck Schools, Salvation Army, Red Cross, and FEMA. The list of participating agencies is long and includes most of whom we consider to be our Meck ARES served agencies. The EOC was full of technology; laptops on the LAN for everyone and large status screens projected on the walls. Everyone there had telephone service provided via VOIP (voice over IP). How would you like to be that LAN administrator? Now you can see where we fit, with our backup emergency communications not depending on any of that technology.

After a Monday of preparation and checking of our equipment, Randy KE4JXF spent his Tuesday with MEDIC. Jim N5RTG put two new stations on the air at Carolinas Medical Main campus, the first we had heard these new stations participate in a county event. Keith KI4SDO was at the Red Cross Disaster Center where simulated evacuation shelter preparations were made. Brian KF4VOO and John WB2NHQ were 'kinda busy' at the EOC with packet and voice operations using the bottleneck of a single mag-mount antenna on a roof air duct. Dave KD4ITI was our packet and adjacent county liaison at Discovery Place. George N3BW was HF liaison to the Tarheel Emergency Net, and part of the scenario was transferring command and control to our state Emergency Management. (Have you been reading those FEMA ICS online courses?) Jodie KI4CXO and Dan KG4ENP were our net controls at the Red Cross 'BFB clubroom.

A conservative estimate of around 70 Ham-hours were volunteered in just a few hours of clock time, not counting those other stations who checked in with our 146.94 resource net. It's really comforting to hear that Hams can "be around" when something happens.

Radio waves and simulated nuclear winds don't stop at the county line. During the day we exchanged messages with not only our own served agencies, but also most of our adjacent counties. It was good to hear from Hams in Cabarrus, Stanly, Iredell, Lincoln, and Gaston who were also representing their county EOCs, Fire Departments, etc. About half of our traffic was sent and received using packet radio, the rest by phone.

So finally here, a BIG THANK YOU to all for your time and dedication. Get your batteries charged again though because we'll do this again during the North Carolina Simulated Emergency Test coming real soon on November 3.

73,

John WB2NHQ, Meck EC



**An Eimac 3-500z
bringing great joy
to it's owner.**



Wall Street Journal - The Other QST?

Ladies and Gentleman,

I'm certain that recently while researching the financials for Yaesu/Vertex, Kenwood or ICOM or maybe checking on a futures price for Eimac 3-500z's you ran across a very interesting article on the Wall Street Journal web site.

The Wall Street Journal had a great article about Chuck Adams (K7QO) and Morse code. Chuck is very proficient with Morse code. He can copy at speeds of up to 140 words per minute (8th fastest in the world). He is doing some very interesting things like releasing novels such as 'War of the Worlds' in Morse code. The Fists club is even mentioned in the article. Read it if you haven't already.

Here is the link.

<http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB119161604206850468.html>

73, Jeff - KA4WYC

Ham Fest Meeting - November 5th

The next meeting of the 2008 Charlotte Hamfest committee, will be on Monday November 5th. at 7PM.

The meeting will be held in the classroom at the Red Cross Disaster Services building.

The Red Cross Disaster Services Center is the brick building on the corner of Park Rd and Ordermore, 2 doors up from the main Red Cross building towards town. The parking lot is right behind this building.

All committee members and all those interested in helping plan and participate in the 2008 Charlotte Hamfest are urged to attend.

73, Ben - WB2RHM

It's Been a Year!

It has been a year since I took on the role of newsletter editor. I just want to thank all of you who have offered your kind words of support during this year. I am so happy that you are enjoying the newsletters. I also especially want to thank those of you who have contributed articles over the past year. You are the true life blood of this newsletter. While I do write some articles myself, without your contributions this newsletter would not be possible. Thanks for the interesting things you do and thanks for sharing it with the rest of us! Also, my sincere thanks to Jodie and the Board for their contributions and support.

73, Richard - K4KRW

Jamboree on the Air

The 50th anniversary of Jamboree on the Air went very nicely for the W4BFB club and the local scouts who participated. John (WB2NHQ) and Richard (K4KRW) held the JOTA session at the Girl Scout headquarters for the Hornet's Nest council. Paul (AD4IE) was kind enough to show up early to help us with setting up. The three of us had all antennas in the air by 11:00 am. That left us an hour to get the radios operational and make other preparations.

We expected to be busy between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm. My children showed up at about 12:00pm. And, sure enough, our first scouts showed up about 12:30 pm. We had somewhere around 30 scouts show up at our site. The majority of them were with Brownie troops. The rest of them were young Girl Scouts. They were mostly somewhere around the 5th or 6th grade.

We talked with the scouts, leaders and parents about the Amateur Radio Service. They seemed very intrigued with long distance communication over HF. Unfortunately, it wasn't a very good day for us on the lower bands. I talked briefly with a station near Houston, TX. QSB and high noise levels made communication very difficult. JOTA is an international event. Interestingly, one of the first stations we heard on HF was a JOTA station operating out of Prague, Czech Republic.

The children had a great time talking to other scouts on the local repeaters. We talked to scouts at three or four other locations around the local area. Jeff (KA4WYC) and Jodie (KI4CXO) were running the JOTA session at Camp Catawba. Our scouts talked to theirs quite a bit that afternoon. The usual questions and answers about age, troops, schools, brothers and sisters, pets as well as many other things traveled on our magic radio waves from site to site. We tried to call Tim's (W4YN) Boy Scout troop on the Scout repeater. I imagine they were having fun on HF. Their troop has a great setup.

The kids also had a great time playing with the code practice oscillators. A couple of them pounded out their name for me in Morse code. They actually did a pretty good job. John also had a worksheet for them where they could decode a Morse code message.

The adults seemed pretty interested in our hobby. While none of them got on the air, they did ask a lot of good questions. Questions included: "How does your radio catch the signal coming from the other radio". One asked "When you hear a signal from a far away station, how do you make sure your reply goes back to that station." So, obviously, a bit of explaining was needed. And, of course, that is exactly what this day is about! So, John and I had a great time.

I decided early Saturday morning to bring the next Carolina EOS balloon payload to the event. I placed it up and out of the way and had it transmit SSTV images of everything going on. I had my FT-897 and my laptop there to receive and decode it. They seemed to think that was pretty interesting. The sound of the SSTV signal really got their attention.

Around 2:30 or 3:00 pm, Kevin (AI4YQ) showed up. He helped us work with the scouts for the remainder of the time that they were there. He also helped us break down everything after they had all left. We finished packing things up at about 5:00 pm. It all seemed to



John (WB2NHQ) helps a Brownie get on the air



Claudia talks to Jodie (KI4CXO) and her visitors

Jamboree on the Air (Cont)

go by so fast. It was a very nice day.

73,

Richard - K4KRW

**SSTV Image from the future
CarolinaEOS2 payload.
(Yep!, I'll do anything
for a good newsletter
picture)**



Board Minutes

Jodie started the meeting @ 7:00 Present were Jodie, Ben, Jeff, Greg, Kevin, Paul, and as a guest, Earl K4KAY – Chairman of the Repeater Committee. John WB2NHQ as the EC & from the Equipment Committee. Don and Bill came in later.

Jodie welcomed guests and stated we will be going to the Rock Hill Hamfest to sell Charlotte Hamfest tickets and parking passes.

Greg gave a report that the tax filing has been sent to the IRS. He also gave a Financial Report. He stated he received notice from BB&T that we could get a check card. This will help future Boards for paying bills.

Jeff gave a report on the Membership. 149 are listed on Roster. There won't be any dues collected until December 2008.

Don came in stated that the next meeting will be by John W4CC on QRP and kit building.

Committee Reports:

Repeater Committee - Chairman Earl gave a report on the status of the 146.940 repeater. We are using the backup controller. He sent back the 'Club' controller to the manufacturer. Earl is proposing to purchase a BACK UP VHF repeater for about \$1,100.00; this is a Kenwood, 25-watt repeater. He was asked several questions, which he commented on. Earl was given approval to purchase the repeater.

John talked about the SERA Membership. It needs to be updated and John has the current info for all our repeaters.

Bill showed up.

John continued with the Equipment Committee. He had a list of all our equipment; both stuff in the clubroom or at radio sites, or at our storage place, also places like packet nodes. John had some pieces missing and we are looking for them. John gave a brief account of our equipment. John then continued with Nuclear Drill on Oct 16 @ 7 or 8 AM, then it wraps up by noon or 1. SET is the first Saturday, Nov. 3rd,



Board Minutes (Cont.)

from 8 – to Noon.

Ben – said the VHF contest went well. The November contests need someone to run this event. Geek fest will be on Oct 31st at the Levine Campus.



Kevin came up with a list of those who can run for office. He has called several people, which many had other time constraints. We talked about others, but so far no one has responded. Kevin and Ben will continue looking for nominees. Several current Board Members have agreed to be incumbents.

Jodie brought up we will have the Christmas Party at a Members' church at St. Andrews Episcopal Church on 3601 Central Ave, near Eastway. She handed out a sheet of food selections for the Party. She passed out a menu of chicken, ham and turkey. Members will bring side items, like desserts, salads and slaw, etc. We will need to know what each member can bring and how many will come. Ben said he could set up a reflector for signing up. Jimmy Huntley with Bass FX will be the DJ. With a selection 40's and up style of music. It was asked to send your replies to Jeff via the reflector.

Jeff asked that we hold off on the Membership packet till next month because of time restraints. Several Board Members had brought comments.

Bill didn't have info for the door lock yet.

Bill is to give Ben the Nye Viking tuner and he will bring the tuner to the Rock Hill Hamfest to sell on the Club Table.

Greg gave out keys to the file cabinet to Jodie, and Ben.

Jodie asked if there were any other business, having none Paul made a motion and Jeff seconded. We adjourned at 8:50

73, Jeff - KA4WYC

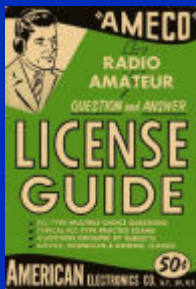
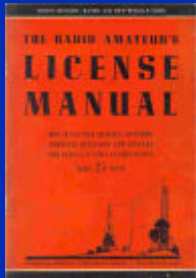
Riley Hollingsworth Retiring - January 3rd

I was just about to mail this newsletter when I received an email from ARRL stating that Riley Hollingsworth (KZ4DH) is going to retire on January 3rd. Riley has been the FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement since 1998. This is certainly the biggest news that members of the Amateur Radio Service have heard since the dropping of CW and the accompanying band allocation changes.

Riley has been a very visible figure while heading up the FCC's enforcement efforts. I was not a ham in 1998 when Riley was appointed. But, apparently, at that time enforcement had been almost nonexistent for about a three year period. We have been very fortunate to have someone in his position who truly loves the Amateur Radio Service. I hope we are so fortunate when the next Special Counsel is appointed.

His love for the service was quite apparent in his "you've got that big knob, use it" speech he gave at Dayton this year. If you haven't read a transcript of it or heard a recording of it, you need to.

73, Richard - K4KRW



VE Test Session - November 17

New ULS Registration Requirement!!!

The Mecklenburg ARRL VE Team will be conducting an exam session for all classes of FCC Amateur Radio License on Saturday November 17th beginning at 9AM 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 8:30AM, 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 CSCEs, and the 2007-testing fee of \$14.00.

Walk-ins are welcome, but we would appreciate it if you register by sending an email to N4MH. You may call 704-948-7373 if you need additional information.

ULS Requirement

NOTE: the FCC will not process applications for new or upgraded licenses UNTIL the applicant has registered in the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS)!

(Hint: If you find that you have an 'FRN number' already printed on the face of your current ham license, you have already registered with the ULS!)

Extract from: *Instructions for NVEC Quick-Form 605 Application for Amateur Operator/Primary Station License* <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/605ins.html>

Supplying this form to a Volunteer Examiner (VE), Volunteer Examiner Team or to a Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) - When using this form, you are required to provide your Taxpayer ID Number (TIN)--which is your Social Security Number (SSN)--or an FCC-assigned Federal Registration Number (10 digits beginning with a "0") on this application. Federal Registration Numbers are assigned by the FCC's ULS Registration system as soon as you are registered in the ULS. If you register electronically, you can immediately view on line your Federal Registration Number. If you register by mail (see below), once FCC processes your registration you can then phone FCC and obtain your FCC-assigned Federal Registration Number. Once you have it, you may use your FCC-assigned Federal Registration Number in place of your SSN for all future Amateur license applications.

Applicants who have not yet registered in ULS or Foreign applicants - may still sit for and take examinations for a new Amateur license, or to upgrade an existing Amateur license with the understanding that no action will be taken by FCC on any application until after the applicant has registered in the ULS. Not being registered in the ULS will cause a delay in the filing of the application. Failure to notify the coordinating VEC of subsequent registration in the ULS, or failure to register, will result in the application being placed on hold until this FCC requirement has been met. Foreign applicants (not eligible for a US Social Security Number)

VE Testing Session (Cont.)

must register on-line as exempt by selecting the reason "the individual is foreign" and a Federal Registration Number will be issued.

Registering in ULS - can be accomplished electronically via the FCC web at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/> or by obtaining, completing and forwarding the FCC's ULS Registration form (FCC Form 606) to the FCC by fax (717-338-2693) or by mail to: FCC, 1270 Fairfield Rd, Gettysburg PA 17325-7245. FCC Form 606 can be obtained via the FCC web at <http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html> or via FTP at <ftp://ftp.fcc.gov/pub/Forms/Form606/>, or by fax at 202-418-0177 (request Form 000606). The FCC Forms Distribution Center will accept orders by calling 800-418-3676.

73,

Ben - WB2RHM

Link Your Food Lion MVP Card for W4BFB

If you are one of our newer members, you may not know that you can link your MVP card to benefit the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society. Our club has an opportunity to earn up to \$350 per quarter through this program.

Note, you don't have to be a member of MARS to link your MVP card.

Here's the web address to begin the process:

<https://www.foodlion.com/IntheCommunity/ShopandShare/secure/RegisterMVPCards.asp>

1. Click on "Select Organization"
2. Select "NC" from the state drop down box
3. Select "Charlotte" from the city drop down box
4. Select "Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society" from the organization drop down box
5. Click "Add MVP Cards" and follow the directions. Be sure to input all 12 numbers on the back of your MVP card.

73

Kevin - KI4KFS



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, wb2rh@w4bfb.org

Kevin Keyes, KI4KFS, ki4kfs@w4bfb.org

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