MECKLENBURG AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

Mars News

September 2012

Prez Says for September 2012

Hello fellow members,

Well I am back and somewhat rested, though I seem to have hit the ground in a full run.....
England and France are still there and have not yet been washed away with the heavy rains they have suffered through this summer. I did manage a little Public Relations by giving a slide show to Gloucester Amateur Radio and Electronics Club; I did talk about our club and the W4BFB website. All in all it was a very successful evening with about 40 amateurs attending from around the local area.

By the time this reaches your e-mail inbox or "snail mail" mail box, the club will have completed this year's major public service event by helping with the Multiple Sclerosis Society's MS150 Break Away to the beach. The membership supports the ride in many ways, as Rest Stop communications, as Situation

Andy Hawkins

team liaisons, and as SAG vehicle support. All of these positions are controlled via net control which this year is provided by the SC Hearts Communications team with help from a couple of our members. If you have not thought about helping out with this event, or any of the others we support throughout the year, you may want to give it some second thoughts; our support is very much appreciated by these organizations, and it is a fun and fulfilling and good for the soul.

This month's meeting will be the second part of the Skywarn training, this is a newly revamped Advanced

Skywarn program. The meeting time will be 7:30pm at the East Baptist Church on Monroe Road. This program is not as long as the Basic Skywarn was earlier in the summer, so we should be out at a reasonable hour.

October's meeting will be Part 2 of the Packet Communications put on by Seth O'Neil, KF4LLF.

I wish everyone a great month, and look forward to seeing you all at the meeting.

73's

Andy K4GKK

Packet Radio is ALIVE in NC/SC!

Hello Amateurs!

I'm writing to encourage your participation in PROMOTING packet radio as a viable means of communication in our area! We have been working very hard to reestablish many of the links of the past that had fallen offline or been removed due to lack of maintenance or inactivity. Have you connected lately to any nodes and pulled up a list of available NODES using the "N" command? The list has been growing by leaps and bounds from month to month! Having plenty of nodes in the Carolinas gives our region the ability to offer services to the amateur radio community that they may not otherwise be able to access. Bulletin Board Systems, DX Clusters, Personal Mailboxes, direct keyboard conversations, WinLink RF-to-email access, NTS message delivery, and World-Wide Chat servers are waiting at your fingertips. We need YOU to use the systems that are there specifically for hams to enjoy!

We packeteers are looking for folks of all ages who are willing to dedicate a small amount of time and maybe a corner of the ham shack to running a packet radio station... New software tools have been developed/upgraded over the past few years that are allowing MORE features! There are several good programs like Outpost PMM for packet with built in NTS forms, ICS 213 forms, or try WinPack Version 6.8 terminal program. Try a software system called BPQ32, where your computer and radio can serve the area as a 24/7 Network Node promoting faster and more efficient connectivity of stations around you to much of the available packet radio world.

Join up with the Yahoo® Users Group for BPQ32 to learn more about operating your own node: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BPQ32/

Interested in other Packet Radio software names?

Visit this site for a large list of different software names for Packet Radio:

http://www.dxzone.com/catalog/Software/Packet/

Don't own a TNC for packet radio? In many cases today, a TNC is no longer needed. Website creator Ralph Milnes, NM5RM, has created pages online describing how to use your sound card or add an external sound card adapter to your PC and get connected to packet radio. Then, choose your favorite packet radio program and get on the air! The more end-users we have, the more fun you'll have.

Problem solved. Check out: http://www.soundcardpacket.org/

For those that used to enjoy the bulletins on the Charlotte BBS, the CLTBBS:W4BFB-9 system has received UPGRADES and is always running. NEW! Weather conditions beacon out every 15 minutes on 145.010, 145.090, 446.500, and 223.400 MHz packet frequencies. You do not need to directly connect to the BBS to view the weather updates. Just tune your radio to the frequency, turn on your terminal program and wait to see the digital beacon. Currently, most end-user traffic is on 145.090 MHz.

Many hams are familiar with the term DX Cluster. Those of you who aren't familiar may wonder what such a thing is. A DX Cluster is a call sign relay system that reports DX frequency coordinates where an amateur operator was heard or contacted. These reports are sent out by spotters (users) of the system so that others around the world can enjoy the same "rare" contact that the spotter just reported! Many of you used to connect to your favorite DX Cluster via packet radio. As time has gone by, most clusters disconnected their radios and converted to online only clusters. Good news! A new DX Cluster is now available to your local area by three modes of connectivity: RF Packet, Telnet, and by Webpage!

If you already use a DX Cluster program by telnet, try connecting to: KF4LLF-8 cluster call, and server address: **kf4llf.no-ip.org port 2300**. This is an AR Cluster Node with an average of 1,000 to 3,000 spotters linked together from around the world!

If you've never used a cluster node, you can use Packet Radio to connect to KF4LLF-8 in Concord, NC. The DX information stream will come right to your keyboard! Currently, RF access to KF4LLF-8 is best connected to on 145.090 or 446.500 MHz No special login required over the air! You might have to "node hop" to connect in, but the closest node to your QTH can most likely connect you to KF4LLF-8. In next month's newsletter, we will provide a list of nodes across the region, their frequencies, and their locations. This will help you to choose which node may be your best "first hop" to get to your destination.

Follow this link to see a packet radio map on our club website: http://w4bfb.org/packet.htm

So I'm thinking that you have thought of all the missing items in your hamshack that would prevent you from becoming "Packet-Active" and finally landed on the expensive one. What?!? You don't have a radio? No problem! Any licensed amateur operator can *still* get on packet radio these days through webpage access! Since the spring of 2012, John Wiseman, G8BPQ has developed new features that allow a packeteer (like you) to access packet radio from virtually ANYWHERE using the internet! There are currently three locations in the Carolinas with HTTP (webpage) access to RF Packet Radio. Web access is available through me (KF4LLF), Bill (AC4ZR), and Bill (W1REP) with connectivity to most local packet frequencies in the area. You connect to Packet Radio using the internet and you'll be able to access BBS's, DX Clusters, World Wide Chat Systems, local user's stations, and most RF nodes in the area! There's only one thing YOU have to do: contact one of the three hams and request a username/password. It's that simple to get access! We look forward to seeing your activity on the air. In the meantime, look for more system updates as we bring Amateur Packet Radio back to life!

Use the following links to learn more about how to navigate packet radio.
Need Help? Beginners link: http://www.choisser.com/packet/
Contact: KF4LLF@gmail.com , AC4ZR@yahoo.com , or near Raleigh W1REP@yahoo.com for local details on how to get connected by webpage access!

73,
DE KF4LLF
Seth O'Neal - Concord, NC W4BFB MARS Club Member (and Active Packeteer!)
http://kf4llf.no-ip.org/

Public Service Committee News from Mary Hunt, N4MH, Chairperson

On September 12 we completed our final CCTTA Event for this year. Those supporting this event were Auford, KU4PF; John, W3SA; Charles, KK4HOK; Bob, K9TMU: Stan, AJ4ZL; Sandy, KK4DAW; Tom,. KA3VVJ and Perry KF4UVL. Also special thanks to Bryan, K4NET who worked at the start line with the computer program filling in for Dr., Bill. I want to say a special THANK YOU to everyone who came out this year and supported the event. This is everyone listed above plus KC4YPB, Dave.

At the end of the event on Wednesday night, we were presented a check for $1,000 from Joe the President of CCTTA for the MARS Repeater Fund.

By the time the newsletter is published this month we will have worked the MS Break Away to the Beach on September 22 and 23. I want to thank everyone in advance for volunteering their time for this event. This is our largest event of the year and we have around 50 ham radio operators that support this event.

MARS CLUB MEETING 8/28/12

The meeting was called to order by Andy – K4GKK at 7:30PM

Visitors:
Mike Long
Vin Capone, K2AMV
Stephanie Comerford
Paul Jones, KK4LEX

Meeting Topic:
John White, WB2NHQ spoke about the DNC and ham radio's role in the communication support for the event. Charlotte hosted the DNC from September 3 – September 6.

Mary Hunt, N4MH introduced Tiffany Milnick of the Greater Carolinas Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society who spoke about the upcoming MS Breakaway to the Beach bike ride from Monroe to Sunset Beach September 22nd and 23rd. The ride will have two start locations; one starting in Monroe and the other starting in Kershaw, SC. The Monroe and Kershaw routes will merge into one route at Coker College in Hartsville, SC. The Columbia Radio Club is providing ham support for the Kershaw route. There are approximately 1000 riders participating in the event. Mary Hunt reported that there are plenty of volunteer opportunities for the MS-150 bike ride. SAGS and rest stop volunteers are especially needed. Go to www.ridemaps.com to sign up to volunteer.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00PM.

Submitted by Kevin Keyes, K4YYD
Secretary MARS

MARS BOARD MEETING 9/018/2012

Meeting called to order at 6:35PM.

Attendees included :

Andy Hawkins – K4GKK; Tom Hunt – KA3VVJ;

Dave Holbrook – KC4YPB; Bryan Ferdinand – K4NET; George Hohas - W4GEH;

John White, WB2NHQ Shelley Eaves, KJ4ATK

Absent:

Barry May – KC4SSS

Bryan proposed the minutes for the Board Meeting of August 7, 2012 be accepted as presented and Dave seconded.

Treasurer's Report:

Tom presented the treasurer's report. Bryan motioned to accept, seconded by Dave and approved by the Board.

Belk Scout Camp on October 13, 2012 for Jamboree on the Air

Vice President's Report:

Shelley reported that the Advanced Skywarn class will take place at this month's club meeting. Seth O'Neal, KF4LLF will present Packet Part II at the October club meeting.

Vice-President Shelly Eaves KJ4ATK

Secretary's Report:

132 total current paid members including 4 life members.

Committee Reports:

Public Service Committee: MS-150 Breakaway to the Beach bike ride from Monroe to Sunset Beach is September 22 & 23. Volunteers are still needed. The start time for both days is 7:30AM

Equipment:

Andy continues to inventory club equipment. Bryan will continue to keep the club's RV trailer at his home until another location can be found.

MARS BOARD MEETING 9/8/2012 *CONT.*

up the event.

Repeater Committee:
Once all of the repeater updates are completed the board will determine who has access to the repeater codes.

Field Day Committee:
The club will set up at Belk Scout Camp on October 13, 2012 for Jamboree on the Air. Don Eaves, KJ4ATJ is heading

Enter-

Old Business: *none*

New Business:

Elections:
2012 club elections will be held at the November club meeting. John and Dave will be responsible for presenting the Board with a slate of candidates by the October club meeting. Kevin will provide John and Dave with the names of eligible candidates.

2 Meter Emergency Net:
Don Eaves, would like to relinquish his position as net manager. The Board will consider those with an interest in taking over this position.

ARES:
John reported that North Carolina ARES has reinstated Mecklenburg County's ARES status.
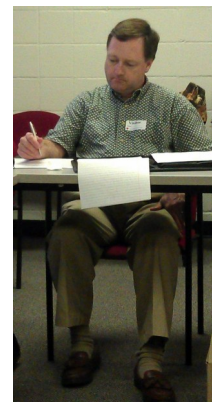
DNC:
The following club members assisted Mecklenburg County ARES with providing backup communication support for the DNC event:
John White, WB2NHQ

2012 club elections will be held at the November club meeting

Submitted by Kevin Keyes, K4YYD Secretary MARS

There being no more business for the evening's meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Club Repeaters

Input	Output	Offset (KHz)	Autopatch	Tone
146.34	146.94	-600	No	118.8
144.69	145.29	-600	No	118.8
144.63	145.23	-600	No	118.8
222.8	224.4	-1600	No	none
449.6	444.6	+5000	No	118.8

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

www.w4bfb.org

W4BFB

Club Officers and Board of Directors

President

Andy Hawkins, K4GKK, k4gkk@w4bfb.org

Vice President

Shelley Eaves, KJ4ATK, kj4atk@w4bfb.org

Secretary

Kevin Keyes, K4YYD, k4yyd@w4bfb.org

Treasurer

Tom Hunt, KA3VVJ, ka3vvj@w4bfb.org

Directors

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John White, WB2NHQ, wb2nhq@w4bfb.org

Newsletter Editor

Sandra Jones, KK4DAW, w4bfbeditor@w4bfb.org

Mecklenburg 2m Emergency Net
9:00 PM local time, daily on 146.94
(-600)
Alternate frequencies announced

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