



WCARS.org
February 2008

The Official Publication of
The Western Carolina Amateur Radio Society, Inc

President's Microphone...

"Ham" and other outdoors activities aren't quite so prevalent this time of the year, but will return when the thermometer reads a little higher. This is the perfect time to work on FD and Hamfest plans for the upcoming months. Volunteers are welcome. These are, after all, club activities, not just for a few. Hope to see you at the next club meeting. 73 W4IYS - Scott

January 3rd Minutes...Steve - KF4TVD

Meeting was called to order at 7:46pm. The pledge to the flag was given. W4IYS - Scott reported that the Club repeater is still being developed - A 220 repeater and a digi-peater are also operational - We still need a Hamfest chair - A volunteer for this job and that of doughnut courier for club meetings is needed - The club needs to decide what to do with the club van - The club Hamfest this year is July 26th, with setup on July 25th - E-mail and mailing addresses can be held confidential for club members that prefer anonymity. N4NH - Norm announced that a new Technician class begins on January 22nd, AB Tech, 318 Elm Building, at 6:00 pm. N1ND - Dan presented the evening program - Amateur Radio 2008 "Amateur Radio is a hobby for a Lifetime". KI4NXS - Ethel won the 50/50 drawing. Motion to adjourn was made, seconded and carried at 8:56 pm.

Traffic Handling Training Net

In early 2007 an ARRL committee released a report on Amateur Radio's response to Hurricane Katrina. One of the issues raised by this "National Emergency Response Planning Committee" was that too few of us are skilled at traffic handling. *The aftermath of a disaster is not the time to learn how to send NTS traffic!* An opportunity begins soon. Mark Rappaport, W2EAG will lead a traffic handling training course, the "Carolinas Training Net", which will begin **Sunday, February 3 at 5pm local time on 3.861MHz.** The net will continue every Sunday thereafter until the course is completed. The course will be a good refresher for experienced operators and offer those new to traffic handling a thorough introduction. A training manual for the course has been posted at www.ncarrl.org and certificates will be issued to those who complete the course. Thanks to W2EAG for his hard work on this program. ARRL North Carolina Section

ARES

A meeting for members and those interested is scheduled for Feb. 22, 2008 from 7-8 pm, Simpson auditorium, AB-Tech.

WCARS

The club needs someone to pick up club purchased drinks for meetings, Field day chairman, Hamfest committee member, and volunteers for the May 31st bike ride. W4IYS - Scott

Hamfest Calendar

Feb 24 Vienna Wireless Society Winterfest, Annandale, VA,
<http://www.viennawireless.com/>, Talk-In: 146.91, Contact: Dennis Voegler, WA4QMS, PO Box 418, Vienna, VA 22183, Phone: 703-534-2081, Fax: 703-204-9000, Email: winterfest2008@viennawireless.org, Northern Virginia Community College, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA

Upcoming Events

Feb NC QSO Party - www.w4nc.org
Mar 2-8 Severe Weather Awareness Week
Mar 8-9 Charlotte Hamfest - www.w4bfb.org
Apr 6 Down East Hamfest, Kinston - www.downeasthamfest.org
Apr 12 Raleigh Hamfest www.rars.org/hamfest
Apr 12 State ARES meeting, Raleigh
Apr 19 Catawba Valley Hamfest, Morganton www.cvhamfest.com
May 10 Rockingham County Hamfest, Reidsville www.rcarc.com
May 24 DurHAMfest, Durham www.dfma.org
May 25-31 Hurricane Preparedness Week
June 14 Winston-Salem Classic Hamfest - www.w4nc.org
Jun 28-29 ARRL Field Day
From NC ARRL Section News

February Meeting

The next WCARS meeting will be February 7, 2008, 7:30 p.m. in the Simpson Auditorium, Simpson Bldg, at AB Tech.
Program: To be announced.

Why an Amateur Radio Operator is called a HAM... Have you ever wondered why we radio amateurs are called "HAMS"? Well, according to the Northern Ohio Radio Society, it goes like this: the word ham was applied in 1908 and was the call letters of one of the first Amateur wireless stations operated by some members of the HARVARD RADIO CLUB. There were Albert S. Hyman, Bob Almy and Peggie Murray.

At first, they called their station Hyman-Almy-Murry. Tapping out such a long name in code soon called for a revision and they changed it to HY-AL-MU, using the first two letters of each name.

Early in 1909, some confusion resulted between signals from Amateur wireless HYALMU and a Mexican ship named HYALMO, so they decided to use only the first letter of each name and the call became HAM.

In the early pioneer unregulated days of radio, Amateur operators picked their own frequency and call letters. Then, as now, some Amateurs had better signals than some commercial stations. The resulting interference finally came to the attention of congressional committees in Washington and they gave much time to proposed legislation designed to critically limit Amateur activity. In 1911, Albert Hyman chose the controversial Wireless Regulation Bill as the topic for his thesis at Harvard. His instructor insisted that a copy be sent to Senator David I. Walsh, a member of one of the committees hearing the bill. The Senator was so impressed, he sent for Hyman to appear before the committee. He was put on the stand and described how the little Amateur station was built. He almost cried when he told the crowded committee room that if the bill went through, they would have to close up the station because they could not afford the license fees and all the other requirements that were set up in the bill.

The debate started and the little station HAM became a symbol of all the little Amateur stations in the country crying out to be saved from menace and greed of the big commercial stations who did not want them around.

Finally, the bill got to the floor of Congress and every speaker talked about the poor little station "HAM."

That's how it all started. You will find the whole story in the Congressional Record. Nationwide publicity associated station HAM with Amateurs. From that day to this, and probably to the end of time, in radio, an Amateur is a HAM.

Submitted by KE4VXC and also by N4NH

ARRL Affiliation...*What should it mean for WCARS?* Any plan or program decision, big or small, should be made in the context of overall club objectives. What is the "big picture"? It can vary depending on the nature of the club -- some have narrower purposes than others do. All Amateur Radio clubs can be guided by basic program goals and principles. It's up to the club members and officers as to what priorities should be set. There are a few ARRL "big picture" ideas worth considering when the club organizes its plans, programs and activities.

Club Program and Activity Ideas

1. Seek to broaden the Amateur Radio experience and capabilities of the members. Encourage a spirit of fraternity and camaraderie among the members.
2. Develop the club as a resource to the community. We are, after all, the Amateur Radio Service.
3. Develop the club as a resource to local hams.
4. Develop the club as an integral part of the Section's Field Organization.
5. Public relations activities such as Field Day, mall displays, and special-event stations improve the visibility of Amateur Radio, promoting it as a positive force within the community.
6. Get involved in local emergency planning.
7. Conduct licensing classes.
8. Conduct "continuing education" or "elmering" activities.
9. Promote technical advancement.
10. Encourage members to increase personal levels of technical understanding.
11. Promote higher operating standards.
12. Conduct code proficiency seminars.
13. Have guest speakers talk on operating modes such as packet radio, satellites, contests, and DXing.
14. Encourage members to seek Field Organization positions within the ARRL Field Organization.

<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/org/acc.html>

Edited from the ARRL Club Online Primer
KF4TVD - Steve

Bike Ride May 31st

This type of club activity provides excellent public exposure to amateur radio.

PRELIMINARY information:

The ride will be in three (3) segments (route not finalized): 1. Family ride (with kids), very short, 2. Half century ride, about 50 to 65km, 3. Full century ride, about 100km.

There will be 5 rest stops/check points, starting at the river park on Amboy Rd. and up through Weaverville and down into Alexander.

We will need about 12 or 15 people to do what we need to do. I will need lots of help in recruiting that many with radios that are willing to help. Everyone else can help now by talking it up and advertising all you can.

We will have lunch at the end. May be a late one but it'll be there the organizer says.

K4BNP - Tommy

VEC

Exams are scheduled for February 9, 9:00 am, at the Mountain Home Volunteer Fire Department, Henderson County.

W4IOE - Sid

Packet Radio - revisited

Packet radio is one of the many digital modes that have been around for some time. It started in the mid 1980's, boomed for a while and then faded out, at least locally. Packet is a system that takes "information", bundles it into "packets", and adds some beginning and ending control information. This is sent to another station that "un-bundles" the packet into "information". Since each packet contains error checking, if the receiving station does receive the packet correctly, it is sent again until it is correctly received.

What are the pluses/minuses of packet? A big plus for using packet as a communication mode is the error checking, ensuring that information will be received correctly. Another is the ability to send/receive files and save them or make hard copies of them. Another plus is the ability to "digi-peet", that is receive signals from a station, store them and then forward them immediately to another station, all simplex. One minus is that

packet is slow: 300 baud on HF and usually 1200 baud on VHF although some networks operate at 9600 baud.¹

What does it take to operate packet? You need a transceiver, antenna, and either a TNC and dumb terminal or interface and computer. A TNC or terminal node controller contains a microprocessor that takes information from the “dumb terminal”, creates the packets and then feeds this to the transceiver. It also processes the received packets. The TNC controls the transceiver and is wired to its audio input and output plus the PTT. This was the original setup.

The most popular packet station uses a soundcard interface instead of the TNC. The computer replaces the TNC to produce the packets; the soundcard generates the appropriate tones and decodes the incoming packets. The interface controls the transceiver transmitting and receiving.

So which is better? It depends on what you want to do. A TNC station can also operate as a digi-peater. TNC setups also have a packet mailbox where messages can be posted. Unfortunately TNCs usually cost at least double what soundcard interfaces cost. The soundcard interface is much more versatile, they can be used for many different digital modes such as PSK-31, etc.

What type radio is needed for packet? Most any transceiver will work as long as you can tap the audio output (speaker/headphone), make audio input (microphone) and have PTT. I have used HF/VHF transceivers, VHF only rigs and HT's. My favorite portable packet station was a 2m HT, battery powered TNC and an old Radio Shack laptop.

Buncombe ARES plans to use packet radio², which is why I put a digi-peater on Spivey Mountain. It operates on 145.630, and signs with K8SKX-3 with beacon text of “AVL digi Spivey Mtn WCARS”. This station hopefully will provide coverage within the Asheville valley and provide a “link” to the packet bulletin board (PBBS) in Hendersonville. This PBBS handles both formal and informal messages both locally and globally.

Next month, I'll go into some “how to do packet” details. I'm not an expert by any means, so it will be vary basic. If you have any questions that can't wait e-mail me at K8SKX@ARRL.NET 73 K8SKX - Dick
Edited by KF4TVD

¹*This is not such a hindrance for text only messages/files, which are typically small in size.*

²*Since this mode requires more than a simple receiver/scanner to monitor, although still not a secure mode for sensitive communications, packet can provide high precision messaging and some degree of privacy for EmComm operations.*
KF4TVD - Steve

ARRL Special Events Calendar

Feb 16, 1700Z-2359Z, San Diego, CA. USS Midway CV-41 Museum Radio Room, NI6IW. Commemorating President's Day and Mt Suribachi, Iwo Jima Flag Raising by US Marines in 1945. 14.325 7.250 14.060 7.040. QSL. USS Midway CV-41 Museum Radio Room, 910 N Harbor Dr, San Diego, CA 92101.
kc2gyv@yahoo.com

Feb 16-Feb 17, 1500Z-2200Z, Alexandria, VA. Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club, K4US. George Washington's Birthday. 28.415 14.240 7.240 7.038. Certificate. MVARC, PO Box 7234, Alexandria, VA 22307. www.mvarc.com

Feb 28, 1500Z-2245Z, Baton Rouge, LA. Baton Rouge and USS Kidd Amateur Radio Clubs, W5KID. USS Kidd Launch Anniversary. 15 20 40 m Gen bands. QSL. USS Kidd Special Event, 305 S River Rd, Baton Rouge, LA 70802.
www.lsu.edu/brarc/uss_kidd.htm

Smoke Test Editor... Members please send any material of interest for inclusion in the newsletter to KF4TVD@ARRL.NET 73 KF4TVD-Steve

THE SMOKE TEST

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American Radio Relay League Affiliate No. 0602

WCARS meets at 7:30 PM the first Thursday of each month at the Simpson Building at AB Technical Community College.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

Membership dues are \$20 per year payable in January.