# W4YK Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club

## The Blue Ridge Echo ..Echo..Echo..
### Official Transmitter of the Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club - W4YK -

## MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER, 2023

The September 5th meeting of the *Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club (BRARC)* was held in person and streamed online via Zoom, and began at about 7:15pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### ATTENDANCE

29 Members attended (24 in person and 5 online), plus 2 guests in person and 1 online.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

August 1 – August 31, 2023

| | | |
|---|---:|---:|
| Balance as of 07/31/23 | | **$ 6,988.29** |
| **Plus**: Deposits: Memberships | $ 20.00 | |
| ½ year membership | 10.00 | |
| | Total Income | **$ 30.00** |
| | Sub-Total | **$ 7,028.29** |
| **Less**: Expenses: Used Icom IC-7300 purchase | $ 800.00 | |
| LDG Z-100A External tuner for IC-7300 | 215.58 | |
| Refund of ½ year dues | 10.00 | |
| | Total Expenses | **$ 1,025.58** |
| | **BALANCE AS OF 08/31/23** | **$ 6,002.71** |

### BUSINESS

*Upcoming Events*

The **BRARC Meeting** on **October 3rd** will feature Mark Waldrop, KE4WA, speaking about Artificial Intelligence. Mark is presenting this topic at the QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo on the weekend of September 9th and 10th. He will join us via Zoom from Moncks Corner, SC.

The **Hendersonville Christmas Parade** will be **December 2nd**. It will probably not be televised this year. There is a limit of 120 entries, and car clubs will be limited to ten cars each.

**Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM** meets the 4th Monday each month at 6:30pm at the State Medical Assistance Team (SMAT) warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock.

*Meeting Minutes*

At 6:30pm members Danny Rector [NA4X], Steve Smith [KC5F]. Marty Wood, [N4AMW], Nick Andrews [K9GVM] and Zach Thompson [KM4BLG] had their POTA and SOTA rigs set up in the yard and parking lot outside of the club's meeting room.  Members were able to view the antennas and radios and interact with the POTA/SOTA demonstrators for 45 minutes.

President Bill Gunn [KB2GUN] called the meeting to order inside at 7:19pm.

Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Susann Swan [K9FMZ] gave the Treasurer's report for the month of August, 2023.

Danny Rector [NA4X] reminded members that volunteers are needed to help stage the Hendersonville Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 2nd.  He needs 20 to 25 volunteers.

President Bill Gunn mentioned that elections are coming up soon and he is looking for suggestions on doing anything new next year.  Per our bylaws, the Steering Committee is to present our slate of officers for 2024 to the club by October 15th.  We welcome suggestions for next year's officers.  (Nominations from the floor are also accepted at the November meeting.)

## PRESENTATION

Danny Rector [NA4X] directed a forum of five club members who are active Parks On The Air [POTA] and/or Summits On The Air [SOTA] operators, with each having a few set topics.

Danny started by showing the POTA website at pota.app.  He highlighted some things like park lists and maps and member statistics.  Many options are available, on computers or cell phones.  The "Activator" uploads the QSO logs to the POTA website, not the "Hunter".  Lots of detailed statistics are updated automatically, including numerous awards for both activating and hunting.  An activator sets up in a National or State park (including other national- or state-run entities like Wildlife Management Areas, Heritage Preserves, Historic Sites, Fish Hatcheries, Historic Trails and Rivers, etc.) that has been assigned a Reference # by POTA, and the entire station including antennas and power needs to be within the boundaries of the entity.  The only exceptions are Trails and Rivers, where everything has to be within 100 feet of the trail or river.  A "2-fer" can be offered when, for example, a trail like the Appalachian Trail passes through a park like Great Smoky Mountains National Park, if you're within the Park and within 100 feet of the Trail.  You have to be careful, though, as some entities don't want wires in trees, holes in the ground, etc.

Nick Andrews [K9GVM] spoke about the SOTA program (https://www.sota.org.uk/).  SOTA has "Activators" and "Chasers" and requires 4 contacts to "activate" a summit, where POTA requires 10 contacts to activate a park.  You have to climb mountains to within 75 vertical feet of the peak.  You can't do SOTA from a car.  Nick was just at Roan Mountain in Tennessee.  He was able to park and hike 1/3 of a mile to the summit, going up 200 feet.  Some climbs are much harder, and summits are assigned from 1-10 points, based on difficulty.  In winter there are 3 bonus points for each activation.  Activators can receive the "Mountain Goat" trophy after earning 1000 points.  The "SOTA Goat" iPhone/iPad app can be used to help with spotting, as well as the online SOTA Watch website (https://sotawatch.sota.org.uk/).  Dean Blair [K2JB] of Asheville is a SOTA ham who will take you on his trips to activate.  He's in good shape and it's a workout to climb with him.

Steve Smith [KC5F] described researching POTA parks and determining their boundaries.  When you select a park on the POTA site, whether from the maps, lists, clicking on a spot or

looking it up directly, it shows a basic map, but it is not accurate enough to determine actual boundaries. However, it includes a website link for the park. That is often the official state or national website for that park, and if they include a map that's the best way to find the boundaries as well as information to possibly help you know where to set up. Even then, it can be good to Google the park name to learn more about it. There is also a useful Facebook Group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/parksontheair) where you can search by the 4-digit park reference number such as "0804" for K-0804, the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site. You'll see reports from previous activations at the site and may find a great spot to set up. There's a Topo Maps website (https://en-us.topographic-map.com/) where you can find the high spots in the park, and which also often has good information on park boundaries when you zoom in. Google Maps "Satellite view" is a great way to get more information, as you can spot parking areas, picnic tables, power lines, buildings to avoid, trails, decent trees, open areas, etc. And for even more information, the POTA page for the park shows all previous activators for that park, and you can email them with questions if they have an email listed on QRZ.com.

Once you're actually in the park, good etiquette includes staying out of the way, not blocking views of visitors or paths of walkers, using headphones if you're not in an isolated area, and not hanging antennas from trees or sticking spikes or stakes in the ground when not allowed. And if a ranger or other official says to move, leave or change how you're operating, do it without argument. It keeps from getting us banned altogether from that park, and you may find they'll even suggest a better spot to set up if you're seen as obnoxious.

Marty Wood [N4AMW] spoke about getting listed on the POTA Spots page, the first page that comes up when you go to the POTA website. Hunters watch the website, and you'll be popular once you're "spotted". This can be automatic if you're running CW or digital modes and have previously scheduled your activation on the site. On any mode, you can "spot" yourself on the website if you have cell service. If not, you can call CQ POTA until someone calls you, and you can ask them to spot you. If you can reach a repeater, you can call and ask if someone can spot you. That doesn't count as a POTA QSO, as terrestrial repeater QSOs don't count as POTA contacts, but it can get you spotted. There are also radio-based methods to spot, including APRS. Once you are on the air, there are many ways of logging. The POTA website requires the activator to upload an "adif" file, created by most logging programs, or you can even enter each QSO individually into the website. Many activators log on paper in the park and then enter and upload the QSOs from home.

Marty showed awards he has won in POTA. He runs up to 10 bands when he is operating, which qualifies for another award by park. He cited how doing POTA builds relationships with some people and they will hunt you whenever you activate.

Zach Thompson [KM4BLG] had additional suggestions for SOTA, many of which also apply to POTA. Prepare for the weather, bringing a shelter or tarp. Bring emergency blankets, a first aid kit, and possibly something on which to sit and for your equipment. Sometimes a log or rock will work. A lightweight foam pad can help. Satellite communication helps when you don't have a cell signal. He carries an HT and cell phone with him as well. Depending on the hike and the weather, he brings 4-6 bottles or more of water with him.

Danny Rector suggested having a specific place for each item in your backpack so you can easily account for them and not leave anything behind. You want to keep your battery and radio well-

protected in your bag.  Ed Winstead suggested carrying something like a Swiss army knife. Marty Wood advocated bringing extra coax and connectors/adapters.

Zach Thompson finished the forum with details about the September 9th/10th  NC POTA event. North Carolina State Parks On The Air is an annual event which hopes to activate all 116 North Carolina State Parks over the course of the weekend, between 8:00am (EDT) on Saturday and 7:59pm on Sunday.  Details including rules are at https://ncpota.org/.



## MEETING ENDED

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes submitted respectfully by Steve Smith [KC5F] from notes by Susann Swan [K9FMZ].

## EMAILED COPIES OF AUGUST PRESENTATION
Correction of August *Echo*:  For anyone wanting a copy of Gary's [AC8NE] August BRARC "Vector Network Analyzers" presentation, his email is ac8ne@arrl.net.

## ITEMS FOR SALE

Handheld or mobile repeater controller - HR10C.  Spectrum Electronic Products
Includes handbook, interface cable.  Has some cool features: voice IDer, voice mail box.
Battery operated (9 volt) - Size 6"x3"x1"  $50.00
K4UOK, Phil, K4UOK@ARRL.net

RigExpert AA-35 Zoom antenna analyzer. $180. Dave - W2CGG. 828-230-9333

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

| Date | Description |
|---|---|
| **Sat, September 16** | **Informal Breakfast Get-Together** – 9am, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy. |
| **Sat, September 16** | **License Exams** – 9am by reservation, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy. |
| **Mon, September 25** | **Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM** – 6:30pm.  Mountain Area Healthcare Preparedness Coalition warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock. |
| **Thu, September 28** | **BRARC Steering Committee Meeting** – 7pm via Zoom. |
| **Tue, October 3** | **BRARC Meeting** - In person in Jackson Park.  In addition, you can still attend virtually.  **Latest instructions to login are on the BRARC website.** |
| **Sat, October 21** | **Informal Breakfast Get-Together** – 9am, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy. |
| **Sat, October 21** | **License Exams** – 9am by reservation, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy. |

| **Mon, October 23** | **Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM** – 6:30pm.  Mountain Area Healthcare Preparedness Coalition warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock. |
|---|---|
| **Thu, October 26** | **BRARC Steering Committee Meeting** – 7pm via Zoom. |

## CLUB CALENDAR

The BRARC Club Calendar is on the BRARC website at http://radioclub.org/  "Club Calendar".

## AREA HAM RADIO NETS

| **FM NETS - 2 METERS** | | |
|---|---|---|
| BRARC Net (W4YK) | 146.640 MHz / T91.5  H'ville | Sunday 8:00pm |
| Slow Scan TV Net | 146.640 MHz / T91.5  H'ville | Sunday 7:00pm |
| Henderson County ARES Net | 146.640 MHz / T91.5  H'ville | Wednesday 9:00pm |
| Anderson Radio Club Net | 146.790 MHz  Pickens SC | Daily 8:30pm |
| Blue Ridge Traffic (SC) | 146.610 MHz  Caesars Head SC | Daily 9:00pm |
| Good Morning Net | 146.910 MHz  Asheville | M-W-F 9:00am |
| WCARS Information Net | 146.910 MHz/  T91.5  Asheville | Monday 9:00pm |
| WCARS Simplex Net | 147.525 MHz | Tuesday 8:30pm |
| Buncombe ARES Net | 146.910 MHz / T91.5  Asheville | Wednesday 9:00pm |
| Transylvania ARC Net | 147.135 MHz  Brevard | Thursday 8:00pm |
| 6600 Net | 145.190 MHz  Mt Mitchell | Saturday 9:00pm |
| Slow Scan TV Net | 146.790 MHz (no tone) | Saturday 9:15pm |
| Oasis Shrine Net | 145.190 MHz  Mt Mitchell | Sunday 9:00pm |
| **FM NETS - 6 METERS** | | |
| 6 Meter Net | 53.130 MHz / T100  H'ville | Friday 9:00pm |

| **HF NETS** | | |
|---|---|---|
| NC Morning Net | 3.927 MHz | Daily 7:45am |
| SATERN Net | 14.265 MHz | Daily 10:00am |
| NC Evening Net | 3.923 MHz | Daily 6:30pm |
| Tarheel ARES Net | 3.923 MHz | Daily 7:30pm |
| K4UUQ Morning Net | 7.228 MHz | M-Sa 7:00am/Sun 8:00 |
| 80 Meter Simplex Net | 3.843 MHz | Thursday 9:30pm |
| Get Up and Go Net | 28.350/28.360 MHz | Sunday 9:00pm |

# W4YK Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club

| DIGITAL MOBILE RADIO NETS | | |
|---|---|---|
| WNC Local DMR Net | WNC Local Talk Group (UHF) | Monday 7:30pm |
| High Country DMR Net | PRN Local Talk Group | Tuesday 8:00pm |
| WNC Net | WNC System Fusion YS24157 | Wednesday 9:00pm |
| WNC DMR Net | WNC Talk Group (VHF/UHF) | Thursday 8:30pm |

## BLUE RIDGE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OFFICERS

| Title | Name | Call Sign | Phone | Email |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PRESIDENT | Bill Gunn | KB2GUN | 704-934-1950 | kb2gunb@yahoo.com |
| VICE-PRESIDENT | James Reed | KK4JFO | 828-698-3609 | jshreed@bellsouth.net |
| TREASURER | Susann Swan | K9FMZ | 828-747-2250 | susann93@use.startmail.com |
| SECRETARY | Steve Smith | KC5F | 828-489-6637 | kc5f@arrl.net |