



## The Blue Ridge Echo .. Echo .. Echo ..



*Official Transmitter of the Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club - W4YK -*

### MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 5, 2024

The March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the *Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club (BRARC)* was held in person and streamed online via Zoom, and began at about 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### ATTENDANCE

32 Members attended (20 in person and 12 online), plus 2 guests in person and 5 online.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

February 1 – February 29, 2024

Balance as of 01/31/24		<b>\$ 6,379.78</b>
<b>Plus:</b> Deposits: Dues 2024	\$190.00	
	Total Income	<b>\$ 190.00</b>
	Sub-Total	<b>\$ 6,569.78</b>
<b>Less:</b> Expenses: Reimburse Steve Smith (Zoom Subscription)	\$ 159.90	
Reimburse Susann Swan (4 Baofeng radios)	<u>74.72</u>	
	Total Expenses	<b>\$ 234.62</b>
	<b>BALANCE AS OF 02/29/24</b>	<b>\$ 6,335.16</b>

#### BUSINESS

##### *Upcoming Events*

**Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM** meets *this month* on March 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at the State Medical Assistance Team (SMAT) warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock. (It's usually the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday each month, but was changed this month due to a scheduling conflict.)

##### *Meeting Minutes*

President Bill Gunn [KB2GUN] invited guests and new members to introduce themselves.

NC QSO Party: Danny Rector [NA4X] shared that the BRARC made 700-750 QSOs as W4YK in the 10-hour North Carolina QSO Party in February from the club shack, on SSB and CW. Danny, himself, operated as a Mobile entry, making 405 QSOs from seven counties. Marty Wood



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[N4AMW] operated as a Bonus Station at the Carl Sanburg National Historic Site with Vlad Karamitrov [N3CZ] handling CW.

50/50 Raffle: Those present decided to restart the “50/50 Raffle” at our next monthly meeting. Folks can buy \$1 tickets and one stub will be drawn during the meeting. The winner receives 50% of the cash, and the rest goes to the club.

Surgery: BRARC president Bill Gunn [KB2GUN] mentioned that he would be having rotator cuff surgery on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Those present offered their best wishes.

## PRESENTATION

When a previous program plan didn't work out, BRARC Treasurer **Paul Nice** [KQ4ALD] offered to chair a roundtable discussion. Because of interest generated by the February 22<sup>nd</sup> nationwide AT&T outage that left millions of people without cellphone service for hours, the discussion was on the subject, *“In case of problems which cause the power grid, cell phones and/or internet to go down, how do we stay active and in touch as a club?”*

Paul asked that the discussion consider ham-related problems and ideas for dealing with them, as non-ham-related effects are covered in other forums. Tonight was a chance to share accumulated knowledge, as “not all members have Extra Class licenses, years of experience and high-dollar rigs.” There are no perfect answers, and we were asked to respect all viewpoints.

An example situation presented was that the power grid is down, and we don't know for how long. How do we stay in touch with each other as BRARC members? Hams mainly use HF, VHF and UHF frequency bands. HF is not always usable for local communications, and almost 30% of those on our roster hold Technician licenses, so VHF and UHF repeaters and simplex are probably the first choice for staying in touch. To be useful on HF we need to understand propagation, which we learn by using it. Antennas that make use of Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS) can be useful for nearby communications out to several hundred miles, depending on the time of day.

Martin Harris [W4FOT] gave a summary of backup power options for the repeaters on Bearwallow Mountain. In the case of a blizzard, there is no way to get to the mountaintop to refill propane tanks or recharge batteries. The 146.04/64 repeater has battery backup for about 2 days, while the 4 DMR repeaters share the generator backup used by the county, and could stay on the air for 1-3 weeks. The 147.705/105 repeater gets its power and backup from the fire commission building. Internet access for the repeaters is through Skyrunner, and may share generator backup.

The Sheriff's Department and City/County have backup generators. The State Highway Patrol has UPS and diesel generators that can last up to a month. Fire departments in Henderson County have their own repeater systems, spread throughout the county, with wind and solar backup to generators. Most public service agencies use encrypted communications, to protect patient privacy and ensure secure law enforcement communication. We discussed contacting the county and fire departments to form relationships and possibly to be of service. It was noted that ARES is a good place for training on procedures used in public service.

We discussed, “What is the club's mission?” Article 2 of the BRARC By-Laws states, *“The purpose of this organization shall be to further exchange of information and cooperation between members, to promote radio knowledge, fraternalism and individual operating efficiency, and to promote and conduct Club programs and activities as to advance the general interest and welfare of amateur radio in the community.”* We're trying to promote and preserve the ham radio hobby. ARES and AUXCOMM already work with county fire departments and



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other agencies. We as a club would like to be aware of what's going on in an emergency, but not step on toes. How do we gather relevant information and share it with the club?

The BRARC "heartbeat" in an emergency situation may be to learn, practice and be ready to pass word (messages) to and from our neighborhoods via a repeater or simplex on VHF/UHF. During the Puerto Rico hurricane aftermath, 50 hams were sent from the mainland just to pass traffic. To be able to pass traffic we need to know the abilities and limitations of our rigs, including how to ensure battery backup, what common frequencies will be used and how our antennas work.

When we need to communicate in an emergency, do we need a net? How often do we try to make contact (to conserve our batteries) and on what frequencies? How do we help our neighbors with things like needed medications? New hams need a way to learn. The BRARC Sunday Night Net helps hams get used to their rigs, but maybe we need a "New Hams Net" for training, and to help them get over "mic fright". A "Women's Net" was also suggested.

The "cadence" of emergency communications needs to be discussed. Do we try to get in touch once a day, four times a day, or possibly have something similar to the "Wilderness Protocol" of 3-by-3 where folks check in every three hours for three minutes? After the recent AT&T outage, people are looking for radio options. GMRS and FRS may be packed with untrained people not knowing what to do. People without licenses who are buying cheap 2-meter radios online may be all over simplex and open repeaters, so we need other options.

One consideration is that we need to help ourselves before trying to help everyone else. We need to think about powering and protecting our own radios. The BRARC has a gasoline-powered generator that is put to the test every year at Field Day. At Field Day one (small) tank of gas runs it at least 12 hours before a refill. It could be used at the club "shack" to keep our station powered, as long as we have gas for it. Do we need to prepare in the event of an EMP or a powerful solar flare? We as a society do not have to apologize for being prepared for emergencies. Our club has lots of former Scouts who learned to "Be Prepared", right down to having matches at the ready.

We discussed asking other area ham clubs what they are doing along these lines. We need to come up with a "living document" of what we do, to be updated regularly, and to have regular practice outside of our 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday meetings, preferably in person and using the equipment.

What do we tell preppers who ask us about getting and using radios? One suggestion was to tell them to either take at least the Technician Amateur Radio exam before getting a ham radio, or to stick to GMRS / FRS radios. A Baofeng or other radio is useless if you're not willing to invest time and effort into how you'll use it. Too many people have the attitude that "If there's an emergency, I don't need a license to use a ham radio." That's not the time to find out it's a useless piece of your kit. And besides, "Ham radio is the most interesting hobby there is!"

Paul asked us each to consider how we fit in these suggestions, and to be ready to add our input.

## **MEETING ENDED**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes submitted respectfully by Steve Smith (KC5F)

## **DUES FOR 2024**

Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club annual dues are up for renewal. They remain \$20.00 per year for Full (licensed) and Associate (unlicensed) members. Dues for additional related members in the



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same household as a Full or Associate member shall be one-half the regular rate. Dues for full-time students in an accredited school will be one-half the regular rate. Send checks made payable to *Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club* (or *BRARC*) to the BRARC Treasurer:

Paul Nice – KQ4ALD, PO Box 234, Hendersonville, NC 28793-0234.

## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

From Susann [K9FMZ]

P	T	F	R	O	T	S	I	S	N	A	R	T	V	R
O	I	I	F	E	D	N	K	E	Q	G	F	A	X	E
S	O	T	S	X	V	F	F	L	N	N	D	Z	U	V
C	P	R	B	E	A	R	W	A	L	L	O	W	G	I
B	O	I	R	Y	R	E	T	T	A	B	N	N	C	E
M	R	T	V	U	Y	L	I	X	Q	E	E	N	M	C
S	E	O	W	E	S	U	U	Y	E	F	V	S	I	S
R	Z	G	T	T	Y	R	E	R	O	Y	S	G	T	N
Q	Z	O	L	C	K	S	E	A	I	T	T	B	C	A
V	N	L	Q	R	E	B	B	T	V	C	P	H	H	R
B	B	Y	I	O	N	V	E	C	A	G	O	U	E	T
Y	A	E	S	U	W	S	X	W	U	E	W	M	L	U
E	T	Z	W	E	O	S	C	D	C	D	P	R	L	A
L	J	R	Q	Y	O	Y	N	Y	P	N	O	E	K	N
Q	F	H	M	O	D	U	L	A	T	I	O	N	R	R

**Find the words in the puzzle.**

Words can go in any direction.

Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

- |             |            |            |            |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| BAOFENG     | BATTERY    | BEARWALLOW | ICOM       |
| INVERTER    | KENWOOD    | MITCHELL   | MODULATION |
| MORSE       | REPEATERS  | SPIVEY     | SSTV       |
| TRANSCEIVER | TRANSISTOR | VECTOR     | YAESU      |



## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Description
Sat, March 16	Informal Breakfast Get-Together – 9am, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Sat, March 16	License Exams – 9am by reservation, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Mon, March 18	Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM – 6:30pm. Mountain Area Healthcare Preparedness Coalition warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock.
Thu, March 28	BRARC Steering Committee Meeting – 7pm via Zoom.
Tue, April 2	BRARC Meeting - In person in Jackson Park. Also streamed via Zoom.
Sat, April 20	Informal Breakfast Get-Together – 9am, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Sat, April 20	License Exams – 9am by reservation, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Mon, April 22	Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM – 6:30pm. Mountain Area Healthcare Preparedness Coalition warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock.
Thu, April 25	BRARC Steering Committee Meeting – 7pm via Zoom.
Tue, May 7	BRARC Meeting - In person in Jackson Park. Also streamed via Zoom.

## CLUB CALENDAR

The BRARC Club Calendar is on the BRARC website at <http://radioclub.org/> “Club Calendar”.

## AREA HAM RADIO NETS

<b>FM NETS - 2 METERS</b>		
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
<b>FM NETS - 6 METERS</b>		
6 Meter Net	53.130 MHz / T100 H’ville	Friday 9:00pm



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<b>HF NETS</b>		
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

<b>DIGITAL MOBILE RADIO NETS</b>		
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)	Wednesday 8:30pm

## BLUE RIDGE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OFFICERS

Title	Name	Call Sign	Phone	Email
PRESIDENT	Bill Gunn	KB2GUN	704-934-1950	<a href="mailto:kb2gunb@yahoo.com">kb2gunb@yahoo.com</a>
VICE-PRESIDENT	James Reed	KK4JFO	828-698-3609	<a href="mailto:jshreed@bellsouth.net">jshreed@bellsouth.net</a>
TREASURER	Paul Nice	KQ4ALD	703-657-9783	<a href="mailto:paul.nice@verizon.net">paul.nice@verizon.net</a>
SECRETARY	Steve Smith	KC5F	828-489-6637	<a href="mailto:kc5f@arrl.net">kc5f@arrl.net</a>