



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



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

MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 2, 2024

The April 2nd meeting of the *Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club (BRARC)* was held in person and streamed online via Zoom, and the business portion of the meeting began at about 7:30pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

18 Members attended (16 in person and 2 online), plus 5 guests in person and 1 online.

TREASURER’S REPORT

March 1 – March 31, 2024

Balance as of 02/29/24		\$ 6,335.16
Plus: Deposits: Dues 2024	\$40.00	
	Total Income	\$ 40.00
	Sub-Total	\$ 6,375.16
Less: Expenses: (none)	\$ 0.00	
	Total Expenses	\$ 0.00
	BALANCE AS OF 02/29/24	\$ 6,375.16

BUSINESS

Upcoming Events

The **WNC Flyer** is Sunday, June 2nd. This is a 100-mile bike ride covering the Brevard and Mills River areas. “WNC Flyer Volunteers needed to provide communications from rest stops and from SAG vehicles. This takes place starting in Brevard and takes pretty much most of the day. A mobile VHF radio is needed for most locations. This is a very fun bike ride to watch. If you are new, I will put you with someone who has worked the ride previously so please join in. We need about 20 volunteers. You can email Danny at rectordl@bellsouth.net or at the next meeting I will have a sign up sheet. If you sign up before May 15th, I can get you a tee shirt. Thank you for your support, Danny NA4X.”

Field Day this year is June 22nd-23rd. This year we will be back at the “normal” location in Jackson Park, outside of our meeting place and shack.



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The BRARC will coordinate the Hendersonville Merchants and Business Association's **Fourth of July Parade** on Thursday, July 4th. We stage the entries, get them on the parade route in order and on time. Susann Swann [K9FMZ] is coordinating communications and has seven volunteers but needs more. It's lots of fun, and you only need a handheld 2m radio.

Meeting Minutes

From about 6:00pm until 7:30pm members Nick Andrews [K9GVM], Danny Rector [NA4X], Steve Smith [KC5F], and Zach Thompson [KM4BLG] had a variety of POTA and SOTA rigs and antennas set up in the yard and parking lot outside of the club's meeting room. Many members and guests viewed the setups and interacted with the operators.

Inside at about 7:30pm President Bill Gunn [KB2GUN] invited guests and new members to introduce themselves. (The Zoom connection was delayed until 7:30pm and we didn't use the usual projector, camera and microphone setup due to everyone having been outside. Our apologies to those who tried to log in before 7:30pm.)

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee presented a proposal 1) To donate the dismantled tower laying on the ground at the east side of the shack to Martin Harris to be used at the Bearwallow Mountain, and 2) That the BRARC donate up to \$500 to pay for concrete for the base for the tower and any parts needed to raise the tower. Martin will be the owner of the tower and base once installed. The members present APPROVED this proposal.

50/50 Raffle: Visitor Carolyn Widener of Hendersonville won \$17 in the 50/50 raffle this month, with \$17 going to the club.

PRESENTATION

Danny Rector [NA4X] guided a basic introduction to Parks On The Air [POTA] and Summits On The Air [SOTA] followed by a Q&A session with the operators who had set up stations outside before the meeting. The Q&A responses included these:

Zach Thompson reminded us that tuners, whether internal or external, don't "fix" a bad antenna. They just make the radio "happier" with the load presented to it. To match an antenna, we need to add inductance or capacitance using coils or capacitors. Adding them at the antenna is the most efficient solution, as we're then not also trying to tune the feedline. One thing Zach uses at times is an antenna made of 25' of wire attached to each side of a twin binding post with an adapter that attaches directly to the antenna jack of his radio, so that there is no feedline involved. That way the radio tuner acts as a part of the antenna system. It's not as good as a resonant antenna, but it's an improvement and works as a lightweight, portable antenna.

Nick Andrews suggests that, when possible, we use resonant antennas. Tune them to the frequencies you expect to use and you won't need a tuner. An End Fed Half-Wave (EFHW) is another popular antenna. ARRL sells a kit, or you can buy the parts for even less. A 66-foot long wire with a 49:1 Balun (transformer) matches your coax cable to a high-impedance wire. It will tune the 40-meter band and all integer frequency multiples – 20m, 15m and 10m. Another option, if you have a tuner, is a 71-foot wire with a 17-foot counterpoise. Nick has good luck with that one on SOTA activations. Nick noted that lots of SOTA summits are also in POTA parks, so you can try out both at once.

Steve Smith spoke about the Par EndFedz "Trail-Friendly 40/20/10" 41-foot EFHW sold by Vibroplex that he uses for POTA in places where we can throw fishing line supports into trees.



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It uses a choke at 33' to shorten it for 40m, and it's limited to 25 watts, but works nicely with the Xiegu G90 20-watt rig and others, and only weighs 3.5 ounces. It's much easier to get 41 feet of wire up in the open than 66 feet of wire for a "real" EFHW. He usually supports both ends, with the near end up about 20' and the far end up 35-40'. This gets much better results than the Wolf River Coil vertical with a 203" whip that he uses other times. He also mentioned that CW gets through much better than SSB at lower power, but hunters will look for you either way!

Danny Rector shared that POTA and SOTA both have "Activators", the ones out in the park or on a summit, and "Hunters", those trying to contact the Activators. (Activators also like to hunt other activators for "Park-to-Park" or "Summit-to-Summit" QSOs.) Danny suggested that activators who aren't operating from their cars plan for a seat and something to write on. SOTA doesn't allow you to activate near your car, and often involves climbing, so lighter is better. You just need to be within 75 vertical feet of the height of the summit. You can sometimes get away with sitting on a rock or downed tree trunk. POTA allows activating from cars, and you have to have your entire station on public land within the boundaries of the park, which has to be open. Not all parks are POTA parks – they have to be state or national parks, preserves, trails and certain other locations. There are lists and maps of all POTA References (park numbers) on the POTA website. Google "Parks On The Air" or "POTA" or just go to <https://pota.app/>

Danny demonstrated using the POTA "Spotting Page" on his tablet. It is a real-time listing of all activators who have "spotted" themselves online or have had callers spot them. You won't hear all of them, as propagation conditions affect who you can hear. As you use the page, you'll learn more about propagation, too, and learn which bands to use at what times for different distances.

Before you go to a park to make an activation, it's good to research it. There are maps available on the POTA website, with links to more official maps. You can use an online maps program to look for possible spots to set up, with street and satellite views showing important details like parking areas, shelters, power lines and park buildings. There are also topographic mapping websites where you can look for the highest spots in a park to set up your antenna.

When you are in the park, if you don't have cell service and can't spot yourself, get on and call "CQ POTA" and ask those who call you to spot you from their house. You could also use a handheld to make a call on a repeater and see whether someone can spot you. Calls through repeaters don't count as POTA QSOs, but can be used to drum up interest, too. Once you're on the air, you can log to a computer, your phone or on paper. Many log to paper as well as electronically for a backup. Log the UTC time of the contact, the hunter's call, the band and mode you're using and the number of the park you're in. Be sure to note changes in band, mode and park number! Nothing else is required, but many log the signal reports and states, as well as park numbers of "Park-to-Park" QSOs. Only the activator submits a log to the POTA website, and hunters get credit for the contact from that log, but most hunters also keep their own logs.

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. **At the end of April, members who are not paid for 2024 will be dropped from the roster and *Echo* email list.** Dues remain



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\$20.00 per year for Full (licensed) and Associate (unlicensed) members. Dues for additional related members in the 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.

MEMBER NEWS

From Brandy [N1HO]: *“I just got my DXCC Mixed sticker for 250 entities, which I earned running barefoot with wire antennas; no tower, beam or amplifier thingy...”* Congrats, Brandy!

Also, Congratulations to Chuck McCurry [WK4Y, ex-KQ4HXP], Bill Brownlow [K4BJW] and Joe Wolfe [KQ4MBO] on obtaining their Amateur Extra Class Licenses!

NEW MEMBERS’ CORNER

from Susann Swan (K9FMV)



Welcome David Burin, KQ4PYD!

David lives in Greer. He holds a GMRS license and wanted to get fully licensed, so he passed his Tech and General class exams at Ingles last month.



Welcome Drew Kuchta, KQ4PZQ!

Drew was exposed to ham radio by friends of his parents. He became seriously interested in amateur radio about six months ago, and successfully passed his Technician license exam. Drew is interested in learning about digital modes.



Welcome Alex Dietrich, KQ4PZF!

Alex was introduced to amateur radio recently when he met BRARC Treasurer, Paul Nice, KQ4ALD. He is interested in the technical side of radio. Alex enjoys hands on learning and hopes to build a radio soon.



Welcome, Tom Harson, K5VJZ!

Tom moved to this area a year and a half ago. He is primarily interested in digital ham radio. Tom holds an Extra Class license.



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ITEMS FOR SALE

Yaesu FTDX-1200 complete with Mic and Signalink USB setup for the radio with cables. I cannot attest to condition of the Microphone as I have never used it. I am the original owner of the radio. It's clean with no scratches or dents. \$450.00

SDRPlay RSPdx Software Defined Radio - \$100.00

Yaesu FT-2980 Brand new, just hooked up to listen to it. \$125.00

Tom Harson, K5VJZ. Cell: 337-298-0708

Rig Expert AA-35 Zoom antenna analyzer. \$175.

Dave, W2CGG. 828-230-9333

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Description
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.
Sat, May 18	Informal Breakfast Get-Together – 9am, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Sat, May 18	License Exams – 9am by reservation, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Thu, May 23	BRARC Steering Committee Meeting – 7pm via Zoom.
Mon, May 27	Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM – 6:30pm. Mountain Area Healthcare Preparedness Coalition warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock.
Sun, June 2	WNC Flyer – BRARC providing communications support.
Tue, June 4	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

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



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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

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)	Wednesday 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	Paul Nice	KQ4ALD	703-657-9783	paul.nice@verizon.net
SECRETARY	Steve Smith	KC5F	828-489-6637	kc5f@arrl.net