



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



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

MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 4, 2024

The June 4th meeting of the *Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club (BRARC)* was held in person and streamed online via Zoom, and began at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

32 Members attended (18 in person and 8 online), plus 3 guests in person and 3 online.

TREASURER’S REPORT

May 1 – May 31, 2024

Balance as of 04/30/24		\$ 6,591.48
Plus: Deposits: Dues 2024	\$ 70.00	
50/50 Raffle proceeds	<u>12.00</u>	
	Total Income	\$ 82.00
	Sub-Total	\$ 6,673.48
Less: Expenses: (<i>none</i>)	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	
	Total Expenses	\$ 0.00
	BALANCE AS OF 05/31/24	\$ 6,673.48

BUSINESS

Upcoming Events

Field Day this year is June 22nd-23rd at Jackson Park, with setup on Friday, June 21st starting at 5pm. See this month’s meeting notes and article for all the details!

The BRARC will coordinate the Hendersonville Merchants and Business Association’s **Fourth of July Parade** on Thursday, July 4th. We gather at 8am to stage the entries, get them on the parade route in order and head them out for the 10am parade. Susann Swann [K9FMZ] is coordinating communications. It’s lots of fun, and you only need a handheld 2m radio.

The Western Carolina Amateur Radio Society’s **WCARS Hamfest** is Saturday, July 20th with gates open at 8am. (6am for vendors.) Smokey Mountain Event Center, 758 Crabtree Road, Waynesville, NC. Talk-In: 147.39+ PL 94.8



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Meeting Minutes

Presentations: The Steering Committee (BRARC officers plus Martin Harris [W4FOT] and Marty Wood [N4AMW]) invites all members to offer suggestions for upcoming meeting presentations. Anything radio-related you might be able to present for half or all of a program would be great, and if you have ideas for programs you'd like to see, pass them along, too!

Lapsed or inactive members: If you haven't been active recently in BRARC activities, we'd like to hear from you to know what we might do differently to keep you interested and active!

Auracast™ Bluetooth LE: A member talked about a forthcoming Bluetooth technology that will help in areas like movie theatres, churches and airports, as well as in our own homes. From their website, "*Auracast™ broadcast audio enables audio transmitters, such as smartphones, laptops, televisions, or public address systems to broadcast audio to an unlimited number of nearby receivers, including speakers, earbuds, or hearing devices. Auracast™ assistants, such as smartphones, smartwatches, or hearing aid remotes will scan for Auracast™ and users will select an Auracast™ broadcast to join, similar to the UI commonly used to connect to Wi-Fi networks in public spaces.*" <https://www.bluetooth.com/auracast/>

PRESENTATION

Our presentation by this year's Field Day Coordinator, James Reed [KK4JFO], was on our upcoming Field Day. It will be June 22nd-23rd at Jackson Park around the building where we hold our meetings, with setup on Friday, June 21st starting at 5pm.

James explained that Field Day is the largest gathering of hams in the US, with nearly every radio club involved. All want to make lots of contacts during the 24-hour period, but at its root it's a training under adverse conditions, giving us a chance to test our emergency and experimental operations without using commercial power or our home stations and antennas.

We need *as many folks as possible* to help set up, work together as operators and loggers at the various stations, and then tear down. On Friday, July 21st from 5:00pm until dark we'll set up antennas and some of the tents. Saturday, June 22nd we'll come back by at least 9:00am and set up the rest of the site, including remaining tents, tables, generator power, etc. Field Day itself starts at 2:00pm Saturday and runs straight through 2:00pm on Sunday. Then we'll tear everything down and should be done by 4:00 or 4:30pm. Come for some, come for all!

BRARC will set up various antennas and stations. It was noted that, "Radio is a science, but antennas are an art." Antennas are the most important part of any ham station, and you can learn a lot by coming out on Friday night and Saturday morning to put everything together.

During Field Day, you'll get a chance to learn the features of the club's two Icom IC-7300 transceivers, at our SSB and CW stations. SSB is more popular than CW, but CW contacts count 2 points instead of 1. We plan to have a digital station running FT8/FT4, using a Yaesu FT-897 belonging to BRARC President Bill Gunn [KB2GUN]. All stations can use all bands but the WARC bands (60m, 30m, 17m and 12m). All licensed hams can operate, using the club call (W4YK), up to the privileges of the control operators present. We'll be using the N3FJP logger.

Danny Rector [N4ANX] will be the "coach" of our "Get On The Air" (GOTA) station, giving community members a chance to experience ham radio. Anyone who doesn't have a license, who has been licensed less than one year, or who is "a generally inactive licensee" is invited to



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make QSO's. The GOTA Coach supervises the operator of the station, doing such things as answering questions and talking them through contacts, but may not make QSOs or perform logging functions. GOTA contacts count 5 points each, and there are also Bonus Points.

Our transmitted exchange at all stations will be "3A NC". Our "Class" is 3A, for three stations "located in places that are not regular station locations and not using facilities installed for permanent station use", and we're in North Carolina. The GOTA and a VHF/UHF station we might set up do not count toward our number of stations, but do generate points for our score.

Field Day offers a number of ways to earn "**Bonus Points**". (Last year Bonus Points comprised 1250 of our total 3360 points.) James asked for volunteers to help with these possible bonuses:

- *Safety Officer* – 100 bonus points. This person must verify that all safety concerns on the Safety Check List (found in the ARRL Field Day Packet) have been adequately met. Mainly at setup. Needs coverage all 24 hours, but can be delegated.
- *Alternate Power* – 100 bonus points. Making a minimum of five QSOs without using power from commercial mains or petroleum driven generator. Burnis Souther [KK4VYT] volunteered, to oversee solar power setup and QSOs.
- *100% Emergency Power* - 100 bonus points per transmitter classification if all contacts are made only using an emergency power source. We will be using a generator and solar.
- *GOTA Bonus* – Completed contacts are worth 5 bonus points. There is no limit to the number of contacts a single GOTA operator can make. 100-point bonus if a GOTA station is supervised full-time by a GOTA Coach. (GOTA Coach must be present and supervising for at least 10 contacts.) Danny Rector [NA4X] is our GOTA coach.
- *Media Publicity* – 100 bonus points for obtaining publicity from the local media. A copy of the actual media publicity received (newspaper article, social media post, etc.).
- *Public Information Table* – 100 bonus points for a Public Information Table to make appropriate handouts and information available to the visiting public at the site.
- *Site Visitation by an elected governmental official* –100-point bonus if our site is visited by an elected government official as the result of an invitation issued by our group.
- *Site Visitation by a representative of an agency* – 100-point bonus if our site is visited by a representative of an agency served by ARES in our local community as the result of an invitation issued by our group. ARRL officials do not qualify for this bonus.
- *Field Day Youth Participation* – 20-point bonus (maximum of 100 points) for each participant aged 18 or younger who completes at least one QSO.
- *Educational activity* – 100-point bonus if we include a specific educational-related activity. The activity can be diverse and must be related to amateur radio. (See Susann Swan's article about Field Day on a later page.)
- *Message Origination to Section Manager* – 100 bonus points for origination of a formal message to the ARRL Section Manager or Section Emergency Coordinator. Include the club name, number of participants, Field Day location, and number of ARES operators involved with our station. The message must be transmitted during the Field Day period and a copy of it must be included in our submission in either standard NTS or ICS-213 format (or have the equivalent content) or no credit will be given. The message must



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leave or enter the Field Day operation via amateur radio RF. (The Section Manager message is separate from the messages handled in “Message Handling” and may not be claimed for bonus points under that rule.)

- *Message Handling* – 10 points for each formal message originated, relayed or received and delivered during the Field Day period, up to a maximum of 100 points (ten messages). Copies of each message must be included with the Field Day report. Messages claimed must be in either standard NTS or ICS-213 format (or have the equivalent content). All messages claimed for bonus points must leave or enter the Field Day operation via amateur radio RF.
- *W1AW Bulletin* –100 bonus points for copying the special Field Day bulletin transmitted by W1AW (or K6KPH) during Field Day weekend. An accurate copy of the message is required to be included in our Field Day submission. (Note: The Field Day bulletin must be copied via amateur radio.)

As noted, Bonus Points add up quickly!

James explained that Field Day is not intended to be a contest, although it feels like it. You may catch the fever, however. If so, please join us at the club shack during the year for some real contests. We regularly participate in NC and SC QSO Parties, ARRL Sweepstakes and others.

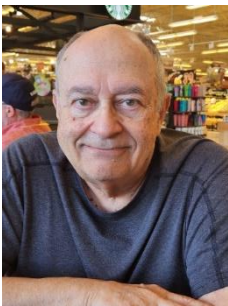
We ask that you all come and invite your friends, even if you don’t plan to operate. (But we hope you will!) It was suggested that the best time might be around 3:00-5:00pm on Saturday, as things will be in full swing and then they can stick around for the food at 5:00pm.

Oh yeah, *food!* BRARC will be ordering pulled pork barbecue and fixin’s from Harry’s for our Saturday night dinner at 5:00pm. Bring covered dishes to share, plus chairs. The club will also provide drinks. It’s always a good meal, and will fuel up the overnight operators, as well!

For any questions, contact James at jshreed@bellsouth.net or Bill at kb2gun@yahoo.com

NEW MEMBERS’ CORNER

By Susann Swan (K9FMV)



Welcome Bill Linhares, KQ4RMT!

Like many hams, Bill listened to short wave radio as a kid. When he was not road racing cars, Bill worked as an industrial engineer.



Welcome Latasha Esperon, KJ5GLV!

Latasha earned her tech license because her partner is a ham and he and his family speak over the radio. She wanted to be able to communicate with them, too.



MEMBER NEWS

By Susann Swan (K9FMV)

Congratulations to:

Ed Winstead, N4EDW; and Randall Nuss, KZ4HX on earning their Extra class license.

New ham Bill Linhares, KQ4RMT, on earning his General Class license.

IT'S FIELD DAY 2024!

By Susann Swan (K9FMV)

If you're a brand new ham, this is a great place to learn everything about amateur radio. You can observe, you can operate a radio, you can help set up and/or take down – and we'll even feed you. This is THE biggest day in ham radio in the United States when local clubs show off the capabilities of ham radio to the public. We will be set up outside of the building where the monthly BRARC meetings are held.

Field Day is an opportunity to meet other hams, learn how equipment and antennas are set up. There is as much fellowship happening during field day as there is radio contesting going on.

Special activities on Saturday, June 22

We hope to have an "Ask an Elmer" tent set up where you can get answers to your radio questions from experienced hams.

1:30 pm Winlink – a method to send emails over the radio. There will be a radio display and you will have an opportunity to try it out.

3:00 pm B.Y.O.B (that's "Bring Your Own Baofeng"). You have a handheld Baofeng radio and you're not sure how to operate it. Bring it with you to Field Day and learn how to use it.

4:00 pm Let's Conquer that Mic Fright! You have a license but are still shy about speaking on the air. Bring your Baofeng, or other HT radio and we will practice near the Field Day site in Jackson Park. We can use the simplex mode which doesn't use a repeater, so our conversations can't be heard very far away. We will also explain the protocol of how to check into a ham radio net.

5:00 pm BBQ Dinner, provided by the club. Spouses welcome.

ITEMS FOR SALE

MFJ-1622 Apartment Antenna, 40m-2m, 200w. \$70 Dave, W2CGG, 828-230-9333 (From MFJ: *"The MFJ-1622 Apartment Antenna covers 40 through 2 Meters, mounts outdoors to windows, balconies, railings, and works great indoors mounted to desks, tables, and bookshelves."*)

Yaesu FTDX-1200 with Mic and Signalink USB setup for the radio with cables. Also with EFHW antenna and coax \$400.00

Yaesu FT-2980 80 watt 2-meter radio. Brand New \$100.00

Icom 7300 \$600.00

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



1ST POTA ACTIVATION

I had been a member of BRARC for several months before I was able to attend my first meeting in April 2024 and the topic happened to be POTA. I had already been exposed to POTA and had created an account but hadn't even hunted at that point or even considered preparing for an activation. The meeting inspired me to log back into the POTA site and research. I then started hunting parks. At this point I've made just over 500 QSOs and listening to the activators I began to become more comfortable with the idea of my own activation. When I attended the June 2024 club meeting a member had brought in a box of miscellaneous radio parts and among them a MFJ OCFD antenna. That was really the last thing I needed to attempt an activation. On a weekend soon after I made my way to a local park only to find I had no internet so I couldn't use the POTA app to hunt or spot myself. Nevertheless, I strung the antenna, hooked up the coax and fired up the 20 watt Xiegu G90 with a LiFePO4 battery. I began scanning the bands and made 10 Park-to-Park contacts, the furthest being Texas, to count for my first activation. I used paper to log with and uploaded them later at home. A few takeaways: Being a Hunter helps prepare you to activate. Secondly, don't wait until you have the perfect setup. I learned from my first trip some modifications I'll make before my second trip and I imagine that process will continue. Lastly working your contacts as park-to-park (P2P) initially may help ease you in the activations before you start self-spotting and working pileups.

73, Wayne Fisher [KQ4GIK]

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Description
Sat, June 15	Informal Breakfast Get-Together – 9am, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Sat, June 15	License Exams – 9am by reservation, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Fri, June 21	FIELD DAY Antenna and Tent Raising – 5pm until dark, Jackson Park
Sat, June 22	FIELD DAY Station Setup – 9am until 2pm, Jackson Park
Sat/Sun June 22-23	FIELD DAY Operation– 2pm Saturday until 2pm Sunday, Jackson Park
Sun, June 23	FIELD DAY Teardown – 2pm until about 4pm, Jackson Park
Mon, June 24	Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM – 6:30pm. Mountain Area Healthcare Preparedness Coalition warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock.
Thu, June 27	BRARC Steering Committee Meeting – 7pm via Zoom.
Tue, July 2	BRARC Meeting - In person in Jackson Park. Also streamed via Zoom.
Thu, July 4	4 th of July Parade – Meet at 8am
Sat, July 20	Informal Breakfast Get-Together – 9am, Ingles 625 Spartanburg Hwy.
Sat, July 20	NO LICENSE EXAMS at Ingles. The VE's will be at the Hamfest giving exams.
Sat, July 20	WCARS Hamfest – 8am, Smokey Mountain Event Center, Waynesville.
Mon, July 22	Henderson County ARES/AUXCOMM – 6:30pm. Mountain Area Healthcare Preparedness Coalition warehouse at 518 S Allen Rd, Flat Rock.
Thu, July 25	BRARC Steering Committee Meeting – 7pm via Zoom.
Tue, August 8	BRARC Meeting - In person in Jackson Park. Also streamed via Zoom.



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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
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



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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