

Ham Chatter



Volume 47 Issue 4

An Official BARC, W4AMC, Publication

April 2013

Editor, Dave Langley, W4YDY

Email: barc@w4amc.com

Florida Hams Prove that Ham Radio Works When Cell Phones Don't

Next Meeting
April 9, 2013



After a day of exploring the Green Swamp Wildlife Management Area -- which covers 50,692 protected acres in Florida's Lake, Polk and Sumter Counties - with his grandson, Joe Cody, KE4WDP, of Winter Haven, Florida, saw that the roads were flooding and becoming hazardous. As he tried to drive out of the area, Cody's small pick-up truck got bogged down in the mud. Since he was out of cell phone range, Cody tried calling for help on the Dade City 146.880 repeater. Richard Parker, KF4ORW, of Dade City, Florida, heard the call and answered.

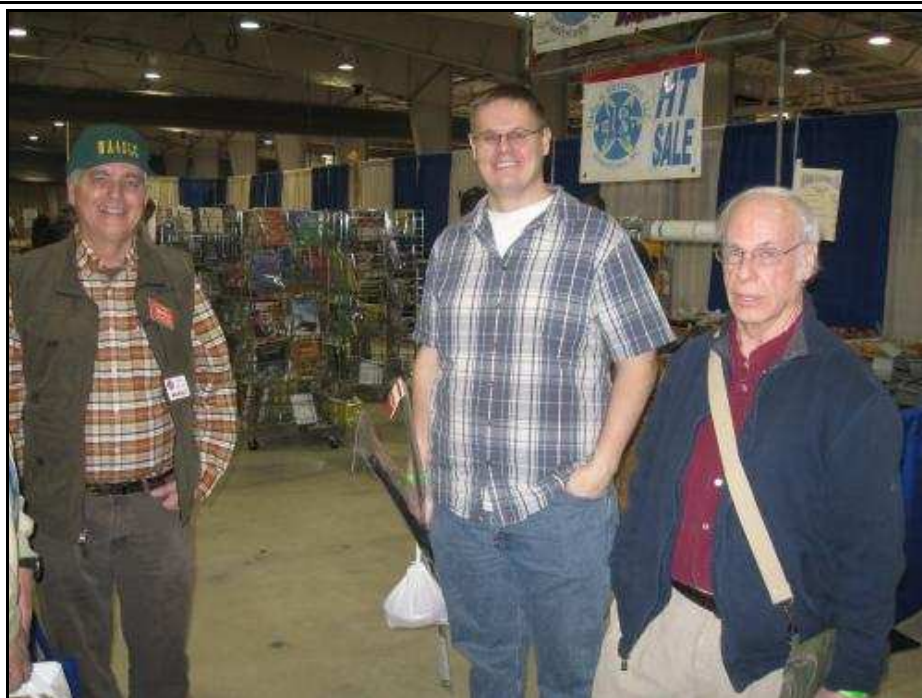
After hearing the situation, Parker called 911 in Pasco County, who put him in touch with the dispatch in neighboring Polk County. Cody passed his location on to Parker, who in turn passed it on to the Polk County Sheriff's Office. "Polk County 911 took over trying to get help," Parker said. "They called me back several times for more information and I was able to relay information from Joe to them. Then Ted Bulmanski, W4TKB, who is also from Dade City, started monitoring and copying Joe's information."

About 30 minutes later, Parker saw a helicopter fly over and around Cody's position, and after another 30 minutes, Cody radioed back on the repeater, saying he was on his way home -- thanks to a Lake County Deputy in a Sheriff's Office truck that had a winch. "We learned that Joe was eight miles inside Lake County," Parker explained. "That's why the Lake County Sheriff's Office responded

instead of the Polk County authorities. The Polk County Sheriff's Office called me back to say that the helicopter from Lake County found the truck inside Lake County and sent both a deputy from Lake County, as well as a Fish and Game Officer and winched him out of the mud. They called me back to thank us for assisting the stranded pair. Ham radio still works when other forms of communications don't." -- Thanks to ARRL West Central Florida Section Public Information Coordinator Kevin Poorman, KV4CT, for the information. - via arrl.org

The Brightleaf Amateur Radio Club will have its regular meeting on Tuesday, April 9 at 7:30 PM at VFW Post Home 7032 on 1108 Mumford Road in Greenville. Program TBA. All members, families and guests are invited to attend.

The next board meeting will be April 30 at 7:30 PM at VFW Post Home 7032 on 1108 Mumford Road in Greenville. All members invited.



BARC members Bill Dawson, WA4SLC, Josh Steele, KB3VKH, and Bernie Nobles, WA4MOK, enjoying the RARSFest on March 30. Some other BARC members spotted at the hamfest were W4EHF, AI4TN, K4IDD and WA4DAN.



Robert Young, NC4RY, Fuquay-Varina, demonstrating his Tarheel Screwdriver antennas to interested onlookers at the Raleigh hamfest.

Next VE Session

The next Brightleaf Amateur Radio Club VE session will be held **Tuesday, April 16** at the VFW Post Home 7032 on 1108 Mumford Road and will start promptly at 6:30 PM. Ted Bertrand, **KI4PWX**, 756-3734, bertrandf@ecu.edu. Please bring the following **required**:

- ◆ **Photo ID** (drivers license)
- ◆ **Original** Amateur Radio License
- ◆ **Copy** of Amateur Radio License
- ◆ **Original** CSCE's
- ◆ **Copy** of CSCE
- ◆ Test fee is \$15.00 .
- ◆ Proof of Tech Plus if before 3/21/87 and doing paper upgrade to General.
- ◆ SS Number will be needed if you don't have an FRN number.

Go to <http://www.w4amc.com/barcinfo.html#VE> for more information.

NC ARES Internet

<http://www.ncarrl.org/ares/>

Pitt County ARES

<http://www.pittares.com/>



Most members renewed their BARC membership for 2013

BARC membership ended with 81 members and after renewals, the membership stands at 74 including 2 new recent members. They are Rod Thompson, **N4PKW**, and Rufus Keel, **KA4RPZ**. Welcome to BARC. An updated roster with a new password was posted on the BARC web site on April 1. The password was sent with the latest Ham Chatter notification to members. Email barc@w4amc.com if you do not have the new password. - *W4YDY*



Happy Birthday

Brightleaf Amateur Radio Club members birthdays in **April**.

- | | | |
|----|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | KK4NOW | Robert Clarke |
| 3 | K4KBB | John McCoy |
| 15 | KJ4GDS | Brenda Bertrand |
| 16 | KJ4DMV | Geraldine Sanchez |
| 18 | WB4PMQ | Macon Dail |

Please let me know of any additions or corrections. - *W4YDY*

William D. Cope, Jr., AF4RP, SK

William Cope, AF4RP, Greenville, passed away on March 25, 2013. He retired from the Voice of America in Greenville.

Well Wishes

Thoughts and Prayers go out to the following:

Charlie Wells, K4SKI

Tom Parsons, W4TEP

Stan Barney, KJ4GDR

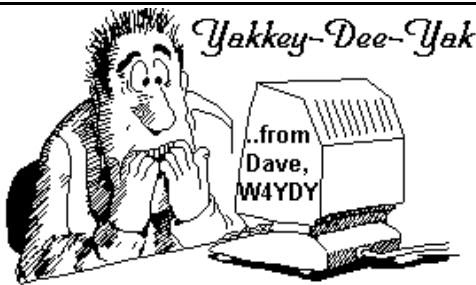


Please inform John McCoy, **K4KBB**, k4kbb@earthlink.net of any changes.

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Voice of America starts Digital Transmissions

On March 16, Voice of America (VOA) Radiogram program conducted a digital test sending streams of text (and one image) while inviting listeners to submit reception reports. According to Radiogram host Kim Andrew Elliot, KD9XB, the response from the amateur and SWL community was impressive with reception reports from 16 countries and many US States.

Thanks to the successful test, Radiogram officially debuted March 30 as a regular VOA program with continuing digital transmission experiments.

I recently read an article about a new antenna design. The fellow had used J Pole antennas before but decided to see if he could design one that would work better and not be too big for 2 meters. He experimented with several designs and came up with the Q Pole antenna for 2 meters. It looks like a circle with a tuning rod going through the southeast side of the circle. It also helps that the rod causes the RF to travel in one direction for more gain. The antenna is only about 2 feet in diameter. It could also be used as a mobile antenna.

I thought about trying to come up with something for HF to increase the gain of a beam. I thought about several designs but most didn't work at all, some made the beam less efficient so it was a matter of trying something else. I then took the beam apart and reconditioned it completely by installing new hardware, cleaning the traps and polishing the elements. That increased the gain by 2 db. As some things are discovered by accident, what worked was just that. I put a leaf rake at the top of the mask holding the 2 and 6 meter beams.

When I check the gain on the HF beam, it had changed but it had gone down. It was in the position shown in the



picture with the beam pointed to the ground so the rake was point 90 degrees to the right. When I faced the rake toward the ground, the gain went up another 3 db on all the beams! It **raked** in the signals! Pun intended. Now I've got to get Bernie to check my readings. Maybe next April, together we can design a more efficient antenna!!! - W4YDY

Radiogram airs:

- Saturday from 1600 to 1630 UTC at 17860 kHz
- Sunday from 0230 to 0300 UTC at 5745 kHz
- Sunday from 1300 to 1330 UTC at 6095 kHz
- Sunday from 1930 to 2000 UTC at 15670 kHz

... from the **IBB Edward R. Morrow Transmitting Station in North Carolina.**

The data transmissions can be decoded by anyone with an AM shortwave receiver using any of the popular sound-card-based programs such as Fldigi, Ham Radio Deluxe, MixW, MultiPSK, DigiPan (for BPSK31, BPSK63 and QPSK31 only), Co-coaModem (for Macs) and others.

In announcing the test before March 16, they sent out the following:

Each test will last one minute, unless otherwise specified, on the following modes at the audio frequencies indicated. During some tests as many as four modes will be used simultaneously . . .

- BPSK31 at 2000 Hz
- QPSK31 at 1000 Hz, BPSK31 at 2000 Hz
- QPSK31 at 1000 Hz, PSK63F at 1500 Hz, BPSK31 at 2000 Hz
- QPSK63 on 1000 Hz, PSKR125 at 1500 Hz, BPSK63 at 2000 Hz
- QPSK125 at 1000 Hz, PSKR250 at 1500 Hz, BPSK63 at 2000 Hz
- QPSK250 at 800 Hz, PSKR500 at 1500 Hz, BPSK250 at 2200 Hz
- QPSK500 at 800 Hz, PSKR1000 at 1500 Hz, BPSK500 at 2200 Hz
- PSKR500 at 1000 Hz, PSK63F at 1500 Hz, PSKR125 at 2000 Hz, and PSKR250 at 2500 Hz (5 minutes, 40 seconds total). The latter portions of the PSKR250 and 500 transmissions are formatted for Flmsg, a function within the Fldigi software suite. (In Fldigi, go to Configure > Misc > NBEMS > under "Reception of flmsg files." Click Open with flmsg and Open in browser and select the desired location of the flmsg.exe file.)

MFSK32 image on 1500 Hz (54 seconds)

Reception reports are welcome at radiogram@voanews.com. More information is available at the Radiogram website. <<http://voaradiogram.net/>>

According to Elliot, future VOA Radiogram programs will transmit only one mode at a time. "This will ensure the highest possible signal-to-noise ratio and the best possible chances for a successful decode. These broadcasts are an experiment. We will try different modes in different programs to see which work best via AM analog short-wave broadcast transmitters."

Editors note:

I should be able to pick up the transmissions since I am about 8 miles from the one half million watt transmitters! They are usually well over 40 db over S9 here! I use the Fldigi program now for data. It decodes many digital modes including CW! - W4YDY

Solar Cycle 24 May Have “Double Peaks,” Says NASA Solar Physicist

According to NASA, the current solar cycle -- Solar Cycle 24 -- should hit its “solar max” sometime in this year, but so far, solar activity has been relatively low. According to an article by NASA’s Dr Tony Phillips, this period of quiet has led some observers to wonder if forecasters missed the mark. But solar physicist Dean Pesnell of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center has a different explanation: “This is solar maximum. But it looks different from what we expected because it is double peaked.” Pesnell noted similarities between the current cycle and Solar Cycle 14, which happened between February 1902 and August 1913 and experienced a double peak. If the two cycles are in fact twins, he said that “it would mean one peak in late 2013 and another in 2015.”

Solar activity tends to swing back and forth: At one end of a solar cycle, there is a quiet time with few sunspots and flares, while at the other end, solar max brings high sunspot numbers and solar storms. Even so, astronomers -- who have been counting sunspots for centuries --

have noticed that a solar cycle is not perfectly regular, with the swing in sunspot counts taking anywhere from 10-13 years to complete. In addition, the amplitude of each cycle can and does vary, with some solar maxima being very weak (such as Solar Cycle 6), while others can be very strong (such as Solar Cycle 19).

“The last two solar maxima, around 1989 and 2001, had not one but two peaks,” Pesnell explained. Phillips’ article explained how “solar activity went up, dipped and then resumed, performing a mini-cycle that lasted about two years.” Pesnell said that the same thing could be happening now. Even though sunspot counts jumped in 2011 and dipped in 2012, he said he expects them to rebound again in 2013: “I am comfortable in saying that another peak will happen in 2013 and possibly last into 2014.”

According to Phillips, solar activity in the Sun’s hemispheres does not always peak at the same time. “In the current cycle, the south has been lagging behind the north,” he said. He explained that if a

second peak occurs, it will likely feature the Sun’s southern hemisphere displaying a surge in activity.

Pesnell is a member of the NOAA/NASA Solar Cycle Prediction Panel, a group of solar physicists that assembled in 2006 and 2008 to forecast the next solar max. “At that time, the Sun was experiencing its deepest minimum in nearly a hundred years,” Phillips’ article explained. “Sunspot numbers were pegged near 0 and x-ray flare activity flat-lined for months at a time.” The panel issued the following statement at the time, explaining its prediction:

“The Solar Cycle 24 Prediction Panel has reached a consensus. The panel has decided that the next solar cycle (Cycle 24) will be below average in intensity, with a maximum sunspot number of 90. Given the date of solar minimum and the predicted maximum intensity, solar maximum is now expected to occur in May 2013. Note, this is not a unanimous decision, but a supermajority of the panel did agree.”

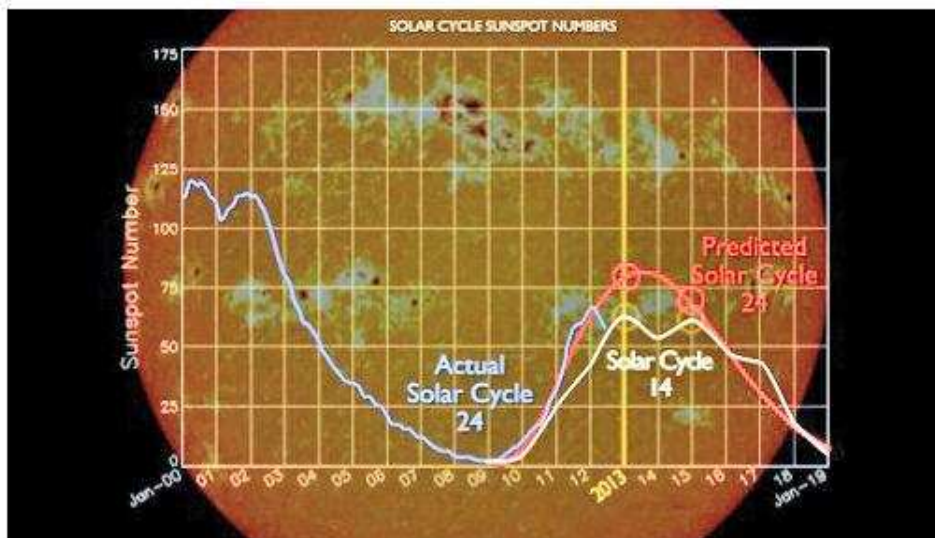
But according to Pesnell -- given the lack of solar activity in February 2013 -- a maximum in May now seems unlikely. “We may be seeing what happens when you predict a single amplitude and the Sun responds with a double peak,” he said. -- Thanks to NASA, Dr Tony Phillips and Science@NASA for the information. - via ARRL.ORG

I can't think of a thing to fill up this space!

April Fools' in QST



Fair warning! In keeping with its time-honored tradition, the newly released April issue of QST magazine contains no less than two items of highly dubious authenticity. Can you find them?



This NASA image compares Solar Cycle 14 (shown in white) with our current cycle, Solar Cycle 24 (shown in blue and red). Dean Pesnell of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center is predicting that Solar Cycle 24 will have a “double peak,” just as Solar Cycle 14 did in the first decade of the 20th century. Pesnell predicts that Solar Cycle 24 will peak twice -- once in late 2013 and again in 2015. You can watch a video explaining the double peak prediction at http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/videogallery/index.html?collection_id=15504&media_id=160463731.

Ham Ads

Ham Ads will be run, free of charge in Ham Chatter for three months for each renewal. Ads must be received by the last week of the month to be included in the following issue. Send ads to: **Ham Chatter, PO Box 8387, Greenville, NC 27835, ATTN: Dave Langley** or email to: barc@w4amc.com (no spaces)
NOTE: Commercial rates on page 7.

For Sale: 2 laptops & TV

1- Gateway 17" NV78 Dual Core Processor T6600, 500 GB HD, 4 GB Memory, Microsoft Office, Program for Yaesu FT 897 & FT 8800

2 - Acer 17" 77412-4815 Intel Pentium P6100 Processor, 500 GB HD, 4 GB DDR3 Memory, Same programs as above Will Take \$300.00 for each one


3 - Insignia LCD flat screen TV, 24 Inch, Hardly used, 2012 model. Model: NS-24LD100A13, \$150.00

Bernie Nobles, **WA4MOK**, wa4mok@embarqmail.com

For Sale: Kenwood TS-850 transceiver with: CW filters, mike, power cords, manual and original box: **Reduced Price!** \$700.00. Kenwood SP-520, Speaker: \$30.00. Kenwood MC-50 desk mike (with connector cable): \$60.00.

Murray, **K4MHM**: mmmm0320@gmail.com

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BARC Meeting Minutes - March 2013

BARC Meeting Minutes

Date: 3.12.13

Call to Order: 7:30 pm

There were 27 persons present as recorded in the sign in book.

Minutes: Approved as published in Ham Chatter.

Secretary's Report: Ted Bertrand, **KI4PWX**, had nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Gerry Clayton, **K4IDD**, gave the report.

Equipment: Ted Bertrand, **KI4PWX**, had nothing to report. BARC is looking for a new equipment manager. Contact Richard Campbell, **W4JNC**, if interested.

VE: Ted Bertrand, **KI4PWX**, reported that three candidates earned Amateur Extra at the last VE session. Congratulations to all. The next VE session will be April 16. See w4amc.com for detail.

Health and Welfare: **K4KBB** had nothing to report.

Ham Chatter: Dave Langley, **W4YDY**, had nothing to report.

Publicity: Taylor Millar, **W4WTM**, reported that announcements for the club meeting and VE session would run in the Daily Reflector.

Pitt County ARES: Bill Dawson, **WA4SLC**, had nothing to report.

Public Service: Josh Steele, **KB3VKH**, reported that he is asking for volunteers for the MS Walk in April and the

ECU Odyssey of the Mind science event. If interested contact Josh.

Future Programs: Terry Monday, **K4ZYD**, reported that the April program will be a Field Day discussion and a presentation by Peter van Houten, **KG4WEZ**, and John McCoy, **K4KBB**, on their recent mini-DX-expedition operating from the Outer Banks during the NC QSO Party. The May program will be given by Rick Niswander, **K7GM**, ARRL Treasurer and Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance at ECU.

Old Business: Interested in being the Field Day Chairperson? Contact Richard Campbell, **W4JNC**.

New Business: None.

Announcements: Raleigh Ham Fest, March 30. Down East Ham Fest, Kinston, April 27.

50/50 Drawing Winner: Richard Campbell, **W4JNC**.

Program: Murray Adams, **WA4DAN**, and Ron Oates, **AA4VK**, gave a presentation regarding their 2012 DX-expedition to Sable Island, off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada.

Adjournment: 9:08 pm EDT.

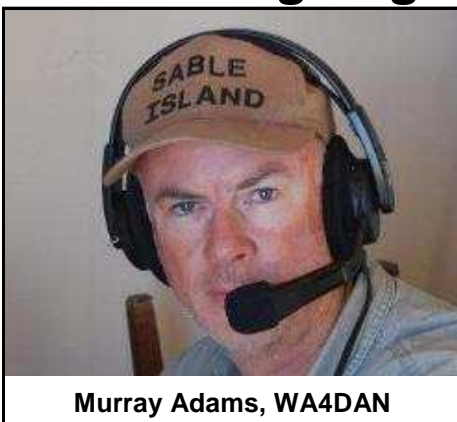
Respectfully Submitted by

Ted Bertrand, KI4PWX
BARC Secretary

BARC Board Minutes - March 2013

There are no board minutes for the March meeting. No official meeting since a quorum was not met.

WA4DAN going back to Sable Island, CY0, in October



Murray Adams, WA4DAN

Gary Bartlett, **VE1RGB**, and BARC member, Murray Adams, **WA4DAN**, are pleased to announce a DXpedition to Sable Island from October 1 - October 11, 2013. Approvals are in hand from Parks Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard. They have chartered

with Maritime Air Charter LTD to provide the Britten Norman Islander aircraft for landing on the beach.

The call, CY0P, has been issued for the October DXpedition. The CY0P (Parks) call was chosen in recognition of the

newest National Park in Canada.

VE1RGB is a veteran of two previous CY0 DXpeditions and is a top CW contester. **WA4DAN** has coordinated two previous CY0 DXpeditions, including the October 2012 DXpedition that was cut short due to Hurricane Sandy.

An all band 160-10 meter, CW/SSB/RTTY operation is planned.

More details to follow in the coming months.



Gary Bartlett, VE1RGB

Guilford County school to talk to astronauts aboard the ISS



GARA (Greensboro Amateur Radio Association) is assisting Guilford County Schools in making a direct contact with the astronauts on the International Space Station through the ARISS program. This contact is scheduled to take place during the week of April 29th through May 4th (exact date and time will be determined the week of April 8th), from the new Ronald McNair Elementary School in Browns Summit, NC.

Members of the GARA are providing expertise in setting up the radio equipment and will be preparing students for the event by sharing their knowledge of radio technology and the careers that relate to these skills. Additionally, RF Micro Devices, a local corporation that specializes in the design and manufacture of radio frequency (RF) solutions for mobile devices and communication equipment, is generously donating the radio equipment that will be used to make a direct connection with the International Space Station. The direct connection will allow students to talk to the astronauts at the time when the space station passes directly over the school. RF Micro Devices is also loaning the school the specialized antenna necessary to achieve the radio contact. Following the event, the donated radio equipment will remain at McNair Elementary, so students and teachers can start their own amateur radio station.

Ronald E. McNair Elementary is a K-5 public school located in Browns Summit, N.C. McNair Elementary is a part of Guilford County Schools, North Carolina's third largest school district, which serves more than 72,000 students. The school is in its first year and recently moved into a brand new facility. The 88,900 square-foot school building features sustainable materials, natural lighting in hallways, solar panels for water heating, light sensors, a light-colored roof to reduce heat gain, an integrated fresh-air system, sun shades for large windows and low-flow plumbing fixtures. Students attended their first day in the new school on Feb. 4, 2013. The school is named for astronaut and physicist Dr. Ronald E. McNair, who received his bachelor's degree from nearby North Carolina A&T State University. He was one of seven crew members killed on the Space Shuttle Challenger in 1986. - *Thanks to Tom Forrest, N4GVK, for info.*



The International Space Station

US Postal Service Introduces Global Forever Stamp



In addition to an increase in postal rates in January 2013, the US Postal Service introduced a new Global Forever First-Class Mail International stamp. Priced at \$1.10 each and offered in a pane of 20, the new stamp offers a single price for any First-Class Mail International 1-ounce letter to any country in the world, as well as 2-ounce letters to Canada. The stamp is available online, at post offices in the US or by calling 1-800-782-6724. -- *Thanks to ARRL Oklahoma Section Manager*

Kevin O'Dell, N0IRW, for the information - via ARRL.ORG 03/12/2013

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ATTN: Dave Langley, W4YDY or
email **barc@w4amc.com**

Help support *Ham Chatter* and the club.

Donations accepted!

NETS

VHF

- ◆ BARC Net, Mondays, 2000 on 147.09 MHz, W4GDF Repeater.
- ◆ Pitt County Emergency Communications Net, Mondays, 2030 on 147.09 MHz. (131.8 Hz Tone)
- ◆ Kinston Amateur Radio Society Net, 1,3,4 Tuesdays, 2000 hrs. on 145.47 MHz., W4OIX repeater in Kinston.
- ◆ Eastern North Carolina Traffic Net, Every night, 2030 on 146.685 MHz.
- ◆ Wilson Amateur Radio Club Net, Thursdays @ 2000 on 146.76 MHz.
- ◆ Piedmont Coastal Traffic Net, Nightly 2030 on 146.88 MHz.
- ◆ Newport WFO SKYWARN Net, Tuesday, 2100 on 145.21 MHz
- ◆ Carteret County ARS (CCARS) Emergency Net, Tuesdays, 1930 on the Newport 145.45 (-) MHz.
- ◆ Coastal Emergency Linking Net, Wednesday, 2100 ET on Ahoskie 145.13, Buxton 145.15, Columbia 146.835 & 443.30, Elizabeth City 146.655, Greenville, 145.35, Hertford 147.33, Williamston 145.41 & 444.25

HF

- ◆ Tar Heel Emergency Communications Net on 3923 kHz Nightly 1930.

NTS CW Nets

- ◆ 3.571 2000 hours, slow speed (5-8 wpm) Carolinas Slow Net
- ◆ 3.573 1900 hours, high speed (20 wpm)
- ◆ 3.573 2200 hours, slow speed (12-14 wpm), South Carolina/North Carolina

Pitt County Repeater Association

<http://www.pcra.us/>

BARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Apr 9	Regular Meeting	Jul 20	Cary Hamfest
Apr 16	BARC VE Session – TUESDAY	Jul 30	Board Meeting
Apr 27	Down East Hamfest - Kinston	Aug 3	HAM CHATTER DEADLINE
Apr 30	Board Meeting	Aug 13	Regular Meeting
May 4	HAM CHATTER DEADLINE	Aug 20	BARC VE Session – TUESDAY
May 14	Regular Meeting	Aug 27	Board Meeting
May 25/26	CQ WW CW WPX Contest	Aug 31	HAM CHATTER DEADLINE
May 28	Board Meeting	Aug 31/Sep 1	Shelby Hamfest
Jun 1	HAM CHATTER DEADLINE	Sep 10	Regular Meeting
Jun 11	Regular Meeting	Sep 14	Virginia Beach Hamfest
Jun 18	BARC VE Session – TUESDAY	Sept 24	Board Meeting
Jun 22/23	ARRL Field Day	Sept 28	HAM CHATTER DEADLINE
Jun 25	Board Meeting	Sept 28/29	CQ WW RTTY Contest
Jun 29	HAM CHATTER DEADLINE	Oct 24 ?	JARSFEST - Benson
Jul 9	Regular Meeting		Regular Meeting - 2nd Tuesday @ 7:30 PM
Jul 13/14	IARU HF World Championship		Board Meeting - Last Tuesday @ 7:30 PM

BARC 2 METER NET - MONDAY NIGHTS AT 8:00 PM - 147.09 W4GDF REPEATER - 131.8 Tone
 PCEC 2 METER NET - MONDAY NIGHTS AT 8:30 PM - 147.09 W4GDF REPEATER - 131.8 Tone
 BRIGHTLEAF AMATEUR RADIO CLUB STATIONS

W 1 V O A - W 4 A M C - W 4 U H S



**April 2013
Next Meeting
April 9**

To:



Ham Chatter
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 PO Box 8387
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