

# DURHAM FM ASSOCIATION



## September 2009 Newsletter Sidney Edwards W4QWM Reporting

### Tuesday September 1 @ Bullocks Barbeque 6:00 PM

**Rob Rousseau, KI4BKE, will talk about train communications and the ATCS Monitor. ATCS Monitor allows you to graphically monitor train traffic on railroads that use the Association of American Railroad's Advanced Train Control System (ATCS) Specification 200 protocol. Basically it allows you to see where the trains are on a railroad display based on wireless data from the signal control points. Rob will bring his laptop that will show the active train lines in North Carolina and we'll learn the status of current projects such as the NS H-line (that runs through Durham).**

#### Durham FM Association (DFMA) Club Meeting Minutes – 08/04/2009

At Bullocks Barbeque Recorded By Lowell (KK4PH)

Attending: Lowell(KK4PH), BOB(W4RWC), Charlie(NC4CD), Dee(KU4GC), MK(W4MKR), Joanna(KE4QOZ), Rhett(KE4HIH), Steve(W3AHL), Randy(KE4UCM), Mark(KJ4NPF), Dan(KR4UB), Steve(W3AHL), Dave(W4SAR), Don(KE4UVJ), Wilson(W4BOH), Dan(KD4AGQ), Jim(WD4KSZ), Sue(KA4AVM), Jim(WB4YYY), Wayne(KJ4GDW), Dewey(WA4AHR), Thomas(N4TMD), Mac(WQ8U), Ken(KI4QXJ), Jim(KB4OT). A total of 24.  
Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and had the drawing for the door prizes. The winners were Joannah(KE4QOZ), Don(KE4UVJ), and Dewey(WA4AHL).

#### Reports:

**Vice-President – Dee(KU4GC):** Program is not confirmed for next month.

#### Field Day Report – Dave(W4SAR):

The planning and execution seemed to go very well and the clubs worked well together. Total points before bonuses: 9245. Total points with bonuses: 11,115.

#### Secretary-Lowell(KK4PH):

Minutes from our last meeting not published because the secretary was out of town.

#### Repeater Manager-Charlie(NC4CD):

Charlie reported that antenna system has been repaired on the 147.225 repeater. A test was done at the top of the tower and the antenna was definitely found to be bad. Then new antenna is an Andrews DB-224 and is mounted on one of the three positions at the very top of the tower. Indications are 85watts forward and .5 watts reflected.  
New backup batteries were installed at "the hill" so the three repeaters at that site will continue to work during power outages. The 220 Mhz exciter was repaired by Sid but there seems to be some signal or noise in the repeater.

#### Treasurer-MK(W4MKR):

Checking	\$ 9,408.13
CD	\$10,226.14
Total	\$19,634.27

#### ARES Report-Randy(KE4UCM):

- The ARES leaders got a tour of the 911 center yesterday
- An ARES membership meeting is scheduled at the Red Cross in Durham, 8/15/2009 from 9-noon.
- There is discussion of cross-training Durham county communicators and Amateur Radio Operators

#### President's Comments-Wilson(W4BOH):

- Report on Joe Ragland. Wilson has known Joe for a long time and gave him a call. Joe is a former club member now living in Wilmington. He has had health problems but doing well now.

#### Program: Digital Television by Wayne(KJ4GDW)

Wayne began with a history of Televisoin and the history of HDTV and the technical aspects of it's implementation and some of the difficulties. North Carolina Public Television was a pioneer with their station in Charlotte being one of the first test sites.

His presentation covered an interesting set of related subjects such how the digital transmission fills the allotted channel space and that multiple channels are carried on one RF carrier.

There was discussion of antennas and some changes in coverage footprint based on the change from VHF to UHF, different power levels, and the nature of Digital vs Analogue. When considering what signal levels to expect Wayne referenced: [www.tvfool.com](http://www.tvfool.com)  
This site will give you the signal strength at your location from TV stations in your area.

Meeting was adjourned following Wayne's presentation.

#### Durham FM Association (DFMA) Board Meeting Minutes – 08/18/2009

Recorded By Lowell (KK4PH)

Attending: Rhett(KE4HIH), Joanna(KE4QOZ), Dee(KU4GC), MK(W4MKR), Dave(W4DAP), Kelly(W4KSP), Charlie(NC4CD), Lowell(KK4PH), Paul (KE4OXN), Bob(W4RWC), Wilson(W4BOH), Don(KE4UVJ)

#### Reports

**Vice-President – Dee(KU4GC):** The program next month will be given by Rob Rousseau, KI4BKE. The topic will be on the technology and protocol used by trains.

#### Treasurer-MK(W4MKR):

Checking	\$ 9,637.66
CD	\$10,226.14
Total	\$19,863.80

#### Secretary-Lowell(KK4PH):

Minutes from the prior board meeting and last club meeting were not published but will be included in the next Link.

#### Repeater Manager-Charlie(NC4CD):

New antenna is installed and batteries are ready to be installed.

#### MCU Report-Wilson(W4DAP):

The MCU is located at the QTH of Wilson's awaiting update to batteries.

#### ARES Report – dave(W4DAP)

- Update MOA between ARES and DFMA.
- Member in ARES is increasing
- Net successful on Mondays
- Tour of 911 went well. The county leader would work to help provide and locate equipment. Different scenarios were discussed about how Durham County ARES might be deployed.
- Red cross radio room is cluttered. A workday is scheduled for September 9 to inventory items in the room and find other storage for excess items. On roof is dual-band, as well as discone antennas. Tower is also available.

There was discussion about moving net from Monday Evening to Thursday evening.

**Action 2009-07-21-03:** Randy will distribute a marked up copy of a new MOU between DFMA and ARES. We will plan to review and vote on this change next month.

Status: In Progress

There will be a group from the board put together to work with Randy on the MOU document.

**Acton 2009-08-18-01:** Dee will organize a group to meet with Randy to clarify.

#### **New Business**

##### **Hamfest:**

We agree to go with the same location and Chairman. Kelly suggested we look into prices for bulk rate mailing. It was suggested this be done prior to the Durhamfest.

Tickets: Non-numbered tickets would be cheaper and Dave will look into some company advertising on the back.

##### **Repeater 147.225 performance:**

Bad popcorn noise in 147.225. Good signals can slowly fall into the noise. Suggestion was made to check the repeater during Possum Trot Net.

##### **Possum Trot Net:**

Net controls are becoming few. Ray has been great fill-in but has new job starting on Monday.

##### **Old Business**

##### **Meal Location:**

No comments on meal location.

##### **Batteries:**

Batteries were purchased and ready to be installed.

A advanced battery charger is on order for the batteries at the hill.

Meeting adjourned

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA) Club Meeting Minutes – 07/07/2009**

#### **At Bennett Point Grill Recorded By Lowell (KK4PH)**

Attending: Lowell(KK4PH), BOB(W4RWC), Mark(NoCall), Charlie(NC4CD), Dee(KU4GC), MK(W4MKR), Joanna(KE4QOZ), Rhett(KE4HIH), Steve(W3AHL), Sid(W4QWM)&Sandy, Thomas(N4TMD), David(W4DAP), Kelly(W4KSP), Randy(KE4UCM), Terry(WA4BVY), Sharon(KA4ZJB), Dan(KD4AGQ), Ed(WA4MXA), Bill(KI4RAN)&Pres, Don(KE4UVJ), Wilson(W4BOH), Ben(KB4NQH) & Sarah, Wayne(KJ4GDW), Ken(KI4QXJ), Derek (NoCall)

Dee called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and had the drawing for the door prizes. The winners were Steve(W3AHL) and Kelly(W4KSP).

There was discussion about the location for future meetings. Food was good here at Bennett Point Grill. It might be a bit cheaper at Bullocks, where we met last month. Our room was full at Bennett Point but could be arranged to hold a few more.

#### **Reports**

**Vice-President – Dee(KU4GC):** There are plans being made but nothing confirmed for next month.

##### **Treasurer-MK(W4MKR):**

Checking	\$ 9,808.44
CD	\$10,215 .73
Total	\$20,024.17

##### **Secretary-Lowell(KK4PH):**

Minutes from our last meeting were submitted by prior Secretary Kelly(W4KSP) and from the June 16, board meeting were submitted by Lowell(KK4PH) and published in "The Link"

##### **Repeater Manager-Charlie(NC4CD):**

Charlie reported that antenna system failed on the 147.225. Charlie was able to move to an alternate antenna, which is a Diamond X500 as a temporary measure. The board approved the recommendation for the club to spend up to \$1,500 to repair or replace the antenna and components for the 147.225 repeater. A vote was taken and approval of the expenditure was unanimous, or nearly so. In anticipation of an affirmative vote, and to more quickly return 147.225 to its normal coverage, a replacement antenna was ordered and is available to be installed when the tower-work can be combined with other commercial work in the area.

**Action 2009-07-07-01:** The club approved the expenditure of up to \$1,500 to resolve the problems with the antenna system on the 147.225 repeater.

##### **MCU Report-Dave(W4DAP):**

The MCU is located at QTH of Wilson(W4BOH). It is being cleaned up after use at field Day where it served well. It is anticipated that a sophisticated battery charger will be required in the near future.

##### **ARES Report-Randy(KE4UCM):**

- Getting records from prior EC.
- Making contacts with Red Cross
- AEC's are being appointed
- Looking for Liaison for the Tarheel Emergency Net
- Working to clarify and update Web Page at www.durhamares.org
- Plan to use 8pm Monday on 145.45Mhz as net time and frequency
- Setting up to use new Phone-Voice notification system.
- District 10 net meets last Saturday of each month at 9pm on 442.150 repeater
- Next ARES leaders meeting scheduled for July 18, at 10pm
- All ARES members meeting August 15

##### **President's Comments-Wilson(W4BOH):**

- This is a critical time and there is a concern that we would not be equipped to respond if we were needed in a time of crises.
- Suggested a "Remote Station Night" when we would all operate from remote, and non-standard, stations.

##### **Program: Digital Communication by Steve(W3AHL)**

Steve presented a high-level description of methods and technologies used in passing digital messages, generally in email format, in his prior area in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Those items discussed were the software required on the local PC, where are Winlink 2000, and PaLink.

The hardware and technology required for transmission, such as

- Standard Wi-Fi operated on 2.4 Ghz amateur frequencies
- Upgraded Wi-Fi components allowed while operating 2.4Ghz under Amateur Radio rules.
- Data backbone on 900 Mhz amateur frequencies
- 1.2 Ghz D-STAR for broadband connections
- Low-speed and long-range HF digital using TNC modems made by SCS, using PACTOR 3.

There was discussion following the presentation. There is interest in knowing more about these technologies. We could invite Steve to return in a few months to give us more detailed information on the hardware and software required to get start and how to set it up.

Meeting adjourned.

## Durham FM Association (DFMA) Board Meeting Minutes – 07/21/2009

Recorded By Lowell (KK4PH)

Attending: Rhett(KE4HIH), Joanna(KE4QOZ), Dee(KU4GC), MK(W4MKR), Dave(W4DAP), Kelly(W4KSP), Charlie(NC4CD), Lowell(KK4PH), Paul (KE4OXN), Bob(W4RWC), Randy(KE4UCM), Wilson(W4BOH)

### Reports

**Vice-President – Dee(KU4GC):** The program next month will be given by Rob Resau(KI4BKE) speaking on communications protocol used by trains.

### Treasurer-MK(W4MKR):

Checking	\$ 9,316.98
CD	<u>\$10,236.91</u>
Total	\$19,553.89

### Secretary-Lowell(KK4PH):

Minutes from the prior board meeting and last club meeting were published in the link.

### Repeater Manager-Charlie(NC4CD):

An Andrews DB-224 antenna was purchased for \$716.00. Charlie also has new feedline to go up. Waiting on a day that we can use the tower crew on a day they complete a commercial project early.

### MCU Report-Wilson(W4DAP):

The MCU is located at the QTH of Wilson's. Batteries need to be checked.

**Action 2009-07-21-01:** Dee or Wilson will contact Dan (KR4UB) to borrow a battery checker from Dewey (WA4AHR) and check the batteries.

### ARES Report - Randy(KE4UCM)

- Kelly will be liaison to DFMA for ARES.
- Meeting scheduled with Tim Booth in Red Cross Emergency Management
- Invited to tour the Durham 911 Center by Jim Soukup. And proposed for August 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Has met with Lisa, prior EC
- Using auto call with 49 numbers. Problem that number comes across as out-of-area.. Randy sent a note to the company asking if this could be changed.
- Memo Of Understanding
  - Looking for document with VA hospital.
  - Have MOU between ARES and DFMA. Randy would like to add language designating DFMA as administrative agent of ARES. This would allow donations to ARES be accepted by DFMA. ARES would be free to use DFMA logo and such.
- No more information will be fed to the Yahoo group. Current site is durhamares.org.
- New members to DFMA once received instructions on use of the repeaters and such. Question asked whether this is still offered.
- Idea was presented suggested to do a free mailing to all licensed hams in Durham County prior to the Durhamfeast.. ARES information would be included in this mailing.
- Question was asked about access to EOC. Randy has reviewed our Closet/Window where the equipment is stored. A request for help with emergency communications is anticipated. We will need training.
- Question about parking of MCU at EOC. It's on Randy's list of questions for Durham County Emergency Management.
- Randy suggested a copy of The Link be distributed to all licensed hams in Durham County. ARES information could be included in that mailing. Randy will distribute a copy of proposed information.

**Action 2009-07-21-02:** Charlie will look for a paper that documents our agreement with the VA Hospital.

**Action 2009-07-21-03:** Randy will distribute a marked up copy of a new MOU between DFMA and ARES. We will plan to review and vote on this change next month.

**Action 2009-07-21-04:** Dave and Dee will work to more closely connect the ARES and DFMA web sites.

**Action 2009-07-21-05:** Dee will pull together a package of information for new members, if hardcopy is available.

**Action 2009-07-21-06:** Protocol of linking of 444.10 Mhz repeater to 146.88, or other VHF repeaters, during times of Skywarm activation or other emergencies, is delegated to the ARES SIG.

### New Business

#### Walter Cronkite:

Walter Cronkite has died and Randy has passed on the suggestion that Walter's call be retired in honor of all the things he has done for Amateur Radio.

#### Meal Location:

There was significant discussion related to the location of our meetings. For Bennett Point, the food and parking was better, but prices a bit more expensive. On the positive side for Bullocks, there was more space and the food somewhat less expensive. It is a nuisance that Bullocks does not take credit cards.

**Action 2009-07-21-08 Motion:** "We meet at Bullocks for future meetings."

The motion passed with the vote of the board being six in favor and three opposed.

We will plan to eat at Bullocks unless there is a scheduling problem in which case we will meet at Bennett Point.

#### Batteries:

There is a need for backup batteries for the Hillsborough repeaters. The last power outage caused immediate failure of the repeaters. Paul has 5 x 100 ah batteries and 1 x 75 Ah battery that have never been used but are two years old. He is offering to the club for \$50 for 100Ah \$40 for the single 75Ah for a total of \$240.

**Action 2007-07-21-09: Motion:** "We purchase the replacement batteries available from Paul for \$240". A vote was taken and motion passed with nearly unanimous affirmative votes.

A more sophisticated battery charger is needed.

**Action 2007-07-19-10:** A vote was taken and a maximum of \$300 was approved to purchase and appropriate battery charger.

### Old Business

#### Tables:

**Action 2009-07-19-11:** Secretary is asked to send a thank-you note regarding the tables that were donated and regrets for the injury sustained while moving these tables.

Meeting adjourned

## Durham FM Association, Inc.

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Meets First Tuesday Every Month 6:00 PM