

DURHAM FM ASSOCIATION



April 2011 Newsletter Sidney Edwards W4QWM Reporting

Tuesday April 5

MEETING LOCATION: Our Meeting will be held at **Bullocks Barbeque 6:00PM**. For more information, see <http://www.dfma.org> Durham FM Association

PROGRAM:

Trials and Tribulations of Achieving that Properly Tuned Signal Vic, K0OUX, will present on his experience with PSK31:

"I will first give an overview of PSK31 and the importance of proper rig interface and what hardware / software and test methods one would use to achieve that first QSO. Time permitting, I will demo my set up, and if 40 m is open have a live QSO. (It would be great if 20m or 10m were open for a little DX)"

Durham FM Association (DFMA) Club Meeting Minutes – 03/01/2011

At Bullocks Restaurant, Recorded by Lowell Tieszen – KK4PH Secretary

Hams: Lowell(KK4PH), Meg(KI4LLL), Karen(KD4YJZ), Dave(K4SAR), Jim(W4KSZ), Dewey(WA4AHR), Dave(NA4VY), Vic(K0OUX), Bob(W4RWC), Robbie(KI4TTZ), Bruce(N1LN), Laurie(N1YXU), MK(W4MKR), Dee(KU4GC), Rich(KD6VK), Rhett(KE4HIH), Derek(K04T), Andy(K4GMG), Woody(K3VSA), Jim(WB4YYY), Sue(KA4AVM), Charlie(NC4CD), Ben(KB4NQH), Wayne(KJ4GDW), Jim(KI4HQO), Don,(KE4UVJ), Chris(K4CPS), JR(KG4NNT), Ken(KI4QXJ), Jim(KB4OT), Sam(KJ4VWG)

Non-hams: Randy and MG

31 hams attended and two non-hams for a total of 33 people attended.

Called to order:

Wilson called the meeting to order.

Woody(K3VS) invited DFMA to participate in Maker Faire. This is an event where crafts and artisan skills are exhibited. The date for the event is June 18, 2011 at the Kerr Scott building on the North Carolina State Fair grounds.

Reports

Treasurer's Report (MK):

CD: ----
Checking: ----
Total ----

Vice President:

- The speaker for April is not yet confirmed.

Business:

There was an appeal for Net Control operator for the Possum Trot Net. If interested contact Rhett(KE4HIH) or Jim(WB4YYY).

DFMA Members were invited to participate in displaying and demonstrating Amateur Radio at the Creekside Elementary School the following evening March 2. The MCU was to be driven to the school by Lowell(KK4PH) and Rhett would be setting up an exhibition of radios indoors.

Program

The program was presented by Bruce(N1LN) and the title was "Contesting, QSOs, Confirmation" Bruce described the making of QSO's during contests, and the logging of those contacts. He presented information on new programs to use for logging and how contacts can now be confirmed "online" with the "Logbook of the World" process accessed from ARRL.

Meeting was adjourned

Durham FM Association (DFMA) Board Meeting Minutes – 03/15/2011

Recorded By Lowell (KK4PH)

Attending: Lowell(KK4PH), Rhett(KE4HIH), Ken(KI4QXJ), Bob(W4RWC), Charlie (NC4CD), Dee(KU4GC), MK(W4MKR), Joanna(KE4QOZ), Randy(K4XRM)

Reports:

Secretary – Lowell(KK4PH): The minutes from the February 15, 2011 meeting were approved.

President – Dee(KU4GC): In the absence of the President, Vice President Dee called the meeting to order.

Vice-President – Dee(KU4GC):

Some ideas but nothing confirmed for next meeting.

Treasurer - MK(W4MKR):

There are 49 paid members

Repeater Manager-Charlie(NC4CD):

Last Friday worked at Hillsborough. Switched out repeaters and put duplexer back in with cable that had been resoldered. There seems to be noise on weak signals. The test equipment produced quiet signals into the repeater receiver. Working with Danny Hampton (K4ITL) to resolve.

Future plans are to move the 224.26 MHz and 444.45 MHz repeater antennas to top. There is a 450-460 Mhz split antenna at the top of the Hillsborough tower and will be tested to see how it performs.

ARES:

- 444.925 MHz repeater (98.4PL) is back on the air. John (KB4WGA) is also looking for a new home for 146.985.
- Red Cross shelter drill this Saturday 3/19/2011 with pre-event meeting this Thursday 3/17/2011. Topic is communicating with Red Cross and use of ICS forms.
- Have Red Cross room each 3rd Thursday except April.
- Followed up Mark Schell Durham County EC. Jeff's been tied up with budget concerns. Mark and Jeff will plan to meet to discuss APRS concerns.

Old Business

Creekside Elementary: We had six volunteers that helped Wednesday March 2, at the Creekside Science Fair. Dee requested pictures.

MCU:

Action 2011-03-15-02: Charlie (NC4CD) will contact Dewy about how the Tarheel antenna might be installed on the MCU.

Web Site: Demo of the Web site at the DFMA meeting was delayed because of the number of interesting Show and Tell items.

Maker Faire:

OCRA will be coordinating with DFMA and RARS. Date is June 18 at the Kerr Scott building on the NC State Fairgrounds.

New Business

MCU

Dee brought a copy of the evaluation of the MCU dated 20 March 2004.

Action 2011-03-13-03: The secretary will scan and send the report to the board and it can be posted on the website.

Meeting Adjourned.

Passing emails over Amateur Radio

By Lowell – KK4PH

If you've been around an emergency, or a serious drill, you may have seen messages get copied from a leader, such as Red Cross Shelter Manager, onto an ARRL Radiogram form to be sent by voice, or perhaps even CW, to the destination. I have found the procedure to be accurate but the ARRL radiogram form is unfamiliar to our served agencies and to gather the messages and transmit over voice channels becomes cumbersome and very slow.

A bit of new-news here is that Durham County ARES is moving away from the ARRL Radiogram and will use a version of the FEMA standard form ICS-213 message form. If you are subscribed to the DNC-ARES Yahoo Group, you can see it here:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DNC-ARES/files/>

I'll try to get the Durham ICS-213 form on the durhamares.org site as well.

The long-range goal would be to have a broad-band solution to exchange electronic copies of the ICS-213 forms. The HSMM-MESH that is being experimented in Orange County may be the solution someday, but for now we are working on VHF, or perhaps UHF solutions.

During our recent Red Cross Shelter drill and with Orange County ARES we attempted to exchange emails from the MCU, The shelter location in Orange County and the Orange County EOC, and the Red Cross in Durham at 1,200 BAUD on three different VHF frequencies. There were some successes and some failures. For this configuration, at the remote end we were using a VHF radio, TNC, and computers. The software was PACLINK with some email reader program such as Outlook or Thunderbird. At the Internet gateway site, where the email messages were transferred from the radio to the real Internet, we used a VHF Radio, a TNC, and a computer running RMS.

If you would like to experiment with sending emails over two-meters, then:

- Dig out your old TNC if you have one, it will probably work. I've not tried, but if you don't have a TNC, I believe one could use your computer soundcard with AGWPE to provide the TNC function
- Download and install the PACLINK program from the winlink.org website.
- Contact me Lowell (KK4PH), or Steve (W3AHL) to find a working RMS Internet gateway within range.

Becoming knowledgeable and developing this technology could really help us pass emails for the agencies we serve which would be a great step in moving beyond the passing of messages verbally over voice channels.

President's Corner

Well, your president has not done a good job of telling you about the good things going on lately. Fortunately, our other officers have been keeping our records and providing programs for us to enjoy. Our programs are especially enjoyable after a nice Bullocks meal, so if you didn't come to our last meeting to hear Bruce, N1LN, tell us about making DX contacts and getting them officially logged, you missed a good one. I know most of us aren't avid DXers or testers, but if you want to enter the occasional contest or just make some QSOs to

get new countries or states, it's nice to be able to use modern web based logging get your confirmations. You can get credit for your QSOs to make them count toward your DXCC (100 countries) or some of the many other awards available to DXers! Bruce walked us through the process of registering for and using LOTW, The Log of the World. LOTW registration helps make sure the entries sent in are genuine and ARRL recognizes them for award credits. Of course you can still chase paper QSL cards if you like. And don't forget, others may need your county or state for some sort of award THEY are working toward.

Meeting before last, we had a nice show and tell session, with a big amplifier, a tiny QRP rig, an airgun antenna installer, and a KW amplifier for six meters to talk about. The members present made many complimentary remarks about the show and tell items and the ensuing discussions. In fact, I think we'll likely have more show and tell sessions in coming months. I know many members have interesting projects or historical artifacts that would make good show and tell material, think about what you have made or bought that may be of interest to the members.

For the UPCOMING MEETING, April 5, Dee has arranged for Vic, K00UX, to talk to us about PSK31, a simple digital mode that is becoming more and more popular. It is very efficient, usually getting through with only a few watts of power and requiring very little bandwidth. If you have an HF transceiver and PC, all you need are some cables and a simple interface box, which you can either build or buy. Rumor has it that there will be a live demo and maybe even a real contact.

If you don't want to come to eat, please join us for the fellowship and programs! We gather starting at about 6 and the meeting starts at 7.

Are these programs not just what you want? How about putting one on yourself? There's nothing like organizing and presenting a program to make one appreciate the work done by other presenters!

Field Day organization has started! Dave, W4SAR, has agreed to handle DFMA field day organizing along with his work on the OCRA side of the operation. Of course we don't really have "sides" out there. Both recent joint efforts have been successful, with people pitching in as one group to get things done! It would be nice if DFMA could send out some more operators, KP helpers, antenna erectors, and campers to help make this year's operation even more successful. Based on previous scores and my observations of our operations, it's obvious we can substantially increase our score and easily capture victory in our class. Many of our stations have several hours of inactivity, due to lack of operators. A few people have been getting their CW skills back up, so they can contribute valuable CW points to the score. Our fine MCU, which has had several radio additions lately, will be serving as home to at least three stations again!

The score isn't everything, of course. Field Day shows us how well we can operate in the field and exposes the shortcomings in our plans and equipment. So please use the opportunity to get your radio and camping gear in shape for emergency deployment. Also, of course, the opportunities for eyeball QSOs around the kitchen are nearly unlimited, so you can satisfy your need to BS with other hams, sometimes even at the nice meals prepared by Dee and MK!!

And speaking of field work, did you listen to or participate in our recent joint ARES exercise with OCRA and the Red Cross? The MCU was out at the Durham EOC (Good job Lowell and Matthew!) and the Orange EOC was manned with voice and Winlink capability. Mobile and home stations were checked in and one shelter was open, with onsite radio communication back to the EOCs and Red Cross building. Our core ARES people are working hard to help us become competent assets to serve when needed, but they need more help from more of us. We need more people to run nets from home, from the Red Cross shack, or from the MCU. We need people willing to serve at shelters or to be sent to trouble spots, if necessary. There are opportunities to help with maintenance and upgrade of the MCU. Please consider talking to Randy McCray, K4XRM, our faithful ARES leader, about getting more involved with ARES.

And speaking of nets, we would like to have you on the DFMA ARES net, Thursdays at 8:30 PM (2030 for the 24 hour minded), followed by the DFMA announcement/ragchew net at 9. It's fun to hear people from our counties and the surrounding counties check in and update us on their doin's. It's a great chance to meet someone new or tap the considerable technical experience of some of those checked in.

OK, please come out for our next meeting, April 5, and bring a friend if possible. If you run into an unfamiliar ham on the repeaters, invite them out too!

73, Wilson W4BOH

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Meets First Tuesday Every Month 6:00 PM