
NEWSLETTER



W4BFB Sells Repeaters, shuts down club!!!!

On March 25 2014, Bryan Ferdinand K4NET announced the sell of ALL W4BFB repeaters, clubroom equipment, and the dissolving of the club. A very persistent group from Yemen bought everything, and has been rumored to have purchased Anderson Mountain in Lincoln Co., Mt Mitchell, and various other sites through out North Carolina. The Group was said to be exploring an idea of linking several repeaters from Manteo to Murphy, and called the "system" a tactical imperative. This group of Yemen prospectors have been buying HAM stations all over the US and have just started their purchases in NC. When asked "what are we going to do now?", Mr Ferdinand said "Bingo is a nice option and there is always watching paint dry!"

A group of Dx'ers that typically operate on 27.025 MHz were very offended by this transaction. One of these Dx'ers know as "Snowman" said, ham ham blah blah mala mala blah blah

Worldwide!!!!!!!!!!" At time of press I was still unable to decipher exactly what he said, but I did pick up on an occasional "AUDIO, AUUUUUUDIO", the rest I ran through Google Translate with no avail. With lack of translation I did have to rely on mannerisms and those all pointed to anger which I attributed to the new "System" of the Yemenese.

According to Bryan, this process will be painless and will be effective starting April 1 2014. The repeaters should all be OFFLINE before the end of the day on April 1st. Use of these (and other) repeaters is prohibited for all people who are not from Yemen or are sympathetic to their cause.

Hopefully the PSGnet "Saturday Ragchew" @ 8pm on 145.230, and the Metrolina 2M Emergency Net @ 9pm will be able to be called one last time before the take over. Be there for both nets and check in one more time! Happy April Fools Day!

Restaurant Review

VEGANS Unite!!!

We have decided to discontinue a restaurant review due to every Piedmont Spotter becoming Vegan. Meat is so over rated and just down right unhealthy. From now on we will be in search of a good Fallafal or a Veggie Burger. Until Further Notice NO MORE MEAT!!!!

NEWSLETTER

BIG100Net@gmail.com

May 20 2014



Once again it is time for the “Big 100 Net”! We had a blast last time and we’re hoping it will be even bigger this year. As we did last year, we will open the net up for Hams, 3rd Party, and Scanner listeners to check in. We feel this is an opportunity to encourage family, friends, and scanner listeners to embrace the world of Ham Radio. Last year between the repeater, email, and PSK31 we had 109 check-ins and KE4EGR John from Mooresville NC was #100 and got in via E-mail.

Arrangements are still in the works for back ups to the Net Control to capture stations that

may be weak into the repeater or checking in by other modes, so if you want to sign up to help...let me know. I will be calling the Big 100 Net on May 20 2014 starting around 7:45. Help us promote this net by checking into your other nets and passing this along during the announcement or ragchew portions. This is a great Amateur Radio Promoting Event and believe me I have been asked “when are you going to do it again” since the morning after the last one. Monitor the 145.230 Machine each night at 8PM and more details will be released soon! Mark May 20th on your calendar!
-KK4GEV LeeSossamon

April Fools

The first front page was a joke. W4BFB is still operating strong and keeping up a great repeater system, and have not been approached by the Yemenese. Also we have absolutely positively in no way shape or form become Vegan!!!! I as well as my Ham brothers and sisters enjoy gathering together around a bountiful meal, and that is a tradition that I don't fore see changing anytime soon. Unfortunately I do not have a Restaurant Review for this edition. If you have a restaurant that is top notch, send me an email about it. I will take all suggestions and will chose between them the ones that deserve a restaurant review. I like Showmars, Wendy's and Bojangles just as much as the next guy, but I'm looking for something a little different. We all have our “Old Standby” type places, but I'm looking for places that have the Old Standby feel that are maybe less known and are a little branching out from the old and familiar. Y'all Go Eat somewhere and tell me about the good ones!

kk4gev@gmail.com

Repeater Etiquette & Good General Information

WHAT IS A REPEATER?

Let's get basic for a few paragraphs... and if you're an old-timer, you might want to read through this section just to see if we got it right.

First, what exactly is a "repeater"? And why do we use them?

Without repeaters, the communication range between Amateur VHF-FM mobile and handheld radios at ground level is limited -- five to fifteen miles for mobiles, and just a couple of miles for handhelds. The distance you can communicate is usually referred to as "line-of-sight" -- you can talk about as far as you can see (if you cut down the trees).

To extend our range, we use **repeaters**. A repeater is a specially designed receiver/transmitter combination. When you operate through a repeater, its receiver picks up your signal on the *input* frequency, and the transmitter re-transmits -- or "repeats" -- you on the *output* frequency. For example, one of the RARS repeaters hears you as you transmit on 146.04 MHz, and repeats you onto 146.64 MHz. You'll hear this repeater referred to as *Six-Four*.

Repeater antennas are located on tall towers, buildings, or mountains, giving them much greater range than radios with antennas near the ground. And when you're in range of a repeater, you can talk to everyone else in range of that repeater.

RARS' 146.64 repeater is located in west Raleigh, near the beltline and Hillsboro St. Its antenna is on the side of a tower that puts it about 350 feet above average terrain. A mobile station running 50 watts can reliably communicate through the repeater out to about 35 miles. So if you were 35 miles *north* of the repeater, you could talk to someone 35 miles *south* of the repeater. That's **70 miles** between you -- a whole lot better than the 10 or so miles you could cover without the repeater!

Repeaters can have many features beyond just extending the range of mobile or handheld radios. One especially useful feature is called **Autopatch**. A telephone line and special control equipment at the repeater allow you to make local phone calls from your radio. Now, this is not exactly a replacement for a cell phone. You can't use Amateur Radio for your business, including autopatch. You can't receive calls, you can make only local calls, and your conversation is *not* private! Everybody else listening to the repeater hears your call. Still, autopatch is handy, within its limitations.

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HOW DO YOU USE REPEATERS?

There are literally thousands of repeaters across the US (and the world). Each one can have it's own peculiarities and unique operating procedures, but there are some basics that apply to almost all of them. Really complete instructions would fill a book, bore you to tears, and start some fights about what's correct and what's not (operating procedure is a matter of strong opinion in Ham Radio!). We'll risk all of that now, but try not to fill a book.

PLAIN OLD TALKING. Mostly, you're here to get on the air and chat, right? OK, first you set your radio for the repeater you want to use. Don't know how to find a local repeater frequency? The RARS web site has a list of the Triangle area 2-meter repeaters. Check it out [here](#). If you're outside the Triangle area, you'll need a repeater directory. They're available from the [ARRL](#) and the [SouthEastern Repeater Association](#). At the very least, you can just scan across the band for activity using this chart as your guide (click on the chart for a larger view):

Once you've selected a repeater and dialed it up on your radio, the first thing you should do is... **LISTEN** for a minute. Repeaters are *party lines*. Lots of people use them on and off throughout the day, and the one you've selected may be busy with another conversation right now. So listen for a minute. (Does anyone remember what party lines are? Kids, ask your grandparents!)

If the repeater isn't busy, key your transmitter and say something like "*KN4AQ listening. Anybody want to chat?*" (Use your own call, not mine, please). You could call CQ, but that time-honored method of seeking a contact never caught on with FM operators. Somebody may even tell you your not *supposed* to call CQ on FM, but you can. What the heck, go ahead and call CQ.

When you release your transmit button, most repeaters will stay on the air for a few seconds, and many will send some kind of *beep*. Then, the repeater transmitter drops off the air. This little interlude is called **hang time**. The beep is there to remind everyone to leave a pause between transmissions in case someone wants to break in. Even if there's no beep, leave a pause anyway. Somebody may have just come across a traffic accident and needs the repeater to report it. If nobody leaves a pause between transmissions, they can't break in.

If somebody answers you, then have a good time! You can talk about anything you want – there are not many rules about the content of Amateur conversation. You *can't* use Ham Radio to conduct your business, but you *can* talk about where you work and what you do. Prime time TV language has been peppered with some *hells* and *damns*, and so has language on some repeaters. RARS discourages that. You're not having a private conversation – you may have lots of listeners, some of them children. Keep that in mind as you choose language and subject matter.

How long do you talk? I see you're catching on to the party-line concept. Maybe somebody else wants to use the repeater when you're done. There's no hard rule. It depends on the time of day (rush hours are *prime time* for mobiles, evening is also a busy time, while 2 AM is pretty empty), and who else might want to use the repeater. If you've been interrupted several times by others needing the repeater to call someone, maybe you've been on a bit too long.

(cont 5)

THREE-WAY RADIO. Not all conversations are strictly two-way. Three, four or five or more Hams can be part of a **roundtable** conversation (five or more will be pretty unwieldy). A free-wheeling roundtable is a lot of fun... and it poses a problem: when the person transmitting *now* is done, who transmits *next*? Too often, the answer is *everybody* transmits next, and the result is a mess. The solution is simple -- when you finish your transmission in the roundtable, specify who is to transmit next. "... *Over to you, Rick. KN4AQ.*"

WE PAUSE FOR STATION IDENTIFICATION. The *Rules* say you must ID once every 10 minutes. RARS is *big* on clear identification when you use our repeaters (as is W4BFB), but you don't have to overdo it. Give your callsign when you first get on (this isn't specifically required by the rules, but RARS (& W4BFB) encourages it on our repeaters), then once every 10 minutes, and again when you sign off.

You don't have to give anyone else's callsign at any time, although sometimes its a nice acknowledgment of the person you're talking to, like a handshake.

BREAKING IN. Repeaters are shared resources -- the party-line. There are many times and reasons that a conversation in progress might be interrupted. You might break in to join the group and add your comments on the subject at hand. Someone might break in on you to reach someone else who is listening to the repeater. You might have to report an emergency. *How* to break in is the subject of debate and disagreement. Here are some suggestions:

Pick a good time. If you have an emergency, a good time is *NOW*. That's why there's a pause between transmissions. Otherwise, listen a bit. Read the ebb and flow of the conversation. One of the fastest ways to establish a reputation as a jerk is to frequently butt your way onto the air without regard for the people already talking.

Give your call, and say what you want. When you've listened and decided it's OK to break in now, transmit quickly when the other station stops, *before* the beep, and say something like this: "*KN4AQ, I have an emergency,*" "*KN4AQ, can I make a call?*" or "*KN4AQ, can I add my 2¢?*"

What about "Break?" The problem with just plain "*break*" is that nobody knows exactly what it means, and everybody has to stop and find out. Some Hams will tell you that break means "*I just want to join in or make a call,*" "*break-break*" means "*I have very important traffic,*" and "*break-break-break*" means "*I have a dire emergency.*" That's fine, but not *everybody* knows that. Plain English works better.

Maybe somebody's breaking in on *you*. What do you do? Easy -- let them transmit, *right now*, unless you know absolutely and for sure that they do not have an emergency. Maybe somebody hasn't read this guide and isn't the expert operator you are now, and they just say "*break*" or drop in their call, when what they really mean is "*HELP!*" So let them talk. Say "*go ahead,*" and give your callsign. And if they're one of those boneheads who's interrupting your perfectly good conversation for no reason but to hear themselves talk, well, bite your lip and be glad you know better.

The exception is when someone actually announces an emergency. Then **CLEAR THE DECKS! DO NOT TRANSMIT!** The station who declared the emergency has the frequency, and unless they ask for your help, don't give it. Unless... always an unless... they obviously don't know how to handle the situation... and you DO. (You do, don't you?) (Cont. 6)

#\$%~á@&#+*!! What was that I just heard? A burst of foul language and nasty noises on the repeater? Jamming? Sounds like something straight out of **CB!** I'm **OUTRAGED**, and I'm gonna tell that sucker off! He can't get away with that on *our* repeater! Gimmie that microphone! (Remember we all put away the CB's for a reason back in the day)

Cool down. It doesn't happen often, but it does happen – it's a big world out there, and there are some bad people in it. Some of them find a Ham Radio now and then, and discover the delight of offending an audience. The key word is **audience.** Deliberate interference and bad language are designed to *make you react.* The person doing it wants to **hear you get mad.** They love it. And if they don't *get* it, they go away, usually quickly. So when you hear the rare nasty stuff on the repeater, just ignore it. Don't mention it at all on the air. Don't mention that you're not mentioning it.

Sometimes a repeater control operator will decide that the best way to handle the situation is to turn off the repeater or one of its functions for a while, but the rest of us should bite our tongues and be silent.

DX! Well, you probably won't be hearing Albania on two-meters anytime soon, but VHF does have it's own form of DX. A few paragraphs ago we mentioned that the RARS .64 repeater had about a 35 mile range. **Usually.** Sometimes, though, VHF/UHF *opens up*, and stations can be heard for hundreds of miles. This is another book-length subject. We'll just squeeze in that VHF/UHF band openings are a double-edged sword.

It's exciting to talk to someone 200 miles away, and it's OK, too. But keep in mind that repeaters were designed to cover local territory, not half the country. So when the band opens up, there is the potential for lots of interference as well as lots of fun. Repeaters on the same frequency will suddenly be too close together. You could very easily be keying up two or more of them at once. To be responsible, get to know where your signal is going (a repeater directory will help). Use a directional antenna, minimum power and keep your conversation short.

On .64, we have to be particularly sensitive to another 146.64 repeater in Winston-Salem, about 100 miles west. When the band opens, even just a little, their mobiles begin keying up our repeater, and we begin keying up their repeater. While normally not fatal, this can be irritating. Running minimum power, either mobile or from home, will help. That repeater uses 100 Hz tone full-time, and our antenna and tower put a deep null in their direction, so it's not a big problem anymore.

How much power is too much? Within 15 miles of the .64 repeater (that's every place in Raleigh), two to five watts into a mobile antenna is all you need. 50 watts is excessive. At home, with an antenna up on the roof, 50 watts is **really** excessive for talking through a local repeater. When the band is open, even a five-watt mobile signal can travel from Raleigh to Winston-Salem. At those times, patience and courtesy will help a lot.

This information was found on the **RARS website in an article by KN4AQ, Gary Pearce.** You can read the whole article at <http://rars.org/repeater/rptrguide.htm>

Many of you probably recognize the name Gary Pearce. Gary, KN4AQ, now produces the online TV show **HamRadioNow** at www.HamRadioNow.tv. YES! That's an Online TV Show that folks like us can relate!

I'd like to thank Gary for allowing me to use parts (most) of his article for our newsletter. You may also want to check out the RARS website as they are a class act bunch of folks up there in Raleigh, and if you happen to travel in that area key up a repeater or two for a great QSO.

Local Nets

Daily Nets:

8:00 PM PSGnet	145.230 tone 118.8
9:00 PM CLTMetro 2 meter Emergency Net	146.940 tone 118.8
9:00 PM Blue Ridge Emergency Net (GSP)	146.610 tone
9:30 PM Central Carolina Traffic Net (Wilkesboro)	146.820 tone 94.8

Mondays:

8:30 PM Shelby ARES Net	146.880
9:00 PM Cleveland Co Simplex Net (1st Monday of the month)	147.505

Tuesdays:

7:00 PM Catawba Co RACES	145.170 tone 88.5
7:30 PM Gaston Co. Amateur Radio Society	147.120 tone 100
8:30 PM Triad SKYWARN® Net	147.255 tone 82.5

Wednesdays:

7:30 PM Mecklenburg ARES Net	146.940 tone 118.8
8:30 PM Rowan Emergency Net	145.410 tone 136.5
9:00 PM GAARC Amateur Radio Operators Net (ARES)	146.805 tone 100
9:00 PM ICARS Net W4SNC	146.685 tone 77

Thursdays:

7:00 PM Gaston ARES	147.120 tone 100
7:30 PM Lincoln RACES	147.015 tone 141.3
8:00 PM Boone NC	147.360 tone 103.5

Fridays:

8:00 PM GRITS net	147.150
8:30 PM Shelby ARES	146.880

Saturdays:

8:30 PM Dixie Radio Pirates Net	145.410 tone 136.5
9:00 PM 6600 Net	145.190

Sundays:

8:30 PM Mecklenburg Simplex Net	147.505
9:00 PM Caldwell Amateur Radio Emergency Services Net (CARES)	147.330 tone 141.3

Net Totals

Month of February 2014

February 2014

Traffic	4
Announcements	59
Check ins	705
Minutes	904
Nets	28

Charlotte Regional SKYWARN®

February 2014

WX Reports	151
Check In's	10
Minutes	780

Charlotte Regional Skywarn had TWO Weather Nets during the month of February. One net was Winter Weather Related and the other was a Thunderstorm that caused a few Severe Warnings before it left our area. Thank you all for your support and for all the good information that was given to the National Weather Service in Greenville-Spartanburg.

Skywarn Training

We are pleased to announce that **Charlotte Regional Skywarn** has arranged to have Tony Sturey from the NWS to hold the Basic and Advance Skywarn Spotter courses in our area.

Date: April 12th 2014

Time: 10:00am to 2:00pm

Location: Salvation Army Charlotte, 501 Archdale Dr, Charlotte NC, 28217

Basic Class Starting at 10:00am ending at 12:15~12:30

30 Min Break

Advance Class Starting at 1:00pm ending at 2:00~2:30

Both of these courses are FREE.

We are limited to a class size of 75 people. If you plan to attend, please RSVP and send me an email to n1crg@outlook.com

Currently we still have some available room for more to sign up.

ATTENTION! CALLING ALL HAMS



207 Low Bridge Rd.
Iron Station, NC 28080
(704) 913-5408

Kk4qbu@yahoo.com

CLUB MEETING

WHEN:

Almost Every Thursday
(contact kk4qbu for specifics)

Starting @ 5:30 PM thru 9:00 PM

WHERE:

AR Byrd Company, Inc.
171 Joshua Court
Lincolnton, NC 28092

ACTIVIES:

Bring anything you would like to talk about or projects you want to work on or just come on out to Rag Chew
We do have some new antennas on the Building

Who is invited?

Anyone with an interest in Amateur Radio
Licensed or Unlicensed

Tying Ribbons on it!

Charlotte Regional Skywarn® arranged Skywarn® Spotter Training April 12, n1crg@outlook.com to RSVP.

Charlotte Regional Skywarn® at Catawba Valley Hamfest April 19 for meet and greet THEN at the Lenoir Amateur Radio Club Meeting May 8 for meet and greet, and light presentation.

PSGnet will sponsor the 2nd Annual Big 100 net on May 20. We hope to blow last year's total of 109 out of the water! For more info or to volunteer to help please email Big100net@gmail.com

Thank You all again for making this adventure as enjoyable as it is! Each night at 8PM we (as net controllers) really enjoy having each of you check in with us. We have between 25-40 check ins each night and we really appreciate you choosing to check in with us. As we have said from the start of the Piedmont Spotter Group,

“Check in with us every night, and any other Net you feel comfortable checking in to”. We really believe in that statement and want to continue to encouraging checking in with as many nets as you are comfortable. We hope that you will “hang around” with us some because our check ins sometimes take a second or two longer to do, and that’s simply because we do things a little different than other nets.

Also we want to encourage you to get those ARRL Radiograms out and let’s pass some traffic! I want to issue this challenge, IF you have someone that has shown interest in Ham Radio, send them some NTS Traffic through our net to show them one more encouraging message to get that ticket!!!

73’s and Stay RadioActive

Lee Sossamon

PSG Marketing and PR

Assistant Emergency Coordinator, Charlotte Regional Skywarn®

GRITS# 941

Calendar**Skywarn® Spotter Training**

April 12 2014

Salvation Army Building
Archdale Dr Charlotte

April 19 2014

Catawba Valley Hamfest
Morganton NC

May 10 2014

Charlotte Regional Skywarn®
Lenoir NC LARC Meeting

May 20 2014

BIG 100 Net on 145.230mhz

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