

Minutes of the Forsyth Amateur Radio Club - 10 April 2017

By Jim Register (KV4SJ)
Secretary, Forsyth Amateur Radio Club

1. Call to Order and Welcome: The 10 April 2017 meeting of the Forsyth Amateur Radio Club at the Red Cross Building, 690 Coliseum Drive, was called to order by President David Shoaf, KC4X, at 1859 hours. David welcomed all attendees, approximately 31, for coming out this evening, and invited each to introduce themselves.

2. VE report: Dale Mierisch, WB9SZL reported two test sessions. He recognized the VEs - Sam Poindexter-NI4TG, John Kippe-K1PPE, Mike Atkins-N4VE, and Bob McClellan-W3AVB who is a new VE. Dale also thanked the other VEs who were unable to attend the meeting.

Dale reported that the Kernersville class had 28 people; 11 opted to take the test at a later date. Of the seventeen who took the test, fourteen passed their Tech and one of those passed the General. Paul Jay-KN4BUK got his General, and William Adamsons-KN4BUG, Stephen Theobald-KN4BUH, John Kieffer-KN4BUI, Lynn Flyer-KN4BUJ, Carson Medford-KN4BUL, Steve Hutchins-KN4BUM, Joshua Swaim-KN4BUN, Scott Adamsons-KN4BUO, Lisa Brunton-KN4BUP, Jeff Stockton-KN4BUQ, Ronald Dunn-KN4RKD, David Grochowski -KN4BUS and Mary Hutchins-KN4BUT got their Techs.

Dale announced that these new hams are starting up a club in Kernersville that will be a sister club with us, and they will try to participate in events like Tour to Tanglewood and Field Day with us. Dale encouraged us to help mentor them along as they get their equipment and get on the air.

Tonight we had 4 – Van Key-KC4WSK and Mike Brown-W4LKN got their Extras, Neil Maready-KN4CNE and Robert Lightner KN4CNF got their Techs.

3. Repeater report: Dale Mierisch, WB9SZL reported that all three are up, but two are not in good shape. The 145.47 repeater is working fine, as is the associated Echolink node. The 146.64 machine has a rogue pager swamping the input, so the associated Echolink node is impaired for that reason. On the 444.275 machine, the internal controller keeps trying to wrest control from the external controller; Dale is still working the issue.

4. Treasurers Report: Kent Englebert, K4HKE, gave the current treasurer's report. The current bank balance: \$ 5013.85 with no outstanding bills. Kent reminded new members to come see him if they would like name tags printed up.

5. ARES Report: Harlan Cobert, W1HRC mentioned two events coming up. The Pilot Mountain bike rally coming up May 28 will need 12 to 14 volunteers and two mobiles that are CB capable. This event will be handled much like the Tour to Tanglewood. A sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteers to support the Pilot Mountain event.

Tour to Tanglewood will be September 16 and 17; Harlan will cover that event in more detail at a later date.

6. Reynolda House Samuel FB Morse: Ray Purdom, K4ZGV reminded everyone about the Community Day event Saturday, April 29, running from 11 until 3. The club has reserved the gazebo out front for the special event station and will be operating from about 10 until 4 using both CW and SSB modes. As before, the event call sign will be N4M. Ray asked for folks interested in operating the station to get in touch with him. Contrary to earlier information, the exhibit will be free on Community Day, rather than the regular \$14 entry fee. Note that there is sometimes a waiting line to get in.

7. Presentation – Low-Band DXing: Charlie Kluttz, W4TMR, gave a presentation on the what, why, how and when of Low-Band DXing.

What – Low-band DXing is working other countries on the 160, 80, and 40 meter bands.

Why - The low bands may be all you have to work with. With the sunspot minimum still three years away, conditions for 20 meters and up are in decline. Five-band and nine-band DXCC awards require the low bands. Contesting options are enhanced when you can use the low bands. Finally, like climbing the mountain, you do it just because it's there.

How – You need the basic equipment – receiver, transmitter (or transceiver), mic and/or key. Charlie noted that activations typically only use CW on 160. Last, but most important, is the antenna. You need a low takeoff angle to minimize the number of bounces. You can get a dipole up high enough to do ok on 40 meters, but on 80 and 160, you have to go to a vertical transmitting antenna to get a good takeoff angle. Charlie discussed noise issues, and recommended using a separate receiving antenna to optimize the signal-to-noise ratio. Charlie explained that receiving antennas will reduce the desired signal level, but they will reduce the noise level more; he puts a preamp, and occasionally a bandpass filter, out at the antenna feed point to avoid amplifying noise picked up on the coax. Gain on the preamp is adjusted so the noise does not move, or just barely moves, the S-meter needle. He also discussed the pros and cons of Beverage, flag, and flag-on-ground antennas. Charlie wrote an article on the latter, and it will be published in QST in late fall or early winter of this year.

When – Charlie commented that on the high bands, given the right conditions, you can work DX at any time. On 160, you can make contact with a station anytime the path between the stations is in the dark; when the path goes light, the signal goes out. He reports a little bit of an exception; the Grey Line path, which gives a thirty to forty-five minute window of enhanced propagation. He gave an example of a DXpedition to Midway Island he was listening to about 5:00 am. The station would be briefly audible, and then drop back down into the noise for another 30-40 seconds. He kept listening until daybreak, when he was in the Grey Line path. The DXpedition's signal popped up three or four S-units, and he was able to work him on the second call.

8. Adjournment of Meeting: Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by John Kippe, K1PPE and seconded by several other attendees. Meeting was adjourned at 2033 hours.

9. Partial List of Meeting Attendees: Below are the names of FARC member attendees.

Steve Patterson-WA3RTC, Kent Englebert-K4HKE, Geoff Rudy-KK4MOV, Steve Chambers-K4RCI, David Shoaf-KC4X, John Kippe-K1PPE, David Ramsey-W4OIL, Ken Melvin-KM4NFQ, Cathy Melvin-KM4OCS, Van Key-KC4WSK, Brent Goodwin-KN4ACN, David Fulton-WD4BYA, Daryl Knight-N5WK, Jim Marler-KM4HUZ, Dave Larson-KM4RAB, Ron Adkins-KM4WPN, Chris Rodie-KW4VK, Brian Cave-AB4BC, David Puckett-AJ4BD, Sam Poindexter-NI4TG, Ron Gregoire-W4UDB, Mason Matrazzo-KM4SII, Ray Purdom-K4ZGV, David McDonald-N5WNB, Terry Brown-AK4D, Fred Wood, Rick Henkel, Don Anderson, Wayne Gunter,

Mark Gaines-KM4TUK, Dale Mierisch-WB9SZL, Phil Nunn-KD4JZZ, Doc Holliday-WB4QIZ, Michael Pope-K4OLD, Bill Kennedy-WD4OTY, Harlan Cobert-W1HRC, Bob McClellan-W3AVB, Mike Brown-W4LKN, Harold Richardson-N4HER, Jim Cole-KM4QPR