



The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

Feed Line

Providing Amateur Radio news for the Triad



Brian Wilson, NX4U, Editor

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International Space Station

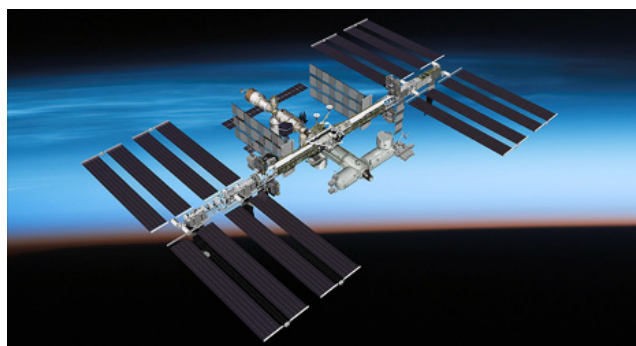
By Tom Bertolino, KB1P

The International Space Station is visible the Greensboro area during the last week in April. The times and sky locations are listed below. All info is from this site <http://www.calsky.com/cs.cgi>

Depending on the ISS work schedule, you may be able to make a 2 meter contact with the station. The ISS down link frequency is 145.800. The uplink frequency is 144.490. Their call sign is NA1SS. Some hams had contacts using just the downlink frequency.

I believe astronaut Col Catherine Coleman KZ5ZTH is the ham aboard the ISS. Contact depends on her work schedule, and If she has free time.

I have had friends who have made contact with their HT and a rubber duck antenna, and some others who had an arrow 2 m hand held beam who could not make a contact. It is the luck of the draw. I am going to try. Good Luck, Tom



GARA Picnic

The plans for the annual GARA Picnic are well on their way. Rumor has it that Bob Mays, K4MOW, may agree to cook again this year and the club has secured Hagan-Stone Park, shelter 5, for May 19th. It appears that the best time for this picnic will be 6-8:30pm, so please plan to attend.

This year is a little different than in the past. Over the last couple of years there have been a lot of no shows and a lot of food left over. GARA is hoping to eliminate this issue by charging a nominal fee of \$5 in advance (prior to May 12th), and \$6 on the day of the picnic. Children 11 and under eat free.

Also, new this year is the introduction of door prizes. Several gift certificates to local restaurants will be given away, but you must be present to win.



NEXT MEETING

Monday, April 23

The next meeting of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association will be Monday, April 23rd, at Captain Bill's Seafood & Steakhouse, 6108 West Market Street, Greensboro, NC 27409, between Guilford College Road and Swing Road. This month's meeting is entitled "What Goes in a 'Go' Box?" and will be presented by Gaither Frye, KD4CTY.

GARA Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes March 26, 2011

The GARA club meeting was held on March 26, 2012, at Captain Bills Seafood Restaurant located at 6108 West Market Street in Greensboro.

GARA President, Donna Ferguson, KD4WIK, called the meeting to order at 7:15pm.

First, there were reports from the board members.

Craig Bondy, N8STA, gave the treasury report stating that the check book is good and the balances are good.

Donna gave the financial report for Al Allred, K4ZKQ, who could not make the meeting. Donna relayed that everything looks good and is in line with forecast.

Greg, KG4UQV, had nothing to report.

Todd Smith, AK4TS, thanked Fred, KK4BAW, for lining up the program for tonight.

Todd also spoke about the fox hunt that Roy Smith, N4BYU, organized. There was very little participation and it may have been due to ball games on TV. Todd said that he would like to see more participation in fox hunts as well as nets and use of the K4NSC station.

David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF, gave the engineering report and said that everything is working well. David said that we are occasionally hearing the K4USC repeater in Union, South Carolina, which shares our 145.15 frequency. David also discussed the N4G special event station and said that we had 19 QSL cards come in already. David said that he would like GARA to fund the QSL card printing and postage which is estimated to be around \$285.00. There was some discussion about getting the cards done cheaper. Brian Wilson, NX4U, made a motion to approve the amount of \$285.00 for the cards, Chris Thompson, K4HC, seconded. The motion passed.



The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

President Donna Ferguson, KD4WIK
Vice-President Todd Smith, AK4TS
Treasurer Craig Bondy, N8STA
Secretary Greg Spencer, KG4UQV
Financial Al Allred, K4ZKQ
Engineering Chair David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF
Operations Roy Smith, N4BYU
Member-at-Large Fred Lomax, KK4BAW
Member-at-Large Gaither Frye, KD4CTY
Appointed Position:
Webmaster & Newsletter Editor
Brian Wilson, NX4U

The Feed Line is ©2012 by the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association and published monthly. Our address is P.O. Box 7054, Greensboro, NC 27417. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide the club and prospective members information about the club and amateur radio in general. Material and information should reach the editor by the first Friday of the month for the next edition of the newsletter. Opinions expressed in "The Feed Line" do not necessarily represent the views of the officers, directors, editor or members of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association. Material may be reproduced, provided proper credit is given to GARA.

Approval of minutes, Roy made a motion to approve the minutes as published, Doug Johnson, K4OJP, seconded.

Fred Lomax, KK4BAW, thanked Dan Habecker, W9EQ, for recommending Mark Franco, N2UO, for the presentation this month. Fred said that we need people to present programs for the rest of the year.

Roy said that the Annual Doggett Picnic will be held on September 29th.

Steve Bartis, KJ4LBR, said that there will be a get together before the Raleigh hamfest on April 7th. Hams will meet at Pam's Farmhouse located at 511 Western Blvd around 6:30am.

Donna asked for everyone to identify themselves.

Duane Brantley, AB9J, said that there will be a swap meet on May 19th at RFMD. Fred will have directions and bring your own tables.

Donna introduced Mark Franco, N2UO, who gave a great presentation on his homebuilt 20 foot dish antenna for EME on 1296 MHZ.

The meeting ended at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by Greg Spencer, KG4UQV, GARA Secretary.

Board Meeting Minutes April 19, 2012

The GARA Board of Directors held their April meeting on April 19, 2012, at the Kathleen Clay Edwards Library. The meeting was called to order at 6:53pm by Donna Ferguson, KD4WIK, president.

Members in attendance were; Donna Ferguson, KD4WIK; David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF; Gaither Frye, KD4CTY; Craig Bondy, N8STA; Fred Lomax, KK4BAW; Todd Smith, AK4TS; Roy Smith, N4BYU; and Greg Spencer, KG4UQV.

Donna said that she noticed the Board meeting minutes were published with the incorrect date but looked good otherwise. Roy made a motion to approve the minutes. Craig seconded and the motion carried.

Reports from officers:

Craig gave the treasury report stating that he has all of the spreadsheets up to date and the bank accounts are looking good. Donna said that her records show that we have 93 paid memberships at this time; Craig said that he would check to see that his records match Donna's records.

Gaither had nothing to report.

David said that the D-Star machine was back on the air after being down for a few hours due to a power failure at the repeater site. The city's backup generator did not start so both repeaters were off the air for a while. The 2 meter repeater came back up with no problems but the D-Star machine had some issues with the internet router and the controller.

David said that we are going to look at how the D-Star machine is linked on a daily basis.

Fred said recent net participation has been good, but we still need programs for meetings.

We discussed some ideas about programs for meetings.

Greg asked the board about co-sponsoring Field Day with Guilford ARES once again this year. After some discussion Greg made a motion to have GARA cosponsor Field Day, Roy seconded and the motion carried.

Roy said he feels that the board members should know how to bring down the repeater if necessary. David said that he thinks it should be the board's decision who should have the codes.

Todd said that he would like the board to provide leadership to the various nets that we have.

Todd said that he will work on coming up with programs for the meetings. Fred said that he would be glad to help. Todd also said that we should publicize the programs more.

The board discussed hosting of the technical forum on Sunday nights. Gaither said that he would like some help with the technical forum as his work schedule prevents him from being there every week. Roy said that he will help and be backup. Todd said that the nets or forums should be familiar no matter who is hosting it.

Todd said that he thinks GARA should look at club spending and fund raising.

Donna said that she had written two letters to the soccer association and she would like us to choose which letter we like best. After some discussion we decided to merge the two letters into one and send that.

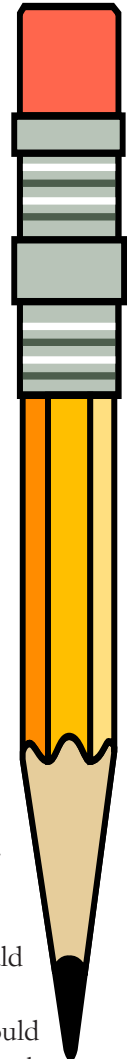
Roy said that we should look at the news line donation that we have been making. After some discussion Roy made a motion the send them a maximum of \$125.00. David seconded and the motion carried with one opposed.

Craig said that we only have one key to the post office box and he would like to see what it would take to get a second key. The board is okay with looking into the second key, and Craig will report to the board next month with the details.

The board discussed the North Carolina D-Star Net, which has been without a net control for a while.

Roy made a motion to adjourn, Craig seconded and the meeting ended at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted by Greg Spencer, KG4UQV, GARA Secretary.



From the President's Shack

From Donna Ferguson, KD4WIK

When I first got involved in Ham radio, I thought it was just a bunch of geeks sitting behind radios talking to each other. Although I wasn't far off the mark, I have learned that it is so much more than that.

This past weekend, I had the pleasure of helping out with the Belew's Creek Triathlon. This really gave me a good look at how Ham radio can be useful and be able to show this usefulness

to others. While Robert was riding support and using the bike's radio to communicate with net control, I rode with a fellow goldwinger who is not a ham and used my HT to communicate with Robert and net control. Even though I had some minor radio issues, the guy that I was riding with was still impressed with the capabilities of Ham radio. It was a good feeling to be able to demonstrate something that I am passionate about to others.

Being a Ham is about making friendships, creating bonds, and being able to share your hobby with others. It's about a different kind of family. I see GARA as being that family. It is a mixture of those that are really involved and want to participate as much as possible, those that have other interests and will participate when they can, and those that can't participate so they come to the family reunions to hear about what others are doing.

When I think about family, I see myself as having three families; my family, my GARA family, and my goldwing family. Goldwingers and Hams have more in common than some would think. Both are types of families that want to see their families grow and carry on. GARA has grown since last year and I hope it will continue growing. By talking to other hams in the area and letting them know about our club, we can continue growing our family.

Since the beginning of April, I have worked the RARSfest and helped with the triathlon. Both

This Month's Meeting: Gaither's Go-Box

This month's presentations will consist of Gaither Frye, KD4CTY, showing his "Go-Box." If you read *The Feed Line* regularly, then you are familiar with his multi-part presentation in the last several issues. Since many are interested in "seeing" Gaither's box, he has agreed to bring his "Jump Kit" and show it to us.



experiences have given me the opportunity to connect with both hams and goldwingers on many different levels and I had a blast doing both. I hope to have many more opportunities to be able to connect the two hobbies and show fellow goldwingers just how useful Ham radio can be.

I am proud to be a Ham and part of GARA and I hope you are too!

Engineering Update for March, 2012

From David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF

March was a quiet month for the Engineering Committee, however April was a little bit less quiet.

On Monday evening, April 2nd, the W4GSO repeater site experience an extended power failure. Unfortunately, the backup generator failed to start, and both the VHF and UHF repeaters failed when the backup uninterruptible power supplies (UPSs) that support them ran down. Other equipment at the site, including the site owner's equipment, along with the tower beacons, also failed. I am not sure when the power came back on, as I was out of town that day, but by all accounts, it was off for at least 6 hours. Once utility power was restored, the VHF repeater recovered and came back on the air without any apparent ill effects. The UHF D-Star machine came back up, but the internet gateway did not come back to life. Some additional troubleshooting on the gateway machine resulted in two problems: a misconfiguration of the router (most likely caused by the power interruption) and a corrupted configuration file on the gateway server. Once these problems were corrected the gateway was restarted and is now working.

The faulty generator, which is not GARA equipment, but property of the site owner, has been serviced and is alleged to be back in full operation.

On Saturday April 14th, Arch, KT4AT, and myself, visited the site to make backups of the D-Star computer and the internet gateway server, and to make some performance measurements on the VHF radios. The primary VHF radio still has excellent sensitivity of around -133 dBm at the receiver input. The output power is about 75 watts, and the antenna and feedline are reading a VSWR of around 1.1:1. The backup VHF radio has slightly less sensitivity, but still excellent.



Upcoming projects:

1) The UPS battery on the VHF machine is close to 2 years old, and should be replaced. At the same time, I'll replace some of power supply wiring on the repeater controller and weather radio, which is a little bit on the sketchy side. This will probably require that the repeater controller be reprogrammed if the power is completely disconnected from the UPS for an extended time, but while we were there, we tested the reprogramming software that we have, and it seems to work.

2) The D-STAR repeater has some so-called "execution scripts" that have been installed on the internet gateway. These scripts are pre-packaged programs that can be executed by a user over the air to perform various functions. I'll report on the details after we test the functions out a little bit more. One of the functions looks at the most recently busy D-STAR reflector, and links the repeater to it, no matter where it is in the world. This might be interesting to try, and see what kind of DX we can pick up!

3) I had mentioned in a past article that the VHF repeater controller, although it works well, is an obsolete model that can't be purchased now. If it fails, the repeater would likely be off the air for a while until a new one could be procured and proved in. I am still looking at possible replacement controllers, and I will report on this in a few months.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your club repeaters, either VHF or D-Star, please contact me at aj4tf@arrl.net

73, David, AJ4TF

N4G Special Event Station Report

By David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF

The paper logs for the N4G special event station in March have been captured electronically and converted to an ADIF format database, along with complete mailing addresses for the over 300 contacts. During the electronic capture, we discovered that in addition to the other interesting contacts that I mentioned last month, we worked November 3 Kilo November (N3KN) during the event. If you don't recognize that call, it is Kay Craigie, the president of the ARRL! How about that for a VIP in our log?

I have also gone through all of the QSL mail that we have received so far. There are 25 people sent a QSL card and a request for a QSL from N4G

so far. Several sent a large envelope and asked for a certificate. Since we haven't designed it yet, I plan to slip a note into their QSL cards and let them know that we will do that later on... but I'm looking for a club member with some artistic talent to design a certificate for N4G.

The N4G QSL cards have been printed and paid for by several donors to the club who wish to remain anonymous. They did turn out nice!

I have sent out cards to the first 20 or so QSL requests, and for the rest of the contacts, we're going to have an envelope stuffing party, perhaps as soon as the end of the April club meeting.

Remember I am looking for a volunteer (or volunteers) to design a commemorative certificate for N4G. Please contact me if you have interest in doing this.

Photo Courtesy of Tom Forrest, N4GVK



Can't afford to go to Dayton?

Then come to the
**RFMD Amateur Radio Club's
FREE Tailgate Swapfest!**

Yes, that's right FREE – NO ADMISSION FEE!

Saturday, May 19th, 2012, 8:00AM to 11:30AM

Rain or Shine

RFMD Headquarters – BACK parking lot
7628 Thorndike Rd., Greensboro, NC 27409

NO admission fee, **NO** space rental! All profit is yours!

We provide a paved parking lot and indoor toilets.

You provide everything else: tables, canopies, power, drinks, food, and merchandise.

Visit **KD4RF.org** for directions, details, and updates.

Congratulations! You Passed!

Every month on the second Saturday, except in March when it is the third Saturday, W4VEC holds a testing session for those who live in the area. This provides an opportunity for individuals to be able to test for their amateur radio license or upgrade. Thanks to Glenda Nicholson, AG4NC, and a group of volunteers, each month there are new or upgraded hams in our area.

In April, we had three (3) individuals who passed their test(s) and earned either their Technician, General or Extra class license.

Next month's testing session will be on May 12th at #3 Centerview Dr, Hickory Building, Greensboro, NC 27407 at 9:00am. While walk-ins are welcome contacting the lead VE is preferred. Please contact Glenda Nicholson at (336) 674-3810 or by email at ag4nc@bellsouth.net

All Photos Courtesy of David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF



***Gaither C Frye, Jr - KD4CTY
Upgraded to Extra***



***Christopher L Oxendine - KE4OAC
Upgraded to General***



***John C Steinberger - W8LWX
Upgraded to Extra***



During the testing session the Volunteer Examiners watch while the participants work to answer the questions correctly. After the examinees are finished the test are graded and checked by at least 3 VEs.

Order of the Long Leaf Pine

The following was printed in the Greensboro News-Record on Wednesday, April 18, 2012



Photo Courtesy of
Tom Forrest, N4GVK

Charles Weldon Fields Sr., 98, of Greensboro has been awarded North Carolina's Order of the Long Leaf Pine by order of Gov. Bev Perdue. He was involved in the formation of the Tar Heel Emergency Net, a daily over-the-air radio exercise which has operated continuously for 65 years on more than 23,000 occasions. The Tar Heel Emergency Net provides emergency communications for the citizens and agencies of North Carolina when usual means of communication are unavailable. Fields, known on the radio as "Weldon," was first licensed in 1930 and is still actively operating his radios under his call sign of W4AJT. In May 2010, Weldon led a two-hour hurricane exercise drill in conjunction with N.C. Emergency Management. He holds an appointment as an Official Emergency Station with the American Radio Relay League, the national association for Amateur Radio. The presentation was made April 7 at the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society's "RARSFest" annual gathering of ham operators from North Carolina and beyond. Created in 1965, the Order of the Long Leaf Pine is the second highest honor that North Carolina's governor can bestow on a Tar Heel state resident. The award is presented to North Carolinians who have made extraordinary contributions of dedicated service to their state.

Annual Doggett BBQ

September 29, 2012, Save the date for the annual Doggett Picnic.

The Doggett's have been hosting a picnic for many years and started inviting the local Hams. I spoke with John and he gave me the date. The time is usually 6pm. You need a chair and appetite. Some of the best BBQ around.

The Doggett family includes the following hams: Clark, KG4HOM; Jane, KG4ZQK(Wife); John, AJ4DV(son); Mary, KJ4ZQL(Daughter); and Lexie, KI4QNC(Granddaughter)

If you have never attended, you don't want to miss this event. Go ahead and mark your calendars and plan to attend. Even though this is several months away, calendars have a way of filling up. This is a great time of food and fun.



Photo Courtesy of Tom Forrest, N4GVK

Area Happenings

FOURTH MONDAY – at 6:30pm, the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association have their regular monthly meeting at the Golden Corral, 4404 Landview Dr, Greensboro, NC 27407, off Wendover Ave, near Sam's Club. Please plan to gather at 6:30pm for dinner. The meeting is scheduled to start at 7:15pm

CLUB NETS:

SUNDAYS – at 7:30pm, the **Technical Forum** on the 145.150;

- at 9pm, the **GARA News and Information Net**. This net features *NewsLine* and is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater. Roy Smith, N4BYU is always looking for net controls. Contact him if you would like to help.

TUESDAYS – at 8:30pm **The Triad SkyWarn Net** meets on the 147.225, K4ITL repeater, no tone required.

TUESDAYS – at 9pm, the **D-STAR Net** meets on 442.8625 (W4GSO B and Reflector 17C)

WEDNESDAYS – at 8:30pm, **The Guilford Amateur Society Rag Chew Net** holds their weekly net on the 145.250, W4GG repeater with an 88.5 Hz. tone. Jim Hightower, W4JLH is the net control.

THURSDAYS – at 9pm, **The Guilford County ARES Net** meets on the 145.150 repeater (100 Hz. tone).

OTHER ACTIVITIES :

FIRST MONDAY – **The Guilford County A.R.E.S.** monthly meeting is held at 1002 Meadowood St. off W. Wendover Ave, in the EMS building, beginning at 7pm.

THIRD MONDAY – at 6:15pm **The Guilford Amateur Society** holds their monthly meeting at Tex & Shirley's Restaurant in Friendly Shopping Center. Eat at 6:15pm and the business meeting begins at 7pm.

THURSDAY – at 11:15am, Greensboro Hams get together for lunch. Thursday lunch group is meeting at the K&W Cafeteria, 300 Forum VI Mall at Friendly Shopping Center. Talk-in is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater with a 100 Hz. tone.

EVERY FRIDAY – at 8pm (approximately) Greensboro Hams get together for coffee at Starbucks at Edney Ridge Rd.

The W4VEC Testing Schedule

Apr to Sept 2012

May 12, 2012

June 9, 2012

July 14, 2012

August 11, 2012

September 8, 2012

October 13, 2012

Location: #3 Centerview Dr,
Hickory Building,
Greensboro, NC 27407

Time: 9:00am

Contact: Glenda Nicholson

Phone: (336) 674-3810

E-mail: ag4nc@bellsouth.net

GARA REPEATERS

145.150 MHz - offset, 100 Hz. tone

442.8625 MHz. + offset, Digital D-Star



Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

P.O. Box 7054

Greensboro, NC 27417

www.w4gso.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Official Publication of GARA