Words From the Prez

Hey, Everybody! Boy, summer has come and gone. Well, almost. We can look forward to fall with leaves changing, pumpkins, hot chocolate, cooler weather, and working contacts on 80 meters. I won’t lie, I like spring and summer, but I look forward to fall and winter, too. Living in the Carolinas is simply the best! Luke likes being out in the kennel more, too. He can talk to all the neighborhood dogs. Yep, like his ol’ man, he can talk!

I want to thank everyone who ventured out to help take down Bob Cole’s KD4IIN tower on Saturday, October 12! More than anyone, I thank David Haas KK4OEW who climbed the tower for us. Using his equipment, we got it down with no problems at all. Nice and safely. Well, Gary W4GDC, did nick a knuckle. He just gave more blood, sweat and tears than the rest of us. I have never had any other tower bolts cause such a problem. They just didn’t want to turn loose! But, they finally did.

That Saturday, we also held our monthly club meeting, during which we nominated our club officers for 2020, who will be voted on in November.

Believe it or not, this is a very important aspect to our club, as it is our means for providing our leadership. The nominations followed:

President - Jeff Blythe KA4WYC
Vice President - Mike Miranda W4DXL
Secretary - Shawn Goodin K4RSG
Treasurer - Joe Ducar KJ4QFV

Without any office being opposed, these are our club officers for 2020.

When you see these members, please thank them for stepping up and accepting the duties of a club officer — and ask them what you can do to help out.

In other club business, I informed the club about the money we made from cleaning out the corner in the Salvation Army warehouse, (Many thanks to Mike KG4PDA and Mike W4DXL for their help!) and two ham radio estates (the equipment was donated to the club). To sell the equipment, we bought spaces at the Shelby Hamfest and the Rock Hill Hamfest. A big thank you to all the members who came out to help sell it all. After reimbursing for the spaces, we made $900.00! I wanted this money to go to our Equipment Fund.

I then gave a report on updating our club station in regards to...
to purchasing an ICOM IC 7300, moving the ICOM IC 718 to a digital station only, for CW, RTTY, PSK, FT 8, and such. We have two ICOM IC 706’s. We could sell one and make a go-box for community events and such, with the other one. Any funds raised will go to making the go-box. I asked Joe KJ4QVF to take on the task of making our go-box. He does a good job — if you haven't seen his! I asked for a motion to purchase the IC 7300. The motion was made and seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Having no other business, we adjourned to take down the tower.

Remember to mark your calendars for our Christmas Party on Thursday, December 12. We'll gather at 6:00pm and have dinner at 7:00pm at the Salvation Army. I’m looking forward to some honey spiral-sliced ham and Price's Chicken Coop chicken. Please bring some yummy sides and desserts to add to the festivities. Be sure to wear your best Christmas attire. You may even see me in a coat and tie! Susan N4PSN will send a sign-up sheet via SignUp Genius again this year, so everyone can tell us how many are coming and which sides you’d like to bring.

That's all for now. Think about something you'd like to see the club do. Get involved!

73,
Jeff Blythe KA4WYC, Club President

Upcoming Events!

Mint Hill Historical Society SW Station
I recently spoke with Sue of the Historical Society. She acknowledged that the village needs a clean up. The Society has made some good progress already and considers it an on-going project. They’ve sold and removed some of the farm machinery, the gold panning area has been cleaned up, the assay office floor and back door will be repaired, the barn area is ready for foundation work and the grading is done! 73, Joe Ducar KJ4QVF

W4CQ Christmas Party!
You and yours are invited to our Annual Christmas Party on Thursday, December 12, 2019! We'll gather at 6:00pm and have dinner at 7:00pm. To add to the festivities, the club is providing delicious spiral honey-baked ham slices and Price's Chicken Coop chicken. It will be a nice time of celebrating together. Be sure to wear your best Christmas attire. Susan N4PSN will send a sign-up sheet viaSignUp Genius again this year, so everyone can tell us how many are coming and which sides you’d like to bring. We look forward to seeing you there!
Thank you, Everyone, who ventured out to help take down Bob Cole’s KD4IIN tower on Saturday, October 12! More than anyone, I thank David Haas KK4OEW who climbed the tower for us. Using his equipment, we got it down with no problems at all. Nice and safely. Well, unfortunately, Gary W4GDC nicked a knuckle. — Jeff Blythe KA4WYC

Photographer: Shawn Goodin K4RSG
It was 7:00am on November 25, 1949, the day after Thanksgiving, and I had been planning my trip to the FCC field office in lower Manhattan for many months. My ever-vigilant mother was using her best efforts to convince me not to go that day because it was drizzling, and snow was forecast for the afternoon. But when she saw how important the trip was for me, she relented. What helped to convince her was that school was closed and the FCC was open.

I had been studying for the test for a few years, with a year or so taken off when the hormones kicked in and girls seemed more important than ham radio. Thank goodness, that phase passed quickly.

My Elmer, Jim McGinty SK W2YYJ, would not let me take the test until I could copy Morse code at 18 words per minute (wpm) on W1AW. I disliked him at the time, but will be forever grateful because, not only did I copy the 13 wpm license test solid, but I was comfortable enough with my code to get on the air with a home-brew rig on 40 meters. To this day, over 80% of my high-frequency (HF) QSOs are on CW. Three of my buddies took their FCC test when they could copy Morse at 13 wpm on W1AW. All three failed the code test. Two of them never got a license.

If there had been vanity calls back in those days, I would probably be W2YYJ today.

At one point I had been given a copy of an ARRL handbook. I read it cover-to-cover, including the ads. My CW test was not a problem, thanks to W2YYJ, and reading the handbook, plus an ARRL license manual, put me in a state of mind where I was totally convinced I would pass the test. I also passed the 2nd Class Radio-Telephone license. In due course, W2DEC arrived in the mail.

Back in 1949, there were only three classes of license: Class A, B, and C. Class C was a conditional license. If you lived too far from an FCC field office, you could arrange to have the test proctored. If you passed, you received a Class C license. The entry level license was a Class B which roughly equates to today’s General; however, you could not operate phone below 10 meters. It was required that you had to have been a Class B for a year before you could take the Class A test, then you could operate phone on 75 and 20 meters. There was no phone on 40 meters.

An interesting side bar was that most hams did not know that W calls were being reissued in the second call area. It was not unusual when people would say, “Hi, old timer” when I worked them on the air.

At the end of my licensing year, I went back to New York and took my Class A license. I was so excited that I went to Harrison Radio and purchased a microphone, even though I didn’t have a rig with a modulator.

The day after I received my driver’s license, I enlisted in the Army Signal Corps reserves — not out of any sense of patriotism but because you could occasionally get free radio gear. When it came time to go into active duty service, during the Ko-
The Korean War, every person in my basic training battalion went to advanced basic training. I attended six months’ of school at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, which was only about forty miles from my home.

Ham radio has really been good to me. It might have well saved my life by keeping me out of combat during the Korean War and into the best radio and electronic school the Army had to offer.

In my late teens through my late 20s, I had the propensity to be in the right place at the right time, frequently for the wrong reason.

I have witnessed significant changes in ham radio over the past 70 years:

1. VE Sessions which eliminate the need to travel to an FCC field office for a license or upgrade
2. Code requirement eliminated for FCC-issued ham radio licenses
3. Transition from AM phone to SSB
4. Vanity calls
5. Satellite and moon bounce
6. Operating a rig remotely
7. Digital free software from Joe Taylor K2JT, making QSOs with stations that are 20 DB below the noise level possible
8. Joe Taylor’s K2JT FT8 produced more on-air QSOs than all other modes combined
9. Discountenance of Novice and Advanced class license, although present holders can renew them forever
10. The demise of Heath Kit signaling the shift of hams being technology based to appliance operators. Hams rarely build anything anymore.

I’ll leave it to the reader to decide if these things are good or bad for ham radio.

73,
Urb Lejuene W1UL
Urb@ham-cram.com
609-937-5487

I’d love to hear from you.

When not writing newsletter articles or working DX or FT8, Urb is usually enhancing his ham license preparation website, http://ham-cram.com. The site has four distinguishing characteristics: (1) We only study correct answers, (2) We only study the pool questions most likely on the FCC test, (3) The goal is to work smarter, not harder, and (4) It’s free.

You know you have ham radio issues when:

You wonder every morning at work... Did I leave the soldering iron on?

You find yourself thinking in CW — dit dah dit dit.

At local parties, you find yourself uncontrollably mumbling cq cq cq...

You instinctively pull over and check your antennas every time before and after going through an area with a low clearance (i.e., a tunnel) — even when you are a passenger in someone else’s car.

I know you’ve heard me talk about wanting to re-learn my Morse Code, or CW. In 1979-1980, when I got my Novice License, Foxtrot Charlie Charlie (the FCC) required Morse Code as a testing element to obtain a license for entry level Novice to General, and the “never take another exam” Extra. Novice required 5 wpm (words per minute), General required 13 wpm, and Extra was 20 wpm. I’ve heard people say, “The reason I didn’t get my license sooner was because I just couldn’t pass the code.” On February 23, 2007, the FCC removed the requirement to use Morse Code as a testing element for any amateur radio license. Many claimed that would be the downfall of CW. Others said amateur radio would be inundated with people from 27 Mhz. (the citizen band). The “new” Extras were called “Extra Lites,” because they didn’t have to learn the code to get their licenses. First, let me say, that the rumored demise of Morse Code has never been affected by its removal in the testing elements. The lower portions of the HF bands have never been busier.

Now, here is the reason for this article. Since CW is no longer required, why does it take six months to a year to obtain a seat in CW Academy (www.cwops.org)? I registered in April and got the last session of the year for September–October. I got lucky! They offer sessions four times a year and are usually divided into somewhat local areas around the world. I’m on the East Coast, so the members of the class were in Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. We started out with six students, but due to some conflicts, three dropped out — which left us with three students and an instructor. There are eighteen sessions total in Level 1. You have a session twice a week, lasting about an hour a session. You learn the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, ten numbers, and a handful of prosigns and punctuation. It uses the Farnsworth method of learning. You learn: E, T, A, N, 4 in the first session. You have a script to go by and use an online Morse Code tutor called CWops Morse Code Trainer by S. C. Phillips, when you’re not in class. Oh, as a must, you’ll need a code oscillator or an HF rig that has one in it. You’re not actually transmitting on the air, but it’s just so everyone else can hear your code as you send. We gather online each session using Skype. The instructor sends each student a word from the list, and then the student sends a word back to him. Each student gets a turn with the instructor. As the others are copying and sending, you try to copy theirs, too. So, you are not only hearing the good code from the instructor, you are trying to copy your classmates, too. It’s not an easy task. Oh, and there’s one thing I left off. You have to practice, practice and practice some more. CW Academy requires you to practice an hour each day, seven days a week, including the days you have class! Oh, my.

I’m coming to the end of my Level 1 session at CW Academy. I can send (fairly reliably) at 20 wpm, but can only copy at 10 wpm. It’s way easier to send than copy. One requirement for receiving a certificate of completion is being able to receive at 10 wpm. You should have “instant character recognition” (ICR). That is, as you hear the dits and dahs, you should instantly know what that character is. You must attend 90% of the sessions. I found our instructor very willing to help students if, for some reason, they had to miss a class. I know of one time when the instructor helped a student make up a session which the student missed due to being out of town without internet. They simply picked a different day and time.

OK, so maybe the big question on everyone’s mind is, “Jeff, did you pass?” Yes, I did! So did Gary W4GDC in a previous session. If we can do it, so can you.

Hey, as a side note, CW Academy is starting a short class between Level 1 and Level 2 to assist those students who need a little more training before continuing to Level 2. And before you ask... Yes,
Thoughts & Prayers

Let’s remember to pray for protection and safety for all first responders. Keep all those in uniform in your prayers, too, for safety and for comfort while they’re far from home for the holidays.
Charlotte Amateur Radio Club
Minutes of the October 12, 2019 Business Meeting
1050 Persimmon Lane, Alexis, North Carolina
To promote the technical craft of amateur radio through training, mentoring and enhancing fellowship among radio amateurs.

DATE: October, 2019

CALL TO ORDER: 9:30am by President Jeff Blythe KA4WYC

WELCOME/OPENING REMARKS: Jeff welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Susan Nosko N4PSN): Jeff Blythe KA4WYC, Club President, read the September 7, 2019 club meeting minutes. Jeff asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mike Miranda W4DXL so moved. Shawn Goodin K4RSG seconded it. The motion passed.

TREASURER’S REPORT (Joe Ducar KJ4QFV): A Treasurer’s Report was not given.

NEW BUSINESS
• 2020 Club Officer Nominations: We nominated our club officers for 2020, to be voted on in November. Those nominated are:
  President - Jeff Blythe KA4WYC
  Vice President - Mike Miranda W4DXL
  Secretary - Shawn Goodin K4RSG
  Treasurer - Joe Ducar KJ4QFV

Without any office being opposed, these are our club officers for 2020. Congratulations!

• Club Income (Jeff Blythe KA4WYC): I informed the club about the money we made from cleaning out the corner in the Salvation Army warehouse, (Many thanks to Mike KG4PDA and Mike W4DXL for their help!) and two ham radio estates (the equipment was donated to the club). To sell the equipment, we bought spaces at the Shelby Hamfest and the Rock Hill Hamfest. A big thank you to all the members who came out to help sell it all. After reimbursing for the spaces, we made $900.00! I wanted this money to go to our Equipment Fund.

• Club Equipment (Jeff Blythe KA4WYC): I gave a report on updating our club station in regards to purchasing an ICOM IC 7300, moving the ICOM IC 718 to a digital station only, for CW, RTTY, PSK, FT 8, and such. We have two ICOM IC 706’s. We could sell one and make a go-box for community events and such, with the other one. Any funds raised will go to making the go-box. I asked Joe KJ4QFV to take on the task of making our go-box. He does a good job, if you haven't seen his! I asked for a motion to purchase the IC 7300. The motion was made and seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: Having no other business, Jeff KZ4WYC asked for a motion to adjourn. Mike W4DXL so moved. Dave Marcelli N4CQ seconded it. The motion passed. We adjourned at 9:56am to take down the tower.

Respectfully submitted, Jeff Blythe KA4WYC, Club President for
P. Susan Nosko N4PSN, Club Secretary
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*The Connector* is the official newsletter of the Charlotte Amateur Radio Club. It’s published monthly.

As Editor of *The Connector*, I welcome pictures (.jpeg), articles (Word doc), and any other member contributions. Please send your submission to W4CQ.Susan@gmail.com. As Editor, I reserve the right to edit any and all pieces.

The submission deadline for each month’s newsletter is the third Friday of that month. Anything received later may be held for the next month’s publication.

As *The Connector* Editor, I am honored to serve the good people of the Charlotte Amateur Radio Club.

73,

P. Susan Nosko N4PSN