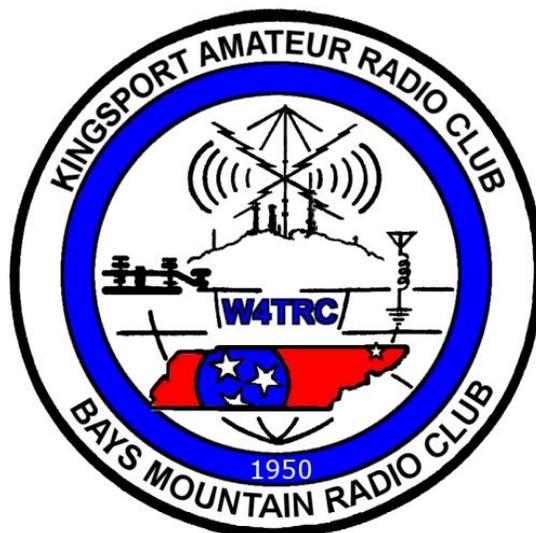


ZERO BEAT



April 2019

Next Meeting, Thursday, 11 April 1900 hours
Program: *Radio Spectrum* by Ken Klotz

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Meeting Notes: 14 March 2019

There was no formal meeting this month due to the club tour of WJHL Channel 11 in Johnson City

Field Day: Duck Island will be our Field Day operating location this year. We will be at shelter 3. Details will be shared as they are developed.

Repeater Upgrade: Ken Klotz mentioned that the club would be interested in upgrading one of our repeaters to take advantage of a manufacturers discount and the generous offers of monetary support from club members. This subject was discussed in depth at the February meeting but will be brought up for formal discussion and vote at the April meeting.

WJHL Facility Tour: WJHL Tour started at 7:11 and consisted of a walking tour of the facility. Areas visited included the general offices and two production facilities. The tour culminated with an in-studio on-air observation of the preparation, production and transmission of the news and weather.

Reports and Essays

District 7 Skywarn Continues

I approached Eric McCord about my taking on responsibility for coordinator of the District 7 Skywarn Group. He sent my offer to the folks at the National Weather Service in Morristown. I discussed the matter with them and described my experience as an amateur radio operator that I believed would be of value with this endeavor. My offer was accepted by the advisory board at their most recent meeting, and I was advised by Anthony Cavalluci that I have been appointed District 7 Skywarn Coordinator. Eric has given me his contact list and other materials. I am now working through these and creating a plan for continuing the contribution of the group. In the meantime all severe weather is on hold.

73 de WC5WM

THE INFAMOUS BIG BALD MOUNTAIN REMOTE BROADCASTS By George DeVault

From a technical stand point remote radio broadcasts today are relatively simple affairs with one or more microphones and perhaps a simple mixer feeding a cell phone circuit or an internet connection back to the studio. Typically these are from auto dealerships or play-by-play sports events. "Back in the day" pairs of wires from the remote site back to the studio were leased from the telephone company for the remote event, an expensive undertaking (especially for one time only broadcast) sometimes requiring weeks to get the circuit arranged through the phone company. Then came the practice of using small VHF or UHF transmitters to get the program directly to the studio or to a mountain-top or tower-mounted antenna and remote pick-up receiver from which a leased phone circuit would convey the program audio on to the studio. This made it possible to plan remotes quickly, easily, and inexpensively.

The principal manufacturer of these transmitters and receivers was George Marti from Cleburne, Texas, and the remote broadcasts were often called "Marti" remotes. The Marti VHF remote transmitters had an RF output of only thirty watts. In those days it was the practice when doing a remote from a business to have a small remote mixing board complete with turntables and to spin the records from the remote site. Seeing the records playing on the air gave listeners who stopped by the feeling that they were really in a radio station. This is the story of a series of very remote and unique broadcasts originating from the very top of Big Bald Mountain in western North Carolina some 5,500 feet above sea level just across the state line from northeastern Tennessee.

The first owner of WKPT-AM&FM in Kingsport was a principal in the development of what was then known as Big Bald Mountain Resort. (It's now called Wolf Laurel.) The resort featured a very challenging golf course, ski run, lodge, restaurant, horseback riding, and later a very chilly swimming pool uniquely shaped like a "W." The success of the project depended upon the sale of rustic home sites scattered over thousands of acres of mountainous wooded land within the development. Prospective home site buyers were lured to the resort to examine the property by vivid live word descriptions of the views, the seclusion, the laurel and trillium flora, and the prospect of a rustic mountain home away from home.

Getting these folks to traverse the narrow two lane highway that then ran from the Tri-City area to the North Carolina state line (on the way to Asheville) took some real convincing in those pre-Interstate 26 days. From Kingsport the drive was at least an hour and a half. WKPT's remote broadcasts would begin early on Saturday and Sunday mornings and continue until late afternoon. Some were on AM while others were on FM or simulcast. Scheduling was complicated by the obligation to carry some segments of NBC Radio's weekend feature, "Monitor" on the AM station and a few religious programs on Sunday mornings. (Remember the "Monitor" beacon?) Doing the remotes, one often felt like "the Pied Piper" luring folks to make the trip, and it was usually around noon when they started rolling into the resort.

Getting ready for the remote broadcasts was a real challenge. The DJ's (usually two) accompanied by an engineer in the earliest days of these broadcasts would drive to the resort on Friday evenings where they would stay in a log cabin in a village within the resort near its entrance. Even in the summer a roaring fire in the big stone fireplace was a must given the cool mountain air. Steaks grilled over an open flame or country ham usually highlighted the dinner on Friday night and breakfast the morning of the remote respectively.

Very early on Saturday and Sunday mornings the crew would drive the remote van to "the bald" and set up for the day's broadcast. On occasion in late spring and in the fall it would encounter snow on top of the mountain.

Dedicated hikers were often encountered on the Bald, which is on the Appalachian Trail. Vehicles were not usually allowed. Fortunately, the station was allowed to locate its remote van there. There were a few failures involving the remote van getting stuck in the mud or in the snow, and on one occasion the van rolled off a narrow road and overturned into a creek. That day's remote was cancelled! (The Marti transmitter survived the mishap, but dents in its case remain today where it sits virtually unused in a closet at the station.)

Since there was no electrical power on the mountain top, a generator was set out of the van, which then drove about 100 feet away to the broadcast site. An extension cord brought the power from the noisy generator to the van. This separation was to keep the sound from the roaring generator from getting into the microphones. If the generator "hiccupped" during the broadcast when a record album or 45 RPM single was playing, the turntable in use would slow down and then return to normal speed resulting in a distinct "wow" in the audio, and of course it was important to keep fuel in the generator. Yes, more than once the DJ's let the gas run dry. ('Funny, that never happened when an engineer came along.)

Another turntable-related difficulty arose when the sun was at a certain angle in late morning and late afternoon. The sun shining through an open window of the van would directly shine on one half of the turntable, leaving the other half in the shade. The uneven heat would make the LP warp slightly. When the turntable was started with a cut all cued up, the pick-up arm and cartridge would bounce up and

down with results you can imagine. If the warp was not too severe, the announcer could place a quarter on the cartridge to try to hold the needle down on the record (forget any potential damage to the cartridge and the LP). More often than not the jock would have to switch to the other turntable, which was totally in the shade, attempting to “sight cue” the record while talking on the air. From the remote mixing board the audio went to the Marti VHF transmitter in the back of the van and from there to a 20 inch whip antenna on the roof of the van and on through the air to a receiver on Bays Mountain overlooking downtown Kingsport almost 60 straight line miles away from the Bald. The audio then traveled through a leased telephone circuit to the studio downtown. Fortunately, the earliest portion of the remote broadcasts were always carried on or simulcast on the FM station, whose 45,000 watt signal from Bays Mountain blasted into the van’s broadcast receiver on Big Bald Mountain, which was monitored for on air cues. By a couple of hours after sunrise the 1,000 watt AM station’s signal could be received, but with WKPT(AM) being on a Class IV (now known as Class C) local channel it was a challenge to receive it with sufficient clarity on top of Big Bald.

Fortunately for the station, many listeners did make the curvy drive over the mountain, and many purchased sites for their mountain hideaways. A number of those Kingsport area residents or their offspring still own their mountain homes over half a century later. While they may not remember the unusual remote broadcasts from the 1960’s, which originally lured them to the resort, you can be certain that those who participated in these radio broadcasts will never forget them!

George DeVault began his career at the WKPT stations at age 15 and retired from them in 2017 just short of his 71st birthday having served as Holston Valley Broadcasting Corporation’s president for over 34 years. He was a host/announcer for a number of the Big Bald Mountain remote broadcasts. He is also a retired Naval Reserve Captain having served as a public affairs officer. He holds an Advanced Radio Amateur license with the call sign, W3KPT.



Santa Claus Special Radio Crew



Hiking Through

I realize that this book has nothing to do about amateur radio. But to those of us that participate in SOTA and others that are genuinely interested in stories from those that hiked the entire AT, this book is for you. (John Williams lent me his copy.)

The book is written by Paul Stutzman. His wife Mary, had cancer and she believed until her last week, that God was going to cure her. But like all of us, she and her husband had come to the intersection of "Our Hopes and Expectations and God's Perfect Plan For Us". Even Jesus had asked that the "cup be removed from him".

Paul had talked with Mary about always wanting to tackle the AT. So he writes about the quarrel within himself to leave his well-paying job, his comfortable way of life and trade it for a four and a half month hike on the AT with nothing but his pack and the clothes on his back. He writes about the interesting people he meets along the way, trail magic left by generous folk for "through hikers" and the generosity of good people all along the trail supporting the hikers. As you can imagine, being in the woods for that long a time, gives one time to think, change ones perspective on life and learn from others on the trail.

I enjoyed the book because it was interesting and was a fast easy read. It was as if I was listening to his stories over a campfire...

The book: "**Hiking Through**" written by Paul Stutzman

73

Larry

KD4FTN

Articles and Reports for *Zero Beat* ??

Please submit these to wc5wm@arrl.net

THE ZERO BEAT NEWSLETTER

Is published monthly by the Kingsport Amateur Radio Club and Bay's Mountain Radio Club. For more information on the Zero Beat, please contact: Carl Hacker at WC5WM@arrl.com.

Kingsport/Bays Mountain Radio Clubs' Officers 2019

Rick Johnson: WB4RLJ, KARC President

Chuck Short : KK4JHL, KARC Vice President

Robert Watts: KM4VMZ, KARC Secretary

Neil Weber: KM4NWH, KARC Treasurer

Dave Stevens: WB4DES, KARC Deputy Treasurer

Klotz W4IJK Club Repeater License Trustee

Rick Light: KG4WZG, BMRC Vice President Dave Stevens: WB4DES,

W4TRC Webmaster Web Site: www.w4trc.org

Carl Hacker WC5WM: *Zero Beat* editor

W4TRC 146.970 MHz REPEATER INFORMATION:

Location is on Bays Mountain, Kingsport, TN

2 Meter repeater: 146.970 MHz, (-) PL Tone, 123.0 Hz.

440 Repeater: 443.325 Mhz. (+), PL Tone, 123.0 Hz.

33Cm. Repeater: 927.025 Mhz. (-) PL Tone 123.0 Hz.

Sunday Night Informational Net on 146.970 at 8:30 P.M. EST

For More Information on the KARC/BMRC and Amateur Radio, Visit our Club Website at www.w4trc.org

For More Amateur Radio News, Visit the American Radio Relay League Website at www.arrl.org

Net Schedules (as of 10/23/2018)

Kingsport Amateur Radio Club/Bays Mountain Radio Club weekly two-meter net, Sunday night at 8:30 p.m., on the W4TRC repeater at 146.970 Mhz. The net includes ARES® check-ins and an opportunity to sell, buy and/or swap equipment.

The Boone Trail ARES®/RACES Net is held each Monday night at 8:30 pm on the 146.820 MHz KF4VTM repeater. A C4FM digital Fusion net is held on Thursday evenings at 8:30 pm on 146.820 except for the 3rd Thursday.

The Carter County Amateur Radio Association (CCARA) repeater is WR4CC on 145.290 MHz, with a tone of 103.5. The club holds a net every Monday evening on their repeater at 8:00 pm.

The Johnson County Net is Monday at 9:00 PM on 145.290 MHz with a 103.5 tone or direct on 146.610 MHz with the same tone (103.5). 6-meter Net every Thursday at 8:30 p.m. The Net is at 53.330 MHz, and the repeater has a tone of 103.5.

Johnson City Amateur Radio Association's Net is held on Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m. on the 146.790 MHz Repeater. Tone is 131.8 with a negative offset. This net is not held on the 3rd Tuesday, the night of the JCARA's monthly meeting.

Bristol Amateur Radio Club's 2 Meter net meets every Tuesday night at 9:00 PM on the 146.070/670 Bristol Repeater.

Mountain Empire Amateur Radio Society's 440-net, Wednesday at 9:00 p.m., on the 443.00 Repeater. Everyone is invited to check in.

Unicoi County Amateur Radio Association's Net, Thursday at 8 pm on 147.270 MHz. Except for the first Thursday of the month which is the Club Meeting.

Area Amateur Radio Clubs/Organizations Meetings

Bristol Amateur Radio Club meets the first Thursday of each month at 7 pm in the Conference Center at the Bristol Memorial Medical Center. Take exit 74 off Interstate 81 in Tennessee. For more information, email w4ud@qsl.net

Carter County Amateur Radio Association meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at 805 Highway 91, Elizabethton, TN (0.5 miles past the 2nd traffic light on Hwy 91 or 3.5 miles from Hwy 19E on the left side of the highway).

For more information go to the Club's web page at <http://www.wr4cc.org>

Johnson City Amateur Radio Association meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at the Washington Co/Johnson City EMS Training Building 296 Wesley Street Johnson City, TN 37601. Contact JCARA, 240 Hartman Road, Jonesborough, TN, 37659.

Kingsport Amateur Radio Club/Bays Mountain Radio Club meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the Toy Reid Eastman Employee Center, South Wilcox Drive, Kingsport, TN, unless meeting changes are made due to Eastman related activities. For more information email w4ijk1@gmail.com .

The Mountain Empire Amateur Radio Society (MEARS) meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., at Washington County Public Library in Abingdon, VA, with possible exceptions in November and December. For more information, visit their website at http://www.home.earthlink.net/~mears_arrl/

Scott County (VA) Amateur Radio Society meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., at the EOC Building behind and under the Lonesome Pine Regional Library, Gate City, VA. For more information, email Jeff K4LMP at k4lmp@k4lmp.org

Unicoi County Amateur Radio Association will be moving the meetings to Maple Grove Restaurant in Unicoi. This change will take place Feb. 5, 2015. The weekly ARES nets will change to Thursday evenings at

8pm as of Thursday December 11, 2014. For more information contact Ken Johnson at w3gfmkj@gmail.com

Johnson County Amateur Radio/Ares club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., at the Johnson County Hospital Conference Room. For more information contact Danny Herman at K4DHT@dannyherman.com