



### Next Meeting:

Tuesday, February 6, 6pm.  
At Bullock's BBQ

Program:

**Up, Up & Away –  
Balloons and APRS**

By:

**Daniel DeCourt, W3WDD**

Daniel has been involved with the launch and tracking of helium-filled balloons from western North Carolina. The balloons transmit on 144.39 with APRS tracking which is available on the website [aprs.fi](http://aprs.fi). Previous balloons have traveled beyond Charlotte or western South Carolina. The website shows altitude and speed of the balloon. Coordination with the FAA is required and on the last flight, air traffic control at the Charlotte airport got "excited" about the balloon in their airspace. Daniel lives in Dillsboro and will be making the trip to Durham to give us the program.

I hope you will join us on Tuesday.

**73, Charlie, NC4CD**

### President's Corner

Happy February! It's been a pretty nice winter so far and let's keep that going. Though this is the shortest month, we have 5 Thursday night nets this month! So if you've been thinking about being a net control this would be a great time to do it.

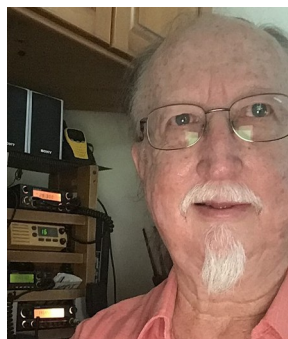
Don't forget Valentine's Day is this month, too. I would like to proclaim that on that day we refer to frequencies as Hearts instead of Hertz. For example "The 145.450 MegaHearts repeater" "... Just kidding but it is a sweet idea...

See you at the meeting and catch you on the nets.

Bob Cook, W4FK

President of DFMA

73



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### Joe Ragland, W4BZL, sk

Joe Ray Ragland Jr.

May 20, 1938 - January 17, 2024

Joe was born in Kernersville, NC. He earned his BS in Mathematics from UNC-CH in 1960 and his MS in Computer Science from UNC-CH in 1971. Joe worked at the UNC Computation Center from 1961-1966. He was the Manager of Information Services and Assistant Director for Data Communication, Triangle Universities Computation Center (TUCC), from 1966-

1990 and then Manager of Internet Operations, Microelectronics Center of North Carolina (MCNC) from 1990-1995. A much more thorough obituary can be found here.

While Joe was active in the DFMA before I was licensed and joined (1997), I got to know him through his work at TUCC. In the early years of the IBM 360, the local publications produced under his leadership were crucial in translating the many linear shelf feet of the IBM Manuals into useful English, and in filling the gaps even they left. The TUCC reports were also user guides for the significant number of local TUCC innovations. As a graduate student and later working at Duke, I found them invaluable.

I'm sure there are DFMA members that got to know him much better in connection with ham radio. Wilson, W4BOH, posted about his father's (the original W4BOH) interaction with Joe on our email reflector (OCRA-DFMA@groups.io). He wrote:

"I know there are several members who will remember Joe Ragland and his wife Mary Ann. My dad was an Elmer to Joe and a couple of other teenagers from Kernersville, starting in the mid fifties. Joe was always pleasant and took part in many activities at W4NC, the Winston club.

He went on to become a stalwart of the UNC/RTP computing community, before retiring to Emerald Isle. Mary Ann passed a few years ago and Joe sold their place at Emerald Isle to move near his daughter, in Wake Forest."

Joe and family members did join us for a DFMA Christmas dinner at Bullock's a few years ago and we did get to reminisce a bit. We owe Joe great thanks for the service he provided in both the Computer/Internet and the Ham Radio fields.

**73, Dee, KU4GC**

## Joe, W4BZL, NC Internet Pioneer

Joe Ragland was a soft-spoken guy who was a technical genius in data communications. He was the person who brought the internet to North Carolina, and in particular to the RTP and to UNC, Duke, and NC State, and then to universities and other organizations throughout NC. The first NC link came from Washington DC or some such place, as an extension of the ARPAnet. Joe was one of the very few people who had sufficient technical background in depth in both radio transmission (as many of the links were RF) and data communications. He knew how to interface traditional telephony systems with (mostly IBM) computer software and systems. He knew how to talk to the telephone guys, the radio guys, and the computer guys, each of whom lived in his distinct technical world.

Joe was not the chief administrator, he was the guy who understood all sides, could communicate across domains, and could make the system actually work, and he did. He was the central technical leader at Triangle Universities Computation Center and later at the Microelectronics Center. He was a ham radio operator who knew far more about vhf and uhf radio systems than he ever let on. Getting the internet to "actually work" in the RTP and at various universities required coordination and cooperation with lots of strong-willed people in different organizations and universities. Joe had the right personality to explain and persist in getting what needed to be done actually completed. That often required working through a lot of bumps along the way. Joe was a good teacher, and taught many people (including me) how the internet, as a system, actually sends data back and forth -- what goes out, what comes back.

In the present day it is hard to picture the environment then, when many high-level people not only had no idea of how data communications worked but little sympathy for why data communications was even needed. (Many thought that it was all an expensive boondoggle that would have no real value if it was ever completed. Couldn't we just talk on the phone?) That is, what Joe did was a huge technical challenge but also an organizational challenge. Joe's quiet but persistent personality inspired confidence among those who worked with him and for him, and through his work the internet in NC became a reality. Consequently, we in the RDU area joined the modern world years before we otherwise would have, Thank you Joe.

**73, Roger Barr, N4GF**

## Ham Stuff on Red Bubble

I found this site because my grandson gave me HAM socks from this place. It has lots of HAM Radio themed stuff.

Go to <http://redbubble.com/> Then enter Ham Radio in the search field near the top.

You will easily find the usual coffee mugs and T-shirts. But it doesn't end there. Using search categories on the left, you can find things like wall clocks, pillows, bath mats, shower curtains. Jig-saw puzzles and more.

**73, Bob, K6GRR**

## The ARRL and I

To my surprise, I recently received a certificate in the mail. It came from the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) lauding my 25 years of membership. (It's actually been a few more, but who's counting -- maybe I let my membership lapse a month or so.) I also got a nice 25 year pin that I may (or may not) actually wear. I thought this was a nice gesture and



reminded me of the service the ARRL provides to us radio amateurs. I have always enjoyed perusing the ARRL's QST magazine and reading articles on making/building things. OK, I usually did not make the things themselves, but often they led to better understanding of antennas, circuits, or whatever was being dealt with. Sometimes it did show me tricks and/or techniques that I was able to use for other projects for my home station.

QST is just the most obvious service provided. The ARRL is our advocate with the FCC. The recent approval that allows higher baud rates for digital communication on HF (but with a bandwidth limit) is the result of years of pushing. Yet, it will allow more efficient transmission of emergency communications if it comes to that. Ongoing is defending the bands allocated for our use. I suspect we'd be a lot worse

off without the ARRL efforts. Another ongoing battle is reigning in excessive HOA antenna restrictions. There has been some, limited progress. As you know, little gets done in the legislatures without having some lobbyist push for it. The ARRL is the only organization that is looking out for us at that level.

Another service provided by the ARRL is Logbook of The World (LoTW). When I first started using HF, I thought QSL cards were sort of neat. But, I quickly realized their use can be very time consuming and potentially very costly for postage, QSL cards to send, and "Green Stamps" to encourage replies. I made my own QSL cards and do send them to others on direct request. So, is you want confirmation of a contact, LoTW takes almost no time to use. While free, you do pay a small amount per QSO if you want the contact to counts for an ARRL certificate (and I've collected a few).

So, if you're not an ARRL member, you should be. It does cost a bit more than the DFMA membership (Have you renewed?) but it's well worth it. For some of you on a very tight budget, I can understand sitting this one out, but be thankful to those who do support the ARRL.

73, Dee, KU4GC

## Minutes

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Board Meeting Minutes 4/18/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Board Meeting Minutes 5/16/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Club Meeting Minutes 6/6/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Board Meeting Minutes 6/20/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Club Meeting Minutes 7/18/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Board Meeting Minutes 8/15/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Board Meeting Minutes 9/19/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Board Meeting Minutes 10/17/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Club Meeting Minutes 12/5/2023** - Pending

### **Durham FM Association (DFMA)**

**Club Meeting Minutes 1-02-2024**

**Secretary - Pam (K04YAR)**

**President:** Bob (W4FK)

Bob called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

### **Attending**

Bob (KF4NTC), Dave (NA4VY), Bill (N8BR), Book, Martin (KA5JUJ), Bob (KD8FQM), Mike (KK4BPH), Michael (AA4YH), Pat (K04QLU), Bob (W4FK), Charlie (NC4CD), Mark, Dan (KR4UB), Mark (KJ4NPF), Chris (KY4OU), John (KX4P), Jack (KM4MBG), Lenore (KF4PAB), Chris (K4OGP), Wilson (W4BOH), Pam (K04YAR), Keith (K4CXU), Mark (MAJ2X), Dee (KU4GC), Robert (K6GRR), Henry (WB4ROI), Paul (N2XZF), Dave (W4SAR), Karen (KD4YJZ), Howard (VE2AED). Attending remotely, Tim (KC1TWR), Ken (K04DHJ).

A total of 32 attendees, all but 2 of them hams.

### **OFFICER REPORTS**

#### **President:**

Bob (W4FK)

A reminder to check into nets every week. If you would like to take a shift at Net Control let Bob know.

#### **Vice President - Chris**

Nothing to report.

**Secretary - Pam - Nothing to report.**

#### **Treasurer - Jack**

It's membership renewal season. We have a monthly renewal option now or you can pay yearly. Last year we had over 100 members. Now we have 61. You can pay your renewal fees with cash at a DFMA meeting or you can mail a check to the DFMA Club.

#### **Repeater Manager - Charlie**

All repeaters are working well. New nets are on the 145.450 repeater. Next month's presentation will be on the helium balloons they are releasing in Western NC and tracking with APRS.

**Door Prizes** were awarded to John, Mark (KJ4NPF) and Michael (AA4YH) and Tim (KC1TWR). A gift certificate will be mailed to Tim who attended the meeting remotely.

#### **Program**

The evening's presentation was about some of the challenges in running a cable Internet and television provider. It was presented by Mark Eagle.

**Bob adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:50.**

**Remember to Renew your Membership by Paying your Dues**

Buy – Sell – Trade

The following equipment was donated to OCRA and Wilson, W4BOH is overseeing its disposition.

Heathkit SB-300-Simple but very effective ham band receiver. Amazing condition, \$150.

Kenwood TS-850-Solid state transceiver, the K3 of the 90s. Recently tested, GREAT receiver, HI-FI analog audio and excellent filters, with speaker and PS, \$700. - **SOLD**

Hallicrafters SX-99-Vintage Receiver, works but needs love. Easy to work on. \$50. - **SOLD**

Please contact **Wilson, W4BOH** by email: **infomet@embarqmail.com** if interested or to get more info.

(Note. It is hard to keep up with Wilson’s inventory and he has received even more equipment recently. If you are interested in used equipment, it could be worth your while contacting him. - Dee, KU4GC, editor)

DOWN-SIZING SALE of RADIO & TEST EQUIPMENT

A DFMA member is down-sizing to a location that does not allow antennas for a ham station. The following items are for sale at very reasonable prices.

- Drake TR4-C HF Transceiver
- Drake T4XC Transmitter
- Drake R4C Receiver
- Drake MS-4 Speakers w/ AC-4 Power Supplies
- Corsair CX750M Power Supply Upgrade for Drake AC4
- Drake TV-3300-LP Model 1608 Low Pass Filter
- Bird 612 Termaline Wattmeter
- Bird 6156 Termaline Wattmeter
- Almost All Digital Electronics DFD4 Frequency Counter
- Almost All Digital Electronics Precision Freq. Reference
- Heathkit Sine-Square Audio Generator IG-18
- Heathkit Antenna Noise Bridge HD-1422
- Micronta Clamp-On AC V-A Meter
- Hamtronics 2M Receiver Preamp
- Icom IC-V82 2M HT
- Icom IC-U82 440 MHz HT

Email **nc4cd@earthlink.net** if you are interested in buying any of these items before they go on ebay.

Do you have something that you need or something you want to get rid of? There’s this spot in The Link set aside just for you. Just email the appropriate info to **ku4gc@amsat.org** and it will be included with the next issue. Make sure to include contact info and feel free to include a picture (that is yours – please no copyrighted stuff from the web).

73, Dee, KU4GC

Web Site: **dfma.org**

Upcoming Events (dfma.org for details)

- 2/06 DFMA Meeting, Bullock's BBQ, 6pm
- 2/12 OCRA Meeting, Efland Baha'i Center, 7:30pm
- 2/20 DFMA Board Meeting, virtual, 7pm
- 2/25 NC QSO Party, 10am-8pm
- 3/05 DFMA Meeting, Bullock's BBQ, 6pm

73 - Dee, KU4GC, Editor  
Lenore, KF4PAB, Proofreader

Send copy to [ku4gc@amsat.org](mailto:ku4gc@amsat.org)  
Deadline: one week before the Club Meeting  
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The DFMA Mailing Address

The DFMA has a new mailing address. This is a mail service which costs less than a post office box and provides some extra services.  
Please address any mail you have for the club to:  
**Durham FM Association**  
**9169 W State St #644**  
**Garden City ID 83714**