

# THE LIVE WIRE



The Monthly Publication of the Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Society, Inc.  
<http://www.brars.org>

**March 2011**

## BRARS OFFICERS

Pres. Wyatt Miler, KJ4CTD  
V. Pres. Josh Owings, KG4PFJ  
Sec. Rick Bagwell, KD4DRA  
Treas. Robert Martin, WA4HRK

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Taylor, N3PT  
Phil Robinson, KG4FQG  
Vic Gallo, WA2PJZ  
Johnny Allison, WD4DYH

THE BLUE RIDGE AMATEUR  
RADIO SOCIETY  
&  
BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

# 2011

Jan. 3	Feb. 7
March 7	April 4
May 2	June 6
July 4	Aug. 1
Sept. 5	Oct. 3
Nov. 7	Dec. 5

## March 7, BRARS Meeting

Mike Oakley, N9GSX, presented a program on Emergency Communications. For more information, check out the ARES website at [www.ares-sc.org](http://www.ares-sc.org).



Gary, KI4DOS, was awarded a trophy for high number of Net check in's.



## April 4, Club Meeting Program

The Greenville Spartanburg National Weather Service Director, Tony Sturey will present a program on the National Weather Service and Skywarn.

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### Silent Key

The Ham community mourns the passing of James "Bob" Lawrence, WU8D. A memorial service will be held Saturday, March 26, 2011 from 2pm until in the parking lot of the Lil' Rebel on Hwy 290 in Greer.



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## THE BLUE RIDGE 2 METER NET MONTHLY TOTALS FOR FEBRUARY 2011

### SESSIONS 28

W4DJW 190  
WA4HRK 141  
WD4CYM 134  
KB0KBJ 75

### TRAFFIC 53

AJ4RK 199  
KI4DOS 368  
KG4FQG 320  
KJ4NAI 70

### TOTAL CONTACTS 2198

KF4ZCC 75  
K4SUG 403  
KJ4BSJ 223

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## CHECK IN AND CHAT ON THE LOCAL NETS

Greenville: 9 pm nightly - 146.610

Greenwood: 9 pm Thursday night - 147.165+t107.2

Greenwood Ladies: 8 pm Tuesday night - 147.165+t107.2

Anderson: 8:30 pm nightly - 146.790

Good Morning Net: Mon-Wed-Fri: 9 am - 146.760

ARES Training Net: 8 pm Thursday night - 146.820

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## Ham License Testing Sessions Administered by Volunteer Examiners (VE)'s

**For all tests you should arrive at least 15 minutes early  
and bring the following:**

- **Photo ID (such as Drivers License or State ID)**
- Original and photocopy of your current Radio License, if applicable
- (as well as any CSCE's you will present for verification for upgrades)
- Social Security Card or FCC-issued Registration Number

*Good Luck!*

### Greenville SC

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month  
Testing begins at 8:30 AM  
Red Cross Building  
940 Grove Rd. (near G'ville Memorial Hospital)  
Fee is \$10.00  
Contact: [Steve Shaffer, AF4RN](#)  
[Map Here](#)

### Spartanburg SC

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every even numbered month  
Testing begins at 7 PM  
Red Cross Building  
104 Garner Road (off Pine St. -US176)  
Fee is \$ 15.00  
Contact: Fritz, W4NTO @ 864-583-6716  
[Map Here](#)

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## **GENERAL MOTORS TURNS TO AMATEUR TO SOLVE ANTENNA PROBLEM**

When General Motors --- the world's second largest auto maker --- encountered a problem with the AM/FM antenna on its 2011 Chevrolet Camaro convertible, it was at a loss as to what to do. Spy photographs showed a pre-production version of the car with a long whip-style antenna on its rear fender. After what GM called "an outcry among Camaro enthusiasts," the company decided to rethink the antenna. But how?

On hardtop Camaros, the antenna is integrated into the rear windshield, but given the disappearing nature of this car's roof, that wasn't possible on the convertible. So GM turned to two antenna engineers -- Don Hibbard, W8DBH, and George Kittinger --- who were tasked with doing what some thought was impossible: concealing the AM/FM antenna without sacrificing radio reception, while not putting it inside the Camaro's windows.

Hibbard and Kittinger managed to find a way to bury the AM/FM antenna inside the spoiler perched on the car's rear deck lid. All that is visible is a shark fin antenna (used for satellite radio, OnStar and cellular signals), while the separate whip antenna --- built into the spoiler --- is used to receive AM and FM radio signals. Hibbard and Kittinger knew they had to find a way to preserve the vertical polarization of an AM/FM antenna, so they tried a few possibilities before coming up with the idea of placing the half-wavelength horizontal antenna in the spoiler. According to GM, this is a first.

A ham since 1977, Hibbard --- the holder of an Advanced class license --- is a self described antenna nut, crediting his Amateur Radio background as a precursor for his love for antennas. He was first licensed when he attended Lansing Community College where he was studying electrical engineering. "One of my professors asked us in class if we would be interested in getting licensed," he told the ARRL. "We already knew the technical stuff from our college courses, but we settled in to learn Morse code, the FCC regulations and everything else you needed to know to become a ham."

-continued-



After graduating, Hibbard went to work for General Motors in the electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) lab. A few years ago when a position in the antenna validation department opened, he jumped at the chance. "Through ham radio, I've always loved playing with antennas," he told the ARRL. "As hams, we are always building and experimenting. Sometimes at work, when I'm confronted with a problem, I say, 'I did such-and-such on an antenna for a ham band. I wonder if it will work here.' So my amateur experience with antennas has definitely come into play here at work."

The spoiler AM/FM antenna is an active antenna module that does all its impedance matching and amplification before the signal is sent back to the receiver. But when asked about the possibility of an amateur antenna in the spoiler, Hibbard just chuckled. "This antenna just receives, it doesn't transmit," he told the ARRL. "We can get away with a receive-only antenna in the spoiler. I'm not so sure about a ham antenna."

Hibbard said that the unorthodox placement of the antenna within the body of the vehicle created a number of technical challenges, such as balancing form by preserving the car's styling and maintaining unimpeded audio reception. "Where other automakers have tried and failed, Chevy succeeded," said Hibbard. "We hope to take what we've learned with the Camaro convertible, build on it and apply it to future vehicles."

Hibbard said that with work and kids in college, he has not found as much time as he would like to be active once again on the air; he counts 15 meters as his favorite band and SSB his mode of choice. "I really enjoy contesting, ARRL Field Day and the ARRL Sweepstakes," he said. "I also love experimenting and seeing what I can do. After all, I'm a ham."

Article reprinted from March 2011 **QST** with the permission of the ARRL.

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**Third Annual Harmon Field Heritage Days  
Thursday - Sunday  
March 24 - 27, 2011**

**Bring the family and experience life in the 1800s; Civil War re-enactors; arts and crafts; history; buggy rides through a Civil War camp, and of course food.**

**If you would like more information you may email**

**<http://serendipitykidsranch.com/heritagedays.htm>. You may also call 828-894-3370 or 828-817-1544.**

**If you would like for me to forward the entire email announcement to you please drop me and email at [K3JOY@bellsouth.net](mailto:K3JOY@bellsouth.net). Joy**

## 2011 HAMFEST Schedule

For more information, go to [WWW.ARRL.ORG/Hamfests](http://WWW.ARRL.ORG/Hamfests) .

- **3/19/2011 | [Kennehoochee Hamfest](#)**

**Location:** Marietta, GA  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Kennehoochee Amateur Radio Club  
**Website:** <http://W4BTL.org>

- **03/19/2011 | [MTARS Tullahoma Hamfest](#)**

**Location:** Tullahoma, TN  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Middle Tennessee Amateur Radio Society  
**Website:** <http://www.qsl.net/mtars>

- **04/22/2011 | [Southeastern VHF Society Conference](#)**

**Location:** Huntsville, AL  
**Type:** ARRL Convention  
**Sponsor:** Southeastern VHF Society  
**Website:** <http://www.svhfs.org/conference.html>

**04/23/2011 | [North Carolina State Convention \(Raleigh Hamfest\)](#)**

**Location:** Raleigh, NC  
**Type:** ARRL Convention  
**Sponsor:** Raleigh Amateur Radio Society  
**Website:** <http://www.rars.org/hamfest>

- **05/07/2011 | [South Carolina State Convention \(Upstate Hamfest\)](#)**

**Location:** Spartanburg, SC  
**Type:** ARRL Convention  
**Sponsor:** Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Society  
**Website:** <http://upstatehamfest.com>

## From the Board of Directors

It is the policy of the Board of the Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Society that should any member of the Club have an issue with something the leadership of the Club is doing, the member is encouraged to bring their concerns to the attention of the Board at any Board meeting or to the membership of the Club at any regularly scheduled Club meeting. Further, the actions of the Board may be reviewed by any member of the Club at any time.

### Contact the Officers

Pres. Wyatt Miller – [kj4ctd@wmiler.org](mailto:kj4ctd@wmiler.org) - 864-6639203  
V. Pres. Josh Owings – [jeowings@gmail.com](mailto:jeowings@gmail.com) – 864-884-6587  
Sec. Rick Bagwell – [kd4dra@gmail.com](mailto:kd4dra@gmail.com) – 864-907-6121  
Treas. Robert Martin – [wa4hrk@gmail.com](mailto:wa4hrk@gmail.com) – 864-335-9679

### Board Members

Bob Taylor – [rtaylor62@charter.net](mailto:rtaylor62@charter.net) – 864-331-9864  
Phil Robinson – [mastercarpentry@gmail.com](mailto:mastercarpentry@gmail.com) – 864-906-7892  
Vic Gallo – [vsg20@Aol.com](mailto:vsg20@Aol.com) – 864-243-9827  
Johnny Allison – [jallison0529@mindspring.com](mailto:jallison0529@mindspring.com) – 864-884-1314

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## **BRARS Club Meeting Minutes March 7, 2011**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Wyatt (KJ4CTD)  
Roll Call took place around the room to recognize members, and guests,  
3 guests were recognized and 1 was a member at the end of the night.

### ***Officer Reports:***

**Secretary:** Rick (KD4DRA) Read the minutes from last meeting. Motion and accepted.

**Treasurer:** Robert (WA4HRK) reported that the Bank account is in good shape.  
No Bills to be paid, next big outlay of money will be the Ham fest.  
***(Club accounts are available for review by club members at any time).***

### ***Committee Reports:***

#### **NET Report:**

Ray (K4SUG) reported the net totals for February were 2198 total contacts; 28 sessions; 53 pieces of traffic.

#### **Repeater Report:**

Ray reported that this Spring he will be getting together a crew to put the new antenna and feed line up at the 82 site. He also answered a question about the height of the new antenna, he says we'll gain about 100 feet, and improved coverage area.

**Field Day:** Josh Owings, (KG4PFJ) reported that we intend to have a mini field day on April the 9<sup>th</sup>; If Wyatt can get approval from the Donaldson Center operation manager. The date for the real Field Day is June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>

**Ham fest:**

JD (KF4RVH) past around 3 sheets to get signups for volunteers at the ham fest. If you would like to volunteer, contact JD at [mmjnorris@att.net](mailto:mmjnorris@att.net)

**FWA:**

Freedom Weekend Aloft will be held in Simpsonville again this year. The dates are 5/27/2011 - 5/30/2011. Freedom Weekend needs volunteers for the Balloon operators, if you would like to help out contact. Cindy Nelson, Associate Director  
Phone: 864-399-9481, let her know you are with the BRARS Group.

**Old Business: N/A****New Business:**

Johnny (WD4DYH) would like to get together a group of Members that would like to Take the CERT Training classes, these would take place sometime in the spring. If you are interested contact Johnny at, [jallison0529@mindspring.com](mailto:jallison0529@mindspring.com)

**New application:**

Jack Tripp (KK4ALT)

*The members voted that he be accepted as a BRARS member.*

**Drawings:**

Tom (KB1EFA) Name was drawn for the Club Prize of \$10.00, but he wasn't present, so next month the prize will be \$20. Ed (K4KK) won the **50/50 drawing** of \$20

**Program:**

Mike Oakley (N9GSX) Is The "DEC" for Abbeville, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenville, Greenwood, McCormick, Oconee, and Pickens. A good Reference point would be, [www.ares-sc.org](http://www.ares-sc.org)