

# Z E R Ø BEAT

## CLUB OFFICERS

### President:

JIM MINOR K4BTP

### Vice-President:

WAYNE GENTRY AA4BL

### Sec./Treasurer:

BOB LIEBERMAN KA4WZI

### Publicity Officer:

MEL ORENSTEIN W6THZ

### Trustees:

ED SENSINTAFFAR WA4NKU

FRANK GOLDEN W4DQF

JIM MEACHAM KK4A

## REPEATERS/CUSTODIANS

146.04/64 MONTGOMERY, AL

WAYNE GENTRY AA4BL

146.25/85 WETUMPKA, AL

TOMMY GARRETT WA4FYU

147.78/18 GRADY, AL

ROLAND TOWNLEY K4B0J

## CLUB STATION

Call: W4AP

Trustee: PETE SIDES W4AUP

**MAR 85**

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

# MARC

MONTGOMERY AMATEUR RADIO  
CLUB, INC. P. O. BOX 3141  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36109

## OFFICERS FOR '85'

Election of officers for 1985 took place during the December '84' meeting and the results can be seen on the front cover of this issue of Zero Beat. The cover had to be changed slightly to incorporate the new position of Publicity Officer plus a listing of the repeater custodians and trustee of the club license. If you're wondering about the apparent new position of Publicity Officer, it's not a new position at all; it is in fact provided for by the Club By-Laws. It was decided that this position should be filled; therefore, it was added to the slate of officers. As you can see, there are some new names as well as familiar names. These people will need your help and support during their terms in office so pitch in and participate!!!

## NEW MEETING PLACE

It was under investigation for several weeks by the Board of Directors of the MARC, and it was put to a vote of the general membership at the February '85' regular meeting. The decision is now final.....The regular monthly meetings of the Montgomery Amateur Radio Club, beginning with the March '85' meeting, will be held at the Alabama Emergency Management Agency Headquarters in downtown Montgomery. I am sure that this surprises a good many of you so I'll try to give a little background leading up to the move.

First of all, there has been a lot of talk in the last few months about a club station. Many feel that a club station would be a great asset to the MARC. It also seems to be the opinion of most that the facility which houses the club station should be large enough to accommodate the average number of people which usually attend the monthly meetings, must be secure, and at the same time should be readily accessible. Of course, it goes without saying that the facility had to be affordable. The desire and interest on behalf of the club was there, the appropriate facility was all that was lacking.

In recent months, a RACES organization authorized by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) was initiated through Marc Miller, K4ONF, Communications Warning and Public Information Officer of AEMA. As the results of a positive impression of the RACES operation and through the efforts of Marc Miller, the MARC was offered space at AEMA Headquarters to hold meetings and to set up a club station. The Board of Directors of the MARC met at AEMA Headquarters on February 14, 1985 to look around, and the proposed new facilities were favorably received by all in attendance. The areas allocated for club use include a meeting room with tables and chairs and an adjacent room (Marc's office) which houses the RACES station and which will ultimately house the club station. This area is also known as the Emergency Operating Center or EOC.

The building which houses the new club facilities is the State Administrative Building behind the Capitol and is bounded by Ripley on the East, Union on the West, Monroe on the North and King on the South. A map is attached to the end of this newsletter, and I hope it will at least get you into the neighborhood. The entrance to the building is on the southeast corner or at the intersection of King and Ripley. You can park on Ripley or even better on King. By the way, this is the same building that the 146.04/64 repeater is in and on. If you ever come to a meeting and there is no one at the door, just call on 85 or 64 and someone will come-a-running. Once inside the entrance door, just go down two floors (you can't go any further) and follow the corridor.

Well, that's about all I can think of to say about the new meeting place. I guess our next endeavor should be to round-up some gear to use in a club station. If anyone has anything they could donate or lend to the club, get in touch with President Jim Minor, K4BTP. So, see you at the new place on 18 March 1985 at 7:00 P.M., local time.

#### IF ALL ELSE FAILS

It is a well known fact that some people have more trouble with the code than others. For those of you who have tried everything and still can't seem to get over the hump, take note. In a recent issue of World Radio there was a review of a product called "Subliminal Code Learning" by Vince Luciani, K2VJ. It is in fact a cassette tape which one listens to and which seems to be only soft music; however, the code is supposed to be there, working on your subconscious even though it is consciously unheard. I don't know if the tape works or not but subliminal suggestion is a very real concept and might be worth looking into if you're having trouble with the code.

Another suggestion, if you don't buy the subliminal theory (sounds like a cigar) is this. The Montgomery Unit of CAVEC (Central Alabama Volunteer Exam Coordinator) now has a means of producing practice tapes similar to the actual code exams given by CAVEC. If you will get in touch with Bobby Chandler, N4AU, and furnish him with a blank tape, he will produce a practice tape for you.

#### LICENSE EXAMINATIONS

The Montgomery Chapter of CAVEC will give Amateur Radio Operator License Examinations for novice through extra class licenses on March 23, 1985 and at the Columbus Hamfest on March 30, 1985. The March 23rd exams will be given in the H. C. Trenholm Science Building on the campus of Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama and will begin at 8:00 A.M. The March 30th exams will be given in Columbus, Georgia in conjunction with the Columbus Hamfest and will begin at 10:00 A.M., E.S.T. Candidates should either send a completed 610 form to CAVEC, 5244 Millwood Road, Montgomery, Alabama 36109, or fill out a 610 Form as a "walk-in" at the examination point. There will be a \$2 application charge at the Montgomery exams and a \$4 application charge at the Columbus exams. Questions regarding the examinations should be directed to Bob Garrett W4MF, 277-2287.

#### TALL TOWER NET

Over the last few years there has been a lot of off and on, pro and con discussion about having a net on the 147.78/18 repeater. As most of you know, this machine has extensive coverage including much of central and south Alabama. It has often been said that this coverage would significantly add to the potential of a successful net on the Tall Tower repeater. At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the MARC it was decided to give it a try. The general consensus of the Board was to start out on an informal basis every Thursday night at approximately 8:15 P.M., local time; do this for a few weeks to sort of test the water and if there appeared to be enough interest, proceed with more specific planning. Well, the Tall Tower Net, as it is being called for lack of a better name, has been active for several weeks now and the response seems to be good. Wayne Gentry, AA4BL, has been acting as net control and he has advised me that check-ins have numbered into the forties and have

ranged from as far South as the Florida/Alabama line, as far West as Selma, as far East as Columbus, and as far north as Birmingham. Not bad considering that the net has only met four times as of this writing. If it is ultimately decided that there is enough interest to warrant a net on 147.78/18 (there definitely seems to be), then several questions will have to be answered. Some of those questions are: What type of net will it be.....Traffic? Emergency? Official ARRL? Extension of Central Alabama Two Meter Net? How often will it meet? How will net control be handled? What will be the official starting time of the net? These are just a few of the questions that have been discussed on the net. So how about checking-in next Thursday night at approximately 8:15 P.M. and give your input. If you don't have any input, check-in anyway. By the way, I'd like to point out that Wayne, AA4BL, has done a great job in getting the net started, but let's not make him carry the entire load. Give him a call if you can help out in some way.

#### OFFICIAL DUN

As was pointed out in the December issue of Zero Beat, it's time to pay our 1985 MARC membership dues. According to President Jim Minor, K4BTP, membership renewal is proceeding at a rather slow pace. The primary source of income for the club is money collected in the form of membership dues. I'm sure that those of you who haven't renewed intend to; however, good intentions can't be put in the bank nor can they be used to buy maintenance parts for the Club Repeaters. The club definitely needs your support and I am quite sure that at \$6 per year a better deal does not exist anywhere in or out of Hamdom.

#### ARRL AFFILIATION

In case you don't know, the MARC is affiliated with the ARRL and this enables the club to receive \$2 for each individual ARRL membership renewal and \$5 for each new ARRL membership which the club sends in. This is an excellent way to help the club so the next time your ARRL membership comes up for renewal, or if you know a prospective new member, contact Jim Minor, K4BTP, or Bob Lieberman, KA4WZI, for the details.

#### DETERMINATION

I personally witnessed the following story and felt it worthy of sharing with you.

The Montgomery Unit of CAVEC was giving Amateur Radio License examinations at the Greenville Hamfest on January 27, 1985. One particular applicant held a Novice license and was there to attempt the 13 WPM code test and the written exam for Tech/General. He advised us that he had very little education and was a very poor reader. Most of his knowledge of amateur radio was gained through the intense aid of a friend. Continuing conversation with this gentleman amplified more and more his lack of formal education but at the same time also revealed a distinct air of determination. He attempted the 20 WPM code test "just for the heck of it" but was unsuccessful. He then took the 13 WPM code test. After the code tape ended the ten question written exam was handed out. As time went by, it became painfully obvious that he was struggling to answer the questions; yet a glance over his shoulder revealed what appeared to be very good copy. It was now clear that he was having great difficulty reading and

comprehending the questions. A decision was made by CAVEC officials to read the questions to him. No other aid was given him. He passed! Now came the big one.....the 50 question multiple choice exam. Again, one of the Volunteer Examiners read each question to him along with the four possible answers. It was a long and arduous ordeal for the examinee and the examiner. He finished the exam and without hesitancy, turned it in to be graded. By now you have probably guessed that he left the testing room with a hard-earned but well deserved General Class Amateur Radio Operator's License.

#### CALLBOOK CUSTODIAN

I'm sure most of you know by now that Wayne, AA4BL, is custodian of the 146.04/64 machine but did you know he is also custodian of the "Club Callbook". It's a 1985 U. S. version and if you need an address, just get in touch with him. Callbook Custodian is an awesome job, but I'm sure the right man has been charged with it.

#### BUSINESS OR NOT

An article from the December '84' issue of World Radio told of one amateur asking another on the air about the price of a piece of equipment that was being sold by the estate of a deceased amateur. The other refused to discuss it, saying it was illegal to discuss prices on the air. Well, I believe that the majority of us realize that we are forbidden to use amateur frequencies to conduct business communications, but are we sure what constitutes business? The article states that business communications are defined by Section 97.3(bb) of the FCC rules as transmissions or communications, the purpose of which is to facilitate the regular business or commercial affairs of any party. We are advised to note the words "purpose" and "regular". Continuing on, it is pointed out that if a communication facilitates someone's business but that is not the actual "purpose" of the communication, it does not come under the definition. If someone on the road is looking for a gas station and you direct him to the nearest one, you are facilitating business, but that's not your purpose; you're trying to help a driver in need. Of course, if you directed him to your brother's station a mile further away, it might be a different story.

Now with regard to the word "regular" the article takes us back to the original topic of discussion: if the Ham asking for the price of the equipment is a dealer in amateur radio gear, such a communication would be a business communication, and so prohibited. But if it is only a question of someone looking for a piece of gear to enhance his own station, it would be legitimate.

I would like to close this article with a few questions as "food for thought".

1. Is it legitimate to call "time" on an autopatch repeater?
2. If you were on a street corner in a strange town and without transportation, would it be legal to contact a local Ham with your HT and ask him to call a cab for you?
3. If your car breaks down in town, is it legal to use the autopatch to call a garage keeping in mind that there are buildings and houses all around you which surely have telephones in them?

4. Many rules and regulations have exceptions which read "except in the case of an emergency". What is the definition of an emergency? Does this mean strictly life or death situations or can it also be a matter of inconvenience such as car trouble?

#### EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Amateur radio is one of the most versatile hobbies that I know of; by that I mean that there are many different areas of interest within the hobby and it offers at least one niche for even the pickiest of Hams. However, amateur radio is also an unselfish hobby in that it offers a service to non-Hams in the form of traffic nets and emergency communications. Even though the average person is probably unaware of these services, they have the potential of playing a very important role in the lives of many; I'm speaking of "times of emergency", be it local, regional, national, or worldwide. Recently, local amateur radio operators have had the opportunity to show that they are ready, willing, and able during times of emergency.

During the last week in January of this year, the State of Alabama was hit by an ice storm. Much of the upper half of the State was paralyzed and a state of emergency was declared. Many local Hams went into action through the Radio Amateurs Civil Emergency Service, or more commonly known as RACES. The local RACES organization is authorized by the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and operates from the emergency operating center or EOC at AEMA Headquarters in downtown Montgomery. The EOC is equipped with HF and 2-meter amateur gear. The RACES volunteers manned the station continuously throughout the duration of the emergency.

The week of February 11, 1985 was Severe Weather Preparedness Week and on Thursday, February 14, 1985 a mock tornado drill was conducted state-wide. At approximately 10:30 A.M. the warning sirens began sounding to signify the beginning of the drill. Local Hams proved their readiness by checking into an emergency session of the Central Alabama 2-meter net on the 146.25/85 repeater. There were 24 check-ins representing a nice cross section of the various types of operation; i.e., mobiles, base stations, portables, and at least one station operating on emergency power.

#### THE GOOD 'OLE' DAYS

Do you remember when you could go home in the evenings after a hard day on the job, turn on the HF rig, and then work into almost any part of the world on any mode. Ah, yes, those were the good ole days or maybe I should say the good ole years.....1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, and maybe even into 1981. Of course, I'm speaking of the years when the present sunspot cycle was considered as being at or near its peak.

I received my Ham ticket in 1977 and quickly became a DX fanatic. I immediately took for granted the fact that 10 meters opened up almost daily, that 15 meters opened up before noon and usually remained open until 9:00 P.M., and that 20 meters was always open (or at least it seemed that way). These three bands kept me so busy that I didn't know what was happening on 40, 80, or 160 meters. A typical evening might have begun by making several phone contacts into Europe and Africa before supper. After supper I usually swung toward the Pacific, started at the top with a few Japanese contacts and

gradually worked to the Southwest where the ZL's and VK's were always on tap. This was also a good time to pick up some of those exotic Pacific Islands. Why, I remember the night when a station from Papua, New Guinea checked into the Cradle of the Confederacy Net on 28.772 Mhz at 9:00 in the evening. We all worked him and I have not heard another Papua, New Guinea station since..... Apparently the place just ain't eat up with Hams. Well, by now I usually switched to CW and started working the Russians. Now that was fun 'cause there was usually a jillion of 'um and they all thought I was from Lower Slobovia (my call, KK4A, was new then). By the way, why do all Russian CW signals chirp like crickets? And so it went, sometimes into the wee hours of the morning. If you stayed up late enough or woke up early enough, you could work India over the poles. If you haven't done that, then you probably aren't familiar with "polar warble" (not to be confused with polar bears).

What is all this leading to? Well, with the bands in their present condition, we can't work much DX in the evenings, so I find it enjoyable to reminisce. I also realized not too long ago that Hams who have obtained their tickets within the last three years may not realize that HF holds a world of excitement that they have not yet been exposed to. I just wish I had some good news but according to the January issue of QST, things are going to get worse before they get better. The article entitled "Sunspots" on Page 52 says that the cycle won't bottom out until 1987 and that band conditions won't begin to improve until 1989. And I thought things couldn't get any worse. The article does say that conditions tend to improve faster than they deteriorate. So, I guess it will be a few years yet but I can hardly wait; after all, I still don't have Zone 23 confirmed for WPX and I'm not even close to being on the DXCC Honor Roll.

#### DON'T FORGET

Central Alabama two-meter net every Sunday night at 8:30 P.M., local time, on the 146.25/85 repeater.

Tall Tower Net every Thursday night at approximately 8:15 P.M., local time, on the 147.78/18 repeater.

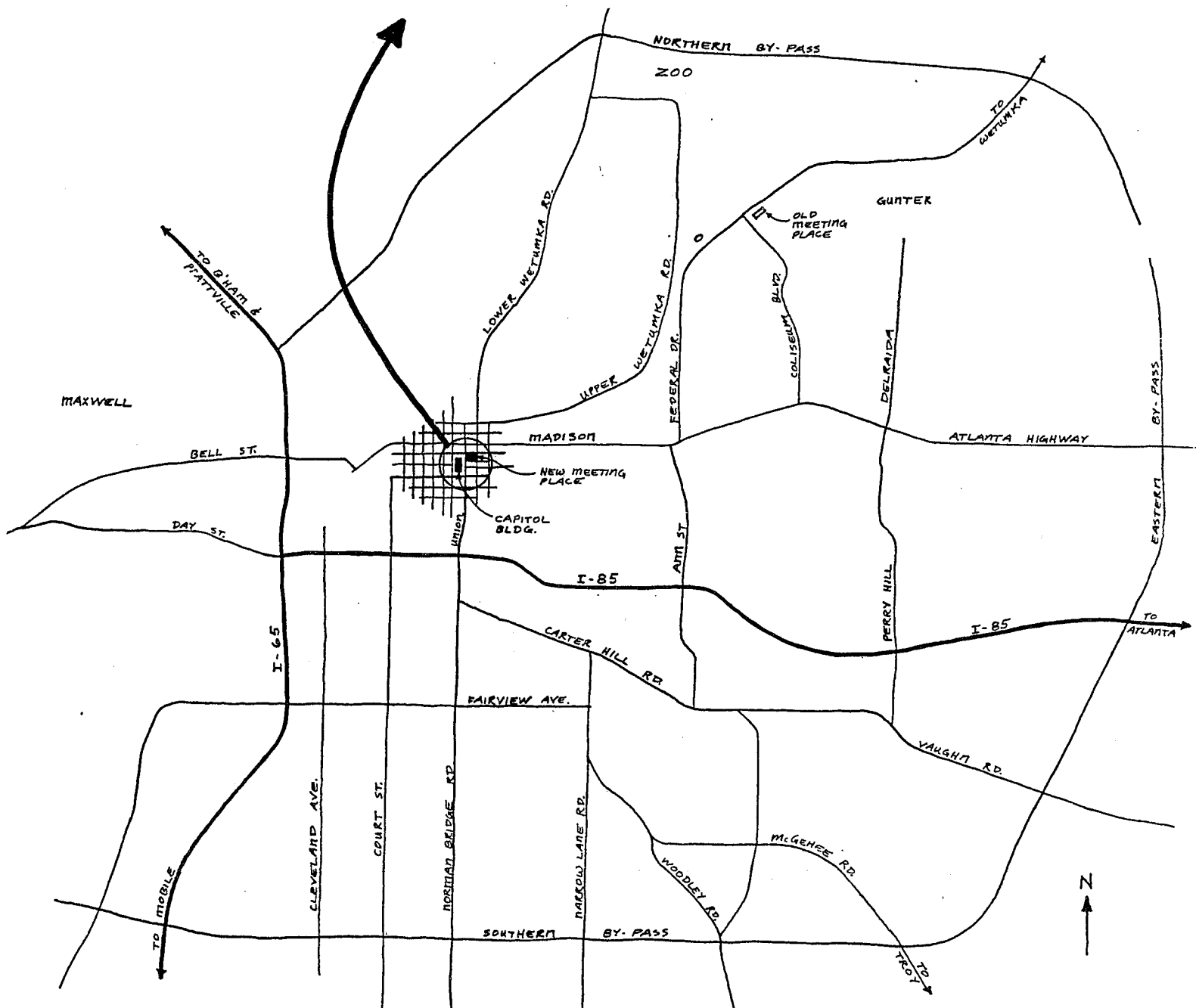
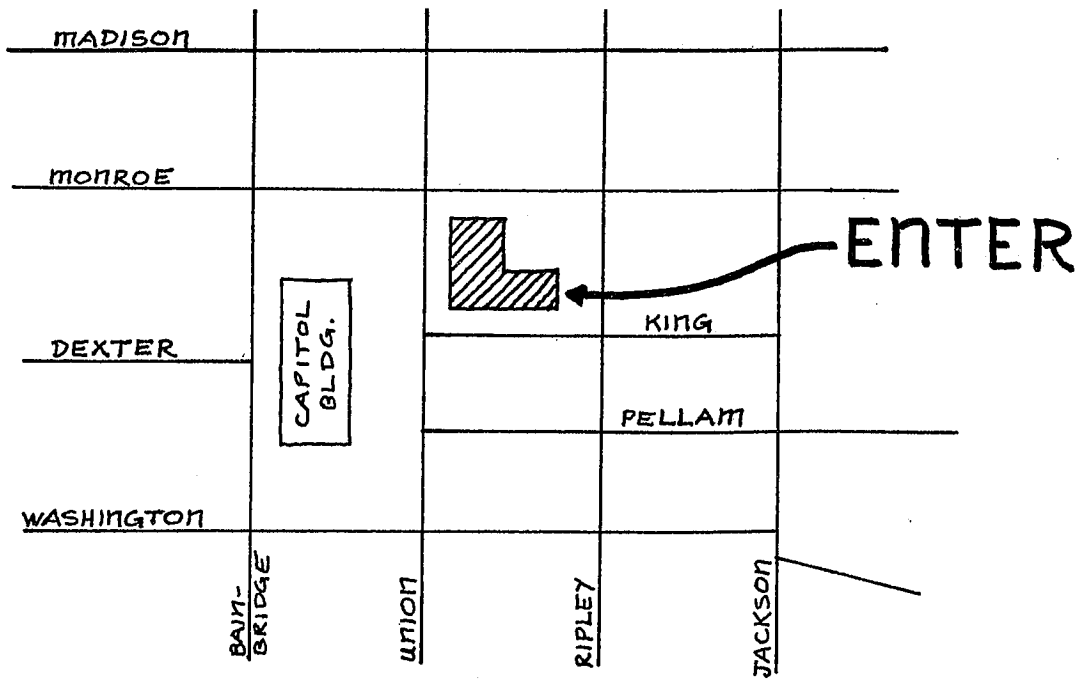
Club meetings over the next quarter will be on March 18, April 15, and May 20, 1985 at 7:00 P.M.; and, of course, don't forget the new location as discussed hereinbefore.

#### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

In closing this issue of Zero Beat, I'll leave you with this question: How indispensable are you? Ponder this for a while, then place your finger in a bucket of water and slowly withdraw it. See how long the hole remains where your finger was. 73

#### P.S.

I was delighted to hear Bob (Uncle John Henry) Kinsaul, K4UJH, on 146.25/85 today. Most of you probably know that Bob has been under the weather for a while now, but I could tell by the ornery sound of his voice today that he is well on his way to complete recovery. Welcome back, Bob. I always knew you would pull yourself back together before the spring fishing season.





MONTGOMERY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

NAME:

HANDLE:

STREET ADDRESS:

CALL:

CITY & STATE:

LICENSE CLASS:

ZIP CODE:

ARRL MEMBER (Y/N):

HOME PHONE:

EXPIRES (MO/YR):

OFFICE PHONE:

OCCUPATION:

=====

BANDS WORKED & EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

=====

(FILL IN THE 0 TO INDICATE ACTIVITY)

	160	80	40	20	15	10	6	2	OTHER
AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SSB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RTTY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SSTV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FAC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OSCAR						0	0	0	0
MOBILE		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HAND/TALK								0	

EMERGENCY POWER AVAILABLE BATTERY: 0 GASOLINE GENERATOR: 0

=====

HAVE YOU UPGRADED YOUR LICENSE IN THE LAST YEAR? (Y= 0 / N= 0)

WHAT ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE CLUB PARTICIPATE IN DURING  
COMING YEAR?

CAN YOU PRESENT OR ARRANGE A PROGRAM OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS?

WHAT NETS DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN?

OTHER COMMENTS:

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN WITH \$6.00 ANNUAL DUES TO:

Montgomery Amateur Radio Club, Inc.,  
P. O. Box 3141,  
Montgomery, AL 36109

