

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

146.24/84 WETUMPKA, AL

TOMMY GARRETT WA4FYU

147.78/18 GRADY, AL

ROLAND TOWNLEY K4BOJ

CLUB STATION

Call: W4AP

Trustee: PETE SIDES W4AUP

SEPT 85

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

MARC

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

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

You might think it is a little soon to be discussing MARC elections; after all they don't come up until the December meeting and there will be another issue of Zero Beat before then. But, after looking back on last year's elections, I believe that now is the time for each of us to begin thinking about who we want as club officers for the 1986 calendar year. We simply cannot wait until election night to begin considering this matter because if we do we will end up in the same situation as last year; i.e., nobody wanted the jobs. Now I have not recently talked with our current President and Secretary/Treasurer but these two gentlemen are serving their second consecutive terms in office, and I think I can safely say that neither of them is seeking election to a third term. This is probably a good time to point out that I don't intend to continue indefinitely as the editor of Zero Beat either. That's not to say that I won't support the club, but I firmly believe that new blood in the various elected and appointed positions is important to the viability of any organization.

The bottom line of all this is that it takes participation from the members to make any organization successful in its endeavors and I don't mean a few of the members, all of the time. We must spread the work load around, and we must get new members involved. Above all, let's not force those who do take on club responsibilities to continue with them for more than a year unless they choose to do so. There are plenty of very capable people in our ranks, so there is no reason for the same club officers and appointees to have to carry the load year after year. Let's roust some previously uninvolved people out of the bushes and see if some of them will go to work for the MARC. Surely, out of nearly 150 members, there must be more than a handful that are willing to do something for the MARC and thus for the community and for amateur radio.

TALL TOWER NET

If you haven't been checking into the Tall Tower Net lately, you're missing a good thing. It has really caught on from Birmingham to Florida and is probably the most entertaining net in the listening area. It is now affiliated with the National Traffic System and ARRL and is designated "Alabama Emergency Net Golf" or AENG. However we (the MARC) still retain the title, Tall Tower Net. The net presently meets every Monday and Thursday night at 8:15 local time on the 147.18/78 repeater which is sponsored by the Montgomery Amateur Radio Club. Wayne, AA4BL, is net manager and net control on most nights but receives help with the latter on occasion. Roll-call is performed by county and check-ins usually range from the forties to the sixties. Traffic is handled after roll-call and then net business and items of interest are taken care of. A new item recently added to the net is the airing of "Westlink" which is an Amateur Radio News Service. The Net then goes into an informal discussion. The topic for discussion could be and has been most anything. The discussions are often lively and interesting.

Most of you know that the title of Tall Tower came from the fact that the repeater is located on the WSFA-TV tower in Grady, Alabama at approximately the 1300 foot mark. This makes for an excellent machine, but things may get even better. The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) which the MARC is affiliated with, has procured a G.E. Mastr II repeater for use in place of the present Tall Tower machine. The new machine has been tried out on 146.24/84

(remember the two-tone beep) and works like a charm. The only thing left to determine is whether the new machine will fit in the existing cabinet or not. Hopefully there won't be any problems and the Tall Tower will have a new voice in the near future.

MONTGOMERY HAMFEST 1985

Don't forget that the 1985 Montgomery Hamfest is just around the corner so you need to plan accordingly. The Hamfest will be a one day event held in the Civic Center on Saturday, 9 November 1985. The prizes have not been established as of this writing but flyers will be mailed in the near future which will tell you the full story about the prizes. One bit of good news is that Doc's Communications has stated that he would come to the Montgomery Hamfest, and there is a good chance that Hooper from Mississippi will also show up. Starting time for the Hamfest will be 9:00 A.M. with license exams beginning at 8:00 A.M. The drawing for the prizes will be at 3:00 P.M. I've been told that the Alabama Repeater Council will have a meeting during the Hamfest. Talk-in will be on the 146.24/84 repeater.

If you're interested in helping with the Hamfest, here is a list of Committees and Chairpersons that you can call:

Hamfest Chairman: Tommy Griffin, WB4WIM

Ticket Chairman: Leroy Bell, KA4WZD

Publicity Chairman: Phil Salley, WB4OZN

Facilities and Flea Market: Al Erdman, W4CNQ

Talk-in Committee: Paul St. John, N4DLV

License Examinations: Bob Garrett, W4MF

Treasurer: Bob Lieberman, KA4WZI

So tell everyone you talk with about the Hamfest and tell them to spread the word.

SUPER NOVICE LICENSE:

In an effort to make the Novice ticket more attractive to young computer hobbyists and others, the ARRL has submitted a proposal to the FCC which provides for an expansion of Novice privileges. This proposal has been met with varying attitudes, opinions, and emotions by Hams all across the county. The primary change which seems to cause a rub among many higher class licensees is that Novices will be given phone privileges under the proposed expansion. These phone privileges would occur in the 10-meter band (28.3 - 28.5 MHz), 220 MHz band, and 1240 MHz band. Those against the plan say they don't want Novice licenses to be so attractive that the incentive to upgrade is diminished. Those in favor of the plan point to statistics which show that a very high percentage of Novices never upgrade and that amateur radio is in a no-growth status. There are valid arguments on both sides of the fence and I really am not sure which side I support (I guess I'm a mugwump) but I do believe that amateur radio must grow to survive and maintaining a no growth, no decline

posture is not an acceptable alternative. If the ARRL's proposal is not the answer, then what is? If you are against it, then you are duty bound to offer an alternate proposal. If you can't think of a better way to give amateur radio a shot in the arm, then maybe you better reconsider the ARRL proposal.

TVI NIGHTMARE

For those of you who have experienced or are experiencing TVI problems while operating your amateur radio station, this article may be of interest or possibly even some help to you.

It all began when I moved into a new home a couple of years ago. Up to that point my amateur radio career had been free of any interference to televisions while operating my radio station. This lack of interference or TVI included my own home as well as surrounding homes. I'll admit that my station did interfere with my own stereo but not the stereos of my neighbors.

After setting up my amateur radio station in our new home, I became painfully aware of the fact that I was seriously interfering with my TV sets. The nature of the interference on the TV sets was a strong herringbone pattern on the screen while operating on 10, 15 and 20 meters and fundamental front end overloading on 40 and 80 meters. My neighbors experienced no TVI to my knowledge. The cable TV company was called in (I have underground cable TV service) but they had no answer to my problem. I then tried an assortment of things such as additional grounding, a low-pass filter on my HF rig, new coax, a complete check of all coaxial connections, a borrowed HF rig in place of my own, a new TV (I'm serious), different AC circuits within the house, and rerouting of cables and power cords. I even tried ungrounding everything. Nothing worked!

Now after a year of not operating while my family watched TV or talked on the phone I decided I'd had enough. I had heard on several occasions that wrapping TV power cords and antenna cables around toroid or iron ferrite cores would eliminate or reduce TVI on many cases. So through the courtesy of Keith, KB4C10, I obtained several old fly-back transformers, removed the iron cores from them, and started to work. I wrapped (6 to 8 turns) the Cable TV coax around one of the cores just after the cable entered the house. I could see a noticeable improvement in my TV picture while transmitting on 10, 15 or 20 meters so I added another core between my VCR and TV. This resulted in even more improvement. Finally I wrapped the power cords from the TV and VCR around one core and SHAZAM - no more TVI resulting from 10, 15, and 20 meter transmissions.

However, the fundamental front end overload while operating on 40 and 80 meters remained unaffected by the addition of the iron cores. After doing some reading I learned that this type of problem is often resolved by the addition of a "high pass filter" at the TV set. Initially, I couldn't find one in town at a reasonable price but I finally realized that Radio Shack had one for \$3.95. I was willing to gamble on that amount so I bought one and hooked it up. Well that was probably the best value for \$3.95 that I've ever received in amateur radio because that little device reduced my 40 and 80 meter TVI from totally blanking the screen to only a tiny flicker or blinking which the rest of my family doesn't even notice.

RACES - IT NEEDS YOU!

The Montgomery area Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service or RACES as it is more commonly known has been activated three times this summer. The first time was on Friday afternoon, August 16, 1985, as a result of a tornado in north Alabama and the associated stormy weather. The second time was on Thursday afternoon, August 29, 1985, as a result of hurricane Elena. As most of you know, Elena veered to the east on Friday afternoon, August 30, 1985, and the RACES operation was secured. But then on Sunday, September 1, 1985 Elena began to move northwesterly and the local RACES operation was activated for the third time.

These three activations totaled about 55 hours of operating time for the RACES station at Alabama Emergency Management Agency headquarters in downtown Montgomery. It takes two amateur radio operators to man the station; one on the two-meter rig and one on the HF rig. Each two man crew typically operates a four hour shift although some worked longer shifts and of course some worked more than one shift during the duration of the emergency conditions. The mathematics of all this says that 28 different ops could have been used (not counting extended shifts and multiple shifts) during the recent RACES activations. These operators are not always easy to come by, especially for the undesirable hours such as midnight to 6:00 A.M. and also during the 8 to 5 working hours. The bottom line is that the pool of volunteer operators needs to be significantly larger than the estimated needs of the average emergency condition. If you think you would like to help out, give Wayne Gentry, AA4BL, a call. He is the chief coordinator of the RACES operation in the Montgomery area. By-the-way, if you didn't listen in on 147.18/78 MHz and/or 3.965 MHz during Elena, then you missed hearing a real quality operation by the local RACES group.

FIELD DAY PAST

I can't let this issue of Zero Beat out without commenting on the Field Day effort put forth by the MARC last June. Some people who have attended and/or participated in past Field Days, say that 1985 was the best ever. The MARC operated two primary transmitters (one phone and one CW) plus a novice station. All electrical power came from two generators. Logging for the two primary transmitters was done by two separate computers which gave us continuous print-outs and also did the duping. How's that for class? The primary stations were continuously manned for the entire 24 hour duration of Field Day resulting in a final score that was considerably higher than past years. All-in-all it was a great effort and thanks are owed to a lot of people. In fear of leaving out someone, I won't mention any names; but the MARC is especially grateful to those who helped set up and dismantle, those who brought food and drink for more than themselves, those who brought or made available their own personal equipment for club use, those who operated, those who visited with us, and those who planned and coordinated. Last but not least, the MARC would like to thank Marc Miller, K4ONF, of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency for providing us with their emergency field trailer and generator, and Charlie Cargile, WB4LJJ, who graciously made the Field Day site available to us. Also, thanks to Bob Kinsaul, K4UJH, for recording the Field Day effort of video tape and making it available to the MARC for viewing at the July meeting.

VEC PROGRAM - GOING STRONG

It has been a little more than a year since the first amateur radio license exam was given by a Volunteer-Examiner Coordinator or VEC as they are more commonly known. The VEC system is in high gear and more examinations are being administered since its inception than could have otherwise been administered under the former system. In fact, existing VEC's are already administering 50% more examinations than the FCC did when they had the program. And what about the quality of the VEC program, you might ask? Well, according to FCC statistics the average nation-wide passing rate from the beginning through July 1985 is 51.7% and the range is 43.54% to 59.32%. These figures indicate to me that the VEC program is administering exams that are neither too easy nor too difficult. I also point out that the FCC is reportedly very pleased with the VEC program.

Now, let's narrow down the picture and look at the VEC program in our area. First of all there are approximately ten VEC's authorized to operate in Call Area 4, but only four give a significant number of examinations. They are:

Western Carolina Amateur Radio Society (WCARS)
Central Alabama VEC, Inc. (CAVEC)
The W5YI Report (W5YI)
American Radio Relay League (ARRL)

Of these four, Central Alabama VEC or CAVEC is the leader of the pack. CAVEC was organized by and is headed up by Tom Ingram, K400V, of Selma, Alabama. Tom has appointed Chief VE's (volunteer examiners) as needed throughout the area. In Montgomery, Bob Garrett, W4MF, is the Chief VE and he selected an executive committee consisting of the following Extra Class licensees: Bobby Chandler, N4AU (Assistant Chief VE); Wayne Gentry, AA4BL; Art Stringer, N4QT; Joe Lacy, KB4ALW; Roy Brouger, W4IK; and Jim Meacham, KK4A. But getting back to my original point, CAVEC really shines in comparison to the other VEC's. For example, CAVEC is the third largest VEC in the country based on sessions completed and elements given. CAVEC is exceeded only by ARRL in first place and W5YI in second place. I might add that the margin between second and third is small indeed and in some months CAVEC is in second place. Now the amazing thing about CAVEC being in third place (almost second place) is that the first and second place VEC's are national organizations; i.e., they are authorized to give exams in all call areas. CAVEC only gives exams in Call Area 4. How about that! Looking at Call Area 4 alone, CAVEC is the undisputed leader in all categories: they give one third more exams than the second place ARRL VEC; they never make late submissions to the FCC; and the submissions are rarely defective. It appears to me that CAVEC is possibly the finest VEC organization in the country.

CLUB CHALLENGE

The ARRL is sponsoring a contest which gives the MARC the opportunity to win either an Icom IC-735, a Heath HW-5400, or a Kenwood TS-430. The contest, called Club Challenge for the 80's, stems from an ARRL membership drive and it is open to all ARRL affiliated clubs. Clubs have been divided into three groups: Small clubs - 25 or fewer members; medium clubs - 26 through 75 members; and large clubs - over 75 members. The MARC is a "large" club and is in competition with only large clubs. The objective of the contest is for each club to recruit as many new ARRL members as possible by December 31, 1985. The

club with the most recruits wins one of the transceivers. Note that only new ARRL members count; not renewals and not members returning to the ARRL after an absence from membership. Also note that the new ARRL member doesn't have to be a MARC member. Of course, as we've stated in previous issues of Zero Beat, the MARC receives \$5.00 for each ARRL member recruited regardless of whether we win a transceiver or not. Now if you recruit a new ARRL member, there is a special four digit code (0763) which must be put on the application form in the appropriate place. Without this code the MARC won't get credit for the new member. So with a little effort you can earn some money for the MARC and also help the club win a new HF transceiver.

WHAT A DEAL

In the June issue of "The Birmingham" which is the monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Amateur Radio Club, there was an article entitled "What Is Electricity". Well, we all know what electricity is, but I was not personally aware of what a good deal it is (for the power company) until I read the above referenced article. Here's an overview of what the article revealed about the value of electricity: The power company sends electricity through a wire to a customer, then immediately gets the electricity back through another wire; i.e., you buy it but you don't get to keep it. Now this happens over and over again at a rate of 3600 times a minute. This means that a power company can sell a customer the same batch of electricity over five million times a day. Rumors say that there hasn't been any new electricity generated in this country since 1937. I really don't believe this because some electricity is bound to escape from the system occasionally and not return to the power company. A good example of this is when one receives an electrical shock. In this situation sometimes the electricity goes to ground instead of back to whence it came. When this happens you are actually zapped twice - first by the electricity and then by the power company who accesses you with an additional charge for losing some of their electricity. It sounds like a no-win situation for consumers but just think about how hard it would be to achieve WAS or DXCC without electricity.

ARRL NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 1985 ARRL National Convention will be held in Louisville, Kentucky on October 4, 5, and 6 and ARRL affiliated clubs have been asked to publicize this information in newsletters and on nets. The Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center will be the site of the convention. There will be a very large contingent of major vendors (168 booths) as well as a huge flea market (500 + booths) for you to visit - all under one roof and air conditioned! There will also be over a dozen forums and of course amateur radio license exams will be given. For further information, contact the Greater Louisville Hamfest Association, P. O. Box 34444, Louisville, Kentucky, Telephone (502) 368-6657. If you can't make this one, keep in mind that the ARRL National Convention will be in Atlanta in 1987.

NOVICE CLASSES

The MARC has scheduled a new session of Novice classes which is slated to begin in late September. An exact starting date has not been established but it will probably be about the last week of the month. The classes will be conducted by Wayne, AA4BL, and Jack, N4MDY, and will be held every Tuesday at the Department

of Public Safety Communications Building, 1038 Coliseum Boulevard (right behind the drivers' license trailer). If you know of someone that is interested in becoming an amateur radio operator, please tell him or her to contact Wayne Gentry at 365-0925. The exact details will be worked out as soon as possible and in fact may be totally resolved by the time you read this. Growth is very important to our hobby. So how about talking to you non-ham friends and acquaintances and stir up some interest in amateur radio. You will probably find out that there is a lot of satisfaction derived from introducing someone to such a fine hobby.

CALL SIGNS

For those of you who have applied for a new call sign or who may be considering applying for a new call sign, the following may interest you. This is a list of call signs issued as of August 1985 according to the FCC. This list is by license class and is for Call Area 4 only.

<u>Extra</u>	<u>Advanced</u>	<u>Tech/Gen</u>	<u>Novice</u>
AA4LT	KJ4HC	N4MME	KB4PFL

CLUB ACTIVITIES

The MARC is not an inactive club by any means, but I often wonder if we could do more, especially along the lines of community service and also things that are just plain fun for Hams such as a transmitter hunt for example. If you have any thoughts along these lines, pass them along to a club officer or throw them out at a club meeting and let's get some more things going.

SILENT KEY

It is with deep regret that we note the untimely passing of Walter Boyd, K4ZXA, on July 6, 1985. Walt was a long time friend of amateur radio and of many Montgomery area Hams. He will be sorely missed.

DON'T FORGET

Central Alabama Two-Meter Net every Sunday night at 8:30 P.M., local time, on the 146.24/84 repeater.

Tall Tower Net every Monday and 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 September 16, October 21, and November 18, 1985 at 7:00 P.M. These dates are the third Monday of each month. Check the March issue of Zero Beat for detailed instructions on how to get to the meeting place.

Join or renew your ARRL membership through the MARC to maintain ARRL affiliation. The MARC gets \$2 for each renewal and \$5 for each new member.

Club callbook is in the possession of Wayne Gentry, AA4BL. Call him if you need an address.

Central Alabama Two-Meter Sideband Net every Thursday night at 9:00 P.M., local time, on 144.190 MHz, USB.

Montgomery Hamfest on Saturday, November 9, 1985 in the Civic Center.

MONTGOMERY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

NAME _____ CALL _____

ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE _____

CITY AND STATE _____ ZIP _____

ARRL MEMBER ? _____ LIC. CLASS _____

BAND CAPABILITIES _____

Those wishing to join the MARC or members wishing to renew, please fill out the above application and return with \$6.00 annual dues to:

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

Non-members receiving this newsletter for the first time are invited to join the MARC and receive each quarterly issue of Zerø Beat.

