

# Zero Beat



Montgomery Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

Established 1938

June 2012

## CALENDER OF EVENTS

### CLUB MEETING

Every month - 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 7 PM  
American Red Cross Building  
5015 Woods Crossing Dr. Montgomery

### FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

Saturday morning before the club meeting at 8:30AM  
Flip's on Atlanta Hwy. at Perry Hill Rd.

## FCC EXAMS

Montgomery ARRL VE Team: Last Saturday of the month at  
the E. L. Lowder Branch Library, 2590 Bell Rd. North of  
Vaugh Rd. at 9:00 AM

For information, Howard Marshall, W2SKP, by e-mail,  
[hmarshal@w2skp.com](mailto:hmarshal@w2skp.com)

Also: <http://www.arrl.org/find-an-amaeur-radio-license-exam-session>

CAVEC every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 6:30 PM at  
American Red Cross, 5015 Woods Crossing Dr.  
For Info contact Jim Eiland, KR4JY ([jeiland@knology.net](mailto:jeiland@knology.net))

Additional Exam Info:

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/examsearch.phtml?State=AL>

## Club Nets

Central Ala 2 meter Net  
Sunday at 8:00PM on 146.84 MHz Net manager: Chris, K4LIA

2M SSB Net,  
Sunday, immediately following the Central Ala 2 meter Net  
on 144.210MHz USB Net Managers: EI K4DJL & Jim N4CIO

SkyWarn/Alabama Emergency Net Golf  
Thursday at 8:00PM on 146.84. Net manager: Otto, N4UZZ

## 2011 Officers

President: Scott Poole, W4SPA  
Past President: Ken Kohnke, KJ4CJP  
Vice-President: Ken Kohnke, KJ4CJP  
Secretary: Rick Cochran, AJ4ZZ  
Treasurer: Jim Cooke, AK4FP  
Publicity: Bruce Jenkins, KI4OZW  
Trustee: Jim Eiland, KR4JY  
Trustee: Rik Doll, KU4PY  
Trustee: Phil Salley, K4PO  
Trustee: Scott Poole, W4SPA  
W4AP Trustee: Tim Moore, K4TK

## Local Repeaters

146.840(-) W4AP Wetumpka  
146.920(-) W4AP Eastdale (DSTAR)  
147.180(+) W4AP Tall tower - Grady, AL 123 Hz  
444.5(+)  
53.350(-) W4AP Titus, AL 100 Hz  
444.450(+) WD4JRB Baptist Tower 100 Hz  
(Echolink Node 212144)  
446.450 (Splx) IRLP (4845) Baptist Tower 110.9 Hz  
147.200(+) KE4LTT Friendship 107.2 Hz  
444.575(+) KE4LTT Friendship 100 Hz  
147.380(+) W4KEN Santuck  
145.690 W4AP BBS  
144.390 W4AP-1/3 APRS Digipeaters



## From the President's Shack

*By Scott Poole, W4SPA*

Summer is almost "officially" here and everyone knows what that means... Field Day! Field Day is the biggest operating event of the year, so I hope everyone will take some time from their busy schedules to come out to the Field Day site Fort Toulouse! If you need directions, surf over the club's web Field Day page at <http://www.w4ap.org/modules.php?name=FieldDay>. There you'll find all you need to know including directions and maps. MARC Vice-President Ken Kohnke, KJ4CJP, will be at the helm again this year so please come out and show your support of our club's Field Day effort. As usual, there will be lots of operating, fellowshipping, and eating! Yes, world renowned Chef Lewin will once again be serving up his famous chili along with the standard fare of hotdogs and hamburgers. Also, the brand new MARC Ecomm trailer will be making its debut at Field Day!

MARC will soon conclude a Technician License class that began in May and continues until just before Field Day weekend. There were 12 students enrolled in the class so we'll have some brand new operators soon! It's good to have a few new Technicians for Field Day!

Many of you have asked me about the next SOB launch so let me bring you up to date with the latest happens inside the Stratosphere or Bust laboratory. Our very first balloon (SOB I) was launched on July 27, 2002. To commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our first launch, we will be launching (SOB X) on Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012. A new payload design is currently on the drawing board and it will be built and tested in early July. We've completely redesigned the payload to prevent another failure due to the cold temperatures aloft

and we're adding a backup RDF beacon. The backup transmitter is completely separate from the APRS equipment in order to minimize the chance of a double failure. The backup transmitter runs from 2 coin cells and will transmit for up to 3 days. Hopefully we can locate and recover a lost payload by then!

At the June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting we will be discussing final preparations for Field Day. Ken will be demonstrating set-up and use of the Icom 7200 radio and Field Day logging software.

I hope to hear everyone on the air and see you at the meetings!

73,  
Scott

## VE testing ARRL and CAVEC

Complied by  
Howard Marshall w2skp

	Technician	General	Extra	Total
March	4	2	3	9
April	2	1	1	4
May	3	3	3	9
Totals	9	6	7	22

### Need a ride to MARC Meetings?

If you or someone you know of would like to attend the monthly MARC meetings but cannot get there, we can help.

Please contact me at 334.309.4703 or by email at [secretary@w4ap.org](mailto:secretary@w4ap.org)

If you get my voice mail, please leave your name and phone number and we will make arrangements to get you to the meetings.

## Field Day 2012

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Ken Kohnke - KJ4CJP  
Field Day 2012 Chairman

We're just a few weeks away from one of our greatest events! Field Day 2012 will be here before you know it! Once again we will be holding Field Day at the Ft. Toulouse Historical Park in Wetumpka. Scott Poole (W4spa) and I have been working on the new ECOM trailer to get it ready for its maiden voyage. Last month we had our first Field Day committee meeting along with the station captains to iron out the rules and to try to optimize our event to get as many points as possible. But we can't do it without operators. We are in bad need of operators at the phone station! We also could use some ice chests to store soda and bottled water in. Invitations to elected officials and EMA personnel were sent out a few weeks ago. So far I have received a no show by Mayor Strange. I have yet to hear from others. I say no news is good news. Some of us will be camping out this year while other will be coming and going as they please. I had talked to the park Manager about letting people come in and out after hours and he said he would make arrangements with the new security people of the park. Field Day starts June 23<sup>rd</sup> 18:00 UTC to June 24<sup>th</sup> 18:00 UTC. We will be setting up on Friday June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 18:00 UTC so come on out and have some food, fun and contacts! Yes, Lew's famous chlli will be there too! I look forward to seeing everyone there!

73 from Ken

### My Knowledge Base; Fickle?

Randolph G. Crowder, AJ4HX

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As licensed Amateur Radio operators, what do we know? I mean, what do we really know? How long has it been since we earned our license(s)? How much have we forgotten? What are we doing right; what are we doing wrong? These questions ran through my head at a recent ARRL testing session held here in Montgomery.

I was one of several Volunteer Examiners helping supervise those attempting to earn or upgrade their license. Whilst they were busy taking their exams, just for grins, I decided to look at a Technician's exam. I'm embarrassed to admit I could not have definitively answered any of the first four questions. Having earned my Extra only 4 years ago, I thought to myself "Wait a minute, I'm an Amateur Extra, I should know this stuff!" Apparently, I've lost some valuable knowledge in that short period of time. Bad juju.

Therefore, I've undertaken a study program to refresh my memory. The plan is to go through the course book for each level of licensure; study it as if I'm a newbie, and (correctly) answer all the question pool questions in the back of the book. Then, it's on to a review of Part 97. To date, I'm two thirds of the way through the Technicians book. I'm relearning stuff I forgot; and after 4 years of licensure, a lot of it makes more sense now than it did when I first learned it.

Now, I am **not** calling anyone a slacker, nor am I discounting your years of experience. What I **am** saying is that perhaps if we all were to occasionally get back into the books and refresh our memories (both as individuals and as a collective), we'll make the Amateur Radio community a better place. Over the decades, that community has built itself upon the shoulders of others, and has earned us many privileges. Don't we owe it to ourselves, and those who will follow us, to continue this proud heritage?

73, Randy

### Summary of club meeting activity for the period of March through May 2012

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March 19, 2012

- Treasurer: IRS Form 990 filed for MARC
- Committee reports:
- Field Day Committee:
  - Payment of \$100 made to reserve the pavilion at Ft. Toulouse for 2012 Field Day on June 23 and 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - Ft Toulouse night security we are working arrangements for coming & going during the overnight hours.
  - Still in need of a phone station captain
- By-laws committee:

- work is progressing - expect be 2/3 the way through by the April meeting.
- Hamfest committee:
  - MARC 2012 Ham Fest is ARRL Alabama State Convention
  - new location at the Shriner's Temple
- MARC Ecomm Trailer committee:
  - Cabinets are made and Fred, KR4YK volunteered to paint them
- Howard, W2SKP gave a overview of the exercise held the previous week by the Elmore County EMA
- Scott, W4SPA, discussed the status and need to make some decisions as to what should be done with our 6 meter repeater that is not on the air at this time.
- Jim Burns, N4CIO, gave a demonstration of the Jacobs Ladder he had built
- Presentation on back up power supply for an amateur radio station

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#### April 16, 2012

- Approximately 33 were in attendance.
- KR4JY suggested we purchase a desk mike and foot switch for Field Day. After a brief discussion, we agreed to purchase a Heil microphone.
- Committee Reports:
- By Laws Committee:
  - work is continuing – approximately 50% complete
- MARC Ecomm trailer committee:
  - The cabinets for the trailer are painted. Work to prepare the trailer for Field Day continues and is on schedule.
  - KJ4DXL, Less Amidon, has volunteered to build the antenna patch panel for the trailer.
- The new 2012 Field Day T-shirts were on display, which are now on sale. Sales will continue through early June.
- MARC Polo shirts will be available for order in July, after Field Day. Price including personalization will be around \$38
- Public service events
  - Race Judicata, 5K run in Cloverdale. Comm support went very well – no issues to report.
  - WN9J, John Garman, reminded of the Agape run on May 12<sup>th</sup>
- 6 Meter Repeater Status:
  - Larry, WA4LR, in Greenville will host our 6 meter repeater on his tower.

- Tom, WB8COX, will retrieve the repeater from its current location and assess it prior to its relocation.
- Rik, KU4PY, reminded us about the ARRL frequency test.
- Scott, W4SPA, introduced our guest speaker, Mike Stoudenmier, Director of the Montgomery County EMA. Mike gave an informative presentation on the roles and responsibilities of the EMA and how amateur radio can assist him.

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#### May 21, 2012

- Reminder - Field Day is last Saturday in June (22 – 24)
- Field Day \$5 donation request with jar passed around the room
- Committee Reports:
  - Bylaws Committee – Randy, AJ4HX, reported they were close to being finished. Looks promising to deliver final report in July or August
- Field Day committee meeting report from May 1, 2012:
  - Need Ice Chests, 4 to 5 for drinks
  - Requested that Tom, WB8COX, bring solar panel
  - Need 5 gallon gas cans
  - General plea for more operators to sign up
  - In and out of the camp after 10:00 still working on details
  - Proclamation has been submitted
  - EMA generator will be available again this year
- MARC Ecomm Trailer Committee:
  - Currently being worked on, will be functional by Field Day.
- Public Service events:
  - AGAPE Run went well
  - Triathlon at Waters went well
- Zero Beat will be published on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, for Field Day
- QSL cards for the club. There are about 300 QSL Requests on EQSL. Let Tim Moore know about it, [K4TK@arrl.net](mailto:K4TK@arrl.net)
- Guest Speaker:
  - Jim Locke from the Civil Air Patrol. The local CAP squadron is looking for a communication officer. CAP meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday nights. Cost: \$65/year for CAP membership, \$25/year for Squadron

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## April 2012 Column

By Dan KB6NU

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Mailing lists, blogs, and podcasts are good sources of ham info

Whether you're a newcomer or an old-timer, the Internet is possibly the best way to learn as much as you can about amateur radio. On the Internet, you'll find many, many ham radio mailing lists, podcasts, and videos. In essence, these resources give you access to hundreds, if not thousands, of Elmers.

One mailing list that I always suggest to new hams is the HamRadioHelpGroup (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HamRadioHelpGroup>). The purpose of this group is to help "those who are interested in getting started in Amateur Radio or upgrading their license." This mailing list has a good mix of beginners and experts, and most questions are answered quickly and correctly. One thing that I really like about this group is that the moderators do a good job of keeping the discussions on track, and will squelch them when they stray off topic or threaten to turn into flame wars.

In addition to the HamRadioHelpGroup, you might also want to join a more targeted mailing list. For example, if you're interested in learning Morse Code (hint, hint), you might join the SolidCpyCW list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SolidCpyCW/>). If you just bought a Yaesu FT-60 hand-held transceiver, you might want to join the FT-60 list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FT-60/>). Chances are that no matter what your interest, there's probably a mailing list to discuss that interest.

I'm subscribed to a lot of amateur radio mailing lists and could probably spend most of my day just reading and replying to them. In order to get the most out of them, without them taking away from my on-air time, I only read those threads that I am really interested in, and even then, I quit reading them once they have started to drift off-topic. I also un-subscribe myself from lists that cover topics that I'm no longer interested in.

Blogs, podcasts and videos

In addition to getting on a few mailing lists, you might want to read a few blogs and subscribe to podcasts. These are also great sources of information about amateur radio. I blog about amateur radio at [www.kb6nu.com](http://www.kb6nu.com), and lots of hams find it a good source of information. You can find a list of other ham radio blogs that I'd recommend on my home page.

Podcasts are also a good source of information. One podcast that you might want to check out is the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast (<http://www.myamateurradio.com>). Since 2008, Jerry, KD0BIK, has been producing PARP, and currently has more than 50 different episodes online. For other podcasts, consult the list on Jerry's home page.

Finally, there are literally thousands of amateur radio videos on the net. On YouTube alone, there are approximately 32,000 of them. The American Radio Relay League has its own channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/ARRLHQ>), but perhaps the most popular amateur radio video channel is the K7AGE channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/K7AGE>). K7AGE has more than 6,200 subscribers and his videos have garnered more than 2.1 million views!

Whatever source or sources of information you select, remember to not let them take up too much of your time. Ham radio is about more than just reading, listening, or watching. It's about doing!

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## May 2012 Column

By Dan KB6NU

Dayton Hamvention 2012: Another great ham radio experience

My Dayton experience started at 3:45 am Thursday morning. That's when I had to get up so that I could make it to the Fairborn Holiday Inn in time for the first session of this year's Four Days in May (FDIM) conference. FDIM is a one-day conference put on by the QRP Amateur Radio Club International (<http://qrparci.org/>) and is a great way to start the "Dayton experience."

This year, we were treated to six very fine presentations. They included talks on using microcontrollers for various projects, software-defined radio, VHF and UHF for QRPers, homebrewing with “hollow state” devices (more commonly known as tubes), using open-source electronic design tools, and operating pedestrian mobile. The two talks that I enjoyed the most were “Hollow State (Thermatron) Homebrewing” by Grayson, TA2ZGE/KJ7UM and “Leveraging Free and Open Source Tools in Homebrewing” by Jason, NT7S.

Friday morning, I got up early again, so that I could make the 7:30am bus to the Hamvention. We arrived about 8:00 am, just as the gates were opening. The first thing that I did was to head to the FAR Circuits tent, which is—as the name implies—at the far end of the flea market. There, I made my first purchases, a board to make a regenerative receiver and one to make an audio breakout box.

The rest of the day was a combination of wandering the aisles of the outdoor flea market, fighting the crowds inside the arena, attending seminars, and meeting people that I know. By the time, 4:30 pm rolled around, I was pretty hot and tired. Temperatures topped 80 degrees, and on the blacktop surface of the flea market, temperatures were undoubtedly higher. I was happy to get on the bus and head back to the hotel.

Saturday, was pretty much the same story, except it was even hotter. The temperature almost hit 90 degrees. I didn't bring any sunscreen, either, so I got a little rosy.

I ran into some people that I knew that had just come down for the day, or perhaps that I'd missed the day before. One guy I ran into at the Ohio Repeater Council booth, pulled out his new Elecraft KX-3 and gave me a quick demo. It's actually quite a cool, little radio. I'm still saving up for a K-3, though.

Around noon, I went to the food court for a slice of pizza and a glass of beer. Seating is catch as catch can, so I shared a table with several other hams. This is great because you get to meet all kinds of different people.

This year, an older gentleman sat down next to me with his beer. We got to chatting, and as it turned out, this was his 55th straight year attending the Dayton Hamvention! He started going before it was even held at

Hara Arena, and even after they moved to Hara, they didn't use the entire facility as they do now. I'm really glad that I got to speak with him.

So, what did you buy?

I didn't really go down to Dayton with much of a shopping list. In addition to the PC boards, I did pick up a bunch of other little stuff including some strain reliefs, more clamp-on ferrite cores, a paddle pad from Vibroplex (\$1) to keep the paddle down at the club station from sliding around, and some tube sockets! One of the vendors there had a box of tube sockets that they were selling for a quarter apiece or five for a dollar. I picked out five and paid the lady, and as I was walking away, I decided that they were such a good deal that I went back and bought five more.

My biggest purchase was NT7S's OpenBeacon QRSS transmitter ([www.etherkit.com](http://www.etherkit.com)). It cost me \$40. It looks like a very nice kit, and I'm hoping to be on 30m QRSS shortly with it. The nice thing about this transmitter is that it has a microcontroller that lets it transmit DFCW and Hellschreiber, in addition to CW. It should be fun to both build and operate.

Too rich for my blood

In other news, both Kenwood and FlexRadio both introduced new radios at Dayton. Perhaps the most buzz was around the Kenwood TS-990. All they were showing was a prototype under a Plexiglass cover. In addition to being incredibly expensive, the radio is huge! I heard someone joke that to produce this radio, Kenwood is going to have to corner the market on buttons and knobs. If you've seen the photo in QST (which was allegedly produced with Photoshop), you'll know what I mean.

The other radio with a bit of buzz is the new FlexRadio FLEX-6000. For the past couple of weeks, the FlexRadio website was proclaiming that this radio was going to be a game changer. Perhaps it is, but at \$6,000+, this radio is out of my league, and too expensive for the majority of radio amateurs. That being the case, I really don't know what all the buzz is about.

I'm sure that the TS-990 and the FLEX-6000 are both great radios, but I think that the law of diminishing returns applies here. At some point, are you really getting \$6,000 or \$12,000 of fun out of the radio? I don't think that I would.

Well, that's it. Another Dayton Hamvention is in the bag. It was a lot of fun, and I'm already looking forward to next year. I've already contacted one of the forum organizers about adding an adult education forum. I think that's something that's both needed and would be popular. I'll just have to make sure to leave enough time to hit the flea market and grab some more tube sockets or coax or whatever.

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When he's not tromping around flea markets, or attending conferences, Dan, KB6NU, writes books about ham radio. His latest, 21 Things to Do After You Get Your Amateur Radio License, is available as an e-book from Amazon, Barnes&Noble, or from his website, <http://www.kb6nu.com/>. You can e-mail him with comments, questions, compliments, or brickbats at [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).

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## Titanic Wireless Operator Movie

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This link was provided courtesy of Cheryl Whitlock AA4YL, of the Heart of Dixie ARC in Opelika.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-AWbrdNo58&feature=youtu.be>

This is a recent production that portrays the wireless operator on the voyage of the Titanic. I hope that you will find this of interest.

Ken AK4KN

## Lunch Bunch

A group of MARC members meets for lunch Wednesdays at 11 am at various local restaurants. Sign up for the email on the club web or just check to see the next location. This was taken at Corsino's recently:

Lunch Bunch at Corsino's



This was taken at a MARC Field Day. Scott sent this to me earlier but I don't recall who took the photo.



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Year \_\_\_\_\_

**Montgomery Amateur Radio Club – PO Box 3141 – Montgomery, AL. 36109**

**Renewals** enter, name and callsign and any changes in status.

**\*Note: Senior Members** over 70 please send in application to keep roster updated.

**New Members** enter all available information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member(Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Family Members

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member(Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member(Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member(Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Class of License: N= Novice, T= No Code Technician, T+= Code Technician, G= General, A= Advanced, E= Extra

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate Membership type below. Membership fees are **due every January 1<sup>st</sup>**. There is a 60-day grace period.

**Family membership** is for immediate family with 2 or more amateur radio license holders **residing at the same address**.

**Associate Membership** is for individuals who **do not have** an amateur radio license, but are interested in the activities of the club and are preparing for exams.

**Senior Membership** is for an amateur age 65 or older.

Check type of membership:

\_\_\_\_\_ Single Membership (\$25 per year)

\_\_\_\_\_ Family Membership (\$40 per year)

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior Membership - age 65-69 (\$15 per year)

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior Membership - age 70+ (no charge)

Associate Membership (\$10 per year)

## The Montgomery Amateur Radio Club

Public Service Since 1938

Amateur Radio

[www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org)

[www.w4ap.org](http://www.w4ap.org)



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