



CENTRAL GEORGIA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.
P.O. Box 2585
Warner Robins, Georgia 31099
www.wa4ort.com



December 2009 Newsletter

New Club Members

Since our June Newsletter we have added quite a few new members. Here is a list of those joining the club on the second half of this year.

Larry Julian, KC4DCA, Robins AFB
Ben Kaiser, KJ4MYI, Byron
Jeanene Kaiser, KJ4MYH, Byron
Rex King, W5AEK, (USN Ret), Perry
Vicki King, K5VLK, Perry
Kelli Morey, N4KEM, Kathleen
Phil Pike, KJ4JQE, Kathleen
Clay Peacock, KJ4MYU, Centerville
Billy Walker, KJ4NLR, Centerville
Robert Tuck, AB4RT, Warner Robins
Richard Williams, KJ4MYF, Warner Robins
Jeanne Williams, KJ4MYG, Warner Robins
Jim Zuspahn, KJ4PSO, Warner Robins

Thanks to all our **29 new 2009 members** joining our faithful past year group we now have 71 total members. That is something **OUTSTANDING!** To get a complete list of club members you can go to our website at www.wa4ort.com, click on "Newsletters" tab (where this Newsletter is located), scroll down to "Club Documents" and open "CGARC Membership Roster Name-Call-City.pdf". While you are on the website check out all the other neat things our webmaster Cliff (W4CDM) has added.

Five HamCram Classes in 2009

During 2009 Dr. Wil Perez, NM4W, developed and conducted five HamCram classes to help a lot of folks get into Ham Radio. The first one was held in Cochran on March 28th with 12 new Technicians. In this group we had the first of what would become very common and that was a husband/wife couple, Bertram (KJ4LAF) and Neta (KJ4LAE) O'Berry, attending and

completing the class. The success of this class proved that Dr. Wil had a very good concept and started a lot of local Hams thinking. They started looking for places to hold more sessions.

With the help of Greg Brown, W4KTM, the group of firefighters and first responders in Peach County set up a session at their Fire Station on Hwy 49 south of Byron. On June 13th 19 new Technicians were added to the Amateur Radio operator ranks. Unique in that group was the complete family of Tim Hardy, AF1G, where his wife Dawn (KJ4MYK) and both twin daughters Kaitlyn (KJ4MYJ) and Ashley (KJ4MYL) successfully completed their studies. Also, more of what would become common was the husband/wife couple of Ben (KJ4MYI) and Jeanene (KJ4MYH) Kaiser along with Richard (KJ4MYF) and Jeanne (KJ4MYG) Williams.

At the Houston Medical Center on September 12th, where 11 new Technicians completed studies something new was started. A lot of local Technicians, including some from previous HamCrams started studying and testing for their upgrades to General class. There were 10 General upgrades in this session,

Terry Teal, KI4QFF set up the next session at the Warner Robins 911 Center on October 31st, where they yielded 4 new Technicians and 5 General upgrades.

The last one for 2009 was held at the Macon Medical Center on December 5th with the aid of Tammy and Darrell Collier. This one had 10 new Technicians and 5 General and one Extra upgrade. Continuing in this common

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tread was a wife of a Ham, Tammy, KJ4RFW, getting her Technician license while the husband, Darrell, KJ4PEO, upgraded to General. Darrell says that stands for "Real Fine Woman" – enough said. We also saw a wife/son get their Technician license while dad upgraded to Extra. This was Hugh, KD4UTQ, his wife Veronica, KJ4RFQ, and their son Justin, KJ4RFP.

We see a great pattern here where more couples and complete families are getting into Ham Radio. This type of growth in the Amateur Radio ranks is what will guarantee the future of our great hobby.

Many thanks go out to many local Hams for their efforts. First, Wil (NM4W) was ingenious in developing and conducting all the classes. Bill, (KJ4O) and Bill (NM4D) sat through and assisted all day in most all the classes. Bob (KI4YNZ) demonstrated echo-link and other feathers at several sessions. Many other local Hams came out and gave the students help, advice and needed encouragement. Many thanks go out to Dave (KN4DS) for heading up all the VE sessions at the end of each one of the classes. There were many VE's that came in and helped administer the tests. The paperwork was a monster but the group was up to the challenge and did a great job.

Because of all the new Hams our club has grown this year to an almost unbelievable **SEVENTY ONE (71)** members. That is the largest CGARC club membership since back in the mid-eighties.

Tailgater's Corner

For Sale by Elaine, KB4KNE
Contact Preston, WR4PM – 478-731-2871
(helping Elaine sell Sam's [sk] equipment)
Bird 43 Wattmeter and a large assortment of slugs, with many wattage and frequency ranges.

If you have items you would like added in this trader section email them to Bill (NM4D) at NM4D@ymail.com.

You can also post your for sale or look for your wanted items on the club website at <http://tradenet.wa4ort.com>, thanks to our webmaster Cliff, W4CDM

Fox Hunt News

The Fox Hunts for 2010 will be held on each Saturday evening following the club meetings. For example, the January club meeting will be on Thursday, the 14th, and the Fox Hunt will be on Saturday, the 16th. The "fox" will start transmitting at 1900 hours (7:00 PM EST). All "hunters" should gather near the Goodwill Trailer in the south parking lot of the Houston County Mall in Centerville (near Golden Corral). Initial communications, participant check-in, and control will be on the 146.25/85 repeater and the Fox will start transmitting on the selected simplex frequency of 146.58 Mhz.

Anyone interested in joining the next hunt should just show up with a radio, directional antenna and attenuator. It works best if you have a partner to help make the checks while the other one drives. If you do not have the equipment come on out and partner up with someone who does. It will give training and is a lot of fun.

\$\$ 2010 Membership Dues \$\$

It's that time of year again. Many of you have responded and paid your 2010 club dues. If you have, thank you for your support and promptness. I have redesigned the membership card, putting the repeater control info on the back. If you have already received your 2010 card and would like one of the new ones, contact me and I will be happy to issue you a new one.

If you have not paid, please take a moment and drop your payment in the mail at the club P.O. Box address at the top of this Newsletter or, better yet, bring it to the January 14, 2010 meeting. As a reminder if you are one of the many new 2009 members your 2010 dues may be prorated based on the date you joined. If you have any questions about it please contact me at NM4D@ymail.com or phone me at [478] 542-1620.

Squelch Tails

Greetings all,

Another year has come and gone, and it's been a busy year on the repeater front. Of course, there are always things that need to be done to keep our systems purring along, but this year's addition of two 440 MHz links has been a major undertaking AND a rousing success! We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jimmy Burgamy, WB4NFG, for providing us with the three link radios, feedline, and his personal time, all of which helped make the link system a reality. I'll discuss the link system further down the page.

While I'm thanking people, I want to recognize the contributions that Dan, KF8DB, has made toward keeping the systems operating. Aside from volunteering his time, Dan also provides the vital test equipment that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. Also, Dan has an endless junk box and has donated countless widgets, gadgets, and gizmos needed to keep the repeaters on the air. And aside the above, Dan is always able to provide sound, sage technical advice, and usually doesn't laugh too hard when I let the smoke out of something. Thanks, Dan!

Finally, I want to thank the users and supporters of the CGARC repeater systems. Without you guys, the repeaters would just be an empty hole in the RF spectrum. You are the ones who make it worthwhile to maintain these systems, and you are also the ones who dig deep into your pockets whenever we need to perform maintenance or upgrades. Simply put... thanks!

- WA4ORT Repeater (146.850): Thankfully, our pager interference is gone... at least for the time being. I have the unfortunate feeling that it'll be back when the weather warms again... unless somebody at the offending transmitter accidentally fixes it before then. For the time being, all we can do is wait-and-see. To the best of my knowledge, the system, along with all its bells and whistles, is fully operational.

With the addition of the 440 MHz link, we'll need to look into options for improving the power distribution (13.6 VDC) system and battery backup switching. I have some ideas for this, but haven't finalized anything yet.

- NM4W Repeater (145.110): This system has been purring along like a kitten for the past couple of months. The new controller is performing well and (after some initial headaches and growing pains) the programming is about 98% complete. Jimmy Burgamy, WB4NFG, helped me out a bunch by performing some mods to the repeater audio circuit, resulting in much improved transmit audio. (Thanks Jimmy... those mods had been on my back-burner for months!) Overall, this system performs amazingly well... especially considering that it literally rose from the ashes of a lightning-damaged repeater! I have parts on-hand to upgrade the battery backup switching circuit, but have not had time to do any of the needed work. Hopefully that project will be progressing soon.

- Link Systems: As mentioned above, the link systems are up and running.

The primary link is between Warner Robins (146.850) and Cochran (145.110). Linking codes and a full description of what the various courtesy tones mean (you DID know that the different courtesy tones have distinct meanings, didn't you?!) can be found on the CGARC website at <http://members.cox.net/cgarc/> by clicking on either of the two repeater tabs. If an issue with DTMF tones can be resolved on the Cochran side of the link, the codes will be simplified.

The secondary link between Cochran and the Cherry Blossom Intertie is not being used at this time. We have elected to withdraw from the Cherry Blossom Intertie, but will soon become members of the still-under-construction Peach State Intertie, hosted by Jimmy Burgamy, WB4NFG. More to follow on that, but in the meantime, please do not link to the Cherry Blossom Intertie.

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- K4EDN Repeater (147.015/444.625 PL 82.5 Hz): It's great to see that usage of this system is picking up! Terry, KI4QFF, is using K4EDN for his Tuesday Night HoCo ARES nets, and the system also performed well for the Warner Robins Christmas Parade and the 2009 Santa Patrol. This system has great range, particularly for the Southern end of Houston County, and is a great place to 'get away' from the activity on the two CGARC systems. My thanks to Dennis, K4EDN, for providing this great system and allowing us to 'adopt' it and use it as though it were our own.

That's it for this edition. If you have questions about anything I've written above or have other questions or ideas for topics, please post them to the CGARC Yahoo Group using the subject line 'Ask the Repeater Dude'. If you're not a member, you can join by going to the CGARC website and signing up. If you want to remain anonymous, email me directly at (WM4B)@arrl.net.

73 es gud dx, Mike, WM4B

From the "New Guy In Town"

Hi CGARC crew! I'm Alan (N5VXL) the new guy in town. OK, surely not the only new one, but from my first house hunting trip in September, CGARC folks have done a fantastic job of making me feel welcome. Thanks!

Late this summer I got a crash course in Central Georgia geography, buzzing around in my yellow toaster (bright yellow 2005 Scion XB) searching for the gremlin that interferes with our 146.850 repeater input. I must admit, it was equal parts fun and frustrating. Just when I'd come to where I was sure it was hiding the beast would go silent. I couldn't help but imagine some kid seeing me pull up and turning off the transmitter – and laughing.... Maybe it was my goofy yellow car they were laughing at (my XYL calls it the "Short Bus"). Anyhow, on this list of things we need to be ready for in 2010, add "finding the gremlin" to that list. Thanks to the interference log Mike

(WM4B) added to our website we know a bit about the beast. Here is a recap:

1. It seems to come alive when the temps cross over 70* F, and fades away when it goes over 77* plus or minus. As it fades away it seems to shift a bit in frequency.
2. It repeats some local area pager transmitters onto our repeater input, but some folks from the club have done some exhaustive work with the cooperation of the pager system folks and we're 99+% sure they are not the source – just the available signal that is being mixed and dropped onto our repeater input.
3. It has been known to also interfere with some public safety frequencies as it makes its way up and down the dial.
4. There is an area of interest – sort of a Macon version of the Bermuda Triangle – mostly on the west side of Macon where the beams and feet on the ground seem to think it's coming from.
5. It seems to take a lunch break. Actually, I suspect it's more that the paging that it is retransmitting goes quiet from about noon to 1pm, but still.....

So, in addition to rotating your tires, cleaning the gutters, and preparing your taxes you can add honing your Radio Direction Finding (RDF) skills. Heck, you don't even need a transmit license to help out with this. Anyone with a receiver that has some ability to show signal strength and some sort of a directional antenna can get involved. Practice by direction finding some known local signals, like maybe the FRS handhelds you have in the junk drawer – or just by tuning to the input of a local repeater and seeing if you can DF the local ops as they check in. I suggest searching "tape measure beam" for an antenna so cheap and easy to build that I managed to build a couple. Having a decent beam makes Direction Finding much easier. Let's find and put an end to this menace in 2010.

Cheers & Happy New Year
N5VXL Alan DesJardins

CGARC 2009 Financial Summary

Date	Transaction	Payment	Deposit	Balance
01/01/09	CGARC Bank Account Year Starting Balance			\$1,114.03
12/31/09	Misc Club Expenses Total *			-\$317.45
12/31/09	Repeater Expenses - both Repeaters (less phone bills)			-\$870.05
12/31/09	AT&T Phone Bill for 25/85 Repeater Total			-\$378.78
12/31/09	2009 Membership Dues Received			\$852.00
12/31/09	2010 Membership Dues Received			\$495.00
12/31/09	Repeater Repair Donation Total			\$407.00
12/31/09	Repeater Linking Equipment Donation Total			\$260.00
12/31/09	Meeting Half & Half Drawings Total			\$369.00
12/31/09	2009 Heart of Georgia Hamfest Total			\$611.94
12/31/09	ARRL VEC Testing Total			\$174.00
12/31/09	Total in Bank Account on December 31, 2009			\$2,716.69
04/09/09	Total from MGRA Contribution to Hamfest		\$279.90	
12/31/09	Total in Bank for Heart of Georgia Hamfest		\$611.94	\$891.84
12/31/09	Total in Bank Account for CGARC	\$891.84		\$1,824.85

* A complete itemized and categorized financial report will be emailed to all members to view in an electronic (PDF file) from Bill, NM4D, club Secretary/Treasurer, to the email address on file. If you do not have an email account a paper copy can be requested. Remember that this is your club and your treasury. You have all rights to review it anytime during the year.

CGARC Officers, Board of Directors and Repeater Committee

Scott Nolde, N4CI President	John Louth, WB4EEL Board Member as Last Past President	Mike Besemer, WM4B Repeater Control Operator Repeater Coordinator Trustee
Terry Teal, KI4QFF Vice President	John Hughes, WA4JGH Board Member	Wil Perez, NM4W Repeater Control Operator
Bill Atkins, NM4D Secretary/Treasurer & Newsletter Editor	Leon Tompkins, WR4MT Board Member	Dan Haines, KF4DB Repeater Control Operator
Preston Morgan, WR4PM Club NET Coordinator	Dave Stewart, KN4DS VE Testing Coordinator	Charles Armstrong, AE4VA Repeater Trustee

If you have articles or items you would like to contribute and have published in our next Newsletter please contact the editor. If you have suggestions, complaints, or if you have items for our "**Tailgater's Corner**" for sale, buyer, or trade send anything to:
CGARC, P.O. Box 2585, Warner Robins, GA 31099.

73, Merry Christmas & Happy New Year,

Bill Atkins, NM4D
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