



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



June 2009 Newsletter

New Call Signs

Bill Atkins, formerly WD4ASB for 5 years and KC4WU for 28 years, is now NM4D. Jozsef Dombai, formerly KD4AQC is now licensed as W4JPD (Jozsef P. Dombai).

New Club Members

Ken Catron, W4KIK, Byron
Jozsef Dombai, W4JPD, Byron
Mike Hall, KJ4LAC, Perry
Frank Hough, K4ICT, Macon
Larry Keith, KQ4B, Warner Robins
Joshua McCall, KJ4IPZ, Macon
Phil Pike, KJ4JQE, Kathleen
James Plemons, KI4SJJ, Warner Robins
Joel Robertson, AI4NP, Bonaire
Tony Sheldon, W4AGS, Centerville
Roy Wood, Jr., KJ4LAM, Jeffersonville

Top 25 things vanishing from America: #16 -- Ham Radio

Published by America On Line

This series explores aspects of America that may soon be just a memory -- some to be missed, some gladly left behind. From the least impactful to the most, here are 25 bits of vanishing America.

An easy way to prolong a disaster is to have the respondents use dozens of different, incompatible communications systems, or operate them with no protocol. Yes, I'm thinking about Katrina. I'm also thinking about a vanishing American treasure, the **amateur radio operator**. In the past five years alone, the number of people holding active licenses has dropped by 50,000, even though Morse Code is not longer a requirement.

Many think of a ham radio operator as a tubes-and-wires geek, and there is a certain truth to that stereotype, although today's ham is more likely to be computer-savvy and involved in cutting-edge technologies. However, from my personal experience, I know them to be among our nation's best trained and most capable respondents to disasters. Call them KJ4IPZ, W4AGS, or any of the other radio volunteers, disaster communications become orderly and prioritized, as they employ the protocols and training received in gaining their licenses. As director of one of the nation's largest week-long bicycle races, (W4) Plemons, KI4SJJ, Warner Robins with countless challenges with imagination and expertise, whether it was assembling a portable KQ4B, Warner Robins in the field, coordinating emergency medical transport, or organizing the search for a lost child. I saw them sit for countless hours patiently looking out for the safety of thousands of people that would never know of their efforts.

As cell phones and the Internet siphon off much of what once attracted people to amateur radio, the nation's ham radio population is graying rapidly. Given the cash value of the radio bands allocated to amateur radio, there will be relentless pressure on the government to take back those bands so they can be sold. All these elements speak to a long, slow diminishment of a pastime that began with Marconi.

When amateur radio as we know it disappears, it won't be the radios we'll miss. We'll miss the operators. 73's to a national treasure.

Tom Barlow, N8NLO

Heart of Georgia Hamfest

Larry Keith, KQ4B, headed up and chaired the May 9, 2009 Heart of Georgia Hamfest. Under his leadership and with the help of a lot of other hold working MGRA, CGARC, and MARC club members the Hamfest turned out a wonderful success.

(**MGRA** is Middle Georgia Radio Association, **CGARC** is Central Georgia Amateur Radio Club, and **MARC** is Macon Amateur Radio Club)

Ticket sales showed 204 paid attendees. That may not sound like a staggering crowd, but any time you can double the number from last year it is called progress. We took in \$816 from ticket sales and \$60 in inside table rental. Other income of \$15.84 came from soft drink sale profit. The total income of \$891.84 will be held in the CGARC treasury for use on the 2010 Hamfest.

Everyone should understand that the Hamfest did not profit \$891.84 because the three sponsoring clubs supported the Hamfest with contributions. For example, CGARC voted to pay up to \$300 in support of the Hamfest. This motion authorized payment of checks for \$97.18 and \$182.72 for a total of \$279.90 to the Hamfest. MGRA paid a like amount and MARC paid some \$50 in its support. (Please bear in mind that the MARC is a much small group and unable to pony up as much money)

Some of the very good news from the Hamfest is the signs bought (\$149.80) and undated ticket printing (\$64.18) will not be required for the next few hamfests. These reusable signs and doubled ticket order (undated) for only a few dollars were smart choices.

Carry-over money from 2008	+\$129.00
Byron Middle School rent	-\$400.00
HRO order of prizes	-\$365.45
Flyer printings	-\$70.37
Hamfest signs	-\$149.80
Ticket printing	-\$64.18
QST Magazine ad (May 2009)	-\$89.00

MGRA donation	+\$279.90
CGARC donation	+\$279.90
2009 Hamfest ticket sales	+\$816.00
2009 inside table rental	+\$60.00
2009 Soft drink profit	+\$15.84

Tailgater's Corner

For Sale by Elaine, KB4KNE

Contact Preston, WR4PM – 478-731-2871 (helping Elaine sale Sam's [sk] equipment)

Bird 43 Wattmeter and a large assortment of slugs, many wattage and frequency ranges.

Foxhunt News

The next Fox Hunt for 2009 will be held Saturday evening following the club meeting according to Preston, WR4PM. The "fox" will start transmitting at 1900 hours (7:00 PM DST). All "hunters" should gather at the Goodwill Trailer in the south parking lot of the Houston County Mall in Centerville. Initial communications 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.

June 13 Technician Class

The Central GA Amateur Radio Club will be sponsoring a Technician Class Study session on June 13, 2009. The study class will start at 8:00 AM at the Peach County Fire Station at the west end of GA 247 Connector (turn right at the end). It will be an all day study class ending at 4 PM with the VE test to follow.

Anyone is welcome to attend and bring friends. The only fee will be \$14 for test. There will be an hour for lunch and 15 minutes breaks between sessions of 45 minutes. If you are interested, please email nm4w@live.com for a copy of the study guide for this class. You may also call Dr. WiL at 770-490-0022.

Squelch Tails

Hello all,

Things have been fairly slow on the repeater front for the past several months, which is definitely a good thing for the CGARC Repeater Committee. There have been no outages, upgrades or major programming changes, giving all of us a while to catch our breath. I would, however, like to discuss some comments that have been addressed to me and/or that have been heard on the air.

- Repeater Range: This is a topic that gets discussed every year, usually in the mid to late springtime. Unfortunately, our VHF signals can be impacted greatly by weather and foliage. During the springtime when we have a great deal of moisture in the air (e.g. Fog) and when the trees are in full leaf (and before the dry summer depletes the moisture in those leaves) you will notice a reduction in the repeater footprint. Typically this takes place in the form of mobile stations being noisy into the system in places they had not been noisy before, with a much lesser degree of impact to the repeater transmitter signal. The impact will vary greatly as the weather changes, but is usually more noticeable on those very 'thick' spring mornings. This will carry on into the summer, but to a somewhat lesser degree as the trees wither a bit during the drought season.

- Ducting: This is also the time of year when we'll see some tropospheric ducting (aka 'Tropo' or 'Ducting'). Ducting is caused by inversion layers in the atmosphere and is generally most noticeable at night and in morning hours before the sun begins to reheat the air. For the majority of us, this is most noticeable during morning drive-time. During periods of ducting, you'll notice periods of enhanced propagation and you may be hearing/bringing up several repeaters at a time. (Typical of this is hearing the W4ULH repeater in Florence, SC on 146.85, at a

distance of about 250 air-miles.) During these periods, please pay particular attention to your transmitter power output and ensure you use the minimum power needed to accomplish your communications in order to prevent interference with distant repeaters.

- The Link: I've been approached by several members regarding issues with the link between 6.85 and 5.11. One issue that was first noticed during the 27 Apr ARES net (and subsequently identified as a true issue) was desense on the link path. This problem was corrected a couple of days later and was caused by tuning changes in the link radio duplexers. These are the same duplexers removed from the 145.11 repeater because they tended to be unstable due to temperature. The duplexers will require some monitoring over time, but as of press time, both the 6.85 and link were operating up to their full potential, given the equipment being utilized. I have several ideas for a long-term fix/renovation for the link, but nothing has been firmed up yet. Please be patient and remember that this link is held together with bailing wire and chewing gum and that it does require some life support from time to time.

- 5.11 to 5.43 Link: Discussions are underway to link the 5.11 with the 5.43 in Macon to assist with weather events and for day-to-day usage. This project is still in the very early planning stages and is many months down the road. More to follow as developments occur.

- Site Maintenance: The 6.85 has already come under attack by the neighboring kudzu fields and we will need to do site maintenance within the next month or so. 4 or 5 folks with gloves and trimming tools will be needed for an hour or so to remove the vines from the building, feedlines, and masts. More to follow on a date.

- K4EDN Repeater (147.015/444.625 PL 82.5 Hz): This repeater had gone intermittent over the winter months and has

led me on a merry chase, but I'm convinced that the intermittent issue has been solved. These repeaters are linked at all times and they provide great coverage. This is a great place to go if 6.85 is busy or if you want to 'get off the beaten path'. Please utilize and enjoy this system.

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 (mycall)@arrl.net.

73 es gud dx,

Mike
WM4B

CGARC Officers, Board of Directors and Repeater Committee

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If you have articles or items you would like to contribute and have published in our Newsletter please contact the editor, Bill Atkins, NM4D. If you have suggestions, complaints, or if you have items for our "**Tailgater's Corner**" for sale, buyer, or trade send them. Send anything to nm4d@ymail.com or US mail it to CGARC, P.O. Box 2585, Warner Robins, GA 31099 or call Bill at 478-542-1620.