

ZerO Beat



Montgomery Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

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SKYWARN

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The new ZeroBeat Newsletter, the official publication of the Montgomery Amateur Radio Club published on the first day of each month. Contents: Articles about new products - antennas - techniques and ideas – items for sale – humor - announcements and upcoming events – letters to the editor – articles about old products – profiles of club members – event pictures. The ZeroBeat wants your contributions! Email articles to me at CASKYWARN@GMAIL.COM in Microsoft Word format or plain text. Comments are welcome!



Your club needs you!

Help keep our repeaters on the air!

Support our mission!

Now with easy on-line renewal!

Go to w4ap.org click on JOIN/RENEW

Mobiles click top left menu button ☰



Help keep amateur radio flourishing in Central Alabama for education, discovery, public service, and great fellowship!

Skywarn

N4UZZ



Skywarn is a national organization and we in Central Alabama have an active chapter of hams who are also certified storm spotters. We have a weekly net on the W4AP UHF repeater and meet from time to time for education and training. The mission of Skywarn is to be the eyes and ears of the National Weather Service, to observe and report about things that radar cannot see.



We have three NWS radars covering Montgomery, but even the closest radar site has beams that are over 2000 feet high by the time they make it to our city. Wall clouds, funnels, damaging winds – they all happen below 2000 feet and the NWS relies on observers to get the full picture of what is going on.

Skywarn storm spotters can give specific warnings about the location and movement of severe weather cells. During outbreaks Skywarn net controllers will read radar and provide suggestions for the positioning of storm spotters.

Skywarn has two levels of training, Basic and Advanced. Skywarn storm spotters learn about how thunderstorms and tornadoes develop, how to observe severe weather cells, and what kinds of observations to report.

At Central Alabama Skywarn, we welcome observations and reports from all hams on the frequency including observations from their homes. We trust that hams will exercise good judgment and not occupy the frequency with trivial reports when there is severe weather in the area.

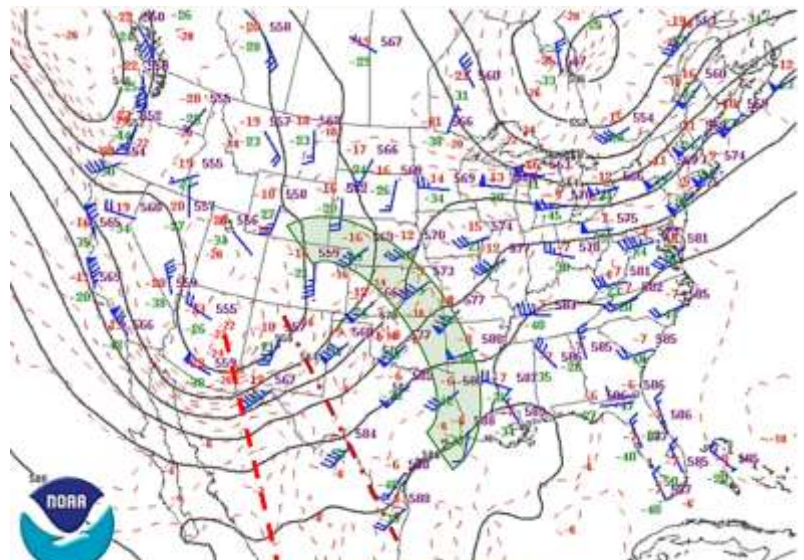
When there are severe cells in the area, net control will often ask for reports from the affected area rather than from parts of the catchment area that has no severe weather. Central Alabama Skywarn covers Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, and Montgomery counties. Storm spotters may go outside that area if they have identified a severe cell that is likely to be moving towards out area.

Net control will often use a variety of radar products to identify and describe the severe cells. We use base velocity and relative storm velocity data to identify areas of rotation that may indicate tornadoes or might lead to the development of tornadoes.

Club Meeting on April 20

The upcoming club meeting will have the big Skywarn presentation to prepare members for the tornado season. We will cover what kinds of weather conditions create severe cells, how tornadoes develop, how we evaluate the approaching weather threat, and how we read radar reflectivity and velocity. We will also discuss how the Skywarn Net operates and what kinds of reports go to the NWS.

We will look at the upper atmosphere patterns that the Storm Prediction Center analyzes before they issue warnings and



The Storm Prediction Center in Norman, OK, analyzes the 500 mb flow patterns and designates severe weather risk areas.

Risk Level	
5	High
4	Moderate
3	Enhanced
2	Slight
1	Marginal
	Thunderstorms

designate risk areas. This will be a non-technical basic introduction to the analysis of expected weather.

This presentation will make members more informed about weather and better prepared as the tornado season gets into full swing in the coming months.

Be sure to join us.



Montgomery Amateur Radio Club

6 followers • 0 following
 Nonprofit organization

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The New MARC Business Page

As you know, we have been struggling for a long time with the idea of trying to take the MARC Facebook page public, and all the problems that would entail. For instance, someone would have to constantly monitor and delete inappropriate comments from the public. But now we have a solution.

We have settled on a strategy to increase Facebook and website exposure. We will keep the Facebook MARC group private but will use a new MARC business page that is open to the public and where posts are google searchable. On that page, only a few selected club officers can post. The public cannot comment.

We will use that business page to post teasers for blog articles that we are putting on our web page. We will also post any club activities. These will be available on google searches. Right now, there are three blog entries. You can see them on w4ap.org/blog And you can see the MARC business page here <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586661405752>

As you can see, it tries to heavily promote the hamfest. I want to thank Jim Garner, K4JKG, for taking the initiative to start this PR strategy and for figuring out the best way to do it.

Many thanks to our webmaster Mac KO4UWY for figuring out how to make it a reality.

Plans for the New Year – Many Exciting Events (Updated March 31, 2026)

The Great Spring Fox Hunt April 4, 2026

Ft. Toulouse Historic State Park, starts at 9:00 AM. Rain date is April 11.
Look out for an email about the weather on Friday, April 3.

The MARC Club POTA Activation May 2, 2026

Ft. Toulouse State Historic Park POTA activation starting at 9:00 AM. Learn about POTA spotting, operation, and log submission. Watch the excitement of pileups. Park entry fee is \$ 2.00.

Field Day June 27 – 28, 2026

Randy's KV4AC farm in Snowdoun, setup Sat 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM, operation 1:00 PM to Sunday 1:00 PM, operating club radio in the club trailer, using club linked dipole. Members can sign up for setup, operating shifts, clean-up.

SET – Simulated Emergency Test Sat Oct 10, 2026

All day operators will report simulated emergency traffic and check into nets. Logs and reports will be furnished to the ARRL.

Glassner Autumn Challenge Sat Oct 24, 2026

We provide communications for the Glassner ride through South Montgomery County.

Hamfest Sat Nov 14, 2026

Our hamfest continues to be a great success every year!

Special Event Station for the Iron Bowl Sat Nov 28, 2026

See the article in this ZeroBeat for details.

Additional events: Monthly club meetings, Christmas Party in December, monthly ARES meetings.



Skywarn is now on UHF!

Skywarn has moved to UHF. The Skywarn Net is now meeting on the Bald Knob W4AP UHF repeater at the usual time, Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM CT. The net has storm spotter training, coordination, as well as check-ins.

We are keeping the new Skywarn frequencies confidential. We are not mentioning the new frequencies on the air! When on the air, simply refer to the “Skywarn repeater frequency” or the “Skywarn simplex frequency.” Anyone who would like to join the Skywarn group email list or get further details about Central Ala. Skywarn, contact me at caskywarn@gmail.com

Membership in the Skywarn Group

Members in the Skywarn email group on groups.io get regular *Skywarn WX Bulletins*. These are either marked as *Routine* or as *Special*. Routine bulletins are those that contain no warnings of any severe weather events and cover a time period during which storm spotter activation is not expected. These *Routine* bulletins are designed to keep members aware of the bigger weather picture for the next seven days. *Routine* bulletins are issued on Thursdays.

Special bulletins are issued whenever needed to alert members about possible severe weather in the future – usually one to three days out. *Special* bulletins attempt to provide specific forecast details about the timing of front passage, severity and nature of weather threat.

A weather map of Central Alabama showing a front passing through the region. The map includes a grid and color-coded weather patterns.	<p>Skywarn WX Bulletin – Special 01/24/2026 17:05 PM CST</p> <p>A front will pass through Central Ala on Sunday 01/25/2026 at 2PM CT with possible <i>svr</i> t-storms and tornadoes (probability less than 5%)</p>
<p>An example of a recent Special Skywarn WX Bulletin.</p>	

All bulletins are extremely condensed, very brief executive summaries that give essential information in one or two sentences and a map. They are designed to give the reader the information they need at a glance.

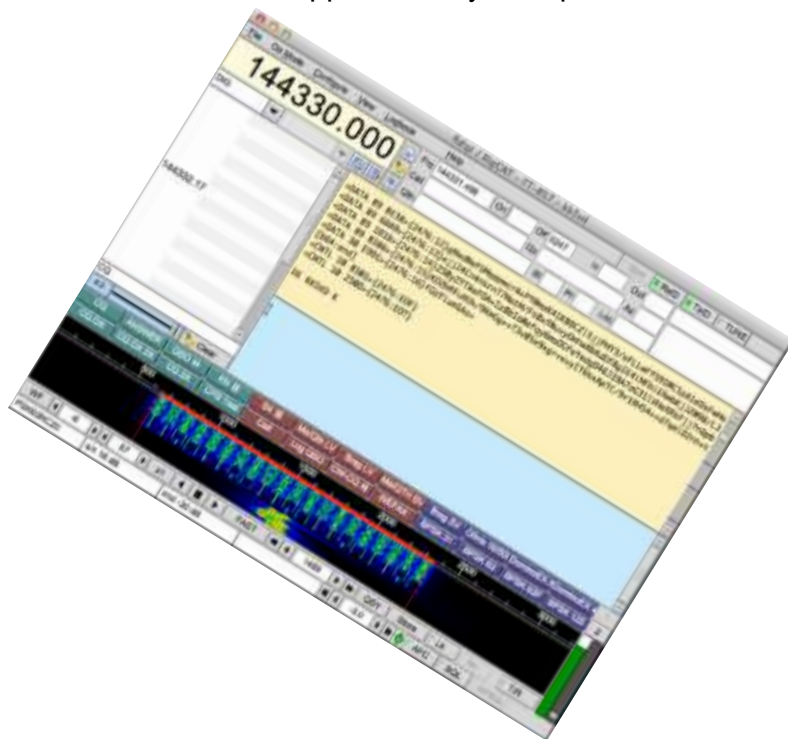
With this extremely condensed executive summary format we hope to fight “alarm fatigue” while keeping members informed of the weather picture.



Montgomery County ARES Digital Emcomm Net Thursdays

Montgomery County ARES runs a digital emcomm net on VHF Thursday evenings from 8:00 pm local time to 9:00 pm local time. ARES members participating in the net will set up their stations sometime after 7:00 PM LT but no later than 8:00 pm local time and leave the station running and beaoning in the designated digital mode. After that, they can leave their station unattended because all net procedures involve automatic exchanges that require no further operator input.

The net will conclude at approximately 9:00 pm local time after net control sends a request to the station at the Red Cross to list all stations heard.



The digital station has excellent range due to its antenna placement about 20 feet above the roof of the Red Cross building. We have had check-ins from North Prattville, Millbrook, Pike Road, and Ramer.

Stations can send a signal report request to the Red Cross station at any time.

The MGM-ARES groups.io files area has a one-page cheat sheet on how to set up your radio for this digital net. It also gives a list of basic commands such as requesting a signal report.

The file is password protected. If you do not have the password, you can email me at memarc840@gmail.com and request it.

Local Nets Are Inviting Your Participation!

Otto N4UZZ

NOTE: Technicians can participate in the nets on 10m.

- The Cradle of the Confederacy Net and 10-10 International Chapter meet weekly on 28.350 MHz on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM CT on upper side band.
- Monday nights at 8:00 PM CT the UHF Net: ragchew and to answer equipment questions. New hams and old hams invited. 444.500 W4AP Bald Knob repeater.
- Sunday night at 7:00 pm the Hams for the Lamb Net practices Christian fellowship and mutual support on the 146.84 W4AP repeater. All amateur radio operators are invited.
- Sunday night at 8:00 PM local time the Central Alabama 2m Net meets on the 146.84 W4AP repeater to exchange news, announcements, and for ragchew
- Thursday evenings, 7:00 PM Skywarn Net on UHF. Weather topics. Storm spotter training. Contact the net manager at caskywarn@gmail.com to join.
- Thursday evenings at 7:30 PM local time the Montgomery County ARES Net meets on the 146.84 W4AP repeater to discuss topics of preparedness.
- MGM-ARES runs a digital net Thursday nights 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM CT. Details are available by request to Montgomery.county.ares@gmail.com
- The Alabama Emergency Net Mike meets daily at 6:00 PM on 3.965 MHz LSB for statewide traffic handling. (This net requires General Class privileges.)

**Do you want to look up events or nets?
The club calendar on the front page of our website
<https://w4ap.org>
is always up-to-date with the latest details.
Just click on an event to get everything you need to know.**

MARC Happenings for February 2026

The Lunchbunch meeting schedule: all meetings at 11:00 AM

Apr 1, 2026	Pizza Perfect, 428 Coliseum Blvd, Montgomery, AL 36109
Apr 8, 2026	San Marcos, 61 N Burbank Dr, Montgomery AL 36117
Apr 15, 2026	Fried Tomato Buffet, 6561 Atlanta Hwy, Montgomery, AL 36117
Apr 22, 2026	Full Moon BBQ, 7660 Eastchase Pkwy, Montgomery, AL 36117
Apr 29, 2026	Fat Man's BBQ, 1660 Federal Drive (Montgomery 36107)

To join the club or Lunchbunch email list, send request to CASKYWARN@GMAIL.COM

The MARC 2m Net	meets every Sunday at 8:00 PM CT on 146.84 W4AP
The Hams for Lambs Net	Christian fellowship meets every Sunday at 7:00 PM CT on 146.84 W4AP
MGM-ARES Meeting	every fourth Thursday of the month, 7:00 PM, Red Cross Bldg
Skywarn Net	every Thurs 7:00 PM except fourth Thur of the month, caskywarn@gmail.com
MGM-ARES Digital Net	every Thursday 8:00 PM – 9:15 PM 146.84 montgomery.county.ares@gmail.com
Central Ala UHF Net	Mondays (except club meeting nights) 8:00 PM 444.500 W4AP

Club Breakfast Sat, Apr 18, 2026, starting at 7:00 AM
Chappy's, Carmichael at Perry Hill Road,

Club Meeting **Mon, Apr 20, 2026, 7:00 PM**
American Red Cross, 5015 Woods Crossing, Montgomery, AL 36106

CAVEC Testing Temporarily suspended due to closure of Renfroe's Foodland

For details on all events: go to w4ap.org
Scroll down to the club calendar, click on any event for details

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1412939275643917/>
MARC Business page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586661405752>

Club Officers:

President:	Otto Arnoscht N4UZZ
Vice-President:	Ken Brittin AK4KN
Treasurer:	Fidel Cintron KK4KGO
Secretary:	Dennis Egbert K4PDQ
Public Information Officer:	James Garner K4JGK
Director 1:	Philip Salley K4PO (2022 - 2026)
Director 2:	Fred Springall KR4YK (2023 - 2027)
Director 3:	Mac McWhorter KO4UWY (2026 – 2029)
Director 4:	Jerome Goddard II W4IJG (2026 – 2026)