

Zero Beat



Montgomery Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

Established 1938

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THE CLUB HAS TO MOVE!



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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!

Plans for the New Year – Many Exciting Events (Updated February 1, 2026)

The Great Spring Fox Hunt March 14, 2026

Ft. Toulouse Historic Park on Saturday, March 14, 2026. Hunt 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM, then pizza and announcement of the winners. Big hamfest gift certificates for winners. Park entry fee is \$ 2.00.

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.



The Club is looking for a new home!

The Red Cross is moving, and they are not taking amateur radio with them. Their new facility is a former AT&T store in the parking lot in front of Lowe's building supplies on East Blvd. The new building simply does not have room for amateur radio. Red Cross staff will not have offices. They will have cubicles instead.

We are looking for a new home. Prospects are the EMA, the Salvation Army, or any other organization with a big building that can accommodate us and a mission that supports us. Talk to your friends and contacts and help us explore possibilities.

We have to find a place to store all the stuff we have in storage at the Red Cross. We will take down our antennas and take them with us. We have to vacate by September 2026. If you have any space to help us store some of our stuff (some of which gets used just once a year during the hamfest), please let Fred KR4YK know!

The Icom IC-7300 on the Used Market

Otto N4UZZ

I keep up with the market for used HF transceivers and have noted a recent development: a lot of used Icom IC-7300 radios are landing on eBay. This influx has depressed prices with many of the radios winding up selling below \$ 700.00. Several factors have come together to create this wave of IC-7300 selling. The first is the arrival of the Icom IC-7300 Mark II, an event that makes the original 7300 sound older. Other factors include tough competition in recent years, with the Yaesu FT-710 being especially noteworthy.

The Icom IC-7300 remains an outstanding workhorse with a very good receiver, a wonderful spectrum and waterfall display, and an intuitive interface. When it hit the shelves of dealers brand new quite a few years back it was an overnight sensation. It was the first transceiver built on SDR technology with a price tag that undercut the competition. It remains an excellent value to this day.



Especially now that used units are becoming available at even more reasonable prices.

For instance, Main Trading Company of Texas was advertising a used IC-7300 with a 30-day guarantee for a net cost of \$ 799.00. Given that there is very little that can go wrong with these radios, this appears to be an excellent chance to get a very good HF radio that will provide years of service. There is a good reason the 7300 became a best-seller. You can hardly get on the HF bands without someone out there telling you that they are running a 7300 and are getting good reports. The transmitting audio is excellent right out of the box with the handheld factory microphone. I use my 7300 for portable operations and mostly CW. I have always described the receiver to be “right up there with the big boys.”

If you really want the very best receiver you might want to look at the Yaesu FT-710. It comes in two versions, one is the FT-710AESS which comes with an external speaker that is tuned to emphasize sideband speech, and the other is the FT-710 Field without that external speaker. The FT-710 Field can be bought for \$ 999.95 + tax, which is a rather incredible price given the performance of this radio.



From a user interface perspective, there are two features the Yaesu has that I wish the Icom had. The first is a graphic presentation of the passband, including a depiction of where your notch filter is. On the Icom you have to go to the audio screen and even then, it is difficult to figure out where your notch filter is. The second is a cw tuning indication that shows you



The Yaesu depiction of the passband showing the notch filter placement in yellow.

when you are zeroed in on a cw signal. On the Icom there is no indicator. I use software to display the passband and the tuning relative to other stations. It really should be shown on the radio. There is one feature all recent Yaesu radios have: the controls are cramped near the tuning dial. It is easy to bump the dial as you push a knob here and there. I have controlled that by making the tuning knob friction very high, making it difficult to turn.

One thing about the Yaesu I do not like is the display. There is no signal averaging. So, cw jumps onto the screen and disappears. The Icom has a calm, averaged signal display. But on the Icom the spectrum display does not give adequate height to the signals, making it all look like weak and modest signals. Look at the image of the Icom in this article. At 7.06 the display shows a very strong signal. It is clearly visible on the waterfall, but the spectrum display shows only a really small blip. The Icom display can be customized because from the factory, the spectrum display is fuzzy and unclear. I adjusted mine to mimic a Flex display.

I have run the big brother to this radio, the FTDX-10, in Field Day conditions with other radios nearby. The blocking is excellent. The Icom cannot compete on this and overloads more easily from strong out-of-band stations. That is – in my opinion – the main weakness of the Icom receiver. But as long as you are not operating with other stations nearby or living a few blocks from a Voice of America transmitter, you will not notice this.



The arrival of excellent SDR radios from Yaesu and Icom has depressed the market for used radios, which is a good thing. Right now (01/30/2026 at 18:50 CT) you can pick up a fine Ten Tech Orion 538 for a measly \$ 455.00. Icom 706 Mark II goes for about \$ 500.00. Every now and then you can grab an Icom IC-7300 for less than \$ 700.00.

But why take the risk of a used radio from eBay when the Main Trading Company advertises a brand-new IC-7300 for \$ 1048.00. With the factory rebate, your net cost is \$ 948.00. Main Trading Co. charges no sales tax and shipping is free. I don't know how they get away with that.

You can check out their prices at mtcradio.com



Iron Bowl 2026 Special Event Station

Visit us at w4ap.org

A Special Event Station

N4UZZ

If we get enough volunteers, we want to operate a special event station for the 2026 Iron Bowl. We need to be on the air all day on the day of the game (until the game starts) on November 28, 2026. Persons taking shifts can operate from home or the club station, using the W4B call. **The main requirement is accurate computer logging!** If possible, we should operate SSB and some CW stations.

I am volunteering to compile all the logs and send out the Special Event Station QSL cards. They will be emailed to all the contacts at their QRZ email address. Pictured above is a draft of the QSL card design.

I will be asking for volunteers and putting a volunteer shift spreadsheet online. Email me with any questions or ideas N4UZZ caskywarn@gmail.com

For club members only: A football raffle!

N4UZZ



Do you feel that you can pick the winner and predict the spread of the Iron Bowl 2026? Then join this raffle and win a prize!

As part of the operation of a special event station for the Iron Bowl 2026 we will operate a football raffle for club members.

I will put a spreadsheet online where you can enter your prediction for the

score of the Auburn-Alabama game. You will enter your call and your prediction.

Go to <http://tiny.cc/ironbowl>

For the winning team, enter ALA or AUB.

For the point spread enter a whole integer of the predicted winning margin. Enter points, not touchdowns or field goals.

The member who is closest to the actual game outcome will be the winner.

In case of a tie, the winner will be the first member who entered the winning prediction. The winner will be announced at the Christmas Party.

The prize is a VHF/UHF dual band j-pole roll-up antenna.





Skywarn is moving to UHF!

Skywarn is moving to UHF.

The weekly net will be conducted on the UHF W4AP Bald Knob repeater. Storm spotters will use 445.500 simplex to communicate with each other and net control as the situation requires.

We are keeping the new 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."



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 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.
- The QCWA (Quarter Century Wireless Association), rag chew after the Cradle of the Confederacy Net on 28.350 MHz 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.
- 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 memarc840@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

Feb 4, 2026	Pizza Perfect, 428 Coliseum Blvd, Montgomery, AL 36109
Feb 11, 2026	San Marcos, 61 N Burbank Dr, Montgomery AL 36117
Feb 18, 2026	Fried Tomato Buffet, 6561 Atlanta Hwy, Montgomery, AL 36117
Feb 25, 2026	Full Moon BBQ, 7660 Eastchase Pkwy, Montgomery, AL 36117

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
MGM-ARES Digital Net	every Thursday 8:00 PM – 9:15 PM CT memarc840@gmail.com
Central Ala UHF Net	Mondays (except club meeting nights) 8:00 PM 444.500 W4AP

Club Breakfast Sat, Feb 14, 2026, starting at 7:00 AM
Chappy's, Carmichael at Perry Hill Road,

Club Meeting **Mon, Feb 16, 2026, 7:00 PM**
American Red Cross, 5015 Woods Crossing, Montgomery, AL 36106

CAVEC Testing Mon, Jan 12, 2026, 6:30 pm
Community Room, Renfroe's Foodland,
9168 East Chase Parkway Montgomery, AL 36117

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/>

Club Officers:

President:	Otto Arnoscht N4UZZ
Vice-President:	Ken Brittin AK4KN
Treasurer:	Fidel Cintron KK4KGO
Secretary:	Dennis Egbert K4PDQ
Public Information Officer:	James Garner K4JKG
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)