



### Huntsville Amateur Radio Club Information

#### Club Officers

##### President:

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY  
duncant1@ds-s.com

##### Vice President:

Kim Hensley, WG8S  
khensley@gamewood.net

##### Secretary:

Rolf Goedhart K4RGG.  
k4rgg@arrl.net

##### Treasurer:

Heath Thorson, KC4HRX, 722-0250  
hthorson@knology.net

The club's address is Box 423, Huntsville, Ala. 35804. Meetings are held each Friday night at 7:30 P.M. at the American Red Cross Building, 1101 Washington Street. Dues are \$12.00 per year, family memberships are \$15.00 per year. The club maintains a Web Site at "http://www.harc.net"

The North Alabama Repeater Association operates repeaters on 146.34 / 146.94, 147.78 / 147.18, 223.34 / 224.94 and 448.5 / 443.5. NARA dues are \$16.00 per year and may be sent to NARA at P.O. Box 18941 Huntsville, AL 35804-8941.

The club's packet radio interest group, HUNTSPAC, maintains an extensive packet network for the Huntsville area. Dues for use of this network are \$15.00 per year, and can be paid through the HARC Secretary-Treasurer listed above.

The club's ATV special interest group, TVATV operates an ATV repeater. It's input frequency is 439.25 MHz and its output is 421.25 MHz. A voice coordination repeater is operated with output frequency of 145.33 MHz, input 600 kHz down.

The Vox is published the third Friday of each month except for August. Editor of the Vox is Frank Emens, W4HFU, 3714 Lakewood Circle, Huntsville, Ala. 35811 or femens@hiwaay.net. Material of interest to the HARC membership should be submitted to the editor by the second Friday of the month of publication.

"Vox", Vol 44, Nr 1, January, 2004  
A Newsletter published monthly except for August by the Huntsville Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 423, Huntsville, AL 35804

### 2003 Rocket City Marathon

The 2003 Rocket City Marathon, held Saturday, December 11, 2003 thru the streets of Huntsville, Alabama, is history. Pretty good weather for the runners - high 30s and overcast at the 8am start, and the wind and rain held off until much of the field had finished. Again a very high percentage of finishers this year.

The Rocket City Marathon is one of our major public service events each year. Thanks to the following hams who provided needed communications: K4DRW Don, K4EGB Peggy, K8GNM Woody, KD4TFN Steve, KE4AHR Kris, KF4MMF Chris, KG4UWE Charles, N4ZRC David, N5AYD John, W4SSW Scott, WA4PRH John, WB7VDN Ron and WD4CPF Leigh. My thanks also to the North Alabama Repeater Association for the use of the 443.5 remote base, to Steve Flory, WA4OUE for the use of the 145.47 machine and also to the multitude of NARA members and others who kept the repeaters clear during the race.

73, Leigh WD4CPF

### From the President

#### What are your New Year's Resolutions?

Many a new year's resolution implies retreat from something negative: to quit smoking, or to loose weight. All that is fine - so when the smoke clears, try these resolutions on for size.

Learn something new

"Use it or Loose it" is a good maxim when it comes to our minds. Whether tickling the neurons with something entirely new, or revisiting things we thought we knew with a "refresher course", none of us need worry about brain overload!

Participate in something new to you

Some are ready at the drop of a hat for any adventure, but speaking for myself

and I suspect many others, it is very easy to get into a comfortable rut. The next time an appeal for help goes out, consider the possibility that we might get back from opportunities in proportion to what we put in.

Take on leadership responsibilities

An idealized view of a group effort shows everyone pulling together toward a common goal. Where did the goal come from? Who set the course for getting there? How about the strategy and tactics? These are, with the help of the group at large, responsibilities of the leadership. Are you a leader?

Is this a thinly-veiled allegory about HARC? Well, yes (there goes the veil!), but that doesn't destroy a more general application. Let's this new year's resolutions be positive and

### CAVEC Amateur Radio License Exams

Exam sessions are held the first Saturday of each month unless a holiday causes the session to be delayed for one week.

Upcoming sessions are:  
Saturday, January 6  
Saturday, February 7

For information contact:

Larry Frost, KR4GU, 536-4154  
kr4gu@hamfest.org

Or

Don Tunstill, W4NO, 536-3904  
dontunstill@hamfest.org

Exam Sessions are held the 3rd Saturday of each month at 1:00. In even numbered months they are held at the Athens EOC. In odd numbered months they are held in Madison at Intergraph, Building 15

For information contact Bob Hudson,  
W4RKH, 461-7905

out-of-the-ordinary. We all might be surprised what happens!

73, Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

**Hamography**

HARC is blessed with a number of very special people, as would be expected in an organization composed of HAMs, who tend to be special regardless. But, on joining HARC earlier this year, one person really stood out in my mind. There are HAMs whose primary interest and value to the group is in the area of Emergency Communications; those who are heavy into the technical aspects of the avocation. Then there are those who are people and service oriented. Such is the HAM subject for this month, a very special part of the HARC family:

**K4EGB PEGGY BELL:**

Peggy is a long time member of HARC, having obtained her Technician Class Ticket and joined HARC in 1993. When asked what led her or attracted her to Ham Radio and HARC; her reply was "The People". People play a very critical role of importance in every aspect and consideration of Peggy's life. For her, it is not the question of "What" is being done in HAM radio...it is the "Who" is doing what .. that counts.

Peggy's involvement and approach toward VHF and UHF radios and equipment bespeaks her primary values related to Ham Radio. For her, those pieces of gear and equipment are simply tools. Tools to allow access to and appreciation of the important aspect of Ham Radio, the people involved. Her lack of

interest in some of the traditional areas of Ham Radio, CW, Propagation, etc; is understandable. CW and other elements of HF Radio offer limited opportunity to get to know the person behind the code tone, the mike and the call sign on HF; as opposed to VHF and UHF which offer a greater opportunity to get to know the person eventually on a face to face basis. This tendency of Peggy's involvement has proven to be a huge advantage to the HARC Community.

Peggy has become the "Social Glue" for HARC that helps bind us together; that gives us the opportunity to balance the technical with human interaction. That binding provided by Peggy is apparent in her involvement with Field Day Social Events; The Information Booth at the

HARC ACTIVITY CALENDAR FOR January, 2004						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	31 Southeast Linked Repeater Net 1900 on +442.775 PL 203.5 Hz	1 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	2 No meeting Happy New Year day after	3 *TWIAR  Cavec exams. 0900 at Red Cross Bldg.
4	5	6 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	7 Southeast Linked Repeater Net 1900 on +442.775 PL 203.5 Hz	8 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	9 Joint HARC / NARA Meeting	10 *TWIAR  John Farr reports no hamfests in the area this month
11	12	13 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	14 Southeast Linked Repeater Net 1900 on +442.775 PL 203.5 Hz	15 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	16 HARC Meeting  Vox & Social night	17 *TWIAR
18	19	20 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	21 Southeast Linked Repeater Net 1900 on +442.775 PL 203.5 Hz	22 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	23 HARC Meeting  Saturn V Restoration Project	24 *TWIAR
25	26	27 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	28 Southeast Linked Repeater Net 1900 on +442.775 PL 203.5 Hz	29 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	30 HARC Meeting  Fifth Friday - Auction off your surplus 'stuff'	31 *TWIAR
1	2	3 ATV Net 2000 Check In 145.33	4 Southeast Linked Repeater Net 1900 on +442.775 PL 203.5 Hz	5 EMERGENCY NET on 34/94 @ 1930 Skywarn Net on 147.24 @ 2000	6 HARC Meeting	7 *TWIAR  Cavec exams, 0900 at Red Cross Bldg.

\*TWIAR -- This Week In Amateur Radio, +442.775 PL203.5 Hz 8 PM Every Saturday  
 ATV Net @ 20:00, Check in on 145.33, Tuesdays  
 Southeast Linked Repeater Net on +442.775, PL 203.5 Hz @ 20:00, Wednesdays  
 Madison County Emergency Net on 34/94 @19:30, Thursdays  
 SkyWarn Net on 147.24 @ 20:00, Thursdays

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HAMVENTION each year; and at regular HARC weekly meetings throughout the year.

Peggy's people oriented approach does not limit itself to HAM Radio; but extends into the society and culture around her. Peggy is employed as a teacher working primarily with Pre School and Older students that have special educational needs. She relates a tremendous satisfaction derived from helping those that need her help in such a critical fashion.

These are the qualities and the makeup that make K4EGB such a valuable asset to HARC and the community we live in.

HARC.If you have not done so lately.give a frequent "RR" to Peggy!!!

73, WB0UCI, Fred Kersey

**Memorable Events of 1903**

Those of us who collect shoe-boxes full of little cards may have worked the North Carolina Special Events Group's

station W4B at Kitty Hawk between December 12th and 17th, 2003.

It is fitting to commemorate by radio the Wright Brothers' first powered flight, since 1903 also saw a great radio first: wireless communications from the U.S. to England. American DXers now barely wink at calls beginning with "G" and "M", but it was certainly hot stuff for Guglielmo Marconi and his competition. (Do you suppose "G" and "M" were chosen for British Isles calls because they are Marconi's initials?)

If you are interested in a non-technical history of Marconi's work, particularly the period between 1894 and 1920, pick up a copy of Gavin Weightman's "Signor Marconi's Magic Box", published in 2003. The book is subtitled "The most Remarkable Invention of the 19th Century, and the Amateur Inventor whose Genius Sparked a Revolution". While the concentration is squarely on Marconi himself, there are interesting asides into the lives of Lee de

Forest, Ambrose Fleming, Alfred Nobel, and Hugo Gernsback.

Read the book now. And don't miss the W4B Kitty Hawk bicentennial.

73 de KG4CUI

**Yet Another Balloon Chase**

Balloon chasing season seems to have come to and end for the year, but we had one last adventure that took us to North Georgia on 15-NOV-03.

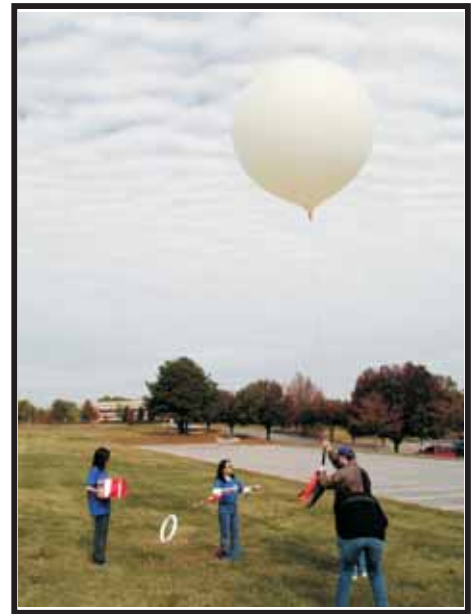
Two balloons were launched from UAH on Saturday, 15-NOV-03, at the NSSTC building. These balloons carried several experiments for the student at UAH. They also carried 2-meter transmitters equipped with APRS (Automatic Position Reporting System) equipment to let the chase team know where the balloon is located throughout its path. Bill Brown, WB8ELK, had another low power 2-meter transmitter attached to each balloon. One had a voice ID and the other had a CW ID. These could be heard very easily heard for hundreds of miles.

The two balloons reached an altitude of 109,286 ft and 110,124 ft respectively and they moved as fast as 108 mph when they hit the jet stream. No wonder we could not keep up with them. This time of the years the winds are a lit-

stopped to eat since it was after 3:00pm and nobody had eaten lunch yet.

The signal from the balloon had stopped, so we had no final coordinates from the packages. The only signal we had at that point was the 30mW voice

ID beacon, so now we were on a Fox Hunt with handheld beams to pinpoint the signal. We took several measurements to triangulate the source of the signal. Then, I got a message back from another APRS station with a phone number to call N4NEQ on the phone. Cell phone coverage was not good in the area so it took a while. We got the last set of



tle different from what we experienced in the past few balloon chases.

The APRS beacons from the 2 balloons were confirmed to have been heard in the following 12 states: AL, AR, FL, GA, IN, KY, MO, MS, NC, OH, SC, TN

The callsigns used on the balloons were KI4CPA and KI4CLR. We expected them to land in the same general vicinity, but that would change as the second balloon was ascending very slowly compared to the first. This only meant that it would travel father to the East and this could be trouble for the chase teams as it landed in the Cohutta Wilderness area near the Georgia state line.

The first balloon landed near Dalton, GA as predicted. It was recovered from a tree near a strip mall. The second balloon headed for the mountains and we lost the signal as the terrain blocked it. I looked on my APRS map and saw an APRS station on the mountain close to the balloon and then it made a direct path towards the balloon. Great! We have another balloon chaser looking for the payload. We

APRS coordinats from N4NEQ and proceeded to head in that general direction. We hit a dirt road that took us into the Cohutta Wilderness Area and it got rough. We got on Hells Hollow Road and quickly decided it was named appropriately, because we had to turn back at the first deep creek crossing following by a steep hill on the other side. Our team met up with WB8ELK on the other side of the mountain, as we got closer to the source of the beacon. Unfortunately, it was dark and the search could not be completed.

It was a long ride back to Huntsville from Copperhill. Another search team from North Georgia recovered the payload a few days later and shipped it back to UAH.

The chase teams consisted of KI4CLR, KI4CPA, KD4TFN, N4TXI, W4JXP, KG4UWE, WB8ELK, N8DEU, and others.

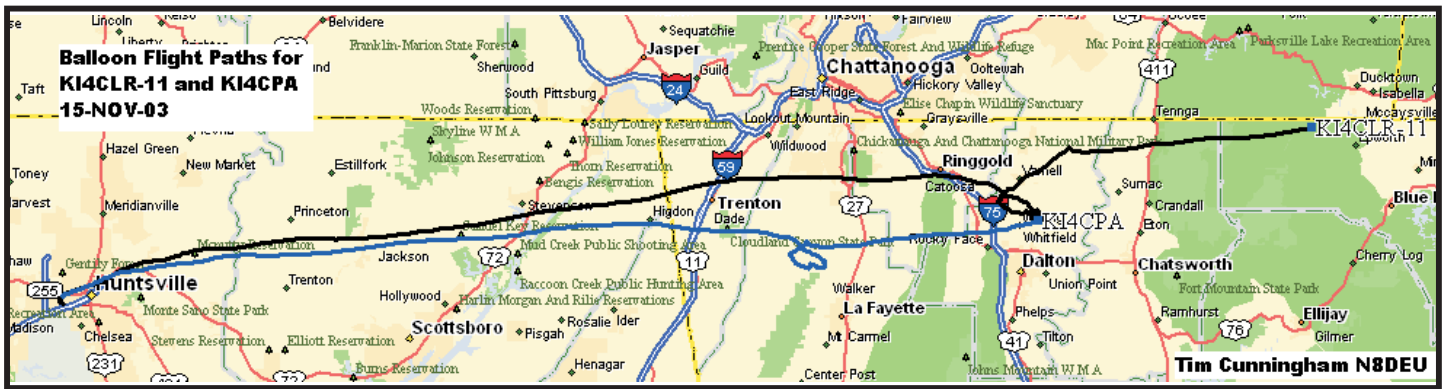
**The following is a note from Bill Brown:**

Sunday, Ralph Fowler N4NEQ and his son and Eddie Foust WD4JEM came up from Atlanta and Dave Hoffman KE4FGW drove down from Knoxville to attempt a recovery... they got within a quarter mile of the payload scrambling up a 45 degree incline

in the rain... nothing like wet leaves on a steep mountain. The tracking beacon was still operating as of 9 pm Sunday night. Monday, Eddie WD4JEM and John Mullinix KF4SKT drove back to the area and Eddie walked up the dirt trail that went past the trailers at the end of Shady Grove Road. He walked clear up to the top of Granny Marr Mountain and started back to the closest point where the GPS said the payload was about 0.05 miles away... he managed to glimpse a hint of orange just below him. After walking



*John Mullinix, KF4SKT with the recovered payload Monday night*



about 200 feet down a steep incline he found the payload on the ground near a big rock... the parachute and tracking beacon were laying on the ground (the balsa wood antenna support was broken in two places)... the primary student payload packet antenna had impaled itself into the ground and was bent over about 90 degrees but not broken off and the payload looks to be in good shape. He got back to the trail just after sunset.

*73's de Tim, N8DEU*

**NARA Notes:**

Greetings and Merry Christmas from the Shaffer Household ! Ron: W4VM, Sandie KE4LRX, Emily: KF4SUV and Kelley - The "DJ" of '94 commercials GRIN. As I write this, '94 is still operating with the back-up RF drawer but the main controller - down at Ernie's house a few miles from it's normal site (Thanks again Ernie). There was so much Hum on the audio last time we had the back-up in there that I decided to try & get something stable through the holidays even at the sacrifice of a bit of coverage.

Sandie & I just got back from Charlie's (N4OKL) house with the main '94 RF drawer after Steve: WA4OUE performed some rather extensive surgery on it. I'll save the details for the big meeting. Many Thanks again Steve ! We plan to try a re-install back at the Ch 31 site sometime this week or weekend so hopefully by the time you read this, we will be back on site at Ch 31. There are still problems yet to be solved but now our own hardware is in much better shape and hopefully better able to withstand the harsh RF environment up there. We may soon find out!

In the mean time, make your plans well ahead to attend the big HARC /

NARA kickoff meeting on Friday January 9th at 7:00 PM. We start at 7:00 with social time & begin the meeting at 7:30. We are still fine tuning the agenda and may be right up until the meeting. There is so much to talk about but I plan to focus the meeting on operating through the NARA repeaters as they are and will be. We will give you the technical details but we'll try to keep that brief if possible.

The idea we are tossing around is to perhaps even have a "repeater technical program" at a later club meeting or maybe at the W4VM/W4XE repeater group gathering if we have it like we did last year in January. If we do it, look for a restaurant meeting format around the end of January. Since Ralph and I enjoy getting into the technical nuts & bolts of "repeater building" that might be the better place to talk up the nitty gritty technical details of both NARA and other machines we are working with.

I welcome feedback on these Ideas. Please let me know what you think. There is always more to talk about at the NARA January meeting then 1 hour or even 1 and a half hours will allow. This year I would like to focus on what our strategic goals are both from the leadership point and the membership point. We have taken a hit this year in performance to both of our two flagship machines through factors beyond our control.

What kind of system do we want to build to get us back to top notch repeaters?

- We still have three excellent sites - how do we want to utilize them in the future?
- Are there other site opportunities which would help us improve our systems?

- Are there other Hams with mountain top havens that might help us out?
- What about remote receivers?
- Do we want a system with city wide "handy" coverage or with regional area "mobile rig" coverage?

All these questions are the kind of things I've been asking myself as I prepare for the NARA meeting this year. What about you ? what are your inputs? If you have some good ones, we'd like to hear them but be forewarned - he who has great ideas usually gets nominated to "chair the committee"! - Read that, we're always looking for are few good men (or ladies)! - This is a "team sport" - If you like to tinker with projects, we'd love to put you to work. We can acclimate you to the ins and outs or working on repeaters if your willing to spend the time. Greg Saratte: W4OZK is our nominating chairman this year. Get with him if you would like to run for office or with me or Ralph if you just want to help out. Let me close with a big round of thanks to all who have helped us through a busy and difficult last few months. I have made many, many trips up & down the mountain working on '94 and I could not have gotten through all this without the help of many folks who pitched in. I certainly did not do it alone! - To or V.P: John K4AN for several trips to the site - working on '94. to Todd: KD4ALP (our Treasurer) and Leon: WB4LTT for re-tuning our duplexors and getting us fixed up with new Jumper cabling, to our Secretary, Charlie: N4OKL for doing the Leg work to get '94 back and forth to

Steve's (WA4OUE) place, to our technical advisor: Ralph, W4XE for pages & pages of e-mails in technical advice as well as trips with me (laden with equipment) to the '94 site to look for interference and work on our hardware. To John, N4ZZY for helping me out with a look at our RF environment through a spectrum analyzer and to John and Don: W4NO and Frank: W4HFU for pulling off the Joint membership drive mailing .. and the list goes on and on - I know there were several more including WG8S, W8LN, W4TCL, and lots of '94 users just helping out with tests as we checked things out. Ham Radio is truly a team effort! Lastly, a hearty thanks to KE4LRX for putting up with me being gone from domestic duties and even accompanying me on several of those trips! Looking forward to seeing all of you at the big meeting! .. And if you are not sick of repeaters by the end of Friday evening, stop by the 147.24 repeater meeting the next morning at UAH.

*73, Ron Shaffer: NARA President*

**From The Editor's Wastebasket**

The HARC Christmas party for 2003 was held on December 5. Turnout was not as great as it was last year, but I attribute that to the fact that the weather was cold and messy enough to encourage staying at home. Those who attended had a great time. I had failed to prepare and bring my camera along but John Lewis, WA4PRH Had his with him and shot some pictures. When I got home that night there was already a

monster file in my email box with his pictures, some of which are displayed on this and the next page.

*I've just been made aware that J D Bennight, K4GKJ, as well as Robert H. Ailor, KA4PKY, both members of HARC, became Silent Keys in the last week.*

*Their passing is a major loss to the Huntsville Amateur Radio Community*

We start the year off with a bang with the joint meeting with the NARA folks. Be sure to be there to get the latest scoop on what's happening with the repeaters in the Huntsville area. It may be true that the NARA movers and shakers "get their kicks" working with and on the repeater system, but it is also true that the system provides a real and vital service to the local ham community. I suspect that the knowledge that what they are doing provides a public service is a significant part of the "kicks factor". Anyway, we all owe them a big thank you for the things they do.

Tim, N8DEU and his cohorts have found another challenge using amateur radio with the weather balloon chases using APRS transceivers. The balloon payloads usually don't pick very convenient and accessible places to land and the activity seems to combine a heady mix of fox-hunting, APRS, map reading and trekking through the deep woods to locate the payload. The most recent episode, reported in this month's Vox involved an especially elusive payload that was not located

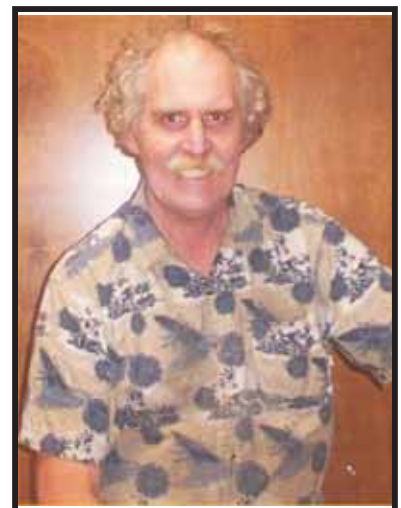
until near sundown Monday after a Saturday morning launch.

I believe a lot of members of HARC are involved in activities of one kind or another that would be of interest to your fellow club members. Why don't you share the fun with us. We are always in need of interesting programs for club meetings and, if you'd rather not present a program, there will almost always be room for you to report what you're doing in the Vox.

It wouldn't be right to do this "finish up the year" edition of the Vox without recognizing and thanking Tom, Rolf, Heath, Peggy, Steve, Woody, Don and all the rest of the bunch that work so hard making HARC such a good outfit to belong to. Thanks to all.

And speaking of "ALL", it is time to hope you ALL have a great holiday season and the best of fortune for the year 2004 (and subsequent)

*73, Frank Emens, W4HFU*



*John, WA4PRH*



*The Guest of Honor, Mr. S. Claus*



*This BFT arrived at the party in Santa's sack.*

Huntsville Amateur Radio Club  
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