

Splatter

Mississippi Coast Amateur Radio Association

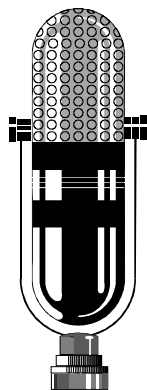
P.O. Box 1785

Gulfport, MS 39502

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Summer 2004

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The Mississippi Coast Amateur Radio Association (MCARA) meets the third Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the conference room at the American Red Cross building on DeBuys Road in Biloxi. All radio amateurs and persons interested in becoming an amateur are invited to attend and learn more about our organization.

The club also calls the MCARA 2 meter net each Tuesday night at 7:00 PM on the Biloxi repeater at 146.73 MHz.

Field Day 2004



The Mississippi Coast Amateur Radio Association (MCARA) gathered on Saturday and Sunday June 26 and 27 to participate in this year's Field Day 2004. Field Day is an annual nationwide emergency radio communications event sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). Field Day demonstrates the emergency communications capabilities of amateur radio clubs, groups and individual operators under simulated emergency conditions. Disasters and other emergencies can and do happen unexpectedly and the need for backup communications is essential when other communications are disabled or otherwise overloaded. Radio amateurs have a long and proud history of volunteering their services and equipment to serve their communities and country in time of need.

This year's field day site was at the Harrison County Farm north of Gulfport. A total of 42 volunteers participated in such varied support roles as equipment and antenna setup, on-the-air operations, power distribution, logging contacts, food preparation and serving, manning the display table, and testing and repair as needed. All operations were conducted on emergency power supplied by generator or batteries, thereby eliminating the need to use commercial power which is often not available during disasters. In addition, this year a solar panel was utilized to provide battery charging during daylight hours.

This year's operations were conducted as class 4A during the 24 hour period. There were CW, digital and phone contacts made by numerous operators during the day and throughout the night. Operators ranged in age from 14 years to senior citizens. Power levels ranged from 5 watts (QRP) to 100 watts. Antennas varied from home brewed wire dipoles and inverted "V"s to verticals and beams. In other words, a little bit of everything was used as would be the case in an actual disaster.

Of particular interest was **Jeff's (N9OKV)** military surplus mobile radio trailer which was complete with computers, printer, HF and VHF equipment, battery power, antennas and portable gasoline generator. The "icing on the cake" was a room air conditioner that Jeff installed to make operating conditions in the trailer more bearable in the heat and

humidity of this year's event

Food services were provided by members and wives under the expert direction of **Gail Horning, KC5KMU**. A special thank you is due to Gail and **Barbara Turgeon** and their volunteers for keeping everyone well fed and "hydrated" to compensate for the heat and humidity. We all know that "an army moves on its stomach" and we marched forward to earn 2414 points this year.

Special recognition is due **Cynthia Smith, KD5WTK** for setting up the very eye-appealing display board of the club's activities and taking photos of the weekend's activities. She and her husband **Jeff (N9OKV)** put a lot of hard work into organizing this year's Field Day and making it the successful and fun event that it was. Great job, Guys.

Among the 42 participants we had, some were visitors from out of town who came to participate in operating and support activities. **Ben Bunag (KD5YTI)**, grandson of **Barry (WB5WB)** and **Jackie Wilhelm**, returned this year from California with license in hand and his new QRP rig to operate on phone to add points to the club's total. In addition, he brought along a very professional home brewed 2 meter ground plane antenna which he and Barry had made. Ben is a great example of how a young man can get started in amateur radio with the help of a senior ham who takes the time to stimulate his interest and help him to prepare for the test. Let's hope that Ben has his general class ticket when he returns next year.

Another visitor was **Matt Strachan (KE4DXE)**, an active duty member of the U.S. Air Force who was in Biloxi on temporary duty at Keesler AFB. Matt managed to attend the June club meeting and also field day to help out. He made some solar powered QRP contacts on Saturday using a borrowed station. We thank him for coming out and adding to the club's total point score. Matt is a weather forecaster stationed at Dyess AFB in Abilene, Texas.

This year's field day was an unqualified success and, as always, we had a lot of fun making it happen. We extend our sincere thanks to all who participated.

Hurricane Hunters ...

The June 21 club meeting featured a most interesting presentation by **LtCol Doug Lipscombe**, 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron at Keesler AFB. He literally took us into the eye of a hurricane with a slide show depicting a C-130 Hurricane Hunter aircraft penetration into a storm center. His graphic description of flying into such a powerful storm was "hair-raising". In addition, he demonstrated the use of drop sondes for measuring storm wind velocity, direction and barometric pressure. We sincerely thank him for coming to speak to us on such a timely subject.

Memorial Day Cookout

Club members and their families were again treated to a great cookout at the home of **Clyde Ready, W5CR** and his XYL **Carol, KB5VBX** on Saturday, May 29. The event took place at the Ready's home located on Hoot Owl Hill up Highway 67 north of Biloxi.

Special thanks are due to our hosts, **Clyde and Carol**, and to **Gail, KC5KMU**, our Activities Chairperson. Those who cooked our excellent meal and those who brought so many great tasting dishes and desserts are to be equally recognized and thanked.

Our goal is to enjoy our hobby and the fellowship we share with the many interesting, talented, and hard working folks who make up our organization. We had an excellent turnout for our Memorial Day cookout and look forward to the next one.

Repeater 30 years Old ...

The local 146.73 repeater is **30 years old** this month. It was first licensed as a club repeater on **July 12, 1974** with the callsign **WR5AFE** and was located in Gulfport. Its founders were **John Belham, WA5PDG**, and **Fred Taylor, K5QBU (SK)**, with the original license being issued to Taylor as trustee. The justification for a repeater became evident with the growing use of the 2 meter band along the Gulf Coast and the need for extending the range of 2 meter operations in this area.

The repeater's first licensed location was in Gulfport at 59th Avenue and 3rd Street. However, conditions forced the location to change in 1986 and the repeater went silent until 1987. At that time club president, **Joe Butler**, then **K5JB** (later **K5OS**), arranged for the present site at the cable tv tower in North Biloxi

When the repeater returned to the air in 1987 it was still **K5OS** but with a new control operator, **Peter Heuser, KC5IF**. Also, the autopatch was introduced that year in memory of **Tom Braidwood, W5BW (SK)**, who was, unquestionably, the dean of amateur radio operators on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Tom was first licensed in 1914.

The repeater call sign remained unchanged until 1991 when it became **KC5IF**. Pete, KC5IF, has had the responsibility for keeping the repeater on the air for the past **17 years**. We all owe Pete a debt of gratitude for his hard work and dedication to the club and the repeater.

The next time you key-up the repeater, please think about those dedicated hams whose efforts, long ago, have made it possible for us to have this vital link in our local communications capability.

Field Day 2004

Photos by WE5Y



John (KD5RVX) explains some details to **Ben (KD5YTI)** about Ben's new QRP rig.



Mike (KA8JRM) discusses a technical point during a CW operating session.



Don (WA5DM) and **Don (W5DJW)** assemble a vertical antenna for Field Day operations.



Stu (N5LBZ) and **Clyde (W5CR)** reflect on the day's events and progress.



Dave (WY5S) and **Jeff (N9OKV)** check out the portable generator that supplied power for Field Day.



Ben (KD5YTI) demonstrates what amateur radio is all about. Fun, adventure and education.

Mississippi Coast Amateur Radio Association (MCARA)
P.O.Box 1785
Gulfport, MS 39502

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Summer 2004

The *Splatter* is published quarterly for members and friends of the **Mississippi Coast Amateur Radio Association (MCARA)**. It aims to broaden their awareness and understanding of issues and events relevant to radio amateurs in this area.

MCARA Officers for 2004:

President: David Turgeon, WY5S

Vice President: Clyde Ready, W5CR

Secretary: Carol Ready, KC5VBX

Treasurer: Barry Wilhelm, WB5WB

Splatter Editor: Joe Littlepage, WE5Y

MCARA Calendar:

- 1st Saturday of each month: VE testing in the conference room of the American Red Cross building located at the corner of DeBuys Road and Fernwood Road in West Biloxi

- 3rd Monday of each month: Monthly general membership meeting at the same location

- Every Thursday night at 7:00 pm: Coffee Break and fellowship get together at McAllister's located in the Popp's Ferry shopping center (west) located at Popp's Ferry Road and Pass Road in West Biloxi