



# Splatter

Mississippi Coast Amateur Radio Association

P.O. Box 1785

Gulfport, MS 39502

<http://www.ms cara.org>

## Spring 2003

*New Hams*

*VE Testing*

*Special Olympics Needs  
Volunteer Operators*

*Ham Radio - Hobby  
or Service?*



The Mississippi Coast Amateur Radio Association (MCARA) meets the third Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Civil Defense meeting room at the Harrison County Courthouse in Gulfport. 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 club repeater at 146.73 MHz.

## New Amateur Radio Operators

### January 4, 2003 VE Testing Session



**George Dobson**  
*Technician Class*



**Andrea K. Dobson**  
*Technician Class*



**Bobby G. Graves**  
*Technician Class*

### February 1, 2003 VE Testing Session



**Catherine Childs, KG4YAB**  
*General Class*



**Bob Robinson, MD**  
*General Class*



**Jerry Myers**  
*Technician Class*



**George Manning**  
*Technician Class*

## VE Testing “Hatches” Seven New Amateurs

The MCARA Volunteer Examiner Program is moving along with great success. The testing session on January 4th saw three new amateur operators join our ranks. **George Dobson, Andrea Dobson, and Bobby Graves** successfully passed the test for the Technician class license to get the new year off to a great start. Then the testing session of February 1st resulted in four more new hams joining our ranks. **Catherine Childs (KG4YAB)** and **Dr. Bob Robinson** both made General Class and **Jerry Myers** and **George Manning** made Technician Class. Their smiles tell it all. After studying hard to prepare for their tests they all can be justifiably proud of their accomplishments.

The next step will be for them to get on the air to enjoy their new privileges. As they “get their feet wet” on the air I am sure they will have questions that we can answer through our own operating experiences and expertise. At one time we all were where they are today and we wish them every success and many years of enjoyable operating.

We hope that they will consider joining our club so that they might enjoy the fellowship and learning experiences offered through membership. Our monthly meetings, Saturday breakfasts, Thursday night coffee breaks, and evening dinners offer lots of fun and “ham talk” to keep our hobby interesting. Field Day, Boy Scout encampment support and other ham events round out our activities throughout the year.

## Volunteers Needed ...

It's that time of year again and I have just received the dates for the Special Olympics, 9-11 May. Last year we had quite a few hams help out on short notice and this year I am trying to give everyone a heads-up. In the past we have manned the events and provided communication for each event and last year we were used for both events and backup for other emergencies.

Because of the way we were able to handle situations using a net control operator, they have asked us to do the majority of communications this year.

The earlier I can get names of volunteers the better the chance of getting the proper passes for those hams to get on base. Due to the current threat level, I will need to get socials [SSANs] of everyone that wants to

help if they do not already hold a military ID card.

The service we can provide will depend on the amount of volunteers we get. Any input from the gulf coast hams will be welcomed.

**Bradford N. Godwin, SSGT, USAF**  
**Weather Forecast Instructor**  
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## Ham Radio - Hobby or Service?

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Well, this discussion is not only interesting but very important. Amateur radio is at a pivot point in history where it is critical for us to know just what we are: members of a radio service or electronic hobbyists? I like to believe we are both and even more. There is no doubt that our mission statement has changed even though Part 97 is relatively unchanged in its wording. Handling traffic, checking into nets, chasing DX, learning to use CW as another Ham tool, building antennas, working with QRP, and experimenting with things like PSK31, satellite communication and digital voice transmission are just a few of the fun parts of amateur radio today.

However, we cannot hide from reality. Look at the coming of powerful home computers, high speed electronic connections, world wide communication and information transfer via the Internet, cheap long distance rates via phone cards, hand held Cell phones that can reach parties around the globe, global positioning satellite equipment that tells us at all times where we are and where we are going, and on and on. In my opinion only a fool would say that Amateur Radio is the same thing that it was twenty years ago.

We are at a new page in Amateur Radio History. It is not the end of Ham Radio. That is a prediction that has been made each time in the past when new electronic communication technology has been developed. Also, it is not the dawn of a new age where Amateur Radio will only be some form of charity or community service organization. Nor will Ham Radio be just a fun pastime for the electronically talented or technically curious. Nor will it be just another market for the commercial sale of high tech toys like high fidelity stereo sound or high definition TV. (Yes, Virginia, Radio Shack was once a seri-

ous source of electronic parts for Ham Radio Operators before it became an electronic toy store to survive in today's market.) What then are we to become in this new phase of our history?? That depends on us. Yes, we are to some extent all of the things mentioned above and more. But there are new challenges now before us. We are faced with a foreign world that is developing highly skilled engineers, scientists and technicians faster than we are. Our educators have not been able to generate the spark of curiosity and the desire to learn in many of our young Americans. That "spark" in the past has made our country the most innovative and productive in recorded history.

We are faced with new technologies that both make our lives more comfortable than ever before. And yet, most of us feel exhausted and overwhelmed by the speed of ongoing new developments. Our automobiles are the best and safest in history, yet highway accidents are the leading cause of death for young people between 15 and 20 years old. We know more about alternate fuels, recycling our waste, the protection of our natural environment, and the dangers of smoking that ever before. And yet smog still hangs over our city, our streams and lakes are still polluted. People still throw their waste out of car windows and leave trash to float down the rivers. We have not been able to help people stop a deadly habit that causes them to spend billions of dollars just to kill themselves with lung cancer.

And we think we have problems in Ham Radio??? It is my opinion, however, that the challenge has never been greater for Amateur Radio to demonstrate the importance of electronic communication and the use of sound methodology for the transfer of information. The challenge is to experiment and develop new and better methods. The challenge is to create a spark for our young Americans who will become the leaders of our Country when most of us have already "shorted to ground." The challenge is to serve our communities and demonstrate the need for an amateur radio service whether it is in providing safety through communications at a parade, setting up demonstrations of ham radio for public education, enjoying benefits of a 3905ccn, or helping with the myriad of communication problems associated with public safety during foul and dangerous weather. The challenge is to provide a well trained cadre of volunteer radio operators to provide back up for communications necessary for the defense of our homeland from terrorists.

There are some who say that Ham radio is no longer needed and the valuable frequencies we have should be sold to commercial interests to help with the national debt. What if tomorrow they were to outlaw visible ham antennas and towers everywhere? What if they reduced our maximum output power to five watts? What if they made the sale of commercially manufactured ham radio gear illegal? What if they said all future ham activities would be restricted to 11 meters?

Well, it has happened before. The frequencies being used

in the early days of ham radio were stripped away by the government and given to commercial interests. Ham radio was restricted to the spectrum we now call the HF frequencies which at that time were thought to be worthless. The hams of that day met the challenge and found through experimentation that the HF frequencies could be used for long distance communication by bouncing signals off of the ionosphere.

Ham radio transmissions were silenced completely during World War II

Thank God for the trained ham operators that were able to step in and help train the radiomen needed at that time. After the war AM was challenged by a new technology called single sideband. Many felt it would be "the end of Ham radio as they knew it."

So where are we now?? Same as before?? As I said earlier, in my opinion we are at a pivot point. It is time once again to discuss what we are and what we can be. A wise man once said, "Science is the study of why things are what they are. Engineering is the study of what things can become." We need to decide what we can and should become. We need to establish a new mission statement to supplement Part 97. And most important we need to get started right now. 2003 should be the year that we redefine ourselves in light of current technologies and the challenges of the future.

Amateur Radio is a "service" and a "hobby" and much more. We are public servants, we are pseudo scientists. We are "electronic dream weavers." We are historians. We are both student and teacher. We are the first level volunteer communicators of last resort during some emergencies. We are the first communicators on the scene of other emergencies. We can be the spark that lights the creative fires for a young person who may become the next Edison, Armstrong, or Faraday. Whatever we are, I believe it is critically important and I take it seriously. I believe amateur radio operators should stand proudly and let others know why Ham radio is and what it can be. I hope that during the coming year we can begin to establish a new and proper mission statement that will enable us to carry our antennas, our batteries, our gear our log books and a proud commitment to the meaningful operation of amateur radio (practice, hobby, service and much more) well into the next century.

Enjoy your Hobby/Service to its fullest and support it to the best of your ability as we have come a long way from yesterday, and tomorrow is bringing us glints of the future technology that will change our lifestyles.

I hope that everyone finds a bit of uplift in this message for a fantastic 2003.

**Howie, W9HG**

This thought provoking article was provided by **Dave Turgeon, WY5S**. It is reprinted here by special permission. We hope that you enjoyed it.

*- Editor -*

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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:**

**President: David Turgeon, WY5S**

**Vice President: Don Ward, W5DJW**

**Secretary: Carol Ready, KC5VBX**

**Treasurer: Clay McClendon, W5ACS**

### **MCARA Calendar:**

**- 1st Saturday of each month: VE testing at the Harrison County civil defense conference room in the Harrison County Courthouse, Gulfport**

**- 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 Biloxi**