

HAMS Keywite

www.marc.org.za

November 2010

NEWS

PO Box 1076, Hilton, 3245

M I D L A N D S A M A T E U R R A D I O C L U B



AFFILIATED TO
THE SARL & IN
ASSOCIATION
WITH THE NATAL
CARBINEERS

The Chairman's Report

Another year is slipping by, but luckily we don't have to say that work slipped us by this year. It has been another busy month, both on the club front and at work, which is probably the norm for most at this time of the year.

Shaun ZR5SF has finished painting the shack (thank you Shaun). And also thank you Gavin ZR5GAV for your help. The next step is probably to install the shelving and table top. Let's see if this can still be accomplished this year. When finished, the club house will certainly be something to be proud of. The radios have been repaired and are working well.

Shaun ZR5S and Mike ZS5ML will try and get an internet feed to the shack via the World's View tower. Once we have installed a computer in the shack, members without internet will be able to visit the shack to make contacts on Echolink, EQSO, update their qsl records on SARL, and of course brows the internet for ham related articles. It also allows for other future uses.

After the shack is finished, we will have a look at our repeater sites for maintenance. The World's View room needs a serious make-over, and that will be organised sometime early next year, as I doubt that we will find enough willing volunteers during busy December.

The new club computer is still being programmed by Shaun ZR5S. A lot more is going into this as a lot of the previous programs and hardware need new drivers and updates to work on Windows 7. But good progress is being made, and it will be soon installed at Groenekloof again. More about the programs like Echolink are described in the following report by Shaun ZR5S.

On Saturday Brian ZR5BCB donated a Mean Well 15A switched mode power supply to be raffled. Thank you Brian for this generous offer! Ian ZS5AZ is custodian of the power supply and the raffle numbers. If you are interested in purchasing a ticket (R20.00), please contact him for a number. Tickets can still be purchased at on the 4th December at the year end meeting. The winning number will be drawn then as well.

CLUB COMMITTEE 2010-2011

CHAIRMAN, HHN, WEBMASTER & EMAIL

Mike Lauterbach ZS5ML
082 372 0997

VICE CHAIRMAN & TECHNICAL

Shaun Rudling ZR5S
082 676 1488

SECRETARY & TREASURER

Ian Pearson ZS5AZ
082 419 6450

EVENTS, PRO & TRAINING

Shaun Fisher ZR5SF
076 600 4460

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Des Mullen ZU5DM
082 496 9573

Club House Manager

Gavin Claasen ZR5GAV
076 305 9644

Congratulations to our new members who have passed their RAE exams. They received their call signs on the 12th November. They are:

Graham Bowles	ZU5GB
Jesse Jacobs	ZU5JDJ
Liesel Jacobs	ZU5LJ
Marthin Jacobs	ZU5MJ
Eric Lewis	ZU5EL
David McCash	ZU5SAM
Fred Strauss	ZU5AS

We have heard some of you on air already and hope to hear more of you in future. I also hope to see you all at our Christmas function next month at Cumberland. I am posting a separate article below with directions.

Many hours of work have also gone into bringing our database of members, both past and present, up to date. Unfortunately we cannot find a comprehensive database which should have been carried forward from committee to committee, but only current membership lists. Simple data like names of partners, birth dates, when you became a ham and joined various clubs etc is unavailable. Gavin ZR5GAV has spent many hours going through old records fishing for data. He has forwarded this to Ian ZS5AZ, who is compiling the database.

Shaun ZR5SF has written a database program which is being used to capture this data. Ian has nearly 300 names already, and has scratched through our records, those available at SARL and of course searched the internet for data, and has managed to obtain quite a bit of data. However, much of this information could be out of date and inaccurate. We will be publishing this data in the near data so that you can have a look at it and provide us with updated information where you can.

That aside, please can you update your records by filling in the form sent out to you some time back. The link to the pdf form is on our front page, just underneath the picture of the young Jota participants. Here is the direct link :

http://www.marc.org.za/downloads/member_update.pdf This form has been automated - open it and simply fill in the data fields on the computer, and press the send button - you do not have to print it out and send it off by snail mail if you have an internet connection. Forms have been posted to our members without internet access.

Your participation in this will be greatly appreciated, especially in light of the poor response so far - only 15 of our 40 members have bothered to send in their updated details. We realise that a lot of the data will be fuzzy, like when you joined MARC or upgraded to a new call sign. If you do not have exact dates, then your best estimate will be good enough. If the online forms don't work, or if you would rather send in your data by snail mail, please contact Ian who can eg send you a paper form together with a self stamped return envelope. It is vital that we get this information as our club has a rich history, and it is worth while documenting it - did you know that the ZS5PMB is the second oldest call sign in South Africa? The oldest call sign belongs to an individual, meaning that our club call sign is the oldest club call sign.

Our Midmar Dam weekend was as enjoyable as always. The main topic of discussion at the meeting was voting for the winning slogan and logo. Only 10 members sent in their choices for the winning design and logo, but it was sufficient to compile a short list of the most popular logos and slogans. The present members then chose their favourite slogan and logo from the 7 top entries.



The winning slogan was "We do it wirelessly", and the winning logo is shown on the left.

The two R200 prizes went to Ian's kids, Holly-mae and Morgan, who sent in 26 entries! They certainly put a lot of effort in, and one of their designs and a few of their slogans will probably be also used on one of the new banners.

If you have any suggestions of how to improve the above design, please send them to competition@marc.org.za We might also make an additional banner using our official new logo as a watermark, and superimposing many of the excellent submitted slogan over it. If you have suggestions of how to incorporate this design onto a tear drop banner, please send these through as well.

For the SARL hf field day competition, we used Colin's (ZS6CF) 83m loop wire as a long wire, stretching from our operating station high into a tree 90m away. As a counterpoise we lay a 40m cable on the ground in the opposite direction. Signals were not as expected and then by lifting the counterpoise to form an off centre fed dipole, the signal improved marginally. Next year we will probably use the loop wire as a proper loop again, or use a simple dipole, which worked very well last year. We did make quite a few contacts on both Saturday and Sunday morning. Saturday's breeze over the dam was very refreshing and we hardly felt the heat. The wind direction changed though on Sunday morning and came from the opposite direction. Due to the increasing heat and decreasing contacts, we called it a day 2 hours before the end of the contest, packed up and fled to the comfort of our homes. I will definitely be back next year - it was a very relaxing and enjoyable weekend.

Hope to see you all at our year end function at the Cumberland Nature Reserve,
Mike ZS5ML

Diary of Events

27 November	NaSonop: actuality program about Amateur Radio in ASTV Bouquet on the new TOPTV satellite service
4 December	Year End function at Cumberland - meeting at 11h00
20 January 2011	Closing date for submission for application for May 2011 RAE bursaries. Visit www.amateurradio.org.za for application forms
30 January 2011	Closing date for phase 1 of the construction competition
27 February 2011	Maritzburg Marathon

Ham Bulletin Readers

28 November - ZS5ML
05 December - ZS5AZ
12 December - ZR5SF
19 December - ZS5V
26 December - ZS5ML
02 January - ZS5AZ
09 January - ZR5SF
16 January - ZS5V
23 January - ZS5ML
30 January - ZS5AZ

The M.A.R.C. Infrastructure

Voice Repeaters (FM)

Visit www.marc.org.za/pages/freq.htm for updates of this list

VHF	Tx	Rx	Equipment
Hilton	145.6625MHz CTSS 88.5	145.0625 MHz	SCR200 20W, Diamond X-200 rx and tx
Estcourt	145.700 MHz	145.100 MHz	Emcom SA256 25W, Diamond X-200 rx
Franklin	145.725 MHz	145.125 MHz	GE MVP 10W
Worlds View	145.750 MHz CTSS 88.5	145.150 MHz	Emcom SA256 25W, Diamond X-200 rx and tx
Greytown	145.775 MHz	145.175 MHz	Home Brew @ 20w, Diamond X-200 rx and tx
Underberg	145.7875MHz CTSS 88.5	145.1875MHz	Q8000 30W
Windy Hill	145.700MHz	145.100MHz	Hamnet repeater.
UHF			
Mt Gilboa	439.225 MHz	431.625 MHz	Vertex Standard VXR-9000, Diamond X-200 rx and tx
Zwartberg	438.775 MHz CTSS 110.9	431.175 MHz	GE MVP 15W

APRS

The national APRS frequency is 144.800 MHz (Tx & Rx). The I-Gate is at Hilton (ZR5S). Fixed stations should beacon at approximately 30min intervals with a path of WIDE5-5. Mobile stations should beacon at approximately 1min intervals with a path of "WIDE1-1, WIDE5-5". We have aprs digi's throughout KZN. A PBBS (mailbox) is on ZS0PMB-1 for emergency use. A KA-NODE is on ZS0PMB-7

Packet Radio

No packet radio frequency. However, limited packet radio facilities are available on 144.800MHz

ECHO-LINK "voip"

Our node number is 244279 Call Sign ZS5PMB. This Echo-link facility is available on the Midlands linked Repeater network.

E-QSO "voip"

We are in the "101ENGLISH" virtual room, on the "repeater.dns2go.com" server. This is linked to RF at Hilton on 433.000 MHz simplex.

BEACON

Greytown 50.321 MHz (Tx) ZS5SIX FSK

Banking Details

Account Name: Midlands Amateur Radio Club
Account type : Cheque
Bank: First National Bank
Acc #: 62057756507
Branch: Bank St
Branch Code: 220825

WEB SITES

MARC'S very own website www.marc.org.za
SARL's website www.sarl.org.za
HAMNET website www.hamnetkzn.org.za

Regular Events

The KwaZulu Natal Net (Early Birds):

Starts at 06h00 on 7.055 MHz. in winter and 3.650Mhz in summer and continues until 07h40. Colin ZS5CF hosts the net from 06h00 & Gary Potgieter (ZS5NK)-takes over later on.

MARC Sunday Morning Net:

Times: 07h45. Club bulletin is presented at 08h0.

Frequencies: VHF: 145.750MHz, 145.6625MHz, 145.775MHz, 145.725MHz, 145.7875MHz, 145.700MHz
 UHF: 439.225MHz

Hamnet Bulletins: Sundays at 07h00 on 145.625MHz and 3.760MHz
 Wednesdays at 19h30 on 145.625MHz and 3.760MHz

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Year End Function - 4 December, Cumberland Nature Reserve

Our year end function will be on Saturday, 4 December, at 11h00. We will have a short meeting, followed by our year end lunch. The club will sponsor meat, rolls and some cool drinks. Please bring a plate of eats or salads.

Some of our members will be camping there on Friday and Saturday night. Please could you contact Shaun ZR5SF to let him know whether you are camping or just coming up for the year end meeting and lunch, as he needs to book the camp sites, and cater for the food.

Entrance fees are R10pppd for day visitors, or R50 per head for campers.

Directions:

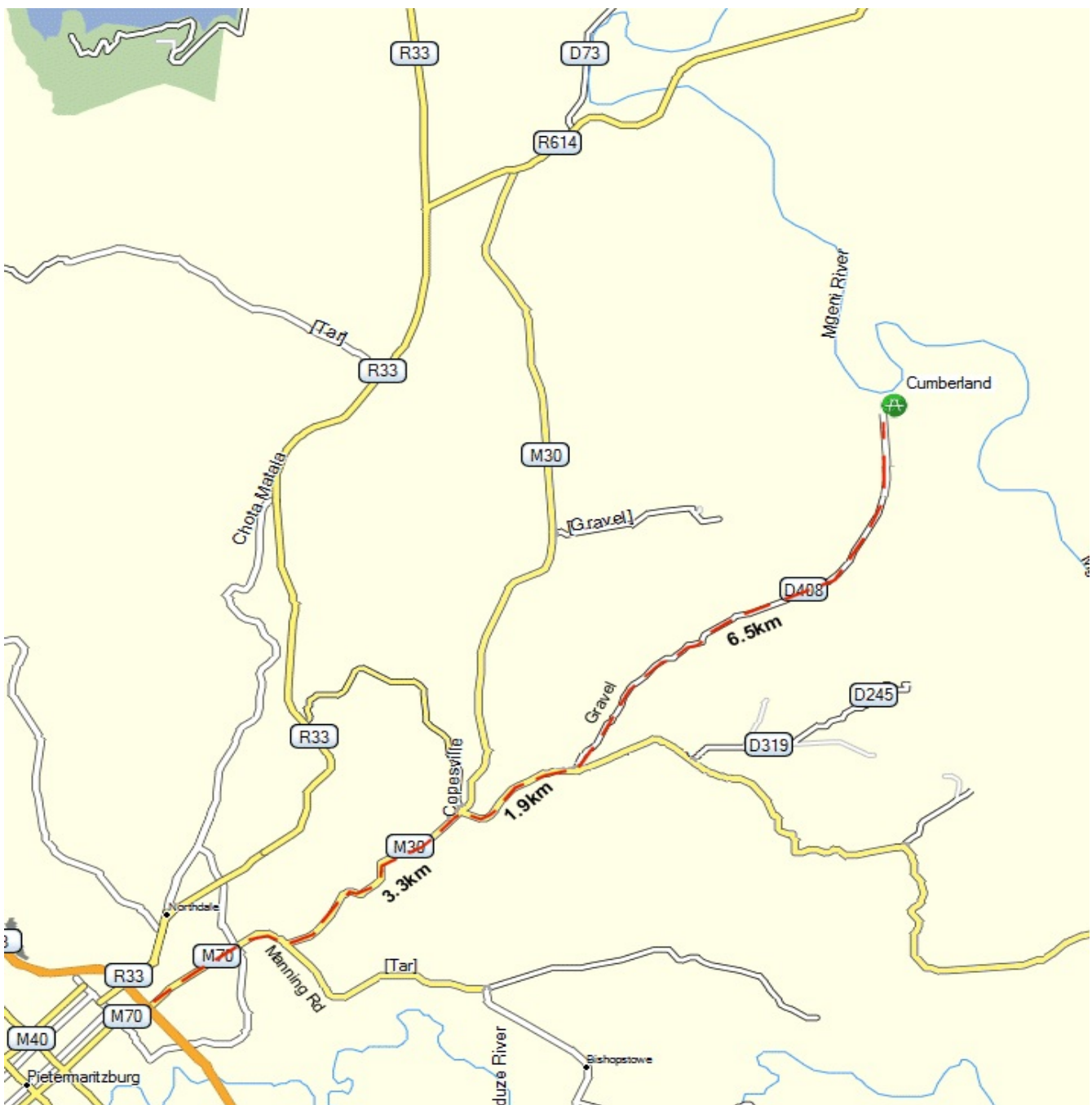
From Pmb - take the Table Mountain rd to Wartburg. (If you travel along Manning Rd, turn left at the Shell garage onto the M30/Table mountain rd)

After 3.3km, at the Copesville intersection, turn right.

Turn left onto the gravel D408 after 1.9km

Carry on for 6.5km into the Cumberland Nature Reserve.

In the reserve, you will find a hut with an honesty box where you can pay your daily fees - Shaun ZR5SF will collect the R50pppd for the campers. Follow the signs to the camp site



Report from Shaun ZR5S about the club computer

Not much has changed over the last month in this department. Although, after our monthly MARC meeting up at Midmar Dam, I committed to re-install our PC back up at Hilton soon. I have been busy installing all of the software applications from ground zero but have not completed yet. I will endeavor to complete all the software installations from my shack using "Remote Desktop". At this stage, one can work the Echo-Link on 145.450Mhz FM. A 88.5Hz tone-squelch will be activated as soon as possible. Sporadic noise bursts through our link radio squelch is not tolerated by the echo-link community and certain standards need to be met.

I should also be able to re-activate the APRS i-gate this month. Take note that the Echo-Link is currently configured to be permanently connected to an international reflector. This allows us to hear a lot of activity and perhaps to participate too. It has been encouraging to hear a few local MARC members make use of this MARC facility. It makes the effort worthwhile. Although I cannot find a spare minute to chat on this Echo-link node right now, it is entertaining to monitor the channel in the background. A lot of the chit-chat is about the local weather in that ham's world. Currently, our European hams are freezing cold, the South Americans hold on to ornaments every time an earthquake shudders their houses, the North Americans are holding thumbs as the hurricane season fades away and the Australians need either more rain, or less rain depending if you are in the north, or south. Hams love to speak about the weather. Rightfully so, as this is one force we cannot tame and is often a real life threat. This is one area where we as communication enthusiast's, can serve the public and further our cause.

It is also encouraging to see a few more of our members acquiring D-Star transceivers. I will need another hand soon to count the d-star sets in KZN, as I was only born with ten fingers. The commitment to explore and discover our digital HAM environment, is clearly evident. On this note, I will be re-activating the D-Star repeater up in Hilton soon.

All of the mentioned facilities above, and more, were running on the old borrowed PC that eventually failed. Re-installing and configuring the software onto the new PC is time consuming. But I am confident that most will be working again soon.

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There have been no contributions for any articles this month, and I have not had time to dig something up, resulting in a short newsletter.

If you have any useful articles for this newsletter, please email them to zs5ml@marc.org.za for publication. Any articles of interest to Amateur Radio, both technical and non technical, will be well received.

If you would like your own email address ending with @marc.org.za, please contact me zs5ml@marc.org.za

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