

CCARC News

Capital City Amateur Radio Club

February 2025



A New Member's Introduction

By John Dorr

I arrived a few minutes before the January meeting time, but all the locked doors and the unresponsive call buttons I tried made me late by the time I finally found the open door on the northwest side. Entering, I followed the voices I heard to the meeting room. I was now a bit tardy and interrupted the meeting already in progress.

We all stared kind of bewilderingly at each other for a moment. I almost said, "Greetings, earthmen" because they were all looking at me like I just stepped off the Mothership. Someone asked, "Did you bring cookies?" Hmm, extra-terrestrial cookies? Once I assured the group that I had indeed found the room I was looking for, I was invited to say something about why I was there and to sign in on the attendance sheet.

I mumbled somewhat incoherently a little about my dad and about Dick Beaton, submitted my application and dues. Some discussion as to whether I was a member was quickly settled

Coming Events 2025

February 3 - CCARC monthly meeting
7 pm at the Salvation Army, 1330 Hudson St. or on Google Meet,
<https://meet.google.com/zfs-ctwp-bax>

Coffee Net – Every Saturday at 9 am on 147.22, Belmont Repeater. Eyeball @ Red Atlas at 9:30.

ARES Net – every Tuesday at 7:30 pm on 147.22

Trivia Net - every Sunday, 7:30 pm on 147.22. John Monson AJ7MT

when my dues payment was confirmed, and I took a seat in the back to observe the meeting's proceedings. It was good to hear about planned events. I hope to take part!

After the meeting Marla was kind enough to forward to me a couple of recent newsletters (to catch up, I suppose.) I asked her if it might be all right if I contributed a little something about who I am and my hopes and reasons for this newfound hobby of mine (and old-found hobby of yours.) She agreed to indulge me and here I am, pecking away.

I've been thinking a lot about Morse Code a lot lately. Why? Mostly because I dislike texting and consider it a step backwards from the actual telephone part of the device that texting takes place on. I rant at the texters - mostly in my mind, but sometimes out loud - and say, "What's next? Morse Code? Then Semaphore? Then smoke signals?" Then I remember Dick Beaton, RIP. I know he loved CW. Dick Beaton was a very special friend and colleague to me.

I'm a piano technician by trade now, thanks to Dick Beaton. He pulled me nearly kicking and

screaming against my will into this profession that I now love. I always knew Dick was a ham. I couldn't help but recognize the antenna outside his house. I play golf at Bill Roberts and his house was right off the 4th fairway, a hole we know as "Jaws." Growing up, my family always had one or two antennae at my house— not to mention the mobile antenna on the car - a post on the rear bumper with two or three "basketball hoops" on it. My father was a ham, too. And now, in 2025, NOT kicking and screaming but perhaps influenced by the spirits of my dad and Dick Beaton, I am drawn into this new hobby.

When I was 12 years old, I took and passed the 5-wpm code test towards my Novice license but never took the written exam. And as adolescents do, I became interested in other things not related to my father.

These days I have a working philosophy that all living things are either growing or dying. "So, what's it going to be today?" I ask myself daily. On good days, my choice is to try to grow, even at 70 years old. So, this new amateur radio pursuit should stimulate my sometimes-foggy brain and may even turn out to be useful as I travel in my retirement. (Not retired yet, but I'm planning on a few traveling test-runs soon.) I'm also thinking that the available service aspects of amateur radio may help me give back to society in some meaningful ways, even though we are blessed to be living in a usually disaster-proof area, but for forest fires and the threat of earthquakes.

I'm studying for my exam. I'm practicing code. I'm hoping to make friends among the membership. I'm hoping for some good advice when it comes time to buy a rig and set up a station. My hope is that you all will help me know and grow.

Humbly yours,

John Dorr (call sign TBD it is hoped)

New Member

By John Geach KS7R

Matthew Cornyn mhcornyn@me.com passed his Technician exam on January 29 and received his call sign, KK7YWN, just over a day later. He is a civil engineer and Helena's newest ham and CCARC member.

Thank you to the VEs assisting with the exam: Al Simons WA1TYB and Bill Erhardt K7MT. The next VE exam session is scheduled February 27. Other exam dates will be posted on the hamstudy.org website where you can also register for an exam. If you're interested in taking an exam, please register at least one week prior to the exam. If you have any questions, please contact John KS7R, jcgeach@gmail.com.

Silent Keys

William McGuire Sr. KD7BIG died January 29, 2025, at 89 years old. He was active in Army MARS and the Hellgate Amateur Radio Club in Missoula in years past. He recently received his 25-year ARRL membership pin. When asked how his father would want to be remembered, Bill N7MSI said that Bill Sr. was a Command Sergeant Major in the US Army Reserves and a father of six.

Tom White, WA9YFF, received this call sign in 1964. He was a General Class licensed operator for 61 years. His son, Dave WA7YFF, said, "I think, without exception, his favorite thing about ham radio was the 'eyeball' QSOs each week. Friendships with radio operators in Racine WI, Quartzsite AZ, Glacier/Waterton Hamfest, and Helena MT, were all very important to him. He rather insisted on attending the hamfests and the weekly coffees. If my father could be

remembered as one of your friends, that would be enough. He is forever 86.”

MEGA Trivia

By Trivia Master John Monson AJ7MT



A Big change has come to the trivia world!! On January 9, 2025, a new AND homegrown version of Trivia made its debut. Welcome to AJ7MT Grandma’s Tupperware MEGA Trivia! What is special about MEGA trivia is where it came from. W7AFM Bob was cruising the want ads and came across a collection of trivia games. He picked it up and sent it to me, where I forged and created a new, exciting and challenging version of Trivia.

AJ7MT Grandma’s Tupperware MEGA Trivia has several interesting components. First the ancient green Tupperware container which holds the cards was contributed approximately 50 years ago by my grandmother, an avid collector of Tupperware. I can remember many family picnics where that container was the silverware drawer. It eventually ended up in my shop as a catch all for nuts, bolts and screws. But when I went looking for a container that was worthy of MEGA trivia, and would hold those cards just perfectly, it came off the shelf, repurposed. Next, MEGA trivia represents a blending of no less than 10 trivial pursuit sets. From 80’s trivia to youth trivia to music trivia to the boomer edition, all that trivia is represented. The best part, if I get more sets, they will all become a part of the game! So, how brave are you?? Do you have what it takes to

face MEGA trivia, born and forged high in the Rocky Mountains, a treasure trove of miniscule questions of the strange, bizarre and unexpected. Come join us, Sunday nights at 7:30 on the Belmont repeater. Note, we are FAMILY and Non-Ham (as long as the operator is legal) Friendly!!

Trivia has been an ongoing fixture Sunday nights at 7:30 on the Belmont Repeater since February 28, 2021. There is a fairly steady group of approximately 12 people who play as both teams and individuals, and it seems a good time is had by all. Come join the fun!!

American Legion Hams Were Ready!

By Tim Sowa KB7DMK



As the Palisades Fire made cellphone and other communication difficult, if not outright impossible, the emergency communications center at American Legion Palisades Post 283 came in handy.

“When the fire happened, our members were coaching and helping people get out of the community, until the repeater burned down a few blocks over,” said Post 283 Commander Joe Ramirez. “Our command center served a really, really important purpose, being one of the only ways to communicate.”

Hank Elder was Squadron 283 commander when the ham radio setup took place last year.

“After they rehabbed the facility, they decided to build the actual emergency communications center, which is manned by mostly Sons of The American Legion members,” Elder said. “They meet once a month and they go through all the equipment to make sure it’s up and running. I’d say officially it’s been up about six months.”

The ham radio system has a gas generator and a battery backup, “so it is designed for this exact catastrophe,” Elder said. Ramirez acknowledged some chuckles when the system was first put in. “If you look into the room, you’re looking at equipment that looks like, you know, was designed and made in the 1970s; it just looks dated,” Ramirez said. “But it was a real smart thing to do to get that up to code, up to standard, and to keep it up.”

“Who would have thought when we put this in motion that it would be of use so quickly?”

Experimenting with Antennas

By Ray Zinn K7ZIN



Ray says, “With this 5/8 wave VHF/UHF foldable handheld antenna, I can hit Belmont with ease from the ranch.”

Stargazing

By Bob Gomes W7AFM



Mars

Since the early 1980s, I have been interested in astronomy. I started out using a small 3 1/2-inch telescope that I bought used. Since then, I have had many different telescopes over the years. This year I bought a 6-inch computer programmable telescope. I had to align the telescope to three stars and lock those into the programming of the telescope. Once I had those settings locked in, I was able to click the image on the computer screen and the telescope would put that object in the center of the telescope mirror. Then I could take pictures of the item that was in the telescope lens. I have some great photos of Mars, Jupiter, Uranus, Mars, Venus, and different Nebulas, like the Horsehead in the belt of Orion (middle star.) If anyone is interested in stargazing, I would be happy to share some tricks I have learned over the years.

Most of these photos are taken at 300 to 500 power magnification using different eyepieces.



Jupiter

Our Ham Happenings

By Stacy Webb KK7CJV

The new year 2025 is starting out to be a busy one! At the January Gallatin Valley Ham Radio Club (GHRC) meeting, Eric KE7NLU was voted in as the Vice President while I raised my hand to be the GHRC Field Day Coordinator for 2025. The club was also awarded an ARRL Club Grant for the goal of taking the ham radio hobby to the public, initially with Scouting America. So we have been busy meeting with Mountain Valley Scouting District representatives and planning the first event.

I have been net control for a 7:00 Thursday night 10-meter Gallatin Valley Net on 28.355. Each week I lead with a new exercise, Learn Your Radio. One night we changed modes. Starting on USB, then FM, and AM and back to USB for further discussion of our findings. Another night I did net control in split mode where I was listening for check-ins up 5 kHz. It was great fun for new and seasoned hams. I would love any other suggestions of drills/exercises we could do during the 10-meter net where ALL hams can participate.



Eric and I participated in Winter Field Day at the Missouri Headwaters State Park. The president of GHRC, a young and ambitious guy, camped overnight Friday thru Sunday in the below-zero temps. We visited his camp on Saturday and inside the wall tent it was surprisingly warmish. After checking into the noon WFD net on 3.880 and much conversation, we decided to set up a vertical Rez coil and make some POTA contacts. We worked bands I had never tried

before: 6-meter and 70 cm! I have a goal to work on the N1CC award from POTA, all on SSB, 10 bands in 10 different parks. I now have 1 park where I made a contact on 10 bands! One of our radios was still monitoring 70 cm band when suddenly, a passerby came through calling CQ, so we put him in the log too! Great fun!

We miss you all so much and hope to soon visit for coffee! Until then, POTA ON!

Home Brew Set Up

By Mike Obryan N6IGA

This is my 6m home brew amp 600w plus one vintage "big tube" 3-500zg tube and gG fuse, with a plate voltage (Eb) of 3000. Get your gear ready for the season!



Constructive Feedback, Please

By Al Le Vie KH87AL

Hello friends, I just published my new ham radio website after many trials and errors of teaching myself how WordPress works. This is a no-frills version to get it up and going for now. If I could pose a simple request. When you have time, can you please look over the site and give me your constructive feedback? Did I make any blatant errors? Minor errors? Any links broken?

<https://kh7al.site>

Thank you very much!! –Al

Other Newsletters

Darrell Beckstrom K7IUI is the editor and publisher of the *Capital Carriages Car Club* newsletter. Page 1 of the February issue is reproduced below. To see the rest of this issue and to get on the mailing list, please contact Darrell, mtbeckstrom@gmail.com.

Capital City Amateur
Radio Club
Helena, Montana



Editor: Marla Unruh KM7LIB
Editing and proofing: Kathe N1NYT
& Al Simons WA1TYB.

Writers: CCARC members

Club website: n7rb.org

[CCARC Shack Tour](#) – website

with member profiles

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Membership \$25 per year. Contact

Al Simons for application info.

al@simonshome.org

Capital Carriages Car Club

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF ANTIQUE AND COLLECTIBLE MOTOR VEHICLES
Helena Chapter of the Montana Pioneer & Classic Auto Club, Inc.

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2025 Upcoming Events

If there is any event that you may know about, let me know so that it can be included in the newsletter. Due to the amount of vehicle activities in Montana, I am only including events in our immediate area.

March 9—Monthly meeting of Capital Carriages, 12:30pm at the old Jorgenson's Restaurant

May 2, 3—Crusin' the Drag in Great Falls

July 25-26—Red Lodge
Website: www.redlodgecarshow.com

August 28-September 1—International Mustang Meet in Helena put on by the Last Chance Mustang and Ford Club. Contact Donna Graveley (406)465-9631 or graveleyranch@blackfoot.net

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| Meet and Eat 5:30 PM Jan. 14—Brew House Jan. 28—Shellies | | |
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