



The AARCOVER

Bulletin of the Austin Amateur Radio Club
October 1990

MANCHACA OCTOBER 13

The umpteenth semi-annual Manchaca Swapfest will be Saturday, October 13. As usual, the location will be the Manchaca Volunteer Fire Department, which is on Highway 1626, more-or-less in downtown Manchaca. To get there from Austin, one option is to take Manchaca Road south until it dead-ends into 1626, turn right (west), and go a few tenths of a mile. The VFD building is right across from McCoy's. The official start is 7:00 a.m., but no matter how early you get there, you will not be first; things usually wind down in the early afternoon. For talk-in try the 146.94 and 146.78 MHz repeaters.



MEETING

Tuesday, October 9, 1990, at 8 p.m. Even better, come early and eat dinner with everybody!

Luby's Cafeteria on North Loop.



This month's meeting will feature a representative of the American Red Cross, who will talk about Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation. There may be a video. This is an important topic to anyone who works around electricity, like ham radio operators, and their spouses. You might want to bring yours.



The club still has a No-Smoking policy at meetings and programs.

IRAQI EDITORIAL?

Some audio of Iraqi radio transmissions, played on Western news programs, have been heard with the CW characters "BS" sent over it continuously. The source of the interference is not known nor acknowledged by the media.

de AA5BT, Univ. of Texas ARC Newsletter

To many, a "user friendly" computer means you have a friend who knows how to use it.

ODESSA HAMFEST

The 7th Annual Odessa Hamfest will be on November 3-4, 1990 at the Holiday Inn Convention Centre, 6201 E. Highway 80 (just east of E. Loop 338 on north service road). The hours will be from 8-5 on Sat. and 9-2:30 on Sun. There will be a free Mexican Buffet on Sat. from 5-7 PM and there will be a QCWA Breakfast on Sun. at 8 AM. The President will have pre-registration forms at the next AARC meeting. Leftovers will be given away at the Spring Manchaca Swapfest.

Coming soon: "SuperFAX," which will transmit images in PostScript format instead of as a series of dots like conventional FAX machines. Expect up to 10x speed increase & better resolution.

NEW & UPGRADED HAMS

Results of ARRL/VEC exams given September 8, 1990, at the Texas School for the Blind:

NAME	CALL	UP TO
Ralph J. Hach	-	Novice
Robert K. Moeser	-	Novice
George M. Calhoun	-	Novice
Diana A. Larson	-	Technician
Calvin P. Barton Jr.	KB5IEX	Technician
Barney R. Loesch	-	Technician
Larry H. Larson	KB5MSX	Advanced
James E. Trulove	WB5EMI	Advanced

There were a total of 19 candidates taking exams.
VE EXAMINERS

NAME	CALL
Joe Makeever	W5EBJ
Ben Menke	AA5NC
Ray Menke	WX5D
Steve Runyon	WQ5G
Alex Vrenios	KX9I
Larry Gunter	WB5BEK

The next ARRL/VEC exam will be given at:
Texas School for the Blind
100 W 45th Street
Austin, Texas

on November 10, 1990 at 11:00 a.m. Please arrive by 10:30 a.m. and plan for the exam to last for up to 3-4 hours. You will need to bring the original of your license (if you have one), a photocopy of that license, black or blue pen, a photo ID (or two other forms of ID — credit cards, birth certificate, etc.), and \$4.95. Also, any original CSCE's from a previous VE exam for which you wish to be credited. The \$4.95 fee will be waived for candidates who wish to take only the written and code elements for the Novice exam. A pencil and hand-held calculator are recommended also, but not required. If you have any questions regarding the upcoming exam, please contact me at 473-3526 (work) or 345-7281 (home).

Report compiled by Larry Gunter, WB5BEK

LONG TERM STORAGE OF NiCads

NiCads will pretty much live "forever" if you want to store them. In fact as far as secondary cells go, properly treated, they have the longest shelf life. In order to keep NiCads long term, they have to be broken into cells (as distinct from batteries which are a group of cells). Each cell should then be totally discharged - not by short circuiting - and when discharged should have a short circuit placed across the cell terminals. When in the totally discharged state and with the shorting bar in place, they can be thrown in the back of the closet and forgotten until needed.

To bring these archived cells back to life you need

continued on page 6

WATERPROOFING

The January 1989 issue of "Radio Communications", journal of the Radio Society of Great Britain, recommended the use of "self-amalgam-

PL259 connector is as waterproof as a fishing net

ating" electrical tape wrapped around the coax connectors to seal them from water. The tape should be wrapped with 50% overlap and stretched very tightly - wrapping from small to large end.

Wrap a barrel junction from both ends to center. The tape will fuse into a custom-made waterproof boot for the connector. IT MUST BE COMPLETELY OVERWRAPPED WITH OR-

continued on page 7

MINUTES

Meeting of the Austin Amateur Radio Club for September 11, 1990.

President Mike Kellam, AA5JP, returned from his retreat in Colorado in time to call our meeting to order at 8:00 PM at Luby's on North Loop.

VISITORS: Visitors included Alan Wormser, WB5QLF; Warren Weber, N5MBO; and Jim, who just started studying for his license.

OFFICER'S REPORTS: The minutes were accepted as printed in the AARCOVER. The Editor, Rick Herndon, K5FNI, requested new material for the newsletter and assistance in taking them to the Post Office for the monthly mailing. Treasurer Amado Ramirez, N5PCP, reported that the club's checking account balance was \$1523.45. The club has made a donation of \$50.00 to the Red Cross and has helped Ron, WA5RON, with the expenses of putting the Newsline report on the air each Sunday evening. Activities Manager Darrell, WD5CDY, requested that we remind you of the Manchaca Swapfest on October 13th. The doors will open at 7:00 AM and the tables will be first-come first-served.

OLD BUSINESS: The Secretary has the Skywarn cards and decals.

NEW MEMBERS: Several new members were elected tonight. These were Cal Barton, KB5IEX; V. D. Chalcraft, N5NWI; Harold Miles, AD5L; Marshall Reece, N0BLD; Robert Burson, N5NXO; Warren Weber, N5MBO; and Alan Wormser, WB5QLF.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Rick, K5FNI, reminded us of the new Novice class at Becker Community School. The course starts tonight but will take late registrations. A new roster is now being prepared. Joe, W5EBJ, announced that the Internal Revenue Service is auctioning off some amateur radio equipment tomorrow morning (Wednesday, Sept.

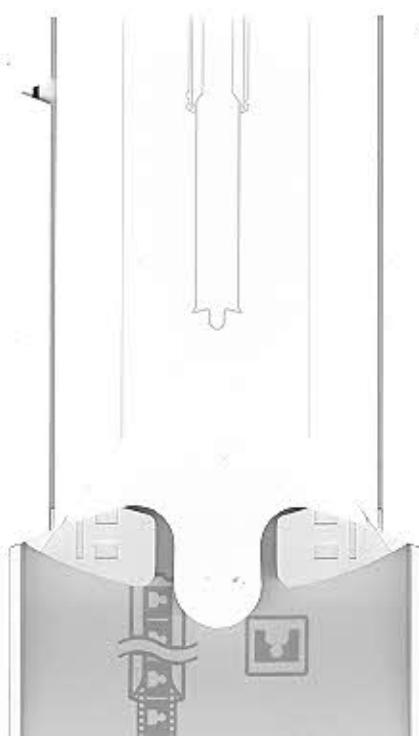
12). Joe, W5EBJ, also noted that Tom Comstock, N5TC, is running for Director of the West Gulf Division of the ARRL. Tom is a professor at Texas A & M and has talked to the club several times. Miles, N5KOB, is making a directory of members by occupation, services that they offer, or business they are in. Let Miles know what you offer if you wish to be included. Larry, WB5BEK, summarized last week's VEC exams. 19 attended, there were 3 new Novices, 2 moved to Advanced Class, and there were 3 or 4 new Technician Class hams. Several got credit for some portion of the exam. The next exam will be on October 6 since the swapfest is on the second week of the month. There will be a meeting of the Quarter Century Wireless Club at Wyatt's this coming Saturday, September 15. Ron Johnson, WA5RON, will be out of pocket during several upcoming Sunday evenings. He needs a volunteer to tape the Newsline program (this involves a long distance telephone call) and to then play it on the 146.94 repeater after the ARO swap list is read.

PROGRAM: Vice President Stuart Rohre, K5KVH, introduced the chairman of the Technical Committee, Ed Golla, K3AHS. Ed presented a program explaining the various functions of the club repeater on 146.78 MHz. Ed covered the tone test, use of the phone-patch, the mailbox, the digital voice recorder, and several other functions. A handout of the common controls was available to all attendees.

Respectfully submitted by: Joe Canfield N5HPC,
AARC Secretary

AARCOVER SUPPORTERS

Committee to Elect Tom Comstock Director.
Broadcast Technical Services (quality VHF & UHF antennas) 800-874-2880.
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BEYOND VOX

Research being done by the Air Force may someday lead to thought-controlled ham gear. According to a C3I Report, scientists have already succeeded in using brain waves to control the



CQ CQ

left- and right-rolling of a flight simulator. Subjects were equipped with electrodes attached to their heads, and learned how to

control the simulator to compensate for unexpected disturbances. According to the report, subjects in the test gradually shifted from manual control of the simulator to brain-wave control, then maintained control during motion.

While you won't be able to buy a thought-operated rig next week, in the future we may be able to control our rigs while reclining in a lounge chair by the pool. We could not only copy CW in our heads, we could send it from there also!

de N5KOB

WHO WILL BE ZA1A?

The long amateur-radio silence from Albania might soon come to an end. The small Stalinist nation, isolated from the outside world since WW2, is beginning to permit entry by foreigners. An advertisement by Salen Lindblad Cruising, Inc. (800-223-5688) starts with these words, "Albania, At Long Last!" The advertisement goes on to list tours departing London on October 3, 7, 11 in 1990, and February 27, March 3, and March 7 in 1991. The cost for the 8-day tour is \$1450 per person, which includes airfare from London.

Of course, a tour like this is not the same as a DXpedition, but can one be far behind? You'd better get ready for the pileup of the century!

de N5KOB

**IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR
ALL ARRL MEMBERS**

This fall, we members of the West Gulf Division must choose a person to represent us on the Board of Directors of the League. It is particularly important this year that we elect a person who has the knowledge, experience, and leadership ability to do the job. These are critical times for the future of amateur radio. The League needs Directors who can meet the challenges of these rapidly changing times. The only way to make sure that the right person is elected is for each member of the division to carefully study the record of the candidates and

VOTE

The job of Director is demanding. It requires a person who knows the issues, knows how to work with others, and who is a proven leader. The candidate this year who has those qualities is

TOM COMSTOCK, N5TC

For 15 years, Tom has served amateur radio at the national, division, and section levels. He is committed to excellence in amateur radio. His years as a Vice Director, volunteer examiner, teacher, emergency communicator, traffic handler, Section Official, and his daily on-the-air involvement in all phases of amateur radio have given him the experience required to do the job. Don't let someone else make your decisions for you:

VOTE**ELECT TOM COMSTOCK,
N5TC****DIRECTOR****WEST GULF DIVISION**

Paid for by Committee to Elect Tom Comstock Director.



OFFICERS, COMMITTEES, BULLETIN

OFFICERS

President	Mike Kellam, AA5JP	836-8223	919
Vice President	Stuart Rohre, K5KVH	255-3932	918
Treasurer	Amado Ramirez, N5PCP	280-1879	916
Secretary	Joe Canfield, N5HPC	258-4761	917
Activity Manager	Darrell Dawson, WD5CDY	258-1433	915

COMMITTEES

Technical	Ed Golla, K3AHS	255-4818	111
Emergency Coord.	Joe Fisher, K5EJL	926-4689	
W5KA Trustee	Joe Fisher, K5EJL	926-4689	
Editor	Rick Herndon, K5FNI	454-1670	914
Labels & Roster	Pete Jordahl, K5GM	454-7889	913

(Numbers after the call signs are phone # and autodial # on the 146.78 repeater.)

BULLETIN

Contributions of articles, cartoons, etc. should be addressed to 1809 W. Saint Johns Ave., Austin, TX 78757-2238. Phone numbers for editor: home 454-1670 / work 465-6338.

The deadline for articles is twelve days before the FIRST TUESDAY of each month. Material received after that will be saved for the following month. Permission is granted to reprint articles appearing in the AARCOVER, provided credit is given to The AARCOVER and a copy of your publication is mailed to the author. The AARCOVER Editor would appreciate receiving a copy of your publication, also.

Commercial ads are cheerfully accepted, at only \$15 for a full page, \$10 for a half page. Members may advertise ham-related For Sale or Wanted ads free if space is available.

NiCads from page 3

to cycle them. It is best to remove the shorting clips, and charge and discharge each cell individually a couple of times before building them into a battery. When the battery is built, they should be charged once for 14 hours at the C/10 rate and put into service.

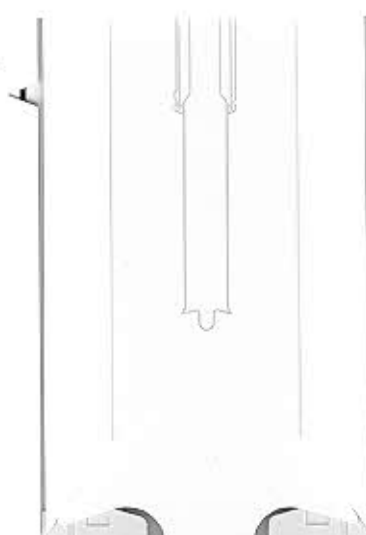
Treated this way, you should be able to leave some NiCads to someone in your will.

Boring and possibly unnecessary safety note: The internal resistance of NiCads is low. This

means if you short across the cells you are liable to get burnt, cause an explosion or generally get into trouble. Every time I talk about NiCads at ham clubs a sheepish member comes up to tell me he still has a burn scar from the time his NiCads and loose change were in the same pocket.

Also, Cadmium is a toxic metal, it can cause hair loss and death. I know no-one cares about domestic toxic waste - least of all municipalities - but try and bear in mind that dead NiCads are toxic.

de Julian Macassey, N6ARE via Antenna Farm BBS UUCP file



Waterproofing from page 3

DINARY PVC TAPE (SCOTCH 33+ OR EQUIVALENT) OR THE FUSING TAPE WILL BREAK DOWN UNDER UV LIGHT (read sunlight).

In the US of A, "self amalgamating" tape is better known as Scotch 23 Rubber Splicing Tape and is available at your favorite electrical supply house at about \$8/roll. When you remove this tape, plan on using a NEW Stanley utility knife blade - it gets tough!

(If you are still using Coax-Seal (TM) to seal connectors, old fashioned LIGHTER FLUID does a pretty fair job of removing the sticky black residue from that stuff. No, don't light it - just use it as a solvent!)

GREASES AND SEALANTS

The RSGB article mentioned two other interesting substances which also belong in your tool kit if you use antennas or coax. Let's say you want to waterproof the terminal block on the bottom of a rotator or the driven element connections of a beam which uses nuts and bolts. Here, Dow Corning MS4 is an alternative. This is silicone grease which comes in a five ounce tube (like a large toothpaste) for about \$9.50. It has good dielectric strength - 21.7kV/mm, and is also a handy lubricant for feeding wire through tight grommets.

A good silicone grease just sits there and protects - and doesn't react.

If you want a sealant which sets up to a semi-solid, DON'T USE COMMON RTV or any common caulking or bathtub sealant. These emit a strong vinegar smell when curing and will corrode and destroy electrical connections to nonconductivity within a year.

Dow Corning Silastic 738 is designed for corrosion sensitive electrical or electronic equipment/

connections. Its disadvantage is a long, slow curing time - about two to three days to tacky and one to three weeks to dry. A small tube (about 5 oz.) costs about \$9; a 10.3 oz. tube (which fits a caulking gun) is about \$13.50.

If you have an especially critical application (i.e., EME or satellite), you may want to use Dow 3145 Hi-Tech RTV. A good application of either is sealing the PL259/SO239 junction on a Hy-Gain balun. Wrap the coax as far as you can with Scotch 23, then pot the connection with the Dow 738.

Both 738 and 3145 have a 500+V/mil dielectric strength. The applications notes for both 738 and 3145 recommend cleaning the surface to be sealed (except plastics) with acetone and then, always, priming the surfaces with primer - Dow 1200 for 738 and Dow 1204 for 3145. Rubber surfaces should be lightly sanded and acetone wiped.

WHY BOTHER?

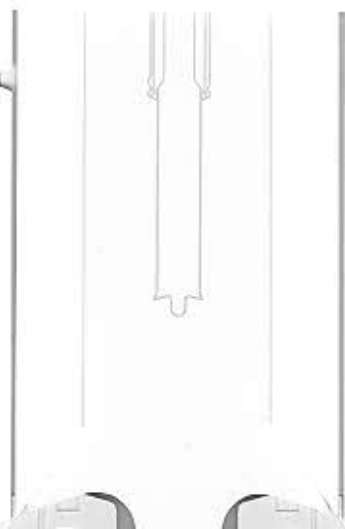
All of these great tapes and sealants sound like a lot of bother and are expensive, too. You might ask, "Do I really need any of this stuff?" Let me quote a line or two from the RADCOM article:

"The PL-259...is about as waterproof as a fishing net. If you put a PL-259 on the end of a run of RG8 and there's a light shower 30 miles away, the coax (conductor and braid) will turn green in 10 seconds flat!"

Perhaps a slight exaggeration, but with good coax costing to fifty cents per foot, it seems to make sense to spend a few dollars to protect the dollar and time investment in a coax run. WATER IN YOUR COAX WILL CAUSE CORROSION AND A CHANGE IN THE ELECTRICAL PROPERTIES OF THE COAX.

Do you want a conductor or a semiconductor in your feedline?

de Blair Bates, K3YD, The Delaware-Lehigh ARC Inc., Nazareth, PA, via WORLD RADIO, October, 1990

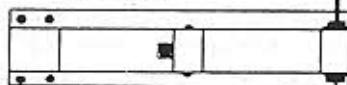


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Every month there is a page in QST magazine listing special event stations. Typically, a "special event" is when a ham radio club sets up a station to celebrate something historical. Some are serious, many are not. If you work a special event station, send them a QSL and a big SASE so they can return a certificate to you. Here are some of the special events listed in the October QST, to give you an idea of what they are about:

- Oct. 6-7 Celebrate 150th birthday of Lake County, Ohio
- Oct. 6-7 Operation from Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania
- Oct. 12-14 Pioneer Day, Cleburne, Texas
- Oct. 13-14 Dwight Eisenhower's 100th birthday
- Oct. 13-14 U.S. Navy's 214th birthday
- Oct. 17-19 Radio Club of Jr. High School 22 of NYC, 10th anniversary
- Oct. 19-21 Salt Festival at Big Bone Lick State Park, Kentucky
- Oct. 19-21 100th anniversary of Univ. of North Texas
- Oct. 20 Teddy Bear Festival, Mississippi
- Oct. 20-21 Chisholm Trail Heritage celebration, Oklahoma
- Oct. 27-28 Gateway Arch 25th anniversary, St. Louis
- Oct. 29... Canadian Liberation Celebration (from Belgium!)
- Oct. 31... Halloween from WO00, Frankenstein, Missouri

de N5KOB