

# *The* **MODULATOR**

The Baltimore Amateur Radio Club,  
P.O. Box 120  
Reisterstown, MD 21136-0120

The Baltimore Amateur Radio Club  
Repeater System **W3FT**

Frequency	PL
146.07/146.67	107.2
222.64/224.24	107.2
444.625/449.625	107.2

**simplex:** 146.55

**web:** <http://www.baltarc.com>

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
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February 2006 Vol.60, No.2

# *The* **MODULATOR**

Newsletter of the Baltimore Amateur Radio Club

# LARC VEC 2005 The Year in Review

**Also:  
Of Crystal Kits and Memories**

# The MODULATOR

published by *The Baltimore Amateur Radio Club*

P.O. Box 120

Reisterstown, MD 21136

For Information, dial **410-HAM-TALK**

Club website: <http://www.baltarc.com>

Hamboree website: <http://www.gbhc.org>

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Corresponding Secretary	Henry Lee III	KB1PE
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Items for *The Modulator* should be sent by the 5th of the previous month, to:

Editor  
*The Modulator*, 3607 Klausmier Rd  
Baltimore, MD 21236  
or email to [modulator@baltarc.com](mailto:modulator@baltarc.com).

The club meets at 7:30 pm. the first and third Wednesday of every month in the club facility at 12360 Owings Mills Blvd., 3/10 mile south of Bond Ave. See ADC map page 16-D8. Complete directions web page <http://www.baltarc.com/directions.htm> or call the Club Facility at 410-526-4263.

**VE Testing:** First weekend of each month. Contact Rusty, N3WKE at arrl.net

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## VE Report - January 2006 Happy New Year!

A Laurel ARC Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (LARC VEC) affiliated testing session was held at the BARC Meeting and Training Facility in Owings Mills, MD, on Sunday, January 8. Five people took exams for either their

initial ham license or to upgrade their license.

### The examinees achieved the following:

#### Became new Technician Class licensee

Jim Florwick KB3NAA  
Dave Alexander KB3NAB  
Allan Mead KB3NAC (w/HF)  
Jeff Wallitsch KB3NAD

#### Upgraded to Extra Class licensee

Max Robinson KB3LXB

### Overall, six tests were passed out of six administered:

Element 1 (5 WPM CW): 100%  
Element 2 (Technician Written): 100%  
Element 3 (General Written): N/A  
Element 4 (Extra Written): 100%

### Thanks to the Volunteer Examiners who made the session possible:

Hale Adams N3NYC	Tom Hendricks KB3CVS	Robin Schaefer AA3SB
Bill Dobson N3WD	Russ Kaufman N3YI	Rusty Schaefer N3WKE
Don Friedmann W3QYL	Ed Kriston K3CAV	Doug Wittich N3VEJ

Next testing session at the BARC facility is Saturday, February 4, 2006. Registration opens at 1:00 PM and testing starts at 2:00 PM. For information about the exam session, please send email to [n3wke@arrl.net](mailto:n3wke@arrl.net) (or call Rusty Schaefer 410-247-0578).

### 73, Rusty N3WKE

VE Team Leader

## Of Crystal Kits And Memories

By Myles Carpeneto

For those of you who remember those “stirring days of yesteryear,” when a crystal radio that worked without a battery was the height of cool, you might want to check out [www.midnightscience.com](http://www.midnightscience.com). Here you can buy inexpensive crystal radio kits to introduce a son, daughter, niece or nephew to the wonders of picking AM radio waves out of the air.

I remember getting my first crystal set on Christmas Day when I was 9; it was a REMCO radio kit that I fouled up by trying to put it together before I read the directions. My father eventually showed me how to straighten everything out, and I used that radio until I cannibalized it for another project three years later.

At [www.midnightscience.com](http://www.midnightscience.com), you can get an Oatmeal Box radio kit for \$8.95; all you have to supply is the oatmeal box. There is also a crystal radio kit for \$14.95 that doesn't require winding a coil. For \$12.00, you can get a fully assembled Rocket Radio that works just by connecting the included alligator clip to ground.

I remember the Rocket Radio that I bought from a “junk” radio store on Canal Street in New York while on vacation in 1959. There was many a night I drifted off to sleep listening to WBAL with that earplug hidden from view.

[www.midnightscience.com](http://www.midnightscience.com) is home to The Xtal Set Society, which in addition to crystal kits, sells books and related parts that you can use to design your own old-fashioned crystal set; and, I do mean OLD-fashioned, e.g., a Galena crystal with a catswhisker.

Even if you don't buy anything, a visit to the website is worthwhile for the memories it will bring to mind.



## For Sale

Radio Shack HTX-202 2mtr hand held with speaker mic. - Best offer.

Contact Kurt WA3TOY

410-360-6894

[k.fritsch2@verizon.net](mailto:k.fritsch2@verizon.net)

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## BARC LUNCH with the President

February 18 (Saturday) 12:30 PM

Cici's Pizza, 6473 Baltimore National Pike, Baltimore, MD 21228

In the shopping center behind McDonald's and Applebees.

Take Rt 40 west from I-695 exit 15. Go past Rolling Rd. Watch for the McDonalds and Applebees on the left. Turn in at the signal. Turn left behind McDonalds and Cici's will be staight ahead.

Cici's provides fresh pizza buffet, with about 12 varieties. Also a salad and pasta bar is included. Total cost with a drink and tax is \$6.28. If you can let us know by email ([lunch2006@baltarc.com](mailto:lunch2006@baltarc.com)) or phone (443-794-0735), we'd appreciate it, but it's not mandatory. Weather cancellations will be announced on the repeater or call the above phone number.

## Hamfest Consignment Table

Do you have one or two items to sell, but want to shop instead of tending a tailgate space? Then bring your items to the BARC Consignment Table. You set the price, and you set the minimum acceptable price (10, 25 or 50% off). We will code that information onto a tag for the item, and sell it for you. You then pay BARC a commission of 10% on the sale. This service is open to members and non-members alike.

## Upcoming Program Events

### February 15: Katrina - What did we learn?

Tim Russell, WA7TOF, was in Mississippi with the Anne Arundel County Mobile Communications Command Unit that he helped design. If you attended the MEMA program December 3, you saw the MCCU. At the February 15 meeting, Tim will tell us what it was like to put the unit through its paces, and what was learned in general by amateurs and agencies about emergency communications.

### March 15: (Tentative) Home Made Station Accessories.

Would you like to see what your fellow BARCers have built to increase their operating comfort or their station's effectiveness? Send nominations of potential speakers for that program or any others to Tom, at [n3ij@comcast.net](mailto:n3ij@comcast.net).

## The President's Corner

We are less than 40 days away from our big event for 2006, the **Greater Baltimore Hamboree and Computer Fest**. GBH&C is our primary source of revenue. It supports our public service activities, the scholarship fund, field day, training classes and the repeater network. So please, support the club, come out, lend a hand, and have fun, contact *Robin, aa3sb@arrl.net* or attend this month's meeting at 7:30PM on February 8 and February 22.

Following the program meeting on February 15, 2006 we will review and vote for or against a number of Bylaw changes. The Bylaws are the constitution that governs the club. All changes have a direct impact on the membership. Please mark your calendar now and plan to attend the meeting.

Last month I announced the formation of a membership committee under the leadership of our Vice President, **Hale, N3NYC**. On a related note, I would like to share with you the following true story sent to me by a club member, only the names have been changed.

*There was a new guy at the BARC meeting last week... John Smith. He was licensed many years ago, but he let it lapse. Anyway, he was kind of relearning the whole ham radio thing. He stopped by to check out the club. I met him there, and he said that he wanted to start small with radio purchases and wanted to get an HT. Guess where he lives? In the Tabco Towers! Some people were telling him he might have a problem accessing the 67 repeater from right below the antennas (being in the shadow, and all). Before he left the meeting, I offered to stop by his place, test out repeater access from my HT, and then go over what's available for him to purchase.*

*A few days after the meeting, he called to say that he passed his tech and got his new call sign (uh oh, I forgot what it was). Anyway, I kept my word and stopped by his place with my HT (and some catalogs). He was so excited; we had no problems hitting 67 (considering he might have been considered in its shadow), and we hit 030 and even 135 out there. (Unfortunately, the 449.475 TV hill repeaters will be down for a while). We reviewed some catalogs, and we discussed things to do with radio nowadays (like APRS). And... He sounded like he was going to join BARC! Hopefully, that's one more member to add. I think he's going to try to work his way to General soon.*

What a great story. This member took the initiative to help a new amateur and as a result, we may gain a new member. Hale's task is to lead the member-

## I. NC-VEC Comments on FCC Proposed Rule

The NC-VEC considered submitting comments to the FCC on the notice of proposed rule making. Rol Anders K3RA volunteered to serve on the committee that drafted the NC-VEC's proposed comments. Rol worked long and hard at drafting comments. Unfortunately, the NC-VEC voted not to submit the comments. I do not think that Rol's time was wasted, however, as his work gave him visibility within the NC-VEC. I hope that this visibility can pay off in election to the QPC next year.

## J. Personal Security Question

Beginning 9/25/2005, the FCC has given Uniform Licensing System (ULS) users the option to select a personal security question. This question is to be used for expediting ULS password re-sets. Collecting Personal Security Question information is optional for the VECs.

LARC VEC has opted not to collect personal security question information. ARRL VEC and W5YI VEC, the largest VECs, have also opted not to collect this information. I understand that Alaska VEC is collecting this information, and possibly some of the other VEC's.

## K. Records Retention

One important item that came up from NC-VEC was a change in the Instructions to the VECs on records retention. Part 97 requires in Section 97.519 that VECs maintain examination records for at least 15 months. However, until now, the Instructions to the VEC have required "VEC's shall retain all examination sessions records at least fifteen months. Examination results summaries and rosters of examinees shall be retained until further notice." The instructions are not binding on the VEC's, but I have chosen to follow them in the matter of records retention. As a result, the VEC is maintaining boxes of old "results summaries and rosters of examinees" in the Chairman's basement.

Now that the Instructions no longer suggest holding onto this material indefinitely, I plan to dispose of the old records by shredding. The LARC VEC new retention policy is to hold all records from the current year and from the two previous full years. This is a longer retention period than required by the FCC and by the Instructions to the VECs. I will dispose of old records by shredding records from the 3rd previous year. Thus, in January of 2006, I will plan to shred the records from 2003 and earlier.



the Palm Beach Amateur Radio Council VE Team and the Clearwater Amateur Radio Society VE Team.

The Clearwater team not only began testing this year, but also became the second most active LARC VE Team.

### **F. New Team Leader**

The Team Leader for the Rochester Amateur Radio Association (RARA) VE Team retired during the year because her job as a Real Estate Agent required her to work during the times that the Team was scheduled for VE Testing. **Raj Dewan N2RD** became the new RARA Team Leader.

### **G. Club Calls**

After receiving several requests for Club Call Sign work during the year, I spoke with Bill Cross from the FCC about becoming a Club Call Administrator. LARC VEC is not a Club Call Administrator. I don't know why LARC VEC decided not to take on this work, because this decision was made before I became associated with VEC Management. Bill told me that the FCC considers that Club Call Administration program is working satisfactorily, and that the FCC sees no need to change it at this time. Now that I've completed this research and determined that Club Call Administration is not available to us, I plan to continue to refer the Teams to ARRL for their Club Call needs.

### **H. Question Pool Committee**

Once again, I was not able to get a LARC VEC member on the Question Pool Committee (QPC). The thinking of the NC-VEC seems to be that they want a three-member committee, consisting of a rep from ARRL VEC, a rep from W5YI-VEC and a rep from another VEC (currently a rep from Alaska VEC), with the rep from the "little pistol" VEC serving as Chairman. I think that his policy is short-sited, as it guarantees that every time there's a new Chairman, the new Chairman will have no experience as a QPC member. However, I have not yet been able to sell my point of view. I will continue to work on getting a full QPC member from LARC VEC.

The QPC Chairman, Jim Wiley KL7CC, invited the VECs to appoint "associate members" to the QPC. LARC VEC appointed Rol Anders, K3RA, who is a LARC VE with the Historical Electronics Museum VE Team and the Maryland Mobileers Amateur Radio Club VE Team. Among his many qualifications, Rol teaches licensing classes, and has a unique knowledge of the questions pool questions that results from teaching.

ship committee however every club member is a member of the committee. Therefore, I challenge every one of you to help a newly licensed amateur or potential amateur become radioactive. If every BARC member brought one new amateur into the fold the future of the Baltimore Amateur Radio Club would be secure. Now let's take it a step further... if every licensed amateur regardless of club affiliation did the same as I am asking club members to do, the future of the U.S. Amateur Radio Service would be secure.

That is all for now, and I hope to see you at the February 15th program meeting, or at this month's Lunch with the President on Saturday, February 18th 12:30 PM at Cici's Pizza, until then...

*Remember, this club exists because of you and it cannot exist without you!*

**Joe Krysztoforski, AJ3X**  
**President, BARC**

## **Laurel Amateur Radio Club VEC 2005 - The Year In Review**

*By Diane Zimmerman AA3OF*

**T**he Laurel Amateur Radio Club (LARC) VEC is the fourth largest of the fourteen VECs. Our eighteen teams offer VE sessions across the United States. Our people are among the finest volunteers serving Amateur Radio today.

This is the story of the VEC and its accomplishments during the year 2005.

### **A. VEC Management**

LARC VEC is an all-volunteer organization. We are the only VEC serving the contiguous United States who does not charge for examinations. (Alaska VEC also does not charge for examinations, but they serve only the State of Alaska.)

The Laurel Amateur Radio Club pays for the VEC's expenses. Our expenses consist of office supplies and postage, and total no more than several hundred dollars each year. The sponsoring clubs cover individual team expenses.

As VEC Chairman, my responsibilities are to serve as liaison to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) who authorizes the VECs. The bulk of this work involves in reviewing session packages submitted by the Teams and uploading the session results to the FCC computer. The FCC auto-grants li-

censes according to the files that the VEC provides. I also attend the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinator meeting each year, along with team members **Michele Cimbala WK3X**, **John Creel WB3GXW**, **Les Jamison WR3X**, **John Johnston W3BE**, and **Rol Anders K3RA**. I report to the Laurel Amateur Radio Club and to the FCC.

The VEC has three backups for uploads: **Michele Cimbala WK3X**, **Bob Rose AA3RR**, and **John Forrest W4ZA**. These folks do uploads for their club teams, and also do uploads while I am on vacation.

The VEC web site is: <http://larcmdorg.doore.net/vec/>

This site contains information about the LARC VE Teams and their scheduled test sessions. All Teams are urged to submit their exam session information and information about licensing classes for publication on the web site. Our Webmaster is **Ed Herbrechtsmeier K3QX**, who also is the webmaster for the Laurel Amateur Radio Club web site and the Foundation For Amateur Radio web site.

### B. Team Activity

LARC's eighteen VE Teams held 136 sessions during the year, at which they administered 1274 elements to 927 applicants.

The most active LARC VEC VE Team is the Laurel Amateur Radio Club's VE Team under the leadership of **John Creel WB3GXW**. This team held eighteen VE sessions during the year. Not only does this club provide monthly tests each month except December in Laurel, MD, it also provides testing services at many local Hamfests and at VE Licensing Classes held by other local clubs.

The second most active Team is the Clearwater Amateur Radio Society VE Team at 15 licensing sessions. This Team also holds monthly exams and tests at Hamfests and VE licensing classes. The Maryland Mobileers Amateur Radio Club VE Team and the Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club VE Team jointly take third place, with thirteen sessions each during the year.

The Laurel Team tested the most applicants (178) during the year, but the Mount Vernon Team administered the most elements (291.) The Mount Vernon Team was number two for applicant testing volume (157), and the Laurel Team was number two for elements administered (236).

One of the most interesting VE Teams is the Amateur Radio Club of Trinity VE Team. This Team tests students at Trinity High School in Camp Hill, PA.

Central America VEC Inc	476
	793
Greater LA AR Group	350
	441
Sandarc-Vec	331
	497
W4VEC	323
	427
Sunnyvale VEC ARC Inc	219
	352
Anchorage AR Club	207
	248
The Milwaukee RA Club, Inc	136
	107
Jefferson AR Club	40
	11
Golden Empire AR Society	37
	13
MO-KAN VE Coordinator	30
	49

The FCC provides VEC activity figures during the annual National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators. Note that the FCC figures differ from the LARC VEC's figures; the above chart reflects the FCC figures.

### E. New Teams

The Sarasota Emergency Radio Club VE Team, headed by **Ron Wetjan WD4AHZ**, joined LARC VEC during the year as the newest VE Team.

Two teams who joined the VEC Club 1994 began testing this year. They are

Scarborough, Robert	KC3EV	11
Schaefer, Robin	AA3SB	11
Thompson, Ellen	N3EMI	11
Cooper, Rick	KR3LC	10
Ferguson, William	WB3JJS	10
Matthews, Omar "Jerry"	N3XWT	10
May, Charles	AA3WC	10
Waller, Al	K3TKJ	10

Note that many of the most active VEs work with multiple teams, and not only work monthly sessions with their club teams, but also work Hamfests and special test sessions held for licensing classes.

LARC VEC has active VEs who are well known within the Amateur community. These include **Bill Edgar N3LLR** who is the ARRL Atlantic Division Director, **Al Waller K3TJK**, who sponsors QSL.net, **Jim Cross WI3N**, the ARRL Maryland-DC Section Manager, and **John Johnston W3BE** who is the National President of QCWA and a columnist for WorldRadio magazine.

#### D. LARC VEC Standing vs. Other VEC's

LARC VEC is moving closer to taking over third place in the VEC activity status. We missed taking third place by 5 applicants this year. As you see from the chart, our standing increased from a falling off in activity by WCARS rather than from increased activity by LARC VEC.

Coordinator Name	Number of Applicants Tested 2004	Number of Applicants Tested 2003
ARRL/VEC	15,945	20,242
W5YI-VEC	6,404	6,778
W. Carolina AR Soc/VEC, Inc	1,057	1,180
Laurel AR Club, Inc	1,052	1,056

**Sean Barnes N3JQ**, the Team Leader, teaches physics at Trinity High School and elmers his students in the Amateur Radio Club of Trinity. This team offered 74 applicants the opportunity to take 86 elements during the year. In the November session, this Team offered examinations to 42 new hams at Trinity High School.

#### C. VE Activity

Two hundred and six people worked as LARC VEC VEs during the year.

Once again, the LARC VE who participated in the most test sessions during the year is **Les Jamison WR3X**, who worked eighteen VE sessions. Les also tested with four different teams during the year. Les works for the VEC as a trainer, who helps teams with new team leaders and new team members get organized, and he also volunteers to help out as needed when teams are temporarily short of members.

This year, 10 VEs worked with multiple teams.

The annual standing of the most active LARC VEs is:

VE	Call	Sessions Worked
Jamison Jr., Les	WR3X	18
Creel, John	WB3GXW	15
Queen, Ken	K3EQ	15
David Jr., C. T.	K3GXF	14
May, Mary Ellen	W3VY	14
Angel, Charles	AA3FB	13
Cimbala, Michele	WK3X	13
Forrest, John	WZ4A	13
Hatfield, William	W3QX	13
Mantich, Matt	N3JMK	13
Nichols, Harold	WA4OGP	13
Schaefer, Rusty	N3WKE	13
Zimmerman, Diane	AA3OF	13
Bevan, Holly	N3MB	11
Corron, George	AF4JH	11
Diamond-Rose, Brenda	KB3ATI	11
Grady, Patrick	KG4URP	11
Lempicki, Francis	AA4ZS	11
Rose, Robert	AA3RR	11




*continued on page 10*

**Upcoming Public Service & Events**

Mar 25-26 - Greater Baltimore Hamfest & Computerfest at Timonium Fairgrounds

# February 2006

**Upcoming Contests**

Mar 4-5 -  International DX Contest (Phone)  
 Jun 10-12 -  June VHF QSO Party  
 Jun 24-25 -  Field Day

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> BARC Minifest time to time?	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> VE Testing— Registration: 1 p.m. Testing begins: 2 p.m.
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Hamboree Committee 7:30 p.m.	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Deadline— March Issue of <i>The Modulator</i>	<b>14</b> Valentine's Day	<b>15</b> Club Meeting: Katrina - What Did We Learn? (see p3) - 7:30 p.m.	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <i>Lunch with the BARC President</i> 12:30 PM - Cici's Pizza (see page 3 for details)  Int DX Contest (CW) 0000 Sat- 2400 Sun UTC
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Hamboree Committee 7:30 p.m.	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Deadline— Feature Articles for April Issue of <i>The Modulator</i>	<b>28</b>				<b>Phases of the Moon</b> 02/05 First Quarter 02/13 Full Moon 02/21 Last Quarter 02/28 New Moon