



GRAYSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWS

AUGUST 2014

WWW.K5GCC.ORG

VOL. 20, No. 8

THE PRESIDENT'S QSO

Hi All,

Last Saturday was the Kiwanis bike rally and I want to say a job well done by all. I think everyone had fun and thank everyone who came out to help us. We want to thank Tim (N5SWG) and Stacy (W5ORD) for the use of their trailer for this event.

Our next event will be the GCARC 20th Anniversary Special Event Station which will be on September 20th. We will discuss this at our next club meeting and will more details out at a later date.

Hope to see everybody at the meeting on Friday where we will have a presentation by Matt (KF5KOY) on satellite communications and antennas.

Please visit the [Grayson County Amateur Radio Club Calendar](#) to stay in the loop of the different activities.

If you have ANY comments, questions, concerns, or ideas...Please contact me at bencsly@gmail.com

Thank You
Ben Sly (KF5OEB)



"It shall be our purpose to further the exchange of information and cooperation between members, to promote radio knowledge, fraternalism and individual operating efficiency, and to so conduct club programs and activities as to advance the general interest and welfare of Amateur Radio in the community."

From the GCARC Constitution

CLUB INFORMATION

2014 OFFICERS

President:	Ben Sly KF5OEB
Vice President:	Jeannie Dopson KF5PDM
Secretary:	Sheila Sammons KF5TDP
Treasurer:	Sheila Sammons KF5TDP
Activity Directors:	Daniel & Amber Boehmisch (AF5OY & KF5WPS)
Trustee:	Rick Simmons K5ECX

MAILING ADDRESS

Grayson County Amateur Radio Club
718 Highway 82 E, # 198
Sherman, Texas 75090

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Address: WWW.K5GCC.ORG
Webmaster: TBA
Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/K5GCC
Page:

MEETINGS

When: 3rd Friday of each month
Time: 7:00pm (1900 hours)
Location: Grayson County Courthouse
2nd Floor Assembly Room
100 W. Houston Street
Sherman, TX 75090
GPS: 33.38.18N, 96.36.59W

NEWSLETTER

Published: Monthly via e-mail
Editor: Michael Bernier KF5NPM
To Submit News or to Add/Remove from E-Mail List: Send E-Mail to KF5NPM@GMAIL.COM
Submission Deadline: 12 midnight on the Saturday prior to each monthly meeting

GCARC, ARES, AND SKYWARN PATCHES

GCARC club patches are available and may be purchased at each club meeting; cost is \$5.00 each. These are round patches with the club logo, and are great for wearing on vests and other non-club clothing, placing on equipment bags, go-kits, etc.

ARES and SKYWARN patches may also be purchased at each club meeting; cost is \$4.00 each. If you choose to wear patches on your club shirt or jacket, the ARES patch should be placed on the right shoulder and any other patch (SKYWARN, RACES, CERT, etc.) should go below it. Since some members have tactical shirts with pen pockets on the left sleeve we do not recommend placing any patches on that side.

CLUB CLOTHING ORDERS

Several times each year, members have the opportunity to purchase club-related clothing (shirts, caps, jackets, etc.). These items have the GCARC logo and the member's name and callsign embroidered on them. An order form with instructions will be included in the newsletter each time orders are being taken.

GCARC TREASURER'S REPORT

Starting Balance 6/30/2014	\$1,311.15
Cash On Hand	\$20.00
Deposits	+ \$0.00
Expenses	- \$75.00
Ending Balance 7/31/2014	\$1,236.15
Equipment Fund	\$589.00

NOTES:
Deposits: None
Expenses: Food for Red River Bridge War (\$75.00)

Sheila Sammons KF5TDP
GCARC Secretary/Treasurer

GCARC MEETING MINUTES

GCARC Meeting, July 18, 2014

The Grayson County Amateur Radio Club met on July 18, 2014 with 17 members in attendance. President Ben Sly opened the meeting at 7:02 with a welcome to all attendees.

Motion to accept minutes of previous meeting was made by David Woods (W5COP) and seconded by Mark Pilkilton (KF5UZW), motion passed.

Treasurer's Report was reviewed and motion by John Ramsey (KF5KHZ) and seconded by Jim McGlynn (KF5QOI), motion passed.

Previous Business Recap

- Special thanks to Rick Simmons (K5ECX) for cooking up a great supper and breakfast for our ARRL field day.
- Several members enjoyed a great day at the Red River Bridge War special event. Lee Sly (N5SLY) grilled up hamburgers and hot dogs. Approximately 30 contacts were logged. The airwaves were very congested that day as a lot of clubs were hosting their own special events.
- Still looking at options for a club radio and how best to secure it for transporting and storing.

Old Business

- Club members discussed that the Treasurer's Report should also give a breakdown of how much money has been designated for equipment. Motion made by John Ramsey (KF5KHZ) and seconded by Jim McGlynn (KF5QOI). All approved, and motion passed.

New Business

- David Woods (W5COP) reminded members that the City of Sherman would be doing work in the area adjacent to the W5RVT repeaters (VHF and UHF) starting in mid-October.
- Vice President Jeannie Dopson (KF5PDM) reminded everyone that volunteers were still needed for the Red River Bike Rally on August 9th.

Chris Butler (KG5VUN) shared with the group how to build your own storage / carrying case for you radio equipment

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.

Next Meeting will be at 7pm on Friday, August 15th, 2014, in the Grayson County Courthouse 2nd Floor Assembly Room, Sherman TX.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sheila Sammons KF5TDP
GCARC Secretary/Treasurer

CLUB MEETINGS, LOCAL ACTIVITIES, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Club Meetings

Grayson County Amateur Radio Club (GCARC)

3rd Friday at 7:00pm

Grayson County Courthouse 2nd floor assembly room, 100 West Houston Street, Sherman TX

<http://www.k5gcc.org>

Cooke County Amateur Radio Club (CCARC)

2nd Thursday at 7:00pm

Cooke County Library, 200 S. Weaver Street, Gainesville TX

<http://www.gainesvillehamfest.org/club.htm>

Durant Amateur Repeater Association (DARA)

3rd Tuesday at 7:00pm

Bryan County Emergency Management, 2808 Enterprise Drive, Durant OK

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Durant-Amateur-Repeater-Association-Ham-Radio/292030700959672>

Fannin County Amateur Radio Club (FCARC)

3rd Saturday at 9:00am

First Presbyterian Church, 818 North Main Street, Bonham TX

<http://www.k5frc.org>

McKinney Amateur Radio Club (MARC)

2nd Tuesday at 7:00pm

Spring Creek Barbecue, 1993 North Central Expressway, McKinney TX

<http://www.mckinneyarc.org>

Quarter Century Wireless Association (QCWA) Chapter 41

1st Saturday at 11:00am

Midway Point Restaurant, 12801 Midway Road, Dallas TX

<http://www.texasqcwa41.org>

ARES® / SKYWARN®

Grayson County ARES® Training

4th Tuesday of each odd-numbered month (Jan / Mar / May / Jul / Sep / Nov) at 7:00pm

Sherman Municipal Airport Terminal Building, 1200 S. Dewey Ave., Sherman TX

<http://www.tecoares.org>

GCARC Events

GCARC 20th Anniversary Celebration

September 20, 2014

Details TBA

Denison Main Street Festival

October 4, 2014

Downtown Denison TX

Details TBA

Eisenhower Birthday Special Event Station

October 11, 2014

Denison, TX

Detail TBA

Training Classes

Radio & Electronics Lab for Hams

2nd Saturday of each month from 8:30am-12:30pm

Grayson College Center for Workplace Learning, Seminar Room C, 6101 Grayson Drive, Denison TX

This is a hands-on class where students learn basic principles of electronics, proper use of tools and test equipment, and other tips and techniques applicable to Amateur Radio. Class content will vary.

Contact: Moe NT7C (903) 564-7115 or nt7c@arrl.net

Class Fee: No charge for the class; however, there may be costs for tools and/or supplies used in the class

Registration: Required; contact Moe to register

General License Training Class - sponsored by the Durant Amateur Repeater Association (DARA) and Durant/Bryan County Emergency Management
All five Tuesdays in September from 6:00-8:00pm
Donald W. Reynolds Library, 1515 W. Main Street, Durant OK
This is a 5-week class to prepare students to take the General Class license exam. You must already have a Technician Class license to participate.
Contact: Jim K5BNK (jharmon@netcommander.com) or Kenneth AB5CC (kepler@durant.org)
Class Fee: No charge for the class or study materials; those choosing to take the exam at the end of the course will be charged a \$15 exam fee.
Registration: Recommended; contact Jim or Kenneth for details.

VE Testing Sessions

Texoma VE Team – Bi-Monthly Testing

1st Thursday of each even-numbered month (Feb / Apr / Jun / Aug / Oct / Dec) at 7:00pm
Grayson College Center For Workplace Learning, Seminar Room C, 6101 Grayson Drive, Denison TX
Contact: Moe NT7C (903) 564-7115 or nt7c@arrrl.net

Durant Amateur Repeater Association – Monthly Testing

3rd Tuesday of each month at 8:00pm (following the DARA monthly meeting)
Bryan County Emergency Management, 2808 Enterprise Drive, Durant OK
Contact: Jim K5BNK (jharmon@netcommander.com)

Texoma Amateur Radio Association – Monthly Testing

3rd Saturday of each month at 2:00pm
The Java Stop Café, 5700 North FM 1417, Sherman TX
Contact: Dave K5YM (281) 743-7478

Fannin County Amateur Radio Club – Appointment-Only Testing

First Presbyterian Church, 818 North Main Street, Bonham TX
Contact David WA0URJ (wa0urj@yahoo.com) to schedule a session

Hamfests

Ada Hamfest

September 13, 2014
Chickasaw Community Center, 700 N Mississippi Ave, Ada OK
Talk-In: 147.285 (114.8 PL)
Public Contact: Chris Faulkner KD5NQA (580) 332-1435 or kd5nqa@yahoo.com

Gainesville Hamfest

September 27, 2014 7:00am-1:00pm (VE Testing starts 9:30am)
Gainesville Civic Center, 311 South Weaver Street, Gainesville TX
Talk-In: 147.340 (PL 100.0) or 442.775 (PL 100.0)
Public Contact: James Floyd N5ZPU (940) 668-7511 or jfloyd54@suddenlink.net
Website: www.gainesvillehamfest.org

Texoma Hamarama (Oklahoma Section Convention)

October 24-25, 2014 (Friday 5:00pm-8:00pm, Saturday 8:00am-1:00pm)
Ardmore Convention Center, 2401 N Rockford Rd, Ardmore OK
Talk-In: 146.97
Public Contact: Don Loving KM5OX (580) 221-1894 or wallcloud2001@yahoo.com
Website: www.texomahamarama.org

DURANT AMATEUR REPEATER ASSOCIATION (DARA) NEWS

The monthly DARA meeting is held the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm, and all guests are welcome.

DARA and Durant/Bryan County Emergency Management are sponsoring classes for the General Class amateur radio license test. These classes will run all 5 Tuesdays in September. This is not the entry level license but the second of the three license classes. You should already have the Technician Class license in order to attend.

The class is free and study materials will be provided. Testing will be \$15 on the last day of class. Classes will be held from 6pm until 8pm at the Donald W. Reynolds Library 1515 W. Main in Durant. Contact Kenneth Eppler AB5CC at keppler@durant.org for more information.

Jim K5BNK

CLUB ACTIVITY REPORTS

Kiwanis Red River Bike Rally – August 9, 2014

I want to thank everyone who came out to help with the bike rally this past Saturday (August 9th).

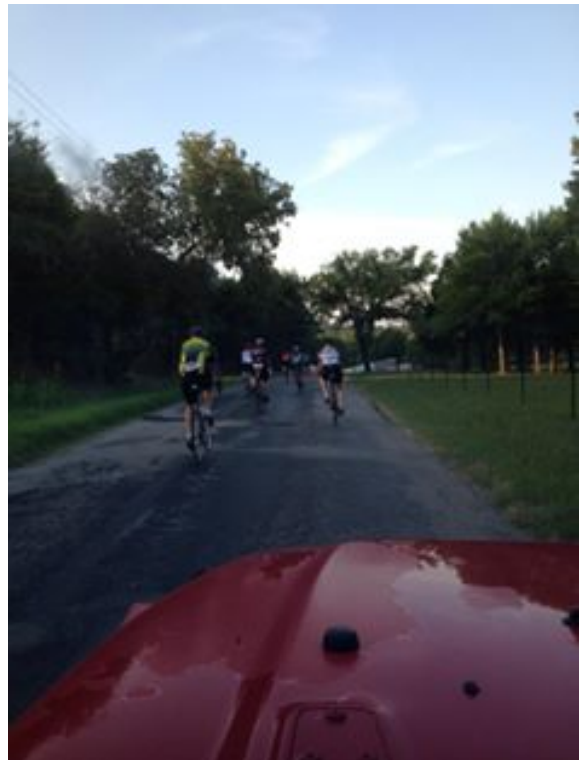
Everyone from Rick (K5ECX) in Net Control to our two youngest radio operators Karlee (KF5ZPG) and Trevor (KG5BGI).

It was a long hot day, but there were no major incidents with either the riders or the radio operators. So, all in all it was a great day and we were able to showcase how radio communications works in a public service arena. The Kiwanis were very pleased with how smoothly things went, so be sure to pat yourselves on the back because it was a job well done by each and every one of you.

Thank you to Tim (N5SWG) and Stacy (W5ORD) for the use of their trailer as our command center; it made the day a bit easier.

Again, congrats to each and every one of you on a job well done, and I hope you will consider marking your calendars to volunteer for next year's bike rally.

Thanks,
Jeannie – KF5PDM



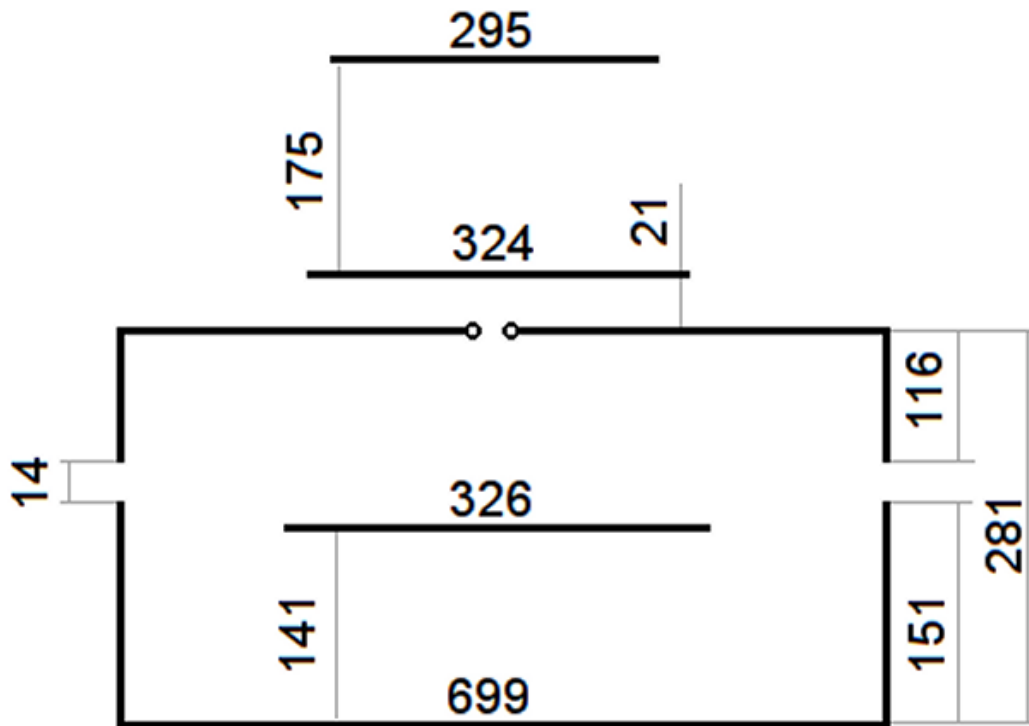
DO IT YOURSELF

Compact Handheld 2m/70cm Antenna for Satellite Operation

At the July ARES training meeting, Matt KF5KOY brought in a scratch-built 2m/70cm dual band handheld Yagi designed for picking up signals from Amateur Radio satellites. He built it using plans obtained from a ham radio blog in Lithuania. It was a very popular “show and tell” item during the meeting, and afterward several members requested a copy of the plans so they could construct their own.

The plans and all available information are being provided here for the benefit of those who did not attend the meeting.

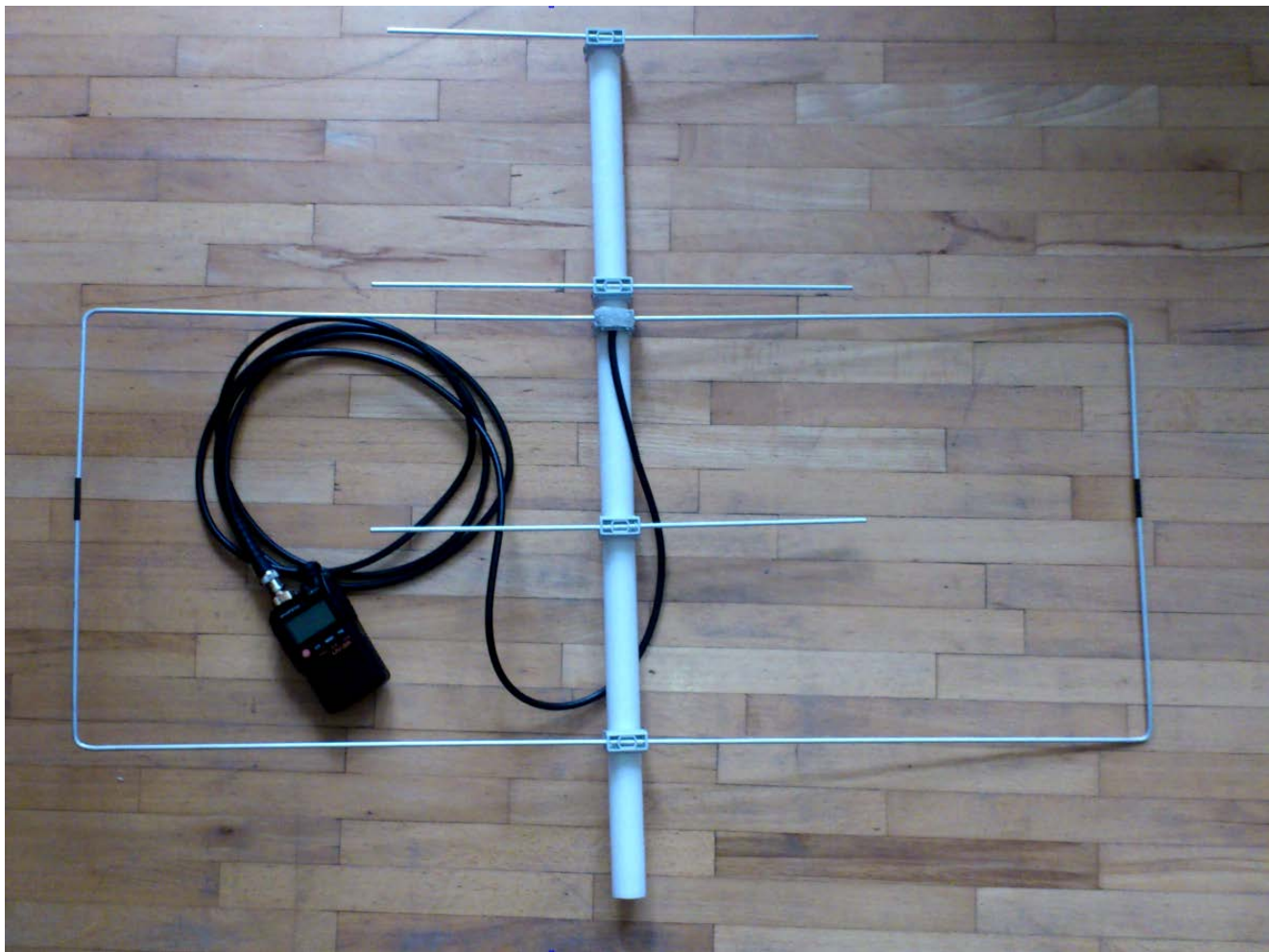
Element Schematic (note: **all measurements are in millimeters**)



The black lines represent the physical elements, while the gray lines represent separation amounts between each element.

According to notes posted on the blog by designer Zilvinas Atkociunas (LY2SS), the elements on the original antenna were made from 3.2mm aluminum welding rods, but 4mm material would also work without a problem. The elements were then attached to a suitable length of PVC pipe (Matt used a pipe approximately 24 inches long) and the radio connection is through a single 50-ohm coax feedline (see photo for placement). Matt experimented with different methods of attaching the elements, and came up with cutting small grooves into the pipe for the elements to sit in and using cable ties (“zip ties”) to hold them in place instead of the clamps used on the original.

The photo on the next page shows the original antenna connected to a HT. Note the attachment point for the coax. Also, the black connector pieces at the far left and right of the long elements are actually short lengths of non-conductive tubing used to provide additional rigidity to the elements.



Regarding performance, Zilvinas states the antenna has 4dB gain on 2m and 6.5dB gain on 70cm.

To view the original blog posting, follow this link (although the posting is written in English, the rest of the blog is in Lithuanian): <http://rksvyturys.blogspot.com/2013/08/compact-and-effective-2m70cm-dual-band.html?m=1>

(Credits: schematic and antenna photo – Zilvinas Atkociunas LY2SS)

SWAP MEET

(Disclaimer: This section is provided for hams to list items they wish to buy, sell, or trade. GCARC will not be responsible for the accuracy or completeness of any descriptions, will not guarantee any items function as described, and will not participate in any transactions. The individual buyer and seller are responsible for all discussions, negotiations, and resolving of differences.)

To submit items to be listed, send the information in an e-mail to the GCARC Newsletter Editor at kf5npm@gmail.com. When listing items for sale or trade, photographs are encouraged. There is no charge for listings, and you do not need to be a member of GCARC to participate.

FOR SALE: Cushcraft ALS2010 8-Element Log Antenna

Recently working, was taken down to replace with a new T8 log. SWR 2.0 to 2.5 but a tuner brings it into line just fine. Located in Savoy; will need to be partially disassembled for transport.

Asking \$150. Contact: Gary Stone N5PHT via e-mail -- n5phtgs@gmail.com

FOR SALE: Cushcraft ASL-670 Log Periodic Antenna

The Cushcraft ASL-670 is the ultimate multi-use antenna. Since the antenna is a log periodic, it offers continuous coverage through the 2 and 6 meter bands as well as 220 and 440 MHz. So while being a terrific antenna for operating those bands, it's also a great aviation and public safety band monitoring antenna.

Use the antenna for contesting and mountain topping if you like. The antenna is compact and easy to assemble and disassemble with no tuning required. Yet it is rugged enough for permanent installations.

This antenna has excellent gain f/b with good VSWR bandwidth to boot. Enjoy the fun of high performance operation *and* multi-frequency.

\$190 Pick Up Only in Bonham, TX

Contact: David Reeder WAØURJ

E-mail: WA0URJ@yahoo.com

Home 903-583-1023 – Cell 972-658-6773



FOR SALE OR TRADE: GAP Titan DX Vertical HF Antenna

I have a GAP Titan DX 10m-80m vertical HF antenna for sale or trade. It is in good but used condition. Please go to the GAP Antenna website (www.gapantenna.com) for details and price when new. I also have the optional heavy duty tilt over mounting plate. It is currently assembled and I want buyer/trader to see it that way. However, I think it will have to be taken apart to transport as it is 30 ft. tall. No ground radials needed as it has its own ground plane wires.

For sale or trade at half its new price

Contact: Sarge KE5YPB

E-mail: 0101.smd@gmail.com

FOR SALE: Computer and Radio Station Desk

Desk is light oak, 62" w x 33" d with glass panel to see monitor from below. Power distribution panel included. Hutch is white pine stained to match the desk, 60" w x 42" h with adjustable shelves. Desk can be disassembled for transportation and reassembled easily.

Asking \$400 for the set.

Radios not included.

Contact: Bill KK5RW

Phone: (281) 217-9942

E-Mail:

3bewens@gmail.com



ARRL VEC Conducts Remote Exam Session with Applicants in Antarctica

The ARRL Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) administered several Amateur Radio examination elements to applicants at Amundsen-South Pole Station in Antarctica – the home of KC4AAA. The examination was administered under new FCC rules which became effective on July 21, permitting VECs to administer Amateur Radio examinations remotely.

“All six candidates earned a new or upgrade license,” said ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM. “There were three new Technicians, two upgrades to Amateur Extra, and one candidate who went from unlicensed to Amateur Extra.”

Joe Musachia, W5FJG, served as the volunteer examiner at the South Pole, while Penny Harts, N1NAG, and Rose-Anne Lawrence, KB1DMW, were the VEs at ARRL Headquarters.

“Chet Waggoner and Bartley Davis are the first at the South Pole and possibly on continent to pass the General exam,” Musachia said, naming a couple of the candidates in a posting on the ARRL Facebook page. He said two previous exam sessions were held at the South Pole, but they had to get special permission from the FCC to conduct them.

The logistics were somewhat daunting, since the video link required a satellite connection and clearance from NASA, and it was subject to possible last-minute changes, should the International Space Station require additional Satcom time. Musachia, who is the satellite engineer at the station, said NASA was aware that the VEs had requested a large block of time to perform the exam session, and they did not change it.

Somma said the video exam session went ahead as scheduled on July 22 at 8 AM EDT, which was 8 PM in Antarctica. “The summer day was a pleasant 80° here at Headquarters in Newington, while in Antarctica it was 80 below!” she pointed out.

“All of us here at the South Pole want to extend our thanks to you and the VEC team at the ARRL for making this license exam session happen,” Musachia said in an e-mail to ARRL Headquarters. “We all just finished a bottle of champagne to celebrate the newly licensed and upgraded Amateur Radio operators. We wish you all could have joined us.”

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

Early Efforts on Behalf of “The Amateur Radio Parity Act” HR.4969 Bearing Fruit

Initial efforts to secure additional co-sponsors for “The Amateur Radio Parity Act of 2014” -- HR.4969 -- are starting to produce results. As of August 5, 17 co-sponsors have signed onto the bill, which was introduced in the US House of Representatives with bipartisan support in late June. Additional co-sponsors are anticipated. HR.4969 would call on the FCC to apply the “reasonable accommodation” three-part test of the [PRB-1](#) federal pre-emption policy to private land-use restrictions regarding antennas. The bill’s primary sponsor is Rep [Adam Kinzinger](#) (R-IL), and it received initial co-sponsorship from Rep [Joe Courtney](#) (D-CT), who attended the ARRL National Centennial Convention on July 19 to speak with League officials and those attending the event.

“With Congress on break for the month of August, we are encouraging our members to meet with their representatives while they are home on break in their districts, and urge their support for HR.4969,” said ARRL Regulatory Information Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND. “We’re very pleased with the initial response, but the more noise we make, the better our chances.” He emphasized that a successful outcome requires as many co-sponsors as possible, and that’s where ARRL members come into play in their role as voters and constituents.

The League has opened a [HR.4969 page](#), which contains information and guidance for clubs and individuals promoting efforts to gain co-sponsors for the measure by contacting their members of Congress. The web page includes a sample letter to a member of Congress and a list of “talking points.” For in-person visits, the League recommends organizing small teams of knowledgeable, articulate radio amateurs to approach lawmakers one to one to plead their case.

The limited PRB-1 pre-emption currently applies only to state and municipal land-use ordinances. The FCC has indicated its reluctance to provide the same legal protections from private land-use agreements -- often called covenants, conditions, and restrictions or CC&Rs -- without direction from Congress.

HR.4969 has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Rep Greg Walden, W7EQI (R-OR), chairs that panel's Communications and Technology Subcommittee, which will consider the measure. The League had approached Walden, who helped to engineer the bill.

Henderson said that in response to the "Get Behind HR.4969" effort at the Centennial Convention and last month's [edition](#) of the [Legislative Update Newsletter](#), more than 2000 individuals drafted letters to their congressional representatives, urging them to co-sponsor the bill. He asked League members to e-mail or mail letters directed to their US House of Representatives member to ARRL Headquarters for forwarding. E-mails will be printed beforehand, he noted. Henderson explained that this approach speeds delivery, since individual pieces of mail to members of Congress are scanned for threats. Henderson said he's already received another 200 or so letters to forwarding to House members.

Direct letters to HR.4969 Letter Campaign, ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111. If e-mailing, include the bill's number, HR.4969, in your subject line. Henderson pointed out that all correspondence to members of Congress must be signed and include the constituent's mailing address. "We're only targeting members of the US House and not approaching members of the US Senate right now," he said. "We'll handle that when the time comes."

Henderson said a campaign opposing passage of HR.4969 also is underway and gaining steam. "The leading opposition group is putting out a lot of misinformation -- that the bill would invalidate *all* CC&Rs," he said. "HR.4969 only seeks 'reasonable accommodation' for Amateur Radio communication. It would give you a seat at the table with your homeowners' association, requiring it to arrive at a reasonable antenna accommodation, instead of imposing an absolute and outright ban on all antennas."

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

SKYWARN Volunteers Muster as Severe Weather, Tornado Hits Southern New England

When severe weather erupted in Southern New England on July 27 and 28, [SKYWARN](#) volunteers went on alert to help forecasters track conditions and, afterward, to assist authorities with assessing the damage. A super-cell storm system organized over northern Norfolk County, Massachusetts, on the morning of July 28 and raced through portions of northeastern Massachusetts, causing wind damage in sections of Needham, SKYWARN Coordinator and ARRL Eastern Massachusetts Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator Rob Macedo, KD1CY, reported.

"The storm was tracked using the SKYWARN self-activation protocol," he said. The system subsequently generated an EF-2 tornado, which swept through Revere, Massachusetts, leaving a swath of significant damage in its wake. "Within 15 or 20 minutes of the storm's passage, the Amateur Radio SKYWARN network received reports of many trees and wires down and structural damage in Revere," Macedo said. "Other pockets of straight-line wind damage and flash flooding occurred elsewhere in Southern New England, rounding out a 2-day stretch of severe weather in the region."

SKYWARN Spotters Jim Palmer, KB1KQW, and Marek Kozubal, KB1NCG, worked with [National Weather Service-Taunton](#) Warning Coordination Meteorologist Glenn Field, KB1GHX, local first responders, and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency personnel in surveying the damage. All are associated with [WX1BOX](#), the Amateur Radio Station at NWS-Taunton.

According to the NWS-Taunton office, the tornado, with winds estimated at between 100 and 120 MPH, affected both Chelsea and Revere, but most of the damage was in Revere. The NWS said the tornado traveled 2 miles, leaving a path some 3/8-mile wide. [The Weather Channel](#) said the tornado affected a 3-square mile residential area of Revere, damaging more than 60 homes and business and leaving upward of 3000 residences without power. A temporary shelter was opened to handle those displaced by the storm. In addition, significant flash flooding affected the Boston Metro West region, with rainfall of up to 3.5 inches recorded in less than an hour.

Macedo said another round of severe weather occurred later in the day on July 28, affecting northwestern and north-central Massachusetts through southern New Hampshire, with additional severe thunderstorms taking place across north-central Connecticut. “These severe thunderstorms caused pockets of flash flooding and straight-line wind damage,” Macedo’s report said. “Particularly hard hit were parts of Westford, Littleton, and South Chelmsford, Massachusetts, as well as part of Enfield and Somers, Connecticut.”

A tornado warning was issued for parts of eastern Hampden and southwestern Worcester counties in Massachusetts, but only pockets of straight-line wind damage were noted.

Monday’s severe weather events followed an 8-hour severe weather episode that had affected parts of Western and Central New England the previous day. A warm front passing into Southern New England the morning of July 27 brought severe thunderstorms with it. A funnel cloud was sighted and minor wind damage occurred in Springfield, Massachusetts -- also in Hampden, County -- and there were reports of flooding and some lightning-caused fires in Central Massachusetts. Another round of scattered severe thunderstorms affecting parts of Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut occurred during the late afternoon and early evening hours of July 27. “SKYWARN self-activation handled the storm activity across the region,” Macedo said. Areas reported hardest hit in the second round of storms were West Springfield, Agawam, and Longmeadow -- all in Massachusetts -- extending into Enfield, Somers, and Tolland, Connecticut. Pockets of wind damage reached the Storrs/Mansfield, Connecticut, area -- home to the University of Connecticut.

“We wish to thank all SKYWARN spotters, local police and fire departments, and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency for their help and support during this active 2 days of severe weather in our region,” Macedo said. “All of us working together makes a significant difference for our communities by providing accurate ground-truth information for better warnings and forecasts.”

The NWS-Taunton Forecast Office also had kind words for the Amateur Radio SKYWARN volunteers. “The National Weather Service would like to extend its appreciation to our North Shore and Boston SKYWARN Amateur Radio coordinators, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Region 1 Office, and the Revere Police Department for helping us tremendously with this storm survey,” the office said.

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

Ham Radio Payload to Circle the Moon

A lunar flyby with a ham radio payload transmitting JT65B mode on 145.990 MHz is expected to take place toward the end of this year, giving earthbound radio amateurs the opportunity to receive some otherworldly DX signals as the payload flies around the Moon.

China has [announced](#) plans to launch a lunar orbiter carrying a 14 kg battery-powered payload known as 4M-LXS, which was developed at LuxSpace. Signals from the Amateur Radio payload can be decoded using the free [WJST](#) software by Joe Taylor, K1JT.

The orbiter is one of the test models for Beijing’s new lunar probe *Chang’e-5*, which will land on the moon, collect samples, and return to Earth. The launch, planned for 4th quarter 2014, is aimed at testing technologies that are vital for the success of the spacecraft. The orbiter will be launched into Lunar Transfer Orbit and then perform a lunar flyby before re-entering Earth’s atmosphere after 9 days.

The orbiter, which arrived by air in Xichang, Sichuan, on Sunday, August 10, has been transported to the Xichang Satellite Launch Center.

- Information courtesy of AMSAT-UK

LOCAL RADIO NETS

Daily

Texas Slow Net (CW only)

Daily 7:45pm CT on 3.570MHz.

This is a training net for operators interested in building proficiency in CW and learning about handling procedures for CW traffic nets.

Weekly

Durant ARA Weekly Net

Tuesdays 7:00pm CT on the 147.390+ (118.8 PL) repeater.

No net on the 3rd Tuesday of each month due to the DARA monthly meeting.

Fannin County ARC Weekly Net

Tuesdays 8:00pm CT on the 145.130– (no PL) repeater.

This is an informal information net.

McKinney 6 meter AM Net

Wednesdays 10:00pm CT on 50.400MHz

Ladies Net

Thursdays 8:00pm CT on the 147.000+ (100.0 PL) repeater.

Net Control Operator: Linda KE5YUC

McKinney ARC Info Net

Sundays 8:00pm CT on the 146.740– (110.9 PL) repeater.

Semi-Monthly

Grayson County ARC Information Net

1st & 3rd Sunday at 8:00pm CT on the 147.000+ (100.0 PL) repeater.

This is an informal information net and Buy/Sell/Swap net.

Grayson County ARES Net

2nd & 4th Sunday at 8:00pm CT on the 147.000+ (100.0 PL) repeater.

This is a directed information net used for training.

RACES Command Net Check

2nd & 4th Sunday at 2:00pm CT on 7.255 MHz LSB

This is a RACES Command Net check for statewide RACES Command Net members ONLY. All other Amateur stations are welcome to listen, but DO NOT check in!

Monthly

Scout Ham Net

1st Tuesday at 8:00pm CT on the 147.000+ (100.0 PL) repeater.

This net is for all active Scouts, Adult Leaders, and Merit Badge Counselors who are Amateur Radio operators.

North Texas ARES HF Net

2nd Wednesday at 8:30pm CT on 3.860 MHz LSB

This is an information net open to all ARES members in the ARRL North Texas (NTX) Section.

McKinney ARES Net

2nd Sunday at 9:00pm CT on the 146.740– (110.9 PL) repeater.

AREA REPEATERS

Sherman TX	147.000+ MHz (100.0 PL)	W5RVT	Kingston OK	146.985– MHz (103.5 PL)	K5BQG
	147.280+ MHz (107.2 PL)	W5COP			
	444.750+ MHz (100.0 PL)	W5RVT			
Bonham TX	145.470– MHz (no PL)	K5FRC	McKinney TX	146.740– MHz (110.9 PL)	W5MRC
	145.130– MHz (no PL)	K5FRC		145.350– MHz (100.0 PL)	N5GI
	443.750+ MHz (no PL)	K5FRC			
Durant OK	147.390+ MHz (118.8 PL)	K5KIE	Melissa TX	443.200+ MHz (100.0 PL)	W5MRA
	147.255+ MHz (114.8 PL)	K5CGE			
Gainesville TX	147.340+ MHz (100.0 PL)	WB5FHI	Rosston TX	145.490– MHz (85.4 PL)	WD5U
			Van Alstyne TX	443.800+ MHz (103.5 PL)	W5VAL
			Grayson County ARES (portable)	441.375+ MHz (67.0 PL)	WC5GC
				(on the air only for emergencies & training)	

GRAYSON COUNTY ARES AND RACES

Sparks, Crackles, and Other Random Thoughts

By Rick Simmons K5ECX
Grayson County ARRL EC



Things Are Different Here

You may recall my last note or post was based on things I learned at Plano's Ham-Com in June. I want to go back and review some information I found in a recent ARRL newsletter regarding SKYWARN and self-activation. Recall that our Section leadership asked us not to self-activate and I discussed why in my last note. Well, in late July up in New England there were tornadoes. I suspect that's not a common occurrence in Massachusetts, and as I read the story the ARES group was noted as self-activating to follow the storm. Now this piqued my interest. Self-activation (a recent topic of our Section leadership) and Following the Storm. So, back to the Internet, my source and wellspring of *all knowledge*...

It appears all NWS offices and ARES teams are not the same, and in some areas (head nod up North) they don't activate spotters and keep them apprised of developing situations as they do down here (kudos to the FTW NWS team). I dug around and read a few SOPs for ARES up yonder, and in some cases they have ARES folks watch the WX and decide if they need to activate. We would wear our volunteers out in the spring and summer if we activated at each issuance of a watch. We also are blessed with a cooperative NWS which has tools to issue information to our NC staff, the very same data that goes to the Emergency Management community. Everyone is on the same page, and that is important! It's a cooperative effort, and we have a good idea of what each other is doing.

Now just so you know, we also have our NC team scheduled to take turns "on duty." The NC with the short straw that week is responsible to keep an eye out if a watch is issued and as a team we communicate about the goings on and what NWS is saying via forecast and outlook products they have online. Once things have moved along to the point the WX is beginning to show its ugly side in the neighborhood, you get a notice of Yellow or Orange. Occasionally we all get a Red Alert with no notice... it is Texas weather, you know. If any of the other NC staff is out of pocket, Grayson County is still covered by the on call NC.

Now as to the storm-following thing. When activated, our team of NC ops and Assistant NC ops do their best to watch the WX out the window, on the screen and from your reports to keep everyone safe as possible. You also play a role by attending the SKYWARN training every year to stay abreast of what those churning clouds and winds mean. Review your information, go online and look at SKYWARN training; there is a lot out there. Be careful to use NWS sources for this so you get the right stuff. We don't want anyone in a tornado or a hail core, but we do want to try and get trained eyes in place to see what's going on and report it to NWS so they can make the best decisions possible to protect our communities. Technology, radar and databases are great, but up here the bottom 6000 feet of a storm is not in their radar view for the most part, and a lot can happen there.

Thanks for all you do to help in this regard. You are part of a large team of volunteers and professionals who rely on you to be the front line when as ARRL says "all else fails." Next time you hear one of our Ft. Worth NWS forecasts, WX Statements, Watches or Warnings, remember you are part of the team that makes that possible.

It is a pleasure to serve with you.

73
Rick
K5ECX