



# GRAYSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWS

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MARCH 2016

WWW.GRAYSONCOUNTYARC.COM

VOL. 22, No. 3

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## THE PRESIDENT'S QSO

Howdy everyone,

My favorite time of year is finally here...Spring. The days are getting warmer and we can get outside and do more now. Along with the good we can also expect to get the usual bad weather that comes with the thunderstorms. Let's just hope that we don't get a lot of them and don't get the rains like we did last year. My hope is that those of you that are involved with ARES and CERT won't have much to do this year.

Hopefully, we can get some of our Helping Hams projects completed in the months ahead.

At next month's meeting we'll get serious about the plans for our Perrin Field Special Event in May and our plans for Field Day in June. Mark will be busy setting up locations for our club events and working out all the details.

Our CW classes are in progress and we'll finish them in April. These have been great classes for those that want to learn CW. We all owe James a special Thank You! for all of his work preparing and conducting these classes.

I was out of town working last week and have to tell you that not only did I miss my wife and family...but I also missed my radio and the opportunity to make some contacts. I guess I'm addicted to Amateur Radio. It really is a lot of fun, and once you find what really interests you, you might become addicted too. My favorite thing is making HF contacts...especially Special Events like the National Parks On The Air event going on this year. I love the challenge of trying to contact as many of those sites as I can. But some things drive me crazy. Not sure what disorder this is but I'm sure I have it. I've got 99 confirmed contacts for NPOTA and have been waiting a week for #100. It's driving me nuts...why can't any of the 15 or 20 unconfirmed contacts I have upload their logs so I can get #100. Are they all conspiring against me? I'm sure they are. I just keep telling myself that it's OK, it's only a hobby and I'm having fun.

I took a short break after writing that last paragraph and guess what I did? Those of you that know me real well could see this coming. Well, I checked the LOTW web site to see if I got any more confirmed contacts and sure enough I did. I just got #100 for NPOTA. I feel better now. But wait...now I have to get to 200. I'll be a basket case by then. LOL

As your president this year my goal is to offer more opportunities for our members to learn and experience different aspects of Amateur Radio. Your next opportunity will be during our Perrin Field Special Event during May. Members operating their stations during the SE may open their shacks to visitors. If and when they do...take advantage of the opportunity to learn a new mode or get some experience. This will be great for you new hams that don't have your shacks set up yet or are not even sure if you would like HF radio. This will give you a chance to go for a test drive before you run out and spend a pile of money on some equipment.

Looking forward to lots of fun during the coming months.

Lee - N5SLY  
[lee.n5sly@gmail.com](mailto:lee.n5sly@gmail.com)

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## CLUB INFORMATION

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### OFFICERS

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|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| President:         | Lee Sly N5SLY         |
| Vice President:    | James Frank KW5CW     |
| Secretary:         | Stacy Branam W5ORD    |
| Treasurer:         | Sheila Sammons KF5TDP |
| Activity Director: | Mark Pilkilton KF5UZW |
| Trustee:           | Rick Simmons K5ECX    |

### MAILING ADDRESS

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Grayson County Amateur Radio Club  
P.O. Box 642  
Sherman, Texas 75091

### NEWSLETTER

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|   |  |
|---|--|
| Published:  | Monthly via e-mail   |
| Editor:   | Michael Bernier KF5NPM   |
| To Submit News<br>or to Add/Remove<br>from E-Mail List: | Send E-Mail to<br><a href="mailto:KF5NPM@GMAIL.COM">KF5NPM@GMAIL.COM</a> |
| Submission<br>Deadline:                                 | 12 midnight on the Sunday<br>following each monthly meeting              |

### MEETINGS

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

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

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|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| Individual:          | \$20.00/yr |
| Family:              | \$30.00/yr |
| Associate (non-Ham): | \$15.00/yr |

**Memberships are from January 1 – December 31**

### WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

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|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Address:   | <a href="http://www.graysoncountyar.com">www.graysoncountyar.com</a>             |
| Webmaster: | Ben Sly KF5OEB   |
| Facebook   | <a href="http://www.facebook.com/groups/K5GCC">www.facebook.com/groups/K5GCC</a> |
| Page:      |  |

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### DUES AND DONATIONS

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Membership dues are payable upon joining and renew on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Donations to support the club are always welcome. Dues and donations may be paid by cash or check at any monthly GCARC meeting and by mail, or by using a credit or debit card online at the GCARC website.

### GCARC, ARES, AND SKYWARN PATCHES

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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, we recommend ARES members place the ARES patch first 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

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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.

*"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

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## GCARC MEETING MINUTES

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### GCARC Monthly Meeting – March 18, 2016

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm

- Vice-President James Frank KW5CW lead the meeting as President Lee Sly N5SLY was out of town
- The Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Report from February were approved
- Please remember to pay your dues as soon as possible. You can pay by mailing a check, online through the website, or at the April meeting
- Rick Simmons K5ECX - ARES
  - We have had 2 ½ SKYWARN activations within a very short period of time, the ARES folks appreciate all those who were able to assist in tracking and reporting these storms
  - March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7 pm, there will be a face-to-face ARES meeting at the terminal building of the Sherman Municipal Airport; the state representative for disaster coordination will be speaking about how that system works
- Our first special event is coming up in May, the Perrin Field Special Event. Remember it will be 9 days this year to allow more club members to participate. Please contact Lee Sly to let him know if you plan on participating.
- CW classes began in February, there will be some changes to the time schedule due to changes in James' schedule. More information will be forthcoming.
- James brought up the possibility of Intermediate and Advanced CW classes. He defined the basics of each level:

Basic/Introductory, you should be able to within 2 months:

- learn 26 letters and 0-9
- demonstrate ability to master common pronunciation marks
- copy groups of letters and numbers at 13-15 WPM
- take a short test to obtain certificate

Intermediate, you should be able to within 2 months:

- display continuity of sending and receiving at 20 WMP
- prepare to be competitive on the air
- familiarize yourself with the most popular CW contests
- take a test to obtain certificate

Advanced, you should be able to:

- pass a 20 WPM test to get into the class
  - be able to send/receive 25-30 WPM by end of class
  - be able to successfully participate in CW contests
  - this class is very demanding of your time and skills
  - you will be required to study lengthy drills
  - practice learning how to "misspell" words for ease/speed of transmission
- James would like to get the club's name out there as a club that also does CW
  - Regular meeting closed at 7:30
  - Mark Pilkilton KF5UZW followed by giving a demonstration on using a Raspberry Pi

The next meeting will be on Friday, April 15, 2016 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stacy Branam W5ORD  
GCARC Secretary

## GCARC TREASURER'S REPORT

Bank Balance as of 3.18.16 Club Meeting

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Operating Fund Beginning Bal | 1,771.53 |
| Funds Received               |          |
| Dues                         | 140.00   |
| Patches                      | 20.00    |
| Less expenses                |          |
| Website Renewal              | 96.00    |
| Operating Fund Balance       | 1,835.53 |

\*\* 28 Members            YTD

Available Equipment Funds            86.05

Funds Received

Less expenditures

Equipment Fund Balance            86.05

### OPERATING BUDGET

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Post Office Box                | 0.00   |
| Checks                         | 0.00   |
| Website                        | 0.00   |
| <i>Special Events Deposit</i>  |        |
| Denison Main Street            | 75.00  |
| V.A. Fal-dur-All               | 35.00  |
| RR Bridge War                  | 50.00  |
| <i>Food for Special Events</i> |        |
| Perrin Field                   | 65.00  |
| AARL Field Day                 | 65.00  |
| RR Bridge War                  | 65.00  |
| Eisenhower Birthday            | 50.00  |
| Christmas Dinner               | 75.00  |
| <i>Donations</i>               |        |
| Perrin Museum                  | 50.00  |
| Kiwanis/Bike Rally             | 250.00 |
| Toys For Tots                  | 100.00 |
| <i>Total</i>                   | 880.00 |

### EQUIPMENT NEEDS

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Amount Budgeted | 0 |
|-----------------|---|

Ending Bank Balance  
as of March 18, 2016            1,921.58  
Club Meeting

Sheila Sammons KF5TDP  
GCARC Treasurer

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## CLUB MEETINGS, LOCAL ACTIVITIES, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

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### Club Meetings

#### **Grayson County Amateur Radio Club (GCARC)**

3<sup>rd</sup> Friday at 7:00pm

Grayson County Courthouse 2<sup>nd</sup> floor assembly room, 100 West Houston Street, Sherman TX

<http://www.k5gcc.org>

#### **Cooke County Amateur Radio Club (CCARC)**

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 7:00pm

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

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

#### **Durant Amateur Repeater Association (DARA)**

3<sup>rd</sup> 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)**

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday at 9:00am

First Presbyterian Church, 818 North Main Street, Bonham TX

<http://www.k5frc.org>

#### **McKinney Amateur Radio Club (MARC)**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00pm

Spring Creek Barbecue, 1993 North Central Expressway, McKinney TX

<http://www.mckinneyarc.org>

#### **Quarter Century Wireless Association (QCWA) Chapter 41**

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday at 11:00am

Midway Point Restaurant, 12801 Midway Road, Dallas TX

<http://www.texasqcwa41.org>

### ARES® / SKYWARN®

#### **Grayson County ARES® Training**

4<sup>th</sup> 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>

### Ragchewing & Other Informal Meetings

#### **Ham Talk at The Java Stop**

Every Saturday 11:00am-2:00pm

The Java Stop Café, 5700 North FM 1417, Sherman TX

<http://www.facebook.com/thejavastop>

### VE Testing Sessions

#### **Texoma VE Team – Bi-Monthly Testing**

1<sup>st</sup> 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@arll.net](mailto:nt7c@arll.net)

#### **Durant Amateur Repeater Association – Monthly Testing**

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 8:00pm (following the DARA monthly meeting)

Bryan County Emergency Management, 2808 Enterprise Drive, Durant OK

Contact: Jim K5BNK ([jharmon1940@gmail.com](mailto:jharmon1940@gmail.com))

#### **Texoma Amateur Radio Association – Bi-Monthly Testing**

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each odd-numbered month (Mar / May / Jul / Sep / Nov) at 2:pm

The Java Stop Café, 5700 North FM 1417, Sherman TX

Contact: Dave K5YM (281) 743-7478 or [k5ym@yahoo.com](mailto:k5ym@yahoo.com)

#### **Fannin County Amateur Radio Club – Appointment-Only Testing**

First Presbyterian Church, 818 North Main Street, Bonham TX

Contact David WA0URJ ([wa0urj@yahoo.com](mailto:wa0urj@yahoo.com)) to schedule a session

## Hamfests

### **Durant Amateur Repeater Association (DARA) Annual Tailgate/Swap Meet**

April 2, 2016 8:00am

Albert Park (Washington St. off U.S. 75), Durant OK

Free admission, free tailgate space, free coffee and donuts

### **HamEXPO**

April 15-16, 2016

Bell County EXPO Center, 301 West Loop 121, Belton TX

Talk-In: 146.820 (123.0 PL)

Public Contact: John Hobson WD5BFS (254) 338-8620 or [expo@tarc.org](mailto:expo@tarc.org)

Website: <http://tarc.org/hamexpo>

### **Ham-Com**

June 10-11, 2016 (Friday and Saturday 8:00am-5:00pm)

VE Testing: TBA

Irving Convention Center, 500 W Las Colinas Blvd, Irving TX

Talk-In: 146.720 (110.9 PL)

Public Contact: Jim McClellan N5MIJ (214) 934-9916 or [commercial@hamcom.org](mailto:commercial@hamcom.org)

Website: [www.hamcom.org](http://www.hamcom.org)

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## **CW CORNER**

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The Basic CW class is moving right along and is now heading into its fifth class this year. The next class will be on Saturday - March 26th to begin at 9:30AM instead of the usual 8:30AM time. Because of my work schedule that has changed requiring me to work weekends, I will need the extra time to get out of work and make it directly to class.

The class has been quite challenging to students of this class, mainly because of the choice of letters to review during the sessions. These characters haven't been chosen by accident, as they are sometimes quite similar or exactly opposites in their formation of sounds. This selection will require you to learn each letter formation so that you should not forget them, and the key will be if you study the audio files that were sent for practice after the weekly sessions. Practice makes perfect, and you will acquire a big sense of accomplishment if you can copy code after this class at 13-15 WPM. That's just 2 months of time from the first class to the last class.

The goals of each of the 3 classes I can teach can be summarized into the following....

The present class, or **Basic Class** is not stressful, and it exists basically to learn the 26 letters of the alphabet and 10 numbers 0 through 9, also to learn a few of the commonly used pronunciation marks, such as the period, comma, and question mark. At the end of the class, you are now required to demonstrate your ability to know these characters, and in turn you can qualify for a certificate sponsored by the GCARC demonstrating your ability by attending a minimum of 1 class passing the short quiz. You will be able to copy groups of letters and numbers at a speed of approximately 13-15 words a minute upon completion of this class, and this would be accomplished in approximately 2 months. This basically gets you in the door regarding CW. You will know by the end of this class if you like CW, or if you want to further your skills, and in that case we have the next level.

The next class, called the **Intermediate Class** will be as follows...

Continuity of sending and receiving CW at a minimum of 20 WPM with an accelerated goal of receiving up to 25 WPM. This will be accomplished within 2 months, which should be ample time to better your speed and start having lots of fun doing it. This class will prepare you to be competitive in contests, and will familiarize you with the most popular contests that also use the mode of CW for transmission. Another certificate will be available after completion on this course, and you will be required to show you can send and receive CW using a Bencher paddle similar to the one that I use in class sending between 15-20WPM.

The last class that I will teach is called the **Advanced Class.**

You do not have to have previously taken either the Basic or Intermediate class course to take the Advanced class course, but there is a requirement. It will be to successfully pass a 20 WPM quiz at the beginning of the course. There will be no exceptions to this requirement and before the course is finished, you will easily send and receive 25-30WPM. The goal of this course is to advance your skills sending CW, and to prepare you to be successful in participating in contests. One of the goals of this course is to make sure that you are very good at using the J-38 straight key. The J-38 straight key has its purposes, especially in contests, and will be explained further if this class actually takes place. Due to the club schedule for the rest of this year, the chances of either an intermediate or advanced class course is unlikely. But if a few of the CW enthusiasts in this club really want to experience the next class level, then let's get together and make it happen.

I must remind you that I have a minimum of 50 years of experience with CW, and I would be very demanding of your time and skills in the advanced class course, and your ability to study lengthy drills, in the form of audio files that I will constantly send you. I will not expect you to waste my time in this class and it may be a little stressful. It is **ONLY** for the serious CW operator. In this class especially, the more you practice, the more you will succeed. I expect every student in this class to make a sincere effort to listen to every practice session that I send, as by this time you will be weaned off of the Koch method to the James Frank method, which is just straight hard core copying of code at high speed not using a computer and learning to respond to others at their higher speed, especially in contest situations under difficult band conditions. You will also learn to misspell in this class, which is also a requirement, so that you can actually write down on paper what you are receiving at fairly high speeds (20-25WPM).

When we finally have a group of hams in this club that can truly send and receive CW at higher speeds, I would like to get this club on the map regarding contest operation. That is my ultimate goal. Yes, many people participate in contests like Field Day because they want to have fun and yap with their friends, and not be concerned if they actually can win a contest, or even know where they actually stand in the contest that they operate. But this select group of hams will be competitive in the CW contest that they operate, and really experience ultimate CW operation.

With just 3 classes left until the final day when you take the final quiz to qualify for the next CW certificate on April 23rd, I encourage anyone who hasn't attended a class to date to still come and witness a CW session. It's different, and a lot of fun!

**Next class - March 26th - 9:30AM - Grayson County Court House.**

See you there!

James Frank - KW5CW  
GCARC Vice President

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## HELPING HAMS

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The idea behind Helping Hams is simple – all hams need a little help sometimes, but they might not know who can help them. Our club has many talented members, with some better at certain jobs than others. What we hope to do here is match up hams needing help with other hams who have the skills to help them. Working together, we can all help our fellow hams and encourage them to continue pursuing their interests in this wonderful hobby.

The currently-requested needs are listed below. If you have a need, or know of a ham with a need, or if you or someone you know can help, contact our newsletter editor by sending an e-mail to [kf5npm@gmail.com](mailto:kf5npm@gmail.com). Be sure to include the following: 1) Who needs the help and how to contact them; 2) What needs to be done; 3) When can someone come out to do the work; and 4) Where is the location of the work that needs to be done. **You don't have to be a member of GCARC to ask for help or make an offer to help.** We're all in this together – that's what the hobby is all about!

**Current Requests:**

Bennie K5DIZ      Antenna install

Bob Sholl          Needs help with a rotator on a 100' tower. Will probably be scheduled for the  
W5DSA              spring.

Sherman  
Davy Ln, Denison

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## SWAP MEET

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*(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](mailto:kf5npm@gmail.com). Photographs are encouraged. There is no charge for listings, and you do not need to be a member of GCARC to participate.*

### FOR SALE: Kenwood TS-440S

Kenwood TS-440S in like new condition. Includes microphone.  
Asking \$350.00 but will consider offers.

Contact: Joe Denney WD5JME  
Phone: (903) 819-5843

### FOR SALE: Yaesu FT-950

Yaesu FT-950 in excellent condition. Includes original box, manual, stock mic, & power cord.  
Asking \$925.00. Local pick up in the Sherman area or I will deliver to DFW area.

Contact: David Reeder WA0URJ  
Phone: (972) 658-6773  
E-Mail: [wa0urj@yahoo.com](mailto:wa0urj@yahoo.com)

### FOR SALE AS IS: Assorted Electronics/Test Equipment

The following items were donated to GCARC and are in need of a new home. No set price per piece – make us an offer!

- Heathkit RF Signal Generator
- Square Wave Generator Model 71
- Broel & Kjoer Voltmeter
- Sierra Electronic Corp. Carrier Frequency Voltmeter 104A
- Polytechnic Research Heterodyne Frequency Meter Type 504

**NOTE: These have not been tested and are offered “as is” with no refunds.**

Contact: Lee Sly N5SLY  
E-mail: [lee.n5sly@gmail.com](mailto:lee.n5sly@gmail.com)

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## NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF AMATEUR RADIO

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### Armed Forces Day 2016 Communication Test To Include Direct Military-Ham Contact on 60 Meters

This year's Armed Forces Day Crossband Communication Test on Saturday, May 14, will include a significant new wrinkle: Select military stations will be using 60 meter interoperability channels to communicate *directly* with Amateur Radio stations on the band. Back this year, select military stations will use crossband Automatic Link Establishment (2G ALE) communication as well as MIL-STD Serial PSK to send the Secretary of Defense Armed Forces Day message. Armed Forces Day 2016 is Saturday, May 21, but the radio event is held earlier to avoid conflicting with Dayton [Hamvention](#), May 20-22.

The annual Armed Forces Day Communication Test is an opportunity to exercise two-way communication capability between Amateur Radio and military stations using a variety of modes, including SSB and CW as well as digital modes. The annual event gives participants -- including shortwave listeners (SWLs) -- an opportunity to demonstrate their technical skills, and to receive recognition from the appropriate military radio station.

QSL cards will be provided to all stations that make contact with the military stations. The Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard cosponsor the joint military/Amateur Radio exercise, with military stations transmitting on military frequencies and listening on Amateur Radio bands.

Amateur Radio stations and Short Wave Listeners interested in trying the MIL-STD Serial PSK mode can [download](#) the software program, *MS-DMT*.

Full details about this year's Armed Forces Day radio activities — including stations, frequencies, times, and modes of operation — will be [posted](#) by April 12 as well as on the US Army MARS [Facebook page](#).

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

## U.S. Amateur Radio Numbers Continue To Soar

Amateur Radio is alive and well! Growth in the US continued in 2015, with a record 735,405 licensees in the FCC's Universal Licensing System ([ULS](#)) database by the end of the year. That's up 9,130 over December 2014, a 1.2 percent rise, continuing a steady increase in the Amateur Radio population in every year since 2007. In 2014, the Amateur Radio ranks grew by a net 8,149 licensees. The [figures](#), compiled by Joe Speroni, AH0A, on his FCC Amateur Radio Statistics web pages, exclude expired licenses that are within the 2-year grace period, and club station licenses. Compared with the same month 10 years ago, the Amateur Radio population in the US has expanded by 72,805 licensees -- or nearly 11 percent.

As expected, the biggest growth by license class was in Technician licensees, which rose by 6,570 in 2015. General ranks increased by 3,079, and Amateur Extra numbers went up by 3,496. The 2015 overall numbers faltered a little in April before rebounding in July. The introduction of a new General class question pool on July 1 appeared to have only a slight effect on month-to-month numbers in that license class. ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, said 2015 was another banner year for ARRL VEC-sponsored test sessions.

"For the second year in a row, we have conducted more than 7,000 Amateur Radio exam sessions in a year, an important milestone for the ARRL VEC," she said. "A total of 7,358 ARRL-sponsored exam sessions were administered in 2015, compared to 7,216 in 2014. The number of exam applicants was down slightly in 2015, compared to the previous year, and the number of examination elements administered also dipped slightly, she noted.

"Since 2014 was a record-setting year, the numbers of 2015 examinees didn't drop so much as return to more typical levels," she explained.

Somma pointed out that the ARRL-VEC also processed and filed nearly 10,100 license renewals and address changes for members in 2015. This is a free service to ARRL members.

Technician licensees still comprise a little less than one-half of the US Amateur Radio population. As of December 31, some 47,850 Advanced and 10,800 Novice licensees remained in the FCC database. The FCC no longer issues Advanced and Novice licenses, and their numbers continue to decline.

Once again, California far and away was home to the largest number of licensees among the 50 states, with 103,938 at the end of 2015, up from 102,735 at the end of 2014. North Dakota remained the state with the fewest number of Amateur

Radio licensees, with 1,510, up very slightly over the previous 12 months. Club station licenses in the US number 11,599 according to Speroni's web pages.

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

## **ARES, SKYWARN Volunteers Respond to Heavy Rain, Flooding in Louisiana**

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and [SKYWARN](#) volunteers in Louisiana assisted the National Weather Service (NWS), as record-setting rainfall led to severe and widespread flooding. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved a disaster declaration for the state. Region 7 District Emergency Coordinator John Mark Robertson, K5JMR, in the Shreveport-Bossier City area, said Amateur Radio involvement began on March 8, when the NWS-Shreveport Office requested a SKYWARN activation during a tornado watch. For the next 17 hours, Robertson reported, a group of volunteers handled weather-spotting duties over linked repeaters, filing some 70 reports. Their coverage included parts of Texas and Arkansas. The severe weather included hail as well as major flooding that closed Interstate 20 in three Louisiana parishes and inundated entire neighborhoods. On March 10, the ARES team in Tangipahoa Parish in southeastern Louisiana was active for nearly 2 days in response to heavy rain and flooding.

"Local hams operating from their fixed stations in homes, on portable HTs, and mobile provided updates on local conditions and were able to offer road reports to travelers on the state highways and Interstate 12, which crosses all of the major rivers in our area," ARES Region 9 DEC Bob Priez WB5FBS, told ARRL. He said the Tangipahoa, Tickfaw, Tchefuncte, and Bogue Falaya rivers, as well as numerous streams and waterways, were well above flood stage by the afternoon of March 11.

"We were able to receive and send weather bulletins and flood conditions to and from the NWS in Slidell, Louisiana, using our 147.000 repeater and the Slidell 147.270 repeater. The 147.000 repeater also provided communication with the EOC at Southeastern Louisiana University and Tangipahoa Parish EOC in Amite, Louisiana," he said. Fixed stations used packet radio on VHF as well as conventional e-mail to relay NWS weather bulletins and to forward local reports to NWS.

Priez said the March activation was the third for his ARES crew since two events in February, when the area was hit with heavy rain and wind. He said that event gave the group the opportunity to test recently revised plans to interface directly with the NWS Office in Slidell via repeaters in Tangipahoa and St Tammany parishes and via packet. "This plan proved really effective in the February 23 event, which, in addition to rains and winds, also spawned numerous tornadoes across the southeast region," Priez said. "Our widespread ham radio observers were able to send real-time reports of tornado activity in Livingston, Montpelier, and Convent, and from Washington and St John parishes in Louisiana, and also from southwestern Mississippi." The group also kept in contact with the Southeastern Louisiana University EOC and the Tangipahoa Parish EOC via the local VHF repeater.

On March 13, Robertson said three SKYWARN volunteers activated in the Shreveport-Bossier City area in response to severe weather, posting 25 messages dealing with tornado watches and warnings, reports of hail, and continued major flooding.

According to the National Weather Service, the highest reported rainfall total was southeast of Monroe -- "a whopping 26.96 inches!" The NWS has [posted](#) rainfall totals for the March 8-12 period. The flooding has led to road closings over a wide area, including part of Interstate 10 in Texas, and law enforcement personnel have been using boats to reach and rescue stranded residents.

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

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## LOCAL RADIO NETS

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### 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month due to the DARA monthly meeting.

#### **Fannin County ARC Weekly Net**

Tuesdays 8:00pm CT on the 147.200+ (100.0 PL) repeater.

This is an informal information net.

#### **McKinney 6 meter AM Net**

Wednesdays 10:00pm CT on 50.400MHz

#### **Ladies Net**

Thursdays 7:00pm CT on the 147.000+ (100.0 PL) repeater.

Net Control: 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**

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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**

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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**

1<sup>st</sup> 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**

2<sup>nd</sup> 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**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday at 9:00pm CT on the 146.740- (110.9 PL) repeater.

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## AREA REPEATERS

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|                   |   |                         |                               |  |                  |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <b>Sherman TX</b> | 147.000+ MHz (100.0 PL)<br>147.280+ MHz (107.2 PL)<br>444.750+ MHz (100.0 PL)               | W5RVT<br>W5COP<br>W5RVT | <b>Gainesville TX</b>         | 147.340+ MHz (100.0 PL)  | WB5FHI           |
| <b>Allen TX</b>   | 145.350- MHz (100.0 PL)   | N5GI                    | <del><b>Kingston OK</b></del> | <del>146.085- MHz (103.5 PL)</del><br>(currently out of service) | <del>K5BQC</del> |
| <b>Bonham TX</b>  | 145.470- MHz (100.0 PL)<br>147.200+ MHz (100.0 PL)<br>443.750+ MHz (100.0 PL)               | K5FRC<br>K5FRC<br>K5FRC | <b>McKinney TX</b>            | 146.740- MHz (110.9 PL)  | W5MRC            |
| <b>Denison TX</b> | 145.330- MHz (100.0 PL)   | W5DWH                   | <b>Melissa TX</b>             | 443.200+ MHz (100.0 PL)  | W5MRA            |
| <b>Durant OK</b>  | 147.390+ MHz (118.8 PL)<br><del>147.255+ MHz (114.8 PL)</del><br>(currently out of service) | K5KIE<br>K5CGE          | <b>Paris TX</b>               | 146.760- MHz (203.5 PL)  | WB5RDD           |
|                   |   |                         | <b>Rosston TX</b>             | 145.490- MHz (85.4 PL)   | WD5U             |
|                   |   |                         | <b>Van Alstyne TX</b>         | 443.800+ MHz (103.5 PL)  | W5VAL            |
|                   |   |                         | <b>Whitesboro TX</b>          | 442.875+ MHz (100.0 PL)  |                  |

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## GRAYSON COUNTY ARES AND RACES

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### Sparks, Crackles, and Other Random Thoughts

By Rick Simmons K5ECX  
Grayson County ARRL EC

#### It's SKYWARN Season!

What's that noise? Oh, this bed is so nice and warm... ZZZZZ... what's that noise? It's my text alert... must be a bug on one of the security cameras, it's still dark... ZZZZZ... Darn there it is again, just the repeat of the camera bug alert... wait, two alerts in a row, Darn what's going on? Ughh, wake up, uggh... "New event. Severe Thunderstorm warning from..." UH oh, when did that happen, no watch? I thought it wasn't supposed to rain this morning, much less be severe. Cobwebs not clearing well in my head... wait, who has the SKYWARN Net? Oh crud, it's me... 😞

So that's how my morning started one day a couple of weeks ago. And thus began HAIL week. We had several activations and numerous reports of various sizes of hail, hail coverage, and for some folks hailed cars. It was surprise attack from the weather gods and provided some tests of our ability to respond while caught flat footed. You all did really well, and though we didn't have a great number of spotters that very early morning we were effective in providing information to the Local EOM team and the NWS on which they could base sound decisions as to their response to changing weather.



As a result of some of that weather, I had a chance to participate in a damage assessment with our county EOM team and with NWS in their investigations as to whether tornadic activity was present in the Whitesboro area. Both increased my knowledge of these processes and a big limitation in our "view."

In the damage assessment the focus was an area on Highway 377 south of town. By observing direction of damage and debris the wind appeared to be from SW to NE, and was apparent mostly in the spotty debris found as it crossed roads. Everything from damaged limbs, trees and small structures yielded clues as to the path of damage. Fortunately in this area no severe damage occurred to homes, nor were there any people hurt. Later that day the NWS representative came up to review the sites and determined from the debris pattern and other visible damage patterns there was no tornado but instead high wind, maybe a microburst. Wind lays debris out in a line, while a tornado will mix debris up and lay it every which way with no discernible pattern other than when viewed at a more area type view. Then we moved to an area northwest of town I had not heard about, but the NWS and Local EOM had. There was substantial damage to a barn, several smaller sheds and fences. Some shingles were blown off houses and a few trees were down. Again, no tornado. But, this area pointed out to me how big our county is and how little we see as spotters. Our view is limited -- earth curvature, trees, buildings, terrain, etc.

Darkness is a horrible time to try and spot; mobiles even from hilltops can't see very well. Our entire spotter corps is valuable. Never think that just because you spot from home that your info or "no report" are not valuable. NO reports mean that it's not happening in your area, which is good for you but may be bad for another area where it is happening. This also allows the rest of the team to focus on areas where information is indicating a more substantial event. There is no prize for spotting a tornado in your backyard! Just a lot of work and possibility of loss of life. Be glad you didn't have to report. For the folks who go mobile I can't emphasize enough to pay attention to the weather: wind, temperature, or if there are drastic changes that may be because you're in the inflow or outflow, think about what that means and report. Review your SKYWARN training and the info sheet we received. It may help the NWS with understanding what they are seeing with their tools. Remember, their radar can't see the lower 6,000-8,000 feet of a storm up here, and you provide great clues to them with good reporting.

Thanks for your time and efforts to help protect our communities!

73  
Rick  
K5ECX