



GRAYSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWS

NOVEMBER 2017

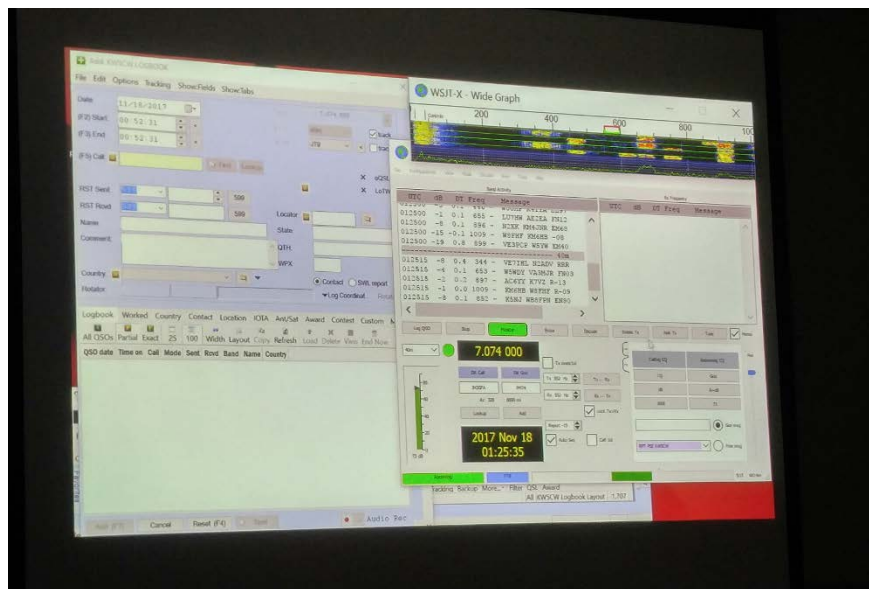
WWW.GRAYSONCOUNTYARC.COM

VOL. 23, No. 11

THE PRESIDENT'S QSO

Hello there,

Our club President Mark KF5UZW wasn't available to provide a letter for us this month. If he had been, most likely he would have talked about the excellent presentation on the new FT8 digital mode by James KW5CW at this month's meeting, including a live demonstration. Here's a photo I tried to take of the computer screen James was displaying during the demo; hopefully you can make out at least some of the screen:



There's more discussion about this and other new digital modes later on in this issue.

The next meeting in December will be the club's annual Christmas Dinner. As I understand it, the club will be providing the meats (turkey, ham, etc.) and everyone is asked to bring in a side dish or dessert to share. If this or anything else about the event changes, it will be posted on the club's Facebook page (a link to it is on Page 2).

73,
Mike Bernier KF5NPM
GCARC Newsletter Editor

CLUB INFORMATION

OFFICERS

President: Mark Pilkilton KF5UZW
Vice President: James Frank KW5CW
Secretaries: Stacy Branam W5ORD
Nancy Pierce KG5PIZ
Treasurer: Marvin Schiavone KG5GMA
Activity Director: Trevor Reed KG5BFI
Trustee: Rick Simmons K5ECX

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

MAILING ADDRESS

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

MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

Memberships are from January 1 – December 31

NEWSLETTER

Published: Monthly via e-mail
Editor: Mike Bernier KF5NPM
To submit news or Send E-Mail to
e-mail changes: KF5NPM@gmail.com
Submission 12 midnight on the Sunday
Deadline: following each monthly meeting

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Address: www.graysoncountyar.com
Webmaster: Ben Sly KF5OEB
Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/K5GCC
Page:

DUES AND DONATIONS

Membership dues are payable upon joining and renew on January 1st 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

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

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

GCARC MEETING MINUTES

GCARC Meeting Minutes – 17 November 2017

- Called to order 7:00pm
- October Minutes and Treasurer's report motioned by Roy Reed AF5VA / Sheila Sammons KF5TDP; all approved
- The club's TS-2000 radio was shipped off for repair and is on its way back; labor was \$195, parts were \$50 + shipping costs. Mark Pilkilton KF5UZW will be reimbursed for costs, shipping was donated by Jim McGlynn K5QOI
- Perrin Museum Tower Project: the antenna bracket will be attached to the left side of the conex box outside the museum building. After the bracket is installed the project will continue.
- Elections for 2018 Officers
 - President: Trevor Reed KG5BFI
 - Vice President: Originally James Frank KW5CW but now Lee Sly N5SLY
 - Secretary: Jim McGlynn K5QOI
 - Treasurer: Marvin Schiavone KG5GMA
 - Event Coordinator: Andrew Bentley KG5SKM
 - Newsletter Editor: James Frank KW5CW(Note: Event Coordinator and Newsletter Editor are not elected officer positions, but are appointed by the club's officers and serve at the pleasure of the club)
- James Frank KW5CW then gave a presentation about the new digital mode FT8 that has only been out for about 3 months but is gaining popularity worldwide because it is a quick and efficient way to make digital contacts; it is not a chat mode, designed for quick contacts
- Meeting closed 8:15pm

The next meeting will be the club's annual Christmas Dinner on Friday, December 15, 2017 at 7:00pm in the Grayson County Courthouse, 2nd Floor Assembly Room, 100 W. Houston St., Sherman TX.

Respectfully submitted by
Stacy Branam W5ORD
GCARC Secretary

GCARC TREASURER'S REPORT

Bank Balance as of 11.01.2017 1,559.62

Operating Fund Beginning Bal 1,381.97

Deposits	Dues	Checks
		Cash
		Online
		Clothes

Less expenses

online fee

Operating Fund Balance 1,381.97

** Members YTD 41 (6 Free)

Available Equipment Funds 177.65

Donation

Less expenditures

Equipment Fund Balance 177.65

Ending Bank Balance
as of November 18, 2017 1,559.62

Marvin Schiavone KG5GMA
GCARC Treasurer

OPERATING BUDGET	
Post Office Box	64.00
Checks	9.25
Website	103.92
<i>Special Events Deposit</i>	
Perrin	50.00
<i>Food for Special Events</i>	
<i>Donations</i>	
Memorials	
Total	227.17

EQUIPMENT NEEDS	
Tower Bracket	151.89
Amount Budgeted	0

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.graysoncountyar.com>
- 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>
- 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>
- 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>
- GCARC Events**
- Annual Christmas Dinner**
Friday, December 15, 2017 7:00pm
Grayson County Courthouse 2nd floor assembly room, 100 West Houston Street, Sherman TX
Please bring a side dish or dessert to share
- 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@arrl.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 (jharmon1940@gmail.com)
- 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 and
Swap Meets**

Cowtown Hamfest (ARRL North Texas Section Convention)

January 19-20, 2018 (Friday 3:00pm-7:00pm, Saturday 7:00am-3:00pm)

VE Testing available – contact site for testing times

Forest Hill Civic & Convention Center, 6901 Wichita Street, Forest Hill, TX

Talk-In: 146.940 (110.9 PL)

Public Contact: David Forbes KC5UYR, (817) 925-5126 or kc5yur@compuserve.com

Website: <http://cowtownhamfest.com>

CW CORNER

CW is a form of communication that is unique in its own way, yet it is now considered an old form of communication these days. Operators that use the mode are rapidly moving down in number. Sometimes I feel like an endangered species, as eventually CW may be a thing of the past. But for as long as I'm living, it should be around. My wife and I kid around sometimes and she tells me that I will live longer than her. Since she made that stupid statement, I will return with another stupid statement telling her that I'll live to be 100. That may be a long time to many, but for me that's only 34 years from now. So if I'm accurate, CW will be around for at least another 34 years. But with the rapid inventions of various modes of operation for the ham radio operator, one can only guess what the band plan may be 34 years from now. At the present time, we have CW, AM, SSB, FM, RTTY45, RTTY50 RTTY75, FSK31, FSK63, FSK125, FT4, FT8, JT9, JT65 and probably others that I do not have listed here. By the year 2052 when I turn 100 years old, there most likely will be another 15 to 20 modes of operation. But for me now, I'm just having fun on the modes that we have. I hope others within our club will try to expand their horizons within amateur radio and venture into a mode that they never wanted to try in the past. Some have tried CW, and now they understand if they want to go further with it. For me, finally I broke out of my shell and tried digital, and found out that it is a lot of fun, especially FT8. I put on a little live demonstration at the last club meeting, and a few of the members came up to me afterwards and told me that they were going to give it a try.

Starting on March 1st of 2018, I will begin my retirement. At that time I will be playing full-time with Amateur radio, and I plan on expanding my horizons in the hobby. For example, I never tried to work PSK31, and that's been around a while. One funny thing happened the other night. I was cleaning the radio room and picked up my Kenwood TS-590 box. The microphone fell onto the floor and obviously I had to pick it up. Ok, what should I do with it? Well, I elected to plug it into the radio for the very first time, then I did the unspeakable. I changed modes of my radio to 7.175 mhz - LSB. To my surprise I found some DX on that frequency on LSB, advertised on a DX Cluster that seemed to be working the world. His call was TO2SP, from Saint Barthelemy Island. I listened to the frequency for about 10 minutes and debated whether I should call him or not. Was I about to work SSB for the first time in about 40 years? Surely I wouldn't be able to work that station with a dipole mounted just 10 feet off the ground. Ok, ready or not, I decided to give it a shot. I bumped up my power from 10 Watts I was using for FT8 to a grand 25 watts. Just before I did, my heart raced a little, thinking how great it would be that my very first contact on SSB with this radio would be with someone of the Leeward islands about 200 miles SE of the British Virgin Islands called Saint Barthelemy Island.

I thought to myself that I could never work him because there was a pile of stations calling. OK. so here goes...

TO2SP TO2SP this is KW5CW Texas USA...

Oh my, just 1 second later he was calling me. Boy was I stoked. I could not believe it. I didn't think making a SSB contact would affect me so much. But here again, I tried something different from the norm, and I tried a mode that has been around for a long time and made my first contact with that mode in about 40 years. I don't know if SSB was even around 40 years ago, but CW surely was, because I was having the time of my life with it even back in the good ole days. I do know back then I was an avid operator on 75 meter AM phone.

Now, by just writing this article, I seem to miss CW operations. I'll make a few CW contacts tonight before turning it in.

At the meeting last week, I was given the privilege to be the new GCARC Newsletter editor. I have a lot of ideas for the publication, so I'm hoping that all will be happy with it. Since I'm retiring at the end of February and will not be the GCARC vice president in 2018 because of the term limitation, I'll have lots of time to work with it. The one thing I'm not

too keen with is the publication date of the newsletter, and I think it should be moved. We can discuss that at a future time, maybe at the next meeting in January 2018.

So the moral of this story is if this old dog can move away from CW and try something new, then others can do the same. How about if you give it a try?!!!!

Some of us should try and get off VHF/UHF and try the low bands sometime !!!!

The last time I looked, CW is not a requirement to work voice on the low-bands anymore.

73,
James Frank
KW5CW - GCARC Vice President

QSL MANAGER'S DESK

It's that time of year where we give thanks for the blessings we have, and this year is special for me because I have much to be thankful for. I'm thankful I got to take a ride on that Ford Tri Motor a couple of weeks ago...



But there was a problem. I woke up that morning not being able to see out of my right eye. Went to the eye doctor early the next week to learn that the retina had detached. Had eye surgery on Friday of that week. All went well and I'm confident that my vision will be back to "normal" after the recovery period. It takes 6 to 8 weeks. Very thankful that I had great doctors take care of this...and for my wonderful wife, Kathy, for taking care of me through all of this. I'm thankful for my friends and family for the support they have given me.

I'm very thankful to a couple of our club members who have done a great job over the years for the club...Mike KF5NPM, our Newsletter Editor and Stacy W5ORD, our Secretary. They are both stepping down this coming year. Thank you for jobs well done.

Mike has been posting some of the newsletters from other Amateur Radio clubs on our Facebook page and I noticed that many of them have given their newsletters names. I think it's time we give ours a name as well. What do you think? Here are a few names I'll throw out there for consideration...

- Communicator
- QSO
- Above the Noise
- Shack News
- Transmissions
- QUA K5GCC
- QBM K5GCC

I made a commitment that I would put together a "class" about what all the buttons and dials do on a radio, but that has been delayed because of my eye problem. It will get done next year.

For now I just want to wish each and every one of you a very Happy Thanksgiving and I'm looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

73
Lee Sly N5SLY

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. Photographs are encouraged. There is no charge for listings, and you do not need to be a member of GCARC to participate.

FOR SALE: Yaesu Fusion Radios

FTM-100 – asking \$225

FTM-400 – asking \$350

Both are in mint condition.

Contact: Barry - W5BGD

E-mail: barrydavidson0269@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

HELPING HAMS

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. 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	Sherman
Bob Sholl	Needs help with a rotator on a 100' tower.	Denison
W5DSA		
Sheila Sammons	Needs help with antenna repairs – damaged from falling tree limbs. Looking at	Sherman
KF5TDP	sometime later in the year.	
Mike Bernier	Needs help with replacing damaged HF antenna plus installing two additional	Denison
KF5NPM	antennas and grounding. Looking at sometime late in the year.	

NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF AMATEUR RADIO

SKYWARN Recognition Day Is Saturday, December 2



A heads up: [SKYWARN™](#) Recognition Day (SRD) will take place this year on Saturday, December 2 from 0000 until 2400 UTC (starts on the evening of Friday, December 1, in US time zones). During the SKYWARN Special Event, ham radio operators will set up stations at National Weather Service (NWS) offices and contact other radio amateurs around the world.

Participating Amateur Radio stations will exchange a brief description of their current weather with as many NWS-based stations as possible on 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meters plus 70 centimeters. Contacts via repeaters are permitted.

SRD was developed jointly in 1999 by the NWS and ARRL to celebrate the contributions SKYWARN volunteers make to the NWS mission – the protection of life and property. Amateur Radio operators, which comprise a large percentage of SKYWARN volunteers, also provide vital communication between the NWS and emergency managers, if normal communications become inoperative.

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

Year-Long NASA On The Air Event Kicks Off On December 11

The Amateur Radio clubs at National Aeronautics and Space Administration ([NASA](#)) centers around the US have invited the Amateur Radio community to join the NASA On The Air ([NOTA](#)) special event. NOTA gets under way in December 2017 and continues through December 2018. In addition to being the agency's 60th anniversary, 2018 will mark 50 years since NASA orbited the first human around the moon, and 20 years since the first elements of the International Space Station (ISS) were launched into low-Earth orbit.

Starting on Monday, December 11, 2017 (UTC), Amateur Radio club stations at various NASA centers and facilities will be on the air with special event operations to celebrate these monumental achievements, as well as current milestones.

Some clubs will offer commemorative QSL cards, and a special certificate will be available indicating the number of NASA club stations worked on various bands and modes.

“We plan to have a web-based system for you to check your points total and download a printable certificate at the end of the event in December 2018,” the NASA announcement said. “Points will be awarded for each center worked on each band and mode (phone, CW, digital, and ‘space’ modes – satellites, meteor scatter, EME, ISS APRS).” That would, of course, include contacts with any of the Amateur Radio stations on the ISS.

Key anniversaries during NOTA include the 45th anniversary of Apollo 17 on December 11, 2017, which kicks off the event; NASA’s founding on July 29, 1958; the 20th anniversary of the ISS first element launch on November 20, 1998; the 20th anniversary of the ISS Node 1 Launch on December 4, 1998, and the 50th anniversary of Apollo 8 – launched on December 21, 1968, and returned on December 27 – marking the end of the event.

Ham radio clubs at various NASA facilities will sponsor their own special events to commemorate and celebrate specific events.

“We hope to be on the air for casual contacts and contests as well. All contacts with NASA club stations will count toward your total,” the announcement said. “QSL cards can be requested from each club you work and details will be on the individual QRZ.com profile page for each club call sign.”

Center/Facility	Designator	Call Sign	State
Ames Research Center	ARC	NA6MF	California
Armstrong Flight Research Center	AFRC	NA6SA	California
Glenn Research Center	GRC	NA8SA	Ohio
Goddard Space Flight Center	GSFC	WA3NAN	Maryland
International Space Station	ISS	NA1SS, etc.	Earth orbit
Jet Propulsion Laboratory	JPL	W6VIO	California
Johnson Space Center	JSC	W5RRR	Texas
Kennedy Space Center	KSC	N1KSC	Florida
Langley Research Center	LARC	KG4NJA	Virginia
Marshall Space Flight Center	MSFC	NN4SA	Alabama
Stennis Space Center	SSC	TBD	Mississippi
Wallops Flight Facility	WFF	W4WFF	Virginia
White Sands Complex	WSC	N5BL	New Mexico

[More information](#) is on the NASA On The Air website. Participating Amateur Radio clubs, and the NASA On The Air (NOTA) event are independent of –and not officially sponsored by – NASA.

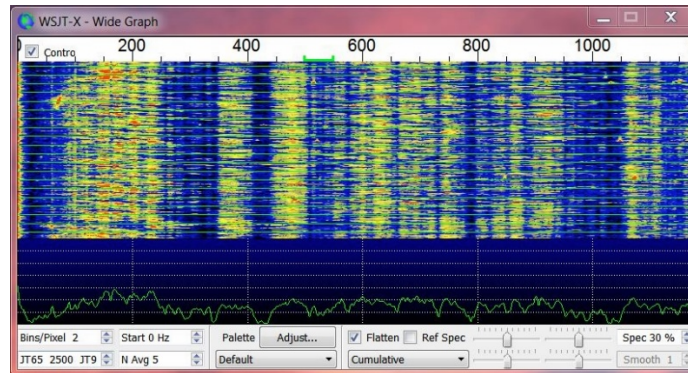
- Originally published online at ARRL.org

New Digital Modes Changing Complexion of Bands and Perhaps of Ham Radio

The wave of software-based digital modes over the past several years has altered the atmosphere of the HF bands. Some suggest the popularity of modes that make it possible to contact stations neither operator can even hear has resulted in fewer CW and SSB signals on bands like 6 meters and 160 meters. Traditional modes require far more interaction and effort on the part of the operator; the newer digital modes not so much. The recent advent of the still-beta “quick” FT8 mode, developed by Steve Franke, K9AN, and Joe Taylor, K1JT – the “F” and the “T” in the mode’s moniker – has brought this to a head. Some now wonder if FT8 marks the end of an era and the start of a new, more minimalist age.

“We’ve been as surprised as anyone about the rapid uptake of FT8 for making QSOs on the HF bands,” Taylor told ARRL. Rather than viewing FT8 as a total game-changer, he sees a dividing line between such digital modes and more traditional modes.

“SSB and CW are general-purpose modes,” Taylor asserted. “They are good for ragchewing, DXing, contesting, emergency communications, or whatever. FT8 and the other modes in [WSJT-X](#) are special-purpose modes. They are designed for making reliable, error-free contacts using very weak signals – in particular, signals that may be too weak for the more traditional modes to be usable, or even too weak to hear.”



Sample WSJT-X “waterfall” display

Taylor notes that the information exchanged in most FT8, JT65, and other digital-mode contacts “is little more than the bare minimum for what’s considered to be a valid contact.” In addition to call signs and signal reports, stations may exchange grid squares and acknowledgments.

Radio amateurs recently commented in response to a Top Band Reflector post, in which Steve Ireland, VK6VZ, averred that because of FT8, “160-meter DXing has changed, perhaps forever” in recent weeks. Ireland said he downloaded FT8 but just couldn’t bring himself to use it on the air. “My heart isn’t in it,” he wrote. “My computer will be talking to someone else’s computer, and there will be no sense of either a particular person’s way of sending CW or the tone of their voice. The human in radio has somehow been lost.”

In his [blog](#), Steve McDonald, VE7SL, compiled not only Ireland’s posts, but some responses to it, although not identified by name or call sign. One commenter suggested that the game-changing aspect of FT8 is that those who typically operate CW or SSB will gravitate to FT8. “The amount of activity on the FT8 frequency of any band is phenomenal,” the commenter observed. A few complained that no skill is involved in making contacts using computer-based digital modes.

Another suggested that FT8 is already falling victim to its own success, with too many stations crowding around the designated FT8 frequencies. Others were more philosophical, with remarks along the lines of this one: “It is allowing people who have smaller stations the opportunity to get on and use their radios and a computer to make contacts they never would have been able to make. This is great for ham radio!”

Taylor would agree. As he sees it, FT8 won’t replace modes such as CW or SSB. “Nevertheless, it’s clear that – at least in the short term – many hams enjoy making rapid-fire minimal QSOs with other hams, all over the world, using modest ham equipment,” he said. “For this purpose, FT8 shines.”

In a related “lightning talk” at the 2017 ARRL-TAPR Digital Communications Conference (DCC) earlier this year, ARRL Contributing Editor Ward Silver, N0AX, challenged his savvy audience to develop a keyboard-to-keyboard mode “between FT8 and PSK31” that would support casual and competitive operating, be more interference and noise tolerant, and be usable by those with “compromised” stations and antennas. He also challenged his listeners to develop a “smart” spectrum display that would identify signals by mode, so Amateur Radio could move away from the practice of setting aside specific frequencies for digital modes.

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

FCC Chairman Recognizes Amateur Radio in Praising those Assisting Puerto Rico

Wrapping up a 2-day visit to Puerto Rico earlier this month, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai (right) recognized Amateur Radio volunteers in praising those who turned out to help the stricken Commonwealth in the wake of Hurricane Maria.



“[T]he worst of tragedies can also bring out the best in people. I saw that firsthand during my 2 days in Puerto Rico,” Pai said. “Everyone is pitching in: The people of Puerto Rico helping their neighbors, hardworking Federal Emergency Management Agency staff – including communications personnel in Emergency Support Function #2 – the dedicated regulators of the Puerto Rico Telecommunications Regulatory Board, and the FCC’s own Roberto Mussenden, who has spent the past month away from his family on the mainland in order to help the island where he grew up.”

“Additionally, Amateur Radio operators, broadcasters, cable operators, fixed wireless companies, wireline carriers, and mobile providers have stepped up to the plate, working overtime to connect the disconnected,” Pai continued. “All of this work reflects the ethos I saw on many signs and t-shirts during my time on the island: ‘Puerto Rico Se Levanta’ [Puerto Rico is Rising].”

Pai said recovering from Hurricane Maria will require an all-hands-on-deck effort, and the FCC “remains committed to doing everything we can to help restore communications networks as quickly as possible.” He also expressed his belief that that “more funding will be needed” in the months ahead.

In October, the FCC granted ARRL’s request to waive current Amateur Radio rules to permit data transmissions at a higher symbol rate than currently permitted, in order to facilitate hurricane relief communications between the continental US and Puerto Rico. The temporary waiver is limited to Amateur Radio operators in Puerto Rico using PACTOR 3 and PACTOR 4 emissions, and to those radio amateurs in the continental US who are directly involved with HF hurricane relief communications involving Puerto Rico or the US Virgin Islands, the Commission said at the time.

During his stay in Puerto Rico, Pai visited various parts of San Juan and towns along the northeastern coast. He also inspected a tower site and associated infrastructure on mountains in El Yunque National Forest. That infrastructure serves a critical role in providing connectivity in the eastern part of Puerto Rico, particularly for first responders. While there, he met with President Sandra Torres López and Associate Member Alexandra Fernández Navarro of the Telecommunications Regulatory Board, attended a briefing hosted by FEMA and attended by staff from ESF-2, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Weather Service, the Small Business Administration, and others, and with representatives from numerous communications entities, including fixed wireless providers and broadcasters.

“The path to recovery has met several challenges, most notably the lack of power and functional infrastructure,” Pai said. “One thing is clear: Overcoming these challenges won’t be easy.”

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

Software Defined Radio (SDR) Pioneer Vanu Gopal Bose Has Died At 52



Software Defined Radio (SDR) pioneer Vanu Gopal Bose died on November 11 after suffering a sudden pulmonary embolism. He was 52. Bose was the son of Bose Corp founder Amar G. Bose, who died 4 years ago at 83.

Vanu Bose in 1998 founded Vanu Inc., which pioneered the commercialization of software defined radio and was the first company to receive FCC certification of an SDR in 2004. The firm’s technology grew out of Bose’s graduate research at MIT. Father and son both were MIT alumni.

Recently, Bose’s company deployed more than 40 Community Connect base stations in Puerto Rico to provide cellular service in the wake of two devastating hurricanes.

- Originally published online at ARRL.org

LOCAL RADIO NETS

Daily

Texas Slow Net (CW only)

Daily 7:45pm CT on 3.570 MHz

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

Weekly

South Texas Section ARES Net (HF)

Mondays 7:30pm CT on 3.873 MHz LSB

This is an information net open to South Texas (STX) Section ARES members. Other Amateur stations are welcome to listen in.

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 147.200+ (100.0 PL) repeater.

This is an informal information net.

McKinney 6 meter AM Net

Wednesdays 10:00pm CT on 50.400 MHz

Ladies Net

Thursdays 8:00pm 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

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 (HF)

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

North Texas Section ARES Net (HF)

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) 147.280+ MHz (107.2 PL) 444.750+ MHz (100.0 PL)	W5RVT W5COP W5RVT	Gainesville TX	147.340+ MHz (100.0 PL)	WB5FHI
Allen TX	145.350- MHz (100.0 PL)	N5GI	Kingston OK	146.085- MHz (103.5 PL) (currently out of service)	K5BQC
Bonham TX	147.200+ MHz (100.0 PL) 145.470- MHz (100.0 PL) 443.750+ MHz (100.0 PL)	K5FRC K5FRC K5FRC	McKinney TX	146.740- MHz (110.9 PL)	W5MRC
Denison TX	145.330- MHz (100.0 PL)	W5DWH	Melissa TX	443.200+ MHz (100.0 PL)	W5MRA
Durant OK	147.390+ MHz (118.8 PL) 147.255+ MHz (114.8 PL) (currently out of service)	K5KIE K5CGE	Paris TX	146.760- MHz (203.5 PL)	WB5RDD
			Rosston TX	145.490- MHz (85.4 PL)	WD5U
			Van Alstyne TX	443.800+ MHz (103.5 PL)	W5VAL
			Whitesboro TX	442.875+ MHz (100.0 PL)	WC5GC