



GRAYSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



GCARC
GRAYSON CO. TEXAS USA

Having Fun with Amateur Radio

February 2024

Vol 30 No. 2

Events
Coming Up

Next Scheduled Operating Event

Perrin Field
Special Event
May 18
thru May 24

1st and 3rd Sunday Nets

Dates/Net Control:

2/4 – Tamara – KI5ZIP

2/18–Ricky-KG5FDT

3/3–Michael–AB5MC

Time: 8:00 PM Local

Repeater: 147.000+

Next Regular Club Monthly Meeting

Date: Feb. 27th

Time: 7:00-8:45PM

Location

Texoma Council of

Governments

1117 Gallagher Rd.

Sherman, Texas

CW CLASS **COMMENCEMENT** **MARCH 4, 2024**

February 27th Monthly Meeting Presentation

Weather Safety
by
Roy Reed
AF5VA

PRESIDENT'S QSO

Are we having fun yet? Yes!

Wow, Michael Coffman AB5MC rocks! With his event planning and leadership skills, he really made everything flow smoothly during the Winter Field Day event! Even though he was under the weather and could only be there in seclusion for a short time, he still made it out to make some WINLINK contacts! The GCARC family cannot thank you enough! While the details are still coming in, we had a very successful event. Despite the cold days and freezing nights, we had at least 25 members come out and had 10 or more visitors! Also, the food was wonderful and, well, the ongoing chili feud continues with James Shippet taking 1st place!

Earlier in January we had a dynamic meeting that helped us prepare for Winter Field Day and spotlighted the new CW class that will begin in March. We also recognized James Shippet for his work as board President the past two years and his ongoing dedication as the current Vice President. He also designed and rolled out the new GCARC 30-year anniversary banner!

In addition, we had over 25 participants who helped us brainstorm ideas for an action plan for 2024. Your ideas were amazing! We discussed everything from the future of ham radio to dream purchases for the club. I was specifically impressed with the participation during group activities. We will be highlighting the results during the February meeting.

Speaking of the February meeting, please remember we have changed the date from the 20th to the 27th to encourage participation in the SKYWARN training. This will be held from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Grayson College Center for Workplace Learning on the 20th. During the GCARC club meeting on the 27th we will continue this theme as Roy Reed discusses weather safety.

What a wonderful start to 2024! Thanks to everyone!

73, Michael Higgins – KI5ZIQ

February Club Meeting

A yearly tradition in the GCARC is to re-familiarize each other with possible weather conditions and actions we must take to stay safe. Roy Reed – AF5VA will continue his traditional discussion on weather safety. Also, a discussion on the upcoming solar eclipse which begins on April 8th is a topic of a special event the GCARC could take part in this year. A new GCARC event may be in order. Let's discuss.

Note: The February Club Meeting Date is now February 27, 2024 – 4th Tuesday of the Month. The meeting was moved because of a same day conflict with Skywarn.

Upcoming Solar Eclipse

Look to the sky on April 8 as Texas and several other states to the northeast will experience a total solar eclipse. In fact, some locations will experience over 4 minutes of totality! And the eclipse is occurring just a few miles east of Sherman, in our backyard! I had the opportunity to experience a full eclipse in 2017, and it was an amazing event, even if it only lasted a few minutes. A few weeks ago, during an ARES net I was asked if the GCARC was planning an event that day. I thought it was a great idea and after further investigation, we found out there is an AARL event on that date. We hope to pull something together in the next few weeks as locations, parks and other venues are filling up, if not already full. The following link shows the total solar eclipse path. <https://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/map/2024-april-8>

This interactive site allows you to view specific locations and the duration of totality. This is a great tool to help you prepare for the event. We will keep you posted on Facebook and the GCARC website as we continue to plan for April 8. If you would like to be part of the planning for this event or have a great location to view the eclipse and would permit the GCARC to work the event, please let us know!

Member Focus for February – Michael Coffman – AB5MC

February's Member Focus is Michael Coffman (AB5MC). In his 20's he worked as a Paramedic and was introduced to the different radio bands and SKYWARN and kept a scanner to listen to it and fire and EMS as a hobby.



But it was only a few years ago that he looked into being a licensed amateur radio operator. Michael enjoys learning new modes of operating, how things work, and building new things. He says that the best part of the hobby is there is always something new to learn.



As far as our club goes, he loves that we are active in many different ways instead of focusing on just one thing. The openness of our club members to help each other always amazes him and has inspired him to operate outside his comfort zone and be more active in new ways.

Michael would like to see our club continue to be active with different events like we have done the past few years with fox hunts, antenna builds, solar projects, ARES Skywarn, and POTA groups. There is something for everyone, and being active has and will continue to draw interest and feed club growth that will expand our combined knowledge and skills. Michael's home set-up primarily consists of two HF and two VHF/UHF radios: an ICOM 756 Pro for general receiving and voice, a Yaesu FT-891 with Digirig (a digital modes interface) and a Microsoft Surface Pro in his go kit that is used for voice, digital work and Winlink email. There is also an Alnico DR-735T and Digirig on-the-go kit for vhf/uhf digital modes. He has a Yaesu FT-8100 for voice and general receiving and also uses an ICOM IC-2730A in his primary vehicle. He has a Yaesu FT3DR HT for APRS, that is also paired with a Mobilinkd (a highly mobile packet radio) TNC4 for portable Winlink and expanded APRS messaging. Club members appreciate Michael's contributions to the club, his leadership, and organizational skills (as demonstrated in his planning for Winter Field Day) and his kind friendship to all of us. Way to go, Michael!

Elmer's Corner

Antennas are one of the most intriguing but misunderstood products of amateur radio. If it has to do with operating a radio to make contacts, to talk to other hams, knowledge about antennas is a must. Without an antenna, the most expensive radio purchased would be just a boat anchor.

How many different types of antennas are there? Generally, there are directional antennas like beams, omnidirectional antennas like verticals, and wire antennas, highlighting the simplest form called the dipole, which is one of the most efficient antennas used today for bi-directional signal radiation. A dipole in an inverted-vee configuration radiates omnidirectional like a vertical but would be more significant for not-so-distant contacts such as NVIS operations, especially if mounted close to the ground. Verticals, on the other hand, work great for long distance communications, especially when mounted on the ground with multiple buried radials.

Then there are antennas that people are aware of but may never use, such as magnetic loop antennas. I have displayed my two magnetic loop antennas both in a classroom and in the field at Summer and Winter Field Days in the past. One is commercially made by Chameleon Antennas for 80 -10 meters, and the other is a homebrew magnetic loop that works on 20, 30 and 40 meters. Over the past 50+ years of my existence in this hobby, I never had experience with very small antennas except for my short 8-foot vertical for 40 meters, where the coax is not physically attached to the antenna, but inductively coupled to the coil. With the advent of the magnetic loop and activities such as Parks on the Air, I have discovered that very short, compromised antennas perform well, are quick and easy to set up, and it really opens your eyes to what different antennas can do. This year I will create articles that will help educate you on all various types of antennas.

Then there are antenna tuners. Originally, I was totally against them. But they are a must if you put up a non-resonant antenna such as an end-fed wire with a 9:1 unun attached. I've had success at home and at the parks with non-resonant antennas. But most amateurs use antenna tuners in their ham shacks, which is absolutely the worst place for its location. Why is that? The answer to that and other questions will be answered in future articles, made available in a [blog feature](#) on the club website that will be introduced soon. Writing a blog article can be done by anyone. What is your interest? Is it antennas, is it CW, is it SSB, is it Digital, UHF or VHF communications, or contesting? You can print your story. You can share your thoughts on any of these topics and display your experience you can share with others. We can all be Elmers if we want to. The neat thing is most of us perform as Elmers unknowingly, as most are willing to help others that ask for our help. Stay tuned to 'Elmers Corner' for some educational learning coming your way.

QSL Manager's Message

The position of QSL Manager with the Grayson County ARC is now open to anyone who wants to fill that position. I am stepping down at the end of the year. Why??? Very simply, I'm not getting any younger and it's time to turn these duties over to someone younger.

So, what do I do as QSL Manager? Here is a list of what the job entails... [click to learn more...](#)

At Last Month's 'Pretty Fun' Meeting...and In the Future...

With near record-breaking attendance, the meeting last month was the first meeting with our new officers, specifically with our new leader and president, Michael Higgins – K15ZIQ. This club has truly evolved throughout the years, but this year of all years, the club has a great chance to skyrocket to success. The success in the club actually started before 2024, as the past presidents helped contribute to where the club is today. But unless you are totally blind, you must realize that Michael Higgins has the experience and desire to help our club shoot to maximized success. Our club ranks will grow significantly this year. Being new as a radio amateur of only one year in the hobby, his communication skills and the ability to learn about our hobby in rapid fashion is something that cannot be compromised. His professionalism in speaking demands that you listen when he speaks. There is nothing fake that Michael portrays in everything he talks about. You can take it to the bank that if Michael spends his time on a subject that he feels we need to be familiar with, it would be beneficial for you to spend your time to sincerely listen and adapt. His very-well thought out meeting agendas are geared for all of us to have 'FUN'.

Everyone that attends our meetings are witnessing changes for the better. Even the newsletter has changed in size and composition of material. No more long newsletters here. Any articles of specific length will contain links to the website where the article can be read in full if you want to read it in its entirety. The club will celebrate their 30th Anniversary throughout 2024. Join us and become part of the fun at the GCARC meetings.

The January CW Secret Message – Decoded in the last newsletter was...

What is the one main goal of the GCARC? To have fun (decoded by Michael Coffman)

Current Links to Information found on the GCARC Website

[January 2024 – Treasury Report](#)

[January 2024 – Secretary Report](#)

[Perrin Field Special Event](#)

[License Testing at TCOG in Sherman, Texas](#)

[Note: CW Classes start on Monday, March 4, 2024](#)

Time: 7:00PM – 9:00PM – Location Michael Higgins Home in Sherman, Texas

Sign-up sheet at the next meeting

GCARC OFFICERS

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