

# The WCARC Report

March 2004

## The BPL Problem – and What You Can Do Now

Yes, the FCC has approved a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) to deploy Broadband over Power Line (BPL). This means that it's too late to file "BPL is a bad idea" comments – but it's not too late to make your voice heard about how BPL should be implemented. In fact, it's vital that hams everywhere in the country file comments stressing the importance of implementing BPL in a way that protects amateur radio operation.

To start, go to the ARRL's web pages concerned with BPL (<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc>), and review the analysis of the issue presented there. Don't overlook the individual web articles published in the last 30 days (these are listed near the foot of the page cited above) – especially "ARRL Encouraging 'Thoughtful, Considered' Comments on Proposed BPL Rules" (<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/03/24/3/>), which suggests how to comment effectively on the NPRM. Then send in your views!

Alternatively, as Stuart Rohre, K5KVH, has suggested, review the document prepared by Tom Cox, KT9OM, (<http://download.antennex.com/docs/bplcomments3.pdf>) and forward it to the FCC – with your endorsement – as an expression of your own position.

But hurry. The deadline for filing comments is May 3 – and the hobby you save (or lose!) may be your own. ☒

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## Our March Meeting

by Club Secretary Greg Worthington, AG5W

The March 4, 2004 meeting of the WCARC was called to order by President Rick Trommer, W5RHT. There were over 35 attendees and at least 2 visitors. The visitors were: Mike Goin, W5GIC, and Rob Hughes, N7AKE.

Acceptance of the minutes as posted on the WCARC web site was moved, seconded, and approved.

## Treasurer's Report

Club treasurer Jon Boles, K5AEM, offered this report:

### March, 2004

Beginning Balance	\$ 2,654.67
Receipts/Deposits	\$ 1,687.35
Expenditures	\$ 0.00
Ending Balance	\$ 4,342.02
ARES Funds Available	\$ 1082.02
WCARC Funds	\$ 3,260.00

## DX Report

John Warren, NT5C, noted that XF4IH is a current DXpedition to Socorro Island in the Revillagigedo Island Group operating from March 3 through 20 that should be easy to work from the Central Texas area.

John updated the club on how the internet can enhance DX work by allowing for schedules (skeds) to be set up with DX operators. You can go to QRZ.com and search for operators in a country that you need. Since many hams list their e-mail address on QRZ.com, you can then send an e-mail to set up a time and frequency sked to work this operator and thus get the country you need in the log.

One such opportunity that John has come across is for Iraq, YI. W3ICM, Fred Matos, is in Iraq and is the Spectrum Coordinator for the coalition forces in Iraq. His duties include issuing all amateur radio licenses.

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## The President's Corner

Well this month's meeting almost started off on the wrong foot, as the custodian was not at the school board building to let us in! A quick call to Sandy Hill and she came to our rescue. Thanks Sandy! I'll insist on a key from here on out as I'm sure we would have had a crummy time in the parking lot, attempting to hold our meeting in the rain.

My thanks to Dennis Murphy, W5KQF, for taking on the newsletter for the club. Please send in any type of related article to Dennis so it can be posted in our newsletter.

It looks like the year has started off with a couple of great training sessions in our area. First the Landing Zone training and then the ever popular Skywarn Training at 3M. Our club gets some great coverage with all the folks participating in these events.

A major focus for our club is that of Field Day, which will be held this year on June 26 and 27. Dick Foster, W5TA, has again volunteered to serve as our Field Day Captain. The club has agreed to hold Field Day at Lake Georgetown; we will secure the picnic grounds at the same park as in years past. Dick did discuss a classification change from years past and we can continue this discussion at next month's meeting. This event gives everyone in the club something to do; even if it is raising antennas or installing generators, the club needs your help to complete the setup of the Field Day stations and making everything operational and safe for the station operators and visitors. Dick will be calling on all of us to pull this event off as we have in the past. Please volunteer or just come out and give a hand as you will enjoy the entire day at the lake.

The second part of Field Day also needs your help – that part is operating the stations. Sign up for an hour (or more) of operating time – again this is something we will be talking about over the next few months.

John Warren, NT5C, has given us some additional information on looking for DX stations at the bottom end of 40 meters, from 7.030 to 7.040 (working splits), and as I tune around this segment of the 40-meter band I find lots of activity that I should keep tabs on. I tune around 7.245 and a few other frequencies on the 40-meter band and because of all the foreign broadcasts I generally leave for 20 or 75 meters to find someone to talk to. I need to keep reminding myself to drop down to the bottom of the band and work some of the DX stations that have been relatively easy to work (this week anyway).

The club has been given a heads up on the need to secure a new meeting place as the GISD has new rules in effect which state that building use can be charged at a rate of \$36 per hour. This is the type of expense that we want to avoid at all costs (please note the pun)! The club officers will be looking into any possible alternative to our current meeting place; if you know of any other option, please tell one of them about it and if possible a contact person so we can make a follow-up call and see if that location would meet the club's needs. We need to move rather fast on this item so we can get the word to everyone if a change needs to take place. We will keep you informed on this item at future club meetings until it is resolved.

As a reminder . . .

March 20	Brenham Swapmeet
April 17	WCARC Picnic at San Gabriel Park
May 22	Belton Ham Expo
June 18-19	Arlington Ham-Com
August 6-7	Austin Summerfest

Well that's about it for this month and I want to give a try at contacting SP8BRQ before he gives it up tonight – the low end of 40 is very active so check it out. If you have not been attending the breakfast at the Monument consider it one Saturday. You can learn everything from how to clean out your dryer vent to how Don blew Q9 and then how he installed the finals in his K2 in backwards. You might find out how hotel keys are programmed and how to cut down on the hash and RFI from your Ford Explorer. Make a point of stopping by the Monument around 6:30 AM next Saturday.

73, Rick W5RHT

### APRIL EVENTS

April 17: WCARC Picnic at the Arbors in San Gabriel Park, Georgetown (details at <http://www.wcarc.com>)

April 17-18: The 2004 BP MS150 Houston to Austin Bike Ride (20th anniversary!). 110 ham radio operators are needed and all forms of Amateur Radio are used -- HF to UHF, APRS to ECHOLink, Repeaters in cities along the way. For details contact Mike Hardwick ([n5vcx@arrl.net](mailto:n5vcx@arrl.net)) 713-771-4625 or sign up at <http://www.houstonhams.org>. Information about the ride at <http://www.ms150.org/ms150/>.

He has arbitrarily assigned himself the call, YI3DX, and operates out of the Republican Guard Palace in Baghdad using a G5RV. John requested a 40 meter contact from him, and told him that we would monitor 7030 to 7040 from 0320Z to 0350Z. Fred agreed to try to put up a 40 meter dipole and possibly get on for the ARRL DX SSB contest.

### **Contest Report**

No report was presented.

### **ARES Report**

Tom Whiteside, N5TW, announced that Rick, W5RHT, has taken the responsibility of the HF Cavalry to make HF an integral part of the ARES activity and effectiveness. Chris, KC5AQF, has agreed to take on the Training AEC responsibility -- which leaves the Call-up AEC position for Georgetown open.

Steve, AD5JZ, requests help on the Sunday ARES net. The ARES net is at 8:00pm on 143.13.

The ARES program for March will be Bruce, W3NJ, who will review the December roll out plans for the Packet Messaging System.

### **Old Business**

#### **Club Picnic**

Jim Bittick, KC5BHF, indicated that he had 70 pounds of baby back ribs in his refrigerator, and we all hope that he will bring them to the picnic. The picnic will be held at San Gabriel Park in Georgetown, Area A, on April 17. Serving time will start at 5:00pm.

#### **Newsletter**

Dennis Murphy, W5KQF, has taken over responsibility for the WCARC newsletter. His first newsletter was out on time, and he did an excellent job. The club expressed its appreciation to Dennis for volunteering to take over this important role in club communication.

#### **Meeting Location**

Jon Boles, K5AEM, updated the club on the possibility of the club losing its current meeting location in June unless we agree to pay the school district a fee for use of the meeting room. No action had yet been taken to contact GISD officials to confirm if a fee will be required from the WCARC.

### **Skywarn**

The turnout at this year's Skywarn session at 3M was good. There will probably be a Skywarn session in Georgetown later this year.

### **Landing Zone Training**

Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HDX, indicated that the Landing Zone training session went well with about 50 to 60 hams in attendance with roughly the same number of fire and police personnel.

### **WCARC-Owned Equipment List**

Greg Worthington, AG5W, said that thanks to Dennis, W5KQF, we had the WCARC equipment list available for review in this month's meeting. The only change to the current list as printed in the February newsletter was that Stuart Rohre, K5KVH, has the MFJ Grid Dip Adapter.

Two items remain in the "missing" category: the Mosley Triband antenna and the Topo maps. It was moved, seconded and approved to remove the Topo maps from the WCARC equipment list.

This list will be reviewed quarterly.

### **Club Anniversary**

Bob Petrosky, N5TT, noted that this month's meeting was the 27th anniversary of the WCARC which was founded in March of 1977. He is the authority on this subject since he started the club.

### **New Business**

#### **Handicapped Parking**

Bob, N5TT, strongly suggested that the handicapped parking ramp not be blocked.

#### **Field Day**

Dick Foster, W5TA, volunteered to continue as the captain for the WCARC Field Day which will be June 26 and 27 this year. It was moved, seconded, and passed to allow for the \$150.00 needed to reserve Russell Park for this year's Field Day activity.

#### **General**

Dave Hassell, N5IW, generously agreed to provide the refreshments for the April meeting.

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## Field Day 2004

Field Day is June 26 and 27 this year. Mark your calendars. The club got the ball rolling at the last meeting with the approval of funds to reserve the same site at Russell Park that we have been using the last 8 or 10 years.

We have captains for the CW station and the GOTA station; thank you Dave Hassell, N5IW, and Dennis Murphy, W5KQF. We still need a captain for the Phone station and VHF station.

I've received a suggestion that we invite the CTDXCC group for a joint Field Day. They would certainly provide some hot shot operators, but I don't want to hear "I couldn't get on" the Monday after. I would like to see our club provide the operators even if the score isn't that high. Give some new folks some experience. This is supposed to be a training exercise . . . in part.

Your thoughts and comments, please.

Dick Foster, W5TA  
[w5ta@austin.rr.com](mailto:w5ta@austin.rr.com)

**Our March Meeting**, *continued from page 3*

### Program

Dick, W5TA, introduced Kees Talen, K5BCQ, who provided an excellent program on how to effectively use eBay to purchase or sell items. He provided insights from his experience and extensive use of this powerful internet venue.

Minutes submitted by the honorable although hard of hearing Greg Worthington, AG5W. ☒

## The ARES Report

by Williamson County EC Tom Whiteside, N5TW

It has been a good month with no bad weather but some mighty fine training at the annual Skywarn training at 3M. It was good to see so many attending from the WCARC. Now is the time to be especially vigilant. If you don't own a Weather radio, consider getting one and look for one that has "SAME" technology – that is what you need for warnings specific to a particular location. If you hear the WCARC repeater courtesy beep changed to a Morse "W" (Di-dah-dah), that is a hint to tune to the National Weather Service to see what's up! Chris, KC5AQF, did last Sunday evening's net training on Weather and made the excellent suggestion of programming a channel in your VHF mobile radio to 162.400 MHz to receive the local weather. Weather nets, if they are activated, will be on the 145.130 MHz repeater.

Speaking of repeaters, the Bell County repeater up 1600 feet on the KCEN tower is up and running on 147.140 MHz with a 123 tone. This is another fine wide area emergency asset.

Rick, W5RHT, has assembled the beginnings of a fine HF Cavalry able to setup long distance emergency communications. It is not too late to get in on this activity – get in touch with Rick! He plans a drill in the near future and you can participate or listen in.

And we had a great program at last month's ARES meeting as Bruce, W3NJ, outlined the plan to achieve a packet messaging system this year. He has found some outstanding software that should meet our needs and he will be ready to declare the hardware and software requirements in the June time frame. Watch this space!

The ARES meeting and the Sunday evening nets have been well attended and I hope that you will join in! The ARES meeting is the second Thursday of the month at the Round Rock fire station now at 7pm and I hope you will join us.

And don't forget the Sunday evening nets at 8pm on 145.130.

One final comment: ***The Georgetown Callup AEC position is STILL open!!! I really need a volunteer to fill this critical position!*** ☒

## Share the Wealth!

We've all got war stories about antennas we've (at least tried to) put up, or how we finally logged that exotic DXpedition, or what our first contest taught us – or something!

And this newsletter needs 'em – whatever those stories might be. Please (PLEASE!) take a few minutes to jot down a brief version of one of your adventures in ham radio, and hand or e-mail it to me at [w5kqf@arrl.net](mailto:w5kqf@arrl.net). The other members will enjoy reading it, and you'll get rich and famous (if there's any justice . . .).

Or . . . give us a position statement of some sort – for example, “Why I'm Still a CW Operator” (or, on the other hand, “Why I Haven't Touched My Key in Years”). It'll give the other members some food for thought, and you'll get rich and famous . . .

Or, share some of your know-how in a brief how-to piece. Maybe “How to Clean Up Your PSK Signal” or “5 Things to Remember When You're Building a Kit” or “A Quick Guide to 60 Meter Operation” – or whatever you'd like to tell us about. The other members will learn from it, and you'll get . . . well, you know.

There's some column space waiting for you in our next issue. That address again is [w5kqf@arrl.net](mailto:w5kqf@arrl.net). Thanks!

Dennis Murphy, W5KQF

## Announcements

If you haven't yet paid your club dues for 2004, it's time – the first quarter of the year is nearly over! Dues are still a bargain: only \$10 a year for single memberships, \$15 for families. Get your payment to club treasurer Jon Boles, K5AEM, at our next meeting, April 1.

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The ARRL has announced changes in its awards. The Rag Chewer's Club, the Old Timer's Club, and the Friendship Award have all been discontinued. WAS and DXCC remain among the most popular awards. For details see <http://www.arrl.org/awards/>.

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Our club web site has moved to <http://www.wcarc.com/> and the ARES site to <http://www.wc-ares.org/>. Field Day 2003 pictures have been posted too – see <http://www.wcarc.com/fd2003/index.html>.

## WCARC-Owned Equipment List

Who Has What -- and Since When

### Tower work

Gin pole – John Benedict, KE5RS – 8/30/2003  
Tower step – Jeff Schmidt, N5MNV – 8/7/2003

### Antenna Measurement

MFJ Analyzer – Ken Larsen, KC5RPF – 12/3/2003  
MFJ Grid Dip Adapter – Stuart Rohre, K5KVH – 3/4/2004

### Antennas

Butternut HF Vertical 10M-80M – Bob Helms, AF5Z  
Cushcraft R7 HF Vertical – Dean Hamilton, K5FDH – 11/6/2003  
Hygain Triband – Dick Foster W5TA – 7/4/2003  
Mosley Triband – MISSING!

### Masts

Push-Up Masts (2) – Bob Helms, AF5Z – 8/7/2003  
Push-Up Mast – Ken Larsen, KC5RPF – 7/4/2003  
Push-Up Masts (2) – Virgil Buell, KD5KQV – 7/4/2003

### Power Supply

20 Amp Supply – Dave Hassell, N5IW – 7/4/2003

### Picnic Supplies

30 Cup Coffee Pot – Don Bonner, NO5B – 8/8/2003  
5 Gal Drink Coolers (2) – Virgil Buell, KD5KQV – 8/7/2003  
Heavy Duty Power Cords (2) – Chris Hill, KC5AQF  
Miscellaneous Picnic Supplies – Don Bonner, NO5B – 8/8/2003

### Pending Sale

Commercial Grade Antenna – Bob Helms, AF5Z

Please advise club secretary Greg Worthington, AG5W ([ag5w@aol.com](mailto:ag5w@aol.com)), of any additions or corrections. ☒