

# The WCARC Report

August 2004

## September Events

Sept 9: Launch of National Preparedness Month by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the America Prepared Campaign, the American Red Cross, the U.S. Department of Education, and the ARRL in conjunction with a coalition of more 50 national organizations. For details see the ARRL link: <http://www.arrrl.org/news/stories/2004/08/26/3/?nc=1>.

Sept 11: Highland Lakes ARC's annual swap meet at the Pavilion in Marble Falls. For details contact Chuck Dear at 830-693-0513 or e-mail [kb5ykj@281.com](mailto:kb5ykj@281.com).

Sept 16: Amateur Radio Awareness Day, sponsored by the ARRL. Details on the ARRL web site – <http://www.arrrl.org/>.

Sept 17-18: Tailgate Swapfest/Cookout at the RV park in Lake Murvaul, TX. For details contact Betty Moreland at 903-685-2365 or e-mail [w5pup@texramp.net](mailto:w5pup@texramp.net). Also: <http://www.k5cxo.net/swapfest.htm>.

Sept 25-26: Texas State QSO Party. Rules for this year's party at <http://www.txqp.org>. ☒

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 The President's Corner
- 2 Web Site of the Month
- 4 The ARES Report
- 5 WCARC-Owned Equipment List

## Our August Meeting

by Club Secretary Greg Worthington, AG5W

The August 5, 2004 meeting of the Williamson County Amateur Radio Club was called to order by President Rick Trommer, W5RHT. There were 40 plus members and visitors at the meeting with 35 signing the attendance sheet.

The minutes posted on the WCARC web site were approved as amended by Virgil Buell, KD5KQV. The "Press Release for Field Day" section was amended as follows: "Press Release for Field Day – Virgil Buell, KD5KQV: Virgil, KD5KQV, provided the *Williamson County Sun* the Field Day press release package. Both Virgil and Tom, N5TW, were interviewed by the paper."

## Treasurer's Report

Club Treasurer Jon Boles, K5AEM, offered this report:

### July, 2004

Beginning balance	\$ 2768.79
Receipts/Deposits	\$ 378.29
Expenditures	\$ 48.29
Ending Balance	\$ 3098.79
ARES Funds	\$ 1041.41
WCARC Funds	\$ 2057.38

## DX Report

John Warren, NT5C, updated the WCARC on the DX and Contesting program to be presented at the Austin Summerfest which is August 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. The program will be from 10 to 12 on Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>.

Contest Report -- none

*continued on page 3*

## The President's Corner

Another month has just shot by and I only have a couple of new contacts in my logbook.

The club seems very open to making the effort to pull off another Technician class, and leading the way is Greg Worthington, AG5W. Greg is looking into how we should advertise this session and where we should hold the training; he's also looking into certification of the instructors with the ARRL.

All of these items will require a great deal of Greg's personal time and efforts, so please be willing to help with any of Greg's tasks in order for the club to get this class organized and in full swing. I'm sure that Greg will have updates for us at the next meeting.

The Austin Summerfest is now over for another year. This event brought some 927 folks into the Austin area and presented them with a very full and active weekend of events. It was great to see all the WCARC members supporting this event, and I hope that everyone found something to their liking or something that they were looking for in the swap area. Next year's Summerfest will be held August 5-7, 2005, again at the Red Lion Hotel, so mark your calendar for this event.

As we are approaching the last quarter of the year it is again time for club members to start thinking about the election of officers for next year. I will be asking the membership this next meeting to select a nominating committee to poll the prospective leaders among the club membership. The goal is to present a slate of officers at the November meeting, so please be thinking of who you would like to see as your officers for the next year. If you would like to see any changes to the club, this would be a good time to move some key members into club positions and if needed make some changes to the club. I'm not suggesting that our club needs a change; I'm just open to your thoughts and suggestions related to our club.

Our club's next big event – our February Swapfest – needs some planning. I need to start calling on some dealers, but along with this we need to talk about how we want to run this event. I will have some questions for the club concerning this event at our next meeting, and if you have some ideas, please be prepared to bring them up at that time. I don't have any plans on finalizing the Swapfest during this meeting; I just want to get your input and feedback.

As a major request to all our club members, we need volunteers to give presentations! This is a very hot

topic for our club, as we want to provide you, the club members, with information and presentations that will keep you interested in the club and in our hobby. Give us a few minutes of your time; tell the club about your radio interests and remember, if you give us a presentation you will receive a WCARC T-shirt for your efforts.

Think about it and give any one of the club officers a call or e-mail and tell us what you can do to help out. The club really enjoys hearing about how other folks got into this hobby.

As a reminder to all members, our next club picnic will be on October 9 at San Gabriel Park.

As a swap fest reminder . . .

Aug 28	Gainesville Hamfest
Oct 02	Ham Expo, Temple ARC

Well, that's about it for another month and I want to give a try at the filter alignment of my K2. I have been picking N5TW's brain on just how he went through the alignment process. I have the software running and I have been very close to completing the procedure but for some reason I just want to keep playing with it just to see how it works. The really nice part of the K2 is that you can start and stop the alignment procedure and nothing really gets messed up – just start over and try it again.

With that I hope to see you at breakfast next Saturday at the Monument Café.

73, Rick W5RHT

### Web Site of the Month

ICs are here to stay, but vacuum tubes still have their admirers – and there isn't a bigger fan than the man behind Hugh's Ominous Valve Works. His site -- <http://www.ominous-valve.com/> -- is an entertaining but sincere homage to the mighty tube.

The front page is a grab bag of old pictures and links. They're fun (and interesting) but if you agree that "Real equipment glows in the dark," jump directly to this page: <http://www.ominous-valve.com/tubes.html>.

Whatever you do, don't miss the pictures from WLW (and check out the captions too – Hugh is a funny guy): <http://www.ominous-valve.com/wlpics.html>.

## ARES Report

Tom Whiteside, N5TW, indicated that the new section emergency coordinator would present at the ARES program for Summerfest. Additionally, packet messaging would be discussed including its internet/packet mail over capability.

Per Virgil Buell, KD5KQV, at an event at the Dell Diamond (Jewish Children's Olympics for US and Israel), WCARES provided back-up communications in an official capacity.

## Special ARES Presentation

Steve Neubauer, AD5JZ, presented Harvey Henning, N0AJP, with a certificate in recognition of his contribution as a Sunday Night Net Control Operator. The full club applauded Harvey's outstanding contribution. Although Harvey may not continue in his role as the net control operator, he will still participate in the ARES activities. Thank you Harvey!!

## Old Business

### Trailer Project

Virgil Buell, KD5KQV, announced that John McColly, W5RQ, has taken over official responsibility for the trailer project.

### Equipment List

With the guidance of Greg Worthington, AG5W, the Club Owned Equipment list was reviewed and updated. It will be posted as updated in the WCARC newsletter. The "missing" Mosley Triband Antenna was removed from the list, and a new Mosley Triband Antenna was added to the list after Harvey Henning, N0AJP, donated it to the club. Harvey requested that a club member come by his QTH to pick it up. Additionally several items more closely associated with the club's picnic activity were removed from this list and will be handled as part of Jim Bittick's, KC5BHF, picnic list. These items were: a 30-cup coffeepot, general picnic supplies, and two 5-gallon drink coolers.

### Field Day

Dick Foster, W5TA, updated the club on the final WCARC Field Day score of 4158 points that included an extra 50 points for e-mailing the report.

## New Business

### Women's Adventure Race

Jim Mischel, KB7UQD, requested volunteers to

support the Women's Adventure Race that will be held in Austin on September 5, 2004. This is Texas' largest adventure race for women, and Jim needs about 10 volunteers.

### Fall Picnic

Jim Bittick, KC5BHF, announced that the WCARC Fall picnic would be held on Saturday, October 9, starting at 5:00pm at the Arbors at San Gabriel Park (the usual location). Jim and Michelle, KC5BHE, will provide and cook the meat for the picnic and asked that those coming to the picnic provide a dessert. Jim also asked for the club to set up a radio station since this is an amateur radio club and also for Jim's entertainment.

### Ham Radio Classes

Rick Trommer, W5RHT, suggested that the club consider having a Fall class for new hams. The discussion included the need for such a class for both county emergency and other official personnel as well as new hams in general. Tom Whiteside, N5TW, was aware of the need for a class for local dispatchers and agreed to handle any such class. Greg Worthington, AG5W, agreed to coordinate class activities for a Technician class for new hams.

The key element for the class for new hams was to identify a large enough group to make a formal class worthwhile rather than having individual club members elmer a small number of new hams. The optimal size for this class would be to start with about 20 students realizing that some would drop out before completion. There was general agreement that we needed at least 10 students to start a class. To that end, it was moved and seconded that Greg, AG5W, be authorized to spend funds he deemed appropriate to solicit via the local media interest in such a class for new ham radio operators. It was also agreed that identification of students by WCARC club members was probably going to be critical to getting an appropriate level of interest in order to justify the class.

### Sun City Ham Radio Demonstration

Jim Hester, K5HTK, indicated that a group of Sun City operators is going to set up an "emergency field day" demonstration to show the people of Sun City what ham radio can do. They plan to have an open house for this activity, and Jim requested the loan of a vertical antenna as well as some ARRL materials. Sources for both items were resolved during the meeting.

*continued on page 4*

### **CQWW CW 160 Meter Contest**

Dick Foster, W5TA, announced that using N5TW's call and QTH, he, host Tom Whiteside, and John Dvoracek, KE5C, won the multi-op category for the 160-meter CQWW CW contest. This is a major accomplishment in a major contest. Congratulations to all three!

Dean Hamilton, K5FDH, agreed to provide refreshments for the September meeting.

### **Program**

Robert Brandon, K5PI, used the WCARC call sign, WC5T, in this year's WPX contest. He reviewed the contest results and strategy. ☒

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## **The ARES Report**

by Williamson County EC Tom Whiteside, N5TW

This has been another busy month. We had a super training exercise at last month's meeting thanks to Virgil Buell, KD5KQV. Chris Hill, KC5AQF, our training AEC, Galen Helmcamp, WA0YVQ, and I have begun planning the fall SET. We will be participating with an ARCHES drill on August 28. There has been much effort on the packet front. And I finished the ARES ARECC Level II course and enrolled in the Level III course starting September 3. Never a dull moment!

### **SET**

We are still studying the calendar to set the date for this year's SET – it will be sometime in October for sure. In addition to operating from the various agencies, this year's SET will also have plenty of opportunity for fixed (home) stations to participate. We hope to get a bunch of participation from home stations – a high level of participation will spice things up with more traffic and it will be a good chance to see how well your station performs to a number of locations. And we will have a chance to check things out from our various served agencies as well. It will be a good exercise and we hope you will participate!

### **Winlink 2000**

Winlink 2000 is the packet system that is being pushed by the ARRL for deployment across the country, and our group is making great strides in getting this implemented in our area. For those not familiar with Winlink 2000, it

enables our agencies to use the e-mail tools they are familiar with even when they lose their internet connection. The system provides for local hubs that can route e-mail within that hub using local LAN connections. If an agency loses its internet connection, the system uses Packet radio to tie hubs together – it will even use HF PACTOR routing should all our local resources be off-line. (Winlink 2000 messages have been coming from Charlie-devastated parts of Florida.)

This system has been in use for years by sailors and RV enthusiasts and this may be an added incentive for your participation – imagine sitting out on a deck chair doing your e-mail. Many communities have (or will have) local Winlink 2K VHF connections that can be used to check your mail on the road. You can use PACTOR if you decide to do an HF hookup and have a General or higher license. Might be a nice way to go for e-mail for those of you on dial-up connections. Casual use of our ARES infrastructure will be encouraged as an incentive to have equipment ready to go and to keep the system exercised.

Scott Pederson, KI5DR, has signed up to help me drive this effort and he will be giving a presentation on Winlink 2K at the next ARES meeting. With some luck, he will have a demo going and some coaching for setting the system up on your computer.

### **Specifics on our Packet implementation**

We are still having trouble with the antenna at the high node site. Mark Stennett, NA6M, has some tower folks coming to fix this problem – hopefully before you read this. I acquired a GE Phoenix radio that will be the packet transceiver here. I also purchased a Kantronics 9612 TNC with dual ports – ultimately, we plan to add a second radio for a 9600 baud UHF backbone that will need the second port. My thanks to Jim Hester, K5HTK, for successfully interfacing the Phoenix and the Kantronics and testing it out. NA6M is working on the computer for this setup as well as the controller code and we hope to get this up and running soon. This site will be used as a high digipeater until we can get an internet connection there for a Winlink node.

Joe Dorn, W5VEX, pioneered getting a working Winlink VHF node going – known as a Telpack node in this system – and he drove down from Bell County to get one up and running at my place. So we have a working experimental Telpack node here parked for now on 145.730. As folks get the user application called Paclink up and running, they can begin doing Winlink e-mail over this node. W3NJ, W5VEX and KD5OKI have all successfully sent and received e-mail via this node.

The next piece of the puzzle is the HF PACTOR connection. PACTOR III is capable of up to 4800 baud over an HF connection and is being pushed for ARES. PACTOR III modems are more expensive but also support PACTOR II (works in very poor S/N conditions) and the original PACTOR I. I ordered and received an SCS PACTOR III TNC this month. If you want to read up on it, see <https://www.scs-ptc.com/controller.html#ptc2ex>.

This last weekend, I successfully was able to connect to a Winlink station in Houston with the modem and we transferred several e-mails – one with an 11K attachment that arrived in less than a minute.

I also want to thank Ken Larsen, KC5RPF, for scrounging some laptop computers for the cause. KI5DR will evaluate them for use with the packet cavalry.

So, a fair amount of progress was made this month. We hope to get more users up and going the next month as well as to make more progress with the high node.

### Finances

With the purchase of the GE Phoenix, the Kantronics TNC and the SCS PACTOR III TNC, the ARES budget is flat lined. We are sitting at around -\$200 at this point. Kees Talen, K5BCQ, has (once again) taken on selling donated items to help us raise funds. We have had a number of equipment contributions from club members including one very nice cash gift. I want to thank these donors and encourage folks to open up their closets to see what items you might be willing to add to the pot.

### Net Control position still open

Steve Nuebauer, AD5JZ, is still looking for an operator for the rotating Sunday evening net position – one of the best training opportunities around. Please contact Steve if you have an interest in this slot.

**A reminder:** The ARES meeting is the second Thursday of the month at the Round Rock fire station now at 7pm. Last month's program was a terrific training exercise designed and run by Virgil Buell, KD5KQV. This was a big success and we will do this one again in the future – don't miss it. Next month will be an overview on the Winlink 2000 system by Scott Pederson, KI5DR – hopefully including a demo if the demo-gods are willing.

And we also hope to hear you on the Sunday evening nets on 145.130 at 8pm. We have been averaging about 25 folks on these and they always have a brief snippet of training. ☒

## WCARC-Owned Equipment List

### Who Has What -- and Since When

#### Tower work

Gin pole – John Benedict, KE5RS – 8/30/2003  
Tower step – Jeff Schmidt, N5MNW – 8/7/2003

#### Antenna Measurement

MFJ Analyzer – Mike Blanchard, N5KDY – 8/1/2004  
MFJ Grid Dip Adapter – Stuart Rohre, K5KVH – 3/4/2004

#### Antennas

Butternut HF Vertical 10M-80M – Bob Helms, AF5Z  
Cushcraft R7 HF Vertical – Dick Foster, W5TA – 8/5/2004  
Hygain Triband – Dick Foster W5TA – 7/4/2003  
Mosley Triband – to be picked up from Harvey Henning, N0AJP

#### 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 – Tom Whiteside, N5TW – 7/14/2004

#### Miscellaneous

Heavy Duty Power Cords (2) – Chris Hill, KC5AQF

#### 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.