

The WCARC Report

October 2004

Welcome, New Members!

It's a pleasure to introduce these new members:

Bill Hatfield, K5KCR – Schertz
Jeff Kilgore, KC1MK – Georgetown
Earl Landry, K5EID – Round Rock
John Massa – Pflugerville
Dave Miller, KE5CAL – Round Rock
Tom Miller, KE5BWB – Round Rock
Bill Morgan, N6XGX – Georgetown
John Obst, KG9JG – Georgetown
Bill O'Connell, K5YO – Austin
Jim Russell, NQ5L – Leander
Tim Stevens, KD5WML – Round Rock
Rob Wooten, KE5BME – Round Rock

Look for these folks at the next meeting you attend, and introduce yourself – you'll meet some new friends!

November Program Alert!

At our meeting on November 4, Ken Harker, WM5R, will speak on RF Safety and demonstrate his Amateur Radio RF Safety Calculator, a freeware program you can use to make sure *your* station is operating safely.

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Our October Meeting

by Club Secretary Greg Worthington, AG5W

The October 7, 2004 meeting of the Williamson County Amateur Radio Club was called to order by President Rick Trommer, W5RHT. There were 42 members and guests who signed the attendance sheet.

The minutes posted on the WCARC web site in the September newsletter were approved as posted.

Treasurer's Report

Club Treasurer Jon Boles, K5AEM, offered this report:

September, 2004

Beginning balance	\$ 2053.68
Receipts/Deposits	\$ 474.78
Expenditures	\$ 14.45
Ending Balance	\$ 2514.01
ARES Funds	\$ 446.02
WCARC Funds	\$ 2067.99

DX Report

Stuart Rohre, K5KVH, reported that there have been 10-meter openings to Europe

Contest Report

No report offered.

Repeater Report

Tom Whiteside, N5TW, reported that the repeater is working well:

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The President's Corner

Another month has just zoomed by and once again I'm looking to see how I can catch up on the chores I was supposed to do last month that I put off until this month.

I started about two months ago to dig a hole for my tower installation. I rented an electric jackhammer to make this a quick and easy process. Well, that was strike one. I picked a spot in the back yard that was comprised of solid rock and about ¾ inch of some type of soil or grass roots. No large rock chunks were removed from this hole, only white powder and some slivers that I managed to break off of the larger parent rock formation. After about four hours of sweeping away rock dust and a few handfuls of rock I ended up with a 3x3x2½ foot hole. The next problem (strike two) was that the tower is 75 feet from the house, so now I need to trench a line from the house (avoiding my underground propane tank and lawn sprinkler system) deep enough to run my coax, rotor cable, and ground wires.

Idea #2 is now in process, locating a site closer to the house so I will not have to trench anything, while keeping the tower in a spot that keeps everyone in the house happy (foul tip – try again). Anyone need a small rock hole that has never been used? This is a pick-up only item as shipping a hole this size would be hard to pack. I guess I might try eBay!

At this month's meeting our primary focus was on the Technician class. Greg Worthington, AG5W, has the instructors scheduled, the training site picked out and scheduled, and it looks like we have some 12 to 15 folks ready to take our class. If you can provide Greg with any additional help, please contact him as he could always use someone as a backup to one of the scheduled instructors for this class.

The first class was a success! Greg was able to get two great instructors, and the folks in the class were responding to questions and everyone went away talking in a very positive manner and everyone is looking forward to the next session. Per a follow-up e-mail from Greg, it looks like he has found another four or five folks that want to join the group next weekend. Great job everyone for talking up this class!

As you know by now the club was not able to have our Fall BBQ picnic. Jim Bittick, KC5BHF, informed us that due to a death in the family (Michelle's father), he would not be able to schedule this event and that he did not have time to provide a back-up plan for the club. The club would like to acknowledge this loss to

Michelle and Jim: our thoughts are with you at this time.

Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX, and Dick Foster, W5TA, are making some headway in finding officers for our upcoming year. If you have any interest in filling one of our club officer positions, please contact either Dallas or Dick and put your name in the hat. Or if you know of someone that you think would make a good officer for our club, please provide them with that information.

Dick Foster has almost filled out the year with some very fine presentations for the club. While everyone greatly enjoys this function of our monthly meetings, it is work on our VP's part. If you have a presentation or if you know of someone who has a presentation that you would like to see at our club meeting, contact Dick and give him the information so he can go after the folks and schedule them. Better yet, sign up and let us know about your favorite aspect of 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.

As a swap fest reminder....

Nov 5, 6 Austin Radio Round Up (Jeff Fest)

With that I hope to see you at breakfast next Saturday at the Monument Café and then it's off to the Round Rock Fire Station for the next session of the Technician class. I hope to see you at one of these club events.

73, Rick W5RHT

November Events

Nov 5-6: Austin Radio Roundup – 7:00p.m. to 10:00p.m. on Nov 5, 8:00a.m. to 1:00p.m. on Nov 6 in Wozniak Hall of St. Louis Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Road, Austin. For details check the AARC web site's swapfest page, <http://www.austinhams.org/swapfest.html>.

Nov 6, 13: WCARC Technician License Class – 8:30 to 11:00a.m. at the Round Rock Central Fire Station. Students and instructors are still welcome! For details contact Greg Worthington, AG5W (ag5w@aol.com), course coordinator.

Nov 13: NCTECH 2004 Hamfest – 7:00a.m. to noon in Azle, Texas, sponsored by the Tri-County ARC of North Texas and the City of Azle DPS. For details contact David Johnson, KB5YLG (kb5ylg@yahoo.com), at 817-444-5165 or check the web site <http://www.wc5c.org/>.

WCARC Repeater – 146.640 MHz with tone 162.2
NA6M Repeater – 147.080 MHz with tone 100
NA6M Repeater – 444.525 MHz with tone 100

ARES Report

Tom Whiteside, N5TW, reported that there will be a Simulated Emergency Test on October 16 from 9:00a.m. to noon.

WCARES will be updating its membership roster. To maintain your membership in WCARES, you must have checked into the WCARES net at least once in the past year. Other criteria will be considered, and the goal is not to eliminate anyone from the list, but just to get the list to reflect a reasonable level of activity.

Refer to the WCARES Report on page 4.

Announcement

Harvey Henning, N0AJP, had previously donated a Mosley Tri-Band antenna to the club. He requested that someone arrange to pick it up from him soon. Jon Boles, K5AEM, agreed to do so.

WCARC Picnic Cancelled

Jim Bittick, KC5BHF, announced that due to the death of Michelle's father, he and Michelle would not be able to handle the cooking for the picnic planned for Saturday, October 9, 2004. The club expressed its deepest sympathy for Jim and Michelle.

The WCARC picnic was cancelled.

Old Business

Ham Radio Classes

Greg Worthington, AG5W, reported that the plans for the WCARC Technician class are coming along well thanks to several members who have volunteered to handle instructor activities. We now have enough instructors to assign two for each of the four Saturday sessions as well as some to serve as back-ups if needed. There are about 14 students who have expressed interest in the class along with two additional names that were provided during the meeting. That gives us nine students confirmed, and we are hoping for a good turnout.

Class Dates: October 23, October 30, November 6, and November 13.

Class Times: 8:30a.m. to 11:00a.m.

Class Location: Round Rock Central Fire Station.

Text: *Now You're Talking* – Fifth Edition, available from the club for \$15.

Depending upon the class turnout and availability of VECs, WCARC may conduct an ARRL/VEC testing session at the same location as the class on November 20.

Outlaw 100 Race

Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX, has the needed volunteers to support the Outlaw 100 race on October 9. Additional volunteers are welcomed to pair up with others

New Officers Committee

Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX, indicated that he had two candidates for key officer positions for next year. They are: Dick Foster, W5TA, and Mark Stennett, NA6M.

Women's Adventure Race

Jim Mischel, KB7UQD, said that the race went well, and that he had received good feedback on the support given by the ham radio volunteers. He will probably be leading this effort again next year and he emphasized the great food and other possibly more interesting benefits of supporting this race.

Sales on eBay

Kees Talen, K5BCQ, is continuing to support the WCARES needs by selling donated equipment on eBay. Most if not all of the receipts for this month were a result of Kees' efforts. Thanks to everyone who has donated to this activity and to Kees for closing the business.

New Business

Field Day Recovery

Dick Foster, W5TA, has been assessing what will be needed to repair the club's R7 antenna that was damaged during this year's Field Day activity. He has agreed to make the repairs as well as stop by Texas Towers when he is in Dallas to pick up the necessary parts for such repairs. It was moved, seconded, and passed to authorize Dick to spend up to a maximum of \$40.00 for parts to repair the R7 antenna.

November Refreshments

Ken Larsen, KC5RPF, agreed to provide refreshments for our November meeting.

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Our October Meeting, *continued from page 3*

October Program

Jim Parnell, W5JAW, provided an excellent program outlining the design of an iambic keyer. The emphasis of the presentation was home brewing from design, to circuit board layout, and final assembly using surface mount components.

Minutes submitted by the honorable and apparently mistake prone club secretary, Greg Worthington, AG5W.

The ARES Report

by Williamson County EC Tom Whiteside, N5TW

It's been another busy month!

Williamson County Organization Changes

I was surprised to learn that Steve Nuebauer, AD5JZ, and his family are moving to Alpine, TX! Steve has done a marvelous job running the Sunday Night Net as AEC. I'm pleased to announce that Galen Helmkamp, WA0YVQ, has stepped forward to take the Sunday Night Net AEC slot. While I had him on the phone, he also agreed to be my Backup EC in case I am unavailable. I think all our AEC functions should have a backup! With Steve leaving, we have two Sunday night net slots open. These are important positions and not that much work when there is a full team. Please contact Galen and volunteer!

SET

(The following description is drawn from my e-mail summary – next month's meeting will be a discussion about the SET and some planning for the next one.)

I want to really thank all who participated in the Williamson County ARES Simulated Emergency Test today. Our major focus this year has been building new infrastructure with our Winlink 2000 efforts and the new HF Cavalry. Consequently, the SET goals for this year were focused on testing functionality. Next year, we will build on this year's results to battle harden our systems and skills for a full blown test during the 2005 SET.

While we were not without problems, I think we achieved most of our goals and accomplished a good training exercise. I would ask everyone to jot down thoughts on what worked and what did not – this will be the focus of

next month's meeting – along with some photos taken from the various sites.

To review, specifically our SET goals were:

Primary Goals:

1. Exercise Paclink e-mail at every EOC ==> Accomplished.
2. Test all EOC - EOC simplex paths ==> Accomplished.
3. Deploy HF mobile stations to remote areas in County and prove communications ==> Accomplished.
4. Critique equipment / antenna needs for 2005 plan ==> EOC AEC action item.

Secondary Goals:

1. Home QTH / Other Paclink traffic ==> Accomplished.
2. Home QTH / Other EOC simplex ==> Accomplished.
3. Build experience base with EOCs ==> Accomplished.
4. Have high participation ==> So so.

The SET ran from 9a.m. to 11:40a.m. EOCs at Cedar Park, Georgetown, Round Rock and the County were activated.

There were a total of 41 check-ins to the SET Net control station (a tad low for a 130 person organization and the Central Texas population base). Thanks to N0AJP, NQ5L, W5LHC, KD5SFK, KD5OKI, W3NJ, W5VEX, K5AEM, W5TSN, KE5AGG, N5WCB, KB5TWO, KE5RS, KC5CWD, KD5RRB, KI5YG, KA5DRS, N5MNW, K5HTK, WA0YVQ, KI5DR, K5HMN, W5VGJ, N5OUJ, KA5DRS, KD5SFH, KD5UAR, KB5OEL, KD6ZJH, W4QBU, W5VGJ, W5JWB, N5TW, KC5AQF, W5RHT (via HF), W5KHC (via packet), and KD4HNX.

HF Cavalry: W5RHT - Rick's team had seven participants and operated from 8:55a.m. to 10:45a.m. and were successful. I had erected a low 80M dipole to complement my DX intended array but we learned for close-in 80M operation, the DX antenna won hands down. Thanks to KC5AQF for acting as net control from here. HF Cavalry participants: W5RHT (Andice, Bartlett and Granger), KC5AQF (Georgetown), W5VGJ (Taylor), KB5TWO (RR fire station), N0AJP (Georgetown), and N5TW.

Packet results:

As you probably know, we had essentially no packet capability at the beginning of the year and set a group goal to have eight portable packet stations with an

elevated node and to create a message-based system by the end of the year. With the emphasis on the Winlink 2000 system by our SEC (KK5CA) and the ARRL, we transferred the flag to Winlink this summer. For the SET, we had two Telpack server nodes up and most EOCs were able to communicate effectively with both in testing today. We had a total of eight Paclink stations check-in so that actually made our year end goal for the "Packet Cavalry." Since there were only two working a week ago, I really appreciate all the effort to bring these to life. We received 71 Winlink messages here with many of these cc'ing many of the packet stations for a much larger message total.

There were numerous problems. The Paclink component of my Telpack node went south last night and I was not able to restore despite trying various things most of the night – we compensated by having folks send e-mail my regular id and just used the node as a relay point. For some reason, we stopped receiving messages here at some point and we missed about 20 minutes worth. Some EOCs reported receiving as many as six copies of individual messages. We have a bunch to learn about actually using the system for EMCOM purposes - including how we log and track critical responses, meaningful subject lines, using tactical callsigns, etc. The Paclink computers are, in general, too fragile – we need to learn more about making these more robust and less trouble to create.

Paclink participating stations: KB5TWO, W5VEX, KD5SFK, WA0YVQ, KE5RS, KI5DR, N0AJP, and W5LHC. Special thanks to W5VEX for coming down from Belton to participate.

EOC Simplex tests: All EOC simplex testing was completed and recorded here. An action item is reviewing these results to see what antenna improvements are needed to improve these given packet antenna requirements.

We had some malicious interference on 145.130 and transferred to 147.08. We had some confusion when my NCS radio developed a problem with RF feedback that prevented operation on this frequency and created confusion. The outside packet antenna project will free up the outside antenna and fix that. I would comment that our net procedures were a little sloppy at times – we had people leaving without checking in. We should have used tactical callsigns consistently – we even had a couple of operators call in for EOCs with their calls from more than one EOC – that is confusing. The NCS consistently had difficulties raising the County EOC on the net frequency. Our simplex testing combined with

packet usage stressed our antenna capabilities and probably contributed to that.

So we had some problems – but shaking those out is what these events are for. All in all, it was a very good exercise and effort, and I am very pleased. My thanks to the team for a very good SET! Congratulations!

Winlink 2000

We have the new server that Bill Goff, N5WCB, built up and running here. The Telpac node has been extended to what is known as a VHF Hubbing PMBO – that is Winlinkese for an e-mail server that can continue operating even when the Internet is down. Our STX Section Emergency Coordinator tells me that we are one of the first in the country with this capability and he offered the group his congratulations. We are still working out a few wrinkles with it.

With the help of (in no particular order) N5ZXJ, NA6M, W5VEX, K1KQ, AE5Q, N5KF, KD4HDX, NA4M, AG5W, KB7UQD, K5AB, KD5OKI, K5BCQ, KC5RPF, and K5AEM, we got the new 4-bay antenna donated by ECPI and the monster 1 5/8" feedline installed for the node. My special thanks to Gerald Richmond, N5ZXJ (my counterpart in Bell County), for climbing with me to do the install, to Mark Stennett, NA6M, for being straw boss plus driving that cable back and to Jon Boles, K5AEM, for building the A-frame for unspooling this monster cable.

Finances

We have had about \$200 in additional software expenses for the new Winlink PMBO. I appreciate folks continuing to donate gear for Kees Talen, K5BCQ, to sell!

A reminder: The ARES meeting is the second Thursday of the month at the Round Rock fire station now at 7:00p.m. The program will be a review of the SET.

And we also hope to hear you on the Sunday evening nets on 145.130 at 8:00p.m. We have been averaging about 25 folks on these and they always have a brief snippet of training courtesy of Chris Hill, KC5AQF. ☒