



# WCARC News

March 2005

www.wcarc.com

## Texas BPL Project Shuts Down, ARRL Withdraws Complaint.

From the ARRL <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2005/03/30/100/>

NEWINGTON, CT, Mar 30, 2005--An Irving, Texas, BPL pilot project that was the target of an ARRL [complaint](#) two weeks earlier has shut down and removed its equipment. In mid-March, the League called on the FCC to shut down the system and issue fines for causing harmful interference to Amateur Radio communications. The ARRL's March 15 filing to the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, its Office of Engineering and Technology, system operator TXU and equipment manufacturer Amperion supported a complaint from ARRL member and North Texas Section BPL Task Force Chair Jory McIntosh, KJ5RM, who regularly commutes through the BPL test zone in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"I just got back from reviewing the site and can confirm that the BPL installation in Irving, Texas, has been removed and is no longer operating," McIntosh told ARRL this week. "Things are so quiet you can hear a pin drop. Definitely quite a change!" He said when the system was running, interference in its vicinity was 20 dB over S9 or stronger on all amateur bands from 40 through 6 meters.

The ARRL became involved after FCC failed to respond to a [formal complaint](#) McIntosh filed last fall. ARRL Laboratory Manager Ed Hare, W1RFI, also took measurements at the Texas site that verified McIntosh's observations.

See Texas BPL - page 2

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 President's QRM
- 3 Web Site of the Month
- 3 The ARES Report
- 4 WCARC-Owned Equipment List
- 4 Contest Calendar

## March Meeting Minutes

by Rick Trommer, W5RHT.

The March meeting of the Williamson County Amateur Radio Club was called to order by President, Mark Stennett, NA6M. There were 35 members and 3 visitors who attended our meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting were posted on the WCARC web site and they were approved as posted.

### Treasurers report given by Jon Boles:

Beginning balance	\$2,593.93
Receipts/Deposits	\$1,374.00
Expenditures	\$363.30
Ending Balance	\$3,604.63
ARES Funds Available	\$266.12
WCARC Funds Available	\$3,338.51

Treasures report was accepted. We have 1 new member, Paul Gilbert KE5ZW – Welcome Paul to the WCARC!

### DX Report:

John Warren, NT5C, reports that the Peter1 Island DX expedition has been postponed.

### Contest Report:

No report for this month.

### ARES Report and Repeater Report:

Tom Whiteside, N5TW, told us about the WinLink station that he has up and running and that he is working with the City of Georgetown for a grant to setup another WinLink station.

No problems with our repeater!

### Old Business:

WCARC Newsletter – Mark Stennett, NA6M is still looking for a club member to take on this project for the club. As with all of our other club activities this job should not be a problem, it just takes someone with a little free time and someone who is willing to help the club. Please see Mark or any of the other club officers and help us out with this program.

See March Meeting - page 3

## President's QRM

Howdy folks!

Spring is here and I am ready. It is nice to see the bluebonnets again.

Echolink is up and running on the 147.080 repeater. I don't have it set up yet where you can make outgoing connections but incoming connections are happening every day. The node number is 147080 or NA6M-R in your echolink software.

It looks like we may be getting broadband at the KINV tower site real soon. This will allow us to directly connect Echolink and IRLP to the repeaters as well as have a Winlink connection for ARES use.

Do you have a story to tell? A project you're proud of? Please tell us about it. Drop me an email with the details so we can include it in the newsletter.

73, Mark

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### Join Us For Breakfast

WCARC Breakfast - Saturdays at 6:45AM  
Monument Café  
1953 S. Austin Avenue  
Georgetown Texas 78627

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### Williamson County Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 1644  
Georgetown, TX 78627

Club Repeater: 146.640 -600 kHz Tone: 162.2 Hz

## 2005 Officers and Committees

**President** - Mark Stennett, NA6M

**Vice President** - Dick Foster, W5TA

**Guest Speaker Committee**

Vice President - Dick Foster, W5TA, Chairman  
Tom Whiteside

Bob Redoutey, N5KF

**Secretary** - Greg Worthington, AG5W

**Treasurer** - Jon Boles K5AEM

**Pubic Information Officer** - Virgil G. Buell, KD5KQV

**Newsletter Editor** - Mark Stennett, NA6M (who is looking for you to volunteer for this position.)

**Emergency Coordinator** - Tom Whiteside, N5TW

**Webmaster** - Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, thanked McIntosh for his help in bringing the situation to a head. "I hope your example inspires other amateurs facing similar situations to get involved," Sumner added.

On the basis of McIntosh's report, the ARRL this week canceled its complaint to the FCC seeking the system's shutdown and fines for the operator. "ARRL therefore withdraws its complaint with respect to the TXU/Amperion site and requests that the Commission turn its attention to the remainder of the BPL sites which are actively causing interference to radio amateurs, including Briarcliff Manor, New York," ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, wrote the Commission.

There's been no word from TXU as to its reasons for shutting down the system and removing the equipment. The test report the League included with its complaint pointed out that the interference was not confined to Amateur Radio spectrum but included additional HF spectrum. The ARRL said the system even failed to protect many of the bands that the FCC's new BPL rules require to be notched.

The Irving BPL test site is the third using Amperion BPL equipment to shut down following complaints from Amateur Radio operators. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, last June, Alliant Energy cut short its BPL "evaluation system" after the utility and Amperion were unable to resolve ongoing HF interference to amateurs. In the Raleigh, North Carolina, area last October, Progress Energy Corporation shut down Phase II of its BPL field trial after pronouncing the test a success.

Despite an FCC inspection report to the contrary, local amateurs said Progress and Amperion had only limited success in mitigating interference on amateur frequencies in that trial. While initially saying it had no plans for a large-scale commercial rollout of BPL in its service areas, Progress later backed away from that statement, contained in a memorandum announcing the shutdown.

The ARRL formally supported Amateur Radio complaints in Iowa and North Carolina.

Energy East--a cooperative of New York State Electric & Gas and Rochester Gas & Electric--decided last summer against deploying BPL in its Western New York service area. It reportedly based its decision in large part on the high levels of radio frequency interference that an engineer and company officials observed during a visit to Penn Yan.

Last October, a BPL field trial in Menlo Park, California, where now-former FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell earlier had extolled the technology's virtues, was aborted before getting very far off the ground. The BPL demonstration was co-sponsored by Pacific Gas and Electric Company and AT&T, which said it decided to direct its business energies elsewhere.

In January, the Borough of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, decided against plans to offer broadband Internet service via BPL. The Cumberland Valley Amateur Radio Club ([CVARC](#)) spearheaded ham radio [opposition](#) to the plan in the eastern Pennsylvania community of some 17,000 residents through an informational campaign.

## Georgetown Swapfest – Rick Trommer, W5RHT

Rick presented the final results of our clubs event for this year. We had 558 tickets sold and we had 51 out of 65 tables accounted for and in rough numbers the club brought in \$895 during this event. The numbers for folks at this event were in the area of 270 – 280 and all in all not a bad showing for our club. The club thanked Cliff WB5DYA for the door prizes and for the work and effort to obtain the prizes for the club.

### New Business

Jim Bittick, KC5BHF, has scheduled our Spring Picnic for May 7th at San Gabriel Park. We will be at the same shelter and Jim has agreed to do the cooking at this club event.

Dallas KD4HNX, is asking the club for \$50 to renew our clubs URL for the next 5 years, the club voted and approved his request.

Cliff WB5DYA, is asking the club to consider making some changes to the WCARC Swapfest. Cliff will respond back to the club within the next 60 days with the recommendations and he is asking that a committee consisting of himself, Rick W5RHT and Paul KE5ZW, meet and talk about these recommendations. The club agreed as well as Rick and Paul.

John Warren, NT5C talked about this years Austin Summerfest and about a couple of the presentations scheduled for this event.

Dick W5TA, asked the club about this years Field Day event. The primary discussion was the location for this event, should the club move back to Russell Park or find another location. Dick will look into the cost for Russell Park and other locations and get back to the club.

Jerry Burran, N5CNG, has a box load of old WCARC documents that he would like to give back to the club. Jerry told the club that this box has most all of the old club newsletters and original documents. Mark Stennett agreed to take these items and see if someone could scan them and possible put them up on our web site at sometime in the future.

Steve Neubauer, AD5JZ, will bring refreshments to next months meeting. Meeting was adjourned.

Program by John Massa, KE5DFH, was the PIC10F (Worlds Smallest Microcontroller).

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## Web Site of the Month

Collins Radio Classics - <http://www.radioing.com/collins/>

Take a trip back to the days when these fine radios were king. The equipment that spawned so many dreams with hams worldwide, can now be appreciated through its history, original ads reflecting the golden days of ham radio, photos, specifications, and other offerings of cyberspace.

## ARES Report – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

This has been a busy and good month of ARES activities.

### Last month's meeting

Vigil (KD5KQV) led an updated version of his famous "plate exercise". This is a great tactical and message passing drill and it went very well. It went so well that the folks at the meeting unanimously voted to do it again this month. Their feeling was that we can build on what we learned and improve further with the 2 month in a row program. If you missed last month, don't miss out this time! Thanks to Virgil for this great training!

### County activities

I reported last month that we worked with Patrick Cobb with EMS on a proposal to add a significant county amateur radio capability. The proposal funds a voice and a Winlink VHF station with antennas, coax, etc at their EOC, a new communications center and for three specialized communications vehicles. This proposal was very warmly received (Patrick says approved) and we were asked to work with the 10 county "CAPCOG" group on extending this proposal across this broader area. I made a presentation at a CAPCOG meeting this week and NQ5L did a Winlink demo for them. We should know soon about the status of this funding and I am in communication with the ECs for the involved counties.

### N5TW Winlink node

This has been another busy month for the node. This is our first month for the HF Pactor node to be up and we have had numerous check-ins from around the state from ARES folks. This is working well. Thanks to KI5DR's efforts, we have a "new" GE Delta VHF radio on the 145.03MHz node. These radios were \$3000 a few years ago and make super packet radios – it has a rated output of 110W so it will run cool and happy throttled back a bit.

Statistics for March:

VHF:	1751 check-ins	232 messages passed
HF:	55 check-ins	33 messages passed

Our ARES SEC managed to send a message over the N5TW VHF link from Houston using the KD5HHW digipeater in Magnolia, TX. A new "DX" VHF record for the node.

### Other Winlink information

We \*NEED\* more folks to get busy and setup portable response packet stations. I know of a few people working on these and we have 4 or 5 in operation. Our agencies are now sold on this capability and we are at risk of falling on our faces for lack of enough of these stations.

See ARES Report, page 4

## ARES Report ...continued from page 3.

NQ5L and KD5FSK have demonstrated that the TNC-X kits, which cost around \$70 with the case option, work just great – so PLEASE, let's get serious and get more of these Packet Cavalry stations on-line.

The April meeting will be another run of Virgil Buell's (KD5KQV) "Plate Exercise". We will also get to meet Patrick Cobb – Patrick is the driving force for the County's grant proposals. Remember that the ARES meeting is the second Thursday of the month at the Round Rock fire station now at 7PM.

And please participate in our Sunday evening nets at 8PM.

**Tom Whiteside (N5TW)**  
**ARES Emergency Coordinator for Williamson County**

## WA7BNM April Contest Calendar

From: <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

Kids Roundup	1400Z, Apr 2 to 2200Z, Apr 3
SP DX Contest	1500Z, Apr 2 to 1500Z, Apr 3
EA RTTY Contest	1600Z, Apr 2 to 1600Z, Apr 3
Missouri QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 2 to 0500Z, Apr 3 and 1800Z-2400Z, Apr 3
QCWA Spring QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 2 to 1800Z, Apr 3
Montana QSO Party	2300Z, Apr 2 to 2300Z, Apr 3
RSGB RoPoCo	0700Z-0900Z, Apr 3
144 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 4
RSGB 80m Club Championship, CW	2000Z-2130Z, Apr 4
ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400Z, Apr 5
YLRL DX-YL to NA-YL Contest, CW	1400Z, Apr 6 to 0200Z, Apr 8
SARL 80m QSO Party	1700Z-2000Z, April 7
JIDX CW Contest	0700Z, Apr 9 to 1300Z, Apr 10
ARCI Spring QSO Party	1200Z, Apr 9 to 2400Z, Apr 10
EU Spring Sprint, SSB	1500Z-1859Z, Apr 9
Georgia QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 9 to 0359Z, Apr 10 and 1400Z-2359Z, Apr 10
Yuri Gagarin International DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 9 to 2100Z, Apr 10
UBA Spring Contest, SSB	0600Z-1000Z, Apr 10
SARL Hamnet 40m Simulated Emerg Contest	1200Z-1400Z, Apr 10
222 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 12
YLRL DX-YL to NA-YL Contest, SSB	1400Z, Apr 13 to 0200Z, Apr 15
RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB	2000Z-2130Z, Apr 13
Holyland DX Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Apr 16
TARA Skirmish Digital Prefix Contest	0000Z-2400Z, Apr 16
ES Open HF Championship	0500Z-0859Z, Apr 16
EU Spring Sprint, CW	1500Z-1859Z, Apr 16
Michigan QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 16 to 0400Z, Apr 17
Ontario QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 16 to 1800Z, Apr 17
YU DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 16 to 0500Z, Apr 17 and 0900Z-1700Z, Apr 17

## WILLIAMSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OWNED EQUIPMENT

Reviewed at 5 August 2004 WCARC Meeting

### Tower Work

- 1 Gin Pole - KE5RS, John Benedict - 30-Aug-03
- 1 Tower Step - N5NMW, Jeff Schmidt - 7-Aug-03

### Antenna measurement

- 1 MFJ Antenna Analyzer - KI5YG, Steve Cowell - 3-Feb-05
- 1 MFJ Grid Dip Adapter - K5KVN, Stuart Rohre - 3-Feb-05

### Antennas

- 1 Butternut HF Vertical 10M-80M - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05
- 1 Cushcraft 6-element 440MHz Beam - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05
- 1 Cushcraft R7 HF Vertical - W5TA, Dick Foster - 3-Feb-05
- 1 Hygain triband antenna - W5TA, Dick Foster - 3-Feb-05
- 1 Mosley Triband Antenna (Donated by Harvey, N0AJP) - K5AEM, Jon Boles - 3-Feb-05

### Masts

- 2 Push Up Masts - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05
- 1 Push Up Masts - KC5RPF, Ken Larsen - 3-Feb-05
- 2 Push Up Masts - KD5KQV, Virgil Buell - 4-Jul-03

### Power Supplies

- 1 20 Amp Power Supply - N5TW, Tom Whiteside - 14-Jul-04

### Miscellaneous

- 2 Heavy Duty Power Cords - K5HTK, Jim Hester - 3-Feb-05

### Pending sale

- 1 DB Commercial Grade Antenna VHF high-band 158MHz - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05

## WA7BNM Contest Calendar Continued...

NAQCC Weeknight 40/80-Meter Sprint	0030Z-0430Z, Apr 20
432 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 20
RSGB 80m Club Championship, Data	2000Z-2130Z, Apr 21
DX Colombia International Contest	0000Z, Apr 23 to 2400Z, Apr 24
SP DX RTTY Contest	1200Z, Apr 23 to 1200Z, Apr 24
Helvetia Contest	1300Z, Apr 23 to 1300Z, Apr 24
Florida QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 23 to 0159Z, Apr 24 and 1200Z-2159Z, Apr 24
Nebraska QSO Party	1700Z, Apr 23 to 1700Z, Apr 24
EUCW/FISTS QRS Party	0001Z, Apr 24 to 2359Z, Apr 30
SBMS 2 GHz and Up WW Club Contest	0600 local, Apr 30 to 2400 local, May 1