



WCARC News

May 2005

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Texas BPL Initiative Officially Dead; Antenna Bill Exempts Amateur Radio

NEWINGTON, CT, May 31, 2005--Despite some eleventh-hour political wrangling, Texas legislation that would have encouraged the deployment of BPL by electric utilities has failed to pass. After the original measure, Texas Senate Bill 1748, got stalled in the Texas House of Representatives, its language was grafted onto two other bills in an effort to ease it through the current legislative session, set to wrap up today. The various measures died when House and Senate leaders were unable to resolve their differing versions. Meanwhile, wording to exempt Amateur Radio has been restored to a potentially restrictive antenna bill, [HB 843](#). North Texas ARRL Section Manager Tom Blackwell, N5GAR, says time simply ran out for the supporters of the BPL measure, which was to have served as a model for bills in other states.

"The Texas BPL bill is dead," Blackwell commented on his [Texas BPL Web site](#).

See *SB1748 and Antenna Bill* – page 4

Join Us For Breakfast

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

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May WCARC Minutes

The WCARC meeting was called to order by President Mark Stennett, NA6M. There were 40 members and visitors who signed the attendance sheet.

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

Treasurer's Report – Jon Boles, K5AEM

April, 2005

Beginning Balance	\$3,395.63
Receipts/Deposits	\$ 174.01
Expenditures	\$ 108.17
Ending Balance	\$3,461.47
ARES Funds Available	\$ 155.13
WCARC Funds Available	\$3,306.34

The April 2005 Treasurers report was approved as read.

DX Report – none

Contest Report – none

Repeater Report – Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX

The repeater is working well.

ARES Report – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

Reference the WCARES Report
James Russell, NQ5L, will conduct a Packet workshop May 21. He may be contacted at nq5l@arrl.net

Old Business

WCARC Newsletter – Mark Stennett, NA6M

Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW, indicated that he might take over the WCARC newsletter responsibilities.

Trailer Project – John McColly, W5RQ

John reported that federal grants for trailers similar to the one being discussed by WCARC are available only to a political entity. Williamson County currently has plans for three trailers. The county may need assistance from WCARC to get their trailers up and running. With this in mind, does the club want to mount a smaller effort than originally planned? If so, we will need support of the membership to make it happen.

John did not want to press the question to a vote just after receiving this update. He recommended that a vote be taken at the June meeting on continuation of the effort.

WCARC Picnic – Jim Bittick, KC5BHF

The picnic will be at 5:00pm at the Arbors of San Gabriel park in Georgetown on Saturday May 7.

See *May meeting* - page 3

President's QRM

Howdy folks,

Wow. It's June already. I find it hard to believe we are almost half way through the year. The club picnic this year was fantastic. Thanks to Jim Bittick, KC5BHF and his lovely wife for making all the arrangements.

I went to the Belton swap for the first time this year. While the weather this year put the outside sellers out of business, there were plenty of things to see inside.

Working for Univision Radio has been keeping me really busy. I did manage to work in a trip to Dayton between visits to Chicago and New York. This is my third trip and I loved every minute of it. Dayton is absolutely huge. To wander the parking lot and see everything in one day would be a challenge and your feet would hate you at the end of the tour. The inside exhibits are just as rewarding with most vendors showing off powered up equipment.

I thought the attendance was light on Friday but Saturday was crowded per usual. Official estimates this year had the attendance at about 25,000 people. The weather in Dayton cooperated very nicely.

Usually it is raining over the weekend, this year the rain held off until Sunday morning.

I always pick something up at Dayton, usually from the parking lot sellers. The cool find this year was an N connector inline adapter with an adjustable sample port coming off to a BNC connector. Silver plated, this adapter is used to sample power or inject a signal into a line and is frequently referred to as a magic T. Ten bucks, brand new, such a deal. I found it odd however that there were no GE Delta radios to be found in the parking lot. I saw lots of Motorola Syntor and Spectra radios but they seemed to be priced high. It looks like we have broadband internet at the KINV tower site now. I have a CAT5 connection sitting on the repeater rack but need to get the fixed IP addresses from the provider. The long term goal will be to move Echolink and IRLP to the site for 147.080 and 444.525 repeaters as well as establish a Telpac node for ARES use on the packet radio.

Field Day is just around the corner. Please see Dick Foster, W5TA if you are interested in helping out.

73,
Mark

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

Public Information Officer - Virgil G. Buell, KD5KQV

Newsletter Editor - Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW

Emergency Coordinator - Tom Whiteside, N5TW

Webmaster - Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX

"The winners are the *Texas Constitution* and the people of Texas

who have imposed strict time limits on actions by the Texas Legislature." By law, legislative sessions run 140 days. A collateral benefit of the legislative battle, Blackwell says, is that the BPL bill motivated people not normally engaged in the political process to get involved--some for the first time. Many members of the Amateur Radio community in the Lone Star State contacted their lawmakers to voice their opposition to the original bill and its various successors, he said.

"Potential investors in BPL should be reminded that because of the conduct of the lobbyists they hired and the elected officials they influenced, we were energized," he said. "Because of them we are now better organized and prepared to address interference complaints to the FCC and respond to any other attempt to effectively convert any of our amateur bands to commercial use."

Blackwell says suggested it's not too soon to start thinking about the 2007 legislative session. "We expect to see the same kinds of bills filed again," he said.

Blackwell, Bill Lawless, W5WRL (now West Texas SM-elect), Gene Preston, K5GP, and Skip Cameron, W5GAI, testified in opposition to the original BPL bill--SB 1748--while it was under consideration by the House Regulated Industries Committee. Blackwell says a representative of the Texas Coalition of Cities for Utility Issues who also testified against the measure called it unconstitutional.

Radio amateurs in Texas also contacted their lawmakers regarding antenna-related legislation--HB 843--giving certain Texas counties the authority to regulate "communication facility structures."

The House version included an exemption for Amateur Radio antenna support structures, but the Senate version stripped that provision. South Texas State Government Liaison Jim Robinson, K5PNV, said, however, that he got assurances from House and Senate sponsors of the bill that the language would be reinstated when the measure went to conference.

The bill now includes wording exempting "a communications antenna, antenna facility, or antenna tower or support structure located in a residential area that is used by an Amateur Radio operator exclusively for Amateur Radio communications or public safety services."

"Looks like our work is done, insofar as the 79th Legislature is concerned," Robinson told ARRL West Gulf Director Coy Day, N5OK, and Texas ARRL section leadership this week. "Thanks to all of you for the excellent job you collectively did in getting contacts made with key legislators. This reflects a great team effort."

Georgetown Swapfest – Rick Trommer, W5RHT

Discussions regarding the charging of entry fees for the 2006 swapfest were underway, but the persons heading up the effort were not in attendance at the meeting. The second key question for next year's swapfest was to find a new location.

Field Day – Dick Foster, W5TA

Dick reviewed the possible locations for this year's Field Day. The two options presented were locations at Russell Park and last year's location at Heritage Park. Dick felt that if Russell Park were to be a possibility, we would need someone with political clout to lift the restrictions of access. Russell Park would also be an expensive option. Heritage Park would be free to the club, and hopefully there would not be a repeat of the rain and mud of last year. It was moved, seconded, and passed that this year's WCARC Field Day activity be held at Heritage Park.

Dick still needs someone to handle a CW station for Field Day. He requested that anyone interested contact him after the meeting.

New Business

Texas QSO Party – Jon Boles, K5AEM

Jon discussed the club's sponsoring two 2nd place trophies for the Texas QSO Party at a cost of \$35.00. It was moved, seconded, and passed to provide such trophies.

March Refreshments

Kees Talen, K5BCQ, agreed to provide refreshments for the June meeting.

WCARC Program

The program for May was by John Basilotto, W5GI, discussing his multi-band mystery antenna.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OWNED EQUIPMENT

Reviewed at 5 August 2005 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 - K15YG, 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-ele 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 Ant - 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 Ant VHF 158MHz - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 6-Feb-05

ARES Report – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

This has been sort of a short month for me between some traveling and Paul collecting inputs a bit earlier. Thanks Galen for sitting in for me in my absence.

Last month's meeting:

I am grateful to John Meaker KR4AH for a great program on anticipating Red Cross challenges based on studying map information to assess populations at risk and other factors. Very interesting program and it was good to see all the attendees.

N5TW Winlink node:

Nice stable month with another GE Delta brought up as a spare and another for a portable station – both donated by NA6M – thanks, Mark! Here are some pictures of a GE Delta SX model with a TNC-X “built-in”.



Changes were made to integrate the N5TW-10 node into the main Winlink server so this node should be up full time now.

Statistics for March: (HF node was down while we were traveling)

Telnet: 3 check-ins, 4 messages passed (mostly for Harris County)

VHF: 1905 check-ins, 183 messages passed (several from Harris County)

HF: 11 check-ins, 4 messages passed

Other Winlink information:

Jim Russell, NQ5L led a great Packet workshop this month – I was sorry to be out of town and miss that! Jim will send in a separate report for the newsletter on the workshop. Maybe we can get some of the participants to send in reports to the newsletter detailing their experiences.

Mark, NA6M got the NA6M-1 high node up as a digipeater on 144.910 and Scott, KI5DR has put a KI5DR-6 node up on that frequency until we can get a full blown Telnet node going there. This high node is up 350 feet on the KINV tower just under the NA6M repeater antenna. Here is a picture of KI5DR-6:



ARES Report ...continued from page 3.

A reminder that we have instituted a weekly Winlink check-in. Total check-ins will be reported on the Sunday evening net. Winlink check-in is easy, just send a check-in note to ng5l@winlink.org and cc: n5tw@winlink.org and tell us which node you used. You can check-in at your convenience anytime during the week – Jim asks that notes be posted before noon Sunday. We are encouraging folks to vary the node they use weekly to help exercise all the gear and keep you in practice – multiple check-ins via the different nodes are welcome.

As a reminder, the current nodes are:

KI5DR-5 145.73 (via ausrly-1)

KI5DR-6 144.91 (via NA6M-1)

N5TW-12 145.03

N5TW-10 145.61

Field Day:

We will be doing message passing for Field Day again this year – this year, we will be using our portable Packet stations and there will be participants from other ARES group around the state and perhaps country. Should be a lot of fun and good practice for us. Even if you are not active, stop by during FD and get a quick tutorial on this!

June Meeting:

We have been focusing more on training this year and less on build projects. *BUT*, the June meeting will be a project meeting to build copper cactus antennas. This time, we plan to stage the materials to the meeting so all you will need to do is come if you want to participate. Since the materials are not free and we are short of money, we will ask for a \$10 donation to cover our costs if you want to participate – this makes a very nice antenna for \$10!

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. These are still on 146.64 (PL 162.2) while the 145.13 repeater is under the weather.

Tom Whiteside (N5TW)

ARES Emergency Coordinator for Williamson County

WA7BNM April Contest Calendar

Please see: <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

THE PACKET WORKSHOP

A packet workshop was put together on May 21. The goal was to help hams install and run the various programs needed to get Winlink running on their systems. There were also hams who had a new TNC-X built, and one (Craig, W5TSN) who built a TNC-X from scratch the day of the workshop.

Jon (K5AEM) was the first to connect his TNC and get it working. He was able to send emails through the temporary Telpac station running at the workshop location.

Everyone should congratulate Craig, W5TSN. It has been a while since he did anything remotely like building a circuit board, but it worked perfectly the first time it was powered up!

Virgil, KD5KQV, gets the prize for enduring the most frustration of the day. He successfully sent an email but the computer he was using was stuck with Dallas', KD4HNX, call sign in it! Try as he might, he couldn't get that to change and we weren't much help.

Bob Thompson, W5VGJ, also had an interesting problem that wasn't figured out until later on. Once we got past some software issues and had the computer talking to his TNC-X, whenever he would transmit there was another audio tone superimposed on the modulation. He later found out this was RF getting into the TNC-X from the mag mount antenna he had next to his setup. Another lesson, reduce power or put the antenna a long way from the TNC-X!

It was a very productive day even though it was extremely hectic at times. We've learned some lessons on how to make it more productive and are planning another workshop for getting even more hams running with Winlink 2000.

Jim Russell, NQ5L

**Newsletter Deadline !! The 25th of the month prior to publication.
Please submit articles and ideas!!!**

**WCARC ARRL 2005 Field Day
June 25-26
Heritage Park, Georgetown
Pitch in - Help Out - Have fun !!**