



WCARC News

September 2005

www.wcarc.com

ARES Report

Katrina & Rita The Evil Sisters

The big news this month is definitely Hurricane Rita. And Rita came on the heels of Katrina and Katrina on the heels of the Lockhart expedition that occurred at the end of the last month. And we have been busy adding to infrastructure. The World has been getting it's money's worth out of the WC-ARES group lately – that is for sure!

Katrina

Katrina was a huge storm that did enormous damage. Texas responded generously housing many thousands of evacuees. Bernie Davies KC5LGS was good enough to travel to Houston on our behalf to help with the logistics associated with the Astrodome shelter. I received a special thanks from the District 1 Emergency Coordinator, KD2KW thanking us and Bernie for his fine job. (You remember Ken KD2KW from his years in the club.) Hats off to Bernie for a GREAT effort.

I cobbled up my antenna system to allow my big 80M and 40M antennas to be used on the Winlink HF node to better reach the affected area. The Winlink development team did a quick software upgrade to support my automatic antenna system under program control. The node had hours and hours of Katrina traffic up until Rita shooed the amateurs away from the MS/LA coast.

Thanks to Jim NQ5L (our Digital Communications AEC) for hosting another great Packet workshop. Two stations were “revived” and there were three new “Packet Cavalry” members brought on-line. A forth station was partially brought up and subsequently has come on-line. This puts us above our year end goal of 16 Packet Cavalry stations and in good stead for the SET coming up in November.

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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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WARC Meeting Minutes

Williamson County Amateur Radio Club
Sept. 1, 2005

The WCARC meeting was called to order by President Mark Stennett, NA6M.

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

Treasurer's Report – Jon Boles, K5AEM

August, 2005

Beginning Balance	\$ 2,604.80	
Receipts/Deposits	\$ 187.56	
Expenditures	\$ 103.70	
Ending Balance	\$ 2,688.66	
ARES Funds Available	(\$ 24.09)	
WCARC Funds Available	\$ 2,688.66	
Paid Membership	Beginning	Ending
Individual	82	84
Family	24	24
Honorary	3	3
Total	109	111

DX Report – John Warren, NT5C

The bands are beginning their fall “warm-up”. 40 meters to South Africa is already opening nicely. The KA2HTV DXpedition to North Korea has also run into bad luck.

Contest Report – none

Repeater Report – none

ARES Report – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

Reference the WCARES Report.

The discussion of Katrina dominated the news. At present time, the first WinLink messages are coming through. Conditions in the disaster area are poor, and communications to individuals in the area are non-existent. Houston and Travis County shelters are being opened for refugees. This is a good time to review “Go Kits”.

The Fall SET is planned for November. Caldwell County “switchover” to a “hardened” facility took place with WCARES responding. Of 18 responders, 14 were from WCARES! Good show!

The next WCARES meeting will unveil a newly published plan. The discussion will be “How we do a deployment.”

A WinLink demo was given in Sun City to the Assistant Chief of Police, who wants all of his officers now to be licensed.

Bring desserts!

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ARES Report

WCARC Minutes

Tom Nevue W2MN (our new Cedar Park Backup AEC) has done a great job of outfitting the dispatch room with a 2-meter voice and Packet station. Both of these have antennas up 75 feet and should have super coverage. In addition to setting up the W5LHC Paclink station, we also setup a new W5LHC-10 Telpac station. Tom is working with them on their mobile setups for 2M voice and Paclink.

Darrin KD5CQL and Keith KD5FYG did all the heavy lifting to get antennas, radios, feed lines and the computer setup at the Georgetown Healthcare System. This before Keith had even passed his license exam – congrats Keith! We got the KD4HNX-1 Paclink setup running and also the new KD4HNX-10 Telpac node. It also has all the software needed for ARCHES on-hand. This node played a role during the Rita effort – more on that later.

Dallas KD4HNX / John KE5RS had been lobbying Round Rock Hospital to put the ARES ARCHES computer in front of the hospital corporate firewall to allow it to be used as a Telpac node. This was accomplished and we got it all setup to do Paclink and Telpac. Unfortunately, there is some construction planned soon that will cause this setup to be physically moved and there are also cooling issues to be resolved to leave it up and running permanently. Watch this space for another full time Telpac node.

These new nodes are great strategic additions that give us more Internet diversity (better chance of having the Internet running at one of them), more physical diversity (less chance of losing all of them in a storm), more bandwidth and hardened sites with backup power. Good stuff!

More infrastructure was added as part of the Rita deployment – as I said, it has been a very busy month...

Hurricane Rita

Unlike most of our severe weather, a hurricane provides days of warning. Initially, it looked like Rita was going to bear down on us. At its worse, Rita was even bigger than Katrina and could have created hurricane force winds and flooding in Williamson County. That possible outcome is what our agencies and our team prepared for. In any case, we expected the area to house many evacuees and that also required preparation. Our team did a good job of using that lead time to prepare. Since our Winlink PMBO hub requires power, I was able to buy a generator and to lay away 12 gallons of fuel. Everyone kept their vehicles well fueled. The Cedar Park and GHS infrastructure work was completed. W5TSN with help from K5HTK got a second antenna in place at the county EOC – we need two antennas at each location to support Winlink. The Georgetown EOC requested that we be prepared to operate in the EOC proper versus the dispatch office where our gear is installed so K5HTK rigged up a temporary setup there. We were asked in Round Rock to move the gear to the side room off the EOC to make things quieter for them and us KB5TWO and WA0YVQ got the gear moved and tested.

I met with all the ECs in the district and our DEC down in Austin Wednesday evening before the storm to discuss the latest evacuation plan and to coordinate mutual assistance.

The County Office of Emergency management office had daily meetings I and some others in our group attended as part of the preparation. We also began nightly nets to communicate the situation to the team and to begin gathering resources in advance.

At 10AM on Friday, both the County and Round Rock EOCs were activated and we staffed these with both voice and Winlink capabilities as planned.

We were on standby for the other EOCs throughout the storm. By Friday evening, it was very unlikely that we were going to have high winds and rain here but the easterly storm track was herding more evacuees our way. Our planning shifted to creating self-sufficient teams with HF capability to deploy to the affected areas

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Old Business

Fall Picnic, Jim Bittick, KC5BHF

Jim announced that the Fall Picnic would be held on Saturday, October 8th. Serving will be at 5pm. Bring desserts!

New Business

Texas VHF FM Society

Mark Stennett, NA6M, was recognized as a new board member for the Texas VHF FM Society. Mark noted that these responsibilities will not allow him to pursue a second term as president of the WCARC.

Wesleyan Center

Dean Hamilton, K5FDH, reported on new plans for renovation of the Wesleyan Center. It will be made into low-income housing, beginning with the top floor as a new home is built and residents can be moved out. We don't need to worry about relocation the WCARC meeting place for a while, most likely.

Programs, Dick Foster, W5TA

Dick requested programs for the remaining months of the year. He suggested, "shack descriptions", or items dealing with low-band operations.

October Refreshments

Gaylen Helmcamp, WA0YVQ, will provide refreshments for the October meeting.

WCARC Program

The program for September was a presentation by Tom Whiteside, N5TW, on the story of his 80 meter vertical.

Thanks to Duane Calvin, AC5AA, for taking the minutes for the September meeting.

WA7BNM April Contest Calendar

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

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 - 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-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

after the storms. As of Friday evening, there were 8500 folks sheltered in Williamson County and probably 20,000 extra folks total staying in the county. (I know we had 5 extra folks and a total 5 cats under our roof.) This extra load of people strained the local healthcare system. At one point, we were asked to send an operator to the Georgetown Healthcare System. I was able to report back that we had an operator with voice and Winlink capability in a matter of minutes. That was Keith KE5FYG.

On Saturday morning, I committed to our SEC (Jerry KK5CA) that we would have two mobile, self sufficient HF mobile teams ready to deploy first thing Sunday morning. NQ5L worked late into the night Saturday getting K5HTK's Pactor I TNC working with his radio – we had to really have all the bugs out before potentially deploying that morning.

We ran a continuous net on the WCARC repeater during all hours the EOCs were staffed by amateurs. Thanks to KB7UQD and KD5WML for helping out with the nets. We also participated in the HF net on 7285 at the same time in addition to scrambling on the phone for various fire drills. By Sunday morning, our effort concluded and it was decided that no HF deployment would be immediately needed. My thanks to NQ5L, AE5Q, KI5DR, W5VGJ and KD5PUJ for being ready to deploy Sunday morning.

Special thanks to W5TSN, WA0YVQ and KB5TWO for long hours at EOCs. W5LGM, K5AEM, KE5AGG, K5HTK and W5HMN spent time at the EOCs as well. And thanks to KE5FYG for doing GHS duty. There were many more on standby to serve, we had over 30 people on that list.

On Monday, we were requested to send operators to Jasper Texas which is expected to be without power for perhaps as long as 30 days. NQ5L and W5VGJ instantly volunteered to team up on this mission and deployed early Tuesday morning. I sent my HF portable go kit with mast, antenna, stakes, etc along with 5 gallons of my generator fuel reserve with them. Jim has been sending in Winlink HF reports at least daily.

Jim NQ5L and Bob W5VGJ left on their DXpedition to Jasper Tuesday morning in the camper setup Bob brought to Field Day. They returned Saturday evening (October 1st).

Scott KI5DR headed out to Jasper Sunday morning (October 2nd) – he returned on the following Thursday.

Annual Simulated Emergency Test (SET)

A reminder that this year's Simulated Emergency Training (SET) moved to November 5th. While we met a number of the SET goals during Rita, we were trying not to break things versus testing to capacity and we did not deploy to all the EOCs. The consensus from the AEC team was to proceed with the SET as planned. This month's meeting will be a preparation for that.

N5TW Winlink node:

Still no usage reports in the new software – The HF PACTOR setup has been logging more than an hour a day of transmit time with Katrina and Rita traffic.

Weekly Packet net reminder:

A reminder that we have instituted a weekly Winlink check-in. Total check-ins are reported on the Sunday evening net. Winlink check-in is easy, just send a check-in note to nq5l@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.

**Newsletter Deadline for Articles and Submissions
is the 25th of the Month prior to the month of
publication**

The current nodes are:

KI5DR-5	145.73 (via ausrly-1)
NA6M-10	144.91
N5TW-12	145.03
N5TW-10	145.61
KD4HNX-10	145.61 (Georgetown Healthcare System)
W5LHC-10	145.61 (Cedar Park PD)

Remember that the ARES meeting is the second Thursday of the month at the Round Rock fire station now at 7PM. You don't want to miss it!

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

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

HF Operators still needed at East Texas Operations

Operators are still needed for operations supporting the Salvation Army and their relief efforts in the East Texas areas of Jasper, Hemphill and Beaumont from the devastation of Hurricane Rita.

Jasper, Texas.....

The Salvation Army needs Amateur Radio operators with mobile HF (80/40) SSB to assist with daily food distribution in the area of Jasper and Hemphill, Tx operations. Operators will need to provide their own sleeping quarters (tent, RV, travel trailer, etc). Most of the work is outside in high humidity and temperatures. People with medical problems that could become severe in these conditions should not volunteer for this assignment.

The roadblocks into Jasper have been removed. Gasoline and diesel fuel remain in short supply. The Salvation Army is providing priority fueling cards for their workers, which includes the volunteering Amateur Radio operators. It gets you access to the fuel, but you still have to pay for it.

Amateur Radio operators interested in helping with this relief task should send an e-mail to the Section Emergency Coordinator, KK5CA (kk5ca at arrl.net) with the subject of JASPER or HEMPHILL.

**WC-ARES NET... Sunday's
8 p.m. on 146.640, PL 162.2**

QRM

.....by Mark Stennett, NA6M, President

Howdy folks,

I am hearing a lot of new call signs on the 2 meter band in the Austin and Georgetown area. This is fantastic and I congratulate you folks for getting your licenses. Please do what you can to encourage others to do the same as you progress in this wonderful hobby.

As if Hurricane Katrina was not enough damage for one year, here comes Rita. Radio engineering staff from the Dallas market and I drove out into the Jasper and Beaumont area 72 hours after the storm had passed in order to deliver diesel fuel, a generator and 1 kW solid state FM broadcast transmitter to fellow broadcasters in need. The damage was widespread yet not evenly distributed throughout the region.

In Beaumont, we noticed that one house would be nearly untouched as trees fell around it, sometimes within inches of the structure, while the house next door had the roof blown off or trees crashed onto it. Gas was in short supply within 100 miles of Beaumont coming from the northwest and long lines of cars stretched those supplies thin. We packed plenty of extra fuel with us as well as ice, food and water.

In situations like these it is very important to be entirely self sufficient. KOLE radio in Beaumont lost their 300 foot AM tower in the storm. The tower buckled and folded up within 100 feet of the base, crushing a car parked within the fall zone. Most of the broadcast stations in the area were suffering from a lack of electricity or generator fuel. KJAS in Jasper had a small propane fired generator but it was fed from a city gas supply which was sputtering due to broken gas pipes along the way.

We dropped off a 15 kW diesel generator and several hundred gallons of fuel which enabled KJAS to resume their entire operation and provide much needed news to their community.

Leaving the area for Georgetown at around midnight, I could not help but pull over on a desolate state highway between Beaumont and Livingston to get a good look at the stars. With the electricity out in the area for 40 to 50 miles in all directions, the lack of light pollution made for a wonderful view.

73, Mark, NA6M

