



# WCARC NEWS

January 2006

www.wcarc.com

## Williamson County Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 1644  
Georgetown, TX 78627

### Inside this issue:

Meeting Information	2
Website Of The Month	2
ARES Report	3
President's QRM	3
Club Equipment List	4
Contest Calendar	4
Texas BPL Story	4

### WCARC Officers

#### President

Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW

#### Vice-President

Bob Thompson, W5VGJ

#### Secretary

Tim Stevens, KD5WML

#### Treasurer

Jon Boles, K5AEM

### WCARC Staff

#### Public information Officer

Virgil Buell, KD4KQV

#### Newsletter Editor

Mark Stennett, NA6M

#### Webmaster

Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX

#### Guest Speaker Committee

VP - Bob Thompson, W5VGJ  
, Chairman

Tom Whiteside, N5TW

Bob Redoutey, N5KF

#### Emergency Coordinator

Jim Russell, NQ5L

## December Meeting Minutes

The WCARC meeting was called to order by President Mark Stennett, NA6M. There were 37 members and visitors who signed the attendance sheet.

The minutes were approved as posted in the WCARC Newsletter.

### Treasurer's Report – Jon Boles, K5AEM

#### November, 2005

Beginning Balance	\$ 2,135.42
Receipts/Deposits	\$ 100.00
Expenditures	\$ 26.15
Ending Balance	\$ 2,209.27
ARES Funds Available	(\$ 127.09)
WCARC Funds Available	\$ 2,209.27

### ARES Report – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

Reference the WCARES Report.

### Williamson County EC – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

The Williamson County EC is an appointed position. The endorsement of such position although not a requirement is an important "vote of confidence" by the group that represents amateur radio operators in Williamson County. Tom asked WCARC to give this vote of confidence to Jim Russell, NQ5L. The WCARC support for Jim was enthusiastically given by a show of hands with no dissenting votes. Unless something unforeseen occurs, Jim will begin his term on January 1, 2006. WCARC gives special thanks Tom for his outstanding efforts and results during his busy term as Williamson County EC.

### Repeater Report – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

The repeater is working.

### DX Report – Tom Whiteside, N5TW

The low bands continue to be good.

### Old Business

#### 2005 Field Day Results – Dick Foster, W5TA

WCARC was in the 88<sup>th</sup> percentile in its category for the 2005 Field Day. We were 54<sup>th</sup> out of 451 entries in our category. Dick was pleased with the results that support his goals of both doing well in the Field Day activity and as well as keeping the event "friendly" to all of those who want to participate.

#### 2006 WCARC Swapfest – Rick Trommer, W5RHT

The date of the 2006 WCARC Swapfest is February 12. The new location will be the Showbarn, and it is relatively close to our normal location. There are no tables available at this location so the 2006 event will be tailgating only. The only tables will be those provided by the sellers. Tailgating parking spaces will go for \$10 each, and Rick may make some special provisions those needing multiple spaces. This event will be an ARRL event and therefore some of the door prizes will be provided by the ARRL. The food services may be provided by the Elks.

### New Business

#### Amateur Radio at Deep Woods Elementary School – Tina Risinger, KC5BZA

Tina informed WCARC of the "Big Project" activity in the Round Rock ISD with the first RRIISD ham shack set to open in January, 2006. She discussed the progress of this activity and asked for assistance from members of WCARC.

## December Meeting Minutes continued...

If anyone is available to help with the ham shack or become a science fair judge, please contact Tina at (512) 310-9010 or [trisinger@yahoo.com](mailto:trisinger@yahoo.com).

### Longhorn District Boy Scout Camporee – Mark Stennett, NA6M

Mark shared a request by Jeff Schmidt, N5MNW, to provide some Boy Scouts with an experience of amateur radio at a comporee on Lake Granger on January 21<sup>st</sup> in the afternoon. Tom, N5TW, proposed that WCARC organize a team to support this activity and will serve as a focal point for the club. The initial plans include a HF station, a local VHF station, and a VHF Winlink setup. Tom will contact the scout leader to confirm details. Please e-mail Tom at [tomw@ecpi.com](mailto:tomw@ecpi.com) if you want to participate.

### Officer Nomination Committee and Elections – Dallas Mellichamp, KD4HNX

Dallas had the following nominations for WCARC club officers:

President: Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW

Vice-President – Bob Farmer, W9BF/5 and Bob Thompson, W5VGJ

Secretary – Tim Stevens, KD5WML, was nominated from the floor

Treasurer – Jon Boles, K5AEM

Having TWO candidates for vice-president threw the club for a loop as no one could remember having two candidates for any of the officer's positions in the past and especially the vice-president's position. There was considerable discussion including having co-vice-presidents or voting on both candidates with the winner taking the secretary's position. In the end, Bob Farmer, W9BF/5, withdrew himself from consideration.

The officers unanimously elected by a show of hands in the meeting were:

President: Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW

Vice-President – Bob Thompson, W5VGJ

Secretary – Tim Stevens, KD5WML

Treasurer – Jon Boles, K5AEM

The new officer's terms will begin January 1, 2006. Thanks to all of those elected and to Bob, W9BF/5, for their interest in the successful future of the club.

### January Refreshments

Warren Gossett, KB5OEL, agreed to provide refreshments for the January meeting.

### WCARC Program

The program for December was a showing of the new ARRL video narrated by Walter Cronkite.

### Join Us For Breakfast

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

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

### WCARC Meetings, 1st Thursday - 7:30 PM

**Wesleyan Retirement Home  
1105 S. Church St.  
Georgetown, TX 78626**

### WCARC Repeater: 146.640 MHz, 162.2 PL

### WCARES Meetings, 2nd Thursday - 7:00 PM

**Round Rock Fire Station No. 6  
2919 Joe DiMaggio Drive  
Round Rock, TX 78664**

### Website Of The Month

<http://www.heavens-above.com/>

If you're interested in satellites or astronomy, you've come to the right place! Our aim is to provide you with all the information you need to observe satellites such as the **International Space Station** and the **Space Shuttle**, spectacular events such as the dazzlingly bright **flares from Iridium satellites** as well as a wealth of other spaceflight and astronomical information.

**Newsletter Deadline for Articles and Submissions  
is the 25<sup>th</sup> of the Month prior to publication**

## ARES Report—Tom Whiteside, N5TW

The end of the year is always a good time to reflect on the year's efforts and this month's column is dedicated to that. The group has much to be proud of!

The packet front has been amazing – we have gone from 2 Telpac nodes to 7! New nodes this year were (in order of appearance):

N5TW-10  
 NA6M-10 high node  
 W5LHC-10 CP EOC  
 KD4HNX-10 (GHS)  
 KB5TWO-10 (RR EOC)

We have the KD4HNX-11 (RRMC) node all setup and tested out – we were hoping to have that up by year end but they were physically relocating the coax on the last working day of the year!

We added HF PACTOR to the PMBO making it a full fledged ARES PMBO - #3 in the country! This facility did great service during Katrina and Rita.

Our Packet Cavalry started the year with basically 0 stations – we concluded that our Win98 based efforts were just not going to cut it and had to start over. Thanks to many individuals effort and to NQ5L's workshops, we ended the year with 33 qualified stations in our Packet Cavalry! In addition, we now have 6 members who have created HF portable PACTOR stations with 3 of these being the high end PACTOR 3 capable units.

The group has done it's usual job of supporting public service events such as the Outlaw 100 – this is a great service and made for great training. In addition to this, we were called on to support a planned communications outage in Caldwell county and had numerous members support that.

Katrina was a big wake up call for the county. Our PMBO did hours and hours of e-mails from Louisiana and Mississippi during the aftermath. I'd like to single out Bernie Davies KC5LGS for his trip to the Houston area in support of the refugee effort there.

Rita came on the heels of Katrina. For us, this involved serving at the Round Rock and County EOCs as well as sending the HF Cavalry to the recovery area in Jasper and also in installing a repeater there that ended the need for the HF mobile operation. Our Winlink capability was also heavily used in the Rita operation – VHF locally and HF in the recovery effort. Below is a link for a more detailed summary of the Rita operation.

[http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/PublicServiceStories/index.html?evt\\_id=2&call=N5TW&bbycall=1](http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/PublicServiceStories/index.html?evt_id=2&call=N5TW&bbycall=1)

Coming on the tail of the Rita effort was the annual SET which was done in October. This was a full blown effort with voice and Winlink at all the local EOCs plus participation from our friends in Burnet / Llano counties. We owe a big debt to N5SSI and his LSSN / TSSI teams for a great severe weather simulation.

As a final activity, we participated in the Travis County ARCHES drill in November.

I think everyone should be quite proud of the efforts this year!

## President's QRM

Greetings!

Following up a class act such as Mark, NA6M as WCARC's new President will be quite a job, but one that I am looking forward to.

A new year brings new changes and I want to congratulate Jim Russell, NQ5L as he takes on the duties of ARES Emergency Coordinator for Williamson county and as Tom Whiteside, N5TW moves up the ladder to Digital DEC of ARES.

Most important of events upcoming, will be the Hamfest coming Feb 12th at the San Gabriel Park in Georgetown. Volunteers will be needed to staff the event and help make it another banner event for WCARC. Please take a look at the web page for the hamfest and volunteer.

A note to think of for the next few months is to be safe with fire and be prepared for emergency communications in support of emergency agencies fighting the numerous wildfires that have occurred all over Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico in in Dec and Jan.

Weather forecasters predict that we could see the super dry, windy conditions of the recent months for as long as April with little to no relief of rain.

So be careful and be prepared to help if you can.

Again, I am looking forward to being President of WCARC and invite any with suggestions and comments of what we can do to speak with me.

In Service,  
 Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW

## In Other News...

### WA7BNM Contest Calendar—January, 2006

SARTG New Year RTTY Contest	0800Z-1100Z, Jan 1
AGCW Happy New Year Contest	0900Z-1200Z, Jan 1
AGCW VHF/UHF Contest	1600Z-1900Z, Jan 1
(144) 1900Z-2100Z, Jan 1 (432)	
ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400Z, Jan 3
WQF QRP Party	0000Z-2400Z, Jan 6
Midwinter Contest, CW	1400Z-2000Z, Jan 7
Original QRP Contest	1500Z, Jan 7 to
1500Z, Jan 8	
ARRL RTTY Roundup	1800Z, Jan 7 to
2400Z, Jan 8	
EUCW 160m Contest	2000Z-2300Z, Jan 7
0400Z-0700Z, Jan 8	
Midwinter Contest, Phone	0800Z-1400Z, Jan 8
DARC 10-Meter Contest	0900Z-1059Z, Jan 8
Kid's Day Contest	1800Z-2400Z, Jan 8
Hunting Lions in the Air Contest	0000Z, Jan 14 to
2400Z, Jan 15	
070 Club PSKFest	0000Z-2400Z, Jan 14
MI QRP January CW Contest	1200Z, Jan 14 to
2359Z, Jan 15	
North American QSO Party, CW	1800Z, Jan 14 to
0600Z, Jan 15	
NRAU-Baltic Contest, CW	0530Z-0730Z, Jan 15
NRAU-Baltic Contest, SSB	0800Z-1000Z, Jan 15
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0200Z-0400Z, Jan 16
NAQCC 80m Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Jan 19
LZ Open Contest	0400Z-1200Z, Jan 21
Hungarian DX Contest	1200Z, Jan 21 to
1200Z, Jan 22	
North American QSO Party, SSB	1800Z, Jan 21 to
0600Z, Jan 22	
ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes	1900Z, Jan 21 to
0400Z, Jan 23	
CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW	0000Z, Jan 28 to
2359Z, Jan 29	
REF Contest, CW	0600Z, Jan 28 to
1800Z, Jan 29	
SARL Youth Day	0700Z-1100Z, Jan 28
BARTG RTTY Sprint	1200Z, Jan 28 to
1200Z, Jan 29	
UBA DX Contest, SSB	1300Z, Jan 28 to
1300Z, Jan 29	

<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.txt>

### WILLIAMSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

#### OWNED EQUIPMENT

Reviewed December 1, 2005

#### QTY—DESCRIPTION—LAST LOCATION—DATE

##### Tower Work

- 1 Gin Pole - KE5RS, John Benedict - 21-Nov-05
- 1 Tower Step - N5NMW, Jeff Schmidt - 22-Nov-05

##### Antenna measurement

- 1 MFJ Antenna Analyzer - N5KF, Bob Redoutey - 20-Nov-05
- 1 MFJ Grid Dip Adapter W5TA, Dick Foster -20-Nov-05

##### Antennas

- 1 Butternut HF Vertical 10M-80M - AF5Z, Bob Helms -1-Dec-05
- 1 Cushcraft 6-element 440MHz Beam - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 1-Dec-05
- 1 Cushcraft R7 HF Vertical - W5TA, Dick Foster - 20-Nov-05
- 1 Hygain triband antenna - W5TA, Dick Foster - 20-Nov-05
- 1 Mosley Triband Antenna (Donated by Harvey, N0AJP) - K5AEM, Jon Boles - 20-Nov-05

##### Masts

- 2 Push Up Masts - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 1-Dec-05
- 1 Push Up Masts - KC5RPF, Ken Larsen - 23-Nov-05
- 2 Push Up Masts - KD5KQV, Virgil Buell - 21-Nov-05

##### Power Supplies

- 1 20 Amp Power Supply - N5TW, Tom Whiteside - 20-Nov-05

##### Miscellaneous

- 2 Heavy Duty Power Cords - K5HTK, Jim Hester - 24-Nov-05

##### Pending sale

- 1 DB Commercial grade Antenna VHF high-band 158MHz - AF5Z, Bob Helms - 1-Dec-05

## ARRL Cautiously Optimistic about Texas BPL Deployment Announcement

NEWINGTON, CT, December 28, 2005--The ARRL is viewing cautiously the recent announcement of a commercial broadband over power line (BPL) deployment by the largest electric power utility in Texas. [TXU](#) Electric Delivery and BPL manufacturer [Current](#) Communications Group have partnered to establish "the nation's first broadband-enabled Smart Grid" that will cover most of TXU's service area. That includes some two million homes and businesses in the Dallas-Forth Worth area as well as other Texas communities.

"If TXU is going to install a BPL system, the ARRL is glad that TXU has chosen Current's system--which avoids using spectrum allocated to the Amateur Radio Service--in preference to one that has proven to be problematic," commented ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ.

...continued on page 5

## Texas BPL Continued...

It was another story altogether when TXU operated a pilot BPL project in Irving, Texas, in 2004 and early 2005 using Amperion hardware. The system generated such interference on Amateur Radio frequencies that the League

filed a formal [complaint](#) with the FCC in support of a Texas radio amateur seeking the system's shutdown and fines for the operator. Within two weeks of the League's filing, TXU dismantled the BPL trial, and the ARRL withdrew its complaint.

Sumner says the League is not expecting history to repeat itself when TXU and Current begin installing their "Smart Grid" BPL system in 2006. As he pointed out in his "It Seems to Us . . ." editorial in August 2005 *QST*, Cinergy Corp's deployment of the nation's largest BPL system in the country in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area so far "has proceeded without major interference problems." The Cinergy system also uses Current Technologies equipment.

"Current has avoided putting high-frequency energy on the medium-voltage lines by using low-band VHF (30-50 MHz) instead," Sumner wrote. Additionally, he noted, Current's system uses Homeplug modems, which avoid all ham bands except 60 meters, to connect individual customers. Limited testing of the Cinergy BPL deployment suggested its interference potential is minimal relative to Amateur Radio facilities.

While Sumner won't rule out some occurrences of RF interference in the TXU rollout, he says the League anticipates a low-enough probability to deal with it on a case-by-case basis. ARRL Laboratory Manager Ed Hare, W1RFI, has been in regular communications with engineers at Current Technologies. Hare summarized those conversations: "I have shared with Current Technologies just what those case-by-case interference problems would be. While they are taking the position that they will wait until problems actually occur, then determine what is needed to fix them, their open dialogue with ARRL will be an important part of the process. The opportunity for dialogue exists for all of the BPL companies, although not all of them want to work on solutions to the interference problems that have plagued this industry."

In October, the ARRL [petitioned](#) the FCC to issue a *Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making* modifying the Part 15 BPL rules it adopted a year earlier and sharply reduce BPL's potential to cause interference. In exchange, the League said it would withdraw its still-pending [Petition for Reconsideration](#) in the BPL proceeding, ET Docket 04-37.

"It is no longer the case that all BPL systems inherently radiate high levels of RF energy on amateur allocations on overhead medium-voltage power lines," the ARRL said in its petition. "Thus, not all BPL architectures have similar potential for harmful interference to the Amateur Radio Service (and to other licensed services)."

The League's petition cited BPL systems by Current Technologies, IBEC and Corridor Systems as being among those that meet the additional requirements it's proposed. The ARRL also has cooperated with Motorola in testing the interference potential of that company's Powerline LV BPL system. Results so far have been very encouraging.

According to a TXU news release, Current Technologies will design, build and operate the BPL network for TXU. In TXU's announcement, BPL's ability to provide broadband service to individual customers and businesses seemed to take a back seat to its potential to monitor the utility's power grid, preventing and detecting problems and outages and enabling automated meter reading.

The agreement between TXU and Current Technologies calls on the utility to pay approximately \$150 million to Current to procure services over 10 years to utilize the BPL system's capabilities. "When the agreements become effective, TXU Corp will become an equity holder in Current," the announcement said. Cinergy, Google and Goldman Sachs are among Current's other shareholders.

Story courtesy, ARRL—

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2005/12/28/100/?nc=1>