

# The Groundwire

Monthly Newsletter of the Tyler Amateur Radio Club  
P.O. Box 6393, Tyler, TX 75711

## PRESIDENT'S SOAPBOX

### We Are Busy!

I don't have anything imperative to write about this month. Nothing is weighing so heavily on my mind that I must "get it off my chest." We do have a busy amateur radio season upon us, however, and I am trying to get my arms around the plans for the remainder of 2010:

- **Field Day, June 26-27:** It is no secret that I love Field Day and consider this one of the most important operating activity of the year.
- **Tyler Jaycees Fourth of July Fireworks Display:** The Jaycees have asked for our help providing communications at Lindsey Field. They estimate that 8-10 operators would be needed. We can also set up a display to promote the TARC and amateur radio if desired.
- **Texas QSO Party, September 26-26:** We are considering an organized club activity this year.
- **Tyler Rose Marathon, October 10:** The 5K, half-marathon and marathon are scheduled as part of the Rose Festival activities. We are working with race officials to provide course-wide communications. We may use this activity as our annual ARES Simulated Emergency Test.
- **Parade honoring Veterans, November 13:** This activity is still in the very early planning stage, but if it comes to fruition, we may organize this parade for the Jaycees and event organizers. Anything we can do to honor our vets... right?
- **Thanksgiving Feast, November 18:** Need I say more?
- **Tyler Jaycees Annual Christmas Parade, December 2?:** Great fun making sense of the chaos and confusion
- **TARC Christmas Celebration, December 16:** 'Tis the Season!

By my reckoning, that is eight extraordinary activities in less than six months, and I've probably forgotten some activities that should be on this list. How does the saying go? "If you want something done, ask a busy person." That's us!

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On a more personal note, thank you for your continued support and faith in the TARC club leadership. It is a labor of love! Heartfelt thanks to Alan Luce, KE5RFR, and Clif Sherrod, KD5UCY, for their dedicated service to the Tyler Amateur Radio Club. I will miss their wise counsel (but I still have their phone numbers... 😊). At the same time I look forward to working with Elaine Jackson, KF5CNN and Bob Sanford, KC5SMC as new Board members. Along with Art Sharp, K5LXK and Don Simonton, K5LOW, we are in good hands.

See y'all at Field Day!

73!

## MAY HAPPENINGS

### Leadership Elections for 2010 - 2011

At the May Club meeting, the members present elected the following slate of officers to lead the Club during the 2010-2011 fiscal year:

- President - Mark Taylor (W5MCT)
- Vice President - Art Sharp (K5LXK)
- Sec./Treasurer - Elaine Jackson (KF5CNN)
- At Large Board Members - Bob Sanford (KC5SMC), Don Simonton (K5LOW)

We're sure that the Board has great plans and goals for the Club over the coming months and we look forward to hearing about them at meetings, etc.

### TARC Board Meeting Synopsis

The newly elected Board had its first meeting on Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. Notable results and actions from that meeting are as follows:

- For those attending Field Day **and using** one of the ten reserved overnight camping spots will be responsible for the park fees attached thereto
- Sec./Treas. Elaine Jackson will investigate using other venues for future Field Day exercises as the Tyler State Park Black Jack area is felt to be sub-optimal.
- A projected 2010-2011 budget was discussed.
- VP Art Sharp will work with the Tyler Jaycees in response to their request for assistance with a July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks display at Lindsay Park

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## TARC 2010 Ham Of The Year

The TARC award of "Ham of the Year" was given to Elaine Jackson (KF5CNN). Elaine was cited by presenter Don Simonton (K5LOW) for her significant contributions to the Club over a wide range of areas. Among other accomplishments, Don cited Elaine's support of and participation in Club events such as Field Day, Skywarn training and our 2M net; her "do without being asked" attitude in such areas as visitor recognition, her monthly before-meeting kitchen "KP" and her "outside" commitment to ham radio; as well as her contributions to The Groundwire and her recent upgrade to General class. Congratulations again, Elaine - LEAD ON!

## Fred Farkle Award

Apparently - it was long before my time - Fred Farkle (WX5FF) had been a long-standing Club member of some notoriety. Fred was said to have been blessed with a rather large measure of eccentricity resulting from an unfortunate fall from a tower and landing squarely on his head. Whatever, to celebrate Fred's remembrance, each year a "deserving" club member is singled out for the award by the previous year's recipient using criteria disclosed only at the moment of award.

This year's Fred Farkle Award was given by John Smith (KE5YTU), the 2009 recipient, to Bob Sanford (KC5SMC) for, perhaps among other attributes, having his boots full of water following the completion of the Beauty and the Beast bicycle race. Bob had ridden his motorcycle in the somewhat inclement weather that day to lead the long distance riders along their route. It had taken most of the day and when he returned to the starting place, Bob's boots were actually, visibly overflowing their tops. Apparently, Bob's foul weather gear had suffered a malfunction and had formed a sort of funnel that directed the rainwater into his boots.

The award itself consists of a white, plastic "hard hat" style helmet festooned with various accoutrements affixed to it by all the previous recipients. John had added a clever if somewhat crude CW key complete with buzzer. Bob's biggest challenge, in addition to keeping mental notes about prospective 2011 awardees, will be trying to find a place to add something new to the helmet. Congratulations, Bob, and happy Fred Farkle-ing!

## Silent Keys

Jimmy Gibson of Mt Pleasant emailed to inform us that Tom Kennedy, K5TDK, became a silent key on May 11, 2010. Tom was the net control station for the first TARC net I

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ever heard. A professional television and radio broadcaster, he was a natural at leading the TARC 2-meter net! Tom was from White Oak, Texas and was active in numerous amateur radio activities in Gregg County.

Anrea Bergeron-Paul kindly sent an email letting us know that her father, Corrie Bergeron, Sr., W5FOR, passed away on May 1, 2010 in Baton Rouge, La. Corrie was a TARC member and trustee in the early 1990s. Corrie especially enjoyed Field Day and breakfast get-togethers with other hams.

Friends and families of these SKs felt compelled to let the club know of their passing. The TARC must have made a lasting impression on Tom & Corrie that was also passed on to those left behind. Let's keep making those positive, lasting impressions. Mark Taylor (W5MCT)

## FOX In Tyler

Do you know what FOX stands for? About a month ago, there was an issue in Tyler that affected both the TARC 147.00 repeater and the ETMC 145.21 repeater. Bob Sanford (KC5SMC) contacted me in the late afternoon and advised me that some mutually destructive phenomenon was taking place with the two repeaters. If someone was transmitting through the 147.00, there was an alternating pulse on 145.21. The reverse was also true with the pulsing noise on 147.00 when the 145.21 was keyed up. It was very strange phenomenon.

Nothing of this nature had occurred before. I and a number of operators tried to triangulate based on the input frequencies of the repeaters in an effort to determine the origin of the pulsing signals. It was strange that we all had a very strong signal all over town. So, we set a FOX hunt in motion. About 8:00 pm, Ed Wilkinson (N1EW), the trustee for the 147.00 machine, was on the way out to the 147.00 tower site to check on its operation. I contacted David Higginbotham (W5CAH), the 145.21 trustee, and asked him to check that repeater. For a while, David took that repeater off the air. We later decided to put it back on the air to allow our city wide FOX hunt to proceed.

Since Ed was on the east side of town, I decided to go to the west side. I traveled around the loop to the west and turned west on Hwy 31. I was using my HT with a paper clip as an antenna held up by the window of the car. As I proceeded down Hwy 31 about two miles outside the loop, I started to get a weaker signal. Ed was using his HT and was driving back toward downtown. I turned around and also started back toward downtown. The signal continued to get stronger as I approached downtown. I decided to remove the paperclip on my HT. I was still getting a signal as I passed EMS

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on Glenwood. The signal was good without an antenna at the intersection of Front and Glenwood. I reported to Ed that it may be something going on with the EMS 800 system causing the pulsing signal. John Arnold, W5CUD was helping us by keying up the 145.21 machine so we could monitor the pulsing signal on the 147.00 machine. I pulled behind EMS and the signal was a little less.

As I was pulling out of the EMS parking lot back onto Glenwood, the signal got stronger again. I then crossed Glenwood into the Cotton Belt Building parking lot about the same time Ed arrived there. We both had a very strong signal in the Cotton Belt Building parking lot. I was aware that Texas Department of State Health Services had ham radio gear in that building on the second floor with a GP9 antenna on top of the building. We concluded that the pulsing signal was coming from that station. We tried to contact Robert Spainhour, KD5ZRD to discuss the situation but could not reach him. We decided to have David, W5CAH disconnect the 145.21 machine for the evening and that I would go visit with Robert the next morning.

I arrived at the Cotton Belt Building around 8:15 am to visit Robert, KD5ZRD. We went to the room housing the radio gear and discovered that the Yaesu FT-8900 was indeed set up on two VHF frequencies, 147.00 and 145.21. What was strange was the radio was also set for cross band repeat. The firmware of that radio should not allow for cross band when you have two active frequencies of the same band. Robert said that he had set the radio to monitor 147.00 for SKYWARN activation and had set the radio to cross band so he could use his HT. Normal cross band operation is to have a VHF and a UHF frequency for that purpose. Somehow, the radio got 145.21 turned on along with 147.00 while it was set for cross band. Robert took the radio out of cross band mode and returned one side to UHF. I contacted David, W5CAH to turn the 145.21 back on and the problem was solved.

So, from now on, FOX stands for "Fixed Operation Xband". We've given Robert a hard time about all of this already so please don't say anything more to him in that regard 😊 . John Newman - (N9JN)

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## Visitors and New Members

TARC was pleased to welcome the following **new members** and visitors at the May meeting.

Name	Call	QTH	Interests
<b>Lisa Zappelli</b>	--	<b>Arp</b>	<b>Most everything in ham radio</b>
<b>Todd Hoover</b>	<b>N5TJH</b>	<b>Longview</b>	<b>VHF, HF, Packet, CW</b>

## Monday 2M Net Participation

Check-in statistics for the latest series of TARC Monday night nets were as follows:

Net Date	Net Control	Check Ins	Traffic
05-17-10	W5MCT	50	5
05-24-10	K5LOW	44	4
05-31-10	<b>No Net</b>	--	--
06-07-10	K5LOW	43	6

The Club's weekly two meter net is held each Monday at 8:00 PM on the Club's K5TYR repeater, (147.00 MHz, negative offset and 88.5 PL tone). It continues to be one of the most active VHF nets in East Texas. The net is open to all licensed hams. More information about this and other area nets can be found [here](#).

## VE Testing Results

Congratulations to the following **newly licensed** / **upgraded** amateur radio operators!

Testing Date	Name	QTH	Class	Call
05-16-10	<b>Elaine Jackson</b>	<b>Whitehouse</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>KF5CNN</b>
	<b>Forest Rathbun</b>	<b>Tyler</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>KF5ARZ</b>
	<b>Joseph Lausier</b>	<b>Mabank</b>	<b>Technician</b>	<b>KF5GYJ</b>

Testing for new and upgraded amateur radio licenses is conducted by Club VEs<sup>1</sup> on the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM at the American Red Cross building at 320 E. Rieck Road in Tyler. Any schedule changes will be announced on the TARC two meter

<sup>1</sup> Volunteer Examiner - All amateur radio license tests are conducted by licensed volunteers in accordance with FCC rules.

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net (details above). Mac McGraw, AE5FH, is the contact VE. You can [e-mail](#) him or call him at 903-839-7916 for more information.

**Important Notice:** The FCC has announced that a new question pool for Technician Class testing has been approved and will become effective on July 1, 2010. Anyone now studying to take the Technician test with the currently available test preparation materials should do so by June 30, 2010. After that date, newer study materials will be required to be fully prepared. The last scheduled test date by the Tyler VE Group using the current question pool is June 13<sup>th</sup>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Field Day - 2010

This year's edition of ARRL's annual Field Day (FD) exercises will be on June 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Paul Paulsen (K5PFP) is heading up the Club's efforts. We will once again be at the Black Jack pavilion in Tyler State Park. There are just a few slots available so interested hams need to contact Paul ASAP to get one reserved. If you miss getting one of the slots at Black Jack, you might try what [these guys](#) did at last year's FD. For one thing, they had much better scenery.

We're again very fortunate to have the [Dogwood Chapter](#) of the Lone Star Dutch Oven Society there with us to provide some of the eats. Details are still being worked out but for sure they will provide lunch on Saturday. These guys are awesome cooks and great food from entrees to desserts will be aplenty so make plans to include this annual Club event in your activities for that weekend even if you don't plan to operate.

### Monthly Club Meetings

The Tyler Amateur Radio Club meets on the third Thursday of the month for fellowship and enrichment of our ham radio experience. Meetings are held at the Shiloh Road Church Of Christ, corner of Shiloh Road and Paluxy in Tyler at 7:00 p.m. Club meetings and membership are open to all interested persons, with or without an amateur radio license.

The TARC meeting primary agendas for the next month is as follows:

- **June 17<sup>th</sup>** – First Club meeting with the newly elected officers and Board. No announced agenda so be sure and attend and be surprised. **Annual Club dues**

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are payable **now** for the 2010-2011 year. Bring yourt payment with you to the next Club meeting or send it to the Club's snail mail address.

## TECH TALK

This portion of the newsletter provides a venue for technical topics of general interest to all hams. Broad topics such as antennas, feed lines, connectors, baluns, interference, etc. are all part and parcel of any ham activity. The purpose is to provide some basic information along with references and links for further reading and study. Here's an opportunity to "e-Elmer" each other - let's use it!

### Those Pesky Grid Squares

Many hams, DXers in particular, it seems, like to know, and sometimes collect grid square information. (BTW - if grid squares are new to you, click [here](#) for an good overview.)

One of the best ways we've seen to determine your, or anyone else's grid square is to use [this](#) resource. It's works worldwide with both four- and six-digit squares. Just navigate to your location of interest on the map (at least down to the city level) and just click on that spot. The grid square info pops up in a text box. It also works "in reverse". If you know the grid square but not its location, just enter the grid square at the bottom of the page and click on "Locate".

### VOACAP Goes Online

Making point-to-point HF propagation predictions is now easier than ever as [VOACAP Online](#) has been opened to the public. The service uses VOACAP (Voice of America Coverage Analysis Program) which is arguably one of the best HF prediction engines available on the market today. VOACAP Online is **free** to all and makes using VOACAP a no-brainer. Just enter the coordinates of the transmitter and the receiver, and that's all. To find the coordinates, you can use the Google Maps based [QTH Locator](#).

The prediction is given as a "circuit reliability" graph that shows the probability of achieving a CW-grade transmission quality between the transmitter and the receiver. VOACAP Online is brought to you by Jari Perkiomaki OH6BG (concept), James Watson HZ1JW (graphs) and Juho Juopperi OH8GLV (server-side programming). Jari Perkiomaki (OH6BG)

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## THIS 'N THAT

### Bubble Burst!!

I like CW - not that I'm any good at it, especially after the operation on my right hand. Neither am I a contester, CW or SSB, but I like to participate at a "fun level" from time to time when the prospects of working a new DX entity are around. On CW, contest or otherwise, I've always marveled at the speed and efficiency of the Russian operators, at least up until now. Check out the two videos on [this](#) web page (scroll down a bit).

I'm sure this isn't an isolated case and that's more the pity from my standpoint. I've always felt, perhaps wrongly, that ham radio contests were, among other goals, supposed to help us become better operators so we could bring those skills to bear in times of need. Well, you can't argue with the efficiency of the operation in these videos, but I fail to see other than in that aspect how such automation would help make anyone a better traffic handler in an emergency where canned messages are unheard of in actual cases.

### Kenwood Parts & Etc.

Check out [this](#) link for hard to find items for older Kenwood tube-based equipment.

### F.Y.I. Websites

Belonging to several ham-related e-mail "reflectors" (aka listservs) here at Editorsville, we get some interesting links that cater to the DIY crowd and electronic types. Here's a sample of some of the more recent link findings that our fellow Club members might enjoy surfing ...

- [The Electronic Goldmine](#)
- [Surplus Sales of Nebraska](#)
- [Fair Radio Sales](#)
- [Surplus Traders' Net](#)
- [American Science & Surplus](#)

### Bssszzzzzttt!

Check out the pictures of the power cord at [this](#) eBay auction listing. The owner actually admits in the listing that he put the plug in an outlet and turned the radio on!! ***They walk among us.***

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## Free For The Asking

For this Father's Day, the main PC here at Editorsville has been graced with a new wide-screen LCD monitor. Accordingly, the replaced Sony Trinitron CRT monitor is needing a new home. It's a white, 17" model that still works quite well for its age and technology after a few minutes of warm up, i.e. it's not "instant on" even from sleep mode. Large and bulky, it's available for pick up only. If no takers the Club's June meeting, it's new home will be the Tyler recycling depot.

## RANDOM THOUGHTS

- Map Quest really needs to start their directions on #5. I'm pretty sure I know how to get out of my neighborhood.
- You never know when it will strike, but at times there comes a moment at work when you know that you just aren't going to do anything productive for the rest of the day.
- I disagree with Kay Jewelers. I would bet on any given Friday or Saturday night more kisses begin with Miller Lite than Kay.

## ITEMS FOR SALE

TARC members with items that they'd like to sell (or swap) can have them listed on the Club's website by [e-mailing](#) a full description of them along with price (or swap) targets to the Club's webmaster Gaylen Gage (KD5KIZ). A list and description of items currently for sale can be found on the Club's website [here](#).

## 2010 - 2011 TARC OFFICERS

President	Mark Taylor	W5MCT	<a href="mailto:Taylor.mark.c@gmail.com">Taylor.mark.c@gmail.com</a>
Vice President	Art Sharp	K5LXK	<a href="mailto:Drsars08@gmail.com">Drsars08@gmail.com</a>
Secretary/Treasurer	Elaine Jackson	KF5CNN	<a href="mailto:elaine@nofrowns.net">elaine@nofrowns.net</a>
At Large/Net Control Chair	Don Simonton	K5LOW	<a href="mailto:K5low@arrl.net">K5low@arrl.net</a>
At Large	Bob Sanford	KC5SMC	<a href="mailto:kc5smc@msn.com">kc5smc@msn.com</a>

Anyone interested in joining the Tyler Amateur Radio Club, licensed or not, may contact any of the above Club officers for more information.

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## SOME USEFUL LINKS

Content	Link
Tyler Amateur Radio Club	<a href="http://www.tylerarc.org">www.tylerarc.org</a>
Ham License Practice Tests	<a href="http://www.qrz.com/p/testing.pl">www.qrz.com/p/testing.pl</a>
Contest Information	<a href="http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/">www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/</a> <a href="http://www.arrl.org/contests/#corral">http://www.arrl.org/contests/#corral</a>
Hamfest Information	<a href="http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html">http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html</a>
Good Study Materials for all Hams	<a href="http://www.hamuniverse.com/">http://www.hamuniverse.com/</a>
From the TARC Website	<a href="http://www.tylerarc.org/favorite.htm">http://www.tylerarc.org/favorite.htm</a>

## CNN DESK

Since my election to the Board as Sec/Treas., it has occurred to Bob and me that this column's future contents might at one time or another be construed by some as a quasi-official TARC Board position, announcement, action, etc. Both of us want to assure everyone that such will never be the case. Accordingly, any ideas, opinions or musings given here will be mine (and/or Bob's) alone. No relationship between the contents of this column and my position on the Board should be construed.

***Come to the Club meeting, wear your badge, bring a visitor and something to share - not necessarily food!***

73 to all,

Bob - AG5X & Elaine - KF5CNN

[Co-Editors](#)