

The Groundwire

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

PRESIDENT'S SOAPBOX

Climbing Higher

A few weeks ago I was among a group of TARC members who attended a tower party to take down antennas and a tower for a fellow ham. John Newman, N9JN, and Bob Sanford, KC5SMC, did all the actual tower climbing while the rest of us worked as ground crew. I know several other TARC members have climbed towers in the past, but Bob and John, based on my personal observation, have done the majority of tower climbing these past years.

Tower climbing is an important resource for a club to have. Antennas are critical for amateur radio success and towers and masts are required to hold up all our antennas (Altitude. Altitude. Altitude.) Hiring professional climbers is expensive, so having volunteer tower climbers willing to help the local ham community is a valuable asset that we need to protect and perpetuate.

What's my point? I can foresee the day when neither Bob nor John will want to climb anymore (I'm not saying they are getting old!). What will we do then? Hopefully, we will have to call upon a new generation of tower climbers!

This is a call to action for some of our younger, able-bodied TARC members to step up and volunteer to learn how to climb towers and erect antennas. Both John and Bob have agreed to help mentor novice climbers in such areas as:

- Safety
- Equipment
- Tower construction techniques
- More safety
- Antenna erection
- Tower demolition
- Still More safety

There are a number of upcoming tower parties in the next several months, and these will be perfect opportunities for tower climbing "on the job" training under the auspices of our master climbers. If you are interested, by all means let John, Bob or myself know. Your efforts and willingness to help will be appreciated throughout the Club.

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APRIL HAPPENINGS

Leadership Nominations for 2010 - 2011

As most members already know, the Club's fiscal year runs from June through the following May. That means that nominations, for the most part, for the coming year's Club leadership is done in April. Accordingly, the following nominations are extant as of the April meeting:

- President - Mark Taylor (W5MCT)
- Vice President - Art Sharp (K5LXK)
- Sec./Treasurer - Elaine Jackson (KF5CNN)
- At Large Board Members - For two positions (in alpha order): John Arnold (W5CUD), Dick Green (KC5CID), Bob Jackson (AG5X), Bob Sanford (KC5SMC), Charlotte Sanford (KD5BKC), Clif Sherrod (KD5UCY), Don Simonton (K5LOW) and Michael York (N5OAR)

Nominations are still open and those interested in serving as an officer or Board member, or who wish to nominate additional candidates should contact Clif Sherrod (KD5UCY) via email [here](#). Also, make a note that **the May Club meeting will begin at 6:00 PM instead of the usual 7:00 PM**. This is to accommodate the extra time needed to have both the election officers and the Club's annual pot luck dinner. All members should make an extra effort to attend and participate in both events. Guests are always welcome.

Local Speaker at the April Meeting

Our speaker for the April TARC meeting was none other than our own John Arnold (W5CUD) who regaled the 28 members and guests present with his past experiences in hidden transmitter locating, a.k.a. "fox hunting". John's experience with that activity goes back to 1958. He demonstrated several of the hand-held antennas that were used in those times past when the hidden transmitters were 10M AM radios. He claimed that 10M hunting was more fun than the 2M hunts that are most prevalent today. John also brought his own home brew two meter "fox" that was later used in an abbreviated hunt that took place in the church's parking lot and surrounding grounds. Mark Rainey (KE5YTC) "won" the hunt by finding the transmitter after about 20 minutes of searching. Well done Mark and thanks, John, for a new experience for many of us.

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Visitors and New Members

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

Name	Call	QTH	Interests
Jack Gibson	W4SVH	Hideaway	Joined by Mail
Kenneth Caudle	KF5GGB	Joinerville	--

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
04-12-10	AG5X	42	6
04-19-10	KF5CNN	41	8
04-26-10	KC5SMC	53	6
05-03-10	K5LXK	41	4
05-10-10	K5PFP	38	5

The Club's weekly two meter net is held each Monday at 8:00 PM on the Club's K5TYR repeater, (147.000 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
03-14-10	Arthur Leerskov	Athens	Technician	KF5GEO
	Nathan Terrien	Lindale	Technician	KF5GDC
	Kenneth Caudle¹	Joinerville	Technician	KF5GGB

Testing for new and upgraded amateur radio licenses is conducted by Club VEs² on the second Sunday³ 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

¹ Examination administered at the April TARC Club meeting.

² Volunteer Examiner - All amateur radio license tests are conducted by licensed volunteers in accordance with FCC rules.

³ In May, test will be administered on the **third** Sunday due to Mothers' Day being on the second Sunday.

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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 13th.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TARC 2010 – 2011 Fiscal Year Turnover

Attention all TARC members! Remember that the Club's fiscal year runs from June 1st through May 31st of each year. Please mark your calendars now to remind yourself to pay your 2010 – 2011 Club dues no later than May 31st. An ideal time to pay your dues is at the May Club meeting on the 20th. That's when our annual Club banquet will be held plus the election of officers and Board members for the coming year. You can enjoy the company of your fellow Club members whilst partaking of some really great food courtesy of some generous Club members (YOU can be one of them!) and also have a hand in deciding who shall be guiding the Club for the coming year. Bring your checkbook or even CASH! Single membership dues are \$25.00 per annum. Additional members from the same family, licensed or not, may join for half price.

TARC 2010 Ham Of The Year

Nominations are open for the 2010 TARC "Ham/Hams Of The Year". Some or all of you have someone in mind who is or has been an asset to our club or the community this year. Help choose the right person or people for this honor. This is like the Academy Awards, Ham Of The Year will be chosen by their peers. Let your vote count. You may not vote for yourself, since the committee will think that you have not given this important position enough thought. Email your nominations to Gaylen Gage [here](#) and hope that your name is submitted by one of your peers. If your name is omitted, you are probably not as involved in YOUR club as much as you should be. Gaylen Gage (KD5KIZ)

Field Day - 2010

This year's edition of ARRL's annual Field Day (FD) exercises will be on June 26th and 27th. 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

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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.

Tyler Marathon

This [event](#) is being planned by the City of Tyler for Sunday October 10, 2010. Billed as "10-10-10" it will consist of a full marathon (26 miles and change), a "half marathon" and a 5K run all on the same day. Your Club plans to approach the City (Art Sharp - K5LXK) about providing communications likely very much along the lines of our support to the Beauty and Beast bicycle race. Stay tuned to this channel for details as they are settled.

Monthly Club Meetings

The TARC meeting primary agendas for the next few months are as follows:

- **May 20th** - Election of new officers and annual dinner (pot luck - [contact Misty Stevenson](#) to sign up) **Club meeting will start at 6:00 PM.**
- **June 17th** - First Club meeting with the newly elected officers.

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.

Ham-Com 2010

This major ham event will be held in Plano, TX on **June 11-12th** at the Plano Centre - same as last year. Tickets went on sale March 1st with a \$1.00 discount if purchased before May 30th. Full details can be found [here](#).

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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!

HF Propagation Indicators

Back in the December issue of *The Groundwire*, we discussed various sources of transmissions that could be of use in determining the instantaneous propagation condition on the HF bands. Beacons were mentioned as one source. To recall, beacons are stations that are "always on" and transmitting some sort of repeating signal. Hearing one or more beacons and knowing their locations can give a good idea of current propagation conditions across whatever bands the beacons are transmitting on. At the time, we didn't include the so-called "letter beacons" which derive their collective appellation due to the fact that they only transmit a single repeating letter of the alphabet.

As we (all too slowly) begin to enter the next cycle of increased sunspot activity, band openings should become more frequent and pervasive across our operating frequencies. Adding the "letter beacons" to your propagation indicators could be a useful thing to do, especially if you're into DXing in any sort of serious manner. The best source we've found for learning about those beacons is [here](#) on Wikipedia. There you'll find a brief history of the things (very interesting reading) as well as frequencies and times that they might be heard.

A-A (beep, beep) M-C-O

While the subject of transmissions in the mechanical sense is clearly off-topic in a ham radio newsletter, it strikes us that some of the technologies discussed in [this video](#) might well be applicable to our hobby in the design and construction of, for example, amplifiers or even transceivers. Throughout their history, hams have a long and continuous record of adapting technologies to their use and this could prove to be the next great leap in ham radio technology advancement. At the very least, it's certainly worth a look.

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Free Equipment Documentation

Many, if not most or all of us, are familiar with the so-called “[BAMA](#)” [archives](#) of free-to-download documents for mostly obsolete electronic equipment, ham radio stuff included. For reasons not altogether clear, they dropped all of their Heathkit® material. While some pay sites, our favorite example [here](#) for instance, have continued to supply them, costs can become prohibitive when more than one or two are needed. We found [this](#) free site as a potential alternative. That’s not to say it’s archives are complete or even of uniform high quality, but sometimes something is better than nothing. Of course, both of these, and many others have documents for many lines of equipment other than [Heathkit](#)®.

Not Free, But Cheap (and easy)

Here’s a ‘Net resource that, among other products, sells CDs and DVD loaded with readable and printable documentation for radio equipment and test equipment that most any ham would appreciate. Here at Editorville, we’ve purchase two of their offerings (so far). Contents range from excellent to just OK but always usable for operation, repair and maintenance functions. Look at [this](#) link to find some of the more pertinent offerings, but there’s lots of other genre that are worth browsing as well.

MEMBERS’ CORNER

None – No Submission

You can read the last submitted ham radio story and see the “shack shots” [here](#).

To be featured in “Members’ Corner”, submit your “ham biography” (e.g. when and how you got started in amateur radio, etc.) and a photo of your shack via [e-mail](#) to [The Groundwire](#).

THIS ‘N THAT

Spread Some Good Will

It would be hard to imagine that anyone who’s even moderately active on the ‘Net would not know about that California-based online auction site. It’s the thousand pound gorilla in the online auction world. There are others, of course, some even dedicated to single topics like firearms, etc. We recently discovered another “general purpose” online site [here](#) and were taken with the notion that using it, when possible, might leverage that part of our disposable income to a higher good – a kind of “play it forward” if you will. Check it out and see if you might feel like wise. You might try the word “radio” for a starter.

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Live Ham Radio Broadcasts

Tom Medlin (W5KUB) is seeking support in testing of the W5KUB.Com ham radio video broadcasts. He reports: "We broadcast live streaming video and audio of hamfests. We will be broadcasting the Dayton Hamvention in mid-May but our site is up and running 365 days per year with recorded video of ham related activities. In addition to the video, we have a chat room where everyone can chat with the W5KUB gang or other hams around the world. We are viewed in approx 150 countries each year during our live broadcast.

"Again this year we will be giving PRIZES ¹to lucky viewers. GRAND PRIZE this year is a Yaesu FT-950 HF/6M transceiver and if the grand prize winner is logged in at the time of announcement, they will also win a Yaesu VX-170. Other prizes include Heil microphones, Diawa watt meters, LDG auto tuners, weather stations, baluns, Comet antennas, G5RV antennas, ham (radio) hats, and QSL cards just to mention just a few. See our web site for a list of all prizes and rules.

"We converted from media player to Flash media this year and need your help to log in to the site and help us test the capacity. The site is <http://w5kub.com>. Thanks and good luck on the prizes" ***Thanks to Alan Luce (KE5RFR) for bringing this to The Groundwire.***

Ham Radio Is Alive And Well

One might think that in the age of Facebook, Twitter and "smart phones" that a communications medium as old as ham radio would be on a "technology death list". Au contraire, mon frère! According to [NPR](#)², ham radio is not only not dying, it's actually growing.

Off-Topic, But Very Interesting ...

Are you a "connoisseur" of things old? I am, at least when it comes to radios that glow in the dark, locomotives than run on steam and airplanes with at least one propeller. Of the first, I have several in various stages of operability. When it comes to the latter two, I have only pictures to sate my thirst. Fortunately, the 'Net and the decreasing cost of rotating storage³ make collecting same fairly easy. In some of my latest browsing, I came across [this site](#) which features content of both, as well as several other things.

¹ The grand prize is only available to U.S. hams because of government regulations in different countries. International hams can still win all the other prizes that are listed.

² National Public Radio

³ One can now buy a terabyte disk drive for under \$100. Incredible!

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What makes this site different, at least to me, is the historical completeness of the author's work. There's not "just" a collection of pictures – there's more, MUCH more. For example, every known existing B-17 cataloged with its picture(s), ownership history, condition, location, etc. etc. etc. Take a moment and drop by the site. It's definitely worth a browse if you're at all interested in such things.

RANDOM THOUGHTS

- Nothing's worse than that moment during an argument when you realize you're wrong.
- There is great need for a sarcasm font.
- Was learning cursive really necessary?
- Is it just me or are high school kids dressing worse and worse?

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](#).

2009 - 2010 TARC OFFICERS

President	Mark Taylor	W5MCT	Taylor.mark.c@gmail.com
Vice President	Art Sharp	K5LXK	Drsars08@gmail.com
Secretary/Treasurer	Alan Luce	KE5RFR	txlaflash@aol.com
At Large/Net Control Chair	Don Simonton	K5LOW	K5low@arrl.net
At Large	Clif Sherrod	KD5UCY	clifanshirley@yahoo.com

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

SOME USEFUL LINKS

Content	Link
Tyler Amateur Radio Club	www.tylerarc.org
Ham License Practice Tests	www.grz.com/p/testing.pl
Contest Information	www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/ http://www.arrl.org/contests/#corral
Hamfest Information	http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html
Good Study Materials for all Hams	http://www.hamuniverse.com/

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CNN DESK

As shown above, there's been a 2010-2011 slate of prospective officers and Board members submitted for consideration and approval by the membership at the May meeting. While we applaud the commitment of those members who have already served and are willing to serve again, we find it disappointing at least that more members, particularly those who've been in the Club for a while and haven't served, aren't stepping forward to take some of the responsibility for directing the Club's future. Staleness and lethargy are the legacies of this type of laissez-faire. With no criticism towards anyone intended, it's only with "new blood" that any social organization such as a ham club is going to realize a critical mass of exposure to new ideas and new directions to pursue.

Come to the Club meeting, wear your badge, bring a visitor and something¹ to share!

73 to all,

Bob - AG5X & Elaine - KF5CNN

[Co-Editors](#)

¹ News, announcement, joke, suggestion, problem, solution, idea, experience, etc. ... or even snacks!