

The Groundwire

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

PRESIDENT'S SOAPBOX

The Presidential "State of the Net" Address

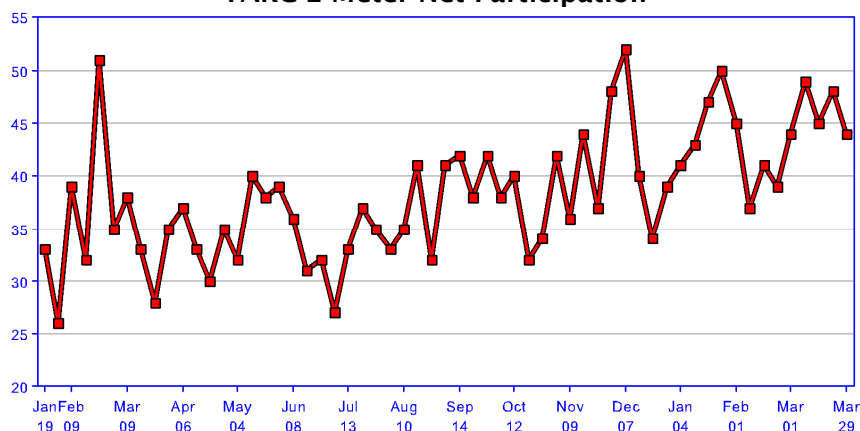
It's been well over a year since the TARC adopted the roll call format for the Monday night two-meter net, and all indications are that the new format is a hit! Why? I'm not entirely sure, but a little history lesson may shed some light.

In late 2008, we had three routine net control stations: Don-K5LOW, Paul-K5PFP and yours truly, Mark-W5MCT. Other hams filled in here and there, but the bulk of the NCS duties fell squarely on NW Smith County. The net format was an open call for check-ins that I like to call the Pile Up format. The NCS operator tried to write down the check-ins, usually just the call sign suffix, doing their best to keep up. K5LOW had a big list of call sign suffixes that gave the name and location of hams that frequently check in. Maintaining and distributing that list was a pain. Having NCS duty was 45 minutes of hard work and occasional terror! I'm sure many of you remember the old format its attendant frustration.

Paul, K5PFP, was going to out of town for a few months, potentially leaving us with two NCS operators. We desperately needed additional NCS stations. The biggest obstacle to recruiting more NCS operators was unquestionably the format. Don, K5LOW, suggested that we change formats to make it simpler for the NCS. We all agreed. To make maintenance of the roll call list simpler, I wrote some web pages that the NCS operator uses to call up the roll and record check-ins. We also automatically generate the script the NCS operator refers to during the net. I even wrote a list of tips and techniques for the newbies!¹

As a result, we now have eight operators² that rotate the NCS duties and the net is experiencing unprecedented popularity. Just how popular, you ask?

TARC 2-Meter Net Participation



¹ I've attached this list at the end of my article... much of it applies to all of ham radio.

² Our active NCS stations include AG5X, K5LOW, K5LXK, K5PFP, KC5SMC, KE5TYU, KF5CNN and W5MCT

The Groundwire

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

These data reveal a steady increase in check-ins, averaging 38 check-ins over 59 weekly nets with a max of 52 check-ins. The simplicity of our new roll call check-in process was a big factor in attracting new NCS operators. Could this also explain our steady growth in check-ins to our net? I would be remiss if I did not properly thank those responsible for our net success:

- All TARC members for supporting our efforts by
 - Providing a great repeater
 - Fostering an environment that encourages members' growth and rewards risk-taking
- Each TARC NCS operator for
 - Learning a new (or refining an old) radio skill
 - Taking risk
 - Answering the call to serve

I would also be remiss if I did not make some kind of altar call¹: How about you? Would you like to try your hand as NCS operator? Here's how ...

- Be Prepared!
 - Things will go wrong, so plan for them!
 - Print a copy of the roll call in case your computer dies
 - Have a big chief tablet and a red crayon handy
 - Have a second radio handy
 - Monitor your signal while playing Audio News
 - Your primary rig may fail just prior to or during the net (think it won't happen? Ask W5MCT)
 - Beware of feedback if volume is up while you are talking on your primary rig
- Be Calm!
 - Your memory will fail you!
 - You will not remember the call sign or name of that familiar voice checking in, no matter how hard you try
 - Don't hesitate to ask for a fill or other information
 - Your ears will fail you!
 - You will transpose letters, mix up calls in a pile-up
 - You will get behind recording calls to the point you just stop
 - Do the best you can and don't hesitate to ask for re-checks, fills
 - Your tongue will fail you!
 - You will get tongue-tied
 - You will forget something important that you wanted to say
 - Review the script prior to the net to familiarize yourself with some of the trickier wording
 - Remember... you've been talking almost all of your life... relax!
- Be Nice!
 - Remember how you have flubbed up a past check-in?
 - Go ahead and take out-of-sequence, uncalled for check-ins
 - Help the newbies & those unfamiliar with our net
- Be Yourself!
 - This is supposed to be fun!

¹ "Just As I Am" being sung in the background... feel free to hum along. 😊

The Groundwire

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

- This a social net... so be conversational and natural
- Beware of humor!
 - Interpersonal humor is 90% non-verbal, so remember that no one can see your expression or body language.
 - The nuance in your voice may be lost over the radio.
 - What sounds humorous to you at the time may come across completely different to the net participants
- Be Humble!
 - Ask for help you need it
 - Seek feedback from fellow NCS operators
 - Try to be better each net
- Have Fun!

FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS

Beauty and the Beast Bicycle Race - Art Sharp (K5LXK)

The 22nd Annual Beauty and the Beast Bicycle Tour has come and gone with resounding success and once again the Tyler Amateur Radio Club contributed greatly to that success. The only major negative to the entire day was the miserable weather. We are all thankful for a successful and safe event. The performance of all 25 of our operators was superb. You are a tribute to our club and your contribution to this event is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

The Tyler Bicycle Club race officials were somewhat disappointed by the reduced number of riders in the race, due to weather of course, but extended their high praise and thanks to the TARC for our support.

Guest Speaker at the March Meeting - Paul Paulsen (K5PFP)

Our speaker for the March TARC meeting was Doug Byrd from Hideaway. Doug was a long time employee of Rockwell and Collins in Richardson, TX working on a variety of communications projects. Doug shared his experiences working on Low Frequency (LF) communications projects to enable communications between military command centers and submarines. He described the T.C.A.M.O. project ("Take Charge and Move Out") and its trailing wire antenna system towed by C-130 aircraft. He also showed a PowerPoint slide presentation developed by Rockwell/Collins for marketing its products and services worldwide. It was a little dated but reflected state of the art when Doug retired in 1998. Doug also shared some of his experiences working on submarines during the testing of the system.

While not directly related to ham radio, Doug's presentation showed how commercial and government projects can influence our activities and that the problems associated with LF communications are the same no matter who is paying for it. Paul Paulsen (K5PFP)

Visitors and New Members

TARC was pleased to welcome the following **new members** and visitors at the March meeting. Club membership is open to all persons interested in amateur radio, licensed or not. Contact any Club officer (see below) for more information.

The Groundwire

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

Name	Call	QTH	Interests
Bill Orr	KD5NVN	Chandler	
Mike Shipley	N5WUH	Whitehouse	Antennas, Gen. HF, Digital Comm
Danny Kresta	KF5EMZ	Tyler	ETECS, Nets, DXCC, Satellite
Ken Kinman	KE5JWY	Holly Lake	ETECS, Antennas, Home Brew
Butch Adair	WA5SLG	Tyler	Antennas, Gen. HF, Satellite
David Faulkner	KF5ASB	Tyler	ETECS, Nets, Gen. HF
Forest Rathbun	KF5ARZ	Tyler	Antennas, VHF/UHF

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 are open to all interested persons, with or without an amateur radio license.

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
03-15-10	W5MCT	46	5
03-22-01	K5LOW	48	5
03-29-10	K5PFP	44	7
04-05-10	K5LOW	30 ¹	3

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	Rory Branson	Tyler	Technician	KF5FQQ
	Shane Pittman	Whitehouse	Technician	KF5FQR
	Danny Kresta	Tyler	General	KF5EMZ
	Larry Hazelton	Tyler	Extra	KF5EZD

Testing for new and upgraded amateur radio licenses is conducted by Club VEs² 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 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

¹ Done in simplex mode at 147.00 Mhz due to repeater problems.

² Volunteer Examiner - All amateur radio license tests are conducted by licensed volunteers.

The Groundwire

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

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

Jacksonville Doins'

The Cherokee County ARC has announced the 6th annual K5JVL special event station operation "Drakes on the Lake" for **Saturday, April 24th**. Scheduled times are 1500Z through 0500Z on Sunday the 25th. Currently planned frequencies +/- QRM are 3.875, 7.275, 14.275 and 21.375 MHz. Operations, both CW and sideband will be from the RV campgrounds located on Lake Jacksonville using only vintage Drake radios. A certificate of contact will be available via a 9x12 SASE to Brad Law, 840 Henderson Street, Jacksonville, 75766. Talk-in to the operations point will be on the Club's 146.800 repeater (136.5 PL).

Monthly Club Meetings

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

- **April 15th** - Nominations for new Board members ([Clif Sherrod is Chair](#)); preliminary Field Day preparations will also be discussed; John Arnold (W5CUD) will talk on "fox hunting"
- **May 20th** - Election of new officers and annual dinner (pot luck - [contact Misty Stevenson](#) to sign up)
- **June 17th** - First Club meeting with the newly elected officers.

ARCOS Cook Out & Swap Meet

The Amateur Radio Club of Shreveport (ARCOS) will hold its ninth annual 1-day cookout cum swap meet on **Saturday, May 1st** from 9 AM to 3 PM - rain or shine. The meeting place will be in the Cypress Black Bayou Recreation Park. (See a map [here](#).) That locale is about eight miles north of I-20 out of Bossier City, LA. Their contact point for full details is Kelly Spencer (KD5S), 930 N Lake St, Waskom, TX 75692-8504 or (903) 687-2899 or kd5s@arrl.net.

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](#).

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!

To Tube Or Not To Tube

The Groundwire

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

It's always been a bit a curiosity here at Editorsville that references to non-tube type equipment always being referred to as "solid state". After all, there are only four state of matter: solid, gaseous, liquid and plasma. Tubes aren't any of the last three so by the process of reductio ad absurdum, they are also "solid state" devices. Nonetheless, the differentiation is likely to be with us for a long time ... and so will vacuum tubes. If you have an amplifier, the chances are very good that it has at least one power tube in it. Since all power tubes have filaments, [this](#) article should be of interest to you. While it focuses on the problems of filament life vis-à-vis the broadcast industry, its message is pertinent to us hams as well.

[And Speaking of "Solid State" ...](#)

[Here's](#) a website that has oodles of facts and figures regarding the now ubiquitous "transistor". While the site (apparently) hasn't been updated in some time, what is there is a good "look back" at various stages of innovation, the people involved, etc. etc. Of course, there's also more links to other related sites to keep one browsing and reading for quite a while should one be so inclined.

MEMBERS' CORNER

None – No Submission

You can read the previous 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

Got 70cm?

If so, and you have at least a small yagi for it (or even if have to brew one up), you might want to try a bit of EME¹ work. From Joe Taylor (K1JT) via Tony DeAngelo (N2MFT) comes word that in less than two weeks the Arecibo Observatory Amateur Radio Club will again put the 1000-foot radio telescope on the air for 432 MHz EME. Quoting from Joe's original announcement ...

"KP4AO can be heard with a small hand-held yagi pointed at the moon, and a good receiver. A 15 dBi antenna and 100 W will be enough to work us on CW.

"Operators at KP4AO will do their best to work as many stations as possible. Each session will start with a brief announcement and CQ in SSB. SSB QSOs may continue for 30 minutes to an hour, if the QSO rate remains high. The mode will be shifted to CW as soon as it is judged that higher QSO rates would result.

"We will listen for calls at frequencies 5-15 kHz higher than our own, and even higher if QRM warrants. Callers who s-p-r-e-a-d o-u-t are more likely to be copied.

"If you've already worked us in any mode, please do not call again -- give others a chance.

¹ EME – Earth-Moon-Earth QSO.

The Groundwire

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

"If we call "CQ QRP", we will listen for stations running 100 W or less to a single yagi. Please do not answer such a CQ if you are running more power or have a larger antenna.

"On **April 18**, if we reach a condition where most calling stations have been worked, and we judge that operating in the digital mode JT65B would produce a higher QSO rate, we will switch to JT65B.

"Note that any of these planned operating strategies may be changed as circumstances dictate.

"We are extremely fortunate to have been granted access to the world's largest radio telescope for this amateur radio good-will event. We look forward to working as many stations as possible in the allotted time!"

Their presently scheduled frequencies and operating times are as follows:

April 16: 1645 - 1930 UTC	Callsign - KP4AO
April 17: 1740 - 2020 UTC	Tx Freq - 432.045 MHz
April 18: 1840 - 2125 UTC	Rx Freq - 432.050 to 432.060+

Paint Your Wagon ...

...or perhaps that old "boat anchor" (BA) that you've restored. The usual problem with the latter is that the paint the original manufacturer used is not available at the local hardware or paint store. True BAers never say die and will most always find a way to achieve the ends they seek. One ham in particular, Glen Zook (K9STH), has been working on that very problem for some time. He has listed on his website "formulas" (actually mixing proportions of off-the-shelf paints) that he feels accurately duplicate some of the older BA paint colors. He has listings for Collins, Heath, etc. that most anyone interested in re-painting such equipment would welcome. Naturally, in the true spirit of hamdome, all his information is 100% free to see and use. Check out his website [here](#).

Who's That Knocking? (Reprise)

When you call CQ and a station answers, there was a time when, just by the call sign of the answering station, you could have a pretty good idea where the operator was located (provided they weren't mobile, of course). No more. Not here in the U.S. or abroad either. Having been QRT for a number of years, I was more than a bit at sea to discover the plethora of strange call sign configurations, especially the 1x1 ones. Being a DXer at heart, I knew right off that I'd have to find resources to re-educate myself so I could tell if that S58** station that I was hearing under a horrendous pileup was a "new one" or not. (It sort of was and sort of wasn't, but I digress.) Plying the 'Net uncovered a *some* help but in the end I was resigned to accepting that only "stick time"¹ was going re-educate me.

However, we did find [this](#) website that has some really nice freebie downloads including some overlay maps that visually depict the assigned locales for the prefix parts of calls signs, both Stateside and foreign. When printed out in color, they're a quick, if not 100% definitive "locator" for ham stations around the world.

And Now For A Bit Of Reflection

¹ A term used by pilots that means "hands-on experience"

The Groundwire

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

The amount of free “stuff” on the ‘Net continues to amaze me and especially in the ham radio domain. The unselfish sharing of information and knowledge has simply got to be greater than in any other hobby/social activity I can think of. It’s as if “Elmering” has gone on steroids in spite of the fact that ham licenses are, from a purely technical standpoint, easier than ever to obtain and “home brewing” is practically a thing of the past save perhaps in the UHF bands where commercial equipment is sparse to say the least.

One such place where “e-Elmers” exist in strength is qsl.net. It’s so loaded with links to free information that it’s downright mind boggling. A special place that we’ve found very helpful inside there is [here](#). By clicking on the “Directory of Lists” in the left menu column, you’ll find a veritable plethora of “reflectors” on a very wide range of ham-related subjects. The only danger in subscribing to one or more of them is a potential flooding of your email inbox which can precipitate a “drinking from a fire hose” syndrome. Our advice would be to pick one or two before jumping in with both feet. Some are more active than others, but we’ve found none (not that we’ve tried them all) that weren’t active. Your mileage may vary.

JUST FOR FUN

- Two fish swim headlong into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says “Dam!”
- No word in the English language rhymes with month , orange, silver, or purple.
- Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing. (Hopefully, so will our minds.)
- There are only four words in the English language which end in 'dous'¹
- There are only two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order².

ITEMS FOR SALE

From Longview, Jim Rogers (N5VGQ) allows that their club has a quantity of 40’ steel push-up poles for sale for \$50 each. These make excellent dipole holders and can even be used for lightweight beams. Contact Jim at (903) 235-5347 for more information.

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	txlflash@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.

¹ Tremendous, horrendous, stupendous, and hazardous.

² Abstemious and facetious.

The Groundwire

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

SOME USEFUL LINKS

Content	Link
Tyler Amateur Radio Club	www.tylerarc.org
Ham License Practice Tests	www.qrz.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/

CNN DESK

Well, it's election time again at TARC. By now, you should've received a solicitation from the Club to make your nominations for next year's Board of Trustees. If you haven't, [contact](#) Clif Sherrod to get more information. As you've probably heard both Bob and I say before, supporting organizations that you belong to is not only a duty, it's also a privilege. There are many, many ways to discharge that duty and honor that privilege, but one of the best is the giving of your time and talents to it for the benefit of other members. There's no better way to do *that* than to serve on the Board. Second only to being a Board member yourself is doing your part to see that the best qualified members have to chance to serve. You can do that by nominating one or more members whom you believe would serve the Club well. Don't lose the opportunity to let your voice be heard in that regard.

Of course, election time in May also means it's dues paying time. Dues are payable on or before **June 1st** of each year. Single memberships are \$25.00 with additional family memberships available for \$12.50. Membership is open to anyone, licensed or not, who has an interest in amateur radio. For further information contact the Club's treasurer, Alan Luce [here](#).

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

73 to all,

Bob – AG5X & Elaine – KF5CNN
[Co-Editors](#)

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