

# The Groundwire

Official Newsletter of the Tyler Amateur Radio Club - June 12, 2017

## President's Message

Welcome to another exciting year of activities for the Tyler Amateur Radio Club. Building on outgoing president Rick Hall's excellent work, I would like to sustain the momentum and have made several changes that I think will help in that regard:

- The *Groundwire* newsletter has been re-activated and this is the first edition. It will be one of the ways we can keep current with one another and with our hobby. *Amateur radio is not static!* (no pun intended). What I found exciting in the 1960s is not what younger hams see as pertinent today. The newsletter will act as a link to our needs, both as individuals and as a group, and will help us to move forward.

- Age-wise, we have the youngest governing board in the club's history. I believe this will allow us to look a bit more to the future. Patrick Lincoln, a visionary computer scientist, said that any group that is focused on the present will never reach the future. We have bylaws, the operating foundation of our club, which were last revised in 1995. They are hopelessly out of date. A committee headed by Gene Coldwell (WB5CTQ) has been formed to revise them and bring them into the 21st century. Again, with all the modes, analog and digital, and all the services they support, we need to decide what we need to do as a group. How much public service, DXing, contesting or whatever we want to embody, keeping in mind that a club is the sum of its members and not the other way around.

- We need to protect our investments. We have an excellent newly-elected treasurer in Josh Kaufman (KE5FGC). He will inventory our assets and make recommendations to the board about what we do and don't need. Excess property, estate donations and donations from members of the club will go a long way to secure our financial needs. This will prove to be good sense when Mother Nature decides to destroy one of our repeaters.

- We are going to actively reach out to schools, both secondary and college level, as well as to organizations such as scouting. Brochures and materials supportive of what amateur radio does for the community will be provided in a one-on-one setting. We will also provide these materials at VE sessions. As VE testing administrator Butch Adair (WA5SLG) has noted, what better time could there be to get a new ham interested in our club than when they have just qualified for their license?

- What are you trying to do as a ham? Vice-President Michael Fowler (W5FOW) will be exploring how to augment shop night with educational discussions at our meetings, and, hopefully, at his Thursday hands-on events. Amateur radio used to be a potentially lethal hobby, and electrical engineering was something we were all expected to know at some basic level. Semiconductors did change this a bit, but burning up the output stage of your brand new transceiver is still possible. It is, however, avoidable if you understand the basics! In this regard, you will all receive a CD with books and journal articles that pertain to every learning level of amateur radio. Primarily, these comprise a reference library, and are not necessarily for casual reading. When you hear a presentation from one of our many Elmers, or see something while working with Michael, these resources will amplify and solidify your knowledge, which is the intent. Take a look at Elmer Bucher's books, which are historically important for he is probably the original Elmer, and with good reason.

- A very large portion of our frequency allocation is in the HF region - 30MHz and below. This can be a daunting area to get involved with as the buy-in costs, while not crippling, are generally 10x the cost of a new Chinese HT - even on the used market. To spark interest and help quell some of the fear of this region, each monthly meeting will have available a working HF setup so members, particularly new ham members, can see the value and excitement of adding that kind of capability to their station.

- Finally, ham radio is supposed to be fun, not work. It is a hobby, a responsibility, a service to the community, and a bond between friends. Field Day could be a blast if we could view it as more than just another chance to contest. Whatever brought you to amateur radio, whatever kept you in amateur radio should be shared with our guests since every one of them is not only a potential member, but also another path to the hobby's future. I look forward to working with all of you over the coming months and hope I can channel your vision for the future.

73 for now,  
George (KF5WFA)

### Club Meeting

*Directions for the Future* - Club president George Plotkin (KF5WFA) will give a presentation on his vision for our club. He has some very specific ideas on some changes he thinks are required if TARC is meet the needs of our club and community in general and our membership in particular over the next year and

beyond. Discussions will follow. Even if you can't make every club meeting, I urge you to try extra hard to attend this one.

*ARRL Field Day 2017 - (June 24-25) - The Tyler Amateur Radio Club has participated in the ARRL's Field Day event in recent years from a facility at nearby [Camp Tyler](#). We are once again returning there for Field Day 2017. We will have transmitters on 20, 40, and 80 meters SSB; 20 meters CW; and new for 2017, 20 and 40 meters PSK31. We plan to keep stations on the air making contacts for the full 24 hours of 1 PM Saturday to 1 PM Sunday.*

It takes a fair bit of effort to build and operate a six transmitter station, so thanks to the 20-plus people who are already signed up to help. Some operator slots are still available. We also we need volunteers to set up Friday evening. If you'd like to help and haven't signed up as yet, please email [me](#). Whether you're operating or just observing, we look forward to you joining us for Field Day 2017. Wayne Hoskins - WM5Q

## New Members

At the May meeting, the following fellow amateurs were welcomed into our ranks:

- Jack Gibson - W4SHV
- Ron Rodenius - KG5THC
- Joe Lisbony - WB5SDV

If you missed that meeting, make it your goal to attend this month's meeting and to look them up and add your welcome as well.

## Reminders

*Club Dues* - The club's fiscal year runs from June through May. Membership dues for the 2017-2018 fiscal year are now due. Full membership is \$25.00 and additional family members are \$12.50 for the year. Dues may be sent to the club at P.O. Box 6393, Tyler, 75711 or may be paid at the next club meeting by check or cash - no CC's please.

*Hams & Eggs* - The club's informal breakfast social is held circa 7:30 AM on the fourth Saturday of each month at "Happy's" restaurant at 2202 East Fifth Street in Tyler. It's about a quarter-mile west of East Loop 323. This is a permanent change of venue from "The Egg & I" restaurant in the Bergfeld Center. Family and friends are always welcome.

*Tech Net* - Butch Adair (WA5SLG) hosts an open technical discussion net on the club's 146.96 repeater on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> (and possibly 5<sup>th</sup>) Thursday nights at 7:00 PM. Topics are what check-ins bring with them plus what Michael Fowler's Shop Night was or will be next.

*Shop Night* - Michael Fowler (W5FOW) is the host for this hands-on activity held on the evening of the first Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. The location is 418 South Broadway "around back" (signs will point the way). It's a non-threatening opportunity to get up close and personal with some of the technical aspects of our hobby you may want to understand better.

*Ten Meter Net* - Wayne Hoskins (WM5Q) is the emcee for this weekly informal gathering that has no standing agenda. The planned meeting frequency is 28.365 MHz at 8:00 PM each Sunday night and all are welcome. Butch Adair (WA5SLG) usually brings a few questions out of the current General and Extra class license exams for check-ins to ponder, perhaps answer and always discuss. This is a great way for new Technicians to get some early exposure to what's next and for current Generals and Extras to refresh their knowledge on topics we should all have at least a handshake acquaintance with.

*VE Testing* - Testing for new and upgraded amateur radio licenses is conducted by local area VEs on the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM at the American Red Cross building located at 320 East Rieck Road in Tyler. Any schedule changes will be announced on the club's Monday night two meter net. Butch Adair (WA5SLG) is the contact for VE testing information. You can [e-mail](#) him or call him at 903-561-6099. Butch reported that June 11 testing opportunity had the following results:

- Peter Damron, Whitehouse - passed the Technician exam (again). He'd been a Tech previously but had let it expire
- Brent Morgan, Jacksonville - passed the Technician exam
- Ron Rodenius, Tyler (TARC member KG5THC) - upgraded to Extra

Congratulations to these new/upgraded amateurs!

*Monthly Club Meeting* - The Tyler Amateur Radio Club meets every fourth Thursday of the month at the Shiloh Road Church of Christ, corner of Shiloh Road and Paluxy. Call to order is always at 7:00 PM. Those attending are encouraged to

be present a bit sooner to enjoy the always congenial fellowship. Friends and family are always welcome.

*TARC Website* - Our club's [website](#) is the "go to" place for lots of information about who we are and what we do - and have recently done. Put a note on your calendar to visit it often.

### Kudos<sup>1</sup>

A loud shoutout goes to Gaylen Gage (KD5KIZ) for patiently working with Suddenlink to re-activate the Groundwire's e-mail address. Reportedly, it had been out of use for so long that it essentially had been 'mothballed'. Fortunately, a reset action by Suddenlink brought everything back online. I'm uncertain what my 'Plan B' would have been but I am certain the results Gaylen achieved are much better. Thanks again, Gaylen!

Doug Wyman (W5DKW) has generously volunteered to be a proofreader for each edition of our newsletter. *Thank you Doug!* This is a great example of the kind of active participation that George will be addressing.

Our club will need more of this kind of volunteerism going forward if we're not only going to survive but also to grow in more robust ways than just numbers of net check-ins and roster statistics. There's lots of opportunity for any member to make a contribution be they a new Technician or an "Elmer".

### Closing Notes

*A Point to Ponder* - Is the reason you became a ham in the first place still sustaining your interest? Will it continue to be enough? What would it take to want you to broaden your interest? What is on your ham radio bucket list?

Consider the following analogy: Some years ago, I was involved in an up close and personal way with the continuation of a large technology support contract at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. The incumbent contractor seemed to have an unbreakable lock on it. He'd been there - done that for the past seven years and knew to all issues and answers ten ways from Sunday. The competitor was viewed just as a new kid on the block. To every outsiders surprise, the "kid" won the competition going away even though his price was a bit higher.

In the de-briefing by the NASA selection committee, they made clear that they judged the incumbent as having one year's experience seven times whereas the

"kid" brought new perspectives on the tasks at hand. In other words, the incumbent hadn't grown with the job.

Fast forward to us and our personal quest for a satisfying ham radio experience as each of us defines it. To that end, the breadth and depth of our hobby can be daunting: so many bands; so many modes; so many choices of equipment, antennas, etc. Nonetheless, that's no excuse for settling for a familiar security of one mode, or one band, or one activity, etc. For myself, having been a ham now for more than 40 years, I can say that while I'm a dyed-in-the-wool DXer, I have at times dabbled in several much less familiar ham activities. I think those experiences have served to make me a better ham. I know it's given me a more robust experience and appreciation for what amateur radio has to offer.

Try asking yourself "Where am I now in that regard?" From the standpoint of being a ham, what do you want to be able to look back on in 10, 20, 30 or more years? Will the "hamming" you're doing now end up being just one year's experience repeated many times? Will that be enough? Honestly asked and answered, you may surprise yourself. Oh, by the way, participating<sup>2</sup> in a ham radio club counts as experience.

See you at the club meeting this Thursday!

73 !

Bob AG5X

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<sup>1</sup> Any member can submit a kudo for the newsletter

<sup>2</sup> Word implies much more than just attending meetings. Volunteering to help with activities; holding an office; spreading the word; bringing in new members, etc. is 'experience'.