

The Groundwire

Official Newsletter of the Tyler Amateur Radio Club - September 18, 2017

President's Message

Be prepared!

Be prepared and be willing to do something, especially something difficult or something that you do not usually do. Hurricane Harvey challenged our preparedness to the fullest. With cell towers, internet and power gone, Amateur Radio took center stage and kept the lines of communication open. Our fellow hams were there, and across the country, relaying emergency information and literally saving lives. [This clip](#) from KETK says it all.

Our own John Newman (N9JN) is centerstage in the clip and makes the case for amateur radio emergency communications. Data shows that national disasters have been a major reason for people across the US to get their amateur licenses. Over 30,000 new licenses have been granted each year for the past three years - a record high. Total active FCC-issued ham radio licenses also hit an all-time high of 743,003 in November 2016 in great part due to concerns about emergency preparedness.

Nerdy hobby? I think not.

Which brings me to the first great hurdle all hams' experience. You have your Technician license and you have your handy talkie - what next? Your only high frequency (HF) privileges are on 10M which is

fairly limited in an emergency. Additionally, VHF repeaters may not be working. Try using VHF or UHF simplex and let me know how that works for you. It's not a reliable medium in any event.

Clearly, you need to upgrade your license. When preparing to do so, please read and study the material, don't just memorize it. There are plenty of Elmers, not just engineers or rocket scientists mind you, who can help you actually master the exam and become more than an "appliantologist". Once upgraded, understand that expensive gear is definitely not de rigeur for operating on the HF bands. Good, inexpensive equipment abounds. Most seasoned hams have excess equipment sitting in some corners (well, OK, all corners) and are willing to share it.

That said, keep in mind we have an outstanding lecture on grounding by Dick Green (KC5CID) coming up this week. Next month's presentation on emergency amateur operations by John Newman (N9JN) and Mark Taylor (W5MCT) is going to be timely and, as always, enjoyable.

Don't forget, The Texas QSO Party is almost here! Everyone should plan on visiting and operating, even if you only spend 15 minutes making contacts on HF. You will have shrunk your world that much more and, I think, become a better person for it.

73,

George de KF5WFA

What's Coming This Month

As George mentioned, September's presentation will be on station grounding given by Dick Green (KC5CID). Those that heard Dick's talk a few years ago will be anxious to hear it again as it's packed with facts we all should not only be aware of but also be putting into practice. Besides helping to eliminate noise and interference, it also helps to make our stations, shall we say, "less attractive" to lightning. For newcomers to the club, this is a "must see and hear".

Also, don't forget that the Texas QSO party is this weekend! As usual, venue will be the - the Tehan building at Camp Tyler. Full details can be found [here](#) (all hours shown are UTC). It's also the Saturday for our "Hams & Eggs" fellowship breakfast at Happy's. The plan is to hold the breakfast starting at 7a instead of 7:30a - finish at 8a and head over to the QSO party. It's be a weekend FULL of fun and fellowship. Be sure and attend both.

For workshop attendees that want to take advantage of *one* option for finishing their set (other options are in the works), bring it to the QSO party and help will be on hand to finish it there in a separate area away from the QSO happenings. Any time after about 9a would be OK.

Looking Ahead ...

Terry Gimble (W5TG) is also going to be the master of ceremonies for the Boy Scout's Jamboree on the Air in October (JOTA). This will be held at the Boy Scout headquarters on Fifth Street. This is

a great opportunity to reach out to future amateur radio operators. Again, it isn't about the equipment - it's about the contacts.

Again, John Newman (N9JN) and Mark Taylor (W5MCT) will give a presentation in October on emergency communications (aka EmComm). These guys are "heavy" into this very important aspect of amateur radio and how it interfaces with first responders, etc. You won't want to miss what they have to say! This will be the last formal presentation for 2017. The November meeting will be our Thanksgiving dinner meeting (details are TBD - "to be announced") and the December meeting will be for fellowship and good will (details also TBD). In 2018 we'll once again host Skywarn classes but the dates are (guess what) TBD. When that is settled, club meeting presentations for 2018 will be announced.

Members' Corner

This space has been added for inputs from the general membership. Op Ed pieces, operating experiences, bragging rights, etc., just about anything a member might want to share with the rest of us could go here. Submittals are to be addressed to [The Groundwire](#) and be in plain text or MS Word "doc" or "docx" format.

- Orbin Smith (KL7XP) submitted this bit of interesting ham radio history regarding the Wiseman Wireless Station in Alaska:
 - On August 15, 1935 Will Rogers and Wiley Post, who was from Grand Saline, died in a plane crash in Barrow, Alaska . The aurora borealis had knocked out all radio transmission to Fairbanks so the news had to be relayed through the Wiseman wireless station. That's how the outside world learned of their

deaths . When I lived in Wiseman, I found old pieces of that radio station and I used them in my ham radio station KL7XP. I would tell hams from around the world about that bit of history when I talked to them .

Kudos

Several Kudos this month for the splendid work on and support to the BITX40 workshop. We didn't have time to finish due to a scheduling snafu with the church, but we *shall* get all the sets "done and dusted" as the Brits would say.

If you have or will have your set completed by meeting night, bring it. Butch Adair (WA5SLG) will have his test equipment there and can do a final exam on it.

- George Plotkin (KF5WFA) The *force majeure* who originally conceived of the idea, nourished it, brought it to fruition, and did the design work and testing to raise the stock kits into the higher form that the participants assembled.
- Club Elmers
 - Terry Gimble W5TG who also brought all the extension cords and power strips necessary for the soldering irons;
 - Art Sharp K5LXT who, for the third time, lent his knowledge and expertise to make sure the event was a success;
 - Gene Coldwell WB5CTQ who served as an "assembler guinea pig" by completing a set beforehand and documenting his experience which was used during the workshop;
 - Butch Adair WA5SLG not only Elmered two of the

participants but was also manned the test bench. (We didn't finish due to time but we did get past the obligatory "smoke test".

- The Participants:
 - Carl Moss (KC5IIS); John Armstrong (KG5LWD); Thomas Gilliland (KG5MHC); JD Brown (KG5PXO); Orbin Smith (KL7XP); Frank Reagan (W5BBB) (Third workshop for him!); Bill Houston (W5ZK); Pete Mendolia (KG5UOS)

- Supporting
 - Elaine Jackson KF5CNN and Rachel Plotkin KF5WLC made sure there were drinks and eats during breaks and lunch.
 - Bob Jackson AG5X who tried to keep everything "in sync".

Reminders

- Club Dues - The club's fiscal year runs from June 1st through May 31st. Membership dues for the 2017-2018 fiscal year are now due. Full annual membership is \$25.00 and additional family members are \$12.50. Quarterly prorating of dues will begin in September.

- 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 reports that the September 10th testing opportunity had the following results:

- Three new Technicians
 - Jerry Bates - Gladewater -
 - James Rogerson - Tyler -
 - Delton Starling, Jr. - Tyler -
- One upgrade to General
 - Josh Kaufman - KE5FGC (TARC Treasurer)

Congratulations to these new/upgraded amateurs!

- TARC Website - Other important events are on the Club's website [here](#). It's also the place for lots of information about us: Who we are, what we do, will do and have done as well as a bunch of useful links. Put a note on your calendar to visit it often.

Closing Notes

Due to a scheduling "snafu" with the church, we weren't able to stay and continue the workshop until final assembly. Still, the feedback that I received was 100% positive. Efforts will be made to find a venue or two where the small amount of soldering, etc. can be completed and the sets fully tested as planned. Thanks again to all that came, saw and for all practical purposes, conquered a challenging project.

73 for now,

Bob Jackson - AG5X

Editor