Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club

2023 CLUB OFFICERS

Pres: Aaron Baker – KI5FIQ

Vice Pres: Mark Phillips – KI5POH
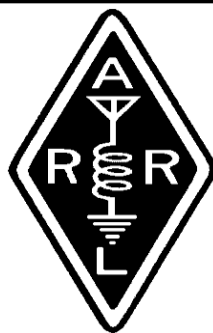
Sec/Treas: Army Curtis - AE5P

Visit our web site at

https://w5nac.com/

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club is to support and promote Amateur Radio by public service, offering training to unlicensed interested parties and licensed Amateurs, mutual support of other Amateurs, engaging events that promote Amateur radio to the general public and other Amateur radio operators, and continuing fellowship by regularly scheduled organized meetings and events and having fun.

NOVEMBER MINUTES

The November business meeting of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club (NARC) was held October 25 on the club's 146.84 repeater. The three club officers checked in, as well as nine additional club members.

At last month's meeting, President Aaron KI5FIQ appointed a nominating committee consisting of Jim N5JGE, Wolfie KI5MHB and Army AE5P. The committee was charged with presenting a slate of candidates for 2024 officers at the November meeting.

The committee is proposing Mark KI5POH for President, Darrell KI5PYQ for Vice President and Army AE5P for Secretary. Voting will be conducted at the regular November meeting on November 1st.

Darrell KI5PYQ reminded everyone that the next Fox Hunt will be held on November 11 with information transmitted on the club 146.84 repeater at precisely 10:00. Smoked pork butt sandwiches, chips and drinks will be available to all who find the fox.

Net closed at 8:11 p.m.

The regular November meeting of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club was held as scheduled on November 1st at the City/County EOC with 13 members and 1

guest. **President Aaron KI5FIQ** opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Introductions were made by all present. Minutes of the previous meetings were approved as published. Treasurer's report was not read.

The members of the President's nominating committee were introduced and their report for suggested 2024 officers was read. Motion was made to instruct the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for the candidates recommended by the committee. The resulting vote was unanimous. For 2024, the President will be Mark KI5POH, Vice-President Darrell KI5PYQ and Secretary/Treasurer Army AE5P. The 2024 officers will be installed at the December meeting.

Discussion held on our annual Christmas Party, December meeting and White Elephant Auction. Last year this was held in the Private Dining Room at Clear Springs Café, although we were not able then to make reservations for our first choice of the first Wednesday in December.

Our incoming Vice-President **Darrell KI5PYQ** was asked to contact Clear Springs and if possible make reservations for the first Wednesday in December, December 6th. (Editor's note: Darrell did make contact with Clear Springs and has made reservations for December 6th on our behalf. Thanks Darrell)

Meeting closed at 2022.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The final month of 2023 is here and what a year it's been. I feel like I've been going nonstop since Summer and it doesn't even feel like it's already December.

Don't forget we have our annual Christmas party and white elephant auction coming up on the 6th at Clear Springs.

You can even get ahead and pay your dues for 2024 while you're there.

It's been a pleasure serving as club president this year and I wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and start of 2024.

73, Aaron KI5FIQ

Baker.barisax@gmail.com

FROM THE VP CHAIR

It is hard to believe that it is already November. This year has gone by fast.

Our November program will be discussing our orange box radios, how to set up and use them. Army (AE5P) will lead the discussion and it will be interesting to learn about these radios.

We will have our next Fox Hunt on Saturday, November 11th at 10am. Darrell (KI5PYQ) will be hiding the Fox and he will announce the frequency on the 84 Repeater at 10am. We will enjoy pulled pork sandwiches, prepared by Darrell, after the Hunt. Of course, you will need to find the Fox to know where to go to enjoy the lunch. Good luck hunting!

I hope to see you all at the November meeting.

73, Mark KI5POH

KI5POH21@gmail.com

NOTES FROM OUR EC

It's Thanksgiving Day. The company catered a traditional lunch, no it wasn't a buffet line. It's gray outside and in the low 50's at 1:30 pm CT. I guess we can say that Autumn has finally arrived. I hope that all had a great Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Let's start off with Winter preparedness and a basic review:

-Vehicles recently serviced and fueled.

-Generators both fixed and portable, serviced, exercised and plenty of fuel available.

-Antenna guy wires checked. Don't want a tower or the antennas to come crashing down if the weather turns really bad.

-Radios ready for some late night 160, 80 and 40m DX? Tis the season.

-Do you have a bail-out plan to head to the Winter Havens in the south?

The 2023 Hurricane season ends 30 November. As of this writing there was only one tropical depression in the Middle Atlantic. Forecasters are expecting it to head NNE. It seems we will end the season much like we entered this year's pre-season with an Atlantic sub-tropical storm.

New topic, tech question, operational question you decide: Do you give a "verifiable" signal report using ear metering or via the S-meter?

Not very long this time. Remember, St Nicholas is making his list and checking it twice. Have you sent him your wish List?

Thanks to everyone who checks in to our nets even if you just lurk in the radio shadows. Net control operators, thanks for your efforts.

73 de KC5MIB John

VE TESTING

We had one person for a special VE test session on November 9th. Justin Beasley, now KJ5DHA, took and passed his Tech exam. Congratulations Justin.

We do want to remind everyone that we offer in-person testing for all classes of Amateur Radio licenses on the third Wednesday of every month.

Many thanks to VE's, **Andy KE5EXX, Mike AA5HH, Mike W5NXK, Ralph N6RH, Robert KD5FEE,** and **Army AE5P.**

For the latest information always check the club website at:

https://w5nac.com/ve-testing/

73 de AE5P.

email: ae5p@arrl.net

TWO METER CLUB NETS

Please join us each week for the two-meter nets sponsored by NARC. All stations are welcome to check into the nets.

Each **MONDAY** is the **NARC ARES/RACES** net, at 8:00 p.m. on the club's 146.84 repeater (PL 141.3).

Second, on **THURSDAY** evenings at 8:00 p.m. is the **Deep East Texas Skywarn Emergency Weather Net** on the 147.32 repeater (PL 141.3).

Please join us for one or both.

HAMLIST

Are you on Hamlist? Check it out and join at:

https://w5nac.com/about/email-reflectors/

NEXT MEETING

The monthly business meeting is held on the Club's 146.84 repeater, 8:00 p.m. on the Wednesday before our normal scheduled meeting which is always the first Wednesday of the month. All stations on frequency for the business meeting are asked to check-in, whether or not they plan to participate in the meeting.

The next regular NARC meeting will be Wednesday December 6th. This will be our annual Christmas Party and White Elephant Auction and will be held in the Private Dining Room of Clear Springs Café. Members are encouraged to bring a guest. **Note the early starting time of 6:00**. Please plan to come a little early to be seated and for socializing prior to the starting time

Hope to see ya'll there.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF NOTE

Mark your calendars for the following events coming up in the next few months. Full information on these events and much more can be found at https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html

ARRL 10-meter Contest
Dec 9 – 10, 2023
http://www.arrl.org/10-meter

ARRL Rookie Roundup CW
Dec 17, 2023
http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup

ARRL RTTY Roundup
Jan 6, 2024
http://www.arrl.org/rtty-roundup

NAQP - CW
Jan 13 – 14, 2024
https://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf

NAQP – SSB
Jan 20, 2024
https://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf

ARRL January VHF Contest
Jan 20 – 21, 2024
http://www.arrl.org/january-vhf

BARTG RTTY Sprint
Jan 27 – 28, 2024
http://bartg.org.uk/wp/bartg-sprint-contest/

Shuttle Columbia Special Event Station K5C
Feb 2 – 4, 2024
https://w5nac.com

Check out the many contests listed on the Contest Calendar link shown here. There are many State QSO parties and 'Parks-On-The-Air' events that may be just right for you. Check 'em out.

Learning Morse Code
Jim Edmondson, N5JGE

This month's article will highlight some resources and methods that I have used for learning Morse Code. There are many others available if none of these work for you. I started to study Morse Code in 2022. After learning the alphabet, I got distracted with other radio activities and stopped routine practice. I re-started my effort a few weeks ago and already have made much better progress by using several learning principles and internet resources. I am using self-directed learning based on principles that I learned by reviewing several classroom teaching curricula. If you learn better in a more structured environment, there are several organized classes available via virtual learning. The [Long Island CW Club](#) (LICW Club) and [CW Ops](#) are probably the best known.

There are several principles for learning Morse Code that are used in almost every informal or formal learning structure:
- learn the distinct sound of each character, not the individual dit's and DAH's (don't count);
- do not begin learning at very slow speeds, instead use Farnsworth timing (see below);
- learn selected letters first, adding new letters to the list as you copy all former letters at better than 70% - 90% using your chosen Farnsworth speed;
- daily practice in several short periods is most effective; and
- strive for instant character recognition while increasing speed after learning the necessary characters (about 40).

There is less agreement on the order to learn letters, numbers, punctuation and prosigns, when to learn sending and which type of key to use for sending. Many teach what is called the Koch method. Extensive research by the LICW Club showed that this character sequence was not really used by Koch! The LICW Club developed their own letter sequence based on the characters most often used in QSO's.

Some recommend learning to copy before learning to send. The LICW Club incorporates sending from the very beginning and recommends using a straight key. They believe that the direct association of muscle movement to form the characters aids in learning. Others believe that a paddle should be used from the beginning due to its efficiency, better formed code and controlled sending speed. Many CW

operators end up using a paddle eventually, so starting with a paddle eliminates switching keys midstream. Use whichever is more comfortable for you.

To get started, learn the characters as a single sound, not a series of dots and dashes. Focusing on the dots and dashes leads to counting them which slows down processing considerably. Learners starting by counting and / or with slow sending speed to learn the characters tend to plateau at about 13 WPM (words per minute). Progress beyond that speed takes great effort, maybe even starting over.

Learn at a relatively rapid sending speed. This is a bit problematic when first learning because you are using your conscious brain to convert the sound to its character which takes time. Having the characters coming too fast will lead to many missed characters and a lot of frustration. The solution to this problem is known as "Farnsworth" timing. This method sends each character at a rapid speed (12 – 20 WPM), but allows large spaces between the characters (5 – 10 WPM effective speed) for your brain to process what it hears. When first learning, you should strive to copy between 70 and 90% correctly. If you are copying much worse than this, slow down. When copying 90% or better, add a new character or speed up.

Higher speed learning also helps your brain to learn the sounds because the sending speed is too fast for counting. Learning the sounds at high speed prepares you for increasing your effective speed when you "really learn the characters". What is meant by really learning the characters is when you are using your subconscious brain to convert the sound to a character.   This is known as "Instant Character Recognition". This skill is usually needed to get over the 13 WPM plateau.

Classical Farnsworth timing is to use 20 / 5 WPM (abbreviated as FWPM 20 / 5) to start learning letters, numbers, and a few punctuation characters. The LICW Club did extensive research on the history of Morse Code learning. AA0Z has a YouTube video ([LICW Video](#)) where he interviewed one of the founders of the LICW Club and their primary researcher on the findings. It is really fascinating and worth the hour to watch. They structure their learning of the first 18 characters at FWPM 12 / 8 (Beginners Carousel 1). Then 26 additional characters and prosigns are added and the speed is increased to FWPM 12 / 10 (Beginners Carousel 2). Beginners Carousel 3 focuses on QSO structure and getting on the air. Intermediate and Advanced classes focus on ICR, head copy and increasing your speed of sending and receiving.

I have been using Learn CW Online (LCWO) to learn the characters using the LICW Club recommended FWPM of 12 / 8. LCWO uses a character progression similar to the traditional Koch sequence. If you create a free account, you retain your place in the lessons and track progress via a nice set of statistical graphs for each lesson that you complete. The figure at the end of this article shows my statistics for the first 17 (of 40) lessons.   As or after learning the characters, there is the "MorseMachine to help develop ICR. Other practice tools focus on words and callsigns.

To supplement LCWO, I use the extensive YouTube audio files recorded by Kurt Zoglmann – the "Morse Code Ninja". Kurt uses a different letter sequence and mixes words and callsign into the lessons for each letter. He also has extensive tools to help with ICR, Instant Word Recognition (IWR), head copy, callsigns, etc. While using LCWO for basic learning, Kurt's YouTube channel provides thousands of hours of code to listen to and copy.

Two other sites that I recently found are MorseCode.World and Head Copy. I have not used these much, but they seem like great tools for advanced learning. MorseCode.World has a good tool for ICR and follows letter sequences for the major classes and LCWO. One section follows the teaching method of CW Ops, another simulates QSOs and yet another provides Morse code to copy from current headlines to expand your vocabulary. You can also enter text and the website will generate "perfect" code for you to listen to. Much of the content can be downloaded for offline study. Head Copy obviously focuses on copying with any aids. Code is played and you have to choose the correct sequence from 5 choices to advance to the next. Many options as to what is sent are available.

A final helpful tool is a free Android app called Morse Code. A version for Windows 10 and above is also available, but I did not find an iOS Version. This is a translator and learning tool. It allows you to select any letters, numbers or special characters to practice copying using Farnsworth timing. After practicing, the results show total practice time, %answered correctly, number answered correctly and incorrectly overall and for each character, the average time to copy all characters and each character individually.   These statistics are very helpful to determine which characters are problematic and need further practice. Each session is retained in the history list, so you can also track your progress over time. The Android app is great to practice whenever you have a few free minutes.

I have been hunting CW POTA and DX stations using my straight key. Many POTA activators operate at 12 – 20 WPM. Since I have not learned all of the letters, I have a decoder running in the background in case I get stuck. The primary area where you might get stuck is on the activator's callsign. The exchange itself is very straightforward and the POTA spotting page provides the activators callsign, park reference, etc. Using "AB5CD" as the activator's call sign, a typical QSO goes like this:

> AB5CD: CQ CQ CQ POTA AB5CD AB5CD K
>   N5JGE: N5JGE
> AB5CD: N5JGE GM UR 55N 55N MS MS
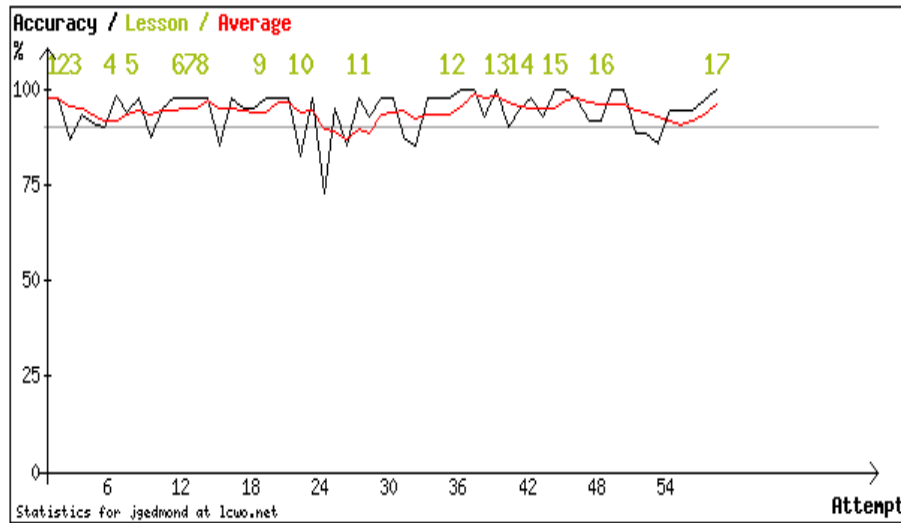>   N5JGE: R R TU UR 5NN 5NN TX TX BK
> AB5CD: BK TU de AB5CD 73 dit dit
>   N5JGE: dit dit

As you can see, the actual amount of sending by the hunter is basically your callsign, a signal report and your state. Most activators are not interested in rag-chewing and keep QSOs short and close to this script. A DX station is even less interested in rag-chewing and the exchange is usually even briefer.

My goal is to become proficient enough to copy up to 20WPM and to be able to complete CW POTA activations (copy callsigns better). There are many opportunities for operators at that speed range. Besides POTA / SOTA, the K1USN Radio Club runs a 1-hour slow-speed CW "contest" twice a week. This is another great way to get slow-speed on-air practice as you learn.

Koch CW course statistics

Statistics for jgedmond at lcwo.net

(Note: Attempts with zero accuracy are not considered for averaging.) Show only results from lesson: [All ∨]

Lessons, Accuracy

Lesson	Attempts	Accuracy			Time spent
		min.	max.	avg	(days)
1	1	97.8	97.8	97.8	1
2	1	97.8	97.8	97.8	1
3	3	86.7	93.4	90.4	1
4	2	90	98	94	1
5	4	87.5	97.5	93.5	1
6	1	97.5	97.5	97.5	1
7	1	97.8	97.8	97.8	1
8	5	85	97.5	94.5	1
9	3	95	97.5	96.7	1
10	5	72.5	97.5	89	1
11	8	85	97.5	92.5	1
12	4	97.5	100	98.8	1
13	2	92.5	100	96.3	1
14	3	90	97.5	94.2	1
15	4	92.5	100	97.4	2
16	10	85.8	100	92.9	2
17	2	97.2	100	98.6	1