

Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club

2020 CLUB OFFICERS

Pres: Bill Rascher - KT5TE

Vice Pres: Steve Bartlett-WB5IDY

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.



MARCH MINUTES

The March meeting of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club (NARC) was held as scheduled on March 4th. **President Bill KT5TE** opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Lunch Room of Christ Episcopal School. Ten members and two guests were present. Each person present introduced them self. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published. The Treasurer's report was read.

In recent contests, **Bob K5ME** and **Army AE5P** reported operating in the CQ DXCW contest, and

Army AE5P reported operating in the NAQP RTTY contest. Members were encouraged to try their hands in the many contests, even if just for a few contacts. Its wonderful practice and a great way to improve your abilities in Ham Radio.

The San Jacinto Day Special Event Station is scheduled for the weekend of April 25-26, using the special call sign K5T. Club members are encouraged to operate in this event from their home stations. Just be sure to inform AE5P of the time and Band/Mode you intend to operate. We need your help to make this a success.

The book raffle was won by **Philip, WB5TAL**, who received a copy of Jerry Sevick's book "The Short

Vertical Antenna and Ground Radial". A special second raffle awarded an ARRL cap to Tom, W5TV.

Program: Bill KT5TE presented a program on mini-PC's that he is using at this home station, most of them running Linex as specialized servers. Bill has a very interesting way of setting up his computers that most of us have not previously considered.

Dues for 2020 are now due!

Dues are just \$20 a year for all licensed hams in a family. You can pay the Treasurer at any meeting, weekly lunch, or VE testing session, or via snail mail to his home address. Make checks payable to NARC.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

ISOLATION

This year spring has been very beautiful and a little wet. Not going to complain about the wet, but it makes spring chores a little tougher.

At the time of writing this we have 22 kids and a few moms that will be culled for udder condition and age this summer. We still have about 20 more does (female goats) to kid, and since they tend to have pairs we could see a lot more kids hit the ground.

Young does tend to walk away from the kids while grazing and forget where they left their babies. So each evening I have to count heads and then hop in the Kubota truck to search for kids in 4 wheel low lock. It is fun to see their predator response when I head their way to scoop them up. You would be amazed as to how low to the ground and silent these young kids can get.

Not even their eyes move when I walk up, and when I snatch them they start hollering for their mom.

In a couple weeks they will have to be herded because by then they're way too fast to snag. Unless, of course, they're in a deep sleep.

What all this means is I don't have a chance to get out, so Wednesday lunches are missed. But I prefer to view the current world state from a positive point as much as possible. At least this week Lauren and I went to Bryan for a ton and a half of feed. It was a very pleasant and fast trip since the roads had all been emptied for our drive. ;-) Lauren paid the bill by standing at the marked 6' line while I talked with other ranchers who were leaning on the hood of their trucks by leaning on the hood of my truck. That gave us all at least 12' social distance.

I hope everyone is making use of this time since we might not have an opportunity for a little R

& R in the future. Of course if you're retired you might go stir crazy.

The last couple of weeks have been so busy that all the noise on the TV makes turning it off easy.

It would be nice to turn on the radios, but with all the work I have I'm way too sleepy. Maybe you'll be able to log special event station contacts.

Or if this mess continues make some contacts for our clubs special event station?

73, Bill KT5TE

bill@watershipfarm.com

FROM THE VP CHAIR

SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO LAUGH

With all the scary media stories and other depressing pandemic hype, I thought a list of funny things (okay dumb things) I have done in the shack might bring a few seconds of levity.

Checking into a weekly net using the microphone from the HF rig, not my 2 m radio. Needless to say, Net Control failed to acknowledge me. Pretty picky I thought.

Checking into a weekly net using the mic from the HF rig, BUT the HF radio was on. I accidentally found a new contact in New York who still did not understand why I introduced myself as EM21PQ Oops.

Trying to relearn CW again, I looked to copy code from some really slow operators on 40m. I became very frustrated as I could not put

together a single recognizable word after 10 minutes. Eventually, I realized they were not sending code in English. Estupido!

Trying to spell something during a QSO using the phonetic alphabet but your brain just blanks out on several letters. "name here is STEVE - Sierra, Tango, Eggplant" . What??

"recuu recuu uvive waawa" what do you mean 40m voice is lower side band? Oops.

Never, never, take a bathroom break while calling CQ on FT8. Wait ... come back ... I need North Korea. On man.

If after 15 minutes of calling you get no response on FT4 or FT8, remember that the red button on your USB sound card device IS actually the power-on button. Click

Never guess what your password was for LoTW. After 3 incorrect tries you get to log your QSOs in a spiral notebook.

It is possible on some radios to accidentally set an automatic turn-off timer, which was created just to make you believe your radio has fried and you need to ask your wife for a couple thousand dollars. Man, I thought I was getting a new FlexRadio in place of that Icom. Read the manual dude.

Never wear shorts while soldering. Never wear crocks while soldering. It can cause one to speak loudly of the illegitimate heritage of the soldering iron.

Crimping coax connectors is always better than soldering unless your finger gets caught in the ratchet mechanism. Again, more discussions about the tool's heritage.

For Generals only: Responding to a CQ from that rare DX station you have always wanted. Wait, he is 2 Khz below my band limit, bummer. "So Sorry, too much QRM to copy, this is WB5IDY QSY" and quickly. (of course this was only a fictional scenario as I

would never transmit out of band ...) turn the radio off now man, folks can track you down.

For all of you Elmers, you know who you are:

An elderly ham driver was going down the interstate when suddenly his 2 meter rig crackled his call...Answering...he heard a fellow ham's urgent warning...."Hey Elmer, just heard on the news that there's a car going down I-40 the wrong way, please be careful"!!

Elmer replied, "Well I'll declare, it's not just one.....

there's hundreds of them'!!!!!!!!!!

73, Steve WB5IDY

bartlett.steve58@gmail.com

NOTES FROM OUR EC

I don't know that that old saw for March will hold. We've had lots of rain. I don't know how much at the mill. I'm sure Rusty and a couple of others have a good idea of this month's rainfall.

We have a new virus out there, COVID-19 (you knew there would be some comment on that topic). Everyone is getting inundated with news, home remedies, not so home remedies, a few can help you get government money and the like. Social distancing is putting a crimp in most of the things we do.

We are a pretty gregarious group. The informal Wednesday and Friday gatherings are on hiatus, pending the outcome and some return to normalcy, however you define normal. We all know what to do, wash your hands often, don't pick your nose, maintain your dress and cover (the

prior service military will understand this one).

There is a lot of "chicken little-the sky is falling mentality" out there. Keep tabs through reliable news sources; don't get caught up in the hype. The City of Nacogdoches has one reported case and has developed a well thought out plan. Steve Bartlett may have some better information and words of wisdom. And in the immortal words of Winston Churchill, "keep calm and carry on."

Soooo, now that you have all this extra time on your hands, oh wait one, that's right most of this crowd is already retired or in essential positions. Those of you who aren't what are you doing with your time?

Remember our regular nets on Monday and Thursdays. We will have a club net next Wednesday, 1 April at 7pm local to have an 'on the air' virtual club meeting. That will be our meeting night and we will utilize the 147.32 repeater to call the net. Again see

elsewhere in the newsletter for more details. Remember to play nice in the yard.

73 de John Chapman
KC5MIB
jlchapman2@juno.com

VE TESTING

Our next VE testing is scheduled for **Wednesday April 15 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Lunch Room of Christ Episcopal Church School.

Applicants should bring a picture ID, the original and a copy of their current Amateur license, the original of any CSCE's and \$15 to cover the cost of the exam(s). Correct change is always very much appreciated.

Applicants are asked to advise AE5P of their intention to take one or more exams prior to the test session. This is necessary to insure social

distancing requirements can be met.

More information is available on the club website at <https://w5nac.com/about/testing/>

73 de AE5P.

email: ae5p@arrl.net

NEW HAMS

At our VE testing session in March, we did not have any candidates. **Future testing sessions will be modified to require advance reservations to insure social distancing requirements can be maintained.**

TWO METER CLUB NETS

Remember to join us each week for the two meter nets sponsored by NARC. 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.

BOOK RAFFLE

The monthly book raffle is being postponed until we are again able to resume our normal meetings at Christ Episcopal School.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be a virtual on-air meeting **Wednesday April 1st at 7:00 p.m.** on the 147.320 repeater (PL 141.3). All stations participating are asked to check-in giving their callsign and name when asked for. An on-air program is planned.

SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR FREE TIME?

As mentioned in KC5MIB's column, many members are now spending a lot of time at home, following the recommendation to maintain social distancing (who comes up with these terms anyway?)

This can present us with a golden opportunity to take advantage of this time, use our radios more, improve our communication's skills, and do something good for our club and community.

How about a daily 2M net just to keep tabs on club members and make sure everyone is okay? It could be a morning net rather than evening, and it could be not much more than just taking check-ins and getting reports of assistance needed. Do we have anyone who wants to volunteer to put such a net together?

How about a daily net to teach and practice CW? I know there has been some talk of this for a long time. Now we have an opportunity to do it. Do we have a volunteer to do this?

Do you have some other ideas on increased use of our ham radios to take advantage of all this free time?

Drop me a note with your thoughts, comments and ideas. I would love to hear from you.

73,

Army AE5P

ae5p@arrl.net

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 <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

Note that all dates shown here are local, CST dates while all contest logging uses UTC dates and times.

CQ WW WPX, SSB

Mar 28-29, 2020

<http://www.cqwp.com/rules.htm>

TEXAS STATE PARKS ON THE AIR

Apr 18-19, 2020

<http://www.tspota.org/rules>

ARRL ROOKIE ROUNDUP SSB

Apr 19, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup>

SAN JACINTO DAY SPECIAL EVENT K5T

Apr 25-26, 2020

7TH CALL AREA

QSO PARTY

May 2-3, 2020

<http://7qp.org>

CQ WW WPX, CW

May 30-31, 2020

<http://www.cqwp.com/rules.htm>

ARRL JUNE VHF

June 13-15, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/june-vhf>

ARRL FIELD DAY

June 27-28, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/field-day>

CQ WW VHF

Jul 18-19, 2020

<http://www.ncjweb.com/N/AQP-Rules.pdf>

NAQP, CW

Aug 1, 2020

<http://www.ncjweb.com/N/AQP-Rules.pdf>

NAQP, SSB

Aug 15, 2020

<http://www.ncjweb.com/N/AQP-Rules.pdf>

ARRL ROOKIE

ROUNDUP RTTY

Aug 26, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup>

WORLD WIDE DIGI DX

Aug 29-30, 2020

<https://ww-digi.com/>

ARRL SEPTEMBER

VHF

Sept 12-13, 2020

<http://www.arrl.org/september-vhf>

MORE LOW POWER OPERATION

by

Thomas Atchison W5TV

Let's continue our discussion of low power communication. There are two general ways of getting 'on the air' with QRP operation. One is to turn your current HF radio down so the output is around 5 watts. Most HF rigs will permit this and it provides an opportunity to experience QRP operation without spending any money. An alternative is to purchase a QRP radio either already built or in kit form. Actually there are a number of rigs on the used market that operate in the 5 to 15 watts range that have good prices on them. Some examples are the Yaesu FT-817, the ICOM IC-703, the Elecraft KX1, etc. If you want to spend more there are several QRP rigs on the new market that will meet your needs. I found an interesting source of QRP radios at a WEB site called QRPGuys: <https://qrpguys.com/>. Another is called RP Labs Shop: <https://www.qrp-labs.com/>. If you want to look at some *really inexpensive* QRP radios try the following: <https://www.aliexpress.com/popular/qrp-transceiver.html>.

As we have mentioned before, you will improve your operation by connecting the best antenna possible. This is particularly true if you connect an antenna with some gain, i.e. a beam. Many hams, however, want to be portable with their QRP rigs; therefore, the antenna is usually a random wire that is as long and as high as possible. Some use an inverted vee antenna that is tuned to a particular band. Of course the advantage of the latter is it only requires a high center point with the legs drooping down to 5 or 6 feet off the ground.

Since there is about 13dB difference between 5 and 100 watts then you will need to hone your operating skills. Listen carefully to a station you want to work and determine how he is operating. Learn the ebb and flow of his operation and get your call in when it will do the most good.

An excellent book published by ARRL is "Low Power Communication" by Richard Arland, K7SZ. If you want to get further involved in QRP operations consider joining the QRP Amateur Radio Club International (ARCI). They produce a magazine called the QRP Quarterly, they organize an annual conference at Dayton and they sponsor various QRP contests and awards. You can find them on the WEB at <https://www.qrparci.org/>.

Tips For Amateurs and Homeowners Utilizing Dish Antennas

Many radio amateurs along with TV satellite homeowners do not realize that signal reception can be improved by proper maintenance of their reflector dish. Several inexpensive maintenance steps can improve reception.

Poor dish reflectivity directly affects the frequency reluctance of the feed horn receiver. The Path-length phase difference between the H-Plane and E-Plane is fundamental distortion created by foreign substances on the face of the disk. ie: dirt, bird feces, leaves, smut

Side lobes can be formed that will misdirect some of the received signal that should be directed onto the off-center dish receiver body. An increase of surface material accumulation will ultimately affect or alter the focal ratio (aka f/D) which of course is very close tolerance.

When one is using any of the elliptical reflectors, consideration must be given to the major and minor axes. Signal distortion can be created by interruption of the axes due to damage, hail stone strikes, bird feces and dirt.

To insure quality of signal reception, one should use Meguiers PlastX clear paste cleaner and polish. Once should apply this evenly to clear all foreign substances from the surface of the dish. Next, apply RainX evenly to the dish surface to reduce rain fade and provide consistently even reflection of the received signal into the receiver body.

Tips for the owner:

- A Pay Attention to your equipment
- P Prevent obstruction of the signal by trees and dirt
- R Remove minor debris from reflector surface
- I Inspect All connections
- L Learn about & observe where to locate your equipment
- F Find out about local codes that may affect your location
- O Open the manuals and read about your equipment
- O Operate your equipment within its tolerances
- L Leave nothing to chance

Respectfully rendered: Ikeda Knotte, PHD