



AMATEUR RADIO FIESTA

Saturday January 14, 2012
Schertz Civic Center
1400 Schertz Parkway
Doors open at 8 AM to 2:00 PM

Talk in Freq: 146.94- (PL 179.9)
<http://www.w5sc.org>

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President's Message - Andy Carstarphen WY5V

Well, I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving and Christmas. I hope everyone was able to enjoy time with friends and family and is looking forward to the new year. You may have noticed some changes. We have a new web site up thanks to Larry Essary who is not only our Secretary, but temporarily the head of the Data Committee. Larry is always working on improving the site. There are sections for current news and events. There are a lot of very fine systems out there. So we are asking for those that would like to share photos of their systems and a write up on your system(s).

We have been busy getting word out about the Society by doing presentations at some local clubs. So far we have done presentations for the Denton County Amateur Radio Association and the Metrocrest Amateur Radio Society. We are taking off for the holidays but will hit the trail again after the first of the year. We have already received an invitation to visit Corsicana for after the first of the year.

That's all for now. 73 and I hope to see you on the air.

73's Andy WY5V

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From our Secretary

Greetings to all of our Society members...

The last few months has seen an extraordinary amount of activity by the Officers and Staff of the Society. There has been more forward movement in the Society in these last few months than I have seen in the last decade.

we are making presentations to local ham clubs, cleaning up the coordination and membership databases, adding new functionality to RF Projector, and finally, we have been successful in improving the image of the Society. And membership is UP!

We are working on a complete re-write to our by-laws to get them into the 21st century and our frequency coordination staff has been looking at our coordination standards and will be making a suggestion to move them forward as well.

We have added a new section to our web site for photos of members repeaters. We have had good response so go take a look and maybe you will get an idea for a new project for your own repeater.

We are also sponsoring our first of several radio contests: The 2 Meter Simplex Challenge for all Texas Amateur Radio Operators on December 11, 2011. It will most likely be history before you see this issue of the NEWS. Plaques will be presented to our winners at our winter meeting in San Antonio. If you missed participating in the winter edition there will be another 2 Meter Challenge this summer.

Our vice-president Billy McDonald, AK5DX, and I have been lending our experience and sweat equity to the Boy Scouts of America to help them build a first-class amateur radio station at Camp Wisdom in the Dallas area. Digging holes, pouring concrete, and we are about to finish stacking the tower for them. This is part of the Circle-10 Radio Scouting project in North Texas. There are several other North Texas hams actively participating in all aspects of the project to install first-class stations at the council's four local camps in Dallas, Texoma, Athens, and Possum Kingdom. If you are a Scouter please consider getting involved.

Also serving as the current database committee chairman I have been working directly with Matt Stennett; an amazing young man (and creator of RF Projector), to resolve some decades old data issues and to make sure we go forward with a known good data point. Matt has rallied to the call and has just recently activated a program that grabs information from the FCC database on licensees which we import into our own member database. This feature goes a long way to make sure we have the most current information on all our members.

Matt has also been working on software that will allow members to download a file with repeater information, for specific geographic areas, that you can upload to your radio to use when you travel throughout Texas. This is something you will be able to create on the fly through RF Projector.

We are truly living in some amazing times for the Society.
Expect the best from us!

Larry Essary K5XG
Secretary



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Rodger Williams W5UOK -
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Michael Hilton N5ZZA -
Zone 3
Mission, TX

Jim Mellon KA3IDN -
Zone 5
Odessa, TX

Johnny Stigler WA5ZRQ -
Links
Euless, TX

David Woolweaver K5RAV -
Mexican Liaison
Harlingen, TX

WINTER MEETING 10:30 AM TO 1:00 PM
BOARD MEETING 2:00PM
SAN ANTONIO JANUARY 14, 2012

OPEN DIRECTORS POSITIONS

Please reference the message below from Lee and Brett Nolan. I would like to thank Lee and Brett for their service.

We also have Pat Soileau, ND5C, who has also resigned and we will need to fill his position also.

We will now need to fill 3 open positions on the Board. If anyone has suggestions for candidates to replace these three, please let us know.

Although we would have preferred to be more active in the VHF-FM Society, Brett and I have decided to tender our resignations from the board of directors. When we embarked on this venture, we did not realize how much of our time would be invested in other matters. Please accept our resignations effective immediately. We feel the positions will be better served by ones who can devote more time. Thanks for working with us in the time we were on the Board. Also, if we can be of any assistance at any time feel free to call on us. Thanks Andy and Larry.

**Lee Nolan WB5UEN
Brett Nolan KC5NER
Pat Soileau ND5C**

The mass emails for this renewal cycle have been sent out, but with a slight variation from last year. The renewal reminder was sent out to every member this year, for two reasons. The first reason being that I hope it illicit a higher electronic renewal rate from previous years, as everyone being aware of the electronic renewal might prompt some word of mouth to those who's emails are not on file or are incorrect. The second is in response to Chris Boone, the last line of the email instructs the member to change their email settings in RF Projector if they do not wish to receive emails from the database.

Matt Stennett

PayPal is now up and running on our web site.

Larry Essary

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Rusty Haddock - AE5AE
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Other News

Making the leap to Narrowband technology by Jay Urish

Recently in North Texas an issue arose where several Narrowband digital repeater systems lost their interim coordination. This caused a conundrum. The VHF spectrum in the metroplex is congested and the waiting list is lengthy. The idea was put forth to begin the process of converting several pairs to Narrowband 2.5kc max deviation channels. This process intrigued me as I am of the mindset that Amateur Radio should be leading the way in radio communications. I firmly believe hams should be efficient users of the spectrum they are allowed to use. With this in mind I decided to lead the way in North Texas for Narrowband conversion by converting my 145.230 repeater to Narrowband.

This change was really simple. My VHF system is composed of a Kenwood TKR-750 repeater. Moving to Narrowband was as simple as plugging in a programming cable, reading the repeater using the KPG-96 software and clicking on the radio button to move from 5khz deviation to 2.5khz and clicking on write to radio. Done! The hard part was setting the audio levels on the Arcom RC-210 repeater controller. With the help of Mike Chittenden, AE5IV, and his service monitor, I was able to have him generate a signal on the repeater input at the proper level, while I measured the levels with my DVM in the controller. Once the input level was set, I could watch the output on my service monitor and set the output level to be right at 2.5kc.

All the radios I use are narrowband ready, such as my Yaesu FT-60, ICOM IC-2820 and ICOM ID-92AD. 98 percent of my users also have newer equipment that is compliant. Results have been favorable with few complaints. Most users have no problem changing the mode for the channel they have 145.230 programmed in. The TKR-750 is pretty tolerant of wideband signals on the input and will usually pass them unless they are really wide, over 6.5kc or so. If somebody is running wide, usually they sound distorted and raspy on the output. They can sometimes still work the machine by just backing off the microphone or talking softer.

All in all, I would have to say the experiment has been a raging success! I am planning on staying narrow on VHF and would encourage all new repeater builders to go in that direction as well. If you are ever in Denton County, feel free to drop by and give it a try. 145.230 PL 110.9.

Jay Urish



Our annual repeater renewal process kicked off Thanksgiving Day and I am pleased to announce the following statistics as of December 1, 2011.

12/01/11 1728 Systems	Repeaters		Zone 1		Zone 2		Zone 3		Zone 4		Zone 5	
	#	%	578	33%	370	21%	103	6%	326	20%	353	20%
1240-1300 MHz	30	2%	17	3%	5	1%	0	0%	8	2%	0	0%
902-928 MHz	28	2%	7	1%	0	0%	1	1%	5	2%	15	4%
420-450 MHz	896	52%	279	48%	207	56%	40	39%	174	53%	196	56%
222-225MHz	104	6%	56	10%	23	6%	3	3%	14	4%	8	2%
144-148 MHz	622	36%	201	35%	123	33%	57	55%	116	36%	125	35%
50-54 MHz	44	3%	16	3%	10	3%	2	2%	9	3%	7	2%
29.6-29.7 MHz	4	0%	1	0%	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Renewed	534	31%	153	26%	113	31%	48	47%	121	37%	99	28%
Not renewed	1197	69%	425	74%	257	69%	55	53%	205	63%	254	72%

This year the renewal notices went to every member with an email address in the system, regardless of whether or not they are a repeater trustee. Our goal is to achieve 100 percent renewals this year so please spread the word Renewing your coordinations online is fast, easy and will help us with the accuracy of our data as we get ready to submit to the ARRL for the Repeater Directory in early 2012.

Heads up, Vested members. We have a significant number of repeater systems in our database that have not been renewed in a number of years. We are working hard to bring all systems into renewal compliance with the Standards.

Please see <http://txvhffm.org/documents/standards.pdf> for more information concerning the annual renewal of your coordinations. Following the electronic renewal cycle this year, we will be mailing those Trustees who did not renew online, a paper renewal form. Please do your part and respond to our call to action to renew your listing in order that we may better serve everyone.

In other news, we are looking at our Standards For Coordination and will be soliciting comment on a number of possible changes. Two items at the top of the list have to do with narrowband channels at the low end of the 2 meter repeater spectrum and spacing between systems. While our current 70 mile spacing between systems is adequate for heights up to 500 feet or so, I think everyone will agree that it is woefully short for systems that are located over 1100 feet and probably too long for systems at less than 100 feet. The good news is that we can easily adapt to varied spacing based on system height with RF Projector. We are also looking to implement Longley-Rice propagation modeling within the program to better predict actual coverage and potential interference between systems.

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Also don't forget that we have a proposal from the August 2011 meeting where digital narrow-band systems can be coordinated on 10khz splinter channels in between the regular repeater pairs on 2 meters. These systems would be spaced at least 50 miles from the regular pair systems and would not require consent from either neighbor. This proposal is pending a vested member poll and should be presented for a vote at the next summer meeting.

Our effort to import the FCC database on an automated and regular basis has been successful. This new tool allows us to use FCC data for Trustees and Member addresses and will Update as soon as you update the FCC. Data is downloaded from the FCC any time there is an Update, at five minute intervals as needed. The data is sanitized and imported to our database for Use by our Membership and Trustee tables. We are also working on an API for logging programs. You can follow our progress on this project by going to : <http://fcclookup.com>

Finally, you should be aware that since August 2011, the domain services and web hosting for the main Society web site have been taken over by Larry Essary. As a result, the entire frequency coordination team has adopted email addresses at rfprojector.com. The old mailing list for the newsletter notifications seems to not be migrating so we will implement a new list at rfprojector.com.

Please see <http://txvhffm.com/coordinators.shtml> for specific contact information.

73 de
NA6M