

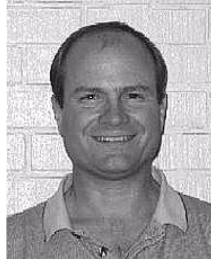
# TheGroundWire

April 1st 2003

Volume 2003, issue 4

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**Paul Dryer KD5IVP**

Field Day, Rescue Dogs, and Other Somehow Related Subjects.....

Field Day commeth! For me ARRL field day doesn't happen often enough. I've always had a fascination for remote operation and Field Day is the pinnacle event. There have been rumblings in the membership about Field Day becoming stale or too complicated and equipment intensive. Equipment intensive I can agree. Stale, well, I haven't been a ham long enough to hit that point, however, I don't understand the opinions. So, this year, I'm proposing some changes.

The club formed a Field Day Site Selection Committee a couple meetings ago. Several of us have been visiting various parks for the right combination of trees, shade, facilities, an accessibility. Armstrong Park in Duncanville is certainly not out of the running but we are looking at alternate sites. Like our general meeting restaurant, a change in Field Day sites might give us a 'shot in the arm', so to speak, in Field Day

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

participation. Once the committee makes a decision, it will pass it on to the general membership for approval.

To give Field Day a fresh face each year, I'm proposing 'theme' Field Days. This year, we might have a 'wire antenna only' day. Antennas may be launched into trees, over light poles, whatever we have handy. Random wires, inverted vee's, long wires, end fed dipoles, loops, anything goes as long as it's wire. In coming years, 'home-brew' Field Day. Fifty percent of the equipment used must be homemade. 'Artificial mast' day might be fun. We hoist our own push poles and military style masts. Battery day would be a possibility. Only battery power may be used. Trunk day could be fun. Each station can be no bigger than what would fit in a car trunk or back seat. The focus of Field Day is emergency communications and station setup. Personally, I would like to see our club become as nimble as possible in that area. Anyway, the possibilities are endless. Please pass along your ideas to the Field Day Committee or me via the website -mail.

I mentioned "nimble" as a descriptive of our club in the event of an emergency in the above paragraph. Reason is, having agreed to spearhead the Dallas County Bio-terrorism Communications plan as well as providing communications for a Dallas based K-9 rescue team, this club needs

the ability to effect reliable communications quickly, easily, and with great portability. Both bio-terrorism and missing persons events are very unpredictable. They are never central to one geographic area. Many clubs have emergency trailers and vans set up for managing catastrophic happenings. But what happens if the roads are closed or we can't find the members that can pull trailers in times of need? An idea might be to make use of the small hf/vhf/uhf radios available today and come up with a very portable and lightweight emergency station that can fit in the front seat of a car, or if needed, backpacked by two or three people. The military has done this for years. There's no reason why we can't continue to improve and perfect the idea. Field Day and our scheduled special events might just be the proving ground for such systems.

Many of you attended the February general meeting and meet Jerry Seevers and Max Kirk, presenters for MARK-9, a K-9 rescue team. Jerry and Max made a point that they need reliable communications and asked if our club was interested in helping. Having met with Jerry, Max and Fleta, Max's professional dog trainer wife, we hammered out their needs and

*(Continued on page 2)*

**April Membership Meeting Program: KCBIFM**

**2METER NCSS Schedule**

**April 2003**

**07-KJ5UY  
14-KC5MQC  
21-KB5TMD  
28-W5WB**

**May 2003**

**05-KB5TMD  
12-KC5MQC  
19-KC5CPO  
26-NoNet - Memorial Day**

(Continued from page 1)

ours. MARK -9 has three levels of certification in their ranks. Communications has a place in all three. Go to our club website to view the levels and what's required to certify.

We need club members to get involved and begin certification. It's fun! I attended a map and compass navigation course last Saturday that was both huge fun and very informative. A course of seven points was laid out in Moss park at the corner of Greenville and Royal. We had to navigate to all seven markers to become certified. Almost like a ratter hunt but with a compass instead. I got a chance to talk with several MARK -9 members who expressed an interest in amateur radio. This is a very good chance for our club to break new ground and provide a tremendous service to the community....and have a great time too! Get involved! MARK-9 will be forwarding training and meetings schedules soon for our website.

73,  
Paul

### The Call Has Gone Out...

Certainly, over the last two years, (i.e. at least since September the 11<sup>th</sup> 2001) amateur radio has undergone its test and I am proud to say that this is one hobby that has earned its "A". An "A" for being able to keep communications intact within the government as well as state, county and city up and running, an "A" for being there and working in the most dangerous and adverse conditions, an "A" for unselfishness and giving beyond the call of duty even when it might endanger the very life of the amateur radio operator. My hat is off to you gallant ladies and gentlemen. Now the call has gone out again for amateur radio operators on a countywide level to begin a new project of working with the Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services to make sure that bio-terrorism and or communicable disease doesn't affect our daily lives.

Several months ago I sat in on the Dallas County Bio Terrorism meeting, and I was amazed that with all the planning that had gone on within that meeting nothing was on the table as to what would happen "if" our communications infrastructure were to take a hit and go down. As I continued to sit in on these meetings, I was asked by one of the Commissioners as to what I thought would be a feasible plan to help undergird the community as well as be an aid to the County in an outbreak of bio-terrorism or communicable disease were to happen. The project that I put together for Dallas County is entitled, "The Community Communications Project". Aptly named for allowing the community itself to be a part and parcel of their own well being if one of these situations were to happen. Dallas County wanted a project in place that would strictly deal with these problem areas if they were to manifest themselves within our county and neighborhoods. While I was working on this plan for Dallas

County I became their liaison to the community for this project, I also needed the knowledge and wisdom of men and women who had been involved with this hobby longer than I have been. As the liaison on this project, I asked the Southwest Dallas County Amateur Radio Club, to help with this project of the Dallas County Health and Human Services, and they agreed to aid wherever they could in making sure that the Community Communications Project was a success.

Over the next few months, we will put together the basic infrastructure of this project; and I am also asking that all amateur radio operators not only in this club but all over Dallas County who want to be a part of this project come on board in helping to aid our community against any type of bio-terrorism assault and or communicable disease outbreak. If you would like to contact me, my email address is kd5oyc@sbcglobal.net or dccearo@netscape.net. You can also call me at 972-321-7460 (Pager) or at work 972-263-9911 ext.420.

I am looking forward to a good relationship within the amateur radio community on behalf of this project; and with your participation. A very special "thank you", goes out to the Southwest Dallas County Amateur Radio Club for being there and caring.

73's,

Aaron McCarthy (KD5OYC)  
SWDCARC/Dallas County Department of Health and Human Service Community Communications Liaison.

### Alinco Announces New Products

April, 2003

In order to compete with leading edge Amateur Radio manufactures such as Kenwood and Icom, Alinco has announced some new and interesting products. With approximately 32 million left handed people in America, the same ratio should apply to the Ham Radio population. With that in mind, the amateur radio manufacturer has announced a new left-handed microphone for each of their current models being sold today. "If this is accepted with the expected enthusiasm, Alinco plans to release their next model radios with a left hand or right hand faceplate option" says an Alinco spokesman.

Ask your local Alinco dealer for details.

## An Ignition Noise Primer

By Danny Cromaz W5WB

A lot of you know that I have been experiencing extreme ignition noise while using my HF mobile rig in my truck. I have mumbled about it on more than one occasion to anyone who will listen, either on our repeater or in person. I would imagine that most of you would like to fix my problem, but for no other reason than to shut me up! Well, there are new developments to it and I am happy to tell you that it is now vastly improved. It is my intention to pass on to anyone who wishes to operate HF in a mobile my experiences in the hope that they don't fall victim of the same things I have. This also ends up being quite an entertaining story also so bear with me as I set the stage.

I have operated HF mobile before. I would like to think that I have some of the knowledge necessary to do so. Forgetting my first mobile rig (a CB radio), my first Ham mobile rig was a two-meter FM radio. No problem there as FM is mostly immune to ignition noise. All you have to worry about usually is alternator whine getting into transmit or receive. My first HF rig was a converted CB SSB radio that put out a whopping two and a half watts on ten meters. This was back in the early 80's and it was during the peak of a sunspot cycle and that two and a half watts did very well. My antenna was a helical whip that was also a converted eleven-meter antenna called a "Firestick". All I had to do was remove some of the wound wire until the SWR came down. All of my mobile installations always consisted of large gauge wire straight to the vehicle battery for the power connections.

My first real HF mobile radio was a Kenwood TS-50 that I won at HamCom years ago. (No, I'm not rubbing it in!) I learned the need to route the DC wire from the battery away from the vehicle computer, as it was a noisy one, especially on twenty meters. Twisting the power leads also helped quiet any RF noise. My antenna(s) were the Hamstick variety so a tuner was not necessary but in order to change bands, I had to change Hamsticks. Having a pickup allowed me to carry more than one so I always had a 40, 20, 15 and 10 meter Hamstick to choose from in the back bed of the truck. The installation was in a 1995 Chevrolet full size pickup and ignition noise was not a problem from the 350V8 engine.

I traded for a 1999 Chevy truck and that installation was basically just my Kenwood TM-733 dual band mobile radio as I had sold my TS-50. I then traded for my present 2001 Chevy pickup and easily took the dual band FM rig and installed the radio in it without a problem as the trucks had not changed much over the years.

That's the good news.....

Last HamCom, I had the vision of getting back into HF mobile and really wanted an Icom 706 but being so tight with my money that I squeak, I was hoping to win one. Well, I wasn't that fortunate as it turns out. While going through the flea

market, there was Radio Shack selling refurbished (or returned) Alinco DX-70T's for under \$300. I passed by that at least three times before I couldn't stand it any more and went back and bought one. At that time, there were only a few left. I then started shopping for some kind of HF antenna to put on the truck. I really wanted a screwdriver antenna (one that can be tuned to any frequency from inside the vehicle while going down the road) but they cost more than the radio that I had just bought! (Insert squeaking sound here) Radio Shack also had the companion auto tuner for \$169 so after five or six club members chanting "buy it... buy it... buy it!" behind me as I stood at the table, I succumbed. My idea was to use the tuner with a steel whip and I would be set. Before I got out of the flea market, I also bought a 10-meter mag mount antenna (because it was there!) for good measure. I installed the DX-70 and connected the 10-meter mag mount and made a few contacts. It was here where I found out why the radio was so cheap. It has an internal switch that sets the output power to either 50 or 100 watts. It was set to 50 for some strange reason. Changing it to 100 watts yielded bad audio reports on ten meters. I thought it might be my cheap 10-meter antenna so I reset the radio to 50 watts and was happy for the time being. The only problem was a "little" ignition noise and I was limited to 10 meters and the band wasn't always open.



Enter my auto tuner and 10 2 inch steel whip. I set the auto tuner next to the radio under the back seat with the remote head on my console. Since the auto tuner was a long wire tuner, any wire after the tuner became part of the antenna that it tuned. ( **clue #1, remember this!** )

I used coax from the tuner to the whip that I had kept from other installations, just using the center conductor. Wow, there sure was a lot of ignition noise but the noise blocker brought it down to a roar. The audio was fuzzy sounding but usable on the stronger signals and I made some contacts on twenty meters and was "sort of" happy. Ten meters was unusable because of the ignition noise. I

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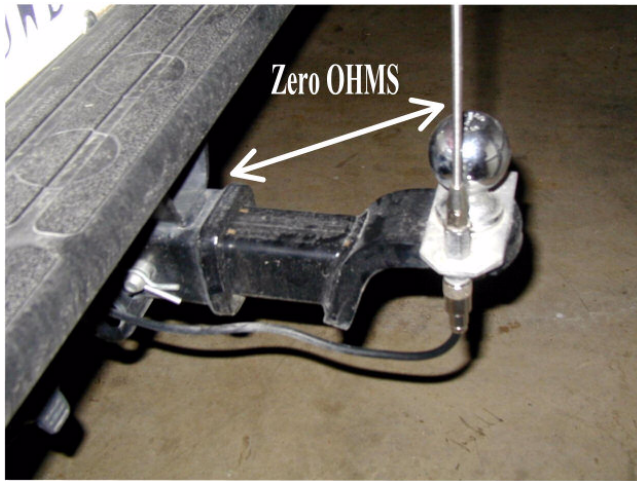
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thought I would tackle the ignition noise by researching the various books I had and material on the Internet. There was some improvement if I grounded the shield of the coaxing to the antenna at both ends but it also dropped my receive signals a little but anything to knock down that ignition noise!

I made a few contacts over the next few weeks and when I did have a QSO, I got good reports. One of them was Japan on the way to the golf course one morning on twenty meters! I also made contact last September with the special event station for the Twin Towers in New York a week or two later, also with no problem. With new resolve, I decided to improve the situation once more. Using an AM transistor radio, I found the ignition noise was coming from the engine (surprise!) and I was stumped on what to do about the modern single coil for each spark plug that the truck had. No luck there. Toroids on the DC cable didn't help either. If you disconnect the antenna from the radio, there was no ignition noise so I didn't expect the toroid to help but I was desperate.

Time passes on with only my occasional complaints on the repeater about the ignition noise to remind everyone of my problem.

You know how it goes... You just about give up when you wake up at 2am in the morning with an idea. I did have an idea one morning and the next weekend, I sprung into action. I grabbed my ohmmeter and measured the resistance between the whip antenna and the frame of the truck. There should NOT be continuity between those two points because the whip mount is insulated from the antenna.



Guess what... **zero ohms**! (A Short!) Now how could that be? The insulator looked good at the mount so I disconnected the plug from it. Now it's an open circuit! Then I remembered back to when I installed the antenna and I grabbed the coax and connector out of a box to save the time of putting on a connector on one end. (**Clue #2**) Taking the connector apart revealed the short. I put on a new connector and fired everything up. Inow have stronger si

nal that overcome my now moderate ignition noise! So what does this all mean? Since I had a tuner, (Clue #1) it was still getting a reasonable match of the shorted antenna that in reality ended up being the whole truck! If I had not been using a tuner, I would not have received much of anything and would have more than likely messed around until I found the shorted connector. I bet you didn't know that a Chevrolet Silverado extended cab pickup could be resonant on twenty meters! The tuned antenna that I was using was surrounding the ignition noise! No wonder! Those of you that have similar issues on ignition noise with your mobile installations may certainly not have the same reason that I had. The lesson to be learned here is to keep trying, use every basic troubleshooting techniques and do not just simply accept that you have tried everything. See you on 40 meters! (or 20 meters, or 15 meters or 10 meters or ..... ) 73! Danny Cromaz W5WB

### March 18, 2003 General Membership Meeting

President, Paul Dryer at 6:35 pm on March 18, 2003, called the General Membership meeting of the SWDCARC to order. There were 31 members present and one guest, Bob McPartland (Bernie's Dad). The previous minutes were approved as posted in the Groundwire with no corrections. Treasurer, Johnny Roberson reported the treasury balance and listed bills which had been paid including the 5 year expense for the club's domain name.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS: Repeaters** - Johnny Roberson called on Danny Cromaz who reported that the repeater had been updated to announce "Club Meeting Tonight 6:30 PM".

**VE Testing** - Paul Dryer announced that no tests were held since Adam's wife had been in the hospital. **Net Reports** - Todd Houvinen reported 12 check-ins on the Monday night 2m net. Bernie McPartland reported that the CW net was moved to 80m on Monday and that future CW nets would be held at 3.527 Mhz immediately following the 2m net.

**Membership** - Rick Ellis reported that the Board of Directors had approved 3 new memberships; they are James Kinnard, Will Turk and Terry Johnson. Johnny Roberson announced the renewal of memberships by Wayne Shier, Adam Adkins, and Cecil Keltner. Paul Dryer suggested that new memberships should be announced on the Monday night nets. Danny Cromaz reported that he is working on a new membership roster with listing by name and by call sign. Paul Dryer requested that we all participate in the club outreach and contact members who we have not heard from or seen. **Special Events** - Rick Ellis reported that the Easter Egg/Fox Hunt will be held at the Lake Ridge Park in Cedar Hill from 4:00 PM to 7:00 pm on April 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be a pot luck dinner so bring what you can, it does not appear that there will be facilities to provide electricity to heat any food. The **Lancaster Library**

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**Special Event** will be May 24<sup>th</sup> (Memorial Day Weekend) this will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary for the library. Valle Toski has contacted the special events department of QST and used the club call W5AUY for publicity. The **Chili Cook-off** is scheduled for September 27, 2003 with no additional details at this time. **Field Day** Committee -Paul Dryer announced that Bernie McPartland had volunteered to be the chairman for the 2003 Field Day. The committee consisting of Bernie McPartland, Paul Dryer, Floyd Rogers, Russ Thompson, and Danny Cromaz visited several sites to check the suitability for a different location of the Field Day event. Some sights include Mt Lebanon, Crawford Park in Cedar Hill, Zider Park in Desoto, and a pavilion in Lancaster. Mt. Lebanon wants \$100.00 plus \$3.00 per head to use the facility. The committee has not made the final decision. **Web-**

**site**-Danny Cromaz advised that the website was up and running and any suggestions are appreciated. Danny recognized that a request for additional Links had been submitted but he felt it only appropriate that permission to link to various sites be approved by that site in advance. **Special Interest Groups**- Paul Dryer requested that all members check out the web site and to email the chairperson to announce your interest so that the chairman will know that you are interested. Paul Dryer walks most evenings between 8:30 and 9:00pm and carries his HT with him and would enjoy talking to someone out at the same time. It is that simple to participate in the "pedestrian portable fitness group".

**OLD BUSINESS:** Paul Dryer re-read the letter asking for club participation in the Dallas County Bio-Terrorism and also read the club reply letter. A vote was taken and the motion passed and the club will seek information regarding future commitments. The club also voted on helping with the Mark 9 group and that motion also passed. Paul Dryer will forward the Mark 9 letter to Danny Cromaz who will post it to the web site listing the various levels of involvement. One key requirement of your commitment to Mark 9 is that when the phonerings you must be ready to go.

**NEW BUSINESS:** The 2003 Repeater Committee is Paul Dryer, Johnny Roberson, Danny Cromaz, Rick Ellis, and Neal Palmquist. The 2003 Materials Committee -Adam Adkins, Danny Cromaz, and Mitch Dees. The 2003 Special Events Committee -Rebecca Ellis, Dave Tucker, Donna Dees, and Russ Thompson co-chairpersons. The Program was presented by Dave Tucker, Paul Dryer, Stan Harmon and Floyd Rogers which included a video presentation of items seen and collected during the Columbia Shuttle recovery effort in Nacogdoches County. Special thanks to Dave Tucker for the audio/visual equipment provided to the club for the program. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm Respectfully submitted by Danny Cromaz -W5WB-Secretary

### March 4th, 2003 Board of Directors Meeting

President Paul Dryer called the meeting to order at 6:40pm. All Board members were in attendance. Guests attending were Donna Dees, Rebecca Ellis, Neal Palmquist, Dean Phillips and Ted Black. **Committee Reports:** The Financial

report was approved as read. The two meter repeater now has the announcement for club meeting days back in operation. There was no VE testing last month and none so far for this month. There were 12 checkins and 5 announcements in the last two meter net and one checkin for the slow speed CW net on ten meters. **Membership:** New members approved were Will Turk N5TLH, Terry Johnson KB5NSL and James Kinnedred KC5KTZ. Welcome!

**New Business:** A proposal was brought up to have a club member in charge to welcome guests to the meetings. It was agreed that we all should try to do that. **Special Events:** Time and place was announced for the combination Easter Egg Hunt and Fox Hunt as April 12th between 4 and 7 pm. Pot Luck dinner also to be held after the hunts. The location will be announced via the two meter Nets, Web Page and broadcast email. On May 24th, we will have a HF Special Events Station at the Lancaster veterans Memorial Library. September 27th is set for a Chili Cook Off again this year.

**Old Business:** We will be voting on the Dallas County Bio-Terrorism letter at the next general meeting. The Field Day Committee is still looking at optional sites and will meet again on March 15th. Check the web site for a list of Special Interest Groups that have been formed. Standing Committees were formed for 2003. The Repeater Committee is Paul Dryer, Johnny Roberson, Danny Cromaz, Rick Ellis and Neal Palmquist. The material committee is Adam Adkins, Danny Cromaz and Mitch Dees. The Special Events Committee is Rebecca Ellis, Dave Tucker, Donna Dees and Russ Thompson. The program for the general membership meeting will be about the Shuttle Recovery Efforts in East Texas presented by various Club members. Arrangements have been made for the restaurant to have a all you can eat buffet during general membership meeting nights. Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm. Respectfully submitted by Danny Cromaz -W5WB-Secretary

### BOARD MEETINGS

First Tuesday 6:30PM

Lunay Sol Restaurant

1615 N. Hampton

DeSoto

### MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Third Tuesday 6:30PM

**Buffet @ 5:30PM**

Lunay Sol Restaurant

1615 N. Hampton

DeSoto