

Southwest Dallas County Amateur Radio Club

The Groundwire

Volume 2004 Issue 2

February 2004

Hot Topics

2004 DUES ARE DUE !

\$25 FOR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

\$10 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBER

Dues can be mailed to:

SWDCARC
P.O. BOX 381023
Duncanville, Texas
75138-1023

THE PROGRAM FOR THE NEXT MEETING IS SHORT-WAVE LISTENING by N5KXA and KB5TMD

W5MBO Antenna Party

Saturday Feb 21st

Email Rick Ellis if you are able to help

Inside this issue:

GETTING THE WORD	2
HAPPENINGS	3
MEETING MINUTES	4-5

NCS SCHEDULE

February 2004

02-KB5TMD

09-KC5MQC

16-W5WB

23-KJ5UY

March 2004

01-KB5TMD

08-KC5MQC

15-W5W5B

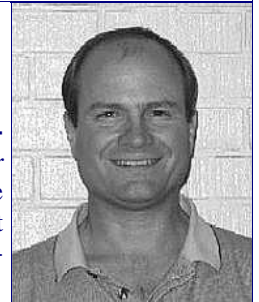
22-KJ5UY

29- TBD

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

CHANGE and AMATEUR RADIO

From the ARRL web site: **League Files "A Plan for the Next Decade" with FCC** (Jan 28, 2004) -- The ARRL has filed a *Petition for Rule Making* asking the FCC to amend its Part 97 rules to complete the Amateur Service restructuring the Commission began in 1999 but left unfinished. The League wants the FCC to create a new entry-level license, reduce the number of actual license classes to three and drop the Morse code testing requirement for all classes except for Amateur Extra....." then "The ARRL said that plan's overall intention is "to encourage newcomers to the Amateur Service and to encourage those who enter its ranks to proceed further on a course of technical self-training and exposure to all aspects of the avocation."



Paul Dryer KD5IVP

Greetings, SWDCARC members! By now most of you, and other Amateurs across the country have either read, or heard about the above proposal by the ARRL to the FCC. I encourage you to read the entire article on the ARRL web site. When I first read it, I was shocked and a tad angered. I know I'm not alone. After a couple weeks cooling off, I began forming opinions, mine only, a few of which I'll share.

I suppose times have changed. Technology has advanced at an epic scale in our lifetimes, eclipsing itself every couple of years. Over the decades, Amateur radio has gone from sparks, vacuum tubes, and continuous wave operation, to now, digital microwave and voice-over Internet. It's now possible to chat with a ham in Sidney Australia, with a 2 watt HT, using modes such as Echolink and the Internet Radio Linking Project. Changing the licensing and privilege structure seems only reasonable with the technological changes that continue to occur. Two things, however, have not changed. The first would be RF energy. It hasn't changed one bit and every single communications mode we use as hams require the radiation of 'locked in physics' radio frequency energy. It is what our licenses, fundamentally, allow us to emit. The second is human nature. We humans, like the lowly electron, will take the path of least resistance to a goal, if given the opportunity. When the ARRL uses the phrase "to encourage newcomers to the Amateur Service" as an intention of their plan, I take great issue with that statement. In fact, it strikes me hypocritical and paradoxical. Folks, Amateur Radio is not for everyone, and it's certainly not dying. No one asked me to become a ham. I wanted to! I was willing to jump through whatever hoops the FCC had to become one. Most hams I know had or have that desire. Since becoming a ham almost five years ago, and being a volunteer examiner, I've witnessed a steady "dumbing down" of what it takes to become a licensed operator. Yes, it's much easier to become a ham, even now, than when I first began. The question then becomes, "are we working to improve the radio art"? I don't think so. Does the licensing process produce a trained radio operator? Nope, not in my observation. With test pools and correct answers available from several sources, it is very possible, if not probable, that a person walk out of a testing session with a new ticket, and have absolutely no idea how radio works or the operation thereof. Element 1 of the exam, the Morse Code portion, is all that's left that

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

must be learned as a skill, and that skill is required to operate the most fundamental of radios. I won't get into the code/no code requirement.

I believe the ARRL jumped the gun on this one and is choosing a direction contrary to the betterment of the art. If there was a petition or polling of the dues paying members of our radio lobby, I never saw it. I do know that this petition's filing doesn't reflect the desires of those I've casually polled. In fact, I'm finding a new fire lit under those still needing Element 1 to learn code and pass the exam before the FCC drops the requirement. Thinking through the commercial, governmental, and personal beneficiaries of such a petition, I'm beginning to wonder who the ARRL is representing. I won't stop paying my dues. The organization as a whole is one of the best on the planet. I do, however, pray they reconsider their purpose and intent, and get back on track of improving and preserving the radio art. Please voice your opinion via email to www.arrl.org, pro or con. Be involved. We pay the ARRL to represent us!

Happy Hamming & 73,

Paul Dryer, President

GETTING THE WORD OUT



Last summer Ben Delatour Scout Ranch in northern Colorado offered classes for the amateur radio and shortwave listener portions of the Radio Merit Badge for the first time. I would like to say that it was a great experience for all concerned but for a wide variety of reasons, it wasn't.

I learned about this "project" just a few weeks before camp began when one of the troop leaders emailed questions to my friend, KØPF. I had no idea what to expect since advance registration was not required. I prepared material for 80 students, about 10 each week of the camping season. I was flabbergasted when 72 Scouts showed up for the first of two scheduled class periods during Week 1. I soon discovered that most of them were clueless about the requirements of the badge – they weren't called, they were sent. The seven-page workbook dealing with the technical portion of the requirements reduced the class by 50% on the second evening.

The experiment was not a total failure, however; about 350 Scouts attended the classes and 49 completed the workbook, made the required radio contacts and earned the Radio Merit Badge.

We are trying a new experiment this year. We scheduled a week-long Radio Merit Badge class during the last week of camp – this will run concurrently with other specialty camps for rifle & shotgun shooting, rock climbing, archery, etc. The Scouts will spend the week studying the theory, building simple electronics kits, making radio contacts, hunting hidden transmitters, participating in simulated emergency situations and other activities to make them aware of amateur radio. Adults can't earn merit badges but I have permission to include adults in the training, too. If there is any interest I hope to expand the course of instruction to prepare the students for the Technician class license and then recruit volunteer examiners to administer the exam on the last day of camp.

Do any of you have experience in this type of venture? If you do, I'd like to hear what works and what doesn't. Please call me on the repeater or email me at: wb0tsx@arrl.net

Thanks and 73 de WBØTSX, Ted Black.



HAPPENINGS

Texas Severe Storms Association

You are cordially invited to attend the Texas Severe Storms Association (TESSA) 8th National Meeting and Texas Storm Conference (TSC) on Feb. 21, 2004. The day-long event takes place at the Granville Arts Center in downtown Garland, Texas.

TSC is collaboration between TESSA and the National Weather Service (NWS). NWS will present information on severe weather safety and storm spotter training in the Main Theatre starting at 8:30 AM and ending at 1:30 PM.

TESSA will deliver presentations on mobile weather data technology, storm chasing, severe weather outlook forecasting, and Doppler radar meteorology in The Atrium beginning at 2:30 PM and ending at 7:00 PM.

The TESSA presenters and presentations include:

Don W. Burgess, CIMMS/National Severe Storms Laboratory

“Past, Present, and Future Relationship Between Doppler Radar and Observations of and Warnings for Severe Thunderstorms and Tornadoes”

Roger Edwards, Storm Prediction Center

“SPC Probability Outlooks - Storm Intercept Forecasting for the Southern and Central Plains”

Martin Lisius, TESSA

“Mobile Weather Information Technology and its Value to Storm Spotters and Chasers”

Tim Marshall, Stormtrack

“2003 Chase Cases”

This event is ideal for storm chasers, storm spotters, emergency management personnel, weather professionals, educators, and students. It is free and open to the public. Seating is limited to 500. We hope that you and members of your organization will be in attendance. More details can be found on-line at <http://www.tessa.org/meeting.html>

Martin Lisius Chairman TESSA

SKYWARN SCHOOL

Good evening everyone. As most of you are aware, The Ellis County Skywarn School is scheduled for Wednesday, March 24th, 7:00pm at the Waxahachie High School Fine Arts Center. This will be the 2-hour **basic** refresher course. I'm sure I'll see most of you there!

Several of us will be attending the 4-hour basic and advanced class held on Saturday, January 31st, 8:30am at the North Richland Hills High School Auditorium. We will meet in Midlothian for breakfast around 7:00am then around 7:30 we will carpool it to the class. If you are interested in joining us, drop me an email. The more the merrier! If you can't make it for this 4-hour session, there are several more opportunities in the upcoming months. The 2-hour advanced portion of the class is well worth the time.

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd/sptrscho.html>

HamFest 2004

Saturday – March 13, 2004 - 8am - 2pm

Location: Betcha Bingo Hall, 2420 W. Irving Blvd. #125, Irving, TX 75061

Directions: State Hwy. 183 E/W @ Story Rd. exit - south to Irving Blvd - cross intersection southbound. Right behind Eckerd's Drugstore.

Talk-In Freq: 146.72/12 (110.9)

Advanced Admission Donation- \$3.00

At the Door -\$4.00

Advanced Table Donation - \$8.00

At the Door - \$10.00 !!! Inside only- No Tailgating !!!

ARRL Sponsored VE Testing

Door Prizes Lots of fun

For more information, contact: www.irvingarc.org/hamfest.html

Coleta Taylor - kd5qfh@arrl.net or Bill Caldwell – ac5bc@arrl.net

Irving Amateur Radio Club, Inc

PO Box 153333

Irving, TX 75015-3333

MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

The February 3rd 2004 Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm at the #1 Asian Buffet in Duncanville. Due to the excused absences of the President (Paul Dryer) and Vice President (Bernie McPartland), this meeting was conducted by the Club Secretary, Danny Cromaz. Those Board Members also in attendance were Rick Ellis, Richard Baker, Todd Huovinen and Johnny Roberson. Guests in attendance were Rebecca Ellis, Jessica Huovinen, Teresa Rodgers, Floyd Rodgers, Neal Palmquist and Ted Black.

The previous board minutes were approved as printed in the previous Groundwire. The financial report was approved as read by Club Treasurer, Johnny Roberson.

Committee Reports:

Repeater: The backup controller has not returned from repair.

VE Testing: There were no tests given last month. We do not have any requests at this time but that could change.

Nets: The two meter net had 15 check ins last night. There was no slow speed CW net following.

Membership: There were no new membership applications received. At present, we have received 34 renewals for 2004. It was decided to replace the membership list on the web page on March 1st with the new paid up membership roster.

County Bio-Terrorism: Nothing new to report.

Website: Other than the new membership roster, there are plans to put more updated information about meetings and special Events on the first page rather than links to other pages in the site.

Special Interest Groups: The **Fox Hunt** was not held last Saturday due to lack of participation. No new Fox Hunts are planned until later in the year except for the next planned special event. An **Easter Egg Hunt/Fox Hunt/Pot Luck Picnic** is planned for Saturday March the 27th at 3 PM. This is the second annual Easter Egg/Fox hunt so plan to attend. Bring the kids and grandkids! The location will be at Valley Ridge Park in Cedar Hill, the site of our last Field Day.

Old Business:

2004 Officer Nominations were made at the last Club meeting and no new nominations were received from the floor on meeting night. The election will be final at the next Club meeting on February 17th to be held at the Windsor Park Baptist Church. Bring your own food as we have done in prior meetings.

Rick Ellis presented his observations and thoughts on W5MBO's antenna situation. Ben Woodall needs the Clubs assistance to repair his Quad antenna. Rick presented pictures and discussion was held of what we could do to help. He has scheduled Saturday, February the 21st at 9 AM for taking down the antenna and Rick is looking for volunteers to help. We may have to schedule another time once we get the antenna on the ground if we have to get additional parts to finish. Send Rick an email if you can assist that Saturday. Use his email address from the Club Web page.

An audit of the books is in order as the records are being turned over to the new Board. Ted Black volunteered to perform the audit to coincide with the change in Officers. It will also be necessary to have the new Treasurer sign a bank signature card.

New Business: A letter was read from the Central Texas Storm Spotters that was addressed to the SWDCARC. It basically wants to see if there is any interest in a statewide link of storm spotters. The Board made no recommendation at this time.

Danny Cromaz opened a discussion on ways to better provide the Newsletter and still meet the Bylaws requirements that we have to get the Club business (minutes, Treasures Report, etc.) to the membership in a cost effective and timely manner. There was discussion that there could be a bare bones newsletter with club business that would take minimal editing and send it out each month and leave the more elaborate newsletter with articles and pictures to be on the web site. This would mostly affect those that have their newsletter sent to them via postal service. At present, there are 9 members that are on the list to be mailed. It has been a problem in the past to gather articles and pictures and still get the newsletter assembled in time to distribute it in ample time before the next meeting. Johnny Roberson volunteered to put the abbreviated minutes and treasurer's report together for distribution via email and also postal mail for the few that require that. Johnny's offer was noted and was tabled for the new Board of Directors to decide on at the next Board Meeting.

Club Program: Short wave listening by Richard Baker and Todd Huovinen.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Danny Cromaz W5WB, Club Secretary

JANUARY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The January 2004 General Membership Meeting was called to order by President, Paul Dryer. Ben Ellis N5TXN was the intro-

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

duced as a guest.

The minutes were approved as read. Johnny Roberson reported a small error in reporting the treasurer report. The club actually had an additional \$26.00 that was found after the bank reconciliation. It will be corrected on next month's report. Also dues are due.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Repeaters-Rick Ellis reported that the 2-meter occasionally hangs up and no squelch tail. Danny Cromaz reminded everyone that the club is currently using the backup controller while the other is being repaired.

VE Testing-no session

Net Reports-Danny Cromaz had 17 checks INS on Monday's 2 meter net.

Membership-No new members

County Bio-Terrorism-Nothing new to report except Aaron got a new call-WD5AKM

Special Events-Rebecca Ellis said no event planned for February but there will be an Easter Egg Hunt in April.

Website-Danny Cromaz reported the Calendar of Events would be changed when he updates the paid membership. Wayne Shier advised the count down to Field Day don't match on all pages and Danny will look into correcting.

Special Interest Groups- The next Fox Hunt will be Saturday, January 31st at Harrington Park at 10AM.

OLD BUSINESS:

Nominating Committee- Chairman Don Hickey reported that the proposed slate of candidates for 2004 are: President-Paul Dryer; Vice-President-Rick Ellis; Secretary-Theresa Rogers; Treasurer-Neal Palmquist; Directors-Dave Tucker and Bernie McPartland. Danny Cromaz reminded everyone that one directorship will be for 3 years and one directorship will be for 2 years. The 2-year is to replace Rick Ellis who is running for VP. Russ Thompson made a motion that the nominations be closed, Floyd Rogers 2nd and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Help with Ben Woodall W5MBO-Needs help with his equipment, he has a Quad in the yard that needs repair. Rick Ellis will go by and survey the premises and advise to the membership what needs to be done.

Windsor Park Church will host the Team Impact special event and requests volunteers to help January 21-25. Hours needed are 5:30-9pm, bring your HT. Meet in the main foyer on the east side of the building. Wear your nametag and SWDCARC shirt. Team Impact shirts are available for \$8.00.

Program: Home Brew Night! The following members brought their home brew projects for a show & tell night:

Paul Dryer-2oz Yagi Ultralite antenna used in backpacking & fox hunting (plans available)

Wayne Shier-Portable operating station with antenna on top using a banana plug

Danny Cromaz-Yagi arrow antenna used in fox hunting \$25.00 and a PSK 31 interface.

Ted Black-PSK 31 without cover box made from QST plans.

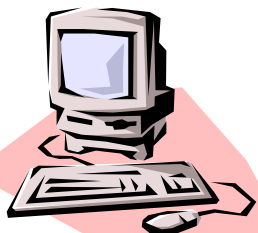
Rick Ellis-2m Yagi made from carpenters tape-flexible (plans available). 2 meter Yagi put together in 30 minutes including time to find the parts made from heavy gauge copper wire. A power supply, which is used with his packet station currently. Fox controller that was designed by Richard Baker.

Richard Baker-explained a smoke alarm/dial paging system/voice recorder/led array panel system he designed for work using the basic stamp for the smoke/weather alarm and emergency warning system. Very impressive Richard!

Floyd Rogers-Demonstrated a battery voltage alarm complete with leds and an EMWIN 1200 baud De Modulator Kit weather alert. Assembled in a Saturday class with the Garland ARC instructions are available on WD4BIS website.

Russ Thompson-talked about his computer generated A-tone decoder.

The motion to adjourn was made by Rick Ellis and 2nd by Danny Cromaz. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM.



486 - The average IQ needed to understand a PC. **State-of-the-art** - Any computer you can't afford. **Obsolete** - Any computer you own. **Microsecond** - The time it takes for your state-of-the-art computer to become obsolete. **Syntax Error** - Walking into a computer store and saying, "Hi, I want to buy a computer and money is no object." **Hard Drive** - The sales technique employed by computer salesmen, especially after a Syntax Error.