

the 60's, 70's, and 80's. The format change was necessary due to recent bankruptcy action taken by the program provider, ABC.

Noting that this format move has highlighted the fact that none of us are getting any younger, he pointed out that HAM operators are aging as well.

Ray announced that he wants to lend the club a hand in recruiting new blood. He pointed out how important and effective this club is in local emergencies, helping the broadcast stations receive timely information to pass on to the public. And how the club can get communications going in places where there is none or where other communications networks have failed.

Ray then made a very generous and affordable offer for advertising time on the broadcast stations, for the club to use as a recruiting tool.

He concluded by pointing out that KVLV, KALP and the BBARC have a history of working together and that KVLV and KALP want to help us add new members.

TRIBUTE TO BOB AYER

Then Bill Roberts provided a Tribute to, and some historical background on Bob Ayer, KA1AAJ.

Bill began by relating that Bob's father was a HAM and a very competent electronics technician. His father taught him well and by the time Bob graduated high school, he was working for an electrician and learning the trade very quickly. Eventually Bob became the head electrician for a major paper company in the North East. Later he became a head electrician for a rail road company working on diesel-electric locomotives. As time went on he also picked up a contract with Sears as a service and repair technician.

After Bob married Claire, he entered into the boat building and repair trade. He built his own sail boat and he and Claire took a 2 ½ year cruise up and down the east coast, into the Gulf of Mexico, and into the Caribbean's.

Then Bob and Claire went back to Maine and bought a marine electronics business. They expanded the business, building and repairing boats, installing and repairing marine electronics systems, radars & sonars, communications systems, and electrical systems.

Claire worked as a teacher and a CPA, and handled the books for the business.

As time went on, Claire began to experience the early symptoms of Alzheimer's. Bob decided to sell the business, and knowing that whether he was in business or not, if he stayed in the area he would still be getting phone calls from his customers. So he decided that he and Claire would pull up stakes and do some traveling across the country. With their travel trailer in tow, they went from place to place, spending as much time as they cared at each stop, then moving on.

When they reached Corpus Christie, they stayed for 2 weeks. With the thought of going to California, they continued west. They stayed in Del Rio for several days, then 3 days in Sanderson, and then they spent about a week in Big Bend National Park. Bob said that when he left Big Bend and headed for Alpine, so many people waved at him he finally pulled over

to check the tires on his car and trailer. When they pulled into Alpine he turned to Claire and said "I think this is it!"

They had been headed to California, settled in Alpine, went to Carlsbad Caverns when Claire's daughter Wendy and their friend Bonnie came for a visit, and we think that's as close to California as they got. Bob and Claire fell in love with Alpine and the people here that got to know them, fell in love with them.

Claire's condition never stabilized, but for the first 2 to 3 years they were in Alpine, they were able to tour the countryside, Big Bend, Terlingua, Lajitas, and spent a lot of time rock hunting at the Woodward Ranch, and became good friends of the Woodward's.

Eventually, Claire's condition deteriorated to the point that they could no longer venture away from home.

Bill said he became acquainted with Bob soon after Bob joined the club, and really got to know him while they remodeled the club RV. It seemed like Bob needed someone to have conversations with. "Of course conversations with Bob, a lot of times, were where you did a lot of listening and he did a lot of talking. And then there was a language barrier, he didn't speak Texan and I didn't speak Yankee. But somehow, we got along pretty well."

Claire's condition continued to decline, and then Bob began to suffer some health issues. At first it was diagnosed as stress, diet, and exhaustion. Just before Christmas he entered the hospital in Alpine and they suspected it was cancer. After the holidays he entered the Odessa hospital and they confirmed the cancer diagnosis. In less than a month from the first diagnosis, Bob passed away.

"Alpine lost a good friend, the HAMs lost a good friend, and I certainly lost a good friend when that happened."

At that point, we took a moment of silent pause to remember Bob. May God bless his memory, may God bless Claire, and may God Bless his family.

K5RF (SK)

Brooks announced another former BBARC member had also past this month. Bob Florstedt, K5RF became SK on January 16. Born Jan. 14, 1918, Bob was 92. He served in the Army from 1942-1945. He lived in Alpine from 1986 through 2004. He was treasurer for the Alpine Ministerial Alliance for 15 years and he and his wife Kaaren opened the Big Bend Thrift Store in 1995. Bob suffered from Parkinson's and past in Cibolo, TX. under the care of hospice at home. His ashes were interred at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio.

HAM OF THE YEAR

Out-going President, Rob Kinucan announced his selection of 'Ham of the Year' for 2009. In his comments, Rob pointed out his selection was someone who put a lot of effort into the club. The things they do aren't always noticed but they are so important to make things go well. He produces the Newsletter, he works on the repeaters, he helps on the logistics for all of the events, deploying the RV, making sure the tower trailer tires