

President

Terry Allison, K5TDA

Vice President

Jim Fowler, KD5KBU

**Secretary**

Bill Baker, W5ATO

Treasurer

Angie Otoupal, N5MVV

Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, AD5BB

July, 2010

Alpine, Texas

MEETING MINUTES, JULY '10

July 13, 2010

The meeting was attended by 12 people. There was much discussion about the treasury report. After Field Day, July 4th Hamburgers, equipment sales of the KA1AAJ(SK) estate, and maintenance expenses for the club's communication RV, there is a lot of income and paid outs that are still in flux.

Issues concerning a winch on the club's antenna tower trailer, tires for the tower trailer and communications RV and a wireless computer network for next year's Field Day operation were presented. No actions were taken, but cost estimates for these projects will be presented in the future.

The Big Bend Balloon Bash will be held September 4-6 and volunteers for those mornings, and the Sunday evening Balloon Concert are needed. Sign up at the August 10 meeting or contact Bob Ward at wa5roe@juno.com, or at True Value in Alpine at 432-837-2061.

FIELD DAY 2010

This year's Field Day, as so many others, was a great success and a lot of fun. Mike, NW5M brought a brand new antenna tower trailer for the sideband station. It is a 55 foot tall tower mounted on a trailer and is on commercial steroids. The trailer has on board out-rigger legs complete with trailer jacks on each leg for leveling. It has an on board generator, hydraulic tilt and elevation winches, air-conditioned radio-repeater rack cabinet... It was featured in the May, 2010 newsletter. It is the property of Jeff Davis County and used for mobile emergency communications for their fire and law enforcement needs, as well as serving the local public activities with communications needs. To insure its readiness and to maintain operational familiarity, Field Day is a perfect exercise to test its performance.

The food was great with Bob, WA5ROE, and Norm, WA5SVS, and Ike Roberts cooking up the grub. These guys cook up the best tasting meals you can't even find in 5 or even 6 star restaurants.

In the final tally, Bill Brooks, KE5OG reports that we made 965 CW contacts, 37 digital contacts, and 1,236 sideband contacts. Once the multipliers and bonus points were added in we ended up with a score of 7,796 points, about 400 more points than we did last year.

EVENT COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT, It Keeps Us Going

By W5ATO

I think most of us are aware that the ARRL, among other things that they do, also functions as a lobby group so the voice of HAM operators can be heard in Washington D.C. One of the ways in which they do this is by providing evidence that

HAM operators are using their spectrum allocation in service to and for the general welfare and safety of their local communities.

Most people, HAMS or not, are aware that HAM radio is used in times of disaster and in weather spotting when severe storms are around. These usually get national, or at least local media coverage.

When it comes to local sporting and recreational events and activities, the participation of HAM operator teams providing a communications network for safety and coordination to support the event rarely gets a mention even in the local media. So how can the law-makers in Washington know how much service amateur radio provides throughout the entire nation to all of this nation's local communities? From information provided to them by the ARRL lobbyists.

So where does the ARRL get this information? From affiliate clubs reporting the information to the ARRL. Whenever we provide communications for a public event or activity, a report is sent to the ARRL. It includes the number of man-hours invested in the communications support, the dollar investment of those individuals in their personal radio equipment used for the event, and the dollar investment in repeater systems infrastructure utilized, etc. in order to cover the event.

On July 31, Bill Roberts and I provided communications for the Blackwell School Reunion running event in Marfa. There were 26 race participants and 13 staff people on the course. It was held on FM 2810, from 13 miles south of town to the Blackwell School located in town. For those familiar with this area this is the highway to Pinto Canyon and Redford, TX. One of the most remote and seldom traveled, paved public highways I know of in all of Texas. From 05:30 to 08:45 hours, the only motor traffic on the highway was related to the event.. The biggest emergency was 6 dead AA batteries powering (rather, not powering) the race directors hand held timing computer/printer. Fortunately I had plenty of fresh batteries in my HT jump bag.

Next to that issue, one runner arrived late, did not sign in and had someone take them out to the start line after the start and ended up starting behind the sweep vehicle (me.) The water station people told me about this but the information was sketchy and the official directors of the race were never informed about this person. Once the main pack of runners had been swept to the finish line, I went back out to try and find this other runner the water station people had told me about. I found the runner about 3 miles from town and one of the water station crews were following the runner and sweeping for her. All was well.

The whole event went well. No injuries or health issues. No calls for emergency assistance. The bulk of the radio traffic was periodic reports on the progress of the sweep at the tail end of the runners. But we were there and the race director thanked us and noted that having us there gave him greater peace of mind