



Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, K5FD August, 2018

Club to Hear Finance Committee Proposals; Watch Video on 3Y0PI Dxpedition

The Big Bend ARC will meet on Tuesday, August 14, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the West Texas National Bank Building in Alpine.

During the business portion of the meeting, we will hear proposals from the Finance Committee on fund raising ideas for the club.

Following the business portion of the meeting, we will view a video on 3Y0PI to Peter the First island in Antarctica. The Dxpedition was very successful but there were several things that happened that could have ended in disaster.

VP6D Ducie Island 2018 DXpedition Receives ARRL Colvin Award

From ARRL

The pending [VP6D Ducie Island](#) DXpedition has received a grant from ARRL's Colvin Award Committee that the VP6D team is characterizing as "significant."

"We appreciate the confidence ARRL has shown in the VP6D project and the team," a statement on the DXpedition's website said. The Perseverance DX Group ([PDXG](#)) is sponsoring the DXpedition, set for October 20 – November 3.

Funded by an endowment established by Lloyd D. Colvin, W6KG (SK), [Colvin Award](#) grants support Amateur Radio projects that promote international goodwill in the field of DX.

The DXpedition has also announced an addition to the VP6D team — Rob Fanfant, N7QT, a DXpedition veteran and participant in the 2017 VK9MA Mellish Reef DXpedition. Fanfant was also a member of the VK9WA Willis Island, E51MQT Manihiki, TX5Z Austral Islands, and VK9AN Christmas Island DXpeditions, among others.



Currently in northern California preparing the equipment for shipment to M/V *Braveheart* in New Zealand, the VP6D working group accepted eight complete Elecraft K3S stations for use at VP6D and were also given a tour of the Elecraft factory. The gear is the same equipment that

operators on the recent KH1/KH7Z Baker Island DXpedition used to rack up nearly 70,000 contacts. Elecraft had the gear to refurbish it for the second DXpedition.

“Today, we are continuing the tasks of integrating the radios, computers, software, configuring the network, and preparing the shipping cases,” the DXpedition members reported. “We plan an end-to-end test, from the keyboard, to the [satellite internet antenna], to the log server in the Cloud. We expect to have the equipment ready for the customs broker by August 7.”

The VP6D team reported in late July that plans to activate Ducie Island this fall are on schedule. An uninhabited atoll, Ducie Island is a British Overseas Territory in the Pitcairn Islands in the South Pacific. The last Ducie Island DXpedition was VP6DX in 2008. Ducie is currently the 21st most-wanted DXCC entity, according to ClubLog. It’s believed that this would be the fourth DXpedition to Ducie.

ARRL Starts Volunteer Monitoring Program; OO Program is Discontinued

The ARRL Board of Directors has adopted the recommendations of the Official Observer Program Study Committee, which would retire the Official Observer (OO) program and institute the Volunteer Monitoring (VM) program. The Board took the action at its July 20 – 21 meeting in Windsor, Connecticut, instructing that the transition “be implemented as soon as practicable.” Under the terms of the new program, current Official Observers will be invited to apply for appointment as Volunteer Monitors (VMs). The Board expressed its appreciation for the OOs and their dedicated volunteer service over the years.

The Board said the action is expected to re-energize enforcement efforts in the Amateur Radio bands and was undertaken at the request of the FCC in the wake of several FCC regional office closures and a reduction in field staff.

Coordination of cases and evidence gathering would become the responsibility of ARRL Headquarters staff, while the FCC will retain the responsibility for final decisions regarding action in specific cases.

The study committee report spelled out the additional steps necessary to launch the Volunteer Monitoring program. Among them would be the appointment of a dedicated Headquarters staff member or an independent contractor working under the direction of ARRL Headquarters to administer the new program and interface with its participants. The Volunteer Monitoring program administrator would, among other duties, create a vetting and accreditation process for prospective Volunteer Monitors. The authority to accredit, appoint, and dismiss Volunteer Monitors would be assigned to ARRL Headquarters staff. Section Managers will continue to be a part of the vetting process for VMs, although they will not have appointment or dismissal authority.

Volunteer Monitor accreditation would be limited to a 3-year term, renewable by satisfying requirements necessary to ensure competency. A new *Volunteer Monitoring Training Manual* is in the final stages of development.

The administrator will create a target for the number of geographically distributed Volunteer Monitors. Preliminary plans would include up to five Volunteer Monitors per ARRL Section and up to 250 Volunteer Monitors overall.

In other duties, the administrator would “develop a rubric or other aid for program participants to highlight offenses and other criteria that the FCC considers a priority,” the motion said. The administrator also would be charged with organizing periodic webinars, highlighting technologies, techniques, and other continuing education topics that would assist, motivate, and better enable Volunteer Monitors. The FCC will be actively involved in the development and presentation of these training opportunities.

The new Volunteer Monitor program would continue to send notices recognizing good on-the-air operating practice. Under the new program, positive or negative operator notices eventually would be sent from ARRL Headquarters, not by individual Volunteer Monitors, in part to maintain their anonymity.

Another function of the Amateur Auxiliary — Local Interference Committees — will continue to be part of the total package, although their work is not directly addressable by the FCC.

The Board directed the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer to study the feasibility and cost of developing a centralized, web-based IT system that Volunteer Monitors as well as ARRL and FCC staff could access, in order to maximize the efficiency of administering the modernized program.

The action further authorized ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, to terminate the standing *Amended Agreement* between ARRL and the FCC Field Bureau regarding the use of amateur volunteers and execute a new *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* between the ARRL and the FCC Enforcement Bureau. The *MOU* is under final review.

In other action, the Board:

- unanimously adopted recommendations of the ARRL Executive Committee to update ARRL's *Articles of Association and Bylaws* (see the July 2018 issue of *QST*, p. 74, or refer to [Minutes](#) 22 – 25 of the Board's July 20 – 21, 2018, meeting).
- established a 3-month general comment period for the *ARES Strategic Plan* with comments, due no later than October 31, after which the Public Service Enhancement Working Group (PSEWG) will present the final plan to the ARRL Annual Board of Directors meeting in

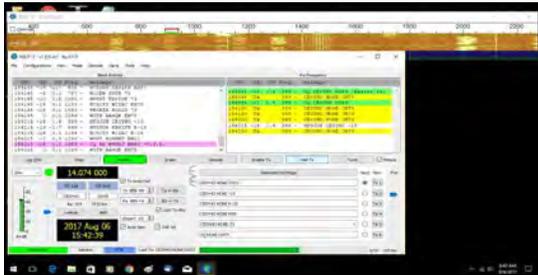
January 2019 for consideration for adoption.

- received the preliminary final report of the PSEWG regarding the rollout of the ARES-Connect program, which will be announced in the September issue of *QST*. The Board agreed to obtain additional field input this fall.
- received an update from the CEO Search Committee.
- was informed, as part of the CEO's report, of current work under way in preparation for World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC 2019). The issue of wireless power transmission (WPT) continues to be a concern leading up to the international conference.
- heard greetings from International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) President Tim Ellam, VE6SH/G4HUA, and from Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) President Glenn MacDonell, VE3XRA. Both attended as guests of the Board.
- heard the report of the ARRL Foundation from its president, New England Division Director Tom Frenaye, K1KI, who reported that the Foundation recently approved the award of approximately 80 scholarships totaling some \$130,000.
- accepted and discussed [reports](#) from standing committees as well as ad hoc and advisory committees of the Board.

FT8 and MSK144 to Get Significant Upgrades

[WSJT-X](#) co-developer Joe Taylor, K1JT, has announced that major changes are coming to the FT8 and MSK144 digital protocols when *WSJT-X* version 2.0 arrives in a few months. Taylor said version 2.0 should be ready for prime time by January.

“Much of the necessary programming is finished,” Taylor said in a post to the Packrats reflector. “Many of the new features have been tested on the air, and we find them to work well.”



Taylor was quick to point out that the new capabilities are not yet publicly available, not even in beta form. He said that he, Steve Franke, K9AN, and Bill Somerville, G4WJS, have been developing “enhanced versions of the MSK144 and FT8 protocols that extend the message payload to 77 bits.”

“Don’t rush to download something,” he cautioned. “There is more testing and code optimization to do.” He said current plans call for a beta-testing period “probably starting in mid-to-late September,” with a full release “possible a couple of months later.”

Taylor ticked off a few possibilities *WSJT-X* version 2.0 will bring to the table:

- ARRL Field Day operation with standard Field Day exchanges.
- ARRL RTTY Roundup operation with standard contest exchanges.
- North American VHF contest operation with full support of grid exchanges and Rover (/R) call signs.
- European VHF contest operation with the exchange of six-digit grids, QSO serial numbers, and portable (/P) call signs.
- Better and more user-friendly support for compound and nonstandard call signs.

- A special “telemetry” message format for exchanging arbitrary information up to 71 bits.
- Support for the existing “FT8 DXpedition Mode,” with a more powerful DXpedition Mode possible too.

“All of these features work seamlessly and automatically,” Taylor said. “No ‘contest mode’ checkboxes are needed. In most situations, decoding sensitivity will be slightly better than at present for FT8; for MSK144 it will sometimes be about 0.5 dB worse. Occupied bandwidths will be the same as they are now, and false-decode rates will be significantly lower.”

Taylor said *WSJT-X* version 2.0 will be available in time for users to digest the new documentation and to practice it before actually getting on the air with it, but he offered one important caveat. “The new protocols cannot be backward compatible with the existing ones,” he said in his post. “We will probably provide some temporary ‘bilingual’ capability for FT8, but not for MSK144. It will be essential for users to upgrade to version 2.0 in order to use the new features and communicate with others who have made the upgrade.”

Taylor promised “plenty of advance notice” about the transition period and a must-upgrade-by date.

Request for News, Classified Ads

The BARK editor is requesting club members and readers provide news items and classified ads for inclusion in this newsletter.

“To provide a newsletter that meets the needs of our members and readers we are reaching out,” said Editor Bill Brooks, KE5OG. “We can better serve club members if we know better what they want to see in the newsletter.”

Personal equipment for sale is also suitable.

You can send appropriate items for inclusion to [bill.ke5og at gmail.com](mailto:bill.ke5og@gmail.com).

Deadline for copy is the Monday the week before the club meeting on the second Tuesday of each month.

Of course, the editor reserves the right to include or exclude materials submitted.

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BIG BEND EMERGENCY NET REPORT From WA5ROE

Date	Net Control	Check-ins	Length	Remarks
07/29/18	WA5ROE	43	29	
07/22/18	W5NPR	33	25	
07/15/18	WA5ROE	43	35	
07/08/18	WA5ROE	41	35	
07/01/18	W5NPR	41	30	

Remember – the BBEN meets **every** Sunday on 3922 KHz at 8:15 a.m. Central time (either CST or CDT). Visitors are always welcome. Early check-ins are welcome beginning around 8:05 a.m. on 3922 kHz or on the BBARC repeater system or on EchoLink.

2 Meter Net Report

Our 2 meter net meets EVERY Wednesday at 8:00 PM (local time) on the clubs repeater system network. These are good training grounds for potential emergency situations as well as helping new hams in the area to have an easy way to get use to "talking on the radio"!

Our club website (www.bigbendarc.com) has all the information about our 2 meter net. This includes the Net Control members schedule, the "script" (supplied only as a guide to insure that the important information is given out weekly - you can use it anyway you see fit) and a list of the recent check-in members.

If you have an interest in joining the NET CONTROL stations as an operator, please call me (432/837-2257) or holler during the Wednesday Net. This summer we are going to be "overloaded" as Bob - W5RHN is in Michigan for the summer and KF5KMA is having eye surgery! We could really use a couple of extra hands to be NCS! The script and "check-in roster" are both posted on the club website for you to download and use as a NCS!

The month of July we had three Wednesday's (no net on the Fourth) and it went this way:

Date	Check-ins	Net Control
07/11/18	21	KG5BMK
07/18/18	18	KG5LMG
07/25/18	18	W5RHN

*****Total of 57 check-ins for the month of July.

If you don't have the time to check-in to the net and participate in the round-table discussion, take a minute of your time and check-in as an "in-and-out" (you're in for the head count, but not participating in the actual net). ALL participation is appreciated and encouraged!

During the month of July we had check-ins from the following hams on the Echo-Link System as follows:

- KD5KC - Mike checked in from El Paso, TX. (1 times)
- N5NYM – Allen checked in from his new home in Port Lavaca, Texas.
- W5RHN - Bob from Crystal Falls, MI. (2 times)
- K5FRN – Fran from Crystal Falls, MI. (2 times)
- KC5WFH – Bill from Northwest of Seattle
- N5BBJ – Bruce checked in from Channelview, Texas (2 times)
- KG5DW – Don checked in from south Florida

I would like to thank KG5HEJ - Al in Terlingua for keeping up apprised of the Echo-Link

activity during our net times! VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!

I want to specifically thank our five (5) Net Control stations for all of their efforts on behalf of the club's 2 meter net for the entire year. It just wouldn't have happened if you were NOT there! Our Net Control stations are:

KF5KMA - Dan, KG5BMK - Chuck, KG5LMG - Marvin, N5BBJ - Bruce, and W5RHN - Bob

BBARC Club Officers

President – Marvin Voiers, KG5LMG
Secretary - Billy Roberts, W5NPR
Treasurer - Angie Otoupol, N5MVV

THE BARK

Newsletter of the BBARC

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club
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BIG BEND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

<http://www.bigbendarc.com>

Meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the West Texas National Bank Building in Alpine, 7:30 P.M. CST/CDT.

ARRL Affiliated Club

When you see them, thank them for all their efforts for the 2 meter net!

73,
Chuck Dobbins - KA5PVB
2 meter Net Manager

MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

2018 Dues are due

Annual membership is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 each year. Dues are \$36 per year for individual or individual & spouse.

Membership allows you to participate in all club activities and vote at the monthly meetings.

Dues can be mailed to Bob Ward, WA5ROE at 1402 N. Fifth Street, Alpine, Texas 79830.

Newsletters are available by e-mail for members, subscribers, and interested recipients. Send your e-mail address to [bill.ke5og at gmail.com](mailto:bill.ke5og@gmail.com) to be put on the list.

ABOUT THE BBARC

Founded December 17, 1974

ARRL affiliate since 1986

The BBARC is a 501(C)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

Big Bend Emergency Net, 3.922 MHz

Founded September 18, 1977

Meets every Sunday morning at 8:15 A.M. CST/CDT

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and visitors.

Established by Bob Ward, WA5ROE.
Net Manager, Bob Ward, WA5ROE, [wa5roe at juno.com](mailto:wa5roe@juno.com)

Big Bend 2-meter Net

Founded July 9, 2008

Meets every Wednesday evening at 8:00 P.M. CST/CDT

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and visitors.

Established by Bob Ayer, KA1AAJ (SK)

Net Manager, Chuck Dobbins, KA5PVB,
[charles.dobbins52 at yahoo.com](mailto:charles.dobbins52@yahoo.com)

BBARC REPEATER SYSTEM

All standard offsets. All repeaters require 146.2 Hz PL tone encoded on your transmit signal. All repeaters are linked.

147.120+	Shafter, Cibolo Creek
147.020+	Elephant Mt. south of Alpine. System hub
146.620-	Ft. Davis located at McDonald Observatory
146.720-	Alpine, Pearce Mountain
146.820-	Terlingua, Study Butte
146.920-	Glass Mountains, Alpine / Ft. Stockton
145.230-	Emergency Repeater

Big Bend ARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Big Bend ARC Club Meeting, August 14, 7:30 pm, Community Room, West Texas National Bank

North American QSO Party, SSB; 1800Z, Aug 18 to 0559Z, Aug 19, 2018

ARRL Rookie Roundup, RTTY; 1800Z-2359Z, Aug 19, 2018

www.contestcalendar.com/