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## Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, K5FD January, 2019 Alpine, Texas

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### Big Bend ARC to Meet

The Big Bend Amateur Radio Club will meet Tuesday night, January 8 at 7:30 p.m. In the Community Room of the West Texas National Bank. The meeting will be presided over by 2019 President Bill Smith, K5WSA.

The Vice-president is Stephen Cook, KE5WCP. Billy Roberts, W5NPR, is returning as Secretary as is Treasurer Angie Otoupal, N5MVV.

Members are asked to bring their 2019 dues which are \$36.

Also, members are asked to fill out the below survey so the new leadership can plan their year.

<https://www.facebook.com/download/218809485723394/Big%20Bend%20Amateur%20Radio%20Club%20-%20Survey.pdf?hash=AcqdgbkjltSPQuS>

### Note from Doug, N5HYD:

The 146.620 McDonald Observatory repeater is having weather-related issues.

We do not have a full set of batteries at this solar-powered site, and it has been going silent when the batteries voltage goes below our safe voltage point.

We are actively procuring two more batteries for the site.

Projected install date is this weekend, if we figure out how to get them on-site. It's paved all of the way but may need a truck due to steepness of the hill.

And I'm all out of trucks right now.

Thanks.

### *WSJT-X 2.0 Full Release Now Available; FT8 Enthusiasts Urged to Upgrade Now*

The *WSJT-X 2.0* software suite has been released, and developer Joe Taylor, K1JT, is urging FT8 and MSK144 users to upgrade to what will become the new standard, because the FT8 and MSK144 protocols have been enhanced in a way that is *not* backward compatible with older versions of the program. That includes any version 1.9 releases.

“The new protocols become the worldwide standards starting on December 10, 2018, and all users should upgrade to *WSJT-X 2.0* by January 1, 2019,” Taylor said on the *WSJT-X* [home page](#). “After that date, only the new FT8 and MSK144 should be used on the air.”

Users are encouraged to read the new [Quick Start Guide](#) for *WSJT-X*. Gary Hinson, ZL2IFB, has released an [FT8 Operating Guide](#).

## Countdown to Third Annual AM Rally Has Begun

The third annual [AM Rally](#) will get under way at 0000 UTC on February 2 and continuing until 0700 UTC on February 4. The event aims to encourage the use of AM on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, and 6 meters while highlighting the various types of AM equipment in use today. The event is open to any and all radio amateurs running AM using any type of radio equipment — modern, vintage, tube, solid-state, software-defined, military, boat anchor, broadcast, homebrew, or commercial.

“We’re very excited about the upcoming AM Rally in February, given its growth over the past 2 years and the positive comments we’ve received,” said Clark Burgard, N1BCG, who is spearheading the event with Steve Cloutier, WA1QIX, and Brian Kress, KB3WFV. “In particular, it’s great to hear how so many ops are giving this classic mode a try, many for the first time, and of the help offered to them by those who have mastered the technology.”

For many, if not most, radio amateurs getting on AM is as simple as pressing the AM mode button on the front panel. Numerous transceivers in use today offer AM capability. A lot of hams enjoy restoring and using vintage Amateur Radio equipment, which typically means a separate transmitter and receiver. Until SSB subsumed it on the ham bands, AM was the primary HF voice mode. The change to SSB did not happen without some pushback, however.

Today, a group of dedicated radio amateurs keeps the flame alive, getting on AM frequently, and for many of them, AM is their primary operating mode. The AM Rally gives the uninitiated a chance to dip a toe into the pool, so to speak.

The [event website](#) has complete AM Rally details, contact information, award categories, logging, and tips on how to get the most out of your station equipment in AM mode.

[Contact](#) Burgard for more information.

The event is sponsored by Radio Engineering Associates ([REA](#)), in cooperation with ARRL, which supports all modes of Amateur Radio operation. W1AW will play a leading role in the event, as it has for the past two years.

Certificates will be awarded to stations scoring the highest number of points in each of the five power classes, regardless of rig category, both for most contacts and most states/provinces.

“All it takes is a turn, push, or click to participate!” Burgard said. There’s also plenty of time to dig out and dust off that old AM-capable tube gear sitting in your attic or basement.

## *New Amateur Radio Packet Gear Awaits Unpacking, Installation on Space Station*

New Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ([ARISS](#)) packet equipment awaits unpacking and installation on board the station after arriving in November as part of the cargo transported via a Russian 71P *Progress* resupply vehicle. The new packet module for NAISS will replace the current packet gear, which has been intermittent over the past year.

“With the arrival of *Progress* complete, the crew has to find free time unpack *Progress*, uninstall the intermittent module, and then set up and test the replacement packet module,” explained Dan Barstow, KA1ARD, senior education manager of the ISS National Laboratory ([CASIS](#)), an ARISS sponsor.

The ISS packet system was reported to have gone down in July 2017, although it unexpectedly came back to life the following summer. At the time of

the failure, NASA ISS Ham Radio Project Engineer Kenneth Ransom, N5VHO, said the revived system would fill the gap until the replacement packet module was launched and installed. The packet system operates on 145.825 MHz. ARISS hardware team members on the ground were able to locate a functional duplicate of the ISS packet module that has been in use on the ISS for 17 years. ARISS said the subsequent installation will depend on the crew's busy schedule.

In an email to ARISS and other groups CASIS supports, Barstow pointed out that ARISS is an official back-up system for astronauts to talk with Mission Control in the unlikely failure of the station's primary communication systems.

Bartow said that in 2017, hams relayed nearly 89,000 packet messages via the ISS — an average of 243 every day. The statistic so intrigued and amazed Barstow that he decided to get his Amateur Radio license and gear to join in the activity.

Satellite stalwart and ARISS supporter Patrick Stoddard, WD9EWK, won the December 2018 *QST* Cover Plaque Award for his article, "Making Digital Contacts through the ISS."

### ***Zaffarini Bill Being Watched; Mobile Rigs Illegal for Use While Driving***

Dale Durham, W5WI, the West Texas Section Manager is keeping a close eye on legislation presented by Senator Judith Zaffarini, of Texas' 21<sup>st</sup> District. Zaffarini covers the Laredo area.

The bill would make it illegal to operate a "wireless communication device" while driving. The bill currently is in rough draft form.

Interestingly, the bill originally had a paragraph that exempted an "operator who is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission while operating a radio frequency device other than a wireless communication device." That section of

the bill is currently crossed out in the draft legislation.

## **FOR SALE**

*Offered by Rusty Herman, KB5R*

Kenwood: TM-221-A VHF Transceiver

Kenwood TM D-700 UHF / VHF Mobile Transceiver with manuals, power cord, and programming disk

Palomar SWR Meter, 0 to 1000 watts

Kenwood TL-922A 2 KW SSB Linear Amplifier 160 to 15 Meters with Manuals

Heathkit SB-604\* External Power Supply / Speaker

Heathkit SB-104A\* 100 W HF Transceiver, 80 to 10 Meters  
\*to be sold as a unit

Free standing 80 foot tower by Rohn

***Please call 432-837-0002 for details***

### ***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
12/02/18	WA5ROE	37	34	
12/09/18	WA5ROE	45	34	
12/16/18	WA5ROE	42	34	
12/23/18	W5NPR	37	35	
12/30/18	KE5OG	30	19	Lousy Conditions

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](http://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. 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 December we had four Wednesday's and it went this way:

Date	Check-ins	Net Control
12/05/18	22	W5RHN
12/12/18	17	KF5KMA
12/19/18	18	KA5PVB
12/26/18	No Net	

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

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 November we had check-ins from the following hams on the Echo-Link System as follows:

N5BBJ – Bruce from Siler City, North Carolina (twice)

\*\*\*We had computer problems on the 12<sup>th</sup> and no Echo-Link available.

I would like to thank KG5HEJ - Al in Terlingua for keeping up appraised 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

Happy New Year to All.

73,  
Chuck Dobbins - KA5PVB  
2 meter Net Manager

**BBARC Club Officers**

President – Bill Smith, K5WSA  
Vice-president Stephen Cook, KE5WCP  
Secretary - Billy Roberts, W5NPR  
Treasurer - Angie Otoupol, N5MVV

**THE BARK**

**Newsletter of the BBARC**

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club  
1402 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Alpine, Texas 79830

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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

**MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION**

**2019 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)

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## **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

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## **Big Bend ARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

January 8 – Big Bend ARC Club Meeting at 7:30, at the Community Room of West Texas National Bank.

ARRL RTTY Roundup, 1800Z, Jan 5 to 2400Z, Jan 6

ARRL Kids Day, 1800Z-2359Z, Jan 5

North American QSO Party, CW, 1800Z, Jan 12 to 0559Z, Jan 13

North American QSO Party, SSB, Jan 19 to 0559Z, Jan 20