



Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club K5FD

September 2020

Alpine, Texas

September 8 BBARC Monthly Meeting

6:30pm Social and Food

7:30 Meeting

@ The Backyard of Bob WA5ROE

1402 N 5th Street

RSVP by 9/4

BBARC Minutes of Meeting

August 11, 2020

The meeting was attended by 21 members and guests.

W5NPR.....Bill.....Alpine
 WA5ROE.....Bob.....Alpine
 KA5PVB.....Chuck.....Alpine
 KI5EXF.....Sharon.....Alpine
 KF5KMA.....Danny.....Alpine
 KE5KNQ.....Rob.....Alpine
 AI4BA.....Al.....Alpine
 KX5SP.....Steve.....Alpine
 KG5VGS.....Gregg.....Alpine
 KD5KBU.....Jim.....Fort Davis
 KG5ZIB.....Judy.....Fort Davis
 KG5ZIC.....Pamela.....Fort Davis
 K5WSA.....Bill.....Fort Davis
 KE5WCP.....Stephen.....Fort Davis
 KG5LMG.....Marvin.....Fort Davis
 N5HYD.....Doug.....Fort Davis
 N5MVV.....Angie.....Fort Davis
 KF5DCM.....David.....San Angelo
 KI5JTB.....Rachel.....San Marcos
 KG5HEJ.....Al.....Terlingua
 KI5ANQ.....Scott.....Terlingua

Message from the President

Hi everybody,

For our next club meeting Bob, WA5ROE, has graciously volunteered to host an outdoor, socially-distanced, social event at his home in Alpine. His address is **1402 N. 5th Street**.

Beans, sausage, cornbread and bottled water will be provided. Bring your favorite beverage if desired.

The social **begins at 6:30**, with a brief business **meeting starting at 7:30pm**.

Members are welcome to bring a partner.

Please RSVP to Bob before Sept. 4th either by email to wa5roe@juno.com or by phone, 432-386-3041.

Bob asked the Brewster county sheriff if the county had any problems or concerns with this event, and they said "no".

Thanks Bob. This is a very casual event. There's no need for you to attend if you are at all uncomfortable with the gathering.

Regards and 73,
 Stephen KE5WCP

BBARC Minutes of Meeting (continued)

Due to the Covid19 virus, the meeting was conducted on 2-meters utilizing the BBARC 2-meter repeater system.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President Stephen KE5WCP. It was agreed that all items of business would be approved by mutual agreement.

The minutes of the July 14, 2020 meeting were read and approved.

Angie, N5MVV reported a current balance of \$9957.57. Activity for May included BBT \$35.21, RV registration \$133.25, trailer registration \$59.75; June BBT \$35.21; JULY True Value \$6.14, Doug Otoupal \$66.83 (tire repair and gas for 146.82 Christmas Mountain trip) and Pafoonik Enterprises \$500.00 (spare duplexes) and August BBT \$35.70 and liability insurance \$200.00.

It was discussed that the usual meeting location at the West Texas National Bank in Alpine was still unavailable because of Covid-19 conditions.

Scott KI5ANQ reported changes to the ECHOLINK system that should improve operation efficiency and speed. A detailed report on improvements was read by Scott and is attached to these minutes. Also discussed was the need for a committee to discuss ECHOLINK technology, repeater technology and net management. Scott, Doug N5HYD and Bob WA5ROE will serve on that committee.

Bob WA5ROE reported that he and Bill W5ATO and made the trip to Pierce Mountains for repairs on the 146.72 repeater and battery cables were replaced. There is still a need for improved guy wires and plans for completing the work.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:3 PM.

Respectively Submitted

Bill Roberts W5NPR

ARRL News

Steve Ford WB8IMY Retires

The voice of ARRL and editor of the QST magazine, Steve Ford, is retiring. Steve Ford had two podcasts, "The Doctor Is In," and the "Eclectic Tech."

Steve also authored many books including "Get on the Air HF Digital," "Amateur Radio Satellites for Beginners," "Getting Started with Ham Radio (first ARRL book published in China)," "ARRL Satellite Handbook," "Radios to Go! Getting the Most from Your Handheld Transceiver," "Your First Amateur Radio HF Station," "Small Antennas for Small Spaces," and "Work the World with JT65 and JT9."

Here is a quote from Steve about the April issues of QST.

"April Fool's pranks are well-established traditions in the publishing world, and *QST* magazine is no exception," said *QST* Editor in Chief Steve Ford, WB8IMY. "The April Fool's tradition in *QST* goes back decades. Search the old issues and you'll find some very clever items."

The April 2014 issue of *QST* contains three April Fool's pieces, according to Ford. "Some are more obvious than others. We'll be curious to see how many readers spot the jokes."

Rachel KI5JTB Earns General

The next generation of the founding member of BBARC achieved her FCC call sign just after Field Day this year. Rachel, daughter of Bob WA5ROE, has now earned her general upgrade. Based in San Marcos, Rachel found a San Antonio club doing exams and got the upgrade.

Rachel is a frequent user on the BBARC K5FD-R EchoLink server (our Gold Medalist in July). She uses EchoLink to check into the Wednesday 2m Net and the Sunday BBEN routinely.

"I am only using my iPhone to operate on Echolink. It's very convenient and also a great way for me to get in contact with my dad, and partake in the 2-meter net on Wednesday's. It's really been a great part of my journey with ham radio and helping me learn how to correctly communicate while on the air," Rachel commented recently. "I've made contact with my dad both ways! He has connected to the Echolink server here in San Marcos, and I spoke with him on 2m (147.520 MHz), and vice versa when I call in on the Echolink server you have out there."

Bob says, "Rachel also has an Icom 7300 for HF. I am going to build some attic antennas for HF when I go in a couple of weeks." Rachel lives in an HOA area.

Rachel is looking forward to the HF system going operational. "Well hopefully, I'll be able to get on 80 meters so I can check into the BBEN, as well as other state nets. The BBEN is really the big one I'm looking forward to, but I'd also love to operate on 40-10 meters for the opportunity to talk with other hams across the US and the world."

When asked about her two exam experiences, Rachel said, "I definitely found the technician exam to be a lot easier than the general. I think it was mostly due to the fact that I was really studying hard for the technician, since it was the first exam. I slacked a bit more with the general, but was luckily still able to pass on the first try!"

For anyone considering an FCC license, Rachel has this advice. "My recommendation is, for one, GET LICENSED! There are zero downsides to getting your technician license. And there are even more upsides to upgrading to your general. There is so much more you can do with the general class, that it almost makes it a no-brainer to go on with the upgrade. The exams between the tech and general are very similar as well. So, if you were able to pass the technician, just a bit more studying, and you'll easily be able to pass the general! I highly recommend hamexam.org, they have flashcards, as well as practice exams for all three license classes, and that website really helped me pass both exams thus far."

And an extra upgrade? "Eventually. I think I can consider myself a real ham by having my general license. But I'd definitely love to continue on to get my extra, because why not?"

Bob summed up his feelings. "I am proud of her."

2 Meter Report

Our 2m net manager, Chuck KA5PVB, was injured in an automobile accident the day he was to work on the 2m report. We will catch up on August and September reports next issue. Get well Chuck.

Big Bend Emergency Net Report

September 1 from WA5ROE

Date	Net Control Station	Check Ins	Length (min)	Remarks
8-2	WA5ROE	41	39	
8-9	WA5ROE	42	36	
8-16	WA5ROE	46	45	
8-23	W5NPR	37	40	
8-30	WA5ROE			

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.

Emergency Nets

Mondays7:30pm.....ARES section 3873 kHz
 Sundays.....8:15am.....BBEN 3922kHz
 Sundays.....2:00pm.....RACES state district 8 7255 kHz
 2nd and 4th Sundays, listen only

BBRC Repeater System

The BBARC operates six 2m repeaters, all connected via the hub 147.020. Contact with one repeater transmits from all repeaters. The frequencies are 100 kHz apart on the 2's: 146.62, .72, .82, .92, 147.02, and .12.

All repeaters use standard offsets on your radio for transmissions (negative below 147 and positive above 147. The following frequencies are for receiving (listening) with the offset your transmission frequency.

- 145.230-.....Emergency Repeater (currently off and stored)
- 146.620-.....Located at McDonald Observatory, covers Davis Mtns Resort, Fort Davis, Davis Mtn State Park, Davis Mtns, Prude Dude Ranch
- 146.720-.....Located on Pearce Mtn, covers Alpine, US 67 (frequency is “6.7”) East/North, and south to Mile High Road
- 146.820-.....Located on Christmas Mtn, covers Terlingua, Study Butte, South County Road, Terlingua Ranch, northern half of Big Bend National Park

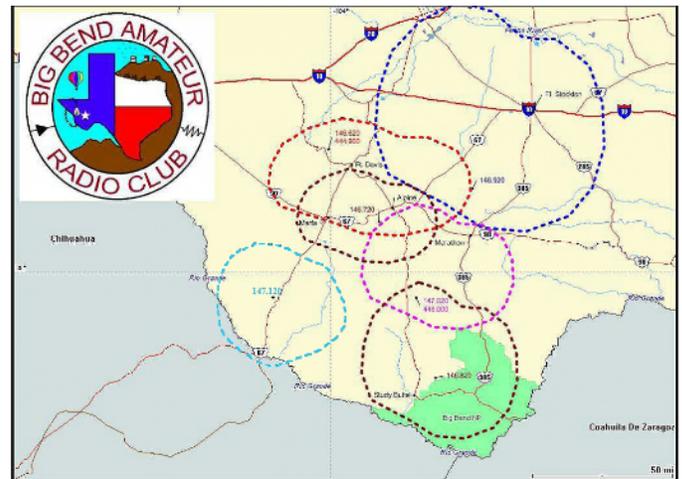
146.920-.....Located on the Glass Mountains, covers US 67 north, Alpine, Fort Stockton, I10 from east-bound picnic area 20 miles of town to US 67 exit, and up to Odessa.

147.120+Covers Presidio, Shafter, Cibolo Creek

147.020+Located on Elephant Mtn, covers TX 118 South of Mile High Road, O2 Flats (the “O2” frequency), Terlingua Ranch, System Hub

All repeaters require a 146.2 Hz PL tone encoded on your transmit signal (CTCSS). Standard offset is the other setting. There is a 3 minute timeout built into the repeaters.

The repeaters cover remote areas and should be monitored for emergency calls. 146.520 is the simplex call frequency and the Wilderness Protocol frequency for this area.



EchoLink QSO Cards

Our K5FD-R EchoLink server logs all users. The information of each user comes from the settings of their EchoLink station, which is usually a desktop, smartphone, or tablet. About 1/4 of the users have these settings done correctly with their first name and QTH. By posting this list to our web site, I hope to encourage all EchoLink operators to set up their name and QTH information. The smartphones are batting zero, especially the iPhone. The QSO information on smartphones is generally phone model name and number, so I filter all those out. EchoLink operators should check their information has their name and QTH. Make it a goal to make the K5FD-R QSO Cards!

Club Officers

PresidentStephen Cook.....KE5WCP
Vice-president.....Scott McClanahanKI5ANQ
Secretary.....Billy RobertsW5NPR
Treasurer.....Angie OtoupolN5MVV

Club Information

BBARC is an ARRL affiliated club.

Founded December 17, 1974

ARRL affiliate since 1986

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

Monthly meetings are the second Tuesday of each month unless a special meeting or event.

Meeting location is the West Texas National Bank Building in the center of Alpine at the intersection of state highway 118 and US highway 67. Parking is on the north side of the building. Enter the north side to The Community Room.

Meeting time is 7:30pm CST/CDT.

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 BBARC mailing address below.

Club Mailing Address

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club

1402 N. 5th St.

Alpine, Texas 79830

www.bigbendarc.com

The BBARC web site contains news, events, reference information, club meeting accepted minutes, Big Bend Emergency Network reports and rosters, 2m Net reports and controller schedule, and newsletters.

The main menu has the following links.

Newsletters contains links to PDF files of the current and past newsletters.

Repeaters has the reference information and coverage map of our 2m repeater system.

Nets has information and reports about our 2m Net and Big Bend Emergency Net.

Licensing has contact information for training and testing, and the schedule of upcoming classes and exam sessions sponsored by the BBARC.

About Us provides the officer list, dues information, meeting map and time, and mailing address.

On the right side are the Posts. The most recent are listed first, then the **Posts by Category** drop down menu. Exploring the links from the **Posts by Category** menu is fascinating and contains most of the content of the BBARC website.

The Bark Newsletter

Published monthly on the first of the month.

Newsletters are available by e-mail for members, subscribers, and interested recipients. To be added to the distribution list, submit content, make comments, or add events, send an email to the editor.

EditorScott McClanahanKI5ANQ
.....ki5anq@outlook.com

Big Bend Emergency Net 3922 kHz

Founded September 18, 1977

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

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and visitors.

Established and managed by Bob Ward WA5ROE.

Emergency Net MgrBob WardWA5ROE
.....wa5roe@juno.com.

Big Bend 2-meter Net on Repeater System

Founded July 9, 2008

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

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and visitors.

Established byBob AyerKA1AAJ (SK)
2m Net ManagerChuck Dobbins ...KA5PVB

EchoLink Reports Beginning

Our K5FD-R EchoLink server generates a copious amount of information in its log files. There is so much information, there are two log files. Containing 15,000 lines each, the log files are not an interesting read. The solution is to parse needed information and create a report. The monthly EchoLink Contact Report is the first of several EchoLink reports planned, and is now available on the web site in the form of a post. This report shows the call signs that connected to our server by day. There are also tallies of number of connects and a list of the top three users.

The User Report lists all of the call signs in alphabetical order, and the total amount of time connected for the report (initially monthly reports). The QSO Cards are another report, as mentioned above.

EchoLink Committee Formed

A proposal to create an EchoLink committee passed at the August meeting to guide our K5FD-4 server. Three members will represent the repeater technology (Doug N5HYD), the nets (Bob WA5ROE), and the EchoLink technology and server operations (Scott KI5ANQ). Here is the proposal and its purpose.

To form a committee of three representing EchoLink technology, repeater technology, and net management for the purpose of defining operating rules for the K5FD-R station and creating goals to explore features and performance of EchoLink. The results would be a series of documents of work, ideas, and the K5FD-R operating rules to help Ham operators everywhere and future K5FD-R operators.

BBARC Monthly Meeting EchoLink Report

Scott KI5ANQ took a few steps towards a better K5FD-R system on our existing Windows laptop server. An ethernet connector was added to the laptop, directly connecting it to the router. The laptop is no longer using WIFI. VOIP packet throughput may increase a 100 times. With the better LAN performance, the buffering in the EchoLink software is no longer needed. This reduced delay down to 1 1/2 seconds on PTT, and only 1/2 second when they release. This change greatly improves response.

When working EchoLink operators, give them some time to respond - their PTT is slow. When they finish, transmission stops quickly and you can respond immediately.

There was hope that moving off of WIFI would fix the constant "link down" problem. This problem breaks the Internet link to the Mother Ship. The problem still persists at the same rate of several times per day. The laptop crashes about once a week. Reliability is the next goal for K5FD-R. I'm going to try a specially built computer with only EchoLink running.

EchoLink logs every DTMF key heard on the repeaters, so if there is a need to verify DTMF events, that is possible.

From the Editor

How do Hams communicate other than PTT?

First, the radio solutions. Our tri-county area has an excellent repeater system and 75m frequency for the emergency network. We live in radio heaven.

The bad news is we are on the outernet - farthest from everything. Landlines work well and generally are in conjunction with internet service. Those are our two strongest physical layers of communication DSL and fiber Internet.

Cell phone coverage is only in the towns. Outside the towns, the mountains block the signal and there are few towers. Look for cars sitting on the side of the road, that's the last chance spots. Land line owners have to use long distance to dial most cell numbers, so they only call other land phones.

Satellite dishes use to be popular, but I don't have any friends that use them anymore. Internet through a satellite is fast on the downlink, but generally requires a land line uplink, so there you go, why have a dish.

Fiber internet is pretty nice. It can send and download any size file, run video conferencing. and operate EchoLink.

Now for the software side of communicating. Most of the correspondence between BBARC members is by email and the 2m repeaters (as far as I know). The web site has important club information and documents. The newsletter has an email distribution list. This is the only list of members and friends for the club. This list is used for important and immediate club news, too.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) is employed in three areas: EchoLink, Internet telephone, and video conferencing. The landline could be a VOIP phone instead. All three work

great with the headset.

Video conferencing has gone mainstream with all employees sent home to work. I had a WebEx conference with my banker yesterday, and he hasn't been to the bank building since March! Video conferencing is really nice, but it needs a shorter name. This week, Zoom was declared malware, and then had a major failure affecting online classes and court cases. I would use what the bank, Boeing, and the US Govt use, WebEx. No more phones, I'm just going to schedule video conference meetings with my family and get some semblance of discipline going again.

Here's what it takes to become a videoconferencer (the German word might be shorter). First, connect your desktop to the router with Ethernet cable and turn off WiFi. Next, get a USB hub. Now you are ready for a good USB webcam, like Logitech, and some way to mount it that makes you look good. Test it out with just movie recording (QuickTime player) and see what your background is, especially windows, doors, and lights. Whatever is behind you will be remembered by all that participate in meetings. Maybe your Ham rig or other cool hobby stuff! One last piece of equipment is a USB headset, I like the Jabra. It includes the microphone and a control button for volume and muting. Now you are ready to sign up with WebEx on their Starter plan. This is to call meetings, the participants do not need to subscribe. Only one host license is needed for personal use. The first meeting should be a test with a willing victim, er, participant. Both will suffer the download/install/permissions hopscotch, which can take from 15 minutes to The End of Time. Once working, try out the options and sharing media. Now you are ready to do a real meeting.

Finally, let's look into the future. Eventually, there will be satellites running cell phones and our world will greatly change. Outside of that, I hope we continue to experiment with our hobby's bands and radio gear. One wonderful tool is APRS. With a few digipeaters and beacons, most of the club members could send and receive packets of information. Beacons can issue bulletins, calendar, club information for visitors, EchoLink information, weather information, local contact information, repeater information, 2m and 75m net reports, even the newsletter!

Another area of future technology is the repeater hardware. Digital systems and the potential to have digital, even Internet links with the repeaters, and tightly integrated EchoLink would keep club members busy buying, installing, and configuring the systems for a solid decade. Having big fun with radios!

If you have any ideas about this or what works for your club, send me an email! ki5anq@outlook.com

Scott KI5ANQ