



# Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club K5FD

April 2021

Alpine, Texas

## April 13 BBARC Monthly Meeting

2m repeater system

7:30 pm (7:00 early checkin with KI5ANQ)

## BBARC Minutes of Meeting

March 9, 2021

The meeting was attended by 19 members and guests.

- K5WSA.....Bill.....Fort Davis
- K7VEN.....Art.....Fort Davis
- KA5PVB.....Chuck.....Alpine
- KB5R.....Rusty.....Alpine
- KE5KNQ.....Rob.....Alpine
- KE5WCP.....Stephen.....Fort Davis
- KG5LMG.....Marvin.....Fort Davis
- KG5ZIB.....Judi.....Fort Davis
- KI5ANQ.....Scott.....Terlingua
- KI5EXF.....Sharon.....Alpine
- KI5JTB.....Rachel.....San Marcos
- KI5NEK.....Jerry.....Alpine
- N5CET.....Charlie.....Alpine
- N5HYD.....Doug.....Fort Davis
- N5JOE.....Jim.....Alpine
- W5JUW.....Lora.....Alpine
- W5NPR.....Bill.....Alpine
- W5ROE.....Bob.....Alpine
- KI5OKE.....San Antonio

Due to the Covid-19 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. Unfortunately, we lost Stephen almost immediately on the 62 repeater, which had been up and down. VP Bill W5NPR took over.

The minutes of the February 9, 2021 meeting were read and accepted.

Treasurer Angie N5MVV was not present at the meeting.

SkyWarn weather training is Thursday (3-11) at 7:30 and need to use link from email to attend the webinar.

Rusty KB5R reported on the test session last Saturday (3-6) with two new technicians - Matt KI5OQC of Fort Davis and Brad KI5OQB of Terlingua. Sharon KI5EXF upgraded to general class. Thanks to the test team VEs Bob W5RHN, Lora W5JUW, and Billy W5NPR.

Rusty KB5R also offered dates 4-17 or 18 or 24 or 25th for the spring fling, the covered dish BBARC party. Will have an outside area to eat or inside and wear masks. (Note: the date has been set to the 24th. Updates will be on the web page and through emails.)

Stephen came back online and had some agenda items from the secretary concerning membership.

Scott KIA5ANQ has information on club membership. The first is the ARRL Club Membership Verification Report. We are an ARRL affiliated club and need to maintain a 50% level of dues paying club members that are also verified ARRL members. The report dated February 23, 2021 has a club ARRL percentage of 59.65%. The list had 34 ARRL members and 23 expired or not an ARRL member. The report also has expiration dates of ARRL membership, so the club is able to track these for its members. The report is done annually, so we are good with ARRL for a year.

The second membership information is the club now begins or renews ARRL memberships through the club. The web site home page has a PDF file to download and print. Fill out the form and write a check to the BBARC. Mail this to the club. The key is to do this two months in advance of expiration. The Member page of the web site lists the upcoming expirations. Soon to expire are KD6KBU, KI5YG, W5NPR, and WA5POK.

The third item is some members have no contact with the club - K5VA, KB5LMB, KM5V, and W5KMC. We have sent letters, and some were returned with a bad mailing address from the FCC database. (Note: KB5LMB has been dropped from the list).

Stephen encouraged everyone to pay club dues. They are \$36 annually starting in January.

Scott KI5ANQ reported on the FCC requirement of registering an email address in their database. The language seems to be getting stronger about the June 29th deadline. Every member should check their FCC record for accuracy and add the email address.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Scott McClanahan KI5ANQ

## 2 Meter Net Report

*March 2021 from Chuck KA5PVB*

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 becoming a net controller, please call me (432/386-8052) or holler during the Wednesday Net. We could really use a couple of extra hands to be NCS! The script and 2m net roster are both posted on the club website for you to download and use as a NCS!

The month of March had four (4) Wednesday's with a monthly total: 113 (note - this might be an all-time high for a monthly check-in total).

Date	Check Ins	Net Station	Net Ctlr
March 3	26	W5RHN	Bob
March 10	21	KF5KMA	Dan
March 17	22	KA5PVB	Chuck
March 24	25	KI5ANQ	Scott
March 31	19	KG5LMG	Marvin

A hearty thanks to all for your participation in support of our net activities!

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!

EchoLink System check-ins are as follows:

KI5JTB - Rachel from San Marcos, TX. 4 times.

KI5RIC - Ric from Ruidoso, NM. 2 times.

W5JSR and KK5ROB - Steve and Robin from Peoria, AZ (Phoenix suburb). 2 times.

KG5HEJ - Al from Terlingua, TX, 2 times.

KI5NEK - Jerry from Double Diamond, TX, 2 times.

KB0VLR - Chris from Red Wing, MN, 3 times.

N5WSZ - Clay from San Antonio, 2 times.

KG5VGS - Greg from Galveston, TX.

KG5GBO - John from Baton Rouge, LA.

A big THANKS to Scott - KI5ANQ for his work on the EchoLink system, it really sound good and the long time delays seem to be gone!

I want to specifically thank our six (6) 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, KG5LMG - Marvin, N5BBJ - Bruce, W5RHN - Bob, KI5ANQ - Scott and KI5EXF - Sharon (substitute, and "possible" future NCS). When you see them, thank them for all their efforts for the 2 meter net.

73,

Chuck Dobbins - KA5PVB  
2 meter Net Manager

## Big Bend Emergency Net Report

*March 2021 from Bob WA5ROE*

Date	Net Station	Check Ins	Length (min)	Remarks
March 7	WA5ROE	50	51	
March 14	WA5ROE	54	60	
March 21	WA5ROE	45	51	
March 28	W5NPR	48	45	

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

Mondays .....7:30pm.....ARES section 3873 kHz

Sundays.....8:15am .....BBEN 3922kHz

Sundays.....2:00pm.....RACES state district 8 7255 kHz  
2nd and 4th Sundays, listen only

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## 2m Repeater Report

*March 2021 from Doug N5HYD*

Some time ago, I was contacted by Andrew Shephard (N5RGH) and later by BJohn McDaniel (KE5PL) about connecting the BBARC repeater system to another repeater system they are expanding towards Ft. Stockton. It's called the 'Permnet'. I think the group wants to connect to us kind-of like the West Texas Connection currently does, as in an occasional dial-up mode.

The 62 repeater is having problems. I think it's batteries. From the logs, 2 batteries were installed 2018 July 28. I also think we have a low voltage disconnect at the site, that kills everything when voltage gets too low. The VHF power amplifier may have a cracked solder joint. The symptoms are classic for this type of problem. I plan to retrieve the system March 26 and bring it in for troubleshooting.

I visited 82 on 3-7. It has the original setup returned, with the broken parts replaced with similar equipment. We need to address water intrusion. I did a stop-gap, but the cure may be worse than the disease.

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## EchoLink Report for K5FD-R

*March 2021 from Scott KI5ANQ*

At the end of the month, a new computer replaced the old laptop. The new computer is a basic MINIX running Windows 10 Pro. The existing radio interface (USB) and radio system are still in use. The first test was the BBEN and only required one change for more than one station to connect (called conferencing).

There is also a new version of EchoLink, the first update in 14 years! The new computer and new software are more reliable. The EchoLink station did not fail between the 2m Net Wednesday to the BBEN Sunday.

Total Number of Connections: 127

Users With Most Connections:

Gold Medal at 7 ..	N5WSZ, K5CLO
Silver Medal at 6.	KG5ZHT, KIT3XF, KI5JTB, KI5NEK
.....	
Bronze Medal at 5	W5JSR-L, WA5ROE, K5RIC-L

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## APRS Report

*March 2021 from Scott KI5ANQ*

Now that EchoLink is improved, can work on the APRS station. Hope to have news for next month.

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## Web Site Report

*March 2021 from Scott KI5ANQ*

No big changes to the web site. Working on more content for the Member page - area repeaters and radio clubs. The newsletter page will convert to tables for each year. Same with the BBEN reports, which go back to 2001.

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## BBRC Repeater System

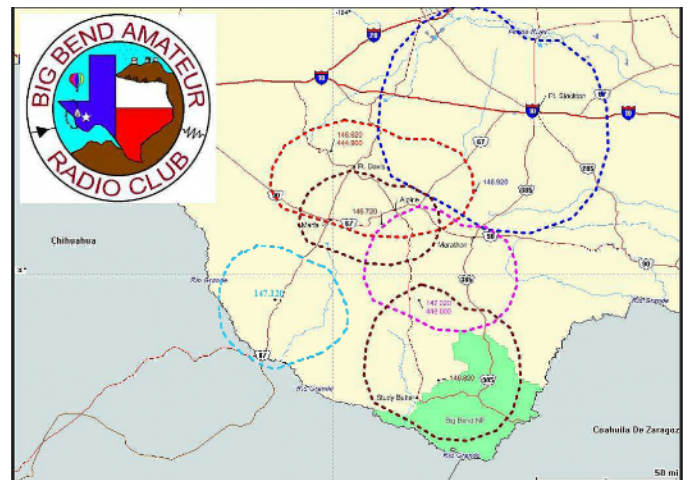
The BBARC operates six 2m repeaters, all connected via the hub 147.020. Contact with one repeater transmits from all repeaters. The frequencies are 100 kHz apart on the 2's: 146.62, .72, .82, .92, 147.02, and .12.

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, Old Ore Road
- 146.920-.....Located on the Glass Mountains, covers US 67 north, Alpine, Fort Stockton, I10 from picnic area 20 miles east of town to US 67 exit west of town, Odessa
- 147.120+ .....Covers Presidio, Shafter, Cibolo Creek
- 147.020+ .....System hub. Located on Elephant Mtn, covers TX 118 South of Mile High Road, O2 Flats (the "O2" frequency), Terlingua Ranch

All repeaters require a 146.2 Hz squelch tone on your transmit signal (CTCSS) and standard offsets. There is a 3 minute timeout. No digital modes, make sure those are off.

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.



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## EchoLink Station K5FD-R Alpine

Access the 2m repeater system through the club's EchoLink station. Get the EchoLink application on your smartphone or Windows station computer. [echolink.org](http://echolink.org)

## Club Officers

President .....Stephen Cook.....KE5WCP  
Vice-president.....Billy Roberts.....W5NPR  
Secretary.....Scott McClanahan.....KI5ANQ  
Treasurer.....Angie Otoupol.....N5MVV

## 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 the BBARC mailing address below.

## Club Mailing and Email Address

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club

1402 N. 5th St.

Alpine, Texas 79830-2512

K5FD@ARRL.NET

[www.bigbendarc.com](http://www.bigbendarc.com)

The BBARC web site contains a Member exclusive area, news, events, regular reports, Big Bend Emergency Network reports, 2m Net reports, and newsletter archive.

**Member** is password protected with exclusive member information.

**Newsletters** contains PDF files of The Bark newsletter.

**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.

**EchoLink** has information about the club's K5FD-R EchoLink station, logs, and setting up EchoLink.

**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 and friends. To be added to the distribution list, submit content, make comments, or add events, send an email to the editor.

Editor .....Scott McClanahan.....KI5ANQ  
contact.....[KI5ANQ@ARRL.NET](mailto:KI5ANQ@ARRL.NET)

## 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 Mgr.....Bob Ward.....WA5ROE  
contact.....K5FD@ARRL.NET.

## 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 by.....Bob Ayer.....KA1AAJ (SK)  
2m Net Manager.....Chuck Dobbins...KA5PVB

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## BBARC News

### Party at Rusty's

Come one, come all, to the Second Annual Big Bend Radio Club Spring Fling! It will be held on Saturday, April 24, at the home of Rusty Herman, KB5R. Festivities begin at 4:00 PM.

Bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share with everyone, and also bring your favorite beverage. There will be plenty of seating both inside and outside, so we will be able to socially distance. Masks are encouraged.

Let's have a great get together and visit with friends. Remember, April 24 at 4:00. The address is in Alpine at 2 Rim Road in Sunny Glen.

We Hope to see everyone there.

Rusty KB5R

### Permnet Link Considered

The club will consider a link policy of our 2m repeater system with the rest of West Texas. The linked repeaters from the Permnet (Permian Basin Network). Testing the link to the BBARC system has been successful with excellent audio. Doug N5HYD has some ideas about doing the link at the Elephant Mtn hub.

### Renew or Join ARRL through the BBARC

Create or renew your ARRL membership through the club, and the club keeps some of the money! This takes about a month, so renewals should be done two months early. Print the **ARRL Membership form** from the BBARC web site home page, fill the form out, write a check payable to BBARC for the membership amount, and mail to the club.

1402 N 5th St, Alpine TX 79830-2512

## *First ARRL Renewals through the Club*

The first batch of ARRL membership forms was mailed by treasurer Angie N5MVB last month. Having the club renew ARRL membership allows paying through the BBARC (writing a check to the BBARC), and the club retaining \$2 for renewals and \$15 for new or 2-year expired memberships.

The club tracks member ARRL expiration dates, so check the Member page for upcoming renewal dates by call sign. The call signs appear in the list 3 months before renewal. There is also a list of recently expired call signs (within 2 years).

## *ARRL Email Alias*

Prepare for the FCC email requirement now with a permanent email address. Many ARRL members have an email alias, which forwards messages to their regular email account. The club's email address is K5FD@ARRL.NET. It is easy to set up with Edit Account on your ARRL profile. Make sure your User Name value is set to your call sign. The User Name can be changed.

## *Club Dues*

Club dues are all done in January, so getting significantly past that now. Of our 58 members, only 32 have paid dues this year.

Dues are \$36 per year for individual or individual & spouse. Dues can be mailed to the club's address with check payable to the BBARC:

1402 N 5th St, Alpine TX 79830-2512

BBARC and ARRL renewal can be done together with one check. Be sure to fill out the ARRL renewal form found on the home page of the web site.

## *Field Day June 26 & 27*

The usual field day activities for the club should be on for the Double Diamond. Antennas, food, and hot weather will be at the club house. Always a fun weekend with special guests. Bob WA5ROE will organize work crews to prepare the site Friday, set up antennas, cook, and clean up Sunday.

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## **ARRL News**

### *2020 Rules for Field Day*

Field Day 2021 has COVID rules again, allowing BBARC members to operate from home and earn points for the club.

We will have a full Field Day event, but this "work from home" policy really helps a club covering a large geographic area and most operators qualifying for emergency power. Head home after the Double Diamond and make more contacts for the club.

### *ARRL May Pay FCC Licensing Fee for Youth*

The ARRL Board of Directors is considering a motion for a program to pay the FCC Licensing Fee of youth under the age of 18. To qualify, the candidate must be a member of an ARRL-affiliated organization at the time of testing, and the testing done by ARRL VEC.

### *April QST Articles*

The Yaesu TFM-300DR review finds the UHF/VHF radio packed with features for FM and C4FM System Fusion operation. The radio has two completely independent receivers that can monitor a UHF and a VHF simultaneously.

April 2021 The BARK

The system includes APRS and GPS. It will operate as a cross band repeater, an undocumented feature. Look for a video on the special four buttons pressed at once way to turn on the radio in repeater mode.

An Eton radio review, of all things, is given the ham perspective. After advertising for years, they deserve a review.

The eclectic area of ham covers radiosondes, telemetry radios on weather balloons using the 70cm band and only 100mW transmitter. The data includes the balloon position.

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## **From the Editor**

Antennas had a hard start to 2021. The Valentine's Day winter storm had high winds and heavy ice accumulation that took down many antennas. Two repeater antennas in the West Texas Connection are down. March came in like a lion (ie wind) and remained a lion into April. This is turning into the year of wind loading for antennas.

The update of EchoLink after 14 years is a good sign the system is to be taken more seriously. Software that old is basically abandoned. The EchoLink servers work great. The sysops software is a bear. The update is a vote of confidence, and I'll proceed with developing an OLE interface to monitor, access more settings, and control EchoLink running the K5FD-R station.

Marvin KG5LMG is setting up a computer dedicated to radio work, and connect the Kenwood TMD-710. This is a great philosophy, the base station computer. I've been buying MINIX NEO J50C-4 mini computers running Windows 10 Pro. The computer can run EchoLink user mode, software that comes with radios, PDF files of manuals, and all the digital and CW mode hardware and software.

A cable set connects the computer headphone jack to the Kenwood radio. A separate serial cable requires a USB to serial (DB9) adaptor, but this is easy. Some adaptors have LED lights for each line to see it working, a useful feature. The serial cable connects the Kenwood TNC modem to the base station computer. This is for APRS operation.

A PTT switch can go through another serial port (USB) and operate EchoLink like a real radio instead of the space bar. I have a big USB volume knob to control audio without the mouse. A USB audio amplifier could drive a vintage speaker. Wire a vintage desk mic through the 1/8" audio jack, and the PTT button through a serial port, and the computer is kind of like a radio. Maybe hide the computer in a vintage cabinet. This makes a great EchoLink base station to monitor the 2m repeaters, explore digital modes, maintain radios with their software, and have all the manuals handy.

Marvin, have fun with your base station computer.

*Scott K15ANQ*