



THE BARK



Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club K5FD

October 2022

Alpine, Texas

CycleFest 2022

by BBARC Members and Edited by Scott K15ANQ

This year's CycleFest newsletter article focuses on the experiences of communications team members. Several of them worked the event for the first time. This year we had over 400 riders and the weather was perfect. Net control for two decades has been Jim KD5KBU. This is Jim's last year leading the team, and Charlie N5CET trained as net control for future events, starting with the Ultra Race January 15th.

I want to point out the support by the BBARC goes beyond radio communications. There were no medical emergencies, but traffic control was an issue as noted by Gordo K5CLO. The first few stations have every rider and many do the short course, which is to turn around and retrace the beginning of the course. This is the highest vehicle traffic part of the route, too.

I hope in future years, the BBARC support takes on greater responsibility for being first responders and

traffic control. There is the additional challenge of communications with Jeff Davis emergency and law enforcement agencies. Jim is the county EMT and Fire dispatcher and has those radios at net control. Next year needs to replace those communications capabilities some how.

Sharon K15EXF's Experience

We had fun tracking certain riders. The stand up cycle person comes to mind. He made it the whole way. It was nice to be with another ham at my station. This was Brad's first time to work an event. The Lions club person was nice to get to know, too. My pictures are from the last two stations, Art, Brad, and I, gathered up with Lonny. We helped him disassemble and pack up his gear.

Brad K15OQB's Experience

For the most part, it was non-eventful at my station which is a positive thing for the riders. The Lions Club had refreshments. The Lion volunteer brought along Bailey the Dachshund which kept us all company and protected us from any bears or mountain lions. It was a



Brad K15OQB, Lonny K5LON, and Art K7VEN at Lonny's Station

good time and I plan to volunteer next year and for additional events. It was nice getting to know Sharon and getting a look at Lonny's station. I learned some things, and it was an all-around positive day and experience.

Charlie N5CET's Experience

With Jim KD5KBU retiring from net control, I worked with Jim to learn the ropes for future events. I have a list of lessons for next time. Most important is to bring some shade. There is a need to log every radio event for future reference. I ended up being the photographer working the start and finish line (the Prude Ranch). I took a lot of pictures for riders in front of the ranch entrance and met lots of nice people. One big concern for next year is a way to contact Fort Davis Dispatch for EMS and Fire. Jim had a public service radio and this will be missing next year. I needed a way to crossband as there is no radio in my truck. My HT transmit was spotty from the ranch entrance while the receive was okay. We need more volunteers next year. The event needs to put a ham with radio in each SAG vehicle. Net control never knew where they were on the course.

Lonny K5LON's Experience

At last year's CycleFest, I used the mobile radio that is mounted in my Jeep to communicate. I sat outside under a portable canopy, but every time I needed to communicate, I had to get back into the Jeep. During that event, I decided that a radio with me under the canopy was best, but not an HT, and one with a little more power.

The answer was a mobile rig, powered by a battery. So yes, I created my portable station, motivated by CycleFest.

The portable kit proved to be a great way to participate in the year's CycleFest. I was able to remain outside the vehicle during the entire event, and still remain in contact with Net Control and the other operators.

Gordo N5CLO's Experience

Jim, thanks for your many years of involvement in these various events. As a first timer, here are my general observations.

I was impressed by the amount of rider and PBBA staff appreciation expressed for our support of the event. Many individual riders and SAG vehicle drivers made a point of coming over to me and saying thanks for being out here. Even had a couple of folks ask me about amateur radio and what was involved in becoming a ham.

On the 11 mile drive from my ranch (2 miles west of Bloys/Crow's Nest) to station #1 before 8am, I noted several groups of riders already west of station #1. Clearly some began well before the normal start time from Prude Ranch. Later riders told me those are typically some of the really competitive riders that are doing the entire loop course. I guess they carry enough hydration to get to station #2 or even #3 by the time the Lions Club refreshments are set up. I'm sure they know they are on their own as regards to food, water and emergency radio support before 8am.

I do agree with the comment made by someone else that ideally we would have a radio operator in every SAG vehicle. Obviously that would be impossible without more volunteers. And it did seem to me that there were numerous SAG vehicles, and they were moving around the course a lot. When I had riders at Station #1 who needed a ride for physical or

mechanical reasons, it wasn't long until a SAG vehicle arrived either randomly or after I reported the need to net control.

Hopefully, when the new repeater atop the hill at my place is operational, we'll have much better coverage from Stations #1 to #2 and beyond on the west side of the loop up towards Sawtooth.

Station #1 was located about 1 mile east of Nine Mile Mountain on Hwy 166 and about 8 miles west of Fort Davis. The spot was good because there were two long asphalt and gravel roadside pullovers on opposite sides of the road. That was critical for safety given the amount of riders and highway traffic occurring on the early part of the course. I positioned my vehicle on the opposite side of the road from the Lions Club's refreshment table and the porta-potties. I found this advantageous since it was less noisy and easier to hear the HT, and no one asked me about the refreshments. Also easier to keep an eye out for approaching vehicular traffic.

Lions Club folks were late arriving at station #1, well after 8:00. Since I keep a big cooler in my Suburban for grocery runs and my hatch was open, early riders stopping at my station assumed I was the refreshments guy too. Fortunately I keep a bunch of water bottles in the Suburban all the time, so I started dispensing those until the Lions Club folks arrived and set up. Might be wise for station #1 and #2 hams to bring a case or two of water bottles to give out to early starters or when the Lions Club temporarily runs out of water.

Stations #1 and #2 need proportionally more food and water support than later stations given that many riders only go to Point of Rocks, Bloys Camp, or Station #2 before turning around. The Lions Club ran out of bread and peanut butter twice and were low on water, too. Only when we were able to advise other stations of this did they remedy the situation by driving more supplies to station #1. That meant we had some riders come through for a time that were temporarily nutritionally deprived.

The PBBA might want to consider deploying more toilets at stations #1 and #2 since they receive more traffic. At station #1, the first few hours often had long lines waiting to use the toilets. I relieved some of this pressure by telling male riders to cross the road and urinate in the roadside grass behind my Suburban. Many did.

Non-CycleFest vehicular traffic is a potentially serious safety issue on this section of the CycleFest course with more riders and car and truck traffic. The portion of the course between Fort Davis along 17 and 166 to the 166/505 Valentine road junction surely has a lot more local resident and through vehicular traffic than does the rest of the course. It also has a lot more riders than the rest of the course except the Prude Ranch to Fort Davis segment. Despite occupying this pullover area with at least 2 or more vehicles, portable toilets, the food and drink table, dozens of stopped riders, **it was clear some drivers had no intention of slowing down.** Some blew through station #1 at the speed limit. This sometimes included large pickups with livestock trailers attached. We were lucky if they moved to the center away from the riders, but often they did not, passing quite close to the riders. I would enter the road and wave at them to slow down. It worked sometimes. My recommendations are either to perform traffic control or advise the PBBA to talk to the Sheriff's office. There needs to be signs or radar speed trailers set to flash at speeds above 40 mph one half to one quarter mile from stations #1 and #2. Both of these precautions are done for the

Bloys Camp meeting. Radio club members may need to stand alongside the road as an incentive to slow down!

Overall, I enjoyed working CycleFest and look forward to helping again next year.

A Career as Net Control

by Jim KD5KBU

I got my Ham license in 2000 and started working events within the year - Hammerfest, Cyclefest, and Mas o Manos in particular. I believe my first time as net control was for the Hammerfest event in 2005, followed by Cyclefest in September. Hammerfest ran every year until 2011 when it was interrupted by the Rock House Fire and again in 2012 by the Livermore Complex Fire. The Permian Basin Bicycle Association was no longer interested in sponsoring the event after that, and it was not run in 2013. They weren't making expenses because there were more competing events around the state than there had been in the past. A few different promoters tried their hand at running it, but it was too difficult to organize remotely and the race eventually died. Cyclefest, however, has continued non-stop, and I have handled net control since 2005 except for 2008 when I had a stroke in July and was not up to organizing the event. I believe Bill Baker took over that year.

I have also been a part of of the Big Bend Ultra Run since the beginning. I was in the field for the first year and I think the second year I took over net control sometime around 2007/8. When the event moved to Big Bend Ranch State Park I did not participate for the first two years because of schedule conflicts but eventually went back to net control and have handled it ever since.

I enjoyed working in the field but found the net control job more interesting (and also a lot more comfortable). One needs to have a picture of the entire event and understand something about what the organizers are expecting. This information needs to be communicated to the operators in the field in order to do a good job. My experience in Fire/EMS, the ICS courses I took, and watching the Texas Forest Service put these practices to use during large fires in the county really helped. Having acquaintances and knowing many people in Jeff Davis county was the most important aspect. It meant that I knew who to call when problems arose. The ARRL Emergency Communicator (EC) program is on target when they say you need to make contacts within your served agencies, in my case it was Jeff Davis county. It's crucial when you need assistance in an emergency.

My interest in radio has always been on the technical side (the winky lights and the buttons) as well as emergency operations. I have been the EC for Jeff Davis County, I think, since 2005 and now DEC as well for region 5 in the West Texas Division. I haven't done very much to promote the ARES program here, mostly just a place holder in the organization. If I didn't have tasks that are taking up more and more of my time, I would probably continue in this aspect of ham radio. Its been great fun and extraordinarily interesting, though very hard work at times. Many changes have come about since I first started 22 years ago and it looks like changes will continue to occur with all the new technology.

BBARC News

Newsletter Revitalization

The BBARC Newsletter stopped last December, but it has now been revived. Past issues will be published.

New Meeting Time and Venue

The November meeting will be at our new venue, the Mason's building at 2300 Highway 118 North, just south of the Lost Alaskan RV park. The meeting will start 30 minutes earlier, too, at 1900 (7pm). Testing will be at 1800 (6pm). Enter the front gate and park inside the fence. Enter the middle door on the South wall, not the front door. Officers sit on the front table facing the audience.

October 11th Club Meeting

The meeting begins at 1930 (7:30pm) at the American Legion Hall, 306 W Sul Ross Ave in Alpine.

License Exams

The upcoming license exams are October 11th, November 15th, and December 13th. The exams begin at 1830 (6:30pm) at the meeting site in October, and 1800 (6pm) at the new meeting venue. Be sure to get an FRN from the FCC Universal Licensing System web site before testing.

December 14th Santa Net

Just received a message from the North Pole that Santa Net is a GO for Alpine around 5pm. Kids can talk to Santa in the luxury of the BBARC RV at the True Value parking lot. More details will be on the website and in the next newsletter.

BBARC Presentation to Alpine Lions Club

Lion Scott K15ANQ presented the BBARC to the weekly Lions Club meeting on September 20th. A slide show introduced the club, ARRL, licensing, and featured our repeater system. Five Lions have strong interest in getting a license. One, Mac Tucker, is the top paramedic in the area, does emergency medical certification classes, and law enforcement classes. Mac will be a valuable resource for creating first responders in the BBARC to work events. Hopefully, more events will be encouraged in the Big Bend Country with this added safety. Events like CycleFest and Ultra Race are the primary income to club, which was lost during the two years of the pandemic.

The presentation greatly encourages similar visits to other organizations and clubs.

BBARC at the Alpine Gun Show

For the first time in club history, the BBARC had an information table at the gun show, the primary fundraiser of the Alpine Lions Club. The BBARC table was in the center of the floor and visible with a raised sign, so seen by every attendee. The primary message was Defend Your Family, Call for Help. A large map of the repeater system was created and mounted on a target frame above the table. An HT and repeater coverage map made clear the message that only ham radio can call for help in most of Brewster, Presidio, and Jeff Davis counties.

Does a Ham Live Here?

A visit to the DMR to get Marvin KG5LMG back online with EchoLink and to see Art K7VEN's QTH made for a nice day. Art's place definitely looks like a ham lives there. Hex beam antenna on a windmill tower, welcome to West Texas.



Antennas at Art K7VEN's QTH.

BBARC 2 Meter Net

Big Bend 2-meter Net on Repeater System

The 2m net was founded July 9, 2008.

This net meets every Wednesday evening at 2000 (8pm) on the 2m repeater system. The 2m net is a controlled net format and welcomes new participants and visitors.

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

2 Meter Net September Report

Our 2 meter net is a good training ground for potential emergency situations as well as helping new hams 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 controllers's 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.

The month of September had four (4) Wednesday's, and it went this way:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check-ins</u>	<u>Net Control Station</u>
Sept. 7	24	Marvin KG5LMG
Sept. 14	20	John KI5SNZ
Sept. 21	23	Sharon KI5EXF
Sept.28	24	Chuck KA5PVB
Total	91	

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 were as follows.

<u>Station</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Times</u>
Mike KD5KC	El Paso	3
Ric K5RIC	Nogal Mesa NM	4
Lonny K5LON	Van Horn	4
Sean KD6CUB	El Paso	2
Gordo K5CLO	Alpine	2
Bob W5RHN	Crystal Falls MI	2
Fran K5FRN	Crystal Falls MI	2
Rachel KI5JTB	San Marcos TX	1
Bruce N5BBJ	Texas Coast	1
Dean WA5HMO	Alpine	1
Jerry W5MOX	Alpine	1
Joe N9JOE	Midland	1

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 happen if you were not there! Our net control stations are Marvin KG5LMG, Bob W5RHN, Scott KI5ANQ, Sharon KI5EXF, John KI5SNZ, and Chuck KA5PVB.

73,

Chuck Dobbins KA5PVB

2 Meter Net Manager

Big Bend Emergency Net 3922 kHz

The BBEN was founded September 18, 1977 by Bob WA5ROE, who was also the first net controller.

The BBEN meets every Sunday morning at 0815 (8:15am) Central Time. Early check ins are welcome starting at 700 (7am) on 80m, the 2m repeater system, and EchoLink. The net is a controlled net format and welcomes all new participants and visitors.

Emergency Net Manager...Bob WardWA5ROE
contact.....K5FD@ARRL.NET.

BBEN September Report from Bob WA5ROE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Net Control</u>	<u>Checkins</u>	<u>Mins</u>
Sep 4	WA5ROE	40	41
Sep 11	WA5ROE	54	45
Sep 18	N5CET	45	50
Sep 25	WA5ROE	46	51

Note for September 11th: 1 formal traffic passed KG5LFG to K5RIC, MAF air show KB5WTX KB5KNF, visitor Marcos N5OMV of Odessa.

Emergency Nets

Mondays7:30pm.....ARES section 3873 kHz

Sundays.....8:15amBBEN 3922kHz

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

New FCC Online Licensing System

by *Charlie N5CET*

The FCC has a new CORES system. You must create a new account as nothing was transferred from the old system.

The CORES System is about **YOU**.

The FRN System is about your **LICENSES**.

The ULS System is how you search for information.

Creating a CORES Log In

Go to this web site.

<https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>

Select **Need a Username?** then **REGISTER**.

Fill out form with your email address and create a password.
Write These Down And Save Them.

Fill in the rest of your information and select **SUBMIT**.

An email will be sent to you with a link in it. Open the email and select the link. You will now be Verified. You are done with email, so go back to the web browser and go to this page again.

<https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>

Go to **USERNAME LOGIN** and type the email and password from above, then select **LOG IN**.

Associating Your FRN with the CORES Account

Select **ASSOCIATE USERNAME TO FRN**.

Type your FRN.

Type **personal ham radio license** then select **CONTINUE**.

Your existing FRN and License(s) information will be linked to your new CORES account.

Conclusion

Now you will be able to renew, apply, and edit your existing license information. This is necessary because the new CORES System is used for the billing and payment of fees.

Everyone will need to create a new CORES account, even if you had one in the old CORES System.

From the Editor

The ability to deploy radio communication in the field by club members is a challenge in the Big Bend Country.

It is safe to guess that every club member has 2m repeater capability. The repeaters are the backbone of communications out here, with the repeaters far surpassing cell phone coverage.

The club runs a weekly 2m net on Wednesdays at 2000 (8pm). Around 20 operators check in and some contribute to the round table with news. They are also testing their equipment and the repeater system, and getting use to each other's call sign and voice. Some times a crackling call for help is a familiar voice.

Another part of the 2m band that is useful is the standard simplex frequency of 146.52 Mhz. This frequency is used for the Wilderness Protocol which asks to monitor this frequency at the top of the hour. It is on my dual band base station all the time, along with the 2m repeaters. I've made contacts with the

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BBRC Repeater System

The BBARC operates six 2m repeaters, all linked 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) from the repeater.

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, and the Prude Ranch

146.720-.....Located on Pearce Mtn, covers Alpine, US 67 (frequency is "6.7") East/North, and 118 south to Mile High Road

146.820-.....Located on Christmas Mtn, covers Terlingua, Study Butte, South County Road, Terlingua Ranch, Big Bend National Park, and Old Ore Road

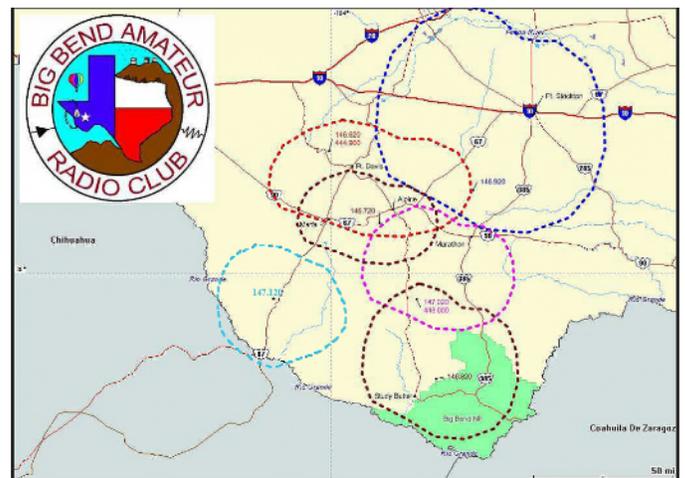
146.920-.....Located in the Glass Mountains, covers US 67 north, Alpine, Fort Stockton, I10 from picnic area 20 miles east of town to US 67 exit west of town, and Odessa

147.120+Located on the Cibolo Creek Ranch, covers Presidio, Shafter, Cibolo Creek

147.020+The system hub. Located on Elephant Mtn, covers TX 118 South of Mile High Road, O2 Flats (the "O2" frequency), and Terlingua Ranch

All repeaters require a 146.2 Hz squelch tone on your transmit signal (CTCSS). 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.



EchoLink Station K5FD-R Alpine

Access the 2m repeater system through the club's EchoLink station. Get EchoLink from echolink.org.

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club Information

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club
1402 N. 5th St.
Alpine, Texas 79830-2512
K5FD@ARRL.NET

Club Officers

PresidentCharlie TroxelN5CET
Vice-presidentLonny Hillin.....K5LON
SecretaryScott McClanahanKI5ANQ
TreasurerAngie OtoupolN5MVB

Club Information

The BBARC was founded December 17, 1974. The BBARC is a 501(C)3 organization. The club is an ARRL affiliated club since 1986.

Contributions to the club are tax deductible and can be made through the mail by check or with PayPal on the club web site.

Club expenses include the repeater equipment, the RV, the phone patch on Elephant Mountain, insurance, ARRL club membership, and the monthly meeting venue.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings are the second Tuesday of each month. Meeting location is the American Legion Hall, 306 W Sul Ross Ave (October last time), and the Mason's Building located at 2300 Highway 118 North in Alpine starting in November. Meeting time is 1930 (7:30pm) for October, and 1900 (7:00pm) starting in November.

Member Dues

Annual membership is due in January. Dues are \$36 per year for individual and spouse. Dues can be mailed to the BBARC or paid on the club web site using the **PayPal Payment** page.

The Bark Newsletter

The club newsletter is published monthly. Distribution is by email to club members and friends of the BBARC. A link to the current issue is on the home page of the club web site. Current and past issues are on the **Newsletter** page of the club web site.

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

EditorScott McClanahanKI5ANQ
contact.....KI5ANQ@ARRL.NET

Club Web Site

The BBARC web site has the following URL.

www.bigbendarc.com

The club web site contains a member exclusive area, news, events, regular reports, exam session and licensing information, BBEN reports and roster, 2m Net reports and net control schedule, repeater information, PayPal payment, and newsletter archive.

EditorScott McClanahanKI5ANQ
contact.....KI5ANQ@ARRL.NET

...From the Editor, continued from page 5

DMR, Emory Peak, and The Basin Road on the simplex frequency from my base station.

The last part of 2m is EchoLink. EchoLink is a computer application that uses the computer speakers and microphone to listen and PTT on the 2m repeater system. A ham license is required to use EchoLink. There are cell phone applications, too. The first contact after setting up the system up was Bob W5RHN driving through Iowa using his cell phone.

The idea of deploying radio communications by club members will focus on 2m and the repeaters. It is the system in place. Let's break the topic into three parts, deploying, the radio rigs, and the club member. Deploying means mobile in a vehicle and on foot. On foot has some serious requirements in this country. On foot is the easiest radio gear, the HT. Dual band is a useful option. Power of 5w is all that is needed out of an HT in most situations, plus a good antenna.

The next topic is the vehicle radio rig. This is the big topic. The mountainous terrain can block repeater access. Roads are few, and there are vast expanses of territory not near any type of road. However, it would be useful for the club to map repeater access along the roads. The radio rig can help reach repeaters with more power (50w) and better antennas. The roof mount magnetic base antenna performs great, and higher gain antennas are available.

When the vehicle is parked, a mast and base antenna with even higher gain will greatly increase reaching the repeaters. A 20' mast and base antenna is critical to deploying mobile because of the terrain.

The last capability of a parked vehicle is crossband repeater. This uses two radios, the vehicle's and the HT. The vehicle communicates with the repeater and is a repeater itself, using the 70cm band. The 70cm band is what the HT uses to transmit and receive from the vehicle's radio, which simultaneously feeds the HT the transmission to the repeater, and transmits the 2m repeater's transmission to the HT. Now the HT can roam around the vehicle, affective while in line of sight of the vehicle antenna. Multiple HTs can use the crossband repeater, too.

Next month, we will look at what type of vehicle and the emergency gear and skills of the operator.

73,

Scott KI5ANQ

Hurricane Ian

An historic event just unfolded in Florida with ARES responding immediately. Hams are asked to refrain from HF WinLink communications in the aftermath. Member Brad KI5OQB is an insurance adjuster and arbitrator. His role is unknown at this early date, but he says this is a major event and he is greatly concerned about the number of fatalities. FEMA and the state of Florida have not released many numbers yet. The storm is back over open water and has spun back up to a hurricane aimed at South Carolina.