



The STATIC

April 2018

The monthly newsletter for members and associates of the Hill Country Amateur Radio Club
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President's Message

Supporting Your Club

What does the Hill Country Amateur Radio Club mean to you? Why should you support it?

Many of us take our club for granted. We have our monthly meetings, we have interesting presentations, we put on Field Day, we have our annual Christmas party, we put on licensing classes, etc., etc. But why do we have a club and why should you support it?

We have amateur radio clubs because of the shared interests of their members. We hams naturally like to get together to swap stories, share our expertise and learn more about different aspects of our hobby. Clubs are a good way to learn how to improve your station and your on-the-air skills. If you have a particular problem or task that you need help on, such as putting up an antenna or hooking up your new rig, the club is a great place to find help.

The club sponsors social events, such as our annual Christmas party. We have on-the-air training events, such as Field Day. And we offer license upgrade classes for those wishing to upgrade. We also offer the opportunity to help our community through public service events and participation in ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service). We also have a dedicated club radio station at the Red Cross that is available for use by club members. And we maintain a local repeater system and IRLP/Echolink node, along with a Winlink packet node.

So why support your club with your dues? You could just attend our monthly meetings or show up for an event without paying your dues. No one likely would be the wiser. However, is it fair to the other hams who do support the club by paying their dues? The club incurs expenses for maintaining the repeater and the club station, maintaining our Web site and email reflector, putting on Field Day, hosting our Christmas party,

insurance for club activities, etc. The bottom line is: it costs money to run an active club, such as ours. Member dues only cover about 80% of the cost of running our club. The rest is made up from donations and surplus equipment sales. So, your dues **are** important for sustaining the many activities of the club.

Likewise, the club does not run on its own. We need people who will come up with interesting programs for our meetings and we need people to put on these programs. We need members who will help out with Field Day and setting up for our Christmas party. We need volunteers to help maintain our repeater system and club station. We need people to participate in public service events, where we help our community and help create a positive image of amateur radio in our community. We need instructors to help teach our licensing classes. We need Volunteer Examiners to conduct license exam sessions. We need people to test and sell our surplus equipment. And the list goes on. None of this happens without the help of club members who volunteer their time.

We have a good, but relatively small, group of volunteers in the club whom I can rely on to step up and help when needed. Without these volunteers, our club activities would come to a standstill. Don't assume that "the other guy (or gal)" will always be there to run an event, maintain our repeater, put on a licensing class, etc. Our active volunteers occasionally need a break or

may have other things going on in their lives that keep them from helping at a particular time. Ideally, I would like to see **all** our members participate in some way in the club's activities. If you're not currently active in helping with some aspect of the club, look for an area you can contribute to. Not every activity requires physical exertion – many involve nothing more strenuous than making phone calls or helping to plan an event. Don't think that just because you have no experience in a particular area that we can't use you. Most of our volunteers, myself included, at one time had no experience in some aspect of club operations, but we were open to helping and learning on the job. You can, too.

This is my challenge to you: support your club financially and by volunteering your time. Find an area you'd like to participate in and let me or one of our committee chairs know of your interest. As the Nike ads admonish: "**Just do it.**"

* * * * *

Speaking of volunteer activities, see elsewhere in this edition of the Static for my write up of our club's participation in the LBJ 100 bike ride. This was a fun event and gave us an opportunity to put our best face forward in helping the National Park Service with their communications needs for this event.

I hope to see you at our upcoming meeting on April 5th. For our program I'll be giving a demo of

the new FT8 digital mode that has become very popular on the HF bands

Until then, 73,
Dale - K4DG

Welcome to our Newest Members

A warm Hill Country welcome to:
David Arel

Congratulations to the new licensees & upgrades

A Hill Country Cheer for:
David Arel who successfully completed his three elements and is now an Extra Class. His call sign is KD5YQE

Committee Reports

Repeater - Curtis Eastwood AD5UZ

No news since the last report

Red Cross Liaison - Terry Hipskind WOHIP

Club Calendar

April 5th - The regular monthly meeting will be held at the Red Cross at 7pm
The program is FT-8 the New Digital Mode



A message from the Executive Director of the Hill Country Chapter

Dear Red Cross Friends,

This year was a very busy one; we provided disaster assistance to families and mobile feeding for first responders/emergency personnel fighting wildfires. We opened several Shelters throughout the Chapter for Hurricane Harvey evacuees, and opened shelters for those who were displaced due to flooding and mandatory evacuations. We also helped families throughout the Hill Country with single family fires, supplying shelter, food, clothing, medication and helping to meet other personal needs.

Through our Sound the Alarm Preparedness Campaign we installed hundreds of smoke alarms, provided fire safety training, escape, plans, and home fire education for Hill County residents.

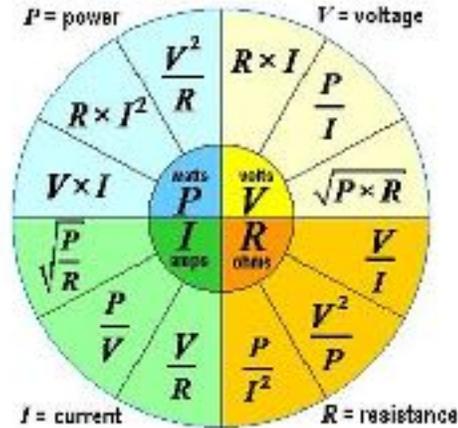
Red Cross Service to Armed Forces is a big part of what we do. Your Red Cross is very busy transmitting emergency messages between members of the United States Armed Forces and their families and providing services at the Kerrville VA Hospital and Hill Country Veterans. This assistance and support makes a great difference in the lives of our veterans. Lifesaving training in First Aid, CPR, aquatics and lifeguarding is also offered throughout our chapter Hill Country.

An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money, and blood to do its work and carry out the mission.

We simply would not be able to do all that we do without your help. Thank you for your trust and commitment to the Hill Country Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Central Texas Region. To learn more about your gift at work, please call 830-257-4677.

Jacques DuBose

VE Testing - Fred Gilmore W0LPD



Upcoming Conventions

None in our area at the present time.

Field Day is coming in June

March 2018 VE sessions started early. Our first session was actually on February 28th and the candidate, David Arel was successful in passing both elements 2 and 3 which netted him a General Ticket. His call is KD5YQE so when you hear him on the air, give him a hardy welcome to ham radio. We had AF5AO, K5HV, K5NOW, KF5AIE, as well as K5YB show up at the setting to serve as VE's if needed. Thanks guys for responding to the short notice for this session. The following week David successfully upgraded to the Extra class and is now working on becoming a VE for the Medina team which will be led by Bill, K5NOW. Thanks to K5HV, K5NOW, K5YB AND KF5AIE for helping with the second session. Our next scheduled session will be April 28th and we already have two candidates registered to upgrade.

On another note Dale, K4DG is going to be scheduling a upgrade to extra class later this year, and already has over a dozen who have registered to attend. Looks as if it will be a great year for Ham radio and for the Hill Country club.

In 2018 I will be re-compiling our membership list for the VE team. If you would like to join us, let me know and I will email you the information to become a VE. We have lost several VE's in the past couple years and have a few others who have not participated so we can use a few more who would like to help.

Fred W0LPD

ARES - Terry Hipkind W0HIP



Last weekend a number of our club members volunteered their time to provide radio support to the LBJ100 Bike Ride. A big Thank You goes out to K4DG Dale Gaudier, K5EWS Dr. Jim Lindley, W5FBG Dennis Robertson, K5SWH Steve Holloway, AF5UX Jim Jinright and AF5AO Charley Robinson. We look forward to hearing their report at the upcoming Club Meeting.

A joint Red Cross/Sheriffs Office Damage Assessment class is being planned for April. These classes are usually followed by an exercise requiring Amateur Radio support. Date to be determined.

We have been asked by the local Red Cross Chapter to provide backup communications during the Laughlin Air Force Base Air Show (May 12th & 13th). Amateur radio support will be needed at two sites; one on base site at Laughlin AFB and one off base site at the Felipe Springs Golf Club.

Club Station

RADIO ROOM UPGRADES



The Radio Room now has a new HF station. Station #3 has been set up with our newly purchased ICOM IC-7300. This station has been fully tested and is fully capable of supporting the Red Cross during times of emergency. Gary Johnson and Steve Holloway officially broke in the station with a training session. I am currently working on an operating procedure for this station which should be ready by our next club meeting.

SKYWARN - Larry Altman N5QGD



No news since the last report

Club Event Report

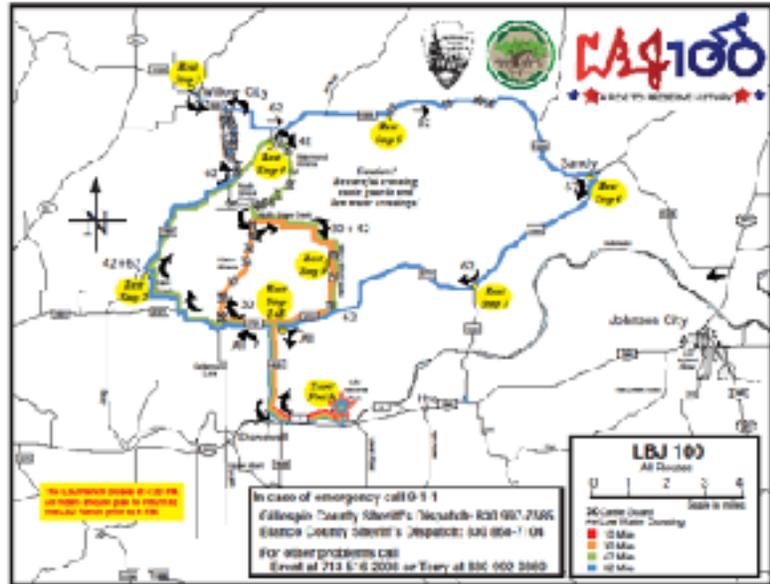
LBJ 100 Bike Ride

A group of HCARC members participated in the 11th annual LBJ 100 bike ride on Saturday, March 24th. The LBJ 100 is a fundraising event to help support the National Park Service operations at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park (aka LBJ Ranch) near Stonewall, TX. Almost 1500 riders from Texas and several other states participated. The ride features tours ranging from 10 miles to 62 miles over country roads between Fredericksburg and Johnson City.

The National Park Service contacted us a few weeks before the event seeking our participation. They wanted amateur radio operators at several of their rest stops to provide communications back to Park headquarters at the



LBJ Ranch. Some of these stops have no or marginal cell phone service and are out of range of the Park Service's radio communications system and local EMS systems. So our operators would be the primary means for emergency communications from these locations back to the Parks Service's emergency operations center (EOC). See map of the bike routes, below.



Even with the short notice, I was able to get the help of several club members who volunteered to man the rest stops. My XYL Deborah (W4FYK) graciously volunteered to help so that I would have some backup as net control.

The plan was to use the Fredericksburg repeater, W5FBG (maintained by club member Dennis Robertson) as our primary communications link. A few days before the event several of us traveled to the area to check on repeater coverage. The test was successful.

On the Friday before the event I took the club's crank-up tower out to the site at the LBJ Ranch where the event would start and finish. This is so I could set up the tower and antennas in daylight – Deborah and I needed to be at the Ranch at 7 AM the next day to get the radio equipment set up and tested before the event began at 9 AM.

We were located at the south end of the private airstrip at the ranch, next to the Park Service's EOC.

See Photos 1,2, 3 and 4.



Photo 1 - Tower Up!

Photo 2 - Net control hard at work



Photo 3 - N5HR on the air

Photo 4 - National Park Service EOC

There were staggered starts for the riders, with those on the longest (62 mile) loop going first. See Photos 5-8.



Photo 5 - The starting and finish line
Photo 6 - First group ready to go!



Photo 7 - And they're off!
Photo 8 - Some of the 1500 riders

I brought along two 2 meter mobile radios: one was mine and another I had borrowed from the club's surplus inventory. Both put out around 50 watts. I also brought my homebrew 2 meter 4 element beam (13.1 dBi gain) and a Comet GP-9 omnidirectional dual-band vertical (8.5 dBi gain on 2 meters). The beam was connected to one radio and aimed at the W5FBG repeater. I achieved full quieting into the repeater. The other radio was connected to the vertical. It also achieved full quieting into the repeater. The plan was to use the link to the repeater for our primary communications to the rest stops, with the vertical and second radio for simplex communications from my base to a rest stop if the link from the repeater was poor or the repeater went down for some reason. After polling the stations at the various rest stops we found the repeater link was best for everyone, so the simplex setup was left only as a backup.

Our volunteers were:

Dale Gaudier, K4DG
Deborah Gaudier, W4FYK
Dr. Jim Lindley, K5EWS
Dennis Robertson, W5FBG
Steve Holloway, K5SWH
Jim Jinright, AF5UX
Charley Robinson, AF5AO

I worked the base station and acted as net control. We used the club's call sign, N5HR, for the base station. My XYL, Deborah, was my

backup and helped deliver messages to the Park Service EOC when needed. We also had our dog, Gracie (aka the “DX Dog”) with us. See Photo 9.



Photo 9 - Gracie the DX Dog

The other stations were spread out along the bike routes, with the station furthest from the repeater (Rest Sop #6) just in range.

Our operators monitored the riders and kept a headcount as they passed through the rest stops. This helped the Park Service keep track of the progress of the riders along the various routes. We also had several calls for help along the routes, including one serious incident that required dispatch of EMS. Most of the riders were back around 2 PM, with the stragglers being swept up by the SAG wagons that followed the riders along their routes.

Since our base station was adjacent to the Park Service’s EOC trailer they were able to overhear our communications. The Park employees in charge of monitoring the event were uniformly praiseworthy of our operation – they felt we were very professional

and were very pleased with our ability to fill in the gaps in their communications systems. The best praise, though, was their enthusiastic request that we help them with this event next year.

My thanks again to all who responded and came out to help with this event. I am hoping we can get a much bigger turnout of club members for this event next year. This was a fun and “easy” event and a great way to help out our community and act as ambassadors for amateur radio.

73,

Dale – K4DG

President - HCARC



License Study Class - Dale Gaudier K4DG

Stay tuned for upcoming announcements regarding licensee study classes.

If you are interested or know someone who is, please contact Dale.

Contact Dale Gaudier at k4dg@arrl.net



The following story is taken from the HamTestOnline web site. The link to the actual article is at the end of the story.



Christina's Story by Christina Cunningham, KT1NA

Christina and John operate the HamTestOnline ham radio license courses website. Until I met my husband, John, W1AI, my only exposure to ham radio was a brief visit to a ham radio store back in 1974, where the owner said, "Little girl, there's too much math, and you would have to learn Morse code. Just buy a CB radio."

Jump to 2012, and I find myself engaged to the owner of the HamTestOnline™ website, which helps people pass the FCC ham radio license exams. I wanted to help him with the website, but he says I would have to have a ham radio license first. I'm thinking, "Uh-oh, math and Morse code! Run away!" But we're engaged, so running is not an option. So I have to tell my then-fiancé that I am completely Lousy (with a capital L) at math and not sure I could learn Morse code. I'm in some real hot water here.

But wait, I'm saved! He explains that the Morse code provision was dropped in 2007 *phew!*, and you can basically skip all of the math-related questions on the exams and still pass the exams *double phew!*. With those obstacles cleared, I decide to go for all three — Tech, General and Extra — at once. He's telling me his courses are that good, so I figure, what the heck, I

might as well start at the top rung. For me, I'm also testing his course. Let's see if this website is as good as he says it is!



Christina studied just 62 hours in a 6-week period. We picked an exam date 6 weeks out. My first thoughts were "OK, now I've stuck my neck out. I hope I can do this!" John wanted to help, but I said, "No, I want to be a regular user, no assisting allowed." I used an iPad to study for portability.

I started with just the Tech topics turned on. Hey, this is fun! I remember some of the Ohm's Law, current and voltage stuff from 37 years ago, then I realize I've forgotten most of it. But wait! This website is giving me the basics, and when I get it wrong, it's bringing back those questions a lot sooner than the ones I got right! I'll be doggoned, it does know me. Just like the slogan. I'm thinking, "Holy mackerel, where was this software when I was in high school trying to learn math?!?"

I got to about 70% on the Tech course, left those topics on and then turned on the General topics. I studied approximately one hour a day Monday thru Friday (I had a full time 40 hour outside job). I studied on weekends too, as much as I could, sometimes 6-8 hours. Busy or not, I had a deadline.

All this time, my exam date was looming. I got to 70% on the General and turned the Extra topics on. When I got to 90% on all three, four days before my exam, I was really confident. My exam was set for a Saturday night, 7:00 pm. I had stayed in Study mode up until this point, but now I took 4 practice exams to be sure I was ready, and then went right back to Study mode!

John drove me to the exam session, and I studied on the iPhone the whole way there. There were a lot of volunteer examiners in the exam room, I'd say as many

as there were people testing. I had read about noisy sessions, so I brought my earplugs. I was so glad I did!

So happy to have my Extra license! John is also a VE, so he signed in as well. Of course, he would not be scoring my tests. I got the Tech exam and was not used to seeing the questions on paper. It was quickly not a big deal, because I could see the answers sticking out on the page in my mind. This might be easy! I finished the Tech with confidence and waited for my score. John was sitting next to the volunteer examiner who scored my exam, and eventually he gave me a big thumbs up!

The examiner congratulated me and asked if I wanted to take the *General* exam. "Of course!" So same thing, filling in the circles, this one was a bit more challenging, a little more math. I guessed those rather than leaving them blank. Turned it in, waited... waited... agony... and another thumbs up and congratulations!

"Do you want to go for the extra?" the examiner asked. You know I said yes, I'd just spent 62 hours over six weeks studying! Someone asked me if I'd studied, and I said, "Oh yeah." So. Deep breath, last time, filling in the answers, a little bit tougher than the *General*.

It seemed to take forever to get the score on this last one. It was all in slow motion from here. John's thumb went up, the whole room was congratulating me, and John was hugging me all at once. I'd done it!!!! Woo Hoo!

The room was buzzing, and the examiner who scored my exams said that in twenty years as a volunteer examiner, this was only the second time he'd seen someone pass all three in one session! Then he asked me, "What book did you use," and I said, "There's a book? All I used was HamTestOnline!".

Every VE in that room was gob-smacked at my accomplishment. I remember there were some General-class VE's there who seemed to think if I could do it, they could too. **John let them know that HamTestOnline gives free Extra courses to active VEs who hold General or Advanced class licenses.**

What a great night. I passed all three! Now I could use my new Extra license to talk around the world, join my CERT group ham radio team, and work on the website with my fiancé. Also, I was lucky enough to get the vanity call sign I applied for — John said I could get a shorter 1x2 (like his, W1AI), but I really really like mine because it spells my name, so I'm keeping it.

So there you have it, folks. I am living proof that HamTestOnline works! This is a serious case of, "If I can do it, anybody can do it." It's so exciting because it opens up a whole new world to a lot of people who might not otherwise be able to pass the exams (raising hand)! I know you can do this. Come on in, the water's fine!



Christina, KT1NA
General Manager, HamTestOnline
Extra Class Accredited Volunteer Examiner

Link to article on the web: <https://www.hamradiolicenseexam.com/christina-extra-class-ham-license-story.htm>

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Fred W0LPD
[Fred and Editor]. We look forward to receiving Reader's Comments on this or any radio topic. We can have a Comments and Q & A section in the newsletter to continue the discussion. Please email the Editor (my address is at the end of the newsletter)

Other Radio News

Program Calendar

April – FT8 - Dale Gaudier K4DG; confirmed

May – Receiving Antennas - John H. AC4CA;
confirmed

June – Field Day; confirmed

July – Field Day Wrap up; confirmed

Aug – DX Basics, especially for new Hams -
Lew K. W5LEW; pending

Sept – Possible. Radio 80 years ago by Bill
Tynan W3XO; pending

October – RTTY presentation By Kerry
Sandstrom K5KS; confirmed

November – EME Basics. Suggested by Warren
S. KG5NPV; pending

December – Christmas Party; confirmed



HCARC General Information

Repeater: N5HR 146.98(-) Tone 162.2
General Meeting: First Thursday of every month except December at 7pm at the American Red Cross, 333 Earl Garrett, Kerrville, TX. Meet & Greet begins at 6pm
Club Net: Every Monday at 7pm on the N5HR Repeater
Website: www.kerrhams.org
Email Reflector: To sign up go to http://www.kerrhams.org/general_misc.html
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hillcountryARC>
Officers:
President: Dale Gaudier K4DG k4dg@arrl.net
Vice President: Gary Johnson N5BAA n5baa@hctc.net
Treasurer: Dennis Robertson W5FBG robertson@ctesc.net
Secretary: Johanna Bruns KG5PBS kvhome@windstream.net
Static Editor: Starr Center KI5SC starr@arrl.net

The HCARC is an ARRL affiliated club

RC & ARES photos by T. Hipskind
Cover and others by A. Bronder

The Radio Amateur's Code

The Radio Amateur is:

+CONSIDERATE...He/She never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

+LOYAL...He/She offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, the IARU Radio Society in his/her country, through which Amateur Radio in his/her country is represented nationally and internationally.

+PROGRESSIVE...He/She keeps his/her station up to date. It is well-built and efficient. His/Her operating practice is above reproach.

+FRIENDLY...He/She operates slowly and patiently when requested; offers friendly advice and counsel to beginners; kind assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the marks of the amateur spirit.

+BALANCED...Radio is a hobby, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

+PATRIOTIC...His/her station and skills are always ready for service to country and community.