



The STATIC

November 2017

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

Elections count. You've heard this before, but elections do count, whether at the national, state or local levels – even for something as humble as your local radio club. We will be having club officer elections at our upcoming meeting on November 2nd. I encourage all members to come to the meeting and let your voice be heard. You will find a list of the current candidates for each of our four offices elsewhere in this month's Static.

Any licensed member of the club is eligible to run for any office. If you are interested in running for a position, please send your information (name, call, position you are interested in, and a brief statement of why you are running) to me by Wednesday, Nov. 1st, so I can circulate this to the other club members.

Also, keep in mind that there are numerous other volunteer opportunities to help your club. These range from committee chairs, such as VE testing, ARES coordinator, SKYWARN coordinator, to running the Monday night 2 meter net, providing snacks for our monthly club meetings, setting up for Field Day or helping with our annual Christmas party. Please consider volunteering to help out with one of these activities. As the saying goes: "Many hands make light work".

Speaking of activities, it is interesting how quickly the new FT8 mode has taken to the airwaves. Reports are that there are currently more FT8 submissions to ARRL Logbook of the World than current CW and SSB submissions combined. FT8 is a digital mode that is an offshoot of the JT9 and JT65 weak signal modes developed by Dr. Joe Taylor K1JT (Nobel Prize winner in astrophysics). I've played with this mode and it is amazingly sensitive and relatively fast – a QSO can be completed in around 90 seconds. Worldwide QSOs can be made at 5 watts on a simple dipole. I'm planning on having an upcoming club presentation on this mode.

Finally, please mark your calendars for the HCARC Christmas Party on December 2nd. See the announcement elsewhere in the Static for details.

I hope to see you at our meeting on November 2nd.

73,
Dale - K4DG

Club Calendar

November 2nd - Regular Club Meeting at the Red Cross Building 7pm
There will be a DXpedition video of a trip to the Antarctic after the business meeting

November 4th - General Upgrade Class at the Red Cross Building 9am

December 2nd - Annual holiday dinner in Ryan Hall at the Presbyterian Church starting at High Noon

Welcome to our Newest Members

A warm Hill Country welcome to:
There are no new members since the last report

Congratulations to the new licensees & upgrades

A Hill Country Cheer for:
There were no upgrades since the last report

Committee Reports

Repeater - Curtis Eastwood AD5UZ

No new news since the last report



Red Cross Liaison - Terry Hipkind W0HIP



Since Hurricane Harvey made landfall on Aug. 23, 2017, the American Red Cross has provided more overnight stays in shelters than we did in the last five years combined; provided more snacks and meals than we did in the last four years; and deployed more staff and volunteers than we did over the last five years. The totals since Harvey made landfall:

- 1.3 million overnight stays (Red Cross and Red Cross partnered shelters)
- 6.7 Million Meals and Snacks
- 3.8 Million Disaster Emergency Supplies
- 193k Health and Mental Health contacts

- 190 Million Dollars of Direct Assistance

We currently have 525 volunteers still involved with Hurricane Harvey, one open shelter with 183 stays, one active kitchen and 2 open warehouses.

The Hill Country Chapter continues to install smoke detectors in Kerrville homes as part of the Red Cross Fire Campaign. Last weekend this Chapter worked with the Kerrville and Fredericksburg Fire Departments and the Texas Forest Service installing approximately 600 fire alarms. Although the battery may be good or the alarm is hard wired, smoke alarms are only good for 10 years. Check your alarms.

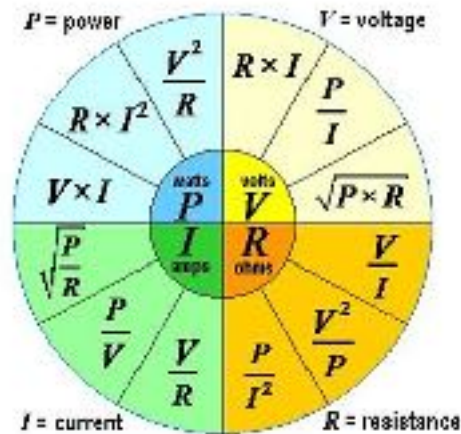
No major wildfires in our area to date, but I have been at several home fires. Cold weather will soon be here and with the change in weather, the number of home fires and carbon monoxide poisonings will increase. Now is the time to have your home heating systems checked by professionals.



VE Testing - Fred Gilmore W0LPD

Upcoming
Conventions

TBD



In October, 2017 we did not have a VE session. However our next session will be on November 18th, immediately after Dale, K4DG finishes up his “upgrade” class. Hopefully this class will be as successful as his “Get Your Ticket” class a few months back. We will start our VE Session at 1:00 PM at the Red Cross building, 333 Earl Garrett Street, Kerrville, the same place as our club meets. We will take walk in candidates so if you want to test for any class license or upgrade come on down.

On a sadder note, Neil Kern, W9CNC who was one of our VE volunteers passed away on October 12. Neil participated in 39 VE sessions while a member of the Hill Country ARC. He will be missed.

In January 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.

ARES - Terry Hipkind W0HIP



No training or deployments took place during the month of October.

We have been asked by the UbarU Youth Ranch to set up a radio shack on their property. They are asking for our expertise in designing a radio room containing four UHF and one VHF/UHF stations for introducing the youth to Amateur Radio. More information will be given at the November club meeting.



SKYWARN - Larry Altman N5QGD

No new news since the last report.

Announcement – November Meeting

The next meeting of the Hill Country Amateur Radio Club will be Nov. 2, 2017 at the American Red Cross.

Business meeting will start at 7:00pm.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

As part of our November club business meeting on Nov. 2nd we will be electing club officers for 2018. The following candidates have indicated their intention to run for the following offices:

President – Dale Gaudier K4DG

Vice-President – Gary Johnson N5BAA

Treasurer – Dennis Robertson W5FBG

Secretary – Johanna Bruns KG5PBS

Any current licensed club member may run for any of these offices. If you are interested, please email me at k4dg@arrl.net, with your name, callsign, office you'd like to run for, and a brief statement of why you are running. Please send this to me by 5pm on Wednesday Nov. 1st so I can circulate it to club members and put your name on the candidate list.

I hope to see you there.

73,
Dale - K4DG



License Study Class - Dale Gaudier K4DG



General Class Upgrade Course

I will be offering a General Class upgrade class this November. If you are a Tech license holder, this class is for you. By upgrading to General, you will have operating privileges on every HF band. It is the single-best and most cost-effective thing you can do to expand your amateur radio operating horizons.

When: November 4, 11 and 18 from 9am to 3pm

Where: American Red Cross, Kerrville

Cost: \$30 for the course (not including the exam fee, which will be \$15).

The course book will be the **ARRL General Class License Manual, Eighth Edition**, available for around \$25-30 on Amazon, the ARRL store and other sites.

There is a scheduled VE test session beginning at 1PM on the 18th where you can take the General class license exam. As a reminder, if you pass the exam you will be able to use your new General class privileges immediately.

Please contact me as soon as possible to let me know if you would like to attend this class. I will then send you further details about the class and the planned syllabus.

Contact Dale Gaudier at k4dg@arrl.net



Some Morse Code History

In 1836, Samuel Morse demonstrated the ability of a telegraph system to transmit information over wires. The information was sent as a series of electrical signals. Short signals are referred to as dits (represented as dots). Long signals are referred to as dahs (represented as dashes). With the advent of radio communications, an international version of Morse code became widely used.

Morse code relies on precise intervals of time between dits and dahs, between letters, and between words.

The speed of transmitting Morse code is measured in WPM (words per minute). The word "Paris" is used as the standard length of a word. To transmit the word "Paris" requires 50 units of time. If you transmitted the word "Paris" 5 times, you would be transmitting at 5 WPM. An experienced Morse code operator can transmit and receive information at 20-30 WPM.



Morse code speed is measured in words per minute (wpm) or characters per minute (cpm). Characters have differing lengths because they contain differing numbers of dots and dashes. Consequently, words also have different lengths in terms of dot duration, even when they contain the same number of characters. For this reason, a standard word is helpful to measure operator transmission speed. "PARIS" and "CODEX" are two such standard words. Operators skilled in

Morse code can often understand ("copy") code in their heads at rates in excess of 40 wpm.

In addition to knowing, understanding, and being able to copy the standard written alpha-numeric and punctuation characters or symbols at high speeds, skilled high speed operators must also be fully knowledgeable of all of the special unwritten Morse code symbols for the standard Prosigns for Morse code and the meanings of these special procedural signals in standard Morse code communications protocol.

International contests in code copying are still occasionally held. In July 1939 at a contest in Asheville, North Carolina in the United States Ted R. McElroy set a still-standing record for Morse copying, 75.2 wpm. William Pierpont N0HFF also notes that some operators may have passed 100 wpm. By this time, they are "hearing" phrases and sentences rather than words. The fastest speed ever sent by a straight key was achieved in 1942 by Harry Turner W9YZE (d. 1992) who reached 35 wpm in a demonstration at a U.S. Army base. To accurately compare code copying speed records of different eras it is useful to keep in mind that different standard words (50 dot durations versus 60 dot durations) and different interword gaps (5 dot durations versus 7 dot durations) may have been used when determining such speed records. For example, speeds run with the CODEX standard word and the PARIS standard may differ by up to 20%.

Today among amateur operators there are several organizations that recognize high-speed code ability, one group consisting of those who can copy Morse at 60 wpm. Also, Certificates of Code Proficiency are issued by several amateur radio societies, including the American Radio Relay

League. Their basic award starts at 10 wpm with endorsements as high as 40 wpm, and are available to anyone who can copy the transmitted text. Members of the Boy Scouts of America may put a Morse interpreter's strip on their uniforms if they meet the standards for translating code at 5 wpm.

In an emergency, Morse code can be sent by improvised methods that can be easily "keyed" on and off, making it one of the simplest and most versatile methods of telecommunication. The most common distress signal is SOS -- three dots, three dashes, and three dots -- internationally recognized by treaty.

The preceding is from <http://www.wryvmuseum.org/morsecodehistory.htm> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morse_code#User_proficiency if you would like to learn more.

Fred W0LPD

-30-

Other Radio News

December Club Meeting

Just a reminder that there will be NO regular club meeting on December 7th. Please come join us for fun and fellowship at our Christmas Part on December 2nd. Regular club meetings will resume on Jan. 4th.



Club Christmas Party

Come and enjoy food and fellowship with other club members as we ring in the holiday season at our annual club Christmas Party! The party will be held on Saturday Dec. 2 beginning at noon. We will be at Ryan Hall at First Presbyterian Church, 800 Jefferson St., Kerrville. The club will provide meats and drinks – we ask that each family bring a covered dish of some sort to share. Also, please bring a non-perishable food item for donation to CAM. Please RSVP to Marilyn, KE5DDR, at mampaw@stx.rr.com to let her know how many people will be in your group so we can plan accordingly. Marilyn also has requested several volunteers to help set up tables and food set up. Please contact Marilyn if you can help.

SPECIAL JANUARY MEETING SPEAKER

Gerald Youngblood, K5SDR CEO of Flex Radio Systems has agreed to visit us on January 4th at our club meeting to give us an inside look on the the world of Software Defined Radio. (SDR). He will be explaining in depth what SDR is, how it works, and why it is the cutting edge technology in Ham Radio design. Looking at the Sherwood receiver rankings well over half of the top 14 ranked radios are SDR, and this does not include Flex's new radios (6400/6400M and 6600/6600M) nor Icom's new IC-7610. Rob Sherwood's presentation at the Xenia Hamfest this past year was completely about SDR being a seminal change in how radios are designed. The Kendall Area Radio Club (KARS) have been invited to

come as have members of the South Texas DX and Contesting Club (STXDXCC).

The meeting will be held in the meeting/banquet room at Buzzie's BBQ. Actual meeting time may have to be slightly earlier to accommodate Buzzie's business hours, but I have been assured they will let us stay as late as 9pm. Please tell your friends and other club members so we get a big turnout for this meeting. The meeting room can accommodate up to 90 people. While we don't expect that number, a really big turnout is hoped for. It's not often that a small club like ours can attract speakers of this quality.

Knowledge gained from this meeting will help us decide on the type of new radio for the club to purchase.

Gary N5BAA

ARRL ANNOUNCEMENTS

CW Gets the Message Through in Wake of Hurricane Irma

Any CW operator worth his or her salt will tell you that CW is the mode that gets through when all others fall short of the mark. CW certainly did the job for Chet Hogue, N3BK, who handled dozens of messages for residents of Florida's Lower Keys in the days following Hurricane Irma in September.

"A message from a Big Pine Key man to his girlfriend, who evacuated with their young daughter and was waiting to hear how he weathered the storm, was one of about 80 sent out over the airwaves by ham radio enthusiast Chet Hogue in the days following Irma's destruction," reporter Katie Atkins wrote in *The Keynoter* in [describing](#) Hogue's activity.



Chet Hogue, N3BK. [Photo courtesy of Chet Hogue, N3BK]

"Things here are still incredibly a mess!" Hogue told ARRL this week.

The Summerland Key charter captain, known as "Captain Chester," weathered the storm in place. He noted that the primary frequencies handling traffic were quite busy, so he got on CW, which, he told Atkins, allowed him "to relay messages clearly." He operated from a station at his home as well as from his boat.

According to the news report, Hogue would transmit message traffic gathered from residents trying to get in touch with family and friends outside the area. He urged anyone interested in Amateur Radio to visit the ARRL website. "It's just neat, this system," he told Atkins. "With a piece of wire and a car battery, you can talk around the world."

Hogue told ARRL that he "escaped" to the Keys in 2010 after recovering from an injury suffered in a vehicle accident. "I haven't been active in some time, but have kept my 'bug-out bag' ready for just this situation," he said. "[This] was my first emergency, as it was for many who passed traffic for me."

Hogue's father -- also Chester -- is N3VA, and his dad and some of his friends got him interested in Amateur Radio. Hogue entered the military as a teenager and, he said, realized the vital importance of communication.

Hogue used a 100 W radio powered from deep-cycle marine batteries, a G5RV antenna on shore and a fiberglass vertical antenna on his charter boat. He kept a handwritten log on a piece of cardboard.

"This is a good reason for all of us to learn CW and use it on the bands, and become skilled at sending and receiving CW," remarked Whitey Doherty, K1VV, a CW stalwart who shared the news story with ARRL Headquarters. -- *Thanks to "Captain Chester" Hogue, N3BK, The Keynoter, and Whitey Doherty, K1VV*

From the ARRL Letter for October 26, 2017

Contesting Calendar

[from contestcalendar.com](http://contestcalendar.com)

Some upcoming contests:

04Nov: ARRL EME Contest
04Nov: ARRL Sweepstakes CW Contest
10Nov: NCCC RTTY Sprint
10Nov: WAE DX RTTY Contest
12Nov: 10-10 Int. Fall Digital Contest
12Nov: Kentucky QSO Party
12Nov: North American SSB Sprint Contest
17Nov: YO Int. PSK31 Contest
19Nov: Homebrew and Old-time Equip. Party
20Nov: ARRL Sweepstakes SSB Contest
22Nov: RSGB 80M Autumn SSB Series
25Nov: CQ Worldwide DX CW Contest
30Nov: RSGB 80M Autumn CW Series

What's your version of the next generation of ham radio?

june 10, 2017 by [dan kb6nu](#)



Amazon Echo In a recent episode of **Ham Radio Now**, Gary, KN4AQ, chides Jason, KC5HWB, of **Ham Radio 2.0**, about the name of his podcast. Gary thinks that we're up to at least version 4.0 by now. (I don't remember the exact episode. Maybe Gary can comment on this.)

Whatever the next version number really is, things certainly are changing. Recently, for example, someone commented on my [Twitter feed](#), that he was seeing lots of digital activity on 20m, but little or no SSB or CW activity. That's certainly to be expected in the future. For whatever reason, new hams —both young and old—don't seem to be ragchewers. (Coincidentally, or maybe not, it's odd that the next generation of ham radio will have such a big social media, i.e. Twitter, component.)

I'm just going to throw out some ideas here, and then hopefully, get some ideas back from you:

- Voice control. I've become enamored with my [Amazon Echo](#). I listen to radio stations on it, I ask for spellings of words, and I'd play music on it if I'd popped for the more expensive version with better speakers. It's pretty amazing technology. What I'd like to do is develop a box that would allow me to control my HF rig. I want to be able to say, "Alexa: Set IC-7300 to 7.027 MHz, CW mode," and have that happen.
- Artificial intelligence. Amazon is, I'm sure, using artificial intelligence techniques to do speech recognition. Can the use of AI to demodulate signals be far behind? Not only that, I'd guess that AI could be used to select an appropriate frequency/channel/mode in the first place.
- JT9, JT65. I'd like to see an extension of these modes to allow some real communication. I don't see why this isn't possible, except, I guess, that this code isn't open source. Is anyone working on an open source version? Are any extensions being considered?

From [KB6NU.com](#) Ham Radio Blog



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 Garret, 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: Robert Russell KF5AIE timberr66@hotmail.com
Static Editor: Starr Center KI5SC starr@arrl.net

The HCARC is an ARRL affiliated club

Inside photo by A. Center

RC & ARES photos by T. Hipkind

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.