



The STATIC

September 2017

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

I'm writing this just a few days after Hurricane Harvey has made landfall on the Texas Gulf coast. We won't know the full scope of the disaster for weeks, but it appears the storm and its subsequent flooding will go down in the books as the worst natural disaster to hit Texas. Our prayers go out to the families and loved ones affected by the storm.

I lived in Houston for twelve years – just one block from Buffalo Bayou - so I know the vagaries of

storms and the potential for flooding in the Houston area. We survived two hurricanes (Rita and Ike) and one bad tropical storm (Allison in 2001) but never saw anything like the deluge and flooding Houston is suffering under from Harvey. Our old neighborhood is underwater. People are stranded in their homes, some on their roofs. The 911 system is overwhelmed. First responders must use boats or helicopters to rescue people.

What can we here in Kerrville do? The Salvation Army and Red Cross can both use your donations – money is best as this allows them to allocate their purchases for needed items. Folks from the affected areas may need someplace to stay temporarily once the waters recede and it's safe to leave Houston. It will take months for damage assessment and cleanup before people can even start the process of rebuilding their homes and their lives.

The flooding in Houston is a sobering reminder to those of us who live here in the beautiful Texas Hill Country. If the path of Harvey had gone just a bit more to the northwest we could have seen a foot or more of rainfall here along with strong winds. I have three low water crossings between my ranch and Highway 16 – it doesn't take much rain to make them impassable.

Now is a good time to review your emergency plan (you do have a plan, don't you?) including your communications options in the event of a natural disaster. How would you let others know if you were in danger if the landlines, internet and cell phone system were down and the power was out? Is your HT charged up? Do you have a way

to charge it if the power goes out? Do you have a way to communicate outside the local area? How would you let loved ones know you're OK? Would you have enough non-perishable food on hand to last until the waters receded? Do you have a portable generator and sufficient gas to run it for several days? Where is high ground? Are your valuable papers stored safe from rising water or fire? Do you know what to do if the water is rising around your home?

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On a related note, by now you should know by now that our club meeting scheduled for Sept. 7th has been postponed. The Red Cross has told us that they will be using both classrooms for operations related to Hurricane Harvey relief at least through Sept. 11th. I will send out an email announcement and post an update on our Facebook page once I know when we can reschedule our meeting.

* * * * *

On a lighter note, my family and I had a great time viewing the total solar eclipse on August 21st from a location in eastern Wyoming. We had perfect weather and the eclipse was spectacular. See elsewhere in The Static for my brief story about the eclipse and a sampling of the photos I took.

73,
Dale - K4DG

Club Calendar

Watch for the announcement for the rescheduled regular club meeting. TBD

Welcome to our Newest Members

A warm Hill Country welcome to:
No new members to report

Congratulations to the new licensees & upgrades

A Hill Country Cheer for:
No new licensees to report

Committee Reports

Repeater - Curtis Eastwood AD5UZ

No new news since the last report

Red Cross Liaison - Terry Hipskind W0HIP

No news since the last report

The Hill Country Chapter, as I am sure you are aware, has been very busy responding to the disaster caused by Hurricane Harvey. I would like to express thanks and appreciation for ALL the work that they all do to bring aid and support to those in need during this disaster and the subsequent recovery from it.

Starr KI5SC

ARES - Terry Hipskind W0HIP

There is no current report on activities this month. Everyone is very busy responding to the Hurricane Disaster. Updates will be forthcoming in the future after everyone is through supporting the recovery efforts.



SKYWARN - Larry Altman N5QGD

No new news since the last report.

Announcement – New Ham Support Coordinator Appointed

Clay Lambert, W5CHL, has agreed to take on the role of New Ham Support Coordinator.

Newly licensed hams have been primarily immersed in learning the technical aspects of the hobby. In this new position, Clay will design and implement programs focused more on the practical, by identifying resources to

help new hams navigate the vast amount of information about the numerous aspects of our hobby.

We expect this will include organizing classes to help newcomers with getting their station up and running and learning a bit more about actual operation.

In this capacity, Clay will be updating the clubs Elmer list, and coordinating Elmer's (mentors) to advise and help new hams on an as-needed basis.

If you are interested in helping out with this program or if you are newly licensed and would like some assistance, please contact Clay at claysonlambert@gmail.com.

Thanks again to Clay for stepping forward and offering to help our newly licensed club members.



I am carrying this announcement over for another month to give all of our new members and licensees a continuing opportunity to avail themselves of any assistance they may need in getting up and running on the airwaves as new Amateur Radio operators. Again a hearty Hill Country welcome to all of you with best wishes for you all in finding the information and assistance that you need to enjoy your new hobby in Amateur Radio.

Starr KI5SC



License Study Class - Dale Gaudier K4DG

No training classes were scheduled in August. I am considering putting on a General class license upgrade class this fall if there is enough interest by our members. If you're interested in taking this class, send me an email at k4dg@arrl.net and I will add you to my list. Once I get enough students I will send out more information and organize class dates.

Contact Dale Gaudier at k4dg@arrl.net

Other Radio News

The Solar Eclipse 2017– Dale K4DG



Many of you know my other hobby is astronomy. One of my favorite celestial events is a total solar eclipse. I've had the privilege of observing totality four previous times from various parts of the world. It is a truly amazing and awe-inspiring sight!

My family and I decided earlier this year to travel to eastern Wyoming to observe the eclipse that occurred on August 21st. The path of totality started just south of Portland, Oregon, and finished at Charleston, SC. We picked eastern Wyoming because the weather prospects appeared best there for mid-August. Our viewing site was at Glendo Lake State Park in Wyoming. Glendo is about 100 miles north of Cheyenne, off I-25. We were staying in a hotel in Cheyenne because everything within 200 miles of the eclipse path had been fully booked over six months ago.

Our viewing site was a large field next to a lake. There were several thousand other people at this site during the eclipse. Originally, Wyoming State Parks had issued a limited number of entry permits for the park for eclipse day (we had a permit), but later announced they were opening up the park to the general public. Because of this we decided to leave early from our hotel in Cheyenne so we could get into the park ahead of the expected rush later in the morning. We left at

3:00AM and made it to Glendo at 4:30AM when the park opened. Traffic was heavy on I-25 but moving at the 80 mph speed limit. When we arrived there were already several hundred cars and RVs who had stayed overnight in the park. We also saw hundreds of cars parked outside the park - presumably with people who had arrived early and slept in their cars.

We set up our viewing area around dawn. The skies were clear with temperatures in the upper 50s. I had brought along a double camera mount to photograph the eclipse and a separate tripod and camera to take a movie during totality. Most of the morning was taken up with getting my equipment set up, cameras focused and everything checked out. I had automated my camera equipment so I could enjoy watching the eclipse visually. During the partial phases of the eclipse I used special solar filters to cut down the light from the sun. We also had special eclipse glasses for safe direct viewing of the sun before and after totality.

First contact was at 10:24am MDT. This is when the Moon's limb first starts to cover up the Sun. The photography plan was to take still pictures every 10 minutes during the partial phases until about 10 minutes before second contact (the beginning of totality at 11:45am MDT). Then to take pictures once a minute until 10 seconds before totality, when the protective filters could be safely removed. During the eclipse both cameras were taking a series of bracketed exposures every 5 seconds to be sure I caught all the interesting details during totality. I also took a movie of the viewing site from just before totality until just after totality. Totality lasted almost 2-1/2 minutes. All my equipment worked flawlessly. I've attached a small sample of the pictures I took. I'll have more at the next club meeting and will show the movie I made, too. You can view the movie on YouTube at this link: <https://youtu.be/FEhS-qUadJs>

If you've never been to an eclipse, there are some interesting things to observe. First, the light gets an eerie cast to it the closer you get to totality. It is a bluish light somewhat like you would see late on a clear winter day. The temperature begins to drop. In the last two minutes before totality you can see the shadow of the Moon on the sky as it rushes across the Earth from the west. The light begins to dim, just as if a giant light dimmer were being used on the Sun. All of this is shown in the video I took. In the last few seconds before totality you can see the diamond ring effect, where the last tiny bit of Sun

is exposed like an arc-lamp between the craters at the edge of the Moon. During totality the Sun's corona - the superheated outer atmosphere of the Sun - is visible. Sometimes you will see small beads of light around the Moon just after totality begins and just before it ends. These are the so-called Bailey's Beads, which are parts of the Sun peeking through gaps in the craters around the edge of the Moon. There is also an amazing 360° sunset surrounding your viewing area.

Each eclipse I've seen is different. For this eclipse the most prominent thing was the beautiful pearly white corona that extended out at least three solar diameters. It was immediately obvious and quite striking with a very detailed structure visible to the naked eye. My unprocessed photos only show a little bit of what was visible to my eyes.

It seemed to be over all too quickly: 2 minutes and 28 seconds of totality.

Once totality was over there was a mad dash by many in the park to leave. There were a lot of Colorado license plates in the parking area, but plenty from places all over the U.S. Traffic out of the park quickly came to a standstill. We decided to wait for the traffic to subside and had a nice picnic lunch. Four hours later, traffic in the park finally started moving. We packed up and joined the herd. That's when the nightmare began.

We learned later that over 100,000 people had visited Wyoming that day to view the eclipse along the path of totality. For comparison, the total state population of Wyoming is around 585,000 people. It seemed like a substantial fraction of the population of the city of Denver were all trying to head south to home. The highways just couldn't handle the load. There were numerous accidents, people ran out of gas, and gas stations ran out of gas. No matter which way we headed we faced traffic at a crawl. After seven hours and two long detours, we arrived back in Cheyenne safe and sound.

Would I do it again? You bet! In fact, on April 8, 2024, Kerrville and the surrounding area will be almost directly on the centerline for a total solar eclipse that will last almost 4-1/2 minutes. I'm already making my plans to view it and looking forward to no traffic jams while I watch it from my ranch.

73 Dale K4DG













Upcoming Contests

TX QSO Party Sep 23rd and 24th

Go to www.hornucopia.com for more information



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>
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The HCARC is an ARRL affiliated club

Cover photos by R. Sanchez
Solar Eclipse by Dale Gaudier

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.