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Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, K5FD

February, 2016

Alpine, Texas

DAVIS MOUNTAIN RESORT HAS SUCCESSFUL TECHNICIAN CLASS

The largest Technician class / Volunteer Exam Session in recent memory (maybe forever) in our region was successfully completed at the Davis Mountain Resort (DMR) on January 30. A total of 13 individuals will be receiving their Technician licenses and one individual will receive his General license. This will result in a 26% increase in the licensed amateurs in Jeff Davis County! And there will be more to come as some additional students from the DMR class will be participating in the exam session on February 10 in Alpine.



Participants of the DMR Technician Class held in January.

This group promises to be an active group of hams. Several are already making plans to pursue higher classes of licenses in the immediate future. For those not familiar with the DMR, this is the description from the DMR website:

The Davis Mountains Resort, located to the southeast of the central core of the Davis Mountains, can be found off of highway 166 some eleven miles outside of Fort Davis. This private development is centered in a large basin containing numerous canyons and ridges that radiate out from the central basin. Elevations range from around 5,500' at the bottom to over 7,600' on one of the summits of Paradise Mountain.

Currently there are fewer than 150 permanent residents in the Resort since most land owners are absentee. The Resort is unincorporated but does have a property owners association that maintains the roads, a community center, a volunteer fire department and emergency services.



The VE Team after the exam session (L – R) Allen, N5NYM, Dave, N5DO, Dick, W5DWI, Bob, W5RHN, and Lora, W5JUW.

Many of the new hams are associated with the DMR Volunteer Fire Department. A complete list of the participants will be included in the next issue of the BARK, once their new call signs have been issued by the FCC.

POSSIBLE CHANGE TO BIG BEND EMERGENCY NET

From WA5ROE, Net Manager

When we started the BBEN over 38 years ago our net starting time was set at 8:30 am central time. This time was selected because the few of us that were on the first net roster also checked into the Northwest Texas Emergency Net that met at 8:00 on 3950 and usually ran about 30 minutes. The Northwest Texas Net still meets at 8:00 but now only runs about 15 minutes.

We have a lot of early check-ins which are welcome but sometimes we have announcements that are missed by those checking in early. I am considering moving the net time to start at 8:15 am. The roll call would be over by 8:30. Those that do not stay for the round table could move on by 8:30. The earlier start would also help propagation during daylight savings time.

I would like your input about the earlier starting time. Email me at wa5roe@juno.com or bring your comments to the net next Sunday.

BIG BEND EMERGENCY NET REPORT

From WA5ROE

Date	Check-ins	Length	Remarks
Jan. 3	46	27 min	
Jan. 10	41	25 min	Add K5GLT, Gordy, Carlsbad, NM
Jan. 17	43	25 min	
Jan. 24	41	15 min	
Jan. 31	46	27 min	

Remember – the BBEN meets **every** Sunday on 3922 KHz at 8:30 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.

LICENSE CLASSES UPDATES

Technician class:

Alpine

The Technician Class meeting on Wednesdays from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. in Room 130 at the Turner Range Animal Science Center at Sul Ross has been extended for one more week. The last class night will be February 10, with a VE session scheduled for 8:00 p.m. A reminder of the VE exam will be e-mailed early next week.

General Class:

South Brewster County

An upgrade class to the General license is scheduled for Saturday, February 6 and 13 at the Family Crisis Center in Terlingua. Times will be from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with lunch from 12 to 12:30. The exam would be given on Wednesday Feb. 17 at 5 p.m.

The ARRL General Class License Manual, 8th edition, 2015, is required and will be available for purchase at a discount price (\$25). The class will cover all elements of the General License and should prepare students to successfully pass the General exam, which will be given at the end of the course. Students must either hold a current Technician License or successfully complete the Technician exam to be eligible to sit for the General license examination.

For additional information contact Dave Cockrum at 837-3711 or via email at n5do@sbcglobal.net.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

There are some things the controller for our repeater system can do of which many of us are not aware. Like test the quality of our signal into the repeater or make an autopatch call to a telephone in the Big Bend region. Bill, W5ATO, will review the commands necessary to use some of these features. He will also review some of the commands which are not given out to all users but which might be useful to know that they are available. A possible example is the ability to separate one repeater from the whole system so it can operate as a stand-alone repeater.

ARRL ANNOUNCES NEW BONUS POINTS FOR FIELD DAY 2016

Although it may seem early, the ARRL has already released the Field Day packet for 2016 and it includes two new bonus point activities: social media and an appointed, active Safety Officer.

Rule 7.3.16 Social Media offers 100 bonus points for promoting our Field Day activities to the general public using social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

Rule 7.3.17 Safety Officer offers 100 bonus points by designating someone to serve as a Safety Officer for groups setting up Class A stations. To qualify for this bonus, we must appoint a qualified person/s who are present at the FD site from the beginning of set-up until the end of break-down. The Safety Officer must certify in writing all of the points below. A completed, signed copy of this checklist must be included with the group's supporting documentation.

- ▶ *Fuel for generator properly stored.*
- ▶ *Fire extinguisher on hand and appropriately located.*
- ▶ *First Aid kit on hand.*
- ▶ *First Aid, CPR and AED trained participant/s on site for full Field Day period.*
- ▶ *Access to NWS alerts to monitor for inclement weather.*
- ▶ *Tent stakes properly installed and marked.*
- ▶ *Temporary antenna structures properly secured and marked.*
- ▶ *Site secured from tripping hazards.*
- ▶ *Site is set up in a neat and orderly manner to reduce hazards.*
- ▶ *Stations and equipment properly grounded.*
- ▶ *Access to means to contact police/fire/rescue if needed.*
- ▶ *Safety Officer is designated point of contact for public safety officials.*

► *Minimize risks and control hazards to ensure no injuries to public.*

► *Safety Officer or a qualified designated assistant was on site for the duration of the event.*

► *As necessary, monitoring participants for hydration and ensures an adequate water supply is available.*

Both these new bonus point opportunities are good ones. Social media is taking over the world, and ham radio needs to part of it. Safety is typically something that we believe is everyone's responsibility, and consequently it ends up being no one's responsibility.

OPINION: DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR MICROPHONES YET!

This is a portion of an article in this month's El Paso Bulletin, the newsletter of the El Paso ARC:

We are moving on to digital training. Digital nets should be conducted instead of voice nets. While voice nets have gotten us where we are today they are outdated. They are too slow and error prone, and are one of the last methods you would want to resort to today.

Passing emergency traffic via digital means is wonderful. Keep it up, don't stop. But don't throw away phone nets!

Consider the myriad of phone nets: the 7290 traffic net – always there in Texas. You know you can check in and get instant help. When the “secure and safe” fiber optic cable was cut and the greater Big Bend was without long distance service, we were able to check-in, via SSB, to the 7290 net and instantly have stations standing by to assist.

Tell the Maritime Net, which is on 14.300 Mhz every day, that all the ships who rely on their SSB net should now make the transition to digital (and not digital voice).

The BBARC sponsors two voice nets: the Big Bend Emergency Net and the Big Bend Two Meter Net. Both offer excellent training for emergency communication and give amateurs in our region a frequency to turn to in an emergency.

We can give real examples of real emergencies which relied on voice communications to get through – and not go into ancient history. The Rock House fire, which started like most emergencies with no warning, occurred while the Hammerfest, a bicycle event which follows the “loop” around the Davis Mountains, was underway. An urgent call went out on the voice net that was providing communication for the event to stop the race and turn everyone around to return to Fort Davis. The fire was rapidly moving from Marfa to Fort Davis. The consequences of bicyclists being overtaken by fire are too terrible to imagine.

Digital communication in an emergency is great – especially when passing traffic that is long and has lots of data. Requests for specific items to be delivered to various locations or other logistical messages would be better delivered by digital means.

Digital communication as it now stands has some difficulties. There are not many “plug and play” units available. Consequently there are not many hams who have digital capability at their stations or the training and knowledge to use digital communication. Even less have mobile digital capability.

The Big Bend Emergency Net has 139 members in 57 communities, from Abilene to Yorktown. Not all 139 members check in each week, but they all have the equipment and the knowledge as to how to use it. If an emergency exists, they will be there to assist.

If an emergency should last a longer period of time than the usual 3 to 5 hour practice session, we know there are enough voice operators to keep going for weeks if need be.

The U.S. military now controls operations in the Mideast from MacDill AFB in Florida. Likely much of the communication to the units in the field is transmitted via digital means. But the troops on the ground still use voice communication to conduct their combat activities. (And I would bet when the commanding officer at MacDill wants to talk to a commander in the field he picks up a telephone.)

Voice still has the advantage of being fast – the average speaker talks at 150 to 170 wpm. In a fast moving situation a decision maker can quickly hear a spoken report, ask questions, and deliver a response.

Let's keep using digital communication. Let's keep improving the technology so it can become more “plug and play.” Let's get more hams to have the equipment and proficiency to use digital communication.

But please – let's keep the first line of defense in an emergency: voice nets!

REMINDER: BBARC BANQUET

Friday, February 5, at 6:30 p.m. the annual BBARC Banquet will be held in Room 129 of the Gallego Center at Sul Ross State University. Beer, wine, and soft drinks will be available at no charge from 6:30 to 7:00 with the meal and program immediately following.

Twenty-five members, spouses, and friends have signed up for the banquet. If you have not yet signed up, the deadline is Wednesday, February 3. Contact Bob Ward, WA5ROE, at 432-386-3041 or Dave Cockrum, N5DO, at 432-837-3711.

BBARC 2015 ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

The Big Bend Amateur Radio Club is a general purpose amateur radio club. Our major activities are our repeater system, public service, education of our members, recruiting, educating and licensing potential new hams, and our major operating event each year: Field Day.

Repeater System

- Club call became K5FD, replaced AD5BB on all repeaters with K5FD.
- Moved 146.72 from Twin Peaks (or Twin Sisters) to Pearce Mountain, overlooking Alpine and Sunny Glen.

Public Service

- Provided communication for the following activities:
 - Big Bend Ultra Run 50 mile race at Big Bend State Park
 - Fort Davis Hammerfest Bicycle Race
 - Fort Davis Cyclefest
 - Big Bend Open Road Rally
 - Marathon 2 Marathon
 - Santa Net

Education for members

- 12 meetings held
- Programs on a variety of topics including:
 - switching power supplies
 - Echolink
 - Skywarn severe weather spotting
 - “simplex repeaters, crossband repeaters, and airborne repeaters”
 - Field Day
 - Summits on the Air
 - MFJ-259B HF/VHF SWR Analyzer
 - SPLAT! Terrain Analysis program.

Recruitment, educating, and licensing potential new hams

- Technician license classes held in Alpine and Terlingua
- General license class held in Alpine
- Three VE exams held resulting in 7 new hams and 3 upgrades

Field Day

- Finished in 5th place in Class 2A with 2,955 contacts and total score of 10,610

Individual accomplishments

- KA5PVB, KE5OG, and N5DO finished in second place in the U.S. in the ARRL SSB DX contest and set a new 5th call district record.

- N5DO was part of a team operating from the Cayman Islands that set a new North American record in the CQ WPX CW contest.

- KB5R erected a 50 foot tower at his QTH.

THE BARK Newsletter of the BBARC

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club
1402 N. 5th St.
Alpine, Texas 79830

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BIG BEND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

<http://www.bigbendarc.com>

Meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the West Texas National Bank Building in Alpine, 7:30 P.M. CST/CDT.

ARRL Affiliated Club

MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

Annual membership is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 each year. Dues are \$36.00 per year for individual or individual & spouse.

Membership allows you to participate in all club activities and vote at the monthly meetings.

Newsletters are available by e-mail for members, subscribers, and interested recipients. Send your e-mail address to [n5do at sbcglobal.net](mailto:n5do@sbcglobal.net) to be put on the list.

ABOUT THE BBARC

Founded December 17, 1974

ARRL affiliate since 1986

The BBARC is a 501(C)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

Big Bend Emergency Net, 3.922 MHz

Founded September 18, 1977

Meets every Sunday morning at 8:30 A.M. CST/CDT

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and visitors.

Established by Bob Ward, WA5ROE.

Net Manager, Bob Ward, WA5ROE, [wa5roe at juno.com](mailto:wa5roe@juno.com)

Big Bend 2-meter Net

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)

Net Manager, Chuck Dobbins, KA5PVB, [charles.dobbins52 at yahoo.com](mailto:charles.dobbins52@yahoo.com)

BBARC REPEATER SYSTEM

All standard offsets. All repeaters require 146.2 Hz PL tone encoded on your transmit signal. All repeaters are linked.

147.120+	Shafter, Cibolo Creek
147.020+	Elephant Mt. south of Alpine. System hub
146.620-	Ft. Davis located at McDonald Observatory
146.720-	Alpine, Pearce Mountain
146.820-	Terlingua, Study Butte
146.920-	Glass Mountains, Alpine / Ft. Stockton
145.230-	Emergency Repeater

BBARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 3, 2016, Wednesday, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

February 10, 2016, Wednesday, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

TECHNICIAN LICENSE CLASS, Room 130, Turner Range
Animal Science Center, Sul Ross State University

February 5, 2016, Friday, 6:30 p.m. (Tentative Date)

BBARC Annual Banquet

February 9, 2016, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

BBARC MEETING, West Texas National Bank Building
Program "BBARC Repeater System Commands"

February 10, 2016, Wednesday, 8:00 p.m.

VOLUNTEER EXAMINATION SESSION, Room 130
Turner Range Animal Science Center
Sul Ross State University

February 6, 2016, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

February 13, 2016, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

GENERAL LICENSE CLASS, Family Crisis Center,
Terlingua

February 17, 2016, Wednesday, 5:00 p.m.

(Date and time subject to change.)

VOLUNTEER EXAMINATION SESSION
Family Crisis Center
Terlingua

March 22, 2016, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.

BBARC MEETING, Turner Range Animal Science Center,
Room 130
Program "NWS Skywarn Training"
Note: Open to General Public