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Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, K5FD

April, 2016

Alpine, Texas

APRIL FOOLS TRADITION CONTINUES IN HAM RADIO!

April must be a slow month in the newspaper and periodical publishing world because many such publications pull out the old standby, the April Fools article. The editor of this newsletter still remembers being shocked beyond belief by an April Fools article. At the young age of nine or ten, I was an avid fan of my home town football team, the University of Arizona Wildcats. The star of the team was a running back, #22, the "Cactus Comet," Art Lupino, who led the nation in rushing. My father brought home the campus newspaper where the headline "Lupino Expelled From School" jumped out at me. I read the article with shaking hands – my hero was expelled from school for kicking a dog that hung around the student center! It never dawned on me that it was an elaborate April Fools prank.

The April Fools tradition is no different in the ham radio publishing world. The 2016 April issue of CQ magazine has an interview with the nefarious Professor Emil Heisseluft who has been writing April Fools articles for 40 years. He says that an editor of CQ felt that his articles were not successful unless at least five subscribers got upset and cancelled their subscriptions!

QST has a long history of April Fools articles, many written by the unscrupulous Larson E. Rapp, WIOU. Many April Fools articles in QST are hidden in such places as the new products shorts and even advertisements.

This year a successful ruse appeared on the Internet – one of our members received this article via email:

BREAKING NEWS:

FCC TO REINSTATE MORSE CODE TESTS

Washington, D.C. April 1, 2016

Today, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC) approved Report and Order 14-987 which reinstates the Morse Code test for General Class and Amateur Extra Class licensees. "It was a big mistake eliminating the Morse Code test," admits Dotty Dasher, the FCC's director of examinations. "We now realize that being able to send and receive Morse Code is an essential skill for radio amateurs."

Not only will new applicants have to take the test, but General Class licensees who have never passed a code test will have one year to pass a 5-wpm code test. Similarly, Amateur Extra class licensees that never passed a code test will have one year to pass a 13-wpm test. Those amateurs that fail to pass the test will face revocation of their operating privileges. Materials for administering the examinations will be distributed to Volunteer Examiner Coordinators by the end of April, so that they can begin the testing on May 1, 2016.

"This isn't going to be one of those silly multiple-choice type tests," noted Dasher. "We're going to be sending five-character random code groups, just like we did in the old days. And, applicants will have to prove that they can send, too, using a straight key."

When asked what other actions we might see from the FCC, Dasher hinted that in the future applicants taking the written exam may be required to draw circuit diagrams, such as Colpitts oscillators and diode ring mixers, once again. "We're beginning to think that if an applicant passes an amateur radio license exam it should mean that he or she actually knows something," she said.

For further information, contact James X. Shorts, Assistant Liaison to the Deputy Chief of Public Relations for the FCC at (202) 555-1212 or jim.shorts@fcc.gov. For more news and information about the FCC, please visit www.fcc.gov.

This article contains the classic elements of a successful April Fools article: a topic that seems plausible, enough realism that it could be true, and a result that would upset the reader. It also has some of the classic signs that it is not true: suspicious sounding names (Dotty Dasher?) and requirements that seem a little off (draw circuit diagrams of Colpitts oscillators?).

It is a fake, isn't it???

NEW STARTING TIME FOR BIG BEND EMERGENCY NET

Net manager Bob Ward, WA5ROE, has announced that the last Sunday in April, which is April 24, will be the first day that the roll call for the Big Bend Emergency Net will begin at 8:15 a.m. instead of the current 8:30 a.m. on 3922 kHz. Early check-ins will still be taken beginning at 8:05 a.m.

BIG BEND EMERGENCY NET REPORT

From WA5ROE

Date	Check-ins	Length	Remarks
Mar. 6	38	30 min	
Mar. 13	36	25 min	Add KG5LTE, Scott, Alpine
Mar. 20	40	33 min	
Mar. 27	32	25 min	

Remember – the BBEN meets **every** Sunday on 3922 KHz at 8:30 a.m. (8:15 a.m. beginning April 24) 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.

BIG BEND 2 METER NET REPORT

From KA5PVB

The Big Bend 2 meter net meets Wednesday evening at 8:00 p.m. Central Time on the Big Bend 2 meter repeater network. These Wednesday evening nets are good training grounds for possible emergency situations. They also provide a “safe” and easy way for new amateurs to get used to talking on the radio.

The net control station calls for check-ins from each of the BBARC repeaters. Listen to make sure the frequency is clear, then sign in by announcing your call sign. After everyone checks-in the net control calls on each station to make any comments they wish.

The schedule for Net Control stations is set through June but, if anyone would like to become a Net Control station, please let KA5PVB know on the net or call him (432-837-2257) and he would be happy to work with you to get started.

Date	Check-ins	Net Control
Mar. 2	17	
Mar. 9	17	
Mar. 16	15	
Mar. 23	13	K
Mar. 30	22	

UPGRADE NEWS

Congratulations to Chuck Corrao, KG5BMK, for successfully upgrading to General at a March VE session in South Brewster County.

With no classes currently scheduled, remember that the BBARC Volunteer Examiners are available to conduct an examination session whenever you are ready. Contact Dave Cockrum at 837-3711 or via email at n5do@sbcglobal.net.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, APRIL 12

The next meeting will return to the normal location for our meetings: the meeting room at the West Texas National Bank, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

After the normal business portion, the program will be on a topic of interest to many of us: how to program one of the new, inexpensive, Chinese VHF and/or UHF radios. Joey Iniguez, KD5MXR, will lead the program. Joey has become our local expert on how to program these radios, both by hand and by connection to a computer.

The common brand names sold in the United States are Baofeng, TYT, and Wouxon. The radio pictured on the right below is the Baofeng UV-5RT, Hand Held Dual-Band Transceiver, available from Main Trading Company in Paris, TX (mtradio.com) for \$29.99! Amazingly inexpensive radios, but apparently not easy to program – not your grandfather’s old two-meter radio!



CONTACT SPORT

I enjoy reading what is generically called “travel writing.” To see another part of the world through a gifted writer’s eyes and learn about the people and their customs is my idea of a good read. I particularly enjoy such writers (among many) as Paul Theroux, Bill Bryson, and Joe McGinnis.

Of course, I also enjoy ham radio and operating on hf, especially chasing DX and participating in contests. Now there is a book that fits into the tradition of the best travel writing and the (admittedly small) collection of books about amateur radio.

There are some good technical books that hams enjoy browsing through, like some people enjoy browsing through cookbooks. Books like *The ARRL Handbook*, *The ARRL Antenna Book*, and the wonderful *ON4UN’s Low-Band DXing*.

There are books that are not technical books but books which give an insider’s view of an aspect of ham radio. Included are such books as *VK0IR Heard Island* by KK6EK, an in-depth look at a DX-pedition from one of the world’s truly remote places and *A Year of DX* by Bob Locher, W9KNI, an account of spending a year successfully winning *CQ Magazine’s* DX Marathon. There is the classic *DX IS! The Best of the West Coast DX Bulletin*. If you find this out-of-print gem, grab it! You will learn about Red-Eyed Louie and his cousin Sunspot Louie. You will read the tales of the Palos Verdes Sundancers. And you learn of the

QRPer who climbs the mountain to seek wisdom from the Old Timer.

But now the best of these books has just been released! *Contact Sport: A Story of Champions, Airwaves, and a One-Day Race around the World* by J. K. George, better known to many hams as Jim, N3BB. N3BB lives just south of Austin where he has an outstanding amateur station.

Contact Sport describes the 2014 World Radio Team Championship (WRTC) which was held in Massachusetts. It is an entrancing look into a different world. It describes this "World Series" of amateur radio and introduces the participants. It moves briskly and it describes amateur radio and contesting in a way that makes it understandable to anyone. It is a book I found difficult to put down.

It is not just a good book, it is a good book about amateur radio! Try it, you'll like it.

You can buy *Contact Sport* at your local Barnes and Noble or find it at Amazon.com.

THE BARK Newsletter of the BBARC

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club
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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

April 12, 2016, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
BBARC MEETING, West Texas National Bank Building
Program: TBA

May 10, 2016, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
BBARC MEETING, West Texas National Bank Building
Program: TBA

June 25-26, 2016, Sat.-Sun.
FIELD DAY
<http://www.arrl.org/field-day>