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Meeting Minutes

No minutes were taken this month.

It was a Skype meeting, however. There were several in attendance. The club unanimously approved the sale of the ICOM HF radio to Brian Wilson – KG5KPN for \$250.00.

MFARC Bank Statement for April

| | |
|--|------------|
| Beginning balance: | \$2,148.49 |
| Income: | |
| Club Dues from Hommy KG5SKP | \$10.00 |
| Brian Wilson – Sale of Club Radio | \$250.00 |
| Expenses: | |
| Check #1056 to E-Club for Louis Escobar Dues | (\$25.00) |
| Check #1048 Scott Joseph Year End meeting | (\$54.60) |
| New balance: | \$2,328.89 |

Provided by Treasurer John Nelson Jr – W7JOY

Presidential Musings and Memos ...

May's Meeting/Change of Venue: This will not come as a shock, but we have had to cancel the face-to-face club meeting (again) for this month. Like last month, we will hold the meeting via teleconference (Skype). To take part, call from any phone 430-242-6000, 321-724-3010, or 866-987-0312, and use the conference code 77175563. Meeting will be on Thursday the 14th at 11:45. Please call-in a few minutes prior to start of meeting so we can begin promptly.

Tuesday 2m NET: Since we can't meet face-to-face, I'd like to remind everyone that the MFARC Lunchtime NET is still up and running. We "meet" every Tuesday at 11:45 on 147.160 (+, PL100). We often discuss club business, so this is a good opportunity to lend your voice.

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Club Radio Sold: After we voted to sell the club's Icom IC-761 (see figure 1), we had a "taker" almost immediately. I am happy to announce that Brian Wilson – KG5KPN is the proud owner of a vintage radio, and MFARC is \$250 richer. Congrats, Brian –that is a good radio.

2m/70cm link radio: In order to synchronize our time-out duration between the 147.160 and 443.900 repeaters, we have taken the Motorola link radio off line and shipped it off to be modified. When it returns, we will have a 3 minute time-out, instead of 60 seconds. W5ZIT, Jim Brown (John's padre), is helping us out once again. A big thanks to ZIT!

TShirts, Hats, and Mugs: The folks at Greenville Trophies are back in the store and are processing orders. Having been closed for more than a month, they are behind schedule. But, I have been assured that our order will be done and delivered in time for Summer Field Day. I received confirmation that we did, in fact, over pay slightly. The overages will be applied to the \$40 digitization fee, as approved by those who paid for the merchandise.

Summer Field Day: Speaking of Summer FD, it is scheduled for the 27th and 28th of June this year. As of now, the event is still a "GO." Unless we hear otherwise, we will proceed as if the event is happening. Last year, we worked with the folks in Rains County, setting up shop at the EOC in Emory. In the past, however, we have set up camp at the Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum just outside of Greenville, along I-30. I will propose at this week's meeting that we use the Audie Murphy this year, so as to avoid people in close quarters with shared food and other potential virus-spreading circumstances. We can vote as a club how to proceed.

Mentoring: I have had the good fortune to have met someone in a FaceBook antenna forum asking for help who happens to live close by (McKinney). He passed his Tech, General and Extra all in the same day! We have been working together to get things set up properly (see figures 2 and 3 for before and after pics of antenna installation). Seeing his excitement when we cover new things has been rewarding. I would encourage the new folks to reach out with questions, and I would encourage the old timers to try their hand at mentoring; it's a ton o' fun.

Well, ladies and germs, that about does it. I have perused all of the yellow sticky notes that clutter my desk, and I do believe "that's all folks."

David Rogers
KG5KPU

Written by President David Rogers – KG5KPU

Ham-Com 2020 Has Been Rescheduled to 2021

For some time the Ham-Com Board of Directors have been monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Over the last couple of months, our reality has been a roller coaster of changes. Many of things we have enjoyed and perhaps taken for granted have had to be postponed, altered, or in some cases canceled.

AIRWAVES



While we have held out hope that this year we would be able to host Ham-Com 2020 as a light at the end of the long tunnel of the COVID-19 virus, it is with great sadness that we must inform all **that we are canceling Ham-Com 2020** and the event postponed until June 17, 18 and 19 2021.

With much input from Health and Safety advisors, the Amateur Community, Legal Counsel and our Vendors the Ham-Com Board has finally been able to negotiate a positive outcome with our event center to this unprecedented situation.

This conclusion is based on the deadly seriousness of the virus, the rate of expansion, and the recovery time after the crisis apex is achieved. But more importantly, it is based on the genuine concern for the health and safety of the attendees, vendors, volunteers, presenters and staff.

Our event center contracted pre-payments for 2020 will be rolled to 2021. Payments made to Ham-Com for the 2020 event for General Admission, Vendor Booths and Flea market tables will also be rolled to the 2021 event.

Details regarding this cancellation will be posted at www.hamcom.org.

Thank you for your understanding and we are looking forward to the next Ham-Com on June 17, 18 and 19 2021.

Sincerely,
Ham-Com Board of Directors
Bill Nelson AB5QZ
Ham-Com Inc. President

Written by Bill Nelson – AB5QZ

COVID-19 – Hunt County cases Leveling Off as Governor Opens the State Slowly

It was welcomed news when Governor Greg Abbot issued Executive Orders GA-20 along with a 64-page guidance called “[Texans Helping Texas: The Governor’s Report to Open Texas](#)”, which provides a lot of scientific predictions about the COVID-19 virus in Texas. The Governor’s explanation of “re-opening” the state was described in multiple phases, with only Phase I defined. Phase I opens some businesses with 25% limited occupancy on May 1st. This includes restaurants, movie theaters, and malls. The same rules apply to museums and libraries, with the caveat that common gathering areas be closed off. Churches are OPEN and a list of other openings are listed.

It could not happen fast enough, is the cry of some who are seeing businesses close for good. However, most restaurants here in Greenville seem to be faring well with the “take-out” crowd, while others have closed during this time. Let’s hope our local businesses all come back. It would be good to patronize these as you are able.

The COVID-19 cases in Hunt County have definitely started to see a lowering of the curve, with the peak around April 13th. The latest report from Hunt County shows a total of 55 cases, with 43 recovered, and 3 deceased. There are currently 9 active cases in Hunt County, all of whom are isolated at home, no hospitalizations at this point.



Written by Editor Michael Ketchum – K5MDK

Mentor Fest 2020 New Date – October 17, 2020

ARRL NTX Mentor Fest has now been rescheduled. Details will be posted at the arrlntx.org website soon. We are very hopeful that by October, we are able to have gatherings and proceed with Mentor Fest, but remain flexible for any change. We appreciate any and all Speaker commitments and should have the schedule block opened back up this week. Mentor Fest is only a success with Presenters on various Topics. I will not hold anyone's feet to the fire if they commit and back out later. If you have a topic that you may like to present, you are welcome to call me with any concerns. Telephone 318-470-9806 or better yet, drop me an email at K5GVK@ARRL.ORG

Written by Someone – Call

Spring 2020 American Red Cross National Communications Exercise

The below emails describe the upcoming National Communications Exercise with the American Red Cross that will occur on May 30, 2020

ACTION:

- Review the following information.
- Notify John Roberts at John.Roberts4@redcross.org, copy ARCEXERCISE@ARRLNTX.ORG if your group will be participating.
- The EC should be the point of contact for their county or jurisdiction and members should make inquiries to their EC.
- EC should contact their local American Red Cross counterpart
- EC should canvas their members if they will be participating.

NOTE: Hunt County EC is Jim Davenport – KD5PAD@Yahoo.com – Rockwall County EC is – Scott Hammond – KK5PP@arrl.net – Rains County EC is Harold Pergrem – K5VES tpergrem@gmail.com

I hope that you will participate in this exercise!

73,

Greg Evans, K5GTX

ARRL NTX SEC

ARRL NTX ASM

WINLINK: ARES-NTXSEC

On May 30, 2020, many Red Cross volunteers across the United States will be participating in a Red Cross centric emergency communications exercise. This exercise is a grass roots exercise with little or no guidance from Red Cross national HQ.

This memorandum is to inform and invite you and your organization to participate at whatever level you wish to be involved.

A primary goal of the exercise is to engage Red Cross Chapters with their local ARES groups per the content and intent of existing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), in order to strengthen and



develop those relationships. There are many MOUs that exist between the Red Cross at the National, District, Regional and Chapter levels and the ARES groups which are also organized in a hierarchy that includes national, regional, section, district and county levels.

Why are you hearing from me? I was late to a planning meeting and have, as a consequence, found myself appointed as the Regional Exercise Coordinator for Texas which is, as usual, a Region unto itself.

Red Cross Communications During a Time of Crippled Communications

Communications infrastructure can be partially or completely hampered by the same conditions that created a disaster in the first place i.e. severe weather, flooding, earthquakes, etc.

We are NOT first responders. We wait to deploy until receiving requests from civil authorities. If communications have been compromised, Cellular-On-Wheels units (COWs), will often have been deployed by TelCos before we are operational and Red Cross DST will have us back online. Often, but not always. This is where Amateur Radio can play a role.

The Red Cross has no central doctrine for emergency communications. They depend upon MOUs with the ARRL, ARES, etc. Some chapters have strong relations with local amateur radio clubs and some have active volunteers with FCC licenses, especially within DST. But many of these Amateur Radio Operators hold other positions (Mass Care, Sheltering, etc.) that may require their urgent participation.

Some Chapters have on site radio stations that are supported by local amateur radio clubs. Most do not. This can be beneficial if a Disaster Operations Center (DOC) is stood up at their Chapter offices. But more often than not, the DOC will be established at a donated facility as near to the disaster location as is practical.

Despite the difficulties and uncertainties, it will still be imperative to pass communications to and from DOCs, MARCs, Shelters, Kitchens, ERVs, Regional HQ, etc. Some by voice and many by using forms. Some of these are simple email conversations but others are official Red Cross forms that contain detailed information, reports and requests. Many of these forms exist in the Winlink library which is the preferred method to send data (forms) via Amateur Radio.

While most Chapters will have mobile voice radio kits, not all have portable Winlink capability. And certainly not enough to cover all the possible sites where a communications point might be needed. THIS is a major reason to develop and maintain good mutual relationships between Red Cross chapters and Amateur Radio groups at the local level.

It's important to note here that not all counties have a well-established ARES group. On the other hand, many of the stronger ARES groups will be supporting several served agencies. For example, Travis County ARES (TX) serves the City/County Emergency Operations Center, the Capital Area Trauma Regional Advisory Council, US Army MARS, etc. Depending on the scope of a disaster (or multiple disasters) the generally available Amateur Radio operators may be deployed to other priorities.

Principal Components of the Exercise.

Based upon a successful exercise last November that include Red Cross and ARES units on the East Coast and Midwest, this year's exercise has grown to include as much of the U.S. that wishes to participate.

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It is divided into Part A and Part B.

Part A is meant to be determined by local level managers within the Red Cross and ARES. The only guidance is that it should be locally driven to create and/or improve local cooperation and the development of plans to carry that cooperation forward. It is suggested that emphasis should be given to the transmittal of Red Cross forms via Winlink. It is anticipated that in Texas, Part A will take place in the morning hours of May 30.

A brief synopsis of objectives met, lessons learned, traffic type and volume would be appreciated. For Texas, these can be sent to me, John Roberts via John.Roberts4@redcross.org.

Part B will be a more structured exercise involving the passage of Red Cross forms to distant points. Winlink connections should be made to the furthest practical RMS Gateway (to simulate local communication outages). For VHF/UHF communications, digipeaters (if available) can be used to increase access to more distant Gateways. Depending on propagation, the use of HF Winlink is encouraged. Telnet will not be used for this exercise.

More specific details regarding Part B are being developed daily as additional groups express interest in joining the exercise. For Texas, there is further information to be published regarding the use of Radio-Only modes.

Other Considerations

Red Cross forms are generally completed on DST issued laptops by employees and volunteers in various positions throughout a Disaster Operations center and then transmitted to their destinations via a local area network and the internet.

But when conditions dictate that traffic must go by radio, how do the forms get input to the Winlink client PC?

1. Pass the completed form to a Radio Operator and ask them to transcribe it to a form on the Winlink PC? The problems with this are obvious.
2. Put an ARES PC on the LAN so the RADO can retrieve completed forms from a shared folder? That might work if you can convince DST/IT to allow it. But then you will have to train volunteers to use the Winlink software on each shift and many of them will be uncomfortable with software and be reluctant to learn "yet another program".

There is a technique that will solve this problem. It involves using a thumb drive to place a small file that contains the Red Cross forms on the subject PC. The desired form can be called up, completed and saved back to the thumb drive which can then be carried to the RADO operating the Winlink client PC in the "radio room". The RADO can then insert the thumb drive in his PC, call up the completed form, and transmit it.

There are two different ways to accomplish this. One is to use the Save Data/Load Data function built into the Winlink forms set. This requires no special action on the receiving end as it will appear as a function of opening the message. Another advantage of this method is that it can be used for many other forms (ICS, HICS, State, FEMA, SHARES and General forms).

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The other is to use the FIMsg utility that was developed independently to perform the same function for Red Cross forms. The RADO calls up the completed form on his Winlink PC and attaches it the message to be sent to its destination. This method requires that the receiving end also use the FIMsg utility. This method includes a few more Red Cross forms than the previous one but does not include the other forms mentioned above.

Full descriptions of both techniques are located here:

Winlink Save Data/Load Data forms – <https://tinyurl.com/yb5mnhc3>

FIMsg Utility for Red Cross forms – <https://tinyurl.com/y8sxmubg>

The use of either or both techniques are encouraged for Part A and Part B in order to practice and gain experience in their application during a “lights out” emergency. Or, for the purposes of this exercise, just have the Radio Operator fill in the form in the normal manner with “dummy” data or data from example forms that will soon be sent from the Exercise Planning Team.

Any of the above methods will result in a SMALL file sent by Winlink unlike a spreadsheet or image attachment which will result in a much LARGER file that can create bottlenecks on the airways.

Next Steps

Both Red Cross and ARES organizations are encouraged to contact their counterparts without waiting for the other in order to explore mutual interest and initiate planning.

If you and your organization intend to participate in Part A, go ahead and start making your plans for your local exercises. Let me know the names, call signs, location, and contact information of the principal participants. Also, a brief description of groups involved, objectives and methods/modes expected to be used would be appreciated.

If you plan to participate in Part B, let me know of your intent and stay tuned as I will be distributing more information by April 3rd as it becomes available.

I can be contacted at any time at:

425-442-0986

robertsjohnj@gmail.com

john.roberts4@redcross.org

Thank you for your attention and I hope that you will be able to participate.

John Roberts W5RZG

Texas Department of Emergency Management State RACES, Disaster District 12 RACES Officer

Travis County ARES, Deputy Emergency Coordinator

American Red Cross, Central & South Texas Region, Radio Communications Lead

Guidance for the 30 May 2020 American Red Cross Nationwide EmComm Exercise, Part A (Local Participation)

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The guidance contained herein is specifically for the Part A, local exercises and directed to the Red Cross regions of North Texas, the Gulf Coast, and Central & South Texas and their ARES counterparts. This document is for guidance only. Details regarding assigned personnel, “site” designations, message forms used, timing and length of the exercise, etc. should be worked out between each Chapter’s Disaster Services Technology (DST) Lead, or designee, and the County Emergency Coordinator (EC), or designee, of its collocated ARES group(s).

Anticipating that some form of lockdown, social distancing, etc. will still be in effect on May 30th, I suggest not trying to simulate any Red Cross or ARES “venue” that would necessitate more than one individual in any given location. Each participating ARES member who can operate any Winlink mode, other than Telnet, can be designated as a “shelter”, “MARC”, etc. All ARES operators are welcome, but we are especially interested in those that have portable Winlink capability as they would be among the first ones requested in an actual situation. If you have emergency power, practice with it during the exercise.

Each participating RED CROSS DST Lead, DPx, Shelter Lead, etc. can prepare one or more of the preferred Red Cross message forms and pass them to their ARES counterpart via email, “sneaker net” or any other means. Or, the ARES operators can prepare the forms themselves following guidelines from the cognizant Red Cross lead. The messages will then be passed via Winlink to a designated station (i.e. a simulated “DOC”). If the received form has a Reply section, it should be filled in with “data” and sent back to the originating station. At a minimum, be sure to acknowledge the receipt in both directions.

It is suggested that the simulated “DOC” be wherever/whatever is the Chapters “radio room”. For example, all Chapters in the CSTR Region of Texas have operational radio rooms on site. However, given the caution in paragraph two (2) above, any other location may be designated as a “DOC” as agreed between the local ARES and Red Cross coordinators. All locations should identify themselves with fictitious Tactical Addresses (STXTRVDOC₁, NTXTARSHLTR-1₂, etc.). See attached document for using tactical addresses. All Tactical Addresses that you wish to use for destination addresses MUST be unique to the Winlink system. If it is already registered, you will be notified and must choose a different one. Otherwise, if you use Call Signs and/or Email for destination addresses, you can ignore this and just put the fictitious Tactical Address in the body of the form or message somewhere.

The local partners may agree to inject unknown variables into the exercise to test the capability to recover from unexpected problems. This is deferred to a local decision based on local considerations.

All messages originating in Texas and going to or from ARES or the RED CROSS for the purposes of this exercise should copy W5RZG in either the To: or CC: boxes of the Winlink message header used to transmit any forms used in the exercise.

REMEMBER: To avoid chaos if your message should be overheard or intercepted, all messages sent during this exercise should begin and end with, “THIS IS A DRILL”.

This does preclude any other requirements for copies requested by other parties to the exercise.

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It is suggested that each Red Cross/ARES pair agree to and complete an After Action Report(AAR) containing at a minimum: a description of the exercise, objectives met, problems encountered, lessons learned, and a tally of the number and types of forms sent. Please forward a copy of any AAR to W5RZG.

Local objectives include (1) fostering increased cooperation between the Emergency Communications assets of local Red Cross and ARES groups (review the national MOU and any local MOU), and (2) increasing familiarity with the nature of Red Cross forms and their transmission via Winlink.

Nationwide objectives include creating a "proof of concept" to highlight for Red Cross national management the importance of amateur radio emergency communications for the Red Cross in the complete or partial absence of internet, cell and commercial power infrastructure.

John Roberts W5RZG
TDEM-Texas State RACES, Disaster District 12 RACES Officer
Travis County ARES, Deputy Emergency Coordinator
American Red Cross, Central & South Texas Region, Radio Communications Lead
robertsjohnj@gmail.com
john.roberts4@redcross.org

¹ STXTRVDOC = South Texas Section Travis County Disaster Operations Center

² NTXTARSHLTR-1 = North Texas Section Tarrant County Shelter One

Formatted by Editor Michael Ketchum – K5MDK

Calendar

- May 14 Majors Field Amateur Radio Club Meeting – Lawson CR at 11:45am.
- May 19 Rockwall ARC Meeting at 7:00pm at Soulman's BBQ in Rockwall.
- May 21 Sabine Valley Amateur Radio Association Meeting – ZOOM MEETING 7:00pm
- Jun 13 Rains ARA Meeting at 9:00am at 146.92 video chat.
- Jun 16 Rockwall ARC Meeting at 7:00pm at Soulman's BBQ in Rockwall.
- Jun 18 Sabine Valley Amateur Radio Association Meeting – ZOOM MEETING 7:00pm

[May 2020 Contest Corral – CLICK HERE](#)

[Jun 2020 Contest Corral – CLICK HERE](#)

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REGULAR ACTIVITIES

- Daily DFW Early Traffic Net (NTS) at 6:30pm 146.88 – PL 110.9Hz
Daily DFW Late Traffic Net (NTS) at 8:30pm 146.72 – PL 110.9Hz
Daily DFW CW Traffic Net (NTS) at 7:00pm and at 10pm on 3541 KHz <http://www.k6jt.com>
Mon Hopkins Co NET at 7:00pm 146.680 – PL 151.4Hz
Mon Rains Co NET at 7:30pm 146.920 – PL 88.5Hz
Tues. Majors Field Lunch time Net at 11:45am 147.16 + PL100Hz
Tues Rockwall ARC Net at 7:00pm 441.525 + PL141.3Hz
Tues K5VOM Net at 8:00pm. News Bulletin at 7:30pm, Allstar 49668 - 441.800 (+) – PL 100Hz
Thurs SVARA Net Every Thursday night at 7:00pm on 146.780 MHz (+) PL 114.8Hz
Thurs QRP Fox Hunt http://www.qrpxhunt.org/summer_rules.htm
2nd Wed of each month – ARRL NTX ARES Net 8:30pm local on 3860

Officers

- President:** David Rogers – KG5KPU
president@w5nni.net
(903) 513-5622 cell
- Vice President:** Jonathan Brown – WB5KSD
vice-president@w5nni.net
(972) 408-6573 cell
- Secretary:** Scott Davis – KK7JS
secretary@w5nni.net
- Treasurer:** John Nelson Jr. – N0DFW
treasurer@w5nni.net
(903) 454-0911 cell
- VE/Class Team Leader:** Scott Joseph – AG5QQ
classes@w5nni.net
- Club Trustee:** Jonathan Brown – WB5KSD
trustee@w5nni.net
- Contest/Activities:** David Rogers – KG5KPU
contest@w5nni.net

Club Repeaters

- Club Station:** TBD
- VHF Repeater:** W5NNI/R
147.160 MHz (+) PL 100.0 Hz
- UHF Repeater:** W5NNI/R DMR D-Star Fusion
444.625 MHz (+) Rx-SQ PL 151.4 Hz

AirWaves is a production of the Majors Field Amateur Radio Club

We're on the Web! Find us at: <http://w5nni.net>

Your article submissions are welcomed. Please submit to editor@w5nni.net.