



The GroundWire

ISSUE 2013-12

Words From The Bayou

Outside The Box

By the time you read this article, it will be after Thanksgiving 2013. I hope you enjoyed the good food and company this celebration is famous for. Where has the year gone? As I am thinking about the days, weeks, and months that have past since New Years Day 2013, one thought that comes to mind is how we tend to be creatures of habit. I am of course referring to our habits as Ham Radio Operators. I'm guessing most of our readers are like myself in regards to the particular radio activities that we partake in, we tend to do what we like or are most comfortable with. This is simply human nature. But glancing at the current QST front page highlighting November Sweepstakes, I'm reminded that I have never participated in this hallmark ARRL event. What does this all have to do with the title of this article anyway? Well, it's just this – with all of the different operating options available to us as Amateur Radio Operators, there's a lot to choose from or venture into in this diverse hobby. There's contests galore, DXing, EME, RTTY, JT65, HSCW, County collecting, microwave transmitting, QRP, home brewing, boat anchors, rag chewing, IOTA, SSTV, APRS, Public Service activities, RACES, ARES, SkyWarn, VEC, whew, what a list. To steal a phrase "Wait there's more...". Yes folks, we have a lot to offer to pique ones interest. So, why not make an early New Years resolution (no this one does not have anything to do with food or dieting, or exercise) for 2014 – ham radio wise. Choose to venture "Out Of the Box", out of your comfort zone and delve into a new radio realm. Pick something you have not done or tried before and go for it. Our own, John KB5NJD, did this very thing with the new allocations at 630 meters. If it's a stretch and requires an upgrade to General or possibly to Extra, then make that a goal. There are resources aplenty right here within the SWDCARC, just ask if you need the assistance or maybe to seek out someone to strike out in a new area with. Let us know if we can help, and keep us posted on your new endeavor (s)!!! You never know what might turn out when you are bold enough to step "outside of the box".



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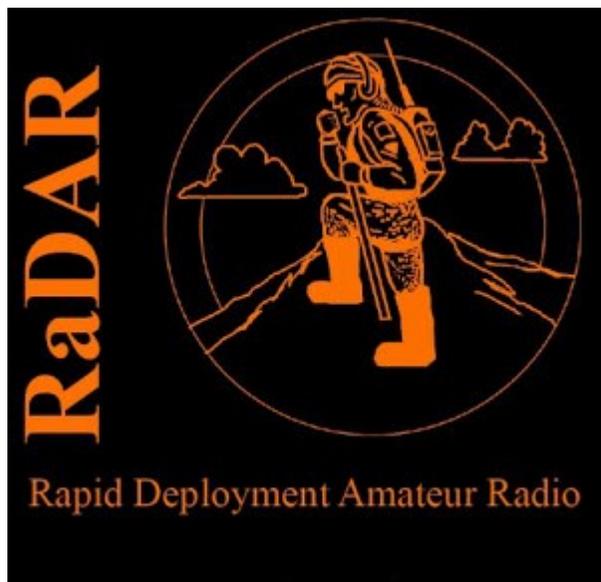
Merry Christmas



73,

Mike

RaDAR by Steve Parks / KF5RYI



It was a crisp morning November 2nd. The contest was supposed to start at 9 AM. A smart operator arrives early, sets up his gear, and maybe makes a test contact or two just to make sure everything is running smoothly. Then review your pack out strategy for a quick, orderly tear down. Orderly is the key word here. You see RaDAR (Rapidly Deployable Amateur Radio) you are awarded 4x bonus points if you move 1Km for every 5 contacts. This can certainly be done while walking and talking, but I'm a CW guy. I don't have a good setup for walking and keying.

I have a good plan. Get up early, play with the kids, get them breakfast, tell them we are going camping tonight after Dad's contest. I have all my stuff laid out the night before and its currently in the back seat of my car. I took a picture of my gear to post to the RaDAR G+ group. As I

look at my post, inspired, I realize. . . my battery. Wow, critical mistake. Glad I got up early! I get the battery in the back of the car, feed the kids, all the awesome Dad stuff.

As usual things don't go according to schedule with the kids. Plus, I kind of don't want to leave. With the oldest one only 5 I can't imagine trying to operate from the state park while being on the other side of a massive QRP contest pile up. I imagine my youngest holding a rattle snake and saying, "it makes noise Dad." I decide I better go, alone.

I'm about 15 minutes behind schedule. That's OK, I'd planned on leaving an hour early. I still have plenty of time to get set up. I get to the gate and show my annual pass.



"Just today" the park volunteer asks.

"Well, I intend to come back in 4-5 hours and reserve a camp spot for tonight. I have this contest. . ."

"You better not wait." The park volunteer says in a deeply concerned voice. "We have a bunch of campers today and we will be booked by noon."

OK. Not a problem, I still have plenty of time to get a campsite and get settled. I get out of the car, adjust my stocking cap to look a little less creepy, pull up my pants and walk in the door. Hams tend to talk a lot. Despite being a CW guy, I talk a lot. I visit with the camp people. Camp spot 72, perfect for a CW guy. I decide its a sign. My first operating spot will not be on the hill above the marina, it will be at camp site 72.

Good CW!

I get to the site, its perfect. Slightly elevated, lots of trees. A break in the trees above the fire pit. The most perfectly level picnic table and its close to the bathroom. Perfect!

8:55a. Crap!

Good news: I learned from Paul (KD5IVP) a cool trick for hanging an End Fed. It involves a slingshot and a small fishing reel. I have successfully deployed this antenna arrangement once. Wasn't a problem then, won't be a problem now.

I grab my gear from the back seat, leave my camp chair and table and climb the stairs to the picnic table. I get my radio situated perfectly, pull out my home brew EFHW. I put the sinker in the pocket of the sling shot, I pull the trigger on the reel for release, I aim carefully for a limb about 40 ft. up. I hit it.

This is not as good as it might seem. You see the goal of hanging an antenna is to go over the limb and attach your wire to the other side. If you hit a branch with a quarter ounce sinker it ricochets. I'm not entirely sure where it went, but there is a certifiable mess up in the tree. I slowly reel in the line, I see the weight come to the final branch and wrap itself so tightly around the limb there is no hope of ever undoing it from 30 feet below. I reel up as far as I can and pull slowly. . . the line breaks. The weight falls.



Good news. I'm not a litter bug! I grab the weight and tie it onto the line on the other end. Try again. Similar result. Now there is a certifiable mess of fishing line everywhere. I untangle, cut, attach a new sinker and try again. I'm becoming discouraged. 3rd times a charm. Nope, same result. 9:15a.

Around 9:30a I get my line in a different spot, its hanging about 25 feet up which isn't ideal, for a 31 foot wire. But its up. I get my wire attached and begin reeling it into the tree. The fishing line comes loose from the limb and the wire falls limp at my feet.

I coil the wire and attempt to throw it into a tree. No dice. I try again. If my wire was only 6 foot it would be perfect, unfortunately 25 feet are up in the limb still coiled. I begin debating pulling out my homebrew Buddipole, but I really wanted a vertical.

I tie on another sinker. I aim carefully. I add an extra 10 degrees of ark than necessary. I pray silently that this will be the one. Good news. The sinker is hanging over a big limb about 35 feet up and is now resting at about waist level right next to the picnic table. Perfect! I cut the weight and attach my wire. While tying the knot around the wire, I lose my grip on the fishing line. . .

I can't write what went through my mind next. I was in a pretty dark place. I take some deep breaths, I walk back to the fishing reel and try to trace the fishing line to where it is in the tree. Is there any hope I can get it back? Best news of the day. Its about 12" above where it was. I jump and grab it, get my antenna up, connect the coax. Money! 9:55a. Its all good.



I text my one guaranteed contact John (KB5NJD). I start calling CQ. I get a guy in FL right away. At the end John tail ends it like a pro. Its not a pile up, but I'm of the way to my move point. I start glancing at my set up for quick take down methods. My mind wonders to where is the best place to operate about 1 Km from here. At about 10:30a I get my 3rd contact.

Thirty minutes of calling CQ was pretty awful, now I'm up to about :45 more. About 11:30a I hear someone calling me back on 10M. Its pretty faint and its definitely DX. Sri Plz Agn? This goes similar to my hanging the antenna, but I finally get it GI4GST. I send an RST and location. I listen intently for the response. Nothing, just the static crackle of the noise floor. Its pretty close to noon, I'm not going to walk 1 Km and have time to set up. I pack up and go home. I take the family camping. Its great. My kids love the outdoors and they pose for the obligatory picture next to the 72 sign. I share with my G+ group and get a laugh. I'm grateful for the fun I'm able to have on the weekend.

There's a lesson in all of this. One of the tenets of amateur radio is supposed to be about operating in an emergency situation. We should probably practice

our craft more often than just field day. Field day is awesome and there are so many team members to help set up the gear. Can you set up your gear and operate in less than an hour? ½ hour? 10 minutes? The next big contest is in April. If you're not a contester they have monthly competitions where long QSOs are awarded bonus points. See what you can do and have fun!!

Steve / KF5RYI

Financial Report ... November, 2013



General Fund

Beginning Balance 11/1/2013			\$906.36
INCOME/EXPENSE			
Dues Income-2013	\$75.00		
ARRL Renewal Income-2013	\$78.00		
Transfer From Matl. Property			
Transfer Petty Cash income			
TOTAL INCOME	\$153.00		
EXPENSES			
ARRL Renew KD8AZT ck2032		\$37.00	
ARRL Renew KF5RYIF ck2034		\$37.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$74.00	
TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE	\$153.00	\$74.00	
Ending Balance 11/30/2013			\$985.36

Special Events Fund

Beginning Balance 11/1/2013			\$140.14
INCOME/EXPENSE			
Trans from General Fund			
TOTAL INCOME	\$0.00		
EXPENSES			
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$0.00	
TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Ending Balance 11/30/2013			\$140.14

Material Property Fund

Beginning Balance 11/1/2013			\$2,405.83
INCOME/EXPENSE			
Dues Income-2013	\$75.00		
Transfer from General Fund			
TOTAL INCOME	\$75.00		
EXPENSES			
AT&T		\$41.83	
PO Box renewal ck2031(voided)			
PO Box renew+LateFee ck2033		\$98.00	
Transfer to General Fund			
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$139.83	
TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE	\$75.00	\$139.83	
Ending Balance 11/30/2013			\$2,341.00
November Balance	\$228.00	\$213.83	\$3,466.50

2013 Board Members

President

Mike Harang (K5MMH)

Vice-President

Bill Ellis (N5TXN)

Treasurer

Jerry Keltner (KB6OJE)

Secretary

Pat Roberson (KB5YPP)

Directors

Paul Dryer (KD5IVP)

Rick Ellis (KJ5UY)

Lester Wong (K5ITO)

Committee Positions

Repeater Trustee

Johnny Roberson (KJ5LB)

Repeater Committee Chair

Mike Harang (K5MMH)

Newsletter Editor

Bill Ellis (N5TXN)

Web Master

Bruce Holt (KG1BAH)

MN²

Monday Night Net

Net Time 8:00PM

147.060(+) Primary

444.500(+) Alternate

Minutes of Board Meeting ... November 5, 2013



The meeting was called to order by Mike (K5MMH) at 6:35 PM.

Invocation was given by Johnny (KJ5LB).

Executive Board members present:

Officers

Mike Harang (K5MMH)

Bill Ellis (N5TXN)

Pat Roberson (KB5YPP)

Jerry Keltner (KB6OJE)

Directors

Lester Wong (K5ITO) – absent, Mother's funeral

Paul Dyer (KD5IVP)

Rick Ellis (KJ5UY) - absent, shift change

Guests: Johnny (KJ5LB), Ben (K5NEB), James (KF5RBN), Mel (KF5YTF) father-in-law of James, Suzette Harang.

Minutes: Motion: Paul (KD5IVP), 2nd : Jerry (KB6OJE). Approved as printed in the Groundwire.

Treasure Report: Motion : Paul (KD5IVP), 2nd : Bill (N5TXN). Approved with current balance of \$3,494.30, and as printed in the Groundwire.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Repeater: Is working and remains status quo.

Backup Repeater: Has been turned back on for testing. Repeater Committee needs to meet and make a decision on the filters and other needed components to make the backup useful.

VE Session: Ben (K5NEB) had a session last Saturday. There are now 6 more new General Class Ham operators. Wayne (KE4SGS) was one of the upgrades. Congratulations to all and thanks to Ben for his work in teaching these classes.

EOC: Paul (KD5IVP) reported that Dallas RACES is now back up.

Membership: nothing to report.

Net: Thanks to James (KF5RBN) for conducting the Net. There were 6 who checked in to the Net.

Web: Thanks to Bruce Holt (KG1BAH) for updating the Club Membership page on the website. Only paid members are listed on the site.

Groundwire: Need front page article for December.

Monthly Program: November program possibility – J-Pole construction.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Dec. 17 (3rd Tuesday) General Membership meeting date ok'd by Paul Dyer, Pastor invited. Date is set on the Church calendar.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Fox Hunt scheduled for Nov. 23. SWDCARC calendar has been updated. Be prepared for lots of driving.

2. HOTY voting now in progress. Send votes to N5TXN.be@gmail.com. Deadline is 23 November.

3. Margaret Sherwood has Ham radio items that belonged to her late husband, Louis (N5OAJ), for sale. If interested, see listing on Ellis County ARC on the For Sale page.

4. PSK contest on low band the 15th, 16th, 17th of Nov. Jerry (KB6OJE) has information.

ADJOURN: Motion by Pat (KB5YPP) at 7:05 P.M.

General Membership Meeting ... November 19, 2013



The meeting was called to order by Bill (N5TXN) at 6:33 PM.
Invocation was given by Paul (KD5IVP).

Executive Board members present:

Officers

Mike Harang (K5MMH)
Bill Ellis (N5TXN)
Pat Roberson (KB5YPP)
Jerry Keltner (KB6OJE)

Directors

Lester Wong (K5ITO) - absent
Paul Dryer (KD5IVP)
Rick Ellis (KJ5UY) - absent

Guests: Russell Gordon (K3RUS) to test tonight, and Mel (KF5YTF).

Minutes: Motion: Jerry (KB6OJE), 2nd : Johnny (KJ5LB). Approved as printed in the *Groundwire*.

Treasure Report: Current Balance \$3,407.50. Motion : Johnny (KJ5LB), 2nd : Bill (N5TXN). Approved with current balance and as printed in the *Groundwire*.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Repeater: Working ok.

Backup Repeater: Repeater Committee Members present will meet briefly after the meeting tonight.

VE Session: Test session scheduled for tonight.

EOC: Nothing to report.

Membership: No new members.

Net: The Monday night net had about 8 check in. Thanks to Ben (K5NEB) for serving as Net Control.

Web: The web page is up and running. Field Day Information to be posted: In Division 3A, SWDCARC placed 1st in North Texas, 3rd in West Gulf Region, and 60th of 350 nation-wide.

Groundwire: Articles are needed. Submit any information to be included in the *Groundwire* to Bill (N5TXN) no later than the 25th of the month.

OLD BUSINESS

Backup Repeater – Repeater Committee Members will meet briefly after the meeting tonight.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Fox Hunt scheduled for this Saturday 23 Nov, 8:30 A.M. at breakfast meeting place.
2. HOTY – HOTY voting in progress. Submit your vote to Bill (K5TXN) by 30 Nov. VOTE!
3. Ben (K5NEB) has Tech and General books for sale.

Christmas Dinner / Meeting is 17 December at 6:30 P.M. The club will supply 2 meats. Members are asked to bring side dishes and desserts to share. We will have the traditional White Elephant gift exchange. Re-gifting, regular, and gag items are welcome.

ADJOURN: Motion to adjourn to the Program by Pat (KB5YPP) at 6:50 P.M.

Program : **J-Pole Antennas** by Barry McCoy (K5BSM), with James (KF5RBN).