
SIGNALS

Rockwell Collins Amateur Radio Club

Monthly Newsletter of the

Volume 34 Issue 01

Web Site <http://www.w5rok.us>

October 2012

RCARC Membership Meeting

Thursday, 23 October 2012
1700 Social 1730 Meeting
1800 Program

Methodist Richardson Medical Center
At Bush/Renner/Shiloh Intersection
Second Floor Conference Room 200

Subject:
TBD—Come and See!

windy. I remember the HT blowing right off of the truck at one point. In a frantic effort to contain items from blowing away, I threw items in my cab and packed them individually into the PCU box one at a time.



Local Club News

Meeting Notice The program for the October meeting was not finalized at Signals publication time, but be prepared for good program. See y'all at the meeting.

Officer Elections Two of the RCARC officer positions for FY2013 were filled at the September 2012 meeting. Michael Schmit, WA9WCC, was elected President and Andrew Robinson, K5VRA, was reelected as Treasurer. The positions of Vice President, Secretary and Activities Chair remain open.

LOST AND FOUND by Michael Ketchum – K5MDK
October 15, 2012 – Celina, TX

Have you ever had that knot in your stomach after losing a very expensive tool or object that you own? I did last year when I lost my Handie-Talkie during a Medical Reserve Corps PCU Exercise. It was over a year ago when I was setting up a PCU (Point of Distribution Communications Unit) at Celina High School in Northern Collin County. However, when I was breaking down the antenna mast and packaging up all of the equipment, it started to get really

Before leaving the site, I assessed all of my equipment, with special emphasis on the PCU equipment that was under my care. After running through the PCU inventory checklist, I started back to McKinney to return my PCU equipment before the dock closed. On the way home, I looked for the HT in the truck and could not find it. After dropping the PCU equipment off, I returned to the High School to see what I could turn up. I even returned back to McKinney and worked with Jake Bathman – KF5IIC by going through some of the PCUs in storage to see if I had packed it up in the PCU. Still, nothing found. After fretting about it a while, I made one more trip to Celina High School before giving up and accepted the fact it was lost.

That was over a year ago. This last Friday, the physics teacher at Celina High School, Rick Carey – KC5LZV, was looking for a lost calculator for one of his students in the Lost & Found bin. To his surprise, he found the Yaesu VX-5R HT radio on the bottom of the bin. The receptionist at Celina High School, Miss Massey, asked what it was. Rick reported that it was a Ham Radio and a valuable one too. He removed the battery, exposing my call sign and phone number. He then requested that if the (Cont. on page 3)

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VE SESSIONS

Dallas tests are held 4th Sat of each month at 10:00. 13350 Floyd Rd. (Old Credit Union) Contact Bob West, WA8YCD 972.917.6362

Irving tests are held 3rd Sat. of each month at 09:00. 5th and Main St. Contact Bill Revis, KF5BL 252-8015

McKinney VE test sessions are held at the Heard Museum the first Sunday of the month. The address is 1 Nature Place, McKinney TX. The time of the testing is 14:30, ending no later than 16:45. **Note: no tests given on holiday weekends.**

Garland testing is held on the fourth Thursday of each month, excluding November, and begins at 1930 sharp. Location is Freeman Heights Baptist Church, 1120 N Garland Ave, Garland (between W Walnut and Buckingham Rd). Enter via the north driveway. A HUGE parking lot is located behind the church. Both the parking lot and the Fellowship Hall are located on the east side of the church building, with big signs by the entrance door. Contact Janet Crenshaw, WB9ZPH, 972.302.9992.

Plano testing is on the third Saturday of each month, 1300 hrs at Williams High School, 1717 17th St. East Plano. Check Repeater 147.180+ for announcements.

Greenville testing is on the Saturday after 3rd Thursday, 1000 hrs at site TBA, contact N5KA, 903.364.5306. Sponsor is Sabine Valley ARA. Repeater 146.780(-) with 118.8 tone.

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President's Message

Greetings to everyone in the Rockwell Collins Amateur Radio Club. Last month, the club voted to change the meeting time of our regular business meetings from the 4th Thursday of every month to the 4th Tuesday of each month. This month, we will be meeting on Tuesday, October 23rd at the same place, the Methodist Richardson Medical Center 2nd floor conference room. We now have the room from 5:00pm till after 7:30pm, so this will give our club members a chance to visit before packing up and heading out. We have been very fortunate to have the Methodist Richardson Medical Center provide us the nice conference room for our club meetings, these last few years. With the day change, we will not have to hurry up and get out to make way for the next group that meets every Thursday at 7pm.

In other news, the club surplus material located in the PACE lab area has been the subject of recent facility requests. We were asked, in a hurry, to reduce our area by 50%. Staying after work at midnight, Dennis Cobb – WA8ZBT and Bob Kirby – K3NT, worked on the material until almost 4am. Later, we received another request from facilities to get rid of more stuff. So, now efforts are underway to reduce it as well as find new places to store things for our club. If you should ever need to use the club station, please roll out the carts of boxes onto the floor outside of the club station so that you will have room to work. When you are finished, please roll those carts back into the club station, where you found them. Thank you.

Well, I hope everyone will support our new President, Mike Schmit – WA9WCC, as we head into this next Fiscal Year. Andrew Robinson – K5VRA has agreed to serve another term and was voted into the Treasurer's office last month as well. If you would like to help the club out, we are still in need of a Vice-President, Secretary and Activities Manager. Please let one of the new officers know of your interest to serve.

Well, this has been great. I hope the best for our club and wish continued participation from everyone. This next fiscal year will be an interesting one, going forward. I'll make every effort to continue to participate and attend the club meetings.

73,
Michael Ketchum
K5MDK
RCARC President (departing President)

Secretary's Report

27 September 2012

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Ketchum K5MDK at 1735 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following attendees were present at the meeting:

Chaeles Beis	K5UWD
Jim Brown	TBA
George Huling	K5GH
Jon Jacobson	KR5C
Dave Jaksa	W0VX
Michael Ketchum	K5MDK
Steve Phillips	K6JT
Joel Rubenstein	N5JR
Mike Schmit	WA9WCC
Jim Skinner	WB0UNI
Paul Veenstra	KC0TEG
Joe Wolf	N5UIC

Program:

The meeting started with the program, presented by Joe Rubenstein, N5JR. The title of his program was "DXpedition to Botswana," which included impressive pictures of Kreuger National Park in addition to his recounting the DX experience.

Officers and Committee Reports:

President's Report: The President's report is in the newsletter.

Vice-President's Report: There was no Vice-President's report

Secretary's Report: The Secretary's Report is in the newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: There was no Treasurer's report.

Website Manager's Report: There was no Website Manager's report.

Station Trustee's Report: There was no Station Trustee's report.

Database Manager's Report: There was no Database Manager's report.

Old Business:

Projects: We still need an improved packet station antenna.

Storage: Due to probable loss of our storage space, we will need to disposition our surplus assets.

New Business:

Meeting Day Change: Michael Ketchum opened the business meeting by suggesting that the meeting day be changed to the fourth Tuesday of the month. This was occasioned by the fact that Thursday is only available until 7:00 PM. Tuesday is clear of other meetings. Jim Skinner made the motion to change the meeting day and Jim Brown seconded it. The motion to change the monthly meeting to Tuesday was approved.

Officer Elections: The vice president reported no nominations for club officers. Michael called for nominations for club officers, but none were offered. Mike Schmit volunteered to be acting president until the office is permanently filled. Andrew Robinson will continue as treasurer. Both officer positions

were approved by unanimous vote. Other officer positions remain vacant.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 1855.

LOST AND FOUND (*Cont. from page 1*) number was not valid anymore, to let him know.

Miss Massey made that phone call to my cell phone. She left a message for me around 11:00am. When I took a late lunch break at 2pm, I checked my voice mail. The first thought that ran through my mind was that old HT I had lost at Celina High School. I immediately called her back and received the welcome news that it was no longer lost.

Today, my YL, Amy, and my Mom made the long trip up to Celina today to pick up the HT. They were able to get it and bring it home. It was a good day for me as I booted the radio up with another battery and tested it with a local repeater. The battery that was on the radio was no good. I will have to buy a couple of new Lithium batteries for it. But it is wonderful to have my favorite HT in my go kit ready to go again.



For those of you who may wonder what I did for an HT all of this last year, it was quite unusual to describe; I had entered a raffle at the Plano Amateur Radio Klub Christmas Party at Spring Creek BBQ in Richardson. Up for grabs was a ton of nice little goodies and two brand new Wouxun KG-UVD1Ps, with a complete accessory kit. I told my wife, who was with me, that there was no way I was getting one of those. Later on, as the raffle progressed, the first Wouxun was given away. Then, my number was called for the second one. What a surprise! I told Kip Moravec – AE5IB, who was conducting the raffle, about my story of losing my HT during an exercise a few months earlier. Kip, so impressed, announced my story to everyone, which was followed with a hearty applause.

So, there are a couple of things to learn from all of this: (1) although it is good to put your call sign and phone number inside the battery compartment or other area inside the radio, you may also want to consider some identification outside as well. (2) Never lose hope on lost articles. They may turn up,

even if it takes a year. (3) when you do lose something, check out the local lost and found in case the item does turn up. You never know.

73, Michael Ketchum – K5MDK

Technology that Works for Me -- Portable DVR! from Dale Kubichek, N6JSX on October 8, 2012

The advancement of the today's technology is mind boggling. Look at the size of your HAM radios and what they can do compared to the old Drake, Swan, Hallicrafter, Heathkit, or the infamous IC-2AT thumb wheel HT. HAMdom has really progressed in just a generation with super miniaturized solid-state components giving us remote control head radios, bluetooth's, CTCSS, HT's smaller than a cigarette pack and now IF DSP, clearly the best all time RX improvement.

As I age I find that my hard-drive between my ears has nearly reached capacity with retrieval seek-times getting longer and longer. Only my wife can effectively push the defrag button. Bill Cosby's recommendation to sit down hard in the chair to push the forgotten back to the top of the stack, just doesn't work anymore. It still remains lost until my wife barks which miraculously pops it to the front of my mind, but that bark comes with consequences. Now that I've been diagnosed with sleep-apnea (that is causing occasional short-term memory losses) I found the DVR a handy if not necessary tool.



Decades ago when I my life was super busy balancing work, family, night-college and more, I bought myself an expensive pocket mini-cassette recorder/player but found it was too cumbersome to use. It was a battery and tape killer (it stretched tapes). Then about ten years ago, I again decided to reorganize my thoughts in a desire to become more efficient. I bought an Olympus VN-90 (90min) ~\$65, DVR with three message folders, using two AAA batteries, very light pocket small, using EE memory and **no tapes**. This DVR can be adapted to many different

uses, imagination and ingenuity being your only boundary. The DVR even has a built-in mic/speaker and two external jacks for mic/speaker. I used it for years until I forgot where I put it, only to find it last year in one of my old Notebook cases. It is now part of my HAM shack to record my Satellite operations with passes not exceeding 12 minutes. Afterwards I transpose the contact data to my PC log and make a PC audio file (.wav/.mp3/.wma) to save those special contacts.

Yesterday, I bought another Olympus VN-7200 DVR (HQ mode = **68hrs** of record time with the same features of the VN-90) from Wal-Mart™ for ~\$29.95. I carry this one in my pocket at all times as one never knows when an epiphany, tidbits of wisdom, or a fable will hit me or a task is created that cannot be lost. I want to insure I follow up before something distracts me and I lose those witticisms. This one button

pocket DVR allows me to use the DVR while playing mobile HF to retain contact reports for later transposing to my log. With today's social focus in creating hands-free laws to minimize vehicle driver distractions (due to untrained/undisciplined cell phone users) the use of a DVR is a safety tool eliminating the need for pen-paper and taking my eyes off the road. Another handy use of the DVR is to record a radio conversation where the other party insists their signal sounds good and the problem must be yours. Playback will surely humble these know-it-all braggarts.



VP-90 used in my portable SAT Com OPs

I was considering buying a voice-keyer for contesting, not now. I'll use my DRV speaker output into my HF IC-746P mic input. Now I just need to toggle the DVR to the pre-recorded message number, key the radio (or set VOX), and press play - sending my pre-recorded voice message again and again. This will save my voice and insure consistent CQ/contact information every time. The boss can bark at me even while I'm playing radio but the message will still get out without background interference! And while the DVR is playing I can input the contact information into the PC log – improving my contact speeds and efficiency.



How many times have you been working on a project to discover you need to buy something to complete it or you've made a critical measurement – and JUST THEN the phone rings, the radio calls, or the boss yells for you - to discover you now have just lost that important thought/measurement? Worst of all you know what ever that thought was is important. That lost thought begins to nag at you to be rediscovered, to the point that you will even retrace your footsteps hoping something you see will jog your memory! A pocket DVR can solve this dilemma and save you much time (and embarrassment). These new pocket DVR tools have become CHEAP with long battery life. I'm not much of a pocket guy so I just bought a nice vertical small cellphone belt holster for my DVR.

A side note; do not use the DVR to record the boss snoring (to prove she does), she really barks when you play that one!

Once again technology is wonderful, providing I remember to carry my DVR with me and use it!

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Young Man's Entry into HF Radio

[JGB \(OD1USA\)](#) on September 24, 2012

My Foray into Ham Radio I got my start in Ham radio as a 27 year old when deployed to Afghanistan on my third tour. During my second tour I brought a Grundig G3 globe traveler which I used regularly to listen to BBC World Service. During my third tour I decided to buy an HF radio. I have had a interest in electronics for years and via my military service had worked a great deal with radios from HF to SHF but I had never had any experience with amateur HF.

After reading and deliberating for a few months I took the plunge and bought an FT-817ND, MFJ 971 and Rig Blaster Plug n' Play. The major appeal of the radio was its small size, relatively low power consumption, battery operation and capability for digital modes. I don't really need a true portable radio per-se but traveling extensively it would be easier to have a compact radio with external tuner, and external amp if need be. My interest in the digital modes which I assumed would be the focus of my operation was the DX capability of those modes as well as compatibility with QRP operation. I knew I would be in for a challenge operating a 5w radio from a remote location and hoping to make DX contacts but I was up for it.

A big appeal of HF amateur operation for me is historical. As a child during the end of the cold war I have always had a fascination with that era. Reading about numbers stations, agent radios, burst communications and low power operation to avoid detection was enthralling. I wanted to emulate some of that style of operation to live and understand it better. The military uses HF radio for secure communication over long distances with limited probability of detection by operating with 20 watts or less. So I knew lower power operation was possible with the right equipment.

I have heard both sides of the debate over whether digital modes have a place in amateur radio. My counterpoint is that despite all of the other digital communications we have avail-

able today HF is the only long distance option we have that makes the user self sufficient. For example here in Afghanistan civilian internet is slow and expensive. Most soldiers pay \$100.00 a month for two hours a day at 56k. The systems are not terribly secure, rely on bulky satellite uplinks and price gouging contractors. If it is possible to send a simple text based e-mail several thousand miles to reach the internet using 15 lbs of equipment that I control I want to do that. The ability to be self reliant, to operate as part of a peer to peer mesh network without satellites, fiber optic back bones is the appeal.

Don't get me wrong about technology. I think tube amplifiers and transceivers are awesome. As technological art, functional history they are truly important to the hobby. I am working on learning CW as it is a simple reliable fall back. However the capabilities offered by digital modes, solid state amplifiers are robustness, reliability, compact size and low power draw.

Did I mention I am operating my station %100 from solar power? I use a 62W solar panel connected to a solex 10amp charge controller, 120Ah AGM battery, MFJ super battery booster to run my radio, laptop and an LED light.

When I received my boxes from HRO I couldn't wait to get them open. I spent considerable time getting a good ground set up because the soil here is dry and rocky. My antenna is a broadband 100ft dipole 60ft above ground in an inverted V configuration. Getting the Rig Blaster working with my Macbook Pro was a little tedious.

It took a few days to get the configuration right but now it works great. Because of where I am most of my contacts come from Europe which is minimum 1600 miles. On the PSK31 hangouts at 14070 and 21070 I was hearing a lot of signals but not getting out. I had to adjust my antenna a little, initially it was about 20ft lower. I built a tower on top of a building to get the additional height and then I was able to start making contacts, averaging 2,500 miles distant on 5w!

My furthest contact so far has been Madagascar 3600 miles south west. It felt like a true achievement to get that 599 from that distance. Since I am using three conductor electrical wiring as a feed line I am hoping when I get a hold of some ladder line I will have even better success.

I think maintaining the viability of amateur radio is important. My journey has been a great educational experience and will continue to be for years. I know that wherever I am in remote places I will always be able to reach out across the world. As a new generation of operators take up the hobby the bridge between digital technology and radio is the one we cross to join the network. If it were not for the digital modes I probably would never have gotten into this hobby, though I hope to one-day have my own boat anchor. I think my journey will be one of reverse evolution from digital to analog. I hope the older enthusiasts will remember that when they bash the newer formats.

*Gardiz Afghanistan, August 30 2012,
JB 18D (Reprinted by permission of eHam.net)*

Rockwell-Collins

Amateur Radio Club

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TO:



CLUB STATIONS

(972) 705-1349

W5ROK REPEATER

441.875 MHz +5 MHz Input

131.8 Hz PL - RX and TX

W5ROK-1 PACKET BBS ROK Node

145.05 MHz

W5ROK-N1, W5ROK-N2 & W5ROK-N3 HSMM-MESHNET Nodes 2.4 GHz

Thursday, 23 October 2012

1700 Social

1730 Meeting

Methodist Richardson Medical Ctr
At Bush/Renner/Shiloh Intersection

Second Floor Conference Room 200

NEXT SIGNALS INPUTS DEADLINE:

→→→ 16 November 2012 ←←←