



KEY CITY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

April 2003

March Meeting Highlights

Kent West, KC5ENO

President Kent West, KC5ENO, called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The recently published *Amateur Radio Today* video was shown. This is a six minute video produced by the ARRL and narrated by Walter Cronkite.

Then Susan Jarrod from the City of Abilene reminded the club members of the upcoming Steamin' Wheels Bike Race and Fun Ride, and asked for our assistance with communications at that function.

Gerald Dugan, N5OGD, then demonstrated the EchoLink system with his handy-talkie, making connection through the local AE5B repeater link to connect to a link in a couple of foreign countries, and than to have a short QSO with a ham in New York.

Peg Richard, KA4UPA, then presented the Treasurer's Report, followed by an update on the upcoming Hamfest.

Peg also brought to the club's attention the availability of Terrorist Insurance for such functions as Hamfest, and the club passed a motion to spend the \$16 necessary for the insurance.

Peg also gave a brief report on the latest test session results, as well as a mention of Judy Smith, KC5THH, being here in town briefly.

After the meeting, several of us met at McDonald's on North First Street for coffee/snacks/late suppers.

Steamin' Wheels

Kent West, KC5ENO

The City of Abilene's 2003 Steamin' Wheels Bike Race and Fun Ride took place on Saturday, 22 March 2003. Several amateurs provided their skills in a controlled net situation to provide communications for the event. Thanks go to Wendell (WA5LVH), John (AE5B), Carla (K5RLA), Nesa (KC5ENL), Kent (KC5ENO), Randy (N5JZH), Chris (KC5PYL), and W.K. (WB5ZOO) for their participation.

The only negative was that two riders were hit by a car, which was the first such accident ever in the history of the race. According to reports, both riders escaped serious injury and are doing fine.

Skywarn Training

Kent West, KC5ENO

The Big Country Skywarn training session for 2003 occurred in the Hilton Room at Abilene Christian University on Saturday, 1 March. It was well attended, and got local media attention. This training prepares spotters for making accurate reports during severe weather activations of the Skywarn net.

Hamfest

Kent West, KC5ENO

Mark your calendars for the upcoming 2003 KCARC Hamfest. It's

scheduled for May 3rd and 4th. This year we will also be the West Texas Section Convention. The event will be held at the Abilene Civic Center. More information and a pre-registration form is available at

<http://www.qsl.net.kcArc/hamfest.html>

ARRL VE Test Sessions

Kent West, KC5ENO

The next ARRL VE Test Session will be conducted on 5 April at 1:30pm at the Berry Lane Baptist Church. The Test Session for May will be at the Hamfest, on the 3rd of May at 10:30am. See <http://www.qsl.net/kcArc/announce.html> for more info.

Vanity Fee Hike

Submitted by Nesa Love, KC5ENL

SB QST ARL ARLB026 ARLB026
FCC Proposes to Hike Amateur
Radio Vanity Call Sign Fee

The FCC proposed March 26 increasing the regulatory fee to apply for, renew or reinstate an Amateur Radio vanity call sign from \$14.50 to \$16.30 this fall. The Commission included the new fee in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) "Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2003" (MD 03-83), released today. The closing date for comments on the new fee schedule is April 25. Reply comments are due by May 5. "We

estimate that 9800 applicants will apply for vanity call signs in FY2003," the FCC said in its NPRM. That's up by 800 from FY2002. It expects to collect revenues of nearly \$160,000, an increase of almost \$30,000 from FY2002. The FCC NPRM also seeks comments on its efforts to review, streamline and modernize its fee assessment and collection processes and procedures. "We welcome comments on a broad range of options in this regard," the FCC said. Areas of particular interest include suggestions for improvement in the agency's electronic payment system. Interested parties may comment via the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) on the web at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>. Enter "MD 03-83" in the "Proceeding" field. Electronic comments by e-mail also are welcome.

Club Meeting!

Kent West, KC5ENO

Remember to attend the Key City Amateur Radio Club meeting, Monday, 14 April, on the second floor of the city library.

An Interview with Bill Shaw

Kent West, KC5ENO

Bill Shaw, KJ5DX, is the Taylor County Emergency Coordinator. As such, he has a role in preparing amateur radio operators to assist in times of emergencies, such as severe weather or chemical spills, etc. He has kindly agreed to answer some questions about these activities.

I = Interviewer

S = Bill Shaw

I: Tell us a little bit about your role as Emergency Coordinator for Taylor County, and how you came to have this role.

S: I was asked by Dee Burton (previous EC) to take this position because of my interest in Ham Radio and the Skywarn program.

I: Some amateur radio operators, or hams, have decided to offer their equipment and services in times of emergencies. I understand that in order to keep things from being too chaotic, such volunteers should be allied with a national emergency service, such as ARES or RACES. What are these organizations? How do they relate to the Civil Defense we remember from the Cold War?

S: Civil Defense is an old term that is not used much anymore. The state of Texas and most emergency management groups recognize folks who are affiliated with an organized group. Freelancers aren't given much credibility, whereas a good organized group is.

I: What does ARES mean?

S: Amateur Radio Emergency Service

I: What does RACES mean?

S: Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services

I: How do the two organizations differ, and which organization, if any, is preferred for local amateurs?

S: ARES is an ARRL entity and is associated by county within the state. RACES is a Texas Department of Public Safety entity.

I: Are there any special licensing or fees or training or age limits, etc, to be a member of these organizations?

S: You have to hold a valid amateur radio license. ARES requires the "registration" of your equipment but doesn't require a background check. As I understand it, RACES does require a couple of signatures for validation and a background check.

I: How does an amateur become a member of these organizations?

S: ARES and RACES both require that you fill out the appropriate form (the RACES form is available in PDF format at <http://www.qsl.net/kcarc/>). RACES officials in Austin do not get in a big hurry about processing these forms when they are submitted. So, be ready to wait for a while from the time the application is submitted and you hear something from Austin.

I: Can an amateur be a member of both organizations? Is there any advantage to doing so?

S: Yes, you can be a member of both. The advantage of RACES is that it is recognized by the Texas DPS.

I: What if an amateur thinks he is a member, or that he has applied, but doesn't know for sure. Is there some way he can check on his current status?

S: The state does supply me with a list, once in a while, but I haven't gotten anything in a long time from them. They will send a RACES ID card if they have you on the list....but again, be aware that it takes them a Looooooooooooooooong time to get things processed....

I: Are members of these organizations paid for their services, or is it strictly a voluntary activity?

S: Everything is strictly voluntary.

I: If an amateur thinks he might be available, say 10% of the time for emergencies, would it be better for him to become a member, and then turn down 90% of the requests for help, thereby increasing the "paperwork-to-benefit" ratio? Or would it be better for him to remain a non-member so that he's not a drain on the system 90% of the time?

S: If you can help at all, I'd suggest becoming a member.

Thanks, Bill, for taking the time to answer these questions.

Accessing EMail

Kent West, KC5ENO

There are several ways of accessing email, and the method used is often determined by the provider of a person's internet services (ISP - Internet Service Provider). However, if other methods are available, the user may find advantage to using them.

No matter which method is used, the process starts by having email arrive at the ISP's server.

When Harry sends an email to Sally, he typically composes the email on his computer using some sort of email client. When he clicks on the "Send" button, the email is sent via his

internet connection (dial-up modem, wireless access, cable modem, DSL modem, etc) to his ISP's SMTP (or "outgoing") server. His ISP's SMTP server then sends the message out on the internet at large, addressed to Sally's ISP. The internet automatically knows how to get the message from Harry's ISP to Sally's ISP.

When the message arrives at Sally's ISP, the message is placed on that ISP's "incoming" server (perhaps a "POP" or "MAIL" server), where it sits waiting for Sally to connect via her internet connection (dial-up modem, etc).

Sally's connection to her ISP can be typically accomplished in one of three ways.

Webmail: This is the way Yahoo! Mail and MSN Mail usually work, as well as other email clients. With this method, the incoming email clients always stay on the ISP's incoming server, and the customer uses a web browser (such as MS-Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator) to access the mail. There is no dedicated application program on the customer's computer for accessing the email; the customer simply uses his web browser as the interface to his email.

The advantage of webmail interfaces is that no matter where in the world the customer is at any one moment, if he has access to an internet-connected web browser, he has access to his email. This is typically how college students access their email. They can get to their email from their dorm computers, or they can go to any one of a dozen computer labs on campus and access their email, or they can get to their email from Mom & Dad's computer over dial-up when they go home for the weekend.

There are a couple of disadvantages to using a webmail interface. One is that webmail interfaces tend to be somewhat slow and clunky. Another disadvantage is that most ISPs limit the amount of storage space a customer can have on the incoming mail server (typically 100 MB or so). What this means is that the customer must continually keep an eye on how much space their mail is taking up on

the server, and either delete old messages to free up space, or move the messages in some way off the ISP's server onto another storage location, typically the customer's own hard drive. This process of moving messages off the server onto a local hard drive is sometimes more than the average customer can handle, so deleting old messages is the usual procedure.

If a customer allows his server space quota to become full, the ISP will tend to do one of two things:

- 1) The ISP may charge the customer a fee for going over quota, or
- 2) The ISP may just "bounce" the new incoming messages, so that the

customer never receives those new messages.

If you've ever had someone tell you they've sent you email, and you've never received it, and you're accessing your email via webmail, it might be that you've gone over your quota. Most ISPs have some mechanism in place that allows you to check your quota.

Pop Mail: Many ISPs offer Pop Mail services. In this scenario, the incoming mail still arrives at the ISP's incoming mail server, and waits for the customer to retrieve the mail. But instead of using a web browser to access his mail via a webmail interface, the customer uses a

Key City Amateur Radio Club Income and Expense Report March 10, 2003

<i>Regular Account:</i>	Balance Forward	\$579.80
	Income	215.00
	Expenses	67.45
	Balance on Hand	727.35
<i>Repeater Account</i>		
	Balance on Hand	64.00
<i>Hamfest Account:</i>		
	Balance Forward	1,747.56
	Income	15.00
	Expense	482.74
	Balance on Hand	1,279.82
	Amount Needed to Balance	2,071.17
	Total Amount on Hand:	
	Checking	2,034.29
	Cash	35.00
	Coins	1.88
	Total	\$2,071.17
	** Itemized Expenses (Regular Account)	
	Checking Service Fee (Feb)	15.00
	Southwestern Bell (Dec)	26.45
	Mailbox Ren 1 Year	26.00
	Total	67.45
	(Hamfest Account)	
	Annual Permit Fee	150.00
	Print Brochures	332.74

Peggy A. Richard, KA4UPA

Treasurer, Key City Amateur Radio Club

dedicated email application program on his computer, such as Outlook Express, Eudora, or Netscape Messenger. These email client programs will occasionally connect to the ISP's incoming server (POP or MAIL, typically), and "pop" the messages off the server onto the customer's local hard drive. If the email client finds any new messages on the server, it will download those messages to the local hard drive, then delete them off the ISP's server. The messages are then accessible locally via the email client.

The advantage of pop services is that once the mail has been downloaded to the local machine, accessing the messages is considerably faster and more convenient than getting mail via a webmail interface. Also, as long as new messages are popped off the server faster than they're coming in, the customer does not have to worry about running out of quota space (although he may have to be concerned about running out of local hard drive space, if he has a "smallish" hard drive).

The disadvantage of pop mail is that messages can't be accessed from anywhere. If Harry's office computer downloads Sally's email message, telling him to meet her for dinner at a certain place, and then he goes home and gets ready for the date, and suddenly realizes that he doesn't know where he's supposed to meet her, he can't use his home computer to re-read the message, because the message is no longer on the server but on his office computer. Harry now has to drive the 30-minute commute back to the office to re-read the message.

There are a couple of ways around this limitation. One is to use remote control software, such as PCAnywhere or Windows XP's Remote Desktop, so that Harry can use his home computer to "remote control" his office computer, and thereby read the email on his office computer using his home computer as a "window" to his office computer. This method tends to be slow and error-prone however.

Another way around the limitation is to use a feature in many email client

programs that leave a copy of the email messages on the ISP's server. There are several problems with this technique, such as again running out of server quota if the messages build up on the server, and email "corruption", where the email client gets confused as to which messages have been read and which haven't, sometimes leading to messages that have already been downloaded being downloaded again and again, and deleting a message on one computer, say the office computer, only to find that the message still exists on the other computer, say the home computer, because both systems popped the message before it was deleted on one or the other systems.

IMAP: IMAP is a system that is sort of a combination of webmail and pop mail. It uses a local email client, such as Eudora or Netscape Messenger, but it leaves the messages on the server and manipulates them there. Typically an IMAP client is much easier to use than a webmail interface, and since the messages are left on the server, they can be accessed from anywhere, including other IMAP clients or webmail interfaces. So, Harry can have Eudora in his office, configured to use IMAP, and he can have Mozilla Mail at home, configured to use IMAP, and he can get to Sally's email message from either place. Or he can stop in at Starbuck's and use their internet cafe computers to access the message via webmail.

Of course, the customer still has the problem of running out of server quota, but with an IMAP client, it's easy to create local folders on the local hard drives and move messages off the server. Harry can have a "Work" folder at the office, and a "Personal" folder at home. When he's reading email at work, he can simply move work-related messages out of the Inbox into his Work folder, leaving other messages in the Inbox. When he gets home, he can move personal-related messages out of the Inbox into his Personal folder, leaving other messages in the Inbox. When he goes to Starbuck's, he can read whatever has been left in the Inbox on the

server. Of course, he can't access his Work folder from home or from Starbuck's, and he can't access his Personal folder from work or Starbuck's (unless he uses some sort of "workaround", like remote control software). Still, IMAP provides a nice compromise, if the ISP allows IMAP access; some only provide POP or webmail access.

These three methods of accessing email can even be combined. For example, Harry may pop his email at the office, leaving a copy of the messages on the server, and then use IMAP at home to delete unwanted messages or to sort them into local folders, leaving a few messages on the server, such as Sally's email containing the location of their date, to be accessed anywhere via webmail.

Mozilla Calendar

Kent West, KC5ENO

The Mozilla project (<http://www.mozilla.org>) has not only developed a standards-compliant web browser, which is the heart of Netscape 6 and above, and a great email client; now they've created a useful standards-compliant calendaring application for keeping track of those dentists appointments and soccer practice and dates with Sally. It's still in its early stages, but shows great promise.

Assuming you have Mozilla installed (at least version 1.2, but preferably more recent), simply point your browser to <http://www.mozilla.org/projects/calendar> and install the appropriate version (Windows, Linux, or soon, Macintosh). Installation over a quick link such as cable modem takes about 30 seconds. Once installed, simply restart Mozilla and your calendar is available in the "Window" menu.

Then you can subscribe to various published calendars, such as the common US Holidays, or the 2003 game schedule for the Washington Redskins. Simply use the Mozilla browser to go back to the [.../projects/calendar](http://www.mozilla.org/projects/calendar) link, and scroll to the bottom of the page. Click on the

holiday schedule of your choice, or on the icalshare.com link to choose from thousands of calendars. After choosing a calendar, a window will open allowing you to subscribe; just click on "OK", and that calendar will be merged with yours. If you don't want to see that calendar's events, just unclick it in the "Calendars" tab; this won't unsubscribe you from the calendar; it will only "unmerge" that calendar's events from your calendar.

You can also share your calendar, but that requires a properly configured server. The icalshare.com link mentioned above allows you to use their server to share out your calendar, or if you have your own web server with webDav capabilities, you can share it that way. This is a great product that would be useful in a small office environment that has its own server (such as a Linux server running Apache); the members of the office could then share their calendars with each other: the receptionist making appointments for the boss; the co-worker seeing if Bob is out sick today, etc. And it's all free, skinnable, and standards-compliant, based on the iCal internet standard.

Web Site Update

Kent West, KC5ENO

The KCARC website, at <http://www.qsl.net/kcarc/>, has been updated to have a more consistent look and to be more standards-compliant. If you haven't visited the site lately, perhaps it's time.

Ogg

Kent West, KC5ENO

Most every one knows what an MP3 is; it's an audio file (typically a song track "ripped" from a music CD) that can be stored and played on digital devices, such as computers and portable MP3 players. Other common formats are WMA (Windows Media) and RealAudio.

What most people haven't heard of is Ogg.

Whereas WMA is controlled by Microsoft, and thereby can only be

played by Microsoft-approved players, and RealAudio is controlled by Real, and thereby can only be played by Real-approved players, MP3s and Ogg files have had a more "open" history.

The free availability of the MP3 format has lead in the last half-decade to its dominance as the format of popular choice in the digital music scene.

However, recently the patent-holder of the MP3 format has decided to start charging royalties for MP3 recordings. What this means is that whatever tool is used to record MP3s has built into its purchase price a royalty fee to pay for the privilege of recording such files. The end-user typically doesn't realize this, just as he doesn't typically realize that a third of the price of a gallon of gas at the pump is taxes. Still, the fee is there.

This has lead to the increasing acceptance of the Ogg format. Like the MP3, Ogg uses a "lossy" compression algorithm. Unlike the MP3 format, Ogg typically compresses to a smaller size while resulting in a better sounding file (depending on bit rate), and is a completely "Free" (non-proprietary, non-patent-encumbered) format. These qualities make the format attractive to makers of music recording programs. However, because the MP3 format has such a headstart, the portable music player manufacturers have been slow to adopt the Ogg format in their players, leaving the creators of music recording programs in a position where they must still pay the MP3 royalties to include the capability to record in that format.

Still, if you're shopping for a portable digital music player, and you're interested in encouraging the industry to adopt a non-proprietary format and/or you're interested in ultimately lowering the cost of music, you might look for a player that can handle both MP3 and Ogg formats.

More information can be found at the following sites:

<http://www.raw42.com/articles/ogg-v-mp3.html>

<http://www.octapod.org/jeanpoole/a>

[archives/000073.html](http://www.linuxjournal.com/article.php?sid=4416)

<http://www.linuxjournal.com/article.php?sid=4416>

Oregon Moves toward Open Source

Paul Johnson

(baloo@ursine.dyndns.org)

(This past week the state of Oregon has been considering a bill to encourage the use of Open Source software by state agencies. The following is an update written by Paul Johnson, a member of the Debian GNU/Linux community. - Kent)

Rep Barnhart (D, Central Lane and Lynn Counties) has managed to get his HB-2892 out of committee. For those of you who don't know (or are outside Oregon looking in), this would require state agencies to consider open source when looking into software.

<http://www.mwvlug.org/legislation/oregon/hb2892.html>

From what I can see, the key points are...

- (1) - Acknowledges that the current system for selecting software is expensive and not the most compatible solution around. (e) specifically mentions that open, platform-neutral standards are the optimal solution. (g) also officially acknowledges that spyware is considered harmful.
- (2)(2) - Open source can (a) save the state money, (b) prevents vendor stranglehold, (c) adheres to open, neutral standards and (d,e) allows for audits.

Section 1 (1) creates a legal definition of Open Source Software for the state, which seems to mandate DFSG¹-style free, as well as what makes an open standard, anything that isn't open is automatically proprietary, and references ORS 174.111 for a definition of state government.

Section 1 (2) contains the actual force of this bill, stating that (a) open source must be considered and (d) any software that does not comply with open standards automatically

¹ Debian Free Software Guidelines; see http://www.debian.org/social_contract.html#guidelines

disqualified, along with (e) any spyware or software shipping with backdoors.

<http://www.mwvlug.org/legislation/index.html> - This group is organizing the effort to support HB-2892 as well as Oklahoma HB-1627 and Texas SB-1627, which are of a similar nature for those states.

ARRL Emergency Communications course registration

Ripped from the ARRL Website

(Apr 4, 2003) -- Registration opens Monday, April 7, 12:01 AM Eastern Time (0500 UTC), for the on-line Level I Emergency Communications course (EC-001). Registration remains open through the April 12-13 weekend or until all available seats have been filled--whichever comes first. Class begins Tuesday, April 22 . Thanks to the federal homeland security grant from the Corporation for National and

Community Service, the \$45 registration fee paid upon enrollment will be reimbursed after successful completion of the course. During this registration period, approximately 200 seats are being offered to ARRL members on a first-come, first-served basis. Senior amateurs are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. To learn more, visit the [ARRL Certification and Continuing Education](http://www.remote.arrl.org/cce/) (<http://www.remote.arrl.org/cce/>) Web page and the C-CE Links found there. For more information, contact Emergency Communications Course Manager [Dan Miller, K3UFG](mailto:Dan.Miller@K3UFG), 860-594-0340.

Tidbits

Kent West, KC5ENO

- Plug your phone number into Google and find your name and a map to your house.
- Ink jet printers are less expensive up front, but most techies consider them disposable, as a new ink

cartridge typically costs almost as much as a new printer, and most inkjets tend to start developing severe problems after about a year. Repairs for such printers often cost more than a new printer. In addition, the ink tends to dry out and gum up the works. Laserjets cost more up front, but tend to last for years with few problems, and cost less per page in the long run. Their ink is a dry powder, so it doesn't dry up and gum up the works. A web search for printer qualities might be in order before you make your next purchase.

• 'Claims that man-made pollution is causing "unprecedented" global warming have been seriously undermined by new research which shows that the Earth was warmer during the Middle Ages.' claims the *Daily Telegraph* (<http://www.portal.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/04/06/nclim06.xml&sSheet=/news/2003/04/06/ixhome.html>).

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