



KEY CITY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

January 2004

November Meeting Highlights

Kent West, KC5ENO

Kent West (KC5ENO) called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

As meeting minutes were not available, they were not read.

Peg Richard (KA4UPA) read the Treasurer's Report.

The club discussed the possibility of deactivating the phone patch on the 146.76 repeater. The expense of the phone line is around \$300 per year, and the question was asked if the phone patch was worth that, as it is seldom used.

Two main objections were raised against turning off the phone patch: 1) we can't do it immediately, because without the phone line, we don't have a secondary means to control the repeater. We'd have to come up with an alternative method. 2) 911 access via the repeater would be lost.

John Dyer (AE5B) suggested we appoint a committee to look into the costs/feasibility of alternative means of controlling the repeater.

John Bogart (WX5TX) suggested that one possibility would be to replace our "full-time" phone line with a "measured use" line. He vaguely recalled that the price of such a line was about half of what we're now paying.

Gary Peterson (NZ5V) suggested a wireless Voice-Over-IP (VoIP) link. If I understood what he was saying, we could put a wireless 2.4GHz transceiver

at the repeater site, and strike up a deal with a VoIP provider, which he thought could be had for about \$8 a month.

It was decided that Peg would look into the feasibility of a measured use line, and Randy Robinson (N5JZH) would look into the feasibility of some of these other options.

The attending members then made nominations for the 2004 club officers. Nominations were as follows:

President: Carla Dyer, K5RLA

VP: Glenn Cummins (K5GZ) and Randy Robinson (N5JZH)

Secretary: Kent West (KC5ENO)

Treasurer: Peg Richard (KA4UPA)

Because of the expense of mailing out ballots to the club members not in attendance (\$30 for stamps), it was motioned and approved that the club accept by acclamation the nominees for the uncontested offices. It was also motioned and approved that the club set aside the standard rules of order in order to hold an immediate election

Club Meeting Reminder

Club dues (\$15 individual, \$20 family) are due at the next meeting of the Key City Amateur Radio Club, scheduled for Monday, 12 January, at 7pm on the second floor of the city library, or mail your dues to:

KCARC
PO Box 2722
Abilene, TX 79604

amongst attending members to decide the office of Vice-President. The motion was then made and approved to vote by secret ballot for the office of VP. By a margin of one vote, Randy Robinson is the 2004 VP.

A reminder was made that the Christmas Dinner will be held on Friday, December 5th this year at the ACU campus.

The club adjourned at 8:15pm on a motion made by Peg, and several met at McDonald's afterwards.

Sound of Music – 2 meter Aurora Style

John Dyer, AE5B

I have uploaded audio files of aurora propagated signals to the file section of the KCARC Yahoo Groups reflector. Two back-to-back massive solar flares last week produced a visible aurora or "Northern Lights" that extended as far south as central Texas. Besides creating a massive light show, the interaction between the solar wind and earth's magnetic field created an electronic "reflective screen" which was used to reflect vhf signals. A good analogy would be two people bouncing a ball to each other off of a solid wall. Obviously the aurora's reflective curtain is neither smooth nor solid. The reflections get twisted, turned, and skewed in many ways. The result is that the returning signal suffers from multi-path and multi-polarization distortion. The typical CW signal

returns as a raspy buzz with no tone. SSB signals are usually distorted to the extent that they are unintelligible. The distortion on SSB is similar to the "polar flutter" that we occasionally hear on an HF SSB signal from a station being worked over the polar region. The main difference is that the distortion on a vhf aurora signal is much more severe.

With the aurora being associated with the magnetic field of the earth, it follows that the aurora reflections will occur in an area to our north. All of the clips were made with the antenna to the north. Both K4QI in North Carolina and I had our beams pointed north toward the aurora when we worked each other. If you lived in South America or Australia, you would point your antenna to the south polar region. The sound of a signal being reflected by the aurora is unique. To hear and work aurora this far south is rare indeed. Each clip is about 60 seconds in length. They do not take long to download, even on my slow rural dial-up.

To access the files:

1. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kcarc/> and log onto Yahoo. The "Sign in" link is on the far right of the page, just above the yellow box.
2. Enter your ID and password and then click on "sign in"
3. You are now logged onto the KCARC Reflector and can now access the files and past messages.
4. Click on "Files" in the box on the left portion of the page.
5. The aurora audio files are in the Aurora folder. Click on the word "Aurora" and then select a file.

If you can't access the files section of our reflector, then that is another reason why you need to register with Yahoo and gain full access to the KCARC Reflector.

New Abilene UHF Repeater

Joe Peterson, KD5YCY

I would like to take this opportunity to announce a new UHF repeater between Hwy 83/84 and Hwy 36 in South Taylor County.

Tower Available

I am a new resident to Albany. The house I purchased happens to have come with about a 60 foot tall (purely my estimate) radio tower. It appears to be in good condition from my layman's knowledge. If you or one of your folks in this area would like it, please give me a call. My home number is 325-762-3868. My office number is below.

Jay Williams, CIC
King & Robertson Insurance
325-762-2288
325-762-3214 fax
jay@wtconnect.com <mailto:jay@wtconnect.com>

It's a privately funded repeater using 443.100/448.100 and a tone of 88.5. This is an open repeater and all licensed Amateur Radio operators are welcome. This repeater was made possible by the combined efforts of Joe Peterson, KD5YCY, Gary Peterson, NZ5V, and Rogers Dennis, K5MUH.

A Ham's Night Before Christmas

Submitted by John Dyer, AE5B

(Yet another corruption of Clement Clarke Moore's classic Christmas tale, this time distorted by Gary Pearce KN4AQ, and the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Raleigh, NC, December 2, 1996.)

Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through two-meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up,
From the tower quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Tech-Pluses,
Took their HT's to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
by a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,

and, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX PacketCluster,

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam -
A flying sleigh, with an
Eight element beam,

And a little old driver
who looked slightly mean.
So I thought for a moment,
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa
The Santa of Hams.
On a mission, this Christmas
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,
And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of CQ,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late QSLs
For a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded

It into the earth, till
The station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Resoldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp...
(Never worked right before --
Now it works like a champ).

A new, low-pass filter
Cleaned up the TV,
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That would not compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep
In the bag that he brought,
And he pulled out a big box,
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?
A Yaesu, for me?!"
(If he thought I'd been bad
it might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate Station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those hours
that I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy,
It was my call he sent,
But the cards and the postage
Will cost two month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone - no good bye.

Key City Amateur Radio Club Income and Expense Report October 13, 2003

<i>Regular Account:</i>	Balance Forward	\$484.94
	Expenses	397.34
	Balance on Hand	87.60

<i>Repeater Account</i>	Balance on Hand	64.00
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<i>Hamfest Account:</i>	Balance on Hand	1,291.07
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Amount Needed to Balance	1,442.67
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Total Amount on Hand:	
Checking	1,431.54
Cash	10.00
Coins	1.13
Total	\$1,442.67

** Itemized Expenses (Regular Account)	
Checking Service Fee (Sept)	15.00
Southwestern Bell (Oct)	31.07
Postage Aug/Oct	26.27
Liability Insurance Premium	325.00
Total	397.34

Peggy A. Richard, KA4UPA
Treasurer, Key City Amateur Radio Club

I ran back to the station,
And the pile-up was big,
But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final
came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What a ham might expect,
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX."

Online License Renewal

Kent West, KC5ENO

My amateur radio license was due to expire this past month. I've known it for months, but just hadn't gotten around to doing anything about it. But about a week before it expired, I decided I had best do so, immediately.

Being an online-sortta guy, I decided to renew via the internet. When I did my license, the process went smoothly. However, the process was not nearly as intuitive as I would've expected, so I thought I'd document what I did to get renewed. To do that, I'd need to do the process again, and since Nesa's (KC5ENL) license was also up for renewal, I decided to use her as my step-by-step guinea pig. Unfortunately, about two-thirds of the way through the process, the FCC's online-system apparently glitched and was down for the rest of the weekend (we started Sunday afternoon). After the system was brought back online, the process was sufficiently interrupted that we had to contact the FCC to get things straightened out. After several calls to and from the FCC, Nesa and the FCC reps were finally able to get her account straightened out. From the FCC's viewpoint, I'm sure it looked like a user error (as we tried to

pick up from where the database crash aborted our renewal, but that just wound up starting a new process instead of picking up where we left off, which could have been done from elsewhere in the system), but from my viewpoint, if the database had not crashed, or if the process had been more intuitive, the user wouldn't have made the error.

So the process is not perfect. Still, it was fast, for my license at least, taking about 30 minutes (would've been less if I had done it before and knew what to do when), and I got my new ticket in the mail within the week. Also, it was inexpensive. It didn't even cost the price of a stamp. Woot! And finally, when something did go wrong, the staff at the FCC was very helpful and courteous and got the problem solved. What a deal!

Of course, I wasn't able to document the process, since when it came time to document the process, the process became "non-standard". So I'll just hit the bare highlights.

Assuming you haven't done business with the FCC online before, it's a three-step process:

- 1) Acquire an FCC Registration Number (FRN)
- 2) Associate that FRN with your call sign.
- 3) Renew your call sign license.

You can start by pointing your web browser (I recommend Mozilla or Firebird) to <http://www.arrl.org> and then clicking on various links to get where you need to be, but it's probably easier just to start at the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS) page at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>.

Near the top of this page is a link to "Register", which is where you'll do steps one and two, and a link to "File", which is where you'll actually apply to renew your license.

When presented with questions about fees, don't worry; at the end of the process you'll find out that there are no fees to renew your amateur license ("and all the people rejoiced"). If your experience is like mine, you'll

have few difficulties, and will have your new license within about a week.

W1AW Code Bulletins on the Internet

Kent West, KC5ENO

If for some reason you can't listen to the W1AW code practice and bulletins on the air, you can still train your ear by listening to the MP3-formatted recordings, available at <http://www.arrl.org/w1aw/morse.html>

ARES Applications Due

Kent West, KC5ENO

If you wish to participate in the Amateur Radio Emergency Service and have not yet become a member, download the PDF application at <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/#fsd-98> and return the completed form to the local Emergency Coordinator, Bill Shaw, KJ5DX. Also contact Bill for info on RACES.

Key City Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

P.O. Box 2722
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