



KEY CITY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

September 2004

July Meeting Highlights

Kent West, KC5ENO

The meeting was called to order by Randy Robinson, N5JZH, at 7:06pm on 12 July 2004.

Kent, KC5ENO, then read the minutes from the June meeting. Randy pointed out the correction that it was Lance, KD5EFB, that read the minutes, not Randy. Jake, KC5GZP, motioned to accept the minutes as amended; the motion was seconded Joe, KD5YCY.

Peg, KA4UPA, then read the Treasurer's Report and reported that the Civic Center waived the usual concession bar fee. Kent asked if the savings from the waiver reduced the approximate \$500 loss reported last month; Peg answered that no, if the fee had been incurred, it would have added to that loss.

Randy then discussed the recent

Club Meeting Reminder

Remember to attend the next meeting of the Key City Amateur Radio Club Monday, 13 September, at 7pm on the second floor of the Abilene Public Library.

Field Day, saying that it had been a good event. He reported that according to rough numbers, our Field Day racked up approximately 1280 points.

Discussion then turned to the 2005 Hamfest. After considerable discussion about ways to save money next year, the pros and cons of keeping the Civic Center as our location, and ways to improve the Hamfest, Jack, KD5UVF, motioned that the club go ahead and reserve the Civic Center for next year. Jake seconded. The motioned carried, with no votes against.

Bill, KJ5DX, announced that the City of Abilene is looking to do some CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training in the near future.

Peg announced a VE Test session scheduled for July 31st. She also announced that Jim is willing to do CW tutoring.

Randy introduced new club member, Matt, and then had everyone introduce themselves to the club by name and callsign.

Bill announced that he sent in the RACES applications that he's been collecting since last January.

Peg announced the passing of our friend Judy Smith, KC5THH.

Peg then moved to adjourn, and the meeting was dismissed.

Afterwards, several of us met at McDonald's for snacks/supper.

August Meeting Highlights

Kent West, KC5ENO

The meeting was called to order by Lance Tolar, KD5EFB, at 7:09pm on 9 August 2004.

The July meeting minutes were read by Kent West, KC5ENO. Mike Jones, KD5YFX, motioned that the minutes be accepted as read; Jake Mullins, KC5GZP, seconded. The motion passed.

Peg Richard, KA4UPA, then read the Treasurer's Report. There were no questions, and the report was accepted as read.

Peg reported that at the July 31st VE Test session, Joe Peterson, KD5YCY, upgraded to General, and Eddie Rodriguez became a new Technician.

Gary Peterson, N5ZV, asked a question about our phone patch, and the monthly expense it entails. This opened a discussion, which eventually lead to a motion being made by Joe Peterson, KD5YCY, that our phone line on the 146.76 repeater be replaced with a no-cost

option, whether that be Voice-Over-IP (VOIP), or a UHF link, or Broadvoice, etc. The motion was seconded by Gary, N5ZV, and the vote was 7 in favor, 7 opposed, effectively killing the motion. Another motion was made by WK Wiggins, WB5ZOO, to table further discussion about the phone line until next month. This motion was seconded by Joe, KD5YCY, and the motion passed.

Hamfest 2005

Kent West, KC5ENO

Yea! It has been decided by the club to reserve the Civic Center again for next year's Hamfest! We enter the preparation for the next Hamfest with some trepidation, for several reasons.

Peg Richard, KA4UPA, who has been the backbone of the Hamfest for years as the Hamfest Chairperson, has elected to vacate that position this year, as she has other duties that will be occupying her time. So we are lacking a Hamfest Chairperson.

Our second area of concern is the fact that we've lost money the past couple of years on Hamfest, and we simply must find ways to deal with this.

Jack Merck, KD5UVF, at our last club meeting, pointed out that the production and sending out of flyers is very expensive. At one point someone pointed out that the cost of this alone is near \$1000. It was suggested that this year we use postcards instead, saving about half the cost of postage, and considerable amounts on printing. Jack volunteered a ream of postcard stock

The next ARRL VE Test Session will be October 2 at 1:00 pm at Berry Lane Baptist Church. See <http://www.qsl.net/kcarc/veannou.html> for more info.

Key City Amateur Radio Club Income and Expense Report July 12, 2004

<i>Regular Account:</i>	Balance Forward	\$583.91
	Income	85.00
	Expenses	252.29
	Balance on Hand	416.62
<i>Repeater Account</i>	Balance on Hand	64.00
<i>Hamfest Account:</i>	Balance On Hand	1338.03
Amount Needed to Balance		1818.65
Total Amount on Hand:		
	Checking	1793.02
	Checks	0.00
	Cash	25.00
	Coins	0.63
	Total	\$1,818.65
** Itemized Expenses (Regular Account)		
	Southwestern Bell (July)	23.68
	Checking Service (June)	15.00
	Postage July NL	19.61
	Equipment Insurance Annual Premium	194.00
	Total	252.29

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

Randy Robinson, N5JZH, brought up the possibility of turning the Hamfest into a "Hobby Fest", getting other groups involved, such as the local railroad train modelers, or RC (Radio Control) plane enthusiasts. Other folks mentioned other groups, such as the Fire Department, who could show off a shiny truck, or a meteorologist who could have a Skywarn training session or two, etc.

Satellite and APRS demos were mentioned. A CW station with code playing often was thought to be a possible crowd draw. We might have someone skilled in CW verbally copying the code as people listened/copied. A balloon launch was mentioned.

J.B. Cloud, KE5BSK, said he believed that local

radio station KCBY would be able to provide some free promotion.

Bill Shaw, KJ5DX, suggested that each member should brainstorm three ideas for the Hamfest, and email those to the Reflector or some central repository.

I'm thinking that if we had a small "lab" of 5 or 6 computers I could teach a session about how to boot off of and use a LiveCD, such as Knoppix. Someone else might use the lab at another time for packet or PSK training, etc.

Be thinking of ways you'd be willing to be involved (such as serving on the committee), and of ways to make Hamfest 2005 the best Hamfest we've had in years, and plan to meet with us at our next club meeting, September 13th.

Thanks for the Ice Cream, George!

Kent West, KC5ENO

Glen Cummins, K5GC, (who credits Brent Morris, N5TEQ for the tip) brought to our attention the fact that former KCARC President George Toone, WB5FBJ, is largely responsible for a newly produced flavor of Blue Bell Ice Cream. While at a camp for disabled kids, he met former Chief Executive Officer of Blue Bell, Howard Kruse. The discussion turned to cantaloupe ice cream. George's father had been a cantaloupe farmer in the Pecos, Texas area. One thing led to another, and bang! the flavor Cantaloupe 'n Cream was born. You can read more at <http://www.oaoa.com/news/nw070804e.htm>.

Formula One Duathlon

Kent West, KC5ENO

Some months ago, the city of Abilene requested that the Key City Amateur Radio Club provide communications for the upcoming Formula One Duathlon, to be held at 9am on Sunday, 24th October 2004. This race of professional marathoners will have racers running, then biking, then running, then biking, and then running once more. It will be conducted in the area of the Expo Center, and is sponsored by some big names like Gatorade. If you wish to help in this communication effort, contact Kent West, KC5ENO.

So You Want To Create Web Pages?

Kent West, KC5ENO

Now that the Internet has become ubiquitous, particularly in the

form of the World Wide Web, or WWW, it's quite common for people to want to develop their own web pages. Purists of a few years ago insisted that proper web pages should be coded by hand, but most people use web-development applications such as DreamWeaver or FrontPage. But in any case, in order to make sure that your web pages work properly, they need to be coded to proper WWW standards. The recognized organization for setting WWW standards is the World Wide Web Consortium, or the W3C.

In order to code to W3C standards, you need to know a bit about those standards.

In the beginning, before the WWW became the reality that it is now, the standard format for electronic documents was the Standard Generalized Markup Language, or SGML, which has been around since the mid 1980's. A "markup language" puts special codes into a body of text in order to specify certain attributes. For example, the markup text below specifies that the word "very" is in bold, while the rest of the sentence is not:

I am very happy.

The sentence "I am very happy" has been "marked up". When this sentence is rendered in an application that understands marked up text, such as in a web browser, the result will be that the word "very" is bolded, like so:

I am **very** happy.

The problem with SGML is that it is a very complex specification.

When the World Wide Web started to become popular, a much simpler subset of the SGML was developed specifically for use on the WWW. This subset is the HyperText Markup Language, or

HTML. HTML 4 is the current standard for web pages.

Unfortunately, during the Netscape/Internet Explorer "browser wars" of the late 1990's, various vendors of web browsers tended to add non-standard features to "their version" of HTML, leading to a world in which web developers had to code for various browsers instead of for one standard. Now that the developers have had a taste of the excess work involved in such a world, many are turning their backs on developing for different browsers, and instead are doing one of two things.

1) Some are developing their pages to the dominant browser (Microsoft's Internet Explorer), which works in the short term, but will bite them if the market dynamics change (which seems to be happening with the sudden popularity of the Mozilla family of browsers), in that they may suddenly find that they have to redevelop their one or two or several hundred or even a few thousand web pages for a different browser, or else lose their web visitors who can no longer view their pages properly. This type of web development leads to inconsistency and sloppiness, and "brokenness" when the next version of a browser becomes popular.

2) Others are developing their pages to standards, as published by the W3C. This leads to consistent, easy-to-maintain, easy-to-upgrade web pages that work with any standards-compliant web browser. The web designer no longer has to tell visitors to use this browser or that browser; any browser that meets standards can view the web page properly.

Writing standards-compliant web pages is not difficult. It can be done by hand, like the purists insist

on doing, or it can be done with tools such as Amaya or Bluefish, or even DreamWeaver or FrontPage if care is taken. Some of these tools, such as Amaya, has the capability to scan the finished page for W3C compliance. Otherwise, the smart web developer will run his pages against the W3C's HTML validator at <http://validator.w3.org>.

Eventually the WWW developed into a much richer experience than the developers of HTML envisioned, and now HTML is often insufficient to meet the needs of web developers. Another solution was needed.

Thus was introduced the Extensible Markup Language, or XML. This is not a replacement really for HTML, but rather for SGML. It's designed to have the power and flexibility of SGML, without the complexity.

In order to bring SGML to the web, a simplified subset, called the Extended HTML, has been developed. It is essentially the next generation of HTML, but is based on XML rather than on SGML. As the W3C puts it:

The XHTML family is the next step in the evolution of the Internet. By migrating to XHTML today, content developers can enter the XML world with all of its attendant benefits, while still remaining confident in their content's backward and future compatibility.

(<http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/#xhtml>)

So as you begin your foray into developing web pages, you might want to take care to develop your pages according to either the current HTML 4 standard or the next generation XHTML 1 standard. Otherwise, you might produce a page that works today, with Browser X, but that is broken tomorrow

Key City Amateur Radio Club Income and Expense Report August 12, 2004

<i>Regular Account:</i>	Balance Forward	416.62
	Income	21.25
	Expenses	37.69
	Balance on Hand	\$400.18
<i>Repeater Account</i>	Balance on Hand	\$64.00
<i>Hamfest Account:</i>	Balance Forward	1338.03
	Expenses (½ Civic Center 2005)	487.50
	Balance On Hand	\$850.53
Amount Needed to Balance		\$1,314.03
Total Amount on Hand:		
	Checking	1267.83
	Cash	25.00
	Coins	0.88
	Total	\$1,293.71
** Itemized Expenses (Regular Account)		
	Southwestern Bell (Aug)	22.69
	Checking Service (July)	15.00
	Total	\$37.69

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

with Browser X.1. In either case, you can code your pages to varying levels of compliance; for example, you can code a page to HTML 4.01 Strict, which means your page adheres strictly to HTML 4.01 standards, or to HTML 4.01 Transitional, which means your page mostly adheres to HTML 4.01 standards, but may contain some elements from older common practices that aren't quite standard in order to work with common but "broken" web browsers. At any rate, coding your pages to standards now will make it easier to upgrade them later as new features are added to the World Wide Web standards set.

For more information on web standards, visit the World Wide Web Consortium's web site at <http://www.w3.org>.

She Wove a Tangled Web

Kent West, KC5ENO

Recently Washington Post writer Kathleen Day wrote an article about her woes when her computer got infected with a virus. Below is a letter I wrote to her, and which may be of interest to computer-using KCARC members. (I mostly suspect this because viruses and other malware is a huge issue on Windows computers nowadays.)

Hi Kathleen!

I just read your article, "What a Tangled Web I Wove" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64483-2004Aug14.html>), and found it interesting.

As a computer support person myself (like your Glenn Paterson)

for the past 13 years, I've run into many computers with similar problems as yours.

I'm sure many folks will write to you with this same info, but just to make sure you get it, here's a few tips.

* Viruses and spyware are a problem on Microsoft Windows, almost exclusively. They are not a problem on Macs, Linux, Solaris, the BSDs, etc. That's not to say that you should just switch to one of these other operating systems just to avoid viruses and the like, but you should know that your real problem is Windows, not computers.

* Internet Explorer is probably the single biggest means of getting your computer infected with viruses/spyware (with Outlook being a fairly distant second). If you're going to run Windows, the three best steps to avoiding viruses/spyware, in order, are:

- 1) Have up-to-date anti-virus software running at all times.
- 2) Have up-to-date anti-spyware software, and run it often.
- 3) Avoid using Internet Explorer. Download and use the free Mozilla Firefox (<http://www.mozilla.org>) or the semi-free Opera. Not only is Firefox immune to the ActiveX exploits that makes IE so dangerous, it's arguably a much better web browser (you'll get spoiled to tabbed browsing and pop-up blocking very quickly).

If you need a computer that "just works", get a Macintosh. They're a bit more expensive up front, but they have a longer depreciation, and a LOT less headache. The biggest negative of Mac is that "everyone has Windows", and most people think they need Windows also. But for a journalist who mostly writes, and doesn't need to pro-

gram or run macros in their spreadsheets, the Mac is ideal. And if you play the guitar or piano, and have been thinking about making your own mp3s or music videos, Garage Band and iMovie on the Mac makes it a piece of cake. For the "average" home computer user or the non-corporate-office worker professional, I'd highly recommend a Mac over a Windows-based computer in most cases.

If you can't afford a Macintosh, and don't want to dispose of your PC, you can install Linux on it. You've heard that it's hard to install, but it's not really any harder than installing Windows; it's just that most people don't know how hard it is to install Windows as it's pre-installed at the store and so they have no basis for comparison. And it's still got a few rough edges (mostly because hardware manufacturers make it difficult for anyone but Microsoft to work with their products (printers, scanners, modems, etc)), but for most people out there who just need to browse the web and IM and email and do some typing and photo editing and printing, Linux is there already. Linux, as mentioned above, doesn't have the virus/spyware issues that plague Windows. If you're not quite ready to jump in with both feet, you can configure your PC to "dual-boot"; when you first turn it on you're asked if you want to boot into Windows or Linux. In this way, you can "test the waters" of Linux without giving up the security (*cough cough*, "security", hmph) of Windows. Furthermore, it makes a great backup system for the next time Windows gets hosed -- can't boot into Windows or use the Internet? Just boot into Linux and keep going. A great thing about Linux is that you don't have

to spend any money to acquire it; you can spend your \$30 or \$80 for a commercial variant with 90 days of support if you want, or you can just download a free version from the web. Glenn probably has the expertise to install it for you, and if he doesn't, just call your local college's Computer Science department, or browse the web for a Linux Users Group (LUG) in your area. If I was in your area (I'm in Abilene, TX), I'd volunteer to install Linux for you in a dual-boot setup; I bet your local LUG has some folks who would do likewise (because we love to see people try out Linux more than we love charging \$45-120/hour for computer help, which we could easily get for helping with Windows problems).

* In an emergency, when you need to check your mail or type an article or browse the web, you can boot off a Linux LiveCD, like Knoppix (<http://www.knoppix.org>) or Morphix or FeatherLinux (which will fit on a bootable 64MB USB memory stick), or etc etc etc. You can download a free CD image from one of these LiveCD sites, burn it to CD as an image (not as a file), and then boot from the CD. While booted from the CD, you're in a fully functional Linux environment. When you get finished, just reboot, eject the CD, and you're back into Windows just like your machine had never heard of Linux. Keep one of these CDs in a desk drawer, and when Windows craters, pull it out and boot up on it and keep computing.

I suspect you're dismissive of the idea of changing from Windows; the inertia is just too strong to stay in the Microsoft world for most folks; but I hope you'll at least consider the dual-boot option or a

LiveCD for emergency use. It could save you a week of lost work next time Windows goes to the Bahamas for a little vacation (taking your credit card numbers with it via spyware – ouch!).

Tidbits

Kent West, KC5ENO

* If you need to convert a GE Rangr radio to 6 meter use, check out the excellent how-to by our own Gary Peterson, NZ5V, located at <http://www.repeater-builder.com/rangr/low-band-rangr-conversion.html>.

* <http://www.securityfocus.com/news/9324> reports that the U.S. Emergency Alert System that we all know and love has security issues that make it vulnerable to Denial of Service (DOS) attacks,

and may even be vulnerable to hackers breaking into the system and issuing false alerts. At the time of the article's writing, there had been no reported cases of these vulnerabilities being exploited.

* July 25th was the 50th Anniversary of the first transmission of human voice via moon bounce (<http://it.slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=04/07/24/1843259&tid=215&tid=134&tid=160>)

* “U.S. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell has started his own Web log to reach out to the high-tech community and bypass the scores of Washington lobbyists who typically skulk around his office.” (<http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,64165,00.html>)

* “The AMSAT-OSCAR Echo Amateur Radio satellite and several

other payloads launched on schedule June 29 at 0630 UTC from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. Ground controllers made their first contact with Echo at 1452 UTC and collected some telemetry to analyze before shutting down the 435.150 MHz digital downlink transmitter.” (<http://www.remote.arrl.org/w1aw/2004-arls010.html>)

* Here's a ham-related crossword puzzle: <http://www.arrl.org/news/puzzles/2004/08/23/1/>

* 93 year-old Stanley L. Burghardt, W0IT, died August 22. He was the founder of Burghardt Radio Supply Inc (now [Burghardt Amateur Center](http://www.burghardt.com)). More info available at <http://www.arrl.org/>.

* Don't forget the KCARCth meeting on Monday, 13th September, at 7pm! See you there!

First-
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Here

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