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Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, AD5BB

May/June, 2015

Alpine, Texas

FIRST AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE CLASS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN THE TERLINGUA GHOST TOWN

On two recent Saturdays the BBARC held a Technician License class in the historic Terlingua Ghost Town, proving there is some life left in the old place. As far as is known this was the first amateur class held in this remote, scenic location on the southern edge of Texas.



The old Perry Mansion in Terlingua.

Actually Terlingua and the surrounding region appear to be booming – there have been lots of new buildings and new residents in the past several years. Thanks to the Family Crisis Center for the use of their meeting room.

Julianne, KF5RDN, and Dave, N5DO, were the instructors for the class, which was successfully completed by four new hams. Earning their initial licenses were Darrell, KG5HEH, Mike, KG5HEI, Al, KG5HEJ, and John, KE8BAX. John received an “8” call because he is a winter Texan. He and his wife live in their RV during the winter months in Lajitas; the rest of the year they reside in Michigan.

There are now around twenty hams living in the south Brewster County area, which includes Terlingua, Study Butte, Lajitas, and Big Bend National Park.

When you hear these new calls on the BBARC repeater system, be sure to welcome the newcomers to ham radio.

RESULTS OF GENERAL LICENSE CLASS

A class for Technicians to upgrade to General was completed recently in Alpine. Three Technician Class amateurs successfully upgraded.

Earning their General Class licenses were John, KG5BYY, and John, KG5GBO. Passing both the General and Extra Class exam was Allen, N5NYM.

The class instructor was Dave, N5DO, with assistance from Bill, KE5OG. The volunteer exam team consisted of Barb, KM5VM, Dave, N5DO, Bill, W5NPR, and Dick, W5DWI. Thanks to these individuals for volunteering their time whenever an exam is needed.

HOW TO GET A PRINTED COPY OF YOUR LICENSE

Effective February 17 the FCC has stopped mailing licenses. From the ARRL announcement on the change: *“Under the new procedures, licensees will access their current official authorization (“Active” status only) via the ULS License Manager. The FCC will continue to provide paper license documents to all licensees who notify the Commission that they prefer to receive one. Licensees also will be able to print out an official authorization — as well as an unofficial “reference copy” — from the ULS License Manager.”*

Here are the details as to how to get these copies of your license from the FCC.

First, getting a copy of your license that has a watermark in the background saying: **Reference Copy**. Thanks to Charlie Campbell, KC5EZZ, of the San Angelo Amateur Radio Club for these directions. [http://www.w5qx.org/download_license.html]

1. Go to <http://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp>
2. Search for your call sign.
3. Click on your call sign.
4. Click on the ADMIN tab.
5. Click on "Reference Copy."

6. Your reference copy license will open in a PDF file for printing or saving.

Second, how to get a copy of your license that has a watermark in the background saying: **Official Copy**. This description of the steps involved are my own. It seems to me to be a cumbersome process, but it does result in only one person – you – being able to download the official copy of your license.

1. While at the url (number one above) for the license search, note your FCC Registration Number (FRN). Write it down somewhere because you will need it.

2. Go to this url:
<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/index.htm?job=home>

3. If you know your password, go to Online Filing and click “Log In.” Proceed to Number 11 below. If you do not know your password (more likely you don’t have one), go to Online Filing and click on “Forgot Password?”

4. Enter your FRN and click on “Continue.”

4. You need to get a “Personal Security Question.” Click on “Request a PSQ.”

5. Complete the form “Set a Personal Security Question.” You need your FRN and your Tax Identification Number (which is, probably, your Social Security Number). At the bottom of the form, where it says “Your Personal Security Question,” pick one of the questions. For example, you could pick “What is your city of birth?” Then fill in the answer where requested.

6. Click in the box next to “I certify . . .” Then click on “Submit.” You will receive a tracking number, which you can write down somewhere in case you never hear back from the FCC.

7. Wait. Maybe as long as three days, but usually in less than two or three hours, you will receive an email from the FCC titled “FCC Personal Security (PSQ) Notification.” Open it and click on “FRN Password Reset.”

8. Enter your FRN. Click on “Continue.” Answer the PSQ.

9. Now make up a password. Follow the instructions for a password exactly (at least 6 characters, both upper case and lower case letters, at least one number, at least one symbol [such as #]. So something like Ab5c#d would work). Click on “Continue.”

10. Now you are back to the ULS License Manager. Click on “Proceed.”

11. Enter your FRN and Password. Click on “Submit.”

12. At the top it will say: “My Licenses.” On the left side click on “Download Electronic Authorizations.”

13. You are on a page that has two boxes. The left one is titled “Filter by Radio Service.” It has a subheading, “My Authorizations.” You should see your callsign there. At the bottom, click on “Select All.”

14. The box on the right is titled, “Authorizations to Download.” Next to it, click on “Add.” Your callsign should appear in this second box. Click on “Select All.” Click on “Download.”

15. The official copy of your license will now download. You can either print it or save it. It comes on a popup, so if you have a popup blocker on your anti-virus program you will need to work around it.

Once you have a password it is much easier. Just go to the url in number 2, then skip to number 11. I realize many of you could do this very well without the step by step directions – but others may be like me, and these steps will make it easier (I hope!).

PROGRAMS FOR THE NEXT TWO MEETINGS

The next meeting of the BBARC will be Tuesday, May 12, at 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room at the West Texas National Bank in Alpine.

After the business portion of the meeting, the program will be presented by Jonathan Baize, AD5OJ. Jonathon is one of those increasingly rare birds: a young ham. Amateur Radio helped to fund part of the cost of his college degree as he was the recipient of the Northern California DX Foundation Scholarship in 2007 and 2008. In 2009 he received another scholarship through the ARRL Foundation, the Richard W. Bendickson Memorial Scholarship. Jonathon received his degree from Bob Jones University where he majored in electronics and computer technology.

Jonathan is from Ft. Davis. His program will be on a telemetry method he has developed to monitor, using a smart phone, the water level in stock tanks from a distance.

The June meeting will be on June 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the West Texas National Bank meeting room. The program will be a discussion of the plans for Field Day. See the following article for Field Day details.

Field Day tee shirts, pins, and hats have been ordered and should be here by the June meeting.

FIELD DAY

The vultures have arrived in the Big Bend, so we know spring has officially arrived. And now Field Day will return on the weekend of June 27 and 28 to officially kick off the summer. The BBARC will spend Field Day at the same place we have in recent years, the Double Diamond Pavilion 5 miles south of Alpine on Highway 118.

Actually the operating occurs from 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 27, until 12:59 p.m. on Sunday, June 28, but Field Day starts sooner than that. For years the rules dictated that we could not start setting up antennas and stations before 1 p.m. on Friday. As we all know, that meant we were struggling to put together yagis, dipoles, and support structures in the hottest part of the day. But a funny thing happened – it began to get hot throughout the Midwest and east as well. Those hams began to complain about having to do manual labor in the heat and the ARRL listened.

Beginning last year the ARRL adopted the following rule:

No class A or B station may begin its set-up earlier than 0000 UTC on the Friday (Thursday afternoon or evening local time) preceding the Field Day period. Cumulative set-up time shall not exceed a total of 24 hours.

So we can start with the antenna work on Thursday evening at 7 p.m. – a much cooler time of day. And we could work on Friday morning, Friday evening, and Saturday morning, all during cooler times, as long as the total amount of time erecting antennas and setting up stations does not total more than 24 hours. So plan on showing up Thursday evening, June 26, at 7 p.m. to start the process!

We will again use the call sign K5FD for Field Day. The paperwork has been completed to have that call sign assigned to the BBARC as an “in memorium” call sign. We expect to receive the official approval in the next few days; currently the FCC lists our application as “Pending.”

A high point of Field Day is always the meals. Chief cook and bottle washer Bob, WA5ROE, reports the same meal charges as last year (and for the past seven years): \$30, plus one twelve pack of soft drinks or water, per person for the weekend. Any 807s are your own responsibility. The fee for the meals will pay for 6 meals: Friday evening, Saturday breakfast, lunch, and supper, and Sunday breakfast and lunch. There is a special rate for families: \$45 for a family.

For drop-ins (individuals not otherwise participating in Field Day) who would like to eat a meal with us, there is a special rate of \$10. The Friday evening meal will be steaks, baked potatoes, salads, and other assorted goodies. The meal Saturday evening will be brisket, cabrito, and chicken along with beans, salad, and additional delicacies.

If you haven't made it out to the Field Day site for one of Bob's breakfasts, you haven't lived! It's especially fun on Sunday

morning when the operators who have been up for most of the night stagger in and brighten up with that first bite of “Huevos con %##%#.

BIG BEND EMERGENCY NET REPORT From WA5ROE

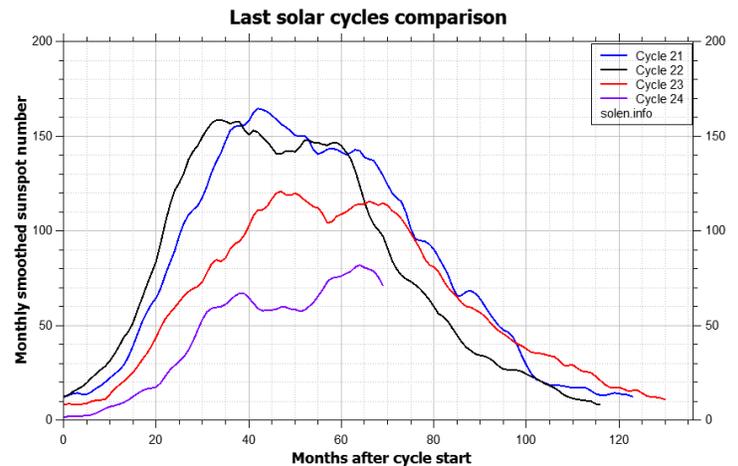
Date	Check-ins	Length	Remarks
Apr 5	31	25 min	
Apr 12	44	35 min	
Apr 19	39	32 min	
Apr 26	30	25 min	Add W5JSR, Steve, and KK5ROB, Robin (both Alpine)

Remember – the BBEN meets **every** Sunday on 3922 KHz at 8:30 a.m. Central time (either CST or CDT). Visitors always welcome.

SUNSPOT CYCLE UPDATE

If you have been following hf propagation lately you are probably aware that Cycle 24 (the current sunspot cycle) was somewhat unusual in that it had two peaks. The following graphs shows the last four sunspot cycles. It appears that Cycle 24 is on the downward side.

The good news is that sunspot cycles heading down toward the low before the next cycle have better hf conditions than the same sunspot count or solar flux index on the upward side.



Those of us who have been through more than one sunspot cycle know that the bottom years are not void of good propagation. In fact the low bands are much better than during the high years. Twenty meters is always good during the daytime, regardless of the sunspot cycle, fifteen has its moments with good propagation despite the low sunspots, and ten meters sometimes comes to life with sporadic E.

THE BARK
Newsletter of the BBARC

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BIG BEND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
<http://www.bigbendarc.com>

Meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the West Texas National Bank Building in Alpine, 7:30 P.M. CST/CDT.

ARRL Affiliated Club

MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

Annual membership is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 each year. Dues are \$36.00 per year for individual or individual & spouse.

Membership allows you to participate in all club activities and vote at the monthly meetings.

Newsletters are available by e-mail for members, subscribers, and interested recipients. Send your e-mail address to [n5do at sbcglobal.net](mailto:n5do@sbcglobal.net) to be put on the list.

ABOUT THE BBARC

Founded December 17, 1974

ARRL affiliate since 1986

The BBARC is a 501(C)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

Big Bend Emergency Net, 3.922 MHz

Founded September 18, 1977

Meets every Sunday morning at 8:30 A.M. CST/CDT

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and visitors.

Established by Bob Ward, WA5ROE.

Net Manager, Bob Ward, WA5ROE, [wa5roe at juno.com](mailto:wa5roe@juno.com)

Big Bend 2-meter Net

Founded July 9, 2008

Meets every Wednesday evening at 8:00 P.M. CST/CDT

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and visitors.

Established by Bob Ayer, KA1AAJ (SK)

Net Manager, Chuck Dobbins, KA5PVB, [charles.dobbins52 at yahoo.com](mailto:charles.dobbins52@yahoo.com)

BBARC REPEATER SYSTEM

All standard offsets. All repeaters require 146.2 Hz PL tone encoded on your transmit signal. All repeaters are linked.

147.120+	Shafter, Cibolo Creek
147.020+	Elephant Mt. south of Alpine. System hub
146.620-	Ft. Davis located at McDonald Observatory
146.720-	Alpine, Twin Sisters Peaks
146.820-	Terlingua
146.920-	Glass Mountains, Alpine / Ft. Stockton
145.230-	Emergency Repeater

BBARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 12, 2015, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

BBARC MEETING, West Texas National Bank Building
Program: Jonathan Baize, AD5OJ, "Homebrew telemetry system to check the status of stock tanks."

June 10, 2014, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

BBARC MEETING, West Texas National Bank Building
Program "Field Day Plans"

June 27-28, 2015, Sat.-Sun.

FIELD DAY

<http://www.arrl.org/field-day>