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Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, AD5BB

September, 2015

Alpine, Texas

LABOR DAY WEEKEND – NO BIG BEND BALLOON BASH!

We all become creatures of habit and when something occurs to disturb our habits it disturbs us. For the first time in a number of years, there will be no Big Bend Balloon Bash. This announcement is all that appears on the Balloon Bash web site:



We are sorry to announce that the
2015 Big Bend Balloon Bash
is CANCELLED

There are likely a number of factors leading to the cancellation of the Balloon Bash including lack of funds, the fact that the organizers are just worn out, and a lack of anyone stepping forward to assume responsibility for overseeing the event.

Those of us in the BBARC will miss the early morning wakeup to get to the airport to wait and watch the weather with the balloon pilots. It was always an anxious hour or so while waiting for the sun to rise and (hopefully) the wind to die down. Then we spent the next three to four hours following the balloons around as they traveled at the whim of the wind and the pilot's ability to find favorable wind at various heights.

As our radio operators reported each balloon safely down on the ground with the chase team in place our net control noted the safe landing. Inevitably there was one balloon that landed in some seemingly inaccessible location and there was much radio traffic about where the ranch foreman was with the gate combination and directions for the chase crew to successfully extract their balloon.

Sunday night was the "Balloon Glow Concert." The BBARC added to our coffers by selling concessions and soliciting contributions.

The Balloon Bash also was an excellent training activity for any emergency situations that would arise over the course of the year. While we will miss the Balloon Bash this year, and hope that it appears again in the near future, keep in mind that there are other events coming that will require our communications assistance. Included in this list are the Marathon to Marathon in October, the Santa Net in December, the Big Bend Ultra Run 50K in January, the Fort Davis Hammerfest Bicycle Race in April, and, coming this month, the Fort Davis Cyclefest.

From the Permian Basin Bicycle Association website:



Fort Davis Cyclefest

When: Sep 19 – 20, 2015

Where: Fort Davis, TX 79734, USA ([map](#))

Description: Tour the scenic mountains of West Texas on a well supported tour - distances range from 27 - 76 miles. Also includes the Mt Locke Mountain Climb with some of the steepest grades east of the Rockies.

Mark those dates on your calendar and attend the September 8 meeting of the BBARC for information on our communications support for this event. There will be a brief presentation on our participation and volunteers will be solicited.

TEXAS QSO PARTY THIS MONTH

The annual Texas QSO Party will be held on Saturday, September 26, from 9 am to 9 pm, and Sunday, September 27, from 9 am to 3 pm. Our west Texas counties are always in demand, so plan to get on and give out some contacts. For more information go to: <http://www.n5bia.net/txqp/index.php>

PROGRAM FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the BBARC will be Tuesday, September 8, at 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room at the West Texas National Bank in Alpine. The program will be on the operation of the MFJ-259B, HF/VHF SWR Analyzer. Thanks to the generosity of Lora, K5JUW, the BBARC owns one of these handy devices, and it may be used by any member.

While most of us just use the MFJ-259B to determine the SWR of our antennas and where they are resonant, it may be used to do many other things. N5DO will demonstrate its use to determine (in addition to SWR, resonant frequency, reactance and impedance) the length of a roll of coax, if the coax has a short and the distance to the short, and loss of the coax.

FLYING ANTENNAS – AND TOWERS!

One of the inevitable results of the graying of amateur radio is the difficulty in working on towers. It used to be that a group would gather for an antenna party, one or two would climb the tower, install the gin pole, and the ground crew would pull antennas up and down the tower using the rope through the gin pole. Unfortunately it is becoming increasingly hard to find tower climbers, especially in small towns.

Increasingly hams are contracting with crane operators to do the lifting and lowering up and down the tower. It appears as though that is fairly doable in large cities, but in Alpine it is difficult. Faced with the task of removing the antennas and towers from the late K5FD's QTH and the need to replace a 40M yagi at KE5OG's QTH, N5DO and KE5OG agreed to split the cost of a crane and crew from Monahans. The cost was high due to the time and distance for the crane to travel from Monahans (high enough that we wonder what we will do next time we need antenna work).

However, the crane operator did a great job and by the end of the day the tasks were completed: KE5OG had a new 40M yagi installed and the antennas and 70 foot tower were safely on the ground from the K5FD (SK) QTH. Here are some photos shot by KE5OG:



Forty Meter Yagi going up at KE5OG's QTH.



KT-36XA Yagi being lowered at the K5FD (SK) QTH – a monster antenna!



140 foot crane lifting the 70 foot tower (made from three Rohn 25 towers bolted together in a triangle – very heavy), swinging it to a vacant lot, and lowering to the ground.

SILENT KEYS

We regret to inform of the passing of some Big Bend area hams.

John Rayburn, KD5TXK, died on April 23, 2015 in Alpine. John was a network administrator at Sul Ross for fifteen years and was well known for his computer skills.

Bill Webb, AG4IB, died on April 28, 2015 in Frankfort, Kentucky. Bill had lived in Alpine for a number of years before moving to Kentucky. Bill earned his license while he lived in Alpine, receiving the call N5ZXW. He was an active participant in BBARC activities and was a member of RACES.

Both John and Bill are missed by their friends and families.

BIG BEND EMERGENCY NET REPORT From WA5ROE

Date	Check-ins	Length	Remarks
July 5	41	26 min	
July 12	43	20 min	
July 19	34	24 min	Add W5WI, Dale
July 26	37	25 min	Change KF5REP to KE5TXS (Rusty)
August 2	36	34 min	
August 9	34	30 min	
August 16	30	18 min	
August 23	31	29 min	
August 31	41	26 min	

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

THE BARK Newsletter of the BBARC

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club
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Alpine, Texas 79830

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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

September 8, 2015, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

BBARC MEETING, West Texas National Bank Building
Program: "How to use the MFJ-259B HF/VHF SWR Analyzer"

September 19 – 20, 2015, Saturday and Sunday

Fort Davis Cyclefest
Fort Davis, Texas

October 13, 2015, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

BBARC MEETING, West Texas National Bank Building
Program: TBA

October 24, 2015

Marathon 2 Marathon Race

<http://www.marathon2marathon.net/>