



Inside this issue

- Meeting Minutes
- President's Letter
- DX Contesting – Lessons Learned
- Calendar

Meeting Minutes

Majors Field ARC Meeting Minutes 2/8/2018 (Unofficial)

- Meeting was called to order
- Winter Field Day: Preliminary results of the WFD were reviewed and discussed.
- Digital Repeater setup in progress.
 - L3 AS IT has established internet connection at the repeater site for the club. We are now ready to start using it at any time.
- CALENDAR OF EVENTS
- OLD BUSINESS
 - TS-2000 status
 - Repeater Linking Project and Echolink on WD5GSL/R 2 Meter repeater.
- NEW BUSINESS
 - ARRL Board of Directors issues
 - Field Day is coming up
- Meeting adjourned
- Planning discussion for Field Day followed.
 - Place: Audie Murphy / American Cotton Museum
 - Addition: Contract for Port-o-lets at location.

Information Provided by President Larry Smith – K5XB

President's Letter

Spring has sprung!

Time to start working those big new antenna projects you planned last month. We have testing sessions and a Field Day effort to plan. There is big progress on the internet connection for the new 440MHz repeater upgrade, and more funny business at our ARRL.

Meetings

Meetings continue 2nd Thursday of every month going forward, in the Kitty Hawk C.R. We need some quality programs! It's just a 15 to 30 minute chat about your latest project or some information you'd like to share. Someone, anyone, we're dying here!

A word about joining and membership renewal: It's still not too late to be counted! With your membership and support, we can continue with projects such as 2-Meter repeater technology refresh, acquisition of a new HF radio for the club, or any other projects we'd like to try.



ARRL Action

Well, there is more silly business coming from the ARRL and this time they “sneaked” it by me. I found out the day the last reply comments were due and did not get to respond. It seems the League is supporting wideband unattended digital modes in the CW/digital band. FCC has had RM-11708 ready to launch as an NPRM for 5 solid years now and is still sitting on it. This mode can pretty much wipe out your access to JT65/FT8 and other narrowband digital modes in favor of PACTOR 4. As I understand it, being a “mail forwarding” mode, it is automatic and unattended and does not check “frequency in use” which I gather from reading the forums is the biggest complaint about the mode. That, and it is used by hams and non-hams alike. The league got permission for the team of Hams they deployed to Puerto Rico to use PACTOR 4 under an STA from the FCC. The League is making claims it was an outrageous success and needs permanent implementation. The only issue with that is the Hams that were in Puerto Rico claim they never used PACTOR 4 because no one ever sent them the PACTOR 4 modems. Fishy. PACTOR 4 mode is used by WinLink, which appears to be a commercial email service of some kind and primarily serves remote areas and the oceans with an email connection. My point in all this is to ask “why?”. If it’s 5 years old, surely technology has overrun it by now. I’ve seen ViaSAT’s product roadmap which shows North and South America, the Atlantic, the Med, and most of Europe including Turkey covered right now for high speed internet, with the rest of world in the plan over the next few years. It is too late to comment to FCC, but never too late to contact your ARRL board member Dr. David Woolweaver, K5RAV@ARRL.org. Do your research if you care, and drop him a line. Tell him what you think. You might courtesy copy our Vice-Director John Robert Stratton N5AUS@n5aus.com, and North Texas Section Manager Jay Urish W5GM, jay@unixwolf.net. Both of them are very engaged and responsive.

Repeaters

Information Technology has connected our internet access for the new 440 repeater. It’s live and ready. I know we’re anxious to get this done. We’ll get a report from Jon Brown at the meeting on the 8th, but I assume he will want to schedule a work day to move in with the new hardware and go live with the digital functions.

License Classes

David Rogers has a firm date for a Technician class test session for the State Guard. May 19 and 20, Saturday and Sunday with review session all day Saturday starting at 8 AM and Testing on Sunday starting at 8 AM. We expect there will be a lot more attendance at this session than we are used to seeing, and David will need our support to help him do this.

Field Day

June 23 and 24. Probably set up on June 22 (Friday). Let’s get to work. Only 3 more meetings to make plans between this meeting and Field Day.



See you at the meeting Thursday. Bring a friend, and feel free to bring your lunch.

73,
Larry
K5XB
MFARC President

Written by President Larry Smith – K5XB

DX Contesting – Lessons Learned

Working a contest is an exciting thing. The exhilaration of using your equipment to talk to someone far away is immense. Getting through the pile-up is an achievement unto itself and, even more, getting a good score to compete against yourself. Here are a few lessons I have learned from the recent ARRL DX SSB Contest while in central Belize this weekend. Keep in mind that I am not a regular contester. But there are a few things I learned and tried that might help someone to get into radio sport.

REVIEW THE RULES

Before you can compete in any kind of event, you must know the rules. Most contests run on a similar set of rules, but there are differences. Some of these may be bands used, multipliers, power levels, and objectives. Most have some kind of exchange, whether it is a serial number, state or ITU Zone along with the received signal report and your call sign. Most contests will have various operating categories. You, as a contester, must know and choose a category. The choice may be obvious, but you can build options into your plan, which may include partnerships with other hams to achieve other categories. You do not always have to work alone. And with that, you start building your objectives. But whatever contest you want to work, know your rules and review them a couple of times to insure you will operate well.

BEEF UP YOUR STATION

Long before the contest, you can take the time to consider some small improvements to your station. The biggest improvements one can make are with the antenna. The most bang for the buck, the antenna will help you get better signal to noise and improve your ability to get your signal out. Consider using a friend's antenna analyzer to find deficiencies with your antenna. Consider a special antenna construction to help reach a new region you could not get before. If the US is your target, select an antenna position that will give you good coverage towards the North Eastern coast, where higher populations of hams persists. Good logging software will make or break a contest for you. So, select software that will meet your needs, and is dependable. That is just the beginning; you must know how your software is configured and how it works. The hot keys must be understood and practiced before the contest begins so that you can log while you talk and listen at the same time. In addition, while we are on the subject of logging software, insure your rig's CAT connection to your logging software is working and dependable. Some rigs have TTL levels and others can accept RS232 voltage levels, but insure you have the proper interface that is impervious to RFI in all the bands you plan to operate.



TAKE A HISTORY LESSON

You do not need to go back to school to get a history lesson in order to help build a strategy that will help improve your score in a contest. However, looking over past logs and reviewing your history will help you see patterns. Did you change bands at the right time? Did you operate the best frequency during the optimum propagation? Having a good understanding of how you performed in past contests will help you improve your score. N1MM logging software has wonderful log statistical analysis tools, such as graphs and tables, which can help identify points where you can do better this time.

WORK OUT A STRATEGY

Everyone has a strategy or plan before entering a contest. But it is always good to review that strategy mentally long before the contest. Consider your station and how best to use it within your plan. Consider the hours you will operate it and to maximize those hours you work. Know what bands you will work and when that will maximize the propagation for those bands. Make a quick chart to help you remember what bands will work best. You do not have to hold to that plan if your current band is wide open. However, if you need more contacts on another band, then plan when you can use it for maximum points. While operating, you will have to choose between RUNNING and SEARCH & POUNCE modes of operating. You may use both at times. Nevertheless, when RUNNING, search for a blank area that does not interfere with others. You can choose two strategies; way off by yourself or near a popular station. Avoid populated areas that will cause QRM. Avoid areas of manmade or atmospheric QRN on the bands. You may have to ask someone how the QRM/QRN sounds like on their end, if you are running. Do not forget that you can freely work near the band edges, particularly the upper regions. However, you may need to strategize who your target stations are and what part of the band they will or will not work. It should be understood that one should not operate at the band edges in order to stay within the permitted ranges of your license class and the bands themselves, taking into account your modulation bandwidth and which side band you are modulating.

LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN

Contesting starts with listening. Listening involves learning to train your ear to pick out call signs and exchange elements. Listening involves learning how a RUNNING station operates and matching your call to gain an advantage. Listening involves tuning out QRM and QRN signals to get a good copy. In addition, it is a good idea to listen for multiplier stations; stations that can help you get more points. Knowing these and listening to how they answer or operate can help you gain an edge.

MAKING YOUR CONTEST COUNT

Here are some additional things you can do to make your efforts count in a contest. Obviously, you should be careful not to waste your time and make every minute count, but you can also do other things to help make the score substantial. One way is to portray yourself on the air as if you really need this contact. A monotone answer to a station's CQ will not make it through the crowd as fast. If you use an inflection that conveys some excitement and a desire to make this contact, that will grab the attention of the caller. You need to come up with inventive ways to break through the pile-up, such as speeding up or slowing down. Getting a grasp of the rhythm of the caller and predicting when to answer is good. Use different methods to answer a CQ, such as a higher pitch voice. Women have a better chance of punching through a pile-up due to their higher pitched voice. Tuning off frequency does not help to get



this higher pitch. In any case, showing excitement will increase your odds. You also need to concentrate while you are calling. Keep watch of the rhythm and stay alert to changing conditions. However, the best way to make it count is to NOT GIVE UP TOO SOON. Many operators make a few attempts in a pile up and give up soon after. When the big guns get all worked off, it will leave more room of opportunity for you to break through. So, keep trying and do not give up.

NOW YOU CAN GET ON THE AIR

Once you have done all you can to prepare for the contest, get on the air. Many times, after working hard on a station improvement for a contest, I get tired, and lose some of the interest and drive to get on the air. Another issue for me is not committing to a contest. It is easy to simply let another contest that you were interested in pass you by. However, the most important thing you can do in your hobby, concerning contesting, is to force yourself to get on the air. Get on the air, even when you have not prepared for that contest. Get on the air, even if you did not have time to improve your station equipment. Get on the air, even when you are late getting started. Make it your mission to simply get on the air and work all you can. Each opportunity gets you closer to a major improvement and more ideas for success in the next contest. Most likely, you will not break into the top group of your category at first. Nevertheless, the key to contesting is enjoying the chase, competing against yourself and gaining the skills needed to be a good ham operator. After all, these skills will help greatly in a time when you are involved with emergency communications as well as every day radio use. Getting on the air is the best thing you can do and you will never regret it.

Written by Vice President Michael Ketchum – K5MDK

Calendar

- Mar 8 MFARC Meeting at 11:45am at B136-A Kitty Hawk Conference Room.
- Mar 15 SVARA Meeting at 7:00pm at Hunt Regional Hospital.
- Mar 10 RSGB Commonwealth Contest CW www.rsgbcc.org/hf
- Mar 10 SKCC Weekend Sprintathon CW www.skccgroup.com
- Mar 10 Oklahoma QSO Party CW Ph Dig <http://k5cm.com/okqp.htm>
- Mar 11 North American Sprint, RTTY <http://ncjweb.com/Sprint-Rules.pdf>
- Mar 24 CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB www.cqwpx.com/rules.htm
- April 12 MFARC Meeting at 11:45am at B136-A Kitty Hawk Conference Room.
- April 7 Belton HamEXPO, Belton, TX www.TARC.org/hamexpo
- April 7 Texas State Parks on the Air <http://www.tspota.org/rules>
- April 15 ARRL Rookie Roundup - Phone
- April 19 SVARA Meeting at 7:00pm at Hunt Regional Hospital.
- April 28 **NEW** Mentorfest Convention in Garland, TX www.arrlntx.org/mentorfest

AIRWAVES



REGULAR ACTIVITIES

- Daily DFW Early Traffic Net (NTS) at 6:30pm 146.88 – PL 110.9Hz
- Daily DFW Late Traffic Net (NTS) at 8:30pm 146.72 – PL 110.9Hz
- Daily DFW CW Traffic Net (NTS) at 7:00pm and at 10pm on 3541 KHz <http://www.k6jt.com>
- Thurs SVARA Net Every Thursday night at 7:00pm on the K5GVL/R 146.780 MHz (+) PL 114.8Hz
Meets every Thursday night except on SVARA meetings 3rd Thursday of each month.

Officers

- President:** Larry Smith – K5XB
president@wd5gsl.net
(254) 644-6465 cell
- Vice President:** Michael Ketchum – K5MDK
vice-president@wd5gsl.net
(972) 408-6573 cell
- Secretary:** Scott Davis – KK7JS
secretary@wd5gsl.net
- Treasurer:** John Nelson Jr. – N0DFW
treasurer@wd5gsl.net
(903) 454-0911 cell
- VE/Class Team Leader:** Jae Stutzman – K5JAE
classes@wd5gsl.net
- Club Trustee:** Jonathan Brown – WB5KSD
trustee@wd5gsl.net

Club Repeaters

- Club Station:** TBD
- VHF Repeater:** WD5GSL/R
147.160 MHz (+) PL 100.0 Hz
- UHF Repeater:** WD5GSL/R
444.625 MHz (+) PL 151.4 Hz

AirWaves is a production of the Majors Field Amateur Radio Club

We're on the Web! Find us at: <http://wd5gsl.net>

Your article submissions are welcomed. Please submit to editor@wd5gsl.net.