



"Dits & Dahs"

Volume 2 Number 1
April 2007

The North Richland Hills Amateur Radio club was formed in early 2005 by a group of interested hams in the North Tarrant County area. We are Incorporated in Texas as a 501c3 Corporation. Our Call Sign is **K5NRH**. The NRHARC is an Amateur Radio Club dedicated to supporting Hams in and around North Richland Hills, TX. Our primary focus is to provide valuable training, while promoting Amateur Radio...and to have fun. Although we are not a specialty club, we also help and support the North Richland Hills Office of Emergency Management and Tarrant County RACES with their goals. In addition to our monthly meeting and training classes we meet often for activities such as ARRL Field Day, Club Picnics, and Fox Hunts. We sponsor licensing classes and testing and are continually looking for opportunities to make a difference in the lives of our members and in our community.

Visit to National Weather Service

November of 2006 - several members of the NRHARC took a tour of the National Weather Service forecasting office in Fort Worth. We were shown the computers and specialized software used to predict weather in several north Texas counties.

Meteorologists on duty explained how they use radar and information from weather balloons to provide not only short and long range forecasts, but also to alert the public with warnings of severe weather that could affect our area. Another part of the tour that was especially important to us as amateur radio operators was the table that had several radios for ham operators that are on duty during severe weather events. These operators provide valuable information to and from ham radio storm spotters and RACES nets.

The tour also included the Gulf River forecast Center which operates out of the same building and provides information on river conditions for a wide section of the southwest.

We wish to thank all of the people at the National Weather Service office on Northern Cross Blvd for their time and hospitality they gave to us and for their service to our area to keep us informed.



President's Thoughts

In this issue, our first for 2007, I want to take this opportunity to welcome all our new members to the North Richland Hills Amateur Radio Club and introduce myself. My name is Bob Norris. My call is KA5KXT and I have the honor of serving as your club president for 2007. I have been a Ham since earning my Novice license in 1981.

Our club members support public service events in the Metroplex as well as participating in Skywarn, ARES, Tarrant County and N.R.H. RACES activities. In addition to these, many of our members are CERT trained and serve the North Richland Hills community emergency preparedness.

In support of these organizations our club provides education pertaining to Amateur Radio and its many facets. Whether it is DX, weather, satellites, Fox hunting, antennas, digital communications, internet or Technician and General Class license training, our club is there to help all of us better enjoy our hobby. If there is something that you would like to know more about and would be of interest to others, let us know. Maybe you can be the presenter.

Whether you are an Amateur or not; whether you are a member or just have an interest in amateur radio, we invite you to come and join us each month at the N.R.H. Fire Department Administration building. Time, schedule and directions are available on our web site by clicking on **Membership** and then click the "**next club meeting**" link near the bottom of the application page.

Your officers for 2007 are looking to build on the successes of 2006 by growing our membership in the club and increasing our participation in events such as public service, Field Day and Fox hunts. Maybe we can get a family picnic together this year. We look

forward to your help, support, and participation.

73,
Bob KA5KXT

NRHARC Educational Program

Roger Courtney – N5RCS - Education Officer

Welcome everyone to the newsletter for April, 2007. I'd like to extend a special welcome to all the new hams in our community. Congratulations to the 9 new General Class upgrades and the new Technician from our last testing session, March 31, 2007. The General Class study sessions resulted in a pass rate of about 90%. I'm VERY proud of all those who obviously studied very hard and persisted when the going got tough.

Testing results from March 31, 2007

New Generals

- o **Bobbie Petty-Roby – KE5MLW**
- o **Robert D Roby – KE5MLX**
- o **Donald R Bellamy – KB5RWZ**
- o **Wayne R Burlew – K0UJG**
- o **William R Hale – N5SZC**
- o **Daniel P Grady – N2SRK**
- o **Christopher Meadows - KC5OYC**
- o **Timothy J Chamberlin – KE5MMA**
- o **Patricia A Thompson – KE5AWW**

New Technician

- o **Thomas M Guilbert – KE5NPS**

Monthly Programs

The Board has outlined a pretty aggressive and informative schedule of programs for the coming year. We started out in March with the "Emergency Preparedness" program presented by yours truly at the March meeting. Copies of "Are You Ready", FEMA Independent Study course IS-22, were handed out to all in attendance. I received lots of positive feedback.

The April meeting will be focused on "Now What?". Now that you have your new license or upgrade, what can you do to start using those privileges in a cost effective way? Do you have some limitations you are dealing with like a small lot, small budget, need technical advice, need components and don't know where to find them? Maybe you just need a hand to wire things up or get some wire in the air. Bring your questions to the club and get some help. The Ham community is here to help in any way it can.

The next two months of May and June will be focused on "Field Day". We need YOUR help! There are many projects currently being planned that could use some helping hands. Thanks to a generous offer from Sean Hughes and the NRH FD, we are going to be located at the old Fire Station 4 this year. Each station and antenna setup will have a team assigned to plan and build any needed structures to make the station usable. Can you lend a hand? Please let any Board Member know and you will be assigned to a team. We also need people to work the stations throughout the night so plan to come enjoy the fun. If you are a Technician Class or General Class license holder it is an opportunity to enjoy all the frequencies available. You can work the stations under the club license K5NRH under the onsite Extra Class control operator. Visitors can work 3rd party under the same rules so bring your friends out and show them just what your hobby is all about. If you have a group studying and preparing for emergencies, this is a great opportunity to demonstrate emergency radio operations. Other programs are being planned that will, I hope, help you sample all the various modes of operating that are available to us as licensed Amateur Radio Operators.

Thank You!

I'd like to thank all those who have given tirelessly to the club over the last two years and built an organization that we are all very proud to be a part of. There are too many to mention individually but I want to say that their efforts have not gone unrecognized and are much appreciated by all of us in the club.

Wanna Help?

If you have an idea for a training exercise or wish to present a topic near and dear to your heart, please contact me at n5rcs@arrl.net and I'll be happy to include you in the training activities.

For Tech's, no-code General's or non-hams: On the first page under the words "Dits and Dahs", there are a series of dots and dashes. What do they say?

Field Day – June 23 - 24

As Roger just said, join us for Field Day 2007! Field Day is an annual event sponsored by the ARRL. We do it for experience in setting up and operating under simulated emergency conditions and to show the public what ham radio is all about. We also have a lot of fun! We had 87 Hams and Visitors sign our Ham & Visitor Registration notebook last year. Let's try and make this year even bigger and better. Invite a friend!



Helpful Hints for Ham Radio Operating:

John Davis – KA5RHF

Thirty years ago, not so long ago for us older Hams, there was no Internet, thus no QRZ.com, Buckmasters, or other helpful information such as contest listing, special event listing, DX help sites, design information, sales, and service, etc. All the needed information was only available in magazines, books, and newsletters or from live Ham contacts. As a simple example you can go to the Website <http://ws8rm.ifip.com/ws8rm.htm>.

There you will find some interesting and all free software. All hams with a computer can use a PDF file of the FCC Part 97 Rules that cover Amateur Radio Operation. How about software that will reset your PC to the Atomic Clock, or an SWR program, or an RF Safety program? Or how about a propagation program that shows the short and long distance along with the antenna beam heading from NRH to Europe.

If you visit my Radio Room you will find items that I have found from experience, are very helpful materials and are within arms length. See the sidebar for details.

I am sure I have just touched the tip of the iceberg of helpful hint items. With all of us Hams sharing information everyone can become safer and be able to work more efficiently. I enjoy working single contacts, regular scheduled contacts; multi-Ham group contacts, regular scheduled nets, and of course RACES. I have found here is nothing more fun and satisfying than relaying information to a group of Ham operators as acting net controller or helper. Through experience of operating the plunge just happens one day and your dreaded fear just goes away as you are too busy getting business done.

Happy radioing!

KA5RHF Shack Hints

- A vertical two scale thermometer that shows both Centigrade and Fahrenheit temperatures. This is very useful for converting so you can relate to other countries temperatures and give the other foreign country Ham operators a temperature he can understand. By the way there is a software program conversion table on the website listed above.
- An indoor and outdoor temperature readout. This is very useful for seeing what is going on outside your Radio Room and lets your radio contacts know what is going on in your neck of the woods.
- Plenty of pencils, erasers, and lined paper tablets.
- A ruler, world map book, and an ARRL Handbook.
- An atomic (WWV Auto set) radio digital clock. I got the one I use for less than \$ 2.00 at a Goodwill store.
- Battery operated calculator.
- Two working battery flashlights.
- Battery operated cassette recorder with blank tapes. Great for recording nets, contests, interference, and of course letting other Hams see how they sound in your Radio Room.
- Headphones.
- Two desk lamps.
- MAPSCO.
- Yellow sticker Post-it Notes.
- Signal strength meter.
- Drinking water.
- A desk pad for desk protection, important notes, and to help confine liquid spillage.
- Smoke detector.
- Fire extinguisher rated for electrical fires.
- Waste basket. This can also be used as a water bucket or to carry out of the Radio Room a flaming and/or smoking experiment gone wrong.
- AM/FM Battery radio.

FOX Hunting

We'll be having a FOX Hunt later this year. This is a fun way to get out with the club and do something different and useful. Why not try building an antenna now, so you can be ready? Here are a few web sites that should get you started in FOX Hunting and antennas. Bring your creation to any club meeting and let us all see the results. If you have any questions, let us know.

http://home.att.net/~jleggio/projects/rdf/snif_bm.htm

<http://www.n2ki.com/HVDFA/Stuff/yagi.htm>

<http://members.aol.com/homingin/>

<http://home.att.net/~jleggio/projects/rdf/rdf.htm>

<http://members.aol.com/homingin/SCalStyle.html>

THE DX CORNER

By Dave Routzon – W5GT

Well, we've got to have hit the bottom of this cycle. The SSN (Sun Spot Number) was 0 for most of the last 6 weeks and the SFI (Daily Solar Flux Index) is in the 60s. That's very low! We should start seeing better conditions as soon as this fall. Let's hope so! Some experts say that the next cycle should be the best in many, many years.

20 meters has still been pretty good, but 10 and 15 meters have been "almost dead" so I've been concentrating on 80 and 40 meters and working on SSB 5BDXCC. The best time to work the low bands for new countries is during DX contests. I've worked from 10 to 30 new "entities" on those bands in each of the last 3 DX contests. The pileups are smaller during a contest and with the sunspots low, the low bands really open up, particularly at sunset and sunrise. Having said all that, I worked 9 or 10 South American stations on 10M in March's ARRL DX contest and N8S on 17M, 15M and 10M (SSN=0).

Recently worked on SSB, despite the low sunspots, were **N8S** - Swains Island (worked on 20M with 80 watts), **BX5AA** - Jim in Taiwan, **9G5** - Ghana, **VK9N** - Norfolk Is. (15M), **YV0** - Aves Island, **V73** - Marshall Islands, **9U9** - Burundi, **5D5** - Morocco (15M), **VQ9** - Chagos Is., **J20** - Djibouti, **E51JD** - 10 minute QSO with Jim on South Cook Is. on 10M SSN=0, and many others. They're out there. You just have to listen, watch the sites like <http://oh2aq.kolumbus.com/dxs/> or <http://www.ng3k.com/Misc/adxo.html> and be ready!

Two secrets for DX: "As much aluminum as you can afford as high as you can afford to put it", and "\$1 spent on antennas is worth \$10 spent in the shack" (from my friend Bill, ZS6CCY). In other words, antennas are the key to working DX. Multi element Yagi Beams at least 32' in the air are the ticket for 20

through 6 meters. For 40 and 80, many of the successful Dxers use what's called a "4 square". It's 4 x ¼ wave verticals in a square array. Kind of like a vertical beam. I don't have the room for that kind of antenna, so I use a 1/4 wave "sloper" from the top of my 45' tower to about 8' above the ground. It works quite well.

The biggest challenge to Dx'ing is QSL cards. I put a sae (self addressed envelope) and sufficient \$ for return postage in with my QSL card when I mail it to the DX station or their QSL manager. By the way it costs many of them a minimum of \$2 US for an airmail stamp. Even with the sae and \$, it can take up to 2 years to get a QSL card back...so be patient!

From the Webmaster

Hello NRHARC. I would like to remind everyone that we do have an Internet presence for our club. On the web we are located at <http://www.NRHARC.org>. The website will always have up to date information about what is going on and it is a great way to introduce people to our club. We have a picture repository for any and all to post your favorite pics of that last antenna raising party. Or if you would like to sell some unused equipment we can even post it out there for you. Also if anyone would like an email address through the club, they are available to club members at no additional cost. You can either get a traditional email account or simply a forwarding address that will go to your existing email account. If this is something you are interested in, please just drop me a line at KD5ZOC@nrharc.org and I'll get you set up. Also if you have any ideas for the website, I would love to hear them. I occasionally go out and just look at other club sites to get ideas, but certainly you all have some ideas that I have not seen or thought of. Please help me out. The more ideas the better the site. Thanks and happy surfen!

Karl Ross, KD5ZOC

YL Chat

Since this is my first article for our quarterly newsletter, I'm not sure what you ladies are interested in hearing so I would appreciate any suggestions you might have.

As a relatively new HAM I am excited about joining in on the air and being able to actually "talk" to other Ham's instead of just listening on the sidelines. Let's face it ladies which one of us doesn't enjoy talking and visiting with other friends. I always get excited when I hear another YL on the air and look forward to making contact with her. So I want to take this opportunity to encourage all licensed YL amateur operators to get on the air and maybe even start our own YL net. Let me know what you think. I'm open for suggestions. And for those that are not licensed, borrow your hubby's radio and listen in. Who knows he might even sign in for you so you can join in. I'd love to visit and exchange recipes, get some gardening tips or just talk about whatever happens to be on our minds at the time be it kids or grandkids.

So for this first article here's a recipe I got from Weight Watchers that I thought you might like to try especially since we are starting to get warmer weather.

Strawberry Vanilla Shake

**½ oz fat-free instant vanilla pudding
& pie filling mix, Use ½ a 1 oz
package
2 cups strawberries, sliced
1 cup fat-free skim milk
½ cup plain fat-free yogurt**

**Combine all ingredients together in a
blender; puree until smooth. Yields
about 1 ¼ cups per serving.**

Notes: This shake thickens if allowed to stand. If desired, add ¼ cup of fat-free

milk to each serving to think to drinking consistency or eat with a spoon. You can also vary the berries according to what's freshest and in season

Weigh watchers points 2

73's
Dwan Needham
KE5JWY

Siren Tests

The North Richland Hills Amateur Radio Club loves to support the City of North Richland Hills. One of the ways we make the most noise is to assist with the monthly emergency siren tests. Several of our Hams enjoy joining in on the NRH Office of Emergency Management Net that takes place at 12:55 PM each month on the first Wednesday of the month on 145.37. At precisely 1:00 PM the city sounds the alarms and hams at each siren location are then able to report back as to whether the siren makes noise or not and whether it rotates or not. It takes a lot to keep the siren network up and running and this is one way that we can help. Although the sirens will report back to the base station their status, the only true way to know is to have a person on site, listening and watching. We have many times been able to report that a siren was not working even though it was reporting itself good and at least once even found out that the siren was working when the system thought it wasn't. This information is then used by the city to make any needed repairs. Thank you to those that help out each month with this project. If you are available on the 1st Wednesday each month and have interest in helping, please contact Karl Ross at KD5ZOC@nrharc.org or (214) 616-2647. We would love to have your help.

NRHARC Club Name Tags



If you don't already have an 'official' NRHARC name tag, you can order one at the SignMan's web site at

<http://www.thesignman.com/clubs/others.html>

Choose "North Richland Hills ARC - TX" from the drop down list. They've updated their site and our club now has its own page.

Club badges are \$10 each plus shipping. Thanks to the SignMan of Baton Rouge for offering this service.

Current NRHARC Officers		
President	Bob Norris	KA5KXT
Vice President	John Davis	WA5RHF
Secretary	Dwan Needham	KE5JWY
Treasurer	Doyle Hardy	K5HTE
Education Officer	Roger Courtney	N5RCS
Board Member	Dave Routzon	W5GT
Board Member	Glenn Thompson	KE4HZC

Contact any Officer at
WWW.NRHARC.ORG

Regular monthly NRHARC club meetings

Held on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the NRH Fire Department Training Room which is located at:

**7202 Dick Fisher Drive
North Richland Hills, TX 76180**

Driving Directions: From Rufe Snow, go east on Mid Cities and then south on Dick Fisher (at the flashing yellow lights)

Monthly board meetings: are held 2 Saturdays before the fourth Monday of each month at 9:00 AM at Tucker's Restaurant located at:

**5249 Davis Blvd.
North Richland Hills, TX 76180**

Upcoming Events

2007

**May 28 Meeting – Field Day planning
June 23 –24 Field Day**

**Please send comments and ideas for future articles to:
editor@nrharc.org**

**Dave W5GT
73s!**

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