



SARA Newsletter

October 2005

Shreveport Amateur Radio Association

Meeting:

First Thursday of each month at 6:30 P.M. in the Bossier Main Library History Center

Local Amateur Information

Available at:

www.qsl.net/nw1arn/

or

www.K5SAR.com

SARA Repeaters:

145.050 - K5SAR
DX Packet Cluster
145.110 - N5FJ
146.700 - K5KDJ
146.820 - K5SL
440.900 - N5FJ

SARA

PO Box 37632

Shreveport, LA

71133-7632

2005 Club Officers

President – Richard Lee,
N5PFZ

Vice President – Glenn Pettiet,
K5TGP

Treasurer – Randy Fulco,
K5SL

Secretary – Ellen Dupuy
K5LND

Amateur Radio antenna "CC&R Bill" Reintroduced in Congress

New York Congressman Steve Israel has reintroduced legislation that could make it easier for radio amateurs living in communities with deed covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) to erect suitable antennas. Arkansas Congressman Mike Ross, WD5DVR, signed aboard as an original cosponsor of the "Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Consistency Act" (HR 3876).

ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, has encouraged League members to write their elected representative and ask that they cosponsor and support the bill, especially given two hurricane emergencies in short order.

"Amateur Radio is certainly a part of this nation's communications infrastructure," Haynie said. "What we're asking for is just a fair shake so we can put up antennas and help our fellow citizens." While the League has ramped up its efforts to educate members of Congress about Amateur Radio, Haynie said lawmakers respond best to individual members.

The one-sentence measure is identical to the text of the CC&R bill that has been introduced in the last two sessions of Congress. It would put private land-use regulations, such as homeowners' association rules, on the same legal plane as state or local zoning regulations under the FCC's PRB-1 limited federal preemption. PRB-1 now applies only to states and municipalities.

HR 3876 has been assigned to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Information about the bill and a sample letter to use when contacting your representative are available on the ARRL Web site, www.arrl.org/govrelations/hr3876/.

In his public announcement September 19, Israel said that "often unsung" Amateur Radio volunteers were instrumental in helping residents in the hardest hit areas in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, including saving stranded flood victims in Louisiana and Mississippi.

"State and local governments, as well as disaster relief agencies, could not possibly afford to replace the services that radio amateurs dependably provide for free," said a statement from Israel's office. "However, the hundreds of thousands of Amateur Radio licensees face burdensome regulations that make it extremely difficult to provide their public services."

Raising the dB

Don't miss the meeting on October 6th at the Bossier Library History Center. KF5XV will speak on power signals and KG5VK is going to update us on his trip in support of Katrina communications (and maybe a little on surviving a fall from a tower). A slate will be presented for the 2006 SARA Officers and Board as well as distribution of absentee ballots.

After the meeting we will walk across to Chef Lee's and have a little food and fellowship.

Vanity Call Sign Processing on Hold

The FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) has suspended the processing of Amateur Radio vanity call sign applications. A WTB staff member, speaking to ARRL on background, said the FCC halted vanity processing on or about September 23 after realizing that filing and regulatory deadline extensions for hurricane-affected licensees in certain states could adversely impact the vanity system. The WTB staffer pointed out that the filing extensions announced this month also apply to Amateur Radio's two-year "grace period."

"Because these extensions apply to the grace period, it could affect vanity processing," the WTB staffer told ARRL. "We stopped processing when it came clear that some call signs could be affected." No decision has been made on when vanity processing will resume.

On September 1, the FCC extended until October 31 all filing and regulatory deadlines falling between August 29 and October 30 for licensees in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana affected by Hurricane Katrina. On September 24, it extended until November 21 all filing and regulatory deadlines falling between September 20 and November 20 for licensees in Louisiana and Texas affected by Hurricane Rita.

The WTB staff member emphasized that the FCC intended the deadline extensions to apply only to licensees who have been directly impacted by the storms. "These are not statewide extensions," the staffer said.

Under Part 97, Amateur Radio licensees have two years from the date of license expiration to renew their tickets without having to retest or risk losing their call signs to a vanity applicant. The staffer confirmed that WTB had disabled the "auto-termination" feature of the Universal Licensing System (ULS) so that it will not automatically cancel licenses that have not been renewed by the end of the grace period.

"We can't assume based on address who might be affected," the staff member explained, "so we're not auto-terminating anything at this point."

In the meantime, the FCC is encouraging radio amateurs to continue filing vanity applications as they normally would. "Everything will be held in queue," the WTB staff member said.--thanks to Dean Gibson, AE7Q, for alerting ARRL to this situation.

Northwest LA Amateurs in Action

Louisiana SEC Gary Stratton, K5GLS, reported that following the passage of Hurricane Rita, DEC Alan Levine, WA5LQZ, in Lake Charles, assessed communication needs and regional assets before ARES members were sent from other areas of the state. First responders entered Cameron Parish, and ARES was asked to accompany the sheriffs and Louisiana State Police to support them with communications.

Later in the week, floodwaters were beginning to recede and most of the shelters were equipped with working telephone service, electricity, and running water, reported Al Oubre, K5DPG. Louisiana's 800 MHz trunking system managed to stay up through the hurricane also, Oubre said.

As areas that were strongly hit by Rita opened up, chances for a call for outside mutual assistance increased. Radio amateurs who lived north of Interstate 10 were returning to their homes and getting on the air again to assist with the relief effort.

Propagation de K7RA

Average daily sunspot numbers dropped over the past week by over 16 points to 29.7. Solar flux values were down 20 points to 80.2. The week was quiet, with no geomagnetic storms. September 26-28 had the most geomagnetic activity, but it was all pretty mild. The K index for middle latitude and planetary readings only went to 3 or 4 on occasion and quickly dropped back to 2.

The forecast for the next few days, September 30 to October 2, is for low sunspot activity. The next peak of activity may be when sunspot 798 returns, currently on the Sun's far side. That activity should peak around October 14-16. The geomagnetic prediction for this weekend is for mild to unsettled conditions, with the planetary A index for September 30 through October 3 at 15, 15, 12 and 12. Prague Geophysical Institute predicts quiet conditions for October 5 and 6, quiet to unsettled conditions October 3 and 4, and unsettled conditions September 30 through October 2.

If you would like to make a comment or have a tip for our readers, email the author at, k7ra@arrl.net.

A Note from Randy on 146.820

Hello all,

I made it up to 146.820 Friday afternoon around 2 PM. I finished my inspections early and was four blocks away. It was really bugging me that the repeater was putting out only ten watts. Anyway the transmitter had a burnt mica trimmer that was in the output circuit to the antenna. I moved it slightly and got the power to jump up to 55w, but then it started arcing on the side. So it had a burnt mica capacitor in the output of the PA.

Easier to change and much better than a final transistor. I got this one to after spraying it, but it didn't last. What you see in the picture is what it looked like after I removed and open it up.

I got a new one from John, N5FJ, and put it in Friday night. PA worked but quit on the way home. I went back at around 10:30 AM Saturday and noticed power dropping off 60 watts to 50 watts, and the receiver not working right.

The PA had 20.3 VDC going to it, not 13.5! That's a rig killer.

Come to find out after trouble shooting I got back to the 3 pass transistors in parallel in the high current area of the power supply. One to all 3 were shorted! Anyway, I couldn't get the heat sink off the back to try and unsolder it there Saturday afternoon. Also the PS delivers 9.5 volts and other voltages so an Astron is not workable. So I had to unwire and unbolt it and take it with me...

Thanks to KL7EMH for helping me carry it and my gear down Saturday. On the bright side, it was neat up there watching the high wind and rain looking out the south windows on the 10th floor for 3 hours or so.

Anyway, the pass transistor is a PNP (ECG 30) it handles 30amps of current and can dissipate 300 watts with the right heat sink. A MANLY transistor indeed, and it has 3 of them. Why did it blow? Who knows?

It has been up there since 1993, and the repeater was used and the repeater is never used!!!!

I will order some from Mouser, or DigiKey unless someone has one. Hopefully, can get back up there next weekend or earlier. Now who is going to help me carry all that up there?????

Randy, K5SL



NVIS: Near Vertical Incidence Skywave

NVIS, or Near Vertical Incidence Skywave, refers to a radio propagation mode which involves the use of antennas with a very high radiation angle, approaching or reaching 90 degrees (straight up), along with selection of an appropriate frequency below the critical frequency, to establish reliable communications over a radius of 0-200 miles or so, give or take 100 miles. Although not all radio amateurs have heard the term NVIS, many have used that mode when making nearby contacts on 160 meters or 80 meters at night, or 80 meters or 40 meters during the day. They may have thought of these nearby contacts as necessarily involving the use of ground wave propagation, but many such contacts involve no ground wave signal at all, or, if the ground wave signal is involved, it may hinder, instead of help. Deliberate exploitation of NVIS is best achieved using antenna installations which achieve some balance between minimizing ground wave (low takeoff angle) radiation, and maximizing near vertical incidence skywave (very high takeoff angle) radiation.

As hams, we often faithfully follow the advice: get your antenna up as high as you can get it! We do this, and other things (like choosing antennas that have a low angle of radiation) in order to maximize the distance over which we can communicate. An antenna with a particularly high angle of radiation is often somewhat disparagingly referred to as a "cloud-warmer", the implication being that if the signal isn't radiated at a low enough angle, it's being wasted. For NVIS, we ignore all this traditional advice, and select instead techniques which will maximize not our DX, but our ability to reliably communicate with other stations within a radius of 0-300 miles.

Find out more about NVIS by reading the complete article: <http://www.gsl.net/wb5ude/nvis/>.

Photographs from Katrina

K5STE



Grounded Barge



Shrimp Boats Sailing Down the Highway



The Guard Giving Steve, K5STE, a Jerk



Been Waiting for that Fish Delivery





Who Lives Here?