



# The **HOTLINE**

Official Newsletter for the  
Heart O' Texas Amateur Radio Club  
Waco, Texas

Volume XXXII, Number 4

April 2007

## **Working with the ARC**

by Bill Feltenberger, KD5UEW

As we progress into spring we will see the potential need for emergency communications increase. I hope that we will all be ready. In light of that the April meeting will be about “networking” and the need for radio operators at the Red Cross.

Aaron Thompson will be our speaker. He sent this as an explanation of his presentation:

*“I have a program ready that involves explanation of our Response Technology Team and how they work within the Red Cross systems as well as how the Amateur Radio community can inter-relate with them.”*

We will also have a comment about the “dreaded background check.” I hope you come and get the good information about what the Red Cross is going to check and how they will check.

As has been a reoccurring them in the letters about these programs I welcome your ideas about what you would like to hear for these programs. At March’s meeting we had an excellent presentation about high-altitude balloons laden with amateur radio gear. April’s meeting by Aaron Thompson is going to be good, too. Come and listen for yourself, so you will not have to try to figure out what you missed.



**American  
Red Cross**

## **President’s Corner**

by Wayne Branscum, KD5SMC

We had a brief training given by Ed Middlebrook KC5NT during our Monday night net March 26, 2007. With National Hurricane Preparedness Week coming May 20-26, 2007 heightening our awareness, we need to be ready. Ham radio and post-storm relief operations could become even more vital with the coming year’s storms. This could easily happen if one or more of the key weather satellites that are already beyond their expected life spans were to fail. Bill Proenza is the new Director of the National Hurricane Center in Miami. He is quoted as saying that certain hurricane forecasts could be up to 16 percent less accurate if one aging satellite ceases to operate before it can be replaced.

The immediate concern is the so-called “QuikScat” weather satellite. This is a bird that permits forecasters to measure basics such as wind speed. Replacing it would take at least four years even if the estimated \$400 million cost were available immediately. “QuikScat” is currently in its seventh year of operation and was only expected to last five. Without the satellite providing key data, both two and three day forecasts of a storm’s path would be affected. That would also mean longer stretches of coastline would have to be placed under warnings, and more people than necessary would have to evacuate. Both of these are areas where ham radio volunteers are considered vital based on their training and expertise.

Let me urge you to get all the training you can get. With tornado season on us, it could be put to use sooner, rather than later—do you remember Friday, March 30, 2007? Each of us should be thinking, “What can I do to improve my readiness and skills?” Let me urge each of you to join us on Field Day. This can be very good training. I’m looking forward to seeing each of you at the meeting.

Wayne Branscum, KD5SMC  
HOTARC President



**Wayne, KD5SMC**

## For the Record...

### HOTARC Meeting of Members March 22, 2007

HOTARC's March Meeting was called to order by President Wayne Branscum KD5SMC at 7:00 PM at the Kultgen Automotive Center of the TSTC Waco campus. Present were seventeen full members, 2 associate members, and five visitors. Visitors were: Paul Holroyd KE5MZF of Hewitt, David Branch KE5MZO of Waco, Carol George KE5MZI of Waco, Kenneth George of Waco, Dell Bredemeyer KE5MZS of Robinson, and Doug Loughmiller W5BL (our guest speaker).

Rodney Baden K5YKC opened the meeting with a prayer.

KD5SMC welcomed our visitors—many of whom have submitted applications for Club membership.

The Minutes for the February meeting were approved as published in the HOTLINE, on a motion by Bill Feltenberger, second by Ed Middlebrook, and unanimous vote by the members. The February Treasurer's Report was also accepted as published in the HOTLINE following a motion by KD5UEW, second by KC5NT, and unanimous vote by the members.

#### Announcements

- **June Pre-Field Day Meeting:** Since the June HOTARC meeting date will *follow* Field Day this year, Wayne KD5SMC generously offered to host a pre-Field Day hamburger cookout at the Salvation Army Building on Interstate 35 in Waco, at 6:30 pm on Thursday June 21, 2007. We will discuss final preparations for Field Day at this gathering.

#### Committee Reports

- **ARES:** Rodney Baden K5YKC reported that there will be an ARES Communications Drill approximately June 21; details to follow.
- **Repeater:** Norris Martin KB5SLI reported that the 88 repeater audio is a little low, but it *is* running!
- **Trailer:** Mike Ross N5MVL talked about floor in need of repainting; hoping to do the work inside Roger WB5MBO's garage. KD5UEW made a motion to allow up to \$100 for floor-repair materials, seconded by K5YKC, and approved unanimously by the members.
- **Web page:** John Chamberlain AC5CV reported that details for the upcoming *Race for the Cure* and notice of the upcoming General Upgrade Class was added to the News page.
- **ATV:** David Bush KC5UOZ had nothing to report.
- **Education:** KD5UEW reported the message-handling class conducted by J.W. Roach W5AYX at Meadowland Terrace went very well. AC5CV summarized the Technician Class training as a "good class, good students, and good teachers!" As noted in the HOTLINE, all but a couple passed the Technician Element 2 Exam, and many are applying for HOTARC membership, too. We are now planning for a General Upgrade Class to be held in May, and will need to buy the Gordon West texts in support of this class. N5MVL made a motion to authorize up to \$300 for purchase of the books, which we expect to be reimbursed by the tuition fees paid by students, seconded by KB5SLI, and unanimously approved by the members present.
- **Public Relations:** No report.

## The Treasurer Reports...

### Heart O' Texas Amateur Radio Club Treasurer's Report, March 2007

<b>Beginning Account Balance</b>		\$ 5,150.32
<b>Income</b>		
Wild West Century donat.	\$ 500.00	
Interest	<u>1.17</u>	
<b>TOTAL Income</b>	<b>\$ 501.17</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>		\$ 0.00
<b>Ending Account Balance</b>		\$ 5,651.49
<b>Outstanding</b> (as of 4-18-2007)		
<i>Credits:</i> Dues, \$210.00; TX Dept of Pub Safety, \$90.00; General Class tuition, \$25.00		
<i>Debits:</i> (none)		
<i>Actual cash on hand:</i> \$5,976.49		

**Submitted by  
Norris Martin, KB5SLI  
HOTARC Treasurer**

- **Special Events:** K5YKC (reporting for Grant KE5ERW) stated that we still need volunteers to staff the *Race for the Cure* event, and asked that interested hams contact Grant ASAP (see our web site for details). Bill Cox W5JRM agreed to move the trailer into position. All agreed that the location used in past years was preferred over a more remote location because of the added security and accessibility to race officials.

### Old Business

- **Audit Committee:** The Committee (Bill Cox W5JRM and Terry Williams KD5KJU) completed their audit of the 2006 books and reported that all was in order.

### New Business

- **New Members:** KD5SMC recognized motions to accept the applications from several for Full Membership:
  - 1) from AC5CV, second by K5YKC, for Dell Bredemeyer KE5MZS;
  - 2) from K5YKC, second by Rusty Keyes AD5JY, for Paul Holroyd KE5MZF;
  - 3) from KC5NT, second by N5MVL, for Darrell Sykora KE5MYE;
  - 4) from K5YKC, second by Jim Finch KE5FDR, for David Branch KE5MZO.
 The members present unanimously approved all the motions.

A motion to adjourn was heard from KD5UEW at approximately 7:55 pm.

The program this evening was presented by Doug Loughmiller W5BL, describing the fun of amateur radio ballooning with the ARBONET project.

Submitted by:

John Chamberlain AC5CV  
HOTARC Secretary



## Bakers Dozen Weather Net (BDWN)

by Ed Hyman, KC5KNI,  
McLennan County Emergency Coordinator

Storm season is here and in the last two major weather events we had 30+ spotters providing information to net control. Remember, the BDWN is normally activated on a direct request from The National Weather Service (NWS) Office in Ft Worth. The amateurs of Central Texas have always been there to support this request.

### How to Report?

The net will be activated on the HOTARC 145.150 repeater (tone 123.0 Hz) with Net Control using the HOTARC club call sign, W5ZDN. Net Control is located in the Waco-McLennan County Emergency Operations Center in the basement of the Waco City Hall. The back-up repeater will be the Club's 146.98 repeater (also with tone of 123.0 Hz).

### What Can You Do to Help?

Continue to monitor the weather the way you do. Be aware of the pending weather conditions—through Weather Radio and or local TV and Radio broadcasts. Check in to the net when it is activated—indicating your call sign, name, location, and whether you are fixed or mobile. Remember your safety during net operations is the most important consideration. Whether fixed or mobile, always have a plan to get to a safe location—always have an escape route and don't hesitate to use it. Should you move because of safety concerns or have to go off the air, please notify net control as soon as it is safe to do so.

Normal activations are for severe thunderstorms and/or tornados. These activations (Warning for McLennan County) are usually based on Doppler radar observations and are indicated as such in the warning text. Once a warning is issued, NWS requires verification of the warning criteria. This is where we come in as trained Amateurs, along with police, fire and EMS personnel, we provide this important verification.

### What to Report?

Report to Net Control: tornados on the ground, funnel clouds, wall clouds (with or without rotation), beaver tails, strong inflow areas, winds in excess of 50 mph, any hail reports (use coin sizes or diameter of the hailstone in inches, ball sizes can be used for large hail), water flowing over roadways (4 inches or more), and any damage, injury or deaths associated with the above criteria.



The above are the critical criteria reports that are needed at NWS ASAP. Net Control will relay them to NWS. Reports of conditions that do not meet the severe criteria, such as rainfall not causing flooding, winds less than 50 mph, and so forth, while important, should be saved and passed to Net Control on request. Don't feel that, because you have checked in, you have to report. Many spotters will check in and then will not be heard again during the Net, as none of the severe criteria occurred at their location. Please advise net control if you are checking out of the net for any reason. Also, please know that Net Control will NOT direct specific routes for mobile spotters to follow. Net control may ask for spotters to move towards a specific area and this movement should be by the safest route as determined by the mobile spotter.

Keep up the great support that you have always provided to NWS, attend SKYWARN, and above all be safe in your spotting activities.



It's hard to believe that we are already thinking about Field Day, but after our April meeting, we'll **only have one more Club meeting before the big day!** That's because this year the "fourth full weekend in June" occurs before the fourth Thursday (our meeting date).

So, bring your "contesting spirit" to this month's meeting, and be ready to help plan a record-setting

***HOTARC Field Day 2007!!***



## Scenes from the 2007 Race for the Cure

photos by Bill Russell K5WAR



*Thanks for your support of this special event!*

## **FCC Poised to Cut Vanity Call Sign Fee By More Than 40 Percent**

*from ARRL Letter*

The FCC has proposed reducing the regulatory fee to obtain or retain an Amateur Radio vanity call sign by more than 40 percent starting later this year. In a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) released April 18, the Commission is proposing to cut the fee from its current \$20.80 to \$11.70. If ultimately adopted, that would mark the lowest fee in the history of the current vanity call sign program.

The vanity call sign fee has fluctuated over the 11 years of the current vanity call sign program—from a low of \$12 to a high of \$50. The FCC says it anticipates some 14,700 Amateur Radio vanity call sign “payment units” or applications during the next fiscal year. The vanity call sign regulatory fee is payable not only when applying for a new vanity call sign but upon renewing a vanity call sign for a new term.

Amateur Radio licensees may file for renewal only within 90 days of their license expiration date. The ARRL VEC will process license renewals for vanity call sign holders for a modest fee. The service is available to ARRL members and nonmembers, although League members pay less. Routine, non-vanity renewals continue to be free for ARRL members. Trustees of club stations with vanity call signs may renew either via the ULS or through a Club Station Call Sign Administrator, such as ARRL VEC.

League members should visit the “[ARRL Member Instructions for License Renewals or Changes](#)” page, while the “[Instructions for License Renewals or Changes](#)” page covers general renewal procedures for nonmembers. There’s additional information on the ARRL VEC’s “[FCC License Renewals and ARRL License Expiration Notices](#)” page.

License application and renewal information and links to the required forms are available on the [ARRL Amateur Application Filing FAQ Web](#) page. The [FCC’s forms](#) page also offers the required forms.

## **Red Cross, ARRL Discuss Background Checks**

*from ARRL Letter*

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) members volunteering to support Red Cross disaster relief or recovery operations would not have to submit to a Red Cross background check unless their volunteer stints extended beyond seven days. That was the word from American Red Cross officials, who met recently with ARRL representatives. The ARRL has expressed concerns about the Red Cross’s background check policy since first learning of it last year. The League posted [its most recent position statement](#) on the topic in March.

ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, and Chief Technology Officer Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, met March 20 at American Red Cross offices in Washington, DC, with two attorneys from the Red Cross General Counsel’s office and two management-level staff members from Red Cross Disaster Services. The group discussed the Red Cross’s announcement that it would not conduct credit or mode-of-living checks. The League’s stated concern has been that the “ARC background investigation consent form” states that a consumer report and/or an investigative consumer report—which includes certain credit checks and mode of living checks—will be obtained on the volunteer signing the form.

The ARRL team asked if the Red Cross would be willing to modify its consent form to limit the authority granted by the person signing the form to criminal background checks only. The Red Cross representatives did not appear willing to modify the current consent form, however.

The ARRL also suggested alternatives to the Red Cross investigation firm, MyBackgroundCheck.com (MBC). The Red Cross also appears unwilling to accept background checks conducted by other entities, such as law enforcement organizations.

Following the meeting, the ARRL reiterated its recommendation that members carefully review any consent document permitting a private organization to conduct a background investigation on that individual. The current Red Cross background check consent form continues to include permission, without further consent from the volunteer, to conduct a consumer report and/or an investigative consumer report.

The ARRL says it won’t suggest which organizations or agencies Amateur Radio volunteers should or should not support, but the League stresses that it does wish to facilitate the provision of volunteer services. The ARC and the ARRL have a Statement of Understanding (SoU), which is up for review this year.

The HOTLINE is the monthly newsletter of the Heart O' Texas Amateur Radio Club (HOTARC), Inc., a nonprofit corporation, chartered by the State of Texas and principally located in Waco. It is permissible to use any of the original material contained herein, provided proper credit is given to the source.

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## HOTARC 2007 Board of Directors

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**Director (2008):** Ed Middlebrook KC5NT, 826-4053, [KC5NT@arrl.net](mailto:KC5NT@arrl.net)

**Director (2009):** Mike Ross N5MVL, 836-1083, [N5MVL@juno.com](mailto:N5MVL@juno.com)

## Club Repeaters

145.15 MHz (input at -600 kHz, tone 123 Hz)

146.88 MHz (input at -600 kHz, tone 123 Hz)

146.98 MHz (input at -600 kHz, tone 123 Hz)

ATV: 421.25MHz (Cable 57), input 439.25 MHz (Cable 60)

## VE Testing

Next session is Saturday April 28, 10:00 AM. **Location:** Baylor's [Rogers Engineering and Computer Science Bldg](#) (#63 on the map). **Bring:** 1) testing fee of \$14 (cash only); 2) a photo ID (two for first-time licensees); and for licensed amateurs: 3) current license *and photocopy of it*; and 4) photocopy of any relevant CSCE. **Contact:** Linda Hynan, AC5QQ at 666-4873 or [Linda.Hynan@UTSouthwestern.edu](mailto:Linda.Hynan@UTSouthwestern.edu).



## 2007 Board of Directors

*Back:* KD5KJU, KC5NT, N5MVL, K5YKC  
*Front:* KB5SLI, AC5CV, KD5UEW, KD5SMC

## Meeting Notice

The monthly meeting of HOTARC will be at 7:00 pm on Thursday April 26, 2007 in the [Kultgen Automotive Center](#) of the TSTC Waco Campus. Meetings generally last about 75 minutes consisting of fellowship, general Club business, and an interesting program. Visiting hams, family members, and prospective hams are welcomed!

*No more Morse code requirement!  
Tell someone about it!*

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Visit our web site at:  
[hotarc.org](http://hotarc.org)