



## The Repeater

June 2009

Sponsored by AA5RO

*Alamo Area Radio Organization, Inc.*

6319 Rue Sophie, San Antonio, Texas 78238-1533

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### Bob's Broadcast - from Bob Rodriguez, AARO President



June should be renamed "Ham Radio Activity" month. It seems just about every weekend is occupied with ham radio related events.

Just before June, on May 30 and 31, the *Tour de Cure* bike race fundraiser will be held. This race starts in Bulverde, proceeds through Northeast San Antonio, overnights in San Marcos and finishes up in Austin. Ham radio is a major player in this event.

On June 6 and 7, **Jerry Barry, K5AXN**, puts on his "*Vintage Field Day*" on the banks of Cibolo Creek, just South of IH-10 East.

At this event, crusty old timers (I'm included), gather and operate many 1950's and 1960's era "Hollow State" AM radios. Younger hams join us and marvel at "old" radios that still work and glow in the dark while putting out "Broadcast Quality" audio with their Astatic D-104 microphones. (See pg. 2).

On June 13, 14 and 15, hams throughout Southeast Texas will be providing communications for the *Texas Water Safari*. This is a world-class, non-stop race for canoes/kayaks from San Marcos to Sea Drift on the Texas Gulf Coast. Some of the

checkpoints are really primitive! Some AARO members will be on hand to help.

On June 27 and 28, we leave the cool, comfortable confines of our homes and gather outdoors for 24+ hours while participating in the ARRL Field Day. I would like to see anybody who thinks ham radio is boring at one or all of these events.

These events provide us with an opportunity to establish communications under less than ideal conditions. I extend an invitation to all hams to join in. You'll like it, I guarantee.

73,

**Bob Rodriguez** -  
K5AUW

#### Got something to say?

This is your club newsletter. Send your articles, gripes, praises, to:  
KD5ZSY @  
satx.rr.com.

#### Congratulations:

At AARO's test session on Saturday, 16 May, **Andrew Watson** K D 5 N N N upgraded to General class. **David Ham** is now known as KF5BGT.

Join Us on 147.380+ and 443.875+ (both PL tone 162.2) for *Newsline* and the *InfoNet* - Monday Evenings at 8:30 p.m., followed by a *SLOW "Learn CW" Net* *Night Owl Net* - Saturdays at 10:30 p.m.; *CW Practice Net* - Saturdays at 10 p.m.  
Also check out the club's web site - <http://aa5ro.org>

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## VINTAGE FIELD DAY Coming

It is time for Vintage Field Day again. This will be the 9th year for us. This is mostly a social event, so bring a yard chair and come join us.

The place may need mowing and no equipment may be set up, but hopefully we will be there. The bands are still pretty dead but that way we can visit more, the bands should be better by next year. This is a creek bottom and floods with a lot of rain, and who knows about the new flu, so if you are coming a long way, be sure to call before noon Friday (June 5).

This is a gathering of some old AM GUYS, some family, and hopefully some new friends. This is not a contest. So come join us and enjoy some time under the giant pecan trees down by Cibolo Creek.

We will have Polish sausage wrapped in tortillas and bottled water. Carol is retired now and she will have more time to play her hammered dulcimer and her bowed psaltry for you.

There are the usual creek country insects, so dress for them. If you came before, please join us again. If you have not come before, come join us this year.

From San Antonio take IH 10 towards Seguin, Texas. Take the Zuehl Road Exit (#595) then go back towards San Antonio on the access road on the south side of IH 10 (two-way traffic here as there is not a bridge on the access road over Cibolo Creek).

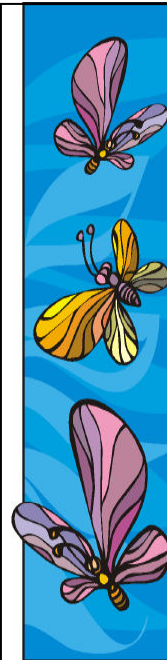
Turn left on Sea Willow Drive and go to the end of the road on the right side (1463). Our San Antonio phone is 210-653-0430.

Noon Saturday to 4 PM Sunday, +- for weather.

*Contributed by Jerry Barry, K5AXN*



[www.virhistory.com/ham/photos/shack3.jpg](http://www.virhistory.com/ham/photos/shack3.jpg)



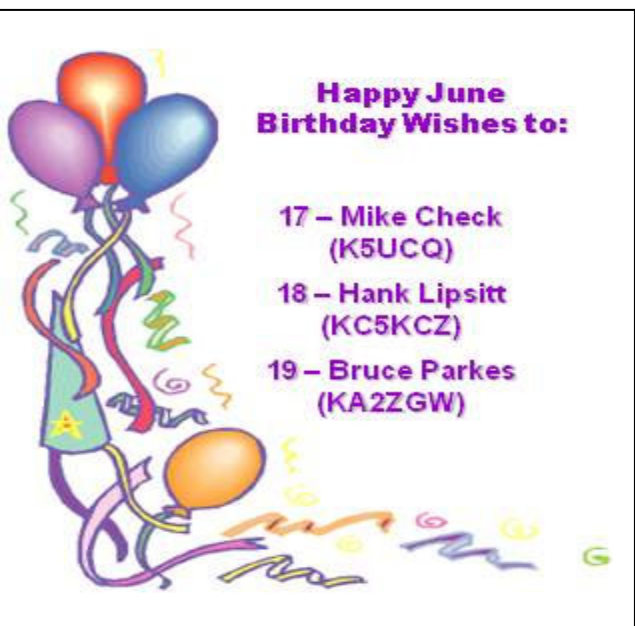
### THE BOOTLEGGER

A bootlegger walks into a radio store and tells the salesman that he would like to buy the new HF rig over in the corner. The salesman says, "Sorry, we don't sell to bootleggers". He leaves, goes home, puts on a brown wig and sunglasses and goes back to the store and tells the salesman he wants to buy that new rig over in the corner. Sales guy says, "Sorry, we don't sell to bootleggers". Old boot asks, "How do you know I'm a bootlegger?" and the salesman replies, "Because that's not a rig, it's a microwave oven."

*(from: <http://www.ac6v.com/humor.htm>)*

### Call Signs on the menu?

Starting with the June 10th meeting at Martha's Restaurant, you will be asked for your Call Sign by the waiter/waitress. The information will go on your ticket so your order will be processed correctly.



## The Repeater

### KD5YRR-SK



The San Antonio area ham community was saddened to hear of the death of **Denny E Findley**.

Denny was a larger than life individual who had a distinctive voice and a unique sense of

humor, wit and endless supply of jokes that made him unforgettable.

Donations can be made in his name to American Heart Association or to the American Cancer Society.

His wife, **Rosalinda** (Rosie) KD5YVI, along with many family members and friends, survive Denny.

The A A R O membership voted to make a donation to the American Heart Association in Denny's memory.



### FIELD DAY

Please Join Us June 27-28, 2009

See Page 5 for more information on Field Day 2009

### Upcoming Statewide Events

<b>Vintage Field Day</b> <b>June 6 - 7</b> See page 2 for information.	<b>- Ham-Com 2009 -</b> <b>Friday and Saturday,</b> <b>June 12-13</b> <b>Plano Centre</b>	<b>June 13</b> <b>Texas River Safari</b>
<b>June 21</b> <b>Deep East Texas Amateur Radio Club (DETARC)</b> <b>in Lufkin, TX</b> <b>8 AM</b>	<b>Texas City Hamfest</b> <b>July 11th, 2009</b> <b>Doyle Convention Center</b> <b>8AM - 2 PM</b>	<b>November 14</b> <b>North Texas Emergency Communicators Hamfest</b> <b>Azle TX</b>

## 2 Meter Repeater Reaching Out... Touching You

Performance of the AARO 2 meter repeater (147.380) has been greatly improved with the tuning of the duplexer.

**"Dink" Stockert** (WA5LNL) graciously donated his time and expertise to re-aligning the unit.

Initial reports from mobile ham operators

indicate that the range of the 2 meter repeater has vastly improved.

In another development, the club has voted to buy a bandpass filter to be added to the 2 meter repeater receiver to help eliminate outside interference often disrupting our communications.

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### PSK31 provides another form of ham communication in digital mode

AARO President **Bob Rodriguez** made a presentation at the May meeting on PSK31. It is a digital mode that is both very inexpensive and easy to use. With one exception, it can be used on most ham bands from DC to daylight. The only band it cannot be used on is the 60 Meter band.

There are only 4 basic items required to run PSK31. You probably have at least 2 already have in your ham shack. First, you will need a SSB Transceiver (HF, VHF and/or UHF). You don't need the latest super-duper, whiz-bang model, whatever you have will work.

You'll need a Windows based computer, either desktop or laptop, with a "Sound Blaster" compatible sound card running Windows 95 or newer OS. Fortunately, just about every computer made during the last 15 years meets these requirements.

Next, you'll need a software program to encode and decode PSK31. There are several freeware programs available on-line. I have found "DigiPan" the easiest to install and most versatile program available. Total cost for DigiPan, \$00.00. (My kind of program!)

Last but not least, you will need some form of interface between the transceiver and the computer. There are several

models available commercially. The average cost is around \$100.00. You can homebrew your own from readily available parts for much less. I have designed and built several interfaces from parts obtained at Radio Shack for less than \$20.00 each!

These interfaces can also be used, along with their freeware, with other sound card based modes such as RTTY (Radio Teletype), SSTV (Slow Scan Television), WEFAX (Weather Facsimile) and others.

The only main disadvantage of PSK31 is that it is not normally an error free digital mode. The "...TOR" digital modes, such as PACTOR, AMTOR and others use ARQ (Automatic Repeat reQuest) or FEC (Forward Error Correction) to provide error free communications. What we generally call PSK31 is actually BPSK (Binary Phase Shift Keying). There is another form of PSK called QPSK (Quadrature PSK) that offers FEC, but it is not as popular as BPSK. So much for the disadvantage, the advantages are many but I will only cover the main ones.

The cost of a proprietary TNC (Terminal Node Controller) [Interface] for most FEC data modes can cost hundreds and hundreds of dollars. (One runs almost \$1000.00 !) You can build a

PSK31 interface for less than \$20.00 or buy a commercial model for around \$100.00.

The fact that PSK31 does not use FEC is also an advantage. "... TOR" stations usually communicate with only one other station during an entire QSO due to the "handshake" required by the FEC and cannot work multiple stations in a net.

PSK31 can easily operate in multiple station nets, much like a voice net.

There is no constant tuning of the transceiver searching for other PSK31 stations. You set it to the "standard" frequency and all of the QSOs and CQs magically appear simultaneously on the computer screen. (Not only that, but they appear at the same time too!) Just use your mouse to "point-and-click" on the station you wish to talk to.

PSK31 is an excellent "very weak signal" mode. QRP operation (less than 2 watts) will usually get through with full copy. It is just about as efficient as CW in getting through the noise.

Prepared text documents can easily be added to the transmit queue. This allows pre-typed lists, requests, rosters, etc. to be sent during the QSO.

The following are a few hints and kinks to operate PSK31:

- Run 1/2 of the power

you normally run on SSB (I run about 50 watts on PSK31).

- DO NOT run so much power that you get an indication on your ALC (Automatic Level Control) display. This will produce a distorted signal!

- Set your Xceiver to Upper Sideband regardless of which band you are using.

- The most common PSK31 frequency is 14.070 MHz.

- PSK31 signals can also be found on 7.035 MHz for DX contacts, 7.070 MHz for stateside contacts and 10.040 MHz. Other bands have PSK31 signals but the above mentioned frequencies are the most common.

- ALL classes of hams, including Technician Class, may operate PSK31 on 10 meters at 28.120 MHz!

Space limitations in this newsletter prevent me from repeating the whole theory of operation, but for further information or hands-on help with operating PSK31, please call me at (210) 887-6618 or e-mail me at bobrod@flash.net. See y'all on PSK31 net on Thursdays at 7 PM on 28.120 Mhz.

*Contributed by Bob Rodriguez, K5AUW*

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## Field Day 2009 Looms Large as SA Hams Prepare for Mega-Event

Field Day 2009 is nearly upon us, and preparations are underway to make this the largest, most successful Field Day event in San Antonio's history.

This is thanks to the participation of AARO, SARC, ROOST, SARO, Hill Country REACT, QCWA and many other organizations and individuals operating jointly under the banner of Bexar County ARES.

Field Day 2009 is expected to draw record numbers of operators and will feature many different bands and modes of operation, including CW, SSB, PSK-31, FM and ATV as a Class F (EOC) station. The total number of transmitters to be operated has yet to be determined, but will number at least six.

### Where and When?

- San Antonio Fire Training Academy. 300 S. Callaghan Road, near Highway 151. (map on pg. 3)
- Setup begins at 8am on Saturday, June 27th. Field Day operations begin at noon.

### What to Bring...

- Snacks and cold

drinks for yourself during the day, and a cooler if you have one. We will have a few community coolers with ice on hand.

- A meal will be provided on Saturday evening. Please bring **EITHER** three dollars **OR** a substantial side dish, chips, drinks or dessert sufficient to feed at least 3 people including yourself. Questions about the meal should be directed to **Teri Thomas** KC5BJI [w a 3 p a y - kc5bjj@sbeglobal.net](mailto:w a 3 p a y - kc5bjj@sbeglobal.net) Reservations would be greatly appreciated so that we can plan to buy enough meat. Please submit your reservation through your club's designated representative.

- A comfortable chair
- Sun screen
- Hat, Umbrella or other shade
- Friends and Family!

Don't assume that things you need will be there. (ie, if you bring a watermelon, bring a knife to cut it with). If you bring a crock pot, bring an extension cord to plug it in.

### What NOT to Bring...

- No alcohol will be permitted on the grounds of the San Antonio Fire Academy, nor in the parking lot.

### Overnight...

- Camping will be permitted on the grounds. If you plan to bring a trailer or camper, please coordinate with **Erik Rabe** KD5YZU

[kd5yzu@wildblue.net](mailto:kd5yzu@wildblue.net)

Gates will be locked at dusk. There will be no vehicular traffic in or out between dusk and daybreak.

### Help Wanted...

We still need plenty of folks to help with the following:

- Setup Crew - Need strong backs to help unload and setup antennas, tables and chairs, run extension cords, gas up generators, etc. Please be at the Fire Academy by 8am on Saturday and dress comfortably. Lunch and cold drinks will be provided. Contact **Shane** NS5D ([shane@ns5d.com](mailto:shane@ns5d.com)) or Erik KD5YZU.
- Teardown Crew - Need same to help take down and load

up everything on Sunday morning. Please be there by 10:30am.

**BRING A DOLLY OR ROLLING CART IF YOU HAVE ONE.** Lunch and cold drinks will be provided. Contact **Shane** NS5D or Erik KD5YZU.

- Loggers - Need loggers to enter in contacts using the logging computers at each station throughout the contest. Contact **Bob** K5AUW ([k5auw@arrl.net](mailto:k5auw@arrl.net)) or **J C Smith** N5RXS ([n5rxs@satx.rr.com](mailto:n5rxs@satx.rr.com)).

- Meal Crew - Need some backyard chefs and helpers to help prepare the evening meal and clean up afterwards. Meal will be provided. Contact Teri KC5BJI.

### • Lastly...

Come prepared to enjoy the fun and fellowship of this event with your fellow (and ladies) of amateur radio in San Antonio.

*\_Contributed in part by Shane, NS5D.*

## Calendar of Events

- ✓ 6/10/09 AARO General Membership Meeting, Martha's Mexican Restaurant, 5822 Babcock Road. Dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
- ✓ 6/11/09 SARC General Membership Meeting, K-COMM, 10815 Gulfdale, 7:00 p.m.
- ✓ 6/13/09 Medina County ARC General Membership Meeting, Hondo Community Center, Hondo, TX. 9 a.m.
- ✓ 6/13/09 McARC ARRL VE Test Session, Hondo Community Center, 1014 18th Street, Hondo, TX, Appointments required. Contact Ray N5VRE @ 830-931-9301.
- ✓ 6/20/09 K-COMM Tailgate/Swapfest, 10815 Gulfdale, 9:00 a.m., 344-3311
- ✓ 6/27/09 SARC-Sponsored ARRL VE Test Session, Great Northwest Library, 9050 Wellwood, 9 a.m. (Call 210 522-6167 for confirmation of this date)
- ✓ 6/27-28/09 Field Day at the Hwy. 151 & Callaghan. (Map on pg. 3).

Check <http://aa5ro.org> for more upcoming events regarding the San Antonio Amateur Radio Community.



**AARO Membership Meeting**  
(second Wednesday of each month)  
**Wednesday, June 10th, 2009**  
Martha's Mexican Restaurant, 5822 Babcock Road  
Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Meeting at 7:00 p.m., sharp

