K5LET JANUARY 2022

PROPAGATION

Newsletter of the Longview East Texas Amateur Radio Club

in this issue

LETARC adds Bert Sharp KI5DYI as Vice President

LETARC interviews Thomas Witherspoon K4SWL

Tips for a successful POTA activation

Join LETARC at our next meeting at 9 AM on Jan. 22nd

Parks on the Air issue

LETARC activities

LETARC held our monthly meeting on Saturday, Dec. 18th, 2021. Ross Bennett KI5SR gave a nice and informative presentation regarding decibels, S-units, power ratios, and signal to noise ratios. The club decided to have dinner at Butcher Shop in Longview at 6:30 P.M. on Tuesday, January 11th, 2022.

Ross Bennett KI5SR talks to LETARC

LETARC 2022 Officers

President - Ross Bennett KI5SR
Vice President - Bert Sharp KI5DYI
Secretary/Treasurer - James Bray KG5OFX
Media Director - Don Gamble KG5CMS
Communications Director - Jim Rogers N5VGQ

Ross Bennett KI5SR and
Don Gamble KG5CMS
picture courtesy of
Rhett Pilcher KG5NWI

Don't forget to pay your dues -

Now that it is January dues are due again. Please write your name and call sign neatly on an envelope and place your dues inside when paying. Dues are $30 if paid in January and $35 if paid afterward. Thank you James Bray KG5OFX for taking care of our club's money and record keeping.

December 2021 meeting minutes

I. Opening Ceremonies
Call to order at 0900
Prayer and Pledge by Rhett Pilcher
Introductions
Welcome from President Ross Bennett

II. Adoption of Agenda

Meeting agenda adopted

III. Adoption of Minutes

Reading of minutes from November meeting. No objections. Minutes adopted. No Finance report.

IV. Reports from Officers.

A. President Ross Bennett – spoke with Jim Rogers, his wife has been exposed to COVID. They are quarantining.
B. Vice President Ron Case – not present
C. Secretary/Treasurer James Bray – when paying your dues, please use a provided envelope and LEGIBLY write your name and call sign on the outside of the envelope. Dues are $30 is paid by the end of January. $35 after that.

D. Media Director Don Gamble – POTA Dec 21 at Daingerfield State Park. Newsletter
by Jan 1. Interviewee may be late so newsletter may be late.
E. Communications Director Jim Rogers – not present.

V. Reports of the Board – none

VI. Reports by Committees –

A. Repeater Committee

1. Repeater controller still under consideration.
2. Recommends club authorize expense of $100 to replace non-working lighting fixtures at K5LET repeater. Motion made by Ross Bennett and Seconded by James Bray. Motion carried.

VII. Reports by Members – Ross Bennett stated he enjoyed the last POTA some of the members
held. John Zenter mentioned it was wet outside.

VIII. Presentation – Don Gamble awarded Ham of the Year. Don is always willing share hisknowledge and assistance whenever needed. He is also doing amazing work on the newsletter.

IX. Recess

X. Reconvene

XI. Program – Ross Bennett provided a short presentation on computing power gain and loss and deciBels.

XII. Unfinished Business – none

XIII. New Business – We have a fifth Wednesday this month if anyone is willing to run net. Don Gamble will run it and John Zenter will back up if needed.

XIV. VE Testing Headcount – enough VEs available for testing.

XV. Monthly dinner – Jan 11 630pm at Butcher Shop

XVI. Adjourn at 1027.

Thank you James KG5OFX

Ham radio quote

"You see, telegraph is a kind of a very, very, long cat. You pull his tail in New York and his head is meowing in Los Angeles. Do you understand this? And radio operates exactly the same way: you send signals here, they receive them there. The only difference is there is no cat."
- Albert Einstein.

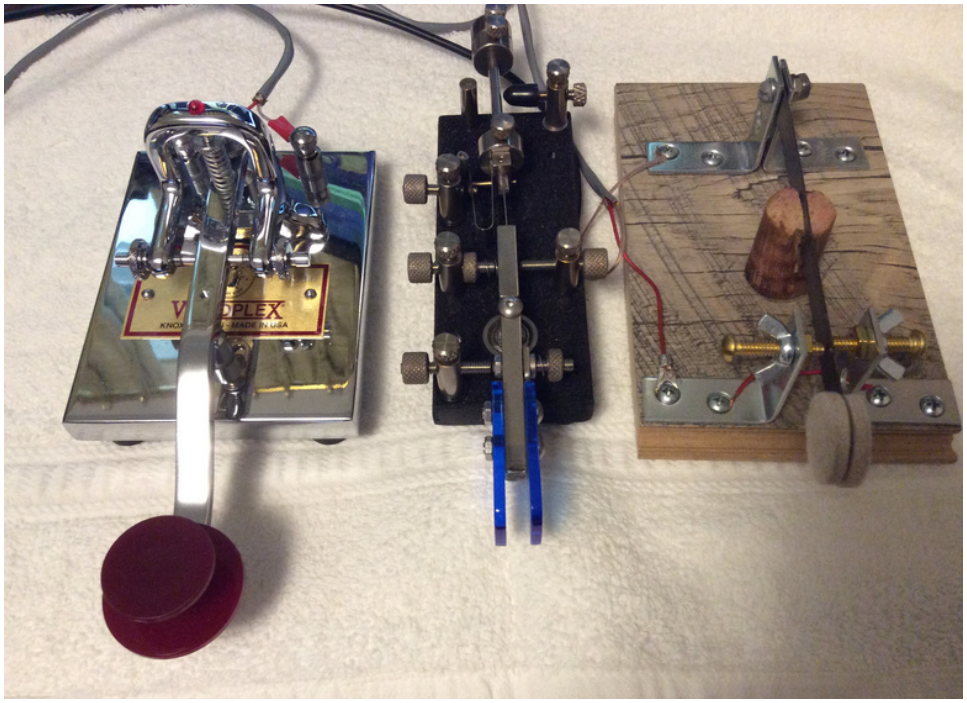
December Parks on the air

Several hams met at Daingerfield State Park (K-3002) on the cold morning of December 21st, 2021. The operators used various radios, antennas and gear and the park was activated by several people. The fanciest of all gear was a metal slinky and radials inserted into a balun as a 17 meter vertical antenna.

Left to right - Don Gamble KG5CMS, Chris Crawford KG5SMZ, Terry Johnson KG5WO, William Collier KG5SVM, Rhett Pilcher KG5NWI, and Bill Manley K5WAM, not pictured is Randal Mays KG5IEE.

Lloyd Jackson WO5W wins the triple key award from SKCC

Our friend and LETARC charter member Lloyd Jackson has won the Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) triple key award. Congratulations Lloyd! He had to make contacts with 100 SKCC members with each key without any duplicates. Lloyd used a straight key, a semi-automatic key (AKA bug) and a homebrew sideswiper key (AKA cootie.) The cootie was made from a hacksaw blade.



Lloyd Jackson WO5W's keys- straight key, bug, and cootie. Congrats Lloyd!

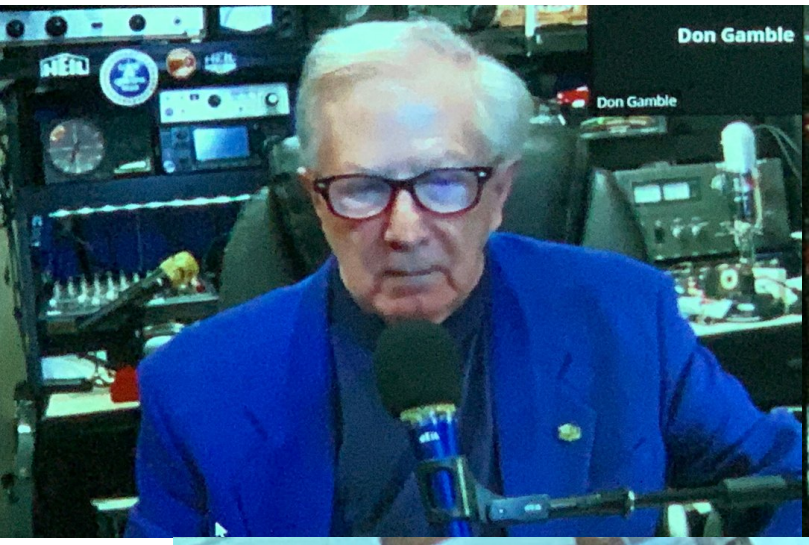
SKCC Straight Key Century Club

K3Y

Speaking of SKCC, the best CW event of the year starts in January. K3Y is a month long special event station that has become a gift to all CW operators. You can join SKCC for free, check out their site here. You can find out more about K3Y here.

Karen Houston KM5A shares pictures from Bob Heil K9EID's presentation from November.

Karen Houston KM5A was kind enough to email pictures to the Propagation editor from November's presentation with Dr. Bob Heil K9EID. I got busy with work and forgot to include them in December's Propagation. My apologies Karen and thank you for the pictures!



(above)

Dr. Bob Heil gave a great talk to us in Nov.

(left)

Dr. Bob Heil plays the organ for our club.

LETARC survey
"What are you interested in?"

1st - Antenna building and modeling
2nd - Storm spotting and SKYWARN
3rd (tie) - Kit building
3rd (tie) - Analyzers and test equipment
4th (tie) - Portable operations
4th (tie) - Radio wave propagation
4th (tie) - Fox hunting
5th (tie) - CW
5th (tie) - DX
5th (tie) - FM and repeaters
5th (tie) - Single side band
5th (tie) - Field day
6th (tie) - APRS
6th (tie) - Mobile radio
6th (tie) - VHF/UHF operations
6th (tie) - Repeater installation and maintenance
7th (tie) - Parks on the air
7th (tie) - Digital modes
7th (tie) - SDR
7th (tie) - Homebrewing
7th (tie) - Texas QSO Party
7th (tie) - Educational outreach for ham radio
8th (tie) - ARES and RACES
8th (tie) - QRP
8th (tie) - Ragchewing
8th (tie) - Special event stations
8th (tie) - Radio programming

Thank you to everyone who participates in our surveys

LETARC interviews youtube star Thomas Witherspoon K4SWL

Thomas Witherspoon K4SWL is the owner and editor of SWLing post and QRPer.com. He is also the founder and curator of both the Shortwave Radio Audio Archive and the Radio Spectrum Archive. Thomas has an incredibly popular youtube channel where he demonstrates "real life, real time" unedited videos. Thomas shows us his various radios, antennas, and gear to operate POTA, SOTA, WWFF, and other portable ham radio adventures. If you haven't watched this channel, do yourself a favor and click here to check it out. Thomas K4SWL was kind enough to grant LETARC this interview.

LETARC: Are you a member of a local radio club? If so, what is your favorite part or activity in the club?

Thomas K4SWL: I'm a member of the Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club (BRARC) and the NCDXCC--both of which meet in Hendersonville, North Carolina. I did normally attend a club meeting once per month, but due to my caregiving schedule with my parents these days, I primarily attend only when the sessions are online. I do feel like clubs are the lifeblood of amateur radio in local communities, so I do enjoy attending when I can.

LETARC: Please tell us about your youtube channel, QRPer.com and SWLing.com.

Thomas K4SWL: I started both the SWLing Post and QRPer.com in 2008. The SWLing Post focuses primarily on shortwave radio, international broadcasting, over-the-air broadcasting, programming, and receiver/SDR reviews. It has a very large community and receives about 7,000-9,000 visitors daily. QRPer.com focuses on low power amateur radio work; specifically, field radio. I enjoy posting comprehensive field activation reports from both park and summit activations on QRPer.com. Of course, we have a number of guest posts, lots of reviews and how to articles, and anything/everything that explores field radio fun. The YouTube channel actually grew out of QRPer. I don't really consider myself a "YouTuber" because my videos are unscripted and unedited. I share real-time, real-life videos of my field activations--they typically run an hour or so each and include all of my success and plenty of mistakes! A number of my subscribers have told me they like listening to my videos to practice real-world CW copy before doing their own CW activations.

LETARC: What got you interested and started in POTA/SOTA/WWFF and other portable and outdoor radio operations?

Thomas K4SWL: From my earliest days in amateur radio, I have been interested in QRP and field radio. I get a real thrill out of setting up a portable field station and making contacts all over the world. POTA, WWFF, and SOTA feel like self-supporting communities within the amateur radio world--we love this stuff. These activities also provide a very convenient excuse to explore parks and summit trails that might have otherwise gone unnoticed.

LETARC: What advice would you give someone starting out in POTA?

K4SWL: Go to the POTA website and practice chasing activators. The spots page (http://pota.app) will give you the details to find an activator. Listen to how they work stations and, of course, jump in and work them! You should register with the POTA website so it can track your activities. Then if you feel like doing an activation yourself, go to the field and give it a go! Don't overthink it. Our first couple of activations are always a bit awkward as we learn the ropes. It's a very supportive community, so no worries at all if you make a mistake. We've all been there. (Warning, though, as this is a terribly addictive activity!)

LETARC: What advice would you give someone starting out in QRP?

Thomas K4SWL: Invest in or build a good resonant antenna to pair with your QRP radio. Consider a good End Fed Halfwave (EFHW) or dipole (or linked dipole). Both are easy to build and perform beautifully. Practice patience if you're using QRP to chase DX. If you love QRP, then hit the field and try activating a park or summit. When you're an activator, you're the DX and people will listen for your signal even if you're only pushing 5 watts. Of course, if you're really serious about QRP, consider learning CW. Morse Code is such an effective mode for the low power operator--I honestly can't tell the difference when I'm running 5 watts or 100 watts in CW. The results are often very similar. CW isn't as hard as you might think. Check out the resources with the Long Island CW Club--they'll have you up and running before you know it!

LETARC: I love seeing the different radios, antennas, and keys you use in the field. Do you have any favorite gear or any gear you would recommend staying away from?

Thomas K4SWL: I have so many favorite radios, antennas, and accessories. Any that you see me use in my activation videos on a regular basis are favorites. I do rely on my Elecraft KX2 a lot--it's the most all-in-one versatile radio I own and can handle anything I throw at it. I love my new Discovery TX-500 too--it's built like a tank, performs well, and it is the most rugged, weather resistant HF radio on the market. I like my IC-705 for its insane number of features and modes, audio and performance--it's a wonderful picnic table radio.

I also love the Yaesu FT-817/818 for the rugged chassis, excellent performance, and the fact it sports both a BNC and SO-239 antenna connector! I've a number of other radios I love, too, for various reasons. I try to rotate them out when doing activations because it's a bit like visiting with a good friend--nice to catch up with them! In terms of antennas, I am very fond of both random wire and resonant wire antennas.

LETARC: What planning goes on before an activation?

Thomas K4SWL: Summit activations take the most planning. When activating a summit, it's important to plan out the day and truly understand how difficult the hike might be in terms of the trail and elevation change, how much time you need to allot, what the weather might be, and you also need a good map if the trail is not as well established, or if there are a lot of twists and turns. The SOTA website has pages for each and every summit in the system--those pages have notes that previous activators have shared. It's important to read through all of them before performing an activation. Summits take me much, much longer to plan for in advance compared to a park--especially if the summit is rare or an All Time New One (ATNO). Parks are much easier because most state and national parks have well-defined boundaries and entry points. Game Lands, Wildlife Management Areas, and tails can be somewhat more difficult to research in advance for access points. Before heading out to any park for the first time, I look up the park website and also check out the park from Google Earth.

Often, from the satellite view you'll be able to see what type of antenna you might need to bring (are there trees, for example?) and where you can deploy your gear. If activating a historical site, you'll often need permission from the park in advance. Some state parks request that you ask permission any time you do an activation, but they are in the minority. Most parks I've been to have staff that simply enjoy seeing their public lands being enjoyed.

LETARC: What advice would you give a local radio club?

Thomas K4SWL: Organize monthly field events. Agree to meet at a local park and bring some radio gear for people to practice their skills. Always look for an opportunity to mentor or be an Elmer for others. People are afraid to ask, so jump in there and simply ask if they have any questions and share your knowledge. You don't need to be an expert on any one topic, in fact, explore a new aspect of radio together with someone. In the end, amateur radio is still an activity that relies on a network of kind, supportive people to make the whole thing worthwhile!

LETARC: What is your favorite part of amateur radio?

Thomas K4SWL: The people I meet through amateur radio. Some of my best lifelong friends are amateur radio operators!

Thank you Thomas Witherspoon K4SWL!

P.O.T.A.

Parks on the air tips

Go to the POTA website pota.app and create an account.

Look for spots and practice hunting other stations.

Make a checklist of all the equipment you will need before you go on an activation. Pay attention to coax and adapters. Charge your batteries.

Consider bringing a back up antenna that deploys differently, such as a wire antenna that uses a tree and a free standing vertical.

You can spot yourself on the POTA site. If you use words like CW, SSB, or QRT in the comments it will automatically put your spot in that category.

Keep in mind that park to park contacts are more points. You can look up spots to find other activators on the POTA site.

Check propagation before you operate. Often when 20 meters is busy and crowded 40, 17, and 15 meters become good bands to activate on or hunt.

Get on the air and have fun! Invite your friends!

Nets

Please join us each Wednesday night at 8:30 P.M. for our weekly LETARC net on the 147.34 MHz repeater. The tone is 136.5.

Our friends in the Rusk County Amateur Radio Club hold a net at 7:30 P.M. on the 146.78 MHz repeater. The tone 131.8

All are welcome to the Uphsur ARES net is held on Thursday nights at 8 P.M. on the 146.9 MHz repeater with a negative offset. The tone is 107.2.

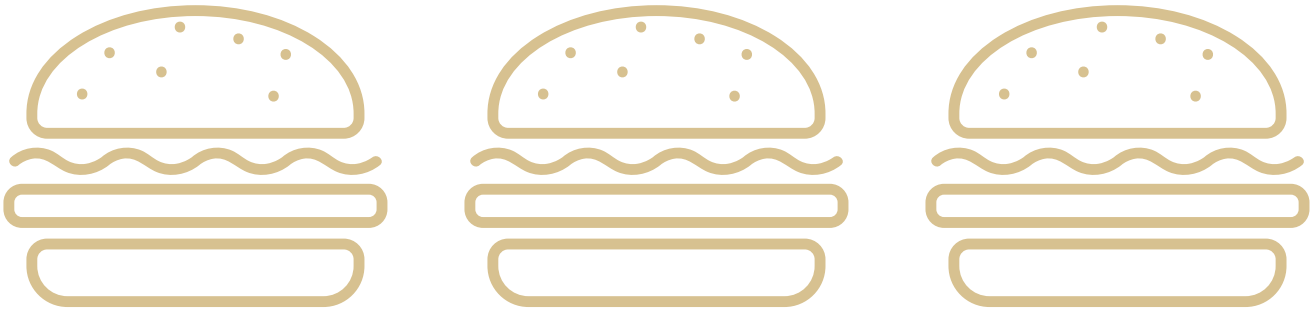
Sunday nights at 8:30 P.M. there is a net on the Daingerfield repeater frequency of 145.23 Mhz. The tone is 151.4

Our friend Lance McNeel W5TWM has invited everyone to his net on Sunday nights at 5:30 on 3.805 MHz LSB. The net sometimes moves frequency a bit out of courtesy to others.

Allen Matthews KA5TJS from San Augustine, TX holds an informal slow speed CW net on Monday nights at 7 P.M. local time on either 7.066 MHz or 3.566 MHz depending on band conditions. Be advised that there is more than one operator named Allen, that can be confusing when copying code in the net.

Our next 2nd Tuesday dinner

Please join us at LETARC's next dinner gathering at 6:30 P.M. on Tuesday, January 11th at Butcher Shop in Longview. Their address is 102 Lehigh Street, Longview, TX 75601.



Our next meeting

Please join us at LETARC's next monthly meeting which will be at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, January 22nd at the Longview Fire Training Center located at 411 American Legion BLVD Longview, TX 75601. Anyone interested in amateur radio is welcome to attend.

There will be a VE test session at 2:00 P.M. that same day at the Glaske science building of LeTourneau University. Walk ins are welcome. Testing costs $15.00 (soon to be $35) and you will need a government issued identification such as a driver's license, a valid email address and an FCC issued FRN number. LETARC VEs can help you get your FRN that day if you need help.

For more information about VE testing please contact John Zenter AE5OY at j.zenter@w-rg.com.

Thank you to

Thomas Witherspoon K4SWL
Mims volunteer fire department
The Longview fire training center on American Legion BLVD
Jim Perry KA5BCM for our radio room
John Zenter AE5OY and our VE team
Marty Duplissey N5KBP for his great work on the ARRL audio news
Steven Lott Smith KG5VK - ARRL North Texas Section Manager
JoAnn Keith KA5AZK - ARES Section Manager
Ross Bennett KI5SR - Gregg County ARES
David Chenault W5CWT - Rusk County ARES
John Keith W5BWC - Upshur County ARES
Tom Noe W5TDN - Gregg County SKYWARN coordinator
Jim Rogers N5VGQ - Repeater trustee
Ron Case W2RLC - letarc.org webmaster
Jim Quinn AJ1MQ - groups.io coordinator
Dr. Hoo Kim AG5ZS - Letourneau university liaison
Dr. Ron Morton KF5GMA & Carolyn Morton KF5GLT Longview CERT

Thank you for reading our newsletter. We hope to see you at our meetings and dinner gatherings and we hope to hear you on our nets. If you would like to contribute to the PROPAGATION please email Don at gambledon@gmail.com.

Please visit our website at letarc.org.

73

73 de Don Gamble KG5CMS.

Dit Dit

LETARC

JANUARY 2022

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1
2 3.805 MHz net 5:30 PM	3	4	5 LETARC net 8:30 PM	6 Upshur ARES net 8 PM	7	8
9 3.805 MHz net 5:30 PM	10	11 Cotton patch 6:30 PM	12 LETARC net 8:30 PM	13 Upshur ARES net 8 PM	14	15
16 3.805 MHz net 5:30 PM	17	18	19 LETARC net 8:30 PM	20 Upshur ARES net 8 PM	21	22 LETARC meeting 9 AM
23 3.805 MHz net 5:30 PM	24	25	26 LETARC net 8:30 PM	27 Upshur ARES net 8 PM	28	29
30 3.805 MHz net 5:30 PM	31					

MEETINGS

OUR MEETINGS BEGIN AT 9AM AT THE LONGVIEW FIRE TRAINING CENTER AT 411 AMERICAN LEGION BLVD, LONGVIEW, TX, 75601. THERE WILL BE A VE TEST SESSION AT LETOURNEAU UNIVERSITY AT 2:00 PM ON THE SAME DAY.

REPEATERS & NETS

LETARC NETS ARE WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT 8:30 PM ON THE 147.34 REPEATER WITH AT TONE OF 136.5

UPSHUR ARES NETS ARE THURSDAY NIGHTS AT 8 PM ON THE 146.9 REPEATER WITH A NEGATIVE OFFSET AND TONE OF 107.2

LANCE MCNEEL W5TWM HOSTS A NET AT 5:30 PM ON 3.805 MHZ LSB.

Upcoming amateur radio events

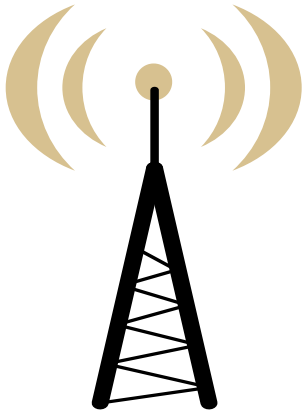
Jan. 1 Straight key night

Jan. 1 ARRL kids day, phone

Jan. 8 ARRL RTTY round up

Jan. 15 North American QSO Party, CW

Jan. 15 ARRL VHF contest

Jan. 22 North American QSO Party, SSB

Jan. 29 Winter Field day