

Radio Field Day connected Tyler County to world

by Michael G. Maness

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Tyler County Amateur Radio Association held its second Field Day on Saturday, June 25, at the Tyler County Emergency Operations Center in Woodville. In the photo, (front, L-R), are TCARA V.P. Ernie Matlock, Johnnie Grohn, Barbara Petri, Mark Odom, Jim Beattie, Carolyn Dowden, Sandi Fails, Bruce Womack; back row (L-R), TCARA President Chuck Petri holding Ayden Pratt, Guy Glimp, Marc Holcomb, Asst. Emergency Coordinator Jon Hartford, A.R.E.S. Emergency Coordinator and Chief Liaison Officer Nick Toparcean, Michael Goff, Asst. RACES Liaison Officer Floyd Petri, Howard Dowden and Rev. James Wedgeworth. See WD5TYL.org for all the local members.

Worldwide access—Tyler County Amateur Radio Association held its second official Field Day, kicking off at precisely 1 p.m., Saturday, June 25. At the end of 24 hours on Sunday at 1 p.m., their farthest connections had touched Romania, Brazil and South Africa.

Gathered in the county Emergency Op Center in the Nutrition Center in Woodville, these ham radio enthusiasts began with lunch at 12:30 with a thoughtful invocation from the Rev. James Wedgeworth, pastor of Victor in Jesus Church in Town Bluff. Amateur Radio Emergency Services Coordinator Nick Toparcean cooked half a hog, and typical of the family environment fostered all brought something for the Pot Luck feast.

TCARA President Chuck Petri said they had six stations running this time. In emergencies, the TCARA can have communication set up for about \$10 in about ten minutes. They could even talk with the International Space Station.

TCARA began over three years ago, and today Petri maintains their vast website, WD5TYL.org, that will be growing more in the months ahead as he adds a store and other features—a real labor of love for this radio expert.

Michael Groff, 17, senior at Warren ISD, was there to test out and get his technician's license. He has been helping friend-of-the-family John Hartford.

Unlike last year, where they had to use pencil and paper to track progress, Asst. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service Liaison Officer Floyd Petri purchased a sophisticated tracking program that will track all the connections from all six stations throughout the 24 hours.

Points are given for connections and the distance between the connections. All the while they refine and learn more about the radio processes. Extra points for the field day are given when public and elected officials make an appearance, and they were thankful that Texas Rep. James White and several members of the Woodville Police Department dropped by.

Floyd Petri was proud to note that he had four generations present. In addition to his wife, son and daughter, there was one-year-old great-grandson Ayden Pratt, an official member, as minors can be members, too, at no charge. Little Ayden was also given an honorary call sign, KG5BOSS, embroidered on his little custom-made shirt.

There are three levels of FCC licenses for radio operators, entry-level Technician License, mid-level General License and the top Extra Class License. The FCC extends operating privileges commensurate with each class that include extending the band width for higher licenses and to help insure that operators understand the laws and operate safely.

Technician Jim Beattie noted with a sense of accomplishment that they had both teachers and examiners, so that over the course of a weekend, it was possible for a person to get training and, with studious heart, be examined and get their credentials signed and sent to the FCC.

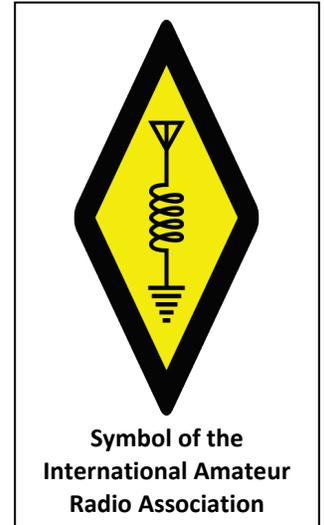
As Coordinator for the Volunteer Examiners, TCARA President Chuck Petri was responsible for signing off on all levels of examinees.

The American Radio Relay League, est. in 1914, hosts ARRL Field Day every year for a 27-hour marathon of national communication that crosses the globe. The goal is “To work as many stations as possible on any and all amateur bands ... and to learn to operate in abnormal situations” (see ARRL.org). Always on the fourth Saturday in June at precisely 1800 or 6 p.m. Zulu or Greenwich Mean Time, which is set at the Prime Meridian in Greenwich, England—in Woodville it was 1 p.m. because of daylight savings. Points are accumulated for a variety of types of connections. Yet no awards are given, for the serious fun has the goal to be less competitive and to foster collaborative over the nation.

Petri was proud to welcome new member, Technician Mica Reynolds from Lumberton, to their association.

At the end of the day at 1 p.m. on Sunday, TCARA had made over 200 connections, with the farthest to Romania, Brazil and South Africa. However, causing not a little frustration in the evening radio chatter, Petri reported that their numbers were down because of a geomagnetic storm in the ionosphere. He hoped their winter Field Day would be better.

The TCARA meets every first Thursday at 7 p.m. at 201 Veteran’s Way in Woodville, Texas. Visitors are welcome. Please see WD5TYL.org.



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