

Tyler County Ham Radio Club Reaches Hawaii

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Tyler County Booster (7-3-25): 7A.

Photos by Karen Vaughn

Hawaii—the Tyler County Amateur Radio Association reached the island in their farthest official connection on their Field Day, June 28–29, at Calvary Baptist Church, yet even farther on signals to folks not participating in Japan and Australia.

Held twice a year, TCARA's Field Day tests the skills in worldwide connections of licensed radio operators among clubs jointly participating. The teams start at precisely 1800 or 6 p.m. Zulu or Greenwich Mean Time, set at the Prime Meridian in Greenwich, England, which in Woodville is 1 p.m., and they run for 27 hours straight through the night, wherever that "night" might be in the world.

TCARA secretary Chuck Petri said they again beat their best record, accumulating a total of 2,538 points, from the combination of 1,038 contact points and 1,500 points from other radio activities.

TCARA gives a hearty "Thank You" to Calvary Baptist and Pastor Tony Moyer who allowed the club a room for the all-nighter and the fellowship hall for their monthly meetings.

They made 265 contacts, over double from their January Field Day, with 11 by voice and 25 by Morse Code. Petri noted they "covered roughly 96% of all the states in the U.S. this year!" And they made several connections in Canada as usual.

For the first time in TCARA history, their newest member and long-time Extra (Advanced) Class operator Rick Vaughn operated CW (radio lingo for Morse Code), which Vaughn was able to code and decode in broadcasts throughout the weekend.

Club President Chris Falkenberry, Vaughn and Petri were the work horses throughout the 27-hour jaunt, yet they were thrilled to see a host of other licensed operators and members drop by, including Rick's wife, Karen, Floyd and Barbara Petri, Marc and Rhonda Holcomb, Kati Appelt, Kolton Falkenberry, Jimmy Caruthers, Tom Sawyer, and Nancy Vallee.



Another first for the club was going completely off-grid. They operated totally on solar, with the panels charging batteries that took them through the short summer evening until dawn Sunday, a critical element in an emergency when electrical power fails.

For a decade now, Petri has maintained their vast website, WD5TYL.org, a labor of love for this radio expert.

There are three levels of FCC licenses for radio operators: entry-level Technician License, mid-level General License, and the top Extra Class License. You will see older hands with the “Advanced License” now superseded by the Extra Class, and way back in the past the Advanced License required knowledge of Morse Code too. Petri is a certified teacher and examiner, holding classes and tests as new radio persons come on board.

TCARA is part of the American Radio Relay League, est. in 1914, which hosts the ARRL Field Day every year for a 27-hour marathon of international communication that crisscrosses 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” (from ARRL.org).

The TCARA meets every first Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at Calvary Baptist’s Fellowship Hall in Woodville, Texas, located at 911 N. Magnolia Street, yet one must enter at the entrance by the WISD bus depot just off Hwy. 287.

Visitors are welcome, and for a load of info see WD5TYL.org.

