

The eKilo - What

Monthly Newsletter of the San Angelo Amateur Radio Club

May 2006

Meeting Minutes

By John Marshall/KC5FMX, VP

The regular monthly meeting of the San Angelo Amateur Radio Club, Inc., was called to order by President Glenn Miller/AA5PK on April 13 at 1930.

Introductions were made with 11 members in attendance.

The minutes for the March meeting were approved as amended in the March issue of *The Kilo-What*, and Treasurer's Report was approved as read.

Committee Reports

David Behrend/KB5FNK, as the only member of the ARRL Field Day 2006 committee, had only to report that he was not interested in chairing the committee. Additional committee members were solicited, but none came forward. We will try again at the May meeting to see if there is an inkling of interest in Field Day. If not, the club will forego FD this year.

Old Business

Clubhouse cleanup, set for April 15, was reiterated, but there was no interest in the project.

The 40/80 meter trap dipole that Paul/N7SDQ donated to the club was erected in inverted vee configuration by John/KC5FMX, Gary/N5GRC and Glenn/AA5PK on March 26 and it works very well. The club now has low band capabilities again.

Glenn/AA5PK gave a report on the Technician license class scheduled for May 6 and 13 at the San Angelo Health Foundation meeting room in the Visitor's Center. There were 10 students signed up so far.

Community Awareness Day at Sunset Mall was discussed. Glenn/AA5PK was assembling the club's display and asked for volunteers to assist with the booth any time from 10 AM until 4 PM. None came forward.

The bike races at the X Bar Ranch in El Dorado were briefly discussed. The race is Sunday, May 21, and ten club members have committed to assist.

New Business

Glenn/AA5PK mentioned that Bill Lawless/W5WRL, ARRL WTX Section Manager, plans to visit the club's Field Day site this year. As mentioned above, there is little interest in FD. Bill also plans to visit us for a regular Thursday club meeting in the near future.

The club has been asked to provide communications support for the Hispanic Heritage Run being held at Goodfellow AFB on May 6 from 0830 until around 1000. Volunteers were solicited and none came forward.

Glenn/AA5PK mentioned that he had been in contact by phone and e-mail with Marcus Barnes/W5CN, a former member of the SAARC. Marcus has been in touch with other former members who live outside the immediate San Angelo area and who wish to attend the next SAARC anniversary/birthday party. Marcus proposed that the party be held on a Saturday versus Thursday so that out-of-towners can more easily attend. It was moved, seconded and carried that the October meeting would be held on Saturday, October 14 starting at 1100 and will include a meal and perhaps become an open house for the club with the media invited. More details to follow.

Good of the Order

Split-the-Pot was worth \$3 to the winner, Glenn/AA5PK, and to the club. Glenn donated his share to the club.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2015.

Following an intermission, Glenn/AA5PK presented a demonstration of PSK31 using a laptop computer, a simple radio-to-computer interface and the club's TS-850S. Our first QSO was with a station in Michigan (whose operator was using voice recognition software so he could speak rather than type his input) and the second, with Ralph/KA5ULE at the keyboard, was with a station in Barcelona, Spain. We planned to use the newly installed 40/80 meter wire antenna, anticipating that 20 meters would be dead at 2030, but the band was actually very hot with many PSK signals readable, both stateside and European.

The next meeting of the San Angelo Amateur Radio Club, Inc. will be Thursday, May 11, at 1930 at the clubhouse.

President's Message*By Glenn Miller/AA5PK*

Again this month I can report we've gotten a lot accomplished since the last club meeting:

On April 15, John/KC5FMX and I spent a few hours cleaning the clubhouse and doing a little tree trimming to keep limbs from interfering with the inverted vee antenna. We filled the dumpster with a mass of junk that has been collecting for years in the garage area. We would have gotten rid of more useless material had our outing not been cut short by my falling from a stepladder while sawing a tree limb and injuring my knee. That put me on crutches for a week and is keeping me in a knee brace now and for the coming weeks/months. We did accomplish the minimum inside the clubhouse—vacuumed a huge amount of what looked like moon dust from atop and under the rug. The badly needed painting will have to wait until there is some interest in making the clubhouse look more presentable.

Even though it was only Charlie/WB5T and I manning the club's booth at Community Awareness Day at Sunset Mall from 0930 until 1630 on April 22, we passed out literature, signed a few people up for the Technician license class and met a few local amateurs who didn't know there was an amateur radio club in San Angelo. I'd have to say, "mission accomplished." Our display was eye-catching and highly visible, just as you first entered the mall through the main entrance. We had the Amateur Radio Today video running in a loop on my laptop and many passersby stopped to watch it. The only radio equipment we had "displayed" was my HT. More gear might have created more interest.

The PSK31 demonstration at the April meeting went well. Twenty meters, which had been dead after dark in previous months, was hopping and we didn't need to resort to the inverted vee to try to make a contact. I guess the shift to Daylight Savings Time made all the difference. I had three of the popular PSK freeware programs running simultaneously and I switched between them to show their different features as they each copied the PSK signals. I called CQ and got an immediate reply from a station in Michigan with whom I carried on a 20-minute QSO. Following that, Ralph/KA5ULE took the keyboard, called CQ, and was contacted by a station in Spain. All in all, a good demonstration of the basics of PSK31.

We welcome five new members to the club this month and expect a sixth perhaps at the May meeting. If we're lucky, a few students of the Technician license class will accept our 3-month trial club membership and become permanent members after the class and passing the exam.

The program at the May meeting will be on direction finding and associated equipment. The students from the license class will be invited to attend and I expect at least a few to actually come. We'll have refreshments of some sort for the meeting. I hope you, too, will attend and welcome our potential new club members.

License Testing News*Glenn Miller/AA5PK, Volunteer Examiner***ARRL VEC**

The regularly scheduled license testing session was held on April 23 at the clubhouse.

Administering Volunteer Examiners were Don/AB5BG, Charlie/WB5T, and Glenn/AA5PK.

Two candidates were administered two examination elements with the following results: One new Technician class licensee.

The next regularly scheduled test session will be July 16 at 1300 at the clubhouse. Pre-registration (submission of **NCVEC Form 605** and **\$14** check/money order payable to "ARRL/VEC") is required not later than July 10.

A special test session will be held for the Technician license students on May 13. This will be the last chance to test using the current Technician license question pool. If you plan to test at the May 13 session, contact Glenn/AA5PK.

License testing information and a link to download the form are available on the club's Web site <http://www.w5qx.org>.

Information/forms can be obtained by contacting Don/AB5BG at 651-5441 or Glenn/AA5PK at 949-4775.

CQ DX de WB5ZAM



By Bill Richards/WB5ZAM

DXpeditions in May: According to the AR-Cluster Network for the week of April 16-23, there were 217 countries active. DXpeditions: 9N, KP2, OY, VP2M, 7Q, J5, 3B8, EL, 9Q, YK, JT, YJ, GJ, JD1, VK9L, FS, EA8, KH8, CT3, HH, CN, VK9N and OY (CQ CW WPX MAY 27-28).

Island of the Month

BIOT. The British Indian Ocean Territory lies way out in the Indian Ocean and, except for Diego Garcia itself, are uninhabited. In 1965, Britain agreed to a long-term lease for the US to Diego Garcia (see Sept '05 Kilowatt for Chagos) and moved all the locals to Mauritius. The area lies approximately at 6°00'S/73°30'E at the Peros Banhos Islands at the northern end to Diego Garcia at 7°20'S/72°25'E. The BIOT consists of Diego Garcia, Egmont Island, Danger Island, Eagle Island, Three Brothers Islands, Nelson's Island, Peros Banhos Islands and the Salomon Islands. At present, although given the right to return to the islands by British Courts, the original inhabitants are not allowed to return due to the long-term US lease. To keep the Chagos area secure, the other islands were kept free of settlers, allowing for secretive flights during the past 40 years.



The Chagos Archipelago actually includes 55 islands, covering an area of 54,400 km². As in any island within 10 degrees of the equator, the islands are hot, humid, windswept, and have no arable land (except on Diego Garcia itself.) Outside the US interest, the British are responsible for the military safety of the area, but due to the US on Diego Garcia, US and British warships regularly patrol the area and the Indian Ocean.

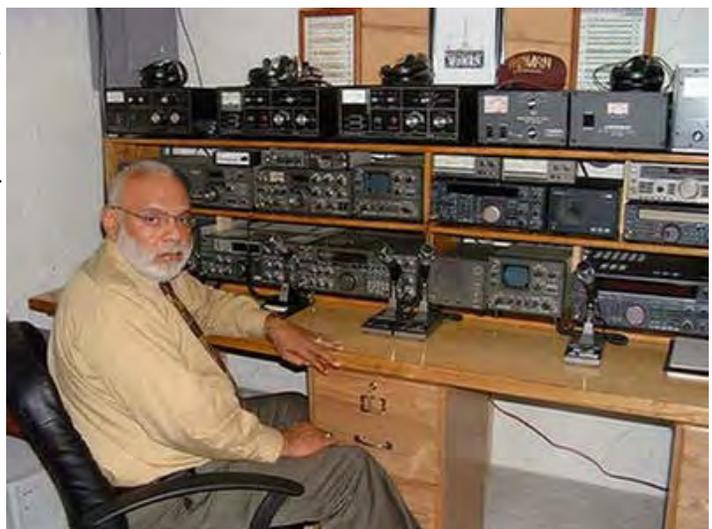
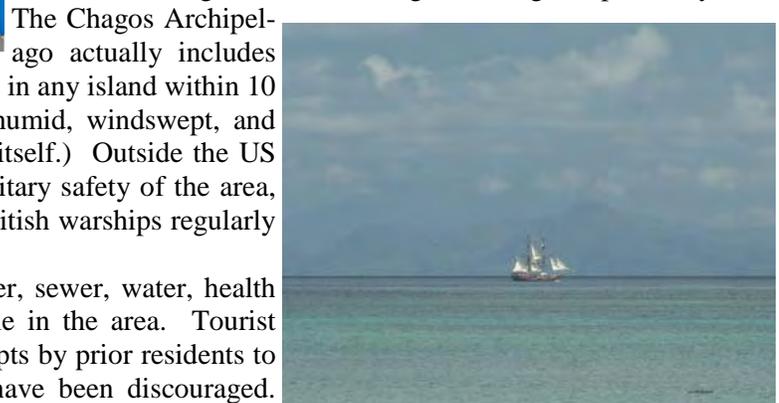
Other than on Diego Garcia, there is no power, sewer, water, health care, nor are visitor accommodations available in the area. Tourist ships are deterred from the area, and the attempts by prior residents to reestablish settlements on the other islands have been discouraged.

The potential for long-range tourism growth is there if the usefulness of the Joint Operations base at Diego Garcia is diminished. However, when one reviews the history of the Asian Theater from a military standpoint you can see the instability of the region does not lead to a foreseeable decrease in the usefulness of the base.

Mauritius and the Seychelles Islands both claim the Archipelago, but with the long-term British dominance and now the US-British inhabitation, their claims fall on deaf ears. The current US lease on Diego Garcia expires in 2016, and, after that, an extension is quite possible. As the world political climate changes, so may the opportunity for more of the chain to be available, at least for self-contained tourist boats and well-supplied DXpeditions, with the establishment of new islands on the air, as well as new DXCC entities.

QSL of the Month

WØMRN: Dr. Marvin Neals has an impressive shack. Read his bio on the QRZ site call sign lookup. Impressive and he's an example of hard work and dedication. And he's "Radio-Active" on HF.



CQ DX de WB5ZAM

DXpedition/vacation report: In our travels to various spots for vacation, we have found that having amateur radio friends in or near are nice to have, but they can also be the difference between a so-so vacation/DXpedition and an outstanding one (this one turned out to be one of the better, if not the best, except for messing with Murphy.) Murphy and his laws are always lurking, waiting to make it interesting. And note: usually problems or whatever usually runs in threes, except when you go the Caribbean it comes in more than double that.

Problem 1: Prior to our trip, I needed to replace my VX-5 VHF-UHF radio. So, on short notice, I tried to get one sent in overnight. AES doesn't understand overnight and sent it UPS 4-day. We left Thursday AM and it got here Thursday PM (here starts our 2 ½ weeks down-stream.) Okay, no problem: I left all the necessary stuff (money, address label, where to go to ship, etc.) to have it shipped. Now we all know that leaving something for others to do usually is okay, even with family, but Murphy....

Problem 2: It was to go to our ham friend there (Tot J69MV), as I know he can get it for us without a "hassle" (oops--Murphy heard that word and reared up again and showed us he's always alert for small SNAFUs and ready to turn it into a nightmare.) The radio had a label to the right address--Castries, St. Lucia—but, in transitioning from my label to the one for FedEx, St Lucia was left off the label in the computer. FedEx local didn't know where Castries was, and held the radio a week before returning it to the Shipping Point. They got St. Lucia added and off it went (Thursday week 2.) Of course, Friday was Good Friday, no FedEx on Saturday, Sunday was Easter, and the good folks in St. Lucia have a holiday for Easter on Monday. No problem, the radio will come in and we'll get it and be on the air Tuesday.

Problem 3: In comes the radio Tuesday (week 3) and customs says "nope, you can't have it, unless you post a bond worth the cost of the radio" (making sure that you leave the island with the radio.) We attended a Hamvention down there last year and the Minister (no less than The Minister of Telecomm) spoke about visiting hams and the problems that they had with the various agencies, and told the hams this wouldn't happen. So we go back and forth between the Customs Officer at FedEx and the NTRC (what used to be the office to fix everything.) NTRC "doesn't have that power now." It is now split between them and the Minister's office. Luckily, having friends there that know the system, we were able to get the radio cleared and in operation 3 days before leaving by Tot calling his contact at the minister's office (the same gent that helps with the license: see below.)

Problem 4: We had been told last year by the Minister and others that returning hams (3rd visit as a ham, DXpedition or otherwise) could get one of the unique St. Lucia Resident Visitor call signs. We (my good friend and Mr. Fix-it for these kinds of problems, Tot, J69MV) were able to sit down with the NTRC (National Telecommunication Regulatory Agency) (the Coordinator, the Lawyer, and the past President of the St. Lucia Ham Club, Joe J69AA) and hash out what the problems were with what we had been told and what was happening in real time. Tot has over the years dealt with the prior Director of Telecommunications, and who is now the Telecomm Advisor to the Minister and we let him, (this is too funny)

Perry Mason, talk to the NTRC lawyer about who had responsibility for what (like watching the Lawyer Perry Mason and Mr. Berger interaction on TV.) What a lesson in the politics and inner workings of the government of St. Lucia (after 15 minutes of listening to her talk to Mr. Mason, the NTRC lawyer says incredulously, "He put down the phone on me!") We were left not knowing what was to happen. After we left the building of NTRC, Tot spoke with Mr. Mason, who said, "it would happen and just give him a day or two." The next day I received word from NTRC that they had asked (formal, written request as Mr. Mason told them to send) for the assigned call sign that I had asked them for (J68WI, like my German DA2WI.) A copy of the request was sent to me via email and a fax sent to the hotel where we stayed. Murphy lurks ever present, even in the islands!!

Problem 5: This was Wednesday, week two, and nothing. Tot checked only to find that Murphy lurked in the typewriter of the Minister's secretary and a letter had been sent to NTRC authorizing a call sign, but that it was K69WI. (Um---you say, isn't St Lucia J6 something or other?) So Tot called and asked NTRC to send a request back to Mr. Mason and the Minister to get the correction made. They said they had and he talked to Mr. Mason who said, "no problem, tell Bill to use the J68WI and get on the air." On Wednesday, week two (only two days left), late in the afternoon I am able to go to NTRC, and pay for my new Resident Visitor call sign, J68WI. Now we are looking at either a marathon DX session for the next two days or just having the knowledge that the next time in St Lucia (I had paid for this year, and renewed for 3 more) I can operate as J68WI. I took the second choice, and did work a few stations, both as J6/WB5ZAM (and that takes forever to send on CW) and with the new call.

Problem 6: Then Mr. Murphy made sure I knew he was still around, and my SWR climbed enough to give feedback to the radio, and mike problems, chirping on 20 CW and unable to tune to 30 m. (Probably the ground, we'll work on that.)

Ah, so, but here I am on the last two days of an otherwise excellent vacation, working the locals on 40 m and VHF, and the repeater on Montserrat, with a local call, feeling more like a local and ready to stay 2-3 weeks more.

But as they say "I owe, I owe! So back to work I go."

Even though Mr. Murphy was ever present again this year (in the past we have had him make us leave passports at home

(Continued on page 5)

CQ DX de WB5ZAM

(Continued from page 4)

when we needed them and miss a flight; miss a flight check-in by 20 minutes (slow ground transport from airport hotel to check-in); roll the car on the way to the airport (road conditions), etc.) But we were, with the help fellow hams, able to overcome the problems.

{Note: those heavy duty suitcases to send your radios in; the ones with foam, and hard sides, which weigh 30 pounds empty, and then you add radios, clothes: you are looking at paying for the extra weight or leaving clothes at the airport!}

Now I am not saying that this time window (get radio, get it out of customs, and get a new call sign issued within two weeks) will work for everyone. Remember, this is the Caribbean (and just like the “mañana” in Mexico) and everything is done on “Caribbean Time.” Ever the pessimist, I bet Mr. Tot a local drink (a Sorrel Shandy—very nice cold, over ice or at room temperature) that I would neither get the call sign nor the radio before leaving. I had to buy him several Shandies for my pessimism.

As a result, here I sit, ready to return, thinking about improving the antenna, improving the matching system, and maybe a better mike for the radio, and thinking about warm beaches, fresh fruit, a Sorrel Shandy, some Piton Rum, and Piton beer, and Trinidad chocolate, and warm breezes, vivid sunsets and rainbows, and “work, work, work”!

(And you know what? The mangos, grapefruit and papayas here just don’t taste the same as the ones fresh from the tree!)

Here is a shot from our table at the Dasheene Restaurant, about 900 ft above sea level beside the Pitons. The one on the right is called Petit Piton at 2438 ft and one on the left is the Gros Piton at 2618 ft from the sea. The hotel (Ladera Resort) here has rooms at \$250 a night in the low season, with three walls and mosquito netting. You look out to the Pitons, and sunset between them. Might be worth a night just to get photos of a sunset. Some rooms have their own pools at the edge and you lie in the pool and watch the sunset. As someone said (Colin Hunt, our landlord at Villa Beach Cottages, to be exact), “this is a world class view.” Of course these are part of a World Heritage Site. There is an organized hike up the Gros Piton, which we didn’t make (HA). We went for lunch and really enjoyed the view. Awesome.



Concho Valley Two Meter Net

Date	NCS	Check-ins	Duration
Apr 10	KA5VTG	10	6 min
Apr 17	KA5VTG	11	7 min
Apr 24	KA5VTG	12	7 min
May 1	AA5PK	15	9 min

This net meets every Monday night at 8 p.m. on the club's 146.34/.94 repeater. All amateurs licensed to operate on that frequency are invited to participate.

Concho Valley Open FM Repeaters

2 Meter		70 centimeter	
145.27-	San Angelo PL 88.5	441.750+	San Angelo PL 162.2
146.64-	Sterling City PL 88.5	442.250+	San Angelo PL 162.2
146.72-	Eldorado PL 100.0	444.225+	Robert Lee PL 162.2
146.88-	San Angelo	444.350+	San Angelo PL 162.2
146.94-	San Angelo PL 103.5	when needed	
147.06+	San Angelo	6 Meter Crossband	
147.34+	Robert Lee PL 88.5	147.30/53.63	San Angelo PL 88.5

May's Program



Fox hunting techniques
and equipment

Name This Piece of Equipment



Keith/K5LSM correctly identified the Racal R-117 in the April newsletter. Perhaps this one will be a challenge.



P.O. Box 4002
San Angelo, TX 76902-4002

Get all the latest club news on the World
Wide Web at www.w5qx.org

2006 SAARC Officers:

President - Glenn Miller/AA5PK
Vice President - John Marshall/KC5FMX
Secretary/Treasurer - Gary Chaffin/N5GRC
Emergency Coordinator - David Wolfe/KA5VTG
Activities Manager - //Vacant
Grounds Custodian - Ron Mechenburg/KC5WXJ

SAARC Monthly Meetings: 2nd Thursday,
1930, clubhouse, 5513 Stewart Lane

Annual Dues: \$20, Sr. & Jr. \$10

The Kilo-What: Edited by Glenn/AA5PK at 949-
4775 or email aa5pk@qsl.net

Article submission deadline: Ten days prior
to monthly club meeting.



**NEXT MEETING:
THURSDAY, MAY 11, 7:30 P.M.
MATHIS FIELD CLUBHOUSE**