



May Presentation - "What's So Great about Digital?"

Jerry Ritchie WA5OKO again stepped up to the plate for our meeting presentation this month, starting with the question "What's So Great about Digital?" He then proceeded to answer.

With all the rage about digital radio these days including Icom's D-Star, Yaesu's newly-announced System Fusion C4FM/FDMA protocol, and other commercial digital systems it seems that analog radio is on the way out the door. No so, according to Jerry.

Unknown to most people, even digital signals are transported by analog means then decoded on the receiving end. According to Jerry, there is no such thing as a digital signal, but rather an analog signal carrying digitally formatted data encoded into an analog pulse signal for transmission.

One interesting point that Jerry made was that light energy is like radio signals but in a different part of the frequency spectrum. In fact, our eyes are nothing more than receivers and thus use about twenty-five percent of our energy! That's why people who use a computer a lot, or who use their eyes for critical, close-up detailed work are so easily fatigued after a few hours.

One advantage of digital radio is that the signals, though transmitted by analog means, are more easily encoded and decoded and provide for greater message integrity due to various methods of signal analysis at the receiving end. Some digital signals even incorporate not only error checking protocols but allow for secure transmission and reception. Sirius XM satellite radio was used for an example of how signals can be secured against reception/decoding by those who are not authorized users, much like cable TV and cellular signals.



Jerry Ritchie WA5OKO emphasizes a point during his presentation.

(Photo by Priscilla Quinn AA5PQ)

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D-Star News

Some items of interest regarding our D-Star repeater system:

From Terry Johnson KG5WO, LETARC's Secretary/Treasurer-

At 12:01 am, Friday, May 30, the complete DSTAR repeater system will come under insurance coverage by Hays Companies, the insurance company who carries our liability insurance. The annual premium of \$273.00 is covered completely by the remaining funds in the DSTAR fund, leaving us about \$23.00 still in that fund. Incredibly, once everything was put on paper and a value assigned to each item, we have an investment of \$19,486.85 in the DSTAR system. That is an impressive number and is a reflection of the generosity and hard work of a lot of people, especially Gary Lewis and Jim Rogers. Thanks, guys!

From Gary Lewis WG5L, LETARC's Vice President and D-Star Honcho (sent to Jerry Ritchie WA5OKO and Jim Rogers N5VGQ)-

Based on my rather unscientific echo testing around the region today, I have updated and attached the range map with the latest UHF results. Given that we had the following readings at the repeater site:

VHF Module C: 25 watts into the duplexer, with 20 watts out of the duplexer

UHF Module B: 22 watts into the duplexer, with 17 watts out of the duplexer

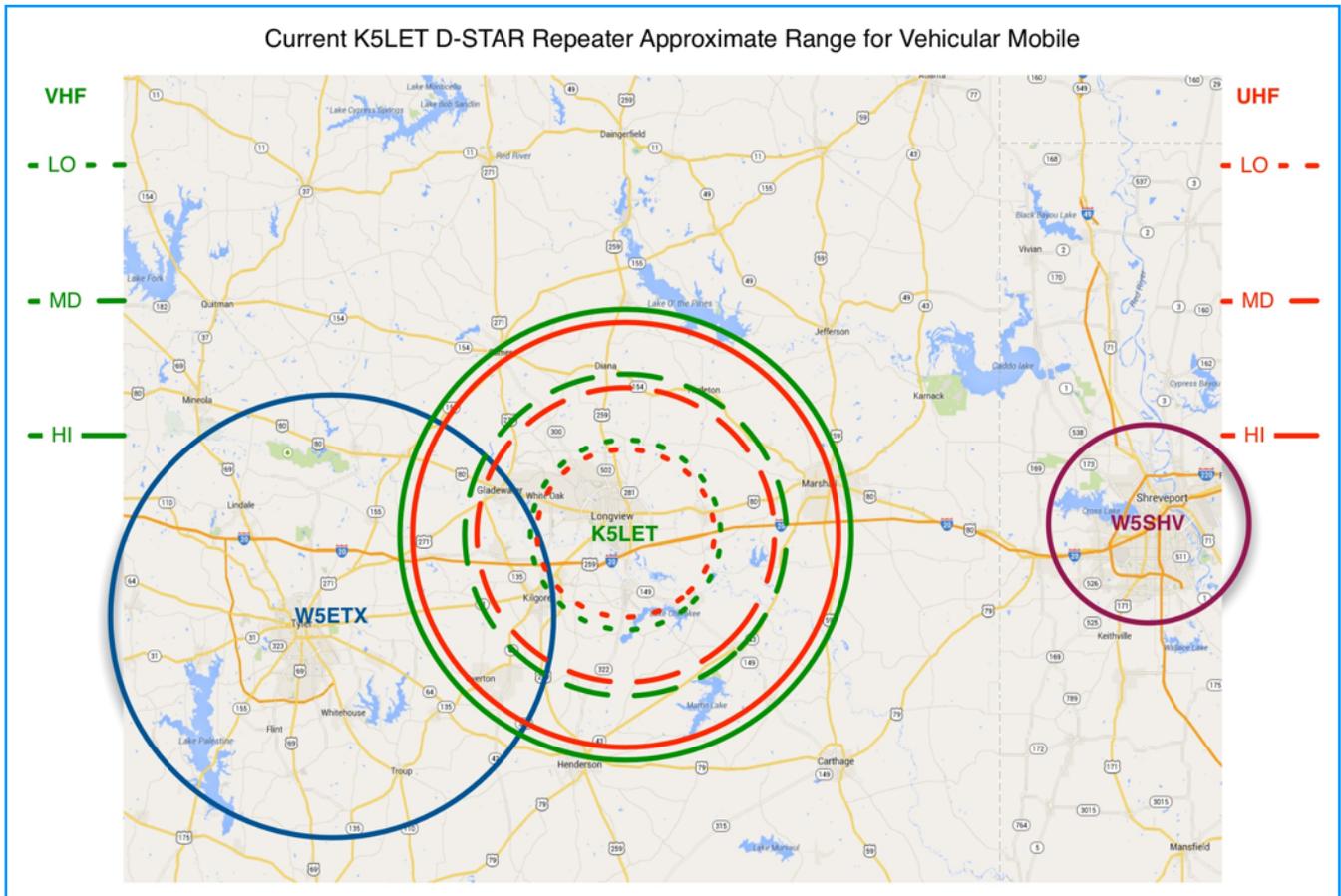
our UHF range is almost, but not quite what the VHF range is. The figures above pretty much match the stats at the repeater that Mike McCrary forwarded to me on the Shreveport and Minden repeaters. The preamps really helped on both bands, as it increased the effective range and also made usage of handhelds within buildings in some Longview locations possible.

I went up and down I-20 this afternoon to US-59 (Marshall) in the direction of Shreveport and to US-271 in the direction of Dallas. Then I came back and went down US-259 through Kilgore to Henderson and then back to Longview via TX-322/1492. I had already made the trek up towards Gilmer on TX-300/US-271. We now have good coverage overlap on both bands with Tyler's W5ETX. (See Gary's map below)

Many thanks to both of you for all your work in getting everything in place and tuned up. It has been quite the journey and these are great results!

D-Star Net:

For D-Star participants in the Longview/Tyler area there is now a weekly net on the B-Module (443.975) held Thursday evenings at 8:30. The initial net was conducted on May 15th with nine participants and the number is expected to grow as more of us hear about the net and acquire D-Star radios. Gary Lewis WG5L is welcoming volunteers who wish to host the net as Net Control Operator. He may be reached by email at wg5l@letarc.org.



Tom Wilbeck N5KGN Reaches Out

Tom Wilbeck N5KGN recently traveled to the Rusk County Amateur Radio Club and gave a presentation that he'd previously given to our club. Here is his email to me:

I went to the Rusk County Amateur Radio Club meeting in Henderson and gave a presentation on station grounding for lightning protection. It was the same 'razoo' that I presented at a LETARC meeting about a year ago.

You can read the write-up and see a short video clip on the RCARC website:

<http://www.ruskcountyar.com>

Tom's very informative presentation is a must-see for those who have or are considering installation of their own tower. With our local lightning problems you should not miss it if you've not seen it already.

64 Machine is Back!

For those of you who used to "hang out" on the 146.64 repeater, Jim Rogers N5VGQ has done his magic, and reports that it is back on the air!

It's NOT Twenty-Five Bucks a Year!

This may scare some people, but the other day I was thinking....

I belong to a number of different organizations that want their annual pound of flesh in the form of cash. Dues that are to be paid for the privilege of receiving untold amounts of junk mail, numerous emails touting the latest, greatest products that help me be a better (choose one) man, pilot, ham radio operator, camper, photographer, driver, videographer or whatever. All I have to do is send them money, and if I do it now, I can save a bundle! Yep! As my father used to say, "You can go broke saving money!" Oh, how true! But here's a surprise that may not have come to mind: you don't get that from LETARC. An occasional email or two, a copy of this newsletter, perhaps a mention of something on the weekly net, or even a little pitch during a monthly meeting. That's it. No big deal.

The salesman inside me awoke and I started taking a little different approach to the subject of annual dues and realized that it is *not* twenty-five bucks at all! Nope! Think of it this way—it's only \$2.08 *per month*! And here's what you get for that two whole dollars and eight and one-third cents:

- Coffee and donut(s) at the monthly meeting. Where can you get such a bargain? Go to FourBucks and see if you can get anything beyond the coffee for that price. Don't even mention their single donut or pastry at \$1.95 (plus tax, or \$2.11). "Oh! You mean you wanted coffee with that?" Won't happen. But at LETARC's monthly meetings you can have coffee and a donut and even get seconds for your two dollars and eight cents. Sugar and creamer are included. Want fancy? Sorry. Go to FourBucks, but take your credit cards. It's a deal even if you don't drink coffee when you come to a LETARC meeting.

- Free educational presentations at almost every meeting, but free advice and fellowship are there *every* time.

- VHF, UHF and the D-Star repeater are for public use, but for your \$2.08 you contribute to the acquisition, maintenance and insurance for all of them.

- If you have no HF rig at home, that's okay—as a LETARC member you have access to our radio room with comfortable chairs, multiple HF radios and antenna arrays, logging computers and software and other furnishings and comforts. Free. Or, rather, included with your \$2.08 per month in dues.

- Annual Picnic in the Park - your \$2.08 goes even further when you consider that our annual picnic/potluck in late summer/early fall includes the meat dishes! Just bring a side dish. Another outstanding bargain, right?

- Field Day, the once-yearly 24-hour exercise hosted by the club in the radio room where you can participate without plonking down a big wad of cash for your own HF rig, etc. Too, you'll have good company all through the night should you choose to stay. Hungry? The club sponsors the event, and volunteers cook up a storm! Bring what you want to eat; the club provides a good portion of the eats, and we usually have a variety of snacks and drinks provided by member donations.

- Monthly Informal Dinner Gatherings. No, you don't have to be a club member to join with us for an informal dinner at a local restaurant but it helps to know people in the group, and every month club members meet to eat and share the latest news, stories and jokes. Visitors are most welcome as are family members and friends.

You see, it isn't twenty-five bucks a year. Just a couple of bucks a month for all this! It's a bargain!

Jim Quinn AJ1MQ, Media Co-Director

Field Day—It's Closer than You Think!

Field Day, the international event that many hams consider “The” event of the years, is right around the corner. June 28th and 29th from 1:00 p.m. local time and for 24 hours, many thousands of hams around the United States and in many foreign countries will be attempting to make as many contacts as possible using primarily HF frequencies for voice, Morse Code and various digital formats for exchanging signal reports and other data with each other to demonstrate the versatility and practical uses of ham radio for emergency communications in case of disaster.

Many of us saw ham radio at work and were drawn into this hobby by attending a Field Day event somewhere in past years. From established radio rooms, portable radios, campsites, hospitals, private homes, community centers and police departments hams everywhere deployed to participate in their own way with their own equipment to show the public how important it is to have ham radio operators and their equipment available in case of a man-made or natural disaster

to provide backup (or even primary) communications for public officials, disaster relief crews and first responders to communicate with the outside world outside the disaster site. Scenarios like the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and various tornado events throughout the country and the world can create such havoc that normal means of communication such as telephones, cellular networks, private and government radio networks are overloaded or even non-existent. That's when ham radio comes into play, when the messages have to get in or out.

LETARC will host Field Day from the radio room in the Red Cross building, and all hams, non-hams, family members, guests and visiting public are welcome to come by to see us in action. Whether you have a radio and/or license or not, you can participate. If you would like to volunteer with this event please contact the coordinators Gary Lewis WG5L via email at wg5l@letarc.org or Butch Ragland KE5OHC by phone at 903.918.99.

Dinner Gathering at Uncle Joe's Pizza

This month's Informal Dinner Gathering will be at Uncle Joe's Pizza and Pasta in Longview this Sunday, June 1st at 6:00 p.m. Uncle Joe's is located at 411 N Spur 63, and further details including a map and the website may be found on the club website www.letarc.org under the calendar tab.

How I got into ham radio..

Unfortunately we had no submissions for the newsletter this month. If you would like to share your own story of how you got into ham radio, please do! Send it to letarcnewsletter@yahoo.com.

VE Session Report

John Zenter AE5OY, LETARC President and VE Team Liaison reports that Cathey Wilson of Daingerfield, Douglas Wyman of Tyler and William Taylor of Henderson successfully attained their Technician Class license and Lionel Platter of Henderson attained his General Class license at this month's VE Session held on May 17th at LeTourneau University. Congratulations to all!

Suggestions for Activities

We are still open to suggestions for club members to participate in any sort of community activities to provide communications services. Please send your ideas/suggestions to letarcnewsletter@yahoo.com

Upcoming Events

June 1st	Dinner Gathering at Uncle Joe's Pizza and Pasta
June 13th & 14th	HamCom in Plano (www.hamcom.org)
June 28th & 29th	Field Day!

Next Meeting:

Saturday, June 21st at 9:00 a.m.
American Red Cross Building, Upstairs
SE Corner of Hwy 31 and Loop 281

Next VE Session:

Saturday, June 21st at 2:00 p.m.
LeTourneau University Glaske Building for Science & Technology

Longview/East Texas Amateur Radio Club (LETARC)
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