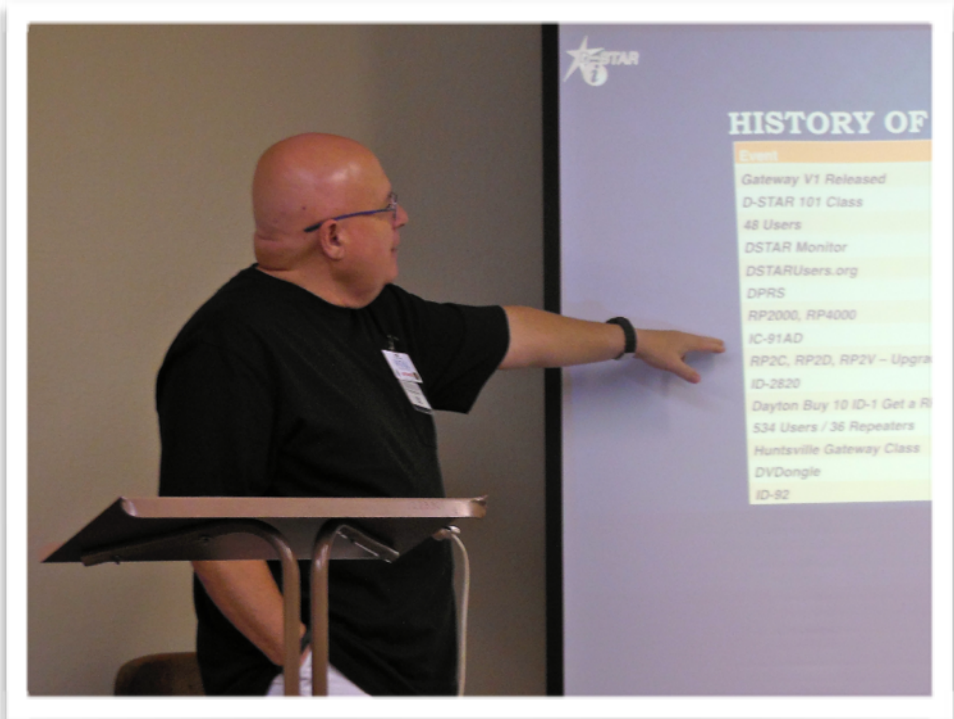




July Presentation - the History of D-Star



Gary Lewis WG5L points out a specific event in the growth chart of D-Star.

(Photo: Priscilla Quinn AA5PQ)



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At the July meeting held July 19th, Gary Lewis WG5L gave an enlightening presentation on the relatively short but intense growth history of the D-Star digital communications protocol from its inception, a presentation of the concept to the corporate officers at Icom in 2001, until now. Starting with a comparison of technologies in the mid-90's, he reflected upon his duties as a project manager with IBM and how he carried a pager which invariably activated during his commute between his office and home where, stuck in traffic, he couldn't always respond in a timely manner when caught in the daily traffic jam of northern California freeways in the Bay Area. After some trying moments and after having to exit the freeway, find a payphone (Payphone? What's a payphone?) and calling the office not terribly long after leaving it, his frustration and pleas to his superiors at IBM

resulted in being granted a portable cell phone. Jumping forward, he mentioned that the iPhone, described as "disruptive technology" that set the cellular telephone world on its ear, has just seen its tenth anniversary. With all the giant leaps in communications technology, the stage was set for his history of D-Star and how its incredible geometric growth and development is a model in itself.

The Japan Amateur Radio League published the D-Star protocol in 2002 and showed the product at the Tokyo Hamfair the same year. It was officially introduced in the U.S. at the Dayton Hamvention in May of 2003. The first repeater was put on the air by K5TIT in Dallas, the concept article was published in QEX, and the ID-1 data radio appeared in 2003 as well. (Continued...)

July Presentation - the History of D-Star (continued)

After the ID-1, D-Star continued to evolve seven months later with the introduction of the IC-2200H (predecessor to the IC-2820) in March of 2004. One year later the ID-800 (predecessor to the IC-880) debuted, essentially making this the period considered to be the birth of D-Star. At that time there were few repeaters: One in the Seattle area near the ICOM U.S. headquarters, one in Dallas, one in the New York/New Jersey area and one near the ARRL headquarters in Connecticut. A repeater in Vancouver and another in the United Kingdom finished the count at six total D-Star repeaters worldwide. In that same year (2005), the Gateway software version 1 was introduced.

In 2006 things really took off for D-Star's growth in the U.S. The Georgia D-Star Group introduced their class "D-Star 101"; the RP 2000 and 4000 repeater modules were released (VHF and UHF versions); the 91-AD handheld radios were released; and the number of users started to skyrocket. By May of 2007 there were 534 users (up from 48 the year before, an eleven-fold increase) and 36 repeaters in place. The DV dongle was offered in December of that year, allowing computer users to participate in D-Star communications using a headset and internet connection. Just fifteen months later in August of 2008, the number of repeaters again skyrocketed

to 201, a 558% increase! Growth had obviously achieved momentum.

During the two-year period between April 2012 and April 2014, Icom introduced the ID-31 handheld transceiver, the ID-51 handheld transceiver, the ID-7100 base transceiver and the ID-5100 mobile transceiver as well as the Android application to provide for remote control of the ID-5100 via bluetooth link.

Today there are 1,100 Gateways (100 added this year), 31,500 registered users (3,000 added this year) with 2,200 users a day on D-Star. There are 1,510 D-Star systems comprised of 2,786 repeaters (VHF and UHF modules) in 48 states and the District of Columbia as well as 48 repeaters in other countries. This is an astounding growth rate, and the pent-up demand for the D-Star radios (including the popular ID-5100 mobile) is just now starting to be satisfied as evidenced by the price drop seen just in the last couple of weeks at the various ham radio outlets and the growing inventory as supply finally catches up to demand of that radio. Of course, as the price of the radios comes down, even more prospects will take the plunge into the D-Star arena and the growth shall continue.

Thanks to Gary for his very informative story!

Field Day Report

Contact information was not available as of this newsletter, however most of the contacts were through the PSK-31 digital format rather than voice or Morse code (CW). Gary Lewis WG5L and Butch Ragland KE5OHC, the Field Day Coordinators reported that though the contact counts were down, LETARC's annual event has evolved into more of an introductory and social event allowing members, guests and the public to learn and experience ham radio of all formats in a very informal and comfortable atmosphere and at the same time enjoy conversation and great food without all the pressure of a more contest-oriented situation. Overall all the participants seemed to enjoy the event, the discussions, the food and the company and look forward to Field Day 2015. Our thanks to all those involved.

How I got into ham radio..

From Dennis Bennett, N5HEK, of Whitehouse TX:

I became interested in ham radio when I was stationed with the US Air Force in Tripoli, Libya in 1958. We had a Major who taught us the code and theory at the MARS station on the base but unfortunately I did not get my license until 1964. This November I will have been a ham for fifty years and have been active the entire time. I find amateur radio to be the most rewarding hobby that I have ever been involved with, and I would suggest that all amateurs learn Morse code and start enjoying it since most of the European DX is on code and CW is coming back strong in the United States. One big reason for this is that code will get through when other forms of communication will not. Too, it does not take much power to do this. The main reason that I enjoy the challenge of CW is that it is not easy and I understand that's why many do not become involved with it. I hope that other hams enjoy the hobby as much as I have over the years.

73's

Dennis

If you would like to share your own story of how you got into ham radio, please do! Send it to letarcnewsletter@yahoo.com.

Dinner Gathering at Papacito's Mexican Cafe in Longview

This month's Informal Dinner Gathering is at Papacito's Mexican Cafe. As always, the gathering is held on the first Sunday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Details on these events may be found in two places; our club website at www.letarc.org under the Calendar tab and on the Yahoo Groups page at www.groups.yahoo.com/group/letarc under the events tab. Email reminders are sent by the Yahoo system five or six days ahead of each event, and again one day prior to it. If you are not a member of the Yahoo Groups page simply go to the page and click the "Join" button and once approved, you will get the reminder emails.

VE Session Report

John Zenter AE5OY, LETARC President and VE Team Liaison reports that Russell Steelman of Gilmer, Allen Redling of Bossier City and Shawn Phillips of Marshall successfully attained their Technician Class licenses, while Henry Davis, Jr. of Longview attained his General Class license at this month's VE Session held on July 19th at LeTourneau University. Congratulations, 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

July 29th-August 2nd	Balloon Race in Longview
August 9th	Shreveport Hamfest (http://www.arrl.org/hamfests/shreveport-hamfest)
August 23rd (tentative)	D-Star ID-51 class at LETARC

Next Meeting:

Saturday, August 16th at 9:00 a.m.
American Red Cross Building, Upstairs
SE Corner of Hwy 31 and Loop 281

Next VE Session:

Saturday, August 16th at 2:00 p.m.
LeTourneau University Glaske Building for Science & Technology

Longview/East Texas Amateur Radio Club (LETARC)
PO Box 5613
Longview, TX 75608