

AARC COVER

Keeping Austin Wireless
for Over 91 Years!

Bulletin of Austin Amateur Radio Clubs

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APRS Tracker Project

By Paul Fenrich, KA5FZU

About a year ago, I came up with an idea that maybe the club could “adopt” the old APRS trackers that were used in the past for the marathon events that were held in Austin. These trackers were built by the radio club folks at Motorola. Through the years, these trackers began failing one by one to the point where there were only four left that were still functioning. They consisted of a metal ammunition storage can containing a VHF transceiver and a special development board that had a built in GPS receiver and TNC. Also through time, the people who maintained these trackers either retired or moved on to other jobs leaving no one to program or maintain them.



The idea was to strip the trackers down and do some cosmetic work to them as well as replace the older

(Continued on page 8)

Periodic Events

Sun	7:30 p.m.	Travis ARES net	147.36 MHz + (131.8)
Sun	8:00 p.m.	Travis ARES Packet	145.73 MHz -
Sun	8:00 p.m.	Williamson ARES net	146.64 MHz - (162.2)
Sun	9:00 p.m.	ARO Swapnet	146.94 MHz -
Sun	(After Swapnet)	Newsline	146.94 MHz -
Mon.	7:30 p.m.	STX ARES Net	3.873 MHz
Tues.	7:30 p.m.	Hays ARES net	444.150 + (114.8)
Tues.	8:00 p.m.	Bastrop ARES Net	443.750 + (114.8)
Wed	11:30 a.m.	Ham Social Luncheon, Jim's	146.94 MHz -
Thu	9:00 p.m.	2m SSB Net	144.250 (USB)
Thu	11:00 a.m.	Lunch, Pokey Joe's 183&Great Hills	444.1 MHz+
Fri	8:00 p.m.	6m SSB Net	50.230(texasvhf.org/)
Sat	7:00 - 8:30a.m.	Breakfast @ Waterloo Ice House	444.1 MHz +
Sat	9:00 a.m.	Chapter 67 QCWA QSO Net.	3.920 MHz LSB
Daily	6:30 p.m.	Central Texas Traffic Net	147.14MHz+

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Please contact a club officer, attend a meeting, mail us to join the organization, you can also join or renew online.

The Austin Amateur Radio Club, Inc. (AARC) has annual membership dues of \$20.00 per person or \$30.00 per family. AARC maintains the following repeaters:

FREQUENCY	AUTOPATCH	USE
146.780	No	
146.880	Yes	General
146.940 107.2 PL Tone	No	Most popular, WX, Swapnet & Newline
224.800	No	
444.100	No	
444.650 +5	No	70cm D-Star Repeater [W5KA]
146.480/+1.0	No	2m D-Star Repeater [W5KA C]
1293.200/-20	No	23cm D-Star Repeater[W5KA A]
1248.200	No	23cm D-Star DD (data, simplex/reversible) [W5KA A]

Persons using the repeaters are asked to join the club to help support these valuable resources. To use the autopatch, announce your call sign, press * and dial the phone number then release the PTT. When finished, press # to hang up the phone. Dial 911 (no * needed) for emergency services.

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Members and other readers are encouraged to submit material for publication. Call Mitch London, if mailed submissions are required. Electronic files are encouraged! Submissions may be edited for publication. **Deadline is the 20th of the month.** Material may be used in a later issue. Unless otherwise noted, permission is granted to reprint AARCOVER articles, provided you credit the author and the AARCOVER.

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For Changes in your ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER or CALL SIGN:

See Jay Hoffman, KA5OST (512) 388-4404 ka5ost@arrl.net

Jay handles all changes for membership information .

Over the WWWaves...

A Collection of Various Websites sent in your friendly neighborhood hams...

Public Service: ARRL Soliciting Stations to Become Emergency Liaison Stations, from current ARRL Letter:
<http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter?issue=2011-07-21>

You can see the subject piece in this letter. This is NOT an ARES Official Emergency Station.

Rick Herndon, K5FNI

AARC Summerfest Club Table Needs Volunteers

The AARC will have a club table at Summerfest again this year and we need some people to help run the table by handing out flyers and giving information about the club to people. Steven Polunsky, W5SMP has agreed to head up this group of people. If you would like to help, you can sign up at ... **<http://signupgenius.com/go/aarc>** Thanks for helping out your club!

Urban Antenna Option

Many hams would like to operate on one of more of the HF bands as the sunspots come back, but are in Antenna challenged areas. The usual solution is to go to a low profile antenna, or use a tilt up system or other raise to use, lower to keep a low profile, type of operating. This is less handy to do with multiband antennas, whose necessary parts to match on multiple bands offers a challenge to the tilting process when they are down on the lawn.

Now, you can have a good antenna with low weight, easily raised, and able to give good performance on HF. Gap Antennas, (gapantennas.com) have now offered their off center fed Asymmetrical Vertical Dipole as a single band antenna for each band. This opens up the possibility of phasing two of these to have a gain antenna system with low take off angle. The antennas are approximately quarter wave dipoles, offset center fed. (Think of a Windom horizontal turned up on one end, but shorter). Use of the linear loading/ decoupler rods offset from the main vertical tube, makes it possible to effect a 50 ohm match at the feed point.

The antenna for 20 meters is 16 feet tall, and only 7.5 lbs in weight.

For 40 meters, the antenna is 31 feet tall, just under a quarter wave.

An intriguing idea is can the 40m antenna also offer a good match on 15 m, for dual band use with one radiator? (It works for horizontal half wave dipoles.) Raising the feed point from the vertical base is said to offer advantages. For one, you will be feeding less current since the impedance is higher and matched to 50 ohm coax. A half wave of coax feeder is furnished with each Mono Gap. Gap offers tilt mounts and two of these would allow one to have phased verticals. You would have to use a phasing network of coax to shift one antenna 90 electrical degrees to form a pattern.

Some hams have claimed to already have done that with one band of interest, while using Gap's multi band verticals, which use the same feed system. The new Mono Gap model uses one wide spaced and in series, one narrow spaced stub tuner rod, to effect the match at the offset dipole feed point. The tuner rod system is parallel to the lower element, while the connection to it is made to the upper element, just as in all Gap Verticals with the stub tuner rod matches. Three counterpoises are used to establish a stable ground reference, or return current path to the vertical. A drop in mount for ground mounting is also furnished.

-Stuart Rohre
K5KVH

Silent Key

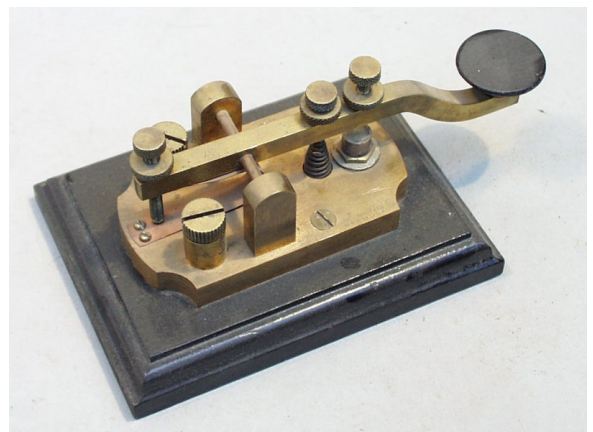
Syl Polunsky [SK]

WWII veteran Syl Polunsky of San Angelo, Texas passed away July 21, 2011. As his obituary

<http://www.legacy.com/link.asp?i=ls000152673475>

notes, "When a teenager he qualified for the U.S. Advanced Amateur Radio License (W5TGT), built a radio transmitter and communicated around the world in Morse code." He was my uncle, he taught me how to solder and he started me on DXing. When I was in junior high school, he loaned me a 26-pound, tube operated shortwave radio, a National NC-190 in the cobalt blue cabinet. I owe him my early interest in radio.

Steven Polunsky, W5SMP



AUSTIN SUMMERFEST 2011

August 5 & 6, 2011

Austin Airport Marriott South
4415 South IH-35

Austin, Texas
78744

Continuing a Ham tradition!

Once again it's time for fun in the sun in central Texas as we make the Capital City the place to be in the middle of the Texas summer. Come and enjoy old friends, the swapfest, and all the events at Austin Summerfest 2011, the ARRL Texas State Convention. And as always, we also host the Summer Meeting of the Texas VHF-FM Society.

Same great location !!!

Check out
www.austinsummerfest.org
for late breaking news!

Schedule

All the activity is concentrated on Friday night and Saturday, to allow you flexibility in your weekend travel plans. But do come early, as things fire up at 6 Friday evening and go 'till 9, and start up again Saturday at 8 am, with swapping 'till 3:30 and dealers & sessions 'till 4:30.

The Texas VHF-FM Society meeting will run from 1 to approximately 3 pm, so mark your schedule.

Prizes

Prizes Galore! You have a chance at a slew of them, including these three Major Prizes:

- Grand prize is a **Yaesu FT-857D** HF/6M/2M/70 cm compact all-mode transceiver.
- Our *Featured Prize* is **Yaesu FT-60R** heavy duty 2M/70 cm 5W FM handheld.
- A special *Bonus Prize* is a **Yaesu FT-270R** 2M 5W heavy-duty handheld.



Advance Registration and Bonus Prize, Yaesu FT-270R

Furthermore, if you register in advance by mail you have a shot at still one more prize—another **Yaesu FT-270R!**

With your registration you get one ticket good for Saturday's door prizes and the Major Prizes, and you can buy more tickets at \$1 each. Plus, if you rent a room at one of the Convention Hotels, you'll get five bonus tickets for each room-night, up to a total of ten tickets. (See next page for prize rules.)



Featured Prize, Yaesu FT-60R



Grand Prize, Yaesu FT-857D

Swapfest

For lots of folks, our main event—wall-to-wall goodies of every description, brought to you in carpeted, air-conditioned comfort on Friday evening and Saturday.

Rules:

- Full-sized tables: 6 feet by 30 inches. \$10 each, limit of 3 to a customer. First come, first served.
- AC power is available at an additional \$5 per customer, through advance registration only.
- We'll attempt to honor requests from groups of sellers for adjacent tables, if we receive your registrations in the same envelope.
- If you advance register for swap tables, we'll attempt to notify you in advance if they are unavailable due to being sold out (a rare occurrence). Be sure to give us your email address so we can notify you that way.

- Your table(s) will be held for you until 10 am Saturday.
- Swapfest hours are 6 to 9 pm Friday and 8 am to 3:30 pm Saturday. Opening times are for both sellers (for setup) and shoppers.
- Buyers and sellers must be registered at the convention.

We'll be holding a Tailgate swapfest on the east side of the Marriott hotel. You need not be registered at the Convention to sell at the tailgate, but of course you'll want to attend the indoor swapfest and sessions, so it would be a good idea to register.

Technical Sessions

- ARRL West Gulf Division Director **Dr. David Woolweaver K5RAV** conducts this year's **ARRL Forum**, with Vice Director **John Robert Stratton N5AUS**. Together, they welcome **Brennan Price N4QX**, ARRL Chief Technology Officer, who will be on hand to discuss advanced communications technologies as well as other Ham topics of national importance.
- The **Central Texas DX & Contest Club**, widely recognized for its excellent Summerfest presentations, has yet another outstanding program lined up for us.
- **FlexRadio Systems personnel** give us the latest on the Software Defined Radio project.
- Find out how to do "the mostest with the leastest" in our QRP workshop.
- The **Roadrunners Microwave Group** hold their annual meeting and host a session on the latest topics on the "high end."
- **Keith Pugh W5IU** leads a wide-ranging discussion on communications through **Amateur Radio Satellites**.
- **Tom Whiteside N5TW**, South Texas Section Emergency Coordinator, hosts a session on **Emergency Communications**.
- **Weather?** Learn about the latest in forecasting technology, and learn about recent weather events with leading Austin meteorologists. Hosted by **Troy Kimmel KE5BCK**, of KEYE News and the University of Texas, and featuring top weather experts from Central Texas.

Directions

The Austin Marriott Airport South is at 4415 South IH 35, Austin TX 78744. The SpringHill Suites are in the same complex, at 4501 South IH 35. Talk-in is on 146.34/94 MHz (tone 107.2 Hz).

IH 35 Southbound: Take Exit 229, go 1.3 Mi. to E. Stassney Lane and turn left. Turn left again onto IH 35 northbound service road and travel 1.0 Mi. to Marriott Hotel.

IH 35 Northbound: Take Exit 230 and travel 0.7 miles north on service road to Marriott Hotel.

US Hwy 71 Westbound: Exit at Burleson/Woodward and travel on the service road under IH 35. Turn left onto the IH 35 southbound service road. Continue 1.4 miles to E. Stassney Lane and turn left. Turn left again on the northbound service road and travel 1 mile to the Marriott Hotel.

US Hwy 71 Eastbound: Exit just after passing under S. Congress (Currently shown as IH 35 South San Antonio, but may change due to construction). Continue East about 0.4 miles and turn right onto the IH 35 southbound service road. Continue 1.4 miles to E. Stassney Lane and turn left. Turn left again on the northbound service road and travel 1 mile to the Marriott Hotel.

Prize Rules

We'll award door prizes throughout the day Saturday, until noon. For these, you must claim your prize by 12:45 pm Saturday. We'll post your name/call or ticket number at the prize drawing table.

At 1:00, we begin drawings for our three Major Prizes.

For the Major and Advance Registration Prizes, you need not be present to win. If you're a winner, we'll post your name and hold your prize. If you haven't claimed it by the end of the day, we'll send it to you.

License Exams

An exam session Saturday afternoon will cover all elements. Bring a photo ID and one other form of identification, and \$15.00; if you're upgrading, bring your current license, any applicable CSCE's, and a photocopy of each. For more info email **Larry Gunter WB5BEK** at wb5bek@arrl.net

After the exams, **Jeff Schmidt N5MNW** and **Ron Hambric N5SBN** have just what you need: A Welcome and Information for New Hams.

Amenities

Come on up to our hospitality suite—that's where you'll find your old friends and new ones too. There are soft drinks and munchies on Friday night, and refreshments on Saturday morning. Saturday evening we'll serve soft drinks, munchies and eyeball QSOs lasting into the night.

The Marriott will again serve a specially priced buffet lunch on Saturday.

Administration Matters

Exchange views with West Gulf Division Director **David Woolweaver K5RAV**, Vice **John Robert Stratton N5AUS**, and our special guest from ARRL HQ, **Brennan Price N4QX**, Chief Technology Officer. Find out what's going on and offer your opinions and insights. The ideal way to get or stay involved!

As always, we host the Summer Meeting of the Texas VHF-FM Society, scheduled for 1:00 Saturday afternoon.

Craft and Skills Events

Sandy Talen hosts our crafts session. And back this year, by numerous requests—garden dragonflies! No prior experience required. Come for a short while or the whole session. Did we mention, no charge? Children are welcome, but an adult must be with the children to supervise and help.

A Cooler Field Day Opportunity

Ronny Risinger, of K5LBJ School Club, is trying to round up some ops to help demo ham radio to The Boy Scout Jamboree on the Air in Oct. Hopefully, it will be a cool weekend then.

Ronny has the rig, and he has some loaner antennas and poles. Probably, he will use an Extended Double Zepp kit, and slip up mast to put up an inverted Vee, 30 feet high.

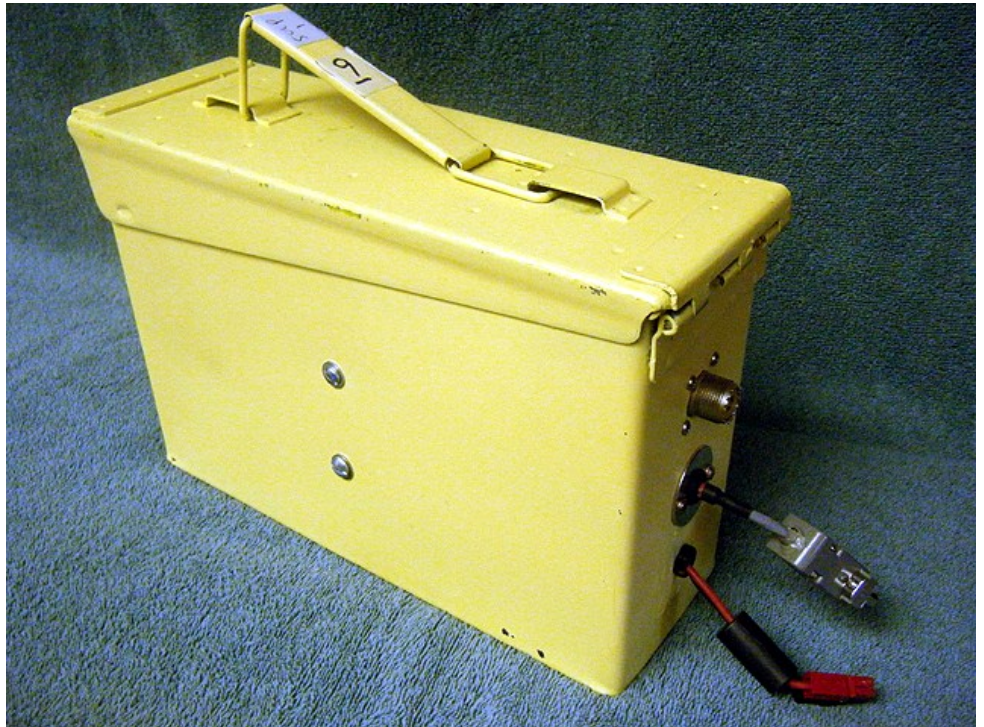
Location to be determined. I will have more info on the date in Oct., and location, later. Contact me for questions, to volunteer, with operations or set up/ take down.

-Stuart Rohre
K5KVH

(Continued from page 1)

development boards with the much newer GPS II receiver and TinyTrak 3+ controller combination. The end result – 1. A newer more modern piece of equipment. 2. Smaller and easier to maintain. 3. User friendly and easy to program.

Jeff Schmidt, N5MNW and Jay Hoffman, KA5OST handled the negotiations for the transfer of the trackers to the Austin Amateur Radio Club. Jay Hoffman was also very instrumental in obtaining donations from other interests outside of the club to help offset the expense of refurbishing the trackers. Then we formulated the plan to rebuild.



At the April 5th meeting, the club voted to spend the money for rebuilding the trackers. On the 14th of April the club received the nine trackers that did not work. On or about the 15th of April, Jay ordered seven TinyTrak 3+ units and the GPS II receivers. The race is on. Now we have to make good on our commitment to have them ready for the next event. The Tour DE Cure – 50 days away.

Murphy of course had his hand in this project as well. There were a few things that were broken and needed to be repaired. Some of the pin outs on the cables were not compatible and had to be changed. Two female connectors will not mate for a good connection. Jeff and I were making changes on the fly and keeping the cost in the back of our minds at all times. Seven units were constructed, tested twice, and declared operational in thirty three days. Seventeen days to spare. These first seven trackers were deployed for two days on the Tour DE Cure with a 100% success rate. Absolutely no failures!

We want to give a very special thanks to the Conley Sports/Austin Marathon for their generous donation towards making this project a huge success. It is through help like this that the amateur radio operators are able to give something back to the community by aiding fund raising projects which raise money for diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and other research.

Summerfest Talk-In Help Needed

For about the last 10 years I've recruited talk-in volunteers from just about every ARES and ARRL club in the area to help with Austin Summerfest... Seems Lee, W5LHC, talked me into this on his first tour as EC for Travis Co. ARES or was he the President of AARC... Doesn't matter, it was a long time ago... I need to find a volunteer to take over the reins... It's quite easy but does take some time to round up some good volunteers, supply them with maps and a roster of operators if they are going to operate from the Hospitality Suite (which may not be open all the time)...

There are really two aspects of the job and both are important...

1. Finding volunteers to do Talk-in of course... The Talk-in Operator can do this from anywhere as long as they are pretty much full quieting into the repeater... Home, Car, Boat, Plane, etc... Talk-in Operator are need from 3-9 PM on Friday and from 6 until 12 noon on Saturday... I've found 1 hour shifts work best...
2. Then there is finding some volunteers to be the Tailgate Security person... They simply ensure the parking spots for the Tailgate area don't get taken up by the general public or folks that just want a good spot close to the hotel... The Tailgate Security folks need to be on site early, 6 AM and can secure at 9 AM or when the last tailgate spot gets filled...

I was going to get some signs made up, Tailgate Parking Only! Unauthorized or abandoned vehicles will be disassembled and removed at the owner expense. I was told that was just a little over the top...

You can have a lot of fun with this job, I know I have... While I don't have time to coordinate and recruit volunteers this year I do plan on taking the 3-6 PM shift on Friday... So until I find somebody to takeover I'll be taking volunteers... To see what slots are open look at the <http://www.austinsummerfest.org> website and click on the Talk-in link...

73 Dallas, KD4HNX

AARC Meeting Minutes: July 5, 2011

Meeting called to order: 7:00pm by President Mitch London, KD5HCV.

Meeting started with a welcome to all.

We had 52 in attendance, 1 visitor, and 3 new members. No upgrades were reported.

Minutes: June's minutes approved as written in AARCOVER.

Past Events: The high points of Field Day held 6/25 & 26 were covered. The August meeting will have the full presentation. HamComm was good with lots of booths.

Upcoming Events/Announcements: TARS (7/9); Oklahoma State Convention (7/29); Austin Summerfest (8/5&6), the club will have an info table and needs volunteers. The club will be selling a trailer full of equipment, from a SK ham, at Summerfest, and splitting the profits 50/50 with the family. Please go and buy stuff to help the club, find yourself some bargains, and clear out the equipment before being carted off to recycling. In computer related news, the club is looking at getting software so we can upgrade and update our website; and now, along with our distribution list and Yahoo group, we are now on Facebook, please "like" us. The Officer's Meeting, this month only, will be moved to the 26th at 5:30pm. A write-up was found, unsure where, highlighting a group of hams that meet monthly to test and experiment with antennas. These items, other upcoming events, and scheduled presentations are listed in the AARC Swapnet newsletter, at www.austinhams.org, and on the Yahoo user group.

REPORTS

President/Vice-President: no report.

Treasurer: totals of club's bank accounts reported; membership is down to 168 due mainly to former members not renewing, yet. As a note, the equipment fund sounds large, but most, if not all, of the moneys is spoken for. One example is the pending, but inevitable, move of the .94 repeater.

Editor: The newsletter was reposted to correct an oversight. Some pictures of Field Day were included, but none showed the CW station. Once extra pictures were received, they were added. Apologies were given; there was never intent to exclude anyone and their efforts from the success and fellowship of Field Day.

Tech Committee: one radio got smoked during Field Day.

ARES: if you are a member, please make sure all your info is up-to-date.

SIG/Other: reminder of meeting times; and QCWA has a presentation of a member's trip to Europe.

Space Wx: This last month has been quiet with solar flux and sunspots down. We are between coronal holes and have seen only a few small flares; therefore, solar winds were not affecting us and 20M is barely open. The low Solar X-Ray Flux indicates a calm sun. Forecast is quiet to active. Ironic note, Sporadic E is causing great 6M work with contacts being made around the world.

Old Business: none discussed this time.

New Business: none discussed this time.

Ham of the Month: Don Dudley, AC5YK.

Door Prizes: F. Brunell, KD5DKB – T-shirt; Pete Jordahl, K5GM – Ham Software CD; Joe Fisher, K5EJL – Ear Light; Andrew Byrd, KF5BAQ – ARES 75th Anniversary Patch.

Russ Pothast, WA0YEI, won the \$50 ARRL gift card for making a Field Day contact.

Meeting Adjourned: ~8pm (Secretary forgot to look at watch when we adjourned)

Presentation: "APRS Trackers Refurb Project" by Paul Fenrich, KA5FZU.

AARC Meeting Info.

Waterloo Icehouse

**8600 Burnet Rd. South of 183
(Come early and have dinner!)**

Business Meeting 7pm

August 2nd—Meeting topic TBD

Officers Meeting 5:30 pm

August 16th—Come see the officers at work!

2011 Calendar of Events

Aug 5-6 Austin Summerfest

Austin Airport Marriott South, 4415 South IH-35 (Northbound access road, just South of the IH-35/Ben White Blvd. intersection)

www.austinsummerfest.org/

Aug 5-7 ARRL Rocky Mountain Division

Convention Sagebrush Inn and Convention center Taos, New Mexico Riley Hollingsworth K4ZDH (Saturday dinner banquet speaker) Chip Margelli K7JA (Saturday luncheon speaker) Rick Roderick K5UR (Sunday breakfast speaker) Dan Henderson N1ND (Friday evening speaker)

www.2011convention.org/taos.html

Aug 27 Gainesville Hamfest

Location: Gainesville, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Cooke County Amateur Radio

Club

www.gainesvillehamfest.org



2011 Upcoming Amateur Exams

ARRL VEC— August 6th at Summerfest (see page 6) & Sept. 3rd 9a.m. at Bethany United Methodist Church. Contact Joe Makeever, W5HS (345-0800) or Joe Thiel, N5SMN (832-0450) for info. \$15 fee.

W5YI VEC- Aug. 13th & Sept 17th 2p.m. in room 106, Fleck Hall, St. Edwards University. Contact Jim Greenwood, AB5EK @arrl.net, (327-6184) for more info.

<http://texasparadise.com/w5yi-austin>

Upcoming Meetings...

Aug	Sept	Austin Meetings/Happenings	Time	Address
2	6	AARC Meeting Waterloo Ice House*	7:00 p.m.	8600 Burnet Rd.
13	10	Austin QRP, Alvin's Sandwich Shop	11:00 a.m.	12200 Research Blvd.
9	13	ATV Club Meeting Mangia's Pizza	7:00 p.m.	12001 Burnet Rd.
20	17	QCWA IHOP 183 Near Duval	1:30 p.m.	11654 Research Blvd.
17	21	Digital Wednesday at Red Cross	7:00 p.m.	2218 Pershing
22	26	Travis Co. REACT Jim's 183 & Burnet	7:30 p.m.	9091 Research Blvd.
23	27	Travis County A.R.E.S., ARL Auditorium	7:00 p.m.	10000 Burnet Rd.
25	22	CERT Meeting CTECC	6:30 p.m.	5010 Old Manor Rd.

**AARC Business Meeting is at Waterloo Ice House Come early and grab dinner before the meeting.*