



# THE UPLINK



NEWSLETTER OF THE JOHNSON SPACE CENTER AMATEUR RADIO CLUB  
Volume 18, No. 3 W5RRR 21 March 2017

Hello, and Welcome to the UPLINK, your JSC Amateur Radio Club monthly newsletter. Minutes for each monthly meeting will be circulated in the newsletter, together with other information of interest. Please submit any comments to the minutes to the JSC ARC Secretary and Uplink Editor, Bob Scully (contact information on the last page).

The newsletter is just starting up again after a time, and needs help to be better! To that end, please send in any suggestions for changes or improvement. Also, it would be great to start up some monthly columns, so please send in any information and/or articles of general or technical interest for consideration for publishing in the newsletter.

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Minutes from the Meeting held on 23 February 2017 at the W5RRR Shack 1736 – 1819

Attendees:

Phil Burley, Larry Dietrich, Gary Grobe\*, John Dusl\*, David Fanelli, David Fretz, Ken Goodwin, Keith Grimm, Preston Broesche, David Lee, John Maca, Mike McCann, Dale Martin, Beth Scully, Bob Scully, Charles Bennett\*, Mary Lynne Barends\*, Brian Campopiano\* – 18 total signed in (attendees with an asterisk are potential new members)

The meeting was called to order by Keith Grimm at 1736 hrs. Keith welcomed all attendees, and asked everyone around the room to identify themselves. He then asked if anyone had questions or comments on the minutes from the January meeting. No comments were raised, and Keith asked for approval of the minutes. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent of the voting members present at the meeting.

Following this, Ken Goodwin provided the Treasurer report. The Club has 43 paying members, and has \$1111.30 split across accounts, with the largest expense payment of the liability insurance premium. Normally this is due and payable in early April, so this was an early payment. The insurance is with Risk Strategies, through ARRL. Also paid was the Web hosting fee of \$59.40 to QTH.com. Ken indicated he was trying to set this up on a recurring basis, and would also try to set a reminder in PayPal.

Dave Fanelli provided a status report on repair of the ICOM IC-781 HF xcvr. Dave indicated the P1 board appeared to be OK, but the regulator board did not seem to be regulating properly, with no 15V output.

Keith again called for volunteers to assist with the upcoming Aliens & Astronauts Fun Run and the EA Reunion activities. He also mentioned we need a volunteer to work with Ken, who would be mentoring that person to assume the Treasurer role. Additional mention was made regarding assistance to Dale Martin and possible assumption of the role of Webmaster.

Keith then provided information on the 60' tower status. CoD has performed a preliminary assessment of the existing pad, has spoken with Rohm regarding the adequacy of the pad, and has indicated they have or will provide a ROM cost for erection of the tower. CoD recommended a new pad would be the best option. Keith said he would continue to work with CoD to nail down the cost estimate, aiming for the lowest amount.



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The start-up of the JSC ARC weekly information net was announced, beginning 7 March on Tuesday evenings at 1900 (7:00 PM) using the JSC ARC repeater, 146.64, no tone. Bob Scully will be the acting net control for the month of March.

Keith announced the meetings would be moving to a room TBD in the Gilruth, the final day and time predicated on results of the member survey.

Next, the topic of the W5RRR 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was brought forward for thoughts and suggestions. John Maca suggested the Club tie back into previous events, and remarked that an annual dinner might be in order. Bob Scully suggested that we probably want to do that anyway, to give members recognition, celebrate our successes, and so forth, much like CLARC does each year, usually in the January time frame. One idea was to contact ARRL to arrange for a special call-sign. Work is proceeding to gather Club history, and Mary Lynne Barends has been working with Beth Scully to gather information from various sources, such as older JSC RoundUp records. Also, a Club history column will be added to The Uplink.

Discussion moved on to some reported inappropriate use of the JSC ARC repeater. Several members confirmed hearing unacceptable traffic. All members were asked to report to the officers if any new such behavior was heard on the repeater.

The shack is still in "clean-up mode", so if any members have any "stuff" in the shack they want, they need to remove as soon as possible.

Dave Lee introduced some guest HAMS, John Dusl, Gary Grobe, and Thomas (did not get the last name). Dave then provided a nice overview of future projects and activities, such as some much-needed repair work to support restarting ARISS and tele-bridge activities, satellite contacts, earth-moon echo work, and so forth. STEM support was mentioned as an important goal. Dave is seeking inputs from the members and is planning to circulate a survey to try to gain some data regarding what the members are thinking.

Dave next mentioned some upcoming events that JSC ARC is planning to support.

- 1) The Aliens vs Astronauts 1K/5K Race Event will be held on Saturday, 15 April, at JSC. Between 8 & 11 volunteers are needed to support the races. David Fanelli, KB5PGY, will be the acting net control. HAMS are requested to report at the W5RRR shack by 0730 for position assignment. The 5K starts at 0830, and the 1K starts at 0900, with all race activities to end by 1030. HAMS will use the JSCARC repeater, 146.64, no tone, for communications. Race organizers are expecting 250+ runners in an attempt at a world record for the "largest gathering of people dressed as astronauts".
- 2) The EA Reunion on 22 April will be supported by the Club, and 4-6 volunteers are needed to provide parking control at the Gilruth. Larry Dietrich, WD8KUJ, will be the acting net control. Folks wishing to support should let Dave and Larry know right away. HAMS are requested to report at the W5RRR shack between 1030 and 1100 for position assignments from Larry.



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Dave also mentioned that the Club is hoping to engage in, and win (!) some upcoming contesting activities. Additional future activities may include support of the 2017 Field Day, together with CLARC, our sister club, and support to members who are assisting Scouts in obtaining their Amateur Radio merit badge.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the need for a user log in the shack, and that the combination probably needs to be changed soon, since it has been the same for a number of years.

A motion was made by Dave Fanelli to adjourn and was approved by unanimous consent at 1819 hrs, 23 Feb 2017.

The next meeting will take place at 1730 hrs, 23 Mar 2017, in the Inspiration Room in the Gilruth Center.

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## W5RRR ARRL International SSB DX Contest

Dave Lee, W5OC

On March 3-5, from 6PM Friday thru 6PM Sunday, several JSC hams quietly helped get the club station cobwebs removed for a contest test run during the ARRL International SSB DX contest. With 265 total contacts, and a total score of 94,320, W5RRR's first contest of 2017 was a smashing success.

tirelessly to debug our stubborn USB-Serial Computer CAT interface for the TS-950S (Fig. 1).

Keith Grimm/KG5HOK and myself/W5OC carried the rest of the ops work on Saturday, logging a tally of 61 unique countries across 10/15/20/40 meters. This was my first opportunity to fully evaluate the 2 working rigs, the TS-950S/TL-922 amp and the FT1000/FL-7000 and our current antenna farm.



Fig. 1 - Fred KG5OKZ and Mike KF5NZZ helping to setup the TS950 before contest start

Special thanks to Mike Vandewalle/KF5NZZ, new member, who came by and shored up the Friday 20m ops run, and Fred Shetz/KG5OKZ, who worked



Fig. 2 - W5RRR 20m/15m Yagi- note the 15m Yagi on top w/only 2 remaining elements

The biggest surprise was how awesome the 2 element 15 element Yagi really performed. Once a 4 element



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Yagi, I was told that Houston wind shear decided to give this antenna a haircut by ultimately carrying off the 2 outside elements (Fig. 2). But who cares, because the remaining pieces worked like a charm! Perhaps propagation helped, but we cut thru many pileups on the first few calls and could mostly work anything we heard. Front to back and side lobe rejection were pretty impressive.

However, our once venerable 4 element 20m Yagi, alas, performed as a tired soldier. Although, we had no issue loading it up with a full KW, the overall performance was mediocre at best. This adds fuel to our incentive to bring this antenna down from the tower for a quick scrubbing and tune-up. It's hard to believe this workhorse has been in existence for over 45 years, including an expedition to Mexico and back (read Dale Martin's history of this Yagi on the W5RRR.org site, under the "W5RRR tab").

We had a blast getting familiar with the rigs and the use of the newest update of N3FJP logging software. Note: W5RRR is now licensed to use the full suite of uniquely designed contest software by Scott Davis, author of N3JFP software. I'm new to logging SW, but it was so smooth typing calls into the computer directly. I'm spoiled for life now.

Besides working a few really exotic DX stations, like the Congo, Brunei, Palestine, Tonga and Pitcairn Island, perhaps the biggest surprise was a contact with Aruba on Sunday. After I made contact and exchanged calls, the fellow on the other end, paused his pileup and asked, "hey, aren't you the NASA ham radio station?". After affirming, "yes, we're at the Johnson Space Center club station", he told me that years ago he was part of the club and helped instruct students to make contacts on the air. I invited him to stop by next time he was in the vicinity. I only wish I had captured his name and personal call!

We both didn't plan to work the whole day, but Keith and I finished up the contest until the very last few seconds of the contest on Sunday dusk (Fig. 3). We were both pretty tired. He went home to a home-cooked delish meal of juicy roast. I rewarded myself with a tall glass of Merlot. A perfect weekend.



Fig. 3 - Keith KG5HOK looking for contest multiplier contacts on 20m

So, with contesting potential coursing in my veins now, and the knowledge that we're very close to having a 1st class HF contest capability again, I'm anxious to get the 20m Yagi repaired with the help from the more experienced tower hams in this club (Dale, Ken!?). Can we get this done? Please let us know if you have ideas.

Also, we really need to get a 10m directive antenna up somehow, as well as a contest competitive antenna for 40m. Although John Maca's R5 vertical and our Windom combination allowed us to make good contacts, we'll need more efficiency operating in the wildly QRM packed contest environment. Ideas and help solicited here, too.

Next stop, CW contests... and perhaps QRP, EME, ... and the big Field Day.



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## Introducing Then & Now - The History Corner

Beth Scully, KG5PJP

2017, a year for reflection, a year for change ... and the year of the 50th Anniversary of the Johnson Space Center Amateur Radio Club! While the exact date of the formation of the club is still being investigated, 2017 is being celebrated as the 50th Anniversary of the JSCARC. Officers are planning a celebration in the fall, and many members – former, current and newbies – are working hard to collect information about the members, activities and photos from the heydays of the 1960s through today to generate a record of the colorful history of the JSCARC. From interviews, recollections and photos, we are developing a timeline for the activities of the club. A special thanks to John Maca (AB5SS), Ken Goodwin (K5RG), Dale Martin (KG5U) and newbie Mary Lynne Barends for their hard work in gathering information. As Mary Lynne so elegantly put it "... this is the ARC's 50th Anniversary and therefore, we want to honor our history, as well as our activities with ISS and the Ham Radio communities that led up to our existence today." If you have any memories, photos, or memorabilia you would like to share with the club as we build our history, please contact Beth Scully, KG5PJP, at [bethscully57@gmail.com](mailto:bethscully57@gmail.com).

## Scout Troop Support

Bob Scully, N9RCS

When Scouts want to meet young people from another country, they usually think of attending a World Jamboree. But few people realize that each year more than a million Scouts and Guides "get together" over the airwaves for the annual Jamboree-on-the-Air (JOTA). During the 2014 event, worldwide Scouting participation included 1.1 million Boy Scouts and 200,000 Girl Guides/Girl Scouts, for a total participation of over 1.3 million--the largest Scouting event in the world. On October 14-16, 2016, the 59<sup>th</sup> JOTA took place, and W5RRR

supported the event in the shack by hosting members of Den 4 of Cub Scout Pack 957. Several cub scouts came to the shack and had the chance to operate one of three different stations to make contacts during the event. As far as the young men seemed to be concerned, the event was a total success. One of their leaders, Jim Siekierski, Den 4 Leader, had this to say:

"Thank you so much for hosting our Cub Scouts yesterday. That was a perfect itinerary for the boys. The intro was informative yet brief enough to retain their attention. The boys all walked away with their phonetic alphabet sheet, practicing the art on just about everything they saw after the meeting. The script you generated for them was excellent. It really made them comfortable in front of the microphone. The facility's capability to establish so many contacts in such a short period of time was also fantastic. It's not as much fun fishing if you don't catch any fish. The boys are all quite shy, but you all made them feel very comfortable. It may be hard to tell as an outsider, but the boys really did enjoy themselves. Many said they weren't expecting to like it as much as they did. I don't know if the experience convinced any to get their license yet, but you certainly introduced them to something new that they found interesting. I call that a success ...

With much gratitude-

Jim"

Dave Lee provided an excellent response: "It was our pleasure to have hosted the event. All of us are passionate about our most important investment in the future— influencing young folks.

Thank you for the insight into how they felt about the experience. This was a "first-time" for many of us as well, and we've already collected ideas how to make this event even better next time. Please extend our thanks to the scouts and supporting parents as well. We applaud your extremely meaningful work.



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If we can be of any service with your continuing great work in scouting, please let us know.

Again, many thanks to Scott and Barbara Hassett, the W5RRR President and VP who allowed this event to be hosted.

-dave et al”

We were able to capture a few pictures of the event, shown here in no particular order.





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That's it for this issue; take care out there!

73 to all!

Bob Scully, N9RCS clear



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## Make Contact!

The W5RRR website is at url: <http://w5rrr.org/index.html>

Checkout the W5RRR Facebook page at url: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/W5RRR-JSC-Amateur-Radio-Club/134474909947681>

The W5RRR Yahoo! Site is at url: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/W5RRR/info>. John Maca is the PoC for getting added to the access list.

## Upcoming Activities (D. Lee for info unless otherwise noted):

CQ WW WPX SSB Contest, 24-26 Mar

Aliens vs Astronauts 1K/5K Fun Run, 15 April

ARRL Rookie Roundup Contest, 16-17 April

JSC Spring Safety, Health, and Environmental Fair, 19 April

Apollo XVI 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 20-23 April

EA Reunion, 22 April

Monthly FCC Amateur Radio Operators' License Examinations, 22 April, Gilruth Center, 0900 for check-in and credential verification, 0930 start of exams (D. Fanelli for info)

## General Interest:

The Galveston County Emergency Communications Group (GCECG) hosts a net each Monday night at 2100 on the WR5GC repeater, 145.41, tone 131.8. GCECG meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month in the Emergency Management Facility on SH 646 just east of IH-45, in League City, from 1900 to 2100.

Our sister organization, the Clear Lake Amateur Radio Club (CLARC), hosts a net each Wednesday night at 2000 on the K5HOU repeater, 146.86, tone 100. CLARC meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month in the Clear Lake Park Community Building, Civic Room, 5001 NASA Parkway, Seabrook, TX 77586, from 1900 to 2100.

Skywarn hosts a net each Thursday night at 2000 on the JSC ARC repeater, 146.64, no tone.

## Upcoming HAMFEST activities:

Houston Hamfest: Friday and Saturday, 24/25 Mar 2017; doors open at noon on Friday, 0800 on Saturday, located at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds 4310 Texas 36 Rosenberg, Texas 77471. See url: <http://houstonhamfest.org/> for more information.

Texas City Hamfest: Saturday 8 Jul 2017. Last year this event was held at the Doyle Convention Center, located at 2010 5th Ave. N. in Texas City, and likely this is the same location this year. See url: <http://texascityhamfest.org/> for more information.





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## 2017-2019 Elected Officers (all elected terms are for 2 years)

Position	Name & Call Sign	Phone Number(s)	eMail Address
President (elected) (Jan 2017-Dec 2018)	Keith Grimm KG5HOK	(281) 483-1532 (w) (713) 907-3105 (c)	<a href="mailto:kgrimm_77546@yahoo.com">kgrimm_77546@yahoo.com</a>
Immediate Past President	Scott Hassett AF5DR	(281) 792-5544 (w) (281) 910-4862 (c)	<a href="mailto:sbgrp@godoodit.net">sbgrp@godoodit.net</a>
Vice-President (elected) (Jan 2017-Dec 2018)	Dave Lee W5OC	(281) 334-3432 (h) (713) 854-4377 (c)	<a href="mailto:david.d.lee@nasa.gov">david.d.lee@nasa.gov</a>
Immediate Past Vice- President	Barbara Hassett KF5QNS	(281) 332-7629 (h)	<a href="mailto:sbgrp@godoodit.net">sbgrp@godoodit.net</a>
Secretary (elected) (Jan 2017-Dec 2018)	Bob Scully N9RCS	(281) 483-1499 (w) (281) 217-2409 (c)	<a href="mailto:sparcs@arrl.net">sparcs@arrl.net</a>
Immediate Past Secretary	Ken Goodwin K5RG	(281) 333-2636 (h) (281) 635-5696 (c)	<a href="mailto:krgoodwin@comcast.net">krgoodwin@comcast.net</a>
Treasurer (elected) (Jan 2017-Dec 2018)	Ken Goodwin K5RG	(281) 333-2636 (h) (281) 635-5696 (c)	<a href="mailto:krgoodwin@comcast.net">krgoodwin@comcast.net</a>

## Appointed Officers

Position	Name & Call Sign	Phone Number(s)	eMail Address
Equip/Station Mgr	John Maca AB5SS	(281) 483-8802 (w) (281) 687-6761 (c)	<a href="mailto:john.j.maca@nasa.gov">john.j.maca@nasa.gov</a>
Property Custodian	David Fretz K5DLF	(281) 461-1949 (h) (281) 236-2282 (c)	<a href="mailto:k5dlf@arrl.net">k5dlf@arrl.net</a>
Past Property Custodian	Larry Dietrich WD8KUJ	(281) 483-9198 (w) (281) 639-7091 (c)	<a href="mailto:wd8kuj@verizon.net">wd8kuj@verizon.net</a>
QSL Manager & Webmaster	Dale Martin KG5U	(281) 484-4465 (h) (281) 901-9147 (c)	<a href="mailto:kg5u@att.net">kg5u@att.net</a>
Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC)	David Fanelli KB5PGY	(281) 483-4833 (w)	<a href="mailto:kb5pgy@flash.net">kb5pgy@flash.net</a>