

**The Central Texas Amateur Radio Club  
meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the  
Bell County Communications Center, 798 West Avenue O, in Belton**

## President's Corner

*Kenneth Watkins, KE5ISN*

As the saying goes, if you don't like the weather in Texas, wait a day, it will change. The month started hot and dry, changed to cool and wet and is forecast to end hot and steamy. Don't forget to count the hurricane/tropical storm threats that occurred. Hope you were fortunate to receive some of the unusual July rainfall that amounted to more than a heat shower. At my QTH, 4.75 inches of rain fell in the last week of July.

Summer will be ending soon and hope you have had a chance to get away from the daily grind with a vacation, or have plans to get away soon. A day trip that you may want to consider is the Austin Summerfest on August 7. Besides the vendors, swap tables and VE testing, a full day of educational activities is on tap.

Be sure to read the article in this issue of the Wavelength on the new FCC rules relating to prohibited transmissions by amateur radio operators. Every one should become familiar with these rules, but beware; the new rules have not taken effect. The rules must first be published in the Federal Register and then they take effect 30 days later.

School will be starting in the next few weeks so remember the school zones, school buses and watch the cell phone use in school zones. **73 de KE5ISN**



CTARC extends its congratulations to three of our own, who as Reservists in the Bell County Office of Emergency Management, were recently appointed to the following positions within the OEM:

**Priscilla Beauregard - KE5UES**,  
Equipment & Delivery Coordinator.

**Linda Blackmon - KE5QGN**, Volunteer Coordinator.

**Maria Vences - KE5QGU**, Interpreter



## Welcome New Member

Please join me in welcoming Mark McGraw, KF5HUG as CTARC's newest member.

Mark recently passed both his Technician and General Class exams during the last VE session at Field Day. Mark is also the Bell County Coordinator for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network.



The Central Texas Amateur Radio Net meets every Thursday at 8:00 PM on the W5BEC repeater, on 147.140(+) PL 123.0 Join Us!

**August NCS & Back-Up NCS Schedule**

August 5 <sup>th</sup> : Net Control: K6WXA Back-Up: KF5LNX	August 12 <sup>th</sup> : KF5LNX K5KFH
August 19 <sup>th</sup> : Net Control: K5KFH Back-Up: KE5DPS	August 26 <sup>th</sup> : KE5DPS W5VEX



The place to be in the middle of the Texas summer. August 6 & 7 at the Austin Airport Marriott South, 4415 South IH-35. This year hosting the summer meeting of the Texas VHF-FM Society and the ARRL Texas State Convention. For complete info, visit: [http://www.austinsummerfest.org/Handbill Layou2010\\_R3.pdf](http://www.austinsummerfest.org/Handbill_Layou2010_R3.pdf)



**ARRL August UHF Contest**

Contest period runs from 1800 UTC, August 7<sup>th</sup> through 1800 UTC August 8<sup>th</sup> on all authorized amateur frequencies of 222 MHz and up. For further details see <http://www.arrl.org/august-uhf>



**International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend**

Not a contest, but this operating event runs from 0001 UTC, August 21<sup>st</sup> to 2359 UTC August 22<sup>nd</sup>. For more information on this event, see: <http://illw.net/> (More about this event further on in this edition of the newsletter.) –Ed.



**North American QSO Party**

Contest period is from 1800 UTC, August 21<sup>st</sup> to 0600 UTC August 22<sup>nd</sup>. This is a great opportunity for anyone working towards their Worked All States or for anyone new to the HF bands, as the contestants aren't interested in "rag-chewing" but rather, in making contacts and moving on. For more info, visit: <http://www.ncjweb.com/naqprules.php>



**LBJ DAY**

**August 27th**

In the covered wagon days, if a baby was born in Texarkana while the family was crossing into the Lone Star State, by the time they reached El Paso, the baby would be in the third grade. - Wallace O. Chariton, Author



**Free to a good home...** nearly like new, galvanized aluminum & brass rooftop antenna tripod mount. This was donated by KB7UNA and KD5RCS.

If interested, contact Rick - K6WXA, at (254) 690-1303 or via email at: [k6wxa@yahoo.com](mailto:k6wxa@yahoo.com) to arrange for pick-up and/or delivery.



## FCC ISSUES REPORT AND ORDER EFFECTING AMATEUR RADIO DURING DISASTERS AND DRILLS



On July 14, 2010 the FCC issued a Report and Order effecting 47 CFR Part 97 Section 113. This is the section of the federal regulations prohibiting certain types of communications by amateur radio operators and exceptions to the rules.

This R&O was the results of a request by ARRL's Amateur Radio Policy Committee petition for rulemaking and a request by the American Hospital Association for a blanket waiver to permit hospitals to use amateur radio as part of emergency preparedness drills. The rules in effect before this change did not allow an amateur radio operator to make transmissions for his employer, on or off the clock.

Also included in this revision of the prohibited transmissions is information on swap nets, teachers using amateur radio during classroom instruction and control stations during telegraphy practice

Below are the new rules on prohibited transmissions exception that will be effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

### § 97.113 Prohibited transmissions.

(a) \* \* \*

(3) Communications in which the station licensee or control operator has a pecuniary interest, including communications on behalf of an employer, with the following exceptions:

(i) A station licensee or control station operator may participate on behalf of an employer in an emergency preparedness or disaster readiness test or drill, limited to the duration and scope of such test or drill, and operational testing immediately prior to such test or drill. Tests or drills that are not government-sponsored are limited to a total time of one hour per week; except that no more than twice in any calendar year, they may be conducted for a period not to exceed 72 hours.

(ii) An amateur operator may notify other amateur operators of the availability for sale or trade of apparatus normally used in an amateur station, provided that such activity is not conducted on a regular basis.

(iii) A control operator may accept compensation as an incident of a teaching position during periods of time when an amateur station is used by that teacher as a part of classroom instruction at an educational institution.

(iv) The control operator of a club station may accept compensation for the periods of time when the station is transmitting telegraphy practice or information bulletins, provided that the station transmits such telegraphy practice and bulletins for at least 40 hours per week; schedules operations on at least six amateur service MF and HF bands using reasonable measures to maximize coverage; where the schedule of normal operating times and frequencies is published at least 30 days in advance of the actual transmissions; and where the control operator does not accept any direct or indirect compensation for any other service as a control operator.



## RS Demise Foretold

Wall Street analysts have now predicted what the amateur radio community has seen for more than a decade, the demise of "Radio Shack". **24/7 Wall St.** has included "Radio Shack" in its list of companies that are certain to be non-existent by the end of 2011. The just released list includes: Readers Digest, Kia Motors, Dollar Thrifty, Zale, Blockbuster, T-Mobile, RadioShack, Merrill Lynch and Moody's.

Here is what they have to say about the end of Radio Shack:

*"RadioShack is one of the oldest retailers in the U.S. It was founded in 1921 and in the early 1960s was purchased by Tandy Corp. The Tandy name was used for some of Radio Shack's retail stores. RadioShack is currently a takeover target. There have been rumors that the company may be taken private via a leveraged buyout or purchased by Best Buy (NYSE: BBY - News), probably for its locations. Best Buy would certainly not keep the RadioShack brand because it is considered downscale and does not have the reputation for quality products and service that Best Buy enjoys. RadioShack has already begun to rebrand itself as "The Shack," an indication that it knows the older brand is a burden."*

---

*Have an article you'd like to see in the Wavelength? Send it along to Rick at: [k6wxa@yahoo.com](mailto:k6wxa@yahoo.com). Articles should be submitted prior to the last Friday of the month.*

---

## Educational Opportunities



This past month FEMA introduced two newly revised courses to its independent study program: IS-15.b, *Special Events Contingency Planning for Public Safety Agencies* and IS-245.a, *Introduction to the Defense Priorities and Allocations System*.

For a complete list of all the courses available through FEMA, please visit: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>

Also this past month, the UCAR COMET/MetEd released a new single module course entitled *River Ice Processes – Short Version* which can be found at:

[http://www.meted.ucar.edu/hydro/basic\\_int/river\\_ice/index.htm](http://www.meted.ucar.edu/hydro/basic_int/river_ice/index.htm).



President: Kenneth Watkins, KE5ISN  
Vice Pres: Gerald Richmond, N5ZXJ  
Secretary: Priscilla Beauregard, KE5UES  
Treasurer: Linda Blackmon, KE5QGN  
Director: Richard Diller, KE5ULJ  
Director: Kevin Epperson, K5KEV  
Director/Webmaster: Russell Mezynski, KF5LNX  
Newsletter Editor: Rick Murray, K6WXA



*From 30,000 feet above Colorado City, CO.  
Photo courtesy KE5WVC*



## International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend

Rick Murray, K6WXA



Some operators may chase the rare and exotic DX entity, a tiny new country on-the-air; or DXpeditions to small, uninhabited islands. But how often do you get the chance to get a lighthouse in your logbook?

Despite the popularity of this world-wide operating event, this annual event goes largely unnoticed and unannounced in amateur radio publications. Perhaps because of the fact that this event is not a contest and there are no points awarded for the number of contacts made or awards issued for the event.

It all started in 1994 when members of the Ayr Amateur Radio Group in southwest Scotland, wanted to create a summer event where club members could get out on a sunny weekend and play radio. Several thoughts were kicked around but eventually the idea of operating from lighthouses was settled on.

Originally known as the Northern Lighthouse Activity Weekend, amateur radio stations were established at 11 lighthouses in Scotland and the Isle of Man. Since then, this now-annual event has grown to become the International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend with a participation of roughly 380 lighthouses and lightships in some 51 countries around the world, with the purpose of promoting public awareness of light-



*Where it all began... Turnberry Lighthouse in Ayrshire, Scotland. Heard on-the-air as GB2LT.*

Houses and lightships their public safety role as aids to navigation as well as their need for preservation and restoration. Naturally, the event promotes amateur radio and fosters international goodwill.



*Easiest catch with its consistent 5:9+ signal, N7L Yaquina Bay Lighthouse in Newport, Oregon.*

Many amateur radio clubs or individual operators, will set-up operating stations either on the grounds of a lighthouse or on the property adjacent to a lighthouse or from an area over-looking a lighthouse. Others are lucky enough to be able to set-up their stations from within a lighthouse itself. This can often make for unusual signal reports from other stations being worked, as a result of the echo effect the tower produces into the microphone.

This event also presents the opportunity to work some truly “rare” lighthouses; rare either because of their location, their owners or their legends. If nothing else, they all may be considered rare – as far as your logbook goes – as they’re only on the air in most cases, once a year.

Some lighthouses because of their location or particular owners – be they government, or in private hands, don't allow general public access, let alone ham radio operations, from their grounds. Such was the case with Granite Island Light Station, until the state elected to sell the island it sits on to private owners. During the transition of the sale, the state allowed the first and only ham radio operation from the lighthouse. Now in the hands of private owners, it has again left the airwaves.



*Rarest catch - Granite Island Light Station in Lake Superior. Its first - and last - activation on the air was in 2007 as K8G.*



*America's most haunted lighthouse, Point Lookout in Maryland, last activated in 2008 as K7HMP/3.*

While land-based lighthouses do have the tendency to steal center stage during this event, lightships were essential partners with America's lighthouses as part of the government's commitment to safe navigation along the country's coasts and on the Great Lakes. Most have now been decommissioned, but a few still make it on the air each August.



*W7BU, the Lightship Columbia (WLV-604) now a floating maritime museum in Astoria, Oregon.*



*Lightship West-Hinder, ON6NW  
Rupelmonde, Belgium*

Working lighthouses on the air is a lot fun but it can be a challenge, as this event runs during nearly the same time period as the North American QSO Party. During this weekend its sheer bedlam on the bands and you're going to have to struggle to get 'em in your logbook.

The International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend event is always held on the third weekend in August. For more information on this event, visit: <http://illw.net> and for more information on amateur radio lighthouse events, please visit: <http://arlhs.com/public.html>.



Over the course of the next two months, we will be going through the peak of the 2010 Atlantic Hurricane Season. For those of us living in north central Texas, there is little concern for the destructive impact that these storm systems possess. What is of concern – or should be of concern – are the collateral effects these storm systems have.

Tropical storms and hurricanes bring destructive winds, storm surge, torrential rain, flooding, and tornadoes. A single storm can wreak havoc on coastal and inland communities and on natural areas over thousands of square miles. Even inland areas, well away from the coastline, can experience destructive winds, tornadoes and floods from tropical storms and hurricanes.



*First storm of the season, Hurricane Alex, as it came ashore June 30<sup>th</sup> as a category 2 hurricane. Photo: NASA*

Tropical depressions and tropical storms, while generally less dangerous than hurricanes, still can be deadly. The winds of tropical depressions and tropical storms are usually not the greatest threat. Heavy rains, flooding and severe weather, such as tornadoes, create the greatest threats from tropical storms and depressions.

All tropical cyclones can produce rainfall amounts of 20 to 40 inches over several days. Widespread flash flooding and river flooding can result from these slow-moving storms.

Flooding is the major threat from tropical cyclones to people well inland. Over the last 30 years, 50% of deaths associated with tropical cyclones have been as a result of inland flooding associated with land-falling tropical cyclones than from any other weather hazard related to tropical cyclones.

A rapid rise in water levels can occur quickly due to intense rainfall. Longer term flooding on rivers and streams can persist for several days after the storm. Such was the case with the Lake Delhi dam failure on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Though not associated with a tropical storm, over ten inches of rain fell in a short period, resulting in a catastrophic failure of the dam in which there was simply too much water for the dam to hold.

Though there were no injuries reported, some 900 people had to be evacuated; portions of state highway 38 had to be closed and a disaster declaration was initiated in two counties.



*Failure of Lake Delhi Dam, Iowa, July 24<sup>th</sup>. Photo: KCRG*

This intense rainfall is related to the speed of movement of the storm system and the geography of the area affected. Slower moving storms produce more rainfall. Mountainous terrain enhances rainfall from a tropical cyclone. Inland flooding can be a major threat to people hundreds of miles from the coast.



*Barricades are put up for your protection. Turn around and go another way! Photo: Texas Severe Storms Intercept*

Densely populated areas have a high risk for flash floods. The construction of buildings, highways, driveways, and parking lots increases runoff by reducing the amount of rain absorbed by the ground. This runoff increases the flash flood potential.

Almost half of all flash flood fatalities occur in vehicles. Contrary to popular belief, many people don't realize two feet of water on a bridge or highway can float

most vehicles. Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers. Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped. If the vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and move to higher ground.

Know what flood warnings mean:

A *Flood Watch* or *Flash Flood Watch* means flooding is possible in your area. Be alert to signs of flooding and prepared to evacuate. A *Flood Warning* or *Flash Flood Warning* means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.

If a flood warning is issued, listen to local radio and television stations for information. If told to evacuate, do so as soon as possible.



*Even the "Good Guys" can get into trouble. Photo: K6WXA*

Flood waters move quickly and can travel for miles beyond the original site of the storm, catching unwary hikers and motorists by surprise. Because flash floods can occur at any time of the year, it is important to always be aware of local weather reports, as the National Weather Service issues a flash flood warning whenever one is occurring or is imminent in specified areas. Floods are long term events that may last days or weeks.

Remember, your safety is up to you!



*Flooding in Killeen, May 24<sup>th</sup> 2007. Photo: Linda McMurray*

For more information on flood preparedness, visit the American Red Cross web page at: [http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/checklists/LP/Flood\\_Safety\\_LP.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/Preparedness/checklists/LP/Flood_Safety_LP.pdf)



## **Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network**

*Mark McGraw, KF5HUG*

Lightning flashes flicker through the windows, followed by thunderclaps that rattle the doors. Sirius, our Border Collie, runs for the closet to escape the booms. It started raining shortly after the lightning began to dance across the sky. Now the rainfall is coming down hard. How intense is the rainfall? Will it cause flooding? How much rain will the storm drop? Did I get as much rain as Belton, Temple or Bartlett?

Fact is, precipitation is unpredictable and variable. So much so, that a neighbor down the street could receive a ½-inch of rain while you receive no rain at all. It is this variability, along with the importance of rain in our lives, as well as the impact of drought, that makes it so valuable to know how much rain has fallen at any particular point. It's impossible to record rainfall at every point, so we compromise, and do the best we can.

This is where the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow (CoCoRaHS) network comes in. CoCoRaHS (pronounced co-co-rawz) is a volunteer network of observers who participate in measuring rain, hail and snow. The data they collect is reported to an interactive web site, making the information available nearly instantaneously. The National Weather Service and the National Drought Mitigation Center also use this data. They are just 2 of the many users who need to know when and how much precipitation has fallen in any given area.

What started with a few volunteers in the beginning has grown to more than 15,000 observers nationwide. It began in 1998 after a devastating flood the year before in Fort Collins, Colorado, claimed the lives of 5 who were caught off-guard by a severe storm. The storm flooded portions of the City, killed 5 people and caused an estimated \$200,000,000 damage. NWS rain gauges were too far apart, and too few to record the storm intensity and the torrential flooding that soon followed. A few people caught in the flooding who were equipped to report the continuing deluge of rain, were so busy with concern for their own safety that they were not able to report to the NWS. Nolen Doeskin, one of the people caught in the flooding, who had the capability to report the intense rains, realized there needed to be more people capable of making local reports of such events. Out of this tragedy, with grant funding and a small number of volunteers, Nolen Doeskin developed the CoCoRaHS project.

CoCoRaHS' goals are to 1) provide accurate high-quality precipitation data to end-users on a timely basis; 2) act as an umbrella for one-stop precipitation information nationwide; 3) increase community awareness about our weather by inspiring and encouraging citizens to participate in meteorological science and have fun doing so and 4) provide enrichment activities in water and weather resources for teachers, educators and the community at large; thus, building a collective awareness of our climate and develop citizen's skills in scientific data collection.

The ultimate goal is to have one rain gauge per square mile in urban areas and one gauge per 25 square miles in rural areas.

Being involved does not require a great expenditure of time on your part. It will require at most 10 minutes of your day to submit a daily report to the website. This includes going out to read the gauge, coming back in to log on to the website and fill out the report. If you take out the time to walk to the gauge, walk to your computer, get settled into your comfy computer chair, it really takes 5 minutes for the whole process.

It is easy to become part of the CoCoRaHS network. You must join and you must purchase the official rain gauge used by all CoCoRaHS observers. To join, visit: <http://cocorahs.org> then browse through the information, and study the training slideshows. To sign up, click the “Join CoCoRaHS” link in the menu on the left side of the page. To purchase a rain gauge, there are a couple of suppliers’ links on the right side of the page.

When you receive your rain gauge, review the training slideshows for the best location to install your rain gauge. After installing your gauge, you are ready to start reporting. Do I really have to submit a report every day, even when it does not rain? The answer is no, you do not, nor are you required to. However, reporting those days when it does not rain is also very important information that is used by the NWS and National Drought Mitigation Center among others. Report those zeros if you can. If you don’t submit a report for a non-rain day, it is not assumed that it did not rain at your location.

Everyone will have days when they are on vacation, or a busy schedule prevents submitting a report or reports. When you get back on schedule, you can submit catch up reports. There are two available to you. One to report “Multi-Day Accumulation” and one to report “Monthly Zeros”. The Multi-Day Accumulation report is used to report rain in your gauge that accumulated over several days when you were on that trip. The Monthly Zeros report is used to report several days when you had zero precipitation and you were unable to submit a daily report for each of those days. Ah, why can’t I just submit a Monthly Zero report at the end of the month rather than a daily report when it did not rain on those days, you ask? The reason is because of the way the NWS collects all of the weather data for each day. All NWS 24-hour weather observations end at 12:00 p.m. Greenwich Mean Time (7:00 a.m. daylight savings CST or 6:00 a.m. CST, in the Central Time zone). For CoCoRaHS observations, the cut-off is 9:00 a.m. Any reports submitted after 9:00 a.m. will not be included in the NWS data used to prepare the various analyses nor will it be archived in the National Climatic Data Center archives. The data will be available on the CoCoRaHS server, so you are able to go back in time to see past observations.

There is another report available to you that has its roots in the origin of CoCoRaHS. It is called the “Significant Weather” report. This report provides you, a local observer a method to provide real-time reports to the NWS. Significant Weather reports submitted to CoCoRaHS are simultaneously submitted to the local NWS office for your area. This information could be used by the NWS to make timely decisions in issuing flood warnings or flood watches. Real-time data to save lives. Why is this necessary when I can call in local flooding on my radio? We already have direct access to the NWS office via EchoLink. Quantified data is the answer. Yes, it is important that the NWS know where there is observed flooding, and you should report it. It is also invaluable if you can quantify how intensely the precipitation is falling. Your report that you received 1.25-inches of rain during the last 30 minutes will assist them in predicting where flooding may be expected in your area, as well as what effect this will have on the downstream creek, or river. You can provide data that weather models and radar cannot, actual precipitation intensity in real-time.

For more information on CoCoRaHS, visit: <http://www.cocorahs.org> or contact Mark McGraw KF5HUG, who is the Bell County Coordinator for CoCoRaHS via email at: [qwiqdraw@gmail.com](mailto:qwiqdraw@gmail.com)

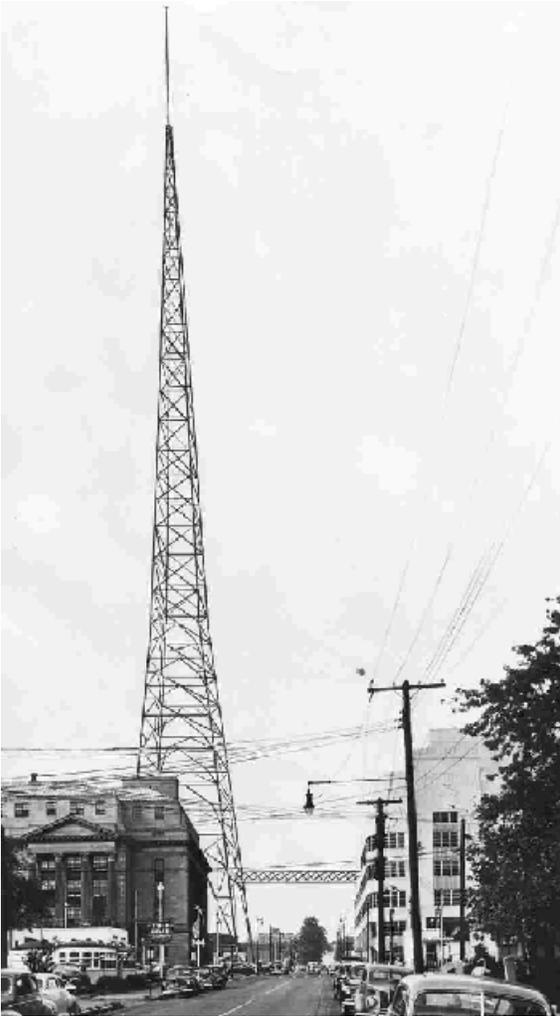


## Will We Talk to Mars in August?

Thomas H. White  
"United States Early Radio History"



Today, it is highly unlikely; however, in the summer of 1924 there wasn't the same certainty. In August some were carefully making last minute adjustments to their radio sets, hoping to hear signals from Mars. Some, thanks to stations like WHAS, would temporarily claim success.



*The transmitter tower of station WHAS, mid to late 1930's.*

In 1924 there was reason to believe that perhaps advanced life, existed on the red planet. Some even believed that Martian inhabitants would be far superior to human beings. Communication with these beings promised great scientific revelations.

Over the years there had been various proposals for contacting Mars, but none had ever been attempted. But thanks to the march of science, Earth now had a powerful new communication tool --- radio. During the previous four years, millions had witnessed, in their own living rooms, the miracle of capturing voices from half a continent away. Would not a Martian civilization, builders of a canal system far beyond the capabilities of humans, be thoroughly versed in the advanced use of radio? On earlier close passes, perhaps over many thousands of years, Mars might have fruitlessly attempted to hail its backward neighbor. Earthlings now had the technology required to receive signals across vast expanses of space. On August 23rd Mars and Earth would come to within 55.7 million kilometers of each other, their closest approach since 1804. Perhaps for the first time the Martians would find us listening.

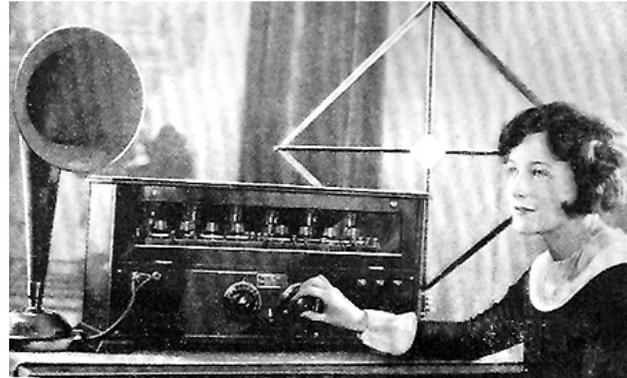
Apparently no attempt was made to transmit signals to Mars. Transmitter powers

were too limited, and it was known that the newly discovered Heaviside Layer (ionosphere) would absorb and scatter any signals sent from Earth on the frequencies then in use. Although no doubt some announcers couldn't resist the temptation to say "*Hello to our Martian listeners*". It was hoped that more powerful Martian transmissions would be able to bridge the gap. Thus, the task on Earth would be to intercept these transmissions. And every home with a radio was a potential detector. Professor David Todd, of the Amherst College astronomy department, worked to organize radio silent periods, to aid the reception of any interplanetary signals. Professor Todd requested that every radio station maintain a five minute silence each hour over a two day period. Only

station WRC in Washington, DC appears to have complied with this request.

Monitoring centered on Saturday night, when the two planets were at their closest. However, strange signals were reported even before the nearest approach of the planet. Radio operators in Vancouver reported on Thursday that they were receiving a series of "four groups of dashes in groups of four". Both the form and origin of the strange signals were unidentified, and a close watch was promised. In London a specially constructed 24-tube set picked up "harsh notes" of an unknown origin. WOR engineers in Newark, New Jersey reported similar sounds at nearly the same wavelength. A Bostonian reported a strange ringing, ending with an abrupt "zzip".

Into the midst of all this activity marched WHAS in Louisville, Kentucky. By coincidence, military maneuvers near Louisville were scheduled on Friday, the day before Mars' closest approach. WHAS saw the maneuvers as an opportunity to score a first, and scheduled a special half hour program, where for the first time a "war" correspondent would broadcast live the progress of the mock battle.



*Typical 1924 era home radio set.*

WHAS's innovative program featured a remote broadcast carried by telephone lines direct from the "front". A Colonel Hamer provided commentary. By chance he was located between two three-inch field artillery pieces firing in an alternating sequence at four times per minute. Scattered small arms fire could be heard at the same time. Because the Colonel's remarks ended a few minutes earlier than expected, the close of the program consisted solely of the sounds of the firing of the artillery and small arms, unbroken by any announcements.

According to Mr. Harris, this final segment was thought by some listeners to have originated from Mars. Imagine the reaction of an unsuspecting person, searching for evidence of Mars, coming across this odd program.

Most schedules listed WHAS as carrying orchestra music at this time. Every fifteen seconds a loud "bong" was heard, as the loud artillery reports overwhelmed the microphone. In between the small arms firing sounded like a strange code, clearly not Morse. Could it be Mars? Could it be anything but Mars?

Eventually the various mysterious reports were sorted out. The operators of the 24-tube set decided they had heard nothing more exotic than "a combination of atmospheric and heterodyning". The Vancouver signals were identified as a new type of beacon being developed to aid navigation in Washington state inland waterways.

And although WHAS eventually took great pride in its contribution to the confusion, everyone eventually figured out the true nature of the mock battle broadcasts.

The final consensus was that there was no evidence the red planet had shown any interest in talking to us.

Perhaps it's best that Mars turned out not to have any radio stations. It's difficult enough having to regulate radio on an earthly scale. Having to include other planets in regulatory agreements would just make things even more complicated.

# HamEXPO!

The Belton Hamfest returns to the Bell County Exposition Center in Belton, Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Getting there is easy; from U.S. Highway 190 take the exit for Loop 121 and follow the signs to the Exposition Center. Plenty of free parking!

Talk-in frequency is 146.820(-) PL 123, and call for W5LM.

General admission for the public is \$5.00 at the door. Admission price includes one free raffle ticket for various door prizes raffled off during the event. Winners must be present to collect their winnings.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.tarc.org/hamexpo>



*Life, the way you WISH it use to be.*

## Strays

### World Record Hailstone

Shawn Neistadt, KELO

VIVIAN, SD - A small South Dakota town is being recognized for a big find after last Friday's storms.

It was Friday afternoon when a line of thunderstorms fired up in central South Dakota. High winds, heavy rains and even a possible tornado rolled through the town of Vivian. But now days later, a hailstone picked up just moments after the storm is getting worldwide attention.

Les Scott will never forget what it sounded like - "A guy throwing bricks at the house and many of them and it was scary," Scott said. Scott watched as massive hailstones pummeled the ground. Tuesday, the dents in the ground are still visible, some as large and deep as coffee cans. But when the hail stopped, a certain stone grabbed his attention.



The hailstone weighed in at 1.9375 pounds and was measured at 18 and a half inches. "Officially, where records have been kept, this will be the U.S. record and world record for weight and size. So very impressive," Mike Fowle of the National Weather Service said.

As impressive as the size and weight are, it may have topped two pounds when it fell from the sky.