



February

2018

**The Central Texas Amateur Radio Club
meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the
Bell County Communications Center, 708 West Avenue O, in Belton**

Terry's Telegram...

Terry Evans, KF5OHR



Ahh, Groundhog Day. It sneaks up on us every February doesn't it? In many ways, this "holiday" provokes positive emotions, for the public, Pennsylvanians, and meteorologists alike. I bet you didn't know the first Groundhog Day was on February 2, 1887 and that the first prognosticating groundhog was cooked and eaten as a meal after his first prediction? I guess they didn't like his forecast.

If you've ever thought to yourself, "Groundhog Day sure is a weird holiday", then you're definitely not alone. Personally, I've never understood why we rely on an animal's shadow to predict our weather. Wouldn't it be the same if any human saw their shadow? But a groundhog? Predicting the weather? What's so special about a groundhog? Why is this holiday even a thing?

We all know it's cold and we're ready for Spring, now that Christmas is over. So will it be a longer Winter or an early Spring? What will Punxsutawney Phil, the most elite of all transcendental groundhogs, and true legend, prognosticate this year? You'll have to read on a little further to find out.

Several Skywarn classes are scheduled this month - including the Basic & Advanced class for Bell County. What with the government shut-down and short-term proposals being ban tied about to keep the government running, these classes may be postponed or cancelled altogether. To keep abreast, keep an eye on the national news and visit: <http://www.weather.gov/fwd/skywarnsch?sptrsch> to determine the status of classes scheduled.

Beyond that not much going on here, other than lately I got hooked up trying to help trap Hogs that are running around in the back of the plant where I work, and are messing up the front drive way at night. That's the area where our customers come in to the plant. They have been making a mess of the area. So we got the ok to try and trap them. So far we have gotten one deer, two rabbits, a skunk and some possums... but no hogs. Maybe we need to hire Kenneth, he knows all about hogs.

Once again I need to mention that it's the time of the year where club dues are due. Our club Treasurer is going to be unavailable to collect your dues payments due to a scheduled medical procedure he's under-going. So I would recommend paying your dues through our club website at: <http://www.ctarc.org/> using the PayPal link.

Hope to see you all at our next meeting which will be on Tuesday, February 6th, at 7:00 PM, at the Bell County Communications Center.

73, Terry - KF5OHR



"Faster than a speeding bullet! More powerful than a locomotive! Able to leap tall buildings with a single bound! Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's Superman!"



The Adventures of Superman first aired over New York station WOR and was broadcast over the Mutual Broadcasting Network, on February 12, 1940. The show aired until March 9, 1942 when it was cancelled by the network who did not realize the show's popularity. Superman fans besieged the network with letters, persuading Mutual to revive the show.

The series returned to the air on August 31, 1942, and on February 7, 1949, the series moved to ABC. The show left the radio airwaves on March 1, 1951 as plans were being made to bring the *Adventures of Superman* to television. The TV series premiered in syndication from September 9, 1952, and ran until April 28, 1958.

Tune in again to the most iconic old radio show of all time, by visiting: https://archive.org/details/superman_otr



The Central Texas Amateur Radio Net meets every Thursday at 8:00 PM on the N5ZXJ repeater, on 145.310(-) PL 123.0 Join Us!

February NCS & Back-Up NCS Schedule

February 1st:	February 8th:
Net Control: K6WXA	AD5SK
Back-Up: AD5SK	KD5FJF

February 15th:	February 22nd:
Net Control: KD5FJF	KE5ISN
Back-Up: KE5ISN	W5VEX



Skywarn Training



Bell County (*Basic & Advanced Spotter Training*) Saturday, February 10th, 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM, at the Belton New Tech High School, 320 North Blair Street, in Belton.

McLennan County (*Basic & Advanced Spotter Training*) Saturday, February 3rd, 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM, at the Emergency Services Education Center, 7601 Steinbeck Bend Drive, in Waco.

Robertson County (*Basic Spotter Training*) Monday, February 5th, 7:00-9:00 PM, at the Franklin VFD Station #2, 129 Redden Lane in Franklin.

Travis County (*Basic & Advanced Spotter Training*) Saturday, February 3rd, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM, at the Austin Community College Eastview Campus, Building 8500, 3400 Webberville Road in Austin. More info on this session at: <http://www.la.utexas.edu/users/kimmel/skywarn.html>

Williamson County (*Basic & Advanced Spotter Training*) Saturday, February 24th, 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM, at the Georgetown Public Safety Operations Training Center, 3500 DB Wood Road, in Georgetown.



AM Rally

If you don't know about full-carrier amplitude modulation (AM) or have never used it on the air, you'll get the chance during the AM Rally between 160 and 10 meters (except 30, 17, and 12 meters) plus 6 meters.

The AM Rally begins on Friday, February 2nd at 6:00 PM CST and concludes at 12:00 AM on Sunday, February 4th. The event is open to all radio amateurs capable of transmitting full-carrier AM.

For complete AM Rally details, contact information, award categories, logging, and tips on how to get the most out of your station equipment in AM mode, visit: <http://www.amrally.com/>



School Club Round-Up

This 5-day event runs from 1300 UTC Monday, February 12th through 2359 UTC Friday, February 16th, with the purpose of fostering contacts with and among school radio clubs. More info on this can be found at:

<http://www.arrl.org/school-club-roundup>



Coryell County Joint Comm Group Meeting

The next meeting of the Coryell County Joint Communications Group, will be on Tuesday, February 13th, at the Lil Tex Restaurant in Copperas Cove at 11:30 AM.

Film is art. Theatre is life. Television is furniture. Radio is imagination.
- Anonymous



Village of Salado '3 Kings 3 Miler'

Robert Shoemaker, KE5WVC

This past January 6th, St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in Salado, hosted the 4th annual running of the *3 Kings 3 Miler* in Downtown Salado. Amateur radio was there with Robert Shoemaker - KE5WVC and Terry Evans - KF5OHR, providing logistical support communications.

The race went off without a hitch with the temperature a brisk 34 degrees as 116 runners, ranging in ages from 5 to 77, hit the streets. Finishing in 1st place was 16 year-old Haas Hunter of Salado, with a time of 18:18. The last runner to cross the finish line, came in with a time of 1 hour, 13 minutes.



When the race was done they enjoyed hot chocolate, coffee and received awards.

The 5K run is a part of the church's tradition that was started in 2014, as a way for the church to promote healthy habits, engage in the community and bring awareness to the holiday of Epiphany. All proceeds from the race go towards supporting the church's mission and the Salado Family Relief Fund.

Sources close to the race, say this may be the last running of the 3Kings 3Miler as they are having a hard time getting volunteers to help operate the race.



A group will be active from Rotuma Island, 23 February - 16 March, as **3D2EU**. QSL via DK2AMM.

DCØKK is active from Sri Lanka until 25 March as **4S7KKG**. QSL via his home call.

UA1OJL is active as **RI5ØANO** from Belligshausen Station, South Shetland Islands, until 31 March. QSL via RN1ON.

AA4NC and **AA4VK** will be active from Saipan Island, 22 - 28 February, each signing **stroke KHØ**. QSL each via their home calls.

JA1XGI will be active from New Britain Island, Bismark Archipelago, 1 - 7 February as **P29VXG**. QSL via his home call.

W3UR is active from Saint Kitts Island until 12 February as **V47UR**. QSL via his home call.

JL3WXS will be active from Koror Island, 1 - 5 February, as **T88XS**. QSL via his home call.

KØPC will be active from Providenciales Island, Caicos Islands, 13 - 20 February signing **stroke VP5**. QSL via his home call.

N4UM as **C6ARU**, K4RUM as **C6AUM** and N4BP as **C6AKQ** will be active from Abaco Islands, 6 - 20 February. QSL each to their respective home call.

A group is active on Sagar Island, until 31 March as **AU2WBR**. QSL via VU2NRO.

NF9V will be active from Curacao Island, 13 - 20 February, signing **stroke PJ2**. QSL via his home call.

HB9FIH is active from El Hierro Island, Canary Islands, until the end of March, signing **stroke EA8**. QSL via his home call.

J52EC is active from Guinea Bissau, until 21 February. QSL via IZ3BUR.

ON6DX will be active as **TY1TT** from Benin, 20 February - 2 March. QSL via his home call.

Special event station **EI5ØAOM** is active until 24 March. QSL via EI2KA. More info: <https://www.qrz.com/db/EI50AOM>

OH2IS will be active signing **stroke FM** from Martinique Island, 18 - 28 February. QSL via his home call.

DL9OBQ is active from Trinidad Island, until 7 February, signing **stroke 9Z4**. QSL via his home call.

A group will be active as **C5DX**, from Gambia, 9 - 16 February. QSL via G4DJX.

A group will be active from Morocco as **CN2DF** and **CN2FR**, 13 - 20 February. QSL via DL7DF.

WJ2O will be active from Peru 13 - 21 February signing **stroke OA4**. QSL via LotW.

F2JD will be active from Honduras, 15 February - 10 May signing **stroke HR5**. QSL via F6AJA.

DF8AN will be active from Easter Island, 21 - 28 February signing **stroke CEØY**. QSL via his home call.

WBØTEV will be active from Belize, 8 - 12 February as **V31VP**. QSL via his home call.

A group is active as **D68I**, from the Comoro Islands, until 10 February. QSL via IK5CRH.

F5LIT is active on Bali Island until 10 February, signing **stroke YB9**. QSL via his home call.

PAØVDV is active from Curacao Island until 8 February, signing **stroke PJ2**. QSL via his home call.

WB2TJO is active as **3D2JS** from Fiji through mid-March. QSL via his home call.

How's DX? *Continued...*

VE3DZ will be active from Jamaica, 13 - 20 February, as **6Y2T**. QSL via his home call.

V31JZ will be active from South Water Caye Island, Belize, 8 - 14 February. QSL via NN7A.

F5LIT is active from Bali Island, until 10 February, signing **stroke YB9**. QSL via his home call.

PA5X as **C8X** and PG5M as **C81G** are active on Ibo Island, until 4 February. QSL each via their home calls.

F6HMQ and **F6GWW** will be active from Guadeloupe, 23 February - 12 March, signing **stroke FG**. QSL via F6HMQ.

The United Nations will be on the air 13 - 20 February as **4UØR**. QSL via UA3DX.

F6ITD signing **stroke FG**, is active from Desirade Island, until 15 March. QSL via his home call.

NE8Z is active from Ecuador until 10 February as **HC1MD**. QSL via K8LJG.

W5JON will be active from St. Kitts Island 13 February - 16 March as **V47JA**. QSL via his home call.

NE9U will be active signing **stroke PJ4** from Bonaire, 10 - 24 February. QSL via his home call.

WIUSN and **AA1M** are active in Panama, each signing **stroke HP8** until 15 February. QSL each via their home call.

GroundHog Day Special Event Station

Punxsutawney, PA - The most dependable weather capital of the world, will be active Saturday, February 3rd from 9:00am to 3:00 pm as **K3HWJ** on +/- 7.245 MHz and +/- 14.340 MHz. More information on this is at:

<http://www.punxclub.com/>



Check Your Boxes

It's that time of year when mice may be looking for someplace warm to get out of the winter weather and nest. Your electrical box may be clean, dry and show no signs of corrosion. However, the cover may be shielding a much greater problem: mice infestation.



Rodents are great contortionists and can squeeze through the narrowest of gaps, finding their way into a beautiful "apartment" in which to nest. If you discover such an infestation, pick up some heavy rubber protective gloves, wear a smock that you can throw away and use a face mask.

When it comes time to seal the entry, plug the hole or holes with stainless steel or copper wool.

"The problem of providing the necessary trained personnel is an outstanding one in radio today. The future is dependent upon trained radio men who will be capable of carrying on the great work of the radio art and industry because the technique of radio has overflowed the confines of communication."

David Sarnoff, Executive Vice-President and General Manager Radio Corporation of America - February, 1930

Changes Coming to ARES

Dale Williams, WA8EFK
Chairman, ARRL Public Service Enhancement Working Group

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) has been the public service communications program of the ARRL since 1935. Over the program's eight decades it has occasionally undergone updates to make sure it meets the needs of partners at all levels, adjusts to changes in the Amateur Radio Service, and incorporates lessons learned from emergency and disaster activations. However, the last major update to ARES occurred more than 40 years ago, and it is quite clear that a lot has changed since then.

Two years ago, the ARRL board of directors created the Public Service Enhancement Working Group to study the ARRL's public service offerings and recommend changes and improvements. The working group focused on many areas including training, volunteer management, field organization positions, and mission – all areas of concern brought to the board and staff's attention from those in the field. The recommendations were vetted through a peer review group of field organization volunteers and readied for implementation.



In the months ahead, information on enhancements coming to the ARES program will be provided, including:

A new national mission statement for ARES; New national training requirements and local training resources for ARES; Updated field organization job descriptions; Improved ARES operating guidelines; New ARES group benefits; and a new volunteer management system – "ARES Connect."

The first step in the next evolution of ARES is group identification. Currently there is no way to identify ARES groups or their associated volunteers with a searchable unique designator, which makes reporting and accountability difficult.

Beginning this past January 1st, ARES groups will need to sign up for their unique ARES identification number. This number will be utilized by the ARES Connect system and provide ARES groups with unique benefits. Groups that will need an ARES identification number include local level (city/county/district) and section level. Once ARES groups receive their identification numbers, they will be eligible for benefits including:

- ARES book sets (for the EOC or Red Cross radio room)
- New ham referral
- Early access to the annual ARES Report
- Email forwarding

Questions concerning these actions can be directed to the ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager, Mike Corey- K1IU, at: ki1u@arrl.org

Amateur Radio Installed at Fort Hood EOC

Budd Johnson, WB4J

After years of fruitless efforts by members of CTARC, TARC and the Texas State MARS, amateur radio has now been installed in the Fort Hood Emergency Operations Center, with 2 Meters and 440 capability, along with an antenna being mounted on the roof of Headquarters III Corps. This will provide their EOC communications operations with the adage of *"When All Else Fails."*



The radio equipment was directly ordered and purchased by the U.S. Army, and remains in their inventory as U.S. Government property. The set-up consists of a Kenwood TM-V71A VHF / UHF dual band mobile radio, mounted in a readily portable case.



The TM-V71A covers both the 2 Meter and 440 amateur bands, with the capability of 50 watts out on either band and features 1,000 split memory channels, the capability of receiving the NOAA Weather Band and a wide-band receiver capable of monitoring 118-524 MHz, and 800-1300 MHz and can simultaneously receive on both VHF & UHF.

Along with the radio, is a TNC KPC Plus USB unit, which gives the radio digital communications capability along with analog. Repeater frequencies programmed in to the radio provide excellent coverage to multiple repeater systems in Bell, Bosque, Burnet, Coryell, Falls, Lampasas, Milam and Williamson counties. Also programmed in are multiple fail-safe simplex frequencies for point-to-point communications.

Atop the roof of Headquarters III Corps, is a Diamond X50NA 144 / 440 MHz Base Antenna, having 4.5 dB gain on VHF and 7.2 dB gain on UHF. The antenna mount was custom made by Fort Hood's Directorate of Facility Engineers to suit the existing structures on the roof top. The antenna has a wind rating of 135 MPH.

Future plans are to install and set-up an identical configuration of radio and antenna at Fort Hood's alternate EOC, located on West Fort Hood on their airfield. The needed equipment has already been ordered and the location approved.

It's been a long approval process, but maybe sometimes, the turtle wins the race!





Winter to Continue

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa. — Thousands of people gathered overnight at Gobbler's Knob to await this Friday morning of February 2nd forecast of Pennsylvania's most famous groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil. They were treated to folk music and a fireworks display under cloudy skies, with temperatures hovering in the teens, while they waited.

The legend says if the furry rodent casts a shadow that day, winter will continue for another six weeks; if not, Spring will come early. All eyes were on his tree-trunk burrow when at just about 7:25 a.m., after a tap of a cane on the burrow, his door was opened, and Punxsutawney Phil – the Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, Weather Prophet Extraordinaire, National Treasure and most photographed Pennsylvanian, emerged.

He was held aloft to the glare of cameras and the cheers of thousands of spectators. He was then placed atop his burrow where he scampered about, scrutinizing every detail. Phil then uttered his prediction to a representative of the 'Inner Circle' in *groundhogese*, which the representative then translated Phil's words to the waiting crowd...

“My faithful followers, I could clearly see, my royal shadow of me. Six more weeks of winter, it shall be!”



Maybe this whole 'shadow' thing is backwards. Perhaps Phil sees his shadow more often than not because of all the TV lights trained on him. Think about it. When do we see shadows? You got it – when it's sunny out. So when Phil comes out of his hole, basks in the sun, or the glare of the TV camera lights, and spots his shadow on February 2nd, why should this portend a longer winter? If it's sunny and nice in early February, shouldn't this mean that spring could be right around the corner? And why, when it's cloudy and foreboding and Phil can't find his shadowy second self, do these circumstances call for a quick end to winter? Such a grey, ugly morning should mean more winter, not less.

Ah but that's logic. Still, Groundhog Day is rooted in ancient traditions. But if all those ancient believers flocked to the animal's hibernation hole, in the middle of winter, on a dark and dreary morning carrying a cart-load of candles, maybe all the candlelight helped cast the shadow - thus sealing the fate of those six more weeks of winter

Groundhog Day has existed for 132 years, not because it is the best meteorological science known to man but because it's fun. If you want to argue the science, you have lost the point of the day. And for those of us like you and me -- *The True Believers* -- we say, why ponder on the logic of things when you can rely on a groundhog to predict the weather? The most famous groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil.



Kelly Stanfield *Seeing the World through Ham Radio*

Blind since birth, Kelly Stanfield didn't let her disability stop her from becoming a ham radio operator. She was originally licensed as KDØIWM while in Kansas, then her family moved to Benton County, Missouri, where she soon found a group of people who enjoyed talking on the airwaves like herself. She joined the Benton County ARES and Twin Lakes Amateur Radio Club and attended meetings, contributed ideas and participated in weekly nets. She attained her General Class and then Extra Class licenses within a span of two months.

Kelly is a third generation Amateur Radio operator on her mother's side of the family. She became interested in ham radio through her grandfather, Harry Krout - WØYQG, who has since become a Silent Key. He enjoyed it and encouraged her as well. Wanting to keep up the family tradition, she recently acquired her grandfather's callsign.

After Kelly had obtained her General Class license, several members of the Benton County ARES and Twin Lakes Amateur Radio Club, were astounded by her capabilities and that she doesn't complain about her disability or use it as an excuse. They wanted to give her the ability to speak with people all over the world, so they raised the funds needed to purchase a Kenwood TS- 590s HF radio with a VGS-1 voice synthesizer board,



and a 30 Amp power supply - along with an 80-10 meter dipole antenna, coax, insulators and wire which was installed outside Kelly's home. Her first radio was a Kenwood TMV71A, which she still owns and uses to this day for local contacts and participating in Benton County ARES nets and activities.

In order for a sightless person to operate a complex radio like this, the radio must 'speak' when settings change. The Kenwood TS- 590 has this ability with the synthesizer board installed, which allows the radio to verbalize and interact with Kelly. It was the group's pleasure to present the completed station as a surprise to Kelly this past December and she was moved to tears by the gesture.

One of Miss Stanfield's most remarkable traits is her sense of humor. She can often be found spouting one-liners and having fun with her disability. Some of her favorites are: "Long time, no see!" "Something bad happened? I didn't see anything!" and "Looks fine to me!"

Kelly says, "You never know who you are going to talk to. Sometimes I call out to a specific person but many times I just call out to see who is listening and who wants to talk to me."

So while you're prowling the bands out there, and you happen to hear Kelly - WØYQG give her a call and find out what she is up to now.

MDZhB "The Buzzer"

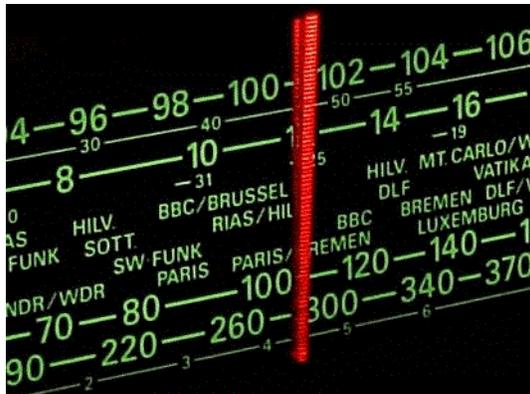
In the middle of a Russian swampland, not far from the city of St. Petersburg, is a rectangular iron gate. Beyond its rusted bars is a collection of radio towers, abandoned buildings and power lines bordered by a dry-stone wall. This sinister location is the focus of a mystery which stretches back to the height of the Cold War.

It is thought to be the headquarters of radio station **MDZhB**, that no-one has ever claimed to run. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for the last three-and-a-half decades, it's been broadcasting a dull, monotonous tone. Every few seconds it's joined by a second sound, like some ghostly ship sounding its foghorn. Then the drone continues. Once or twice a week, a man or woman will read out some words in Russian, such as "dinghy" or "farming specialist" and that's it. It's so enigmatic, it's as if it was designed with conspiracy theorists in mind.

There's no shortage of theories to explain what the Buzzer might be for – ranging from keeping in touch with submarines to communing with aliens. One such idea is that it's acting as a "Dead Hand" signal; in the event Russia is hit by a nuclear attack, the drone will stop and automatically trigger a retaliation.

The frequency is thought to belong to the Russian military, though they've never actually admitted this. It first began broadcasting at the close of the Cold War, when communism was in decline. Bizarrely, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, rather than shutting down, the station's activity sharply increased.

Many believe that the constant drone is just a marker, saying "this frequency is mine" to stop people from using it. It only becomes a truly active station in moments of crisis, such as if Russia were invaded. Then it would function as a way to instruct their worldwide spy network and military forces on standby in remote areas. It seems they've already been practicing. In 2013, they issued a special message, 'COMMAND 135 ISSUED' that was said to be a test message for full combat readiness.



Anyone, anywhere in the world can listen in, simply by tuning a radio to the frequency of 4625 kHz. The station has an online following numbering in the tens of thousands, who know it affectionately as "the Buzzer". It joins two similar mystery stations, the "Pip" {-which transmits on 5448 kHz during the daytime, and 3756 kHz at night-} and the "Squeaky Wheel" {-which transmits on 5473 kHz during the daytime, and 3828 kHz at night-}.

Their listening fans readily admit themselves, they have absolutely no idea what they are listening to. In fact, no one does.