

“Field Day” for Tyler County radio connects to world

by Michael G. Maness

Tyler County Booster, 6-27-19, 2B

“Field Day” kicked off for the Tyler County Amateur Radio Association at precisely 1 p.m., Saturday, June 22. At the end of 24 hours on Sunday at 1 p.m., their farthest connections had touched Michigan.

This year they met at the Chester City Park, just west of the town off Hwy. 287.

TCARA President Robert Caruthers, V.P. Jimmy Caruthers, TCARA Secretary Chuck Petri, Guy Glimp, and Michael Martin helped set up and get all going. For most of the night, it was Petri and the Caruthers brothers.

A large tent provided by Chester Mayor Floyd Petri helped shade them, and he dropped by twice to support and cheer them all on, himself a member and long-time radio enthusiast.

Hot—it was very hot, but a good continuous breeze eased the swelter.

They had three stations running all night. In emergencies, the TCARA can have communications set up for about \$10 in about ten minutes.

“Solar flare,” said Chuck Petri prevented them from their usual international connections. Yet they were able to connect to most of middle America reaching as far as Michigan and Florida.

TCARA supports Amateur Radio Emergency Service to provide support in emergencies. That makes these radio persons all the more valuable, even unsung heroes in an age of so many taking so much for granted. Too often most take our infrastructure for granted. But in a terrorist attack or natural disaster, we can lose all ability to communicate with cell phones, landlines, and the internet. But nothing can keep these radios down.

Martin mentioned that Tyler County Emergency Director Ken Jobe had asked about extending their emergency AM notification. Interestingly, there is an antenna at the Woodville Police Station that can broadcast on AM 1670 for about four miles. Jobe can use his cell phone to send a looping critical message—a vital asset in an emergency—and he was interested in expanding this county wide. Mayor Petri mentioned that he, too, had an AM broadcast ability from his home near the Chester City Hall, and it appears that more is to come for this vital emergency resource in the months ahead.



TCARA began over six years ago, and today Petri maintains their vast website, WD5TYL.org—a real labor of love for this radio expert.

Points are given for connections and the distance between the connections. All the while they refine and learn more about the radio processes. Extra points for the Field Day are given when public and elected officials make an appearance.

There are three levels of FCC licenses for radio operators: entry-level Technician License, mid-level General License, and the top Extra Class License. You will see some older hands with the “Advanced License” now superseded by the Extra Class. The FCC extends operating privileges commensurate with each class that includes extending the band width for higher licenses and helping ensure that operators understand the laws and operate safely.

TCARA is part of the American Radio Relay League, est. in 1914, hosts ARRL Field Day every year for a 27-hour marathon of international communication that crisscrosses the globe. The goal is “To work as many stations as possible on any and all amateur bands ... and to learn to operate in abnormal situations” (from ARRL.org). Always on the fourth Saturday in June at precisely 1800 or 6 p.m. Zulu or Greenwich Mean Time, which is set at the Prime Meridian in Greenwich, England—in Woodville it was 1 p.m. because of daylight savings.

The TCARA meets every first Thursday at 7 p.m. at 201 Veteran’s Way in Woodville, Texas. Visitors are welcome, and for a load of info see WD5TYL.org.



Visit their site www.WD5TYL.org