



THE BRASS KEY



January 2024

A Publication of the Central Louisiana Amateur Radio Club



The BRASS KEY is published monthly as its official journal by the Central Louisiana Amateur Radio Club, P. O. Box 4652, Pineville, LA. 71361. CLARC yearly membership dues (including a subscription to the BRASS KEY), is \$30. Editor/Publisher: Lisa Coleman, KW5LC; (318) 466-5623; clarcsec@yahoo.com. Members may submit texts for possible publication to the editor, Lisa Coleman, KW5LC, by hard copy at a meeting or by email at clarcsec@yahoo.com. Space and printing limitations may affect the appearance of any item submitted. Photo submissions should be sent in either TIFF, JPEG, or GIF formats, by email. All submissions must be turned in to the secretary by the third Tuesday of the month.

2024 CLARC Officers:

President: Terry Bradshaw AG5H
318-308-4342

Vice President: Jeff Foley KI5HVK

Secretary: Lisa Coleman, KW5LC
clarcsec@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Erin "Fred" Huddleston, W5FRD

Board Member at Large: David Nolan K5TS
K5TS@arrl.net

Past President: Kirk Garber W5KKG

Webmaster: Chris Olivier, KI5LOX
(337) 853 – 1527, chrisolivier2019@gmail.com

Amateur Radio License Exam Coordinator
Terry Bradshaw AG5H – 318-308-4342

The Prez Sez . . .

Words from our President, Terry Bradshaw, AG5H

HELLO CENTRAL LOUISIANA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB!

First, I'd like to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Now, I would like to thank each and every one of you for entrusting myself and the other fine board members with the leadership of our great club! So THANK YOU! This year, we hope to accomplish quite a bit. A hot topic is recruiting. How to reach new HAMS and younger HAMS. We've also been discussing a few fund-raising options, more club activities, such as Parks on the Air, and even a weekly rag chew net. (I foresee in the near future, a real fun net coming our way! Just a teaser, I can't spoil the surprise.)

Due to conflict in scheduling with the City of Pineville, we have rescheduled the January meeting from the 2nd to the 9th. At this meeting we will be discussing the plans for Winter Field Day.

The main thing we ask of you this year, the members of CLARC, is your input and your participation. My promise to the club is we will strive to make this the best possible club we can! We just ask that ya'll participate with us and reap the benefits of our labor!

We will have membership renewal forms at the Jan 9th meeting and will be accepting dues for 2024. Bring a friend and enjoy some fellowship!

We will also be taking up donations in honor of our late friend, Mr. Jim Bookter, N5NVP. We ask your generosity in this, as we hope to donate the funds to the ARRL Amateur Radio Scholarship Fund in his name. Jim was a big proponent of this scholarship.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting!

73,
Terry – AG5H
CLARC President
318-308-4342

Thoughts from our 2024 Board Member at Large, David K5TS:

To our CLARC membership:

First, thank you for allowing me to be your Member at Large for 2024. As I understand it, my role is to represent club membership at the board meetings. Since the board has had its first “very productive” meeting, we are all looking forward to the coming year and having some rewarding and educational times together. Your new board is already working as a team and there are tons of ideas being respectfully presented for discussion.

The synergy is amazing as this board interacts and learns how we each think about club functions and responsibilities. In my new role, I am interested in what you guys would like to see, and what you expect from us. Help us to help you. But we cannot do it alone. If the board members are the only ones involved, then our club will be less successful. We need your thoughts, ideas, input, guidance and very often your understanding to be as effective as we can be. One of our primary goals is to be completely transparent in all that we do. And we will endeavor to make decisions in the best interest of CLARC, to the best of our abilities.

Please let me hear from you. What will help you be a better ham? What are your interests? There are so many ham related activities out there to experience; POTA, Digital, CW, DX, Contesting, Satellites, VHF, Antenna building, Experimentation, and Elmering.

There is some real talent and wisdom within our ranks, and we old guys love to share our experiences. I’m a firm believer that each of us is a 10 at something! Please share your knowledge and talents with the rest of us. We need each of you, whether you’ve been a ham for 62 years, or just started studying for your tech.

2024 here we come!

73

David - K5TS
Board Member at Large
K5TS@arrl.net



Prior Public Proceedings

Lisa Coleman, KW5LC , CLARC Secretary

There were no general meeting minutes
taken due to the Christmas Banquet.
Happy New Year!



TREASURER'S REPORT

Erin Huddleston, W5FRD, Treasurer

Due to Christmas and the changing over to the 2024 Board of Officers,
the Treasurer's Report will be available at a later date.

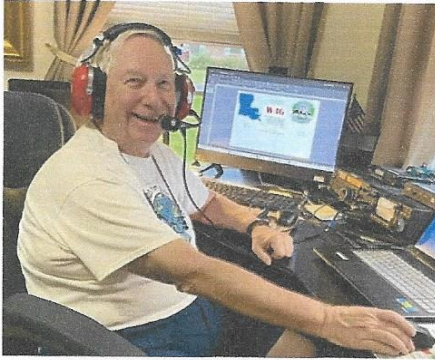
REMINDER!!

Membership dues are due in January! Full membership is still \$30 and \$2
per family member. Dues can be paid to the treasurer, Erin Huddleston
W5FRD at the club meeting or mailed to our post office box. Checks
payable to: Central Louisiana Amateur Radio Club, P. O. Box 4652,
Pineville, LA. 71361.

NOTE TO ARRL MEMBERS:

**January 2 – ARRL Section Manager elections begin.
Don't forget! CLARC's own Houston Polson N5YS
will be running for Louisiana Section Manager!**

**Check your mail boxes for your ARRL Ballots,
which will be mailed out no later than January 2nd!
Please mail your ballots as soon as possible to be
counted by February 16th deadline.**



CLARC Members,

I'm Houston, N5YS, and I want to be your Section Manager.

The League notified me in mid-December that my nomination petition for Section Manager had been accepted and I'm officially a candidate for Section Manager. They also informed me there are multiple candidates. What they didn't say – how many others and who they are.

With multiple candidates, an election must be held. That election, in accordance with the ARRL Bylaws, will occur starting the first week of January 2024 and ending in mid-February 2024.

Ballots will be mailed from ARRL Headquarters no later than January 2, 2024 to full members of record as of December 8, 2023, which was the closing date for nominations. For a ballot to be counted, it must be received by 4:00 pm EST on February 16, 2024. Ballots will be counted on February 20, 2024. I expect to be notified of the results soon thereafter.

A ballot will be mailed to you. Electronic ballots WILL NOT be used for this election. The ballot package you receive will include the ballot, a return envelope, and a 300-word statement from each candidate setting forth the candidate's qualifications along with a black and white photo of the candidate.

This is where I need your support. Please mail your ballot back as soon as possible after receiving it. It takes 4 to 5 days to get a letter from central Louisiana to Newington, CT.

I fully expect total votes cast to be in the low to mid 200s. That means every vote is important.

Please, take a moment to vote, and I hope you'll VOTE FOR ME!

73,
Houston
N5YS

Review of the DX Commander Classic HF Multiband Vertical Antenna

Posted by Mark Haverstock, K8MSH on October 13, 2023 at 2:54 pm (From On All Bands.com)

For POTA and Field Day, nothing beats a telescoping fiberglass pole vertical antenna for simplicity and quick deployment. Our club's 40 meter FD SSB antenna was up in less than 15 minutes, ready to make our first contacts.

But what about multiband versions for portable or base use? DX Commander founder and director Callum McCormick, M0MCX, came up with an interesting twist on the traditional fan dipole antenna—gathering resonant wire radiators around a telescoping pole and balancing them with a reasonably compact counterpoise.

Like other DX Commander antennas, a fiberglass telescopic mast (in this case 32.8 feet high) is the cornerstone of the DX Commander Classic HF Multiband Vertical Antenna described here. Metal and milled plastic parts help support the antenna elements, which are spaced around the mast. All antenna elements are essentially quarter-wave or 5/8th-wave verticals, all coupled into a central feedpoint. They're kept snug with shock cord attached through several support plates.

The Build

The DX Commander Classic I tested is a lightweight, relatively easy-to-build vertical antenna that covers 2m to 40m (80m in an optional inverted L configuration). The antenna kit user guide, available online, is full of illustrations and helpful tips for reference. However, I'd highly recommend viewing Callum's How to Build instructional video as your first introduction.



Assembly consists mostly of cutting wires to the correct length and then trimming the length afterward to achieve best match. I found the lengths recommended in the manual were very close to those we determined after tuning. Remember that the number and length of radials used will also affect tuning. Aim for more, shorter radials rather than longer ones. According to Callum, radials between 3m and 5m in length will be sufficient.

Mechanical construction involves attaching hardware and the SO-239 connector to the element and radial plates. Fork connectors need to be attached and soldered to the radials and vertical wires attached to the mast. These, in turn, are connected to the metal plates at the bottom of the antenna using bolts and wing nuts.

Slip and Slide

One characteristic common to all lightweight fiberglass poles is the inevitable slip and slide. No matter how tightly you twist the sections to lock them as you raise the mast

skyward, they will sometimes slip after being raised to full height and securely guyed. That happened to us during a recent Saturday at our OSPOTA activation (the Buckeye POTA). Electrical tape around the joints didn't provide quite enough protection.

Fortunately, a workable solution is provided with the DX Commander Classic—the stay-up kit. You'll find nylon band-style clamps among the accessories included. These are fitted above each joint (the smaller diameter side). They're also used to stabilize the wire plates at the bottom of the mast.

For permanent installs, you need to go a bit above and beyond the kit to do additional guying, reinforce the mast, and anchor the bottom to prevent slipping. There are several YouTube videos that show how to make bottom anchors from PVC and other materials. I'm looking forward to setting one up at our Arizona location to test how it survives winds and UV exposure over time.

Setup

Setting up the antenna for the first time was really straightforward, especially with two people. Basically, you need to mark out the zone for the three guy lines, which are attached to stakes driven into the ground. Next, you extend the pole out horizontally and add the paracord and elements. Here is where you have two options—as the pole gets longer, you can slide the spreaders onto the pole one at a time as you go, or you can just extend all the sections and friction-lock into place and then slide the spreaders on in a single pass. We opted for the latter.

In addition to the friction of the pole holding everything up, we contemplated adding the clamps, but couldn't find the proper size nut driver. That's something we'll remember the next time. As I mentioned earlier, the first round of electrical tape didn't work, so we tried a second time. Not counting the repeat setup, we figured it would take about 15-20 minutes to put up and the same to tear down, including coiling up the wire, paracord, and radials.

Final Thoughts

All in all, the DX Commander Classic HF Vertical Antenna is lightweight, solid, and covers the bands specified. It's reasonably priced for what you get and has plenty of support courtesy of Callum's YouTube videos. Be sure to secure the pole sections to avoid do-overs.

The complete antenna kit weighs around eight pounds complete with radial and element wires and guying, and is easily backpack-able (if you strap the pole to the outside). It's ideal for longer-term SOTA or POTA trips, Field Day, or other times when you need more than a random wire. It operates as advertised, tunes up well, has a sufficiently wide bandwidth, and deploys and packs up quickly so you can enjoy more operating time.



FROM THE SHACK



Members are free to submit articles for "From the Shack!" We want to hear about your shack or other things of ham interest! Tell us about your operating conditions and submit your photos to Lisa, KW5LC, at clarcsec@yahoo.com



A special thanks goes out to everyone who attended our 2023 Christmas Banquet. Our outgoing president, Kirk W5KKG, turned the CLARC reins over to 2024 president Terry AG5H and the 2024 Board of Officers, wishing them the best of luck for a productive 2024 for CLARC.



**Congratulations to CLARC member David Nolan, K5TS!
David placed first in Call Area 5 and first in Louisiana in the
2023 North American QSO Party!**



**WINTER FIELD DAY 2024 is
FAST APPROACHING!**

January 27 – 28, 2024

Mark your calendar!!



Winter Field Day 2023



ZOOM Link for all CLARC meetings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88070112230?pwd=bjE3bDI2dnZQSGtBWjFVeFNhbVcyQT09>

For license exam information: Amateur Radio License Exam Coordinator - Terry Bradshaw AG5H – 318-308-4342

**** MEETING DATE CHANGE!!! Tuesday, January 9, 2023 – CLARC**

January Meeting – Discussion on the upcoming Winter Field Day Association Field Day. Location – Kees Park Community Center. Meeting will begin at 6:30. Doors open at 5:30 for fellowship. **Reminder folks that January is dues month!** Membership is \$30 for full member, \$2.00 for additional family member. Please help us by having exact amount at the meeting!

**** January 19, 2024 - CLARC Friday Fellowship Lunch** – Time: 11:00 AM. Location TBA.

****January 27 - 28 – Winter Field Day Association WINTER FIELD DAY 2024 - <https://winterfeldday.org/> More information closer to the event!**

****February 6, 2024 – CLARC February Meeting -**

Location – Kees Park Community Center. Meeting will begin at 6:30. Doors open at 5:30 for fellowship. Reminder folks that it is time for membership renewal, if you haven't already! Membership is \$30 for full member, \$2.00 for additional family member.

****February 16, 2024 - CLARC Friday Fellowship Lunch – Time: 11:00 AM. Location TBA.**