



THE BRASS KEY



November 2023

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.

2023 CLARC Officers:

President: Kirk Garber, W5KKG
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Vice-President: Will Butterfield, KI5IPJ
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Treasurer: Stacey Sonneland, KG5KGU
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Past President: John Dempsey, N5CM
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Amateur Radio License Exam Coordinator
Terry Bradshaw AG5H – 318-308-4342



The Prez Sez . . .

Words from our President, Kirk Garber, W5KKG

Not available at time of publication.



Prior Public Proceedings

Lisa Coleman, KW5LC , CLARC Secretary

Minutes of the CLARC General Meeting, October 3, 2023

In the absence of the president, Kirk Garber W5KKG, the presider for this evening's meeting was outgoing president John Dempsey N5CM.

Those present: Allen Henderson KV5O, Lisa Coleman KW5LC, Don Broussard AI5MZ, Pauline Jordan K5PIQ, Stephen Peters N5EKC, Albert Castete KI5KJM, Jim Bookter N5NVP, Mike Canady N5GJQ, Chris Wright KI5HDW, Don Ward KI5AJV, David Nolan K5TS, Terry Bradshaw AG5H, Kevin Walker KG5SGI, Kenneth Walker KF5YRN, Erin Huddleston W5FRD, Stacey Sonneland KG5KGU, marlin Thompson KG5RPZ, Scott Wren KD5DFI, Jeff Foley KI5HVK, Michael Callahan N5MJC, Perry Nelson N5PRN, Susuan Nelson N5CLZ, Richard Lundy WA5CAV, Jack Brosette W5ETL, viewing via Zoom Richard Brannen, Jr. KA3JCA, Luke Butterfield KI5RTS, Dr. Heidi Haviland KK6SZW.

Pledge of Allegiance and introductions were made.

Prayer and welfare:

Marlin KG5RPZ – his father is in the hospital. Asks prayers that his father be compliant with the doctors. Our prayer was led by Mike N5GJQ.

Our presentation this evening was by former CLARC member and NASA Planetary Scientist Dr. Heidi Haviland KK6SZW. A formal introduction was made by John N5CM. Dr. Haviland spoke about Planetary Science, upcoming lunar missions including Luna25, Chandrayaan-3), Artemis, and Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS).

In particular, two radio astronomy payloads called Radio wave Observations at the Lunar Surface of the photoelectron Sheath (ROLSSES) and Lunar Surface Electromagnetics Experiment (LuSEE). We also discussed a mission concept called Farside Array for Radio Science Investigations of the Dark ages and Exoplanets (FARSIDE) for a 10 km 128 pairs of dipole antennas robotically deployed radio telescope on the lunar farside. This talk was well received and provided a lot of interest in upcoming lunar missions.

Following Dr. Haviland's presentation, the business meeting portion of the General Meeting was held.

Butch Castete, the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the nominees for the 2024 Board of Officers. They are as follows:

President – Terry Bradshaw AG5H (Unopposed)

Vice President - Scott Wren KD5DFL

Treasurer – Erin Huddleston W5FRD (Unopposed)

Secretary – Lisa Coleman KW5LC (Unopposed)

Member at Large – David Nolan K5TS (Unopposed)

In order for Erin Huddleston W5FRD to be eligible for the Treasurer's position, according to CLARC By-Laws, (Sec 4:1), she has to have been a member of CLARC for 12 consecutive months. Erin did not meet this criteria. The By-laws state that the membership can vote to suspend this (Sec 7:1). The motion was made by Jack Brossette W5ETL and seconded by Scott KD5DFL that Erin be allowed to run for the Treasurer's position for 2024. The membership voted in favor unanimously and Erin will accept the nomination for Treasurer unopposed.

The floor was then opened for any nominations for the 2024 Board of Officers. Terry Bradshaw AG5H made an additional nomination for the position of vice president, Jeff Foley KI5HVK. No other nominations were made from the floor and the motion was made by Steve K5EKC and Michael N5MJC that the nominations from the floor be closed.

John N5CM next brought up the subject of CLARC equipment that has been stored at the home of Don Ward KI5AJV for the past few years. Don has kept CLARC's equipment in very good shape and has made many repairs to our gear while it has been in his care. Don has recently suffered two robberies of personal items on his property and he is concerned about the safety of CLARC's equipment in his possession. He has asked CLARC to locate another location several times over the past few months and a new location has not been found. Don wants to be relieved of any liability should any of CLARC's property be stolen while in his possession on his property. The membership voted unanimously to relieve Don of any liability while any CLARC equipment is stored on his property. This is to include all CLARC property in his care. John N5CM again stressed the need to a suitable neutral location as soon as possible.

Terry AG5H asked for a clarification as to the months that a member must be a member in which to run for an office in the Board of Directors. His nomination from the floor for the vice president's position, Jeff Foley KI5HVK, will not have the required 12 months of membership before the November election date, but will have the required months by the December meeting, in which the new officers will take their office. It was suggested by Don KI5AJV that another vote by the membership would be formally taken to suspend the by-laws (Sec 7:1), as was done for the treasurer's position. This was seconded by Chris KI5HDW. The membership voted unanimously to suspend the by-laws, thus allowing Jeff Foley KI5HVK to run for the vice president's position.

A run off between Jeff Foley KI5HVK and Scott Wren for the Vice President's position will take place at the November 7, 2023 CLARC General Meeting. All other officers' positions will be unopposed.

The meeting adjourned around 8:00.

Lisa Coleman
KW5LC
Secretary

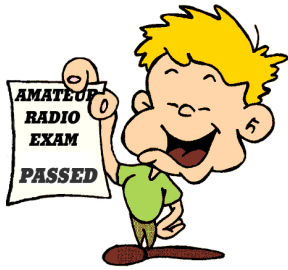
CLARC 2023 Christmas Banquet

Tuesday, December 5, 2023
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Golden Corral Buffet and Grill Banquet Room
501 MacArthur Dr, Alexandria, LA
(In front of Southerlands HomeBase)

Price: \$20/adult for buffet and drink, price includes tax.

There will be NO KEES PARK MEETING in December!



No exams were given in October!



TREASURER'S REPORT

Stacey Sonneland, KG5KGU

Treasurer's Report

Stacey Sonneland, KG5KGU, Club Treasurer

Financial Report for Oct 2023

Revenue

Dues

50/50

\$ 14.00

Misc

Total Revenues

\$ 14.00

Expenditures

Equipment

Insurance

Fellowship

Maintenance and Repairs

Office - P.O Box Rental

Winter Field Day

Summer Field Day

Utilities

Web Hosting and domain

Godaddy

Scholarship

Legal - Annual Report to Sec of State

Baofeng Radios

Misc.

Total Expenditures

\$ -

Revenues - Expenditures

\$ 14.00

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



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



Rag Chewing: A Lost Art

Mark Haverstock, K8MSH

How long are your QSOs? If you’re a contester, they’re likely done in seconds. Operating FT8, your semi-automated QSOs exchange call signs, locations, and signal reports—all in about 90 seconds. Those seeking WAS (Worked All States award) may keep conversations short in order to find more states. What happened to casual chats on the HF bands or your local repeater?

Not What You Think

I asked my 15-year-old grandson and his 40-something father what rag chewing meant. I got an “Ewww, gross” from one and a blank look from the other. Neither is a ham.

The phrase “chewing the rag” is known to have been used since the Middle Ages. One explanation says “chew” was slang for “talk,” and “rag” is derived from “fat” or is a reference to the tongue. “Chewing the rag” thus became a phrase meaning casual conversation, frequently while sitting around a meal, and later, when chatting on the radio.

“Ragchew” refers to an informal conversation on amateur radio that generally involves two or more people. Generally, rag chewing involves talking about hobbies, interests, and current news. It’s common for these conversations to veer off topic or to take on an informal and laidback tone.

It’s usually considered a recreational and social activity that is both for enjoyment and camaraderie. But rag chewing can also be educational since it can provide users with the opportunity to practice their radio communication skills, share ideas and knowledge about the hobby, and find out about new ham radio activities.

Rag Chewer Awards

The Rag Chewers Club (RCC) was one of the easiest awards a ham could earn. To qualify, you only needed to provide evidence that you made a single radio contact that lasted more than 30 minutes. It was created to encourage hams to go beyond a short signal report/location QSO and actually engage in a friendly, meaningful conversation.

Its original intent was to offer a warm welcome into ham radio by offering an award certificate that would be prized, yet obtainable by newcomers. All you had to do was apply and include verification of the QSO—it was free.

For years the award had been offered by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). However, in 2004 it was discontinued, probably due to the cost of the award. The award was rescued by The Society for the Preservation of Amateur Radio (SPAR), which now has been disbanded. Some other groups have picked up the slack, including the Straight Key Century Club (SKCC).

About five years ago, the ARRL was reconsidering sponsorship and took a survey of hams in November 2018. However, there has been no mention since then about an RCC revival on the ARRL's website.

What Can You Talk About?

Your first contact can be a bit intimidating. For that reason, it might be a good idea to arrange a QSO with a friend or someone in your radio club.

After the call sign exchange, signal report, op name and location, the usual topics include local weather, equipment you're using (radio, antenna, mic, etc.), and then whatever you feel like discussing. Other subjects might include hobbies, how long you've been a ham, occupation, pets, and more.

Discussions of politics, religion, and other potentially controversial topics could attract controversy and provoke arguments on the air. If it looks like your conversation is going sideways, it might be a good idea to change the topic or conclude the contact.

You might be fortunate enough to make contact with a foreign (DX) station. Some speak limited English, so take that into consideration. If they are conversant in English (or you are conversant in their native language), you can always tell them a little about yourself and your local area and ask them about theirs. Or you could tell them what ham radio is like in the U.S., as well as discuss your involvement in amateur radio clubs and organizations.

Continuing the Conversation

Many contacts that take place on the HF ham radio bands are what we call “rubber stamp” contacts. These QSOs consist of a set format and do not normally involve long conversations. There are a number of reasons for this, such as contests that have time constraints, the limitations of some digital modes, or crowded DX pileups.

However, many ham radio operators like to talk about far more than is contained within the basic contact. Often technical discussions may be heard, or ham stations may be describing the part of the world where they live. Maybe you’ll connect with a gregarious ham and have that half-hour talk.

Fellow rag chewers, let’s stamp out the rubber stamp QSO!



Word Origins: What does “DX” Mean?

Posted by On July 25, 2020

A remnant from the early days of wired communication, “DX” is telegraphic shorthand for “distance” or “distant.” It is believed that the X stood for “exchange.” When Ham operators say they are “working DX,” it means they are trying to contact a faraway station, or for shortwave listeners, attempting to tune in distant broadcasts.

What is deemed “distant” may depend on the frequency and your area of interest. For example, an amateur on the VHF/UHF bands (mostly used for local or regional contacts) or an operator using low power from, say, Florida, may consider reaching a station in Colorado a DX contact. Other 6 and 2M fans, using favorable propagation conditions, reach stations on the other side of the world to earn honors such as the ARRL VHF/UHF Century Club Award. For HF enthusiasts, DXing often takes the form of making QSOs with rare stations many thousands of miles away in an attempt to “Work the World,” earn rarefied status (e.g., the DXCC Honor Roll), and amass impressive collections of QSL cards.

Up your DX game!

Further DXing comments by Edward Doyle, KJ4NRN:

Even when starting small DXing can be fun for all.

In just over 2 years of being a ham, the one thing I’ve found that I can do for hours on end without getting bored is DXing.

I've found that some hams think DXing is too hard, QSLing too expensive or that they don't have the right equipment. DXing is something that everyone can enjoy and nobody says that you have to QSL to be a DXer. Some DXers I've spoken with have logged over 200 countries but don't have a single QSL card.

I have a nice setup (mainly due to the generosity of some friends) in the shack, but, being 15 years old, I don't have money to throw around nor do I have enough experience in ham radio to be an expert. So how did I end up with 176 countries in my log?

You simply need to remember these five simple rules:

1. Be sure you always listen before transmitting
2. Make sure you are always courteous
3. Remember that there is usually propagation to somewhere
4. Learn when propagation conditions are best.
5. Always be patient

If you already follow these rules, you have 99% of what you need.

DXing Tools

For those who don't have tons of time, a computer can be helpful to pick up some DX spots. [A DX spot is a website listing that shows the call sign of the DX station, his frequency, the time the DX was heard and usually some comment about the DX station. — Ed.] Some good spot sites are DXwatch.com and DX summit.fi.

Your equipment doesn't matter much for the first 50 to 75 countries. If you are very patient and willing to learn a little technique, you can stick with low power to a wire antenna for the earlier contacts. Of course, the easiest way to go is with a 100 W transceiver and a dipole or good vertical antenna.

There are many good books out there about DXing, including The DXCC Handbook and The Complete DXer. Both are available from the ARRL® and other ham radio catalogs.

1

While not necessary, an Amateur Extra class license will open up many more frequencies. On 80, 40, 20 and 15 meters most of the good DX hangs out below the

General class segment of the band (which certainly makes the General class license holders mad). Even so, I have worked 138 countries with my General class license and you can too. Seventeen and 20 meters will be your best bands for now and 10 meters when the sunspots really come back. In fact, once the sunspot cycle kicks in again, even you Technicians can work DX on 10 meters. When I was a Technician I got over 30 countries the first year, only on 10 meters. So that just goes to show that you don't need a General class license for DXing.

QSLing can be easy. I won't go into detail about the direct process, but via the "buro" is cheap and easy if you are willing to wait for a reply.² The ARRL's Logbook of the World (LoTW) is free. Not all DXers use LoTW, but some DXers have earned DXCC using only LoTW. Though not accepted for DXCC, eQSL is fun and easy.

So, to the people who think they are having enough fun on 2 meters, get out there and try something new — like DXing. You'll find yourself captivated. It's too much to miss out on. By the end of this article, you should be saying, "If that 15 year old kid can do it — so can I!"

So, the next time you hear a DX station calling CQ, don't just listen. Throw your call sign out there and have some fun.

NOTE REGARDING MEMBER CALL SIGN CHANGES:

Reminder to members: Please let us know if you change your call sign! We need that information for our records and the other members would like to know as well!



**** November 7** – CLARC November Meeting - Doors open at 5:30 for license exams and fellowship. Meeting to begin at 6:30 – new time, remember! Election of 2023 Board of Officers.
November Program: Waterproofing Coax, David Nolan K5TS

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

**** November 17 – CLARC November Fellowship Lunch – Time: 11:00, Location:** Jim Deggys - Wood-Fired Brick Oven Personal Pizzas

<http://www.jimdeggys.com>

Central Louisiana's Brick Oven Personal Pizzas and salads, etc. Pineville. 3497 LA-28. Skyline Plaza Shopping Center, Pineville, LA (This is a half mile east of the Super One on HWY 28, Pineville, on the left.)

**** December 5 – CLARC 2023 Christmas Banquet –** No Kees Park

Meeting this month!

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Golden Corral Buffet and Grill Banquet Room

501 MacArthur Dr. Alexandria, LA

(In front of Southerlands HomeBase)

Price: \$20/adult for buffet and drink, price includes tax.

****December 15 – Friday Fellowship Lunch – TIME:11:00, LOCATION:**
TBA

****January 27 - 28 – Winter Field Day Association WINTER FIELD DAY 2024 -** <https://winterfeldday.org/>