



## Trains, Traction, Tallow and Sand

*Dave Davis, WB5WIA*

*Life Member, Director 2004-06*

I've just come back from a weekend spend with Robert Crossman KC5ATX and his fine crew at the Texas State Railroad in Rusk Texas. For those unfamiliar, the TSRR is now a short line railroad operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. They operate two excursion trains each day, and Robert is the General Superintendent. One train departs the Rusk depot, and the other Departs the Palestine depot and they pass in the middle. Each train stops in the "foreign" depot for a lunch break for the passengers (there's a deli at each end, but most people picnic), and then at 2pm the trains begin their return journey, again passing in the middle. When the TSRR started in 1976, there were several steam engines, and both trains huffed and puffed on their daily journey.

Fast forward to 2006. Today there is only one operational steam engine, and the opposing train is pulled by a modified Alco diesel. If the State Legislature has their way, the operational funds will be reallocated to other state needs, and the TSRR will become a static display. There are petitions on the web site to sign for your support, [www.texasstaterailroad.com](http://www.texasstaterailroad.com).

Now what does this have to do with ham radio? In talking with KC5ATX he was describing sand as the train engine's best friend. The train is pulled along by a few tiny steel on steel contact patches. If there is any loss in adhesion between the drive wheels and the rails, the wheels spin around and the train goes nowhere. The loss of traction keeps the train from getting anywhere. Robert also tells of train robbers that used to wipe tallow or other grease on the rails as the tracks went up a grade. When the drivers hit the tallow, the wheels would spin mightly, but the train would slow down and eventually come to a stop, allowing the train robbers easy access to the passengers and the freight.

To allow the engines to gain more traction, the railroads installed tanks of sharp sand on the locomotives, and the engineer could blow a stream of sand onto the rails just ahead of the drivers to provide additional traction. The Engineer had to be careful to not give the engine too much throttle lest he abrade the rails and driver wheels, but with some skill and sand, the train would again pick up

*-Cont on page 4-*

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*From the President's Desk*



Dear friends,

Well we are on the cusp of another Summer Meeting in Austin, where the people are weird but the food is not. (For the uninformed, the unofficial motto of Austin is 'Keep Austin Weird'.) I look forward to seeing many of you at Austin Summerfest in early August.

We have several important business items to address at this meeting, including our annual election of Directors. We have four Director positions that are up for election this year, and anyone who is interested in running is encouraged to submit a biography of 200 words or less to the Secretary, Mark Stennett. We will try to send out an election newsletter shortly before the Summer Meeting so everyone has a list of candidates and their bios.

One of the business items concerns the way we hold our elections. I encourage everyone to be informed about this proposed change to our Articles of Incorporation and to be present to vote on it as you see fit.

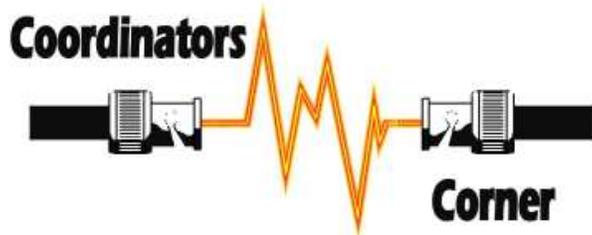
I must keep this brief as I am on vacation right now but trying to meet the newsletter deadline. However, I must take this moment to say thanks for your support during this past year, my first year as Society President. I think we have a lot of work ahead of us still in the Society, and I look forward to continuing to serve if re-elected.

Regards,

John Johnson N5NH  
President, Texas VHF-FM Society, 2005-2006

**Texas VHF-FM Society Standing Committees**

Frequency coordination:	Paul Baumgardner, W5PSB
Database Committee:	Eric Schmidt, KA5WMY
Technical Committee:	Kent Britain WA5VJB
Trustee (W5OGZ):	Jay Maynard K5ZC
Publications Committee:	Dave Davis, WB5WIA



**Notes from the State Frequency Coordinator**  
*Paul Baumgardner, W5PSB*

This has been a very busy time for coordination activities.

Let me take a moment and make some announcements relating to the Coordination committee. For the immediate future we are going to combine Zone 3 and Zone 4 coordination zones. We will officially keep both zones active, but have one coordinator responsible for the combined area. As relates to Coordination Committee personnel, Michael Lay — N5PTN has agreed to take over the combined Zone 3 (Austin and San Antonio) and Zone 4 (South Texas) coordination duties. That places a central Texas amateur operator near the trustees that he has to work with on coordinations. Paul Gilbert — KE5ZW, who has many ties to West Texas, has agreed to take over the Zone 5 (West Texas). Many thanks to Paul Finch — WB5IDM for handling Zone 3 for the last six months and Lance Tolar — KD5EFB for handling Zone 5 over the last 9 months.

There has been some questions relating to where the Society will coordinate D-STAR activity. The current plan is that if you have a current coordination, that you can change the emission type on that coordination and stay on the same channel. If a new coordination is being planned, then we will utilize some 1 mhz split channels in VHF such as 146.45-146.50 output, 147.45-147.50 input on 10 khz spacing and 440.525 - 440.725 output and 445.525 - 445.725 input on either 10 or 12.5 khz spacing for UHF. Please work with your zone coordinator if you are planning any D-STAR or other digital emission repeater systems. I would like to recognize Jim McClellan — N5MIJ and Eric Schmidt — KA5WMY for their work on D-STAR coordination issues.

Also, Eric Schmidt — KA5WMY was elected to the National Frequency Coordination Council (NFCC) Board several months ago. Eric has a long history with the Society and coordination issues. He will be a big asset to the Society and to the NFCC while serving.

Please keep your local zone coordination updated with any address, e-mail or system changes. Only you can help us make our data accurate.

**Frequency Coordinators**

**State Frequency Coordinator**

Paul Baumgardner - W5PSB  
12936 Honey Locust Circle  
Euleless, TX 76040  
voice: 817-868-7663  
fax: 817-354-7736  
coord@txvhffm.org

**Zone 1, Northeast Texas**

**All bands except 440 Mhz**

Craig Green - KV5E  
2818 Emerald Drive  
Mesquite, TX 75150  
972-270-8234  
zone1-2m@txvhffm.org

**Zone 1, Northeast Texas 440Mhz**

Paul Finch - WB5IDM  
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Azle, TX 76020  
817-444-0448  
zone1-440@txvhffm.org

**Zone 2, Southeast Texas**

Eric Schmidt - KA5WMY  
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**Zone 3, South Texas**

Michael Lay - N5PTN  
P. O. Box 80521  
Austin, TX 78708  
512-497-0076  
zone3@txvhffm.org

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**Zone 5, West Texas**

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**Mexican Liaison:**

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**420Mhz, 900Mhz, 1.2Ghz**

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Euleless, TX 76039  
214-236-0222  
links@txvhffm.org

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momentum, and be able to complete the trip with it's passengers and freight.

The Texas VHFFM Society has been operating on greased rails for the last few years. There has been much power applied to the drivers, but there was no traction, so the wheels just slipped and spun. The board and members continued to reduce the applied force to the drivers to stop the spinning, and eventually the society has ground almost to a stop.

There is light at the end of the tunnel, though. At the Hamcom board meeting, the board voted, over a few attendee's objections, to publish the repeater directory. The board recognized that the data was getting long in tooth, but decided to publish it anyway as a means of getting the society back in motion, or, if you will allow me, to regain some traction and get moving again.

The General meeting at Austin Summerfest is always a critical meeting, and this meeting is no different. There will be a vote on matters that will forever change the way the Society conducts business. There also will be the election for four board seats. Unlike previous years, where many hams have announced far ahead of time that they would like to offer their service to the ham community by running for the board, as this is written at the end of June, there are fewer nominees than vacancies. Nominations are currently allowed up to the start of voting, so I am sure that we will have a full slate, but if you have wanted to help this statewide group get moving, now is the time to step forward and toss your gimme cap into the ring. It is an easy process, just send the society's secretary Mark Stennet, NA5M, [secretary@txvhffm.org](mailto:secretary@txvhffm.org) an email and he'll get you on the list.



## Summer Meeting Notice

The Summer meeting will be held in Austin in conjunction with the Austin Summerfest. Information for summerfest is best obtained from <http://www.austinsummerfest.org/>. The Society general meeting will be held Saturday, August 5, 2006 at a time TBD.

*Greetings from South Texas.....*

It has been a long hot summer so far....Most individuals are reviewing their communications needs and getting ready for the storm season. Have you given thought as to what you can do for your community and area during the storm season...Have you given thought as to what you and your family will do, should you have to evacuate your home?

These are things that most of us only think of during storm season, but we must be prepared during non storm season.. We can be required to evacuate our homes, work , etc , any time. Are you prepared?????

Not much happening in new installations in South Texas. I was in the Rio Grande Valley last week , and used the links , that covers the Valley. It works very well. I would recommend its utilization, while in the Valley.

Those traveling to the Corpus Christi area are invited to try the 147.08 & 147.06—107.tone, machines. Both are very good machines and have good coverage. While in the Kingsville area try the 146.68...107.tone, machine good coverage... The Victoria area has a very nice new machine on 145.19 , 103 tone. It has great coverage.

Please contact me for any questions you may have or if i can be of any help.

Bob Lobaugh W5JYJ  
Director  
[w5jyj@arrl.net](mailto:w5jyj@arrl.net)

*From the Secretary:*

Howdy folks, Field Day this year a lot of fun. Our local area club focused our energy on having fun rather than making a lot of contacts. Our GOTA (Get On The Air) station was a huge success and we had several young people dive into it with great enthusiasm. One of them is a new Technician class licensee and another with no license yet. With their interest piqued, I found satisfaction knowing that these folks are interested in pursuing this hobby further.

Getting new folks interested in amateur radio is a worthy goal. While I pause to consider what first impressions we might make to potential newcomers, I can't help but wonder what we could all be doing to further promote amateur radio in a positive manner.

There is a lot of competition out there for the attention of young people. The internet, Ipods, the list goes on. For years my kids have too many other distractions to be bothered with amateur radio. My 17 year old son was one of the GOTA operators and now after being exposed to my radios for all of these years, has decided he wants to get his license.

In other news, if you have any questions concerning your membership status, please feel free to contact me via email at [mark@stennett.com](mailto:mark@stennett.com) or call me at 512-569-3445. I answer my phone 7 days a week.

73 de na6m  
Mark Stennett  
Secretary



**Austin Summerfest 2006**

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*The following candidates have submitted this material to support thier campaign for the Board.*

**James Hester, K5HTK**

I was born in Taylor, Texas and raised and educated in Austin. I live in Sun City a suburb of Georgetown with my wife Kay. I am active in the community where I am a neighborhood representative and the Production Manager of the community cable access channel 79 TV station.



I was first licensed K5HTK as a Novice in 1956 when I was 15 years old. I am Extra Class and my call is the original issue. I was licensed VK8JH while I lived in the Northern Territory of Australia for two years.

I retired from Raytheon Corporation (previously E-Systems, Inc) in Garland, Texas in 1996 after 35 years of service. I was the Manager of Logistics Engineering.

I put the 147.240 repeater on the air for the E-Systems ARC and was the President of the Club for many years. I also was President of the Garland ARC twice and was instrumental in putting their 146.660 repeater on the air. I have been President and Secretary of the Williamson County ARC, served as Net Control of the Garland R.A.C.E.S for 8 years and currently serve as Liaison to the Georgetown Police for the Williamson County ARES.

I founded the Sun City Amateur Radio Club and served as President for two years and I am now the club Trustee and Chairman of the Technical Committee. I installed the 441.625 repeater in Georgetown (Sun City)

Building and experimenting are as important to me as operating.

**Dave Davis, WB5WIA**

I am completing my first two year term as a board member for the Society. Before that, I served 14 months as the Zone 1 two meter coordinator. Although 14 months is a short time for a frequency coordinator to serve, I learned a lot about the system and the inherent problems that we have in trying to put more repeaters into an area than the geography will allow.



I have served on the board throughout the previous lawsuit, and felt very constrained during that time about the lack of traction that we were able to generate as a board. We worked well together, but it seemed every time we wanted to get a project going, the Damoclese Sword of the lawsuit kept us from being able to execute. Thankfully that is over and gone, and the next two years can be spent working on problems that will have happy solutions. The “voting rights” act coming up at the summer meeting will be a watershed policy change for the Society. We will have more members voting on issues, and the Society will need to work very hard to provide information on all sides of the issues, so that the membership who choose (for whatever legitimate reason) not to journey to the general meetings to have a voice in the operations of the Society.

I look forward to another two years of advancing ham radio in the State of Texas.



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The following candidates have submitted this material to support their campaign for the Board.

## Coordinator's Corner

### John Johnson, N5NH



I have been on the Board of Directors of the Society for the past two years, serving first as Newsletter Editor and currently as President. Previously I was on the Board during the early to mid 90's and served as Newsletter Editor during that time.

I believe that the Society needs to improve in several areas including online services (Internet) and member services (handling membership items, voting, etc.) My goal as President during the past year was to get the ball rolling on these items, but I must admit that due to the lawsuit the ball is rolling slowly. However, I think we have now started to address these areas by activities including examining our election process and engaging on a new database for both frequency coordination and membership.

Our membership is diverse and often highly opinionated (not a bad thing by the way), and thus when decisions are made we will never make everyone happy. But hopefully we can study the issues as a group, make decisions that work for the majority of our membership, and continue to move forward.

Thank you for your support in the past and I hope to continue to earn it in the future.

#### Zone 1 - 2m

Zone 1 still has very severe congestion for 2-meters in the core counties and surrounding area around the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. I have 9 applications currently in waiting for frequency pairs in this core area and will update the waiting list before the summer meeting in Austin. There are frequency pairs available in the 50 MHz, 222-223 MHz, 902-928MHz, and 1.2 GHz and higher bands at this time.

Currently in Dallas there are 3 new narrowband DStar repeaters on 2-meters, 70 cm, and 23 cm utilizing perceptually coded voice and low speed data with 6K0F7W emission. These repeaters will co-exist with other narrow-band users with 10 kHz splits between the channels with high Quality of Service metrics. Maybe one solution to the frequency congestion in the more popular bands may be voluntary moves by trustees to aggregate the narrow band digital emission repeaters in into a contiguous sub-band. This way more channel pairs might be created for narrow-band users in the crowded spectrum of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Any channel moves would be strictly voluntary and by mutual consent.

Some new frequency coordinations made since my last column in the newsletter:

W5XBK	146.880	Burkburnett, TX
KD5HIS	146.700	Brookston, TX
WA5FWC	1292.800	Venus, TX
KW5DX	145.410	Leonard, TX

I hope to see you all at Summerfest in Austin!

73, Craig A. Green KV5E



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Coordinator's Corner (cont)  
**Notes from Zone 2 – Summer 2006**

Welcome to the Zone 2 repeater coordination update. The following repeaters newly coordinated since the Spring 2006 issue of the NEWS. A repeater is not listed as coordinated until the on-air status form is received after a construction permit has been issued, so please return your on-air status notification if your repeater is on the air and you have an outstanding construction permit.

**Zone 2 Newly Coordinated Repeaters between 2/19/06 and 6/24/06**

Location	Output	Input	Call	Notes
Madisonville	147.060	147.660	KK5Z	O100.0
Madisonville	442.475	447.475	KK5Z	O100.0
Magnolia	443.850	448.850	W5JSC	O156.7

In addition to these new coordinations, there are currently eighteen active construction permit applications in Zone 2.

Work has been ongoing in Zone 2 to clear up repeaters that have not been on the air or have not returned a coordination renewal in the past year. On April 15th, twenty five certified letters were mailed out to the FCC address of record for repeater coordinations that had not been renewed in over one year. Fourteen of these have been de-coordinated at the request of the trustee or because they did not reply to letter. Mailing certified letters is expensive and takes place only after several regular postal and email notifications. Several trustees acknowledged receiving the original renewal form in the Fall of 2005 and apologized for not returning the form. Please help us save mailing expenses by promptly returning the renewal forms each year.

The following is the waiting list for Zone 2. A detailed explanation of the waiting list description and process appears on the Society website.

**Zone 2 Coordination Waiting List**

	Callsign	City	Band	Application Date
1	KD5HHW	Magnolia	2m	5/11/2004
2	KK5XQ	Baytown	2m	1/28/2005
3	KW5O	Conroe	2m	3/29/2005

Please feel free to contact me if you have any question or are interested in constructing a repeater in Zone 2. I welcome your feedback on any improvements that I can make to better serve our members & trustees.

73,  
Eric Schmidt  
KA5WMY  
Zone 2 Frequency Coordinator

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*Zone 3/4 Coordinators report by Michael Lay, N5PTN  
Greetings!*

As some of you may know, I have recently been asked by the State Frequency Coordinator, Paul Baumgardner to take over as repeater coordinator for all bands in zones 3 and 4. This is merely another task I have chosen to take on and hopefully I won't let you down. As I do not have the coordination files yet, let me spend a bit of time telling you a little about who I am.

I have been a ham since 1990. My call is my first and will most likely be the only one I ever have. I was first approached to join the ham radio ranks back in 1975 by a high school teacher, Phil Shedd, K5RVK (sk). He drove a VW Beetle with a HF whip where the logo used to be. Phil was my teacher for the Industrial Media Technology class, which led to me getting my 3rd class FCC license, with Broadcast endorsement. One of my friends during this time was a fellow student, Bill Parker.

Fast forward a few years and my now best friend, Eddie Runner, (N5PNX originally, now NU5K) bet me a steak dinner on who would be the first to get licensed. Both of us had been around the Houston area ham fests for years, but had not taken that final step. After doing some studying, I ventured out to the Clute hamfest and ran into a VE by the name of William Parker, ND5F. Turns out he is Bill's father! He talked me into sitting for the test even though I didn't feel quite ready. I passed both the novice and technician exams, but did not pass the then required code. I had been studying old tapes that really were at 5 WPM. When the test started with the "new" method (farnsworth, I think, sent at 18WPM with more spaces between characters??), my brain turned to mush! I think I copied a few A's, I's and E's...that was it. So now I had a real challenge! I had 1 year to get the code or I was going to end up paying off that steak dinner!

I went to the next BVARC meeting and joined the novice class, just to get the code. After class, I would wander by Eddie's house to show off what I had learned. Making a really long story short, I did not pass the test at the end of the class...missed by about 4 characters. Since it was now getting to be Christmas time and not wanting to go into the new year without the license, I went to a testing session given by the Echo Society, another Houston club. This time I passed and shortly after the new year, I received my call. Soon, I was asked to help out at a public service event called the Houston to Austin MS-150.

The rest is history. That event has grown from around 1000 bicycle riders, to what it is today, capped at 13,000 riders! I have been on the MS-150 steering committee since shortly after moving to the Austin area in 1993, longer than most of the staff members have been around. I have served as Austin Net Control for most of those years and recently

turned some of the organizing over to Jeff N5MNW. I have also worked both the Motorola Marathon and the Capital 10K for many years. I have worked the much smaller San Antonio to Corpus Christi MS-150 for about 7 years now, thanks to Alfred, KG5QW, another long time friend. I am active in the local club, AARC (Austin Amateur Radio Club) and also a member of the Travis County ARES group.

I have been a member of the Texas VHF/FM Society since at least 1990, although I seem to remember at least once joining before I had my call. Next time we'll have coordination information in this space. Oh, and yeah, I lost the bet...Eddie got his steak dinner...in Honolulu!

73's de N5PTN Michael Lay

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*Zone 5*

Greetings, I have taken over the coordination duties of Zone 5, West Texas. While I currently live in Austin, my heart is still in West Texas. Any folks that have sent coordination requests, papers or messages to previous Zone 5 coordinators with no answer, please contact me by email, phone or in person and I will do the best I can to take care of them as quick as possible. I do ask that persons do not send me letters by return receipt or registered mail as I will not pick them up. It is very difficult for me to get to the post office to get them. I do accept scanned .pdf documents with the original mailed to me by USPS. Take Care...

Paul Gilbert,  
KE5ZW  
Zone 5 Coordinator

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*Zone 1 440*

With the sale of an Estate, my little business, the acquisition of four more communications towers, a new tower shelter install in Sweetwater, Texas as well as a ten channel trunk system in the building, I have been busy as a beaver in the rainy season. This has brought about a minor change, please email me at WB5IDM@ntbb.net and set up an appointment to work through this. Most evenings I am home. I have tried several other ways and this seems to be the best solution for what I need to be doing, at least I am making headway.

I have issued several frequencies and am working on more, to be safe I have been having the prospective Trustee monitor the channel in question for traffic, so far it's worked really well for the Trustee and the Society.

Again, please make an appointment with me, my best time for these matters seems to be after 9:00 PM in the evening.

Paul Finch  
WB5IDM  
Zone 1 440 MHz Coordinator

## THE VP'S PURCH



First, I would like to thank all those members who took the time to read my last message and either called me or emailed me with their comments. Those comments are an important part of my decision making as a member

of your board of directors.

Second, as a coordinating VE for a club's testing efforts I have been pleasantly surprised recently by having three very young people arrive for testing. Two girls and a boy, all under 12. The boy is now a Tech, after his second try, and is the youngest member of our club. The two girls just missed and with a little study should have no trouble passing next time.

The point is, we need programs (PEOPLE) to get more young people interested and ACTIVE in ham radio. EAA and AOPA are, and have been, very active recruiting young folks into aviation, their "Young Eagle" program. We need to get young people started in our great hobby. Electronics and radio are great hobbies and a fine career to follow for life. We all think that don't we?

Get a young person to operate your station, help out with the scout merit badge programs, teach your grandchildren to pass the technician license exam. Why don't we do a better job of sharing our values with others?

If money motivates you – who will you sell your Collins S Line to when you are too old to use it if you don't get new people in our hobby.

Call me or email me, let me know your ideas, concerns, gripes.

Rusty KB5R

Vice President, 2005-06

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## Meeting Notices:



The next scheduled board meeting for the Texas VHFFM Society will be immediately following the General meeting on August 5, 2006, in Austin Texas. The board will elect the officers for the upcoming year, and conduct other such business as necessary in both an open and a closed session.

The Summer meeting of the Society will be held in Austin in association with the Austin Summerfest. We'll be back at the Crowne Plaza (formerly Red Lion) Hotel again on August 5, 2006. Exact time and rooms will be posted on the website, [www.austinsummerfest.org](http://www.austinsummerfest.org).



**Austin Summerfest 2006**