

HOUSTON ECHO SOCIETY

Newsletter - November 2005

Next meeting - Monday, November 14

Presentation: Richard Driscoll, KD5URB, ARES Emergency Coordinator will discuss amateur radio communications during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Club call: W5ECO **Web site:** w5eco.org
Repeaters: 147.08 147.32 224.26
General meeting location: American Red Cross,
2700 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77098
Mailing Address: Houston ECHO Society,
PO Box 270540, Houston, TX, 77277



Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) to discuss radio communications for the recent hurricanes at November ECHO meeting

Richard Driscoll, KD5URB, Northeast Harris County Emergency Coordinator, from the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) will be the guest speaker for the November 14 Houston ECHO Society meeting. He will discuss radio communications that took place in the greater Houston area during and after Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. The ECHO meeting will take place at the American Red Cross, 2700 Southwest Freeway – the meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. Check with the security guard for meeting room, as ECHO sometimes meets in the front building and sometimes in the back building. As is our usual custom, many of us gather for dinner at the Goode Company Mexican Restaurant, Westpark at Kirby. Come join us 5:45 to 6 p.m.-ish or so.

The November 14 ECHO presentation will include discussion of an ARES meeting held at the Transtar building in October 22 to review the events surrounding the hurricanes Katrina and Rita responses by amateur radio in Harris county. Ken Mitchell, KD2KW, ARES District 14 Coordinator, provides some of the points made and discussed at the Transtar meeting. We will put a few of these in the newsletter; for the rest you can come to KD5URB's presentation. They will also be placed on the ECHO web site, www.w5eco.org.

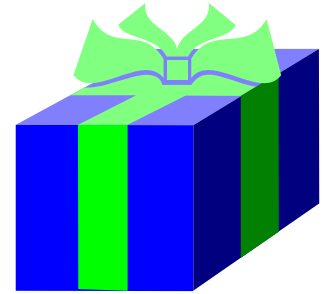
- Human Resources (New HR approach for Rita where a telephone bank was used instead of using the EOC and personal phone calling for making contact with resources not operating during the emergency. Information management techniques and documentation needs to be developed.)
- Turnover/Information warehousing (Transfer of information during shift changes) (Position descriptions were developed mid stream for Katrina but operators weren't used to them being there so the documents were either lost or not used.)
- Resource Net (Agree on Harris County Frequency, 147.00 PL 103.5 Agenda item for District EC meeting this month. It will be added to the publication that is being passed out at hamfest, made available at Houston Amateur Radio and club meetings.)
- Pre-load Equipment (done and documented at HC EOC) (Additional work is being done at the EOC on a weekly basis until problems are resolved.)
- Emphasis who the served agency is. (Make it a part of incident documentation).

More ECHO Society news on next page

Upcoming ECHO Society meetings being planned

December meeting

ECHO's tradition for the December meeting is usually a family dinner and small gift exchange at a local restaurant. Howard Bingham, KE5APW, has suggested Tio Pepe's Spanish Restaurant in Bellaire. We will check into this more at the November meeting and establish a location. Tio Pepe's sounds easy to get to, as it is not far from the West Loop South in Bellaire.



As for the gift exchange, we have set a price of around \$10 plus or minus a little. Use your imagination. Some gifts in the past have included a very nice ballpoint pen, a poinsettia plant, a DX t-shirt, a pair of heavy duty work gloves and similar items. Gifts can be seasonal, practical – your choice. By the way, if it is gender-specific you'll need to mark that on the wrapping paper.

January meeting

January's topics are going to be "Helping the new ham or soon-to-be ham" and "Elmering." This meeting should be fun for both the newbies and the amateur radio veterans. Some of the preliminary plans include a skit by some of the ECHO members in "repeater etiquette," "installing your first radio in your vehicle – and then checking everything out with meters," "basics of ham radio," and a couple of topics yet to be decided. We also plan to have a "pairing up" session where our newcomers will be paired up with a "veteran" who will be their "Elmer" (the ham term for teacher and helper). One of ECHO's newest members, Larry Brooks, KE5FWN, said he is very interested in this type of meeting. In fact, he offers a list of things he is interested in as a new ham. We will try to incorporate these into the January meeting. *Editor's notes are in Italics.*

1. ECHO Elmers to help new hams – what is an Elmer?
2. What is ECHO's purpose and function? (*this appears elsewhere in this newsletter*)m
3. Membership list, list of Elmers, help upgrade license, contacts and questions (*KB5VSY is the membership chairperson*)
4. Other clubs that ECHO members belong to ARES, RACES, SKYWARN, REACT, LSSN, SATERN, etc. – in case new members have interest such as emergency communications volunteering and training beyond ECHO training.
5. ECHO training or preparedness sessions, or work with others on Simulated Emergency Tests (SETs)
6. Classified section on web site – for buying/selling equipment
7. Shoulder patch, hats, etc. for ECHO (*we did have polo shirts – maybe we could do that again*) – what are ECHO's official colors and logo? (*The logo appears at the top of the first page of the newsletter*)

Welcome to three new ECHO members and one re-register

Welcome to three **new** ECHO members - N5TGS and N5TGR, Jeff and Cynthia Beniretto were members of ECHO a few years back and we're sure glad to have them back. Larry Brooks, KE5FWN, is also a new member. Larry Lawson, KK5KE, has renewed his membership for another year. He brings an interesting perspective to ECHO as Larry is a blind ham. He is familiar with the Handi-Hams program which helps hams with disabilities – and we may be able to get a presentation from this group at a future ECHO meeting. KK5KE is real excited about helping ECHO in any way he can, possibly helping out as an ECHO net control.

Visitors interested in getting a license

ECHO has had some recent meeting visitors who are thinking about getting a ham radio license. If you see someone you don't know at the meeting, why not introduce yourself and tell them about how you became interested in getting a license? After all, we all had to start by taking that first step in getting a license. You might also tell them that ECHO is planning a meeting in January that focuses on new hams and things they can do with their new license. That meeting will include plenty of time for a Q&A session.

The Curmudgeon's Corner

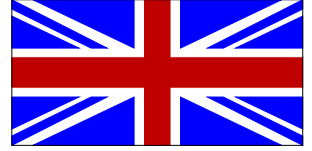
by

Michael P. Martin, B.A., J.D.

K5LAW, M0LAW, G0JCZ

Curmudgeon Emeritus and Resident Wag

Yes, I have three calls now. (sigh) When the Brits started issuing the M block calls, I said to myself, "Self, wouldn't it be nice if you could have M0PJM as your British call? Then your call would be your initials!"



Well, I got in touch with Ofcom, and, would you know it, some idjit beat me to M0PJM. But the really friendly guy over there said, "Why don't you take M0LAW? I can hold it for you if you want."

"What do I have to do?" I asked. "Oh, just fill out a form and pay your annual fee," he said. (I LIKE these people!)

"But I'm not sure I want to give up my G0 call."

"Don't," he said. "You can keep both of them. You just have to pay two fees."

Can you just imagine the mess we'd have here if the FCC let us do that?

Anyway, February is getting close and it will be time for me to renew G0JCZ. Should I? I'll leave it to the club. Email me at K5LAW@sbcglobal.net and let me know your wishes. I'll keep it or let it go, as the club decides. Votes must be in by January 15, 2006. (Offer void where taxed, licensed or prohibited; see dealer for details; do not operate heavy machinery; and insert all the rest of the disclaimers here. Prices slightly higher west of the Rockies.)

SheWhoMustBeObeyed and I will be in the Vatican for Christmas. Don't get your hopes up. No beanie-weenie contest here, because the Holy See is not signatory to the CEPT protocol. (Go figure. They were one of the leaders in organizing European broadcasting...) I might get in to see HVJ, the Vatican's own radio station built by Marconi himself, but the jury's still out as to whether or not they'll let me fire up the ham station that used to be installed there.

So, Lee, you're still the champ. I may (and the operative word is "may") go to London in March, and, if I do, we can see about a beanie weenie contest then. No one has ever worked me as M0LAW. (That's because I haven't used the call yet, silly!)

Holey moley! I'm almost out of space and I haven't griped about anything yet...

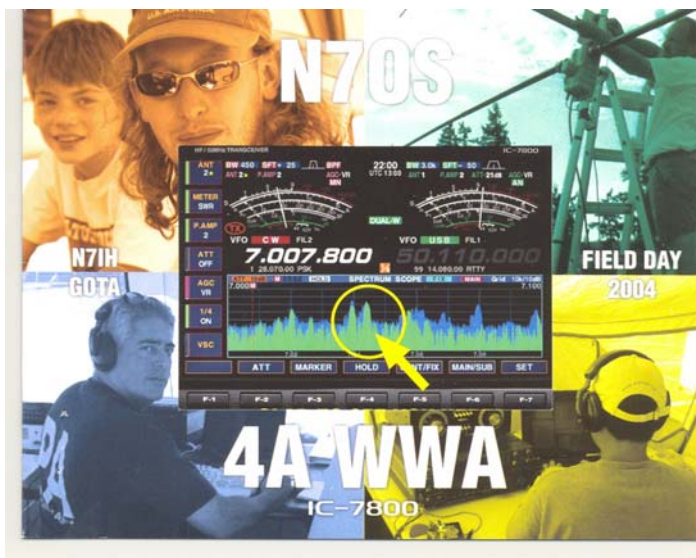
Think there's an IQ drain on the ham bands? Check out Yahoo chat. (I'm "uhlawup" and usually in Texas 4.) Some of those folks on the internet make us sound like rocket scientists. (My apologies to any NASA folk who may be in the club.)

And here's your curmudgeon's greetings for the holidays...

THE SAME TO YOU AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON!



Note: opinions expressed by the Curmudgeon are always welcome in the ECHO Society newsletter!



Field Day qsl received

ECHO received this colorful qsl card from N7OS for a cw contact during Field Day last June. The operator at the time of the contact was KL7BB. N7OS was operating 4A from Western Washington.

Field Day results

Field Day results - ECHO placed fifth among class 3F stations. The W5ECO station also shows up as #248 of all the scores submitted for Field Day 2005.

Top 5 - by Class 3F - 5,3183 Mississippi Valley ARA - 5,2823 Bergen ARA - 5,2423 Oak Ridge ARC - 5,0763 Williamson Cty ARES - 5,050 Houston ECHO Society

Overall totals of all clubs - 247 N4FR 5,0763 Williamson Cty ARES - 248 W5ECO 5,0503 Houston ECHO – Society - 249 K1SV 5,0463 Southern Vermont ARC

Complete totals and breakdowns will be included in the next newsletter.

Public service events – courtesy of Mike Hardwick, N5VCX

Events in December and January needing operators

30K Warm-up Run for the Houston Marathon

<https://www.signmeup.com/site/reg/register.aspx?fid=W52VNK7> - 7:00 a.m. Sunday, December 11, 2005 First Colony, Sugar Land - Multi-loop training run for the Houston Chevron Marathon held in downtown Houston. Fifteen operators are needed for the 30K run. All volunteers will meet at the Denny's on Hwy 6 at 4:45 a.m. for maps, route information and t-shirts. The talk-in frequency will be on the 145.450 minus offset no tone repeater. The event will be on the 444.600 plus 71.9 tone repeater. If you would like to volunteer please let me know as soon as possible so the positions can be schedule. Mike Hardwick 713-771-4625

2005 Chevron Jingle Bell Run/Walk

http://www.jinglebellrunonline.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=1 - 2:30 p.m. Sunday, December 11, 2005 -Downtown Houston - Multi course and Multi-loop fun run benefiting the Downtown YMCA's Partner's Campaign which provides scholarship dollars for people in need of YMCA programs. Ten operators are needed for the 4 different courses/runs. All volunteers will meet at the Denny's on I10 at 12 noon for maps, route information and t-shirts. The talk-in and event frequency will be on the 147.000 plus offset 103.5 tone repeater. If you would like to volunteer please let me know as soon as possible so the positions can be schedule. Mike Hardwick 713-771-4625 **continued next page**

Public Service Events, continued

Chevron Houston Marathon, Half Marathon and 5K Run - <http://www.hphoustonmarathon.com/> - 6:45 a.m. Sunday, January 15, 2006 - Houston - Premier running event for Houston. Over 100 operators are needed for this event. Meeting locations and frequencies are still be coordinated and organized. If you would like to volunteer please let me know as soon as possible so the positions can be schedule. Carl Hacker, KB5LDY chacker@sph.uth.tmc.edu - 713-500-9185 or 713-977-9754 ---

Additional upcoming events

- Frost Bike 50 - Sunday, January 29, 2006
- The Big Chill Bike Ride -Sunday, February 05, 2006 Paws & Puddles Bike Ride - Saturday, February 18, 2006
- Wild, Wild West End Ride - Sunday, February 19, 2006
- Gator Ride - Saturday, March 04, 2006
- The Continental Airlines Cycling Classic - Saturday, March 11, 2006
- Bluebonnet Express - Sunday, March 12, 2006
- Tour de Cypress - Sunday, March 26, 2006
- Camp For All Hilltop Ride - Saturday, April 01, 2006
- The Space Race - Sunday, April 09, 2006
- BP MS150 Bike Tour - Saturday, April 22 & Sunday, April 23, 2006

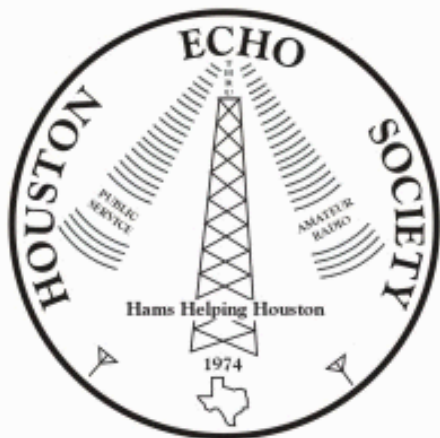
Articles and photos needed

Want to write a review about the ht you just purchased? Did you operate as a rover in a VHF contest? Build a dipole for an attic? Install new contesting software? Here's your chance to tell us all about it. E-mail your articles and digital photographs to ag5t@arrl.net. You can also mail items to the post office box address on the first page of this newsletter.

Mission statement

ECHO is an amateur radio organization whose purpose is to provide emergency communications to the greater Houston area in times of disaster, emergency and other need. We support the American Red Cross in their aid activities and support the operations of RACES, ARES, Houston and Harris County Offices of Emergency Management, National Weather Service and other municipal agencies as needed. Additionally, ECHO provides public service to the community by leveraging various facets of amateur radio people and technical capabilities. Because of the particular focus of the Houston ECHO Society, ECHO has the potential of becoming the center of Greater Houston Area Amateur Radio Club for "Radio-Active Ambassadors." We can be the club that reaches out in a non-threatening manner, and integrate the people and resources of the outlying clubs and bring together the other clubs for emergency and public service needs. In essence, ECHO can aspire to be the UN of Houston area clubs.

The Houston ECHO Society has an e-mail reflector – go to – <http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/echo> - all information is provided on how to join the e-mail list.



Houston ECHO Society

W5ECO

P.O. Box 270540
Houston TX 77277

Membership Application

The Houston ECHO Society is a general purpose, amateur radio club serving the central Houston TX amateur radio community. The club exists to provide emergency communications support for the Greater Houston / Harris County area and that of the Houston Chapter of The American Red Cross. You need not be a licensed amateur radio operator to be a member. Membership is valid for 12 months from the time dues are received.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

FCC call sign: _____

ARRL member: Yes No

Date: _____

Do you have special interests such as contesting, digital modes, hf mobile etc? If so, let us know what they are.

Club secretary use only

Date dues rcv'd _____ Period covered _____ to _____