



# Monthly ECHO

Volume 06, Issue 2

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November 21, 2006

## GENERAL MEETING

2nd Monday of the Month  
7:00 P.M.

American Red Cross  
2700 SW Freeway  
Houston, TX 77098

## PRE MEETIN EATIN

Goode Company  
Mexican Restaurant  
(s.w. corner kirby/westpark)  
Meet at 5:30-5:45 P.M.  
(same night as club meeting)

## MAILING ADDRESS

Houston ECHO Society  
717 East 8th Street  
Houston, TX 77007-1719

## WEB PAGE

[www.w5eco.org](http://www.w5eco.org)

## 2006 Club Officers

### President

Marty Blaise—AG5T  
ag5t@arrl.net

### Vice-President

Paul Rubin—N8NOV  
paulrubin@houston.rr.com

### Recording Secretary

Lee Gaspard—WA5QXE  
wa5qxe@arrl.net

### Corresponding Secretary & Newsletter Editor

Charlie Matthew—N0XFD  
n0xfd@yahoo.com

### Treasurer

Mike Nault—W5OFT  
w5oft@earthlink.net

### Parliamentarian

Phil Schwartztrauber—W5GCT  
pswartztrauber@millarmail.com

## ECHO Holiday Dinner Monday—December, 11



At the November meeting of the Houston ECHO society membership voted to have a Holiday Dinner in lue of the December meeting. The location was unable to be finalized at the meeting so an e-mail survey when out to the membership asking them to vote on one of 3 suggested locations. Nine (9) club members responded to the survey. BUCA di Peppo Restuant came out as a winner.

All members and friends of the Houston ECHO society are encouraged to attend the end of year celebration. A "White Elephant" type gift exchange will take place at the dinner. If you would like to participate please bring a wrapped item of \$10 or so. The rules of the exchange will be explained at the dinner.

If you are planning on attending the

## BUCA di Beppo

5192 BUFFALO SPEEDWAY  
HOUSTON, TX 77005

[Resturant Web Page](#)

# 7:30 P.M.

## December 11, 2006

holiday dinner please RSVP with Charlie Matthew—NOXFD at [n0xfd@yahoo.com](mailto:n0xfd@yahoo.com). **RSVP's should be sent to Charlie by Tuesday, December 5.** This is to insure there are enough seats for the group.

**Charlie Matthew—NOXFD**

### NEXT MEETING

(after the December Holiday Dinner)

**MONDAY—JANUARY 8**

**7:00 P.M. @ AMERICAN RED ROSS**

## Field Day 2006 Results In!

Charlie Matthew—NOXFD



The wait is finally over. Results for the 2006 ARRL Field Day have been posted on the members only section of the ARRL website. Results will be printed in the December QST due out in the coming weeks.

The Houston ECHO society placed 4th in the 3F category. There was a total of 3614 points received by the club. The bands were defiantly not in our favor this year but the hard work of the membership that participated defiantly paid off.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## ECHO License Exams

The Houston ECHO Society sponsors VE Testing on the 1st Saturday and 4th Tuesday of each month. Sessions are held at the American Red Cross building at 2700 SW Freeway. This is just east of Kirby Drive on the feeder road.

**1st Saturday — 9:00 A.M.**

**4th Tuesday — 7:00 P.M.**

Please check the ARRL Web Site under "Licensing" and do a search for tests using the zip code of 77098. (or click here).

Franz Laugermann—K3FL is the coordinator of these sessions and can be reach at the following e-mail: [franzlaugerman@sbc.global.net](mailto:franzlaugerman@sbc.global.net)

[FRANZLAUGERMAN@SBCGLOBAL.NET](mailto:FRANZLAUGERMAN@SBCGLOBAL.NET)

## Houston Marathon



The Houston Marathon is right around the corner. Hams are once again being called upon to volunteer to provide communication support for this large public service event. This is an excellent opportunity to practice your emergency communication skills. Last year 125 hams participated in this event. Why don't you join in?

There are 4 categories of stations the coordinator is looking for:

- **H/H = Hand Held (ht, 7hrs on battery)**
- **PORTABLE = radio quickly setup in vehicle w/ mag**
- **MOBILE = radio in vehicle, ext ant**
- **APRS = either a tracker or receiving station**

## D-Star in Houston

A new repeater is in the Houston area. As of 1930 hrs on November 4, 2006 the first D-Star system is on the air. The Digital Voice repeater can be found at 145.45/147.45 with a call of KE5LFL and is located in the Magnolia area. Current tests to date show an affective range of 18 miles to the east of the repeater site. Jeff Cofsky W5JSC is the trusty of this repeater.

D-Star is the name of I-COM's new digital repeaters. These repeaters operate using the JAIA digital standard and allow for both digital voice and digital data. There are 2m,440, and 1.2GHz versions of the repeater. All of these can be connected together to form links through a gateway system at the repeater site.

Jeff does plan on adding some of the other repeater moduels to the site along with placing it on a higher tower. Please stay tuned for more updates.

For more information on D-Star and the JAIA standard check out I-COM's website on it at <http://www.icomamerica.com/amateur/dstar/default.asp>

In additional to the above system there is another group putting together a D-Star system. Our own club members Mike Nault-W5OFT, Paul Rubin-N8NOV, Alan Isaachsen-KB2WF, and others are working on a system to install on the top of Chase Tower in Downtown Houston.

Updates on this system will be in future editions of the club newsletter.   
-Charlie Matthew—NOXFD

If you are interested in volunteering please e-mail Charlie Matthew at [n0xfd@yahoo.com](mailto:n0xfd@yahoo.com) for a more detailed information sheet. Carl Hacker—KB5LDY is the maim coordinator for this event. Carl can be contacted at the following e-mail [Carl.S.Hacker@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Carl.S.Hacker@uth.tmc.edu) or 713-977-9754.

## From the Editor...

**Charllie Matthew—NOXFD**

Welcome to the new ECHO Society Newsletter! As your new newsletter editor I pledge to put together a good collection of articles for each issue. Do you have something interesting you would like to write about? Perhaps you have a funny ham story or information on your experiences at a recent public service event?.

I encourage you to write something up and submit it to the newsletter. It is the submissions from the membership and other members of the ham community that will make this

newsletter an interesting read.

For 2007, the newsletter will be published six (6) times. February, April, June, August, October, and November. Submissions will be due the Friday after that month's meeting. The newsletter will come out the Monday after the meeting.

I am trying to come up with a name for your newsletter. For the moment I have selected the "Monthly ECHO". If you have any suggestions on a permanent name please pass them on!   
-n0xfd

# President's Corner

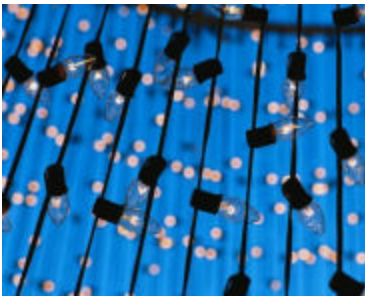
## Holiday Lights Math

Marty Blaise, AG5T

Hello ECHO and ham friends. I thought I would share my Christmas/Holiday lights project and some electrical calculations I've been working on. Here are some things I'm using as approximations and calculations:

A 60-watt light bulb is approx. 1/2 ampere.

My new "twist" is I am going to try those icicle lights this year. Each strand has 150 bulbs and each stand has a total amperage of approximately 0.55 amp.



My house runs on a typical electrical system so I will use basic house voltage in my equations. That can be used in the basic ham formulas for watts, volts and amps. (Actually I guess I could use either 110 or 120

and still come out close - let me know if one or the other is more accurate)

I have a 2-plug outlet on the outside of my house, it is right under the fuse box. The two plugs are part of a 20-amp circuit.

Large bulbs (C9 designation) are 7 watts each. They are usually 25 bulbs on a strand. Of course they draw much more power/current.

Miniature bulb sets say not to connect three sets of lights together. If I remember correctly, hooking Christmas lights end to end puts them in series. However, I have read on the Internet that a lot of things can be plugged into an outlet. In other words, you can have lots of 3-strand sets of lights going to a power strip or ground stake tri-outlet. I think it's even possible to run two long extension cords from the plugs on the side of the house, put power surge 6-outlet strips on the end, and then go wild with tons of lights and decorations. The key is to keep the total amperage to 80 percent or less of the circuit amperage. In other words, 80 percent of 20 amps is 16 amps (I think).

What I'd really like to know is why the icicle light strands have 3 amp fuses. Also why a fourth connected strand won't work - I've tried it and you can't cheat - the fourth strand will sometimes make a whole line of lights go out and blow a fuse.

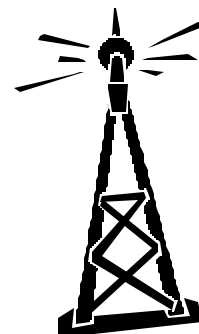
*"What I'd really like to know is why the icicle lightstrands have 3 amp fuses."*

Seems to me if the 150-light icicle (or miniature) lights are 0.55 amp and I can put three strands together, and if I use 6 plugs

on two power strips, that means I can have how many lights? Ok, 3 strands is approx. 1.65 amps so how many of these can I get up to 16 amps? (also remember that other items in the house may use the same circuit so it could add to the combined amperage) -- I think I could have 9 different sets of lights - so I could actually use a 6-outlet power strip and a 3-outlet strip.

In all that would make  $150 \times 3 = 450$  lights per 3-strands  $\times$  9 runs of 3-strands = 4,050 lights. That's a lot of lights!

Ok, your challenge, should you accept it, is to see whether any of my plans make sense! I think the key to whole thing centers around total amperage, series, parallel and how what types of decorations I want to use. I hope you have fun with this. I might have to get that professor on NUMB3Rs to help me. See everyone at the ECHO meeting!



*(Continued from page 1) (Field Day 2006)*

The club operated again from the EJ Hadash, Jr. Communication Room at the Greater Houston Area Chapter of the American Red Cross. The cool comfort of the room defiantly made for a nice environment to work from.



Colin Jenkins—KU5B was the sole CW operator this year and accounted for 346 of our 776 contacts. Of the 3640 points submitted to the ARRL only 26 were removed by the ARRL.

Most likely this was due to duplicate or unverified contacts.

Bonus points were a big contribution to the club's score. All but the satellite, visiting elected

**3F  
4th PLACE  
3614 Points  
776 Contacts**

official, GOTA station, and a 3rd Non-Traditional Demo mode were not obtained. There was a GOTA station set-up for Field Day but we did not receive any bonus points for any of the 19 contacts on it. In order for the club to obtain bonus points the GOTA operators needed to complete 50 contacts. The band conditions that day made the GOTA operators really work for the 19 contacts they obtained.

The GOTA station will defiantly be an area to focus on for next year. This is a really good opportunity to

get people exposed to ham radio and give them an opportunity to operate. How club members could assist with this is bringing people to the Field Day setup. Maybe this would be a son, daughter, family member, local boy or girl scout troop.



**Extra 20/17/15M beam on a temporary mast and rotor strapped to the parking garage. This beam really helped the CW station.**



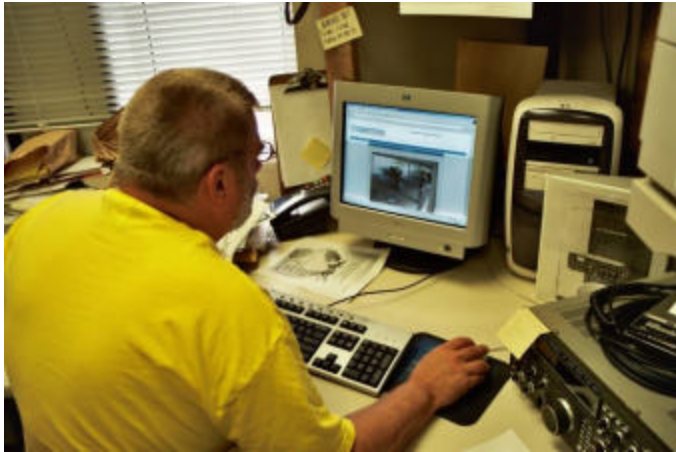
**Collin Jenkins —KU5B and Paul Ruben—N8NOV are putting the final touches on the CW station setup.**



**How many hams does it take.....**



**Brian—AD5OS, Paul—N8NOV, and Marty—AG5T try to figure out some issues with the HF digital station.**



**Marty-AG5T puts some final touches on printouts for the public information table.**

Several antennas were added to the antenna farm at the Red Cross. A temporary tower was strapped to the garage and topped off with a 20M beam used by the CW HF station. The GOTA station benefited from a G5RV type wire antenna that used the light poles at the top of the garage as support points. The digital station benefited from a magnetic loop antenna placed on the roof of the building.

Over all, the efforts for Field Day were rewarding. Our club placed 4th in the 3F category, we learned how we could temporarily install additional antennas (including a beam), and we established how we could operate 3 HF stations at the same time from the Red Cross Communications Room.

The following club members were instrumental in the planning and execution of Field Day— Mike w5oft, Collin KU5B, Paul N9NOV, Marty AG5T, Mark K5GQ,



**David-KC5LWZ had to work hard for some of the GOTA contacts, the bands were not being very nice that day.**

and Charlie NOXFD.

Stay on the lookout for information and planning for Field Day 2007! \*\*



**If you can't get the SWR just right.... Move the tuner closer.... And hope it does not rain :)**



**Lee-WA5QXE and his wife Karen work through some contacts on the GOTA station.**



**Brian-AD5OS shows his girl friend how to operate on some of the digital modes.**

**Houston ECHO Society**  
**717 E. 8th Street**  
**Houston, TX 77007-1719**

**WWW.W5ECO.ORG**

### **CLUB REPEATERS**

**147.08**

+ offset t104.5

**147.32**

+ offset t100.0

**224.26**

- offset no tone

The Houston ECHO Society is a general interest amateur (ham) radio club serving greater Houston Texas and is a ARRL Special Services Club. ECHO stands for Emergency Communications by Ham Operators.

ECHO exists to provide emergency communications to various public service agencies in the greater Houston area. In order to fulfill that objective the ECHO society owns and operates repeaters that may be used in times of emergencies as well as providing a pool of trained radio operators to assist in that effort.

Because amateur radio is such a broad hobby ECHO employs the use of special interest groups, or SIG's, so that members and non-members alike may participate in common interest projects and aspects of amateur radio. ECHO offers classes, test sessions, operates repeaters, and participates in various contests such as the ARRL field day.

All interested parties are encouraged to attend our meetings. If you would like to become a member of the Society, membership dues are only \$20 per calendar year. Please see the club treasurer at the next meeting or contact any of the club officers by e-mail (see the first page of the newsletter).

## **UPCOMING DATES**

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

#### **DECEMBER 11, 2006—Monday**

*Houston ECHO Society Holiday Dinner*  
7:30 P.M. — BUCA di Beppo (see first page)

#### **JANUARY 8, 2007—Monday**

*Houston ECHO Society General Meeting*  
7:00 P.M.—American Red Cross

#### **JANUARY 14, 2007—Sunday**

*Houston Marathon*  
(need volunteers for communication—see page 2)

#### **FEBRUARY 12, 2007—Monday**

*Houston ECHO Society General Meeting*  
7:00 P.M.—American Red Cross  
(nominations for club officers)

#### **MARCH 3, 2007**

*Greater Houston Hamfest*  
8:00 A.M.—Ft. Bend County Fairgrounds  
<http://houstonhamfest.org/>

#### **MARCH 12, 2007—Monday**

*Houston ECHO Society General Meeting*  
7:00 P.M.—American Red Cross  
(voting on club officers)

#### **APRIL 16, 2007—Monday**

*Houston ECHO Society General Meeting*  
7:00 P.M.—American Red Cross

#### **APRIL 21-22, 2007—Saturday/Sunday**

*BP MS150 Bike Ride*