



# San Antonio Repeater Organization

P.O. Box 1753  
San Antonio, Texas 78296

## BULLETIN

*“Serving the Amateur Community for 41 Years.”*

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March 2009

Volume 41 Number 1

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**Next General Membership Meeting April 24, 2009 - 7:30PM**

**SARO NET WEDNESDAYS AT 8:30 P.M. ON 146.94-**

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### THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

— Eric Olson WB5ZQ

Well we have almost finished the first quarter of this year. I would like time to thank all for the other Directors, Committee Chairpersons, and numerous other members who have given of them selves so freely throughout the past year. As your president I look forward to serving this organization in the remaining year.

The first quarterly general membership meeting went quite well. I appreciated the presentations given by our friends with the Houston MS and our very own Purple, WB5VBZ for the digital TV conversion update. Looks like Purple was correct the conversion was postponed. I would like to thank Lee, N5NTG and Scott, WB5ZJI for setting things up.

SARO has seen the passing of three members in the past few months Roy Lane, KA5RLG, Jan Sternecker, WJ5AN, and Biddie Renwick, KB5INZ. May we all take a moment to remember our friends and may their families find piece.

The challenges facing the SARO Board include the 147.14 Buzzard Roost repeater. Due to feed line problems we have changed to a different antenna. This antenna is not in the best of condition and is at a lower elevation on the tower. Coverage is brutally impacted. The Hill Country REACT is continuing to offer monetary support however an estimate to replace the Heliac, antenna and all the mounting hardware is above \$10,000. Sharon, KB5KZD is working on a grant. With any luck we should have an application submitted before summer.

SARO as other local organizations is continuing to experience a down turn in membership. SARO had a total of 153 members at the end of last year, currently we have about 100 members. I would like to encourage everyone to please renew their membership.

If anyone has any questions or comments, please send me an e-mail or give me a call. Thank you for your continued support.

## Whazz Up?

By Gary Tangradly K5GST

2009 is off to a running start! First of all you may have already heard that AARO and SARC have decided to host a combined Field Day. This will be held at the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) Training Academy grounds on Jun 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at the corner of Hwy 151 and Callaghan. More details will be forthcoming as soon as the players have had time to discuss the details.



Then you may have heard that the bike ride we have known for years as the Bike to the Beach has changed routes for this year and will now be known as Bike to the River. More details will appear in this newsletter in an article submitted by Milton Johnson, N5HMJ.

Outside of keeping up with the major events of the amateur radio community in San Antonio and the surrounding area there are some events worked by the members of SARO to be aware of. Everyone is aware that [www.SAHams.org](http://www.SAHams.org) is the place to find out about the latest happenings, right? Or that Lee now has a new Blog area where other hams, like you and me, can sign up to post our own announcements? Visit the website and find out more.

First of all on Mar 7<sup>th</sup> there is the MS Walk. Shortly thereafter in April, the 18<sup>th</sup> to be exact, the Houston to Austin BP 150 bike ride will be taking place and members of several San Antonio clubs will be traveling to Houston for that. Then on what should be Apr 23<sup>rd</sup>, SARO will be working the Battle of the Bands, a Fiesta event. The Tour de Cure bike ride hosted by the American Diabetes Association (ADA) will be taking place on May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. This ride is a two day event going from San Antonio to Austin. For more details on this ride and/or to volunteer contact Lee Besing, N5NTG. June will once again see the Texas Water Safari. Then later in the year there will be another bike ride in La Vernia. And finally there will be a Triathlon in Boerne. I apologize that many of the dates and details are not listed but some of these dates have not yet been established by the event planners. Stand by for more details.

It would be appreciated that if anyone knows the dates for these events or learn of the details that they contact me with the information for inclusion in the next newsletter. I can be reached at [K5GST@live.com](mailto:K5GST@live.com)

## Other Notes of Interest

We are still trying to find a permanent location to hold our quarterly meetings but for the time being our next meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup> will be held at Martha's Restaurant at the corner of Babcock and Huebner Road at 5622 Babcock.

In the area of maintenance and engineering it was reported at our last meeting by Gordon, K5SUZ that the 146.82 and the 444.125 machine were down. An amplifier was donated by

Roger Chido's father and Gordon is working that issue. He also reported that a new controller for the 146.94 machine is on hand but there are programming issues which are being worked.



The 147.14 machine in Sattler is operating but there are problems which by now have probably made the news. At first the problem appeared to be in the lower 130 feet of heliax but after draining a lot of water from the coax and several tests it cannot be determined that the heliax does not suffer from other problems further up on the tower. It is the general opinion of the board and several members that keeping the 147.14 machine on the air is a priority but it should be known that the expense of the required maintenance can be high.

Currently Maintenance and Engineering are suggesting that the best course of action, since we will have to hire a certified climber to go up on the tower anyway, is to replace the entire 700 foot run of heliax and replace the antenna with one we already have on hand. It is felt that this action would fix our problem on a long term basis and keep us from having to do it all over again in the near term.

However, it should be known by just about anyone that this may not be a cheap repair function. Estimates as high as \$10,000 have been made. At this time Sharon, KB5KZD is looking into a grant from Homeland Security and other sources to help us meet this cost. Bear with us, we sincerely hope to return 147.14 to a full operational capability but these things take time. The board of SARO appreciates your patience and will let you know more details as they become available.



## SAN ANTONIO'S 2009 bikeMS RIDE CHANGES COME TO AN OLD FRIEND

By H. Milton Johnson, N5HMJ

On Feb. 18, the rumors about changes to the "Bike to the Beach" were confirmed. In a press conference held at the Alamodome, Tony Ralf of the Lone Star Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society announced the changes. Here is a summary of those changes:

- Event Name: Bike MS Valero 2009 Alamo Ride to the River
- When: October 3 – 4, 2009
- Where: San Antonio-New Braunfels-San Antonio
- Begins at San Antonio Alamodome on Saturday, Oct. 3

- Travels through picturesque Texas Hill Country
- Cyclists can participate for one or two days
- Day one options include 75 or 100 mile rides
- Century Ride includes an additional 25 miles along the scenic River Road from Gruene through Sattler and back
- Multiple mileage options to attract both families and experienced cyclists alike
- Overnight outside Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort in New Braunfels
- Return on day two to San Antonio
- Tour highlights include Texas historic landmarks The Alamo and Fort Sam Houston, as well as lunch stops in Seguin in LaVernia
- Offers convenience to San Antonio residents and surrounding communities
- Fully-supported ride will feature smooth road surfaces
- Includes complete coordination between traffic control, safety and medical teams, cyclists and volunteers
- Registration opens March 2 in conjunction with National MS Awareness Week
- The map of the new route is available at the ride's web site:  
<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/chapters/bikeMSValero2009/index.aspx>

I know that many of us have mixed feelings about this change, so let me explain the motivations for the change. The motivation is a simple desire to increase the number of riders that participate. While the amount of money raised has increased, it has been due to an aggressive campaign to court corporate sponsors. Attempts to increase the number of riders have not succeeded, for the six years I have been involved with the Bike to the Beach, the maximum number of riders has been ~3,300. The problem has not been with attracting new riders, 58% of the riders registered for the 2008 Bike to the Beach were first time registrants. This means that in order to increase the rider participation something has to be done to increase the percentage of returning riders.

The MSS (Multiple Sclerosis Society) has conducted surveys looking at the reasons why riders are not returning. The reasons cited include:

- The rough road surface
- The never ending construction
- The length of the first day's ride (~92 miles)
- The long ride back to San Antonio at the end of Day 2

This is what motivated the search for a new route. Routes to the north, south, east and west were examined and rejected for various reasons, no suitable overnight destination, too hilly, undesirable road conditions, etc. So after an exhaustive search, the new route was chosen. It will take 2-3 years to determine if the changes succeed in increasing rider participation.

## SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE AMATEUR RADIO VOLUNTEERS?

There will be changes, both anticipated and unanticipated. Sure the basic positions remain the same, i.e. Breakpoints, SAGs, Medical, Safety and Shadows, and the duties of those positions remain the same. However we will be working in a new environment and under new conditions.

While some of the new conditions should be an improvement, such as repeater coverage, there will be unknowns that will present new challenges. Will your particular breakpoint be in an RF hole? Where will we be subject to QRM? Where will an HT work and not work?

To meet these new challenges we will have to be prepared and flexible. These are characteristics that define Amateur Radio Operators so we should be able to meet those challenges.

Some pre-ride preparations need to be addressed by the cadre of ham organizers which include Alfred Horn (KG5QW), Barry Hiddema (W5BLH), Curtis Rabenaldt (N5QPN), Gordon Dial (K5SUZ), Lyle Turner (KB5BSU), Mary Anne Horn (N5MYN), Milton Johnson (N5HMJ), Neil Martin (WA5FSR), Ray McLeaird (KE5KHN), Shane O'Neal, NS5D) and Stanley Stanukinos (KA5IID).

In addition we will also be taking advantage of the many hams the live, work and travel along the new route. The preparations include assessing repeater coverage, creating a frequency plan, performing radio checks at each breakpoint and along the course, determining course layout and signage, how our safety and medical teams will work with the safety and medical personnel in each county and municipality, etc.

There are also preparations that every Amateur Radio volunteer needs to take. These preparations include:

- **Dual Band Ability:** If you don't have VHF/UHF capability now is the time start working on it.
- **Cross-band Ability:** This tool increases your flexibility to operate in an RF hole and to increase the usefulness of a handheld radio.
- **Antennas:** If you are working from a fixed location can you put an antenna 15 feet in the air? This is a great ability when working in a fringe area or in a RF hole. Is it time to upgrade the rubber ducky on your HT?
- **Batteries/Power:** Has your HT battery been dying? Could you use a second HT battery? If you normally use a generator have you performed any maintenance on it? Do you have a battery backup?
- **Condition of Equipment:** Now is the time to methodically check your equipment and repair/replace as needed.

- **Manuals:** Can you program all your radios in the field. Now is the time to gather all your instruction manuals into one binder. Try manually programming a new channel before you get in the field.

No matter how well we prepare there will be unexpected challenges during the ride. When these problems arise we will have to meet them with our typical MacGyver abilities. This is nothing new for the Amateur Radio operator.

For us the job remains the same, to safely move >3,000 bike riders ~150 miles over a two day period. This logistical challenge depends on our ability to provide communications. It is the efforts and professionalism of our Amateur Radio community that has made this event a success over the past 19+ years. I hope that we can count on your continued support to make the ride a success in the future.

Thank you,  
Milton Johnson – N5HMJ



## NEXT SARO MEETING Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2009 @ 7:30PM

If you are planning to attend the April 24th meeting (we hope you are) and have not been to one before, or have been to a meeting in years' past, it doesn't matter if you knew how to get there, because we aren't going to that place this time. Huh?

**The April 24, 2009 meeting will be held at Martha's Mexican Restaurant, 5822 Babcock, at the corner of Babcock Road and Huebner Road (NW Side of San Antonio, out near the Medical Center Area)**  
**See Map on right →**

Come early and eat, or stay late and eat. We've got the whole meeting room to ourselves, separate from the other diners. Come in the front entrance and make an immediate left into the private dining / party room just past the cashier. Prices are reasonable, but you don't have to eat here if you don't want to.

## 2009 Dues are Past Due

And don't forget to bring your \$\$ for your 2009 SARO dues if you haven't already sent them in to the club. If you already paid your dues, please accept our thanks. If not, well the renewal application is available on the SARO website, [www.sarepeater.net](http://www.sarepeater.net), so what are you waiting on?

## SanAntonioHams.org

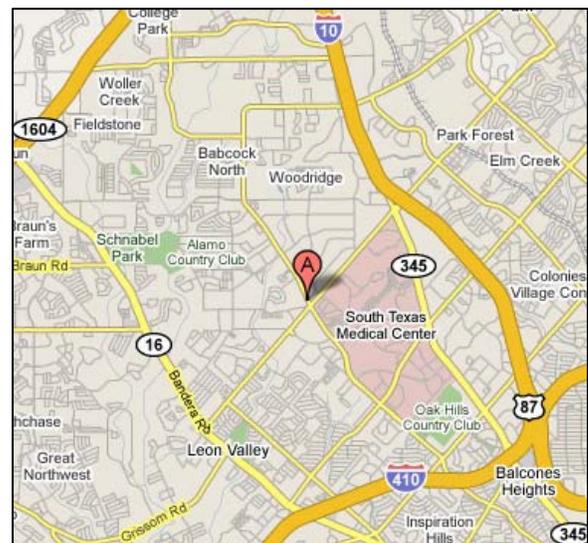
By Lee Besing, N5NTG



**New Feature - The Blog!**  
We've created a new section using WordPress software to allow us and other hams to post their news directly to this website. **Check out our new News Blog** and let us know what you think! **Blog authors wanted.** Contact us via email if you want permission to post your own news stories there.

## Current Top Headlines Posted

- [HB220 Threatens Ham Radio - Action Needed!](#)  
Sun, 08 Mar 2009
- [Citizen Corps News: Does your Emergency Preparedness Kit contain recalled or expired items?](#)  
Fri, 06 Mar 2009
- [CO WORLD WIDE WPX CONTEST 2009](#)  
Thu, 05 Mar 2009
- [Unusual Suspects Meet & Greet - 03/22](#)  
Wed, 04 Mar 2009
- [Police Detonate Ham Radio Equipment Mistaken for Bomb](#)  
Mon, 02 Mar 2009
- [Cellular on Patrol Class - March 21st](#)  
Sat, 28 Feb 2009
- [2009 Combined Field Day Site](#)  
Thu, 26 Feb 2009
- [SAN ANTONIO'S 2009 bikeMS RIDE](#)  
Fri, 20 Feb 2009



## HB220 Threatens Ham Radio!

### Action **No Longer** Needed!

For those that have responded to our request (below) to contact your rep, Thank You! For those that have it scheduled to do; Please stand down. **Word out of capitol is "Point made!"** Thanks All!

Lee H. Cooper, W5LHC  
Public Information Coordinator,  
South Texas Section, ARRL  
<http://www.arrl.org/pio>

## HB220 Threatens Ham Radio!

### Action Needed!

#### PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Action:

Once again a bill is being introduced into the Texas Legislature to ban the use of cell phones while driving unless the call is being made using hands free operation. [Senate bill \(SB582\)](#) is being sponsored by [State Senator Jeff Wentworth](#) of San Antonio includes language to the effect of exempting Amateur Radio.

However, a bill being introduced by [State Representative Jose Menendez](#) from Bexar County does not include such language, Otherwise the bills are almost exactly alike.



When this subject came up before the Texas Legislature in the past [Rep. Menendez](#) had agreed to include such language in his bill and had, however that bill was never passed and not signed into law. Therefore we are still allowed to use our cellphones while driving without the aid of hands free operation. In essence, the subject has one again risen to the top of the agenda and it is time for us as Amateur Radio operators to bring to the attention of our State Representatives the need for exempting Amateur Radio.

It is strongly encouraged that since these bills are due to be entered into hearing this coming Tuesday, March 10th when the legislature reconvenes, that over the weekend and including this Monday, March 9th, each of us contact our State Representative and make our wishes known. In addition to calling and/or emailing your representative it may not hurt to also call [Rep. Menendez](#) and remind him of his past agreement to this provision. This is probably just an oversight on his part and a polite reminder is in order.

A complete copy of each bill can be found by going to the website address [www.tlc.state.tx.us](http://www.tlc.state.tx.us) and click on the menu button labeled "Internet Resources." In the text at the top of the next page you will find a link labeled "Texas Legislature Online," click on it and you will be taken to a page with search boxes at the top where you can enter either "[SB 582](#)" to see [Senator Wentworth's bill](#) and type "[HB 220](#)" to see [Rep. Menendez's bill](#).

You will see about in [the last third of the page on bill SB 582](#) a sub paragraph (2) that states : (2) a person licensed by the Federal Communications Commission to operate a wireless communication device or a radio communication device. In [HB 220](#) this line is missing. That is what we need to have added in the house bill so that in the event these bills are passed out of their respective committees and passed in both houses of the legislature, merged into one and sent to Governor Perry for signature that we do not lose our use of Amateur Radio while in mobile operation.

As mentioned above it is being recommended you also contact your own representative as well as Rep. Menendez, to let them know your feelings. Then maybe if during discussion in committee or on the floor of the legislature one of the representatives will remember this and bring it up in discussion. It is collectively felt that this is only an oversight. We have been down this street before. A gentle reminder at this time is in order. Just keep your senses in check and be polite in your communications and we may once and for all ensure the continued operation of mobile amateur radio communications.

Thank you for your attention.  
Gary S. Tangrady, K5GST  
Assistant Public Information Coordinator  
South Texas Section, ARRL

- [Web Link showing who is on the Transportation Committee for the House of Representatives, who will be considering the bill....](#)
- [Text link for full Text of Wentworth's bill SB 582](#)
- [Text link for full Text of Menendez's bill HB 220](#)

See this article and many others on the San Antonio Hams Blog, at <http://www.SAHams.org/blog>

**News-Blog**



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The SARO Bulletin is published quarterly. SARO General Membership meetings are held quarterly, the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday in January, April, July and October. Subscription and advertisements for personal equipment are free to SARO members. Our website is [www.SARepeater.Net](http://www.SARepeater.Net). All officers / Chairs have official email addresses if you use their call sign @sarepeater.net

**SARO REPEATERS**

All PLL tones 179.9Hz

**6 Meter**

53.13 -

**2 Meter**

145.01 d

146.78 -

146.82 -a

146.94 -

147.14 +

147.36 +a

**220 MHz**

224.38 -d

**440 MHz**

444.100 +a

444.125 +

(+/-) offset direction Std. Split

(a) autopatch

(d) digipeater

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