



San Antonio Repeater Organization

P.O. Box 1753
San Antonio, Texas 78296

BULLETIN

“Serving the Amateur Community for 37 Years.”

October 2005

Volume 37 Number 3

Next General Membership Meeting October 28, 2005 - 7:30PM

SARO NET WEDNESDAYS AT 8:30 P.M. ON 146.94- (179.9 tone)

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Alfred Horn, KG5QW
SARO 2005 President

From The Summer Issue that didn't happen, here is Alfred's article from July 2005. His Fall 2005 article will follow.

Alfred's July Article

My, My! Things have stayed the same, and yet many changes have occurred since I became involved in the Organization in 1987. Elmers from our history include Paul N5SUE, Bob W5TWS, Lee N5FOE, Greg WA5PF, and more that have since passed. I reflect on the time spent with these men and the lessons I learned from them.

Yet some things don't change; Gordon K5SUZ, Roger WA5ONR and other behind-the-scenes guys still devote endless time and effort to our organization. Some seem ageless like Herm N5CNH. He still has all the hair he had when I first met him back in the 80's. Many new faces are now involved, such as Shane NS5D and Lee N5NTG.

Let me encourage you to get to know the new faces and even those of us that have been around for a few years. Many times life is so busy that it becomes a challenge to balance hobbies, family, and work. Let me encourage you to be involved with your ham radio buddies for a great time of fellowship and service to the community. You never know if YOU may be the Elmer someone remembers fondly one day!

Speaking of service to the Community, the MS 150 Bike to the Beach is October 1st and 2nd. If you worked it last year I will be in contact with you to line you up for this year. If you have not been involved in the past and



are interested, give me a call and let's see we can put you to work. Because of increasing prices at the hotels in Beeville, most of us will likely be going to Corpus Christi for Saturday night. At this time we do have some concern about repeater coverage on the first half of the Saturday.

The MS Society is estimating 3700 cyclists for this year. Wow! I can remember when 500 was a big tour.

Alfred's October Article

The end of October is here, and it seems that cooler weather is on the way. October also brings us to the last Membership Meeting of the Year and nominations for Board of Directors. **Four positions will be open; Herm N5CNH, Gordon K5SUZ, Gil AA5XH, and Curtis N5QPN.** We will need at least 5 candidates for the Election. If you wish to be considered, come to the meeting with another member willing to nominate you. If you cannot be present, then have a signed letter delivered that night stating that you are willing to accept a nomination for the Board. Get involved and make a difference in the Ham Community!!!

With the writing of this article we are watching Hurricane Wilma and wondering what effects she will have on the nation, and what volunteer opportunities will need to be filled as a result. When called upon to help with communications for an Emergency, we must remember that this is not an event that is sponsored by any

Continued on page 2

From The President -(Continued From Page 1)

club, but is an Emergency Communication opportunity and that we are supporting the Local Emergency Coordinators and the people in need. This is what makes us as Ham Radio Operators such a great asset to the community. In a time of need we can all come together to support the community.

I hope to see you at the meeting on Friday the 28th at the Ruble Center. It is a great opportunity to meet face to face, those you have met on the air. Also it is a wonderful opportunity to see what is going on and get involved. One never knows who might show up. As usual there is always a gathering after the meeting for food and libations at some nearby restaurant.

More Ham Radio Public Service Opportunities In November

- ✓ **November 12** - Veterans Day Parade, Contact Shane NS5D at 473-4847
- ✓ **November 13** - San Antonio Marathon, Contact Pat AD5BR at 273-5927

Nominations for Board of Directors

Four positions will be open; Herm N5CNH, Gordon K5SUZ, Gil AA5XH, and Curtis N5QPN.



These four current directors are unable to run again due to term limits as established by the bylaws. We will need at least 5 candidates for the Election plus an election officer and counting committee volunteers.

If you wish to be nominated, come to the meeting with another member willing to nominate you. If you cannot be present, then have a signed letter delivered that night stating that you are willing to accept a nomination for the Board.

Elections will be by mailed ballot in December.

REMINDER - 2006 Dues

2006 SARO dues are now being accepted by mail or during membership meetings. There is no increase in dues for 2006. A copy of the renewal / application form is on page 3 of this newsletter. Current members will receive a renewal notice in the mail later this year, Got Membership Questions? Send an email membership@sarepeater.net for answers.

MS150 - 2005 Ham Style

by Shane O'Neal, NS5D

Hats off again to all involved in this year's HEB MS150 Bike to the Beach, held October 1st and 2nd, and benefiting the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Hams from San Antonio, Austin, Houston and surrounding areas came together to provide communications across the 150 mile, two day course from the SBC Center in San Antonio to Coastal Bend College in Beeville, and on in to the finish line at the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi.

This year's event was certainly one of the busiest to date, with more than 3,700 riders registered. Though it was marred by at least one major injury traffic accident involving a volunteer, and many minor ones (mostly due to the heat), the event was a spectacular success from an amateur radio standpoint. Break points, SAG wagons, medical first responders, ambulances, supply trucks, the finish line and the tour directors were all kept in constant contact via ham radio.



One of the three Medical Vans rolls out onto the course on day 2, each staffed with a ham passenger or driver to provide prompt and accurate communications.

Once again, hams did much more than just talk on the radio during this event. Lyle, KB5BSU, was responsible for marking the entire course with signs, and had to be on the course in the wee hours of the morning, well in advance of the riders. Erik, W5ETS and Royce, KA5OHJ, swept the course prior to the event on the huge industrial street sweeper affectionately known as "Broomhilda". Royce also did double duty driving "SAG 3". Alfred, KG5QW, acted as coordinator for the hams working the event, while his wife Mary Ann, N5MYN, was fully engrossed in finish line operations as a ham-turned-staffer.

Meanwhile Janet, KE5AFK, was heard for the first time under her own callsign this year as a staffer-turned-ham.

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Maintenance Report

by Gordon K5SUZ

Let me again apologize for no maintenance article since the January Bulletin, but nothing had been addressed over the last several months.

The 147.14 machine, "the Buzzard Roost", located near Canyon Lake appears to be functioning properly since it was discovered to have an antenna problem (broken dipole). As you may recall, 400 feet was removed from the tower, leaving 600 feet standing. our antenna was moved from an 880 foot level to a 580 foot level. In doing this, the tower company apparently damaged one of the four dipoles of the DB-224. SARO had a tower climber inspect the antenna, found the problem, and repaired it.

The 146.82 machine has been off the air for several months but is now back as a "single site" machine at the 146.82 transmitter site. When Channel 12 went to HDTV, it made the site unusable for any 2-way communications, so the .22 receive package was removed. It does not have the Southside coverage as before, but still works well. Also it might be noted that .82 no longer has an autopatch. You also need to identify it as WA5FSR repeater and hopefully before long we will have the new voter system for .82 up and running!

The 146.94 repeater went down after a storm last month.

It turned out to be a problem in the 10-volt regulator card and was quickly repaired before the rainfall net. Maybe before too long, the existing .94 controller can be changed out with one that is more state-of-the-art.

Last, but not least, the new GE Mastr II for six meters is ready to go. This replaces the GE Mastr Pro which has a solid state receiver and exciter, but has tubes as a driver and finals. Believe it or not Don, W5DK, this is about to come to pass! Everything is up except for the Digi and maybe with a little help I can get the Digi back up.

Well I guess this is all the damage I can do for this writing. In closing, should any member notice a problem with any of the SARO equipment, please give me a call on the air or on the telephone.



Gordon K5SUZ caught in the act of removing one of the SAG Van signs after MS150 was over in Corpus Christi.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM SAN ANTONIO REPEATER ORGANIZATION

P O Box 1753, San Antonio TX 78296-1753

Are you an ARRL member? No Yes Life

Call _____ Class _____ Exp Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Nickname (optional) _____

Please put your Call-Sign on your check
Annual DUES \$15.00 (if have ever been a SARO member)
First Time Applicant \$10.00 plus prorated Dues
 (ie. \$25.00 for new applicant at start of year)

I volunteer for the following committees (NOTE: telephone number and e-mail address will be given to the committee chairperson)

- Engineering Maintenance Newsletter
 Public Service Membership Public Relations
 Web Site Other _____

- New Member (copy of license must be enclosed)
 Renewal (include copy of license if revised/renewed recently)
 Some info has changed, please review record

Phone _____

e-Mail _____

In accordance with Privacy and Freedom of Information Acts, the following applies: Failure to check the following blocks indicating that you **DO NOT WANT** the information published in the SARO Directory, constitutes agreement with its publication.

Check each box **ONLY** if you **DO NOT** want it published:
 Phone Address e-Mail

I understand communications of a business or commercial nature have no place on SARO repeaters. I will comply with the policies of SARO and will not engage in any activities that might bring discredit to the Organization.

Signature _____ Date _____

NS5D MS150 Continued from page 2

Talking on the radio was only a small part of the duties of the numerous SAG drivers, who were busy picking up tired cyclists and helping them get their bicycles and gear into the back of the 15 passenger SAG vans. Once again the SAG drivers distinguished themselves by reporting many safety hazards on the course to Safety Director Curtis, N5QPN.

Despite the loss of the Kenedy repeater (147.200) which had covered a large part of the first leg of the course in year's past, SARO came through with nearly full repeater coverage this year thanks to the 145.250 repeater owned and operated by Doug, KK5LA, and a last-minute temporary relocation of the SARO 146.780 machine to the Kenedy site by Gordon, K5SUZ, Barry, W5BLH and Shane, NS5D. As usual, the 147.080 repeater in Sinton provided excellent wide area coverage on the second leg of the course, allowing the use of handie-talkies from many of the locations.

According to Alfred, KG5QW, hams who volunteered this year will have first crack at working the same positions next year. Hams who would like to work next year's event are encouraged to contact Alfred early on and get their names on the list.

See you next year!

Bike to the Beach – MS 150

By Charles Land, KC5NKK

The MS 150 "Bike to the Beach" bicycle ride occurred on October 1st and 2nd this year. Approximately 3700 bike riders left the SBC center early Saturday morning.



Sag Van #5 finishes in Corpus Christi. Many of the Sag Vans followed the final rider into the Finish Line followed by the Corpus Christi Police and the SARO Turtle driven by Christina W5CSL and Erik W5ETS, and sometimes Diana KD5SXI.



Charlie KC5NKK listens to the net on Sunday morning while waiting for the riders to get on the course from Beeville. The Course had to be changed at the last minute due to a bridge out in downtown Beeville where the course normally was routed.

There were break points about every 10 miles, a lunch stop in Kennedy, an overnight point in Beeville, and lunch the second day in Hempstead. Riders crossed the finish line under the bridge where the causeway enters Corpus Christi.

Ham operators played a major role in staffing and running this event. Hams drove the 15 SAG vans on the route to pick up riders with mechanical problems or who poop out. In addition, hams accompanied the 4 ambulances on the route, the medical support people, the starting area, breakpoints, lunch Beeville overnight stop, the finish line and the supply and net operations centers. All in all, there were about 40 ham operators supporting this event each day.

A repeater had to be installed in Kenedy (146.78), as the local repeater there was out of service. Luckily we were allowed to use the antenna and power that the local repeater uses.

Three repeaters; San Antonio (145.25), Kenedy (temporary 146.78) and Sinton (147.08) were used along the route. Net control started out in San Antonio and moved to Beeville on Saturday before noon, and was controlled from Corpus Christi on Sunday. Nets were run as "closed or controlled nets" on both days, meaning that any caller had to go through net control.

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KC5NKK MS150 -
Continued from page 4

On Saturday, there were two nets, as the San Antonio repeater did not have mobile coverage all the way to Beeville, with operators starting on the San Antonio repeater and ending up on the Kennedy repeater by the end of the day. On Sunday, the distance being traveled was a little shorter, and the 147.080 repeater (Sinton) gave us good coverage for the entire day.

As is plainly obvious to all, having as many as 45 operators on one or two nets simultaneously means there was a constant flow of traffic. Although there were a few times when it was hard to pass routine traffic, net controllers did a very good job of prioritizing traffic and keeping it flowing. As this event continues to grow (we had about 1200 more riders this year than last) we are about at the point where we will require a second net to be available for the entire course, as the Houston ride has done for many years.

Having ham operators drive the SAG vans is a major difference from the Houston to Austin MS 150. One could joke that maybe the Houston hams can't drive and operate radios at the same time – but the reality is that the MS 150 organization there already had established a SAG driver team that largely weren't ham operators and they didn't want to boot out the long term volunteers they had, in order to put hams in their place. And there are about 30 SAGs on the Houston ride plus many busses – which would be a challenge to cover with ham operators (Only about half of the SAGs on that ride are radio equipped.)



Confusion is typical at the Break Points when thousands of riders stop for a break and to use the Porta Potties (note to radio operators, set your station up wind from that location), fill their water bottles or get a snack, get medical attention or hitch a ride the rest of the way on a SAG van. Photo: Lee N5NTG

Being a SAG driver has a lot of challenges. You have to drive a really LARGE van that you aren't used to on roads you may not be familiar with, among hundreds of bike riders, as well as help frustrated riders who are tired, slightly injured (medical folks deal with the REALLY injured riders – our were as much mental injuries and just worn out riders or bike parts).

Early Saturday afternoon was a pretty high stress time for SAGs, as the heat (in the 90s PLUS humidity, the distance (they rode 90 miles that day), and the usually first day body and equipment failures produced a huge number of riders who wanted rides to lunch and to the overnight point. Some riders had to wait an hour or more to get a ride.

The MS organization has a bus or two on standby, and one was called out to bus between lunch (Kennedy) and Beeville. SAGs caught up with demand around 4:00pm and could relax a little. Sunday was a shorter day (only going about 60 miles), the weather cooled a bit as we got closer to Corpus, and those riders who weren't in shape for this kind of ride had already dropped out. Plus there is a huge adrenalin kick for the riders as they know they are getting close to the finish. We had very few asking for rides between the last break point and the finish line. We had quite a few who wanted a ride to the last breakpoint so that they could ride their bikes across the finish line.



SAG Vans staged near the starting point on Hwy 181 watching some of the three-wheel cyclists go whizzing by. These riders use their hands to peddle rather than their legs. Most have physical handicaps of some sort, but they don't let that stop them from riding.

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KC5NKK MS150 - Continued from page 5

Helping riders secure their bikes can be a challenge. I'm told that the average price of bikes on this ride is in the \$2,000 range, with some costing as much as \$4,000. The single rider bikes were easier to handle than the three wheeler or the tandem bikes that are about 3-4 feet longer than a regular 2 wheeled bike. When riders are injured, the SAGs and other ride volunteers see that their bikes (which we call "riderless bikes") are delivered to the overnight point and/or to the finish line, and then the MS organization will transport them back to San Antonio and store them if need be. In addition, MS offers all riders a bus ride from the finish line to San Antonio, and a truck ride for their bikes. Transportation is one of the huge logistical responsibilities that the hams have very little to do with.

Safety issues – one tragedy was a medic who was attempting to direct traffic who was hit by a vehicle. We hear he is OK, but a few days in the hospital was required. Pat AD5BR had just called in a report of this volunteer standing in the middle of the two lane highway, saying "he is a traffic hazard", but before any action to occur to remove him from that location, he was struck by a van's mirror and knocked down into traffic. The victim had violated Rule #1 that any volunteer who has ever been instructed in traffic control knows – never turn your back to oncoming traffic. Lesson learned – don't get in the middle of a busy highway – ever, and don't direct traffic unless you have had training and are operating under the instruction of a peace officer and are properly equipped. Otherwise you could be guilty of obstructing traffic, and you could get that really run down feeling.

My hat is off to the medical team and AMR ambulance crews that supported this event. They did a great job communicating, they worked their buns off, and they were quickly on top of every medical problem reported to them. Great Job!! And ditto for the safety crew – they were always in communications and on top of issues quickly.

And that is not to shortchange the SAG drivers – also did an excellent job (maybe I'm prejudiced, I was one). Nearly all of the SAG drivers have done this for many years, and there is much they know that newbies don't, and there isn't any written instruction or other training, other than MYOMOJT (make your own mistakes on the job training) so it can be a bit intimidating for a SAG driver the first year.



After the tragic accident on Day 2 at Break Point 2 in Skidmore where a volunteer was struck by a vehicle while directing traffic and standing in the center of a two lane, 60mph highway, stacked traffic for miles in both directions before the scene was cleared.

Alfred KG5QW and Gordon K5SUZ did a good job of organizing the hams, and Mike N5PTN and Shane NS5D did an excellent job of Net Control.

The busses were one of our weaker links. They were not ham radio equipped, and were taking instruction from a MS staffer who seemed to shoot from the hip – every time we were told what a bus was going to do, it did something different. They were trying to be responsive to needs, but changed plans so often that they were almost counter productive.



Break Point 4 in Portland: Charlie W5BRC (right), unidentified rider who happened to be a Farmers Insurance Adjuster and Charles KD5EXS (also known as "C4") show the rider his radio station. W5BRC is also a Farmers Insurance Agent in San Antonio. KD5EXS is Charles the IV, thus "C4". The two Manleys worked Break Points both days.

Commentary

By Chuck Kenworthy, WB5FWI

I've been an Amateur Radio Operator for some 34 years now. I wanted to be a "Ham" from a very early age (10), when I got my first shortwave receiver. When I did get on the air in 1971, it was a little rough at first for me to be accepted into the local Amateur community. After much determination, and help from several Hams who took me under their wings, I became (and still am), in my opinion, part of a very elite group of people. Ham radio, although just a

hobby, has played a very important part of my life.

It really irks me to hear some of the conversations that have been taking place on several of our local VHF & UHF simplex and repeater frequencies. Most of us have heard about the shenanigans that go on on the West Coast, along with some of the late-night QSL's on 75 meters.



Chuck operating during MS150 as the Lunch Break Point Control Station, using his electric scooter to get around the area. Chuck is a regular volunteer at this and other events.

Well now it's here, not as intense, but just as stupid. It's normal for people to have differences of opinions, but to slander and belittle each other, especially on the Amateur airwaves, is NOT what Amateur Radio is all about! Some might say 'if you don't like it, turn the channel' or 'you have an off button, use it'. I'm not one to ignore a problem, and ignoring this problem will NOT make it go away.

So what do we do? How do we let it be known that these "free for all, tag-team" conversations should not be taking place over our Amateur airwaves?

I don't know if on-air confrontations are good or not. If done tactfully, it could do some good, or it might backfire and just fuel the fire. Maybe bring up the subject at one of our local club's meetings, and get some positive group discussion might be another way. However we do it, we must get the message out. Our hobby is all about communicating, folks. If you feel as strongly as I do about this subject, speak up!

**Having an Amateur license is a
privilege, not a right!
That's my opinion.
Let's communicate!**



Don KD5HQI, Claude KD5YZX (on the motorcycle) and our fearless leader Alfred KG5QW talking on the side of the road waiting for riders to call for SAG or Medical Support. Some of the motorcycles were hams, such as Claude who was working the event again, but as a Ham for the first time. Alfred was known by tactical call "Motorcycle One" but chose not to ride this year, filling in where ever we neede another ham instead.

2005 Ham Volunteers for the MS150

Here is an updated list of the volunteers that this editor was aware of participating in this year's event, sorted by first name. If you know of anyone missing, please advise the editor by email (n5ntg@arrl.net) and we'll update the electronic copy on the website.

Alfred KG5QW, Anita KD5WTF, Barbara N5RZH, Barry W5BLH, Bill KE5AFL, Charlie W5BRC, Charlie KD5EXS, Charlie KC5NKK, Christina W5CLS, Chuck WB5FWI, Claude KD5YZX, Curtis N5QPN, Dale KB5YSJ, Danny WA5KRP, Diane KC5SXI, Don W5DK, Don AB5XI, Don T. KD5HQI, Doug KK5LA, Dwayne KB5YTA, Eric WB5ZJQ, Erik W5ETS, Frances KB5TMI, Gordon K5SUZ, Herm N5CNH, Janet KE5AFK, Josh KD5IGA, Lee N5NTG, Liliane KC5AQP, Linda KC5QPQ, Louis K5LT, Louise WB5LCT, Lyle KB5BSU, MaryAnn N5MYN, Meilssa KD5KNO, Melissa KC5KIU, Michael N5PTN, Milton KE5CLV & Meghann, Nancy WB5TCX, Neil WA5FSR, Pat AD5BR, Rick N5HJP, Royce KA5OHJ, Shane NS5D, Spencer K5SAS, Terri KC5ANR, Terry K5ADF, Wendell AA5VN, Zachry KD5SJH



San Antonio Repeater Organization
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The SARO Bulletin is published quarterly. Past issues are available from the SARO website. SARO General Membership meetings are held quarterly, at the Ruble Center, at 419 East Magnolia, the 4th Friday in January, April, July and October. Subscription and advertisements for personal equipment are free to SARO members. Our web site is www.SARRepeater.Net.

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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
 223.50 d
 224.38 -

440 MHz
 444.100 +a
 444.125 +

 (+/-) offset direction Std. Split
 (a) autopatch
 (d) digipeater