

Amateur Radio 101

By Bob Frost, Jeff Hahn and Don Parrish

Sometime in the past, you've probably known an amateur radio operator, otherwise known as a ham. Maybe it was your granddad, dad, uncle, a childhood friend or a neighbor down the street. If you ever ventured into their "ham shack," it probably looked like one of the strange labs from the 50s-60s TV series *Buck Rogers*, *Mr. Wizard* or *The Outer Limits* – lots of wires, blinking lights, static, radio sounds and tech stuff.

Ham radio is still very much alive and well today. At last count, there were over 770,000 licensed ham radio operators in the U.S. with well over 30,000 new hams joining the ranks each year, some as young as age six and others well into their 90s. In Sun City Texas there are about 100 licensed hams, roughly 60 percent of whom are members of the Sun City Amateur Radio Society (SCARS).

GET A LICENSE

In 1912 the U.S. Government required an individual to be tested and licensed to legally transmit on amateur frequencies – simply talking on a CB radio doesn't make you a ham. Obtaining a ham radio license isn't difficult. There are three classes of licenses, each of which requires more skill and knowledge than the last. Proficiency in Morse Code is no longer required to obtain a ham license.

TURN ON AND TUNE IN

Once licensed, amateur radio operators have access to specifically allocated radio frequencies. Within those frequencies, hams can communicate over-the-air, locally, regionally, to each other or worldwide to distant stations. Today's hams have options beyond traditional voice communication and may choose to experiment with other modes, including computer-aided digital communication.



PHOTOS BY BOB FROST

SCARS radio room (the "shack") at the Texas Drive Activity Center.



SCARS member Jeff Hahn stands by for emergency communication in the Georgetown Police and Fire Training Center.

For emergency communications, there are national systems that include amateur radio and are managed by the states and implemented by local government. One of the best examples of amateur radio emergency communications occurred in Williamson County on May 27, 1997, when a deadly F5 tornado struck Jarrell, Texas. Amateur radio filled the communication gap until traditional infrastructure was restored.

Williamson County took that experience to heart. Today, the county has invested over \$150,000 in amateur radio communications facilities and equipment (including a mobile communications trailer) ready to be used in case of an emergency. Fully equipped radio facilities

can be found in the police and fire training center on D.B. Wood Rd., Fire Station #3 on Texas Drive and at all Williamson county hospitals, all staffed by trained amateur radio operators.

One of the ways hams train is by providing communications support for public service events. One of the largest local events is the annual Red Poppy Ride where SCARS members make up more than half the radio operators providing communications for race organizers and managers.

INTERESTED AND WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HAM RADIO?

Sun City's Amateur Radio Society gives radio enthusiasts and ham operators a place to meet monthly and stay in touch. Membership provides access to a fully equipped radio room where licensed hams can "get on the air" and talk locally or around the world. A club-sponsored 440 MHz UHF-band repeater allows members to communicate in and around Georgetown using simple and inexpensive hand-held pocket-sized radios.

To learn more about amateur radio and meet Sun City's active hams, simply drop in on one of the first Wednesdays of the month meetings at 7 p.m. in the Texas Drive Activities Center to see what it's all about. We hope to see you there!



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SCARS FOX HUNT CHAMPION

Ham Radio operator Curtis Guyote, using radio directional finding equipment, was the first to find a hidden transmitter (the "Fox") hidden by the winner of last month's hunt.

This monthly Saturday morning radio hunt is sponsored by the Sun City Amateur Radio Society to hone members' radio operation and signal-tracking skills. Each month's winners hide the "Fox" somewhere in Sun City for next months' hunt.



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SCARS FEBRUARY FOX HUNT CHAMPS

Ham radio operators Bob Frost and Pace McDonald, using radio directional finding equipment, were the first hunt team to find a transmitter (the "Fox") hidden by the winners of last month's hunt.

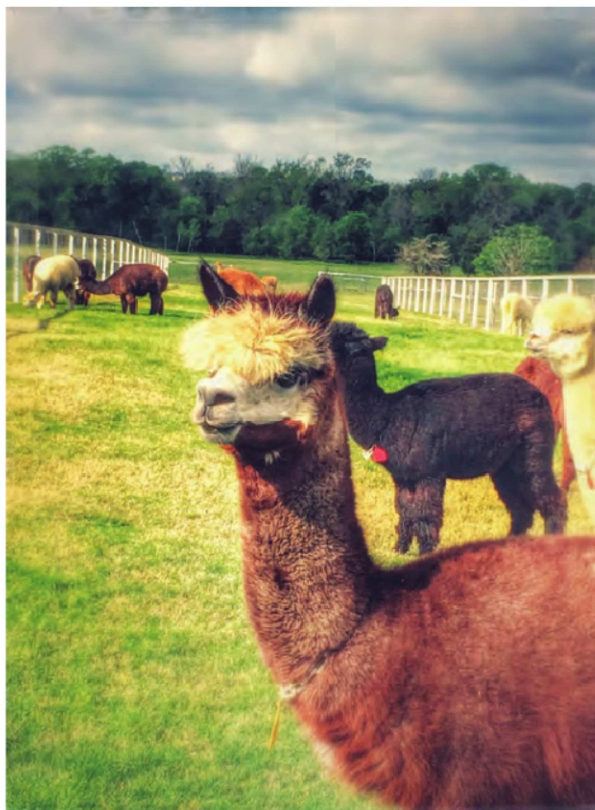
around sun city



SUN CITY AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY'S APRIL FOX HUNT

Ham Radio operators Curtis and Dee Guyote, using radio directional finding equipment, were the first hunt team to find a hidden transmitter (the "Fox") hidden by the winners of last month's hunt.

This monthly Saturday morning radio hunt is sponsored by the Sun City Amateur Radio Society to hone members' radio operation and signal tracking skills.



PEEKA-BOO!

Jacki Westphal snapped this photo of an alpaca during the CA-sponsored outing to the Peeka Alpaca Ranch and Antique Rose Emporium in March. The all-day excursion took residents through the cities of Burton, Brenham, Independence and Carmine.



SMILE AND SAY KVUE!

PHOTO BY CONNIE STUTTERS

Christy Millweard, a KVUE news reporter, recently visited a Georgettes dance class to photograph and interview participants for a program to be aired on her network's television station. Left to right: Barbara Dorrah, Connie Stutters, Sandy Jordan-Kandel, Christy Millweard, Cathy Francis, Vun Ziegler, Debbie Keele.



YELLOW CROWNED NIGHT HERON BY BARBARA LUNA



POPPY RIDE ASSISTANTS

Don Parrish, left, and Bob Frost, right, were among a number of ham radio operators from Sun City Amateur Radio Society (SCARS) who provided route and rest stop communications for this year's Red Poppy Bike Ride. Don and Bob provided mobile support, gear, and communications backup for bicycle riders along the 100-mile route in north Williamson County.



SUN CITY RECYCLES TOURS TEXAS DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

Eight members of Sun City Recycles committee toured the Texas Disposal Systems (TDS) operation in Creedmoor, TX. The tour was arranged by Jordan Fengel, Environmental Coordinator. He has been working with the recycle committee from its inception. TDS is the solid waste and recycle facility for Sun City and Georgetown. The committee was very impressed with the automation and the technical sophistication of the facility.

classifieds

Continued from previous page

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WEATHER RADIO ASSISTANCE

Seated left to right: Sun City Ham Radio operators Don Parrish, Steve Lawrence, Hal Miles, John Scott, Pace McDonald and Curtis Guyote assist Sun City residents with programming their weather radios. This is an annual service offered to Sun City residents by the Sun City Amateur Radio Society (SCARS).

PHOTO BY BOB FROST



around sun city



SCARS JUNE FOX HUNT

Ham Radio operators Curtis Guyote and Steve Lawrence, using radio directional finding equipment, were the first hunt team to find a hidden transmitter (the "Fox") hidden by the winners of May's hunt. This monthly Saturday morning radio hunt is sponsored by the Sun City Amateur Radio Society (SCARS).

In recognition of amateur radio operators, Texas Governor Greg Abbott proclaimed June 19-25 to be Amateur Radio Operator Week.



PHOENIX RISING

Sun City resident Jon Drake created the stained glass work "Phoenix Rising" depicting the long-lived mythical bird in bright hues of red, yellow and blue. In ancient mythology, the phoenix lived for hundreds of years before dying by bursting into flames and rising from its ashes to start a new life. Jon has been crafting original stained glass pieces for over 50 years and is a member of the Stained Glass Club. This piece took Jon about two months to complete.

WATER LILIES ENJOY LUNCH

Water walking is excellent exercise – just ask the "Water Lilies," a group of Sun City residents who get together several times a week at the Texas Drive pool to do just that. Recently, the ladies enjoyed a seafood lunch at Salt Trader restaurant. Shown: Pat Sosinski, Terry Tjandrasa, Donna Nolen, Kathy Digits, Lyn McCarthy and Elaine Warner.



Submit photos to: emily.wallace@sctexas.org. Include a caption and names of subjects in photo if possible.



OUTFOXING THE FOX

Ham Radio operator Bob Frost (center), using radio directional finding equipment, was the first to find a hidden transmitter (the "Fox") hidden by the winners of last month's hunt. In close second was the team of Don Parrish (left) and John Scott (right).

This monthly Saturday morning radio hunt is sponsored by the Sun City Amateur Radio Society to hone members' radio operation and signal-tracking skills. Each month's winners hide the "Fox" somewhere in Sun City for next months' hunt.



BEATING THE HEAT

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PHOTO BY BOB FROST

OUTFOXING THE FOX

Ham Radio operators John Price, David Dial and Don Parrish, using radio directional finding equipment, were the first hunt team to find a hidden transmitter (the "Fox") hidden by the winners of last month's hunt.

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Sun City Texas
Community Association

SCARS SEPTEMBER FOX HUNT

Ham radio operators Don Davidson and Bob Frost are shown with some of the items they used to find a transmitter (the "Fox") hidden in Sun City Texas by the winners of last month's hunt.

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REEL LADIES HAVE FUN IN SEA DRIFT

The Sun City Hunting and Fishing Club sponsored a fishing trip to Sea Drift, Texas. Several of the Reel Ladies anglers brought back a large catch. Pictured: Sally Blackshear



OCTOBER FOX HUNT - LADY'S LUCK?

The team of Wayne and Iris Chauffe are the winners of the October Fox Hunt sponsored by the Sun City Amateur Radio Society. According to Wayne, it was pure logic, determination, multiple measurements/confirmations and perhaps a "little" woman's intuition that resulted in Iris's finding the fox ahead of all the men.



N64 FALL FEST POTLUCK

Happiness is being in Neighborhood 64 for their fun Fall Fest potluck. Everyone enjoyed games, along with entertainment and a silent auction fund raiser for Meals on Wheels. Neighbors showed off their outstanding talent with a magic act, singing, tap dancing, whistling, and guitar music for entertainment. There was fall fun for everyone.



around sun city



NEW ZOOMER

Zoomers President Diane Wakefield presented a Legacy Hills Grille gift certificate to Hank Blanks. Hank is the Zoomers' 2,900th member.



NEW HAM

Dennis Hurtado (left) passes the traveling trophy to R.C. Stephenson (right), continuing the Sun City Amateur Radio Association's (SCARS) tradition of spotlighting the chartered club's newest licensed ham. R.C. studied diligently and passed the Federal Communications Commission operator's test with flying colors, and was granted a Technician's radio license on Sept. 22. R.C.'s new call sign is KG5VCT.

SOUTH AFRICAN ADVENTURE

Eight Sun City residents enjoyed a trip to South Africa, returning on Oct. 4. They visited Cape Town and drove the Garden Route along the coast of the Indian Ocean, also crossing Swaziland. The group enjoyed game drives on water and land including the famed Kruger National Park, where they saw even more animals than they expected.

Front row: Ursula Plinner, Betty Brindle, Lynn de los Santos, Sherry Thien

Back row: Martha Trowbridge, Mary Perez, Lorenzo Perez, Rae Gill



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