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# SIGNALS

Rockwell Collins Amateur Radio Club

Volume 31 Issue 5

Web Site <http://www.w5rok.us>

February 2010

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## RCARC Membership Meeting

Thursday, 25 February 2010  
1700 Social 1730 Meeting  
Methodist Richardson Medical Center  
At Bush/Renner/Shiloh Intersection  
Second Floor East Conference Room

Subject: "Operating HF -What they didn't tell you when you studied for your license" **BY Carl Solomon, W5SU**

right by our current location taking up the block between the George Bush Sr. and Shiloh Road on the South side of Renner Road (look for the tallest building in the area). Please park on the South side of the building. The outside entrance doors are locked after 7:00 PM and we could get bumped from the conference room depending on future demands. Our meeting time will be the standard 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM unless other arrangements are made

**W5ROK Wins 2009 1296Mhz ARRL VHF Contest.** Congratulations, Dennis, WA8ZBT, on winning the 2009 1296Mhz ARRL VHF Contest on behalf of W5ROK at the club station. WELL DONE! Below is the award letter from ARRL and the certificate is shown on page 5.

## Local Club News

**Meeting Notice** Hello fellow Ham operators! This month's RCARC meeting will be held on 25 February and will feature a very important program. Over the years the entry route for new Hams into our most wonderful avocation has changed dramatically. Presently with no-code and the Technician level FCC exam, many newer Hams have a VHF & UHF FM operating background. That is fine. However, when they upgrade or otherwise start to use their newly gained privileges onto the "magical" HF (short wave) band they may be ill prepared for the most interesting but vastly different operating techniques found there. This session is specifically designed to correct that situation. Even if you are an old time HF operator, some of the modes and operating techniques have changed or evolved over time. So everyone will get something helpful from Carl's excellent audio and visual presentation. Our speaker this month, Carl Solomon, W5SU, has many, many helpful operating techniques for the YL and the OM alike that he has gathered from his vast operating experience. Please join us for a fun and educational meeting!. *John Champa, K8OCL, Activities Chairman*

**Club Meeting Talk-In** Each month, on the night of the membership meeting we have a Talk-In on the club repeater. The Talk-In this month is 1630 to 1700 hours, prior to the meeting.

**Methodist Richardson Medical Center Our New 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Meeting Room.** Join us at Rockwell Collins' newest and closest neighbor/partner Methodist Richardson Medical Center for our monthly Meeting. They are located



January 20, 2010

Dear Contest Participant:

Congratulations on your performance in the 2009 ARRL January VHF Contest! Enclosed is your award certificate. My apologies for the late arrival of the 2009 certificates.

The January VHF contest always poses challenges: weather, lackluster propagation, and football playoffs on Sunday afternoon. I hope you were fortunate enough to catch the intermittent 6-meter opening Sunday morning; an E-cloud settled tentatively over southern Ontario, which resulted in an on-and-off path from the Eastern seaboard into Minnesota, Iowa and other Midwest states.

ARRL sponsors many events for the VHF enthusiast: the three VHF contests (January, June and September), the August UHF Contest, the 10 GHz and Up Contest, and the EME Contest. If you haven't participated in one of these events before, give them a try and satisfy your urge for QSOs from 50 MHz through the microwave bands!

If 6 Meters is your game, don't forget about the Fred Fish Memorial Award. Sponsored by the ARRL, this award recognizes the accomplishments of Fred Fish, W5FF (SK), who was the first person to work and confirm all 488 grid squares in the 48 contiguous United States on 6 Meters. For more information on this very special award, visit [www.arrl.org/awards/ffma](http://www.arrl.org/awards/ffma).

The new ARRL web site is almost complete and will be "going live" soon. We'll have lots of info available for the contester, seasoned veteran and newcomer alike. The address is the same, but the information and layout will be new. Keep checking [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org) and let me know what you think.

As always, I'm available by phone or email if you have any questions about contesting.

Thanks for your participation in ARRL contests. I hope to work you in the next event!

73,

Sean Kutzko, KX9X  
Contest Branch Manager, ARRL  
(860) 594-0232  
Email: [kx9x@arrl.org](mailto:kx9x@arrl.org)

AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE  
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF THE INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR RADIO UNION

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- Advocacy
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OFFICIAL JOURNAL

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## RCARC OFFICERS

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## VE SESSIONS

**Dallas** tests are held 4<sup>th</sup> Sat of each month at 10:00. 13350 Floyd Rd. (Old Credit Union) Contact Bob West, WA8YCD (972) 917-6362

**Irving** tests are held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat. of each month at 09:00. 5<sup>th</sup> and Main St. Contact Bill Revis, KF5BL 252-8015

**McKinney** VE test sessions are held at the Heard Museum the first Sunday of the month. The address is 1 Nature Place, McKinney TX. The time of the testing is 14:30, ending no later than 16:45. **Note: no tests given on holiday weekends.**

**Garland** testing is held on the fourth Thursday of each month, excluding November, and begins at 1930 sharp. Location is Freeman Heights Baptist Church, 1120 N Garland Ave, Garland (between W Walnut and Buckingham Rd). Enter via the north driveway. A HUGE parking lot is located behind the church. Both the parking lot and the Fellowship Hall are located on the east side of the church building, with big signs by the entrance door. Contact Bill Reynolds, K8DNE, 972-475-3854.

**Plano** testing is on the third Saturday of each month, 1300 hrs at Williams High School, 1717 17<sup>th</sup> St. East Plano. Check Repeater 147.180+ for announcements.

**Greenville** testing is on the Saturday after 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 1000 hrs at site TBA, contact N5KA, 903.364.5306. Sponsor is Sabine Valley ARA. Repeater 146.780(-) with 118.8 tone.

**SIGNALS** is the monthly newsletter of the Rockwell Collins Amateur Radio Club, published by and for its members. The entire contents of this newsletter are copyright © 2010 by the Rockwell Collins Amateur Radio Club. Permission is hereby granted to any not for profit Amateur Radio Publication to reprint any portion of this newsletter provided both the author and Rockwell Collins Amateur Radio Club are credited.

## President's Message

No President's Message this month. Watch for message in March.

Mike Schmit, WA9WCC  
[wa9wcc@arrl.net](mailto:wa9wcc@arrl.net)

## Vice-President's Message

No Vice-President's Message this month. Watch for message in March. Till next month, 73 from Bob, K3NT

Bob Kirby, K3NT  
[k3nt@arrl.net](mailto:k3nt@arrl.net)  
<http://w5rok.us>

## Secretary's Report

Mike Schmit, WA9CC, opened the meeting at 1735 on 28 January 2010, in the Methodist Richardson Medical Center Conference Room with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present at the meeting were:

Charles Beis	K5UWD	Alan Breitbart	
Forest Cummings	W5LQU	John Cunningham	
Jeannine Duncan		Loney Duncan	W0GZV
Joe Henchal	KF5G	John Jacobson	K5XRF
Michael Ketchum		Bob Kirby	K3NT
Richard Muro		Erik Nordin	SM6KNE
Dwight Ramsey	KE5SAS	Stephen Ross	KE5SZL
Dave Russell	W2DMR	Chuck Samuel	K7NWM
Michael Schmit	WA9WCC	Jim Skinner	WB0UNI
Michael Starnes	AA5WX	Ross Terry	K5SRT
Joseph Wolf	N5UIC		

### 1. Officer Reports

- President's Report:** Mike Schmit, WA9CC, announced that he wants to set up a Ham Radio demo so Rockwell Collins engineers who are unfamiliar with Amateur Radio can learn about the avocation.
- Vice-President's Report:** Bob Kirby (K3NT) reported that the meeting place was changed largely due to changes in security regulations, requiring retired club members to obtain a V-badge and be escorted. Also, a meeting place was needed where members of other clubs and other non-employees could easily attend. Bob also pointed out that the club can return to the Rockwell Collins campus at any time, but with access limitations.
- Secretary's Report:** There was no Secretary's report, since the post is currently unmanned.
- Treasurers Report:** There was no Treasurers report.
- Station Trustee's Report:** There was no Station Trustees report.
- Activities Chairman Report:** There was no Activities Chairman report.

### 2. Old Business

- Amateur Radio License Classes:** Ross Terry, K5SRT, announced that the club is offering a Tech Amateur Radio class in Feb. It will be lead by Dwight Ramsey, KE5SAS, with assistance from Ross. The class is currently full given our current room size of 15 + 2 leaders, and it is now necessary to turn the remaining people away. We plan to offer additional classes later this year.

We plan to have classes each Tues. and Thurs. from Feb. 2 till Feb. 18th in the Temple Conf. room and will finish up on approx. Feb. 23 (pending VE's agreement) by offering an official FCC License Exam with plans to host the test here in the Hospital conference room.

### 3. New Business

- a. There was no new business.

The business meeting adjourned at 1750 for a very educational program presented by Dave Russell, W2DMR, and Forest Cummings, W5LQU, on "VSWR and Reflected Power". The meeting closed at 1915 after a short question and answer session. The briefing charts of the presentation can be found at <http://www.w5rok.us>.

## Events and Public Service Ops

**21 February 2010:** The Plano Amateur Radio Club is hosting a 2 meter FM challenge. More info at <http://www.k5prk.net/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=216>

**20-21 February 2010: ARRL International DX Contest (CW).** . . The object of this event is for W/VE amateurs to work as many amateur stations in as many DXCC countries of the world as possible on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meter bands, and foreign amateurs (also including KH6, KL7, CY9, and CYØ) work as many W/VE stations in as many of the 48 contiguous states and provinces as possible. **Date and Contest Period:** The Third full weekend in February. **Contest Period:** 48 hours—Starts 0000 UTC Saturday; ends 2400 UTC Sunday. More info at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2010/intldx.html>

**13 March 2010: Hamfest.** Irving Amateur Radio Club Hamfest <http://www.irvingarc.org>. Talk-In: 146.72 (PL: 110.9)

**4-5 June 2010: Ham-Com 2010.** Ham-Com, Inc. <http://www.hamcom.org/> Talk-In: 147.18 (PL 107.2)

**Rod Blocksome, K0DAS, Appointed Midwest Division Vice Director.** ARRL President, Kay Craigie, N3KN, has appointed Rod Blocksome, K0DAS, of Robins, Iowa, as the new Vice Director in the Midwest Division. The position became vacant when Midwest Division Director Bruce Frahm, K0BJ, was elected ARRL Vice President at the 2010 ARRL Board of Directors Annual Meeting and Vice Director Cliff Ahrens, K0CA, moved into the Director position.

First licensed as KN0DAS in 1960 -- and an ARRL member since 1962 -- Blocksome credits his grandmother with getting him interested in Amateur Radio: "When I was 13, she gave me this big console-type shortwave radio -- it was so big, it couldn't fit in the house! So I kept it in our workshop and each evening, I would go out and listen to it and I discovered all these exotic countries on the air. I also discovered the hams on the amateur bands. One of the hams I listened to -- William Balderson, W0CKV -- was in Dodge City, about 60 miles away. So I called him up on the phone and told him I wanted to be a ham and asked him if he could help me. He showed me what I needed to do and gave me an ARRL license manual to study. We ordered my Novice test and he administered my code test. The rest is history."

"I'm honored to be selected as the Vice-Director of the ARRL Midwest Division and am looking forward to serving the division

hams to the best of my ability," Blocksome told the ARRL. "I grew up in Kansas, lived in Iowa and have traveled to more than 50 different countries, so I hope to bring my Midwestern roots - as well as a multi-cultural/international perspective - to this position."



Blocksome has 42 years of professional engineering experience in radio communications systems and equipment design. He has designed several Collins HF transmitters and related equipment and managed engineering design teams responsible for design and development of transmitting equipment spanning 0.45 MHz-2000 MHz and at RF power levels of 10

W to 45 kW. He managed an IPD team developing L-band receivers and performing system engineering of communication systems in a full MIL-SPEC environment on the F-22 program and spent two years redesigning and formalizing the System Engineering Process at Rockwell Collins. In addition to his career in the private sector, Blocksome served four years active duty as an officer in US Air Force doing HF communications systems engineering while on leave of absence from Collins Radio Company. He holds a BSEE and an MSEE from Kansas State University.

One activity that Blocksome has been heavily involved in for the past 10 years is research and analysis in the search for Amelia Earhart's airplane. "I and several other ham/engineers at Rockwell Collins have been donating our expertise in radio communications to this effort," he said. "We have been using our experience in this fascinating project to get students interested in science/math by making presentations in the local school system."

Blocksome was a member of a local group of engineers and hams that conducted a very thorough technical investigation of a trial BPL system in Cedar Rapids: "Our efforts were instrumental in convincing the local power utility to abandon their planned BPL project. ARRL Headquarters used the technical report on our measurements and findings in fighting BPL that interferes with Amateur Radio across the country."

"Rod has been an active ham for many years, with a diversity of experiences and interests, including DXing and operating from DX locations, VHF/UHF weak signal operation, classic equipment repair and restoration and antenna design," said ARRL Midwest Division Director Cliff Ahrens, K0CA. "I am looking forward to working closely with Rod, the Section Managers and our dedicated ARRL Field Organization volunteers to serve the ARRL members and radio amateurs of the Midwest Division."

Blocksome has been a member of the Central States VHF Society since 1975 and a Charter Life Member since 2001. He has

served as President of the organization in 1984, 1991 and 1998, with 21 years on its Board of Directors, He is the recipient of the CSVHF Society's 1993 Mel Wilson Award, given to a member for service to the Society. In 1994, Blocksome initiated the process to begin publishing the Society's Proceedings, something other VHF societies have done since. He also initiated the CSVHF Society's "States Above 50 MHz" program.

An avid Collins Radio aficionado, Blocksome has been a member of the Collins Collector Association since 1996. He has served two years on its Board of Directors, hosted three CCA conventions and been the CCCA banquet speaker at the Dayton Hamvention® four times.

He is a charter member of the Collins Amateur Radio Club, serving as President for four years; he currently serves as the club's Program Chairman. He is also a member of the Eastern Iowa DX Association and the Cedar Valley Amateur Radio Club, serving as President two times and Hamfest Chairman two times.

Blocksome has written articles for various Amateur Radio publications, including *QST*. Beginning in 1995, he penned "An HF 50 W Linear Amplifier" for *The ARRL Handbook*. He wrote "EME -- Iowa Style" that appeared in the May 1982 issue of *QST* and he took the photo that appeared on the cover of the July 1982 issue of *QST*, featuring the ARRL National Convention in Cedar Rapids, Iowa..

Blocksome also enjoys weak signal work (50-2304 MHz) and Amateur Radio contesting, both CW and SSB, as a Rover. He also enjoys HF DXing, both chasing DX and being DX (he has operated as VK2IHY in Australia in 1996, T30CXX on Tarawa Atoll in 2002 and 2006 and as T32DAS on Christmas Island in 2008). He likes to restore classic ham gear - particularly Collins equipment and is active in local Amateur Radio clubs and mentoring new hams into the hobby.

**Rock On W5ROK!** NASA Astronaut Dr. Mary Ellen Weber was at Rockwell Collins on Feb. 17, 2010, speaking during Engineer's Week at the Richardson, TX facility. She talked about her Space Station visit and the STS-70 and STS-101 missions. It was interesting to hear how quickly risks grow as you increase to around 17,500 MPH or 25 times the speed of sound ("Its not about going high...Its about going incredibly fast...") and how slowing by 1% can bring you back to earth where you have one approach and have to wait till you're just about 200 feet altitude on a single final before bringing down the landing gear, so you don't blow them off. Video taken during some of the missions and pictures taken were also shown. They included special shots of the Ionosphere and Thunderstorms including lighting from space. Training is key,



quick decision making, and risk management is everyone's primary job on these missions. Ross Terry, K5SRT, got to talk to her after the speech and gave her one of the clubs W5ROK QSL cards. Dr. Weber, a licensed Amateur Radio operator, made several QSO's from space and went on to comment that the club should "Rock on! See the picture in this newsletter of a flyer which was addressed to W5ROK and will be displayed in the main Radio Club room near the QSL cards.

**Giving Back To Amateur Radio.** The Rockwell Collins Amateur Radio Club (RCARC) has been holding Technician level classes during the month of Feb. Prior 2008 graduates Dwight Ramsey KE5SAS main author/teacher and Ross Terry K5SRT have been holding classes and have lined up VE's for an official FCC License test on Feb. 23, 2010 between 11:15 AM and 12:00 PM at the Richardson, TX Methodist Hospital 2nd floor conference room. This test session will allow for others who also want to take an official test for Technician, General, or Extra.

The class has been meeting for an hour on Tuesday and Thursday during February. Students are given reading assignments from the current ARRL Technician License Manual. Normally we review most missed questions from the prior class, review new materials, and then take anonymous practice tests on the current material. The way the class is designed those students completing reading assignments and all class practice test will have been exposed to all current questions. Several class members have stated they may also take the General test on the 23rd.

We need your support to help show off the club facility equipment, talk to new graduates, and discuss the benefits of membership in our club. After a break from the February classes Ross, K5SRT plans to make use of the latest materials and offer another Technician Class. Dwight will then develop and offer a General Class. If you can help show off the equipment, do a hands on tour, talk to some new possible club members, show new members how to use the equipment, or help support a new class series, please let our newest RCARC teachers know.

**Teach An Old Dog A New Trick.** Included in this section are a few Internet web site links that some of our membership have found useful. Do you have a site you use on regular basis or one that might help the new person, then send those along with a short description to our Signals Editor and they will be included as space allows. Who knows—someone with similar interests may have found just what your looking for.

<http://aa9pw.com>. (comment K5SRT) Free practice test on-line with current question pool for Technician, General, and Extra FCC Exams. You take the complete test selecting buttons for your desired answer and then submit it to be scored. It then shows you your right and wrong answers and what sub-elements you may need to focus your study on. This site will also let you narrow your practice questions to sub-elements for focus study. It can be easily printed if needed.

<http://w8mhb.com/exam>. (comment K5SRT) Free practice test on-line with a quick way to skip to any specific question you want on a given test allowing you to skip questions and then come back and review them quickly. It then scores your test once you submit it and gives you an idea where you may need to focus. Some Pop-up blockers may have problems with this

tool unless you allow pop-ups on this site. You can create custom exams to allow you to focus your practice to only certain sub-elements. It can be easily printed if needed.

<http://www.qrz.com/p/testing.pl>. (comment K5SRT) Free on-line practice test with a series of numbered tests. Each answer is graded as it is submitted so be careful that you're done with each question. You can go back and visit the prior question to see what the correct answer was. It includes a count up timer to let you know how long the exam took and an easy to read accuracy and overall percentage results. It does not allow you to focus your test to specific sub-elements. While it is quick for complete practice on-line, it does not lend itself to easy print capture. The base site has a good interface to access or look up call signs. Tip: look to the right of the main Search button and follow the link "Main Menu" to get a list of topics. It can sometimes be hard to notice depending on your browser.

<http://www.hamradioclass.org>. (comment K5SRT) Listen to on-line classes designed to help you prepare for upcoming exams. You can download them for use on MP3 players or Podcast. These clearly took some time and effort and may become dated over time. The classes take on different formats depending on Tech, General, or Extra topics being covered. You might consider learning while driving to work or listen in while working around the house or shack.

<http://www.arrl.org>. (comment K5SRT) This is the official American Radio Relay League (ARRL) home page. There is a search site field immediately upon hitting the site—enter topic or terms you are wondering about related to Amateur Radio and it will give you many links. For example, search on Band Chart to find a nice US Amateur Radio Bands summary chart showing a summary of approved Amateur frequencies.

<http://www.amsat.org>. (comment K5SRT) AMSAT is a name for amateur radio satellite organizations worldwide but in particular the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT-NA) with headquarters at Silver Spring, Maryland near Washington DC. Builds and help coordinate payloads to allow for Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio (OSCAR) equipment.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OSCAR> has nice information on Doppler shift.

**ARRL** The national association for  
**AMATEUR RADIO**

**VHF/UHF**  
**CONTEST AWARD**

**W5ROK (WA8ZBT, op)**

**NORTH TEXAS SECTION**  
**SINGLE OPERATOR LOW POWER**

**2009 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes**

WINNER  
1296  
MHz

*Joe Harrison* **W5ZN**  
PRESIDENT, ARRL

# Rockwell-Collins

Amateur Radio Club

Mail Station 461-290

P.O. Box 833807

Richardson, TX 75083-3807

TO:



### CLUB STATIONS

(972) 705-1349

### W5ROK REPEATER

441.875 MHz +5 MHz Input

131.8 Hz PL - RX and TX

### W5ROK-1 PACKET BBS ROK Node

145.01 MHz

Thursday 25 February 2010

1730

Methodist Richardson Medical Ctr  
At Bush/Renner/Shiloh Intersection

➔ *Second Floor Conference Room* ←

### NEXT SIGNALS DEADLINE:

➔➔➔ **15 March 2010** ←←←