

## TSPOTA Special



Our next major field operating event is [Texas State Parks On The Air](#) April 15–16. The objective of TSPOTA is to work as many other Texas State Parks as possible over the two-day period. We will operate under our club call, KB5A, only on Saturday **but lunch and dinner will be provided!**

As with any operating event there are many moving parts that generate lots of questions. This Special to the Newsletter should answer most of them.

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### ***What are the dates and times?***

TSPOTA runs Saturday and Sunday, April 15 and 16. However, the Club plans only to operate on Saturday. The park opens at **6:00 AM CDT** and we will muster at 7:00 AM to set up our equipment. Admission is \$7.00 per person unless you have a yearly pass. The talk-in frequency will be on the Denton County ARA repeater 146.920 MHz, tone 110.9. Local comms will be 146.48 simplex, no tone. **The event starts at 9:00 AM CDT.** We plan to shut down not later 8:00 PM CDT.

Because we're on the air only one day, we're considering doing some of the antenna setup on Friday afternoon starting at 1:30 PM CDT. **If you can help with the Friday setup, please let us know.**

### ***Where is it?***

Thanks to **Steve Darrah, KD5YPB**, we've once again secured a spot at the [Johnson Branch Unit of Ray Roberts Lake State Park](#). Our operation will be at a pavilion near the Nature Center. We've secured the parking lot for antennas. [Click here to download a map to the Nature Center.](#)

### ***How do I get there?***

From I-35E, take exit 483 toward Lone Oak Rd/Farm to Market Rd 3002. Travel east on 3002 about 6.5 miles. The park entrance is on your right.

Or just click this link. <https://goo.gl/maps/ASUqFeJAQGPwsVmv9>

### ***Can I bring my own radio?***

Radios will be available. If you prefer to bring your own HF radio or a radio that features 2-meter sideband or 6-meter sideband, please feel free to bring it and connect to one of the provided antennas. If you are willing to volunteer the use of your equipment for the day, you are welcome to do so. [Please sign up on our web site.](#)

### ***Can I set up my own antenna?***

No, you should *not* plan to use your own antenna. *However*, if you have an antenna the Club could borrow for the event, please contact Operations Manager Tom Yenny, [K5LOL@ARRL.net](mailto:K5LOL@ARRL.net). The TSPOTA Committee will provide antennas to cover 2m, 6m, 10m, 15m, 20m, 40m and 80m. We will be tightly coordinating what radios will operate on specific bands. [TSPOTA rules](#) do not allow for more than one radio on any particular band at one time anyway.

A note about tuners: We will be using band pass filters and multiplexers to help manage RF. You will not be able to use *internal* tuners, but you may use an external tuner if you wish.

### ***How many stations will be operating?***

We will have up to 5 stations on 7 bands. N5KRG's and KE5KOF's Mobile Command Center (MCC) will have 2- and 6-meter stations; three HF rigs will be at the pavilion.

### ***What if there's foul weather?***

The weather is always a little tricky. "Plan A" is our good weather plan which will have us operating outdoors under the cover of the pavilion. "Plan B" will have our HF stations inside the comfort of the Nature Center as we did last year.

### ***What does the Club need to make this happen?***

We need *you* to participate. As of this writing we still need:

- Chef— Burger wrangler and such on the grill.
- Safety Officer— This is a public park. It's extremely important to monitor the site for hazards.
- Talk-in Monitor— Monitors the VHF rig to help guide any lost hams.
- Equipment— We do need some stuff: coax (long lengths ≈ 200 ft); antennas (see above); rigs; computers; ethernet cable. [Visit the sign-up sheet](#) to let Tom know what you can share for the duration.

If you've never been involved in a field event, now is your opportunity. [Go now to the sign-up sheet](#) to let us know if you plan to attend, what you will bring, and most importantly, how many folks will eat.

This will be a **really fun event**. We hope you can come out and join us Saturday, April 15. Many thanks to the TSPOTA Event Committee, **Andy Parcel, KE5KOF, Ken Wendel, W5RPS, Steve Darrah, KD5YPB, and Tom Yenny, K5LOL**. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Tom, [K5LOL@ARRL.net](mailto:K5LOL@ARRL.net).



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### **MARS Hams Support Farmers Branch**

**Kevin Grantham, N5KRG, and Ron Reeves, NN5R**, recently provided radio support to the Emergency Management Specialist in Farmers Branch.

The Farmers Branch Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is in a multipurpose facility at the Fire Administration building on Hutton Road. There is a dual-band amateur radio antenna on the roof between the Administration building and the equipment bays of Fire Station 3. The transmission line was routed to a multi-use office frequented by visiting fire officials.

Emergency Management Specialist (EMS) **Luke Parten, K15WJM**, requested that the endpoint be moved from

the multi-use office to his office and the commercial radio shop made the move.

As you may recall, MARS did Field Day last year (thank you Farmers Branch!) from the Training Room at the Fire Administration building. As Kevin is the RACES Radio Officer for Farmers Branch, he offered to test the connection during the event. The connection appeared open and *time domain reflectometry* analysis made it appear that the discontinuity was at the base of the antenna. The connectors were not properly made as well.



Luke attempted to engage the commercial radio shop to investigate but they were too busy or didn't want to do such a small job. After months of delay he decided to do his own investigation. That's when he discovered that the wall plate connector on the original LMR<sup>®</sup>-400 coax was pulled apart. He also discovered about 75 feet of LMR<sup>®</sup>-240 coiled up in the ceiling. He asked Kevin for assistance.

Ron and Kevin responded, evaluated the situation and created a parts list for Luke to order through City procurement. A few weeks later the parts arrived so Ron and Kevin went back to the site and replaced the connector, reduced the length of the LMR-240 adding new connectors, and tested the setup. Contacts with a variety of local Skywarn repeaters, other EOCs and the 145.210 and 442.075 MARS repeaters were mostly successful.

Farmers Branch is also the custodian for a half-dozen VHF/UHF "go boxes." These are based on the famous "Hammo Can" designs and are available on request to North Texas agencies. Each kit contains a sealed lead acid (SLA) battery.

Ron and Kevin tested all of the radios with some helpful folks from Irving RACES using their 146.720 repeater. All of the radio gear was in good condition but one of the batteries was end-of-life and should be replaced.

Thanks go to Kevin and Ron who provided this support as a community service under the flag of Carrollton-Farmers Branch-Addison ARES<sup>®</sup>/RACES and the Metrocrest Amateur Radio Society.

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## Field Day is June 24–25

Field Day Marshal **Ron Reeves, NN5R**, has many opportunities for volunteers to act as "Department Heads" to run the event. Send Ron an email ([NN5R@ARRL.NET](mailto:NN5R@ARRL.NET)) if any of the following apply to you:

- You have a suggestion for a Field Day operating site.
- You are willing to be part of the Field Day leadership: **Chief Antenna Farmer; Public Relations; Operations; Chef; Registration; Electrician; Safety Officer** and anything you'd like to lead.
- You are planning to operate from the Club site.
- You plan to have fun playing radio on Field Day weekend

We're looking forward to hearing from *you!*

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## Contesting with Tom

Well, here it is March and the question is whether you will be a Lion or a Lamb when it comes to contesting this month? There are 4 State QSO Parties in March so you have a great opportunity to work on achieving your "Worked All States" award. Three of the state QSO Parties are on the same weekend, March 11–12, so reserve that weekend to jump on the air and work all three contests.

Coming up in April is our next big Club event: the Texas State Parks On The Air or TSPOTA on April

15. We will be having a “play day” near the end of March or early April specifically to test and tune the antennas we will be using for that event. Any and all are welcome to help test and tune the antennas even if you don’t plan to participate in TSPOTA.

Here is a short sampling of contests in March. For a more complete list of **all** the March contests, please visit: <https://www.contestcalendar.com/>.

MAR 04	ARRL International DX SSB Contest	PH	<a href="https://www.arri.org/arri-dx">https://www.arri.org/arri-dx</a>
MAR 11	South America 10m Contest	PH, CW	<a href="http://sa10m.com.ar/wp/rules/">http://sa10m.com.ar/wp/rules/</a>
MAR 11	Oklahoma QSO Party	PH, CW	<a href="http://www.k5cm.com/okqp.htm">http://www.k5cm.com/okqp.htm</a>
MAR 11	Idaho QSO Party	PH, CW	<a href="http://www.pocatelloarc.org/idahogsoparty/">http://www.pocatelloarc.org/idahogsoparty/</a>
MAR 11	Tesla Memorial HF CW Contest	CW	<a href="https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestdetails.php?ref=566">https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestdetails.php?ref=566</a>
MAR 12	Wisconsin QSO Party	PH, CW	<a href="https://www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm">https://www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm</a>
MAR 18	Virginia QSO Party	PH, CW, DIG	<a href="https://www.qsl.net/sterling/VA_QSO_Party/2023_VQP/2023_VQP_Main.html">https://www.qsl.net/sterling/VA_QSO_Party/2023_VQP/2023_VQP_Main.html</a>
MAR 20	Bucharest Digital Contest	DIG	<a href="https://yo3test201x.blogspot.com/">https://yo3test201x.blogspot.com/</a>

Happy Contesting & 73, Tom Yenny, K5LOL [K5LOL@ARRL.net](mailto:K5LOL@ARRL.net)

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## Next Regular Meeting

\* \* \* Please note time and place! \* \* \*

Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 9 2023, 6:30 PM CT

[Carrollton Public Library Hebron and Josey, 4220 N Josey Lane.](#)

ARRL North Texas Section Manager **Steven Lott Smith, KG5VK**, will be our *in-person* guest speaker. This will be a hybrid in-person/remote meeting. We’d love to have an eyeball QSO, but you may join by Zoom. You will receive an invitation as a subscriber to this *Newsletter*.

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## Play Day

Saturday, March 18, 2023 • 10:00 AM ≈ 3:00 PM CT

[Carrollton Josey Ranch Lake Library, 1700 Keller Springs Road](#)

We’ll meet in the Large Meeting Room just inside the front door.

—Steve Darrah, [KD5YPB@ARRL.net](mailto:KD5YPB@ARRL.net)

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## Amateur Testing

Saturday, March 18, 2023 • 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM CT

Allan Batteiger, WB5QNG, will have *IN-PERSON* testing at the [Carrollton Josey Ranch Lake Library, 1700 Keller Springs Road](#), in the *Conference Room in the back* (right side).

Allan continues to host *online* test sessions as well. Go to <https://hamstudy.org/sessions/wb5qng> to

find a session. Visit <https://wb5qng.org/> for information about how to sign up and prepare for a session. Send Allan an email [arb@rtsi.com](mailto:arb@rtsi.com) if you have any questions.

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## Hams & Eggs

Every Saturday morning at the [Whataburger at Old Denton and PGBT](#). Hams from all over get together from 8:00 AM to 10-ish or whenever. There's talk about amateur radio and sometimes Show 'n' Tell. Ya'll come!

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## ARES<sup>®</sup>, RACES & Sirens Oh my!

Serving Carrollton, Farmers Branch & Addison

Next ARES Training Net

**12 March 2023, 8:00 PM CT • 145.210 Tone 110.9**

Next RACES Training Net

**19 March 2023, 7:45 PM CT • 145.210 Tone 110.9**

Siren Tests in Carrollton and Farmers Branch • First Wednesday of the month at 1300 Hours, CT, *weather permitting*. Contact **Steve Darrah** [KD5YPB@ARRL.net](mailto:KD5YPB@ARRL.net) if you wish to volunteer to monitor a siren.

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## Chat Room

Have something to sell, want to ask for tech help, or just want to rag chew? Create a login and post it on our [FORUM Page](#). It's free and you don't have to be a member to post.

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*Made a shocking discovery.*

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That's all for now. **73 from all the Hams at MARS!**

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