

The History of the Sand Hills Amateur Radio Club.....by Rod Hogg

The Sand Hills ARC was formed from the then dormant Garden City ARC and the Scott County ARC in 1970. The Garden City Club had been founded in 1946 with ARRL affiliation in 1947. The earliest entry in the original ledger was November 1946.

The Garden City ARC had members of Robert 'Bob' Snyder, O B Allen, A L 'Duke' Ellington, C H Cooper, Carl Wolf, Luther Largent, and others noted in the ledger.

The Garden City ARC apparently went dormant in the mid to late '60s

In 1970, Rod Hogg, KØEQH, who had recently moved to Garden City from Minneapolis, (near Salina), Luther Largent, KØGZL, Rev Wm Travis, WAØKLT, Ronald Schweppe, KØEXN, Robert Force, Sr, Raymond Nickle and Quentin Hope (later to be WAØWFG) formed a group to revitalize the club. We chose the name of Sand Hills Amateur Radio Club. A name chosen to represent an area club rather than just Garden City.

A little later the Scott County ARC joined the Sand Hills ARC (*)

With the inclusion of the Scott County club we welcomed Wayne Herron, WØMI, Andy Flowers, WØZUX, Gorden Temprow, KAØENS, 'Chet' Fouquet, WØYLO, Harold Hoover, KØDIW, and others, to the group. The Scott County club went dormant shortly after the last Tri-City Ham Club hamfest. (Tri-City was Garden City, Scott City and Dodge City) Records show the Scott County club was organized in the early '50s.

The ARRL granted the Sand Hills ARC the continuation of the affiliation as it was still within the grace period of league reporting and accepted the name change. The ARRL affiliation certificate is dated May 2, 1947.

2 meter simplex operation.....

One of the first club projects was to establish local communications with the use of retired commercial equipment and operate 2 meter simplex. This was done on 146.94. Rod had a 2 meter mobile operating on 34/94 from his operation in the Salina area. A couple years later Sam, (W9KTR) WØOAG, moved to Garden City from Indiana, also had 2 meters in his car from his Indiana club and then Larry, (W6KQL) WØOGH, joined us. He also had 2 meter FM, moving to Garden City from California.

Rod ordered a number of surplus GE pre-progress transceivers which we converted to the ham band. We equipped most all members with 2 meter mobile units. The club had more mobile radios than the city did!

One of our first club projects using ham radio was helping the Garden City police department on their annual "spook patrol" at Halloween. The hams actually had better communications than the police did due to propagation and QRM on their channel. Bill, WAØKLT, served as our base as he lived up on the ridge in the northern part of the city.

2 meter repeater building and operation....

With the success of the two meter simplex it was suggested we put a repeater on the air in Garden City.

Larry, WØOGH, had some GE progress line equipment and some accessories that we could put together for a repeater but lacked the necessary power supplies and control equipment. We

managed to build up a "split site" system, with some equipment at Larry's WØOGH, QTH and some at Luther's, KØGZL, QTH. It was linked together on 70cm. It worked but lacked range.

We decided to build an actual repeater so work went under way to acquire the necessary equipment.

Rod discovered from a Motorola rep that Pioneer Communications was upgrading their mobile telephone system and there would be a lot of equipment made surplus. After an inquiry though we found the radios had been promised to a group in Oklahoma (a friend of the salesman). Some calls were made and we found they did not need all the radios, but wanted the pick of the batch. Luckily they took the late model units leaving the older ones for us. The later ones were duplex units and had no squelch or push to talk circuit in them. The older units however could be converted fairly easily for ham radio use.

Evolving from a split site with 70cm control operation the repeater was operational. WRØAJE was the call sign. A license granted for repeater operation. Initially on 146.340/.940. Operation was from the Kansas State experiment station. The building was an acquired gas meter housing, concrete foundation by LM, KØGZL, wiring by Rod, KØEQH and antenna work by Larry, WØOGH. Our first duplexer was 'manufactured' by Rod, KØEQH, Larry, WØOGH, LeRoy Stockemer, KØWOL and Ray Nickle. The antenna, a Ringo Ranger, was mounted on the experiment station water tower. Control stations were at OGH and EQH QTHs. via 70cm link.

Equipment was GE "Progress Line" we acquired from the Pioneer Communication tower in a 'moon light requisition' operation by KØEQH and KØWOL. The frequency was later coordinated, due to skip interference, to 146.31/.91.

We purchased a new GE MastR repeater, factory duplexer, feed line and an antenna. Fund raising was mainly by Sam, WØOAG and Raymond, KØLZR. Antenna was on the KIUL, AM 1240, broadcast tower near Garden City.

We held amateur radio classes, theory and code over several years, many were licensed.

Membership in SHARC has included hams and interested persons from Ulysses, Sublette, Montezuma, Cimarron, Pierceville, Garden City, Lakin, Syracuse, Tribune, Leoti, Scott City, Sharon Springs, Dighton, Deerfield, Wallace, and Johnson. Making it truly an area club.

Monthly meetings are held in Garden City and Scott City. Even months in Garden City at the Finney County LEC and odd months in Scott City at the Scott County Library on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30PM CT.

The club has held Field Day operation most all the years. Locations it has operated from were: KIUL studio building at the Finney County Fair Grounds, Camp Ben in Scott State park, Friend school building, Shallow Water school building, Kearny County Fair Grounds, Girl Scout park in Garden City, Finney County LEC....

(*) The history of the Scott County ARC by WØZUX, is covered in another document..

Later SHARC history will be covered in a another report when I get it compiled along with some pictures we have that need to be scanned.

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