

What's happening in H-E-B

Arbor Daze seeks vendors and volunteers

Eules is accepting applications for vendors for its annual Arbor Daze festival, scheduled for April 24-25.

Volunteers are also needed for the festival, which features a tree giveaway, kids zone play area, forestry village, food and beverages, arts and crafts and live entertainment.

The festival that celebrates all things trees is held from 5-10 p.m. April 24 and 9 a.m.-10 p.m. April 25 at Eules City Hall Campus, 201 N. Ector Drive.

Information: www.arbordaze.org

Eules ham radio operators step up in times of need

BY TERRY EVANS



Archie Blanchard tests Amateur Radio Eules's equipment at the Eules Police Department. TERRY EVANS SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM

EULESS

The world's oldest electronic social medium continues to be most valuable in crises.

"It's called rag chewing," said John Deithloff, a member of [Amateur Radio Eules](#). "I've been in ham radio since 1954."

The Eules club has about 20 licensed amateur radio operators and while the hobby is certainly fun, it can become a critical form of communication during disasters, such as tornadoes or floods.

"We promote public service as back-ups to the police department and communication support for the [Community Emergency Response Team](#)," which is a national

organization under the Department of Homeland Security, said James Knighton, president of Amateur Radio Eules. “CERTS can do basic first aid, assess situations to tell the city’s responders where and whether help is needed.”

Some club members are also Skywarn storm spotters with the Tarrant County branch of [Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services](#) (RACES), among hundreds of North Texas operators trained by the National Weather Service, Knighton said.

“We have eight or 10 members in RACES,” Knighton said. “We’re called up by the county during bad weather. But we’re storm spotters, not chasers. We looking for wind speeds above 50 mph, water coming up over curbs, and hail bigger than three-quarter inch.”

Eules Police Lt. Joe Kraft recognized how vital amateur radio operators can be in crises, so when he became the department’s emergency management coordinator, he sought out and joined Amateur Radio Eules.

“At that time the Eules group didn’t have a place to meet,” Kraft said.

The club meets on the second Wednesday of each month in a room devoted to them and some of their equipment, Kraft said.

“But they’re welcome to come in and exercise the equipment as they desire,” Kraft said. “If there are National Weather Service alerts they’re encouraged to come in and operate the amateur radio equipment for us and communicate with the storm spotters, if they’re not out doing it themselves.”

Even more frequently, RACES operators provide communications for such public service events as Fort Worth’s Cowtown Marathon and Eules’ Arbor Daze, Knighton said. They set up booths to distribute emergency preparedness material titled KnowWhat2Do, along with other ham radio-related brochures.

Knighton said he needed something to fill the hours after his kids grew up and he no longer hauled equipment and kids for high school marching bands and drill teams. Amateur radio did that and more.

“It’s a lot of fun and a good social activity,” Knighton said. “I meet new people and talk to people I know all the time.”

Some members have elaborate “two-meter” radio systems with massive antennas attached to their homes, Knighton said. But virtually all carry hand-held units that, with boosts from area repeaters, have enough range to connect them across dozens of miles.

“Some guys invest thousands and thousands of dollars into amplifiers, transmitters and antennas,” Knighton said. “But you can get a hand-held radio for less than \$100.”

There also are cell phone applications and software called [Echolink](#) — available only to licensed operators — that combine the Internet and the two-meter frequencies so smart phone users can communicate with people on the other side of the world, Deithloff said.

On a regular basis, however, when all you're interested in is rag chewing, just reaching the other side of town is OK.

"Sometimes we just want to keep up with each other, just talk," Deithloff said.

IF YOU GO

Amateur Radio Euless (W5EUL) meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Emergency Operations Center at the Euless Police Department, 1102 W. Euless Blvd. Monitor 146.94 PL 110.9, email info@w5eul.com, or go to www.w5eul.com for information.

What's happening in H-E-B

Students can get help with STAAR tests in Euless

With spring break a distant memory, students needing to shift their focus toward the upcoming STAAR tests can get some help during special classes at the Euless Public Library, 201 N. Ector Drive in Euless.

The STAAR Test Prep Series continues from 4 to 5 p.m. on March 24 and 31. Each class will focus on a different test prep technique and will help aid students in mental and physical preparations. Questions: 817-685-1480.