

THE AERO AERIAL



Photo taken from the [Guam Ham](#) site

Season's Greetings From "The Aerial" Staff

The newsletter of the Aero Amateur Radio Club
Middle River, Md
Volume 7 Issue 12
December 2010

Editor Frank Stone AC3P

Officers

Bob Landis	WA3SWA	President	Repeater
Bob Venanzi	ND3D	Vice-President	VE Testing
Lou Kordek	KB3LJF	Recording Secretary	Public Service
Pat Stone	AC3F	Corresponding Secretary	Webmaster
Warren Hartman	W3JDF	Treasurer	Trustee
Ron Distler	W3JEH	Property Mgr	Club Nets

Committees

Phil Hock W3VRD
Pat Stone AC3F
Bob Landis WA3SWA
Al Alexander K3ROJ
Frank Stone AC3P
Joe Miko WB3FMT

ABOUT THE AERO AMATUER RADIO CLUB

Meetings: First and Third Wednesdays at 7:30 pm at Coffman's Diner
(Middle River and Orem's Rd.)

Nets: See Local Area Net Schedule

Repeaters: W3PGA (147.24 MHz - / 449.575 MHz -)

WEBSITE: www.aeroarc.us

LOCAL AREA NETS

Day	Time	Frequency (MHz)	NET NAME
Daily	9 – 10 am	147.03	ORIOLE Net
Daily	5:30– 6 pm	3.820	Maryland Emergency Phone Net
Daily	6:30 – 7 pm	146.670	Baltimore Traffic Net
Daily	7 pm and 10 pm	3.643	Maryland/DC/Delaware Traffic Net
1 st Tues	7:30 pm	145.330	Baltimore ARES Net
2 nd Tues	7:30 pm	146.670	Baltimore County <u>RACES</u> Net
2 nd Wed.	8 pm	28.445	AERO ARC Net
4 th Wed	8 pm	147.240	AERO ARC Net
5 th Wed.	8 pm	449.575	AERO ARC Net

The Aero Quantum Mechanics Net: Anytime any Frequency contact WB3FMT. The last one was , on 449.575 MHz on Tuesday 8 pm on March 30th. Who knows where or when the next one may be?

Net Reports

October

10 Meters: **WB3FMT(NCS) AC3P KA3SNY W3VRD**

2 Meters: **WB3FMT(NCS) AC3P KB3VAE W3JEH KA3SNY KB3QAX**

Station Activities

W3JEH is analyzing the operating properties of the club's 20 meter beam. **KB3LJF** is the proud owner of a new IC-718. **KB3VAE** is erecting a new sky-hook for HF. **ND3D** will be using the Hart-Miller special dipole for ARRL SS CW. **KB3PGN**'s boss got re-elected. Congrats to Rick. Are we good for another 100 pts.? **K3ROJ** is recuperating. We look forward to seeing Al on "Dancing With The Stars". **W3VRD** is operating from Essex from Florida.

Field Day: How Did We Do?

The results are in. The ARRL posted the 2010 Field Day scores on their Website. How did W3PGA fare? Not bad at all.

Overall the Aero/BRATS Team placed 447th out of 2,617 US/Canada-wide. In 3A Category for North America W3PGA place 92nd. For the Atlantic Division the team was 41st overall and 5th in Category. Section-wide Aero/BRATS placed 10th overall and 2nd in Category.

Not bad for a score of 3602.

Can't wait for Field Day Fun in 2011.

Aero VE Test Schedule for 2011

All test sessions are scheduled for 1 p.m. At the White Marsh Library for the following dates:

January 22

March 26

May 28

September 17

November 19

Walk-ins are welcome.

Bring to forms of ID (picture) Fee:\$15

For more information contact Pat Stone AC3F Phone: 410-687-7209

Email: ac3f@juno.com

Website: <http://www.aeroarc.us/vetesting.html>

The AZ Wanderings of a MD Sojourner

The Skull Valley Loop Challenge

by *Dave Vleck KA3SNY*



KA3SNY/7

My Arizona vacation this year took on an added element. This was my 11th trip to the state of Arizona to visit the scenic sites there, and to renew an old acquaintance, with Fred N7PJN (formerly KA3SNX), who relocated to Prescott back in 1990, and lodge with him for a few days. This particular trip afforded me a unique opportunity to volunteer and assist the local ham club, Yavapai Amateur Radio Club (YARC), with one of their many public service events scheduled in September. YARC is a very active ham club in the Prescott area, whose membership is approx 170, and is an ARRL affiliated Special Service Club, conducting communications for many public service events and a couple special events each year.

This year, my Arizona vacation visit coincided with the Sept. 19, 2010 Skull Valley Loop Challenge, a 54 mile bicycle race; there was the Groom Creek Half-Marathon, also, on that same day. I had contacted the YARC event coordinator for volunteers, and offered my services to help with the event communications, working with my friend, Fred N7PJN, at the Skull Valley Water Stop. Since he was the only ham at that water stop, the extra help worked out well, and also gave us time together. Since Fred has previously worked many public service events there, I was paired with an experienced volunteer, for my first public service event.

Our Sunday began at 5 a.m. on Race Day. Now, the nice thing about living in MD and being on Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), is that there are 3 hours time difference, since AZ remains on Mountain Standard Time and not daylight savings time. This means that getting up early in the morning does not present a problem for me, as my body had not really acclimated to MST yet. It was pretty normal to awaken about 3 or 4 a.m., since my normal rise time during the work week is 6 a.m. In fact, as I lay awake in bed on one of the first mornings there, in the early morning hours around 4:15, through the open window I heard multiple little feet, crunching in the gravel driveway of the house next door. I sat up in bed to look out the front bedroom window, and noticed by the dim street lighting several four legged critters native to the area, javelina, in varying sizes, going out the driveway, across the road out front, and disappearing from sight down the street. Normal sleepy-heads would have missed that unique sighting.....but I digress.

Most of the communications gear was packed up and loaded in Fred's Jeep the night before, so there was not that much to load that morning except personal gear. For myself, these included my IC-W32A HT (don't leave home without it), extra battery, cameras, the ever present water, and a few other odd & ends, in my day-pack. After arising, eating breakfast, and getting personal gear together for the outing, Fred and I were on the road before 6:30 a.m. bound for Skull Valley, about 20 miles SW of Prescott out

Iron Springs Road. The mornings had been brisk, in the low 50's, so I had donned my heavy flannel shirt brought in lieu of a jacket. According to our itinerary, we were to be at Skull Valley by 0700 hrs, and Fred checked in to notify Net Control we were en route to our assigned location. Upon arrival, we parked at the assigned water stop location, the south edge of the Skull Valley Café parking lot, and checked in with NC that we had arrived, sometime before 7 a.m. NC gave us a signal report that we were a bit scratchy from Fred's Jeep mobile radio through the local 147.260 Mt. Union repeater, over the mountain from which we just drove. This would change once we got our communications gear assembled.

Once parked, we immediately began the process of setting up our communications. As I mentioned, Fred has done many public service events in the past, and has a "go-kit" radio box all set to go, containing a Kenwood TM-732A radio, with external speaker. Connected to this rig, was a Hustler collinear 5/8 wave antenna with a 1/4 wave ground plane, on a pole mounted to the Jeep, up about 8' at the antenna base. Fred powered this off the Jeep's battery, which also had a solar panel keeping a trickle charge to maintain the battery. Need I mention that sun is very abundant out in Arizona? We also had an HT monitoring an alternate simplex frequency, but that remained quiet for the duration. Once set up, we checked back with NC, and got a good clear signal report using only 5 watts. Minimum power use is something on which Fred prides himself for these events. It was now just a waiting game for the start of the race or so we thought.

No sooner had we gotten equipment ready for communications, and set up temporary camp, when one of the early morning customers from the café came out into the parking lot area. He was apparently speaking on behalf of himself and the NEW café owner, and complained about us occupying needed customer parking space. Neither of us knew why the customer and not the café owner came out to us, but the customer did say the new owner was Hispanic, so maybe he could verbalize the matter to us better, or, he had more of a gripe, but this is only theory. Fred explained to the gentleman, that we are only the "hired help", and that all arrangements were supposedly done beforehand by the race committee personnel. All parties made their points, and parted amicably. Fred got on the radio immediately to NC about our conversation, and conveyed the matter to those higher in the chain. After a brief discussion between us, we decided to move our location down the road a short distance, approx 75 yds or so, past the Skull Valley Fire Dept and EMS building, to the Skull Valley Post Office, which was closed on Sunday except for a few locals going inside for box mail, I assume.



Fred N7PJN

We notified NC that we decided to move, and began relocation of all equipment. This mainly entailed dropping the portable antenna mast, and hand carrying it, and all the other gear that was out-and-about, to the near side of the post office driveway, such that we were keeping the way clear for any traffic. The last piece of equipment being the Jeep itself. Having assembled the radio station once before, we were now "practiced" at the set-up, and had the station up and running in about 15 minutes. The job

goes well with two pair of hands working. Once again, we checked in with Net Control at our NEW location, still before the 7:30 a.m. start of the race. The only problem we had now, was there still was no sign of the water stop personnel with the actual water, which I reported, also !

Not too much time had elapsed, when the water wagon finally appeared ... at the café location. Fred then made a quick walk to meet them, explaining the parking lot issue, and our relocation. The water folks then set up their canopy, table, and water supplies on the other side of the post office driveway. Skull Valley Water Stop was now "OPEN FOR BUSINESS." And since it was about this time that the race started, we began the wait for the riders to stop by.



Skull Valley Water Stop



Fred's Jeep Rear-view

The first group or two of riders were what you might call your "serious" competitors, and they just rolled right on by without even slowing down. Fred had earlier designated me the main communicator with NC , so I reported the lead riders had arrived at our checkpoint as they passed (I sort of thought of it as Microphone Manager [my words] for the event) . After the leaders passed, we did not have long to wait before small groups of riders came into view, and then larger bodies of riders. Business at Skull Valley Water Stop then began to pick up considerably, as riders stopped to replenish their water supply.

Since there were no real radio requirements for the moment, it afforded me an opportunity to observe and photograph some of the many riders stopping and passing by. Both men and women were dressed in similar bike rider attire, helmets, and form fitting shirts and pants being the standard. I noticed many wore special shoes, that mate with the bike pedals. More interesting, was what I term as the "class" of riders. First, you have the serious competitor, most notable the front runners who passed us by, pressing on to the finish line. Then you have the competitors that don't seem to be as interested in placing, but still serious about the sport. Next, you have the serious hobbyist who seem to enjoy the race, but really aren't interested in the all out dash to the finish, a more relaxed racer. Next, you have the family and group riders, who seem to ride in packs, stopping and riding as a group; these are the ones who mostly seemed to take their time at the water stop, and conversing while they rested and got their wind. Lastly, there were the casual riders who just seem to like to ride the course, and just participating in the race was meaningful enough. Fred and I even noted a tandem bicycle built for two, which appeared to be a husband and wife duo.



Here they come



Around the Bend



Another Cyclist

Microphone Management radio traffic did not entail much air time, and was mainly directed to the first rider passing, the last rider passing, and a SAG support vehicle which stopped at our location for bike tire repairs, in between. Around 9 a.m, we got word from Lee K7CBK riding in a SAG vehicle checking on riders, that the last bicycle racer had passed our location. I checked in with Net Control that the last rider had passed, and requested permission to shut down the Skull Valley Water Stop, which was granted. So Fred and I officially closed up shop at 9:10 a.m. We notified the water folks next to us likewise, and we all started to pack up the gear. The tear down never seems to take as long to do as the set up, but we were packed and ready to roll in short order.



K7CBL SAG



General Store in Wilhoit AZ

Fred and I continued along the race route south, past the Rest Stop at Kirkland, through the town of Kirkland Junction, and turning left onto State Route 89 heading northeast to Wilhoit, where the last Rest Stop was located, passing many riders along the road. At Wilhoit, we pulled into the rest stop, which was off road in a parking lot area, where there also sat a nice general store. Located here were a couple of more permanent roofed but open structures, where the racers could prop up their bikes, and get some shade. We conversed with Fred's friend, Bob K7CJW and his other station volunteer Richard N7RIS. Bob had noted he had experienced radio problems, and Fred's investigation brought to light a possible bad coax connector that had come loose. But like good hams, Bob and Richard had a backup HT, which seemed to do the communications job for them with a separate antenna hookup.

After some conversation and refreshment, Fred and I continued northeasterly along the race route on our way up Route 89 back to Prescott. The route took us up a very winding road, replete with numerous switchbacks up and over Mount Francis. Along the way up the mountain, we again passed many bike riders, straining and crawling in low bike gears, up the steep grade. We had to be careful, especially around the sharp blind turns, for vehicles coming the other direction and bike riders in the road, too. We even came upon the tandem bike riders going up the mountain, and we were very tempted to kid the husband in front that his wife wasn't peddling hard in the back seat....hi, hi. But we both resisted the temptation. Cresting the mountain, it was all pretty much downhill, literally, back into Prescott for us and the riders. We passed by the Start / Finish area at Goodwin Street near Courthouse Square in Prescott, but continued on our way to pursue other activities down the road.

So ended my first volunteer work at ham radio public service, 2000 miles away. At the time of the race, we never did hear how many riders participated. But in a subsequent writeup in the October YARC newsletter, it was mentioned approximately 187 riders started the race. Congrats to those cyclists who rode the 54 miles, especially up that nasty mountain near the end, and to all 9 hams that participated in that public service event, who were rewarded with event t-shirts, one of which I now possess. More information can be found about the race by Googling "Skull Valley Loop Challenge."



December 2010

			Meeting Coffmans 7:30 p.m.	 1	 2	160 Meter Contest  3	160 Meter Contest  4
160 Meter Contest  5	 6	 7	10 Meter Net 2100.000  8	 9		10 Meter Contest  10	10 Meter Contest  11
10 Meter Contest  12	 13	 14	Meeting Coffmans 7:30 p.m.				
Rookie Roundup  19	 20	 21	2 Meter Net 147.24 Mhz 8 p.m.	 16	 17	 18	
	 27	 28	70 Cm Net 449.575 Mhz 8 p.m.	 23	 24	 25	Merry Christmas
 26	 29			 30	 31	Straight Key Night 7 p.m.	

From the Skies over Mt. Essex

SKY Events for December 2010

December 4th Venus at greatest brilliancy 5 am EST

December 5th New Moon

December 7th Earliest Sunset 4:43pm EST

December 13th First Quarter Moon

December 14th Geminids meteor shower peaks, est 100+ per hr with a First Qtr moon 'Excellent'.

December 21st Full Moon "Cold Moon"

December 21st Total Lunar Eclipse

December 21st Winter begins at 6:38 pm EST also the shortest day 9hrs 20 mins.

December 27th Last Quarter Moon

Planet Lookout

Mercury – Low in the southwest after sunset.

Venus – High in the southeast during dawn sky.

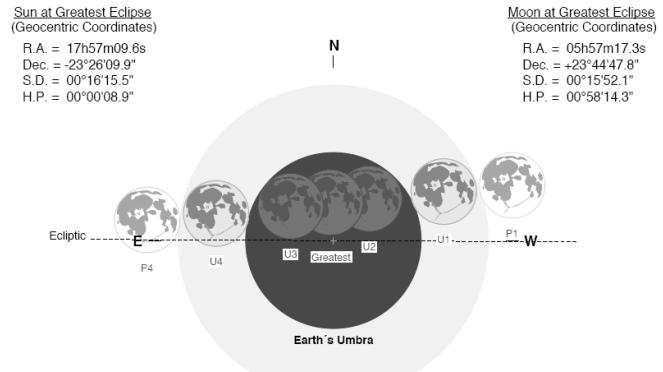
Mars – Low in the southwest at sunset lower right of Mercury.

Jupiter – High in the south at evening dusk.

Saturn – Above Venus high and to the right.

December 21st Total Lunar Eclipse!

A lunar eclipse occurs when the moon passes behind the earth such that the earth blocks the sun's rays from striking the moon. This can occur only when the Sun, Earth and Moon are aligned exactly, or very closely so, with the Earth in the middle. Hence, there is always a full moon the night of a lunar eclipse. Unlike a solar eclipse, which can only be viewed from a certain relatively small area of the world, a lunar eclipse may be viewed from anywhere on the night side of the Earth. A lunar eclipse lasts for a few hours, whereas a total solar eclipse lasts for only a few minutes at any given place. ©Wikipedia



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Tuesday December 21, 2010

Fist hint of shading around 00:29 am
Partial phase begins at 1:32 am
Total runs from 2:40 to 3:53 am
Partial phase ends at 5:01 am
End of the eclipse at 6:04 am

The moon's color will change from a bright copper to a... dark gray? It depends on the dirt and dust in the upper atmosphere.

A HAM'S CHRISTMAS

Twas the night before Christmas,
all through two-meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up
From the tower, quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Tech-Pluses,
Took their HT's to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
by a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,
and, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX PacketCluster,

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam -
A flying sleigh, with an
Eight element beam,

And a little old driver
who looked slightly mean.
So I thought for a moment,
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa,
The Santa of Hams.
On a mission, this Christmas

To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,
And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of CQ,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late QSLs
For a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded
It into the earth, till
The station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Resoldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp...
(Never worked right before --
Now it works like a champ).

A new, low-pass filter
Cleaned up the TV.
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That would not compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep
In the bag that he brought,
And he pulled out a big box.
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?
A Ten-Tec, for me?!"
(If he thought I'd been bad
it might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate Station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those hours
that I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy,
It was my call he sent.
But the cards and the postage
Will cost two month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,
And the pile-up was big,
But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final
came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What a ham might expect,
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX."

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