



South Park Picnic!

WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS July Family Picnic and Auction

Thursday, July 9, 2009, 6:00—10:00 PM

Harbor Grove, South Park

- Please bring a salad or dessert to share as well as your own beverages and folding chairs.
- *We do not have an alcohol permit for the grove.*
- We do not need any paper products. KB3GMN indicates that we have a lifetime supply from Field Day.
- AB3ED will get the burgers, dogs and buns.
- We need a grill (gas, charcoal or solar).
- Please reply to the club reflector by Wednesday evening as to what you are bringing and the number attending from your family.

Auction:

- Ham Radio-related stuff, accessories, gadgets, gear and electronics.
- You may set a minimum price for any item 90/10 split between the seller and the club.

Directions: Short Version: same place as last year.

Long Version:

From the Main Entrance of Corrigan Drive Near McDonald's and the GetGo:

Proceed on Corrigan Drive past the Skating Rink; go ½ way around the circle and continue to the traffic light.

Left onto Maple Springs Drive. Harbor is the first grove on your right, about 50 yards from Corrigan Drive.

Also: We need an auctioneer. Any volunteers?

— 73, Bob Timmins AB3ED

President's Letter

Field Day 2009 was a blast for me. How about for you?

Did you like the South Park site? I'd like to have feedback on that site compared to others we have used in the past: Sportsman's Club, Mingo Creek Park (Observatory and Shelter 9), Mt Lebanon Park.

The South Park site took me back about 25 years to its use by the (defunct) *South Hills Brasspounders and Modulators*. The telephone poles, now surrounded by large trees, held a couple of dipoles while several 20' towers held monoband HF beams.



Of course, **WASH** did it differently this year. The N3ZK-tested method of end to end dipoles worked very well and minimized inter-station interference. The TA33 driven element worked well on 20/15/10 even though it was only at 24'. The Tower Trailer provided excitement on VHF/UHF. How about N3FB's super power distribution system with UPS?

Thanks to all who made this an excellent Field Day.

CW QSOs: 553
SSB QSOs: 422
Digital QSOs: 79
Total QSOs: 1054
QSO points 1686

**Continued
on Page 2**

Inside this issue:

WASH Club News	3
Meeting Minutes	4
WASH Club Agenda	5
Field Day Pictures	6
Field Day Pictures	7
Carl & Quinn's Field Day	8
DX News Briefs	10
WASH Classified Ads	11

Next Meeting: July 9th, 2009

The next monthly meeting of the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** will be Thursday, July 9th, at the Harbor Grove, South Park, Maple Springs Drive just off Corrigan Drive, 6:00—10:00 PM.

This will be the club's annual picnic & auction. Topics will include Field Day wrap-up and preparations for the Pa QSO Party & other fall activities.

Talk-in on the 146.955(-) N3SH/R and 443.650(+) N3FB/R Repeaters (131.8 PL). All members, guests and interested parties invited!

N3SH Field Day 2009 Photos



All photos this page are courtesy of & ©Copyright 2009 Larry Comden K3VX



(Continued from page 1)
 Sections 69 out of 80
 We'll have bonuses added for emergency power, publicity, FD message, etc.
 — 73, Larry Comden K3VX, President,
 Wireless Association of South Hills N3SH / WA3SH / NP2SH

WASH 2009 OFFICERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

President	Larry Comden K3VX
VP / Secretary	Bob Timmins AB3ED
VP / Treasurer	Mark Stabryla N3RDV

AND WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT:

N3SH / WA3SH Trustee	Steve Lane W3SRL
NP2SH Trustee	Paul Jordan NP2JF
N3SH / WA3SH / NP2SH QSL Manager	Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI
NP2SH 2009 QSL Manager	Carl Schroeder K9CS
VE Team Liaison	Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL
Webmaster	Randy George N3ZK
Quartermaster	Harold Rosenberger K3HCR
WASH FM Net Manager	Kevin Smith N3HKQ
WASHFest 2010 Committee	Kevin Smith N3HKQ, Chairman
	Carol Danko KB3GMN

Activities & Operating Events	Bob Timmins AB3ED
Ways & Means	Carol Danko KB3GMN
Field Day 2009 Coordinators	Kevin Smith N3HKQ
	Randy George N3ZK

CLUB-AFFILIATED REPEATERS, BEACONS, & DIGIPEATERS:

Mt. Lebanon	N3SH / R	146.955 MHz (-)	PL 131.8
Mt. Lebanon	W3SRL / R	442.550 MHz (+)	PL 131.8
Canonsburg	N3FB / R	443.650 MHz (+)	PL 131.8
St. Johns, VI	NP2SH / B	28.276 MHz	Propagation Beacon
Canonsburg	N3SH	144.390 MHz	APRS Digipeater

N3SH / WA3SH WASHNet, the weekly on-air net of WASH, meets every Sunday Night, 9:00 PM ET, on the 146.955 & 443.650 repeaters. All radio amateurs, WASH members or not, are welcome to join in!

THE LEGAL STUFF

"The WASHRag™" (formerly **"The Mariner™"**) is the Official Newsletter of the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC. (WASH)**

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The **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** was founded on August 23rd, 1993, as the original **SOUTH HILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**, and operated under that name through 1998. WASH was also known briefly in late 1998 as the **N3SH AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**. It is not in any way affiliated with the "South Hills Amateur Radio Club, Inc." and is not responsible for that group, it's members, or it's actions in any way, shape, or form.

As always, special thanks to the owners of both the N3RNX/R Repeater System and the N3FB/R Repeater System for permitting the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** and it's members to use their repeaters for club purposes. Special thanks also to Glen Roberts KE7FD of The Internet Guild for his assistance in providing space on-line for our website for back issues of **"The WASHRag™"** which can be found at www.washrag.info

WASH Amateur Radio Club News Briefs

Next WASH VE Test July 16th

The Next WASH VE exam sessions will be Thursday, July 16th, 2009, 6:30 PM, at the **Peters Township Library**, 616 East McMurray Road, McMurray, PA. Talk-in on the 146.955 MHz and 443.650 MHz repeaters. All examiners are ARRL VEC affiliated.

Walk-ins are always welcome, but if you plan on attending the test session, please contact VE Team Liason Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL:

Telephone (724) 746-9235 or E-Mail: n3zel@comcast.net

Please bring the following to your test session:

- Picture ID or other suitable identification (2 forms of ID required)
- Pen / Pencil / Calculator
- Original FCC license plus a copy of license (if upgrading)
- Original CSCE plus a copy of CSCE (if upgrading)
- Check or Cash in the amount of \$15.00 (payable to: ARRL VEC)

Future test dates: Thursday, October 15th, 2009
 Thursday, January 21st, 2010
 (tentative) Thursday, April 15th, 2010
 Thursday, July 17th, 2010

June 27th was another cool and comfortable morning, with a weather forecast almost perfect for Field Day set up. And that's exactly what members of **the WASH Breakfast Gang** to were up to in South Park at 9 AM, at the old Model Aircraft field... so there was no monthly breakfast at **The Beach House** in Finleyville.

<http://www.kn4lf.com/kn4lf5.htm> and

(Wonder if they missed us rearranging the tables so that everyone could sit together?)

The next Club Breakfast will be Saturday, July 25th, at **The Beach House**, Library Road, Finleyville, just south of Trax Farm. Come down & share a cup of coffee & a good time with us!

Did you get your N3SH Field Day T-Shirt? If you'd still like one, contact N3ZK and let him know so that he can have them available at the picnic or shortly thereafter. (Ye Editor missed Randy at FD, still hopes to get one!)

Congratulations to Dave Kleber KB3FXI & Harry Bloomberg W3YJ for the Atlantic Division 2009 Technical Achievement Award, for "working together to make digital emergency communication easier & more reliable".

The Sunspots Are Back! (We hope!) One of the longest "droughts" in sun spot activity appears to finally be over. NASA scientists have determined that a solar "jet stream" that normally takes about a year or so to traverse the heliosphere took about two. The results of the "quiet" jet stream was a lack of sunspots and a prolonged "bottom" of the solar cycle. Amateur radio operators (and amateur astronomers) were concerned that we had entered another "maunder minimum," but solar observers have noticed the spots returning and modest solar flares returning.

Although the upcoming Solar Cycle 24 was originally predicted to be one of the most active in decades, scientists now believe that it will be at best a mild one.

Some scientists also appear to believe that a modest cycle will also lead to a cycle of... global cooling.

Find out more at www.kn4lf.com/kn4lf5.htm and www.kn4lf.com/kn4lf72.htm

The 2009 Pa QSO Party is only three months away. And as we all know, time has a habit of sneaking up on you. Now is the time to start deciding on your plans, mapping out portable locations, reserving camping grounds, fixing up the mobile, or just getting the shack ready for another run. W3WN plans to once again invite club members for a Multi-Single op from his QTH... how about you?

For those of you unable to make the club picnic, Atlantic Division Assistant Director Riley Hollingsworth K4ZDH, who retired last year from the FCC after 10 years improving FCC enforcement, will be giving a speech at Lehigh University in Bethlehem PA.

More information available at www.dlarc.org



Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix Volunteers should have received an e-mail by now with the annual newsletter. The PVGP Association will no longer be printing & mailing it to save funds for their charities.

Two changes of note for this year:

1. In order to receive a Volunteer T-Shirt, you must provide the PVGPA with an e-mail address when you sign up
2. Panera Bread will be providing box lunches for the corner workers this year. "Lunch will not be cooked or served for race side volunteers in the tent at Start/Finish." Those with dietary concerns or restrictions should plan accordingly

WASHNet

2009 NCS Schedule

07/05 — Kevin N3HKQ	10/18 — Harold K3HCR
07/12 — Dave N3DFK	10/25 — Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF
07/19 — Bob AB3ED	11/01 — Dave N3IDH
07/26 — Frank N3FB	11/08 — Bob AB3ED
08/02 — Dave N3DFK	11/15 — Frank N3FB
08/09 — Kevin N3HKQ	11/22 — Dave N3DFK
08/16 — Bill W3WH	11/29 — Kevin N3HKQ
08/23 — Harold K3HCR	12/06 — Special Guest!
08/30 — Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF	12/13 — Harold K3HCR
09/06 — Dave N3IDH	12/20 — Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF
09/13 — Bob AB3ED	12/27 — Dave N3IDH
09/20 — Frank N3FB	01/03 — Bob AB3ED
09/27 — Dave N3DFK	01/10 — Kevin N3HKQ
10/04 — Kevin N3HKQ	
10/11 — Bill W3WH	

Join WASH or Renew your Membership for 2009 Today! Membership Application on Page 13!

Minutes, June 11th Meeting

Bob Timmins AB3ED, Vice President / Secretary, **WASH**

Larry K3VX, **called** the meeting **to order** at 19:00 hours. There were 20 members and guests in attendance.

A **moment of silence** was observed for recent silent keys and other deserving persons.

A motion was made by Ed N3ZNI and seconded by Carol KB3GMN to **accept the minutes** of the May 2009 meeting as published in the June 2009 newsletter. The motion was voted on and passed.

Committee reports:

Treasurer (N3RDV):

Secretary (AB3ED): July meeting will be a picnic at South Park. Bob will secure permit for same grove as last year (Harbor).

VE Report (N3ZEL): next session July 16. Examiners needed for session.

Repeaters (N3SH & N3FB): Frank N3FB reported that his machine is online and functioning properly. Steve W3SLR reported that the .955 machine is not id-ing properly. The call sign prefix is being clipped.

FM Net Report (N3HKQ): . no report

Ways and Means (KB3GMN): Carol reported that a Pecuniary Procurement and Redistribution Program will be held at the end of the meeting.

Public Service (N3RDV):

- Dave N3IDH thanked members who participated in the Bentleyville Walk for Alex on Memorial Day weekend.
- Mark N3RDV reported that Randy N3ZK and Paul NØVLR completed the MS 150 Bike Ride.
- The Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix will be July 18 and 19.

Contests (K3VX): Larry mentioned the VHF Contest this weekend June 12

Newsletter (W3WN): The Editor professed his customary modest assessment of the club newsletter.

President's Report (K3VX): Larry K3VX announced that **WASH** will hold a Fox Hunt in association with WACOM in August. Bud N3TIR is assembling a fox and several antennas.

Old Business: None

New Business: Kevin N3HKQ Field Day Report:

- A truck is needed to haul the tower trailer from NØVLR's home to the Field Day Site in South Park. Richie N3SBF volunteered.
- We need tables. Several members offered to assist with this need.
- Set Up will be Friday 10:00 am and Saturday 10:00 am.
- The logging software will be demonstrated after the meeting.
- Members are encouraged to operate at the Field Day Site, especially during the Midnight Shift.

Good of the Order:

Motion to Adjourn: Made by Ron W3WN, and seconded by Carol KB3GMN to adjourn. The motion was voted on and passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm.

WASH Spotlight: MS 150



Randy N3ZK & Paul NØVLR participated as part of Team Comcast in the MS 150 bicycle ride on June 6th & 7th. [Note to KB3ERQ: You have to ride on the team to get one of those riding jerseys!] Photo courtesy of and ©Copyright 2009 Randy George N3ZK

Every month we're going to feature a **WASH** club member, something about them, something they're involved in or a club-related activity that we're involved in, in the **WASH Spotlight**. Submissions for the Spotlight should be sent to Ron W3WN at **newsletter at n3sh dot org**

Monthly WASH Breakfast

Please join us for the next **WASH** Breakfast! We usually get together on the LAST Saturday of every month for a chance to informally sit down, shoot the breeze, compare notes, drink lots of coffee, and just have a good time!



Join us this month at **The Beach House**, on Route 88 in Finleyville, just south of Trax Farms and adjacent to Mineral Beach. Start time is about 8 AM until ????? Monitor 146.955 & 443.650 for talk-in or any last minute changes.

All are welcome, **WASH** members or not, amateurs or not!

Wireless Association of South Hills Membership

AB3ED	KB3IRQ	N3RDV	WB4GCS	WASH FL	WASH VI
AB3EN	KB3IVW	N3SBF	WO3Z	KA3UPY/MM	NP2JF
AB3DL	KB3IVX	N3TIR		W4ZE	Silent
AC4KU	KB3ORR	N3ZEL	Mary Jean	WASH GA	Keys
K3AIR	KB3SRB	N3ZNI	Senk	K3OL	K3EED
K3AVQ	KB3SVX	N9OKM	Jane	KB3IJX	(George)
K3GW	KC4WTT	NU3S	Wagner	WASH NC	KA3NMG
K3HCR	KE7FD	W3LE		N3RNK	KB3ENX
K3LGM	N1NCZ	W3RJM		WASH NE	KB3FNM
K3SGT	N2QIV	W3RWS		NØPEU	KB3FQT
K3VX	N3AWF	W3SRL		WASH OH	N3FZ
KA3TWI	N3BPB	W3VFA		N8DPW	WASH TN
KB3DCO	N3CZZ	W3WH		WASH TX	N3KEH
KB3GMN	N3DFK	W3WN		KE3XB	N3OBD
KB3GMP	N3FB	WA3JPP		N3YPB	N3SKR
KB3GMU	N3HKQ	WA3NB		WASH TX	N3SRC
KB3HFP	N3PN	WA3RVD		K3LGM	N3XFE
KB3IAC	N3QMV	WB3CAI		Jane Wagner	W3ZLK

Through June 18th, 2009

List compiled by

Mark Stabryla N3RDV, Vice President/Treasurer

Silent Keys



Chester Bennett Jr. N3YHX, father of Corky Bennett N3MJP, Bethel Park, June 23rd

H. Rey Whanger W3BIS, Cheswick, June 29th

Ray Renninger K3ECZ, Uniontown, July 3rd

Compuserve Information Service, July 1st

2009 WASH Upcoming Events Calendar

Meeting Topics & Other Significant Club Events — Subject to Change

July 9 th	WASH Picnic & Auction	Family Picnic at Harbor Grove in South Park, 6:00—10:00 PM
July 11 th -12 th	IARU HF World Championship	http://www.iarru.org
July 12 th	North Hills ARC Hamfest	http://www.nharc.org
July 16 th	WASH VEC Exam	Pre-register via n3zel@comcast.net
July 18 th & 19 th	Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix	Schenley Park, Pittsburgh
July 19 th	Somerset ARC Hamfest	http://www.k3smt.org
July 26 th	Portage ARC Hamfest	http://hamfair.com
August 13 th	WASH Meeting	Training for the Hidden Transmitter Hunt in conjunction with WACOM, more details to be announced
August 23 rd	Skyview ARC Hamfest	http://www.skyviewradio.net
September 5 th	Uniontown ARC Gabfest	http://www.w3pie.org
September 10 th	WASH Meeting	To Be Announced
September 12 th -13 th	ARRL September VHF Contest	http://www.arrl.org
September 13 th	Butler County ARA Hamfest	http://www.w3udx.org
October 3 rd – 4 th	California QSO Party	
October 8 th	WASH Meeting	Pa QSO Party Preparations
October 10 th -11 th	Pennsylvania QSO Party	http://www.nittany-arc.net/paqso.html
October 15 th	WASH VEC Exam	Pre-register via n3zel@comcast.net
October 24 th -25 th	CQ Worldwide DX Contest SSB	http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com
November 7 th – 8 th	ARRL Sweepstakes CW	http://www.arrl.org
November 12 th	WASH Meeting	To Be Announced
November 28 th -29 th	CQ Worldwide DX Contest CW	http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com
December 4 th – 6 th	ARRL 160 Meter Contest	http://www.arrl.org
December 12 th – 13 th	ARRL 10 Meter Contest	http://www.arrl.org
December 31 st	ARRL Straight Key Night	http://www.arrl.org

N3SH Field Day 2009 Wrap-Up

Kevin Smith N3HKQ, Co-Chairman, N3SH Field Day

Except for the mishap between W9UK and the CW tent we had a near picture perfect Field Day weekend with good weather and reasonable propagation. Thanks to everyone who pitched in to setup, bring personal equipment and to operate.

I want to thank in particular:

- Frank Bobro N3FB for not only mapped the site; plotting where everything should go, but also brought all of the power cables and UPS's so that we had all of the power we could need, where we needed it. Also, Frank produced a press release of our FD effort which earned us an easy 100 points.
- Jim Sanford WB4GCS who lent us his 5.5 kW generator to use as well as his two large canopies and doing the VHF station and catching a couple of satellite contacts.
- Carol KB3GMN and Richie N3SBF Danko for bringing tables, canopies and most importantly the club tower trailer. Carol and Richie will also provide a home for the tower trailer at their QTH for the time being.
- Dave Kitzinger N3DFK for taking care of the computer network details.
- Larry Comden K3VX for making all the arrangements for the site and comfort facilities.

I want to thank most of all though Bill Hill W3WH. An accident claimed his favorite HF rig, his Ten Tec Omni VI. He had every right to be upset and in a foul mood at very least but in what I know to be typical Bill Hill fashion, he was calm, understanding and forgiving to everyone. He went home Saturday evening disappointed and said he did not think he would be back, but Bill did come back Sunday morning and put in another shift at the CW tent. Bill you are one of the finest men I know personally and an example of a man that I want to be like. Thanks!



All photos this page
courtesy of and
©Copyright 2009 Kevin
Smith N3HKQ



More N3SH Field Day Photos



All photos this page are courtesy of & ©Copyright 2009 Eric Udren K3SGT



The Field Day Adventures of Carl & Quinn

Lynn Richards AAA2ZZ

Looking at his watch, Carl wondered where Quinn was. "He's supposed to be here with the dipole gear and the launcher". Carl brought the two radios for 2A operation; one voice and CW/digital. They had scoped out this prime Field Day location at one end of a beautiful mountain lake months earlier, plenty of trees to hang the all-band dipoles, new picnic tables and a mighty fine water closet nearby.

As Carl finished setting up the tent, generator, lights, bug zapper, portable grill, and official ARRL logo paper lanterns, he could hear the hum of Quinn's '59 Ford 4x4 Pickup truck lumbering up the road to camp. Although he recognized the sound of the unique ping from the motor (unleaded gas) there was something else out there that he couldn't recognize. It sounded big and deep, and was getting closer.

Stepping to the door of the tent, Carl was greeted by the sight of the most bazaar antenna launcher he had ever seen. There in all its splendor was the mother of all antenna launchers, but not the hand-held PVC potato cannon they built previous fall, but something a bit larger. "What is THIS?" asks Carl, to which Quinn replies, "This is the human-cannonball, cannon left over from the Zucchini Family circus days. Ain't it a beaut"? With little more than the scarce sense afforded to a mushroom, the two begin the task of setting up the cannon to raise the dipoles into the trees.

Seeing a thin bank of tall trees between the camp and the lake, the two jockey the cannon into position to launch a weighted line to hoist up their antennas. But lacking the foresight needed to work with such a large launching platform the two begin looking around for the right sized projectile, something Quinn did not take into consideration when the cannon came into his possession. (That event was not something Quinn was willing share just yet with Carl despite the natural inclination anyone would have to pursue.) Judging from the size of the cannon, the two decide the best projectile to use would be the 3 gallon water cooler sitting on the tailgate of Quinn's Ford.

Guessing at the spring setting that powers the cannon, the two set the spring at the half way point. After easing the cooler down the barrel of the cannon, the two stand back and fire the behemoth device. With a loud "FUMPH" the missile flies nearly over the tops of the trees but slams into the midst of leaves and branches, then falling to the ground below. "WOW. It almost made it. Let's turn it all the way up!" Quinn shouts and quickly grabs the cooler from where it lay several yards from the water's edge. Reaching the breach of the cannon, he slams the power lever all the way to the maximum. Carl in the mean time readied the lines to attach to the cooler and Quinn climbs to the loading platform at the mouth of the cannon ready to load it.

While Carl untangles the ropes that he will tie to the cooler, Quinn languishes with anticipation. Fidgeting with the HT on his hip he accidentally fumbles it into the cannon which slides all the way to the bottom. "Ahh! My new VX-6R!" Without a second thought Quinn enters the cannon and gently begins his decent, slow at first but quickly loses control then plummets to the bottom of the cannon. What happened next became the subject of many laughing sessions on the local repeaters.

One of the less know facts about springs is there are a class of the devices that are *nonlinear*, which basically means the further the spring is compressed, the greater the force it exerts *exponentially*. This fact came into play when upon reaching the bottom of the cannon Quinn's impact shook the entire mass including the trigger. Another "FUMPH" erupts from the camp for the second time that morning. Another sound not surprisingly drowns out the cannon; it is the screams of an airborne Quinn demonstrating Newton's First Law of Motion. The same law again comes to bear when Quinn butt-flops in six feet of lake water.

Field Day ended for Carl and Quinn at the same time it did for everyone else, surprisingly. 2A and 338 contacts later, the pair managed to use the cannon after all. It turns out it made a fabulous mast.

I had a BALL! And great to see many of you after too long.

Kevin & Frank just left, this is written while the four-legged one gets some demanded attention, before I unload my car.

Suggest everybody capture TODAY, their thoughts and lessons learned. "Later" won't be fresh, as I'm embarrassed to admit from last year. So, here's mine, hoping somebody will volunteer to collect all, and maybe publish on web site or somewhere

1. As you UNPACK, make a list of what you unpack -- that will all that you took, and all that you had to go back for.
2. Need to make re-arrangements of coax on tower trailer. (Kevin, Larry, and I discussed.)
3. I need to do a better "shelter" for generator
4. We need to come to a permanent solution for tower and rotor.
5. We should consider an aluminum pole coming out of rotor -- lighter than the steel one, and perfectly suitable for our temporary use.

I'm sure there will be more. . . .

Again, thanks to all for a blast.

— 73, Jim Sanford WB4GCS



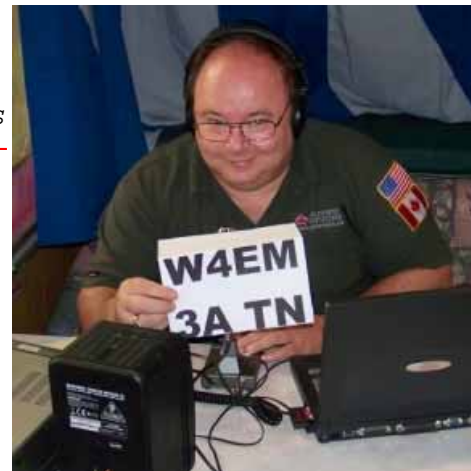
Hi Gang:

Glad you had a great time at Field Day. Sorry I couldn't be there, but I was on.

I had some business in Memphis, TN and the Delta ARC was kind and gracious enough to welcome me to their beautiful site near the TN/MS state line.

If you worked W4EM, that was us, out there in 103 degree heat!!!

— 73, Mike Lazaroff K3AIR



Even More N3SH Field Day Photos

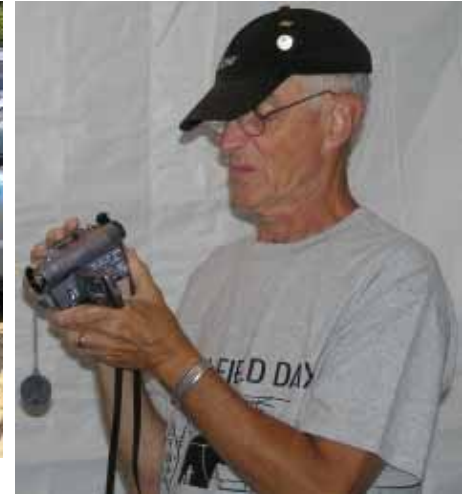


Above photos are courtesy of & ©Copyright 2009 Ron Telek W3LE

I am sure that you all had fun doing Field Day. It was my pleasure to hear N3SH 21.315 phone and WA3COM later on the same frequency while I was logging for the phone station at W4AKH.

- 73, Ted Huf W4ZE

Photos below & right are courtesy of & ©Copyright 2009 Eric Udren K3SGT



Someday

A Short Story by Don Keith N4KC, courtesy of www.eham.net

The signals from the JAs, now reedy and watery in the frying sizzle of band noise, were struggling to make the long trip over the Pole. Europe had long since gone to bed. The Brazilians had given up, too, chucking twenty meters for some other band or gone to a late night coffee. Even the usual wall of stations on the East Coast of the U.S.A. had apparently grown tired of the noise and puny signals and pulled down their shades, too.

Greg Cooper twisted the tuning knob on his Hallicrafters S-38 receiver, swishing it back forth around 14.250 on the twenty-meter phone band. He ignored the noticeable jump in frequency when the knot in the dial string caught on its guide. He had been meaning to re-string it, but school and football and girls kept getting in the way. It was after ten o'clock so the lights were out in his bedroom, but the warm glow of the 6146 tube in the Globe Scout transmitter gave enough luminance through the holes in the cabinet for him to be able to log a contact. That is, if he ever made one.

He still only had the one crystal from his Novice days, cut for 7.125 in the middle of the forty-meter Novice band. Now he could use it on 14.250—the second harmonic and in the AM portion of the band—if he remembered to find the correct dip in the final when he tuned it up. He used the same dipole, too, 63 feet long, fed somewhere near the middle. The coil in the output of the Scout sparked and spat at him sometimes when he tuned up on twenty meters, but he got by and had made a smattering of short contacts since upgrading to General. They had all ended with the other station losing him in the static or the omnipresent interference, always before he could even get the other stations to understand his name and location.

He shoved the cowlick out of his eyes, glanced at the unopened algebra book on the bed, and gave himself three more minutes to conjure up a QSO before surrendering to homework. Neither of his parents were ham radio operators and had trouble understanding his affection for whooshing static and squeaking, squawking noises that spilled from the receiver. Homework had to come first, they maintained. Especially math if he wanted to become an engineer, as he professed.

It was getting late. The full moon filtered through the blinds at his window. There was already a hint of frost at the bottom of each windowpane. There would be snow to shovel in no time, and that, too, would carve into his ham radio time. With a flick of the wrist—just the way he had seen his uncle do it with his much bigger and better station—Greg ventured away from his rock-bound frequency and checked the rest of the band. Only weedy snatches of voices, a tease of a Morse character, and lots of atmospheric scratching. He spun the dial back to the vicinity of 14.250 and reached for the on/off switch on the transmitter.

Much as he hated to, he had to crack that homework. If there was only some way to become an engineer without dealing with that dang math!

But then he noticed a low rumble in the speaker. He touched the receiver dial, moved a few cycles down, and the rumble became a piercing whine. Somebody was tuning up, right there on "his" frequency. He squinted at the math book, pursed his lips and switched the AM/CW switch on the Hallicrafters to AM. With his fingertips, he lightly touched the orange cover of the crystal that protruded from the front of the Scout, as if that would assure he was on frequency and tuned up. But he had dipped the plate three times already, whistled into the microphone, watched the plate current meter swing with his words. The Scout was as ready as it would ever be. Now if the propagation gods would just cooperate for a few minutes.

The big signal had wiped the band clean, shoving away the static, and as its owner tuned, it got even stronger. Now Greg could hear the sound of someone fiddling with knobs and throwing switches. Then the slight rasp of the operator gently clearing his throat. In the background, there was the soft hum of what must have been a fan, maybe shuttling cool air over some powerful amplifier tubes.

Greg still pictured the gentle dance of tuning up a big ham radio station as something akin to a wizard, mixing his potions, chanting his incantations, casting a spell over something over which mere mortals had no control. That was the way Uncle Max did it. Always in the same order and with an exaggerated flourish, always watching the string of meters across the faces of his transmitter and rack-mounted amplifier. And Max never settled for anything but a perfect tune. If even one meter was off a few milliamps or volts, he fiddled with the knobs and switches some more until everything was plumb.

"This is Zed Dee Eight Alpha Alpha, tuning and standing by."

The deep voice roared out of the speaker, rattling his

Continued
on page 11

DX News Briefs

DK9KX, who first activated Conway Reef 20 years ago as **3D2CR**, will be returning to Conway with 6 other operators 3—11 October. More information [including call sign(s) and QSL route(s)] will be forthcoming on their web site at <http://dx-hamspirit.com/2009/06/conway-reef-dxpedition2009/> — DK9KX



The **Gloriosos 2009** crew is concerned about postponements due to flight problems. The recent loss of the Yemenia A310 at sea may also cause some delays. They remain optimistic that they will be QRV at **FT5G** in or around the end of August. In the meantime, due to the delays, they have been able to 2 new operators for a total of 7. They still plan to have three stations QRV 24/7, two dedicated to HF, one to 6 meters which may also see duty on HF when 6 isn't open. — F5NQL

EA3RKR reports that EA4ATI confirms that the dates for the upcoming **C21TI** DXpedition, following several postponements, will be 17—23 August. They plan to be QRV 160—10 meters. Information on activity is available at <http://www.qrz.com/callsign?callsign=C212TI> — EA3RKR

HB9BXE is organizing a DXpedition to Côn Có Island in Vietnam as **3W6C**, 10—18 April 2010. Côn Có is located in the Gulf of Tonkin. They plan "extra emphasis on low-frequency bands." More information available at <http://www.3w6c.qrv.ch> — 3W6C Sponsor Information Brochure

The 2009 trip to **FP Saint Pierre & Miquelon** by K9OT & KB9LIE has been cancelled. They plan to return to the entity in 2010 for their seventh visit. More information at <http://hamradio.pnparms.com> — K9OT, KB9LIE

IK2AHG will be QRV as **8Q7DI** 8—19 July. QSL via I8ACB — DX World

1FQHG will be QRV as **5V7PRF** 22-31 July. He will be operating in ultra lite DXpedition with 100 watts, primarily CW — DX World

DX World is reporting that they have "learned of an upcoming **Yemen 70** DXpedition which is still in the early planning stages." No further information posted, just "Keep your fingers crossed!" Veteran DX'ers know that this may go no further, just stand by & WFWL! — DX World

The latest OfCom (UK) callbook, as of 6 July, is now available as a free download from <http://www.qsl.net/g3zhi/cb1.html>. — G3ZHI

Look for **C37DXU** 22—27 July as a special event station to mark 60 years of URE. Look for EME activity on 2 meters 22—25 July, 70 cm 26-27 July. QSL via EA3BB — MMonVHF, ICPO

SU8LH will be activated, from the Massabb Dumyat west entrance lighthouse in Northern Egypt, by SU1SK & other SU operators 1—9 August, HF & 6 meters, SSB & CW. QSL via SU1SK. Updates available at www.qsl.net/su1sk/Links.html — SU1SK, ICPO

QSL Routes

3D2AD via YT1AD — JA1HGY	HV5ØVR via IWØGPN — K3WI
3XD2Z via RW3AZ — N2ZN	JW5LJA via LA5LJA — JA1HGY
5KØT via HA7RY — W3AWU	LX5A via LZ1RQ — W6RLL
7Q7VB via UA4WHX — W2IRT	PSØF via W9VA — W4DN
7XØRY via OK1DYW — N8DX	SØ4R via EA5RM — K6GEP
8Q7SC via SP2JMB — KRØØ	T3ØM via YT1AD — JA1HGY
9J2FM via JA4ATV — JA1HGY	T3ØXX via JA8BMK — EU7SA
9J2YO via YO4ATW — KRØØ	T31DX via JA8BMK — W2IRT
9K2YM via EA5KB — DE1DXX	T32YY via JA8BMK — K3LL
9V1YC via W5UE — W5UE	T33ZZ via JA8BMK — DE1DXX
A71CT via E7FTR — DE1DXX	TO2T via F6HMQ — EU7SA
AP2NK via W3HNC — KRØØ	TO3R via RW3RN — KRØØ
C31CT via EA3QS — N8DX	TO4T via F6HMQ — K6GEP
CX7CO via WB3CDX — KRØØ	TR8CA via F6CBC — W2IRT
D44TXI via DH2KI — KRØØ	V63PR via J8DEN — K6GEP
D2ØVB via UA4WHX — W2IRT	VKØBP via VK2CA — DE1DXX
ER4DX via RA4LW — N8DX	VP8YLI via IT9ESZ — DE1DXX
FW5RE via HA8IB — UA3FDX	YB2ECG via EB7DX — K6GEP
H4ØFN via HA8FW — PAØWRS	Z36A via DJØLZ — MMØBQN
HP1AC via EA5KB — W2IRT	ZL7T via ZL2AL — W4DN

Thanks to the NJDXA DX News & DX Chat Reflectors, the DX-QSL Reflector, 425 DX News, OPDX News, Diamond DX Club News, ICPO Bulletin, & ARRL DX Bulletin for our DX News information. Thanks also to Bill Moore NC1L / ARRL DXCC Desk, & Bernie McClenny W3UR / The Daily DX for confirmations & additional information.



WASH Classifieds

Information shown here is as supplied to the **WASHRag**. Condition as stated, and all sales should be considered "as-is" unless otherwise noted. All subject to prior sale or withdrawal from sale at the owner's discretion. All responsibility for this information lies with the source and not the **WASHRag** or the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.**

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Has Roadway found the tower yet?

Someday Continued from Page 10

pencil on the desk. Greg grabbed for the "Volume" knob.

Lord! Mom would have his hide if he woke up his father. He had to be at the mill at six the next morning. He worked hard and needed his rest.

Without even taking the time to consult the sheet of paper on the wall that listed all the world's amateur radio call signs, Greg flipped the S-38 to "Standby." And with a practiced motion, he threw the Scout's switch to "Transmit," all while grabbing the cheap microphone in the other hand. Sometimes he still got the switching operation backward, and the squeal left him deaf for a moment, worried about the paper in the cone of the speaker. He'd have to borrow a set of cans from his uncle if he busted the speaker.

"ZD8AA...ZD8AA," his voice broke on the second "ZD8AA." The guy on the other end would know he was only a kid, fourteen years old. Shoot! No real ham wanted to waste time talking to a kid. And especially if the amateur op being called was in some exotic foreign land. He swallowed hard and tried to lower his voice again without it cracking, struggling to sound at least seventeen. "This is WA8QJK. WA8QJK in Cleveland, Ohio, calling. Do you copy? Over."

Nothing. Nothing but the crackling of static, the distant whine on his receiver from Mr. Oliver's TV set down the block. (He still fussed about Johnny Carson replacing Jack Paar on "The Tonight Show," but he watched every night anyway.) A car passing by on the street outside his window, open just enough to allow the coax and the chill wind to get underneath.

Missed another one. Maybe somebody else would call the fellow and he could postpone the algebra homework a few more minutes while he at least listened in to their honest-to-goodness QSO.

Then the crackle was once again erased by the quieting of the massive signal, rolling in on the ether from wherever it came from. Let's see who he answers, Greg thought. Hopefully it would be somebody outside Greg's skip zone so he could eavesdrop on both sides of the conversation.

"Yes, good morning from Ascension Island in the South Pacific, where it is already morning. WA8QJK, this is ZD8AA. You're not real strong but I think I will be able to pull you out of the mud. I'll call it four-by-five. My name is Steve. Sierra tango echo victor echo. Steve. And I am on Ascension, an island between South America and the west coast of the continent of Africa. Pretty isolated territory, but the weather is nice most of the time. I appreciate you giving me a report on how you are hearing 'Ole Betsy' tonight. So, how copy, Old Man? WA8QJK from ZD8AA. Over."

Greg did not even have time to worry about his voice breaking this time, to appreciate the irony of this operator calling him an "Old Man." He toggled the switches on his receiver and transmitter—in the correct order, twice in a row, a new record!—and put his lips to the microphone.

Like an old-timer, he gave Steve on Ascension Island an "honest-to-goodness" five-by-nine, told him his name and location, and just a bit about his simple station, the Hallicrafters, the Globe Scout, the forty-meter dipole zigzagging among the big elms in their tiny backyard. Before he realized it, he had talked a full three minutes. He had never transmitted for three full minutes in his entire amateur radio career. His year-and-a-half amateur radio career.

Oh, no. ZD8AA would certainly have lost him in the underbrush by now. Greg's frail little signal had surely been swallowed up by the atmosphere and the miles between him and that island out there between South America and the west coast of Africa. Maybe, if so, he would pull the J-38 key over and try to rekindle the contact on CW. He was not about to give up easily on this one.

But the instant he took the receiver off standby, he heard the pronounced clunk of the carrier, even stronger now than before. Greg reached for the globe he kept on the windowsill, spun it around to the South Atlantic. Sure enough, there was Ascension Island, a tiny bump just above the "U" in "South."

"Greg, copied one-hundred percent," Steve was saying. "Looks like good propagation our way tonight. Of course, the big rhombic antenna I aim at the U.S. helps more than somewhat, I guess. You know, I used to have a Globe Scout myself when I was growing up down in Alabama. My first transmitter. It's probably in my mom's basement somewhere with all my other gear."

Amazingly, the conversation continued. Steve only missed a word here or there and Greg heard everything ZD8AA said. Everything. How he was an engineer, working for the U.S. space program at a tracking station there. How he got his degree in engineering, even though he hated math as a kid. About how he finally realized the practical aspects of math when he learned about Ohm's Law, studying for his ham license, and actually applied it when he built a transmitter and made his first contact on the air with it. The fact it went up in smoke a few days later when the transformer shorted out did not diminish the thrill one iota. Neither did having to replace his mother's bedroom curtains that got smoked in the process.

When they finally said their 73s and signed off, Greg was too pumped to do homework. He took his time filling in the

Continued on page 12

Someday Continued from Page 11

blanks in his logbook. Then he stared at the neat row of problems on his worksheet for a while before he finally considered trying to solve one of them. It seemed easy. So did the second one. The third was tougher, but he pictured Steve, sitting before that big transmitter, looking out his window at the ocean with the moonlight sparkling on its surface beyond the big, Erector-set-like satellite tracking dishes. The dishes Steve helped build and maintain.

"Greg, maybe if you study hard and get past that math, you can help us get the first man on the moon," ZD8AA had said. And as Greg noodled through the more difficult problems at the bottom of the mimeographed sheet, he used those words as impetus to not give up so easily on finding the correct solutions to each.

The next evening, about the same time, Greg warmed up the transmitter on 14.250, dialed the receiver up and down ten kilohertz either side, and listened hard. If anything, the band was in worse shape than the night before. Even a couple of schedules he listened to some nights were giving up early, heading for "Gunsmoke" on the television.

No ZD8AA either. So, what the heck? He touched the crystal, as he always did, muted the receiver, threw the "Transmit" switch on the Scout, and gave Steve a call.

He tried to keep the pleading out of his voice when he asked, "Are you out there tonight, Steve?"

Almost immediately, the massive carrier was there, just as strong as before, and ZD8AA was answering his plaintive call. Greg's signal eventually faded to the point that Steve was no longer able to copy him, and several long, slow swoops of QSB even took Steve's voice to the brink of the noise, but they still managed forty-five minutes of conversation. Steve described life on the remote island, told him as much as he could about what he did at work. Greg kept his comments short, still afraid he would drop off the edge of the ionosphere in the middle of a word. But he fished for more inspiration, for more encouragement to follow his dream of becoming an engineer, a scientist, something in technology.

ZD8AA happily obliged.

They talked quite a few times over the next few months. Sometimes conditions only allowed a short QSO. Several times, Steve could not pull Greg's signal out of the swamp at all. A couple of times, they dropped to forty meters and CW, and they made quick contacts both times, though not enough to say much. Greg got inspired and cobbled together a vertical, made from pieces of Mr. Oliver's old TV antenna that got eaten by a tree in a storm, and he mounted it with a set of radials—with his dad's blessings and assistance—on his roof. It helped considerably.

Greg also built an outboard VFO for his Scout so they could move around the band when QRM threatened. And a pre-amp for the receiver, too, but that really did not work. It just allowed strong signals—like Steve's—to swamp it.

Of course, he had many other interesting conversations on the bands, and his QSL collection grew to the point they spilled out of his desk drawer. Still, one of the few cards he Scotch-taped to his bedroom wall showed a picture of a massive tracking dish and the South Atlantic Ocean in the background, and it bore the call sign ZD8AA.

In the spring, at the end of a great QSO in which Steve gave Greg some wonderful tips on comprehending calculus, Steve ended his final transmission rather mysteriously.

"Well, Greg, I know you are about to start that summer job and earn all that money for Ohio State, so I don't know how much we will be able to talk for the next little while. By the way, we are about to get really busy down here. I can't say anything, but...well...we will be busy and I'm going to have to leave 'Ole Betsy's' filaments off for the most part. But I'll look for you when I can."

Greg did not probe. He knew better. Sometime's Steve bluntly told him he could not talk about a particular subject.

The summer job was in construction and some nights Greg was too tired to turn on the radio. There was a girlfriend or two as well, and friends who did not understand his affection for radio and pulled him off to other typical teenager pursuits. He was hardly aware of anything that was going on in the world, much less on the amateur band. But, when he did have the chance to operate, the thrill was still there anytime his little station reached out across the world. Or just across the county.

It was a rainy Wednesday in July. Greg's boss had called the night before and said the job would be shut down due to the weather, to take the day off. Wonderful! As badly as he needed to save money for college, he was happy to have a rare day off. He planned to get up early and try to catch the stations that often came through on fifteen meters from Southeast Asia about sunrise, but fatigue took over and he slapped the alarm off when it tried to interrupt his precious rest. Still, he had a hard time sleeping and climbed out of bed anyway. Nothing interesting on fifteen so he went off in search of breakfast. To his surprise, he quickly found that his mom had not fixed anything for him. That never happened.

Instead, she was in the living room, sitting in Dad's easy chair, leaning forward, her eyes fixed to the TV. He had never seen her watch anything with such intensity. Anything, that is, but her soap operas.

"Mom, we got any pancake..."

"Sssshhhh! Come here. I was about to wake you. Watch this."

"But I'm hungry and..."

She kept her eyes on the small, gray screen but waved vigorously for him to come over and watch.

There was a wavy picture of a rocket on a launch platform, white clouds of gas escaping at a couple of points along its length. Apollo 11. Greg was dimly aware that there was to be a space mission—an attempt to land a man on the moon—sometime this summer. In the crush of all that had been going on, he had lost track of it all. Still, his heart quickened when he realized what was happening.

"They're going to the moon! Greg, they are going to try to land and walk around on the moon! Who would have thought we would have lived to see this?"

Her excitement was contagious. The countdown was in the teens already. Then a billow of smoke at the base of the rocket signaled it was about to leave earth, head down range, put Apollo into orbit before she ultimately fired more rockets and pointed toward the lunar surface, over a quarter of a million miles away. Greg watched, not one bit ashamed of the tears in his eyes, as the mission proceeded right on schedule. His mom hugged him.

"Just think. Someday you will help do things like that," she said proudly.

He smiled and kissed her cheek, then he headed upstairs. People on the amateur bands would be talking about what was happening and he wanted to join in.

As he sat down and turned on the transmitter and receiver, his eye caught the QSL card on the wall. The one with the tracking dish and the blue South Atlantic in the background.

Steve! So that was what was keeping ZD8AA so busy these days!

His friend, his QSO buddy, was at that very moment helping keep man's first moon mission safely on track, tweaking the knobs and dials just as he did on "Ole Betsy," aiming his dishes at the space capsule just as he did his rhombic pointed toward Cleveland.

Someday, Greg thought as he smelled the familiar aroma of the tubes in his radios heating up, as he listened to the soft cracking of their cabinets and quiet, comforting hum of their components, as he watched the dial light flicker slightly inside the VFO he had built with his own hands and his uncle's cast-off soldering iron.

Someday.

(Note: this story is fiction. The call letters used do not appear to be assigned at this time and are not meant to represent real people.)



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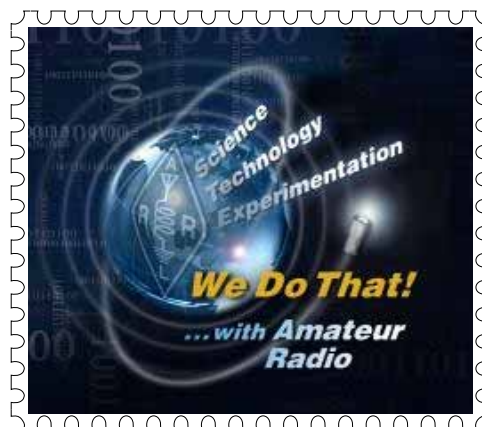
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If that's not almost a perfect picture for an N3SH Field Day QSL card, Ye Editor isn't sure what is! The adorned tower trailer & the Phone tent at Field Day 2009, photo courtesy of and ©Copyright 2009 Ron Telek W3LE



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