

The W.A.COM HAM



October/November 1995 Editor: Kevin Smith

WACOM Assists American Cancer Society's Labor Day Classic 5K Run

Story and pictures by Jim McNutt, NW3X

Amateur radio operators from WACOM again provided communications for this year's annual American Cancer Society's Labor Day Classic 5K run on Monday, September 5th. Over 375 runners and walkers made the trek from Washington Park to Washington High School on Jeffersn Avenue.

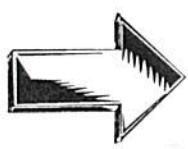


Club hams had a coffee break after the 5K run at the Subway across from Wash Hi. Pictured are First Row: Jim, KA3KSP; Steve, KA3UDR; Bill, W3IBT; and Kevin, N3HKQ. Second Row: Al, N3UTU; Ted, WB3BZK; Frank, KA3UWW, Russ, N3NEL; Walt, N3BKW, and Debbie, KA3YTT. Not pictured are: Joe Musante, WB3GTE, Dave McNutt, KC4EYM and Jim McNutt, NW3X.

A total of 14 hams worked the event. Jim McNutt, NW3X acted as net control for the event. Participating were: Walt, N3BKW; Ted, WB3BZK; Al, N3UTU; Joe, WB3GTE; Kevin, N3HKQ; Steve, KA3UDR; Bill, W3IBT; Russ, N3NEL; Jim, KA3KSP; Dave, KC4EYM; Frank, KA3UWW; Debbie, KA3YTT, and Jack, AA3FN.

Thanks to all those who participated in this year's event.

Bill Hill already practicing for next year!



Speaking Out

by Kevin Smith, N3HKQ
 Newsletter Editor



September means back to school for students, but it also is the beginning of the busy season for WACOM. Assisting the American Cancer Society 5k run begins a series of public service, social, and fundraising activities. After the 5k run WACOM had its annual family picnic.

October brings the Houston Pumpkin Festival Special Event Station and the Boy Scout sponsored "Jamboree on the air" that will have WACOM members

headed by Frank Holden, KA3UWW, provide an opportunity for young Scouts at Camp Annawanna to get on the air with other scouts from all over the country.

I hope nobody needs reminded about the Tri-State Hamfest and Computer Fair that WACOM will have on November 19th. Call Walt Piroth or Joe Stout to find out how you can help. Finally in December we will assist the annual Washington Christmas parade, have

elections for new officers, and finally celebrate the end of another year with with a Christmas dinner.

P3D Launch Set Back

*Space Bulletin 015 ARLS015
 From ARRL Headquarters
 Newington, CT*

The launch of the Phase 3D Amateur Radio satellite has been set back from May 1996 to September, according to the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT). The satellite is manifested on the European Space Agency's Ariane-5 Flight 502. The agency reported that tests on the launcher's cryogenic main stage have been under way in Kourou, French Guyana, and were to have ended shortly, but problems have called for changes that will delay upcoming launches 501 and 502.

AMSAT-North America President Bill Tynan, W3XO, said he was disappointed at the news, but that these things can often be expected in any development program. "Ariane 5 is a very ambitious development program, but one which I am confident will result in great success for ESA--both technically and commercially," Tynan said.

Tynan also said that the Phase 3D team will use the extra time to good advantage to construct an even better and more thoroughly tested spacecraft. A story about the P3D satellite appeared in May 1995 QST.

WACOM Committee Phone Directory

A.R.E.S.	Walt Piroth, N3BKW	746-2327
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Vice President	Walt Piroth, N3BKW	746-2327
Secretary	Ted Lockman, WB3BZK	222-6473
Treasurer	Cheryl McGrevin, N3PYC	225-9545
Education	Jim Burtoft, KC3HW	228-0546
2mtr Net Mgr.	Norm Torisky, N3KLR	745-6154
10mtr Net Mgr.	Joe Musante, WB3GTE	223-0897
Newsletter	Kevin Smith, N3HKQ	258-4153
Repeater	Sam Mayberry, W3CYO	222-0367
VE Testing	???	???

The World with VHF/UHF

by Kenneth T. Frankenbery; AA3GM

VHF/UHF operating. To many radio amateurs that means making a contact on a 2 meter or 70 cm FM repeater. QSOs are usually nice and clear and repeaters can be essential to emergency communications. However, range is mostly limited to the local area. Let me ask a few questions. Are you a no-code technician? Has the pinnacle of your Ham operating been when you made a 2 meter contact on a distant repeater in Ohio? Are you searching for a little something more? If this sounds like you, do not lose hope. VHF/UHF operating can be both exciting and fun!

Did you know that earning a no-code technician license gives you the privilege to operate on 18 different bands? This includes 6 meters, 2 meters, 1.25 meter, 70 cm., 33 cm., 23 cm., and the many microwave bands on FM, Single Sideband, and yes, even CW. Being "stuck" to only the VHF/UHF bands does not condemn you to working only local contacts. Given the right conditions, DX can be worked! It doesn't even take kilowatts of power. A few watts output at the right time can literally work the world! Even though my class license gives me full amateur privileges, I spend much of my operating time on VHF/UHF. I find it very rewarding in making a distant contact on 2 meters or 70 cm. So far, I have made contacts as far as Sweden on 6 meters using 50 watts; San Antonio, Texas on 2 meter SSB using 25 watts; and Boston, Mass. on 432 Mhz CW using 25 watts.

Lets start with what is commonly called "The Magic Band" - six meters. This band (50 - 54 Mhz) is in the transition zone between HF and VHF. When the band is up, it is really hopping! When it is dead, a doornail would look livlier by comparison. The trick is to be there at the right time. When the solar cycle is at its peak, you may be able to work DX almost as well as 10 meters. Even at times of low solar activity, the band can suddenly come to life from Sporadic-E (an ionized cloud of gas in the E-layer of the ionosphere). Since the spring of 1994 I have worked 10 DX countries and 195 grid-squares (175 confirmed) on SSB and CW, all on Sporadic-E propagation.

What is a grid-square? A grid-square is a 2 longitude by 10 latitude area rectangle. There are 32,400 grids that segment the globe. VHF/UHF operators use them to locate each other and collect them with QSL cards. The ARRL sponsors an award (VUCC) for obtaining confirmation on 100 grids for 6 meters (as well as 2 meters). For most of Washington County the grid-square is EN-90. My grid from my location near Bradford, PA is the relatively rare FN-01.

Overall, 6 meters is my favorite band. During the 1994 Field Day, I worked stations in Mexico and California using 50 watts and a 6 meter dipole strapped to the side of a tent! That was Sporadic-E for you. For more information on this band, a book is available for \$12.00 entitled "Six Meters A Guide to the Magic Band" by Ken Neubeck WB2AMU.

Two meters, by far the most popular VHF band, is a great one for making surprisingly distant contacts. Though most amateurs are only familiar with FM repeaters, SSB and CW are also popular and can go considerable distances. As of this writing, I have confirmed contacts with 17 states and over 55 grid squares. Once in a while, the MUF from Sporadic-E will climb high enough to reach 2 meters. The result is contacts from Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. As you can see, being a technician does not mean that you are stuck with only local contacts.

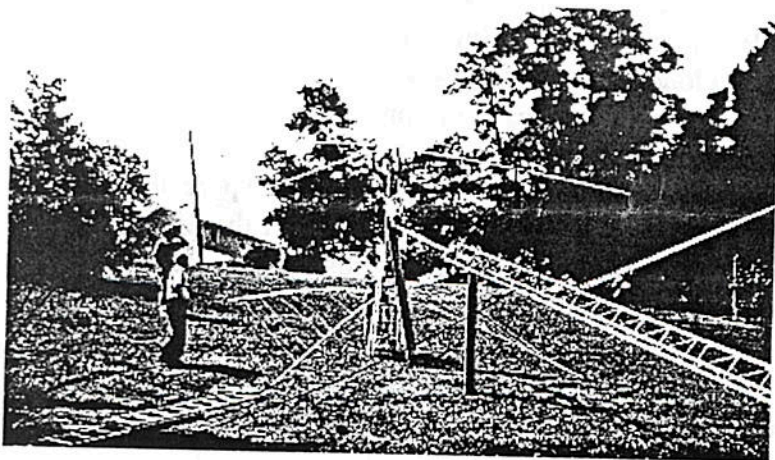
One of the best methods in obtaining new grid-squares and states is to get involved in contests. VHF/UHF contests offer a huge opportunity in working new people. The ARRE sponsors three VHF contests in June, September, and January, as well as one UHF contest in August. These contests operate in all modes - FM, SSB, and CW. Western Pennsylvania has a very poor showing in the amount of amateurs that participate in these contests. You can make a difference.

I could go on for quite sometime on the fun and challenges you could have with VHF/UHF but space will not allow. However, I hope I may have shed a bit of light on the enjoyment you can have on the high frequency bands. Does it cost money to get the equipment? You bet! However, most rigs are somewhat modestly priced. The sky or your wallet I should say is the limit. Remember, there are 18 bands available to you. Take the initiative and operate! But most of all, have FUN!

Newest Cubical Quad Up and Operating!

Dave DeMotte begins stringing his cubical quad on the ground.

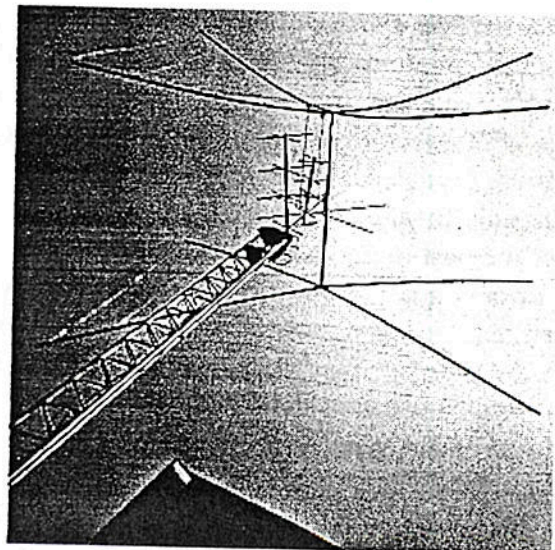
(Real men string it in the air Dave.)



Britt deMotte, Ted Lockman, and John Moninger lend a hand and all important experience in tower raising.

The end result is another cubical quad gracing the skies of Washington County.

Dave can't wait for the next sunspot cycle.



Amateur Radio Related Home Pages on the World Wide Web

The World Wide Web on the internet grows bigger with every day that passes. It took no time at all for amateur radio related home pages to show up. The following are just a few that are ready for you to visit:

ARRL

<http://www.arrl.org/>

AMSAT

<http://www.amsat.org>

SpaceNews

<http://www.njin.net:80/~magliaco/kd2bd@amsat.org>

Weather Channel

<http://www.infi.net/weather/index.html>

ICOM

<http://www.icomamerica.com>

Timewave Technology Inc.

<http://www.timewave.com>

Pacific-Sierra Research Corporation

(propagation prediction software)

<http://www.psrv.com/hfx/>

Oklahoma Comm Center

<http://www.puka.com.okcomm>

Amateur Electronic Supply

<http://www.execpc.com/~aesham>

QRZ Ham Radio

<http://www.qrz.com>

NASA Space Shuttle

<http://www.shuttle.nasa.gov>

8th Annual

TRI-STATE Hamfest & Computer Fair

Sunday

November 19, 1995

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

CHARTIERS-HOUSTON HIGH SCHOOL

Admission \$2.00

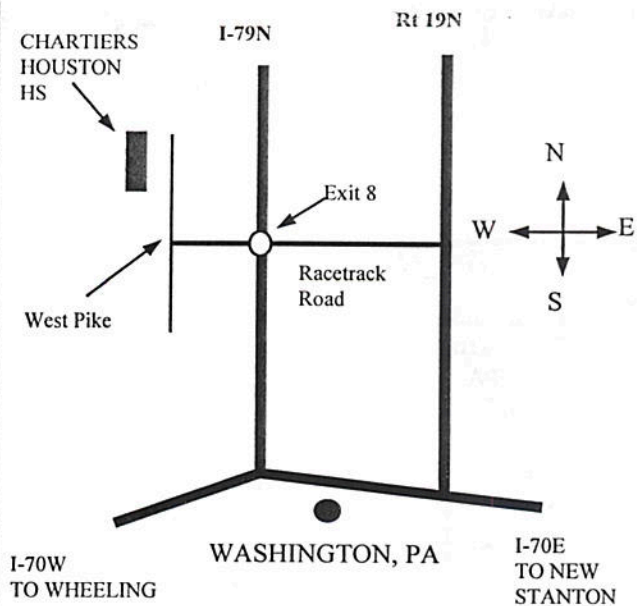
(XYL's and children under 12 admitted free)

Main Prize Tickets

\$2 each, 3 for \$5, 7 for \$10

Admission includes hourly door prize drawings

Winners for main Prizes need NOT be present



FOR INFORMATION OR VENDOR REGISTRATION

CONTACT:

*Ted Lockman	412-222-6473
* Russ Burhenn	412-222-4037
*FAX	412-258-8342
* Email	jstout@sgi.net



November 1995





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																										
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Secretary: Ted Lockman, WB3BZK

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2 Meter Net
145.49MHz
8:30 PM Local Time

- Oct 3 N3KLR
- Oct 10 W3IBT
- Oct 17 N3KLR
- Oct 24 KA3KSP
- Oct 31 N3KLR

- Nov 7 W3IBT
- Nov 14 N3KLR
- Nov 21 KA3KSP
- Nov 28 N3KLR

10 Meter Net
28.330 MHz
9:00 PM Local Time

- Oct 3 W3IBT
- Oct 10 WB3GTE
- Oct 17 KA3VOM
- Oct 24 KD3VX
- Oct 31 WB3GTE

- Nov 7 KA3VOM
- Nov 14 WB3GTE
- Nov 21 KD3VX
- Nov 28 W3IBT

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