



The WACOM HAM



December 1996

Editor: Kevin Smith

Washington, PA

9th Annual Tri-State Hamfest and Computer Fair in the History Books

The crowds were light again this year, however the enthusiasm remained high. The main gym pictured at right once again was the main focus of the day.

Stan Cole, V.E. Team Leader, reported that the V.E. exams at the Hamfest proceeded without a problem. Thirteen people registered to take 29 exams. Five individuals earned a license or upgraded. The following V.E.'s participated in the session: AD3T, W3NUS, KA3KSP, AA3JK, KB3AAG, WA3VKC, KE3OL, N3RDV, NP2JF, AND N3TIR.



Pictured at left, is Bill Edgar, N3LLR, Western PA Section Manager presenting a plaque to Eugene "Buck" Rupert, W3KH who authored the article "The W3KH Quadrifilar Helix Antenna" in the August 1996 QST.

The plaque is a blow-up up the cover to the August 1996 issue of QST. Buck's article can be found on page 30. Buck was a vendor in the main gym where he was selling kits of the antenna featured in the QST article.

A meeting of hamfest minds is pictured at right. This year's hamfest chairman Steve Elliott, KA3UDR is helping last year's chairman, Walt Piroth, N3BKW sell admission tickets.

It was overheard that Steve wanted to know why Walt didn't tell him everything about being chairman. Congratulations Steve on a fine effort of organizing the hamfest.

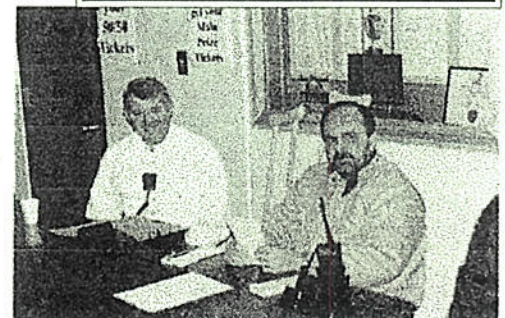
Tri-State Hamfest Summary

Expenses:

Promotion	\$ 410.51
School rental	\$1145.00
Prizes	\$1138.15
Tickets	\$ 72.35
Tables	\$1009.39
Food	\$ 180.60
Total	\$3956.00

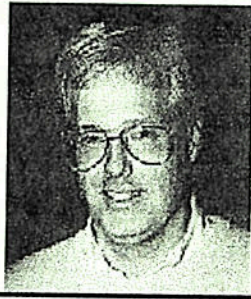
Income:

Vendors	\$1208.00
Admission	\$1964.00
Prize tickets	\$ 586.00
50/50 Raffle	\$ 525.00
Food	\$ 390.00
Total	\$4200.50



Speaking Out

by Kevin Smith, N3HKQ
Newsletter Editor



Another year is finishing up for WACOM and one thing I have noticed is that a lot of the faces I have grown used to seeing at WACOM activities were missing this year. Some of the missing faces are former members. I know they are former members because I have dropped them from the newsletter mailing list due to not renewing their membership. I also think there is as much activity on the local repeaters. In my case, my daily commuting schedule has changed a little especially in the morning, but sometimes I don't turn the radio on either.

Interests and priorities change cer-

tainly, but it would be a shame if Washington County amateurs are growing bored with WACOM. I hope we can determine if WACOM is getting a little stale in member's minds and fix the problem(s).

There are two areas that WACOM can mobilize itself to take on, that can keep members interested. One is getting young people interested in getting licensed. Oddly enough we can utilize the internet to do it. Many hams think that the internet spells doom for amateur radio, but it doesn't have to. Packet gateways onto the internet are possible and not beyond WACOM's

capability. Higher speeds are required to be sure, but its definitely possible. Once something like that is in place, local schools can be approached where we can demonstrate the internet gateway and promote our winter Technician classes.

The second area WACOM needs to get involved with more is doing what we can to utilize the UHF and microwave bands. You read my thoughts on this subject before but it bears repeating. If the US amateurs don't start utilizing these higher frequency bands more we will loose them. The US 104th Congress finished its term by legislating away portions of the 2400 Mhz band from the amateur service to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. That's on top of the problems we might have with the "little LEO" satellite service wanting our 2 meter and 70 cm bands.

Utilization the se bands begins at the local level. If more clubs take it upon themselves to get on these bands then the problem becomes history.

What can WACOM do now? First we need to get over the hurdle that WACOM is going to have to spend its own money. If we aren't willing to do that, then forget the whole thing. Personally I can't think of a nything better to spend WACOM's resources on. Its a better investment for the club than anything else. Second, we need to educate ourselves and investigate how we might cooperate with other western Pennsylvania efforts to establish internet gateways and utilize the higher frequency bands.

Maybe we will find that we have to pioneer getting on these bands. What a thought it is that WACOM would have to strike out on its own into uncharted territory. Sounds like fun to me. Lets talk about this at the club meeting and better yet lets act for a change. Let's make a difference.

WACOM Committee Phone Directory

A.R.E.S.	Walt Piroth, N3BKW	746-2327
RACES	Bob Ketzell, KB3IN	228-0425
EMA	Dave Smith, N3LIK	225-0346
President	Bob Ketzell, KB3IN	228-0425
Vice President	Joe Musante, WB3GTE	223-0897
Secretary	Jarred Stanko, N3TKR	746-2156
Treasurer	Cheryl McGrevin, N3PYC	225-9545
Education	Jim Burtoft, KC3HW	228-0546
2mtr Net Mgr.	Dave DeMotte, N3IDH	228-8178
10mtr Net Mgr.	Joe Musante, WB3GTE	223-0897
Newsletter	Kevin Smith, N3HKQ	258-4153
Repeater	Sam Mayberry, W3CYO	222-0367
VE Testing	Stan Cole III, NX3P	223-0104

A TERMINAL CASE OF HAM

by Kenneth T. Frankenberg, AA3GM

"I'm sorry son ... but I'm afraid you have a terminal case of....of....HAM." I could see the look of grim seriousness on the doctor's face and the frustration of not being able to do anything about it. There is no known cure to this relatively rare but merciless disease. "My gosh", I thought to myself, "is it that bad?" I can't say I was overly surprised though. I knew I had the dreaded symptoms but chose to ignore what was staring me in the face, a terminal case of HAM, medically known as *Cranial Amateuradiosclerosis*. A most hideous affliction that robs people of rational thinking inside and outside the field of amateur radio. Many end up horribly in debt with the purchase of every known transceiver, antenna, amplifier, software, hardware, cable, connector, gadget, gizmo, bell & whistle produced by the many makers of amateur radio equipment. The disease also drastically affects the senses; leaving the poor victim only able to see, hear, feel, smell, and even think in the radio wave spectrum! Luckily, on the financial symptoms, my disease is still in the relatively early stages and so far I have been able to refrain from writing the book, *Mr. Visa Cleans Out Amateur Electronic Supply!* How long can I hold on though?

I left the doctor's office in somewhat of a daze and went back home. Life seemed to have a new meaning after the gut-wrenching news. I wearily sat down in my Ham shack chair, the familiar sounds of CW in the background, and my mind drifted back a few years where it all started and when I experienced the first symptom.....

"Come on Ken!" my brother David (KD3RZ) said, "Go and get your Ham license - you'll really love it!"

"All right, all right! I'll get it - just quit pushing me! This stuff isn't easy and I don't know squat about electronics!" I replied.

My brother spent a good deal of time helping me as I learned radio and electronic theory and Morse code in the winter of 1993. I took my Novice and Technician Class tests together with the 5 WPM code at the end of February and passed it easily. Then the bug bit, or should I say mauled me! I then immediately began to study for the General and Advanced Class tests and passed both a month later with the 13 WPM code. My brother looked at me after I returned joyously from the WACOM VE test session on the 23rd of March with concern.....he saw the first symptom. Upon receiving my first license (N3OVA and later KE3JF) I listened diligently to the Ham radio and warily began making some contacts. As my confidence built, I operated more and more - especially on CW. However, my time was taken from doing something else - studying for my Extra Class license. I listened to CW at 25-30 WPM until my brain went into meltdown but still I pushed on. The strain I put myself through lowered all of my immunities and I was attacked viciously by the dreaded HAM virus. On 19 September 1993, I took and passed my Extra Class test, eventually receiving my current call, AA3GM. Little did I know that I was at the point of no return.

By January 1994, I entered my first ARRL contest and it was all down hill from then. My first score was so dismal that I *had* to get some new VHF equipment, antennas, and later a QRP radio. I then entered the ARRL DX Contest on CW, the June VHF Contest followed by SMIRK, IARU, UHF, QRP-ARCI, and a bunch of other alphabet soups! I went after VHF grid-squares like a cat goes after a mouse and began to think that in buying a Yaesu FT-736R VHF/UHF transceiver (with 222 and 1296 MHz of course) for nearly \$3000.00 - I was getting a good deal!

Even when away from the shack I started experiencing the world in a whole new way. I would go to work out in the woods (I'm employed with the Allegheny National Forest) listening to the birds singing sweetly in CW. I told myself the other day, "Ken, you've *got* to get away from the shack!" So I went to a bar and a real nice looking woman wearing a *Rolling Stones* T-shirt asked me what bands I liked - I told her 6 and 20-meters. I still can't figure out why she looked at me so funny! Last week I went through the drive-through at Burger King and gave the guy an RS(T) on his outdoor intercom. He also had a look of puzzlement as I drove away, my whip antennas scraping the overhang. And finally, when I talked to people in person, I would wait for a courtesy tone before I replied.

Even a lengthy break from amateur radio doesn't help. A couple of months ago I was in Oregon for a three week long fire-fighting detail. I had no radios whatsoever. NONE! However, I could see the clear blue sky - was there tropo activity going on? Is that a REAL sunspot I see on the sun? The MUF must be up!! I can *feel* the radio waves pass right through my body! I yelled out, "The bands are opening! The bands are opening!" I immediately grabbed a charred stick and began to send CW on a rock. The fire-fighters next to me thought I had breathed in way too much smoke!

After arriving back home I hugged my radios telling them I would never leave them alone again. It was about that time that I realized I was a *very* sick man. And so I went to the doctor who gave me the news I had already known. *Cranial Amateuradiosclerosis* is a disease that, while not physically deadly, you only wish it was. You lose your money, family, and eventually your mind. What am I to do? I guess I'll blame my brother for getting me into this in the first place! However, I guess the buck stops here (or in my case leaves). Its a disease I'll just have to live with. Say..... is that a 20-meter opening I feel?

December Western Pennsylvania VE Test Opportunities

(A) = ARRL/VEC, (L) = LAUREL/VEC, (M) = MOUNTAIN/VEC,
(5) = W5YI/VEC, *P* = Pre-registration requested, *N* = No walk-ins

Date(s)	Location	Time	Club	Contact	Telephone
1	Uniontown	1 PM	Uniontown ARC	John Cermak	412-246-2870 (A)
7	Erie	8 AM	RA of Erie	Norma Vanderhoff	814-665-9124 (A)
7	New Eagle		MARC	William Cioccio	412-751-4373 (5)
7	Pittsburgh	9 AM	Grtr Pgh VHF	Jim Cottrill	412-563-2379 (A)
12	Ambridge	6:15 PM	Triple A ARA	Mike Emerling	412-846-2667 (5)
14	McKeesport	9 AM	Two Rivers ARC	Chuck Gessner	412-672-0915 *P*
14	N. Huntington			Ricardo Morales	412-483-7135 (5)
14	New Castle	2 PM.	Penn-Ohio DX Soc.	Gary Pirkkala	412-667-1166 *N* (A)
16	Oakdale	7 PM.	Steel City ARC.	Mark Strayer	412-833-6049 (A)
19	New Castle.		ARL of Lawrence Co	Fred Van Natten	412-667-9451 (5)
21	Elco	6 PM.	Elco ARS	Lou Furlong	412-938-8125 *N* (5)
21	Erie	12:30 PM	Gannon WirelessSoc.	John Duda	814-734-4260 (A)

The Foundation For Amateur Radio, Inc.

THE FOUNDATION FOR AMATEUR RADIO, INC., a non-profit organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C., plans to administer sixty (60) scholarships for the academic year 1997 - 1998 to assist licensed Radio Amateurs. The Foundation, composed of over seventy-five local area Amateur Radio Clubs, fully funds five of these scholarships with the income from grants and its annual Hamfest. The remaining **fifty-five (55)** are administered by the Foundation without cost to the various donors.

Licensed Radio Amateurs may compete for these awards if they plan to pursue a full-time course of studies beyond high school and are enrolled in or have been accepted for enrollment at an accredited university, college or technical school. The awards range from \$500 to \$2500 with preference given in some cases to residents of specified geographical areas or the pursuit of certain study programs. Clubs, especially those in **Delaware, Florida, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin**, are encouraged to announce these opportunities at their meetings, in their club newsletters, during training classes, on their nets and on their world wide web home pages.

Additional information and an application form may be requested by letter or QSL card, postmarked prior to April 30, 1997 from:

FAR Scholarships
6903 Rhode Island Avenue
College Park, MD 20740

The Foundation for Amateur Radio, incorporated in the District of Columbia, is an exempt organization under Section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. It is devoted exclusively to promoting the interests of Amateur Radio and those scientific, literary and /educational pursuits that advance the purposes of the Amateur Radio Service.

Historic Meeting Held for Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS)

AMSAT NEWS SERVICE BULLETIN 330.01 FROM AMSAT HQ

On November 4-5 an international conference was held at the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, to map out plans for a permanent amateur radio station on the International Space Station. Delegates from eight member nations (Russia, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Canada, France and the United States) attended this meeting. From the United States, members of the SAREX working group, officials from NASA, U.S. representatives from the MIR Amateur Radio Experiment and members from the Johnson Space Center Amateur Radio Club attended the meetings.

This historic meeting laid a firm foundation for the future of crew-tended Amateur Radio in space. The international delegates jointly developed a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote the development of Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS). The primary goals of the ARISS international group is to provide for the planning, coordination and performance of amateur radio projects on the Space Station. This group will coordinate activities on Space Station similar to how the SAREX Working Group currently coordinates amateur radio activities on the Space Shuttle.

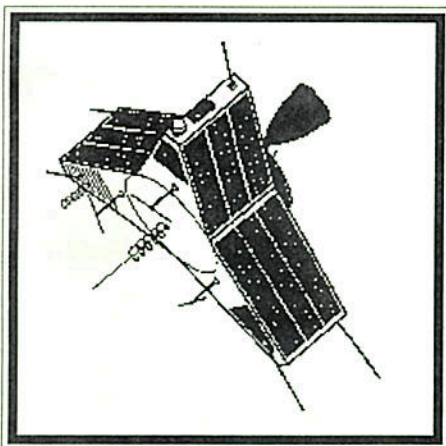
The Memorandum of Understanding is to be reviewed by the AMSAT and IARU organization in each of the eight countries for review and approval. In the United States, this includes AMSAT-NA and the ARRL. On November 11 at the Board of Directors meeting in Tucson, the AMSAT-NA Board unanimously approved the Memorandum of Understanding. Once a final copy is generated, the AMSAT-NA President (Bill Tynan) has been given authority by the board to sign the MOU. This Memorandum, once signed, will solidify amateur radio's permanent presence in crew-tended space activities.

On behalf of AMSAT-NA, Frank Bauer, KA3HDO, the V.P. for Manned Space, wishes to extend his heartiest of congratulations to the ARISS international team for a job well done! We look forward to a truly cooperative international venture on the International Space Station. [Submitted by Frank H. Bauer, KA3HDO, AMSAT V.P. for Manned Space Programs.]

Oscar-13's Final Orbits

Notes prepared by James R. Miller, G3RUH

1996 Nov 24 [Sun] 1545 utc

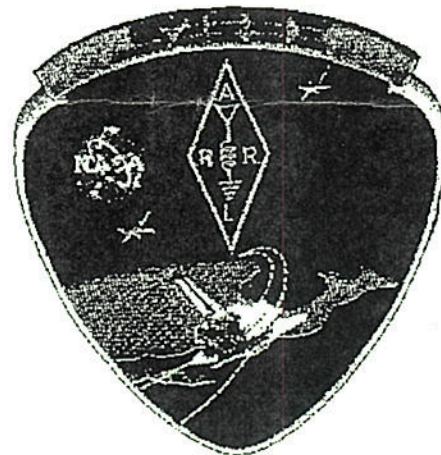


On perigee 6478/79, at around 1996 Nov 23 [Sat] 1140 utc Oscar-13's solar panel #3 ceased to function due to excessive heating. On perigee 6479/80 at around 1996 Nov 23 [Sat] 2009:30 utc panels #1,2,4,6 also stopped working, leaving only panel #5. The transponders were switched off by Graham VK5AGR immediately after his AOS at 1996 Nov 23 [Sat] 2315 utc, orbit 6480 MA 99. Orbit 6480 continued on telemetry beacon only.

AO-13 survived perigee 6481, 1996 Nov 24 [Sun] 0432 utc, perigee altitude 107 km, monitored by insomniacs in Europe. The battery voltage was stable at 11.8 volts, much lower than the normal 14.5v. The on-board computer and related systems are regulated to 10.0v. VK5AGR monitored the remainder of orbit 6481, but one solar panel proved insufficient to sustain a basic system, and the beacon stopped transmitting at 1996 Nov 24 [Sun] 0538:16 utc, orbit 6481, MA 34. Reset commands, which would have left an unmodulated carrier, had no effect.

On orbit 6482 in Europe, 1996 Nov 24 [Sun] 1300 utc onwards, neither of the beacons was detected, and the Reset command was again ineffective. The command stations conclude that Oscar-13 is now defunct. Re-entry is predicted for 1996 Dec 05/06 approximately, though experience with final orbits of decaying satellites indicates an enormous degree of uncertainty in these matters.

The Oscar-13 command stations are/were: Peter DB2OS, Graham VK5AGR, Ian ZL1AOX, James G3RUH, and Stacey W4SM.



For Sale
IC-27A
2 meter mobile
w/external speaker
& lip antenna mount
20 watts
\$150
call 258-4153
after 6:00 PM

