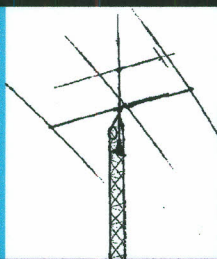


# The AARC Beacon



*Amateur Radio News For  
Charlottesville, VA and  
surrounding counties*

Volume 2003, No. 10

~~~~~

October 2003

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## Meeting Notice

The next regular AARC meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 14 at 7:30 PM** at the **UVA Astronomy Building**. The program will be a presentation by John, K4CQY on **"How to Work DXCC Without Really Trying"**. This should be a very interesting topic!

See you there!!

## The President Speaks

Steve, KF4ZGD

Well folks, its October. For those of you VHF/UHF buffs out there, this means enhanced conditions. For the HF'ers, especially the low-band aficionados, you're looking at lower noise levels, and maybe even some good 80 and 160 meter conditions. Yes, winter is fast approaching.

I know most of us aren't quite ready for that white fluffy stuff, but it's coming before long, and now is a great time to check over your go-kit and make sure your emergency setup is up to snuff. In light of recent events I probably don't even need to say this, but as hams we're called on to be prepared to respond, and we all need to be ready to go when called on. Recently during Isabel, many club members assisted the local emergency services maintain essential communication links throughout the area when power and phone service went out. This was a great effort, and was greatly appreciated by the agencies we served.

Though there were many facets to our operation, there is one that I'd like to spend a few moments discussing. Early Friday morning, I was contacted by the amateur operator at the Red Cross Headquarters locally, and he asked if I could run a damage assessment net for a while on a local repeater. The purpose would be to enable hams to pass along damage reports as they saw them, and thus assist the Red Cross in locating problems. Of course I said yes, and over the course of the morning we passed along over thirty damage reports. At least as many stations participated, and we received reports from at least five different counties. The Red Cross



folks were delighted to have our help, and were very appreciative. As they received reports, they would direct their damage assessment teams to the location to assess the damage and fill out reports. However, there was one problem. They only had ten people (five teams) to cover five counties in one day. Throughout the morning they were begging for more volunteers to help out. In the course of things, the point was brought up that if hams were trained in this, they could pass along reports via radio as they saw them, thus eliminating the need to send damage assessment teams out to that location.

As I sat there thinking that morning, my mind wandered back to several years ago when the club decided not to pursue damage assessment training. Now, when the need arose, we were very limited in what we could do to help them out. If we had gone ahead with an hour-long class then, we could be so much more helpful to them when they needed it badly now. I strongly believe this is something we should pursue in the future. If we do have the Red Cross give us such training, I would encourage everyone to participate. It would be strictly voluntary, and since damage assessment is done after the fact, it would not interfere with our emergency communications duties. So, give it some thought, and please let me know if you're interested!

On another note, it sure is nice to have power back after six days without. It really makes generators and batteries worthwhile! I had a good laugh two days after Isabel passed through when I heard two local hams talking on 76, and one mentioned how the lack of power often means the lack of a good shower. The other responded by saying that yes, it's a good thing that odor isn't transmitted over radio. Hopefully everybody has their power back now, because we're having a club meeting October 14...nah, I'm just kidding on that one!

Seriously, though, the next club meeting is currently about two weeks away on Tuesday, October 14. The topic is will be a presentation by John, K4CQY on **"How to Work DXCC Without Really Trying"**. Everybody be sure and make it out! So, until then, 73!

73 -- Steve, KF4ZGD

## Veep Peeps

Pete, W4PRT

Greetings! I hope that everyone weathered the hurricane with little or no inconvenience. Hopefully by now most if not all folks have their power back and are starting to get things back to normal.

We lost power, but it was only for 16 hours or so. What hurt worse was that my Carolina Windom snapped rather early in the storm Thursday afternoon. After the storm, we had a few trees down across the beginning of the driveway, but

the VDOT crew soon had them pushed aside and chopped up. By the following Wednesday, I had the replacement antenna wire from Radio Works and had my Carolina Windom back in the air.

Prior to the hurricane, I was in the process of re-working the shack. Originally, I didn't want to have a computer there. This was due to the fact that I spend my working hours working with computers and didn't want the computer to take away from the time that I wanted to use the radio. I was also looking for a good way to share the Internet connection that we have here at the house. To make a long story short, I found a way to share the Satellite connection between the four computers and moved the computer into the shack. At first, I thought I would just use it for e-mail and surfing the web with all the Amateur Radio web pages that I read all the time. This suited me fine for the short term. I was thinking about hooking up the Kenwood rig that I got at the 2nd Annual AARC Ham/Swapfest Picnic Extravaganza and how I would interface it with the computer and do some packet and access a DX cluster nearby. But, I hadn't gotten all of that going yet. It was still in the planning stages. I didn't really want to go too gung-ho, remember, we're supposed to do "radio" in the shack, not computers.

Then the inevitable happened. I went over to Jon Gefaell's place one day and he said, "Hey, I got something that I need to show ya that will blow your mind. He then proceeded to show me a suite of software called **DXLabs**. I had heard about this software, but didn't really give it much attention at the time. Jon showed me the "spot collector" and how the DX spots were just rolling in, the "commander" that controlled the radio when you double click on a "spot". How the "spot" is shown on a world map that you can zoom in and out and it shows the DX stations call, frequency and mode and the time that he was activated in the spot collector. Pathfinder looks up the stations call information and makes it readily available for you. There is also a propagation program and a very nice logging program also.

He almost went through the demo too fast. My head was reeling. I asked him, "How much did all that cost you?" "It's free" he said. I couldn't believe it. I asked him if it supported my Ten-Tec Jupiter. We looked and it appeared that it did not. He said "Hang on, I'll write to the guy that writes the software and ask him. He should let you know pretty soon via e-mail."

I'm accustomed to people writing free software, but I have never seen anything like this. It all seemed to work so flawlessly. Well, when I got home that evening, the author of the software had written me and said that it didn't support my radio at the moment, but, if I wanted to test some software and give him feed back, he would add support for it. I was simply amazed. The thing that took the longest was me getting the antenna back up in the air. The software was waiting on me.



I have the software installed and mostly configured. It's going to take a while to get comfortable with all the power that it gives you, but I'll get the hang of it and start working those DX stations that are out there.

I'm so impressed by this software and what it can do for you that I have asked Jon to give a presentation on this software and his experiences working DX stations in the short time that he has gotten his General ticket.

An outline of his presentation is as follows:

#### **Around The World on 90 Days**

This talk by Jon Gefaell K4CQY will explore Jon's experiences having upgraded after 12 years to a General Class license. Since starting his HF operations during the ARRL Field Day, Jon has managed to work 100(+) DXCC entities in 90 days with 100W and a dipole. You can do it too. Along the way he's learned a lot about how to automate a station on a budget, operate exciting digital modes like PSK and SSTV and learn the lay of the bands. Learn about how you can have more fun with Amateur Radio by attending this talk which we hope will be the first of many contributions from club members sharing their experiences and skills with their stations and operations.

#### **The Presentation**

- DXLabs Suite of software, FREE and perhaps the best! (Free CDRoms with this and other great software and information will be available during the meeting!)
- How to interface your rig for computer control for <\$50!
- Callbook Databases, why they're so important and useful. Comparison of different offerings. Buckmaster, QRZ, Flying Horse, etc...
- How to Interface your Rig for Sound Card Operations!
- Learn How to find and work DX from a Rank Amateur!
- HF Nets, Ragchews, Service and DX
- Working DX. The Hunt, the Pileup, the QSL
- Contests. For Fun or Fame? Ham Sports!
- WA4TFZ Radio Racing Team? Help us prepare for and operate the CQ WW DX Contest!

We hope you will all come and bring your friends who might be interested in Amateur Radio. We are attempting to line up a short video from a neighboring DX club which will show the excitement of RadioSport. Jon has agreed to work with club members to assist in setting up their stations for rig control, software automation and digital sound card modes. He will also provide a monthly article for the Beacon. Your

participation, comments and suggestions are greatly appreciated!

73, Pete

## **Proposed Slate of Officers 2004**

Rick, KO4WQ

|                |                |        |
|----------------|----------------|--------|
| President      | Pete Thorsen   | W4PRT  |
| Vice President | John Gefaell   | K4CQY  |
| Treasurer      | Ralph Traylor  | K4CFE  |
| Secretary      | Marty Mait     | AG4DN  |
| Director 1     | Bob Pattison   | K4DU   |
| Director 2     | Steve Clements | KD4MBX |
| Director 3     | Ben Mills      | KG4QVP |
| Director 4     | Jill Anderson  | KG4TFS |
| Director 5     | Howard Gay     | KG4TWQ |

Of course, the floor will be open to other nominations from the membership, but this is the slate from the nominating committee.

## **Club Business**

#### **AARC Board Minutes September 9, 2003**

Board Members Present: Steve KF4ZGD, Pete W4PRT, Marty AG4DN, Steve KD4HBX. All other members of the Board were absent. It was noted that there was no quorum present. No decisions were made or votes taken.

Steve KF4ZGD opened the informal session of the Board at 6:35 PM.

**Finance:** Steve presented the financial report for Ralph. As of 31 August 2003, total Revenues were \$2722.51. Total Expenses were \$1179.29. Excess Revenues were \$1543.22. Balances committed to the Repeater Fund \$1082.68, Packet Fund \$78.51 and AARC Fund \$4261.53, Total Balances \$5422.72. (Complete report available upon request.)

Insurance Billing for an additional \$182.00 from Cabell Insurance Associates was received and presented by Marty. Both Marty and Pete believed an explanation for this bill should be provided. Marty indicated he would call the insurer and request an explanation prior to payment being made.

**Programs:** Pete indicated that he had not finalized the program for next month. Marty noted that the Fluvanna County Communications Officer had recently set up a new



system for the county. He might be willing to make a presentation. Pete said he would follow up.

Pete indicated that ARRL had tabulated the Field Day results and he would present them, hopefully if received, at the next meeting.

**Education:** Steve noted that no students had shown up for the Tech or General classes last week. It is believed that the problem was communication with those who indicated a desire to attend classes. Follow up action would be taken.

**Activities:** Steve KD4HBX raised the issue of continuing refreshments for the general membership meeting. The responsibility currently is being shared by Steve and Pete. It can become a burden at times. A poll of the membership will be taken at the general meeting to gauge their feelings and willingness to assist.

Steve presented a bill for the expenditures made for the picnic. The total was \$171.12 well within the approved amount. (See detailed bill upon request.) Pete and the members of the board thanked Steve for an excellent job.

Steve KF4ZGD noted that the club participation in the Albemarle County Fair was a great success and we should continue participation. This recommendation was made regardless of the severe storm that leveled the tent. There was also discussion of various enhancements to the club display for 2004.

**New Items:**

Marty presented an E-mail from ARRL requesting financial support for their campaign to defeat "Broadband over Power Lines." This threat is considered devastating to Amateur Radio. Since the Board could not take action it was decided to bring the matter to the general meeting and request the AARC contribute \$100 to the ARRL Defense Fund.

Steve KF4ZGD noted that there is a requirement to put together a nominating committee for club officers at this month's general meeting. Various names were noted and the following will be presented to the membership for approval: Rick-Chairman, Pete, Marty, Ernie and Bob.

The informal session of the Board closed 7:10 PM.

*Submitted by Marty AG4DN, Secy.*

**Regular Meeting September 9, 2003**

Steve KF4ZGD opened the meeting at 7:38 PM.

Following the introduction of members and guests, Officer Karla Bower, Community Relations Coordinator for the Albemarle County Police Department, accompanied by her supervisor Lt. Newton, made a presentation on the Mobile Watch Program in the county. She presented the essentials of the program whereby private citizens, companies or organizations are trained to keep their eyes and ears open to strange and unusual activity on the streets, their postal routes, while checking telephone lines, etc. She showed a

beacon light sold by the police department, the Senior Center and JABA at a price of \$5.95. When turned on, the light will continuously flash attracting attention in emergency situations. She distributed a list of Emergency Preparedness items and a booklet used for training classes in "Mobile Watch." Those interested in training for themselves or organization may contact her at 434-972-4079 or E-mail -- [bowerk@albemarle.org](mailto:bowerk@albemarle.org). The presentation was very well received by the membership as indicated by the number of questions asked.

**Finance:** Steve KG4ZGD reported for Ralph. See Board Minutes for details.

**Programs:** Pete indicated he was coming to closure on the presentation for the October meeting. He also informed the membership that Field Day statistics were available from ARRL and he would have them for the next meeting.

**Education:** It was noted that no students had attended last week's Tech or General classes. Classes will be held again this week.

**Technical:** Dave K4DND announced that the tone board for the 76 repeater had been received. As soon as he has an opportunity it will be installed.

**Refreshments:** Steve KD4HBX reported on the costs of the annual picnic in August. (See Board Minutes). He received a round of applause in appreciation for the fine job he completed for this event.

**Membership:** Ben announced that he was reworking the club membership application for next year. The new application would be much more useful. He asked if any member wanted to add his name to the list for mail out of hard copy of the Beacon. None present requested hard copy.

**Club Business:** Marty called for approval of the July 2003 Minutes. A motion was made, second and approved with no discussion by the membership. He then called for the approval for two new members, Brian C. O'Rourke KC5BGQ, Tech and Jill R. Anderson KG4TFS, Tech. A motion was made for approval of the new members, second and approved with no discussion. The next item of business was a request from ARRL for funds to support their effort to stop the move by certain elements of the business community to have "Broadband over Power Lines" (BPL). A recommendation for a \$100 contribution was made by the Board. A motion was made, second and approved without discussion. Copy of ARRL E-mail is available upon request.

Pete noted for the membership that he should have word by the next meeting on the cost, type, etc., of new club jackets.

Steve asked if of the membership desired additional "power poles?" He received an affirmative response and will follow up.



**New Business:**

Steve noted that the By-laws called for the establishment of a nominating committee at the September club meeting. He presented the following committee for membership approval: Rick, Chairman; Ernie; Pete; Marty; Bob. A motion was made for approval, second and approved without comment. A slate will be presented at the October meeting with elections for the 2004 officers at the November meeting.

Steve indicated that Hein had donated an HF vertical antenna for raffle at this meeting. A raffle was held; \$62 was collected and contributed to the club treasury. Ben won the raffle.

With no further business Steve called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made, second and approved without comment at 8:35 PM.

*Submitted by Marty Mait AG4DN, Secy.*

**Hams and Hurricanes**

*Tnx Ernie W2EIU*

Hurricane Isabel has come and gone and is definitely unlamented and not forgotten.

During Isabel a total of at least 17 hams did voluntary service for the community. Some worked at the Emergency Operations Center while others worked at the various shelters and at the Red Cross providing much needed communications.

Emergency Services Coordinator, Kaye Harden - KE4UKW - said "We couldn't have done it without them". APD Lt. Earl Newton agreed.

Many thanks and kudos to: K4DND, N4FWA, W2EIU, KA4JJD, KF4UCI, KG4QVP, K4EBL, KE4NOR, AG4DN, KE4ZNO, W2PVY, KG4NGV, N3DFS, KG4SYS and KG4ZGD.

If any ham was left out, my apologies - it was unintentional.

**Battery Support Under Unexpected Demands**

*Joe W2PVY*

Over the past few years members of our club have become interested in the permanent battery operation of their stations. I think two things brought this about. The first is the sudden availability of many inexpensive, surplus, high-powered gel cells. The second was the introduction of the Anderson Power Pole and the Rig Runner--the 12-volt version of the AC power strip.

At this same time many found that Walmart offered a small, affordable 1.5-amp charger which was well conceived in that it cut off when the battery under charged was at its correct voltage and again began to be recharged as the battery fell below some predetermined lower limit.

When the equipment powered by the gel cells is intermittent in nature, this little charger has time to replenish the battery even though normal operation may have been such that more power was drained than was returned. I found that an over-night recharge was usually more than enough.

I have run my monitor receiver, my Kenwood TS-570 and my Kenwood 700 at the same time with no problems.

The powers that be at the Old Dominion Emergency net told me that my power system would likely be capable of about 16 hours of reliable service if my station was used as a Net Control Station.

With Isabel looming, I wondered how my system would really hold up under the duty cycle I knew I was facing. What I did, which worked fine, was to take my 10-ampere auto charger and substitute it for the 1.5 amp unit described earlier. Like its tiny cousin, its charge rate fluctuated with increasing or decreasing load. The "little fellow" is either on or off; this larger guy was always on, but at a low rate when the battery was considered charged.

The ability to interchange between the two chargers was made very simple by having the right cables fitted with Power Poles.

I'm here to say that this system worked very well. As long as I had commercial or home generator support, my system would **NOT** have gone down.

I do **NOT** recommend using the larger unit all the time. I like the idea that the Walmart unit does not attempt to put a charge into the battery at all times. When no equipment is operating, the little charger seldom cycles.

**Earlsville Volunteer Fire Department Annual Fall Barbeque**

*Bob Pattison K4DU*

For each of the last 10 years the folks at the Earlsville Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD) have supported the AARC by hosting our Field Day operations at the fire station. It is now our turn to support the EVFD by attending their Fall Barbeque in force. The barbeque will be held on **Saturday, October 11 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**. Come and meet members of the Earlsville Community, the fire department and their families. Wear your call sign badges that identify you has a ham and your AARC jackets too!

## October 2003

Carry-Out is available for those who cannot stay or folks who want to have some of that Brunswick stew at home. The fall event features Pork Barbeque, Brunswick stew, Cole Slaw, Dessert and Drink. Hot dogs are also available. The cost is \$8.50 each for Adults, \$7.50 for seniors and a child's plate is \$4.50. The EVFD is working to raise \$80,000 to support their mission. **They support us --- let's support them!**

## Contest Highlights This Month

Bob, K4UVT

### ARRL-Sponsored Contests

**Oct. 18-19** [ARRL Int'l EME Competition](#)

Complete info, rules and log forms for these events can be obtained online at the [ARRL Contest Calendar - 2003](#) webpage.

### Other Contests of Interest

**Oct 4** **The PSK31 Rumble**

**Oct 4-5** **Oceania DX Contest - Phone**

**Oct 4-5** **California QSO Party**

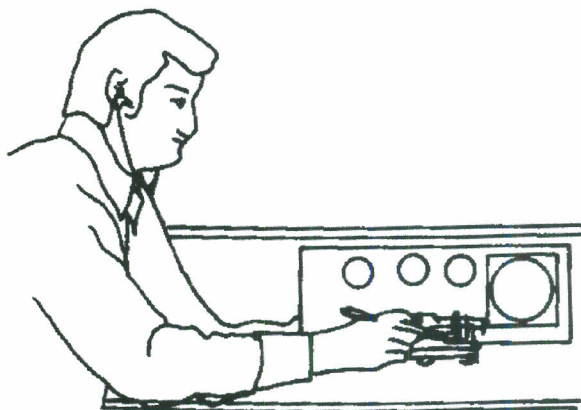
**Oct 4-5** **QCWA QSO Party**

**Oct 11-12** **Oceania DX Contest - CW**

**Oct 25-26** **CQ Worldwide DX Contest - SSB**

The [SM3CER Contest Service - Contest Calendars](#) has info and rules for just about every contest that exists.

73, Bob W4RQ



*Contest Season is  
starting .....*

*Lots of operating  
activity around the  
world .....*

*Join the fun and may  
you have many QSO's !!*



## AARC Public Service Schedule

|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Saturday November 1 | Montpelier Horse Races |
|---------------------|------------------------|

## Area Hamfests

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| None Reported |  |
|---------------|--|

## FCC Database Updates

### New Calls

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| None Reported |  |
|---------------|--|

### Upgrades

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| None Reported |  |
|---------------|--|

## VE Session Schedule - 2003

October 11  
Richmond  
(ARRL/VEC)

Sponsor: RICHMOND ARC/RAVE  
Time: 9:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)  
Contact: PATRICK WILSON  
(804)932-9424  
Email: W4PW@ARRL.NET  
Location: J Sargeant Reynolds Comm  
College  
1651 E PARHAM RD-BLDG B  
WWW.W4PW.ORG (TO REGISTER)  
RICHMOND, VA 23228

Date  
Location  
(ARRL VEC)

For other exam sessions in Virginia  
outside the AARC area, check the [ARRL  
Exam Session Search](#) web page.

## AARC Club Officers

|                   |                   |        |                                                                                |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President         | Steven Traylor    | KF4ZGD | <a href="mailto:kf4zgd@arrl.net">kf4zgd@arrl.net</a><br>434-296-7418           |
| Vice<br>President | Pete Thorsen      | W4PRT  | <a href="mailto:w4prt@arrl.net">w4prt@arrl.net</a><br>434-842-1014             |
| Secretary         | Marty Mait        | AG4DN  | <a href="mailto:mandim8@aol.com">mandim8@aol.com</a><br>434-589-2825           |
| Treasurer         | Ralph Traylor     | K4CFE  | <a href="mailto:rwf6t@virginia.edu">rwf6t@virginia.edu</a><br>434-296-7418     |
| Director          | Bob Pattison      | K4DU   | <a href="mailto:rep4@aol.com">rep4@aol.com</a><br>434-985-4828                 |
| Director          | Will Seay         | KJ4XZ  | 434-823-5665                                                                   |
| Director          | John Green        | KX4P   | <a href="mailto:jgreen@comdial.com">jgreen@comdial.com</a><br>434-975-4493     |
| Director          | Howard Gay        | KG4TWQ | <a href="mailto:kq4fyf@earthlink.net">kq4fyf@earthlink.net</a><br>540-456-6445 |
| Director          | Steve<br>Clements | KD4HBX |                                                                                |

## Contest Calendars

|                                                            |                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">ARRL Contest Calendar 2003</a>                 | ARRL sponsored contests                                                             |
| <a href="#">SM3CER Contest Service -<br/>Calendar 2003</a> | Contests all over the world! Also<br>has links to online rules for most<br>contests |
| <a href="#">Contesting Online</a>                          | Just about everything contests!                                                     |

## Albemarle Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 6833

Charlottesville, VA 22906

<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ejd4e/aarc/index.htm>

## THE AARC BEACON

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ISSUE DEADLINE - 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month

## Contact Information

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PO Box 530

Ruckersville, VA 22968-0530

(434) 990-2659

[W4RQ@yahoo.com](mailto:W4RQ@yahoo.com)

Next Club Meeting :

Oct. 14 - 7:30 PM

UVA - Astronomy Bldg.

## CLUB MEETINGS and NETS

**REGULAR Meeting:** Second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM**BOARD & TECHNICAL Meetings:** First Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM

Meetings are held at the UVA Astronomy building at 530 McCormick Road.

**LUNCHEON:** Wednesdays -- Area hams gather at the **Wood Grill Buffet** on Rte 29 North from 11 AM - 1 PM**Monday Night Information Net** -- Each Monday at 7:00 PM**Youth Net:** Each Wednesday at 7:30 PM on 147.075**Northern Piedmont Emergency Net / Swap Net / Technical Session:**  
Each Thursday at 8:00 PM**All Nets are held on the 146.760 repeater (except for the Youth Net)**

## AREA REPEATERS

WA4TFZINPUT/OUTPUTTone Access (If needed)

146.160/146.760

151.4 Hz

146.325/146.925

151.4 Hz

223.160/224.760

No Tone

449.250/444.250

151.4 Hz (If enabled)

145.030

MACHO Node

145.030

CHO Packet Bulletin Board

Other Area Repeaters

145.410 (-) 100 Hz Tone (if enabled) -- AF4CY (Madison)

442.075 (+) 151.4 Hz Tone -- KF4UCI

## AARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| DATE        | EVENT                |
|-------------|----------------------|
| October 14  | Regular Club Meeting |
| November 11 | Regular Club Meeting |
| December 9  | Regular Club Meeting |

## AARC - PUBLIC SERVICE SCHEDULE

| DATE       | EVENT                  |
|------------|------------------------|
| November 1 | Montpelier Horse Races |

Please sign up at meetings when the SIGN UP CLIPBOARD is passed around. You can also send an email to Greg (N4PGS) indicating your interest in working particular events.