

AARC Meeting of March 13, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM in the National Radio Astronomy Observatory auditorium by our new AARC President, John Porter, KK4JP.

Because our guest speakers had traveled from Fredericksburg, Virginia, a significant distance, John invited them to make their program presentation at the start of the meeting.

[Thanks to Mike McPherson, KQ9P, for recruiting these great speakers!]

The title of their presentation was "Hurricane Maria Puerto Rico DHS/NCC Shares Support to FEMA." Chris Schmidt K4KSQ and Andy Thompson N9VT shared the NRAO stage as they told their story of spending 62 Days on the storm damaged island of Puerto Rico.

But first, here is a brief background on these two gentlemen:

Chris Schmidt is a principal systems engineer and department Chief Engineer for the MITRE Corporation located in Stafford, Virginia. He currently works with satellite communication ground terminals to support his primary sponsor. He has a background in information technology and computing.

Andy Thompson also works for the MITRE Corporation. He is their principal systems engineer and group leader. He currently advises multiple federal sponsors on satellite communications ground systems, as well as HF communications systems and capabilities, enterprise data management, and the application of additive manufacturing technology.

And now the presentation:

"We took time away from our work," stated Andy. He and Chris served for 62 days in Puerto Rico. The hurricane, which hit on September 20th, caused major catastrophic damage. Andy and Chris arrived on the scene on October 19th. "We had to bring our own equipment," stated Andy. "It was a highly fluid situation," he added. "This was a labor of love," he emphasized. "We brought 450 feet of coax, and it wasn't enough," stated Andy. Chris noted that they had to construct and install several wire dipole HF antennas and that they wish they had brought along an antenna analyzer!

In summary, Andy commented that, "The knowledge we brought was more valuable than just amateur radio communications." They both emphasized the value of routine emergency communications practice and the value of long term experience. "Hone your operating skills," they advised, adding, "be flexible."

Club Raffle:

A.J. Miller, KE4AJM, gathered the items for the evening club raffle. After the guest speakers completed their presentation, A.J. drew the numbers of the lucky winners. He reported a total for the evening of \$59.00. The interesting prizes included:

A 2016-17 Repeater Directory

A 700 SX Solar Car Battery Charger

A Digital Multimeter

An ARRL log book (genuine paper)

A Raspberry Pi, Model 8

An ARRL Operating Manual

A bunch of plastic "invisible chip sleeves"

And a mystery bag full of goodies
A USB keyboard

Treasurer's Report:

Club Treasurer, Don Eason, N4UVA, reported these figures for the month of February, 2018:

Beginning balance as of February 1 st :	\$14,940.71
Debits:	\$ 844.28
Credits:	\$ 719.08
Ending Balance as of February 28 th :	\$14,815.51

Approval of Past Club Minutes:

Upon a motion by Mike McPherson, KQ9P, seconded by Don Eason, N4UVA, the minutes of the past two meetings (January and February) were approved unanimously.

Report of the Education Committee:

Rick Oliver, W3KDR, reported that the ten week **Technician radio class** held at Our Lady of Peace on Thursday nights is about to end. The tech exam will be administered next Thursday to 19 students.

Rick also reported on the **Piedmont Regional Science Fair**, which was held on March 7th at the John Paul Jones Arena in Charlottesville. This year, the club gave 3 awards for projects related to electronics or communications. AARC presented a \$100 award to the senior high school division and two \$50 awards to students in the junior high school division.

The senior division award went to Adah McDonald and Julia Douvas, for their project using early detection of background lighting activity as a predictor of impending more serious storm cells. Their Arduino based project could hold promise for automatically disconnecting your antenna from your rig ahead of serious lightening events.

One of the junior division awards went to a 9th grader, Blake Fairbanks, for his project on how the amount of RF radiation varied with received cellular strength from a cell tower, and with distance from the cellular device. Blake had a well presented project for which he had rented an expensive RF measuring device.

The other junior division award was given to Isabel Salzano, a 6th grader, for her project on blocking radio waves. She used a small toy with a built in Wi-Fi transmitter and she used a cell phone with the Wi-Fi analyzer app to measure and plot the signal degradation characteristics of various materials.

AARC members Dave Dawson, KM4YWY, and Michael Ellington, KN4BFB, represented the club as judges for these AARC awards. Other club members, Michael Rein, KA4JJD, and Jim Wilson, K4BAV, also served as Science Fair judges, but they were assigned to judge independent projects.

Entries in this year's Piedmont Regional Science Fair included 343 projects presented by 405 students from 37 regional schools. You might be interested to hear that entries by female students outnumbered entries by male students!

All members of the AARC are invited to participate in the Science Fair in March 2019. "This is always a fun and interesting day," says Jim, who just served his sixth year as a judge. For information on this event, visit their website at www.vprsf.org.

Bylaws Committee Appointed:

President John Porter appointed a Bylaws Review committee, which included Ed Berkowitz, N3US as chairman and other members who may volunteer to serve on this committee.

Elmering Volunteers Needed:

President John Porter, KK4JP, commented that volunteers are needed to “Elmer” new hams or hams who need specific assistance. He asked for members to consider this challenge and to sign-up during the next meeting.

President John Porter closed the meeting at 9PM, just in time for our NRAO deadline to clear the auditorium.

The sign-in sheet of 41 people attending this meeting included:

Bill Pond - N0WP

Connie Pond – XYL

Joe DeVincentis – KO8V

Joe Krofcheck – KM4RiG

Carol Krofcheck – XYL

Stephen Kramer – KN4CJI

Craig Heath - no call sign

Jim Condon – AD4YM

Peter Thorsen, Jr. - W4PRT

Don Eason, Jr. - N4UVA

Bill Phillips – AD6JV

Dennis Terribile – WR4I

Ed Berkowitz - N3US

Stan Hazen – K2SSB

Dave Damon – K4DND

Mike Balister – WB4ZJO

Michael Rein – KA4JJD

Larry Eicher – K4JZQ

Skip Thacker – WD4LT

Richard Freeman - KI4QKV

Kevin Cwalina – no call sign

Rick Oliver – W3KDR

Bill (Chappy) Chapman – K4ERZ

Al Bogden – KF4AGT

Steve O’Connor – KM4PZN

George Grotz – AA4B

Jim Owen – K4CGY

Linda Uihlein – KK4JIO

Michael Nicholaow – W6FW

Andrew Wiley – KK4SHO

Gabe Eilas – no call sign

John Porter - KK4JP
Chris Schmidt – K4KSQ
Andy Thompson – N9VT
Dennis Mennerich – K4THE
Joe Giovanelli – W2PVY
Mike McPherson – KQ9P
Jim Wilson – K4BAV

This meeting summary was prepared by your AARC Minute Man, Jim Wilson, K4BAV, and respectfully submitted to the members of the AARC for review.

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