

November Sweepstakes – What Went Wrong?

By AA3RR

On 19 November a whopping four point four percent (4.4%) of the club's approximate 250 members showed up at the clubhouse to participate in the phone version of the November Sweepstakes which is a very popular contest involving only radio amateurs from Canada and the USA. In case you were wondering, four point four percent represents eleven club members.

On 20 November only Tom/K3TH, myself and Greg/N2IQT stopped by the clubhouse. When Greg stopped by nobody else was there. When Tom and I arrived around Noon, we took down the antenna that was hung between the Boy Scout building and the tower guys. We lowered the antenna that was strung between the tower and the tree line, removed the coax and re-raised the antenna.

NOTE: The club needs to do something regarding this antenna:

1. The antenna can be tied off higher so it can't be tampered with.
2. Coax can be connected and raised high enough so it can't be tampered with.

In case anyone cares, here's how it unfolded and then fell apart.

Advertising –

Evidently we did not advertise this event well enough to spark sufficient interest in this event.

- On 21 October – an announcement was posted on the club website that the club would participate in the phone version of the November Sweepstakes starting at 4:00pm on Saturday, 19 November and ending around 4:00pm on Sunday, 20 November.
- On 3 November an announcement was made during the club meeting that all club members were invited to stop by, have some chili, and play on the radio starting at 4:00pm. Control operators would be available to help new hams and Technicians get on the air and get an introduction to a fun HF contest.
- On 9 November the club newsletter was published and contained the announcement that AARC would participate in the November Phone Sweepstakes on 19-20 Nov starting at 4:00pm.
- During the club meeting on 17 November, an announcement was that all club members were invited to stop by the clubhouse, have some chili, and play on the radio starting at 4:00pm on Saturday, 19 November. This is a great opportunity for new hams to get on the air and get an introduction to a fun HF contest.
- Numerous announcements were made over the repeater about the club's participation in the contest.

Antennas –

- 19 November – Between 1400-1500 six club members showed up to help set up the additional antennas for the contest. Most of you don't know that the club had only two operational HF antennas (or so we thought): A Windom (10-80m) and a Yagi (10-15-20m).

- We installed a temporary vertical with radials (thanks to Rick/KK4GV and Kim/KB3NGU); hung a new Windom antenna across the valley between the clubhouse and the big tree (North to south) at the end of the Boy Scout building (thanks to Tom/K3TH and Bob/KB3MPR). Next, we relocated the Windom that got taken down when the tree fell on the tower guy wires. Since it was securely wrapped around the tower we strung it out toward the tree line (East to West) to the far western edge of the DFRC property (Thanks to Bob/KB3MPR for his help). Of course we attached coax before we raised each Windom.
- A little after 1600 (the contest had already started) we had the primary station in the ham shack up and running. Using the Yagi (In theory) on 10m we quickly made contacts with Alaska, Hawaii, and several western states. Unfortunately, the Windom wasn't working. That is until it was pointed out that "Antenna 1" was the Windom and "Antenna 2" was the Yagi. **All of the contacts so far had been made on "Antenna 1".**

So what was wrong with the Yagi, besides it rotates very slowly and we couldn't hear a darn thing?

Bob/KB3MPR started troubleshooting and in the process, discovered that "someone" had disconnected the coax from the radio to the feed line in the repeater room. Presumably this was done with good intentions but it begs the question: Why did the person who disconnected the Yagi not take the time to write a note saying the coax to the Yagi was disconnected in the repeater room? It's not rocket science folks!

Once we got the Yagi reconnected to the TS-870 in the ham shack we were quickly knocking off the sections in California and all around the western portions of the USA.

So now it was time to set up the second station. Therein lies another story of frustration.

Equipment –

TS-570, Astron power supply, LDG external tuner.

- The in-line 25a fuse in the Kenwood power cord was blown and the fuse holder looked pretty ugly. Cut out the fuse holder and tied the wire back together.
- The 5a fuse in the back of the Astron power supply was blown (By the way, someone had put an 8a fuse in the 5a fuse holder).
- The power supply kept blowing the 5a replacement fuses. Obviously something's wrong with the power supply.
- The LDG external tuner has a "blown" surface mounted transistor.
- After swapping out the power supply and the antenna tuner for known working models we discover that the TS-570 will not power up at all.

Thanks to Jim/KB3NQY for his help in troubleshooting the problems with the TS-570.

Food –

We had three different kinds of chili including a traditional chili, one with beef and venison, and a white chili with

chicken. While I wasn't a judge, I declared Kim's white chili to be the best even though we weren't judging.

Participants –

The following are the club members who showed up, helped with set-up, enjoyed some chili, played on the radio, helped troubleshoot problems and socialized.

- Tom/K3TH
- Bob/KB3MPR
- Rick/KK4GV – Club Officer
- Kim/KB3NGU
- Jim/KB3NQY – Club Officer
- Margaret/KB3LGC
- Robbie/KB3PEB
- Matt/N3QEH
- Steven/KB3WEP
- Brenda/KB3ATI
- John/W3OJ

Lessons learned --

- It's just not worth the effort.
- It's time we stop pretending there is any interest by 95% of AARC club members in operating from the clubhouse during select events and contests.

You need proof? Over the past 5-6 years or more, I and a group of like-minded members have coordinated several operating events from the clubhouse. During that period, only a small group of members typically show up and with a few exceptions they are generally the same people for each event.

- Attempting to repair/replace the damaged equipment is probably a waste of time and effort given the lack of interest in participating in operating events from the clubhouse.



**What You Get—N3WYG
With Our License
Come's
Responsibility**

I listened to an interview between Gary Pearce, KN4AQ of ARVideonews.com and Mike Corey, W5MPC, Emergency Preparedness Manager for

ARRL. This was episode 15 dated August 30, 2011.

From this very interesting interview, I gleaned some ideas that has caused me to think.

The amateur radio service is very broad. This is one of the main aspects of getting people involved. The knowledge base is endless as well as the opportunities. However, this could be a definite pitfall for the amateur radio service as well. We wait, wait, and wait for our particular niche of amateur radio to come around we miss out on a whole lot of very practical and useful experiences and information.

During the interview (which was geared to emergency communications), it was stated that a need or emergency situation where you are particularly called on is probably less than 1% of your total time devoted to the Amateur Radio hobby. The other 99+% is so vital yet it is very often

over looked. This 99+% of the time is so valuable so that the 1% of time that is needed, you are prepared.

The question was asked: What makes us (the amateur radio operators) such an asset for emergency communications?

It could be our license – no, by that logic then our driver's license makes us Indy car racers.

It could be our certificates and plaques for all of our training – no – training is important but that is not what makes us a true asset.

It could be 'the survivor vest, Batman belt with gadgets, and our bandolier of HT' – no – that is not what makes us an asset.

What makes us a true asset is *our comprehensive knowledge of the amateur radio service*. We are called in as 'communicators'. We do not get that knowledge and that expertise simply by waiting for an emergency. We get that knowledge and that expertise by being active in the amateur radio service.

Therefore, when you get your license, upgrade or find that spark that was dormant for a time, get involved with other aspects of the 'hobby'. Get involved in your club. There is a unique place just for you in that group. Get involved in the particular area of your interest. Get involved with as many on air activities as possible. **JUST GET ON THE AIR!**

The other side of what makes us such an asset is that we have the radio frequencies that will allow us to do the job at hand. Please keep in mind that we will not have these frequencies if we do not use them.

The responsibility of everyone who holds an amateur radio license is to get on the air and to GET ACTIVE!

**November Exam Session Results
By AA3RR**



On November 12th the AARC VE Team administered six exams to five applicants. As a result of the exam session, we welcomed three new hams to our hobby and congratulate two others who upgraded to Amateur Extra.

Congratulations to the following:

- Producer Drake = KK4FFH (New Ham Technician)
 - Shepherd Stein = KB3WQW (New Ham Technician)
 - John Moran = KB3WQX (New Ham Technician)
 - David Green KB3WGT = Upgraded to Amateur Extra
 - Michael Birdseye K4DUM = Upgraded to Amateur Extra
- If you hear these hams on the air, offer your congratulations.

The VEs who made the exam session a success included:

- N3MB Holly Bevan
- N3EMI Ellen Thompson
- KB3ATI Brenda Diamond-Rose
- K3ACT Chuck Tanner
- NV3G Oscar Ramsey
- WR3F Richard Firestone
- KB3LGC Margaret Goldsberry

Only one more exam session left in 2011. Hope to see you next month!

Slate of Officers for 2012

Following is the slate for 2012 AARC officials. You will notice the absence of a name at the top. After many members have been contacted, not one will consent to run for president. There must be a member out there who would like to be the AARC President for 2012. We need you. Please come forward!

President: OPEN!

Vice-Pres: Chuck / K3ACT

Secretary: George / N3YSA

Treasurer: Rick / KK4GV

Directors: Vote for 3

Bob Jeter / K3RSJ

Jim Goldsberry / KB3NQY

Steve Hanlon / WM3O

Ron Boller / N3WOF

Milford Craig / N3WYG

Many times the question asked, "**What do I get for my dues?**" After all, the newsletter and roster are electronic now and anyone can read the newsletter on-line. (The roster takes a password but any member can see it and even print a copy.) Aside from the obvious, six repeaters, two digipeaters, full blown club station, clubhouse, presentations, operating events, training, and testing, a typical answer could be: "**The value of club membership is inherent in belonging to and supporting an amateur radio organization that you participate in and care about.**" It's not about what you get. It's about why you care. You are a ham and this is your club.

So get involved!

REPEATER FREQUENCIES

Davidsonville	Millersville	Glen Burnie	Annapolis
147.105+		147.075+	
223.880-	224.560-		
444.400+			442.300+

PL: 107.2 for all repeaters

The 147.105 and 147.075 repeaters are frequently linked. Please leave an extra second after the courtesy beep to allow the link to reset as well.

Visitors are welcome to all meetings and nets.

Meetings are held in the Clubhouse at the Davidsonville Family Recreation Center, Queen Anne Bridge and Wayson Roads off MD Route 214 near Davidsonville, MD. For en-route directions, make initial contact on the 147.105 repeater.

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Wednesday Night Talk Net -- All are welcome

8PM, On the AARC Repeater 147.105

Other Amateur Radio nets

Name	Frequency	Day	Time
Morning Commuter Net	147.105+ PL 107.2	Weekdays	0600
AA County ARES Net	146.805-Mhz PL 107.2	Sunday	2000
Baltimore Traffic Net	146.670-Mhz	Daily	1830
Maryland Emergency Phone Net	3.820Mhz	Daily	1800
MD-DC-DE Traffic Net	3.557Mhz	Daily	1900 and 2200
Maryland Mobileers Net	146.805 PL107.2	Monday	1930
Maryland Slow Net	3.563 MHz	Daily	1930
REACT Net	147.105+Mhz PL107.2	1st Sunday	1930

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First Class Mail

