

# Smoke Signals

Volume 12, Issue 11 November 2009

The Newsletter of Charles County Amateur Radio Club

## Meetings & Nets

Monthly meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month at 7:30 PM at LaPlata Train Station  
Net-Tuesdays 8:00 PM on 443.700 MHz, (No PL, TSQL 179.9 Hz)

Once a month social gathering for breakfast--please check the website for schedule  
Second Tuesday Commex with the ARES/RACES team Charles County 7:00PM EOC LaPlata

## How to Contact Us:

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Smoke Signals is published monthly as the newsletter of the Charles County Amateur Radio Club, Inc. Items to be published in the Smoke Signals should be submitted by the Sunday before the first Friday of the month. Email submissions are most efficient [msack@prodigy.net](mailto:msack@prodigy.net) or mail to Michelle Sack PO Box 1182 Waldorf, MD 20604. Permission is granted to reprint.

## CCARC Net Control Schedule for Nov. 2009

<u>Date</u>	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Alternate</u>
11/03	Bob (KB3KOW)	Rob (N2OMC)
11/10	Rob (N2OMC)	Art (AA3RT)
11/17	Art (AA3RT)	Joe (KB3HNP)
11/24	Joe (KB3HNP)	Bill (KE3RE)

## Activities

### Skywarn:

Last week, Mike (KA3GRW) alerted some of us to a SKYWARN class forthcoming here in La Plata. Tuesday morning, Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> I contacted Michelle Lilly at the Charles County Office of Emergency Services. She advises that there are still seats available if you are interested in attending either as a "first timer" or if you feel you are in need of some refresher training.

The training class will be held Monday, Nov. 9th at 6:00PM in the Charles County Commissioners Auditorium at the Charles County Government Building, 200 Baltimore Street in La Plata.

To reserve a seat, call Michelle during business hours at 301-609-3429 or contact her via email at:

[lillym@charlescounty.org](mailto:lillym@charlescounty.org)

73, de AA3RT

St Mary's county government is hosting a Skywarn Basic I class December 9th. You can get all the contact information from the county's home page in the media release dated October 22, 2009. I know that most of us that attend these classes have had this class several times and would like more advanced training but this is all we seem to get and we all need to attend retraining classes every 3 years to keep up as a current spotter. I encourage you to attend as so am I, and suggest that they hold an advanced class in the area for those of us who participate as volunteer weather spotters.  
73 Tim- KB3OSF SKYWARN SPOTTER SMN-10

### Bike Ride:

Oh. . .it was a magnificent day for a bike tour yesterday in Charles County. CCARC provided nine . . .count them . . .nine operators supporting the event. They were:

KA3AHI  
KB3GHI  
AA3RT\*  
N3YWZ  
N2OMC  
KA3GRW  
KB3HNP\*  
KB3KOW  
WB3KAS

\* New this year

A job well done, guyz and galz.

The level of stress was nowhere near last year. In fact, it was very noticeable early on that the needs of the biker were not nearly that of last year. Main contributor was probably due the fact that the many of the bugs from its first year was ironed out for this year. CCARC dispatched the SAG wagons this year, and that shortened the time for rendering support. Last year Net Control had to run a "sneaker net" and get up from our table, go to the registration table, wait for them to finish up what they were doing at the moment, then listen to our request, then find the cell phone lists of drivers, then start calling the SAGs to find out which one was near by, then. . . All while this was going on, another call for help would come over the radio. This year, we made the cell call direct. . .it was great!

Overall, the APRS tracking support went well. A few glitches, but indeed went well, in my opinion. The Tour committee kept stopping by the see on the screen where the SAG wagons

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were. . . and where they weren't! We, the CCARC after-tour-dinner committee (hmmmm, plenty good food Kemosabe), came up with some great ideas for next year, which we will develop throughout the coming club year. Stay tuned.

But no job is complete until the paper work is finished. I need rest stop reports from you, so I can send our write up to Lara, our Civista contact and to the club. Critiques, comments, complaints, observations, etc are certainly welcomed. If you can get them to me as soon as possible, I can get started while on our three week vacation due to start shortly. I plan to deliver a copy in person to the after-action meeting currently scheduled for mid-November.

As such, we may not be back in time for the November meeting, but I will try to provide another update for the meeting.

Lara has already forwarded many favorable email comments from participant bikers. I will include them in the report later.

Last year it was Rob and the bananas. This year it was Joe and the bananas. Let them tell you what this was all about.

Our two supporters this year vowed to return next year. . . evidence that ya do have a great time supporting the event.

Again, thanks for those who helped. 73, Jim WB3KAS

## JOTA:

On Saturday, 17 Oct, Rob (N2OMC) and Bob (KB3KOW) arrived at the McGreggor farm about 0730 and began setting up for the JOTA. For those of you who keep tabs on the weather, then you know it was a wonderful weekend for ducks! While the rain may have slacked up every now and then, it never seemed to really stop.

This year we opted to focus more on Echolink connectivity than HF since in the past the propagation has not been supportive. Since we're always looking for better ways to do things, this year Rob setup his laptop as an Echolink node. He then used his air card to establish the needed internet connection. The laptop in turn was connected to a radio and all of this was hidden in a room within the farmhouse we were using for electrical power. We had two mobile radios set to a simplex freq and running low power to conserve the batteries as long as possible. Our plans initially were to walk around and find Scouts to talk on the radio, however, it was hard to drag them away from some of their events so we returned to our table area next to the farm house and next thing we knew, they were coming to us. The process worked well in that Rob would use Echolink to look for other Scout units who were active on Echolink, connect to them and establish comms. Once that was done, he'd pass the link to me and then I'd get a Scout to talk away.

This year we were able to establish QSO's with Perth, Australia; Ontario, Canada; Southern California, Nevada, Delaware and even Annapolis. We did learn that while the East Coast was coated with the wet drizzle, Perth and Los Angeles were baking away with 80+ degrees and sunny skies.

The pictures attached show our outside position as well as the inside position. The Scout talking is Cole and he was probably one of two Cub Scouts that picked up the mike and actually held very good QSO's with the other stations.

I'm also happy to note that we had a bit more adult interest than in the past. One parent asked us the difference between CB and Ham Radio and we probably gave him way too much info, but we're sure he won't confuse the two again!

Even with the rain, it was an excellent weekend and the Scouts who had the chance to talk on the radio enjoyed it thoroughly. We did look at trying to talk to the ISS or AO-51, however the passes over the area were too low on the horizon to make it worth even trying.

73 Bob

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