

WATS Happenings

Official Newsletter of the
Waco Amateur Television Society (WATS), Inc.

Volume 6, Issue 11, November 2001

The WATS SkyCam is Back! by John Chamberlain, AC5CV

If you haven't heard, we're back in business!! WATS purchased a new Sony video camera and, thanks to the skills of Larry Bush W5NCD (and many others who helped carry out the 12th floor re-installation), we have a new package that can once again view the lovely skyline and park area surrounding the Waco Suspension Bridge. The SkyCam III is on the air!!

Meeting Notice

CORD Offices (click for photo)
601 Lake Air Drive (click for map)
Waco, TX 76710

Thursday November 15, 2001
Directors 7:00 pm, Members 7:30 pm



The SkyCam I was a pet project of Horace Bushnell W5TAH and W5NCD back in 1998, but it had the bad habit of losing its focus settings anytime there was a power glitch. The SkyCam II remedied that problem and provided a wonderful pan-tilt head and enclosure. It endured "the elements" atop the Waco Hilton for almost 3 years since its debut in September 1998, but finally succumbed to ultraviolet rays and the elements by developing cataracts (a "cloudy lens" for you non-medical types :-). Since the SkyCam was one of the best facets of WATS, the members agreed

to fund the purchase of a new camera from our treasury. W5NCD found a great buy on the Internet for a new Sony Hi8 camcorder—with IR remote. The remote was very important, you see, because we needed a way to control the zoom with our DTMF tones. Rather than attempt to wire into the camera's zoom switch, it was much easier to wire into the remote and let the infrared digital signal from the remote do all the work. We simply had to supply the proper voltage for the remote to function (without batteries). W5NCD took care of wiring up the remote, as well as replacing all the external wiring for the whole assembly and the rest of us had the fun of helping to install it.

The camera has a 20x optical zoom and will digitally magnify up to 200x! But the resulting image is so poor as to be practically useless, so we settled on the 40x max zoom setting (i.e., a magnification of one fourth of the pixels in the 20x optical image). As a matter of note, while testing at 200x, I was able to zoom in on **one window!** of the Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center—that's almost three miles away! This is the best camera we have ever had on the Skycam!



W5NCD, N5XAK,
AC5CV



AC5CV



KD5IQ & Skycam III



As you can see in the photos here (courtesy of KD5IQ), the rooftop enthusiasm spread to John AC5CV, John N5XAK, Larry W5NCD, Marshall KD5IQ, and (not shown) Norris KB5SLI and Justin KC5KQL. Reporting on picture quality from home were David KC5UOZ and Horace W5TAH. (Click on photos for larger versions.)

Boy! On a clear day it is a fabulous view from up there! And as David KC5UOZ notes below, the night vision of our new camera is spectacular! Give it a try!!

President's Column

WATS Sky Cam update: The new camera has been installed and is ready for viewing. It has a great lens and works in very low light, which is perfect for our SkyCam. When viewing at night, now you can see everything. It will be great for the 4th of July fireworks! In the day time the view is just as great. If you would like to control the view with the SkyCam but don't remember how, just ask a fellow WATS member, and we will be glad to help you. Thanks to N5XAK John Gafford, KD5IQ Marshall Mabry, AC5CV John Chamberlain, KB5SLI Norris Martin, KC5KQL Justin Martin, and W5NCD Larry Bush for their contributions to get it working again.



Satellite Radio: Have you ever heard of Satellite Radio? I'm talking about XM Radio, how does this work and what can you listen to? Just go to <http://www.xmradio.com> and do your own research, or go to Best Buy, Circuit City, or Radio Shack and ask to see and hear XM Satellite Radio. You'll find that you can get 100 channels of music, news, sports and entertainment. Over 70 channels of music, 30 channels of 100% commercial free digital-quality sound and coast-to-coast coverage. All you need is an XM-Radio adapter and a low Monthly subscription, for both car and home stereo systems. W5NCD Larry Bush and I have installed them and are very pleased with our purchase.

Hope to see everyone Thursday night, November 15, 2001 for our monthly WATS meeting. Since this is November, we need to start thinking about new officers for WATS 2002 (elections in January). The Board of Directors will meet at 7:00 pm and the Members will meet at 7:30 pm.

73 de KC5UOZ

David L Bush

WATS President

Waco Amateur Television Society (WATS) Minutes of the Board Meeting 18 October 2001

The Board of Directors met at the offices of the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD), 601 Lake Air Drive, Waco, at 7:00 PM. Those present were:

- David Bush, President
- Horace Bushnell, Secretary-Treasurer
- John Chamberlain, Director
- John Gafford, Director
- Norris Martin, Director
- Justin Martin, Webmaster (Visitor)

Horace Bushnell moved, seconded by John Gafford, that the minutes of the September meeting of the Board be approved as they appeared in the newsletter, and published on the web page. Motion passed.

Motion was made by John Chamberlain, seconded by Norris Martin, that the 30 September Financial Report appearing in the newsletter, published on the web page, be approved. Motion carried.

John Chamberlain brought up the idea that it would likely be more appropriate to wait until the Meeting of Members to discuss special events, as there was nothing requiring board action.

The camcorder purchased for the Skycam came with a battery, which will not be used in the Skycam, as it will be powered by commercial power. John Gafford offered to purchase the battery from WATS, reducing the overall Skycam upgrade cost. John Chamberlain moved the offer be accepted. Motion was seconded by Horace Bushnell and the motion carried.

There being no other business, meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Horace Bushnell, W5TAH
Secretary

Hints from...someone who knows! 😊

Do you have a scratched up face? No, not that scraggly beard, but those **LCD faces** on radios, watches, and calculators. If so try this fix: **a pure silk tie**. Pure silk is supposedly more abrasive than steel, yet is very, very fine. It takes a while and a bit of thumb grease, but the scratches come out pretty nice. Rub in a circular motion, and it really works! Use your old ties—the ones with the chili stains!

Thanks to Rudy Marcelletti, K8SWD and Ed Manuel, N5EM from [Houston QRP Club](#)

Waco Amateur Television Society (WATS) Minutes of the Meeting of Members 18 October 2001

The Meeting of Members was held at the offices of the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD), 601 Lake Air Drive, Waco, at 7:30 PM. Those present were: The Meeting of Members was held at the offices of the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD), 601 Lake Air Drive, Waco, at 7:30 PM. Those present were:

- David Bush, President,
- Horace Bushnell, Secretary
- Larry Bush



- John Chamberlain
- John Gafford
- Marshall Mabry
- Norris Martin
- Justin Martin (Visitor)
- Mike Ross

Motion was made by John Chamberlain that the Minutes of the September Meeting of Members be approved as published in the newsletter and appearing on the web page. Second was by John Gafford and motion was approved.

Larry Bush reported on progress of the Technical Committee toward getting the Skycam upgraded. He reported they would be getting a work detail together to do whatever is necessary to get the project completed. The new camcorder has been fitted with a Ultra Violet (UV) filter to protect the lens and a three (3) volt power supply has been purchased for powering the Infra Red (IR) remote. The remote has been modified to be operated by the Skycam controller, which receives it's signals from a VHF radio. Larry also reports the commercial dish antenna, installed alongside the Skycam without our knowledge, has been lowered, again giving the Skycam an almost unobstructed view.

John Chamberlain reported on recent special events for which our members furnished television coverage. Several members recorded video of the Wild West Century Bike Run. John will use clips from each and make a video and present it to members of the Waco Bicycle Club, sponsor of the event.

There being no program, meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM upon motion by John Gafford and second by John Chamberlain.

Horace Bushnell, W5TAH
Secretary



(Photos by AC5CV)

Financial Report

31 October 2001

Bank Balance as of 30 September 2001	\$904.38
Credits: Deposit	\$25.00
Debits: Check #363	(\$19.93)
Check #364	(\$405.00)
Bank Balance as of 31 October 2001	\$504.45

Horace Bushnell, W5TAH
Treasurer

2001 WATS Officers and Directors

President: David Bush, KC5UOZ, KC5UOZ@bigfoot.com

Secretary/Treasurer: Horace Bushnell, W5TAH, W5TAH@aol.com

Director (thru 2003): John Chamberlain, AC5CV, AC5CV@arrl.net

Director (thru 2002): John Gafford, N5XAK, jgafford@clearsource.net

Director (thru 2001): Norris Martin, KB5SLI, nmartin@tstc.edu