

# October 2011 Reflector

Hi Folks,

We have a fast turn-around this time due to the Labor Day weekend starting the club calendar a week late. Had another good meeting and we discussed the coming schedule of events through Thanksgiving.

This month, we had only the Midmonth Breakfast and a test session on the agenda, plus we added an ARES meeting for the October 1<sup>st</sup> SET that same Saturday. The breakfast numbers were a bit down, but nice cooler weather had folks out doing stuff without having to “sweat the details.”

We had two people show for tests and both were successful. Todd Tornow of Tallahassee had tried to find us during the August classes but the person at the info desk at Archbold didn't know we were there. Have to remedy that in the future! He had no problems passing his Tech test, and is now awaiting a call sign.

Henry Leverett had taken a shot at his General upgrade during the August classes and was a little bit short. He went home though and got back into the books and guess what?



Henry blew this one away and is a new General at age 10! We got the shot above and I posted it on the website and on Facebook, and it has generated a LOT of feedback, including a nice email from Dave, WS2L, who is the administrator for the QRZ website.

If you want to have a look, the email is posted on our website. Great job to both Henry and Todd!!

Following the Test Session, John, KE4RWR, held a planning session on the 2011 Simulated Emergency Test, which takes place on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, running from 9am to 12pm

(and possibly later if needed). 24 people were in attendance, representing a number of counties in South Georgia and North Florida.

The purpose of the SET is to test how well we can respond to an emergency, and while it runs somewhat like Field Day, the point is to test your gear and ability rather than run up a massive number of points.

Several hospitals will be activated, as well as, the Thomas county EOC, so if you want to help, there will be a place for you to do that, or you can operate from home. Technician class operators are encouraged to take part and a number of hams have made their home stations available for you to get your feet wet. They, along with the hospitals and EOCs, will run like GOTA stations to give Techs additional HF experience, so please think about taking part.

There will also be at least one VHF Net, so if you can't make it to one of the deployed stations, you can take part from home, and help pass local traffic. This is meant to be a learning experience for all concerned, so if you're hesitant to help because you don't feel you bring enough to the table, DO NOT let that stop you. You can't gain the experience if you don't take part.

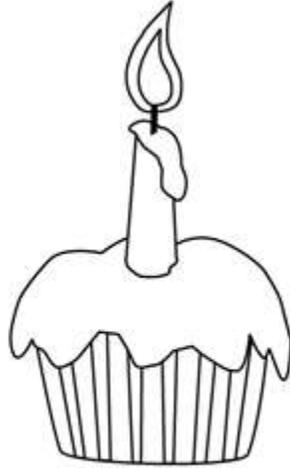
The scenario is available on [www.gaares.org](http://www.gaares.org) and on [www.arrrl-ga.org](http://www.arrrl-ga.org)

Our meeting this month will focus on making final plans for the Spaghetti 100 and the Boston Mini-Marathon. We discussed the Fly-In at the last meeting and voted to pass on it this year because we just have too much on our plates right now and didn't want to wear anyone out.

We'll also need to discuss the November Fish fry, as this will be the last meeting before that event happens. Please make plans to join us at the Plaza on October 1<sup>st</sup> (yes, the same day as the SET!) to help us work out the details. Plan to arrive at 6pm if you want supper, and the meeting will start at 7:30.

I look forward to seeing YOU and your family there!

*Mike*



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

The following members of the TARC Radio Family have October Birthdays:

- Rachel McCleery – Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>**
- Sarah Purvis – Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>**
- Cindy Rykard – Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>**
- Carmen Lanter – Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>**
- Marilyn Webb – Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Don't see your birthday? Let us know at [w4ucj@arrl.net](mailto:w4ucj@arrl.net)

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## *September Test Results*

The TARC VE Team held a test session on September 17<sup>th</sup> and had two people show up for testing.

Henry Leverett, KJ4VHK, passed his General Class and Todd Tornow, from Tallahassee, passed his Technician Test. Congratulations to both on their excellent results!

There will be no October session, as the Spaghetti 100 Bike Race will take place on the third Saturday. If someone does need to take a test, please contact Mike at [ke4fgf@arrl.net](mailto:ke4fgf@arrl.net) and he'll make arrangements.

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***Formal Message Traffic Class in Tifton***

**On Saturday, October 8th, our Section Traffic Manager, Charles Pennington, K4GK, will present a class on “Traffic Handling” at the CPARC Club meeting in Tifton.**

**Time for the class is 1pm, and the location is the Mell Baptist Association Building at 4022 North Tift Avenue.**

**If you’ve never handled formal traffic and want to know more about it, this is a class you won’t want to miss.**

**For more information and a map to the location, check out the CPARC website at [www.w4pvw.us](http://www.w4pvw.us)**

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# *NØ Tenna Wizard*

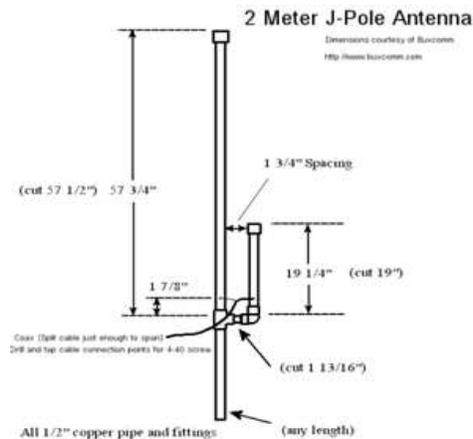
## J-Poles

This antenna is a repeat of my previous posts. The reason that I am repeating it is because it is a superior VHF antenna to most other verticals - commercial or homebrew.

Being an old-timer has its advantages. One such advantage is getting to meet some of the radio pioneers that have helped make our hobby as advanced as it is today.

One such pioneer is General Loren Windom (W8GZ). He described an off-center fed antenna in the 1929 issue of QST magazine that has been known as the Windom antenna ever since. I had the pleasure of meeting General Windom in person while I was living in Columbus, Ohio. He was at the top of the DXCC Honor Roll for many years.

Now, many hams do not realize that the popular J-Pole antenna is an off-center fed Windom. Here are some of the J-Pole antenna advantages: Needs no radials, is easy to erect, has low-angle of radiation, excellent bandwidth, is great for local or distant repeaters, more gain than most ground plane antennas, very durable, stealthy, and is easy to construct. Now, I ask you, why would you spend more than \$100 for a 2-meter antenna when you can build a superior model for less than \$20?



There are many variations of the construction of 2-meter J-Pole antennas. They can be built from a variety of materials, including copper and aluminum tubing, stainless steel rods, 450-ohm ladder line, and 300-ohm TV twin-lead. Construction dimensions are not critical and the antenna still performs well even if you don't get the dimensions perfect during construction.

For construction information, I will refer you to this website.  
<http://www.packetradio.com/jpoles4ever.htm>

One of my favorite styles of construction is shown in figure 1b on page 3 of this article. The reason that I like it is because the short at the bottom of the antenna is created by using copper "T's", which are very strong.

No matter which type of J-Pole that you construct, I suggest putting an insulator at the top to support the shorter reflector from the driven element. The reason for the insulator is that wind will really beat this antenna up and adding the insulator will greatly strengthen it.

Another tip for installing this antenna - you do not need to mount it to a tower, mast, or other support. You can tie it to a rope and pull it up into a tree. It disappears from view!

J-Poles make excellent antennas for use on bicycles. I ran one made from 300-ohm TV wire and could work repeaters 70 miles away. Again, no radials are needed, so nothing to stick out and hurt you or anyone else close to your bike. Taping the J-Pole to a fiberglass rod really makes a strong antenna.

How well do these antennas work? Two weeks ago we had a station check into our Thursday night net from down near Tampa, FL. He was running a J-Pole antenna at 45 ft above ground according to his QRZ website.

Everybody needs a J-Pole whether you are using it on your base station or keep it for emergency deployment. Build one and try it. You will be impressed.

73 & CU On The Air!  
Terry, N0TW



Weather Center

So far the year 2011 has proven to be very active for our members that participate in Skywarn. There were numerous severe weather events this spring, and most recently Post-tropical Cyclone Lee prompted a full Skywarn activation including the station WX4TAE at the National Weather Service in Tallahassee.

Initially the primary threat was believed to be tornadoes from low-topped super cells often seen in the outer bands of a cyclone as it makes landfall. As the day

progressed the low level winds veered and the overall shear became more linear and the threat changed to a severe thunderstorm event where high winds aloft could be mixed down to the surface. These conditions resulted in numerous straight-line wind damage reports across the entire area. The NWS Tallahassee Office received a total of 52 storm reports from across the county warning area. There were several reports relayed by Amateur Radio as numerous operators stepped up and provided support as the system moved through our area that day.

Many of us participated in the Advanced Skywarn Class recently offered by the NWS via webinar. For those that have a sincere interest in weather spotting, continued education plays an important roll in gaining a deeper understanding of what is seen while spotting and also to remain safe when dangerous weather conditions are imminent. One great resource for obtaining additional advanced training for the most serious weather spotters is the MetEd website at <https://www.meted.ucar.edu> . At this website you can take modules at your own pace over a variety of subjects dealing with convective weather. There is no charge for the use of these modules and you can retake them as often as you like or download the courses to your computer so you can use them as a reference anytime. If you have a genuine interest in higher-level weather training then this is a great site and you should check it out!

73's,  
Stewart  
KJ4GOJ  
DEC NWS Tallahassee, FL  
Southwest Georgia District ARES

## **TARC Meeting minutes – 9/10/11**

### **Welcome and Announcements**

#### **Test Session**

Test Session is on September 17<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at the EOC.

#### **Midmonth Breakfast**

Midmonth breakfast is also on the 17<sup>th</sup> at Seminole Wind at 8:30 a.m. with test session following.

#### **Rag chew breakfast**

Rag-chew breakfast is every Friday at 8:30am at Seminole Wind. This is still a very well attended meeting.

#### **Program**

Terry (N0TW) shared a program on station grounding. He asked a question about what is the difference between safety grounding and station grounding. If this is not done you are waiting on a disaster to happen.

### **Minutes and Treasurer's Reports:**

The minutes and treasurer's reports were accepted as presented.

### **Old Business:**

#### **August Classes**

The classes were very well attended and very well done by the instructors. There were three new Technicians; Lynn, KK4DXB, passed her exam with a perfect score, Abbie KK4DZA, who is only 8 and Brian, KK4DZB.

Ashley, KJ4SWF, is now a new General. Keith, KK4APP, Mary, KI4JOO, and Jackson, KJ4NFB, are new Extras. Jackson is our youngest licensed Extra to this date.

#### **New Additions to test team**

There are also several new members on our VE team. They are Mary, KI4JOO, Jeff, KK4APP, John, KA1LQF (also a new club member) and Gene, W4AYK.

### **New Business:**

#### **Club Insurance upgrade**

The present club insurance policy will have the new repeater equipment and the Kenwood TS-480 HF Radio added to it.

#### **SET**

This event is set for October 1<sup>st</sup>. There are several other states joining Georgia in this event. Those states are Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, and North Florida. Georgia was the number one Section in last year's SET. We grew from a three state SET last year to a 3 division SET this year. There will be a planning meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at the EOC to discuss the upcoming SET.

#### **FLY-In Special Event**

The Fly -In will be October the 8<sup>th</sup>. Mike asked for a show of hands of who would like to participate in this event, after reminding everyone that last year only 3 people really did any operating. He suggested that in light of all the other events for October that we might want to think about skipping this one. Lowell made a motion to pass on this event and Buddy seconded this motion. Motion passed.

### **Spaghetti 100**

This event is October 15<sup>th</sup>. We will need to be in place at 8:30am. We will use the 147.195 machine, since it covers the entire route. We will have breakfast at Seminole Wind before the race begins and assignments will be passed out at this time. It should be over with around lunch. Buddy asked the question of when maps will be available and Gary said that a map should be coming to Mike pretty soon.

### **Boston Mini Marathon**

This event happens on October 29<sup>th</sup>. We will need to be there around 7:00 for breakfast and then assignments will be passed out at that time. This event should be over around lunchtime.

### **November Fish Fry**

We will have the fish fry at Morningside Methodist Church this year and Bill has confirmed us on the church calendar. The plans will be finalized at the October meeting.

### **Archbold Hospital**

Archbold Hospital will hold an Emergency Drill on October 27<sup>th</sup>, time to be announced.

### **Ham Jam 2011**

The 2011 Ham Jam will occur on October 22<sup>nd</sup> in Atlanta. The North Fulton Amateur Radio League sponsors this event.

### **Swap Meet**

The gear left from the swap meet will be catalogued and we will try and sell these items one at a time. The ICOM 775 will be the first to go on sale. The club gets 50% of all proceeds from these items that are sold. Stan from TARS said that we could put these items into their newsletter as well.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned with 44 members present.

Dana Swicord, TARC Secretary

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## **ARES Notebook**

As we're about to handle the Spaghetti 100 Bike Ride, it's probably a good time to have a "chat" about what happens during the event. I realize that we will probably have some new people helping and they probably have questions about what they are supposed to do, so let's hit a few of the high points

### **1) The Net.**

We usually run a "Formal," controlled net, which is where you ask the Net Control station for permission before you call someone. This is to keep the repeater clear in case someone needs to report a problem or accident.

Reports should be kept brief and to the point to keep the frequency clear in case a weak station needs to report an emergency. As most new folks (and there should be a few) start out with HTs only, they're easy to cover up

### **2) What you should be reporting.**

Operators are always wondering how much to report, so that needs be clarified beforehand.

The Spaghetti 100 has a common starting and ending point in Miccosukee, though there are several routes in play. That complicates things a bit by having multiple "Tail-End Charlies."

So, quickly, here's what the Bike Group is interested in keeping up with.

- a) **Accidents** – always receives ultimate priority particularly if Medical assistance is needed...that's the reason we strive to keep the frequency clear. The Radio Op with the doctor has the tactical call "**Medic.**"
- b) **First Rider** past your location – watch for and record the rider's number
- c) **Last Rider** – should be followed by a radio op whose tactical call is "**Tail-End Charlie**"

- d) **Mechanical Problems** – 100 miles is as tough on equipment as it is the riders. There is always a radio op with the ride mechanic and he goes by the tactical call “**Mechanic**”
- e) **Road Hazards** – Dogs chasing riders, weather events, or anything that would endanger the riders...and yes they do sometimes ride when it rains. If you see problems with the road on the way to your assigned spot, let Net Control know so another ham can be assigned to that spot if deemed necessary.
- f) **Announce when you are at your location** – simply tell the Net Control you are where you were assigned to be so he can mark you on the map and note your call sign.
- g) **Announce when you leave your location** – Once Tail End Charlie passes by your location; always notify Net Control before packing up and heading home. If you want to continue, ask for re-assignment, or if you need to head home, ask to be relieved.
- h) **Sag Wagon** – this vehicle picks up riders unable to continue, and the radio op uses “**Sag Wagon**” as his tactical call.
- i) **Net Control Stations** – On the Florida side, **K4TLH**, and during the Georgia portion, **W4UCJ**.

A quick reminder here about Tactical calls in case you are assigned one of these positions. You start your communications with them, but you ALWAYS end with your legal callsign.

And for Net Controls, once per hour, you identify with both the club call **and your call**: “ This is W4UCJ, with KE4FGF as Control Operator.”

One or two riders passing by don't necessarily need to be reported. A large group might be worth reporting, mainly if a ride official wants to know where the “main body” of riders is on the course.

The staff vehicles are marked, and will usually stop at your location. It doesn't hurt to let the Net Control know they are presently at your location in case someone needs them.

If these events run as they are supposed to, they are fun but also a little bit boring. Proper procedure means there is little radio traffic to listen to because we want the frequency to stay clear for emergencies, and “rag-chewing” would interfere with that. Some people with dual band radios do talk on the second frequency while the primary frequency is still up where they can hear it.

So, that's a head's up on operating during the Spaghetti 100. I hope this clears up any questions that you may have about the event.

de KE4FGF