

W6OTX

W6ARA

PAARA NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 61, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 2011

K6OTA

K6YQT



PAARAGraphs

The Official Newsletter of the
Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, Inc.
Celebrating 74 years as an *active* amateur radio club—Since 1937

CALENDAR



January 7, PAARA Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Menlo Park Rec Center
700 Alma St., Menlo Park

January 19, Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

All are welcome!
Palo Alto Red Cross
400 Mitchell Lane, Palo Alto

January 19 is also the

DEADLINE for PAARAGraphs submissions.

Send items to Robin Yee, KI6YTA@ARRL.net

January 21, FARS/PAARA Banquet

See <http://www.fars.k6ya.org/events/banquet>
for details and signup deadline.



**Don't miss
our next meeting!
JANUARY 7, 2011**

Our speaker will be...

...Darryl Presley , KI6LDM

Darryl will tell us about his recent diving adventure to Truk Lagoon. Come listen to the talk and see photos of several wrecks of Japanese warships. You will even see a radio or two that have been there for over 68 years.

President's Corner

It sure feels strange writing the first President's Corner of 2011. This year has gone by so quickly, and with it has passed another great year of PAARA experiences, events, meetings, and fun. As we look back at what the club has accomplished in 2010, I think we can all be proud of our club, and of our leadership team.



The first order of business is to thank all of you who have worked so hard to make our club a success in 2010. I want to thank our officers, Doug KG6LWE - Vice President, Ron W6AZ - Treasurer, and Rick K6RDM - Secretary.. I also want to thank our board members, Gerry N6NV, Byron KG6UOB, Rebar N6CCH, and Rob KI6INR. You have all made my job much easier. Aside from the leadership team, there are numerous others who help make PAARA what it is. Of particular note are Robin KI6YTA, our PAARAGraphs editor, Jim K6AK, our raffle master, Rick K6RDM again, who manages our membership database and renewals, Doug KG6LWE again, for making Field Day happen, and Gerry N6NV, for his always supportive, sagely advice over the years. I'd also like to thank Christopher KG6SVI for helping with the raffle. I sure miss him being there each month.

As we move into the new year, we will be welcoming Marty W6NEV as a new board member, and sadly we'll be seeing a little less of Doug KG6LWE, our retir-

(Continued on page 3) Pres Corner

**Be sure to check out the
ALL NEW PAARA WEB-SITE!**

www.paara.org

VE Exams, 3rd Saturday each month, 10:30AM, 145.23– PL=100Hz
 Redwood City Main Library, Community Conference Room
 1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City, CA
 contact: <http://amateur-radio.org/> or Al, WB6IMX@att.net

ELECTRONICS FLEA MARKET

Sponsorship by A.S.V.A.R.O.
 (Association of Silicon Valley Amateur Radio Organizations)
 Second Saturday of month, March–October, 6am–2pm
 Howard M. Krawetz, N6HM 650-856-9761
 Contact: <http://www.electronicsfleamarket.com/>

LIVERMORE SWAP MEET. Now in Robertson Park, Livermore, every first Sunday of the month. 7 am to 11:30 am. Free admission for buyers. For further info, see: www.larkswap.com or contact Ian Parker, W6TCP at swapmeet@livermoreark.org

PAARA Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association

Meets 1st Friday 7:00pm each month at Menlo Park Rec. Center; Net 145.230 - PL 100Hz Mondays at 8:30. See our website at <http://www.paara.org/> for more information.
 Or contact: Joel Wilhite KD6W, KD6W@ARRL.NET, 650-325-8239

FARS Foothills Amateur Radio Society

Meets 4th Friday each month at 7:30pm
 contact: <http://www.fars.k6va.org/>

NCDXC Northern California DX Club

meets 2nd Friday 7:30pm each month,
 repeater for member info 147.360, Thursday 8:00PM
 contact: <http://ndxc.org/> or Mike Gavin W6WZ, (650) 851 8699

QCWA Chapter 11

Northern California Quarter Century Wireless Association
 Meets third Wednesday monthly at Harry's Hofbrau in Redwood City @ 11:30 AM.
 Guests are welcome. Saturday morning net on 146.850 MHz, PL 114.8

NorCalQRP Northern California QRP Club

meets 1st Sunday each month
 contact: <http://www.norcalqrp.org/>

SPECS Southern Peninsula Emergency Communication System
 meets each Monday 8:00pm on Net 145.27, 440.80 MHz
 contact: <http://specsmnet.org/> or Tom Cascone, KF6LWZ, 650-688-0441

SCARES South County Amateur Radio Emergency Service

meets 3rd Thursday 7:30pm each month, San Carlos City Hall.
 Net is on 146.445 [PL 114.8] & 444.50 (PL-100) 7:30 Monday evenings.
 contact: President Gary D. Aden, K6GDA 650-743-1265(D), 650-595-5590 (N)

Web: <http://k6mpn.org> E-mail: pres@k6mpn.org

SCCARA Santa Clara County Amateur Radio Association

Operates W6UU & W6UU/R, repeater 146.985-pl
 Nets: 2m, 7:30pm Mon; 70cm, 442.425+ (pl 107.2) Thur.
 meets 2nd Mon each month @ 7:30 PM.
 contact: <http://www.qsl.net/scara/> or Clark Murphy KE6KXO 408-262-9334
 ARRL/VEC license testing contact 408-507-4698

SVECS Silicon Valley Emergency Communications

Operates AA6BT repeater (146.115 MHz+)
 contact: <http://www.svecs.net/> or Lou Stierer WA6QYS 408 241 7999

TEARS The Elmer Amateur Radio Society

Dedicated to operational training, knowledge building &
 FCC exam testing. KV6R repeater under construction.
 Contact AA6T@ARRL.NET. Most members are Extra
 class or VE's. See QRZ dot com/kv6r for class info

WVARA West Valley Amateur Radio Association

W6PIY six-meter repeater on 52.58MHz. Normally, six-meters is linked with 147 and 223, while 441 and 1286 repeaters are linked.

VHF:	52.58 (-500) 151.4 ctess	UHF:	
	147.39 (+600) 151.4 ctess		441.35 (+5.0 88.5) ctess
	223.96 (+1.6) 156.7 ctess		1286.20 (-12m) 100.0 ctess

Meetings are 3rd Wednesday of every month.

contact: <http://wvara.org/>, Bill Ashby N6FFC, 408-267-3118, N6FFC@Juno.com, or N6FFC@ARRL.NET

American Red Cross, SANTA CLARA VALLEY CHAPTER

contact: <http://santaclaravalley.redcross.org/> or Scott Hensley KB6UOO, (408) 967 7924
fhensley@Novell.com

(please send changes to PAARAGraphs editor: KI6YTA@arrl.net)

**Please contact Rick Melrose to
 settle your 2011 membership dues so
 you can keep receiving your
 PAARAGraphs.**

Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

PO Box 911 Menlo Park, CA 94026

Officers

President	Kristen McIntyre, K6WX	510-703-4942
	kristen@alum.mit.edu	
Vice President	<i>Position Vacant</i>	
Secretary	Rick Melrose K6RDM	408-341-9070

k6rdrm@arrl.net	
Treasurer	Ron Chester, W6AZ
	ron@taxhelp.com

Directors

Past President ('10)	Joel Wilhite, KD6W	650 325 8239
	kd6w@arrl.net	
Director ('12)	Rob Riley, K16INR	650 799-1607 (cell)
	kg6hv@arrl.net	
Director ('11)	Byron Beck KG6UOB	408-369-1913
	kg6uob@arrl.net	
Director ('11)	Marty Wayne, W6NEV	
Director ('11)	Larry Rebarchik N6CCH	650-465-8210 (cell)
	N6CCH@arrl.net	

Appointed Positions

Membership	Vic Black, AB6SO	650-366 0636
	ab6so@smrn.com	
Database	Rick Melrose K6RDM	408-341-9070
	k6rdrm@arrl.net	
Chaplain	Rev. Rick Line, KG6TMD	650 323 8544
	kg6tmd@arrl.net	
Public Affairs	Vacant	
Station Trustee	W6OTX, K6YQT, W6ARA....	Gerry Tucker, N6NV
Station Trustee	K6OTA....	Ron Chester, W6AZ
Property Manager	Gerry Tucker, N6NV	
Fund Raising Coordinator	Bob Korte, KD6KYT	408 396 4745
	bob@rgktechsales.com	
Badge Coordinator	Lynn Gentry, KG6JPV	
Historian	Christopher McIntyre, KG6SVI	
Raffle Coordinator	Jim Rice, K6AK	650-851-2274
Ticket Master	Kyle Rice, KG6MSK	
Field Day Coordinator	Doug Teter, KG6LWE	
ASVARO Rep	Rolf Klibo, N6NFI	650-856-2748
	n6nfi@arrl.net	
Webmaster	John Miller K6MM	
	webaron@gmail.com	
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	kd6w@arrl.net	
QSL Manager	Rob Riley, K16INR (cell)	650 799-1607
	ki6inr@arrl.net	
Speaker Coordinator	<i>Position Vacant</i>	

PAARAGraphs Staff

Editorial Board

Robin Yee KI6YTA	Kristen McIntyre K6WX
Ron Chester W6AZ	Vic Black AB6SO
Joel Wilhite, KD6W	

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Advertising	Ron Chester, W6AZ	408-243-2221
	ron@taxhelp.com	

Member Profiles	Terry Finn, AA6T	650-366-9111
Technical Tips	Vic Black, AB6SO	650-366 0636

Photographer	Bill Young, K6VWO
	jdsinger@sbcglobal.net

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(Continued from page 1)

ing Vice President and program chair. I hope Doug will still have some time to be there at the board meetings. The Vice President and program chair positions are still open as of this writing, and I'd like to invite anyone interested in helping us out in either capacity to talk to me.

Starting out 2011 will be the regular PAARA general meeting on January 7th. I haven't finalized all of the calendar dates with the Menlo Park Recreation Center personnel yet. I will let everyone know well in advance when we will have meetings outside of our usual first Friday rule. Between the January and the February meetings, is the big PAARA/FARS FARS/PAARA Winter Banquet on January 21st. It's a great opportunity to carry a bit of that holiday spirit forward just a little bit further, and have a nice dinner with ham friends and family. This year it will again be held at Michael's at Shoreline, and we are pleased to welcome Jerry Griffin MD PharmD, callsign K6MD, to speak. Jerry is a retired US Army Brigadier General, and a fantastic speaker. We will also have a great raffle. Sign-ups are now linked from the PAARA website, www.paara.org. I hope to see you all there.

Though the big contest season is mostly over until Spring, there are always smaller contests that are fun to operate. One of my favorites is right on the horizon: ARRL Straight Key Night, or SKN. This is a very low key (pun intended!) event for old school brass pounding. It's not even really a contest, but rather a chance to get on the air with CW at any comfortable speed, using a straight key. It's a great excuse to rag chew with some old timers, and get those boat anchors on the air. If you are lucky, you can catch K6KPH, the marine coast station that also operates KPH and KSM. I've heard them a number of times and know that they plan to be on the air again. The event runs from January 1st 0000Z to 2359Z, though most of the activity is on 40 meters on New Year's Eve local time. It's really fun, and I hope to hear you on the air.

As a final note, I want to wish all of you a healthy, happy, and prosperous 2011 and beyond. We are all looking forward to another great year, and particularly the challenge of beating our last Field Day score - KB! I'm taking off for Asia in about 12 hours as I write this. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at "The Friendliest Club Around" when I return.

GUD DX ES GL IN 2011 DE K6WX.

Kristen (K6WX)

**Best
Wishes
to all
for a
safe
and
happy
holiday
season!**

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Awarded by Action of the PAARA Board

*Wally Porter K6URO Dec 2008
Steve Stuntz, K6FS Dec 2007*

FARS / PAARA Winter Banquet Friday, January 21, 2011

**Gerald (Jerry) Dieter Griffin
MD, PharmD, K6MD**

Jerry, who is a medical doctor, has served over 40 years in the US ARMY and US ARMY Reserves. He has been deployed to war zones three times (twice to Iraq and once in Kosovo). He has been active in amateur radio since 1958 and has 329 confirmed DX countries. He operated DX from a number of unusual locations. He was inducted into the CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame in 2008. At age 70, he is still active in immunology research.

See the FARS web site for more details.

Tri-City VE Group 2011 Test Sessions

- Where:** Hurricane Electric
48233 Warm Springs Blvd
Fremont, CA
- When:** Saturday, January 15, 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, February 8, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 12, 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, April 12, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 14, 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, June 14, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, July 9, 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, August 9, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, September 10, 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, October 11, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, November 12, 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, December 13, 6:30 p.m.

For more information, contact
Rita, KI6SSQ@arrl.net, (510) 703-7090
or
Bernhard, AE6YN@arrl.net, (510) 364-0611
or visit
www.sbara.org.

Congratulations to the winners of the December 2010 Raffle



GRAND PRIZE: Phil Steffora / K6TT / Elecraft K3 Transceiver

Congratulations to Phil on winning PAARA's 200th Radio!

- 2nd Prize: Rick Melrose, K6RDM Yaesu FT-1900R
2m/55W/Mobile
- 3rd Prize: David Ranch, KI6ZHD Solarlink FR-500 AM/FM/
SW Radio
- 4th Prize: Robert Van Tuyl, K6RWY Two FRS Radios
- 5th Prize: Jean Claude Guillou, W6JVG CR-2 Short-Wave
Radio Kit
- 6th Prize: Joe McGaken DBJ-1 VHF-UHF Dual-Band J-Pole
- 7th Prize: Anthony Kooij, W6AWK Programmable Message
Fan
- 8th Prize: John Miller, K6MM Gordon West CW Speed
Builder 6 Tape Set
- 9th Prize: Jim Thielemann, KI6KVW Nine-LED Flashlight

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
of PAARA's exciting monthly raffles!**

PAARA had a remarkable year in 2010! If you are not yet a member, please join PAARA now and experience fun 2011 events with the "friendliest club around."

K6AK Jim

PAARA Exemplary Service Award

Gerry Tucker, N6NV 2005

Rice Family 2006

Jim K6AK, Lisa KG6KQS, Kyle KG6MSK

Wally Porter, K6EURO 2007

Vic Black, AB6SO 2008

??? - 2009



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PAARA “The Friendliest Club Around”

January 2011 Raffle Prizes



FIRST PRIZE: Wouxun* KG-UV3D-2 Dual Band HT 2m/440Mhz

* Pronounced “Oh-Sheng”

- Frequency Range 136-174 MHz & 420-470 MHz
- Dual Display
- 13 Hour Operating Time
- Programmable Via USB or Serial Cable and Keypad
- 5 Watts of RF Power on VHF / 4 Watts on UHF

SECOND PRIZE: Samlex SEC-1223 23-Amp Switching Power Supply

- Input Voltage 100-130 or 200-260VAC
- Output Voltage 13.8 VDC
- Dimensions 7.0 X 8.25 X 2.2 Inches
- Advanced Switch-Mode Technology
- Weight 4 lbs



THIRD PRIZE: Battery Tender Junior / 12V / 0.75A / 4-Step Charging / Auto-Float

FOURTH PRIZE: Kill-A-Watt / AC Electricity Usage Monitor

FIFTH PRIZE: Pocket Reference

SIXTH PRIZE: CQ Amateur Radio Calendar 2011-2012

SEVENTH PRIZE: Six JTS Dog-Bone Insulators

EIGHTH PRIZE: Mini-Log

Since February 2003, **200 Radios**, including FOUR Elecraft K3s, a Yaesu FT-847, an Icom 706 MK IIIG, a Yaesu FT-897D, and TWO Elecraft KX1s have gone to Fellow Hams.

Special Thanks to Howard, Jon, Mark, and everyone at HRO for their continued support!

de K6AK Jim

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO MAKE A PARACHUTE MOBILE JUMP

Chronicle of our Sept 2009 operation at Byron, CA

by Mark Meltzer, AF6IM, "Jumper 1"

~ Part 2 ~

(Continued from the December 2010 issue of PAARAGraphs) During opening, I carefully check for other traffic. After canopy inflation, I look for collapsed cells, tears, broken lines, and other problems. I will leave the steering toggles in their stowed position so that they configure the canopy in a "half flaps" slow speed flight mode. I try a few turns by pulling on the rear risers. The safety check is complete. Now I can take in the SPECTACULAR views of SF Bay, the Pacific Ocean, and the Sacramento River Delta. I can see the buildings in SF, all the bridges and many airplanes too, fortunately none nearby. I then look straight down and it literally takes my breath away. I think to myself, "all that is keeping me from falling 13,000 feet is some sewn nylon fabric and a few surprisingly thin Spectra polyester lines." It is a sobering thought. I ask myself, "would you ride in an elevator suspended by only a bunch of thin polyester cords?" My answer is "no," but it isn't practical to use steel cables on a parachute so I am stuck with what I have. "Might as well enjoy the ride Mark, and stop driving yourself crazy," I think to myself as I settle down and start attending to the tasks at hand.

I look around for traffic again as this area has quite a few gliders and powered planes, see no conflicts, then pull out my speaker mic, key it and announce, "Mission Control, JUMPER 1, AF6IM, open at 13,000 feet, good canopy, safety checks complete, ready for comms." I exchange greetings with our Crew Chief Jon Gefaell, K6OJ, then I work call after call. It all goes incredibly well, callers are courteous and patient, and the thrill is mutual as I work hams from all over on 2 meter FM simplex. At times, the breathtaking view and the eerie feeling of being suspended above it by only a few cords is overwhelming and unsettling. I force myself to "reset" and consciously focus on deciphering the numerous incoming calls. Since I can hear stations over a two hundred mile diameter but their hearing range for other ground stations is far smaller, doubles and triples abound. It takes some work to sort it out.

As I float miles above a beautiful California summer landscape, I feel truly blessed being able to enjoy such an exciting hobby a month ahead of my 60th birthday. When I was a new jumper at age 18, 59 was absolutely ANCIENT. I lie to myself that 60 is the new 40, times have changed, I am not really so old, etc. It is easy to deceive yourself at 13,000 feet, perhaps slightly hypoxic, participating in an extreme sport populated by wild hedonistic young people. I am not in denial about aging. I just am crazy about skydiving. I love it as much as I did when I made my first jump in 1968. I was hooked on my first jump. I just can't see quitting the incredible rush and feeling of euphoria that comes with every jump. It's also a really cheap thrill at only \$17 for a ride to 14,000 feet for experienced skydivers. I don't drive fast cars, my wife is my own age, and tattoos and piercings don't appeal to me at all. I am just an older guy who isn't ready to hang up his rig yet -- it's really just that simple.

Most of the time, I have jumper 2 in sight, but not always. My pulse rate rises really quickly when I cannot see him. Five California jumpers have died this summer in canopy collisions. A call from mission control tells me that jumper 2 is half a mile west of my position (in the sun, which is why I cannot see him) and I relax for a few moments. Mission control relays a helpful suggestion from jumper 1 that I head further west as lower winds have increased. At about 3500 feet I tell the callers that I have to pay attention to navigating back to the landing area and will be in listen mode only from 3000 feet down to landing. One by one they fade out as I descend below the Altamont Pass hills that cut me off from the SF Peninsula. Oddly, KR6DD's signal still comes through long after the others have been blocked. Mission control, sited on a high peak, is loud and clear during every phase of the descent.

Mission control reports with obvious pleasure and excitement that our APRS jump telemetry gear (put together by our Chief Engineer Michael "Mikey" Pechner NE6RD and Scott Miller N1VG of Argent Data) is functioning perfectly

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and that the data packets are already up on the Internet. I am focusing on pulling my rear right riser, steering my canopy upwind and don't acknowledge the call, but a chill runs down my spine as I ponder the enormous power of radio, electronics and networks. I literally shudder knowing that my son Eric, KI6PQR, who shuns ham radio in favor of the Internet, is currently looking at his Dad's (AF6IM-7 on APRS) heart rate, blood oxygen level, altitude, heading and speed from the comfort of his dorm room at Peking University in Beijing China. We truly live in an age of tangible miracles.

At 2500 feet I unstow the steering toggles which takes the trailing edge of the canopy back up to a flush position and I surge forward picking up speed. My chute is now handling more like a nimble fighter plane than a ponderous dirigible. The quiet peace has been invaded by a loud rush of air as my unleashed canopy takes the bit and runs fast. I can pull high *G* banked turns that fling my body out horizontal to the ground and cause me to shed altitude with alarming rapidity. I play around with a few high *G* maneuvers but pay close attention to altitude, position and the location of jumper 2 who, besides me, is the only jumper in the sky. I can see that I will clear the ground hazards and make it to the DZ landing area. I keep an eye out for jumper 2 as I navigate toward the same field that he will be landing in. We are far apart now but will be converging fast as we approach the DZ.

At about 1500 feet I set up for my final approach, making sure I have enough speed to penetrate the wind for an upwind DZ landing. I am bouncing around a lot in turbulence and eye the horizontal wind streamers which show strong gusty winds on the ground. I keep my speed high in the turbulence to insure full canopy pressurization. If you get too slow you can stall or have a canopy collapse. Unlike the old round chutes, these dual surface rectangular ram air canopies have to be piloted or they will crash.

There are no go-arounds in skydiving landings. You only get one shot. The ground rushes up at me. I make last minute small steering corrections to hold an upwind track. I can see my teammate Ray Rogoway W6RAR shooting photos as I make my final approach to touchdown. Just a second before I hit, I pull down hard on both steering toggles, pulling down the rear surface of the canopy and bringing the airfoil to a full stall as I touch down for a soft stand up landing. I gather up the collapsed canopy which is trying to reinflate in the 25 knot wind and then make my touchdown call: "Mission Control, JUMPER 1 AF6IM is on the ground at the DZ, safe landing." I watch jumper 2 make his final approach in high winds and bouncy turbulence to an absolutely perfect standup landing. "MIssion Control, JUMPER 1, JUMPER 2 has touched down on the DZ, safe landing."

Jumpers 1 and 2 walk back toward the packing hanger, post adrenaline rush going full blast, endorphins flowing, thinking of the big one, the high one in which we will launch from above 20,000 feet and all the preparation and planning that lies ahead. Mission control is relaying congratulations from our QSO contacts and thanking all the support crew. A beautiful California summer sunset is playing behind us as we walk toward our friends and loved ones gathered at the DZ fence. It is hard to say which side of the fence has the biggest smiles. High fives, whoops, and offers of cold drinks mark the end of a successful parachute mobile jump. Combining the two hobbies that I love has succeeded beyond my wildest expectations.

As I drive home I ponder going higher, using oxygen and communicating with long distance capable HF radio gear. The project is working and is underway. My team mates are enthusiastic and are helping out so generously. We have a lot yet to do but the momentum is there and it I can feel it building. I am totally stoked. It always feels especially good to be alive after a jump. Today, the feeling lingers long after touchdown and finds its way into my dreams.

HAM RADIO'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIRST BLIMPCAST FROM A MAJOR-LEAGUE BASEBALL GAME

Don Tuite, NR7X

Dah-di-dit, di-dah. "DA." That was how Bill DaCosta initialed the broadcast log, and how he identified himself to the control room using the push-to-talk switch on his headset intercom when he was running camera during a live TV show, back in the day. All the engineering crew at WOR-TV were hams, as well as commercial First Phone operators.* This was the early 1960s, when I was a college kid and a summer intern at WOR-TV in New York, and DaCosta ought to be famous because he ran the camera for the first Blimpcast of a Major-League baseball game.

I should know, because I happened to be standing on the roof of Shea Stadium during that game, following the Goodyear blimp with a microwave dish we'd rented from WABC for the occasion.

You're not going to find anything about this on the Web. There isn't a great deal there at all about blimps and sporting events, except a couple of mentions of some Orange Bowl coverage back in 1960. I once found a reference to an ABC blimpcast of a NFL game that happened in 1964, making DaCosta's the second blimpcast of a major league sporting event, but that entry seems to have been taken down.

Maybe Bill would be famouser today if the occasion hadn't turned out to be something of a fiasco. Not that any of it was Bill's fault . . . but let me tell the story.

That summer intern gig was my first job that didn't involve arrangements of bowling pins, and it was a good one. Other stations in New York hired college guys for vacation relief, but they didn't all let them learn to work all the production positions, the way WOR did. I knew a guy from school who worked at WNBC who had to report to the UN every day, just in case there might a breaking news story from there, in which case his job would have been to hang a lavalier mike on the reporter. (He never got to do that.) In contrast, I got to rotate between master control on the 83rd floor of the Empire State building**, the WOR studios, then at 1440 Broadway, and Shea, where most days I'd take turns among the video switcher, the audio board and camera 4, behind home plate. (Camera 4 didn't require the ability to anticipate where the play action was about to take place. The guys on the cameras up in the press level – they were all numbered by the bases they covered – had to be baseball fanatics and stay on top of the play action. Me, I just had to truck the camera from side to side, depending on whether the batter was a right- or left-hand hitter. It was the ideal job for a perennial right-fielder who threw like a girl.)

Anyway, on this particular day in '64 or '65 (I can't remember, but it couldn't have been earlier than '64 because the Mets would have still been playing at the Polo Grounds, and it couldn't have been later than '65 because that was the last year before I headed West.), I show up at Shea, and George Reilly, the assistant chief engineer, pulls me aside, hands me a dish and a preamp and shows me how to access the roof. What had happened was that the folks at the Rheingold Beer ad agency had decided that a blimpcast would be a swell promotional event.

This involved some logistical adjustments in the way we worked, which is where Murphy's Law started to play a part. One aspect of that involved the announce team. Normally, former Pittsburgh slugger Ralph Kiner called the play-by-play, and veteran sportscaster Lindsey Nelson did the color. (Ralph Branca had a pre-game show, interviewing the opposing starting pitchers, but he doesn't figure in this tale.)

Trouble began when the blimp pilot got an eyeful of the camera equipment WOR wanted him to carry. These were the early days of color, and WOR had state-of-the-art stuff at Shea – RCA TK-41Cs.

The camera head of a TK-41C weighs 300 pounds, and the viewfinder weighs another 50 pounds. Then the camera control unit is tidily packaged in an 8-foot tall, standard 19-inch rack. The camera head, of course, has to sit on something, and Reilly had proposed a hefty tripod arrangement, in lieu of the standard Houston-Fearless pneumatic pedestal.

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"Gondola deck ain't gonna support that," said the Blimp pilot.

(No kidding.)

So they went back to 1440 Broadway, where WOR was still using black and white TK-35s for shows like Joe Franklin's "Memory Lane," and Claude Kirschner's ancient cartoons, and hauled a TK-35 back to LaGuardia, where the Blimp was waiting. Compared to a TK-41, a TK-35 was virtually a handicam.

Meanwhile Nelson needed an audio link for his end of the broadcast. It would have been illegal, and it this part of the story is probably not at all true, but the scuttlebutt was that they had rigged up a bootleg CB link for Nelson.

Do you want to know how the test flight turned out? Er, the test flight and the broadcast were the same event.

So comes game time, and I'm up on the stadium roof with my gear and a magnificent view of the Worlds Fair site and all the cemeteries in Flushing, Queens, and there's the mighty Goodyear Blimp, gingerly sharing the airspace with all the jet traffic at Kennedy and LaGuardia.

So what transpires?

First of all, let me state for the record that there was never a violation of FCC regulations, because Lindsey Nelson's audio link simply did not work. Poor Ralph Kiner had to call the entire game himself, and he was pretty hoarse by the end of it.

Next, let me tell you that you get some interesting multipath effects when you mix together a 12-inch microwave dish, a moving source that's at best half a mile away, and acres and acres of parking lot, filled with the reflective steel roofs, hoods and trunks of 20,000 or so automobiles.

It would have helped to have a variable attenuator between the microwave dish and the rest of the electronics, but all I had was a fixed, 6-dB gain stage that I could either have in place or removed. What resulted was a combination of ghosting from the multipath, plus the kind of diagonal herringbone you get when you overload the front end of an analog TV receiver.

But meanwhile, Bill DaCosta (remember Bill?) is getting some dandy pictures. And every once and a while the angles were just right, and my picture stabilized, ta-daa! The technical director punched up my feed from the blimp and out it went to millions of TV sets across the Greater New York market.

Except the blimp shots were black-and-white. Everything else from the ballpark was in glorious color.

Now, an analog TV set has a circuit called a "color killer." It looks for the eight cycles of reference color subcarrier on the "back porch" of each and every line of an NTSC color-TV signal, and if it doesn't see the burst, it turns off all the color-processing circuitry in the set, so the viewer doesn't get any weird moiré rainbow effects when he's watching something in black-and-white.

Only sometimes, there's a glitch when the color-killer pops in and out, and that's what a bunch of people with color-TV sets in the Greater New York market were seeing far more frequently than they'd want to. You know the old line about the station switchboard lighting up?

So, as Walter Cronkite would have said, "That's the way it was." And the way it was is probably why you've never heard of Bill DaCosta. But he was a great guy. All those hams were.

* There was one exception to the all-ham crew. My undergraduate commuting partner and grad-school room-mate, Tony Monko, was not a ham. In fact, he didn't have a First Phone, either. He was, however, a marine operator, and he had a First Telegraph. He was probably the only one among us who could copy 35 wpm in his head while solving a crossword puzzle.

** Someday, I'll tell you about the night I ran a Heathkit "Twoer" – a 5-Watt, crystal-controlled. superregenerative, tube rig from an open window of the telecine room on the Long Island side of the building. Good DX for a repeaterless era. And yeah, I read where they're finally getting around to fixing those windows so they don't open. (And yes, I knew people who said they'd been working there when the B-25 flew into the 79th floor in 1945.)



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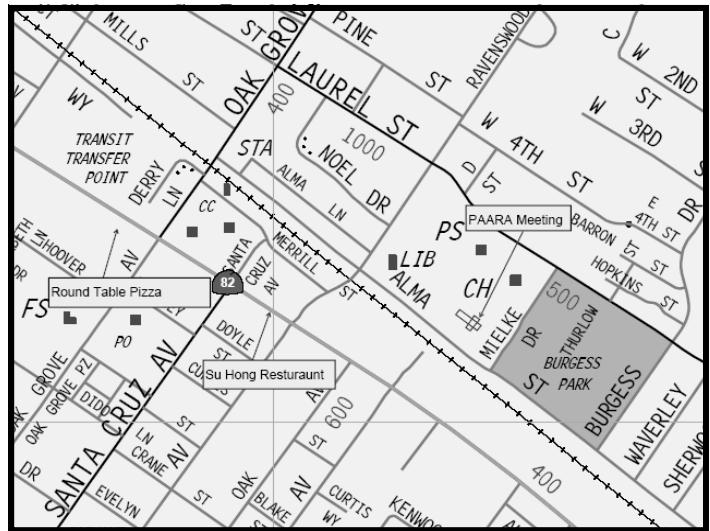
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Info and Swap Session every Monday evening at
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5 th	Mike Bray - N6MEB



Directions to PAARA meeting:
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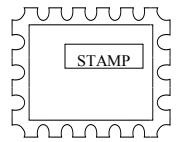
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The image shows a black Motorola TMC-UD710A mobile phone standing upright next to its original packaging box. The phone has a flip design with a dark grey or black finish. The box is also black with the model name 'TMC-UD710A' and 'Motorola' printed on it.

A black Kenwood TS-50 amateur radio transceiver with a digital display showing "RIGIDONG" and "N1552AB". It is positioned next to a vertical blue panel with the word "KENWOOD" printed on it.

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