

# The Short Circuit

Newsletter of the Arctic Amateur Radio Club

Fairbanks, Alaska

June 2013

## Field Day is Just Days Away! Bring Family and Friends

The Arctic Amateur Radio Club plans another fun Field Day June 22-23, this time at Chena Lakes Recreation Area in North Pole. The prominent location should bring hams and visitors alike, and we hope to see many family members there.

ARRL Field Day is the single most popular on-the-air event held annually in the US and Canada. More than 35,000 radio amateurs gather with their clubs, groups or simply with friends to operate from remote locations. Field Day is

a picnic, a campout, practice for emergencies, an informal contest and, most of all, FUN!

This year we hope to demonstrate HF prowess as well as special operations for satellite and digital modes. Visitors can expect to see many aspects of ham radio demonstrated. Bleeding edge technology will be operating alongside more conventional radio equipment. A broad spectrum of technology will be available to see up close.

A highlight of Field Day is always the fellowship that accompanies a team effort. For some, FD is a contest, for others a chance to show off our hobby to the community. A certain camaraderie comes from an event like this.

Please remember – positions and activities are based upon a sign-up priority. **Sign up NOW to get the positions you'd be most interested in.** Contact Neal Brown W7USB at [neal-brown1@icloud.com](mailto:neal-brown1@icloud.com).

## Tour de Cure 2013: A Wrap-Up

by Neal Brown W7USB

Congratulations to every one involved in Tour de Cure 2013 the first public service event of the year for the Arctic Amateur Radio Club. Tour de Cure is unique in that all support for the event itself is voluntary and all the money raised goes directly to research into the causes of Diabetes. Everyone involved started this day with big smiles and a camaraderie of doing something worthwhile. After finishing his 4 1/2 hour stint on net control at dog mushers Jay Helmericks KL2ZA's comment was in effect "this was fun doing something important with ham radio".

To promote why folks should designate the Arctic Amateur Radio Club in their Alaska Permanent Fund Pick,

Click, Give program in 2014 we need to find and do more public service events as the Arctic Amateur Radio Club. Send your suggestions to Neal Brown, president of AARC, at [neal.nbrown\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:neal.nbrown(at)gmail.com).

Tour de Cure staff once again presented us with a major initial challenge in our knowledge of how many participants, and their corresponding bib numbers left in the 7:30 AM 100K and 8:30 AM 50K take off efforts. Jay Helmericks KL2ZA, and Dwight Morris KL7EUY, at dog mushers net control helped Tour de Cure staff understand AARC's needs such that Tour de Cure staff soon provided them with hand written lists for these and the 9:30 AM, 10:30 AM and 11:30 AM take-offs in timely manners.

The team of AARC folks at Farmers Loop/Farmers Loop extension station did a great job sorting through potential chaos with aplomb. The AARC team there consisted of John Slater, KL1AZ, Laqueta MacArthur KD5WEV and Larry Knapman KL2WS.

At the Farmers Loop/Farmers Loop extension station John Slater KL1AZ

sent the following information: We had a lot of concern for the over all safety of bib #54 a 50K rider who at the Farmers loop check point became very confused and disoriented. She and her riding partner were the last folks to pass thru our check point on the second half of the 50K route at approximately 1400 hrs.

Daniel Wietchy submitted the following comment: "There is a synchronicity that occurs between the ham radio operators during any event and here is one from this Tour de Cure. For instance, John Slater's concern about bib #54 was also mentioned on the air."

"I was sitting and monitoring the riders at 8.5 mile: CHSR (where the checkpoint SHOULD HAVE BEEN) simultaneously heard the on-air comment and watched Jerry Curry KL7EDK breeze by as a roving AARC rider on his motorcycle. Jerry was heading east to sweep the far leg of the course."

So Dan, concerned over the rider in question headed west to sweep the area where bib #54 was last seen. Hey – Jerry

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**AARC is now an Official Choice for Pick-Click-Give!**

Tour from p. 2 CAN'T be everywhere.... As it turned out, he found her riding partner waiting at the Farmers Loop/Steese checkpoint and waited while she arrived – minutes later. Dan wrote, “This kind of almost unconscious concern for the riders is rarely mentioned in any of the write-ups about what actually happens during the event. I would imagine Jerry does this mental search & find all day long, only to later do a final sweep, making sure no one is left unattended.”

The amount of up and down of Weller Hill and Nordale Hill on Chena Hot Springs Road caused a few Tour de cure 100K and 50K riders to shorten their rides which in turn challenged AARC staff reporting who had and had not passed their stations.

**AARC voiced concern that the 9 mile check station and turn around position for the 50K was in a bad location** for radio communication and a small somewhat cramped and dangerous location for bicycle riders to get aid. Great thanks to Linda AD4BL and Bill Mullen, KE4ITP for the efforts they made to understand and repeatedly report their data to net control.

Larry Ledlow Jr. N1TX, hovered at the 100K turn around at 23 mile Chena Hot Springs Road. Reports were loud and clear. The first riders hit the mark about two hours after leaving Musers Hall. Over 20 riders were in and out before noon.

Bib 108 presented the biggest challenge to Larry, AARC and Tour de Cure by arriving late at 23 mile and then moving slowly back. See the sidebar on page 3.

It was a bit exasperating that the Tour de Cure staff made no attempt to log in who had and who had not returned to the finish line. With at least #108 still in the field, some operators had concern when HQ stated shutting down operations at 2 PM.

Jerry Curry, KL7EDK's service roving Arctic Amateur Radio Club

**Dan Wietchy KL1JP wrote the following which may help many of us understand the kind of thinking event organizers go through:** Many events such as Tour de Cure as well as the local running events, including the Equinox marathon, terminate their support activities after X hours. I can attest this is very true for the marathon. Almost all of the support staff fold up their tables and go home after 6 hours. Some good natured road-side neighbors leave bottled water, cool watermelon and encouraging signage on roadside tables but no people. Usually – after 8 hours, you are on your own. This had been true for the Yukon Quest too.

There is a competitive “time-line” and if you come in after that, you’re considered combining the Quest with a “camping trip” and you are on your own. Historically the AARC had always manned the log cabin until the very last musher came in but many others, including Tour de Cure staff assume you might be combining the Tour route with a shopping spree or a trip to Barnes & Nobles.... Don’t laugh because that’s exactly what happened several years ago when several of the Tour riders went to B&N for a mid-route coffee break. Go-figure!!!

As previously mentioned, the Tour de Cure is borderline chaos. The AARC club helps to keep the darned thing moderately organized – despite the Tour de Cure officials. Akin to the Quest, the AARC motto for the Tour de Cure also should be “Until the Last Rider Comes In”.

the routes on his motorcycle helped solve several questions about who was exactly where and when. Tour de cures first first aid station was approximately 9 miles from the start at Spirit of AK credit union next to McDonalds across from the box stores on the Johansen and posed problems for everyone trying to figure out who was where during the 25K circuit. Jerry rode portions of that route several times and made a couple of forays up Chena Hot Springs road to report on riders who slowed more than anticipated.

**Daniel Garner of Delta Jct, AK, came to Fairbanks to take his first licensing exam, but showed up first thing in the morning at dog mushers to help set up net control.** Not much later Daniel Wietchy KL1JP, took Daniel on a ride about to see the AARC Tour de cure stations. And then ---Daniel passed his technician class license at the AARC sponsored sessions in Noel Wein library in the early afternoon. Congratulations Daniel.

Two things, 1) clearly the AARC folks involved took seriously their concern for the safety of the riders in Tour de Cure, and 2) it really was fun.

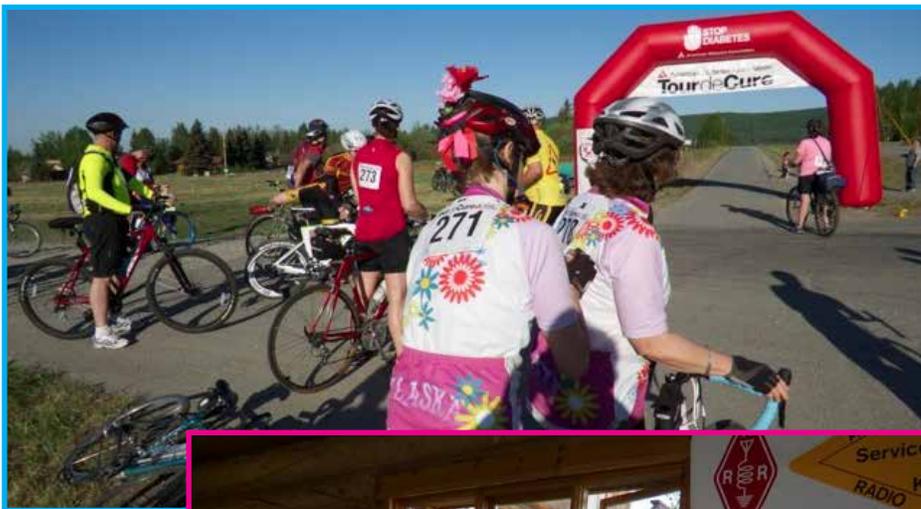
AARC wants to be a part of Tour de cure 2014.

**Thanks to all involved:**

- Neal Brown W7USB
- Helen Brown KL0CM
- whose spirit was present, though she physically was not.*
- Jerry Curry KL7EDK
- Jay Helmericks KL2ZA
- Larry Knapman KL2WS
- Larry Ledlow Jr. N1TX
- Connie Ledlow KL1BE
- Laqueta MacArthur KD5WEV
- Dwight Morris KL7EUY
- Bill Mullen KE4ITP
- Linda Mullen AD4BL
- Marty Thomas KL2MR
- Myles Thomas KL1NU
- Daniel Wietchy KL1JP



100k riders first out



Jay KL2ZA

Dwight  
KL7EUY



Valley Center was a welcome rest stop for two dozen riders.

## A Big Blue Carrot and Gravy

by Larry Ledlow, Jr. N1TX

Bib #108 (Mary) quit the ride at Nordale Road. The afternoon temperature was getting just too hot, and she was starting to show signs of heat exhaustion, which she recognized herself. I drove her back in, and we arrived at Musers Hall about 2:30.

I'm glad I followed her. She kept trying to shoo me away. "I have a cell phone and a friend willing to come pick me up." No dice. "This is my job." I knew if she became incapacitated, a cell phone wouldn't do any good. She had no riding partner.

I played leapfrog with her all the way from Valley Center, coaching her and cheering her on every mile or two. She called me her "blue carrot" (color of my truck). Out by Two Rivers School she was really getting discouraged, but I told her about the three hills ahead and THEN the flats. You should have seen her huge smile when she hit the downhill at 15 mile!

From there she made good time to 9 mile check point. I honestly thought she would quit there, but she wanted to keep going. I met her at the bend just east of Nordale, and she looked up at the hill. I could see in her red face it was just too daunting. She rolled up slowly and said, "I think I'm done."

Nevertheless, Mary was (and should have been) enormously proud of her accomplishment. I was proud of her, too. At no time did I think it appropriate to discourage her from achieving a personal best, although I know some would have. I was miffed when HQ closed up at 2 PM sharp. The sweeper (me) and HQ could have coordinated any necessary aid had something gone wrong. Parts of CHSR have poor cell coverage.

Let me just say this in closing: I was prepared to follow her for the next six hours if she wanted to continue. Sure, I wanted to go home and sip a cold one in the shade. But the main reason I volunteer for events like this is because I want to help people. My "job" is to do just that, not sit, walk, or drive around looking geeky for a few hours so I can get a free meal, add a patch or t-shirt to my collection, or enhancing my feeling of self-importance. Those are all the wrong reasons to volunteer for public service events.

I know many of you feel the same way, and I would encourage you to convey this idea of commitment and true public service to those who just don't get it. In short, walk the talk. The rest is just gravy.

# Eagle Flight Nets Two New Hams

by Neal Brown W7USB

The Arctic Amateur Radio Club worked with the Eagle Community School this past school year to teach material leading to middle school students taking and passing the technician class ham radio license exam.

With Myles Thomas KL1NU as pilot, volunteer examiners Bill Brookins KC8MVW, Linda Mullen AD4BL and Neal Brown W7USB left Fairbanks a little after 9 am Saturday, 25 May, and 75 minutes later landed in Eagle, Alaska. Blocks of ice from the 16 May break-up of the Yukon River, which caused the exam to be shifted from 18 May to 25 May, had been moved off of local main roads late the day before.

Five students and one adult took

exams Saturday, 25 May. Student Sunny Hemen (now KL3RN) and Rick Nix (now KL3RO) passed. Sunny was awarded one of the five new hand held 2-meter/70 cm units offered by Stanton Lewis KK7STL. Neal Brown W7USB awarded a similar new unit to Rick, who passed both his technician class exam and general class exam.

Three of the five students accepted the offer to take a second exam after failing the first and one student passed the second exam.

This was a first time effort to teach Technician Class materials for middle school level students by Marlys House KL3ME, the principal teacher in Eagle Community School and Neal Brown W7USB, with Neal's effort delivered principally by

weekly 30-minute audio/video interactions using SKYPE.

Marlys and Neal plan to evaluate, improve and expand this effort for 2013/2014 school year.

This effort fit into 4H curriculum for the Eagle Community School led by Marla Lowder of the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Alaska Fairbanks and implemented by Ann Millard Eagle Community School principal.

Rick Nix serves as the Eagle Community School custodian, and greatly assisted Marlys and Neal in the hands-on classroom efforts that were undertaken in Eagle. No doubt his new ticket will be of big value to the school and the greater community.



## Minutes from the June Board Meeting

Neal started the meeting at 7:05p. In attendance were: Mac-KL2GS, Laqueta-KD5WEV, Bill-KE4ITP, Linda-AD4BL, Steve-KL7XO, John- KL1AZ, Myles-KL1NU, Neal-W7USB, Jerry-KL7EDK, Billy-KC8MVW, Sterling-WL7TV. A quorum existed.

Neal is still looking for public service events we can support to help promote interest in Ham Radio. TVRR needs assistance in watching for spot fires along the tracks on days when they run the H.K.Porter steam engine. It was felt that this was not really a communications related event where we could be of assistance. They need help, but not so much from ham radio communications.

Linda reminded us that on the 28th of August we will be having a full blown station at the Emergency Preparedness EXpo at the Carlson Center. She is hoping we can set up both HF and VHF stations. Linda also updated us on the progress of getting a VHF antenna up on the Carlson Center building for emergency use. The Carlson Center has been designated as an 'overflow' point for FMH and also a evacuation/staging location. We are hoping to get a Diamond X-50 and coax installed and dropped into the room designated as the command post there. Recent meetings with FNSB are starting to move the project along.

Neal gave a lengthy report on his interaction with BLM and DNR regarding several locations we have equipment installed. At several locations we are looking to remove our equipment completely. Neal is working with these agencies to see if some of the equipment could be brought down during their normal maintenance checks at the sites. The first one we hope to get removed is Glacier/Eldridge. The second one is Mt.Fairplay. Other locations we are hoping to get land use agreements for so we can maintain a presence.

Nenana is still up in the air. There is a good tower but appears to be located on AK RR land or State land. In either case it's close to the road right-of-way and may become an issue. In order to use that location we would need to get a 'use' agreement and then find out if the new building could be moved there and utilized. Last item would be how to deal with lack of AC power to that location. Neal has the repeater equipment secured at his house for now.

John is hoping to get Donnelly back up and running this summer. We have new batteries and the wind generator has been repaired and ready to go back for installation. He would like to try and get this done during July. It will take a work party to get all the stuff installed and turned back on. The batteries are in Delta and will have to be transported up to the site via pickup truck. There are 6 (2.0v batteries) in the new configuration. We will also have to put the mast for

the wind generator back up. This will require a new piece of 2" x 12-14' pipe to support it unless the old one can be found. We also have a new Low Voltage disconnect to add to the new battery plant to keep them from becoming totally discharged.

Discussions about how to advertise Ham Radio and get public interest as well as drawham to our meetings brought up FaceBook as a possible however finding someone with enough time to manage a FaceBook page will be difficult. Our web master is doing a great job on the web site and the work involved with a FaceBook page would probably severely overload him. Another suggestion was to use the KUIAC Community Announcement Calendar which only requires an email several weeks in advance of an event. This may be the best avenue for the present time.

The BOD moved the regular July Club meeting to the 12th since it would have fallen on a holiday weekend. The July BOD meeting is scheduled for the 13th at KL1AZ house in the form of a picnic starting around 3pm. There will be no Interior 2 meter Net on Thursday July 4th. Program for the July meeting would include a Field Day Recap, a Motley Group Picnic Recap and possibly Steve Estes' presentation on Radio Mobile path profiling program. Steve was not sure if he would be in town but if here will be glad to do the presentation. Neal will also appoint a nomination committee for the BOD elections to be held August 10th.

John made a motion to authorize up to \$150 for food and beverages for the Field Day event at Chena Lakes. Neal seconded. Motion passed. Linda said that Lorrie Moore was very thankful to the ham community for all the help in getting the tower down and stuff sold. Linda and Bill will pick up the remaining ham gear later this week. The plan would be to set up a table at the Ham Fest and try to get reasonable offers for the remaining equipment and forward the money to her. Lorrie was a good asset to the ham community and she will be missed.

Sterling gave a quick overview of the Ham Fest schedule. It is schedule for 10 August 8am to 5pm. So far he has the following activities lined out: emergency communications, ham license testing, surface mount technology, satellite class, and BOD elections. Sterling has already secured a few donations for door prizes. Getting large scale vendors to come to Alaska for a 1 day event is not cost effective for them so for future planning the club may wish to expand the event into a two day time frame. Laqueta suggested we give anyone new who is joining the club a free food pass for a hot dog and drink. Steve made a motion to adjourn. Myles seconded. Motion passed. Meeting ended at 8:23p.