FEEDBACK

Warminster Amateur Radio Club Web Page www.k3dn.org

May 2000

President's Message

This is a busy time of the year as spring gets into full force. Flowers to plant, fertilizer and mulch to spread, lawns to mow, the list is never-ending. It is also a busy time for WARC. The nice weather (if the rain ever stops) increases the demand for our public service. If each of our members signs up for one or two events, our public service needs would be well covered. Don't forget to sign up at the upcoming meetings.
Mother Nature has not cooperated with our efforts to proceed with our Adopt-A-Highway program clean-up of Jacksonville Road. Cancelled due to snow on the original date and rain the next, our luck has not been too good! It looks like the next date for the highway clean-up will be Sunday, May 21, the Sunday after Mother's Day.
Hopefully we'll be rid of the rain for Hamfest 2000 on Sunday May 7th. Preparations are moving along nicely. If you have not already, please contact Tony Simek (N3YNH) or Roy Conners (K3TEN) and let them know when you are available to help. We all need to pitch in for this one. By the way, Doc Whitticar (W3GAD) won the hamfest button slogan contest with "Same junk, new vendor". Doc receives a $25 cash prize!
Saturday June 3rd will mark the celebration of Buckingham's 300th birthday. WARC will be helping out with communication for the 5K run and also staffing a table at the event to promote amateur radio and WARC. If we have the interest, we could set up a station and have live demonstrations. Let me know if you are interested in helping with this event.
We are still experiencing interference on the 147.09 MHz repeater. The problem appears to be more global then first thought with other area repeaters on the same frequency also reporting interference. We have several people working to resolve this challenging problem. Contact George Brechmann (N3HBT) if you have suggestions or input regarding the interference.
The WARC officer elections will be coming up at the June general meeting. If you are interested in serving the club in this capacity, please contact Steve Larsen (KA3ZLY) of the nominating committee to let him know you are interested.

See you at the next meeting,
Rocky, N3FKR

Upcoming Public Service Events: Date, Event, Contact

Sunday April 30, March of Dimes Walks, Doc Whitticar W3GAD
Sunday May 7, WARC Hamfest 2000, Tony Simek N3YNH
Sunday May 21, Adopt-A-Highway, Hugh Hart N3SOQ
Monday May 29, Warminster Memorial Parade, George Brechmann, N3HBT
Saturday June 3, Buckingham 300th Birthday, Rocky Pistilli N3FKR
Thursday June 8, Five Ponds golf outing, George Brechmann N3HBT
Saturday/Sunday June 17/18, Willow Grove Air Show, Al Folsom KY3T
Saturday/Sunday June 24/25, Field Day, Doc Whitticar W3GAD

Earth and Space Science

"Arc to Arcturus"

The spring evening provides stargazers with a view of one of the brightest and most interesting stars visible from our region of the world, and; the fourth brightest star known to man. This star's sphere is so large that twenty five(25) billion earths could fit inside. It lies approximately thirty six(36) light years away from us, a neighbor in terms of light years, and emanates a yellow-orange glow. It emits light one hundred times the brilliance of our own Sun. This star is Arcturus, Latin for "guardian of the bear", and it dominates the eastern sky throughout the spring and lies high overhead throughout the early summer. It is the inferior most part of the constellation Bootes(boo-oh-teez), the herdsman, which resembles a giant kite(checkout the shape of the stars above of Bootes and you can imagine a kite with Arcturus as the part where the tail would be attached).

How does one locate Arcturus? Just remember, "arc to Arcturus" and you will have no difficulty locating the star. Locate the Big Dipper, part of the constellation of Ursa Major(the great bear). This is easy because the Big Dipper occupies a very large portion of our sky during the spring and summer. Ursa Major is a circumpolar constellation, which means it can always be found in the northern sky following a circular path around the pole star-- Polaris(the North Star). After you locate the Big Dipper, trace the path of the handle of the Dipper as it moves away from the pot. Continue to trace the path in the same basic ARC as the handle and as you move away from the Dipper. At about thirty degrees(three fist lengths for all us non-technical people) you will come to a very bright object- the star Arcturus. You will know when you have found it because it is obviously more brilliant than anything else in that region of the sky.

So why is Arcturus one of the most interesting stars? For two reasons: first, because its light opened the gates to the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago and, second; because it follows a peculiar path around our galaxy's center. In 1933, the light emitted by Arcturus was focused onto a photo-electric cell to produce an electric current. That electric current was amplified and used to turn on a switch which opened the gates to the World's Fair, held that year in Chicago, Illinois. That light had taken 36 years to reach Earth and had left Arcturus in 1897! Another interesting fact about the star is that while our Sun AND most other stars orbit in the galactic plane(our galaxy is shaped like a flat, spiral disk with a central bulge), Arcturus orbits the galaxy in a PERPENDICULAR fashion(90 degrees to the galactic plane). In other words, instead of traveling along together with us in the circular galactic plane, it is plunging down from above THROUGH our galactic plane! It takes our Sun(and our solar system) 240 million earth- years to revolve around the center of our galaxy-- a cosmic year. Because of Arcturus' peculiar orbit, when we next return to this same point in our orbit around the Galaxy's center(240 million years from now), Arcturus will be somewhere else in its perpendicular orbit. In other words, during this one cycle in time, our orbital paths have crossed and the star is visible to us. However, it is highly unlikely that our paths will ever cross again. It has been estimated that in half a million years from now, Arcturus will have faded into oblivion! So say "hello and good-bye" to Arcturus while the opportunity exists, for we may never meet again.

Keep Looking Up!

Mike
W3MJP

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