

***THE CHURCH IS UNAVAILABLE ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 10.
MEET FOR PIZZA AT THE PIZZA SHOPPE AT 7:30.***

**JOHNSON COUNTY RADIO
AMATEURS CLUB, INC.**
P.O. Box 93
Shawnee Mission, KS 66201

FEEDBACK

JANUARY 2020



JCRAC club members congregated at the Overland Park Christian Church for the annual Christmas party. The festivities began with a 2-liter bottle of Sprite that fell from the buffet table, opened and spewed its sticky contents in one direction and, pursuant to Newton's third law of motion, the equal and opposite reaction sent the bottle flying the other direction until it smashed into the opposite wall.

President Bill Gery, KA2FNK convened the meeting, sent the crowd through the buffet and called upon Chip Buckner, ACØYF to introduce Deb Buckner's "A Contact from St. Nick". Above, Don Warkentien, W0DEW, one of several St. Nick's in attendance. (Photo by NØCVW.)

JANUARY MEETINGS

***January 10 -- NO MEETING. MEET
FOR PIZZA AT 7:30***

***January 24 -- Annual Program
Selection meeting***

The Johnson County Radio Amateurs Club normally meets on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month at 7:00 PM at the Overland Park Christian Church (north entrance), 7600 West 75th Street (75th and Conser), west of the Fire Station.

Much of the membership travels to the Pizza Shoppe at 8915 Santa Fe Drive for pizza buffet and an informal continuation/criticism/clarification of the topics raised at the meeting ... or anything else.

LEAVE THE CHURCH, TURN RIGHT (WEST) ON 75TH. TURN LEFT (SOUTH) ON ANTIOCH. TURN RIGHT (WEST) ON SANTA FE. PIZZA SHOPPE IS JUST PAST THE SONIC ON YOUR LEFT.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 - December meeting
- 2 - President's Corner
- 3 - December minutes
Eddy Paul, KYØF, SK
- 4 - Hambone and the Most Exciting Christmas Ever - A Hambone Story - Jaimie Charlton, ADØAB

>> THE FEEDBACK <<

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Johnson County Radio Amateur Club, Inc.*

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Photos by NØCVW

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Once again, Deb Buckner, KDØRYE, treated club party-goers to a Christmas tale with an Amateur radio twist.



I hope everyone had a good Christmas and

New Year. The weather ending 2019 and so far in 2020 has been really mild so far. The mild weather can not last the whole winter.

At breakfast club, with it being 20 years since the y2k issue, we had a good time remembering where we all were for the “event” of the century. It seems most of us were responsible for monitoring computers systems as the new year began.

Please note that the first meeting in January (10th) we will go directly to pizza at 7:30 pm as the church is in use.

- Bill Gery - WA2FNK

Johnson County Radio Amateurs Club - December 20, 2019

Meeting Date: Friday December 20, 2019. The meeting started at 7:00PM.

Attendance: Self introduction with name and call sign.

President Bill invited people to visit the buffet line. When all had eaten, Chip Buckner, ACØYF introduced Deb Buckner's "A Contact from St. Nick".

Eddy Paul, KYØF, SK

Eddy Scott Paul, died on December 18, 2019 of complications related to post-surgical infection.

Paul earned his BA in Business Administration and Accounting, served as an officer in the US Army Signal Corps, did computer work for the Louisiana Department of Revenue before coming to work at Sprint. He earned his Technician and General licenses in June 2009 and upgraded to Extra the following March.

In addition to his regular participation in JCRAC events, Eddy was one of the "Hams in Space" who turned an interest in FM satellite communication into a dozens of presentations to clubs, hamfests and conventions around the country. He used that expertise to earn bonus satellite-contact points at Field Day.

Anyone who encountered him will remember his big smile and a bit of a Louisiana drawl.



Hambone and the Most Exciting Christmas Ever

A Hambone Story by Jaimie Charlton, ADØAB

Everything started about a month before Christmas. Finally, for the first time in years, I got all my Christmas shopping done early and I could calmly enjoy the holidays. I was just sitting in my basement ham shack sipping a cup of coffee and reading my latest issue of QST when, “Hey Unck, this is going to be the most exciting Christmas EVER!” shouted Hambone as he nearly tumbled down the back steps.

Living next door, I am accustomed to my nephews and their friends bursting in with excitement as they announce their latest project. So, unperturbed, I looked up and said, “Do tell.”

“Unck, this year is the 100th anniversary of the Christmas in the Park celebration and the city has asked our engineering frat to help make it super high tech. They said it was a last-minute decision - to go high tech, I mean – but they wanted to know if we could do something.”

I replied I thought that celebration usually had a traditional theme. You know, a manger scene, church choirs singing, that sort of thing. I always enjoyed the camaraderie as we reminisced over tiny cups of eggnog and listened to Christmas carols. So, I asked, “Why are they changing it?”

“Oh, they’re not really changing it. It’s more like amping it up,” said Hambone. “They want to recognize how the Christmas in the Park party has improved and changed over the last 100 years. The high tech part is where we come in.”



I thought to myself, really, isn’t Christmas all about tradition? Why change what has worked for 100 years? But, not wanting to be the uncool uncle, I replied, “I can see how you could beef up the eggnog by adding a bit more Christmas spirits, but how are you going to ‘hi-tech’ say, lighting the Christmas tree?”

“You’ll be surprised, Unck. We’ll have a real tree, but it will be totally covered with LED lights that are operated by a series of controllers so the tree seems to be alive. The star at the top will have sort of a mist halo around it. At least, that’s what the people from the Theatrical Arts department say, if it’s not too windy.”

“That sounds interesting,” I replied feigning a modicum of interest in the project.

“But there’s more. The tree will be hidden behind the big stage in the park until the last minute when a miniature train will pull it out fully lit.”

Not giving up, my nephew went on, “The Artificial Intelligence Department guys are providing robot elves to move around in the crowd and hand out little presents to children. The robots will run on wheels and have some sort of a head with a Santa hat. They will have one arm that hands out gifts. They say the ‘bots can interact with children and can easily tell boys from girls and give appropriate gifts. You gotta come and see it!”

I didn’t want to commit to anything because history has taught me that showing very much interest means I will get to pay for stuff when the boys’ enthusiasm exceeds their budget. So, I said, “I think it might be worth going to the park just to see that tree and the robot elves.”

“Oh, you’ll love it, Unck! There will be a manger scene with real people and animals and cool laser projections, singers, bands and even eggnog.”

At this point, I figured that I had fulfilled my avuncular duties and turned back to my magazine and coffee. This was a hint to Hambone that he should leave.

But hambone didn’t leave. Instead, he continued, “I’m working on the tree, Dude and Joey are working on the train that will pull it. Other guys are building the lasers and a dynamite surround sound system.

Besides all that, I’ve heard that about fifty members of a bicycle club are planning ride through with lighted wreaths over their wheels. And a rock band is even providing some on-stage fireworks. I can’t wait ‘till Christmas Eve. It will be epic!

Oh, and one more thing, the entire celebration will be environmentally pure! Everything’s going to be solar powered! A solar energy company is lending us over ten thousand watts of panels.”

“I guess that means the festivities will be during the day,” I said sarcastically as I got up and walked over to my coffee maker. This time Hambone took the hint and left.

see HAMBONE on page 5

from HAMBONE on page 4

Say, have you noticed that lately everything is either awesome or epic?

Mid-afternoon, Christmas Eve Day

Okay, okay, I went to the park.

“Hey Dude,” hollered Hambone to his brother, “It looks like Uncle Elmer has decided to come to the party after all.”

“You’re right, bro. I think Unck is getting more and more into the Christmas spirit as more and more of the eggnog spirit gets into him.”

“Hi boys, it looks like you guys have pulled off the perfect Christmas party. The sunny, crisp day with a light snow is perfect,” I exclaimed.

“I hope everything goes okay,” said Hambone. “We had to make some last-minute changes that we couldn’t test. The two-meter repeater the ham club mobile guys were going to use to coordinate the bicyclists has stopped working. Luckily, Hal, Tim, Dil and Dom all volunteered to watch the route and direct the riders. They have high powered ten-meter rigs in their cars so they can communicate without repeaters. I hope that works.

Hey, they’re calling me, I gotta go. You might wanna get closer to the stage, that blue-grass band you like is up next.”

Well, I do like to listen to *The Blue-Tail Flies*. Their fiddler does an awesome (or is it epic?) job on ‘The Orange Blossom Special’. So, I moved closer to the stage. Which also put me closer to the eggnog stand.

I’ve got to say the party was off to a great start. The band was exuberant and people danced and sang along.

At the height of the excitement, the robot elves rolled through the crowd passing out presents and saying ‘Merry Christmas’ and ‘Please accept my humble gift.’

I thought that was kind of an odd phrase. But then again, you have to know the programmers.

No one seemed to care that it had started snowing a bit harder.

Speaking of programmers, I noticed that the artificial intelligence programming actually was pretty good. Mostly, it identified the girls from the boys and gave an appropriate gift. The girls got gifts with pink ribbons and the boys got blue. But it didn’t really matter, the gifts were pretty much generic, hats, candy, etc.

I said the AI was only pretty good, my present was a pink hat with Kiss Me inscribed on it.

Teenagers loved the bots and were all over them taking selfies. On the other hand, small children seemed to think the bots were some kind of a one-armed monsters out to get them and kept their distance. Except for one little boy who wandered into the robot’s field of view.

Instantly, the robot’s sensors latched onto the boy and determined that he was indeed a boy and needed a blue gift. Rolling over to the boy, the robot extended its long arm and said, “Merry Christmas, please accept my humble gift.”

Startled, the boy took one look at the bot’s long arm with a box on the end, screamed and took off running. At this point it became obvious that in their haste, the bot programmers had not anticipated rejection.

The bot chased the screaming boy through the crowd repeating louder

and louder, “Merry Christmas, please accept my humble gift, merry Christmas, please accept my humble gift.” Some of the crowd, sensing that something was horribly wrong, started to run and scream. Finally, a robot wrangler appeared on the scene and sequestered the wayward bot behind the stage. The other bots also were quietly retired.

To their credit, the *Blue Tail Flies* kept playing without missing a beat.

Finally, the band started to play, ‘We Wish You A Merry Christmas’ and it was time for the main event.

I guess the idea was for the train with Santa Clause to pull the big Christmas tree around and back to the stage where it would park and Santa would entertain the secret wishes of small children. To add to the excitement, cyclists riding heavily festooned bicycles would escort the train on its journey and then disappear guided by the ham radio operators.

Everything started out fine. The brilliantly lit tree emerged from behind the stage pulled by the train. Dude was right, it was awesome. Or, was that epic? Anyway, a few brightly decorated cyclists appeared right on cue and then seemed to disappear, right on cue.

According to Hambone, the train was to follow a route marked by a white plastic strip that was laid down earlier. In yesterday’s rehearsal, I’m told, everything worked perfectly.

Today, the train started out exactly on course following the strip through the crowd with Santa passing out gifts that looked a lot like the robot elves’ gifts. But all was not well.

see HAMBONE on page 6

from HAMBONE on page 5

In many areas, the newly fallen snow covered the plastic strip and confused the train's sensors. Thus, unguided, the train wandered through the crowd. Nobody seemed concerned because no one knew exactly where the train was supposed to go and besides, Santa was waving and smiling.

Eventually, the train found its way back and nearly ran into the stage.

Some of the bicyclists got lost and reappeared because they knew where the train was supposed to go and were confused when it didn't go there.

Hal, the mobile ham radio operator who was parked right beside the stage, was the first to notice the cyclists' confusion. He saw that they couldn't follow the wayward train and in the waning afternoon light, couldn't see the snow-covered path. Realizing that he needed to

alert the other mobile operators, Hal grasped his gray microphone, removed it from its dashboard hook, brought it to his mouth, prepared to speak and pressed its push-to-talk button.

A flash and a bang followed by a dazzling array of red and green flames emerged from the stage. Flaming embers shooting high in the sky gave a surreal light to the whole park as they drifted back to earth.

The tree, still on the move, collected some of the embers in its branches, caught fire and crackled and snapped as the flames added to its brilliant LED light display. In the subdued late-afternoon light it was a truly spectacular sight. A post mortem analysis revealed that the fireworks were installed a day earlier by the rock group that was scheduled to play later that evening. The fireworks were theatrical

roman candles that the drummer would detonate, via wi-fi, at appropriate moments in their show.

The fireworks didn't go off during rehearsal because the ham operators were using low power handie-talkies. But at the last minute the hams had to switch to their mobile rigs. So, when Hal pressed his mic button his much more powerful signal overloaded the detonators and the roman candles did their thing.

Nobody was hurt and the stage hands eventually stopped the tree train and put out the fire.

To their credit, the *Blue Tail Flies* stayed on stage the whole time. But they were last heard playing 'Bring a Torch Jeanette Isabella'.

Hambone was right, this was the most exciting Christmas party ever.

>> JCRAC FEEDBACK <<



Spotter Diane Fiddick spots St. Nick.



Spotter Ted Knapp does not spot St. Nick.