

## **From The President – Sept, 2019 by Gene K3DSM**

Instead of a full “Paragraphs” issue, I am using this format of “Presidents Letters” to keep members informed of our progress. Now that Valley Forge Mountain’s W3PHL 16-76 is working well, we have activity on our 76 repeater. 76 has always been the backbone of our group and has always determined how well our association works. Those of us that are busy working on the Valley Forge site wonder where the rest of our members are.

The work continues at our Valley Forge site. Two weeks ago, we trucked out a second full load of junk from the site. You would have to have been there to wonder why we are doing this, but there has been no room to work on equipment, let alone maintain the building. There is and was 30 plus years of equipment that would never be used again for varying reasons. Much of this equipment was our old retired repeaters, generations of them, but some of this stuff was just donated junk.

As I write this today, Greg KB3AY and I had a mini work party. The ceiling is now fixed and complete. Some antenna cables were rerouted. Antennas stored above the ceiling were removed because they were very old and forgotten and in the way of ceiling repair. Cabinets have been emptied of who knows what. The drawers were cluttered with insulation and mouse droppings. We have now reclaimed the floor space, and by next week, we will get our work bench space back.

The outside back of the shed has a gapping hole, almost 2 foot square, where an old heavy metal cabinet was bolted on. Nothing was inside the cabinet, but it ripped this big hole into the T111 panel where it pulled off. That will be patched on our next trip up. Replacing the T111 would be complicated and expensive, as trim and roofing would be involved. A simple wood patch job should work.

I am hoping I can get another group party to do some painting to try to preserve what is left of the building. That needs to happen before winter.

The air conditioner has a bad compressor and needs to be replaced. That will probably happen next spring. We can’t even get to it in the back for all the junk piled up outside. Most of the equipment will operate without the air conditioning; it is mainly for when we need to do surgery on the repeater. I still would like to obtain a line voltage thermostat to put on it so we could set it at maybe 100 degrees or other higher temperature and use it when temperature becomes a problem. With the ceiling fixed, we should be able to maintain a reasonable temperature.

The side door hinges have frozen and in the case of 2 of the 3, they broke loose and fell off due to stress of trying to open the door when the hinges were frozen. It is literally hanging by a single hinge.

Right after Labor Day weekend, another work party is scheduled where the junk from the end storage section will be cleaned out. The rest of the antennas that we already cut up will also be hauled out. That date is Thursday September 5th weather permitting. Can you believe, about 15 defective old stationmasters just laying around.

In another work party soon, we are going to trench a conduit between the electrical box at the tower and connect up with the electric service panel in the building making for a much better connection. A recent estimate was \$6000-\$7000 for that work, so I will head up a work party to get most of this done. I did a similar job for my “computer shop’s” service several years ago. That electrician said he would not touch it unless he could make everything the way he wanted to do it.

The old battery bank of 4 dead Gel Cells is expected to be removed right after Labor Day. I am hopping to replace that with something easier to maintain and less costly. I use regular Marine deep discharge batteries with a Powergate PG40S controller in my own shack. The Powergate turns a regular power supply and battery into a “UPS”

Tom, W3EX donated a computer and LCD monitor for the repeater site. That will be used to program the controller, program the Kenwood repeater, and also connect to the MESH network. When the workbench is finally cleared next week, it can be installed.

It is my hope to obtain a “4G to Ethernet” Router and use T-Mobiles “IOT” service to get some connectivity at the site. This of course would have to be approved by PARA. As long as there are no downloading of files, needed control should fall within the allotted 500 MB monthly allotment costing only about \$15 a month. The router looks like it is about \$180. Any thoughts?

I still have even more plans for PARA. With the above getting done, we need to then shift thoughts over to our Worcester site. We need to fix the coordination for “backup 76”, and get that site fixed up. The coordination needs to be done sooner than later. The grounds there have been well maintained and there is no reason not to get going. We now have the parts to fix the “Voter” and we should do it. We have remote receivers working that are “not connected”. We need a new amplifier for Worcester to replace the one we stole for Valley Forge. We need to check its antennas and feedlines to make sure that they haven’t failed like Valley Forge did. To the membership, can we get this amplifier expense approved? It would be \$850-900. Can I get someone to head up the Worcester site projects?

Once all this is done, and with more help from others, we can do even more at Valley Forge. We have a controller there that is capable of controlling 3 repeaters at once, either separately or linked. I would like to teach some of our members the programming that I know for the SCOM controller so they could help me. I don’t know everything and I could sure use some help.

PARA members should now realize there is a core group that is working and cares about our “Association”. More activity will attract casual listeners and we may get them as new members, but you need to invite them when you hear them. We are just starting to find a few new users of the repeater. You can also “talk up” PARA on the other repeaters too and let others know PARA is alive and well.

To those that have helped at recent work parties, a special thank you. To those who haven’t, join with us and get active again. Volunteer and also come to the meetings.

Thank you Tim N3TPE, Al KA3ODI, Greg KB3AY, Guy WA3JZN, and Ed K2QNI

Any of you out there remember the Owl net on 76 long years ago and the owl-isms? Lets start a list of PARA-isms. We already have PARAGraphs and PARASites. We even have our very own PARALegal. There’s even our PARAphernalia that we use every day. And the PARAPhrases that we say on the radio. What did I forget? Check in on our weekly net Tuesdays at 8PM on 76 and let us all know what I missed.

And by the way: My Radio Show on WCHE1520 called “Computer Corner” celebrates 15 years this October 1<sup>st</sup>. Its web page is [www.5DRadio.com](http://www.5DRadio.com)