OLE VIRGINIA TIMES

August 2008

Next Meeting: August 18, 2008

PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

Greetings again to all! With summer winding down, the signs of kids getting ready to go back to school are everywhere; shortly all of us with early morning commutes will need to be extra vigilant for children, stopped school buses, etc. It seems unfortunate that the end of summer is so fast approaching.

The W4OVH Special Event operation commemorating the Civil War's Second Battle of Manassas will be held on Saturday, August 30, 2008 at Signal Hill Park in Manassas Park. An announcement is in the August 2008 QST. Additional details are on the W4OVH web site and there will be further announcements at the upcoming OVH meeting and during the regular Thursday night 2 Meter nets.

BPL in Manassas: COMtek has sold its BPL operations in Manassas to Gridplex, but the number of real BPL users was incorrectly reported in the local press. The number of user reported was actually the total number of BPL modems installed ever in the City of Manassas; the real number of remaining users is less than half of that. Larry Silverman, president of Gridplex, told me that Gridplex's focus in the future will be on wireless meter reading and WiFi. Although current BPL operations will continue and new installations will be made if any new BPL customers can be found, the City of Manassas is now pushing for the installation of fiber optic cable everywhere in the City of Manassas. The OVH attendees at past City Council meetings urged such a move, and it appears the City may have listened.

I would like to share an experience I recently had meeting a local area ham who has been licensed since 1964. I recently sold my Ameritron AL-1500 to Chris Ramsey / N4YE, an Extra Class licensee, in Annandale. When delivering the amplifier, I learned that Chris has been blind since birth - something which is almost unimaginable for most of us - not to have vision. Chris' interest in Ham radio began at age 11 when his dad bought him a Lafayette HE80 receiver; his grandparents then introduced him to a local ham (K8MZ) who "hooked" him on ham radio! As a Boy Scout, Chris soon learned Morse code from his braille handbook and obtained his Novice license in 1964 and his General the next
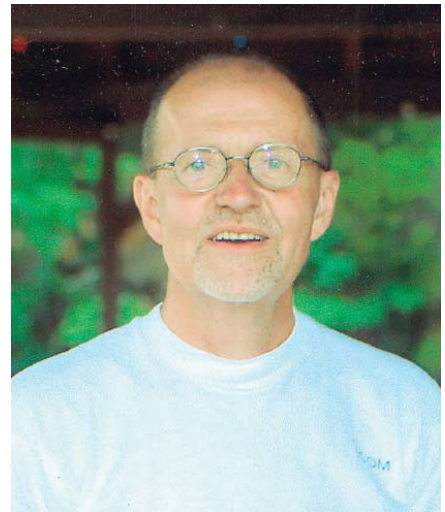
Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
Post Office Box 1255
Manassas, Virginia 20108

OFFICERS

President:	George Tarnovsky	K4GVT	791-5956
Vice Pres:	Wayne Kline	AG4ZZ	791-2100
Secretary:	Wayne Phillips	N7QLK	393-8447
Treasurer:	Joe Dobes	KI4OHR	369-2639

DIRECTORS

Don (Butch) Blasdell	W4HJL	369-2877
Art Whittum	W1CRO	791-4330
Charlie Dale	WA4YGI	361-3091

WEEKLY NETS

Thursdays - 8:00 PM	JOHN H	257-3566

HAMFEST 2008

Chris	KI4POT	361-3257
Bruce	AB8CI	361-8873

FIELD DAY 2008

John H.	KG4NXT	257-3566
Butch.	W4HJL	369-2877

CLUB ROSTER

Blaine	KB4RKL	369-2877

EDUCATION

Mark	WA4KFZ	818-8033

CLUB EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Meola	KI4AZX	393-6681

ARES AREA EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Lane	KG4GIY	361-3042

F.A.R. REPS.

Ruth	KU4WH	331-1234
Mary Lu	KB4EFP	369-2877

FINANCE

Mary Lu	KB4EFP	369-2877
Joe	KI4OHR	369-2639
Ruth	KU4WH	331-1234

GENERATORS

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
Al	KB4BHB	368-4794

HISTORIAN

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3566

WEBMASTER — W4OVH.NET

Bill	N3OH	590-9562

EMAIL REFLECTOR — w4ovh@googlegroups.com

David Lane	KG4GIY	361-3042

JOTA

John H.	KG4NXT	257-3566

LEGAL

Pete	KB4RME	369-2436

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Joe Dobes	KI4OHR	369-2639

NEWSLETTER

Paul	W4ZB	754-0910

NEWSLINE

John H.	KG4NXT	257-3566

PACKET

Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844
Bill	N3OH	590-9562

PROGRAMS

TBA

PUBLICITY

Trisha Wells	KI4PCM	335-1096

QUARTERMASTER

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008

REPEATER CONTROLLERS

Art	W1CRO	791-4330
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Milt	N4SN	369-7265
Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
David	KG4GIY	361-3042
George	K4GVT	791-5956
Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844

W4OVH / W4PVA — TRUSTEE

Art	W1CRO	791-4330

SCHOLARSHIP

Jim	W4JTP	392-0150

SUNSHINE

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3556

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Art	W1CRO	791-4330
Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844
Bill	N3OH	590.9562
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
George	K4GVT	791-5956
Karl	W4KRL	802-1527
David	KG4GIY	361-3042
Bob	K4HJF	335-1939

All telephone numbers listed above are for Area Code 703 unless otherwise noted.

The OVH Times newsletter is the official monthly publication of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club, Inc., a §501(c)(3) organization, dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Amateur Radio. This edition of the OVH Times is Copyright © 2008 by the Ole Virginia Hams.

The OVH ARC meets at 7:30 p.m. local time every third Monday of the month at the NOVEC Tech Center, 5399 Wellington Branch Road, Gainesville, Virginia 20155. Members, prospective members and all other interested persons are invited to attend. Local information can also always be obtained through the OVH's FM repeaters on 146.97 & 224.660 Mhz. Up to date information about OVH activities and meetings is also available on the OVH web site at **http://www.w4ovh.net**.

Articles and quotations in the OVH Times newsletter may be reprinted if credit is given to the OVH ARC and any other noted source. Proposed materials for publication including pictures, articles, letters to the editor, classified ads, notes about specific errors, complaints or the like are solicited from all readers. Forward such items to the OVH Times Newsletter Editor PAUL@W4ZB.COM as soon as available at any time, but the cutoff deadline for the OVH Times each month (usually the second Monday of the month) may preclude publication/correction until the following month.

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year. In 1967 Chris and his family moved to the Washington D.C. area; while in high school Chris and several friends started a 40 Meter Net they called The East Coast Teenager Traffic Net. From 1970 to 1976 Chris attended William & Mary from which he graduated first in 1974, and then with an MBA in 1976. With his formal education behind him, Chris went to work for the Department of Health and Welfare from which he is now retired. For the last six years, Chris has been doing a web Internet DJ show of 50's and 60's music. Check out ramsayoldiesshow.com. You'll be surprised at the audio quality and those of us who remember the '50's and '60's will enjoy a nice "flashback." Chris is married with two children, and I met his son, David. Even without his sight, Chris has achieved things most of us only dream of: his drive and motivation to overcome blindness are inspiring and he is truly a remarkable individual. I hope you all get a chance to meet him someday; listen for him on the HF bands, he'll now be easier to hear in Prince William County on HF with his "new" amplifier.

I look forward to seeing everyone at upcoming club meeting, Monday, August 18th, 7:30 pm at the NOVEC Technical Center in Gainesville, Virginia.

73   George   K4GVT

Sunshine Corner:

Birthdays in August – Dale/N4EDE, Karl/W4KRL, DC/WD4FOX, Jim/WD4OJY, and Bob/N4SCK. Hope everyone has a great day! Also there is a special birthday in our ham family: Abbey, daughter of Chris/KI4POT (see picture to the right) will have her 5th birthday later this month; everyone will remember she was our youngest guest operator at the OVH Field Day event in June.

Sorry to report that a fellow club member is a silent key, Bob/KF4FJC passed away on May 26th. Bob and his family were active members until they moved to New York a few years ago.

Bob/N4RL is recovering from a stay in the hospital, hope to see you back at the meetings soon Bob! Dwight AI4II is also on the mend after a fall.

Don't forget to attend the OVH Club's Special Event operation Saturday, August 30th to commemorate the Second Battle of Manassas. Contact Al/KB4BHB for more information.

John/KG4NXT and I will be celebrating our 5th Wedding Anniversary on vacation out West in the Olympic National Park this month.

Hope everyone has a good month; it's hard to believe summer will be winding down so soon! Please send me items for next month: kg4tvm@hotmail.com or 703-257-3566.

73   Theresa   KG4TVM

Minutes of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club Meeting July 21, 2008:

George / K4GVT called meeting to order at 1930 Eastern Time.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, all present stated their names and call signs. There were 21 OVH members present, and two guests.

BUSINESS MEETING

The minutes of the June 2008 meeting were approved.

Treasury report: Balance is in good standing. Report approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership: Joe / KI4OHR - One potential new member visited the meeting and was read in: Alan Gideon / K5AKG (now with this new vanity call - Ed.). Voting on Alan at the next meeting.

ARES: Joe / KI4OHR: Next ARES training session is 09:00 on Saturday, September 20th at the County EOC. Personal information for a background check is required, and should be forwarded to Dave / KG4GIY; full details are on the web at pwcares.org. Antennas are up already on Potomac Hospital; there will be an antenna party at Prince William Hospital in the near future.

Repeater: Art / W1CRO - Repeater working well, and a standby amplifier is ready to go if needed. Recently encountered a brief occurrence of interference due to ducting by the KE2EJ repeater in New York. Also recently attended the T-MARC meeting. [See below - Ed.]

Training Mark / WA4KFZ: Brian / WC4J is looking for an assistant to teach a 2-day Tech class; volunteers may contact Brian. Local Fire Department, Station 25 offers a classroom as some fire fighters who are interested in Tech classes. Joe / KI4OHR also noted that some county EOC members expressed interest in Tech classes. Mark volunteered to teach classes.

Scholarships: No report.

Hamfest: No report.

Field Day: Resolution passed to reserve Nokesville Park for next year.

Sunshine: Theresa / KG4TVM - Bob / N4RL was released from the hospital.

Packet: Bill / N3OH: the W4OVH.net web site is working and an e-mail link is posted for comments and questions. Packet: 2 Meter radio and TNC replaced. Purchase of equipment: a Diamond X3200A (144, 220 and 440 MHz vertical) and a triplexer was requested and approved. If the feed line proves to be problematic or defective that cost will need to be addressed separately. Total expected cost is around $275.

PROGRAM

George / K4GVT-discussed Gridplex's recent take-over of the the City of Manassas' BPL system from COMtek. Walt Adams (COMtek) is expected to join Gridplex which will focus on remote meter reading.

OLD BUSINESS

Al / KB4BHB: The Special Event Station commemorating the Second Battle of Manassas will be operated at Signal Hill Park in Manassas Park on August 30th as announced in August QST. Setup will be at 7:00 am, and radio operations are expected from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Banner and signage will be posted for visibility. Volunteers are needed to assist with this operation.

NEW BUSINESS

Joe / KI4OHR: a committee should be formed to liaison with the construction of the Red Cross facility. Art / W1CRO, Butch / W4HJL and Gary /WG4ARC comprise the de facto committee now. Discussions about the requirement for a long term lease or other MOU. Art / W1CRO will get a copy of the building plans, now in the design stage and more information about how access will be allowed.

50/50 for $11: Winner was Al / KB4BHB.

Mystery box generated $4. Bill (N3OH) was the winner of the Microphone in the box.

Meeting adjourned at 21:03.

Reminders about some upcoming events / calendar dates:

UPCOMING HAMFESTS

September 20-21, 2008. Virginia Section ARRL Convention, Virginia Beach, Virginia. More details at http://vahamfest.net.

OPERATING EVENTS:

Saturday, August 30th, 2008, OVH Special Event Station commemorating the Second Battle of Manassas. More details on W4OVH.net and from Al / KB4BHB.

Report on T-MARC July 13, 2008 Meeting by Al / W1CRO:

Art/ W1CRO attended on July 13, 2008 a meeting of T-MARC [The Mid-Atlantic Repeater Council - TMARC.org] on behalf of the Ole Virginia Hams' repeater system - W4OVH at which the following business was conducted.

Review the coordinations and re-coordinations made since the previous T-MARC meeting in February 2008. Specific items for re-coordination will be listed in advance in future meeting agendas.

The ARRL has a new submission format for the ARRL Repeater Directory. Updates need to be provided by the end of the year. Art/W1CRO will submit updated information for W4OVH.

Discussion – pro and con of "regulation by bandwidth" approach with reference to D-STAR and other digital modes. Noted that FCC tried several times to issue regulation by bandwidth rules and failed due to many objections. Further noted that most other coordinating bodies have accepted the D-STAR and P25 hardware as the current de facto standards. Group voted for T-MARC to use on an interim basis SERA's plan [SERA.org] for the 144.520 MHz – 145.480 MHz VHF subband for 19 digital voice only repeaters, using 20 kHz spacing and 600 kHz in/out. See below. Further voted that T-MARC's committee on digital channel planning is to solicit comments and input on that plan or alternative plans until the next T-MARC meeting, and to keep the Western Pennsylvania coordination group "in the loop" to avoid conflicts. Also, noted that suggested proposals to delete simplex frequencies in favor of D-STAR or other DVT (digital voice technologies) would raise a host of nasty problem and any such proposals must be carefully looked at during frequency planning. SERA's Plan:

19 D-Star Only Repeater Pairs, 20 KHz spacing, 600 KHz in/out

144.520 - 145.120	144.540 - 145.140	144.560 - 145.160
144.580 - 145.180	144.600 - 145.200	144.620 - 145.220
144.640 - 145.240	144.660 - 145.260	144.680 - 145.280
144.700 - 145.300	144.720 - 145.320	144.740 - 145.340
144.760 - 145.360	144,780 - 145.380	144.800 - 145.400
144.820 - 145.420	144.840 - 145.440	144.860 - 145.460
144.880 - 145.480		

These interleaved pairs are exclusively available for the coordination and assignment of D-Star or other DVTs repeaters, which is determined using nominal FM coordination guidelines and other considerations relating to the narrow bandwidth signals of DVT and those pertinent to co-channel and adjacent channel assignment.

The next T-MARC meeting will be in December 2008 or January 2009 at a place, time and date to be determined and announced and at which an election will be needed to replace two board members who will be relocating. Several complaints were made about the travel required to attend T-MARC meetings at the Historic Electronics Museum in Linthicum, Maryland and suggested that more convenient location(s) be found and/or teleconference attendance be permitted.

Some notes about China and ham radio in China

Many readers may have noticed about two months ago the ARRL issued an announcement that a major technical publisher in China had adapted and translated the ARRL's "Getting Started with Ham Radio" book for the Chinese audience. The ARRL also advised further arrangements had been made with that publisher for the same for five other ARRL publications: "The ARRL Handbook," "ARRL Antenna Book," "Experimental Methods in RF Design," "Understanding Basic Electronics" and "Ham Radio on the Move."

Why did this happen? Does ham radio exist in China beyond the club stations in the large cities? Will we be communicating with hams in China on HF regularly before very much longer? What is going on in China today besides the Olympics? Who cares? How can one find out more?

First, a few quick "facts" about China. The physical size of China is about the same as that of the lower 48 States in the U.S., but the 1.4 billion population is more than four times that of the U.S., mostly concentrated in eastern China. China uses just one time zone for the whole country, and it is always 12 hours earlier there than U.S. Eastern Time. China got its name "China" as used in most of the West from the short lived Chin dynasty more than 2000 years ago, but the Chinese call their country, Zhongguo [this is spelled out here in Roman characters known as pinyin (here with no tone markings on the pinyin] or in Chinese characters: 中国 This two character sequence means the "Middle Kingdom" to a Chinese person; to better remember this, keep in mind that, Japan, just to the east of China, is known as the Land of the Rising Sun, and the Sun always rises in the East.

Does everyone in China speak the same Chinese? No, certainly not. China is quite ethnically diverse geographically, and there are more than six major variants of mutually unintelligible spoken Chinese "dialects" or "languages." The dominant dialect, Mandarin [now also known as putonghua or the "common language"], however, is taught in schools to all non-native speakers as a first second language; also, all school children are taught to write in alphabetic pinyin (Latin characters) before they learn the Chinese character writing system. [Caution, some letters in pinyin have sound values unlike in English, e.g., "q" => "ch".] What is most extraordinary about the Chinese character system is that Chinese who cannot communicate orally because each speaks a mutually unintelligible dialect are able to communicate in writing using Chinese character writing. This is why many Chinese television programs are routinely subtitled with Chinese characters. [Japanese who have learned the Japanese Kanji system which is derived from Chinese system, can usually read / understand basic signs and notices, etc. in China - even though the Japanese and Chinese languages are otherwise unrelated linguistically.] Chinese highly value education and, today, it is estimated that more than 200 million Chinese actively study English; they know they need English, the predominate international language used throughout the rest of world, to deal with the "outside" world. Is a Chinese computer keyboard covered with Chinese characters on the keycaps? No - keyboards in China look virtually the same as those here. To key in a Chinese character, one first keys in the equivalent sound in pinyin for the intended character following which, a pops up submenu offering choices of possible Chinese character sequences corresponding to the pinyin; the writer must then chose the desired / correct Chinese character sequence. A partial analogy based upon English may help: imagine that the "English pinyin' is "rite"; the popup submenu then might offer: "right", "write" and "wright" as possible "characters" corresponding to "rite" and the user would have to select which of those, i.e., which "meaning" he is intending to use. Historically, Chinese characters were written top to bottom, right to left, but today [most] printed Chinese is left to right, top to bottom, the same as in English; in writing and printing there are no spaces between sucessive character sequences (corresponding to words) but there is punctuation between sentences. Hmm? The DISH Network International TV satellite service in the U.S. now offers more than 35 different 24/7 Chinese language channels from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Ham radio does exist in China. The CRSA [Chinese Radio Sports Association], which has a logo similar to that of the ARRL, is the national association there. [Notice the Zhongguo characters on the logo to the right.] Ham radio is still "small" in China but it could become very popular among a very large, technically inclined populace. The translation and publication of the ARRL books will help with that. Skeptical? Use the Romanized names of some of the major Chinese cities [e.g., Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Taiyuan, Hong Kong, Xian, etc.] under "name search" at QRZ.COM and see how many hams come up in those locales? Hmm. What about the Internet? Check out the ham forums on http://hellocq.net. Can't read Chinese (characters), try out the Google "Chinese to English" translator service at http://translate.google.com/translate_t?sl=zh-CN&tl=en. A lot

is going on there? What about the Olympics? Check out http://www.bj2008ses.com.cn/station.html which shows multiple ham stations (two shown below) operating during the current Olympic games:

What about ARES - use of ham radio during emergencies. This is a very interesting and current topic because ham radio operators greatly assisted the relief efforts - providing emergency and backup communications - during the Wenchuan earthquake disaster in Sichuan in May and June. An impressive set of Powerpoint slides about that is available at: http://www.iaru.org/emergency/SiChuan_Earthquake.ppt. Check it out! Examples from that:

Club station BY8AA in Chengdu: provided emergency communications on HF and U/VHF

An ARES command center in Chengdu

Today we live in an ever smaller, fast paced world with almost instant Internet communications available worldwide, 24/7, and the ability to travel to the furthest destination in not much more than one day. Things of major importance to our lives are changing constantly. Does what is happening in China matter? If 200 million Chinese are studying English, how many people should be studying Chinese? How many are? How many people in China will be reading the ARRL publications? Will that activity produce many new Chinese hams? Will we ever hear Chinese callsigns / stations routinely on the HF bands like we now can hear Europeans every day? Will we learn how to overcome trans-polar auroral zone HF propagation problems to better reach China?

Problem Distributing the OVH Newletter by Email last month

A number of OVH members did not receive the PDF file with July 2008 OVH Newletter by email as usual on the Thursday just before the monthly meeting last month. That PDF file was much larger than usual (2.3 Mb) which may have contributed to the problem. Or it was it just a temporary Internet glitch? Regardless, the PDF file was quickly posted on W4OVH.net for those who did not receive it by email.

Second Battle of Manassas:

The OVH Special Event Station - W4OVH - will be operating on August 30, 2008 from the Signal Hill Park in Manassas Park to commemorate the Second Battle of Manassas during the Civil War in 1962. Those who have been in this area for a while almost certainly know something about that famous Battle because the Manassas National Battlefield Park [http://www.nps.gov/mana/] is right here in Prince William County. What are we commemorating? The Union and Confederate forces were closely matched numerically during that battle, with nearly 120,000 troops involved. The fighting was fierce with a casualty rate of nearly 20% and almost 15,000 men died during those three days.

Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Battle_of_Bull_Run] also has an excellent article about the Second Battle of Manassas - which is also know as the Second Battle of Bull Run. The relatively lengthy Wikipedia article includes day by day (and sometimes, hour by hour) battle maps which have been re-drawn on accurate, modern terrain map backgrounds. See the Wikipedia article and also http://www.posix.com/CWmaps/ for more information. An 1862 map for the Battle and a recent photo image taken within the Battlefield Park appear on the following page.

THE BATTLE OF
SECOND MANASSAS
AUGUST 29-30, 1862

LEGEND

MAP SHOWS SITUATION ABOUT 4 P.M. AUGUST 30, 1862

Federal Troops in Attack
Federal Troops on Defense
Federal Troops in Reserve

Confederate Troops in Attack

Confederate Troops on Defense
Trenches
Forest Cover

SCALE
0   2,000   4,000   6,000   8,000   10,000   12,000   14,000 FEET

September 1951   M N B P. 7007
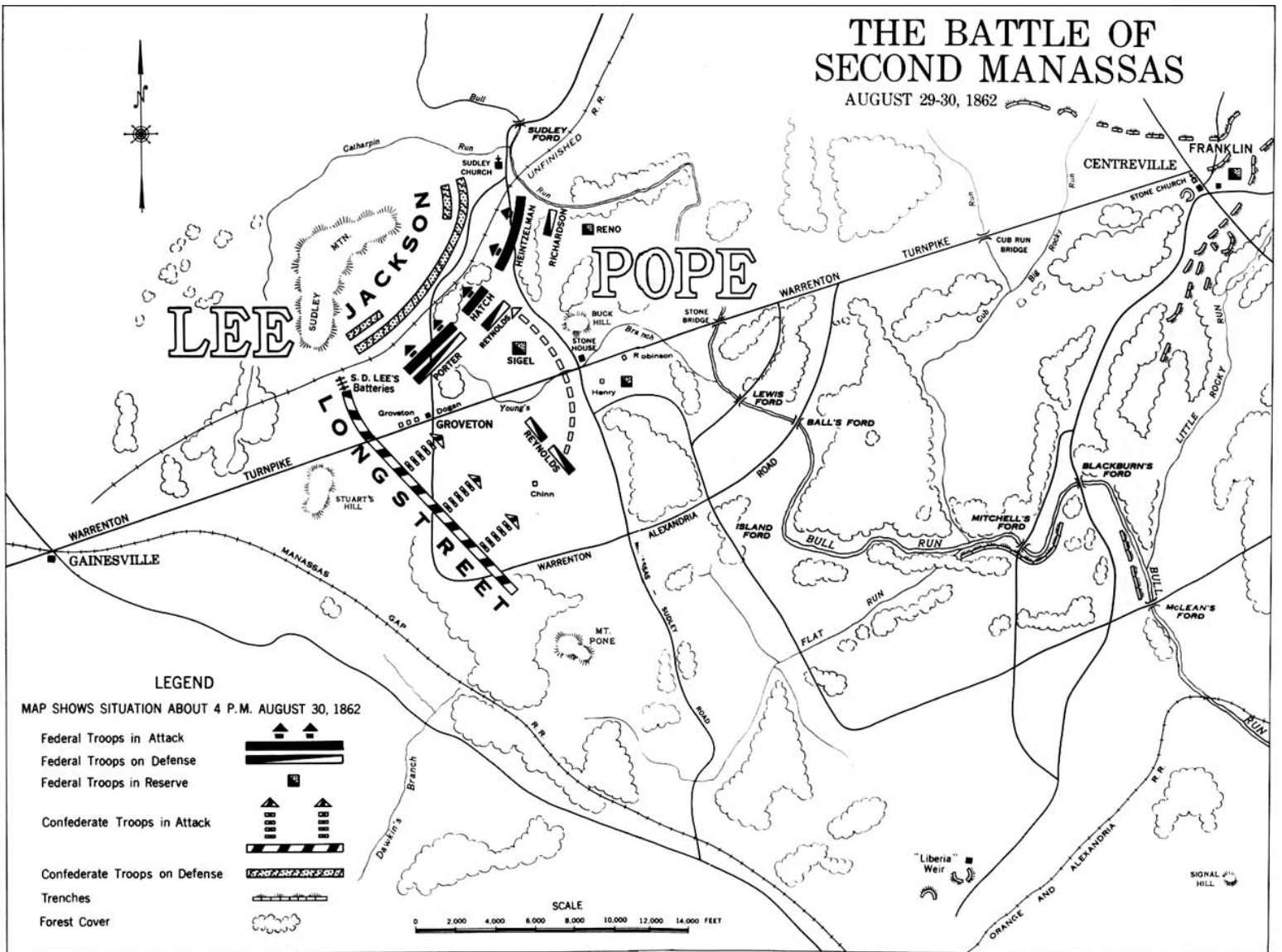
Never Enough Memory - tip for copying very large files onto USB plug-in drives

With large USB plug in memories now readily available and with 16 Gb USB flash key drives now priced at under $50, a new "problem" has surfaced for Windows XP users. XP (but not Vista) will only format USB drives as FAT32 drives using the GUI interface. The problem: FAT32 formatted drives are limited to a maximum single filesize on the drive of about 4.2 Gb; NTFS formatted drives have no such limitation. If you're tired of getting "drive full" errors when attempting to copy files over 4.2 Gb to a USB drive, you'll be pleased to know that you can format (or reformat / convert) your FAT32 USB drives to NTFS drives on Windows XP. How? Read carefully the help for the FORMAT and the CONVERT commands at the XP's (cmd) command prompt, e.g., FORMAT /? or CONVERT /?, and then follow the instructions. This completely solves the problem but only at the command prompt!

Bird's Eye View of What?

Some of the readers may have noticed that http://maps.live.com has recently been updated to include "Bird's Eye Views" of much (but not all) of Prince William County. Some of these views are so good you may even be able to see the antennas at your QTH if they're large enough! Check it out.

Meanwhile, the question of the month: who can identify the location shown below. The image has been clipped and rotated to eliminate "surroundings" and make it more difficult. Send answers by email to the editor. Winners announced next month.