

A Brief History of the VVARA

With the help of members of the Verde Valley Amateur Radio Association, in 2004 I put this information together when I was creating the vvara.org website. Information was contributed primarily by Frank N7EBT, Peggy N7DDR, Don N7HYH, Cal WI6S, among others.

Ernie K6XF

The **Verde Valley Amateur Radio Association** was formed in 1976 with just a few members and the Feedback Newsletter. Frank N7EBT and Peggy N7DDR in 1982 conceived, designed and published the first VVARA Feedback Newsletter to keep members informed of events. Frank designed the first masthead. It consisted of two radio towers emitting a signal, one on each side of the page. The first editor was Peggy N7DDR, who reported the major events, including a couple of yard sales that helped to finance one of the first club repeater on Mingus Mountain. And occasionally someone sent in an article that was of interest. At that time, the club consisted of only hams from the Verde Valley. As she admits, she wasn't very knowledgeable about ham radio, and so she used fillers of all kinds, such as recipes. That wasn't too popular with the confirmed hams, but they did enjoy the news about other hams, including short biographies. In addition Peggy organized yard sales to help finance the purchase of one of the first VVARA club repeaters on Mingus Mountain. Also, Frank has served as president of the club beginning in 1983 and served several terms. Peggy continued to contribute refreshments for the club meetings.

Knobby Knee Net History

The VVARA was formed in 1976 with just a few members. By 1986 membership had grown to 72 members. An informal 2-meter net was in operation by 1986. The club did not have a repeater, so the net was a simplex operation and was only on once a week on Friday nights at 7 PM. Cal WI6S was Net Control and usually had a topic for discussion pertinent to Ham Radio. Eventually, John KQ7T, gave the club a repeater to use. Several folks, which included Cal WI6S, George NZ7I and Don N7HYH, installed the repeater on an old empty hotel in Jerome, but found that it's coverage was inadequate and so it was moved to KQ7T's house off of Rocking Chair Road in Cottonwood. This proved to be unsatisfactory also and after several other unsatisfactory locations, the equipment wound up on Mingus Mountain sharing the Mingus Mountain Group's repeater shack. The club was allowed to share the MMG shack because several of members helped build it (in the midst of a snow storm, by the way). The simplex operation of the net made it difficult for some desiring to participate to hear each other, so Cal suggested the club make use of the repeater. This worked out so well that it was decided to put the net on daily at 7 AM with different Net Controllers each day.

One day after the net was closed Don N7HYH was talking to Cal WI6S as he sat with his short pajamas still on and said, "I'm sitting here with my knobby knees showing". He immediately picked up on it and said, "Say, why don't we call this the Knobby Knee Net". And

Don said, "Sounds good to me". So that's how the net got its name. Cal jokingly placed a requirement of being eligible to join the net by proving that you had dispatched a nasty critter such as a Black Widow, Scorpion, Rattlesnake, etc. However, being fearful that someone would take it seriously, it was quietly dropped several years ago. But it was fun while it lasted!