

**President**  
Rob Kinucan, KE5KNQ  
**Vice President**  
Lora Hawkins, KD5RJE



**Secretary**  
Bill Baker, W5ATO  
**Treasurer**  
Angie Otoupal, N5MVV

## MAS-o-MENOS, 2009 Supplement

February 24, 2009

Alpine, Texas

### MAS-O-MENOS 2009

By Bill Baker



Terlingua, TX. Feb. 14, 2009  
Whereas the 100k mountain bike race in the desert and mountains of the Big Bend area of Texas, between Terlingua and Lajitas is not exactly 100k, it has been named Mas-o-Menos. Spanish for "More or Less".

2009 was also "Mas-o-Menos" the 21<sup>st</sup> consecutive year that Desert Sports of Terlingua has hosted the event. So all participants in this event under the age of 21 were born after its inception.

More on the history of Mas-o-Menos in the following article.

Three acronyms to understand in these articles are, of course BBARC - Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, CASI - Chili Appreciation Society International in this case referring to the world famous 'Terlingua Chili Cook Off Site', and DNF - Did Not Finish (the race.)

There have been several "Net Control" operators for this event over the years. But, by and large, the one person who has coordinated the logistics, lodging, meals, station assignments and has been the voice of "Net Control" more often than any other is Bob Ward, WA5ROE. Bob is one of the 5 original officers of the BBARC, but truly he is the patriarch that first said (parenthetically) "Hey you guys! Let's organize a recognized and legitimate club for amateur radio operators."

This year, conflicting family obligations prevented Bob from attending on race day. Still he put together all of the pre-planning and coordination for the communications team, coordinated the lodging, coordinated the Saturday night BB-Q dinner, assigned a net control operator to make the station assignments and be net control operator, and was even able to deploy the 145.23 repeater to Tres Cuevas.

Tuesday, February 10, Dick and Lora Hawkins, W5DWI and KD5RJE respectively, took the club's communications RV from Alpine to CASI, the start and headquarters of the event. Fortunately they got it down there early in the day because 40-50 mph winds kicked up that afternoon. Fortunately the RV remained upright at its CASI station.

Many modifications have been made to the RV in the past year and we owe our appreciation and greatest thanks to Bob Ayer, KA1AAJ who has housed, supervised, and made most of the many modifications and improvements to the RV. The modifications worked very well for the race, and very

well for Dave, N5DO who set up in the RV and ran an HF sprint contest after the race. The new home made G5RV dipole antenna and the 30 foot (mas-o-menos) pivoting, sectional mast worked precisely as designed.

On Thursday, February 12, I (W5ATO) went to CASI and found the RV still upright. I opened it up and connected it to SHORE POWER (the power grid for us west Texans) and made sure all radios were operating and ready to go. I then went to the Rock House and opened it up and checked the 'lay of the land', as Bob would say.

The Rock House has undergone many improvements recently. Two queen sized beds, heat pump, etc. This year we found 2 roll-away full sized beds, a large stainless steel ice box with ice and water in the door (the ice maker didn't seem to work, maybe a clogged filter), a TV connected to a VCR-DVD player, however no cable or satellite connection, and most surprising of all a land-line telephone. The Rock House can now be reached at 432-424-3333.

On Friday, February 13, Bob, WA5ROE brought the 145.23 emergency repeater down from Alpine and then he, Dean, WA5HMO, and Bill, W5ATO set out from CASI to take the repeater to the top of Tres Cuevas mountain where it can cover the entire course. About two thirds of the way there on a relatively smooth, flat stretch of ranch road, something managed to poke hole in the side wall of one of the tires. It took about 30 minutes to change the tire and we were moving again. Once at the repeater site it took about 15 minutes to unload the repeater, assemble it and get it on the air. It worked flawlessly throughout the entire week end and linked into the system hub at Elephant mountain with a near full quieting signal.

Almost all of the communications volunteers came to the Rock House Friday night for the pot luck supper. From about 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. all enjoyed food, drink, and merriment. By 7:30 p.m. most were in route to CASI for the communications volunteers meeting.

Saturday, February 14 (Valentines Day), was the day of the event. What follows is from my communications report submitted to WA5ROE.

Event Date: February 14, 2009  
Event Start Time: 0830  
Event End Time: 1630

The 2009 Mas-o-Menos desert and mountain bike race was a very successful event. In general this was the 21<sup>st</sup> year for the event.

There were 457 riders registered this year. Temperatures were near the low 60s before sunrise and reached the low 90s by the end of the race. Winds were light.

Skies were mostly cloudy at sunrise clearing to sunny by mid morning.

The race started at 8:34:58 a.m. local time and ended about 16:30. Roughly an 8 hour event.

There was one fall at turn 1 in CASI on the second lap. Medics were called but rider refused treatment. Two riders called DNF on the course due to heat stress symptoms and both returned to CASI under the observation of course medics as the stations cleared the course. No other medical actions were reported. Communications net control made two calls on the medics frequency for two of these riders. Over 30 riders ended DNF.

#### Communications Team and Equipment

20 people actively participated in radio communications on the course. One provided technical assistance from Alpine via the linked repeater system and one other brought the repeater down and set it up for a total of 22 participating hams overall. 16 were BBARC members, 3 were from the San Angelo club and 3 were visiting hams in the area. One of them was an annual visitor to the Big Bend and two were here for the race.

First ground station on station at 7:27 a.m. (D). Last ground station on station at 8:42 a.m. (H). First racer was at H about 10:00 a.m.

Air mobile checked in, in route at 8:20 a.m., landed at air strip at 8:35 a.m. and was in air and in service at 9:44 a.m. after making some communications equipment repairs

#### Equipment Used

2 meter mobile	12 @ \$200.00	\$2,400.00
2 meter 440 mobile 2	@ \$500.00	\$1,000.00
2 meter HT	8 @ \$200.00	\$1,600.00
2 meter 440 HT	1 @ \$300.00	\$300.00
HF-440 Radio	1 @ \$500.00	\$500.00
Medic Radio	1 @ \$500.00	\$500.00
portable 2 meter	1 @ \$300.00	\$300.00
Linked Repeater	145.23	\$2000.00
Linked Repeater	147.02	\$3000.00
Linked Repeater	146.72	\$2000.00

TOTAL \$13,600.00

### BREIF HISTORY OF MAS-O-MENOS



Lajitas, TX., February 27-28, 1988 was the first ever "Big Bend Chihuahuan Desert Classic" off road mountain bike event. It was sanctioned by the National Off-Road Bicycle Association, sanction #428. Mark Mills, then owner of Desert Sports in Terlingua, and Rob Dean, then manager of the Lajitas Resort had spent two years putting the event together. There were several local events and short rides on Saturday and the big cross country race was held on Sunday.

That same week end The Big Bend Bash, an off road rally, had their main event on Saturday. BBARC volunteers worked the Bash until about 1:00 a.m. Sunday morning,

grabbed a few hours sleep and got up early to provide communications for the bike race. Two long full day events in one week end.

In 1989 the race was named the Chihuahuan Desert Challenge. The name stayed for 13 years but the event grew. By 2002 there were nearly 800 registrants. There were over a half dozen different events and short rides besides the Sunday cross country race. There was an obstacle course, a bike hopping event, and a bicycle tossing event. But 2002 was the last year for the Chihuahuan Desert Challenge.

With a change in ownership of the Lajitas Resort, the new owner had no interest in the mountain bike event.

By 2003 Mike Long had become owner of Desert Sports and could not put together a new cross country course and there was no race that year. But Mike did get many pressing inquiries for the race and did put together several short desert rides for those who insisted in riding the desert in February.

In 2004 Mike had managed to secure a new course outside of Terlingua with a start/finish line and race headquarters at CASI, the Terlingua Chili Cook Off site. The course was approximately 50 kilometers in length, but not exactly. Thus the old Chihuahuan Desert Challenge was resurrected under the new name Mas-O-Menos.

2009 was the third year this event has been listed on the USA Cycling Mountain Bike Ultra Endurance calendar. This year it was part of the 2009 Hill Country Bicycle Works Texas Mountain Bike State Championship Marathon Series. Rider were also able to earn points in the Cycle Progressive/Pivot Texas State Mountain Bike Championship Series.



With the exception of one, or maybe two years, the BBARC has been serving this event for 21 years. For most, if not all of those years, camping out at the Rock House has been a tradition and an annual social event enjoyed and remembered by all who have been there. That activity alone is quite a draw to encourage volunteers to participate in this event.

### THANK YOU ONE AND ALL

By Bill Baker, W5ATO

As Net Control this year I want to thank every one who helped. The list is too long for this space and includes several who helped in preparations but weren't on the course on race day. It also includes volunteers from San Angelo, one vacationing ham and two hams that were here just for the race and volunteered to help out. But special thanks must go to Norm Williams, who cooks up the best BB-Q dinner known to mankind.

I hope everyone will be looking forward to next year.

73s