



# NEWSLETTER - January 2009



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**Greater Phoenix Orienteering Club - Getting There is ALL the Fun!**

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## Jan 11, 2009 GPS-aided Orienteering at Robbins Butte

What?? GPS receivers at an orienteering meet? Yes, that's right—this is our first ever event that allows the use of GPS receivers during our competitive course. If you are one of those “stuck at intermediate” orienteers—you know the basics, but lack the confidence to venture too far off trail—then this is the perfect event for you. With a little self discipline, having a GPS backup to recover from errors is a great way to hone your orienteering skills (just don't leap to the GPS solution too soon—try and navigate to as close as you can to the control first).

This event is also being held at a new area with a new map, near Buckeye. There hasn't been much field checking done yet (essentially, this a USGS topo map with 20 foot contours) but the vegetation is sparse and in most places on the map the visibility across terrain is excellent.

This will be a Score-O event, with a two hour time limit. Competitors can visit the controls in any order, with a point score for each control that varies with the difficulty of reaching that control. There are some low scoring controls located near the start area that will be easier to find. We should also have a “whellow” (combined white and yellow) course for beginners using map and compass.

In addition to our Score-O event, there will also be a geocaching event at the same location. The latter event is intended to expose the geocaching community to what we, as orienteers, already know: that map interpretation and route planning are the keys to efficient cross country navigation. Of course, the geocaching course (aka “GPS-O”) can also be navigated with a compass, and any are welcome to try the course and solve the riddle. Likewise, we have extended an invitation for geocachers to try our Score-O course. The geocaching event is posted to the geocaching.com website (check their calendar for the date at <http://www.geocaching.com/>).

After the event, please hang around and greet our new geocaching friends. I'm sure many of you have some hard-earned navigation tips that you could share with them. As an added treat, we will be bringing along some light snacks, and everyone gets the membership rate —so be sure and bring those GPS-aided, techno-geek friends of yours!

For the GPS user: since the Score-O is a competitive event (participants have the option to be timed and scored), the GPS coordinates will not be made available on the website until the evening before the event (see the links on page 2). If you have trouble accessing the site, we will have a laptop computer and/or printed coordinates available at the event.

## More Details

**Schedule:**

Registration Starts .....	9:00
Instruction on topo map reading.....	9:30
Last time to start a course.....	11:00
Courses close.....	1:00
Geocache retrieved.....	2:00

**What you need to bring:**

- Compass and/or GPS receiver and spare batteries
- Sturdy hiking shoes or boots, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- warm clothes or raingear (depends on weather)
- Water bottle
- Pen
- Chair

**Cost:** (everyone gets the member rate)

Individual .....	\$5
Family / team rate .....	\$8

**Downloading of GPS Coordinates**

To download a .gpx file with coordinates, use the following links:

**Score-O:**

(coordinates available after 6 PM Sat. Jan 10)

[http://gphxo.org/Events/20090111\\_Score-O.zip](http://gphxo.org/Events/20090111_Score-O.zip)

**GPS-O:**

(coordinates available after Dec. 15, 2008)

[http://gphxo.org/Events/20090111\\_GPS-O.zip](http://gphxo.org/Events/20090111_GPS-O.zip)

The .zip file also includes a more detailed description of how the GPS-O course works.

## Directions

**From Phoenix**, go west on Interstate-10 to exit 112, then south on AZ Highway 85 for ~7 miles to milepost 147. Take a right at the sign for Robbins Butte Wildlife Area. Proceed ~3.8 miles on dirt road (bearing left at the sign “Powers Butte Wildlife Area & access to Robbins Butte (Mountain)”) to the Start Area (N33°18.8384' W112°40.8891). The road is passable to passenger cars.

**From Tucson**, Take Interstate-8 West from Casa Grande to Gila Bend. Take AZ Highway 85 north for ~27 miles and turn left at the sign for Robbins Butte Wildlife Area (a left turn lane just before milepost 147—before you cross the Gila River). Proceed ~3.8 miles on dirt road (bearing left at the sign “Powers Butte Wildlife Area & access to Robbins Butte (Mountain)”) to the Start Area (N33°18.8384' W112°40.8891). The road is passable to passenger cars.

## **Descriptions of Geocaching Events**

### **GPS-O**

Although a GPS receiver is excellent for guiding you directly to your destination, sometimes the direct path is not the best route. This multi-cache event is for people interested in going off the beaten path, and combines the skills of geocaching with topographic (contour) map reading. The idea is to hone your skills at interpreting the contour map to find the best route to your destination.

This event has six stages that must be completed to get the coordinates for the event cache. The trick is that there are four possible locations (waypoints) for each stage, and you have to figure out which is the correct one to visit.

At each location there is an easy-to-find marker, a punch and a letter. When you get to each marker, you punch your card to show that you've been there, and then record the letter. Visiting the correct markers will give you all the letters necessary to solve the riddle. Once you make it back to the finish and show us the card with the correct punches, and give the solution to the riddle, you will then be given the coordinates for the cache. Note that even if you are very good with riddles, you will still have to visit the correct markers.

Selecting the correct waypoint locations – There is an easy way, and a hard way to do this. The easier way is to be able to read the map features on the map. We'll tell you which map feature you are looking for (like a ridge or a dry wash) and you should be able to identify the correct waypoint by reading the map. Probably the only real challenge in interpreting the map will be to tell the difference between a ridge from a dry wash by reading to the elevation contours (that's a hint).

The harder method (for most people, at least) of selecting the correct waypoints is to correctly answer a multiple choice question. The correct answer will direct you to the correct waypoint. The subject of the questions will be "Arizona trivia."

A color map will be provided to each participant, with a scale of 1:5000 (1 cm = 50 meters; 1 inch = 417 ft)

### **Score-O**

The Score-O presents a more physical challenge, with several waypoints located in remote desert terrain (no roads or trails). Each waypoint is given a point score, and the idea is to collect the highest score that you can within a two hour time limit. The waypoints with the highest score are the ones that are the hardest to get to.

As with the GPS-O, you will use a punch card as proof that you visited the waypoint. You can choose to visit as few or as many waypoints as you like. The markers are highly visible, so the real challenge is to select the optimum route to the waypoints based on interpreting the map features.

Our orienteering friends who will be there are of the opinion that they can finish the course faster with a map and compass than a geocacher can with a GPS receiver—so, game on!

Note also that there is a severe point penalty for exceeding the two hour time limit—so part of the strategy is to be able to make it back to the start area within the time limit. A color map will be provided to each participant, with a scale of 1:15,000 (1 cm = 150 meters; 1 inch = 1250 ft)

## **Saguaro Lake Score-O Wrap-Up**

We had a great turnout for the Saguaro Lake Score-O. There was a threat of rain, but the weather held out and provided nice, cool temperatures for the 4-hour event. A total of 47 people came out to find controls on the nearly 20 km course. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Once again, our friends from Tucson had a good showing during the race. Ludwig Hill had the best score of the day, obtaining a total of 1330 out of 1510 points (35 out of the total 42 controls). Jeff Brucker followed closely behind with 1040 points, even after spending an undue amount of time on our magical hidden control #62. (More on that later.) There were also a number of teams and individuals that scored over 700 points on a course that was intentionally set to be long and hard with a number of controls requiring a substantial amount of climb. On the women's side, Windy Marks and Brigid O'Neil obtained 720 points for the 16 controls that they reached. They even pounded their way to the mombo control located near a sub-peak of Stewart Mountain. Great job!

We had a number of beginners or near beginners who first attended the beginner's clinic, then proceeded to use their new knowledge to try their luck on the course. These included Tina Stefek and Kim Hines (Team Fire) who reached 14 controls in under 4 hours. Are they sure they've never done orienteering before? They'd have continued into the night to find controls if we hadn't put a time limit on them. Steven Hollar as well as Team Slow & Steady Wins the Race (Terry, Mary, and Taylor Hancock) and the boy scouts from Troop 244 also went out and grabbed a bunch of controls. Even Kathi Douglas, who is generally more interested in pretty flowers and bouncing bunnies, was able to stay focused for over an hour and grab herself 4 controls. Once again, great job to everyone who participated!

There are two controls I want to single out for special recognition. Control #91 was placed near the top of one of the sub-peaks of Stewart Mountain. Before the event, I warned everyone that the control was difficult to get to, with thick brush, large boulders, and a substantial climb blocking the way (from 1720 up to 2492 feet, a climb of 772 feet). I didn't think anyone would go up to get the control. However, I was wrong. Jeff Brucker, Bob Badgett, Derrick Beracy, Phil Milan, Chuck Phillips, Forest Brown, Matt Hanly, Windy Marks, and Brigid O'Neil all grunted their way up to the control and were rewarded with magnificent 360 degree views. I commend all of you on your effort.

The other control that warrants mention is #62. This control was placed in an area of the map filled with many parallel reentrants, thick brush, and few attack points. Although one of the course setter's notes recommended that orienteers find a single attack point and carefully follow a bearing and pace count to the control, that didn't make it any easier to find. In hindsight, the placement of this control was not the best, and a number of people wasted valuable time looking for it. I apologize for the frustration this control might have caused. We'll certainly learn from this experience and do better setting the controls in the future. The following people were able to find the control and were rewarded with 60 points: Mike Wilke, Windy Marks, Brigid O'Neil, Forest Brown, Matt Hanly, Bob Badgett, Ludwig Hill, Ron Hendricks, and Carol Cusack.

Once again, thanks to everyone who participated in this event. We spend a great deal of time planning and setting the orienteering courses. Our reward is to see all of you out having a good time participating in the events. We'll see you again at our next meet.

Saguaro Lake Score-O 14-Dec-08								Categories: M - Male F - Female TM - Male Team TF - Female Team TX - Mixed Team	
<b>Total Points Possible:</b>		1510							
<b>Total Number of Controls:</b>		42							
<b>Total Participants:</b>		47							
Overall Place	Competitor	Total Points	Penalty Points *	Number of Controls	Time	Category	Rank	Grand Prix Points	
1	Ludwig Hill	1330	0	35	3:58:07	M	1	10	
2	Jeff Brucker	1040	0	27	3:57:00	M	2	9	
3	Hanly-Brown	960	0	21	3:55:40	TM	1		
4	Luke Tanner	840	0	22	3:48:40	M	3	8	
5	Lunatic Fringe	820	0	19	3:50:45	TM	2		
6	Bob Badgett	780	0	18	3:57:12	M	4	7	
7	Erik Ringnes	770	0	27	3:06:30	M	5	6	
8	Cold	720	0	16	3:57:16	TF	1		
9	Mike Wilke	670	100	20	4:10:24	M	6	5	
10	Caron	640	0	16	3:3:57:16	TX	1		
11	Mike Zampino	570	0	16	3:58:58	M	7	4	
12	Team Fire	460	0	14	3:45:00 #	TF	2		
13	Derrick Beracy	450	140	17	4:14:50	M	8	3	
14	Gary Hickey	430	0	11	3:50:50	M	9	2	
15	Rick Eastman	380	0	18	3:00:00	M	10	1	
16	Deb Lusk	380	0	18	3:00:00	F	1	10	
17	Karthik Venkatesan	240	0	12	2:59:00	M	11	0	
18	L Squared	230	0	14	2:03:00	TF	3		
19	Diet Coke	230	0	12	2:10:00	TX	2		
20	Clark Family	210	0	12	2:04:30	TX	3		
21	Jesse Delgado	200	0	11	2:45:00	M	12	0	
22	Steven Hollar	200	0	8	3:15:20 #	M	13	0	
23	Troop 244	180	0	8	2:25:00	TM	3		
24	Tim Stefek	160	0	5	0:44:00	M	14	0	
25	Team Dam	160	160	10	4:16:16	TX	4		
26	Lee Craven	130	0	10	1:52:00	M	15	0	
27	Slow & Steady Wins the Race	110	0	8	2:24:40	TX	5		
28	Sharon J. Fairchild	110	0	11	3:13:00	F	2	9	
29	Kathi Douglas	60	0	4	1:01:20	F	3	8	

\* Ten points were deducted for each full minute over the cutoff time of 1:00 PM. The penalty points are already included in the POINTS column.

# Honorable Mention: Although these participants came in after the 1:00 PM cutoff, they finished in less than 4 hours. The rule for the 1:00 cutoff time was not clearly communicated to participants that started after 9:00, so no penalty has been applied to these participant's score.

## Move Up! A Column for the A.O.

by Peter Amram

(Used with permission, New England O.C.)

Okay, Mr./Ms. A.O. (Average Orienteer), it's time to learn some map/terrain concepts. Because this purposeful fall you are going to move up . . . from White to Yellow, from Yellow to Orange, and beyond Orange to . . . (Gulp!)

Normally, this column works on your psyche (a.k.a. your Orienteering Soul). But you also need specific skills. You, a stalwart, lone, A.O., will enter those baffling woods which form the laboratory for a weekend's education. Into the wilderness, with only your map, compass, willpower, guile — determined to survive, nay, to prevail!

Well, best to anticipate what's out there, n'est-ce pas? A feisty attitude alone isn't enough. On the map and on the ground are two kinds of terrain features: point and linear. The control is at a point feature; you get to the control by following a linear feature. Common point features are: boulders, cliffs, knolls, the tops of hills, small depressions, stone-wall corners, and trail junctions. Common linear features are trails, streams (active or dry), and stone walls.

On the White course you found a boulder (point feature) by following a trail (linear feature). Advanced courses are similar except the concept of the linear feature becomes more abstract. So, as you advance in the sport, you need more imagination. A linear feature which is parallel to your desired line of travel is called a handrail.

Handrail Note #1: You need not be on or near a handrail to use it. The stream you can see 50 meters away is as useful as the jeep trail you run on.

Handrail Note #2: The imaginary line of a compass bearing is also a handrail, but it is a potentially

deceptive one. The compass is a somewhat crude tool; visible objects on the map and ground are safer.

Handrail Note #3: Advanced orienteers "create" handrails from likely features — the side of a ridge, the edge of a lake — and from unlikely features — a row of low hills; or this cliff, that pond, and then south of the knoll. Learn to create handrails from various point features. An active imagination is a necessary complement to strong legs. (The Brits call orienteering "cunning running.")

Handrail Note #4: The strongest possible handrail is a "corridor" with terrain features on both sides of your route.

A linear feature which is perpendicular to your route is called a collecting feature if it is before the next control or a catching feature if it is beyond. A collecting feature is useful because it announces where you are as you approach the control. To protect yourself, select a route with a catching feature beyond the control, and look for that feature as zealously as you look for the control itself. The appearance of a catching feature is nature's way of telling you that there's, uh, a little problem here, old friend. But at least you know where you are.

A word on reentrants, which are ravines running up the side of a slope. A control in a reentrant is inherently tricky because the target is low. The control description sheet will tell where in the reentrant your control is, but you are not actually looking for a discrete terrain feature. A control in a reentrant is almost a cross between a point and linear feature, so be especially alert.

Sly course setters enjoy hiding orange-and-white bags in secret locations. But, heck, creative solutions to complex problems are the mark of an enterprising orienteer like you who has decided to move up.

**Thanks to all the Saguaro Lake event volunteers.**Course Setter: **Ron Birks**Meet Director: **Forest Brown**Bag Hangers: **Ron Birks, Dianne Haselfeld, Tim England, Carla Brandt, David Erhart**Water Station Setup: **Ron Birks**Equipment Hauling: **Forest Brown**Setup/Tear-down: **Forest Brown, Ron Birks, Kathi Douglas, Karthik Venkatesan**Registration Table: **Kathi Douglas, Karthik Venkatesan, Ron Birks**Timing Table: **Kathi Douglas, Karthik Venkatesan, Ron Birks**Beginner's Clinic: **Ron Birks**Control Retrieval: **Forest Brown, Gary Hickey, Deb Allen, Martin Travizo, Karthik Venkatesan, Derrick Beracy, Tim Stefek, Tina Stefek, Kim Hines**Tabulating Results: **Kathi Douglas, Karthik Venkatesan, Ron Birks****Tucson Club Event Schedule****GPHXO Upcoming Event Schedule**

**NOTE: Not much is going to happen in 2009 unless we get some volunteers to be Club Officers! They plan events and attend to club business. Please consider stepping up.**

<b>January 11, 2009</b>	<b>O-meet and GPS near Buckeye</b>
<b>February 8</b>	<b>Bomboy Mine (Tentative)</b>
<b>March 8</b>	<b>First Water (Tentative)</b>
<b>April 9 &amp; 11</b>	<b>Land Navigation Class</b>

Did you know that GPHXO O.C. members get the "member" rate for Tucson O.C. events? For details about the Tucson Club events, check their web page at [www.tucsonorienteing.org](http://www.tucsonorienteing.org)

Jan 25	Arthur Pack: Mark Parsons (setter)
Feb 15	Ironwood: Leif Lundquist (setter)
Mar 15	Slavin Gulch: Mark Parsons (setter) <b>STATE CHAMPS</b>
Apr 19	Box Canyon: Ludwig Hill (setter)
May 16-17	Mogollon Rim ROGAINE John Maier (setter)

**2008-2009 CLUB OFFICERS:**

<b>President</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Sheryl Berling-Wolff</b>	<b>sherylb@cox.net</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Sheryl Berling-Wolff</b>	<b>sherylb@cox.net</b>
<b>Permits</b>	<b>Eric Ringnes</b>	
<b>Publicity</b>	<b>Tim Tablada</b>	<b>ttracker20@hotmail.com</b>
<b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>	<b>Forest Brown</b>	<b>weakonrecon@yahoo.com</b>
<b>Mapping</b>	<b>Patricia Abbott</b>	<b>PAAPsyD@aol.com</b>
<b>Webmaster</b>	<b>Ron Birks</b>	<b>birksr@aztecfreenet.org</b>

Greater Phoenix Orienteering Club  
c/o Rockledge Services  
P.O. Box 51114  
Phoenix, AZ 85076-1114

GPHXO Newsletter January 2009

# Greater Phoenix Orienteering Club

## ... Join Phoenix Orienteering Today ...

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