Potomac Valley Radio Club Newsletter
December 2007 Edition

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and ***www.pvrcnc.org***

2007 HOLIDAY CELEBRATION DINNER AND AWARDS PARTY
MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, (starting at 5:45 PM)
P.J. SKIDOO'S
9908 LEE HIGHWAY, FAIRFAX, VA

FROM THE PRESIDENT *-- Jim, WX3B*

It is with unusual excitement that I can officially welcome everyone to the 2007 – 2008 fall contesting season! How about those good conditions during CQWW SSB? It's nice to see that we might…just maybe…be heading for more sunspots.

15 meters is alive and well – with a band opening to Europe that started at 8:00 am and was still going several hours later. I enjoyed listening to Fred, K3ZO and his fine tuned Orion audio running stations….including a few I didn't hear (this from the worked all Germany contest).

My hat is off to my young friend Filipe, CT1ILT, who managed to reach 10db/9 during a short 10 meter opening the Sunday before CQWW SSB. Portugal is far south, however I'll take ANY sign of a 10 meter European opening as a good sign – and in fact, right now I'm hoping that the high bands are as good as they were the weekend before CQWW.

Jim Brown, K9YC did an OUTSTANDING presentation on RFI mitigation techniques, along with the finer uses of baluns (they're not just for 'cleaning up' your pattern). We appreciate the time and effort that went into a customized "PVRC" presentation! We will be organizing a group buy of the ferrite material Jim described in his presentation. Stay tuned for details!

The enthusiasm and turnout for Sweepstakes was high again this year. Thanks go out to PVRCers (AA4NC/W4MR, K3MM, and others) who contributed to our efforts, as well as Dean Straw, N6BV, who had an excellent presentation on likely propagation coverage/band strategy.

With sweepstakes and CQ Worldwide just behind us, it's now time for the "Winter Season," those that are single-band and/or single mode: ARRL 160 Meter (taking place as this is being written), ARRL 10, Stew Perry, ARRL RTTY Roundup, and CQ 160 , just to mention a few. For specific information, go to the individual sponsor's websites, http://www.contesting.com or the excellent contesting news website run by PVRC member Jamie Dupree, NS3T, http://www.radio-sport.net

Finally, I look forward to seeing all of you at the PVRC Holiday Celebration and Awards Dinner on Monday, December 3rd. We have lots to celebrate and many awards to present.

73, Jim, WX3B

EDITOR'S PREROGATIVE *-- Eric, W3DQ*

Apologies to all for not publishing a newsletter in November. I trust this issue will fill the proverbial void. 'Nuff said!

The winter season brings out the creative juices of the contest community. These "specialty" contests, from single band or mode to those with limited time windows, force us to focus on specific improvements to our stations – inside and out – and operator skills. For many (including your Editor), it puts matters into perspective and makes the task of station enhancements and upgrades far less intimidating than they may otherwise be. A goal of making one enhancement per contest, be it as simple as changing the position of a piece of gear on the operating desk or throwing up a new or additional antenna for a specific contest is suddenly a manageable task.

To that end, I encourage you to take advantage of the great wealth of knowledge of our fellow PVRC members on virtually aspect of contesting and ham radio. And too, don't forget that the ranks of the PVRCers includes experienced

tower and tree climbers and ground crew, along with station designers, and all around great contest operators.

To repeat WX3B's mantra: "the winning club is the one with the largest number of entrants." Now's the time for PVRC members to work together to get everyone's station up and running in tip-top shape.

October featured two excellent programs that many of you attended. Renowned audio expert and RFI guru, Jim Brown, K9YC, made an excellent presentation about audio and RFI at Capitol College. Jim's presentation and other papers onhte subject are available on his website, http://audiosystemsgroup.com . The specific links to pdf files for the presentations are:
http://audiosystemsgroup.com/RFIHamNCCC.pdf
http://audiosystemsgroup.com/CoaxChokes.pdf

The main tutorial is
http://audiosystemsgroup.com/RFI-Ham.pdf
(note that the server for this website is case-sensitive).

Our second presentation was an 'author talk' with Kristen Haring, author of the controversial (within the amateur radio community) book, "Ham Radio's Technical Culture," which was reviewed in the October PVRC Newsletter.

Continuing the trend, the downtown group has invited local authors Paul Dickson, whose book, "Sputnik: The Shock of the Century" was also reviewed in the October newsletter, and Mark Brzezinski, author of "Red Moon Rising" to join us in March or April.

Once again, thanks to all who contributed to this month's Newsletter: K4ZA, N3HBX, NS3T, K3MM, K4YT, AH0AH, WV4V, W2DZO, G3ZSS, and W4KAZ.

Happy Holidays… See you in the fray!

73, Eric, W3DQ

K0DQ Receives National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal

Retired Vice Admiral and PVRC member Scott Redd, K0DQ, who stepped down recently as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, has been awarded the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal for his exceptional contributions to the intelligence community and defense of the nation.

The medal was presented on November 9 by Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell at a ceremony held in Redd's honor at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C.

Splicing Wire In Free Space

Rich, NN3W asked for advice for *"a simple yet effective solution to splicing a SO239 insulated connector (Budwig HQ1) to the wire (Polystealth 13 wire (stranded and relatively inflexible)) in free space."*

Ty Stewart, K3MM, offered the following solution: "I wouldn't use the ring terminals. Just twist the wires together inline and solder. If you need to relieve tension, grip the wires a foot back on the insulation using tape and string or maybe split bolt connectors. Use a string or tie wrap to take tension off the ends of the wire. Then cut out the feed, strip the wires, twist together inline and solder thoroughly with a LARGE iron (the larger butane ones work great, but the ones big enough to do the job right are fairly expensive). Make sure your wires are bright and clean and you have enough iron to do the job correctly. It's much easier on a warm, calm day. Remove your strain relief and tape it with Scotch 130C and 88, starting at the low end (if there is one) and wrapping upward to get the shingle effect.

"If you have any thoughts of going back to a horizontal feed, you might want to just create a shorting PL259 connector to plug in the horizontal Budwig, being sure use a large wire, well soldered to the PL259 and tape it all up nicely. You might also be able to create a short stub section to plug in here if you need to optimize for CW by making the wire a few feet longer. As long as it isn't too long and you use RG213 or Teflon insulated wire, I would think it would work without breaking down. I've never tried this...just a crazy idea!

"On the vertical side, use the holes in the Budwig as a strain relief, run the insulated wire though the hole, double back and solder to the Budwig stub. If you want more relief, run the insulated through the hole, then clamp to itself just beyond the stub with a split-bolt connector, then double back again to solder to the stub. Be careful not to nick the copperweld wire where you strip it and don't overtighten the split bolt. Make sure you use the right split bolt for the size wire you have. It should be just large enough to stack the two layers of wire vertically in the split. Once done, tape it all up with lots of 130C and 88.

The Toolbox - December 2007

by Don, K4ZA

A recent work trip to VA/MD provided the impetus for this month's column—an overview or review of chains and sprockets. K4VV's old Telrex Big Bertha rotating poles are each turned by chain-driven sprockets. Then, immediately after that, I found myself staring inside K3ZO's old Telrex rotator, which Fred uses to turn his 40M beam. This old technology reminded me that perhaps not everyone knows about chains and sprockets.

In K4VV's case, we recently converted each drive system to 90VDC motors, to take advantage of the Green Heron controller's ramping ability. These massive monsters (the Super Bertha alone weighs 16,000 lbs!) now turn silky smooth. Indeed, it's the ONLY instance I've ever seen wherein a bird, perched on an element, did not fly away as the antenna began to rotate!

Chain types are identified by number—you might hear of a number 40 chain, for example. That far right digit of 0 is used for chain of standard dimensions; 1 indicates a lightweight chain; and 5 indicates a roller-less bushing chain. The digits to the left indicate the pitch of the chain, given in eighths of an inch. For instance, that number 40 chain would have a pitch of four-eighths of an inch, or ½-inch, and would be of the standard dimensions in width, roller diameter, and so forth. Jack's rotators use #80 chain,
for example.

The engineering handbooks call for the roller diameter to be the "nearest binary fraction" (32nd of an inch) to 5/8ths of the pitch. Pin diameter is half of roller diameter. The width of the chain, for "standard" (0 series) chain, is the nearest binary fraction to 5/8ths of the pitch. For narrow chains (1 series), the width is 41% of the pitch. Sprocket thickness is approximately 85-90% of the roller width.

Plate thickness is 1/8th of the pitch, unless you're using "extra-heavy" chain, which is designated by the suffix H, and is 1/32" thicker.

For example, here's the data for the chain driving those Berthas:

Chain No.	Pitch	Roller Dia	Roller Width	Sprocket Thickness	Working Load
80	1"	5/8"	5/8"	0.575-inch	3300 lbs

Two factors determine the selection of a chain—the working load and the RPM of the smaller (usually driving) sprocket. The working load sets a lower limit on pitch, and the speed sets the upper limit.

Maximum Pitch = (900 ÷ RPM) 2/3

The smaller the pitch of the chain, the less noise, wear, and mechanical losses will be the system will have.

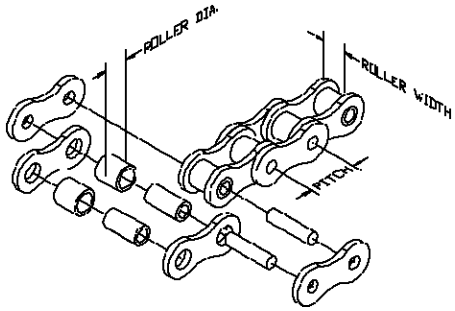
There are four types of sprockets to consider:
Type A: Plain Plate sprockets
Type B: Hub on one side
Type C: Hub on both sides
Type D: Detachable hub

Sprockets should always be as large as possible, for any application. The larger a sprocket is, the less the working load for a given amount of transmitted power, allowing the use of a smaller-pitch chain. However, chain speeds should be kept under 1200 feet per minute.

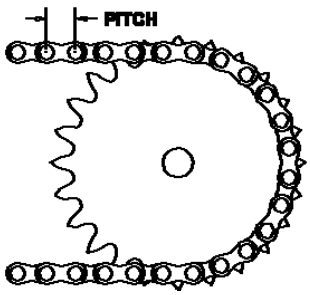
Sprockets should be accurately aligned in a common vertical plane, with their axes parallel. The chain should be kept clean and well lubricated, using a thin, light-bodied oil that can penetrate the small clearances between the pins and bushings. (There are numerous commercial spray lubes that fill the bill.)

A little slack is preferable, preferably on the bottom side of the drive. But, the chain should wrap at least 120-degrees around the drive sprocket, which usually requires a ratio of no more than 3.5 to 1. Often, when using greater ratios, an idler sprocket may be required to increase wrap angle. In the case of the Berthas, the speed is so slow (6:1), with double-reducing transmissions, that this has not been needed.

In both cases, these work trips proved to be interesting projects and keen examples of using modern solutions (the Green Heron units) with older technology (chains driven sprockets).



Chain Pitch



Sprocket & Chain Pitch

Radio Relics Preserved, Then Tainted
Transformer fire at storage site rained toxins upon remnants of L.A. broadcasting history

Bob Pool, Los Angeles Times, October 26, 2007

Call it an old-time radio drama with a 21st-century plot twist.

Plans for a $35-million American Radio Archives museum and research center that will chronicle the development of broadcasting will be unveiled tonight in Thousand Oaks.

But the archives' planned centerpiece -- a collection of hundreds of thousands of historic relics of early Los Angeles broadcasting -- sits locked up in a Hollywood basement.

The carefully preserved original scripts, fragile transcriptions of radio shows and news broadcasts, antique microphones and rare equipment from Southern California's first stations have been contaminated by toxic PCBs. And nobody can agree who should pay for the cleanup.

The mementos and broadcast gear were dusted with polychlorinated biphenyls on Dec. 13, 2004 when an underground electrical transformer caught fire. Smoke laced with PCBs -- used as a cooling oil substitute in older transformers -- spewed through a subterranean conduit into a nearby bank building basement where the collection is housed.

A separate collection of illusionists' equipment and exhibits owned by the Society of American Magicians kept in the basement was also contaminated. Washington Mutual officials were forced to close the busy bank building for months while the upstairs vault and customer areas were carefully cleaned.

But when the bank, the magicians and the broadcasters asked the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to pay the decontamination costs, the city said no.

The broadcaster and magician groups say they are nonprofits that cannot afford to pay for it themselves. So now they and the bank are suing the city for the cleanup costs -- which could total more than $1 million.

Lack of access to the broadcasters' artifacts hasn't stopped the Thousand Oaks Library Foundation from mapping plans for its 40,000-square-foot radio archives building. It will include a large museum and a 50-seat theater, along with a radio listening room and an archival storage area.

Foundation leaders will kick off a construction fundraising effort tonight by inviting potential donors to watch the production of an original radio dramatization at the Thousand Oaks Library. Because of limited seating, the show will not be open to the public.

Written and directed by 1940s-era radio legend Norman Corwin, it will star Samantha Eggar, Carl Reiner, Nanette Fabray and 10 other veteran broadcast figures.

The show, titled "The Strange Affliction," will be recorded for later broadcast, said Stephen Brogden, Thousand Oaks' library services director.

His library's involvement with radio began in the mid-1980s, when it acquired the late entertainer Rudy Vallee's personal papers, notebooks and other items, Brogden said. The library has also obtained much of the 97-year-old Corwin's personal collection.

Brogden said library officials reacted "in disbelief and horror" to the transformer fire and contamination of the radio relics.

"We had already signed a contract with Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters and were planning to bring their materials up here," he said. "I can't in good conscience store contaminated materials, though."

The toxin-coated collection is irreplaceable but salvageable if properly cleaned, said Marty Halperin, vice president of Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters.

"We have a huge CBS collection, all the master recordings of 'Gunsmoke,' 'Have Gun, Will Travel,' 'Suspense,' 'Escape' and 'My Favorite Husband,' which starred Lucille Ball," said Halperin, an 80-year-old retired sound engineer who has a large personal collection of radio memorabilia at his Woodland Hills home.

"We have a letter from a Packard dealer that suggested, 'Why don't we start a radio station in Los Angeles?' We have all of the KFI scrapbook albums that go back into the '20s," Halperin said. Earle C. Anthony launched the city's first commercial broadcast station, KFI, atop his downtown Packard dealership in 1922.

The contaminated collection includes more than 100,000 discs of old-time radio shows and World War II newscasts and battlefield recordings. Among them are the first shows broadcast by Bing Crosby and Jack Benny in the 1930s. There is a 1947 recording of pilot Howard Hughes talking during the one and only flight of the Spruce Goose, a giant seaplane built of laminated wood.

It also includes a large collection of early radios and microphones, including Crosby's personal microphone, an RCA 44 that gave his voice a deep, rich sound. Other items include the broadcast industry's first tape recorder, an Ampex 200, production serial number "1," which was built in 1947 so that Crosby didn't have to perform his radio show twice for eastern and Pacific time zones.

Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters' leaders do not know how much the decontamination procedure will cost. But their attorney, David Habib of Westlake Village, said the cost will likely be well out of the reach of the 500-member organization.

"They are a nonprofit group of elderly people who kind of put their collective knowledge and talents and resources together to create this organization. What they've done is awesome," Habib said. "When you appreciate the magnitude, certainly the remedial work will be in the several hundreds of thousands of dollars."

The broadcasters and magicians have used the bank basement rent-free since 1967.

The site at the northeast corner of Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street was the location of NBC radio network studios built in 1938. Its 350-seat auditoriums hosted production of radio shows such as "Fibber McGee and Molly" and "The Jack Benny Show."

We All Started Somewhere!

by Raj, AH0AH

For what it's worth I am happy to report I came in 22nd place in the DX category in this year's French HF SSB contest (Championnat de France Telephonie 2007).

That's another way of saying there wasn't a lot of competition: the guy in 1st had a score of 600,000+ and my score was 559 (I operated for about an hour)!!

Still, it was a lot of fun, and 22nd place sounds cool, especially given that I had been on air for only 2 months since having gotten my own HF station!

A Legal Update from N3HBX (Oct. 24, 2007)

On 12 October the Appeals Court of Maryland ruled in the suit I brought to overturn a lower court (Special Court of Appeals) ruling, that the Montgomery County Board of Appeals had erred in refusing to hear arguments from my neighbors to the effect that permitting me to erect my towers without any notice infringed their constitutionally-protected property rights. The Court decided that no such protected property rights exist in the State of Maryland, and hence that the County's Board of Appeals had acted properly - thereby overturning the lower court's position. The ruling is posted at http://www.courts.state.md.us.opinions/coa/2007/1a07.pdf

The neighbors are now threatening to go to the US Supreme Court, but short of this, the ruling ends their quest for administrative remedy, and compels them to seek redress through the lower courts. Pending at the Circuit Court is a civil suit that would have me take down my towers and pay them $500,000 for the nuisance I have been! No doubt if I win at the Circuit Court they will appeal, so that matter is far from concluded. In short, my legal costs now exceed $150,000 - with no end in sight....

My defense at the Circuit Court has to be that if something is "permitted" then it cannot be held to be a "nuisance". To conclude otherwise would destroy the ability of any local authority to govern. Wish me luck!

VHF/UHF Contesting

by Jamie NS3T

Now that the HF contest season is underway, VHF/UHF contests take some time off until the January ARRL VHF, so that gives you two months to improve your antennas and station for the next big VHF challenge.

The numbers from the September ARRL VHF are very encouraging for the PVRC. The ARRL results show that club members submitted 20 logs for a total of 2.3 million points! At this time, that should be good enough for the PVRC to win the Club Competition.

Most of the weight was pulled by the Grid Pirates at K8GP, who tallied 1.4 million points, which is the top claimed score for the multi category.

Also, a tip of that hat should go to David Petke K1RZ, who claimed 310,000 points on his own. If that score holds, K1RZ should finish second in the Single Operator High Power category, behind only K1TEO.

Thanks to everyone who helped out. The January ARRL VHF starts on Saturday January 20th. The PVRC finished third in the club competition in January of 2007, so plan now to increase our turnout and the PVRC score!

Globetrotting with Karl, K4YT

I traveled to Bangkok for the CQWW SSB contest and operated with my call HS0ZDG. The contest starts over there at 7 AM local. I was operating from the station of HZ0ZDY/SM3DYU Sam who is a retired shipboard Radio Officer and permanent resident of Thailand. I used an FT-1000, Henry amp, 8-el tribander and 40m and 80m dipoles. We did not have any room to install a 160m antenna. Sam's home is in the city so we had a constant noise level and had to use the noise blanker.

Props were not very good the first day but improved the second. It was rough working the states especially zones 4 & 5. Had a total of 1644 QSOs, 91 total zones, 247 countries giving me a total of 1,233,700 points. Thailand PTT had recently authorized the WARC bands as well as 80 and 160m for regular usable frequencies but the problem was that not many people knew that we could only go as high as 3540. I was only able to work 2 contacts on 80 thru prearranged skeds. There were many loud signals above 3700 but no one was listening below 3540. The WX was dry and the insulators on the electric poles were arcing. We needed rain but it didn't come. A good rain storm would have cleared up the noise level.

Currently I am planning to fly out again for the March WPX SSB contest pending no other overseas travel at the State Dept.

I am currently scheduled to fly to 9X5 on Dec 3rd for the final accreditation or our new embassy building in Kigali and if possible will try to get on for the ARRL 10m contest. An old friend of mine, 9X5SP Peter, is the Deutsche Welle relay station manager there and has offered to get me my license. Not sure what type of station he has but if possible I will guest op from his station.

Upcoming Contests of Note

December 8-9 ARRL 10 Meter Contest
December 29-30 Stew Perry Topband Challenge
January 5-6 ARRL RTTY Roundup
January 12-13 North American QSO Party CW
January 19-20 North American QSO Party SSB
January 26-27 CQ 160 Meter Contest CW

Review Of A Movie Classic

Brian WV4V

A pleasant surprise when I visited my mother in a Connecticut nursing home last week was the John Litel festival on the Turner Classic Movie (TCM) channel which we viewed on the TV in her room.

Why? Because included was the Nancy Drew series from the 1930's starring John Litel as Nancy's father and Bonita Granville as Nancy. Nancy, as most of you know, was a teenage sleuth who solved crimes that stymied the local police. Whenever she was hot on the trail of clues she would recruit assistance from her next door neighbor, Ted Nickerson, W8YZR, played by actor Frankie Thomas, who was a schoolboy about a year older than Nancy.

Early in the movie, Nancy Drew - Detective (1938), Ted is depicted in his garage ham radio shack, talking with a buddy. I could not recognize the pre-war equipment but it looked authentic and his call letters were prominently displayed. His working conditions were quite impressive. Moreover, he was using phone to talk to a cross-town ham, and true to ham radio he referred to his buddy as "Old Man" then he said he had to go "QRT" because Nancy needed his assistance and wished his contact "73."

True to reality was the implication that the plot took place in a (fictitious) location in Ohio, so a W8 call was appropriate. What did not sound so true to ham radio was when some younger kids referred to Ted's ham radio as a "radio sending set."

As the movie played out the crime was solved not by ham radio but by other forms of communication (carrier pigeon) and technology (aerial surveillance photography). However, Ted's knowledge of electricity and warning prevented the two from getting electrocuted when Nancy proposed scaling an electrified fence around a remote sanitarium and also got them out of a jam when the villain locked the two up in a basement and Ted created a spark transmitter from the electrical wiring and successfully sent out a distress call while shutting down all electronic communications for miles around.

It was obvious, however, that the directors took the time to ensure a realistic depiction of amateur radio as opposed to what has appeared in some more recent depictions of ham radio by Hollywood that take liberties or license.

Another piece of trivia this reviewer writer uncovered in doing some research for this article is that actor Frankie Thomas later starred as Tom Corbett in the early 1950's TV series for kids, Tom Corbett, Space Cadet about a 24th Century training academy. That was one of our favorites!

Goings On In The NC West Region

Henry W2DZO

This year has been unique one for the NC WEST group. We started out this year with Henry W2DZO and Robert KG4NEP going to V2 for the ARRL DX SSB contest and picking up to #1 in the world in M/S. The W4WS station at Robert's QTH weathered the winter fairly well. Our local club enjoyed a great field day effort where we showed off our contesting skills to several new hams, and we were honored to represent the league as W1AW/4 in the IARU contest.

We were thrilled with our #2 US CQWW score from 2006, and so our group decided upon a change of venue for 2007. We went back to our first contest home at W4NC (our local club's shack at the Red Cross- see w4nc.com for pictures) for the first time since 1998. Robert KG4NEP took the opportunity to run SOHP from his home, normally the W4WS site. We took the time to add new computers, clean up feedlines, and add internet access for real time scoring- that was great!! Tim AG4RZ, made a great 15m effort running QRP- his wife is due in mid November with their first harmonic so Tim is squeezing in as much radio time as he can get! We welcomed Todd W4WTB and Jim W4UX to a meeting and look forward to voting on then in the near future. Our SS effort is simple, whatever we did last year, do more. We should have ten or so of us putting in scores, including N0KTY, WB4MSG, AG4RZ, WS4NC, W2DZO, N4IOZ, KG4NEP, KG4ECI, and others. Robert's score last year didn't get turned in, so this year we should easily put bigger numbers up. We'll do our best to add to the pile of logs!

We continue to meet each 4th Monday of the month at Chrome eats and drinks. Do come and eat some wings with us! Several of us will be traveling up to Fairfax for the Holiday dinner. Hope to see everyone up there.

The RSGB HF Convention

Peter Bacon, G3ZSS, K6ZSS

The RSGB HF Convention is held every year in mid-October. It is always a very well attended event with many overseas visitors due to the proximity to London and it's airports. This year the HFC moved to a new convention centre approximately 40 miles north of London. The Wyboston convention centre has excellent and inexpensive accommodation facilities as well as the all important bar, at least to Brits.

Due to other commitments, I could only visit the HFC on the Saturday this year. I went along to 4 presentations in the afternoon on 3B7C, BS7H, the Voodoo Contest Group and the Elecraft K3. Don, G3XTT gave an excellent talk on the recently completed successful trip to 3B7C and the challenges faced on St Brandon. This was followed by Mike, K9AJ giving a presentation on the fun and games of operating from BS7H. After looking at the photos of Scarborough Reef, I still am amazed at how anybody can

really call this a country, or should I say, a separate DXCC entity.

The Voodoo Contest Group are very well known for their operations from West Africa in CQWW CW contests. They currently have all their gear stored in TZ6, Mali, but the presentations talked about their plans to move the lot over to Guinea, 3X for this year's contest. Looking at the survey photos, you can expect to hear a very loud signal on all bands from their new site in 3X.

At the HFC the team advised that they were still negotiating a callsign for the contest. My afternoon was rounded off with a presentation by Eric, WA6HHQ of Elecraft on their new K3. Eric was in California, but we had an audio and video link up via Skype. As well as the Skype connection, there was a parallel PowerPoint presentation that Eric talked us through. Eric's presentation left a packed room all asking when they can expect delivery of their K3s as many attendees are anxiously waiting for delivery of their radios (including yours truly). If anybody had any doubts about the K3 before the presentation, then I am sure that they left all wanting one.

I did not get a chance to attend the parallel stream of lectures, but I had very positive feedback on the presentations on the very popular HRD software and the latest developments in SDR.

The HFC is primarily a gathering place for DXers but there was one small room for the sponsors with the new Icom IC7700 and Yaesu FT950 rigs on display. There were also a team of DXCC Field Checkers busy working away on numerous DXCC applications.

Saturday evening was time for the traditional DX Dinner. Bob, GU4YOX plays quiz master with all tables participating in a DX quiz. The winning table received a nice bottle of chilled champagne!

Overall the new venue proved to be very successful and we can expect the RSGB to be looking to book the same venue next year. I would certainly recommend that you plan on being in London next year in mid-October. Check out the RSGB website for details http://www.rsgb.org/hfc/

MyCrowFone - Infiltrating the Continuous Wave -SSB Myth Busters

Kaz, W4KAZ/lid k

[Shamelessly taken from the PVRC Reflector]

This year, it was a more difficult task - convincing the MyCrowFoney operator that he too can earn additional points by modulating the Continuous Wave in the first half of the Sweepstakes. Yes, I know the mere suggestion will have the elite CW ops cringing, but I am living proof that even mere lids such as myself can in fact substantially bolster their overall Sweepstakes score by infiltrating the CW portion of ARRL Sweepstakes, or any other contest that has either a separate CW segment (CQ 160, ARRL DX, CQ WPX) or is dual-mode within one contest (ARRL 10 Meter contest).

"Egads", I imagine you thinking, "surely this W4KAZ lid is daft?"

No, I am not daft (-much-). And please - don't call me "Shirley".

First of all, it should be stressed from the onset that whistling into the MyCrowFone is not the proper method for modulating the Continuous Wave. You WILL be noticed, but the elite CW ops will likely shun you at best. At worst they may drive over to your house and knock on the door. Who knows what might happen next. So avoid the controversy and please restrict yourself to the methods accepted by the CW ops. More on this below.

Further, a minimum amount of CW proficiency is probably required. There is really no getting around it. But if you are able to copy 15 wpm, or were able to pass the 20 wpm extra test, you HAVE the ability. It is merely a matter of choosing to put in the effort. Lets examine the challenge.

It is true that Conventional Wisdom (what-another CW?) holds that one should put a huge effort into the first hours of the contest. This is not necessarily a good idea for the MyCrowFone operator trying to squeeze extra points from the Continuous Wave crowd. The CW crowd will be following this strategy, and you will hear the bands in the early hours populated by many 40 wpm CW machine guns.

If your skill is up to it, please – have at it! But if you are struggling with the Continuous Wave, it is often better to bide your time. Soon enough, the diminishing returns will have the machine guns altering their strategy out of sheer boredom. They will develop a willingness to admit that they can copy Continuous Wave at speeds lower than their standard fare. By Sunday, many will even have fallen asleep in their chair due to lack of activity. Help them stay awake. It is hard for them to go back to sleep after hearing your QLF response to their plaintive CQ's.

There are two very practical approaches to infiltrating the Continuous Wave. If you are really struggling, it pays to S&P the slower stations operating in the upper areas of the band. As the contest progresses, odds are you will find stations there that you CAN copy, with a little effort.

Alternatively, if your skills are up to it YOU can set up shop and run stations. Contrary to Conventional Wisdom (the other CW again), it is NOT REQUIRED in any contest that the Continuous Wave be sent at speeds over 30 wpm. Your run rates will be less productive, but you will find there are indeed QSOs to be made at 20 wpm. Remember – there are probably other MyCrowFone users out there just like us, seeking to infiltrate the Continuous Wave.

Methods of infiltration are varied. If you are skillful enough, you can use nothing but your paddles. But if you are that skilled - you are really a CW op who has embraced the dark side! Don't tell anybody about your MyCrowFone habit.

Many, if not most, of the CW ops are modulating their Continuous Wave with their computer, despite the fact that they are probably skillful enough to operate the contest with paddles, pencil and paper. You should make use of the automated tools too. This saves you the personal stress of sending QLF or keying by shorting two wires on your tongue, or some other equally improbable method.

Remember, you want the other guy to be able to copy your exchange! Odds are, the computer sends cleaner code than the infiltrating MyCrowFone op will be able to manage with his paddles. Make it easy for the run op to copy.

Remember, the rules don't stipulate that your CW must be sent with any particular device, so take advantage of the tools available. Program the function keys, and have at it.

Whatever you do-don't answer at speeds faster than you can reasonably eke out! You want to be able to have a fighting chance of giving the right answer when asked for fills. It is inevitable someone is going to need a fill somewhere, and you don't want to tip off the CW op that you are an infiltrator. Also, breaking into a high speed run with your QLF 10 wpm 2x3 callsign is unlikely to bolster your score. Patience is required.

This last bit is sure to raise the hackles, but use whatever helps you to copy the CW too. If your six year old daughter can copy 50 wpm, have her help you. If you have a program that can actually decode the continuous wave better than you can, use it as an aid. The contest scoring robot doesn't care, even if you will be ridiculed unmercifully by your CW peers. I've always depended solely upon the gray matter in my head and I have an embarrassingly high error rate to prove it. But I managed a lot more valid QSOs and points too.

So don't be "paddle shy"- plan to infiltrate the Continuous Wave for any CW Sweeps if it is possible.

[The article that follows in the next column was sent in by Don, K4ZO, who added the following:

"I recall reading this story when it first appeared, written by and about callsigns I certainly saw in the upper ranks of contest scores. I remember marveling then at the dedication required to follow through on many of tower and antenna projects described in the article. (The fabled "PVRC mount" is clearly visible in the photos illustrating his various beams in the magazine.)

And it was also somewhat unusual for an article of this size to appear—five whole pages devoted to just one station! I was more-than-ever convinced that somehow these PVRC guys were definitely different, and that what they were doing was worth further study. So recently, when clearing out N4UH's magazine collection, I decided to look for it once again.

It was a sad, but rare, treat to later work on Lenny's 40M beam, and then dismantle it when it finally came down in the severe winter of 199"]

One Man's Family of Antennas

by Vic Clark W4KFC

(Originally appeared in CQ magazine, March 1961)

QTH HR OM is on a hill in the country!

Lives there a ham with soul so dead, that he hasn't yearned for a spot meeting that description?

The classic hypothesis of a rural hilltop with "a clear shot in all directions," materializes for all too few of us, as the vision fades before the more practical aspects of life…earning a living, raising a crop of harmonics and attempting to conform, in general, to the accepted patterns of society…(often difficult enough for the species infected with the ham virus!).

So, except for the fortunate hams who are foresighted enough to be born and raised in the boondocks, most of us are to be found pursuing our hobby in an unfriendly environment of power lines, TV birdie-factories and zoning restrictions. It is worthy of more than just a passing note, therefore, when one of the clan casts off the traditional fetters and transforms the reverie into reality.

Meet Len Chertok, W3GRF, a Washington DC amateur, who dreamed of a lofty ham sanctuary far from the city, and proceeded to create one from a comparative wilderness. His remarkable station is the product of tremendous fixity of purpose, careful planning and hard work. It would seem to establish a high water mark for what one ham can achieve in assembling an effective DX factory—starting with only an idea.

Brief Biography

Len, by way of further introduction, was first licensed at the age of 15 and operated his completely home-built station from the family residence in a Philadelphia three-story row-house during the years from 1936 through 1940. Antenna possibilities in this congested district were limited to a few bent wires threaded through housetop clotheslines and broadcast receiving antennas. From such an unfavorable ham location, Len managed a pre-war WAS and WAC, rounding up 56 countries—a fairly impressive total for those days. In September of 1940, he enlisted in the US Army Signal Corps.

The notion of "the ham shack on the hill" persisted with Len through the war years, during which he saw service in the Pacific theatre of operation, visiting spots such as VK9, JZ0, DU, KR6 and JA. Code-handling and technical proficiencies derived from his earlier hamming days qualified Len for a communications billet with the AACS, and he held down one end of many a hot CW inter-island circuit.

Emerging from the war intact and as a Master Sergeant, Len went to work as a civilian operator at the Signal Corps communications center in the Pentagon at Washington, DC. Here, with co-workers W3JTC (later SV0WP), W9NWX (later W0NWX, VP7NG, FO8AJ, etc.) and others, Len helped organize the now widely known Potomac Valley Radio Club of Washington, DC and environs. (Len has subsequently served terms as president, activities manager, secretary and treasurer of the club.)

Len's first postwar operation was under the call W4KXN from an Alexandria, VA apartment, and later as W3GRF from his sister's home in suburban DC. He established W3GRF as one of the country's outstanding DX and contest stations during this period.

In 1950, Len transferred to his present job as a civilian Communications Specialist at the AACS Overseas Communications Center at Andrews Air Force Base, near Washington.

A Hill is a Hill is a Hill

The desire for a rural hilltop QTH persisted and, early in 1954, routine sorties into the Maryland countryside became a weekend feature on Len's agenda. Armed with road and topographic maps and a fistful of real estate listings, Len scoured the hinterlands for "The Hill." The rest of us in the club followed Len's bucolic frolic with a mixture of admiration, skepticism and, knowing Len's penchant for follow-through, more than a little anticipation.

Finally, we learned, he had found *It*! Fifteen acres, including a hill, which, he said, dominated the surrounding terrain. He made the down payment to clinch the deal, then announced his good fortune to the rest of the membership.

"Great!" we reacted, but what kind of a building did the deal include? No building at all, we learned…this could come later. Hmmmm-m. OK…but were there clearings to accommodate the Vee's and Rhombics? Hardly…the place was thickly wooded, with 50 and 60-foot pines, poplars and oak standing shoulder to shoulder over the entire hill!

Anyway, the location seemed strategic—a scant eight miles from the District line and only five miles from GRF's place of work at Andrews Air Force Base. Convenience of access was one significant redeeming feature, we all agreed. "Now, how do you get there to look the place over?" we inquired. We-ellll…you don't exactly, we learned: the hilltop is a good half-mile from the nearest road, and it would be necessary to cross a substantial creek and plough, shanks mare, uphill through a thousand yards of brambles and underbrush…there to peer about among the trees only to see…more trees.

To shorten a long story, no one made it. We accepted Len's assurances that it was *the QTH*, but, appalled by the magnitude of the task ahead, we all began to have misgivings concerning the ultimate success of the venture.

Well, we heard from Len once in a while after that…his appearances at club meetings were less frequent, and W3GRF all but disappeared from the air. As the weeks rolled by, reports of progress began to trickle in. Len couldn't make the meeting, we would hear, because he had a date with a bulldozer…or he was building a culvert to carry the embryo access road over the creek.

The culvert didn't work; heavy rains converted the tranquil creek into a destructive force and the roadway was washed away on two occasions. Thereupon, Len, undaunted, abandoned the culvert scheme and contracted for a 30-foot timber bridge. Then the rest of the road went in—a half-mile of it through the woods and all the way up the hill. Next came the power company, and after some negotiation, a special line was installed requiring nine widely spaced poles…and terminating in a brand new 15kva pole pot near the prospective homesite.

Len, meanwhile, had purchased a chain saw and—working every night after leaving the job and all day Saturdays and Sundays—the trees began to fall, permitting sunlight to reach the ground in steadily growing patches. It was back breaking work, but our city boy thrived on it and was soon sporting an enviable tan and a set of bulging muscles.

As funds permitted, Len would have a bulldozer in to help with the clearing of underbrush and to push the felled timber into huge piles for burning. Mostly, thought, it was Len, chipping away with the chainsaw…summer and winter, in solitude on the hilltop…Gutzon Borglum was no more dedicated in his attack on Rushmore.

Len's un-bachelor like activities were, in fact, regarded with some concern by his family and friends alike. Some found it difficult to understand why he would squander his money on rural acreage and a house, when he could be investing it sensibly in cars, clothes and riotous living. But Len, the man with a plan, paid little heed to the critics.

With completion of the access road, the visitor index rose sharply, and Len began to realize dividends on past favors to others (and few were the PVRC members who hadn't at one time been ably assisted by W3GRF in carrying out their own antenna construction projects!). Many of those who showed up were motivated largely by idle curiosity…these, too, were promptly pressed into service by resourceful Len, who laid in a supply of extra axes and shovels with which his "guests" might entertain themselves.

On Field Day, 1955, W3EIS/3, a one-transmitter, two-man entry, made the first radio contacts from Len's hilltop—operating from a tent in the center of a 100-by-100 foot clearing, with dipoles hanging from trees rimming the opening. The future home of W3GRF was confirmed as a very promising QTH, indeed: 30 watts, from batteries, produced a (then-record) score of 493 contacts to lead all one-transmitters entries in the event.

Hard to Believe

The success of any homesteading effort, we should explain for the benefit of you city-dwellers, depends heavily upon the availability of a suitable source of water. Before proceeding into the construction of the house, therefore, Len contacted a local well-digging outfit and arranged to have the job done. Well digging, for the uninitiated, is a somewhat speculative proposition wherein the well digger (or driller, as the case may be) gets reimbursed for his effort—but this does not necessarily produce water in the desired quantities. So it was in Len's case. A hole was dug some 30 feet into GRF's hilltop with negative results: a second attempt some distance away was no more successful. At three dollars per foot, Len's financial resources were dwindling rapidly. Even Len's indomitable enthusiasm waned somewhat; contemplating this distressing turn of events, he said to the well digger, "What do you suggest? I can't afford to have many more dry holes dug!" "Well," said the contractor, mopping his brow, "you may think it's silly, but I know a fellow who claims to be able to locate underground streams by using a divining rod…I can't hardly believe it myself, but I've seen him produce results more than once. He charges 10 bucks and makes no guarantees, but you're in a spot…and it might work."

It should be noted here that Len is a hard headed realist, devoid of superstitions and holding no brief for witchcraft in any form. His decision, therefore, in indicative of his desperation at this juncture, for, with a sigh of resignation, he replied: "Okay, call him over…I've gone this far; I can't quit now!"

A short time later, the advertised rhabdomantist put in his appearance at the GRF estate, complete with a forked stick and an air of self-assurance. His performance commenced to an audience consisting of the well-digging contractor, his two assistants and Len, the latter conscience-stricken at his role as sponsor of the ritual…and wondering, guiltily, what he would say if a friend should drive up unexpectedly!

The fellow held the stick in front of him and walked slowly forward…suddenly the stick dipped down; he re-crossed the point several time with the same result…whereupon he scratched an "X" in the dirt, and took off along a parallel path. The diggers watched, bug-eyed. Len, writhing inwardly, looked on without enthusiasm. The ceremony continued for perhaps 15 or 20 minutes, by which time two well-defined rows of Xs has been marked on the ground; then the chap turned to the group and said: "Dig here. I think this is a good spot."

Len, describing his feelings at this point, says that he had become somewhat impressed with the diviner's confident manner, but felt certain his $10 would have to be chalked up to "experience," and whatever comfort could be derived from the knowledge that he had tried everything. The spot which the man selected was not far removed from the two previous dry holes, so there was little basis for expecting better results. Len paid the man and he left; the digging resumed.

The results? You guessed it! Len's well stands right where the mystic with the twig said "dig." It has produced an ample flow of cool clear water right through several droughts. With a gesture of resignation, Len simply says: "I just don't understand it, but there it is!"

Construction Underway

In the spring of 1956, the site for the house had been cleared and leveled, and Len contracted for a three-bedroom rambler with a full 25 X 42 foot basement. The building proceeded rapidly and Len, meanwhile, set about to erect suitable towers for his dream beams. By this time, nearly three acres had been cleared, including a central clearing for the house and three tower sites, and four 50-foot wide swaths through the woods in various directions for the wire Vee's. When Len moved into his new home in the late summer of that year, three towers loomed above the trees. These included a 100 foot Vesto self-supporting tower and two guyed towers, one a 100 footer and the other 90 feet in height.

By the advent of the 1956 contest season, an impressive set of antennas had been installed and W3GRF boomed forth with real authority on the DX Bands. Len turned in the third high national score in the CQ DX Contest that year, and followed it up with a fourth high national score in the 1957 ARRL DX Test.

Into Each Life

Life at the Chertok Estate has never been dull. On one well remembered occasion, Len, working with an electric drill at the 60 foot level on one of his guyed tower, found himself providing a direct circuit to the well-grounded tower for the 115 VAC current; the drill had shorted internally! Frozen solidly to the tower and unable to release his grip on either the drill or the tower, Len shouted for help to W6HOH/3, who was assisting from the ground below. Fortunately, HOH reacted swiftly, dashed over and pulled the plug, thereby releasing Len from a very serious predicament. A much chastened Chertok has established use of rubber gloves and an isolation transformer as SOP for future use of electrical appliances on the GRF towers.

Then there was the time when Len, removing a few trees standing close to vital guy wires, felled a 40 foot pine which went over in exactly the opposite direction from that intended. Before Len's horrified gaze, the errant tree deposited itself across a guy wire from his 90 foot tower; the tower promptly buckled and fell into a pile of twisted metal, topped off with the wreckage of two four-element beams (10 over 15 meters). The entire catastrophe required an estimated 10 seconds from the time the tree started to tip until the pile of tangled metal stopped bouncing. Reporting the disaster to the club's two meter net that evening, Len wryly observed, "This has not been one of my better days."

A few months later the calamity was repeated when a bulldozer, clearing land near one of the guy anchors for the 100 footer, backed into the guy wire…and down came 100 feet of steel tower and a four element wide-spaced 20M beam! A lesser spirit than Len's would have turned to stamp collecting, or possibly drink. Not Len, however, who began planning for bigger and better towers, even while the rubble was being cleared away!

UR 599

Today, the monument to Len's persistence and courage stands near completion:

The 100 foot Vesto tower supports a full-sized three element 40M rotary…the reflector is 73 feet long! A 100 foot guyed tower is topped off with a five element 20M beam employing a 45-foot boom. An in-line beam with three 10M elements arranged in front of four 15M elements perches atop a 125 foot guyed tower, while a diminutive 70 footer near the house carries a three band in-line beam which combines a total of six elements for 10, 15, and 20M operation. All of the rotaries are constructed in the basement on long winter evenings. A single section 8JK, suspended about 90 feet above ground, is oriented for Europe and New Zealand
80M DXing. A 270-foot long wire for 80 and 160 complete the present antenna setup.

Lens' hamshack now occupies one end of the large basement room, with the remainder devoted to equipment storage and an outsized workbench. Separate home-built finals are available for each band from 10 through 160, and these are driven by a Collins 32V3. Look at this firepower:

160 m	Single 4-65A 200 watts
80 m	PP 810s 1 KW
40 m	PP 833s 1 KW
20 m	PP 833s 1 KW
15 m	PP 450TLs 1 KW
10 m	PP 833s 1 KW

"One KW, hah!" you say? Len has documentation. Smack in the middle of the 1958 CQ DX Contest, the FCC wheeled up to confirm the point, as they did in many places on that fateful day. It cost Len a vital hour of contest time, but he can point with pride to a rig that is US Government inspected.

A further note or two on the rig: It is almost completely unshielded and its configuration conveys a bit of nostalgia from the pre-TVI days. Len's nearest neighbors are a good half mile away and any harmonics radiated directly by the finals peter out before they reach the sensitive ears of a TV Set. "After all," points out Len, "if I stopped to shield and beautify the rig, where would I get the time to do all the other things that need attention around here?" A single power supply is used for the final amplifiers, and all transmitter and antenna combinations are available for use from the operating position at the flip of a switch. A seldom-used modulator is available, which functions with any final; it employs a pair of 833s, lighted only once or twice a year when some of the gang show up to put W3GRF on for one of the phone DX Tests. Needless to say, Len's first love is CW.

Feed lines to the various antennas consist for the most part of RG-17/U cable, suspended from messenger cables between poles erected for the purpose. The longest feedline measures about 325 feet.

Receiver

A trusty Collins 75A-2, with an 800 cycle mechanical filter and augmented by a DB-23 preselector, carries the receiving burden.

As for the house…it's looking better every day. Recent improvements include wall-to-wall carpeting and fancy drapes. A hi-fi set and ample collections of big band jazz records serve to liven the rustic environment. Lacking the assistance of an XYL, Len hires a cleaning lady to drop by and set things in order once a week, and (excepting the workshop end of the basement) the appearance of the place belies its role as a bachelor's abode.

Tourist Attraction

Len's once-inaccessible wooded hilltop is now a Mecca for Washington area hamdom; visitors come and go on various errands ranging from sightseeing to soliciting Len's assistance and advice on antenna construction projects or other ham-oriented undertakings. The Potomac Valley Radio Club has held summer meetings there and, during June of 1959, the W3GRF establishment was the scene of the annual joint meeting between the Frankford Radio Club of Philadelphia and the PVRC. On that occasion, Len's 30-foot bridge supported a Greyhound bus laden with 45 beefy linemen from FRC's first team!

W3GRF is always activated for the operating contests; if Len himself is not at the key, one or more of the local gang takes the helm to enjoy a memorable operating experience. W6HOH/3 piloted the station to a top US score in the 1959 European WAE contest, for example. Len himself achieved one of his major goals in the 1959 CQ DX Test, by topping all US entries with a 388,010 point score. His sights now are set on a national first place score in the ARRL DX Test. He almost made it in 1960…and the smart money says it's W3GRF in '61!

Other Activities

Not all of Len's efforts go into development of his homestead and contest station. He has managed to edge his country count up to 275 or so, occupies an active role in PVRC affairs and presides as anchor man on the club's 2M net. He maintains a lively interest in political and rulemaking activities affecting ham radio. Len will be remembered by several hundred DXer's as the master of ceremonies for the DX luncheon at the National ARRL Convention held in Washington DC in 1958, under sponsorship of the Foundation for Amateur Radio, Inc. He

now serves as secretary for FAR, an organization with representation from 19 Washington-Baltimore area radio clubs. No social slouch, Len rarely misses out on weekend dancing dates…except, of course, during the contest season!

Len has built a better hamshack, and the world, so to speak, is beating a path to his door. His spectacular demonstration of what can be done along these lines, and his enthusiasm on the subject has motivated a number of his fellow PVRC members to "take to the hills." While none of them, to date, has attempted a raw pioneering effort to match Len's, the shift from the suburbs into rustic areas has proven equally beneficial for all…W3MSK, W3PZW, W4YHD, W4KFC, and W3MSR, to mention a few, have followed suit and established new and more favorable antenna sites for themselves. Others now are combing the hinterlands around Washington DC with a calculating eye.

Now that the skywires are all in place and working well, Len's homesteading efforts are mainly directed toward further clearing of underbrush, leveling of the terrain, stump removal and planting of grass. His aerie proved to be atop a deposit of almost solid bank gravel, a useful road-building component, for which he has already received an attractive offer. But Len's reaction to this is in character: "Why would I sell? I'd just have to go out and do this all over again!"

Next time you're sightseeing in Washington DC, be sure to include, along with your visits to Mount Vernon, the Lincoln Memorial and the Smithsonian, a side trip to W3GRF…it'll put *you* in a hill-hunting mood.

What I've Learned About Ham Radio Contesters

by Jamie NS3T

Just before the 2007 Dayton Hamvention, I launched a new web site about ham radio contesting at http://www.radio-sport.net. The site is designed to read like a newspaper "sports" page about our hobby.

It has been a fun ride so far, as I really enjoy writing fresh stories about contesting that aren't being presented anywhere else.

While the story lines are in theory limitless, getting hams to talk about their contesting exploits is much like my day job, where I am a radio news reporter covering the U.S. Congress.

Some people are very eager to share strategy ideas and discuss what they're doing, but others do their best to avoid making any news at all!

The most eager reception for radio-sport.net has come from overseas, especially in Europe. It is always nice to get an email - often in broken English - from a contester who is willing to tell his or her story. I have made many new friends in the past six months.

Much attention in ham radio blogs has also focused on my companion site http://wrtc.radio-sport.net, which tallies the qualifying standings for the World Radiosport Team Championships.

It has been gratifying to have hams write in and say that they changed their operating schedule after seeing their WRTC scores, because they had no idea qualifying for WRTC was even a possibility for them.

A number of US contesters have been very generous with their time, lending immediate credibility to my site, which features interviews with contest participants. One op even emailed me his phone number after CQWW CW in case I had extra questions about his top score.

On the flip side, there are those who see the site as a step back.

One US Contest Hall of Famer angrily told me in a series of emails that I was wasting my time and doing a disservice to contesters.

"I believe your so-called Single Operator World Rankings is dangerous, at best," this very well-known ham wrote.

I've even been accused of being a PVRC spy who is really trying to get inside information about the multi-op contesting plans of another large ham club that many of you would know.

For the most part though, this has been a positive experience and one that I hope you will join in by sending photos, story ideas and more.

I truly look at radio-sport.net as my way to give something back to the greater ham radio community.

Editor's Comments:

I've been following the evolution of Jamie's website from its beginning and am truly impressed by what he has accomplished. While there is an almost infinite number of amateur radio related websites, they seem to be very narrowly focused on a single subject or area of focus, or very broad and catalog-like in nature.

***Radio-Sport.Net** stands out from the crowd in that it is the only website focusing on the sport of ham radio contesting. It's not a portal, and it isn't full of "hints and kinks." It's where you go to find out what's going on in the sport. It's the CNN of contesting. W4PA writes in his blog, "Another plug for NS3T's www.radio-sport.net -- I like the newspaper-style reporting." Another contester said, "we need real time access to our hobby, we are not getting that from cq and contesting.com is simply a portal..."*

This is not to say the well-known websites that have contest coverage are not providing a valuable service. What it does say is that Jamie is providing a well thought out and well executed service to the worldwide ham radio contest community. His readership demographics appear to prove this: 51% US, 40% EU, 7% SA, 1% AS, 1% VK. Support a fellow PVRCer and active contester. Take a look at http://wrtc.radio-sport.net – sign up for the RSS feed while you're at it.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND PVRC MEMBERS?

- ***The PVRC NW Region***

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the City Buffet, 1306 W. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD. (301) 360-9666. It's in a small shopping center. Most arrive about 6 PM for dinner and informal discussions. The meeting begins at 7:00 PM.

>From W. Patrick Street, turn up McCain Dr. (the Mountain View Diner is on the corner), then turn right into the shopping center, then turn left and search for a parking place. The City Buffet is tucked back in the left corner of the shopping center behind the Mountain View Diner. You can't see the City Buffet from W. Patrick Street.

73, Bud W3LL

- ***The Annapolis Crew***

Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month at Griffens West in Annapolis. We gather at about 5:30 PM and order dinner about 6. We break up usually before 8 PM. E-Mail W9GE to be put on the e-mail reminder list.

73 Bob W9GE

- ***PVRCNC-East***

Meets on the first Thursday of each month. Details are always available on the web site: http://pvrcnc.org/

73, Jim, K4QPL

- ***PVRC-NC/West***

"The Winston-Salem Courteous Operators Club" (W4WS) meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the "Pure Chrome" establishment, 505 Deacon Blvd. Winston-Salem, NC 27105. It's now a biker bar (we came with the building), so feel free to roar in on your Harley. Info at <w4ws.org>.

73 de tom n4ioz

- ***Gaithersburg Area***

Several of us get together, much like the downtown lunch group, about every 4 to 6 weeks and visit various restaurants in the Gaithersburg area.

73, Jeff Embry, K3OQ

- ***Central Virginia Contest Club***

Meets the second Tuesday of the month at The Henrico Doctors Hospital, Parham Campus, located at 7700 E. Parham Rd. Richmond VA. The Hospital is approximately one mile north of the Parham Rd. and Broad St. intersection. The meeting begins at 7PM in the Hospital cafeteria located on the first floor.

Vy 73, Ed NW4V

- ***Over the Hill Bunch***

The group meets for lunch at noon alternately in Maryland at the College PARK Holiday Hotel Route 1and the Beltway or in Virginia at the Parkview Marriot near route 50 and the Beltway. Meetings generally are held on the last Wednesday of the month and are subject to change. Meetings are announced by E-Mail.

All PVRC members, non-members interested in membership and guests are welcome. For information contact Roger Stephens, K5VRX, rogerergo(at)netzero.net 703-658-3991 for Virginia meetings; or Bill Leavitt, W3AZ, w3az (at) starpower.net for Maryland meetings.

73 Bill, W3AZ

- ***Downtown Lunch Group***

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday or Thursday of the month in the downtown area of Washington, DC. Locations occasionally change, but are always Metro accessible. Details are sent out on the PVRC reflector. Feel free to contact Eric, W3DQ (w3dq at arrl.net) or Brian, WV4V (wv4v at arrl.net) for details and directions. ***NOTE: THE DOWNTOWN GROUP WILL NOT BE MEETING IN DECEMBER***

If you have a group that meets regularly or occasionally, please send details and contact information to W3DQ for inclusion in the Newsletter!

PVRC Spotting Network

WR3L: telnet://dxc.wr3l.net
W3LPL: telnet://dxc.w3lpl.net
W4ML: telnet://dxc.w4ml.net
K3SKE: telnet://dxc.k3ske.net
NE3H: telnet://ne3h.no-ip.com

W3LPL Glenwood MD	145.590 441.250
WR3L Baltimore MD	145.610 440.950
N3RR Rockville MD	145.510 441.325
W3TOM Accokeek MD	145.770
N4OHE Mt.Weather VA	145.710 446.025
NE3H Harrisburg PA	145.630
N4SR Woodbridge VA	145.630
N2QT Lynchburg, VA	145.59, 144.97, 446.075

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