



PVRC Newsletter

April 2015

President's Letter – Ethan K8GU

Spring is finally starting to spring here in the eastern suburbs of Lisbon, MD. With the change of season comes changes in radio conditions, schedules, and habits. The last big HF contests of the year are upon us with the CQ WPX. For the VHF fans among us, the tropospheric ducting will start heating up soon and then sporadic-E season will be here. If you're an HF operator, though, this is a good time to start reviewing the season just-past and deciding what work you'd like to do in the off-season.

Off-season work and training is important to maintaining intensity and your competitive edge. If you're a relatively casual contester such as myself, you might find yourself asking "why bother?" Like many of you, I started contesting to help me earn DXCC, but soon I found that contesting itself was much more exciting in many ways...DXCC is new again every contest weekend! Plus, I earned DXCC, and new entities continue to be harder

and harder to come by. Over the years, I've outlined some goals for myself as a part-time contester and if you're just "turning on the radio to make some QSOs" in contests, you might consider doing the same to up your fun.

When I lived in the Midwest during solar minimum, I found that operating domestic contests was a lot of fun, especially the CW Sprint, something that made me a much better operator. Plus, MWA and SMC take Sweepstakes about as seriously as PVRC does! So, I've focused on being loud on 40 and 80 meters, and loud enough on 20 and up to work the west coast and some DX. A modest-height dipole (50 feet or higher) on 40 really owns the band domestically on CW, and with an amp is a pretty good setup on phone. Look back at your score breakdowns and see if you can find areas where your station could use an upgrade, especially on a specific band where you spend a lot of time or want to be more competitive. As we head into solar minimum, perhaps you'll have fewer options! It never hurts to

have another contester walk your lot with you to see potential antenna locations you hadn't noticed.

Then, there are some less obvious things: Is your shack chair comfortable (but not too comfortable)? Is all of your gear placed in a comfortable, ergonomic fashion? What gear failed you this year? Is it time to repair, replace, or buy a spare?

Training, such as my foray into the Sprints, is an often-neglected aspect of the contest off-season. State QSO parties can be a good way to build your multiplier hunting/digging skills as well as pileup cracking on elusive mobile stations. There are fewer stations to tune across so you don't fatigue, but you learn to identify the characteristics of signals that help you identify stations

without even copying their callsigns. I found operating mobile in a couple of state QSO parties was a great way to learn to run a small, intense pileup because you get a new one every time you head into a new county. This may be less true with the advent of the CW Skimmer since a single CQ in a DX contest always seems to generate a steady stream of Europeans for me.

Whatever improvements you decide to take on, I hope you are able to follow through with them and reap new high scores and contesting fun. If you have done something you think is especially interesting or if you are especially proud of it, please write it up for this newsletter (or at least the e-mail reflector) so we all can learn from your efforts.

73, Ethan, KH8/K8GU.

PVRC Officers:

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PVRC Website: <http://www.pvrc.org>

KK4ODQ_ ARRL International DX SSB Contest - Nick KK4ODQ

I am 18 years old, a General class ham operator, and a new PVRC member. I earned my FCC Technician and General licenses when I was 17. I got my start in amateur radio with my granddad (NE6AA) and the Boy Scouts. Granddad became a ham operator only a few years ago when he was gifted a working Icom-728, an Astron RS-20M, and an MFJ-949E VersaTuner at a neighborhood estate sale in San Diego. I first became involved through Scout Troop 993 in Alexandria, VA by completing the Scout Radio Merit Badge requirements. After earning my licenses in 2013, my shack developed with help from granddad and local Elmers. I really enjoy operating my station.



Nick KK4ODQ and dad Curt KK4ODR



Granddad Ken NE6AA with Nick in original shack

My dad (KK4OQR) and I joined Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club (MVARC) in Alexandria (Fairfax County) where I now serve as club vice president. While working with Steve (K4EU) at W1AW/4 in 2014, I connected with Ken (KE3X) and joined PVRC. Jim (WX3B) has "Elmered" me into the world of serious radio contesting, speeding up my learning curve steeply. I am grateful for Jim's generous invitations to operate and the opportunity to learn from a club whose membership is known around the world as a serious contest organization. My granddad likes to say that I am the future of amateur radio. He is pleased that I am starting amateur radio with such knowledgeable mentorship.

The Icom-728 finally went silent. I currently run two Yaesu FT 990s barefoot into a five-band Hexbeam by K4KIO, a 15 m dipole, and an optimized G5RV. I log with N1MM+, DX4WIN, and HRD on a Windows desktop with CAT.

In preparation for the March 6-8 2015 ARRL International DX SSB contest, I coordinated local operators through MVARC and received able assistance from Greg (K6NK), Mark (KV4UC), Pat (WJ0T), and my dad Curt KK4ODR. I arranged for loaner rigs and peripheral equipment from MVARC resources and from my operators.



KK4ODQ's shack

The included photos taken by my Mom display our station configuration for the contest. The Shack is in the basement of our home; the QTH is warm, dry, and quiet. My Mom is a great chef and baker whose skills are appreciated by Team KK4ODQ.



KK4ODQ on 10M in ARRL SSB, while Pat WJ0T looks on

Contest operations went very well. I had great operators to support me in the contest. We operated a multi-multi, low power station. N1MM+ worked very well, especially with the networking option demonstrated to me by WX3B. Telnet-assisted spotting in N1MM+ was a big assist in making QSO's. I was on the air at contest start on Friday, then got up early on Saturday morning and had a good path to Europe. There was lots of good DX that gave me the best score of the season. We logged many JA QSO's in the last hour and a half on 15 m. Overall, we ended up with 629 QSO's for a total of 400,033 points.

Hope to work you in the next contest! For CQWPX, I will be at Jim's station (WX3B).

PVRC History – Fred K3ZO

VU2MSK MASCOT HOTEL
TRIVANDRUM
INDIA Zone 22

TO RADIO W4JD OPR Forrest
CONFIRMING 14 MCS, CW QSO.
OF 25 Feb 68 AT 2150 GMT/~~15F~~
UR RST 579 CONDX Good
RX-TX KWM 2, 5151 INPUT 100 W ANT HY GAIN 14 V
VERT, 3/2 WAVES IN PHASE HORZ
Many thanks for the QSO, 73 DE ed
ED BISSELL W3MSK operating in India
QSL to Box 700 Route 1, ACCOKEEK
MARYLAND 20607 U.S.A.

WR3R showed me this QSL at the recent Frederick meeting. He got it off of Ebay.

Ed Bissell was the first American ham to be licensed under the USA-India Reciprocal Operating Agreement. He made several trips to India in those days as he was a NASA liaison to the Indian space program.

As Dave K3ZJ pointed out on the PVRC reflector, K3LR's web site contains a story by VU2MV including info about Ed [here](#).

K1N DXPedition



John, W2GD with Tomi, HA7RY in background.

The Twin City DX Association has a great write-up by Glenn W0GJ on the K1N Navassa DXPedition [here](#). It is worth reading for two reasons:

- The amount of time and money spent before even heading towards Navassa is amazing.
- A great section on why the EU rates were so much lower than the NA rates – even though NA signals weren't necessarily louder.

Snowbird Operations – Jim N3JT (N3AM photos)

Jim Talens N3JT has joined the growing ranks of remote operators, using a K3/mini and Remote Rig interfaces to control his home station in VA from his snowbird retreat in FL.



Jim also has local operating capability – either that R9 is huge, or Jim is now only a few feet tall and his Florida home is a toy house.



ARRL President Kay Craigie N3KN Is Now a PVRC Member



N3KN attended her second PVRC meeting at the Richmond Frostfest and was voted in as a Member of the Colonial Capital Chapter. Kay is the third ARRL president to be a PVRC member, after Vic W4KFC and Bob W0DX. (*K3YDX photo/N3AM enhancement*)

Membership News

PVRC added several new members since the last newsletter. Please welcome:

- Ray W8LYJ in the Downtown DC Chapter.
- Kay N3KN and Bob KK4R in the Colonial Capital Chapter
- Evan KC3BWA in the Northwest Chapter.

Chapter leaders please remember to complete the [Meeting Attendance Report](#).

Upcoming Contests and Log Due Dates

Contests This Month

Apr 4 – SP DX
Apr 11 - JIDX CW
Apr 13 – Yuri Gagarin DX
Apr 17 – Holyland DX
Apr 18 – YU DX
Apr 25 – Helvetia DX

Logs Due This Month

Apr 3 – CQ WPX SSB
Apr 8 – ARRL DX SSB

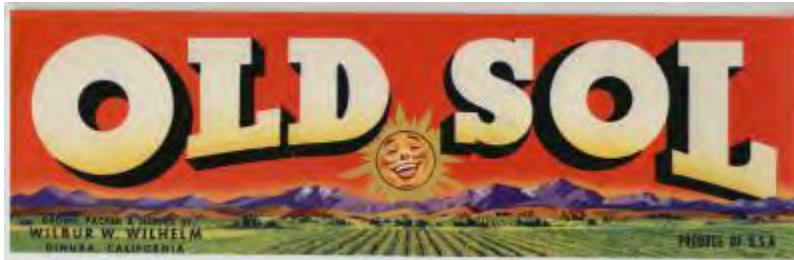
See WA7BNM's [Contest Calendar](#) for more detail and the latest information.

The Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

Thanks to NE6AA, KK4ODQ, N3JT, N3AM and K3ZO for contributions to this month's newsletter. I'm always looking for photos, contest write-ups, hints and kinks, rants – whatever you have send to jpescatore at aol dot com.

Great to see two young testers in this issue of the Newsletter – Nick KK4ODQ and new member Evan KC3BWA. Every year after Sweepstakes someone will post the “where are all the Checks that are in the 00s or 01s??” comment. Well, what are we doing to attract younger people into the hobby and new hams into contesting? The summer contests (and pseudo-contests like Field Day) are great opportunities to do both.

Solar conditions have been making the news lately – the past week has seen the A index actually higher than the Solar Flux Index, with phenomenal auroral openings on 6M and 2M. As Frank W3LPL pointed out, the second peak of solar cycle 24 has proven to be stronger than the first peak – extending FB conditions on 10m through another contest season. Will we get one more 10M contest in December that is actually an HF contest vs. a VHF contest?? As I write this, it is the first day of spring and it is snowing outside – we may just see a third solar peak later this year, who knows??



From the PVRC Treasurer – Bill N3RR

PVRC has chosen not to implement an annual Dues requirement. We depend on the generosity of all of our club members to finance our annual budget. In addition, active PVRC members are expected to participate and submit logs for at least two PVRC Club Competition contests per year.

When contemplating your donation to PVRC, each member should consider the benefit you are receiving from PVRC and its many opportunities for your personal growth in our wonderful hobby, then donate accordingly.

Direct donations to PVRC via Credit Card or PayPal may be made by clicking this "Donate" button and clicking the next Donate button that appears on your screen:



Eyeball QSO Directions

The latest info on local club meetings and get together will always be sent out on the [PVRC reflector](#) and posted on the PVRC [web site](#).

NW Region: Meetings are generally held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Golden Corral Frederick, MD
5621 Spectrum Dr.
Frederick, MD 21703
PVRC Meets in the BANQUET ROOM
(301) 662-5922

From Interstate 270 south of Frederick, MD
take MD Route 85, "Buckeystown Road" NORTH.
First right on Spectrum Drive.
Restaurant is in a couple of blocks. Most arrive about 6 PM for dinner and informal discussions. The meeting begins at 7:00 PM.

Contact: Jim [WX3B](#)

Central Region: Meets monthly the second Monday of each month, except June, July & August). The location alternates between the below MD and VA locations. Pre-meeting dinners start at 6:00 pm and meetings start at 7:30 pm.

VA LOCATION: Anita's, 521 E. Maple Ave, Vienna, VA. Tel: 703-255-1001. Meets at this location during the months of February, April and October.

Contact: Rich [NN3W](#)

MD LOCATION: Max's Café. 2319 University Blvd W, Wheaton MD 20902. Tel: 301-949-6297 People usually begin arriving at the restaurant around 6:30. Meets at this location during the months of January, March, May, September and November. Contact: Art [K3KU](#)

The Laurel, MD Region: Bill N3XL The PVRC get-together is held at the first [LARC](#) meeting each quarter at the clubhouse.

The Annapolis Crew: Dan K2YWE Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month at Broadneck Grill in Annapolis. We gather at about 5:30 PM and order dinner about 6. We break up usually before 8 PM. E-Mail [K2YWE](#) to be put on the e-mail reminder list.

PVRC-NC: The PVRC NC-East chapter meetings are held at [Manchester's Bar and Grill](#) on the 9100 block of Leesville Rd. in North Raleigh, with "QRM" beginning at 6:00pm and the dinner meeting following shortly thereafter. The meeting is held monthly on the 1st Thursday of most months, cancellations or changes usually announced on the [PVRC-NC website](#). [The PVRC NC-West Chapter](#) holds its meetings on the 4th Monday of each month at [the Mellow Mushroom](#), 314 W. 4th St., Winston-Salem, NC. Ragchew at 7:00pm, dinner meeting starts at 7:30pm. All contesters and interested guests are invited!

Over the Hill Bunch: The group meets for lunch at noon alternately in Maryland at the College Park Holiday Hotel Route 1 and 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, 703-658-3991 for Virginia meetings; or Cliff Bedore [W3CB](#) or get on 147.00 for Maryland meetings.

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 or Brian WV4V for details and directions.

Southwest VA Chapter: The Southwest VA group meets each Wednesday at about 8:30 AM at Hardees at 20265 Timberlake Road in Lynchburg, VA. This is an informal gathering, but normally has about 10-12 attendees. Contact Mark Sihlanick N2QT, Tel: 434-525-2921

Southern Maryland Chapter: We meet on the last Wednesday of each month at Nicolletti's Pizza located at: 22741 Three Notch Road, California, MD 20619 Phone: 301-863-2233. Check out their menu [here](#).

Talk-in on 145.350 (-) PL-156.7

Meet and Eat 6:30 – 7:30, PVRC meeting afterwards.

Contact the Chapter Chair, Tom Shelton, ND3N at GL1800Winger<at>Verizon<dot>net or (240) 434-3811 with any questions

The Tidewater Chapter meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month at Frankie's Place for Ribs located in the Fairfield Shopping Center on the corner of Kempsville Rd and Providence Rd in Virginia Beach. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM.

Contact either Chapter Chair: Don Lynch, W4YZT, viaw4yzt.don@gmail.com or Ron Young, W8RJL, via w8rjl@arrl.net All Amateurs are invited.

If you'd like to add or correct a listing, contact K3TN for inclusion in the Newsletter!

Now a Word From Our Sponsors

PVRC doesn't ask for dues, but the Club does have expenses. Please donate online [here](#). You can also support the Club by buying from the firms listed who advertise in the newsletter, or by getting your company to sponsor the newsletter!

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VX-7R/VX-7R Black

50/2M/220/440 HT

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- Fully Submersible to 3 ft.
- Built-in CTCSS/DCS
- Internet WIRES compatible

Now available in Black!

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NEW!

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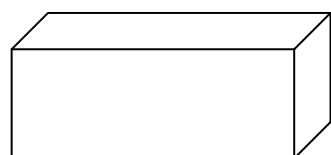
Attention: Contesters

7 Big Problems that are Probably Affecting Your Scores Right Now!

and

How The RF Connection's Mike-Link and
Shure® Legendary Performance™ Broadcast Headsets

Solve them ALL!



Your Radio

← Mic/PTT cable
RX Audio: L/R cable
From Footswitch →



The RF Connection's
Mike-Link

← Headset cable →



Shure BRH440M
Broadcast Headset

Problem #1: Foot Not Near Footswitch, QSO Missed

Solution #1

Use Your Finger Instead!

- Mike-Link finger-touch PTT
- Momentary SPST switch
- Positive tactile feel



Problem #5: Operating CW, you have a "pain in the head" after "Y" hours on-air

Solution #5 - Use Mike-Link

Periodically, Flip the Reverse/Inphase Audio Switch

- Reverses mono audio source for greater listening pleasure



Problem #2: You wear eyeglasses and you have a "pain in the temple" after "X" hours on-air

Problem #3: Brand 'Z' comfortable headset solves problem #2, BUT increases external background noise

Solutions #2 & #3

Use Shure BRH440M
Broadcast Headset

- External background noise isolating
- Closed back—noise isolating
- Gamer-style, circumaural (over-the-ear) ear cup pads



Problem #6: Special microphone is needed for your ICOM radio

Problem #7: External batteries needed when your ICOM-specific headset is used with other radio brands

Solutions #6 & #7

Use Mike-Link & Shure BRH440M

- Built-in, user-selectable, Active ICOM pre-amp
- External power/battery NOT required
- Built-in, user-selectable mic input impedance 2.5K or 10k

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Problem #4: "RF in your mic audio OM!"

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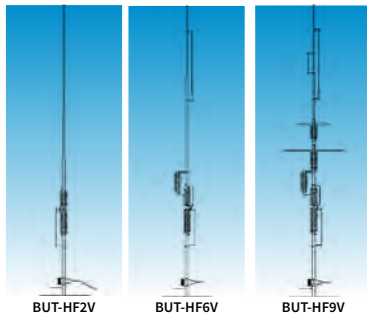


Coaxial Cable Stripping Tools

Made specifically to install solder-type PL-259 connectors onto 50 Ω coaxial cable, these [Coaxial Cable Stripping Tools](#) ensure the best electrical continuity possible. They'll work on solid or foam dielectric cables with either PVC or PE jackets. They're designed to deliver clean, precise cuts time after time. Two versions are available: one for larger O.D. cables like DXE-213U and DXE-8U; the other for smaller O.D. cables like DXE-8X.

Butternut Antennas

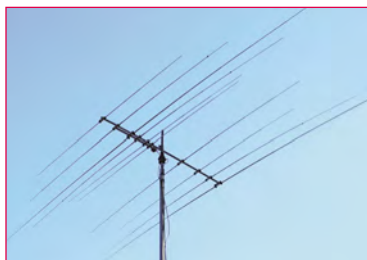
DX Engineering recently welcomed Butternut Antennas to its family of manufactured products, including the classic [2-band](#), [6-band](#), and [9-band](#) vertical antenna designs. The antennas' compact size makes them easy to install, yet they will deliver outstanding performance on each band. And don't worry; DX Engineering will have all the repair, add-on, and replacement parts for your existing Butternut Antennas.



JK Antennas

Built to withstand the wrath of Mother Nature, JK Antenna's time-tested Yagi designs are an excellent foundation for your high performance HF/VHF station. JK Antennas has several models to choose from, each delivering a perfect fusion of reliability, price, and results.

The [Navassa-5 Yagi Antenna](#) is 20-10M Yagi that packs 2-element monoband performance into a 5-band antenna. An optional 6M add-on kit for the Navassa-5 is also available. JK Antennas' [Hawk](#) Yagi is a 40/20 meter design that provides excellent gain and bandwidth figures. The [JK401](#) is a basic dipole antenna that can get you on the 40M band, yet is relatively compact for those with smaller lots. Hams who want to get on the "Magic Band" should check out the [JK65](#). It's a 6 meter Yagi that, despite a relatively short 15' boom, delivers over 9 dB gain. [Find the entire JK Antennas line at DXEngineering.com.](#)



Navassa-5

Stay competitive. Get the right parts and blazing-fast shipping. If your order is in by 10 pm Eastern and the parts are in stock, DX Engineering will put it on a truck the same day. Request your catalog and shop online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at [DXEngineering.com](#).

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ANNOUNCING THE
2015 YORK HAMFEST



Sponsored by the York Hamfest Foundation
The Areas Oldest Continuous Hamfest, our 60th Year

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2015
8:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

New Location

ELICKER'S GROVE PARK

511 Roth Church Rd

Spring Grove, PA 17362

Easy access from York, PA or Hanover, PA

PLENTY OF FREE PARKING!

THIS YEARS HAMFEST IS TAILGATING ONLY

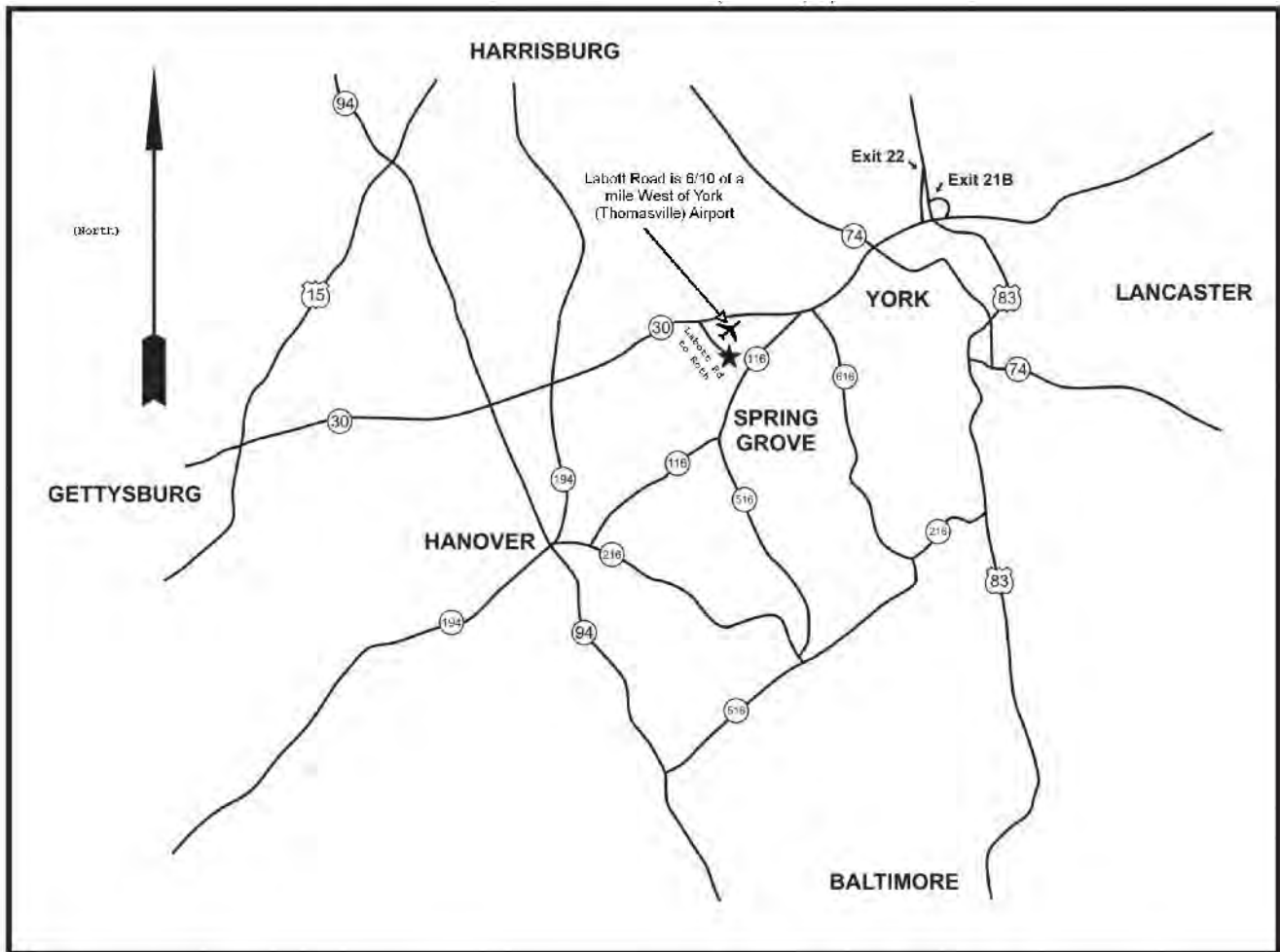
- **TAILGATING SET UP AT 6 AM SATURDAY MORNING.** \$5 per 10' space, plus admission
- **GENERAL ADMISSION AT 8 AM.:** \$5 per person
 - Children Under 16 FREE when accompanied by an adult
 - Unlicensed Spouses FREE
- **RAIN OR SHINE**
- **COMMERCIAL VENDORS ARE EXPECTED TO COLLECT & REMIT PA SALES TAX**
- **FREE VE TEST** – Registration starts at 10:30 AM – Testing at 11:00 AM (Admission fees paid can be refunded upon registration for testing, full ticket and stub are required)
- **FOOD VENDOR WILL BE AVAILABLE**
- **DOOR PRIZES**
- **CARD CHECKING FOR DXCC/WAS/VUCC/WAC**

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES – www.yorkhamfest.org
FOR GENERAL INFORMATION: duane.sterner@yahoo.com

YORK HAMFEST

Elicker's Grove Park

511 Roth Church Road – Spring Grove, PA 17362



THIS MAP IS NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

Directions From Harrisburg:

- Take I-83 S toward York (21.3 miles)
- Take the PA-181 exit, Exit 22, toward US-30/Manchester (.2 miles)
- Turn right onto I-83 BR/PA-181 N. George Street and continue to follow N. George Street (.5 miles)
- Turn right onto Arsenal Road/US-30 W. (5 miles)
- Merge onto us-30 W/Lincoln Hwy toward Gettysburg (5 miles)
- Turn Left onto Labott Road (.8 mile)
- Continue onto Roth Church Road (.2 miles)
- Elicker's Grove Park is on the left.

Directions From Hanover:

- Start center square Hanover
- Proceed North East on Broadway PA (6.2 miles)
- Turn right on US-30 (5.8 miles)
- Turn Right onto Labott Road (.8 mile)
- Continue onto Roth Church Road (.2 mile)
- Elicker's Grove Park is on the left.

GPS

N39 54' 30.87" W76 52' 59.15"
39.9086223 -76.883134

Talk-In: 147.330+600 (ctcss 123.0 Hz)
Alternate: 146.52 Simplex

Directions From Baltimore:

Take I-83 N toward York and follow directions below from york

Directions From York:

- Traveling on 83 N, take Exit 21B and follow directions to Rt. 30W
- Traveling on 83 S, exit at Rt 30 W, Exit 22
- Coming from Lancaster take Rt 30 W
- Stay on 30 W toward Gettysburg (10 miles)
- Turn left onto Labott Road (.8 mile)
- Continue onto Roth Church Road (.2 mile)
- Elicker's Grove Park is on the left.