

## Using the RBN Telnet Servers

By rights, the Reverse Beacon Network (RBN) should be an ideal Sweepstakes tool, particularly for use on Sunday when new QSOs are few and far between. Why? Because it spots anyone who is CQing, without the need for someone to decide to spot the station because it "should be interesting."

The problem for most of us is the sheer volume of spots, and the likelihood that many of them won't be audible at your QTH. Here's how to beat that, by filtering so that you only see spots from stations near you.

On the DX Spider telnet server (telnet.reversebeacon.net, port 7000), you need to send the following command to the server:

```
ACCEPT/SPOTS BY_STATE WV,PA,MD
```

Of course, you would substitute your state and those neighboring for the ones I have listed. Just be sure to format the line exactly as I have specified. This will filter spots sent to you so that you receive only ones heard by Skimmers in the places you designate

To modify the filter, send the same line again, but with different states. To reset the filter wide open, substitute ALL for the list of states.

For a full list and explanation of DX Spider commands, see [http://www.dxcluster.org/main/usermanual\\_en-12.html](http://www.dxcluster.org/main/usermanual_en-12.html)

Though it is less well known, there is a second RBN Telnet server, using AR Cluster Version 6 software. It is found at arcluster.reversebeacon.net, port 7000. The filter syntax is different, but the idea is the same. If you send it the line:

```
SET DX FILTER (spotterstate=md OR spotterstate=pa OR spotterstate=va OR spotterstate=WV)
```

it will only send you spots from Skimmers in MD, PA, VA and WV. The parentheses are required, but the commands are not case-sensitive.

To modify the filter, send the same line again, but with different states. To clear the filters, send

```
SET DX FILTER
```

all by itself.

The AR Cluster software also has some excellent features tailored specifically for Skimmer use. I use the following filter string, combining several filters in Boolean style.

```
SET DX FILTER CALL=N4ZR OR (SKIMMER AND UNIQUE>2) and (spotterstate=md OR spotterstate=pa OR spotterstate=va OR spotterstate=WV)
```

The string is not case-sensitive, but the parentheses and spaces are important. This does several things at once. First if I am spotted, it sends those spots straight on to my logging program (N1MM Logger reports spots of your own station in the Info window). Then it looks again at the full RBN stream, and only passes spots that have been reported by at least 3 Skimmers, anywhere in the world. Those go on to the next filter, which only passes spots made by Skimmers in one of the listed states. Finally, if spots have passed all these tests, the node sends them to me.

As you can imagine, this filtering cuts down on busted spots and virtually eliminates spots I can't hear. Try it – you'll like it.

One easy and obvious tip – in your logging software, you can probably define individual "buttons" to send text to the cluster node. Put your filter(s) in one or more and the "clear filters" command in another, and you can do all this with one click.