

# *PVRC Newsletter*

## *April 2014*

### President's Letter – Ken KE3X

One of my goals as your new PVRC President is to personally attend a meeting of each of our 16 PVRC Chapters. Sort of an 'Eyeball QSO Worked-All-Chapters' quest, if you will. In the past I've attended Rappahannock, Northwest, Central and Downtown DC meetings - I've got 4 Chapters in the log, another dozen to go.

As I was researching Chapter information on our PVRC website across all our 1084 listed members, I came across one group labeled 'No Chapter Affiliation' with 245 operators listed. This group includes members who live within our 175-mile HF circle but have not selected a local Chapter, or have moved their primary residence outside the circle. As our motto has always been 'Once a Member, Always a Member' of PVRC, this group with 'No Chapter Affiliation' tends to grow over time, and currently represents over 20% of PVRC members.

This was particularly interesting as our Board was doing its periodic review of our 5-Meg Program Rules for the 2014-2015 contest season. How can our 'Out of Circle' members continue to participate in 5-Meg and be an active part of our Club? Let's take a look.

#### **5-Meg Program Rules Clarified**

First, there have been some clarifications to 5-Meg Program rules for next year. The most important clarification relates to aligning 5-Meg credit with contest sponsor credit. This rule can be summarized as: "Members will receive 5-Meg credit only if PVRC receives full or partial credit for the submitted log." Consider these examples:

**Example 1:** KE3XYZ is a PVRC member who resides 'In-Circle' and travels to New Hampshire for CQWW Phone. He enters as Single-Op from W1ET, the Dartmouth College club station. This is 'Out of Circle', so PVRC gets no points from the sponsor.

Therefore KE3XYZ receives no 5-Meg points.

**Example 2:** KN4RRV is a PVRC member who resides 'In-Circle' and travels on DXpedition to PJ2T for CQWW Phone. He joins a Multi-Single team with 4 operators from various other clubs. The score is submitted for club credit to CQWW as 1/5 PVRC and 4/5 to other clubs. PVRC receives credit from the sponsor, therefore KN4RRV receives 5-Meg points.

**Example 3:** W3ABC is a PVRC member who resides 'In-Circle' and travels on 'domestic DXpedition' to Ohio for CQWW Phone. He joins a Multi-Single team in Ohio with 6 operators all from NCC. The score is submitted for club credit to CQWW as 1/7 PVRC and 6/7 to NCC. PVRC receives Club Competition points from CQWW, therefore W3ABC receives 5-Meg points.

**Example 4:** KA2PPS is a PVRC member who resides in Florida and travels back to DC for CQWW Phone. He enters Multi-Single with 3 other operators, all PVRC members. The score is submitted 100% PVRC, since the operation was 'In Circle'. Therefore KA2PPS receives 5-Meg credit, since his score contribution was credited to PVRC by the sponsor. Note: If the operation were Single-Op, 5-Meg points would also have been awarded, since the station was located 'In Circle'.

**Example 5:** W4RRR is a PVRC member who resides in Florida and travels to Ohio for CQWW Phone. He joins a Multi-Single team with 6 NCC operators. In this case, PVRC does not receive any credit from the contest sponsor, since W4RRR does not have a primary residence inside the PVRC circle. Therefore no 5-Meg points are awarded.

Now for the best part: there are many contests with no circle restriction. These events are eligible for 5-Meg credit for all PVRC members, including members who live outside the circle. Of the 29 events on next year's 5-Meg calendar, this includes the following 13 events:

- North American QSO Party (all 6 events)
- Russian DX
- Worked All Europe (all 3 modes)
- CQ 160 (both modes)
- CQ WW VHF

That's a total of 8,500,000 5-Meg points available each year to any PVRC member who lives outside the circle. In addition, 'out of circle' members can score 5-Meg points any time they return 'in circle' to operate, either Single-Op or Multi-Op.

Many thanks to our Secretary, Alan AA4FU for his leadership during this 5-Meg program update. The full revised rules will be posted to the website prior to the 2014-2015 contest season.

### **W1AW Travels to Virginia in April**

Only a few days left until Virginia hosts W1AW/4 the week of April 9-16. Steve Hawley, K4EU and Ken Claerbout, K4ZW have been hard at work filling the operating roster. If you would like to operate, check the open slots in the Excel located at the link below, then send Steve an email [here](#) to reserve your slot:

More info [here](#).

See you in the pileups ... and Go PVRC!

Ken KE3X

## Let's support WRTC-2014: Volunteers Needed – Dave K3ZJ

Most PVRCers have heard about WRTC-2014 and know that WRTCs are the “Olympics” of ham radio competition. The WRTC competition will run simultaneously with this year's IARU contest in mid-July. The WRTC competitors will participate in 2-person teams using 100 watt stations feeding identical antennas. Fifty-nine RF-equal field sites will be employed, distributed across a 60-mile arc west of Boston, from southern New Hampshire to Plymouth, MA.

After a three-year qualification period based on contest scores from within pre-defined geographic areas, two of the 59 qualifying teams are composed of PVRC members: KE3X and K0DQ will compete, as will N4YDU and N3KS. (N4YDU was runner-up and replaced NN3W, who bowed out due to family reasons.)

But they aren't the only ones who should be present. WRTC is a unique opportunity for all PVRC members to personally meet and bond with like-minded competitors from around the world. WRTC was conceived and first held in the U.S., but it has been 18 years since the competition last was held here. This is the first time ever for it to be held on the East Coast near PVRC-land.

**Volunteers are needed to help with many tasks.** This is the best opportunity for PVRCers to attend and help out at a WRTC. The gathering could be viewed as a 6-day contesters' hamfest, with a break in the middle for the actual competition. Undoubtedly many operating tips and techniques will be passed around by these top competitors, the referees, and all the contesters working on the event, many of whom we work repeatedly during contests but never personally have met.

Last year I experienced first-hand WRTC preparations during the IARU contest. In May I attended a prep session, and then in July helped a team erect sites. Teams and individuals from as far away as Florida and Canada traveled to similarly lend a hand.

Where are all the PVRCers? I didn't find other PVRCers volunteering to help. I personally am looking for one or two site helpers for at least Thursday-Sunday of IARU weekend, and it would be great for multiple volunteers to raise their hands and participate. There's a variety to tasks that are in need of volunteer help and contesters from much farther, such as Florida (FCG) and Canada have outnumbered PVRCers, not to mention FRCers.

We have two teams in the competition but on the volunteer front we are being beaten soundly by our competitive peers. Call me and I can tell you from my experience last year what is needed and how to get involved, or contact any of the organizers you may know. There's lots more information on the wrtc-2014 website, including a volunteer sign-up tool [here](#).



Former PVRCer (if there is such a thing) Dave, KM3T and Dave, K3ZJ, at the NI1L 2013 WRTC test site in Plymouth, MA. KM3T serves on the WRTC-2014 Board of Directors and is playing a key organizational role.

### **PVRC Buddies – Mark N2QT**



Buddy W4YE and recent PVRC joiner Bud W2RU. They have been making contacts since the early 50's.

## Defining Contest Categories – Ward NoAX

From the March 12 2014 ARRL [Contest Update](#):

Last time, we examined how the current categories are constructed, based on a "standard" set of definitions. The table below shows the categories beginning with the minimal Single-Operator, Single-Band.

Category	Station	Operator	Information	
			RF	Data
SOSB	No Skimmer	One	One band - no limit - one signal	No external data
SO	No Skimmer	One	All bands - no limit - one signal	No external data
SOU	Skimmer OK	One	All bands - no limit - one signal	External data and public Skimmer OK
MS	Skimmer OK	Unlimited	All bands - six/hour - one signal	External data and public Skimmer OK
M2	Skimmer OK	Unlimited	All bands - six/hour - two signals	External data and public Skimmer OK
MM	Skimmer OK	Unlimited	All bands - no limit - six signals	External data and public Skimmer OK

Beginning with SOSB, there is a steady expansion of what is allowed in each of the defining characteristics for the station, operators, and information.

When viewed from the perspective of this set of definitions and choices, confusion over the term "assistance" vanishes. It's all about information and what crosses the boundaries, controlled by limits on the equipment, bands, information, and number of operators.

There are a surprising number of possible categories based on combinations of these characteristics. How many? In the Station column you may use CW Skimmer or not (two choices) and under Operator you may have one or any number of operators inside the station boundary (also two choices). RF information choices consist of 2 bands, 2 limits on band changes, and 3 types of limits on signals - a total of  $2 \times 2 \times 3 = 12$  combinations. External data information is either allowed or it isn't for two more choices. Overall, there are  $2 \times 2 \times 12 \times 2 = 96$  combinations, just from this simple set of choices.

Out of these 96, most current contest rules support just the six categories shown in the table, although some allow a station CW Skimmer in SOAB and some don't. Of the non-implemented categories, some don't make a lot of sense (Multi-multi, Single-band for one) but surely there are some other nuggets of interest to be mined from this rich vein?

Rick, N6XI wrote to describe a Tag-Team SOAB category in which a sequence of operators play by the SOAB rules. "That is, a group of ops taking turns operating a station, single-signal, with unlimited band changes, so the one op in command at any time can take advantage of SO2R (or, for the RTTY-inclined, SOnR). Instead of limiting band changes,

limit operator changes." I can imagine the operator change limit varying from 10 minutes ala the California QSO Party to an hour or even 24 hours.

I'm sure other variations of useful categories come to mind and might make perfect sense for a favorite contest or one your club sponsors. You can even define your own categories and challenges for a contest as long as the QSOs are valid within the sponsor's definitions. Other hierarchies of categories can be built based on these and similar choices, too. The important thing is to build the categories on clear definitions and boundaries. From new categories (and new definitions, as well) will come entirely new contests!

Where does this lead? I believe the major challenges are two-fold; first, what equipment is allowed inside the station boundary? How automated can operation become and still have the outcome depend on operator skill and station-building ability? (This is why we have contests, don't forget...) What are the differentiating factors between types or classes of technology?

The second major challenge is the use and application of data. We're rapidly approaching the point at which things we traditionally think of as part of a physical radio can be located anywhere if sufficient bandwidth and resolution exist to implement the desired function. "Virtual equipment," if you will. With fiber-optic data service, why not offload your DSP filtering or signal decoding to a cloud-based vendor of digital algorithm services? It's already easy to use multiple remote receivers entirely over the Internet.

Operators using remote control might have a set of equipment that looks very much like a traditional station, but performing the actual control functions via a digital control link. Consider the TS-480 with a control head, microphone, key, and headphones in one location and the RF circuitry somewhere else at the end of an Ethernet cable. Is the station control point truly inside the station boundary? Does it matter if the human operator can't tell the difference between everything being in one place and having some of the equipment elsewhere?

Decisions about what combinations and constraints are desirable will be up to contesters and contest sponsors. One thing is clear - technology is not about to slow down for us and seems to be accelerating, in fact. I can envision the day in which the definition of the station boundary changes to "A 500-meter circle, inside which the conversion between electromagnetic waves and data is performed." And everything else can be anywhere else.

Even when that comes to pass, an RF signal will still have to make its way from station to station and hams will still listen to the world turning as the hours pass. The mysteries and challenges of ionospheric and tropospheric propagation will always be a part of ham radio and that is good enough for me. Food for thought? Certainly. An age of experimentation and change is upon us and there will be many changes. It's all a matter of boundaries.

## PVRC Stations Survive the Polar Vortex (Part II) – Bill N3RR



All of Bill's antenna's survived the February snow and ice. As a bonus, he included a screen shot of new IC-7800 firmware V3.00 that provides waterfall spectrum display plus other features.



## From the Wayback Machine: Bicentennial Morse Celebration – Dave K3ZJ



On Thursday, May 23, 1991, the Capitol Hill Amateur Radio Society (W3USS) sponsored the Bicentennial Celebration of the birth of Samuel F. B. Morse in the Capitol of the United States. A part of the program was a re-enactment of the transmission: "What hath God wrought!" Pictured below, dressed in clothes of the era, are Mrs. Jo Ann Morse, Judge Robert F. B. Morse (great-great-grandson of Samuel), Dave Siddall (K3ZJ), Architect of the Capitol George M. White (W3HDO), Bill Hider (N3RR), and Frank Donovan (W3LPL).

*(Editor's note: I remember having a blast putting W3USS on the air with Dave in the ARRL 10M Contest back in the late 1980s. The W3USS web site can still be found [here](#).)*

## Now You Can Tell Your XYL Contesting Is Good for You – Dave K6LL

Dave K6LL points out a recent CNN piece describing the mental benefits of being involved in creative activities, where you get so absorbed in what you are doing that you enter a state of "flow" and lose all track of time, gaining benefits similar to meditation:

*"[Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi](#) first described this phenomenon as flow: a few moments in time when you are so completely absorbed by an activity that nothing else seems to matter. Flow, Csikszentmihalyi says, is the secret to happiness -- a statement he supports with decades of research."*

Full article [here](#).

## Membership News – Bud W3LL

PVRC added one new member in the Southwest Virginia chapter since the last newsletter. Please welcome Ken K4XL.

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

## Upcoming Contests and Log Due Dates

### Contests This Month

Apr 5 – SP DX  
Apr 12 - JIDX CW  
Apr 13 – Yuri Gagarin DX  
Apr 18 – Holyland DX  
Apr 19 – YU DX  
Apr 26 – Helvetia DX

### Logs Due This Month

Apr 1 – ARRL DX SSB  
Apr 4 – CQ WPX SSB  
Apr 13 – BARTG RTTY  
Apr 15 – VA QP

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

## Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

Polar vortexes appear to lead to great high band conditions, which is kind of shame since the “heavy lifting” of the contest season is over – unless you are a WPX enthusiast. April is always a quiet month for contesting, and it is usually when I get the bicycles, boat, lawn tractor and everything else ready for outdoor activities. Of course, just a few days ago we got 4 inches of snow here in FM19 – someone called it “the 84<sup>th</sup> day of January.”

If the cold weather continues, I think I'll tackle the twice postponed shack redesign – an L-shaped operating position has been calling me for a while, and I recently added a second monitor that needs much better positioning. I think I'll use the IARU HF contest (which Dave K3ZJ points out is also the WRTC 2014 venue this year) to aim at having the new configuration ready for. Of course, I think last year I said I was aiming at the February Sprint as the forcing function...

Thanks to Dave K3ZJ, Bill N3RR and Mark N2QT for the great write-ups and pictures for this month.

Pictures, write-ups, anything you have for the next newsletter – send them to [jpescatore at aol dot com](mailto:jpescatore@aol.com).

## **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!

**Central Virginia Contest Club: Ed NW4V** Meets the first Tuesday of the month at St. Martins Church, 9000 St. Martin Lane, Richmond VA, (between W. Broad St. and N. Parham Road). Our meeting begins at 7PM.

**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

**SOMD Region Meeting:** The Southern Maryland Chapter meets at 6:30PM on the first Tuesday of even numbered months. We meet in the vicinity of Charlotte Hall, MD, with the specific location (usually a local restaurant) to be announced several weeks prior to the meeting (keep an eye on the reflector). These meetings are open to all PVRCers, guests, and those interested in joining PVRC. Contact Tom AB3IC for information: e-mail: [GL1800Winger@verizon.net](mailto:GL1800Winger@verizon.net) - cell: 240-434-3811

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 send contributions by snail mail to N3RR's address at [QRZ.com](http://QRZ.com). 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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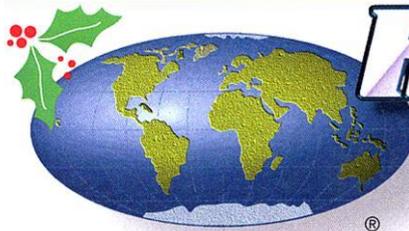
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- 100w HF/6M, 50w 2M, 20w UHF
- DSP included • 32 color display
- 200 mems • Detachable front panel (YSK-857 required)

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- Weather Alert
- 1000+ Mems
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**FT-8900R** Quadband Transceiver

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Available exclusively from DX Engineering, [KD9SV preamps](#) could make the difference between hearing distant stations and actually working a rare DX. They feature a BF981 FET ultra low-noise design. Gain is adjustable from 10 to 28 dB with a low noise figure. Excellent filtering characteristics ensure that you only hear the signals you want to hear. These preamps are the perfect complement to receiving loops, pennants, flags, Beverages or active arrays.



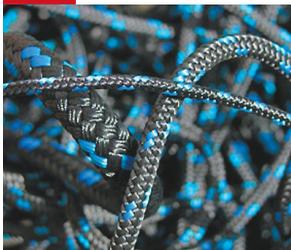
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These [Systems](#) feature a state-of-the-art design to offer operators the most advanced antenna system possible. Plus they're affordable, simple to install and easy to use. There are seven monoband options that cover most of the significant HF bands. These are the same units found in COMTEK's [ACB-4 Hybrid Four-Square Systems](#) and will work well when paired with DX Engineering [Tuned Feed Cables](#). The systems handle the full legal limit with a 100 percent safety factor.



### **DX Engineering Super Duty Saddle Clamps—Click for Details**

Super Duty Saddle Clamps are perfect for building large Yagi or LPDA antennas (where maximum torque is critical). These clamps provide maximum grip on booms, masts and element tubing. Super Duty clamps are cast from rugged aluminum with a special textured surface to grip the tubing. The new [narrow Super Duty Saddle Clamps](#) fit tubing from 0.75" to 2.00" O.D. tubing, while the original [wide Super Duty Saddle Clamps](#) fit 2.00" to 3.00" O.D. tubing.



### **Antenna Support and Guy Line Ropes—Click for Details**

Specifically designed for guying and support, [Mastrant ropes](#) are perfect for wire antennas, supporting Yagi booms and elements, as well as guying verticals and antenna masts. These non-conductive ropes are made from synthetic fibers that won't stretch, collect moisture or suffer from UV degradation. The ropes range in diameter from 2mm to 10mm with a break strength rating over 8,000 pounds. They're sold in 100 meter (328 foot) rolls.

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