

PVRC Newsletter

December 2011

Letter from the President – Mark KD4D

This is my last President's column for the PVRC newsletter. On January 1, Rich Di Donna, NN3W, takes over as PVRC President. I'm excited about Rich's upcoming term and I look forward to another great year for PVRC.

PVRC has done some great things over the past two years. I especially remember our **four** straight wins in the club category for Sweepstakes. The increased participation by PVRC and NCCC has made the contest more fun for everyone. The PVRC Webinars that Ken Claerbout, K4ZW, organizes have been a rousing success.

In addition to our successes, PVRC has some challenges. We're a widely dispersed group, with active Chapters from North Carolina to Northern Maryland. The local Chapters, where people get together, socialize, help each other with tower work, and so forth, are strong. The Sweepstakes competitions have been a unifying force for the club and it's been a lot of fun for me personally participating in Sweepstakes and contributing to our club score. Our "once a member, always a member"

policy keeps us connected with members who relocate to other areas. The internet keeps us connected too.

But, we need to consider how to have more events that unite us as a club – we have several events in the Maryland and Northern Virginia area which are difficult to get to for our members who live in other areas.

What else can PVRC do to help our members have more fun in contests, build relationships, and help each other? Please share your ideas with the officers and trustees and help us make PVRC even stronger.

I am honored to have been PVRC president for two years and I want to thank the officers and trustees who have helped me immensely: the 2011 officers Rich DiDonna, NN3W, Bob Finger, W9GE, Dave Baugher, WR3L, Kam Sirigeldin, N3KS, and the trustees Ed Moore, NW4V, Tyler Stewart, K3MM, Don Lynch, Guy Olinger, K2AV, Pete Smith, N4ZR, Brian McGinniss, N3OC, and Don Daso, K4ZA.

I hope to see many of you at the PVRC Holiday Party on December 5. My favorite part of being President of PVRC is to distribute 5 Million Point program plaques and endorsements and to give

out the six Club Competition awards that PVRC has been awarded this year. GO PVRC!

73,Mark, KD4D

High Speed CW Contest – Ken KE3X

In October of this year my son Kody and I attended the 9th High Speed Telegraphy World Championships, held in Bielfeld, Germany. This was our 2nd time competing in HST - we had also gone to Obzor, Bulgaria in 2009. For details of that trip, see www.arrl.org/teamusa-at-the-2009-hst).

That article explains how the competition works - the scoring is much like gymnastics, where there are 8 individual events and an 'All-Around' competition. The 8 individual events are:

Transmitting Events (Score = # of correct characters sent in 60 seconds)

1. Transmitting figures
2. Transmitting letters
3. Transmitting mixed characters: figures, letters and 5 others (, = . / ?)

Receiving Events (Score = # of characters copied within 60 seconds, with <5 errors)

4. Receiving figures
5. Receiving letters
6. Receiving mixed characters: figures, letters and 5 others (, = . / ?)

Practicing Tests (Scores generated by the simulators)

7. RUFZ
8. Morserunner

Each one of the 8 events are weighted equally in the 'all-around' score calculation. Within each event, the winner gets '100' points, and each other competitor gets a scaled score of 1-100 based linearly on how he/she did relative to the winner. I won't go into further detail here on how the competition works: look [here](#) for details.

We had a few objectives on this trip: 1) represent the USA in international competition; 2) have fun with some of our HST friends we met back in Bulgaria and since on the air; and 3) spend some 'quality time' together (Kody has three brothers, and my wife Ann and I try to arrange a trip every few years with each kid individually - this was Kody's turn ...) I can easily say we chalked up a 'Win' on all three counts.

TeamUSA had 5 people in 2009 but only 3 this time: Kody, me and our team captain, Barry Kutner W2UP. We had lots of late cancellations due to scheduling and school conflicts. Even so, we came in 10th out of 20 teams - right in the middle of the pack. The overall winners were the traditional HST 'powerhouses' of Belarus (1st), Russia (2nd) and Romania (3rd). The team score is the total of up to 18 individual scores per team, based on the 9 categories of 'Under 16' (Male and Female), 'Under 21' (M/F), 'Under 40' (M/F), 'Over 40' (M/F) and 'Over 50' (Men only). So you can see, the bigger teams have an advantage in the overall scores - more competitors means more points.



From L to R: Frank DL2CC, Barry W2UP, Kody K3ODY, Anna RA4FVL

A few interesting notes about HST: first, there are really two 'sub-competitions' going on - the 'Professionals' and the 'Amateurs'. Although everyone in a given age category competes against each other, in fact certain teams have 'professional' CW operators. For example, the adult competitors on the Russia and Belarus teams are effectively 'professional athletes' as if they were competing in gymnastics or track and field. They train for multiple hours per day, year-round, and receive bonuses for medals won at international competitions. This all dates back to the 'Cold War' era when the former USSR needed a steady crop of top-notch CW operators for security (i.e. 'covert') purposes. In fact, the Receiving HST event tests you on 5-character random code groups - exactly the format that was used in the Cold War!

In the youth divisions, those countries' competitors attend a special academic program which integrates CW training into their school day. Imagine being a 10th grader and having your daily schedule be: Math, CW Receiving, Science, RUFZ, History, Lunch Break, CW Transmitting, Languages, Morserunner, etc. By the end of the day, you would have spent between 3-6 hours practicing your CW!



Belarus team warming up for the 'Transmitting' event - notice the matching track suits

Here's an example: Anna Sakukova, RA4FVL from Russia broke the female (and overall) world record for RUFZ during this competition - a total of 4,686 points. (See picture of Anna after the awards ceremony flanked by Kody, Barry and Frank Grossman, DL2CC.) Anna is a very polite 16-year old Russian girl who can handle a pileup of 4 stations at 65-wpm (receiving speed) and 120-wpm (transmitting speed). In the competition, a score of 4,686 points in 10-minutes equates to about 75 QSOs - i.e. one QSO every 8 seconds, or a '450-hour' pace. Not too shabby, and the frightening part is Anna is still only 16 years old! After 2 years of practicing, my personal best is a 320-hour pace on a 10-minute Morserunner run - I cannot conceive of a 450-hour!

It's kind of hard to compete with that dedication, if you think about it. That leaves the true 'Amateurs' to compete informally with each other - i.e. experienced contesters and DX'ers who happen to love Morse Code and like to push themselves to see what their CW limits are. This group includes many hams from Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria with whom I have become good friends in recent years. Everyone is very willing to pass along tips and help each other improve (see picture of Iliya Getzov, LZ4UU showing Kody some tricks on RUFZ). In my 'Over 40' division I have Anti, HA3OV (of HG6N, and a WRTC competitor), as well as Suad, DK6HZ (operates from DR1A) and the German team captain - Hein Langkopf DL2OBF.

I recall in Bulgaria in 2009 there were two competitors from Mongolia. This time they fielded a team of five, and placed 9th overall, just beating TeamUSA. Bravo to the Mongolians! Several of their team members are military officers, and in the last 2 years

their scores have improved quite a bit. We saw new teams this year from Switzerland (three team members) and France, Italy and Japan (one each).

Finally, a few words on Morse Code and personal limits. At HST we talk about 'plateaus' and 'breaking through' to a new level. Whatever your current code speed, you can ALWAYS improve to a new level. Just don't expect it to happen overnight. It's like the old joke where a tourist stops a cabbie in New York City and asks "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" Hint: the cabbie answers "Practice, practice, practice!"

Here's a good example - when I came back to amateur radio in 2008 after 15 years away, I think my first RUFZ run was about 12,000 (see www.rufzxp.net for the 'Toplist' scores, to put that score into perspective). At that time, I had the advantage of being stuck on a train from Geneva to Zurich for 2 1/2 hours a day, 4 days a week - i.e. lots of time to practice Morserunner and RUFZ! I recall hitting 'plateaus' at 24,000 then 30,000 then 37,000 points over the following year. For months I could not break through those levels. Then magically it just happened. I recall I set my personal best in RUFZ over 43,000 points when I was on the train, after two glasses of Swiss white wine. That run was sort of like 'zen of Morse Code' or something - where you hear the CW in your ear, and the result comes out the keyboard without even consciously thinking about it.

At HST 2011, Barry was the big winner with a Gold medal in Morserunner ('Over 50' category) and a Bronze in RUFZ. I taped Barry's medal presentation - it was really cool to hear the US National Anthem being played for the first time (see the video [here](#)). Kody came home with a 6th Place certificate in Morserunner (see picture on the train back to Hannover), and lots of good memories playing ping-pong with the other teenagers from Eastern Europe. It's hard for Kody to practice his Morse Code during the school year, and we will never be able to practice enough to beat the 'professionals', but as long as it's fun and we can afford the time away from school/work, we'll keep competing. If nothing else, it's really cool to represent the USA!

See you in the contests and Go PVRC!

Operating from Thailand at E2E – Fred K3ZO

A quick rundown on how conditions looked over here for the CQ WW SSB contest.

E2E: ops HS0ZCW, K3ZO, K4YT, high power, all bands, single xmitter, multi op. all hours.

	Q	C	Z
7	145	37	21
14	1014	97	34
21	1328	87	30
28	1780	99	29
	4267	320	114

4,428,536 final score

Fortunately Charly's QTH 20 miles straight west of Bangkok was not affected by the floods. Driving over there on Friday, however, 10 km east of Charly's place we encountered about three blocks' worth of flooded roads up to hubcap level.

For the East Coast 15 meters was definitely the best from here, with the band open to PVRC-land almost continuously from 2350 UTC to 0300 UTC and again from 1100 through 1900 UTC. Twenty meters was also quite good to PVRC-land from 1000-1200 UTC and again from 1600-2400 UTC, but it was hard to get a run frequency there. It was nice to put a number of PVRC and NCDXA members in the log.

After operating a very fancy high-end radio here I still prefer my Ten Tec Orion I for receiving, but part of the problem could be that the radio was adjusted for the host's favorite parameters.

We decided to just have fun and run whenever we could, doing almost no S&P'ing and not connecting to any cluster. We had great runs into Europe on 10 but you could tell immediately when the band had opened from Europe to the US as the runs suddenly stopped when everyone in Europe turned their beams around toward the US. Of course, the band also got busier with all the US run stations suddenly cluttering up the band.

Fifteen was good enough that with the beam pointed at the East Coast we still got plenty of Europeans calling in, so, especially on Sunday, I just kept the beam pointed at the East Coast. We may have missed the best openings to the states on 10 because 15 was so good at the same time. With this in mind I purposely went to 10 about 1300 UTC Sunday and found some of the strangest conditions I can ever remember from Thailand, where historically I have operated from for four years during my working stints here plus a number of times on visits to the family.

I would have thought I was back in MD with my beam pointed south. There were almost no signals on 10 at all, but the band was very quiet and signals from the Caribbean were all S9+. Everything was coming in right over the North Pole. So we operated out of character for a few minutes and did some S&P: NP4Z, WP2Z, PJ4D, etc. all worked with one call to get through the piles. Who says that the Caribbean is difficult from Asia?!

This is an area very much affected by equatorial absorption while the Sun is up. It definitely affects one's ability to drag weaker signals through the noise as while the Sun is shining there is a constant S5 to S6 background hiss on 10 and 15 meters. Fortunately the hiss is gone during the hours of darkness which were also when the best openings to the East Coast occurred, so I was able to copy WM3O's LP and KR2Q's QRP easily even though their signals weren't moving the S-meter at all. They were worked in the middle of a fairly large pile-up so they should nevertheless be congratulated on their timing to get their calls in there just at a moment nobody else was talking.

On 10 meters another annoying problem is the constant yoops and swishes of innumerable ionospheric sounders (?) which peak from here when the beam is pointed North-Northeast. Add to that a band full of loud NBFM signals from NE to East (Hong Kong taxis? Chinese fishing boats?) and daytime operation from here on 10 can leave one with the experience of having to request an inordinate number of repeats.

On the positive side, we logged hundreds of BA/BD/BG/BH/BI/BY calls, and as these guys get more familiar with the contest world pointing an antenna at East Asia will yield increasing QSO volume as time goes on.

Thailand is also well situated for working Russia, and the bottomless pit of Russians, many sporting their new vanity calls, was a pleasure to take advantage of: they are all snappy ops and no time is wasted when running off a Russian pile-up. While nobody was looking, a new crop of Japanese seems so have come along also, as many of them who we worked were labeled as unique calls by N1MM using the AD1C database of contest calls. And no, we weren't busting these calls, the Japanese are very good at correcting you until you get the call right, even though their accents are sometimes difficult to work with. Interestingly enough we also logged quite a few different Filipinos. So I would say ham radio is still a growth industry in East Asia.

In closing, I should mention one incident which amused us, as an example of how good conditions really were. At times when it is impossible to get a run going inside the US phone bands, we could do a brisk business with Europe by going just below the US phone band and running there. On Sunday Charly fired up on 14149 and began a run when suddenly a complaint was heard from an unidentified voice who announced that we were QRMing his run 1.2 KHz higher. Indeed, the voice matched that of the op on the mike of a well-known M/M operation who was running on 14150.2. We will not mention the call here but it was not a PVRC call! Imagine conditions being good enough so that a station from Thailand can cause QRM on the East Coast!

The flooding is not over but the family's compound here is still dry. Hopefully I will make it back there as scheduled next week without having to endure this problem.

Thanks again for all the Q's! It was a blast to be on the other side for a change. Special thanks to host Charly for making it all possible.

73, Fred, K3ZO and HS0ZAR.



Fred, K3ZO with Khun Chaiyong, HS1QVD (source RAST)

Wire Beam – Jim K4QPL

I don't take any credit for it, but a recent antenna project has turned out so well I can't resist passing. It was also a great excuse to enjoy the Fall days without raking leaves!

My goal was a second tribander, aimed NW, that I could use with my second radio. Not having the bread or motivation for a second tower I started looking around for something better than a dipole, like a wire something specifically for domestic contests. Had messed with the idea of a Moxon (like the pattern) but the wisdom of people who know a lot more about antennas than I do, (K2AV), was that a triband Moxon could be REAL tricky to get set up properly.

Did a google search and came up with this which is a QST reprint:

http://www.ve7ca.net/ANT/INT/VE7CA_2-ElWireYagi.pdf

Reading the intro was like he was reading my mind--he just did it 10 years ago! But that's what's so cool – and at almost same place in the sunspot cycle. The other thing that is important is that I have a lot of trees and it's impossible to find the right gaps to put up conventional wide-spaced wire yagis. If you've got an 8' wide path between two =>40' trees (strategically positioned to give you a W-NW aim) you can put up one of these babies.

I followed his dimensions **exactly**. Used my 75' tower for one end support and a nearby tree with a rope over a branch at about same level. Spud gun got it there on the second shot. Getting exact horizontal balance at final height was a bit tricky, (the RG8X adds progressively more weight to the DE side as it goes up) but again, follow instructions by sliding the knots on the bridle and you'll hit it eventually.

Raised it to about 40'. Put the MFJ analyzer on it and was spot on for 3 bands. Even the hairpin match hit 48 Ohms on the first try which is close 'nuff to 52 for me! Your mileage may vary. Doing it again I'd probably add a couple inches to the 20M dimensions to concentrate on the cw end, but SWR is about the same as my TH7, 1.6 at 14050; 1.2 at 14200. Similar on 15 and 10. For cw and phone it's perfect as is.

I also tried raising it to about 60' but that brought it closer to the top of my tower and nearer the TH7. SWR started looking funny. There might be some interaction.

Connected it to the six-pak so I could do side by side comparisons with the TH7. More good news: Tuning through the bands receiving, it was not unexpected, but confirmed that for the 5, 8, 9 and the near 7 and 0 call areas the low homebrew 2 el Yagi was about 1 S unit **better** than the 75' 3 el tribander. They evened out on 6's but for DX, especially for the JA's on 10M this evening the TH7 pulled ahead again. Worked a 5 in TX and did comparisons. Transmitted signal reports followed Rx results. So, it's ideal for SS, NAQP, etc.

So, for about the same cost and space requirements as a dipole you can have a 2 element tribander aimed for where the high band SS QSO's will be this year. And if the XYL or neighbors are a consideration, take it down after the contest, roll it up and bring it out again next time. Also great for FD.

Anyone who wants to try it and has questions, reply directly. Be glad to share some additional construction tips.

73, Jim, K4QPL

Who The Heck is Who?? – K3TN

Rob, KA1ARB is now K4OV.

Welcome New Members – W3LL

Please welcome the following new members who were voted into PVRC during the months of August and September:

- In the Laurel Region: Shane WQ3Y, Mona NY7P, Johan KB3VQH
- In the Northern Chapter: Tom AB3IC
- In the Downtown DC Chapter: Tim N3QE, Brennan N4QX
- In the North Carolina East Chapter: Bill W4KSZ
- In the Northwest Region: Geoff AA3WZ
- In the Tidewater Chapter: Ted W3TB

National Capital Radio and TV Museum needs space – Eric W3DQ

Published: Thursday, October 20, 2011

Radio and TV museum may leave Bowie by Virginia Terhune
Staff Writer, Gazette.net

The National Capital Radio & Television Museum in Bowie is “bulging at the seams” and needs the city’s help to find larger quarters or it may have to leave the area, museum directors say. “We’re wondering how you see opportunities for our future,” Brian Belanger, executive director and curator, who asked Bowie council members for help Monday during the City Council meeting.

Supplied by an ever-growing list of donations, the museum in the city’s historic Harmel House, which according to property records is about 2,000 square feet and was built in 1903, has “a warehouse full of things but not enough space to display them,” Belanger said. He also said its present location in the historic two-story house on Mitchellville Road near Mount Oak Road is not easily accessible by bus, the second floor is not handicapped-accessible and the building does not have climate controls to protect the exhibits.

The private, nonprofit museum, which does not receive funding from the city, has leased the building since 1999 to display reminders of broadcast history ranging from Marconi's earliest wireless telegraph, through early crystal sets of the 1920s, Depression-era cathedral radios, postwar portables and the development of television, according to the city website.

Berlanger said the museum is visited by more than 2,000 people a year from the U.S. and around the world who help boost Bowie's economy. Although small, the museum is becoming even more well known globally because of the Internet, he said. Run until now entirely by volunteers, directors have moved toward "taking it to the next level," by hiring Laurie Baty as a part-time manager, he said. Berlanger also asked the council for help in connecting with local business leaders in hopes of winning their support.

Mayor G. Frederick Robinson asked Berlanger to make a list of specific needs and said the city would look into them. "We'll try to put you together with the right people," Robinson said Monday. Councilman Dennis Brady, an electrical engineer, also encouraged the museum to remain in Bowie. "I think we make a good team," he said about the museum's connection to the city. "We'd love you to stay. I'd hate to see you go."

The museum is located at 2608 Mitchellville Road south of Bowie Town Center. It is open Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m., according to the city website. For more information, visit www.cityofbowie.org and www.radiohistory.org.

Upcoming Contests and Log Due Dates

Contests This Month

- Dec 2 – ARRL 160M
- Dec 3 – New 10M RTTY
- Dec 10 – ARRL 10M
- Dec 17 – Stew Perry TBC
- Dec 18 – ARRL Rookie Roundup

Logs Due This Month

- Dec 1 – OK/OM DX
- Dec 6 – ARRL SSB Sweepstakes

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

The Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

Well, the “heavy lifting” of the contest season is over, with the Sweepstakes/CQ WW extravaganzas over. Looks like PVRC got the four-peat in SS and topped NCCC once again – that is something to be very proud of. In the SSB SS it is always fun to have something say “Holy cow, I’m drowning in MDCs!”

I’ve been slowly buying up used parts to go SO2R and in SS I set up the TS-850 and Ten Tec Titan on 40 and used the K3/KP-500 for moving around the other bands. Not even close to SO2R, but I’m now much faster at QSYing. In the CQ WW CW, I went SO2V assisted using the Reverse Beacon Network with just the K3 and its second receiver, and the 500w amp (and a Windom at 45’) and was just amazed at the rates I could get. Now if I could just get some real antennas up...

Thanks to Ken KE3X and Eric W3DQ for submissions for this month’s newsletter and to Mark KD4D for his president’s columns. If you have any post-contest write-ups, or cold weather antenna projects you are proud of, drop me line [here](#).

– 73 John K3TN

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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 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.

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: Topolino's, 6320 Old Branch Avenue, Temple Hills, MD. Tel: 301-449-6160. Meets at this location during the months of January, March, May, September and November.

Contact: Mark [KD4D](#)

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 about 10-12 attendees. Contact Mark Sihlanick N2QT, Tel: 434-525-2921

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

PVRC Officers:	Trustees:
President: <u>KD4D</u> Mark Bailey	<u>K3MM</u> <u>N3OC</u> <u>N4ZR</u> <u>W4ZYT</u> <u>NW4V</u> <u>K2AV</u> <u>K4ZA</u>
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Now a Word From Our Sponsors

PVRC doesn't ask for dues, but the Club does have expenses. Please send PayPal donations via DAVE@WR3L.NET or by snail mail to Dave's address at 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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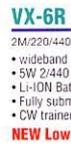
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