

PVRC Newsletter

October 2015

President's Letter – Ethan K8GU

While October generally marks the beginning of the HF contest season, it also marks an important month in the PVRC calendar: the nomination of new officer candidates for the Club. By the time you read this, you should have seen the list of incumbent officers and trustees on the Club e-mail reflector along with a call for nominations. I encourage you to give this some thought.

Depending on the year and the characters and projects involved, the officers invest varying quantities of time. But, there is a constant need for attention to the chapters, membership, comradery, and finances of the Club, to name a few areas that your officers monitor. Our past president, Ken, KE3X, made a heroic effort to visit all of the chapters, something that I'm simply unable to do given my hectic work schedule and young family. But, the two Vice Presidents, Tom K3AJ, and Bud W3LL, along with Treasurer, Bill N3RR,

have been able to make it to a few chapters. And, they prepared a really professional program for the Virginia Beach Hamfest with Secretary Vic, W4VIC. Great work and thanks, guys! I believe that this is particularly important with nearly all of the present officers coming from the Northwest Chapter. I especially urge those of you in outlying areas to participate as officers or trustees in the future.

Trustees have less input on the day-to-day operation of the Club but they are brought in for consultation on important strategic and financial decisions and for historical perspective. The trustees are geographically and personally diverse and several are past officers (especially presidents).

With that bit of administration out of the way, how are your plans and preparations for the upcoming contest season going? Post those reflector questions and tips! Write up brief reports for the Newsletter with pictures!

Without the August NAQP results included, SMC has a commanding lead over both PVRC (2nd) and NCCC (3rd) in the three-way NAQP Challenge between the clubs. As I have written previously, their president, Craig, K9CT, has been making a big push in this competition and I expect no less in Sweepstakes as well. If SMC is as active in SS as they were in the August NAQPs with similar conditions, they are going to eat our turkey and stuffing, too! We know that SS is a numbers game: the club that brings the most participants has a strong chance of winning. But, we also need a cadre of serious ops to build the bottom line.

Speaking of numbers, for the part-time ops: This is just a friendly reminder that because SS has a small number of multipliers, your score rarely exceeds linear growth with time, except perhaps in the first 100 QSOs or so (I just made that figure up, we could do the analysis based on the ARRL's score databases). And, especially on CW, the one-QSO-per contest (no multi-band QSOs) rule and a relatively small population of operators constrains your score to stop growing linearly and saturate at some point after you've worked all the available multipliers and your rate falls

off. As Scott K0DQ, writes in the PVRC 2015 ARRL DX Contest Cookbook, "In any event, the amount of time you spend in the contest is your decision but the Club hopes you will spend it wisely."

For the newer members: Sweepstakes can be a bit intimidating because the exchange is long, the rules are a bit funny, and we as a club agonize over it for months. My first introduction to Sweepstakes in a club competition was at a multi-operator station. From a learning perspective, there's really no greater way to go: you can get familiar with the exchange and strategy by listening to the other operator(s) and then jump in when you're ready.

By the time the next Newsletter comes out, Sweepstakes will be upon us, so this may be my last communication on the topic in the Newsletter for this year. May your station projects be successful and your preparations be fruitful. And don't forget to take a close look at the officer/trustee nomination opportunity as a participant or an informed voter.

GO PVRC!

73, Ethan, K8GU

PVRC Officers:

President: K8GU Ethan Miller
Vice President: W3LL Bud Governale
Vice President: K3AJ Tom Valenti
Secretary: W4VIC Vic Culver
Treasurer: N3RR Bill Hider

Trustees:

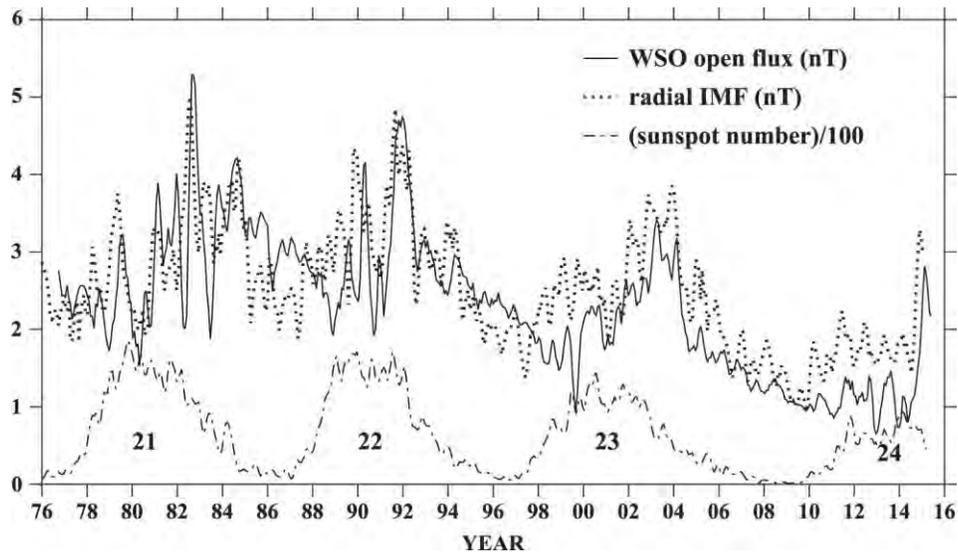
K3MM, N3OC, WX3B, W4ZYT, N4NW, K2AV, KE3X, K4ZA, K3WRY

PVRC Charter Members (all SK):

W3GRF, W4AAV, W4KFC, N0FFZ, W4LUE, W7YS, VP2VI/W0DX, W3IKN, W4KFT

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

Finally, Some Good News About the Next Solar Cycle – Frank W3LPL

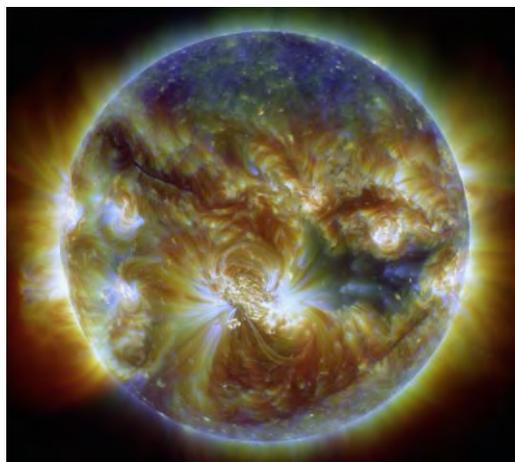


Until mid-2014 Solar Cycle 24 was remarkably quiet. Despite the steadily declining solar flux since mid-2014, the Sun's large-scale magnetic field suddenly strengthened late in 2014 reaching its highest value in more than twenty years.

Using these and related observations, two Naval Research Laboratory researchers, Wang and Sheehy, predict in their August 2015 article in *The Astrophysical Journal* that Solar Cycle 25 may reach an amplitude similar to Solar Cycle 24.

Until the unexpectedly sudden and strong increase in the Sun's large-scale magnetic field, some solar scientists feared that Solar Cycle 25 might achieve a much lower amplitude than Cycle 24. Those fears might now be put to rest.

Full article [here](#).



AB621 Tower Improvement Project – Jim AB3CV

I have an AB621 tower with a three element Steppir and a 6M7 on an 8 foot aluminum mast turned by an Alfaspid RAK-1. This combination has worked very well for me but I've found raising and lowering this 104 lb. combination to 50ft to be overly exciting even with ground crew of three. The problem is that the three people have difficulty reacting to the tower motion and each other's actions and the resulting instability becomes unsettling with a lot of shouting of instructions from the person underneath the tower on the elevator winch. Of course wind gusts only make it worse.

I've found a good solution which can be handled even by a single person without running from anchor to anchor to adjust tension although with two people it is easier yet. I've added some Dacron rope to each of the top guy points and brought them to the usual anchors and passed them through a carabiner and from there to the launcher where they are taken up by three inexpensive hand winches. These Dacron lines are used to provide tension once the permanent top guys go slack while lowering.

The three winches are mounted on an aluminum plate mounted to the back of the launcher. These lines are brought to the top of the tower (more carabiners) so that the loads on the winches are vertical, resulting in a simple shear load on the mounting plate. I've used climbing grade carabiners throughout rather than pulleys which always seem to snag small rope at the worst time.



Bare panel with the winches attached before we added the lines and carabiners.

Our (AB3CV, K3AJ) first test was on 9/14 in the lowering of the antennas to enable a major tree trimming. The wind was blowing 10-15mph with gusts even higher and yet the lowering of the unit was very steady with Tom operating the elevator and myself maintaining tension via the winches. We were both able to see what was happening to the tower as we could both look directly up the tower and react accordingly.

The tower came down about as quickly as one could work the elevator, remove the tube and dress the feedlines. Much improved over previous attempts and no frantic yelling! This approach could probably be implemented for the AB577 as well as the AB621 as they are similar in construction.

PVRC Forum at the Virginia Beach Hamfest – Bob K4NTO

Four PVRC officers presented at the PVRC Forum at the Va Beach Hamfest on Sept 12th



From left to Right: Don Lynch W4ZYT Trustee; Vic Culver W4VIC Secretary; Tom Valenti K3AJ Vice President and Bud Governale W3LL Vice President.



Annual NR4M Goatfest – Steve NR4M/Lar K7SV

A combination chapter meeting and open house was held at the NR4M Goat Farm QTH on Saturday 22 August 2015. A full write-up and many pictures [here](#).



World Wide Radio Operators Forum WRTC 2018 Update Webinar

On Sunday, Oct 4, 2015 from 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM EDT., the WWROF is hosting a webinar to get out the latest info on WRTC 2018. Full info and registration is [here](#).

Agenda:

"WRTC 2018 Overview and News" by Chris, DL1MGB, President of the organization committee:

- short introduction to the WRTC Germany
- information sources, web, standings
- local activities, e.g. sites, PR, volunteers
- finances - call for donations & sponsoring

"Competition Rules for 2018" by Uwe, DL8OBF, Director for Competition

- especially the arguments and the decision MS vs. M2
- outlook to next steps in rules design

"Work All Germany Contest - a new WRTC qualification event" by

Christian, DL8MBS, WAG Contest Director

- (WAG is the German equivalent to ARRL DX)
- short introduction into the contest
- special aspects. e.g. DOK

N1MM+ Hint for Multi-Contest Weekends – John K3TN

On many weekends there are more than one contest I might dink around in, like simultaneous QSO parties and the SAC or JA events. In N1MM you have always been able to start up multiple contest logs and go through the “Open Log in Database” menu entry to switch between them.

But in version 1.0.5176 or later, N1MM+ now has a nice short cut:

- With your cursor in the Entry window, hit ALT+F – that brings up “active” contest log list
- Select the number in the list of the contest you want to switch to, type in that number and hit Enter
- Voila – you are logging in the other contest.



Membership News

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

- Wilson AA5AZ in the North Carolina West Chapter.

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

Upcoming Contests and Log Due Dates

Contests This Month

- Oct 3 – Oceania DX SSB
- Oct 3 – CA QSO Party
- Oct 10 – Oceania DX CW
- **Oct 17 – Worked All Germany**
- **Oct 24 – CQ WW SSB**

Logs Due This Month

- Oct 2 – CQ WW RTTY
- Oct 7 – All Asian DX SSB
- Oct 10 – SARTG RTTY
- Oct 20 – ARRL UHF

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

The Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

Strange HF conditions the past month or so – not often you see the A index higher than the Solar Flux Index. With all the gloomy predictions of a coming Maunder-like Minimum, it was nice to read the article Frank W3LPL pointed out where some researchers think the recent geomagnetic activity indicates Cycle 25 may look more like Cycle 24 than completely flat line.

But we still have the minimum to slog through. October brings the start of the biggies – **CQ WW SSB**. Let's hope at least 15M opens up and it isn't until 2016 that all those SSB signals have to squeeze into 14.150 – 14.350, ugh.

Lots of good talk on the PVRC reflector around optimal heights for 20M beams and how a 2 element 40M Moxon performs almost as well as a full size antenna but saves dramatically on tower and rotor hardware.

I'm getting the itch to play with Software Defined Receiver technology, especially after playing with a Flex Radio and the new Maestro control head at Dayton. Anyone using SDR technology in your contesting today?

Thanks to Jim AB3CV, Bob K4NTO and Frank W3LPL for inputs this month. I'm always looking for pictures or stories for the Newsletter – send anything you have for November to jpescatore at aol dot com.

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 meets the 3rd Monday of each month (except December) at about 7:00 PM at Hams Restaurant, 414 S. Stratford Rd., Winston-Salem on the south end of the Thruway Shopping Center. We meet in the front meeting room of the restaurant. A wide variety of cold 801s and Sports bar menu available. Contact Henry Heidtmann [W2DZO](#), full info at <http://www.w4nc.com>

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

Colonial Capital Chapter: Meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 8:30 am
Location: Hot Stacks Restaurant, 6495 Richmond Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23188
757-565-1105

Contact: Bill Conkling [NR4C](#)

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](#), or Ron Young, [W8RJL](#) 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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(714) 533-7373
(800) 854-6046
Janet, KL7MF, Mgr.
anaheim@hamradio.com

BURBANK, CA
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Eric, KA6IHT, Mgr.
Magnolia between
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burbank@hamradio.com

OAKLAND, CA
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(510) 534-5757
(800) 854-6046
Mark, W7YN, Mgr.
I-880 at 23rd Ave. ramp
oakland@hamradio.com

SAN DIEGO, CA
5375 Kearny Villa Rd., 92123
(858) 560-4900
(800) 854-6046
Tom, KM6K, Mgr.
Hwy. 163 & Claremont Mesa
sandiego@hamradio.com

SUNNYVALE, CA
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(408) 736-9496
(800) 854-6046
Dan K6DN, Co-Mgr.
Howard, W6HOC, Co-Mgr.
So. from Hwy. 101
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Rick, K3TL, Mgr.
RT.13 1/4 mi., So. I-295
newcastle@hamradio.com

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(503) 598-0555
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Leon, W7AD, Mgr.
Tigard-99W exit
from Hwy. 5 & 217
portland@hamradio.com

DENVER, CO
8400 E. Hill Ave. #9, 80231
(303) 745-7373
(800) 444-9476
John, N5EHP, Mgr.
denver@hamradio.com

PHOENIX, AZ
1939 W. Dunlap Ave., 85021
(602) 242-3515
(800) 444-9476
Gary, N7GI, Mgr.
1 mi. east of I-17
phoenix@hamradio.com

ATLANTA, GA
6071 Buford Hwy., 30340
(770) 263-0700
(800) 444-7927
Mark, KJ4VO, Mgr.
Doraville, 1 mi. no. of I-285
atlanta@hamradio.com

WOODBRIIDGE, VA
(Near Washington D.C.)
14803 Build America Dr., 22191
(703) 643-1063
(800) 444-4799
Steve, W4SHG, Mgr.
Exit 161, I-95, So. to US 1
woodbridge@hamradio.com

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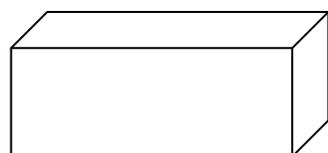
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and

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From Footswitch →



The RF Connection's
Mike-Link

← Headset cable →



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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 BRM440M
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- External background noise isolating
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- 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

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- Built-in, user-selectable, Active ICOM pre-amp
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DX ENGINEERING *Receive Antenna Variable Phasing Controller*

Combine two identical receive antennas to create a "virtual rotator" directional array. It's adjustable, so you can null-out unwanted directional noise or enhance distant signals. This controller is the ideal solution for imperfect antenna setups, giving you great low band reception regardless of your landscape. You're also able to upgrade your NCC-1 with optional [Filter Sets](#) for band-specific enhanced performance.



DX ENGINEERING *Receive Preamplifiers*

An advanced push-pull design eliminates harmonic distortion to make these the best low-noise preamps on the market—even better than many radio front-ends. With 300 kHz-35 MHz coverage, they are perfect for AM and HF DXing, SWL or contesting. These preamps handle strong signals without overloading.



DX ENGINEERING *Receiver Guard 5000 & 5000HD*

DX Engineering's Receiver Guard 5000 and 5000HD are perfect if you have a receive-only antenna subjected to high RF levels. They're also useful for Field Day, SWL or if your neighbor generates a lot of RF. These electronic limiters work automatically, generating far less harmonic noise than other limiters. Select the original [Receiver Guard](#), or the new [Receiver Guard HD](#) made for upper-tier, high-performance radios.



ACOM

2000A Automatic Linear Amplifier

This is one of the finest Amateur Radio HF amplifiers to combine fully automatic tuning and sophisticated digital control capabilities. Using a revolutionary amplifier design, the 2000A easily delivers up to 1,500 watts of clean, distortion-free power. Full automatic tuning gives contesters an edge by permitting lightning-quick bandswitching. Advanced digital features provide full control via PC when plugged into the 2000A's RS232 port.

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2015 NY QSO Party



Set aside the date: Saturday, October 17th, 10:00 AM
Phone – CW – RTTY/Digital

Since 2009 Rochester has been the home of the NY QSO Party. This is a great opportunity to be a station that everyone wants to work. All stations work only NY'ers!

All the information you need such as rules, FAQ's and awards are just a click away... www.NYQP.org.