

PVRC Newsletter

October 2014

President's Letter – Ken KE3X

Boo! What does October mean to you? Excellent question - so I did a quick survey. My 8-year old said "Halloween", a colleague at work answered "MLB playoffs" and a neighbor said "Make sure to sweep your leaves into the street, so you don't miss the city pickup like you did last year!" All good answers, but not exactly what I was looking for. I think the most important part about October is "It's almost time for Sweepstakes!"

Sweepstakes Review

Each year PVRC picks one contest to rally the troops. Recently we have emphasized ARRL Sweepstakes, with excellent results - we have won 6 years in a row.

Let's review recent results (scores displayed as 'million points'):

Year	PVRC	NCCC
	Pts/Entries	Pts/Entries
2013	22.9 / 317	16.9 / 231
2012	20.1 / 267	8.1 / 107
2011	22.8 / 291	14.7 / 189
2010	21.4 / 273	20.1 / 286
2009	24.3 / 302	22.7 / 332
2008	22.6 / 325	20.3 / 278
2007	18.0 / 241	19.1 / 273

A few comments on this:

1. We don't always win! It's tempting to assume 'PVRC has always won SS' so we can take it easy this year. Not the case at all - in past decades other clubs have had long winning streaks, and as recently as 2007 we were outscored and had fewer entries. We have won SS for 6 years in a row since we have made it our #1 priority, and this year is another challenge for us.

2. SSB vs CW: In Sweepstakes, we have traditionally been stronger on SSB than CW, falling behind NCCC after the CW leg, and making it up on SSB. I have always wondered why this is so.

Is there something about the Pacific Ocean that makes West Coast contesters naturally better at CW? I doubt it. PVRC has shown in the 2014 NAQP Challenge we can challenge NCCC on CW - let's prove it again in Sweepstakes CW 2014.

3. Total station entries: Our maximum number of station entries was 325 in 2008. I am encouraged by last year's 317 station entries - can we break the all-time record of 325 stations this year?

4. Our 'Medium Guns' are always the backbone of our victories. Do you have one radio, tribander, wires, a 500-watt amplifier, and score between 50,000 and 100,000 points in each SS leg last year? Then you are the reason we have won Sweepstakes for six years in a row, and we need you back in 2014 again. Let's all think of ways to encourage the

next group of Little Guns to become Medium Guns this year.

5. PVRC Sweepstakes Awards: Have you ordered your celebratory mug from 2013? Hit the link on our right side of our website and see how you did last year. Did you win a '100,000 Point Improvement Award'? Can you exceed 242,195 points this year and climb into the Top 10? Have a family conflict one Sweepstakes weekend? How about hosting a Guest Op and being a '300 QSO Station Host'?

So with this background, I now officially declare Sweepstakes 2014 is a Double Point Contest for 5-Meg. Let the games begin!

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

Ken KE3X

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

New Tower and Beam for Multi-Op K3CCR – Ben N3UM

K3CCR (Collington Community Radio) is the club station at the Collington Continuing-Care retirement community in Prince George's county, MD, just west of DC. The club has a new 85-ft. tower with a beam, and two contest/DX quality legal-limit operating positions. More info [here](#) or at and K3CCR page on qrz.com.

Collington management has always been supportive of voluntary resident activities, e.g. a big woodworking shop, beekeeping, and RC model sailboat racing. A ham radio tower was a new idea. But, as described in the article by Grant Bagley, W3GB (Jan. 2013 QST, p. 70), a modest rooftop tower with a C3 gained acceptance a few years ago.

Based on this experience, management recently gave permission for us to pursue a county permit and put up a much better antenna. We got trees cleared and concrete poured, and hired pro John Crovelli W2GD with his assistant Bill W2RQ to put up 85 feet of Rohn 25 and a Bencher Skyhawk tribander. Ben N3UM brought tower sections from his former QTH. Dick K3DI brought tower sections, rotator, and the Skyhawk beam, plus Phyllistran guys.



Club members L-R : Dick, K3DI; Grant, W3GB; Ben, N3UM; Gerry, N3ADY; and Karl, KB3US.

On tower put-up day, Wed. July 23, the temperature got to 95 with a heat index of 101. We coped, taking maximum advantage of shade from the numerous trees on the hilltop tower site, gulping water every few minutes, and taking breaks. Nobody got heat exhaustion.



Grant and Gerry assembling tower sections.



Ben and Gerry doing antenna assembly (Dick worked on this earlier).

Karl installed grounding and lightning protection systems (no photo). Everyone pitched in on miscellaneous support chores as they came up.



John securing the third tower section

Twilight came July 23 with the tower complete but the antenna still on the ground. The beam went up July 31, in much better weather: a careful process with guys being undone and redone, and the fully-assembled beam hoisted in small increments.



John working the 20 m driven element past a top guy cable.



The new antenna structure rising about 30 ft. above the trees

The tower base is on average 45 feet above the surrounding terrain, for an effective antenna height of about 130 feet. For low bands we now have interim wire antennas. These will soon be replaced by an inverted U for 80 m. and an inverted V for 40 m. with centers supported by halyards on the new tower. The top halyard arm can be seen in the previous picture.



K3CCR's two high-power operating positions

Each operating position has a networked logging computer, and switchable bandpass filters to allow safe simultaneous operation at 1500 watts. The left-hand position has an Orion 2 and an Alpha 99, while the right-hand position has an FT-1000 and an AL-1500. This equipment was brought along from former QTHs of club members when they moved to Collington.

We intend to operate our newly enhanced multi-op station in all major CW and SSB DX contests, Sweepstakes, and in many smaller tests, in 2014-2015 and following seasons, submitting our scores to PVRC. For publicity we will do QSO parties in nearby states. K3CCR has done some contests in the last few years. In the last few months we did Field Day 2A, IARU, MDC QSO Party, and NAQP SSB for practice and equipment shakedown.

Near-future plans include at least one more HF operating position, a 160 m. vertical, and an SSB/CW station on VHF (we have the VHF gear and Yagis). A bit later we would like to put up a second tower with the 3-element Steppir which Ben N3UM brought along.

If you or someone you know is ready for independent living in a retirement community but want to continue serious ham DX and contesting, consider Collington. A few other retirement places may have some kind of ham station, but none like K3CCR.

An American Ham in Russia - Max RA/KE5JA

Most of you will not know me, but I joined PVRC back in the early 70's as WB4UKA and was a 20M operator at the big W4BVV contest station. I moved to Texas in 1978 and have away from Northern Virginia ever since.

I work for a large international oil company, and in early 2010 I learned that I would be moving to Sakhalin Island, Asiatic Russia. Being an active ham, one of the first things that entered my mind was, "can I get licensed to operate in Russia, and if so, how"? But after numerous internet searches & inquiries, nobody seemed to know if it was possible and if so, how. So off I headed to Russia in June 2010 with only a minimal ham station that I figured I would at least use to SWL.

I remembered working Yuri RA0FU (now RM0F) in many contests when I was back in Texas, so shortly after arriving in Sakhalin, I decided to e-mail him and ask for help. Yuri responded immediately and provided the forms I needed to send to Moscow. It all turned out to be quite simple, but interesting in some aspects. I sent the application to Moscow along with a copy of my USA license and passport, it was approved, and then another form was mailed to me that I had to take to a government bank and pay a nominal fee in Rubles. I had to bring along one of my Russian engineers to help as I would never have been able to communicate by myself. By the way, they don't use checks in Russia (my local friends don't even know what a check is) and people rarely use credit cards, only debit cards. After waiting another few weeks due to the slow mail system, I received a one year license to operate as R0/KE5JA, and not a minute too soon, as I received the license several days before the CQ WWDX phone contest.

My first contests from Sakhalin were fun but challenging, as I was only running 100 watts to an OCF dipole. In 2010, I ended up with 473 QSO's in the CQ WWDX SSB contest and 995 QSO's in the CQ WWDX CW contest. All those Asian stations that used to be good DX from the states were now the locals, but all those Caribbean and Central American Stations that were so easy to work back home were now almost impossible to hear. It was also different to start a contest at 11:00AM Saturday morning and end the contest at 11:00AM Monday. This meant missing the first few hours of work on Monday and having to immediately switch my brain from "CQ DX" to typical office issues after heading straight to work at the end of a contest.

Working barefoot with a dipole sure can be frustrating when one is used to a lot better. When moving to Sakhalin, I was allowed to ship whatever I could fit in a standard overseas container. But not thinking that I could get on the air, I decided against bringing most everything I would have otherwise. Another challenge was the house I live in. It is essentially a two story townhouse located in a company compound/subdivision. So of course, no outside antennas or any modifications on or to the house are allowed. Fortunately, there were a number of trees in my back yard, so without asking, I threw up the dipole and nobody seemed to care. As I could not drill or install anything to accommodate the coax, all cables exited via a partially open window, something I was reminded of in the winter with below zero temperatures outside.

My first trip home was in December 2010, and I immediately purchased an ACOM amp to bring back to Sakhalin. I was cautioned that my main challenge would be getting the amp on a plane in the USA, rather than getting the amp into Russia. However, I checked

the amp in the original carton and included a well-marked info pack (taped to the outside of the box) to the USA TSA – it included a copy of my ham licenses and basic info about the amp so that they would not be concerned with it being checked on a USA commercial flight. I could tell they opened and read the info, but all arrived OK.

Nearing the end of my first year, I had to renew my license again. And, boy was I surprised when I received “RA/KE5JA” for my new license! Seems Russia had recently signed the CEPT agreement which stipulates that foreign hams operating in Russia should use the “RA/” identification. I had RM0F call the Moscow Radio office and ask if either I could keep my “R0/” ID or be assigned a Russian call, but was told no. And it has been mostly confusion ever since.

It seems that logging programs, contest recording software, spotting network software, etc. identify me as being in European Russia. I had the AD8V database updated immediately to identify me as being in Asiatic Russia, but many hams never update the database in their logging software. So not only do I have a long and strange call to use in contests, but in contests such as the All Asia DX Contest, many non-Asian stations won't work me when I call CQ because they think I am in Europe, and I have even had stations refuse to log me. I have also spent much time with CQ WPX and ARRL DX contest administrators trying to get my call listed correctly. I actually have two contest operating certificates listing me in European Russia, and one for operating in the Asiatic Russia “5th” call area.

After living here for several years, I had a 30 foot Rohn 25 tower and hex beam shipped in a friend's container. My next challenge was to get permission to erect them. Having our company EVP as a friend and next door neighbor helped, and before the 2013 CQWW, I actually had a rotating beam antenna. For a small simple installation, it actually works quite well. Purchasing a steel pipe section here for the mast was another adventure - I had to buy a 10m long carbon steel pipe from an industrial pipe supply / fabricating facility and have them cut it with a blow torch.



Tower and Hex beam after 6 feet of snow

I have befriended all the local hams and have had the good fortune to participate in three different multi-op contest operations at RT0F's (ex RU0FM) fantastic QTH. Igor's location is right on the east coast with a straight shot to North America, and with a lake bordering most of his property, an excellent shot in most directions. Igor has four towers,

three at approximately 140', one with three 7/7/7 element 15M beams. His newest tower is a self-supporting motorized crank-up. Several storms have taken their toll; hence some antenna changes, but always a great station. His property is located on a number of acres that include a separate two story building for contest operations, with another building a complete Russian Banya (sauna). While operating one of the phone DX contests, I had several North American hams comment on my excellent English, but many Russian hams responded to me in Russian and were extremely confused to learn that the RT0F operator they were working only speaks English.



Igor RT0F and XYL

Seems I am a noteworthy contact being a USA ham operating in Asiatic Russia. Of course, I have worked many JA's in all the contests, and wow, they do QSL! I have just over 40,000 QSO's in the log and have sent out 4500 QSL's to date, probably 80% + to JAs. Operating with a dipole for my first three years, my country total only stands at 252. I have been extremely well received by all Russian hams and have had many FB QSO's!

Russia and Sakhalin have been a great place to live and work, not to mention operate ham radio, salmon fish, snow ski, etc. The Russian people are fantastic, just like us in many ways. It's too bad our politicians don't get along better. I know Russia is in the news a lot these days, but please note that the average Russian I've met is a good hard working family type that wants to be friends with all.

Now, my assignment is ending and I will be moving to A92/HZ in late October. I plan to be on the air from both locations early 2015 for the next 3+ years, typically from A92 on weekends and HZ during the week. I'll try to get a better station on the air this time and as always, will I spend most of my time on CW.

From the Wayback Machine – Carl K3RV

Seeing the chatter on the reflector about this year's gathering at KentMorr reminded me of a similar event that took place in 1975.



L-to-R: W3ZZ, K3ZO, K6UA, K3RV, K7ZZ



L-to-R: K7ZZ, K3RV, K3ZO, W3LPL

(Editor's note: If you look closely, the sign on the right says "All you can eat crabs - \$5.75". Today, a single steamed/spiced crab is \$5!)

Membership News – Bud W3LL

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

- Rick N1RM (formerly AI1V) in the Northwest Chapter.
- Howard WA4PSC in the North Carolina East Chapter

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

Upcoming Contests and Log Due Dates

Contests This Month

- Oct 4 – EPC Russia DX
- Oct 4 – Oceania DX SSB
- Oct 4 – CA QSO Party
- Oct 11 – Oceania DX CW
- Oct 18 – Worked All Germany

Logs Due This Month

- Oct 3 – CQ WW RTTY
- Oct 15 – ARRL VHF
- Oct 10 – SARTG RTTY
- Oct 31 – All Asian DX SSB

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

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:



The Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

Solar conditions reversed course in recent weeks, with the SFI surging up close to 200 just in time for the CQ WW RTTY weekend. I really only got on to test out the new N1MM+ logging software in a RTTY configuration (it worked flawlessly) but it makes me wonder whether I'll be making RTTY contacts on 28.175 a year from now...

Next month's newsletter will focus on Sweepstakes, for obvious reasons. If you have any hints and kinks, SS memories or anything else – send them in. If you have some thoughts but are not crazy about writing, drop me an email – we can always chat on the phone and I'll publish something interview-style.

Thanks to N3UM and KE5JA for the WRTC write-ups and K3RV for the photos. Since this ended up as a pretty long issue, next month we'll have the results of the PVRC On the Air Reunion poll.

As always, send any contributions to jpescatore at aol dot com.

In Memory of Tony N3ME



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

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

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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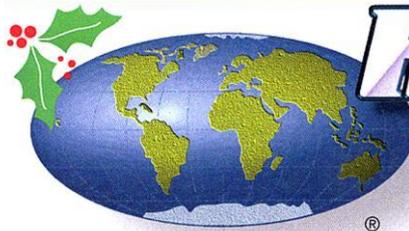
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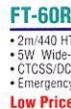
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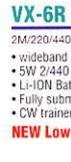
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Receiver Guard 5000

DX Engineering's Receiver Guard 5000 is perfect if you have a receive-only antenna saturated with high RF levels. It is also useful for Field Day, SWL or if your neighbor generates a lot of RF. If you're a contestor, understand that this is NOT a filter; it's an electronic limiter that works automatically. It generates far less harmonic noise than other limiters, which allows your station to continue to operate competitively.

Dual Vertical Array

The Dual Vertical Array is an easy-to-install two-element vertical antenna phasing system that offers great HF or 6M performance. It uses a new design to increase array efficiency by eliminating the waste load port found on previous systems. The array can handle 2 kW, with a front-to-back over 20 dB and up to 3 dB of gain over a single vertical. Dual Vertical Array systems are available for the 160, 80 and 40 meter bands.

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Transmit Four-Square Systems

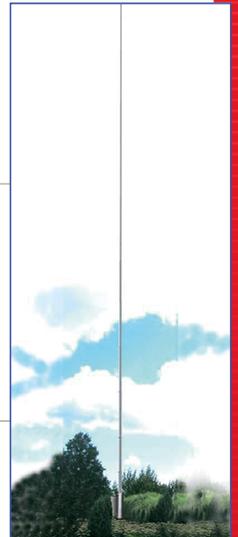
Available for the 160, 80 and 40 meter bands, these Systems let you receive or transmit with 5.5 dB of gain in four selectable directions or you can go omnidirectional with a push of a button. A 20+ dB front-to-back ratio helps reduce interference from unwanted directions. They feature a classic hybrid design and can handle 5 kW CW. These easy-to-setup systems let you listen "all around" and select the best receive direction.



Full Size 80 Meter Quarter-Wave Vertical Antenna

This 68 foot tall, high-performance, full size antenna has a rugged base made from aircraft-grade aluminum tubing. Each antenna is built using precise machining and uses stainless hardware for unmatched reliability. The VA-1 requires simple guying, handles 5,000 watts and is tunable to operate over the entire band with an SWR of 1.5:1 or less. This antenna also has an innovative Tilt Base to make service easy.

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