



PVRC Newsletter

February 2013

President's Letter – Rich NN3W

As President of PVRC, I get the privilege of writing to you all through the Club newsletter on (approximately) a monthly basis. Often my column revolves around efforts and events within the Club, contesting tips and techniques, and stories of contests of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. I usually don't get on my soap box and rant or offer a piece of my mind. This time, I'll exercise a little presidential prerogative and do just that.

If you haven't noticed, it's miserably cold outside. The thermometer hasn't broken 32 in close to a week. But, despite that fact, I've managed to keep myself warm. My fireplace in the downstairs is roaring away this evening – a combination of red oak, locust wood, and QSL cards. Yes, QSL cards. January is an interesting time at my QTH.

As you've undoubtedly become aware, our friends at the U.S. Postal Service have a knack for raising postal rates in late January. This has a lot of consequences for us hams – especially us QSL bureau sorters.

As a little background, in addition to masquerading as a club president, I have taken to spending some quality time as a volunteer QSL bureau sorter for the W3 Incoming QSL bureau. It's actually a lot of fun and has some side benefits (which you can find about if you become a sorter). This means that every month I get QSL cards – a lot of QSL cards. And because the postal rates rise in January, there is extra effort made in getting QSL cards out to all the users who have QSL cards on hold for them so as to minimize expense to the users.

However, while I've been through the process of distributing cards to about 80 different users (about 50% of the users in my sort (the "H" sort)), I've had to deal with a rather vexing problem of unclaimed cards. In fact, this month, I had close to 50 incoming cards that were destined to users within my sort who have flat out refused to claim them, say they only use LoTW, or may be unwittingly unaware of my requests for them to claim them. So, after a lengthy wait of languishing in the QSL "orphanage", off to the fire place they eventually go.

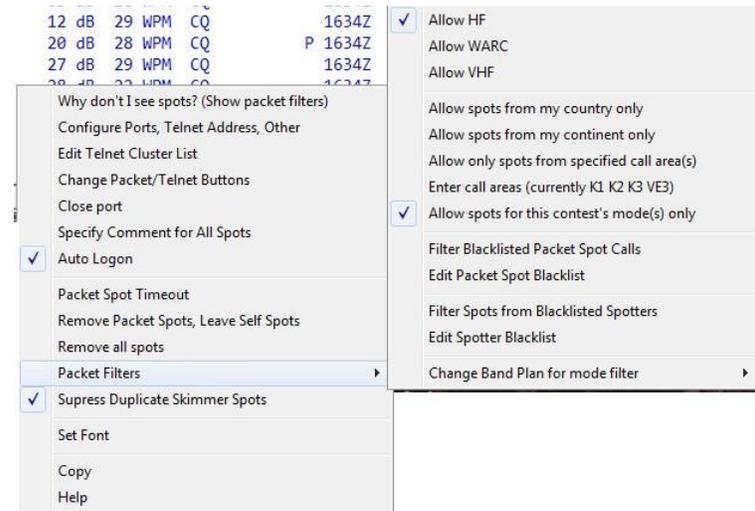
Some of you are wondering where this is all going. Well, one thing that I've noticed is that a large percentage of the cards that are orphaned are cards that are directed to contest stations – for QSOs made during contests.

As testers, many of us go to great lengths to make QSOs. We spend hour after hour running on the bands; we beg for QSOs; we cajole; we move multipliers from band to band; we croon “anyone, anywhere!” We thrive on working other testers. But we also thrive on working the casual operators who happen across us in the passbands on their VFOs.

Unlike serious testers, the casual operator's motivations are varied. Some want to just make a few QSOs; others have learned that contests are a great place to work counties, work states, work zones, or work whatever is needed for a given award; others just want to have fun. Regardless of motivation, many of these casual operators will in the days and weeks following a contest, will send out a QSL card to the big contest station – seeking to have a QSO confirmed.

Testers have gotten a lot of flak over the years. We're blamed for taking over the bands on the weekends; we're blamed for ruining nets; we're blamed for covering up “Global Centers of Emergency Activity”; etc. One example of good will that we do retain is that we are responsive to requests for QSL cards – either direct or via the bureau. I call it the “cost of doing business”. However, a certain percentage of hams (including testers) have said that they do not want to respond to QSLs. They are too busy or they don't have the money or they say they use LoTW only. I find this awkward: on the one hand we beg casual operators to work us, but on the other hand we refuse or resist the request to send them a QSL card after they have expended the effort to work us.

I also think that the refusal or resistance to responding to QSLs has ramifications – for testers in general and for particular testers. In my conversations with some of my friends in Europe, it has come to my attention that “black lists” have been created and developed for use with programs like Wintest and N1MM which automatically delete or “grey” out your call if you've been known to be or have gained a reputation as a recalcitrant QSLer.



So, as we approach the Spring contest season, please do keep in mind that as a tester, we rely upon casual operators for a decent percentage of our contest scores. It behooves us – in exchange for some QSO point credit – to return the courtesy of a QSL card when we get one from another ham. In the long run, it will benefit not only your score for your station, but contesting in general.

73 and stay warm,

Rich NN3W

ARRL RTTY Roundup Result or A Day in the Life of a QSO Rate Junky – Mike K4GMH

Nice ARRL RTTY Roundup contest. However, it didn't start out so nice or so it seemed to me.

Goal for the contest was to make 2400 QSOs in 24 hours which I had reached the last couple of years (yeah, I'm a "QSO rate junky"). My SO2R operating approach is to "run" on both radios rather than the classic SO2R operation of "run" on one radio and search and pounce on the other radio. Using this method has produced my best QSO rates per hour.

Started out at the beginning of the contest, 1800Z, and that may or may not have been a good decision. (Could have started an hour or two later and counted the time towards my official six hours off time.) Wasn't able to get sustained runs on either radio, at least not when 100 plus QSOs per hour were anticipated at the start of the contest. Something had to change or my goal couldn't be reached.

Twenty and 15 meters were my starting bands with the antennas for both bands on Europe. This band combination was chosen after listening and calling CQ on 15 and 10 meters just prior to the contest. The SFI was 145 at the start of the contest, high enough, at least I thought, to have good 10 meter activity for an hour or two at the beginning of the contest. However, didn't hear more than one or two stations on 10 meters in the half hour leading up to the start. A few minutes before the start, the decision was made to open on 15 and 20 meters. Maybe ten would be open Sunday morning. (Ten meters never did open during the contest, for me at least, as anticipated based on the SFI and propagation forecasts.)

With this decision out of the way, the contest started, but not as I had hoped. Averaged 85 QSOs per hour for the first four hours using 20 and 15 meters with the antennas on Europe. By this time, realized I had to average more than 100 per hour over the next 20 hours of the contest to reach my goal. I had to do something. Definitely, 20 and 15 meters with the antennas pointed towards Europe weren't going to allow the goal to be reached and 15 meters was the slower of the two bands. I decided to go to 40 meters a bit early.

My mind set, going into the contest, was to move the 15 meter radio to 40 meters between 2230Z and 2300Z, I bumped this up half an hour. Also decided to point the lower 40 meter antenna towards Europe and the upper 40 meter antenna toward the NW. This also puts the upper 20 meter antenna in the NW direction as both upper 20 and 40 meter antennas are on the same mast (single tower). Still having acceptable runs to Europe on 20 meters so kept the lower 20 meter antenna (4 el SteppIR fixed on Europe at 100 ft) in the forward direction (SteppIR capable of 180 degree reversal by adjusting element length from the shack). This combination, one radio on 20 meters with the top antenna pointed NW and the lower antenna pointed towards Europe and the other radio on 40 meters with its top antenna towards the NW and the lower antenna pointed at Europe, hit the "sweet spot" for a rate junky. (Both antenna combinations were fed in phase.) Next two hours produced rates of 139 and 124 QSOs per hour!

The 20 meter rate increased due to the West Coast stations now hearing me better along with a nice number of Far East stations being put in the log. This nice 20 meters run lasted the next two plus hours with rates of 66 and 59 QSOs per hour. Meanwhile 40 meters was producing 70 and 66 QSOs per hour. Finally, 20 meters started to slow and this radio was

switched to 80 meters.

Now on 80 and 40 meters, the QSO rate remained over 120 plus per hour average for the next six hour. Unfortunately, this far into the contest the rate junky adrenalin high was overcome by the urge for sleep especially for this 70 plus year old who now had been up for over 18 hours. Five and half hours were officially taken (0600Z to 1130Z) in the contest with a bit over five hours for sleep.

I took half hour max. length breaks from time to time throughout the contest which don't count towards the 6 hours of official off time unless a half hour off time is used as one of the 2 official off times. Still my official operating time was less than 23 out of 30 hours of the contest. (Single operators can operate 24 of the 30 hours with no more than two off times that can be counted towards the 6 hours of official off time.) Another factor, for me at least, is at 120 plus QSOs per hour rate I'm too busy, even for RTTY contesting, to eat while in front of the radio. Thus my need to take the break, get up and take a few steps, get something to eat, take care of bodily functions, etc.

The contest ended, mercifully according to my body, at 0000Z, 7 January 2013, with 2469 QSOs in the log. Goal had been reached, 2400 QSOs for the contest, even though I only operated (officially) for 22 hours, 20 minutes.

Now, whether the score, 323,439 points (unofficial), will be sufficient to win a category and help PVRC get another gavel is up to the contest committee and the official scoring computer. Whatever happens, I had fun in making all the contacts with old and new friends. Reaching and exceeding my pre contest goal was definitely the icing on this delicious cup cake call the ARRL RTTY Roundup.

Box score:

<u>Band</u>	<u>QSOs</u>	<u>Mults</u>
80	371	6
40	710	29
20	808	55
15	529	41
<u>10</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>0</u>

Totals: 2469 131 323,439 points

Station:

Radios: IC746s

Amps: GS-35Bs (1400 W RTTY)



Ant: 10 - 20, pair of 4 el. SteppIRs (one at 130 ft the other fixed on Europe at 100 ft);
TH6DXX fixed SE at 40 ft
40, pair of F12 EF240Xs (one at 142 ft the other at 70 ft)
80, xmit on inverted vee with apex at 120 ft; reception pair of 480 ft Beverages (one NE
other W)

Software: WL w/ MMTTY run on a single computer.
All antennas, except the Beverages, are mounted on a 130 ft tower.

For Sale HAM-IV – Frank WB3AVN

I have a HAM-IV (from my OM's estate), and I would like to make it available to PVRC members before I eBay it. It's gently used (turning a TH-3) and includes a working controller. Asking \$250. Contact me via email at frank9111 at Verizon dot net

Buy Your XYL a Couture Hat For Valentine's Day – John N3AM



Membership News – Bud W3LL

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

- Rick KK4GV
- Vitaly KB3WD

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

A Visual Reminder of the Key to Success in Contesting – Art K3KU

The Wednesday before SS CW I began a short history course at an institution in Rockville. With my thoughts churning on how to do better in SS, I turned into their parking lot and, behold, the secret was arrayed before me: "Butt In Chair, Butt In Chair, Butt In Chair..."

I take good advice wherever I find it. Here, it was at B'Nai Israel Congregation:



Upcoming Contests and Log Due Dates

Contests This Month

Feb 3 - NA Sprint CW
Feb 9 - CQ WW RTTY WPX
Feb 10 - PACC
Feb 16 – ARRL DX CW
Feb 22 – CQ WW 160 SSB
Feb 23 – NAQP RTTY

Logs Due This Month

Feb 1 – CQ WW 160 CW
Feb 7 – ARRL RTTY Roundup
Feb 20 – ARRL VHF

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

The Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

I have a theory: when cave people reached aged 50 - actually, most cave people probably died well before 50, so let me start again.

I have a theory: when cave people reached the equivalent of today's age 50, the younger cave people noticed that the old cave people weren't bringing in as much saber tooth tiger meat. In general, the older cave people were consuming more cave people clan resources than they were contributing. Also, the old cave people tended to fall asleep much earlier in the evening and weren't all that much fun around the cave fire at night.

So, the young cave people would wait for the oldsters to fall asleep, then sneak up on them and bash them in the head with a rock and use them the next day as bait for the saber tooth tiger hunt. But, evolution is wise – old cave people that didn't sleep very well at night were alert and evaded the nightly cave whippersnapper death squads. They survived, and passed on the genes that cause us (or at least me) to wake up every few hours in the middle of the night.

Turns out the old fart "can't sleep through the night" syndrome is kind of a handy trait for hitting the European openings on 160 – I used this strategy to work at lot of 10 pointers in the January CQ 160 WW where conditions were phenomenal. I had to go out and clear snow off of the laundry tub that protects the base feed of my 51' Marconi T antenna, but things were FB after that.

I think as we add on contesting years we also accumulate a lot of wisdom through pattern recognition of what went on in our young contesting days. PVRC has a great tradition of the "wisdom of the elders" being passed on to the newer contesters. Pass it on – send in your hints and kinks, or anything else.

Many great submissions this month. I recently changed jobs (www.sans.org) and may have lost a few things folks sent me - whatever ya got, send to jpescatore at aol dot com.

73 John K3TN

PVRC Officers:	Trustees:
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Vice President: W9GE Bob Finger	
Vice President: K8GU Ethan Miller	PVRC Charter Members (all SK):
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PVRC Website: http://www.pvrc.org	

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: 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 - 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 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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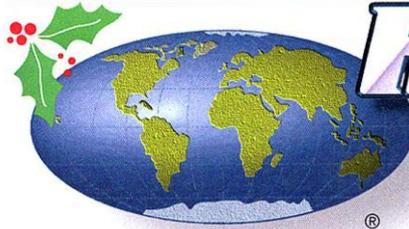
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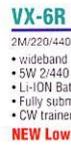
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