



# Potomac Valley Radio Club Newsletter

March 2005

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and [www.pvrcnc.org](http://www.pvrcnc.org)

## The First-Ever PVRC Contesting Seminar is March 19-20 (see page 2)

PVRC welcomes **Rich Firestone, AB3BQ**, **Joe Howell, KB3KQ**, and **Kevin Craven, WV3D** to the Laurel Chapter of PVRC; **Paul Heller, W3PH**, to the Central Chapter; and **Jerry Cater, KI4CCJ**, to PVRCNC East

PVRC regrets to report the passing of **Larry Minnis, K3MLA**, and **Bill Shepherd, K3WS**, and extends condolences to their families and friends.

### Editor's Note

By **Pete Smith N4ZR**

Thanks to Eric Scace, K3NA, for pointing out that the "PC of the Future" in last month's Newsletter, contributed by K3ZJ, is actually a hoax. Some clever type put together a composite of an early nuclear submarine control panel and some other elements and attributed it to Popular Mechanics. Oh well...

New in this month's Newsletter is a Classified Advertising section for non-commercial use by PVRC members buying or selling ham-related items. Send your ads to me before the 20th of the month, and they will appear on the first of the next month.

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### From the President

By **Jack Hammett, K4VV**

Congratulations to N3OC, WX3B, N3RR, and the team of speakers for the Contest Seminar. The event is booked to capacity. A milestone achievement for PVRC!

WX3B, W3DQ and I met at my home on January 29 for a several hour planning session, lunch, and station tour. Here are the summary objectives and actions that we discussed as priorities for our efforts this year: (1) Apply our strong treasury to strengthen PVRC, (2) Make the Contest Seminar a success, and publish and distribute if feasible, (3) Support leadership outreach to the Regions, with leadership visits and increased dialogue, (4) Support the upgrade of methods and practices of the Regions, (5) Restructure the Central Region to attract the large population of members, (6) Improve our process to promote and recognize contest activity (such as an enhanced 5M system, selecting Captains for specific contests), seeking to be the #1 contest club in the United States, (7) Provide leadership advocacy for contesting activity, station building, and skill development, (8) Explore ways to upgrade our PVRC forums: newsletter, website, reflector, and meetings, (9) Update the Bylaws to support the modern distributed nature of PVRC, (10) Welcome new PVRC members from outside the Circle (who would come into the Circle to operate), (11) Encourage and nurture multi-operator stations on the frontiers and in the Regions to expand activity, and (12) Facilitate the potential role of our members and stations in emergency communications. This is an ambitious effort for the year, and we anticipate support from

many in PVRC to be successful.

My enthusiasm for the continuing renewal and growth of committed contesters in PVRC got a serious boost in February when I had email and telephone dialogue with Tom McAlee, NI1N. Tom lives in Virginia and will bring very welcome new talent and energy. Tom's recent score was close to that of K3ZO. See my introduction and Tom's very interesting "Comments on Antennas and Operating in 2005 ARRL DX CW" in this newsletter.

The results of the 2004 CQ WW WPX CW Contest show PVRC members demonstrating leadership! The K4JA team, including K3TW, K4JA, K4ZA, K7SV, KD4D, N4GG, W3BP, and W4TNX, operating as KM4M, is the new record holder for Multi-two in the US. N3OC hosted WR3Z, K3FT, and N3OC to rank #3. In Single-Op, K4ZW, operating as KN1DX, was #4 in the US, K3ZO #7, KT3Y #12, and N2YO #15. N3UM was #4 in the US in Tribander/Single Element. In the club competition, PVRC ranked as #1 in the US for combined CW and SSB, and #2 in the world.

We all regret the loss of Bill Shepherd, K3WS (ex-W3ZSR) and Larry Minnis, K3MLA (ex WB6VGI), who became Silent Keys in February. May they rest in peace.

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## **Contest Seminar Update**

By [Brian Mcginness N3OC](#), [Bill Hider, N3RR](#), and [Jim Nitzberg, WX3B](#)

The response for the contest seminar has been overwhelming, and we were able to fill up the seminar in just a couple weeks. We had several hundred inquiries, and have 55 registered participants, and two on the standby list. If you have not paid yet, and most have, you need to do so immediately or risk losing your spot to someone on the standby list. The deadline was 2/28 and that date has past.

We have been working with the speakers, and it looks like there will be some excellent material presented. Things still look good at the hotel, and we have conveyed the final tally for the number of attendees for the seminar, and for the Saturday dinner, to the hotel staff. Everyone will have a chance to evaluate the seminar afterwards, and we hope you take the time to do so as we will use this information to decide if we try to repeat this next year. If we do repeat it, your input will help determine the format, and the topics and speakers for next year.

We do have a number of non-members attending, including several from outside of the area. The inquiries were from all over the world, and included a number of DX stations that would have liked to come but could not. Perhaps next year with more notice they will be able to attend.

We are working on both a SSB and CW pileup competition for the Saturday evening after-dinner activities. We will have the use of the room after dinner, and you are free to stop by for a drink, a chat with friends, software demonstrations, or trying your hand at the pileup simulators. Dan W3DF has spent a lot of time recording and re-mixing SSB pileups from recent dxpeditions, and has done an outstanding job.

Everyone's patience has been appreciated. We are not perfect. This is the first time we have attempted something like this, and we have made a few mistakes. But we do appreciate your support, and hope to see you at the seminar for a great time!

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## **The Toolbox**

By [Don Daso, K4ZA](#)

On a recent turnkey installation for a client, I had the nasty job of toting 3 yards of concrete from the delivery truck to the tower base, using a single wheelbarrow—200 ft away (downhill, luckily). It was cold, wet (raining), and the neighbor lady was cursing us the entire time (she was somehow convinced that tire tracks on



Figure 1.

her lawn were my doing; they weren't). However, the upshot of this task was that I discovered a new tool. Albeit too late to use on this job, and probably too expensive to utilize any way except through a rental, but a superb example of problem solving at its simplest form.

To wit, the Accu-Chute wheelbarrow (fig. 1). This is a heavy-duty wheelbarrow, with a tapered chute, or pouring spout, on its front. Equipped with heavy-duty wheels and tires and a heavier-than-usual bed, this wheelbarrow will allow you to easily and accurately pour liquids into a small diameter tube. Perfect, in other words, for what I was doing, or what we sometimes must do on tower jobs. The price is high, but the labor saving just might be worth it.

On this same job, some simple tools again came into play, reminding me of early building success. This was a 52-ft Tri-Ex crankup tower, weighing some 900-odd lbs. The owner, who still lives in New York, hired me to install it. He purchased the tower on KA9FOX's QTH.com website, and the Florida owner delivered it to the NC location. Before its arrival, I spent considerable time thinking about moving this hunk of steel. I believe this "visualization" was not only helpful, but useful, because the owner was amazed when N4ZC and myself unloaded it in less than two minutes, without incident. "It took me an hour to load this thing, using a forklift," he exclaimed. Here's how we did it.

I knew, from telephone conversations, that he was using a U-Haul vehicle trailer. I cut some sections of 3-inch water pipe to the width of trailer's ramps. Even though the tower was heavy, I was still able to lift it at one end, enough so that Roger (ZC) could slide one under the tower. It was then a simple matter to slide those down to the center, whereupon we could then tilt the tower up—the other way—and slide the remaining pipe sections under that end. Then it was amazingly easy to roll the tower off, onto my work dollies.

I have two dollies which I utilize all the time in tower work. They're great tools. One is a simple "wagon" style dolly, with 10-inch pneumatic tires, capable of supporting 1200 lbs. I have a 10-ft handle for it, which lets me walk and steer with a tower hanging over the front. The other is a modified "trailer hitch" dolly, designed to allow one person to roll a trailer around. I welded some plate to the hitch point, and it now slides under heavy stuff and allows me to roll it around. This dolly usually "brings up the rear" of whatever long, heavy object I'm trying to maneuver around someplace. And I can still screw a ball into it, to use as originally designed. Together, these dollies allowed just the two of us to roll this heavy crankup tower next to the house, where it sat atop some concrete blocks, while we dug the base.

A few weeks later, when the base had cured (and my finger had healed—another story for another time), it was a simple matter to put the tower back on these same two dollies, and carefully move it across the yard, under the deck & and ease it up to the Tri-Ex erection fixture. I must admit, in each case, the work went easier than even I had imagined. Storing them takes some time and trouble, but these dollies have made work projects such as this one not only possible, but also much easier and more affordable. And by the way, I purchased the wagon dolly from TEK Supply and the trailer dolly at Northern Tools.

If you think you're interested in moving heavy objects without incident (hurting yourself, for instance), or spending large amounts of money to rent mechanized equipment, you might enjoy what one enterprising retired carpenter in Michigan has been able to accomplish. Visit <http://www.theforgottentechnology.com/Page1.htm> for a fascinating look at some old methods and techniques for moving heavy stuff!

## **Modifying the Top Ten DXDoublers for Enhanced Operation with N1MM Logger**

By **Pete Smith, N4ZR**

For a week or so, Ted, W4NZ and I corresponded about the use of the unshifted tilde (~) key to switch audio for SO2R operation. Ted had discovered that by moving Jumper 2 of the DXD to the "NA" position you could

change the headphone audio from being always on the active radio to "stereo" (one radio in each ear), just by pressing that key.

There seems to be some confusion about the documentation of this feature. The manual refers in the key assignments to it as an Orion-specific feature, but in fact it will work with any hardware that can sense the state of LPT pin 5. Also, the manual says: "Shift-` (Shift+single quote) - Toggle Stereo/Mono ( LPT pin 5)." On American keyboards the single quote and double quote are on the same key, and that's not the one that is meant. The "`" is on the left end of the number row on US keyboards, and shifted produces "~", which is why I refer below to the tilde key.

I wanted to go one better and mimic the "PTT" operation of the DXD, which puts both ears on the INactive radio for aggressive S&P, but still be able to put both ears on the Active (or Run) radio from the keyboard, to help pick up weak answers to my CQs while HC8N is blasting on the S&P radio at S9 +40. You can do this manually by switching the DXD audio mode switch from PTT to Auto, but I'd rather keep my hands on the keyboard.

After corresponding with George, W2VJN and Dave, N3RD, of Top Ten, and entirely thanks to them, I have it working. I also owe a vote of thanks to Terry, N4TZ/9, whose article in September/October NCJ describes modifying the DXD to do the same trick, but with a footswitch, and got us all thinking.

First, put the DXD jumpers in their CT/Writelog/TR/MM position. This has the effect of isolating pin 5 of the LPT port. Then put a 2N2222 open collector switch between pin 5 and the Auto terminal of S3 on the DXD (that's the audio mode switch). Specifically, pin 5 drives the base of the transistor through a 1K resistor connected to the high side of R22, just like the basic CW keying interface. The emitter is grounded to the ground-side of R22, and the collector is wired to the switch side of R29. I mounted the transistor next to R22 with double-sided tape. Ugly but effective. That's all there is to it.

## **Booting from a CD and Running Dos Software from a USB Memory Stick**

By [Mark Bailey, KD4D](#)

Using MS-DOS 7.1, booting from CD and running CT and TR from a USB stick appears to work fine. This needs stress testing, of course, but looks extremely promising. It turns out that only a small percentage of machines that I have run into support *booting* from a generic USB stick. This should allow using many more that recognize the USB stick but don't allow booting from it!

[Editor's Note — Mark supplied a very clear 15-page PDF description of the procedure, with numerous screen shots, which is obviously too long for the Newsletter, so I have placed it in the [March 2005 extended content section](#) on the web site. Click on the blue text to go there.]

## **Slashed Zero Fonts**

By [Anthony Luscre, K8ZT](#) [reprinted by permission from the Internet]

Every few months the issue of Slashed Zero Fonts comes up on various ham radio mailing lists. I have added a new page to my web site that gathers together a large variety of Slashed Zero and other helpful fonts for hams. The page is hosted on a very dependable and usually fast server, so the intermittent problems people have had in downloading the fonts from a variety of some times slow and some times unavailable sites can be avoided.

I have also written a short story on the Zero along with a link to AE7Q's Zero story. You can go directly to the page via <http://www.k8zt.com/zero.html> or via my Software/Logging page at <http://www.k8zt.com/logging.html>.

**[See you at the Contest Seminar, March 19-20 in Fredericksburg?](#)**

**2005 Hamfest Schedule**  
 By [Glenn Kurzenknabe, K3SWZ](#)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
March 13	Vienna, VA	July 4	Harrisburg, PA
March 19	Charleston, WV	July 10	Kimberton, PA
April 2-3	Timonium, MD	July 17	Mountain Top, PA
April 17	York, PA	July 24	Howard County, MD
May 1	Hagerstown, MD	August 7	Berryville, VA
	Warminster, PA	August ?	Lewistown, PA
May 14	Fredericksburg, PA	August 14	Westminster, MD
May 29	Howard County, MD	August ?	Hanover, PA
June 5	Manassas, VA	September ?	East Stroudsburg, PA
June 11	Bloomsburg, PA	September 10-11	Gaithersburg, MD
June 19	Frederick, MD	September ?	Allentown, PA
July 3	Wilkes-Barre, PA	September 25	Wrightstown, PA
		October ?	Lancaster, PA
		October 16	Sellersville, PA
		October 30	Westminster, MD

**Central Meeting Schedule**

The next Central meeting will be held on Monday evening, March 14 (not March 13 as previously written) We'll be following up on our success of the February gathering by meeting at Topolino's Restaurant, 6320 Old Branch Avenue in Temple Hills. We will not be using the Church for this meeting.

We start gathering at 6:00 pm or so, with the "official" meeting starting at 7:30 pm. See you there! We need a head count for the restaurant, so please RSVP to W3DQ if you hope or plan to attend.

**PVRC Contest Calendar**

Courtesy of the [WA7BNM Contest Calendar](#)

**Boldface indicates PVRC 5M Events — all dates and times are Zulu**

**ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Mar 5 to 2400Z, Mar 6**

North American Sprint, RTTY 0000Z-0400Z, Mar 13

Virginia QSO Party 1800Z, Mar 19 to 0200Z, Mar 21

**Russian DX Contest 1200Z, Mar 19 to 1200Z, Mar 20**

**CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Mar 26 to 2359Z, Mar 27**

Mid-Atlantic QSO Party, 1600Z May 14 to 2400Z May 15, with a break 0400 - 1100Z Sunday

**CQ WW WPX Contest, CW 0000Z, May 28 to 2359Z, May 29**

West Virginia QSO Party 1600Z, Jun 18 to 0200Z, Jun 19

ARRL Field Day 1800Z, Jun 25 to 2100Z, Jun 26

**Antennas and Operating in the 2005 ARRL CW DX Contest**

By [Tom McAlee NI1N](#)

[Editor's Note — This is an interesting counterpoint to the two part article by K4ZW about last fall's CQWW, giving the viewpoint of a relatively new but already high-achieving contester. It also propocides an interesting answer to those who say that every serious contester in our area is already a member of PVRC!]

[Introduction by Jack Hammett, K4VV: Tom McAlee, NI1N from Blacksburg, VA, expressed interest in joining PVRC and in attending the Contest Seminar. I had several email exchanges with Anthony-WM3T, Randy-

KC9LC, Dave-N4JED, and others on how to get Tom together with a few PVRC members to become “qualified” for membership. In follow-up email and a phone conversation, I got to know Tom and to have great respect for his achievements and commitment to further improvement. Tom did 2285 QSOs, 421 Mults, and 2.886M Points in the February DX CW Contest, and then said he “was a little disappointed.” Tom is a man with very high standards of performance! After the conversation with him, I emailed a brief message that I enjoyed the conversation, wanted to hear more about his SteppIR results, and asked if he was using Beverages or listening on the verticals? His intriguing reply of February 23 follows. We look forward to welcoming Tom to membership soon.]

I’ve only had the SteppIR up since November, but so far it has been great. I ordered a 3 element in Dayton last year, but it took months to arrive. In the meantime, I changed my mind and went with the 4 element (they had no problem upgrading the order since it hadn't shipped yet).

The 3 element was on a 16 foot boom. The 4 element was on a 32 foot boom. While I don't have a 3 element to compare to, I'm happy I made that decision.

Its great being able to cover the entire band instead of picking a part of it (CW or SSB) and having something less than optimum on the other. For chasing DX, I also love the 12 and 17m coverage. Many people feed their tribanders on 17m with so-so results. Few people actually have monobanders on 17m. I get terrific reports on 17m, where it’s significantly better than average.

The only thing I had to compare it to is an R6000 vertical and wire delta loops for 15 and 20. It just blows those away... it makes S9 signals out of stations I wouldn't even know were there on the vertical or the loops!

One downside of the SteppIR is obvious now that I hadn't considered initially. I'd like to get another HF rig and try some SO2R so I can hunt multipliers without having to stop a run. But, I can't do that cross-band with the SteppIR the way I would be able to do with an interlaced multi-band yagi with multiple feedline connections.

I have 2 RX-only antennas for the low bands. I have beverages for NE and SW (EU and the South Pacific), using a single 2-wire run (spaced 10" apart) using K1FZ transformers. The feed end has 1 coax terminal for each direction and I use my own relay box to flip the coax between them. The terminal that isn't connected to feedline is shorted with a 50-ohm resistor (a recommendation of K1FZ).

I also have a K9AY AYL-4 4-way loop system. My intention was to use that to fill in the areas the beverages don't cover. But, I've found that sometimes it is better, even to Europe, than the beverage. In fact, its a toss-up between the 3. On a different day or different time of day and on a different incoming signal, any of the antennas may be better than the other. Sometimes the verticals receive better for a given signal, sometimes the beverage is better, and sometimes the K9AY system is better. So, rather than filling in the gaps the beverages don't cover, I've found it to be more of another tool in the arsenal.

Since putting up the tower (and beams) and the 80 meter array last fall, this is the first time I've really been pretty satisfied with the antennas. I used to end contests only wishing I had better antennas. Now, I have no problem getting through even the fiercest contest pileups, and often before some of the big boys like KC1XX, K3LR, and W3LPL. My theory on that is many of their ops only seem to know how to brute-force their way through pileups, rather than applying some skill one acquires chasing DX. I can't say for sure that's the case, but its the only way I can explain routinely beating much larger stations through the pileups!

So anyway, I no longer end contests thinking only of ways to improve my antennas and I'm seeing how much more there is to it. Specifically, keeping up those 150-200 QSO/hour rates going for hour after hour without losing my mind is a challenge, and I'm trying to learn the best ways to determine when it's time to change bands and/or when its time to hunt some multipliers. For example, in last weekend's contest, I had a great run going on 15m for a few hours, but at some point I had to try to get some multipliers on 10 and start running on

20. If the rate isn't slowing, that's a tough call to make! The rates on 20 will probably be just as good, and running there would help fill in multipliers on that band. It's such a dilemma, and it's one the multi-multis don't have to face.

I also learned a valuable lesson about running last weekend. It was about 2:00 am Saturday night, past the EU sunrise. There wasn't much happening on 80 and 160 and there were no new multipliers there. So, I pointed the 40 beam to VK/ZL to see if a CQ would raise anything. To my surprise, EU was calling me off the back of the beam. So, I turned the beam back to EU and started a 2.5-hour run on EU! It went from 2:00am until 4:30am, well past their sunrise. Signals were fairly weak, but the band was very quiet at that point so I was able to copy even the 5-watters that I had a hard time copying earlier in the evening. Also, with most of the USA single ops in bed, the band was left to only the multi-multis and the few insane single ops like myself who try to do the entire 48 hours of the contest. The west coast boys were running JA, but we weren't getting in each other's way. So, there wasn't much QRM.

My lesson there was this: even if the band doesn't seem open, if I'm not scoring much S&P'ing multipliers, put out that CQ! I might be really surprised at the result. In this case, it was the best EU run I had on 40m during the entire weekend.

I also learned a lesson about being in the low end of the band. Around 11pm or so Saturday night I was running EU on 80, but up around 3550 where I had some room to breathe. It was going ok, but could have been better. After a while, I hunted some multipliers. I heard SU9NC's CQ and got him in one call. I immediately put him on the packet cluster and the big boys were there like vultures, clearing up the low end of the band. I found a nice empty spot at 3517 and started running EU. About 10 minutes later, multi-multi <callsign removed> came back from the SU9NC madness and decided he was going to brute-force steal his frequency back. He parked himself 100Hz below me and started CQ'ing. But, I put the new filters in my Yaesu to work and stayed right there. Having the advantage of being on the high side, I knew that if anyone were going to work anyone it would be me. And, that was the case... EU was calling and calling. I kept running them and <callsign removed> worked nobody. After 5 or 10 minutes he gave up and I stayed there for a good hour or so, running EU at rates that doubled what I had at 3550. It may be a little more taxing on the nerves and raise the frustration levels a bit, but it sure seemed to pay off being down there.

I also see how much I have to try some SO2R. I look at the breakdowns on the 3830 of the single op stations that come in on top and the only thing that separates me from them is their rates (not the multiplier count -- if anything, I'm often ahead of them there). And, I'm sure I can run rate as well as them... its just a matter of not stopping those runs in order to catch some new multipliers.

At some point before the CQ WW this fall, I'll have an SO2R setup. I plan to get some practice at it along the way in some of the smaller contests, but it would also be great to talk to some people who are already effective at it.

Another thing I really need to do is get my logging software (CT) configured to do some keying. I use the memory keyer on the Yaesu (via the remote keypad) for CQ'ing and giving replies, but I send the other station's callsign manually when running. In a 48 hour contest, my arm feels locked up from the elbow down by the 30th hour and I start messing up sending, which doesn't do much for the rate.

So anyway, there are a few thoughts after last weekend's contest. Before putting up the tower and the 80m array, I just thought I needed bigger antennas. I now see how much more there is to it and it has exposed me to a whole new world of challenges and opportunities! That's not so say I don't want bigger and better antennas, but right now I think the biggest bang-for-the-buck I can get is in other areas.

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**Briefly Noted — PVRC won the US club competition in the 2004 WPX contest, and placed second world-wide. Great going, everyone [thanks, K3ZO, for the info]**

## **Around the Club Meeting Minutes from the Regions**

**Central Meeting Minutes February 7, 2005**

by Jack Hammett, K4VV and Eric Rosenberg, W3DQ

Following the lead of the NW group, we tried out a new format for this meeting...gathering for dinner and fun conversation at Anita's Mexican Restaurant in Vienna, VA .

Attendees were Eric-W3DQ, Jack-K4VV, Paul-W3PH, Bob-KI3O, Owen-K3CB, Mark-KD4D, Fred-K3ZO, John-N3HBX, Rich-NN3W, Mike-WQ2M, Peter-W2CDO, Gene-W3ZZ, and Ken-W8JVP.

The business meeting was quick... Paul Heller, W3PH was voted into membership. Discussion included the Contest Seminar, a positive attitude about supporting the CQ VHF Plaque Program, and many other topics, including potential speakers and programs. While the very interesting discussion was enhanced by the lack of detailed note taking, the following comes from around the table:

W3ZZ: Gene described the recent VHF contest as having the "absolute worst conditions I've ever heard". Gene also talked about a new, unidentified noise on 902 MHz.

K3ZO: Fred operated the VHF contest and others.

K3CB: Owen operated the CQ 160 CW contest from W9GE's QTH, using a Ten Tec Orion and computer logging for the first time. He was impressed enough to order his own Orion.

KD4D: Mark will be a 40 meter operator from W3LPL for the ARRL DX CW contest.

W2CDO: Pete found critters eating the feedlines to his beverage antennas. He's put up a "small tribander" for the ARRL DX CW contest.

NN3W: Rich is 'officially on the air' with a full wave 80 meter quad, 40 meter and 20 meter delta loops, and unfortunately, a high noise floor. Rich's spring project, after cutting down some trees, is to put up his 80 foot tower. In the meantime, Rich has operated at W4RM and W3LPL's multi-ops.

KI3O: Bob continues to impress all with his apartment roof antenna and station, although he was only able to put 2-3 hours in the CQ 160 CW contest.

N3HBX: John continues to build his new station, with legal fees escalating.

K4VV: Jack continues the construction of his station, waiting for better weather to put up his Big Berthas and his K4JA and Force 12 antennas.

W4RV: Jack will be operating the CQ WW Phone contest from PJ2T.

W3DQ: Eric had his best effort in the CQ 160 CW contest. The new transmit antenna, an inverted-L with 21 radials seems to work, although the EWE's don't seem to be doing much at all. Eric's working with a ham in Dallas on BCB filters that will help get rid of the intermod problem he's facing on 160 and 80 meters, and will report the results to the group.

The next Central meeting will be held on Monday evening, March 14<sup>th</sup>. We'll be following up on our success of the February gathering by meeting at Topolino's Restaurant, 6320 Old Branch Avenue in Temple Hills. We start gathering at 6:00 pm or so, with the "official" meeting starting at 7:30 pm. See you there!

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The **Annapolis** Crew of the PVRC met for dinner and fellowship at Griffin's Grill on Friday, February 23rd. The meeting was proposed by and arrangements were made by W3IKE. Attending were:

Ike Lawton, W3IKE, Brian Gaffney, K3PU, Rob Renoud, K3RWR, and Dick Wilder, K3DI.

Discussions were on wide range of subjects from antenna designs to corporate problems in the world. It was agreed that the meeting was a good idea and, for now, we will regularly meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:30 PM at Griffin's Grill located at 2049 West Street at the intersection of West St and route 2.

For a menu and a map, go to [www.griffinswest.com](http://www.griffinswest.com) and click "West of where."

The next meeting will be March 23, 2005.

Submitted by Dick Wilder, K3DI, chairman

**CVCC/PVRC Meeting, February 8, 2005** — those present: Roy WK4Y, Bob NK4H, Jerry K4KJL, Marie K4KML, Sheila K4WNW, Bruce WD4LBR, Ralph N4EHJ, Dave N4DWK, Sejo N3UA, Bob W4MYA, JB N4NQY, Phil KD4BMQ, Kyle WA4PGM, John W4TNX, Ronnie WU4G, Ed NW4V.

The regular meeting of CVCC was called to order at 7:05 by President Ed, NW4V. Members introduced themselves. Ed announced that our first and second choices of plaques for the VA QSO Party that we had voted to sponsor were already taken. It was decided to forgo the sponsorship and try to address the issue earlier next year.

Congratulations to Bob, W4DR, for his outstanding accomplishment of winning the Desoto Cup 5 years in a row! Bob has won each year since the award's inception. Also, Bob is on top of the world 40 meter standing at 358 countries confirmed. Congratulations Bob! (The Desoto Cup is awarded for most band entities worked as part of the DXCC Challenge).

Ed reminded us that FrostFest is Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> at the Showplace. The Peter I Dxpedition has been delayed. Start date is now in mid-February due to transportation delays. Kyle, WA4PGM, had the website updated and would like members to send news events to be posted. The Contest Seminar sponsored by the PVRC will be March 19 and 20. Ed has information.

Congratulations to Bob, W4MYA. PVRC scores show him first in the CQWW 160 CW contest – SOHP.

Treasurer's Report: Bob, NK4H, has sent \$200 to Omar, YK1AO, to help purchase radio kits, and \$100 to QSL.net. Ed recognized Dennis, N4DEN, for updating the cluster and keeping it running smoothly.

Roy, WK4Y, raised a question about including 60m contacts in our band entity competition. The decision was made to wait until 60m is recognized for ARRL awards.

We need a picnic chairperson for the Annual May Picnic Outing. Please contact Ed. All elected offices are open for the next 1 year term beginning in April. Please contact Ed if you are interested in being nominated. The President, Treasurer, and Secretary position are all open. Nominations will be held at the March meeting with elections in April.

Kyle Chavis, WA4PGM, gave the presentation on his trip to the Turks and Caicos Islands and working as VP5 in the CQ WW SSB in 2003 & 2004. Kyle is working with a young hams program where licensed hams under 21 years of age can win a dream trip and chance to operate from a world-class contest station. Kyle holds the very unique distinction of being the second person to ever achieve the worked all US Counties QRP Award

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Marie Long, K4KML, secretary

The **Northwest** Region met at the City Buffet in Frederick, MD on 15 February 2005.

In attendance were W3EKT, K2PLF, N6WHB, W3KHZ, W2YE, K3WC, NE3H, W3BTX, W3TEF, KB3LGS, W3SF, N3VOP, K8OQL, N4MM, N3FX, N3UM, W3IDT, W3ZZ, WN3R, W8ZA and W3LL

Regrets: W4AU, John is attending Tuesday night welding classes thru March. WF1L, Bill has a church committee meeting. K4VV, Jack has a family commitment. N8II, Jeff had hoped to attend the meeting, but a hectic work schedule got in the way. Jeff will be SOHP, all band, for 36 hours in the ARRL CW contest; SOHP part

time in the CQ 160M SSB contest and a part time in the ARRL SSB contest. KA3UBJ, Miriam is working a concert tonight in her new concert hall.

Announcements: By a show of hands an overwhelming majority will be attending the Contest Seminar from NW. Thanks to Marty, K2PLF for chairing the 18 January NW meeting while Kayren and I were on our Caribbean cruise. W2YE, Dick reminded us that the Virginia State QSO Party is the same weekend as the contest seminar. However, it is possible to get some operating time in the QSO Party due to time overlap. A 500 pt bonus is provided for working the Sterling Park ARC club station, K4NVA, as announced in the March issue of QST. Dick will be multi-2 for the contest at his station. The Russian DX Contest is also on the same weekend.

N4MM, John announced that this weekend is the Virginia State Convention in Richmond. He will be there on Sunday representing the ARRL director. John also passed out fliers for the 55th Winchester Hamfest in Berryville, VA scheduled for 7 August.

From Around the Table: W3EKT, Ed had been in email conversation with Ed, K3IXD who is getting N1MM working with MTTY. Ed is working on 5BDXCC. He now has 95 confirmed on 80M. K2PLF, Marty had 3600 pts in the VHF Sweepstakes contest and 60K pts in the CQ 160M contest. He's not sure where he will be operating from this weekend for the ARRL DX CW contest. He will either be at N4RV's QTH or from home. N6WHB, Patty was in the VHF SS contest. She made her first contact in her first contest with Frank, W3LPL. The contest was fun and she'll do it again.

W3KHZ, Art due to various commitments hasn't been doing much hamming lately. He did some dxing by working the 6O station on 80M, 40M and 30M on CW. W2YE, Dick had one of his better contest performances last weekend in the WPX RTTY with 948 contacts and over 1M pts in 30 hrs - and it doesn't even count for the 5M award. Dick managed to work Ed, K3IXD. Ed was using his new club call NU4SC. Dick also participated in the 160M CW contest. His latest effort is replacing the 6 yr old shack computer. Everything now works better and faster. The XP file transfer wizard was a great help using serial port connections on each computer. Dick began using a new version of DX4WIN. He downloaded all contacts using his call received in 1996. He then uploaded 43,892 QSO's to LoTW and received 5,847 QSL's. The result was 40 new band countries for the DXCC Challenge.

K3WC, Dusty has not put up his towers. The towers are flat on their cart in the grass. Eventually he and Marty, K2PLF will surprise us but don't hold our breath. Dusty has been working on a box that Joe, NE3H made to use with DX4WIN, Writelog, CW keyboard and the FT1000MP. He worked the 600CW on 5 bands but not 80M. He is registered for the seminar and looking forward to the novice end of it. Dusty considers himself a neophyte modern day contester.

NE3H, Joe takes no credit if Dusty takes apart the box. All 4 boxes that Joe made worked perfectly. Joe finally ordered his new Orion and will try to learn how to use it by the next contest season. The Orion should arrive by our next meeting. W3BTX, Bob operated the January VHF and the 160M CW contests at W3SO. He went to Aruba with Roy, W3TEF and didn't even get to look at the radio. Actually, he got a lot of calls to operate on 12M and 30M. The quickly made 12M & 30M dipoles worked better than the Force 12. Roy and Bob were at the P40V station. You can easily hear signals there that are difficult to copy here. Roy made over 3K QSO's in Aruba. A bushel mail basket of QSL's was waiting when he got home. The first one on top was from W3LL. It took a couple of weeks answering the direct requests, some of which were passed out at our meeting. Bureau cards have not yet arrived.

Roy worked the VHF SS contest in January at W3SO. The weather was brutal on top of the mountain. The 2M 15 el boom broke in half a few weeks before the contest due to ice loading. Marty W3YOZ and Tom W3SF replaced the beam in below zero weather while Roy and Bob were in Aruba basking in the sun. At last check W3SO was still in first place in the limited multi class with 177K pts in the January VHF contest. The contest was as brutal as the weather. The best DX was 4 grids in Florida during the last 2 hrs of the contest. Only 2

rovers were worked due to the severe weather. It required 4 wheel drive to get to the top of the mountain along with shoveling the way in and shoveling to get out. It was fortunate that they didn't lose power up there.

KB3LGS, Justin is looking forward to the Contest Seminar and absolutely can't wait until Dayton. Justin will be working the DX CW contest this weekend. W3SF, Tom had fun in the January VHF contest at W3SO. Tom found the C3I 2M beam broke because the mast plate was not installed on the center section of boom but rather on the weaker side section. Therefore it was not a fault of C3I - a defective installation and not a bad antenna. He praised Dell for their outstanding service and dinged MFJ for theirs. Tom worked the CQ 160M CW contest from home after watching some of the fun at W3SO. By careful adjustment of his antenna tuner, he got the G5RV down on 160M. He made 30 QSO's while wishing for a better antenna. When Roy and Tom were in Aruba, Tom heard them on 40M at just above the noise level from home. He flew up the mountain and found them 15 minutes later at 10 over 9 from the top of the mountain using the W3SO dipole. What a difference location makes! Tom has reservations for both Dayton and the Contest Seminar. He'll be in the DX CW contest this weekend.

N3VOP, Mike's computer failed two weeks ago and he plans to replace it with a new Dell computer. A third vertical antenna was damaged in the windstorm of a few weeks ago. These were Comet and Diamond fiberglass antennas. The next one will be metal for 2m and 440. The January VHF Contest was brutal. The contest started out with helping Clint, W3ARS take down John W3ADC's tower in the driving snow. The urgency was to have the tower refurbished for the March contest. Mike is looking forward to attending the Contest Seminar. This is one reason he joined PVRC!

K8OQL, Jerry's been getting on the air an hour before sunrise working the terminator until about 8 AM. This is followed by a session beginning half an hour before sunset for good long path openings into the far east. He found this technique to be very productive. Jerry found conditions good for the CQ160M CW contest. He made 606 Q's, 13 countries and 58 sections and missed WAS by one state, a KL7, using a vertical in the packet assisted category. He missed the first few hours of the contest because he was delayed at Mario's Restaurant entertaining his girlfriend. Jerry will be at Bob's, W8ZA, for the ARRL DX CW contest this weekend and back again in March for the SSB portion.

N4MM, John made about 100 Q's in the 160M CW contest and 100 Q's in the VHF contest on Saturday. The line noise on Sunday was so bad he couldn't work anyone. John managed to get zone 30 on 160M for the WAZ award. John's been fighting the powerline noise for the last 6 months. The power company came out but couldn't find it with their sniffer. They called someone from Pittsburgh who came out with a scope and some ultrasonic equipment. After an hour of searching, they found a bad insulator in John's back yard that was arcing. It sounded like a spark gap transmitter on the ultrasonic receiver. John asks if anyone has experience with the MFJ powerline noise meter and wants to know if it's any good. John recounted the story of a deceased Winchester, VA collector who had 6 new in the box E.F. Johnson Thunderbolts among many other new vintage ham gear. Their whereabouts remain unknown. Since the local ARRL director, Dennis, will be unavailable for the next two local hamfests, John will be doing the Vienna and Richmond hamfests.

N3FX, Tony spent a few hours in the CQ 160M CW contest all S&P. He installed a NE beverage antenna which performed very well. This weekend he will be at WX3B. Tony is looking forward to the Contest Seminar. N3UM, Ben was in the ARRL 10M, 160M and VHF contests. He was also in the CQ WW CW and 160M CW contests. Last year in the CQ 160M CW contest he worked 37 countries, 8 of which were new, for 170K pts. This year 23 countries and only 120K pts. The VHF contest was disappointing because the tropo was dead, no E skip and low participation. The high point was working FN41. Ben is looking forward to the Contest Seminar. He's had the feeling for years that he was doing ok but if he can get help from the experts he might be dangerous. W3IDT, Bob and Miriam, KA3UBJ were in the VHF contest from home. W3ZZ, Gene requested a CW contact for 8 points. This resulted in one cw contact in the log. This is the first contest in two years from home. Contesting is usually at W3LJ. Bob and Miriam will be attending the Contest Seminar.

W3ZZ, Gene was unfortunately in the VHF contest. He says unfortunately because it was a poor example for

newcomers. A new useful beacon on 50.074 MHz signs W3DOG located on the north end of Ocean City. It's a 50W vertically polarized signal on a broadcast tower. K3TKJ who runs QSL.NET runs the beacon. That beacon was 25 dB below normal during the contest. There's also a beacon there on 432.320 MHz. They're a useful indicator of nearby propagation conditions. Gene had 200+ Q's, a dreadful multiplier and 15K pts. Gene will be at W3LPL on 20M for both the ARRL DX CW and SSB contests. He might be at HC8N for the SSB contest in March if the flight schedules don't interfere with the Contest Seminar. Gene is happy to see so many who will be attending the Seminar.

WN3R, Dick is still off the air. Tomorrow he will sign the contract to build the house in Frederick. This means he should be back on the air in September. He's been collecting a lot of radio gear, more than he knows what to do with. Gene says Dusty will help put up the tower.

W8ZA, Bob's last meeting was in November. He's now fully retired - applause. December 31 was his last day with the Government. At a retirement party in January his group presented Bob with an eight inch Dioptsonian telescope. Bob dabbles a little in astronomy. Right after retiring Bob took a trip to Florida to visit an aunt and uncle in a nursing home and on the way back spent a few nights with Ed, K3IXD in SC. Ed is hanging copper loops in the trees for 6M, 2M and 432MHz. Bob then drove from Rocky Mount NC to Alexandria in an ice storm. The Santa Fe all wheel drive handled like a charm. Bob got home in time to put in a couple of hours in the VHF contest using a vertical on top of the 80 ft tower. Bob also got a new Dell 3000 Dimension computer. He found w8za@aol.com was taken by someone so had to use bobw8za@aol.com. This weekend Jerry K8OQL will be joining Bob for the ARRL DX CW contest on the mountain. Bob will be attending the Contest Seminar. Bob and everyone agreed that the venue for the Christmas Dinner was very nice. The food came out hot and the seating was very pleasant at large round tables. Maybe Jack should now book it again for next year.

W3LL, Bud reports the SteppIR MonstIR antenna which both he and Dusty have on order for September delivery is now in production with the first one shipped on 09 February. Bud's is still scheduled for a May delivery date. He received a certificate from the ARRL for the 2004 ARRL DX SSB Contest, single operator, low power, MDC section. Bud was in the ARRL 10M contest, attended the Christmas Dinner, the Orion demonstration and a nearly two week Caribbean cruise. The roundtable discussions were followed by a lively discussion on propagation expectations and band planning for this weekend's DX contest. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM. The next NW Region meeting is Tuesday, 15 March 2005.

73, Bud W3LL NW Region Chairman

January 2005 **PVRCNC (East)** — Attending: Guy K2AV; Bert N4CW; Tom N4TL; Will AA4NC; Jay NT4D; Jerry KI4CCJ (1st meeting); Jeff NX9T; Jim K4QPL; Keith W4KAZ; Bob N2NFG; Bob K4HA; Chuck K4NYS; Ron N4XD; Bill K4CIA.

BS:

K4CIA all agog about Peter Island. Karnac sez to get a grip, it's only DX... (Expose!: Karnac has it from the last time. Ask him who DIDN'T get the VU4 and then duck...). N4CW Worked the VU4, did multi in 160 test at W0UCE with Jack.

Computer quit keying rig at beginning of the contest and both of them had to send everything by hand. Regardless of the strain, Bert seemed to be using a fork OK. But Jack, according to Karnac, had both arms in slings for over a week. QLF?

N4TL did the CQWW and SSCW. Involved in the transfer of PC manufacturing assets from IBM to China. AA4NC doing a lot of mobile operation over XMAS time. Visited W4PA. NT4D not much progress on repairing crankup. Due to binding only able to rotate antenna about five degrees per hour. Karnac wants to know how Jay knew that ten hours hence he would need the beam on the Caribbean. Psychic?

KI4CCJ first meeting for Jerry. Plans to be here next month for 2nd meeting. Wife (not present) is KI4GMW.

SHE is working on her extra class. NX9T has been traveling a lot. Also got the VU4. (Karnac just gave me an uncomplimentary hand signal...temper, temper.) N4XD used his new Orion (!) in the 160 test. Has the INRAD 600 Hz roofing filter. Very pleased. Karnac also had a listen to that rig. Had to pry him off. Apologies to Ron for all the slobber. Ron also got the VU4. Ron celebrated the Stew Perry by stewing his Astron power supply.

K4NYS is rebuilding (did not specify what). Has new roofing filter in his MP. Also going mobile with new FT857D. K4HA has been "goofing off". Karnac sez likely getting up at 5AM every day to do it, too. Also doing a lot of packet cluster work. K4QPL "dabbled" in the 160 and 10m tests. Full time in NAQP.

W4KAZ sez NAQP is his favorite. Told an interesting story about how to copy HS5S at 55 wpm. Everything except his call? N2NFG worked both the 10m and 160m tests using an 80m dipole off the top of his tower. The tower is up to 40' but the brambles are climbing faster. Note to confused history buffs, this is 8 feet per year progress for a tower with 10 foot sections. You don't want to know why.

Toward the end of the meeting KI4CCJ was treated to his inaugural rendition (273rd overall for the club) of the "Who has the gin pole now" food fight and sing-along. Karnac says that was done to the tune of "99 bottles of beer on the wall", though the writer has no recollection of any harmony.

73, Guy K2AV

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**PVRC/NC East Meeting Minutes** — February 3 2005, Golden Corral, Dillard Drive, Cary  
Attending: N4CW, NT4D, KI4CCJ, K4WES, K4HA, AA4NC, K4CIA, N4XD, NX9T, and N4TL.

Activities Bragged About:

K4HA - along with W2XL participated in the CQWW 160 CW contest after several misfortunes prior to starting. Camaraderie was further enhanced with libations from GM...a good time was had by all!

AA4NC - Will's been burning up the airwaves mobile. Best DX was S9SS on SSB.

N4XD - operated the 160 CW test from Pittsboro without his electric heater, "forcing" Ron to use his amp for comfort.

NX9T - beside himself for tremendous success during the January ARRL VHF Sweeps despite conditions. Jeff provided contacts on 6 and 2 to the deserving.

N4TL - Tom operated the VHF Sweeps, giving his 5-over-5 stack on 6M a good workout. Conditions weren't that great, but he worked what he heard. Tom also worked the 160 CW contest, discovering, in the process that the computer interface wouldn't key the rig; turned out to be a bad connection to the keying transistor. After that fix, everything worked fine.

K4CIA - always supporting the PVRC effort, Bill worked all the locals in the 160 CW contest then quit!

K4WES - Wes has been inactive but plans to try and participate more.

KI4CCJ - it was Jerry's second meeting, so everybody welcomed him aboard. He did participate in the SSB NAQP (74 Q's), and is eager to improve his antenna setup to contribute more to the PVRC total scores.

NT4D - Jay no longer has a splint on his leg, but this time he showed up with an Ace bandage on his wrist--tendonitis! That didn't slow him down, though, he was active during the 160 CW contest and plans to be on for the WPX SSB contest that's coming up.

N4CW - operated both NAQPs, RTTY Roundup, the January VHF contest, and (at W0UCE's) shared the operating load during the 160 CW contest. The meeting ended around 7:00 PM with everyone feeling well-fed and

merry.

Respectfully submitted by Bert, N4CW

The **Laurel Chapter** PVRC met on January 26, 2005, upon conclusion of the regular LARC meeting. The Laurel Chapter proudly announces that Joe KB3KGA, Rich AB3BQ and Kevin WV3D are now qualified for membership in PVRC, by participation in two or more PVRC activities within the past 12 months. It was very exciting to see three more new contesters at the meeting; Eric Nagle (unlicensed), Sarah Howell (unlicensed) and Mona Singleton NY7P. Other members signed-in were: Ed K3QX, Joe N3TZA, Dennis KT3D, and HD K3HDM, Bill N3XL, and Kevin W3DAD, for a total attendance of a dozen.

Joe N3TZA, President of LARC, presented 2 paper QSL cards that the Club has received as a result of our recent efforts in the October CQ Worldwide DX and November ARRL Sweepstakes SSB contests. Amazingly to me, one of the cards was from a Short Wave Listener! Ed K3QX presented our membership's Year to Date PVRC 5M Award point totals. He drew our attention to the outstanding 5M database on the PVRC web site. W3DAD leads our pack with an 8 year total of 3,08,968 points and a 2004-2005 total of 137,210 points. Go Kevin!

Our VHF/UHF contest coordinator is Ed K3QX. It was noted that we now have two all-mode 2-meter rigs, which should make for lots of fun. Yours truly will attempt to coordinate our HF efforts. Our next event will be on Saturday, February 5th 1900 local time, the North American Sprint (0000Z - 0400Z, February 6). This is an HF event. We will be operating from the old shack. This may be the last event in the old shack, as we are soon to be relocating to impressive new facilities at City Hall. Pizza will be present to help commemorate the shack! If any visiting PVRC members are interested in operating from our shack come join us. I'm sure we could use some help getting the hang of a Sprint, as this type of QSY contest will be new to all of us. We will have 2-meters on 147.54 simplex for talk-in directions, or my cell phone number is 240-475-5159.

We talked about starting a 2-meter Net to discuss our Chapter's contesting activities and there was significant interest. We decided on a tentative time of Monday evenings at 2030 hours (8:30 PM) and I volunteered to be Net manager. We need to find an available repeater and will make every attempt to have Echo-link connectivity. Joe N3TZA suggested contacting John Creel WB3GXA, who operates and maintains the 147.225 repeater. Stand-by for more info on this.

The upcoming March PVRC Contesting Seminar was briefly discussed with more detailed information on the agenda and registration will be available soon. There was strong interest and the LARC Chapter plans to participate in this event.

73, Bill N3XL n3xl@arrl.net

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**Laurel Chapter** PVRC Net check-ins for 2/28: WI3N Jim, KZ3AB Al, K8YPY Dan, KK3F Pat, N3XL Net Control

Our Chapter's participation in the ARRL International DX Contest (Phone) was discussed. Our efforts will be as single operators from home stations. Be sure to spell out Potomac Valley Radio Club as your club affiliation.

Networking at the PG County EOC was discussed. A Jabber back-up server for the EOC LAN is being investigated.

The use of screen reader software in conjunction with contest logging software was discussed. This will be developed further for our blind participants. Bill and Pat are going to take this on as a project.

On Wednesday, January 25th the Virginia contingent of the PVRC **Over the Hill Gang** gathered at the Park Bistro restaurant in Falls Church for the first fellowship lunch of the new year. Attendees chowing and rag-chewing were John B. Johnson-W3BE, Ben Shaver-AA4XU, Jim Talens-N3JT, Fred Laun-K3ZO, Bill Leavitt-W3AZ, George Sinclair-K6ETM, and Roger Stephens-K5VRX. Numerous stories, recollections, observations and opinions were voiced and a truly good time was had by all!

## **Secrets of Contesting, Chapter 15**

**By Jim Neiger, N6TJ [reprinted by permission of the author from the CQ-Contest reflector]**

Obviously the topic of "how frequent should we ID" is one of great interest, and its been fun reading and contemplating everyone's opinions. And that my skills, or lack thereof, would sometimes be mentioned is at least interesting for me, and for those who think I've maybe "done it right" sometimes in my 50 years of contesting - thank you.

But believe me, I'm strictly an AMATEUR. I kind of adopted the use your call at the end of a QSO from one of our best, Katashi Nose KH6IJ. As I started contesting from W 7 land in the mid-1950's, Nose's style was one we all marveled to hear. So when I first started contesting from DX in 1967, it made sense to try and sound like Nose. Fat chance, but what a standard to try and emulate, huh?

What I call the Nose Rule: just sending your call says three things: (1) I QSL your report, (2) I am XXXXX, and (3) QRZ. A lot said, in very short order. How efficient is that?? Keep in mind, that for most of us, pre-1970 there were NO MEMORY KEYERS, NO COMPUTERS, and everything was sent long hand. Now, certain principles still apply, I believe, and for those who want to continue reading, follows my Secrets of Contesting, Ch. 15. I take no exclusivity on any of this; many will perhaps disagree, but that's OK too.

1. A major secret to life (and contesting) is to AVOID THE EXTREMES. Simply stated, there's no one size that fits all. And for most of us lying well within the extremities, whatever we feel comfortable doing, is probably the right thing. Sign your call whenever you wish; you won't please everybody anyway, so what the heck.
2. How can anyone take exception with the way Jose CT1BOH is doing it? Numbers that truly boggle the mind. Yes, sometimes I beat Jose - usually now he beats me. His analysis, for the most part, is right on, I believe. Incidentally when Jose started contesting in the late 80's, he always told me I IDed too often, and he could've generated bigger scores than I from D44BC. Maybe he was right; I certainly have learned from him.
3. Whereas I have a 'reputation' of signing after every QSO; I must confess I don't always today. Sorry.
4. Obviously the appeal to sign your call every Q is greatly diminished, as VR2BG suggested, if your call is a basket case. I've been very fortunate to have the ZD8Z call since 1968, and I suppose it is easily recognized. Each character ends with 2 dits, and a few hundred thousand QSO's later - well I'm sometimes astonished when it ends up BUSTED on packet. Oh well. Now if my call was XQ9ABY, I doubt that this EXTREME call would motivate me to send it after every Q.
5. As N6AA and others have observed, the frequency that you sign is pretty well dictated by the pileup. And I have noticed that when I sign every Q, my pileup definitely grows, leading me to believe that when I don't sign, many are patiently waiting for the call. Truly interesting dynamics.
6. For me, I have evolved into (1) signing after every QSO when the pileup is not robust, and (2) signing after every two to three Q's when the pileup is big and the rates are good. At a minimum, one should never go longer than a minute without IDing, in my opinion.
7. The gentleman that I am trying to learn from is my good friend Al 4L5A. And with his D4B call, what a GOLD STANDARD he is setting for the rest of us. Can you imagine eleven straight 200+ hours this past CQ WW CW? With best hours exceeding 260 Q's? Not even CT1BOH has done that!

Anyway, enough of this. Strive to feel comfortable in what you're doing. Realize that others might be listening and set a good standard for non-contesters and beginners. Do what Don Wallace W6AM used to call "friendly CQing". Play the game fair. Cheaters know who they are, and they're not the only ones who know. Winning is important, but it's not everything. As Ville OH2MM shared with me in Brazil two years ago, after a while, only YOU remember your No. 1's. And if any of us strive to be remembered one-half as fondly as KH6IJ, then that's a nice legacy with which to depart.

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## How Not to Take Down a Tower and a Beam

By [Chet Moore, N6ZO](#)

5 years ago, during the construction of an in-ground swimming pool at this QTH, things went awry when an unexpected overnight snow storm dumped 7 inches of snow on the ground here in Chesapeake Va. This ultimately caused some 20 feet of ground between the pool walls and the cement base of the tower to fall into the hole being dug for the pool. The walls of the pool collapsed into the pool, undermining the cement base under the existing 70 foot of AB-105 tower. I became aware of this at sunrise when the next door neighbor excitedly knocked on my door to tell me my tower was leaning toward her house. I called the pool company who contacted a local rigging company who said they thought they could get to it in 3 days if the tower had not fallen over by then.

The riggers (contracted by the pool company and not me) arrived 2 days later stating they would be back and were going to use a crane to take the antenna down and disassemble the tower. The riggers showed up the following day without the crane stating that a crane was not needed because they were "professionals" and were used to working on bigger towers and antennas at 500 to 1000 feet. They stated that they were "experts" at AB-105 and requested that I "keep out of the way."

I advised them a second time that the tower was "double built" from 50-70 feet and that I thought their gin pole looked to be too small to handle the extra weight of the double built tower sections. I also recommended they take the 4 el 20m beam and rotor off before taking down the tower. I requested that they bring out the crane as initially agreed on. They again reminded me they were "professionals" that they worked for the pool company and not me and for the second time, requested that I stay out of the way. Their climber then scampered up the tower and who must have been part monkey, rigged a gin pole and began removing bolts at the 60 foot level WITH ANTENNA AND ROTOR STILL ATTACHED. The ground crew then pulled on the pull rope. There was no movement by the tower and beam whatsoever. When the tower would not come loose even with ALL of the bolts at the joining section removed. The one guy on the tower hit it with a small sledge. This is *exactly* what was needed to get it loose !!. ZIP, CLANG,... SWISH,... CHING, ..CHING, ..CHING, ..CHING,.. THUD! In the blink of an eye, the top 10 feet of tower with rotor and beam attached, swung out, the beam and tower section rotated about 90 degrees in mid air. In about ½ a second, the slack went out of the line on the gin pole and then the tower with beam still attached came shooting back down bending the gin pole from vertical to horizontal with the legs of the top section coming back down and through the tower at the 60 foot level. It sheared off five struts on the now free wheeling top section and 5 more on the still standing tower. It narrowly missed hitting the idiot on the tower. So much for "being professionals." I believe that had the tower not been double built ( for those familiar with AB-105, there were L shaped steps on all 3 faces of the tower instead of just one on the climbing side as well as double regular struts) it would have buckled the tower at the 50 foot level. All 4 elements of the beam were sheared off. Another crew from Earle Industries (a subsidiary of Norfolk Shipbuilding /NORSHIPCO) took down the remains of the tower and antenna the following day

After two years of finger-pointing exercises between the pool company and the rigging company and under threat of law suit, the pool company finished the pool. I personally contracted another tower company to re-do the base and put the tower back up. The final result is that the matter was settled out of court in my favor mainly because I had a video tape of the way the tower crew removed the tower.

I was effectively off the air for a frustrating 2.5 years at this QTH. The good news is that the tower is now at 90 feet with a C31XR at 90 feet. Back in November 2004 a 2 Element Cushcraft 2 el 40M beam was side

mounted at 70 feet. Inverted VEE on 80 and an inverted L on 160 round out the antenna installations. I live on a small 1/4 acre lot with neighbors on all sides. Because the guy wires are about 1 foot from the property lines, there can not be any more height increases at this QTH.!

I got my start in contesting when I worked for Vic Clark W4KFC while in the fighting U S Coast Guard and being the chief op at K4CG. I normally operate the CQ WW and ARRL DX contests both modes at W3PP and SS both modes at home. .

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**Ham Classified Ads (non-commercial, ham-related, free)**

K3RUQ ham radio QTH for sale on the Eastern Shore of Maryland with 2 acres, Rohn SSV 80' self-supporting tower, nice home and large shop. No tower restrictions or TVI problems. Near Cambridge, MD in the country—FM28. [Please click here](#) for details and pictures.

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**PVRC REFERENCE PAGE Please send corrections to the editor. March 2005**

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**PVRC Dues** PVRC has no annual dues. Donations are gratefully accepted by the Treasurer, Dave Baugher WR3L, 615 Rockaway Beach Ave., Baltimore MD 21221. Please make your checks payable to PVRC.

**Autocall Column Editor** is K3DI 410-757-6706

**PVDXSN Packet Network**

W3LPL	Glenwood MD	145.590, 441.250	w3lpl.net	W3IP	Crownsville MD	145.570	
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Most of the system is sponsored by the Potomac Valley DX Spotting Network. Nodes with \* are independently funded by each SYSOP., The W4ML node is funded by CVCC.

**PVRC Meetings**

**ANNAPOLIS:** Dick Wilder, K3DI 410-757-6706

**BWI:** Weekly breakfast Wed at 7:00 AM at Basil's Deli Port on Elkridge Landing Rd 1/4 mile South of Winterson Road 410-850-4333. Director: Ike Lawton, W3IKE, 410-263-2830. Sec: Howard Leake, W6AXX, 410-465-7008, [w6axx1@starpower.net](mailto:w6axx1@starpower.net)

**CENTRAL VA:** Pres: Ed Moore - NW4V - [nw4v@comcast.net](mailto:nw4v@comcast.net), Secy: Marie Long - K4KML - [long2624@netzero.net](mailto:long2624@netzero.net), Treas: Robert (Bob) Ladd - NK4H - [rladd@comcast.net](mailto:rladd@comcast.net). Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Henrico Doctor's Hospital, 7700 Paraham Rd., Richmond, VA. To the right of the main entrance is a second entrance. Go through that door, turn left through that door and the cafeteria is the first room on the right. There will be some who meet at Nick's Roman Terrace, Westlands Shopping Center, West Broad Street starting at 5:50 PM for dinner before the meeting. Talk-in available on 145.430

**CENTRAL:** The Central Meeting is always the second Monday (except June, July, and August) at 7:30 pm. The central meeting generally alternates between MD and VA locations. A pre-meeting dinner is usually held between 5:00 and 6:30 pm. Check via 147.000- repeater. VA LOCATION: The Patrick Henry (Public) Library, Route 123, Vienna, VA. MD LOCATION: Church of the Nativity (Episcopal), Route 5, Temple Hills, MD.  
Pre-MD meeting dinner at Topoleno's Restaurant about 6:00 or 6:30 pm.

**EASTERN-SHORE (DEL-MAR-VA):** Dallas Carter, W3PP 302-875-0550 [ludal@dmv.com](mailto:ludal@dmv.com)

**LAUREL:** Bill Smith, N3XL ([n3xl@arrl.net](mailto:n3xl@arrl.net)) 301-935-4873 Laurel Region meets concurrently with the Laurel Amateur Radio Club at the first LARC meeting of each quarter.

**NORTH CAROLINA -- EAST:** Chair: Guy Olinger, K2AV, [k2av@contesting.com](mailto:k2av@contesting.com); Sec: Jim Price WW4M. POC's are K2AV and WW4M (h:919-362-4635, w:919-460-2991). PVRC/NC meets at 6 pm the first Thurs of each month, plus an additional meeting in April at the Raleigh Hamfest. For details see <http://pvrcnc.org>

**NORTH CAROLINA -- WEST (TRIAD):** Meets the 4th Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at Cobal's Elemental Eats and Drinks on Deacon Blvd. in Winston Salem. Ragchew at 6:30. Directions are available upon request. The chairman for the new PVRC/NC West chapter is Henry Heidtmann W2DZO, [henry@summitschool.com](mailto:henry@summitschool.com) and the secretary is Robert Whitaker KG4NEP, [kg4nep@yahoo.com](mailto:kg4nep@yahoo.com).

**NORTHEAST:** WR3L Dave Baugher 410-DX1-WR3L [dave@wr3l.net](mailto:dave@wr3l.net)

**NORTHWEST:** Chair: Bud Governale, W3LL, 410-666-9189. [W3LL@arrl.net](mailto:W3LL@arrl.net). Meets monthly the 3rd Tuesday. Informal dinner about 6pm; meeting at 7pm at the City Buffet, 1306 W Partick St, Frederick, MD 301-360-9666. Rear of shopping center, behind Mountain View Diner.

**OCOQUAN:** Jack O'Mara W4NF, H:703-791-3302 W:703-739-7636 [w4nf@comcast.net](mailto:w4nf@comcast.net) and Cliff Deel W4CE, [w4ce@aol.com](mailto:w4ce@aol.com) 703-491-0841

**OVER-THE-HILL LUNCH BUNCH (VA DC MD):** Meetings are held monthly at two locations: Falls Church, VA (Parkview Marriot) and Beltsville, MD. Meetings are announced by E-mail. All members, their guests and non-members interested in membership are welcome. For information contact Roger Stephens K5VRX, [rogerergo@netzero.net](mailto:rogerergo@netzero.net), 703-658-3991 for the VA meetings; or, Bill Leavitt W3AZ, 301-292-5797 for MD meetings.

PENNSYLVANIA: Steve Cutshall, K3TZV, k3tzv@paonline.com, 717-763-0462.

RAPPAHANNOCK: Steve Bookout, NR4M (ex-NJ4F) NJ4F@erols.com. Also, Larry Schimelpfenig, K7SV, k7sv@va.prestige.net

SHENANDOAH: Bill Hinkle KV3R kb3aug@juno.com 304-567-3138

CARROLL COUNTY: Jim Nitzberg, WX3B.410-374-9233 nitz@selectsa.com

SOUTHERN MD: Chair: Wayne Rogers N1WR E-Mail: n1wr@chesapeake.net Phone: (H) (410) 394-0313 Meetings held at the home of N1WR.

SOUTHWEST VA: Coordinator: David Jones, N4JED, Vinton, VA 540-890-2034, N4JED@AOL.COM. Meetings begin at 6 pm at the Roanoker Restaurant, Roanoke, Virginia in a private room (ask at the desk if you have not joined us before).

TIDEWATER COLONY OF PVRC: This group now meets in conjunction with the Virginia DX Century Club at Ryan's Steak House, which is on Battlefield Blvd in Chesapeake, at the Battlefield Blvd South (VA 168) exit off I-64. The meeting is still the third Tuesday of every month. We gather for dinner around 1815-1830, with the meeting around 1915-1930. Contact W4ZYT at 757-457- 5181 or w4zyt@exis.net for additional info.

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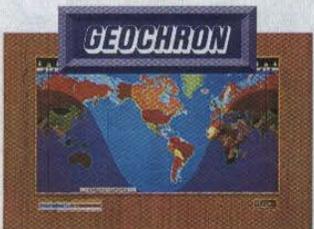
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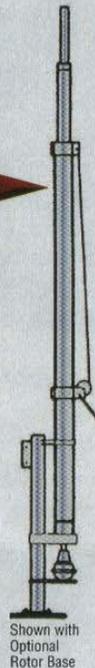
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