



# Potomac Valley Radio Club Newsletter

July 2004

Visit us on the web at [www.pvrc.org](http://www.pvrc.org)  
and [www.pvrcnc.org](http://www.pvrcnc.org)

## PVRC welcomes Rob Katz, KA1ARB, to PVRNCN-East

### Editor's Note

By Pete Smith, N4ZR

This is the last issue of my first year as Editor. It's been fun, not goof-free, but getting better, I think. Please let me know what you'd like to see more of, less of, and so on. I'll do my best, together with our volunteer authors, to oblige.

Headlining this month's issue is Fred Laun's latest propagation article, dealing with what to expect in the IARU contest. I'm also trying an experiment with several first-person stories, which I hope you'll enjoy. There won't be an August issue, so the Newsletter will resume around September 1, with contributions due August 20. PVRC President Jack Hammett, K4VV, is traveling at press time, but he'll be back for the September issue. Enjoy your summer!

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### PVRC Event Calendar (includes summer get-togethers)

**Note: All dates are Zulu. Boldface denotes contests that count toward the PVRC 5 Million Award and summer PVRC events**

IARU HF World Championship 1200Z, Jul 10 to 1200Z, Jul 11

North American QSO Party, CW 1800Z, Aug 7 to 0600Z, Aug 8rc

**WAE DX Contest, CW 0000Z, Aug 14 to 2359Z, Aug 15**

Maryland-DC QSO Party 1600Z, Aug 14 to 0400Z, Aug 15 and 1600Z-2359Z, Aug 15

**W3YOZ Fowlfest, August 21**

North American QSO Party, SSB 1800Z, Aug 21 to 0600Z, Aug 22

**NR4M Open House, September 11**

For schedule changes, rules and log submission info, go to <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

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### Fowlfest Announcement/Directions

It's Fowlfest time!. The joint PVRC and NCDXA meeting will be hosted again by Marty, W3YOZ, at his "park" near Annapolis. Festivities start at noon on Saturday, August 21, with BBQ chicken and drinks. Some folks may bring the optional salad, dessert or other munchies. Everybody should bring a big appetite!

Directions:

From Virginia: I-95/I-495 to MD Route 4 (PA Ave. South/East); turn off at MD Route 258 (Bristol/Deale); take 258 to MD Route 256; turn left and go to Rodgers Road; turn right, go to gravel road on left, turn left; go to 1062 sign turn right and go to picnic grounds at the water's edge.

From U.S. DC Beltway/50: Take Beltway to Route 50; take Route 50 east. After crossing Patuxent River the next turnoff is MD Route 424 (Davidsonville Road); take 424 towards Davidsonville, cross over route 214 (Central Ave), and continue until it dead ends at MD Route 2. Turn right, go 200 feet and turn left on Mill Swamp Road. Continue to MD Route 468

(Muddy Creek Road); turn right on route 468 and go 6 miles to the traffic light at MD Route 256. Turn right on MD Route 256 and continue to Rodgers Road (first left after the Churchton Post Office); turn left on Rodgers Road, go to gravel road on left; turn left, go to 1062 sign, turn right and go to water's edge.

From I-97: Take I-97 South to MD Route 665 (Allen Blvd.); take 665 to MD Route 2; take Route 2 south to Mill Swamp Road (first left after Route 424 on right); take Mill Swamp Road to MD Route 468 and follow the directions above.

## **CONTESTING NEAR THE SUMMER SOLSTICE -- PART 2**

**By Fred Laun, K3ZO**

This is the second and last article in this series. This month I will focus mainly on the upcoming IARU HF World Championship.

The first part of the series, as you may recall, appeared in the April issue of this publication, and was mostly about the CQ WPX CW Contest. Before going on to the IARU event, it might be useful to go back to that April article to see how accurate my predictions were. It's always a good idea to analyze the contest while it's still fresh in one's mind. That way, before next year's contest, we can look back to this written analysis to get some pointers which otherwise may have faded into the fog of history (particularly at my age!).

Ben, N3UM had noted after the earlier article that I didn't to say that in the WPX, contacts on 40, 80 (and 160) count double points for QSOs outside the USA. Therefore shouldn't I have emphasized that it would be important to hit those bands hard?

Ben is absolutely correct about my omission. In fact, in my own case I did hit 40 meters very hard, and I also found that 80 meters was quite good to Europe around sunset the second day and I made 100 contacts on that band before sunset in the Midwest, allowing me to make headway before the Midwest QRN started rolling in.

Meanwhile Ken, K4ZW, operating as KN1DX, was making hay on 20 and 15 and, despite my having an advantage of 800 to 300 or so in low band contacts, Ken, with his higher overall QSO total and his higher multiplier, gave me a good thrashing. Both of us put in the full 36 hours permitted to single operator stations. As I said in the first article, rate is all important, even keeping the low band point advantage in mind.

Some would say that Ken had an advantage because he used a rare prefix while I stayed with my plain vanilla K3 call. I personally have never felt that having a rare prefix was that much of an advantage. When you have the kind of a station I have where you can run stations at a reasonable rate hour after hour, I feel that the bulk of callers are people with modest stations who are anxious to call anyone they can find who can also hear them. In the WPX there are so many prefixes on that it is not a winning strategy to S&P looking for multipliers only. There may have been a few people out there working on their WPX award and not seriously in the contest, but I don't think their numbers amounted to much. Ken just beat me fair and square on rate, and in this contest, the more QSOs you make, the more multipliers you have just by the law of averages.

What about conditions? My forecast was correct regarding conditions at the start of the contest. But I failed to predict the fact that, the sunspot cycle having dropped considerably over the past year, there is an hour or two just prior to sunrise where, even at this time of year, Europe does drop out on 20 meters. Also, the morning opening to Asia was not as robust as I had expected; either that, or there just wasn't much participation on the part of the JA's. For whatever reason I had a dearth of Asians in the log, a fact commented on by other contesters in the East and Midwest as well.

The morning opening to Europe on 15 was puny weak as I predicted. Indeed, European signals were stronger in the afternoon as I had forecast. What I failed to take into account was the operating practices of the majority of European hams. Fifteen may be wide open to Europe, but if all the Europeans are on 40 or 20 at the time, the fact that 15 is wide open doesn't do you much good. So in the final analysis it paid to be there running the puny weak Europeans at the time they were there on the band, which was during our morning hours. In retrospect I should have taken my first time off at around 0700-0900 UTC instead of 1400-1600 UTC.

The unpredictability of Sporadic E propagation this time of year makes it important to keep an ear on 10 meters. In the WPX CW, I caught a good direct path opening to Europe on 10 the second day at 1200 UTC. It was a widespread opening with good signals from DL, G, LZ and HA, but it didn't last long and by 1215 UTC it was gone. I should have listened as early as 1030 UTC or so as I believe the opening had been going on for a while before I noticed it. For a July contest such

as the upcoming IARU event the Sporadic E factor is even more important than it was in the WPX.

So what about the upcoming IARU contest? The first thing to note is that multipliers count once per band, and there are fewer of them than in the WPX, so it is important to hit as many bands as you can at their respective peak hours. You have to get to 80 early as by the time we have sunset here sunrise is already occurring in much of Eastern Europe.

The important thing to note about Europe is that the active IARU member society headquarters stations are almost all located there. Therefore Europe is worth 25 or so multipliers on each band even though it is host to only six or seven ITU zones. When you work them on each band these mults begin to add up. Also, these headquarters stations are generally multi-ops so when a band like 10 opens at all they will generally be there. No matter whether you have a station which can maintain good runs almost constantly, it still pays to break off and make an S&P band sweep every so often because the headquarters stations are not doing S&P and they will NOT be calling you. If you want to work them YOU have to call them.

The IARU is a 24-hour contest so even at my age I can usually last the full 24, though I admit to having drooping eyelids along about 0800-0900 UTC. I always plan to stay on for the full contest period. The contest begins at 1200 UTC and 20 is the safe choice to start on, though with Sporadic E having a strong presence this time of year, 15 and even 10 might very well be open to Europe at the beginning of this contest. If the HQ stations are booming in on 10 at the beginning of the contest it pays to knock them off then and there, as you may not get another chance given the unpredictability of the propagation mode.

Both phone and CW are going on at the same time in this contest, so you have a number of category options. Particularly at this point in the sunspot cycle I prefer to participate as a mixed-mode entry because it allows me to keep moving even with only one or two bands open at a particular time. Phone becomes a more attractive volume choice these days because a number of European countries have already opened up the HF bands to their no-code hams. Yet I feel I need the CW to do well on 40 and 80 where phone becomes much less productive. In fact historically the top CW-only entries here in the USA have generally scored about as well as the top mixed-mode entries. It will be interesting to observe whether this continues to hold true as so many more no-code operators show up on the HF bands.

As the contest continues through the day Saturday the recipe is to shuttle between 10, 15 and 20 as conditions on those bands dictate. You earn as many QSO points working a W5 as you do working a DL, so when there is a good Sporadic E opening on 10 to the Midwest, be there as long as the rate holds.

A couple hours before sunset, say 2300 UTC at the latest, you must go to 40 in order to get the European mults while they are available. Keep an eye on 80 at the same time and as soon as you can break through go after the mults on that band as well. If there's any time during the contest when S&P pays off, this is it. Don't hang in there too long on a particular HQ station if you can't get through his pile, but keep moving around calling the mults as much as you can. Forty may also turn into a good run band to Europe later on but get the mults under your belt while you can.

On 40 even after Europe fades out remember that any station outside your own ITU zone counts equal points, so in this contest, for example, it becomes productive to run stations on 40 meter SSB up in our part of the band during the hours of darkness. 75 will probably be hampered by QRN but it's also worth a try if your rate is suffering elsewhere. And some of the best Sporadic E openings occur in the early evening so after you have the 80 and 40 meter mults under your belt it pays to keep an ear on 10 meters because there you have all the potential for the volume provided by the USA Novices and Techs on that band.

In the wee hours of the morning 20 should remain open to Europe until a couple hours before sunrise, but it also pays to point the beam west as you'll have nice runs of W0's and W6's spiced up by the occasional VK and ZL. Remember that Central and South America have a few ITU zone mults to hand out also, so it pays to make an S&P run with the beam south on all the bands every now and again.

In recent years I have found myself finishing up Sunday 1100- 1200 UTC on 15 meters beaming Europe, but the lower sunspot count may make 20 the band of choice for that last hour this year. It will be interesting to see how things pan out.

Anyway, good luck!

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**IARU HF Championship 1200 Z Saturday, July 10 — Be There!!!**

## The Toolbox

By Don Daso, K4ZA

Recently, while working on some tower and antenna jobs, my clients have reacted to some of the tools in my toolbox—with surprise and questions. Here then, are the answers to those questions, along with some general descriptions.

The single most interesting tool I own (apparently, based on reactions) is a set of ratcheting box/open-end combination wrenches. What's unique about them (besides the novelty of a ratcheting box-end wrench) is that the ratchet works in only 5-degrees of rotation. When you're working atop a tower, sometimes in cramped conditions, that smaller ratchet angle can make a difference and save you time. Plus, the box-end wrench gives you a little more torque compared to a typical socket wrench. Craftsman, along with Husky, Snap-On, and so forth, make these wrenches. Mine have proven so useful, I've got two sets.

For years, I relied on Klein "lineman's pliers" to solve lots of gripping and cutting problems. But recently, I have found the "Robo-Grip" pliers to be more useful when faced with aluminum elements, larger connector on baluns, and so forth. They made the difference a few weeks ago when taking down some old Telrex beams that had been up in the air since 1978. The hardware was so rusted that regular wrenches wouldn't fit. Again, several manufacturers make them, including Craftsman. I'm carrying a little more weight in the pouch, but again, they can save time.



On those same Telrex beams, I once again relied on PB Blaster (a chemical catalyst) to loosen long-rusted hardware. W9GE turned me on to this stuff last year and I continue to be amazed by it. Once we'd trammed the beams down, the owner began taking them apart. He sprayed everything with WD-40. Then N4ZC gave him some Blaster, and the beams were soon enough in pieces. Finally available here in the Carolinas at Wal-Mart. The old tag line, "This stuff really works," truly applies to this product!



I used to carry multiple screwdrivers. But two years ago, I switched to one of those cheap (Chinese) multi-bit screwdrivers—two sizes of straight as well as Phillips blades. Only once during those two years have I needed something that would provide a bit more torque, so now my pouch is lighter by not carrying so many screwdrivers.

It's been said thousands of times, but bears repeating—if you want your electrical tape to last on the tower, use only Scotch 88 and cut the last wrap, allowing the tape to "relax" before smoothing it out. I just came off a tower last week where the tape had been tugged and pulled apart, and each wrap was coming apart, flapping in the breeze, even though the tower had just been put up weeks before.

It's also been said thousands of times, but bears repeating—*never saddle a dead horse*. This same tower used ¼-inch EHS with Crosby clips [the traditional cable clamps—ed.], but the owner alternated each clip at each end of the guys. Naturally, he didn't appreciate my pointing out this mnemonic hint of how to prevent such a *faux pas*...since his other two towers rode out Hurricane Hugo just fine back in '89, etc. Fortunately, the installation had multiple clips at each guy end, so the holding power wasn't compromised too much.

What's in your toolbox?

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## Ammunition for Little Pistols

By Bill Axelrod, K3WA

End of June. First day of summer. And WPX come and gone. A good time for all us "Little Pistols" to take stock. And if we do it right, maybe our stock will go up this fall. Or, to be sure, just watch what I do and do exactly the opposite. You'll do much better that way. And it's easier.

I hope you all enjoyed the CW WPX. As I blathered last month, the WPX is a contest with where those of us with low-power rigs and basic antennas have a chance to do well and sharply hone our contesting skills. And I hope you did.

Despite less than optimum conditions, the bands were pretty much full – except for 160 and 10 anyhow. Lots of cool prefixes and even some nice-to-find DX. Again this year I kept the rig cranked down to 100 watts and used an inverted vee at 36 ft. Despite working my next door neighbor's home entertainment system on all bands, with a really BIG SIGNAL I

might add, I also did pretty well working other contesters. Didn't hear many Asians or South Americans this year with the exception of central Asia. Only a few JAs.

If anyone was able to stay awake reading last month's column (or cared to) I wrote that the WPX provides an opportunity to measure a station's performance, figure out how to improve it, and to develop the beginnings of your strategy for the contests to come. This WPX was no exception.

So here's my observations this year. Of course, they come as a blinding flash of the obvious. Maybe I should call them "lessons re-learned". Or maybe "lessons to be forgotten". Or maybe prime bull. Whatever. But here goes. And I wonder how they match your observations and conclusions.

This Little Pistol did not do well for the first hour or so of a band opening – pick a band, any band. And my effectiveness diminished big time during the hour or so before a band closing.

This Little Pistol couldn't get a run going except during the peak period of a band opening. And couldn't hold a frequency worth beans at any time.

With the band fully open, I could compete in almost any pile up. Otherwise, fudgetaboutit.

With the band fully open, I could work even the weakest DX stations. And this year there were plenty of them. Especially on 15 meters. Way down in the noise.

This Little Pistol was pretty competitive across the USA at all times except for the Pacific Northwest near band openings and closing.

This Little Pistol was far more effective on 80 meters than I had expected – a pleasant surprise. And that even with low power and a really sub-optimized antenna.

And this Little Pistol went "wee wee wee" all the way home. Oops, that should have been "Little Piggy" and in another forum.

So what does that add up to? Beats me. But it does help this "Little Pistol" build his attack plan for the next contests. And what's that, you might ask. Well.....

Well, to start, I'll operate one step behind the crowd. Instead of starting in the highest band that's open, I'll drop down one. So, assuming that 10 is dead, conventional wisdom is to start on 15. I'll start on 20. Why? Because the odds are that 20 is farther along into its opening and, as I observed, this Little Pistol does considerably better when the band is fully open. Duh!

OK. That might mean that I won't get to 15 meters until the next day. But given that this Little Pistol does so poorly near a band closing, it seems to work out better that way.

Then, I'll hang in on 20 longer than you might expect and wait for 40 to fully open for the evening before QSYing there. Later, do the same for the QSY to 80.

I won't even try to run on any band until or unless its fully open. I'll concentrate on searching and pouncing early in the contest and wait to run until the band is well established.

Pile ups? I will ignore them unless a band is fully open since that's the time a Little Pistol can compete with the bigger signals. Unless it's a new country or I just can't resist. I still haven't found any will power pills.

Operating hours? Well, that's a tough one. I might get in during the morning 40 meter gray line openings, assuming there is one. Contrary to what I've observed about my efficiency (or lack thereof) around band openings, I've found I do pretty well during a gray line opening. But other than that, I'll take time off in the mornings to let the bands get pretty well open before joining the fray.

And lastly, I will not be afraid to go after very weak signals. The fact that they are weak at your QTH doesn't always mean that you need high power or big antennas to be heard.

So, fellow Little Pistols, I hope you, too enjoyed the CW WPX. And maybe got some ideas for your strategy for the upcoming contests. Whether you have a strategy, make a plan, or could simply care less, please do get on the air and have fun making contest QSOs. CU there!

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## 2004 Hamfest Schedule (courtesy of K3SWZ)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>		
July 3	Wilkes-Barre, PA	July 4	Harrisburg, PA
		July 11	Kimberton, PA

July 18	Mountain Top, PA	September 12	Felton, DE
July 25	Timonium, MD	September 18	Allentown, PA
August 1	Berryville, VA	September 18-19	York, PA
August 7	Lewistown, PA	October 2	Lancaster, PA
August 15	Westminster, MD	October 17	Sellersville, PA
August 22	Hanover, PA	October 31	Westminster, MD
September 11	East Stroudsburg, PA		
September 11-12	Gaithersburg, MD		

Updates/additions/corrections are appreciated!

## **W4MYA Receives Central Virginia Contest Club Honor (courtesy of NW4V)**

At the Annual May Picnic Meeting of the Central Virginia Contest Club, Bob Morris, W4MYA received a Lifetime Honorary Membership Award. This rare distinction was given in appreciation for Bob's many years of outstanding service to the Club, as a radio Elmer and a first rate contesting mentor, (as well as a first rate contester)! Bob opened his world class multi-multi contest station to many operators through the years. His gracious hospitality and enthusiasm for competition and camaraderie are fine examples worthy of such an award. Long-time club member, Bob, W4DR, presented a handsome engraved plaque commemorating the award. "The CVCC has been in existence for 30 years and W4MYA has been contributing for most of that time, in all ways possible, to help ensure the Club's success," said W4DR. As the loud applause subsided, W4MYA thanked the club members and expressed his sincere appreciation for such recognition. Thank you Bob, and congratulations!



## **FAR-Fest Returns to Gaithersburg From Dan Blasberg KA8YPY, President, Foundation for Amateur Radio**

Fellow amateurs and friends of FAR,

As most of you know, FAR and the Columbia Amateur Radio Association used to do a hamfest called "Fall-Fest" at the Howard County fairgrounds for the last two years but, due to a scheduling error, the Howard County site was booked for the wrong weekend this year. Faced with the need to come up with a new date, a new place, or both, a number of ideas were considered but none of them were agreeable to both organizations. Therefore, it was decided to cancel the "Fall-Fest" and for each organization to pursue its own respective hamfests, if they felt they could do so.

Many of you have asked FAR when it would return to Gaithersburg, or even if there was a plan to return. I am very happy to say the answer is that after a five-year absence, the hamfest will return to the location where it started 47 years ago. The Foundation for Amateur Radio will announce at its meeting this Wednesday evening the return of The Foundation for Amateur Radio Hamfest--F.A.R.Fest--to Gaithersburg, Maryland, on September 11 and 12, 2004. F.A.R.Fest will be held at the Montgomery County Agricultural Center, the Gaithersburg fairgrounds. Also at F.A.R.Fest, FAR will be sponsoring the ARRL Maryland-DC Convention on both days. It is true F.A.R.Fest will be sharing the fairgrounds with another event, but we anticipate being able to accommodate all those who would like to be a vendor or to tailgate at the hamfest. As I write this, we have had several individuals volunteer to help work on the planning committee. I was also glad to learn the following clubs have expressed an interest in being responsible for certain aspects of the F.A.R.Fest:

- Laurel ARC VEC VE Testing
- Mount Vernon ARC Announcements and PA
- MADXRA Hospitality Committee
- Montgomery ARC Talk-in and the KV3B regional repeater
- Explorer Crew 80 First aid

If you have an organization that would like to help be responsible for items at the hamfest, please feel free to contact me. Some of the items we need help with are:

- Tailgate set-up and coordination.
- Indoor Vendor set-up and coordination.
- Gate admissions sales.
- General set-up
- General tear down

For more information, please go to <http://www.Farfest.org>

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## **Yukon Project Final Report**

### **From Ken Claerbout, K4ZW**

Everything has been shipped to Jay with the exception of two 50/75 ohm transformers donated by K4GMH. Those will go out this week. I have some left over cash and after talking with Jay, I'm going to put together a small care package of coax, connectors, and a small antenna switch for the shack. As you can see from his note below, there is a lot of good news from VY1 and he is really excited about future contests. Thanks again everyone!

73

Ken K4ZW

Ken,

I am very grateful for the packages you have sent and are sending. They will help me to keep Yukon on the air during the contests. Please send at least two 75/50 ohm transformers, if possible, because all equipment and antennas are 50 ohm and the CATV hard line going out to the tower is 75 ohms. More great news... I have been exchanging e-mails with Claudio, LU7DW... He and his wife are immigrating to Canada and will settle in Yukon in June or July. He will rent to start and when he can afford it he will be buying

a home in a good location for the two of them to operate from. In the meantime he will have access to the YARA (Yukon Amateur Radio Association) contest station. He is up on the DXCC lists and has been an active contester on both CW and SSB. What a great addition to have to YT.... An experienced contester and DXer. The 'po boy has to start all over on his DXCC, so he will be very active, which is great for the folks outside of YT. I will wait until everything arrives, get a digital picture of the station set up, and then thank everyone. I think seeing the station setup will help folks to see the effects of their generosity. I will see if I can get Claudio to work a multi-op with me for SS. With the two of us plus Bob, VY1MB and the novice contesters learning, at a 4th position it could be quite a show. Claudio has his own nice gear, and so does Bob. If I can set up a 4th position to be shared by the newcomers, it would be the most serious effort ever into a multi-op that I can remember. I am going to try to get the second position up and running by July 1 for the Canada Day contest. Have the guys watch for me and let me know how things sound.

Also, if anyone in PVRC should want me to make sure that someone is there for a particular contest, please tell them to let me know. I have an Ameritron AL80A (medium size) amp for the HF bands, and I have parts to build a couple of 2, 4-400z single band amps. The tuning circuit parts I have would be good for a single band for 40, 20, 25, 10, or 6. I am set up with transverters and small amps on 6 and 2. If the weather holds out without wind long enough this year, I will have my tribander up as high as the good tower ends up being, and the broken Gem Quad which I was given will be repaired and up on mast at about 35 feet on a wood pole. I have lots of used copper clad high tensile #11 telephone wire to make antennas from. I guess you can tell that I am very excited about getting my station going again. I have been off the air essentially since SS. And in that SS I was having rig lockups and computer crashes. It will be so nice to have a working station again. Thank everyone involved.

73

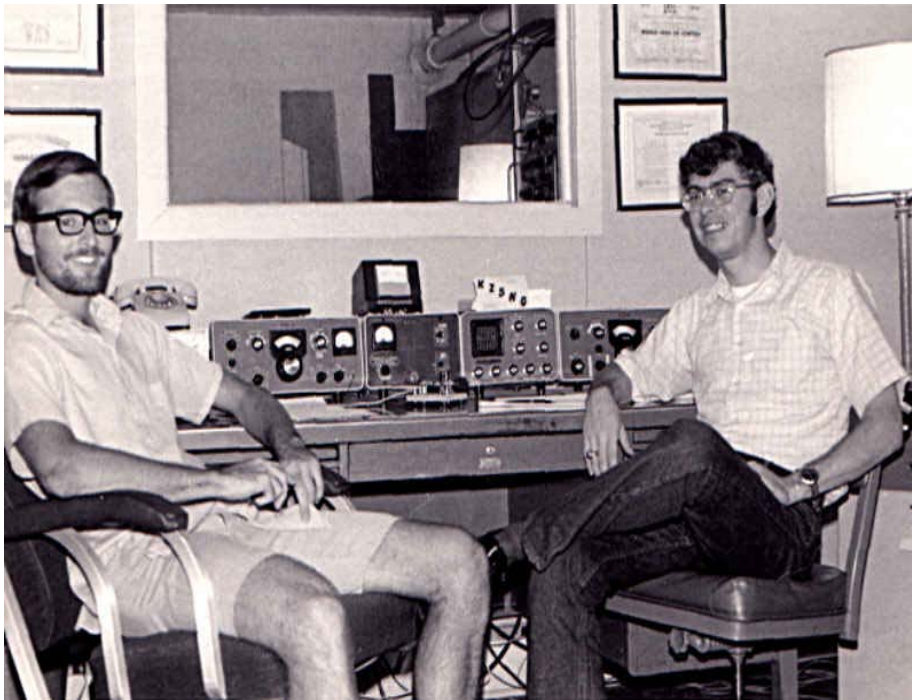
J.

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## **PVRC BPL Comments**

**By Jim Talens, N3JT [originally submitted for the June Newsletter—apologies, ed.]**

PVRC prepared Reply Comments in the FCC's rulemaking proceeding on Broadband over Powerline, Docket OET No. 04-37. PVRC filed Comments on May 3, and six members (NW4V, N3AM, KT4W, W3CB, WX3B and N4ZR) reviewed a sampling of the some 1200 comments filed. Several other members contributed summaries of certain pleadings. All of these enabled PVRC, though N3JT (former FCC attorney), to prepare our Reply Comments under Jack's (K4VV) signature. Both the original Comments and Reply Comments are available on the PVRC website.



## Down Memory Lane By Steve Hawley, K4EU

[Editor's Note] Steve's had a long and varied ham career, and some of these pictures and commentaries will probably bring back memories. We'll run them occasionally as space permits — Thanks, Steve!]

The picture dates from 1973, and shows the US Navy club station KZ5NG on Galeta Island, Canal Zone. I spent most all my free time operating KZ5NG -- KZ5 No Good or KZ5 Nice Guy.

Hans (now sometimes heard as 3W2LWS) and I were serving in the Navy at the time. Note the swank uniforms we wore and the regulation beard and sideburns....

Left—Hans WA1LWS Right K4UE, then WA4UAZ/KZ5BP

Funny story -- A fellow 'shipmate,'

Mark, WN6BBC, got his novice ticket and we suggested he apply for KZ5QR for his callsign. The licensing authority in the Canal Zone would accept requests for any unassigned call in those days. So they assigned Mark KZ5QR. Because he only had a USA Novice license, the CZ licensing authority rules states that an "N" had to be appended to the callsign to indicate Novice class. Therefore our friend came away with KZ5QRN for his callsign. You talk about a great callsign and conversation piece!!! There may be others but I'm not aware of any other Amateur callsign that is also a Q-signal.

Another sea story -- 1973 was the day of oil embargos around the world. One day while operating, Tom Christian, VR6TC, from Pitcairn Island called me. Tom is VP6TC today and is a direct descendent of Fletcher Christian of "Mutiny on the Bounty" fame. Tom and his island was in desperate need of oil. Traditionally ships only stopped at Pitcairn a handful of times a year but he was having great difficulty getting any ship to stop and deliver a few barrels of oil. I phone patched Tom into several oil companies in the Canal Zone and Panama. After some time and effort we finally found a company who promised to send a ship to stop at Pitcairn and deliver some oil while on its way to New Zealand. Tom was so grateful for the assistance that he sent me some really nice Pitcairn stamps as a thank you.

KZ5NG put out a whopping signal with the Collins S-line and a TH6 up 80' -- > We used to run a lot of phone patches and do a lot of DXing and Contesting. 15 minute claim to fame: #1 world, single op, in the first annual 1973 ARRL 10m Contest with 122K points.

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## WPX SSB 2004 By Jim Nitzberg, WX3B

The WPX contest is my personal favorite because it is both a DX and "local" contest. This means that you usually have somebody to talk to – and rates can be quite high. In addition, your call sign prefixes are those rare Multipliers – so that when AK3Z shows up on frequency, he's just as rare as ZD8Z.

The contest emphasizes working DX and in particular, working DX on the low bands as a way to maximize the points per QSO. Strategy is important, however because you don't want to overlook the hundreds of juicy stateside and Canadian prefixes.

This year I set a goal to beat our previous record of about 3.5 million points. As a frame of reference, 3.5 million points represented about half what the competitive single operators produce. With some more operators, a lot of radios, and some luck, I was confident we'd do it.



About a month before the contest, an old radio friend I'd never met asked me about bringing a North Carolina Team up to operate. This was Henry, W2DZO and at the time I had no idea what a great time we'd all have.

I had less than a week to get ready. Everything was in perfect working order when I left for my vacation – however we had an ice storm in Manchester and it bent my 15m Quad mast and it had to be replaced. Other than that – we were in good shape. A quick trip to Lowes and a few quad parts later, WX3B was 100% operational. Henry, W2DZO informed me that he and Gene, WB4MSG were coming up to spend the entire weekend – and they wanted to...do a lot of daytime operating!

Friday evening came quickly and Tony, N3FX and I started the contest together at 7:00pm sharp – me on 15, and Tony on 20. I wasn't able to run very well so I concentrated on pouncing on some of the Asian stations. I was surprised how well the band was holding up...VK's, ZL's JA's, all of the USA's west coast was loud, too. Tony looked like he was having fun on 20m as well.

At about 1:30am, with about 400+ QSOs in the log, Team PVRNC showed up. Both Henry and Gene had been contesting from their mobile all the way up (this was a 7+ hour drive for them!) and they were ready to do some serious OPERATING! When I went to bed at about 2:30am, they were both at it on the low bands. Henry was up until 4, and Gene until 5:30 – and this was after a full day of work and a 7 hour drive.

Saturday morning delivered a startling revelation for us – the big European 10 meter opening we were all dreaming about...didn't happen. Fortunately, 15 meters was good and Gene did some running on 15 for hours on end. Henry stayed on 20, and Rob, K1RH had the difficult assignment of making (read: Manufacturing) QSOs on 40 meters. Ever try to CQ on 40m during the day in a contest? You really need to perfect this art to draw the casual operator out! Rob made several hundred QSOs during the DAYLIGHT hours on 40.

Clint, W3ARS showed up at about 1:00am Sunday morning and hammered away on the low bands for several hours while the rest of us took a break.

Then on Sunday morning I heard something VERY unusual. I was sure I was dreaming. No, it was N3YIM, the "pouncer" – running stations on 20 meters. Good job, Joe – keep up the good work, you'll break that 460/hr QSO record in no time.

On Sunday afternoon while I was out and about – team WX3B was contesting away. At the end of the contest – N3SB took over 20 meters until the finish of the contest and he was running stations like crazy.

The result was spectacular – everybody had a great time and we ended up with just over 7 million points – a new record for WX3B. Thanks to all who participated. Can't wait to do it again for the WPX CW contest.

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## **CQ CONTEST – My Start in Radio Contesting**

**By Steven Hanlon, KB3KAQ**

I have been an amateur radio operator since July of 2003 and in that brief time have worked several contests of various size and participation levels. Being new to amateur radio as well as radio contesting, my lack of knowledge of propagation, geography, and strategy have done little to slow me down. Not knowing what is or is not possible, I am trying everything and having a great time in the process.

When first working toward my Technician license, my interests were in mobile operation akin to Citizen Band operation. I had a CB radio in my vehicle and had grown tired of the foul language and lack of respect. I was looking for another means to stay connected while traveling, which is a large part of my job. I had no idea of the vast world the HF operation made available and not understanding that, I only focused my interests on VHF repeater and simplex operation while mobile.

In June 2003, I found out about the Field Day operation of a local club, the Maryland Mobileers. I contacted the club president expressing my interest in amateur radio and was invited to the site. Not knowing what to expect, I was not prepared for the experience. I sort of knew that hams did, but never had been in a ham shack or even heard a CW or sideband QSO. Field Day excited me about joining the amateur radio ranks. I knew I was hooked after hearing a dozen or so phone contacts from across the country. During the drive home, I decided to pursue my ham radio license.

The next test session at the Anne Arundel Radio Club was 2 weeks from Field Day and I tried a few practice tests on the various websites along with reading an older ARRL Operating Manual. Having those few practice sessions under my belt and a background as an Electronics Technician, I felt confident enough to head to the test session determined to come home with a license. I didn't ace the exam, but as Bob Rose, AA3RR stated, I had passed and that's all that mattered.

Now licensed as a Technician, I worked the local repeaters with a hand-me-down 2m FM rig. I then added a dual band HT to my shack. The fun of operating 2m FM quickly wore off and in the fall I purchased an all mode HF and VHF transceiver – the Icom 746PRO. This was a logical rig since it would allow me to explore the HF bands as I upgraded my license with expanded privileges. I could also operate using various modes on both 2 and 6 meters.

The small world of the local repeaters and regional operation using 2m SSB operation was bolstered with discovering 6m SSB operation. In one evening on 6m SSB with an attic dipole I was able to work stations in Florida, Missouri, and Nebraska. That whetted my appetite for chasing DX and I began studying for my General. Moving from the Technician to General class greatly shifted my interests and goals in amateur radio with access to the HF bands.

### **First Contests**

Shortly after earning my Technician class license, I was made aware of the upcoming Maryland QSO party and decided to work the contest as a rover. Being limited to 2 meter FM simplex did not deter me from heading out counties as I drove around the Baltimore and Washington suburbs. My goal was to make the minimum score to receive a certificate of participation and to have fun doing it. My brief effort in this contest had me hooked on contesting and I was determined to increase my score in next year's MD QSO Party and to tackle larger contests with a more focused effort.

In November, I was invited to the Anne Arundel Radio Club for Sweepstakes. They have an active kid's club and they were working the contest. It was great to see the kids work the bands and there were even some funny moments when a young boy was mistaken for an YL a few times. I worked the bands for about an hour that night and it was an incredible experience. There was no turning back; my interests in ham radio were firmly set in contesting and chasing DX.

Not being able to work the HF bands, I setup a 2m beam for the upcoming ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes. The beam came from the same ham that had donated the 2m FM rig, WB1FXX. I did not have a rotor so I decided the best bet was to point it toward New England and see what would happen. I was very pleased with the results having met my 100 QSO goal – I ended up with 106.

After the contest experience at my house, I knew I had to get on the HF bands and stepped up my CW study to pass the exam; I already passed the written exam. I missed several HF contests I had hoped to work, but on Valentine's Day 2004, I earned my General class license. Shortly after, I worked the CQ 160m contest at K3DI putting in 2 solid 8-hour efforts.

Having more operating experience really helped in my next contest, the ARRL DX SSB. I worked this from my QTH and again set a QSO goal of 100. I had attempted to setup a wires for 75m and 40m, but could not get them installed in time. The ground-mounted vertical would have to do. My modest goal was achieved after working 18 hours over 2 days. It was more difficult than I had thought, but was an invaluable learning experience. Sunday after the contest, I began looking for a tower and tribander.

### **Trial By Fire**

So far, my contest efforts had been very positive in both learning the ropes and reaching my goals. I had yet to really put forth a full effort and that would change with being invited to K3DI for the CQ WPX. I committed to staying overnight and working the bulk of the contest. Little did I realize what I was getting myself into.

My first shift was from 1200z Saturday to 0330z Sunday. It was my first time working with a tri-bander on a tower and the experience was well worth the list of things I'll have to do to make up the missed weekend with the XYL. I did not call CQ as much as I had wanted, but really honed my S&P skills. I quickly realized east is not east and west is really south, and that I need a large Great Circle map at the home QTH. The largest breakthrough was being able to point the beam in the right direction based on the prefix of the call sign.

Using the packet spots, I was able to work stations across the bands in the direction the beam was pointed. This little "trick" really helped to keep the rate up. I even figured out what I was able to do off the back. Once I was satisfied I had worked everything I could hear on that heading, I scanned the band map for new a direction, again maximizing that direction. Once 20m closed into Europe (or maybe I worked everyone that was still awake), I pointed the beam west and went to work on the US and Canadian stations. I had a good solid 2 hours of running before things dried up.

## **A Better Contester**

Joining the PVRC has had the largest impact on my contesting career. K3DI inviting me to help out in contests and showing me the ropes has been invaluable. KE3Q's emails and station building exercises have given me a greater understanding of what it takes to be a winning contester. W3MC has offered tower advice and a tribander to put on the tower. I even found a 50' tower that a PVRC member had lying around. Without the club, I would be a frustrated little pistol and I doubt contesting would be such a large focus right now.

The WPX experience was the boost I needed to keep that focus. I know that a tower and beam will improve my station, but having the ability to point and shoot in the pile-ups really is the way to go. I didn't win them all, but many only needed me to call once. I'm starting to understand propagation and re-learning geography to improve my strategy. Never has learning been so closely linked as it is in amateur radio. My desire to improve my score is based in understanding a variety of disciplines. So one could make the case that ham radio, specifically contesting, is the ultimate road to enlightenment. Well, maybe just for me.

I have only worked phone contests since my CW skills are very poor. I have a long way to go before I can contest using CW, but that is a goal I am working toward. I am currently studying for the Extra exam since that will allow access to all of the contest activity. Little did I know how much ham radio would change my life and how becoming a contester would change my goals in ham radio.

If we had not moved into a single family house, I would have lost interest in the hobby not too long after getting my license. I could not put up antennas in the townhouse community and stealth wires would never have worked. Moving into our current house was probably the biggest expense I've ever made for a hobby. Don't tell me wife why we really moved, she thinks it was to have a nice place to raise our family.

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

The **NW Region** met at the City Buffet in Frederick, MD on 18 May 2004. Minutes by Bud, W3LL, Chapter Chairman. In attendance were N3HBX, N4MM, K8OQL, W3EKT, W3KHZ, K2PLF, NE3H, W6NRJ, W2CDO, N3VOP, W2YE, N3UM, WD3A, W3ZZ, W8ZA and W3LL. Regrets: K3WC and WQ2M.

From Around the Table: N3HBX, John went to Dayton where he spent lots of money - a Force 12 80M beam bought on the spur of the moment among other items. N4MM, John attended both Visalia and Dayton. No nominees for the DX Hall of Fame which was peculiar. John was in the WPX SSB, Russian DX and other contests. His VHF antennas are almost in the air - needs one more day. K8OQL, Jerry, also attended both Visalia and Dayton enjoying both events. It rained on Saturday afternoon so Jerry went to the Wright Brothers Bicycle Shop. The Wright brothers were into printing, bicycles and aeroplanes. Jerry will be in the WPX and IARU contests. W3EKT, Ed received email from Ed, K3IXD who reports he has a SteppIR 40 to 6 M verticle installed in place of the wire dipole. W3EKT ordered the three element SteppIR beam 5 weeks ago to go on his 577 rocket launcher. This may replace the 18 foot boom C3E. Ed is now at the 1k mark for the DXCC Challenge - for \$85 he can get the plaque.

W3KHZ, Art went to Dayton, walked the flea market, got wet. He didn't spend much money but saw a lot of people and enjoyed it. Art went to the DX dinner and attended a few forums. He met and talked to Jeff, VY2ZM who is his neighbor on PEI. Both extended invites to visit each other on PEI. Art still has two towers on the ground along with two antennas. K2PLF, Marty is on a contesting break since ARRL CW. He plans to be in the WPX contest. Marty went to Dayton but did not get to Visalia this year. The conditions in the DX and Contest forum rooms were shamefully bad. He spoke with Jay, VY1JA today who was booming in on 17M SSB. Jay was using the Omni 5 which was repaired at Tentec. Shipping costs were 3X the repair costs. The laptop and TS450 that PVRC sent are both working fine. He received an FT990 from K6AW, Steve Merchant, shipped by Tree, N6TR of the Boring ARC. NCCC provided a refurbished rotator. The Quad will go up on a 40' tower with the tribander on a 70' tower. Jay wants to run Multi-OP in the SS contest. He will need help with computer networking and interference between rigs. Jay sends his appreciation and thanks for all support that PVRC has provided.

NE3H, Joe was at Dayton. Not much operating but did manage to work a dozen PVRCers from Taiwan on 20M. W6NRJ, Jim along with an old HP friend N6KD Dennis, went to Curacao in March and operated a contest station located on the undeveloped SW side of the island. The two bedroom 2 bath house was located next to a sparsely populated resort. The station is located on a cliff 50' above and from the water. The back yard had 3' iguanas and parrots along with other exotic

birds. Dennis worked QRP (the station has 4 amplifiers) working 60/70 countries. Jim worked the WARC bands at 100W using one of four FT1000's looking for QRPers on the other end. The coolest temperature in the shack was at 6AM where it was 83 degrees. The site had 17 towers, including a gain antenna on 80M. QSL cards are due from the printers on 01 June. N3VOP, Mike has the 10-40M Carolina Windom in the air and having fun with the DX net on 14.247 MHz at 5PM. Mike may be in the June VHF contest as a rover from the Carolinas.

W2YE, Dick missed Dayton - spent enough last year. He worked the 6M sprint with 43 contacts using a 2 el Lightning Bolt quad with 6M add on kit. He corrected the problem of the coax wrapping around the Glenn Martin Voyager by fastening a 1' aluminum strip extending above the tower. The Prosistel rotor problem was solved by waterproofing the rotor cable. N3UM, Ben reported poor conditions for the SSB DX contest and hasn't been in a contest since. He noted that Marty, K2PLF won the triband single element class in the WPX CW contest with Ben in 7th position in the US and a previous MD winner. So, Ben may be in this contest if not distracted by other nice weather activities. In April Ben's son was doing a 50 mile race on Arizona's Mogalin rim, the Zane Grey Trail which takes about 8 hours to run. Ben provided ham radio support for the race at the 17 mile aid station reporting the names of the first 5 runners, names of drop outs and the no shows.

WD3A, Tom has no ham news but reports he is no longer unemployed. He is now the owner of a business that's looking for work - data driven decisions and technology consulting. W3ZZ, Gene went to Dayton - maybe his last Dayton. He has been going every year with Fred, K3ZO. The forums were good in subject matter - good talk by Bob Sherwood. He attended the VHF forum which no one goes to except Gene. He saw a 241 GHz tranceiver with CNC precision machined 12" dish. The forum rooms were half the size of last year with temperatures that felt like 140 degrees and no air circulation - except for waving programs. He did not go to Visalia but will go next year. Instead, Gene went to Atlanta talking to the SE VHF Society. Next year it will be in Charlotte. Gene was in the 220 MHz sprint. He now has all the pieces to reguy his tower with KC1XX to do the work. By the fall, all microwave equipment might be up - 25 sq-ft.

W8ZA, Bob was in both the 2M and 6M sprint. He's still contemplating taking the antennas down for refurbishing for the fall contest season. W3LL, Bud received a large envelope from Russia which contained the 2003 Russian DX contest certificate for US, all band, low power, ssb category. Along with the certificate was a 58 page book containing results, statistics, soapbox, awards, records, commentary, club scores, band breakdowns, etc. A first class operation. Bud also attended Dayton where he ordered the SteppIR MonstIR 40M-6M antenna, an AN Wireless 90' self supporting tower (along with Dan Simmonds to do the install), chrome moly mast and Alpa Spid Rotator. The MonstIR won't be shipping until October due to the backlog of orders. The 34' boom length antenna has three full length elements on 40M thru 30M and four elements on 20M thru 10M and 6 elements on 6M. Area is 22.9 sq-ft; weight is 170 lbs and 39' turning radius. The tower is rated for 36 sq-ft @70MPH. Bud attended the DX and Contest forums and dinners at Dayton. Visalia is next year.

The Annual May Picnic Meeting of **CVCC/PVRC** was called to order at 3:30 PM on Saturday the 22nd at the river home of James Frame. Minutes by Chapter Chairman Ed, NW4V. The following members were present: Bob, NK4H, Roy, WK4Y, Kyle, WA4PGM, Ed, NW4V, AC, W4HJ, Bruce, WD4LBR, Sheila, KG4WNW, Marie, K4KML, Jerry, K4KJL, Bob, W4MYA, Dennis, N4DEN, Bill, K4WMA, Sejo, KI4FDF, John, W4TNX, Bob, W4DR, Rosalie, N4CFL, and Tom, N4ZJ. With spouses, and children the total attendance was 28. The weather was cooperative, the food delicious, and a good time was had by all!

The highlight of the meeting was a special presentation made by W4DR, in recognition of Bob Morris, W4MYA [see article earlier in the Newsletter—ed.]. It was duly voted that the club will meet the second Tuesday of each month June-August at 6 PM at Extra Billy's Barbecue. Extra Billy's is located at 1110 Alverser Dr., Midlothian (804.379.8727). The restaurant is located between Rt. 60, Midlothian Turnpike, and Huguenot Rd. next to the movie theater and Southern States.

Thanks to AC for all the set up and clean up work at the picnic site and for bringing the grill. Thanks to Bob Ladd for once again performing chief duties. Special thanks to my wife Ellen, WA4EJM, for the party favors and coordinating efforts. The meeting was adjourned at 4 PM. Best wishes to all for a safe, fun summer!

The **NW Region** met at the City Buffet in Frederick, MD on 15 June 2004. Minutes by Bud Governale, W3LL, Chairman. In attendance were N3HBX, WD3A, AD3F, W3EKT, K2PLF, K3IXD, W3KHZ, NE3H, K3WC, W2YE, N3VOP, K8OQL, N4MM, W3LJ, W3IDT, W3ZZ, W8ZA, N3KTV and W3LL. Regrets: K3DML

Announcements:

W3LL, Bud, noted that N3HBX, John had an excellent article in the May/June 2004 issue of the NCJ on modeling multiple configurations of 160M antennas. The objective was to achieve directivity in a limited space with minimal interaction. N4MM, John reminded us of the Berryville Hamfest on 01 August at the Ruritan Fairgrounds. W3ZZ, Gene mentioned the CW WW VHF Contest is on 17/18 July.

From Around the Table: N3HBX, John made 660 Q's (130K points) thru 1296 MHz in the VHF contest. Power line noise wasn't too bad. WD3A, Tom had nothing to report. AD3F, Gene with not much contesting this season. The IC 746 is back at Icom with a no charge repair to replace IC 151 chip notoriously sensitive to ESD. Gene demonstrated his immaculate BC611 WWII handie talkie. It operates on 3885 KHz AM at 300mw with a weight of 7 lbs. W3EKT, Ed had 100 Q's in the VHF contest with EM75 as a new grid. He's organizing his 1100 card DX Challenge submission which includes 90 countries on 160M. K2PLF, Marty is recovering from Pneumonia which started two days after our last meeting. Marty worked W3SO on 6M for his sole VHF Contest contact. He completed entering 4354 band mode cards into DX4WIN. The upside is he discovered 66 cards never submitted. K3IXD, Ed has been away about a year from NW meetings since moving to SC. He drove 700 miles from Sommerville, SC to Altoona, PA to operate at W3SO in the VHF contest. He then went to his son's house on the Eastern Shore of MD, followed by a round trip to the NW meeting for another 460 miles. Now that's dedication! About 1K Q's were made at W3SO and 315K points. CT didn't crash with 4 computers networked. A 6M 5EI beam pointed at New England was added for the contest.

W3KHZ, Art reports two antennas and towers are on the ground. They might be in the air in the next two to three years given the present rate of activity. Art will be VY2MM this time next month for the summer. He'll be looking for 6M openings along with 20m-10m on a vertical. The site is located directly on the ocean. Art will also be Canadian Lighthouse 341 along with PEI Iota NA29. NE3H, Joe had nothing to report. K3WC, Dusty has a new 2.8 GHz Pentium computer on line. The tower and antennas are still on the ground. Delivery date for the MonstIR is unknown. He needs to find someone to put tower and antennas in the air. W2YE, Dick with over 400 Q's and 300K points in the WPX CW and 90 Q's with 32 grids in the VHF contest. N3VOP, Mike was attacked by "Murphy" this past month. This is the first June contest he missed since being licensed. Mike and Clint W3ARS have plans for the Sept contest which they will announce later. K8OQL, Jerry hasn't been home much this past month to be radio active. N4MM, John's 2M and 70CM beams are now atop the 70' Glen Martin tower after a 4 year delay. He made 300 Q's during half the VHF contest on 6M, 2M and 70CM. 300 Q's were made in the WPX CW contest. Sunday's VE session in Winchester created 5 new hams. John cut his grass more times this year than all of last year. The next ARRL board meeting is in July so nothing new to report there. W3LJ, Bruce still has a leg of an inverted V on the ground. This will get in the air when help becomes available. W3IDT, Bob reports no activity for the last few months. KA3UBJ, Bob's daughter, an active contester, has moved back into the area. Bob wrote letters regarding BPL to Maryland's two senators along with Wisconsin senators. Of five letters, one thank you letter was received. Follow up letters will be written regarding lack of acknowledgements.

W3ZZ, Gene did not participate in WPX CW because it drags. However, Gene worked the VHF contest last weekend with the Grid Pirates, K8GP. The class was restricted to limited Multi because the blue bus was beyond it's last legs. Score was 750k points with an additional unsolicited 160Q's and 80 grids on microwave. A lot of double hop contacts were made including to the midwest and west coast. Conditions were fair the first day and non existent the second day. Contacts on the first day exceeded 700. Florida had better conditions, working all over the Caribbean. For the future, grid circling and captive rovers may be over. A new microwave contest may be in our future, operating like the 10 Gig cumulative which permits scheduled contacts etc. Four band limited ops category (6M to 440) is likely to happen. Limited and unlimited multi op is likely to remain.

W8ZA, Bob did not work the WPX. He had 30 Q's in the VHF contest including one on 1296 MHz with K2UOP. He built a 10 el 1296 Quagi. Bob's 12th grandchild was welcomed last Monday. N3KTV, Jim has been teaching his 17 year old how to drive and get to lacrosse games this past year. Last year Jim was responsible for the W3AO field day setup and teardown. This year PVRC and CARA will be assembling 12 AB577 masts. The layout is ten in a row separated by 100' with dipoles between and monobanders on eight of ten towers. Tribanders on two towers and two additional towers with UHF and VHF antennas along with satellite antennas on the last one. W3AO has been the number one Field Day station the past four years. Jim has been scouting new places to set up because a new high school going up behind the old set up location. The new location is near W3LPL and is 640' ASL. See the reflector for the exact location. Helpers and observers are welcome. The goal is to have ten towers up by 8:30PM Friday night and wrapped up by 6PM Sunday evening. W3LL, Bud made a handful of contacts in the VHF Contest and PVRC Reunion. Bud now has a commitment for getting the tower and antennas up by the fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM. The next NW Region meeting is Tuesday, 20 July 2004.

**PVRC/NC East Meeting Minutes, June 3, 2004, Golden Corral, Dillard Drive, Cary.** Several members gathered for an impromptu rag chew at the door, then entered en masse to adopt the GC diet, appropriately stuffing their faces with the cholesterol enhanced cuisine. Minutes submitted by K4QPL, amended by WW4M

Members Present: Summer attendance was boosted by 33% with the arrival of the Brookover clan--Jay, NT4D; XYL Debbie, WD8EBI (DEBI -- Get it??) ; 1st harmonic Stephanie, KG4CXA; and second harmonic, Meredith, NYL (Nice Young Lady, Not Yet Licensed). Others in attendance were Keith, W4KAZ; Bob, N2NFG; Bill, K4CIA; Wes, K4WES; Will, AA4NC; Jeff, NX9T; and Jim, K4QPL. A special welcome to Rob, KA1ARB, attending his second meeting. After a heated discussion which mostly involved questions about how certain other members had ever been admitted to the club, he was nominated and welcomed as a member of PVRC. Regrets: Ed AE4EC, Pete AD4L, Guy K2AV, Jim WW4M.

Member News: Your secretary, WW4M, was absent having given some cockamamie story about a conflict, and your chairman, K2AV after laying claim to the 40M run position at NY4A for 52 straight hours out of 48 in WPX, was reportedly still asleep and unlikely to be seen before IARU.\* Anarchy ruled until W4KAZ provided a slip of note paper slightly larger than a postage stamp to K4QPL who allegedly took minutes. After trying in vain afterwards to decipher notes like "N2NFGwpxtoweroneofthesedays" he gave up and decided to write a fictionalized version which follows:

W4KAZ was in WPX but as his log was written in the same notepad he brought to the meeting, he will purchase a microscope and then determine his score. KA1ARB enjoyed WPX also. He says next time he will turn on his transmitter. N2NFG report is above; K4CIA had no contest activity but in addition to a trip to Dayton, Bill has planted several acres of radials in anticipation of a good crop of counterpoises for shunt feeding his tower on 160M. K4WES also brought the family. He's looking forward to FD. AA4NC quipped that it was really considerate of Wes' mother to give him the same name as his call sign. NT4D was also in WPX giving out mults with abandon to the needy including NY4A. AA4NC has been QRL with other things and no contesting. Tried to break away from a business trip to CO to join a friend for WPX but ended up in Aspen for the weekend. Real hardship, Will! NX9T also went to Dayton under the mistaken theory that would give him a free pass for not appearing in any contests this month. Wrong!

K4QPL was part of the quintet operating NY4A M/M in WPX at N4AF. Mildly waxed by another PVRC station KM4M M/2 (at K4JA) for top US score reported, but should finish stateside top M/M. WW4M later received a report from a field mouse that the self proclaimed 'OFs' at NY4A achieved this high score despite 2 MPs blowing up, the logging program crashing, and missing the first 30 minutes of the test, and operating while crammed into a small room with 4 amplifiers, several radios, various computers, two dogs and temperatures around 90 degrees. The meeting descended into further chaos. Rob, KA1ARB proved he was worthy to be a member of PVRCNC, instigating a bun fight by asking for recommendations on the best low budget radio for a newbie tester. With spirit not seen since the last Writelog-TR rumble, the relative merits and demerits of older ICOM, Kenwood and Yaesu radios were thrown about until Rob decided he might be better off with a Cobra 27 Mhz "Trucker Special." QRO at half the cost of an Ameritron linear. After emptying the soft-serve machine and a barrel of M&M's, the meeting broke up about 8 p.m.

Member News via Email: Ed AE4EC wrote "Have a conflict tomorrow evening so cannot make it but thought i would report that I made 200 q's with 147 mults for a score of 67448 in the WPX. First time I've been able to reach 200 Q's so I am either getting better at this game or had lots of luck this time." Pete AD4L says "I've just about got my wireless broadband setup stable enough that I can focus on the next priority, which is reviving station in time for WAE. In fact I'm going to drive about a half dozen ground rods this weekend. So, although I sold two of three radios and some antennas and the like, don't get the wrong idea. :-)

\* From K2AV: "Actually K2AV had been detained by Homeland Security and was being quizzed for conduct on WPX weekend, to wit: sending coded number groups to large numbers of stations on 7 MHz that the FCC monitoring station could not copy, and therefore presumed did not exist. The numbers being sent were clearly too high to be serial numbers in the contest, and did not increase by one from contact to contact as observed with other stations in the contest. The excuse that another member of the team had misconfigured the logging program was deemed not credible. "He was finally let go when he confessed that the REAL 40m operator was a gentleman named Karnak who could usually be found fishing off the Florida Keys. They apparently were well acquainted with Karnak, though they had never managed to bring him in for interrogation."

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submitted by K4QPL, amended by WW4M

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**PVRC REFERENCE PAGE Please send corrections to the editor. July 2004**

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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

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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**

**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.

**NORTHWEST:** Chair: Bud Governale, W3LL, 410-666-9189. 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.

**NORTH CAROLINA -- EAST:** Chair: Guy Olinger, K2AV, 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 Cobalt'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 and the secretary is Robert Whitaker KG4NEP, kg4nep@yahoo.com.

**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.

**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).

**BWI:** Weekly breakfast Wed at 7:00 AM at Basil's Deli Port on Elkrdige 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

**OVER-THE-HILL LUNCH BUNCH (VA DC MD):** Meetings are held monthly at three locations: Falls Church VA (Parkview Marriot), Oxon Hill MD, and Beltsville MD. Meetings are announced by E-mail or by telephone. All members and non-members interested in membership are welcome. For information contact Ben Shaver, AA4XU, 703-534-4740 or Bill Leavitt, W3AZ, 301-292-5797.

**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

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

**CENTRAL VA:** Pres: Ed Moore - NW4V - nw4v@comcast.net, Secy: Marie Long - K4KML - long2624@netzero.net, Treas: Robert (Bob) Ladd - NK4H - 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

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

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

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

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

**LAUREL:** Pud Reaver W3YD preaver@earthlink.net Laurel Region meets concurrently with the Laurel Amateur Radio club at the first LARC meeting of each quarter.

**NORTHEAST:** WR3L Dave Baugher 410-DX1-WR3L dave@wr3l.net

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

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