

PVRC Newsletter

May 2012

President's Letter – Rich NN3W

Greetings from soggy and damp Vienna! Well, spring has developed into its normal pattern of warm, cold days, and rainy days. I shouldn't complain as we're *supposed* to get rain in April, and it looks like we did (some of you may actually be shoveling snow!). We're also getting some beneficial moisture after a relatively long and prolonged streak of dryness.

Speaking of breaking the prolonged streak of dryness, how about those sunspots!?!? When I last sat down to compile the monthly President's column, the solar flux was about 105 and we were all ruing the fact that ARRL DX and Russia DX yielded some pretty ho-hum conditions. Well, one month later, the sun decided to wake up fully and present us a very nice gift – a SFI of 150. I realized we're not in 2000 or 1989 territory where we could have considered 150 to be tantamount to the end of the world, but I'll take what we can get.

Our solar gift was just in time for a slew of mid-tier contests that suited the interests of

most any contester or award chaser. This past weekend, we had the Michigan QSO Party, the CQMM, the Holy Land DX Contest, the Ontario QSO Party, the YU DX Contest, and one or two others. I worked somebody who was active in most all of these events, and had a good deal of fun.

As a club, I realize that much of the conversation focuses on the *big* events (e.g., CQWW, ARRL DX, Sweeps, IARU, and the big VHF tests), but there are a lot of events where PVRCers can test out their gear, practice for the big ones, or just play (either casually or play to win). You don't have to lock yourself into the shack for 48 hours; you don't have to have 6/6/6 on 20; you don't have to spend the following week earning back sleep credits.

To give you an example, a great guy from the Pittsburgh area – Keith WA3HAE – won the 2011 running of the Florida QSO Party – besting out some big guns like W8MJ and K3WW. His 20 hours of activity (operating low power, mind you) earned him top billing in one of the best QSO parties out there, a

plaque, and maybe a sack of Florida oranges.

So, pop on over to the [Contest Calendar](#) and find an event. You'll be surprised how well you can do in events like the Florida QSO Party, the New England QSO Party, the 7QP, and other events (all of which are in the next two weeks).

Anyhow, as I mentioned earlier, spring is definitely here. The signs of spring are not limited to the trees, shrubs, grass and increased your over-the-counter outlay for Claritin. PVRC has seen some new shoots as well. Two of the club's chapters have sprung anew, and with them a clutch of new members and prospective new members. On April 3, the Southern Maryland chapter reconvened after a long dormancy and with them at least two good prospective member candidates - KR3A and WA4PRR. Thanks to AB3IC and N1WR for getting that chapter reinvigorated.

Less than ten days later, the Eastern Shore awoke with a roar with a meeting down in

Delmar, Delaware. W9GE, K1RY and N3ME opened the tap and a lot of pent up PVRC/contesting demand was released with TEN new members joining the fold (that might be a modern PVRC record). Welcome to WA2VQV, N3IOD, N3KRX, WG3J, K5HAL, W3UC, K4OR, NR3P, KB3TAW, and KB3MDZ. Let it be known that, commencing today, I expect to never a comment from a PVRCer that they didn't work Delaware in Sweepstakes!

April and May are also big months for eyeball QSOs outside of PVRC land. Some of you have just returned from the annual DX conclave in Visalia. Let us know what happened! Others are making the pilgrimage to ham radio paradise (aka Dayton). Maybe we can pick up our Sweepstakes Gavel!

Well, enough musing and kvetching. 9M0L is still audible on 20 meter long path. Maybe I can land him. Thank you, Mr. Sun!

73, Rich NN3W

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

N3RR Antenna Farm Renovation – Bill N3RR

Since 2005, my station was less than fully operational due to antenna, ring rotor and computer interface problems. I could not devote the time necessary to repair these problems because of business and family priorities. But, beginning in August 2011, I started a maintenance effort to get my station back to "contest competitiveness".

I contacted Mike, W3MC, and he assisted me in my outdoor work, beginning with the lowering, repair & re-installation of my Force12 80m rotatable dipole, model EF-180C, at 149 feet. The EF-180C model is 85 feet tip-to-tip. One element tip (16 feet long) had broken and needed replacement, and the other was about to break. Force12 had designed a sturdier element tip and provided a few to me at Dayton 2005, and I now had the time to install them.



With Mike standing at the 134 foot level on the top of the tower, we rigged my stainless steel cable tram line, tensioned it to about 800 pounds. Mike attached the EF-180C to the tram pulley and we lowered it to the ground. While Mike waited on the tower, I replaced both element tips, riveted them in place, and hauled the antenna back to Mike using my lawn tractor to pull it back up the tram line. Mike reinstalled it on the mast, raised the mast, secured it all and I was back on 80m big time!

Then, throughout the fall, and the "nice" winter days (especially in February 2012), I began a swap-out and repair of each of the motor drive units on my 5 ring rotors on that tower. With Mike's help, since October 2011, we have replaced 4 of the 7 motor units in my system. Only the 2 element 40m antenna at 67 feet has a "noisy" ring rotor unit. Each swap-out requires the unit be sent to TIC General in Minnesota for repair - a multi-week time delay in making the next repair.



Then, just before ARRL DX Phone in March this year, the feedline on my 15m beam at 67 ft came loose. W3MC, WN3R, N3JT and my daughter's friend, Scott Elliott, assisted me in its repair.

Since September, I have switched to the N1MM Logger software on a new Win 7/64 dual core PC, and have 6 contests under my belt using that new software and hardware. I'm now in pretty good shape for the fall 2012 contest season. This summer, I plan to swap out my IC-4KL amp with my IC-PW1 amp and use the PW-1 for contests once that software/hardware integration is complete.

Upcoming Contests and Log Due Dates

Contests This Month

- May 5 – ARI DX
- May 12 – CQM DX
- May 12 – VOLTA RTTY
- May 19 – EA CW
- May 19 – Baltic Contest
- May 26 – WPX CW

Logs Due This Month

- May 1 – BARTG RTTY
-

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

K3AJ Antenna Farm Raising – Tom K3AJ



Raising Tom, K3AJ's 50 ft. Universal self-supporting aluminum tower using a tow truck winch - another no-climb tower option.

We lowered it down the same way, with the tow truck, landing the tower propped up on a wooden frame (you can see it laying flat on the ground in the background). Antennas can be installed or worked on off of a small step ladder with the tower propped up that way. This time around, we dropped it to the ground after removing the old antennas to add a section to go from 40 ft. to 50 ft, and installed a new 3-element SteppIR. Although the tow truck operator said that his winch capacity is 15,000 pounds, we didn't challenge it much as the 50 ft. aluminum tower only weighs 195 pounds. The foundation is another story, however, as it contains more than 4-1/2 cubic yards of concrete.



The finished product - 3-element SteppIR at 50 ft. along with inverted V's for 80,40 and 30."

Pictures taken by Jim, AB3CV, who helped with the job.

Another Missing Morse Marker Mystery – John K3TN

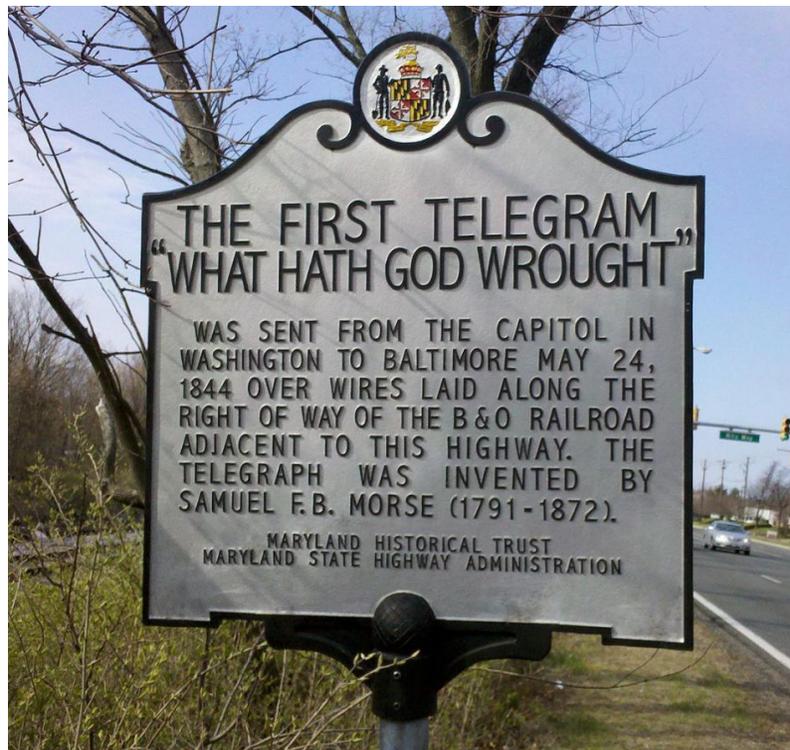
Back in the early 1990's PVRC was involved in the mystery of the missing historical marker on Rt. 1 in Beltsville, MD, celebrating Morse's test of the telegraph from Baltimore to Washington DC. As Frank W3LPL remembers:

A photograph and brief article appeared in QST circa 1990 about a descendant of S.F.B. Morse. Larry W3GN suspected the QST article was based on a false claim, and endeavored to use his considerable genealogical skills to determine the truth.

Larry shared his proof with the ARRL, and as a result the league later sent Larry the article for pre-publication review that they subsequently published in April 1991 QST. As I recall, your article was published in the same magazine. (See "[Samuel F. B. Morse: Radio's Mysterious Progenitor](#)")

Interestingly, during the course of his investigation, Larry discovered a link between his family tree and Morse's second wife. SFBM was Larry's distant but very well established and proven relative.

Sure enough Larry was able to prove that the "QST" Morse was not a descendant of SFBM. Early in his investigation, Larry remembered that he had seen a historic marker on Rt. 1 across from the Ritz Camera store in Beltsville, but when he went to look for it, it was gone. He worked with the state of Maryland to get it replaced, also circa April 1991.- Frank W3LPL



(A short related video is [here](#).)

I recently came across an article in the Morse Telegraph Club newsletter that pointed to a blog entry from a Brooklyn NY cemetery about yet another missing Morse plaque. The article is reprinted below with permission of the Green-Wood Cemetery.

[Morse Bronze Plaque, Heading Home](#)

January 26th, 2012 | Published in [Green-Wood Historian Blog](#)

Samuel Finley Breese Morse (1791-1872) was a giant of the 19th century world and is one of Green-Wood's most famous permanent residents. Morse had three extraordinary careers: as painter, photographer, and telegraph inventor.

Morse was the leading portrait painter of his time; he was chosen in 1826 to be the founding president of the National Academy of Design because of the respect he had from his fellow artists. Painter Thomas Cole, the leader of the Hudson River School, described Morse as the "keystone of the arch" of American painters.



"The Muse-Susan Walker Morse," hangs in the American Wing of The Metropolitan Museum. Morse painted this portrait of his daughter 1836-37; the New York Mirror wrote that it was "the most perfect full-length portrait that we remember to have seen from an American artist."

Morse also was a pioneering photographer—France's Louis Daguerre taught Morse his new invention, photography, and Morse sent the first word of Daguerre's historic breakthrough back to America, then pioneered American photography after he returned to New York City.



Samuel Morse, photographer, with an early camera.

But Morse is best-remembered for his revolutionary invention of the telegraph and Morse Code; for the first time in human history (short of smoke signals and flag wags), messages might travel faster than a human being could carry them. You think the Internet changed the world? Consider the telegraph . . .



Morse was an international superstar. Here, some of the medals he received from nations throughout the world for his invention of the telegraph adorn his chest.

Morse has been ensconced at Green-Wood, on a hillock built up in his honor, since his death in 1872.

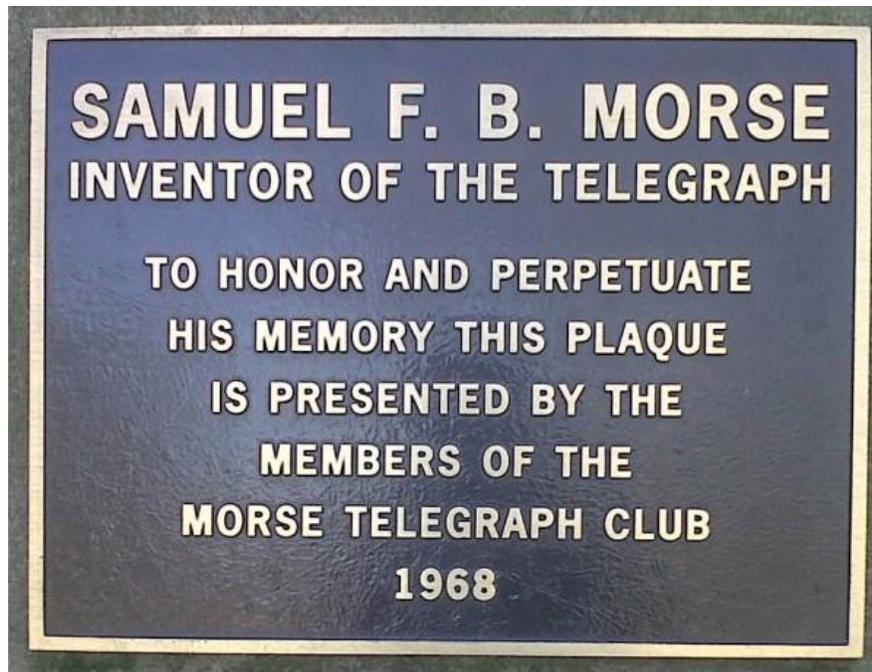


The Morse Monument is three-sided--one side for each of the Morse brothers. Note the bronze plaque mounted on it--and follow the story below.



Samuel Finley Breese Morse's headstone.

Almost a century after his death, in 1968, a bronze plaque, honoring his telegraphic accomplishments, was placed on the Morse Monument. Years later, it was stolen, and a second cast was made and mounted.



The replacement plaque that is attached to the Morse Monument. Photograph courtesy of Ken Taylor.

But, it turns out, the original has now turned up in good hands. Just last week I received this e-mail:

I am writing to inform you that the Morse Telegraph Club has recovered a bronze plaque, which was placed on the Morse monument in 1968 by our organization. Apparently, this plaque was stolen from Greenwood Cemetery at some point in the past and ultimately ended up in the hands of a collector in Phoenix, Arizona. Upon his passing, his family listed the plaque for auction on E-bay. When this was brought to our attention, we negotiated with the family for its return to MTC for subsequent disposition.

While we are aware that the stolen plaque has since been replaced with an identical marker, we nonetheless wanted to make you aware of the fact that the original is now in our possession. If Greenwood Cemetery would like the original marker returned, we would, of course, be happy to do so. If this is unnecessary, the plaque will be stored and eventually exhibited in a museum of telegraphy, which we are planning to establish in the near future.

Please advise us of your wishes. . . .

Best Regards,

*James Wades
International President,
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.*

Yes, we did want it back. So the original bronze plaque is in transit, coming back to Green-Wood, where we will cherish it. Thanks, James Wades, and the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc., for your good deed!

Published in the [Green-Wood Historian Blog](#)

Welcome New Members – W3LL

Please welcome the following new members who were voted into PVRC during the month of April:

- In the Eastern Shore Chapter, Steve KB3TAW, Paul NR3P, Jerry N3KRX, Eric WG3J, Cullen K5HAI, Bill N3IOD, Jamie W3UC, Russ WA2VQV, Garry K4OR and Chris KB3MDZ
- In the Northwest Chapter, Vasily K3IT

2012 Contest Scores Update – John K3TN

With only the CW WPX and the June VHF contest remaining in the current “season”, it looks like KD4D is in a strong position to win the 2012 contest seasons point race. N3HBX, WX3B, N4AF and K4GMH are in striking distance, however – the US record for WPX CW is 9.6M, so the final totals could swing by several million points.

Thanks to Howie N4AF for his usual web magic – score summaries can be seen at <http://pvrc.org/5M/CurrYr.php>

Rank	Call	Season Total	Prior Year Total	Program Total
1	KD4D	10,060,763	7,982,595	94,689,793
2	N3HBX	8,206,521	13,025,757	106,650,081
3	WX3B	7,651,034	6,724,389	64,130,029
4	N4AF	6,896,896	8,174,982	127,412,737
5	K4GMH	6,711,807	7,646,332	54,032,280
6	W3LL	5,809,504	1,934,828	23,610,061
7	AA4NC	5,424,600	5,026,433	54,364,940
8	K4VV	5,249,732	1,276,032	25,630,002
9	K3WI	5,182,166	305,015	14,180,205
10	N4RV	5,143,341	9,678,057	64,287,863

Spam of the Week – K3TN

The below came via email to a list of 49 hams, spread across many PVRicers and lots of other contesters and ARRL officials. It is of course totally bogus, but I, for one, am looking forward to adding Gilligan’s Island to my DXCC list:

“Greetings to Pvrc officers. - My name is Prince Donatello. I have a request in to ABC Extreme Home make over, which includes a trip to africa in 10 Air Force One jets, as we operate amateur radio from Air Force One. This trip will also include a dxpedition to Ketamina Reef, a new dxcc country and more, as I have asked the State Department to reopen the U.S. Embassy in the Islamique Republic Des Comores, as we role out the red carpet for Dr. William Barnett, D68WB and his lovely wife Laura Barnett and Arnold and Marilyn Newman(w8Kzb/5z4lh) and others.

We will need operators, dxers and contesters for this dxpedition, as I have been sending information to Fred, K3ZO and to Central Intelligence Agency, as we may have some amateur radio ops whom will help us to find Ketamina Reef, as we add it to the dxcc country list, as the CIA is the way to new dxcc countries.

Ketamina Kingdom, Guiligans Island and others will follow.

73, D68GA”

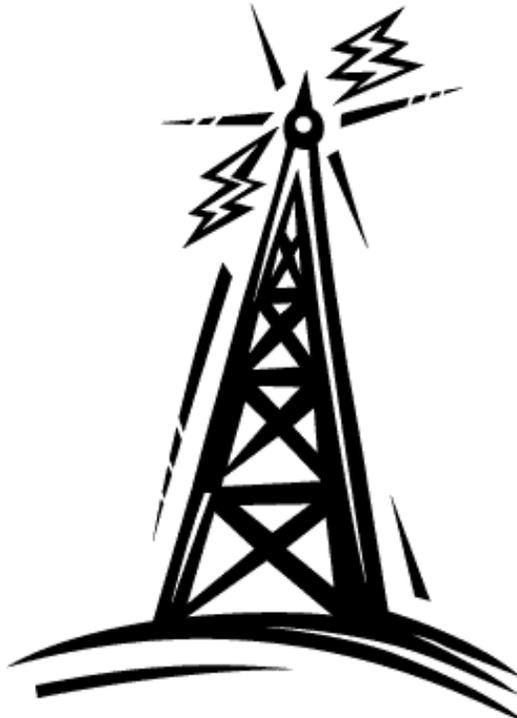
The Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

At the end of May the WPX CW will be the last major HF contest for the season, and I think I'm going to tear down my shack and put in a bigger L-shaped table and change where my coax comes in and how my grounding is set up. Every time I create an operating position I've made the same mistake – I push the table up against a wall, making it a huge pain the neck to check or change cables. This time I will leave "walk behind" room. I've gotten great write-ups and photos from PVRicers on antenna work and rig modifications – anyone have some shack design or operating ergonomics you have done and are proud of?

A lot of great contributions to the newsletter this month, and a few that will run next month. Thanks to Bill N3RR and Tom K3AJ, as well as Frank W3LPL, for submissions for this month's newsletter. If you have any post-contest write-ups, embarrassing pictures or soapbox items, drop me a line [here](#).

I also finagled a business trip to Columbus OH for the Hamvention weekend, so I hope to see many of you in Dayton.

– 73 John K3TN



Eyeball QSO Directions

The latest info on local club meetings and get together will always be sent out on the [PVRC reflector](#) and posted on the PVRC [web site](#).

NW Region:

Meetings are generally held on the third Tuesday of each month at the City Buffet, 1306 W. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD. (301) 360-9666. It's in a small shopping center. Most arrive about 6 PM for dinner and informal discussions. The meeting begins at 7:00 PM.

From W. Patrick Street, turn up McCain Dr. (the Mountain View Diner is on the corner), then turn right into the shopping center, then turn left and search for a parking place. The City Buffet is tucked back in the left corner of the shopping center behind the Mountain View Diner. You can't see the City Buffet from W. Patrick Street.

Contact: Jim [WX3B](#)

Central Region

Meets monthly the second Monday of each month, except June, July & August). The location alternates between the below MD and VA locations. Pre-meeting dinners start at 6:00 pm and meetings start at 7:30 pm.

VA LOCATION: Anita's, 521 E. Maple Ave, Vienna, VA. Tel: 703-255-1001. Meets at this location during the months of February, April and October.

Contact: Rich [NN3W](#)

MD LOCATION: Max's Café. 2319 University Blvd W, Wheaton MD 20902. Tel: 301-949-6297
People usually begin arriving at the restaurant around 6:30. Meets at this location during the months of January, March, May, September and November.

Contact: Art [K3KU](#)

The Laurel, MD Region: Bill N3XL

The PVRC get together is held at the first LARC meeting each quarter at the clubhouse.

The Annapolis Crew : Dan K2YWE

Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month at Broadneck Grill in Annapolis. We gather at about 5:30 PM and order dinner about 6. We break up usually before 8 PM. E-Mail [K2YWE](#) to be put on the e-mail reminder list.

PVRC-NC

The PVRC NC-East chapter meetings are held at [Manchester's Bar and Grill](#) on the 9100 block of Leesville Rd. in North Raleigh, with "QRM" beginning at 6:00pm and the dinner meeting following shortly thereafter. The meeting is held monthly on the 1st Thursday of most months, cancellations or changes usually announced on the [PVRC-NC website](#).

[The PVRC NC-West Chapter](#) holds its meetings on the 4th Monday of each month at [the Mellow Mushroom](#), 314 W. 4th St., Winston-Salem, NC. Ragchew at 7:00pm, dinner meeting starts at 7:30pm. All contesters and interested guests are invited!

Central Virginia Contest Club: Ed NW4V

Meets the first Tuesday of the month at St. Martins Church, 9000 St. Martin Lane, Richmond VA, (between W. Broad St. and N. Parham Road). Our meeting begins at 7PM.

Over the Hill Bunch:

The group meets for lunch at noon alternately in Maryland at the College PARK Holiday Hotel Route 1 and the Beltway or in Virginia at the Parkview Marriot near route 50 and the Beltway. Meetings generally are held on the last Wednesday of the month and are subject to change. Meetings are announced by E-Mail.

All PVRC members, non-members interested in membership and guests are welcome. For information contact Roger Stephens, K5VRX, 703-658-3991 for Virginia meetings; or Cliff Bedore W3CB or get on 147.00 for Maryland meetings.

Downtown Lunch Group

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday or Thursday of the month in the downtown area of Washington, DC. Locations occasionally change, but are always Metro accessible. Details are sent out on the PVRC reflector. Feel free to contact Eric W3DQ or Brian WV4V for details and directions.

Southwest VA Chapter:

The Southwest VA group meets each Wednesday at about 8:30 AM at Hardees at 20265 Timberlake Road in Lynchburg, VA. This is an informal gathering, but normally about 10-12 attendees. Contact Mark Sihlanick N2QT, Tel: 434-525-2921

SOMD Region Kickoff Meeting:

The Southern Maryland PVRC Chapter is starting (or re-starting, as you please) meetings in St. Mary's county. At this initial meeting we'll be discussing future meeting dates, times, and locations. A short presentation about PVRC for potential members will also be made.

This Chapter primarily serves the needs of the Hams in St. Mary's, Calvert, and Charles counties. Of course, meetings are open to all PVRC members.

When: Tuesday, April 3rd, 2012. From 6:30PM until 8:00 PM.
(We have the meeting room starting at 5:30 if you'd like to drop in earlier for an eyeball ragchew)

Where: St. Mary's County - Charlotte Hall Library - 37600 New Market Road,
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622 (NW Corner of Rt. 6 and Rt. 5/235)
GPS: 38.473358, -76.777733

Wayne Rogers (N1WR) will be the chapter chair. For more information contact Wayne (n1wr@chesapeake.net) or Tom, AB3IC (GL1800Winger@verizon.net).

If you'd like to add or correct a listing, contact K3TN for inclusion in the Newsletter!

Now a Word From Our Sponsors

PVRC doesn't ask for dues, but the Club does have expenses. Please send PayPal donations via DAVE@WR3L.NET or by snail mail to Dave's address at QRZ.com. You can also support the Club by buying from the firms listed who advertise in the newsletter, or by getting your company to sponsor the newsletter!

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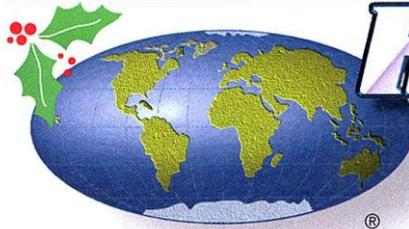
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- 5W TX (300mw 220Mhz)
- Li-Ion Battery
- Fully Submersible to 3 ft.
- Built-in CTCSS/DCS
- Internet WIRES compatible

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VX-6R

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- CW trainer built-in

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- 100w HF/6M, 50w 2M, 20w UHF
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- WIRES Capability
- Wideband Receiver (Cell Blocked)

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- 100 W w/ auto tuner • built-in Power supply
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- 3 Band Parametric Mic EQ • 3 IF roofing filters

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- 10M/6M/2M/70CM • Wires capable
- 800+ memories • Built-in CTCSS/DCS
- Remotable w/optional YSK-8900

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