

# POTOMAC VALLEY RADIO CLUB

est. 1947

## SEPTEMBER 1991 NEWSLETTER

### OFFICERS

PRESIDENT - WA8MAZ DON DASO (301) 702-2059  
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The Potomac Valley Radio Club meets the second Monday of each month, from September through May. Regular business meetings alternate between College Park, MD and Temple Hills, MD. For directions to the next meeting, see below. Or call any club officer.

**PVRC CHARTER MEMBERS:** W3GRF, W3IKN, W4AAV (SK), W4KFC (SK), W4KFT, N0FFZ, W4LUE, W7YS, VP2VI (W0DX).

Charter Members are not required to pay dues.

**VHF Repeater (K3WX):** Output 147.00 MHz., Input 146.40 MHz.

**UHF Repeater (K3WX):** Output 443.15 MHz., Input 448.15 MHz.

#### Packet Cluster Contest/DX System:

145.51 MHz. Connect to W0YVA  
145.57 MHz. Connect to N2FB  
145.59 MHz. Connect to W3LPL  
145.63 MHz. Connect to K3NA  
147.525 MHz. Connect to N4SR

#### Next Meetings:

at FARFEST  
Date: 8 September 1991  
Place: Montgomery County Fairgrounds,  
Gaithersburg, MD  
Time: 1100 Hours EDT

Date: 9 September 1991  
Place: Church of the Nativity  
5203 Manchester Drive  
Temple Hills, MD  
Time: 1930 Hours EDT

Check with the packet cluster or the repeater for last minute changes, if any.

#### DIRECTIONS TO TEMPLE HILLS MEETING:

Take the Capital Beltway to Beltway Exit 7-A (Maryland Route 5 - Branch Ave.) Head South towards Waldorf. You will find a stoplight immediately after entering Branch Ave. Take a right at this stoplight, which is Manchester Drive. Halfway down the block, you will see the entrance to the church parking lot winding up the hill to your left next to the sign saying Church of the Nativity.

Many thanks to Tony Faiola, K3WX, for use of his copier for publishing this Newsletter.

Editor: Fred Laun, K3ZO (301) 899-1235

Production and Circulation Manager: Howard Leake, W6AXX (301) 465-7008

Club Historian: Lawrence T. Fadner, W3GN (301) 725-1624

News Deadline: 20th each month.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK....

The "fowlfest" was a fine success. Several long-absent callsigns were noted scattered across the Laun lawn Saturday afternoon. A couple of them commented that making the FARFEST meeting will allow their scores to count for the PVRC club total, as indeed it will. A little fellowship and an increased club score -- what more could we ask for? Apparently little else, as the sign-up sheet for manning the PVRC table at FARFEST was duly penned in. Thanks! 'MAZ will arrive early and get things set up. NK4U has suggested giving NCDXA, PVRC, & as well as Packet Cluster a combined "double table" space -- since we all "more or less" do the same things. While I'm not sure this is especially true, it seemed like a harmless enough idea (worth the larger space, in a better location) to warrant saying yes. We'll have an "official" meeting somewhere on the grounds

(in a suitable spot) at 11 AM. Stop by the table to get more details. And sign the check-sheet...

Several possible new members picked up applications between the chicken and burgers on Saturday. Some of them will be eligible for your vote at the first meeting, which will occur on Monday, September 9th, the day after FARFEST. Please be aware that election of club officers will be an early requirement. Volunteers (for nominations or service) are always in order.

Again, it was a pleasure to see so many turn out for the fowlfest. I hope to see many of you again at Gaithersburg, and the next evening in Temple Hills. Vy 73 de Don WA8MAZ.

## MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks to those who made the Fowlfest such a lively affair this year. At this time we have a list of 92 licensed hams who attended, but not everyone signed the sign-up sheet so we are still going over the list to see if there are any more additions in order.

Special thanks are in order to President Don, WA8MAZ, and his XYL Cathy who did yeoman work in the grilling department. Thanks also to all of you who brought a dish or dishes. It was much appreciated. Of course there is no way this could be done without my XYL Somporn, who is the CEO of this yearly operation. Whether or not we do it again next year is her decision to make.

For someone like myself who spent his whole working career in effect countering Soviet-generated Marxist propaganda, the events of the past couple weeks in the USSR are unbelievable. Apparently amateur radio was present in the Yeltsin Headquarters, as there have been reports that the transceiver some of us saw on TV was used on 14165 and 7055, signing the call R3A, letting the Soviet people

know what was really happening in their country during the period the official TV and radio were under the control of the "old guard." That little balloon craft in the TV shots was probably holding up one end of a vertical. No doubt there will be more about this in QST in coming months as ARRL was getting faxes about R3A through the whole period.

Some of our contest friends, like Gene, N2AA, of FRC, were in the USSR at the time and will have some interesting stories to tell. Meanwhile Boris, WF3J/UB5KAF, was at the Fowlfest with a big smile on his face. He said this is the first time he feels free to say exactly what he thinks.

Howard, W6AXX, is in California as this is being written, so this issue is a production of yours truly from start to finish. Howard left a lot of props and instructions before he left, however. Hope everyone gets it in time.

The DX world is being titillated by UB5JRR & Co., who have gotten Burma on the air as XYØRR. Conditions weren't very good to start

with but Aug. 29 dawned bright and early with good conditions over the pole on 15, allowing a number of the locals including myself to work them.

Meanwhile there is good news from the IARU that Albania has legalized amateur radio and has set up a national amateur radio society. It is expected that Albanian citizens will start operating about the middle of September. One of the operators is reported to be the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs himself, who is reported to have assigned himself the call ZA1TAA.

I hope to live to see the day when XY/XZ and ZA will be regulars in the DX contests. After all, 15 years ago nobody was working BY's or

BZ's either.

I have to apologize to those who sent their VHFContest scores from June. My records got fouled up and I combined some reports from June with those from January, so nothing ever got into print. Hope to do better with the September VHF Contest reports. Those of you who operate VHF, I hope you will get on and give me (and others) a point on Sept. 14-15. Six may turn out to be pretty good, as Australia and Desecheo have both been worked from this area in the last week on that band. Unfortunately my 6-meter beam was disconnected and lying on the roof while the rotator on that tower is being reconditioned. Oh well!

73 de Fred.

## THE NAME OF THE GAME

with thanks to Rob Sterne, WK3W

While we have been following with interest all of the unbelievable developments in the USSR this week, Rob Sterne, WK3W, points out that names of some cities in the Soviet Union had already undergone change. This, presumably, to go back to their original names and move away from the names the Communists had forced upon them.

According to the June 8 issue of The Economist, these are among the changes that have been made:

<u>Communist Name</u>	<u>Restored Name</u>
Andropov	Rybinsk
Brezhnev	Naberezhnye Chelny
Chernenko	Sharypovo
Georgiu-Dezh	Lisky
Gorky	Nizhny Novgorod
Gotvald	Zmiev
Frunze	Bishkek

Kalinin	Tver
Kuibyshev	Samara
Kirovobad	Gyanja
Leninabad	Khodjent
Mayakovsky	Bagdati
Ordzhonikidze	Vladikavkaz
Voroshilovgrad	Lugansk
Zhdanov	Mariupol

The biggest possible change, that of Leningrad back to St. Petersburg, has not been made yet, but with all that has happened in the past couple weeks, who can deny that this move will be made in a matter of time?

We'll leave it to our oblast expert, Bernie, WB3JRU, to tell you what call areas and oblasts the above are in. Samara sounds like UA4 to your editor, and Bishkek is the capital of UM8-land, right Bernie? As for Bagdati, I didn't know YI was a part of the Soviet Union...

## NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

*"In the PVRC, once a member, always a member..."*

Out-of-town member and still ace contester Lew Gordon, K4VX, has been spending the past few weeks visiting YU and SU lands. No doubt Lew will let us know whether Croatia and Slovenia will soon be added to the DXCC list.

Bill Long, KC3AG, attended the Alfa Romeo owners' convention in California. Bill

celebrates his 74th birthday on Sept. 8

Another Bill who is a birthday boy is Bill Leavitt, W3AZ, whose 70th comes along on Sept. 24.

Tony, K3WX, speaks proudly of his son who has spent a very successful summer term in Spain learning how to speak the local lingo.

## CHECKING OUT HURRICANE BOB

by Jim Talens, N3JT  
Vice President

Sometimes my long weekend getaways are determined by cheap airfares. In this case Northwest had offered a "bargain" rate to New England locations so YL Nina and I decided to visit K1VR, outside Boston; K5MA on Cape Cod; and visit the mansions at Newport RI. The last of these was the highlight of the trip for Nina, and I was looking forward to seeing them. I always keep in the back of my mind the notion of a rich uncle passing away and leaving me real estate like that. Such thoughts never venture far from the back of my mind because I have no uncles. But already I stray.

We spent a delightful day with K1VR, better known hereabouts for his deep involvement in distributing the K1EA CT software. Indeed, one of the fun activities while with Fred was a short visit to K1EA'S QTH, atop a mountain and furnished in multiple computers. With time short we headed off to K5MA'S place, also a hilltop, in Falmouth. We arrived on Friday afternoon and had not yet heard anything about Hurricane Bob. So we enjoyed ourselves, feasting on freshly-caught tuna and swordfish and working DX on 2 meters. It is, after all, much easier to work NJ (or W3ZZ) when you are transmitting from a 100 foot tower overlooking water! We had intended

heading toward Newport, RI, on Sunday, but the annual Cape Cod 10 km. marathon required the involvement of as many hams as possible, so I volunteered to man a location at the top of a hill just before the finish line. I had brought my 2 meter HT. The weather was warm and the field fast. The first contingent of racers were paraplegics in wheelchairs, quite an impressive sight, and profoundly inspiring. In fact, the winner gave me a small sticker emblazoned with "Just Do It", which for awhile during the Fowlfest adorned K3ZO's dumb terminal. It was quite interesting noting the medical attention provided to the racers, which was quite impressive, given the range of ages and apparent physical conditions of some of the participants!

About midday we returned to K5MA'S shack only to hear that Hurricane Bob had passed North Carolina and was heading directly for Cape Cod. Egads! We decided that rather than head inland and stick it out at a hotel it would be both safe and exciting to stay on the hill with K5MA. As it happens, we were right on both counts. The eye of the hurricane passed about 18 miles to our west, which means the strongest winds were headed our way.

It seemed odd that the rain associated with the storm was minimal. But the winds were not. We estimated them at well over 100 m.p.h. At times it seemed that my perception was tilting 30-45° but it was actually all the trees within sight. A tremendous roar could be heard in the distance, and within seconds three branches would bend as though an invisible (and large) hand were brushing them.

K5MA has two radio towers, both Rohn 25, one at about 100 feet with a TH6DX on top and another at about 70 feet with a two-meter beam and 5-el monobanders for 15 and 10. The elements of those beams were curved back like semi-circles during wind gusts, but were not damaged. We were most concerned about a tree branch that was smacking heavily against one of the 100-foot tower guy wires. As the wind direction changed with the rapid passing of the hurricane, that branch stopped smacking the guy from the top and began smacking it from underneath! Fortunately, however, the storm was moving north at over 32 m.p.h. and there was hardly any rain. This reduced the mechanical burden on the towers and trees, so no damage, except for one apparently stripped Ham-IV rotor gear, occurred. A number of trees were damaged and the property was littered with debris.

From the back window of a neighbor's house at the end of the storm we looked down toward the water and saw enormous waves

breaking across the road, sending spray over the tops of houses along the beach. The inland pond and the sea were one, and boats were capsized by the dozen. We managed to see these places up close a few hours later. The houses were intact, but the road was badly damaged, power lines were scattered like toothpicks (I thought of wandering home with a pole pig but Northwest Airlines has a weight limit!) and the sand dunes behind the beaches were newly sculpted. We left the next morning for Newport, which was even harder hit than Falmouth, but we thought that we might still see some of the mansions and perhaps by the next day we would have a chance to visit one.

As we approached the city, the tree damage was noticeably more severe than inland or Falmouth. Trees had been uprooted by the thousands, some obviously hundreds of years old. The mansions seemed unaffected, but trees in their "yards" had toppled into brick walls and the like, causing considerable damage. Electricity was out except in some downtown hotels. We benefitted because the hotel offered us a reduced rate. We stayed at the Viking Hotel, which had been built in the 1920's by 100 mansion owners to handle their guests. We never got inside the mansions, though we did visit the first synagogue in North America, and we again enjoyed wonderful cuisine in the area. Now I am looking for a special bargain flight to Newport, RI, so we can visit the robber barons' mansions!

## CONTEST NOTES

by Fred Laun, K3ZO

One thing that had always bothered me in the past while contesting was what to do about stations who called me who I was not eligible to work in the contest in question. For example, what to do about the DX station who calls you in SS, or the W who calls you during the ARRL DX Test.

The problem was that I didn't want to make an entry for them in my contest log, and my regular log was not usually at hand after I

cleared the deck of extraneous materials prior to the contest. Yet many of them had been searching for Maryland for years (so it seems) and when I said I had no way of logging them, they must have thought I was a terrible sorehead.

K1EA has solved this problem for me with his CT program's "Note" feature. Now when an ineligible station calls me I just hit Alt-N and jot their call down on the notepad, sometimes

adding a report. The time and band are already conveniently recorded automatically.

At the end of the ARRL phone contest, for example, I then print ARRLSSB.NOT and hand it to XYL Somporn, who records all the QSO's listed there in my regular log. Then I am all set to confirm the QSO's for those who send me their QSLs.

Have you received requests by stations who say they were running QRP asking that you fill out their QSL "W9XXX/QRP"? The trouble is, how do I know they were really running QRP? I am sure the great majority of them are honest, but experience has shown there are always a few people around who cut corners.

We were staying at the same hotel in Dayton this year with most of the QRP gang, so I asked if they require that a card state /QRP in the callsign block to count for their awards. They answered "no." So I am not depriving somebody of an award by refusing to assent to such a request. I usually write "ur QRP fb" somewhere else on the card.

The matter of stations signing /QRP during a

contest has come up more than once during club meetings. Presumably the QRP operator thinks that a contester, upon hearing the /QRP, will make everyone stand by while he finds out who the QRP'er is and gives him a QSO. But a serious contester cannot afford to take the time to do this since overall rate is the name of the game. No extra points are allotted for working someone who says he's running QRP.

Additionally -- especially on CW -- a QRP'er sending /QRP often causes confusion since, weak as he is, the receiving station sometimes thinks that the /-whatever is a portable designator. This creates delay and confusion.

Personally, I prefer that a QRP station use his call and nothing else when he calls me. If the purpose of running QRP is to show that you can compete reasonably well with the big boys, then no special preference should be sought anyway. That defeats the whole purpose of the argument. People like Angela, G0HGA, whose letter I quoted last month, or G4BUE or our own QRP specialist Bill, K3WS, will get through anyway, and don't need the /QRP crutch to help them.

## WELL-KNOWN MAGAZINE DEFENDS AUCTIONING OF FREQUENCIES

with thanks to Rob Sterne, WK3W

Rob, WK3W, called our attention to an editorial in The Economist for June 8, 1991, about some plans which are floating around to auction off radio frequencies to the highest bidders. In the editorial, entitled "Free as Air", and subtitled: "Governments defraud taxpayers when they give away radio frequency bands," The Economist defends the proposed auctioning of radio frequencies to the highest bidders:

"The American public owns about half the land in America. If the government were to give that land to businesses, it would be defrauding

taxpayers of its sale value. If it also insisted that the land be used only for, say, cattle ranching, it would prevent the growth of everything from theme parks to nature reserves.

"Yet Congress wants to do something analogously absurd with America's airwaves...

"Three arguments are raised against auctions. First, the government cannot sell what it does not own; second, auctions might fend off deserving newcomers offering new services; third, they would prevent the government

fulfilling its primary duty, of ensuring the airwaves are reserved for the uses that are in the public interest.

"The first is easily dealt with. Certainly, the American government did not buy the airwaves, as it bought Alaska. But who else owns them if not the public?.... Given that it is necessary for somebody to monopolize each frequency (or there would be static for all)... the government has to do the allocation on behalf of the public.

"Auctioning licenses would not prevent new services getting on to the air. Quite the reverse. Apple Computer wants to make a wireless computer that would need no telephone line to talk to others; it will need a part of the spectrum. Let it buy it rather than wait to be allocated it. Perhaps it could not afford a band: then demand is probably not as great as for another user...

"Don't listen to the lobbies. To decide between the many new uses of the radio spectrum by fiat, rather than price, is to bow to political lobbying power, rather than public demand. True, auctions might drive some worthy users off the air together. But if the government wants to stop ham radio operators

being driven off the air by yuppies wielding digital walkie-talkies, then let it reserve a small band for radio hams, or any other deserving broadcaster. Planning (zoning) laws work for land; why not for airwaves?..."

Opinion: It would seem that the Economist has forgotten that our Constitution protects the rights of minorities -- in this case us hams -- as well as the rights of the majority. Over the years hams have pioneered developments that have later led to the very profitable uses of the airwaves by commercial entities. How nice to reward us by throwing us off our bands in the name of unrestrained capitalism. Surely the Economist has realized by now that leaving us in the hands of the Charles Keatings of the electronics industry is not necessarily in the public interest. And that by restricting the spectrum territory available for experimentation, we push development of new technologies overseas, thus adding to the already serious plight of our home-grown electronics industry. Or could it be that this British publication is seeking precisely such an outcome? And as for zoning laws, we know all too well how they inhibit an individual from using his own land in the way he wishes. What a great principle of "private enterprise" to apply to the spectrum!

## THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

by Ben Shaver, AA4XU

The Over-the-Hill Division of the Potomac Valley Radio Club met on August 15, 1991, for lunch and discussion at Weston's in Annandale, VA. Bill Grenfell, W4GF, was host.

Attending: W6AXX W3XE W3GN W3AZ W3GRF K3WX W3CPB W4DM W4GF AA4XU

The next OTH lunch meeting will be held in Oxon Hill, MD, in September. Len Chertok, W3GRF, will be host. Call Len at 301-297-4888 for reservations. All welcome.

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The annual Fowlfest was hosted by Fred and Somporn Laun at the K3ZO QTH on Huntland Road in Temple Hills, MD. A great time was had by all.

The following PVRC and/or NCDXA members and guests were in attendance: AA4XU G3LDI HC1CYB K1DQV K1HTV K3CH K3CHP K3DI K3NA K3RT K3SKE K3SO K3TW K3ZO K4YT

K5VRX K6IR K7SV K8OQL KA3CXG KA3TGY KA3TOI KA3VYN KA3WPD KA4RRU KA4S KC3EK KC3VO KC4B KE3Q KE9A KF3P KJ4VG KK4HD KK4WQ KN3P KN3T KO7V KO0U KT3Y KX3Q KZ3H N2FB N3AM N3EBR N3FBN N3GB N3HIT N3II N3JT N3TO N3UN ND3A NH6T NK4U NR3Y W2GHK W2TK W3AZ W3AZD W3CPB W3EKT W3FYP W3GRF W3HHG W3HVQ W3LPL W3MSN W3TMZ W3UJ W3XE W3YOZ W3YY W3ZN W3ZZ W4NL W9LT WA3DVO WA3TAI WA4QYP WA8MAZ WB2TNL WB3ANE WB3FSB WB3JRU WB4NFO WC4B WD4KXB WD4O WF3J/UB5KAF WI2T WI3A WK3V WK3W.

(Editor's note: Not all in attendance signed up on Ben's sheet, so we hope we got everyone who was here. Please advise the Secretary of any errors. In case you are interested, the above list amounts to 94 licensed amateurs, and does not include XYL's, YLF's or Jr. Ops. unless they are also licensed. No wonder the hamburgers went fast!)