



SPARKS



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Puget Amateur Radio Society

September 2000

PARS gets special Salmon Run honors

You should already be aware of this month's PARS Salmon Run effort, since I've tried to give everyone advance notice of this event. This year's Run, sponsored by the Western Washington DX Club, will be held on the weekend of Sep. 16-17. The Salmon Run is our state's QSO party ... hams everywhere will be trying to contact us Washingtonians, looking for stations in as many of our 39 counties as they can find. Hef and I put K7PAR on the air from Wahkiakum county last year and had a great time being the "DX" for a change (and we'll never forget how to spell "Wahkiakum" any more, hi hi).

In recognition of last year's effort, the WWDXC has awarded PARS the honor of being this year's Bonus Station, and is allowing us to use their W7DX callsign for the contest. Stations making a valid phone or CW contact with us will get to add 500 points ea. (1000 points maximum) to their total score. We'll be operating from a house near Leavenworth, Chelan county, close to the geographic center of the state, and I've invited the WWDXC members to join us as well. With our Bonus Station status, we're likely to be the most sought-after station in Washington that weekend! Hope to see you there. - de N7UK

Sept. program - PSK31

Our esteemed Treasurer has been bitten big-time by the PSK31 bug, and we have therefore bestowed the title of Resident Expert upon him. The principal responsibility of the Resident Expert is, of course, to share his expertise with the rest of the club. Ergo, he'll be showing off the

wonders of this new mode at our September 21 general meeting.

PSK31 is a very narrow-bandwidth digital mode that's catching on fast with hams around the planet, and may already exceed conventional RTTY in popularity for real-time HF digital QSOs. It rivals CW for performance under weak-signal conditions. All you need to participate is a radio with good frequency stability, a PC with a sound card, and some free software available over the web. I'm sure you'll share Hef's enthusiasm for PSK31 once you've seen it in action. - de N7UK

PARS Net discontinued

In spite of our switch to the W7SRZ 2-meter repeater, turnout for the Net has been languishing for months, so I'm calling it quits for a second time. We had hoped for better participation, given the 146.9 machine's excellent coverage and the expectation that more members would have 2-meter gear available. We'd also hoped that the Net would be a good sales tool for the club, as a lot of locals dial in the SRZ machine to make use of its free autopatch. While we did get the occasional visitor, none expressed interest in joining the club or sitting in on a club meeting. Another club member would certainly be welcome to pick up the ball and resume the Net, if they think it worthwhile. Alternately, we could hold a scheduled roundtable-type net, rather than a formal check-in/check-out type, at a mutually agreed-upon time and frequency. I'll leave that to the other members. - de N7UK

Next general meeting - Thursday, Sep. 21 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. Our own John Heflin, KD7E, will present a program on PSK31 (see article above). And be sure to join us at 5:30 PM for dinner at Coco's, 14804 NE 24th St. in Redmond. Visitors are always welcome at the meetings and at Coco's.

Next board meeting - At the home of Al Staples, N7VOF, 409 - 109th Ave. SE in Bellevue, Thursday, Oct. 5 at 7:00 PM. All PARS members are welcome.

Field Day 2000

Ah yes, Field Day. The day that separates the real amateurs from the really amateur. The day when those who really know something may or may not want to be around until it's all set up, which is, I guess, the best way for those who don't know something to learn something. I do have to say that my few years of working on Field Day have been instructive in a variety of areas, including but not limited to, setting up antenna farms. I still consider myself a wannabe when it comes to most areas of the technical aspects of amateur radio, so I learn something every year. This year we thought it would be fairly easy, since we weren't moving the trailer.

Field Day 2000 dawned bright and overcast, as I recall. Since I live some distance away by the time I arrived on scene the gang already had a small tribander up, tied to one of the traffic barrier posts in the Senior Center parking lot. The next project was the other larger tribander, which was assembled amid much discussion about what piece goes where, and who had the proper wrench, etc. This is an interesting project every year, since some of the parts are non-standard due to repairs over time [*I like to think of them as "improvements" - Ed.*].

Once we had it together, we had to get it up in the air. We put the tower up, and then Hef KD7E was going to climb the tower being supported by several stalwart souls, while he held the beam with his other hand to get it on the mount! After his daughter threatened to disown him, we reconsidered and finally put it together using a ladder as a support and then raising the whole

thing after the beam was mounted. Whew! And it worked! As always. And it's funny how the most mundane things become guy points, like dumpsters and fences, not to mention the occasional stake. In the meantime, the slingshot brigade was desperately trying to get a 40m wire over a tree limb but were mostly succeeding in losing the weights. Tim KD7DEY finally got lucky and the wire was up. Add in the usual complement of 2m and 6m trailer mounted antennas and we were ready to go. On time, even.

The bands weren't really lively, but there was enough stuff to keep us occupied when we were on. What I like about this bunch is that no one is trying to set a league record, so that if you wanted to stop working after 30-45 minutes, you don't feel like you are letting the club down. Yours truly worked 10m for a good part of the day, which I never did before on Field Day. Picked up a fair number of contacts, and learned that OR is NOT the same as ORANGE as a Field Day designation. Probably cost a bunch of points because the logs wouldn't jibe the way I did them. Sorry about that, Bob. Over the course of the day, we worked 10, 15, 20 and 40m with varying degrees of intensity. I don't think anyone did CW. I don't remember a great deal of activity on 2m, but there were a few contacts made.

Late in the afternoon, we were visited by Calvin KC7IYP and Paul W5DX. The pot-luck dinner was very tasty and attended by about 10 or so members and spouses. Thanks to our First Lady Lisa K7LAM for coordinating that.

PARS 2000 - 01 Club Officers:

President - Charles Beckmeier, KC7GMF 425-392-5846
Vice Pres. - Al Staples, N7VOF 425-454-2882

Secretary - Kirk Bellar, N7UK 206-542-6742
Treasurer - John Heflin, KD7E 425-828-3034

The Puget Amateur Radio Society (PARS) is an ARRL-affiliated club serving radio amateurs in the greater Seattle area. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month (except July, August, and December) at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE. Visitors are always welcome.

Annual dues are \$15.00 for individual membership, \$22.50 for family (2 or more persons at the same address). PARS will prorate the dues of new members joining after Jan. 31. Call Kirk, N7UK, for a membership application.

Visit our Web page at <http://www.qsl.net/k7par>. This is always a work in progress, so check back often.

Send articles, comments, want ads, idle gossip, etc. for inclusion in this newsletter to Kirk Bellar, N7UK, 19353 Greenwood Ave. N, Shoreline WA 98133, fax to 425-867-2160, or e-mail to n7uk@aol.com.

Send all other club-related correspondence to PARS, PO Box 32, Kirkland WA 98083-0032.

I don't know how long things continued into the evening, since I left about 7:00 pm. But I think we all had a good time.

During the course of the day Kirk Bellar N7UK, Lisa Marker K7LAM, John Heflin KD7E, Tim Monk KD7DEY, Al Staples N7VOF, Bob Adams KJ7BP, Jim Darby W7FYH, Doug Bell, Dick Schwanke W9HXM, Don Hickman KC7MDA and Jim Von Seggern KC7FEH were in attendance, as well as Al Staples' brother and John Heflin's daughter. There probably are others, but I can't remember. I have no idea who was there on Sunday, since I wasn't. I assume that it all got taken down at least as handily (?) as it went up.

- Vy 73 de Jim Von Seggern KC7FEH

[Thanks for the report, Jim. Here's the point tally:

40m - 17 QSOs

20m - 33

15m - 37

10m - 20

6m - 1

total 108 QSO's X 2 (multiplier) = 216 total points

As for getting everything dismantled Sunday, it turned out that there weren't enough members handy to be able to safely take down the tower. After a few frantic phone calls, Hef, Doug, Bob, Your Sparks Editor, and Hef's daughter Sophia returned to the scene of the crime. The five of us managed to bring it down without incident. - Ed.]

Hamfest donations

Shoreline ARES member Jon Sorensen, K7WNE, has made a large donation of parts and equipment to PARS. Jon is getting ready to sell his house and move to Pt. Orchard, and was only too happy to divest himself of some treasures. This will be a big help in replenishing our coffers when the Mike & Key hamfest rolls around in March. Jon says he'll probably donate more goodies next month. Hef may run out of room for cars in his garage at this rate.

IOTA 2000

For the second time, PARS participated in the Islands On The Air (IOTA) contest, sponsored by the Radio Society of Great Britain, during the weekend of July 28-29. Hef and I made our first tentative effort at IOTA last year from under a tarp at South Whidbey State Park on Whidbey Island, running on battery power. Not wanting to commune quite so intimately with the great outdoors again this year, I rented a cottage on Whidbey's Holmes Harbor, about 7 miles NW of Langley. We could have also operated from nearly any of the San Juans or from Vashon, according to the contest rules, but Whidbey has convenient ferry access from Seattle, as well as lots of vacation rental housing available.

Having rented the place sight unseen, we weren't quite sure how conducive it would be for erecting a temporary antenna farm; but it turned out to be a good, if not ideal, location. Lisa and I went over to Whidbey a day ahead of time to set up two tribanders and the club's R5 vertical for 10, 15, and 20 meters, along with a sloping dipole for 80. Naturally, we got rained on most of the time while we were doing this, although it cleared up late Friday afternoon and was sunny for the rest of the weekend. The house was about 40 feet from a sheer cliff overlooking the water. We set up our operating position in the house to take advantage of the view, and were treated to the sight of bald eagles regularly traversing the cliff.

The contest got underway at 5:00 AM local time Saturday. I made a few contacts on 40m CW, but it was slow going for the first hour. 20m phone started to open up about 6:00, and this turned out to be the dominant band and mode for the duration of the contest. Hef and Al arrived at 7:30 and set up their radios. While the contest rules allowed us to use one radio for calling CQ and another for calling new multipliers, we lacked a sufficiently loud signal into Europe to be able to hold a CQ frequency on 20, so we spent most of the contest "searching and pouncing".

We operated until 1:30 AM Sunday, then called it a night. I got up about 4:00 AM, with an hour still left for the contest, and heard a couple of

weak sigs on 40 CW, but decided that sleeping sounded infinitely more appealing than trying to add a last couple of QSOs to the log. Once we were really ready to get up Sunday morning, the four of us dismantled the equipment and packed the cars in short order, and left for home about 11:00 AM.

So, how'd we do? The table below shows our contacts, multipliers, and total points per band. We made no contacts on 10, 80, or 160, and just a handful on 15 and 40.

Band	QSOs	Mults.	Points
10m	0	0	0
15m	3	2	45
20m	87	26	657
40m	3	3	45
80m	0	0	0
160m	0	0	0

Grand total = 747 points x 31 multipliers =
23,157

Last year, we placed dead last in our category ... not surprising, since we only worked for 3 hours before giving up. While we increased our total (claimed) points by a factor of eight over last year, our QSO/hour rate was considerably worse. At least we weren't having to keep the mosquitos at bay this time.

This is still a little-known contest in the U.S. 19 of the top 20 island multioperator stations last year were in Europe. We didn't expect to burn up the bands this year, but did expect to have a better run rate of contacts. While it was fun and a good excuse for a weekend getaway, we'll skip the IOTA next year and hope that participation from North America improves to the point that it is worth having another go at it in '02. - de N7UK

No June minutes this month

Okay, I admit it! I managed to bury the June minutes amongst the onslaught of other papers and general junk cluttering up my abode. And after all the trouble Jim went to, to get them to me in plenty of time for publication. If I can unearth them in time, or get another copy from Jim, they'll go into the Oct. Sparks.

Web site update

If you haven't taken a look at the PARS web site (www.qsl.net/k7par) lately, you'll find that Hef's made quite a few additions that'll make it more useful to members and non-members alike. For starters, we're working to put all of the available back issues of Sparks online. All of the issues from the '98-'99 club year are there, and the rest should be added within the next two months. (I'm still trying to locate pre-1990 issues, by the way ... if you were a member in the '80s, please check your files to see whether you might still have a few of these lurking around.)

In addition, you'll find the club's by-laws, a membership application/renewal form, repeater directories for 2 meters and 440 MHz, a DXCC callsign prefix list, and an ARRL/RAC section list. All of these documents are available in Adobe Acrobat format (also called PDF, for Portable Document Format), which lets you read and print them regardless of whether you're doing your web surfing with a PC, a Macintosh, or even a Unix machine. You can download the Acrobat reader software for free from the www.adobe.com website; you'll find a link to the Adobe site at the Sparks index page.

Starting with this issue, Hef will put the current Sparks online about the same time as the paper copies go in the mail. We'll be encouraging those of you with web access to get your copy online, since printing and mailing costs for Sparks constitute the second-largest recurring expense for the club, after insurance. Members will be notified by e-mail whenever Hef posts a new issue.

- de N7UK

Budget proposal at Sep. meeting

Pursuant to our by-laws, the PARS board will present a proposed budget at this month's meeting for our '00-'01 club year. Copies of the budget will be available at the meeting, or from Hef by e-mail or snail-mail.