



SPARKS



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Puget Amateur Radio Society

January 2001

Jan. program - Antenna modeling

PARS' very own Secretary (and Your *Sparks* Editor) will be doing the honors this month with a program on computer-aided antenna modeling. Amateurs now have a plethora of free or low-cost computer software available to take the guesswork out of skyhook-building. I'll be demonstrating the popular *EZNEC* program, as well as some free Yagi-optimizing software, and I'll model several commonly-used antennas (dipoles, phased verticals, delta loops). - de N7UK

Don Hickman recovering from stroke

Member Don Hickman, KC7MDA, is recuperating at home after suffering a stroke on Nov. 7. Don came home from the hospital on Nov. 28, and reports he's making slow but steady progress and hopes to attend this month's PARS meeting. The Board sent Don a get-well bouquet on behalf of the club. PARS extends its best wishes to Don for a speedy recovery.

2000 Salmon Run results

The Western Washington DX Club has published the results of the 2000 Salmon Run contest at its web site (www.wwdxc.org/salmon). PARS, operating as the W7DX bonus station from Chelan county, came in second of the three WA club entries, with a score of 62,336. The top club entry was the South Hill Contest Club in Puyallup, which tallied 219,496 points.

Andrew Isar, W7VJ, of Gig Harbor turned in the top "legal" score with 356,888 points. Rex Maner, K7QQ, of Olalla hosted a multi operator-multi transmitter demonstration station that racked up 429,580 points. The Salmon Run rules specifically

prohibit multi-transmitter stations from competing, although the WWDXC awarded a special commendation to Rex and crew for their efforts.

As I mentioned in the October *Sparks*, it was especially gratifying to be able to hand out bonus points to everyone we worked. While someone else will get bonus station honors this year, I'm sure it won't detract from the pleasure of our participation from another "rare" county. Mark your calendar for Sept. 15-16. - de N7UK

Holiday party - Dec. 2

Our esteemed Treasurer, John Heflin, along with his blushing bride Sandra, hosted this year's party at their abode in Kirkland. In attendance were Charles and Kathy Beckmeier, Jim and Arzetta Von Seggern, Dick Schwanke, Doug Bell, Lisa Marker, and Your *Sparks* Editor.

We shared a potluck dinner. As typical for such events, no one went away hungry. Our thanks go to the Heflins for opening their lovely home to us for the occasion, and to everyone who attended and shared their gustatory delights.

The Ham of the Year was a no-show (and now we know who DIDN'T get the award this year, hi hi); hopefully, he or she will make an appearance at this month's meeting to receive this award.

More Sparks online

Mark Whitaker's been busily adding *Sparks* back issues to our web page (www.qsl.net/k7par). They're essentially complete from 1996 to present, with more to follow.

Next general meeting - Thursday, Jan. 18 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. Kirk Bellar, N7UK, will present a program on antenna modeling. (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, Feb. 1 at 7:00 PM. All PARS members are welcome.

Dues are due

It's that time of year again: All PARS members need to renew their membership this month. Dues are still \$15.00 for individuals, \$22.50 for families (2 or more members at the same address). All existing members will receive a renewal/survey form and SASE by mail, regardless of whether you get your *Sparks* by mail or e-mail.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey form with your renewal; this will help us plan for future programs and activities.

ARRL Sweepstakes results

So near, yet so far... That sums up this year's PARS effort in the ARRL Phone Sweepstakes, which occurred on the weekend of Nov. 18-19. In spite of another good effort this year, the elusive amateurs of Quebec thwarted our goal of a Clean Sweep of all 80 ARRL and RAC sections.

The weekend started auspiciously enough. The WX was cold but dry and sunny, as Jim Darby, Doug Bell, and Your *Sparks* Editor assembled the Mosley Jr. and erected it on a 20-foot telescoping mast. Jim and I then suspended the 40m and 80m dipoles between some obliging evergreens and the water tank, and we were in business. We also made use of the R-5 vertical on the trailer.

Our radio arsenal consisted of my TS-870 and the club's IC-740. The Sweepstakes rules allow a station to have only one transmitter on the air at a time, so we used the TS-870 as our main radio and the IC-740 as a "spotter" to look for new sections. I also brought along my laptop, loaded with *TR Log*, in hopes of improving our logging

speed and accuracy over last year. ARRL had disallowed our Clean Sweep claim for the '99 contest because we had improperly logged a couple of contacts.

We were ready to go at the 1300 starting time. Doug, John Heflin, Charles Beckmeier, Mark Whitaker, and Yours Truly shared the operating chores over the weekend, while Al Staples, Larry Larse, WB7FEP, and Marc Weinburg, KD7KNN, dropped by for moral support and/or heckling.

Our strategy, such as it was, was to search with both radios for new sections, rather than calling CQ. We had 65 of the 80 needed sections in the log by the time we quit Saturday night. On Sunday morning, we managed to round up 14 of the remaining 15 sections, including perennial rarities Maritime (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island) and Yukon/Northwest Territories/Nunavut (Jay, VY1JA, has this 1.38 million square mile section almost entirely to himself). However, we heard no Quebec hams calling CQ, and that proved to be our undoing. We heard a few responding to other stations' CQs, so we knew they were out there. We switched to CQ mode Sunday afternoon in an attempt to lure one of the wary Quebecois out of the noise, to no avail. We finally gave up about 3:00 Sunday afternoon, brought the temporary antennas down, and called it a contest.

Our kudos, as always, go to the folks who helped with setup and teardown, especially Jim Darby, who passed up the chance to operate but pitched in just the same. We'll rethink our strategy and have another go at it this November. - de N7UK

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, recounts, 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.

Notes from The New Kid

[Thanks to new member Mark Whitaker for the following. We did NOT pay him to write this, honest! - Ed.] Here I am, only a month into my life as a HAM and a member of PARS, and I am feeling more jazzed about both than I did a month ago. It's really been great getting to meet with the members of PARS and to be able to pick everyone's brains for ideas and suggestions! I hope that you all realize how wonderful it is for someone like myself to be able to come into a group and to feel like I am welcome and that people will tolerate my asking so many questions (sometimes repetitively). This group is very fortunate to have so many knowledgeable members and I am very thankful for having been able to join.

Now, before you all start getting sick of my "gushing" about the group I shall move onto something that I would like to share with everyone. I know that many of you have been around amateur radio for some years and that using the radio has become something of old hat to you; but hopefully you all still feel the thrill of amateur radio as I have during the November Sweepstakes. My original intention in getting into amateur radio has always been to get involved in the community service activities; so I thought I would go as far as getting the Technician License and probably no further. Plans are great to have, and subject to change at just about any time... such is my case. When I passed the Technician test on my first sitting I thought, "Wow! That wasn't too awfully bad, maybe I should go ahead and just see if I can study for the Code and General tests and take those as well." Which, I have embarked upon that course but the only reasoning I could come up with is that it would give me a few more bands to "play" around on and to just say I have passed the tests; I wouldn't want to do any of the contests since I really have no interest in competitive events.

Keeping these thoughts in mind, I was somewhat hesitant to take up the invitation by Kirk and Hef to show up at the November Sweepstakes but decided that I should see what all of this was about. I arrived late Saturday evening, planning to only be there for about an hour. Kirk and Doug were the only ones manning the radios when I arrived; we sat and chatted for a few moments and then Kirk turned on the speaker for his rig so I could hear what was going on. What I heard made me wonder if perhaps HAM's might be just a little bit too "charismatic" for me after all. I couldn't make any sense out of what was being said and most of it was far too fast for me to even begin translating it into something that I could understand (being a product of Oklahoman parentage I tend to think, talk and listen at a more leisurely pace - you can imagine what a conversation between a Manhattanite and myself might sound like). Of course Kirk put this more into perspective for me in that he said, "To do contesting, a person might do well to go to

auctioneers school." Now, having attended quite a few livestock auctions I knew I would have to ratchet up the brain just a wee bit - this was taken care of by a healthy dose of "HAM shack brew"; I'm not sure what that black stuff was that Kirk brewed, but it seemed to do the trick! *[It's a secret recipe I got from Speedy Gonzales - Ed.]*

I decided that I would need to sit there, perhaps a little longer than the hour I had planned and see if I could learn to decipher what I was hearing. After a few more moments of sitting and listening, Doug suddenly perked up and excitedly (perhaps "excitedly" might be an understatement!) told us that he was picking up another station in one of the areas that hadn't been contacted by our group yet. Both Doug and Kirk swung into action with Doug keying up the microphone with our call sign and Kirk feverishly typing away at his laptop to register the contact once it was made. As Doug made contact and I tried to follow what was being said and what Kirk was typing in I found myself getting caught up in the excitement and anticipating the next contact.

As the evening wore on and my "one hour" of observing turned into two and then three, more contacts were made and I even started getting into the action by taking over the computer input while Doug tried to make contacts and Kirk was listening for other potential contacts. Around midnight, Doug decided to call it a night and Kirk invited me to put on the headsets and see what I might hear. I thought to myself, "Sure, why not. I'm only going to be here a few more minutes," famous last words!! As I sat there listening for a "little bit" I found myself getting more intent on hearing the various stations making contact and finding out where they were when I happened to hear a station from the Virgin Islands calling CQ - a location we had not logged yet! Now it was my turn to get excited and I called to Kirk saying, "WHAT DO I DO??!!" Kirk coached me through the procedure and told me that I could go ahead and make the contact; with Kirk's help I fumbled my way through my first contest contact. Now my adrenaline was flowing and there was no way anyone was going to pry me away from that transceiver now! Needless to say, my one hour of observing found me still sitting at the radio till early morning (I think I left about two-thirty in the morning, but I honestly can't remember now - I was having too much fun).

My thanks to Doug and Kirk for showing me how its done and to Kirk for coaching me through that first contact and managing to stay awake while I still wanted to contest. I doubt that I will ever forget this contest and I definitely will be looking forward to doing my next contest (hopefully I will have completed the remaining tests required for my General and Extra ratings I won't be keeping someone from getting their needed rest).
- 73's, Mark KD7KUN

Minutes of the PARS General Meeting, 16 November 2000

The members met at the Bellevue Senior Center. 9 members attended, a quorum. 1 visitor, WB7FEP, was also present. President Beckmeier brought the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

Following introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance, member Jim Von Seggern, KC7FEH, presented a program on his round-the-world cruise and described his maritime mobile operations during the cruise.

After the break, the President initiated the business meeting. The members approved, without correction, the minutes of the October general meeting as published in the November issue of *Sparks*.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer reported a positive balance as of Nov. 16 [*financial statements are available from the Treasurer - Ed.*]

Trailer report: The Secretary reported that he would be removing the hamfest donations from the trailer during the upcoming weekend, in order to make space for the Sweepstakes contesters. He had found someone willing to store the donated items until the March hamfest.

Contest report: The Secretary reminded the members about the upcoming ARRL Phone Sweepstakes contest during the weekend of Nov. 18-19, in which PARS would be participating. The Secretary solicited volunteers to help erect antennas at the trailer that weekend for the contest, and explained the Sweepstakes rules. He also reported that PARS came in dead last in its category in the 2000 Field Day event.

Hamfest report: The Treasurer has reserved two tables at the Mike and Key hamfest, which will take place on March 10, and has tickets for 4 workers. The Secretary solicited additional help from those members who planned to attend the hamfest as buyers.

Publicity: Chair Lisa Marker, K7LAM, was not present. The Secretary reported that Lisa was

taking a class on Thursdays, and wouldn't be able to attend any general meetings until June, but would have some time to work on a new brochure during her December class break.

Holiday party: The Treasurer announced that the party would occur at his house on December 2, and that he had sent out invitations to the members. He asked the members to RSVP and to let him know what potluck items they would be bringing.

Old business: The Secretary mentioned that Doug Bell, KD7KKR, was searching for a new repeater controller for the WS7K machine, in response to a discussion at the October meeting.

New business: Mark Whitaker, KD7KUN, asked for suggestions for improving the club's web site. He also asked whether there would be any interest in setting up an electronic subscription list for sharing items of interest among the members.

With no further business, the President adjourned the meeting at 8:45.

*Respectfully submitted -
Kirk Bellar N7UK
PARS Secretary*

ARRL election results

Incumbent NW Div. Director Greg Milnes, W7OZ, bested former Director Mary Lewis, W7QGP, by a vote of 2383 to 2237 in October's election. Incumbent Vice Director Jim Fenstermaker, K9KF, defeated Ed Bruette, N7NVP, western WA Section Emergency Coordinator, deputy state RACES Officer, and WWARA chairman, by a vote of 2620 to 1873. The Director and Vice Director serve two-year terms.

Code practice starts Jan. 23

In response to popular demand (well, from Charles Beckmeier and Mark Whitaker, anyway), I'll be conducting weekly code classes on Tuesdays at 5:00 PM at the trailer. We'll keep the duration under an hour, to avoid brain rot. Walk-ins are welcome. - *de N7UK*