



# SPARKS



Vol. 17, No. 2

Puget Amateur Radio Society

February 2001

## **Feb. program - mystery video**

Mark Whitaker, KD7KUN, will entertain us with a mysterious video at this Thursday's meeting. What's on it? Can't say, except rumor has it that it'll include some PARS members past and present, and its disclosure could jeopardize national security and cause uncontrollable itching. You've been warned.

## **Bob Adams named Ham of the Year**

Long-time member Bob Adams, KJ7BP, is PARS' Ham of the Year for 2000. Vice-President Al Staples, N7VOF, presented the award to Bob at our January 18 meeting.

The nominating committee, consisting of previous recipients Al Staples, Kirk Bellar, and Jim Von Seggern, recognized Bob for his service as Vice-President during the 96-97 and 97-98 club years, his chairmanship of the Field Day and refreshment committees for many years, and his willingness to pitch in for our myriad antenna setups and tear-downs, regardless of weather.

The award consists of two plaques: One engraved with Bob's name, which he retains permanently; and the other engraved with the names of all recipients to date, which Bob will keep for a year.

## **WPX contest - Mar. 24-25**

PARS will be competing for the third time in the CQ World-Wide WPX (Prefix) Contest, to be held on the weekend of March 24-25. As the name implies, this contest is global in scope. We've worked about 50 DXCC entities during each of our previous two efforts, including some seldom-

heard islands. You can expect lots of rare DX to come out of the woodwork for this year's contest, as well.

Contestants earn a multiplier for each unique callsign prefix (K7, K6, DJ3, 9L1, etc.) they work. Last year we enticed other participants by using Bob Adams call, KJ7BP. For the CW-phobic, fear not, this is a SSB-only contest. We'll start setting up antennas at 0900 on the 24th.

## **Puyallup Hamfest - Mar. 10**

We're tantalizingly close to Hamfest Day '01. The Northwest's biggest ham-a-rama, the Mike and Key Hamfest in Puyallup, is happening on March 10 this year, and PARS will be there with two tables o' treasures for sale. Thanks to donations from Jon Sorenson, K7WNE, Don Hickman, KC7MDA, Your *Sparks* Editor, and the Shoreline Fire Department, as well as last year's leftovers, we'll have no trouble filling our booth with goodies.

If you're planning to attend this year's Fest, consider pitching in for an hour or two at our booth. It's an easy job and a good opportunity to schmooze with the similarly-afflicted. We'll also be holding a clean-up party on Feb. 24 to spiff up our merchandise. Let Hef or Kirk know if you're interested in helping out with either event.

Hamfest revenue pays for three-fourths of our operating budget for the year. We're always looking for ham- and other electronic-related equipment for donation or consignment. Donations to PARS are fully tax-deductible. Call Hef or Kirk to arrange a pick-up. - *de N7UK*

*Next general meeting* - Thursday, Feb. 15 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. Mark Whitaker, KD7KUN, will present a SECRET video (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, Mar. 1 at 7:00 PM. All PARS members are welcome.

## Dues reminder

Yes, this is yet another reminder to pay up, folks. All PARS members need to pay their dues for the 2001 calendar year in order to remain in good standing. You should have received a renewal and survey form around the middle of last month; if not, contact Kirk for another copy.

Dues are still \$15.00 for individuals, \$22.50 for families (two or more persons at the same address). We've held the dues at this level for five years ... such a deal! Dues cover only about a fourth of our actual operating budget for the year.

Don't forget to fill out the survey along with your renewal.

## Field Day '01

Our recent cold snap makes thoughts of Field Day all the more appealing. Yes, PARS is already making plans for this year's FD outing. For starters, the members voted at the January meeting to return to our old stomping grounds at Downtown Park, directly south of Bellevue Square. Our esteemed President will put his sport-ute to the test by hauling the trailer to said park. Field Day Committee co-chairs Jim Darby and Doug Bell are making sure our permits are in place and that the park sprinklers will be turned off for the big event. (You ARE doing that, right guys?)

Meanwhile, Mark Whitaker has been contacting various emergency-response groups, like the Bellevue EOC, EARS, ARES, etc. to see whether they'd be willing to set up some public displays at the park that weekend. We're bound to elicit much more curiosity from the public with a cou-

ple of emergency vehicles parked next to the trailer.

This year's Field Day will take place on the weekend of June 23-24. We're still working out the details, but typically we start setting up around 0800-0900 Saturday and begin operating around 1100. Once we begin, the rules say we have 24 hours to operate. We'll likely have 3 HF radios and a 2-meter FM rig in operation, and possibly 6 meters as well.

If the members express enough interest, there'll be a potluck dinner on Saturday. We'll poll the members at the April or May general meeting.

Start thinking those warm thoughts, and mark your calendar for June 23-24!

## Code class is underway

The level of interest in our PARS code class has been surprising and gratifying. We currently have four students: Charles Beckmeier, Doug Bell, Don Hickman, and Mark Whitaker. Their goal, of course, is to be able to pass the 5 WPM code exam needed to upgrade to General or Extra class. We'll also be striving to help the students avoid obstacles to increasing their code speed, teach them something about CW operating practices and etiquette, and toss in a little history of both landline and wireless telegraphy.

We've had three class sessions to date. We hold classes on Tuesdays from 5:00 to 6:00 PM at the trailer; walk-ins are welcome. We'll continue the class as long as there's at least one member desiring to learn the code.

### 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, threats, 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](mailto:n7uk@aol.com).

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

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## Repeater update

Your *Sparks* Editor attended the Western Washington Amateur Relay Association (WWARA) meeting on Feb. 1. The WWARA is a group of hams, mainly repeater owners, who assign and coordinate repeater frequencies, power levels, antenna heights, etc. in order to minimize interference between repeaters in western WA and adjoining areas. They also publish an annual repeater directory for the Northwest (although they opted not to do so in 2000). Participating repeater owners on the wet side of the Cascades must renew their coordinations with the WWARA every five years.

I recently discovered that our repeater coordination expired in September, so I took our renewal paperwork in person to the WWARA meeting to see what transpires. While there, I had my first eyeball QSO with Steve Szombathy, W7UDI, our new PSE liaison, who'll provide PARS with access to our Rose Hill repeater. Steve will also be maintaining the repeaters in Olympia, Port Townsend, and Orting which Chuck Graff, K7CHV, previously looked after.

Meanwhile, Doug Bell is currently shopping for a new repeater controller for our 443.2 machine, one with a voice ID'er, voice announcement recording and playback, and other features yet to be determined. The Board hopes to make a recommendation to the members at our April general meeting. We want to replace the existing controller because of the difficulty in re-programming it with another ID, in this case from WS7K/R to K7PAR/R. We'd also like to have a voice ID'er, rather than CW, in deference to the many no-code Techs using the 440 band now. We'll be considering other features, such as voice mailboxes, time/temperature announcements, etc. that will make the repeater more useful and enjoyable for its users. While an autopatch is unlikely, given PSE's unwillingness to let us tap into their phone system, we could add the necessary equipment if the members want it and are willing to pay for it.

In addition to renewing our repeater coordination, PARS has paid for a year's membership in WWARA. This will entitle the

club to a vote on any motions brought up at the general business meetings, and to receive their newsletter, *The Coordinator*. We'll also be placing an ad in this year's repeater directory, in an effort to bolster our membership. You can find out more about the WWARA at [www.wwara.org](http://www.wwara.org). - de N7UK

## WA Senate mulling ham antenna law

The Washington state senate is considering a new bill, S.B. 5002, which would strengthen existing state laws limiting county and local restrictions against amateur radio antenna structures. The bill, sponsored by Senators Pam Roach and Don Swecker, would amend RCW sections 35 and 36 to specify that no city, town, or county "... shall restrict an amateur radio antenna height to less than seventy feet unless the restriction is necessary to achieve a clearly defined health, safety, or aesthetic consideration."

Existing state law requires counties and towns to conform to PRB-1, which calls for "reasonable accommodation" for amateur antennas. As you might imagine, that phrase is open to wildly divergent interpretations. The revised law, if approved, would require WA counties and towns wanting to prohibit installation of a ham antenna structure higher than 70' to first prove that the structure would be a safety hazard or an eyesore.

As with PRB-1, state law does not try to limit restrictions imposed by "CC&Rs" (covenants, conditions, and restrictions), rules agreed to by contract between a home buyer and homeowners' association. The FCC considers these to be voluntary agreements between private parties, and therefore beyond the force of law. The ARRL is trying to get the FCC to reconsider its stance on this issue, arguing that, in many areas of the country, it's difficult to avoid CC&Rs when buying a house or condominium.

At "press time", S.B. 5002 was under consideration in the Senate Economic Development & Telecommunication Committee. Complete text of the bill is available at [www.hamtowerlaw.com](http://www.hamtowerlaw.com).

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## **Minutes of the PARS General Meeting, 18 January 2001**

The members met at the Bellevue Senior Center. Nine members attended, a quorum. One visitor also attended. President Beckmeier brought the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

Following introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance, the Secretary presented a program on computer-aided antenna modeling. He used the EZNEC program to model three antennas and predict their performance, and demonstrated some of the capabilities and limitations of the software.

The Vice President presented the 2000 Ham of the Year award to Bob Adams, KJ7BP, for his service to the club. *[see the article elsewhere in this issue - Ed.]*

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

**Treasurer's report:** The Treasurer reported a positive balance as of Jan. 18 *[financial statements are available from the Treasurer - Ed.]*, and reminded the members that dues are due from all members for the 2001 calendar year. The Secretary requested that all members fill in and return their survey forms along with their dues.

**Trailer report:** The Secretary noted that all of the hamfest donations had been removed from the trailer during the weekend prior to Thanksgiving.

**Hamfest report:** The Treasurer announced that there would be a "cleanup party" day to clean and price donated items for the hamfest, date to be determined.

**Contest report:** The Secretary reported that PARS would again participate in the CQ WW WPX contest, to be held on Mar. 24-25.

**Programs:** Nothing to report.

**Field Day:** The members voted to hold Field Day in Downtown Park in Bellevue this year. The President expressed his willingness to tow the PARS trailer to the park. The members discussed the permitting process for use of the park.

**Publicity:** Chair Lisa Marker, K7LAM, was not present. The Secretary reported that Lisa would complete the brochure by Jan. 28.

**Old business:** Doug Bell is shopping for a new repeater controller for the WS7K machine, and has located 18 potential suppliers so far. The Secretary noted that the repeater's frequency coordination had expired, and that he had applied for a five-year renewal for the frequency coordination with the Western Washington Amateur Relay Association, as well as a year's membership for PARS in the WWARA. The Secretary planned to attend the WWARA meeting on Feb. 1, which would conflict with the Feb. PARS Board meeting. The Board members decided to cancel the meeting. The Secretary then announced that PARS has a new liaison at Puget Sound Energy to provide access to the repeater site, and discussed some of the reasons for his wanting to replace the repeater controller.

**New business:** Don Hickman, KC7MDA, thanked the members for sending him a get-well bouquet following his stroke in November.

With no further business, the President adjourned the meeting at 9:25.

*Respectfully submitted -  
Kirk Bellar N7UK  
PARS Secretary*