
SPARKS

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Puget Amateur Radio Society

October 2002

Skagit County RDF Foxhunt

Greetings,

This is a little late, but thought you would like to be aware that the annual Skagit & Whatcom County Ham Clubs are opening up their annual Fox Hunt to all Hams and Clubs. Date is Saturday, October 19. Here is an information link on the Mt. Baker ARC web page: www.qsl.net/k7skw/PresidentsCup.htm

Hope some of your members can attend.

TNX es 73's

Rodger - KK7LK, www.qsl.net/kk7lk
Mt.Baker ARC, www.qsl.net/k7skw

Happy birthday to you!

| | | |
|-------|-----------------|--------|
| Oct 2 | Clair Martin | KC7ARX |
| Nov 4 | Mel Carlson | W7KDZ |
| Nov 6 | Jim Von Seggern | KC7FEH |

Upcoming meetings

As of today, our president has confirmed the following speakers at our regular meetings:

- Nov. - Jim Fenstermaker, Vice Director of the NW division of ARRL
- Dec. - Christmas party
- Jan. - Mark Whitaker
- Feb. - Ron Verscharyl

He hopes to get Mar. - June filled in the next few weeks.

Salmon Run '02

Last month, PARS participated for the fifth time in the Washington State Salmon Run, sponsored by the Western Washington DX Club (WWDXC). Hams around the globe try to work as many of the 39 WA counties as they can find during this event. Every year the PARS contest crew has descended upon a different county to put K7PAR on the air, starting with our first tentative effort from the trailer (in King County, of course) in '98. Then Your Former *Sparks* Editor got the nutty notion to rent a motor home and drive it to a "rare" county, namely sleepy Wahkiakum, west of Longview, for the '99 Run, abetted by Hef KD7E. I'm convinced we started a trend with our mini-DXpedition, since other hams have activated Wahkiakum in every subsequent Run.

In recognition of our efforts to get a rare county on the air, or maybe just sensing that they had a live one, the WWDXC offered to let us operate as the Salmon Run bonus station in 2000, using their W7DX call. Hef, Al N7VOF, and I headed for Chelan county, near the geographic center of the state, to hand out bonus points to the deserving.

While perusing the results from past Runs, I noticed that Pend Oreille county, north of Spokane, was never known to have been activated for this contest (Someone may have made some contacts from there, but never bothered to submit a log). This was all the enticement I needed, so last year Mark KD7KUN and I made the six-hour road trip to a fishing resort (trout, not salmon) near the town of Newport, rented a cabin, and set up shop. The DX Club rewarded our efforts with one of their coveted packages of smoked salmon, which we shared with the other PARS members at last February's meeting.

Last year's Run was also notable for an increase in the number of mobile operators activating multiple counties, especially Ward N0AX and Jack K7ED, who operated as the W7DX bonus station while motoring through no less than 20 of the 39 counties! Other WA ops were starting to get the DXpedition bug, in some cases setting up on county lines and handing out double QSOs. One place still not getting much attention was San Juan county, consisting of San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, Shaw, Blakely, Decatur, and numerous smaller islands in northern Puget Sound. It has relatively few resident operators, many of whom don't live on the islands full-time; and having to wait for the ferry doubtless discourages the mobile ops. It's consistently one of the most-wanted WA counties among the county-hunting crowd, for the same reasons. Jack was planning a solo mobile effort this year, and intended to spend some time operating from San Juan, when I suggested to him that PARS could do a portable operation from there and free him up to spend more time on the "mainland." Jack readily agreed, and this year's venue was set.

Lisa and I went to Orcas Island in late July and scouted for a location for the Run. I found a collection of rental cottages on the southeast coast of the island, one of which was situated right on Rosario Strait with a view of Mt. Baker. Better yet, it was surrounded by decent-sized firs, some of them 80 feet or better, just right for hanging antennas from. The cottage would sleep four or more, depending upon how friendly the occupants were. I

Next general meeting - Thursday, Oct. 17 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. We will have John Mertel of STEEPIR, a local antenna manufacturer as our speaker. 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 - Thursday, Nov. 7 at 7:00 PM at the Cowboy Steakhouse, located on the east side of the Totem Lake Mall in back of the Bank of America Bldg. Take the 124th St. exit off of I-405 and go east to the first street with a left turn lane. Turn left, cross the railroad tracks, continue to the next light, turn right at the bank, go one block and take a right. All PARS members are welcome.

rented it for the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights of the Salmon Run weekend, which would allow about half a day each for antenna setup and teardown. After advertising my intentions in the June Sparks, Van KD7QIT expressed a desire to participate. I told him that, since there were no other takers, we'd have enough room for his family as well (I had extended an invitation to Zoli, HA1AG, who'd been looking for a Salmon Run sponsor via the WWDXC, but he was unable to get a visa into the U.S.). School commitments meant that Van and crew wouldn't be able to come prior to the start of the contest.

I arrived at the cabin just after noon on the Friday before the Run, and set about erecting as many antennas as daylight would allow. I put up my 3-element tribander atop a 36-foot push-up mast, the club's R-5 vertical and 80-meter dipole, and a 3-element 6-meter beam. The weather was faultless the entire weekend, for which I was especially grateful during my antenna-raising chores. After a dinner break, I set up my TS-870 and IC-706 on the dining table, plugged in some antennas, booted the laptop, and made sure that everything was ready to go. The 6-meter antenna and feedline were exhibiting a high SWR. I wasn't expecting to make many contacts on 6 anyway, so I didn't take the time to troubleshoot the problem. Similarly, I decided not to put up my inverted-L for 160 meters, since I didn't expect to hear much contest activity there.

The contest began the next day at 0900 local time. After a couple of minutes of tuning around the bands, I found a spot on 20 meter phone to call CQ. My contact rate was pretty good for a minor contest, 40 QSOs in the first hour. After the rate slowed, I tuned around some more and was surprised to find that 10 was open to the east coast. I worked 50 stations in 53 minutes on 10m phone, then slipped down to 15 meters and worked 46 more stations at nearly the same rate. This was our operating pattern throughout the contest: We'd go to a new band or mode, call CQ and work until the rate fell, then change bands/modes and repeat. The contest rules required that we stay on the same band/mode for at least 10 minutes. This proved frustrating at times on Sunday, when the QSO rate slowed. We didn't do much "search-and-pounce" operating - since we were operating from a rare county, both the Washington and non-Washington participants were looking for us. Many of these QSOs were with casual participants who had no idea what the Salmon Run was about, but were happy to give us a contact anyway.

Contesting from an island had an added advantage: We'd get calls from people working towards Islands On The Air (IOTA) or U.S. Islands (USI) awards. Occasionally, I'd give out the appropriate IOTA and USI info, which would catch someone's ear and result in a contact we wouldn't have made otherwise. I even gave out my own Ten-Ten number when asked. There was also a collegiate QSO party taking place the same weekend, and we did a bit of *quid pro quo* with the participating college stations.

Van finally showed up at the cabin at 1400, with XYL Margie and harmonics Vanessa and Joey. Van took over the operating chores for a while, which freed me to put up the 40 meter dipole. We used his TS-2000 to search for new multipliers. Most of our daytime contacts were with U.S. stations (outside of Washington), Canada, and a handful of Europeans. Our higher-band signals were mostly bouncing over our own state, as we expected from previous Runs, but around 1700 we switched to 40 and 80 meters and started exchanging contacts with other WA ops in earnest. We continued to trade off radio duties until about 2000, stopped for a quick dinner with the rest of Van's clan, then continued working until midnight. The contest rules mandate no operation from midnight to 0900 local on Sunday - a much-appreciated sleep break.

We resumed at 0900. Van and family left about 1130 to allow some time for sightseeing before they caught the ferry back to Anacortes. Most of our Saturday contacts had been on phone, so I concentrated on making CW contacts on Sunday afternoon. The QSO rate slowed, either because we'd already worked the active participants, or else everyone was tuned in to the football games. The pace picked up considerably, though, during the final half-hour of the contest. I worked 21 stations in as many minutes on 15 phone, then switched to 10 meters with 8 minutes left and made 13 more contacts. As the clock rolled to 1700, I looked down at the final tally: 602 QSOs. This was about 250 more than our previous best effort in Chelan.

Since I had booked the cabin through Sunday night and had taken Monday off from work, I waited until the next morning to pack and tear down the antennas. A young doe appeared and began nibbling the foliage about 40 feet away from me while I was winding up coax; I'd seen her and another doe on the previous afternoon, sunning themselves on the lawn next to the cabin. I finished packing about 1100, caught the 1350 ferry, and got home just ahead of Lisa that evening.

For the record, here's the QSO breakdown by band/mode:

| | 80 | 40 | 20 | 15 | 10 | Total |
|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-------|
| SSB | 45 | 25 | 82 | 125 | 160 | 437 |
| CW | 14 | 13 | 38 | 68 | 32 | 165 |

We worked 26 of the 39 WA counties, 48 states, 6 Canadian provinces, and 9 DXCC countries. To date I've received 20 QSL cards, many from county-hunters. I'll bring 'em along to this month's meeting. Meanwhile, you can peruse Van's Orcas photos at www.kichline.com. All in all, it was a terrific experience, and the results were more than gratifying. I may have to rethink my plan to go to a different county every year ... San Juan would certainly be worth a repeat visit. - de N7UK

Minutes of the PARS general meeting, 19 September 2002

The members met at the Bellevue Senior Center. 10 members attended, a quorum, plus 5 guests. The president called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Ronald Verschuy1, K7AAE, presented a program in which he talked about his many activities with many military and emergency amateur related groups.

After the talk, the meeting broke for refreshments. The president called the business meeting to order at 8:48 PM.

The members approved the June meeting minutes as published in the September issue of Sparks.

Treasurer's report: Our new treasurer explained that he had made the insurance payment with his own check, since he didn't have signatory power yet. Our previous treasurer reimbursed him from the club's account. After that payment we had \$1393.89 left.

The president asked that members take turns around the room telling about any radio contacts they had made or any other ham related activities. He asked for short dissertations, less than 5 minutes apiece.

- Hef worked the only ham on East Timor.
- One of the attendees made lots of interesting PSK31 contacts, particularly on 20 m.
- Kirk showed off his QSL card for Ducie Island, the newest DXCC entity. He made the contact on March 20, during the first DXpedition to activate the new entity.
- Scott talked about contacting the ISS on VHF.
- Charles made several contacts on local repeaters along the way on his trip to California and back.
- Art has been keeping in daily touch via an 11 o'clock HF net with Al and Wilbur Staples on their trip to New Mexico and back.
- John is in the process of setting up a station to work the satellites.

The president announced that this had been an experiment to see how attendees liked it, and we would be including this in each meeting, so be prepared with something to say.

Trailer report: Mark reported he is still working on getting extra power to the trailer. He just found out we have a new lock on the trailer. He will try to put the smoke detector in this coming week.

Hamfest report: Kirk reported that the hamfest will be in March as usual, and we're looking for donations and/or consignments to sell. Principally ham related items, but anything electrical will be considered.

Contest report: Kirk reported that this coming weekend will be the Washington State Salmon Run. Van Kichline and he will be operating from a cabin rented on Orcas Island. Details can be found at www.dxc.org/salmonrun. Hef and Kirk said that the Salmon Run is a fun contest for Washington hams, even if you don't leave home.

The next contest will be the ARRL Phone Sweepstakes in November.

Old Business:

- Installation of an antenna at the Senior Center: Kirk needs to complete his plan and submit it to the facilities folks for their review.
- Repeater controller replacement: Once a month, Kirk has been pestering Steve Zombotne (sp?), our man at PSE who is supposed to be doing the work for us, but no progress so far. He's also talked to John Fortier N7WDF at PSE, who said he would help if Steve couldn't or wouldn't make the time.
- Purchase of a copy of Adobe Acrobat for the newsletter editor: Doug reported that this product lists at about \$220, which seems expensive for our use, but there are also shareware solutions available that he will try. Terry mentioned a web site which will convert a document for free. Mark mentioned he has Acrobat 4 and would be willing to perform conversions.

New Business: The president mentioned that the Christmas meeting is usually held at a member's home, and asked if the club would like to hold a summer picnic. Kirk suggested that this could be associated with an operating event.

Announcements for the good of the order:

Someone mentioned that the ARRL sent an email message to anyone who had a field position in ARES about a Homeland Security Grant that in several more weeks they will open enrollment to anyone. The president requested he forward the message to him so that he can send it to the members.

There was discussion about the need to move the trailer closer to the building, and the availability of a trailer ball but no vehicle.

[There may have been a bit more here, but the cassette ran out, and I didn't notice.]

The president declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted –
Doug Bell KD7KKR
PARS Secretary

| PARS 2002 - 03 Club Officers: | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|--------------|
| President | Don Hickman | KC7MDA | 425-821-7025 |
| Vice-President | Charles Beckmeier | KC7GMF | 425-822-2339 |
| Secretary | Doug Bell | KD7KKR | 206-362-2421 |
| Treasurer | Van Kichline | KD7QIT | 425-820-7278 |

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| 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 North 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 www.qsl.net/k7par . This is always a work in progress, so check back often. | | | |
| Send articles , comments, want ads, large unmarked bills, etc. for inclusion in this newsletter to Doug Bell, KD7KKR, 12755 27th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98125-4311, or e-mail to warrenhb@msn.com. | | | |
| Send all other club-related correspondence to PARS, PO Box 32, Kirkland, WA 98083-0032. | | | |