



SPARKS



Vol. 15, No. 2

Newsletter of the Puget Amateur Radio Society

February 1999

No KLM program this month

Last month we were treated to a show-and-tell from SGC in Bellevue. This month we had planned on hearing from another local manufacturer, KLM Antennas in Monroe.

Unfortunately, KLM president Bruce Scott backed out of the program at the last minute. There's still some chance that he'll be able to do a program before June.

As of "press time", we have no alternate program lined up for this month. If we can't get an alternate speaker, then we'll run some of our new ARRL videos after the business meeting and the break. - de N7UK

PARS pix at SGC's Web site

If you attended the January meeting, you may have noticed that one of the SGC employees was recording the event on his digital camera. You can see the results at their Web page:

<http://www.sgcworld.com/2020/parsmeeting.htm>

SGC included four photos from the meeting, as well as some excerpts from last month's *Sparks*. Had I known they'd be plastering my prose all over the Web, I would've written *much* better copy! - de N7UK

It's Hamfest time!

With the Mike & Key hamfest less than four weeks away (Mar. 13), we hope you'll consider donating your unwanted ham-, computer-, or electronics-related items to the club. All donations are tax-deductible.

We'll also sell items on consignment. The club will collect a 15% commission on the sale.

If you're planning to attend the fest, how about helping out for an hour or two at our seller's tables? It's an easy job, and a good chance to chat with your fellow PARS members, as well as the other attendees. There'll be a sign-up sheet at this month's meeting.

Call Hef, KD7E, to arrange for a donation pickup, have something to consign, or would like to help at the tables.

Happy Valentine's Day



Dues are past due

Those of you who haven't paid your '99 dues must do so right away to remain in good standing. Dues are still \$15.00 for individuals, \$22.50 for families (two or more people sharing the same mailing address). Bring your check or cash to the February meeting, or mail your check to our NEW club address:

PARS
PO Box 32
Kirkland WA 98083-0032

Contact Charles, KC7GMF, if you have any questions about your dues status.

Next general meeting - Thursday, Feb. 18 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. We have no program planned yet for this month (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. 4 at 7:00 PM. All PARS members are welcome.

New ham band at 60 meters?

From the Jan. 22 ARRL Letter: "The FCC has issued an Experimental Radio Service license to the ARRL to permit two-way tests in the vicinity of 5 MHz, the most likely site of the next amateur HF band. The license, bearing the call sign WA2XSY, was issued January 8. A group of 15 current amateurs in various parts of the US and the Caribbean will conduct experimental, two-way RTTY and SSB transmissions within the band 5.100 to 5.450 MHz. To avoid interfering with existing services, the participants will confine their operations to the least-populated 50-kHz segment.

"The idea is to show that an amateur allocation there will improve our emergency communication capabilities by filling the gap between the 3.5 and 7.0 MHz bands,' said ARRL Executive Vice President David Sumner, K1ZZ. Sumner pointed out that several of the participants are phone net members in the Caribbean and Gulf area who frequently handle hurricane-related traffic and now must alternate between 75 meters and 40 meters. Other participants are members of a nationwide digital data-forwarding network.

"Participants in the WA2XSY experiment may run up to 200 W effective radiated power. Similar multiband trap dipoles capable of operation on 80 and 40 meters as well as at 5 MHz will be employed at each station location. Operation by participants will consist of short transmissions to determine propagation characteristics.

"Participating stations are located in

New Hampshire, Tennessee, Ohio, Florida, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Indiana, California, Utah, New York, Texas, the US Virgin Islands, and Maryland."

At present, the ARRL is seeking no additional participants, and has no set operating times or frequencies.

New skyhook for the trailer ... maybe

Member Dick Schwanke, W9HXM, has generously donated a new Hy-Gain 14AVQ vertical to the club. This antenna covers 10, 15, 20, and 40 meters.

I've had some discussions with the facilities managers for the Senior Center about erecting the antenna on the roof of the building. I even had the opportunity to take a stroll around the roof to consider the options for installing it.

The facilities guys were generally positive about the idea, although they did have some reservations about running the 35' radials that we'd need to make it work. They're concerned that the radials would be a hazard for anyone needing to do roof maintenance. I'm still waiting for their decision.

If we don't get the okay to install it at the Center, the 14AVQ will make a dandy addition to our Field Day antenna arsenal. - *de N7UK*

Feb. Board minutes available

Minutes of the February Board meeting are available from the Secretary.

PARS 1998 - 99 Club Officers:

President - Jim von Seggern, KC7FEH	360-638-1715	Secretary - Kirk Bellar, N7UK	206-542-6742
Vice President - Lorie Graff, N7LCO	425-392-5846	Treasurer - Charles Beckmeier, KC7GMF	425-822-2339

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.

Join us on the PARS net every Wed. night at 7:00 PM, on the WS7K repeater, 443.2 MHz (103.5 Hz PL). The repeater is located on Rose Hill in Kirkland.

Visit our Web page at <http://www.qsl.net/k7par>. We've just started building this page, so check back often.

Send articles, comments, want ads, idle rumors, 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.

Minutes of the PARS general meeting, Jan. 21, 1999

The club met at the Bellevue Senior Center. Sixteen members were present, a quorum. Seven visitors also attended, including six employees of Bellevue radio manufacturer SGC. President Von Seggern was absent.

The Vice President called the meeting to order at 7:12 PM. Following introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance, Pierre Goral, KI7UA, co-founder and president of SGC, gave a presentation describing his company's history and products, and fielded questions from those present. Pierre and his employees brought numerous SGC products for display: HF radios, antenna tuners, amplifiers, and antennas, intended mainly for mobile and portable operation. The Vice President allowed extra time during the break for members to have a closer look at the products and to chat individually with SGC employees.

Following the break, the Vice President called the business meeting to order. The members approved, without revision, the minutes of the November general meeting as published in the December issue of *Sparks*. There was no December general meeting, and therefore no December minutes to be voted upon for approval.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer reported a positive balance for the 30 days ending January 8, and reported on the deposit and withdrawal amounts for the same period. [*Financial statements are available from the Treasurer - Ed.*] The Vice President reminded the members that annual dues were due by the end of January.

Trailer Committee: The Secretary had nothing new to report regarding the trailer. He reiterated the need for new batteries for the 12V distribution system, as had been discussed at previous meetings. The Vice President reminded the members that the trailer was available for use by any member, and the Secretary offered to instruct any of the members on use of the trailer equipment. He advised the members that anyone wanting the combination to the trailer's padlock should make the request to a Board member, and that

the Board would determine whether to let the member have the combination.

Flea Market: Committee Chairman John Heflin, KD7E, was not present to report. The Vice President asked that members wishing to donate items for the Mike & Key flea market should contact Hef, and reminded them that the flea market was not far in the future [March 13]. The Secretary reported that he and the President had settled on a 15% club commission for items sold on consignment.

Nomination Committee: The Vice President said that she would be announcing nominees for the '99-'00 PARS Board at the April general meeting. She reported that two (unnamed) members had already agreed to be nominated for President and Vice President, and solicited nominees for Secretary and Treasurer.

Field Day: Chairman Bob Adams, KJ7BP, solicited ideas to make this year's Field Day better than last year. He suggested that the club could increase the tower height, and have participants sign up for operating shifts so that the club could operate for the full 24 hours of the event. He also wanted to have digital HF capability for this year's operation, noting that each digital contact counts as two points. The Chairman and the Secretary discussed whether to log Field Day contacts by hand or computer. The Chairman said that he would apply to the city of Bellevue for the permit to use Downtown Park again for Field Day.

Old Business: The Vice President noted that the club has programs scheduled for February and March, but nothing yet for April through June. She believed that the program for one of those months would be devoted to fox hunting, and mentioned that she was talking with the Issaquah and Maple Valley ARC's about having a combined hunt and possibly a joint project to build direction finders.

New Business: The Board recommended getting a club PO box. The Treasurer had approached Kirkland REACT about sharing and splitting the cost of their existing box, and they

had agreed. The members voted and approved this arrangement. The current annual cost to PARS will be \$22.00. The Treasurer has the key to the box, and will retrieve the PARS mail. The new address is: **PARS, P.O. Box 32, Kirkland WA 98083-0032**. The Treasurer said that he would send a change-of-address notice to the Dept. of Licensing for the trailer registration, and the Vice President said that the club would change the address on its insurance policy, corporation papers, etc. Correspondence requiring a street address will go to the Treasurer's house.

Chuck Graff, K7CHV, asked the Secretary to include the club's Web address in every issue of *Sparks*, to which the Secretary assented [The address is <http://www.qsl.net/k7par>. It always appears at the bottom of page 2 of *Sparks*. - Ed.] The Secretary also mentioned that he'd been sending *Sparks* to ABC Communications in Shoreline, and that they had been posting it on their bulletin board.

The Vice President presented the Ham of the Year Award to Kirk Bellar, N7UK. She cited his efforts at maintaining and upgrading the trailer, his service as Secretary and *Sparks* editor, his work to obtain the club's callsign, and his help in installing a new controller for the WS7K repeater.

The Vice President noted that member Herschel Whiting, WS7K, has sold his Kirkland condominium and bought a house in Sequim. The Treasurer wondered whether the club should change the WS7K repeater callsign. The Vice President and Secretary said that Herschel was still a member in good standing, and that the repeater controller couldn't easily be reprogrammed with a new callsign; therefore, they didn't intend to change the repeater's call unless Herschel objected. The Secretary praised PSE employee Jon Fortier, N7WDF, for his help in installing the new repeater controller, and recommended a letter of commendation to him.

Tim Monk, KD7DEY, suggested that PARS present a program about ham radio at one of the local schools. The Vice President asked Tim to come up with an appropriate time and place.

John Black, W7HIL, said that he and four other hams had founded an informal group at Providence Point, and were busily finding ways to circumvent their antenna restrictions. He also mentioned that the group would be involved with EARS, as would some of his fellow Issaquah ARC members. He expressed a desire that some of the PARS members activate the club trailer in case of emergency.

With no further business, the Vice President adjourned the meeting at 8:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kirk Bellar, N7UK
PARS Secretary

Modem woes

And from the Dec. 25 ARRL Letter: "A maker of 'wireless modems' and a cable TV company that's been installing the units across the US have told the ARRL they'll do whatever it takes to keep the devices from causing interference to amateur HF bands...The devices, manufactured overseas by Phonex Corporation of Midvale, Utah, operate under Part 15 of the FCC's rules... One unit plugs into the telephone connection while the other serves as a telephone or modem jack; both plug into convenient ac outlets. The carrier-current devices impose RF on the power line to transmit data back and forth in the form of wideband FM..."

"Unfortunately, the Phonex wireless modems operate on 3.52 and 8.27 MHz. Cable giant TCI has been installing these units in some subscribers' homes..."

"ARRL Lab Supervisor Ed Hare, W1RFI, says the League received reports in mid-December about persistent interference on the low end of 80 meters and on other bands. The interference, consisting of discrete, somewhat noisy and drifting carriers, typically showed up around 3520 to 3530 kHz, but harmonics have been reported as high as 20 meters..."

"Hams experiencing harmful interference they believe is related to these devices should contact their local TCI office..."

A tutorial on developing code speed

[Thanks to Dick Schwanke, W9HXM, for the following article. - Ed.]

One of the most important concepts to develop in copying code is to avoid anything that will upset the free flow and rhythm that is needed for successful results. The following suggestions will help to achieve this.

The writing tool is more important than most people realize. Pencils can break off the point. Failure to press hard enough can render the text unreadable later. My recommendation is to have two identical ball-point pens at hand any time you sit down to copy code, and make sure they are broken in immediately before using, to be able to write the first character as soon as it is sent.

Most people will naturally try to write cursive. If cursive is to be used, it is best to use lower case only; but there is a problem with letters such as **t** and **i** which need a second stroke. The norm is to wait for the end of the word and go back for the second stroke. It is best to avoid going back for anything. I prefer printing in all capital letters and spending some time (separate from copying) developing methods of writing each letter with the minimum number of strokes. For example, I make the letter **A** by starting in the lower left corner and making an inverted **U** with a bar across the middle, thus using two strokes instead of three. It is also very important to be able to tell the difference between **I** and **1**, **Z** and **2**, and **O** and **Ø**. I put a slash through the zero. Having an absolutely stable alphabet that requires no thinking is the backbone of copying code above 15 words per minute.

Writing or printing small is very important, as the more real estate is covered, the longer it takes. There is a natural tendency when one is copying near the limit of one's ability to write larger than when one is comfortable. This must be resisted. Disregard capitals, even though the natural tendency is to make some distinction at the beginning of a sentence or in words such as state names that are normally capitalized. They take extra time and disrupt the smooth flow, which is very necessary. I recommend writing only half way across the page, to shorten the time required to return to the beginning of the next line. Also, it is easier to decide when to begin the next line if you are in the middle of the page, rather than crowding up to the right margin. If you think a word is ended and have started back to the beginning of the next line and the word continues, ignore it and finish the word on the new line, again to avoid interrupting the flow. Punctuation is a similar problem. It seems strange to start a new line with a

comma, period or question mark, but you should write it where you are, rather than go through the extra motions needed to make it look pretty.

I like to copy code in notebooks with spiral bindings, because they lie flat with no problems and I don't have to hold them down. This is not completely trouble-free. Right handers should have the spiral ONLY on the left and left handers should have the spiral ONLY on the right. [As a southpaw, I recommend writing from back to front in a conventional spiral notebook if you're sinistrally inclined, or get a "lefty" notebook that's bound on the right. The bigger office-supply stores carry them. - Ed.] Allowing the spiral to be under your hand while copying can be upsetting and spoil the free flow.

Copying behind may or may not be easy to learn, but is essential because the code length varies from letter to letter, while the space between letters is constant. My calculations suggest that a writing speed of about 70 words per minute would be required if one insists on writing only in the spaces between the characters when the code speed is 20 wpm. Teaching yourself to copy behind can be aided by selecting a code speed at which you are completely comfortable and forcing yourself to wait until the following character is being sent before writing the previous character. When you are completely comfortable with copying one character behind, try two characters behind. When you are completely comfortable with two, go for three characters behind. When you are comfortable with three characters, it is time to start speeding up the code you are practicing. The reason for all of this is that when you encounter words such as "meet" and "feet", you will find yourself behind because of the shortness of the code combinations. If you can't handle it, you will miss some characters before you get back in rhythm.

Many CW operators skip obvious letters when in real-time communication with another station. There is nothing wrong with this AFTER you have passed the test; but the test questions will often ask you to write the "height of the antenna" (or a similar question), and if you copied "ft" instead of "feet", you risk missing the question.

I recommend that you practice writing everything and, if you have the option, to copy random characters at least half the time, because a random character generator will give you an even distribution of all alphabetic, numeric and special characters; while plain text will normally be short on numbers, punctuation and special characters in relation to alphabetic, and even the alphabetic will not have even distribution.
- de W9HXM

The Prez Sez...

First of all, I would like to extend my congratulations to Kirk N7UK, the 1998 Ham of the Year. It is an award richly deserved, not only for his roles in PARS over the past several years, but also for his role in the development of the Shoreline Auxiliary Communications Service [an emergency communications group, similar to ARES - Ed.]. I have it from a highly-placed and unimpeachable source in the Shoreline emergency system (also a mutual friend, who shall remain nameless) that without Kirk, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to set Shoreline ACS up. I only regret that I was not able to be present to make the presentation myself. Way to go Kirk, you are a role model for all of us!

The swap meet in Puyallup is fast approaching. As most of us already know, it's about the best place in this area to locate good used gear. I hope that many of you will be able to attend. If you are interested in helping out I'm sure that John Heflin, KD7E, would like to hear from you.

I'll see you all Thursday at the meeting, and don't forget the dinner at Coco's on 148th Ave. and 24th St. NE at 5:30 before the meeting. - 73 de Jim KC7FEH

Birthdays!

John Heflin, KD7E	February 29
Bill Bingham, WA7VEH	March 6
Lester Ellis, KC7TQP	March 15

EARS hoping you'll call

Eastside Amateur Radio Service - interested parties contact John, W7HIL, at 425-391-8026 or Chuck, WA7EBH, at 425-392-5303. Always room for more help in this community activity.

Programs, get your programs

We're still looking for programs for the April, May, and June meetings. Call Lorie if you'd like to be a speaker, or if you have a program idea.

And finally...

My thanks to the Ham of the Year Committee (Jim, Chuck Stroeher, and John Black) and the rest of the club for honoring me with this year's award. It's humbling to be counted among such august company.

I owe a debt of thanks to several people: To Lorie, for encouraging me (some might call it arm-twisting) to get involved, first as program coordinator, then Secretary; to Jim and to Charles Beckmeier, for humoring me during the Board meetings; and to those of you who've helped out during Field Day and the contests, particularly Bob, Hef, Al, and Doug.

Although I've been a PARS member since '92, I never really felt that it was "my" club until I started taking part in its inner workings. I encourage everyone to do the same, whether by running for office, joining a committee, or putting on a program. I promise the rewards will exceed the effort. - 73 de N7UK

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Buy, sell, or trade your ham-, electronic-, or computer-related treasures here. Ads are gratis for PARS members. Call or e-mail Kirk, N7UK, to place your ad. The Editor reserves the right to capriciously refuse any ads for items he deems unsuitable, e.g. macrame or furbys.

WANTED TO BUY Ham radio and test equipment that glows in the dark (anything with tubes). I enjoy restoring and most of all operating these beauties from a BYGONE ERA. They will get a loving home. Also will buy any tubes, parts, extra manuals, pre-1970 CQ-73-ARRL handbooks, or anything else relating to ham radio of that era. These items are of great value as a resource when restoring equipment. Jerry, WA7BUY, 360-457-6671 or kit-susa@olypen.com.

KEYS WANTED - Collector wants to buy straight keys, bugs, keyers, other telegraph-related instruments, books, and ephemera. Kirk, N7UK, 206-542-6742 or n7uk@aol.com.