



SPARKS



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Puget Amateur Radio Society

January 2002

6 meters is HOT!

Although, by most accounts, Solar Cycle 23 peaked in the spring of 2000, Ol' Sol is still stirring up the ionosphere for us. Your *Sparks* Editor discovered about a week ago that local VHF aficionados have been enjoying almost daily 6-meter openings to the east coast for the past two months, via F-2 propagation. Having been duly alerted, I hastily dug the pieces of my 6-meter beam out of the aluminum pile in the back yard, bolted it all together, bungeed it to the chimney, and hooked it to my '706. I was quickly rewarded with six contacts with New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont), and one with Nova Scotia. The next morning I worked eleven more stations, adding New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island to my collection of states. The stations were loud, too... S9 and better signals were common. Many of them were engaged in transcontinental rag-chews with Seattle-area hams. Others were the recipients of huge HF-style pileups, as Northwesterners tried to add to their collection of grids worked. (VHFers identify their location according to the Maidenhead Locator System, which divides the globe into 1° latitude by 2° longitude rectangles called "grid squares", or just "grids". The Seattle area is in grid CN87.)

I'd long heard about hams working the world with a wet noodle during Cycle 19 back in the late '50s, but I never thought that I'd see such conditions myself, and was beginning to wonder whether the stories had been embellished a bit much over the years. 6-meter openings are infrequent, and usually limited to 1000 miles or less. Thanks to prevailing conditions at present, some of the

better-equipped local stations have worked Greenland, western Europe, Japan, and the Canary Islands recently.

Many of the HF rigs introduced in the last ten years include 6 meters, such as the Icom IC-706, IC-746, and IC-756, The Kenwood TS-570S and TS-2000, and the Yaesu FT-920. Ten-Tec is offering an inexpensive transverter kit, as well as an all-mode 6- and 2-meter transceiver. With the right propagation conditions, a dipole at modest height will let you join in the coast-to-coast action. If you've been ignoring that 6m position on your rig's band knob, you're missing out on some remarkable DX opportunities right now! East coast openings are occurring from approximately 0900 to 1300 local time, and openings to Europe and Japan appear around 1430. - *de N7UK*

PARS holiday party

Don and Pat Hickman were our hosts for this year's holiday party, and they did a bang-up job of decking their halls for the occasion. In attendance were Mark Whitaker and Karna Mathre, Charles and Cathy Beckmeier, Doug Bell, Dick Schwanke, and Lisa Marker and Your *Sparks* Editor. Everyone brought tempting and toothsome potluck offerings for the occasion. Lisa and I thought it only fitting to contribute a (baked) ham.

Our 2001 Ham of the Year was a no-show at the party, so we'll present the award at the January general meeting if he makes an appearance.

Our thanks to Don and Pat for graciously opening their home to us once again.

Next general meeting - Thursday, January 17 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. Program still to be determined. 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, Feb. 7 at 7:00 PM, location TBD. Contact Kirk if you'd like to attend. All PARS members are welcome.

Puyallup Hamfest - Mar. 9

Is it possible? The Mike and Key hamfest is just seven weeks away, March 9 at 0900 to be exact. PARS is getting a couple of dealer tables again, and will be doing its darndest to augment our treasury by parting with donated electronical goodies. We plan to have a work party on Mar. 2 to clean up the treasures, probably at the same location as last year. I'll let everyone know by next month.

We'll be looking for folks to man the tables, even if just for an hour or two. So if you plan on attending anyway, I hope you'll take a little time out from your ogling and help us liquidate our inventory. Needless to say (but I'll still say it), we're always looking for donations or consignments of radios, PCs, and other electronic equipment for the flea market. All donations are tax-deductible. Proceeds help to keep PARS careening along, and keep our membership dues low.

We've gotten a jump-start on our hamfest take this year, thanks to the sale of six two-meter cavities to the Federal Way ARC in early December. The Federal Way guys are busily upgrading their 147.04 repeater, and managed to find our web ad for the cavities. This sale put us well on our way to meeting our income objective for the club year, but we're not quite there yet. Your efforts and donations will help keep us in the black for another year, so we can continue to do whatever the heck it is we do.

WPX Contest - Mar. 30-31

PARS will yet again participate in the CQ World-Wide WPX Contest, occurring on the weekend of

Mar. 30-31 this year. This is your chance to work some rarely-heard DX and try your hand (ears?) at contesting. We'll start setting up antennas at 0800 Sat. morning at the Senior Center, and go QRV as soon as we're ready. Those of you who are willing to help with antennas will earn our undying gratitude, natch.

Sweepstakes results

Well, in spite of our efforts, PARS came up one section shy of a Clean Sweep again in the ARRL Phone Sweepstakes. This time we missed Idaho, of all places. Obviously, a DXpedition to Idaho is in order for this year's SS (Just kidding, uh, I think!). Still, the fun was in the chase, as always.

We ended up with 348 QSOs, 79 sections, and a total score of 54,288. My thanks to everyone who participated or just showed up for moral support, and special kudos to those of you who helped with antenna set-up. - *de N7UK*

Dues are due

What, again? That's right, folks, it's been an entire year since you last squandered your hard-earned on this dubious endeavor. Dues are \$15.00 for an individual, \$22.50 for a family (2 or more persons at the same address).

You'll find the renewal and survey form included with this month's *Sparks*. Please take a few minutes to fill in the survey. Bring your payment and renewal form to this month's meeting, or mail it to Kirk at 19353 Greenwood Ave N, Shoreline 98133. I'll have extra forms available at the meeting for those of you who get *Sparks* by e-mail and can't print out the form at home.

PARS 2000 - 01 Club Officers:

President - Mark Whitaker, KD7KUN

Vice Pres. - Lisa Marker, K7LAM

206-542-6742

Secretary-Treasurer - Kirk Bellar, N7UK

206-542-6742

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

Send articles, comments, want ads, Enron shares, 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.

FCC still declining to broach CC&Rs

From the ARRL: The ARRL got the proverbial lump of coal in its stocking in late December, but it wasn't from Santa. The FCC affirmed a November 2000 staff-level decision that declined to include privately imposed deed covenants, conditions and restrictions - CC&Rs - under the limited federal preemption known as PRB-1. That policy requires municipalities to "reasonably accommodate" amateur communication in antenna-related zoning and regulation.

The ARRL a year ago appealed to have the full FCC review the earlier denial. The Commission turned down the League's Application for Review December 18 in a Memorandum Opinion and Order released December 26.

"There has not been a sufficient showing that CC&Rs prevent Amateur Radio operators from pursuing the basis and purpose of the Amateur Service," the FCC said. The Commission said hams still can get on the air without installing residential antenna systems by operating away from home, while mobile or at club stations.

The FCC said it recognizes the importance of preserving the integrity of contractual relations that CC&Rs represent. It asserted that the ARRL had submitted no specific evidence that would persuade it to abandon its long-standing policy of excluding CC&Rs from PRB-1.

ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, expressed disappointment in the Commission's ruling. "The biggest problem Amateur Radio operators face today is being able to put up an antenna," Haynie said. "Our only approach now is to get a bill into Congress."

The FCC itself even hinted that Congressional action ought to be a next logical step. "However, should Congress see fit to enact a statutory directive mandating the expansion of our reasonable accommodation policy," the FCC declared in its MO&O, "the Commission would expeditiously act to fulfill its obligation thereunder."

Haynie conceded that extending PRB-1 protection to CC&Rs would be "a tough sell" to mem-

bers of Congress. He noted, however, that it's getting more difficult all the time for amateurs to find desirable housing that does not come with deed covenants and restrictions. "It's extremely serious for the amateur community, because it restricts what hams will be able to do in the future," he said.

The topic is likely to be the focus of additional discussion at this month's meeting of the ARRL Board of Directors.

In its Application for Review in late 2000, the ARRL maintained that the FCC should have the same interest in the effective performance of an Amateur Radio station and in the promotion of amateur communications regardless of whether the licensee's property is publicly regulated or privately governed by homeowners' associations and their architectural control committees.

A copy of the FCC's Memorandum Opinion & Order in RM-8763 is available on the FCC Web site. [www.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-01-372A1.doc]

Comm. Academy set for Mar. 23-24

Local ARES/RACES groups will be hosting the third annual Emergency Communications Academy this Mar. 23-24 at the NOAA facility at Sand Point. Course topics will include:

- ★ emergency management
- ★ terrorism response
- ★ radio direction finding
- ★ severe weather reporting (SKYWARN)
- ★ APRS
- ★ navigating with GPS
- ★ marine response and rescue
- ★ earthquake preparedness
- ★ NVIS antennas

The Academy will also be offering the ARRL Emergency Communications Course, level 1 during the same weekend.

There's no charge for the Academy, although they will ask for a small donation at the door. More info. and registration is available at www.academy2002.org

Minutes of the PARS general meeting, 15 Nov. 2001

The members met at the Bellevue Senior Center. 14 members were present, a quorum. 2 visitors also attended. The President brought the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

ARRL NW Division Vice-Director Jim Fenstermaker, K9JF, presented a program on current activities at the ARRL. Topics included the Logbook of the World, band restructuring, ARRL lobbying efforts, 40m restructuring, CC&Rs, League funding, "The Big Project", the new QRP DXCC award, and the ARRL NW division Web site.

Following a break, the President brought the business meeting to order. The members approved the minutes of the October meeting as published in the November issue of *Sparks*.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer reported a positive balance as of Nov. 15 [*Financial statements are available from the Treasurer - Ed.*]

Trailer committee: The President said he'd check and restock the trailer prior to the ARRL Sweepstakes. The Secretary noted that he and Charles Beckmeier had moved the trailer closer to the Senior Center building, had tidied up the disassembled antennas and masts behind the trailer, removed hamfest donations and trash, and had re-levelled the trailer so that the door would close properly. The Senior Center staff had previously complained to PARS about the condition of the trailer and surrounding area, and the Secretary was concerned that the staff might dispose of PARS' antennas or masts. He had advised the Senior Center that most of the debris around the trailer had been left by the staff or other users of the Senior Center, not PARS.

Contest: The Secretary announced that the club would again be participating in the ARRL phone Sweepstakes, occurring on Nov. 17-18. He solicited members to operate and to help set up and tear down the antennas. The next contest would

be the CQ World-Wide WPX contest, which would take place on Mar. 30-31.

Hamfest: The members discussed some of the details of the Puyallup hamfest, to be held on March 9. The club would rent two dealer tables, as it has done for the past four years.

Field Day: The members considered whether to hold Field Day at the Senior Center, Downtown Park, or elsewhere. Charles Beckmeier noted that he was selling his SUV and would therefore be unable to pull the trailer again.

Refreshments: The President thanked the Vice-President for bringing refreshments, especially the home-made cookies.

Old Business: The Secretary reported that he'd made no progress in getting Puget Sound Energy to grant the club access to the repeater site, so that he could replace the repeater controller.

New Business: The members voted and approved the 2001-2002 PARS budget, as included with the Oct. issue of *Sparks*.

The President remarked that he was talking with the Bellevue city government about the possibility of erecting an 80 meter dipole on the Senior Center, or on the adjoining water tank, so that an ARES team could talk to the state EOC if needed. The Secretary added that he had talked to the city previously about putting the club's R5 vertical on top of the Senior Center, and that they had been amenable to the idea. Dick Schwanke suggested that the existing end-fed random-wire antenna might be adequate; the Secretary suggested to Dick that he check in to the state emergency net. on Sat. morning or Mon. night to see how well he could be heard with the random wire.

With no further business, the President adjourned the meeting at 8:31.

- Respectfully Submitted,
Kirk Bellar N7UK
PARS Secretary-Treasurer