



SPARKS



Vol. 18, No. 4

Puget Amateur Radio Society

April 2002

Apr. program - VHF/UHF roving

This time, for sure! Lynn Burlingame, N7CFO was a no-show last month, but promises to REALLY be at this month's meeting to talk about his VHF roving exploits. See last month's *Sparks* for a description of roving.

WPX Results

Mediocre propagation, the Easter holiday, and antenna problems conspired to hold our score down this year, but our intrepid PARS contesters did their best to repeat their last-place finish in the CQ World-Wide WPX contest. I think it's safe to say that our standing is secure again this year.

A goodly crowd arrived early on Mar. 30 to set up antennas and radios. We were QRV by 10:30 AM, only to find that neither tribander we had put aloft was working as advertised. The club's mini-Mosley wouldn't load at all; I believe it was mounted too close to the metal flashing around the Senior Center Roof.

Meanwhile, my Hy-Gain would only load up on 15. This proved to be only a slight handicap, though, as 15 had the best propagation during the contest weekend. We also made a large number of contacts on 15 with the R5 vertical, and some with the 40-meter dipole, hoisted about 50 feet high. 20 meters worked okay for domestic contacts, although these only counted as 1 point, versus 3 for the DX stations. 10 meter propagation was almost non-existent this time.

New member and new ham Van Kichline needed little coaxing to get behind the mike and make his first-ever HF contact, and a half-dozen more in

quick succession. John Heflin, Al Staples, and Charles Beckmeier also contributed to the QSO count. By the time we quit Sunday afternoon, we had put 218 QSOs, 36 DX countries, and 78,228 points into the log. For the record, here are the DXCC countries we worked:

Alaska	Denmark	Netherlands
Argentina	England	Poland
Aruba	Finland	Portugal
Austria	France	Slovak Republic
Belgium	Galapagos Is.	Slovenia
Bosnia	Germany	Spain
Canada	Hawaii	Ukraine
Canary Is.	Italy	Uruguay
Cayman Is	Japan	Venezuela
Columbia	Kuwait	Virgin Is.
Croatia	Lithuania	Wales
Czech Republic	Mexico	Yugoslavia

My thanks to our setup crew: Mark Whitaker, Van Kichline, and Al and Wilbur Staples. - *de N7UK*

Field Day

Now that the Spring and hay-fever seasons are upon us, it's a bit easier to announce, with a straight face, that Field Day is just around the corner - June 22 and 23, to be exact. We're staying put at the Senior Center for this year's event, and crossing our fingers that we won't be competing with any weddings or revival meetings that weekend. Antenna setup will begin at 8:00 AM local, and we'll try to go QRV by 11:00 AM. Once we start, we'll have a 24-hour window to operate. The Board is still looking for someone to act as Field Day chair ... expect some arm-twisting at this month's meeting.

Next general meeting - Thursday, April 18 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. Lynn Burlingame will present a program on VHF roving (see 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 - Thursday, May 2 at 7:00 PM, location TBD. Contact Kirk if you'd like to attend. All PARS members are welcome.

Ham slams spam

I've noticed a disturbing trend as of late with Spam I get in my Inbox. As a computer professional I'm used to being barraged with all varieties of the processed meat product, but I've fiercely maintained the secrecy of my Holiest of Holies - my One True e-mail address. However, ever since obtaining an arrl.net alias I have said alias pointing to it. Alas! Rome was not built in a day, but was consumed by fire in one night as Nero fiddled!

It's unbelievable how so many people out there want little old me to be richer, happier, thinner, smarter, et cetera. Why, there was one person just yesterday who wanted to stash millions in an account in my name and then share it with me. True friends are indeed hard to find.

Now let me put the levity and sarcasm aside for a moment. What is undoubtedly happening is that websites are being scoured for e-mail addresses. I would be quite surprised if QRZ.com and eHam.net both were not victims of this kind of abuse. And abuse it is. As hams, we have these forums in which to meet, exchange ideas, and otherwise communicate (aside from QSOs, that is). These e-mail mass marketers are taking advantage of the fact that we supply e-mail addresses here that we tend to use often. As a result, we get nailed with spam that hawks everything from pyramid schemes to bootleg Viagra.

How can we stop this? Well, there is little that QRZ.com, eHam.net, and others can do to stop their websites from being abused. Automated search engines called "crawlers" can scour a website and capture anything that looks like an e-mail address. These crawlers are unstoppable without locking everyone out of the website. What has to happen is on our end. First and foremost, don't fall for the

"Unsubscribe" or "Opt-Out" links found in most of the spam we get these days. While some of these unsubscribe links are legitimate, others are simply used to see if the mass marketers found an e-mail address that someone actually uses. The irony is that the attempt on your part to stop the spam might actually make it worse.

The best thing to do is find out where in your e-mail software you can set up message rules. I use Outlook Express, and in that software you can configure a spam lockout rule under Tools -> Message Rules -> Mail... The idea is to build up a list of key words and phrases that the spam uses but your valid e-mail does not. You then instruct your software to automatically delete these messages from the server, or perhaps move them to another folder out of the way. There will usually be separate sections for subject keywords and message body keywords, so that gives you much flexibility in determining what constitutes spam. These keywords can be joined by an AND or an OR. That part is important because if you connect all keywords with ANDs then each keyword must appear before the rule will dispatch your spam. Set them to OR.

My current spam rule is still in its infancy, as I lost my old one due to an operating system crash, but here are some of the words and phrases I trap: xxx, web cam, web cams, financial freedom, making money, sex, no obligation, mortgage, earning, per month, adult video, FREE, \$\$\$.

I hope that this tip helps folks from choking to death on the processed meat product of the Internet. We are, after all, hams (pun intended).

73,
Edwin Alexander KS5D
(reprinted from QRZ.com)

PARS 2001 - 02 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, WASL test scores, 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.

Linear amp project

Most of you are aware that PARS owns a linear amplifier. It's a Heathkit model SB-200, capable of putting out 600 watts or so on 80 through 10 meters, minus the WARC bands. Heathkit introduced this model in 1964 and produced it until 1978, when the FCC made all amplifier manufacturers remove 10-meter capability from their products, in an effort to discourage the 11-meter crowd from running more than their legal allotment of 5 watts. Heathkit removed all of the offending 10-meter bits and pieces from the SB-200 in '78 and re-christened it the SB-201. Ergo, our linear is between 24 and 38 years old.

Some of the components have inevitably deteriorated in that time, particularly the electrolytic filter capacitors, rectifiers, and carbon resistors in the power-supply circuit. Another problem is that the transmitter has to be able to switch 135 volts at 3 amps in order to energize the amplifier's high-voltage relay, a task that few solid-state rigs can handle without help.

Luckily, the Heathkit SB-200/201 and its big brother, the SB-220/221, are still popular amps, and have spawned several companies that sell replacement and upgrade parts. With the members' approval, Your *Sparks* Editor has purchased three circuit boards from Harbach Electronics in Indiana: An upgraded power supply board with beefier capacitors and rectifiers than the original; a "soft-start" board to limit the inrush current to the tube filaments (this will extend the life of the tubes), and an optically-isolated keying board to drive the high-voltage relay. As it happens, my local ARES group just acquired an SB-201, so I'll be upgrading both amps at the same time. I expect to make a few other minor modifications and, with Doug Bell's help, connect it to our IC-740 and have it ready to go in time for Field Day.

AC power for the '200 remains a problem, given the limited amount of mains current available to us at the Senior Center. President Mark has been talking with the Center facilities folks to see if they'd be willing to put in an extra outlet or two for us. Barring that, we may have to resort to running it from our generator. We'd do this

anyway for Field Day, of course.

So how much of an advantage will the linear give us in the pileups? Increasing our power from 100 to 600 watts translates to a gain of about 7.8 dB, or roughly 1.3 S-units, depending on whose S-meter you're staring at. (There's no standard for S-units, although they're generally assumed to be 6 dB/unit). That could mean the difference between a good contact and a "sorry, OM, can't quite pull you out of the noise" when conditions are marginal. It won't improve our receiving ability, of course, but the IC-740 consistently hears everything we can work, and then some.

I'm looking forward to bringing this venerable piece of Heathkit gear up to modern performance standards, and making a bit more noise on the bands in June. - de N7UK

Nominations this month

PARS members will nominate officers for the '02-'03 club year at this month's general meeting, in accordance with our By-Laws. We'll have a clean slate next year, as all of this year's officers have announced that they're out of the running, citing the old "other commitments" excuse. Actually, Your *Sparks* Editor is citing the equally-hoary, not to mention vampirish, "we need new blood" excuse. After four years on the Board, I'm ready to be just one of the rank-and-file again, folks.

At our March meeting, several members expressed their willingness to be nominated for officer positions, with the notable exception of President. This is actually one of the easier positions on the Board, since the President's major responsibility is to keep the general meetings from generally getting out of hand. Anyone with a reasonable grasp of Robert's Rules can do it.

You can nominate yourself or someone else, if they're willing. While we usually get only one nominee per position, there's nothing to keep us from nominating more. It'd be fun to have a horse race for once. We'll announce the nominees in the May *Sparks* and take a vote at the May general meeting.

Minutes of the PARS general meeting, 21 Mar. 2001

The members met at the Bellevue Senior Center. 12 members were present, a quorum. The President brought the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

Lynn Burlingame, the scheduled speaker, was absent from the meeting. The President called the business meeting to order. The members approved the minutes of the February meeting as published in the March issue of *Sparks*.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer reported a positive balance as of March 21, and reported income and expenses for the previous 30 days. *[Financial statements are available from the Treasurer - Ed.]* He noted that the club had exceeded its sales goal for the club year, thanks to the Mike & Key hamfest sales in March, and the sale of the two-meter cavities to the Federal Way ARC in December.

Trailer committee: The President reported that he and Terry Dettman, WX7S, had inspected the trailer to make sure it was in good condition to haul to the Communications Academy at Sand Point. The President had also been talking with someone at the City of Bellevue about the possibility of getting more AC outlets for the trailer, and putting an antenna on the roof of the Center or the water tank. He thanked Charles Beckmeier for purchasing a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector, as had been approved at the January meeting.

Contest: The Secretary reminded the members that PARS would participate in the CQ World-wide WPX Contest on the weekend of Mar. 30-31. He asked for volunteers to help set up antennas at 8:00 AM on the 30th, and asked Al Staples to bring his radio to the trailer.

Hamfest: The Treasurer had already reported on the hamfest revenue during his report. Doug Bell said that he managed to get all of his hamfest items home without mishap, in spite of a severely overloaded car.

Field Day: The President asked for a volunteer to chair the Field Day committee. No one volunteered.

The President thanked the Vice President for providing refreshments.

Old Business: The Secretary remarked that PSE liaison Steve Szombathy still hadn't installed the new repeater controller. The President mentioned that former member Herschel Whiting, WS7K, was now in a nursing home in Lynwood, following a stroke he suffered in Phoenix. Herschel's callsign is still on the club's repeater. His condition makes it even more imperative that PSE replace the existing controller. The Secretary said that he'd contact Steve.

The Secretary reported that he and Dick Schwanke would attempt to eliminate the RFI problem at the Senior Center.

The President was still pursuing the possibility of getting an antenna installed on top of the Senior Center, as well as getting additional AC power to the trailer.

New Business: The Secretary moved to purchase some upgrade parts from Harbach Electronics for the club's Heathkit SB-200 linear amplifier, at a total cost of \$117. The members voted and approved the motion. Doug Bell agreed to help interface the linear to the club's IC-740 transceiver. The members discussed ways to provide power for the linear.

Don Hickman noted that the members would be nominating officers at the April meeting to serve during the '02-'03 club year. The President and Secretary announced that they would not accept any officer nominations.

With no further business, the President adjourned the meeting at 7:40. In lieu of a program, the members had an extended break for socializing and refreshments.

- Respectfully Submitted,
Kirk Bellar N7UK
PARS Secretary-Treasurer