



PVRC Newsletter

October 2011

Letter from the President – Mark KD4D

Hard to believe, but it's time to

think about **SWEEPSTAKES!** PVRC won the Unlimited Club Competition in 2009 and 2010! This is a **BIG DEAL** – our competition with the Northern California Contest Club is intense. This club competition is a real “win-win” for everyone – more stations on the air means more QSOs and more FUN for everyone in the contest!

This year, NCCC may have a huge advantage over us on 15 meters. How can we repeat our 2009 and 2010 victories? We'll win with Sweepstakes entries from each and every one of you! The key to beating NCCC is to have more of our members active in both CW and

SSB and submitting logs and spending more time with “butts in chairs”.

To encourage activity, PVRC will again offer “double five million program points” for Sweepstakes. Here's your chance to take a big step toward a PVRC 5 Million Point award or endorsement! Please let the club officers and chapter leaders know about **your** ideas for improving PVRC's Sweepstakes score. What are **you** going to do to **BEAT NCCC?**

73, Mark KD4D

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W7YS, VP2VI/W0DX*, W3IKN, W4KFT

SO3R RTTY – Mark N2QT

I wasn't able to do a full time effort in the recent SARTG RTTY contest so I decided it would be a good time to experiment with Single Op 3 Radio (SO3R). Mind you this was in RTTY, which is the easiest mode to do to extra radios as the decoding is done for you! I normally run SO2R with a single computer running N1MM so I needed to add a second computer networked to the first, a third rig, and figure out the switching and audio monitoring.

For the third rig I started to use my venerable TS940 since it had the IF output that allows me to hook up a panadapter which I thought would be key to using the extra radio efficiently. However in FSK mode it only uses high tones, and I wanted to use low tones on this rig to mix in with the high tones I normally use on the original two radios. Since this was an 'experiment' I didn't want to figure out setting up AFSK. I therefore settled on using an FT1000MKV, which allows low tones and had the advantage of having more filters. It didn't have an easy way to add a band scope but I did manage to hook up an SDR to the FT1000, fed off the RX antenna port. This gave me a 10-15khz view of the band, although I had to manually select which part of the band, since I couldn't figure out how to get it to track the tuning on the Yaesu. I also had bleed through of the SDR injection frequency into the FT1000, and other issues which hurt the effectiveness.

At least the audio routing was pretty easy. I use a somewhat modified clone of the TopTen DXDoubler. This box has an audio mix feature that allows combining the audio on two radios. I added an extra input, isolation transformer and rewired it to mix the third radio with the left ear audio of the left most of the two original radios. Running the narrow filters in both of the radios, it seemed easy to differentiate between the radio with high tones and the radio with low tones. I used the volume controls on the radios themselves to set the balance to what I liked.

Adding a second computer networked under N1MM was a bit of a struggle, but no more than any other thing tried for the first time. I used a laptop with an external USB soundcard and Edgeport USB to serial adapter. There are several features that are key for multi-one or multi-two type operation such as other rig lock out and the like that take some time to get used to when used in a single op operation. The third radio does not integrate with the SO2R logic such as N1MM's 'last one wins' so will it requires some rethinking in use.

I had a separate keyboard (one of the mini-keyboards so there would be room) and a mouse for the second computer. However I have been using Synergy, software that allows sharing of a single mouse and keyboard across multiple computers. (free from <http://synergy-foss.org/>) Since I use N1MM in its mouse-centric mode (ESM, right click sends enter) I found that using a single mouse and having the screens from the two computers next to each other I didn't use the second keyboard/mouse much.

Now for antennas. While it is said you can never have too many antennas, this becomes doubly true when trying to feed three radios. I chose to use the third radio on 40M only since my 40 dipole has stubs for isolation and does not share feedlines with any other antenna. While this was easy engineering it wasn't so hot operationally as it

forced me at times to have the third radio on the best band. I found it best to have the third radio on the third best band (or the band you're waiting to open), and be able to keep the first two radios going on the best two bands. So more relays (or antennas) are needed!

For radio arrangement, I have both my SO2R radios on the left, even though I'm right handed. I have found that since I tend to keep my right hand on the mouse, the left hand is best for radio tuning. Since there was room to the left of the second radio (once 6M e-skip died and the 6M amp could be moved) the third radio went there. This was awkward but workable.



So was this worth it? Well it was fun, and continues to be so since I enjoy the challenge of the design and operation at least as much as the contest itself. Did it help my score? Well that's not easy to compare since I used it in a part time effort; but my guess is that it didn't. I spent too much time learning the setup and its operation and fighting the problems that showed up.

Will I try it again? Of course, but with changes. Thankfully there are more contests coming up. There are just too many nuances of operation to sort through with just simulated operating.

Anyone else nuts enough to try this? Get in [contact](#) with me! - Mark N2QT

Forty Years Ago: PVRC's Asterisked Sweepstakes Win

1971 was an exciting year for PVRC in the ARRL Sweepstakes:

- Everyone enjoyed the shorter contest exchange – 1971 was the first year you no longer had to send the time of QSO and your birth date as part of the exchange.
- A young Frank Donovan K1LPL/3 had the top CW score in the Atlantic Division and came in 7th overall, behind a really young Chip Margelli (K7VPF at the time, now K7JA) who came in number one from W7RM.
- Bob Cox K3EST operated to a fifth place national finish in phone, just ahead of K1ANV (Gene W3ZZ) operating W3GRF. K7JA also came in tops in SSB SS.

Steve K0CS contacted me and pointed out that the club competition is where it got even more interesting. The results in QST show that the Mad River Radio Club came in first with 9.96M to PVRC's 8.79M and Murphy's Marauders 7.36M. However, the printed results had an * next to MRRC's total:

** At publication time the validity of the Mad River Radio Club entry is under challenge concerning the eligibility of some of its members to participate in the club aggregate score. The matter is now being examined with final disposition to be determined at a later date.*

K0CS pointed out that the August/September 2001 issue of the MRRC newsletter "[The Flash](#)" says:

Murphy's filed a protest almost immediately and after five months of political wrangling, MRRC's 1971 SS Affiliated Club entry was disqualified. The stated grounds for the disqualification was the fact that the only 'in person' meeting the club had held was the first meeting at Dayton 1971; all the subsequent meetings had been on 3907 KHz.

A "Feedback" item in June 1972 QST verified the decision to invalidate MRRC's score. So, PVRC ended up the winner in 1971 – with an asterisk. Frank W3LPL remembers:

PVRC mounted a serious effort after it became apparent that MRRC was mounting a serious effort to win the 71 SS. At the time I was working at NSA with W3GN, and he and I motivated each other to maximize our SS scores that year. I was a 24 year old 1st Lt. at the time.

Murphy's engaged the ARRL much more aggressively than PVRC did after the contest. I don't recall the nature of the protest mounted by PVRC, but it was much more low key than Murphy's.

The 1971 SS club gavel is displayed in my library! Several MRRC guys (K8MR and others) visited my open house several years ago and I let them hold it!



The “Asterisk Gavel” – photo by W3LPL

Gene W3ZZ remembers:

I had also charted the distance eligibility of the MRRC entries [based on what appeared to be their center on the Mad River] and found a number of entries that appeared to be outside the circle – enough to put the club results in question. While I was considering what to do, Murphy’s Marauders filed their objection so I let my objection go.

K3EST only entered the SS a couple of times. But he did very well. I had been entering seriously since I moved here in 1964 and finishing in the top ten most of the time. But soon afterward I got smart and stopped killing myself in a domestic contest.

This event led to the League changing the affiliated club contest score rules, as well as the near disappearance of MRRC as a club. Forty years later PVRC has a chance for a rare three-peat in winning the SS club completion.

Speaking of 1971 – Recordings of Famous Fists from Back in the Day

Frank W3LPL points out the link on the PVRC website ([here](#)) that has a short piece by Fred K3ZO on SWLing from Viet Nam and some recordings (converted to .wav by K4GKD) of the fists of W3PZW, W4KFC, W4BVV and W3AU. After listening, two thoughts came to mind: (1) I wish my signal was that strong to someone in XV/3W listening on a dipole; and (2) While I’ve been an electronic keyer guy since the first Heath keyer came out, there is something impressive about a recognizable fist.

Who the Heck is Who?

There are few new calls that will show up in the PVRC circle:

- Eric KA3ITJ is now N3TD
- Vic W4VIC will be using his new club call NF3C in contests.

Fabricating Common Mode Chokes – K0TO from the Top Band Reflector

Tod K0TO fabricated a series of RF common mode chokes using type 31 materials and RG59 coax and measured their impedance and attenuation over a range of frequencies. Lots of graphs and data [here](#).

Welcome New Members – W3LL

Please welcome the following new members were voted into PVRC during the months of August and September:

- In the Southwest VA chapter: AK4DR, K2XX, K4ORD, KA3NZR, K4ALE and KT0P
- In the Annapolis Chapter: WW3DE and WA7TOF

Member News

W4NFT (from N2QT):

Thanks to Gary W4GDG (leaning on the roll bar) who organized a work party of PVRC members Dave, N4DB, (in green) Bill, KC4D, (seated) Pete, W4WWQ (with the cutters) and Mark, N2QT to help with yard cleaning for Jim, W4NFT. Jim hasn't been able to clear the brush from his yard due to health issues and we were pleased to help rectify this. It was particularly satisfying to watch KC4D on the tractor conquer the run wild bushes with nary a groan of either man or machine.



Upcoming Contests and Log Due Dates

Contests This Month

- Oct 1 – CA QSO Party
- Oct 8 – SAC SSB
- Oct 9 – NA Spring RTTY
- Oct 15 – Worked All Germany
- Oct 17 – ARRL School Roundup
- Oct 29 – CQ WW SSB

Logs Due This Month

- Oct 11 – SARTG RTTY
- Oct 12 – ARRL Sept. VHF
- Oct 31 – All Asian DX SSB

See WA7BNM's [Contest Calendar](#) for more detail and the latest information.

K5OT New ARRL Sweepstakes Manager

From the ARRL Contest Update 14 September 2011:

The [ARRL Sweepstakes](#) has a new manager, Larry Hammel K5OT! After discovering the Novice Roundup and Sweepstakes in *QST*, Larry also noticed the exploits of Vic Clark W4KFC. "I wanted to know more, so I wrote him a letter filled with a list of crazy questions about contesting and operating techniques. What followed was magical. Vic actually wrote me back and we traded letters and then contest QSOs during the next few years. I never met this contesting/SS legend in person, but his simple efforts to mentor a young contest enthusiast made an indelible impression on me." An officer of the Central Texas DX and Contest Club, Larry has operated from home and from many contest stations.

The Editor's Last Word – John K3TN

The solar flux is at 150 as I write this and both 10 and 12m are open. As Mark points out, 10 and 15 being open is not great news for PVRC in Sweepstakes, but for every other contest it sure is nice to have those bands humming. Wouldn't it be nice if the ARRL 10 Meter contest this year was less like a VHF contest and more like a DX contest?

I think the most fun I've ever had in a contest was doing a multi-two in the ARRL CW in a sunspot peak somewhere around 1990 with Wayne N2FB when he had his two tower station in Waysons Corner, MD. Wayne was on 15m and I was on 10 early one morning, and we had the CT rate meter well over a combined 300/hour for hours on end.

Thanks to Mark N2QT, Frank W3LPL and Gene W3ZZ for inputs this month. Next month will likely be the "focus on Sweepstakes" issue of the newsletter – if you have any secret tricks for a high SS score, any SS-specific station improvements, any pictures of your SS brooms or Clean Sweep coffee mugs, or want to do a short writeup, send them to [me](#) for the next newsletter!

Member Classified Ads

K4SO QTH For Sale – Nokesville, VA

The lot is 3.22 acres, and adjoins a 17-acre park to the west which is still undeveloped. It's been that way for the 24 years we've been here. I have a single 100-foot Rohn 45 tower, with a 40-2CD at 110 feet, 15 el. K1FO 2M yagi by C3I at 105 feet, KT34XA at 100 feet, 3 el. CC 6M yagi at 73 feet, 4 el. CC 15M (15-4CD) at 70 feet, 5 el. 6M M2 6M5X at 54 feet, homebrew OWA 6 el. 10M yagi at 50 feet, and a 204BA, 4 el. 20M at 46 feet.

The 204BA is fixed on EU, the top 3 are on a TailTwister, and the others are on two, side-mounted HAM IV rotators, that allow about 280 degrees of rotation from just south of east, through north, and almost to south (read, not quite to SA and Caribbean, through AF, EU, JA, VK, and around to some of Central America.) I have 4 slopers for 160M on the tower and a 160M dipole on the tower to a tree. With some work, it's basically at 100 feet.

The house is 3 br., 3 baths, a split foyer. The radio shack is 14 x 20. Details of the house can be provided for your XYL, but sound, with a recent heat pump (R15), well and septic, aluminum siding, and a recently replaced deck. The neighborhood contains 3 other hams, two of whom are either never, or virtually never on the air. The third is a wonderful guy, and he and I rarely overlap, and he's been areal friend, especially in bad weather!



You can see the location at QRZ.com and <http://www.k4so.com>, shows the tower and setting, and some other pictures. We are looking for market value, plus a little for the tower and antennas, so I can put up a station when we move. If you are interested, email me at K4SO dot com and we can discuss. – 73, Mark.

Eyeball QSO Directions

The latest info on local club meetings and get together will always be sent out on the [PVRC reflector](#) and posted on the PVRC [web site](#).

NW Region:

Meetings are generally held on the third Tuesday of each month at the City Buffet, 1306 W. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD. (301) 360-9666. It's in a small shopping center. Most arrive about 6 PM for dinner and informal discussions. The meeting begins at 7:00 PM.

From W. Patrick Street, turn up McCain Dr. (the Mountain View Diner is on the corner), then turn right into the shopping center, then turn left and search for a parking place. The City Buffet is tucked back in the left corner of the shopping center behind the Mountain View Diner. You can't see the City Buffet from W. Patrick Street.

Contact: Bud W3LL

Central Region

Meets monthly the second Monday of each month, except June, July & August). The location alternates between the below MD and VA locations. Pre-meeting dinners start at 6:00 pm and meetings start at 7:30 pm.

VA LOCATION: Anita's, 521 E. Maple Ave, Vienna, VA. Tel: 703-255-1001. Meets at this location during the months of February, April and October.

Contact: Rich [NN3W](#)

MD LOCATION: Topolino's, 6320 Old Branch Avenue, Temple Hills, MD. Tel: 301-449-6160. Meets at this location during the months of January, March, May, September and November.

Contact: Mark [KD4D](#)

The Laurel, MD Region: Bill N3XL

The PVRC get together is held at the first LARC meeting each quarter at the clubhouse.

The Annapolis Crew : Bob W9GE

Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month at Broadneck Grill in Annapolis. We gather at about 5:30 PM and order dinner about 6. We break up usually before 8 PM. E-Mail W9GE to be put on the e-mail reminder list.

PVRC-NC

The PVRC NC-East chapter meetings are held at [Manchester's Bar and Grill](#) on the 9100 block of Leesville Rd. in North Raleigh, with "QRM" beginning at 6:00pm and the dinner meeting following shortly thereafter. The meeting is held monthly on the 1st Thursday of most months, cancellations or changes usually announced on the [PVRC-NC website](#).

[The PVRC NC-West Chapter](#) holds its meetings on the 4th Monday of each month at [the Mellow Mushroom](#), 314 W. 4th St., Winston-Salem, NC. Ragchew at 7:00pm, dinner meeting starts at 7:30pm. All contesters and interested guests are invited!

Central Virginia Contest Club: Ed NW4V

Meets the first Tuesday of the month at St. Martins Church, 9000 St. Martin Lane, Richmond VA, (between W. Broad St. and N. Parham Road). Our meeting begins at 7PM.

Over the Hill Bunch: Bill W3AZ

The group meets for lunch at noon alternately in Maryland at the College PARK Holiday Hotel Route 1 and the Beltway or in Virginia at the Parkview Marriot near route 50 and the Beltway. Meetings generally are held on the last Wednesday of the month and are subject to change. Meetings are announced by E-Mail.

All PVRC members, non-members interested in membership and guests are welcome. For information contact Roger Stephens, K5VRX, 703-658-3991 for Virginia meetings; or Bill Leavitt, W3AZ for Maryland meetings.

Downtown Lunch Group

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday or Thursday of the month in the downtown area of Washington, DC. Locations occasionally change, but are always Metro accessible. Details are sent out on the PVRC reflector. Feel free to contact Eric W3DQ or Brian WV4V for details and directions.

Southwest VA Chapter:

The Southwest VA group meets each Wednesday at about 8:30 AM at Hardees at 20265 Timberlake Road in Lynchburg, VA. This is an informal gathering, but normally about 10-12 attendees. Contact Mark Sihlanick N2QT, Tel: 434-525-2921

If you'd like to add or correct a listing, contact K3TN for inclusion in the Newsletter!

Now a Word From Our Sponsors

PVRC doesn't ask for dues, but the Club does have expenses. Please send PayPal donations via DAVE@WR3L.NET or by snail mail to Dave's address at QRZ.com. You can also support the Club by buying from the firms listed who advertise in the newsletter, or by getting your company to sponsor the newsletter!

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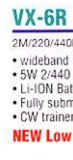
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