Palos Verdes Amateur Radio Club

K6PV

Wednesday, October 17 is

Antenna Night at

Hesse Park 7:30 p.m.

The President Pontificates

Wow…. what a summer this has been, traveling to Europe (at least for some of us – including your President and Vice President), Club Picnic, and many other fun events (you fill in here)! NOW we're moving into FALL (whether we want to or not)!! Time now for other things, eh? …. Like what?? You ask?? Well, ….. More FUN things… like PVARC meetings, Christmas/ Holiday Banquet, DX Contests – primarily the last weekends of October (SSB) and November (CW), and other things – more traveling and/or ???. Look for additional information on our fun Club meetings and the annual Christmas/Holiday Banquet elsewhere in the QRO. The two upcoming HF Contest events are among the premier events of HF DX Contesting! You should consider operating in these fun (do I need to repeat, FUN) events on any or all HF Bands 10 – 160M (EXCEPT the WARC Bands). You might then ask, "What are the WARC bands?" Simply put, they are the 12, 17, and 30 Meter bands (24, 18, and 10 MHz bands). The 'usual' HF bands are the ones used for contests (10, 15, 20, 40, 75/80, and 160M). While there are 'super' stations that routinely operate in these fun (do I need to repeat, FUN) events, there are many categories that recognize many different levels of station capabilities from high power to low power, and single band to all bands. Come along, operate some (SSB and/or CW), and see what it's like. You might even enjoy it after a few hours of operating! We (the BOD) have some more interesting HF stuff for you…. We'd like to know what part of HF you like!! Do you want to know more about operating, equipment, and/or antennas, or whatever??? We're interested! Are you?

An exciting part of Amateur Radio is all the interesting equipment that HAS been available, and that is NOW available. It's just incredible how much functionality/capability/features/functions can be crammed into what we generally call our 'equipment.' Check out QTH.com and e-bay for good deals on used (previously owned) equipment. ICOM and YAESU are the main equipment suppliers with the American guys - TenTec, Elecraft, and the Software Defined Radio (SDR)/ Flex Radio providing very interesting and competitive alternatives. With the complexity of today's technology, the kit concept (aka HeathKit) is hardly a viable option. Yet Elecraft does provide the 'do-it-yourself' options that some of us still yearn for.. Do you?

With the cooler weather of Fall, we are really blessed with the almost continuous opportunity to do (outside) antenna work. You DO want to put up and / or maintain your new/existing HF antenna, don't you!! IF NOT, WHY NOT.. Remember, HF IS FUN!!! Join us, if you have not already, to experience the joy (read FUN) of HF!! OK, ok, .. ok.. .enough of HF – at least for now!

Oh, for those of you that might be wondering, and even those of you that are not….. I have made little, albeit LITTLE progress in cleaning up my Shack. It is still not in 'show-case' condition! More later.

See you at the next, FUN Club meeting! Come one, come all!

Vy 73

Joe

What's It All About, Alpha?
Jeff Wolf, K6JW

Okay, I generally try to write columns for QRO that have some general functional utility for new hams or even experienced ones who've forgotten some of the basics. This column simply isn't one of that kind. Instead, it's simply a tale of experience in amateur radio, with some perspective on goal setting, achievement, and what's really important in the pursuit of one's avocation.

For me, the essence of amateur radio is to be found in HF operation: world-wide friendship and the thrill of long distance communication from my shack without wires. There's a romance about it that still thrills me, 49 years into it all.

I was first licensed in 1958. My Novice station consisted of what was arguably one of the worst shortwave receivers ever made: the Hallicrafters S38-E. It was paired with a Globe Chief 90A, which was a crystal controlled CW transmitter that actually worked quite reliably and effectively. My antenna was a Mosely trap vertical for 10-40 meters. I set it up on the flat roof of our garage, attaching about 16 radials, 4 for each band (no WARC bands back in those days).

I worked practically no one, mostly because of that !#$*^! receiver, and things didn't get any better until I got my General in 1961 and built a Heathkit Mohawk/Apache pair. (Therein lies another tale for another time.)

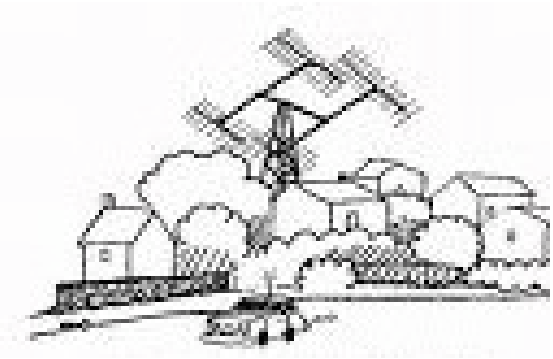
The Apache was one of the last amateur non-SSB, AM phone transmitters, as we were on the cusp of the major AM to SSB migration. So, just as I aspired to go from my Novice/Tech rig to my General rig, I now aspired to go from an AM/CW transmitter to an SSB/CW transmitter. And, of course, I lusted after Collins S-Line. Of course, I was just a 15 year old kid, and so that was something I could only dream about. In those dreamy days of my youth, there was only the equipment: the dials, buttons, and panel lights, the warm glow of the tubes (well, yeah, there *was* this girl…). Communication, in and of itself, seemed secondary. For this kid, it was mostly about the toys.

There have been a lot of things I've dreamed about in amateur radio since then: a contact with Pitcairn, a beam antenna on a tower, ever better radios, and more power among them. Behind each of my dreams is a story and, I must say, I've been blessed beyond my wildest imagination as most of my dreams have come true. For example, let's consider power.

In 1970, while traveling in southern Italy, I saw a gorgeous cameo carved by a master artisan. It was so beautiful that, even as a callow young man, I knew I should buy it and, someday, present it to the woman I would marry. In 1974, I gave the cameo to Rowie as an engagement present. In return, she asked what I would like. While no gift was required, I replied, "Why, how about a linear amplifier?"

The puzzled look on her face said it all. She was totally clueless, and so she simply told me to buy whatever I wanted. We didn't have a lot of money, and so I bought a Heathkit SB-200, which I built and used until just recently, when I placed it on a shelf for a well-deserved rest. And why did I do this? Because for many years I had dreamed of owning the Rolls Royce of amplifiers, an auto-tune legal limit, solid as a brick, obscenely expensive, Alpha 87A. About two years ago, Alpha announced that it was going to discontinue the 87A and, in a discussion with my wife, she was actually heard to say, "Oh, why not?"

Then, just as I was about to order one of their special edition, farewell models (the "Omega", get it?), they announced that something called the Alpha 9500 would be its replacement, and that if one were willing to place a pre-production order, one could save $1000 over the eventual sale price of, oh, around $9000. I called Alpha to discuss the matter with them, and found that the pre-production price for the 9500 was "only" about $300 more than the full price I'd pay for the closeout 87A. It seemed like a no-brainer, so in February 2006 I placed a 50% deposit on a 9500 with promised delivery date within six months.



I'll spare you all the details but, 19 months later, the amplifier finally arrived. Murphy ever present, it of course showed up two days before we had to move out of the house while our wood floors were being refinished. This was agony, but 10 days later I unpacked the unit, set it up, and then (after some distressing problems getting up and running – another story) went on the air for the first time in my nearly 49 years as a ham in my own shack running full legal power.

Now, what's the point of all this?

I guess it's that I've come to realize that, while I've gained much over the years as my amateur radio dreams have been slowly but steadily realized, I've lost something, too. When the Alpha arrived, I was pleased and eager to place it on the air. I noticed, however, that I wasn't nearly so excited as I was when I had so much less, say, on the day the big truck pulled up in front of my house and delivered that wonderful Heathkit Mohawk to an eager 15 year old boy. That summer day was a quantum leap for me at a time when I had little, dreamed of much, and when every dream fulfilled (amateur radio related or other) seemed to be, for me, "one giant step for a man" if not for mankind.

So, where is my excitement, now? It's much less in the equipment itself (although I still love my toys), and more in the shared experience of hamming with others. It's in attending the conventions, meeting with my ham friends and making new friends, and in working the DX. It's in developing my personal operating skills and expanding my knowledge of radio and electronics, in trying to understand things I've never understood very well. Perhaps the best way to explain all this is to say that what is important to me is not the Alpha, itself, but the fact that my very first contact with it, some 12,000 miles via long path to St. Brandon in the Indian Ocean, was with a friend on DXpedition there. It was the contact with a friend that was important.

Sure,I know what you're thinking. it's easy to say all this when one has been fortunate enough to assemble a fine station like the one I now have, but it's important to see through that, and to realize that it's not the extravagance of the station that really matters. I finally understand that, if I didn't have as much as I do, it wouldn't change the motivations that have grown in me with time, experience, and maturity. Amateur radio is just as exciting for me today as it was in 1958, but the reasons for that excitement have evolved and ripened with age. Amateur radio and I have grown up together, has become an integral part of who I am, and it is difficult for me to imagine what my life would be without it.

My story, then, leads me to offer some advice to our newest hams and, maybe, to stimulate some thinking among older ones, too. For what it's worth, I think that it really makes very little difference what the material aspects of your station may be at any given time. If your rig or shack is not what you'd ultimately like to have

(mine was once located in a bathroom linen closet), then dream bigger and someday your wishes may materialize, but don't let it stop you from having fun now. The satisfaction and enjoyment you can have bears relatively little relationship to how much "stuff" you may have amassed. Above all, realize that amauteur radio is about people connecting with, and often helping, other people through a shared interest in communication technology and, yes, the use of wonderful toys, and that no matter where you are in your own personal amateur radio arc, there are more good times ahead for you and for your fellow hams. Of course, it's all been said before:

It's not about the destination.
It's about the journey…

73 es gud DX,
Jeff, K6JW

Sept 10th School Radio Check

Herb Clarkson, KM6DD

RPV DCS Station 17 Charles supplied nine PVARC members who spent Monday (Sept 10th) determining the operational readiness of the Palos Verdes Unified School District (PVPUSD) emergency radio system.

Club members taking part were Alan Soderberg, Dale Kind, Dale Hanks, Jim West, Ken Getzin, Robert Keefer, Denzel Dyer, Diana Feinberg, and Dale Carlson.

Non-PVARC individuals from RHE DCS Station 17 Frank were Jim Johnson, Wayne Hilton and Michael Barry.

The PVPUSD appreciates the efforts and thanks everyone involved. Over thirteen thousand kids plus staff members are safer because of this work.

RADIO STATION WA6ESC AMATEUR RADIO

Treasurer's Report

Bill Harper

October, 2007

PVARC Balance	$1,958.40
John Alexander Fund:	$ 798.00
Repeater Fund:	$ 852.66
Total Bank Balance	$3,609.06
Membership 2007	**120**
ARRL Members	**73**

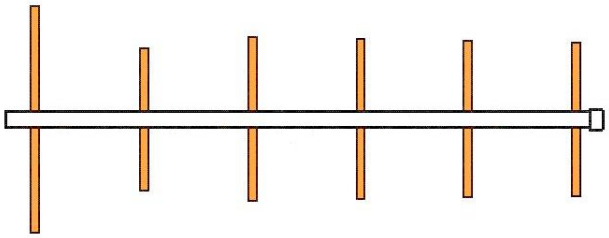
Happy Halloween!!

K6PV Repeater Upgrades Include Improved Etiquette, New Transceiver and Antenna for Voice Announcements

Mel Hughes, K6SY

The PV Repeater, K6PV, has been without voice identification for the past three weeks. Why is that, you ask? Well, I'll tell you.

The voice announcements originate from my home, not from the repeater site. The Announcements are actual recorded voice, mine at the moment, and stored in digital form using an MFJ 434B Voice Keyer. The Voice Keyer can store five messages but only four have been used in the past. The messages are controlled by a Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) that plays the appropriate message on the even hours beginning at 6:00 a.m. and ending at 10:00 p.m. The messages are transmitted to the repeater site just as any other signal is. They were transmitted using my Kenwood tri-band TM-742A transceiver at 50 watts using the station OMNI antenna at the top of the mast on my 51 foot tower.



This arrangement created two problems. First, the message played even if the repeater was in use and usually was the strongest signal at the input. This resulted in the "capture" of the receiver input by the voice announcements and nothing else was heard until the announcement was competed. The message time ranges from 10 to 30 seconds depending on the time of day. Second, since I was using my station FM radio, on occasion it was left in the 2-meter position, usually tuned to the DX club repeater, W6AM. The controller didn't know the difference and would make the voice, K6PV identification, on the DX club repeater. Embarrassing, to say the least!

So, several steps have been taken to correct these issues. After doing a bit of research, I purchased a single band Alinco, DR-435TMK transceiver. It will operate at 5 or 35 watts and the price was right. But the best feature is the DB-9 serial port on the rear of the unit. A Squelch Status signal is available on one of the pins as an open collector of an NPN transistor, I needed only to supply a 1K ohm resistor to the + 12 VDC supply. When there is no signal at the input of the receiver of sufficient strength to open the squelch the transistor is biased on, and is biased off when the signal is strong enough to open the squelch. Now, when the transceiver that sends the voice announcements listens to the repeater output, there is a way to tell the controller not to send the scheduled message as the repeater is in use.

I rewrote the program for the PLC to accept the Squelch Signal from the receiver as an Input and to wait on the voice announcement until the carrier of the repeater drops out. Only then will scheduled messages be transmitted to the repeater. The PLC will wait up to 30 minutes for a clear input to the repeater. After 30 minutes the

message will be skipped and wait for the next scheduled message.

All this has been tested and is now in place. Now the only thing left is an antenna! I didn't want to use the old antenna because I wanted an antenna for the voice announcement radio that would be independent of the rest of the station and that would monitor the repeater output so the system could tell if the repeater was in use or not. I needed an antenna with some gain because I was not going to have the use of an antenna at the top of the tower and in the future I plan to add some additional in-band controls for the repeater. I needed an antenna with gain and directivity.

I needed a beam antenna. One with 7-10 dB of gain so I could hit the repeater with a solid signal in the 5 watt mode and not have a lot of RF desensitizing the input of the other receivers. A four-element Yagi seemed just the thing, but no one had one in stock and the price was over $150.00. Then, at the suggestion of Rick, K6WXA, I checked the project page on the Club web site. Guess what! There were instructions for a six-element 440 – 450 MHz Yagi, using material that I had left over from some lawn sprinkler repair work; ¾" PVC for the boom and ½" copper pipe for the elements. In reviewing the plans I found a few details missing; in particular information about the feed point construction. However, a quick visit with Bill Harper, WA6ESC, the designer of the antenna and fellow Sea Hawk set me on the correct path.

The only part called for on the plan that requires any specials tools is the insulated spacer for the driven element. It needs to fit snugly inside the copper pipe to keep the elements separated by the OD of the boom. Bill provided me with a spacer. It only took a little sanding to make it fit. The OD of the spacer must fit snugly in the ID of the copper pipe you are using. Be warned now, copper pipe comes in three schedules or wall thicknesses, M (low pressure), L (medium pressure), K (high pressure). Each has the same OD, 5/8", but the ID's different as follows:

K = 0.527",L = 0.545", and M= 0.569".

You need to size the spacer to the type of pipe you are using. The spacer I used was phenolic, but it could be any good insulating material.

The plans are not very clear on the feed point so I have included a photo of the method I used to feed the antenna. It is electrically as shown in the plans, but differs mechanically a bit. The wire size is AWG #10 solid use in household wiring. The shorting bar is the same material. The balun is a 4:1 impedance matching device; 50 ohm unbalanced to 200 ohm balanced. The "U" piece of coax, braid end to braid end is ½ wave length long at the transmitting frequency, adjusted for the V_f, the velocity factor of coax. Radio waves travel more slowly in coax than they do in air or free space. To get the signal from one side of the "U" to the other at the correct time (phase), the balun must be shortened by V_f. V_f is usually specified in decimal format as a number from 0.65 to 0.95 depending on the coax type you are using. The coax I used had a velocity factor of 0.82. One half wave length at 442.120 MHz, the repeater input, is 13.357". 13.357 x 0.82 = 10.95" -> 11.0". The balun was built using 11 inches and when tested with the MFJ 259 Antenna Analyzer using a 200 ohm resistor across the leads to simulate the feed point impedance of the antenna, the SWR

minimum was within 200 KHz of the design frequency. At these frequencies that is considered "right on."

The antenna was tuned up by connecting the MFJ 259 Antenna Analyzer to the antenna feed line and moving the shorting bar for minimum SWR at 442.120 MHz. It took less than five minutes. Once the spot was found the shorting bar was soldered in place. When the final configuration was tested the SWR at the design frequency was 1.2:1 and the 2.0:1 band width was nearly 20 MHz. You can't ask for much better than that. The only thing left was to test the actual gain.

Last Sunday I took the completed antenna to the Bill Harper Antenna Proving Grounds where we measured the gain at 442 MHz to be 10 dB, with the gain not dropping by more than 2 dB across the 2.0:1 band width of the antenna.

Now all that remains is to paint the antenna to waterproof the connections. The trick here is to use an epoxy-style marine paint; a paint without any metallic additives. This waterproofs the antenna and helps hold everything in place without degrading performance.

By the October Club meeting the antenna should be up and sending the four original messages with a new, 5th message, to premier on Wednesday, October 17, 2007. See you at the meeting.

73,
Mel Hughes – K6SY
Trustee – K6PV

PVARC Meeting, 9/19/07 notes.by Bill Leighton, KG6WVF

Joe Locascio brought the meeting to order.
New members Don Hersch W6AGG and Curtis Watanabe introduced themselves.

Bill Pomeranz asked for two volunteers, DCS members to provide radio support for Habitat For Humanity activities during the first week of November. These activities will be in San Pedro and near Vermont and 112th St,

Jeff Wolf produced a Kenwood TS 530SP and offered it for sale, proceeds to be donated to the John Alexander Fund.

Dave Scholler donated a "junk box" of amateur related supplies to the club.

Herb Stark gave information concerning this year's Christmas party. It will be Friday, 12/14 at Pt Vincente. Cost is $37.50 per person, reservations may be made on the club website.

Ginger Clark gave information and solicited interest in a Catalina IOTA expedition tentatively scheduled for a weekend In January. She and Curtis Watanabe will be organizing the expedition.

Bill Harper gave his treasurer's report.

- $3668 total balance with some Lighthouse expenses outstanding.
- 13 new members this year.
- 116 total club members
- 71 ARRL members.

Denzel Dyer announced upcoming speakers.

- October: Phil from HRO (Anaheim) will speak, perhaps on DSTAR
- November: Jeff Wolf on his tower construction.
- January: tentative subject, RadioDirection Finding and T-Hunting.

The "Antenna of the Month" was skipped so that out guest speaker could leave early.

Our guest speaker was Dick Norton, N6AA, Director of ARRL's Southwestern Division. He gave a lively talk, discussing numerous ARRL services including assistance with BPL interference issues, antenna zoning, and WINLINK,

Palos Verdes Amateur Radio Club
Annual Holiday Dinner

Point Vicente Interpretive Center

31501 Palos Verdes Drive West, Rancho Palos Verdes

Friday, December 14th, 2007

Happy Hour at 6:00 PM, followed by dinner at 7:00 PM

Dinner Menu:

Macadamia encrusted Salmon with a pineapple vanilla butter sauce; Carving station with Sirloin of Beef plus Leek Mashed Potatoes, Vegetables, Rolls & Butter. A Dinner Salad is included with mixed greens, pecans, sliced apple and gorgonzola with a Raspberry Vinaigrette. Appetizers include an Assorted Cheese Platter with Gourmet Crackers and Artichoke Dip or Shrimp with Cocktail Sauce. Dessert follows with a Cheesecake Bar with an array of toppers. Price is $37.50 per person.

For Reservations and Payment Information, please contact
Bill Harper-WA6ESC at (310) 377-8267
or via palosverdesarc@cox.net

Catered by *"Entertaining Friends"* of Manhattan Beach

Opportunities

October

6 & 13 - Technician Class, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Hesse Park, Walt Ordway.

6 & 13 - General Class, 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m., Hesse Park, Walt Ordway

17 - Club Meeting Hesse Park 7:30 p.m.

November

21 - Club Meeting, Jeff Wolf's Antenna Project, Hesse Park 7:30 p.m.

December

December 14--Holiday Dinner--
Check out the flyer on page 8
and then
contact Treasurer Bill Harper.
Should be fun!

January

16 - Club Meeting, Joe Moell, foxhunting, Hesse Park, 7:30 p.m.

Need a Club Patch? $5

Or How About a Club Jacket?

Joe Locascio, K5KT

310-541-5495

Need a Club Badge?

Contact Karen Freeman, KG6BNN

310-541-6971

$13

Sale on 2-Meter Antennas!

The Torrance schools recently replaced their two-meter Cushcraft Ringo Rangers with all-band Discones. The Ringos, all in good working order, are available for $15 each including assembly instructions.
Contact Chuck KN6H at (310) 325-3184 for more information

Holiday Dinner!

James Doody, JPL, Project Manager for Spacecraft Communications for the Cassini Saturn Craft.

James Doody will give a fascinating and non-technical talk on Cassini's exciting mission to Saturn, and how we communicate with this spacecraft across the vast distances.
The food is going to be terrific again, too!

ARRL Summary Report
October, 2007
compiled by Bryant Winchell, W2RGG

NATO GROUP RELEASES REPORT ON BPL

The Information Systems Technology group, part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Research and Technology Organization (RTO), released their report, "HF Interference, Procedures and Tools" (RTO-TR-IST-050), in June. This report "address[es] the concerns raised by the potential for unintentional radio interference to be caused by the widespread operation of broadband wire-line telecommunications systems." *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 36*

CANDIDATE FOR ARRL SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION DIRECTOR DISQUALIFIED; NORTON DECLARED RE-ELECTED

Carl Gardenias, WU6D, the challenger seeking the position of ARRL Southwestern Division Director, was declared disqualified Thursday by the ARRL Ethics and Elections Committee. Gardenias was running against incumbent Richard "Dick" Norton, N6AA. Due to the disqualification, the Committee has declared Norton re-elected. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 37*

1296 MHZ WAS #1 AWARDED TO TEXAS HAM

Al Ward, W5LUA, of Allen, Texas, is the first person to achieve the ARRL's Worked All States (WAS) on 1296 MHz, making him 1296 MHz WAS #1. Ward first started on his pursuit January 25, 1977, with his first 1296 MHz contact with Leroy May, W5HN (SK). His 30 year quest ended last week, with confirmed contacts with Wyoming, Utah and Idaho, giving Ward his last three needed states, thanks to Paul Perryman's, WA5WCP, EME DXpedition. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 37*

SOLAR UPDATE

Tad "Sunspots Cast a Glare in My Eyes" Cook, K7RA, this week reports: The sun has been blank, no visible sunspots, for the past seven days, September 7-13. We may not see another spot until September 22, just before the autumnal equinox. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 37*

GET READY FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL ARRL ON-LINE AUCTION!

The Second Annual ARRL On-Line Auction kicks off October 24, running until November 2 on the ARRL Web site <http://www.arrl.org/auction>. This is your chance to pick up one-of-a-kind Amateur Radio items. To see what the Auction will offer this year, be sure to check out the Auction preview that begins October 17. Last year, the Auction attracted more than 4300 bidders from 36 countries. While the majority of buyers were from the USA, Canada and the UK, there were buyers from Australia, Malaysia, Grenada and Tanzania. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 38*

ARRL CONTINUES TO TALK WITH DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ABOUT PAVE PAWS SITES

The ARRL participated in a teleconference call on Wednesday, September 19, with the Department of Defense (DoD) regarding Amateur Radio repeaters interfering with the Air Force's PAVE Paws radar system.

Reports have circulated that a number of California repeater owners have decided to take no further action to mitigate the interference unless they receive official notice from the Federal Communications Commission. The DoD has indicated they are willing to allow the ARRL to continue its attempts to

mitigate the interference; however, they have expressed a sense of urgency that this must come to a conclusion. Those waiting for FCC action may find it coming sooner rather than later. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 38*

FCC AMATEUR RADIO ENFORCEMENT CORRESPONDENCE POSTED

On August 23, the FCC's Enforcement Bureau released new Amateur Radio enforcement actions. Todd C. Browne, KD0PA; Keith W. Coad, KW2C; Santos J. Rodriguez Colon, KP4DC; Jerry L. Counsellor, WE5JC; Pablo Diaz-Alequin, KP4MC, and Donald B. Flowers, NC4DF, all received letters from the Commission concerning their vanity call signs. These amateurs received their vanity call signs by stating they were former holders of these call signs, but the FCC can find no documentation substantiating their claims. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 38*

SOLAR UPDATE

Tad "All for the Love of Sun(spots)" Cook, K7RA, this week reports: Fifteen days in a row with no sunspots, but this may change soon *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 38*

SPECTRUM DEFENSE FUND MARKS ELEVENTH YEAR

First begun in 1996 to protect the 2 meter band from "Little LEOs" (low-earth orbiting satellites), the ARRL's Spectrum Defense Fund marks its eleventh annual appeal this year, urging members to take a stand to protect the Amateur Radio spectrum from broadband over power lines (BPL). The ARRL's concern is not whether BPL will ultimately succeed or fail, but whether the federal government will fulfill its obligation to ensure that BPL systems - if and when they are deployed - will not pollute the radio spectrum *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 30*

AMATEUR RADIO GOES TO WASHINGTON

Army MARS Chief Stuart S. Carter, AAA9A, has invited the ARRL and Amateur Radio representatives to join a Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) demonstration outside the Capitol building in Washington, DC on October 3. Hams around the country are asked to aid in the demonstration by making HF contacts during the day. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 30*

GET READY FOR JOTA

Jamboree on the Air will celebrate its 50th year this year when it gets on the air October 19-21. Normally a 48 hour event, this year's JOTA will be 50 hours long in recognition of the anniversary. The fun begins at 2200 (local time) October 19 and ends at midnight (local time) October 21. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 30*

SOLAR UPDATE

Tad "Ain't No Sun(spots) When She's Gone" Cook, K7RA, this week reports: Last week's report stated the possibility that zero-sunspot days were about to end, but no such luck. Instead we've seen no sunspots for three weeks straight, since September. *Ref.: ARRL Letter Vol. 26, No. 39*

Walt Ordway's New Award Tale

There's an amateur radio award called Worked All USA Counties, otherwise know as USACA. The award is sponsored by CQ magazine, and is written up in each issue. I got my USACA award from CQ back on 22 December 1994. At that time, the CQ award required that you make a two-way contact with another ham in all 3,076 counties. I was # 851 to get that award. As of today, around 1,158 hams have that CQ award.

But, there are a lot of what we call "County Hunter nuts". So, many years ago, some of them formed the Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club (MARAC). For a few bucks a year, you join the club. They issue dozens of County Hunting awards. As an example, if after you get the CQ award (for working all counties once), you can start over and work them all again. If you do that, MARAC gives you what is called the "2nd Time Around" award. I worked them all twice and on 4 February 2002 I got the MARAC 2nd Time award # 297..

I got my CQ Award USACA award on 22 December 1994. Back then, you applied for the award making out a log for CQ, which gave them the info on all 3076 contacts (one in each county in the USA). When I made out my log for CQ, I noticed something very interesting--I had made a contact in 3025 counties from my car (mobile) to a ham who was mobile in the other county. So, only 51 counties had been worked where I was "fixed" and the other ham was "mobile".

I was mobile so much because I was still working and I would work counties from my car on my way to and fron work.

So, after I got my CQ USACA #851 award, I obviously decided to go after the 2nd Time award from MARAC.

BUT, I also made a list of those last 51 counties that I needed for a possible All Mobile-To-Mobile award from MARAC. Well, I got focused on that and actually finished the last 3,076 all mobile-to-mobile county on 29 April 2000. So, having done that, I sent a log to MARAC and applied for an All Mobile-To-Mobile award. Guess what. They didn't have an award for that. So, I was told to send the MARAC awards committee a letter that suggested this as a new award. It was turned down, but, CQ gave me an endorsement for my All Mobile-to-Mobile accomplishment, and that sticker is on my CQ USACA award.

Next, on 16 November 2001, Colorado added a new county, Broomfield. Well I worked Broomfield, the 3,077th county, that day mobile-to-mobile. So, I sent another log to MARAC and suggested that they establish an award for All Mobile-To-Mobile. But, they still had no award for it. I was also told to send a recommendation to the MARAC Awards committee. They rejected it.

So, at the various MARAC conventions each year, I would mention my problem to other hams. At the 2007 summer MARAC convention, they finally voted to have an All Mobile-To-Mobile Award. After the vote, I simply handed my log/application to the MARAC Awards Person. which made me the proud owner of MARAC's first Worked All Counties All Mobile-to-Mobile award.

Note that the award says 28 July 2007 and Certification #1. Well, that's all great, but I actually did the 3,076 back on 29 April 2000, and I actually moved that to 3,077 on 16 November 2001. But, regardless of all of the above, a member of the PVARC now holds the serial #1 of an award for working another ham in all 3,077 counties, All Mobile-To-Mobile award.

Walt Ordway, K1DFO