



The Parasitic Emission

Volume 36, Number 5

Supporting Amateur Radio Activity in Cameron, Clearfield, Elk and Jefferson Counties

May 2010

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On The Air

by Joe Shupienis, W3BC

YOU NEED your local amateur radio club. And it needs **you**. If you haven't guessed by now, I'm a strong believer in the importance of amateur radio clubs. Without them, it's clear to me that our hobby would be much less than it is.



This is true of all hobbies—they're more fun when we share our activities with others. But more importantly, there are activities that *require* a group of people to participate in order to be meaningful and successful.

Of course, to some of you, this raises the specter of "organization"—and many of us shy

away from "organizers" and "bosses." God forbid, somebody might ask you to *DO something!* Allow me to point out why your self-imposed absence hurts you and hurts others.

Public service. This is arguably the main reason for the continued existence of Amateur Radio, and is specified in the FCC Rules. In fact the very first item in Part 97.1 which defines the "Basis and Purpose" of Amateur Radio is 47 CFR 97.1 (a): *Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.*

Mentoring. I'll bet that somewhere along the line, you received help from another ham. It's also likely that you have been the one offering help as well. I'm fond of saying, "Everybody's an expert at *something*." You can benefit from the expertise of others and they in turn can benefit from yours.

Group activities. Although you can do many things by yourself, sharing the fun with someone else can "kick it up a notch." Ham radio has a rich tradition of antenna parties, contests, hamfests, and other activities—all made possible by gathering a group of hams together to enjoy their favorite hobby.

Recognition. A fact of the human experience is that there is strength in numbers. A "lone

gunman" is considered a "crackpot," but a group of "crackpots" is called an "army." Guess which gets more respect! The same holds true for Amateur Radio. A club has a better chance of educating local government officials that your backyard antenna tower is a "public service," and not a "public nuisance."

I can't emphasize strongly enough that a healthy group presence in the community conveys an air of respectability to our hobby that is simply not possible any other way. Such respectability is absolutely necessary if we are to continue to enjoy the precious resources of frequency spectrum and legal status that permit us to reap the benefits of our hobby.

There's only one way to get that presence in your community—you guessed it—**your amateur radio club!** If you are participating, you have my thanks and my respect. If you are not participating, I am curious why not. I want to know your reasons.

I am serious about this, and I have put together a survey. I am asking you to complete this survey and get your answers back to me. Your individual answers will be held in the strictest confidence. The results will be shared anonymously with the

If you are not participating, I am curious why not. I want to know your reasons.

In this 10 page, 6,233 word issue...

- **Pennsylvania QSO Party Results Are In – W3BC**
- **Special Event Stations – KA3FHV**
- **An Electret Microphone for HF Radios – WW30**
- **Product Review: Linemaster Foot Switch – WA3UFN**
- **Basic Concepts: Contesting 101 – W3BC**
- **Regional Amateur Radio Activities Calendar**

leadership of each club, so they can address the declining attendance at meetings recently.

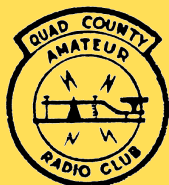
I'm also starting an *inter-club "attendance contest."* Which club will have the most members present at this month's meeting? You can do your part to help your club out by merely putting in an appearance!

If it's been a while since you have been to a club meeting, this would be the perfect time to go to one. *Field Day* plans are being made, and there will be a program on "Boat Anchor Restoration" presented by yours truly.

I'll see you... *On The Air... and at the meeting!*



Affiliated Club



Club Connections

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In the April newsletter we celebrated the 35th anniversary of the Quad-County Amateur Radio Club. I hope we aren't planning it's wake in the June issue.



The Quad-County Amateur Radio Club

*Serving Cameron, Clearfield,
Elk and Jefferson Counties
since 1975*

THE MAY MEETING OF THE QUAD-COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE CLEARFIELD 911 CENTER AT 7:30 PM, FRIDAY, MAY 21ST.

FIELD DAY PLANNING WILL BE ON THE AGENDA!

AFTER THE MEETING, JOE SHUPIENIS, W3BC WILL PRESENT THE PROGRAM, "BOAT ANCHOR" RESTORATION. THERE WILL BE REAL, LIVE BOAT ANCHORS PRESENT, SO WEAR YOUR FIREPROOF CLOTHES AND HERNIA PROTECTION!



THE MONTHLY QCARC BREAKFAST WILL BE ON SATURDAY, MAY 15, 9:30 AM. THE NEW LOCATION IS SID'S SUPER SUBS, 1306 OLD TOWN ROAD, IN CLEARFIELD (NEAR THE HYDE INTERSECTION).

Summary of the April Meeting

by Joe Shupienis, W3BC

DUE TO insufficient attendance to constitute a quorum, a meeting was not called to order, and no business was conducted.

Bryan Simanic, WA3UFN presented a program on motorcycle awareness for all drivers to the other four members in attendance.

Behind the Gavel

by Doug Rowles, W3DWR

HAVING TROUBLE finding the minutes from the April club meeting? It could be because you had trouble finding the April meeting. You shouldn't have. It was at the same time, same place, and on the usual third Friday of the month. Right now I want all of you to put down the newsletter, and go get

your desk calendar and a marker. I'll wait...

Everyone make it back? Good! Now, take your marker and circle the third Friday of the remaining months of 2010. Also circle June 25, 26 and 27. That is Field Day Weekend, plus Friday, June 25th to put up the antennas.

We did have five members at the 911 center on April 16th, and Bryan, WA3UFN, graciously went ahead with his presentation on alerting drivers of cars and trucks to become aware of motorcycles.

In the April newsletter we celebrated the 35th anniversary of the Quad-County Amateur Radio Club. I hope we aren't planning it's wake in the June issue.



Punxsutawney Area Amateur Radio Club

*Serving Punxsutawney
and Jefferson County*

THE MAY MEETING OF THE PUNXSUTAWNEY AREA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB WILL BE HELD AT THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FINDLEY AND UNION ST, PUNXSUTAWNEY AT 7:00 PM, TUESDAY MAY 11TH.

FIELD DAY PLANNING WILL BE ON THE AGENDA!

AFTER THE MEETING, JOE SHUPIENIS, W3BC WILL PRESENT THE PROGRAM, "BOAT ANCHOR" RESTORATION. THERE WILL BE REAL, LIVE BOAT ANCHORS PRESENT, SO WEAR YOUR FIREPROOF CLOTHES AND HERNIA PROTECTION!

Net Schedules

QCARC	1900 Sunday	147.315
Cld Co ARES	1945 Sunday	147.315 T 173.8
ECARA	2000 Sunday	147.000
PAARC	1930 Monday	147.390 T 173.8
Jefferson Co.	2000 Monday	147.105 T 173.8

Club Connections



Elk County Amateur Radio Association

*Serving Elk and
Cameron Counties*

THE MAY MEETING OF THE ELK COUNTY
AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION WILL BE
HELD AT THE ELK COUNTY 911 CENTER,
US 219, SOUTH OF RIDGWAY ON
SUNDAY MAY 15TH AT 1:30 PM.

FIELD DAY PLANNING WILL BE
ON THE AGENDA!

AFTER THE MEETING, JOE SHUPIENIS,
W3BC WILL PRESENT THE
PROGRAM, "BOAT ANCHOR"
RESTORATION. THERE WILL BE REAL,
LIVE BOAT ANCHORS PRESENT, SO WEAR
YOUR FIREPROOF CLOTHES AND
HERNIA PROTECTION!

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If you know of someone who might like to receive a copy, please send their email address to subscribe@parasiticemission.com and we will add them to our list.

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AMATEUR RADIO GPS MYSTERY TOUR.

Every month, we present a set of GPS coordinates that are somehow related to amateur radio. Some will be immediately obvious, while others will require some head-scratching.

Last month's coordinates were 41° 01' 25" N, 78° 24' 35" W, which is the Clearfield 911 Center, the location of the QCARC meetings. (You might try putting them in your GPS if you had trouble finding the meeting...)

This month we visit the location of a famous QRMer, responsible for many "busted QSOs"...

May ARGMT Coordinates:

51° 18' 19" N, 30° 03' 57" E

Hint: The "WIDE" setting for the ANL on your transceiver was made necessary by the unlicensed (but Government-sanctioned) RF emissions from this station.

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Roving Report

W3BC, WA3UFN and KB3TAP set up shop near Horntown and then, Troutville to activate the FN01 and FN00 grids for the **432 MHz Spring Sprint**. Even though the high winds wiped out almost any chance of tropo enhancement, stations were worked as far away as Hamilton and Waterford, Ontario. The best DX of the evening was 291 miles to K1TEO in Monroe, CT. Total claimed score was 2721 points.

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You can get in on the fun (from home or otherwise) during the **six-meter sprint** on Saturday, May 8th from 7:00-11:00 pm.

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Speaking of VHF Contesting, make plans now for the ARRL June VHF QSO Party on Saturday, June 12th and Sunday, June 13th. More information is online at <http://www.arrl.org/june-vhf-qso-party>.

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Shorts

The Quad-County Amateur Radio Club held its first meeting on April 17, 1975. This year, the club celebrates its 35th Anniversary. If you have any photos or stories from the early days, please contact your editor, Joe Shupienis, W3BC at:

joe@parasiticemission.com

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If you have photos or stories of interest to hams in our area, please share them with us. Send them to:

submit@parasiticemission.com

If you have questions or comments for the editor, please send them to:

W3BC@parasiticemission.com

Remember the **new deadline**: The last Monday of the month before publication.

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You don't have to be a "professional" writer to write for *The Parasitic Emission*. We will print whatever you send us. We will be happy to correct and polish your article if you so request.

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Pennsylvania QSO Party Results

by Joe Shupienis, W3BC

CONGRATULATIONS to everyone who participated in last October's PA QSO Party, and helped make it a success! Several Quad-County stations made notable showings.

Joe, W3BC easily won **First Place** in **Jefferson County**, far surpassing the other entrants who

were all visitors. He also took **Second Place Western PA High Power**, coming in a few points short of perennial big-gun W3SO in Blair County.

Bryan, WA3UFN was a solid **First Place** for **Clearfield County**, besting the visiting Mobile and Rover stations by a handy margin.



In St Marys, **Paul Ginther, ND3R** put his shoulder to the wheel and earned **First Place** honors for **Elk County** with 368 QSOs, working 56 counties and 48 ARRL sections—the majority by CW! **John Frantz, K3TMD** did his part to put Johnsonburg on the map and in 83 logbooks.

Sadly, **Cameron County** went undefended against the visiting marauders from Washington County and Ohio. Maybe next year, a Cameron County resident will operate for a few hours to win a “real” First Place.

Fred, KM3M did a great job winning **First Place** for **Indiana County** in the face of stiff visitor competition, especially from “Satchel” the Black Labrador who was guest operating K3LAB. Likewise, **John, NA3F** gave the visitors what-for in Huntingdon County.

In **Potter county**, locals **K3CC** and **KB3JVD** put in a great showing, but were edged out by interloper W3BN from the Reading ARC. If it were up to me, I'd only give “County” awards to the highest scoring county residents (unless none of them got on the air.)

In Western Pennsylvania, the visiting stations took away the gold from Armstrong, Bedford, Cambria, Clinton, Fayette, Forest, Franklin, Fulton, Juniata, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango and Warren Counties.

If you wanted to win first place for a county, it would have been very easy to do so—even if you

only operated for 3-4 hours from a simple, home station in Bedford, Cameron, Clinton, Forest, Juniata, Mercer or Warren County. Even the most inexperienced newcomer could have easily beaten the other (visiting) entries from those counties, brought home the gold, and made a lot of new friends in the process!

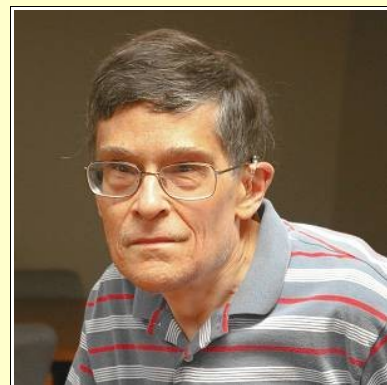
Mark your calendar for the 2010 PA QSO Party, and plan to get on the air for some fun. This year the dates are Saturday, October 9th and Sunday October 10th. Hundreds of hams will be looking for you and your county on the air!

Special Event Stations: Elation and Letdowns

By Jeffrey Rowles, KA3FHV

ANOTHER OPERATING activity for some amateur radio operators is the contacts with what are known as special event stations. These operations are set up by amateur radio clubs or individuals across the United States and around the world, to celebrate specific events such as Groundhog Day, the Indianapolis 500, and unique structures such as “S” bridges.

Just this past month Joe, W3BC, obtained a special call sign, “W3Q”, to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Quad-County Amateur Radio Club. It was good from April 10th to April 24th.



Over the years I have had the pleasure of contacting several of these stations, but there were a few letdowns, notably, The March of Dimes.

Announcements of special event stations can be found in the SPECIAL EVENT section of QST each month.

Shorts

Errata and Corrigenda

A SMALL NUMBER of errors crept into last month's issue of *The Parasitic Emission*. Our proofreader, Floyd Schmertnick, W3LID has been duly chastised for his ineptitude.

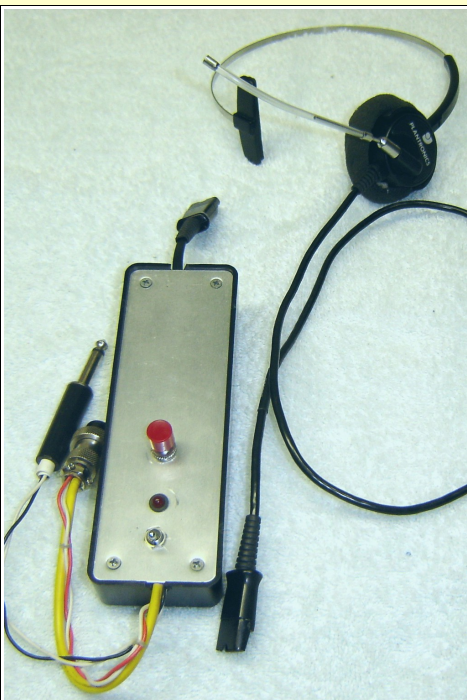
- My usual photo on the front page was inadvertently switched with a stock photo of Country Music Hall of Fame legend, Hank Thompson.
- The spelling checker was somehow confused by the words “Parasitic” and “Emission.”
- I completely forgot to include any “April Fool” articles...

An Electret Microphone for HF Radios

By Pete Carr, WW3O

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SEVERAL MONTHS AGO Rick, N3RJH, gave me a Plantronics single earphone headset that was excess to his needs. I'd been using a double earphone version



At left is the Radio Shack enclosure with the on-off toggle switch, red momentary PTT switch and the LED indicator. It sits on the table top near the left side of the Kenwood radio. At right is the single earphone headset with its connector.

for quite a while (like 15 years) and for some reason one of the earphones went bad. It had been used with a Kenwood TS-520 HF transceiver that is over 35 years old and works like a champ. The double earphone unit had the mic mounted at the end of a boom which could be positioned to prevent breathing on the element.

The one Rick gave me had

the electret mic installed in the earpiece with a hollow tube extending down and away toward the users mouth. Again, it could be positioned so breathing noises didn't get out on the air. Electret mics are very good because they are amplified. This means that they transform more of the voice audio into electronic signals and do a better job of reproducing sounds. They, however, are more sensitive so they need a bit more attention in the noise department.

While both headsets were made by Plantronics, they had different connectors. Installing the new headset required me to modify the wiring so that a suitable connector could be installed between the microphone and the battery circuit.

A schematic of the circuit is included. This schematic was produced on a program called *Express SCH* which is part of *Express PCB*. It's a free program that will transform the schematic that you draw into a printed circuit board design. If you want to build a circuit you can use *Express*

SCH to draw it, then use *Express PCB* to design the circuit board. It can then be uploaded to the company and they will make you the boards for a fee. Even if you only want to learn to draw schematics in CAD this is a very good way to start.

The 9-volt battery, LED, switch and the other parts are housed in a small Radio Shack plastic enclosure. The on-off switch disconnects the battery from the microphone. While the current draw of the mic is extremely small, I wanted the switch and associated LED. When the LED is lit the mic is hot.

The push button switch is for push-to-talk and switches the radio into transmit mode. The earphone 2-conductor cable is passed straight through the enclosure to a ¼ inch 2-conductor plug that goes into the radios' earphone jack.

When operating, you place the headset on your head and adjust the earphone for best reception. Then you adjust the mic tube just off the side of your mouth and turn on the switch on the enclosure. The LED will light and you are ready to talk.

I use an old Heathkit Waveform Monitor that displays the amount of modulation on an RF SSB signal. It's like an oscilloscope but only works with audio waveforms. If the mic gain is raised too high, or you shout into the mic, the waveform "flat-tops". This means that the waveform is not sine-wave shaped but has flat peaks due to over modulation.



Here are the two headsets. On the left is the old double earphone unit while the new single earphone is on the right. Each headset has a 4-conductor connector that mates with a long coil cable with a RJ-45 type plug on the end. I modified this cable to interconnect the headset to the enclosure.

Radios have mic gain controls along with a compression switch. The gain control sets the amount of modulation while the compression tailors the audio signal for increased SSB output. It's a fine line between maximum modulation and distortion so the Waveform Monitor helps me get it

It's a fine line between maximum modulation and distortion...

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right. Since everyone's voice is different, no two microphone/radio combinations would be the same.

Most Ham radios come complete with a hand microphone. They are matched to each other and generally work pretty well. The problem is, if you're going to be on the air for several hours, like for ARRL Field Day, the supplied hand mic gets pretty heavy. Also, as my arm gets tired I tend to let the mic move further away from my mouth which effects modulation. By the end of Field Day nobody can hear me!



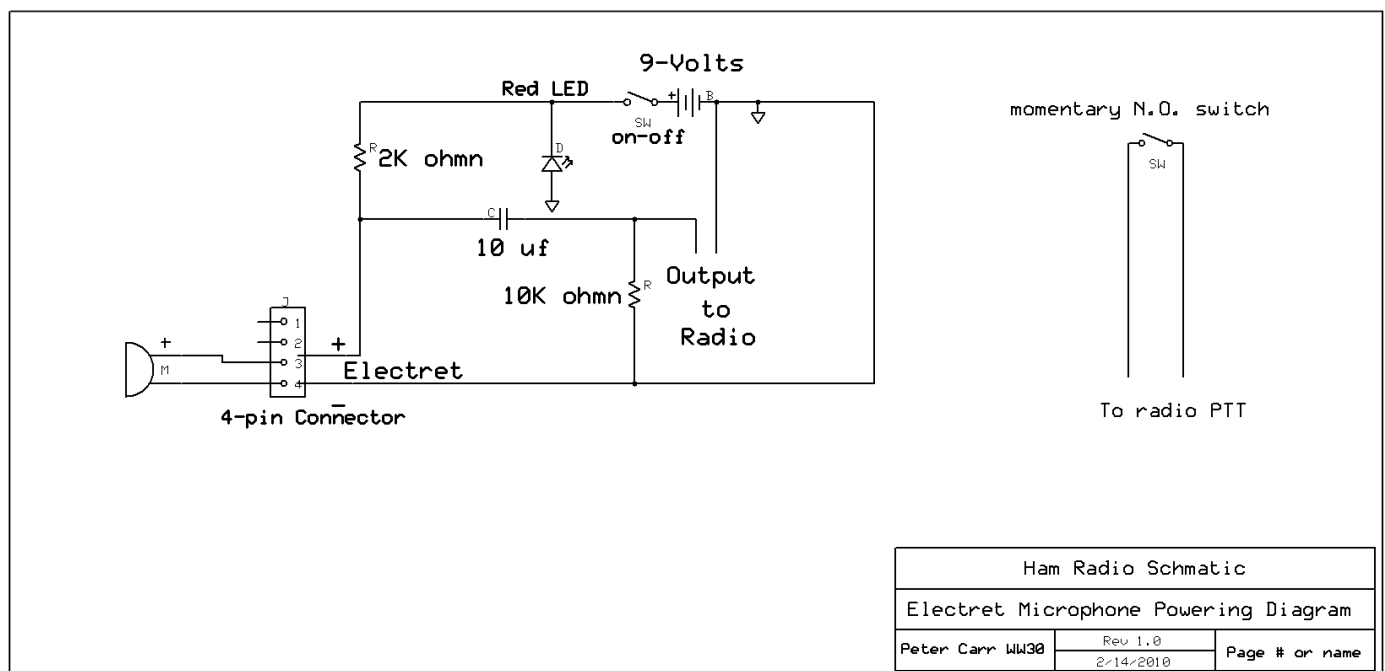
The enclosure with the headset connected is hooked up to the Kenwood. At the far left lower corner of the radio is the earphone jack where the 1/4 inch earphone plug connects. Most all radios use the 1/4 inch earphone jack but may have different types for the microphone.

The headset keeps the mic at the right location for best modulation and the earphone helps when trying to hear those mumbled call signs through the noise. It also helps when several Ham stations share a room or tent and everyone is talking at the same time. The headset and enclosure use the same connector as the hand mic so it's easy to switch between them. It does take a little time to wire up the circuit and some more time to get used to operating with it.

The end result is well worth the effort and increases the enjoyment of working HF. A hidden side benefit is that, if you're called to dinner, you can claim you're late because you didn't hear the call!

Resources:

www.expresspcb.com ; includes Express SCH software for schematics drawing program.



Product Review: Linemaster 632-S Foot Switch

by Bryan Simanic, WA3UFN

IF YOU HAVE worked a contest anytime you understand that keying your hand-held mic, as well as a desk mic, can get to be a real job! I had that experience while working the PA QSO Party last year. So I started my search for a decent foot-switch that would relieve me of the PTT task with the hand mic as well as free up my hand to do the typing for the logging program.

Since I am using the interface assembled from the instructions in W3BC's article in the January issue of *The Parasitic Emission*, this made the foot-switch a great addition to use with a headset. Yippee—hands free!

I wanted a foot-switch that would hold up to the stomping that it would typically receive during a pile-up or when the excitement rose while trying to contact one of the rare stations. After doing a little research I found that the Linemaster® brand seemed to surface as the one to use. Well, of course I had to look one up on a couple of my favorite web sites to see what the going price was.

EBay listed several of them and the price seemed to hover around \$35.00. Hmmm, seemed to be a lot to invest into a tool that I would use

occasionally, but I figured that while using the headset and logging software it became more of a necessity. Even considering that I needed a quality foot-switch, I was still reluctant to spend the amount but I found one (model #632-S) locally at Friedman Electric Supply.

Upon looking at the switch I understood why it was highly rated and why it garnered the price it did. This switch really is an *industrial quality* foot-switch! The foot-switch is all metal and weighs in at just over 2 pounds. Electrically, the actual switch is probably rated for at least 10 amps; really, overkill for the application but it *will* last.

After inspecting the foot-switch, I decided to invest in one. I tried it out for a couple QSOs and found that I was really glad I obtained a quality, made in the USA, switch that will last a lifetime or two or three or...

The overall switch housing has a black wrinkle finish and the base has a rubber-like wrinkle finish surface that should prevent unwanted movement when used on vinyl or tile floors. It stays in place nicely on carpeted floors too.

Spending a few extra dollars for an industrial tool versus a plastic one (which may not last very long and might fail just when the DXpedition calls you) was well worth it. Now, I can't wait for the next contest to give the switch a good work out and reduce *my* work out!!



This switch really is an industrial quality foot-switch!

Basic Concepts: Contesting 101

by Joe Shupienis, W3BC

SOME PEOPLE like to hunt. Some like to fish. Some like to compete for prizes. And, some like to use Amateur Radio and chat on the air. Contesting combines all of these activities, and more. Here are some tips to get you started in contesting. Nothing too advanced—this is “Basic Concepts,” after all!

To an outsider, contesting looks like a lot of energy being spent to simply make a bunch of short contacts. Many ragchewers resent the “enhanced” level of activity during a contest, and call into question the ethics of stations calling CQ for hours on end.

Contesters, on the other hand, believe that there is a method to their madness, and successful

contesters have the scores and awards to prove it! Even when calling CQ for long periods with no answers, a successful contester is consciously doing something that will help make it all worthwhile—he's “making some noise.”

You would be amazed at how many stations can be worked on a “dead” band—but they only call you if they can hear you. So rather than sit by a hissing radio, bemoaning a dead band, the winning contesters all “make some noise” to attract other stations. Sort of like the fisherman who keeps baiting his hook and casting it into the water. Eventually, they will both get a “nibble!”

There are two main strategies for effective contesting: “Search and pounce,” and “Running a frequency.” Most would-be contesters start out by using Search and Pounce (or “S&P”) techniques. They methodically tune up and down the bands,

looking for other contest stations they haven't worked yet, and give them a call. This is the most effective method for those with limited contest experience, and those with small signals.

The advantages of S&P for the newcomer are many. For some, the fast pace of contesting can be a bit intimidating. S&P allows you to take things at your own pace, and gradually increase your tempo as you gain experience. Beginners are advised to take frequent breaks to collect themselves before rejoining the fray. S&P allows you to pick up where you left off, since you don't have to worry about "maintaining" your "run frequency."

A good S&P operator has the advantage of being able to change bands—when things slow down on one band, he can move to another with more activity. But be aware of the rules! Some contests limit band changes, or have a minimum time that you must stay on a band once you change to it.

Running A Frequency

Higher power stations, and more seasoned operators will be successful at occupying a frequency. You don't need to use cut-throat techniques to run—an excellent sense of timing is far more useful. A good operator develops a rhythm for calling and listening, and never hesitates, as this could allow someone else to think the frequency is vacant and start their own run.

Running is the method of choice among the "big-guns" who dominate the winning positions in all contests. But even "little pistols" can run if the band is not too crowded. It's more about technique than about power, but power "helps!"

The rank beginner is cautioned against running on a busy band. Each CQ can bring a howling "pile-up" with several stations answering you at once. There is no one right answer to this problem—each operator finds his own way to work through the pile-ups. Some will work the first call they can understand clearly, while others will work the last station to call. Sometimes, I like to give the little pistols a chance and deliberately ignore the strongest stations if I can also hear "the little guy." Other testers only work the strongest stations and ignore the weak signals that require more work to dig out of the QRM. All of these are valid. All of these will get you points.

Planning To Win

The goal of contesting is to increase your score. There are many ways to do so, and you need to develop a scoring strategy for each contest. There

is much more to it than "working everything I hear." Depending on the rules of a particular contest, you may want to devote a sizable amount of time chasing after "multipliers" rather than working sheer volumes of stations.

It is vital to know and understand the rules of the contest before the contest starts. This allows you to figure out how the rules can benefit your type of operation. For example, if there is a multiplier of 2 for running 100 watts or less, you might get a higher score with 100 watts than you would with 200! But in the contest next week, you might need 1500 watts in order to hold your run frequency.

Some contests offer bonus points or multipliers for operating different modes. A low power station might best the big boys simply by using CW. In many contests, you may work the same station again on different bands and different modes. Others, notably the ARRL Sweepstakes, permit you to work a station only once, regardless of the band.

In the WPX contests, the object is to get as many callsign prefixes as you can. This generally requires working a lot of DX stations. But other contests might only allow a single additional multiplier for "DX" no matter how many different countries you work!

Then there are contests where you cannot gain points for working a particular class of station or stations in a certain location. For instance, if you are working from your home station on Field Day, you don't get any points for working other home stations. In many DX contests, contacts with stations in your own country are worthless.

Some contests have time limits. You can only work 24 hours of a particular 30 hour contest, for example. If you go over, you will have certain QSOs rejected, points deducted—or even be *disqualified*!

Keeping track of all this can be challenging, but that's all part of the fun! That's why the contest organizers publish the rules for their contest. That is also why the winning testers read and understand those rules before the contest begins.

Building A Winning Score

You need to know how you're doing to enable you to do better. That's not doubletalk—think about it carefully. All winning testers regularly evaluate their current performance, and if they see themselves starting to fall behind, they take steps to get back on track.

The most important measure of success during a contest is "Rate." Rate is simply the number of contacts per hour being made. If you made 120

It is vital to know and understand the rules of the contest before the contest starts.

contacts the first hour and 10 the second hour, something is very wrong. Believe you me, in that scenario, you really do not want to know how many you would make in the third! (Hint: zero to none!)

In the highly unlikely case I just described, it would be time for corrective action. Look outside and see if the antenna fell down. Make sure the equipment is still working. Make the decision to change bands or modes. Or even take a timed break (in the manner permitted by the rules!)

How do you measure rate? Most fully-featured logging programs do that for you. The days of paper logs are long gone. It's much easier and more accurate to use computer logging programs. There are some very good ones in widespread use. Most cost under \$20, but some good ones are free. You can usually try before you buy. I use and like [N3FJP's](#) programs but maybe you won't.

Serious contesters devote lots of research into getting the logging program that's "just right" for the way they operate. The logging program also performs many other useful functions, such as duplicate checking and alerting, scorekeeping, ratekeeping, multiplier "want lists", operator chatting and mapping of worked/needed states/sections/countries/counties/etc.

Success Favors the Prepared

In contesting, as in life, it's the little things that count. Is your operating position comfortable? You will be sitting there for hours, so it better be! Have you made arrangements for snacks and beverages? Believe it or not, you use up quite a bit of energy during a contest. Stress burns calories!

Have you done all your "chores" so you won't be interrupted in the heat of the contest to "mow the lawn" or "take out the garbage" at a critical time? Have you explained your need for "me time" to everyone's satisfaction? Is everybody happy?

Before the contest starts is the best time to test and adjust your antennas and equipment. A sure way to miss a lot of contacts and get low scores is to waste contest time putting up antennas! Be certain ahead of time that everything's working.

Make sure **you** are working, too. Try to get plenty of sleep two nights before the contest. Eat a healthy diet for the week before a major contest, and try to get in a little exercise, too. That way, you won't have surprise demands from your body at inopportune times. If it's an outdoor contest, pack and wear appropriate clothing. In the summer, bring sun protection and industrial-strength insect repellent. My experience with Lyme Disease last summer was far from pleasant!

After the Contest (AKA The Party's Over!)

When the contest is finished, make sure you save and back up your logs. Then back them up again to a thumb drive. Nothing is more heartbreaking than pushing the wrong button and, BOOM! You just wiped out thousands of points! "It" happens!

Park your antennas, and power down the station. Have something to eat, and celebrate another contest that is "in the books." Now is probably not the best time to go back through the logs and "fix mistakes." (There's *never* a best time for that!)

Later, review the log, and the rate report. See how your score compares with those from last year's contest. Once you're certain you have logged everything correctly, and claimed every point and every multiplier you earned, ready the log for submission and following the contest organizers' instructions, submit your log.

Most contest sponsors accept computer logs in the "Cabrillo" format, and allow you to email them or directly transfer your log via the Internet. Any logging program worth its salt does the necessary conversions for you, and produces a correctly formatted Cabrillo file.

A word on whether to submit your log or not:

SUBMIT! That's the word. Even if you are embarrassed at how poorly you did, **SUBMIT YOUR LOG.** If you don't want anybody to see how poorly you did, submit it as a "check log," **BUT SUBMIT YOUR LOG!**

Stories abound about people who made only one QSO, submitted their log anyway, and later found out they won first place! Some of those stories are even true! I won a 1st Place WPA Rover certificate for an August UHF contest in which I burned 27 gallons of gas to make 9 QSOs on 432, which is the only UHF band I have. I also took 1st place in the frigid 2008 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes. QST even printed my soapbox comment in which I admitted that I only made a "half-hearted effort."

Don't get too wrapped up in scores. Somebody always does better and somebody else worse than you. It's the luck of the draw. If you better your score each time you enter, you're moving in the right direction. That makes you a better ham!

Contesting brings together everything that makes Amateur Radio worthwhile. Operating skill, adherence to the rules, equipment utilization, station engineering, knowledge of propagation, building friendships, personal integrity and all the other facets of our grand hobby combine with each other in our best contest efforts.

Most of all, it's good, clean fun!

Serious contesters will devote a lot of research into getting the "just right" logging program to support their methods of contest operating.

May 2010

Regional Amateur Radio Activities

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 7:45pm» Clearfield County ARES Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	26 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net	27	28 7:00pm» Spring Sprint 432 MHz	29	30	01 6:00am» Spring Sprint Microwave 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
02 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 7:45pm» Clearfield County ARES Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	03 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net	04	05	06	07	08 3:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Meeting 7:00pm» Spring Sprint 50 MHz 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
09 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 7:45pm» Clearfield County ARES Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	10 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net	11 7:00pm» Punxsutawney Area ARC Meeting	12	13	14 Dayton Hamvention	15 Dayton Hamvention 9:30am» QCARC Breakfast 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
16 Dayton Hamvention 1:30pm» Elk County ARA Meeting 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 7:45pm» Clearfield County ARES Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	17 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net	18	19	20	21 7:30pm» QCARC Meeting	22 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
23 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 7:45pm» Clearfield County ARES Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	24 Parasitic Emission Submission Deadline 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net	25	26	27	28	29 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
30 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 7:45pm» Clearfield County ARES Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	31 Memorial Day 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net	01 7:00pm» Punxsutawney ARC "Radio Night"	02	03	04	05 Rochester Hamfest 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net

Visit www.parasiticemission.com for back issues, current issues and more. The current online interactive version of this calendar, which contains events in upcoming months may be accessed at calendar.parasiticemission.com. You may use that calendar to enter amateur radio events of interest to local amateurs which are intended for publication, subject to review and approval.

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