
HAMateur Gazette

The Newsletter of The
Paso Robles Amateur Radio Club

W6LKF

Meeting Date: First Monday Each Month

Email: prarc@mindspring.com

September 8, 2002

Volume I, No.8

Next Meeting: September 9, 2002 Centennial Park,
Paso Robles 7:30 PM

President: Bill Mcfarlen, WA5VGI

Vice President: Tim Haueter, W6NS

Secretary: Mike Kelley, K6AJ

Treasurer: Bill Palmertson, K6BWJ

- The Newsletter is also available online at:
 - <http://force12inc.com/F12-CLUB-PRARC.htm>
 - Tom Schiller has graciously spared some space on his Force 12 site. He has also listed several club newsletters from other clubs at this link : <http://force12inc.com/F12-NEWS-CLUBS.htm>
-

In this Issue:

- **Thought of the Month!**
- **Presidents Corner**
- **DX News**
- **Siren Test News**
- **Silent Key**

PRARC Meeting - Monday, September 09, 2002

The highlight of the next PRARC meeting will be a presentation by Tom Schiller, N6BT on his visit to Japan and presentation(s) to the JARL convention. Tom had a great trip and you will enjoy sharing his many and varied experiences on the trip.

Looking forward to seeing you all on the 9th.

73,

Bill McFarlen - WA5VGI
President, PRARC

- **Thought of the Month:**

Imagine NB6T (Fred Jennings) calling N6BT (Tom Schiller) in a CW contest at 30 wpm. (Hint - do the cw)

Submitted by: Bill - WA5VGI

- **PRESIDENT'S CORNER:**

Where did the summer go? We are seeing hints of Fall out here on the ridge. A big thank you to all who participated in the PG&E siren test. This event has always been a good money maker for the club. Having never participated in a siren test I decided that it was time for yours truly to get his feet wet. Bill and Joan Palmerston were kind enough to take me to the gathering place down at Cal Poly. Tom, N6BT had loaned me a hand-held transceiver so I was all set. Joan gave me a siren monitoring assignment sheet which was neatly filled out with a map showing the location of the siren that I was to monitor. Not being familiar with the SLO area Tim, N6NS loaned me his "Thomas" map showing the campus area and road off of Hwy 1 to my siren. Boy this was going to be a snap.

Since I had ridden down to Cal Poly with Bill he was kind enough to loan me his car for travel out to my siren location. Around 11:30 AM I left the Cal Poly parking lot proceeded to Hwy 1 and then turned on Steiner road to the Department of Water and Power station where the siren was located. I parked Bill's car exactly where the map showed and began my wait for the first siren test which was scheduled for noon. At around 11:50 AM I decided to move Bill's car to a slightly better location on the road to see the siren. The road I was on was dirt and very narrow. As I started to turn around his car another car came down the road which I was now blocking. In my haste to move Bill's car out of the way I backed over the edge of the road onto a soft steep slope. Yep you guessed it. I was now stuck on the road embankment in soft dirt with the frame of Bill's car almost bottomed out. Looking at my watch I saw it was only several minutes until the first siren test so I

walked back to my original location. At 12 noon the siren went off as scheduled. Between then and the next scheduled test 5 cars came down the road. Three offered to help, two pretended I wasn't there and a pickup truck with three young fellows in it hooted and hollered something about my driving skills. At 12:30 PM a second test went off as scheduled. Following that I radioed to Joan that I had a slight problem with Bill's car. After some conversations with several club members the "Miller Towing Co." volunteered to come pull me out. About 10 minutes Larry and Char pulled up in their van, hooked on a heavy rope with hooks and voila I was back on the road. Thanks Larry and Char!! Next year my siren will be located on a paved road!!

Hate to mention it again but we are still far behind in collecting club dues. Please - a check or cash to Bill Palmerston.

73,

Bill - WA5VGI
President, PRARC

- **DX News:**

"The solar terrestrial indices for 02 June are solar flux = 179, A index =21 and the mid-latitude k index = 3". Summer doldrums, ho hum summer, what is the DXer to do?? A DX club of which I am a member has an excellent solution. The Central California DX Club

sponsors the Summer DX Super Sprint. The object is to contact as many DXCC countries as you can between 0000 UTC June 01 and 2359 UTC August 31. The event is open to CCDXC members as well as amateurs residing in Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa and Tulare counties. You can enter in either phone, CW and digital, mixed mode or Novice/Tech. Having suffered through terrible band conditions in May I thought that at least the challenge of chasing some different countries for 3 months would be fun. I decided to enter mixed mode (CW & SSB). What follows is a summary of that activity and some observations.

Starting June 1st I hit the deck running. After 2 weeks I had 89 countries worked. By the end of June there were 133 countries in the log. Now, a minor glitch. We had scheduled a 19 day vacation back east starting July 01 and a visit down to Dale, K6UA in Fallbrook for 3 days so I would lose 3 weeks of operating time in July. But on the days I was home I continued to tune the bands and by the end of July I had contacted 155 different DXCC countries. The month of August provided some fair to good openings when the "k" index dropped to 1 on several days. But new DX was getting harder to find.

By mid-August my total was now 176 countries and I started to have thoughts of maybe getting near 200 for a total. I took notes from my Daily DX Reports sent by Bernie, W3UR. I checked out "DX Summit" on the internet to see what stations on different bands were being worked by the west coast. I set my alarm for 1:00 AM to get up and work N6XIV/KH9 on Wake Island. I listened short path, long path, switching between bands as propagation would change

during the day. My final new country logged was EY2ARP in Tadjhikistan on 17 meter CW at 0425 UTC on 31 August. I ended the DX sprint with a total of 191 DXCC countries worked.

Since I had used both modes I thought it would be interesting to see how my totals split between CW and SSB. Using a computer sort I noted that I had worked 124 DXCC countries on CW and 118 countries on SSB over the 3 month period. That surprised me a bit as I expected the individual totals to be higher. The message here was that if you are chasing mixed- mode DXCC you can't afford to favor just one mode. Or saying it another way, working both modes yielded approximately an additional 70 DXCC countries total. I was active and logged stations on 40, 30, 20,17,15,12 and 10 meters. While the packet system was valuable in finding DX stations to work the old practice of tuning and tuning paid off especially on the WARC bands.

Despite generally lousy conditions here are some of the countries logged during the 3 month period:

3V8	9N7	TA3	VQ9	4W
3XA8	A45	TT8	VU2	BQ9P
4L1	A71	TU2	XY5	
4S7	AP2	TY7	XW1	
5N1	5C2(CN)	EK3	YA5	
5R8	FR	UK8	ZA	
5X2	KH9	EY2	Z22	
5Z4	OJ0	EX2	ZC4	
8Q7	S21	V8	ZD7	
9L1	S9	VK9L	ZD9	

During this exercise one thing became very clear. Despite the poor band conditions the DX stations are there. One has to ferret them out and it can take a lot of hunting to do that. On two occasions I defeated a "k" index of 3 by working both a 3B8 (Mauritius) and FR (Reunion Is.) station long path when the propagation was short path. Due to the high polar absorption neither station could be worked by repeated calls on the short path but when I switched to long path I was able to get through. The signal reports were nothing to brag about but the stations were in the log. One of the big challenges became beating out east coast stations who were not affected by the high absorption on the polar paths. That meant finding just the spot(frequency) to call on. Lots of good pileup practice here.

In summary the DX sprint was alot of fun and kept me actively chasing DX. I did end up with a number of new band/mode countries and even a few new U.S. counties. When things were really bad I would go up to 14.336 MHz and look for some new counties on the county hunter's net. I was also able to work 17 new IOTAs (islands that count for the RSGB IOTA award).

I'm looking forward to fall propagation and also getting back on the low bands (160/80/40). I will be putting up a new 2 element yagi for 80/75 meters designed by Tom, N6BT and produced by Force-12. Will share more about that next month. See you in the pileups.

73,

Bill - WA5VGI

- **Siren Test News**

Hello Everybody,

It's hard to believe that the siren test is over. I had a great time (except for the work) being the rookie ham organizer. However it is only fair to say that Bob Gromer really made it all possible. I got the opportunity to meet a lot of people that I might not have otherwise. My overall impression was that it was a fantastic experience.

As you probably know, I was at the EOC during the actual test hanging out with Brad Hoskins. I wish I was as good and efficient radio operator as he is. Maybe in another lifetime..... The assistant net control person (ED Shaw) was out of town so we were a little short handed however Brad did great and I learned a few things that I could do better next year.

It turns out that the Ham Organizer is really just a paper pushing type of job. I spent most of my time getting paper work ready for the real players (Coordinators and the Observers). All of the coordinators did their jobs perfect and my hat is off to you all (if I had one). I'm already looking forward to doing this again next year. I expect I can do it better and faster the second time....

I believe there were 3 sirens that were found to be faulty. Two of the three were reported faulty by PG&E's instrumentation. I believe the third one was reported good by the instrumentation and really failed

in the field. So much for automation. My arithmetic suggests that the instrumentation fails half as often as a siren

I'm hoping that you all return next year. It would probably be good form to thank the volunteers in each of your areas for their services. We want them back next year also. I heard there were a few areas which harbored a little excitement. The Los Osos area had two alternates both of which had to be used. I'm sure there were other instances of this.

Thinking forward to next year gives us lots of time to think about possible improvements. I would like to see us build a war chest of potential alternate observers. There may be ways that we can utilize the radios better. Someone suggested that net control move up to UHF. Anyone wishing to initiate contact with NET CONTROL would use UHF. Net control could of course initiate VHF communications directly to coordinators in the field. This change might make the net control job a little more orderly. It's probably worth thinking about...

If anyone has any interesting suggestions I would like to hear them.. We've got a year to prepare so lets have a little fun with it.

You all should plan on a get together at my home again next year. I would like to start a mini-tradition since it is so much fun..

Best Regards,

Bill Bailey AE6EQ

Hello All,

I would also like to thank you so very much for your part in this years test. I have always believed that if something seems to be very complicated, we should step back and look at what we have done to make it that way. You seemed to keep things simple and therefore prove my theory. Anyway, thanks to you and all your assistants and the observers.

It will take me a few weeks to get everything organized and donation checks requested, received and mailed because I am very heavily involved in preparation for the big dress rehearsal and graded exercise drills. If I come across something I cannot read or any missing information on the cards, I'll be contacting Bill for clarification.

**Thanks again,
Anna**

***Anna L Halverson
Emergency Plan Coordinator
Diablo Canyon Power Plant
Phone: (805) 545-3328
Co.: 691-3328
Pager: 3328
Email: alh1@pge.com_***

- **Silent Key**

Ross Connor, K6KAX, also know as Skipper, passed away on Sept. 6 2002 at Sierra Vista hospital in San Luis Obispo. Ross was 75 years old. He is survived by a daughter, Carol, two granddaughters, and five great grandchildren.

A memorial get together is pending and I will try to notify all who are interested. Please call me for information.

Tom Kotten KC6ASY 805-237-1014

I'm going to miss him.
