



# 599 VA ..... - . - . - . - November 2010

News Letter of the Central Virginia Contest Club

<http://www.c-v-c-c.us>

Editor: KJ4IPF [bytehd@us.net](mailto:bytehd@us.net)

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## Meeting Notice

The November meeting of the CVCC will be held on Tuesday, November 2, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. at St Martin's Episcopal Church, 9000 St. Martin Lane, Richmond, Va. 23294. The pre-meeting social and dinner will be at 5:30 P.M. at the Golden Corral, Gaskins Road and West Broad Street. Don't forget to Vote!

## December Dinner Meeting

Christmas dinner is on Monday December 6, 2010 @ 6:30 P.M. at Nick's Roman Terrace, 8051 W Broad St, Richmond, VA 23294. Please RSVP to Dennis at [n4den@comcast.net](mailto:n4den@comcast.net) so he can get a head count.

## November Program

The November will mainly be a business meeting where we will make plans for our participation in the upcoming ARRL contests. We will also discuss the future of CVCC and solicit ideas for making this a more viable and long-lived organization. Membership has been declining over the years and if we intend to continue we need to reverse that situation. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting and present your comments and ideas. If time allows we may also present a short program which consists of one of PVRC's "webinars".

## Random Skip by W4DR

Our club news letter is more widely read then most of us appreciate. About a year ago I mentioned that I was trying to collect QSLs from the ten deleted countries which I did not work myself. Nine of these were deleted before I was licensed. A good friend helped me obtain 4 of the missing countries from the collection of a deceased mutual friend of ours. Now I needed only 6 to have a complete set. I listed the 6 I needed in this column and Tony, W2VRK sent me a VO2 dated in 1949. Obviously Tony reads our bulletin. Since then we have had occasional email correspondence. Tony is one of the few people in the world who has the complete collection of cards for every DXCC entity on the postwar countries list.. The remaining ones I need are so rare that collectors can pay hundreds of dollars for some of them on E-bay. Recently I got a letter from Tony with a real treasure.

It wasn't a FN, FI, PK5, PK6 or CR8/D card, but rather a very attractive W4QCW qsl for a Nov 20, 1950 160 meter AM qso I made with W1DBM. It was amazing to me that Tony knew that W4QCW was the original call of his old friend W4DR and that he picked this out W1DBM's collection and sent it to me. The card listed my transmitter as a 6L5-6L6-807 running 45 watts. My receiver was a NC-101X. This information was great to have as I remembered quite well the NC-101X receiver, but could not remember that I had it at that early date. I remember my Elmer, W4NZZ coming to my house one day and excitedly announcing that the FCC had just granted 160 privileges to General Class and higher and that I should get on the band. I still remember the very low dipole strung the entire depth of my dad's property.

It couldn't have been over 15 feet above ground. W1DBM was the best "DX" I worked with my little station and the fad of 160 meters soon faded out as I discovered real DX on 40 meters. It wasn't until 1969 that I rediscovered 160 meters and with some higher power and a shunt fed 85 foot vertical I became the 9th person to work DXCC on 160 meters. This effort took until 1977, but by that time I was hooked on 160 DX'ing. Now it is my favorite band, but with 323 worked new ones are getting very hard to find. But just getting that QSL from my earliest days on the band with a 1 cent stamp on it helped me relive the excitement of those heady days.

Bob W4DR

### **OCTOBER DX REPORT**

One word describes the month of October on the bands-- FUN! The four new DXCC entities in the Caribbean made a lot of joyful noise on the radio this month. Our member reports below reflect a lot of this activity. The pileups were there but fairly easy to break through. Thanks to all the PJ operators who gave us a month to remember!

November promises to be a good month as well with plenty of contests and DX activity. You can check here: <http://www.ng3k.com/misc/adxoc.html> for the current planned operations and also here: <http://dx-world.net/>

The biggest DX event this month will be ZL8X, Kermadec Island. A German Team will be on the island Nov. 19- Dec. 5. Full details here: <http://www.kermadec.de/>

Sprinkle in ARRL November Sweepstakes and CQWW CW and you have lots of opportunities to be on the radio! Good luck this month and good DX! Here are your reports:

**W1ZA** – Duke reports working all the new PJ's on all bands. Mostly all SSB but CW as well. I heard the mighty ZA on 17M CW working one of the PJ's. Way to go, Duke!

**WD4LBR** - Bruce and Shelia missed half of the month due to travelling on vacation. But they more than made up for it by working all the new PJ's on all bands totaling somewhere around 65 new band countries each! Bruce worked PJ7E on 25 of the 27 possible band slots. He was #2 in zone 5 for the top 100 calls and tied for #3 in the world for the top 100 calls that worked PJ7E. Bruce also reports working an all time new one in ZD9. Awesome job, Bruce!

**N3UA** - Sejo had a great month and was overjoyed to see 10M open all day long! He worked the ZD9 on 15M for an all time new one. In total, he had 26 new band countries as follows: 10m: 5H, A2,FO8,ZD9,C9,9A,VQ9,E7,ST,5N,EI,VK, 12m: ZD8,SV9,E51,HP,VK,RK2,G,A2,Z3,MD,5H,FY 15m: C9 Congrats, Sejo!

**W4DR** – Bob had a tremendous month with the PJ's and had the most FUN he has had on the radio in a long time! Bob's PJ combination was over 100 for a total of 37 new band entities! He worked PJ7E on 60M for number #81 there. He also picked up CX/N3BNA for #82 on 60M. Great job, Bob!

**N4DEN** - Dennis reports the following new band entities for October: PJ7 15m, GU 15m, HH2 10m, 5V 20m, ZD7 10m. Nice work, Dennis!

**W4PM** - Puck racked up 587 Q's this month mainly in the following contests: CQP, Oceania DX CW, WAG and FOC BWQP. He worked all four new PJ's on most bands and added an MD on 12 and left over from Sept were 15M - YJ, ZB, JY, 20M- D2. Surprisingly, these were all CW QSO's. Good job, Puck!

**W4HZ** - Jonathan had tremendous fun working the PJ's on most bands on SSB and CW including three of them on 160M! He also got the Antarctic group for a few new band entities. Jonathan has been spending time preparing his station for the upcoming contest season including working on a new 160M beverage. Congratulations, Jonathan!

**NW4V** - I also enjoyed the PJ activity and worked them for 26 new band entities 10-80M. I was pleased to work 5V7TT on 40 & 80 CW for new BE's.

Thanks to all who sent in a report.

Vy 73,

Ed NW4V

#### **November Contest Calendar**

QRP Fox Hunt	0100Z-0230Z, Nov 3
QRP Fox Hunt	0100Z-0230Z, Nov 5
Ukrainian DX Contest	1200Z, Nov 6 to 1200Z, Nov 7
<b>ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW</b>	<b>2100Z, Nov 6 to 0300Z, Nov 8</b>
QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Nov 10
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1100Z-1200Z, Nov 10 and 1900Z-2000Z, Nov 10 and 0300Z-0400Z, Nov 11
QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Nov 12
WAE DX Contest, RTTY	0000Z, Nov 13 to 2359Z, Nov 14
JIDX Phone Contest	0700Z, Nov 13 to 1300Z, Nov 14
OK/OM DX Contest, CW	1200Z, Nov 13 to 1200Z, Nov 14
Kentucky QSO Party	1400Z, Nov 13 to 0200Z, Nov 14
QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Nov 17
QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Nov 19
YO International PSK31 Contest	1600Z-2200Z, Nov 19
LZ DX Contest	1200Z, Nov 20 to 1200Z, Nov 21
<b>ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB</b>	<b>2100Z, Nov 20 to 0300Z, Nov 22</b>
EU PSK63 QSO Party	0000Z-2400Z, Nov 21
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0200Z-0400Z, Nov 22
QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Nov 24
QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Nov 26
<b>CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW</b>	<b>0000Z, Nov 27 to 2400Z, Nov 28</b>

*Send comments and corrections about this page to Bruce Horn, [WA7BNM](mailto:WA7BNM)*

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Permission was received from Bruce Horn to use his contest calendar. It can be found by following links on [www.contesting.com](http://www.contesting.com)

November kicks off the big contest season, but don't forget the **CQWW SSB** contest this weekend **October 30 and 31**. The November Sweepstakes, CW beginning on November 6 and the SSB portion beginning on November 20 will give us a change to help PVRC beat the west coast guys again this year. Plan on spending as much time as you can in these and send in your logs for PVRC. This is a good chance to work on your 5 band WAS. Perhaps you can even get a sweep of all 80 sections. This event is great contesting practice because it's all US and Canadian stations and even a modest set up can run 'em big time. This will get your contesting juices flowing for sure. Perhaps some of you would like to host a multi-single for SS. If so put out an e-mail to the group and get some ops lined up.

At the end of November is the CQWW DX CW contest. Even if CW is not your primary mode give it a go. It will be great practice. There are also a number of smaller DX contests some on RTTY and PSK for you folks who enjoy digital contesting. If you want to see how you can do on QRP check out the QRP Fox hunts. These are only one hour in duration and you try to find and contact the two foxes in that time period. Also the CWOps mini-CWT Tests can be a lot of fun.

In December we have the ARRL 160 and 10 meter contests beginning December 3 and Dec 11 respectively. Put these on your calendar now. These are two contests we enter as a club and we need to make a maximum effort to try to win gavels this year. Hopefully we will have some multi station action In these.

73,

Puck W4PM

### **Contesting, by Allen Singer N2KW**

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with permission from the editor of FOCUS and the author. No changes were made to the spelling as it was published by a British club and is in the Queen's English.

As much as I want to introduce the thrill of 'Radiosporting' to non-contesters, it would be unfair to devote an autumn column to the basics. For those readers who haven't felt the energy of a 150+ hour, I encourage you to get on for the last hour of any contest, call CQ, and see how many callsigns you can log in that hour. Keep track of your 'personal best' rate, and watch it climb. I will try my best to help. Remember, a P4 is just as good as a P5, so don't waste your time in pile-ups. You would be amazed at how much good a clear frequency does you, so don't be afraid to go higher in the band, where it is less crowded. You have to trust me on the 'CQ'. I found it difficult to believe myself, but it is really true, that most of the multipliers come to you!

I suppose contests are occasionally won by someone operating random bands on gut instinct, but not very often. You have to have a strategy to maximize score! If you do not have 48 hours to devote to the contest, there are schemes to maximize any given number of hours that you have allocated. Many dedicated testers participate in club-score competition, and it has been proven that the club with the

greatest number of participants will come out on top! It will be difficult to formulate strategy for such a widespread audience, so specific targets will have to be generalized. Europe is more important to East Coast (USA) contesters, whilst Japan is more of a factor on the West Coast. Just don't lose track of the goal – to maximize rate.

Not only does each band have its own characteristics, but specific targets vary greatly, according to your location. It is possible to generalize, if you substitute 'sunrise', 'sunset', 'morning', 'afternoon' and 'evening' for chronological times. Let us look at each (traditional) band, and see if we can skim the best from each of them. Starting with my favourite, 160 metres.

The best way to operate on 160 metres is to display the 'grey line' (the Terminator) on your computer screen. In the days before widespread use of the PC, there were individual charts, one for each month of the year, with sliding overlays to display the Terminator, but the PC is more accurate and far less cumbersome. Although DX Atlas™ is the best of these (my opinion,) there is a decent free 'grey line' programme contained in the N1MM software (also free!). Propagation of signals on 160 metres is along dark paths, with specific enhancement if either end of the path is in twilight, (that means double enhancement if both stations are in the 'grey line'). At, or slightly before, your local sunset, you will hear stations to your east. Some of them will be quite loud. I suggest that you don't even waste your time calling them! They are hearing stations to their east, and much louder than you! For every one whose attention you manage to snag, you could have had 20 QSOs on 40 metres. Multi-operator stations keep 160 metres active for 16 hours a day, but as a single-op, you are only interested in sunrise in target areas to your east, and sunset in target areas to your west. From the East Coast of the USA, that means being on the band for European sunrise. At their sunrise, areas to their east are now in daylight, and you have far less QRM to deal with. It must be clearly understood that the angle of radiation is even more important than azimuth in any antenna, and that it is beyond the reach of most of us to deploy horizontal antennas at a height that would be effective on the LF bands. This is why it is so important to use vertical, a ground-plane, a Bobtail, or an inverted-L on LF. Low, horizontal antennas may hear well, but only work close-in stations, where the angle of arrival of his signal is higher. There are exceptions to most rules, and double-hop 'E-layer' propagation on HF is the most obvious that comes to mind, but you really need a vertical for LF. A successful contest station can never have 'too many' antennas!

The 80 metre band is similar to 160, in that it favours paths through the zone of darkness, with enhancement along the Terminator. Although there are notable differences, for our purposes, we can treat them as the same band. You should be on one or the other after midnight local time, favouring the one that yields the highest rate. Many contest DXpeditions hit 160 metres on the hour, so maybe that would be a good place to be for the first 15 minutes of the hour, but not if you have a pile of callers on 80! Remember not to be a 'DXer' and spend half an hour to work a contest DXpedition that will be begging for contacts the next day! Call CQ and 'run' if at all possible.

The same phenomenon occurs on 40 metres, in that stations to your east are audible, even loud at times, but will not hear you unless there are no other callers. I have worked Europe (from K1TTT) at 2pm local time, but working a single station, and running a string of stations are two separate things, and there is no doubt that a higher frequency would be more productive at that hour. During years of low sunspot activity, the MUF frequently drops below 40 metres after local midnight, which is your cue to pay attention to 80 and 160 metres. The time to open on 40 metres is when your rate on 20 metres seriously drops. You want to operate on the highest band with conditions for DX QSOs.

Twenty metres is a daytime band at this point in the sunspot cycle. You can expect to work DXCC easily in a contest weekend, with as many as 150 countries hitting the log of the heavyweights. It is also the most crowded band, so please remember that a clear frequency is more important than a 'good' frequency! I cannot over-emphasize this point. Keep in mind that rate rules! Most DX stations will operate on the highest band with propagation, so 'go with the flow' and move up to 15 metres as soon as you can. Although 20 metres can (and does) open before local sunrise, it often closes again before the 'real' opening when it gets light. Squeeze what you can out of LF, because it will be closed during hours of daylight. Again, although there are often spectacular long-path openings at sunrise, they don't yield rate, which is ostensibly your goal. Keep checking 15 metres, and move up as soon as it supports DX propagation. There will be ample time for a return to 20 metres when 15 closes to the east. Rates for this second visit to 20 metres are almost as high as the morning run!

The beam headings on 15 metres are less than apparent. Under the current low solar flux, especially if conditions are disturbed, signals may be better beaming south or southeast when the band first opens. The first hour or so of a 'real' opening will see low arrival angles, so expect the higher antennas to hear things that you cannot. Have no fear, within the first hour arrival angles increase, and more modest antennas have their day. In fact, there are many occasions that a low antenna will out-perform a high one, but not when the band is first opening. At local noon, or thereabouts, there are often opportunities to work the antipode, beaming over the North Pole, but don't expect to do this with a low antenna!

There is no band where our current dearth of sunspots show its presence more than 10 metres. During times of plenty, this band opens shortly after sunrise, with extremely long skip available. Believe it or not, there have been many occasions where you had to go above 28125 kHz to find a clear frequency! Sadly, this hasn't been the case for some time now, to the point that many newer amateurs have never experienced the thrill that 10 metres can offer. It was Fred, K3ZO, that taught me the term 'searchlight propagation' to describe a phenomenon that I was familiar with, but didn't know the proper name for. Basically, the skip zones, the 'footprint' if you prefer, gets smaller as you go higher in frequency. This can work for you, or against you. If all of your mates in the local club are getting through, chances are you will as well. However, if the DX is answering stations that are out of your area, it probably means that he is hearing them better, and your turn has yet to come. This is another reason that a CQ is so effective, the stations that answer are the ones that actually hear you! If you plan on being active for both days of the contest, do not leave 10 metres whilst the band is open. There is no guarantee that it will be open again on the second day. Do not overlook the transequatorial opportunities this band offers in late afternoon. This can mean Africans for Europe, or South America for the States. Turn the beam south and tune. Your CQ calls would be more productive elsewhere.

Putting it all together, assume that your day starts at local sunrise, check 40 metres to the west, but get on 20 metres to the east as soon as possible. Follow the MUF up to 15 metres....at this juncture, don't expect much from 10 metres. That doesn't mean that you don't have to check it. After noon, the process will reverse, with 20 metres closing shortly after sunset, favouring signals from your west. From the time 20 closes, to local midnight, 40 metres will have most of the action. That is not to say that opportunities do not exist elsewhere, but this is where the action is, until it isn't! After midnight, 80 and 160 metres come into their own. The very best time to operate is 'when you can' and the best place is whatever band yields the highest rate.

There is an awful lot of information crammed into this column. I suggest that you read one paragraph at a time and be sure that you have digested its contents before moving on. Otherwise, it is too easy to be overwhelmed.

### **Note from the Editor**

A couple of things I notice about the Guys and Ladies of CVCC is that they all are top notch operators. They all have a wealth of knowledge and experience that we young ones both in age and experience would be good to tap into. And they are nice too! It reminds me of my first experience with Ham Radio.

In 1980, my family moved from Illinois to South Carolina. Since we lived near the beach in a neighborhood paved only with coquina shells, I would always get my bike stuck in the thick sand. One day I came across a house with a 50ft tower and a few yagi antennas mounted at the top. I wandered to the door and knocked. To my surprise, an older woman answered and as I introduced myself, I asked “what’s that”, pointing to the tower. Jean Passow yelled back into the house “Ed, you got a visitor”. I was welcomed to both the neighborhood and a new hobby. Ed Passow was K4CI. He told me he was on the design team that developed the NTSC color TV standard for RCA and had retired to live the good life at the beach. Doesn’t hurt that he was 1000 feet from the Atlantic, elevation 10ft, and sitting over a water table only 10 feet down. I listened as Ed worked South Africa, Vietnam, and a ship at sea off Antarctica. One contact I vividly remember was the pilot aboard Richard Nixon’s private plane. The jet was returning from the funeral of Anwar Sadat in Egypt and needed to refuel somewhere in the Mediterranean. Being able to talk and not just listen *was* the attraction.

George  
KJ4IPF