

Noise Floor

Vol. 3, No. 1

Pacific Northwest VHF Society

Spring 2004

2004 Pacific Northwest VHF+ Conference date, location set

Mark your calendar now! The 2004 Pacific Northwest VHF+ Conference will be held October 1-2 at the Best Western Hallmark Inn Moses Lake. You won't want to miss it. Conference registration will open August 1, 2004. Cost of the conference will be \$25 per person, including a buffet lunch. Registration details will be forthcoming in the June issue of Noise Floor.

Special conference lodging rates of \$55 per night (one queen-size bed; \$60 for two queen-size beds) have been negotiated. Make your reservations early as the block of rooms with special rates will be held by the hotel only until September 1, 2004. After that date, rooms will only be available at the regular rate of \$75.

To make a reservation, call the Hallmark Inn directly at (509) 765-9211 and ask for the special "PNWVHFS Conference" rate. Using the Best Western toll-free number or web site to make reservations may not guarantee you the special conference rate.

The PNWVHFS Board of Directors recently approved the addition of an Eastern Washington location to the Pacific Northwest VHF+ Conference schedule rotation and Director Bob Lee (N7AU) did a great job of finding a great facility in which to hold it. He and PNWVHFS President Lynn Burlingame visited the site and worked out the details with the hotel.

Traditionally, the conference has rotated between three locations; Bend, Oregon; Portland, Oregon/Vancouver, Washington; and Seattle/Tacoma, Washington. Adding a fourth location in Eastern Washington will provide even more geographic diversity.

Moses Lake was selected for the 2004 conference due to its accessibility via major North-South and East-West highways, availability of good facilities and other factors. The 2005 conference is tentatively scheduled for the Portland/Vancouver area. Future conferences will rotate among the four areas.

See the PNWVHFS President's message elsewhere in this issue for how you can help with the conference.

Tentative Schedule of Events

Friday, October 1

"Rove-In" VHF/UHF contest
No-host "Pizza Bash" social event

Saturday, October 2

Technical programs
Buffet lunch
More technical programs
PNWVHFS Annual Meeting
VUCC QSL card checking
Post-conference tailgate swap meet
No-host dinner (optional)

Sunday, October 3

No-host "Hit the Road" breakfast (optional)

Inside

<i>President's message</i>	<i>Page 2</i>
<i>NOAX wins writing award</i>	<i>Page 3</i>
<i>Contest calendar</i>	<i>Page 3</i>
<i>Using the 7th Call Area QSL Buro</i>	<i>Page 4</i>
<i>Editorial: "Where do we go from here?"</i>	<i>Page 6</i>

President's Message

Lynn Burlingame (N7CFO)

Plans are well underway for the 2004 conference in Moses Lake. We owe a round of applause to Bob, N7AU, for locating the site and working out the details with the Hallmark Inn. Bob spent a lot of time on finding a conference site and it is a good one.

The Hallmark Inn is an excellent hotel and is conveniently located just off I-90. They are on the waterfront and have a wide range of amenities. Our conference facilities are great and if you bring your spouse, it is a pleasant place to spend a day in the sun by the pool, play a round of golf, visit the antique stores or tour the local area. The Hallmark is a "Destination Resort" and there is a lot to do. Check their excellent website at <http://www.hallmarkinns.com/property/main.asp?property=2&pageid=2&pagedetails=1> for details.

The conference is already shaping up to be quite an event. We have the preliminary planning taken care of, and are working on the agenda and speakers. We now have nearly 250 members, and will undoubtedly exceed that mark by conference time. With half that membership we had 54 participants at the 2002 conference in Bend, so this will be a major gathering.

We will have the traditional Friday night pizza bash and also plan on a no-host dinner at a local buffet restaurant on Saturday night after the conference. The conference facility has a great setup for an outdoor tail-gate swap meet and we plan to hold one at the end of the conference.

We need volunteers to help out in several areas:

- Door prize chairman
- Talk-in contest chairman
- Assistance with registration
- Audio visual coordinator
- Swap meet chairman
- VUCC card checkers
- Spouse's activities

Please contact me (president@pnwvhfs.org) if you are willing to help out or have any suggestions for the conference. I'll see you there!

Columnists needed

Want to write a quarterly column about a weak-signal area? VHF/UHF? Microwave? Contesting? "Tips 'n Tricks?" Activities and gatherings? VHF+ operator profiles? Well, here's your opportunity. *Noise Floor* needs 2-3 columnists to provide quarterly coverage of VHF/UHF/Microwave activities or technical happenings.

One of the reasons *Noise Floor* is has missed some of its quarterly publication dates is lack of suitable material. What's needed is good, solid information that members will both enjoy and benefit from. The other important part is that this be a continuing endeavor rather than a one-shot article...though those are welcome too. A couple of solid columnist anchors each quarter would make all the different.

Not a writer? No problem. The *Noise Floor* Editor has the capability to polish up draft articles. You pull the facts together and take your best shot at stringing the words together; the polishing...if needed...can be done on this end.

If you're interested, drop a line to secretary@pnwvhfs.org with a brief description of the topic area you'd like to cover on a quarterly basis. Your contribution to *Noise Floor* will be sincerely appreciated.

Informal get-togethers are easy, fun activities

With a far-flung regional organization such as the Pacific Northwest VHF Society, informal "eyeball" get-togethers play an important role. They provide opportunities to socialize, share information and get to know each other...and to bring in new members.

Saturday morning breakfasts are a great way to bring VHF+ operators together. The best part is that they take so little effort to set up. Periodic "Wet Side" breakfasts at the Poodle Dog Restaurant in Fife and "Dry Side" breakfasts at Frankie Doodle's Restaurant in Spokane are good examples. Hopefully, this concept can expand to other areas of the Pacific Northwest.

Continued on Page Three

N0AX wins 2003 Orr Technical Writing Award

(Editor's Note: H. Ward Silver, N0AX, is a member of the Pacific Northwest VHF Society and was a speaker at the joint Microwave Update 2003/Pacific Northwest VHF Conference last September. The following excerpts were taken, with permission, from the The ARRL Letter, Vol. 23, No. 09, February 27, 2004.

The ARRL Foundation has bestowed the 2003 Bill Orr, W6SAI, Technical Writing Award on QST Contributing Editor H. Ward Silver, N0AX, of Vashon Island, Washington. The action came during the foundation's annual meeting, held via teleconference February 12. The Foundation Board of Directors cited Silver's "fine technical series in QST and other League venues."

"I really am thrilled to win the award because I greatly admired the technical savvy and writing of Bill Orr," Silver said. "I still have several of his antenna books on my bookshelf. His Radio Handbooks were very helpful as companions to The ARRL Handbook, as well."

The award selection is made by the ARRL editorial staff, based on articles published in QST during 2003, that most exemplify the writing philosophy of Bill Orr—that articles should tell a technical "story" that appeals to a broad audience extending beyond those individuals who have a particular interest in the topic.

"Ward's got a great sense of how to write for beginners," said QST Editor Steve Ford, WB8IMY. "He can take a complicated subject and explain it to anyone. Another great strength is his sense of humor in his writing. Between those two strengths, he can make almost any subject palatable."

Get-togethers...

Continued from Page Two

Anyone can start the ball rolling...no "social chairman needed" and no complicated arrangements required. Just select a friendly local restaurant and post a note to the NWSVHF reflector telling folks where and when you'll be for breakfast. Sometimes just a few folks will show up; other times you'll have to drag up some extra tables to accommodate the crowd. There's no reason why it has to be breakfast either. Make things fit the situation. A Friday dinner or Sunday lunch are other possibilities.



Ward Silver (N0AX) in his Vashon Island ham shack

2004 VHF+ Contest Calendar

Spring Sprints¹

144 MHz: April 5 - 7:00 to 11:00 pm local time
222 MHz: April 13 - 7:00 to 11:00 pm local time
432 MHz: April 21 - 7:00 to 11:00 pm local time
902 MHz+: May 1 - 6:00 am to 1:00 pm local time
50 MHz: May 8 - 2300Z to May 9 - 0300Z

June ARRL VHF² - June 12-14

July CQ VHF Contest³ - July 17-18

August UHF² - August 7-8, 2004

10 GHz Cumulative² - August 21-22 & September 18-19

September ARRL VHF² - September 11-12

Fall Sprints⁴ - Dates/times TBA

Notes (links below take you to web sites with more information about the contests)

¹ [Spring Sprint details](#)

² [ARRL contest details](#)

³ [CQ Worldwide VHF Contest details](#)

⁴ [Fall Sprint details](#)

Do you use the ARRL 7TH Call Area Incoming QSL Bureau?

By Ken Miller (K7IFG)

Manager, ARRL 7th Call Area Incoming QSL Bureau

Are you an amateur radio operator who is not a current user of the ARRL 7th Call Area Incoming QSL Bureau, operated under the auspices of the Willamette Valley DX Club? The QSL bureau is open to all amateurs with a '7' call (e.g., W7, K7 AK7, etc., but excluding Alaska or Hawaii calls), regardless of operator class. You do not have to be an ARRL member.

We currently have thousands of cards for hundreds of 7th call area amateurs in our dead files because no SASE'S [self-addressed stamped envelopes] are on file or there is no established credit with the bureau. Reasonable contact attempts are made using email addresses from QRZ and Buckmaster (and in some cases through post-cards), but many of these email addresses are not current and bounce.

If you are not a current bureau user, but have had contacts with amateurs outside the US, you may have cards in our dead files. Due to the high costs of mailing, most foreign amateurs accumulate and forward their cards in bulk to the ARRL HQ for redistribution or direct to the various US QSL bureaus.

To claim foreign QSL cards (including those from Canada) see the instructions and forms at www.qsl.net/wvdx. No Internet capability? Follow the basic rule - keep at least two 6x9 or 5x7 SASE's on file with:

ARRL 7th Area QSL Bureau
PO Box 555
Portland, OR 97207-0555

Have Internet capability and want to know the status of your account or if you have cards in the dead file? A list of the current bureau sorters, by alphabet letter, is at www.wvdx.org under the 'W7 QSL Bureau' button. Most volunteers have email addresses and can give you the status of your account.

Please note - ARRL rules allow for the disposal of dead file cards 90 days after reasonable efforts have been made to contact the affected amateur. Each sorter only has limited space for storing dead file cards.

We don't want to dispose of any cards that might be yours, so please, always keep at least one SASE on file with the bureau. Thanks.

Noise Floor is the official publication of the Pacific Northwest VHF Society. All opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors unless specifically stated as being otherwise.

Editor

Jim Aguirre, W7DHC

Submit items for publication to w7dhc@arrl.net
or to PO Box 527, Preston, WA 98050

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Check them out at http://www.educatorscorner.com/index.cgi?CONTENT_ID=2523.

Growing the Pacific Northwest VHF+ Conference

By Jim Aguirre (W7DHC)

When you look back at the history of the Pacific Northwest VHF Conference, you find that it began as a pretty impromptu event. A few folks got together for the better part of a day to swap ideas, information...and, frequently, various pieces of gear. It was a very low-key, fun activity.

Over the years, the annual conference has evolved into a full day of technical programs, fun activities and socializing. In the last couple of years, a Friday evening social event..."Pizza Bash"...has taken root. After the 2002 conference in Bend, an informal group...most of the conference attendees...got together for dinner at a local restaurant. A great time was had by all!

Authorized promotions, vendors require prior board approval

One of the benefits of belonging to an organization like the Pacific Northwest VHF Society is access to some special promotions, offers, etc. One example has been our highly successful group purchase program with Downeast Microwave. Another is the logo gear available through approved vendors listed on the society web site.

Each of these promotions or vendors has received approval from the PNWVHFS board of directors before being implemented. The board reviews proposals, sets guidelines for the vendors, etc. This ensures that members will receive quality items and that any misunderstandings can be resolved appropriately. Approved promotions and vendors are listed on the society web site so members will know about them.

Getting a special promotion or new vendor approved starts with the society's secretary-treasurer. A proposal should first be submitted to secretary@pnwvhfs.org. It will be reviewed to determine if there is enough information available for the board to make an informed decision. If additional information is required, the requestor will be asked to provide it. When the required information is in place, the secretary-treasurer will forward the proposal to the board of directors for their consideration. This is usually not a lengthy process; a week or two. Once a decision has been reached, the secretary-treasurer will notify the requestor.

Last year, PNWVHFS joined with Microwave Update 2003 to host a joint three-day event. This was a big step up. More than 100 movers and shakers from the VHF, UHF and Microwave ranks came to Everett, Washington, for the event.

If you attended, you know the level of knowledge and expertise represented was amazing. There was also a great dinner on Saturday evening with lots of prizes awarded. Conversations lasted well into the "wee hours." The vendor displays, Friday evening indoor swap meet and Sunday morning tailgate swap meet put the frosting on the cake.

Wouldn't it be great to grow the Pacific Northwest VHF+ Conference into a similar annual event. Other groups hold full two-day and three-day conferences; most notably the Central States VHF Society, North East Weak Signal Society and the Southeastern VHF Society. There's no reason we can't do the same. It would take a little more organization and a bit more involvement of members (not a bad thing), but nothing that an organization the size of PNWVHFS shouldn't be able to accomplish. Let's give it some thought!

PNWVHFS is #3 in membership

Just two-and-a-half years after it was formed, the Pacific Northwest VHF Society has become the third largest weak-signal VHF and above organization in the United States. This is according to available statistics found in the ARRL's Affiliated Clubs database and on non-affiliated club web sites.

The largest VHF+ organization in the US is apparently the North Texas Microwave Society with 375 members. Central States VHF Society follows in second spot with 300 members and PNWVHFS is a solid third with 242 members...and still growing! Stay tuned.

Editorial: Where do we go from here?

Jim Aguirre (W7DHC), Noise Floor Editor

A solid foundation has been laid for the Pacific Northwest VHF Society over the past two-and-a-half years. The central core of the society was formed around the annual Pacific Northwest VHF Conference, started on an ad hoc basis a number of years ago by people who felt it was a good idea to meet periodically to share information and build relationships. We owe a debt of gratitude to those early organizers.

Since the society's formal founding in September 2001, a number of other enhancements have been added; among them a quality web site and e-mail reflector, ARRL affiliation and club competition entries, approved vendors of nametags and clothing items, a quarterly newsletter, periodic "group buys" of Downeast Microwave products, and impromptu "VHF breakfasts" in the Seattle and Spokane areas. The annual conference remains the primary focus, however.

Where do we go from here? Most of the guidance and direction of the new organization has fallen to a very small number of people. There is a real need to get more people involved. It is important for the society to mature into the kind of organization the MEMBERSHIP wants it to be...not what a few people may THINK the membership wants.

PNWVHFS currently has two elected officers; President and Secretary-Treasurer...and five elected board

members, one from each ARRL/RAC section. We need to hear from YOU regarding what YOU want the society to become. Please take a few minutes to think about this question and then contact your section director or one of the officers with your thoughts. Please remember that in addition to an idea for a new event or activity, there needs to be someone to make it happen.

You'll find contact information for PNWVHFS officers and directors at <http://www.qsl.net/pnwvhfs/administration/staff.htm>. Whether you're a charter member or a newcomer to the organization, your views...and participation...are welcome. It's up to you to make them heard.



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