

Noise Floor

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Pacific Northwest VHF Society

Fall 2004

Moses Lake conference details coming together

A little more than a month before the 2004 Pacific Northwest VHF+ Conference in Moses Lake, Washington, the pieces are falling into place. Five speakers have been confirmed and a sixth is currently being finalized. Programs range from operating activities to contesting and building or modifying equipment. There will be a full day of presentations and activities, capped off by the society's annual business meeting (it will be brief!) and the annual PNWVHFS awards ceremony.

The traditional Friday evening "Pizza Bash" has been scheduled for Chico's Pizza, 530 Valley Road, Moses Lake. There's good news for those who don't particularly like pizza...Chico's menu includes other choices as well. Things will kick off at about 6:00 pm...that's when the room reservation starts...and will run until the last person leaves. This is always a fun event with lots of conversation and renewing old acquaintances. Don't worry if you haven't attended one in the past...there's lots of new acquaintances made too!

Please keep addresses updated

If you move or change your e-mail address, please let the PNWVHFS Secretary-Treasurer know so that society records can be updated.

A recent mailing of 2004 conference flyers produced a significant number of returns that were undeliverable by the US Postal Service or Canada Post due to bad addresses. Similarly, e-mails to a number of members have bounced due to address changes.

Send all changes to secretary@pnwvhfs.org.

A couple of other informal events will be taking place after the conference. On Saturday evening, there will be a no-host gathering at a local Chinese restaurant in Moses Lake. Then, on Sunday morning, any holdovers are invited to attend a no-host breakfast get-together in the hotel restaurant before heading home. Details on both events will be posted to the e-mail reflector and will be announced at the conference.

Don't forget to participate in the "First Annual PNWVHFS Rove-In Contest" while heading for the conference. Full details are posted at <http://www.qsl.net/pnwvhfs/scores/rove-in.htm>. You don't have to be a serious rover to participate. FM contacts are just as good as SSB or CW, so all you absolutely need is a "handie." This should be a fun event.

Don't forget to make your room reservations at the Best Western Hallmark Inn and Conference Center in Moses Lake by September 1. The hotel has made available a block of 51 rooms at special conference rates...\$55 for a single queen bed, \$60 for two queen beds...but reservations must be made by September 1 to get them. Call them at (509) 765-9211. There's a slight glitch in their computer and they have our organization listed as "PNWVHS," so use that name when requesting the special rate.

2004 Conference T-shirts

The society will be selling special T-shirts at the Moses Lake conference. These shirts will have the logo and web addresses on back, and small logo in front on the left side with the addition of "2004 Conference, Moses Lake, Washington" on the front left side under the logo. At press time we have not settled on a color, but they will look nice for the group photo...guaranteed!

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Vice President Position Proposed

A proposal to amend the Constitution of the Pacific Northwest VHF Society to create the office of Vice President will be brought before the membership for a vote at the 2004 annual meeting in Moses Lake, Washington, on Saturday, October 2, 2004. The society's board of directors has approved placing this proposal before the membership.

The following sections of the PNWVHFS Constitution would be amended by this proposal:

Article II would be amended in Sections 1 and 4 to include "Vice President" in the list of officers described.

Article III would be amended to delete Section 5 since it is no longer necessary.

Article IV would be amended to add the duties of the Vice President in a new Section 2 and renumber the existing sections to coincide with the addition. The new Section 2 wording would be as follows:

"Article IV

"Sec. 2. The Vice President shall assist the President in the execution of his/her duties and shall chair committees as directed by the President. Should the President be unable complete his/her term for any reason, the Vice President shall assume the duties of President for the remainder of the unexpired term, and shall call for a special election to select a new Vice President as required in Article II, Section 4."

If this proposal is approved by the membership, a special election will be called before January 1 to elect a vice president. The balloting will be conducted by mail.

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 news items to secretary@pnwvhfs.org or to PO Box 527, Preston, WA 98050

From the President...

The annual conference is shaping up nicely and the Hallmark is busy taking reservations. Be sure to make your reservation before the September first cutoff date so you can get the group rate.

We have the agenda nearly complete, and the rest of the activities are set up, so things are looking good. We have a great place lined up for the Friday night pizza bash, and a Chinese buffet for Saturday night, so there will be plenty to eat.

Don't forget the tailgate swap on Saturday afternoon. It will be in the parking lot next to the meeting area, and will give you a chance to get some fresh air and to pick up some goodies. If you have any 'show and tell' items this would be a good place to display them.

--Lynn Burlingame (N7CFO)

Conference T-shirts...

From Page One

The shirts will cost \$12, and will be available for payment and pickup at the conference. If you want a shirt, please reserve it immediately by emailing n7cfo@ix.netcom.com, and be sure to state the quantity of shirts and sizes (S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL).

There will be a few extra shirts available for purchase at the conference, but we cannot guarantee sizes, so it is important that you reserve yours now. If you want a shirt but cannot attend the conference, they will be sent by priority mail for an additional \$4 after the conference. Please send payment to: Lynn Burlingame, 15621 SE 26th, Bellevue, WA 98008-5443.

Any leftover shirts will be made available for purchase by members after the conference.

“Homeland Security” heightens security concerns

By Lynn Burlingame (N7CFO)

Heightened security concerns have led to increased scrutiny of actions that seem “out-of-the-ordinary” to citizens and/or law enforcement officers. In July, a student photographer taking pictures of the Ballard Locks in Seattle as part of a school assignment was questioned twice over a period of weeks by local police and “agents” of the Homeland Security Department. Despite being in a tourist area where cameras are allowed, he was asked to identify himself, was grilled extensively and was himself photographed by one of the “agents.”

Many of you are also aware that one of our members had a somewhat similar encounter while operating a contest this spring as a rover in Blaine, Washington. A State Park employee saw what he felt was suspicious activity on an adjacent public street and called the Border Patrol, who responded with Customs officers and local police in tow.

Even though radio amateurs are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and are well known for their assistance during emergencies, we need to recognize that it is just a matter of time until someone is again confronted while participating in a mobile or portable radio operation. All it takes is one nervous person to call a local, state or federal law enforcement agency to get a serious response.

Police officers and other law enforcement personnel are understandably nervous when approaching an unknown “suspicious” person...or group of people...in a vehicle, RV, tent, etc. Since law enforcement folks almost always carry firearms, it’s a good idea not to spook them. In developing the following guidelines to help prevent any misunderstandings, I have consulted with several friends that are in law enforcement. They...and I...suggest the following precautions.

1) If stopped while driving, place your driver’s license and vehicle registration on the dash. If it is at night, turn on your dome light. Open the window and keep both of your hands in plain sight. Traffic stops are just plain scary for cops and these actions will result in a law enforcement officer that is a little more at ease.

2) If you don’t have ham plates on your car, you may want to get them. Law enforcement officers usually

recognize them as belonging to a licensed amateur radio operator.

3) Carry a copy of your FCC license with you. The FCC no longer requires this, but it will help you prove who you are and what you’re doing. Tell the officer you’d like to show him/her your radio license BEFORE reaching for your wallet or purse. Get an acknowledgement before proceeding.

4) Carry with you a copy of the contest/activity publicity, rules, etc. This will provide an official explanation of what you’re doing.

5) Invest in some “Amateur Radio” magnetic door signs. They’re not all that expensive and may prevent you from being stopped in the first place.

6) Carry copies of W7DHC’s brochure, *What’s Going On Here?* Jim has covered areas that will help you address security concerns should they arise. Having something in print usually makes it appear more official and often will provide enough information to satisfy a law enforcement officer.

7) When questioned, reply honestly and do not make jokes! Emphasize that the contest or activity is a form of emergency preparedness drill, and that amateur radio operators have an established role in homeland security emergency preparations.

By taking just a few simple precautions, you can quickly establish who you are and what you are doing. By showing our professionalism...even though we are “amateurs”...we can increase our visibility in a very positive way.

First Annual PNWVHFS Rove-In Contest

Something new has been added to the annual Pacific Northwest VHF Conference...a contest. In order to promote VHF+ activity in the Pacific Northwest and attendance at the annual meeting, the PNWVHFS is sponsoring an annual event...the PNWVHFS Rove-In Contest to be held in conjunction with the society's annual meeting each year.

Is this an event just for the established "rover" contesters? Absolutely not! In fact the usual rover rules found in regular contests have been "bent" to encourage everyone to participate. (Check out Rule 3: "carpooling." Maybe the ARRL will add this one to the big contests!) If you can radiate a signal from your car, truck, van, motorcycle, bicycle...or in at least one case, full-sized bus...you've got a shot at winning something.

Check out the rules below.

CONTEST PERIOD

For 2004, the contest period will be 0700 PDT, October 1 to 0900 PDT, October 2, 2004. Logs must be submitted to contests@pnwvhfs.org no later than October 15, 2004. Awards will be announced via the NWSVHF reflector and on the PNWVHFS website no later than November 15, 2004.

RULES & SCORING

1) Exchange is grid square and PNWVHFS membership number (non-members use four-digit year first licensed).

2) At least one station in every contact must be either a rover or a portable. Rover and Portable stations must identify as such. Rovers continue to identify as "rover" even after arrival at the Conference location.

3) Carpooling is encouraged. Each licensed operator is considered to be an individual station. Equipment may be shared. However, QSOs between carpool members must actually take place using electronic radio equipment on amateur bands above 50MHz. Please note on score sheets which carpool you are a part of to qualify for special carpool aggregate awards.

4) There are two classes: 1 - 3 bands = "Limited" and >3 bands = "Unlimited".

5) FM is allowed and encouraged. National Simplex frequencies (ie: 146.52) and repeaters are not to be used for contacts, however.

6) Laser communications are allowed and Laser is a free band (does not count in the band count for class). At least one stage of electronic signal detection is required.

7) QSO Points = 1 point per QSO.

8) Score = (QSO points) x (Grids Worked) x (Grids Operated From).

There will be a Preliminary Scoreboard posted at the conference where attendees may post their preliminary scores.

AWARDS

Certificates for high scores per class (Limited and Unlimited) plus certificates for: highest number of grid squares activated, highest number of grid squares worked, highest carpool aggregate (a certificate to each member of the high aggregate carpool score in each class).

Additionally, the Board of Directors of PNWVHFs, at their discretion or upon nomination by the membership, may award additional certificates to participants for extraordinary effort (ie: travelled the greatest distance to attend the conference, overcame the greatest hardship overcome, etc.).

Weather band transmitters in the Pacific Northwest

Looking for a propagation indicator on 2M? Try the National Weather Service stations located throughout the Pacific Northwest. While they are a bit higher in frequency than the amateur 144-148 MHz band, they can prove useful in determining band openings. All these stations broadcast continuous weather information, so are useable 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

They're also useful for their intended purpose...providing weather information...when you're out camping, boating, etc. Check them out. See the chart below for station specifics.

Transmitter	Call	Freq	Watts
CLE ELUM, WA	WXN21	162.400	75
SPOKANE, WA	WXL86	162.400	100
ASTORIA, OR	KEC91	162.400	100
COOS BAY, OR	KIH32	162.400	330
EUGENE, OR	KEC42	162.400	100
MEDFORD, OR	WXL85	162.400	330
PENDLETON, OR	WXL95	162.400	330
THE DALLES, OR	WXM34	162.400	330
FORKS, WA	KXI27	162.425	300
PLYMOUTH, WA	WWH27	162.425	100
PUGET SOUND MARINE, WA	WWG24	162.425	100
HEPPNER, OR	WWH28	162.425	100
NEAHKAHNIE MTN, OR	WWF94	162.425	25
RICHLAND, WA	WWF56	162.450	100
OLYMPIA, WA	WXM62	162.475	100
WENATCHEE, WA	WXM48	162.475	100
BURNS, OR	KHB30	162.475	130
MT. ASHLAND, OR	WWF97	162.475	100
SALEM, OR	WXL96	162.475	100
TILLAMOOK, OR	WWF95	162.475	25
BEND/REDMOND, OR	WWF80	162.500	120
JOHN DAY, OR	WNG560	162.500	100
UMATILLA, OR	WWF57	162.500	330
DAVIS PEAK, WA	WNG604	162.525	100
DAYTON, WA	KZZ73	162.525	300
GOLDENDALE, WA	WNG566	162.525	100
OKANAGAN (Tunk Mt.), WA	WWF49	162.525	50
NEAH BAY, WA	KIH36	162.550	330
SEATTLE, WA	KHB60	162.550	330
YAKIMA, WA	KIG75	162.550	300
BROOKINGS, OR	KIH37	162.550	500
FOSSIL, OR	WNG559	162.550	300
KLAMATH FALLS, OR	WXL97	162.550	100
NEWPORT, OR	KIH33	162.550	100
PORTLAND, OR	KIG98	162.550	330
ROSEBURG, OR	WXL98	162.550	100