



THE FRANKFORD RADIO CLUB NEWSLETTER

PROFICIENCY THROUGH COMPETITION

CALENDAR

August:

- 7-8 Maryland/DC QSO Party
- 14-15 Worked All Europe CW Test
- 21-22 New Jersey QSO Party
- 22 FRC Summer Meeting at N3RD, 1 PM (see page 2)**

September:

- 4-5 All Asian SSB Test
- 11-12 Worked All Europe SSB Test
- 14 FRC Meeting, Phila 8 PM**
- 18-19 Scandinavian (SAC) CW Test
- 25-26 Scandinavian (SAC) SSB Test
- 25-26 CQ WW RTTY DX Test

October:

- 2-3 VK/ZL SSB DX Test
- 2-3 California QSO Party
- 9-10 PA QSO Party
- 9-10 VK/ZL CW DX Test
- 12 FRC Meeting, Phila 8 PM**
- 30-31 CQWW SSB DX Test**

November:

- 6-7 ARRL SS CW Test
- 9 FRC Meeting, Phila 8 PM**
- 13-14 Worked All Europe RTTY Test
- 20-21 ARRL SS SSB Test
- 27-28 CQWW CW DX Test**

CHANGES

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President's Column



It's almost August and I still feel like the 98-99 contest season JUST ended.

And this year for the first time in twenty years FRC lost not one but **both** the CQWDX and the ARRLDX contests. Conditions were outstanding!! We did a terrific job and had the highest scores ever, every FRC score entered was higher this year than last. EVERYONE, EVERYONE who got on and contributed deserves a solid round of super thanks. Thanks for the hard work, the effort, the sacrifices, unselfish efforts!!! **YOU DONE GOOD!!!**

BUT---NOW WE NEED YOUR BEST EFFORTS AGAIN!!!!

Propagation conditions will be better than ever! Sunspots will be up!! The high bands will be wild! The running better, the bands will be open longer and open earlier!!! The adrenaline will really flow, everyone from the super stacks to the simple tribander will be able to work hard, have it easier and faster, for longer periods.

Dxpeditions using simpler antennas, tribanders, and wires not having to depend as much on the low bands will provide an experience that is like candy, you cannot get enough!!! **YOU HAVE TO BE THERE!!**
YOU HAVE TO PLAN FOR IT,

NOW!!! You have to get set, to think about it, talk about it!

The WAE practice CW contest is upon us the second weekend in August!!!

What antennas will you use? Is your amplifier ready? Your computer? You cannot operate at home?? Where will you go? Do you need ops?? Get them now!! Oh, you will not be operating at home even though you have a good station?? Find, ask, seek, hunt down someone who needs a station. And don't forget to get on at home even if you are at a super station! Even though you might only make 100 qsos at home, EVERY QSO you give me or every other FRC dxpedition is WORTH 1000 POINTS to me at **V47KP**. If you give me another 100,000 points with just another 100 BAND QSOS and you do this for OUR DXPEDITIONS, this adds up quick to MEGS!!!

EVERY POINT WILL COUNT!!!! HOW ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE THE MOST POINTS

If you need help or advice, or equipment, ASK!!! The help, the advice, the equipment, is there...we will do it for you--

(continued on page 2)

Directions to August 22 FRC Summer Meeting at N3RD

Type the address 143 Camp Council Road, Phoenixville, PA 19460 into your favorite web-based or CD-ROM map software, and make your own directions. Or, read on.

General: Bring a chair, if you like to sit. Use receptacles for cigarette butts, if you chose to smoke. Talk-in will be on the **W3FRC** repeater, 147.27, +600. Parking will be on the left on the lawn; please pay attention to any signs that may be posted. The affair will take place regardless of weather with no rain date. Come partake of Master Chef Doug's (**W3CF**) cooking on the Weber grill. Promises to be yummy!

From the North and from Central New Jersey: Take the Northeast Extension south and then west to the Valley Forge Interchange of the PA turnpike. Take the very first exit after the toll booths (about 100 yards), which puts you on Gulph Road, heading west. Continue on this road, making no turns. The road will turn into Route 23, which will take you through Valley Forge Park and on into Phoenixville. Again, continue on Route 23 through Phoenixville. Near the western edge of Phoenixville, Route 113 will join with Route 23, and they will be coincident for about a mile. Where Route 113 veers to the left at the traffic light at the McDonalds, keep to the right and go straight. Not counting the traffic light at McDonalds, turn left at the second traffic light onto Rapps Dam Road. Continue down the hill on Rapps Dam Road, and turn right onto Camp Council Road just before the covered bridge. Go for about 0.4 miles on Camp Council Road. House is on the right just after a stone retaining wall.

From Philadelphia and East and South Jersey: Take the Schuylkill Expressway to King of Prussia. Take the Mall Blvd exit, which is the last exit before the turnpike toll booths. Turn right onto Mall Blvd and continue down the hill to the traffic light at Gulph Road. Turn right onto Gulph Road, heading west. Follow directions above.

From the South: Take Route 202 North to Route 401. Left on 401 (West or North). Follow Route 401 for several miles up and over Bacton Hill. Turn right onto Route 113, which heads you north. Follow Route 113 for several miles, passing through a traffic light (Cold Stream Road) and a blinking light (Kimberton Fairgrounds). About 0.5 miles past the blinking light, there will be a Shelley's Hardware Store/Lumberyard on your right. About 50 yards past Shelley's, turn left onto Rapps Dam Road. Follow Rapps Dam Road until you pass through the covered bridge. Turn left onto Camp Council Road. Go for about 0.4 miles on Camp Council Road. House is on the right just after a stone retaining wall.

From the West: Take Route 724 East. Follow 724 until 724 ends (there will be a road sign saying "End 724") and the highway changes to Route 23. Continue on Route 23 for about 300 yards, and turn right at the traffic light onto Rapps Dam Road. Continue down the hill on Rapps Dam Road, and turn right onto Camp Council Road just before the covered bridge. Go for about 0.4 miles on Camp Council Road. House is on the right just after a stone retaining wall.

BUT ONLY IF YOU LET US KNOW!!!

WE LOST LAST YEAR BY LESS THAN 30 MEGS IN EACH CONTEST!!! I don't have the results of this years UNIQUE\BAD\NOT IN LOG score reductions but remember that a few years ago we lost almost 45 million points because of such reductions!! Don't log it in if you are just guessing...be sure, especially for a multiplier!! Don't follow the callouts blindly. Many are wrong. Be smart, be accurate, be cautious and aggressive, as well. You can lose as much as 20,000 points with one stupid guess!!!

Am I upset because we lost? YOU BET!!! Are you upset because we lost. I SURE HOPE SO!!

Can we do better this year??? I KNOW SO AND SO DO YOU!! Will I try harder this year? FOR SURE!!!

WILL YOU?

73 ALEX, W2OX

FROM THE EDITOR

Ahhhh, this is the way I like it. Little or no room for me to write anything (admit it, you like it that way, too!).

I've tried to keep the font sizes a bit more consistent this month. Last month's type looked a bit large (though it looks small on my PC). A smaller font means more articles.

Thanks again to this month's contributors. I hope to hear from YOU for the September issue.

73, Joe KQ3F

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN HAMFEST 1999

By Alex, W2OX

If you think Dayton is fun, try the Hamfest in Friedrichshafen, on Lake Constance, south Germany. If you have attended the Dayton Hamfest, you should not miss this Hamfest. It's like Dayton, only better and cleaner, with a totally different international flavor. Since the DARC, the Deutsch ARRL is the sponsor, it reserves an entire indoor cavern, as large the Dayton ones strictly for national associations and clubs. Next year, FRC will have a booth, since the charges are very reasonable!!!

I flew into Frankfurt on AA in sardine class, arriving at about 7 AM after leaving JFK at about 5:30 PM. Nice flight. Got through customs and got a car and on road by 8 AM. Where were these German Autobahns when I was 17?? Like route 95 but no speed limits???

The German autos have only two speeds--on and off!!! Driving at speeds from 75-110 mph, gripping the wheel like Mario Andretti and with little or no sleep I made the approximately 350 km trip to Friedrichshafen in beautiful, cool weather by about 1 PM. Not bad, since my German is nil and I drove from major city to major city.

Since this year was my second trip to the Hamfest I quickly found the Hotel Alfred Gasthof at Ailingen, where I knew the CONTEST DINNERS were held every evening, and checked-in to a lovely room. I slept until 9 PM and then went down for dinner and promptly met FRCER Walter, **DJ6QT**, in the dining room. This was the start of three days of non-stop contest club meetings.

The next morning the HAMFEST opened and I went with Walter, **DJ6QT**, who graciously got me in the back door to the Rhine-Rhur DX Assoc (RRDXA) booth (you think Dayton door checks are thorough, try German cops) From then on I divided my time between the Bavarian Contest Club, the BCC, and the RRDXA booths, and going around to meet many hams at the national booths. Oh, I also went quickly through the Hamfest display areas, which were so clean you could eat off the floors. Even the flea markets had all equipment, NEATLY laid out and DUSTED. The equipment looked the same as in Dayton only more expensive by \$100-\$200. The food and dining areas were spotless and a waitress insisted on my removing my food so she could change a cloth table covering since it had stains on it. It was a bit

strange to have nobody speaking English, and even more frustrating not to be able to get a flyer on ICOM equipment in English. German only!!!

In the evenings there were dinners at the Hotel Adler for contestors, sponsored on Wednesday by the RRDXA with a team beer slugging contest. The Russians won easily. Thursday night was sponsored by BCC. They staged a QSO contest which required everyone to stay seated while attempting to make a QSO in any way possible: hand signals, voice, sign language etc. The German hams must have the lowest UBN error rate in the world since even in this contest they were very formal and correct. **S50A** won this contest. I did not get to bed until 2 AM both nights.

Saturday at 11:30 AM there was the DARC contest forum. This year there were at least 500 persons present. The language was German for the DARC discussions, while the awards were in English and German. Once again FRC won the non-European WAE, and it was a great pleasure for **N2EA** (FRC pres 90-91) and myself to get the trophy for FRC. The BCC and FRC once again won the Trophies. This was the highlight of the trip for me!!!

N2EA and I had a great time that day together and we wound up the Hamfest at another dinner in Ailingen that evening.

I then drove to Frankfurt that night and flew home the next day. I hope you have a chance see the photo album at the meetings.

IARU CONTEST SCORE RUMORS

Call	QSOs	Cty	HQ Stns	Score	Class
AA3B	1569	104	88	1,168,320	SOCW
K3PP	703	83	66	411,985	SOMIXED
K3WW	367	43	12	87,505	SOCW
KQ2M	2672	140	95	2,726,000	SOMIXED
N3MKZ	1142	77	60	706,920	SOPHONE
W2EN	505	64	54	187,502	SOCW
W3PP	1982	104	81	1,564,360	SOMIXED

The Acom 2000A Amplifier by Barry, W2UP

As one who typically operates single-op assisted in the major contests, I'm always looking at ways to jump on those packet spots more quickly, and get in and out of the "packet pileups" before they get too big. Hitting Alt-F4, while running CT or Writelog takes the transceiver where it belongs. Antenna switching is handled by Top Ten Devices boxes. And then there's the amplifier. I've used a variety over the years: SB-220, Alpha 77, and Alpha 78 (bandpass tuning was a step in the right direction, but still too slow). For several years I considered getting an Alpha 87A, but I heard too many stories about it faulting out when the match wasn't perfect. While at N3RS last year for one of the contests, I saw an antenna tuner in their 20m stack line, just so the 87A would operate without kicking out. That clinched it - no 87A for me. So now what?

One day, while Web surfing, I came across a site in Europe selling an amp called an Acom 2000A. It looked like quite an amp from the specs - full power using 2 Svetlana 4CX800A tubes, autotune(!) accepting up to 3:1 SWR (!!), and very high tech (more later). So why hadn't I heard of it? Asking around, I found a few things: it was pretty new, there were none in the US, and it was made in Bulgaria by the same company that made the Alpha 91B. So who had one? ON4UN had an early prototype. PY5EG, 4X1AD, and GW3YDX each had one. I e-mailed each of these guys with lots of questions, and they all answered with nothing but praise for it including "the best amp I ever owned." To make a long story short, I bought one.

The amp itself is a black box with

only an on/off switch. All metering and controls are on the RCU (Remote Control Unit), which is a 7x5x1 inch box with LED bar power (fwd and refl) meters, several status LEDs, an alphanumeric LCD display, and a bunch of membrane-buttons to control the menu functions. The RCU comes on a 9 foot cable, so the amp (all 80 pounds of it) can be placed off the operating desk, out of the way. Very slick!

Setup and operation is a breeze. If you're the type who doesn't like reading manuals, just turn the amp on (at which time you will hear TEST in CW), watch the 2 1/2 minute warm-up countdown, and start operating. The amp senses your operating frequency with the first CW dit (a single dit at up to 40 WPM, per specs), or voice syllable, and autotunes to factory default settings. The bands from 160-10m are broken down into segments (as small as 25 KHz on 160 and as large as 300 KHz on 10m). Each band segment has a factory default tuning setting, plus 10 user-defined settings per frequency segment. This allows you to select more than one tune setting per segment, for use with alternate antennas, partial stacks, etc. where the load differs from your primary antenna. It's completely hands-off operation! However, you'll probably want to customize the tuning for your antennas via an auto-tune menu. You select the antenna number, choose auto-tune, press the ENTER button twice, and the LCD display prompts with "Apply drive 10-20 W," with a small bar graph to help you adjust the exciter drive. The amp then autotunes for that segment (and antenna selection) in about 2 seconds. Do this for each frequency segment you operate and you're set for life, or until you install new antennas. It is now stored in memory, and is recalled in less than 1/2 second with that single dit at 40 WPM. Should you ever want to manually tune (though I can't imagine why), it can be done via the manual tune submenu. The measure submenu allows you to monitor 2 of 20 amplifier param-

eters at the same time, such as exhaust airflow temperature from each tube, filament current, power gain, line voltage, last frequency used, and more, plus all the usual things.

These guys have thought of everything. For example, line voltages can be set on the transformer for 100, 120, 200, 220, and 240 VAC. Not fine enough control for you? Via a submenu on the RCU you can set it for "high" or "low" with respect to the transformer tap for additional fine tuning. Personally, mine is set for high, as my line voltage runs 252V (yes, I've talked to PECO about it). A HELP submenu contains info such as software revision number, tube serial numbers, and actual operating time in hours, plus various tips. There is an INFO submenu selection. This transmits remote diagnostics over the telephone via audio Baudot RTTY generated through the RCU. Diagnostics are also available via an RS-232 port on the amp. Here's one for the esoteric department: Say you like the amp so much you own more than one. How does remote control software tell the amps apart? Each one can have a unique network ID! You don't want your son or XYL using the amp. It can be password protected via the RCU. Finished operating? Turn the amp off and it sends a CW "AR" to you.

You probably can tell I like this amp. I'm just waiting for the contest season so I can be in and out of the packet pileups before you guys get there! BTW, the amp is now sold in the US by Acom International in MA. You can find their Web page with additional info at www.hfpower.com.

73 Barry, W2UP

FRC Mailing List (Reflector)

Here's a systematic process on how to subscribe to the FRC reflector. It is as easy as sending a normal E-Mail message. Once subscribed every message that anyone sends to the reflector comes right to your E-Mail address automatically. You can ignore the message or join in the conversation or topic of the day.

- 1) Compose an E-Mail message to: frc-request@contesting.com
- 2) The subject line is optional and not really needed.
- 3) In the BODY of the message type a single line of text as follows:

Subscribe frc callsign

For example: subscribe frc w3cf

Then SEND the message! After subscribing you will get a confirmation.

That is all there is to it! Now all FRC reflector mail will come back to your E-Mail address automatically.

If you wish to list a message on the reflector simply compose an E-Mail and address it to:

frc@contesting.com

Now you can use the subject line to convey the topic to be discussed. Attaching files to reflector mail is not considered good operating practice and will usually result in many "gentle nudges" to cease and desist from other FRC reflector users. .HTML files are a no-no, too. Just use straight text. If you have any questions just post it on the reflector and one (or many) of the old sages will come eagerly to your assistance. **73 & DX Doug W3CF**

A FREE e-mail enhancer from ARRL for members.

The ARRL has what it calls "The ARRL E-mail forwarding Service". It is free, simple and useful.

Go to the ARRL Members Only Page. (You have signed up for the Page, haven't you?) Click on the prominent box, "The E-mail Forwarding Service". That will lead to a signup page with all details.

What it does is set up an alias for you under your callsign. It does NOT change your use of your usual address in any way. Just continue to use either one where you feel it appropriate.

For example: Instead of the cumbersome address that I and some others have, this system gives me: **n2vw@arrl.net** ...

The ARRL alias remains the same regardless of what ISP or other address you have. It is also simple to change when you have a new call or ISP.

The primary advantage for Hams is the ease of sending e-mail to other hams. All I have to remember is the "call" @arrl.net.

Check it out. Well worth your time. **73, Jack, N2VW**

Call For Photos

K3WW is looking for PHOTOS of as many members stations and antennas as possible. I can scan them and return them, or you can scan them and Email them to me (**k3ww@fast.net**). I am going to change our club tape from video clips to mostly still photos using Power Point. I may incorporate a few brief video clips, if you have some that are amazing. I still can output to Tape, or perhaps CD ROM, for showing at Dayton. Please attach a brief description of people in the photos, equipment and antennas.

Perhaps we could tie in some of the historic material that Alex is looking for, along with the up to date stuff.

73 Chas K3WW

The Frankford Radio Club

Club Officers

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Repeater

2 meters, 147.27/147.87
Output PL tone, 118.8

Home Page

www.frc-contest.org

Meetings

Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (Sep through May) at 8 PM at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, 43rd and Kingsessing Street, Philadelphia. Summer meetings are held at member homes (one Saturday/ Sunday per month).

Packet Cluster Contest/DX System

144.910 N2MT
144.930 W3FRC
145.610 K2TD
144.950 KD3CN
145.530 K3WW
145.530 AA1K
145.530 K2SG
145.570 WT3Q
145.570 K2TW
145.590 N2NT
144.950 K3GYS
145.710 W3EA
145.730 N2BIM
147.495 W3MM
441.050 W3MM
445.525 K3GYS
445.525 W3EA
445.850 KD3CN
..TBA N3ED

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