



The OSCILLATOR

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Editor: Everett W6ABM
w6abm@arrl.net

Oregon Tualatin Valley Amateur Radio Club



"MY TWO CENTS" Pat Roberson

Greetings, and a Happy 2011 to everyone.

Thanks to Don KK7TN for presenting the Installation Ceremony at the January club meeting. Everett W6ABM put on a great presentation called "HF Potpourri", which was very interesting. I bet it was fun "back in the day" to run six meters AM from a car.

A couple of us from the club recently attended the Auxiliary Communications Emergency Solutions (ACES) Basic Certification course. It was a mixture of newbie's to Amateur Radio and those of us who have been around for awhile. The course touched on a number to topics regarding emergency communications, and I know for me, rekindled my interest in traffic handling. It is very much "hands-on" training and I highly recommend taking the course. For more information, check out their website at: www.oregonaces.org/content/about-aces.

Our Vice-President, Herb K7HRH, is putting together quite an interesting selection of programs for the year.

See TWO CENTS, Page 4

TWITTER FOR HAMS

Twitter? Everyone has heard about it but few hams actually use it for real. Twitter is a microblogging platform, that allows broadcasting a tweet, a short message of 140 characters to share information. The platform proved useful during major events, such as Haiti or Tunisia. For hamradio, the tool can help develop new practices and uses.

Some twitter uses for hams:

- Follow amateur radio news in real time
- Subscribe to a DX Cluster
- Share photos, videos and live impressions during a contest, an activation
- Announce your geographic position
- Send alert to indicate activity on air, in real time
- Relay weather alerts, emergency messages, support

What equipment is required? A computer or a smartphone may be used. A phone with a camera and an internet connection and a GPS for geolocation is the ultimate. Try it out. Go to www.twitter.com to signup. Use your call sign as your ID. Follow me @F1JXQ.

David F1JXQ
Le Bourget du Lac, France

CLUB MEETING

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17th

OTVARC is affiliated with ARRL: The National Association for Amateur Radio and is a *Special Service Club*. We meet at the *Community Building, Sunset Presbyterian Church, 14986 NW Cornell Rd, just off US 26 (Exit 65) in Beaverton*. Check out the map at: tinyurl.com/otvarc-site

Our February 17 program will feature Dave Haupt W8NF and is entitled "LIVING WITH YOUR AMP." Whether you have an Amplifier or thinking about getting one...this program will have information for you. Our meetings open at 7:00 pm.

Guests are always welcome. An amateur radio license is not required. Invite another ham to come with you.

Club meetings are good places to meet new friends.

REGISTER ONLINE FOR
SEA-PAC 2011 BEGINNING

FEBRUARY 19th

www.seapac.org

HOW TO MAKE YOURSELF HEARD

This is one area where contesting and DXing overlap quite a bit. For a big gun, the main dimensions you need to worry about are power and direction. If you're loud and aiming toward the right population centers, you'll get lots of callers. Simple enough. Speed plays a role too.

Those of us who are smaller need more tactics. Particularly during search-and-pounce, exploiting aspects of your signal to be noticed can gain you points and/or new entities.

What do I mean by dimensions of your signal? They are the aspects of your signal that differentiate it from others. The main dimensions that occur to me are:

1. Strength/direction
2. Speed
3. Pitch
4. Timing

The list is probably not exhaustive but it's what comes to my mind. Let's take them in turn.

Strength is one that can obviously be approached by adding power, antenna gain, or speech processing. It can be improved by operating on frequencies that aren't too busy, so that you're relatively stronger than in a crowded neighborhood. It matters how strong you FEEL. Ever see a little terrier take after a much larger dog? That terrier THINKS that it's fierce and scary. It "feels big." Ever see the big dog back down? It can work! Psychology matters. Even big guns sense the difference when they "feel loud."

Speed can refer to voice enunciation or your CW keying speed. You can differentiate yourself from the pack by being faster or slower. Don't take it to extremes, or you just become that much more QRM. Speed can mean using phonetics, or not using them. When CQing, you can attract more callers if your speed appeals to them. Use a speed appropriate to the part of the band you're in, and vary it from time to time. Bear in mind any QSB. When QSB is fast, a higher speed is more intelligible, contrary to our instinct that says to go slower if someone's having trouble copying.

Pitch can be a discriminator when you're S&Ping. Both voice and CW can vary in pitch by changing your frequency slightly, either by changing your VFO or, if you have one, varying your XIT. Often, arranging to make your pitch a bit higher to the receiving station can make you stand out. That means calling at a slightly higher frequency on USB or a slightly lower one on LSB. Or putting a YL or a kid on the mike. On CW, you can't be sure which sideband the receiving station is using, so vary both directions. Try to get a clue from who else you hear being worked. Split operations are a whole `nother ball game here but the same principle applies.

Timing refers to when you call and how many times you call. This can be questionable territory. A lot of stations want to be the last guy heard, with the result that entire QSOs get covered up by people who haven't finished their initial call, and they become QRM. Listen and get what style the runner is using. If he's picking up callers right away, call early and make it quick. If he seems to take a while to pick someone out, wait a second or two and then give your call. The op may be waiting out the initial roar before he can pick someone out.

There are undoubtedly other dimensions. For instance, I haven't had enough RTTY or other digital experience to have a good feel for them and what you can do to stand out, short of raw power. The dimensionality of a mode is one thing that makes it either good or bad for contesting and DXing, and the main modes we see used on the bands reflect this.

Well, I've run on long enough. See you in the shack or on the bands!

73,
Carl WS7L

CLUB HELP?

Got a question about the Club, dates, or programs? Drop an email to otvarc@gmail.com. We'll always try to refer you to the best contact for an answer.

QRP PSK31?

I am flirting with the Small wonder QRP 20 meter kit for the PSK mode. How realistic will it be that I make any contacts? My antennas would be base loaded whips at best or maybe an indoor dipole, but the apartment location would nix any outside wires at all. — Paul WA2ASQ, Newington CT

I run QRP PSK with a Yaesu FT-817. I made a portable doublet with speaker wire instead of the 4 conductor ribbon cable, and it tunes up nicely with a z-match balanced tuner. You can build your own or buy the BLT+ kit from Hendricks. For portable operation, I use a 20' collapsible flagpole from Harbor Freight, and a 12V 9aH sealed lead acid battery. That battery will power me all day for PSK at 2.5W.

As for results, like many others...if you can hear them, you can work them. Get the antenna up where you can, tune it, and play. 20M is best, but I've had good luck on 17, 30 and 40, too.

Great idea to take it with you - and good luck.
—Jason N6EY, Fresno, CA

PSK is a great mode for QRP operation. A lot will depend on your particular environment. I use a Yaesu FT-817 for PSK portable, and I've used several antennas with it. A typical setup is to use the 817 with an MFJ 'Tiny Travel Tuner' and either a 1/4 wave piece of wire out the window or an MFJ 1899 5' loaded whip. I find the 1899 a mechanical kludge, it breaks too easily due to the weight of the antenna, and it's really too heavy to put on the BNC connector of the 817. But, when used with a 1/4 wave piece of wire run around the baseboards of the room as a counterpoise, the little tuner works fine to get the SWR on 30 meters and higher down to a usable level.

Thus armed, I've made contacts all over the place from inside motel rooms. Some apartments and motels have metal in the walls. Bricks don't seem to matter, but marble facades do. The electrical noise in the apartment may be the biggest issue.

See QRP PSK31, page 4

FIFTH WEDNESDAY CONTESTS

The Fifth Wednesday Contest is held four-times each year in those months with 5 Wednesdays! It is designed to help understand the use of FM Simplex and what your "reach" is on two meters. It assists in improving your VHF operation by clearly indicating who hears you, in what directions you have your best possibility of making a simplex contest.

Fifth Wednesday Contests in 2011 will be held on March 30, June 29, August 31, and November 30. Janet Bell WB7FJC is the coordinator of our Fifth Wednesday Contest.

All hams are welcome to join in the fun on 147.54 MHz from 8:00 to 9:00 pm local time on these dates. Invite your friends to join in the fun. Other clubs are welcome to promote the Contest as well.

Questions to Janet, WB7FJC@arrl.net.

YOUR 2011 BOARD

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CLUB FREQUENCIES

Simplex: 147.54 MHz
Repeaters: 146.96 MHz (Goat Mtn)
223.94 MHz (Goat Mtn)
440.25 MHz (Goat Mtn)

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OPERATING AID: TEMPERATURE

C	F	C	F
-17	1.4	15	59
-15	5	17	62.6
-13	8.6	19	66.2
-11	12.2	20	68
-9	15.8	21	69.8
-7	19.4	23	73.4
-5	23	25	77
-3	26.6	27	80.6
-1	30.2	29	84.2
0	32	30	86
1	33.8	31	87.8
3	37.4	33	91.4
5	41	35	95
7	44.6	37	98.6
9	48.2	39	102.2
10	50	40	104
11	51.8	41	105.8
13	55.4	43	109.4

LOOKING AHEAD

- February 17** Club Meeting
- March 17** Club Meeting
- March 30** Fifth Wednesday Contest
- April 21** OMSI/K7SUB Event
- May 8** 33rd Anniversary
- May 19** Club Meeting
- June 3 -5** SEA-PAC 2011
- June 16** Club Meeting
- June 25 - 26** Field Day
- July 21** Club Meeting
- August 18** Club BBQ/Ice Cream
- September 15** Club Meeting
- October 20** Club Meeting

TWO-CENTS, from Page 1

If you have anything to suggest that he can add to his list, please let Herb know.

See you at the next meeting, February 17.

Pat Roberson, N7PAT
President, OTVARC

Clip for use at your Operating Position

QRP PSK31, from page 3

Don't overlook 30 meters' PSK potential, either. There isn't as much activity there, but what's there is pretty terrific - lots of good DX. 30 is usually open at night.

— Bill KØRGR, Rochester, MN

PSK-31 is an amazing mode. You will work signals you won't even HEAR. The signals appear on a "waterfall" or other display on your computer's PSK software. You just click on that line, and bingo! Text starts appearing and you're reading that QSO. Click another area or hit an "F-Key" (depending on which software you are using, and you start transmitting, just start typing out your message or CQ. Or you can type out canned CQ's and messages about yourself and your gear in advance, then click an icon and send those. The PSK-20 is a terrific rig Small Wonder Labs kits are very high quality, the instructions easy to follow, and Dave Benson is eager to help with a tip or a no charge replacement part. No fancy equipment needed for alignment, and the interface is already built

See QRP PSK31, page 5

HAMFESTS & CONVENTIONS**19 FEBRUARY 2011****Salem Hamfair**

Salem Repeater Association
 Polk County Fairgrounds
 520 South Pacific Highway West
 Rickreall, OR 97371

www.w7sra.org

Talk-In: 146.86 (PL 186.2)

Donald Brusch K7UN

PO Box 5130

Salem, OR 97304-0130

503.931.8751

k7un@arrl.net

15 - 17 APRIL 2011**62nd International DX Convention**

Northern California DX Club

www.dxconvention.org

info@dxconvention.org

The Holiday Inn Hotel & Conf Center

Visalia, California

Room rates - \$99.00

Reservations - 559.651.5000

3 - 5 JUNE 2011**SEA-PAC****NW Division ARRL Convention**

Seaside Convention Center, Seaside Oregon

www.seapac.org

C. Wayne Schuler AI9Q

16414 NE 21st Street

Vancouver, WA 98684

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HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY

1 KB7NJE Mary Jo Mosby	15 KB7VHI Alvin Carlson
4 KK7DS Daniel Smith	15 AI9QC. Wayne Schuler
4 K7SIX Ken Davenport	21 KA7NAN Sharon Coan
5 WB7FJC Janet Bell	24 W7VPV Richard Booth
6 WA3RMX Thomas Hill	26 KA7RNN Roger Noyes
8 N7DZR Willis Ranes	27 K7FW Dale Mosby
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11 W7GH Rob Locher	28 WB6SHR Paul Lucas
13 W7SST Mike Brashler	
13 WG7U George Lottes	

MAUREEN RETIRES

With this issue of THE OSCILLATOR, you'll miss the OREGON TRAIL LIP BALM ad here. Maureen KA7LAP has determined her "retirement" date.

For many years, her LIP BALM has played a prominent role on this page. A member of our club, her product has been available at pharmacies in Portland, Hillsboro, and Cornelius.

We wish Maureen well as she moves her talents into new areas.

QRP PSK31, from page 4

in. My first QSO with my PSK-20 was with VK2CA in Australia, I was in Los Angeles, running 3-4 watts into a vertical. The newer design runs with more power. Your neighbors will never hear anything. String a dipole around the edges of your outdoor patio, you'll have great luck. 20 meter wire antennas are short and easy to build.

— Ken AD6KA, Chatsworth, CA

FEBRUARY LUNCH BUNCH

Saturday February 26th at 1:30 PM

Mandarian Palace
 9225 SW Allen Blvd.
 Beaverton, Oregon
 503.245.8828

Questions?

Linda KC7YTD
 kc7ytd@gmail.com
 503.246.8879

CLUB MEETING
FEBRUARY 17TH



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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June 3 - 5, 2011

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