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## EDITOR'S JUNK-BOX

I would like to thank the club members for your expressions of care for me and my family when I was as sick as your basic dog. The good news is that after a second operation later this summer to tidy up some loose ends, there will be absolutely no permanent effects of this episode on my health or lifestyle. So you ain't seen the last of me yet! This issue marks the end of my 9th year as MARC's newsletter editor. Stay tuned.

In the last year, MARC has gained a large number of new members who have recently joined the Amateur Service. This is good news for MARC. In recent *REMARCS*, I've been trying to work in more information that will benefit new hams. Looks like there is good reason for that effort to continue.

I recently received a major DX award certificate on which the printing twice refers to the recipient as being a 'he.' C'mon, people, wake up and smell the 21 st century! No, I am not going to send it back. I may be annoyed, but I'm not crazy. 73 for now de KAY WT3P

### NEW VIDEO LIBRARY

**TOM N3JMA is building a collection of videos to loan for new (and/or improving) hams. He'll have the videos on display at meetings. Borrow and enjoy, but please return them promptly. If you have items that can be legally copied for the collection, please contact Tom at 896-8413.**

## PUBLIC SERVICE

There will be a Thorncroft equestrian event on May 10 for which communicators are needed. If you don't have a Mother's Day obligation and can help out, contact STEVE K3KFD at 667-1650.

Training in formal message-handling continues on the three weekly MARC VHF Traffic Nets. Learning to operate in a directed net and to relay radiograms is an important skill for all hams; most local radio clubs do not offer this education. Also, it's a good way to meet other club members and make friends.

## UP TO SPECS

*Here is a plain-English translation of some terminology found in high-tech advertising literature:*

New -- Different color from previous design.

All New -- Parts not interchangeable with previous design.

Futuristic-- No other reason why it looks the way it does.

Unmatched -- Almost as good as the competition.

Redesigned -- Previous faults are corrected, we hope.

Years of development -- We finally got one that works.

Microprocessor-controlled -- Does things we can't explain.

Performance-proven -- Will operate through the warranty period.

Foolproof operation -- No provision for any adjustments.

Maintenance-free -- Impossible to fix.

**24-hour** service -- Given 24 hours, we can usually find a technician to ignore your problem.

Meets all standards -- Ours, not yours.

Satisfaction guaranteed -- See 'Meets all standards.'

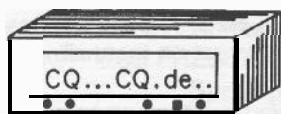
[Adapted from 1992 **RADIO** WORLD DIRECTORY]

# BRING A FRIEND TO A MARC MEETING!

## CQ CONTEST? WHAT'S A CONTEST?

By Q. R. Zedd

Some people enjoy competition: on the tennis court, at the bowling alley, at the card table, or on the ham bands.



The essence of ham contesting is to make as many contacts as possible in a specified time period. There are contests for specific parts of the spectrum (ARRL 10

Meter Contest), specific modes (CQ World-Wide DX CW), specific groups of hams (ARRL Novice Roundup), specific geographical areas (Pennsylvania QSO Party), and so on. The most popular operating event in North American ham radio is a combination contest and emergency preparedness exercise called Field Day, held the fourth full weekend every June.

In addition to the number of contacts made, many contests add spice by **weighting** scores in some way -- more QSO points for CW contacts than for phone contacts, for example. If a phone QSO is worth 1 QSO point, a CW QSO might be worth 2 QSO points. Many contests also have **multipliers** to boost the final score. Here's how multipliers work. After you add up all your QSO points, you multiply that figure by something else achieved during the contest. You might multiply by the number of ARRL Sections, DXCC countries, CQ zones, or Pennsylvania counties that you worked, for example. Weighting and multipliers become major factors in the contesters' operating strategy. To keep things relatively simple, Field Day does not have multipliers, but CW contacts are weighted to count more than phone contacts.

A valid contest contact consists of an **exchange**: the information stations must send, receive, and log. In addition to the callsign, items that might form part of an exchange are serial numbers, states, ARRL Sections, CQ zones, signal reports, and organization membership numbers. The Field Day exchange is somewhat

mysterious, but everyone is told what to send and log by the Field Day captain, so you don't have to worry about it. Although the big-whoop winners in contests are serious radio-sportsmen with access to cowabunga stations, contest sponsors today try to attract more "little gun" participants by creating a lot of sub-categories that are within the reach of those who don't have a prayer of winning the whole doughnut.

However, even if you don't play to win, contests are a good way to sharpen operating skills and to contact states, grid squares, and countries needed for operating awards. They also give you a better practical understanding of propagation than reading about it in a book. For those who feel tongue-tied in a rag chew, contesting could be just the right ice-breaker. That's because you don't have to think up anything original to say! After the contest, however, you'll have your contest experiences to talk about in rag chews.

Before jumping into a contest, either figure out the exchange by listening, or look it up in one of the magazines. Never try to engage a contest station in a rag chew, and avoid breaking his rhythm to ask what's going on, what's the exchange, where's he located, etc. You may get your head back in neat bite-size pieces.



People do not bark or bite, however, in the Novice Roundup, Field Day, and Pennsylvania QSO Party contests. This makes them good spots to get your toes wet in competitive operating. Come on out to MARC Field Day this June and try this side of ham radio fun. Who knows? You might be the next hot prospect for one of the big contest clubs, or just have a heck of a good time.

## MARC SCORES IN '91 PENNSYLVANIA QSO PARTY

Seven MARC members submitted scores in the 1991 PA QSO Party, for a club total nearly 25k greater than last year: 87,223.5 points. We placed 15th out of 17 clubs eligible for awards, or 23rd out of 47 total clubs. Congratulations to WES WB2SVF, who won Delaware County! ALLEN WG3E finished in 11th place among the mobiles and handed out many multipliers. KAY then-KC3LM now-WT3P (who?) had the top score among MARC entries.

Berks County's Dauberville DX Association won both the overall club trophy and the medium/small club gavel with 1,988,094.5 points, almost 10k more than last year's winner, the Delaware-Lehigh Amateur Radio Club.

The 1992 contest, the 35th annual outing, will be October 10-11, Columbus Day weekend.

### 1991 MARC SCORES

Kay KC3LM	49,594.5
Carter KD3AO	18,057.0
Wes WB2SVF	11,136.0
Allen WG3E/M	5,482.0
Bob K3QXH	2,356.0
Bart KC3BP	550.0
Ned WQ3Z	48.0

## OPERATING FUN

**ARMED FORCES DAY:** A communications test between hams and the Military Communications System, May 16-17. Special QSL card. Lengthy details, page 128, May QST.

**ARRL JUNE VHF QSO PARTY:** Some FM activity, but mostly CW/SSB. Rules, page 126, May QST.

**CALAVERAS CO., CALIFORNIA:** WA6YGA, May 15-17, celebrating the annual frog-jumping contest. **ARCADE, NY:** AA2EN will celebrate the Arcade & Attica Steam Railroad, May 30-31. **BALTIMORE:** WA3PJQ honors the submarine service aboard the USS Torsk. *I'll bet you missed the Toad Suck Daze station, from Toad Suck, Arkansas. No, I don't make this stuff up!*