

RADIOSPORT

Or.. Why would I enter an Amateur
Radio Contest?

What's up with that?

What's in it for me?

By Ray N6HE for the PVARC 4-17-2013

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ✖ 1. What are these things called contests, anyway?**
- ✖ 2. Why would I want to get involved?**
- ✖ 3. Reasons why I might not want to....**
- ✖ 4. OK, I'll try it, but which one (or two)?**
- ✖ 5. Getting ready...**
- ✖ 6. Doing it!**
- ✖ 7. Review – So what did I accomplish? What did I learn? Would I do it again? Why?**

1. What are these things called contests, anyway?

- ✗ **My definition:** An organized amateur radio on-the-air activity where hams, for a variety of reasons and usually with specific more-or-less common goals, use their radio equipment to contact other.

1. What are these things called contests, anyway?

- ✖ **My expanded definition/description:** Hams communicating with other hams, sometimes (but not always) trying to contact as many other stations as possible with each contact being as short as possible to allow more contacts to be made in the time period allowed. Some are as short as 30 minutes, and some are an entire year long! Variations include contacting other hams in as many areas/countries as possible, using as little power as possible, only females, rookies, only one mode (RTTY or PSK-31, e.g.), etc.

1. What are these things called contests, anyway?

- ✖ Generally speaking it's a game, and hams play this game for all the reasons people play any game; plus, there are many additional benefits to amateur radio "contesting." As a matter of fact, there's a move afoot to call this type of operating event "Radiosport." You'll fit in somewhere!



1. What are these things called contests, anyway?

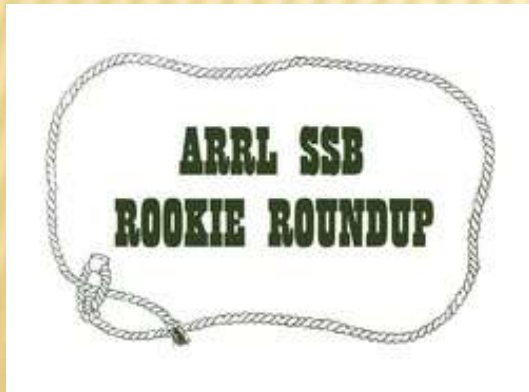
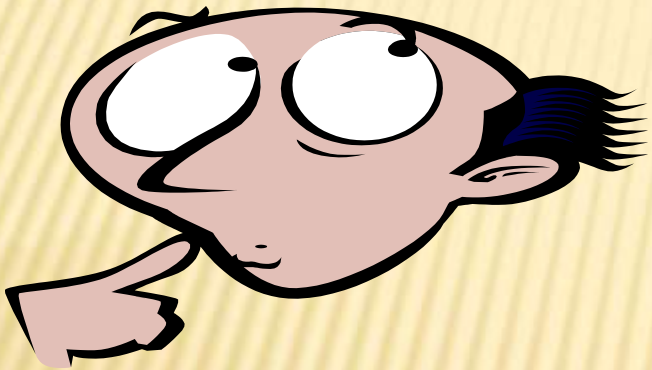
- ✗ For most participants, there are no “losers,” rather, everybody wins (because almost every person’s goals are different). Every contester I’ve talked to says they’ve learned something from every contest they’ve ever entered, even if it’s “Well, that doesn’t work!” One ham recently put it perfectly when he said, “You don’t learn anything when everything works.”

1. What are these things called contests, anyway?

- ✖ There are SSB and CW and RTTY and PSK-31 and DX and exotic modes and HF and VHF/UHF and moonbounce and microwave and Hi/Low/REALLY Low power and antique “boatanchor” equipment, and various events structured as “contests.” Basically, something for everyone (SEE THE WA7BNM CALENDAR)(next slide) almost all the time. Short ones. Long ones. You name it. I’m waiting for a contest to see how many left-handed albino females over 80 I can contact using only a whip antenna with battery power on CW!
- ✖ What did Ray’s dog “Sparky” teach him about contesting? Stay tuned.....

1. What are these things called contests, anyway?

April 2013 contest listing, courtesy of WA7BNM




+ SARL 80m QSO Party	1700Z-2000Z, Apr 4
+ LZ Open 40m Sprint Contest	0400Z-0800Z, Apr 6
+ SP DX Contest	1500Z, Apr 6 to 1500Z, Apr 7
+ CWops Mini- CW Test	1300Z, Apr 10 to 0400Z, Apr 11
+ JIDX CW Contest	0700Z, Apr 13 to 1300Z, Apr 14
+ SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Apr 13 to 2359Z, Apr 14
+ EU Spring Sprint, CW	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 13
+ Georgia QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 13 to 2359Z, Apr 14
+ Hungarian Straight Key Contest	1500Z-1700Z, Apr 14
+ Holyland DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 19 to 2100Z, Apr 20
+ TARA Skirmish Digital Prefix Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Apr 20
+ ES Open HF Championship	0500Z-0859Z, Apr 20
+ CQ Manchester Mineira DX Contest	1200Z, Apr 20 to 2359Z, Apr 21
+ EU Spring Sprint, SSB	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 20
+ Michigan QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 20 to 0400Z, Apr 21
+ Ontario QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 20 to 1800Z, Apr 21
+ YU DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 20 to 1700Z, Apr 21
+ Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z, Apr 22
+ SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Apr 24
+ CWops Mini- CW Test	1300Z, Apr 24 to 0400Z, Apr 25
+ 10-10 Int. Spring Contest, Digital	0001Z, Apr 27 to 2359Z, Apr 28
+ SP DX RTTY Contest	1200Z, Apr 27 to 1200Z, Apr 28
+ Helvetia Contest	1300Z, Apr 27 to 1259Z, Apr 28
+ QRP to the Field	1500Z, Apr 27 to 0300Z, Apr 28
+ Florida QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 27 to 2159Z, Apr 28

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ See how participating in a contest would increase your enjoyment of our hobby... what in particular do you want to get from Amateur Radio? How might this help you with your goal? What about things you haven't thought of yet?
- ✗ LEARN STUFF about Ham Radio! Get involved in Field Day from the start! Watch everything and help set up and operate the gear. Learn! Ask questions..."Why'd you do it that way?"

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ **FUN! LEARNING! ACCOMPLISHMENT! IMPROVEMENT (self/station)!**
- ✗ Generally, this presentation applies to both HF and VHF (mostly HF), but some info will be for each
- ✗ What types of contests are there? DX, One mode, e.g., PSK31-SSB-CW-RTTY, etc., Some are true contests and some are activity events. VHF-UHF home and rover , Field Day, HF/VHF from home or at a friend's, Mini-DXpedition (like our PVARC Catalina IOTA trip). Something for everyone!
- ✗ You could join contest club to see what that's all about - for fun (e.g., SCCC)
- ✗ See your experience/skill envelope expanded into new areas and to new levels
- ✗ Make it easy on yourself! Can't copy 40-45 WPM on CW? (Hint: I can't either!) Use aids like "CW GET", skimmers, Reverse Beacon Network, Spotting software

2. Why would I want to get involved?

✗ Improve your operating skills

- Getting through QSB, QRN, and QRM (and Lids!)
- Learn what works (propagation, communications technique, etc.) – see other ops' patterns, learn new “tricks,” etc.
- Learn your limitations and set goals to improve if you want to . . (e.g., N6HE is limited in CW and SSB events by his typing speed – how to fix: learn to type faster and/or use a friend as a logger
- Learn what 5NN, A, T, and N mean when you're expecting a number! 5NN at 45 WPM? What does “TOO” mean on RTTY? 5NN?
- Two stations calling and you want to work both for sure? Stack 'em!
- Be an efficient communicator “Again?” VS “Well, there was another station QRM-ing you and...” I've simply sent “AGN?” 15x on RTTY – and completed the QSO

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✖ {From Jeff K6JW} Logging for great CW operators has had great value for me over the years. I've been fortunate to have worked FD with two superb CW ops, Mike Gould (W6FI) and PVARC member Rocco Lardiere (N6KN). These guys are simply the best CW ops I've had the privilege of assisting. My code speed and ability to copy callsigns and contest exchanges have improved greatly over the years as I've struggled to keep up with them over hours of operating at a stretch. As you know, I'm not a tester by nature, but if you want to improve your CW skills, testing is a great way to do it, and logging for a great operator is a way to do it without the anxiety of actually having to make the contacts, yourself. It was only after doing this with Mike and Rocco for awhile that I gained the confidence to call CQ in a contest rather than search and pounce.

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ On phone, learn creative ways to do things (or not): “No copy - give me another phonetic!” (for “X”); “1-2-3-4-5-6,” “5-6,” not “fifty-six” (vs “66”)
- ✗ Learn how NOT to be as you experience a LID or any obnoxious behavior
- ✗ Learn your radio – really well!
- ✗ Learn somebody else’s radio (And then have to buy a radio like theirs? This happened to me with WB6UIA’s TR-7 in 1979)
- ✗ How fast can you get back on the air if you break a piece of gear? (You’re not a quitter, are you?) (see next slide)

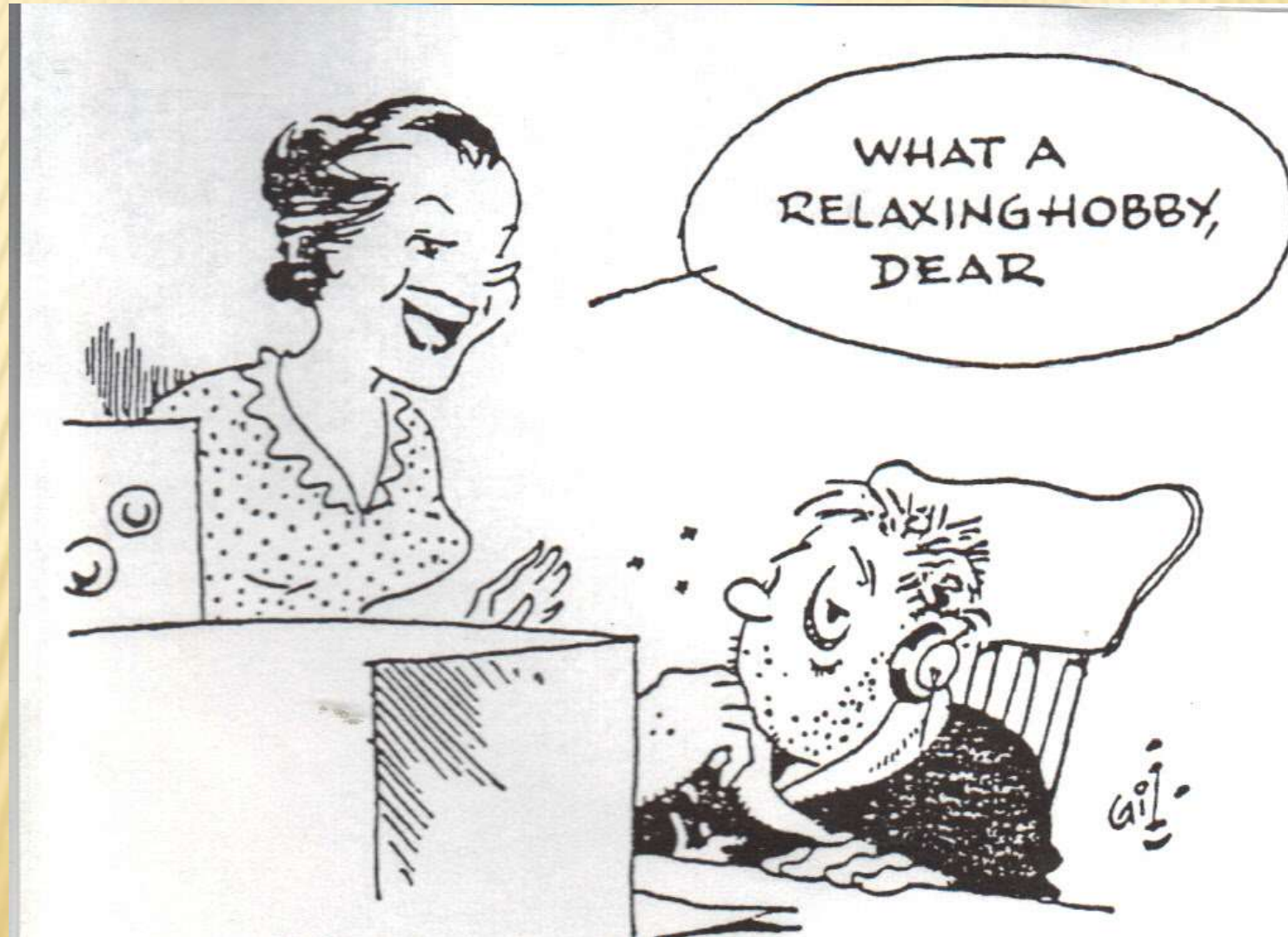
2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ {From Jeff K6JW} I had bought a used Generac generator and we'd used it for several years when we did Field Day at Peninsula High. The last time was a doozy. Around 3 AM I was running CW contacts when the generator started making awful sounds -- kind of like it was chewing itself to pieces which, in fact, it was. I quickly shut down the gear and ran out to see sparks flying amid a huge and terrifying racket. The drive shaft from the motor to the generator had snapped and was flailing around free, banging into the generator housing and tearing it up. Frightened as I was, I ran up to it and shut it down. The generator was totaled. Well, 3 AM or not, I called Dan Colburn W6DC at home and he loaded his generator into the trunk of his T-bird. I was back on the air within about 30 minutes.

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ Have an excuse to fix something that's been busted for a while before the event
- ✗ Try/learn new modes/styles (e.g., Sprints, PSK-31)
- ✗ Work as a team with other hams (log for each other, etc.)
- ✗ Learn from others' station layouts, station accessories, operating skills and techniques
- ✗ Integrity check on yourself (do you follow the rules?)
- ✗ You might be more competitive than you think!
- ✗ Fun and addictive? Discover a new passion? 100+ QSO's/hr?!?!?
- ✗ Increase your WAS, DXCC, WAZ totals – get award certificates

2. Why would I want to get involved?



2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ Laugh! (Mostly at yourself; but at others, too – with compassion, of course!)
- ✗ Make mistakes, be a LID, learn! Learn from others' mistakes.
- ✗ Learn how to improve yourself and your station (equipment, accessories, software, operating techniques, ergonomics)
- ✗ When all else fails, will you be capable of operating under trying conditions (when tired and under poor band conditions, etc.)? If a message HAD to get through, I'd pick a contester (or someone having experience in contests) to get it done (note: or a DXer!)

2. Why would I want to get involved?

× BONUS BENEFIT:

- + Most skills/improvements learned from contest experience are the same skills needed for effective DX-ing!



DX

2. Why would I want to get involved?

✗ BONUS BENEFIT:



DX

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ Learn what time/band combos work to where
- ✗ Is LONG PATH for real?
- ✗ Is GREY LINE propagation for real?
- ✗ See if platitudes are true (e.g., “10M is only open during the daytime”)
- ✗ A reason to improve antennas and equipment
- ✗ Learn the most cost effective enhancements (e.g., buy an amp or get a better/higher antenna?)
- ✗ Reach goals you’ve set for yourself (getting on 6m, 160M, e.g.)
- ✗ Experience “40 going long” for yourself

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✖ Improve your CW speed – a lot! (desire to copy well)
- ✖ Have your call recognized at ham gatherings?
- ✖ History: the ARRL CD parties – ORS's: the BEST CW ops
 - + (They still are! Visit RN6 or PAN - a CW “Symphony!”)
- ✖ I met a guy I'd been working in contests for 40 yrs - - - (Jack W1WEF) at Visalia in 2010!
- ✖ Learn CW QSK – is it for you?
- ✖ Always send “de N6HE” or BK or K or KN? Or nothing?
- ✖ Hotel Echo vs Honolulu Ecuador / both? When?
- ✖ Learn propagation (chasing multipliers)

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ Want to try SO2R ? SO3R? Holy Cow!
- ✗ See what can be done on a “dead” band
- ✗ Increase DX totals/awards/accomplishments/pride
- ✗ Get mentored and learn by others’ experience
- ✗ During down time with a mentor, get ham folklore and stories
- ✗ Learn the practicalities of HF/VHF propagation – QSO with Hawaii on 2M?
- ✗ Learn new bands – e.g., I’ve never even heard a signal on 6M! 180 yrs ham exp at Catalina: ZERO 160M air-time!
- ✗ **BOTTOM LINE:** The dog with his head out the car window.... Having fun! Happy! Doesn’t care about speed, where he’s going - he’s just doing it and having a blast!

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✗ **Marty, N6VI, DX-er / Contester Extraordinaire, suggests these reasons:**
- ✗ 1) improve your ability to copy and log accurately, and your ability to request and give fills efficiently;
- ✗ 2) improve your ability to send concisely and with proper timing;
- ✗ 3) increase your understanding of propagation (especially if you're single-band and are not just jumping to the busiest band all the time);
- ✗ 4) assess your station performance (vs. peers) and the effect of station changes, new antennas, etc. (year to year);

2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✖ 5) stress-test the operator, dealing with extended BIC time (time in the chair) and with crowded band conditions;
- ✖ 6) stress-test your station; find out the weak spots when it's run for an extended period;
- ✖ 7) identify opportunities to improve station ergonomics; and
- ✖ 8) (for award-chasers) add to your award totals (band-countries, grid squares, etc.) significantly over a single weekend. **OR....**

2. Why would I want to get involved?

Because you might want to feel like this!



3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

- ✗ I'm not a "contester." This label means..... And if I entered a contest, I'd be one –ugh!
- ✗ I don't have the station to be competitive
- ✗ Reluctance.... Sometimes slower CW ops don't seem to want to operate if faster person present (afraid of being judged?)(some hams are judgmental – so what? Don't be timid)
- ✗ Fear of making a mistake and being judged (tip: they want the QSO, they'll be patient)

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

- ✗ “I don’t like contests/contesters” – reasons I’ve heard:
 - ✗ I’d feel bad if I don’t win or place well, and I have a fragile ego..
 - ✗ I could never win
 - ✗ That’s not what ham radio is for
 - ✗ Contesters are jerks
 - ✗ I’d transmit on top of people ragchewing – they’d get mad
 - ✗ I don’t want to be labeled a tester
 - ✗ I don’t like competing, and it’s a competition, right? (or is it?)
 - ✗ Other hams will know I’m not as good as I want them to think I am

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

✖ This is my only radio....



3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

✗ I don't have a REALLY big antenna:



3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

✖ I don't have a big antenna like K4GMH:



3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

- ✗ **I don't have a big antenna like K4GMH:**
- ✗ Ant: 10-15-20M: pair of 4 el. SteppIRs
 - + (one at 130' one fixed on Europe at 100')
 - + TH6DXX fixed SE at 40'
- ✗ 40M: pair of Force12 EF240X's (one at 142', one at 70')
- ✗ 80M:
 - + TX: inverted vee with apex at 120 ft
 - + RX: pair of 480' Beverages (one NE other W)
- ✗ All antennas, except the Beverages, are mounted on a 130' tower.



3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

- ✗ I don't have a big antenna: **This is what K4GMH said when I asked him for a picture of his "Big Gun" Antennas:**

You may want to emphasize the "big" antennas won't make you competitive if you don't put in the time learning how to operate efficiently in a contest with or without the "big" antennas. A good operator, with modest antennas (dipoles and tribander), will beat a novice contester who is using the "big" antennas. Kind of like having a "hot" sports car, but don't know how to drive it for maximum performance. Only way to get the "smarts" to be a good contester, is to ask questions and put in the time operating in the contests, aka BIC - Butt In Chair. The operator is key to a competitive/winning contest station.

Good luck with the presentation to generate the spark of interest in the audience for the sport of radio contesting.

73,

Mike, K4GMH

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

✗ I'd feel like this:



✗ Or this:



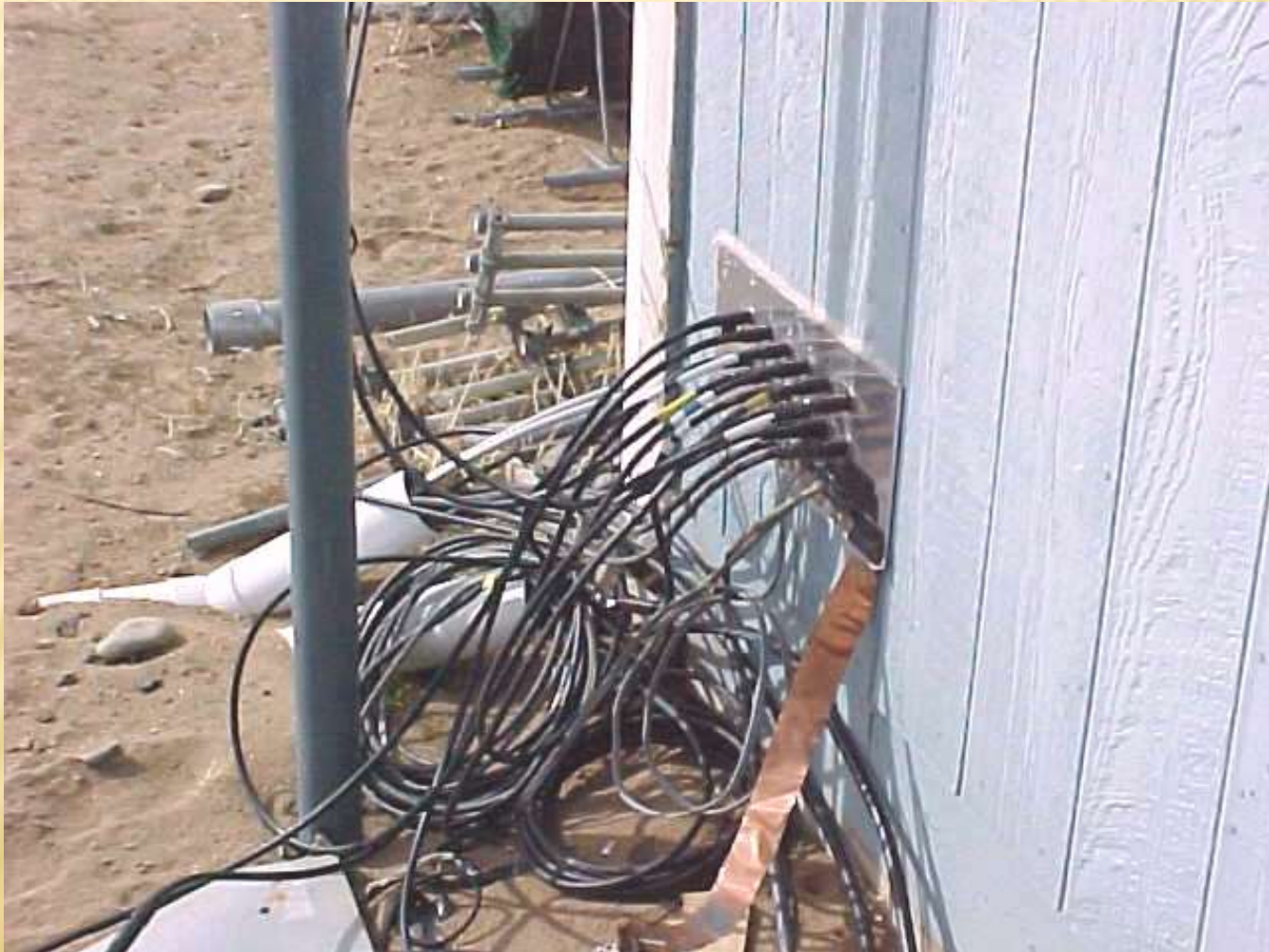
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- ✗ I'm not a "Big Gun" – this is NOT my station (K7NV):



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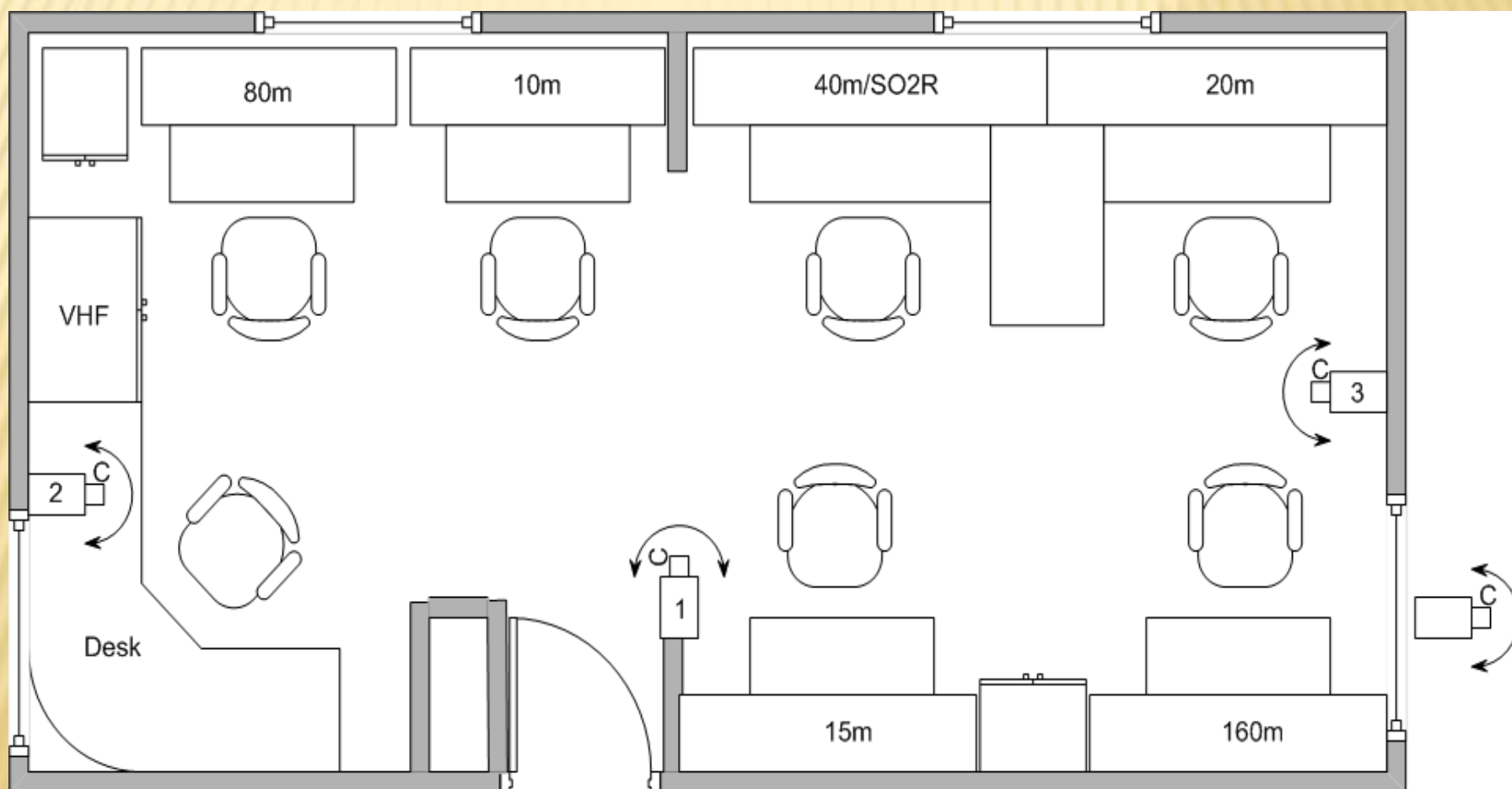
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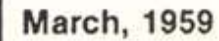
✗ I'm not a "Big Gun" – this is NOT my station:



2



✗ I don't want this to happen to me:



3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

✗ Or this:



April, 1954

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)



(REBUTTAL)

- ✗ Results vary – a lot! There are always folks at the “bottom” – surely you can place ahead of a few of those guys, right?
 - + For example, in the 2012 CQ WW SSB DX Contest, the bottom submitted entry (number of QSO's) in the US First Call District was **5**. Second Call District was **1**. Third call District **1**. Get the idea? Certainly, you will “beat” somebody! (if where you place is a concern)

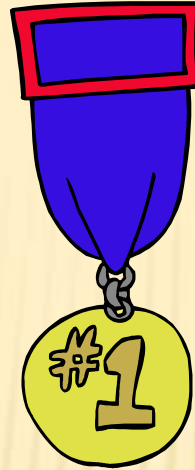
3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

✖ On the other hand....

- + NZ6L: 1st Place CALIF – Idaho QSO Party – ? QSO's!
- + N6HE + AA6VX – 1st Place Multi-Op ARRL SW Section - CW
- + N6HE “1st Place Single Operator Low Power CW – Los Angeles Section” - 2009

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

✗ On the other hand....



+ WAY TO GO, JOE!

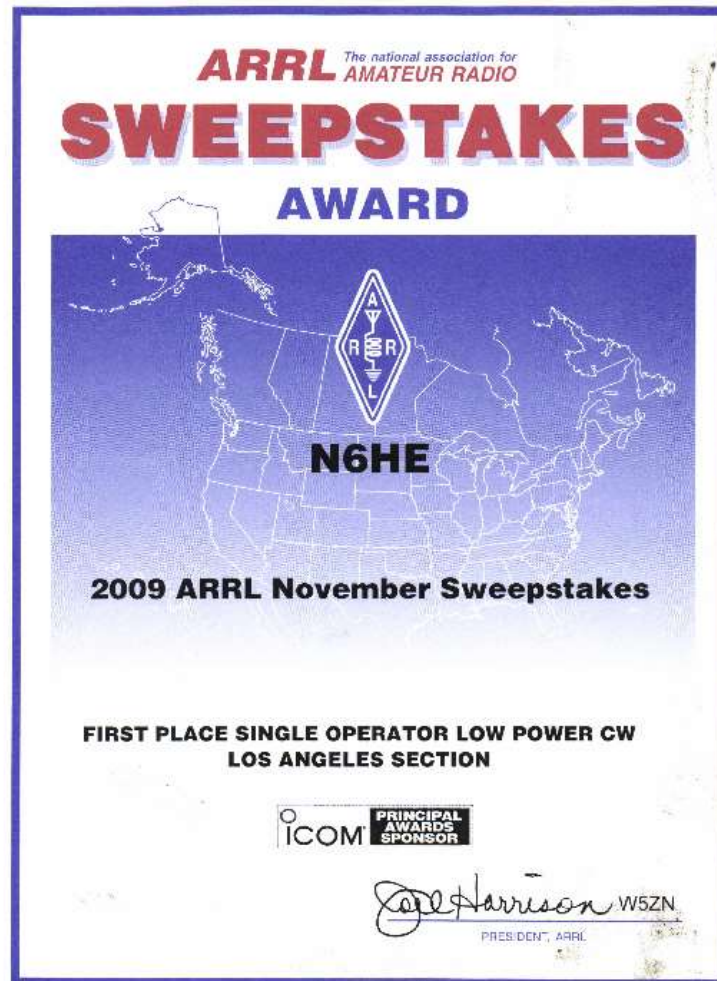
+ NZ6L: 1st Place CALIF – Idaho QSO Party – 4 QSO's!

+ N6HE + AA6VX CW ARRL Sweepstakes – 1st Place
Multi-Op ARRL SW Division

+ N6HE: 1st Place Single Operator Low Power (100W)
CW – Los Angeles Section – ARRL Sweepstakes – 2009

You could surprise yourself!!!!

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)



3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

- ✖ Or, to help your ego, you could go QRP and expect to be near the bottom:

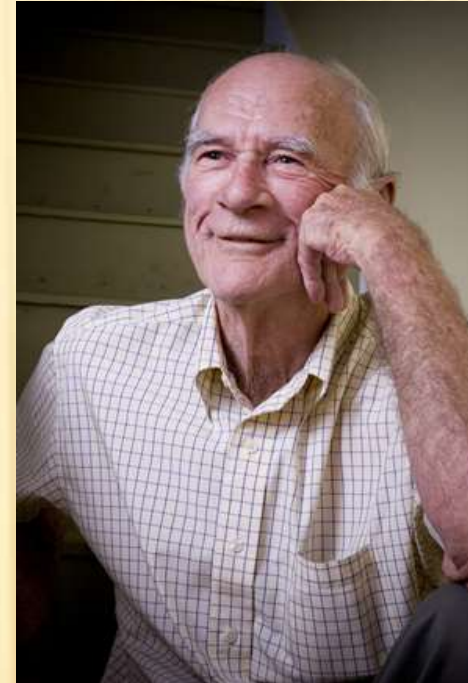


3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

✗ BUT maybe you'd feel like this:

✗ Or this:

✗ Look, Mom!!



Ahhhh – State #50!

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

- ✗ N6HE's simple station (with 25'-high dipoles, and close-in 100'-high dirt to my Northeast) – and I do fine! (1,300+ contest QSO's in February, 2013)



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- ✗ **March 2013 RTTY NA Sprint:**

- ✗ (80-40-20-Q's-Mults-Score)

- ✗ #9 of 18 W6's, #43 of 97 total

- ✗ Had fun! Even scored 50% up...

- ✗ Made lots of mistakes - laughed

N6RO	H P	KEN	CA	42	85	64	192	43	8,256	NCCC #1
WØYK(@N W6P)	H P	ED	CA	42	79	58	179	39	6,981	NCCC #1
W6OAT	L P	RUST Y	CA	32	52	72	156	40	6,240	NCCC #1
W6SX	H P	HANK	CA	36	65	55	156	40	6,240	NCCC #1
K6UFO(@ W6YX)	Q R P	MOR K	CA	22	56	72	150	40	6,000	NCCC #1
W1SRD	H P	STEV E	CA	33	50	61	144	41	5,904	NCCC #1
K6MM	H P	JOHN	CA	28	55	68	151	39	5,889	NCCC #1
K9YC	H P	JIM	CA	24	64	61	150	39	5,850	NCCC #1
N6HE	L P	RAY	CA	9	43	37	89	31	2,759	
K6NV	L P	BOB	CA	20	22	32	74	31	2,294	
KM6Z	L P	VLAD	CA	0	8	55	63	30	1,890	
NS6T	L P	TOM	CA	16	18	36	70	25	1,750	NCCC #1
N6QQ	H P	JOHN	CA	0	0	54	54	28	1,512	
K6DGW	H P	SKIP	CA	15	18	27	60	23	1,380	NCCC #2
N6XI	H P	RICK	CA	0	0	40	40	23	920	
N6MSY	L P	PAUL	CA	12	21	3	36	16	576	
WQ6X	L P	RON	CA	4	14	8	26	13	338	
K6ST	L P	BARR Y	CA	0	4	2	6	6	36	NCCC #2

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

- ✖ Hey, it's RadioSPORT, not necessarily a “contest”
- ✖ Ever enter a 10K race? Why? Not to win, right? Your personal best, better than last year, friendly competition with a friend, curiosity, just to participate, fun (give points, be on the air), accomplishment
- ✖ See contest results listings: Note HP, LP, Single-band, and QRP classes; really low scores, # hours – “game the system” next year? (pick a category with only a few entrants)(or FD 4A vs 5A for relative placement)

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

- ✘ Is Field Day a contest? Sorta (very low-key). Well...did you have fun at Field Day?
- ✘ Don't need to do it ALL of the contest period
- ✘ K6PV/6 at Catalina: NAQP, 160M “contests” – we all had a ball – learned 160M, RTTY – and the group having dinner together trumped being in the contests (we weren't fanatics!)
- ✘ Can combine with a mini-DXpedition if want to
- ✘ Experience the best ops doing their best! Sprint QSY rule, the “NOW...” macro – something for everyone

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

- ✗ **What makes hamming fun for you? Why are you a ham?**
 - 1) Service – EmComm, etc.
- ✗ 2) Hands On Experience – building antennas, kits, peripherals, radios
- ✗ 3) Operating – QRP, QRPp, DX, Ragchewing, Traffic, New Modes, Wallpaper, Hidden Transmitter Hunts, weird stuff (e.g., moonbounce), “because it’s there,” just plain fun
- ✗ How would “Radiosport” fit in with this?
- ✗ Participate with a friend
 - + Support a friend

3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....) (REBUTTAL)

- ✗ So..... Let's hear from some PVARC members on what their experiences/learnings were when operating in “contest mode” for the first time!
- ✗ Diana AI6DF
- ✗ Clay AB9A
- ✗ Malin KJ6HUB
- ✗ Peter KE6JPM

4. OK, OK, I'll try it. But which one (or two)?

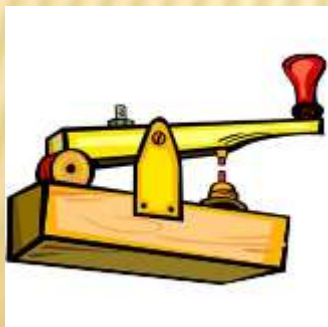
- ✗ Check the WA7BNM calendar

- ✗ "Rookie" events



- ✗ Freaked out? Operate as "relief" for someone else for awhile – your supposedly-pathetic efforts will be better than none for them!

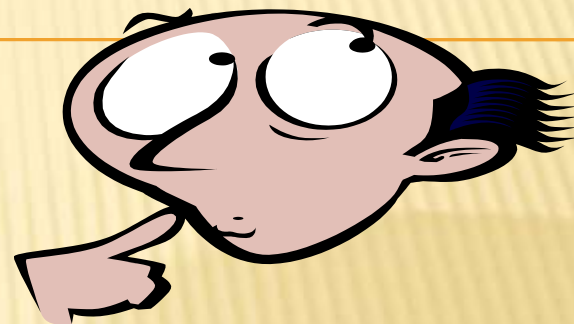
- ✗ Field Day!



✗OR



?



5. Getting ready...

- ✗ What equipment do I need?
 - + Radio, antenna, microphone or key and keyer, HEADPHONES (pro-active spouse protection!)
 - + A memory keyer helps a lot on CW
 - + Voice keyer?
 - + Contest logging software helps
 - ✗ WriteLog, N3FJP, N1MM

5. Getting ready...

- ✗ What mental preparation do I need to do?
 - + Know the rules, have them handy for referencing
 - + (Optional) What is propagation likely to be like? (ARRL Bulletins, CQ magazine)
 - + Set modest goals – what will make you feel “successful?”
 - ✗ Amount of time in the contest?
 - ✗ Number of QSO's?
 - ✗ Number of new states, countries, and or zones worked?
 - ✗ Better than the last time?
 - ✗ Improved code speed?
 - ✗ Improved communications techniques?
 - ✗ Gain experience to make you “better” in several areas?

5. Getting ready...

- ✖ What operational preparation do I need to do?
 - + Have a band chart handy (don't rely on memory!)
 - + Preset tuner/amp controls for rapid band changes
 - + Do a “dry run” of exchanges using the software
 - + Confirm all gear and antennas are alive and well
 - + Clock accurate to the second?



5. Getting ready...

+



5. Getting ready...

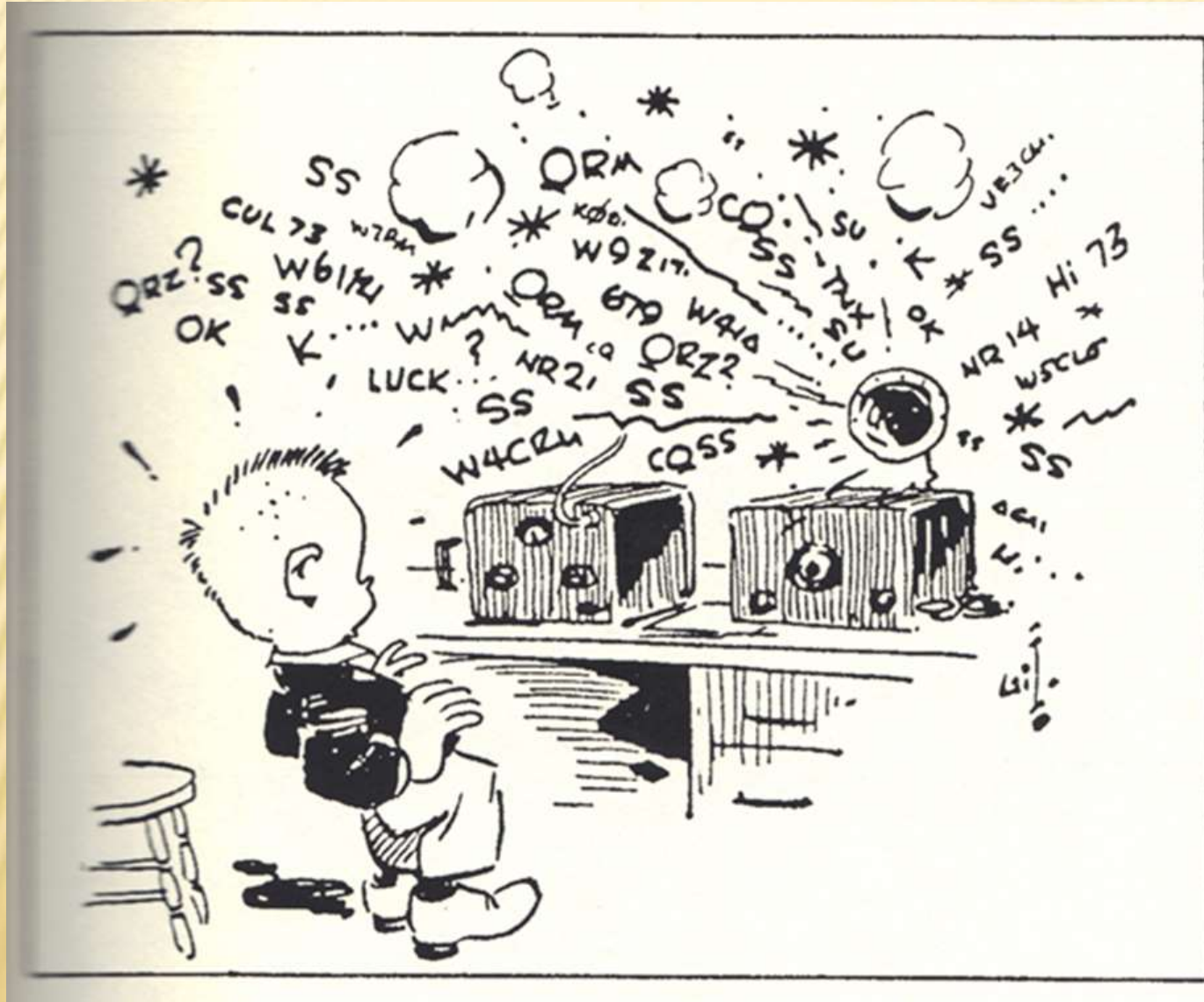
+ Just before the contest starts...

- ✗ Have had good sleep
- ✗ Remind spouse: no phone calls, no honey-do's, bring food!
- ✗ Relax
- ✗ Tune around and get a feel for the bands
- ✗ Final test of proper power out, etc.
- ✗ Make double sure you know the time differential between your QTH and UTC
- ✗ Cold 807's ready? Or not...
- ✗ Tick..tick..tick..tick...(wait until someone else has started) . .
Then..... **GO FOR IT!**

6. Doing it!

- ✗ Tune around
- ✗ Find a loud station calling “CQ Contest” to call
- ✗ LISTEN to what/how he’s doing – get the rhythm – get his exchange information in advance
- ✗ CALL HIM! Mamma mia, there’s MY call - he’s calling back to I’il ‘ol ME!
- ✗ QSL his info, send yours; get his QSL of your info (like a “How’re you?” exchange: **How’re you?** **Fine**, **how’re you?** **Fine.**)
- ✗ Log it!
- ✗ SMILE! You’ve done it! 😊! (That’s all there is to it!)
- ✗ Repeat.
- ✗ Repeat.
- ✗ Repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat.....
- ✗ Then, call “CQ CONTEST” and see what happens – hang on tight! (see next slide!)


6. Doing it!



March, 1959

6. Doing it!

✗ The **FUN** part:

- ✗ Work as a team with other hams – it's a great way to get to know club members better (FD, LH, Catalina)
- ✗ Fun and addictive? Will you have a passion for making 100+ QSO's/hr?!?! (It's a kick!)
- ✗ Make mistakes, be a LID, learn!
- ✗ Laugh! See "F5###/LID" get spotted! Har!
- ✗ If in the clear calling CQ, use Screwy Phonetics for fun - e.g., "Johnny Walker" or "Elvis Presley"
- ✗ Look 'em up on  QRZ.COM as you work 'em in a slow event – fun to put a face/station to the guy you're working (say HI to his wife by name?)
- ✗ Support others in doing what they like to do

6. Doing it!

✖ The **FUN** part:

+ AB9A, KE6JPM, and KJ6HUB at PVARC Field Day, 2012



6. Doing it!

✖ The **FUN** part, Part Deux:

- + (OOPS!!!) Fun at another ham's expense: In the early 80's, about 7 of us were at my QTH testing FD radios and antennas ... there was a WA4 calling "CQ Florida QSO Party...anybody, anywhere..." on 15M, a (dead?) (quiet?) band. Nobody calling him at all. So, after 20 minutes of hearing this, we thought, "What about an "Instant W6 Band Opening" to this poor guy? After all, there were **7** of us....
- + Well, I'd better not put this next part in print....

6. Doing it!

✗ The **FUN** part, Part Deux, Page Deux:

- + (Insert speaker's disgusting verbal imitation of what happened next here)
- + (Well, you had to have been there!)
- + ...but we were legal - we would not have been written up by an O.O. or the FCC!

6. Doing it!

✕ The LEARNING Part:

✕ Know thyself...

- + Integrity check on yourself (gee, he's calling for a "Tango" station ONLY ... well, the "Echo" in my call could kinda-maybe-sorta be heard by me as a "Tango," couldn't it? I'll call him! **(NOT!)**)
- + You might be more competitive than you think

6. Doing it!

✗ Find Operational Shortcuts:

- + On CW, learn what A, T, N and 5NN mean when you're expecting a number! 5NN at 50WPM?
- + Two stations calling and you want to work both for sure? Stack 'em!
- + Be a true communicator "Again?" VS "Well, there was another station on top of you..." I've sent "AGN?" 15x on RTTY – and completed the QSO
- + Learn to use QSK on CW

6. Doing it!

✖ Find Operational Shortcuts:

- + On CW, learn what T, A, N and 5NN mean when you're expecting a number! What does 5NN sound like at 40WPM?)
- + Answer: A = 1, T = 0, N = 9. 5NN = 599.
- + Why used? Because it's waaaaaay faster! (dah vs dah-dah-dah-dah-dah, etc.)
- + Answer: Brrrrp!

6. Doing it!

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6. Doing it!

✖ Find Operational Shortcuts:

- + Do you always need to send: de (call), BK, or K on CW or “this is”... or “go ahead” or “over” on phone/voice? What about RTTY? PSK-31?
- + Whatever works! HOTEL ECHO vs HONOLULU ECUADOR – Remember “Give me another phonetic for X?”

6. Doing it!

✖ Learn about Propagation:

- + (for “multipliers” – and a higher score, usually)
- + See what can be done on a “dead” band
- + Learn what time/band combos work to where, e.g., JA’s on 15/20M in late afternoon and on 40 in early morning
- + Experience “40 going long” for yourself
- + Yes, LONG PATH is for real!
- + Yes, GREY LINE propagation is for real!
- + How do 2M propagation and 432 propagation differ?

6. Doing it!

- ✗ **Learn about Propagation and the real world:**
 - + See if the “platitudes” are real
 - ✗ Can’t work ‘em if you can’t hear ‘em...

6. Doing it!

- ✗ **Learn about Propagation and the real world:**
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6. Doing it!

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6. Doing it!

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 - ✗ I should call the other guy right after he says “QRZ?” ...

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 - ✗ 10M is only open during the day ... **Not always**
 - ✗ Sometimes, the station is too weak to hope for a QSO ...
FALSE
 - ✗ I should always call the other guy right after he says “QRZ?”
... **FALSE** (there is no “always” rule!)

6. Doing it!

✖ Improve yourself and your station

- + Learn from others: get tips and observe their skills
- + How fast can you get back on the air if you break a piece of gear? (Be like K6JW and W6DC!)
- + Learn how NOT to be as you experience a LID or obnoxious behavior



- + See others' contest styles – how well are they working for the other guy? Will they work for you?

6. Doing it!

✖ Improve yourself and your station

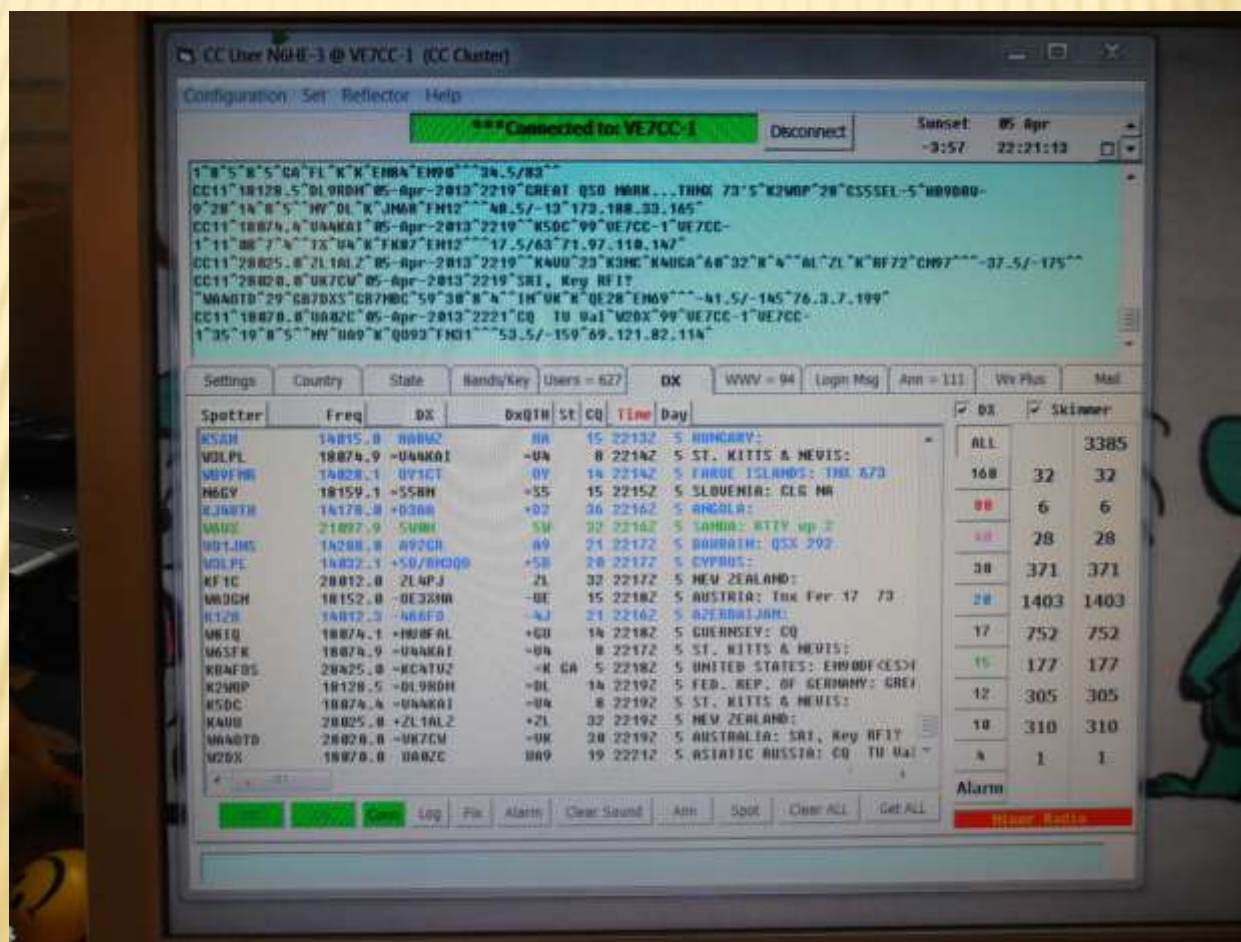
- + Make it easy on yourself! Can't copy 40 WPM? Use aids like "CW GET" by UA9OV, DX Clusters, skimmers, Reverse Beacon Network, Spotting software
- + Call people at 5 watts – see what happens! Not recommended just after buying an amp!



- + Use the “timing” of your calls to your best advantage
- + When best to CQ? When to S&P (Search and Pounce)?
- + Note the other op's style – and co-operate with it
- + Learn proper “tail-ending” skill

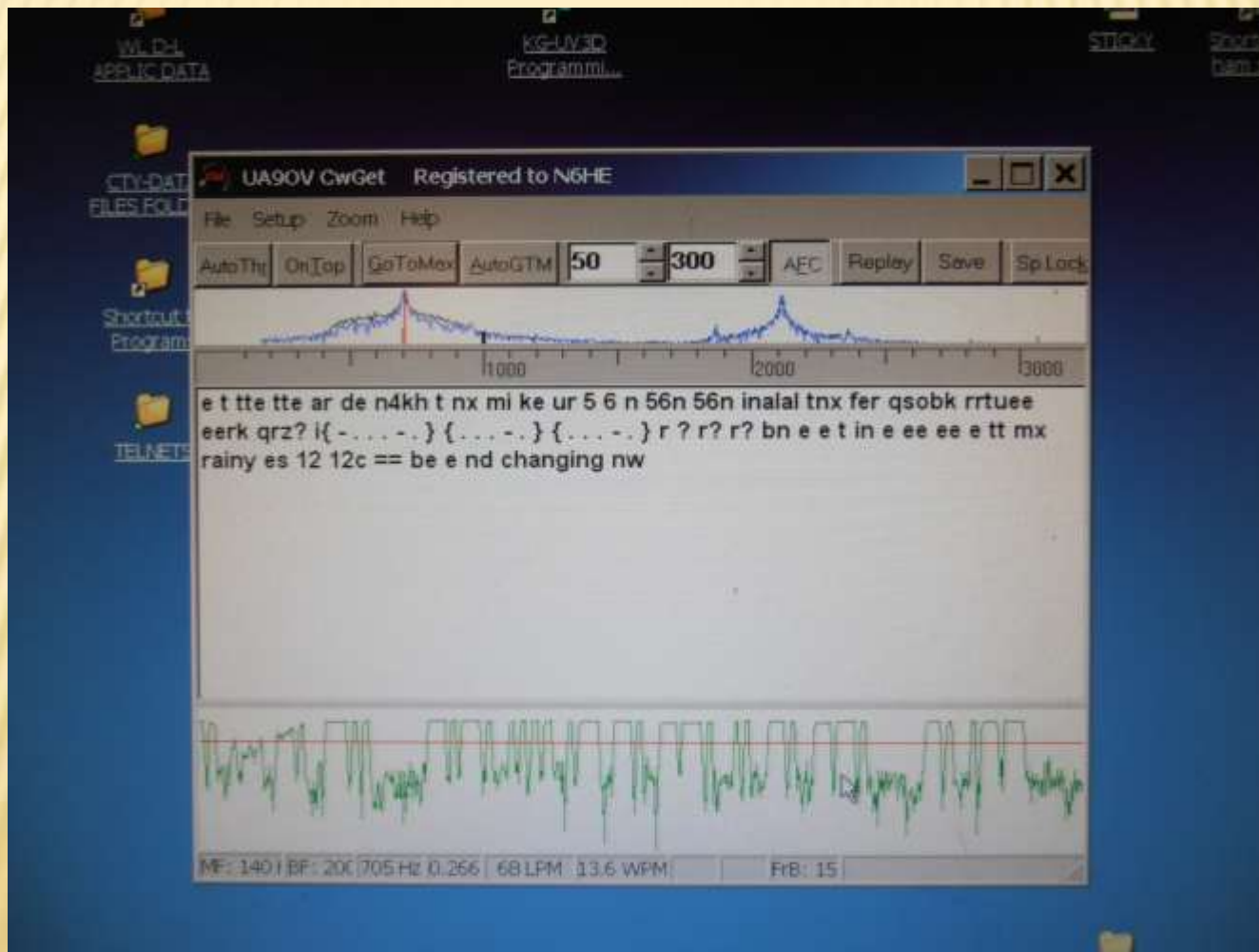
6. Doing it!

- ✗ Screenshot of the VE7CC “DX Cluster” – countries and states are identified (I use a second computer for this to save screen space):



6. Doing it!

- ✗ Screenshot of the UA90V “CW GET” Program – use it to capture the calls of CW “speed demons” (and calls like EI5EIE):



6. Doing it!

✖ A couple of tips for the Newbie:

- + Call CQ toward the end of a long or “thin” contest – all the “big guns” who’ve been calling CQ all through the contest will be on the prowl for fresh meat (that’d be you, Kemo Sabe!) (It’s the “Shooting Fish in a Barrel” effect)
- + Try the “second best band” for less competition (multi-operator stations will be there and single-op stations will be on the “best band”)

7. Review – So what did I accomplish? What did I learn? Did I make my goal(s)? Would I do it again? Why?

- ✗ **Am I a “better” ham?** Note: when the chips are down and someone asks you to step in and work a radio to help in an emergency, will you:
 - + A) make excuses and not help
 - + B) try, but embarrass yourself
 - + C) look like a deer in the headlights
 - + D) be up to the task and do a brilliant job – because you’ve had experience operating under a bit of stress and can cope with almost anything

7. Review – So what did I accomplish? What did I learn? Would I do it again? Why?

- ✖ What did I actually accomplish / learn / improve?
- ✖ What am I proud of?
- ✖ How many new states, countries, and zones did I work?
- ✖ What will I do different/better next time? (After the Catalina/IOTA trips, we always create a list of what worked and what needs improvement for next time)
- ✖ Schedule your next contest!

S000000000000..... NOW WHAT?!?

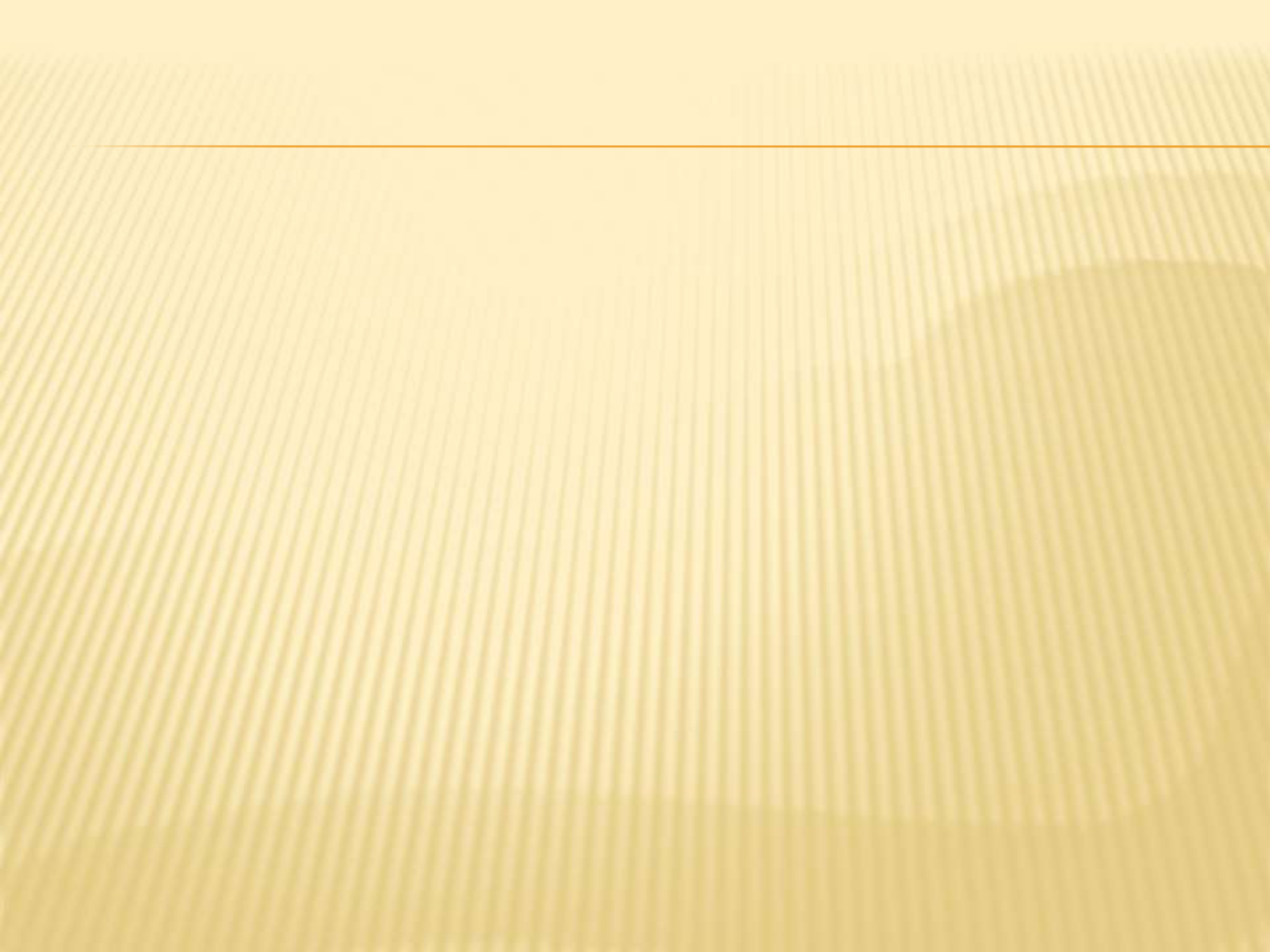
- ✗ Talk to me or another ham that participates in contests – ask them to be an “Elmer” to you in this area
- ✗ Visit them at their QTH during a contest
- ✗ Subscribe to the **National Contest Journal**
- ✗ Do Field Day at PVARC station K6PV (6/22-23/2013!)

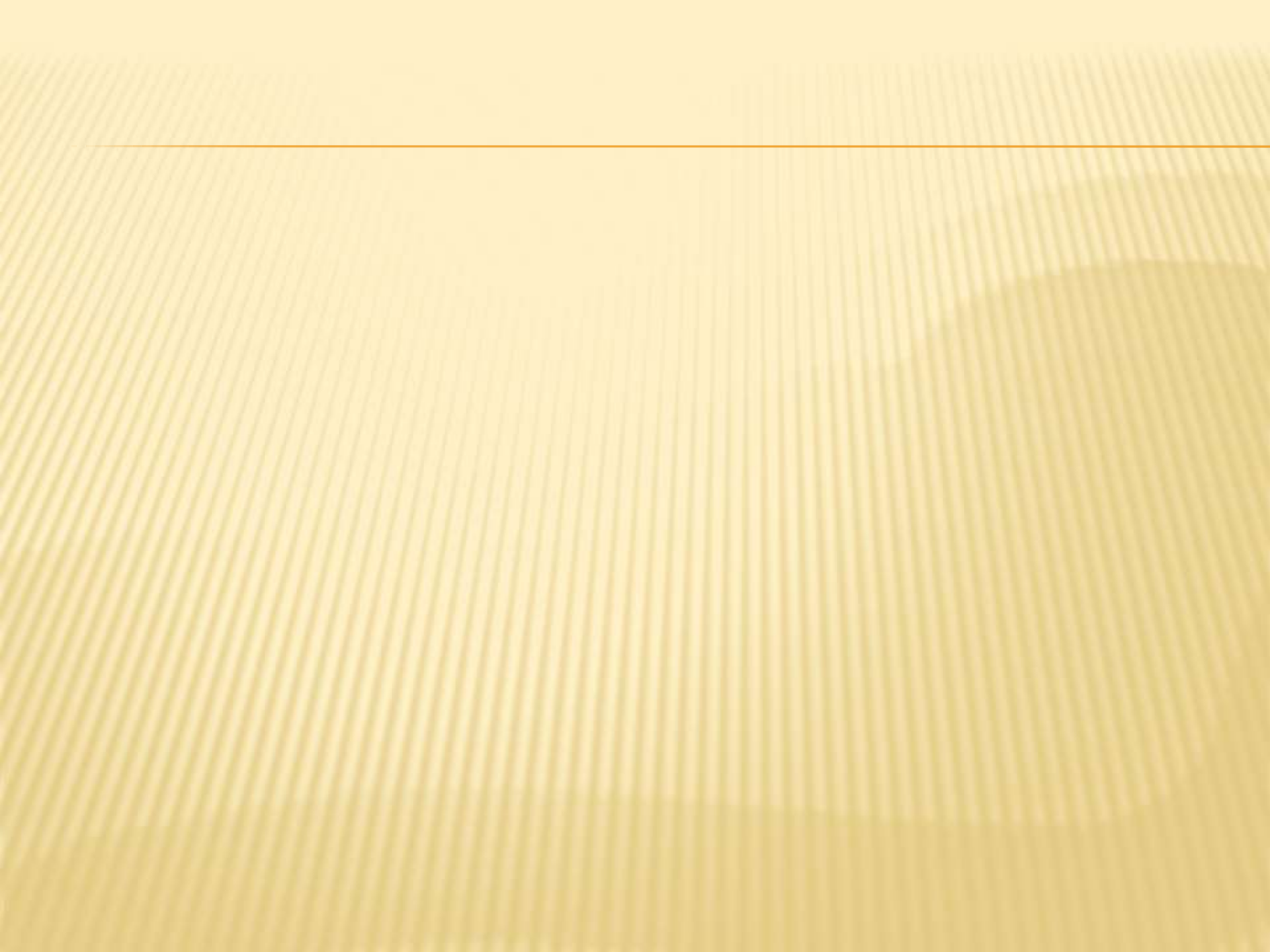


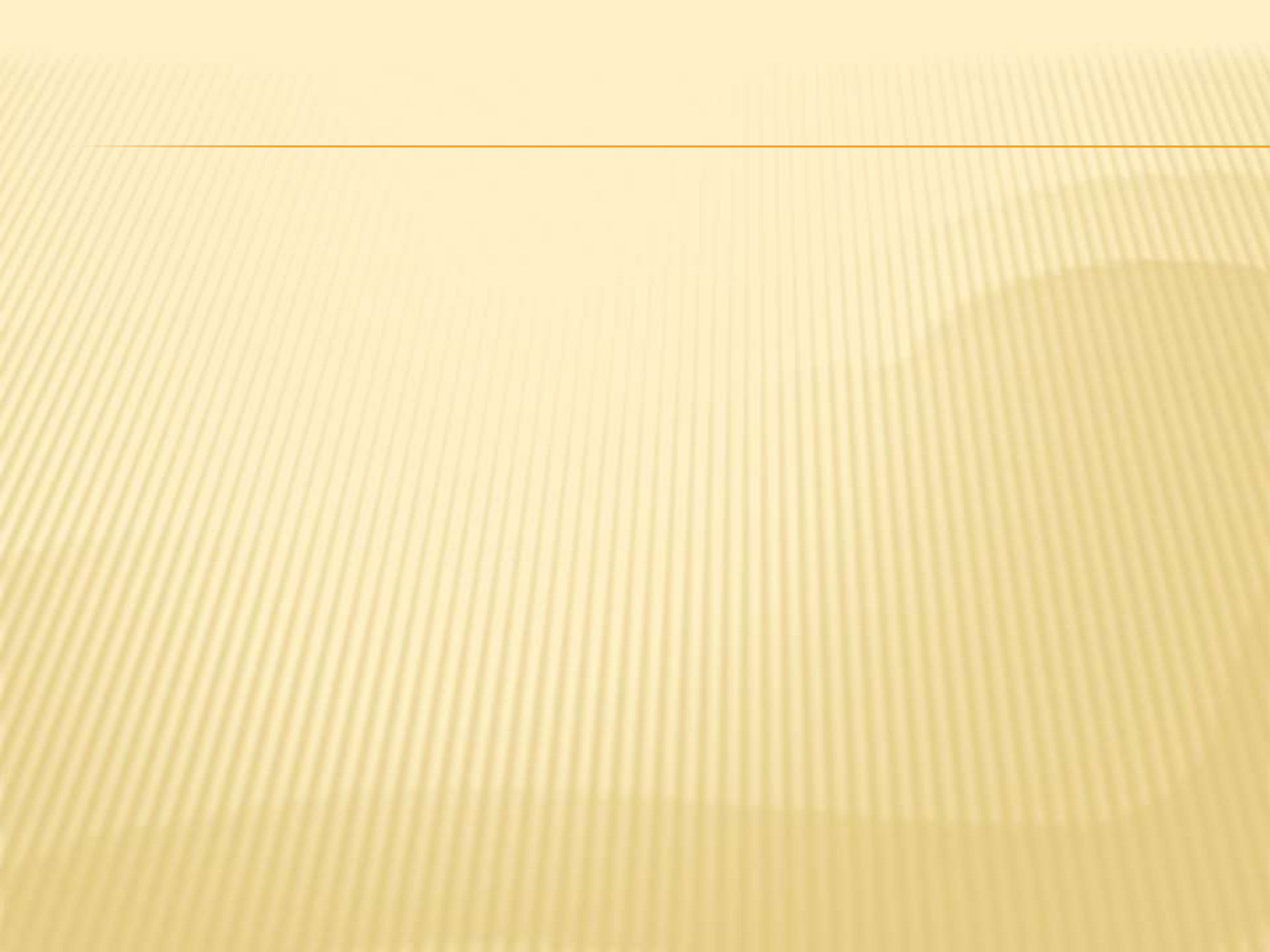
THANK YOU!

- ✖ Thank you for being here! I hope you've learned something and that I've perhaps sparked interest in one of my favorite parts of Ham Radio!
- ✖ Try it, you just might like it - see you in a contest / doing RadioSport soon!
- ✖ If you want an Elmer or have questions, contact me:
 - + Ray Day N6HE home 310-541-7557, or
 - + Email me: rayday@cox.net

QUESTIONS?

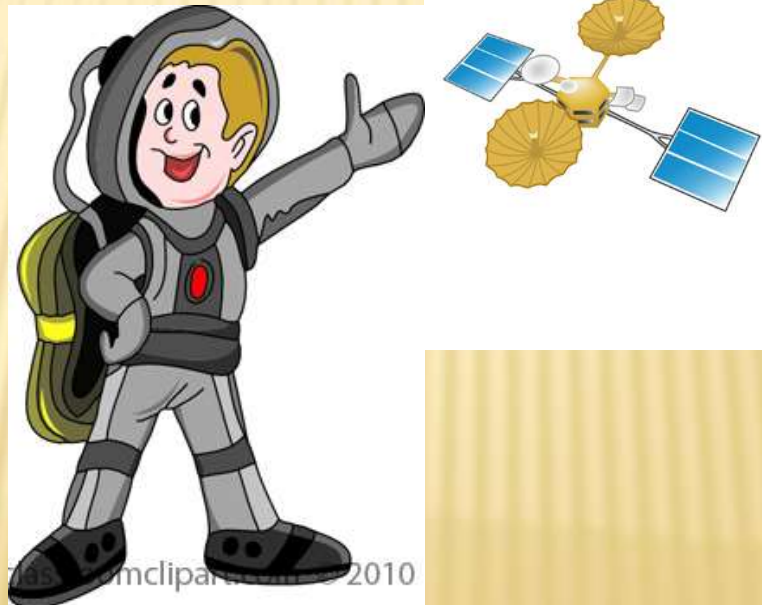






2. Why would I want to get involved?

- ✖ Learn enough about intricate ham operations to TALK TO AN ASTRONAUT! (or other hams through a satellite)



3. Reasons why I might not want to (Yes, but....)

✗ Rd station

