A Look at Our Future

The Radio Club of Ploiesti Motivates Young Hams

—submitted by Duque Vincent (Vince) Gerard YO9BC

The basic idea for all Rotarians is service and helpfulness to others. As ROAR members we can extend this philosophy to radio amateurs in our community. To this end, this is how we are helping create new enthusiastic hams in Romania.

Our logical choice was to use the Radio Club of Ploiesti as the center of our activities. The club, which operates with the call sign YO9KAG, is run by its 100-percent-devoted manager Mihai Malanca YO9BPX. The club now has 141 members. Among them are 36 youth (both girls and boys) who are taking amateur radio courses and are also participating in national and international competitions.

In the first six months of 2012, members of our club won:

- Six gold medals and three bronze medals in Romania
- Three bronze medals at the Mondial Competition in Switzerland
- Fourteen medals in national competitions in radio contesting and high-speed CW.

From the Editor

This issue is chock full of interesting articles touching on many aspects of our hobby. Beginning right on this page, Vince YO9BC introduces some new young hams from Romania who are winning radio contests—even in high-speed CW.

If you're interested in how to set up your own mobile emergency communications center, Chuck KI6DCD shows you how he is getting ready for when the "big one" hits. A small directional antenna may help in an emergency or just in getting on the ROAR nets. Jean-Pierre F1CFA writes about his experiments with a magnetic loop. On the other hand, a battleship makes a great ground plane. Mike G4WRU combines some World War II naval history with his story about serving as a regular operator of the ham station in the HMS Belfast floating wireless office.

How would you like to help spread the word about RI’s high-priority campaign, “End Polio Now”? You can do it by calling “CQ Polio” on International Polio Day in February. Pertti EA7GSU and Dan KB6NU tell you how. Pertti also gives us some useful tips on contesting in his story about running the CQ WW Contest on 80-meter CW. And, if you would like to get ready for that next CW competition, you can read my story about how I've been boosting my speed with the help of a great new mentoring program.

I want to thank the contributors to this issue who answered my request for stories so enthusiastically and so well. Keep this great stuff coming!

—Richard Spingarn TI7/AA2UP
We, as Rotarians—and ROAR members—sponsor the youngsters in the club, who range in age from 6 to 20 years old. We provide them with transceivers, linear amplifiers, and antennas. We also help them with expenses when they travel to competitions outside Romania.

In 2013 the club will participate in:

- The Romanian National Competitions for high-speed CW in April and September
- The Romanian HF/DX competition in August
- The ARRL International DX Contest–CW in February
- The IARU HF World Championship in July
- The High-Speed Club CW Contest in July

Due to our excellent results in 2012, it is very likely that the Ploiesti Amateur Radio Club will be named the official Romanian representative at the next IARU meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. Also the club will likely compete in “Youngsters on the Air” in Estonia in 2013.

We hope that these young people will have successful careers in the future, as well as join Rotary and ROAR.
How would you like to set up your own special-event station to spread the word about one of Rotary's highest priorities—the campaign against polio. You can do just that by joining the effort started by Pertti in Spain last year. At that time Ramiro EA7EGS in Pertti’s district in Spain asked approached Pertti with ideas for what ROAR might do to help with “End Polio Now”. Given the short time frame until Polio Day 2012, it was not feasible to mobilize the entire ROAR membership in establishing a project. Instead, they decided that Pertti would put a special-event station on the air.

Despite the fact that Pertti was operating on a weekday, he made nearly 50 contacts. The station really awoke the curiosity of many operators who requested more information. Then, to reinforce the message, Pertti sent out a special QSL card with a picture of the famous Al Alhambra castle in Granada, Spain, illuminated that very evening with the “End Polio Now” message.

When fellow ROAR member Dan Romanchik KB6NU in the United States learned about Pertti’s plan, he decided he would also participate. That weekend, Dan called “CQ Polio” from WA2HOM, a club station that he manages. He made about 25 contacts and helped spread the word about End Polio Now. Dan issued a certificate to the stations that requested a QSL.

This year, we want more ROAR members to participate in this event, which is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, February 23 and 24, 2013. We think this type of special-event operation is a perfect way to use amateur radio to enhance the efforts of Rotary.

You can have a QSL card made, perhaps with a picture similar to the one Pertti used. Similar illuminated displays were mounted in many countries, and a photo may be available from the RI website.

Or if you prefer, you can issue a certificate similar to the one that Dan KB6NU sent out. He would be happy to supply a template that you can customize for your operation.

Pertti will be QRV on 14293 kHz, which is the frequency of the ROAR International Net, as well as 21293, 7118 and 7180 kHz. Dan will be QRV on 14287 kHz, which is the frequency of the ROAR North American Net. In Australia, ROAR president Bill VK4ZD will be QRV as VI4POLIO.

Please consider participating in this event with us. It will not only help spread the word about “End Polio Now”; we may even attract some Rotary hams to join ROAR!

Feel free to contact either Pertti pikause@yahoo.co.uk, or Dan cwgeek@kb6nu.com, if you would like more information.
An Improved Magnetic Loop Antenna
—submitted by Jean-Pierre Aubanton F1CFA

To participate in the ROAR nets is for me a very nice activity. But sometimes, because I am located in a narrow valley, it’s difficult to get my signal over the mountains. What can I do?

Of course, a vertical or ground-plane antenna is a good solution. The angle of take-off versus the ground is good. But the power is emitted in all directions. A dipole would be better from the point of view of directionality. But a dipole does not fit very well in my green valley.

The 40-meter band is used by a lot of people, some of whom run too much power and create splatter all over the band. Other QRM and some QRN also are a problem.

A long time ago, I tested a small magnetic loop antenna along with a classic adjustable capacitor on top. It was excellent, but just usable for reception. This adjustable capacitor was not convenient for the high voltages used when transmitting. I decided to see if I could design and build a loop that would also work on transmit.

I started my project with a simple dipole using copper tubes and a gamma match. I bent the two wires until they were adjusted to the 20-meter band. However, the performance of this antenna was not very interesting.

I continued on and crossed the two wires to create a loop and a resulting top capacitor. The antenna was then on the 40-meter band. Two PVC electric conduit pipes are fitted together by plastic links, allowing the wires of the antenna to slide close together without shortcircuiting. An antenna analyser was necessary to tune the antenna on 7.180 MHz to a minimum SWR.

The result has been very surprising. I have a very good SWR of 1:1 at that frequency, due to the easiness of the gamma match adjustment. The bandwidth is very narrow—it is plus or minus 10 KHz on 7.180 MHz, with a SWR of 1:1, and plus or minus 50 KHz, with a SWR of 3:1. The Q factor is very high.

The antenna has good directivity. It has only two lobes and it is very easy to rotate the antenna to avoid a disturbing signal. There is also a very surprising reduction of the noise. The clearness on receive is very noticable. The narrow bandwidth of the antenna reduces the strength of the stations that are not on the frequency, as well as attenuating band noise.

When on the air, some stations report receivinging two S-units better than from a vertical antenna. I am not surprised because the antenna is highly directional with very narrow lobes.

My prototype antenna is standing on the ground at the moment, but my guess is it will run much better if I can raise it. I am working on a rope system so that I can adjust the length of the wires from the ground. I need to design a crank to tighten and loosen the adjusting ropes. Another problem, which I have not solved yet, is how to weatherproof the antenna against rain and the humidity.

I am also now testing another other magnetic loop antenna, fitted for the 20-meter band—this one with no capacitor. Up to now, I can’t see any great improvement in signal strength between the vertical antenna and the loop. The surface area of the 20-meter version is smaller than for the 40-meter antenna. This may be an explanation. But one advantage is still that the directional characteristics are very noticeable.

I still need to study what the optimum value of the capacitor should be. Too high and it is an ordinary dipole with a low Q. The lower adjustment is critical, as a small change in capacitance can modify the frequency with resulting very high Q.

This balance is an interesting subject. Please let me know your thoughts and I will continue testing; my email is f1cfa@ref-union.org. (And thanks to Pertti EA7GSU, for his help and valuable comments on this project.)

Jean-Pierre Aubanton is a member of the Rotary Club of Mazamet, France.
Turning CBers into Hams  
—submitted by Kees PA2X

I have been a licensed ham for over 32 years now. But I started as a 27MHz “Citizens Band” DX operator when I was 14 years old. Experience in my club shows that this is still a good way to “grow our hobby.”

For the last three years I was president of a radio club in Holland called “Whisky Oscar”, or “Wereld Omroepers” in Dutch. WO was founded in 1979 in Canada by Dutch emigrants who used 11 meters to contact their homeland. In those days there was no Skype, and phoning home was very expensive.

The club has been transformed rapidly over the last few years from an 11-meter club into a “hybrid radio club” where amateurs and 27MHz operators are now working side-by-side.

Why did we do this? Well, our beloved radio hobby is mainly practised by male operators who are way above 40 years old. Hardly any youngsters are interested in ham radio, due to the Internet and other high-speed communications. How do we get new enthusiastic radio operators on our bands?

The WO club actively promotes the radio hobby and has guided many 27MHz operators to official ham status. This was done by organising field days and by showing our CB members how to get their amateur license. In three years’ time, 200 new members applied to our club, and now 35 percent of our members have become hams. The club guided over 50 people to their amateur radio ticket. All was accomplished just by reaching out in this way, and no other local radio club has been so successful.

So when your local amateur radio club wants to gain new members, why not invite the CBers? Show them how they can enrich their hobby. Did you know that 27MHz DX operating practices are often as professional as those found on our amateur bands? Have you recently listened on these bands to see for yourself?

Last month was exceptional. The Whisky Oscar club officially got the club call sign PI4WO from the Dutch government. We see this as an acknowledgement by the government and the rest of the amateur world that our program is a successful way to guide young people into our hobby. So next time you meet an 27MHz operator, just ask: “How about your next step . . . becoming a ham?”

Kees is a former member of the Rotary Club of Bussum and is an active member of ROAR.

Aboard the HMS Belfast  
—submitted by Mike Davidson G4WRU

As the byline says, my name is Mike Davidson. However, I am also known as “Monday Mike” when I am aboard the HMS Belfast operating her permanent special-event station, GB2RN.

I have done this almost every Monday for about the last year and a half. The Belfast is moored just above Tower Bridge has been there for just over 40 years. In that time over seven million people have visited the ship. It has a proud history and I am thrilled to be a part of this permanent floating museum.

In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler was making warlike noises in Germany. So on 17 March 1938, the HMS Belfast, a light cruiser with a large number of rapid-firing 6-inch guns, was launched. Built at the Harland & Wolff shipyard, she was commissioned into the Royal Navy in August 1939.
**Aboard the HMS Belfast**—cont. from page 5

As soon as September of the same year, the Belfast apprehended and captured a German liner, the SS Cap Norte, which was attempting to return to Germany. Then in November Belfast struck a mine. Casualties were light but her back was broken, and she would spend about three years being repaired. She rejoined the Home Fleet in November 1942, and saw a lot of other action until June of 1944 when she was part of the Allied bombardment force during the D-Day landings in Normandy.

In 1945, after the Japanese surrender, HMS Belfast sailed for the Far East, where she organised the repatriation of survivors from Japanese prisoner-of-war camps. After a mission in Korea and then peacetime duties in the Far East, she was paid off into the reserve. On 21 October 1971 (Trafalgar Day), she was towed up the Thames and docked as a permanent floating museum.

The idea of helping on the ship appealed to me immediately. I served two years as a National Serviceman in the Royal Air Force, where I was trained as a wireless operator. This is how I learnt Morse Code. One day I was operating my amateur radio station when I heard GB2RN calling for a contact. I knew this was the call sign of HMS Belfast, and I answered.

The operator that day was the membership secretary of the London Group of the Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society, Tom Taylor. I asked him if they needed any volunteers to operate the station and he replied in the affirmative. I met him on board Belfast and joined the London Group.

I enjoy my Mondays in the bridge wireless office of HMS Belfast operating the station. We have three transceivers and some computers in the office. I also have a Morse key connected to an oscillator. We get youngsters who are visiting the ship to send their names in Morse Code and then we give them certificates. The kids are really delighted, as also are their parents.

Sometimes I am there on my own but usually I have a colleague with me. We get lots of foreign radio amateurs visiting. We make them very welcome and invite them into the office, where, if they wish, they can operate GB2RN.

We have two aerials strung up between the masts, and a fantastic earth plane, consisting of a metal ship on water which goes all the way to the sea. We therefore make lots of contacts and sometimes get a pile-up where lots of stations are trying to contact us. Most departments on the ship have mannequin models dressed in naval uniform, and so one of the most amusing things that happens is that people look into the bridge wireless office, and when we move or speak to them they have quite a fright!

Any radio amateur, ROAR member or not, is welcome in the bridge wireless office and will be able to operate with the GB2RN call sign. The ship is a fantastic floating naval museum and hopefully will still be moored up in the Thames for another 40 years.

*Mike Davidson is a past president of the Barkingside Rotary Club.*

ifroar.org
Emergency Communications

How One Ham Is Getting Ready To Go

—submitted by Chuck Graham KI6DCD

When I was in high school in the late 1950s, my Dad and I built a Heathkit receiver. I spent many hours in rural California listening to other parts of the world. I loved Radio Australia on Sunday mornings. It was like a voice from the future; it was already Monday in Australia.

Then for most of my working life as an engineer and photographer, though I was interested in ham radio, I never had time for it. But after I retired, a fellow Rotarian, Major Clay Gardner from the Salvation Army, asked me to get involved and join the Emergency Disaster Services Team. And before long someone suggested I get my ham license and become a SATERN (Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network) member. The idea took hold and I did just that. Before long I was teaching others how to get their licenses.

I have a modest station. For HF, I have a Yaesu FT897D with matching tuner connected to an inverted-vee G5RV at 30 feet. The rig is also connected to a DBJ roof-level antenna for VHF/UHF. I live 30 miles east of San Francisco so I’m almost out of the earthquake zone. But what if I need to go someplace to help out in an emergency? I have a Yaesu FT8900R in my SUV. It runs 10, 6, and 2 meters plus 70cm feeding a Diamond CA8900A. But I have nothing on board for the HF bands below 28 MHz.

At first it appeared that I would need to purchase more radios and a lot of parts to make it all come together. Then it occurred to me that I’d better be careful that I don’t build something I can’t even carry! I’m a kidney transplant survivor since March 2009, and I’m not very strong anymore. So I had to ask myself—How can I use what I have to make a portable, emergency radio station ready for deployment?

Why not use my Ford hybrid SUV? There’s plenty of room on the rear loading deck. I could use that as a desk and make a very well-equipped communications center. After all, there is plenty of power already there, due to the DC-generating capabilities of the hybrid engine. So now all I had to do was plan the station and then get everything mounted and working properly. I wanted to have both the 8900 and the 897 in the rear of the vehicle, both for redundancy and so I could listen to HF and VHF/UHF at the same time in an emergency.

First, I needed to get the 8900R moved to the back. That meant I had to buy another separation kit and run the new cable to a new rear-mounting bracket. Then I unclipped the head and mike from the driver’s location. I finally got everything working well in the back with the help of a Lido Window Mate (LM-400EXP) and a Lido Bean Bag (LM-25). I just had to move my speaker to complete the setup.

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My next challenge was moving the HF rig from the house to the truck. Of course, this radio does not have a removable head so I needed to run 12 volts to the rear. I decided rather than just run a wire to the radio from the battery, I would install a RIGrunner (4008H) so I could hook up several items. I planned to have my laptop, my 4 HTs, my antenna analyzer and my Home Patrol scanner there too. All have good rechargeable batteries, but on a long deployment that would mean recharging. The RIGrunner has three 12-volt car adapter plugs, perfect for this application.

The final step was installing antennas for the FT897 side. Since the rig covers 160 meters through 70cm it requires HF and VHF/UHF antennas to do the job. I resurrected a Buddipole antenna that I bought before my kidneys started failing and added it to a Larson mag-mount for VHF/UHF. I was on a roll.

So the emergency portable station, KI6DCD, goes something like this. The FT8900R head, normally mounted at the driver’s right, is moved to an added separation kit on a Lido mount on the rear deck. The microphone stays attached to the head and the MFJ speaker normally under the driver’s seat is moved to the rear deck. With the hatch lid now normally open for operation of the station, the Diamond CR8900A antenna is swung up 90 degrees so it is vertical. That completes the UHF/VHF portion of the station. Elapsed time to set up—less than 10 minutes.

Next the FT897D is moved from the base station location to the rear deck of the SUV. The built-in 120-volt power supply is unplugged and the 12-volt cable is attached and plugged into the RIGrunner. I carry a spare 120-volt power cord in my cable bag in case it turns out I am able to operate inside. I also carry the programming cables for each radio along with the laptop and its 120-volt cable that would run to the hybrid’s AC circuit.

The UHF/VHF Larsen mag-mount antenna is mounted and cabled to the FT897D jack. The Home Patrol 1 scanner whip is put on the roof. Add a canvas chair, logbook, notepads, and pencils and the station is almost ready.

Next the Buddipole is assembled for the frequency of interest. It is mounted on its mast and tripod and positioned in a clear space away from the truck. The Buddipole can be configured for almost any HF frequency 80m to 10m. Total set-up time is about 45 minutes.

I hope to hear you soon on the radio. If the earth starts shaking nearby, you’ll hear this rig from a hilltop in the Sierra Nevada foothills of California.

Oh, and by the way, I often wonder what ever happened to that old Heathkit receiver my Dad and I built years ago. Wish I still had it.

Chuck Graham is a second-generation Rotarian. His father was past president of a Rotary Club in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Chuck joined the Rotary Club of Antioch, California, in 1971, when he was an engineer for Pacific Bell. He went on to become president there in 1976-77. He has served for many years on both the district conference and the PR committees, as well as on the district membership committee. He also helped the then-district governor form a new Rotary club in Antioch, CA. He later moved to the Clayton Valley/Concord Sunrise Rotary Club, where he served as president and also held many other posts on the district level.

Chuck is now a retired professional photographer. In February 2004, he went to Zambia to photograph the International Vision Volunteers, a Rotary ophthalmologist team. He helped them with their recognition and fund-raising efforts.
One of my retirement goals is to get more enjoyment from ham radio by improving my code speed. However, besides randomly getting on the air, is there a better, more productive way to go about it? There are many options. But thanks to the highly effective mentoring program I found, I am now on my way to brass-pounder status. Getting there has been an interesting journey that has given me fresh skills, a sense of accomplishment, and also a new and valued friend.

When I took my Amateur Extra exam in 1994, I had to pass a Morse Code test at 20 words per minute. I scrawled down fragments of as much of the text as I could. And then I had to answer (with some educated guessing) a bunch of multiple choice questions. If I remember correctly, I got the minimum passing grade. Over the years I operated just enough CW to keep from forgetting it altogether and maybe copy 10 or 12 wpm in a crunch. So if you take the measure of a ham by CW ability, I would have come in pretty low on the scale.

One day about six months ago I was surfing QRZ.com and I spotted a news item announcing CW Academy. The article said that once you sign up, CW Academy will match you with your own private Morse Code tutor—someone you can work with on a regular basis to help improve your skills. This was just what I was looking for, since I was a little shy to just foist my corroded CW on the unsuspecting.

CW Academy is part of a somewhat exclusive international club known as CWops. According to their Website, CWops seeks “to bring together Amateur Radio operators who enjoy communicating by Morse Code (CW).” They do this through planned CW Academy events and activities, including their Elmering program. CWops has also set up some “watering holes,” which are listed on their Website, where budding CW aficionados can meet to practice together.

You don’t have to be a member of CWops to participate in CW Academy activities. But if you want to be a mentor and join the CWops club itself, you must be invited by a current member and then demonstrate to other members that your CW proficiency is at least 25 wpm.

This all seemed a bit daunting to me. But I figured I’d give CW Academy a try. What did I have to lose? It’s completely free.

So I submitted my online application and within a few days I got an email from Jerry Lewine, K6QU, my new CW Elmer. After setting up our first QSO for a day or two later, I decided to look Jerry up on QRZ. I found that he is a true ham-radio hero. Back in 1968 he was the only one in the world who heard a CW SOS call on 20 meters from a ham on a burning ship near Baja California. Jerry telephoned the authorities from his home near Pittsburgh and the Coast Guard responded. The ship was lost, but all 35 people on board were rescued. Wow!!
When we got started, I’m afraid Jerry had to call on his reserves of heroism to put up with my very rusty fist. On our second or third QSO he asked me if I had a keyer and paddle. If so, please put away my hand key. Only trouble was, my old J-38 key was in a drawer. I was already using my keyer!

Since then, Jerry and I have been meeting a few times a week for several months. Our QSOs are completely impromptu so, just like in the real world, I never know what’s coming next. Occasionally, Jerry will make suggestions about how I can improve my technique. But mostly he is there to give me the opportunity to practice and make mistakes—the best way to learn.

That’s what I like about the CW Academy program: much of the pressure is off. There’s no one on the other end of the QSO who may be judging you harshly. You are free to learn by doing.

I have found that getting really good at CW is definitely something that requires a lot of work and determination. Studies have shown that many people have natural mental barriers to copying past 13 wpm and then past 20 wpm. This was certainly true in my case. In addition to my skeds with Jerry, I have tried to practice receiving and sending for at least one half-hour a day, sometimes on the air and sometimes with computer aids. Some days are better than others. I reach plateaus and stay there for a while. Sometimes I even regress a little.

But I have made steady progress and have built up some stamina. During a recent QSO Jerry and I ragchewed at nearly 20 wpm for almost an hour. When we signed, I hadn’t even realized so much time had gone by. I credit Jerry and CW Academy for giving me the motivation and encouragement to deal with the setbacks and to finally come close to my goal. And as often happens in this great hobby, Jerry and I discovered we have a lot of common interests and we have also become good friends.

As I have improved, I have found CW to be hugely enjoyable and even a little addicting. I can now copy 20 wpm without pen and paper. They say such mental gymnastics tend to keep aging synapses in good firing order and that certainly can’t hurt either. What is more, now I finally get to put my personal stamp of authenticity on that Extra ticket I got almost 20 years ago.

Richard Spingarn is a past president of the Ithaca, New York Rotary Club and has been editor of the Communicator since 2011.
Competing in the CQ Worldwide DX Contest

—submitted by Pertti Kause EA7GSU

The CQ Worldwide DX contest has been my favorite since 1963 when the famous DXpeditioner OH2PM, also named Pertti, was living with me as a tenant. I had a station in my basement with homemade equipment and a cubical quad antenna, and we decided to participate in the CQ WW contest in the all-band class. On that first try we got 142,242 points—the best in Finland.

Not surprisingly, when OH2PM was not under my roof anymore, I wanted to participate on my own. In 1965, and a few years later, I got the certificate again. I have joined the CQ WW contest many times since—not every year but when circumstances have permitted. During the years I lived in Finland I managed to collect five more certificates of excellence in the 80-meter single-operator/single band CW class. Since I moved to Spain the number has grown to twelve.

So you will not be surprised that I continue contesting, especially since my present situation makes it fairly easy. I am now living in the countryside in a little Spanish village where I am off the electrical grid. The house is powered by solar energy, making for very low QRN, but limiting my transmit power. I really can only run a maximum 100 watts.

This year, all I had to do was some minor antenna work to get the station in good shape. The 80-meter dipole had to be freed from the tree branches where it had been tangled; a ground-plane antenna had to be constructed for southeast direction; and I had to make a Beverage antenna for better reception. This last step also required that I modify my preamplifier. All this kept me busy for quite a while due to the very changeable weather at the time.

For the first time I used a computer for logging the QSOs. When you work several hundred stations, it is almost impossible, particularly with my old memory, to recall the stations you worked before. The computer will tell you of duplicates, but only if it works as you expect. And mine didn’t.

It sometimes forgot to tell me that the station I was calling already existed in my log. So I had a lot of responses like “sri qso b4”. That wasted a lot of time. For an elderly participant like me the 80-meter single-band class gives an opportunity for some sleep during the day. Before the computer age, the daytime was used to check the log and to make an alphabetical list to avoid duplicates. You could continue calling and perhaps get something but that was not very likely.

Anyhow, the station was ready, computer on my left side, the speed of my Vibroplex (yes, I am not an el-bug man) adjusted for decent speed, and the fridge furnished with cutlets, pizzas and cool drinks. Last-minute improvements were switching off the Internet connection and removing the energy-saving light bulb. Both caused QRM!

The first QSO in the logbook was at 0000 UTC. You could feel the nervousness on the band a few minutes prior to that. Some stations were already occupying a frequency, exchanging reports with anybody and waiting for the start cannon to go off.

And here we go. The band was blasted with calls, reports, and zone numbers. I had decided to start scanning the band from 3580 kHz down, as is my habit. I am not a pile-up operator and prefer to pick the stations I hear. This way you often catch a weak DX station that has gone unnoticed by the crowd and is therefore easy to collect.

Propagation was very good; the US stations were easily heard with S5 - S8 signals. Asian stations were pretty strong but they were masked by the Eastern Europeans, probably with high power, but certainly with high speed. Some reports were copyable only after several repetitions. The efficient, army-based CW training of some ops sometimes made it difficult for me to copy even the call sign. Towards the morning hours the skip moved more and more to the west and, in addition to the multitude of North American stations, the Central Americans came through. The benefit of the Beverage receive antenna then became obvious. It attenuated the European stations.

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The Beverage is about 200 meters long and is laid broadside to Europe. This acts to attenuate signals from there. However, sometimes I was competing with stations from the United States. This contest is extremely popular so you need to have a good strategy to be successful. The natural response is to immediately call on frequency at the end of every QSO. But this is often not the best idea because it is difficult for the operator to copy one call out of the many calling on the same frequency.

It helps to tune your transmitter a couple of hundred Hertz off. This makes it easier for the DX to tune around and maybe find you. Also as soon as the band opens to a certain area, everybody wants to get the multiplier immediately. So the crowd is immense. But if you have the nerve to wait, you will later have nearly empty slot to call and get him.

The band opens again here in the late afternoon with poor conditions to east. You hear the stations but they cannot copy you. Then slowly the signals get stronger and the carousel is in full swing. The night is long and requires many cups of coffee, hot chocolate and tea, perhaps with a tiny bite. You do not take a full meal during the contest to avoid falling asleep. And, sometimes it is not a total waste of time to contest on 80 meters during the day, despite its “nighttime-band” reputation.

I remember, when I was still in Finland one bright sunny February. It was lunch time and I put out a CQ DX on 80 meters. And what came back? An Alaskan KL7 station with 589 report!! When higher frequencies open, the majority of stations go there and the band contains mostly the strong multi-multi 80-meter stations. When scanning the band, really don’t expect to find an unworked station. But if you do, it can be a real gem.

But sometimes you can be disappointed. On Sunday late in the afternoon I heard a relatively strong signal from Zone 32! North Africa? No, it was New Zealand! After he called a few times, I realized the treasure out there. But by then the frequency was getting full of the slow callers, the fast operators, and those who had never heard the station but just kept calling! I tried on zero beat, then 150 Hertz up and then down, but no luck. I had spent over 20 minutes trying to catch him! But so it is.

In the end, I had better results than ever before this year. I logged 465 QSOs, 81 countries, and 20 zones. Does this mean I will get another certificate? Time will tell. When I find out I’ll let you know. What about CQ WW 2013? I do not know if I will take it so seriously as I once did. But I’ve said that before. You can’t make a tiger shed its stripes!
ANZO Report — submitted by Peter Lowe VK3KCD

In July of 2012, ROAR ANZO had a stand at the Australian Rotary Conference held in Canberra. Our president Bill VK4ZD, with his wife Diane VK4KYL, were joined by Phil VK2MCB and Peter VK3KCD. Phil is a Canberra resident and he gave most generously of his time and resources to set up the display. This conference ran over two days and we received many inquiries and two possible new members.

The ANZO region AGM was held during the conference and was chaired by Peter VK3KCD, the regional VP. Those present in Canberra were joined by John ZL2JPM via Skype video link, which was most successful. John is leading a concerted publicity effort to promote ROAR in New Zealand. A regular 80-meter net has been established in ZL, and the VK/ZL weekly 40-meter net continues to be well attended.

Propagation on 20 meters has been mixed but certainly better than 12 months ago. This has resulted in more VK/ZL contacts with our European friends on the weekly Sunday net. We are looking to increase the ROAR presence at district conferences and we have already noted significant interest in amateur radio as an activity to bring to Rotary’s youth programs.

Rob ZL1RD was welcomed back to our nets after a short absence during which he changed his Rotary club.

Left to right: Phil VK2MCB, Peter VK3KCD, Diane VK4KYL, Bill VK4ZD.

Plans for Our Station at the 2013 RI Convention — submitted by Vitor Manuel Silva CT1BJZ

Here is the latest news about our proposed station at the 2013 Rotary International Convention in Lisbon. I recently met with Manuel CT1EW and Miguel CT1FBK. We are going to set up a remote station and we think the connection should be established via Internet as ADSL with 2Mbps, or if not sufficient, with a 10Mbps link through fiber optics.

Of course, this all depends on the administration of the space at the convention, and we still need to meet with the organizers to finalize the arrangements. We believe the cost of the connection will not be too expensive, but we also still need to verify this.

The radio to be used can be supplied by the Rede dos Emissores Portugueses (REP), the Portuguese ham radio association. We had our first meeting last autumn with Carlos CT1END, the president of REP. We will improve the antennas now at the club station, CT1REP, in order to have the best possible results. We are working on the special-event call sign. It could be CS6ROTARY or CR6R. It only needs to be approved.

It was also was suggested that we use the JT65 mode, since I am told it is much used. We will probably use 15 and 20 meters. We will develop these ideas further as we can. All suggestions are welcome!
About ROAR

Rotarians of Amateur Radio is one of the oldest fellowships of Rotary International. It was established in 1966 by Byron Sharpe W9BE, a Rotarian from Illinois, USA. In 1989 one of our ROAR members, Hugh Archer W8JA, served as president of Rotary International. ROAR members are perhaps the most active fellowship in communicating with each other regularly.

Purpose: ROAR provides a forum for the exchange of views among members who share an interest in amateur radio, either as licensed radio amateurs or as shortwave listeners. We wish to promote international understanding and fellowship.

Eligibility: To become a member of ROAR, you must be an active Rotarian, a Rotaractor or a former Rotarian, and you must be a licensed amateur operator or have a genuine interest in shortwave radio. Spouses of ROAR members may also join.

Dues: The fellowship collects annual dues that cover the cost of maintaining our member directory and producing our ROAR Communicator newsletter.

Currently our dues are $20 US for one year or $90 US for five years and can be paid by visiting the website:

http://ifroar.org

Treasurer’s Report

Beginning Balance July 1, 2012 $ 4,137.44

Income:

- Membership Contributions
- Dues Europe $ 90.00
- Dues USA 410.00
- Dues ROAR UK 640.00
- Dues ROAR Japan -
- Dues ANZO -
- Dues South America -
- Donations -
- Refund (Impact) 1,499.59

Total Income $ 6,777.03

Total Expenses $ 48.75

Balance as of December 31, 2012 $ 6,728.28

Treasurer’s Reminder

If you have not yet paid your dues, now is the time!

You can find out how to pay with Paypal by going to our website: www.ifroar.org.

—Bob Butler WB7RQG, Treasurer

ROAR Communicator is published by President Rotarian Bill Main VK4ZD (RC Gatton and Lockyer, District 9630, Australia) for and on behalf of the International Fellowship for Rotarians of Amateur Radio. Editor: Rotarian Richard Spingarn TI7/AA2UP (former member, RC Ithaca, NY, USA).