



Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the
 Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub
 P. O. Box 2112 Parkersburg, WV 26101

MINUTES OF JANUARY 1995 P.A.R.K MEETING

ARCHIE (W8GWR) WON THE 50-50 DRAWING, HIS WINNINGS WERE \$9.50.

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 P.M. INTRODUCTIONS WERE GIVEN WITH 25 MEMBERS AND GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE. THE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 1994 MEETING AND TREASURES REPORT WERE READ AND APPROVED. COMMITTEE REPORT -- NO REPORTS WERE GIVEN. WAYS AND MEANS REPORT -- ROY (N8YYS) REPORTS THAT A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY WAS MADE ON THE 2 METER RADIO THAT WAS RAFFLED OFF.

OLD BUSINESS -- NOTHING REPORTED.
 NEW BUSINESS

LICENSE CLASSES WILL BEGIN ON FEBRUARY 21, 1995 AT THE PARKERSBURG RED CROSS CENTER. THEY WILL START AT 7:00 P.M. THEY WILL CONCLUDE ON MAY 9, 1995. ARRL TESTING WILL BE GIVEN AT THE MAY 9, 1995 CLASS. A FOLLOW UP TEST WILL BE GIVEN ON MAY 13, 1995 TO CORRESPOND WITH THE NATIONAL ARRL TESTING. FEE FOR THE CLASS WILL BE \$10.00. THE MAY 13, 1995 TEST SESSION WILL BE AN OPEN SESSION.

ROY (N8YYS) MADE MENTION OF THE FOLLOWING IDEAS:

- 1- WOULD ANYONE BE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING A COMPUTER CLASS IF HE WERE TO HAVE ONE AT HIS HOME. INTEREST WAS SHOWN BY SOME KLUB MEMBERS.
- 2- WOULD ANY KLUB MEMBERS BE INTERESTED IN SETTING UP A SPECIAL EVENTS STATION THIS SUMMER AT THE BLENNERHASSETT ISLAND. BLAINE (W810E) NOTED THAT ABOUT 15 YEARS AGO THE KLUB SET UP A SPECIAL EVENTS STATION ON THE ISLAND. INTEREST WAS SHOWN BY SOME KLUB MEMBERS TO SET UP A SPECIAL EVENTS STATION.
- 3- WOULD ANYONE BE INTERESTED IN HAVING A FOX HUNT. SOME DISCUSSION FOLLOWED ON THE SUBJECT.

ROY (N8YYS) ASKED FOR FIELD DAY OPINIONS. -- NONE WERE GIVEN AT THIS TIME. CURT (K8UC) REMARKED THAT THE 147.39 REPEATER OR SIMPLEX COULD BE USED WHEN HAVING A LONG DISCUSSION ON COMPUTER RELATED SUBJECTS OR OTHER SUBJECTS THAT MIGHT TIE UP THE 146.97 REPEATER.

JANE (N8MOW) MENTIONED THE BANK WANTED HER TO GET A STAMP TO STAMP THE BACK OF P.A.R.K. CHECKS FOR DEPOSIT. JERRY (N8HEO) SAID HE WILL GET ONE MADE. JEP (K8BOT) MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE THE MEETING AT 7:30 P.M.

P.A.R.K. MINUTES

THE DECEMBER MEETING OF P.A.R.K. WAS HELD AT THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY BUILDING ON DECEMBER 17, 1994.

A DELICIOUS CHRISTMAS DINNER WAS ENJOYED BY EVERYONE. THERE WERE 64 IN ATTENDANCE. FOLLOWING DINNER, THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT, ROY MAULL.

THE SECOND READING WAS GIVEN ON THE AMENDMENT TO ALLOW ONLY ONE READING OF A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION BEFORE A PERSON IS VOTED INTO THE KLUB. A MOTION FOR THE AMENDMENT WAS MADE BY CONNIE HAMILTON. THE SECOND WAS BY TOM HORTON. THE MOTION PASSED.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS WERE READ AND VOTED ON FOR ROGER KINGERY (KB8UEQ), MARK GRUBB (KB8SRK), AND JASON LICHT (KB8LPW).

THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THE KLUB WAS CONSIDERING A SPECIAL EVENTS NET TO BE SET UP ON BLENNERHASSETT ISLAND.

CLASSES WILL START THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY. THEY WILL FINISH ON MAY 9TH. TESTING WILL FOLLOW.

THE DRAWING WAS HELD FOR THE 2 METER RADIO. IT WAS WON BY TIM BRITTON (W8CRW)

FOLLOWING THE MEETING, THE GROUP WAS PROVIDED ENTERTAINMENT. THE EVENING CONCLUDED WITH THE ARRIVAL OF SANTA.

Klub Officers for 1995

President -	Roy Maull N8YYS
1st. VP	Ray Bodie N8TWV
2nd. VP	John McGuffey N8NBL
3rd. VP	Earl Hulce KB8HRG
Sec.	Larry Deems N8TGI
Tres.	Jane McGuffey N8MOW
Sarg/arms	Bob Lyens KB8EFB
NL Ed.	Jerry Wharton KA8NJW
Production	Mary Britton KB8BOA

HR AMSAT ORBITAL ELEMENTS FOR AMATEUR SATELLITES IN NASA FORMAT
FROM WASQGD FORT WORTH, TX November 18, 1994
BID: \$ORBS-322.N

DECODE 2-LINE ELSETS WITH THE FOLLOWING KEY:

1 AAAAAU 00 0 0 BBBB.BBBBBBBB .CCCCCCC 00000-0 00000-0 0 DDDZ
2 AAAAA EEE.EEEE FFF.FFFF GGGGGGG HHH.HHHH III.IIII JJ.JJJJJJ KKKKKZ
KEY: A-CATALOGNUM B-EPOCHTIME C-DECAY D-ELSETNUM E-INCLINATION F-RAAN
G-ECCENTRICITY H-ARGPERIGEE I-MNANOM J-MNMOTION K-ORBITNUM Z-CHECKSUM

TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS BT

AO-10

1 14129U 83058B 94311.32676368 -.00000015 00000-0 10000-3 0 3265
2 14129 26.7622 299.3734 6026132 225.3511 66.0715 2.05879904 85732

UO-11

1 14781U 84021B 94319.48717573 .00000186 00000-0 39309-4 0 7535
2 14781 97.7829 327.1114 0012303 141.1765 219.0326 14.69270721572521

RS-10/11

1 18129U 87054A 94318.18981474 .00000051 00000-0 39091-4 0 9905
2 18129 82.9263 217.9628 0011636 336.1986 23.8621 13.72344408370481

AO-13

1 19216U 88051B 94311.77313192 -.00000578 00000-0 10000-4 0 9943
2 19216 57.6728 221.5174 7242728 354.2960 0.7033 2.09727084 49026

MIR

1 16609U 86017A 94320.89051919 .00004733 00000-0 68709-4 0 8455
2 16609 51.6453 141.9917 0001329 270.3843 89.7000 15.57909734499817

HUBBLE

1 20580U 90037B 94320.20347392 .00000633 00000-0 47821-4 0 5648
2 20580 28.4698 339.4257 0006019 235.6727 124.3288 14.90730559 52092

Satellite Information

I don't know much about satellites or how they work. I found the following article informative. If you have questions about satellites and what you need to work 'em, just ask on 97, we can look for answers together. Jerry. In answer to the request for explanation of the Keplerian elements, this is a piece which made the rounds on packet some years ago:

ORBITAL ELEMENTS

Definitions of the Basic Elements of Orbital Mechanics

EPOCH = Time, T: While not strictly an 'orbital element,' a time reference is needed in any element set to indicate an instant at which the remaining numbers are all valid. This number can be chosen arbitrarily by the individual generating the element set, but it is usually chosen somewhere near the middle of the radar or other observation times used to generate the elements.

MEAN MOTION, N: The number of complete orbits the satellite makes in one day. The reciprocal of N is the period (P), the amount of time required to complete one orbit. Also, once the Mean Motion is known, a quantity called the Semi Major Axis (SMA) can be computed. This is defined as one half the straight line distance between the apsides (i.e. the apogee and perigee). Occasionally, the Period or SMA will be given in place of the Mean Motion.

MEAN ANOMALY, M: An indication of where the satellite is along its orbit at the EPOCH time. Specifically, it is a measure of time since perigee - expressed as an angular quantity - with 360 degrees (one full revolution) being equal to one orbital period. Many computer programs, however, look for M (or "MA") measured from 0 to 255 rather than from 0 to 360.

For example, a Mean Anomaly of 90 degrees (or 64 for computers) indicates that the satellite is one-quarter period past perigee. Another way of looking at Mean Anomaly is as the time integral of Mean Motion. (Equivalently, Mean Motion is the time derivative of Mean Anomaly.) Since Mean Motion is a positive constant (excepting drag effects) Mean Anomaly increases linearly with time. It must be emphasized that since a satellite in an elliptical orbit does not move at a constant rate the 'angle' represented by the Mean Anomaly does not correspond to any measurable physical angle. However, knowing the Mean Anomaly and the Eccentricity (described below) you can compute the True Anomaly - V - which is the angle as seen from the center of the earth between the perigee point and the satellite's current position, measured in the direction of satellite motion. Likewise, knowing the True Anomaly and the Eccentricity, you can compute the Mean Anomaly.

ECCENTRICITY, E: The degree of 'lopsidedness' of the orbit. $E = 0$ would be a perfect circle, $0 < E < 1$ is an ellipse, $E = 1$ is a parabola and $E > 1$ is a hyperbola. Now, we have determined the size and shape of the orbit. Next, we need to specify how the egg-shaped orbital ellipse is rotated within its orbital plane with respect to an external reference.

ARGUMENT OF PERIGEE, W: The angle, as seen from the center of the earth and measured in the orbit plane in the direction of the motion of the satellite, between the equator and the perigee point. An argument of perigee between 0 and 180 degrees indicates that the apogee occurs in the Southern Hemisphere; a value between 180 and 360 degrees represents an apogee in the Northern Hemisphere.

Next, the orbital plane must be oriented with respect to an external reference frame. Two numbers are needed to do this: Inclination and R.A.A.N.

INCLINATION, I: The angle between the orbit plane and the earth's equator. An inclination of zero means that the satellite is always above the equator; an inclination of 90 degrees indicates that the satellite passes over both poles on each orbit.

RIGHT ASCENSION OF ASCENDING NODE (RAAN), or CAPITAL OMEGA: The angle, measured along the equator, between the first point of aries (a reference celestial longitude) and the point on the orbit plane where the satellite crosses the equator going northward. The first point of aries is defined as the point at which the sun crosses the equator into the Northern Hemisphere at the first instant of spring. Right ascension is necessary here because it is fixed in space; longitude measurements would depend on the position of the rotating earth.

DRAG, DECAY, or MEAN MOTION RATE, Dot: For low-altitude satellites drag can be an appreciable factor which can only be approximated at best. The Drag Factor - $N \cdot \text{Dot} / 2$ - indicates the rate of orbital decay by its effect on the Mean Motion, N . A drag-free orbit has a constant N ; atmospheric drag will remove energy from the satellite and increase its Mean Motion at the rate of $2 * N \cdot \text{Dot}$ revolutions per day each day. Of course, as the satellite drops into a lower orbit atmospheric drag will increase. Therefore, predictions based on just a single drag term are - at best - approximations. This is one reason orbital elements must be updated regularly - perturbations are another.

PERTURBATIONS: If one assumes perfect two-body motion - implying the absence of external perturbations and no atmospheric drag - all of the elements above except for Mean Anomaly would remain constant for all time. Of course, the real world isn't so ideal.

The most important factor, other than drag, for most satellites is the non-spherical shape of the Earth. This causes both short-term and long-term changes in the Argument of Perigee and RAAN. This factor is easily calculated, however, on the basis of the elements above. Effects of solar and lunar perturbations can usually be ignored for low-altitude satellites.

Ham Radio Classes

PARK's spring classes are set to start on February 21 at 7:00 p.m. The classes will be meeting at the Red Cross building at 8th. & Market St. in Parkersburg.

The classes are open to anyone interested in getting involved in Ham Radio and people wishing to upgrade their skills. The classes will last for 12 weeks and conclude with VE exam sessions. The final test will coincide with the ARRL Nationwide exam day on May 13 which will be open to the public at 9:00 a.m.

UPCOMING CONTESTS

- Feb. 18-19 ARRL CW DX Contest
- Feb. 18-19 YL-ISSB SSB QSO Party
- Feb. 19 Colorado QRP Club Party
- Feb. 24-26 YL-OM YLRL CW Contest
- Feb. 24-26 CQ WW 160 M SSB Contest
- Mar. 4-5 ARRL SSB DX Contest
- Mar. 11-12 QCWA SSB QSO Party
- Mar. 18-19 Bermuda Contest
- Mar. 18-19 Alaska QSO Party
- Mar. 18-19 BARTG RTTY Contest
- Mar. 18-19 Virginia QSO Party
- Mar. 24-25 CQ WW WPX SSB Contest
- Apr. 1-2 Holy Land DX Contest
- Apr. 1-2 Italian YLRL XVIII Int'l test



Curt presents Dave with a Ham of the Year Plaque while Roy looks on.

PARK/ARES NET
Tuesdays at 9:00 pm
146.970

HEATHKIT ROOTS By W. R. Plage W4DQT

How many of you old timers remember Amateur Radio before Heathkit? I do. My call, W4DQT, dates back to 1935, so I remember how it was before that wonderful Heathkit Catalog, full of kits for test equipment, transmitters, receivers, and even transceivers. I was also there during the post WWII years when Heathkit began to emerge as a major electronic kit producer. I even remember its roots long before it arrived on the Amateur Radio Scene.

Ed Heath was a pioneer in the kit business long before his name became synonymous with electronic kits. A pilot and aviation business man in the early 1900's, Heath operated the Heath Airplane Company. His operations included a flying school, mail-order aircraft parts and accessories, pilots supplies, and manufactured the Heath "Parasol" airplane.

The Heath Parasol was a small, single place, high wing monoplane, powered by a four cylinder, 27 horsepower motorcycle engine. He offered it in kit form for \$199, less engine, or for \$975 ready to fly. He also offered a package deal for those new to flying. The buyer bought the kit, built the airplane at the factory under the supervision of the Heath staff, and learned to fly while doing so. Hopefully, the customer completed his airplane and soloed at about the same time.

In my teenage years I became fascinated with airplanes, and have been ever since, so I was very much aware of Ed Heath and the Parasol. I dreamed of building my own Parasol. In the summer of 1929 I learned to fly at the age of 16

at Candler Field, A dirt field which had just become Atlanta's first municipal airport. That same field is now Hartsfield International Terminal with many acres of concrete. I met Ed Heath there during my student pilot days. Like most of the pilots trying to make a living in aviation in those days, he also did air show flying. In fact, one of his air show acts was to loop a home-made glider four times from 1200 feet.

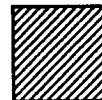
Heath stopped at Candler Field for gas one day when I was at the field, and I was introduced to him by my instructor, Doug Davis. This was a never-to-be-forgotten thrill, which I cherish to this day. Two years later, in 1931, he was killed test flying a new airplane design.

The Heath Airplane Company subsequently went through several changes in ownership, and in 1933 added a kit for an aircraft radio to its catalog. This was the start of what became a move into electronics and the Heathkit company we all know so well. (QCWA Journal) via Curt

Dues?

The time is fast approaching when the 1995 dues are due! Have you sent in your check? All Klub dues start in April.

Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub
P. O. Box 2112
Parkersburg, WV 26101



94
K8NJW Jerry Wharton
1722 20th St.
Parkersburg WV 26101

ONCE IN A LIFETIME
BY THOMAS R. HORTON, K5IID

Having been somewhat active in contests and DXing throughout my amateur career, one of my primary objectives was always to be able to operate from a sought after country. Beginning in early 1985, a series of events occurred which would lead to just the sort of once in a lifetime experience I had imagined.

At that time, I learned that my employer had a sizeable contract with the People's Republic of China which would involve sending personnel to China to commission equipment sold by our company to the Chinese. As China had been a curiosity to me for many years, I soon made it known that I would like to be among those chosen for the project. Following the usual interviews, phone calls and anxious days, I learned that I had been accepted. The project team was assembled and we began preparations to depart for the Middle Kingdom in March of 1986. My once in a lifetime opportunity was about to begin!

To begin the process of becoming a "BY", I wrote to the IARU requesting licensing information on China, although I already knew that only club stations were currently permitted. I also knew that visiting foreigners could, at times, receive permission to operate on a case by case basis. The information received from the IARU told me exactly what I already knew. However, it did contain the current addresses of all the stations of the China Radio Sports Association (CRSA) stations. Since we would be traveling throughout the country, I decided to write all the stations and request permission to operate each of the stations just in case I did get to that location.

After several attempts at wording the letter, (and at the same time pleading for permission) I had the draft ready. It had to be a perfect letter, because this would be a once in a lifetime situation.

I thought it would be very helpful if the letter was written in Chinese as well as English. With several Mandarin lessons behind me, I still was in no position to translate the letter myself. At this point, I enlisted my Chinese teacher to aid in the translation. Since she was unfamiliar with amateur radio and it's terms, it took some time, but in a while I had the letter in hand. The final draft had the Chinese version at the top of the page and the English underneath.

In late November the letters were mailed in envelopes addressed in both Chinese and English. In a period of fourteen days I had received four answers, all that I would ever receive. The answers from BY1PK, BY4AA, and BY5RA all stated that while it was possible to operate from their stations, it would also be very difficult, since an interpreter would be necessary. The answer from BY1QH was written in English and was very promising. It stated that in fact, yes, I would be able to operate the station. I was given a telephone number to call when I reached Beijing. However, as with most everything in China there was a catch. The station was located at Qing Hua University in Beijing and permission to come on campus must be obtained. Yuan Bo, the chief operator suggested that I write the Foreign Affairs office at the University to obtain the proper authorization. I enclosed the original letter the CRSA stations, a copy of Yuan Bo's letter and my business card printed both in Chinese and English. Confident that I had covered all the bases, I mailed the letter and waited. It proved to be a long wait. I'm still waiting for the answer.

Our planned departure date had slipped a bit, but I arrived in Beijing on the evening of April 17th and had a couple of days to recover from jet lag before boarding the train for Anyang in Henan Province and a 3 hour trip by motor vehicle that would take me to Zhong Yuan Oil Field near Puyang where our project would begin.

On the next day, after several unsuccessful attempts, I was able to contact Yuan by telephone. I was amazed and very relieved to learn he was fluent in English and I decided he must surely be a professor who had studied abroad.

During our conversation, it was decided that I would visit the station the next afternoon. Yuan would arrange for a taxi to pick me up at my hotel and would make sure the driver knew how to find the station once we got to the university.

I mentioned at that time that I had not received permission from the Foreign Affairs office to come on campus, but he didn't seem too concerned about it. Not to worry.

At the prearranged time on Saturday afternoon, I went to the front desk of the hotel, and asked if my taxi to Qing Hua University had arrived and was promptly ushered into a waiting taxi and off we went. Only later, and not much later at that, did I realize that not only was this not my taxi, the driver had no idea where the University was, much less how to find the station.

After stopping several times to ask directions, we finally found the university but still had no idea how to find Yuan Bo and BY1QH. We drove around the campus scanning the area for antennas for a while, before finally stopping at a very rare telephone. I reached Yuan and he gave the driver directions. At last, I was about to begin my once in a lifetime adventure.

My first meeting with Yuan Bo was surprising in a couple of ways. First, BY1QH was not located in one of the science buildings as I had imagined but rather in a dormitory. Secondly, Yuan Bo was not a professor as I had pictured from our conversation but a senior student of Electrical Engineering. I found him to be quite hospitable, pleasant, and very intelligent.

As is often the case, hams have an instant rapport, even though they may have never spoken even on the radio. Common interests make for interesting conversation. Although BY1QH had been active for quite some time, Yuan was keenly interested in even the simplest things concerning hamming. We chatted for quite some time. I enjoyed talking to him so much, I didn't even attempt to operate the station on this visit even though the opportunity was offered.

Later that evening I made the train trip to the oil field. After almost a week there, some needed equipment had not cleared customs, so my colleague and I decided to go to Beijing to try and speed things up. We couldn't! However being in Beijing did give me another opportunity to visit BY1QH.

I called Yuan to make arrangements to go to the university that evening. Although he could not be there, he made arrangements for another of the operators to be there in case I needed help.

Once at the station, we had problems with the 20 meter antenna, so the evening was spent on 40 cw. most of the QSO's were JA's with a few UA's. However contact was made with N6MA and VK3AMZ. As expected, it was a thrill to be on the back end of a pile-up for a change.

In June and again in September, visits were made to the station. By this time I enjoyed talking with Yuan so much that no attempt was made to operate either time.

October saw my third trip to China and again I visited Yuan at the station. We had discussed the possibility of my operating the CQ-WW phone contest previously and on this visit we firmed up the details. Now I was really excited!! Just imagine -- me operating the big one from China !!! Wow! Talk about once in a lifetime!!!

Before leaving Beijing, I phoned our agent and asked that they make reservations for a hotel room for the contest weekend. At that time, reservations in Beijing were at a premium and must always be made well in advance.

I only planned to operate during the day and evening, returning to the hotel to rest at night.

Once I was back at the oilfield, I immediately requested that the Foreign Affairs office obtain a train ticket for me for the Thursday night before the contest. I was assured that there would be no problem. Since the contest didn't start until 8:00 a.m. Saturday morning local time I would

have all day Friday to take care of some business and get ready for the foray.

On Wednesday, not having heard from the agent about my hotel reservations, a call was booked to Beijing. Naturally, nothing was definite (it never is in China). Maybe there would be a room, maybe not. It was still a once in a lifetime chance. The decision was made to go ahead.

Thursday morning an inquiry was made about the train booking as had been done on Tuesday and Wednesday. Both times before I had been told there would be no problem. But of course, that was what someone told Custer before riding into Little Big Horn.

Now on Thursday, there seemed to be a problem. The oilfield was only allotted four tickets per day and there were six foreigners to leave that day and there was no room for me on that train. However, if I could leave on the 8:00 P.M. train there would be no problem. Here we go again!

The 8:00 train would arrive in Beijing at 4:00 A.M. instead of the planned 6:00 A.M. Now that's only 2 hours earlier right? It must be realized that although Beijing is a very large city, there are no all night coffee shops, etc. In short, at 4:00 A.M. there is nothing to do but walk the streets. Although there is really nothing to fear in walking the streets of Beijing at that time of the night, it would be very cold and a very long walk anywhere.

I asked my co-workers to call our agent that night and try to book a hotel and taxi for that early arrival so at least there would be a place to go.

Thursday evening came and we (two nationals and I) departed for the train station at Anyang. Upon arrival, we found that indeed there was no space available on the 8:00 train but we could get on the 10:00 train after all. Well, there goes the guaranteed room reservation.

At last, after waiting at a small, dingy hotel for about two hours in Anyang, we went to the train station.

The train came and off to the platform we went. Of course the conductor said there were no seats left. Then she decided that she did have one space left for the foreigner, me. Then she decided that she had a whole compartment left after all. She didn't want to sell the seats because she didn't want to have to clean up another compartment when the trip was over.

Finally I was on the train. Should be there about 6:00 A.M. no problem except that I have a hotel room to pay for that didn't get used. Oh well, it's once in a lifetime.

At exactly 5:15 A.M. the conductor threw the compartment door open and shouted "Beijing comes". I started gathering my things in preparation for arrival at the "Northern Capital".

At 5:23 the train stopped. Not in Beijing, not anywhere! Usually Chinese trains are very punctual. If departure time is 12:17, you had best be seated at 12:16:55 because in five seconds the train will be rolling. But this time for some unexplained reason we remained stationary for over two hours. When we did begin moving again we crept into Beijing arriving at 9:22 A.M.

instead of 6:00 A.M. I immediately headed toward the taxi stand. At least at this time of the day there would be no problem finding a taxi.

When I arrived at our agent's office, I was not surprised to find that our representative was out. Of course, no one else had any idea whether or not I had hotel reservations. I said that I would return later and headed for the coffee shop and breakfast.

While waiting to be seated, I encountered a fellow employee who had arrived the previous day. He told me that he was leaving for Karamay in Northwest China at noon. He also told me he had another day left on his hotel reservation. I struck a deal with him not to check out and I would take over his room and pay his bill. At least I would have a room for the night.

I had planned to go out to the university in the afternoon to check out everything but my boss had other ideas. He wanted to have a meeting that afternoon and suggested we have dinner that night. Oh well, what could go wrong. After all, here I was in Beijing, China about to operate in THE CONTEST.

I went back to the agent's office to find that I indeed did not have reservations for the next three nights. I decided that I would just try to stay at the university in the radio shack and sack out in one of their overstuffed easy chairs.

I left the agent's office and went shopping for rations to eat in the shack during the weekend. After my shopping spree, I went to my newly commandeered room to take a nap. I was so geared up that I slept a total of 13 minutes.

I decided to try to read. I picked up my newest Ludlum novel and read the next five paragraphs eleven times. Failing that, I tried to watch TV. A fascinating English class was the best offering, so I sat back and tried to relax. After a few minutes I swear that one of the students shouted "CO CONTEST"!

I called Yuan Bo only to find out that he was at BY1PK, he had been recruited to operate this weekend since he was one of the few English speaking operators. When I reached him he assured me that there would be no problem staying at the university the whole weekend. In fact he offered to find me a bunk but knowing I would already be imposing, I declined. He said that Chang, one of the other operators, would look after me and assist in any way needed.

Yuan also told me that I would be the only foreigner allowed to operate the contest from China although many had requested permission. Now I was really thrilled!

I had to go back to the agent's office once more to pick up my train ticket for Monday morning. I had requested the 12:09 P.M. express train since that is only a six hour trip. My ticket turned out to be for 9:01 A.M. The contest wouldn't be over until 8:00 A.M. local time. I couldn't operate till the contest was over and still make the train. Oh well, I would just have to quit early.

I had planned to turn in early and get plenty of rest for the ensuing weekend, but after dinner with my boss, he came back to my room we discussed technical matters concerning our project for a few hours. Finally he left in the wee hours and I went to bed.

It was bed and not sleep. I was still so keyed up and anxious I couldn't sleep. I started worrying about not being able to sleep. Then I began worrying about not being able to wake up if I did drift off. I set two alarm clocks and finally did drift off to sleep.

In what seemed a very short time, I heard the first alarm go off and a few seconds later the other clock yelled at me. Well, here I was dead tired but the day of a lifetime had arrived.

Shortly, I was sitting in front of the TS-180 and a broken home brew amplifier at BY1QH. The broken amp would be no problem because everybody knows that an exotic prefix is worth at least 20 db.

Yuan left a station "menu" to aid me. I fired up on 20 meters and everything seemed ok. The four element monobander worked very well except the rotator wouldn't turn completely around. . . . well no real problem, what with my extra 20 db prefix gain. Besides, once in a lifetime you can do without a rotator.

There was plenty of time left to check out 15 meters so I did just that. The band sounded really dead. I checked the swr oops very high. I tried tuning the antenna with the old KW Matchbox but nothing seemed to help. Well 15 probably wouldn't be any good anyway, anyway this would save time changing bands. No problem . . . well maybe a small one.

I went back to 20 meters and heard an obvious multi-multi checking things out from the US . . . you know how the big guns are. I called him and of course with my 20 db prefix gain he came right back. After exchanging signal reports he asked for QSL info and I told him to QSL via K5IID. He said "Is that K5 I'm a Dummy" and I immediately knew that it had to be Bill, K2NJ, and old county hunter friend of mine that always used those phonetics for my call.

After signing with him, I worked another familiar call, W8MPW. Al said that I had a big signal (+20 db, right?). He tried to help me get a

pileup started but no takers. Hmmm.

Well, the time had almost come. Only five more minutes until the chance of a lifetime would become a reality.

I started looking for a fairly clear frequency to carve out a spot for myself and all of a sudden the band roared with "CQ Contest". Oh no, my clock was slow. How could I be so stupid. . . . now there were absolutely no clear spots. I knew I could be heard with my extra prefix gain but I needed to be able to hear too! Believe me, you have never heard a JA curtain until you have heard it from the other side of the pond!!!

At this point, I decided to use the search and pounce method. I could get my runs later. After the first hour or so, I tried some CQ's and got a fair response but not near what you would think from BY.

I tried 15 meters once again and found the problem. The antenna switch was labeled wrong and now I could hear some things. Now we could really get cooking. I turned the antenna stateside but now the band was dead again. I heard a few South Americans but had a really hard time getting them. The antenna wouldn't turn quite far enough, but it should have been close enough. I turned back toward JA and ran them for a while.

I switched back and forth between 20 and 15 most of the morning. I had fair success, but the 20 db prefix factor seemed to be missing, especially on 15. It almost seemed that the beam on 15 was backward.

Back on 20 I worked a KA2 in Japan and he said that I was breaking up then I noticed the SWR going crazy right after I said BY—. Oh great, now I had problems on 20 meters. Just what I really needed.

I went back to 15 and the conditions seemed really strange. I've seen crazy, skewed paths on 10 meters but never anything this wild on 15. Oh well, not to worry. . . . after all it's once in a lifetime. . . . enjoy.

About noon Yuan telephoned from BY1PK to see how things were going and to see if I needed anything. I asked him if the 15 meter beam pointed the same way as the 20 meter beam. He said "Oh no; I forgot to tell you, it's backwards." At least I wasn't going crazy!

Quickly, I returned to the rig and pointed the antenna 180 degrees from Europe and here they came. I called CQ and the pileup began. It was only a matter of time now!!!

I plugged along the rest of the afternoon on 15 occasional checking 20 and usually returning immediately to 15.

Every few minutes, Chang popped in to check on me. they were really taking good care of me!

The radio shack at BY1QH is located on the third floor on the northwest end of Dormitory 16. It has many windows that are very poorly insulated and poorly sealed, therefore the strong, cold northwest wind seemed to just whip through the room. It was quite cold and very uncomfortable in the shack but I could handle it. . . . especially once in a lifetime.

After 15 played out, I shifted back to 20 and since the wind had now died down the 20 meter beam seemed ok. It fixed itself.

I was getting very tired; winding down very fast, but I had to press on.

Eventually 20 died down and I tried 40 without, much success. Probably not enough power or antenna, and I'm not sure if the 20 db prefix factor works on frequencies this low.

It was pretty late but I checked 15 and heard Jim, VK9NS running JA's but I couldn't break the JA curtain.

I was very cold, not like Heard Island, but cold nonetheless. Chang had brought in a small electric heater and it helped some, but only some. He and I talked for a while but soon I could hardly hold my eyes open. I had only had about 3 hours sleep since Wednesday night. I decided to try and get some sleep and Chang brought me a very thin but welcome blanket.

I tried to get situated and rest a bit. About 3:00 A.M. I woke up absolutely freezing. I put on an extra pair of jeans, socks, and another shirt. After about another hour, so cold and tired and miserable that I felt like saying "So what if it's only once in a life time" but I didn't. I just sat in the chair at the rig and slept sitting upright for a while.

About 6:30 I woke up feeling quite rested. I turned the rig on and listened on 20 meters. The band was totally dead. I listened on 40 and that band was hopping. Suddenly it occurred to me that during one of my waking periods in the night that the wind had come up really strong and the 20 meter beam must really be a mess now. It was!

Oh well, a single band 15 meter entry would have to do. Up on 15 meters, I turned the antenna away from the U.S. and started working stateside. I worked most of what I heard then started on the JA's.

By late afternoon, I was doing pretty well and had a really good run of Europeans going. You know, the kind of European pileup that when you say "everybody standby", nobody does. I was really knocking off the multipliers when the door of the shack opened and in walked a German ham that I had met previously here. He normally had a schedule on Sunday evenings with friends in Germany. I nodded a greeting and kept working the hordes for a few minutes. In a bit, I took off the headphones and apologized to him for disrupting his normal routine, but he said he knew I was coming for the contest and just stopped by to visit.

After a few minutes, I went back to the radio but by now I had lost the frequency but, I managed a few more QSO's.

When 15 died, I tried 40 since my 20 meter antenna was shot. In Beijing there is so much RFI that at times it is virtually impossible to hear anything. 80 meters is bad all the time. Away from Beijing it is not nearly so bad.

What with having an early train ticket back to the oilfield at Puyang, the contest was over for me for all practical purposes. I was disappointed with the results but still I had the chance of a lifetime.

I slept much easier on Sunday night since it was much warmer. I awoke early and listened on 15 meters for a few minutes before leaving. One of the few signals I heard was W5WMU but I couldn't break the JA curtain again.

Chang came in and I thanked him for his hospitality and kindness during the weekend. I quickly penned a note to Yuan Bo thanking him and rushed downstairs to meet my pre-arranged taxi. By the time I got there, Chang had already put my bags in the trunk of the taxi. I wondered if he was being helpful or just glad to get rid of me.

Since it was early morning, the traffic was light and we arrived at the Lido Hotel rapidly. I would have breakfast, a short meeting with my boss and head out for the train. To avoid problems securing a taxi later, I asked the driver to avoid problems securing a taxi later, I asked the driver to wait. He agreed. Now he could sleep and make a bigger fare at the same time.

I rang the boss on the house phone and headed for the coffee shop. As I followed the hostess to the table, I noticed everyone looking at me. I must have looked rather haggard, but so what. I just had the weekend of a lifetime. . . . let them look.

Soon I was ready to head for the train station. I stood at the front of the hotel waiting for the taxi driver to pull up through the circular drive to pick me up. No one came. I started looking around for my taxi. I walked through the parking lot with out finding it. After inquiring at the transportation desk inside the hotel and receiving several shoulder shrugs, I walked back outside and waited. 20 minutes passed. Maybe I wouldn't be on the 9:00 train after all.

I was about to try to call Chang to find out what taxi company he had called but decided to make one more pass through the parking lot. As I returned from the far end of the lot, I passed a few empty taxis and one of them honked at me. There was my driver grinning at me from the fully reclined front seat.

I jumped in saying "Kwai-Kwai" (fast-fast). He already knew we were going to the train station. By now the traffic was thick with taxis, buses, trucks, hand carts, donkey carts, horse carts, pedestrians, and millions of bicycles. Arriving finally at the station, I paid the driver and literally

ran to the platform. As I sat down the train began to roll.

I had planned to crash during the trip since I hadn't laid down in over 50 hours. One of the people in the compartment was an Australian who, as I soon found out, worked for a subsidiary of my company. It was his first trip to China and had only arrived a few hours earlier. He had many questions. We talked the entire leg of my trip.

We arrived at the Anyang station on time. I said good-bye to the Australian and gave him the rest of my snacks left over from the contest. He had a two and a half day train ride to endure and I felt sorry for him.

At the meeting with my boss that morning, he confirmed he had notified the Ministry of Petroleum that I would be arriving and there would be transportation waiting for me at Anyang.

I stood at the exit area of the station for a few minutes waiting for my escort to arrive. Sometimes they are a few minutes late so no problem. After a while, I walked out to the front of the station in case he was waiting there. I waited longer, praying that someone would show up no one did.

In China, once you leave the tourist areas like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Xian, you really draw strange looks from the people . . . especially the peasants! Since I am rather large 6'6" I really got looks.

Soon I had drawn a pretty large crowd. For some of these people, I was the first foreigner they had ever seen. I went inside the station to ask someone what to do or where to go. I found no one that could speak English and no one could understand my Chinese. Back outside I went with my entourage. When you encounter a situation like this, you feel totally helpless and bewildered. If you were ever lost from a parent on a shopping trip, as a child, then maybe you have an idea of the feeling.

In a few minutes (which seemed like hours), a policeman came and motioned for me to follow him. Inside the police office at the train station he motioned for me to sit down.

I started rummaging through my briefcase knowing I normally carried a business card file filled with cards from the oilfield employees. The Chinese oilfield workers use business cards like QSL cards. I also vividly remembered leaving the file at the hotel at the oilfield. I looked through my wallet but found nothing to help there either.

In desperation, I looked again and stuck between the bills in my wallet was a receipt for a jar of instant coffee I had purchased from the dining room at the oilfield hotel. Printed on it in Chinese were the words "Second Guest House, Zhong Yuan Oil Field". Ok!!! I showed this to the policeman and he nodded his head and picked up the telephone.

Shortly a man commissioned by the foreign affairs office at the oil field arrived, looking quite agitated. He took me to the same hotel where I had waited on my trip to Beijing and deposited me in one of the barren rooms. He took one of my business cards and left the room.

Several hours later a car arrived from the oilfield to take me home. About midnight, I arrived back at the oil field, and immediately crashed.

Before I fell asleep, I thought of all my big plans for the past weekend and how disastrous it had been. At least I had accomplished a lifetime goal. I was able to operate in THE CONTEST from one of the rarest countries in the world!! Certainly, for me a once in a life time feat.

I also learned something very interesting. Murphy lives in China.

As I was drifting off to sleep, something that Yuan had asked popped into my mind. "Are you planning to come back next month for the CW contest?" Hmm I wonder? Maybe if

I did, and again the next year for the SSB contest—but that's another story!