Logbook of the World and Me
RCC Aug 2008 - Delvin/N7QMT

Over a year ago, I decided to give the ARRL Logbook of the World (LoTW) a try. I downloaded the certificate, received the postcard in the mail, and then tried to get it working on my computer. Two problems cropped up immediately. First, I forgot the password I created for the certificate. That is a showstopper. First suggestion, write down your certificate password; you will need it whenever you upload QSOs. The other problem I discovered was that version 4 of my logging program (I use Logic) did not generate the correct transfer file. So, I gave up for a while.

A new year came, and our government leaders decided to give me some money to spend. My wife spent most of the money on the house, but I was able to upgrade to version 8 of Logic that created the right transfer file formats. Within a day after the CD arrived from Georgia, I had my past logs copied into the new database, so I signed up for a LoTW certificate again. I wrote down the password this time.

The postcard from LoTW arrived the following Monday, so I uploaded my QSOs. Amazingly, nearly 1 in 6 matched QSOs already in LoTW. Some that I really expected to match did not, so I compared times reported on QSL cards received, and I discovered some of my logged times were not correct. I keep my computer log in UTC, but when I operate, I usually log local time. Apparently (at least according to my logs), Vancouver moves around from -6 hours to -9 hours from Greenwich depending on the moon phase, season, or some unexplained factor. Perhaps I just experienced operator error.

Based on some QSL cards and a few ops that mentioned my times were off, I adjusted times for several contests consistently, and then uploaded those QSOs again. I picked up more hits, which indicates I need to review times for other contest periods. QSO date, time, band, mode, and the other station's call sign must be right for a match.

To date, LoTW shows eight DXCC entities confirmed of the 15 I have worked. I have QSLs for some of those contacts, but LoTW filled some gaps. For WAS, I have three states outstanding. I have cards for all 47 so far, but LoTW confirmed 30, and I can easily see my progress for 5BWAS. I like the concept of LoTW. Even though my QSO count is currently under 1000, over time that number will grow, and

I look forward to tracking my progress towards WAS, DXCC, and other awards via LoTW. Even if your QSO count is low, if you have software that can generate ADIF exports, consider signing up for LoTW. I would guess that my sloppy time conversions caused some QSOs that should have matched to miss by an hour. Fortunately, I got the time right for my Ducie Island contact. I can now sign on to the LoTW web site and show people my progress towards awards.

Suggestions for success:

- ✓ Write down your certificate password.

- ✓ Write down the LoTW password that you create. This is different from the initial password on the postcard.

- ✓ Pay attention to the QSO time. LoTW has some built-in fuzziness on time (you can vary a minute or two), but when you are off by an hour, the QSOs do not match.

- ✓ Upload your log periodically and track your progress.

- ✓ In case I did not say it enough, pay attention to the date and correct time.

- ✓ Have fun on the radio, and log your contacts.