

Contest Soapbox

2002 ARRL November Sweepstakes (CW)

23 Soapbox entries available

VE7FO -- Nov 25, 2003 01:49 ET

Another emotional roller-coaster ride. Started preparing for this one a week early. Made sure all the gear was functioning, checked latest version of TR using simulator and got some much needed cw practice as well, plotted propagation charts to VY1JA, VE1OP, VO1MP, VE2AWR, VE4, 5 and 6 as well as various difficult US Sections. Read and took to heart Tree's contesting hints on the CQ Contest reflector. I think this is the first contest I have ever felt actually ready for.

I now have a 2nd monitor hooked up to the computer. As conditions looked like there might be a lot of activity from the sun I had the GOES satellite 5 minute X-Ray Flux monitor running on it as well as a Kp graph updating periodically.

Wanted to start listening around an hour or so ahead of the start but got to the rig only 15 minutes before start time. Listened around a bit then, just before the start heard a carib station working people like crazy so thought I'd call to sensitize him to my call for when things got going. What the.... rig doesn't key. Frantic fiddling with my breadboarded keying interface. Hmm... computer output not keying. Reboot computer. Now it works. First 20 minutes of contest lost.

2120 Start running on 10. Wow, this is great. That cw practice is paying off.

2212 53 Qs 27 mults. A 53 hour on cw with the long SS exchange is pretty good for me but switch to 15 as charts say no prop to VY1JA on 10. Somewhere along the way I realize that sending leading zeroes with a long dah and 9 with an N is messing people up so dispensed with both.

2337 92 Qs 46 mults. Hmm.. no J and rate not as good on 15 so switch back to 10. Conditions are great - look at all those mults.

0013 117 Qs 50 mults. Spent too much time S&P. When am I going to learn? In SS if I make 800 QS and a sweep (good luck on either of them) then 1 mult is 1600 pts while 1 Q is 160 pts. i.e. a mult is worth only 10 Qs (even if it is J), fewer if I make less than 800 Qs. Still, an average of 40 Qs/hr x the 20 hours I'll probably put in is 800 Qs. While things do slow down, they don't slow down as much for me as for the big stations as there are still lots of guys on

Sunday needing a VE7. So, maybe 600 Qs is do-able. Switched to 15. Lord knows why - made 17 Qs in the previous 20 min on 10.

0115 147 Qs 56 mults. Whoopee-ding 30 Qs in an hour. Good mult production though (code for too much S&P). Switch to 20. Now that I look at the log I realize that of those 30 Qs, 12 of them were in the last 15 minutes. Why did I switch?

0159 186 Qs 59 mults. Hey, that was a 51 hour. Pretty good for me in SS.

0347 232 Qs 61 mults. 85 Qs in 2.5 hrs. Too much S&P again. Starting to get depressed and feel like quitting. Berating myself for not running on 10 'til it died. To make myself feel worse I check my 2001 log to see how I was doing at this time. Well... 175 Qs and 64 mults so I'm 60 Qs ahead. Yah but wait 'til you look at 2002. Hmm... 133 Qs and 53 mults - I'm 100 Qs ahead. Say - I'm doing really well! This is fun! Let's go beat up on 40.

0424 244 Qs 62 mults. Not loud on 40 - all S&P. Switch to 80.

0538 262 Qs 64 mults. Not loud on 80 either. Switched back and forth between 40 and 80 until I went to bed (much later). Had a 3/4 hr break in here too.

0800 284 Qs 67 mults including Mt. 22 Qs in 2.5 hours. Should have gone to bed 2 hrs ago. 284 Qs in 10 hours of operation is 28/hr. At that rate, if I get in another 11 hours I'll just about make 600 Qs. Well, that would beat my previous 2 attempts of 471 and 524 Qs (not counting my last incarnation in the 50s and 60s where 184 Qs and 220 Qs were enough for me to win Section awards). So, set a target of 30/hr. That'll give me 614 Qs which gives enough headroom for dupes but probably not enough for busted calls, etc. I'll work on busted calls next year. For now, if I can report a net 600 Qs I'll be real happy.

1602 Back at it on 15.

1643 299 Qs 70 mults. Was glad to pick up NNy, Me and Vt. I find them somewhat difficult from here. Worked Don, AA5AU. I thought he'd be out duck hunting. Funny sig though. The dits seemed to be on a different frequency than the dahs. Sounded like about 170 Hz apart. Looks like 10 is happening. Go there.

1648 302 Qs 70 mults. It wasn't. Try 20.

1700 307 Qs 70 mults. Half way to my 600 goal with 10 hours to go and it's Sunday. Well, maybe I got a chance. After all, it's only 30 Qs/hr. Oh, oh. X-Ray Flux rising rapidly. It's been bouncing around between C2 to M1 with a couple of stronger blips but now it's rocketing up past M8. This doesn't look good.

1719 314 Qs 70 mults. Last 2 Qs were locals. Gosh it's quiet. The only cw I hear is from the ringing in my ears. Flux is 10X higher now at X8. D-Region Absorption Prediction site says estimated time of recovery something like 2-3 hours. Goodbye 600 Qs (sniffle). If I understand this stuff correctly, 10 should recover first so watch the flux graph (mercifully dropping) and run the CQ enerator on 10.

1733 Whaddya know! A Q on 10 with W0PI. Great call under the circumstances. On phone I would have called him "Whoopee". Hey, I'm running and making Qs. Wow, we're back. What a relief. I thought I was going to have to put Beaconsee up on the 2nd monitor on 10, 15 and 20 and read a book or something while I watched it and the flux. Maybe I can still hit 600.

1945 398 Qs 72 mults. Well, that was really good considering that we had a major, major X-Class flare. Flux is now down to about M1.5. Ran the whole time. Had a 52 hour which is good for me in SS. Finally, a VE3 showed up.

2113 440 Qs 72 mults. On track. At 30 Qs/hr to hit my 600 target I should have 441. Flux is down to C6. Thank goodness that's over. Switched briefly to 15 during this time and then back to 10. Some S&P but mostly running. No bites on my CQ for 4 minutes. SOUND THE ALARMS... CHANGE BANDS.... NOW! I have to learn to be more patient. I had 8 Qs in the period 2100 - 2109. That's 48/hr. It wasn't that far back in the story when I was crowing about a 52 hour. Anyway, I went to 15. Maybe I'll do better on the East coast mults.

2200 457 Qs 73 mults. Flux is down to C5. Falling behind here. I should have at least 464 Qs to hit the 600+. Did pick up NNj however. I have a problem with the MkV on 15 which I haven't got around to fixing which cuts the output back to about 65W. No, it's not a high SWR foldback problem. (Maybe I should spend less time on these stories and more on the rubber/road interface.) 6 Qs in the last 15 min. Switch to 20.

2300 485 Qs 73 mults. Flux is behaving itself. Now down to C4. Should be at 494 Qs. Maybe I'll find rate on 10 so go there.

2338 501 Qs 74 mults. Flux is about C3. Didn't find any better rate but did find my only Mar. That's worth about 7 Qs. Should be at 514 Qs. Slipping - try 15.

0020 515 Qs 74 mults. Flux is nice and steady at C3. Should be at 534 Qs. 40 minutes behind schedule. Switch to 20.

0100 539 Qs 75 mults. Flux is up a bit at C5. Should be at 554 so now 30 minutes behind. Did pick up NLi so that's worth another 7 Qs in total score. Been running 20 the whole time.

0105 543 Qs but flux is now at C8. Rate of rise is quite worrisome.

0110 548 Qs. Great rate but flux is now about M1.2. Rate of rise looks steeper than the X8 flare. Don't like this at all.

0115 550 Qs. Flux is M5. At this rate it'll hit X10 at 0120. Looks like I'm toast.

0120 552 Qs. "But wait, what do I see?" Flux is about X1.1

0130 557 Qs. Flux has levelled off at X3. "She's walkin' back to me."

0200 569 Qs. Flux is M6. "Pretty woman." Should be at 584. 30 min behind schedule. Maybe, like Roy Orbison, I'll get lucky.

0259 600 Qs 75 mults. No dupe headroom.

I tried to do more of the listening on the MkV A VFO while CQing on the B. Some of those reading this may have heard me CQing endlessly on the B VFO for something like 20 minutes while I tuned around on the A. It took me quite a while to realize that the reason I wasn't hearing any answers to my CQs was that I had the B Rx turned off. Oh well, there were at least 7 other VE7s on that I heard so maybe I didn't cause anyone to miss VE7 through my carelessness.

One major problem I had which caused me to request many fills is due to the combination of the length of the SS exchange and my somewhat advanced age. While listening to TR sending my exchange I seemed to often fall into a trance where I wasn't actually listening to what was being sent. This, in itself, isn't that bad a thing. Unfortunately, the trance extended to not listening to the exchange being sent back to me. This led to a lot of frantic keyboard punching and fill requests. I hate to think what I'll be like in ten years.

I was going to say, "73 and see you in the phone SS," but as phone SS was last weekend (another roller coaster ride), the best I can do is a weak, "Hope I saw you."

73, Jim VE7FO -- *VE7FO*

K5ZD -- Feb 15, 2003 22:03 ET

No Lab-NF section. Kept looking and hoping for VO1MP, but no luck.

This contest was a blast for the first 11 hours. After that, it was just a grind. Which seems strange since conditions and activity were the best I have heard in a long time. Must be getting old!

26th year in a row with over 1000 QSOs. May have to give up my hopes of ever making Top Ten High Power from New England. We just don't have the propagation. -- K5ZD

K3KU -- Dec 2, 2002 20:42 ET

Summary -- 80: 22 40: 364 20: 344 15: 5; Total: 735 QSOs, 78 Sections; Score = 114,660

Club: Potomac Valley Radio Club

That was fun!! The best result ever for the K3KU vintage express: Drake T-4X and R-4B, with a 35-foot high asymmetric dipole whose short end is almost vertical; paper logs and dupe sheet; no memory keyer. OK, it's only the second real effort, but I think I've gotten back to the level where station improvements will yield more than operator improvements.

The rig spends most of the year packed away, coming out for SS CW. I set it up two weeks before SS this year. During the first week, the antenna tuning seemed weird, so the Sunday before SS I lowered it from the tree and checked the feedline continuity. Both sides of the window-pane ladder line were open between the house and the dipole! The station played much better after I replaced that part of the feedline. (I wonder what condition it was in for SS last year!)

This form of two radios -- separate TX and RX -- is definitely not what they mean by SO2R. Not having transceive is a real hindrance, but my footswitch spotting mod in the T-4X made it tolerable (that's spotting as in zero beat, not as in packet, kids).

Speaking of SO2R, I finally realized what a benefit it is for little pistols like me that all you big guns have it. Your using the second radio to scrounge for QSOs makes my CQing more effective.

I got started Saturday after nightfall, at 2343Z. 40 sounded good, so I started there. I stayed there until 0834Z. I had 338 QSOs and 75(!) sections. 40 had slowed, so I gave 80 a try. 40 minutes, 13 QSOs. Quit for 4 hours (tried to do only a brief nap, but it didn't happen). Started on 20 at 0913Z, and spent most of Sunday there, with the 21Z hour on 40 and a brief try at 15 (21 minutes, 5 QSOs, no NWT or KL7). Mixed CQ and S&P throughout the contest (Duh! That's what you have to do in SS). My signal stinks on 15 and 80. Never heard a signal on 10 this year, so I have yet to find out how bad my signal is there (last year all I heard on 10 was K6LA calling CQ).

As the contest wore on I felt surprisingly alert. I never got into the "What am I doing, and what are all these numbers??" mode. I was conscious of what number I was sending, and of the significance of what I was hearing. I kept the R-4B set on the 1.2KHz bandpass. I found that the

filter between the ears worked better than the narrower setting on the R-4B, and it let me hear better what was going on around me.

Yeah, yeah, the Sweep is not all that important -- if you always get one anyhow. I'm still trying. Section #74 was WPA (QSO #339; K3CR answered my CQ on 80 just before my break; blasted me awake for a few more minutes). #75 was RI, 2 QSOs later (K1AM; nice QRP effort). #76 was ME (QSO #390, on 20). (I'm just remarking on the strangeness here. I suspect the left-coasters think we east-coasters start the contest with these easy sections hard-wired in the log.) #77 was AB (QSO #506, VE6BBP, who I think answered my CQ on 20; I couldn't break the pile-up on VE6JY Saturday evening, but I did get him later). Section #78 was one of the more satisfying moments of the contest. I heard VO1HE give a report on about 14.020, but he was S&Ping. I squeezed into a small hole at 14.025 (small signals don't need much room) and called CQ. YES!!! And thank you very much (my QSO #564). Never heard VY1JA this year (and I doubt that I could have beaten the pile-up), and I think I have yet to hear any KL7 in the four SS CW from this station.

Snagging the VO1 was my best move of the contest. The second best was when I moved the Drake power supply from the counter-top to under the table, so I could warm my feet on it at 5AM. Man, do I get cold when my metabolism slows down. I felt like I was working Field Day.

Always nice to see the old friends in SS, and to see the few newcomers. And for those of you who are complaining that you don't like SS CW, and every year you swear that you'll never do it again...

TNX FER THE QSO ES CU NEXT YR

73, Art -- K3KU

W7SW -- Nov 26, 2002 22:35 ET

Thanks gang for another GREAT time on CW. Enjoyed working all the different types of contesters from the VERY relaxed to the VERY serious - and lots of other types too - such as the guys who are running less than a watt so you have to listen to their call fade in and out for almost a minute before you can pull 'em out of the noise. The guys who send slow CW certainly get my attention since they are the ones who hopefully will be sending faster CW next year and may still be around after the guys with the low check numbers "check-out". It is wonderful that there are so many of us still playing CW together! CU sn, Scotty -- W7SW

WJ5K -- Nov 25, 2002 17:52 ET

Hi gang, I had a great time operating the SS CW Contest. I really hadn't planned on being serious about it until I got started, then the ole' bug bit and I was hooked to try to get a SWEEP.



Photo: Rob - WJ5K at his trusty Schurr Key. Older photo, I am now running a Kenwood TS-870s rig and a Tennadyne T6 Log Periodic.

I missed a sweep by three sections, NL, NWT and my neighboring state of Arkansas. :-(

That didn't keep me from having fun. The Sweeps are my favorite contest of the year. I am not a serious tester, but love to try for the SWEEP.

I will see you next year and ready to give out the illusive MS section. 73 ! -- WJ5K

WI7N -- Nov 17, 2002 22:06 ET

I decided before the contest that I was going to move into the 21st century (20th Century?) and use my computer to send contest information instead of doing it by hand. I'd cleaned the carbon off the coil in my antenna tuner earlier in the week, so it tuned less erratically and worked better. On Friday evening I started to set things up and remembered that my TS-940 doesn't have a direct computer interface. I'd need to go through the TNC to get to it. It took me a while to remember where I'd stored the TNC, but I finally found it in the garage and got everything connected by late Friday night.

I was getting ready to power everything down when the computer started to make funny noises. The displayed message said something to the effect that "Your Disk Controller or your Hard Drive are toast!" DARN! I stole the computer from my son's room and replaced the one that had gone bad. Now my monitor wouldn't work! I got the monitor from my son's room also and the hardware finally worked properly.

Then I couldn't find the floppy disk with the software needed to communicate with the TNC. I spent 2 hours looking through boxes of diskettes and finally found it. I installed it and gave it a try. It demanded Activation Key information that had to come from the manufacturer. I spent another hour looking for the sheet of paper where I'd recorded the activation key and finally found it. It still wouldn't work, so I sent an urgent email message to the software manufacturer. It was now well past midnight on Friday night so I went to bed.

I got up early Saturday morning to find an email response from the software manufacturer saying that the software Activation Key that was previously provided "ought to work". Well it

doesn't, darn it! I searched through hundreds of floppys and found an old (circa 1990) DOS program that should allow me to communicate with the TNC and installed it on the computer. The only data I could get back from the TNC was garbage characters. It was now almost time for SS to start so I gave up and went back to my old stand-by memory keyer. I moved the computer and keyer to a rickety old card table that I placed next to my station. I wanted to avoid the shoulder pain I'd experienced in previous contests when stretching back and forth between the keyboard and the keyer.

I had everything ready at the SS opening bell and operated "Search and Pounce" for a couple of hours. Then I called CQ SS for a while. I operated on 10 Meters first, then 15, then briefly on 20. When those bands closed down I moved to 40 and then to 80. By midnight I'd worked all but 6 sections. I was pretty demoralized because I still hadn't worked the San Francisco (SF) section. Usually SF is common and very easy to work from Oregon.

My teenage daughter came back from a party shortly after midnight. She'd had a big fight with her boyfriend and was fairly distraught. I spent the next hour listening to her tales of woe. Essentially, her boyfriend had been flirting with other girls at the party. I patiently explained that teenage boys 'sometimes' did that... I received a poor response to this explanation. I finally explained that all teenage boys are worthless pond scum and not worthy of her attention. That seemed to calm her down some and I went to bed.

I got up about 9 AM Sunday morning and got back into the contest at about 10 AM after eating breakfast and doing some morning chores. I worked a few more of the sections I needed (NLI, MAR, QC) but still needed NL, NWT and SF. My computer monitor kept flickering on and off and displaying raster lines instead of data. I had to 'whack it hard' several times whenever that happened. My old MFJ memory keyer is more than 10 years old and is getting pretty worn out. I sometimes had to push the button 4 or 5 times really hard to make it send CQ SS. I accidentally knocked the keyer off the ricketly card table a few times in the middle of an exchange and sent gibberish while trying to get all the pieces back together again and cables reconnected.

By 2 PM on Sunday I was ready to give up completely so I watched football games on TV for a while. Finally I turned my radio back on, heard VO1MP, and quickly worked him. I was down to only 2 sections needed! After a while I decided that there was 'no possible way' that I was going to get NWT, so decided to just have fun and called CQ SS for a while. About an hour later VY1JA answered my CQ!!! I was down to 1 section needed! How can I possibly still need San Francisco??? About 30 minutes later I finally worked SF for a Clean Sweep! I was tired so I stopped operating about an hour and a half before the end of the contest. My final score was 510 QSO's and all 80 sections. I hate to admit it, but it was a pretty typical SS experience for me...

Gene -- WI7N

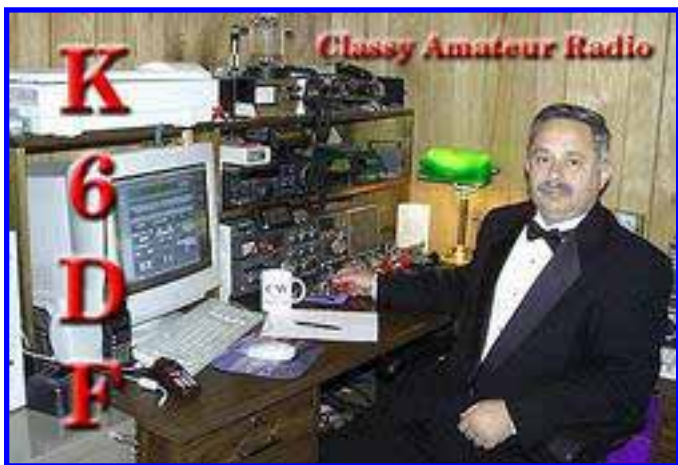
K1SMF -- Nov 12, 2002 14:35 ET



No doubt as to which mode I prefer.

Had a great time as the band condx were FB!! Just couldn't make the clean sweep. I can just about hit NL with a rock from my QTH but never heard one on the bands. 73, Will
-- *K1SMF*

K6DF -- Nov 12, 2002 09:56 ET



K6DF Ready for CW Sweepstakes!

The only time I had to work the Sweepstakes was Sunday, so I put on my best contest attire and went to work! Didn't make a lot of QSO's, but had a wonderful time.

As usual, the CW Sweepstakes was fun to work and I think there were more stations on this year. It was a good workout for my new Kenwood TS-2000.

was getting the key out, use the leaf blower to move all the scratch paper out of the way. While bringing me coffee, my XYL Pam, slipped on the oil I spilled on the floor while oiling up the key, . . . her ankle is doing much better now, . . . anyone know how to get a coffee stain off a wall?

The only problem was . . . cleaning up the shack after the contest is over . . . pick up all the old burned out 807's, fix the shelf that broke while I

Great fun, . . . keep putting these on . . . I'm looking forward to next year already . . . Pam's not!

My thanks to all the FB operators for the QSO's

73, Dennis K6DF Fremont, CA -- *K6DF*

WA3SES -- Nov 8, 2002 13:21 ET



My grandson Todd, February 2002. Just shy of two years. Loves to play with the keyer.

One of my two "most favorite" contests...received my first piece of contest wallpaper from this event back in 1991 or so...Took first place WPA low power with about 44k points, which would not get you 5th place in WPA these days.

First Murphy strike was at 2117z Saturday...spun the tribander to work WP2Z and could not get it back to the west...seems the maple tree had grown into the turning radius. I had contracted to have the tree trimmed about 3 weeks ago, but the guy said he would not be able to get to it until mid-November. Had to scoot up the tower, and, while the xyl released

the brake and turned it, I pushed on the boom to force it through the branches. Got away with that with no damage, at least no damage to the beam...but my 56 year old legs sure paid the price.

A few minutes later, in the middle of QSO with N6RO, the rig "reset" to its default settings. Think it got a blast of feedback from somewhere.

Finally, the power supply started acting up and the rig shut down completely. After a few "jiggles" and "bangs", it 'held'. Gotta get that looked at.

Luckily, I did not turn the computer off during the contest, even during the extended off periods. At the end of the contest, I made a copy of the .qdf and other files. Thank goodness, because the next day, and ever since then, I am unable to get the computer to boot.

Did not have the stamina to go at it like I intended at the start of the contest...just ran out of steam Sunday. Had *visions* of 1000 Q's, but settled for 719.

Missed NL, NWT and AK...never heard any of them.

73, and thanks to all for the Q's.

Ed -- WA3SES

KB0VVT -- Nov 6, 2002 20:45 ET



Rebecca, KB0VVT, running a frequency at 28 wpm during the ARRL 2002 CW Sweepstakes. How many 14 year old YLs can do that during SS? Dad, KG0US, listens to activity on another band.

Hi, my name is Rebecca Rich, KB0VVT, and I am 14 years old. I earned my license in 1996, and have participated in the last couple of SS contests. I particularly enjoy the CW contests. Last year my dad, KG0US, and I made about 700 contacts in the SS CW contest. This year we went into the contest with my dad wanting to make at least 1000 contacts. I wanted to set a goal of 1500 contacts! My dad, KG0US, and I were able to make 1,036 QSO's, along with all 80 multipliers (OUR SECOND CW SWEEP IN TWO YEARS!:)!). We got a sweep both years running low power in the MULTI category. Please see our reflector post submitted to http://www.contesting.com/_3830.

My mom, KG0UT, my dad, and I will all be operating in this years SS Phone contests, so look for my mom's call sign KG0UT!

We QSL 100% but if you want a QSL card quickly please send a SASE.

‘See you in the next contest and thanks for all the QSOs!

Rebecca -- *KB0VVT*

K5UJ -- Nov 6, 2002 09:48 ET

Here's a new addition to Murphy's Law: If anything dies on you it will be the thing you have only one of. I have two transceivers; one amp. Guess which one died the day before the contest? Then on contest day the cw rig wouldn't key up. Got that fixed telling myself these snafus are part of the hobby--enjoy them (it's true). On the bright side, 100 w. is perfectly fine for a domestic cw contest--even with an average antenna you can hold a frequency and run stations...do everything the big guns do. I did not plan to operate in this contest but got drawn into it for a few hours anyway. I'll be back next year. -- *K5UJ*

K3NK -- Nov 5, 2002 21:42 ET

The last time I competed in the Sweepstakes contest was 24 years ago.

I'm not sure what persuaded me to check out the contest this year, but was pleasantly surprised by the wall-to-wall activity on all bands. Initially the plan was to make a few S&P QSOs, but it didn't take long to get caught up in the competition/fun and I stuck around for a several hours. I found it interesting, but not surprising, how most of the "checks" were pre-1980. It would be interesting to see a statistical analysis/graph of the check dates.

I had a good time and will be back next year. My only disappointment is missing a clean sweep by 1.....Vermont - where were you? :)

73, Jim

K3NK (ex-WB2FFY/VK1FF) -- K3NK

W5KDJ -- Nov 5, 2002 21:52 ET

327 QSO's 73 sections in 13 hrs running 1 WATT. Had a great time but can't work these long one's anymore. Hope to see more QRPp stations in future contest. -- W5KDJ

W1WEF -- Nov 5, 2002 18:02 ET

Sweepstakes CW 2002 W1WEF SOHP Memories

When I looked at last year's notes, it said: DON'T DO THIS AGAIN!

When I looked at my notes from two years ago, it said: "NEVER AGAIN!"

I guess I'm a glutton for punishment. I love the first night of Sweepstakes. I love CW. I really wasn't going to do it this year until I had lunch with my good friend K1RM on Wednesday, and learned that Vinnie was planning to do a serious effort. Hmmm...he always beat me when he used to do SS; I wonder if I can beat him this year? I changed my mind and started to get excited thinking about the challenge.

Turned my fixed lower TH6 to the Southwest from Europe. Decided once again to set up a second radio, even though I don't have filters or stubs or a second amplifier. I do have a couple wire antennas I can switch on that radio, and after all, I just got a new 930S and haven't even used it yet! Got my little two radio switchbox out and in short order had a second radio I could use with the right combination of bands.

Set up the Hotshot coffee maker, and I was all set. Tried to sleep before the contest started but it

was futile. I had been getting pretty good sleep lately anyhow, and I could take off time and sleep a bit during the contest. Set the computer clock with SETTIME. Set up the F keys: F1 CQ; F2 # B W1WEF 52 CT; F3 TU W1WEF QRZ? ; F4 W1WEF; F6 and F7 short Cq's. Also set up the memory keyer with CQ, B W1WEF 52 CT, 52, and W1WEF. Tried to print last year's .BRK sheet, but the printer decided not to work. I'm as ready as I'm going to be, so I start checking the bands and saying hello to the gang before the start.

10 sounds real good so I start there. 28006 for the whole hour and I have 86 Qs at the end of the hour. At 2300 I have 168 Qs and Im still on ten but had started sweeping up the band. At 00Z I have 247 Qs...averaging over 80 an hour so I'm already having fun! The last hour included some 15 and 20. At 0013Z I go to 40, but it's not that hot yet and I go back to ten. At 0100 I have 347 Qs, so my average rate has dropped below 80/hour.

I remember Dan, K1TO, telling me that his strategy at the start of SS was to start at the bottom of one band, S&P the band moving up and knowing that every station is a new one, then go to the next band, do the same thing, and the next. I thought about doing that but I like running and was feeling loud.

At 0300, I have 451 Q's. When I worked Vinnie, he was 5 ahead of me, but comparing notes after the contest, we're about even now. At 0400 I have 497 in the log and made a 20M Q on the 930S during the run on 40! I hate using the second radio. I'd rather just listen to my own CW. By 0700 I have two more Qs on the second radio. Whoopee! At 0719 it's gotten really slow and I decide to take OFF time. During 4 hours and 15 mins OFF, I couldn't fall asleep. I'd been drinking coffee and Mountain Dew like it was going out of style, and I had so much caffeine in me there was no way I could fall asleep!

After a shower and some cereal, I'm on 80 at 1134Z and the first hour of the "second half" produces 42 Qs. This is the time I hope to get the close in contacts that the guys out West clean up on. I have a low dipole on 40 at about 45 feet, with a counterpoise ten feet beneath it. This was a Tim Duffy (K3LR) idea years ago, to make a cloud warmer (now called NVIS...near vertical incidence skywave...or something like that). As the West coast wakes up, they call me with this antenna anyway! On 80 I used my 80 dipole mostly, but if a weak station called in I would switch to the 4 square and usually copy better.

The bands have been good , no bad noise, good signals. In fact, QRP stations are generally so loud, I cant guess who the QRPers are like I usually do. I've been using all three TH6's in different directions most of the time on the high bands.

Onward and upward. The rest of Sunday is a real drag. I guess this is when the second radio is supposed to help, but all day Sunday I made 9 more Qs on the 930S! Like I said, I just don't like doing that two radio thing. Spacing out the rest of my off times, I set a goal for myself with about 6 hours to go of 185K. This seemed like a stretch goal, but it would be nice to reach it.

In early afternoon, I still needed VO and VY1. I decided I wasn't going to spend time looking for them as I usually do. I would systematically comb the bands, checking every station heard to see if I needed it, and CQ'ing along the way when I'd find a hole. High in the band I seemed to get more answers than down lower. One thing I did differently this time was to try to call more slow CQ's. I never set my speed over 32WPM, and even had it as low as 28! With my manual keyer I went slower than that, and if a real slow guy called I went back at his speed.

At 1008Z, VO1TA called with a big signal on 21081 for my #1008. Within an hour, I tuned across VY1JA on 28020, and worked Jay for the sweep with a slightly watery signal. Thanks Jay for being there with your flu, your rig problem and your bulldozer work! It's still a thrill to complete the sweep in Sweepstakes.

0253Z, 7 minutes to go and I'm combing 80, with my score just under 185,000. Four Qs in those last few minutes, and I made my goal! I doubt it will remain over 185k when the log checking is done, but after seeing how much I lost last year, and why, I was more careful than ever this time around. Last year I lost 19 Qs because I operated too long! This time I returned to tracking OFF time on paper, instead of using the computer time "OFF". I mentioned what happened to me last year to Tree, N6TR, before the contest, and he said he uses paper to keep track also!

Will I do SS again? We'll see. Maybe it would be more fun from a rare multiplier...or from Louisiana!

Bottom Line: 80/196 40/341 20/371 15/84 10/150 1142x 80 185,280

JACK W1WEF -- *W1WEF*

KC4WQ -- Nov 5, 2002 17:23 ET



Could not believe how rusty my ear is... can't say what was more exciting. My 10 year olds birthday party Sunday afternoon or busting the VY1 pile-up QRP -- *KC4WQ*

KC4WQ harmonic... tuckered out after a full day of SS and Birthday cake

K0WA -- Nov 5, 2002 12:42 ET



W0NO's station in the farm/ranch office. K0WA at rate station, W0NO and K0BJ conferring, AB0S at S&P station.



The main tower with stacked yagis and 40. Photo taken from near the 160 tower, used as a halfwave on 80 for this contest.

K0WA and AB0S have been doing SS multis, both modes, with various sidekicks for a couple decades. Last year the team moved from W0CEM's well-appointed Junction City KS station with low antennas, to the QTH of new upstart W0NO, who has boldly established quite a DXer and contester's paradise outside Beloit, in north-central KS. Alan's station consists of an IC-756 PRO II, its ugly-sister original PRO for the mult station, Alpha and Acom amps. Outside are stacked independent-pointing yagis, 40 M yagi, low tribander, 1/4 wave 160 vertical and windom. The past 4 years K0BJ has been joining the group for cw weekend.

This collaboration of Lee, Tim and various others has won multi class in the past, and typically finishes in or near the Top 10, often capturing Midwest Division in the process.

This contest was our first time working anything other than a token mult/S&P operation. We have some improvements to make but it went fairly well. The mult station stumbled across VY1JA calling unanswered CQs on 15 early in the contest, and hastily called him on 25 watts and the windom. Got him first call, but it took poor J quite a bit to dig out our exchange. As with many contesters, we were nail-bitin' for a NL contact and were happy to see the webcluster spot Sunday afternoon. Got him on the 3rd call for our sweep. Thanks to all those lukewarm contesters in odd places who put up with hordes

of callers pestering them! Ended up with around 1240 QSOs.

Our team had the proud (?) distinction last year of being the only Top 10 multi to lose a relative

position due to busted reports. We hope that along with more Qs from the mult station, we managed to produce a cleaner log this time. Anyway, lots of fun for 3 long-time ham friends and their accommodating and gung-ho host. -- *KOBJ*

N2CU -- Nov 5, 2002 12:45 ET

This was my first attempt at operating SS QRP. After years of doing it HP, I needed a break. Nice, low pressure operating. QRP is really fun. I think everyone should try it. There were lots of great QRP signals out there and I even managed to get a few compliments myself.

Many thanks to all the great ops who copied my exchange on the first try; very few repeats. Thanks to J. for listening for QRP at half past the hour. Got him on the first call!

Now for next year, I'll alter my game plan a little and try to get that elusive NL section.
-- *N2CU*

N2EY -- Nov 4, 2002 08:50 ET

A big TU to all who patiently struggled to copy my QRP/inverted V signal from EPA. K2 #2304 has a wonderful receiver, but it doesn't make 5 watts any louder.

My second try at QRP, and did a little better than last year. It's become more a test of operator stamina than equipment performance - a far cry from my DX-20/VF-1/AR-2 first CW SS! 34 years and no sweep yet - will #35 be the year?

364 days and counting.....

73 de Jim, N2EY -- *N2EY*

N8CPA -- Nov 5, 2002 08:40 ET

Rigs: IC-735, TS-50 (Listen only)

Antennas: Home brew inverted Vee for IC-735; R-7 vertical for TS-50.

Keying: AEA MorseMachine; Classic Keyer mahogany and brass iambic paddle.

Logging: Old CTX laptop running N3FJP software.

Decoder: JRC 600 Ohm headphones audiologically coupled to gray matter.

Other equipment: Timewave DSP599zx during crowded band CDX.

Goal: Clean Sweep

Outcome: LOTSA FUN!

I am utterly hooked on the first weekend of November! My 8th CWSS, my ears were still joyously ringing when it was over. Twenty-three fewer contacts than last year, one Section closer to Clean Sweep than last year. One fantastic time! I spent most of the last 2 hours hunting for SF, AK and NWT. I found SF, but AK and NWT escaped unheard, unscathed. Might I suggest a new commemorative trinket? A broken broom pin for those who miss the sweep by 5 or fewer Sections. -- *N8CPA*

K7FU -- Nov 4, 2002 22:40 ET



K7FU OPERATING POSITION

It was another great event and even the solar conditions held out for the most part. I went into this contest with 2 goals in mind. 1. Beat last years score and get to 100,000 points 2. Clean Sweep

I can now pat myself on the back for a job well done. My claimed score is 100,800 points and I managed the clean sweep. The hardest part was the sweep. Conditions toward VY1 and VO1 were not very good here on the west coast as mentioned in another soapbox posting. Last year Jay VY1 was 20 Over on ten and a piece of cake. Not this year. He was running about S3 on my

290 foot V Beam up 60 feet. I was lucky enough to break the large pile of stations trying for him, and in doing so completed my sweep. My station consists of my Mark V and the Vee Beam. I enjoyed the contest very much, even though the flu bug had hit me hard. You cannot tell I was all stuffed up on CW! Some day I will operate from a 1st class contest site and see what I can really do. 73 and thanks for another fine contest.

Ray K7FU -- *K7FU*

N7HJ -- Nov 4, 2002 20:56 ET

Only was able to operate on 10 meters and not for long as I had some commitments. Found I have RFI on CW on 20/15. I would say that the High Speed CW ops pretty much ignored my slower speed. Thus they missed out on a contact. I even called them 3 or 4 times. More than

enough for an exchange. Maybe they should answer some of the slower guys too. -- *N7HJ*

K7IR -- Nov 4, 2002 18:25 ET



Jack WA0RJY hard at work feeding the teeming masses Saturday afternoon while keeping an eye on the willows and the lake.



The business end of K7IR - a three-stack of C31XR's at 40/80/120' with a 40-2CD and rotary dipole for 80 on top. Also a plastic owl named Frogman - don't ask. To the right, a small crankup holds a 3-element SteppIR and an 80-meter inverted vee. The big tower will hold all SteppIRs by the end of the year.

WA0RJY (retired from contesting) and I decided to do a "fun" multi-op from the wilds of EWA at the fine station of K7IR in Moses Lake. This turned out to be a good decision - both fun-wise and score-wise. Jack and I have operated together from W7RM and in numerous Field Day operations, so we have developed a certain tolerance for each other's bizarre sense of humor and predilection for obscure references to British comedy. So - we loaded up the car and head for Beverly...uh, no...I mean K7IR.

The station is right on the shore of the freshwater lake and sports a 120' tower with a stack of C31XR's, soon to be replaced with 3-element SteppIR's. A two-element 40-2CD and a rotatable 80-meter dipole live at the tippy top, along with a plastic owl. Inside (see photo) lives an Alpha 87 and a comfy operating position which we customized rather extensively. Our radios were an FT-1000MP driving the Alpha and a TS-850 as the second radio.

First, some repairs needed to be done. The TIC RingRotor on the middle yagi was inoperational and the coax had been yanked off the balun. Up the tower I went. Everything bears the calling card of the local Moses Lake fauna - birds. Luckily, repairs to the balun went quickly and I was able to get the antenna pointed ESE - the only required direction for SS from the Pacific NW. Also luckily, it wasn't blowing a gale and the wind chill was non-existent. Along with the big tower, a low 80-meter inverted vee was installed on a 60' crankup tower sporting a SteppIR yagi. The low vee turned out to be quite valuable, illuminating the West Coast with very high-angle (i.e. - straight up) radiation.



Getting ready for my shift early Sunday morning, I was rewarded with this lovely view out the shack window at 0630 local and about 25 degrees F outside. Contest? What contest?



Ward N0AX trying to extract more activity out of 21049.7 on Sunday afternoon. Where is everybody? Chasing VY1JA on 28016, no doubt...

Inside, we got everything running without RFI or other grounding problems - always a concern when lashing up a temporary High Power station. It was not for lack of cables and wiring. 2100Z rolled around and we were off.

Great conditions were in evidence on all bands. 10 was hot, hot, hot and surprisingly, 80-meters was not noisy or lossy. We had short-skip on 10 into California along with transcontinental answers to our CQ's on 80 - when was the last time that happened? Sunday was the usual crawl - you can really tell when kickoff time happens at 1PM Eastern Time.

By Sunday morning, we were two sections away from a sweep - Yukon/NWT and Newfoundland - what a surprise. I knew VY1JA had promised to be on, but propagation is always iffy. Gus, VO1MP, usually makes an appearance, but it's hard to figure if he will be a pouncer or a pouncee. The moral of the story is CQ and hope your partner finds one or both. I found Gus working N7WA on Sunday. Gus was tuning around so I flipped a mental coin and hoped he was headed higher in the band. A CQ-ing hole was only 5 kHz up, so away I went and pretty soon I was rewarded with a NL multiplier. That left VY1/VE8 - the toughest section. The one that separates the sheep from the goats. The mug-maker. But where was J?

28016 was where J was. With a huge and semi-ruly pileup. Sunday pileups on J have this surprising tendency to get a little, shall we say, continental? If werewolves come out when the moon is full, our inner children come out when J makes an appearance. To make it worse, he was only about S-5 and very, very fluttery on the direct path. Oh, woe - this was going to be tough. Then inspiration struck - backscatter! I



Jack, WA0RJY hard at work looking for new stations while Mr. Alpha does his best imitation of Enrico Caruso on 20-meters. That Jack, he's retired from contesting, you know.

usually operate QRP where backscatter is not an option. However, Mr. Alpha and a couple of long-boom yagis might change things. Pointing the antennas at the South Pacific brought VY1JA up to a solid S-7 with no flutter or buzzing - we had a chance. It's irrational, I know, but I like mugs, so we blew about 30 QSOs chasing J and finally cracked the pile. Poor J - he had the flu and was in his little shack up there in the Arctic snows, freezing, so we could act like hose-heads and get our sweeps. Thanks, OM!!

From there it was anticlimatic...and slow. With several hours to go and little on that hadn't been worked, SS becomes a "character building experience." Lots of tuning and lots of CQing

with little to show for it, but the bands did begrudge us a trickle of QSOs as football lost its hold on contesters across the country. Maybe ARRL could arrange to have SS weekends correspond to the football bye weeks. Shoot, we even have a section named after football - NFL. Just kidding.

The last goal was 1100 QSOs and it was looking like time was speeding up as we got closer. Relativity or something. 50 to go. 40 to go. 30 to go. 25 to go. 24 to go. You get the idea. At 0230Z Mr. 1100 was in the log and we pulled the plug. It's a three-hour drive back over the Cascade mountains to Seattle and I had a ferry ride on top of that, so we had some disassembling to do in a hurry. Funny how quickly it all comes down after it takes so long to put together.

Back in the car and headed west, we considered the results. 1100 Q's and a sweep for 176600 points. Not a record, maybe a Top Ten, but fun and we tried to be sure nobody missed EWA. K7OX, WA7LT, K7MM, and others were all in there, too, so hopefully you got EWA if you tried. If not - there's always next year!

Thanks for all the QSOs, folks - see you in two weeks from home as W7VMI with some of the young contesters here on Vashon Island.

73, Ward N0AX and Jack WA0RJY -- N0AX

N8XE -- Nov 4, 2002 18:48 ET

What a great time! 40M was my workhorse band this year. I did not do as good as good as



previous years, but had a ton of fun. This year was the first year calling CQ and it was probably the most fun (and the scariest) for me yet in a contest. Thanks to everyone who was patient with me. Next year I hope to have another radio for running and the other one for hunting and pouncing. I always look forward to this time of year. 73 de N8XE, Jason -- N8XE

Here I am about an hour before the end of the contest. Notice a couple of coffee mugs on the desk? Coffee helps alot!!

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