

# Contest Soapbox

## 2003 ARRL September VHF QSO Party

28 Soapbox entries available

### N3AWS -- Oct 15, 2003 20:39 ET

Missed the June contest due to being on "night float" rotation at work. So for September, guess what? More night float! I did manage to get on for one hour and made two contacts. I almost didn't submit a score, but wanted to show my support for the contest, the portable category, and the ARRL.

Two QSOs, two grids, total score: 4 points! Things can only get better!

73, Jim N3AWS EM90 -- N3AWS

### KF0Q -- Oct 11, 2003 21:10 ET



**Sunday sunset KF0Q/0 EN43dw**

The September 2003 event was my third ever low power portable attempt; second for the September contest. This year I had no real goals other than to have all of my eight bands working and to get somewhere beyond a hundred qso's. I had a pretty good time here in '2001 running low power portable (QRP) so I thought that it would be fun to try it again. I had a hunch that the propagation would be down due to changing conditions and an early dose of fall weather. I started getting really serious a few days before the test by hauling some of the yagis up to the site and testing some

feedlines. Turns out that I found no less than 3 bad feedlines that needed attention – just days before the contest!

My station was nestled in the corner between the corn and the alfalfa at the end of a field road on a hundred acre farm here in southeast Minnesota. I do not own this land – I just ask permission from the owner/s of the property a few times a year when I can fit a contest in. I have never had an issue with them, and they seem to hardly know that I am around. There is a decent paved road leading to the property and a nice field road too to the site (about a half mile from the pavement), which makes it easy to get to. The site is just a few miles inside EN43, which can be nice sometimes as there is less activity in the grid.

I used 2 portable push up masts that have guy ropes tied off at 120 degrees for mounting the 8

yagis. The larger 36 ft mast has three tiers of guy ropes while the smaller mast for 222 on up only needed one set. The '6MX5 was damaged this summer and I needed a couple lengths of aluminum tube for the repair. Even though the parts were ordered several days in advance they still hadn't showed up in time for setup on Friday afternoon! I normally put the 50MHz antenna on the top of the stack, but this year I got started without it and put the KLM yagi for 144 on the top. Late Friday night however; the parts arrived so I was able to fix the M2 and mount it Saturday morning. (As we all found out six never really opened any way).

The operating position was atop my 24" deep folding camping table inside a tent. An Astron power supply was used inside for just one load; the 902-144 xverter. Two rotor boxes were used for the CDE AR33 and Yaesu 1000 rotators on the pushup masts. Most of the 7 feedlines and 2 IF cables fit neatly in the corner of the tent where I didn't have to trip over them too much. One thing that hadn't occurred to me was the lack of heat available at the operating position. Typically I have plenty of heat from the gear, but running low power this time out (and with temps in the upper 40's in the morning and night) it was cold!

An IC746PRO used for 50MHz and the IF for 902,2304,3456 as well as 146MHz FM for local contacts. I added a optoisolator inverting circuit to the PTT output of the '746 PRO to get +12V on xmt used for the PTT H needed on all my Down East xverters that are set up for 10W common IF on 144. PTT keying between the IF rig and the xverter was performed manually by selecting the correct line and plugging it in to the '746PRO cable. A 4 - position N coax switch was used to switch between each xverters or the 146 antenna. The 2304 and 3456 xverters were tower mounted in a Nema 3R hoffman enclosure along with an Astron SS-18 power supply.

Antennas: M2 6MX5, KLM 16LBX, Butternut 2MCV-5 Vertical, 222 'FO style homebrew 16 element, M2 432-9WL, Directive Systems LY's 902 -3456MHz: 3333, 2345, 1376, 9112

Rigs: IC746PRO, FT736R, Down East 902-144, 2304-144, 3456-144

I got on the air a bit later than expected, but I wanted to make sure all the gear was working on all bands. I was pleased with the 144 station this time out - working some grids to the south that are typically a challenge for me with higher power. I was thrilled to work K9SM in EM59 some 350+ miles to my south late Saturday! It was really nice run in to and run the bands with Tim and Pat K0PG/R, K9ILT/R with the rover stack pointing right at me! I had no idea that I would have so many contacts on 902... SSB for that matter!

For all the effort my setup was not without problems. My larger stack of 144 and 6M antennas tossed around in the wind repeatedly and caused my bearing to drift big time. I must have twisted my back while mounting the 2304/3456 transverters up on the mast before the contest. I pulled the switch Saturday night and went home to get warm and get some rest. The 5KW generator sputtered now and again on Saturday night. On Sunday afternoon I found out why. After I turned the unit off for refuel - I couldn't keep the generator running for more than 2 minutes. The low lube light said that the level was below safe. I added oil (that didn't work). (Obviously I checked it

before the contest start -). I pulled the spark plug and discovered no spark. Then I drained and refilled the crankcase to the correct level to no avail. At this stage I concluded that the low oil circuit was hyperactive. The station went quiet for a few hours Sunday afternoon while I figured out another source of power – which turned out to be my 130AH rover battery! The battery did the trick for the next several hours. In total I ended up with some 213 qso's, and beat my previous score from '2001 substantially. Finished up (at 0258Z) with K0MHC/0 for EN26 on 902 CW ... Thanks Jim! Not sure what the next adventure will be – perhaps I will try portable for the January event some time. 73, de -- *KF0Q*

#### **KE4KVV -- Oct 14, 2003 10:36 ET**

Well this was a "TOUGH" contest here in EM80 by any standard. Both bands I was working (6 & 2 meters) were pretty FLAT. Two meters was much better than Six but nothing to brag about. This was only my second VHF contest and I guess I was a little spoiled from the conditions back in June 2003 when both bands were pretty wide open here. My score this time does NOT look very impressive on paper but it was the best I could do under those conditions. Guess we will see how they compare to others when the totals are all in! Looking forward to the next contest anyway, GOOD or BAD conditions I am READY.

Clayton, EM80, NFL -- *KE4KVV*

#### **K0PG & K9ILT -- Oct 12, 2003 00:45 ET**



**Turkey farm at our EN23 spot. They sure smell different on Thanksgiving!**

When will we ever learn? A carefully considered schedule is always laid out ahead of time and communicated to the VHF contest community. Fooey! Our first stop in north central Iowa was so good we trashed our planned leaving time and stayed as long as the Qs kept coming.

We headed off to Minnesota and ran into some rain and construction near Rochester. We wound up taking the wrong road and found ourselves almost to Iowa, instead of almost to Wisconsin. We always try to make lemonade out of lemons, and we wound up overnighing in Decorah, Iowa where we stayed in the VIP suite at the Motel 8 (living large on the road). Sunday morning found us on a great hilltop putting out EN43. As we moved on, we found a new favorite spot for EN42, so the Iowa detour worked out well. It kept us from making a couple of planned stops later Sunday, but our QSO rate was fine, and we were



**Sunday afternoon in Wisconsin.**



**Mark, N8KWX, in laser QSO with Pat.**

enjoying the trip.

A real highlight was having Mark, N8KWX surprise us at our EN62 spot. He brought along his Laser gear, allowing us to make a light QSO.

It's great to travel along with the regulars, and get to meet some new friends too. Overall, 972 miles, 13 grids, and about 450 Qs each. We made our best score to date, with about 78K each. We're already working on our January plans, hope to see you then! 73, Tim KOPG and Pat K9ILT the "Rovairs Extraordinaires" -- KOPG

### **K1NKR -- Oct 7, 2003 13:45 ET**

Having introduced Dan, W1RDB, to VHF contesting in August (Mt Kearsarge NH), we decided to "do" September. Vacation schedules and business travel conspired to make this contest an abbreviated one, leaving only a half-day Sunday available. We rendezvoused on Mt Agamenticus, in southern Maine.

Without too much effort, we managed to get on 50-1296 (minus 903). We brought the transverters for 903, 2G, 3G, and 10G, but didn't get them set up because of the short time we had. We used an old 'NKR lash-up of single-boom, multi-band yagis. No two elements of the antennas were in the same plane. They worked, though.

Things we learned: - If you're not ready for June you won't be any more ready for September. The



**W1RDB accumulates contest number two.**

5GHz rig still isn't tuned up. The PAs and LNAs for all the microwave bands are still on the workbench. And the bandswitcher is still lacking something-or-other... - In New England at least, if you go to a conveniently accessible site you'll share it with a FB rover/portable. In August N1JEZ elmered us through a couple of tight microwave shots. In September W1BQ showed us what a truly impressive road-worthy antenna farm looks like. - No matter how rudimentary your equipment or antennas, you work more folks with them than if you had left them at home. (Corollary: You win more contests by submitting logs than by not doing so. I took Rhode Island one year and

Canada another by using this tactic.) -- *K1NKR*

### **NØURW -- Oct 4, 2003 22:09 ET**

ARRL ...Sept... VHF...Contest...2003...NØURW...EN41GO... \*\*\* During editing of my 1st soapbox entry ,, I suffered a fatal error & poof,, no more soapbox,, it had vanished so I re-posted the edited version.\*\*\*

Greetings All...It had been raining here since friday night & didn't look to be stopping any time soon...( yes we really needed the rain,, a couple of weeks earlier would of been better but you take what you can get) In the past I try to be well prepared for contest weekend..This time I was not... Too much going on ,so ham radio had to take a 2nd place on the priority list...As the contest started out Saturday,I found no tropo on 6 meters ,,, The June & July contests had blessed me with fabulous conditions on 6 & 2 meters.. But not this time...6 meters is my primary band now , (4-6 el.yagi's) after taking down my monster 2 meter array..( 8-11 el. yagi's ) just after the July cq vhf contest for major upgrades... It will be back up bigger & taller & with elevation control by the June 2004 contest...I put up a small 7 el. homebrew antenna on 2 just for the contest...It worked well as I made several contacts both days , but missed alot I would of normally had no trouble contacting with the monster.. I decided to switch from the low power section to the hi-power section in a attempt to grab a few new grids & contact some of the distant rovers I could just hear...( it worked ) I unplugged the 170 watt bricks on 2 & 6 ... Plugged in the old 600+ watt mirage brick on 2 & the Heathkit HL-2200 amp. ( converted to 6 meters) The increased power helped me alot with no tropo to speak of on 6 both days. I did pick up a few east coast contacts Sunday morning on 6 ( scatter ). I'm happy to say my 222 setup was still working great, even in the rain, & even after turning up the drive in the dem transverter to feed my amp to 265 watts. After having problems with my 432 setup in June & Aug. , it too was working great... ( about time ) ... I found my 1296 setup was water logged & just barely made 1 contact. A BIG thanks goes out to everyone I did make contact with,& once again the rovers were a main part of my log...Just wish 6 would of opened up...even a little would of been nice... Some how the rest of my family misunderstood which weekend the contest was & had planned lots to do at home. So as to not

make the xyl any more mad than she was , left me with just over 12 hours of actual sitting in front of the radios. Still this was a very good test in the rain under very poor conditions from my qth & I was very happy with my score... This being the 2nd year without any 6 meter enhancement has me re-thinking my strategy... January will be here before you know it & I have lots to do before then . I'll listen 4 U to call in January so look for me on 6.... Dan (Ö;Ó) -- NØURW

**VP9/N0JK -- Oct 4, 2003 16:04 ET**



**The Jr. Boomer 2M yagi at VP9/N0JK. Note the brown leaves on the trees. Ed said the salt spray from Hurricane Fabian killed many of the trees and plants.**



**My oldest son Kevin, N0TZZ in Bermuda.**

What a difference a few months make compared to the June VHF QSO Party. No Es, F2 or tropo from Bermuda in the Sept. contest. I stayed at Ed, VP9GE's QTH. Hurricane Fabian had knocked off the electricity at his home, so I ran the contest "Field Day" style with generators. Only contest QSOs completed were on 6M. I CQed often on 2M but nil heard.

High points were working W2SZ/1 on 6M Sunday afternoon(who I missed in the June contest) and having a nice dinner at the "Lobster Pot" restaurant in downtown Hamilton with my family to celebrate my son's 22nd birthday. After dinner I finished the contest with a weak Es/scatter opening between 0100 - 0200 utc Sept. 15 to the northeast states. K1TOL had a great signal peaking a solid 579. WA2BPE and W3CMP were worked during this opening.

Some stations heard but not worked on 6M: W4IY, W8GG em78, K1WHS, K1JT, K1SIX, W2FU, K3YTL and N2PA. Believe W2FU heard me calling on CW, he would qrz, but could not complete. Seemed most ops had their antennas pointed away from Bermuda. At 1846 utc on Saturday I heard a station saying their grid was "EN19" on 50.150 ssb? That was the best DX heard.

Best DX worked on 6M was AA4ZZ EM96, K1TOL FN44 and WA2BPE FN12. A lot of work for only a few contacts. Was hoping for a tropo or big Es opening, but was not to be this time. Ran the IC-706MII at 100 watts to a 5 el M2 yagi at 20



**Jon VP9/N0JK and Ed VP9GE enjoying dinner at the Lobster Pot restaurant.**

feet on 6M, same radio with an amp and a "Jr Boomer" for 2M. Impressive to see how quickly the hard working people of Bermuda recovered from Hurricane Fabian's damage. -- *N0JK*



**Looking towards the northeast USA from the 6M5X yagi.**

### **N6NB/R -- Oct 4, 2003 04:40 ET**

I built a second 10-band roving station and it really paid off. Roving together in two vehicles with the two 10-band stations, N6MU and I had a great time and scores well over 300K (our best ever as rovers). We visited 16 grid squares and traveled 1,300 miles each.

Thanks to Rob Hughes, a seasoned sports car rally driver, for helping with the driving and for setting as fast a pace as possible in an antenna-laden vehicle (definitely NOT a sport car).

For more details, please visit [www.n6nb.com](http://www.n6nb.com) and check the page on roving.

73, Wayne, N6NB -- *N6NB*



After the contest, N6NB/R and N6MU/R, joined by sports car rally driver Rob Hughes (left to right), pose with our 10-band rover vehicles in CN80.



While N6NB/R operated in DM15, "designated driver" Rob Hughes took this sunset photo looking west toward the mountain ridge where the N6NB HF/VHF antenna farm is located.

**N1DPM -- Sep 29, 2003 22:16 ET**

This was a really fun contest from FN32qb here at the home QTH. Finally things are back to good working order after the lightening strike of 2001. Shown here is a picture of the array. See you in January! -- *N1DPM*





**N0DQS/R -- Sep 29, 2003 22:03 ET**



**Finally the Rain stopped when I reached EN22/32 early Saturday evening**



**Working thru 24Ghz from EN03/02 South Dakota late Sunday afternoon.**

Started the contest in Southern Iowa EN20/30, wouldn't you know couldn't buy rain the past month or so and poured on me Saturday afternoon. Band was real flat, poor, dead, what ever else you want to call it other than good! In the heavy rain I had trouble working 1296 with some stations normally not a problem but worked others?? Hooked up with Tim and Pat K0PG/r and K9ILT/r while they were in Northern Iowa and actually got to work my home grid during a contest! That just does not happen. Had fun working some of the fellows from the Twin Cities, W0GHZ, W0ZG, KT8O, N0KP, W0JT to name a few. It was fun running around the grid corners and bands with them. Worked Jerry K0CQ for the first time on 222 which was great, glad to see him on the new band. Was dissapointed that I did not hook up with N0LL as much as I normally do, did not work him on 1296 this trip, but I suspect condx had a lot to do with that. Good success working KM0T, 14 grids thru 10Ghz (except one on 1296) 6 grids on 24Ghz and one light. Could have done 2 more grids on 24 but ran out of time. Usually hook up with Lloyd WB0ULX in EN04 for a bunch of grids but did not catch him till I was in his back yard in EN14. Worked the N0KIS club station at the University of Nebraska. Good to hear them on! Caught some of the guys on in Kansas as well. As usual I headed out to South Dakota and with the

condx like they were it was tough and lonesome there. Did hook up with K0MHC,EN26 thru 3456, missed his activity the past few contests. Activity from fixed stations was way down from past contests. I sure hope it doesn't get to the point where a rover has to depend on other rovers for activity during a contest so I hope we can get more activity in January in the Midwest! I traveled just over 1100 miles and activated 14 grids and 2 states. Different route this time, usually I do 4 states and about 800 or 900 miles or so and 16 grids. See you all in January

Gene N0DQS -- *N0DQS*

### VE2XX -- Sep 26, 2003 08:43 ET



I found conditions were flat for the most part but a good amount of stations were on. I was glad to get on at a more serious level than i have in the past, I owe this fresh start to Warren Wb2ona, and Steve N2cei of Demi , for their encouragement, and and support in upgrading my complete transverter system. I will continue the upgrades on the system and hopefully will have it completed for June 04. .There are also a group of keeners in the Granby area Fn35 who have helped put our area on the map for Vhf, and UHF activity, Keep looking up north!!! Many new stations with multiple bands . 73's de Ve2xx, Stu -- *VE2XX*

### W7DK -- Sep 26, 2003 11:55 ET



**Dege Peak, 7006 ft above sea level, the site of the W7DK VHF contest expedition.**

Four members of W7DK- The Radio Club of Tacoma- (W7WG-Worth, AC7QN-Chuck, KB6OKS-Lynn, and AE7RW-Rich) backpacked two miles to (7006 ft ASL) Dege Peak (pronounced: Day-Gay), a beautiful location near the Sunrise area, located in Mt Rainier National Park, Washington State. One park ranger we encountered thought we were here to "set up the repeater". A hiker/visitor thought we were "tracking animals" (the Yagi on one backpack).

It so happened that one of the two Park Ranger Volunteers who was stationed at Dege Peak that day to greet and assist visitors was a Ham Operator, Howard- N7RTT, who assisted us.



**AC7QN, Chuck, operates 144 MHz SSB with Mt Rainier looming in the background.**

We had a clear shot north to British Columbia and SE to Northeast Oregon. We operated 6M, 2M, and 70 cm and made 60 QSOs total. Maybe not a huge amount... but the excitement was high because this kind of contest was a first for three of us and we were at such a great location.

After the 70 cm contacts died down... a HF antenna was erected and some great contacts were made on 17 M and 40 M.



**KB6OKS, Lynn, operates 50 MHz SSB and AM with the NW side of Mt Rainier in the background.**

We all lots of fun, great weather and scenery, and we were able to spread the word of Amateur Radio to the curious hikers who visited our site. We are getting excited about going back next year.. 73s de W7DK. -- AE7RW



**AE7RW, Rich, operates 144 MHz FM and 432 MHz SSB & CW to a dual band Yagi.**



**W7WG, Worth, chats with Steve, W7IK in Corvallis, OR, on 40 Meter SSB.**

**K1TR -- Sep 20, 2003 21:16 ET**



**Enjoying a warm and dry start from the operating position.**

Even though I didn't observe any substantial band enhancement, decent weather and only a few equipment failures afforded a very fine contest weekend atop 6288' Mount Washington, NH in FN44. My single-op low power operation netted about 211.6k. Check out <http://www.qsl.net/k1tr/> for more details. See you in January! -- *K1TR*



**The shack and antennas floating atop the undercast...**

**KQ6EE -- Sep 20, 2003 11:16 ET**

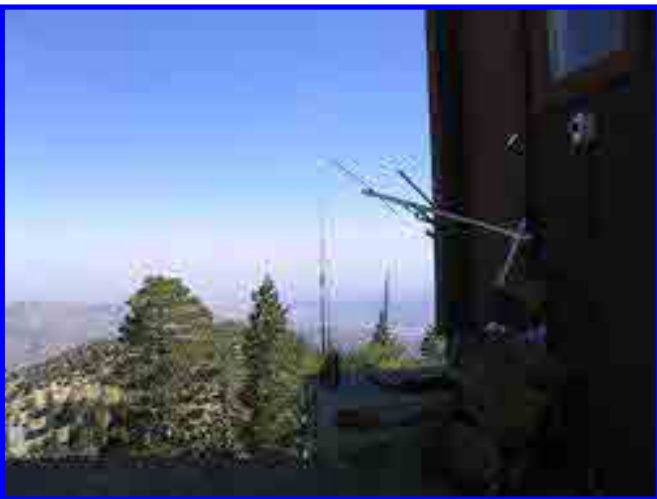


**My radio setup at the ski lift pole at the top of Thunder Mountain. The back groundback is Mt Baldy (10000+ft)**

KQ6EE was at the top of Thunder Mountain. On Saturday, I packed all my equipments to my backpack, and drove up to Manker Flat (5000+ft) above Glendora in Southern California. From Manker Flat, I hiked up Baldy Notch then to Thunder Mountain(8000+ft). I brought my Yaesu Ft817, Icom 4 bander HT, Alinco 220 HT, mag-mout and dual band beam antenna. I arrived about 10.30 o'clock and hiked down about 5. o'clock. On Sunday, I didn't do much hiking. I rode the ski lift from Manker Flat to Baldy Notch, then hike up to Thunder Mountain. I did very good in this contest because I had an elevation gain. That's what I like to do QRP at the top of the mountain. I got away from the smog, enjoy hiking, and play with radio. May be next contest, I will hiked up to Mt Baden Powell (9000+ft) or Mt Baldy(10000ft). Fun Fun Fun for all contest. 73 -- *KQ6EE*



Here is other view of the fun contest



more photo about my contest

**KC8HZM -- Sep 19, 2003 13:04 ET**

Wow, this was both my first contest and first time as a rover station, and I'm definitely hooked! 500+ miles and 6 grids in one day and we not only survived, but we had an absolute blast!

Fellow operator Jeff (KC8HZQ) and I spent a lot of time asking questions, planning, and putting together a rover station in my little ol' Ford Festiva. It all paid off because everything went very smoothly!

It was truly a 'no budget' effort. Almost all the equipment was borrowed and all the antennas were homebrew, including a 7 element yagi for 2m, a 6 element for 440, and an unnamed 6 meter 'bent'



**I rejoice in successfully reaching EN74, just before raising our mast and antennas.**



**Great view over Lake Michigan**

dipole.

Many thanks to the VHFContesting reflector, Todd for loaning us equipment, and to the many stations that we contacted. Highlights include working KC8RBR, W8LON, WA8RHS, and many others.

We learned a lot and we'll be back again!

More details at

<http://www.goshen.edu/~martentb/rover/rover.html>

Marten KC8HZM

<http://www.goshen.edu/~martentb> -- *KC8HZM*

### **K7MDL/VE7/R -- Sep 20, 2003 03:15 ET**

I was rover once again. My objective was to activate some rare grids on Vancouver Island. I managed to "justify" the trip by combining it with some excellent fishing in Port Hardy where I started out the contest from (CO60).

Scoped out CO50 Friday evening on the very northwest tip of the island. Nothing heard so I skipped this grid in the contest not wanting to run the 100 miles of gravel logging road a second time.

Saturday traveled another 100 miles or so of gravel logging roads to the west coast again to



**In CO70 just north of the 50 Degree grid line for CO70/CN79 in Campbell River on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Good overwater shot to Seattle several hundred miles away.**

**Antenna farm top to bottom: 6M loop, 2M 10el, 1296 28el looper, 222 9el and 432 14el 8ft end mounted homebrew K1FO designs. Had to leave the 903 home, TX power amp stage not working. Solid 1.25" fiberglass rod front mast and crossboom bolted to an aluminum rectangular stock mounted to the roof rack plus a hitch mounted rear pole withstood the miles of overgrown brush and logging road potholes.**



Zeballos in CN69, but heard nothing - very steep mountains, and no good view to the SE. Next hit the CO60 site which was 4200ft on Newcastle Ridge near Sayward on the east side of the island. Challenging old logging roads and it was very windy and rainy, but decent contacts to the Seattle area. Spent the night there. Definitely a 4WD road adventure.

Sunday hit the 50 degree latitude CO70 and CN79 grid line in eastern coast city of Campbell River on the waterfront. Good signals to Vancouver and Seattle here. Ran to the west side of the island for CN78 and CN79 (Ucluelet and Radar Hill south of Tofino) Again good sigs into Puget Sound and Aberdeen on the Washington southwest coast.

Was running behind a few hours so I missed activating CN89 and CN88. Caught the ferry home back to Seattle that night from Nanaimo in CN89.

In the hour before the contest I had the opportunity to present to the Port McNeil (CO60) local ham club meeting what my rover rig was all about and digital modes and VHF contesting. As a bonus they gave me a bunch of FM contacts as the contest started and I pulled away. Thanks to the several VE7 hams who helped me navigate the backroads to these far off sites.

More details on the trip can be found at <http://mysite.verizon.net/res0iem6/index.html>

73,

Mike -- *K7MDL*



In CO60 at 4200ft on Newcastle Ridge on the east coast of Vancouver Island. The 146.700 repeater is barely visible 100ft away.



The view south in Zeballos, CN69 to put another rare grid on the air - No RF leaving this place to the SE. Was hoping for a small over water shot to the SE to Seattle/Washington Coastline - not to be found. Great scenic drive however and another 100 miles of logging roads!

**K1WHS -- Sep 19, 2003 17:12 ET**



September is THE contest for us here in FN43 in the wilds of Maine. This year we were greeted with average conditions. There was no real phenomenal DX to report. Just a lot of steady operating. The big news was that we had a great group of operators: some new to VHF and some old hands as well. Lauren, W0LD helped out along with WA1MBA and K1DG for a short time on Saturday afternoon. Everything went pretty smoothly if you discount the six laptops and network crashing just before the contest began!! From a disastrous start, we salvaged a great ending. All the gear worked great. Whatever blew up was fixed in short order. Grid and QSO totals were fantastic on all bands. Activity seemed great. The new 144 antenna made a big splash as did the new 432 array. The 144 system was a stack of eight short rear mount yagis stuck on the tower leg.

**The six meter antenna system: 4 X 7 element yagis switchable in different combinations. It worked fine for us.**



**N2CEI and W2PED working on the microwave tower before the contest began. The 144 Array is visible to the left a few hundred feet away. The top six meter beam is barely visible below in the foreground. The view is Southwest.**



**The microwave tower is a 120 ft Rohn 55 with Quad arrays of loop yagis from 903 thru 3456. In addition, 5.7, 10, and 24 GHz reside on a sidearm mount. This combination was good for 156 grids this time.**

Both were instrumental in improving our score for our best effort yet. We almost beat our 2001 September score where we had tropo on all bands down the entire Eastern Seaboard! Some neat QSOs included a 2 minute contact with K9NS on 144 SSB! Also working AA2UK, K2TXB, and K2UYH all on 10 GHz from here in Maine. How about working W2FU in Western NY on all bands up thru 5.7 GHz? The six meter array cranked out 73 grids. I could go on and on. There must have been some planetary alignment going on!! Operators included W1MRQ, W1SD, K1DY, K1DG, K1WHS, WA1T, WA1MBA, N2CEI & XYL Sandra, N2EOC, W2PED, W0LD, and K0ZK. N1LBI, "Chef Monte" was in rare form with a killer kitchen setup, and served up several great entrees. My favorite was the seafood chowder. The Breakfast stew was a winner as well. The two dogs, Demi and Beagle Bailey helped out by keeping the hill clean. No old hotdogs were left around with those two on the job. We had enough operators so that we could take some breaks and get some sleep. (I got three hours!) The wx was fine. The tents were comfortable. It does not get much better than this in my book. -- *K1WHS*

**K2QO/R -- Sep 19, 2003 11:20 ET**

This effort was a solo rover due to my rover partner being QRT in 8-land for the weekend. While there was no discernable propagation of any kind, I did manage a few nice q's. On Saturday I set up in FN02 expecting to do a QRP portable, but one station scolded me early on for not roving. Since activity was a bit sparse, I cranked up the power and went to another grid. In the end, I worked from FN02, 03 and 13 on Saturday. After a golf outing on Sunday, I arrived at FN12 after supper and stayed until about 10:30 PM local. The breakdown is as follows:

RoverLog QSOs by Activated Grid: Grid QSOs FN13 20 FN02 52 FN12 63 FN03 34

RoverLog Score Summary, Using new rover rules: Band QSOs Mults 50MHz 43Q 16M 144 MHz 64Q 22M 222 MHz 23Q 8M 432 MHz 28Q 9M 1.2 Ghz 9Q 2M 10 GHz 2Q 2M

Grids activated: 4

Totals: 169 Q's 63Grids

Claimed Score: 15372

The equipment here is typical of the 'no-budget' philosophy.

\*\*\*6M/2M/70cm FT-100D at full power to a 6M X-Beam, 2M 6-el WA5VJB and 432 11-el WA5VJB \*\*\*222MHz FT-817 driving a W1GHZ XVTR at 5W to 6-el HB WA5VJB \*\*\*1.2G FT-817 driving a DEMI XVTR at 3W to a 15-el HB Quagi \*\*\*10G Borrowed Yaesu 2M rig, DEMI XVTR, Qualcomm Amp, RCA 18" Dish and HB Feed Thanks to K0SM for the 10G stuff!

See you all in January 2004. Please talk this one up at every radio meeting till January with EVERYONE who will give you the time. It would be nice to have a barn burner of a contest where you couldn't work'em all because there were TOO many!

Check out my rover at <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~msadams/RDV%20Photos/>

73, Mark -- K2QO/R

**WA7JTM -- Sep 19, 2003 11:11 ET**

Operated portable from DM34 at 7000+/- ft. Wx was warm, and the biting bugs were fierce. Spent a fortune on insect repellent. Still had a good time camping out with the dogs and playing Radio for the weekend.

Other than a short 6M opening to Texas, no real propagation to speak of. The higher bands were

pretty good, especially with all of the Rovers running up and down the Az to Cal line. Conditions into Southern Cal seemed pretty good. New Mexico was non-existent except for K5AM. It was a thrill to finally work California on 1296, a first for me from this location.

This is the highest score ever for me in a September contest. Hope to do it again next year with some help from a few friends. This single-op stuff is too much work!.....73 all.....Pete -- *WA7JTM*

### **N6ZE -- Sep 19, 2003 00:52 ET**

A first for this callsign: Unlimited Multi-op, BUT ONLY by virtue of having Bob, KK6UE, as an operator for the first hour of the Test & daring to utilize 5 bands. The score of 5504 is probably the lowest of any Multi-op entry, but we had fun as usual.

I didn't think that conditions were particularly good, but managed 4 QSOs on 1296, including QSOs with 3 stations which I had never worked on that band before. Best DX was N6XQ (DM12).

I didn't hear many hilltopping stations, but significant Rover activity added to my totals.

From my home QTH (DM04ne) in Thousand Oaks, CA, in the Conejo Valley, I managed:

6m: 31QSO 6GRIDS IC-756PRO-2 + 5 el M2 yagi

2m: 53QSO 13GRIDS FT-736 + Microwave Modules Amp + 17el M2

1.25m: 13QSO 4GRIDS FT-736 + TE-2212 brick + 7 el M2 yagi

.70m: 25QSO 6GRIDS FT-736 + RF Concepts 4-320 brick + 11el M2

.23m: 4QSO 3GRIDS FT-736 + 35el M2 yagi

Note: All antennae mounted less than 20 feet above the ground.

KK6UE & I are members of the Ventura Co. (CA) Amateur Radio Society (VCARS). Other members of VCARS: KE6CWD/M, N6VNG/M, & KE6IMP also participated in the Test. -- *N6ZE*

### **KG6GMT -- Sep 18, 2003 16:30 ET**

Good Contest Hot here in the CA Valley. My Number down from last year. I did not get in to CM94 till late Sunday. Wont make that mistake in JAN. Lots of Rovers this year the Fun of being a rover and running into a rover is great.

brock -- *KG6GMT*



The array of 902-5760 transverters (loaned from W5LUA)



The W5AC club station (VHF+ side)



N5GQB and N5PYK traveled to Texas A&M University (W5AC) to participate in the September VHF contest. We were fortunate to have equipment to activate every band from 6m to 3cm. This was the first time, that we are aware of, that W5AC was active on the bands from 902 - 10368.

While tropo propagation was decent, a little help was needed to reach the DFW metroplex (170mi) on Sunday morning. Thus, with the MCS (mesoscale convective system) moving through central Texas, we took advantage of rain scatter propagation, an underutilized mode on microwave, to complete on 2.3, 3.4, 5.7, and 10 GHz. While signals gradually became weaker on the lower bands, even 2.3 GHz provided good copy on CW. In hindsight, we should have tried 1296 as well, but we'll leave that for another contest.

Overall, it was an enjoyable contest even though propagation was not particularly great.

Learn more about W5AC at <http://w5ac.tamu.edu>

73, Joe -- N5PYK

The contest antenna arrays at W5AC. Not shown, 5760 horn and 222 beam.

KC2LSU -- Sep 17, 2003 23:12 ET



where did that reflector go now?

This was my first contest, since getting my ticket three months ago. I was amazed at what just 10 watts from my Icom 706 MKIIG powered with a St Louis Switcher (modified PC power supply) can do going into a high gain antenna. Look at that "piece of junk" direct fed Yagi I was using; it's a full time job just keeping the #6 ground wire elements, straight & centered, when the antenna is not up on my "tower". (due to deed restrictions, it has to look au-natural, and I hide it when not in use)



"my tower" with rotator

Look at it, a \$6 antenna, that lets me work stations 200 miles away! I even found the plans for it on the internet at

<http://www.fredspinner.com/W0FMS/CheapYagi/vjbcy.html> "Cheap Yagi Antennas for VHF/UHF" (a big thank you to the author, Kent Britain, WA5VJB!!!!)

-- KC2LSU

W6KA -- Sep 17, 2003 20:29 ET



**Our fist location DM03**

For KG6KJN and I it was our second time contesting. We used our club call W6KA from the Pasadena Radio Club. Our first attempt was earlier in the year so we knew what we were doing...wrong.

This time we out later than expected and did not bring any lights as last time we quit in the day time...flashlights now added to our checklist. We now have our locations marked as waypoints on the GPS to keep me from driving in circles.



**Mile Square Park DM13**

Although we only worked the contest one day we were surprised by the propagation on the higher bands. Stations were stronger on 2 Meters and 70CM than 6 Meters. Hope the bands start to get better next year.

We were on 6, 2, and 432 with an FT 847. For 1296 we used an IC 910H. Antennas were 3 elements on 6M, 5 elements on 2M and 432. 1296 we used a 14-element yagi. All supported by three 5-foot mast sections. All coax was LMR 400.

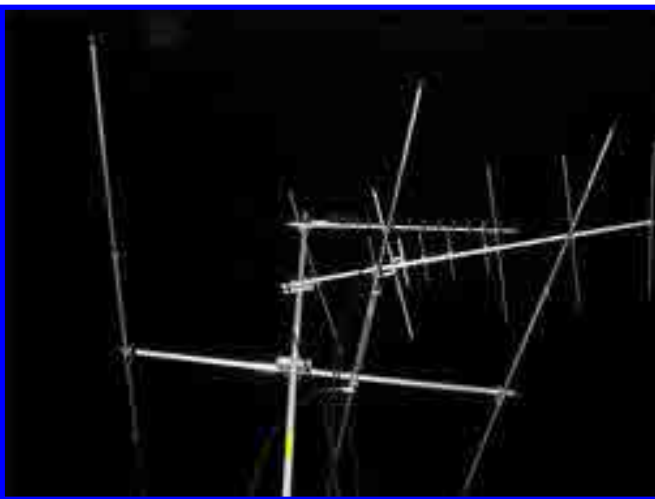
Eli and I wish to thank the trustee, Paul Gorden, for the use of the club call W6KA.

We are still learning but most important for the weekend is that we had FUN.

-- *KJ6NO*



**Old Highway 99 in DM04**



**The business end**

### **WD4OAR -- Sep 17, 2003 13:39 ET**

The Ocoee Amateur Radio Society (OARS) had a great time during the contest from the mountains of North Carolina EM75. We were active on 6m, 2m, 222, and 432. Unfortunately the weather got rough on Saturday night and the weather continued to be bad Sunday morning and we were forced to shut down, yet we still had a blast on our very first VHF contest effort. We had some computer logging problems and several computer hardware problems as well causing some frustration. We will know what to do better next year. Unfortunately there were no openings on 2m and only a few on 6m. The highlight for me was working EN60 W9ICE on 432 CW from EM75 with 20 watts. AE4BK OARS Vice President -- AE4BK





**Tent City at 5377 Ft.**



**Installing the 432, 2m, and 222 antennas on the rotating mast.**



**432 Station**

**N0KIS -- Sep 17, 2003 09:14 ET**



**Here is the stacked array that Bruce, N0KIS built from old television antennas which saved the day for us on 2m.....The 6m beam is in the background....**

About all we can say is that conditions were less than ideal here in Nebraska.... We made an attempt at our first contest from the new University of Nebraska club station..... Things didn't turn out as we would have liked.... We did have a good time trying out the new equipment and hope for better conditions in the next contest...

6-meters was really dead, one really short opening to the east for about 5-min. .... The only saving grace was our performance on 2-meters, we did have pretty good luck with stations out to about 500 miles from Lincoln but there wasn't enough stations on to raise our score....

We used a stacked array on 2-meters and a three element beam on 6-meters..... The University club station is located on the fourth floor of the Journalism College which provides an antenna elevation of about 75 feet above ground with nice short coax runs ....

The rigs used were an Icom 736 on 6-meters and an Icom 746 on 2-meters..... We had a Kenwood 707 on 70cm but it was FM only ....

The weather was great, but again the conditions were not what we hoped for with our first contest from the new club station ..... 73's -- *WD0BGZ*

**W3SO -- Sep 16, 2003 21:59 ET**

This was W3SO's best score. The line score was:

50 412/64;

144 431/66;

222 149/54;

432 216/55;

for a claimed score of 375,947 points.

The operators were:

WR3Z,W3BTX,K4VV,K2PLF,AI3M,K3IXD,K3RUQ,W3PAW,KD3SA,W3TEF,and W3YOZ.

Thanks to the Grid Pirates for the loan of a 222MHz amp. The amp and a new 22el beam at 105 feet made for a new high score for us. The 2m amp blew one hour before the contest. KD3SA dismantled it, made new parts from scratch on his lathe and had it back work three hours into the contest.

6M nevered opened up, but we did have one QSO with FL and almost another one. The WX was rainy and foggy all weekend.

ARRL-SECTION: WPA

GRID: FN00sn

QSL Manager: Roy, W3TEF

Station write up is at <[www.qrz.com](http://www.qrz.com)>.

73, The Wopsononock Mountaintop Operators -- *K3IXD*

**W7GK -- Sep 15, 2003 16:21 ET**



**The 6, 2 and 432 antenna array.**

Packed the gear into the truck and operated a single-low power from the top on Pennsylvania Hill (9400' MSL) in Elko County, NV. This site is about 10 mi. SSW from the town of Mountain City in the northeastern part of the state.

Gear consisted of an FT-847 and a stacked array of 4 el. on 6m, 11 el. on 2m and 11 el. on 432 mhz.

Weather was great. Temps were moderate and winds very low for this elevation in mid September. That's the good news.

Bad news is nothing in the way of a band opening occurred. Occasionally a word or a syllable would pop in then disappear just as fast.

Did work into central OR on 432 mhz. and had several contacts into CA on 6. Not much to brag about.

With luck next contest we'll experience better band conditions. Be pretty difficult to top June 2003's conditions.

Highlight of the weekend was watching a group of 10 American eagles flying around the site. Really an awesome sight seeing them riding the air currents up then do their rolls, twists and dives.  
-- W7GK

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