

Contest Soapbox

2003 ARRL November Sweepstakes (Phone)

33 Soapbox entries available

K3UD -- Mar 31, 2004 21:53 ET

Started out to use limited operating time to hand out some points for the serious competitors but then became addicted. Had an Alaska station call me near the end of the contest.... a first. I was fortunate in 1983 to win the Kentucky section low power certificate, although I had a better score this year, it will not even be close to some of the other low power ops in the section. Maybe next year! -- *K3UD*

KL7AA -- Jan 24, 2004 17:45 ET



The KL7AA mobile communications center with a trailer mounted tri-bander on a 40 ft. crank-up mast. The trailer also includes a 12kw diesel generator.

This is the second year the Anchorage Amateur Radio Club (KL7AA), the South Central Amateur Radio Club (KL7G) and Alaska District 7 Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) have participated in the ARRL November Sweepstakes phone contest as a winter communications training exercise.

We operate “Field Day” style using portable towers, antennas and generator power. The idea is to simulate emergency conditions and test our ability to operate during the Alaska winter. On Saturday morning when we set up our portable operation it was -5 deg F, which is -20 degrees Canadian!

Fortunately our Radio Clubs and Alaska ARES have worked hard to build up our emergency communications capabilities and we have a converted RV motorhome with two tower-and-power antenna trailers. Each trailer sports a tri-bander on a 40 ft. crank-up and includes a 12 kw diesel generator, providing power for our 1,500 watt amplifiers on 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 meters.



The KL7AA mobile communications center with the 80m vertical in the foreground.



KL7CY "walks-up" the quarter-wave 80m vertical while the ground crew stands by on the guy ropes. The temperature this morning was -5 deg F.

We use temporary quarter-wave "Marconi" verticals on 80 and 40 meters. The vertical for 80 meters is a 40 ft. aluminum tilt-up tower with a 20 ft. "stinger" top section. A similar 30 ft. aluminum tower and stinger is used on 40 meters. Both verticals have an extensive but temporary ground radial system.

Conditions were very difficult from here, with the High Latitude College A index showing 75 on Friday and improving to 66 on Saturday and 63 on Sunday. We could hear many stations but typically Lower 48 stations have their antennas pointed East or West during the contest and that makes it tough for us to squeak through.

Many thanks to the stations who made the extra effort to work us under difficult conditions, especially the QRP stations.

Noise levels were high on 80 meters and we were only able to work Alaska stations on that band and with the exception of a couple of W6's it was the same story on 40 meters. Our thanks to the Alaska net managers who let us check in and then work the locals after the nets had closed.

We could occasionally run 'em on 20 meters, but since this was a training exercise we tried to

place less experienced operators at the controls and they were often more comfortable with a search and pounce technique.

Although we didn't get a Clean Sweep or run up much of a score we were able to meet or exceed all of our training goals. We learned a lot about our current state of readiness and about the operation of our emergency communications systems. Look for us again next year!

PS: Hello to Steve (KG5VK) - we were glad to be the last station you needed for your sweep!
-- KL7TS



KG5VK steve

Thanks to both Randy K5SL and Jason N5NU I was amazed KL7 was the last for our sweep ! KG5VK has been qrt for the last few, but we R Back ! -- KG5VK

N5TW -- Dec 20, 2003 17:33 ET



KC5YKX banging it out on Sunday in the 2003 ARRL SS Phone.

First I would like to thank Tom, N5TW, for use of his world class station. Tom has built a fine contest/DX station in central Texas and I thank him for privilege of using it.

Now to the nitty-gritty. This was only my second SS. My first being an effort from home and only a 10 meter vertical and a 40/80 dipole. This was completely different. I had a very nice antenna selection at my fingertips. I made the decision to start on 15 meters remembering the advice given to me by K5TR. "Never, ever start on 10 meters no matter how good it sounds." This was not the only advice given to me before I delved into my first real SS. K5PI, WM5R,

KI5DR and N3BB also had tips and the one I took most to heart was RUN. Well I did. 15 and 20 where great but 80 was hard due to having very directional DX antennas. 40 was also good but I did not find out just how good until 2 hours left in the contest. Messed that up bad...so next year I won't forget, you can run on 40.

I had to drive up Georgetown from Corpus Christi the morning of the contest. That is a 4-hour drive so I had to get up early so I could get there in time to eat and get acquainted with the station again. (Last time I used it was for a SOSB 15 meter effort in ARRL DX) I could not get there Friday due to my wedding anniversary. That meant I petered out about 3 to 4 hours early and missed some prime low band stuff. Plus I finished the test with 4 hours too much off time. I

tried to make up for Sunday on the higher bands but 4 hours of QSOs is hard to make up. I probably lost about 200+ Qs due to that 4 hours of missed time.

Rates were good for most of the contest. Mults were a different story. I thought I would get the sweep this year with the better antennas or at least come closer. I had 77 last year with QC, NNY, and MAR missed. This year it was 77 with NT, ND, and NL. Can't a guy catch a break? Oh well I had a blast and being loud helps. Thanks for all who answered my CQs and the CQers for coming back to me. Congrats to K5WA for what looks like a STX LP record. Did not think that was going to happen this year. Breakdown of N5TW's station:

10,15 and 20 have 3 independently rotating antennas and one 3 element yagi fixed SE. All yagis used in spray array. 10 meters - 5/5/5 Force 12 EF510 (not used) 15 meters - 6/6/6 M2 15M6 20 meters - 5/5/5 M2 20M5 40 meters - 2/2 CC XM240 80 meters - COMTEK K8UR style 4-Square 160 meter - COMTEK 4-Square w/ omni mode (not used) 4 2-way Beverage receive antennas for 80/160M FT-1000D @ 150W WriteLog

Next year I will try to maximize this station's full capabilities.

73, Reid -- *KC5YKX*

W4NVY -- Dec 14, 2003 14:38 ET

First time using a logging program and slugging it out through the QRN. Much QRN & QRM. Kudos to K5EEE for sticking with the QSO till confirmed.. Same for K3CR and W0LSW. Stumbling through the logging program until I got it down right in the first five Q's. Found the CO2 detector reacting to the RF via house wiring – XYL was sure to inform me. Great time over the weekend. See you all again next year -- '73, Marc W4NVY -- *W4NVY*

K4FAU -- Dec 9, 2003 13:39 ET



The decision to participate in this contest was made only 2 weeks before the contest after one of our members came across the Collegiate Championship www.collegiatechampionship.org web site. The Collegiate Championship is an Amateur Radio competition between college and university Amateur Radio clubs that takes place during the ARRL November Sweepstakes radio contest. The week before the contest Hank N3HV, Fred K9VV and Jeff AJ2U cleaned up the station at T6 and got it ready to operate. The only thing

Setup of K4FAU Photo by Robert KG4IMT

missing was a 40M antenna. Saturday of the contest Ed W1UY and Sjaak KG4PVX were the first to arrive. Together they put up a Delta 160M, 80M, 40M and 30M sloper. Minutes before the start of the contest Art AB4RL joined in and K4FAU was up and running in the contest.

We decided to take part as a Multi station to give non students and alumni a chance to operate. The ARRL rules for a school club are a bit too restrictive. Ed left not to long after the start of the contest. Art and Sjaak operated till about 7 pm and stopped for dinner. Around 8:30 pm John WD4V and Sjaak arrived back at T6 and started operating on 15M. After only a short time John had to leave and Robert KG4IMT joined Sjaak. At around 10pm Saturday Sjaak left for home and Robert continued to operate K4FAU deep in to the night on a good working 40 Sloper.

Sunday morning Jeff used the station for 2 hours as ????? with Sal N4YQU as a onlooker. When it was time for Sal to get behind the mike he suddenly remembered that his XYL had some errands for him to run..... Sjaak arrived early afternoon at T6 together and with Jeff tried to get the Alpha 78 amplifier to work. After some time looking for the TX cable (Hank had arrived in the mean time) the decision was made to keep running "barefoot" 100 Watt.

Sjaak took the controls again of the station to put a couple more calls in the log for K4FAU. After 3 difficult contacts (into CA,PA and TX) Sjaak discovered that the TX power of the radio was only 5 Watts! Jeff had turned the power down in order to hookup the amp. With the power backup to 100 Watt Sjaak continued until there were 101 contacts in the log. Jeff had left and Sal returned back to T6 when it was time for Sjaak to leave. After initial problems figuring out the logging software Sal and Hank put another 20 some stations in the log. Robert was the last person on Sunday to put a couple of entries in the log for our ARRL SS effort.

Our first contest effort (besides Field Day) proved to be fun. Even tough we won't make the top of the list we learned a lot and I am sure we can and will do better in future contests.

Thanks go out to (in order of appearance) Hank N3HV, Fred K9VV, Jeff AJ2U, Ed W1UY, Sjaak KG4PVX, Art AB4RL, John WD4V, Robert KG4IMT and Sal N4YQU -- *KG4PVX*

N2DUP -- Dec 7, 2003 22:43 ET

We sure had a crappy time working stations around these parts this year. This is my second SS ever -- the first being last year. I spent most of last year on 10M. Squeezed out two SFL stations on 10M this year only. Never worked a single VE station, but did work VI. Highlight was working W1AW. Did pretty good in sections in most call districts, except the zero call area ... only worked Colorado! Ugh! I finally gave up Sunday evening, frustrated that I wasn't even going to approach my score of last year's first time out for SS. I hope things are better for the 10M contest.

K8IAT -- Nov 26, 2003 13:44 ET



Dan Rhinesmith, Jason Himes and Corey Rhinesmith



Clinton Boyd, Jason Himes, Corey Rhinesmith with K8IAT as Control Operator

November Sweepstakes was a huge success for upcoming amateurs. This year the Kendallville Contesters took their Field Day Equipment (Yesu Ft-920, 30ft Portable Tower, Cushcraft A3S Tribander and their 80-Meter Off-Center-Fed Dipole) and traveled to Howe, IN to set up in Dan Rhinesmith Garage. We invited several visitors over to experience November FieldDay SS. The use of an old wood working shop provided an excellent amateur radio communication center. Friday night with allot of help from our friends (Michael Schall) we lift our antenna into the air. Place a table in the center of the temporally Emergency Communication Center. Wire up all radio, Computer, interfaces, Clocks and any other tid-bit information devices and we are ready for November SS. On Saturday Morning we all get up early to travel to the second best Hamfest in the nation! Although this year the Ft. Wayne Coliseum was not as filled as previous years but still an excellent time in meeting fellow hams and attending the ARRL forms. At proximately 12:00 local time we all travel back to Howe with all of our cover dishes. The Kendallville Contesters use the November Sweepstakes as a Holiday Banquet (Thanksgiving/Christmas Dinner) The table saw was converted to hold the Holiday Feast. The turkey and all of the

trimmings are dished out and the BUSH Race is under way, we make a couple of contact to insure all instruments are ready for Lift-Off. With our belly's full and the Nascar Officials trying to sort out who won the championship, The Contest Began. This year the contacts where dispassionately down, some due to the downward solar cycle, and others from lack of operators in the contest. But had a wonderful demo to a couple of new possible operators. Clint ran the Logging software (Designed by Scott N3FJP) Jason Himes turned the dial on the radio, and Corey Rhinesmith was operating the microphone made myself (Tim Ryman K8IAT and Garry Pape KB9YTT) very proud to encourage the use of amateur radio to a younger generation. All

thee are now interested in getting there ticket. Gary and I will be starting classes soon, with the promise of them able to operate Field Day 2004 as a Tech Station. -- *K8IAT*

KO6BB -- Nov 24, 2003 23:27 ET

Well, I used to work all the big contests but have been inactive on the bands for about 3 years or so, concentrating on SWLing and beacons.

BUT, I bought a new Icom IC-718 and MFJ 949E and they arrived the Wednesday before the Phone SS. Of course I would never forgive myself if I had missed the SS this year. Thursday and Friday was spent repairing/checking my antennas (Roof mounted Hustler 6BTV and Alpha Delta DX-B sloper for lowbands), setting the station up, checking the station Battery bank (3 120AH Deep cycle batteries) etc. Wired the the old Radio Shack boom headset up for the IC-718 and I was on the air!

I usually work contests in a very casual way, taking lunch breaks, walk around the yard breaks etc. Anyway, I worked 226 QSO's and all but a couple of the USA sections (Utah one state away eluded me). WHERE WAS CANADA? I only worked a couple of their sections. I have yet to make a "sweep" but all my previous SS contests were run from the apartment with attic dipoles. The new setup at this QTH was a vast improvement!

ALL IN ALL I HAD A GREAT TIME AND LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT ONE!
-- *KO6BB*

W3JX -- Nov 24, 2003 16:36 ET

What a great time we had...thirty years ago, Pete (W3WC) and I worked SS from my attic shack as WA3QQQ and WA3QQR. His hair is now gray, and mine is gray and gone, but thirty years hasn't diminished our passion for this fascinating hobby. Thanks to N3FJP for making the log so simple. Thanks to the XYL for the weekend divorce! We plan to do better next year. -- *W3JX*

KI9R -- Nov 24, 2003 21:02 ET

Operated from my car on Sunday in order to add a few more points towards the Society of Midwest Contesters drive for their fourth consecutive Unlimited Title. The competition was very fierce, my congrats to NCCC & PVRC for their all out efforts also. If we get beat as all lifelong Cubs fans know, "Wait till next year!" -- *K9JS*



K9JS Station the mobile

AI9U -- Nov 24, 2003 20:54 ET



AI9U Station

This was my fourth time in SS and my first time I missed the Sweep, I am pretty bummed about this, but if SMC can manage to get the Unlimited Title for the fourth time in a row it will all be ok with me. :-)

Was disappointed a bit in some of the comments being posted on the packet network with regards to SMC posts. The way I look at it the competition was gunning for us and this can only be good for contesting, the petty remarks only fired us up a bit more! -- *K9JS*

KE8FO -- Nov 22, 2003 09:56 ET

After being off the air for over a year and missing the 2002 SS due to a move, and finishing the new house's basement for the past year...I got on the air for the first time Sunday morning of the 2003 SS! It was my goal when I started the basement a year ago, but until the week before the contest, I thought the phone SS was Nov. 22-23. Yikes! But I spent most of Saturday setting up and erecting my MFJ vertical again. Hardest part was getting the coax out of the house...isn't it always?

But I did it...with a funny "chuk-chuk-chuk" noise centered around 21 MHz, but also heard on 28 and 14! I think it is either a grounding problem or something in the new house is creating

RF. Anyone with a suggestion, please email me at ke8fo@tm.net. Thanks.

Operated 10 hours Sunday and nabbed 175 QSOs in 65 sections with my 100W IC-728, and MFJ vertical and VersaTuner II, from West Michigan. Turns out the dipole up about 12' was tuned too high in frequency for all the bands, but the tuner worked.

Surprised at the conditions: 40M was my best band, and very little on 15 and nothing on 10!

This has got to be my last year for handwritten logs. I hope to get an used PC and do computer logging by the time the ARRL DX test rolls around. I haven't checked lately, but I could never find a contest log program for my Mac. That's too bad, because Macs rule, if you ask me.

And next SS, a 40-80 dipole gets up in the air, I go 24 hours and try for my second sweep in 25 years! But I am just happy to get back on. The basement is almost done!

---Mark, KE8FO (licensed and ARRL member since 1976) -- *KE8FO*

W7KPL -- Nov 21, 2003 17:36 ET

Great contest. Beat my dad's score of 1932 by 8 qso's. in 1932, I believe, was the very first SS Contest. He garnered 200 contacts with all homebrew equipment. In approximately 14 hours of operation I nabbed 208 contacts in 2003.

Thanks to all who helped me reach this goal.

Best 73's Jerry W7KPL Scottsdale,AZ -- *W7KPL*

W7KPL -- Nov 21, 2003 17:22 ET

Wow! Great contest. I was trying to beat my dad's 1932 score of 200 contacts. Dad was W9IPT and now a Silent Key. In about 14 hours of operation I nabbed 208! Thanks to all who helped me make this goal.

I have a modest station. 100 watts and a dipole.

Best 73's to all!

Jerry W7KPL Scottsdale,AZ jjer101@aol.com -- *W7KPL*

K8FC -- Nov 21, 2003 16:22 ET



Next year, I am going to let Brewski (the golden retriever) do the SSB Sweepstakes.

Well, I must admit , SSB is brutal and not for the faint of ears. I operate and love CW most of the time but since I made a CW sweep this year I thought I would try for the SSB sweep. Well, did not make it as I missed ND and WY and I live in Colorado. Go figure. I should have went outside and shouted north and beat tom-toms that would have worked better. Heard both stations weak, but they were in my skip zone at the time I heard them.

I was hoarse for three days, even using the computer wave files for most of the exchange.

All antennas and the radio worked without a flaw, knock on wood. Murphy for once stayed home.

I will be there next year, me and the dog. Take care and good luck.

/joe -- *K8FC*

N8II -- Nov 21, 2003 14:42 ET

What a difference from last year, solar flux down, geomag activity up! It was much harder to hold a run frequency with LP and the longer skip zone on 20M especially late Sunday morning and early evening. I had to try 75M early around 2345Z and started a good run right away, running 101 Q's in the 00Z hour. Just after 01Z a skip zone started forming and all of New England plus even MI started skipping over me with fluttery signals; even W1B1GQR was puny weak. I was just about ready to bag it when 75 began improving around 03Z and by 04Z, I had another 101 hour. Sunday AM was OK on 75, but the skip zone stayed too long to make 40M useful til around 15Z. Sunday around 18Z, 15M was wide open to CA with only a few AZ, NM, and TX stations as well, nothing from the Rocky mtns. or Northwest. Around 02Z the flutter and skip zone returned to 75M.

The sections came pretty easily but somewhat slowly without having to waste time searching, except for AK and NT. I found KL7J loud on 20M about 23Z, but never heard VY1.

The secret to success was running lots of casual ops, especially on 75M; QSO total was 575 there. Thanks for the Q's! -- *N8II*

VY1MB -- Nov 20, 2003 15:03 ET

Contesting is alive and well in the Yukon or I should say NT. for the SS contest. Bob VY1MB ran a multi-op station with the help of Dean VY1CQ, Martin VY1YT and technical support and repairs by Doug VY1BD. Despite the bands being very poor and 3 antenna repairs at 1130 pm Sat. evening in temperatures of minus 28C we kept a real contest going by trying to compete with Jay Allan VY1JA. Fun was had by all and we'd like to thank Bob for his station and hospitality. You can bet in next year's SS contest we will be back bigger and better. -- *VY1BD*

KB1IAR -- Nov 20, 2003 14:53 ET

Had a lot of fun this year with my IC-718 @ 100w thru my MFJ-949e to th G5RV Jr. about 40' up.

This is the 2nd time I tried the SS. Last year I was a new General and worked only 26 stations. This year I set a personal goal of 100 QSOs and made it exactly working 20 and 40. I wanted to work 10 but found the band dead whenever I tried it.

I was cursed with a wicked cold and sore throat that kept me from making too many contacts on Saturday. I thought for sure I wouldn't get there but was able to pick up steam Sunday afternoon when my throat was a little less sore and hit # 100 around 2330. I came back in the final hour to add a few "insurance" contacts but found the bands too noisy and little activity.

My thanks to everyone who was patient enough to listen to my hoarse voice and complete the exchange when conditions weren't ideal. I still get disappointed when some of the hardcore contest stations quickly dismiss my weak signal, but I do understand that they have a different goal than I as a strictly casual contester, do. Since I'm not looking to finish at the top in the standings, I have more satisfaction when I complete a difficult contact and I and the other operator thank each other for their patience. It's also a lot of fun working in one of the rarer sections (RI) and hearing the appreciation in the other operator's voice when he thanks you for giving him a needed multi.

Again, had a lot of fun and am looking forward to the next one.

73, James in Manville RI -- *KB1IAR*

WB8RFB -- Nov 19, 2003 21:47 ET

This year's SS Phone was a low point score-wise for me. It seemed band conditions were constantly changing and I had to ask/send a lot more repeats than in past years. Sure shows you what poor band conditions will do.

However, it was nice to see a lot of new '03 Check's out there and realize that some of the new

hams are getting their feet wet in a premier contest that has been fun for me since I got into ham radio back in the '70's.

Although I didn't put in much time this year, it still was nice to make the contacts that I did. It was also good to still see that some ops don't take this event so seriously that they can't take the time to "stop and smell the roses." By that I mean that I heard a few stations have a "mini-QSO" after the contest exchange and relate how things were going to each other. To me, that brings out the essence of ham radio.

That's not meant to disparage the big guns. It was nice to work them too as they are very efficient, have great signals and you are in and out of there in a jiffy. We need both kinds of ops to make this the successful event it is. I heard a lot of them patiently work stations that didn't have a lot of contest experience. That's the sign of a true ham!

Let's hope that 2004 brings better band conditions and more ops getting on the air from the "rarer" sections.

See you all next year. -- *WB8RFB*

W4ATL -- Nov 19, 2003 12:41 ET



W4ATL with the Elecraft K2 and Yaesu FT-920 in the background. The smile was before the bands died.

This was my first SS using SO2R. I have a FT-920 and Elecraft K2 with an A4S at 50 ft, 40M dipole at 50 ft and a G5RV for the K2.

I had a great start on 20 and then things just slowly died throughout the night. I had a lot of power line noise on 15M Saturday afternoon and evening. For some reason, 40 was dead for me by midnight and that just left 80 on my G5RV (my 80M antenna was damaged during a wind storm.). Sunday morning was real slow until about 1500z Sunday. The 15M power line noise quieted down and it was a lot better band than the mess on 20M. By Sunday afternoon I started to feel better about my effort and ended up just short of last year's score.

I did not hear AK until the very end of the contest and I never heard NT although I heard people working VY1JA. Looks like the guys in 6, 7, 0 and 5 land had the upper hand in getting the sweep as they were working VY1JA while I was listening to static. -- *W4ATL*

K3ASK -- Nov 19, 2003 12:15 ET

My first ARRL contest and boy was it a fun time. I helped operate a kids club station and they really gave me an education. Some very intelligent and well spoken kids able to work a pile up. Very impressive to watch and an honor to be a guest op. The bands were difficult at best, but still a great time. Next year I'll be SO2R using my own call. The station building has begun.

Anyone have a tower, stacked beams, and a radio they are looking to "donate" to a worthy cause? Hi Hi

73 Steve -- *KB3KAQ*

NX9T -- Nov 19, 2003 09:03 ET

This effort was a mixed bag for me. Saturday started out painfully slow and I just couldn't get "in the groove". I was so frustrated that when I QRT'd for the night....I made plans to attend a hamfest Sunday morning rather than get up and contest. Well, I did just that but as Murphy would have it...on the way to the hamfest I was listening in on 40m and couldn't believe the HUGE signals everywhere. The bands were alive!!! I went on to the hamfest but returned home and got back on the air around 11:00am. Played a few hours til 1:00 when I took 2 hours off to enjoy the beautiful NC weather outdoors. Got back on the air and played contest until my kids bedtime when I took another hour off. All in all, I wound up with about 13 hours operating time.

The bands were incredibly jammed packed with contestors. 20, 40, and 80M presented very little room for finding a frequency. This was a primary reason for my depression I think Saturday...I like to run'em and this just wasn't happening. I'm starting to think that the SO2R approach(which I don't do) is taking up to much spectrum. Several times I found a clear frequency...QRL'd a couple times...started up...only to be told "The frequencies in use..blah blah CQ CQ CQ"...It was obviously someone off on another frequency working someone else then when they came BACK wanted their frequency back under the premis that they never gave it up. I believe if you leave...don't respond to QRL type inquiry...then too bad. That's your risk of trying to utilize two radios on two bands at the same time. Ohwell...off the soapbox.

In my 13 hours...wound up with 921 Q's and 79 multipliers. Never heard "NT" and am glad I didn't spend time hunting them down as it sounds like working them would have been difficult(to say the least) and time consuming.

SS is always a great contest. I enjoy it greatly and am so glad that Sunday wound up better than Saturday...the contest was saved!!!! :)

Please feel free to visit my homepage for info. about my stations: www.qsl.net/nx9t

73 and GL! Jeff -- *NX9T*

KN3A -- Nov 18, 2003 20:38 ET



My wife thinks my hamshack desk is a mess???!!!

This was my first contest after a 7 year absence from ham radio. I decided to run SSB at QRP. What a surprise it was to me that I worked 50 ARRL sections and logged over 150 stations. I really want to thank everyone for their patience with QRP stations like mine. All but one hung in there until they got all my information. Thanks everyone, you were great. I also used N3FJP's logging program. Unlike 7 yrs. ago when I had to keep checking my handwritten log, I knew instantly if I had a dupe or not. I look forward to more contests ahead, especially a RTTY or CW contest.

73 -- Scott

-- *KN3A*

W0NO -- Nov 18, 2003 17:14 ET



Minimal RFI worries at Alan's farm Multi-2 QTH, and lots of room for towers, 4 squares and Beverages.

Multiop in KS 1529 Qs * sweep = 244,640

The old Flatland Amateur Radio Transmitting Society convened once again at the W0NO QTH. Conditions were a little more stable than for the cw session (see our CW '03 soapbox under K0WA). NL was the last section to go in the log Sunday morning, as has been the case more often than not for us the last few Sweepstakes.

It's sure good to log so many recent checks. Some undoubtedly are new club callsigns etc. but many are honest newbies. Witness some of the other soapbox comments here..... In fact our station owner W0NO has only been licensed since 1999 although the 'bug' has been in him



Tim AB0S runs on the 756PRO II/Alpha 91B main station.

much longer. Apparently the future of contesting is bright.

We used the 2nd radio to better effect in this contest than any previous effort, but we still have much to learn about the most effective use of it.

See you next year. -- *KOBJ*



Lee K0WA tunes the 91B while Alan W0NO checks for smoke...



In his 2nd SS with us, Mike K0FJ is our newest addition and he can R U N .



Bruce K0BJ and W0NO on the 2nd rig scour for fresh meat during the "Sunday noon doldrums".

KE6CC -- Nov 18, 2003 14:53 ET

HI.

This was my first sweepstakes and it was a lot of fun. The bands could have cooperated more.

10 meters was dead until Sunday. I heard a lot of the east coast there running 40 over 9, but they were stations I had already worked.

15 and 20 were very good and very busy. The signals came and went erratically. I had several comments on how strong my 5W station was from stations I had been calling for 10 to 20 minutes! Many times stations would disappear mid-QSO.

My antenna is a B & W multi-band folded dipole at 6,030 feet. That helps a lot. However you sure can't park and call CQ using QRP.

I heard all sections except NT, SK, and NL, but I couldn't work them all. They didn't hear me. Frustrating.

I'm looking forward to next year.

John

-- *KE6CC*

KE4VH -- Nov 17, 2003 13:24 ET

Thanks to all who struggled to pull my puny signal out of the static this year. My regular sized G5RV had come down a few months ago, and I wasn't able to get it back up in time for the contest. Had to settle for a "junior" G5RV (40 through 10) at less than optimum height, and positioned in the wrong direction to boot. In 2000, I'd managed to get a clean sweep, but 10 meters was still in pretty good shape that year and accounted for quite a few contacts. Without 10 and 75 this year, it was a struggle, and I was only able to muster 59 sections. Next year, I think I'll set up a portable station in SNJ. Never heard a single CQ from there the entire weekend! -- *KE4VH*

KI6CK -- Nov 18, 2003 01:46 ET

First time in SS. Great fun! Took a bit of time to assimilate techniques for logging and sending exchange. No wave files this time around! Twenty and forty meter bands worked really well. Thanks to all those considerate operators. -- *KI6CK*

KD5YIL -- Nov 17, 2003 20:52 ET

Hi!!

As a new "HAM," I've been enjoying this "hobby" a great deal!! Thanks to all the experienced old hands who welcomed a new '03' to the ranks.

I run a small station using home brewed loops but still was able to snag the rare 1500 miler and

have a lot of fun. And all on less than 50W!!!

A funny sidenote though... I once got a little excited and cranked up the power a little too much. I found out that the alarm system in my house works, and I also gave the police officers who showed up something to chuckle about.....

This is fun and I enjoy it, but I would ask that the contest keyer users to program the machines to pause longer so we can get our entire six character callsign in, and remember, the small guy out there trying to be heard, might be the "sweeper" you need...

73 to all y'all.... I hope to work you later on down the log... :-> Art - -- *KD5YIL*

KI4ASK -- Nov 17, 2003 20:02 ET



Joe Domaleski (KI4ASK) and his daughter Alex participate in the 2003 Phone Sweeps

I'm a new amateur radio operator and this was my first contest. Wow! It was a lot of fun, but hard work at the same time.

I got a late start because I was flying in from a business trip on Saturday. I began working the contest around 0530 on 16 Nov (UTC). Using an Instant Messenger via the internet, I contacted a friend of mine, KT4Q, to find out about the required exchange and away I went.

I used a Yaesu FT-897 (100w), AT-897 auto-tuner (a big help!), and a Van Gorden all-band (not) dipole hanging about 90 ft. up in a big oak

tree in my back yard.

Because I didn't have any logging software, I printed out the manual logs and began logging stations. Most of my contacts were on 40m, 20m, and 15m. 20 and 15 seemed to be especially effective.

My XYL and children were asleep when I started. When they awoke, they found me hard at work in the shack. My 8 year old daughter (who will probably be the next ham in the house) helped review my log for dupes when I made calls. We missed a few (more on that below).

Some observations I made during the contest: 1. It helps to have everything you need at your fingertips - especially controls for the rig. 2. Headphones help you hear and focus 3. Most of the folks creating pile-ups were either rare sections and/or had a lot of power. I ran 100w and is was

plenty to be heard but not enough to set up shop and wait for people to contact you. 4. Do they really have radios in the Northwest Territories? (just kidding, but I couldn't find them). 5. Almost everyone was friendly. When they heard my 03 check, most welcomed me to ham radio (nice touch - thanks). 6. A few folks took the contest too seriously - I was scolded a few times for making a duplicate contact. Sorry, I only had pen and paper not sophisticated software. We all have to start somewhere. 7. Despite all of the fun, I was disappointed with a few stations who were occupying too much bandwidth. I don't have sophisticated monitoring equipment in the shack, but I know (just from using my dial) that a few stations seemed to be spread across double the bandwidth. It's not a good thing when I tune across 5 KHz and hear the same station! 8. I was amused by the non-contesters ragchewing between the QSO's. They seemed to be tucked away weathering the onslaught on traffic - a few even making funny remarks about it. 9. Passing the morse test and getting the General upgrade was definitely worth it! I can't wait until the next contest.

Oh, one other thing. My XYL and other 2 children didn't like having daddy tucked away in the shack for the weekend. Next time, I need to send them shopping, to the movies or something. I'll plan in advance so we can all agree.

73 to all and especially to those of you who made my first contest such a great experience.

"JoeDom" -- *KI4ASK*

N4KIT -- Nov 17, 2003 16:09 ET

Well, where to start.

That seemed to be the question this year. 10 seemed to be all but dead, though some signals (strong ones too) were there, I think most assumed it would be closed and started at 15. I did too. After the first couple of hours, I gradually migrated, seemingly reaching each band a little behind the curve. Even when I could find a clear spot, my 100 w and Carolina Windom didn't seem to be able to punch through the QRM from nearby stations well enough to be copied reliably. So I satisfied myself with a hunt and pounce approach.

Did I mention the bands were weird? A station there S10+ one minute was in the noise the next. I had no luck locating J. and his fellow VY1's at all. Heard Hawaii, but I was unable to punch through for a Q.

Missing from the log this year: NT, RI, SF, SB, PAC, AK, WY, ID

Of note this year were a few very high quality QRP stations. I didn't make note of the calls, but the signals were first rate, attesting to much work to optimize antennas. FB guys, well done.

At least I did (with encouragement from the XYL and kids) manage to top my best score, even though Sun morning my heart really wasn't in it. Thanks to all the OMs and YLs who came back to my call. This is still my favorite operating event of the year.

73 de Chris 285 A N4KIT 96 VA, see ya'll next year! -- *N4KIT*

N7HJ -- Nov 17, 2003 14:28 ET

Bummer contest this year. Was looking forward to it. Gave out 30 contacts but then an emergency cropped up. Came back restarted program but got a glitch and whole LOG went Bye Bye. UGH.

End of contest for me. -- *N7HJ*

N7VMR -- Nov 17, 2003 11:43 ET

I was having great fun, Until I was notified I had to go from Billings, MT to Great Falls, MT on Sunday.

I was to retrieve my daughters stolen vehicle :-)

I wish to thank those that help me get started this year.

Jim Fuller N7VMR MT SEC -- *N7VMR*

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