Contest Soapbox

2004 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes

35 Soapbox entries available

AJ4W/ROVER -- May 8, 2004 22:53 ET

Hello to all at ARRL: Just a few lines to let you know about our rover operation. The team consisted of Joe (AJ4W) Tom (N5ROC) and Dana KD4ESC. Tom's father loaned us his Alegro motor home for our rover operation. We all met at Dana's house in Cullman to install our antennas and equipment. As we started out from EM64 headed south it was decided to go to Red Mountain in EM63 and set up as close to the new Vulcan. Most all TV stations are located here and the RF is very heavy as you would think. We were able to make several contacts and get some pictures(see attachment)while setting next to NBC 13 van in visitors parking lot. Next we headed south toward EM62 down 280 . By this time it had started to rain and 280 is very congested but Tom drove us through with Dana (which new the territory) guided us on the right path. Joe was on 2 meters and 70 CM calling CQ. The dual band beam 2&70 was pointing to the rear while we were going south-southeast. The only real band opening of any kind happened while moving down 280.AG5V came booming in from EM 55 on 2 totally unexpected but giving hope that we just might hit it right for a good band opening on this rover operation. With new vigor and after stopping to eat a bit we headed on down 280 still looking for the bands to open up. As we checked our GPS locator to see if we had made it to EM62 so we could give out some more contacts in a different Grid (and get some more ourselves) we called CQ contest AJ4W/ROVER. Well by this time the word had gotten around and stations we just waiting for us.Jimmy Long W4ZRZ led the way on all bands. But Jimmy was not too impressed with our signals . We took his advise and moved on down the road to the next hill top which made a whole lot of difference. From here we got to work WB4VHF N4GRU KE4TFI N4DMR N4DXY and many others. It may seem funny but when you are off like that it sure is good to here folks from the grid you came from. I can just imagine how it must feel to be on an rare island somewhere and herein the group back home, Wow. After bedding down for the night in the Wal-Mart parking lot we were very comfortable at first. As the night went on and temps started to drop I knew why Tom wanted us to bring along our own sleeping bags. Good Idea Tom, otherwise I would have frozen hi hi. Getting some breakfast the next morning seamed to rejuvenate all of us as we set our on the highest spot in the state of Alabama. But wait, we have another grid here EM72. CQ CQ CQ AJ4W Rover, hello anyone. Nope not anyone, not even Jimmy W4ZRZ. We were either in the land of no RF or everyone was gone to church or sleeping late. In any case no contacts from EM72 . But we all knew things were going to change soon cause we were headed to Mt.Cheaha. If you have not ever been there, then make plans to go, just make sure it is better weather than it was when we arrived. When we got to the top , the wind was rocking the motor home. It was not just a gust or two but strong blast of wind. Again we encountered strong RF from the APT transmitters so we went up in the observatory to look out

over the country side. Trouble was and this is no joke the APT tower which was less than 75 ft. away was nearly unseeable looking out of the windows. Tom did bring his trusted camera and got our picture though(also in attachment). After leaving the peak and coming down the slopes we were able to make several good contacts on all bands from the scenic view pulloffs. That was about it from EM73. Next we headed north to EM74 with no way of knowing what layed ahead or where exactly we were going. Thank goodness for GPS locators we knew when we had made it to the new grid. No mountain top, but no obstructions either. We set up and started to operate and were told by several what good signal we had all around. As we got back on the road , heading for our home Grid , I heard W4LIA asking if we were back in EM64 yet. Again a quick check of the GPS and sure enough we had just crossed back over so got to work Rick from EM64 on his three bands. Also N4DXY,W4EVH W4WDH, W3NH, AA4R, AF4OD, AA4R, KM4MP and several others. A good time was had by all of us and I would not be surprised if at some point we tried it again. If so I know we will let more people know what we are going to do. 73 FROM THE AJ4W/ ROVER GROUP DANA KD4ESC, JOE AJ4W & TOM N5ROC.
-- *AJ4W*

N1MJC -- Mar 11, 2004 17:42 ET

Jean, N1MJC, operates the 2004 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes--her first. [N1RL Photo]

We (Jean, N1MJC, and Rick, N1RL) had a lot of fun operating this contest, which provided the occasion for our first 10 GHz QSO. Fortunately, the makeshift 6 and 2-meter antenna system held up for the weekend. Getting the shaky pole and beams up in the air in the first place at our tower-less QTH was hazardous duty, however, given temperatures near zero and snow and ice on the ground. Frostbite loomed.

We set up a separate N1MJC VHF-UHF station on the kitchen table (easier access to manually rotate the antennas, and Rick was working an HF contest upstairs at the same time). While we didn't have huge signals and were unable to operate for the full contest period, we did manage to hit a 6-meter opening into Florida. Never did work that VP9, although he was quite loud at times into Western Massachusetts.

Many thanks to all who pulled us out of the noise. -- *N1RL*

The N1MJC "shaky-pole" antenna system, which barely cleared the rooftop. [N1RL Photo]

N6NB/R -- Feb 29, 2004 00:53 ET

We traveled 1,300 miles, activated 16 grid squares, called a lot of CQs and had a lot of fun working 10 bands. There are photos, along with a discussion of the history of the rover category, on n6nb.com . -- *N6NB*

WA1RKS -- Feb 27, 2004 16:28 ET

Had to do some scrambling to get a rotator working,but made it in time! Don't think activity was as gud as last year.As far as on the air testers and point giver-outers!.But worked my time,and had a gud time as always.Would have liked to increase my 432 contacts,maybe in June.A longer opening on 6m would have been nice, worked a few but not as long as I would have liked to have seen. it. Also would have liked to seen all participants listed in QST,like they used to,myself included.So 73 gud dx! see you in June! de Ellis. -- *WA1RKS*

W6SN -- Feb 26, 2004 03:13 ET

Well this was my first contest; I operated with Nick W6GNU, and Jason W6SN on Top of Mt.

Here is Jason (W6SN) and Nick (W6GNU) at the operating position

Here is the 6m beam on Sunday, It was nice after the wind came!

Vaca in CM88.

Not knowing what to expect, I brought my IC-706MKII, Nick had his IC-746, and Jason had his Kenwood TS-B2000, and we had extra stuff to go around! I operated 6m (First time on 6m)(100W), Nick handled 2m (100w), and Jason had 440(50w). We had a 6m 3 Element beam at 30', stacked 2m beams at 15', and an Elk 2m/440 for 440 at 20'. We also had 1.2 ATV (MDARC ATV repeater) and 2.4 Wifi (Which neither got working)

Now here's the crazy part – We are at a radio site, with power, But instead we run off of 3 batteries (2 car, and 1 deep cycle) for the WHOLE contest

We got up there Friday morning about 0900z (we could not wait till the next morning!) We where in the middle of light rain, clouds (2800ft elevation) and darkness, we got everything up by 1400z, and tested.

Time for the real test: Could we do the whole contest and not have any problems? Well we had a couple, about 20 hours into the contest (After we talked to almost everyone that was out that day) the winds kicked up, we are talking 50-60 mph! So here Nick and I go, running around making sure stuff didn't fly away, Thankfully nothing did... We also had to go back down a couple times for various things, including a serial cable for the TS-B2000 – OOPS!

Contacts: 158 Multiplier: 22 Total points: 3872

Not bad for a first time! Hear all of you at the next vhf contest! 73's Trevor, KG6MDW

Gas for running my car for lights = $20 Screen tent = $50 Radio Equipment & Antennas =

Here is the 2m stack (on the fence) and 440.. You can also see our semi-wind-shelterd operating area

Here is the Saturday morning pic of the 6m beam

$3750 Masts and related equipment = $100

3 days of sleep-deprived, RF exposed, Cold & Windy Contest bliss = Priceless. -- *KG6MDW*

KF0Q -- Feb 20, 2004 07:40 ET

Operating Site in EN44da KF0Q/0

Well I wasn't sure if it would happen last fall - but I actually followed through and operated single-op portable (QRP) for the Jan '04 contest. May sound a bit crazy to some to even consider the setup outdoors in January but I live in the southern part of Minnesota - I hear about the guys up north near International Falls and such and consider myself lucky living down here! Some of my friends think that adding the challenge of a small signal is further abuse! But I always seek out some adventure for a contest and my plan was in place. On Jan 2 it all started with a phone call to obtain permission to set up and operate at the site in EN44 located at the Winona Sportsman's Club on the ridge just west of Winona, MN some 10 miles from my home. I picked the site because our local club here in Winona often sets up for Field Day there and it

Looking West

432-3456 stack close up (M2 9WL on top)

Crowded operating position (better than outside!)

lends itself somewhat to VHF on up work with some good elevation. (Besides – I knew the road would get plowed too). Later that afternoon I took advantage of a near January thaw and prepared for the contest by marking off the two mast locations, trailer location, and setting the earth anchors in the partially frozen ground. Not knowing what could happen in the next 3 weeks I marked all the anchors and mast locations with fluorescent orange paint. The only other preparation I accomplished in the coming weeks was to replace the generator oil with 5W30 synthetic blend and give it a good test run.

For my portable setup I use 2 telescoping push up masts that have guy ropes tied off at 3 points for mounting the 8 yagis. The larger 36 ft mast has three tiers of guy ropes while the smaller mast for 432 on up had two sets. It usually takes about 3 days to get everything just right for the contest (in warmer weather). I really had no idea what to expect so I thought that it would be good to start a week early. My first return trip on January 17th however; was aborted due to the ice storm the night before. My second return trip on the 21st had to be aborted due to the dangerously high winds at the site. (Assembly of this style push up mast …by yourself …in the wind is not only difficult, but also dangerous!) The big stack (6MX5, 16LBX, 222-16) finally went up Friday afternoon just one day before the test. I worked in pack boots with several layers of clothes and my head covered at all times. Most of the gear was staged at home to minimize the time for assembly in the field. I worked in short shifts with my hands exposed at a minimum. While working in the cold I learned how to prepare a taught-line hitch in just a few seconds! One thing I hadn't thought too much about was how the low temperatures would affect cableling. My setup requires 11 cables for antennas, IF's, PTT's and 2 for the rotators. The LMR400 flex wasn't too bad but everything else was considerably stiff.

On day two of setup I was greeted with some unexpected colder temperatures. It was -8F when I

left the house for the ridge. Even though I knew it would be tough to get the work done outside in time for the contest I pressed ahead and got the antennas for next five bands: 432 - 3456 up in record time! Even in the warmer months I have had some trouble hoisting the tower mounted xverter box up to the aluminum cross members - but this time out things went OK. (I have been known to be fussy about how the stack looks ...it really helped keeping my torpedo level in my back pocket this time out!) As it later turned out in spite of the delays and cold I was probably the most prepared for the contest start this year than any other time.

My operating position was inside the small familiar looking yellow camping trailer (courtesy N0QK – tnx again Russ!). The table in the camper is barely big enough for the 2 transceivers, rotor boxes, keyers, and computer. Underneath the table was my Astron power supply, and 902-144 xverter. Once again I used the IC746PRO for 50MHz and the IF for 902, 2304, and 3456 as well as 146MHz FM for local contacts. Just as in the September '03 test I handled PTT keying between the IF rig and the xverter 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.

My generator was actually on-line at contest start as the trailer warmed up a bit (For a heat source inside the camper I used a small electric heater. I tried the propane furnace for a bit but decided that it wasn't worth the trouble). Immediately I heard many of the locals mostly from EN44 exchanging reports. It wasn't easy, but I ignored the stations for a few more minutes taking extra time to make sure both keyers were operating, as I knew it would be nice to have a beacon available for the higher band qso's. First contacts in the log were W9FZ/R. Bruce was really close to my west and really loud on all 7 bands! For the next few hours I was quite busy working Bruce and several of the locals including K0NY/R and WA9IGK/R on their four bands. (The heater by the way did an awesome job! By 0100Z on Saturday night the camper was a comfortable 64F inside!)

Things seemed to quiet down a bit after that. Many of the stations to my north were busy chasing the rover stations around and I had substantial difficulty contacting anyone with all the yagis pointed away from me. I worked several more stations throughout the evening but pulled the switch when things got really quiet for a good rest at home overnight. The next day things went pretty fast. I was happy to hook up with some stations to the southeast: N2BJ and WB9Z on CW. Although things were pretty quiet to the east - I did happen to run into KC9BQA for a 3-band sweep. Other highlights included all band sweeps with several stations .... 902 and 1296 were the most impressive this time out. My frozen tower mounted xverter box for 2304 and 3456 seemed to work just fine too!

Not without some troubles - just as in the September '03 test the generator had problems later Sunday. Even though it wasn't snowing at the time the high wind up on the ridge caused blowing snow to get pulled into the generator between the brushes and slip rings causing a shower of sparks! I didn't even bother to see how bad the damage was - just decided to pull the

switch. (Maybe need to find a contest-rated generator next time out.). My whole operation came to a dead stop just after 5:00 Sunday. I used the extra time to begin tear down (typically takes 2 days to get everything back home) which was a great idea as it turned out. In all I feel that the effort was a success - had plenty of room for more contacts. For those who took the time for a qso – thank you! One thing I will take from the experience is the knowledge in what it takes to deal with the cold WX setup and logistics. I got all the gear back to the house in record time by 7:00 Monday morning just before the start of small storm that closed schools with 7" of new snow. 73, de -- *KF0Q*

K1IM -- Feb 13, 2004 23:11 ET

Nice flat conditions along with 6 through 1296 antennas mounted at only 20' at my new rental home, made for some real noise floor Q's ! Local terrain was over the antenna height in most all directions except for SW into FM28/29. This was an exercise in system design work and not a serious contest attempt. Having sold my home at near 1200' elevation a few months ago, due to good real estate advantages and misdirected local zoning gods, I look forward to a new location by next January test. Thanks to all that climbed into their radio to work my very modist temporary station in northern CT FN31WX.

73's and CU agn in Dayton. Space #2214 and the weak sig & contest dinners.

Tom K1IM -- *K1IM*

W6YV -- Feb 12, 2004 20:02 ET

The 1296 loop yagi is looking for those elusive QSOs beyond the mountians to the north. The Library Tower is the tallest building between Chicago and Taiwan.

I operated W6YV, the University of Southern California Amateur Radio Club station, in the Single Operator Low Power category. The club is located on top of a seven story building on the USC campus about two miles south of downtown Los Angeles.

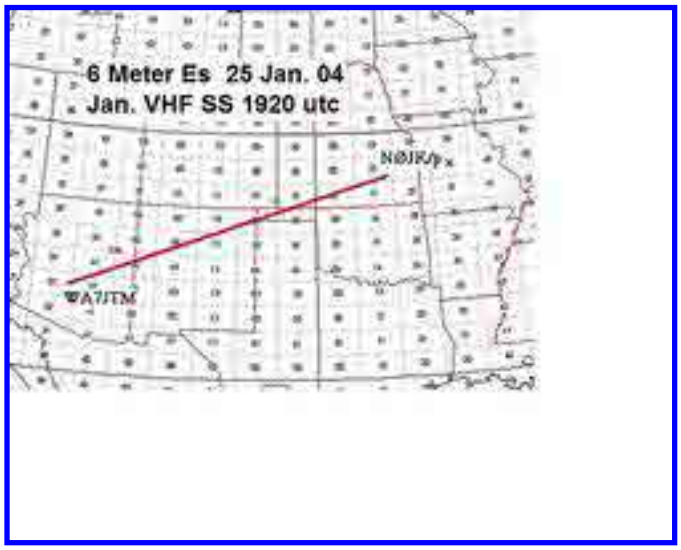
Virtually all of the Los Angeles basin can be seen from this spot, as suggested by the photos. I managed lots of local QSOs on five bands, but getting out beyond about 200 miles across the mountains was very difficult. Local noise problems and the propensity for almost everybody to be on top of each other on the calling frequencies contributed to this problem. Es to Texas on six meters produced two new grids at the end of the contest, but otherwise

Visible to the south from W6YV is the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and in the far distance to its right is Catalina Island.

conditions were poor. In addition to contesting, I enjoyed chatting with a number of old friends.

73, Curt Roseman -- *K9AKS*

N0JK -- Feb 11, 2004 14:30 ET



Plot of 6M Es Sunday at 1920 utc.

A "tough" contest to operate as a single op QRP portable in the cold, windy, icy Flint Hills of central Kansas. The WX forecast prior to the contest was for pleasant sunny 55 deg F both days. Saturday ended up being cold and windy, Sunday freezing rain, sleet, ice and snow. By Sunday evening the "Cattle Pens" where I operate was a winter wonderland with the antennas coated with ice.

No tropo on 2M or above. Highlight was catching WA7JTM DM33 Arizona on 6 meters during a short loud Es opening early Sunday afternoon for my only Es QSO in the contest. I worked Pete using the dipole shown in the picture. The 6M radio is an old MFJ-9406. Pete e-mailed I was his best "DX" on 6M during the contest.(After the contest he had W5 and XEs in) -- *N0JK*

Homemade dipole used to work WA7JTM.

W9XA -- Feb 10, 2004 13:37 ET

<STRONG> 1296 worked anyway! </STRONG>

I had a great time on the contest! Thanks to all the patient folks for the 7 initial contacts on 1296. As you can see in the photo, Murphy re-arranged the 1296 array prior to the contest - I can only imagine where that 4th yagi is pointing. -- *W9XA*

K1KC/R -- Feb 2, 2004 23:08 ET

Thanks to all the stations who worked our five band continuously moving rover. We covered over 1000 miles and made 170 contacts. We found no enhanced propagation so only worked stations one to two grids away usually. The rove began near Atlanta and went through Nashville, Knoxville and eastern Tennessee towards Roanoke. We turned south instead of proceeding on to Hagerstown as a nice winter storm was chasing us! Spending the night in SW Virginia we awoke to heavy snow and 17 degrees.Travelling south through Charlotte and Columbia the road conditions were dicey. It was an interesting trip and we promise to never do it again! -- *K1KC*

Navigator's position

Technician's hangout

Sixteen antennas to assist the propagation gods

Here's where we turn DC back into AC

A cozy spot to make a few contacts from

N0URW -- Feb 2, 2004 20:00 ET

NØURW en41go (Ø¿ø)

Greetings everyone..... I was ready,,,,my equipment was ready,,,,but mother nature had other plans....A Huge Ice & Snow storm projected to hit over the weekend curtailed some rovers from my area...Not to worry, I had already planned on running hi-power on 6 & 2 ....In past years ,running low power in January just didn't give me the punch to make it over the higher noise

2 meter beam center top, 222 outside 4 antennas, 432 inside 4 antennas

6 meter array, 4-6 el @ 60 ft

levels..So this year I was ready... I just finished installing a new 2 meter beam & wanted a good test...(the beam worked great)Once again the noise played a factor & high winds slowed antenna positioning. Saturday: A nice opening on 6 meters into the Florida area prior to the contest all but vanished by start time.. I managed to log a few east coast stations on 6, but very spotty. 2 meters was the place to be , with good conditions to the north & south out 400+ miles.... 222 mhz. & 432 mhz. were also good... Sunday: I awoke Sunday morning to bitter cold winds howling through the trees... Brrrrr... East winds so strong my antennas had to be pointed east or west... This was ok for a while as I found several stations on 6 meters out east to work off scatter...2,222 & 432 were average.... Late Sunday afternoon the winds died down enough to turn the antennas...Again 2 meters worked out to 400+ miles north & south... & 350+ miles east & west ... With no major tropo over the weekend from my qth, my score shows an average January VHF contest... Thanks again to the rovers who did make it into my log & I promise come June ,you won't have to worry about ice or snow,however there is the occasional tornado...Hope you all had fun! I Did! Listen for me in June,,,hope to have my new 2 meter array up !73's (ô¿Ø) -- *N0URW*

N6ZE/R -- Jan 31, 2004 21:11 ET

N6ZE, Transcon Rover (4730 miles traveled this time)

N6ZE/R operated from 5 grids, 4 states, & 4 divisions during the ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes. My ops were in conjunction with a business trip. (I has been off during the weekend of 16/17 January, because I believed the "QST" contest announcement!)

Stats:

4495 points total

FN31: 6m: 1q/1g; 2m: 2q/1g; 70cm: 1q/1g. I operated for 10 minutes at the beginning of the SS from the Bradley Airport Terminal. Best DX: K1ZZ in Stratford, CT (~20 miles) on 6/2/70.

EL96: 6m: 3q/1g; 2m: 4q/3g; 70cm: 3q/2g. I operated for about an hour from the top of a 7 story garage at the Ft. Lauderdale Airport. Best DX: 6m: K1JT(FN20); Ft. Myers on 2/70; best SWL: EL98 on 2m

FN30: 6m: 14q/1g; 2m: 30q/3g; 70cm: 15q/3g. I operated for about 5 hours from the 20th floor of a hotel just 2 blocks west of Times Sq. There was still activity at 2 A.M. on Sunday morning!

DM03: 6m: 8q/3g; 2m: 14q/2g; 70cm: 4q/1g. I operated for about 30 minutes from a parking lot at Los Angeles Intl. Airport.

DM04: 6m: 8q/0g; 2m: 13q/0g; 70cm: 6q/1g. I operated for about 30 minutes, until the end of the contest, just to the north of the Santa Monica Airport.

New rig this time was Yaesu FT-817 + Maldol whip and with nil 6/2 gain & a little bit on 70cm. (FT690, IC202, & 24 "C" cells have been retired.)

It was pleasure to qso old friends on the east coast. -- *N6ZE*

K5IX -- Jan 31, 2004 19:43 ET

Saturday was a little slow but lots of locals to make up for it a little.

Sunday 6 meters opened to Florida and I think I worked everyone I could hear.

Rigs used in contest: 1. YAESU FT-847 (6 METERS) With "MORE POWER" KW AMP 2. YAESU FT-100D (432 MHZ) 3. ICOM 746 (2 METERS)

Antennas used: 1. Cushcraft A50-5S (5 element 6 meter at 50 foot) 2. Cushcraft 10 element 2 meter at 25 foot 3. Cushcraft 432 MHZ vertical at 20 foot.

Thanks for all the QSO'S...C U IN THE NEXT TEST... 73... CHUCK -- *K5IX*

KD3ST -- Jan 27, 2004 20:37 ET

Just playing around really. I only have an M2 eggbeater antenna on 2M. I used a 160M dipole on 6 which netted me a VP9! (Too bad no other E's though!) I have no antenna for 432 which makes it not too surprising I didn't hear or work anyone! hihi The only band I had any chance at all on was 2M. I have a 170 watt RF Concepts brick. I made it to W3SO in FN00 from my QTH in FN21. I didn't do too badly with my omni despite intermittant S6 electrical noise.

I've decided to be competative I need 2 things, REAL antennas and a voice keyer! hihi

73 de AL, KD3ST -- *KD3ST*

K5IX -- Jan 26, 2004 15:12 ET

Saturday was a little slow to say the least...mostly 2 meter locals ...worked a few on 432 also but again only local..

I worked high power on 6 meters and low power on 144 and 432 mhz using Cushcraft A50-5S 6 meter beam at 50 feet... 10 element yagi on 144 mhz at 20 foot.. and a vertical at 30 foot on 432

Rigs used were a YAESU FT-847 on 6 meters...ICOM 746 on 2 meters (100 watts) and a YAESU FT-100D on 432(20 watts).

Amplifier for 6 meters is a "KOMMIE KILOWATT" by MORE POWER

Total claimed score is 4488 points

total contacts = 129 total qso points = 136

K6LMN/C6A started things off on Sunday on 6m...worked xe1mex, xe2hwb and xe1hrs to close the contest. Most qso's with Florida stations..

SEE YOU IN THE NEXT CONTEST... 73... CHUCK K5IX -- *K5IX*

WD5AGO -- Feb 2, 2004 12:31 ET

As normal, I enjoyed the VHF-SS while conditions were below normal here in NE Oklahoma, EM26. Again we operated QRP portable but cut back on the number of bands this year: 6m, 2m, 1.2m, and 70cm. This allowed faster set-up and a little bit larger antennas that could be loaded in the car. The rigs were a IC706 and a 222 DEM. A picture is on QRZ site which we added a 7ele for 2m and a 2ele for 6m this year. No problems other than rain and pea-soup fog both days, and a visit from a local athority to see what I was up to! -- *WD5AGO*

N3DB -- Feb 2, 2004 01:12 ET

Lots of fun & a few surprises not too common during the January Contest for a 6m only station. Meteor scatter condx were fairly poor, but tropo was fairly good at times. Es to VP9, C6A & FL Saturday evening. Two new grids- WN2R in FM14 & K6LMN/C6A in FL06, who was operating while driving down a coastal road in the Bahamas. Nicest surprise was a call by PY1DGV while I was cq cw toward the Gulf during the Es. He had just built a 6m dipole from a junked tribander & told me I was his first DX QSO on 50MHz. Afterward I worked 2 other PYs & 2 LUs during an approximately 1 hour Es + TEP opening, which yielded GG87, GG66, GF05 & FF96 as multipliers. Conditions were good to South America but few stations were QRV that evening. A nice warm-up for the June contest from W3DOG in FM28. 73 -- *N3DB*

K2QO/R -- Feb 1, 2004 16:47 ET

K2QO/R in EN92, Temp about 3F, Note the snow on the golf carts! Worked VP9GE from here. Hard to believe we'll ever golf again.

My rover partner Paul, W2TAU and I embarked on a 400 mile journey through EN91/92 and FN01 on Saturday followed by FN02/03/12/13 on Sunday. While activity was very light Saturday, Sunday was FB!

We ran ABCDEI and Light for our best rove yet with about 35K points, more than doubling last years effort.

1296 was awesome Sunday night with numerous random Q's from the Rochester gang.

The most memorable Q came when K2AXX asked me to do 10G from our second last grid. I reminded him that we'd broken the coax to WR90 transition and were out of action. Since we were line of sight at 10 miles, he told us to simply stick the end of the feedline out the window. SHAZ-ZAAAM! 10G at 10 miles on CW with no antenna on our end! Very cool. (His setup is nothing to be taken lightly I might add.)

Additions this year included a DEMI 1296 XVTR running about 2.5W to a HB 15-el Quagi and a cushcraft 2/446 dual band beam for FM. Having one op mine the FM contacts was a superb plan for us.

I have not seen in the reports any really cold WX. We had -3F on our hill in FN01 and saw -15F on the late night drive from Union City to Erie, PA. With temps this cold, the rotors were groaning as the Bury-Flex coax was stiff as a board.

See y'all in JUNE! -- *K2QO*

K7XC/R -- Jan 31, 2004 23:31 ET

Sunday Morning on way to Kettleman City. K7XC/R - ABCD9EI - DM23 to DM09.

9AM Sunday in CM95 above Kettleman City. Loops 6, 2, 222, and 432. Yagis 2, 432, 902, and 1296. 17db horn 10Ghz.

K7XC/R was active from DM23, DM13, DM14, DM24, DM15, DM04, DM05, CM95, DM06, CM96, CM97, CM98, CM99, & DM09. 50 Mhz = 120Q x 17G, 144 Mhz = 211Q X 20G, 222 = 118Q X 16G, 432 = 130Q X 18G, 902 = 2Q X 2G, 1296 = 1Q X 1G, 10GHz = 1Q X 1G. 583 Total Qs x 75G + 14 Bonus Mults = 75383 Final Score.

A slight departure from my usual route to get close enough to work some fellow rovers on 3 microwave bands I borrowed from Tim - NS9E. Imagine my dismay when the IF rig died after just a handful OF QSO's at the very beginning of the contest. The loss of these 3 bands easily cut in half what my final score could have been. I did manage to make my very first contacts on 902 MHz and 10 Ghz though!

Visit my homepage: K7XC.tripod.com for more information and photos.

That which does not kill us only makes us stranger. (from Aeon Flux) -- *K7XC*

Sunrise Near Tehatchepi CA on my way to the central valley.

Delorme's "Map-N-Go" software is invaluable in planning an effective route and calculating alternatives while on the road.

Assembling the microwave bands at the beginning of the contest at DM23 in the Joshua Tree National Monument.

10Ghz 17Db horn I cobbled together from an old Heathkit Microwave Detector and a WR-90/Female N adapter. it worked very well.

KC5OBX/R -- Jan 31, 2004 23:17 ET

KC5OBX/r rear view of our setup. Had to get DPS approval to go down the road. Had to lower it all to travel but this it set up.

My wife and I set out here in West Texas set to activate 6 grids here in our area. We spent all day Saturday prepping the truck to go out, a calm day little chilly but calm. We woke Sunday morning to 25mph winds and this made things interesting. See, I had mounted the top section of a tower into the back of my truck with three beams on it. We set off and worked several stations here locally, conditions to other places were not there. We activated DM93, DM94, DM84, DM83, DM82, and DM92. We were operating a 706 Mark II for 6m, 2m, and 432 and an Alinco DR 235 Fm rig for 220. The beams were, a converted DPS beam to 6m, a 12 element 2m beam and a 11 element 432 beam. We had a great time and we are looking forward to the next contest in June. -- *KC5OBX*

Our rover station working from DM93

The inside, IC-706MarkIIG, DR-235, IC-2720, Logging Computer, and GPS to know where we were in the dust storms on Sunday.

The weather from DM84. It got worse later inthe day.

Hooked up with KD5ULG/r in DM94 and we traveled together the rest of the day.

K0NR -- Jan 31, 2004 00:13 ET

A lightweight "sport chair" and table provided some comfort at the operating position.

I had a great time operating the January VHF Sweepstakes from the summit of Mt Herman (DM79), 9063 feet, west of Monument, CO. This was a backpack portable QRP operation, just like last year. My transceivers were an FT-817 and an Alinco 222 MHz FM HT. I used a dipole for 6 meters, an Arrow II yagi antenna for 2M / 70 cm (mounted on camera tripod) and a small Arrow yagi for 222 MHz. Also carried a 2M/70cm HT for FM contacts.

I hiked up the mountain twice, once on Saturday afternoon and returned again for Sunday afternoon. Activity was brisk enough to keep me busy working the radios, especially on Saturday. I worked a couple of guys on 147.42 MHz mountaintopping with FM HTs. I worked KC0GBK on Twin Sisters Peak (just east of Rocky Mountain National Park) on 144 MHz and 432 MHz. On Sunday, I worked Joe AB0YC on Ellingwood Point (14,042 feet in elevation in DM77) on 144 MHz. These folks were out

The Yaesu FT-817 and external battery.

All the gear fits into or attaches to the backpack.

climbing mountains and made it a point to see who they could work in the VHF contest. While it was cool at my operating location, Joe was experiencing much more severe conditions at that altitude.

While the weather generally cooperated with temperatures around 45 deg F, there was significant snow on the ground this year. The trail up Mt Herman was quite slick, but I found my newly acquired "Yaktrak" grippers for my boots to be very effective. These things are like really lightweight, rubberized crampons for walking in snow and ice.

I operated around the same number of hours as last year but scored about 3 times higher. There was nothing exciting in terms of band openingsn during the hours I operated. Last year, my contacts were mostly DM78, DM79, DN70 (the major Colorado Front Range cities). This year there were more local grids active. Special thanks to Erich KI0SK/rover (and partner) for some of the eastern Colorado grids and Duane WA7KYM for DN71 (Wyoming).

73, Bob K0NR -- *K0NR*

N6NB/R -- Jan 30, 2004 16:36 ET

This is a duplicate entry. Please delete it. -- *N6NB*

W4OZK -- Jan 30, 2004 16:26 ET

What a fun contest for January 2004!! In Alabama we experienced about every type of weather conditions imaginable. Starting out in EM71 bright sunshine and a nice 72 degrees temp, then traveled into hard rain, blowing wind, thick fog and ended the contest in the dark at 30 degrees temp. This year the rover traveled through 8 grid squares, EM71, EM61, EM72, EM62, EM63, EM73, EM74 and EM75. Enjoyed making contacts and many new friends along the way. 73's Greg -- *W4OZK*

The rover setup.

Reminder, while roving you must watch where you stop! Is that someone's underwear on the 2 meter antenna?

Wonder where I picked these up?

APRS track of my rover station during the contest.

KC8HZM/R -- Jan 29, 2004 16:51 ET

This was our second time rovering, we had learned quite a bit from the first time around and made lots of improvements to our station, the Über Rover. It was cold here in Michigan. We just about doubled our score from September, but it seemed like there was a lot less activity in Michigan this time around in January. I think the weather was a factor. Did I mention that it was cold? Jeff (KC8HZQ) and I spent two days driving around in my Festiva with a bunch of radio gear. It was a pleasure to meet KF8QL, W8LON, KC8RBR, and K8DOG on the air again. Our setup worked pretty well, except we were still stone cold deaf on 6m for some reason.

KC8HZM (myself, Marten) on the left and KC8HZQ (Jeff) on the right. The Über Operators.

Here I am wondering if the wind will topple over my Festiva with with my homebuilt 7 element 2m and 15 elemenent .7m quagi flappin' in the breeze. (it was cold)

Since it looked so strange anyway, we might as well give them something to wonder about!

I was hoping that our new antenna setup would alleviate that problem. It was cold. For next June I'm looking for a way to get on 222 and I'll probably build an amp for 6m also. I think that we're both looking forward to the warmer weather! Check out http://www.jeffdeheer.com/rover and http://www.goshen.edu/~martentb (click on 'rover station') for more info and pics!
-- *KC8HZM*

We had a hard time hearing anything on 6m with the loop that I built. Maybe there is salt in the coax or something.

Believe it or not, there was plenty of space in the back for all of the equipment.

KQ6EE -- Jan 29, 2004 16:06 ET

KQ6EE on the top of MT. LOWE above Pasadena, California. On Saturday, the weather was so terrible; dark cloud, little of rain and cold. I brought my FT-817, beam antenna, magmount, Alinco 220 ht and Icom 4 bander ht. I didn't do much on Saturday because of the bad weather. On Sunday, the weather was much better; sunny and cool. But the fog moved in early, so I had to hike down about noon. But I enjoy hiking and playing with my radios. June contest and field day are on my planning stage. Hiking and playing with ham radios are so much fun. 73 Hon Chu -- *KQ6EE*

Here is my contest setup. The background is Mt Wilson, above Pasadena, California

Here is another view, pointing to the north

K0MHC/4 -- Jan 27, 2004 21:32 ET

This was my first contest operated from our RV while camping so I didn't quite know what to expect. After dreaming about extreme, multiband station configurations I settled on what I had on board. An FT-100 operating on 6 meters with a 34' push up pole and stacked Moxon beams. One quick trip to the local Radio Shack located RF cables for the phasing network and an audio cable for the CW paddle.

The station was checked out before the contest with locals that left some doubt about overall

Stacked Moxon 6 meter antennas on the RV

34' push up mast attached to the RV ladder

operating capability. The 6 meter noise level is quite high in an RV and campground environment. I soon learned that I could work most stations heard as long as there wasn't a pile up. We had good openings here in Bradenton, FL to New England and Texas as well as many other states East of the Mississippi. However, the contest activities ended abruptly when two neighbors in the campground stopped by to discuss their TV reception problems. Unfortunately, the stacked Moxons were highly visible and attracted too much attention. Does anyone know of a Wal-Mart parking lot located at the intersection of 4 grid squares for next year?

While the cooperation from local stations was helpful, a Florida based weak signal club/society (similar to NLRS, RMG, etc.) would have been beneficial with a reflector, beacon list, nets and get togethers. It would be a good investment in the local infrastructure. See y'all at the Orlando hamfest and Atlanta weak signal conference.

73, Jim, K0MHC/RV/4

http://www.k5rmg.org/k0mhc.html -- *K0MHC*

KC2LSU -- Jan 27, 2004 16:13 ET

This winter VHF contest was a nightmare -- my antenna rotator stopped working! I had to keep running out every 20 or so minutes to push my 2 meter beam another 45 degrees. I finally had the time to crack it open today, and discovered it had a few bolts that had loosened up in there -- thank goodness it wasn't rust, or ice!

Near the end of the contest, after I got tired of turning my patio deck beam back and forth I threw out a dipole for 6 meters on top of the 2 meter beam -- and I actually heard a station! So I proceded to make my first contact ever on 6 meters!!!! I managed to connect with a few more stations before the band shut down for my makeshift antenna. -- *KC2LSU*

K0AWU -- Jan 27, 2004 13:04 ET

Fun contest as always from EN37ed Northern Minnesota. At 15,958pts my best January contest in the last 7 years and my 3rd best VHF/UHF contest of any type. Activity was very good during the first few hours of the contest with 71 contacts of the 161 total in the first 3hrs. Sunday was

Blue sky now, Snow for the the contest.

very slow all day. 11% of my score was from W0AMT/R and W9FZ/R. Enjoyed a 2m EN43 contact with the K0PG/R, K9ILT/R team too. It had been a long time since I had worked Pat and Tim. Thank you rovers!

50Q/28Grids 6 meters, 74Q/30Grids 2 meters, 16Q/10Grids 222Mhz, 19Q/9Grids 432Mhz and 2Q/2Grids 1296Mhz. Conditions at best, would be described as "ok". No 6m Es, but I did have some AU Saturday with 20 contacts on 2m and 6m combined. 16 FSK441 (WSJT meteor scatter) contacts on 2 and 6 meters kept me company during the nighttime hours, almost half of this group were random contacts. Best tropo DX was with K2DRH EN41 at 410miles on 6,2,222,432. N0URW EN41 at 406 miles was worked on 6 and 2m during the last hour of the contest.

Thanks for the contacts and don't stay away from the radio! -- *K0AWU*

N3TR -- Jan 27, 2004 12:24 ET

Transducerz

Lotsa fun for a basically dead prop weekend. Opping single-op, low-power.

One brief 6m opening FM29 / EL9x-land and VP9GE.

Very surprised that I tagged 7k pts. 75/16 on 6. 78/14 on 2. 27/7 on 432. 21.75 hrs. 180 Qs. 207 Q pts. 37 multis. 7659 total pts. Station was IC-746//IC-821. 100W on 6 and 2; 35 W on 432. 5 el on 6 @ 20'; 7 el on 432 @ 24'; 5 el 2m @ 60' with icy SWR trubs. This hobby is amazing. Some very good ops working Qs at the noise floor. Good show guyz!~!~!

Mega thanx to AA2YG/R in FN22; don't know how ya ever heard me. Think we were both 1/4 S unit above the nx floor. Ur FB OM.

73 all Unca Billy, N3TR -- *N3TR*

W3SO -- Jan 26, 2004 21:04 ET

The Jan 2004 team (L to R): W3PAW, W3YOZ, K4VV, KD3SA, W3TEF, W3BTX, and WR3Z. Missing from the picure were K3RUQ and W9NET

There was 14 inches on snow on the ground at the beginning of the contest. On Saturday night the temperature went to -10 degrees. And another foot fell late Sunday evening. Luckily we had no antenna or rotor problems. But the bad wx and the league scheduling this contest on the same weekend as another major contest, the CQ 160 CW contest, did affect the number of participants.

The 222 rig was fixed and we were able to work CW, as well as SSB and FM. Also W3SO now has a Henry Amp for 222. It was run at 400w.

Complete station details are at www.qrz.com/w3so.

Again thanks to the rovers for the QSOs and we look forward to everyone's QSOs in June.
-- *K3IXD*

KG6GMT -- Jan 26, 2004 20:01 ET

The KG6GMT Rover in DM15 about Noon local time Sunday 70 DEG F.

The KG6GMT Rover ran 729 miles covering 8 grids in Southern California We had 136 contacts for 182 points with 38X for a raw score of 6916 points. Bands worked 6 metere 10/5 144 80/14 432 46/10. The rig was a Yaesu FT-817 stock on 6 and 432 but we had a 30 watt amp on 144. We started the contest in Santa Barbara in a foggy mist and ended in the hight desert in bright sun. Grids operated from DM04,DM05,DM06, DM14,DM15, CM94,CM95,CM96. Operators were myself Brock KG6GMT and Jake Hall KG6HHE -- *KG6GMT*

W8PAT -- Jan 26, 2004 13:58 ET

I had a good time and conditions were as expected for January contest. VP9GE only Es on six

meters from here. Two meters, 222 and 432 were good to about 300 miles. K3EAR - FM19 was the big gun to the southeast and N2PA - FN12 to the northeast.

6 meters 28 QSOs - 14 Grids 2 meters 29 QSOs - 17 Grids 222 17 QSOs - 12 Grids 432 16 QSOs - 9 Grids 1296 4 QSOs - 3 Grids Total 94 QSOs - 55 Grids = 7645

I was only able to operate for about 7 hours of the contest. Spent too much time thawing equipment around the farm. Had -10F Sunday morning but all rotators worked.

I would have loved to increase the grid totals with WSJT FSK441 on meteor scatter but didn't have much time for skeds. I worked only K7BV/1 - FN31, W3OR - FM28 on 6 meters meteor scatter.

Good Lord willing, I will around for the Spring Sprints and in June VHF.

John W8PAT EN81 -- *W8PAT*

WB8DQT -- Jan 26, 2004 11:27 ET

Even EME operators are awestruck by this massive two-meter array!

It has been about 30 years since I last operated CW/SSB on two meters. This Fall I decided to try SSB/SSTV on the band and put together a very basic station using an old IC707 HF transceiver, a Ten Tec 1210 transverter, and a Mirage B-310-G "brick". It was late enough in the season to preclude real antenna work, so I quickly erected a pair of stacked M2 halos to hold me over until Spring. The station turned out to be surprisingly effective on SSTV, but the January Sweepstakes provided a chance to see what its limits might be. The weekend was far from ideal, with no evidence of enhancement on the band, sub-zero temperatures, and intermittent high noise levels at my QTH in south-central Michigan (EN72). Despite all the rational reasons not to participate, I'm glad I did. I netted a total of 19 grid squares (five states plus Ontario) and the operating standards on both CW and SSB were very high. It's just too bad the band will be so quiet between now and June! -- *WB8DQT*

VA3NFA -- Jan 26, 2004 09:20 ET

That was fun!

My total claimed score is : 2236

Band: QSO/Grids

50: 16/7 144: 32/12 222: 8/4 432: 9/2 1296: 1/1

66 contacts and 26 multipliers.

I worked about 6 hours on and off during the contest. Memorable events:

- Working VA3KA (about 15 kms away) on 1296 FM with a borrowed 1w FM HT.. my FIRST 1296 contest QSO! - Working 8 QSO's and 4 grids with my new 222 transverter.. it worked great! - Working VP9GE on 50.. the ONLY opening I heard on 6m

My best DX (other than VP9GE) was FM19 and FM29 on 2m.. nearly 450 miles!!. Best DX on 222 was K3EAR in FM19.

The bands seemed very poor Saturday evening.... but seemed to improved Sunday afternoon and evening. Also, there seemed to be a lot fewer "big guns" on the air.. and less locals as well... we will have to fix that for the June contest!

Not as good as my 4000 score in last years contest.. but still fun!

My station:

Rigs: FT847 for 50, 144, 432; FT817 and MM transverter for 222

Antennas: 4 ele on 144, 4 ele on 222 @ 15';Par Omni Loop at 35' for 6m, and a Diamond V2000a verticle @ 35' for 432.

73 -- *VA3NFA*