Contest Soapbox

2005 ARRL 10 GHz and Up Contest

17 Soapbox entries available

WJ7L & WA7GIE -- Nov 22, 2005 02:58 ET

The path...

WJ7L's setup. The broader beamwidth helped find Robin's carrier so both ends could improve aim...

WA7GIE's setup, with Ron, K7RJ in front of Dave. We all felt warmer after the contacts!

Our first try at 10 GHz narrowband DX was a thrill. 330 kM. Dave Williams, WA7GIE, Ron Jones, K7RJ and myself, Dale, WJ7L, went to Nelson Peak, near Salt lake City, UT at 9,359'. Ron is still in construction of his transverter, but shared the moment with us. We worked Robin, WA6CDR, who was Brian Head, UT at 11,307'. Robin had about 5W and a 2M dish. Dave had 2W and 22" dish working SSB. I had half a watt and a 17 dB horn running CW, though copied Robins SSB QSO with Dave just fine. The shouts of joy were heard almost as far... This is fun! Thanks, Robin for being there. Microwave activity in Northern Utah has only been in a growth mode for about 3 years, but 7 folks now have 2W narrowband added to their Gunnplexor gear. We watch experienced hands from some parts of the country, knowing we have a long way to go. We would love to climb a mountain and aim your way from a new grid... -- *WJ7L*

W1GHZ -- Oct 18, 2005 23:05 ET

W1AIM and KB1VC recovering from a 10 GHz pileup

10 GHz contest is a bit more laid back than others.

While operating from Block Island, RI, a reporter from the local paper came by. here's the article:

http://www.blockislandtimes.com/news/2005/1008/News/036
-- *W1GHZ*

N6CA -- Oct 17, 2005 20:50 ET

N6CA's 3 footer with 10 watts looking towards the SF bay area from CM96WL.

KH6WZ and N6CA with an over the water (canal) shot fron the valley.

N6CA and KH6WZ a really great time getting back into the Central Valley of California this year. It's a fun place to operate, away from all of the traffic of smogville (LA). We both worked many long haul contacts from the valley this year; N6CA had 10 contacts over 1000 km, the longest of which was 1088 km (676 miles) and Wayne had several as well. These were CW only and were all over the 8000 foot mountains to the South. There were 17 contacts over 1000 km this year on the West coast. N6CA ended up with 187 Qs with 50 stations. Wayne excercised the ole CW fist for the first time in many years and it paid off. Looking forward to next year with the higher bands included.

Hope to see all of you at Microwave Update 2005 in Cerritos, CA.

73 & Thanks for all the contacts!

Chip N6CA -- *N6CA*

Wayne KH6WZ looking South from the flat lands of the central valley with his 8 watter and a 2 foot dish.

K1WHS -- Oct 12, 2005 18:38 ET

The 10 GHz dish is mounted on the top of a sidearm, with 5 GHz below it, and 24 GHz on the bottom. The box behind the 10 GHz dish houses the transverter and 20 watt power amplifier. IF feedline is a run of 3/8" heliax. The rig downstairs is an Elecraft K2 which makes a nice compact and great CW Rig.

I try to get a few hours in on the 10 GHz contests. I operate from a home station, which seems somewhat rare on 10 GHz. A few people do it, but a mountain top or a large expanse of sea water sure helps with the contacts. This year, I managed 5 hours of fun on the second weekend only. Of course, the bands were stinko for the most part from my home location. Saturday seeemd to be slightly better than Sunday, but I was only active for slightly less than one hour. On Saturday, my best DX was K2DH near Rochester, NY for a new grid on 10 GHz. On Sunday, I tried with W3HMS in FM08US to no avail. He was barely audible on 144 with my huge 4 long yagi array at 136 ft. That makes a very nice liason antenna by the way!! Only after sunset did things seem to improve, and I could finally work K2TXB in FM29PT. I missed with other stations earlier in the day in places that I have worked in the past, so the band was down for sure. I never heard any rain scatter while I was QRV. With only 5 hours of operation, I am not surprised. I missed much! Rig is a 36" dish at about 115 ft. with 20 watts rf output and mounted on the back of the dish. I ended up making 26 contacts from home. That adds up to about 5 per hour! Quite a rate!! -- *K1WHS*

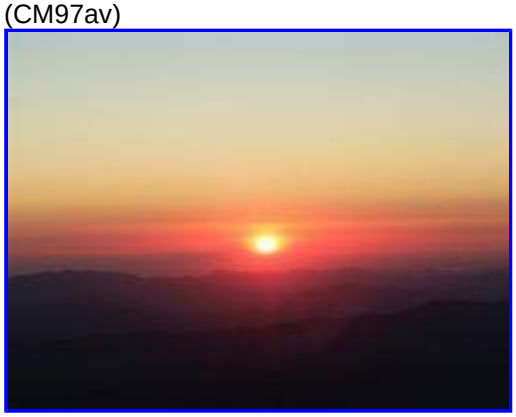
KB8VAO -- Oct 12, 2005 00:56 ET

The first weekend of the contest, AD6IW / Goran and I operated from Mt. Lassen (CN90fl), Mt. Shasta (CN81vi), and Mt. Diablo (CM97av).

I worked a few stations from Mt. Lassen, but kept getting reports of a very weak signal. I checked all the connectors

KB8VAO on Devil Peak (DM07dm)

K6MGM, W6GDM, AD6IW on Mt. Diablo (CM97av)



A fine day for microwaving!

AD6IW on Devil Peak (DM07dm)

and the relay, but still less than 1 mw output.

Thanks to the ops that stuck with me during the first weekend, your pre-amps were really put to the test.

The highlight of the weekend was working AA6HA / John at 343 km with my broken transverter!

Sunday I joined K6MGM / Dennis, W6GDM / Dave, and AD6IW / Goran on Mt. Diablo.

Later the next week Goran tracked down the problem with my transverter... a capacitor with a bad solder connection.

All that bouncing around on mountain roads took it's toll on the transverter.

With a new 75 cm offset dish and pre-amp for 10 GHz, I was ready for the second weekend. Goran and I set out for the Sierra's.

We went to Devil Peak (DM07dm), a phenomenal site at 7,000 feet elevation and clean shots in most directions!

We set up and listened to the Mt. Vaca and Mt. Frazier beacons pounding in.

Things started out very slow on Saturday but the pace quickened on Sunday.

Late Saturday night I was joined by W6BY / Brian.

Activity on the higher bands was the best I've ever heard, with 15 QSO's on 24 GHz, and 4 QSO's on 47 GHz.

The highlights of the weekend were working W6ASL / Jim by bouncing signals off of Mt. Diablo, and working K7XQ / Jerry for his first 10 GHz contact!

Best DX:

10 GHz - WA6CGR - 436 km

24 GHz - AD6FP - 313 km

47 GHz - AA6IW & W6QI - 147 km

* (AD6FP was heard on 47 GHz at 313 km, but no contact)

Signal Peak Lookout Tower

W6BY on Devil Peak (DM07dm)

Moonrise in the Sierra's..... GOT EME???

W0JT -- Oct 10, 2005 15:36 ET

Thank You for the use of the Cactus Repeater System during the contest!

And last but not least, Thank You to all the rovers, I know it was especially painful this year with these gas prices.

73 Steve -- *KB8VAO*

Last year, the Northern Lights Radio Society had great success with one team roving the North Shore of Lake Superior, another team at four fixed locations across the lake on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and a couple of small teams around Lake Superior in NW Wisconsin and Wawa, Ontario, for the first weekend of the contest. For the second weekend, one team set up in Sisseton, South Dakota, and the rest roved in various parts of SW Minnesota and the Twin Cities metropolitan area. In my

The NLRS Rover Pack parked on rural road in SW Minnesota. To the left in the photo is W9FZ looking for contacts to the East. To the right (his back to the camera) is WB0LJC. Closest to the camera is the open rear compartment of the W0JT rovermobile.

The W0JT rovermobile with my 10 GHz tripod-mounted rig in the grass on the roadside. Thank goodness that SOME Minnesota farmers grow beans instead of corn!

The Rover Pack for weekend two. At far left you see W9FZ preparing to work the gang in Sisseton, SD. WA2VOI (his back to the camera) is checking on W9FZ's success. At right, N0NAS is finishing his QSO's with the folks in the Twin Cities. That long shadow is mine, and the photo was snapped just before it was my turn to work the folks that N0NAS is working right

case, the second weekend of 2004 was mostly a bust, because of work committments.

For 2005, we decided to try something different, and forego the Lake Superior expedition. This would be an all-overland attempt. One team spent both weekends at a few fixed sites in Sisseton, SD. Another team roved in SW Minnesota, with an emphasis on making lots of contacts quickly from many locations. To speed up the process and maximize the number of QSO's, we tried to minimize the use of CW and maximize the use of sites where signals were good enough to allow quick SSB contacts. A third team positioned itself at a few fixed locations just South of the Twin Cities metropolitan area that had good views to their West, where the other two teams would be operating. Stirred into the mix were some operators roving the Red River Valley, stations in southern Canada, and a well-known fixed station in NW Iowa.

The first weekend was such an incredible success that we got the lust for big scores. So we decided to really hit it hard on the second weekend, and instead of a change of scenery, we set up for another rover run in SW MN with fixed stations as on weekend one to our West and East. The results will speak for themselves when the scores are posted. Several of our rovers crossed the 100,000 point boundary as well as the 500 QSO mark. I was very happy to come close, with a claimed score of 92,235 points and 500 QSO's (but one was a dupe, so "only" 499 valid QSO's for me).

I lost some Q's due to equipment problems. Amazingly, I only lost a few of them on the first weekend due to my signal being much weaker than expected. This was traced to a maladjustment that had me transmitting 20 mW instead of 2000 mW! Gee, do you think a 20dB penalty makes a difference? More serious equipment problems (at least in terms of lost QSO's) were the less-than-optimal wiring harness of of my rig that occasionally went haywire and prevented my rig from transmitting, and having my rig blow over in the wind at the second-to-last stop of weekend one and landing on the feed horn, breaking off the SMA probe. Amazingly, temporary repairs with duct tape got me back on the air for the last stop. All these problems were ironed out between the two weekends of the contest.

I also lost some QSO's due to operator problems. I got much better at pointing the dish as the days progressed, but being the least experienced of the rovers in our pack still worked against me a bit. There was also one stop

now. where my position as "tail-end Johnny" lost me a bunch of contacts: As we arrived and began to unpack gear, it was lightly misting and I covered my system with a large plastic bag, but didn't take the time to put on my raincoat. By the time it was my turn to make my QSO's, the rain had built up to an unacceptable intensity and I had to call it quits for that stop. Fortunately, the storm passed very quickly, and by our next stop, the rain was gone.

I know how to work on the errors that held my own score down a bit, but as a group, we now have the happy dilemma of trying to figure out how we are going to top our overall results next year!
-- *W0JT*

N2UO -- Oct 6, 2005 14:47 ET

N2UO operating from Camelback Mountain, PA. 20 W into a 40 inch dish. The antenna was very sharp, but all contacts were easy after I set my azimuth with the Packrat's W3CCX beacon.

N2UO operating from High Point, NJ. Vegetation is a real problem from this location, unless you can have the dish 20 feet high.

This was my very first 10 GHz contest and 10 GHz experience. I finished building my transverter just hours before the contest. The first weekend was not very successful with only 3 contacts, and very thick fog up on Camelback, PA. I could not see more than a few feet away, and I was not sure if I was shooting through trees or not. I later discovered a problem with the antenna that explained the poor performance.

The second weekend was completely different. I worked 25 more stations, some almost 400 km away, for a total of 28 QSOs and an accumulated distance of 5942 km. Sometimes I could hear better on 10 GHz than on 2 meters. Three random rain scatter contacts made the weekend even more exciting. The second weekend I operated on Saturday from Camelback Mountain, PA (FN21HB) and on Sunday from High Point, NJ (FN21QH). Both sites have lots of vegetation that complicated some of the contacts.

Overall, my brand new homebrew system worked well. I run 20 W from a TWTA into a 40 inch dish. The transverter was made with surplus and homebrew connectorized modules, and the tripod was made with plumbing fittings and water pipes. The investment was minor as I purchased most of the parts at hamfests, swap meetings or scrap metal yards. The dish was free for the taking. 73, Marc -- *N2UO*

NS1O -- Sep 29, 2005 07:53 ET

I had a great time this year as I do every year. Conditions for the August half were not good at all with the rain on Saturday and band conditions in the NH area less the

Al, NS1O (in cowboy hat) and Dale, AF1T at Gay Head Lighthouse.

Al, NS1O and Dale, AF1T sunset at Gay Head Lighthouse.

Al, NS1O wrangling them their signals at the park.

steller for both days but I managed to make it out with Lee AA1YN, John N1FOJ and AL Greenwood N1EUX to Kearsarge in NH at FN43bj and Betty's field in Mason NH at FN42cs. Unfortunately I don't have any pictures for this half.

Now the second half in September things went better, Dale AF1T, Micky W1MKY and I, Al NS1O went to Martha's Vineyard, MA (FN41oi & FN41ql)and managed to avoid the remains of the hurricane with just a little rain and wind on Saturday morning. Serprisingly band conditions where good on Saturday and we managed to work W3HMS in FM8us by tropo for 701 km (our best for the weekend and my personal best so far) with WA3PTV (FN10cr 609 km, K2DH, N2DYY, K0SM (FN12hr 565 km)and W3SZ at FN20ag for 452 km with a combination of tropo and rain scatter, not a bad day at all for distance this year. Sunday conditions where not as good but a bad day doing Microwaves still beats a good day at work in my book. The pictures are of Dale AF1T, Micky W1MKY and Myself NS1O at the Vineyard (I'm the one with the cowboy hat :)) Dale' running a 24" dish and 10 watts, Micky's running a 12" dish with 1 watt and I'm running 10 watts with a converted primestar dish.

Thanks to all for the contacts and great time this year and a special thanks to KA1OJ for the short hops. Hope to hear you all on again next year, till then 73

Al NS1O -- *NS1O*

Al NS1O, Dale AF1T and Micky W1MKY at the Park.

Micky W1MKY at the leason setting up the contacts at the Park (theirs nothing like a womans voice to add a few dB's to the signal :).

Dale AF1T serching for signals at sunset (Gay Head Lighthouse)

And the star of the show the Gay Head Lighthouse

W6QI -- Sep 24, 2005 02:40 ET

Very happy after extending the 47 GHz world record with Gary AD6FP.

Getting ready to try a 375 km shot on 47 GHz from Mt. Oso to Mt. Frazier.

The goofy smile was captured in August on Mt. Frazier (DM04MS) after extending the 47 GHz world record from 290 km to 313 km. Gary AD6FP was on the other end at Devil Peak (DM07DM) in the Sierras. Propagation was outstanding on 10/24/47 this weekend. 700+ km QSOs were made with S9 signal levels on 10 GHz.

In September, we tried unsuccessfully to extend the 47 GHz record further. Lars AA6IW and I operated from Mt. Oso, Mt. Bullion, Pilot Peak, and Duckwall Mountain. In contrast to the August weekend, conditions were very poor on 10/24/47. Nonetheless, I heard Gary from Frazier to Pilot Peak at a distance of 344 km.

There was a good bit of activity on the higher bands this year, as I logged 16 24 GHz QSOs and 6 47 GHz QSOs. My overall score suffered because of the poor conditions and the driving to various mountains in September. But it was fun to 4x4 and explore new mountaintops. -- *W6QI*

KØAWU & WØPHD -- Sep 22, 2005 18:12 ET

Wally, WØPHD and I once again operated together for the 10Ghz Cumulative contest but with two changes from last year. First, we operated from the Red River of the North valley both weekends. Second we were rovers instead of the fixed operations of last year. This valley extends from southern Manatoba all the way to the South Dakota border. It is an old glacial lake bed and offers very good "shots" north-south. The lake bed is about 30miles wide on an average.The entire valley is flat as a table top and selecting a site is pretty easy for the most part, except for "shelter belts" in some areas. Operations included almost 40 locations in the valley along the Minnesota/North Dakota border in EN18,17,16.

The August weekend (photos) weather was very pleasant,

WØPHD Minnesota sunflowers in the background.

KØAWU Listening north toward VE4MA.

but the September weekend was cold and damp on Saturday. Propagation was not very good on the 2nd Saturday at all with the fog, mist and low ceilings.

We both run 18" DSS dishes with modified DSS feeds. The transverters are Downeast Microwave units, WØPHD's is the 2w version and mine is the lowpower unit with a Qualcom amp running about 800mw. Sorry you can't see the transverters, they are wrapped up to avoid thermal drift in the cool wind.

Operations were in support of VE4MA, other operators in southern Manatoba and NTØV on Saturday of each week. Then on Sundays I would rove alone working whomever was available, with more effort spent on the NLRS group operating from Sisseton, SD.

The equipment worked well and we had lots of fun. I had 14 unique calls worked, 153 contacts, average distance of 173km and best distance of 292km. Many of the contacts on Saturdays, with the paths being worked were CW. On Sundays once the paths were under 220km to Sisseton, we were able to run SSB. Total fun 27,928pts ... -- *Bill KØAWU*

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