

Contest Soapbox

2005 ARRL 160 Meter Contest

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6Y0A -- Jun 12, 2006 18:07 ET



160m vertical, view towards EU



Base loading coil & "gin pole" used to help raise the vertical

We've wanted to do the ARRL 160 from Jamaica for many years, but this is the first time we did it! We've got all our antennas and coax stored at the villa, but each year we try to increase the antenna efficiency, so we rebuilt the 160m vertical using various parts. The new 70' vertical sounded good on paper, but it was a bit wobbly and one of the guy ropes snagged on the way up, and we broke the antenna before it got 10' off the ground.

Plan B: to make sure we could get the antenna up with ease and not waste more time, we cut out the busted section of tubing, and took off the tip to make the vertical more rugged, but shorter. With the help of a gin pole (actually one of our 40m verticals) the 160 antenna went up fine this time, but with 4 top loading wires, and 2 more tiers of guy ropes, it took a while to tweak the guying. We ended up with a 55' vertical with four 40' top loading wires, a mid/top loading coil, and small base loading coil to tune for resonance. We had 2 radials elevated about 14' over salt water, and about 30 ground radials (not attached to elevated radials) of varying length covering the ~180 degrees that was not covered by water.

One of the hams who used our QTH for the WW SSB contest left an amp for us to use that supposedly put out 1200w, but we were lucky to get 300w from it. Nothing we could do about it, so we limped along with 300w for the entire time we were there.

One of our goals was to work JA on Top Band, and we were hoping to have a full KW at hand... Luckily we were rewarded by many JA's calling us even with 300w output. Some of the stong S7 JA's that called could bearly hear us, so we know we need more juice for the next time we try to work JA on Top Band. That said, on 160m we worked a total of 44 unique JA callsigns on this trip, which is about twice the cumulative total of JA's we've worked on Top Band since we started going to Jamaica in 1997. Guess the new vertical works! No RX antennas were used.

Many thanks for all the QSOs and fun! 73, Kenny K2KW & Tom N6BT -- K2KW

K9CS -- Mar 24, 2006 13:40 ET



The K9CS Multi-S group celebrates another successful ARRL 160 Meter Contest operating from the WB9Z station.

general and then shortly after that to Extra class and W2AOH, then N2CS and with a move to Illinois, K9CS.

The station transmits from a 160 foot series fed vertical tower with 120 quarter wave radials and receives with numerous Beverage and pennant antennas. WB9Z is located on a farm near Crescent City, IL and is a member of the Society of Midwest Contesters. -- WB9Z

From left, Howard AK9F, Carl K9CS, Jerry WB9Z, Don K9NR, Will K9FO. This group has been teamed on 160 meters for over 20 years and consistently places in the top ten. The 2005 effort resulted in 1,519 Q's, 79 US/VE sections, and 35 Countries for a total of:

371,640 points.

This is one of the highest scores and one of the best efforts for the group.

This year, we used the call K9CS to celebrate Carl's 50th year in amateur radio. First licensed in 1956 at age 13 in New Jersey, Carl was KN2QZR, he upgraded quickly to

K0SF -- Mar 22, 2006 08:32 ET



Tower is empty except for 10/15m dual-bander.



Tower base with Harris CU-2310 remote tuner. Shuntfeed consists of 3 ea 6 ga wires from the 45' guy level. The tower rotates, but the wires remain stationary. The system uses 4 each quarter wave

Jim, N0UR, did one heck of a nice job for operating the station for the first time. He overcame adversity easily:

He had never operated the station nor a Yaesu FT1KMPMK V before. He ran unassisted (no packet), he got around the S9+15 dB power line noise that kicked in Thursday before the contest, and he dealt with the SWR fold-back that reduced the MK V transmit power when off the tuned point (remote antenna tuner).

On Saturday during daylight, I re-strung the 860' two wire beverage, and logged the ANC-4 noise settings. This allowed him to hear Eu and everywhere in general with a lower noise floor. He also became comfortable with the remote antenna tuner such that he could null SWR across the band and run the full 150W. I had Mark, K0KX visit Friday night to verify the station power output.

Jim: Great job and you're certainly invited next year !

73,

Steve -- K0SF

radials at 8' height above ground. It is possible to retune for resonance in 3 seconds from in the shack.

W6AW -- Jan 14, 2006 23:54 ET



We operated from a commercial AM Broadcast site in Sacramento. The station went off the air at sundown, and returned at sunup, which limited our participation to evenings only. We loaded up a single 320 ft tower for transmit, and used a loop antenna for receive. We used an old AIRSTREAM trailer as our operating platform (Much more comfortable than the unheated transmitter building). Sorry we couldn't hear many of the stations that heard us, but our noise level (even with the loop antenna) was pretty bad at times. We look forward to December, 2006.

-- WB6RVR

ZF2AH -- Dec 24, 2005 00:28 ET



Well condx here poor on Friday, but Saturday was dynamic! The problem is I only had the Eu beverage up! So many of you were in the noise, I am sorry. Hearing a lot of Eu! I did manage to have a great time.

ANTENNA WAS INVERTED L AT 100 FT, Power 1000w, beverage at eu!

Next yr will get the USA beverage up. Regards to all

Joe -- W6VNR

K1LT -- Dec 29, 2005 02:16 ET



K1LT's daughter Sunni helps K8ND with spotting.

K8ND and I want to apologize to all of the stations to whom we said "AGN" again and again. First off, we have 14 receiving antennas to choose from, so selecting the proper antenna takes a bit of time. We propose a new Q-code, QWA, which means, "please repeat, wrong antenna". Alternately, Jeff and I need more operator training.

Second, Saturday night a snow and ice storm moved through the area, obliterating with static crashes a really decent European opening. My apologies to GI3???, who I could just not pull through the noise. I meant to send "QRR", but accidentally said "QRS", and slow Morse just doesn't work in high QRN.

Antennas: Beverages in 13 directions for receiving and 40 foot "T" for transmitting and receiving.

-- K1LT

W8BAR -- Dec 23, 2005 16:58 ET



W8BAR Gang - AA4VV, W1TO, WA8SDA, W8VVE, missing W8UI

W8BAR is back!!

After a couple or more years of absence due to timbering destroying our Beverage system, we have pretty much rebuilt our little modest W8BAR contest station at W8WEJ's farm at Tuckers Creek in Wirt County, WV.

Although we have hilltops, we are not on one of them; we are in a deep (as in deep hole) valley here.

For our coming out party, we decided to give the ARRL 160 contest a go. We thought December would be better weather wise, than our usual CQ 160 Contest in January, which is always terrible weather wise for us, we were **WRONG,!!!!** We had an ice storm and resulting mud etc. Are there any 160 meter contests in July?

Sooooo we gave the ARRL 160 contest a shot. We really wanted to work all 80 sections but we could not work SJV to save our lives, though God knows we tried.

This group began its friendship in high school 50 years ago. Operators were W1TO (who flew in from MA), AA4VV (who drove in from NC), W8WEJ, W8UI(first time and still in shock), WA8SDA, and W8VVE.

We ate well-- very well, W8VVE's chili was truly a gas.

We ran a 90 ft top loaded wire vertical with 6000ft of buried radials, and 6 Beverages. The rig was a very tired 850 and an even more tired old alpha 3 holer at about 1 kw out.

Again, we ate well, I may not know radio--but let me assure you I know food and fellowship!!! It IS a hobby!! It was very good to be back and at least make a footprint effort on 160, and more important , fellowship, food, and get the bunch back together again.

DX and 160 is! We will be back. all the best 73 John W8WEJ -- *W1TO*

EA7NW -- Dec 19, 2005 02:01 ET



G5RV-M at sunset in the building I live, 40 feet high.

No many time for working this contest. My first participation, and not good condx. With my G5rv-M not much more its posible to do, with a constant qrm of s9 in my shack. Best regards, merry xmas and we see you in ww dx 160.

Frank -- *EA7NW*



In the shack, with my son David, future contender.

NX9T -- Dec 13, 2005 07:49 ET



Jonathan and Jacob, future "Junior Ops" getting some "mic time" at a local FM station's Open House.

Lots of fun as usual. For some reason, I always enjoy the 160m contests a little more than some of the others. Not really sure why. I was only able to muster a limited appearance this year but had a great time while on. I probably need to start seriously training my "junior ops" to take a leading role in the late night shift since I'm finding it harder and harder to stay up(see picture)! ...www.qsl.net/nx9t.....

73 and Merry Christmas! Jeff -- NX9T

W0EB -- Dec 11, 2005 20:48 ET

Missed all the fun Friday night for some reason. I don't know why I didn't get on. Started early Saturday morning and worked some. Took frequent breaks, and even went to bed early Saturday night. Got up early Sunday and worked a bunch more until after the sun came up. Ran high power for the first time in a 160 meter contest, and it did make the difference. My antenna is an approximately 1/4 wave inverted U. It goes up 25 feet, out 70 feet to a pine tree in my front yard and back down 25 feet where it's tied off to the trunk (insulated). The only counterpoise in the system is an 8 foot ground rod right at the feedpoint. Coax shield goes to the ground rod, center goes to the wire. The amazing thing is it is virtually flat and I don't even need the tuner at 1820 KHz. In my 44 years of hamming, this is the only antenna I've ever had that would radiate a signal on 160. I've had many that would load up with a tuner, but never would couple much signal to the sky. This one was an accident that happened back last February in the ARRL International DX contest. So far, it ain't broke, and I ain't gonna fix it. Rig was an Icom IC706MKIIG with the 250 Hz CW filter and the amplifier a Ten Tec Centaur run on 120 Volts. That has since been remedied, and now have a 220 volt line run into the shack. I did this immediately after the contest shut down Sunday. It makes the Amp run a lot better, and doesn't even blink the shack lights now when I key it @ 650 watts on CW or 800 on SSB.

Even with my limited operating time, managed 250 Q's, 4 DX stations, including HC8N in the Galapagos, and 70 sections for a claimed score of 36400. My best 160 effort so far. I think I will get

serious in the Stew-Perry coming up. Hope to see you all there?

Jim - -- W0EB

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Page last modified: 03:31 PM, 05 Jul 2006 ET

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