

Contest Soapbox

2005 ARRL November Sweepstakes (CW)

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KC6WTA -- Nov 6, 2006 15:56 ET

I had fun. This was my first contest. I only copy about 10 wpm so it was hard to find enough people to slow down for me. I operated for 11 hours and made 93 contacts. Just 7 shy of the pin... :(

I had fun, I will do better next weekend on the phone portion. -- KC6WTA

N7TY -- Jan 6, 2006 12:25 ET

I had a blast! This was my first Single-Op contest. I have operated in only three other major contests as part Multi-Op effort. My contest Elmer, N7CW, encouraged me to enter, what fun. Because of antenna restrictions I have no 80 meter antenna which limited me on Saturday night. I also forgot to try 10m, I could have made a few more Qs. I was a bit intimidated at first with the length of the exchange, but the longer I sat in front of the rig the more it came together. I can't wait until next year. -- N7TY

K0T V -- Dec 11, 2005 21:37 ET



My host, K0TV, setting up the Ten Tec "O'Brien", as we jokingly called it (with the proper Brooklyn Jewish accent from an old gag on The Three Stooges).

It's a lot of fun to operate QRP and not be weak. I like to call it "high power QRP". I've done it twice before on CW SS - once from K1EA (paper logging in the room where CT was written, cuz I hadn't learned how to use CT yet), and once from K1TTT. This time, Jerry, K0TV, was kind enough to let me operate his excellent station for QRP SS. His newly erected 40 meter beam worked great, and he even put up an 80M dipole for me (his four-square is better for DX contests). The Ten Tec Orion is an awesome radio, with the bandwidth fine-tuning that I've always wanted. At home, I just have an IC706MKIIG and a low wire dipole on the side of my duplex condo, so this was a real treat. -- Eliot -- WIMJ



Tired, but still happy, on Sunday afternoon.



The 40M Beam (The Log Periodic for 20-10M wasn't too shabby either)

W1TR -- Dec 7, 2005 12:35 ET

It was my first time on a CW contest in over a decade. I had to setup and learn a new logging program (N1MM) and connect up the CW/PTT cables... then get used to operating it. After a couple of shaky hours, I got into the rhythm and had a great time. Next year will be a better effort ! Terry
-- *W1TR*

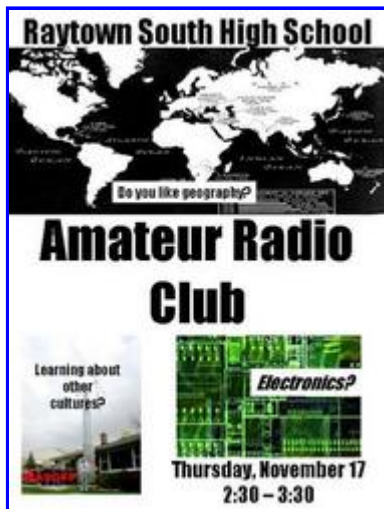
KD2MX -- Dec 6, 2005 10:42 ET

This was my first try at a CW contest since getting back on the air after many years of inactivity. I was pretty much blown away by the average cw speed. I had to listen long and hard before attempting a contact. Plus I only had a straight key so I really felt like a slow-poke. I sweated out about 50 contacts. I ordered my new CW paddle the next day while researching contesting programs. I won't have a problem beating my score next year! -- *KD2MX*

KB0VVT -- Nov 27, 2005 20:03 ET

SS CW 2005

Note: The photographs will open to a larger size if you click on them with your mouse.



Raytown South Amateur Radio Club flyers distributed in the school hallways and science classes.



Rebecca, [KB0VVT](#), studies for an AP Biology Exam while working the contest on Sunday afternoon. SS CW 2005.



Joe Watts, KC0UNB, squeezes in a few contacts with the low power [ICOM](#) IC-756 PRO II using the CW Decoder built into the Writelog logging software.

Much has happened since last year's Sweepstakes when the KB0VVT SS CW 2004 Multi-op team placed 5th in the Nation.

My family and I traveled to Hawaii to vacation in late December 2004. I had planned to operate Kid's Day (1.) in January, 2005 from KH7X (2.) but my sponsor had to cancel. I still hope to operate at KH7X during an actual contest someday. My mother, KG0UT (3.), and I operated Kid's Day aboard the USS Missouri (4.) a few years ago using the callsigns KH6BB (5.) on phone and KB0VVT/KH6 (6.) on CW. It was so cool because I am from Missouri and do not live too far from the Truman Library (7.).

- (1.) <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/kd-rules.html> (2.) <http://www.qsl.net/ct1boh/kh7r.htm> (3.) <http://www.qrz.com/kg0ut> (4.) http://www.ussmissouri.com/WebCam_live.html (5.) <http://www.kh6bb.org/> (6.) <http://aditl.com/ham/harc/harcnl/harcnl0301.html> (7.) <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/>

During the 2005 Dayton Hamvention (8.), I volunteered at the ARRL EXPO Youth table and operated the N8D special event station at the ICOM booth. Dayton is always a lot of fun and it is great to spend time with all of my amateur radio friends from all over the world. I especially love participating in the KCDX Club CW Pile-Up competition (9.).

- (8.) <http://www.hamvention.org/> (9.) <http://www.qsl.net/k0vbu/pile2005.htm>

Field Day is one of my favorite events of the year. I am a member of the Raytown Amateur Radio Club that only has about a dozen or so members. Even so, we were able to finish 4th place nationally in the two-alpha category using the club callsign K0GQ (10.). Steve Lufcy K0OU and I made about 1400 Qs operating the HF CW station.

- (10.) http://www.arrl.org/contests/soapbox/index.html?con_id=90&call=k0gq

Over this past summer, Stan, K5GO and Kevin N5DX (11.), invited me to their station to help operate during the IARU HF World Championships contest using the call W1AW/5 (12.). The station is located about 2000 feet above sea level on top of Gaither mountain that overlooks Harrison, Arkansas. It was great to operate with the others from such an awesome station. More information about the W1AW/5 CW operation can be found in my write-up of W1AW/5 CW (13.) and from the write-up done by Rob Underwood W8YRB (14.).

(11.) <http://www.ncjweb.com/marapr05feat.pdf> (12.) http://lists.contesting.com/_3830/2005-07/msg00403.html (13.) http://www.arrl.org/contests/soapbox/index.html?con_id=91&call=w1aw/5+cw (14.) http://www.arrl.org/contests/soapbox/index.html?con_id=91&call=W1AW/5

In case you have not heard, during the summer, I was honored as the recipient of the annual ARRL Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Award (15.). I received the award for, among other things, my accomplishments in academics, participation or leadership in organizational affairs, amateur radio operating activities, public relations activities, and for community service and involvement.

(15.) <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2005/07/20/3/?nc=1>

I am now a senior in High School so it is time for me to decide which college I plan to attend next fall. I am interested in studying Mathematics and Engineering. In early August, my family and I traveled from coast to coast visiting the University of Missouri-Rolla, Caltech, MIT, and took a road trip to ARRL Headquarters in Newington, Connecticut. I am guaranteed a spot at UMR but I am still entertaining the thought of attending MIT. After the campus tour, I was able to locate the MIT Amateur Radio Club antennas along with the building that houses the station. The building was being remodeled, but I still entered and climbed the many flights of stairs. All I was able to see was the frosted glass door with the radio club logo. I am not sure where I am going to attend college next fall, but whichever college it is, I hope to put their Amateur Radio Club back on the contesting map!!

Early this school year, I convinced Dr. Overfelt, the Principal of Raytown South High School, to sponsor the newly formed Raytown South High School Amateur Radio Club (RSHS ARC). I decided to mix things up a little bit for Sweepstakes since it is my last year of high school. A fellow RSHS ARC member, Joe Watts KCØUNB, and I ran Sweepstakes under the SCHOOL Category!!!!

The RSHS ARC does not yet have a club callsign or club station. The Sweepstakes rules state that, "A club may operate from a member's station only if no on-campus station exists." This being the case, we operated from my station using the KBØVVT callsign. The station is located on a 100' by 100' city lot with my parent's house located in the center. There is a KLM KT34A tri-band Yagi and a Alpha-Delta DX-A sloper on a 50' Universal self-supporting tower in the backyard. We used a beat-up R7, that I have used since I was 8 years old, and a Cushcraft A3S that is up about 25 feet. We also tried to use the new Cushcraft MA8040V that I put together. It worked fine on 40 meters, but it kept faulting the amplifier when used on 80 meters. The reflected power would start creeping up until it would flash over and fault the amplifier. I wasted several minutes of the contest fooling around with this antenna. It is a good thing I had the Alpha-Delta Sloper, or we would have been in real trouble. I sure wish I had 2 or 3 elements on a 40-meter beam along with some listening antennas for the low bands.

I ran for 24 hours, and Joe came over to my station a few times during the weekend to help. For the first time ever, I had to operate the radio the whole day without the help of a multi-op team. I stayed up until 2:00AM Central Standard time and got back up to catch the morning rush at 6:00AM Central Standard time. I spent Sunday afternoon working the contest and studying for my Advanced Placement Biology test that I would take the next day over the Lac Operon and Hox genes (I got 100%). During the contest, I also decided to adopt the Multiplier Bell System (the system where you ring a bell every time you get a new multiplier) at my station.

Joe does not really know CW, but with the help of the Writelog CW Decoder, he was able to

squeeze-in 20 contacts on the 100 Watt ICOM IC756 PROII, including a few new sections that we needed. I made the remaining QSOs by running high power.

I also submitted my write-up on the 3830 reflector (16.).

(16.) http://lists.contesting.com/_3830/2005-11/msg01415.html

Well, that is a Sweep!!!

It was nice to hear you all on Sweepstakes CW... I hope to see you at Dayton. Until next year ...

I Am Proud To Be a Know Code Ham, 73,

Rebecca Rich -- *KB0VVT*

K1USC -- Nov 19, 2005 09:58 ET



Greetings to all, from one of the new guys. Tony, K1USC here in Alta Loma, CA. Orange Section.

It's nice seeing the comments on the Soapbox. It amazes me how well so many of you do with only a few hours on the contest. I still have a lot of contesting & operating skill to develop before I can run with the big dogs. For example: I saw Charlie Spetnagel, W6KK on the Saturday morning before the contest at the W6IER club meeting. He asked if I was going to work this contest. Standing in the presence of such an experienced radio operator, I casually told him "yes, I'll be on" (trying to sound like it was "just another contest").

The truth being that I was stressing over the difficult exchange waiting for me once the contest began. He was nice & encouraging. Reminding me to learn the sequence, just send at what ever speed I could & that others would QRS. Sure enough, he was right, many op's slowed down.

I asked Charlie if he was going to operate in the contest & he amazingly answered back "yea, I'll probably do some casual operating and just go for a sweep." I was thinking to myself, Wow, this guy is just gonna casually operate & figures to get sweep out of it?!?! Of course this is the same guy who was seen at W6IER's field day sending sonic speed CW and logging his calls with one hand, all the while holding a sandwich with his other hand. And of course, this is the same guy who just came back from K7C!

Well, here we go, I thought, It's all a learning experience & fun for me. Here's my story on how the contest went:

During the contest I operated QRP on 20 & 40. My initial thinking at the time was that this would give me a chance to get some good use out of the Redhot Radio Norcal 20 QRP rig I recently bought from K7QO. I also was thinking about using a recently purchased used Norcal BLT tuner, but I'm not yet familiar enough with it to depend on it under contest conditions. So I used the AT-100Pro auto tuner with my G5RV up 25ft on a push-up pole (which also pulls double duty as my swimming pool sweeping pole) and away I went. The little rig & tuner were hooked up to a 7 amp,

12 volt lead acid battery.

Once I was QRV, the contest was already in full swing. I had to listen a while to learn how the contest exchange sounded. I got the hang of it and the N3FJP logging program's interface made entering the sequence a breeze. I remember listening in last year to this contest and I was quickly scared away from all the high speed information being sent back and forth. At the time, I was a brand new Tech Plus and still plugging away at about 5WPM. What a difference a year makes. A year later and with some experience under my belt, I was ready to jump in and try my hand at it. I'm glad I did.

Yes, it is a tough contest exchange compared to others I have tried, but I saw it as a good learning challenge. My technique was a modified version of S&P: Search, listen & figure out their exchange, and then Pounce. Of course the pouncing part is always a challenge with only 5 watts. The usual response I heard coming from the other end was di-di-dah-dah-di-dit, QRZ, or someone else's call. But once in a while I got through. Enough times to keep me motivated and coming back for more. It was also kind of cool to once in a while be heard & plucked out of the pile ups ahead of the QRO stations. But for the most part, persistence and some really good ears on the other end helped out a lot. A sincere Thanks to all those out there that heard me and were patient enough to get the exchange.

The QRP rig performed well, I really like using it's full break-in keying, smooth & quiet. Hearing the band in-between my own key-clicks helped out a lot and kept me aware of the conditions. On 40M, I switched back to my 857D with the RF output turned down to 5wts and measured by an Oak Hills Research QRP Wattmeter. It's a neat little meter. I made all the contacts using my trusty Bencher paddle at around 20 WPM.

This was my first effort at trying out the ARRL CW Sweepstakes contest. As my contact numbers grew past 100, I thought "cool, now I can order one of those participation pins. It was nice seeing my score progress & the logging program's section map filling in with color. By Sunday afternoon, I was starting to see making all fifty states QRP as a very real possibility. But in the end, I came up short missing just three states when I pulled the plug. I never heard AK, ND & UT. I probably could have kept at it for a couple more hours but, family time was more important. Overall, a fun contest and I came away satisfied that I made a new high number of QSO's in a contest. That's a nice accomplishment for me personally, especially when it was done with only 5 watts. I think I've come a long way from a year ago as a Tech Plus listened in amazement at the sounds of high speed contest exchange and thinking there's no way I'll ever be able to do that! Well, give me another couple years at this and maybe, just maybe, I'll be up there with the "big dogs". Although, I don't know if I'll be able to do it while eating a sandwich with one hand, hi-hi. Best 73 to all & see you on the bands.

Tony Ruiz, K1USC dit dit & Fight On Trojans! -- *K1USC*

N7BYU -- Nov 16, 2005 14:36 ET

For the second year in a row, the Brigham Young University Amateur Radio Club (N7BYU) entered in CW portion of SS. As far as I know, this is also only the second time that we've done so, and I was the operator both times.

I'm still working on CW, so the entire contest was spent searching and pouncing on the stronger signals. I listened to a QSO or two to make sure I got the correct exchange, and then jumped in. I'm forced to do this because the bigger guns are usually way too fast for me!

This year was a big improvement over last year, and part of that was simply due to the fact that I was able to devote more time to it. I got about half of all the sections. 20 m was the band of choice, although I had a few on 40 and snagged a couple on 15. The multipliers I got were spread out all across the US and western Canada, though most were here out west. This year, my score was many times higher than last year's, where I didn't really spend much time at all.

I hope to catch you in the Phone portion. Operation will again be limited, due to another football game (it's rivalry week!). -- *AD7BN*

N7MAL -- Nov 16, 2005 02:46 ET

This is a copy of an email I sent to ham friends and family the day before SSCW:

Boys and Girls: The best news is the ladder-line for my wire antenna now goes directly into the shack and the back of the tuner, just in time for the sweepstakes contest. No more coax stubs and baluns outside. As my story unfolds keep in mind I'm over 6 ft tall and weigh 350 lbs.(I'm also ugly) I am also over 60 and totally disabled.

The Bad News is I fell doing the work.

The Good News is I only fell a little more than 2 feet.

The Bad News is I fell on the concrete patio(and the part that is covered with sand).

The Good News is an empty box of kitty litter kept my head from crashing into the concrete.

The Bad News is I have broken and bruised toes, a torn knee ligament, bumps and bruises everywhere. I can barely walk and can't get comfortable either lying down or sitting in a chair.

The Good New is I have a full bottle of Vicodin and a full bottle of prescription strength Ibuprofen.

Hopefully I'll be able to make a decent showing in the contest. The antenna works great with the direct connection to the tuner. Hopefully I can beat last years effort:

Unfortunately I made a terrible showing because of the pain. I am really seriously considering SSPHONE. -- *N7MAL*

WD0GTY -- Nov 14, 2005 13:07 ET

Had a fun time again this year giving contacts to the big stations. Need to practice more so I can call CQ and get the numbers up. The long exchange is intimidating for me when I try to call CQ.

Weather during the contest weekend was great. Perry, N5PJ came over Sunday afternoon and he made a suggestion to set up the radio outside on the patio and operate like Field Day and fire up the grill. Had a great time and the steaks were awesome even though I got a little big cool by the time the contest was over.

Hope to hear everyone in the phone contest so we can get another sweep this year.

Jeff -- WD0GTY

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