Contest Soapbox

2006 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes

47 Soapbox entries available

WB1EDI -- Jun 12, 2006 09:07 ET

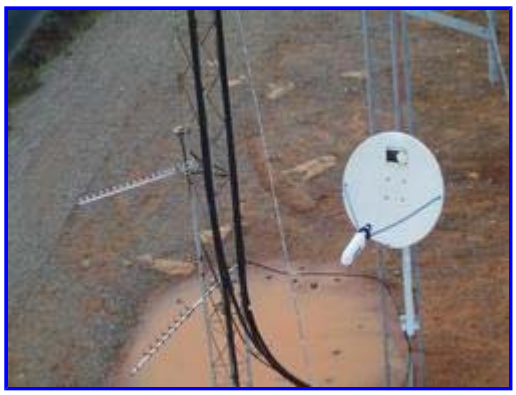
none -- *WB1EDI*

W6SN -- Apr 26, 2006 21:44 ET

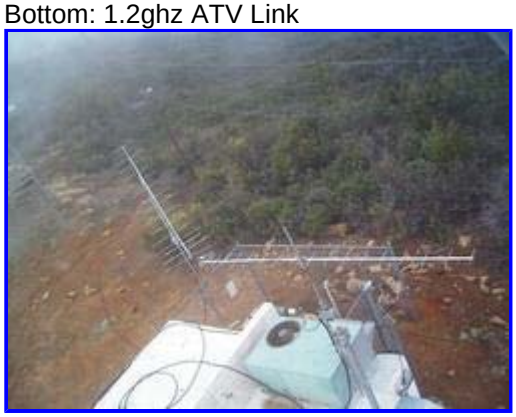
Jason W6SN putting up our late-night ATV antenna and 2.4ghz Internet yagi (non contest use though :( )

M2 6M3, located ~100' away from the radio site

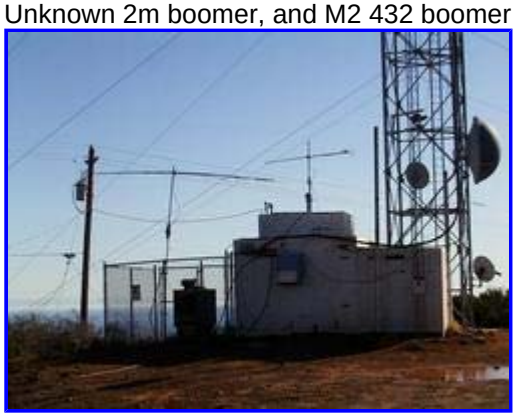
Good contest agian. Lots of wind up on Mt. Vaca, near Fairfield, Ca in CM88. This year we had boomers on 2m, and 432, while a 6m3 held the fort down on 6m. TS-2000 powered this year, we had 2 of them, with a amp on 432, all fed by 7/8" heliax! Yayas! The contest was great, unlike the ARRL server, as this is the 3rd time I've submitted this bloody soapbox, the 2nd time it was on the site for all of 2 hours before it disappeared... Oh well... Back to the QSO's :) -- *KG6MDW, W6SN, KG6JMW*



Top: 2.4ghz Internet Links
Bottom: 1.2ghz ATV Link



Unknown 2m boomer, and M2 432 boomer



Noticie the leaning mast? That was vertical at the start of the contest, we acutally had to lower it down because it allmost broke....

K3EAR -- Apr 22, 2006 22:39 ET

We are back again this year despite all odds with a full Unlimited effort . Sorry about last year's Limited operation . Things have been a bit reserved over the past year due to my wife's long battle with cancer . It escalated over this past year with the possibility of having to leave at any time till her final passing . I give much credit to the guys in our small club and the local clubs for pulling things together and making this operation happen . They even got me to put my Rover back out on the road . The

W1SJ at 50mhz

N2YHK at 144mhz

N1JFU at 222mhz

W2IX at 432mhz

first day was not too bad but the second day saw the van turn into an ice cube on wheels towards the end . So how did we do you ask ? Despite relative flat band conditions , the token Murphy visit and our usual intentional interference from another group posting here , not too bad at all . From the posted preliminary scores we have seen we are at least 300K over the nearest competitor and nearly double the next nearest competitor . This will be our third winning effort as an Unlimited , if true , punctuated by the win as a Limited . Yup , that is 4 years of serious effort for those interested . We hope to resume further construction and development this year and be back again . As always we can be emailed for the story inside the story and more pictures . WA1HHN -- *N3EMF*

N0BR at 222mhz

NN3Q at 222mhz

WA3YKS at 432mhz

WA1HHN Rover

WB8BZK/R -- Feb 19, 2006 20:15 ET

I'm so glad that I took Friday off from work to set up all of the equipment in the rover mobile. I was taking the last load out to the car just as the first snow flakes began to fall. Boy did it come down fast. Within a few hours we had twelve inches of snow on the ground. I thought for sure that all of snow would surely halt all rover operations in the area but the plows cleaned up most of the snow and ice from the roads by morning. Still I didn't hear too many other rovers braving the elements around Chicago this time around.

As I drove up to Wisconsin for the start of the contest, the snow depth decreased significantly and driving became much better. The best part is that I was able to set up all of the beams on the portapole at several locations which really helped bring in the weak ones and a few extra multipliers.

Sunday morning brought a heavy fog that left an ice build up on the antennas. Had to chip away the ice on the six meter M2 loop to keep the FT100D transmitter from SWR foldback. Winter roving is always an experience!

Overall I had a great time roving in the January contest. 73 Mike -- *WB8BZK*

KE4WBO -- Feb 16, 2006 19:03 ET

ANTENNAS USED DIRECTIVE SYTEMS 2M-2304 AND A PROCOMM 10GIG DISH, IN THE BACK GROUND IS THE 6M ARRAY

ANOTHER FUN CONTEST GONE PAST NOT MUCH PROP BUT MANAGED QUITE A FEW QSO'S ON 2M CW . I OPERATED SINGLE OP LOW POWER ON 6M ,2M 222,432 1296 2304 10368 THE THIRD TIME TOWERS AND ANTENNAS HAVE BEEN KNOCKED DOWN BY HURRICAINES HERE AND MANAGED TO SALVAGE THESE FROM WILMA WHICH I RECEIVED THE FULL BRUNT OF, SNAPPING MY UHF TOWER AT 30' THE DIRECTIVE SYSTEMS ANTENNAS FELL STRAIGHT DOWN THROUGH A PALM TREE AND STUCK IN THE GROUND ,I CUT THE TREE AWAY AND THE ANTENNAS SPRUNG BACK SLIGHTLY BRUISE DBUT WORK FINE . I APPRECIATE THE CW OPS WHO STUCK IT OUT WITH ME LATE SUNDAY NIGHT AT THE LAST MINUTE I WASNT COPYING WELL ON CW ANYMORE. I ONLY HAD ABOUT 10 HOURS ON THE WHOLE CONTEST BUT STILL FUN HEARD W4WA ONCE ON 2M ONLY OUT OF STATE STATION I HEARD ON ANY BAND DURING THE CONTEST. K0VXM AND I TRIED TO RUN ON 10 GIGS SUNDAY MORNING AND I HAD A SWITCHING RELAY STICK AT THE LAST MINUTE HE HAD SOMETHING SIMILAR HAPPEN TO HIS SETUP FUNNY HOW IT ALL WORKED THE WEEK BEFORE :> 73 -- *KE4WBO*

W4VHF -- Feb 13, 2006 13:42 ET

The January '06 VHF contest for W4VHF was a BEAMLESS event. QRV on 6M, 2M and 432 with stacked Big Wheel loop antennas, which yielded 170+ unofficial QSOs. Experienced wierd wx condx e.g. ice storm on Sunday evening/night and woke up on Monday AM with no evidence of ice. -- *W4VHF*

Stacked 432 Big Wheels over stacked 2M Big Wheels. (6M not shown)

W3SO -- Feb 7, 2006 12:07 ET

Left to right, WR3Z at 6m and K4VV at 2m

W3YOZ at 222 MHz

The operators for this contest were: WR3Z, W3BTX, K4VV, W3TEF, K3RUQ, AI3M, W3SF, K8JW, WM3O, and W3YOZ.

The band by band details: 50MHz 390QSOs, 54Grids; 144MHz 436QSOs, 62Grids; 222MHz 135QSOs, 44Grids; 432MHz 167QSOs 39Grids.

There wasn't a team photo this time since the operators worked in shifts. However here are a few inside the shack photos. W3SO was on for the full period except for the last hour when the operators had to leave the mountaintop due to freezing rain. Again, thanks to the rovers for all the QSOs. And to ARRL for sponsoring the contest. Look for W3SO, FN00sn, WPA section, in the Spring Sprints.

For a history of the station development visit: <www.qrz.com/w3so>

For the Wopsononock Mountaintop Operators, Ed
-- *K3IXD*

WM3O at 432 MHz

KG4LEV -- Feb 6, 2006 16:08 ET


This was the FM Setup, the antenna was on a 100' Fire Tower. It was a Tri-Band Vertical Antenna.


This is John (KG4LEV) checking the log to see if we had the contact. He was operating the SSB Station with the Beams.

Each year, hams all over get excited about participating in the VHF Contest in January. Thanks to the ARRL for sponsoring such a great event along with many others throughout the year. This year the Western Piedmont Amateur Radio Club (located in Morganton, NC) and the Marion Amateur Radio Association's (located in Marion, NC) Club Presidents (KI4GZD and KG4LEV) went atop Walker Top Mountain for a joint effort in the January VHF contest. We operated under John's call this year (KG4LEV) because we used mine last year and it's more difficult than you think to use someone else's call sign. As you can imagine I goofed a few times. I tried to take a few pictures from the weekend but we were having too much fun and I didn't get as many as last year.

We set-up a camper and made a weekend out of contesting. Walker Top is approximately 3000 ft' give or take a few feet. We used fairly large beam antennas for SSB 432, 222 and 2 meter and a 3 element 6 meter setup on Rohn Tower than mounted in a mount made by John (KG4LEV) that mounted in the hitch on his truck. We used a Tri-bander Vertical (444, 223, 144) attached to the top of a 100' Fire tower and a 6 meter halo loop Omni directional antenna mounted in the hitch of my (KI4GZD) truck.

With preliminary results, it looks like we scored over 14,000 points from Saturday at 2p.m. till Sunday about 4p.m. With darkness approaching and work the next day we figured we needed to get started on our 5 hour tear down. This year was so much better than last year, the weather was gorgeous and perfect for contesting except when we started tearing the assembly down, the wind started blowing really bad and the it was right at freezing and everything was iced over which made for a fun time tearing everything down. Climbing the 100' Fire tower,

This is the tower where we mounted our vertical tribander.

Here is the Beam set-up. John made a bracket that fit in his hitch to utilize Rohn tower, works very nice.

Here is the Beam set-up. 432, 222, 2, 6

I figured I would add a picture of me (KI4GZD)in the soapbox so John wouldn't

which had steps iced over and the wind blowing upwards of 40 plus mph made for an interesting venture to remove the antenna but we managed to get it down.

We had a blast this year as always and can't wait till June to do it again.

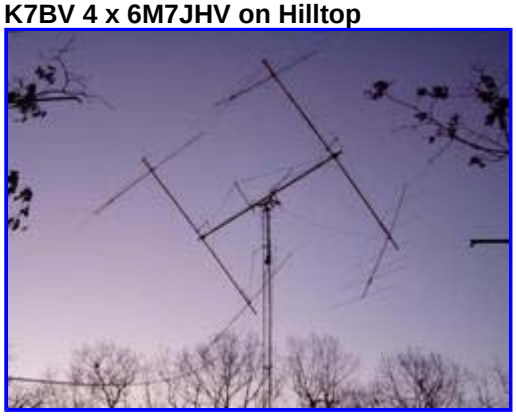
Greg -- *KI4GZD*

give me such a hard time. Last year I escaped all the pictures somehow, LOL. We were getting ready to tear down and I was checking the log.

Camper Set-up

K7BV -- Feb 4, 2006 12:03 ET

K7BV 4 x 6M7JHV on Hilltop



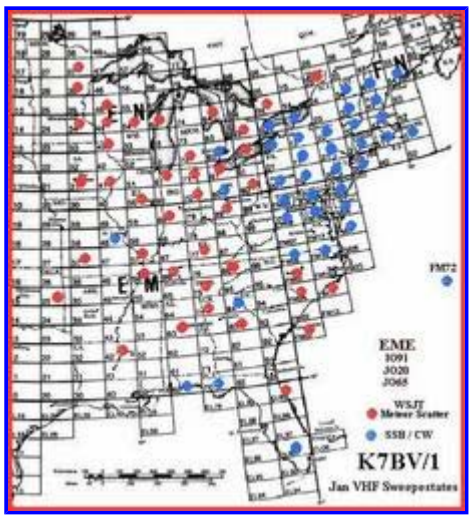
K7BV 4x7 barking at the moon

From my perspective, 2006 saw a very typical January VHF SS. I count as norms the following: (1) winter winds = lots of power line noise (2) not one single Sporadic Es opening (3) NFL playoffs on TV competed for potential contacts (4) Murphy arriving for his first – of many to come - visit of the New Year.

My primary reasons for entering VHF contests are to have fun, run into old and new friends, extend my knowledge of my band of choice, and to use the large antenna array I am blessed to own to maybe give a few folks their only 6 meter FN31 multiplier. Therefore, I entered my usual non-existent contest category: Single Op, Single Band Obsession-6M, Single 8877, Single “H” Frame. However, this year I moved from the Single Planet classification to the Multi-Planet arena after deciding to use the moon for EME grid chasing. I used the following modes to make QSOs: SSB, CW, WSJT modes JT6M-FSK441-JT65. Sadly, I forgot to check the FM simplex channels and, even though I had a number of frequency jammers, none of them used AM so I missed both of these modes.

I sent my transceiver in for a lube and tune-up the week before the contest. So, having no life other than being a 6m fanatic, I had nothing to do in the evenings leading up to the contest but to drive the meteor scatter community nuts as I secured WSJT digital skeds with ops in 48 grids outside my tropo range – 350 to 425 miles. While I did not have many dreams (okay, okay….I had some) of working grids ON the moon, I did arrange 5 skeds using the moon to work Earth grid multipliers.

I finished with 340 QSOs in 84 grids with 23 hours in



front of the rig – yes, you are right, I DO need to get a life….

The grid breakdown might be of interest to some. Looking through the log, I note 40 of the 84 grids were worked only via WSJT modes on meteor scatter. EME produced 3 grids in EU. Therefore, lacking Es, SSB/CW tropo and forward scatter accounted for the remaining 41 grids. DX worked included VP9 on SSB meteor scatter as well as G, ON, SM on EME.

New things learned:

----Spacing my meteor scatter QSOs 15 minutes apart proved to be more than enough time. Being careful to only sked EME'ers with BIG BOY toys, I was able to complete those contacts in the dead of the night in anywhere from 10 to about 30 minutes.

----My station is an Alligator at times now with the 1,500 watt 8877 amp and I need to be sensitive to that fact when listening for calls. I added an in-shack preamp some months ago. I generally do not run the preamp on SSB or CW but did pull it in a few times during the contest to hear some ether level callers that otherwise would have been missed using the rig stock preamps.

Old things that I wish I HAD NOT learned to be true:

----Some stations cannot keep endless mindnumbing CQs off 50125, presumably believing that stations listening on that frequency encounter some sort of signal enhancement direct to their station. This logic appears to be seriously flawed, though, because rarely do those CQ'ers seem to hear the bellowing curses of non-contesters asking them to QSY, many times offering specific places to go to – Heaven not being among them.

----Through careful observation of various operating techniques employed up here in W1 land, I am reminded that it is indeed possible to turn up ones mic gain and to compress the audio so horribly that it can be made to be impossible to copy even though the amplifier final is doing a meltdown and the output occupies enough bandwidth to accommodate, say, a TV video channel with one's splatter. On this subject, I note that those audio output adjustment also appear to affect the offenders' receiver as well since they rarely can hear all the screams from the less-than-adoring observing crowds.

Thanks very much for the fun – May the Es be with you in 2006

73 de Dennis -- *K7BV*

W6XD/R -- Feb 4, 2006 03:48 ET

Thanks to everyone who worked us as we moved through 15 grid squares.

This year we stayed in California and limited our total trip to less than two days, starting the contest in Orange

John Desloge, N6MU, points to the south toward Sacramento from CM99, at the north end of the January, 2006 route followed by W6XD/R (operating in the Ford van), N6MU/R (in the Subaru Baja) and K6VCR/R (in the Ford F-150). With John are Rob Hughes, KG6TOA (left) and Hank Feilen (right). Art Goddard, W6XD, and Tom Sneden, K6VCR, were both operating and missed being in this photo, taken by N6NB.

"Is this pack roving or what?" asks N6MU (in blue shirt) as KE6HPZ, N6DN and N6NB all gather around N6TEB's Ford Excursion in the Mojave Desert. N6TEB is obscured by the windshield in this photo by K6VCR. At the time, N6RMJ was also at the Mojave convergence but out of sight in the sagebrush about a mile away.

Here's Paul, N6DN, with his 5.7 and 10 GHz system.

County (DM13) at 11 a.m. (PST) Saturday and returning there about 1 a.m. Monday after going as far north as Arbuckle (CM89), northwest of Sacramento.

A highlight was having six (6) 10-band rovers together at the Mojave convergence at one time (K6VCR/R, N6DN/R, N6MU/R, N6RMJ/R, N6TEB/R and W6XD/R). There was a lot of commotion even on the microwave bands as we all worked each other--and everyone else we could hear at this junction of grids DM04, DM14, DM05 and DM15.

There are more pictures of this and previous rover adventures, along with a short history of this kind of VHF/UHF contesting, on the rover page at www.n6nb.com.

See y'all next year! -- *W6XD/N6NB*

W6XD and N6NB (in the background) operate simultaneously to roll in the Qs at the Mojave convergence in this photo by K6VCR.

Rob Hughes, KG6TOA (left), who got his call sign specifically to take part in roving expeditions, chats with his sports car rally buddy Hank Feilen, who is thinking of getting an amateur radio license for the same reason. They teamed up with K6VCR and N6MU, respectively. For both, having a "designated driver" with credentials like that was a real luxury.

Dave, N6TEB (seated at the front console in his Excursion), talks with N6DN.

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