

Contest Soapbox

2005 ARRL September VHF QSO Party

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WA1HHN/R -- Dec 28, 2005 18:49 ET



The WA1HHN/R Rover in Action



The Rover Gear Deployed



The Big Valley Below the Contact

The plan was to add 2 or 3 more bands and Rove to at least 7 or 8 grids. That was my plan but Murphy made other arrangements. All was set the first day. I had practiced setting up the new antennas and the new transverters seemed to work just fine. The first contacts went well and it was off to scale the fire tower in the next grid. Some curiosity seekers at the fire tower who looked on, but thankfully no problems. I pressed on for the long ride to the next grid. Actually the next two are fairly close together on the same unpaved road. I had some problems at a new location I tried so I decided to back track a bit. I met up with the local Park Rangers and did a stop and show that went well. They had heard about me from the regular ranger who is pretty used to me operating from there. Then on my way again in the dark on that narrow dirt road on top of the mountain range disaster set in. My rear tire blew out in a big way and of course people were calling me for skeds at the next grid. Nothing like changing a tire in the dark with a van load of gear. Of course the spare was behind where all the batteries and antennas were stowed. I was able to make repairs and get down the road. I met up with another local Rover (WA3PTV) and our other club Rover out on the main road at a small local restaurant/bar combination. It was after 11PM so I headed back to the barn for some sleep. Next day I went and got a new tire, thank God for the road hazard warrantee. I though this was best as the next leg of my trip was some 500 miles which did not seem to be a good idea to do without a spare tire. Due to the lost time for repairs, search time at yet another new location, travel time and set up time I was only able to manage 2 more grids. I did my best to hand out a few new grids to those who called. Band conditions were odd indeed. Many calls, few answers. Hopefully I will do better the next time out of the barn. It was a learning experience for sure.

Walt, WA1HHN -- *N3EMF*



Another 47GHZ Contact, No Problem!



And a visit from Mr. Murphy no less!

K3EAR -- Dec 19, 2005 07:33 ET



Pete Walters K9PW

This year the stage was certainly set for a classic rematch in the SOHP Category. A short history here, In 2003 for the first time our club station was reconfigured from a Multi operation to a Single Op effort. With many choices of call possible Stan, KA1ZE chose to use our club call of K3EAR. For a first effort the victory was ours and the #1 spot was secured. The following year in 2004 another of our regular Ops, Pete, K9PW decided to give it a try. He did well indeed adding over 100K to the previous year's effort but it was sadly a photo-finish to the end with Jeff, K1TEO pulling out by less than a nose. So more determined than ever Pete returned again this year in 2005. Yes he succeeded in adding yet another 100K to his previous score and finally realized his victory along with setting a new all-time World Record in this category. Good job Pete, a true victory in the face of all adversities. For the story within the story, you will have to E-mail me for that. Walt, WA1HHN. -- *N3EMF*



K3EAR the SOHP Station

KG6IYN -- Nov 29, 2005 01:32 ET



A view not normally seen, but handily provided from about 50' above the site via the Fire Lookout Tower. This view shows the 222/432/1296 Stack - other antennas and omni's were mounted on or near the Lookout Tower.



One of the best features of this location are the sunrises and sunsets. In this picture, you can actually see the "peak" of the mountain in the clouds that are at about 4100' to the west during sunrise.

What an outstanding year ! From the January VHF Contest through the September event, things just kept getting better.

Every ARRL VHF Contest entered this year was conducted from the same hilltop in DM12, about 7 miles north of the US - Mexico Border, and approximately 50 miles east of the Pacific Ocean, Elevation 4900' ASL.

Going from the battle in January 2005 with the winds blowing non-stop at 50 MPH or better to a calm and mellow September 2005 "end of season" finale was quite the interesting run this year.

Scores for January were all over the map for setup and antenna problems. June paid off in a huge way with Southern California seemingly getting the better part of the Western States band openings on 6 Meters. September was the best effort for setup, operating and teardown - even allowing time for testing and tinkering with the DEMI and DB6NT transverters, along with a handful of completed QSO's on bands not normally explored.

Hopefully everything learned will make the efforts for 2006 that much better. Having done this as a "one man show" for about the past three years and really fine tuning operating efforts has paid off - certainly by being more organized and spending less time with set up and teardown.

Thanks for all of those who helped by passing out points and for the local rover efforts that helped tremendously with the scoring - especially in a time where gas per gallon in Southern California was close to three bucks a gallon for regular.

Goals for next year - more bands, a little more power on



The business side of how this all gets done : The well designed and professionally engineered Nissan Microphone Holder ...



The business side of how this all gets done : The leather upholstered rear seating surface and equipment holder - "Brother, can you spare a switchbox ?"



The business side of how this all gets done : The view from the Drivers 8-way electrically adjusted power seat, with heated surfaces for those chilly contesting evenings. Not shown are the additional switchboxes and transverters behind the pile of radios on the passenger floorboard.

900/1296/2304, getting two more transverters set up in the gap between 2304 and 10 gig, perhaps a first effort as a multi-op station (hopefully with my newly licensed Son, Bobby).

Cheers - see you all on the bands next January !
-- *KG6IYN*



Another shot of the "bumper mounted" short stack



A different shot showing the "low band" antennas and verticals - other antennas used were on the northwest side of the fence surrounding the tower, a few of the M2 Loops are up on the tower itself.

WA2BTR -- Nov 7, 2005 08:44 ET



My first ARRL VHF contest. Operated from my cabin on a lake in Maine (FN54). Took a little while to get used to the non-"Sweepstakes" type action. Still had a blast though especially with the early Sunday morning Au which provided a number of contacts. (first Au I've ever heard) Needless to say, I'm hooked and the wheels are already spinning for January '06...but I'll be home in NJ for that one! 73's -- WA2BTR

K8EP -- Oct 25, 2005 13:42 ET

With warmer temperatures, summer took one last jab at us as the K8EP group set up on Friday September 9. But, by evening and overnight during the contest, it was evident that fall had indeed arrived in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia.



N3JDR and W8CMK attach the two meter antennas to the mast.



The six meter beam is quickly assembled by Pat-K3MQP, Dale-K3DD, and Bill-N3JDR.



Did you bring the instructions on how to put the canopy together?



The K8EP site starts to take shape!

Again this year we were located atop North Mountain just west of Martinsburg, WV, operating grid square FM09x1. With a few changes to our antennas on 6, 220, and 432 we looked forward to the contest with added anticipation. Our “improvements” were basically getting a little more height to the 6-meter beam, and the “luxury” of having the 220 and 432 antennas on separate masts and rotors.

An added surprise came late Saturday night and into the early hours Sunday morning with an aurora opening. The operators were kept busy and for a few of us this was the first opportunity to experience this phenomenon. Other added bonuses came with a 6-meter band opening Sunday evening and a few CW contacts on 432 from some distant grid squares. Several of us realized a need to sharpen up our CW skills! Activity was steady as the contest ended giving a great finish to an enjoyable weekend.

Those participating included Rodney - N8RAT, Pat - K3MQP, Stu - W3STU, Dale - K3DD, Bill - N3JDR, Mark - W8CMK, Gary - WB8EKG, Milt - N3LTQ, and Adam - KB8UUE. We also want to thank Dan - K8GUN and Fred -KB8SVT for kindly loaning their equipment to us, helping to make the weekend a success. Thanks to Rodney-N8RAT for the photos.

Everyone commented on how much fun this contest was and are already talking about January 2006. To anyone who has yet to try the VHF contest we can only say come on in the airways are fine! -- W8CMK



....and we're off and running with Garry-WB8EKG in the foreground.



Pat-K3MQP enjoying CW contacts.



Rodney-N8RAT had a beautiful view of the Shenandoah Valley from his temporary "QTH."



Dale-K3DD prepares the 432mhz mast.



In good company with local FM radio station tower.



W3STU you make a mean breakfast.



Oh say can you see the 222mhz beam?



Six meter fun for W8CMK.

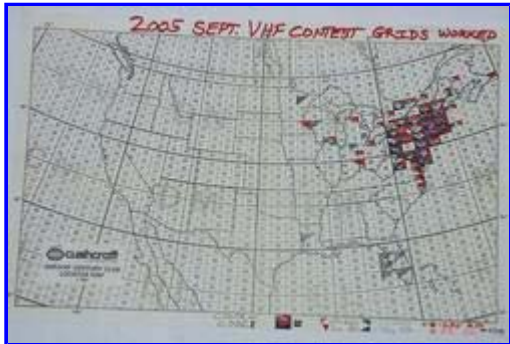
W3SO -- Oct 19, 2005 16:34 ET

Oops - forgot to do the Soapbox page on the web. Sorry. CLAIMED-SCORE: 550228 ARRL-SECTION: WPA (FN00) CATEGORY: MULTI-LIMITED OPERATORS: W3BTX,WR3Z,K4VV,ND3A,W3TEF,W3SF,W3YOZ,KB3LGS SOAPBOX: Murphy stuck in that the 222MHz computer would not boot so we resorted to logging 222 on an off-line computer. We probably missed making QSOs on all four bands with many stations since the 222 operator watches the network for the stations needed, and on which band. On the plus side, after CQ WW VHF Contest Marty, W3YOZ, and the Altoona, PA team members upgraded the 2m antenna to a stacked, rotatable, 15 el 2m beams and a rotatable 2m 17 el 2m beam. We heard better and got good reports in the A-B comparisons before the contest. The station details are at <www.qrz.com/w3so>. The AU on 6m and 2m started about 2AM ET Saturday night and lasted until sunrise, then we had tropo and Es. Exciting Saturday night and Sunday. This time we had at least one QSO in each hour, and that was with only eight operators this time. All QSOs were either CW, SSB, or FM. We worked 30 different rover stations for 174 QSOs, about 12% of our QSOs. Thank you rovers! This was our best score ever, beating our June 2004 score by 145K. CU in the Fall Sprints and again in the January VHF contest. For the Wopsononock Mountaintop Operators, Ed -- *K3IXD*

KA1LMR -- Oct 16, 2005 00:02 ET



Here are the Antennas that help do the job at sunset.



ABOVE: Grid Square map showing Grids work color coded by band: 6M Gray, 2M Red, 222 Green, 432 Blue, 903 Pink, 1296 Orange, 2304 Purple.

From a 1,000 Ft. Hill top in South Central NH. With much planning and preparation in getting every thing working right Since the June VHF contest. And having no major problems or equipment failures and the bonus of nice weather.

For all my efforts in setting up this portable station on a hill top I can say I well exceeded my own expectations by breaking some of my own long sought records. Those being finally breaking the 500 QSO barrier and 100,000 mark of total points , which surpasses all of my previous scores in VHF Contesting in operating portable from a Hill top.

The Contest was a bit slow at first but Aurora opening late Saturday nite gave a promising hope:

6 Meters- from FN 43 to IN, IL, WI, MN, FL, TX.

2 Meters- from FN 43 to OH, MI, IL, MN EN 34 !, NS: FN 95!,ON EN93, NB FN66, WV, VA.

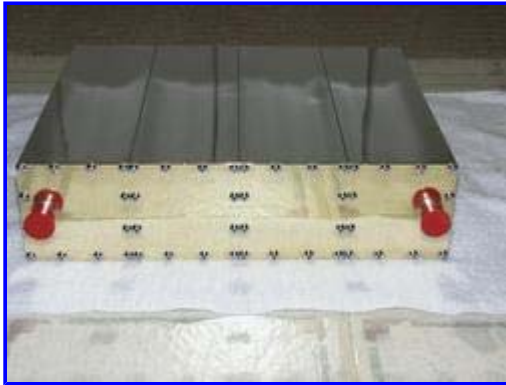
222 MHz- FN 43 to IL, WV, VA.

432 MHz- FN 43 to PA, WV, VA.

With little sleep in the back the truck Sunday Morning yield PA, VA on 903 Mhz by late after noon some brief E skip would Yield several Florida staions and K5QE EM 31



6M 6 POLE and 2M 4 POLE Band pass filters.



903 MHz 4 POLE tightly Notched Band Pass Filter.



6M Filter top, 2M Filter Middle, 903 Mhz Filter Bottom.

in TX.

In the final few hours a few other Treats W3OR in Delaware on 50,144,222, 432 and even 903! and W4FRA on 2M from NC.

All in all it was a fun and successful contest, I Look forward to hearing you all on next year, perhaps with the addition of 3456 Mhz or 10 GHz if I can muster it all.

-- *KA1LMR*



The one down side of operating from a good location on a hill top is competing with all the nearby QRM, Intermod, Paging transmitters saturating the 6M band, the commercial and others on the 2M band, Cellular towers blasting on 903 Mhz. A step towards curing this, which helped out this contest, was to add these custom-built band Pass filters. These BY DCI did a good 80% of attenuating the unwanted. They are a bit pricey being of built of extruded Aluminum and Brass, I decided they should look nice as well. Pictured is what hours of polishing can make these filters look like. If you see what they look like stock you will appreciate the difference. The Owners of DCI also Hams WWW.DCI.CA wrote commenting the same praising the work on how nice the filters looked after all of my hours of elbow grease. :)

KI4AEI -- Oct 15, 2005 21:03 ET



KI4AEI operates first contest during Sept VHF QSO Party from the station of K9ES

This is Elliot Robinson KI4AEI, just turned 15 and operated his first contest. Elliot used the station of K9ES, and has been bitten by the "contest bug". Now he is studying for his general license. -- K9ES

WA4UF -- Oct 14, 2005 09:19 ET

Well, I thought I was going to have a repeat of the June party, where I did all that work on my antenna farm and netted what, 3 QSOs? It was Saturday night before I finally (with some stellar "hold this while I tighten up the



My temporary antenna farm - 3 elements on 6, 15 elements on 70cm, 6 elements on 2



The Icom Triplets - GARC's IC-551 and IC-451, my IC-221 (which used to be GARC's before it died and was resurrected)

WA2IID/R -- Oct 11, 2005 09:26 ET



On Mt. Equinox

please feel free to browse our website: <http://www.frontiernet.net/~ihi/> Hope all had as good of a time as us. 73 Jack -- WA2IID

guylines!" support from the XYL) got some metal in the air and got the 6m and 70cm rigs (borrowed from the Gator Amateur Radio Club's station). Sure enough, 6, 2 and 70cm were all deadDeadDEAD.

Then, Sunday afternoon, after doing some work around the house and running some errands, I wandered past the radio desk and heard "CQ contest... CQ contest..." buried in the static. Twirl the knob on the 6m rig, and off we went! I stayed glued to the radios until the wee hours and got 30 6m QSOs logged. 2m and 70cm stayed dead, unfortunately. Still, I was having the time of my life. Here's hoping the propagation doldrums don't strike in January! -- WA4UF

A really great contest. The weather was perfect for roving. Not even any bugs around like there usually are. The opening on Sunday evening was a real bonus and a great way to finish up! Our score was our best yet for the September contest. The only problem we had was the loss of the 3456 station Saturday evening. It is always a tough balance of weather to take away operating time to try to repair, or just let it go. We let it go, but after we got home discovered it would have been an easy fix. Oh well. Anyway our major objective was indeed achieved (having fun). If you would like more information on our operation

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