

THE BLACK HOLE



ARRL SS Unlimited Team Champs 2000, 2001, 2002

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KARSFEST 2005: a great success!

by Brian Maves, K9QQ

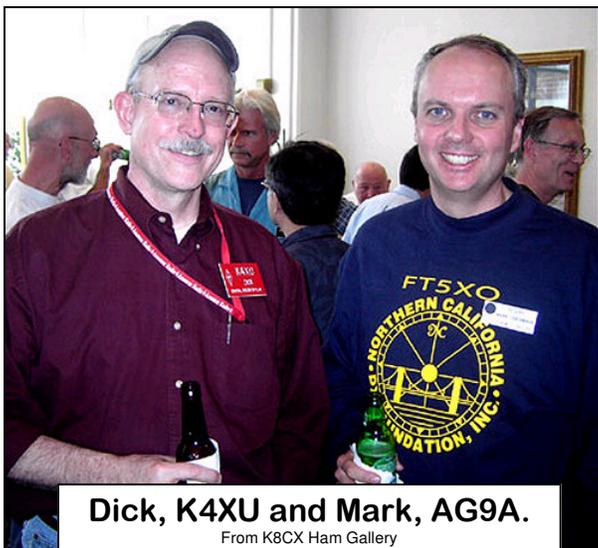
We have used KARSFEST in Peotone, IL as a vehicle to promote contesting and DXing 4 of the past 5 years. This year's hamfest went very well. Attendance was great! Joe Pontek V31JP was here with a great power point of his home and contest station in Belize. Carl K9LA and xyl Vicky AE9YL were here doing DXCC and WAS checking, Jess AI9L and xyl Patti AF9H did CQ award and VUCC card checking, my thanks to all of you.

However, I am sad to announce this was the last year my son Chip K9IOC and I will be doing the show. This is killing me, but we're going to leave on a high note. We have 8 years of shows under our belts and have decided to pass the baton. My only hope is that everyone will remember the themes of the shows we put together, to better promote amateur radio.

I coined the phrase "KARSFEST" in 2000. Jerry Rosalius WB9Z did the Spratly Island 9M0M DXpedition show in 2001. Jim Mornar N9TK did the first ever Ducie Island DXpedition showing in 2002. The show honoring Paul Gentry K9PG and the SMC's Nov SS 3-Peat, presentation by Carl K9LA was in 2003. And Joe Pontek V31JP contest station in Belize was this year's 2005 show.

Dayton 2005 Pics

If you have pics from Dayton 2005 please send them to k9qq@hawaii.rr.com for the next issue.



Dick, K4XU and Mark, AG9A.

From K8CX Ham Gallery

My goal was to bring something special to KARSFEST that is above and beyond your average hamfest, something that will be remembered like I do as a kid novice back in the old Santa Fe Park hamfest days in the 70's and 80's.

Promoting contesting and the SMC along side the hamfest has been a pleasure and an honor. The '01, '02 and '03 SMC rallies were wonderful, I am personally thankful to all of you for that!

Now, I am going to concentrate on installing my new telescoping tower, this will finally complete my contest station.

It's time to start contesting beyond SS. And oh yes, I fully expect an SMC WIN in the upcoming 2005 SS. NCCC is toast, take no prisoners! Everyone please make SS priority one this year.

GO SMC!

73' Clay Melhorn N9IO



The Black Hole



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Membership in **The Society of Midwest Contesters** is open to all persons with a bona-fied interest in amateur radio contesting. The club doesn't collect annual dues, but instead funds everything through member donations. For more information contact one of the following officers:

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As one of the top contest clubs in the nation, we continue to sponsor plaques for a number of major contests including Sweepstakes, ARRL DX, CQWW, and CQWPX, as well as make monetary donations in the interest of promoting radio sporting.

A few years ago, we decided to eliminate formal dues of \$10 per year, and instead, maintain funds through member donations. We encourage all members to consider making an annual donation to the club. Your generous donations allow us to continue to expand our support of radio sporting.

You can make your donation two ways:

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The VHF Column

By W9GKA, Kevin Kaufhold

On Contests, and More Contests. SMC ops have been very active on recent VHF contests.

The results of the 2004 CQ VHF contest were reported a while back. Bob, K2DRH, not only won the national title for SO, all-band, he actually had a higher score than all multi-ops in the event. Way to go, Bob! N9TF won the national competition for QRP, while John, K9JK, was 2nd nationally among the rovers. Eight of the 15 entries in the 9th call area were SMC ops, in fact. Other SMC members operating included WO9S, N2BJ, K9YC, K9DXR, and W9SE. Great job everyone. This information on the contest was supplied from K9JK, John. Thanks for the report.

Several ops were also active in the 2005 Spring Sprints. W9SZ and N9GH worked the 50 MHz sprints, while K9JK ran rover on 2 meters and participated on 432. N9GH also ran on 2 meters. W9LYA, NA9US (by N9GH), K0PG, K9YC, and K2DRH all worked the 432 night. N9GH and W9SZ worked the uwave sprints on 902 and above. I may have missed some folks in some sprints. Sorry if I did not include everyone in this report who ran the various events.

Now for the 2005 June VHF QSO Party. We made a big push for ops for this event, figuring that our best chance of participation by HF ops was in the June VHF. We should increase our ops numbers somewhat this year, possibly over 30 ops (we had 27 entries in 2004 and 24 entries in 2003), but so far, most of the scores have been reported by our usual ops active on VHF. This will still put us in the medium category.

The contest was quite interesting for so late in the solar cycle. I was expecting rather dead band conditions all around. However, we had some scattered amounts of E skip on 6 meters on Saturday afternoon, mostly to the SW but also into Florida. States worked on 6 included Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas. I worked 11 new grids to the SW that I have never confirmed before, and a few rare ones that I have never worked before (DL89, DM81, DM90). But the skip was concentrated to areas of very low population density and did not extend to California or other megacenters of amateur population.

6 and 2 meters started out excessively noisy on Saturday afternoon, which was partly due to a rash of local rain cells in the area. We dodged most of them in the St. Louis area, but John, K9JK, got drenched in his rover on both days of the contest. 2 meters quieted down a bit towards evening, but several ops simply gave up on 2 meters, moving their liaison frequencies to 222, which was in much better shape.

(Continued on page 4)

ARRL Improves Reporting

From the ARRL "Rate Sheet"

Is the move to electronic log handling and checking having the desired effects? ARRL Contest Administrator Dan N1ND sees definite improvement. "Because of the success of the Cabrillo project, the ARRL Contest Robot, and the log checking teams, I would like to note that the results for all ARRL Contests are available at least a full month earlier than just 5 years ago... And in some cases, such as this year's DX CW and Phone contests, the results are a full 2 months earlier."



WRTC 06 Final Team Rules

by Brian Maves, K9QQ

The WRTC 2006 committee finalized the team selection criteria, with some key changes over the draft criteria they've had on the street for the last 9 months. They re-structured the categories, expanding them from four to six to include the champion and runner-up teams from the last competition, select national teams chosen by official organizations from each country, national regional teams selected based on performance in selected contests, national sponsored teams selected by the highest donation bids from sponsors, national young teams for operators 22 years or younger, and the multi-single teams.

The changes reduced the number of teams from 65 to 60 and redistributed the number of team slots among the categories. As a result, they reduced the number of core teams from 49 to 37. Under the final rules though, they removed the "same-country citizenship" requirement for 15 teams, which will allow for multi-national teams in the competition.

One change pointed out by Pat, N9RV, will make the competition for a spot on regional teams more equitable. These slots will be chosen based on scores in major contests, but operators in the blackhole will only be competing with other operators in the our region. As Pat pointed out, "Now your "finish" in a contest is based on how you did against competition in W8-9-0-5 only. So if you were in seventh place, say, in the WAE contest in 2003, it might be a first place finish (worth 450 points) if everyone ahead of you was east coast."

The WRTC 2006 team selection process starts this September and teams will be chosen in January 2006 and announced at the end of that month. You can read the full criteria at <http://www.wrtc2006.com/ingles/criteria.pdf>.

(Continued from page 3)

This generated a lot of activity on 222 and 432 throughout Saturday evening, and I had more contacts on these two bands than in any other recent event. Several SMC ops easily worked into the SW (OK and Texas) on all the upper VHF bands Saturday evening. But others, such as Bob, K2DRH, found 2 and above propagation to be nothing out of the ordinary.

I was most impressed by the coordination between SMC members. Everyone was looking for everyone else this time around, and I worked or heard at least 27 SMC ops on one or more bands, and very often on all 4 VHF bands. K2DRH, N2BJ, WB9Z all boomed in with their usual intensity, but several others were also quite loud into the St. Louis area when they turned to the south. This included K9NS, K9RN, and K9ZO. I was also quite pleased with several ops who made a special effort just to get on the contest to help out the SMC. These ops included Jon, WO9S, Bill, W9VA, Patti, AF9H and Jess, AI9L. I was very pleased to work Danny, NG9R on all 4 VHF bands for the first time. Even though we are quite close to each other (one grid away), we have never made connections before.

Zack, W9SZ teamed up with Bob, N5RP, to activate Bald Knob, which may have not been run in a contest in close to 10 years. They did not get on top of the cross however, and one of their rigs was not working at all (I think it was 432). Zack carried along his microwave stuff all the way up to 10G, but I don't think he made any contacts above 1.2G. All in all, the run at Bald Knob this year was a very good effort, even if it did not come up to the high K rates more typical of northern Illinois.

John, K9JK, did a fabulous job swinging in to the south and east of the SMC circle. I worked John some 21 times across 4 bands and 6 grids. I was most happy to actually be able to meet John, but he looked rather haggard, arriving at my place around midnight on Saturday. John was scheduled to stop over at Marshall's house, W9RVG, but with that being 2 hours away, John spent the night at my contest site at Lebanon in FD-like accommodations before moving on in the morning.

The highlight of the contest was the aurora on Sunday afternoon. Many folks missed it, since they shut down early from lack of activity and band conditions Sunday. The Au started around Chicago around 1:30 PM Central local time. By 2:30 PM, Jerry, WB9Z was reporting it in the Bloomington area. Around 4:30PM Au came into the St. Louis area. It was a very intense buzz, and was so strong that it was occurring simultaneously occurring on both 6 and 2. I did not get a chance to move to 222, but some locals did hear some aurora there (although I do not know if they worked anyone). Jerry, WB9Z, worked literally hundreds of ops on 6 meter SSB. The Au was so powerful that SSB was actu-

ally quite workable on 6 meters, in spite of the severe distortion effects. Some of the CW signals on both 6 and 2 were coming in at over 20 / 9. Indeed, the main problem was trying to sort through all the QRM. This slowed things down considerably. I worked stations mostly to the north, but when I moved the antenna to the NE, I did manage to catch Maine on 2 meters, for a new grid and state (my 38th on 2 meters). Others who were more northerly located, such as K2DRH and WB9Z, were able to work farther off of north, and some NW areas (such as Wy, Mt, Ore) were worked by various SMC members. The Au festivities lasted until 7:00 PM in St. Louis. Overall, it was one of the strongest auroras I have ever been in, and certainly the most crowded of any Au event I have worked (in past years, my CQ's in a mid-week Au would often go begging, with few people being on).



Eric, K9GY, made his first 6 meter contacts a month before the June contest, and he has been a ham since 1977! He was so excited by the e skip potential on 6 meters that he worked the contest as a portable from Skyline Dr in the Shenandoah. See the following beautiful picture of one his spots that he stopped at, high in the mountains of Virginia, EM08.



Sean, KX9X, also sent me a picture of his portable activity in the June contest. Sean captured a wonderful rainbow. His small 6 and 2 meter antennas can be seen attached to a camper.

K9YA Field Day 2005, Woodstock, IL



K9ZO at V31RA for WPX CW 2005



Upper left: V31LZ QTH
Upper right: V31LZ
Lower left: V31RA a.k.a.
Ralph, K9ZO

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by NV5A

The SMC logo appears at the top-center of the badge in black and white. Your call sign, first name and city & state appear in dark blue. The SMC name badge as shown with the slot & strap with swivel alligator clip, but there are other choices.

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Be sure to note that it is for a "Black Hole" badge and please allow a couple weeks for delivery.



SMC Shirts

SMC short-sleeve Polo shirts are available in two styles: white shirt with "SMC" in black and "name and call" in blue lettering as shown below, or red shirt with black lettering. The cost is \$20, including shipping. You can email your orders to AD9P@swbell.net (Al) or NOUXQ@swbell.net (Sandy)



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