

THE BLACK HOLE



Official Journal of The Society of Midwest Contesters

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From the President

By Miike Kasrich, AJ9C

Its September SMCers. Time when our thoughts wander toward radios and contesting just a little bit more than the summer. I hope you all noticed the kudos we received from Ward in the Contest Update. Both ZOfest and the Grand Prix were mentioned. Guess that shows a little activity can go a long way to putting yourself or an organization in the spotlight! If you are a member of the ARRL and don't subscribe to this weekly newsletter I recommend you do so. There is always timely and useful information in the update.

Speaking of the Grand Prix, did you take time to read the rules? Make any plans to submit an entry during August? On August 1 we started a new club award the "Grand Prix". Its the board's hope that this will spark some activity and give some recognition to the operating you do each year.

The rules on the website there are 16 possible contests of which you can chose 9 as your Grand Prix score. Omitted from the rules was CQWW RTTY, CQWW 160 both CW and SSB can count as an entry. It is our vision that from year to year the contests can be changed or added to along with the rules being adjusted. This year we wanted to see how the award was received along with whether the data collection process could be broken so it is a bit limited. Pat WW9R is administering the award so send comments

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SMC Grand Prix

The board has been working hard over the summer putting the final touches on a long-awaited activity awards program for the club, called Grand Prix. It enables club members to participate in a broad array of contests for credit, domestic and DX, HF and VHF. Everyone should be able to find plenty of opportunities to operate in their favorite contests and get Grand Prix credit. Right now the board is looking for comments on the draft rules. They can be found on the home page of the SMC website,

<http://www.w9smc.com>. If you haven't done it already, please go there, take a look, and send the board your comments via the SMC reflector, or directly to one of the board members.

Adventures in SO2R Land - Part 15

By Bill Axelrod K3WA

Prolog. So there I was, waiting for the November CW Sweepstakes to begin. Last year I was without a gain antenna. This year I have two. Last year my primary amplifier was broken. This year I have both. Last year my first QSO was VE8 getting that most difficult section in the log. My second QSO was VO1, another tough mult. What will this year bring???

This year brought Murphy back for a visit, just two days before Sweepstakes. We had a day of unexpected high winds that ate up the rotator on my lower beam leaving it stuck towards the East. If you really have to have a beam that doesn't turn, Easterly is not a bad direction for a November Sweepstakes from the Black Hole.

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The Black Hole



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Brian Maves, K9QQ

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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. For more information contact one of the following officers:

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Dues are \$10 a year and additional donations are appreciated.

You can make your payment two ways:

1. Send a check, money order, or cash to:

Zig Markowski - KM9M

50 E. Eureka Drive

Lemont, IL 60439-3970

2. Use Paypal and email your donation to dues@w9smc.com.

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To get your SMC stuff, see the last page of the newsletter or visit the SMC website, <http://www.w9smc.com/merchandise.htm>



Badges

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Shirts

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and suggestions his way or to the reflector.

September means W9DXCC, not a SMC event but one where a lot of SMCers attend. We will be meeting Friday night for dinner at Lou Malnati's Pizza, just a round the corner from the Holiday Inn. Even if you aren't attending W9DXCC, SMC members are encouraged to stop by and say hello.

Thanks to Ralph K9ZO for arranging the room. Send Ralph a email if you think you might want to stop by.

On a closing note we are approaching \$1k dollars in donations for sponsoring a second station in WRTC 2014. There are two ways you can donate. Send a check or Paypal to the SMC with an earmark for WRTC 2014 or you can donate directly to WRTC 2014 and specify the donation is on behalf the SMC. WRTC 2014 has been granted tax exempt status so you can get a deduction you can use on your taxes. Donate \$100 or more and WRTC will send a receipt. We have sponsored one station already with club funds and are at \$750 for the second station. Any excess funds collected over the \$1k will be designated to the WRTC 2014 general fund.

That's all for now. Get active and make some contacts and I hope to see you on the air!



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Sweepstakes got off to an absolutely great start. Last year my first QSO was with the Northwest Territories (VE8). This year my first QSO was more mundane (Ohio) which helped keep me on an even keel. But then things kind of exploded and, for the first time ever, I completed my sweep that first night. I was on cloud nine for a while. It turned out that maybe getting a sweep so easily was not the best thing that could have happened since it took the edge off the contest and I defaulted to a less aggressive style of contesting.

Given a basic station and antennas, the real skill in a contest comes from between our ears. It is a game of mental keenness and endurance. Taking the edge off with such an early sweep hurt both. Maybe that's just lack of experience. If I get an early sweep next year I will be able to guard against this phenomena and maintain a steady aggressive posture through the rest of the contest.

Shortly before the Sweepstakes started, someone entered a post on the CQ Contest reflector remembering how, back-in-the-day, a contester would send "ie" to check if a fre-

quency was clear before trying to CQ there. Like most of us do with a QRL today. I wish that guy's computer had CRAPPED OUT with a large puff of black smoke and not let him get that post out. Oh no, he just had to send that ##!! post. And the whole community just had to chime in. Rats!

And what was the result? Well, it wasn't pretty. And now I know the difference between sending "ie" and QRL? to see if a frequency is clear. When someone sends "ie" on your run frequency it just means that you have significantly less time to defend your run frequency, especially when doing SO2R. It was "ie" – nanosecond delay – CQ test de K9WTFO.

Sweepstakes is a tough contest for SO2R mainly due to the long exchanges. Means leaving your run frequency quiet for lengthy period of time when you are working someone with the second radio. When someone pulls the "ie" nanosecond space CQ routine there is rarely time enough to get back to your run frequency and reclaim it before the inter-loper gets something going. Grrr. That rotten old fashioned "ie simply makes SO2R a lot less fun. I wound up turning off the second radio Sunday afternoon in sheer frustration. The test question for next year is "Will I become an ie-er along with all the rest?"

Sweepstakes ended well for me but nowhere near as well as it could had I been able to keep my head in the game and my second radio on.

I consider myself lucky to have been invited to join Jerry WB9Z in a multi-op effort for the 160 CW contest. What a great station and what a super-duper host. Lots of fun even with a blizzard. Thanks Jerry.

An unexpected death in the family paid quits to any more contest activity in 2010. Santa ended the year on a high note when a second Alpha 87a found its way into my shack and showed up for a working party to replace the rotator on my lower beam..

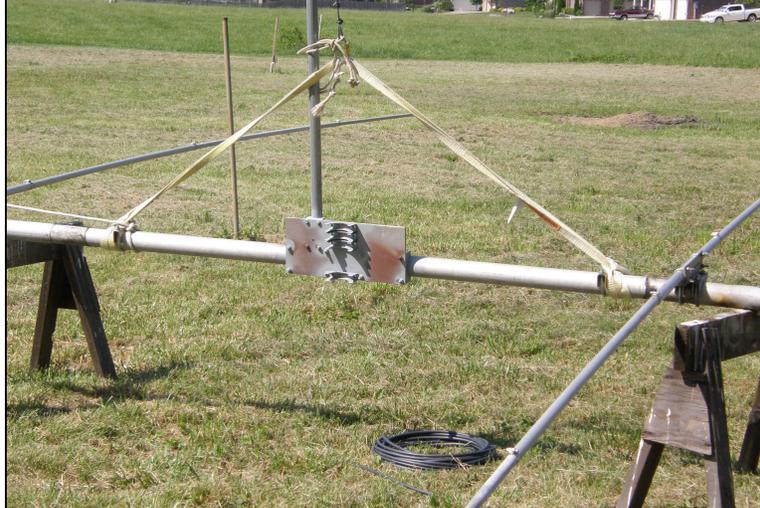
Epilog. So there I was, waiting for the ARRL RTTY Roundup to begin. This time I was ready! Two quality radios, two working beams, two legal limit amps, well this contest should be a cake walk.



Summer projects at W9RE



This is a skin diving weigh, which is easily adjustable along the



This shows the the lifting arrangement

I took down my (3) 5 element 20 meter yagis on 46 foot booms and converted them to 6 element OWA's on 48' booms. They are at 55', 110' and 170'. The project took right at 1 month from start of take down to putting the last one back up. I replaced all coax and baluns to center Stack Match box and the antennas seem to work much better now (won't know for sure until the DX contests). N9FC and K9XV provided ground help while I was on the tower.

I solved a problem with my 80 meter short vertical circle receiving array that has dogged me since last October. Turned out to be a schematic from ON4UN's book that did not work in my case. I had to revert to a more complicated schematic that I utilized on my 160 receive array to get the 80 to work properly. The more complicated one uses 7 binocular transformers; the simpler one that did not work only used 2 transformers! Simpler is not always better.

I had to replace and rebuild the prop pitch motor on my 80. It got water and bird crap in it and it was totally fouled up.

I am now in the process of installing a 204BA stack for the SE with the lower one rotatable to the west. I have a neighbor to the west of my present 20 meter stack with a plasma TV that causes me RFI when beaming to the west and the new stack is not aiming over his house when beaming west.

So I have been pretty busy antenna wise this summer. If I get to it I am going to try another 15 meter low stack for the domestic contests; in my main stack I can only point the top antenna (160') to the west and this seems to be too high.



This is the coaxial balun and split direct feed.



Here is the top yagi back in the air.

SMC Stuff

SMC Clip-on Badge *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.



Price: \$14.50 (includes s&h).



KC9FD

SOCIETY OF MIDWEST CONTESTERS

Club badges can be obtained by sending a check for \$5.50 to:

Midwest Engraving

Ph: 414-228-8654

6657 N. Sidney Place
Glendale, WI 53209

Fax: 414-228-8655

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

Eric, T6MO, or K9GY when back in the states, sent along some pictures from Afghanistan. He has been getting quite a bit of time on the bands, even in some contests. He provided his totals for some of them in table to the right. Unfortunately, Eric is relocating to a new base and isn't sure when he will be able to get a station back on the air. He checks in regularly on the reflector, so if you need T6 watch for his announcements there.



	<u>40</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>Total</u>
General QSOs	121	181	1079	419	78	20	1898
All Asian CW	47	99		109		26	281
IARU 2011	48	28		85		47	208
WAE CW	205	129		325		64	723
	421	437	1079	938	78	157	3,110

Member/New Member Information/ Update Form

Name: _____

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Please send updates to:

Zig Markowski - KM9M
50 E. Eureka Drive
Lemont, IL 60439-3970

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