

THE BLACK HOLE



Official Journal of The Society of Midwest Contesters

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From the President Craig Thompson K9CT

With 2014 essentially in the rear view mirror, we look to 2015 with anticipation for what it can become. SMC has grown in membership and activity. I feel that the stage is set for more growth in 2015.

The board has set a course for the year to fix a few things so we can move ahead as a club. We prepared a budget and updated our organizational documents in early 2014. The board wanted to improve our website and make it a focus of the SMC communications. All of these things are fundamental to moving ahead. The website is up and going, and we can update it at any time. Timely information is now available to our members and prospective members.

What do our members expect from SMC? I think that first and foremost is help to those that want to be contesters or want to be better contesters. We have a membership that will help anyone with those needs. Our club's group "reflector" has always been a healthy place to seek help. We did participate in the W9DXCC DX University this year with a couple SMC Board members doing some teaching. Our plan this year is to offer a Contest Track for beginning contesters. This will be a great place for SMC members to get a jump start into contesting and prepare them for Contest University at Dayton.

Members should expect activity! We have participated in the NCCC-PVRC NAQP Challenge the last two years.... each year growing our membership participation. This is a 10 hour commitment per session that most members can fit into their busy schedules. We'll continue our support of this challenge in 2015 and encourage participation with recognition and internal competitions. The same has worked well for Sweepstakes. It has been amazing how our members stepped up to help their teams compete. The side benefit is station and skill improvement of our membership.

We host an annual summer SMC-fest for our membership. It takes on a different look each year. You are welcome to attend and meet your fellow members there and at our SMC Suite at Dayton Hamvention in May. It really makes a difference to share ideas and enthusiasm with your peers. Please plan on attending one or both this coming year.

The ARRL Centennial was a huge boon to ham radio activity in 2014. We had two activations per state that has centered on SMC membership. Why? Because we have hams that know how to operate and handle pileups in a brisk efficient manner. I know we have gained members as a result of the W1AW/x operations. It is too bad this can't continue for 2015...what a great idea this was. Contesting will be better in 2015 as a result of training many hams on the fun of chasing stations and figuring out how to do it.

If you know someone in your area that enjoys contesting, why not ask them to join SMC? We want to compete for national recognition and the only way to do so is to have an active membership. We should be competitive in SS, NAQP, VHF, 160 and 10 contests. As history as our guide, SMC has been able to win any of these contests.

SMC board will be meeting soon to discuss strategies and plans for 2015. Your input is important. We've had some great ideas spring from our membership this year....newsletter, SS Team Competitions, etc. So let's move the ball forward this year....

The Black Hole



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Material for **The Black Hole** should be sent to: BH@w9smc.com

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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Meet the new Black Hole newsletter crew!

I responded to the request for someone to take the reins of the SMC Black Hole from Brian, K9QQ, and I guess I was first, as there were a couple of others that volunteered as well. At any rate, while they may call me the newsletter editor, Tim, K9WX, Bill, K3WA and Mel, KJ9C, are at least as involved as, and probably more so, than I am. I can tell you that it is a team effort.

I hope we can provide a new issue every other month to start out, and I would for that go to monthly, at least most of the year, but it will depend on how many others contribute to the effort. We hope to provide top quality, timely material, long on information and pictures and hopefully short on fluff. I think we are looking at 6 pages per issue, more or less depending on input received.

One thing we do ask is for each SMC member to put together a short biography, especially the lesser known "little pistols", and include a photo of yourself. There are a few members that we all know well, but a good many we would not know if we tripped over them at a hamfest.

We will glean a few tidbits from the reflector, but we really need input from the members in general. We ask for good technical articles, tips on being better contesters, recaps from recent contests or even a recent trip to operate on the other side of the pileup. Please include good color pictures with your pieces as well. We are also are looking for input on what you want to see in the our newsletter, so feel free to make suggestions.



Danny NG9R submit articles to BH@w9smc.com

2014

SMC Board:

L to R:
WW9R,
KE9I (SK),
K3WA, K9CT,
WE9V,
KB9OWD,
K9QQ, KI9A,
KM9M, K9ZO
(Host), K9SD
(Missing)



W9SMC

Callsign of
Society of Midwest Contesters

SMC Web Page: <http://www.w9smc.com>

SMC Stuff

To get your SMC stuff, visit the SMC website,

<http://www.w9smc.com/merchandise.htm>



Shirts

MEMBER PROFILE (each issue we'll introduce one of our SMC members. This month it's **Jim Funk N9JF**)

My first and most vivid memories of electricity were associated with electric fences and with the Sunday morning my Dad was working on the TV (staying home from church because I was sick) when the high voltage arced through his hand to ground. It didn't seem to bother him, but it certainly made an impression on the small boy nearby.

Somehow I became reconciled to the flow of electrons. My first adventures in radio were broadcast band listening as I discovered that even the small AM radio in the milking parlor would bring in distant stations at night. I yearned for a better receiver, and Dad encouraged me to purchase a Knight-Kit Star Roamer kit and helped me assemble it. Listening to AM broadcast lasted only days; I stumbled onto people talking to each other and exchanging strange series of letters and numbers and to beeping sounds that I knew must be Morse Code. But...how to interpret it?

I purchased a 78 rpm record from ARRL and with Mom's help, managed to learn the code at five words per minute. I bought a copy of the Callbook. For my 15th birthday trip, Mom took me to visit the first ham listed alphabetically in Quincy IL: K9AAJ. Lee took me to visit another ham, who took me to another. A few months later, one of them gave me my Novice test.

My license arrived in the mail on Lincoln's Birthday in 1965. I had, while awaiting the license, purchased and assembled a Knight-Kit T60 transmitter. My first attempts at contacts were fruitless; Dad finally helped me track down the reason: the output was securely soldered directly to ground. The next evening I managed to get a signal report out of WN6NBV in California. I was shaking so hard I could barely send my call - WN9OBP. More contacts quickly followed. The Star Roamer was so unstable that I would lose the contact if anyone slammed a door in the house. Character-building, perhaps? My main opportunities for operating were in the early morning before milking time. This was complicated somewhat by the fact that I shared a room with my younger brother, Dave. He finally got tired of merely being disturbed and began listening as well; his Novice license arrived about the time I upgraded to Conditional in May of 1965 and changed the "N" in my call to an "A".

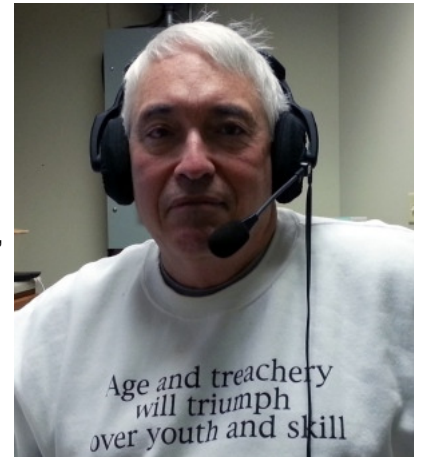
In August of 1965, I stumbled upon the Illinois QSO Party, and my fascination with contesting began. I could fill an entire log page in just an hour! Not that I didn't like rag-chewing...I did....but the challenge of rapid-fire operating fed what little "Type A" I exhibited. College days enabled me to contest from W9YH using "real equipment" and a decent antenna and introduced me to some talented operators. We did a couple of serious Sweepstakes efforts, including one where we taped the whole contest with the intent of transcribing it later. (We didn't even think about it being unethical...) Two of us spent all of our spare time for the next three weeks and finally gave up, and the log was never submitted. For phone SS, we taped my girlfriend's voice calling CQ and then confused the callers by having male voices give the exchange. (She became a licensee from the first license class I helped to teach. She made one contact, with my youngest brother. I married her, but not necessarily for that reason.) W9YH also afforded the opportunity to become very involved in the National Traffic System, and that became my principal operating activity for the 70's.

The 80's brought kids, cows, a new house and no operating time. The radio (now an FT101E) sat under the bed for seven years. My cousin, NU7J, called one day. (April 17, 1987) "I just put up an antenna. Can you get on the air?" "Give me an hour." Good old 20-meter dipole.

Then 70 feet of Rohn tower went up; a tri-bander followed. Somehow I was introduced to K4VX and his super-station and to some of his operating crew. I became part of the tower help and an occasional operator at Lew's place. It was always a special thrill to operate 160 meter contests from K4VX. That became my favorite band; perhaps a throwback to my broadcast band listening days? From home, a simple inverted L and a hundred watts garnered my only "win" in an international contest: ARRL 160, low power in about 1992. I became one of the early users of TR-Log and have only recently moved into the 21st century with a logging program that is compatible with something beyond Windows 98. Old habits do die hard.

NG9R and I worked together to raise more towers and populate them with a variety of rather modest but reasonably effective antennas for 1.8-1296 MHz. They came and went depending upon the contest and the severity of weather. Recently, about 98% of my operating has been mobile, including numerous state QSO parties. I've operated from over 2000 of the 3077 USA counties.

Melba, the aforementioned girlfriend/wife, tolerated (and even cheered) my radio passion, passed her license test a second time, and raised the rest of the hams (4) in the family (well...I helped a bit...). Perhaps the next few years will find some grandkids manning the station, using their YL-voices to break pileups, or running at 35 wpm on CW from the N9JF mini-powerhouse station.... I think we'll start with Kids' Day and work our way up the ladder.....



Navassa K1N preparations continue....

I was asked what have I been doing to get ready for Navassa. Well, there are lots of little things that are important and timely that must be done. Each team member volunteers to help out the team with some task during the DXpedition. I chose to volunteer to request the Elecraft radios and Array Solutions SAL30, prep them and get them shipped out in good time.

The team has a group on Yahoo. The team leaders, Bob, K4UEE and Glenn, W0GJ both inform us of important elements that each of us must complete. The team responds and exchanges helpful information.

Navassa Island is remote and has possible health issues that we must prepare for. There are mosquitoes and possible Haitians on the island. This exposes us to ailments that could be conveyed. We are to be immunized for Hepatitis, Flu, Typhoid, Malaria and Tetanus. My preparation has included common over the counter meds for headache, pain relief, intestinal and stomach issues, sun screen, mosquito repellent, etc. We also must bring along camping supplies, hiking shoes, pants for the cactus and rough terrain, full coverage hats and shirts, headlamps, lights, batteries, 2m HT...well you get the idea. I work on this on a daily basis to make sure I have everything to be self sufficient for the two weeks

we will be on the island.

We have 10 Elecraft K3 in various configurations. 6 of them are dual RX. We also have 8 P3 bandscopes and 5 KPA 500 amplifiers. They were all shipped to me. I unpack each one and check to confirm its operation, set the K3 up for SSB, CW and RTTY use with our computers, and then repack.



Most of the boxes...



Test rig setup

We have a website, Facebook page and a Twitter feed. Please check them out and Like our Facebook page.

You can also support our trip, as it is very expensive to transport our team to and from Navassa and pay for the F&W security. I would ask you to support us prior to our trip as the bulk of our expenses occur before we leave. WB9Z and I are very fortunate to be included in this team and are excited about making lots of QSOs with the Black Hole in late January !

73, Craig K9CT



SAL 30 test setup

**WEBSITE &
CONTRIBUTIONS :**

<http://www.navassadx.com/>



NAQP CHALLENGE - CAN SMC WIN IT NEXT YEAR?

Halftime for the 2014 NAQP Challenge saw SMC in third place behind Potomac Valley Radio Club and Northern California Contest Club. The other clubs had more points than SMC, and the PVRC had 40 more logs than SMC, leaving us nearly 90 million total points behind second place NCCC.

Our friends in the other two clubs might have become complacent over the summer. Perhaps they rested on their close proximity to the Atlantic and Pacific beaches. In any event, while their participation fell off dramatically in the second half, SMC's participation remained strong, and we moved into second place (to PVRC) once the final score was tallied, because we had more logs than the others.

For the second half of the Challenge (July NAQP RTTY and August NAQP CW and SSB), 196 SMC members submitted logs compared to 197 for the PVRC and just 178 for the NCCC.

According to the NCJ web site, 96 different SMC members submitted a log for at least one of the three second half contests (just over a third of our members), and 30 SMC members submitted a log for all three second half contests: AA8R, AB9H, AB9YC, AF9J, AJ9C, K3WA, K9CT, K9DUR, K9MMS, K9NW, K9OR, K9WX, K9ZM, K9ZO, KB9NW, KD9MS, KJ9C, KU9V, N2BJ, N7US, N9CK, N9WKW, NG9M, NG9R, W9PA, W9RE, W9TC, W9VQ, WI9WI, WO9S. And many of these folks are not regular RTTY or SSB or CW operators... they got outside their comfort zones and participated.

The scoring (total points times number of logs) for the competition pays a big premium for participation, and NCCC's drop in logs submitted led to their fall to third.

The SMC Board of Directors has committed to our participation in the 2015 NAQP challenge. Every log submitted will help us compete, regardless of the log's score or the number of QSO's. Mark these dates on your contest calendar now:

NAQP CW 1:	1800Z, Jan 10 to 0600Z, Jan 11
NAQP SSB 1:	1800Z, Jan 17 to 0600Z, Jan 18
NAQP RTTY 1:	1800Z, Feb 28 to 0600Z, Mar 1
NAQP RTTY 2:	1800Z, Jul 18 to 0600Z, Jul 19
NAQP CW 2:	1800Z, Aug 1 to 0600Z, Aug 2
NAQP SSB 2:	1800Z, Aug 15 to 0600Z, Aug 16

The dynamic duo of Steve and Deb Craig (WD9CIR and N9SJ) have long been a fixture in SMC contesting and especially in the November Sweepstakes. They usually operate as a Multi-Single burning up the bands with a wires antenna only station. They alternate call signs every other contest - but you can count on them being there and putting lots of SMCers and others in their log.

They routinely get a clean sweep in the contest and have won their category some number of times. In 2014 the pot got sweeter with the first ever SMC contest within a contest, when they won an SMC award and coffee mug.

To quote Deb "We have ARRL SS plaques from several years and enough certificates to wallpaper the shack, but only one SMC mug! I built the wall sconce from some antique mahogany that our shop manager brought in. He helped me get it milled out for the mug inset and the dados on the CNC mill in our machine shop. Happily there is enough wood leftover for another sconce in case another mug comes to roost in our shack!"

They proudly display their SMC mug on the wall along with their ARRL Sweepstakes plaques.

Looks like they like it. Who will be next?



ARRL DX CONTEST SINGLE BAND WINNERS (compiled by K9LA)

W/VE CW	160m		80m		40m		20 M		15m		10m	
	call & state	Qs & mults	call & state	Qs & mults	call & state	Qs & mults	call & state	Qs & mults	call & state	Qs & mults	call & state	Qs & mults
1980	W8RL WV	41 21	N4AR KY	205 60	W5UN TX	527 77	K3TW MD	727 90	K6LL AZ	901 78	N4WW FL	741 93
1981	N4IN FL	31 23	W1ZM CT	234 71	W5UN TX	710 77	K5IY TX	1076 107	K1RM CT	1200 85	W0ZV CO	1067 83
1982	N4WW FL	44 25	W1ZM CT	254 64	W6XX CA	655 63	K1KI CT	864 111	K6LL AZ	1002 84	N4ZZ TN	732 77
1983	W8RL WV	60 35	K1PT MA	383 73	NA5R TX	604 75	K8NA MI	498 80	W0ZV CO	750 82	WB4TDH FL	206 56
1984	W1RR NH	50 32	W1FV MA	320 64	W2VW NY	796 100	K3UA PA	931 108	WB4TDH FL	643 88	W1WEE CT	359 76
1985	W1RR NH	139 60	W1FV MA	640 77	N4PN GA	993 96	N2AA NJ	1199 94	K2EK NY	635 87	WA7KLC AZ	18 13
1986	K5UR AR	100 50	W1FV MA	454 74	N6QR CA	795 76	K2VW NY	1813 115	K3RV VA	439 82	KR1R MA	17 8
1987	K1ZM NY	115 48	W1FV MA	728 69	K4XS FL	810 80	K1RM CT	1123 100	W5VX TX	362 72	K9LA TX	51 20
1988	K1ZM NY	122 60	W6RJ CA	346 68	K2EK NY	1102 96	K2VW NY	1564 103	K1RM CT	961 92	N4BP FL	179 45
1989	K1ZM NY	88 35	W1FV MA	551 70	KB0G KS	910 84	N2AA NJ	1944 103	K2VW NY	1769 105	K1RM CT	1530 98
1990	W1NG CT	60 34	W1FV MA	521 81	W00G MO	790 97	K4VX MO	1075 104	WN4KKN TX	964 104	K1ZM NY	631 108
1991	W1NG CT	107 46	W1FV MA	729 78	K1ZM NY	1312 102	W1RR NH	1597 101	W00G MO	1548 103	KR0Y TX	1410 100
1992	K5UR AR	64 43	WE3C PA	307 68	K8PO MA	1110 102	K1TO CT	1814 112	K2VW NY	1529 115	W0UN CO	1563 115
1993	W1FJH NH	97 47	W1FV MA	746 77	W6XX CA	994 103	KT3Y VA	1515 109	K0LUZ FL	1413 111	K5MR TX	421 98
1994	K1ZM NY	85 50	W1MK MA	472 80	K8PO MA	1075 100	W3USS DC	568 92	N4CT TN	565 87	WS1M MA	118 48
1995	W4MYA VA	154 58	W1MK MA	928 89	W3GH PA	793 99	K2SS CT	1516 112	W5VX TX	839 91	K9OM IL	73 35
1996	K1ZM MA	303 63	W1MK MA	905 79	N7DD AZ	1014 92	K1RM CT	1450 103	K9BGL IL	151 52	W6KFV CA	31 8
1997	K1ZM NY	268 70	W1MK MA	1021 90	N7DD AZ	1182 110	N8II WV	1674 110	N5LT TX	301 68	W5AJ TX	34 16
1998	W4ZV NC	200 71	W1MK MA	1018 90	AD6DO CA	1006 94	W0UN CO	1573 105	K5TR TX	1100 104	K4JYO AL	97 41
1999	WA8GHZ TX	82 61	W1MK MA	645 81	K8DX MI	1012 94	K1TO FL	1255 103	K2SS/1 CT	1905 106	WC4E FL	1179 93
2000	K3RR PA	58 41	W1MK MA	802 82	K7EM OR	1264 88	K4XS FL	1666 115	VE6WQ AB	2059 113	K1RM CT	1766 111
2001	WV2Y NJ	346 61	W1MK MA	1099 89	K8LV MI	1161 105	W5WUW LA	1115 106	N2MF NY	1778 121	K1ZZ CT	1778 111
2002	VY2ZM MAR	600 71	W1MK MA	1013 85	KT3Y VA	1334 97	W7WA WA	1856 106	N2MF NY	1879 112	W4ZV NC	2162 108
2003	K4TEA GA	67 42	W1MK MA	847 78	N4PN FL	1034 99	N2MF NY	1464 115	W4KZ GA	1486 106	W4ZV NC	1306 113
2004	VY2ZM MAR	468 76	VY2LZ MAR	1211 98	N4PN FL	1351 120	WE2F NY	1473 117	N2MF NY	1551 111	K4WI AL	724 93
2005	W4ZV NC	244 63	W1MK MA	1126 88	KT3Y VA	1245 94	N8II WV	1667 113	W4NZ TN	1052 91	K4WI AL	96 40
2006	N4PN GA	360 75	K1LZ MA	1090 96	N2MF NY	1328 104	NY3A PA	1663 110	K5TR TX	606 103	K7AO NV	47 25
2007	KT1V NH	307 71	W1MK MA	1009 87	N2MF NY	974 108	W1MU ME	1546 106	K4EA GA	659 97	K5NA TX	63 27
2008	W4ZV NC	303 74	W1MK MA	961 87	K1ZZI GA	1247 105	W1MU ME	1448 103	NR5M TX	224 71	K4WI AL	23 8
2009	W4ZV NC	428 79	KT1V NH	1182 93	K9OM FL	1296 112	KQ2M CT	2164 119	K4EA GA	410 87	K4WI AL	30 10
2010	W4ZV NC	399 62	N2MF NY	1036 83	W8JI GA	2291 118	W1MU ME	2010 118	N4PN GA	1327 109	NN1N CT	91 37
2011	W4ZV NC	364 75	K6ND MA	903 97	K1IG RI	1713 114	N2AAVA	1575 106	N2MF NY	1048 108	K4WI AL	144 52
2012	W1XX RI	115 47	VY2ZM MAR	1051 90	NN1N CT	1851 111	N2MF NY	1872 120	N4ZZ TN	1444 113	W4ZV NC	818 105
2013	W4ZV NC	388 72	W1MK MA	1070 91	W7WA WA	1171 97	K2XA NY	1970 112	K3RV VA	1829 118	K2SSS NY	726 102
2014	VE3PN ON	81 41	N4TB FL	331 74	W3BGN PA	1508 108	N2MF NY	2161 119	KU2M NJ	2003 114	VY2ZM MAR	1678 112