

THE BLACK HOLE

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF MIDWEST CONTESTERS

Volume #1, Issue #6

May - June 1986

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The Society meets every Saturday Morning at 10:30 A.M. local central time on 3858 KHZ +-2 KHZ. Society dues are \$3.00 per year. Material from *The Black Hole* may be reproduced providing proper credit is given to the author and *The Black Hole*.

MEETING NOTICES - SATURDAY JULY 12 11:30 A.M. Oak Creek Swapfest
SATURDAY JULY 19 1:00 P.M. QTH of K9ZO

NOTES FROM THE AHEM, PRESIDENT

NA9D came over here a few days ago and showed me the gavel awarded to the SMC for our fantastic, first ever effort in the SS, and in doing so moved the QTH of the president approximately 3 miles to the West to my QTH. That's what's great about contest clubs, things happen at an alarming rate! So you guys didn't nominate anybody either huh? I should of at least left an option and nominated someone myself, but I don't mind - really. First off, I want to congratulate Steve NA9D on behalf of the contest community for his monumental efforts in putting this black hole into competitive form. I'm sure no other area in the Northern Hemisphere has experienced this kind of upsurge in activity in the past couple of years. Steve really put a lot of hours into the club and it really has stood out. I guess the club is a year old now. 90+ members is obviously a good sign, and interestingly enough, I don't think even half of the now defunct Ill-Wind club is enrolled in SMC membership. I liked Ill-Wind, it had a lot of character and quite a roster, but for some reason it just died with the sunspots. I don't want to see that happen again, because if the SMC can't make it, there will never be a club able to continue in the "black hole," and I am sure that I am not the only one who would like to see something tie us contesters together (and there are a LOT of us!). An important part of any active club has to be its newsletter, and we are no exception. Steve has stressed this point many times and will continue on as editor of *The Black Hole*. He does a great job, so we have no problems there. Of course, as publications will agree, we need articles. In a contest club, if something is interesting to one, it is interesting to another. Another thing we need to do is continue expanding membership. Let's get these newcomers-to-contesting in the club. The SMC is not just a "big time only" club. My main drive as president will be to work on increasing our numbers. We can harness some of the big-timers and sign up alot of casual-timers and really turn in some fine scores. Get the word out, we're starting to be recognized!

Dayton was a blast. Thanks to K1TMM for his efforts on the slide show, and to the Mad River guys for co-hosting the suite. Had real good conversations with K3LR, K1AR, WA6VEF, N6TR, and N5DU (and others) about the state of contesting, and some good but humorous Midwesterners complaints. Things seem to be going well in Indiana. W9RE seemed to be impressed with the tenacity of the club. I think we need to get some meetings scheduled to include the Indy boys. There are some big scores down there. W0AIH sure has put together a super station up north. Paul had some great pictures going around the suites. If he gets some operators together, they should be able to fight the W9 condx pretty well. K8CC and K5ZD are doing a great job with the NCJ. It's amazing with the day to day schedules these guys have that they can put together a quality publication like the NCJ. I would be interested in knowing the circulation of the NCJ.

The SS scores were pretty impressive. Of particular note to me were the efforts of AC9C and K2PLF. Marty's phone score (low power) represents what had to be a very strenuous weekend. And for those of you who think rate is better than searching for those last 2 mults - talk to NA9D [he just wants to rub it in he beat me by 2 q's - ed.]. W9RW told me he is going to fire up for next year and reclaim his record. Dick and other guys like K9JU, W9LNQ and W9REC are in there every year. I think next year we will actually try to win the SS.

I recently received my results for the Wisconsin QSO party. Wow. It used to be when you worked Wis., it was K9GDF or EYA or maybe ZR. There are pages of Wis stations in this critter! K9EC's MM is something to look at! Congratulations to the contest committee for a good job in getting this one going.

I have a couple of designs for club QSL's. If anybody else has some let's see 'em. I need to order a few thousand cards. I have an idea for a club motto too: "The SMC - WE EARN OUR CONTACTS." Comments? Be sure to fill out the forms that are in here someplace, and send in ur dues. We probably need to resupply the mail funds. Look for club awards soon. Next meeting? We need one with a big turnout. I will be in Seattle July 23-29 representing the SMC at the Pacific Northwest DX Convention. Maybe I can learn something from W7RM or XR and the rest of the JA-running contingent. Let's get those antennas up (K9EC, NA9D, AC9C, W9RW, WB9TIY, K9XR, and anybody else contemplating or constructing new stuff) for the upcoming contest season!

73, Dave AH2U/9

FROM THE EDITOR

Well, we all know the big news was we attained our goal of entering the unlimited category in SS, and we won it! We were the only entry in that category, but we were still second in the nation for all clubs. Can we win the nation next year? Only you can determine that. Note we only made the unlimited category by 2 stations - the 2 stations with the smallest scores, if you want to look at it that way. Every score counts!! We now have a gavel thanks to those two logs. The contributions of the smaller stations will stand out more as we begin issuing internal club awards.

The first page lists our new officers. Congratulations to AH2U, president for the next year. I will be secretary/treasurer, and I hope that transferring the duties of president to Dave will leave me more time for contesting. Mike AC9C will assume the post of contest activities chairman, the main duties of which are organizing sprint teams.

After a busy year of establishing the society, I have a fairly good idea on how to keep it going. First of all, contesters are interested in contesting - and preparing for contesting. Just these two items can suck up all ones free time, especially with families etc. Most of us don't want to spend lots of time on club-related stuff, but all of us want to be part of a big contest club. So that's how we'll run the Society. We will keep our meetings to four a year and try to have them at hamfests. We will continue to have occasional social events, the main one being a suite at Dayton. We may have an

annual banquet if enough people will attend. These events along with the newsletter, awards system, and weekly net will be the Society of Midwest Contesters. We will remain one of the top contest clubs in the country as long as we have a core of volunteers who will take care of the club busy work and lots of contesters as members.

Dayton was fantastic, Our suite was jammed both Friday and Saturday night. Best of all enough money was collected to pay for the suite. Extra money we collected will be put in a fund for next year. It was great to see so many of you in the suite and at Dayton. There is a possibility of some rooms at the Stouffers' for next year for the Society, more on that later. Several of us have reserved rooms for Dayton '86 at the Belton Inn, which is inexpensive and within walking distance of the Stouffers'.

We have a slight surplus in the society budget, which will be used to print certificates. This is annual membership renewal time, and we are keeping the dues at \$3.00. Please fill out the enclosed form and questionnaire and return as soon as possible. If for some reason you are not going to renew, you are still eligible for last year's club awards so return the form anyway.

Yes, it had to happen and it is finally here. I am speaking of course of the "phone keyer." This is equivalent to a CW contest keyer but stores your voice digitally, eliminating tape loops. One is now being offered by LC Electronics, 54 Hobbs Road, Pelham Hampshire NH 03076 for \$314. It's pretty amazing and may save quite a few throats in the future.

Some of you Wisconsin folk may be interested in knowing the Greater Rice Lake Contest Club will be breaking into two parts by next year's Wisconsin QSO party, making a real run for the money for Wisconsin clubs in the 200K to 250K club score range. Next Newsletter is slated for The beginning of September just before the sprints. We will try to have all the latest rumors and also official Society awards in that issue.

73, Steve NA9D

MEETINGS!!!

Yes, it's that time again for two more "official" meetings of the Society. The main purpose of these meetings is to keep as many members eligible for ARRL contests as possible. According to ARRL club criteria, if you live outside of 50 miles of club center (or your station is 50 miles from club center if you operate from somewhere else) you must attend two of the four meetings per year to remain eligible. If you live farther than 175 miles from club center, you are not eligible no matter what. To see where your ARRL eligibility stands, check the mailing label on this newsletter for one of these codes:

DN - You are "Distant Non-eligible" and thus need to attend 2 meetings to become eligible

DE - You are "Distant Eligible" and need to attend one meeting to keep your eligibility

LE - You are "Local Eligible" and are always eligible as long as you remain a member

Remember this eligibility stuff is only for SS and ARRL DX club competition. There are no meeting requirements for CQ club competition, but one must be a member to participate here. These ARRL requirements are really a drag, but we are stuck with them until they change. The next meetings of the SMC will be:

SATURDAY JULY 12 AND 11:30 A.M. AT THE OAK CREEK SWAPFEST, OAK CREEK WISCONSIN; SPONSORED BY THE SOUTH MILWAUKEE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB. Announcements will be made as to the exact meeting site on the hamfest grounds. Directions: I-94 to Highway 100 (About 10 miles south of Milwaukee), east a mile or two and follow the signs.

SATURDAY JULY 19 AT 1:00 PM AT THE QTH OF K9ZO. A friendly outdoor social type gathering is promised at Ralph's. Directions: I-55/I-74 around Peoria to Rt 9 (Market Street), head 1.25 miles west (away from town), right at the diagonal road near the General Telephone building. Second house of the left is K9ZO's. Talk-in on 146.34/94.

The other "Official" meetings for this year are scheduled for the Peoria Hamfest September 20 and the Greyslake "Radio Expo" Hamfest September 27.

TREASURY REPORT

The treasury is now being divided into 3 sections - operating budget (newsletter costs, certificate costs, etc.), Dayton fund (to be used toward the annual suite), and the Plaque fund (for plaques sponsored by the Society). These will be kept separate from each other, and unless you feel an urge please only pay the annual club dues of \$3.00 and don't feel obliged to contribute to any of the other funds. As of 6/26,

Operating Budget - \$62.37 Plaque Fund - \$25.00 Dayton Suite Fund - \$37.00

THE CONTEST ROUNTABLE conducted by Gary Sutcliffe W9XT

This month's topic was unusual antennas that have worked well for you. Apparently odd-ball antennas don't work very well, because I didn't get any responses. I have one odd antenna that worked quite well at one QTH as well as at a couple of Field Day sites.

My dad, WB9FRF and I received our licenses together (I was WB9FRG) back in 1970. The yard was too small to put up an 80 meter dipole and still keep it inside the lot. We did however have two very tall hickory trees in the back yard. After thinking about it for awhile, we came up with the idea of using the tree as a support for a wire "vertical."

First we took a 1/4 wave length of surplus wire. We could have used the ubiquitous bow and arrow method for getting the wire up there, but we didn't have a bow. Instead, we filled an old sock with gravel and tied it to one end. Then swinging the sock like a bolo, tossed it up into the tree. The final shape was like a question mark, so we always said we used a question mark vertical on 80 meters.

Since the shack was in the basement, the coax came out of the house at nearly ground level. Nearby was a water faucet that provided a reasonable ground, so the shield of the coax was connected to it. The center conductor was of course attached to the end of the wire missing a sock.

We had intentionally cut the wire a bit on the long side, so tuning was accomplished by pulling the wire in a bit and cutting off a short piece. The new end was soldered to the coax.

The antenna worked quite well. I was not into low band DXing in those days, but I remember one QSO with Texas at noon, so I suspect that it had the rather low angle of radiation typical of verticals. Some ground radials would probably have helped also.

The antenna did have a few problems however. It, like most wire antennas for 80, had a rather limited bandwidth. The biggest problem was keeping it up though. That problem was not caused by wind or ice.

As I mentioned, the tree used for support was a hickory tree. Well, squirrels love hickory nuts, and there were always lots of squirrels around. Apparently they didn't like the sock swinging back and forth in their favorite tree (maybe it still smelled), so they would periodically bite through the wire!

I have not had convenient trees available at my last few QTH's, so I have not used this antenna for quite a few years except at Field Day. The advantage at FD is that it is so quick to put up. It is also quick to take down. You just cut the wire at the base, and the weighted sock falls back to the ground. Next time you need a quick and cheap antenna for 80, give the "question mark vertical" a chance.

Because of lack of responses, this will be the last Contest Roundtable. I am sad about this, because every contester has a few tricks, gadgets and opinions about operating contests that others would be interested in reading about.

When I first started this column, I got a large number of suggestions for future columns. I would like to list some of them in the hope that somebody will be willing to write an article for *the Black Hole*. Subjects include what to eat (and what not to eat) during a contest, antenna switching systems, how to use two rigs in a contest (how about you Steve?), favorite rigs, band switching strategy for DX and domestic contests, and hunting vs CQing.

I bet everyone of you have ideas about these and other subjects. How about writing an article about them?

Many thanks to Gary for running the Contest Roundtable. He may be thinking about giving the same idea a shot in the NCJ with a larger number of contesters as a sample base. Do you have an opinion on any of the above subjects? If so, consider writing an article for the Black Hole. - ed.

A LOOK AT CONTESTING FROM GUAM part 2 de AH2U

20 is still open, and I realize I should have spent more time here as I was hurting for multipliers. Pacific stations traditionally have a lot of Q's, but few mults to back them up. Add 4K1GAG in the S. Shetlands, and 9U5JB. The 4K1 was a surprise. That's about 12,000 miles from here. Don't hear them all to often either. I left 20 for the night and for the contest. I returned Monday morning, and the band was bad. Only 15 more Q's would be logged there.

By this time, I am pretty tired, and conditions have overall been pretty cruddy. I have fleeting thoughts of quitting and going to bed, but I hang in there. Take a quick break, which I use to sight the yagi. The indicator doesn't work, and there are no outside lights, so I have to use my car headlights. Then, using a broken mirror, reflect light out into the jungle on the antenna. Fortunatly it was headed about East. If it has any front to back, that's where I will want it for the brief opening between 2100 and the rest of the test on 15.

I wasted a lot of time on 160. It gave me a chance to relax. Since the JA's cannot operate SSB, there wasn't much to work, so I shot-the-bull with Paul, VS6DO. VK9MR broke in, and I talked to them for awhile. They have had a rough time, but were thoroughly enjoying themselves. VK2WU had wanted to come up here and operate, but we couldn't accomodate the multi-multi Les was hinting at. Run back and forth to 40 and 75, but there's not much happening. This continues until 1115, when W4DR comes through loud and clear on 75. Then the madhouse starts. I wasn't prepared for this. East Coast, and nobody shut up to listen for me. N2AA and W3LPL blast through, but the pile is unruly and rediculous. I waste a lot of precious opening trying to install order. I had earlier decided not to go split on 75 because there was so much local noise. The Coast Guard maintained a freq on 3.789 that really messed up the band for me. At least I know I messed it up for them too. The best, clear frequency would be the one I was using, so it had to go this way. I come back to many stations, but they don't respond. W9RN and K9BIL have good ears. They make 2-ways. Somebody is pleading for the guys to shut up. They eventually do, only because they think I left. Hesistantly, I throw my call into the wind, and W9ZR calls in, minus the pile-up. Randy apparently heard I was up here, and wants a sked on 160. Also he asks if I worked K5UR yesterday. We decide to go down right away while the band is peaked. I didn't really think I'd work anybody, because I had only worked a few stateside stations on 160 since I'd been on the island. After all, I was 8000 miles away, and I couldn't hear.

Immediately after calling CQ on 1.826, and listening on 1.815, K5UR comes pounding through. Rick's vertical was really performing. He was an actual S9 out here. Obviously others had heard me make the sked, and were down here as well. The pile was also large here, only I couldn't hear it. A real loud KL7Y calls in, incredulous he can hear me, and then N4RJ and N4PN blow away KL7Y. I don't know what those guys down in Georgia are doing, but they were really loud here too! As quick as the band opened East, it closed. As I listened to mostly noise, I heard "Zulu Radio" very clearly come out of the noise. I couldn't believe I actually heard a nine on 160! I give Randy the report and listen intently. Yep there he was, and there he wasn't. In and out. QSL Well, I sighed, the nines can't feel all that bad. They can't say they don't get the openings. I mean, they had an entire minute of opening to zone 27 on 160! What more do they want, XZ on the longpath? I stuck around for a few 6's and 7's, and was lucky to hear VE7BS calling for a mult. I didn't realize a VE mult would be so tough. I spent more time yet, to help out the Mellish operation, and VS6DO coordinate with a

couple of guys, then left the band for good. I did come back during the EU opening (2000Z) out of curiosity, and thought I heard UC1WWY. At least that's what it sounded like. Of course - no Q's.

Now fast approaching the dead hours of the test, I did some tallying. Here I was at 1700Z, with 3691 Q's, about 135 zones, and 200 countries. "Jeez" Seems like I ought to have more than that. After all, I have sat here at the desk constantly since the beginning. I was dead tired too. Worse, I was just about out of Vivarin. It was a new box when I started, and believe it or not, it cost me over \$6! This was cheap for Guam. Talked to Bob again, and it turns out he quit at 1880 Q's on 20. The band was veritably dead, and he wanted to spend some time with his family. I tried to talk him in staying with it, but he didn't care anymore (not to mention it's kind of hard to spend time with his family at 3 AM!). You could tell a typhoon had really tired us out recently. Bob would never quit like that. He had some rough times up on 20 though. Once during a peak hour for him, I jumped down to 40 and my harmonic fell right across his running frequency. He came to 40 furious, demanding I change frequency. I calmly told him I had only 25 kc, and this was the only spot I could fit into. I could feel him burning up from where I was, but he left. Our QTH's were less than a half mile apart.

Finally morning arrived, and in a stupor I finished out the contest with a great run into the states. Conditions were really improved. I even snuck in 4V2C, and XE, and N4WW (zone 5!) on ten meters! That was really surprising. 15 closed out with KS9K, KQ9W, WB9TIY, KS9U, KK9A, and K9SD representing the 9th district. Even went over a hundred for the last hour of the test. I disassembled the station, half asleep already. Actually I had fun, and was glad I hadn't given up as the conditions came around beautifully for Monday morning. I made it back to my barracks and slept for 23 hours straight. No lie. My roommates were amazed. Final tally at end of contest:

KJ9W/KH2

Band	Q's	Zones	Countries
160	28	10	9
75	256	20	31
40	904	29	45
20	463	32	66
15	1803	32	62
10	<u>604</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>25</u>
	4058	145	238 = 4,337,092

N5

Final note: 145 zones was by far the highest zone total of any station (s/op) in the contest and the final score was fifth in the world. KG6DX ended with 2879-36-92, for 1.08M on 15, and KD7P/KH2 ended with 1823-38-116, for 781K placing 2nd, and 5th in the world respectively.

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