

THE BLACK HOLE



ARRL SS Unlimited Team Champs 2000, 2001, 2002

Official Journal of The Society of Midwest Contesters

Volume XV Issue IV

June 2007

Thoughts From the News President

By Mike Kasrich, AJ9C

Greetings SMCers. I'm not sure if the correct "H" word I am thinking of is honored or hoodwinked having been nominated to serve out the remainder of Pat's term as President of the SMC. In either case it is a privilege to be here. It is my intent to continue the initiatives that Pat and the Board started and expand upon them so we can keep our spot as one of the premier contest clubs in North America if not worldwide.

A bit about myself maybe for those who can't recognize me at a hamfest. I was first licensed in 1974 with the call sign WN9PIR, upgraded shortly there after to a WB and received AJ9C in 1979. Like a good portion of you I handled traffic (QIN, ITN 9RN) and chased DX (Need just an E4, VK0H and P5 to have them all) to reach where I am in the radio world today. My first contest was SS cw in 1974. I didn't really understand the national aspect of the contest. I was talked into operating by a couple of high school friends (WB9IZL, WB9JVB now ADVX) to "compete" in the East Gary SS championship. I think the championship was won by Fred with 32k points. I used a HW-16 with a handful of crystals and a straight key. My first effort consisted of 84 Qs and 20 some

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Upcoming Contests

NCCC Sprint Ladder 0230Z-0300Z, Jun 22
ARRL Field Day 1800Z, Jun 23 to 2100Z, Jun 24
NCCC Sprint Ladder 0230Z-0300Z, Jun 29
NCCC Sprint Ladder 0230Z-0300Z, Jul 13
IARU HF World Championship 1200Z, Jul 14 to 1200Z, Jul 15
NCCC Sprint Ladder 0230Z-0300Z, Jul 20
NA QSO Party, RTTY 1800Z, Jul 21 to 0600Z, Jul 22
CQ Worldwide VHF Contest 1800Z, Jul 21 to 2100Z, Jul 22
NCCC Sprint Ladder 0230Z-0300Z, Jul 27
ARRL UHF Contest 1800Z, Aug 4 to 1800Z, Aug 5
NA QSO Party, CW 1800Z, Aug 4 to 0600Z, Aug 5
WAE DX Contest, CW 0000Z, Aug 11 to 2359Z, Aug 12
ARRL 10 GHz & Up 0600 local, Aug 18 to 2400 local, Aug 19
NA QSO Party, SSB 1800Z, Aug 18 to 0600Z, Aug 19

Ya Mon Da Bahamas!

C6AYM WPX CW 2006 & 2007

By Eric , K9GY

(Originally written in 2006 and now updated with 2007 info.)

Wow was that some contest or what...Special thanks goes to my XYL who let me get away to The Bahamas (twice)! Also thanks to Mr. Kemp at the Nassau Palm Resort <http://www.nassau-hotel.com> for allowing me full access to the roof. Brian, C6AQQ / ND3F has operated from the hotel for CQ WW CW's in the past.

The adventure starts in Chicago

My flight from ORD to MIA got delayed 3hrs at ORD due to thunder/rain. I should of weighed the luggage because I was overweight by 6 pounds on both checked bags which resulted in an

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The Black Hole



The **Black Hole** is published monthly, September through June, by The Society of Midwest Contesters. Permission for use of the materials is hereby granted on the sole condition that credit is given to the source of those materials.

EDITOR

Brian Maves, K9QQ

Material for **The Black Hole** should be forwarded to:

k9qq@arrl.net

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:

BOARD

Pat Barkey, N9RV
Jerry Rosalius, WB9Z
Mike Wetzel, W9RE
Scott Neader, KA9FOX
Ron Feutz, KK9K
Sig Markowski, KM9M
Chad Kurszewski, WE9V
Paul Gentry, K9PG
Mark Obermann, AG9A
Ralph Bellas, K9ZO

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Zig Markowski, KM9M

CONTEST ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

Vacant

AWARDS COORDINATOR

Chuck Schneebeil, KI9A

SMC Needs Your Financial Support

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 the 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:

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.

W9SMC

Official Callsign
of
The Society of Midwest Contesters

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

SMC Stuff

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



Badges

Order
Today!



Shirts

Field Day Anyone?

Ed. Thanks to all the members who shared their Field Day plans. If you're looking for a place to do a little operating, look for a group in your area and see if you can join them. Also, N0FCD sent along this link <http://pages.ripco.net/~ormos/fd2007.html> which shows FD sites around Illinois.

City, St	Location	Club Name	Cat	Contact
Lake Forest, IL	Northcroft Park	North Shore RC	3A	Randy, k9or@arrl.net
Salina, KS	Oakdale Park	Central KS ARC, W0CY	2A	Sid, n0obm@n0obm.org
Quincy, IL	South Park	Western IL ARC	4A	dpeace@adams.net
Bloomington, IL	I74 and I55	Central IL Contest and DX Assoc.	?A	k9zo@hotmail.com
Riverton, IL	Riverton Middle School	Sangamon Valley Radio Club	6 or 7 A	Don, w9ebk@warpsnet.net
Indianapolis, IN	Park, TBD	Hoosier DX and Constest CLub	2A	Mel , kj9c@iquest.net
Wauconda, IL	260 Jamie Ln Unit D	CorTek Radio Assc.	3A	Charlie, N9CO@aol.com
Raytown, MO	59th and Raytown Rd.	Raytown ARC	2A	Steve, k0ou@comcast.net
Chippewa Co., WI	Long Lake	Home station	1B-1	K9AY
Savanna, IL	Palisades State Park	Palisades ARC	4A or 5A	Mike, motte@aeroinc.net
Peoria, IL	ICC North Campus	Peoria-Area ARC	3A or 4A	John, n9msg@arrl.net
Carlinville, IL	Carlinville	Home station	1B	KX9X
Elmhurst, IL	910 N. Addison Ave	York Radio Club	?	N0FCD
Murphysboro, IL	Murphysboro	Home station	1?	K9QG (N5RP)



VHF Column

By Kevin Kaufhold, W9GKA

Status of VUAC. George, W9GIG and Kermit, W9XA, the Central Division's VUAC representative, have set up a reflector for VUAC activities. The reflector is designed to provide Central Division ARRL members with access and input on proposals at the VUAC level. If you are a Central Division League member interested in VHF contest rules, I suggest that you participate. W9XA will forward comments to the VUAC for further consideration. You can sign up for access to the reflector by contacting W9XA.

So far in the process, a majority position as to rover rule changes has been tentatively established, but that evidently can change, depending upon input from the VHF community via these Division level reflectors. The majority position as of 4-27-07 is to:

- Develop a new limited rover category for four band rover operation;
- Keep the regular rover category for all band rover operation;
- Also develop a new unlimited rover class, apparently designed to put the pack rover operations into, without specifically banning pack roving practices;
- Specifically allowing for APRS in rovers;
- Amending the family rule to allow multiple calls from the same rover to be used by family members.
- Allowing a non-op driver in rovers, as a safety issue.

No position has yet been established on non-rover changes, but that may be forthcoming from the VUAC at some point. If you want exact wording of the proposed rules, it is on the Kermit's reflector, along with very good commentary from several well-known central Division VHF contesters. See W9XA for access.

I do want to compliment W9GIG and W9XA for this layer of communication (and W9FZ for hosting the list). It certainly makes the process more transparent than last time, and provides for ARRL member comment and input at any earlier stage. Coupled with the VUAC survey that was previously done in November, 2006, no one should be surprised by whatever final proposals surface from the VUAC level. Kermit is hoping that consensus will develop among Central Division League members, so that he can report our reaction to the majority position that has been formulated by VUAC. That may cause a change in the proposals at the VUAC level. If you like or dislike the above proposals on rovers, please see W9XA!

Out-of-Circle Coordinator

By Ron Feutz, KK9K

Fellow Outlanders,

The SMC board is planning a major effort to reclaim the SS gavel this year.

I have volunteered to coordinate out-of circle guys who want to travel in-circle to help the cause.

We will have a guest op/multi coordinator to find places for you to operate.

For now, please just reply to me if you have any interest.

From a personal standpoint, I traveled to K9ZO's place to do SSB last year, and we had a great time - also made 2 sweeps and over 2300 Q's for the SMC.

Please give it some consideration, and if you think you may be interested, get back to me.

We have plenty of time to find you a place to operate.

Thanks and 73,

Ron KK9K



We Need Your Support

By Zig Markowski, KM9M

Fellow SMC'ers,

It is time again to ask for your financial support via dues/donations to support SMC.

Although it is not a requirement to pay dues or make a donation to be a member of SMC, the club does have a real need for funds to operate.

Sponsoring the SMC Suite at Dayton, supporting members who have been selected as participants in WRTC, sponsoring plaques for the various contests SMC does, etc., all have a price tag.

The suggested amount for dues is \$10 per year. We would welcome any size donation, larger, or smaller.. ALL are welcome and appreciated!

If you care to pay using PayPal go to the bottom of the "Join SMC Page " at:

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sections I believe. Thus started my addiction. (sigh). From humble beginnings.....

I did get a few congratulation messages after the announcement of my Presidency. I thank all of you for your vote of confidence. In particular a short email exchange with Howie (or is it Howard?) K9KM sticks out. In our brief conversation I mentioned that I hoped to cultivate a sense of community among the SMC members and this struck a chord with Howie. As he said it is not that we are loners as a group but we just don't really get together on a regular basis. We probably all belong to more than one amateur radio organization. It is my goal that if someone asks you what club you belong to that your answer is "The Society of Midwest Contesters" and not some other club as your first answer.

To borrow from a former US President and a current candidate, our sense of community will not be developed by one person but will take a village. That means every person on the roster needs to contribute ideas, energy and time. These activities don't necessarily take a great commitment but may be as simple as going to a regional get together sharing some stories or sending a short blurb to Brian for inclusion in the next Black Hole. If we all do this then we will get to know each other better and will feel that sense of community along with having an "ownership" interest in the SMC.

To that end some more concrete requests and club business. The meetings held near St. Louis by KI9A and Chicago by K9GY should be a become a permanent fixture. As you folks have the meetings someone take notes and forward them to Brian so we can't publish what we are doing and saying in the Black Hole. I know a few SMCers get together near Michigan City still on the first Friday of the month. Let us know what's happening and who is at the meeting. Between now and September I would like each member to talk to some other non SMC ham about the SMC or even better yet make a presentation at a local club meeting. With the new ops out there when code was removed as a requirement there should be an untapped group that wants to learn more about performance operating which after all is what we do best! Let me know who you talked to and I'll send them personal invitation to join. I have commitments from some members to visit clubs near Bloomington, IL and in Indy and spread the word but we need more of you to join in so our recruitment efforts cover our entire circle.

I believe it was mentioned that the Sultans want to pass the torch of the Dayton suite on to a new group. Anyone out there feel that they are the host (or hostess) with the most? We will need someone to step up or the suite will be history next year. Although the SMC conducts much of it's business online which keeps expenses to a minimum there still are reoccurring expenses that our club incurs. (plaques,

WRTC stipends etc etc....) dues are not required but your donations once or twice a year are needed. Send your donations to Zig KM9M or click on the Join SMC link on the website and hit the donate button!

I guess that's about it for now. Watch the reflector for more news to come between now and September. With all your help we will "get the band back together." Back to net control.....

Mike/AJ9C (no not Mel)



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

click on the "donate button" at the bottom of the page. No need to fill out the membership application.

Or, if you prefer to write/mail a check, Please put your call-sign somewhere on the check.

Make your check out to:

S.M.C. or Society of Midwest Contesters

mail the check to:

S.M.C.

c/o

Zig Markowski - KM9M

50 East Eureka Dr.

Lemont, IL 60439-3970

Thanks for your consideration and continued support of SMC on behalf of the members and Board of Directors!

73,

Zig Markowski - KM9M

Secretary/Treasurer



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extra \$125 for excess weight (\$100 for the golf case and \$25 for the regular suitcase). At the ORD security checkpoint the wheelie bag with all the radio equipment was completely swabbed. I asked the dude how many of the tests came up positive. His response was that only the first test was positive.

I arrived at MIA approx 2 am. In order to find the gate for the MIA-NAS leg I had to call AA, hah! The airport monitors were all off at that time. Luckily, I was able to get a little sleep by laying across three sets.

In 2007, I decided to leave on Weds afternoon and take a direct flight instead of leaving Weds night and using a connection through Miami. That worked out well since I was able to check into the hotel by 5pm Weds and finish setup by 4pm Thursday. Better yet I was able to take a nap before the contest in 2007.

Will I ever get set up (2006)?

I purposely took an early Thursday morning flight to NAS in order to allow for more setup time. I arrived at the hotel at 10:30am. Unfortunately the fifth floor was being remodeled. So I asked for a fourth floor room over the flat portion of the roof. The clerk said I'd have to wait until 12:30 or 1pm. My luggage was checked into the hotel storage area.

The previous day I checked with the licensing clerk to insure that she'd be there on either Thu or Fri. So I used the down time to walk over and pay for my license for 2007-2010. Unfortunately, I started walking without a hat (my head is bald) or sunscreen. So I got some sun in the first few hours on the island.

Returning to the hotel around 1pm I was informed that there still was no room available yet. Eventually, I decided to haul the golf case (used primarily for antennas) to the roof. Around 2pm I began assembling antennas. Sometime after 3pm I finally got a room.

Most of Thursday was taken up with setup work etc.

Mr. Murphy – Where are thee?

Invariably there are problems that occur. Hopefully they aren't show stoppers. The biggest issue was the SWR on 40m with the F12 antenna. I had set it up in the backyard at home and got a 1.7:1 SWR although here it was 3:1. When taking down the antenna on Sunday I realized why! There were two markings on the element length and I evidently incorrectly constructed the element spacing.

Another issue was that the SWR on the 80m dipole was infinite. In talking to Jerry KE9I he mentioned that was most likely a loose connection. I hadn't used the 80m dipole since

sweepstakes 2002 (or maybe 2001) so anything was possible with it by this time. It ended up being loose lug nuts on the balun. Once those were tighten, it worked great. I eventually used it on 40m sometimes in place of the F12. Post note: It really was a 40m dipole which for some stupid reason I thought it was an 80m dipole...doy! I've since decided to mark any antenna I make, hah!

While at Dayton (the previous weekend), Dennis K7BV/1 had mentioned that six meters was quite good. He also mentioned that The Bahamas are somewhat rare on 6m. So the Cushcraft 3 element 6m beam was tossed into the golf case in case there was some opening. Unfortunately, I had never tried out the FT-857d on 6m (or even 6m SSB). The 857d had some kind of intermittent issue on 6m. I had thought it was the microphone but the mic worked fine with the FT-817 (brought along for backup). The FT-817 ended up being the primary 6m radio for the duration of the trip.

Wow is this really 6 meters?

Ended up making over 400 contacts on 6m. Even worked a station near Green Bay, WI. Keith, W9RM made it into the log too. I worked from OK to TX to FL up to Canada / Maine. It was amazing what 5 watts and a 3 element beam at 55'-65' can do when you have a DX callsign.

I tried to speak fairly quickly in order to maximize operating time and work people before the band shifted. Seems like some of the old-timers must not have been used to an HF style operation on VHF since some asked me to slow down, hah!

Besides the contest operating, I had the most fun with 6m on this trip. I just love the FT-817. It really can play when the stars align.

In 2007, the FT-857D was repaired for 6m operation so I was all set for lots of 6m QSOs. The 6m openings were not as plentiful and I ended up with only 47 QSOs on 6m. Although the opening did extend into Canada! In order to reduce some weight in my baggage I left the 6m beam at home. Instead, I used the 40m dipole on 6m which seemed to work aok.

Rules...What rules?

Umm, well I guess I should have looked over the rules a little closer in case I had questions. I had no internet access from the room. Local places charged \$6/hr to use the internet.

I had to take 12 hrs off time during the contest. I'm used to the WAE rules which only allows for a maximum of three off times in 12 hrs. I believe each one has to be a minimum of a half hour. The WPX rules just stated to take 12 hours off. Umm, does that mean a 10-12 min break can count? Uh

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Oh. A copy of the rules is always a good idea, hah!

It would have been great to run USA on 40m during the day like sweepstakes. They would count for 4 points instead of the 2 or 3 pointers I could get on 20-10m. It was a great concept from my viewpoint but USA stations don't want to work one pointers (other USA stations) on 40m when they can work 2 or 3 pointers on 20-10m, hah!

Let the contest begin

I had hoped to take a 1-1/2 nap in the mid to late afternoon on Friday before the contest started. I just wasn't tired enough. In addition, most of the afternoon was spent having fun on 6m. In the back of my head I wondered whether this was going to be a strategic downfall.

Started out on 40m due to the higher QSO point versus 20m. It was rough going with noise and a higher than planned SWR. At 01z I switched to 20m. Wow! The band is hopping! Made lots of QSOs on 20m and made up for some lost ground. Eventually I returned to 40m to hear the noise had quieted down. At 07z 20m was still going strong. I hated to take a rest at that time but I knew I wouldn't get too far in the contest if I didn't get some rest.

Saturday was a memorable day as the rates were keeping my occupied. At 22z Saturday, 15m was open to EU and JA at the same time. I thought we were near the bottom of the solar cycle? Late in the day on Saturday and into Sunday zulu time I had a three hour run on 20m, whew! Jerry KE9I called right around the beginning of the run so I'm sure he has some insight from the other end. It was great to work him from The Bahamas.

On Sunday morning I planned to place a breakfast order and have it delivered to the room so that I could keep operating. I ate a little later than usual so I ordered the steak and eggs to try something different. It was actually pretty good too! Also found out that Clif bars are good to eat during the contest <http://www.clifbar.com/>

As to be expected Sunday was slower rate wise than Saturday. My room looked out into the Atlantic and I was able to see the cruise ships and boats come and go. I'm a gym rat at home so with the rates being slower, I headed out for a jog. In addition, I was still searching for an artist to draw a painting for my QSL cards.

Also as usual for Sunday is bad packet spots. All of a sudden I started to work a fair amount of dupes. One even thought I was C6AQN...So I figured that out and sent my call three times in a row in order to get the pileup straighten out.

I thought someone was pulling my leg when I copied

UA3LID (short for U-A-LID). It ended up being a legit QSO based on the flow of the contact. I hated to give out the number 666 (sign of the beast) or 911. It's silly I know but there is some psychology to it, isn't there?

Some memorable mults are China, Korea, Kuwait, Australia, Norfolk Is, Hong Kong, and Palmyra.

On Sunday, the A/C started to sound like an old WW2 bomber plane. I figured by the time maintenance came to check it out and actually fix it I would have been gone. So I decided to just deal with it. In 2007, there was constant 10-20 mph winds. I was located in a corner room with windows on two walls. So I never used the A/C.

I took a quick look at 6m during a slower time on Sunday to hand out some QSOs.

If I took my score for 2006 and placed it in the 2005 top scores it would have placed 9th in the Word for SOAB-LP category. So we'll see how the other folks did this year. (I ended up placing 7th in the world for SOAB-LP in 2006.)

	160	80	40	20	15	10	Totals
2006	0	0	434/173	852/363	476/108	112/21	1874/665
2007	0	139/64	490/228	753/218	123/19	26/5	1531/534

Funny thing about the WPX is that the top scores for SOAB-LP are mixed in with the SOAB-LP (Triband/single element). Kind of strange that CQ makes a separate category for them and then decides to group them back together for a top score listing!

Will I ever get back?

My XYL had mentioned how hot the Nassau airport is. For some reason I did not remember that from our previous trips. Well she was definitely correct. It was blazing hot in the terminal, ouch! Initially the flight was scheduled to leave on time. We lined up at the gate only to later be told that ORD had weather issues. I was able to be first in line to board, which was advantageous in placing the carry-on wheelie bag with the radios.

We eventually boarded the plane although I was a little distressed to learn that I'd have to check the wheelie bag at the plane door. I asked the stewardess whether I could place the bag in the onboard compartment. She agreed but the Bahamian baggage loader made a big deal out of me trying to take my carry-on inside the plane when others had to check theirs. It seemed the stewardess didn't have (or want to use) any authority over the baggage handlers.

Once everyone was finally on board the plane, I overheard the pilot asking a lady about what exactly she had said about drinking. Well it turns out that the pilots had to get cleared from flight operations before we could leave. The total delay

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at NAS was 1-1/2 hours.

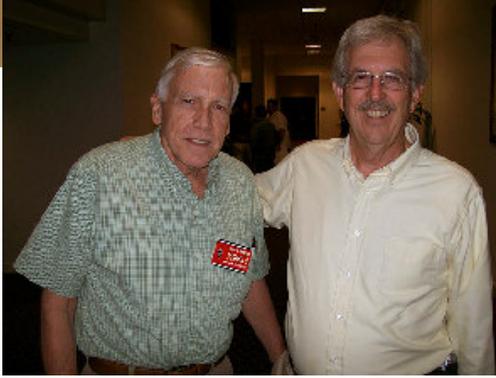
Fortunately in 2006 my baggage was not weighed at the Nassau airport. Unfortunately in 2007, they were weighed! I knew I was in trouble when I saw the large scale that was perfectly visible upon entry into the terminal. Between 2006 and 2007, I paid a total of \$250 in overweight baggage charges. So the plan for the future is to find some storage facility to hold the antennas and coax as they are the heaviest of the baggage.

In 2007, there were no flight delays to speak of so that was enjoyable. I purchased a Pelican case that was carry on size. Although due to the small size of the aircraft the case got checked at the airplane ramp. The vibrations from the airplane trip loosened the CW/SSB filters in the radio and a screw on the top of the radio!

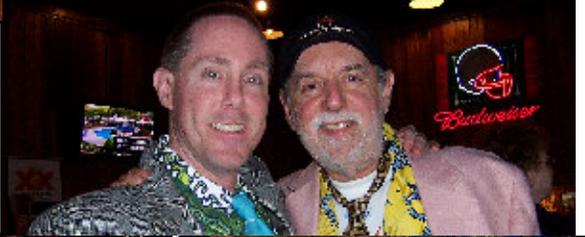
What's Next?

Next year I might have to shift things around a little. I'll probably have some travel to Texas and Germany that will shift my contest plans around. I definitely enjoy the experience. The people of The Bahamas are very friendly and a joy to talk to. At some point I'll progress to getting into the big league of doing the CQ WW CW from C6A. I'd also like to do a VHF contest from there also.

No worries Mon!



**SMC
Dayton Pics
2007**



SMC Stuff

SMC Clip-on Badge

by NVSA

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).

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www.thesignman.com/color/



KC9FD

SOCIETY OF MIDWEST

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

Midwest Engraving
6657 N. Sidney Place
Glendale, WI 53209

Ph: 414-228-8654
Fax: 414-228-8655

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)



Member/New Member Information/ Update Form

Name: _____

Call: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

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Please send updates to:

JON OGDEN, NA9D
905 SURREY LN
ALGONQUIN IL 60102-2058

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together today!**



The Society of Midwest Contesters

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