

The VHF Journal

Official Newsletter of the Rochester VHF Group

September 1999

This month's saying: "Bite me, microwave boy!"

(With apologies to *The Drew Carey Show*)



January VHF SS participation award, c.1988

Editorial License

...de VE3IEY

Well hello there. It's been fourteen years since I last edited the VHF Journal, and technology just rages on, doesn't it? I pulled out my stack of old Journals and had lots of fun remembering back to 1982/83- the first year of the modern era of the VHF Group newsletter. Ed Maher, WB2ZJY, suggested the name VHF Journal in 1983/84, and the rest is history. Back then, the whole operation was done on a battleship grey 1948 IBM electric typewriter bought for \$20 at the Rochester Hamfest (weighed about 45lbs!), was shrunk by 25% in a machine at RFC that was the size of a small backhoe, and then copied it onto legal size sideways, so we could get 4 pages onto one sheet of paper. But I digress... Lets get on to the business at hand.

Just as every editor of the newsletter, I have my own style. Some will like it: hopefully no - one will absolutely HATE it! My hat is off to ALL the VHF Group members who have edited the newsletter over the years (lets see... WA2YTM, WA2TMC, WB2ELB (now W2EV), KD2KQ, N2HKD, and I KNOW I am forgetting someone...). A BIG THANKS to all the production staff, past and present- these are the people who copy, fold, lick and stick so you actually GET the newsletter- a task more difficult than creating the original, I think! This year JUDY, N2KXS heads the team.

I'll make the rest of this short: newsletter submissions are due by the 21st of the month preceding the meeting. They need to be submitted by e - mail to: tantonr@aracnet.net

Please submit articles in **WORD PERFECT 6.1**- If you don't have that, then convert your article to **WORD 2.0**, which is ancient but pretty universal and I can fix it here. Almost as ancient **ASCII Text**, which will also work. Please put your **CALLSIGN** in the subject line of the e - mail, i.e.: VE3IEY de K2DH. That's it.

Oh yes, and a warning: if you don't submit something, I'll make something up. I'm a pretty irreverent sort, so watch out if you choose the second option. I do plagiarize mercilessly (especially when it comes to illustrations), but give credit where credit is due when I know where to give it. We only have about 75 members, so the message *lighten up, it's only a newsletter!*

Meeting: Friday, 10 SEP 1999, 7:30PM
Monroe Co. Social Services Bldg.
111 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY
BASIC VHF OPERATING : Frank, K2OS

1999 FALL ALL - BAND SPRINTS ANNOUNCEMENT

OBJECT: 1). To work as many stations as possible on VHF in a 5 hour period. 2). To have fun!

DATE: Thursday, November 11, 1999

TIME: 7 PM to Midnight local time. Stations within 50 miles of a time zone boundary may adjust their operating time to that of the adjacent time zone if they wish. You may operate all 5 hours of the event.

BANDS: All above 50 MHz, including laser.

CLASSES: Single - op, all band only. While there is no rover class per se, a station may change grids, and submit a separate log for each grid operated from.

SCORING: 1 point for contacts on 6 and 2 meters. 2 points for contacts on 222 and 432 MHz. 4 points for contacts on 902 and 1296 MHz. 8 points for all bands 2304 MHz and above. Multipliers are 4 digit maidenhead grid squares. (January VHF sweepstakes scoring.)

OTHER RULES: All other rules are the usual rules for ARRL VHF contests.

AWARDS: Certificates will be issued to the top 5 finishers at the National level. We are open to alternative award ideas for next year!

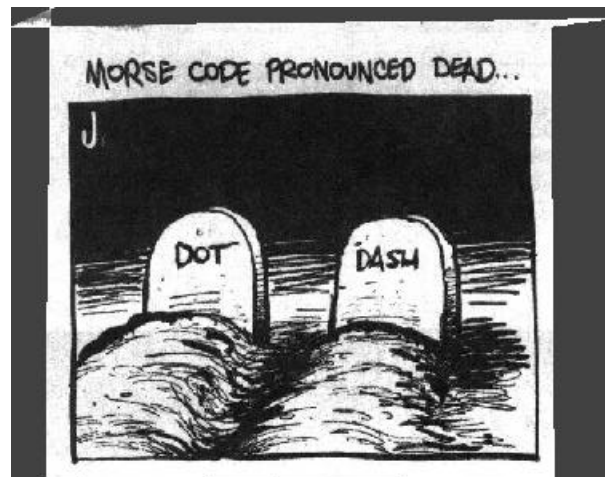
REPORTING: Logs are due three weeks after the contest date.

Electronic: Submit log and a suitable summary sheet to:

VHFGroupers@greeceny.com (Log should be in ARRL standard file format.)

Mail: Log and suitable summary sheet to:

Rochester VHF Group, P.O. Box 92122, Rochester, NY 14692



From the Chairman

...de NS9E

Hello! I am Tim Stoffel, NS9E, your Chairman for the 1999 - 2000 club year. I hope your summer has been a productive one, both for amateur radio and your non-radio pursuits as well. If I can't say mine has been productive, I can at least say it's been HOT! Thank the Lord for air - conditioning. I've installed two of them this year! (One is in the shack, which is also my shop and computer room.)

The August UHF contest was just yesterday. I didn't finish nearly as well as I had planned. Too much work spent improving the station! (Plus, I had to go into work during the last 3 hours of the contest.) But, were the improvements worth the trouble? Yes! 3456 is now on the air with a big signal (5 watts now, with much room for improvement). 222 and 432 each have a big beam. Although these antennas are not as high, they definitely hear better. Before summer is out, I hope to have 5760 up as well. 10 GHz should follow in the fall, if I can work out a suitable antenna arrangement. But enough about my station!

The biggest thing I have noticed in the past few years of involvement with the Rochester VHF Group is **declining membership**. Why is our membership declining? There could be several reasons. The one given most often is usually the proliferation of the Internet. Unfortunately, this is a bad rap for the Internet. Nearly all active hams who are also on the Internet see the Internet as a tool, not a replacement. I suspect that many of those who have traded their radios for modems probably wouldn't have remained 'radioactive' for much longer, anyway.

Another big reason given is work. The universal complaint one hears these days is how hard they have to work on their job. Little free time is left to 'play radio'. I have seen this firsthand right here in this club. I have seen it in my own life, as well. There's not a whole lot that can be done about this, but there are a few things. One is short, more frequent operating activities. Another is encouraging club projects. Yet another is a good newsletter. Although club meeting attendance is a good thing, it can be more than made up for by active participation through the newsletter, activities, Internet, etc.

The third might be a lack of interest. Are we as a club promoting the activities it's members expect? I know that some people are 'Contesting is life, the rest is just details' people. There are others who could care less about contesting, but might be building some really high performance gear in their basements. Still others are working less traditional VHF modes, and enjoying it virtually unnoticed by the rest of the club. If we as a club focus too much on one thing, the rest of the club could very well lose interest. We need to look at all aspects of Amateur Radio VHF (And this could include FM, repeaters, ATV, Packet, etc.) without moving too far from our core interests.

The fourth reason we are losing members is boring club meetings. A few years ago, we had interesting club meetings, with good programs and a few interesting side activities. Lately, the meetings have become a business meeting and maybe a program. This must change.

To this end, **your board is proposing some format changes to the monthly meeting to make it more interesting**. First of all, we are going to streamline the business portion of the meeting so we can concentrate on the important old and new business items. Membership, Treasurer's, and committee reports will be posted in the newsletter, and little meeting time spent on them. (Unless it's justified, of course, but I have never seen this in 11 years!)

We are going to add some chances for **group interaction** to the meeting, including a chance for everyone to introduce themselves, and briefly tell us about their activities. We may also throw up an interesting question for each person to answer as part of their introduction! During the intermission, we might throw out a 'problem' for people to solve in small groups. The solutions will be presented before the program. This is a chance for us to learn from each other while having fun! We are also bringing back the popular 50 - 50 raffle.

As far as meeting programs go, we are endeavoring to have an interesting program at each meeting. September will feature a tutorial on weak signal operating by Frank Pollino, K2OS. (Bring your friends who have never tried weak signal operating before. Get 'em hooked!) October will feature a 'rover roundup', where each of the rover owners we have

in the club will have a chance to talk about their rover and the interesting experiences they have had on the road with it. November should be our famous tune - up clinic, where you can get the noise figure of your preamps and transverters measured. Tentatively, we are planning a group discussion on what we learned during the June contest effort. And January, of course, is the January Sweepstakes rev - up meeting!

We have a tremendous pool of talent in this club. If you have a subject you would like to 'pontificate' on, please volunteer! If you are scared to speak in public, talk to me. I'll help you! (Besides, what ham doesn't like to talk?)

We are looking at starting one or more club projects. What these might turn out to be is still under discussion. One being considered is a group purchase of the new Down East Microwave 10 GHz transverter kits! These kits enable you to get on a truly exotic microwave band WEAK SIGNAL (Or FM, etc for that matter) for considerably less than \$300. All you add is an IF, an antenna, and a SMA T/R relay. Wouldn't it be a blast to work 20 Q's on 10 GHz during a contest rather than 2?

We are trying an experiment this fall designed to combine the fun of a full - blown contest with the brevity of a single evening! Thursday, November 11th will mark the first running of the **all - band sprint**. (Rules are published elsewhere in this newsletter.) This short (5 hour) contest is designed to sharpen your skills as a single operator, and test your station to see if all is working right before the snow really flies. It should also be a whole heap of fun!! This isn't just a local contest; this is a NATIONAL contest being sponsored by the Rochester VHF Group. Make plans to get on and have a good time!

We now have one more national contest (September) that is also a club competition. We also have several internal club awards that have not been awarded for a couple of years. The contest promotion team has their hands full just getting people to compete effectively. As a result, your board has recommended creating a new appointed position: Awards Manager. This person's job will be management of the club's many awards, including the January Sweepstakes, W2UTH and the Gizmo award. We may also offer some operating awards to encourage people to get on the air and use their stations between contests and openings!

While on the subject of appointments, I will take a moment to note that Tom Richmond, VE3IEY has accepted the position of **Newsletter Editor**. Judy Stonehill, N2KXS and Jeff Luce, KB2VGH have taken on the newsletter **printing and distribution** jobs. Jeff also continues as our membership chairman. Mark Wasserbauer, N2YB, along with Mark Hoffman, KA2RDO and Jim Howard, N2JMH, will be our **contest committee** this year. With these three motivated people, the Rochester VHF Group should be a force to be reckoned with in January!

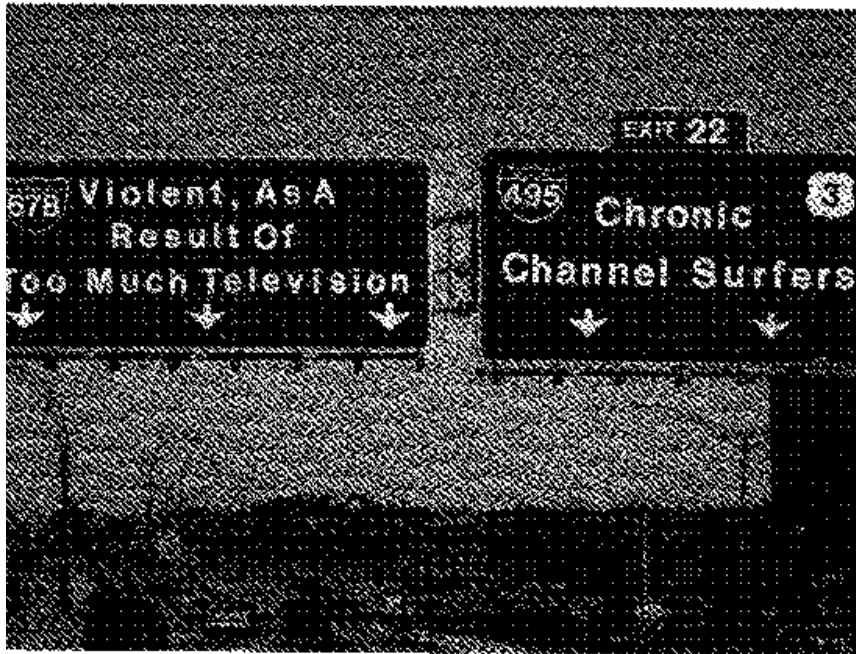
We will make an attempt to do some nets on the higher VHF bands, and perhaps try a 1296 net again. We need to use our microwave allocations more effectively, or we will lose them to the greedy megaconsortiums! (Yes, I've seen too many James Bond films!)

The last major initiative I want to discuss is some incentives designed to encourage the recruitment of new members. What this will work out to be is still not clear. Most likely, you will be eligible for FREE dues if you recruit a certain number of new members. Keep tuned for more news on this!

If you have any questions or ideas, I would like to hear them. After all, this is your club, and I want it to be all you expect it to be! My E - mail address is lionlamb@servtech.com, and my evening phone number is (716) 247 - 4798. You can also visit my VHF website at www.lionlamb.org/vhftest.html

I sincerely hope that 1999 - 2000, the club's 51st year, will open both the millennium and our second half century with a renewed burst of growth and enthusiasm. But I can't do it alone. It takes YOU and YOU and YOU!

See you in September! **Tim, NS9E, Chairman**



Internet info:

The RVHFG enters 21st century

Jeff Luce, kb2vgh

It is my pleasure to announce that we now have the ability to create mailing lists. There are currently 2 setup: one for our Board of Directors, and another for making announcements to the entire club.

There will be additional lists setup once we can establish a set of rules for them. If you see a need for additional lists let me know.

RVHFG - Contest Contest related discussion

RVHFG - Misc Miscellaneous discussion, sked requests, VHF related[local] for sale listings

RVHFG - Tech Technical discussion

For the time being the announcement list has been setup to only accept submissions by BoD members and appointees only. The address of the announcement list is:

rvhfg@vhfgroup.rochesterny.org Please thank Mark Hoffman KA2RDO for all of his effort in making this happen

Are you on the Rochester VHF Groups' email list??? If not send you email address(s) to KB2VGH. Also don't forget the club website and members only site!

73

Jeff KB2VGH

Meeting schedule for the next few months...

Sept. 10 <Basic VHF operating- K2OS>

Oct. 8 <Rover rally- N2OPW>

Nov. 12 <Tune - up clinic>

Dec. 10 <June contest reflections?>

Jan. 14 <January contest rev - up>

All the dates for this seasons' meetings are the second Friday. The time is always 7:30PM . The place is 111 Westfall Road unless otherwise noted. The last meeting scheduled is for May, and there is usually no April meeting because of the annual banquet.

From the Treasurer:

By Paul N2OPW

Treasurers Report:

Income:

Dues collected \$ 514.00

Interest: 3.36

Expenses:

Banquet 68.62

Awards 533.52

Balance on Hand:

Checking 603.26

Savings 1,243.93

Total \$ 1,847.19

MY FIRST WEAK - SIG VHF QSO

(a.k.a.: "when the bug bit")

Guest writer of the month: Mark Hoffman, KA2RDO

The Year: 1986

The Band: 144MHz

The Radio: Yaesu FT - 480R, 10w radio

The Antenna: 5 element homebrew, made from a radio shack scanner antenna.



The station: W2SZ/1, FN32.

My dad and I were goofing around at a hamfest earlier that year, and decided to give 2m a shot. I liked it because the radio had a CW position, and pretty lights. At the time, all I knew about VHF was that it was line - of - site.

We put the 5 element beam right above our tribander which was mounted on a roof tripod. Think we ran RG - 8x as feedline. I came in, turned the rig on, and as I'm tuning around, all of a sudden the rig comes alive on 144.170- there's this voice calling CQ Contest. I'm wondering "who in the HELL is W2SZ". When they say FN32. I KNOW we're in FN13* (everyone around me is, so I must be) so that's DX! I call, he comes back. I tell him FN13, he sends FN32. "Thanks, QRZ. "

**The irony is, it takes a few weeks on the bands before Keith Hibbert (our then neighbor) discovers that our house actually is in FN12ex, not FN13. Decided to start VUCC all over again. Haven't looked back since.*

Contest Corner

Mark Wasserbauer, N2YB

It seems like it has been a very long time since I had the heater on in the car on the way to work, it was on this morning though. I guess it's the very first signs that Fall is getting closer, my favorite time of year. It has been a very hot and turbulent Summer for me, selling the

house and packing. Man do I have a lot of radio stuff! (Susan calls it junk but it's not.)

Sitting at our lunch table at the N2PA site under a tarp in the rain, the day after the June contest, our newly elected Chairman asked me to stay on as Contest Chairman. I accepted because the title has changed a bit to Contest Committee Chairman. I am very happy to announce that starting this year, the Rochester VHF Group has a Contest Committee:

Jim Howard (N2JMH): One of the Groups newest top single operators. In 1998 Jim was just edged out of a 5th place trophy, so in 1999 armed with a great deal of determination, knocked a few heavyweights out of the way and captured 2nd place Unlimited Single. Jim is destined to take #1 very soon along with some National awards from the League. Jim has also demonstrated diversity in his operating skills by assembling a Rover team (N2WVK) and an exceptional piece of Rover hardware. I will say that from the Hill in June, N2JMH/R sounded like seasoned veterans. The Rochester VHF Group will benefit from this sort of determination and resourcefulness in the contest committee.

Mark Hoffman (KA2RDO): Mark's contest record speaks for itself. Numerous top five RVHFG finishes, several First Place RVHFG Unlimited SingleOp finishes, in 1999 Mark needed about 1k to set a new club record for this category. He has several top 10 National trophies, has been a 6m and/or 2m operator in the N2WK contest team during the last 10 years. His accomplishments are too numerous to cover in this column, just check ARRL records. Mark is also a very versatile tester, able to adjust his performance to almost any contest situation. Mark will no doubt bring enthusiasm and great ideas to the contest committee and the RVHFG.

I am looking forward to this contest season more than any other in the past because of these two individuals. Contesting is a big part of operating for many members in the Group and therefore should consist of more than a single person. A committee also brings in ideas from multiple sources and backgrounds. There have already been a number of good ideas bouncing around the committee e-mail. Join me in supporting both of these guys in our newly formed RVHFG Contest Committee.

Contest Schedule

Sept 11 - 13 VHF QSO Party

This year the ARRL has made it a club competition. Put on your best performance and turn in a log. You just might win something!

Nov 11 All Band Sprint 7pm - 12am. Rules are very similar to Jan. Five hours of operating madness. Will be a nice primer for January. A chance to put contest pressure on the equipment with ample time to fix the weak links.

Jan. 15 - 17 VHF Sweepstakes
The first contest of the next thousand years.

I am suggesting that everyone get ready for this and next years contest season. I am certain that activity will be at its' highest in recent years.

The reason is that many stations will be scrambling for the plaques and awards with 2000 on them. If you want one, start getting ready!



The Perseids of '99 were so bad that...

Edward S Urbanik, N6YM

I left the house for breakfast, and the band didn't open.

Number of schedule cancellations exceeded the number of completions by a factor of five.

Local computer birdies went QRT.

AA7A was only heard once.

144200 was usable for local ragchews, without objection.

The nearest 2m beacon stopped transmitting.

Number of visually observed sporadic meteors exceeded the number of Perseid meteors.

The peak was simultaneous with the null.

On the 12th, between 16 and 18z, I rechecked the calendar to confirm it wasn't the 10th. Three times.

The beacon used as a 2m indicator stopped sending its grid, and started sending "S2".

Hope you did better. 73 Ed N6YM

ROOKIE ROVER -

or: "geez Dad, you're a psycho!"

Jim, N2JMH shows us how it was done in June 1999, the RVHFG's 50th Anniversary year!

(editors note: I laughed, I cried, I ate the whole thing... this article, excerpted from an e-mail by Jim, is long but worth the read- kind of inspiring as a matter of fact!... abciey).

Around the end of 1998 there was talk about putting together a big effort for the 50th year of the club. I thought to myself how much fun this would be to be a part of but in my eyes it seemed like the club was loosing some steam. I guess I shouldn't judge because I have only been in it for a couple years and did not have much to go on. Anyway why would I be invited, most of these guys did not know me any ways. I put it to rest.

Just before the Jan test when Wayne was selling his equipment I got a chance to go to the holy Mecca of wanna be ham operators such as myself. I get permission to make a large offering and head over to meet "him". During the transaction Wayne talks about the club effort possibly happening and I suggest that I would rove only if it would be beneficial to the club and it was going to be a serious effort. I figured I could throw a couple radios in the truck and hit the 4 corners. He tells me if I step up there is no way the would let me go out without being fully equipped. I say no problem I have up to 1296, I am big time. Then he says that someone would loan me microwave equipment, he was sure of it. OK, whatever, I just wanted to get out of there, I had new equipment to play with, skeep for 222 and preamp, 903 transverter and preamp and some new meters so I could look at my skeep, how cool. Wayne also loaned me the "winning on the hill" video and had me pretty enthused but the Jan test was only a few weeks away and I had things to do.

Jan. test came and went with not much discussion on the group effort that I heard of, although I did talk to Todd n2wvk about it and had a late night 6 meter discussion with Walter nq2o and Steve n2ull about roving and the club. Also had watched the "winning on the hill" video many times for ideas and to see how the big boys did it.

One night I get home from work and there was a message to call Wayne, I think it might have been in March, not sure but I do know I had started to work out of town for what I thought would only be a couple weeks. I am anxious to get back to Wayne because I figure he is selling more gear and I want it before someone else gets it. After a few days I finally talk to him and he tells me it is on and am I still willing. I got to admit I am a little skeptical because of some of the club meetings and the banquet. Poor turn out and bickering. Wayne tells me to call Mark ka2rdo and talk to him. By the time I finish talking to Mark (an hour and a half) I am really excited. He hooks me up with the web page and some phone numbers and I start to make a plan.

I was already in process of buying a new full size Ford van so this was going to be easy, some racks that were already in the van and a little tripod to set on the ground and I would be a rover. Wrong. Just before the second meeting, the first that I would attend, the dealer had lost my paper work and wanted to start over on the van deal. Bring out the ugly monster and I am no longer welcome at the dealership.

The first meeting goes well with all the big contesters there and I am really impressed with how this is going on there part although I am back to square one but with lots of time before the test. Wayne makes sure I get introduced although I know who almost all of these people are from the meetings I try to go to even if my partner Todd seems to be loosing interest in the club and contesting. I make a new plan for my roving that won't include a lot of setup time but is going to take a little work and won't ruin my truck. I spring it on my wife by calling her at work at 9pm (she is working 2nd shift) and inform her that in the morning we are going to Detroit MI and pick - up a couple pieces of aluminum tower and have to be there by 11:00 am as they usually don't have Saturday hours. This stuff is expensive but I justify in my own sick mind that it is OK because I will use it as the top section of my second tower at my house that I had planed on putting up sooner or later. I will tell you what there is no way I am climbing this stuff, the rungs bend under my 200 pounds and I just could not imagine carrying any gear up there.

The trip to Detroit was funny in that you have to imagine those little dolls with springs for a neck, that is what my wife looked like as we were hammering through the Canadian rough roads and she was trying to sleep. Even though I stayed up till she got home from work and got up before her in the morning she was still a little upset with me laughing at her every time she fell asleep. I guess she will not be my driver if I ever rove again. Over the next few weeks I design my setup mentally during the week and build on the weekend. I talked Todd into his 1 section of Rohn 25 and tell him I will give it back un hurt. By this time I am frustrated with him because I have been going it alone and also have family commitments for the weekends as well. Really unfair on my part, but that is what happens when you are obsessive. So anyways I get the saw out and cut his tower in half to mount to the front of my truck as the base with the aluminum tower to lay over the truck for travel. I customize a rotor mount with a old TV rotator I had in the junk box and put a mast in.

Now is when I realize just how big this thing really is. I nose my truck up to my one story house, tie a rope to it and go on the roof, no way, I can't pull it up by hand with no antennas or feed line on it. It was not the plan to raise by hand but I needed an idea of just how heavy it would be. Got it standing up finally with the help of my 14 year old son and measured it to be 33 feet from the ground to the top of the mast. As we stood there on the ground and looked at this thing my son says to me *geez Dad, you're a psycho*". Anyone with teenage boys will know that this was a major compliment and I took it for one.

At this point I was in good shape I thought with the rest of the work to be done the days just before the test. I went to a scheduled meeting at MDS and only about 6 guys showed up. Now I started to have second thoughts, I still had not touched my shack or my tower which were going to be totally destroyed after I ripped everything out of there. I was close to just staying at home and operating because with the big guns at the hill I could have taken first place in WNY single op easily I think and that would have been great for my paper collection on the wall. I wouldn't have done this, but I have to admit that the thought was there.

The week before the test I got out of work at 1:30 PM in Erie, Pa gassed up the truck and was on my way home. By the end of that day most of my equipment was in the truck and tower work scheduled for tomorrow. In bed at 2am. Up at 6am going strong trying to get as much done as possible before Todd showed up at 5. About 9pm we were in good shape and were drinking pretty good and starting to test things out with the tower in the travel position. Low output on 6 - 432 which uses the same IF and a DEM switch box and relay box that I made to get rid of out of band signals due to little attenuation. Multiple changes have been made to this setup over the past year including gain stages for the low IF of the Yaesu 1000mp. After hours of tearing apart everything I had put in place and listening to a partner tell you how your custom equipment should be working an alcohol induced ugly monster was released. My wife heard me in the house. A side note to this. Just so everyone does not think I am a jerk. At work it is my show and you work for me, don't like it and your fired, I work in a dangerous occupation and it is my job to see that you go home safe. I am well known for this, respected and hated. I don't like the heat and it was hot all day as you all know. I am also a big baby. Waa This paid off because all weekend things

went relatively smooth with no insubordination from my partner. By the end of Thursday night I was mad and did not know if Todd would show up after work on Friday. When he left I went in side to get some rest but could not sleep so got back up and found the problem. Always keep documentation and always look for the simple things first. The switch box was not getting PTT and the gain stages were just attenuators. In bed at 3am.

Friday up at 7 am, had to sleep in one morning, a little redesigning to the raising fixture and tying up loose ends takes me all day, still had not gotten together with Paul n2opw to copy some of his maps, forget the maps George is leading the way. Still have to water proof the window where the feedlines come in. Scott's gear is not making any power. At this point a lot of people are stopping over to see what is going on, friends and family all want tours and to B.S. I do my best to keep my happy face on and be polite. Next time do the set - up behind the house for additional time savings. We take off for the Batavia airport to test about 8pm. Do some testing with k2an and nq20 through 1296 and realize what we have forgotten and make a list. Most important was some light for taking down.

No problem I have my 2 AA pen light with me, but more light will be needed. First time out it takes about 20 - 25 minutes each for set - up and tear - down. We attract a lot of site see - ers but we are ready. Home about 10:30 with plans to stop at Scott's house at 8:00 in the morning for repairs to the m - gear.

Saturday- Scott digs in and finds the problem right away, over to George's, where he is having troubles of his own and Scott lends a hand there. We head up to the Lodge at Woodcliffe for some final testing and leave there about 1:00pm way behind schedule and meet Bill k2ter going up there. We get to FN23 or is that FN22 about 3:00pm and really start things of right with the "grid goof" By the time we finished at the second stop things did not look good. We had only made it through 1296 in both grids and were way behind schedule as far as I was concerned. We head off to FN24 and I am keeping an open mind for better success up north. Meet up with the n2opw/r and had a good time with 3 rovers at the rest area telling early war stories. Did put the tower up with out the dish on here, we only did this once though.

Now is when it gets interesting, George informs us he is going back to Rochester and I talk to Todd about it. We decide to go it alone. George points out a spot on the map for FN14 and we head off to it. We find the spot he spoke of and there is to many houses close by to run a generator at 1am so we choose to go back to a bus garage that Todd has worked from Charlie's rover. We set - up and start to work the bands with Mark ka2rdo and completed up through 1296 with 903 being a tough contact. We told him we would try to make it back to the Woodcliffe but were not sure. After about the 20th deer we saw standing on the side of the road we pulled into a rest stop for some much needed shut - eye. Asleep at 3:30am with my feet hanging out the window of my truck. If there were mosquitoes there like at my house I would have been sucked dry.

Sunday up at 5:30 headed into Rochester. Set - up at 7:15am ran the bands through 5.7 and had our second wind. It was great to work them all and we were excited. Stop at our houses for a much needed shower, got some gas and were set - up at the Batavia airport at 10:30am. We were like a well oiled contest machine with each knowing there job and doing it with out hesitation. We had our set - up time down under 10 minutes and were having a blast talking about doing this all the time and building a rover only vehicle like George. Set - up at fn02 by 12:45 with only fair results from there, missed a couple bands from there and made us realize we were not the greatest rover to ever operate the face of the earth. At this point we decided we would stop in fn12 and then head into fn11 with no idea where we would go. We choose this verses another site in fn02 that we would have to locate ourselves with no guarantee we would pickup the other 2 bands or head south of the border and at least work to 1296 with out a known site. I asked around for some info even with the k3ytl guys but no luck, even promised them qso's. There loss. Fn12 we wanted to do all the bands on phone but could not on 5.7 so got it on cw. What a beautiful site that is under the big towers.

Off to fn11, the final frontier, we decided to go to Tioga PA as we were both somewhat familiar with it and were going to buy a map. No Gazetteer to be found so we just drove around. We saw a tower up on a hill and decided to use the right turn approach. Just keep making right turns till we found it. After an hour on a dirt washboard road and T - storms threatening we found the tower with a gate and lock. No place to operate from there because of trees. We continued on only to have to stop to duct tape the truck to keep it dry, the water would have run down the feed lines right into the rigs. As soon as we taped it up it stopped raining, now I have duct tape glue all over my truck. No problem, I would have wrapped myself in duct tape if I thought it would have helped us make contacts at least to 1296. We did see this little field with a limited view through the trees but we thought it would be marginal at best. We continued on up the road when I saw a pick - up gaining on us flashing its lights.

This is when I started to hear dueling banjos from the movie Deliverance. The guy pulled up next to us and told us we passed the tower site and we told him it was locked. He said he had keys and asked us if we were the new company moving in. I wanted to say yes but did not and tried to explain what we were doing. He told us he could not let us in and besides there were tall trees there anyways so I asked him if it would be alright if we set - up in that little field. He was reluctant but said OK. Finally set - up at 8pm, 4 hours since our last contact. I will tell you what were we surprised as we peaked up our antennas through the bands and they were pointing threw this little opening in the trees. Made it all the way through 5.7 and just made our night.

On the way back to the hill the only other point of interest was when we stopped in Prattsburgh for some beer and one of the local juvenile delinquents walked up to my truck and said "what the hell is that, a damn CB antenna?".

Sorry to be so long winded but wanted to write this all down. Thanks for letting me join you guys for this, it was a great and memorable experience. Damn proud to be part of the RVHFG. I hope we keep it going.

Jim n2jmh/r

SUPER ROVER:

from W2FU Rover in The 1999 June VHF contest

The Stats:

Grids activated- 12

Number of times we put up the tower 12

Number of times we took down the tower 12 (good thing this matches the above number)

Number of meals at eating establishments 2 (includes a meal before the contest)

Approximate average set - up time 3 minutes

Approximate miles driven 1100

Furthest QSOs made from 241 miles out (EN95XL)

Closest QSOs made from 29 miles out (FN12HX)

Hours of Sleep- 4

Equipment failures- 0

Operator failures- 2

Wrong turns creating significant extra driving times

Total wait time at the border 5 minutes

Total QSOs = 127

50 - 12

144 - 15

222 - 12

432 - 15

903 - 22

1296 - 21

2304 - 11 (all but EN95XL)

3456 - 6

5760 - 2

10368 - 1 (The last QSO we made)

Best view- FN14BA overlooking the lake

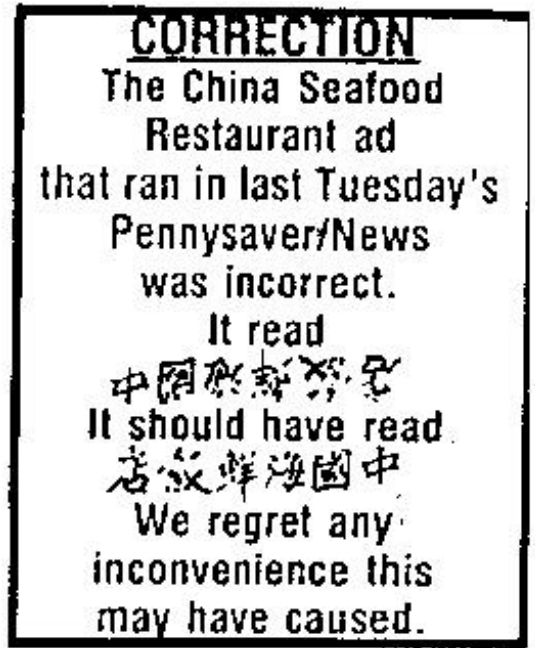
Worst view- EN95XL at midnight overlooking nothing, and the three guys who visited us from across the street didn't even offer us one of their beers.

Most interesting passerby woman in bathing suit on Long Point, Lake Erie Canadian resort community who thought we were checking their boat speeds.

The longest time we spent at any one spot was about 1.5 hours. This was the first stop in EN92SO and was expected. Only one other that I can recall took more than an hour. I can only recall one missed pass and that was from 222 to 432. From this far away (FN05 I think) you can't just get anyone's attention, except on two meters. With the beams pointed away, we can't be heard reliably on 222, 432 and 6. But Frank (K2OS on 432 @ W2UTH) would always get the antennas on us in a hurry so that we got our microwave sked set up on SSB in fine fashion. The Boomer award from W2FU/R goes to Frank.

Hats off to the whole W2UTH crew, my fellow rovers and especially to KA2RDO who was always there when we needed him to get stuff straightened out.

Jeff and Chris



June Contest Commentary from the Master of Ceremonies at the W2UTH RVHFG 50th anniversary June VHF QSO Party BASH!

Wayne King, N2WK

I want to tell each of you how proud I am of the effort you ALL put forth last weekend in the June VHF contest. We put together a fine team from the RVHFG and although we did not topple W2SZ you have every reason to celebrate the fruits of your labor. A very hearty kudos' to the rookie rovers. We could not have had over a million points without you.

Kudos' to N2YB for stepping up and managing the spotter position for the microwave station. From each of us on the Hill. (Thank you Diane Halliday for the great food). We all thank the Steenoff's for the hospitality and the N2PA gang for having the team at their site. Rovers, you were spectacular especially the first timers. I thank you for letting me lead you and I love you all. Once again we have shown that the RVHFG and WNY are someone to be reckoned with.

Thanks, your humble leader,
Wayne N2WK

FOR SALE: 5 el 2m beam, new HB: \$50

Mosley rotating dipoles, like new, full size, full pwr:

TA31M, 10,15,20m \$125

TW31M, 12,17,30m \$150

S401M, 40m \$150 all assembled, stored

inside, used on Field Day only.

Contact Len, WA2ZNC <wa2znc@juno.com>

----Don't forget: The Elmira Hamfest- Saturday, 25 SEPT 1999 at the fairgrounds. This is about 1 1/2 to 2 hrs from Rochester, the stuff that these guys bring out of the hills is just amazing. **Of course, the PACKRATS is the first weekend in OCT, isn't it?**
Need info, eh!



Special Note:

Sept 11 - 13 VHF QSO Party

This year the ARRL has made it a club competition. Put on your best performance and turn in a log. You just might win something!

MEETING NOTICE: Friday,
10 SEPTEMBER 1999 at 7:30PM,
Monroe County Social Services Bldg.,
111 Westfall Rd, Rochester, NY

Program: Frank Pollino "Basic VHF
Operating"

This month's VHF Journal edited in FN14pd,
Amherst Island, Ont., Canada by VE3IEY.
Production by N2KXS in FN12, Honeoye Falls, NY, USA.
Isn't NAFTA great, eh?

The VHF Journal,
Official newsletter of
The Rochester VHF Group
PO Box 92122
Rochester, NY, 14692