

The Rochester VHF Group

The VHF



Journal

Volume 63 Issue 5

February 2011

The next regular meeting of the Rochester VHF Group will be Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM

**Spencerport Wesleyan Church**  
2653 Nichols St., Spencerport

**Map and directions in back**

**In this issue:**

The Chairman Speaks!  
Secretary Report  
Treasurer's Report  
The Vice Chairman's Report  
Contest report: K2LIM  
Classified

**Topics:**

Flex-1500

## The Chairman Speaks! Dave Hallidy K2DH

**Groupers:** Well, the first thing I can say is, we haven't gotten anything close to my wish for winter settling down for us! I don't know about you, but I can tell you I'm sick of snow! The January contest is history and though I haven't heard any detailed reports, for the short time I was active I found conditions to be particularly flat and activity to be light, to say the least. I'd like to hear your opinions of the contest at the upcoming meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>- please share your trials and tribulations with us at the February meeting.

I don't have a lot to talk about this month, but we do need to start thinking about officers for next year- this will be my last term as Chairman, per the terms of our constitution. Hopefully, we can talk the other officers into staying, but in any case, it's not too early to think about next year.

This month, our February meeting will be a presentation of the new Flex Radio Flex-1500 SDR (Software Defined Radio) by Freddie WB2GFZ and John WB2BYP. They'll tell us about their experiences with this new radio, its features and shortcomings.

**Continued....**

*Published by  
Rochester VHF Group  
PO BOX 92122  
Rochester, NY 14692*

*Editor: Tom Jennings, KV2X*

*The VHF Journal is published by the Rochester VHF Group monthly except June-August. The subscription price is included in the membership dues. If you elect to receive the PDF version by downloading it from our website, dues are US\$10 per year. In this case, you will be notified by email the day it is available for download. If you choose to receive the hardcopy Journal by Postal delivery, the dues are US\$15.00 per year. Articles and comments should be submitted to [journal@rvhfg.com](mailto:journal@rvhfg.com)*

# The Chairman Speaks! continued...

...Currently, the March meeting is open. If you'd like to do a presentation (we'd really like that!!!) please let me or John know so we can "roll out the red carpet" for you! Seriously, the club needs to hear/see what the members are doing- it's a friendly group so you won't be intimidated speaking to us.

That's about it for this month- I look forward to seeing you all at the meeting on February 11th at 7:30pm for another interesting SDR discussion! I hope to see you there!

73

Dave Hallidy K2DH

## Secretary Report

Tom Jennings, KV2X

### Rochester VHF Group Meeting Minutes for January 2011

The general meeting, held at the Spencerport Wesleyan Church, was convened at 1950 by K2DH. Dave introduced K2QO and AB2YI as the speakers for tonight's program. We went around the room introducing ourselves and telling what we did ham radio wise this past month.

WB2BYP motioned to accept secretary report as written in the Journal with K2OS seconding the motion. K2QO motioned to accept treasurer's report and WB2BYP seconded the motion.

Attending: K2DH, KV2X, W3OAB, W2TAU, WB2BYP, Gloria Butterworth, K2QO, WA2IKC, K2OS, WB2GFZ, K2EFH, AB2YI, N2YGG

Dave proposed to have a vhf related flea market for the March meeting and wanted to know if the members would be interested in selling and buying the vhf related equipment. We discussed some possibilities. John and Dave will have further discussions and decide.

WB2BYP brought some noise figure meter to check out some equipment which had problems at the tune up clinic last month.

**Old business:** Tom asked for input to the journal. We discussed beacon status. Main concern is accessibility to the beacon site. W3OAB will make some inquiries as to how accessible the site is

**New business:** None this month

John motioned to adjourn the business portion of the meeting and W3oab seconded it.

**Program:** K2QO and AB2YI Discuss roving along with some tune ups.

### Rochester VHF Group Treasurer's Report – January, 2011

#### CHECKING ACCOUNT

<b>Previous Balance</b> (as of 01/08/2011):	<b>\$1,940.09</b>
Income: Dues	\$10.00
Expenses:	\$0.00
<b>Current Balance</b>	<b>\$1,950.09</b>

*Respectfully submitted,  
Tom Jennings, KV2X, Treasurer*

## The Vice Report February 2011

On Friday February 11 2011 we will have a presentation on the **Flex-1500** given by Freddy Sulyma, WB2GFZ and John Stevens WB2BYP. Freddy has been doing a lot of research and experimenting with the digital interface and application side of the Flex-1500, and will be going over some of the hints and kinks in the setup of Virtual Audio Cables and the transceiver. I will be bringing along a Flex1500 set up with a 432 transverter, a homebrew interface box and a typical desktop suitable for running the unit.

If you are not familiar with the unit here is a brief description from the Flex website:

"A software radio is a radio whose channel modulation waveforms are defined in software. That is, waveforms are generated as sampled digital signals, converted from digital to analog via a wide band DAC and then possibly up converted from IF to RF. The receiver, similarly, employs a wide band Analog to Digital Converter (ADC) that captures all of the channels of the software radio node. The receiver then extracts, down converts and demodulates the channel waveform using software on a general purpose processor."



Front View - FLEX-1500  
(approximate actual size)

The Flex-Radio web-site is located here:

[http://www.flex-radio.com/Users.aspx?topic=shackpics\\_f1.5k](http://www.flex-radio.com/Users.aspx?topic=shackpics_f1.5k)

Freddy will have a hand-out with additional software applications such as Fldigi, HRD/DM780 and MULTIPSK, along with the links to web-sites.

The Flex-1500 is pretty affordable as SDR's go, and there are even several Flex-5000's in the club, so there is some expertise around for the more complex configurations and setups too.

The **Monday Night and Thursday night nets at 2100L on 144.260 USB** have continued to be well attended. Once again thanks to the usual suspects : Ken W2UAD, Al KA2EKI, Mark K2CAN, John W3OAB, Bill KB2BLS, Mike WB2SQS, John N2DCH, Len WA2ZNC, Dave

K2DH, Ken KA2LIM, Paul W2TAU, Mark K2QO, Freddie WB2GFZ, Len KC2PCD, Gary KC2TEP, David AA2YI, Carl WA2GAI and Al K2MPE.

On Friday March 11, 2011 we are planning another experiment, to have a **Mini-Flea-Market for VHF-UHF** goodies. We are hoping that this is a way to get a jump on the spring and summer projects, perhaps unload some thing that has been around and unused and pickup something of interest. Transverters, preamps, tubes, transistors, antennas, feed-lines, waveguide goodies, anything VHF and up is fair game. We would even make an exception for a piece of HF gear if it was capable of operating on or supporting the inter-connect to VHF/UHF/SHF gear.

Spread the word about the meetings, and join us on the Monday and Thursday night nets.

See you on the air,

John, wb2byp

## January 2011 VHF Contest at K2LIM

On Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup>, I made a trip to the contest site to do some last minute updates to the operating positions. The Snow was about 5 or 6 inches deep in the fields and 1 or 2 feet in the road. I had to use a 4 wheel drive truck that I borrowed from Keith, the land owner to break a trail in across the field. Then I drove right in with my van. Thursday night we got 6 inches of snow and when Al and I went to the site on Friday the 21st, I had to use my 4 wheel drive vehicle to break a new trail in as the old path was filled in. Al followed me in with his 4 wheel drive car. He got stuck twice but it was a quick dig-out with the shovels and we got to the site.

To get the heat and equipment running I left home at 1100 AM Saturday morning. The temperature dropped over night so it was now in the teens. The wind blew all night and the tracks were all filled in and several drifts. One about 3 or 4 feet deep on the road by the end of the 6M tower that I shoveled the wheel paths out before driving on into the site. Gregg arrived at the site and got stuck where I had shoveled the wheel path. Got him dug out and on in to the site. I got the heat going and then drove back down thru the field to the road to make the pathway better and packed so Al could drive in. Also at the site there was now a snow drift about 4' deep on the east side of the "Limo" and the 6M trailer was covered as well as the 432 trailer. Larry and Walt came with Al so we were in good shape with a total of 5 operators.

Next I got the new computers for logging setup and networked and I have to say right now, this was a great upgrade, as the data input from any one computer is updated to the entire system in about 4 seconds max. With all the equipment running, the power output on each band checked, and everything was working in good shape when Murphy stepped in the door and burned out the 50 amp power supply transformer with power draw. We changed out to the spare on hand and we're back in business.

All position were filled and in operation when the contest started. About 1 hour into the contest, we suddenly had no output power on 432. I monkeyed around with the amplifier and could not get any power out. So I drove home and got a spare 432 amp and brought that back and put in line. Back up to 300W out and now we are having big time trouble hearing stations very close. So, back home I go and retrieve another transceiver. Get back, swap the rigs and we still are having receive trouble. Meanwhile, 2 and 6 are plugging away putting entries into the log and 222 is working well. Oh yes, we are adding 440 FM contacts from some local's.

Murphy stepped back in with a flash and all 12 VDC was gone at the 222 position. We initially thought another power supply died but we unhooked the lines from the power supply and it came back to life. The crowbar circuit works. So I started unhooking units from the power strip one by one and finally found a dead short on the newly installed desk light. Hooked everything

back up and 222 was back up running, then I repaired the light , re-installed and everything is running smoothly except 432 is still not working.

Signals would just disappear on 222 in the middle of a contact and then re-appear a few minutes later, I began to think that part of the 432 problem was band conditions. After all the temperature outside was 0 degrees but nice and toasty inside. We finally shut the 432 station off and concentrated on just 3 bands. Contacts petered out around 11 pm so we headed home for some sleep at 1145pm. Gregg decided he would stay all night as he had to leave mid-day on Sunday for work.

Walt and I arrived back on site shortly after 0700 Sunday morning. Gregg had the generator all gassed back up and it was nice and toasty inside the limo. I brewed a pot of coffee, Al arrived with breakfast sandwiches and we were back at making contacts on 3 main bands with an occasional 440 FM contact. Mid morning, ole' Murphy came by again and the 440 FM rig died. Holy Crap! 432 is really a problem child this contest.

Gregg had to leave about 1 PM so Walt rode out with him to return home to Syracuse, NY about a 2 hour drive. Rob arrived on site about 4:30 pm after having a heck of a time driving in. He said: let's try 432 again. So we hooked up the beams direct to the rig I had brought from home and there is no power output. Holy Crap! Murphy's back. So, I took it out of line, put the original transceiver back in, hooked up the transverter, hooked the solid state Amplifier in line, turned everything on, tuned around heard signals on 432. WOW! Don't know what is going on but we'll take it. We are showing about 85 watts out and every station that I call comes back and I can HEAR them. So for the last 6½ hours of the contest we had all 4 bands on and I was trying to make up on 432, with the farthest contact into FM27 to the south. Our 432 Q's and grid's really suffered this contest.

In the Food department we had subs for lunch on Saturday and there was a crock pot of chili with corn bread muffins, a crock pot of beef stew with rolls, snacks included chips and cookies. On the liquid side, Gregg had his trusty coke and Ken brought a 5 gallon of Creamy Stout. Holy Crap! These guys emptied that keg. On Sunday morning we had Coffee and sausage sandwiches for breakfast and worked on the rest of the chili and stew through out the day. Rob brought some more subs when he came so as usual we ate very well and washed it down with home brew.

We did not venture very far out to make holes in the snow drifts as the temperature was dropping and it was well below 0 degrees. The sky was clear and full of stars. I will insert some comments from Al at this point.

A fun weekend. Thoughts/comments (in random order)

- I only got stuck twice...and that was on the first trip in.
- The in & out was the roughest drive that our Honda Element has ever taken.
- The lower 2 meter Omni's. (They are 1-1/2 wavelengths off the ground.) I worked one station in central Ohio on them that I could not hear with: a) the upper omni's, 2) the LVA and 3) the stacked beams.
- Dealing with a pile-up on 2 meters.
- The (frightening) cold (outside) both Saturday and Sunday night.
- The sunrise on Sunday morning...driving through the field...the "fire in the sky" as the sun "peeked" over the horizon, igniting the ice crystals and snowflakes in the

air with a fluorescent orange color. I would have stopped to photograph it but I was afraid that I would get stuck.

This was the first contest with us using the new call sign K2LIM. It went very well and we only had to remind a few stations that it was a new call sign when they insisted that it was KA2LIM because that is what came up in their data base. Shame, shame on them relying on a data base and not listening to the call sign.

This was not our best January contest score wise. 432 really hurt us being down for all but about 7 hours of the contest. But, we had fun and that's the bottom line. Although as we were cleaning up to go home, the comment was made; is it really worth it to run the snow drifts and brave the zero degree weather for the January contest. HMMMMM! Food for thought....

We wound up with 575 contacts and 118 multipliers for a total score of 80,830. The band break down is as follows:

<b>K2LIM Band Break down</b>		
<b>Band</b>	<b>Qs</b>	<b>Mults</b>
50	186	35
144	279	47
222	71	23
432	39	13

As you can see, the 432 stats are low as we missed many stations that we could never find again late in the contest. It is what is it so now I have until June to work on the break-down problem and hope and strive for less break-downs.

When I got home at 1150 pm Sunday night the thermometer on the garage shower -16 degrees and was still -16 at 0730 Monday morning.

Here are some photos from the site:

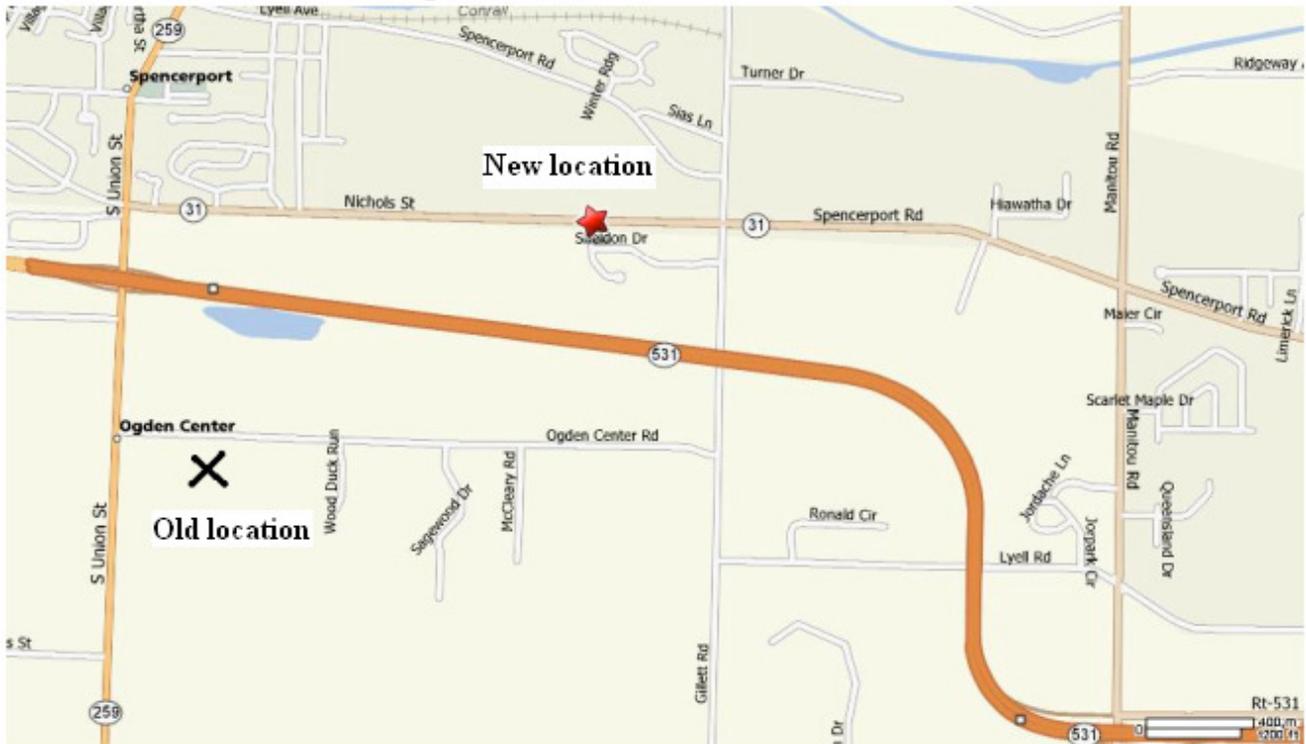


Ken  
KA2LIM

# Classified Listings

None this month

## Meeting Location and Directions



**Spencerport Wesleyan Church on 2653 Nichols St. (actually Hwy. 31).**

**Directions from Rochester:**

**531W exit RT. to 259N**

**259N turn Rt. on 31E (first Rt. at traffic light)**

**Look for Spencerport Schools Bus Garage on left**

**Take first Rt. on Sheldon at A-framed church, park in rear lot.**

**Enter gray metal door under fire escape.**