

The Rochester VHF Group

The VHF



Journal

Volume 60, Issue 6

Feb. 2009

The next regular meeting of the Rochester VHF Group will be Friday, February 13th, 2009

Spencerport Wesleyan Church
2653 Nichols St., Spencerport

Map and directions in back

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Topics:

Logbook of the World (LoTW).

The Chairman Speaks! Bill Rogers, K2TER

Fellow Groupers:

I would like to thank Bob Nezelek (W2CNS) and Andy Flowers (K0SM) for putting on a demonstration of the Flex5000 Software Defined Radios. I'm sure everyone present at the meeting appreciated seeing this technological breakthrough first hand. I wonder who will be next to crack open their piggy bank and purchase one.

January VHF Contest: I hope you all made some time to get on the air for the January contest. If you did, please make sure to hand in your log to the ARRL and also send your summary sheet information to me k2ter@rochester.rr.com to be eligible for RVHFG club awards. If you are also handing in your log for Rochester VHF Challenge club scores make sure to note the club name and your "Rochester VHF Challenge" score on your summary sheet. Scoring for the Rochester VHF Challenge is described here: <http://www.rvhfg.org/challenge.pdf>.

February 13th Program: It is our pleasure to have Paul Mackanos (K2DB) provide a talk on the ARRL Logbook of the World (LoTW). Paul will give us a live demonstration of the power of this on-line tool and show us how to create an account and start QSLing 21st century style.

Please meet us at Spencerport Wesleyan Church – 2653 Nichols Street (Hwy 31) Directions on last page. **Bring a friend!**

Bill, K2TER

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Editor: Tom Jennings, K2VX

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Secretary Report

Judy Stonehill, N2KXS

Rochester VHF Group Meeting Minutes for January 9, 2009

The meeting, which was held at the Spencerport Wesleyan Church, was convened at 1939 local by the Co-Chairman, K0SM.

Attendees talked about their activities and plans for the upcoming January VHF Sweepstakes.

Tom, KV2X, moved that the Treasurer's report be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Larry, N2MLH, and approved by the attendees.

Tom, KV2X, moved that the Secretary's report be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Larry, N2MLH, and approved by the attendees.

In attendance were K0SM, N2MLH, N2KXS, KV2X, K2DLW, N2ZDS, WB2QCJ, W2CNS, K2MTH, WB2YJH, K2MPE, WA2ZNC, K2MP, K2OS, W3OAB, NQ2O, KA2LIM, and W2JTR. Also attending were Mark Hazel, K2MTH, Duane Fregoe, K2SI, and Jean Kent, as guests.

OLD BUSINESS

Andy, K0SM, asked that member's logs from the January VHF Sweepstakes be sent to Bill, K2TER. Information about log submission can be found on the web site. The information in the logs will be used to determine the winner of the Rochester VHF Challenge.

NEW BUSINESS

Andy asked if the dates are out yet for the Spring Sprints. If anyone has information on the dates, they are asked to put it on the reflector.

Al, K2MPE, moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded and passed by the attendees. The business meeting was adjourned at 1955.

PROGRAM

Andy, K0SM, and Bob, W2CNS, gave a presentation and demonstration of the Flex 5000 technology and how it can be used in VHF activities.

Rochester VHF Group
Treasurer's Report
January 2009

CHECKING ACCOUNT

<u>Previous Balance</u> (as of 1/1/09):	\$1,134.41
Income:	
Membership dues	\$ 30.00
Expenses:	\$ 0.00
<u>Current Balance</u>	\$1,164.41

SAVINGS ACCOUNT

<u>Previous Balance</u> (as of 1/1/09):	\$1,523.77
Income:	
Interest	\$0.19
Expenses:	\$0.00
<u>Current Balance</u>	\$1,523.96

TOTAL	\$2,688.37
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*Respectfully submitted,
Judy Stonehill, N2KXS, Treasurer
February 3, 2009*

Remembering Leon Ingerick, N2HLT

Leon Ingerick, N2HLT, passed away suddenly, February 7, 2009.

In remembrance: A good friend Leon Ingerick, N2 HLT

By Tim Stoffel, NS9E

I do not remember when I first began hearing the call 'N2HLT' on the VHF bands in the Rochester area. I do remember that it did not take long before I began to hear and expect it every time there was a VHF contest. I knew Leon lived a good piece away from Rochester, down in Penn Yan, NY. I believe he occasionally would come up to Rochester for an RVHFG meeting.

I remember working with the Gannett Hill Gang on a couple of big June VHF contests from Gannett Hill, and from, Wayne King N2WK's house our west of Rochester. This gave me good experience working with a really big M/U VHF team. But, the opportunity came along for something a little less involved. I think it was originally through Steve Raas, N2 JDQ that I got the invite to join N2HLT and KB2DMK for a June contest.

My job at WXXI frequently interfered with contesting operations, so it was very late at night when I first drove down to their contest site, on some land in a State-owned forestry area. I specifically remember one of my headlights exploding on the way down, for no good reason, making it tough to find the site.

When I got there, I found a modest setup for M/L, set up in some tents. It was a nice, peaceful setting, and we were having fun tuning up the station and catching some weak signals. Leon and his close friend Rick Ayers KB2DMK were very pleasant and cordial to work with. In general, Rick and Steve worked 6 and 2 meters. I worked 222. Leon worked 70 cm. This first contest together proved rather exciting when rainwater found its way into the 2 meter amplifier. Light show!! We did get the amplifier running again. After the contest was over and we got a decent night's sleep, we started our takedown day with a traditional meal of cold chicken.

Both Rick and Leon were consummate tower climbers. I remember the elaborate setup we had for the Gannett Hill Gang, with winches, erection fixtures, etc. Leon and Rick managed to do nearly half of what the GHG did working together, and simply stacking tower. I was always amazed how they could do it. The most important thing though, was in all the contests I worked with them, towers were never a problem. And I got some great pictures of Rick and Leon climbing, doing their thing. And of the towers in the sunset, the fog, etc.

It was clear after that contest we were a natural team. And we stuck together. For January, we operated from Leon's house in Penn Yan. For June and September, we operated from the State forest land. In the last couple of years I was in Rochester, we started to use an RF site a bit further south and west of the State forest land. This site was more open, and less work was required to set up towers. There was also a building in which all stations except my 222 station would fit. We had a nice tent for that station. Over the years, we were joined by various other operators. Loren James N2LSJ and Randy, WB4MJF are among these. I seem to remember Bill Rogers, K2TER also worked with us for a couple of contests.

One year, Leon and Rick came out and operated with us for Field Day. Those were in the years that there were stations trying to operate the then undefined '0A' category, with just VHF. This was a lot of fun as well. The bottom line though, is every operation we did together was a

very enjoyable and memorable experience. I have lost count of how many operations we did together.

Leon had a great sense of humor, and we were always coming up with new jokes, puns and one-liners. This is part of the reason our team had so much fun together.

It was also at Leon's EME station that I got my first opportunity to work moon bounce.

One other thing we enjoyed doing was going down to Dayton, OH every year for the Hamvention. We did this three times. We all shared, four or five of us, one hotel room. These Dayton trips were very fun and memorable (And expensive!) events, and I still cherish memories of these fun times.

After I moved to Reno, I quickly became involved in the amateur radio community out here. I am trustee of the University of Nevada Reno club station W7UNR. I am president of CARCON, our repeater coordinating body here. I was president of a now-defunct club called the Reno Area Metro Simplex club, or RAMS. And until the last couple of years, I operated regularly with Tim Marek K7XC in VHF events. (Most of my free time now though, is taken up with my work with African lions, etc.) Although this has all been enjoyable, I dearly miss the times with Leon and his team. (And the GHG, and the Rochester Hamfest, and everything else I was involved with there.) These truly were among the best experiences I have had as a ham radio operator in the 20+ years I have been licensed. Best wishes to you, Leon. The DX up there is a whole lot better than it is down here!

I can't believe Leon is gone. I had the pleasure of joining Tim, Rick, and Leon for one of their LMO efforts on Italy Hill. Leon was a natural leader and a good friend. He was always helpful and encouraging to me as I built up my station. Hamfests and field days won't be the same without him.



Picture from <http://www.lionlamb.us/vhf/vhfpix.html>

This is Leon, N2HLT, as operating a 432 MHz station in the September 1998 VHF QSO party. This is how I will remember him.

Bill, K2TER

I am in utter and total shock. Leon was a good friend to many of us. I remember selling him a pair of RIW-19s that he used as part of his first 70cm EME system. I remember him operating with us at W2UTH and have some great pictures of him mugging for the camera. He will be sorely missed. Rest in Peace, Leon.

-Mark, K2AXX

January VHF Contest Reports

N2KXS / WO2P January 2009 “Contest Recap”

The N2KXS / WO2P January Contest operation has taken place every year since 2004 at the N2KXS QTH in FN12GW. After having roved together but with independent vehicles and stations for 12 years, Judy and I decided to retire from roving in 2003, to develop independent base stations and continue to operate independently, but from her QTH. We each have stations that are QRV from 6M – 10 GHz, with a few exceptions in the microwave bands. Our biggest challenge in working so closely together, of course, is to not step on each other while operating. We alternate working on 6 and 2 meters to mitigate QRMing each other. The contest is long enough and, with a finite number of stations to work, we have plenty of time to pick up local operators we may have missed the first time around.

Station improvements this year included the installation of a KMA (6m – 1.2 GHz) log periodic on Judy’s station. With a limited amount of mast space, the KMA is a good compromise antenna and performed well during the contest. We designed and built an RF switching system that allowed Judy to, with a flip of a rotary switch, quickly select and connect any rig to the KMA.

We had our fair share of equipment “issues”, mostly on the 432 band. At times, Judy’s linear amp would not drop out of transmit after keying up (we are still working on that one). While setting up the station, I found that my 432 DEMI transverter was as deaf as a stone and had almost no output power. Thanks to Tom, KV2X, for lending me his 432 rig and Bill, K2TER, for the power cord early on the morning of the contest. My 1296 DEMI transverter had a receive noise level of S9+20 but I was still able to work a significant number of local stations due, in large part, to the power they put out! Dave, K2DH, and I have scheduled an autopsy for this unit in the near future.

From our perspective, this was an average year. No “openings” of note but local FM activity seemed to be up (perhaps due to the “Rochester Challenge”?). The football playoffs certainly did NOT add to the activity level. We sent a lot of RF to the great white north with only a few contacts, kind of disappointing. We did, however, take full advantage of all our fearless rovers, following them and contacting them in as many grids as we could. They certainly did a lot to boost our scores! The KQ2O rover (Mark and Paul) made their annual Sunday afternoon (and greatly appreciated) stop at Judy’s QTH and, after a quick round of “driveway contacts”, Judy hosted them with hot chocolate and chocolate chip cookies. The official contest greeter and mascot, Judy’s cat “CJ”, did her best to make Mark and Paul feel at home, with CJ paying special attention to Paul. The guys were back out on the road within an hour. We finished out the afternoon and evening with a flurry of activity with the rovers at the 4 corners and the Sunday evening FM “fray”.



Another contest is in the books. There were many lessons learned and plenty of equipment to repair. Oh, BTW, don't forget to get those logs submitted!

Fred WO2P

K2AXX

After my IC-746Pro failed earlier in the week, I went single-band 50MHz. I have to go to the shack to get the log, but I think it was something like 80 / 30 or so. Not a huge contribution..... I'm hopeful that I can sell my remaining surplus on eBay (I seem to have saturated the market ;-)) and get the repairs done.

-Mark-

K2QO/R



K2QO and W2TAU in FN12gw

This may be the first January contest where we did not work any DX. The usual surprise Caribbean QSO on 6m never happened. Neither did the usual contacts on 2M into ME. Propagation was very much in the tank, especially on the microwaves. Granted it was only 8F on Saturday, but as you get closer to superconducting temperatures things should improve, yes?

Many thanks to a new rover team that hit the road, KC2QZF/R and his rove partner N2WLS. There is nothing better for activity than a new rover team! Now if I can only talk Steve into taking another band or two. Great job guys!



Backseat Equipment Rack

As far as total activity, what was lost in Q's with the usual superstations was made up largely by newer call signs in and around Rochester on 2M FM which was hopping. It feels like there is a resurgence of activity around Rochester. If a few more stations get on and add a band or two future contests will be a blast! At times, the pileups were a few stations deep and you could not tell who was calling who. Nice.

The K2QO/R team made its third journey in the new Saturn Vue. While a bit tight in the interior, it works well. A custom rack with all the transverters, amplifiers, IF radio, custom DC

rotor and elevation boxes fits nicely in the space vacated by the left passenger seat. We ran 6, 2 and Laser from the front seat and 222, 432 and up to 10G from the back. This works well in September and January when the contest is not likely to turn into a 6M only affair. We mix up the bands front/back for June.

One new feature this contest was a snazzy elevation control for the 5.7/10G dual feed dish built by rover partner W2TAU. It senses elevation and provides visual feedback via diodes that allow us to point level, up or down as needed. Unfortunately, there were no long haul contacts on which to test the system. But the control does allow the dish to be parked facing either up or down to reduce wind load while driving.

Again, thanks to the awesome hospitality of Judy, N2KXS and Fred, WO2P who always provide lots of points with microwave and lasers along with a hot fire, hot chocolate and cookies.

So in summary: 385 miles; 382 QSOs; 68K points; 6 grids FN02/03/12/13/22/23

73, Mark -- *K2QO*

K2TER/R

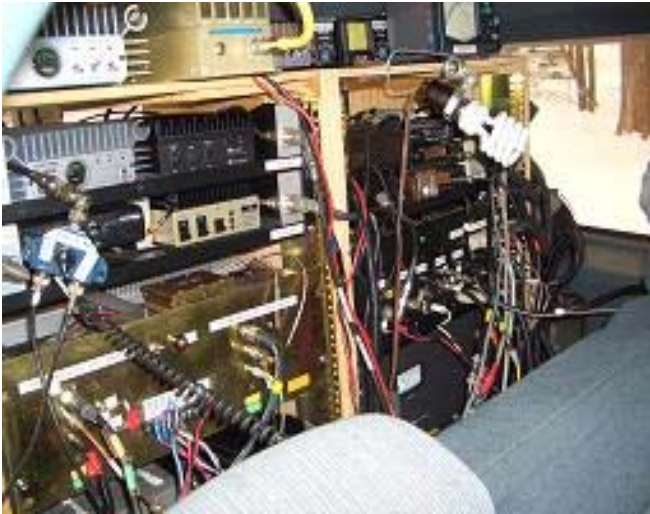
This year it was decided to change both operating positions layout in the rover along with a couple of FT1000MP Mark V Field transceivers as main radios and a FT100 and IC706 as liaison radios. The goal was to make the rover more ergonomic See pictures below. Another big change was networked laptops for logging and communicating between operators. We had all the changes done before the end of 2008 as Bill had to out of town January 2nd for his job. When he arrived back a week later all we had to do is mount the antennas and do some quick operational tests. Things went well until arriving at FN23 where we began having trouble with 2m and 222 MHz. Not many contacts there on any of the bands. Same situation in FN22. We actually cut our stay short. First thing Sunday morning we made some repairs which resulted in some strange behavior of the transverters. After a couple hours of debugging Bill fixed the problem and we were off to FN02 very late. Still the rover performance was not up to what it was in the past. One positive thing is that we made quite a few FM contacts.



Front operating position.



Back operating position.



Transverters, Amps, and Switch Box.



K2TER Rover at FN02

Pictures by KV2X

Bill, K2TER and Tom KV2X

Hello Contest from WA2ZNC

Many commitments over the weekend; a frozen rotator, and a very poor 1296 antenna, kept my time on the contest way down. Only one contact made on 1296. I made a total of 58 contacts, for a score of 1560 points, for the RVHFG. My log is into ARRL. I worked 6/2/220/440 and 1296, AM and FM Sure hope to do better the next time.

Len, WA2ZNC

W2EV

With the best of intentions of being on everything through 10-GHz, the weather didn't cooperate. The only antennas I have on the roof, got me on ABCDE. The halo's played nicely on 6 and 2 meters but I was disappointed with the diminished regional activity and difficulty in moving people from one band to the next. The standard response was, "I'll catch you tomorrow (Sunday) on the other bands." Sadly, in most cases, we never hooked back up again.

Final un-audited results put W2EV at a little over 10,000 points (not bad, considering two funerals that weekend. Still, I was heavily motivated to do better in the Spring Sprints and the June and July VHF contests.

To that end, I'd like to propose that the RVHFG membership consider a "1-hour Franti-call" during each of these events. A single hour during which all members promise to activate and work the contest (and each other)...even if they're not seriously entering the event. It could be really exciting!

Ev, W2EV

January Program

Andy, K0SM, and Bob, W2CNS, gave a presentation and demonstration of the Flex 5000 technology and how it can be used in VHF activities.



Pictures by KV2X

Members gathering around Bob's and Andy's Flex 5000 discussing SDR technology.

Panadaptor display of the Flex 5000

Rochester Hamfest

As you're probably aware, there is contradictory info posted on two different sites, and there's nothing the Hamfest Committee can do about that...yet. It has become rather controversial and I am trying to say as little as possible, although there have been a fair number of incoming inquiries on the RARA Hotline asking if there is really going to be TWO hamfests here this year. Irv, AF2K

Editor's Note: It looks like information is becoming more consistent as I checked two urls: www.rochesterham.org and www.rochesterhamfest.org and both point to RARA's home page. I also did some Googling and found a url for a Rochester Hamfest flyer at: <http://www.rochesterham.org/hamfest.htm>

WXXI DTV Hotline

By Tom Jennings, KV2X

At the January RARA meeting two gentlemen from WXXI gave a talk describing the analog to digital TV switchover and what WXXI was doing to make the transition go smoothly. They asked for volunteers to help out with a special phone Hot Line on January 22, 2009 at the WXXI studios while a message regarding the transition was being splashed on their analog TV signal. This message had the hot line phone number displayed for anyone to call with questions about the transition. I volunteered. In the meantime the local ARES group decided to coordinate the volunteer effort. My count of ham volunteers at WXXI was 6 or 7 but there were more. Before arriving I was told an orientation prior to manning the phones would be done. Actually there was no orientation and after a short briefing of what to do, a phone was put in front of me! I answered 30 to 40 phone calls in two hours. As soon as I hung up with one caller the phone rang with the next caller. Busy two hours!

Some of the questions I helped answer were:

- "I have a converter box and I want to record a program with my VCR and watch another program, how do I do that?"
- "I live between Rochester and Syracuse. The Syracuse DTV stations come in great and analog stations are terrible while the Rochester analog stations are received great but no DTV."
- "I only receive channels 8 and 31 DTV and nothing else";
- "Coupons have expired, how do I get new ones."

These problems were present with both dtv sets and dtv converter boxes.

WXXI recommendations	
Use an outside antenna	If you only can use rabbit ears antennas, get ones that are designed for HDTV
If you want to use a signal amplifier, use one designed for DTV signals.	If your coupon has expired, hold on to it as Congress may order retailers to accept expired coupons. Another option is to ask friends or relatives for their unused coupons.

NY Senator Schumer says there is a movement in Congress to delay the transition until June, 2009. As of February 4th Congress approved a four-month delay in plans to stop analog television broadcasts. The new date is June 12, 2009. Stations are allowed to cut off analog signals before the June 12.

6 and 2 Meter Nets Check-ins Submitted by Net Control, Larry Carter, N2MLH

January 12, 2009			
2m Net			
kb2bls	kc2mcc	k2dh	ka2ene Harry
ka2eki	n2yem	kc2hzm	kc2pcd
wb2byp	ve3tfu en92 Steve		
6m Net			
ka2ene	ka2eki	wb2byp	wa2gai
kc2hzm1296:	wb2byp432:	ka2ene	ka2eki
kb2bls	wb2tpn		
February 2, 2009			
2m net			
kc2hzm	kb2 bls	k2dh	ka2eki
wb2byp	nq2o	kc2pcd	n2yem David Batavia
6m Net			
kb2bls	k2dh	kc2hzm	ka2eki
kc2pcd432.1	k2dh	ka2eki	kb2bls1296.1
wb2byp			

Classified Listings

For Sale: 2 and 3Gig Station

2 and 3 G in one box with common TWT (WA2MOP's rover station) All Down East components. \$500. PS for TWT.

Free 18" dish with tri-band feed with purchase of complete station.

Contact: Howard Clark k2an at localnet dot com

Wanted: Makings for 903 xvrtr

L.O. chain and assemblies that can be the makings for a very infrequent limited SSB or CW only use like contests. Power output 10mw to 1w is ok. What ya got to offer?

AL, k2erg@arrl.net

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.