

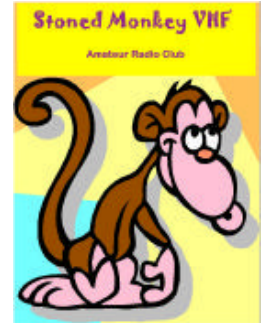
WeLCARS



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Lake County Ham Radio Journal

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www.welcars.org

June 2008

www.stonedmonkey.org

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Meeting Schedule

WeLCARS Meeting

Topic: Field Day Plans
June 4 - 7PM
Fox Lake Community Center
23 South St., Fox Lake, IL

VE Testing

June 11 - 7PM
Fox Lake Community Center

WeLCARS Meeting

June 18 - 7PM
Dino's Den Restaurant
88 E. Grand Ave., Fox Lake

Contesting

ARRL June VHF QSO Party

14 June 1800Z – 16 June 0300Z
50 Mhz and up.

Kids Day

21 June 1800Z – 21 June 2400Z
HF

ARRL 2008 Field Day

28 June 1800Z – 29 June 2100Z
HF & 50 Mhz & up

QRP ARCI Milliwatt Field Day

28 June 1800Z – 29 June 2100Z
HF & 50 Mhz & Up

Hamfests

Starved Rock Radio Club

Jun 1 - Princeton, IL
www.qsl.net/w9mks

6 Meter Club of Chicago

Jun 8 - Wheaton, IL
www.qsl.net/k9ona

Oak Creek Ham Fest

July 6– Oak Creek Wisconsin
www.qsl.net/wa9txe

TechFest III: Revenge of TechFest

July 26th at the WeLCARS World
Wide Headquarters in Fox Lake
(expect to see flyers when Joe
gets paroled from Mexas)

GET READY FOR THE UPCOMING ARRL JUNE VHF QSO PARTY!

June is just about here, and according to ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X, that means the VHF bands are starting to get some steam. "If you've never experienced the fun of VHF+ operating, the ARRL June VHF QSO Party is a great place to start. With many HF radios now offering at least 6 meter SSB/CW capabilities -- and some offering 2 meters and 70 cm as well -- any amateur with a Technician class license or higher can experience long-haul communication on the VHF bands," he said.

Known as the "Magic Band," 6 meters can be quiet for days at a time, and then suddenly explode with signals when the E layer of the ionosphere cooperates. There's no guaranteed way to predict when 6 meters opens, which is why the propagation mode is called "Sporadic-E." When 6 meters opens, contacts several hundred miles away can be made with relatively modest equipment; 50 W and a simple dipole antenna can do wonders during a good opening.

When operating on VHF, Kutzko said that your Maidenhead grid square is the common geographical information exchanged. For complete information on grid squares and how to tell what grid square you are in, visit the ARRL's web site <<http://www.arrl.org/locate/gridinfo.html>>.

Kutzko advises that there are a few things to know about operating on 6 meters: In the US and Canada, there is a "calling frequency" on 50.125 MHz USB. Many stations monitor this frequency to listen for band openings. Stations can call CQ on the calling frequency, and if somebody answers, the stations will find a new frequency on which to conduct their QSO. It is considered poor etiquette to monopolize the calling frequency for QSOs.

Most SSB activity will take place between 50.125 MHz and 50.250 MHz. If conditions are exceptional, Kutzko said you may hear signals above 50.250: "CW signals can be found from 50.100 MHz to 50.080 or so. The frequencies between 50.100 and 50.125 MHz are a 'DX Window,' meaning it is reserved for QSOs between W/VE and DX stations. Please do not make stateside-to-stateside QSOs in the DX Window."

Kutzko said that getting on 6 meters is easy: "A dipole for 6 meters is only 9 feet, 4 inches long and is an easy construction project. Try to get the dipole in the air as high as possible, but even 15 feet off the ground will make some QSOs. If you have an antenna tuner that can handle 6 meters, you can try

loading up another of your antennas on 6 meters with reasonable success."

Because VHF+ antennas are relatively small, Kutzko said that many amateurs operate from portable locations, such as a hilltop or a campground. Others operate the contest as a "rover," operating from their car or truck while transmitting from multiple grid squares over the contest period. "Tracking rovers during the contest is almost as much fun as the contest itself," he said.

The ARRL June VHF QSO Party runs from 1800 UTC Saturday, June 14-0300 UTC Monday, June 16. Be sure to use those extra bands on your transceiver and get in on the fun you've been missing on 6 meters and up! For more information on this contest, please be sure to check out the Contest Rules <<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2008/june-vhf.html>>.

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TechFest III Scheduled

Joe Serocki – N9IFG

I will start working on the details, but here's the scoop so far!

Date: July 26th, 2008

Doors open at 8:00 am

Doors close at 1:00 pm

Location: WeLCARS World Wide Headquarters

Rover Mania: We are requesting that any Rovers that wish come display their rover setup. Think of this as an Old Hot Road show for Ham radio.

Special event station to celebrate boating in the Chain of Lakes. Coincides with the boat show in town the same weekend, about a mile away

HT drawing for our radio class class will be held

At the current time DC Ace is a go. If any of you want to start inviting your favorite vendors, now is the time.

Stoned Monkey VHF Attack Plans for the June 2008 VHF Contest (REVISED in detail)

Tom Staley K9TMS

Well just when you think you have it all figured out stuff happens. Due to a conflict our host at the Woodstock Nursery will not be able to have us out at her site for the June contest. It seems there is some holiday called Fathers Day that appears to be at the root of the problem.

As a result we are now planning on holding the event at the Pioneer Tree Farm. So where the heck is the Pioneer Tree Farm? Well for those of you well versed in Longitude and Latitude the coordinates at 42.39242 North Latitude by 88.27640 West Longitude. For the rest of us, go north on IL Route 31 from McHenry. Turn right on Pioneer Road and go to past the large silver silos on the right to the first bend in the road, the farm is at the bend in the road. We will have a sign out marking the event.

The contest starts at 1800Z (1300 Local, 1:00PM CDT for the civilians in the group) 14 June 2008, the contest ends at 0300Z 16 June 2008 (that's 2200 Local on 6/15/08 or 10PM CDT).

Here are the basics on what the contest is about. We have already covered the time and date. The contest is on all Amateur Bands from 50 Mhz and up. You are allowed to contact each station once per band and grid regardless of mode. This means if you work a station that moves to another grid square you get to work them again. For full rules visit:

<<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2008/june-vhf.html>>.

As for the Monkey effort; we will have the following setup:

On 6 Meters we will be using an IC756 with 100 watts out into a pair of home brew 5 element beams at 44 and 30 foot. These antennas will be seeing their 3rd contest, they were part of the inspiration for the driven element Chris used for the 2 and 440 beam project. Details of how to build your own version of these antennas will be forth coming in a future addition of the Journal.

On 2 Meters we will be using an IC756 as the IF radio that will be feeding an Elecraft Transverter that will feed 25 watts of 2Meter energy into a TE Systems 400 watt amplifier. That 400 watts of 2 Meter RF will

find it's way into an antennas that goes by the name "Big Bertha" a Cushcraft 19 element boomer. This will be a-top N9REP's 20 foot self supporting "Hula" Tower. This station has really come along way in the last 2 contests. Using a transverter over a regular all mode 2 meter rig allows us several advantages. First we get all the joys of using the IC756 "Fish Finder", next the front end of the transverter is much more sensitive and cleaner on receive than the standard two meter all mode radio. And last and most important the 400 watt amplifier doesn't get overdriven anymore. For FM we will be using an FT857 into a 17 foot dual band antenna.

At 222Mhz the setup starts getting a bit more complex. We will be using and IC7000 as the IF radio driving a Down East Microwave transverter. In addition to the above advantages listed for the 2 meter transverter, a transverter is about the only way to get on 222Mhz SSB and CW. The transverter will be feeding a 120 watt amplifier that will be sending it's 120 watts of 222 RF to a pair of 15 Element Cushcraft 222 boomers. These will be up at roughly 30 and 24 feet. For FM we will be using a Alinco 222 FM radio into a Ringo Ranger up as high as we can get it.

For 432 this time we will be using a total new setup. An IC7000 will be driving a 110 watt amplifier. The 110 watts will then feed at least 1 19 element 432 Cushcraft Boomer, we are hoping the 2nd arrives in time for the contest.

The bottom 4 bands will all be with radios equipped with voice keyers. Yes even the Monkeys have stooped to allowing electronics to do the voice over!

Our UHF station will consist of a single FT817 driving either a Down East 903 Mhz transverter or a 1296 Transverter. Both will feed Looper antennas. The antennas will be mounted at the top of my Penniger Tipper at about 25 to 30 foot.

We will also have a couple of really cool radios. First is a 10Ghz station that will use an old IC290 driving a Down East transverter sending 3 watts of 10Ghz energy into an 18" dish, we don't stand in front of it. The other station will be several Laser Light transceivers. These are voice type transceivers that are sold in kit form from Ramsey Electronics. And yes we do normally wait for dark as it is just cooler to do the contacts in darkness. The fidelity of laser QSO's is really something to hear.

Our contest logging will again be done with the Monkeys own software logger which has been in a continuous state of upgrades. This logging system will utilize a single database and at least 4 computers to log all the contacts we make. All the computers will

be networked and have the capability of sending messages between the stations.

The last and most important thing to mention is of course the food. To put it mildly we don't starve. George KC9AAX will undoubtedly keep us well fed.

We would like to welcome all that would like to visit or spend some time behind the microphone. We also encourage everyone that can't come out to dust off those IC706's FT100's and such and get on the Magic bands above 30Mhz and have some fun. HF contesting tends to be a hectic pace operation, you will find that for the most part the VHF contesting is much more laid back. IF Six opens it will become just as hectic as HF though so you get the best of both.

For those of you that would like to come out at help or observe our setup we will be starting setup Friday afternoon the 13th of June (YIKES you are required to bring your own rabbits foot).

WeLCARS Field Day 2008

Tom Staley – K9TMS

Well by now we have finally sorted out most of our plans for Field Day.

We will again be setting up the operation at the Grant Township Garage on Molitor Road.

At the current time we know we will be doing at least a 4A operation. This may change right before start time IF a) conditions look favorable and b) we have another person willing to run another station.

We will again be using power! At least two of the stations will be in excess of 500 watts and the 2 meter station most likely at 400 watts. Many of our antennas will be home brew type antennas. We are hoping to have satellite and digital communications running.

Being there has been little change of the setup I will go over the key people here and what they will be doing in brief.

The HF Band Bosses are N9YH, K9HA, K9BTW and K9TMS. Our VHF Boss is KC9LFP. On the GOTA side we hope that N9IFG will be in town and be out GOTA coach. We encourage all of our recently licensed hams to come out and help us run up the

GOTA score.

The contest starts at 1800Z (1300 Local or 1PM CDT) on the 28th of June. We will be ending the contest at the 24 Hour point on the 29th. Setup will begin ~ 1500 local on the 27th.

If you have questions on how to participate in Field Day please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at home most week ends at 847-546-7380 or via cell at 815-451-7625.

Fall/Winter Logging Software Project Announcement

Tom Staley – K9TMS

Joe, Chris and I have been discussing project ideas for the cold months. Yes I know most of us are still trying to locate the sunscreen and flip-flops but one thing I have learned is when you plan early you have plenty of time to put it off. Any way one of the recurrent requests I have heard is the idea of developing a general software logger developed by us and for us.

At this point I am looking to start working on this in October after the VHF contest. We can use as a base to start some of the logging ware I have already distributed. We can then discuss what to change, add or modify.

What I need from each of you is ideas! I know not everyone is highly versed in the various programming languages of the day. If you just sketch what you want to see that would be great. Then we can all decide what will work and what will not.

If we have some of you out there that have talents in the area of software and feel like helping, that would be wonderful.

The entire idea here is to start you thinking about what you'd like. When the time comes who knows maybe you'll get bitten by the software writing bug like I did some years ago.