

Lake County Ham Radio Journal

January 2010

www.hamradiojournal.com



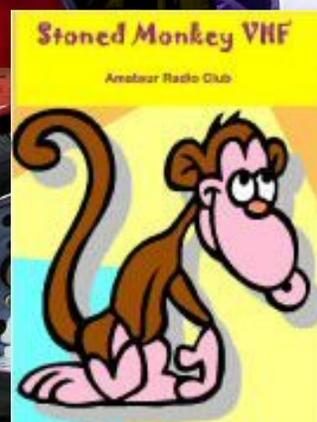
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January VHF Contest Plans

Mini-Keyer Reveiw

Awards Night



N9UHF

www.stonedmonkey.org



W9WLC

www.welcars.org

Upcoming Events

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LCHRJ Editorial Staff

Editors

Tom - K9TMS
Chris - N9YH

Contributors

Steve - KB9MWR

WeLCARS Meetings and Events

VE Session

Friday January 8 - 7PM
Fox Lake Community Center

Meetings

Friday January 15 - 7PM
Friday January 22 - 7PM
Friday January 29 - 7PM
Fox Lake Community Center

Hamfests

38th Midwinter Swapfest

Jan 10 - Waukesha, WI
www.warac.org

On the Air

144 MHz SSB SWOT Net

Sundays 7PM
144.250 USB

Informal Net / Radio Tradio

Sundays 8PM
KB9I Repeater
145.41 (-) PL 107.2

Other Events

Lake Co RACES Meeting

Jan 4 - 7PM
Lake County EOC

MCWA Meeting

Jan 5 - 7:30PM
Nunda Township Hall

McHenry Co RACES Meeting

Jan 26 - 7PM
McHenry County EOC

Contest Calendar

ARRL RTTY Roundup

Jan 2 12PM - Jan 3 6PM
3.5 - 28 MHz Digital
www.arrl.org/contest

070 PSKFest

Jan 8 6PM - Jan 9 6PM
3.5 - 28 MHz Digital
www.podxs070.com

North Amer. QSO Party

Jan 16 12PM - 12AM
1.8 - 28 MHz Phone
www.ncjweb.com/naqprules.php

ARRL January VHF Sweeps

Jan 23 1PM - Jan 24 10PM
50+ MHz Phone, CW, Dig.
www.cqww.com

Winter Field Day

Jan 30 11AM - Jan 31 11AM
1.8+ MHz Phone, CW, Digital
www.spar-hams.org

ARRL 10 Meter Contest

Dec 11 6PM - Dec 13 6PM
28 MHz Phone, CW
www.arrl.org/contest

State/Prov. QSO Parties (VT, MN, BC, DE, and NM)

Feb 5 - 7 (Times vary)
1.8 - 50 MHz Phone, CW, Dig.

CQ RTTY WPX

Feb 12 6PM - Feb 14 6PM
3.5-28 MHz Digital
www.cqwprrty.com

North American Sprint

Feb 13 6PM - Feb 13 10PM
3.5-14 MHz Phone
www.ncjweb.com

Da Second Week of Nerd Camp

Tom Staley - K9TMS, WeLCARS Contest Commandant

Well like last year we again gathered the nerds and set out in pursuit of HF contacts across the USA and Canada. This years gathering focused on setting up two stations at WWWHQ and encouraging other members to activate their home stations at home or mobile. The stations at WWWHQ were originally supposed to be running 600 to 1000 watts. The W9WLC station was not able to have access to an amplifier so it remained at the 100 watt transceiver output power. The N9UHF station was able to go to 600 watts of power.

Here's the detail on the stations and the scoring.

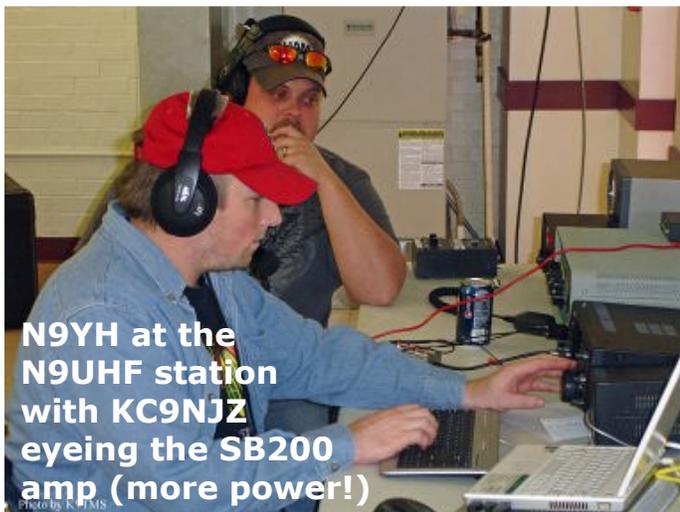
W9WLC used the K9HA IC-756ProII and DX88 Vertical mounted to the K9TMS Trailer mounted Tipper. With K9HA managing the station and K9BTW, KC9JQX, and KC9MKL as the operators. As you can see by the score they did an outstanding job! A significant score increase over last year.



W9WLC vertical antenna

Band	QSO's	QSO Points	Multipliers
160:	0	0	0
80:	25	50	8
40:	104	208	15
20:	72	144	44
15:	0	0	0
10:	0	0	0
Total Score:	201	402	x 67 = 26,934

Print Save Exit



N9YH at the N9UHF station with KC9NJZ eyeing the SB200 amp (more power!)
Photo by K9TMS



K9BTW at the helm of W9WLC
Photo by K9TMS

N9UHF used the K9TMS IC756ProII (fish finders rule!), SB200 Amplifier and Comet H422 horizontal Dipole mounted atop Hula 3. With K9TMS managing the station and N9YH, KC9PJJ, KC9PPU, KC9LFP, N9REP, KC9QYL and K9HA as the operators. Again you can see that there was a tremendous score increase over 2008. I actually still had the scoring break down for the N9UHF operation for comparison.

We also had logs submitted by KC9NJZ, KC9LFP, N9YH, and N9VN toward the club score competition. Thanks, guys, for the effort.

The goal this year was a Clean Sweep for both W9WLC and N9UHF. The W9WLC log fell 13 short of that goal and the N9UHF station was within 7 of a Clean Sweep. This also is a vast improvement over last year. Next year I think we will finally achieve this goal as long as the Airwave Gods are with us.

This year we noted an absence other than Marlene's Chili – an absence of noise! According to N9IFG the folks at Metra spent a lot of time and money fixing wiring problems with switches on the tracks behind WWWHQ. What ever it was they did really helped a lot. Where as last year on 40 meters we had a constant S9 background noise this year it was a pleasant S5 most times.

The skill of our operators continues to improve which also accounts for the score bump. We spent about as much time on the air but less time getting ready and tearing down, why? Simple everyone is used to doing the setup and now understand the ins and outs of the station setup. I look forward the Field Day 2010 with the group where we will again gather the troops and attack the airwaves.

Band	QSO's	QSO Points	Multipliers
160:	0	0	0
80:	0	0	0
40:	0	0	0
20:	83	166	42
15:	0	0	0
10:	0	0	0
Total Score:	83	166	x 42 = 6,972

N9UHF score 2008...

Band	QSO's	QSO Points	Multipliers
160:	0	0	0
80:	0	0	0
40:	216	432	66
20:	43	86	2
15:	66	132	5
10:	0	0	0
Total Score:	325	650	x 73 = 47,450

...and 2009



January 2010 ARRL VHF Sweepstakes Contest

Tom Staley - K9TMS, President - Stoned Monkey VHF ARC

The temperatures are cold enough that you best not lick your tower, so it must be time to give consideration to what to do for the January VHF contest.

The contest this year will take place on January 23rd and 24th. We had been passing plans that we as a club are trying to organize a bit of a Rover expedition. This gets a bit complex as I have been informed that I am required to fly to the left coast on the 24th for a teaching gig that starts the 25th. As a result my Illinois rove time is going to be severely cut short.

I would still like to see as many people as possible get their rover vehicles ready and plan to get out and rove both days. I would say our best plan is to plan a rover gathering in the Elk Grove 4 corners area on Saturday the 23rd at the start of the contest. Provided we can get a fair number of us out there we can have a ball. I would further encourage another such plan be used on Saturday for the 2 grids on the north side of Milwaukee for those that will still be around on Sunday the 24th.

Many folks feel there is nothing to be done if you can't rove without weak signal capabilities in your rover machine. Actually we proved that you can have a lot of fun just playing on FM. Add possibly 2 and 432 SSB

and you really can have a bit of fun. So if you only have Fm and verticals don't stay home get out there and join in on the rover fun.

Wendell N9REP is also organizing a possible Field Setup at either the Woodstock or McHenry locations we have used in the past. This would most likely be a scaled down version of what we normally do in June and September, so if there is no way you are going to have a rover put together for January you may wish to contact Wendell and see if there is a possibility of getting a field setup going with a small group of folks. Both this station and the rovers would help each other. Remember that January sees a bit less participation than the warmer month VHF contests, so having each other to work would be a big benefit.

As to the rest of my plans, on Sunday I will be attempting a QRP portable setup in the Bay area. I hope to be able to get on top of Mt. Diablo which will give me about 3900 foot of elevation. I hope to be able to put myself on 5 bands using an FT817, ICT81 and THF6. Last time I did this I had a ball.

One last thing. The contest in January is a club contest. When you submit your logs make sure that you list the club name as "Stoned Monkey VHF ARC." I will also need to know that you have submitted a log for us.

KB9MWR 73 Magazine Index Project



73 Magazine was an amateur radio magazine that was published from October 1960 to September 2003. It was known for its emphasis on technical articles and for the lengthy editorials by its colorful founder and publisher, Wayne Green W2NSD.

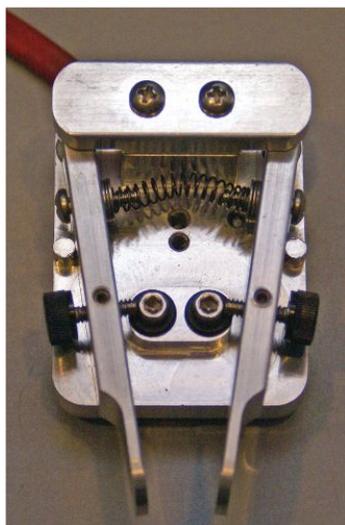
LCHRJ contributor and blogger Steve KB9MWR has compiled an index of articles published during 73 Magazine's run. Steve reports that while the index is complete his personal collection is not. If anyone has issues from the 2000-2002 period for sale, Steve's contact info can be found on the index page at <http://www.qsl.net/kb9mwr/files/ham/73.html>.

American Morse CW Key Review

Tom Staley - K9TMS, President - Stoned Monkey VHF ARC

With our renewed interest in CW operation I decided it was time to invest in a new key for the multitude of HF rigs that I have with built-in keyers. My original CW key as a novice was a conventional straight key, I still have it to this day and love it. But using the straight key I am only good to about 10 words a minute before my sending gets pretty sloppy. To go any faster I find that I need to use a keyer.

Somewhere over the years I picked up an MFJ knock off of the Bencher Paddle set. These are good paddles as long as they set on your bench and are not transported hither and yon from one portable contest site to the next. My paddle set has suffered over the years and actually had one of the Plexiglas paddles break. I decided it was time for something a bit sturdier. At about the same time I wanted something to take with me along side the FT817 QRP radio I have. After a bit of quizzing Uncle Google I came upon American Morse (www.americanmorse.com). After looking their selection of keys over I selected their Miniature Key – DCP is the model if you are keeping track. With a price of \$45 shipped to me I felt I couldn't go wrong.



The DCP arrives as a bag of parts. The assembly is all mechanical and is very easy provided you are proficient with a screw driver and hex wrench. You do need to do a bit of clean up on the edges of the metal surfaces. A bit of fine emery cloth and steel wool

should do the trick. For mine I got out the extra fine emery cloth and some brass polish to give it that nice shiny look. After that it is just a matter of assembling the key. The key

itself is very light and is designed to be mounted in several ways. American Morse does have bases and leg straps for it or you can do as I did and grab a scrap piece of aluminum plate and craft your own.

The fit and feel of the key is very good and it's built like a tank so there will be little issue with this rolling inside my Ham Radio Possibles bag. The key is fully adjustable to meet the requirements of your fist.

You would think the review would be over at this point. But after my experience with the small paddle set I was so impressed I asked Mrs. Claus to look into getting me the larger KK2 Paddle kit. Being I was a good boy this year the KK2 showed up under the tree.



The KK2 is a bit different than the DCP. It actually has it's own base that comes in the kit and weighs in at 1.25 pounds, heavy enough so that it doesn't walk across the table. Again the kit is like the DCP in that it is up to you to finish. Basic metal clean up and polishing will do again for the most part. The

one big difference is that the base is made from steel. The manufacturer encourages you to make sure to take some care in insuring that the burs are all cleaned off the base. They also indicate the base can be finished by painting it but caution needs to be taken not to get any paint in the mounting holes. I thought long and hard about how to finish my base.

I didn't much care for the look of the steel. Even polished it wasn't anything to get much excited over. I was concerned with paint getting in the mounting holes. I eventually had a brain fart and realized the best finish would be to just use some cold gun bluing to finish the base. This worked very well, just make sure you degrease the base before you blue it. I found that even if you get the bluing in the holes it doesn't interfere with mounting it. For the aluminum and brass furniture I again polished it with Brasso. The assembly was much like the DCP – if you are accomplished with a screw driver you can handle it.

The KK2 is a much beefier design. The addition of the plastic paddles is also a nice touch. Again the paddle is adjustable to your fist.

My understanding is that the KK2 runs \$65 (according to Mrs. Claus) which is not a bad price. Both the key kits I have built were well worth the investment and I look forward to getting into CW a bit more during the winter months. For those of you looking for your first key I don't think you will go wrong with one of these. Hopefully we can get some of you CW beginners out there to get into CW possibly with one of these keys and then possibly WeLCARS can claim the coveted 500 CW GOTA QSO's at FD2010. [With a good keyer, we can't miss! - Ed.]

3rd Annual WeLCARS and Stoned Monkey Awards and Holiday Banquet

Tom Staley - K9TMS, President - Stoned Monkey VHF ARC

Chris Burke - N9YH, Secretary/Treasurer - WeLCARS

The 3rd annual Holiday Banquet and Award Dinner was held on December the 12th at Dino's Den. Each year we go back and look at the events of the year and have a little fun with those events through our annual awards. So for those of you that missed the festivities here are this year's award recipients.

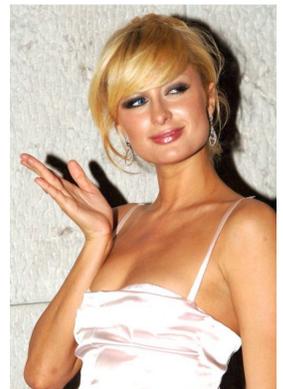
First off our apologies for missing the award to KC9MKL these awards were done while K9TMS was in transit and he simply missed the last email with your award.

The "Where's Waldo 'You Are Here' Award" goes to Christopher KC9MKL for finding an iPhone app that gives grid square location to 10 (yes, TEN) digits. Being prepared for a contest that scores by the millimeter also made Christopher a runner-up for the "Boy Scout Preparedness Award." (This award could also be known as the "Monty Python Hastily Developed At The Last Minute At Great

Expense Award" since N9YH wrote this the morning of the presentation...)

The "Clark Kent X-Ray Vision Award" goes to Larry W9LGP for studying N9IFG's 222 MHz beam for duplication. Larry has reportedly not opened the box since receiving it months ago, so we can only assume that x-ray vision is involved.

The "Paris Hilton Geographically Challenged Call Sign Award" goes to Mike W1MRK (formerly KB9YIV) for selecting a vanity call from another call district. No word on if the FCC required Mike to pronounce "Baahhhhh-ston" or "Paahhhh-k da caaaahhhh" or "Wicked Haaaaard Coooorrrrrr" like a Kennedy.



The "Arte Johnson Flasher of the Year Award" goes to Chris N9YH for failing to get the attention of Adrienne KC9PPU in the Stealth Bomber with lights and siren.

The "Jeff Foxworthy Smarter than a Fifth Grader Quick Study Award" goes to Greg KC9QYL for being the only member (at least that we know of) to pass both the Technician and General tests in one sitting.

The "Samuel Morse CW Call From Hell Award" goes to Greg KC9QYL. We've had some obnoxious CW calls these past few years. KC9LEP, WeLCARS's first club call, was fairly long but then came some greats like KC9LFP, KC9NJZ, KC9PJN, and KC9PPU which all tip the scales with a "weight" of 84. Greg takes the cake with a CW weight of 90, which indicates it'll take approximately an hour and a half to send on CW. Put that paddle away until that vanity Extra call comes in.

The "Henry Kissinger Diplomacy Award" goes to Dan K9BTW for somehow talking his XYL into letting him put up a Hy-Tower if she got a new dog. These negotiations now known as the "Puppy for Hy-Tower Summit Negotiations"

The "Mark Thompson 'Love My Icom' Award" for realizing that Icoms look better on the bench than Yaesus.

The "Elvis Presley 'Aloha From Hawaii' Award" goes to Mike AA9IL for his announcement that for Sweeps weekend that he would be enjoying the wonderful climate of KH6. Plans are underway to send Mike to KL7 for next year's contest, perhaps via parcel post.



The "Buddha Mantra of the Year Award" goes to Tom K9TMS for making us all repeat "Say 'No' to Over



Engineering! Say 'No' to Over Tightening!" every outing after the June VHF contest where some bolts were, well, over tightened.

The "Wile E. Coyote Road Kill of the Year Award" goes to Terry K9HA for learning the hard way that Hondas don't run on road kill. "Coyote gonna be okay, Uncle Lar?" "I don't think so, L'il Tommy..." And this just in... Terry is also in the running for the "Earl Scheib Customer of the Year Award" for needing body work two years in a row after last year's Field Day incident.



The "Johnny Rivers 'Secret Agent Man' Award" goes jointly to Terry K9HA and Joe N9IFG for separate attempts to spy on the W9CA Field Day operation where they were quickly discovered and chased from the property. Runner-up on this award goes to the W9CA contest team for attempting to spread misinformation about where they would be operating from during this year's Field Day. It's not hard to tell where you are when you're sending out that much RF 5 miles away, guys. The empty blacked out motor home with no cables running in or out was a most excellent addition.

The "Ed Sullivan Plate Juggling Award" goes to Joe N9IFG for juggling the same set of license plates between two or three different trailers.

The "Elmer Fudd Innovation in Hunting Award" goes to Joe N9IFG for his creative use of antennas to hunt birds out of season using the elements on the War Wagon's antennas. "Birds gonna be okay, Uncle Lar?" "Not this time, L'il Tommy..."



The "Hans and Franz 'Pump (clap) YOU UP' Award" goes to Keith N9QDS for bench



pressing a box of spare parts at work that weighed nearly as much as his Chevy Aveo, thereby exploding his left shoulder. Perhaps Keith's upcoming surgery put him in the running for the "Steve Austin '6-Million Dollar

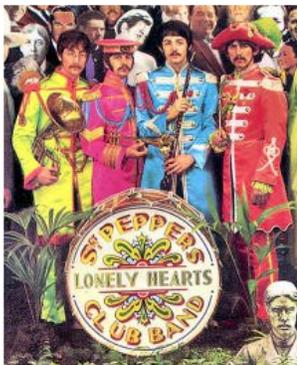
Man' Award" next year.

The "Hugh Hefner Centerfold Award" goes to Wendell N9REP for getting his picture in the December issue of QST.

The "Eric Cartman 'Screw You Guys, I'm Going Home' Award" goes to Carl N9KTL for quickly leaving our Field Day operation because of the QRM caused by so many stations in a small area, and the still unidentified QRN.



The "Peter Brady Voice Change Award" goes to Jonathan KC9PJM for being mistaken for a YL several times when making Field Day contacts.

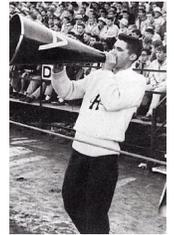


The "Sgt. Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Award" goes to Adrienne KC9PPU for attracting the attention of a lonely ham during the September VHF contest. Thankfully Adrienne had enough presence of mind to

realize that astrological sign was not part of the contest exchange. "Roger that you're a Gemini, I need your grid your grid!"

The "Jackie Joyner-Kersey Marathon Running Award" goes to Adrienne KC9PPU for keeping up with Kay during the Grant Township 5K PSE and for running 3 stations at once during September VHF while the rest of the crew was otherwise occupied.

The "McGruff the Crime Dog Bloodhound Award" goes to Jay KC9NJZ for hunting down and identifying the morons jamming the 145.41 repeater.



The "George W. Bush Cheerleader Award" goes to Joe KC9LFP for his frequent use of creative and inspirational phrases such as, "Go team!"

The "Secret Squirrel 'Hoarder of the Year' Award" goes to Lee KC9JQX for purchasing 400 feet of LMR-240 coax. We're not sure what kind of project he has in mind for that much coax, but we're starting to suspect a giant antenna for him to phone home...



The "Faces on the Milk Carton Award" goes jointly to Jason KC9LWF and Mark KC9KCW who disappeared from the face of the Earth, though we did see them briefly during Field Day and the June VHF contest.

On a very slightly more serious note, both clubs held their annual elections during the soirree. The results, shocking as it may seem, were that for the third time the officers for both clubs remained the same.

WeLCARS: President Joe N9IFG, Vice-President Keith N9QDS, Secretary and Treasurer Chris N9YH, and Contest Commandant Tom K9TMS

Stoned Monkeys: President Tom K9TMS, Vice-President Wendell N9REP, Secretary Dan "Dr. Bero" K9BTW, and Treasurer Penny K9PLS.

We hope you had as much fun with the awards as we did in creating them and they keep you thinking of the good times we had over the last year. Our policy is always fun first, then QSOs!

Looking forward to 2010 - 73!
Lazy Eagle and Mongo

We Love a Parade

Chris Burke, N9YH - WeLCARS Secretary/Treasurer

For the third year in a row, the WeLCARS and Stoned Monkey crews got together for the Fox Lake Korpan's Landing Christmas Parade, held the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Joe N9IFG made the executive decision not to use the golf cart this year. In hindsight that probably wasn't the best idea, since the parade managed the brisk pace of 4 MPH - pretty fast if you're walking. Not to worry, folks - he made it to the end before Christmas.

Elvis and Santa in the same photo?!? What am I doing writing for this rag? I need to sell this to the Enquirer!



N9IFG making himself useful



K9TMS and KC9PJM working on K9TMS's trailer display



K9TMS jingling the bells on his antenna



It's not a parade without the Shriners!