

Results of the 2008 CQ WW VHF Contest

BY JOHN LINDHOLM,* W1XX

*"Six meters is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get."
—KCØDEB*

It was 1800 hours UTC Saturday, July 19, 2008, the scene of the starting flag for the CQ WW VHF Contest, when "Gentlemen (and ladies), start your radios" was heard S9 throughout the amateur radio world. There was Gene, KB7Q, revving up his radios in Yellowstone Park, Wyoming (DN44). Mike, KB7ME, was making good on his promise of last year to operate portable from rare square DN02 in Lake County, Oregon. California rovers K6EU, WA6KLLK, K6JRA, and W6KA were dispensing "almost all water grids" CM86, CM87, CM94, and DM03 to the delight of West Coast contesters. Jon, K1NV, was experiencing fine openings to the east on 6 meters, operating portable 7 from a ghost town in the Nevada desert (DM17). Andrew, W2AJM, operating this, his favorite contest, from FN21 was busy on 6 meters snagging no less than three South Dakota stations for a new state—all in different grid squares. Zoli, HA5CQZ/P, was harmonizing CQ VHF to the Summits on the Air (SOTA) program from Mt. Muzsla (HA/EM-006) at 805 meters ASL running an FT-817 and 6-element Yagi on 2 meters. So began the 2008 CQ VHF Contest for some of the 532 entrants submitting logs.

Conditions: Creamy Vanilla or Chewy Taffy?

Band conditions are always a mixed bag, reported by some as dead as a doornail while others experience double-hop across the continent. Here's a North American sampling from those who experienced some of the brighter moments:

"Highlights for me in CM87 were working KB7ME in DN02 for a new grid on 2 meters and via tropo with meteor scatter pings to work KG6IYN in DM12." — AJ6T. "Conditions improved a lot on Sunday with 6-meter openings first to the northeast and later to the northwest. Plus we made

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Expanded CQ WW VHF Contest Results

For a listing of the ops and grids activated by the rover stations in the 2008 contest, plus the operators of the multi stations, go to <www.cq-amateur-radio.com>, to the Contests section, to "Expanded Results of the 2008 CQ WW VHF Contest."

17 two-meter EME contacts for 17 rare grids we could not have worked otherwise." — K5QE. "At times 6 meters had wall to wall signals, but then 'poof,' they'd be gone only to reappear two minutes later. Love this band." — NØHF. "Some decent 6-meter E-skip on the east coast six hours into the contest on Saturday and then again early Sunday morning, but none Sunday afternoon." — N3UM. "What a terrific Saturday evening with the whole Midwest barreling into northern New Jersey." — WB2LEB. "At 2315Z I had not made a single 6-meter E-skip contact and was

starting to think the contest might be a bust, but then, VO1NO in GN19 answered my CQ, followed by Gulf Coast stations popping in. For the next three-plus hours, the band was open to various spots in the Midwest and some double hop to California and the DN grids." — K1TEO.

On the DX side of the ledger, in what is surely the first entry in this contest from Guam, KG6DX in QK23 had "a nice opening to Japan" during the 23Z hour for a 6-meter run of 62 JAs in 22 grids plus one in South Korea." Nice going, Joel. Meanwhile CQ VHF stalwart Julio, NP3CW, "worked around 85 stations on 6 meters in North America and the Caribbean in a bunch of grid squares just days before the contest, but 'nada' during the contest." In Europe, perennial multi-op winner OK1KIM summed up the situation with: "We made a few 2-meter meteor-scatter contacts but our 86 LOC total is our lowest ever, as there was no elevated propagation. Even though our effort turned into



With a third-place SOAB effort, KG6IYN, operating portable from extreme southern California, proved you can score big on the "left coast." Here Bruce is putting the finishing touches on a pair of Cushcraft 13-element Yagis for 2 meters, and yes, both gammas were up.



Ninety-nine percent of EN67 in Michigan's UP is in Lake Superior. Thus, Craig, K9CT (left), and Larry, N9LR (right), multi-op'd portable station N9LR on Mt. Brockway's terra firma, running 100 watts on both bands to Yagis on a 50-foot trailer-mounted tower.

more of a 'social gathering,' we hope our multi victory is still secure." It is!

Single-Op Top Scores

The scores never tell the whole story, as philosophically summarized by Pierre, PJ2BVU: "The important thing is not to necessarily win, but to take part." Thus, winning can be in the eye of the behold-

er. Notwithstanding, 259 handsome CQ certificates were earned by entrants, nearly 50% of the entry base.

In the USA, Bob, K2DRH, continued his mastery over the SOAB (Single Op All Band) category with just under 160K points, getting his station back together just in time following some significant hardware failures. Jeff, K1TEO, with just

QSO LEADERS BY BAND WORLD

Single-Op 50 MHz	Multi-Op 50 MHz
E77EY324	C4N290
W4TAA/VE3197	OK1KIM125
ZC4LI193	UT11C50
EA3AKY168	
	144 MHz
	HS0IAQ506
	HS8LUR297
	HS8KFW429
	HS6RMY268
	OK1KIM399
	HA6VV/P265
	HS1AXC384
	DK5DQ200
	E22YS382
	OK1KZE188

USA

Single-Op 50 MHz	Multi-Op 50 MHz
K1TOL480	WS1XX98
K5TR449	KE2N92
K2DRH440	K4QI77
W5PR420	K2PLF76
WD5K388	
KG6IYN314	Multi-Op 144 MHz
K2PLF311	K5QE596
KA1LMR303	K8GP432
K1TEO297	KB1DFB406
W1XX286	KA2LIM354
	W3SO320
144 MHz	144 MHz
K2DRH178	K8GP307
K1TEO134	W3SO211
WB9Z113	K5QE193
KG6IYN100	KB1DFB145
N8RA98	KA2LIM106

a part-time effort, displaying his operating prowess, finished second. Bruce, KG6IYN, was a nice surprise, finishing third with 69K, the second highest score ever from California, just short of the 6-land record of 75K set by W3SE in 2000. The aforementioned KB7ME in Oregon scored the third highest 7-land score ever with 19K points.

In the USA 6-meters-only category, Lefty again piloted his K1TOL station to top honors and second highest USA score of 82K. Ken, WM5R, guest op'd the multi-array station K5TR to a solid second place with 69K. Chuck, W5PR, and Tom, WD5K, were in a virtual tie for third and fourth place at 61K. W3BD, operated by George (N3GH), got the highest score ever from 3-land in this category. A glance at the top scorers box for 6 meters shows that 5-landers dominated, taking seven out of the top ten scores.

The 2-meters-only category was largely shunned in North America with only two U.S. and one Canadian entry. But the category continues big in Thailand, although scores there were not as big as in previous years; HS6RMY was tops with 10K points in 19 grid locators. Europe produced some good 2-meter scores with HA6VV/P tops with 27K, followed by perennial winner DK5DQ with 21K.

Further on the DX side, DL2OM captured the SOAB top score with 20K, edg-

Ocean State 2-Meter FM Simplex Challenge

By Bill Champaigne, * N1HRA

The concept of a 2-meter FM simplex contest was hatched within the confines of an Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) group in Charlestown, Rhode Island. The objective was to test FM simplex coverage in support of the local Emergency Management Agency. Further, with many newly licensed hams confined to 2-meter FM, training in making rapid-fire QSOs was desired. In stepped the established CTRI Contest Group as sponsor of a now statewide (and more) competition.

Research on the web revealed similar activities by clubs in Milwaukee and the Twin Cities, which provided valuable guidance in drawing up rules for the so-called challenge. Running concurrent with the CQ WW VHF Contest would assure some level of success, which proved accurate. To concentrate activity, seven so-called focus hours split between Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon were incorporated into the rules. Geographical boundaries of local grid squares, as the default VHF contest exchange, was provided along with a list of 3-letter abbreviations for the 39 statewide cities and towns which was also included in the exchange. Multipliers were cities/towns, plus grid squares, plus other states. Acting

as a wild card were bonus points for working the CTRI club call, WA1RR, which was active during each of the focus hours from seven different locations scattered across the state. To further ARES purposes, bonus points were also offered for operating as least some of the time on battery/generator/solar. The rules and entry forms for e-mail submission in MS Word format were posted on the club website.

The results were gratifying. At least 38 stations participated with activity reported in 21 RI cities/towns, six grid squares, and four states plus three rovers and a maritime mobile. Almost all of the stations active had never operated in a contest before, or very little. Gaining familiarity with grid squares was a positive result.

The results were e-mailed to each contestant and posted on the club website with certificates being mailed to all who submitted logs.

Many newcomers were exposed to the joy of contest operating with the added potential of gaining some additional members for the club. Other groups may want to tap this potential source of contest operators.

*Vice President, CTRI Contest Group



The Carolina DX Association operated N4BX in North Carolina's FM13, another almost all-water grid bordering the Atlantic seaboard. Besides experiencing good propagation on 6, thanks perhaps to tropical storm Cristobal, the 2-meter EME array yielded a QSO with an OZ in Europe.

ing out OK1DC with 18K. E77EY earned the third highest 6-meters-only score ever from Europe with 42K.

Hilltoppers and QRP

The Hilltopper category is now more popular overseas than it is in North America. By definition, a Hilltopper must meet three conditions: operate portable, run QRP, and limit the operation to no more than six hours continuous. This accommodates especially those who may backpack to isolated high spots where it may be difficult to overnight. Multiple entries were received from Thailand, Hungary, and Ukraine. E75DX far outdistanced the competition with 81 Qs in 50 LOCs. W9SZ topped the USA entries.

QRP stations are limited to 10 watts output and can operate full time from home or portable. All 24 entries from European Russia were QRP, as well as 29 entries from Ukraine. All 2-meter single-op stations in Thailand were also QRP. HA1ZH was the top DX QRP station with 9K points. In the USA, Chris (KA1LMR) again paced the QRP field with 44K with Curt (K9AKS) again finishing second.

Multi-Op Scores

There were lots of multi-operator stations on with the Texans at K5QE besting all other North Americans. Their 218K score was the third highest ever in 5-land. The highest score ever from 2-land, 86K, was posted by KA2LIM, and the second highest New England score ever, 92K, was submitted by the Connecticut crew at

KB1DFB. K8GP, now sporting the Delmarva VHF Society moniker, scored the highest 4-land score ever with 176K. On the DX side, C4N from Cyprus came through with the third highest score ever from Asia, 46K. Meanwhile, the OK1KIM group continued their multi domination of the contest from Europe with 125K, as they had done in 2004, '05, and '06. Last year's winner, UT1IC, finished third, with Thailand's HS0IAQ coming in fourth utilizing 2 meters only.

Rover Scores

In the simplified two-band format of this contest, rover stations can be outfitted for action on short notice and with reasonable effort. They can constitute a significant portion of the score registered by a fixed station making a serious effort. In North America, certificates are issued based on a regional basis to recognize their valuable contributions. The top five scores worldwide were made by these rover stations: WB3BEL, WB8BZK, N9TTX, VE3CRU, and WA0VPJ.

Contest Management

Putting on a worldwide contest is very much a team effort. For example, 2008 saw a remarkable upsurge in log submissions from Ukraine and European Russia. Pre-contest coordination among the clubs in Ukraine by Yuri, UT1IC, paid huge dividends. His eastern EU contacts yielded Victor, UA6EM, who oversaw the Cabrillo submission of many UA logs. Bringing about the usual S9-plus activity from Thailand was Champ, E21EIC, who

TOP SCORES WORLD

All Band	HA2VR/P4,278
DL2OM20,251	DL2SAX/P4,012
OK1DC18,395	GW8ZRE/P2,898
IW2NOD11,100	
AO6VQ5,754	QRP
	HA1ZH9,216
6 Meters	VE3TLT2,108
E77EY42,768	
ZC4LI21,230	Rover
W4TAA/VE319,897	VE3CRU18,612
EA3AKY17,472	E20YLM864
	US1IAA396
2 Meters	Multi-Op
HA6VV/P27,030	OK1KIM125,528
DK5DQ21,600	C4N46,110
OK1KZE17,672	UT1IC13,034
S53N13,158	HS0IAQ12,144
HS6RMY10,184	HS1AXC9,984
9A4VM8,062	E22YS8,404
	HS8KFW6,864
Hilltopper	
E75DX5,700	

USA

All Band	Hilltopper
K2DRH159,996	W9SZ1,944
K1TEO75,710	K1ZE1,722
KG6IYN69,390	
W1XX57,840	QRP
K2PLF56,023	KA1LMR44,619
WB9Z50,032	K9AKS13,090
K0KP31,086	KO9A7,854
KE2N29,050	W3EP6,811
K4QI28,314	N9TF4,864
N8RA26,892	N8XA2,808
	N0KIS2,613
6 Meters	Rover
K1TOL82,080	WB3BEL56,882
K5TR69,146	WB8BZK41,724
W5PR61,740	N9TTX22,464
WD5K61,304	WA0VPJ14,691
AE5T28,896	
W5WVO25,957	Multi-Op
W3BD22,357	K5QE218,986
K5MV16,037	K8GP176,774
K3FM8,806	W3SO108,332
WA1UJU7,840	KB1DFB92,568
	KA2LIM86,032
2 Meters	
KX4R1,276	

received some extra help from E20PFE and HS8KGG in converting paper logs to e-submissions. In South America, Flavio (PY2ZX) helped stir the initial signs of contest activity there, along with translating the rules into Portuguese and Spanish. Others known to have helped internationally are DL8EBW, JF1ICQ, G4DWZ, and still others who have done so with little or no fanfare.

I can't say enough about the assistance provided by Steve, N8BJQ, who produced all the scores and statistics from the log-checking program. Trey, N5KO, monitored the log submissions robot. Jon, K9JK, converted the paper logs to e-submissions using the WA7BNM CabForms. This contest does attract many casual entrants who thankfully availed themselves of the WA7BNM on-line post entry

GRID MULTIPLIER LEADERS BY BAND WORLD

Single-Op		S53N.....43
50 MHz		
E77EY.....132	Multi-Op	
ZC4LI.....110	50 MHz	
EA3AKY.....104	C4N.....138	
W4TAA/VE3.....101	OK1KIM.....50	
	UT1IC.....30	
144 MHz		
DL2OM.....60	144 MHz	
DK5DQ.....54	OK1KIM.....86	
HA6VV/P.....51	UT1IC.....19	
OK1KZE.....47	UW3E.....16	
USA		
Single-Op		K4LY.....29
50 MHz		
K1TOL.....171	Multi-Op	
WD5K.....158	50 MHz	
K5TR.....154	K5QE.....170	
K2DRH.....151	KA2LIM.....117	
W5PR.....147	K8GP.....111	
KG6IYN.....112	KB1DFB.....107	
AE5T.....112		
W5WVO.....101	144 MHz	
	K8GP.....58	
144 MHz	K5QE.....53	
K2DRH.....50	W3SO.....49	
WB9Z.....42	KA2LIM.....35	
K1TEO.....36	KB1DFB.....26	
K4QI.....32		

service. Thanks, Bruce! K9JK also produced all the certificates for 2007, sent out prior to the 2008 contest. Curt, K9AKS, provided historical perspective that aided in reporting these results. The contest website (www.cqww-vhf.com) has been restructured and maintained by Randy, K5ZD, in conformity with the family of CQ WW contests. Thanks to all.

Of course, the real heroes are the stations on the air. A look at the statistics indicates: log submissions were up 19% from 2007 and within 94% of the record-breaking year 2006; total number of stations active 9158; a total of 42,092 claimed QSOs; total number of grids activated 853. This represents an overall 12% increase in activity from 2007. Bottom line: This contest is quite healthy, and has the potential to only get better as it continues to appeal to mainstream 6- and 2-meter operators.

With 100% of logs checked, the following error rates were revealed: invalid or "not in log" 1.7%; dupes (claimed as valid) 0.4%; "busted calls" 1.4%; overall error rate of 3.6%, up slightly from the prior year. Thanks to all entrants for the obvious care exhibited in logging contacts and in submitting their logs in Cabrillo format.

The plaque program has been put on hold. The initial bulk order supplied by the vendor has all been issued as of the 2007 contest. Costs have increased for a re-order, so other less-expensive alternatives are being explored. Whether the program should be continued depends on new donors, especially clubs, stepping forward. Continuing to tap the well

of previous donors somehow doesn't seem appropriate. Your comments on this are welcomed.

An editorial explanation: The Contest Quahogs of Rhode Island (CQRI) in past years have provided a review of this contest. Because of a severe nor'easter ice storm, the scheduled meeting date was postponed indefinitely. Thus, the CQRI members, including the Old Timer, are seeing this report for the first time.

As the checkered flag has marked the end of the 2008 contest and this report, we look ahead to the 2009 CQ WW VHF Contest, scheduled for July 18-19. The full announcement will appear in the June issue of CQ, on the CQ website (www.cq-amateur-radio.com), and on the VHF Contest website (www.cqww-vhf.com). See you all then.

73, John, W1XX

QRM

Enjoyed the first two hours of the contest with one QSO per minute, but Sunday with poor conditions, very few contacts made ... **EA3AKY**. I got chased off the hill after only three hours of Hilltopper time ... **K1ZE**. VHF QRP is fun! ... **K3TW**. Big day for the 6-meter single-element V-beam and the 2-meter Moxon with 2.5 watts on both bands. The evening brought propagation delights on both bands ... **K4TRT**. The *E*-skip covered a surprisingly broad range over the country with at least one QSO in every grid field in the lower 48 except DL. I slept until 6 AM on Sunday only to find 6 meters open to 3-land. Best DX was VA6AN in DO33 ... **K5TR (WM5R, Op)**. This was only my 2nd effort on 6 meters using my new FT-450. I'm still using HF wire antennas but looking forward to putting up a 6-meter ground plane. Best DX was Indiana ... **K6CSL**. What a great decision to go QRP again. Signals were 60 dB out of the east. Only one station I called didn't hear me ... **KCØRQH**. I enjoyed the contest and was pleased to win a certificate in 2007. Let's hope for more UK entries by backpackers activity sponsored by the RSGB ... **GW8ZRE/P**. The Hilltoppers were mainly active over here ... **HA2MN**. Few stations participating in Japan but looking forward to more JAs active next year ... **JO7UEB**. Not a high QSO count but visited 10 different grid squares in five states: AR, LA, MS, MO & TN. Most Qs were in MS and the 5th call area ... **K9JK/R**. Had a lot of fun ... **KD5WGM**. I operated single-op from a campground in North Carolina running 10 watts on 2 meters with an IC-706 to a homebrew Moxon rectangle. On 6 meters I ran 8 watts to a homebrew copper halo with both antennas on a paint-pole 18 feet above the bed of the truck ... **KI4SYR**. I operated in the Hilltopper class from the Topeka, Kansas hospital parking garage roof during some breaks from work with just a quarter-wave whip. W5WVO and K5TR had huge signals. Stations in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona were very loud ... **NØJK**. This was my first time to operate QRP portable. I had a lot of fun combining camping and amateur radio ... **NØKIS**. Nice band

openings made for a lot of fun ... **N1ZN**. Nice to see some Brazilian stations active in the CQ WW VHF ... **PP2XX**. This was my first contest from my new QTH in FN36 ... **VE2PIJ**. My callsign, "VE3AAQ Mobile W1 Rover" was the longest and most confusing callsign I have ever used ... **VE3AAQ**. I finally got the chance to operate the contest from my home province. I set up a small Yagi at my parent's lakeside cottage in western Newfoundland and had a few patchy openings. I could have given out GN19 to more people if they would only swing their beams my way ... **VO1NO**. Propagation was not great, but I still had fun ... **W4FRA**. A fun weekend with some good *E*-skip, but nothing like 2006. But then, what is? ... **W5WVO**. The weather was perfect and conditions weren't terrible. I guess I couldn't ask for much more. I enjoy the Hilltopper category. I didn't even mind being invaded by June bugs ... **W9SZ**. I could hardly believe it when I heard maritime mobile station, K2NUD, in grid FN40 off Long Island ... **WB2AMU**. Nice 6-meter opening from DM04 to CN87 on Saturday ... **N6ZE**. Operating QRP in northwestern Ohio, I worked east to New Brunswick, Canada, west to Washington State, and south to Florida Sunday morning. The contest was fun as always ... **N8QE**. I'm back on 6 meters since the AM days in 1953. Ran low power to a 6-element Yagi put up for the contest. It was great to see so many friends whom I see in HF contests on a regular basis ... **N4PN**.