

## 2014 June VHF Contest

*by Jarred Jackson*

For the first time in almost 15 years, I participated in a contest with my father N2QIP. Very fitting that it was Fathers Day weekend and it was great to spend time with him. We had fun, learned a lot and had some very unexpected results. First, we found out that a 6 band portable station can be a beast to setup (see picture below). Despite good equipment and antennas, performance of the portable station was not



great. All those trees probably contributed to the problem. N2QIP had the 6 band FM rover at the four corners in Le Roy and had very few people to talk to (although W2EV came through on FM very nicely). FM-only is very challenging, but seems to have a lot of upside potential to increase participation without a large expense for equipment. Out of the experience we came to really enjoy the characteristics of 223 MHz FM for the extra points and its ease of use with modest antennas. On the downside we just couldn't get the distance we needed for four grid coverage on 928 and 1296 FM, so had to settle for only two

grids worked. After hours of setup, driving, and teardown we decided that we couldn't justify doing it again at that location and with the 500 meter portable station location restriction I had to sideline all of my equipment on Sunday. Driving around with dad in the rover still seemed like a good option; however the FM-only concept seemed limiting. We had considered installing an older Yaesu FT-290 2m all mode in the rover but didn't have the time to figure out how to power an amplifier and barefoot power is only 2.5W max. We also didn't have an easy way to power the radio (found out later the power connector is reverse polarity), but it has the option of installing C-Cell batteries inside the case with about 2W output, so we tried that and it seemed to work. The second challenge is that he didn't have a horizontal polarized antenna. So we got the three element yagi off of my roof (used for Monday nets) hooked it up to his bike rack and we were on our way to the first stop at the Woodcliffe Lodge in Victor. Never would I have thought that 2W into a three element yagi up 6 feet off the ground would ever work. But it did and we quickly picked up FM08 and FN00 to our surprise. We made our way down to South Bristol for a few contacts, did some wine tasting in Canandaigua, and then made it back home for play time with the kids and a nice Dinner. After dessert and a conversation about the 2m QRP SSB radio performance, I remembered I had the matching FT-690 6m radio in the basement. But this time I could not find an antenna to use and the yagi from the portable station was sidelined. Each of the Yaesu radios comes with an integral telescoping whip, so I installed the C cell batteries, extended the whip and was very surprised to hear a lot of activity. Was that Florida? Where is EM71 anyway? We took the radio out to the driveway and worked a few surprising new grids as a very nice 6m opening seemed to be coming to a close. What a great way to end the contest.

Equipment Used

<b>Portable (KF2MR) – Saturday Only – FN12</b>	<b>Rover (N2QIP) - FN12, FN13, FN03, FN02</b>
Icom IC-7000 (6m, 2m, 432 SSB) 10W	TYT TH 9800 FM Mobile (6m, 2m, 446) 50/40W
Icom T-81A handheld (6m, 2m, 446, 1296 FM) 5/1W	TYT TH-9000 FM Mobile (222 Mhz) 55W
Alinco DJ-G29 Handheld (220/900 FM) 5/2.5W	Kenwood TK-981 (928 MHz FM) 15W
SG-Labs 1296 Transverter 2W SSB with IC-7000 IF No contacts made on SSB	Alinco DJ-G7 (1296 FM) 1W
7 element 2m yagi – Mast 1 (20' telescoping pole)	Triband mobile antenna (6m/2m/446)
11 element 432 MHz yagi – Mast 1	222 MHz 5/8 wave magmount
3 element 6m yagi – Mast 1	900 MHz magmount
Triband vertical (6m/2m/446) – Mast 2 – 16' PVC Tower and mast	16 element 1296 MHz yagi – Horiz. Pol.
5 element 220 MHz yagi – Vert. Pol. – Mast 2	Late Add – Yaesu FT-290R 2m 2W w/ 3 element yagi
10 element 900 MHz yagi – Vert. Pol. – Mast 2	Really Late Add – Yaesu FT-690R 6m 2W w/ internal whip antenna
22 element 1296 MHz Yagi – Horiz. Pol – Mast 2	
Marine Deep Cycle Battery 12VDC 60AH 600W AC Custom Power Center with 1800W Inverter Generator for Backup and Charging.	

I look forward to a slightly smaller effort in the August and January contests and will be working on consolidating the portable station into a rover after field day. But if any of the veterans would like to suggest a better location for portable operation I would love to get that concept to work.

73 de KF2MR