Rochester VHF Group New Members Guide

Welcome and Thank You for your membership in the RVHFG! You now belong to the longest continuously operating VHF club in the world. The purpose of the Rochester VHF Group is to promote the use of amateur radio frequencies in the VHF, UHF, and Microwave bands. Our members tend to enjoy pushing the art and science of radio to its limits, whether that involves setting up a portable microwave station, bouncing signals off of the moon, or routinely contacting other stations on 2m SSB over hundreds of miles without the use of a repeater or the internet.

As a member of the group, you will interact with others who may consider themselves “weak signal enthusiasts”. These folks enjoy using SSB, CW, and perhaps digital modes that use narrow bandwidth signals to achieve highly efficient and long distance communications. You will learn about and use propagation modes such as Sporadic E and Tropospheric Scattering.

One popular activity with many RVHFG club members is VHF, UHF, and Microwave contesting. You can read more about these contests on the ARRL website, however the club is particularly active in the January and June VHF contests, with others also interested in the CQ, UHF Distance, September, and 10 GHz contests as well. In these contests, members will operate from home often using rotatable yagi antennas or head out on the road with portable or mobile contest stations. Part of the fun of contesting is designing and assembling your station. Our members have contest stations that range from simple single band operation on 144 MHz to elaborate 10+ band stations capable of operating from 50MHz to 47GHz.

Other activities include club projects such as construction of VHF antennas, assembling transverters, or maybe just getting together for a picnic. However, these activities depend upon our members being actively engaged and volunteering. You are encouraged to identify ways that you can contribute to the group. Writing articles for the newsletter, contributing to a project, serving as net-control for an on-the-air net, and helping others with their projects are all ways our members keep the club going strong.

If you don’t already have one, you are encouraged to develop a good SSB/CW operating station on 6m and 2m. These are the “bread and butter” bands used by nearly all VHF enthusiasts. What is “good” for one person may not be good (or possible) for another, so a bit of experimentation will be needed (this tends to be the fun part). Remember that SSB and CW modes on VHF bands use horizontally polarized antennas for best results. If you are not sure where to start, post a question on the email reflector or website forum.

OK, I paid my dues and sent in my registration form, now what?

- Join the Yahoo Group or Email Reflector
  - You may have received an email already, if not, send a blank email to:
    - rvhfg_general-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
  - A Yahoo account is required for full access to the group, but is not required to use the email list/reflector

- Review articles, newsletters, and forum entries on www.rvhfg.org

- Participate in the weekly SSB nets
  - Monday at 9pm – 144.260 MHz SSB
  - Thursday at 9pm – 50.200 MHz SSB
  - The nets have a facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/RVHFG/
    - Submit a request to join

- Listen for which of the RVHFG CW beacons you can hear
  - 50.075, 144.298, 222.050, 432.300, 1296.257
  - Beacons are located in Bloomfield NY (Grid Square FN12hv) at the Antique Wireless Association and use the commemorative club callsign of W2UTH

- Attend RVHFG group gatherings
  - Look for details on the website or email list

- Write an article detailing something new you learned

- Snap a few pictures of your latest project, your shack, or antenna setup and share it online, by email or in the newsletter

- Post a question to the online forum

- Participate in a VHF contest

- Update your QRZ profile to show off your VHF capabilities

- Plan for expansion – More power, more gain, more bands!?