

The VHF Journal

Official Newsletter of
**The Rochester VHF
Group**



* Club Call W2UTH *

~~~~~  
DECEMBER 1999

**This Month's Saying:**

*"Stay Calm. Be Brave. Wait For The Signs."*

*Jasper Friendlybear, The Dead Dog Cafe*

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**Meeting: Friday, 10 DEC 1999**  
**Monroe Co. Social Services Building**  
**111 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY**  
**Internet Resources for the VHF Operator**

**To subscribe:** Send your address, call, and \$10 US funds (or \$15 CDN funds), to: The Rochester VHF Group, PO Box 92122, Rochester, NY, 14692.

**Commentary and articles** via e-mail to editor VE3IEY:  
**tantonr@kingston.net** (Please note the change of ISP address!).  
Use standard ASCII text, Word Perfect 6.1 or send as a regular e-mail message.

Post editing, Data Magic, Printing & Distribution are courtesy of Judy, N2KXS.

**Schedule for the rest of 1999-2000**

**Jan. 14 <January contest rev-up**

**Feb / Mar < who knows?**

**April < Jan VHF SS Awards banquet.**

*It was accepted practice in Babylonia 4000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer, and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the "honey month" or what we know today as the "honeymoon"*

**10GHz Transverter Project is Underway!**

Mark Hoffman, KA2RDO

In case you weren't at the November Tune-Up clinic, here is the latest project on the books for the RVHFG! We are sponsoring the purchase of 10Ghz Transverters, from kits sold by Down East Microwave. Here are some of the particulars of the units:

Frequency: 10,368.0 GHz = 144.0 MHZ. (2m IF)  
Noise Figure/Gain: <1.8db NF, > 17db Gain  
Power Out: >5mW  
IF Drive: 3w Maximum (EASY to interface)  
DC Power Requirements: 10-15.5VDC @ 600ma  
Input/Output Connectors: IF in = BNC, TX/RX = SMA

The Kit includes all parts, including the case and connectors. All that is needed to get this thing working once complete is a SMA SPDT relay (Also available surplus from DEMI for under \$40) and an antenna (Again, Dishes and whatnot from DEMI or other sources).

Here's how you get in on this fantastic project:  
\$70 Down payment (**Non-refundable**) no later than the December Meeting (12/10/99)

Remainder Due upon receipt (\$177.50) of kits.

Total Cost: \$247.50

This is a 10% discounted price, only available if purchased through this offer!

**NOTES:**

-All deposits **MUST** be received **NO LATER THAN** the December Membership Meeting (12/10/99). No exceptions.

-These deposits are **NON-REFUNDABLE**.

-Once we receive the kits, the remainder will be due.

-We **MAY** have some surplus Primestar Dishes that would work well on 10GHz, which might be available to those purchasing this group kit. More information to follow. If you have any further questions, contact KA2RDO or K2DH

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**FEDS RAID RAMSEY ELECTRONICS!!**

See Page 2!

# FEDS RAID RAMSEY ELECTRONICS!!

Tom Hodge WA2YTM

On November 10th eight armed agents of the US Customs Service and one NY State trooper raided Ramsey Electronics in Fishers, NY, just outside of Rochester. They entered the building about 9:30 in the morning and presented a search warrant. The warrant allowed them to search for and seize devices capable of transmitting speech surreptitiously. They claimed that Ramsey Electronics was violating two federal laws regarding the sale of illegal bugging devices and smuggling. They photographed the kit assembly area, the shipping area and the technician's bench where kits are tested and repaired. They searched through the billing records and requested lists of products.

They seized over nine different products including the FM-1,2,4,5,6 C-2001, C3001 and ATV transmitters. They took any of the products that transmitted audio or video and audio claiming these items could be used for illegal bugging. When questioned about the validity of these charges by the owner, John Ramsey, he was told that if he did not cooperate Customs would close down the company and bring in their computer experts to search through all of the computers bit by bit and the process could last several months.

After four hours they loaded the seized items in a van and provided an unsigned receipt of the items taken. When John Ramsey asked to verify the count of the items taken he was denied. "You have to trust our count." was the reply. He then pointed out that the 1st item on the list was the RF switch and not a transmitter and that the agents had failed to take the PB-1 telephone transmitter kit. Also the 2nd item on the list was incorrect and several camera kits without microphones had been seized incorrectly. These items were corrected but further checks were denied. Again the receipt is only a list of items with no agency name or signature. About 3:00 in the afternoon the Custom's agents left to return to their Buffalo office.

Currently if you try to order one of the forbidden items from the Ramsey website [www.ramselelectronics.com](http://www.ramselelectronics.com) you will be connected to a page with further explanation of the federal laws involved. One of the laws regards smuggling INTO the US, which, since all kits are assembled from components at Ramsey electronics, would seem not to apply. The other law states it is illegal to sell any device whose primary use is surreptitiously transmitting oral communications. Ramsey Electronics does not feel that the primary use of a wireless microphone is for bugging any more than a baby monitor is, and that is stated clearly in the catalog. Also Ramsey feels that a simple letter notifying them of the pertinent law would have sufficed.

Until further notice wireless transmitters for audio are unavailable.

**Editors note: Ramsey Electronics has been a longtime supporter of the RVHFG and other Rochester ham clubs through the years since its establishment nearly 20 years ago. I felt an obligation to print this because you should know what is going on, and what representatives of your government are up to. If it wasn't seen here, you wouldn't see it anywhere else.**

# Coax Velocity Factors

Norman Krajkowski, N2GKM

I was making up a table to keep with the TDR and thought you'd like a copy.

| ANDREW #                 | TYPE  | SIZE   | VELOCITY      |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|---------------|
| FHJ1-50                  | Foam  | 1/4"   | 0.79          |
| FSJ1-50                  | Foam  | 1/4"   | 0.78          |
| LDF2-50                  | Foam  | 3/8"   | 0.88          |
| FSJ4-50B                 | Foam  | 1/2"   | 0.81          |
| LDF4-50A                 | Foam  | 1/2"   | 0.88          |
| LDF5-50A                 | Foam  | 7/8"   | 0.89          |
| LDF6-50                  | Foam  | 1 1/4" | 0.89          |
| LDF7-50                  | Foam  | 1 5/8" | 0.88 Air 0.92 |
| Flexi-4XL                | Semi  | 7/16"  | 0.79          |
| 9913                     | Semi  | 0.405" | 0.84          |
| 9914                     | Foam  | 0.403" | 0.78          |
| RG8                      | Solid | 0.405" | 0.68          |
| RG8                      | Foam  | 0.405" | 0.78          |
| RG8X                     | Foam  | 0.242" | 0.78          |
| RG58                     | Solid | x      | 0.78          |
| GI Joe (w/ Kung Fu Grip) | Semi  | 11/16" | 0.79          |
| Super GIJoe              | Semi  | 29/32" | 0.75          |

# Wash the cat

submitted by Tom Hodge WA2YTM ("TIPS FOR CAT PEOPLE, The Washington Times, Oct 25-31,1999")

Cat people, whose devotion to the feline among us is well known, have accused us on occasion of dissing the cat. This is a mean libel, of course, but rather than argue with unreasonable people, we pass along these tips which sailed in over our transom, on how to effectively bathe a cat. The author of the note, obviously a kind and faithful reader, is otherwise unknown to us, and the note is reproduced here in its entirety:

"1. Thoroughly clean the toilet.

"2. Add the required amount of shampoo to the toilet water - a strong industrial solvent works best - and lift both lids.

"3. Pick up the cat and soothe him as you carry him toward the bathroom.

"4. In one smooth movement put the cat in the toilet and close the lids. (someone may need to stand on the lid so that he cannot escape).

"5. Flush the toilet 3 or 4 times. This provides a 'power wash and rinse' which I have found to be quite effective.

"6. Have someone open the door to the outside and ensure that there are no people or other obstacles between the toilet and the outdoors.

"7. Stand behind the toilet as far as you can, and quickly lift both lids.

"8. The cat, now exceedingly clean, - will rocket out of the house at warp speed.

"Sincerely yours, the Dog."

## A Note from N2CEI

Hi Tom!

How is it going! Nice work in the VHF Journal! Hope it doesn't become a pain in the ass! So I see all of what I think is reflector stuff in the Journal. Does RVHFG have a reflector? If so how do I get hooked up! For that matter, do they have a website?

Been busy down here with work. Got 3456 on the air. 112 elements, 25 watts and Mast preamp. Works great! 4 bands now. Not counting 2M with a halo! Will be back on 6M soon. Yagi is up. Working on a amp. I have a Pulse power amp from ENI in Rochester. Just got it playing with a KW out! All Solid State! Nice piece of gear!

Thats it here. What the hell are you up to?! Steve--  
**"Beauty lies in the eyes of the Beer holder"**

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Hi Tom,

I have many, many MANY questions about ham radio and VHF concerning all the changes that have gone on since I was on the air 13 years ago. **Have you ever considered a question and answer segment in the journal that could take a question and give a general answer to it.** I can not believe all of the changes!

Karyn Blodgett - WD2AKA

**Editors note: Any Volunteers? We could really use a regular column like Karyn suggests!**

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### FOR SALE:

- TRS 80 Radio Shack Color computer. 64K, complete software collection, incl. Home finance, mortgage, etc, PLUS hurricane heading "watcher", antenna heading for DX, log book, DX Journaling. Has Tapes and Cassette Player as well as game cartridges and joy sticks. Asking \$25 for all.

Please call WD2AKA, Karyn at (315) 986-7244

*(Ed note to KB2VGH and W2UAD: U need this computer.)*

### FOR SALE:

- Heathkit, SB200 amp. 2, 572b tubes, wired for 120vac. ----- \$200.00
- Kenwood, TS440S 160 to 10m, CW filter, PS50, P.S., Spkr. mike. \$ 700.00
- Kenwood, TR-7600a, 2 m. HT, desk charger, 3 batteries, mike \$ 75.00
- Icom, IC 2AT, 2m. HT, desk charger, 5 batteries, mike, case, \$75.00
- Mosley, Rotating Dipoles, TA31M, (10/15/20m) TW31M, (12/17/30m) S-401M, (40m.) all like new, stored inside, field day used. \$150.00ea.

Please call WA2ZNC, Len, 229-5470, wa2znc@juno.com



## ADVANCED COMPUTER LANGUAGES

A language instructor was explaining to her class that French nouns, unlike their English counterparts, are grammatically designated as masculine or feminine. Things like "chalk" or "pencil," she described, would have a gender association although in English those words were neutral.

Puzzled, one student raised his hand and asked, "What gender is a computer?"

The teacher wasn't certain which it was, and so divided the class into two groups and asked them to decide if a computer should be masculine or feminine. One group was composed of the women in the class, and the other of the men. Both groups were asked to give four reasons for their recommendation.

The group of women concluded that computers should be referred to in the masculine gender because:

- 1) In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on.
- 2) They have a lot of data but are still clueless.
- 3) They are supposed to help you solve your problems, but half the time they ARE the problem.
- 4) As soon as you commit to one, you realize that, if you had waited a little longer, you could have had a better model.

The men, on the other hand, decided that computers should definitely be referred to in the feminine gender because:

- 1) No one but their creator understands their internal logic.
- 2) The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else.
- 3) Even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later retrieval.
- 4) As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.

**(Editors note- sounds a lot like radio equipment)**

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*Before thermometers were invented, brewers would dip a thumb or finger into the mix to find the right temperature for adding the yeast. Too cold, and the yeast wouldn't grow. Too hot, and the yeast would die. This thumb in the beer is where we get the phrase "rule of thumb."*

*In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts. So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them to mind their own pints and quarts. It's where we get the phrase "mind your P's and Q's."*

## VHF Operations - The fine art of going insane!

...de K2AXX  
(ex KA2RDO)

Every January, a good chunk of the population in the US and Canada sit down in front of glowing boxes, screaming incoherently into a microphone - all to talk to other people. HEY! Doesn't this happen every weekend on other bands?

Yeah, to a point. HOWEVER - there's something extra special about VHF and above. Lemme explain myself. The fundamental difference between HF and VHF contesting is the purpose. Whazzat? Again, lemme 'splain: HF requires skill and stamina. How many of us can say we've run 130+ stations per hour, or held a run frequency on 20 meters all afternoon?!? It seems, if you can't accomplish DXCC during an HF contest weekend, you did something wrong. This is excellent fun! Do it at least once. Maybe twice.

VHF requires the same skill and stamina. Spending a full hour listening for millisecond pings from the meteors, or digging in the noise to work a station in Ohio on 2 meters in a new grid - these are the same as HF, just not as far away. DX is DX, regardless of the definition! To me, Montana on 2 meters is as RARE as P51 (North Korea), and just as unlikely to be in my log in the same duration!

What makes VHF extra special to ME, is that you can't go to R&L Electronics and buy a 10-band VHF station, get a pile of antennas, and kick arse. It isn't that easy on HF, I know. But let's face it: Alpha 87A makes 1500w on all bands in less than a SECOND. The FT-1000D can receive on 2 bands at the same time. You can set your computer up such that you don't EVER need to speak a word during a contest. Hell - that same machine can also change bands, keylines, bandpass filters, and amplifiers with a few keystrokes!

Maybe what I'm getting at is, if you want to play on VHF, you need to be a wee bit more, well, "intrepid"? You can always BUY the VHF gear you need (DEMI, SSB Electronics and Kuehne Electronics all make kick butt gear), but you STILL NEED TO INTEGRATE IT. Nothing like buying a \$200 preamp, and blowing the GaAsFET in an hour. I've done it. Many of us have! Keep in mind, you DON'T have to be off the air because of that! Think of it as a challenge - how can I NOT EVER do that again!

That's where the Rochester VHF Group comes into play. This is the forum where experimenters and operators alike meet to discuss how to build, integrate, and operate equipment. This is where like-minded (and even not-so like minded) hams come to figure things out. This group has talented technical people who are more than willing to make an effort to help. There are also a number of Top-10 contesters who would love nothing more than to get YOU interested in that. There are EME'rs, Packet enthusiasts, APRS



junkies - just about anything you can imagine. In order for this group to work - make certain you each bring whatever talents you have forward. You NEVER know when something you are good at may make all the difference to someone else. What does this diatribe mean? Contribute to the journal. If you've erected a new antenna that works great - tell us about it. There ARE people in this club that would certainly benefit from that kind of knowledge. That's why were all here - to learn and grow in this magical hobby!

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### The Rochester VHF Group "Who's Who":

#### Officers:

Chairman: NS9E

Vice Chairman: KA2RDO

Secretary: K2OS

Treasurer: N2OPW

Director (Even year): KB2VGH

Director (Odd year): K2DH

Past Chairman: N2ULL



#### Appointees:

Contest Chairman: N2YB

Assistant: KA2RDO

Assistant: N2JMH

Awards manager: <open, new!>

Banquet Chairman: <open>

Picnic Chairman: <open, has been for several years>

Newsletter Editor: VE3IEY

Newsletter Publishing: N2KXS

Membership Manager: N2KXS



Internet Webmaster: N2KXS

#### How to contact them:

K2DH Dave Hallidy

(716)-728-9517 k2dh@frontiernet.net

K2OS Frank Pollino

(716)-594-0502 pollino95@aol.com

K2AXX (ex KA2RDO) Mark Hoffman

(716)-243-5606 mhoffman@greece.k12.ny.us

KB2VGH Jeff Luce

(716)-424-8406 kb2vgh@amsat.org

N2KXS Judy Stonehill

(716)-582-2074 jstonehi@frontiernet.net

N2JMH Jim Howard

(716)-637-4554 n2jmh@ibm.net



N2OPW Paul Meyers

(716)-425-1301 N2OPW@qsl.net

N2ULL Steve Obenhofer

(716)-392-7870 N2ULL@aol.com

N2YB Mark Wasserbauer

(716)-242-4574 mwasserb@harris.com

NS9E Tim Stoffel

(716)-247-4798 lionlamb@servtech.com

VE3IEY Tom Richmond

(613)-634-1855 tantonr@kingston.net

#### • Jeff, KB2VGH sez:

"There is only \*one\* mailing list [you'll ever need...]"

***Rvhfg@vhfgroup.rochesterny.org***

It is setup to broadcast to all RVHFG members.

# RESULTS OF THE 1999 RVHFG TUNE-UP CLINIC

by Dave Hallidy K2DH

Once again, as has been typical for the past few years, submissions were down. However, that said, I was quite impressed with the quality of some of the gear. It's interesting to note that this is the first year that had NO 6 or 2 meter submissions! Of note was the 10GHz submission of John Stevens, WB2BYP. He brought his complete transverter, set up on the tripod with two foot dish and IF rig. It was BEAUTIFUL! It was also very functional, the noise figure running 2.91dB at the preamp and 3.8dB at the waveguide transition to the dish feed- very nice. John said it

also worked(!), having made about 15 QSO's during the 10GHz contest this year. We also got a look at the Down East Microwave 10GHz transverter which was brought in by Bill, K2TER. As you may be aware, this transverter is the next RVHFG club project, and it was good to see a complete unit performing just as expected- we measured 1.74dB Noise Figure and 18.08dB gain (DEMI claims <1.8dB NF and >14dB gain). We also got the opportunity to use an HP network analyzer to look at W2DYY's triband dish feed for 2304, 3456, and 5760 MHZ. This was enlightening because we could see the effect of the dish behind the feed and objects in front of the feed on the return loss (VSWR) of the feed on each band.

Here then is a tabulation of the units submitted for measurement and their performance.

| BAND/OWNER    | / Preamp/Conv/ | Homebrew/Comm/ | NF   | Gain  | Comment         |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|------|-------|-----------------|
| <b>10GHz</b>  |                |                |      |       |                 |
| K2TER         | C              | C              | 1.74 | 18.08 | DEMI built unit |
| WB2BYP        | C              | H              | 2.91 | 22.99 | At preamp       |
| WB2BYP        | C              | H              | 3.80 | 21.32 | At Feed         |
| <b>5.7GHz</b> |                |                |      |       |                 |
| K2DH          | C              | H              | 1.62 | 15.4  |                 |
| <b>3.4GHz</b> |                |                |      |       |                 |
| K2DH          | C              | H              | 1.42 | 19.86 |                 |
| <b>2.3GHz</b> |                |                |      |       |                 |
| K2DH          | C              | H              | 2.78 | 14.6  | GaAs MMIC LNA   |
| <b>1296</b>   |                |                |      |       |                 |
| KA2RDO        | P              | H              | 0.88 | 15.08 | ATF10136        |
| KB2VGH        | P              | H              | 1.50 | 17.73 | MGF1402         |
| <b>903</b>    |                |                |      |       |                 |
| WO2P          | C              | C              | 1.07 | 16.63 | DEMI built unit |
| N2KXS         | C              | C              | 1.03 | 20.3  | DEMI built unit |
| <b>432</b>    |                |                |      |       |                 |
| KB2VGH        | C              | C              | 4.04 | 32.2  | MMT432-28       |
| K2OS          | P              | H              | 0.60 | 29.1  | 2X ATF10135     |
| <b>222</b>    |                |                |      |       |                 |
| AA2WV         | C              | H              | 5.70 | 8.88  | 144 IF!         |
| WO2P          | C              | H              | 1.22 | 15.44 | DEMI kit        |
| N2KXS         | C              | H              | 1.17 | 15.27 | DEMI kit        |
| AA2WV         | P              | H              | 0.88 | 16.07 | MGF1302         |

Thanks once again to Adaptive Broadband for the use of their facility and equipment. Next year, let's plan on this again, and we can certainly make use of the other fine pieces of HP equipment AB has in its test equipment inventory.

Dave Hallidy K2DH

## The Night Before Y2K

(author unknown)

> Twas the night before Y2K,  
> And all through the nation,  
> We'd soon see the bug that,  
> Caused such a sensation.  
>  
> The chips were replaced,  
> In computers with care,  
> In hopes that ol' Buggy,  
> Wouldn't stop there.  
>  
> While some folks could think,  
> They were snug in their beds,  
> Others had visions,  
> Of dread in their heads.  
>  
> And Ma with her PC,  
> And I with my Mac,  
> Had just logged on the Net,  
> And kicked back with a snack.  
>  
> When over the server,  
> There arose such a clatter,  
> I called Mister Gates,  
> To see what was the matter.  
>  
> But he was away,  
> So I flew like a flash,  
> Off to my bank,  
> To withdraw all my cash.  
>  
> Then word of the shortage,  
> Caused such a demand,  
> That the money was gone,  
> And the streets were all jammed.  
>  
> When what with my wandering eyes,  
> Should I see on my screen,  
> But Millennium Buggy,  
> This must be a dream!  
>  
> The Hack of all hackers,  
> Was looking so smug,  
> I knew that it must be,  
> The Y2K bug!  
>  
> His image downloaded,  
> In no time at all,  
> He whistled and shouted,  
> "Let all systems fall!"  
>  
> "Go Intel! Go Gateway!  
> Now HP! Big Blue!  
> Everything Compaq,  
> And Pentium too!  
>

> All processors big,  
> All processors small,  
> Crash away! Crash away!  
> Crash away all!"  
>  
> All the controls,  
> That make the planes fly,  
> And the microwaves for,  
> The signals they rely.  
>  
> All through the system,  
> To me, and to you,  
> The predictions they made,  
> Would soon all come true.  
>  
> And then came a twinkling,  
> As midnight drew near,  
> All over the globe,  
> In each hemisphere.  
>  
> As I drew in my breath,  
> And was turning around,  
> Out through the modem,  
> He came with a bound.  
>  
> He was covered with fur,  
> With six legs outspread,  
> Two beady eyes,  
> And a chip on his head.  
>  
> With a sack full of virii,  
> Flung on his back,  
> He looked like a hacker,  
> Just waiting to hack.  
>  
> His eyes - how they twinkled!  
> His dimples - how merry!  
> As midnight approached, though,  
> Things soon became scary.  
>  
> His droll little mouth was,  
> Drawn up in a sneer,  
> While he sat like a kid,  
> Waiting out the new year.  
>  
> Two little antennae,  
> Stuck out of his head,  
> (Improved his reception,  
> from what I've heard said.)  
>  
> He had a broad face,  
> and a round little belly,  
> But with six dirty socks,  
> His feet were quite smelly.  
>

> He was chubby and plump,  
> Perpetually grinning,  
> And I laughed when I saw him,  
> Though my hard drive stopped  
spinning.  
>  
> A wink of his eye,  
> And a twist of his head,  
> Soon gave me to know,  
> A new feeling of dread.  
>  
> He spoke not a word,  
> But went straight to his work,  
> He changed all the clocks,  
> Then turned with a jerk.  
>  
> With a twitch of his nose,  
> And a quick little wink,  
> All things electronic,  
> Soon went on the blink.  
>  
> He zoomed from my system,  
> To the next folks on line,  
> He caused such a disruption,  
> Could this be a sign?  
>  
> Then I heard him exclaim,  
> With a loud, hearty glee,  
> "This has been fun,  
> I'll see you next century!"

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## Congrats Papa Ev!!

From: Jeff Luce kb2vgh

I would like to extend my heartfelt  
Congratulations to **Ev W2EV** on his  
newly born twin boys. They were  
born on Friday 11/19. I wish you all  
the best of luck. (I thought they were  
going to be Y2Kids??)

*Congrats!*

PS. When can we expect to work  
them on 10/24GHz???? :-)

-Jeff KB2VGH

## New Identity- de KA2RDO

Folks : I have a new identity after 16 years. From 11/23/99, my callsign is now K2AXX. Here's the full details - please update your databases:

K2AXX - Mark Hoffman  
5519 Lakeville-Groveland Road  
Geneseo, NY 14454-9545  
(716)243-5606  
ABCD9EFGH(I)  
(And also QRV on 160).

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## "Looney Rover Wins!"

(excerpted from e-mail from Russ N3EMF)  
Date: Mon, 22 Nov 1999 18:07:37 -0500

"Congratulations to Norm N2GKM!  
The November issue of Cheese Bits has the 6 Meter Fall Sprint results and he's the grand prize "ROVER" winner! (Of course, he was also the ONLY entrant as a rover on 6m). See, that drive down from up state didn't go unnoticed after all!"

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## Editorial License

de VE3IEY

**LET'S TALK ABOUT THE BILL OF RIGHTS...** The story on Ramsey Electronics really makes me want to ask: is the government trying to turn back the tide on technology? After all, look at how small our rigs are getting... at what point do they become bugging devices? By this standard, our HT's of today would have been the bugging transmitters of 20 years ago.

Charging a company with customs violations even though they do not import entire devices, but assemble kits from parts acquired from both domestic and foreign sources is both bogus and nothing short of an abuse of power- an attempt to shut down something the government may not like but is not breaking the law. **The basic plan here, in case you haven't figured it out, is to make it more expensive to fight the government than to give in.** The government has more lawyers and red tape than almost anyone AFFORD to fight, whether they are in the right or not.

It should be relatively obvious that Ramsey Electronics hasn't broken the law. If a gun manufacturer's lawfully made product was used to commit a crime, who would you charge? What percentage of those guns are used to commit crimes, out of that entire manufacturers output? Or how about a ham

radio manufacturer who happens to sell gear which is then used to illegally jam repeater communications? Or how about Heathkit- how many of its total output of Kit SB-200 Kilowatt Amps ended up on the CB bands? Probably much less than 1%. And if they did, would you charge them with customs violations because some of their parts like resistors came from Mexico and some of their capacitors came from Taiwan?

I am told that the "agents" wanted to seize a vintage muzzle-loading rifle on display at the company to prevent it from being used against them during the search (not that they were being threatened with it)- **how stupid are these guys?** I personally am not a "gun nut" and own no firearms- but I really have a problem with the whole attitude displayed by the agents participating in this so-called "enforcement action." I have heard some very interesting stories on the CBC about the condition of materials seized by US customs when they are forced by court order to return them- let's not call it intentional destruction because that is such an ugly term. But if I were John Ramsey, I'd be planning a big write-off to my insurance this year.

abciey

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## From the Treasurer

By Paul N2OPW November 18, 1999

### CHECKING ACCOUNT

Previous Balance..... \$689.43  
Income:  
    Dues collected..... 50.00  
    50/50 profits..... 12.00  
Expenses:  
    Newsletter Supplies..... -143.76  
    Membership Cards... . - 27.50  
Current Balance..... \$580.17

### SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Previous Balance.....\$1243.93  
Income:  
    Interest:.. . . . . 4.72  
Expenses:..... 0.00  
Current Balance.....\$1248.65

### Balance on Hand:

Checking..... 580.17  
Savings..... 1,248.65  
**Total..... \$ 1,828.82**

**IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!!!**

# Contest Corner

Mark Wasserbauer N2YB

## **Sometimes I look at work that I have done in the past, even the recent past, and I cannot imagine what I was thinking when I did it.**

Keeping the N2PA station on the air has taught me lessons that I will always remember. Perhaps because each lesson was learned the hard way, silly errors that have resulted in very hard work to repair.



The Mountain Group put N2PA on the air for the Rochester VHF Group sponsored All Band Sprint. After a feeble effort to repair the 903 array and the main 432 array, during the first few minutes of operation I discovered that the rotor on the 108' tower was also stuck. Insult to injury I guess. I was, however, glad to hear so many stations on the air and Jeff N2JQR let me sit down at 6 meters for a while. At first it seemed a little odd calling CQ contest in the middle of November, but after getting a lot of takers realized that the message was out. >From the Rochester area; NS9E, N2JMH, N2WVK, NQ2O, AA2WV, K2AN are in the N2PA log. N2PA Results: 39/19 on 6m, 65/27 on 2m, 32/15 on 222, 30/17 on 432, 2/2 903, 2/2 on 1296.

### Time Management.

This is the time of year where I begin to prioritize my Radio fun time. Identify the projects that must be done, should be done, and may be done, and work to completion from the top of the list. I call the 'must be done' issues the ones that will have an impact on the score of the station, a missing band that is otherwise solid due to broken antenna. 'Must be done' things are usually repairs to bands that you have had on the air and are well established. 'Should be done' things are usually improvements, although they would more than likely improve your score, you operated last year without it but it, 'should be done'. Everything else is a 'may be done', sometimes followed up by 'if I have time'. The key is to use your remaining time wisely. Start on 6 meters and work your way up. Make sure you can expect a solid performance on each band starting on 6 and move up.

### Operational Goals.

Plan to succeed. I think that perhaps the first order of business is to determine your operational goals. Tally up a final score based on your expected operation on each band. This is not the time to start dreaming and making unrealistic expectations but at the same time, don't be afraid to challenge yourself. Your contest objectives should be based somewhat on your past performance. Start with your last year performance for each band and go from there. Was last year an exceptional year? Did you have equipment problems that affected your score? Was there some unexpected propagation? Did you make improvements over the summer? Even if your station is exactly the same as last year but have been working on operating skills you should expect some improvement. For example; last year you logged 105 Qs and 15 Grids on 2 meters, this year your expectations may be 115 Qs and 18 Grids. If however, over the summer, you put up a better antenna and included a mast mounted preamp, your expectations may be somewhat higher; perhaps 150 Qs and 23 Grids. If you have added a new band and want a realistic number of Qs and Grids you might

expect to work, talk to someone who has a similar capabilities on the band, or at least guess. The idea is to put yourself to a challenge that is attainable, not a lofty goal that will only leave you disappointed. With a little effort you should be able to come up with a goal for each band you plan to operate, and an overall score that requires you to stretch, but not hurt yourself.

### Contest operating strategy.

Set up an action plan that is in line with your operational goals. If you plan to work 100 Qs on 2meters, how many should you have in the log before turning in Saturday night or Sunday morning? There are many contesters who believe that by 0500Z or 12:00am Saturday, you will have made 33% of your finishing score. In other words, 33% of your finishing score is generally made during the first 10 hours of the contest. This makes perfect sense since this represents roughly 30% of the contest operating time. This should only be used as a guide to a more detailed structure. Your operational performance should be broken down even further into checkpoints or milestones to monitor your performance at any point in the contest. Four hour intervals are good, but if you like detail, 1hour intervals can give you a very clear picture of how you are performing based on you objectives. At any point in the contest you will know whether you deserve a break and for how long, or need to dig in and pick up the pace. If you want to get there, PLAN.

### Operating comfort.

I tend to have a short fuse. And one thing that tends to burn it quickly is an uncomfortable or messy operating position. I like a comfortable chair and a clear surface that is at a convenient height. Some minimal amount of room to move around where I will not be banging my elbows or my head on things. And complete control of the station within an arms reach. When you are fresh at the start of the contest, bending, reaching, or getting out of your seat to perform rudimentary adjustment of the station may seem of no consequence, perhaps even a novelty. After the first day of heated operation and waking up after a minimal amount of sleep, the last thing you will want to do is sit down at an operating position that generates ergonomic stress. In simpler terms, a station that is difficult to operate will not be operated for as long or as efficiently. Try to develop a position that is easy and a pleasure to operate. This is especially true in the latter half of the contest. If you have made a rather aggressive operation schedule for yourself, I suggest you give some thought to how easy your station is to operate and make changes where necessary.

### Some ideas:

I like all radios, rotator front panels, and computer screens facing me in a cluster a small as possible. This makes for small head or eye movements to take everything in. The entire operation of the station should be within arms reach. I like the computer keyboard where I am not strained to use it, usually right in front of me. An operation that may require a long-term use of my hands I try to position the equipment so my arm is at rest. An example; one year I decided to put my transceiver up where the front panel was staring me straight in the face. As the contest wore on my arm became increasingly strained trying to keep my hand on the turning dial. As a general rule, things that I will require long term use of hands I keep low so my arm is at rest on the table, radios, rotors and keyboard. The computer screen is usually staring me in the face.

A couple of years ago I made an investment in a headset with a boom-mic, I have never been sorry. Contest operation is really a pleasure with both hands free. I have seen some for as little as \$20 - \$30, (Radio Shack). The hands free convenience for the serious contesters is worth ten times that much. This is another one of those 'Don't take my word for it, ask any serious contesters'.

Consider any other factors about your operating position that could make the contest more enjoyable. Do you like a bright room, a dark room, do you like to be able to see out a window? Some operators have small refrigerators and snack tables nearby. How about a cot? If you plan on sleeping some but are concerned about over sleeping, crash right in front of the radios. I have been known to sleep right in front of the operating position on a hardwood floor. I have heard of some who nap with headphones on! Some ops are very extreme. The point is you will enjoy the contest more if you are comfortable in the station operation. Now is the time to get these sorts of things in place.

#### Equipment

One of the most frustrating events in a VHF contest is equipment failure. About the only thing worse is not knowing that something has failed only to find out when a 'Once in the contest' opportunity is long gone. Unfortunately there is no way to predict all the bad things that may happen to your station upon exposure to the pressure of contesting until the real thing. You can, however, simulate the situation to some degree by testing and spending time operating the station. The goal of this exercise is to first test the equipment, but also for you to get familiar with the 'feel' of the station, how does the receiver sound, how narrow is the beam width of the antenna? When you have a good feel of your station, you will be more sensitive to changes that may indicate a problem. In the heat of the contest, the sooner a problem is identified, the sooner it can be remedied or worked around, and the less impact on your final performance. This brings me to another issue. Being familiar with your station means that you are also aware of some possible weaknesses. Do not underestimate the pressure a serious contest effort can have on equipment. Be prepared to work around a known weakness in your station. Expect Murphy at any time and be prepared to trip him up as he strolls through the door. When the contest is underway and an equipment weakness fails at the exact time you need it, and up to that time your patience has taken a number of direct hits, if you now execute a planned work-around and manage to complete that Q for the new grid, you will feel yourself recharged in the accomplishment of beating Murphy at his own game. If, however, you are unprepared, and miss the new Grid, you may go over the edge in frustration. A very important part of planning for success is planning for contingencies. Plan a number of routes to your goal. Throwing in the towel is easy, but remember, winners tend to be people who refuse to take 'no' for an answer.

#### Optimize available equipment.

If you are interested in turning in the highest possible score, my advise is to put every possible band and mode on the air that you have access to. One thing to remember is not to spend too much time on shaky equipment if the solid stuff needs attention. Almost every station has equipment that falls into two groups, solid and shaky. Solid equipment is the stuff that is on the air all the time and has not given you any problems and for good reason. Shaky equipment usually works and can be very valuable to your contest effort but has known problems and usually for equally good

reasons. I would encourage you to get even the most uncertain pieces of equipment on the air, as long as the solid part of your arsenal is ready to go. If making such an effort means you have added a band, it can only improve your score. However, have your contest expectations prepared for complete failure of equipment that may not be up to the task.

#### Personal Preparation.

For many of us, this is the only radio contesting we do all year. Skills get rusty in that amount of time. My suggestion is to clean out the cobwebs and start the contest running. Your personal performance is the single most important element in your contest effort. Let me start with some examples. If you use the first few hours of the contest to dust off your CW skills that results in another station not understanding that you have other bands, you have missed an opportunity that may not present itself again. Perhaps you have some preparations that have been put off until the night before the contest, you get very little sleep as a result of frantic construction that results in either not being able to stay awake for the early morning meteors on 6m, or not have the interest due to your sleep deprivation. Do yourself a favor and hone your contesting skill prior to the contest. Operate your station perhaps a bit more often than usual. Draw a line on contest construction and get a good night's rest at least the night before the contest. As the contest grinds on and you find your stamina maintaining, you will be glad you did because at that moment, you may notice that you are having fun.

#### Conclusion

I have said this before but it's worth saying again. The contest winners will be the operators who work the hardest and the smartest before and during the contest. And just what defines a contest winner? I will just say that you don't have to bring home a plaque to be a winner. Plan and prepare, execute according to your plan and you just may find a new level of contest enjoyment.

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**NEWSLETTER- ALL ISSUES!**  
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**Industry Canada releases two new**  
**MICROWAVE spectrum use policies**  
...excerpted from the RAC website.

Industry Canada (*ed note: the FCC up north*) has published, in the Canada Gazette, two new policies governing spectrum use **which will impact some of our microwave amateur bands.**

The first is a spectrum utilization policy for license-exempt wireless local area networks in the frequency bands 5150-5250

MHz, 5250-5350 MHz and **5725-5825 MHz**.

**5725 and 5825 MHz.**

These unlicensed devices can be operated with outdoor antennas, and at a power level which may cause interference to sensitive amateur radio receivers. Any cases of such interference should be immediately reported to Industry Canada, as unlicensed devices are not permitted to interfere with a licensed service.

A copy of the document can be downloaded from the IC Strategis web site:

**The second document** describes the way the government will decide how to **allocate spectrum in the frequency range from 900MHz to 40 GHz range** in response to new requests. Where spectrum demand is excessive, IC will use the auction process. Where spectrum demand is medium to low, licences will continue to be offered on a first come first served basis.

**2400 - 2483.5 MHz** (being considered for high power/directive antenna)"

This is a warning, that the department is considering allowing more, and higher power, licence exempt devices in the Amateur 2300-2450 MHz band.

*This policy will permit the sale and operation of computer LANs which can operate in the 5GHz amateur band between*

**RAC has proposed a primary allocation for Amateur Radio in the vicinity of 2400 MHz, and we will continue to push for this allocation.**

With regard to competitive licensing, the policy includes the statement:

"The department intends to initiate public consultation in early 2000 to establish the policy and the competitive licensing process, with the view of subsequently licensing additional narrowband and wideband wireless access spectrum for urban and rural areas in the band **3400- 3700 MHz.**" *This band overlaps the Radio Amateur 3300 -3500 MHz band.* Since Amateur is secondary to Fixed Wireless Access in this band, we can expect more interference from the new systems if and when they are approved.

The policy also includes the statement: "There are a number of frequency bands designated, or being considered, as spectrum for licence exempt (LE) devices or systems which may be of interest to potential users and service providers."