I always enjoyed the Johnny Carson Tonight Show skit “Carnac the Magnificent.” First, holding an envelope to his forehead, Johnny would name three things as the answer; then he’d rip apart the envelope and pronounce the question. In the spirit of Carnac: Dreams, Schemes and Themes!

Even before I got a look at the submitted scores, I had a suspicion that this year’s event would prove to be great for some and a disappointment to others. As the current sunspot cycle is on the rise and the weeks prior to the event showed great Eₘ activity on 6 meters, many participants were planning to keep their rigs focused on that band. They anticipated lots of activity and grid-square multipliers. Other hams were busy completing antenna erection and making repairs to radios, amplifiers and preamplifiers. Rovers were getting their chariots readied and routes established. Big guns were soliciting and finalizing schedules for digital modes — meteor scatter and moonbounce contacts to enhance their scores from previous years and even many operators set their sights on bettering their scores. Nevertheless, they persevered and activated 12 grids from Memphis to Florida.

Sandra, N2CEI and Steve, K4SME got a little more excitement than expected when they encountered a violent windstorm that removed half of the 6 meter Yagi reflector. Nevertheless, they have a station and antennas that give him more on 6 meters. He has worked hard to have a station focused on that band. They anticipated lots of activity and grid-square multipliers. Other hams were busy completing antenna erection and making repairs to radios, amplifiers and preamplifiers. Rovers were getting their chariots readied and routes established. Big guns were soliciting and finalizing schedules for digital modes — meteor scatter and moonbounce contacts to enhance their scores.

Based on their previous successes, station improvements and operating prowess, many operators set their sights on bettering their scores from previous years and even breaking some records. The dream of George, K5TR was to work 2000 QSOs or more on 6 meters. He has worked hard to have a station and antennas that give him great propagation and listening capabilities. Six meters was very good for him again this year — not as good as last year but still very good.

Wayne, N6NB set out to score big as a QRP Portable station and to set a national record. His scheme was to optimize a 10-band station and have the team of similarly equipped Southern California Contest Club rovers cover as many grids as they could and make contacts with him. Brothers Dave, N2TEB and Andrew, K2FR set off hiking up Mt Beacon to fulfill their hopes of fun while portable contesting. One of the recurrent themes was that the weather that was not as cooperative as expected; despite some QRP thrills with Eₘ (sporadic E) contacts on 6 meters, their operation was cut short with more unfriendly rain in the Midwest but most of it cleared out by Sunday evening. Many eastern stations reported power outages lasting several hours during the contest. Perhaps they were all saving their emergency power sources for the upcoming ARRL Field Day?

John, W6XM and Eric, K0VER operated W6XM from the rare grid of CM93 on Santa Rosa Island off the coast of Southern California. They flew there on a small twin-engine plane and operated bands ABD using battery power with Yagis on a 15 foot mast. From the write-up on their website (w6xm.org/2011/jun-vhf) it’s apparent they had a fulfilling trip.

Mitch, W1SJ/WD1GQR operated from Mt Equinox in Vermont at an altitude of 3848 feet after enduring hours of waiting for the horizontal sheeting rain and winds of 35 mph to calm. Trying to stand without getting blown over was difficult. His patience was rewarded with 6 meter double-hop Eₘ to

Dreams, schemes and themes.

Rick Rosen, K1DS
rick1ds@hotmail.com

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Japan. There were 51 logs from Canadian small openings to the mainland US and Caribbean grid square. Fred, KH7Y gave us another DX entity and point score. Wayne, operating as PJ2/R over 30k in his entry. Dave, VP5CW as a YN2PR in Nicaragua scored 85k and 100k as a SOLP entry. Chuck, W5PR operating as a score of 2.8k. Ted, HI3TEJ had close to 100k as a SLOP entry. Chuck, W5PR operating as YN2PR in Nicaragua scored 85k and Jim, operating ZF2BI in the Caymans, had over 30k in his entry. Dave, VP5CW as a SLOP had an entry with a quarter-million-point score. Wayne, operating as PJ2/K8LEE, gave us another DX entity and Caribbean grid square. Fred, KH7Y managed to have 22 contacts in 15 grids with small openings to the mainland US and Japan. There were 51 logs from Canadian stations, including a whopping 1 million point entry from Unlimited Multiop VE3WCC. One Unlimited Multiop and four Single-Ops including Chuy, XE2N with over 60k in Mexico added another half million points to the action. Stations from HR, VP9, YS and KP4 also were logged.

The Bands
Hail to the mighty 6 meter conditions. Dave, K0DI aptly renamed the weekend, “The June 6 Meter Contest.” The band popped open intermittently all weekend with both single and double-hop E. Tom, K4MM cautioned “If you left the seat you missed a mut.” The best hours appeared to be Sunday between 1200 and 1700 UTC. Reading some of the QSO rates from contesters, results section (www.arrl.org/contests). The biggest category with 716 entries was SOLP. The SOHP category had 215 entries. Limited Multioperator entries numbered 63, while the Unlimited Multioperators submitted 103 logs. Low-power Portable included 37 entries. Rovers are divided into three sections and there were 49 Classic Rovers, 40 Limited Rovers and 10 Unlimited Rover logs submitted. This distribution is similar to previous years. Forty-three section records were broken all over the map and in every category. N6NB set a new national record in the QRP portable category with 295 points. A complete listing of the records and extended contest information can be found at the online ARRL contest results section (www.arrl.org/contests). The Competition
The details show a total of 1233 submitted logs, an increase of 2% over 2011. Again, the biggest category with 716 entries was SOLP. The SOHP category had 215 entries. Limited Multioperator entries numbered 63, while the Unlimited Multioperators submitted 103 logs. Low-power Portable included 37 entries. Rovers are divided into three sections and there were 49 Classic Rovers, 40 Limited Rovers and 10 Unlimited Rover logs submitted. This distribution is similar to previous years. Forty-three section records were broken all over the map and in every category. N6NB set a new national record in the QRP portable category with 295 points. A complete listing of the records and extended contest information can be found at the online ARRL contest results section (www.arrl.org/contests).
Their score was 687k based on a 6 meter -
come and still put forth a winning effort."

The 6 meter conditions in the central US-
croping abnormal rain and storms-
their score. A true team effort-
ning to higher-
ning heat leading up to the contest;
during the spring which turned to higher-
hampered by abnormal rain and storms-
maneuver through-
get everything ready just prior to the start.

The top scoring Limited Multiop team-
75/35 on 432 MHz, an impressive feat-

in the pool and see what it’s like to swim in
the contest. Although there is no one of the
entry groups that can be credited with the
greatest contribution to the activity, by sheer
numbers those folks who operated casually
and made a few dozen contacts certainly
added to the fun of the weekend, especially
when the propagation was favorable.

The 6 meter conditions in the central US
gave a scoring advantage to those stations
who kept that band working as much as possible. In first place in the SOLP category
is Larry, N0LL in KS who scored 381,860 points. On the strength of his 6 meter 1174
contacts in 272 grids, combined with another 46 contacts on bands BCDE, he was
able to beat his nearest competitor by 2000 points, about half of 1% of his submitted
score. Rich, W55XD in NTX took 2nd place with 379k. He had 117 more 6 meter QSOs
and 273 multipliers but only 17 additional

Regional Winners

Northeast Region (New England, Hudson and Atlantic Divisions; Maritime and Quebec Sections)

AFT1 152,040 A
W3PAW 130,269 A
K1KG 115,397 A
WB1GQR (W15UL sp) 111,452 A
NZ9M 46,151 A

Southeast Region (Delta, Roanoke and Southeastern Divisions)

N2LL 307,671 A
W4WZQ 198,171 A
K49A 88,873 A
N4QV 118,803 A
AASAU 110,622 A

Central Region (Central and Great Lakes Divisions; Ontario Section)

K2DRH 342,681 A
W9ZRX 314,033 A
K2RSC 189,389 A
W24A 88,344 A
N3IN 80,410 A
V47V 74,909 A

Midwest Region (Dakota, Midwest, Rocky Mountain and West Gulf Divisions; Manitoba and
Saskatchewan Sections)

N0LL 381,860 A
W6SSD 379,672 A
WS2K 197,024 A
N5POH 167,420 A
N0HJZ 162,122 A
W07D 63,660 A

West Coast Region (Pacific, Northwestern and Southwestern Divisions; Alberta, British Columbia
and NWT Sections)

WJOF 118,450 A
W7LJC 84,148 A
N3RMM 77,434 A
W6AN 72,808 A
W366A 63,660 A

Multioperator Scores

The top scoring Limited Multiop team this year was a group in AR manned by
several of the ARRL staff and the immediate past president, Joel Harrison, W5ZN.
Joel reported, "Early preparations were hampered by abnormal rain and storms
during the spring which turned to higher than normal heat leading up to the contest;
however the local radio club pitched in to get everything ready just prior to the start.
A great group of operators injected diverse contesting expertise into the effort that allowed
the W5ZN team to maneuver through a weekend of obstacles that included lost operating
time due to severe thunderstorms and loss of electricity, equipment failure
even the death of an immediate family member of one of the ops. A true team effort
proved these complications can all be overcome and still put forth a winning effort."
Their score was 1090/298 total with plenty of contacts and grids on the other three bands. In second
place the K9NS team in IL scored 633k, also capturing plenty of the 6 meter excitement
in addition to 69 grids on 2 meters! The K8GP gang in VA placed 3rd with 506k,
managing to find 451 contacts on 2 meters. Late Sunday afternoon they lost their commercial
dower to storms and had to call it quits early.

The Unlimited Multiop competition seemed to line up as it has been for the past
few years with perennial winner W2SZ in 1st place again with 1,183 million points.
The 12-band effort with a mega-station atop Mt Greylock, one of the best VHF spots in
the northeast, coupled with the population density of the area and their multiple rovers has
taken this group in the leading spot in this category for many years. Snapping at their
heels with a 1,017 million point score is the KSQE team, headed by Marshall in the STX section.
Their 8-band station made use of the great 6 meter conditions with a 1421/302 band total. They also had 205/98 on 2 meters
and 75/35 on 432 MHz, an impressive feat considering the wide open spaces of their geography.
Rover Activity

Despite varying weather and road conditions the rovers always seem to be in demand and having fun. The Classic Rover category is still the most popular and one third of them were equipped with 10 bands or more. Their contact totals on the microwave bands account for a large percentage of all of the contest activity in the centimeter wavelengths. Because so many of the fixed stations kept their band switches on 6 meters, in many instances rovers had to plead with other stations to “run the bands.” Again, the Southern California Contesting Club rovers were out in force; using their scheduled travels over 10 grids and neat “bands in a box,” they captured the top four spots in this category.

The Limited Rovers are challenged to use only bands ABCD; most of them made use of the four bands although there were several entries in this category with only two or three bands, often dropping 222 MHz or 432 MHz. With 40 entries in this category, it remains quite popular and is a good entry category for operators with a multi-band rig who want to get on the road, provide plenty of action for many of the fixed stations and see what propagation they can find from different locations. Topping the 40 entries was Tim, AL1VE centered in CO who managed to capitalize on the 6 meter activity with 781/205 and only 5 contacts across the other three bands for a score of 169k. In 2nd place was another SCCC rover, Mike, W6YLZ who covered 10 grids and scored 76k.

On to the Unlimited Rover category — those who declared themselves as “Unlimited” and those who did not fit the rules of the other two rover categories. There were 10 entries in this category; the team of Brian, ND3F and David, N3XD operating the N3IQ rover were first in this category with 84k using 6 bands across 7 grids. Joe, WA3PTV from WPA was second with 62k based on a 10-band effort in 4 grids. Third place was earned by Jim, K66MC from NM with a score of 44k from a 5-band effort, heavily weighted with 6 meter contacts and grids.

Club Competition

The club competition is important; there is subtle peer pressure to get the maximum number of potential club participants for an aggregate club score. There were 541 logs in total for all the club entries or about half of all the participants, considering that there were Multiop stations that added into the club scores. On a roll for the past few years, the Society of Midwest Contesters picked up another first place as the unchallenged leaders in the Unlimited Club category. They managed to get 73 member logs for a 2.2 million point club total.

There were 33 entries for the Medium Club category. The Potomac Valley Radio Club won top spot in this section with 39 entries and a total of 2.1 million points; two strong Multiop stations, K8GP and W3SO, are major contributors to their success. The Local Club category had 14 entries; the Mt Frank Contesters in Illinois were first with 4 logs and 673k.

The Future

Next year’s June VHF QSO Party will be held on June 9-11, 2012 and there is no doubt that many of you have already booked the time and are already making preparations. The challenge will be to introduce some newcomers to the fun and activity and make them feel part of the broader VHF community. Various websites and the VHF contesting reflector are always great sources of assistance for all types of questions or ideas, as well as for buying and selling used radio gear. Most VHF radio clubs have well organized websites and they are good local resources for amateur operators seeking membership or assistance with their projects or station building. It is also a delight to see your posts on various reflectors including your station pictures in the ARRL contest Soapbox. (www.arrl.org/soapbox).

In Conclusion

I am grateful to my wife Jani, who serves as editor of these articles and to Curt, K9AKS for assisting with the contest records research. Thank you both.

Now back to the original answer I posed at the beginning: Dreams, Schemes and Themes! The question inside Carnac’s envelope: Name three things that VHF operators enjoy before, during and after the June ARRl QSO Party.