2007 ARRL June VHF QSO Party Results

Your log was either half empty or half full.

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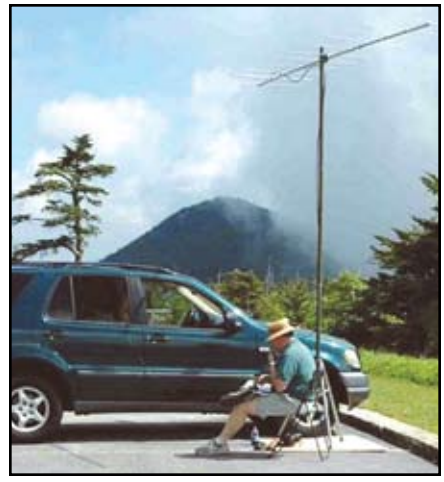
The most interesting question for the June 2007 VHF QSO Party is how you think it compared to the same event in 2006. Split decision! An emphatic yes for some, including the multi-operator team at K8GP and all the long-haul QSOs they had on 144-222 and 432 MHz. But for others it was a struggle to fill the logs, as 6 meters did not have the conditions encountered last year for much of the country or much of the contest period. Sixty scoring records were set last year. Undoubtedly many will say the 2007 event, held June 9-10, was a mere shadow of 2006, as there was so little propagation on 6 meters. And supporting that opinion is the fact that top scores in 5 out of 6 operating categories were about half of what they were last year.

One contestant in the Midwest put it this way, "How bad was it? It was so bad that I didn't hear K2DRH on 6 meters all weekend." On the other hand, single-operator K2DRH shows up with a respectable 6 meter total of 82 grids. And WB8JUI/R asked, "Who turned off the propagation?" Yet 16 stations, including one low-power single op and two high-power single ops worked 100 grids or greater on 6 meters, with K8GP working 180 grids. K3GM added this note to his entry, "Once again, the Magic Band didn't let us down for the June contest. We had a fine opening here in northeast to the midwest, and later on, to the south. I'm hooked on 6." WØDJM sent this comment, "Got on 6 meters with a 10 element Yagi 12 feet above ground for the band opening during the last hours and had a blast!" As a counterpoint to some of the fixed stations in areas untouched by 6 meter propagation, the rovers were again out in force, having more time to concentrate on what they do best, lighting up rarer grids on the higher bands, and having a ball while giving out all of those QSO points and multipliers.

Another interesting question for the June 2007 VHF QSO Party is how many stations managed to increase scores with less 6 meter propagation? That answer is found by looking at the number of QSOs made on the rest of the bands, where operators spent more time and effort for higher value QSOs when the frenzy was absent on the magic band. Last year there were 143k 6m QSOs represented in the submitted logs, while in 2007 the entries showed only 52k QSOs. However, this year the submitted QSO numbers increased by 1300 on 144 MHz, 1000 on 222 MHz, 1700 on 432 MHz, 60 on 902 MHz and 500 on 1296 MHz, despite a reduction of 20% in the number of participants submitting their scores. It also appears many folks have added capabilities on the higher bands.



KB5YZG on his first VHF outing (on Mt Mitchell, North Carolina) using an ICOM IC-706, with an 11 element Yagi on top of a stack of fiberglass tent poles. Car battery provided talk power; elbow provided rotator power.

Weather: Always an Adventure

The weather seemed to be more reasonable this year than it was last year. A high pressure area seemed to dominate the central part of the country. Some groups reported hot muggy weather for their portable setups, interspersed with thundershowers and lightning. KI7JA, SOLP in his portable tent setup in DNØ3 (SE Oregon) told the harrowing story on the ARRL Web site soapbox of winds, rain and freezing weather that knocked down his antennas multiple times, tearing holes in his tent, allowing water to drip onto his electronics. With the moisture in his rig it wouldn't work, but then in the daylight it dried out and came back to life again. The final straw was the ticks he found on his body, sharing the weekend with him.

Kevin, KLØRG, and Paul, K7CW, visited Prince of Wales Island, Alaska (IOTA NA-041) in rare grid locator CO35 to take part in the 2007 June contest. Kevin lives nearby, in Ketchikan, but Paul traveled by Alaska Marine Highway ferry from Bellingham, Washington to get there. They were able to hand out that rare grid multiplier to 74 other stations over the weekend, with many of the contacts made using *WSJT* and meteor scatter. (Be sure to see the Sidebar on the ARRLWeb results.)

There are several multi-op groups that bring their VHF gear and teams to the same spots each year to keep a tradition of friendly competition, continuous station improvement to facilitate the on-the-air experience for old-timers, newcomers and rovers. Single-ops have often had the experience of planning out a weekend with schedules for various *WSJT* modes and propagation and operating time characteristics, to use the contesting hours efficiently. The synergies created between the casual ops, single-ops, multi-ops, rovers and QRP portable stations makes for some predictable results and some challenges. The issue of use of the calling frequency has been raised again on the vhf contesting reflector. In more VHF-active areas, with higher population densities, activity is spread across 200 kHz or more, with CQ callers and CQ responders often moving up and down the band, and with the "big gun" multi-ops spacing themselves to avoid excessive QRM. Gene, W3ZZ, an active member of the Grid Pirates, related his experience this year with the calling frequency dilemma.[1] When they called CQ on 144.200, they found many more responders from the central part of the country, but missed many of the northeast corridor stations on 2 meters and were unable to "run the bands" with them.

Although log submission numbers were down this year by almost 20% from 2006, it was up from 2005. The anomaly of 2006 in the dramatic increase in logs submitted appears to be related to the six meter conditions that year. In comparing my personal contest logs to all of the contest logs submitted to the ARRL, it appears that there are still a large percentage of participants who never submit their scores, but certainly enjoyed the event and made it fun for others. Fun, I say, as there is always joy in adding another call

[1]G. Zimmerman. *QST*. Oct 2007, pp 79-80.

From December 2007 QST © ARRL

Top 10

Single Operator, Low Power

K2DRH	242,505
WB1GQR (W1SJ, op)	156,738
W3SZ	110,600
KB8U	100,036
AF1T	80,388
NØKP	69,293
N4QWZ	61,500
WB2SIH	60,900
NØVZJ	57,260
NØLL	55,870

Single Operator, High Power

K1TEO	541,206
KA1ZE	268,745
K1RZ	232,848
KMØT	188,895
K8EB	183,799
WA2FGK) (K2LNS, op	183,169
WB9Z	127,792
K4TO	124,992
K8TQK	123,096
N3HBX	111,384

Single Operator Portable

KA1LMR	63,731
KG4LEV	19,344
W4RXR	12,144
W1JHR	10,945
N8XA	10,650
WB6FFC	7,950
N7IR	7,614
WB2AMU	3,132
N6RZR	2,666
W3DQT	1,932

Limited Multioperator

W3SO	443,421
W4IY	440,744
K9NS	405,805
AA4ZZ	362,523
N3EMF	300,384
W1QK	169,600
K5TR	113,160
N8ZM	83,832
W3HZU	55,860
KK4US	47,580

Multioperator

K8GP	2,382,600
W2SZ	2,080,878
W3CCX	792,640
K5QE	528,000
K3YTL	506,924
W4NH	368,676
N2NK	178,948
KBØHH	154,070
KM5PO	132,050
WØEEA	122,176

Rover

N6TEB/R	322,577
N6DN/R	284,700
K2TER/R	157,176
K2QO/R	106,153
W1RT/R	88,816
WØZQ/R	85,916
W9FZ/R	76,360
KC3WD/R	71,040
VE3NPB/R	67,456
KF8QL/R	54,352

into the log and another band-multiplier into the score; and there is nothing more frustrating than tuning or calling CQ and having no response. Even if things appear to be slow, a contact in the log every now and then with a new band multiplier keeps the operators interested and operating.

The Rover entries continue to expand, and this year the number was up to 98 rover logs. Rovers have learned that VHF contesting can be very fulfilling, once their antennas are above the treetops and buildings and looking at relatively clear horizons. Not only do the rovers allow stations to fill in some needed grids from sparsely populated areas, but a review of the entries showed that half of the rovers were loaded with 6 bands or more, and almost half of those had 10 bands or more, making for great band multipliers.

Records

With conditions as they were, could records be set? Yes, one division and eight division section records were broken this year. Going alphabetically by section, KL7FF in Alaska topped the previous Limited multi-op scores with a new 2788 score. WA3QPX scored 23,763 to set a new low-power single-op record in Delaware. In the Portable category for Indiana, K9AKS had 1650 points for a new high water mark. Moving down to North Carolina, the W4NH multi-op group had a 368k score for a new record. WA2VNV captured the NLI single-op low power record with 24k. In the San Diego section, KG6IYN scored 64k in the single-op high power category. NN4AA set a portable record in South Florida with 1520. In the more detailed write-up below you will note K8GP breaking the West Virginia Multi-op section record and Roanoke Division record with a 2.38 million score. Even when propagation was lacking, there were several opportunities for record-setting. Check the June VHF QSO Party Section Records on the ARRL Web site (**www.arrl.org/contests/results/june-vhf-section-records.html** and **www.vhfscores.info/**) to see the records through 2006 and the many categories in several sections without entries.

Single Operator

Although it's always exciting to see the "battle of the bands" between the top scorers, the hams who make the attempt to be on for a few hours, check the propagation, pull out a few weak signals and submit a log, are always my heroes. Without them, we wouldn't be enticing newcomers and spreading the VHF-UHF and microwave joy. Although many have decried the loss of complete contest listings in *QST*, the downloadable and sortable comprehensive results are posted on the ARRL Web site for "members only." That gives every ARRL member a chance to see where their scores and efforts stacked up against the local, regional and national competition.

The top scorers in many divisions remain the same year after year, not surprisingly due to the station quality, antenna arrays, geography and determination of the operators. Four of the SOLP top 10 have appeared in the box 3 of the last 3 years, another 4 have appeared twice, and there are 2 newcomers. K2DRH again had top honors with 242k. Following in second place as he did in 2005 was WB1GQR with W1SJ as operator at 156k. Creeping up the chart is W3SZ in 3rd place with 110k. KB8U is making his third appearance in the top 10 box in the past 3 years with 100k, followed by another three-time top 10 boxer, AF1T with 80k. The next five stations in order are NØKP, N4QWZ, WB2SIH, NØVZJ and NØLL, demonstrating that the activity and competition is widely spread, at least to the middle of the country.

In the SOHP category, K1TEO nearly doubled the score of the nearest competitor with another fantastic score of 541k in modest conditions. Here again, the top 5 stations have been seen in the top 10 box for several years running, although the next 5 stations have just broken into the box this year. KA1ZE was in 2nd place with 268k and in 3rd place K1RZ had 232k. KMØT in 4th place with almost 189k showed an excellent effort from Iowa, and K8EB with almost 184k from Michigan was in 5th place, proving again that there is substantial VHF activity in the middle of the country. K2LNS is resurrecting the WA2FGK station and managed a 6th place finish. He lost all of his antennas a few years back, but is managing to get things restored with a five band effort. In order of finish for 7th through 10th places were WB9Z, K4TO, K8TQK and N3HBX, all scoring more than 100k.

There were 23 log entries for the Single Operator Portable category this year, down from last year's 39 submissions. Could the weather have been a factor or were the scores so much lower that some operators decided to forgo log submissions? Last year's high scorer KA1LMR repeated honors in 1st place with bands through 3456 MHz, but with 63k, he had about half of his 2006 score. In this category also we found that 6 of the top 10 scorers made multi-year appearances in the top 10 box. KG4LEV took second place with a 5 band effort from North Carolina. His score was 19k, an improvement over his last year's 16k effort. In 3rd place, W4RXR had a 12k result as a fresh call appearing in the top 10 SOP category this year. W1JHR had an 8 band portable station that scored 11k from the mountains of VT, and was also a newcomer to the top 10. N8XA managed to compile 10k to make 5th place moving up from 9th last year. With scores from 8k down to 2k, WB6FFC, N7IR, WB2AMU, N6RZR and W3DQT rounded out positions 6-10. Any of us who had calls from these SOP ops are grateful that they made the effort to be out in the field, providing more opportunity, especially on the microwave bands. Considering the rules, the power limitation

Affiliated Club Competition

	Entries	*Score*
Unlimited Club		
Society of Midwest Contesters	55	1,106,960
Medium Club		
Potomac Valley Radio Club	35	3,633,086
Mt Airy VHF Radio Club	17	1,260,783
North East Weak Signal Group	17	990,537
Northern Lights Radio Society	20	605,675
Carolina DX Assn	6	439,435
Rochester VHF Group	6	341,786
Badger Contesters	11	254,311
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	16	241,916
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	10	214,062
Northern California Contest Club	12	162,790
Contest Club Ontario	17	157,632
Florida Weak Signal Society	9	148,956
Pacific Northwest VHF Society	14	130,683
Alabama Contest Group	3	111,219
Roadrunners Microwave Group	4	100,286
Western States Weak Signal Society	4	91,939
Bergen ARA	4	59,317
Mad River Radio Club	4	49,064
Central Arizona DX Assn	4	15,642
Dauberville DX Assn	4	11,304
Tennessee Contest Group	6	4,553
Local Club		
North Texas Microwave Society	7	773,427
Downey ARC	4	333,272
Eastern Connecticut ARA	5	111,104
Chippewa Valley VHF Contesters	5	100,618
10-70 Repeater Assn	3	32,613
Michigan VHF-UHF Society	3	30,945
Raritan Bay Radio Amateurs	8	12,184
Nacogdoches ARC	3	10,406

Northeast Region (New England, Hudson and Atlantic Divisions; Maritime and Quebec Sections)			Southeast Region (Delta, Roanoke and Southeastern Divisions)			Central Region (Central and Great Lakes Divisions; Ontario Section)			Midwest Region (Dakota, Midwest, Rocky Mountain and West Gulf Divisions; Manitoba and Saskatchewan Sections)			West Coast Region (Pacific, Northwestern and Southwestern Divisions; Alberta, British Columbia and NWT Sections)		
WB1GQR (W1SJ, op)	156,738	A	N4QWZ	61,500	A	K2DRH	242,505	A	NØKP	69,293	A	NU6S	33,453	A
W3SZ	110,600	A	K4LY	55,245	A	KB8U	100,036	A	NØVZJ	57,260	A	K6TSK	24,633	A
AF1T	80,388	A	K2DEL (WA2SEI, op)	35,910	A	WZ8T	39,550	A	NØLL	55,870	A	N7CFO	18,395	A
WB2SIH	60,900	A	W2BZY	26,602	A	W9GKA	35,695	A	WB5ZDP	45,045	A	K6XN	11,684	A
K5MA	39,984	A	K5YPV	22,176	A	KC9BQA	32,421	A	NØPOH	34,400	A	W6OMF	11,656	A
K1TEO	541,206	B	K4XR	110,589	B	K8EB	183,799	B	KMØT	188,895	B	KG6IYN	64,315	B
KA1ZE	268,745	B	KE2N	92,616	B	WB9Z	127,792	B	WØGHZ	94,200	B	AF6O	61,870	B
K1RZ	232,848	B	K4QI	91,264	B	K4TO	124,992	B	K9MK	56,942	B	W7CE	27,888	B
WA2FGk (K2LNS, op)	183,169	B	W4ZRZ	90,216	B	K8TQK	123,096	B	W3UUM	45,000	B	KC6ZWT	22,536	B
N3HBX	111,384	B	W4WA	57,524	B	K8MD	100,608	B	K5LLL	41,968	B	W7FI	19,584	B
KA1LMR	63,731	Q	KG4LEV	19,344	Q	N8XA	10,650	Q				WB6FFC	7,950	Q
W1JHR	10,945	Q	W4RXR	12,144	Q	K9AKS	1,650	Q				N7IR	7,614	Q
N2TEB	1,536	Q	W3DQT	1,932	Q							N6RZR	2,666	Q
N3XG	630	Q	NN4AA	1,520	Q							KG6TGI	874	Q
N3HU	160	Q	N3AWS	468	Q							W7KK	270	Q
W3SO	443,421	L	W4IY	440,744	L	K9NS	405,805	L	K5TR	113,160	L	VA7ISL	36,890	L
N3EMF	300,384	L	AA4ZZ	362,523	L	N8ZM	83,832	L	WDØT	46,505	L	AD6IJ	28,670	L
W1QK	169,600	L	KK4US	47,580	L	K8ZIZ	27,448	L	WØLSD	14,325	L	WA7JTM	10,419	L
W3HZU	55,860	L	NR4CQ	28,840	L	W9VW	26,265	L	NØEO	13,020	L	K7XC	8,896	L
N3YRR	33,300	L	KI4SNY	16,632	L	WN8R	25,245	L	WØFRC	4,788	L	W7MRG	6,669	L
W2SZ	2,080,878	M	K8GP	2,382,600	M	W8BAE	84,738	M	K5QE	528,000	M	N6CW	80,325	M
W3CCX	792,640	M	W4NH	368,676	M	N9UHF	80,565	M	KBØHH	154,070	M	W6TV	67,320	M
K3YTL	506,924	M	K4EJQ	88,322	M	N2BJ	67,080	M	KM5PO	132,050	M	N6GKJ	20,026	M
N2NK	178,948	M	AG4V	59,823	M				WØEEA	122,176	M	W6YX	13,200	M
K1MUJ	98,420	M	N4JQQ	33,136	M				WØKVA	25,276	M	N6VMO	10,640	M
K2TER/R	157,176	R	W1RT	88,816	R	W9FZ/R	76,360	R	WØZQ/R	85,916	R	N6TEB/R	322,577	R
K2QO/R	106,153	R	KC3WD/R	71,040	R	VE3NPB/R	67,456	R	WD0ACD/R	31,326	R	N6DN/R	284,700	R
KE3HT/R	40,754	R	N4DXY/R	21,924	R	KF8QL/R	54,352	R	WY0X/R	17,424	R	N6MU	48,635	R
K3LFO/R	39,450	R	AH8M/R	17,875	R	NE8I	38,836	R	WØSD/R	12,948	R	KE6QR/R	14,080	R
WA3PTV/R	37,080	R	N5AC	16,059	R	WB8BZK/R	33,456	R	KCØIYT/R	12,532	R	N7EPD/R	13,719	R

of 10 W and the use of portable power, these stations required an excellent elevation in a relatively populated area with lots of gain in the antenna to make their impressive scores. There appear to have been considerable opportunities to break section scoring records in this category.

Multi-Operator

Pooling resources and mobilizing a team creates a common goal for a formal or informal group of VHFers, and often provides new opportunities for newcomers to participate. VHF beginners can also take this experience to appreciate the differences between the higher and lower bands, equipment, location, propagation and operating skills. Having lived in a VHF-compromised QTH, I had been a multi-op participant and for the past 20 years, I have participated as a rover. I experienced the frustration of foliage and fixed structure signal blockage, and as a result I always head for the hills. Almost all of the multi-operator groups have established themselves at excellent elevations, with towers and antennas that have a clear view of the horizon in most directions. A well planned and executed group station brings a high level of on-the-air activity to all of these radio-contesting events, with many of them propagating additional single-ops and rovers over time.

A small margin separated the top scorers in the Limited Multi-operator category. The top scoring stations in this group have been in a tight competition for several years. First, 2nd and 3rd places were separated by less than 10 percent at the 400k point level. The Wopsonock Mountain group scored 443k for top honors here, having moved into 1st place after being 2nd last year and 3rd the year before. The W4IY group also climbed a notch in each of the last three years and was in second place this year with 440k. Knocked out of first place in the last two years, K9NS was third with 405k. In 4th place the AA4ZZ group had 362k, also advancing one position from the 5th spot they held the past two years. N3EMF partnered with WG3E to make it to 5th place in this category, just breaking 300k. The 6th though 10th places were earned by W1QK, K5TR, N8ZM, W3HZU and KK4US with scores from 169k down to 47k.

The big story this year was the dramatic scores of two excellent multi-operator stations K8GP and W2SZ who battled it out for 1st place, as they have for several years. And the winner is: K8GP, the "Grid Pirates," taking advantage of some unique propagation, calling CQ incessantly, scouring the bands, seeking the rovers and moving stations up the bands. They amassed 2.38 million points to beat W2SZ, the "Mount Greylock Expeditionary Force" by 300,000 points. Both of these multi-operator groups beat their 2006 scores by 300,000 and 100,000 respectively.

There is no competition as keen as one between the two multi-operator giants, K8GP and W2SZ. The Grid Pirates celebrated their 10th anniversary of contesting on Spruce Knob in West Virginia at 4863 feet above sea level. With a set of well equipped vehicles that grind up the marginal mountain roads and a highly dedicated team of operators, they parlayed their win from last year into a repeat performance. It seems that everything went well for them, including a fantastic tropospheric opening into the midwest and southwest and working stations out to over 600-700 miles. They appear to have set an all time high record for 222 grid multipliers, topping an old record of 76 grids with an incredible 84 grids worked this year. They also broke their own record of 77 grid multipliers on 432 with a whopping 94 grids this year. Their final score was 2.382 million points. A complete report of the Grid Pirates contesting efforts including pictures, video and audio clips can be seen on their Web site (**www.k8gp.net/**).

The Mt Greylock Expeditionary Force (**www.mgef.org**), W2SZ, continues to set a standard for multiops with a score of 2.080 million points. This year the road and the summit of Mt Greylock was closed to the public for a major road rebuilding project. The group's cordial relationship of more than 35 years with the state officials as well as the fact that ham radio operators are first responders in time of emergency went a long way to obtaining special permission to allow the group to access their usual portable QTH, albeit with a smaller crew and lacking a working lodge on the summit. In a band-by-band analysis, it's clear that the MGEF

holds an advantage over the Grid Pirates in the area of microwave contacts, thanks to so many rovers in the Northeast that are equipped by the team for QSOs on the upper frequencies. On the other hand, the opening experienced by the Grid Pirates gave them a 130 grid multiplier advantage, despite having 450 fewer QSOs in their logs. This competition is bound to continue as both groups have several dedicated well maintained vehicles with powerful transmitters and sensitive receivers, substantial towers and antennas, well situated operating locations and a loyal and finely trained group of operators.

In 3rd place, for a third year in a row W3CCX, the Pack Rats (**www.packratvhf.com/**) scored 792k. It was a year of change for this club as the operating configurations were changed, a newer and reduced number of operators participated, and an unanticipated set of minor problems slowed some of the microwave operations. They also faced some mountaintop changes in power availability, but an additional run of 250 feet of cable overcame the gap. K5QE held 4th place again with a score of 528k and in 5th place was maintained by K3YTL with 506k points. The order of finish of these top 5 multi-operator groups was exactly the same as last year. Again sharing some of the top scoring activity across the country, 6th through 10th places were captured by W4NH, N2NK, KBØHH, KM5PO and WØEEA.

Rover

N6TEB took first place this year with 322K, and improvement of 30k from last year. In second place, N6DN with 284k improved his score from 2006 by 23k. K2TER in third place with 157k and K2QO in 4th place with 106k seemed to share similar routes in western NY. W1RT in 5th place had his first serious outing in the jitney that he purchased from now silent key W3IY and scored 89k in a Mid-Atlantic set of grids. Sixth through 10th places were won by WØZQ, W9FZ, KC3WD, VE3NPB and KF8QL with scores from 86k down to 54k. Although the Rover category continues to have some regulars in the top 10 box, there are some welcome newcomers to this revered status. Reviewing the similar QSO numbers and the grids worked on the microwave bands by the top two scorers, you can draw your own conclusions; what tactics and strategies did they use to garner scores in the 300k range when there were no other West Coast stations appearing in the top 10 box scores.

As the numbers of rovers increase, and their band capabilities continue to improve, they have become a new force and source of substantial opportunity for fixed stations. I was stung by a remark that showed up recently on the VHF contesting reflector; a rover was told by a fixed station that they would have to check and see if they needed the rover's grid multiplier before completing a contest exchange. Hopefully this was just a misguided and mistaken comment by a newcomer rather than an attitude of that particular station toward rover activity. Each and every contact should be another building block of score, communications ability and efficiency, and no contact should be refused. What's more, several multi-operator groups and single operators have analyzed their logs and noted that rovers account for 20-35% or more of their contest scores.

The KL7FF QTH: **The 2 meter 12 element Yagi can be seen mounted on the mast on the deck to the left side of the cabin. The 6 meter 8 element Yagi can be seen in the right foreground, mounted on 3 tower sections. The 2 meter station ran 400 W output and the 6 meter station ran 600 W output.**

Complete Results are on the ARRLWeb

For the complete 2007 June VHF Contest Results, including scores for all entries, see **www.arrl.org/contests/**. Soapbox comments are at **www.arrl.org/contests/soapbox/**.

Club Competition

Watch out! The Society of Midwest Contesters put together 55 logs to post a 1.1 million point score in the Unlimited Club category. The SMC has grown in number and activity, as they entered 28 logs in '05 and 36 logs in '06. Competition leads to more activity, something we all enjoy. The Potomac Valley Radio Club had their three-peat topping the Medium Club category with a 3.6 million aggregate score from 35 members. The Mt Airy VHF Radio Club swapped places again with the North East Weak Signal Group coming in second with a score of 1.2 million. The NEWS Group in 3rd place had 990k points with 17 logs. Welcome to the Alabama Contest Group who made their first appearance in the Medium VHF Club Category with 3 logs and a total of 111k points.

In the Local Club listings, the North Texas Microwave Society placed first with 7 logs accumulating 773k points, tripling their scores from last year. The Downey ARC was second in this listing with 4 entries and 333k points, another welcome to a new group. The Eastern Connecticut ARA was in third with a 111k score from 5 logs.

Observations and Web scores

There were 3 brief "DX" logs reported this year, two of them with only 1 QSO each, and CU2JT adds, "Rotten conditions but glad I could give one guy the HM77 grid."

With only a few more months to go until the 2008 ARRL June VHF QSO Party (scheduled for June 14-16) it is likely that many of the "regulars" are already setting aside the time, planning their strategy and ensuring that their gear is in top working order. With so many balls in the air to juggle, it takes a defined and disciplined plan and execution to be a top scorer. Single ops carefully track rovers, set schedules and use *WSJT* to enhance their efforts. Multi-ops use similar strategies, and often equip and support rovers to increase grid-multipliers. Portable QRP ops find that when they are at a good elevation and in the open that even very little power and a lightweight, directional antenna is all that is needed to work many of the well equipped fixed stations. KB5ZYG, a first-timer operating portable from Mt Mitchell, North Carolina, said, "Learned a lot, had a lot of fun…next time I'll bring a table, umbrella and a friend with another band to operate."

We are on the upslope of the next sunspot cycle, 6m conditions are bound to improve, and tropo-ducting and aurora enhancements can make their appearances at any time. If you have already been bitten by the VHF bug, stay with it, as conditions for future contests are always unpredictable. Newcomers with low or modest power and antennas are always welcome. K3NK commented, "First time in this contest. Had fun and will be back." AK9F reported, "Operated 6, 2 and 432 using only a 6 meter loop at 15 feet… amazingly, it actually radiated." If you haven't yet pushed the band switch toward 50 MHz and higher on your new multi-band rig, you're missing an exciting opportunity. Subscribe to a VHF reflector or a VHF club newsletter. Visit a VHF club near you, or perhaps their Web site if you're not in their neighborhood. Aside from some excellent ARRL publications, there is a wealth of information available on all phases of VHF and microwave theory, construction, operation and contesting available from these resources. QST