

Results, 2005 June VHF QSO Party—Catching a VHF/UHF Buzz

Celebrating increased participation and activity with a “buzz”!

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It's so exciting to see a 10 percent increase in submitted logs over last year for this event: 840 logs received in 2005 vs 763 in 2004. The more stations on the air, the busier the operators, the higher the scores and the better the satisfaction of participants. Adding to the usual exhilaration of VHF contesting, there was E-skip for many, and an aurora for many more, as “the buzz” lasted for several hours on Sunday afternoon. Can you equate the stimulus of an hour of wall-to-wall stations calling on E-skip or aurora to the caffeine in a cup of espresso or a can of Red Bull? The Sunday aurora re-energized those operators who were sagging in the waning hours of the contest. The “buzz” gave them a jolt, and both QSOs totals and grid multipliers on 6 and 2 meters got a tremendous boost from the great reflector in the sky.

The weather was not an important factor for most for this event, although there were some clusters of strong thunderstorms in the central part of the US that caused affected stations to be off the air for several hour periods each day. Most operators who posted their comments and pictures on the “Soapbox” reported generally good conditions, while Pete, WA7JTM, reported gusty winds, rain, hail, and lightning from DM53 in the White Mountains of Eastern Arizona. K7MDL/R found snow at 5500 feet as he motored through the mountains in Eastern Washington, while KB1HXO was fogbound on Mt Washington, NH, at 6288 feet. The usual winds up there only allowed him to erect his 6 m antenna, but he managed to log 80 QSOs, despite the limitations.

Entries are Up

Efforts by both big and small stations seemed to pay off with scores incrementally increased over previous years. The limited multi-op stations were again doing their best to flood the airways on the “bot-

tom four” while well equipped microwave and unlimited multi-ops were encouraging contacts to run the higher bands. There were 540 entries from stations scoring less than 10,000 points. Judging from the comments of those in sparsely populated areas, and operators who had limited time to participate, everyone seemed to have great satisfaction in the activity and the conditions for the effort applied. There were logs received from 92 rovers and from 30 QRP portables, which continue to add interest and intrigue to the chase for contacts. Of the rover entries, there were 25% that operated with 1-3 bands, but a huge 50% of them were operational on 6 or more bands, with several rovers operating 12 or 13 bands. Fifty percent of the QRP stations had 1-3 bands, while 15% activated 6 bands or more.

As the controversies continue about reasons for falling VHF contest participation rates, differential scores for microwave contacts and rover tactics, the ARRL Board of Directors is again assembling an ad-hoc group to reconsider the current VHF contest rules. As a reader of this report, an active VHF contester, or just a casual periodic

VHF equipped operator, these future discussions will be of interest to you. As stated earlier, more participants lead to more potential QSOs with ensuing improved operator satisfaction. Look at the VHF contest reflector¹ or the microwave reflector² in addition to the ARRL publications and bulletins for updates and opportunities to give your input on the issues.

As the availability of increasing numbers of surplus VHF and UHF and microwave gear and components are being made available through hamfests and Web-based services, the numbers of microwave equipped stations continues to increase. Power levels are also up on 903 MHz and higher, as commercial services are pulling these amplifiers from their racks and replacing them with higher frequency units. The regional VHF conferences and the annual Microwave Update (MUD) meetings have been a treasure trove of information for builders, operators and rovers. Detailed presentations on antenna and equipment construction, interfaces to various computer programs for logging, frequency monitoring and stabilization, operating techniques



Make sure to ready W6DWI soapbox of his Single-OP Portable venture to DM16 from Telescope Peak, Death Valley National Park, Inyo County, California, USA.

Top Ten

Single Operator, Low Power		Limited Multioperator	
K2DRH	224,896	K9NS	630,743
WB1GQR (W1SJ, op)	163,744	K3EAR	516,258
K9MU	156,247	W3SO	434,808
K8BU	144,980	W4IY	412,328
W4SHG	93,150	AA4ZZ	366,916
AF1T	77,805	W3DOG	306,820
K8MR	64,084	K8CC	234,856
N0LL	57,069	W1QK	161,304
N0KP	57,062	N8ZM	128,520
N0VZJ	55,890	WA7JTM	86,528
Single Operator, High Power		Multioperator	
K1TEO	638,321	W2SZ	2,145,936
K1RZ	308,234	K8GP	1,554,487
W4RX	283,764	W3CCX	993,328
K3DNE	216,087	K3YTL	477,466
K5TR	209,560	N2PA	416,724
K8EB	168,896	K5QE	262,482
K4QI	150,047	N2NK	214,228
KM0T	146,475	K7CW	198,085
K8MD	140,936	W4NH	190,806
AF6O	127,335	K0DI	138,827
Single Operator Portable		Rover	
K6MI	94,248	N6TEB	225,008
KA1LMR	76,920	W3IY	178,064
N7IR	31,719	K2TER	133,433
W6DWI	18,225	N6RMJ	123,288
K0NR	16,415	K6NC	103,532
N7OEP	14,472	W9FZ	82,278
W7KK	7,980	KF8QL	82,152
K9GY	6,357	K2QO	82,040
W4RXR	6,210	VE3NPB	80,190
KG4LEV	4,884	N1XKT	57,239

and digital modes have infused participants with new knowledge and skills. Proceedings of the conferences are also available from the ARRL.

For this contest, there were over 133,000 QSOs in the submitted logs, a 5% increase over last year. About half of the QSOs were on 6 meters, 28% on 2 meters, 11% on 432, 6% on 222, 2% on 1296, and smaller percentages on other higher frequency bands. There were 81 QSOs on 24 GHz, and more than 100 light/laser QSOs, largely attributable to rovers. The top stations with grid multipliers starts with perennial winner in the M class (multi-unlimited), W2SZ/1, who captured 456 multipliers in their log, followed by K8GP, with 443 multipliers. With an outstanding performance of 181 grids on 6 m alone, the Limited Multi-op group of K9NS had the third highest grid total at 373, and that was followed by the extraordinary Single Operator High Power effort of K1TEO at 349 grids. W3CCX (multi-unlimited) also broke the 300 grid level with 343 grids, 5th highest overall.

With an increase of 61 logs to a total of 468 in the Single-Op Low Power category, this continues to be the predominant type of participating station. The Single-Op High Power category showed 165 entries, only 3 fewer than last year. The Limited Multi-Op station entries increased by 4 to 46, and the Unlimited Multi-Op stations accounted for 36 entries, exactly the same number as in last year's event. It was truly gratifying to see a 375% in the number of stations operating in the QRP Portable class, with a total of 30 entries this year. There are still

many ARRL sections without entries in this class, and no scoring records established.

Check the June scores records up through last year on the main Web page at www.arrl.org/contests. Rover logs added another two entries to last year's total, rounding out to 90 stations out on the roads this time. There are probably multiple factors accounting for the increase in participation: all of them good! If you haven't yet gotten involved, see what opportunities you can have with your own gear, or in conjunction with another VHF ham or multi-op group. All will attest, it's a lot of fun, and there is great satisfaction in accomplishing the challenges of VHF, UHF and microwave communication.

Single-Operator

In the low-power category, Bob, K2DRH, in IL section, again put in the top score with 224k points, a hair lower than last year, but a super score with his 7 bands through 2304 MHz. With the loss of ac power due to an automobile accident with a feeder pole in the area, he was able to get his 7.5 kW generator working for a short while until it too quit due to loose bolts and a blown head gasket. He finally got power restored in a few hours, but by then, activity was off or the night and he missed his WSJT skeds. Despite that visit from Murphy, he still held first place. WB1GQR (W1SJ, Mitch, op) was second with 163k from VT, topping his second place score from last year by 40k with the addition of 4 microwave bands. K9MU (156k) and K8BU (145k) each moved up a notch in the standings to 3rd and 4th place, respectively, dropping W4SHG (93k) back into 5th place. Records were set by W4SHG for VA section and Roanoke Division, by K8BU in MI section and Great Lakes Division and by WB1GQR (W1SJ, op) for the VT section and the New England Division. With only 3 QSOs on 2 m in 1 section, Ed, KL7UW, established an initial scoring record as the first single-op low power entry in the Alaska section. It may not take too much to top it in the future!

The high-power category saw a new national, New England Division and CT section record set by the first place score of a determined operator, Jeff, K1TEO. Despite the loss of his 10 GHz ability at the start of the contest (later learned that it was a simple broken wire connection, easily repaired *after* the contest), he scored over 638k, trumping the previous national June contest SOHP record of 626k, set by W5ZN in 1998. Following the old adage, "practice makes perfect," Jeff is on the air for all the VHF events, and constantly seeking improvements to increment his score. His friendly nature on the air, coupled with a great signal, attracts stations back to work

him contest after contest. Back in SOHP second place is Dave, K1RZ, in MDC, with a score of 308k. After the contest Dave's gear, including his tower mounted 10 GHz gear at 120 feet, got a lightning hit. Here's hoping he'll have it all repaired for the next series of VHF events. Jim, W4RX, moved into 3rd place with a score of 263k on a 10 band effort from VA, also setting a new Roanoke Division and VA section record. K3DNE, Ed, moved up a notch from last year into 4th place with 216k, 41k over last year, with an added microwave band. K5TR was in 5th place with a huge 175 grids on 6 m with 209k from a 5 band effort.

With the growth of the Single-operator QRP portable category, there are several new section records. John, K6MI, put a 10 band station together and amassed 94k points to win first place in this category and set an SJV section and Pacific Division record. Chris, KA1LMR, in second place, doubled his previous top score from 1992 to set a NH section record with 77k in a 6 band effort. Gary, N7IR, placed third with 31k while Robin, W6DWI, was in 4th place with 18k from ORG and Bob, K0NR, captured 5th place and a Rocky Mountain Division and section record with 16k from CO. One of the most interesting accounts of a "Q" entrant on the soapbox is Robin's story and pictures of his hike to 11,000 feet on Telescope Peak in DM16 in Death Valley National Park. He hauled 80+ pounds of radio gear in addition to his personal support needs over a several day period. Encountering snow twice and hail once, he endured to operate bands ABD with 10W and directional antennas, powered by NiMH cells and a solar panel. Great planning and perseverance! W8PGW (Stephan,

Affiliated Club Competition

Club Name	Entries	Club Total
Medium Category		
Potomac Valley Radio Club	31	3,547,020
Mt Airy VHF Radio Club	18	1,565,564
North East Weak Signal Group	14	924,166
Society of Midwest Contesters	28	759,181
Northern Lights Radio Society	19	634,274
Western States Weak Signal Society	13	547,629
Pacific Northwest VHF Society	17	416,826
Carolina DX Assn	5	378,435
Northern California Contest Club	18	366,592
Mad River Radio Club	5	329,289
Badger Contesters	13	300,386
Rochester VHF Group	7	297,307
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	13	284,709
Contest Club Ontario	14	284,647
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	8	208,783
Central Texas DX and Contest Club	6	118,382
Florida Contest Group	4	75,401
Tennessee Contest Group	5	73,044
Dominion DX Group	4	40,180
Central Arizona DX Assn	3	29,126
Hudson Valley Contesters and DXers	4	24,635
Frankford Radio Club	5	16,287
Bergen ARA	4	9,909
Local Category		
Mt Frank Contesters	4	630,790
Chippewa Valley VHF Contesters	10	231,489
Roadrunners Microwave Group	3	150,333
Eastern Connecticut ARA	4	71,132
North Texas Microwave Society	5	68,388
Delaware Valley VHF Society	5	55,681
Medina 2 Meter Group	3	24,682
Dauberville DX Assn	3	6,842

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)	163,744	A	W4SHG N8UM	93,150 48,720	A A	K2DRH K9MU	224,896 156,247	A A	N0LL N0KP	57,069 57,062	A A	NU6S KG6GIQ	52,717 45,375	A A
AF1T	77,805	A	N4KFT	38,000	A	KB8U	144,980	A	N0VZJ	55,890	A	W7YOZ	42,946	A
WB2SIH	55,448	A	KD4HIK	22,374	A	K8MR	64,084	A	NN5DX	40,334	A	K6VCR	34,402	A
W3KJ	39,160	A	KU4WW	20,800	A	KC9BQA	49,920	A	W0JT	29,890	A	KC6TEU	31,122	A
W1PM	39,008	A												
K1TEO	638,321	B	W4RX	263,764	B	K8EB	168,896	B	K5TR	209,560	B	AF6O	127,335	B
K1RZ	308,234	B	K4QI	150,047	B	K8MD	140,936	B	KM0T	146,475	B	WB6AAG	106,218	B
K3DNE	216,087	B	W4ZRZ	65,415	B	K8TQK	123,097	B	W0GHZ	117,552	B	KR7O	70,357	B
W3SZ	125,928	B	W4WA	58,756	B	N2BJ	119,412	B	W5SIX	115,659	B	K7RAT	66,430	B
K2TXB	112,649	B	KC4PX	46,494	B	WB9Z	110,246	B	(K5AM, op) N0URW	89,355	B	(N6TR, op) KG6IYN	53,530	B
KA1LMR	76,920	Q	K9GY	6,357	Q	N8XA	3,960	Q	K0NR	16,415	Q	K6MI	94,248	Q
AA3GM	1,938	Q	W4RXR	6,210	Q	W8PGW	3,880	Q	N7QF	1,734	Q	N7IR	31,719	Q
WB2AMU	1,767	Q	KG4LEV	4,884	Q	(WB8WSF, op)			N0JK	210	Q	W6DWI	18,225	Q
KB1HXO	1,040	Q	KU4BP	378	Q	KC9FVW	12	Q				N7OEP	14,472	Q
AB2K	238	Q	K4AQ	128	Q							W7KK	7,980	Q
K3EAR	516,258	L	W4IY	412,328	L	K9NS	630,743	L	K5ARM	85,656	L	WA7JTM	86,528	L
W3SO	434,808	L	AA4ZZ	366,916	L	K8CC	234,856	L	KM5PO	80,199	L	K7XC	40,893	L
W3DOG	308,820	L	W4COV	14,688	L	N8ZM	128,520	L	W5KFT	59,250	L	K7MWD	38,081	L
W1QK	161,304	L	K5KDX	12,166	L	K8FM	23,375	L	N0MA	32,382	L	K7RC	24,840	L
WY3P	45,724	L	N3NYC	9,100	L	NG9R	17,195	L	W0LSD	31,472	L	VA7DX	24,272	L
W2SZ	2,145,936	M	K8GP	1,554,487	M	WW8M	136,881	M	K5QE	262,482	M	K7CW	198,085	M
W3CCX	993,328	M	W4NH	190,806	M	W9RVG	71,862	M	W0KVA	60,198	M	K0DI	138,827	M
K3YTL	477,466	M	AG4V	50,625	M	K9RN	56,952	M	W0EEA	56,420	M	VA7ISL	125,452	M
N2PA	416,724	M	WC4J	50,295	M	N9AKR	29,472	M	KB0HH	38,048	M	AD6J	71,280	M
N2NK	214,228	M	N4JQQ	26,190	M	W9SZ	6,480	M	W5LCC	35,340	M	W6SBA	68,757	M
K2TER	133,433	R	W3IY	178,064	R	W9FZ	82,278	R	KC0IYT	48,114	R	N6TEB	225,008	R
K2QO	82,040	R	W4VHF	37,400	R	KF8QL	82,152	R	KF0Q	36,480	R	N6RMJ	123,288	R
N1XKT	57,239	R	KD5RUJ	21,175	R	VE3NPB	80,190	R	W0ZQ	31,533	R	K6NC	103,532	R
(K1DS, op)			KD5SHM	14,558	R	K8DOG	51,523	R	N5AC	30,192	R	K7MDL	30,996	R
WA2IID	55,328	R	W4TXS	8,900	R	VE3SMA	40,474	R	N5RZ	27,744	R	K6EU	24,367	R
K3LFO	47,170	R												

WB8WSF, op) set a MI section record in this class with a 3880 score, and Fred, KG6KUB, set a PAC section record with 870 points. There are lots more records to be set and broken in this category, which is showing both growth and popularity. The following sections have not had an entry recorded yet in this category: NNY, USVI, PR, SC, SFL, WCF, LA, AK, EWA, NE, AB, MAN, MAR, NL, NTYT or SK. This is a challenge and an opportunity to put your call in the record books.

Multi-operator

The W2SZ/1 Mt Greylock Expeditionary Force topped the Multi-op Unlimited class again, with 2.1 million points, an improvement over last year by 200k, yet shy of their record set in 2002 of 2.7 million points. Although some of their microwave totals were less than last year's, they had 19 more grid multipliers on 6 meters. With their excellent QTH atop Mt Greylock, and an experienced team of operators, rovers and very substantial equipment, they will continue to be a group to set the pace for the other multi-op teams. The Grid Pirates of the K8GP team changed their category this year, moving to Unlimited from Limited Multi-op last year. In doing so they leapt into 2nd place, closing the scoring gap between themselves and W2SZ. The Grid Pirates are another group with experience and a disciplined strategy, just 10% fewer QSOs and only 1% fewer grids than W2SZ. The difference appears to be in the balance of contacts between the lower and higher bands, where W2SZ has the advantage with

the number of microwave contacts and grids, while the K8GP group bested them on 6 and 2 meters. In third place, the Packrats of the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club had a score of 993k. The competition for top honors in this category is continuing to heat up, with K3YTL in 4th place with 477k, having moved into the Unlimited category from Limited for the past several years, and N2PA in the 5th spot at 417k.

K9NS in IL moved into the top spot in the Limited multi-op category with a score of 630k, up 50k from their score last year, no doubt due to a great grid count of 181 on 6 m and 96 grids on 2 m. The K3EAR team moved into the Limited Multi-op from their previous year's position in the Unlimited category and came in second with a score of 516k. Although they had 171 QSOs more than K9NS, their grid counts on 6 and 2 m were 120 fewer. W3SO with 434k placed third again, this time improving their score from last year by 114k points and setting a new WPA record in this category. AA4ZZ was 5th with 367k. Six other section records were set in the Limited Multi-op group by the following stations: KL7DX, AK, 104 points (the first entry in this category for AK); K2MET, NLI, 20k; K5ARM, NM, 85k; K8CC, MI, 234k; W3DOG, DE, 308k. As the entries in the Limited Multi-op seem to be growing in capability, many of them can be encouraged to move into the Unlimited category and add the microwave experience.

Rover

Top honors for this contest in the Rover

category go to Dave, N6TEB/R, who teamed up with his usual roving partner Glenn, KE6HPZ, to turn in a score of 225k from the West Coast, utilizing 11 bands with 50 MHz-10 GHz + Light/LASER. Bill, W3IY/R, and Christophe, ON4IY, teamed up again for the last time to capture second place with 178k. Sadly, Bill Seabreeze, W3IY, became a Silent Key at the end of the summer. He will be remembered by the VHF community for his dedication to encouragement of others to be active on all bands through the microwave spectrum, and for his remarkable rover efforts in the Atlantic Region over the past several years. The Mid-Atlantic States VHF Conference, held on September 24, 2005 was dedicated to his memory and his legacy will be honored with "The Rover Recognition Award" (see sidebar). Bill, K2TER/R, and his rover partner Tom, KV2X, scored 133k for third place in the WNY, also with an 11 band effort. Patrick, N6RMJ/R, turned in a single-handed score of 123k for 4th place using 10 bands. With 103k, K6NC/R rounded out 5th place with bands ABCDE.

As the Rover category has continued to grow in popularity and contribution to VHF, UHF and microwave activity and gas prices are hovering in the \$3 per gallon range, there will likely be additional considerations given to the "cost per QSO." Despite this potential obstacle, many rovers are covering 8-12 grids and more for a contest weekend, keeping the bands busy. Rovers are anxious to share their experiences. Several have written articles for *QST*, other Amateur Radio

journals, VHF conference proceedings and Web postings, including the ARRL contest soapbox. Most Web search engines can bring up an interesting array of sites and articles for those who want to read more about the roving experience.

Club Competition

Now in our 3rd year of aggregate club scores for the June VHF QSO Party, the list of leaders in the Medium Size Club entries shows some slight changes from last year. Overall, there were 4 additional Medium Club submissions and 2 additional Local Club entries, again lending some additional gains for VHF activity. The Potomac Valley Radio Club again topped the list with 31 entries, accumulating 3.5 million points for 3 out of 3 first places since this category was established. In second place was the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club with an aggregate score of 1.5 million from 16 entries. Both of these top scores were largely made up from the multi-operator station entries from these clubs. In third place was the North East Weak Signal Group with 924k from 14 entries.

In the Local Club category, high score honors were earned by the first place Mt Frank Contesters with 4 entries for 630k; in second place the Chippewa Valley VHF Contesters with 10 entries for 231k; and in third place the Roadrunners Microwave Group with 3 entries for a total of 150k. As has been said before, but deserves to be repeated, Club entries are often the stimulus for regional activity, with significant peer encouragement to be active on VHF, UHF and microwave frequencies.

Highlights

All 50 states were represented in the entries, as well as logs from six of the nine Canadian sections, one entry each from the Bahamas, Jamaica, FP/Miquelon, and four from Mexico. The 6 m E_s favored the central and western US, while the Sunday afternoon aurora enhanced conditions across the upper states and Canada. Activity seemed pretty well spread across the country with greater intensity in the more densely populated East and West Coasts, but a clear increase in VHF QSOs across the central, midwestern and southwestern US. All the mountaintops were busy with single-ops, rovers and multi-ops. Although mountaintop weather can be cold, wet and windy, most temporary stations managed to gain satisfaction for their efforts.

Tom as FP/N6RA celebrated his 50th year as a ham operator by traveling to FP/Miquelon Island off the coast of Newfoundland and putting in a single-band 6 m effort. His 45 QSOs were almost exclusively made during the Au on Sunday, despite having plenty of power and a 41 foot boom

W3IY Rover Recognition Award Established by the Mt Airy "Packrats"

The memory of Bill Seabreeze, W3IY, is being honored by the establishment of the Rover Recognition Award. The Mt Airy VHF Radio Club, Inc. members were fortunate to have had Bill and his frequent roving partner, Christophe, ON4IY, operate the VHF contests and other on-the-air activities from Bill's rover van in grids adjacent to "Packrat territory" and were responsible for hundreds of QSOs, dozens of grid multipliers and thousands of contest points for the Packrats in each of these events.

The club voted to make Bill an honorary Packrat this past year, and also awarded him a plaque in recognition of his efforts and achievements over the past several years. Not only had he been an active roving tester, but he stimulated significant microwave activity in the region with the consensus building of the designated "Microwave Activity Days," commonly referred to as MAD on the first Saturday morning and the first Monday evening of each month. Many of the rovers in the region try to get their vehicles out for these MAD periods, home stations are active, and all try to make sure that their gear is in working order, and possibly try out new modes, new paths and new bands.

Additionally, Bill established an excellent Web site as a resource page for rovers, including lots of pictures of his gear, rover vehicle and operating sites. There were also a host of links and other useful info on rover issues and how he had addressed them.

The 2005 Rover Recognition Award will be given in early 2006 to a rover station who demonstrated particular excellence throughout the year in 2005. The Packrat Board of Directors will review the activity of the rover stations in all of the competitive VHF events throughout the year. Consideration will be given to the effort, regularity of operation, bands operated, grids covered, contribution to the VHF community, unique factors and operating characteristics. Although total scores will be factored in, they will not be significant criteria for this award. The contest results as posted in *QST* and on the Web sites of other contest sponsors will enable the award committee to form a list of candidates, and any additional information on the rover operations can be directed via e-mail to the Packrat President and Chairman of the Board as listed on the Packrat Web site. Queries may be sent to Rick Rosen, K1DS, at rick1ds@hotmail.com.

Yagi. Paul, operating VP5/N4VHF from Providenciales Island in the Turks and Caicos had 67 QSOs and 38 multipliers on 6 m. Plans are being made to add 2 m for next year from this rare VHF DX location.

Extracting from several "Soapbox" postings, the reports were full of adventure, great efforts, and happy operators. From Lou, N9KC/R, roving through CO, KS and NE: "I was surprised how well the little halo antenna worked. Also had several unexpected 10 GHz QSOs and lots of activity on all the bands." Bill, KØAWU, said, "...the Sunday afternoon AU popped in and I had a BLAST!" K5KDX multi-op reported, "This was a lot of work to get set up and to take down, but was a lot of fun." From Ellis, WA1RKS, "I have a small station setup but do have fun and enjoy each band with gusto!" "This was my very 1st June VHF Contest!...and it was a blast!" from Carl, KC2NRU. The KM5PO group reported similarly, "This was our first effort and did we ever have fun!" Others said, "...had a ball as usual..." and "...what a fun contest!" Whether you have a newer multiband rig with 6 m and higher

bands, or just some FM VHF gear, you can get in on the action and excitement. There are plenty of resources, and the VHF reflectors welcome questions from newcomers and experienced VHFers. It doesn't take too much to get started, but a good, high location with a decent antenna, low loss feedline and a reasonably sensitive receiver are factors that will add to your satisfaction.

All Soapbox comments and pictures are found at www.arrrl.org/contests/soapbox/. Detailed listings of all scores may be found on the Web report at www.arrrl.org/contests/results.

If you have been standing on the sidelines for a while, and haven't yet tried to be part of some of the excitement of the VHF contests, take this as an invitation and a challenge. *The next June VHF QSO Party is scheduled for June 10-12, 2006.* It's never too early to contact others who have been active on the VHF bands to get additional encouragement, to line up equipment and antennas, and make your own participation plans or to get linked up with a multi-op team or VHF-active club. **QST**