

2006 ARRL September VHF QSO Party Results

Endeavor to Persevere

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2006 saw some amazing VHF contesting results, especially the June VHF and CQ WW contest, both of which had excellent E-skip (E_s) condition on 6 meters and even some on 2 meters. September 2005 saw some excellent propagation and record setting scores. Would the enhanced propagation hold for this year's September contest?

For the most part, the September contest had average to below average conditions throughout much of the country. A strong cold front moved from the Midwest a day before the contest, passing through to the East Coast as the contest started and ending any real hope of enhanced conditions in the eastern half of the country.

Other areas noted little if any enhancement, with the exception of a nice E_s opening Sunday afternoon and evening, mainly from Florida to the Midwest. 2006 was the kind of contest where success requires perseverance, keen awareness of band conditions to find the small periods of enhancement that invariably occur even under normal conditions and working rovers to fill in those otherwise inactive grid squares.

2006 saw a total of 531 logs submitted, down a bit from 2005 where the enhanced tropo, aurora and E_s conditions helped increase participation. Even without enhanced conditions, five new division records were set this year, thousands of contacts were made, new all-time grids were worked by many and there was lots of fun and camaraderie for the VHF contesting fraternity.

E-Skip

Statistically, September tends to be one of the poorest months for E_s openings on 6 meters; however, last September saw a terrific opening that lasted for several hours and helped many achieve high scores. Surprisingly, 2006 saw a repeat E_s opening, albeit much less widespread and of shorter duration. Lesson learned — expect the unexpected when VHF contesting! Stations in Florida were especially well positioned this time, working stations mainly in the Midwest. Floridians Ivars Lauzums, KC4PX, and Murray Dail, K4HV, topped the single operator 6 meter grid totals with 64 and 53

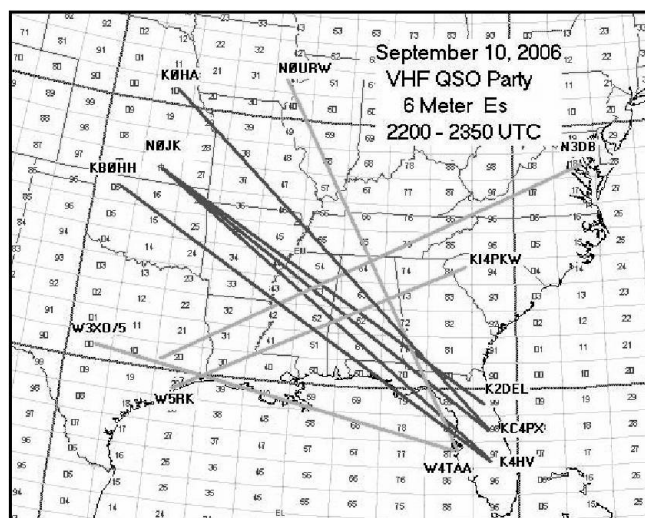


Figure 1 — The E cloud that sparked the opening was likely over northern Mississippi and Alabama. There is a clear path from Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa toward Florida. While apparently weaker, there was also a Southwest to Northeast path, as a few contacts were made from Texas toward the Carolinas, Virginia and Maryland.

respectively, many worked during the Sunday afternoon opening. Ivars noted that the contest was quite slow, but by persevering he was rewarded with about three hours of great fun on 6 meters. He worked stations as far west as Texas, as far north as Iowa and as far east as Ohio during the opening. Jon Jones, N0JK was able to work into Florida from EM17, though he was only using an indoor dipole. As he put it, "A September contest E-skip opening is an unexpected treat."

Playing the Hand Contesters are Dealt

When the bands are enhanced, we can work many distant grids. Activity usually increases as casual contesters become more interested and spend longer amounts of time on the air, and signals are stronger than under normal operating conditions. When propagation enhancement is not there we generally have to work harder to achieve a large score, and there are more frequent slow periods during a contest. So how did the top guns achieve their scores with the average or below average conditions we saw in this year's contest? To find out, I asked a group of operators who achieved great results this time around. Dave Petke, K1RZ, submitted a list of key things he does to maximize his score and have fun during a contest. With a few edits, here's the summary with comments from the panel of "experts" — Dave Olean, K1WHS; Bob Matthews, K8TQK; Frank Bechdoldt, K3UHF; Bob Striegl, K2DRH; Dave Kleindl, N0KP, and Marshall Williams, K5QE.

● **Rovers, Rovers, Rovers** — All top scorers note their success with rovers. They

Top Ten

Single Operator, Low Power

K2DRH	200,860
WB1GQR	92,759
AF1T	83,400
VE3TFU	71,818
W0AH	69,309
WB2SIH	55,862
N0KP	55,107
WB5ZDP	52,910
WA3GFZ	52,704
WA3EOQ	44,400

Single Operator, High Power

K1TEO	571,675
K1RZ	342,540
W4RX	248,738
KA1ZE	207,558
K8TQK	177,388
K8EB	107,700
K4QI	88,550
K1JCL	87,702
(K1GX, op)	
W4ZRZ	80,848
W4WA	70,356

QRP Portable

KA1LMR	67,650
K6MI	24,624
N7CFO	9,016
KK6KE	8,424
WB2AMU	3,549
W9SZ	3,196
N7XB	2,884
W1JHR	2,660
KQ6EE	2,541
KU4BP	448

Limited Multioperator

K3EAR	373,804
W3SO	265,374
K8EP	184,094
AA4ZZ	161,937
K2BAR	129,640
W4NH	84,728
N8ZM	61,770
KB1DFB	41,554
W1QK	38,964
W2ZQ	30,192

Multioperator

W2SZ	1,247,208
K1WHS	1,056,123
K3QE	365,552
K3YTL	341,088
W4IY	285,714
N3NGE	283,002
N2NK	135,520
K3EOD	74,542
W2EA	70,959
N9UHF	30,294

Rover

N6NB	245,340
N6MU	233,730
W6XD	230,866
KF6YV	222,390
W1RT	108,252
VE3OIL	102,528
K3UHF	70,065
WA2ID	63,933
VE3SMA	61,311
KC3WD	59,126

provide many contacts, but more importantly, they give those multipliers that would be either impossible or tough to otherwise work. As Marshall, K5QE, put it, "We give most of the credit for our score to the rovers." Both Dave, K1RZ, and Bob, K2DRH, noted how important it is to track the rovers as they move from grid to grid. They often are in a grid for only a short while, so you do not want to miss the opportunity to work them. Noting their frequencies of operation is a big help to find them as they

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	92,759	A	W0AH	69,309	A	K2DRH	200,860	A	N0KP	55,107	A	KC6TEU	23,892	A
AF1T	83,400	A	W4SHG	43,470	A	VE3TFU	71,818	A	WB5ZDP	52,910	A	W7CE	14,382	A
WB2SIH	55,862	A	W4XP	31,692	A	N9DG	23,994	A	N0VZJ	36,975	A	W6OMF	10,746	A
WA3GFZ	52,704	A	K4FJW	12,402	A	W09S	16,256	A	W3XO	23,850	A	K6ME	4,867	A
WA3EOQ	44,400	A	WA4QYK	10,750	A	VE3KZ	12,663	A	W5ROK	17,073	A	N6KW	4,350	A
K1TEO	571,675	B	W4RX	248,738	B	K8TQK	177,388	B	W0ZQ	28,938	B	KG6IYN	32,706	B
K1RZ	342,540	B	K4QI	88,550	B	K8EB	107,700	B	K5LLL	25,365	B	N7EPD	23,340	B
KA1ZE	207,558	B	W4ZRZ	80,848	B	K8MD	70,050	B	K0AWU	18,486	B	KR7O	20,128	B
K1JCL	87,702	B	W4WA	70,356	B	W9GA	66,420	B	W0GHZ	18,225	B	KC6ZWT	19,620	B
W3ZZ	70,330	B	KN4SM	42,210	B	N2BJ	53,865	B	NM5M	10,569	B	K7ND	12,720	B
KA1LMR	67,650	Q	KU4BP	448	Q	W9SZ	3,196	Q	K0NR	65	Q	K6MI	24,624	Q
WB2AMU	3,549	Q	KG4ORX	70	Q	N8XA	272	Q	K0JJW	6	Q	N7CFO	9,016	Q
W1JHR	2,660	Q										KK6KE	8,424	Q
VE2DWA	374	Q										N7XB	2,884	Q
N1MPT	341	Q										KQ6EE	2,541	Q
K3EAR	373,804	L	K8EP	184,094	L	N8ZM	61,770	L	W5LCC	3,193	L	VA7ISL	28,060	L
W3SO	265,374	L	AA4ZZ	161,937	L	K8IZ	26,800	L	KB7EEG	276	L	W6MMM	19,620	L
K2BAR	128,640	L	W4NH	84,728	L	WN8R	17,550	L	K0GIE	80	L	KF6CNV	9,430	L
K81DFB	41,554	L	WD4OAR	25,200	L	N9TF	10,045	L				K6XN	8,979	L
W1QK	38,964	L	WK4P	21,240	L	VA3WLD	4,235	L				K6UCI	4,525	L
W2SZ	1,247,208	M	W4IY	285,714	M	N9UHF	30,294	M	K5QE	365,552	M	K16BEW	5,332	M
K1WHS	1,056,123	M	KO4MZ	18,834	M	K9MU	7,140	M	W0EEA	30,015	M			
K3YTL	341,088	M	AG4V	18,270	M				K60HH	29,260	M			
N3NGE	283,002	M	NE5BO	12,141	M				WASTKU	11,774	M			
N2NK	135,520	M	K3JT	6,426	M									
WA2IID	63,933	R	W1RT	108,252	R	VE3OIL	102,528	R	N6NB	245,340	R	K3UHF	70,065	R
K2QO	58,986	R	KC3WD	59,126	R	VE3SMA	61,311	R	N6MU	233,730	R	KE6BZY	18,200	R
WA3PTV	50,139	R	N4OFA	42,273	R	W9FZR	40,068	R	W6XD	230,866	R	K6NKC	9,940	R
K3LFO	49,215	R	AF4OD	6,072	R	WB9SNR	34,371	R	KF6YYV	222,390	R	K6LMN/R	2,944	R
KE3HT	42,864	R	AH8M	5,100	R	VE3CRU/R	24,684	R	N5AC	53,956	R	K6JAR/R	2,900	R

move around. Working a rover can add a bunch of contacts in a short space of time — something to look forward to when things slow down.

From a Rover's point of view, Frank, K3UHF, mentioned that it is important to start and end at a good spot. Using the time before the contest to get to a spot so as not to use up operating time helps the score. Activity is often highest at the start of a contest and near the end.

● **Run the Bands** — It's always important to run the bands with stations when you connect to be sure you do not miss them. One advantage of a contest without enhanced conditions is there is more time to run the bands once you find someone. No need to worry about missing that big 6 meter opening. Bob, K8TQK, noted that he worked stations this time as soon as he heard them, not waiting till later — you may never hear them again. Bob, K2DRH, made the point that it pays to ask everyone what bands they have. Even if they have a modest station and don't think they can make it on a particular band, experience suggests that once beams are lined up, you can often make the contact. I can attest that this usually happens to me four or five times during a contest where I coax someone to try, we make it and they come back to the original band we were on to say, "I had no idea I could work that far on 432 (fill in the band)."

● **Keep the Rotator Turning** — Most VHFers use highly directional beams, so unless both beams are pointed in the right direction, we often can not hear one another. This is especially true for the farther out sta-



The K3UHF rover station with microwave extension — please pass on the left!

tions. Moving the rotator around improves the odds of catching someone when the beams are better aligned. Dave, K1RZ, and Bob, K2DRH, noted one of my favorite strategies — pointing the antenna looking for missing grids. It is amazing that time after time I find that I can fill in my grid map by checking what grids I still need and aiming for the needed grids. You have to call a lot of CQs to make this happen; calling CQ and moving the rotator around also help to spot short term enhancement that will almost always occur over the course of the contest. Several of our experts observed that being in the right place at the right time is critical for catching those far away stations that may only be workable briefly during a

contest with average conditions.

● **Tune Around** — While this might seem to conflict with calling a lot of CQs, the top testers balance their calling time with some listening time. It is another way to observe periods of minor enhancement in a particular direction and to see who might have just come on the band. It also helps with finding rovers and oftentimes there are stations that get on for relatively brief periods of time to hand out points. Some of them will only CQ to maximize their operating results so you need to find them. Bob, K8TQK, observed that he called a lot of CQs this time, but he also did more "search and pounce" this time to be sure he found as many stations as possible. Dave, K1RZ, pointed out another source of potential contacts, especially in a slower contest like this year's event: Tuning a band provides an opportunity to hear stations you may have already worked on that band but that you can ask if they have other bands to try.

● **Stay in the Chair** — Leading operators put in as much time as possible to make their scores. Bob, K8TQK, was only off the air for 4 hours this time; this attributed to him achieve his excellent score. While not everyone can put in a full-time effort, the more time the better. Bob, K2DRH, believes one of the most important aspects of achieving a top score is to stay in the chair, no matter how slow it gets. He calls it bulldog persistence. Rovers make short-term stops in rare grids, and those brief periods of enhancement will be missed if you are not on the band.

Dave, K1WHS, found that as the contest

progressed it was clear propagation wasn't cooperating, so to achieve a good score required hard work. Bob, K2DRH did note however, that another good operating requirement is to know when to take a break. Going off the air in the middle of the night when all that's on are the multiops already worked is helpful to keeping up the effort throughout Sunday. And don't stop early! The panel all agreed that they work new grids right up until the end. Bob had the usual flurry of activity in his area right up until the final minute of the contest — he was able to work several new grids, allowing him to surpass the 200,000 mark. And per Murphy's Law: If you end early, there will definitely be an opening!

● **Use all Modes** — Dave, NØKP, pointed out that when band conditions are less favorable, CW becomes even more important. Several contactys were made with CW that would not have been possible had he stayed on SSB. Bob, K2DRH, likes to call CQ in all directions from time to time on CW to work those really distant stations. The K1WHS team put up some FM dedicated antennas for this contest, and that paid off with some extra contacts. Bob, K2DRH, echoed those sentiments, offering that checking the FM frequencies during slow periods can help the score.

WSJT is also a good mode to use, especially during slower periods. The K1WHS multioperator team made about 40 skeds on this mode, completing a majority of them. Almost all of those grids would have been unworkable this time around except on WSJT. Checking their 6 and 2 meter grid totals shows the impact successful use of WSJT had on their score.

Other interesting modes and approaches can also be employed to seek out extra contacts. In the Twin Cities area, Dave, NØKP, says they use the downtown skyline to reflect and scatter 10 GHz signals, allowing for some microwave contacts otherwise unworkable. Frank, K3UHF, works across mountain ranges in the Pacific Northwest by intentionally bouncing off mountains. And he has even used tractor-trailer trucks in the past — while they are in motion, he uses them to reflect signals, allowing him to work some interesting DX paths.

Overall Category Results

Single Operator

After a second place finish in 2005, Bob Striegl, K2DRH, came out on top for SOLP in 2006. He noted that things started slowly with so-so conditions and low activity levels, but he stuck with it, tracking every rover he could and finding the brief periods of enhancements that are often there even when conditions in general don't look promising. He finished with a flurry of



The K1WHS auxiliary microwave setup on 903 MHz, 1.2, 2.3 and 3.4 GHz. This was used to work a few local while the big array was "busy."

activity, netting several new grids right at the end to push him over 200,000. Mitchell Stern, WB1GQR, continued his SOLP success achieving a second place finish. Dale Clement, AF1T, was right behind for third followed by Steve Land, VE3TFU; Steve battered the Canadian Division record scoring 71,000. After many years contesting from Colorado, Doug Allen, WØAH, found the East Coast to his liking finishing next in line behind VE3TFU. One other Division record was set in the category, as Keith Berglund, WB5ZDP, improved on the West Gulf record while achieving an 8th place national finish.

Jeff Klein, K1TEO, topped the SOHP category. Without the great enhanced conditions of 2005, his score was down a good deal this time to 571,000. To achieve even this level required perseverance, working every station possible on all bands and tracking the rovers to work the rarer grid squares. Dave Petke, K1RZ, did his usual bang up job with only a minor dip in his score to place second in the category. James Ahlgren, W4RX, moved up a spot this year to take third with almost 250,000 points, followed by Stan Hilinski, KA1ZE, operating from his location in rare FN01 (Western Pennsylvania). Bob, K8TQK, had very good results to round out the top five with 177,000.

The QRP Portable category saw a rematch with Chris Merchant, KA1LMR, and John Morrice, K6MI, again taking the top two spots. Chris used his New Hampshire portable location to great effect with a score of 67,000. John tried a new location and found conditions difficult. Still, his Mt St Helena location in the San Francisco section was good for 24,000. Lynn Burlingame, N7CFO, was third from the Pacific Northwest, just ahead of fellow West Coaster Bryan Weikum, KK6KE. Ken Neubeck, WB2AMU, and Zack Widup, W9SZ, were neck and neck for the next two spots.

Multioperator

After several years running the station as a single op entry in the September contest, the South Mountain Contest Club, K3EAR, team entered as a Limited Multiop effort and walked away with a first place result. Their score of 373,000 was a testament to their outstanding location in Southeastern Pennsylvania, great station setup and excellent operators. Fellow Keystone State station and 2005's top entry Wopsononock Mountaintop Operators, W3SO, had another strong effort to place second this year. They noted the poor conditions in this year's event, but did work some brief openings on 6 meters to Florida and Texas to help achieve their score. The gang at Eastern Panhandle Amateur Radio Club, K8EP, continued their impressive results in the September contest, moving up from fifth last year to the third spot, while North Carolina mountain toppers AA4ZZ repeated as the fourth place finishers. The ops at Bergen Amateur Radio Association, K2BAR, and Fourlanders Contest Team, W4NH, repeated in the national top 10 finishing right behind AA4ZZ.

The RPI Amateur Radio Club, W2SZ, crew returned to the top spot in the Multi-Multi category after a brief hiatus in the June contest. Despite the poor conditions in the Northeast they toughed it out to achieve over 1.2 million points. Amazingly, despite the conditions, the K1WHS group, led by Dave Olean, actually increased their score over 2005, giving W2SZ a real run for their money while achieving over 1 million points and a second place finish.

Rover

The top 4 rovers in the contest were Wayne Overbeck, N6NB; John Desloge, N6MU; Art Goddard, W6XD, and Michael Gorlick, KF6YYV. Traveling together to eight West Texas grids, they each scored over 200,000 points. Next in line were John Diusilio, W1RT, last year's top rover Russell Beech, VE3OIL, and Frank Bechdolt, K3UHF, who all made many other contesters very happy handing out rare grids and lots of contacts. John and Christophe, ops of W1RT, tried a new route this time, starting out on the coast as they often have, but heading farther inland later in the contest. They had a chance to try out major revisions to their rover mobile, and those seemed to work with a score topping 100,000.

Frank, K3UHF, noted some improved activity this time, likely the result of some local nets attracting folks to give out points. His 10 grid focus on handing out rare grids within contact distance of metropolitan areas; 70,000 achieved in the Pacific Northwest indicate the strategy is a winner. One division record was set this year in the rover

category as Mike Wechsler, N4OFA, bested his own Delta Division 2004 score. In a year with tough conditions, many operators noted how important rover contacts were to boost scores and keep the action going. Tracking rovers is one of the keys to successful VHF contest results. On behalf of the rest of us — thanks guys!

Regional Highlights

Northeast Region

Vermont Contest Radio, WB1GQR, had the top regional SOLP score followed by Dale Clement, AF1T; William Fisher, WB2SIH; Paul Sokoloff, WA3GFZ, and Howard Reynolds, WA3EOQ, all of whom made the National Top 10, as well.

In the SOHP category, national leader's Jeff Klein, K1TEO, and Dave Petke, K1RZ, were joined in the regional chase by Stan Hilinski, KA1ZE, and K1JCL, operated by Paul Vitols, K1GX. The Northeast also led the way in the Multioperator categories with LM leaders South Mountain Contest Club, K3EAR, and Wopsononock Mountaintop Operators, W3SO, and fellow top 10 leaders Bergen ARA, K2BAR; Kim Proventure, KB1DFB, and Dan Fegley, W1QK. Murgas ARC, K3YTL; Leonard Martin, N3NGE, and the Normanoch VHF Contest Club, N2NK, had leading regional and national results behind overall Multiop top guns RPI Amateur Radio Club, W2SZ, and the team led by Dave Olean, K1WHS, in the Multioperator category.

The regional roving competition was very tight with John Isenberg, WA2IID, just ahead of Mark Adams, K2QO; Joseph Lockbaum, WA3PTV; James Erickson, K3LFO, and Tim Ertl, KE3HT. The Northeast also had several excellent QRP scores with Ken Neubeck, WB2AMU, and George Vaccaro, W1JHR, joining Chris Merchant, KA1LMR, in the overall top 10.

Southeast Region

The Southeast had some outstanding efforts starting with the SOLP category where Doug Allen, W0AH, had the top score. Steve Gilmore, W4SHG, and Chuck Watts, W4XP, just missed the national list. James Ahlgren, W4RX; Russ Holshouser, K4QI; James Long, W4ZRZ, and Charles Hooper, W4WA, all made the top 10 in SOHP. The Eastern Panhandle ARC, K8EP; Paul Trotter, AA4ZZ, and Fourlanders Contest Team, W4NH, did likewise in the LM, followed by the OCOEE Amateur Radio Society, WD4OAR group in the regional results. The team led by James Hale, W4IY, led the Multis, while John Dausilio, W1RT, has one of the nation's best roving scores, with strong competition in the Southeast from Matt Butcher, KC3WD, and Mike Wechsler, N4OFA. Ed Swiderski, KU4BP, made the national

QRP list as he led the regional category.

Central Region

The Central Region saw lots of activity and some excellent scores. Bob Striegl, K2DRH, led the SOLP category, with Steve Land, VE3TFU, joining him in the national top 10, followed by Duane Grotophorst, N9DG, and John Rosner, WO9S in the region. SOHP stations Glenn Mathews, K8TQK, and Erwin Beemer, K8EB, scored well against the overall competition, with Mark Dabish, K8MD, missing the top 10 by a mere 300 points; Ken Boston, W9GA, and Barry Cohen, N2BJ, were right behind K8MD.

The Thomas Holmes, N8ZM, team effort was #7 nationally and tops in the region for LM, with Jason Pecora, K8ZIZ, next in line. The top regional Multi score came from the Stoned Monkey VHF ARC, N9UHF, crew. Rover results for this region were very good with Russell Beech, VE3OIL, and Stephen Kavanaugh, VE3SMA, achieving overall top 10 scores. Bruce Richardson, W9FZ; Jim Mitzlaff, WB9SNR, and William Burgess, VE3CRU, were right behind with excellent scores. Zack Widup, W9SZ, led the way in the Central Region with his usual strong QRP effort.

Midwest Region

Dave Kleindl, N0KP, and Keith Berglund, WB5ZDP, were neck and neck for the top SOLP score from the Midwest Region. Vince Pavkovich, N0VZJ, had the next highest score in the category. The SOHP category was very competitive in this region, with Jonathon Platt, W0ZQ, taking top honors just ahead of Ron Morosko, K5LLL, with Bill Davis, K0AWU, and Gary Mohrlant, W0GHZ, only 250 points apart for third and fourth highest scores in the Midwest.

Marshall Williams, K5QE's, team achieved the top Multi score in the region and third highest in the contest. Jim Smith, W0EEA's, group broke their own Rocky Mountain Division record to secure second with Gary Gerber, KB0HH's, crew less than 1000 points behind. Top LM in the Region was the Lubbock Amateur Contest Club, W5LCC. Wayne Overbeck, N6NB; John Desloge, N6MU; Art Goddard, W6XD, and Michael Gorlick, KF6YYV, all roved together to achieve the high regional score in that category. Stephen Hicks, N5AC's, rove achieved a FB score of over 50,000.

West Coast Region

Ken Mason, KC6TEU (now WE6T) led the SOLP category, followed by Clay Curtiss, W7CE, and Larry Hogue, W6OMF. Top SOHP entrant John Buck, KG6IYN, was followed by a group with very close scores: Eric Olson, N7EPD; Robert Brown, KR7O, and Norman Alexander, KC6ZWT. Gabor

Horvath, VA7ISL, was the lead Multioperator station in the region, just missing a top 10 finish in the LM category. The Willits Amateur Radio Society, W6MMM, was right behind in LM, while Oscar Daley, KI6BEW, was the top Multi station on the West Coast. Rover Frank Bechdoldt, K3UHF, had a great score to lead the category, with Brodie Leage, KE6BZY, and Dan Bubke, K6NKC, next in line. The region really shines in the QRP category with five overall top 10 scores, including the overall 2nd, 3rd and 4th place: John Morrice, K6MI, was top dog followed by Lynn Burlingame, N7CFO; Bryan Weikum, KK6KE; Bruce McCain, N7XB, and Hon Chu, KQ6EE.

Affiliated Club Competition

The September contest includes a competition among clubs within the overall contest. 2006 saw nine entries in the Local Club competition and 14 in the Medium Class. The Michigan VHF-UHF Society led the Local Clubs just ahead of a fine effort from the North Texas Microwave Society. The Roadrunners Microwave Group and the Delaware Valley VHF Society finished 3rd and 4th in this category.

In the Medium Class Category, last year's numbers 1 and 2 swapped places with the North East Weak Signal group coming out on top of the Potomac Valley Radio Club. Both clubs topped the million point mark with their efforts. The Packrats of the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club and the Contest Club of Ontario repeated 2005's third and fourth place finish, respectively. The VE3s continue to do an outstanding job of getting the troops out for the September contest with 20 entries, second only to the Pacific Northwest VHF Society with 21 entries. Three Midwestern club groups finished neck and neck for fifth through seventh place: the Society of Midwest Contesters, Badger Contesters and the Northern Lights Radio Society.

In the End

Contesters have to play the hands dealt, whether that means great conditions or not. VHF contesters have been fortunate to enjoy several recent contests with exciting conditions, though that was not the case this time around. Yet by persevering, preparing and applying effective strategies, we had lots of great scores and fun in the September VHF contest.

Looking forward to 2007 and beyond, we can hope for many exciting VHF contests and realize that some with less propagation enhancement will require "bulldog perseverance" to succeed. Congratulations to all the participants in the 2006 event, and best of luck to all for a great 2007 season.

The next ARRL VHF QSO Parties are scheduled for June 9-11 and September 8-10, 2007.

QST