# 2012 ARRL® January VHF Sweepstakes Results

# **Fireworks in January!**

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The summer months are usually known for dramatic activity on the VHF and above bands but the 2012 January VHF Sweepstakes weekend surprised almost everyone with an exceptional amount of enhanced propagation that equaled or surpassed a summer run on the bands in some areas. Not only was there an abundance of sporadic E (E-skip or E<sub>s</sub>), but aurora (Au), transequatorial propagation (TEP) and even F2 and Au-E<sub>s</sub> were evident in many areas. Many participants felt that this year's contest had some of the best January propagation in many

#### **6 Meter Conditions**

For many operators the fireworks on 6 meters occurred right from the start of the contest. In the midsection of the nation, Larry, NØLL, made 186 contacts on 6 meters from his Midwest location and even worked HKØNA on 6 meters for DXCC entity #130. Congrats Larry! Jon, NØJK, had strong E<sub>s</sub> from eastern Kansas to the mid-Atlantic region and even had a run going using a 2 element Yagi with 10 W. The band opening moved to the southwest after 2+ hours with Mexico coming in very loud.

Duffey, KK6MC, got in on the fun while roving across four grids between Flagstaff and Phoenix with W7QQ. They had numerous E<sub>s</sub> contacts on Saturday afternoon, some to the same stations as they moved between grids. The opening was so intense that many contacts occurred while driving through hilly terrain. Another opening into the Pacific Northwest hit on Sunday afternoon throughout California. Traveling the same route as last year, the KK6MC score tripled. Pete,

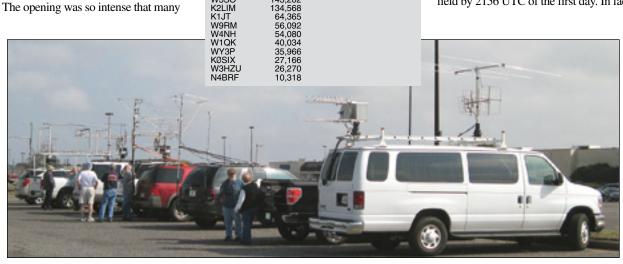
WA7JTM, indicated that this was his best E<sub>s</sub> opening in a January contest — ever! That says a lot since he has operated in contests going back to the 1960s.

Five inches of snow and sleet fell in many areas of the Northeast 12 hours before the contest. As a result, activity at times was lower than usual and several rovers got a very slow start, but numerous stations got in on the fun anyway. Joe, K1JT, reported isolated E<sub>s</sub> openings into the south at the start of the contest and again on Sunday from 1830-2335 UTC, both into the Southeast and to the Midwest. Stan, KA1ZE/3, worked several well-known stations in the upper Midwest on Saturday, including WØUC, W9JN, WØZQ, KØKP and NØAKC. Interestingly, Stan made those QSOs from Clearwater Beach, Florida, remotely controlling his station in Pennsylvania.

N4QWZ in Tennessee's EM66 grid worked into South America, making contact with LU5, ZP5 and YV5 for the first time in his long radio career. Stations in CO2 and C6 were also worked. All contacts were on CW. While the Caribbean contacts were likely E<sub>s</sub>, the South American stations were probably contacted via TEP.

From EM31, Marshall, K5QE, had an exceptional E<sub>s</sub> run, working almost everything and everyone early Saturday afternoon in the EN and FN fields then switching into the DM field by 2156 UTC of the first day. In fact,

Top Ten					
Single Oper	ator,		Multioperator		
Low Power	454.000	K5QE_	812,224		
K2DRH	151,392	N3NGE	535,050		
WA3NUF N3RG	147,618 103,704	K3EOD W3SZ	137,772 79,280		
N3LL	103,704	KBØHH	70,596		
AF1T	98,942	N3YMS	66,700		
WB2SIH	82,296	N1JEZ	40,479		
N4TWX	66,125	N4QV	29,488		
K1KG	61,149	WB3IGR	25,270		
N4QWZ	58,108	N4JQQ	22,750		
N1DPM	40,152	Rover			
Single Oper	ator,	K5ME	379,000		
High Power		W5FWR	356,345		
K1TEO	375,386	KF5KEY	351,840		
K3TUF	332,536	AE5P	317,515		
K3IPM	103,562	K5TRK	305,800		
WØUC W5PR	81,016	K5FAY	292,930		
WA3DRC	80,475 72,624	W5TV K1DS	184,052 134,246		
W4ZRZ	64,533	NN3Q	40,068		
WB2RVX	63,300	VE3OIL	33,902		
K4QI	61,608				
WØGHZ	58,195	Limited Rover WK5F 22,750			
<b>QRP Portab</b>	le	KK6MC	12,920		
N3AWS	7,398	ABØYM	12,814		
N8XA	6,400	K9JK	9,400		
WØPV	5,289	N2ZBH	9,316		
W9SZ	2,187	WØBL	9,080		
WD5AGO	1,680	WB8BZK	8,080		
WB2AMU	980	WA4JA	3,634		
AE6GE K2UNK	945 528	K6BRW N4TZH	3,480		
K4RSV	384		3,108		
KL3JI	160	Unlimited Rover			
		KRØVER	15,120		
Limited Mul W3SO	143 202	K2TER	14,014		



The Nacogdoches ARC put together a huge rover effort to win the Medium Club gavel — and succeeded. See the online article for more about this team operation. [Wayne Overbeck, N6NB, photo]

others in the Northwest reported Marshall's signals being extremely solid for much of Saturday. One of the K5QE operators, N5NU, ran a 200 contact hour on Saturday. Marshall's multioperator station had 158 grids on 6 meters alone!

Category Activity						
Category	2012 Logs	2011 Logs				
SOLP SOHP SO-Portable MO-Limited MO-Unlimited Rover Rover-Limited Rover-Unlimited	471 148 16 23 46 39 22 ed 2	420 154 22 28 32 30 19				

## **Aurora and Exotic Forms** of Communication

Au was strong in the upper plains and Midwest. Paul, WØUC, (EN44) not only ran 6 meter E<sub>s</sub>, but had one of his longest Au sessions ever during a contest. Paul's first 6 meter Au run was on Sunday from 2026Z-2044Z. The buzz then returned on 6 meters from 2244Z-0130Z with contacts on 2 meters as well between 2301-0122Z. Gary, WØGHZ, also made some Au contacts from EN34 from 0043Z-0113Z on Saturday. Jim, K8MR, had aurora contacts with VE2 and VE3 as well as with WØUC and W9JN. Steve, VE3SMA (EN93) also reported working WØUC and W9JN on Au at around the same time.

K1JT, K5QE, and several others made contacts off the Moon once again this year. Many others ran meteor scatter on 6 and 2 meters. 10 GHz was well represented, too. One exceptional, 165 mile 10 GHz CW contact

between Jon, WØZQ, and Jim, KØAWU, is even available online at nlrs-10ghz.blogspot.com.

## 2012 Results -**Aggregate Activity**

As the graph shows, log submissions were up this year some 8% over 2011 with 767 logs entered

compared to 710 last year. With the enhanced propagation, aggregate scores surged some 24% over 2011 to 10,737,292 points. Total contacts increased 33% to more than 87,000 and total multipliers across all bands jumped 48% to almost 28,000. The chart shows the aggregate volume of contacts made during each contest hour. Note that in several hours on both Saturday and Sunday contestants worked over 3000 stations per hour. That is a lot of activity!

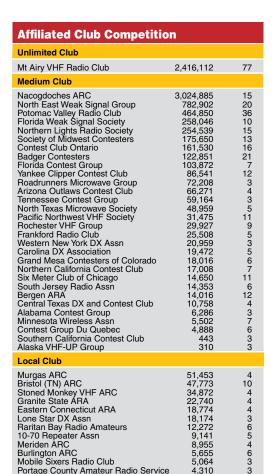
Participation was up in 2012 in many of the categories as shown in the activity table. While there was some movement between subcategories, total Single Operator logs jumped dramatically from 574 to 619; total Multioperator logs increased from 60 to 69 and the Rover category totals (combined) went up from 54 to 63 logs.

## **Single-Operator Categories**

In Single Operator, High Power (SOHP) Jeff, K1TEO, took first place, just shy of 1000 contacts and 375,000+ points. The strong 6 meter conditions helped Jeff's score but making contacts on all bands through 10 GHz was a large factor in his success, too. Notably, Jeff had 17 contacts on 2.3 GHz and 11 contacts on 5.7 GHz. Now that's some allband capability! Second in SOHP went to Phil, K3TUF, also scoring well over 300,000 points. Phil blanketed all bands, making contacts as high as 24 GHz as well as light.

Single Operator, Low Power (SOLP) continues to be the most popular category in the contest with 61% of all contest logs. First place goes to Bob, K2DRH, at 151,000 points. Bob led the nation in multipliers among the SOLP stations on most of the eight bands on which he was active. Only 4000 points behind, Phil, WA3NUF, captured second place this year with just over 146,000 points. Phil was on more bands and had more contacts than Bob but the difference was 110 more multipliers for K2DRH.

Single Operator, Portable (SOP) stations are a rugged bunch. Not only do they put up with freezing cold, snow and sleet in portable spots but they run only 10 W, use generators or batteries and often make do with makeshift



18,774 18,174

9,141 8,955

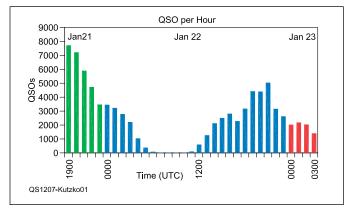
5.655

5,064

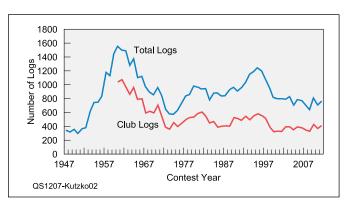
Eastern Connecticut ARA
Lone Star DX Assn
Raritan Bay Radio Amateurs
10-70 Repeater Assn
Meriden ARC

Mobile Sixers Radio Club Portage County Amateur Radio Service

Burlington ARC



A chart showing the number of contacts logged during each hour of the contest. The effects of the big 6 meter openings raised activity on both days.



Club logs continue to make up a significant fraction of all submitted logs year after year. In 2012, approximately half of all logs submitted also contributed to a club score.

Northeast F	Region	Southeast Re	egion		Central Reg	jion		Midwest Re	gion		West Coast I	Region	
Northeast F	d, Hudson and isions; Maritime	Southeast Re Delta, Roanok Southeastern N3LL N4TWX N4QWZ W2BZY KO4MA W4ZRZ K4QI WD4MGB K14FIA K0VXM N3AWS W0PV K4RSV W4NH WY3P N4BRF WA4DYD N4QV N4JQQ K1KC N4PD	e and Divisions 103,032 66,125 58,108 36,642 31,300 64,533 61,608 46,509 34,132 32,130 7,398 5,289 384 54,080 35,966 10,318	АААА ВВВВВВ QQQ	Central Reg Central and Divisions; O K2DRH VE3SMA N9LB K8MR VA3ZV WØUC K8MD K9EA VA3ST W9GA N8XA W9SZ KDØEBT W9RM N9TF N8ZM K8GDT W9RVG N2BJ W8RU	Great Lakes	ONAAAAA BBBBBB QQQ LLLL MM	Midwest Rei Dakota, Midw Mountain an Divisions; Midw Saskatchew WB5ZDP NØLL WB2FKO WA0ARM W6ZI W5PR W0GHZ W0ZQ W3XO/5 WD5K WD5AGO KD7WPJ KØNR KØSIX NØLD W0VB WD5IYF K5QE KBØHH	west, Rocky d West Gulf anitoba and sections 33,182 27,306 24,947 17,301 17,220 80,475 58,195 32,054 31,122 20,748 1,680 108 90 27,166 7,865 4,743 1,716 812,224	A A A A A B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B	West Coast  Pacific, North Southwesterr Alberta, Britis and NWT Sec WA7JTM NQ7R WJØF K6MI K6TSK  N7CW W6XI N7EPD KC62WT KC6SEH  AE6GE KL3JI WO1S W6YX W6RKC KE7SW VE6CPP KF6I	western ar n Divisions th Columbitations 27,270 24,444 19,170 14,300 9,894 38,068 13,048 6,840 945 160 627 6,240 559	ia AAAAA BBBBB QQ L
N3NGE K3EOD W3SZ N3YMS N1JEZ K1DS NN3Q AA1I WA1T K3IUV N2ZBH N2SNL K2TER	535,050 M 137,772 M 79,280 M 66,700 M 40,479 M 134,246 R 40,068 R 17,976 R 11,704 R 7,751 R 9,316 RL 1,104 RL	W4PK AG4V K8GP WA4JA N4ZTH KD4RSL KD4GCF	2,911 16,665 11,232 3,634 3,108 2,414 288	M R R R R R R R R R R L	VE3OIL K9TMS N9REP K9BTW W9FZ K9JK WB8BZK VE3RKS K9PLS	33,902 12,072 11,400 11,160 6,253 9,400 8,080 1,856 240	R R R	NØGZ K5GKC KC5MVZ K5ME W5FWR KF5KEY AE5P K5TRK WK5F ABØYM WØBL AF5Q KE5VIO KE5VIM	2,838 2,088 379,000 356,345 351,840 317,515 305,800 22,750 12,814 9,080 777 192	R R R R RL RLL RLL RL	K6LMN K6EU KL7YK K6GEP KK6MC K6BRW WW7D WA7KVC K1FJM (N6ZE, op)	3,078 645 580 63 12,920 3,480 2,768 2,398 910	R R R RL RL RL

antennas. First place went to James, N3AWS, from Mississippi who used only 6 meters, making 137 contacts and finishing with 7398 points. Phil, N8XA, worked 6, 2 and 222 from Ohio to take second, while John, WØPV, finished third at over 5000 points, also using only 6 meters from the West Central Florida section.

#### **Multioperator Categories**

It is fascinating to watch multioperator stations in action. Being able to juggle many schedules, bands and modes from EME to MS and tropo is truly awe-inspiring to watch. In particular, the Multioperator, Unlimited (MU) is a no-holds-barred, big power spectacular event, typically with many other single operators and rovers in close coordination.

Taking top honors this year is Marshall's, K5QE, Texas team. At 812,224 points, Marshall's was one of two stations in the entire contest to exceed 1000 total contacts reaching 1339 contacts. It was a long-sought goal of his to win the MU category in January from a low population area. Congratulations! Second place went to another great operation at Len's, N3NGE, station in eastern Pennsylvania. His was the other station to go over 1000 contacts and at 1229 it was very close on contacts but over 100 multipliers behind K5QE, finishing at 535,050 points.

The Multi operator, Limited (ML) category is an interesting one, being limited to only four bands but with multiple operators running the bands. ML saw intense competition in 2012.

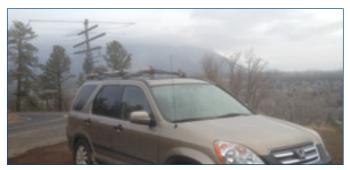
W3SO in Pennsylvania finished with top honors at 143,000 plus points. Around 50% of the station's 676 contacts were on 6 meters. Second place was taken by K2LIM, only 9000 points behind with a few less contacts and multipliers.

#### **The Rover Categories**

This year the national rover leaders were a Who's Who from the Nacogdoches Radio Club. The first seven places in the Rover category were from Nacogdoches as was the top place holder in the Limited Rover (RL). First place in the Rover category went to Bob, K5ME, at 379,000 points. Running 11 bands through 24 GHz, Bob made 672 contacts and 125 multipliers. Close behind was W5FWR at more than 356,000. The difference lay in a

# **6 Meter Propagation Play-by-Play**

Along with more photos and graphics and a great club story, the extended version of this write-up at www.arrl.org/contest-results-articles provides an extensive "play-by-play" 6 meter propagation report based on a sequence of hourly contact maps. John, K9JK, did a great service in generating the sequence of maps from the ARRL log-checking database. Mid-points between contacts and the likely regions of E layer density are easy to spot. When looking at the maps, it is amazing to realize all this occurred in January, not June!



Jim, KK6MC, and Bill, W7QQ, roved across four grids between Flagstaff and Phoenix, using a Moxon beam for 6 meters and Yagis for 2 meters through 70 cm. [James Duffey, KK6MC, photo]

Division Lea	aders by Cat	tegory					
Single Operator,		,	Multioperator	Multioperator			
Atlantic Central Dakota Delta Great Lakes Hudson Midwest	WA3NUF K2DRH NØKK N4QWZ K8MR WB2SIH NØLL	147,618 151,392 12,600 58,108 20,768 82,296 27,306	Atlantic Central Delta Great Lakes Hudson Midwest New England	N3NGE W9RVG N4JQQ W8RU KC2SST NØGZ N1JEZ	535,050 8,610 22,750 3,686 1,456 14,268 40,479		
New England Northwestern Pacific Roanoke Rocky Mountain Southeastern Southwestern West Gulf Canada	AF1T KD7UO K6MI W3IP WB2FKO N3LL WA7JTM WB5ZDP VE3SMA	98,942 4,488 14,300 18,848 24,947 103,032 27,270 33,182 28,122	Northwestern Pacific Roanoke Rocky Mountain Southeastern Southwestern West Gulf Canada Rover	KE7SW W6YX N4PD WØRIC N4QV KF6I K5QE VE6CPP	450 6,240 3,080 1,924 29,488 18 812,224 63		
Single Operator, Atlantic Central Dakota Delta Great Lakes Hudson Midwest New England Northwestern Pacific Roanoke Rocky Mountain Southeastern	High Power K3TUF W0UC W0GHZ KG5MD K8MD W2KV W0LGQ K1TEO N7EPD KC6ZWT K4QI K7ICW	332,536 81,016 58,195 23,280 44,157 23,302 4,888 375,386 13,489 13,048 61,608 10,728 14,522	Atlantic Central Dakota Delta Midwest New England Northwestern Pacific Roanoke Rocky Mountain Southwestern West Gulf Canada	K1DS K9TMS KC0P AG4V WB9QAF AA11 KL7YK K6EU K8GP NØLP K6LMN K5ME VE3OIL	134,246 12,072 9,418 16,665 187 17,976 580 645 11,232 19,760 3,078 379,000 33,902		
Southeastern Southwestern West Gulf Canada	W4ZRZ N7CW W5PR VA3ST	64,533 38,068 80,475 35,100	<b>Limited Rover</b> Atlantic Central Delta	N2SLN K9JK WA4JA	1,104 9,400 3,634		
Limited Multiope Atlantic Central Dakota Great Lakes Hudson	erator W3SO W9RM KØSIX N8ZM W2JJ (WA2VUN, op)	143,202 56,092 27,166 4,224 7,310	Hudson Northwestern Pacific Roanoke Rocky Mountain Southeastern Southwestern	N2ZBH WW7D K6BRW KD4RSL ABØYM N4TZH KK6MC	9,316 2,768 3,480 2,414 12,814 3,108 12,920		
Midwest New England Roanoke Southeastern	NÖLD W1QK WY3P W4NH	7,865 40,034 35,966 54,080	West Gulf Canada Unlimited Rover Atlantic	WK5F VE3RKS	22,750 1,856 14,014		
Southwestern West Gulf	WO1S WD5IYF	627 1,716	Rocky Mountain	KRØVER	15,120		
Single Operator, Atlantic Central Delta Great Lakes Hudson New England Northwestern Pacific Southeastern West Gulf	Portable K2UNK W9SZ N3AWS N8XA WB2AMU WA1LEI KL3JI AE6GE WØPV WD5AGO	528 2,187 7,398 6,400 980 6 160 945 5,289 1,680					

few fewer contacts and multipliers. KF5KEY was third at 351,000 points. All three of these top Rovers worked from 10 grids with 11 bands of operation.

The RL category saw Bill, WK5F, take the top spot at 22,750 points. Having only the lowest four VHF bands to utilize, he still made 303 contacts. Second was Duffey, KK6MC, who had more than  $100 E_s 6$  meter contacts in Arizona, totaling almost 13,000 points. Third in this cat-

egory was ABØYM from Colorado who also obviously benefitted from excellent 6 meter conditions with 65 out of 207 contacts being on 6 meters.

Only two logs were entered in the Unlimited Rover (RU) category. KRØVER in Colorado

Band Activity						
Band	Logs	QSO				
6 2 2222 MHz 432 MHz 902 MHz 1296 MHz 3456 MHz 5760 MHz 10 GHz 24 GHz 47 GHz 119 GHz 142 GHz 141 GHz Light Total	720 612 317 466 114 173 78 52 34 46 14 0 0 0	46,408 20,964 5,683 8,350 1,406 1,883 935 708 432 456 81 0 0 0 0 0 51 87,357				

ran six bands through 1296, garnering 15,000 or so points. K2TER from New York was second, making over one-half of his contacts on 6 meters.

#### **Club Competition**

The Club Competition has been a driving force of the January VHF Sweepstakes since the earliest days of the contest in 1948. This year was no exception with 43 clubs participating, compared with 38 clubs last year in 2011 and up from 27 clubs back in 2000. There were 414 club

logs entered this year, accounting for 54% of all logs. Club members also generated the vast bulk of scores at 8,571,134 points, 78% of total points made by all participants.

In the Unlimited Club category, the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club "Pack Rats" posted a huge number of club logs (77) as well as total points (2.4 million) being the only club that amassed over 50 member logs in the contest. Including this year the Pack Rats have won the last 16 consecutive Unlimited Club gavels in the January contest and have won either the Unlimited or Medium club category in almost every year since 1961. No other club can claim that kind of record in any contest, HF or VHF+.

Thirty clubs participated in the Medium Club category. The Nacogdoches ARC engaged in a monumental effort to take the Medium Club gavel with over 3 million points, having increased their logs to 15 this year. The North East Weak Signal Group continued its strong showing from prior years, placing second in the category. Another preeminent club, the Potomac Valley Radio Club, placed third with more logs than any other club except the Pack Rats.

The Local Club category experienced intense competition among 12 club entries. First place went to the Murgas ARC with 51,453 points from four logs. Murgas has also been a perennially active club, having now won eight Local Club gavels in January (at least by the author's count) and even more in September. The Bristol (TN) ARC finished close behind in second place at 47,773 points and 10 logs while the Stoned Monkeys ARC from Illinois was third with over 34,000 points.

#### **Conclusion**

Propagation this year was extraordinary, with E<sub>s</sub>, Au, Au-E<sub>s</sub>, TEP and F2 all contributing to the effort. Most of the contestant's scores were higher than in prior years as a result. The real significance of the 2012 edition of the January VHF Sweepstakes may lie in the increased participation levels. Not only were total points, contacts and multipliers higher but submitted logs, participating clubs and band activity levels were all up. Let's keep the trend going into 2013! See you next year for the VHF Sweepstakes January 19-21!

A special thanks to everyone who provided a log or log extract on E<sub>s</sub> or Au contacts: N9LB, W6KBX, K1TEO, K8MRI, WZ1V, AA5JG, NQ7R, W2BVH, K3TD, K3TUD, K5QE, K7XC, K9EA, K9ZM, KA1ZE, KC6ZWT, N3RG, N7DB, NN1N, VE3SMA, NØPOH, WØGHZ, WØUC, N4NH, W9RVG, WAØCNS and WA7JTM.

# **Extended Version Online**

Check out the extended version of this article at www.arrl.org/contest-results-articles for more analysis and more photos. If you own a smartphone, just scan this QR code.

