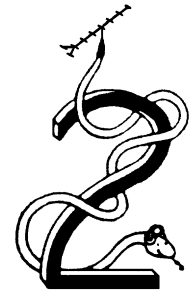




S.W.O.T. BULLETIN



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SIDEWINDERS ON TWO AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
SSB, CW AND DIGITAL OPERATIONS ON 144MHZ AND UP

BULLETIN # 277

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S.W.O.T. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Send renewals and new applications for membership to Howard Hallman WD5DJT. Please make all checks payable to SIDEWINDERS ON TWO. And all I need is your SWOT # for your renewals if you want save your bulletin!!!
(See address above)
- Send your SWOT “members worked” from your log to, SWOT Awards manager, Wade Massey, 1016 Weiss Ave, Princeton, TX., 75407 \$1.00 fee for certificate and your certificate number would be appreciated, also SASE.
- Send all applications for County Awards and County Awards correspondence to the SWOT VUCA Awards Manager, Len Parsons W5AL, 11361 Tascosa Rd. FM 1061., Amarillo, TX. 79124
- E-Mail all articles and reports to the Editors’ Web addresses listed above or you can mail them to KA5DWI, 6516 Simmons Rd, NRH, TX 76180-4243.
- **MERCHANDISE:**
Decals and listings available for \$1.00 each for shipping and handling from the Secretary/Treasurer.
SWOT PATCHES ARE AVAILABLE AT PRICE OF \$4.00 EACH + \$.50 FOR MAILING
Badges are available from “The Sign Man”, Rick Pourciau NV5A, <http://www.thesignman.com/menu.html>

ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB

Be sure to join and chat with other S.W.O.T. members at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sidewindersontwo>

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The Chairman's Corner

By John Petersen "KM5ES"

Well again we start to approach the Tropo season soon. Weather will be warming up pretty quick hopefully and everyone will be getting the antennas back into optimal performance. I plan soon on taking my array down and cleaning it, straightening elements from the ice storm a year ago and resetting the SWR. I also plan on raising the array up another 20 feet, which should put my antennas around 100 feet.

From what I have researched from my logs for the past 4 year,s is the latter part of March things will be picking up. North/South Tropo and Gulf Tropo on 2 meters will be the first noticeable.

We are in the final stages of getting the yearly meeting for SWOT finished. The plans for now are to have the meeting during the Hamcom Hamfest in Arlington Texas this year, June 7th and 8th. Judy and I plan on being down, in the Dallas area Thursday thru Saturday evening.

I am awaiting confirmation on the meeting for the 7th at the convention center. We plan on having quite a few in attendance this year. Also, I would like to commend Don, NL7CO for his job on the January SWOT Contest this year. Don has worked very hard at making it a success. I hope that we can make it a yearly event.

Also, I would like to remind all members that we still have available the monthly newsletter that can be sent to you via email each month for all members that pay their yearly dues. You still can continue getting the newsletter via *snail mail*.

With the cost of postage continuing to rise in the foreseeable future, we plan on raising yearly dues. This will be discussed in our meeting in June.

One other quick note. My website has been down due to problems at Lakewebs.net or my service provider. I do not know when it will be back up and running it not soon I am working on a new site. I will pass along the URL when I get it running.

73 to all
Good DX
John Petersen KM5ES #3331
SWOT Chairman

Note from the editor: John's new web address is, <http://km5es.lwok.com> and <http://www.qsl.net/km5es/>

Meet the Members, Officers and Net Control Operators for SWOT

Each month we will profile one of the Officers, NCS and longtime contributing Members for SWOT.

This month we profile **Sam Whitley, K5SW**, longtime Ham, SWOT member and former NCS from Eastern Oklahoma.

No doubt, Sam is a one of the pioneers when it comes to weak signal operation. Several firsts, seconds and only times have been accomplished by Sam. His outstanding signals were have been used by many VHF'ers as a gauge to a band opening. In North Texas, where aurora is rare, we know we are having it by Sam's 40 over S9 buzz on CW.

Before Sam was licensed, he was familiar with Amateur Radio, because of his uncle (whom he is named after) was a ham. His call was W5ALI. His uncle had been a Ham since 1931. After World War 2, in 1946 when the Hams could get back on the air, Sam observed his uncle building a 10-Meter AM rig and I speaking over Ham Radio to another Ham in New Jersey with the rig.

Sam was first licensed as a Novice, WN5WAX in May of 1952, while a junior in high school. His elmer was the high school biology teacher, W5VJU. By the fall of the same year, Sam had become W5WAX.

His first rig was a 6L6 XTAL oscillator. He still uses it from time to time on 40-Meters. It ran 8 watts, with one Xtal, to a 40-Meter dipole. On receive, he used a BC-342-N Army surplus Receiver and to a home-brew antenna tuner. No meters on the radio and he could tell his output by feeling with his fingers and receiving a few RF burns.

In the late 1950's, he became interested in VHF, getting on 6-Meters and 2-Meters. After working his first "E" Skip on 6-Meters, he was hooked on VHF. He ran both 6 and 2-Meter AM and CW until

1966, then added SSB. Experience taught him all the different kinds of propagation on VHF. Sam made his first meteor scatter contact in 1964 and was active in the 1965-66 Leonids Meteor Storm where 2-Meters seemed like 20 meters with continuous bursts. Sam made many an Aurora "first" contacts during the 60's. In 1966, he completed his first 2-Meter "E" Skip contact with a North Carolina station.

On 6-Meters his first "F" layer contact was in 1967 with to Ecuador, HC1FS. He was the first Oklahoma ham to earn 6-Meter WAS in 1970. Sam got WAC on 6-Meters in 1981, and this year earned his DXCC on 6-Meters. He now has 132 worked and 128 confirmed countries on "6".

Since the early 60's, on 2-Meters, Sam continues to watch for those openings using whatever propagation there is. He has 47 on the continental states worked. Sam needs Oregon!! He has worked XE1 thru XE3, CO, VE2 thru VE5 and VP9. All of this is using terrestrial modes. No EME was used. Sam has 289 grids confirmed.

In the 1970s, Sam ran across the newly formed SWOT group in Texas. He remembers, Len W5JTA SWOT#1 and Lloyd K5ASZ SWOT#4 (now silent-keys) from the old days. He was one of the first VHF'er outside of Texas to get his SWOT number. Sam is SWOT #34. Later, about 1976 he started the "Eastern Oklahoma SWOT Net" and ran that net until the early 80's. Later, when he found that net inactive, he started it back up again with the help of Jerry, N5OSK. Soon the net was turned over to ED, WD5GVP, who turned it to the present day NCS, John - KM5ES.

Sam retired in November of 1999. He is still very active on 50, 144 and 222 MHz SSB and CW. He no longer concentrates on 432 and 1296 MHz because he was climbing the towers too much.

In 1999, he helped form the "Ultra Highs Weak Signal Society" and obtained the call W5VHF for that group. He is also active as "A relief crewman" on the World War 2 Submarine, USS Batfish #310, now "on patrol" at the Port of Muskogee. He has an Amateur Station aboard the boat in the cramped radio room with a 5BTV vertical mounted on the Con-Tower. He was able to obtain the call "WW2SUB" as a call sign for the boat. Sam enjoys

talking with old WW-2 and ex-Navy seamen who served aboard Submarines.

Sam still loves to play with his old tube gear on 80 and 40 meter AM/CW during the winter months to re-live earlier fun times from the home station. One of his favorite stations is his Heath DX-35, VF-1 VFO and a Drake 2C receiver, with a 2CQ Multi/speaker and an old McElroy key.

Sam has been an elmer and mentor for a number of us, and a pioneer in Weak Signal. He still stays busy and enjoys smelling the roses of retirement life.

Next time you talk to Sam, be sure to thank him for his contributions.

What I Do When 2 Meters is Not Open

From: Jim Kennedy WH6LR

I used to be a 6-Meter nut until meeting NL7CO and hearing about all his 2-Meter stuff. Then one day last year, when I was monitoring the local repeater where all the VHF's hang out, I heard that Florida was open on 2-Meter SSB. So, I gave it a shot and Bammm! I made a 2-Meter contact outside my grid (EM04) I was hooked. Well, 2-Meter SSB is not open like that all the time (No Kidding!). What do I do to pass all the time away when 2m is not open?

I started by learning and playing on Ham Satellites. I was looking for something that I could do on a regular basis when 2-Meters was not open. Well, the birds come over just about everyday, so I thought it was a good choice. Price wise it's not cheap. Rotor \$400.00, Radio \$1,600, and antennas \$400.00. So as you see, I was out of pocket a little bit. P.S., wife thought a lot!

My first contact on the birds was with W0SAT (cool call!) on FO-29, from EN42. He was real nice to me on the birds because it's not as easy as it seems. In fact, I got schooled on my first contact and after trading e-mail help me through all the steps that satellite operators need to know. I started feeling all comfortable on the birds.

The last thing I started on was contesting. It's a blast! Learning from Don NL7CO that multipliers are what you need. I have to admit, I was a ham for 7 years, but until I moved to Lawton, I have learned a ton here. Elmering is alive here in EM04. Now

I'm the NCS on the SW Oklahoma 2m SSB Net from EM04.

Jim

Do You Remember When? **My Favorite 2-Meter Band Openings.**

Part 1

By Art Jackson, KA5DWI

Every now and then, I will try to review and write about some of the big openings we have had in the past. I have a memory like an elephant and I kept fairly good logs to remind me what happened. After you read these, I would appreciate your comments and observations. Also, for those major events you experienced, write them up, and I'll post them here in the Bulletin.

The first one I am going to write about was not a single event, but an entire weekend of DX. It was from both Sporadic E and Tropo. This all occurred on the weekend of May 10-12 of 1986.

May is one of the best months for 2 Meter DX. We have some the best weather phenomena as major weather systems are clashing for space. We have high-pressure and low-pressure systems all moving and building enhancing the Tropo possibilities. Finally, we have entered what I call the "E" Threshold. This is when the Sun has crossed 15° North latitude on May 1. Sporadic E season has now begun.

As I remember, I had got up early that Saturday morning and checked into the HQ SWOT Net with Frank, N5CTE. The weather wasn't too pleasant. A line of strong thunderstorms was approaching Dallas/Fort Worth. It was fairly dark, and I was hearing a little thunder. In my shack then, was an old Zenith B&W TV that I used as my DX condition monitor. This is a must for the serious VHF DX'er. I was seeing sporadic E building around 9 AM. Hooray! It was the first good one I was observing for 1986.

I turned on my good old HF rig, a newly reconditioned Drake TR3 (I still use it!). I tuned it to 28MHz, and I was immediately impressed. 10 Meters was wide open! I worked a 59+ station in Indiana at 9:25AM and kept listening on 10 thru the

static crashes. The "skip" was getting shorter. Signals on the TV were building and moving up to Channel 6. At 10:15AM, two major events would occur.

On 10 meters, I run across KB5MR, John (Swot#1553) in Tulsa, OK. I work him for my WAS on 10 Meters! While I am chatting with him, I am hearing with the other ear, K4WOC-FM17 booming on 2 Meters. So I yell to John, "Sorry to run. Thank you, 73's... 2 just opened up!!!" *I never would get a QSL card from John.*

Out of nowhere, 2 Meters came to life. Solid 40 over S9 signals from Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania for an hour and a half. I worked KW's and 5-watt stations. The new grid count had increased by 8. The tape recorder was also on to capture the event. It was absolutely crazy. Twenty miles west of my QTH it was mostly quiet. I can't remember the call and name of the station (so much for the elephant) to my west, but I remember his comments. "Is that for real ... You just worked who!!!" The poor guy was getting only occasional hits. On this end, it appeared that the opening was from my QTH eastward towards Dallas. E's can be funny or brutal sometimes.

I was putting my life in jeopardy. In and amongst the QSO's were claps of thunder. Thank God it wasn't very loud. I think worst of it was off in the distance. About 45 minutes into the opening I got a very harsh and stern look from my wife, followed by a slamming of the door into the shack. I had managed to wake her up. She had other priorities and my hamming wasn't one of them.

Of course, living here in the Metroplex has its disadvantages for the VHF DX'er. We have too many of us in a small space during an opening. During the excitement of one of these openings, we will accidentally, and sometimes on purpose, step on each other. So would happen in this case. Russ, N5WS (Swot#593) lived in the Dallas area then. He was also enjoying the opening. In the excitement, he managed to jump in on a QSO I was having with a station in Pennsylvania, blew me away and worked the guy. Russ realized what had happened and proceeded to apologize to me for his actions. Russ is a fine operator and I accepted his apology, it was just the opening.

Then, out of the blue I hear, "WA1OUB New Hampshire".

"WA1OUB KA5DWI 59 EM12 Texas!" then "KA5DWI WA1OUB 59 FN43 New Hampshire 73's"

I had just completed a 1538 mile 2-Meter QSO. To this day, I have not worked anything longer. And, I don't know of many other single-hop ones as long until last year. *WA1OUB is now K1SIX.*

I would work a few more New York stations and finally after 2 hours, 28 QSO's and 15 Grids it would abruptly end. For me at that time, I managed to work the furthest and most QSO's in one opening at one time. It had done this with 125 watts and a 13-element yagi at 30 feet. I was spent. That was fun.

But, it wasn't over yet.

The storms and an associated Pacific cold front moved through quickly. Almost as fast, another storm system approached. Wedged between those storm systems was big upper air high-pressure ridge. The following two days we would have a rather significant Tropo opening.

Part 2 next month.

On the World Wide Web

A few sites Weak Signal operators may be interested in. Send in your favorite sites, they will be listed here.

New version of WSJT that contains new and improved JT44 mode for Tropo and EME
<http://pulsar.princeton.edu/~joe/K1JT/BETA192.ZIP>
<http://pulsar.princeton.edu/~joe/K1JT/BETA192.TXT>

New Vhf-Online site. Developing. Has calendar of nets and events. Also media links to VHF nets.
<http://www.vhfonline.com/index.html>

Aurora Sentry: The best real time Aurora information site.
<http://aurora.n1bug.net/>

NR0D Space Environment: Real time propagation information site.
<http://www.visi.com/~brainiac/solar/>

V-UHF Tropospheric Ducting Forecast. Best Tropo prediction site.

<http://www.iprimus.ca/~hepburnw/tropo.html>

KM5ES Weak Signal Homepage. Our Chairman's famous VHF Web Page with important information and links.

<http://km5es.lwok.com>

WB5APD VHF/UHF Weak Signal Page. GA's Bob Dobson's informational web site.

<http://www.alltel.net/~wb5apd/>

New Yahoo WSJT Group Page

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wsjtgroup/>

National Weather Service Radar links. NWS radars do not filter out false echoes caused by Tropo producing temperature inversions. Also displays reflections caused from Aurora events.

<http://weather.noaa.gov/radar/national.html>

DX Reports Febraury 16-March 15

By Art Jackson KA5DWI

Each month we will attempt to let you all know what has been going on 2 Meters and give you an idea what you can expect in the next month. Please Mail or email your DX reports to me and we will get them in the newsletter.

DX Reports

Meteors:

No major meteor showers occurred, but continued successful WSJT contacts were reported.

Aurora:

02/19: Light Aurora

03/01: Good Aurora opening from WI to PA north.

E Propagation:

Nil on 2 Meters. Six meters was also quiet.

Tropo:

As we begin the transition from Winter to Spring, the first widespread openings started from the Gulf States.

02/17: MS, FL, IN - EM54>EL79&EM79

02/19: S.FL, N.GA- EM74>EL96,EL88

02/20: IA, KY - EN41>EM56

02/24: NE MI, SW PA - EN84>FN00&FM09

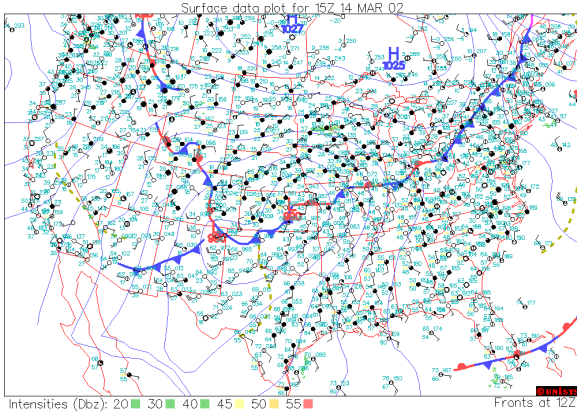
03/10: Localized enhancement FL to GA.

03/13&14: First Big Tropo!!!

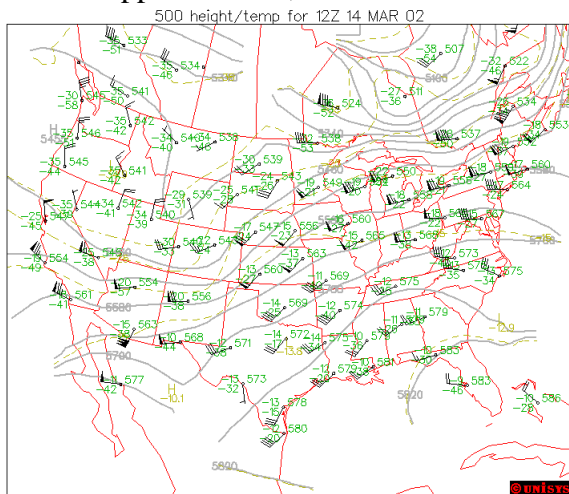
First reports began during the evening of 3/13. The line of propagation began from NE AL into WV and into S.TX. Many good reports up to 1000km along and near that line. Later in the evening, reports from W. LA to SC and AL to IN began. By early

morning, Tropo from Central FL to N. Texas was reported.

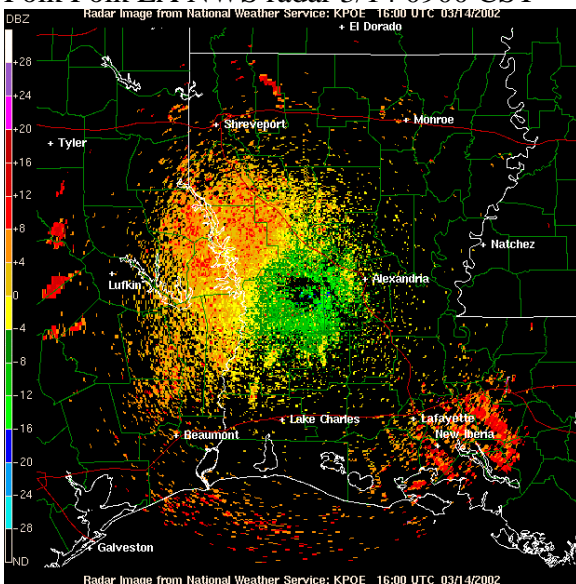
Surface map AM 3/14:



500mb Upper Air Plot, 3/14 AM



Folk Polk LA NWS radar 3/14 0900 CST



The weather maps display a slow moving frontal system across the mid-section of the US, with a

strong warm and moist surface inflow toward the Low pressure system. An upper-air high pressure ridge (850-300Mb) had developed over the East Gulf to the Midwest (bell shaped bump).

The upper-air high pressure system capped the warm air from the Gulf. The inversions (shown by the massive false echoes) on the Fort Polk, LA radar show the developed Tropo.

Sources: DX World 144 Propagation Logger and SWOT Group Page

What to expect March 16-April 15: **Propagation is picking up!**

Meteors:

The slowest period each year for meteor scatter has past. Although no major showers occur through this period, 28 minor and sporadic ones occur. During this period no fewer than 12 of these showers are at least a little active. Again, WSJT contacts should be more reliable during this period.

Look on 03/20-25, Especially 03/22, 04/06, 04/10-12, for the better meteor-scatter opportunities. Remember that the April Lyrids on 4/19 and peak on the 22nd.

Aurora:

The sun has been somewhat active the past month. M-Class flares were common. But, none of the flares were directed at the Earth. NASA has not predicted any major active periods for the next month. Therefore, be sure to monitor *Spaceweather.Com* for possible events.

Tropo:

Mid-March is the beginning of the Tropo season. The contrasts in weather systems we see this time of the year help provide us the opportunities. As mentioned last month, look for an upper air high-pressure system to develop over the southern Gulf of Mexico as a good omen. Cold systems as they move in from Canada will stall as they run in to it.

Also, as a series of Pacific systems move in from the west coast, look for a bell-shaped formation in the jet stream between them. This is indicating an upper air high. Again, look for paths on the western and northern portions of the upper air high-pressure system as it moves across the US. The slower these move, the better possibilities.

E-Layer Propagation:

“E” possibilities are still far and few between. Keep an eye for some activity beginning on 10 and 6 Meters towards the end of the period. Remember that disturbances in the Sun can set off a surprise opening. “E” propagation should return around May 1.

Moon:

Good days: 03/23-24, 03/28-30

Best days: 03/25-27

Bad days: 04/03-04

Based on low sky noise and path loss readings less than 3dB. Bad days are more than a 10db reading.

Lunar, Solar and Astronomical Events

Lunar: Apogee – 04/09

Perigee 03/27

New Moon – 04/12, Full Moon – 03/28

Solar: Overhead 03/16: - 1.7°S, 04/15: - 9.8°N

Spring Equinox 03/20

USAF Predicted Solar Flux Average:

03/16-04/15: 189 (Declining only 1)

Solar Flux dropped 35 last period.

Meteors:

Minor Showers: 28 from 03/16-04/15, 20 Peak during this period.

Moderate Shower: MuGeminids-3/22 N-S paths,

Ursa Majorids- 4/10-11 NE-SW,NW-SE paths

Major Showers: None

More meteor info at:

<http://comets.amsmeteors.org/meteors/calendar.html>

Event & Contest Calender 2002

April	01	144MHz Sprint 7-11PM Local time
April	09	222MHz Sprint 7-11PM Local time
April	17	432MHz Sprint 7-11PM Local time
April	26-27	S.E.VHF Conference, Oakridge, TN
June	07-08	Ham-Com Arlington, TX SWOT Meeting TBA
June	08-10	ARRL VHF QSO Party
June	22-23	ARRL Field Day
July	13-14	CQ Worldwide VHF Contest
August	3-4	ARRL UHF Contest
September	14-16	ARRL VHF QSO Party

SWOT NET UPDATES

Northern Missouri Net – 9:00PM CST Tuesday
1st, 2nd and 5th Tuesdays each month, NCS is Phil,
N0PB EM39.

3rd and 4th Tuesdays each month, NCS is Dave,
KB0PE EM48

Look to the SWOT Yahoo Group for any last
minute changes.

SWOT NET REPORTS

Here are the net reports for December and January.
The first figure listed for each date is the number of
check-ins and the second is the number of grids.

Sunday Northern California:

Month of February

01/05/02...82 01/12/01..No Net 01/19/02...76

01/26/02...80

14 Different Grids / 3 States.

Eastern Oklahoma (Monday)

2/18/02...32/13 2/25/02...24/11 3/04/02...41/12

3/11/02...No Net

Central Louisiana (Tuesday)

2/12/02...11/9 2/19/02...No Net (weather)

2/26/02...4/3 (noisy conditions)

3/05/02...9/7 3/12/02...10/8 grids

Northern Missouri (Tuesday)

2/12/02...23/10 2/19/02...24/13 2/26/02...13/6

3/05/02...15/7 3/12/02...27/13

North Texas (Wednesday)

2/13/02...38/18 2/20/02...No Net

2/27/02...25/11 3/06/02...31/13

SW Oklahoma (Thursday)

2/14/02...2/1 2/21/02...6/3 2/28/02...6/2

3/07/02...7/4

East Texas (Saturday)

2/23/02...15/7 3/02/02...11/3 3/09/02...15/7

3/16/02...18/9

SIDEWINDERS ON TWO” ENROLLMENT OR RENEWAL FORM

NOTE: Though your membership and number are good for life you must renew annually to receive the newsletter and stay on the active list..

Enclosed find check/MO. to: New member---\$10.00_____ Renewal----\$10.00_____

Howard Hallman WD5DJT, Sec.Treas.

3230 Springfield Lancaster, TX 75134-1214

New Member. I have worked the following members:

Call: _____ SWOT No. _____ Call: _____ SWOT No. _____

Renewing: My SWOT No. is _____

Name: _____ Call _____ Grid Square _____

Street address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone Nos. _____ E-mail _____

SWOT NETS

Day	Local Time	Area	Net	Frequency	Net Control Station
SUN	8:30A	TUCSON AZ	ARIZONA	144.250	N7SQN AL
SUN	8:00P	VACAVILLE CA	NORTHERN CALIFORNIA	144.250	W6OMF LARRY
SUN	9:30P	HOLLAND MI	MI SWAM	144.155	K8NFT
MON	7:30P	ALBUQUERQUE	NEW MEXICO	144.200	N5XZM BOBBY
MON	8:00P	WOODLAND PK	COLORADO	144.220	W2CRS WBODOM
MON	9:00P	MUSKOGEE	EAST OKLAHOMA	144.250	KM5ES JOHN
MON	8:00P	SANDUSKY	E. MICHIGAN	144.250	W8IDT BART
TUE	8:00P	CA.NO CTYS	NORCAL	144.250	KF6BXH BILL
TUE	8:00P	EM31 LA.	CENTRAL LOUISIANA	144.250	K5MQ DAVE
TUE	9:00P	N. CENTRAL MO.	N. CENTRAL MO.	144.250	N0PB PHIL KB0PE DAVE
WED	8:00P	IA-MO-IL	TRI STATE	144.250	WZ9D N9CXO
WED	9:00P	NO TEXAS	NORTH TEXAS	144.250	W5FKN BOB
THU	8:00P	CA SO CTYS	NORCAL	144.250	KC6CHJ
THU	7:30P	LAWTON EM04	SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA	144.250	WH6LR JIM
THU	9:00P	TENNESSE	UPPER CUMBERLAND	144.225	N2BR BOBBY
SAT	7:00A	EAST TEXAS	PINEYWOODS	144.250	K5LOW DON