



SWOT BULLETIN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
SIDEWINDERS-ON-TWO RADIO CLUB



PROMOTING SSB, CW & DIGITAL OPERATIONS ON 144MHz AND UP

VISIT US ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB AT :

www.swotvhf.org

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

BULLETIN # 297

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S.W.O.T. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Send renewals and new applications for membership to Howard Hallman WD5DJT (See address above). Please make all checks payable to SIDEWINDERS ON TWO. Include your SWOT # for your renewals.
- 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.
- E-Mail all articles and reports to the Editors' Web addresses listed above or you can mail them to Art Jackson KA5DWI, 6516 Simmons Rd., North Richland Hills, Texas 76180-4243.
- **MERCHANDISE:**
Decals and listings available for \$1.00 each for shipping and handling from the Secretary/Treasurer.
SWOT Patches are available at a price of \$4.00 Each + \$.50 for mailing
Badges are available from "The Sign Man", Rick Pourciau NV5A, <http://www.thesignman.com/menu.html>

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The Chairman's Corner

By Art Jackson, KA5DWI

I sometimes think that for all the good luck one has the bad luck will offset it.

Just when you think things are working your way, the Halloween gremlins and spooks catch up with you and make life a little difficult. And so goes the past month.

School has been a bit of a drag and has really taken quite a bit of time. I'm trying to maintain a 4.0, so I am studying quite a lot. On top of that, a family matter a week ago stole my entire past weekend. So the result was a delayed bulletin. Sorry about it. I guess in a way it was a blessing. I have had to ignore a couple of issues the past weeks and this delay has given me a chance to readdress them. In addition it is time to adjust the schedule of the Bulletin.

The first issue to readdress is the where we stand on the By-Laws.

We have received little if any response from the membership concerning the By-Laws. What I would like you all to do is to read them over one more time and indicate your approval or disapproval of them. Please let us know your opinions of the alternatives that were listed.

Please Email me at ka5dwi@sbcglobal.net with your vote. You can also snail mail to me at the logbook address. I do not care whether you are a paid member or not. Having a SWOT number is good enough for me. Any response will make my day.

My opinion on the By-Laws is, please take into consideration that this club other than, but also sometimes including the Board and the officers is a terrible history of apathy and non-involvement. Much of it has to do with a lack of personal time and all of the other facets of this hobby.

The result of all of this is only modest gains in membership and renewals that are not anything to get excited about. But again, one renewal and new member is better than no renewals or new members. I would really like to see SWOT become more like 10-10, a Chapter based organization. Our growth will depend on what is going on in your local areas and not what we do here in Texas and Oklahoma. The strongest growth in this organization has come from SWOT's only chapter, NORCAL. If it had not been for them, I am not quite sure where we as an organization would be.

Sometimes in the next 2 or 3 months I will take these results and present it in some way back to the Board. I will let them validate the final results.

If you lost your copy of the By Laws, they are available at:

www.swotvhf.org and
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sidewindersontwo/files>

The second issue is to get our current Vice Chairman relieved of those duties.

John Petersen, KM5ES asked a couple of months ago that situations were such that he would like to resign as Vice-Chairman.

Unfortunately my lack of time has kept me from getting this resolved. In the next couple of weeks I will be in touch with the board and will get John replaced with Donald Ross, NL7CO. Don will do us well.

Third Issue ...Future Bulletins

Looking for a new editor. It is time for me to take a rest. I am willing to alternate each issue with someone.

Also, I would like your feedback about cutting the bulletin down to bi-monthly starting in 2004. Maybe we issue it monthly only during July, August and September; which are after typically active propagation months. Let me know what you all think.

This will be the last issue for 2003. I will be on a DXpedition next month, so no Bulletin will be attempted unless there is a volunteer. This trip will be done without a radio and a laptop. Nobody was interested in FK93.

Recap

It has been another interesting month of propagation. So far from what I have seen, the Bulletin last month has covered the big Tropo opening better than any other periodical. I remind all of you that when you get the opportunity to work DX, share it with others. It is hard to get potential new operators up here unless you can demonstrate what can be worked.

Thanks again to Don, NL7CO for his regular and reliable contributions and to Tip, WA5UFH for the notice and rules of the December North American Meteor Scatter Contest.

As for bad luck, I have rotor problems...

Happy Holidays and Mucho DX
Art Jackson-KA5DWI

What is a VHF-er?

From Donald Ross NL7CO

What is a VHF-er?

As I sit here wondering what to write about, a recent conversation keeps running through my mind - what exactly is a VHF-er?

Is it someone who owns and operates equipment on an authorized frequency above 30 MHz and below 300 MHz? Is it someone who ONLY operates above 30 MHz? Is there some other, more esoteric definition?

I, and many of my fellows, believe that being a VHF-er is a mindset and an attitude.

It is a mindset in that you are always looking to get that extra half, or even quarter dB out of your station. Constantly reading articles and books, listening to other VHF-ers for tips, and yes, even experimenting with your own setup to get just that little bit more out of it.

It is an attitude that we absolutely, without a slight hesitation or doubt, must help each other.

Help each other put together a better station even if it means that they end up more capable than you - they'll help you pull ahead next time. It means working a rare grid during an opening and then shutting up and listening while someone else works the guy. It means calling someone on the phone and letting them know that there is an opening.

How can you identify the true VHF-er?

- They are the ones that show up at the antenna and tower raisings.
- They are the ones that loan equipment to the new folks.
- They are the ones that invite people into their shack to show how they put theirs together.
- They are the ones that are willing to shut up during a contest so that someone can work a new grid
- They are the ones who tell the distant station to listen for the little guy trying to work them
- They're the ones that talk to the newbie "off line" rather than embarrass them in front of their new peers

And hopefully, it's the one you see in the mirror each morning.

Holiday Thoughts For the VHF Enthusiast

From Donald Ross NL7CO

Now that the holidays are upon us, it is time to start working on all of the contest station improvements that we promised ourselves at the end of last contesting season. I mean, what better time of the year to work on those stacked arrays than December? Yeah, we promised to do that stuff right after the September VHF contest but for some reason, we never quite got around to it.

So what are you going to do?

For most of us, preparation for the January contest is limited to rearranging the shack to make it more efficient or just to make it look better. Has the better half been complaining about the clutter or the mess? Now is a good time to position all of the cables so that they are less of an eyesore (and safer too). It's also a very good time to closely examine all of the cables and see which ones need to be replaced due to fraying or because you yanked on something in the middle of the contest just a little too hard. What about the cables that have one or two (three?) adapters on it since you've changed out a radio, an amp, or a TNC? Sure would look nicer if you soldered a new, correct, connector on the end. Who knows, it may even work better. Do you have the correct adapters for your headset, foot switch, and key?

Another thing you may want to look at is how you log contest QSOs. Are you still using paper like many of us? If you're using paper, where do you keep the pens and pencils? Are they handy for when one breaks or runs out of ink? If you're using pencils, where is the pencil sharpener? Is it convenient? What about additional log sheets when you get the tropo opening in the middle of the contest?

If you have switched to one of the computer logging programs, are you using the latest release? Have you practiced with it? Does it interface directly to your radio, and if so, is that one of the cables that needs to have a new connector put on the end of it? Do the radio and the computer play well with others, or do you need to make them get along with each other?

How are your station grounds? Do they come to a central point or are you "daisy chaining" them together? Is all of the equipment actually grounded?

Is there a piece of equipment that you need / want to integrate into your station to make it better? Have you

“talked” to Santa Claus (parents, spouse, kids, and grandkids) so that they know what to get you? There are lots of sales out there right now, even at the ham radio stores.

And finally, have you taken a few moments to actually just sit in your shack and look at everything? I like to close my eyes and try and lay my hands on each piece of gear and see how intuitive and comfortable it is to put it into play before each contest.

Believe me; time spent now will be rewarded during the actual contest.

Happy Holidays
Don

News From NORCAL

From Larry Hogue W6OMF

Sent the 3rd week of October

K6ETB, Larry SWOT #326 of Woodside, CA passed away last week of a heart attack...

KD6WAB, Don SWOT #3398 of Vallejo, CA Survived a heart attack and has had a 5 way Bypass... He is resting well... Note: Don was in the throws of moving to Salem, OR to be nearer his kids and grandkids.

We are preparing for the annual gathering (meeting if I must call it that) of the NORCAL SWOT members... All SWOT members are always invited... but those paying thru the chapter will have an opportunity for the SWOT only drawing... This years membership is currently at 61 and we will have three SWOT only drawings... First prize will be a \$150 gift certificate to HRO, the second will be \$100 to HRO and the third is donated by WA6CAX, Bill, SWOT # 3400 a \$50 M² gift certificate...

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE PRESENT TO WIN... Just paid thru Dec 03...

We are gathering at our normal place in West Sacramento, Bakers Square Restaurant, 0930 local, December 6 and if you have something to wheel and deal with, park in the back of the lot so were out of the way...

The season has been slow with lots out on extended vacations... Germany, Hawaii, Texas, Virginia, Minnesota, and all over the state... we'll look forward to seeing the pic and hearing about the grand kids...
73 Larry

December 2003 North American Meteor Scatter Contest

1. PURPOSE: to promote activity using meteor scatter propagation on the amateur VHF/UHF bands using both scheduled and random techniques.

2. CONTEST PERIOD: Dates were chosen to make good use of the annual Geminids meteor shower. The contest starts on Friday, December 12, at 0000 UTC and ends on Tuesday, December 15 at 0700 UTC (Thursday evening through late Sunday evening, North American time.)

The first 30 minutes of each even-numbered UTC hour (00, 02, 04, ...) are designated as “Random Windows” in which non-scheduled QSOs are strongly encouraged (see section 4, below).

3. ENTRY CATEGORIES: Low Power or High Power, Single Band or Multiband: four categories in all. Low power means less than 200 Watts output was used at all times.

4. VALID QSO TYPES: Any transmission mode (for example, FSK441, JT6M, CW, HSCW, SSB) is permitted. The propagation mode for all QSOs must be meteor scatter. Contest QSOs cannot be claimed within your own grid square or any of the immediately adjacent grid squares, including those that touch yours diagonally at a corner.

Each QSO will be considered as being either “scheduled” or “random.” Random QSOs must not be pre-arranged and must originate during the random windows. A random QSO is started during a random window by calling CQ, answering a CQ, “tailending,” or moving a station to another band.

If a random QSO is followed immediately by a QSY to another band, a successful QSO on that band also counts as random even if it begins after the random period has ended.

A given station may be worked for contest credit on each band in both scheduled and random modes.

5. EXCHANGE: Valid QSOs require the exchange of full call signs, four-digit grid squares, and final rogers. Any communication by non-meteor-scatter means during a contact invalidates the contact.

6. OPERATING PROCEDURES: Stations may use the internet, email, or other non-meteor-scatter communication to make schedules or solicit contacts except for random QSOs initiated during the random windows. During those intervals it is suggested that

participants call CQ or answer CQs in a region +/- 10kHz centered on the standard calling frequencies of 50.260, 144.140, and 222.140.

It is intended that random QSOs initiated during the random windows should be truly random. Real-time self spotting or other indications that you will be calling CQ or listening on a particular frequency, etc., are not in this spirit and are therefore forbidden during the random windows. After each random window has expired, however, participants may post their results on Ping Jockey Central, www.pingjockey.net/cgi-bin/pingtalk.

7. SCORING: Scheduled QSOs count 1 point on 50 and 144 MHz, 3 points on 222 MHz, and 10 points on 432 MHz. Grid multipliers are counted separately on each band. Random QSOs yield the same number of QSO points as scheduled QSOs, but each random QSO also counts as a multiplier. Your final score is the sum of all QSO points, multiplied by the total of unique 4-digit grid locators worked per band plus the number of random QSOs.

Standard Rover rules apply for rover stations: rovers also get credit for each band-grid from which they make a QSO.

8. REPORTING: Log information must contain the following data: date and time of QSO, callsign of station worked, random or scheduled QSO, band, grid square, QSO points, and unique grids by band. For example, the log of K0ABC might look like the following:

Date	UTC	Call	R/S	Band	Grid	Pts	Grids
Dec 14	0103	W1ABC	S	144	FN42	1	144-1
Dec 14	0204	W1ABC	R	144	FN42	1	
Dec 15	1225	N4XYZ	R	50	EM83	1	50-1
Dec 15	1240	N4XYZ	R	144	EM83	1	144-2
Dec 15	1352	N4XYZ	S	222	EM83	3	222-1
Dec 16	0203	W9JKL	S	144	EN62	1	144-3

The total score of K0ABC would be computed on his summary sheet as follows:

Band	Scheduled	Random	QSO	Points	Grids
50	0	1	1	1	
144	2	2	4	3	
222	1	0	3	1	
Totals	3	3	8	5	

Score: (8 QSO points) x (5 grids + 3 randoms) = 64

The following information should be contained on the

summary sheet accompanying the log: Callsign used, Grid Locator, Power Category, Single or Multi-Band, Name, Address, and Email Address (if available).

Logs must be postmarked or email dated no later than January 12, 2004. Email logs should be sent to wa5ufh@ykc.com;

paper logs should be sent to:
 Louis R. Tipton
 778CR123
 Edna, Texas 77957

Please send in your score! It's very easy to do, and we want to have a good record of the level of activity in the event.

9. RESULTS will be posted on a pre-announced web site.

-- 73 from Joe/K1JT, Tip/WA5UFH, and John/N6ENU, for the WSJTGROUPE, sponsors of this event.

DX Reports October 16- November 22

By Art Jackson KA5DWI

Aurora:

10/29: The Entire US to South Texas
 10/30: Same conditions, different event
 10/31: Midwest and Northeast enjoy the leftovers.
 11/20: As far south as Oklahoma
 11/21-22: Continued great conditions for the Midwest and Northeast
 On 10/29, Bill W3XO/5's Internet post said it best. "Best AU I have heard since I moved here to South Texas."

It was the first time that your editor heard stations from the South on Aurora. It was absolutely a wonderful AU opening. As soon as the aurora ended on 2 Meters, spectacular 6 Meter conditions occurred. A few of us worked our 48th, 49th and 50th states on that band. Some of the most powerful X Class flares on record occurred prior to these events.

Meteors:

The Leonids appeared to be a bit of a disappointment this year.

Sporadic E/ FAI:

No reports as expected.

Tropo:

Another good opening!

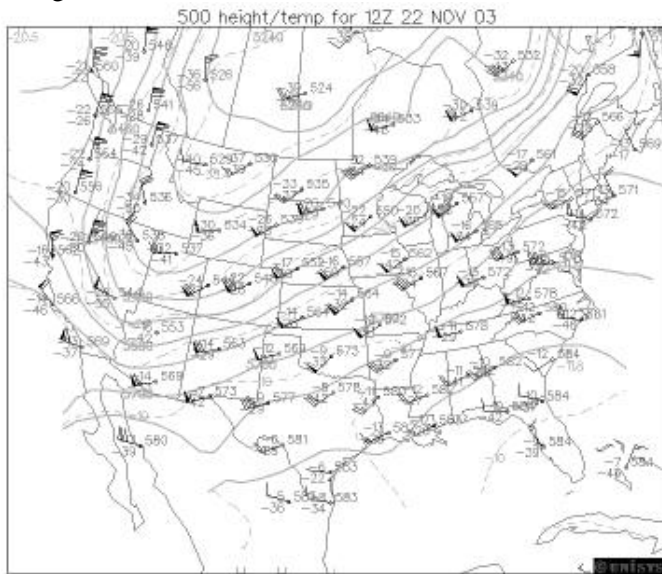
10/24: Gulf Coast states

11/01: East Coast states

11/22-23 West Texas to South Carolina

Prior to the passage of the season's first big cold spell, another pleasant Tropo occurred from West Texas to as far east as South Carolina.

W5III in DM91 worked KE8FD in EM94. Many stations were on in between. 500mb Height/Temperature Map shows a good ridge along the East Coast and over to central Texas.



Please send me your reports, I will be glad to put them in the Bulletin.

What to expect

November 22- January 1:

Start making your off season station plans after December 15.

Meteors:

What is considered the best annual shower is the Geminids. The shower will peak quickly at 15:00 UT on December 14. The shower tends to quickly rise to peak, then slowly tail off. Many forget to stick around a day or two after the peak.

This is a good late evening and around sun up shower. It has a history of being fairly productive for the seasoned Ping Jockey. Great for the WSJT contest.

The minor shower Ursids then show up around 12/22 into 12/23. This shower can be cold and it can be hot.

Aurora:

Hard to top October, but these disturbances stick around for a few months.

Come to find out that this rather unusual and highly active spike in solar activity during the down cycle is not as rare as one may think. Similar events occurred during the last two cycles.

What was so interesting about this one was that as one region formed, at least two others developed right behind each other. The latter region formations should stick around for a while. Be prepared for additional

geomagnetic storms around December 6 to December 15. A second disturbance is possible around December 21-22.

Aurora is a great mode to pick up those grids that are hard to get on Tropo and E Skip.

Tropo:

We now enter a period of fewer opportunities for Tropo. They still happen. If you here from your favorite weatherman, "Indian Summer", that should alert you that something could develop.

Stalling clear weather systems that warm up over a few days can set off some pretty exciting openings.

E-Layer Propagation:

The Winter Es season has begun. Generally it is a 10 and 6 Meter event, but every few years it becomes a 2 Meter one. Look for short duration solar disturbances to set things off.

Moon:

Good days: 12/01, 12/12-19, 12/27-29

Bad days: 11/25, 12/23

Good days are based on low sky noise and path loss readings (DEGR) less than 3dB, *Best* days at/or below 1dB. *Bad* days are those with a 10db plus reading.

Lunar, Solar and Astronomical Events

Lunar: Perigee – 11/23 & 12/21 Apogee – 12/06

Full Moon – 12/08, New Moon – 12/23

Highest Declination (Elevation): 12/11-12

Lowest Declination (Elevation): 11/26, 12/23-24

Solar: Overhead 11/23: - 20.3°S, 01/01: -23.0°S

Winter Solstice 07 UT 12/22

USAF Predicted Solar Flux Average:

11/22-12/22: 141

(A drop of 19 from the prior month, but almost 20 plus two months ago.)

Meteors:

For December, there are approximately 34 meteor showers to generate activity. About 25 of them peak during the month. I would spend those quiet dark evening trying out a little WSJT.

Meteor info at:

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

Event & Contest Calender 2003

<u>Month</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Event</u>
December	12-15	December Meteor Scatter Contest

January 17-19 ARRL January Sweepstakes

Send me dates that are important to you all.

SWOT Announcements and News

From Phil Baldwin, N0PB

Hi all,

I will have the Bigwheels available this week.. Did a little quick tower work Sunday afternoon. I have 2 of the Bigwheels atop the 96 ft. tower with the pre-amp at about the 80 ft. level.

I need to do some work and improve the feedline, but they are up there and seem to be working OK. I will be able to switch between them and them beams as I had before.

We broke the old record of 38 checkins last week !! We had 39 checkins from 18 grids and 5 states. There were several that normally check in, but weren't there this time too. There are several new stations on the net as well. It is very nice to see some new people on the band. Let's all welcome them to the band and help out if you can. I think we all remember what it is like starting out... Fun, but can be discouraging without a little help sometimes or just a station to answer your CQ. So don't be afraid to answer the new guy. Remember, we were all new once too. Might be nice feeling later when you notice the new operators using good operator etiquette later down the road.

SWOT Net Reports

Here are the net reports for August and September. Unless noted, the first figure listed for each date is the number of check-ins and the second is the number of grids.

Northern California (Sunday)

Month of October:

A total of 15 different grids with 3 states

Week one 79

Week two 72

Week three 69

Week four 73

34 people checked in all four weeks, 28 checked in three of the weeks, 22 were around two weeks and 25 visited once for the month...

Northern Missouri (Monday)

Month of October:

Date/Check ins/Grids/States

10/6... 31/16/6 10/13... 30/15/5 10/20... 28/16/5

10/27 No Net

North Texas (Wednesday)

10/15... 36/16 10/22... 38/19 10/29... 30/16

11/05... 33/16 11/12... 36/16

Southwest Oklahoma (Thursday)

No Reports

East Texas Pineywoods (Saturday)

10/18... 12/6 10/25... 15/7 11/01... 14/7

11/08... 14/7 11/15... 14/7

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---\$12.00_____ Renewal---\$12.00_____

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 _____

Receive Newsletter By Email: YES _____ NO _____

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	NO. 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	COLORADO	ROCKY MT. VHF +	144.220	N0VSB W6OAL
MON	8:00P	NE MISSOURI	NORTHEAST MISSOURI SWOT	144.250	N0PB PHIL
MON	8:00P	SANDUSKY	E. MICHIGAN VHF	144.250	W8IDT BART
TUE	8:00P	CA.NO CTYS	NORCAL	144.250	KF6BXH BILL
WED	9:00P	NO TEXAS	NORTH TEXAS SWOT	144.250	W5FKN BOB
THU	8:00P	CA SO CTYS	NORCAL	144.250	KA6CHJ PAUL
THU	7:30P	DUNCAN OK	SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA SWOT	144.250	W5SSG JIM
THU	9:00P	TENNESSE	UPPER CUMBERLAND	144.225	N2BR BOBBY
SAT	7:00A	EAST TEXAS	PINEYWOODS SWOT	144.250	K5LOW DON