Basics of VHF Contesting

This is supposed to be FUN!

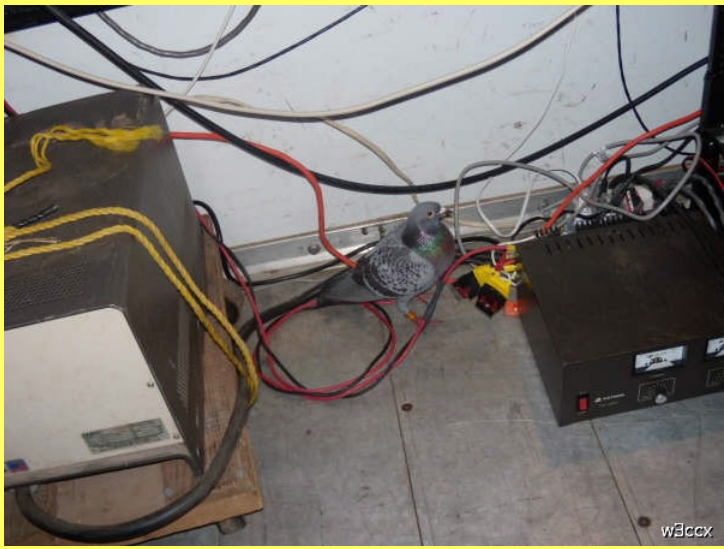


VHF Contests

- January VHF SS— 2nd full wknd January ***NOT***
- June VHF QSO Party-- 2nd full wknd June
- Field Day– 4th full wknd June
- CQ VHF WW-- 2nd full wknd July
- UHF QSO Party– 1st full wknd Aug
- Sept VHF QSO Party-- 2nd full wknd Sept
- Spring and Fall single band Sprints
- 10 GHz & Up, EME, SBMS club uwave, FM

Pre-contest checklist

- Expectations-Expectations-Expectations
- Antennas and feedlines
- Rigs tested—beacons, nets, test gear
- Logging capability
- Spare parts/replacements
- Power source
- Contingency planning



Know the Rules and Exchange

- When does the contest start and end?
- What class am I entering?
- Good call phonetics
- What info is exchanged?
- Grid locator (4 or 6 digit) have a map
- Signal report optional most often
- How, where and when are logs submitted?

Strategies and Tactics

- Read about the contest from QST/CQ/ contesting reflectors
- Plan to have fun, not win the first time
- Make sure the gear works first
- Get antennas their highest
- 6m & 2m are basic to most contests
- Select an entry class
- Action starts when contest starts

Strategies and Tactics-2

- Listen and scan the bands +/- 50 KHz starting around the calling frequencies
- Learn and use CW
- Seek FM simplex contacts

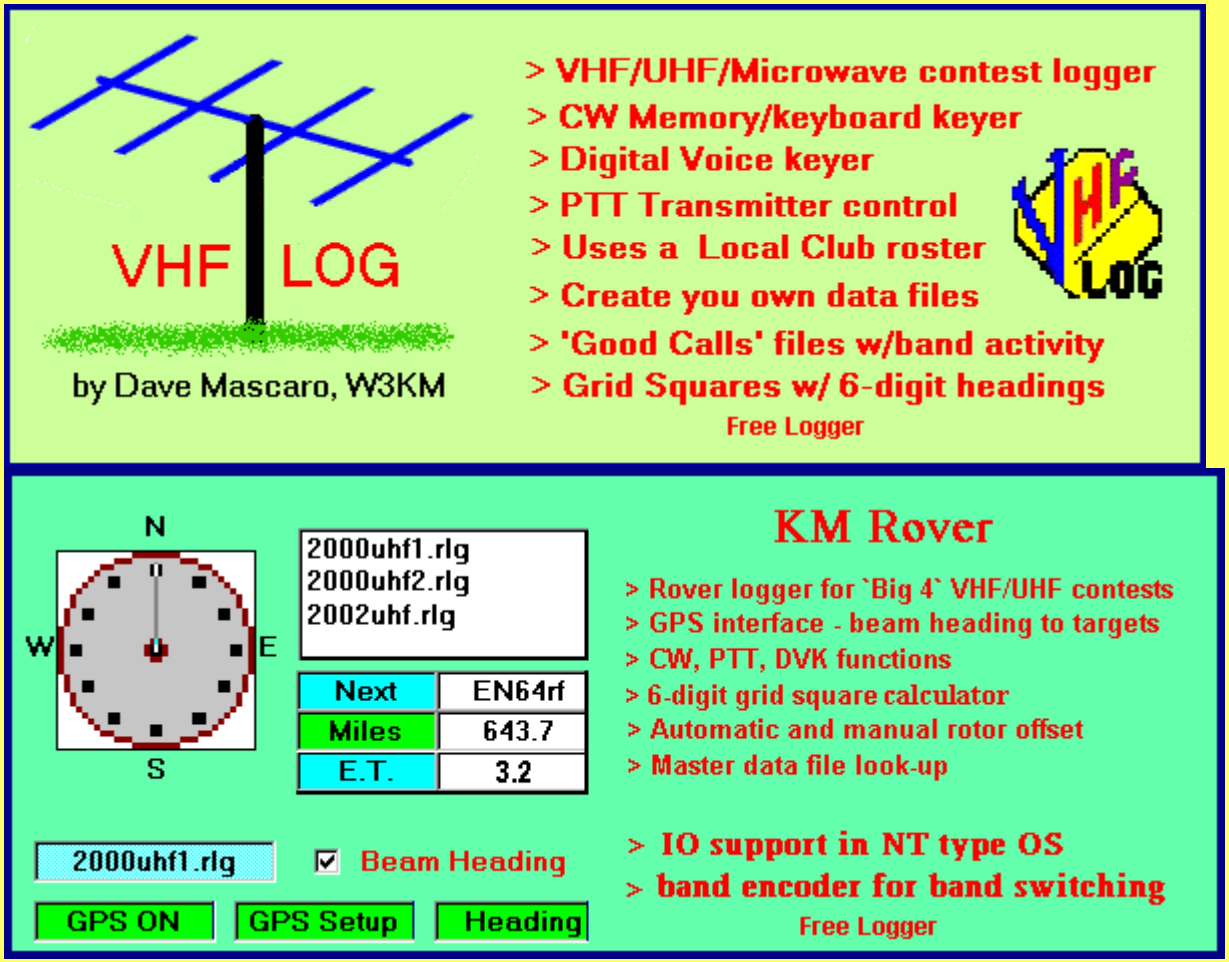
  146.55/58, 223.5, 446.000
- Turn your antennas
- Call CQ at times (voice keyer)
- Listen for 6m Es

Big and Little Guns

- Call anyone you hear
- Tail-end other contacts
- Be persistent but polite
- Conditions can change quickly
- Listen and record the exchange carefully
- “Thanks”
- Know when local ops and rovers active

Free Logging Software

- http://mysite.verizon.net/dmascaro1/
- http://www.qsl.net/w3km/



Time & Band Management

- Start when contest starts
- Plan breaks for meals and sleep
- Get information from locals on best contest activity periods and bands/modes
- Back off when rates slow down, but check back periodically for 6m Es
- Most activity on 50-144-432 SSB

Avoid These Errors

- Incorrect time/date on logging program
- Inexperience with computerized logging
- Hogging the calling frequencies
- Poor ergonomics
- Climbing a tower without appropriate safety gear and assistance
- Working on “live” gear
- Getting overtired, especially if a rover
- Failing to submit your log

QUESTIONS?