



# 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://www.swotvhf.org)

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## BULLETIN # 291

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**MAY 2003**

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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 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

### Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

School's out. I was glad to get the past eight weeks over and done with. The brain was totally committed to learning something although there was a time or two that I thought that I couldn't cram anymore into it. Anyhow, I managed to get all A's my first semester and put a lot of Ham and SWOT duties to the side. So, it is time give a little attention to the hobby before the Summer session begins.

### Major Upcoming Events, Plus Help!

I am happy to report that Ham-Com 2003 (ARRL National Convention) got our meeting listed on the Program. The gathering will be on Saturday-June 21 at 1:00 P.M. in Meeting Room 6. It will last only one hour.

This *will not* be a formal meeting. This will be a chance for us to get together and see each other face to face. We want to bring in some new members and get some current ones to renew their memberships. I am also sure that there are some Hams that could use some help and advice on setting up a "Weak Signal" station.

I would like this to be an opportunity to promote SWOT. Of course, this is also a chance for you all to express your opinions on any issues that you feel that we in the Board need to confront.

**One last hitch** concerning this meeting, I may need a backup. There exists a possibility that I might not be able to attend. A family member has been serving our country in the Middle East since November and is expecting to return for a single weekend sometimes in the next few weeks. The family is planning a party. Unfortunately, the party will be in New Mexico. Therefore, it may be on Ham-Com weekend. So Help!! I need someone to back me up incase.

Once again, Howard WD5DJT will have a booth in the Flea Market with his usual stack of SWOT promotional stuff. Be sure you all sign in. He will be on Row B, Table 1 inside the convention Flea Market.

In addition, I am planning to attend the Central States VHF Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, July 24-27. I hope that all you members can attend this conference. It is the premier gathering for this end of the Ham hobby. It is always interesting, entertaining and has great door prizes at the banquet. We might want to consider an informal SWOT gathering here as well. More on the Central States VHF Conference in the next month.

## A Busy Month

We are now entering the best part of the year for operating on 2 Meters. Just about every day from now till mid-August has some kind of opening to somewhere. So far, early indications show a good Summer DX season. So make some noise!!!! Also it's time to get the station or Rover ready for the ARRL June VHF contest. When the band isn't open, write an article or two for the Bulletin.

## The Bulletin

Once again, thank you Don - NL7CO and Lee - N5TIF for your contributions this month. It is Contest Season, so this month's issue promotes it.

Hope we can see you all next month. 73's  
Art Jackson KA5DWI #2497

## What is Your Favorite 2 Meter Contest?

By Donald Ross, NL7CO

There are six major contests a year for the serious 2 Meter contester; January ARRL, the Spring Sprint, June ARRL, CQ World-Wide VHF, September ARRL, and the Fall Sprint. There are some minor contests that are fun to operate in and these include the ARRL Field Day competition, the ARRL EME contest, and possibly your state QSO Party. Each contest also brings it's own unique flavor and propagation expectations as well as dividing the year into distinct periods. Which one of these is your favorite? If you could only do one, which one would it be?

For the "normal" 2 Meter contester, operating from that comfortable, state of the art, 2 Meter super station, all of these contests are basically the same with the only real variable being the number of participants. All of the major contest score basically the same way - QSO points x grids worked = Total Score - and with the exception of the CQ WW VHF, all of the QSO's count one point each. Therefore, each contest can be compared against every other one to determine how to improve your station to place higher (or to protect your lead) in the next one or to objectively analyze if the last improvement actually was worth your time and effort.

For us Rovers, the analysis is a little more difficult. Rover scoring is done in two fashions - ARRL and "the old rover rules", which are used by everyone else. For trivia pursuit fans, the old Rover rules were the ones initially promulgated by the ARRL and then changed, against the wishes of the VHF Contesting community, by the ARRL Contesting Committee for unknown reasons. Rumors abound as to why the change was made but, with no factual evidence. I'll stay out of the Why's.

Under the current ARRL rules, Rover scoring is still the sum of QSO points (1 per at 2 Meters) x the total multipliers = Total score. The difference is that the multiplier total is the total number of unique grids that you worked from all grids activated, plus one multiplier for each grid that you activated. The definition of activating a grid is that you made at least one successful contact from the grid.

Calculating your total score under the old rules is slightly more complicated. The total score is the cumulative sum of QSO points and multipliers in each grid. There is a very good example of the old Rover scoring at the CQ-VHF website in this year's CQ WW VHF contest rules (<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/VHF%20Contest%20Rules%202003%20216.pdf>)

Personally, I like competing in all of them, but the best one for me - as a Rover - is probably the CQ WW VHF. The days are longer and there is generally less weather problems here in SW Oklahoma for me to worry about while operating in my favorite mode – “Run and Gun”. And with only two bands in play, it is easier to get peoples attention without them being gone somewhere "running the tree" with someone else when I need to activate my current grid. Oh yeah, 2 Meter QSO's are also worth two points each.

So which one is your favorite?  
Don, NL7CO/R

## **A Little Experience From the 144 and 220 MHz Roves**

By Donald Ross, NL7CO

The 144 MHz Sprint was done as a "run and gun" operation with 100 watts and dual KB6KQ loops on the back right corner of the truck. This worked well, but I was nervous because I didn't really know the height of the system (later measured at 13' 4") and it was on the side of the trees. The route was one that I was very familiar with and I was confident that I could get to all five of the intended grids. We started late due to a different non-ham roving partner than normal and were still deep into EM14 when the contest started. We worked all of the Lawton locals and charged into EM15 where we met with AF5Q/Rover and loaned him the 2M9SSB that we were carrying as a back up since Ron had broken the gamma match on the beam that he was carrying.

Although this committed us to the loops, I had transmitted much farther with them than we were planning on traveling. We missed a planned contact with NH6CJ/Rover in EM05, but did talk to Mike in

other grids. We worked all of the Lawton guys in every grid (except WO7GI while in EM15) and even managed to work some other grids as we ran the roads. All in all, a good contest but no contacts with Texas stations. All total, 40 contacts in seven grids for a final score of 280 points.

The 220 MHz Sprint was run as a "shoot and scoot" since I don't have 220 loops yet (Norm can expect a call before the next 220 rove) and we were restricted to using a small M2 220 beam. My partner on this rove was my normal roving partner, KC5UFW, and the crew duties were much easier. What a difference Jerri made in the rove! We worked on a procedure that allowed us to stop, set up and orient the beam, and be ready to rock in about ten minutes. This is important because we will be carrying beams with us during the June VHF Contest.

We moved to the intersection of EM14 and EM15 and set up thirty minutes before the start of the sprint. We specifically set up somewhere that we would be able to drive with the beam still up into the next grid. We worked WO7GI before the contest to make sure everything was operational and then counted down the minutes to the start.

Mike called us right at 1900 local time and we drove down the access road to EM15. We called him back and then ran to tear everything down and move to the intersection of EM05 and EM04 where we set up and worked WO7GI on SSB, and NE0P on FM.

Next we decided that since it was still early, we would try and get to the EM03/EM13 intersection and get WO7GI, an unplanned grid. We finally got to the right spot according to the GPS and set up and ran EM03 and then drove to EM13 with the beam still up. In addition to working WO7GI/EM04, we also got KD5OMJ/EM04, W5UGM/EM12 and K5LUA/EM13 as the clock wound down. Yeah, we got some Texans!!

Final score was 14 contacts in 3 grids for a total of 42 points.

So what did I learn?

I learned that I like the contest being on Saturday nights better than during the week and hope that the East Tennessee DX Association moves next years 2 Meter Sprint to Saturday also. They've done a great job of keeping the Spring Sprint alive and should be congratulated. Thanks ETDXA.

I learned that there is nothing like an experienced partner and they should be cherished as the good friends that they are. Thanks Jerri.

I learned that I want my 400 watts back and will run that in June instead of only 100 watts.

I learned that I still like to “gun and run”, but “shooting and scooting” needs to be part of the arsenal also. The set up drills will need to be refined since the 2M9SSB breaks down into three pieces instead of remaining complete in between grids.

If you “shoot and scoot”, do it from a place that you can move the required 100 meters into a new grid square without tearing down the beam(s). This will allow you to remain in the "capture area" of most antennas that you just worked. In the June contest, I will start on the grid line for DM86/DM96 and then scoot to EM06/EM16, operating “gun and run” in between with the loops.

I learned that 13'4" is awful close to the Oklahoma minimum bridge clearance of 13'6" and that I need to lower the loops by about a foot and move them to the left rear of the truck to be safe.

I reaffirmed that I'd rather rove than work from a box somewhere.

Look for NL7CO/Rover in the June contest from DM86, DM96, EM06, EM16, EM26, EM25, EM24, EM23, EM13, EM14, EM15, EM05, EM04, and EM03 as KC5UFW and I try to put all fourteen Oklahoma grids on the air during a single contest on 2 Meters. We'll also attempt to run DM87 and DM97 on the Friday before the test for those who need it.

Don, NL7CO/R

## What Does it Take to Win

By Lee Kemp, N5TIF



As you can see, I won my section (North Texas) in the 2002 June VHF Contest for 2 Meters.

What I have here is not much of what some say is a “Super Station”. In fact, it is just the opposite.

For the contest I was running an IC 211 with a RF Concepts brick at 170 watts out. I was using Belden 9913 as coax loading two 10- element yagis at just 35 feet. It doesn't sound like much does it. Yet, I won the North Texas Section! Now, how did I do that?

Well, first I tried to work all that I could hear. Next, I was by the station around 18 hrs or so. I got only 4 hours of sleep and took about 2 more hours for eats. Now the next one may be the biggest contributor to my win.

I was competing against only 6 or so other stations *that turned in their logs!* I am sure that if a few more operators had got on and worked that contest as hard as I did, I could have been easily beaten.

So the next time you have a low score and you are wondering if you should bother to turn it in, you may get a surprise and win! Sometimes that's all it takes. Now this section may be different on the East or West coast, but it would never hurt to turn in those logs.

The June Contest is just a few weeks away make plans to be there and send in those logs.

Good luck to all. 73's  
Lee Kemp N5TIF  
SWOT #3319  
VUCC 6M #1114

## On the World Wide Web

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

### It is Contest Time!!!

Reminders of some helpful related sites.

**Online Map Creation Website** – AZ\_PROJ Equidistant Mappings. The Best Map Site in Cyberspace  
<http://www.wm7d.net/azproj.shtml>

**New Improved Wingrid.** Distance-Bearing Program  
<http://www.cstone.net/~w4sm/software/WinGrid.zip>

**VHFCONT** – DOS VHF Contest Software  
One of the best and most reliable programs.  
<http://www.qsl.net/kc6teu/>

**CT Contest Software** – Now Public!!!!  
Longtime, supported and reliable contest software.  
<http://www.k1ea.com/>

More **VHF Contest Software** for the Rover.  
<http://www.qsl.net/w3km/#rover>

Of course, the **Rover Resource Page**

<http://www.qsl.net/n9rla/>

## **DX Reports April 16- May 15**

By Art Jackson KA5DWI

### **Aurora:**

It was a fairly active month. Spotty reports of AU on 4/21, 4/26 & 5/11. Good reports on 4/30-5/01

### **Meteor:**

Many pings were reported once May began. The Eta Aquarids did produce some good results, but was not a spectacular shower from early indications.

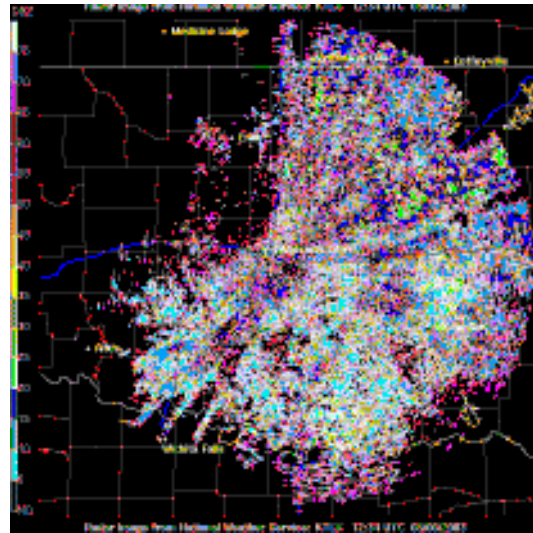
### **Sporadic E:**

It continues to be encouraging despite not the best solar conditions. During the reporting period, 3 good E openings occurred (4/26, 4/30 & 5/13). There was no 2 Meter Es reported, although in all 3 the MUF appeared to reach at least 110 MHz and come very close to reaching 2 Meters. Much of this activity appeared to be generated from the South. Many Caribbean and Latin American activity reports on 6 Meters. Much of this activity preceded or followed solar disturbances.

### **Tropo:**

Once again the southern half of the US was the benefit of enhanced conditions. South Texas continues the hot area for propagation. As in the month prior, it was opened to somewhere just about every day. The weather system that influenced and resulted in a significant number of tornados in the Southern Plains and the Midwest also generated much of the Tropo conditions in the South.

A persistent and strong ridge of high pressure (about 10-15K feet) was wedged from the center of North Texas and Eastern Oklahoma all the way down to Mexico. The indicator of the ridge was a terrible haze created by crop fires in Mexico and Guatemala. We had Tropo, but couldn't breathe. The violent super cells that formed either moved along the northern edge of this ridge and many of them were choked off by it. On the morning of 5/06, excellent conditions were reported from Oklahoma to Arkansas to South Texas. The following image is a capture of the Oklahoma City NWS Radar. These are *FALSE ECHOES* showing the strong temperature inversions that created the propagation.



## **What to expect May 16-June 15:**

### **Best Month of the Year!!**

#### **Meteors:**

The June Arietids begin on 5/21 and peak on the 6/07 at 2200 UTC. It is an excellent North-South path shower throughout the morning and daylight hours.

Best times are 0500-1000 and from 1200-1700 *Local* times.

#### **Aurora:**

Despite a slow declining sunspot count, the Sun remains quite active at times. Look for aurora possibilities around 05/27-28, plus from June 3-7. Be sure to monitor *Spaceweather.Com* for possible events.

#### **Tropo:**

From May into June we usually see our first "Super Refraction" type of Tropo opening. This spring continues to be good for propagation. Although it feels like Houston here in Dallas/Fort Worth, there have been enhanced conditions on most days. There has been an upper air high-pressure ridge to the south of us all month.

As we enter late May, the Tropo focus is now on developing heat waves. These heat waves are caused by one factor; a strong, unmoving ridge of upper-air high pressure. So be on alert if the temperature rises quickly and the overall weather conditions are stable. As the heat rises off the earth, then is capped from 15 to 35 thousand feet, it should open things up. After the very rough weather we have had in the Midwest, we could use a heat wave or two.

#### **E-Layer Propagation:**

Still encouraged about Es for this year. Good early season openings on 6 Meters. Keep an eye for some activity beginning on 10 and 6 Meters. Very short skip on these bands leads to openings here.

Possibilities exist from now till early August. Conditions will be rapidly improving till June 21<sup>st</sup>.



## **Moon:**

Best days: None

Good days: 05/23, 06/05-11

Bad days: 05/18

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 – 06/12, Apogee – 05/27

Full Moon – 05/16 & 6/14, New Moon – 05/31

Highest Declination (Elevation):06/01-03

Lowest Declination (Elevation):05/18-19

**Solar:** Overhead 05/16: - 19.1°N, 06/15: -23.3°N

**USAF Predicted Solar Flux Average:**

05/16-06/15: 125

(Little to no change from the prior month)

**Meteors:**

5/16-5/31 -16 Active showers, 4 Peak

6/01-6/15 - 24 Active showers, 7 Peak

Meteor info at:

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

## **Event & Contest Calender 2003**

**Calendar:**

<u>Month</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Event</u>
June	14-16	ARRL VHF QSO Party
June	20-22	ARRL National Convention Ham-Com Arlington TX SWOT Meeting Gathering
June	21-22	SMIRK QSO Party
July	19-20	CQ WW VHF Contest
July	24-27	Central States VHF Conference Tulsa OK
August	2-3	ARRL UHF Contest
September	13-15	ARRL VHF QSO Party

Send me dates important to you all.

## **SWOT Classifieds**

**From: Randy Tipton WA5UFH (Tip)**

Edna, Texas EL19pa (361)782-7686

Email: [wa5ufh@ykc.com](mailto:wa5ufh@ykc.com)

I have a M2 2M18XXX Yagi Antenna in barn, taken apart ready for pick-up. Boom broken down with elements still in place. Was up about 12 months and removed because it made my xyl nervous. (It is 36 ft 3 inches long) Have all the paper work! Picture on my web site at [www.qsl.net/wa5ufh](http://www.qsl.net/wa5ufh) (Go to the Hazer Link) while it was perched on top the tower . For pick-up only in Edna, Texas. (EL19) for \$110. Good deal for someone

who is close. (I could be talked into driving no more than 50 miles one-way to meet you if necessary)

**From: Dennis Kaylor K4OXG**

[k4oxg@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:k4oxg@tampabay.rr.com)

Hey guys, I have a M2 2 port 2 meter power divider. It looks brand new. It sells new for \$69 asking \$50 plus shipping

I also have a Cushcraft 13B2 13 element Yagi for 2 meters in very good condition with instructions and all parts. No broken elements. It sells new for \$149.00, asking \$75 plus shipping. If interested drop me an email.

Could you check your pile of antenna parts. I need a small piece of tubing 38 inches long 5/8th" OD. If anyone has one willing to get rid of it, please let me know ASAP. My antenna project needs the said piece for competition.

Thanks

## **SWOT Net Announcements and News**

**Monday Evening - Northern Missouri SWOT Net  
Phil Baldwin N0PB EM39 NCS:**

Phil is now the lone NCS for this Net. Contact Phil if you can assist him as an alternate or backup NCS. This is one of our premier Nets and always has a large participation. Your assistance will be much appreciated. Contact Phil at:  
[n0pb@starband.net](mailto:n0pb@starband.net)

**Thursday Evening – SW Oklahoma SWOT Net  
Jim Kennedy W5SSG EM04 NCS:**

As we get into the Es season and you are spending the early evening in front of the radio, don't forget this net. Jim has kept it running, but could really use some checkins outside of Lawton Oklahoma.

## **SWOT Net Reports**

Here are the net reports for April and May. 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 April:**

34 checked in once, 31 twice, 30 three times, 39 all four times....

14 different grids

A wonderful month with lots of rain and checkins ... come on Summer Es

04/06 – 75      04/13 – 90

04/20 – 82      04/27 – 99

**Northern Missouri (Monday)**

04/07... 27/13 04/14... 13/7 04/21... 29/12

04/28... 25/14

**Central Louisiana (Tuesday)**

No Reports Received

**North Texas (Wednesday)**

04/16... 16/09 04/23...No Net 04/30... 29/15

05/07... 28/13 05/14... 31/15

**Southwest Oklahoma (Thursday)**

04/03... 03/02 04/10... 05/01 04/17...04/03

04/24... 01/01

**East Texas Pineywoods (Saturday)**

04/19... 17/09 04/26... 11/05 05/03... 08/05

05/10 ... 12/06

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**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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***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	COLORADO	ROCKY MT. VHF +	144.220	N0VSB W6OAL N0POH
MON	8:00P	N. CENTRAL MO.	N. CENTRAL MO. 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
TUE	8:00P	EM31 LA.	CENTRAL LOUISIANA SWOT	144.250	K5MQ DAVE
WED	8:00P	IA-MO-IL	TRI STATE	144.250	WZ9D N9CXO
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