



N.E.W.S. LETTER



The Publication of the North East Weak Signal Group

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President: W1GHZ Paul Wade
V P: WA1MBA, Thomas Williams

CURRENT OFFICERS

Secretary: N1GJ George Jones
Treasurer: N1DPM Fred Stefanik

NEXT MEETING

**OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE A PICNIC ON JULY 21 AT THE KNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS PAVILION IN ENFIELD, CT**

DIRECTIONS ON PAGE 6

**MDS (MINIMUM DISCERNABLE SIGNAL) TESTING ON 10 GHZ
AND POSSIBLY 24 GHZ**

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27TH ANNUAL EASTERN VHF/UHF CONFERENCE AUGUST 31, SEPTEMBER 1&2, 2001

MEMBERSHIP in the N.E.W.S. Group is \$10 per year. Apply to Fred Stefanik, N1DPM, 50 Witheridge St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030 (413) 786-7943 You may download an application from our web page <http://www.newsvhf.com>

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

July meeting

Our next meeting will be a picnic on July 21 at the Knights of Columbus pavilion in Enfield, CT. See the map for directions. We had a great time there last July, and the pavilion has a roof, so come rain or shine. The club will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, and soft drinks. Bring anything else you need, and feel free to bring enough to share.

I hope that our outstanding chef will be available, but we will still need a couple of volunteers to help with the cooking. No need to make reservations, just pitch in if it looks like something needs doing.

MDS testing

The technical part of the meeting will be MDS (Minimum Discernable Signal) testing on 10 GHz and possibly 24 GHz if I can get some stuff together, so bring your gear. If you don't have any, it's still worth seeing all this stuff in one place - last year, we had them lined up the whole length of the pavilion.

To test for MDS, we set up a distant signal source. After everyone has a chance to peak up on the signal, the signal level is reduced one dB at a time - when you can no longer hear it, then you have found the MDS for your system. You decide how well it works, and whether you can hear as well as Don.

As a doublecheck, the frequency is moved a few KHz, then the signal level is increased one dB at a time. If you weren't kidding yourself, you should be able to find it at the same level as before.

Finally, we also check relative ERP, transmitting one at a time and recording the relative power received at the distant point.

Results last year were pretty good. Most folks had 10 GHz stations that worked pretty well, while a few found problems so they could fix them before the 10 GHz & Up contest in August. Finally, a few others wished that they had brought their gear - and the rest of us shared the wish when they had trouble during the contest!

June Contest

I heard and worked many N.E.W.S. members in the June VHF Contest, and hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. There was enough propagation to make things interesting: aurora on Saturday evening, a really good 6-meter opening on Sunday evening, and I hear there was 6-meter double-hop at 1:30 AM on Sunday. I missed the early morning stuff, unlike certain

members who keep a baby monitor by the bed.

Good activity on 10 GHz was provided by several mountain-top rovers. I worked a total of eight QSOs in three grids without any rain scatter - far better than I expected. Best DX was KA1UAG in FN33, a new grid from home.

N.E.W.S. webpage

The NEWS group now has its own domain, with a new URL for the club webpage: www.newsvhf.com Ron is doing a great job as webmaster, so check it out.

VHF Conference

Our next gathering will be at the Eastern VHF/UHF Conference. Details elsewhere in this issue.

Congratulations

To Ron, WZ1V, who graduated from the University of Hartford last month with BSEE summa cum laude. (We all knew he was loud!)

Paul W1GHZ

SECRETARY'S REPORT OF THE NEWS BOARD MEETING 19 MAY 2001

Because of a problem with scheduling (after the best efforts of Art, W1TDS, the folks at Westover AFB still got it wrong) the planned meeting and C5A tour at Westover AFB was cancelled and the regular NEWS meeting moved back to the usual location in Enfield, CT. A last minute mailing alerted most of the NEWS members of the change. As a result, no formal Board Meeting was held.

SECRETARY'S REPORT OF THE NEWS MEETING OF 19 MAY 2001

The general meeting was called to order at the usual meeting place in Enfield, CT, by President Paul Wade, W1GHZ, at 1:20 PM. The attendance sheet was passed around. As a result of the last minute change in plans for the May meeting, attendance was down from the usual numbers, but those who did come had a good time with the usual eyeball contacts and show and tell activities.

Work is still continuing on the 10 GHz repeater planned for Mt. Graylock. Final details should be available at the July meeting.

As a result of the study done by Tom, WA1MBA, a domain name was selected for the NEWS Group. Details are in the

May 2001 NEWS Letter. A motion was made by Ken, WIRIL, and seconded by Bert, N2YYU, that the NEWS Group use NEWS-VHF.org as our official domain name. Vote passed.

A short discussion was held concerning insurance for the NEWS Group. The Secretary will contact the ARRL about their club insurance program and report back to the club when the information is received.

Paul, W1GHZ, urged everyone to enter the June ARRL VHF Contest and send in scores. There is no official club competition in June but we need to get into the habit so everyone will submit scores in January when there is an official club event. Besides, Paul needs the grids!

President Paul Wade, W1GHZ, put on a Duct Tape Auction with the parts/equipment brought in by the membership. As always, it was interesting and fun.

There were several informal show and tell activities at the end of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

NEW METEOR SCATTER SOFTWARE

I am pleased to announce general availability of the second beta release of WSJT, a software package designed for amateur radio communication at VHF using the technique of high speed meteor scatter. The software can be downloaded from URL <http://pulsar.princeton.edu/~joe/K1JT>. It is free and available to anyone for amateur radio use.

WSJT has been subjected to thorough on-the-air testing by a dedicated group of volunteers. Some hundreds of QSOs have been made with it over the past month on the 2 and 6 meter bands, under "dead band" conditions and without benefit of meteor showers. Typical paths for this type of communication are in the 500 to 1400 mile (800 to 2250 km) range.

This second beta release of WSJT carries version number 0.92. It is considered beta-level software because the program contains a number of new features that will surely benefit from wider testing, including a few "quick-and-dirty" programming shortcuts that will be superseded with better code soon. In addition, its user documentation is not yet complete. The program will certainly continue to evolve when and if my time is available.

WSJT is highly usable in its present form. I believe most of the original Beta Test Group consider it to represent a substantial step forward in amateur meteor-scatter capabilities. The program is easy to set up and use, and it does not require proficiency with Morse code.

If you would like to communicate with me about WSJT, please send email to k1jt@arrl.net

73, Joe, K1JT

VHF CONFERENCE VUCC CARD CHECKING

QSL card checking will be conducted at the conference. ARRL Award card checking for the VUCC, DXCC, and WAS awards will be performed by Stan, WA1ECF.

For VUCC, all new applications and updates for any VUCC band will be reviewed.

For DXCC, only cards less than 10 years old and NO 160M can be field checked. First time applications require a minimum of 100 acceptable cards. Updates require a minimum of at least 1 card.

See the ARRL website for rules, applications, fee schedules and logging sheets.

The advantage of field checking QSL cards, is that the cards are immediately returned to the applicant after review, and the application is forwarded to ARRL HQ for processing.

Normal ARRL HQ processing times are about: VUCC 3 weeks, DXCC 12 weeks your experience may vary.

I enjoy attending the presentations at the conference, so most card checking will be performed outside of the presentation times.

Appointments are available from Friday afternoon thru Sunday.

Stan, WA1ECF

N1GJ HAS MOVED TO THE CAPE

I have moved from Stow, MA to a new home in Bourne, MA. Please change my address, to:

George Jones N1GJ
24 Weatherdeck Drive
Bourne, MA 02532

If my calculations are correct, I'm now in FN41rr, right near the Bourne Bridge on Cape Cod. Hope to see everyone at the July NEWS meeting..

73, George Jones, N1GJ

NEW WEB URL FOR THE NEWS GROUP

Our web page is at a web address we can all remember now! It is <http://www.newsvhf.com>. Please make a note of this and give it out to all the other VHF'ers.

Thanks Ron!

NEWS Editor

ARRL JUNE VHF K1TEO SO HP

Good , though not a great contest from FN31/CT this year. The wx was a lot better than last year with beautiful sunny days and low humidity. Last year when it was over 90 and humid the shack was like a sauna. Fortunately, not this time. And, last year we had a major T-storm go through and a power outage that knocked us off the off the air for 4+ hours. With the low humidity this year came average band conditions. Need a little humidity to get those coastal enhancements. 2 meter and up condx seemed average in most directions throughout, though a little below average to the north. And the dry wx meant that line noise was pretty high.

Very little prep was done in the weeks leading up to the contest. Added a TS2000 so learned how to play with that. Otherwise, for once, it was nice to not be running around trying to fix something ahead of time. Then about 2 weeks before the contest we had a period of several days of rainfall. Last Sunday I was checking everything out and noticed the 1296 ant swr was very high. Decided to take the tower down and find out what was up. Opened up all the connections and found them dry. Never found the problem but when I put it all back together everything seemed fine. Perhaps a poor connection somewhere. Friday night I came home and cranked up the towers. Quickly tested things and found that the 2 meter ant wasn't working. Cranked the tower down but not wanting to tilt it over (big job) I hung on a ladder and tried to find the problem. the problem was intermittent so was pretty tough to figure out. Changing power dividers seemed to fix things so I was back in business Saturday morning. So much for not having to do much beforehand!

The contest got off to a slow start. Activity wasn't to o great from what I could tell. And no openings on 6 to liven things up. We did have the Au Saturday evening though only about a 10 contacts on 2 and 15 or so on 6. K9MRI was best DX on 2 (K2YAZ in EN74 was also loud but couldn't get his attention). N19E and VE1YX were best dx on 6. Funny thing about it was I was looking for Au based on the prop reports I looked at just before the contest but hadn't noticed any till VE3TFU called me on 2 mtrs s9+ with my beam NE. Pretty impressive SSB sig given it was a weak au.

Things were very slow as the night wore on. When I went to 432 at 0100z for the activity hour, my first 10 cq's went unanswered. Usually I can work 25-35 q's in the first 15 minutes of an acitivity hour. Shows how poor activity was in the NE this year.

At 0515 z I went over to 6 for a sked and found a W9 on the sked freq s9+. Wow! For the next hour and half or so 6 was filled with s9+ stations from the MW and occasional s1-5 W7's and 6's. Worked 140 or so q's and added about 60 grids. I usually head to sleep about

0630 z in a contest. I kept saying to myself I'd head off in 5 more minutes....Finally at 3 am local time I made the decision to pull the plug. I knew given all of the work on the tower the night before and that morning I'd be a basket case Sunday unless I slept. I was hoping Sunday would bring more openings. As it turned out, 6 was open for another 2+ hours and this turned out to be the only real opening of the contest from my qth. You pay your money and take your chances...

Sunday was slow throughout. Much of Sunday afternoon the rate meter was stuck at 20 or so which is very slow . Lot's and lot's of unanswered cq's. Only later did I learn that the guys to the south of me in W3/W4 were working EU on 6. I worked 1 EU in the morning and heard one other (CT1). We had an opening to VE1/9/VO1 at the time. There was also an opening to FL and CO for a short while. Other than that there was some very sporadic Es Sunday evening. The strange part was that for 2 hours or more, stations just to the east of me were working Es on 6 and I couldn't hear a thing. W3EP, K1GX, AA2DR etc are all only 50-75 miles from me and they were giving some guys s9 reports. So close...I did get into the opening for 5 minutes at one point, worked 7 stations and that was it.

Some other highlights were working some new grids on 6 (7) and a couple of new ones on 222 and the microwaves. Thanks to John, W1XX for heading up to FN64. Heard him munerous times on 2 as loud as S9 . Good job!

Some lowlights included a problem on 2304. Ah, some more work to find out what's going on there. One of my neighbors called Sunday afternoon to complain I was getting into his phone. I gave him an RFI proof phone a few months ago. I asked if her was using it. "It's upstairs and I made my call from downstairs. I don't want to walk upstairs to make a call" was the response. Ughh boy.....Last lowlight is activity levels. Don't want to be negative, but activity in the NE seems to continue to decline. Very disappointing.

And finally, wonder why this always happens. The contest is about to end in 15 secs and there on my freq is W31Y who I've been looking for most of the contest. I think we were actually using the same freq without knowing it. Tuning up to 144.200 to listen to the post contest discussion, there's W4MYA 20 over. I never heard Bob the entire contest and missed his grid on all bands. This is definitely Murphy's law (or, it's easier to hear the dx on a qrm-free band, HI!).

Final score was 422k.

6	352	118
2	327	48
222	82	29
432	127	33
903	33	19
1296	49	20
2304	14	7
3456	10	6
10G	10	6
Total	1004	286

Taken from Jeff's posting to the VHF reflector, N.E.W.S. Ed.

ARRL JUNE VHF CONTEST DE K1UHF

Last year at our conference I purchased a new C3I 7 element 6 meter beam. Must to my dismay it was sitting assembled on saw horses, in my back yard, until just before the contest. With great effort I found a mast to get it up high enough to clear the trees, at least I thought. The old beam was on a pipe on the gable end of my garage and I needed a taller and stronger support to install the new one. It was hard to tell but I thought I had a good piece of pipe to mount it on. After getting it up it was obvious it was not going to clear all of the trees even after cutting down a small one. I got a tree guy to climb up and trim some branches and I was ready to go with the new antenna. I have always had good scores on 2 meters, but never on six. This was the June E skip contest and I thought I would be all set.

After some difficulty getting my computer to do the logging and voice keying, I lost a hard drive weeks before. I started a little late. The activity at first was great, I was running stations at 200 Q's per hour. That didn't last long, it seemed like everyone was there at the start and then packed it in after an hour or so to enjoy the nice weather and do something else.

Activity seemed low for the rest of the contest especially from New England, more about that later. Six opened up to the Canadian Maritimes for awhile, with S meter signals from one of the VO1's. A few 4's popped through on six but it didn't look like my six meter score was going to be up with the new antenna. The antenna was working well but there just wasn't the activity or the propagation. On the rest of the bands the conditions seemed to be flat or worse except for a short Au opening on 2. I didn't seem to be very busy, calling CQ a lot was about it. I was down on one band, my 903 antenna had come off the tower and I had to take it down. Having that extra band would have kept me busier.

Here was my big mistake, for years now I stay up as late as I can, usually till 2 or 3 in the morning, then I go to sleep. This year, for the first time, I decided to get to sleep early and get up early, BIG MISTAKE. Apparently six opened up to the West at about 2:00 AM and I was asleep. It would have been nice to have had the extra 50 grids and the 100 Q's that everyone else got that stayed up, oh well.

I had a new TVI complaint during the contest, the other neighbors left me alone. This guy lives next door and is a ham, I tried to introduce myself to him when I first moved in six years ago but never heard from him until this contest. He said I was bothering his phones and his TV. I explained to him that I wasn't connected to his phone line that and since he was on cable it couldn't be a problem with my equipment. He hung up.

All in all I enjoyed the contest but was disappointed with my score and missing the 6 meter opening. I was very surprised how few NEWS members I worked. It seems like we have less and less activity from our club. Some of the members were on but some only for a short time and many were among the missing. Perhaps we could have a NEWS activity hour and meet on a pre-determined frequency. I think this would be a good idea especially for the January club competition.

My score was only 129.5 K down from 220K in 1999. The breakdown is as follows:

6M	130	28
2M	315	44
222	61	22
432	84	23
1296	31	13
2304	13	6
10G	8	6
Total	642	142

73,
Del, K1UHF

Hope to work more NEWS members in Sept!

27TH ANNUAL EASTERN VHF/UHF CONFERENCE

**AUGUST 31, SEPTEMBER 1&2, 2001
RADISSON HOTEL (860) 741-2211
1 BRIGHT MEADOW BLVD. (OFF RT. 5)
ENFIELD, CT 06082**

The annual conference sponsored by the Eastern VHF Society and the NEWS Group is rapidly approaching. The Conference will include a Friday Night Hospitality suite; Saturday formal talks, lab demonstrations- noise figure measurements to 10 GHz, manufacturers displays, dinner banquet and door prizes. Sunday will host our outdoor flea market and antenna measurements from 2 meters to 10 GHz.

Speakers to date include: DSP by Roger W3SZ
K8GP Contesting by Owen K6LEW
What's New at SSB by Jerry K3MKZ
2/3 & 5/10 GHz Packaging by Stan KA1ZE
Meteor Scatter by Phil VE3ACK
Dish Construction by Tom WA8WZG
New Products at DEM by Steve N2CEI.

A block of rooms is reserved at the Radisson until August 1, 2001 under the NEWS group for \$85 per night for a single or double room. The phone number is (860) 741-2211. Further conference information and registration forms will be available and downloadable on the NEWS WEB site in about a week @ <http://www.newsvhf.com>. We are attempting to modernize our registration process utilizing Reflector and WEB sites and email. Therefore a very limited mailing will be sent out this year so please consult the WEB site for updated information. Additional information not contained on the WEB site for the conference may be obtained from Bruce Wood - N2LIV, 3 Maple Glen Lane, Nesconset, NY 11767; (631) 265-1015 (h) or (631) 293-9600 (w) or email at bdwood@erols.com. Information on the flea market may be obtained from Mark Casey - K1MAP, 303 Main Street, Hampden, Mass 01036; (413) 566-2445 or email at map@map.com.

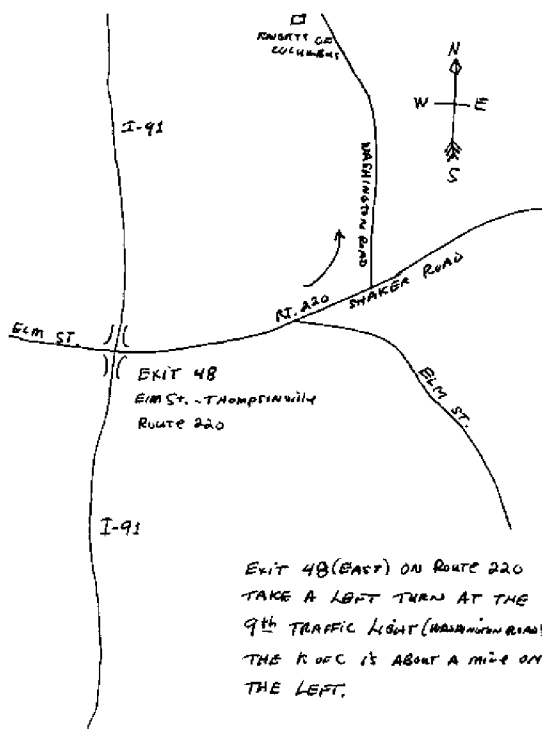
Hope to see you all there. Bruce N2LIV

DIRECTIONS TO THE NEXT MEETING ON JULY 21ST

Route 220"). Start counting traffic lights.

Take ELM/RT220 EAST to the fork (between ELM on the right and SHAKER on the left). Bear left at the fork onto SHAKER road.

At the NINTH TRAFFIC LIGHT from exit 48, turn LEFT onto WASHINGTON ROAD. Go "about a mile" and the K of C is on the left.



DON'T FORGET

THE NORTH EAST WEAK SIGNAL GROUP
2 METER VHF AND ABOVE NET
EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT AT 8:30 p.m. LOCAL
144.250
W1COT, K1UHF OR K1PXE NET CONTROL

WHERE WAS THE NEWS GROUP ON FIELD DAY ?

I think that one of our club's goals is to promote VHF and above weak signal activity, at least, I for one, consider that it is. Field day is the premiere ham radio activity. With the introduction of the relatively new ARRL "free VHF station" rule for there are many clubs running VHF stations. This makes field day perhaps the best opportunity for us to introduce and interest the average ham to VHF weak signal operation.

I am sorry that I did not put a reminder our previous issue. At that time field day seemed like a long way off.

I am sure that some other NEWS members were operating a VHF station with their local ham club. Listening to the activity I don't think there were many. The VHF activity is down from a few years ago when the free station rule was introduced. Maybe the average club thinks there isn't enough activity to make it worth the effort. It is up to us as a group to go out with our local clubs and set up a field day VHF station. I caught a bunch of Pack Rats on from other club field day stations, along with many guys I recognized in FN20 and 30 that usually operate from home. I worked one station up in New Hampshire that Dale, AF1T had helped with and KINCO was on from the Stratford club. As every year, Jeff, K1TEO was in there giving out points from his home station. I operated VHF from the GNARC club as K1EV and got on from home Sunday afternoon towards the end of the 24 hours.

I know that you may not like operating field day as there are many inexperienced operators. It really isn't that bad, it is fun to here the comments when they are surprised at how far the signals go. It is also fun to just work a bunch of small temporary VHF stations set up only for the weekend.

Next year we should make a point to all get on for at least a small time and get the activity and the interest in VHF up on this weekend. Maybe even set up a station for a local club. This may be asking too much as I mentioned about the June contest we didn't seem to have much of a NEWS group showing even for a VHF contest.

While I am on the subject it would be nice if we had more check ins to the Thursday night net. I have to admit that I haven't been as active as of late, I do partially blame my RIGblaster as taking some of the fun out of the hobby and makes me feel like I talk to hams all day long at work. I do believe if there were more activity it would be more fun for all of us and would breed even more interest.

Thanks for reading this. Catch you on the bands!

73,
Del, K1UHF

FOR SALE OR SWAP

Small metal turning lathe - 6" Craftsman (Atlas) model 109.20630. Includes set of change gears, KRF omni-post tool holder mounted on cross slide, faceplate, dog, dead centers, 1/2" capacity drill chuck, Two - 4 jaw chucks, 1/3 HP motor w/mount, cutter bits etc. Bed 24" long. Good condition. \$200

Yeasu FT-480R 2 meter multi-mode transceiver w/mike. Includes a separate 115vac - 12 V power supply for home station use. Presently set up for 0 dBm output for transverter "IF" use but easily restored to 10 watts output. With instruction book. Good Condition. \$200

Ailtech 75 Noise Figure meter, homebrew noise source and instruction book. Good condition. \$50

Alfred Microwave Amplifier, Model 562, 1 watt TWTA. Puts out 30 with 0 input on 10 Ghz. Good Condition. \$25

Interested parties contact: Ken - W1RIL 508-757-3966 or via e-mail at (w1ril@juno.com)

Microwave modules 432 xvtr. 1 w in on 50 mhz, 10w out on 432. Electrically and cosmetically in excellent condx. \$130 including shipping.

Advanced Receiver Research 432 inline preamp. Excellent condx. \$65 including shipping.

Mirage KP1 144 mhz inline (160w)preamp. This unit is less than a month old. Decided to go in a different direction, so won't be needing it. Cost \$130. \$100 including shipping.

Contact, Jeff K1TEO jdklein@hewitt.com

Kenwood all mode transceiver Model TM 255A with DFK-7A Detachable Front Panel Kit (7m) \$600.

Kenwood TS-690 with additional filters, Instruction Manual, \$600.

2M allmode, 100 watt Icom IC-275H with High Stability oscillator, Icom PS-55 power supply, Instruction and Service Manual, \$750.

HF & 6 Meters, 100 Watt, Icom 736 with Service Manual, \$800.

(4) 2304 MHz 45 elm loop yagis \$75 each, buy 4 get power divider free.

(4) Modified Cushcraft 32-19 2M antennas, \$75 each.

(4) Modified Cushcraft 220 antennas, \$75 each.

All items in excellent shape. Price Plus shipping. Just purchased a new TS-2000 rig. Bruce N2LIV, bdwood@erols.com

M-Square 2M8WL, 24 element 53 foot boom 2 meter yagi. Antenna is in good condition. Includes a custom aluminum angle mount and truss support. Also includes a RG142 teflon high power balun (made by M2). \$300

Antenna can be delivered to the July NEWS meeting or the Eastern VHF Conference in August, or it can be picked up at my QTH in western Mass. Contact me either by email, freddpm@juno.com, or call at 413-786-7943 73 Fred N1DPM

DOWN EAST MICROWAVE

VHF/UHF/SHF EQUIPMENT AND PARTS 50 TO 10,368 MHZ

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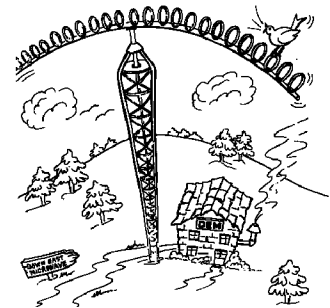
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SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE NEWSLETTER

STEVE KOSTRO, N2CEI, 954 RT. 519, FRENCHTOWN, NJ. 08825 PHONE: 908-996-3584, FAX: 908-996-3702

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THE NEXT MEETING

**OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE A PICNIC ON JULY 21 AT THE KNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS PAVILION IN ENFIELD, CT, SEE DIRECTIONS ON PAGE 6**

**MDS (MINIMUM DISCERNABLE SIGNAL) TESTING ON 10 GHZ
AND POSSIBLY 24 GHZ**

YOUR ATTENDANCE IS NEEDED FOR THE CLUB'S ARRL COMPETITION!!

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2 METER VHF AND ABOVE NET
EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT AT 8:30 p.m. LOCAL 144.250
W1COT, K1UHF OR K1PXE NET CONTROL**

North East Weak Signal Group

**c/o N1DPM
Fred Stefanik
50 Witheridge St.
Feeding Hills, MA 01030**



**Check your membership expiration date
on the mailing label!!**

