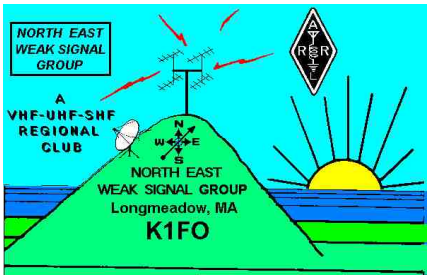

N.E.W.S. LETTER

The Official Publication of the North East Weak Signal Group – N.E.W.S. - Home (newsvhf.com)

SEPT 2023	Volume 31	Issue 4

Next Meeting: September 23, 2023.

In This Issue

GENERAL MEETING - STORRS LIBRARY -

1 PM to approximately 3:45 PM.
693 Longmeadow St, Longmeadow, MA 01106
http://longmeadowlibrary.wordpress.com

BOARD MEETING - 11:00 AM at Lulu's, 151 Hazard Ave. Enfield, CT
Phone: (860) 763-2377 I-91 Exit 47 Rt. 190E 1 Mile on Left http://luluspizzeria.com

DON'T FORGET

The North East Weak Signal Group 2 Meter Net
Every Thursday at 8:30 PM local 144.250 MHz
K1BXC Net Control

MEMBERSHIP in the N.E.W.S Group is $10 per 2 years.
Apply to George Collins, KC1V. E-mail: news.kc1v@gmail.com.
You may download an application from our web page: http://www.newsvhf.com

The N.E.W.S. LETTER is the publication of the North East Weak Signal Group.
Articles may be reprinted with proper credit given to the author and the N.E.W.S. LETTER.
Send articles by e-mail to Don Twombly at donw1fkf-news@yahoo.com.

REMINDER: 222 MHz Activity Night Tuesdays 7 to 11 PM

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report June 28, 2023

Balance, Last Report 3-25-2023: $2824.70

Income:

Dues: $30.00
Donations: $15.00

Balance as of 6-28-2023 $2869.70

Current Paid Members:

We have 2 new members 3 renewals

Totals are: 80 Regular
3 Life
12 Permanent

Submitted June 28, 2023 George Collins, KC1V

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(2003)

Secretary's Report North East Weak Signal Group

NEWS Picnic 22 July 2023
at Knights of Columbus, Enfield, CT

Called to Order by President W2AAU at 1358

TREASURER - Dues due in January $ 10 for two years

OLD BUSINESS
Conference Report by K1MAP
- Didn't lose money
- ~140 attendees
- Eastern VHF/UHF Conference next April

Adjourned 1405

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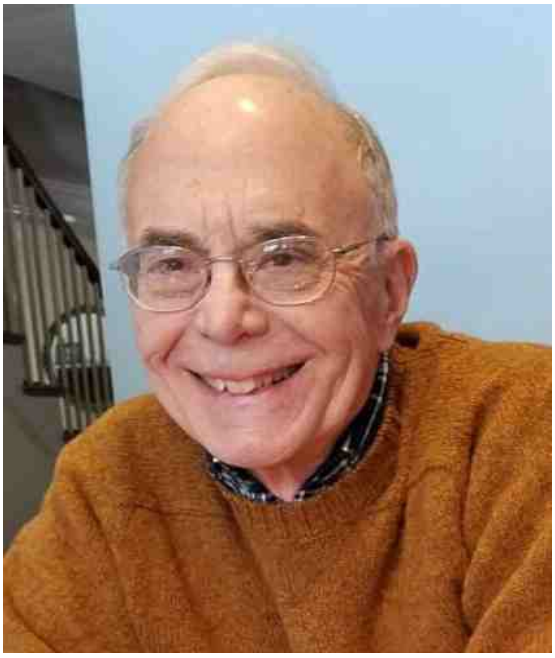
10 GHz beacon Project
Maine has been delayed



Lewis D. Collins

March 25, 1941 ~ July 12, 2023 (age 82)

Obituary

PEABODY – Dr. Lewis D. Collins, 82, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, July 12th, 2023 at Brooksby Village. Born in Maysville, Kentucky, he was the son of the late Jesse L. and Mary F. (Smoot) Collins. He was the loving husband of Carol (Mostrom) Collins, with whom he celebrated 47 years of marriage.

Raised and educated in Maysville, Lewis graduated from Maysville High School. He studied electrical engineering at Purdue University where he obtained his BSEE, then at MIT where he graduated with his ScDEE. Lewis worked at WFTM in Maysville beginning in high school. After graduating from MIT, he worked at MIT Lincoln Lab and Wang Lab. Later, he worked for Tiernan Communications in San Diego and Broadcast Signal Lab. Lewis was also widely known in amateur radio as WIGXT.

While in Kentucky he was honored with becoming a Kentucky Colonel. After moving to Massachusetts, he served as an elder in the Presbyterian Church USA in several churches. As a resident of Brooksby Village, Lewis was the Trustee of the Brooksby Radio Amateur Group.

In addition to his wife, Carol Collins of Peabody, Lewis is survived by his daughter Becky Collins of Hudson.

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Lew was a very active VHF'er a few decades ago. Mostly active from Peabody, MA and Cape Cod. He also put out a VHF newsletter. Lew had a PHD in electrical engineering from MIT. Another great guy now SK.
73, Joe, W1JR

Lew Collins had a long history of contribution to the VHF+ weak signal community. He was involved in the Eastern VHF Conference from early days through it's transition to being sponsored by the NEWS Group.
Thank-You Lew, W1GXT, Rest in Peace

--Mark K1MAP

NEDECN – New England Digital Emergency Communications ...

The TAC316 DMR talk (chat) group is set up for10 GHz and Above ARRL contest and will be available for alignment of microwave dishes and scheduling on mountain top sites and island sites. It may also help for safety, on and off sites via portable or mobile radios.
I know that 2 meter SSB has been in common use between mountains for scheduling and coordination during 10 GHz and Up Tests, but a new option has evolved. That is, Amateur DMR. It can be simply used with a walkie, rather than setting up an SSB transceiver and yagi. It also works in many parts of New England where cell phones don't. The NEDECN (network) now has 96 repeaters available for portables and mobiles. Coverage is provided from Maine thru Quebec, NY, VT, MA, NH, RI, NJ, PA, DE, MD and VA. The dual band walkies, operate on both analog and digital modes and range in price from $54 to $299. Additional information available from me:
Bill, NE1B@arrl.net
and on the website nedecn.org

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Microwave Update

The next Microwave Update will be held in or near Vancouver, BC, Canada October 3-5 2024. It's likely that we will hold the 47th Eastern VHF/UHF Conference at the Hilton Garden Inn in Windsor, CT. Tentative dates are April 18-21, 2024.

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Club Commission Program

One of the benefits of being an ARRL Affiliated Club is having access to the Club Commission Program. Affiliated clubs can use this program to receive a commission for promoting membership in ARRL. When you sign a new member, the club gets $15, and when a member renews through the club, you get $5.

Members can renew anytime without losing any of their membership time. Details and forms are available on the ARRL website, at www.arrl.org/affiliated-club-benefits. FAQs are also available to help explain the program. It does take some effort and a bit of paperwork, but the club reaps the reward in cash. If your affiliated club is not participating in this program, ask them to investigate it (ARRL)

Weekly Calendar

Mon. Packrats Nets start at 7:30pm on 6 meters, 8pm on 144.150, etc. Philadelphia area.
Tues. Mud Toads Net FM17, Virginia 8pm 144.250
Activity Night 7:30pm 222.100 K1WHS+
Weds Activity Night 432 N1DPM+
Thurs. NEWS net, 8:30pm 144.250
Sat. Chesapeake Net 144.205 W3BFC FM28 9pm
144.205 Mornings 8:30-9:30 AM -- 144.205 , 144.190, ME, Canada to NC and out to OH, WV

Officers:

President Dick Frey, WA2AAU, Delanson, NY
Vice Pres. Eric Mazur, KA1SUN, Savoy,

Treasurer George Collins, KC1V, Somers, CT
Secretary Paul Wade, W1GHZ, Cabot, VT

Board Of Directors:

Tom Cefalo W1EX N Reading MA

Tom Williams WA1MBA Orleans, MA
Bob Bownes KI2L, Troy, NY
Mark Casey K1MAP, Hampden, MA

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For Sale:

10 GHz 12 watt amplifier (sat14w) 75-100 mw drive, 12-30v input $400 Don W1FKF

donw1fkf-news@yahoo.com
(2003)

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Papers from Microwave Update 2023 and 46th Eastern VHF/UHF Conference, including papers not in printed book and updated papers are available at http://www.microwaveupdate.org/conf2023/2023papers.html if you prefer a printed Proceedings book, they are available at lulu.com search "Microwave Update 2023"

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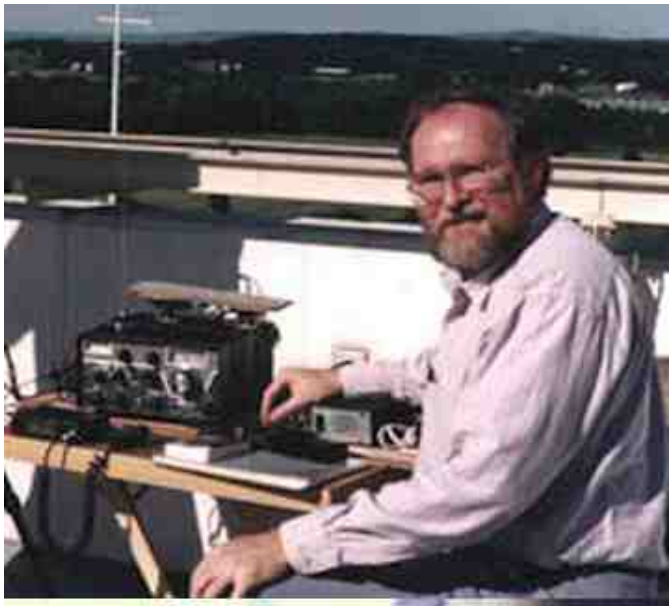
NEWS Picnic 22 July 2023 Knights of Columbus, Enfield, CT

(Photo;s by

(K1MJM)



Picnic MDS and
ERP Testing 2023

tomw@wa1mba.org

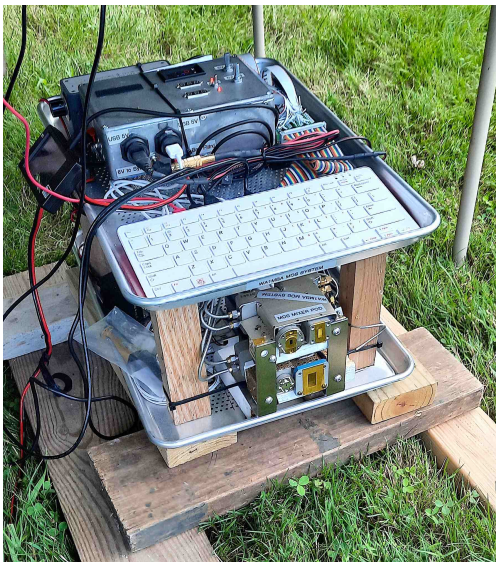
	MDS TESTING JULY 22, 2023. NEWS GROUP PICNIC							
	Call	**Dish Type**	**Dish Size**	**Power**	**MDS**	**TX**	**Comment**	**BAND**
					Lower (more negative) =Better	Higher (less Negative) =Better	Baseline added into MDS	**GHz**
							Baseline -40	
1	WZ1V	Offset	18"	2W	-73	-40.8		10
2	N1DPM	Prime	30"	15W	-73	-38.9		10
3	K1OR	Prime	12"	3W	**-80**	-36.3		10
4	K1CA	Offset	36"	12W	**-80**	**-32.9**		10
5	KB1QV	Offset	18”	0.2W	-70	-50.9		10
6	W1GHZ	Offset	18"		**-77**		No Xmtr	10
7	KG6CIH	Offset	18"	2W	-67	-45.8		10
8	AF1T	Prime	24"	10W	**-80**	**-32.3**		10

(2003)

Nothing changes

Some of the same dishes

(Photo's by KB1QV)



9	W1JR	Offset	18"	1.5W	-70	-42.9		10
10	WW1Z	Horn	20 dB	1W	-55	-58.8		10
11	W1FKF	Offset	19"	8W	**-77**	**-32.8**		10
12	KA1UAG	Offset	20"	14W	**-77**	**-29.8**		10
13	KA1LEX	Prime	24"	6W	-67	-36.7		10
14	KA1SUN	Prime	20"	1W	-55	-41.3		10
15	K2AEP	Offset	22"	160mW	-55	-87	Not CW?	10
							Baseline -40	
16	K1OR	Offset	20"	2W	**-70**	**-47.8**		24
17	W1GHZ	Offset	18"	1.8W	***-65***	-51.3		24
18	AF1T	Prime	12"	2W	**-70**	**-44.3**		24
19	W1FKF	Offset	19"	0.5W	**-70**	**-46.8**		24
							Baseline -40	47
20	W1GHZ	Prime/Cass	12"	25mW	**-65**	**-63.0**		47
21	K1OR	Prime/Cass	12"	73mW	-53	-79		47
22	AF1T	Prime	12"	30mW	**-65**	**-62.8**		47
23	W1FKF	Prime	12"	30mW*	***-60***	**-66.3**	Tx pwr low	47
							Baseline = 0	
24	K1OR	Prime/Cass	12"	~1 mW	**-53**			78
25	W1FKF	Prime/Cass	10"	~1mW	**-53**	-104		78

Tom WAMBA

KEY	Best is Bold Underline	**-80**
	Next Best are Bold	**-79**

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Mt. Wachusett Permit
10 GHz above Contest

if someone wants to be on the permit list, contact me by email George W1JHR

specrisk@aol.com

(2004)

Thoughts on Cooling Solid-State Power Amplifiers

Paul Wade, W1GHZ 2023
w1ghz@

I am sometimes amazed when I see guys who used to have a ½ horsepower blower cooling their big triode amplifier now use a muffin fan to cool a KW+ SSPA. The SSPA is more efficient so generates less heat, but the muffin fan airflow is just delivering mouse farts compared to the blower.

To compensate, some ops back off the power level by reducing drive to the amplifier

A typical LDMOS SSPA has high efficiency at maximum output, but the efficiency decreases at lower output, so the maximum power dissipation is around 70 or 80% of maximum output. Backing down the power can put more stress on the transistor than running flat out.

A better way reduce power and device stress (and operator stress from blowing transistors) is to reduce the drain voltage – this can often increase efficiency, providing slightly less power with less heat and stress on the device.

Do the numbers and find what works for your amp.

Cooling

Adequate cooling, at least for me, means that the amplifier temperature with key down stops rising in a reasonable time and settles at a constant temperature. If the gear will run at full power for hours, then it will probably run forever (unless I forget to connect the antenna, one of my favorite ways to blow up amplifiers).

The most effective air cooling is impingement cooling, with air blasting straight down on the heat sink and exiting along the fins. We did some tests in industry some years ago, and found that impingement cooling can be as much as five times as effective as moving air along the fins. To be five times as good required airflow and pressure that made more noise than that ½ HP blower. At reasonable airflow, impingement cooling is still much better.

The muffin fan sitting on the heat sink is impingement cooling, but a small fan just isn't moving enough air. Some folks put two muffin fans on a longer heatsink; putting them side-by-side creates a dead air point in the middle, which is usually right over the device.

A better solution is a muffin fan that moves a lot more air. I use 48 volt fans, since 50 volts is right there anyway. As you might expect, a fan drawing 0.7 amps at 48 volts moves a lot more air than one drawing 0.2 amps at 12 volts. The 48 volt fans may be found on ebay at reasonable cost.

Of course, moving more air means more noise. For 12 volt fans, I designed a fan controller to adjust fan speed to heatsink temperature. This is fine for lower powers. I am playing with a controller for 48 volt fans.

Since an SSPA does not have tuning knobs, it doesn't need to be near the operator, or even within earshot. For higher bands, moving it closer to the antenna can cut down on feedline loss.

Liquid cooling can be much more effective, but more complex, and probably not useful for portable operation. In humid climates, condensation can be a problem.

Digital

Digital modes run at full power for 30 seconds or one minute. The device reaches close to maximum temperature in this time, then cools down again, and repeats. This is the definition of temperature cycling, and a good way to get something to fail, if it is going to. Even if the heat sink is not getting hot, the transistor junction is seeing a large temperature swing. It might be better to leave the bias on to maintain idling current during receive while running digital modes, to keep the temperature more constant – or even turn up the idling current to keep dissipated power constant.

Summary

Most important is to get it on the air. These ideas may help keep it on.

.....

10 GHz Contest Second Weekend September 16-17, 2023

New scoring rules in effect for 2023!

Distance point multipliers for each band have been added to encourage contacts on the higher microwave bands. Contacts on bands higher than 10 GHz will now accrue greater distance points. In addition, single-band "Best DX" and single-band "Top Score" certificates or endorsements will be awarded for each individual band (Individual single-band top scores are to be based on distance points only). See the contest rules at **contests.arrl.org/ContestRules/10-GHz-Rules.pdf** for more details.

Contest Objective: For North American amateurs to contact as many amateur stations in as many different locations as possible in North America on bands from 10-GHz through Light. Amateurs are encouraged to operate from more than one location during this event. See the detailed rules for restrictions.

Contest Period: Each weekend begins at 6:00 AM local Saturday though 12:00 midnight local Sunday.

Contest Rules are now maintained as a single downloadable document.

Click here for the complete ARRL 10 GHz and Up Contest Rules (PDF)

For contest information contact **contests@arrl.org** or (860) 594-0232

Tropo September 2023

Tropo opening started August 31 morning here, a once in a blue moon opening coinciding with an actual blue moon.

I've made over 50 DX QSO's since then, too many to list them all.

Here are some of my best contacts the past few days on FT8:

Date Time Band Call Grid DX
Sept 2 1106 144 K2DRH EN41vr 915 mi.
Sept 2 1125 222 KA9CFD EN40om 956 mi.
Sept 2 1146 432 W9FF EN40tf 938 mi.
Sept 2 1148 432 K2DRH EN41vr 915 mi.
Sept 2 1156 432 W9EWZ EN52nm 846 mi. Sept 2 1201 432 N0PB EM39wo 1037 mi.
Sept 2 1206 432 KA9CFD EN40om 956 mi. Sept 2 1213 222 K0TPP EM48rk 976 mi.
Sept 2 1218 222 AA9MY EN50fm 890 mi.
Sept 2 1224 432 AA9MY EN50fm 890 mi.
Sept 2 1228 432 NR9Q EN40ic 987 mi.
Sept 2 1235 432 KU8Y EN61uw 714 mi.
Sept 2 1245 432 N9DG EN53bj 898 mi.
Sept 2 1314 144 KB9TVR EM49sp 950 mi.Sept 2 1916 144
K9MRI EN70iu 666 mi. mid-afternoon
Sept 2 1927 222 K9MRI EN70iu 666 mi. mid-afternoon
Sept 2 2324 144 W4LES EM84mo 735 mi.
Sept 2 2355 144 W4IMD EM84ab 802 mi.
Sept 3 0001 144 WB4JWM EM83ji 804 mi.
Sept 3 0007 144 WA4CQG EM72fo 937 mi.
Sept 3 0053 144 WB4OMG EL98ad 1055 mi.
Sept 3 0212 144 NN4X EL98jh 1024 mi.
Sept 3 1219 144 WB0VHB EN41hb 981 mi.
Sept 3 1229 144 NR9Q EN40ic 987 mi.
Sept 4 1123 144 N4KZ EM78ne 692 mi
73 Ron WZ1V FN31rh

.....

I missed getting on Friday night, and didn't get in to the shack until around 8 local on Saturday 9/2. The APRS map showed me off the edge of the red, but I still made a few contacts on 2/222/432/1296 (gave a new state and grid on 1296 to Russ, K2TXB)
I was back in the shack Saturday late afternoon/evening when things slowed to just NE stations as you can see in the log.
I'm happy with what I was able to work way up here in the boonies on the edge of the Blob.
Date/Time/Call/Grid/Freq/Mode/Miles
2023-09-02 12:10:45 KA8CNI,EN81va,144.175666,FT8 580
2023-09-02 12:11:30 KB9TVR,EM49sp,144.175666,FT8 1010
2023-09-02 12:23:30 VA3IKE,EN82QB,432.175666,FT8 568
2023-09-02 12:28:45 KA9CFD,EN40om,432.175452,FT8 1001
2023-09-02 12:41:15 WB8ART,EM79vp,432.176216,FT8 719
2023-09-02 12:52:15 KE8FD,EN80tj,432.175714,FT8 610
2023-09-02 13:08:15 W8MK,EN82gt,144.175439,FT8 590

2023-09-02 13:14:15 KX9X,EN50uc,144.174927,FT8 893
2023-09-02 13:28:15 KD2CDV,FN03pe,432.175580,FT8 353
2023-09-02 13:56:30 K2TXB,FN20mb,1296.065671,Q65 357
2023-09-02 14:10:30 KD2CDV,FN03pe,144.174222,FT8 353
2023-09-02 14:21:45 W3XTT,FN01xt,144.174363,FT8 367
2023-09-02 14:27:45 AA9MY,EN50FM,144.174900,FT8 940
2023-09-02 14:35:45 WA2TMB,FN13bc,144.174900,FT8 316
2023-09-02 14:47:15 KO4YC,FM17gv,222.174954,FT8 552
2023-09-02 15:03:15 K9YK,EN60ik,144.175722,FT8 835
2023-09-02 15:06:15 K8ZM,EN91hq,144.174693,FT8 520
2023-09-02 15:11:41 WB8ART,EM79vp,144.174693,FT8 719
2023-09-02 22:13:15 K5VIP,FM16vq,144.175830,FT8 598

2023-09-02 22:18:00 KA2UQW,FN20xh,144.175200,FT8 323
2023-09-02 22:33:45 K2TER,FN13ge,144.175949,FT8 295
2023-09-02 22:37:30 WA2ZPX,FN21sj,144.175340,FT8 263
2023-09-02 22:42:00 KB1HY,FN31lu,144.174956,FT8 206
2023-09-02 22:58:00 WA3PTF,FN22,144.175123,FT8 220
2023-09-02 23:02:30 N2IEC,FM29lk,144.175599,FT8 398
2023-09-02 23:14:00 WA2TMC,FN03vg,144.174872,FT8 328
2023-09-02 23:41:00 N3YY,FN22ic,144.174776,FT8 247
2023-09-02 23:42:00 K1FSY,FN31mr,144.175721,FT8 213
73,
Mike, N1JEZ 73

.....

That was really something!
Since 1986 I have caught four or five tropo openings that extended beyond 500 miles, all straight down the coast to extreme eastern Virginia and possibly extreme eastern North Carolina. I would have to go back and check paper logs from decades ago to see about the latter. I am sure I never worked anything much beyond 800 miles on tropo. Never anything to the midwest.
I have written up a summary in a blog post so I won't repeat all here. Those who are interested can look it up.
http://blog.n1bug.com/2023/09/03/big-tropo-opening/

Paul N1BUG

.....

K1WHS

I was up at the shack at about 10:00 UT and made my first QSO at 10:23
> with W9FF on 432 at over 1000 miles and then switched to 222 and
> worked a bunch of “new blood” including K0TPP at 1067 miles in EM48.A
> few minutes later at 11:05 UT, I had my best distance QSO of the event
> as KF0M started rolling in on 222 MHz from EM17. The distance was
> quite a haul at 1437 miles. I am not sure, but I think that is my
> personal best DX on tropo for 222 MHz. It was all anti climactic after
> that. The bands held together up until about 12:30 UT (8:30 AM local
> time) It looked as if the long haul tropo had dissipated around that
> time. Other long distance contacts made after the KF0M QSO included
> KA9CFD EN40 at 11:17,and N0PB EM3 at 12:13 UT andK0TPP in EM48 at

> 12:23. These were all in the 1000-1100 mile category.
> Here is a copy of my log for the evening and following morning.
> DATETIMECALLGRIDTXRXBANDMODE QRB (Miles)
> 09/02/2023 00:08 K9MRIEN70IU-18-17220 MHzFT8TR754
> 09/02/2023 00:46 AA9MYEN50FM-18220 MHzFT8TR973
> 09/02/2023 01:07 AA4ZZEM96-4-11220 MHzFT8710+-
> 09/02/2023 01:15 AA4ZZEM96-470 cm. FT8710+-
> 09/02/2023 01:18 K8TQKEM89JE5858220 MHz SSB698
> 09/02/2023 01:19 K8TQKEM89JE559 55970 cm. CW698
> 09/02/2023 02:11 W8PATEM66GM-16-19220 MHzFT8992
> 09/02/2023 02:25 N9LBEN52-8+1220 MHzFT8910+-
> 09/02/2023 02:27 N0LWFEN10WM-14-17220 MHzFT81303
> 09/02/2023 02:49 W9EWZEN52-8-2470 cm. FT8910+-
> 09/02/2023 02:52 W7JWEN82-870 cm. FT8609+-
> 09/02/2023 02:53 KC0CFEN32CG-4-270 cm. FT81156
> 09/02/2023 02:57 VA3MWFN03-15-1970 cm. FT8401+-
> 09/02/2023 03:26 W9DEYEN52RP-11-0170 cm. FT8888
> 09/02/2023 03:28 N9LBEN52-19-1670 cm. FT8910+-
> 09/02/2023 03:33 WE9REN63-16-1070 cm. FT8801+-
> 09/02/2023 03:33 WA4YAFN42-19-2370 cm. FT860+-
> 09/02/2023 03:35 N2OAFN03-14-1470 cm. FT8401+-
> 09/02/2023 03:51 K9MRIEN70IU-14-1270 cm. FT8754
> 09/02/2023 04:03 K2DRHEN41VR-11-0370 cm. FT8984
> 09/02/2023 04:17 N9UMEN52WG-20-1270 cm. FT8871
> 09/02/2023 04:19 K2DRHEN41VR-20+04220 MHzFT8984
> 09/02/2023 10:13 W9FFEM48RK-14-1370 cm. FT81075
> 09/02/2023 10:19 N2WKFN03XE-14220 MHzFT8356
> 09/02/2023 10:27 N2JQRFN13CE-14220 MHzFT8344
> 09/02/2023 10:42 K0TPPEM48TK-14220 MHzFT81067
> 09/02/2023 10:49 W9VHFEN71-1370 cm. FT8724+-
> 09/02/2023 10:56 AA4ZZEM96+14+ 1670 cm. FT8710+-
> 09/02/2023 11:05 KF0MEM17HO-16-13220 MHzFT81437
> 09/02/2023 11:06 K8ZREN91-16220 MHzFT8525 +-
> 09/02/2023 11:13 K4WMSFM17KS-16+2870 cm. FT8505
> 09/02/2023 11:15 VA3IKEEN82QB-3070 cm. FT8600
> 09/02/2023 11:17 KA9CFDEN40-70070 cm. FT81044+-
> 09/02/2023 11:28 K9MRIEN70IU 0220 MHzFT8754
> 09/02/2023 11:41 KE8FDEN80TJ+2+ 4220 MHzFT8622
> 09/02/2023 11:42 N9AKREN61-5-4220 MHzFT8824+-
> 09/02/2023 11:44 VE3DSFN03FQ270 cm. FT8430
> 09/02/2023 12:13 N0PBEM39WO-14-0870 cm. FT81123
> 09/02/2023 12:18 KU8YEN61+9+1570 cm. FT8824+-
> 09/02/2023 12:23 K0TPPEM48TK-18-0970 cm. FT81067
> 09/02/2023 12:28 WB8ARTEM79-12-2070 cm. FT8771+-
> 09/02/2023 12:37 KE8FDEN80TJ+23+13220 MHz FT8622
> 09/02/2023 12:49 VE3CIQFN15-19-1570 cm.FT8330+-

Dave K1WHS

FT8 Saga

I've got to chuckle a bit over Pete's grumblings.
It's about 5 years too late to hate FT8. Hey that rhymes.
I'll bet K1JT had no idea his invention would take over
the VHF bands as quickl;y as it did.
By 2018, I was grumbling about how we lost 6M almost entirely to it.
Now it's the defacto mode of choice there.
And it's becoming that way on 2M as well, at least for DX.
Speaking as someone who hated it when it first came out,
now that I've been using it for 5 years, I can say this.
It absolutely has huge advantages over SSB and CW.
one frequency vs tuning the band, sequenced operation,
and a big jump in MDS. An example of that was this morning,
working KO4MA EL88to on 144.174. Andrew was only -20 dB
when we worked. Definitely too weak for CW, but easy enough
for a 1,040 mile contact on FT8. That's why you won't hear me
bashing it anymore. So to those who have never used it,
I say try FT8, FT8, FT8 ! - but don't forget SSB-CW,
and the enjoyment and challenge that comes with
making human to human, ear to ear QSO's.

73 Ron WZ1V

P.S. - I'll be taking a break from FT8 this weekend,
so look for me on SSB-CW only.

.....

Oh boy, why would I want to get stung by the swarm? Well, speaking as a little gun, FT8 sure has allowed me to have a whole lot of fun that even with CW was pretty discouraging. Living in an HOA, not far from Clearwater Beach has had its benefits but Ham radio has not been one of them. My HOA prohibits outside antennas. The antenna that I am using is a 14ft long dipole on 20 meters. Rig is a Hermes-Lite2 running 5 watts. So, how is it working? I made an occasional CW contact before switching to FT8. Now, simply amazing, more than 800 stations are in my 20 meter log.
You say what has this got to do with VHF?? Please think of the little guns. The guys and gals who don't live on a hilltop. Who don't have the ability to put that nice yagi on a tower. Who love the hobby and want to make QSOs. Who perhaps even want to brag about some DX they have worked.
Thanks go out to Joe Taylor for making the impossible possible!
73, Stan KA1ZE (W3XTT)

.....

On Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 09:55:50 AM EDT, kim peck <kim.peck2@comcast.net> wrote:

Why am I sticking my fingers in this blender ? I do care I guess.

Paul is correct. The mode does solve some problems for some people. Many of us (can I say "old timers", or just luddites), feel like it's a passing fad. The next shiny object to occupy the attention of those not sufficiently focused. The reality is much worse. It is changing the nature of not only contesting (especially VHF), but ham radio in general.

The modes (there are several) have 2 main features:
1) The narrow bandwidth of the detection system (and matching TX of course) give a wonderful signal to noise advantage (even over CW). We are finding propagation at times and conditions, and over distances no one thought possible. There are other digital systems (psk31) which have this potential, but Joe (Taylor) has pushed this (in a good way). This has brought EME to many hams who would otherwise never have the chance.

2) The modes are highly automated. IN FT8, the bits for your call and grid are already determined (and there are worse aspects). The time slots (if used correctly) mean that there is no "doubling", and that you know when the other end is sending. This along with the brevity of the message, are big factors in weak signal work, especially meteor scatter. It is this automation which somewhat irks me, and seems a bit too convenient for contests.

** Perhaps we could attach a codec to a similar low bandwidth system, and restore some more traditional aspects of operation while enjoying the better SNR.

Ham radio is many things to many people. There are so many different ways to communicate which go beyond the

traditional phone and CW (rtty, slow scan, ect). We don't complain about those modes. At some level, FT8 (et. al.) is just one more. However, the FT8 mode and its siblings, have had a much larger impact than any of the other modes which proceeded it (perhaps the change from AM to SSB was similar).

My only complaint, is that FT8 (ect.) tends to suck up all the activity, when general activity is in a decline (VHF at least). This is continual problem, but most evident during a VHF contest.

I would like to see the FT8 mode removed as a mode (just like repeaters) from the VHF contests. (perhaps the interest level is sufficient for its own contest) Otherwise, have fun with it. It does make me sad however, when I know the band is open (beacons), and the (phone) calling frequencies are silent.

73,

KP

Kim Peck (WA1PBU)

Very well said Paul. As much as I don't like FT8 for VHF contests because
I feel it has killed bands like 6 and 2 meters in the contest for "old
school" contest activity. But...what Paul said makes perfect sense...It
allows people to work the band without local QRM. This is true only if
people stay on the right sequence. There were a number of times that this
wasn't the case during this opening and by operators that should know
better. That's all I'll say about that.
73
Fred
N1DPM

.....

On Tue, Sep 5, 2023, 4:14 PM Paul Cianciolo <paulc@snet.net> wrote:

> Hello Pete,
>
> I find voice USB much preferable as well and I did indeed work a number of
> voice contacts. So I agree with you there 100 %
> But here is the rub.
> I live exactly 3 miles from Jay W1VD. It is line of site from 40 feet up
> on my tower to his. Just above the tree line.
> There is no question that I would cause great interference to Jay and he
> to me if we were on voice USB trying to make a contact at the same time.
> I have known Jay for 40 years and he has helped me so many times in the
> past I would not want to cause him interference.
> I am sure I have at one time or another. FT8 with us both operating in
> the same 2 time slots, allows us to work DX without any interfering with
> each other
> That’s the primary reason here.
> My .02 cents
> 73's Pete see you on voice in the mornings
> PaulC
> W1VLF
.....
> Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 3:58 PM
> To: Mike Seguin via NEWSVHF
> Subject: [NEWSVHF] ft8! ft8! ft8!
>
> Ft8 ft8 ft8 ft8 ft8!!!! Is all I am hearing about lately.
>
> Now, don’t get me wrong, ft8 is a fantastic tool that we have today. It
> has features that improve your capability for weak signal and it gives
> poorly equipped or stations with poor station locations a chance to make
> som contacts. But please don’t forget the other modes. I will tell you
> that ft8 isn’t for everybody.
> For me, it certainly one of the better openings I have worked in a long
> time. It doesn’t compare with the FL opening Oct. 11 2016.

> This opening I worked a half dozen stations on ssb or cw in about a half
> hour or so around 9 oclock in the morning the morning of Sept. 2.
> Actually, I worked W8ANS maybe 1 or 2 s units above normal before 9
> oclock. I was working northern Pete, WA2JMG when I heard Jay W1VD working
> VE3ZV who I don't work too often, so I quickly moved my beam and worked
> VE3ZV. Then, I really started looking around. I soon found K2DRH with a
> good signal working KC9CML also with a good signal. I was able to break in
> and work both of them. I finished off by working VE3EU and KE8FD. I sure
> wish I had found more statins to work.
> For several reasons, I will never go on ft8. First, I am just not
> interested in it. I am not even interested in what others work on ft8 and
> I even would rather not what others worked with it unless it is some kind
> of a dx record or something like that. I don't want to hear about someone
> worked on ft8 who was worked on other modes. As far as I am concerned,
> that person is no longer on the air. So, ft8 just goes in on one ear and
> immediately out the other ear and its just a waste of time talking about
> it. I also no longer try to use the chat page. I know that there has been
> some work to try to make ft8 more accessible to the blind I don't know how
> the real problem can be solved. The real problem with both the chat page
> and ft8 is that stuff moves much too quickly across the screen. All you
> have to do is imagine trying to read one character at a time with a screen
> reader. Stuff will be long gone before you can get to it. Folks have been
> getting after me to get on ft8 but even If I had I doubt I could have made
> more than a couple contacts and then, mostly by luck. No, let someone else
> try to deal with it.
> I think one of the big problems with working other modes is when and where
> to look. Maybe it will help if we describe activity in our local areas.
> I'll start by describing activity I know of from my qth near the shore of
> CT between Bridgeport and New Haven. My qth is a fairly good but not great
> vhf location. Most mornings there is 2 meter activity between 7:30 and
> 9:30 each morning There may be some activity outside those limits. 2
> meters is most busy between 8:30 and 9:30. I average around a dozen or
> stations in my log every day. Since everyone doesn't get on every day,
> there are maybe 20 or more stations who get on from time to time. Center
> frequency used is 144.205 which was started by W3XTT many years ago but
> other frequencies are used by some groups. For example, 144.190 is used by
> stations in northern Va early in the morning. WA1RKS AND WA2GMJ like
> 144.195 and its nice to jump down there when .205 gets to busy. Some of us
> look for W8ANS on .185. There is a group of New Yorkers on 144.240 at
> different times especially evenings. And 144.250 is popular for some
> nets. Evening activity is more difficult for me to track for evenings. I
> have activities most nights but evenings activity ain't what it used to
> be. W3BFC runs a net on .205 Saturday at 9:00 with net control
> transmitting from fm28. Sunday and Wednesday I am on 432.150 starting
> 8:30. Monday, I check into packrats nets on 222 and 432 and we get on
> 1296.111 starting at 9:30 pm. Tuesday,it is 222 activity night and I have
> been there almost every week since it started a couple years ago. I have
> only missed one or two times. I like to get around a dozen contacts each
> week but don't quite make it some weeks. Thursday is the north east weak
> signal group net on .250 at 8:30 pm.
> Sorry about the long email. I hope it helps someone.
>
> 73, Pete K1PXE fn31ke
>.....
..

Everyone has their own opimion

The bottom line is it has increased the use of VHF and UHF Frequencies

The use of Digital Modes are in its infancy

(I would like to see beacons use FT8) Don W1FKF


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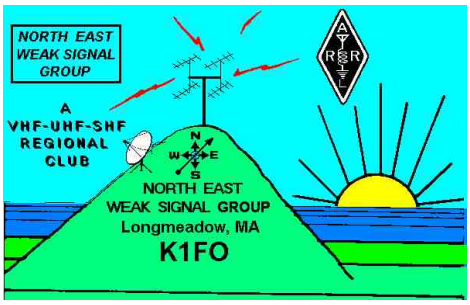

North East Weak Signal group

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date: _____

Name: _____

Call sign: _____ Grid: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____Zip: ___-_____

Phone (home) _____ Optional (work) _____-___

Email _____

ARRL member: Y N

Electronic Newsletter Delivery: Y N

Operational Bands (circle)

50 MHz 144 MHz 222 MHz 432 MHz 903 MHz 1.2 GHz
2.3 GHz 3.3 GHz 5.6 GHz 10 GHz 24 GHz 47 GHz
76 GHz Light Other (list)

The North East Weak Signal [N.E.W.S.] Group was established in 1993 to form a camaraderie among fellow VHF-UHF-Microwave enthusiasts and support a convenient means to exchange technical information. We currently have six meetings per year, 4 are held on at the Storrs Library on Rt. 5 in Longmeadow, Mass., 1 at our annual Conference in April, and 1 at our Annual Picnic in July. We provide a "NEWSLETTER" that is distributed via email two weeks prior to each meeting. Any contributions to this publication are appreciated and can be sent to: Don Twombly, W1FKF by e-mail to donw1fkf-news@yahoo.com
Dues are $10 for 2 years. Please contact or mail application to: NEWS Treasurer, George Collins, KC1V, 105 Ninth District Rd., Somers, CT 06071 or E-mail: news.kc1v@gmail.com

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NEWSLetter

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