

2011 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes Results

No propagation, no warmth, no problem!

Sean Kutzko, KX9X

kx9x@arrl.org

In 1924, famed English mountaineer George Mallory joined his third expedition to reach the summit of Sagarmāthā in the Himalayas, known by westerners as Mount Everest. At age 37, he believed it would be his final opportunity to stride upon the then-unreached top of the world's highest mountain. Legend has it he was the one who, when asked why he wanted to climb Everest, gave a simple but immensely profound reply: "Because it's there." The attempt cost him his life.

Today's VHF+ contesters generally don't have to contend with such perils. However, this past January, many competitors found themselves asking the same question: Why? The winter was one of the harshest on record for much of the country; record snowfalls in the Northeast, bitter cold in the Midwest, and the mere existence of substantial snow at all in parts of the southeast wreaked havoc on many contest efforts this January. As if that weren't enough, the propagation gods struck a deal with Mother Nature and sucked the ionosphere dry of any substantial enhancement. One thinks of Mallory at base camp, huddled in a lonely, cold tent, and can imagine similar thoughts running through the VHFer, calling CQ late on a cold Saturday evening, mentally turning over every virtual rock in hopes of working a new station. The answer for why VHF contesters do it in their world is the same as Mallory's in his: because it (the contest) is there.

Rick, K1DS, roved through five grid squares in the Northeast during this year's January VHF Sweepstakes. "Despite the challenges of potential problem weather, roving in the northeast is still a treasure of contacts," he explains. "The major highways are kept clear, the rover spots I like are not



DAN OLDFIELD, NØOLD

Stu Turner, W0STU, made his first-ever foray into contesting a memorable one! Operating from the top of Mount Herman in Monument, CO (grid DM79), Stu managed 88 QSOs on 50, 144 and 432 MHz and earned a slot in the Top Ten in the Single Operator, Portable category. He'll be back on the mountain for more VHF+ fun!

real mountain tops, but rather clear hills or parking areas with a reasonable horizon, allowing for good microwave activity." Some of the reason is purely practical. "I am restricted by CCRs from having an outdoor antenna. I do have some in the attic, but the contest is much more fruitful as a rover." When you can have more fun by hitting the road with better antennas than staying home, the choice is made for you.

Perennial Single-Operator, Portable op Zack, W9SZ, has similar reasons for trudging across the tundra, mile after mile: "I guess it's for several reasons. One is that I don't have any home antennas for VHF+ and a hilltop location works out really well. Another is that I like the challenge and adventure of it all! And I like doing something that very few, if any, are also doing. I don't think there are too many other people running Single-Operator

Portable in the Midwest in January." He's right; there were only two other ops in the entire Central Region that braved the elements.

Why January?

So why *is* there a VHF contest in January? Kevin, W9GKA, has researched the history and trends of VHF+ contesting for years. In his work, he notes the ARRL announcement for the first January VHF Sweepstakes in the December 1947 *QST* saw the need "[T]o help stimulate activity on the VHF bands at a time when it is normally somewhat low." Indeed, then-ARRL Communications Manager F. E. Handy, W1BDI, made the comment as far back as November 1939 that regular communications on the VHF+ bands didn't require excellent conditions to be enjoyable: "Poor conditions were reported from some points, but that was the idea, to prove to the doubters that

real communication can be accomplished on u.h.f. day in and day out, with average conditions — no exceptional lucky breaks required. It can."

The development and popularity of the "big three" contests occurred within a very short time frame in the late 1940s. With the creation of the January VHF Sweepstakes, the League wanted to continue the 1930s UHF Marathon tradition of promoting activity on the "ultra-highs" regardless of propagation. Read more of Kevin's analysis in the Expanded Results version of this article online at www.arrl.org/contest-results-articles.

Some operators enjoy the competitive challenges found in January. Long-time VHFer Emil Pocock, W3EP, noted, "The January VHF contest really tests station capabilities and operator skills because of the generally poor propagation conditions."

Division Leaders by Category

Single Operator, Low Power

Division	Call	Score
Atlantic	WA3NUF	151,276
Central	K2DRH	147,333
Dakota	KA0KYZ	2,112
Delta	N4QWZ	26,866
Great Lakes	WN8R	8,456
Hudson	WB2SIH	55,971
Midwest	N0LL	8,643
New England	N1DPM	106,812
Northwestern	KD7UO	4,147
Pacific	K1YQP	12,560
Roanoke	W3IP	37,157
Rocky Mountain	N0YE	5,902
Southeastern	W2BZY	9,503
Southwestern	KG6IYN	15,322
West Gulf	W6ZI	9,165
Canada	VA3ST	32,786

Single Operator, High Power

Atlantic	K3TUF	221,120
Central	W0UC	47,294
Dakota	W0GHZ	24,840
Delta	AA4DD	9,065
Great Lakes	K8TQK	49,147
Hudson	N2GHR	60,076
Midwest	N0GZ	8,192
New England	K1TEO	369,444
Northwestern	N7EPD	18,356
Pacific	KC6ZWT	18,179
Roanoke	K4QI	44,460
Rocky Mountain	W6OAL	11,468
Southeastern	W4ZRZ	52,668
Southwestern	KE7NR	8,415
West Gulf	K5LLL	23,175
Canada	VE2PIJ	6

Single Operator, QRP Portable

Division	Call	Score
Atlantic	N3YMS	31,150
Central	W9SZ	6,392
Dakota	KD0EBT	333
Delta	W4RXR	2,624
Great Lakes	N8XA	576
Hudson	WB2AMU	976
Midwest	N0JK	126
New England	WA1LEI	48
Northwestern	N6LB	340
Pacific	KB5WIA	2,134
Roanoke	KC8KSK	210
Rocky Mountain	K0NR	1,725
Southwestern	N6NB	170,262
Canada	VA3RKM	48

Limited Multioperator

Atlantic	K1JT	106,856
Central	W9RM	32,028
Dakota	K0SIX	20,060
Great Lakes	N8ZM	1,725
Hudson	KC2SQU	530
Hudson	W2NPT	341
Midwest	N0XP	200
New England	N1WK	58,887
Pacific	K6OG	1,323
Roanoke	K8GP	139,887
Southwestern	N6MDV	231
West Gulf	NR5M	8,844

Multioperator

Division	Call	Score
Atlantic	N3NGE	532,656
Central	N2BJ	21,608
Dakota	N0AT	18
Delta	N4JQQ	11,229
Great Lakes	W8RU	6,204
Hudson	N2GCZ	22,680
New England	W1XM	14,319
Pacific	WA6KLK	2,310
Roanoke	W4YCC	3,720
Southeastern	W4NH	21,528
Southwestern	KC6SEH	2,752
West Gulf	K5QE	178,563
Canada	VA7MM	36

Rover

Atlantic	K1DS/R	110,760
Central	K9TMS/R	9,075
Delta	AG4V/R	18,717
New England	W1RT/R	26,950
Northwestern	K7HPT/R	6,336
Pacific	K9JK/R	370,923
Rocky Mountain	KJ4EWA/R	2,278
Southwestern	N6TEB/R	245,244
West Gulf	K5GJ/R	15,129
Canada	VE3OIL/R	22,825

Limited Rover

Division	Call	Score
Atlantic	N2SLN/R	850
Central	KC9NJZ/R	3,440
Dakota	KF0Q/R	4,176
Delta	WA4JA/R	1,275
Northwestern	NL7HJ/R	1,045
Pacific	W6YLZ/R	60,390
Roanoke	K4GJUN/R	15,052
Rocky Mountain	AB0YM/R	2,070
Southwestern	N6ZE/R	1,078
West Gulf	AF5Q/R	190

Unlimited Rover

Dakota	KC0P/R	4,959
Rocky Mountain	KR0VER/R	7,680
Southwestern	KE6HPZ/R	189,837
West Gulf	KD5IKG/R	2,376

Activity

Activity was lower in 2011 than in 2010; 710 submitted logs compared to 761 last year. This is in the lower portion of the average number of logs since 2006, which saw the highest number of submitted logs (793) in recent history. Despite the lackluster propagation often found on the Ultra-Highs in January, many HFers are taking a chance with their newer rigs that offer 6 meters and possibly 2 meters and connecting some feed line to the "other" antenna jack on the back. The VHF bands offer propagation and operating challenges that simply don't exist on HF, and it's nice to see some HFers dipping their toes in the VHF+ waters.

Alabama Contest Group member Jim, KC4HW, made a handful of QSOs on 6 meters with an HF antenna from EM71. "I used the 40-2CD tuned with the FT2000D; was quite surprised that it worked." Jim's working on beams for 6 and 2 meters and should have them up soon. While sporadic-E generally stays dormant during the winter months, there have been some phenomenal tropo and auroral openings in January over the years. Like the new golfer that has a couple of great shots in an otherwise dull round, there were plenty of interesting occurrences in this year's January VHF Sweepstakes to get the HFers to come back for more.

Single Operator Categories

Nearly 600 logs received were in a single-operator category, or 84% of all logs.

In the Single-Operator, High Power (SOHP) category, perennial winner Jeff, K1TEO in FN31 battled equipment failures and having to dig a tower base out of

Affiliated Club Competition

Club Name	Score	Logs
Unlimited Club		
Mt Airy VHF Radio Club	2,058,590	66
Medium Club		
Southern California Contest Club	2,404,964	17
North East Weak Signal Group	811,940	26
Potomac Valley Radio Club	481,749	21
Society of Midwest Contesters	201,724	15
Northern Lights Radio Society	111,522	11
Contest Club Ontario	78,518	9
Pacific Northwest VHF Society	66,578	19
Yankee Clipper Contest Club	57,629	8
Roadrunners Microwave Group	50,328	6
Florida Weak Signal Society	48,088	13
Badger Contesters	44,426	12
Tennessee Contest Group	27,209	5
Frankford Radio Club	22,263	4
Northern California Contest Club	17,326	14
Six Meter Club of Chicago	13,562	10
North Texas Microwave Society	7,873	3
Mad River Radio Club	7,527	5
Grand Mesa Contesters of Colorado	5,745	4
Rochester VHF Group	5,730	5
Alabama Contest Group	4,471	3
Rochester (MN) ARC	3,819	11
Alaska VHF-UP Group	1,315	3
Arizona Outlaws Contest Club	880	5
Local Club		
Murgas ARC	207,630	5
Eastern Connecticut ARA	69,410	5
Stoned Monkey VHF ARC	34,738	9
Bristol (TN) ARC	27,804	10
Chippewa Valley VHF Contesters	16,163	3
Granite State ARA	11,855	4
Bergen ARA	11,087	7
Raritan Bay Radio Amateurs	9,234	6
Burlington County Radio Club	6,131	5
Mobile Sixers Radio Club	3,531	4
Dauberville DX Assn	2,901	3
Portage County Amateur Radio Service	1,959	6
Delara Contest Team	1,535	3
Downey ARC	837	3

several feet of snow to effect repairs on a damp power divider. Even so, he cruised to his ninth SOHP victory in ten years. Making effective use of the higher bands was key to his success; out of 880 QSOs, 188 (18%) of Jeff's QSOs were on 902 and up. 100 QSOs came from Rovers.

Second place this year went to Phil,

K3TUF in FN10, moving up a slot from 2010. Phil put in big efforts this past year to install a rotating tower and raise his microwave antennas above the trees. "I called this my test voyage and to that end the voyage was successful, the equipment held up and did not fail." Dave, K1RZ of the Grid Pirates fame earned third place from FM19. When conditions falter, the "Northeast Corridor" seems to dominate more than usual. This year was no exception; only Jimmy, W4ZRZ in EM63 and Glenn, K8TQK in EM89 made the Top Ten away from the East Coast, earning 9th and 10th place, respectively.

Single-Operator, Low Power (SOLP) continues to be the most popular category in the event; six out of ten entries were in this category. As with High Power, the Right Coast dominated the category's Top Ten, with one notable exception. The battle for first place was between Phil, WA3NUF in FN20 and Bob, K2DRH on the Illinois side of the Mississippi in EN40. Both gentlemen have a long history entering in the SOLP category, with Bob trumping Phil three out of the last four years. This year, Bob had almost double the multipliers of Phil; however, with the substandard conditions, the Northeast population advantage and QSOs on four extra microwave bands proved to be too much for Bob's high mult count, and WA3NUF bested K2DRH by less than one percent! Fred, N1DPM, a regular "Top of the Box" guy, fought off some equipment problems and earned third place from his Feeding Hills, MA QTH in FN32.

It takes a special breed of VHFer to venture out in sub-zero conditions to enter the QRP Portable category. This year, twenty-

Northeast Region (New England, Hudson and Atlantic Divisions; Maritime and Quebec Sections)			Southeast Region (Delta, Roanoke and Southeastern Divisions)			Central Region (Central and Great Lakes Divisions; Ontario Section)			Midwest Region (Dakota, Midwest, Rocky Mountain and West Gulf Divisions; Manitoba and Saskatchewan Sections)			West Coast Region (Pacific, Northwestern and Southwestern Divisions; Alberta, British Columbia and NWT Sections)		
WA3NUF	151,276	A	W3IP	37,157	A	K2DRH	147,333	A	W6ZI	9,165	A	KG6IYN	15,322	A
N1DPM	106,812	A	N4QWZ	26,866	A	VA3ST	32,786	A	N0LL	8,643	A	K1YQP	12,560	A
AF1T	70,012	A	K4FJW	9,880	A	N9LB	20,160	A	N0YE	5,902	A	K6TSK	10,395	A
K1KG	61,544	A	W2BZY	9,503	A	VE3SMA	13,475	A	W0ETT	3,525	A	W6OMF	6,846	A
WB2SIH	55,971	A	K5YPV	3,956	A	K9MU	12,104	A	KA0KYZ	2,112	A	K6XN	4,321	A
K1TEO	369,444	B	W4ZRZ	52,668	B	K8TQK	49,147	B	W0GHZ	24,840	B	N7EPD	18,356	B
K3TUF	221,120	B	K4QI	44,460	B	W0UC	47,294	B	K5LLL	23,175	B	KC6ZWT	18,179	B
K1RZ	180,737	B	KE2N	34,020	B	K8MD	36,936	B	W0ZQ	12,169	B	NU6S	9,040	B
WA2FGK (K2LNS, op)	177,232	B	KN4SM	23,660	B	N8BI	20,306	B	W6OAL	11,468	B	K7CW	8,592	B
WB2RVX	113,960	B	K0VXM	13,900	B	W9GA	14,080	B	N0GZ	8,192	B	KE7NR	8,415	B
N3YMS	31,150	Q	W4RXR	2,624	Q	W9SZ	6,392	Q	K0NR	1,725	Q	N6NB	170,262	Q
WB2AMU	976	Q	KC8KSK	210	Q	N8XA	576	Q	W0STU	1,309	Q	KB5WIA	2,134	Q
N2SPI	876	Q	N3AWS	18	Q	VA3RKM	48	Q	K00EBT	333	Q	AF6RR	1,064	Q
N2YTF	259	Q	K9GY	1	Q				N0JK	126	Q	N6LB	340	Q
KC2YUG	136	Q												
K1JT	106,856	L	K8GP	139,887	L	W9RM	32,028	L	K0SIX	20,060	L	K6QG	1,323	L
K2LIM	78,068	L	WY3P	22,119	L	KC9JTL	1,976	L	NR5M	8,844	L	N6MDV	231	L
N1WK	58,887	L	KU1T	1,656	L	N8ZM	1,725	L	W0VB	2,905	L	KE7DX	33	L
W1QK	30,988	L	N4ARR	315	L				W5IYF	2,475	L			
N8RA	22,098	L							KO5D	555	L			
N3NGE	532,656	M	W4NH	21,528	M	N2BJ	21,608	M	K5QE	178,563	M	KC6SEH	2,752	M
K3EOD	70,713	M	N4JQO	11,229	M	W8RU	6,204	M	KB0HH	67,146	M	WA6KLLK	2,310	M
WB3IGR	26,944	M	W4YCC	3,720	M	KO9A	3,658	M	KC5MVZ	348	M	K6TWT	495	M
N2GCZ	22,680	M	WX5T	2,380	M	K9IJ	1,896	M	N0AT	18	M	W6RKC	407	M
W1XM	14,319	M	K5VIP	1,372	M							K9PY	288	M
K1DS/R	110,760	R	AG4V/R	18,717	R	VE3OIL/R	22,825	R	K5GJ/R	15,129	R	K9JK/R	370,923	R
NN3Q/R	75,509	R			K9TMS/R	9,075	R	K0MHC/R	3,690	R	K6AH/R	363,664	R	
W1RT/R	26,950	R			K9BTW/R	7,728	R	KJ4EWA/R	2,278	R	WB6BFG/R	351,526	R	
K3IUV/R	8,257	R			K9HA/R	6,384	R	AE5P/R	1,350	R	N6UWW/R	350,931	R	
W3IC/R	6,688	R			KC9MMM/R	4,820	R			N6HD/R	344,029	R		
N2SLN/R	850	RL	K4GUN/R	15,052	RL	KC9NJZ/R	3,440	RL	KF0Q/R	4,176	RL	W6YLZ/R	60,390	RL
N3XUD/R	640	RL	WA4JA/R	1,275	RL	KC9LFP/R	2,873	RL	AB0YM/R	2,070	RL	N6ZE/R	1,078	RL
AB4XC/R	380	RL	KD4RSL/R	1,218	RL				AF5Q/R	190	RL	NL7HJ/R	1,045	RL
AB2YI/R	312	RL										K6LMN/R	247	RL
K4CHE/R	208	RL												
									KR0VER/R	7,680	RU	KE6HPZ/R	189,837	RU
									KC0P/R	4,959	RU			
									KD5IKG/R	2,376	RU			
									N0HZO	1,425	RU			

two hardy souls packed up their gear and headed for the hills. Not all of the country was beleaguered with bad weather, and the top QRP Portable op probably needed some sunscreen! Wayne, N6NB, set his sights on the QRP Portable category (as he did in September), and moved his operations to the top of Signal Peak, near Newport Beach, CA in DM13. With the assistance of the Southern

California Contest Club's pack of rovers, Wayne decimated the previous record score for the QRP Portable category, amassing 170,000 points. With September and January's QRP record under his belt, one wonders if he'll go for June 2011 as well. Second place went to the 2009 and 2010 winner Nick, N3YMS from FM29. Third went to tried-and-true QRP Portable entrant Zack,

W9SZ, set up outside near Champaign, IL in EN50. Zack reported he was able to complete QSOs with EM66 and EN44; not bad for no propagation and 10 W.

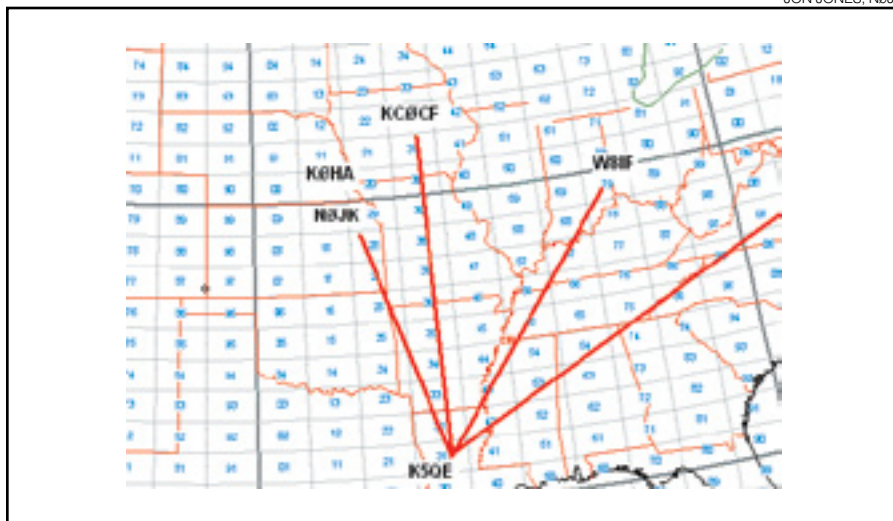
Multioperators

Multiop contesting can be the best of both worlds: when conditions are hot, you get to share the excitement with your friends. When conditions aren't so hot, you've got somebody to commiserate with. For the most part, this year seemed to fall into the latter category. Sixty multioperator logs were received for the event, or 8.5% of the total. This includes single-ops who decided they wanted to have spotting assistance or internet chat rooms at their disposal, too. The entries were split evenly between the Multioperator category (which allows QSOS on as many bands as you have antennas for) and the Limited Multioperator category (which allows QSOs on any four bands of your choice).

The Multioperator category saw good representation from much of the country, and some very familiar calls, as well. Leonard, N3NGE, once again took his great station outside of Morgantown, PA in FN20, gathered a team of great ops, and maximized skeds on meteor scatter and with rovers to amass over 1,250 QSOs and 216 multipliers (including an impressive 39 grids on



Single Operator, Low Power	QRP Portable	Multioperator	Limited Rover
WA3NUF 151,276	N6NB 170,262	N3NGE 532,656	W6YLZ/R 60,390
K2DRH 147,333	N3YMS 31,150	K5QE 178,563	K4GUN/R 15,052
N1DPM 106,812	W9SZ 6,392	K3EOD 70,713	KF0Q/R 4,176
AF1T 70,012	W4RXR 2,624	KB0HH 67,146	KC9NJZ/R 3,440
K1KG 61,544	KB5WIA 2,134	WB3IGR 26,944	KC9LFP/R 2,873
WB2SIH 55,971	K0NR 1,725	N2GCZ 22,680	AB0YM/R 2,070
W3PAW 54,720	W0STU 1,309	N2BJ 21,608	WA4JA/R 1,275
W3IP 37,157	AF6RR 1,064	W4NH 21,528	KD4RSL/R 1,218
VA3ST 32,786	WB2AMU 976	W1XM 14,319	N6ZE/R 1,078
W3RJW 30,380	N2SPI 876	N4JQO 11,229	NL7HJ/R 1,045
Single Operator, High Power	Limited Multioperator	Rover	Unlimited Rover
K1TEO 369,444	K8GP 139,887	K9JK/R 370,923	KE6HPZ/R 189,837
K3TUF 221,120	K1JT 106,856	K6AH/R 363,664	KR0VER/R 7,680
K1RZ 180,737	K2LIM 78,068	WB6BFG/R 351,526	KC0P/R 4,959
WA2FGK (K2LNS, op) 177,232	N1WK 58,887	N6UWW/R 350,931	KD5IKG/R 2,376
WB2RVX 113,960	W9RM 32,028	N6HD/R 344,029	N0HZO/R 1,425
W2SJ 84,588	W1QK 30,988	N6TEB/R 245,244	
WA3DRC 76,608	WY3P 22,119	K1DS/R 110,760	
N2GHR 60,076	N8RA 22,098	N6HC/R 101,367	
W4ZRZ 52,668	K0SIX 20,060	NN3Q/R 75,509	
K8TQK 49,147	W3HZU 18,700	W1RT/R 26,950	



Conditions were very flat across most of the country. Jon, NØJK's map shows a select few of the meteor-scatter QSOs made on Saturday night. Note the relatively short distances for meteors.

432 MHz) for almost 536,000 points, earning their fifth straight Multioperator title. Second place was earned by the Texas team of Marshall, K5QE. "Murphy decided to make his home here this contest," he lamented, losing both 2 meters and 432 MHz capabilities for a time. Despite the troubles, EME and meteors catapulted the team to the highest grid totals on 6 and 2 meters of any other entrant in the contest. Al, K3EOD and his team came in third this year, earning a Top Three slot for the second year in a row.

Limited Multioperator entrants focus their efforts on only four bands. This allows the team to really work a band to the absolute bottom, which several did. As with all other categories, the East Coast advantage cannot be overlooked, although a couple of Midwest teams did make the big box. Top honors this year go to the Grid, K8GP, piloted by veteran team members Terry, W8ZN and Andy, K1RA. This marks K8GP's first January entry since 2008. Not far behind in second place was Joe, K1JT and his Princeton team. They took advantage of 12 hours of visible moon and made 58 2-meter EME QSOs. "Does not make for a high QSO rate, but sure helps the grid count!" Third went to Team LIMO, K2LIM. While the team lost an "A" somewhere along the line (formerly using KA2LIM), Ken Kent and his group did a great job earning yet another Top Ten slot. Honorable Mention to both Keith, W9RM and Vince, KØSIX for making the Top Ten from the Midwest tundra.

Rovers

If you're going to operate mobile during the January VHF contest, trying to stay warm is generally a good idea! The SoCal Rovers needn't worry about winter weather and were able once again to band together and

take the top slots in each of the three Rover categories. The winner of the "classic" rover category this year was John, K9JK, who hopped a plane westward and joined forces with the SoCal group. With second op John, N6MU hitching a ride in 'JK's RoverMobile, the team activated nine grids and made an easy go of taking the top spot. Fellow SoCal rovers Andre, K6AH and Bill, WB6BFG rounded out the top three. Outside of California, Rick, K1DS braved bad weather in the Northeast and activated five grids on his way to seventh place.

Limited Rover was won by another SoCal'er, Mike, W6YLZ (with Roozy, KG6OKB as second op). Their 627 QSOs with 83 unique calls led the category. Second place went to Roanoke Rover Representative Steve, K4GUN (assisted, as always, by XYL Kristine, K4LIG), hitting eight grids along the East Coast. Third place goes to Matt, KFØQ, who managed just over 100 QSOs from the frozen kingdom of Minnesota.

The Unlimited Rover category — where anything goes — yielded only five entrants this January. Glenn, KE6GPZ led the category as part of the SoCal group. Eric, KRØVER, along with 8-year old assistant Alisha, activated four grids in Colorado on their way to second place. Mel, KCØP, earned third place from Minnesota. "Cold WX, but much better propagation than last January." Tim, KD5IKG and Carol, NØHZO rounded out the category with operations in Texas and Minnesota, respectively.

Club Competition

One of the big points historically of the January VHF Sweepstakes has been club competition. Clubs would get all their members active and promote learning and have a lot of fun, all while working towards a com-

mon goal. Does the same hold true today? Jeff, K1TEO is skeptical: "A huge thanks to the Packrats who provided over 20% of my QSOs. A few years ago there were multiple active clubs here in the Northeast but it seems like only the Packrats are still at it. Please continue!"

Indeed, the Packrats, aka the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club, ran away with the Unlimited Club title by submitting logs from 66 members, more than double the number of the second-most represented club, the New England Weak Signal Group. The Packrats have been tirelessly promoting VHF+ operating for more than fifty years, and their combination of technical prowess, Elmering and operating skill is mighty tough to beat. Well done to the Packrats for rallying their troops.

The Medium Club category saw entries from 23 different clubs. Top honors go to the Southern California Contest Club, who parlayed their 17 entries from their Rovers into a force to be reckoned with. The New England Weak Signal group managed second place this year, and the Potomac Valley Radio Club earned third place.

The Local Club category had fourteen entries from across the country. High atop the others was the Murgas ARC based in Wilkes-Barre, PA. Second place goes to the Eastern Connecticut ARA, while the Stoned Monkey VHF ARC represented the Midwest well and gets crowned third.

Conclusion

VHF+ contesting, like many other things, depends on what you put into it. It is not the place for guaranteed results, especially in January. Mallory never attained his goal of reaching the summit of Mt Everest, but he kept trying, in part, because the chase was important to him. Band conditions will run hot and cold from year to year, but it's the pursuit of the fun and accepting the conditions for what they are on contest weekend that keep competition levels strong during this event.

Be sure to plan for the next ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes on January 21-23, 2012. Why? Because it's there! 