

SOAPBOX: Comments about your 2023 FOBB adventure

NK9G

One thing nice about being somewhat central U.S. is if propagation is with you, you get both coasts. Fairly easy to the east but west is a challenge. I heard AC7A Tom in AZ but QSB did in that QSO. I heard NN6EE (not in contest) with a big signal but no ears. A few Colorado and California but nada to the rest. All in all, not too shabby! Looking forward to next year's BB!

N3AQC

40 Meters was VERY slow while 20 Meters was jumping all the time.

K9NUD

This was my first flight. I biked to the planned park and scored a nice, shaded table in an unused shelter. I set up KX2 and my shiny new vertical, a variation on the PAC-12/JPC-7 using 5 radials of various lengths. The bands were quiet, and most of my RBN reports were single digits. I worked stations on 15, 20, and 40 meters. I thought maybe the vertical was a stinker so I flung a 40M EFHW into the trees. The RBN numbers were almost identical. I switched back to the vertical to round out the event. It was neat getting used to the coil and whip adjustments using a NanoVNA. I was joined by several spiders and one intrepid squirrel.

VE3DQN

I'd thought of skipping the portable operation, succumbing to the demon I'm-too-old-for-this. But memories of previous FOBBs plus wanting to try out a new EFLW + rig + ATU combo put me outside on this gorgeous summer afternoon. I wasn't disappointed. I was reaching as far away as GA, MS, MO, IL, and WI, and there was enough activity to keep me occupied--with breaks--for most of the afternoon. Thanks for keeping this one going.

WA4AAK

Operated hunt and pounce. Only one contact on 40M (AB9CA/BB), but 13 on 20m. Ran 5W, EFHW on telescoping pole. Signal levels weak. 72!

K1YAN

Had only an hour to operate. Heard three stations ... worked two and the third was lost to QSB. The station was a KX3 @ 5w to a G5RV jr. at 30 ft.

WA5RML

Elecraft K2 @5 watts to a BuddiStick vertical antenna. 20m effort only. Operated from NY - my primary residence is in TX. Weather was ideal - a far cry from 100+ degree temperatures in TX. Thanks for the QSOs! 72, Andy - WA5RML

AB9BZ

Weather was great. Had a great time operating this year along side Dan W9SAU. Also included a picture of two hard working "worker bees" from the Santa Fe Prairie. 73 Dave AB9BZ

KC3MIO

Had an excellent time. Thought I would try my magnetic loop. If you have ever tried a kayak in the wind, you know what weather-vaning is. The loop turned in the wind and a strong contact vanished. Made three contacts including one on 15 Meters. Sent a line up for my 65' EFHW and made 9 more contacts. In the end: A good time was had by me in my first. Next year I will have pictures. 72/73, Rich

KØTTW

This was my first FOBB event and I combined it with a POTA in Pawnee National Grassland (K-7490). I was running an IC-705 at 5W to a Packenna 20m EFHW as a sloper. The bands haven't been great for QRP operation lately, but with zero noise out in the middle of nowhere it was a lot of fun working the weak signals for the event.

W4MPS

Always fun. Great Ops with great ears under less than ideal conditions. 72, Marc, W4MPS

AB9BZ

Weather was great. Had a great time operating this year operating alongside Dan W9SAU. Also included a picture of two hard working "worker bees" from the Santa Fe Prairie. 73, Dave AB9BZ

W7QQQ

Wish I was out portable, but it was 105 degrees here. Fun event! I was expecting more from 15 meters, but only one contact with N5GW. He was very loud! Also, NN5DE had a big signal on 20 meters.

W3SI

Today was the first nice weather we have had in a week and I promised the XYL that we could go for a motorcycle ride on the first nice day. I was able to get out early and set up the antenna and begin operating at 17:10 UTC for about a hour then I had to pack up the station and head to the house to change and get on the scooter. All in all it was a fun day. I got to activate a State Park for POTA and also collect Bumblebees! I was able to have a happy XYL as we rode the back roads of Southern Maryland and ended up in Colonial Beach, VA for a great diner and music. I will try to schedule more operating time next year. It's always fun to set up the QRP rig outside away from distractions and operate some CW. 72, Bill - W3SI

KK9U

Great hearing so many Bumble Bees on the air! Almost everything was on 20, with one on 15 and a lot of unsuccessful CQs on 10/40. Sean KK9U

N4DLA

This was my first FOBB. 10 and 40 meters were silent at my QTH. Only one Bumble Bee was heard on 15 meters but they didn't hear me. I managed three QSOs on 20 meters using a Ukrainian Army key with my Icom IC-706MKIIG (dialed back to 5 watts output) and a 90 foot

multi-band folded dipole up 40 feet: K0TTW BB63 in Colorado; NK9G BB34 in Wisconsin and AC7A BB25 in Arizona. Signals were weak on 20 meters and several other bumblebees were heard but they didn't hear me. I did enjoy the QSOs I made. Great fists.

AC9HP

KX2 and Eagle One Antenna

AA2AD

Of my 14 or 15 FOBBs, none had better weather or fewer biting bugs. The KX1 works better than the HW-8 and an inverted V dipole on a portable windsock mast works better than a short wire in a tree. One cold 807 light at the top of each hour. All BBs have been a blast, but this was the best! Thanks, KI6SN and 72, Peter, AA2AD

W0UHU

Had a great time. Wire antenna seemed to be pointing to the east as I didn't hear anybody from CA which is unusual. Thanks ARS for organizing this! Doug, W0UHU.

W0ESE

Another great adventure! Wonderful time but hot weather! I put all my gear in a backpack and walked to the park to have the luxury of a covered picnic table. Thanks ARS for sponsoring this event.

K4JAZ

The view of Huntsville from the bluff at the Nature Preserve was great but I forgot to take a picture! I enjoyed my short outing even after church and lunch with the family.

K4UPG

HOT and thunderstorms prediction by the weather-guessers was for lightning, wind and rain starting around 2:15 PM EDT, so I set up a very easy EFHW as inverted vee with a peak at about 15 feet so I could take things down quickly. Rig was HB1B with a NMOS Hi-Per-Mite CW filter and a homebrew EFHW tuner. As it turned out, the storms held off until about 4:45 PM. I was getting lightning alerts on my phone lightning app that strikes were within 10 miles at 4:00PM so went QRT and packed up. Lake Fredrica is a 66 acre lake and our housing development has a private lakeside park with nice tall pine trees for hanging wire. I normally get my segmented dipole up at 45-48 feet but takes too much time to get it down and packed when the lightning is rolling in on us. Band conditions were good and I was getting good RST on the stations I could get a response from. Even got 2 599 reports when the band seemed to peak. Shortly afterward, the band seemed to drop out. Contacts were mostly the Great Lakes area and not my normal east coast and midwest area. Partly due to antenna orientation and NVIS limits I suppose. But it was a fun time and I was grateful to get a solid 3 hours of fun during our peak thunderstorm season. Best signal was N0SS in MO booming in a 599 and Rick NK9G in WI who is always good strong contact during these QRP contest times! Look forward to FOBB 2024! Thanks, KI6SN, for keeping things rolling!

ADØYM

I only had an hour to travel and set up Sunday morning, so I opted for convenience. Fortunately, afternoon temperatures were lower than earlier in the week, though it still was hot enough in the open field used for my operation. All but two of my QSOs came from the East. 72, Mike - ADOYM

NØSS

It was great having Bill Gerth, W4RK, as my cohort, in-person and at the key, following a three-year hiatus due to Covid and health issues. After picking him up at 1400Z, we arrived in historic Westphalia, Missouri, at 1430Z, grabbed a couple of sandwiches at a local market, and were set up and checking the bands by 1545Z. At 1615Z we were devouring the sandwiches and counting down the minutes until zero-hour at 1700Z. Pictures show a similar system as in previous years: 40-10 meter OCFD; 40-foot fiberglass mast; drive-on mount; KX3, and a Bioenno 12v - 3Ah Lithium Iron Phosphate battery. The first two hours we used Bill's Palm Micro attached to his KX3, but the last two hours we used my 9A5N Solid State paddle from Croatia. Bill's comment, "I absolutely love this thing," necessitated my keeping an eye on it during packing. Our operating site is not the best for radiating electro-magnetic current as the town literally sits in a bowl. You enter the village by descending a hill from the north and you exit by ascending a hill to the south. But the site is on private property with lots of antenna room and ... it has air-conditioned restrooms! Old men (85 and 78) need accommodations. HF propagation in the Midwest may have mirrored other parts of the country. We gave out a few 599 reports, received about as many, but most were 559 with notable QSB at times. All of our contacts were on 20 meters. We called a couple of stations on 15, but they immediately faded. 10 was dead and 40 was beset with a hitherto unheard S9-plus interference from somewhere which completely ruled that band out. Perhaps an electric fence was put up last year. Will have to investigate before next month's Skeeter Hunt. We made a total of 56 contacts, 37 of which were Bumble Bees. This gave us a score of 6,216 (37 x 3 x 56). A surprising 34percent of our contacts were non-BBs this year which I suspect would otherwise have been "in-the-field Bumble Bees" were it not for the nation-wide heatwave. These home-stations dutifully gave out 5W and 10W numbers, so we dutifully counted them as non-Bumble Bee contacts. Many thanks (yet again) to KI6SN for sponsoring FOBB. Much appreciated. 72/73, Kent Trimble, K9ZTV Bill Gerth, W4RK.

N5GW

It was hot & humid but I had a small fan going under a big oak tree & a light breeze. 20M was the main band, but I was able to make several contacts on 15M.

KD2GUT

Dialing my Yaesu FT-891 down to 5w for the first time and setting up a "hybrid" vertical antenna using a Buddipole/Hamstick combo with counterpoise, I made my debut as a QRP operator on 20m. Normally I activate POTA sites using 40m. The greatest revelation is that yes, you can get a 5 9 9 between New York and Michigan while running 5w. Who knew? The only dicey moment for me came when, sitting underneath the comfort of a canopy of trees, I was buzzed at high speed by an actual bumblebee! Fortunately, there was no contact (I'm allergic, so that's good);

but unfortunately, since there WAS no contact, I could not log him. Our property, which is about 3/4 of an acre in suburban New York, is not professionally landscaped. We have done plantings ourselves to accommodate the bees, butterflies, birds and especially the squirrels, and it is considered a "wildlife habitat" by the National Wildlife Federation. We are very proud of the fact that it is a safe home for its residents and a haven of peace for us. Not to mention a GREAT site for "backyard portable," as I now know!

N9EP

Propagation was not great but this was a fun event. Thanks for running it! 73,
Ed N9EP

N2TNN

The weather cooperated and the Fort Nonesense, VA location was shaded plus no bugs. Several club members stopped in to provide moral support and enjoy the event. The bands were crowded but being portable just puts more fun into it! Dean N2TNN

AG7CC

The weather and location were great, but I had a high noise level. Not sure if it was just the band conditions or RFI. But it was fun!

AG8YT

20-meter band conditions seemed surprisingly good. It was great to hear and work so many Bumblebees.

WVØH

2023 FOBB landed while on vacation to the west coast. From a rental house on Heceta Beach in Florence, Oregon I set up my newly acquired MTR-5B from NK6A, Don and a 66' No. 28 Teflon end-fed wire off the west-facing balcony. I used a 32 foot fishing pole lashed to the deck railing to support the wire in the middle.

NX1K

Used KX2 transceiver and SOTABEAMS linked dipole on 20 and 40 meters. Set up in the field next to the Turners Falls, MA airport. I had a few curious visitors who thought what I was doing was "pretty neat." Nice cool (75) weather with low humidity and clear skies in sharp contrast to the week before. 20 meters was in and out here. For example, at times NK9G (800 miles due West) was S2, other times he was S7. 40 meter activity was low until the last 1-1/2 hour. Nice to work some familiar calls and plenty of new ones for me.

WD8RIF

I operated bicycle-portable (pulling a dog trailer containing two small dogs) at the ruins of Neale House on Blennerhassett Island in West Virginia. I used an Elecraft KX2 and a Tuffeln 35' EFRW antenna with two 17' counterpoise wires. Band conditions were rough, with deep QSB. At one point, I was completing a QSO when 20m briefly opened up and I could

hear at least three other stations running the same frequency! The (terrestrial) weather wasn't as forecast, with the temperature approaching 90F instead of the expected 84F, but the dogs and I were OK in the shade. All the stations I worked were participating in FoBB, and had either a Bumblebee Number or reported running 5 watts. Despite the poor radio conditions and the hot weather, I had a great time and look forward to next year.

AC7A

The weather was a concern for my FOBB due to both the excess heat and the summer monsoon storms here in southern Arizona. I decided to operate from a natural park setting at a Pima County park, near the base of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Because of the likelihood of very high temperatures occurring during the FOBB I realistically pre-planned to operate just the first two hours of it. The park I chose to operate from is a large natural area that has one remote picnic area that is seldom used in the summer months. It's a pretty good walk from the parking area to the far end of that picnic area where there is a large, old Mesquite tree that makes for a decent operating site. Once the gear had been transported to the site I unpacked it first, and then set up my homemade, 12' tall, center-loaded vertical. The antenna is similar to the one designed by AD5X. It is lightweight and breaks down to a small size. Mine uses plug-in coils and capacitors to make it resonant on 40 through 15 meters. I brought my K1 CW transceiver, a 12-V 6-Ahr LiFePO4 battery, a Palm paddle and some lightweight headphones as the field equipment. Logging was done with paper and pencil because that is all that is necessary for the FOBB. The park temperature at 1700 UTC, the start of the FOBB, was in the low 90s. It was quite humid by Arizona standards stemming from the rain we had the previous evening. The Mesquite tree provided some shade, but I had brought a large golf umbrella along to provide even more shade. I simply laid it on its side on the table and secured it with some rope. It worked well keeping me and the equipment well shaded. I made 15 contacts starting at 1700 UTC and ending at 1901 UTC. Eight were on 20 meters and the other seven on 15 meters; 13 were FOBB stations signing /BB. I had listened on 40m during that time, but didn't hear any FOBB stations. That's not too surprising out here in the west. It was already about 100 degrees at 1900 UTC and adhering to my 2-hour operating plan I shut down my operation. I still had to take the antenna apart and pack all the items and get them back to the car. That went quickly and I was back home in the AC by 17:50 UTC. I had a nice time operating the 2023 FOBB. Conditions were good overall. It is a good reason for me to get outside and operate portable even when the weather is less than ideal!

WD4CFN

We had rain coming, so I only had about 20 minutes of hunting bumblebee stations after activating the SOTA summit. Even though it was a short time, it was still fun.

AB9CA

First, and importantly, the weather cooperated. Temp stayed in the low 80s with light winds. Much better than a couple of days earlier when it was 93 and windy. The setup was my K1 to a 56' Inv V, peak at 37'. Had battery troubles early. That battery had always been reliable. Fortunately I had brought a spare battery. Also had to reprogram the keyer. Time lost. It started off well - first hour gave me 17 Q's. But, as always, things get slower after that. Still a fair

amount of activity. Logged 24 on 20 and 10 on 40. Went to 15 a time or two but no one home. I had made a point of getting to the site early as that is a popular site and often taken. Since I had some spare time I chased POTA activations until time for FoBB. Then, after FoBB, I ran an activation from the park. Ended the day with a total of 101 in the log (34 FoBB, 67 POTA). All at 5w. I think that is my best QRP POTA activation of all time.

KD3FG

I haven't participated in FOBB in many years and was looking forward to this year. However, due to family obligations, I was only able to play for the last 30 minutes. I managed to work 3 Bumble Bees (N5GW, NX1K, & N3AQC) from the home shack at 5 watts. I'll try again next year!

AG4P

Have me and my fellow hams been doing this for about 20 years? Time flies when you're having fun.

W7IY

I tried starting early by operating from Nags Head, NC. However, that didn't help my score. So I tried again on the right weekend, starting at 1:00 EDT at a local park. The park was empty and I had a small pavilion all to myself. The afternoon was beautiful with temps in the mid-80's, cloudless sky, slight breeze and shade. There was a row of trees in the right spot, so I set up a random end-fed wire supported on one end by a tree and the middle by a 25' fiberglass pole. The counterpoise was about 20' elevated 3-4 feet above the ground. The KX3 tuned the wire OK, but conditions on 20M were not very good for me. Most of the signals were weak. Just as I was getting in the groove, a group of thirty people showed up including husbands, wives and bunches of children. They took over the pavilion and it was clear I needed to end operations. My last QSO was with K4BAI, who I met a couple years ago at Xenia. John is a great operator and his signal was strong as usual, which I could hear over the raucous. Thanks for the Q's and I'll try again next time! Stu W7IY BB No. 10.

N4KGL

My rig was the Icom 705. My antenna was a SOTAbears Band Hopper link dipole. Tom WD0HBR was my copilot. We enjoyed the event. 72, Greg N4KGL

K4AKC

Twenty meters was working well in Alabama, so I chose to stay on 20 meters. My antenna was an End-Fed Zepp vertical hung from a tree limb at about 45 feet. It was matched by a 1/4 wavelength section of window line. No ground, no counterpoise. My most distant contact was with KK4ITX in Maine. A little over 1000 miles. Or maybe it was VE3EDX in Ontario with my Argonaut 516. I worked 13 states and one DX. Fun Fun Fun! Thanks, Tom K4AKC

AG7TX

I had a blast although it was slim pickin's. The Girl (my dog) and I had a great hike, it was cool, the pines were lovely, and made some contacts. The contacts also count for a park activation. I pushed the log last night. Best, David AG7TX

KØEMT

sed an N0SA design paddle from cwmorse.us. Used solar to keep the 3Ah LiFePO4 battery topped off. Sweat bees got the word that it was FOBB. They were out in full force. I knew it was going to be a hot one. It was pushing against my "no go, it's too hot" temp. To provide some shade, I set up a tarp. I took out a liter of water in a CamelBak Chug along with a 2 liter hydration pack. Post event check revealed that I downed 2 liters of water during the event. Got a bit of a late start. So, I missed that critical first hour. Primarily called CQ. Only a bit of S&P. Thanks, ARS, for sponsoring this event. 72, Bryan, K0EMT

WG8Y

I set up at Dunn's Mountain park again this year. I was 45 minutes late getting started. Murphy made me forget to put my string in my pack to hoist my 44 ft end fed in a tree. Was gonna just throw it up but one of the guys that worked there had some tent string that got the end fed up a bit higher than me just throwing the wire. I used my FT-817ND with a 44 ft. end fed with a homebrew 9-1 unun. Used a 16 ft crappie pole to get the unun up about 12 feet up. I started off working a strong POTA station then a couple B's. Called cq and worked a couple more then had a strong GA station wanting to know what CQ "BB" was for. A short Rag chew followed and a strong 599 report and he was in the log. Worked a few more BB's, 2 SOTA guys and my Brother N8DPD, in Ohio who was at 5W and finished with AC7A in AZ on 15M, Cool. Then after only 40 minutes of op time a storm was rolling up the hill. Had to take things down in a hurry. Not much of a score but that's ok. I had fun. Gave the park guy back his tent string and told him I'd see him at the end of August for the skeeter Hunt. I had to explain that too. Hi Hi. 72 from NC, Mark WG8Y

