



# TALES FROM THE SWAMP

November 2017

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## **From your President:**

Greetings again fellow Swamp Foxes! The fall/winter contesting season has begun, it is time to get those stations on the air and start having fun! The bands were pretty crowded but between the huge pileups and sub-par band conditions, it wasn't easy to make contacts.

We had a pretty good turnout from our members again this year in the CQWW SSB. The club submitted an aggregate score of 731,642 which is up from last year's score of 543,722 points, great job guys!

Make sure to mark your calendars, two big contests coming up this month, [ARRL sweepstakes](#) is Nov. 18 and right after that is the [CQ WW DX Contest](#) is Nov 25<sup>th</sup>.

Just something to keep in mind, Dave WN4AFP mentioned to me that the SCQP committee is looking for sponsoring clubs. I think that the SFCG would be a great promoter for the yearly event and I would like to propose to our members that we put this up for discussion. At the moment, the SCQP committee is busy ironing out the details for this year's competition so right now information is limited. Dave will keep us up to date as details of the SCQP are finalized.

As some of you might remember, Dave NJ4F and Kevan N4XL put together a really nice contesting presentation a couple of years ago. The SFCG advertised a contesting class and had two very successful classes which were held at the Red Cross building In North Charleston. Dave NJ4F has advised me that we can make arrangements for another class put together if there is sufficient interest.

In the meantime, I would like to share something that I saw on the CQ Contest mailing list that I thought was pretty interesting. Anthony K8ZT shared his [contesting presentation](#) from the 2017 ARRL Great Lakes Division Convention. It is not very long but it has quite a bit of information that would be useful to the radio amateur who enjoys contesting so check it out!

This past weekend I went with Dave NJ4F to the Myrtle Beach Hamfest. This was my very first time going to this event and despite its small size; I found it to be very enjoyable. The folks up there were very pleasant and helpful. The prices on the used equipment,

antennas, and all the various odds and ends that you might need (or don't need) for the ham shack were very reasonable.

As representatives for the SFCG, Dave and I got some good exposure for the club. I got to hand out a few club flyers and met some interesting people. We were seated right across from the ARRL table, as Dave was fulfilling his official ARRL QSL card checker capacity. One of the folks that we met was one of our newest members, Al NE4EA. It was really great to be able to meet Al face to face and we got to have a good chat.

We also saw both the Director of the ARRL Roanoke Division Dr. Jim Boehner and the SC Section Manager N4UFP Marc Tarplee. Both Dave and I got to talk with Mark about the club and he took some of our flyers to hand out at the various events that he attends. The Myrtle Beach hamfest was a small event compared to others but very enjoyable, I would recommend going and plan on doing so myself in the future!

### **Brag List:**

Dave WN4AFP bragged about topping K4BAI in a contest. We all know that John is like the ultimate warrior when it comes to weekend contesting. Does this make Dave fair game for self-bragging?

## **Member Contributions:**

### **DX Cluster Filters**

Kevan Nason, N4XL

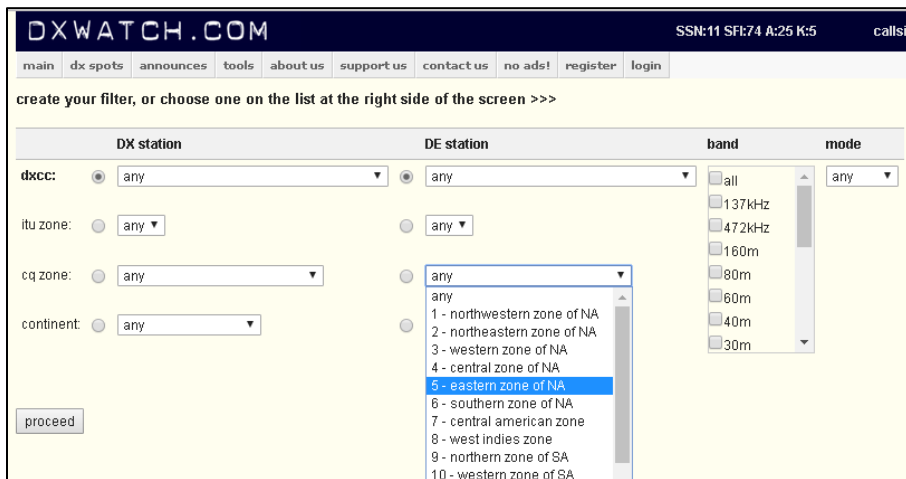
The excitement in the voice of a ham just discovering HF Dxing when they first learn about DX Clusters is wonderful to hear. These Clusters are useful because hams around the world “spot” DX stations using the Internet so other hams can more easily find a new DX station to work. “Spotting” means posting the DX stations call sign, frequency, and other useful information making it fairly simple to find that new country you need for your DXCC award.

Some of us old timers think that is destroying or dumbing down Ham Radio by making it too easy to find the DX. An operator doesn't need a deep understanding of propagation to know when and on what band to expect DX anymore. All you do is check the computer and see who is active and where they are at. Others of us embrace the new technology and put it in our bucket of tools to use for award chasing or contesting.

But even though the Cluster does make it easier, you still need a basic understanding of radio propagation to effectively use it. Too often I hear that earlier excitement turn to disappointment. People say they tune their radio to the frequency and can't hear the DX. Or they can hear them, but they are weak and never answer their call. They become frustrated with chasing DX. In many cases the problem

occurs because by default the Cluster shows spots from everywhere in the world. If you checked you might find that BY1 or KH3 call you want to work was spotted by a Japanese station and propagation from the DX to the United States just isn't happening. No wonder you can't work those spots!

The first thing us old timers say is if you can't work the spots on the cluster then turn your VFO and find them on your own. There isn't a better way to learn and enjoy radio then to find things on your own. But there is another thing you can do. Most Clusters have a filter to increase your chances of working a spotted station. [DXWatch](#) for example lets you choose to only show spots FROM stations in the Eastern United States. You have a much better chance of working that DX spot if others in your part of the world are already working them.



## **Other News:**

Thomas AJ4Q tells us that he has been busy doing VE sessions and bringing new hams into the hobby. There were two test sessions, a standard and then a general class. He reported that 75% of the upgrade students passed their tests.

Tom W1TEF reminded the club about this year's School Club Roundup. Congratulations to both Schofield Middle School whose preliminary scores ranked # 1 with a score of 408,444 and Palmetto Scholars Academy came in 7<sup>th</sup> with 974 points in the Middle/Intermed/JR High School - W/VE category.

Frank KG4IGC informed the club that [CQWW Raw Scores SSB](#) has been posted.

Kevan N4XL bought himself a gaming keyboard and started a lively conversation about its uses and advantages. Some of the features are ergonomics, backlit keys, and the ability to program the keys for functions in N1MM+ and other logging programs.

Kevan has been having some problems with his yagi spinning around on his tower after the recent hurricane. He is currently working on getting that problem repaired.

Robert AJ5E asked if it was possible to use N1MM+'s voice keying feature with his rig or would he need a dedicated voice keyer. It was


determined that he could use this feature by making some .wav files for this purpose. After creating the .wav files he could then use a program like Audacity to trim the blank spaces at the beginning and end of the voice files.

This way you do not have dead air before the recording plays after hitting the function key. The same applies at the end so that the answering station does not reply before your rig goes back to receive. Kevan also recommended not using N1MM+ to do serial numbers; those are better served using your own voice.

Dave WN4AFP has moved up in the world, he now sports a new 40 meter aluminum wire dipole @ 28'.

Kevan N4XL reminded the group about audio recordings in the CQWW contests. Frank KG4IGC asked how the typical ham with a modest station could do this and Kevan gave us a couple of good links explaining how to accomplish this. One of the programs that many hams are using is called [qsorder](#). It is a plug-in for N1MM+ and QSO audio recording. Here are some of its features:

- saves n1mm logger QSO audio to disk
- MP3 support (via LAME)
- tunable audio buffer size and delay
- SO2R and Multi/Multi support
- Integrated with N1MM Log - "Play Contact" shortcut
- Continuous recording mode

- Online QSO sharing at <http://qsorder-k3it.rhcloud.com/> 

There was also a discussion about it in the [CQ-contesting archives](#) about a year ago that you can refer too but you will have to do a search for the discussion.

There was a good discussion about contest preparation. First and foremost...READ THE RULES! Knowing a bit about propagation and when the bands are open to certain parts of the world is always helpful as well. Here in the Low-Country on a good night EU, the Middle East and AF are usually plentiful in the evenings on 20 and 40 meters. 15 meters is good for EU and SA during the day and JA and VK's are usually found in the early mornings although I have heard them in the late afternoon.

Kevan N4XL brought up some good information about how to improve your contest rates. Some of his suggestions included looking at 3830scores, keeping focused on your rates, if they go down try something new, change bands, run, S&P, and changing your spotting network to find new spots if you are using one.

Hans WU0B let us know that he is working on his 5BDXCC.

Bill N4IQ spent some time away for a few weeks but is now at home and ready to get back to his normal operating schedule.

Robert AJ5E is considering putting up an 80 loop at his QTH.



Frank KG4IGC ran into high SWR problems in the CQWW SSB contest. He has the problem narrowed down to what he suspects is a bad solder joint in either his MFJ-969 tuner or his MFJ 4746 switchbox. He is leaning toward the switchbox as he has had to have that serviced by MFJ for another issue in the past. Frank is also looking to rethink a few of his wire antennas when the leaves fall off of the trees.

Gil KS4YX reported that Murphy stopped by his QTH as well. Seems like he sure is making his rounds! Poor Gil...he decided to install a left-over hard drive in his desktop computer. Everything was going good until he decided to erase the old drive and use it for back-up. You probably know what happens next, as I am sure it has happened to the best of us hihi...Gil formatted the wrong hard drive! It all worked out in the end though, Gil got a nice refresher course on how to do a clean install of Windows 10.....

Dave WN4AFP informed the club that the ARRL will be doing another year long contest similar to NPOTA. This time they will be hunting grid squares, so prepare for the bands to be very busy with some massive pileups!!

Thomas AJ4UQ has been having a problem with a high noise floor at his QTH. He reports that he has replaced his feedline RG8X mini with RG8 Super (RG-213 type) but still is having a problem with the high noise floor. He also tells us that the ARRL has posted scores for Field Day, School Club Roundup, and June VHF contests.

## **Notable Mentions:**

The Swamp Fox Contest Group would like to welcome back Kevan Nason N4XL to the club. Keven is a very competitive contester and an excellent Elmer. We are very pleased to have Kevan back on our team and look forward his contributions to the club.

## **Contests:**

### **RTTY Macrothon Contest**

K7OM 760,492

KG4IGC 618,858

### **Pennsylvania QSO Party**

WN4AFP SO QRP 34,452

### **New York QSO Party**

WN4AFP SO Mixed QRP 1,720

### **Illinois QSO Party**

WN4AFP Fixed LP 16,278

W4SLT Fixed HP 6,480

## **JARTS WW RTTY**

K7OM SO HP 115,400

## **ARRL Sweepstakes CW**

N4IQ SO2R Unlimited HP 122,310

NI7R SO Unlimited HP 66,720

## **WAE RTTY**

K7OM SO HP 133,560

KG4IGC SO LP 2,240

KS4YX SO QRP 1,554

## **Kentucky QSO Party**

WN4AFP Out of state QRP 144

## **NA Sprint SSB**

N4IQ SO2R HP 4,797

WU0B SO LP 88

KCOMCK

## CQWW SSB Contest

NE4EA SOAB HP 106,652

K7OM SOAB HP 59,059

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KG4IGC SOAB LP 127,264

N4XL SOAB (A) LP 281,940

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WU0B SOAB (A) LP 95,407

WN4AFP SOAB classic LP 47,280

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AJ5E SOAB classic LP 3,960

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W4SLT SOSB/10 HP 10,080

## SFOTA:

### OVERALL STANDINGS

	CALL	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1)	N4IQ	11012	276	3940	15228
2)	WN4AFP	3584	1420	222	5226
3)	KG4IGC	1112	582	1776	3470
4)	KS4YX	670	145	1684	2499
5)	NJ4F	691	0	1728	2419
6)	K7OM	840	252	1311	2403
7)	NI7R	1459	0	289	1748

8)	N4VZ	0	77	1349	1426
9)	W4SLT	0	1415	0	1415
10)	AJ5E	0	182	732	914
11)	WU0B	0	482	192	674
12)	NE4EA	294	0	0	294
13)	AJ4UQ	7	0	241	248

### INDIVIDUAL MODE STANDINGS

CALL	CW QSO'S	CALL	SSB QSO'S	CALL	DIGITAL QSO'S
N4IQ	11012	WN4AFP	1420	N4IQ	3940
WN4AFP	3584	W4SLT	1415	KG4IGC	1776
NI7R	1459	KG4IGC	582	NJ4F	1728
KG4IGC	1112	WU0B	482	KS4YX	1684
K7OM	840	N4IQ	276	N4VZ	1349
NJ4F	691	K7OM	252	K7OM	1311
KS4YX	670	AJ5E	182	AJ5E	732
NE4EA	294	KS4YX	145	NI7R	289
AJ4UQ	7	N4VZ	77	AJ4UQ	241
				WN4AFP	222
				WU0B	192

## Upcoming Contests

### HF CONTESTS

[CWops Mini-CWT Test](#), Nov 15, 1300z to Nov 15, 1400z, Nov 15, 1900z to Nov 15, 2000z, Nov 16, 0300z to Nov 16, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Member: Name + Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: November 18.

[NAQCC CW Sprint](#), Nov 16, 0130z to Nov 16, 0330z; CW; Bands: 80, 40, 20m; RST + (state/province/country) + (NAQCC No./power); Logs due: November 20.

[NCCC RTTY Sprint](#), Nov 17, 0145z to Nov 17, 0215z; RTTY; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: November 19.

[ORP Fox Hunt](#), Nov 17, 0200z to Nov 17, 0330z; CW; Bands: 80m Only; RST + (state/province/country) + name + power output; Logs due: November 23.

[NCCC Sprint](#), Nov 17, 0230z to Nov 17, 0300z; CW; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name +

QTH; Logs due: November 19.

[YO International PSK31 Contest](#), Nov 17, 1600z to Nov 17, 2200z; PSK31; Bands: 80m Only; YO: RST + Serial No. + County, non-YO: RST + Serial No. + Country; Logs due: December 2.

[SARL Field Day Contest](#), Nov 18, 1000z to Nov 19, 1000z; CW, SSB, Digital; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RS(T) + Number of transmitters + Category (see rules) + Province (or "DX"); Logs due: see rules.

[LZ DX Contest](#), Nov 18, 1200z to Nov 19, 1200z; CW, SSB; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; LZ: RS(T) + 2-letter district, non-LZ: RS(T) + ITU Zone No.; Logs due: December 4.

[All Austrian 160-Meter Contest](#), Nov 18, 1600z to Nov 19, 0700z; CW; Bands: 160m Only; OE: RST + Serial No. + District Code, non-OE: RST + Serial No.; Logs due: December 31.

[REF 160-Meter Contest](#), Nov 18, 1700z to Nov 19, 0100z; CW; Bands: 160m Only; RST + Serial No. + Department Code; Logs due: December 3.

[Feld Hell Sprint](#), Nov 18, 1900z to Nov 18, 2059z; Feld Hell; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, **6m**; (see rules); Logs due: November 22.

[RSGB 2nd 1.8 MHz Contest, CW](#), Nov 18, 1900z to Nov 18, 2300z; CW; Bands: 160m Only; UK: RST + Serial No. + District Code, non-UK: RST + Serial No.; Logs due: November 19.

[ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB](#), **Nov 18, 2100z to Nov 20, 0300z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Serial No. + Precedence (Q/A/B/U/M/S) + [your call sign] + Check + ARRL/RAC Section; Logs due: November 25.**

[Homebrew and Oldtime Equipment Party](#), Nov 19, 1300z to Nov 19, 1500z (40m), Nov 19, 1500z to Nov 19, 1700z (80m); CW; Bands: 80, 40m; RST + Serial No. + "/" + class; Logs due: December 21.

[Run for the Bacon QRP Contest](#), Nov 20, 0200z to Nov 20, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RST + (state/province/country) + (Member No./power); Logs due: November 26.

[SKCC Sprint](#), Nov 22, 0000z to Nov 22, 0200z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RST + (state/province/country) + Name + (SKCC No./power); Logs due: November 24.

[QRP Fox Hunt](#), Nov 22, 0200z to Nov 22, 0330z; CW; Bands: 80m Only; RST + (state/province/country) + name + power output; Logs due: November 23.

[Phone Fray](#), Nov 22, 0230z to Nov 22, 0300z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15m; NA: Name + (state/province/country), non-NA: Name; Logs due: November 24.

[CWops Mini-CWT Test](#), Nov 22, 1300z to Nov 22, 1400z, Nov 22, 1900z to Nov 22, 2000z, Nov 23, 0300z to Nov 23, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Member: Name +

Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: November 25.

[RSGB 80m Autumn Series, SSB](#), Nov 22, 2000z to Nov 22, 2130z; SSB; Bands: 80m Only; [other station's call] + [your call] + [serial no.] + [your name]; Logs due: November 23.

[NCCC RTTY Sprint](#), Nov 24, 0145z to Nov 24, 0215z; RTTY; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: November 26.

[NCCC Sprint](#), Nov 24, 0230z to Nov 24, 0300z; CW; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: November 26.

[CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW](#), Nov 25, 0000z to Nov 27, 0000z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RST + CQ Zone No.; Logs due: December 1.

[QRP Fox Hunt](#), Nov 29, 0200z to Nov 29, 0330z; CW; Bands: 80m Only; RST + (state/province/country) + name + power output; Logs due: November 30.

[Phone Fray](#), Nov 29, 0230z to Nov 29, 0300z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15m; NA: Name + (state/province/country), non-NA: Name; Logs due: December 1.

[CWops Mini-CWT Test](#), Nov 29, 1300z to Nov 29, 1400z, Nov 29, 1900z to Nov 29, 2000z, Nov 30, 0300z to Nov 30, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Member: Name + Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: December 2.

[UKEICC 80m Contest](#), Nov 29, 2000z to Nov 29, 2100z; CW; Bands: 80m Only; 4-Character grid square; Logs due: November 29.

## **VHF+ CONTESTS**

See Feld Hell Sprint, above.