TALES FROM THE SWAMP

April 2018

Author: Frank KG4IGC

From your President:

Greeting fellow Swamp foxes! I want to start out by reminding everyone that the SFCG and the Dutch Fork ARC are sponsoring a competitive Contesting Class Saturday April 14, 2018. The Dutch Fork Amateur Radio Group is opening their great clubhouse for the class. They are located just a few minutes from I-26 at 234 Depot Street, Little Mountain, South Carolina 29075. Kevan N4XL will be presenting the class which starts at 8:30 AM and is expected to last about 5 hours and an additional 90-minute break for lunch. We should be done by 3:00. If you plan to attend, please email Kevan N4XL and let him know that you will be plan on coming.

Things have been a little rough at your club Presidents QTH for the past couple of months. As you all know, I have had some major

computer problems that pretty much crippled my station. I have been working diligently with my father, a retired computer technician to get my machine back up and running.

It was a long and tedious process, but things are finally looking up. Not only do I have my main PC back, my XYL Sarah KG4NKG saw fit to buy me another I7 machine to use as a backup. This particular PC will eventually become a print server for my network, and also control point #2 for another rig. (Gee, who saw that coming?)

Now comes the long process of installing software and setting things back up which as most of you know, can be a real headache. Fortunately, I had the good sense to make backups of all my files on my computer. I put them all on a USB stick and multiple CD's. It was a good thing that I did because somehow my dad lost _all_ my files that were on a 2nd hard drive that he was using to back up everything.

I have always been one of those who figured that in the event of a catastrophic failure, that I would be able to get things running again quickly. I have always kept backups of things like my logbook, documents, & pictures but never have had an actual backup of my hard drive and operating system (go figure). I know, that was not the smartest thing that I have ever done. Today, that all changes; I will be ordering a couple of hard drives just for backing everything up.

Before I took the machine to get worked on, I started thinking about the setup process when it comes to ham radio programs. In the past, I have found that it is not so easy to remember all your settings. It can be really aggravating sometimes to get ham radio programs set up and running correctly. This is especially true if you run multiple pieces of software. I use several programs for my ham radio activities, so remembering those settings can be challenging.

I decided that it would be beneficial to take screen shots of all my settings in every program on my desktop. I went through every single program, ham radio related or not and took screenshots of every single tab in every program. Some of these programs have multiple layers of tabs. One such program is FLdigi, that program took about an hour to capture shots of the tabs and save each one as a jpeg. I would have never guessed that a program could be so complicated with so many settings.

All my work is paying off though, I now have a very good reference to get my software back up and running. When I finally do get both machines set up, I plan on taking those screenshots and printing them, so I can have them as a reference. When they are printed, I am going to put them in a binder and make a handy reference guide. I plan on doing this for every am program that I use. Why have I not done this in the past? I'll tell you why: overconfidence.

You would think that after years of using the same software that it would be easy to set back up. Well, I am slowly finding out that my aging mind is becoming very forgetful. I am glad that I made the screen shots because I tried setting up N1MM and realized that I had forgotten how to get certain things to work. Another fine example is Log4OM.

I got really frustrated with trying to set up Log4OM the first time, and had to recruit the help of a pro, Bill N4IQ. This time, it will be much easier, thanks to my screenshots. Lesson learned? ALWAYS have a rescue disk and backups of your hard drive. If you can make a reference guide for your ham related software to help you with setup trust me, it will be worth your wild to do so. As I said, I have a lot of programs to set up and that is going to take some time. I hope to have

things back up and running in the next week or two, and very much look forward to getting back on the air. Thanks so much to all of you for your support and suggestions, it is greatly appreciated.

Brag List:

WN4AFP Certificate, 2017 Delaware QSO Party 1st Place USA

WN4AFP Bottle of maple syrup from the 2017 Vermont QSO Party

W4SLT   Certificate, 2017 ARRL DX Contest 1st Place SC Section
                SOSB/20 39,951 points 8th place US & Canada

W4SLT   Certificate, 2017 California QSO Party SOHP 11,476 points
                #1 SC #37 USA

W4SLT   Certificate 2017 Missouri QSO Party 2nd Place, SC

NI7R   Certificate, 2017 ARRL DX Contest, CW 1st Place SC Section
                SOULP 152,028 points

KG4IGC Certificate, 2017 New England QSO Party SOLP 2nd place SC

KG4IGC Certificate, 2017 Missouri QSO Party 1st Place SC

Field Day 2018

Field day is fast approaching, the dates this year are June 23-24. If anyone is interested in putting together a group of guys in to operate in the low country, please contact Frank KG4IGC. If there is

enough interest, we can make some arrangements and put WW4SF on the air. I have a Yaesu FT-847, a marine battery, and an antenna that we can use. Information about the ARRL Field Day event can be found *here*.

Member Contributions:

K1AR's Contesting Tips
By Kevan Nason, N4XL

For many years K1AR published some short contest tips. They are excellent. Google them on the internet. To wet your appetite, here are a few:

04 I'm sure you recall the technique entered during a contest when you are "looking for multipliers?" As you tune up and down the bands, don't forget to call ANY needed station -- even if he's not a new multiplier. Maybe I'm the only guy who does this (although I doubt it), but it is easy to get into multiplier mode and skip calling the easily workable stations. The extra effort could mean an additional 20-30 QSOs in your log!

07 Does the physical size of your QTH limit you from erecting 500+ foot beverages? I have discovered that there are times when existing antennas can enhance receiving quality on 80 and 160 Meters. For

example, try using your 40 meter antenna on 80 or 160 as a receive array. If stations are loud enough, improved signal-to-noise ratios can more than compensate for reduced signal strength levels and heighten your ability to copy low-band signals - - without a beverage!

11 Maybe this is an idea that David Letterman (U.S. TV talk show host) stole from me. For years, before every contest, I compile a "Top-10" list of strategies/events that I executed well and those that needed improvement based on the previous year's contest. What's different is that I have begun saving them, compiling a multi-year set of lists. The "well-executed" list can be a source of encouragement, while the areas needing improvement gives you something to shoot for each time you operate. This technique can only improve your score.

20 One of contesting's most difficult strategic decisions is to know when to stop calling a station in a pileup that you cannot work. Fortunately, most modern logging programs tell you specifically how many QSOs a new multiplier is worth. In the future, if your goal is to achieve the highest score possible, try to avoid wasted time calling an unworkable multiplier: a) for that 40th Zone, b) to obtain a clean sweep in the ARRL SS, c) out of sheer stubbornness that may make a nice contest QSO but a lower final score!

43 OK, not everyone has the circumstances that allow for 3 towers with stacked yagi's on all bands at your station. There are more reasonable things that any contest station owner can do that don't require megabucks. And, with the contest season rapidly

approaching, now is the time to implement! Consider your station from an antenna switching, external noise filtering, band changing perspective. Pay attention to some of the construction/configuration ideas being promoted in sources such as CQ Contest, the NCJ, or the Contest Reflector. There are literally dozens of low-cost improvements that you can make to your station that will improve your scores. Be aggressive; check 'em out!

64 As I've been doing some recent maintenance work lately. I learned an old lesson yet again: label the cables. So much of success in contesting can be controlled by preparation that has nothing to do with the actual process of operating. Nothing is more frustrating than experiencing a malfunction during a contest and spending more time deciphering your cabling scheme than actually fixing the problem and getting back on the air. Remember, your contest score will only increase when you're transmitting and not debugging. Take the time to anticipate malfunctions by clearly labeling everything in your shack. You'll thank yourself later!

Contests:

Virginia QSO Party

WN4AFP   SOAB/Mixed Fixed QRP   6,336

BARTG RTTY Contest

K7OM   SO EXPERT HP   164,164

N4IQ   SOAB HP   68,444

NJ4F	SOAB HP	14,990
KM4RK	SOABLP	1,539

Club total: 248,637

CQWW WPQ Contest, SSB

WJ4X (N4XL)	SO(A)AB LP	850,050
WU0B	SO(A)AB LP	154,033
WU0B	SO(A)AB TB-Wires LP	154,033
KG6MC	SOAB HP	416,790
K7OM	SOAB HP	106,740
W4SLT	SOAB HP	100,440
NI7R	SOAB HP	66,171
WN4AFP	SOAB	109,825
WN4AFP	SOAB TB-WIRES LP	109,825
WN4AFP	SOSB40 LP	87,675
WN4AFP	SOSB40 TBWIRES LP	87,675
N4IQ	SOSB40 HP	1,617
N4IQ	SOSB40 TBWIRES HP	1,617

Club Total: 2,246,491

UK/EI DX CW Contest

K7OM	SOAB HP	1,320

Missouri QSO Party

KG4IGC   SOAB LP   1,334

Mississippi QSO Party

WN4AFP   SOAB LP   2,322

Other News:

Kevan N4XL gave us some pointers to use for the CQ WPX SSB contest. He discussed such things like how having a unique call is always a plus. He also reminded us that we should always read the rules before the start of the contest. Lastly, he pointed out that the points are worth more on other continents and on 40/80 meters.

Tom W1TEF posed the question "if I have somebody help me with logging Qs in the WPX, does that put me in the Multi op, Single transmitter category?" Tom AJ4UQ quoted from the rules "all operating and logging functions are performed by one person (the operator)."

Dave WN4AFP started a discussion on using voice keyers in a contest. He recently heard a ham in the WIQP using a voice

keyer to call CQ, but he used a female voice recording to send reports. This proved to be very distracting to some. Dave NJ4F mentioned that he wouldn't be surprised if it would not be long before contests were automated.

Tom W1TEF asked how you would go about correcting a serial number if you used recorded messages. Kevan N4XL gave a good explanation on how ESM (End Sends Message) works within N1MM. You can use it to send the exchange after you put the call sign in the log. If you correct any errors, ESM will automatically resend the corrected report. He also gave some hints on how to create natural sounding wav files to use within N1MM.

Dave NJ4F mentioned how it is becoming a trend for members of Yahoo groups to change over to groups.io.

Dave WN4AFP informed the group that the Vermont QSO Party results were out, and that he had won a bottle of Maple Syrup. BTW, he also won the Delaware QSO Party, and also a plaque from the Ohio QSO Party running QRP! Congratulations Dave!

Dave WB5NHL told us that starting April 1, 2018 Club Log will no longer accept http and will be "redirected" to https this includes requests by API. G7VJR, Michael, requests "Please check to make sure you refer to Club Log as https://clublog.org to avoid problems".

Frank KG4IGC informed the club that the results for the [New England QSO Party](#) had been posted.

Ted K7OM mentioned that the UK/EI DX CW contest must not have much participation. It is not listed on 3830scores.com.

Dave WN4AFP told us that the [WPX Raw scores](#) have been posted.

SFOTA:

Things are really starting to heat up in the SFOTA competition this year Be sure to remember to report your Q's after each contest, no matter if you only made a few contacts or a couple of thousand! Remember, those contacts add up so every Q counts!

Current Leaderboard

2018 OVERALL STANDINGS

	CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1)	N4IQ	52	4556	277	0	2926	7759
2)	K7OM	18	668	596	16	2297	3577
3)	WN4AFP	41	1435	590	0	0	2025
4)	NI7R	8	1023	183	0	584	1790
5)	N4XL	2	380	1037	0	0	1417
6)	NJ4F	7	437	20	0	887	1344
7)	KG4IGC	6	27	665	0	571	1263
8)	WU0B	4	0	800	0	302	1102
9)	KS4YX	4	229	0	0	692	921
10)	KG6MC	2	82	620	0	0	702
11)	W4SLT	5	0	528	0	0	528
12)	NE4EA	5	222	46	0	0	268
13)	AJ4UQ	6	1	132	1	119	253

2018 INDIVIDUAL MODE STANDINGS

CALL	CW QSO'S
N4IQ	4556
WN4AFP	1435
NI7R	1023
K7OM	668
NJ4F	437
N4XL	380
KS4YX	229
NE4EA	222
KG6MC	82
KG4IGC	27
AJ4UQ	1

CALL	SSB QSO'S
N4XL	1037
WU0B	800
KG4IGC	665
KG6MC	620
K7OM	596
WN4AFP	590
W4SLT	528
N4IQ	277
NI7R	183
AJ4UQ	132
NE4EA	46
NJ4F	20

CALL	DIGITAL QSO'S
K7OM	16
AJ4UQ	1

CALL	RTTY QSO'S
N4IQ	2926
K7OM	2297
NJ4F	887
KS4YX	692
NI7R	584
KG4IGC	571
WU0B	302
AJ4UQ	119

Upcoming Contests

NAQCC CW Sprint, Apr 11, 0030z to Apr 11, 0230z; CW; Bands: 80, 40, 20 meters; RST + (state/province/country) + (NAQCC No./power); Logs due: April 14.

Phone Fray, Apr 11, 0230z to Apr 11, 0300z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 meters; NA: Name + (state/province/country), non-NA: Name; Logs due: April 13.

CWops Mini-CWT Test, Apr 11, 1300z to Apr 11, 1400z, Apr 11, 1900z to Apr 11, 2000z, Apr 12, 0300z to Apr 12, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 meters; Member: Name + Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: April 14.

RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB, Apr 11, 1900z to Apr 11, 2030z; SSB; Bands: 80 meters Only; RS + Serial No.; Logs due: April 12.

NCCC RTTY Sprint, Apr 13, 0145z to Apr 13, 0215z; RTTY; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: April 15.

NCCC Sprint, Apr 13, 0230z to Apr 13, 0300z; CW; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: April 15.

QRP ARCI Spring QSO Party, Apr 14, 0000z to Apr 14, 2359z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 meters; RS + (state/province/country) + (ARCI number/power); Logs due: April 28.

JIDX CW Contest, Apr 14, 0700z to Apr 15, 1300z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 meters; JA: RST + Prefecture No., non-JA: RST + CQ Zone No.; Logs due: May 15.

OK/OM DX Contest, SSB, Apr 14, 1200z to Apr 15, 1200z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 meters; OK/OM: RS + 3-letter county code, non-OK/OM: RS + Serial No.; Logs due: April 22.

F9AA Cup, PSK, Apr 14, 1200z to Apr 15, 1200z; PSK; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 2 meters; RST + Serial No.; Logs due: May 15.

New Mexico QSO Party, Apr 14, 1400z to Apr 15, 0200z; CW, Phone, Digital; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6 meters; NM: Name + county, non-NM: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: April 28.

North Dakota QSO Party, Apr 15, 1800z to Apr 16, 1800z; CW, Phone, Digital; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, 2 meters; ND: RS(T) + County, non-ND: RS(T) + (state/province/country); Logs due: May 15.

Georgia QSO Party, Apr 14, 1800z to Apr 15, 0359z, Apr 15, 1400z to Apr 15, 2359z; CW/Digital, Phone; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6 meters; GA: RST + county, non-GA: RST + (state/province/"DX"); Logs due: April 29.

Yuri Gagarin International DX Contest, Apr 14, 2100z to Apr 15, 2100z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, Satellites; RST + ITU Zone No.; Logs due: May 15.

WAB 3.5/7/14 MHz Data Modes, Apr 15, 1200z to Apr 15, 1400z (RTTY), Apr 15, 1400z to Apr 15, 1600z (PSK), Apr 15, 1800z to Apr 15, 2000z (RTTY),

Apr 15, 2000z to Apr 15, 2200z (PSK); RTTY, PSK31; Bands: 80, 40, 20 meters; British Isles: RS + serial no. + WAB square, Other: RS + serial no. + country; Logs due: May 6.

International Vintage Contest HF, Apr 15, 1200z to Apr 15, 1800z; CW, SSB, AM; Bands: 80, 40, 20 meters; RS(T) + 4-character grid square; Logs due: April 25.

Hungarian Straight Key Contest, Apr 15, 1500z to Apr 15, 1700z; CW; Bands: 80 meters Only; RST + Serial No. + Power Code; Logs due: April 30.

ARRL Rookie Roundup, SSB, Apr 15, 1800z to Apr 15, 2359z; SSB; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6 meters; Name + 2-digit year first licensed + (state/province/XE area/DX); Logs due: April 18.

Run for the Bacon QRP Contest, Apr 16, 0100z to Apr 16, 0300z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 meters; RST + (state/province/country) + (Member No./power); Logs due: April 22.

Phone Fray, Apr 18, 0230z to Apr 18, 0300z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 meters; NA: Name + (state/province/country), non-NA: Name; Logs due: April 20.

CWops Mini-CWT Test, Apr 18, 1300z to Apr 18, 1400z, Apr 18, 1900z to Apr 18, 2000z, Apr 19, 0300z to Apr 19, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 meters; Member: Name + Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: April 21.

VHF+ CONTESTS
222 MHz Spring Sprint, Apr 17, 1900z to Apr 17, 2300z; (not specified); Bands: 222 MHz; 4-character grid square; Logs due: May 1.

Also see ARRL Rookie Roundup, SSB, SKCC Weekend Sprintathon, Georgia QSO Party, Yuri Gagarin International DX Contest, North Dakota QSO Party, New Mexico QSO Party, F9AA Cup, PSK, Missouri QSO Party, Mississippi QSO Party, & Texas State Parks on the Air, above.

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