



TALES FROM THE SWAMP

TALES FROM THE SWAMP

November 2018

Author: Frank KG4IGC

From Your President:

It was really great to see that we had such a good turnout this past weekend for the CQWW DX Contest, SSB. We had a total aggregate score of 1,507,143 points with nine club members participating. Last year we made 2,613,468 points with seven ops which is a difference of 1,106,325 claimed points. This year the bands were tough, no doubt about it. I know that I struggled to make Q's most of the time that I was on the air.

Kevan N4XL always talks about his lessons that he learned after each contest so I thought maybe I would mention a couple lessons that I learned during this contest. As most of you know, I have a limited station; I run low power and have low antennas. With all the QRM from the states and QSB it was very difficult to hear the DX

stations on 20 and 40 meters. Usually, when the stations that I want to work are hard to hear I tend to turn down the RF gain turn on my attenuator to -6 dB. I also tend to use the IPO a lot to bring the DX in above the noise. Well, I found out last weekend that less is more.

When I attended Kevan's contesting class, he told us that if one thing doesn't work, try something else. Well, I actually found myself turning off the IPO and turning up the attenuator to -18 dB and had my RF gain at about one o'clock. I could not believe the difference. By doing this, I reduced the background noise and the QRM substantially and was able to hear DX clearly. I actually found this to work better than some other things that I have tried like RF Filters and adjusting the shift function on my rig.

One other thing that learned is that the some of the American stations were going split on 40 meters. Not operating a lot in SSB contests, I didn't realize how small of a window that DX stations have on 40 meters. This is a new concept to me, as I have never run split in a contest. I might have to give it a try the next time that the bands are crowded. I tried running a couple of times but with the band conditions like they were, it was very inefficient and my Q count went way down.

I figured out while doing S&P that by timing yourself and listening to how a DX station was running his pileup that I could raise my Q count considerably. One last thing that I noticed was that the JA's tend to hang out in the upper portions of 15, 20, and 40 meters. This prompted me to look up a band plan for Japan and indeed, their frequencies differ some from ours here in the states. Information like DX band plans can come in handy and I certainly will be using it in future contests.

My wife Sarah (KG4NKG) and I drove up to Conway to attend the Myrtle Beach Hamfest. Despite the hamfest being small, we had a

pretty good time and got to meet up with Al NE4EA, Ron N4VZ, and Dave NJ4F. Dave was doing card checking so we all got together and hung around his table for a bit and had some good conversation. I also got to talk with our Section Manager Marc Tarplee, N4UFP for a few minutes. Marc and I talked a bit about the SC QSO Party, and he mentioned that he wouldn't mind putting a rare county on the air. I saw Dr. Jim Boehner N2ZZ from across the room but unfortunately did not have a chance to speak to him. Here is a picture of the SFCG guys at the hamfest, this one was provided by Dave NJ4F:



Just as a reminder, we are coming up on the beginning of the year and soon it will be time for our annual club meeting. I will be contacting Lizards Thicket in Lexington soon to reserve the meeting room. For our new members, we usually have our annual meeting on the last Saturday of January. It will also be election time for the club officer positions. We have had the same officers for the past couple of years and it is time for some new blood.

When Dave NJ4F, Ted K7OM, Mark KM4RK, and I formed this club we set it up so that any of our members could have the opportunity to be a club officer. As a founding member, I would really like to see our members step up to the challenge. Having new officers from time to time is important to the efficient running of a club. It also means fresh ideas which are always healthy for any club. This is why we have elections each year so as your club President, I ask that our members consider running for one of the four positions.

Brag List:

Frank KG4IGC Certificate, Missouri QSO Party 2018, 1st Place SC

Member Contributions:

Formatting CQ to make the RBN happy

By Kevan N4XL

I was reading the last CQ magazine and a story about K0NM who learned CW at age 70 because he wanted to experience running CW. I enjoyed the article, but it prompted me to review how to format your CW CQ so that the skimmers and Reverse Beacon Network (RBN) picked you up. The algorithm used by the RBN to generate spots works better if you give it some help. I found an updated version from what I remembered seeing a couple years back so am glad I looked.

Some of you are totally against assistance. You don't have to enter "Assisted" to use this information. It isn't against the rules. In fact many top scoring unassisted ops do this all the time and it is accepted practice. It certainly isn't an ethical dilemma for me since I now almost always enter Assisted anyway. This will improve your chances of getting spotted if you call CQ. As such, it should increase your rate since being spotted more often means more people will know to look for you.

N6TV did a Contest University presentation at Dayton this year called "CW and RTTY Skimmer and the Reverse Beacon Network". It is posted at ww.contestuniversity.com

Slide 21 says this:

How do I CQ "properly"?

Send everything at the same consistent speed. Never use >/<or +++/--- to change speed in messages

Call CQ or TEST and send your call twice

CQ N6TV N6TV

TEST N6TV N6TV

CQ N6TV N6TV TEST

Use proper spacing (let computer send). Don't send with paddles and rush-everything-together

Change your freq. slightly to get spotted again

Slide 22 says:

What counts as "CQ"?

Originally just: "CQ", "TEST", and "QRZ"

VE3NEA Added: "FD", "SS", "NA" and "UP"

Examples:

P5DX P5DX UP

SS N6TV N6TV

NA N6TV N6TV

FD N6TV N6TV FD

Short calls like "W1F" should always be sent twice to help Skimmer identify it quickly.

That bit about >/< and +++/--- refers to macros causing CW speed to increase during the repetitive parts of the contact and then slow down again. You've likely heard something like your call coming back at 30 WPM then the speed ramps up to 40 WPM for the 5NN part before dropping back to 30 WPM for the exchange info. That is done using those type characters in the logging program macros.

Club Happenings:

WN4AFP passed along a note that he received: "Very sorry to pass on the news that long-time contester and extraordinary gentleman Paul Bitter, W0AIH became SK today. Tower accident at his QTH.." N4GG Note the extensive [write-up](#) about Paul in the *Twin City DX Associations 2014 Newsletter*, pg. 15

Kevan N4XL mentioned that he was having some issues with RFI on 10 meters. Gary W4EEY told him that he too had issues with 10 meters and offered a few ideas to help resolve the problem.

Gil KS4YX informed the club about the Stone Mountain Hamfest in Lawrenceville, Ga November 3rd and 4th 2018.

Kevan N4XL shared an article from DX.com by the Pacific Islands DX-Pedition Group about the *Amateur radio permit application to Kure Atoll "denied"; Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources cites 1990 textbook, "Vertical structures such as the radio antenna... for ham radio operations, pose a direct bird strike hazard."* This article can be found [here](#).

Al NE4EA reported that he tried to work the OC contest. He didn't hear many stations but did hear a E6Y and a VK station.

Ron N4VZ provided some information about a request put out by the Florida State EOC. They are requesting ham operators to help in Bay County, Florida after hurricane Michael struck.

Al NE4EA reminded everyone about the Myrtle Beach Hamfest.

Dave WN4AFP gave a tip about jotting down station calls while running when there are multiple stations calling you. This way he can run down the list without ID'ing after every Q. This is known as call stacking. Kevan N4XL made the point that you would have to be familiar with the calls to be efficient and that pausing too long while running might be counter-productive.

Frank KG4IGC told the group that he saw on the Missouri QSO Party Facebook page that the 2018 awards and certificates are in the mail. Certificates are also available for download from the [website](#).

Kevan N4XL mentioned that he was looking for some new ideas for presentations. He visited the Tennessee Contest Group's website and ran across some articles by Kirk Pickering K4RO. You can find these articles [here](#).

Tamitha Skov's YouTube Channel:

[A Fizzle and a Spotless Sun: Solar Storm Shortie 10-24-2018](#)

Upcoming Hamfests:

[Stone Mountain Hamfest and ARRL Section Convention](#) Saturday 8 AM-4PM Sunday 8 AM-2PM Gwinnett County Fairgrounds, 2405 Sugarloaf Parkway, Lawrenceville, Ga. 30045

Contests:

CWops Mini-CWT Test 1300z Oct. 31

Bill N4IQ SOHP SO2R 12,880

CWops Mini-CWT Test 1900z Oct. 31

Bill N4IQ SO2R 8,554

CWops Mini-CWT Test 0300z Nov. 1

WN4AFP SOLP 961

CQWW DX Contest SSB

W4EEY	SO(A)AB HP	501,700
KG6MC	SO(A)AB HP	328,328
N4XL	SO(A)AB LP	456,456
KG4IGC	SO(A)AB LP	62,951
WB4HRL	SO(A)AB LP	31,065
WU0B SO2B	SO(A)AB LP	13,120
K7OM	SOAB HP	51,336
NE4EA	SOAB HP	18,990
WN4AFP	SOAB LP	43,197

Club Total: 1,507,143

Arizona QSO Party

KG4IGC SO Mixed LP 624

Illinois QSO Party Oct 21

WN4AFP Fixed LP 2,856

WB4HRL Non IL LP 868

New York QSO Party Oct 20

WN4AFP SO CW LP 3,080

WB4HRL SO SSB LP 36

JARTS WW RTTY Contest Oct 20

KG4IGC SOLP 81,180

K7OM SOHP 57,285

Stew Perry Topband Challenge Oct 20

NJ4F Single Op HP 78

Pennsylvania QSO Party Oct 13

WB4HRL SOSSB LP 1,669

California QSO Party Oct. 6

NI7R SOFixed LP 9,435

WB4HRL SOFixed LP 1,080

Upcoming Contests:

[CWops Mini-CWT Test](#), Oct 31, 1300z to Oct 31, 1400z, Oct 31, 1900z to Oct 31, 2000z, Nov 1, 0300z to Nov 1, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Member: Name + Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: November 3.

[NRAU 10m Activity Contest](#), Nov 1, 1800z to Nov 1, 1900z (CW), Nov 1, 1900z to Nov 1, 2000z (SSB), Nov 1, 2000z to Nov 1, 2100z (FM), Nov 1, 2100z to Nov 1, 2200z (Dig); CW, SSB, FM, Digital; Bands: 10m Only; RS(T) + 6-character grid square; Logs due: November 15.

[SKCC Sprint Europe](#), Nov 1, 2000z to Nov 1, 2200z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RST + (state/province/country) + Name + (SKCC No./power); Logs due: November 8.

[NCCC RTTY Sprint](#), Nov 2, 0145z to Nov 2, 0215z; RTTY; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: November 4.

[NCCC Sprint](#), Nov 2, 0230z to Nov 2, 0300z; CW; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: November 4.

[Jakarta RTTY Contest](#), Nov 3, 0000z to Nov 3, 2359z; RTTY; Bands: 15m Only; RS + Serial No.; Logs due: November 10.

[IPARC Contest, CW](#), Nov 3, 0600z to Nov 3, 1000z, Nov 3, 1400z to Nov 3, 1800z; CW; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; USA IPA Members: RST + Serial No. + "IPA" + State, non-USA IPA Members: RST + Serial No. + "IPA", non-IPA Members: RST + Serial No.; Logs due: December 31.

[Ukrainian DX Contest](#), Nov 3, 1200z to Nov 4, 1200z; CW, SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Ukraine: RS(T) + 2-letter oblast, non-Ukraine: RS(T) + Serial No.; Logs due: December 4.

[ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW](#), Nov 3, 2100z to Nov 5, 0300z; CW; 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 12.

[IPARC Contest, SSB](#), Nov 4, 0600z to Nov 4, 1000z, Nov 4, 1400z to Nov 4, 1800z; SSB; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; USA IPA Members: RS + Serial No. + "IPA" + State, non-USA IPA Members: RS + Serial No. + "IPA", non-IPA Members: RS + Serial No.; Logs due: December 31.

[EANET Sprint](#), Nov 4, 0800z to Nov 4, 1200z; Any; Bands: Any; RS(T); Logs due: November 18.

[High Speed Club CW Contest](#), Nov 4, 0900z to Nov 4, 1100z, Nov 4, 1500z to Nov 4, 1700z; CW; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Members:

RST + HSC No., non-Members: RST + "NM"; Logs due: November 25.

[ARS Spartan Sprint](#), Nov 6, 0200z to Nov 6, 0400z; CW; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RST + (state/province/country) + Power; Logs due: November 8.

[Phone Fray](#), Nov 7, 0230z to Nov 7, 0300z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15m; NA: Name + (state/province/country), non-NA: Name; Logs due: November 9.

[CWops Mini-CWT Test](#), Nov 7, 1300z to Nov 7, 1400z, Nov 7, 1900z to Nov 7, 2000z, Nov 8, 0300z to Nov 8, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Member: Name + Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: November 10.

[UKEICC 80m Contest](#), Nov 7, 2000z to Nov 7, 2100z; CW; Bands: 80m Only; 4-Character grid square; Logs due: October 31.

[NCCC RTTY Sprint](#), Nov 9, 0145z to Nov 9, 0215z; RTTY; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: November 11.

[NCCC Sprint](#), Nov 9, 0230z to Nov 9, 0300z; CW; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: November 11.

[WAE DX Contest, RTTY](#), Nov 10, 0000z to Nov 11, 2359z; RTTY; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RS + Serial No.; Logs due: November 26.

[PODXS 070 Club Triple Play Low Band Sprint](#), Nov 10, 0000z to Nov 12, 2359z; PSK31; Bands: 160, 80, 40m; RST + (state/province/country); Logs due: November 19.

[10-10 Int. Fall Contest, Digital](#), Nov 10, 0001z to Nov 11, 2359z; Digital; Bands: 10m Only; 10-10 Member: Name + 10-10 number + (state/province/country), Non-Member: Name + 0 +

(state/province/country); Logs due: November 19.

[JIDX Phone Contest](#), Nov 10, 0700z to Nov 11, 1300z; SSB; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; JA: RST + Prefecture No., non-JA: RST + CQ Zone No.; Logs due: December 12.

[OK/OM DX Contest, CW](#), Nov 10, 1200z to Nov 11, 1200z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; OK/OM: RST + 3-letter district code, non-OK/OM: RST + Serial No.; Logs due: November 18.

[SKCC Weekend Sprintathon](#), Nov 10, 1200z to Nov 12, 0000z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, **6m**; RST + (state/province/country) + Name + (SKCC No./"NONE"); Logs due: November 18.

[CQ-WE Contest](#), Nov 10, 1900z to Nov 10, 2300z (CW/Digital), Nov 11, 0100z to Nov 11, 0500z (Phone), Nov 11, 1900z to Nov 11, 2300z (Phone), Nov 12, 0100z to Nov 12, 0500z (CW/Digital); CW, Phone, Digital; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, 2, 432 MHz; Name + Location Code (see rules) + Years of Service (see rules); Logs due: December 1.

[AWA Bruce Kelley 1929 QSO Party](#), Nov 10, 2300z to Nov 11, 2300z, Nov 17, 2300z to Nov 18, 2300z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40m; RST + Name + QTH + Eqpt Year + Transmitter Type (see rules for format) + Input Power(W); Logs due: January 1.

[4 States QRP Group Second Sunday Sprint](#), Nov 12, 0100z to Nov 12, 0300z; CW, SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Member: RS(T) + (State/Province/Country) + Member No., Non-member: RS(T) + (State/Province/Country) + Power; Logs due: November 14.

[RSGB 80m Autumn Series, Data](#), Nov 12, 2000z to Nov 12, 2130z; RTTY, PSK; Bands: 80m Only; [other station's call] + [your call] + [serial no.] + [your name]; Logs due: November 15.

[Phone Fray](#), Nov 14, 0230z to Nov 14, 0300z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15m; NA: Name + (state/province/country), non-NA: Name; Logs due: November 16.

[CWops Mini-CWT Test](#), Nov 14, 1300z to Nov 14, 1400z, Nov 14, 1900z to Nov 14, 2000z, Nov 15, 0300z to Nov 15, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Member: Name + Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: November 17.

VHF+ CONTESTS

[SARL VHF/UHF Analogue Contest](#), Nov 10, 1000z to Nov 11, 1000z; Analog (CW/SSB/AM/FM); Bands: 50 MHz, 70 MHz, 144 MHz, 432 MHz, 1296 MHz; RS(T) + 6-character grid locator; Logs due: December 3.

Also, see [SKCC Weekend Sprintathon](#), above.

