



# TALES FROM THE SWAMP

February 2020

Author: Kevan Nason, N4XL

## Marie McDonald

We were saddened to hear of the death of K7OM's XYL, Marie. They spent many happy years together and it will be extremely difficult for him going forward. Please let Ted know your thoughts and prayers are with him.

Ted wrote:

Thank you all for your kind words today about my loss. Marie and I had been married 52 years. I met her on the 2nd day after I arrived in Costa Rica in 1966. We were married there about a year later. She was a wonderful woman, and I'm going to have an extremely hard time without her.

She had just taken her niece to the airport for the nieces return to Costa Rica. At the airport she suddenly became unable to breath, and had pain in her chest. Medical personal there laid her on the floor and started performing chest compression, while waiting for the ambulance. She passed away I believe before they got here to the hospital.

Ted K7OM

## New Kid Needed:



Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Step right up to the Greatest Job in the SFCG!! Uncle Fox Wants You! Seriously, we need a President. Contact Dave, WN4AFP, and tell him you want to do your part to help the group.

## From Your President:

Forthcoming. Or maybe it isn't forthcoming. Depends on what the new President wants to do. See "New Kid Needed:" above.

## SFCG Meeting Saturday, January 25th, 2020:

We had a good get together. If you weren't there you missed some good socializing. Outgoing President Frank, KG4IGC, has spent considerable time and effort these last couple years improving our group. Thank you, Frank. Kevan, N4XL, gave a presentation on why he made the choices he did when erecting his vertical antennas. SFOTA presentations were made by Dave, WN4AFP. He also gave us the scoop on the new QP Challenge. And we met Ed, K3DNE.

Oh... we also learned that for the next meeting to not tell the Lizard's Thicket folk you are there for the Ham Radio operator meeting. Instead tell them you are with the Swamp Fox Contest Group. They were irate at us for showing up 4 hours late – even though we were 45 minutes early. Turned out another Ham group has a standing morning reservation but people haven't been showing up lately. They thought we were those folks instead of the responsible contesters we are.

Here are some highlights from the Secretary's notes. Contact our new Secretary Ed, WB4HRL, for the full report. (Thanks for stepping up Ed!)

- President Frank thanked the club officers for their support and commitment to our club. He also thanked everyone who provided support and help last summer when his shack was damaged by lightening. He also thanked his wife, Sarah, for her support and help.
- President Frank announced that 2019 brought us 6 new members: Phil, AC4Q; Mark, N4UFP; Charlie, KD4CB; Elaine, N4EHT; Matt, NU4E; and Ed, K3DNE. We currently have 28 members on the roster
- President Frank announced that he would be resigning as club president effective today due to family related medical issues. There were no nominations for a new president. The following officers were duly elect by the club.
  - Vice President: Dave, WN4AFP
  - Treasurer: Phil, NI7R
  - Secretary: Ed, WB4HRL

Upon motion duly made, seconded, and approved by the club, these officers were given authority to select a new club president without further approval of the club membership. The Vice President will serve as interim president until a new president is selected

- President Frank discussed the following topics with the club:
  - Increase in mentorship
  - Sponsorships for SCQP and 13 Colonies contests
  - Upcoming contests and events
  - Increase in multi-op and team operations
  - Use of the club call; WW4SF
  - Dues and website expenses

## 2019 SOFTA Awards:

I'm sorry to say no one thought to take pictures of the arriving stars as they walked the non-existent red carpet back to the award ceremony room, but here are the winners! There were some very impressive Q counts. Come join the fun in 2020 and dethrone the Kings.

### Overall

First N4IQ

Second K7OM

Third WB4HRL

### Most CW QSOs

First N4IQ

Second WN4AFP

Third NI7R

### Most Phone QSOs

First WB4HRL

Second WU0B

Third KG4IGC

### Most RTTY QSOs

First N4IQ

Second K7OM

Third KG4IGC

### Most Digital QSOs

First N4IQ

Second N4VZ

Third WB4HRL

### Most Improved WB4HRL

#### K1AR Contest Tips

- A careful review of the previous year's log before a contest can help you in a number of ways. In addition to revealing a scoring target to beat, it can be helpful to make a list of the Top 10-15 actions you could have taken to improve your score that year and place it in front of you as a reminder for this year's contest.
- Even though there seems to be a focus on the "band edges," don't be afraid to use the high end of the bands as well. In one hour during a run in the 1992 CQ WW SSB Contest, I had HS, 8Q7, 4S7, TL8, and 9K call me while operating on 14318 kHz!
- 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!

## From the reflector:

- We need a good name for our NAQP contest teams. SFCG#1 seems soooo dull. I like “Palmetto Bugs” for CW tests, but it doesn’t go well with the NAQP SSB. Give it some thought and throw out some ideas so we’re ready to go before the next one comes around. Here’s a listing of some past NAQP team names so you can get an idea of what we’re talking about.

Team	
4. CO Avalanche	39. PVRC NORTH CAROLINA EAST
5. Arizona Outlaws Assassins	40. ORANGE JUICE-3
6. DFWCG Mavericks	41. Flying Iguanas
7. SMC Team Ferrari 488 GTB	42. SMC Team Ferrari Monza SP1
8. NCCC Team #3	43. PVRC SWVA Little Bit 1
9. MRRRC/NCCTeam A	44. SFCG Reptiles #1
10. WØAIH Memorial # 1	45. NCCC Team #4
11. Myrtie's Men	46. DFWCG Rangers
12. SCCC #1	47. ORANGE JUICE-2
13. YCCC Defence	48. Big Sky Contesters - Cutthroats
14. Bama Boyz1	49. Boiled Owls Nassau
15. Deep Dixie CC Team Elvis	50. NCCC Team #5
16. NCCC Team #2	51. CO Rockies
17. ORANGE JUICE-1	52. PVRC COLONIAL CAPITAL #1
18. SCCC #3	53. NPARC Barkers
19. YCCC Linebackers	54. METRO MUMBLERS
20. TCG	55. Bama Boyz2
21. Mid Florida Group	56. Boiled Owls Suffolk
22. SMC Team Ferrari Monza SP2	57. SMC Team Ferrari Portofino
23. SMC Team Porsche 911 Cabriolet	58. METRO SCREAMERS
24. Big Sky Contesters - Rainbows	59. PVRC SWVA Little Bit 2
25. YCCC Offence	60. ORANGE JUICE-4
26. SHENANDOAH VALLEY WIRELESS	61. SMC Driftless Zone Contesters
27. PVRC SWVA1	62. SFCG Reptiles #2
28. SECC	63. MRRRC/NCCTeam B
29. CO Broncos	64. Arizona Outlaws Gamblers
30. SCCC #2	65. SMC Team Lambo Huracan
31. SMC Team Porsche 911 GT2 RS	66. SMC Team Lambo Centenario

- Dave, WN4AFP, announced the State QSO Party Challenge. Who can get the most contacts in selected state QSO parties over the entire year? See [StateQSOParty.com](http://StateQSOParty.com) for details. Are you paying attention Robert, AJ5E? Good way to get those lost skills back after 739 days. Oh... Hope you trimmed your beard and got a haircut after being dormant for so long. Dave, WN4AFP, has also added this statement to his reflector postings. Thanks for promoting the SFCG Dave!
- Speaking of QP’s, did you see Ed’s, K3DNE, score for the NAQP? Claimed 997 q’s for 113,658 points! Guess the SFCG has another serious contender on the roster. Good job Ed.
- Bill, N4IQ, posted a listing of the popular RTTY and Digi contests for the year. Guess we know where he’ll be spending his time.

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- Third NI7R

### Most Phone QSOs

- First WB4HRL
- Second WU0B
- Third KG4IGC

### Most RTTY QSOs

- First N4IQ
- Second K7OM
- Third KG4IGC

### Most Digital QSOs

- First N4IQ
- Second N4VZ
- Third WB4HRL

### Most Improved WB4HRL

## Observations by the Editor:

### 1. Technical

Check out K2AV's web page at K2AV.com for information about Inverted-L's and information on how to construct and install his Folded Counter Poise (FCP). There is an interesting talk about the various losses in an Inverted-L's antenna system that apply to all Inverted-L's and not just those using a FCP. I found the section called "The Loss List, Your Shrinking RF, Issues and Fixes" particularly interesting. He makes a convincing case to not drape the horizontal section over a tree as I have done here at N4XL. I'll probably leave mine as is, but good to know the cost of my deciding to do so.

### 2. Rules

While reviewing the rules for the ARRL DX CW contest I again noted the bit about multi-stream decoders putting you in the Single Operator Unlimited (assisted) category. We've had a couple debates about using CW decoders on the reflector. I'm in the camp that if you need help to decode a CW signal you are getting assistance. Others aren't. I understand the bit about 'You use a computer to decode FT4/8, RTTY, PSK, etc., so what's the difference when using one to help with CW? How can you operate a RTTY contest "Unassisted" if under your way of thinking you

need a computer to decode the signal?' I disagree with that logic. Your brain is perfectly capable of decoding CW. Some do it at >60 WPM. Many do it at 20 WPM and above – without a computer. Your brain is not capable of decoding the others. So... In my opinion getting help with something you could do on your own but have chosen not to, choosing instead to use a device to make it easy on you, seems the very definition of “assisted” to me. But it turns out I’m almost wrong. Kinda wrong. Sometimes wrong. And sometimes right.

I decided to ask the ARRL about it. Here’s the response:

Hi Kevan,

The “multi-channel” part is the key here. A single stream decoder would still place you in the “Single Operator” (unassisted) category; while using a decoder that can decode multiple decoded signals is a multi-channel decoder, which would place you in the Single Operator unlimited category.

In summary, if the decoder is single stream- Single Operator (unassisted)

If the decoder is multi-channel- Single Operator Unlimited

Good luck in the contest!

73,

Paul Bourque, N1SFE  
Contest Program Manage

All of you who said it is perfectly fine to use a decoder and enter unassisted are correct – for ARRL contests.

Here are some excerpts from the CQWW contest rules which require you to enter as an Assisted operator if you use a decoder in that contest.

V. ENTRY CATEGORIES:  
...  
1. Single Operator: QSO finding assistance of any kind is prohibited (see VIII.2).  
...  
(VIII.) 2. QSO finding assistance: The use of any technology or other source that provides call sign or multiplier identification of a signal to the operator. This includes, but is not limited to, **use of a CW decoder**,...

As we’ve talked about before on the reflector, check the rules for each contest.

3. It's in the blood. Some folk just have to contest.



Matt, DJ8OG (aka NU4E) has this great picture from home. Many would be discouraged coming to another country and not have that much aluminum to play with yet, for some, the contest must go on. Matt went to his employers at work and obtained permission to set up antennas in the parking lot. When not traveling he uses temporary wire antennas to get on the air and often whups us fixed station folk before taking them down on Sunday. That's dedication! Matt, I'd suggest you seek counseling to help cure your obsession, but I'd hate to have the shrinks ruin a great operator.



Here's Matt's latest 3830 postings

Current	Contest	Call Used	Class	Power	Score
	<a href="#">RTTY WPX Feb 8</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	SOSB/40	LP	712,844
2020	Contest	Call Used	Class	Power	Score
	<a href="#">NAQP CW January</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	95,400
2019	Contest	Call Used	Class	Power	Score
	<a href="#">144FallSprnt Sep 23</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	42
	<a href="#">432FallSprnt Oct 9</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	72
	<a href="#">50FallSprnt Aug 24</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	24
	<a href="#">50SprngSprnt May 11</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	25
	<a href="#">ARRL 10 Dec 14</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	SO Mixed Unlimited	LP	13,838
	<a href="#">CQ WW RTTY Sep 28</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	SOAB	LP	334,800
	<a href="#">CQ160 CW Jan 25</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op Assisted	LP	42,224
	<a href="#">CQWW CW Nov 23</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	SO(A)SB40	LP	200,184
	<a href="#">CQWW SSB Oct 26</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	SOAB	LP	403,490
	<a href="#">CQWW VHF Jul 20</a>	<a href="#">NU4E/R</a>	Rover	LP	20,604
	<a href="#">NA Sprint SSB November</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	4,860
	<a href="#">RTTY WPX Feb 9</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	SOAB	LP	158,100
	<a href="#">SS SSB Nov 16</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	QRP	2,800
	<a href="#">TBDC Dec 28</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	534
	<a href="#">WAE CW Aug 10</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	87,765
	<a href="#">WAE SSB Sep 14</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	Single Op	LP	396
	<a href="#">WAE SSB Sep 14</a>	<a href="#">W4EEY(NU4E)</a>	M/S	HP	28,060
	<a href="#">WPX CW May 25</a>	<a href="#">NU4E</a>	SO(A)AB	LP	1,170,748

## N1MM+ Tips:

1. The band map is a very useful tool for Unassisted Operators too. You can't use a spotting network to populate it, but you can put calls on it yourself and still stay in the Unassisted category. Under "Config" you will find the option to "QSYing Wipes the Call & Spots QSO in Bandmap (S&P)". That is a great function to enable. It automatically spots the station (on just your Bandmap and not send it out on the internet) when you move on. The next time you cruise up/down the band he will stand out on your Bandmap as being an unworked station. You can also use ALT+O to store the contact in the Bandmap. A shortcut I use a lot is ALT+M. It puts "Busy" on the Bandmap for that frequency. I use it when I run across rag chewers or stations I can't work for the particular contest I am in. Since you found the stations yourself by turning the VFO you are not considered to be in the Assisted category when you do this.
2. I was on 80 during the NAQP and tuned in when the running station received a report from a Maine S&P Operator. He asked if Maine could go to 40. The meet frequency was exchanged and they QSYed. If you are asked to go to another frequency and your rig is interfaced to N1MM all you have to do is type the frequency into the entry window and the rig will go there. Once you work them on the other band CTRL+ALT+Q brings you back to your run frequency on the original band. Hopefully you didn't lose it, but if someone is there calling CQ the ethical thing to do is find another place to call CQ.
3. To continue with changing frequency, if you set N1MM up correctly it will also change mode for you when you go from a CW to SSB or Digital portion of the band to another. For example, say you are in CW mode at 7033 and you move to 14185. The rig will change from CW to USB automatically for you. Do that with two N1MM settings. On the Mode Control tab of N1MM's Configurer select your rig to the "Follow Band Plan" mode. Not yet a digital contester I haven't done this second part yet but it looks like you should also define what parts of the CW band are for CW and which are for Digital. Select "Config" on the Entry Window, go down the list of settings until you find the "Change Band Plan" selection and adjust it to what you want. Be aware though that some N1MM reflector cries for help have been heard from people who forgot they had made those setting changes and their rig wouldn't do what they expected it to do when changing frequency or bands. Tom, W1TEF's KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) advice is often of great value to those of us who like complications, but forget what we to help with one contest doesn't necessarily work for the next.
4. I sometimes find myself having to call a few times to break a pileup during a contest which requires a sequential serial number. I have usually already typed in the stations call and serial number I expect him to give me when I call. If I didn't get through, I used to manually retype the serial number adding one for each time I lost out. After losing out in the pileup five or six times retyping his number was both a pain and a bit depressing as I watched his number getting higher and higher while my rate dropped. Then I discovered CTRL+U leaves the call alone and updates the received serial number by 1. No need to delete or overtype the old number. If you find you are four or five numbers behind the sent exchange just hit CTRL+U as many times as it takes to catch up. That last is useful if you tune off frequency for a minute or two and pick up someone else before coming back. If you told N1MM to spot stations on your Bandmap then when you tune off frequency it will remember the last number you had for the guy and will put it back in the entry window for you when you come back to his frequency – only now you're behind by several numbers.



## Upcoming Contests: Including VHF/UHF

See WA7BNM, but don't forget

# SCQP IS FEBRUARY 29<sup>TH</sup>!

SFOTA Current Leaderboard <http://www.sfota.com/>

2020 OVERALL STANDINGS						
CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1) WB4HRL	32	1140	386	0	1148	2674
2) WN4AFP	23	1269	243	0	640	2152
3) N4IQ	6	919	0	165	932	2016
4) NU4E	3	730	0	0	639	1369
5) K7OM	6	486	120	0	680	1286
6) K3DNE	4	0	1080	0	0	1080
7) NJ4F	3	50	0	0	779	829
8) NI7R	5	485	0	0	313	798
9) KG4IGC	2	245	0	0	550	795
10) WU0B	1	0	358	0	0	358
11) KS4YX	3	81	31	7	200	319
12) N4XL	3	317	0	0	0	317
13) AJ4UQ	2	0	0	6	61	67

  

2020 INDIVIDUAL MODE STANDINGS							
CALL	CW QSO'S	CALL	SSB QSO'S	CALL	DIGITAL QSO'S	CALL	RTTY QSO'S
WN4AFP	1269	K3DNE	1080	N4IQ	165	WB4HRL	1148
WB4HRL	1140	WB4HRL	386	KS4YX	7	N4IQ	932
N4IQ	919	WU0B	358	AJ4UQ	6	NJ4F	779
NU4E	730	WN4AFP	243			K7OM	680
K7OM	486	K7OM	120			WN4AFP	640
NI7R	485	KS4YX	31			NU4E	639
N4XL	317					KG4IGC	550
KG4IGC	245					NI7R	313
KS4YX	81					KS4YX	200
NJ4F	50					AJ4UQ	61

*"The best of the best gained their winning edge practicing the basics over and over in numerous forgettable events, often using inadequate radios and second-rate antennas. Discovering how to overcome such obstacles are lessons never forgotten."*

*-- NCJ Profile of N6RO*

### 3830 Activity:

(Activity from the last 30 days postings on 3830scores.com where postings listed club affiliation as being SFCG. The list does not include the CWOPS mini-tests )

Timestamp	Call	Class	Power	Score
<b>ARRL Jan VHF</b>				
1/20/2020 15:44	AJ4UQ	SO 3Band	LP	30
1/20/2020 15:07	KS4YX	Single Op	LP	72
<b>BARTG Sprint</b>				
1/26/2020 20:10	WB4HRL	Single Op	HP	1,950
<b>BC QSO</b>				
2/3/2020 15:23	K3DNE	Single OpSSB	HP	18
2/4/2020 3:58	NI7R	Single OpCW	HP	100
2/3/2020 12:48	WB4HRL	Single OpMixed	HP	188
2/2/2020 23:03	WN4AFP	Single OpMixed	LP	648
<b>CQ160 CW</b>				
1/27/2020 13:26	K7OM	Single Op	HP	58,968
1/26/2020 14:36	N4XL	Single Op	LP	16,121
1/27/2020 4:14	NI7R	Single Op	HP	25,168
1/27/2020 23:18	NJ4F	Single Op	HP	4,830
<b>MnQP</b>				
2/2/2020 2:04	K3DNE	Single Op Phone	HP	4,410
2/2/2020 2:30	WB4HRL	Single Op	HP	616
2/2/2020 0:40	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	6,802
<b>NAQP SSB</b>				
1/19/2020 14:29	AJ5E	Single Op	LP	1,519
1/19/2020 6:35	K3DNE	Single Op	LP	113,658
1/19/2020 15:16	K7OM	Single Op	LP	9,000
1/19/2020 17:50	KG4IGC	Single Op	LP	61,132
1/19/2020 12:10	N4XL, KA4CSM @ N4XL	M/2	LP	5,472
1/19/2020 13:52	WB4HRL	Single Op	LP	18,130
1/19/2020 20:27	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	11,550
1/19/2020 5:11	WU0B	Single Op	LP	39,022

Timestamp	Call	Class	Power	Score
<b>NCCC RY-Sprint</b>				
1/24/2020 2:53	N4IQ	Single Op	LP	220
<b>RTTY WPX</b>				
2/10/2020 2:18	K7OM	SOAB	HP	155,588
2/9/2020 23:58	KG4IGC	SOAB	LP	412,776
2/10/2020 0:08	KS4YX	SOAB	LP	38,727
2/10/2020 2:21	NI7R	SOAB	HP	73,264
2/10/2020 15:17	NJ4F	SOAB	HP	153,265
2/10/2020 15:21	NU4E	SOSB/40 TB-Wires	LP	712,844
2/10/2020 0:30	WB4HRL	SOAB	HP	443,424
2/10/2020 1:23	WN4AFP	SOAB TB-Wires	LP	236,664
<b>VtQP</b>				
2/3/2020 15:20	K3DNE	Single Op	HP	102
2/3/2020 12:16	WB4HRL	Single Op	HP	75
2/2/2020 22:57	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	924
<b>WFD</b>				
1/26/2020 19:53	WB4HRL	1H	HP	548
<b>XE RTTY</b>				
2/4/2020 2:02	K7OM	Single Op	HP	20,352
2/3/2020 13:23	WB4HRL	Single Op	HP	6,930

### Guest Article:

*(Thank you, Bill, N4IQ, for some thoughts about FT4 contesting and particularly FT4 in the last RTTY RU contest.)*

Finally had time to think about the RTTY RU contest

Background: I operated SO2R on RTTY using N1mm and MMTTY. I also had FT4 going on a third computer which was running N1mm networked to the RTTY setup so all the logging and duping was shared between RTTY and FT4. N1mm worked really well on these computers, both modes. Slick!

I only operated 19 hours this year. I had a late start (technical problem) Last year I operated 23 hours and had over 1500 Qs. The late start and the use of FT4 (both modes running 1KW using the same antennas) decreased my score. FT4 worked fine but FT4 is not close to being

competitive in rates as compared to a SO2R RTTY station as I found out. I was experimenting this year with the integration of the two. I have nothing against FT4 but if a person wants to maximize Qs and the final score in this contest, stick to RTTY. I have N1mm statistics to prove the point.

You may be asking the question: Doesn't this contest need three mode categories... RTTY, FT4 and MIXED? My long answer is:

RTTY RU has had the digital option now for a long time. In the past PSK was the primary alternative to the RTTY mode but hardly anyone used it in RTTY RU because it was so slow. Along comes FT4 contest mode which is a HUGE step up in rate! Theoretically it can approach RTTY rates but for a number of reasons it does not practically do this. I had max RTTY one minute rates of 240 Qs per hour, ten minute rates of 138 per hour and a number of 60 minute rates of 100+ Qs per hour. None of my FT4 rates can match these. "Mechanically" FT4 could approach the the hourly rate but it just does not happen and theoretically it could never reach the one minute and ten minute rates. Also, I did not see any multipliers (57 sections - all states plus about half the Provinces and 54 countries) on FT4 that I did not see or work on RTTY.

So if someone wants to operate the digital modes in this contest, it is not because they want to maximize Qs or their score. They probably work the digital modes because they simply enjoy it and want a different challenge than operating RTTY. Unfortunately, they will be put in the same category as the higher rate RTTY stations and they will be forced to be in an Unlimited category even if they don't use the typical spotting clusters. Probably they don't care. Should there be different categories for different modes in this contest? I think the ARRL originally just wanted to give these operators a venue to operate non-RTTY modes. However, starting a year ago, if the FT operators really want a competitive challenge, the recent advent of the FT RU and the FT WW contests gives them this challenge. I operated the FT RU this year (using N1mm - WSJT-X - SO2R) and had a blast. So was the FT WW contest. I think the ARRL should leave the contest as is and just let the operators do what they want. The competitive operators will stick to RTTY.

My thoughts are reflected by these highly regarded RTTY Digital testers:

\*\*\*\*\*

"I don't care for the FT intrusion on the ARRL RTTY Roundup but the ARRL RTTY Roundup has always allowed other digital modes like Amtor and ASCII. So I understand and accept the FT modes in this contest.

I went to FT4 a couple of times. I made 49 contacts and one new multiplier (I think). Sometimes (actually most of the time) can't tell whether the contact is good or not. FT4 and FT8 are awkward modes for contesting, at least for me

I know FT4 is suppose to be as fast as RTTY but it's really not. It's just not practical yet.

Don AA5AU”

\*\*\*\*\*

“Don,

So agreed. I used Writelog with WSJT-~~X~~ and the UDP listener for FT8/FT4. I didn't work the RRU last year so this was my first year with the FT modes.

It will be interesting to see what winning logs look like. But if I can operate next year I will likely not use FT8/FT4 at all. With a single radio, the rates are just really poor, and inflexible. And I still never sure exactly when a station is well and truly in the log. Sure, the software logs the station but then often I had the station still sending the RR73. In a couple instances I am sure they were copying me perfectly fine but never moved on until I sent a "73" message.

The long and short of it is that this was all about having fun. The only rates occurred on RTTY and while I worked one or 2 mults on FT4/FT8, it was not worth the slow rates.

RTTY rates blasted FT4 rates by a mile even with relatively poor propagation. You don't need a 100% reception to figure out a State or number I guess. (especially with pre-fills)

Anyway was lots of fun. Looking forward to next year already even though RRU is not my favourite event.

Dean - 8P2K”

Until FT, the other digital modes in RU were inconsequential, so it didn't matter that they were included. There was naturally no activity.

Because FT is so popular otherwise, the enthusiasm carries over into contests. It's good that there are some FT contests to try and flesh out the issues. It will likely take both the participants and the software developers to determine and address the issues.

For me, FT is not yet competitive with RTTY contesting. But for many others it is more appealing for their station capability and operating taste. That's a good thing for ham radio in general and contesting in particular.

There are some serious FT contests now with which improvement can take place: FT Roundup, WW Digi, RTTY Roundup, etc with different rules. ARRL RTTY Roundup provides head-to-head competition between RTTY and FT. It will illustrate the deficiency of FT contesting for "serious" rate seekers, until the problems are fixed. Unfortunately, I fear FT siphons off some RTTY participation. That lower participation makes Sunday even slower, especially for serious RTTY participants who have worked most everyone. The casual ops that make up a large portion of the participants aren't really affected.

I think this is all mostly good and its exciting to participate in the birth and evolution of FT contesting which is a significant development for ham radio.

73,

Ed W0YK

Space WX: ( From TamithaSkov's YouTube page)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UckXjdDQ-db0xz8f4PKgKsag>

### ARRL DX Contest Rule Excerpts:

- W/VE amateurs: Work as many DX stations in as many DXCC entities as possible on the 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meter bands.
- 1.2.2. DX stations are any non-W/VE station. This includes US possessions and territories in the Caribbean and Pacific.
- 4. Contest Exchange:
  - 4.1. W/VE stations send signal report and state or province.
  - 4.2. DX stations send signal report and power (number or abbreviation indicating approximate transmitter output power).
- 5.2. Multipliers
  - 5.2.1. W/VE stations: Sum of DXCC entities (except US and Canada) worked per band.
- (General Rules <30 MHz) 2.2.2. Single Operator Unlimited stations are allowed only one transmitted signal at any given time, not including transmissions on a spotting net; alternating CQs on two or more frequencies using the same band and mode is prohibited.
- (General Rules) 3.3. An operator may not use more than one call sign from any given location during the contest period.
- (General Rules) 3.7. All transmitters and receivers must be located within a 500-meter diameter circle, excluding antennas.
  - 3.7.1. This prohibits the use of remote receiving installations.

73,

Kevan N4XL