TALES FROM THE SWAMP

August 2020
Editor: Kevan Nason, N4XL

Thank you to our current group leadership.
>President – Ed, K3DNE
>Vice President - Dave, WN4AFP
>Treasurer – Phil, NI7R
>Secretary – Ed, WB4HRL

The Presidents Perspective

We have a new member to welcome, Scott Brown KN4SMO of Greenville. Scott holds a General ticket that he obtained in November of 2019. His station consists of a FT991A and an OCF dipole on 10-80m at 78ft and is active on SSB and FT8. Scott recently achieved 1st place in the April 2020 ARRL Rookie Roundup SSB in the W4 call area - what a great start to his contesting journey and a great time to join our contesting club with the fall contest season approaching!

Scott, we are very happy to have you on our team and a member of Swamp Fox Contest Group!

73,
Ed K3DNE

From the Reflector:

Author Dave, WN4AFP, was in the National Contest Journal's July/August 2020 issue. He wrote an article about The Carolina Weekend Story about how the SCQP and NCQP came to be held on the same weekend. If are an ARRL member, but do not receive the NCJ, you can access it digitally from the ARRL website. Pay close attention to the young ham on the lower left of the picture showing the W4MPS call sign.

If you have ever had problems with Windows Com ports, and who hasn't, there is a Contest University presentation that might save you hours or days of grief. Kevan, N4XL, passed along the link. https://www.contestuniversity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/N6TV-Everything-You-Need-to-Know-About-USB-and-Serial-Interfaces.pdf

Tom, AJ4UQ, gave Dave, WN4AFP, a way to monitor his own RTTY signal using a web SDR available at websdr.org. Tom suggested piping audio from the web SDR back into FLDIGI and decoding yourself. Great idea Tom.

Matt, NU4E, has been busy setting up his new Flex radio and antenna farm at his new QTH. He has also been linking back to his home QTH in Germany to do some remote operating. He will undoubtedly once again soon be killing us in the contests. There are advantages and disadvantages to everything though. He sure helps the team scores!

The NAQP RTTY turned out to be a great hit with SFCG members. President Ed sent this message: Congrats to SFCG team consisting of: NU4E, KG4IGC, K7OM, KS4YX . The team finished in 24'th place (out of 66 entries) with a score of 99,798! Our 2nd team, Swamp Fox Scouts finished with a score of 16,079 - not bad for a team of just two (NI7R and WN4AFP).

WN4AFP's XYL, Joye, had to ask why he received "The day of YL's award". She was undoubtedly interested in understanding why the text of the award talked about pleasure and contacts.

Ed, K3DNE, received a broken Clean Sweep mug. Wonder if they were trying to tell him something? A replacement was promptly sent. Good job Ed!

Frank, KG4IGC, received a nice Certificate of Participation from the KY QSO Party team. Always good to get some more wallpaper. Is it time to take a trip to Home Depot for some wallpaper glue?

In past years John, K4BAI, has posted some NAQP operating tips. Kevan, N4XL, accessed the open access posts from the South East Contest Club and forwarded one of those messages to the SFCG. Now is a good time to review them again with the NAQP SSB coming up in a couple days.

Frank, KG4IGC, pointed out that while the SFCG didn't make the top 10 teams for the ARRL RTTY RU contest we did beat some formidable competitors. Among many others, the SFCG's team score of 218,831 put us in front of the Southern California Contest Club, North Coast Contesters. Mad River Radio Club, Carolina DX Association, and the South East Contest Club. Good job team SFCG!

Past SFCG member and now silent key Tom Francis, W1TEF, was honored by some SFCG members in the NAQP CW by using the name TOM for the exchange. We miss your input Tom. RIP.

SFCG members did well in the Virginia QP too. Ed received certificates for WN4AFP, NI7R and K3DNE. K7OM

Several people received emails from the World Amateur Radio Contesting Association informing them of their contest ranking in the world. There was considerable discussion as to who that group is.

Contest Tips:

K1AR Contest Tips

23 Try varying the phonetics you use in pileup calling. Sometimes a different word will help differentiate your call from the others. Sharp, piercing words are usually more effective. For example, GERMANY is probably better than GULF, or consider DENMARK instead of DELTA. As is so often the case in contesting, put yourself in the shoes of the operator you're calling.

26 With sunspots near a minimum, bands like 160 meters are even more important to maximized contest scores. With my relatively small 3/4 acre New York lot, I had pretty much dismissed any serious operation on that band. However, a 70' oak tree and 130 feet of wire can support an Inverted L that has worked VP8SGP, T32J, and many others. Check out the Inverted L antenna . . . it's an easy passport to 160M and higher contest scores.

38 It may seem obvious, but labeling items in your shack such as antennas, amplifier settings, relays, etc. is a must! If you haven't taken the time, revisit this area of shack housekeeping. Many station owners also label their coax feeds, and/or rotator and control lines as well. It just may prevent a catastrophic failure when you get serious in this fall's contest season.

Observations by the Editor:

- You've probably heard about this prediction, but it is so encouraging you have to read it again! From the July 22, 2020 ARRL Contest Update: One of the most recent forecasts for Solar Cycle 25 hints that we could be partying like it's 1959: "...we deduce that Sunspot Cycle 25 will have a magnitude that rivals the top few since records began. This outcome would be in stark contrast to the community consensus estimate of Sunspot Cycle 25 magnitude... We predict with 95% confidence that the Cycle 25 amplitude will fall between 153 and 305 spots." See the ARRL Letter article for more details.
- I was asked how I used spots after participating with members of the Deep Dixie Contest Club in a distributed multi operation during the July 2020 RAC contest. That led to a recorded YouTube PowerPoint presentation about some of the many aids available within N1MM to use spots and panadapter displays to find and work stations while S&P. Tips for both assisted and unassisted operation were discussed. I've talked about many of these things separately on the SFCG reflector and in the newsletters, but here it is in one session with pictures and explanations. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeU7NBFnHgo
- Not Ham related, but you space buffs might be interested to hear the latest news about the dwarf planet Cere out there in the asteroid belt. NASA announced it has a large brine saltwater body underneath its ice crust. Volcanic core activity allows for the liquid to be present.

N1MM+ Tips:

Section 3.1 of the User Manual provides a listing of Third Party Software that integrates well with N1MM. These programs can help improve your contest scores, as well as help with pre- and post-contest activities.

- AutoHotKey is extraordinarily powerful scripting and keyboard remapping freeware. You can remap keyboard, joystick, and mouse and run simple or very complex multi-step scripts. Virtually any key, button, or combination can become a hotkey.
- CC User by Lee, VE7CC is a full featured Telnet and TNC program for use with AR Cluster, CC cluster or DX Spider Nodes
- 2Tone is a drop-in replacement for MMTTY using different decoding and encoding algorithms. It can be used in any of the Digital Interface or Additional RX digital windows in N1MM Logger+ in place of MMTTY. Many users have found that it decodes more accurately than MMTTY under difficult conditions
- QSOrder is a QSO recording program written by Vasily, K3IT, to enable N1MM Logger users to record contest QSOs on the fly and replay them. QSOs are stored individually in folders labelled with the contest name.
- Real-time Log Backup – TRNMirror, TRN_Mirror monitors the N1MM Logger transaction log files and maintains a shadow copy of your contest log in a second location
- Mult Chaser is a free add-on program for N1MM Logger that displays contest multipliers on a map of North America as they are worked. The program reads from the specified N1MM Logger database after each contact, provided that Mult Chaser and N1MM Logger are both configured appropriately. Mult Chaser supports contests with ARRL/RAC sections as multipliers (Sweepstakes, Field Day, ARRL 160), contests with states/provinces as multipliers (NAQP, ARRL RTTY), contests with grid squares as multipliers (Stew Perry), and US State QSO parties.

- R8 Brain - Audio File Resampler, Sample rate and bit resolution converter for audio recording .wav files. It includes a batch mode to modify all .wav files.

Sometimes you run across a station call sign during the contest that is not recognized by the file wl_cty.dat as being a valid call. You can force N1MM to log it anyway by placing the contact information into the correct entry window fields and then using CTRL+ALT+Enter. But the QSO will not be counted in your score. This might happen with Special Event calls for example. Section 3.2 describes how to customize (edit) the DXCC wl_cty.dat file so N1MM accepts the contact as being correct.

The latest list of Third Party Software can be found at https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/appendices/third-party-software/ and includes reference to a program called Athena Log Analyzer. The description reads "Athena is a very powerful analysis tool which integrates a N1MM+ log to show graphically contest data in real-time. Either individual bands, or an all-band total can be displayed. Selection can be made to show QSO's, Multipliers, Points or Multi*Points. Existing contest logs may be used to produce "goal files" which can be compared against live progress. Athena can automatically adjust the time and date before creating these files to match the current contest timing." Note that it says, "…in real-time". It uses your contest log to produce reports and information during the actual contest. I plan to explore how Athena can help my scores in the next couple months.

Upcoming Contests: See WA7BNM webpages
- The NAQP's are just around the corner

SFOTA Current Leaderboard:

2020 OVERALL STANDINGS

	CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1)	N4IQ	52	6321	1292	411	2544	10568
2)	WB4HRL	134	5691	1186	0	1997	8874
3)	K3DNE	33	380	6575	64	0	7019
4)	WN4AFP	64	5005	1314	0	640	6959
5)	NU4E	10	2150	1576	0	1109	4835
6)	KG6MC	22	2083	1197	12	0	3292
7)	N4XL	13	2390	824	0	0	3214
8)	K7OM	18	1444	180	0	1434	3058
9)	NI7R	24	2673	58	0	313	3044
10)	KG4IGC	6	408	18	0	971	1397
11)	KS4YX	10	664	55	43	404	1166
12)	NJ4F	3	50	0	0	779	829
13)	WU0B	1	0	358	0	0	358
14)	NE4EA	1	92	0	0	0	92
15)	AJ4UQ	4	5	2	6	61	74

3830 Activity:

Timestamp	Call	Class	Power	Score
ARRL FD				
6/29/2020 0:52	N4IQ	1D	LP	2,012
6/29/2020 12:09	WB4HRL	1D	HP	651
ARRL June VHF				
6/15/2020 3:23	K3DNE	Single Op	HP	61,963
6/15/2020 1:19	KS4YX	Single Op	LP	972
6/15/2020 3:42	NI7R	Single Op	HP	3,159
6/16/2020 1:28	NU4E/R(NU4E,@W4EEY)	Limited Rover	LP	40,837
DL-DX RTTY				
7/9/2020 13:00	WB4HRL	SOAB-6	HP	280
DRCG RTTY				
6/14/2020 18:22	K7OM	SOAB	HP	46,859
6/15/2020 11:54	WB4HRL	SOAB	HP	10,611
IARU				
7/12/2020 15:58	K7OM	SOABCW	HP	55,872
7/15/2020 20:43	NI7R	SOAB(A)CW	HP	74,520
7/14/2020 13:58	WB4HRL	SOAB(A)Mixed	HP	34,086
7/13/2020 3:06	WN4AFP	SOABCW	LP	128,628
IOTA				
7/26/2020 18:19	WB4HRL	SO12CW	HP	294
7/26/2020 12:03	WN4AFP	SO12CW	LP	363
MDC QP				
8/11/2020 1:09	WB4HRL	Amplified	HP	239
8/9/2020 14:48	WN4AFP	Standard	LP	3,290
NAQP CW				
8/2/2020 13:36	AC4MC	Single Op	LP	17,513
8/2/2020 14:54	K7OM	Single Op	LP	6,500
8/2/2020 13:27	KG4IGC	Single Op	LP	12,994
8/2/2020 13:20	KS4YX	Single Op	LP	19,600
8/2/2020 4:43	N4XL	Single Op	LP	122,472
8/2/2020 19:13	NE4EA	Single Op	LP	4,140

8/2/2020 20:05	NI7R	Single Op	LP	22,000
8/2/2020 20:44	WB4HRL	Single Op	LP	8,100
8/3/2020 14:31	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	18,779
NAQP RTTY				
7/20/2020 2:32	K7OM	Single Op	LP	19,800
7/19/2020 16:03	KG4IGC	Single Op	LP	31,827
7/19/2020 14:19	KS4YX	Single Op	LP	8,960
7/19/2020 5:22	N4IQ	Single Op	LP	81,357
7/19/2020 20:07	NI7R	Single Op	LP	10,650
7/19/2020 6:10	NU4E	Single Op	LP	45,012
7/19/2020 13:16	WB4HRL	Single Op	LP	14,007
7/20/2020 0:35	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	6,612
NCCC RY–Sprint				
6/12/2020 2:23	N4IQ	Single Op	LP	578
7/24/2020 2:19	N4IQ	Single Op	LP	585
NCCC Sprint				
8/7/2020 22:08	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	380
RAC Day				
7/2/2020 14:12	AJ4UQ	SOSB/20	LP	400
UkrClsRTTY				
6/21/2020 14:13	K7OM	SOAB	HP	288
6/21/2020 13:22	WB4HRL	SOSB/20	HP	258
WAE CW				
8/10/2020 0:49	K7OM	Single Op	HP	6,006
8/10/2020 5:13	NU4E	Single Op	LP	138,500
WVQP				
6/22/2020 14:15	K3DNE	Single OpMixed	HP	505
6/21/2020 3:44	WN4AFP	Single OpMixed	LP	1,902
WWSAC				
7/7/2020 3:45	NU4E	SOAB-OM	LP	

Guest Article:

Maybe next month.

==========================

73 es QRT de N4XL