TALES FROM THE SWAMP

October 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

Club Meeting:

The next club meeting will be on Zoom. Come join us at 1930 EST on October 20th. Login information to be provided via the reflector. If you haven't ever participated in a Zoom meeting you should download the software ahead of time. I missed my first Zoom meeting because I failed to do that. It wasn't difficult to set up, just my unfamiliarity with it caused me to take longer than I had expected it too. Of course, for video you need a camera, but you can join the meeting without either camera or microphone. To participate though, you at least need a microphone connected to your PC/Phone. I found I cannot have other software trying to use the camera at the same time Zoom does, so close the other software before trying to share video.

From the Reflector:

- Frank, KG4IGC, mentioned that Heil repairs their headsets at a reasonable cost. Ed agreed. Frank also mentioned a particular run of the Heil Pro Elite Commercial headphones was known to have defective plastic parts associated with the boom mic. Heil repaired them for him at their cost.
- Ed, K3DNE, shared a link to https://haminfo.tetranz.com/map which shows nearby ham radio operators. This link appears to be reasonably accurate. The website link has been making the rounds on many ham radio reflectors.
- Many Foxes have been enjoying the VHF, RTTY, and Digi contests. It's good to see diversity.

- Scott, KN4SMO, has been having equipment problems while traveling. Glad your computer is working again, and it was only corroded fuse spades that caused your rig to have low power.
- Phil, NI7R, shared a discouraging health issue. Please include him in your prayers.
- Kevan, N4XL, forwarded information that the SC Governor and Legislature is encouraging development of Broadband Over Powerline throughout the state to bring high speed internet to rural areas. The ARRL and many professional organizations have shown this will result in increased RF noise if not implemented correctly. Unfortunately for us, too many companies focus on cutting costs rather than cutting unnecessarily radiated RF.
- There was some discussion about how a shortened version of RTTY contacts used to reduce contact time and increase rate has the unintended consequence or also increasing busted q's. The "improved" exchange was mentioned in a Contest University presentation, but our operators have noticed the lack of 'error correction' inherent in the older method results in the S&P station being unsure if they were the report recipient or if the runner was talking to another station.
- Our President, K3DNE, has been issuing standings and closely watching the SFCG improve in the club standing reports from many contests. Thank you for your leadership, Ed.
- Dave, WN4AFP, and Kevan, N4XL, were disappointed with their LCR reports from the CQWW CW contest. As pointed out in a previous newsletter a high error rate can significantly reduce your score. Phil, NI7R, had a 0.9% error rate. Way to go Phil!
- Bob, AC4MC, has had computer issues with his shack. Corrupted files, locked up computer, etc. He tried many different, and interesting, ways to fight RFI. (I wouldn't have considered foil backed ceiling tiles.) No matter what he tried, he was unable to raise power above 300 watts without the gremlins coming out. He finally discovered an unused USB cable still plugged into the back of the computer. He is back to 1,500 watt operation now it has been removed.
- Scott, KN4SMO, mentioned he is studying for his Extra. Go for it, Scott! You'll love the increased opportunities the license will bring.

Contest Tips:

K1AR Contest Tips

03 Avoid the temptation of diving directly into a pileup after first hearing the frenzy. Take the time, especially when using a smaller station, to listen to the operating style of a needed multiplier before calling. Adding a planned delay of two or three QSOs to learn the DX STATION'S techniques will usually reduce the time needed to get him into YOUR log.

30 In keeping with this month's theme of CQing, try varying your CQing style. Remember the most important information another station needs is your callsign, not the letters "CQ." You may want to "call CQ" occasionally by just signing your call sign 2 or 3 times, especially on CW. Calling CQ with less information apart from your call is always better than more!

35 Even though winter's fast approaching and the possibility of tower projects are fading, it's never too late to consider a wire antenna project. You'd be amazed how quickly you can get a signal on 160 meters for the upcoming 160 contests with a simple inverted "L" hung from a tree and 4 or 5 radials. Take a look through some of the antenna books and check it out. All you need is a good pair of gloves and you're well on your way!

CQWW DX Contest
This major contest will be here in just a few days. Although it is a DX contest you might be giving away easy points if you didn't notice Rule IV.B.3, it states "Contacts between stations in the same country have zero (0) QSO point value, but count for zone and country multiplier credit." Don't forget to work a U.S. station in each of zones 6, 7, and 8. I try to let the frenzy die and work them Sunday or in the middle of the night when rate is usually slower. Of course, they sometimes come to you if you are calling CQ.

K9YC's tips
These came from a 2016 thread where a ham specifically asked about NAQP tips, but Jim included some advice useful for all contests.
   o When answering a CQ, NEVER send your exchange until the other station has sent you his exchange and you have copied it. For example, if he says "Kilo 8?" only send your call again. If he sends his exchange and you don't copy it, ask for a repeat, and do it with as few words as possible. For example, "K9YC Name?
   o "When calling a station, send only your call, and only once on CW and SSB. Listen for a second or two, and if the other station doesn't come

back, send your call once more. And listen. (Two or more stations may have called at the same time and the other station didn't copy either one.) On SSB, say your call with standard phonetics, with good articulation.
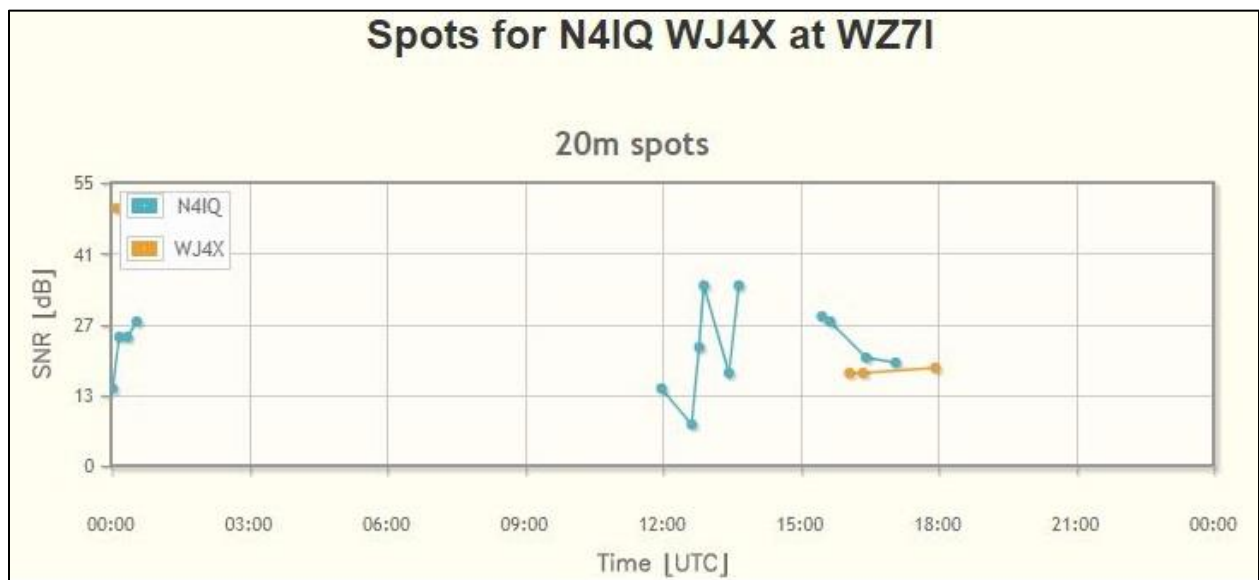
- o NEVER repeat anything that the other station has copied correctly. This is particularly important when you're weak or there is QRM or noise. Sending your call again wastes time, AND, more important, it makes him think he has it wrong, so he may ask you to repeat it, wasting more time.   :)
- o NEVER use "QRZed" to finish a QSO -- the stations who want to work you are tuning the band looking for stations to work. They want to hear your call! When you're the CQing station, finish your QSO with "Thanks, Whiskey 8 Tango Alpha Hotel." When you only say "QRZed" that tuning station doesn't know your call, so it will waste time (yours and his) for him to find out. Or he may just keep on tuning for someone who DOES say his call.   :)
- o When you're the CQing station, always give a station who may be waiting a chance to call you as soon as you've said "thanks." In other words, don't start another CQ after each QSO until you've listened a second or two for a station who has been waiting.

Observations by the Editor:

- (I had typed the following blurb into the draft October SFCG Newsletter a week before Ed made his reflector post. That's two of us who like them. Maybe you should think about them too?)
A few years back it seemed time to look at crimping coax connectors. That happened after listening to the likes of super-station owner K3LR say he crimps his coax. Tim undoubtedly has hundreds of PL259's. I figured if it is good enough for him and the reliability he needs, then they should be good enough for me. Besides, although it hasn't been many cables, virtually every premade coax cable with ends I've purchased for several years have been crimped. I don't understand why so many people trust cables bought from vendors with crimped connectors, but still bad mouth "do it yourself" crimps. They say they are unreliable and they don't trust them. They'd rather solder their own connectors. Huh? Anyway, DX Engineering has a patent on a new crimp type PL259 connector. Although I couldn't see what would be so unique about a connector it warranted a patent, since I've had good luck with DX Engineering equipment, I decided to pay the slightly higher cost and find out. They are worth it. Easiest connector I've ever installed, and it seems almost impossible to get a shorted connector. Purchased 175 ft of their LMR400 type cable and a dozen DXE-PL259CS8U connectors. I'm so pleased with them I had to tell you. I'll order more when I run out of these.

- It is fairly well known, but thought I'd mention the Spot Analysis Tool available on the Reverse Beacon Network (RBN). Besides using the Real Time Scoreboard, it is fun to put your call in the Spot Analysis Tool either alone or with another call sign to see how you are doing against the competition. You can compare up to three calls using a skimmer from many places in the world. Data is kept for analysis later. Below is a comparison of how Bill, N4IQ, and I compared from skimmer WZ7I, which is located in Ohio, during the CQ WPX CW contest last May. I was using WJ4X in that one. There isn't much data shown since apparently that particular skimmer didn't pick up Bill and I calling CQ very often, but I've seen charts become very full. The shot below will give you an idea of what is possible. The tool shows spots for 10 through 160 meters. I only show the 20 meter band below. Bill was running HP and wires versus my LP and yagi. Since it runs off the RBN, it doesn't work for SSB or digital modes – although I think I heard skimmers are starting up for FT4/8 now so maybe it will for that. You can find the tool at http://www.reversebeacon.net/analysis/

Spots for N4IQ WJ4X at WZ7I

Shack Survey

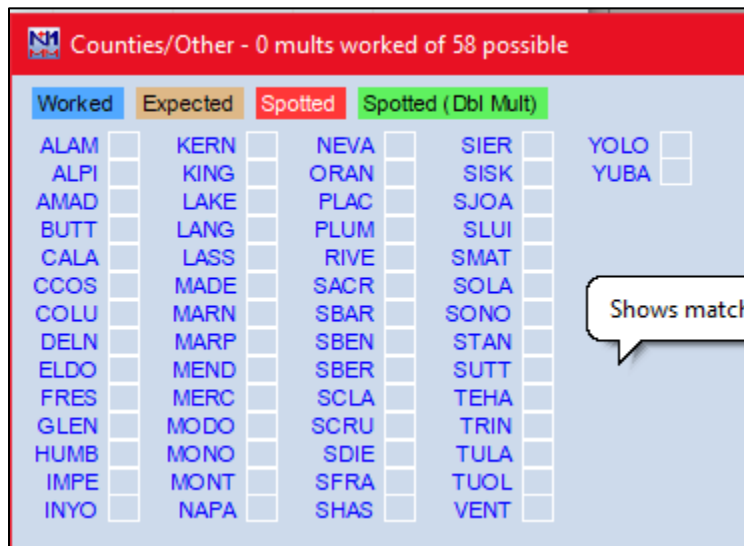| Call	Name	Transmitter	Amp	Antenna	Ant Height	Band or Freq	SO2R	Modes	Comments
N4XL	Kevan	TS590SG, TS590S	N/A	Bencher Skyhawk	50	20-10	Yes	CW, SSB	Panadapter RSP1A and Airspy HF+, K9AY loops are down again. Charlie Brown has his kite eating tree, I have my wire eating lawn mower.
				Inv-L, 45 radials	65 vert, 70 horiz	160, 80, 20, 15, 10			
				80/40 Top Loaded Vert	20	80,40			
				Inv-V	35	40			
				K9AY Loops		160, 80, 40			
NJ4F	Dave	IC7800, IC7600, IC910H, IC970H	Alpha 9500, 2100	Steppir DB18	70	40-6	No		Other various and sundry stuff like everyone else. Home built computer, another in the works. Unfortunately, my grass cutting gig seems to have consumed my life. I stay busy 6, 7 days a week. And when I get home and prepare for the next day I'm just too tired to do anything else. But, it will end one day.
				160/80 dipoles and Inv-L's	70	160, 80			
KG4IGC	Frank	FT-DX3000, FT-DX3000, FT991A	N/A	Gap Challenger Vert with 20 radials	Ground	80-2	No	RTTY, CW, SSB	I use a RSP1 for a pan adapter, Working on setting up a station for VHF contesting with Yaesu FT-847, also plan on putting up a few more Super loops for other bands, just have to figure out how to place them on my tiny lot.
				160 Inv-L, 10 radials	30 vertical	160			
				20/40 Superloop x2		40, 20			
				272' Horizontal loop	25	80-?			
				NA4RR Hex Beam	20	20-6			
K3DNE	Ed	FT1000MP MK-V, IC746 (for 6 and 2)	Yaesu Quadra (HF-6), 160w SS 2m	Inv-V	60	160-20			I'm a little embarrassed that I now have no homebrew equipment in the shack. There was a time where I had homebrew single tube (4cx250B) amps and power supplies for 6 and 2m and a homebrew power supply for
				KIO Hexbeam	43 ft	20-6			

Call	Name	Transmitter	Amp	Antenna	Ant Height	Band or Freq	SO2R	Modes	Comments
				Modified Cushcraft 3 ele	25	6			my old single tube 2c39 1296MHz amp. I've either sold or scrapped those for more reliable solid state amps. (Transmitters: I have an IC765 in storage as back-up and 2 x FT736R for VHF-UHF and transverters for 144, 903, 2304, 3456MHz) (Amps: In storage: Lunar Link 1.5KW 2m amp, Solid State amps for 222 thru 3456MHz). (Antennas: In storage: Force-12 C3 tribander, yagis and loop yagis for 222 - 3456 MHz).
				M2 7 ele	23, soon up at 50 ft	2	SO2V	CW, SSB, FT8/4, MSK144 Meteor Scatter	
AJ5E	Robert	TS480HX	N/A	67 ft long OCF Dipole	20	160-10		FT8, RTTY, SSB	MFJ-993B tuner. This is a fairly low-budget low-impact operation. The only thing I bought new is the MFJ tuner and a nice Heil headset; everything else is used / homebrew / hand-me-down / scraps. Even the logger and digital modes engine is an old govt surplus Dell Optiplex (Linux), which doubles as a family Minecraft server. The entire ham shack is just a tiny table in the corner of the laundry room.
NU4E	Matt	Flex 6600 w/Flex Control, FT991	RF2K-S, 2m SS 150W	1/4 wave GP w/2 radials	4	80		CW, SSB, RTTY	Need to rearrange the ham stuff inside the shack during the Winter and build new and higher antennas
				1/4 wave GP w/radials	Ground	60			
				1/4 wave GP w/3 radials	18	40			
				AV-640 Vert	4	40-6			
				Single boom yagi, 6 ele 2m, 10 ele 70cm	varies, portable use	6, 2			

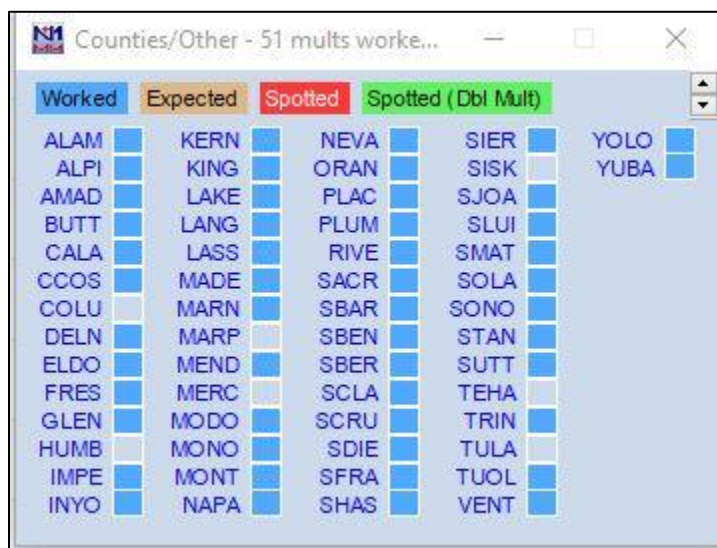| Call	Name	Transmitter	Amp	Antenna	Ant Height	Band or Freq	SO2R	Modes	Comments
NI7R	Phil	K3	KPA500	17 ft whip on 6 ft metal ladder w/radials	Ground	160, 80, 40. Manually switch coils	No	RTTY, SSB	HOA Restricted
				73 ft attic zig-zag	Attic	All, but best on 15, 10 and 6			
				Transworld TW2010		20-10			
WB4HRL	Ed	IC7300	ALS600	Full wave Delta	35	80-10			Also use an MFJ – 986 antenna turner
N4IQ	Bill	TS590SG, TS590S	ALS1306, THP HL-1.5KFX	160M Carolina Windom	40	160, 40	Yes	CW, RTTY, FT4/8, Feld-Hell, PSK, SSB (in that order)	Home brewed and constructed SO2R system; BandMaster II band pass filters; two MFJ-4716 6 antenna remote switches. My antennas changes monthly - still lots of antennas to try out. Some of these antennas I have modeled with EZNEC.
				1/4 GP	22	40			
				40/20-10 Super Loop x2	40+	20			
				20/10 Super Loop	50	20, 10			
				80m Carolina Windom	45	15			
				80m Top Fed Coaxial Inv-L (no radials needed)	55 vertical	80			
				3 ele, 6m Cuscraft	45	6			
				7 ele, 2m M2	45	2			
KN4SMO	Scott	FT991A	N/A	OCF Dipole		80-10		SSB, RTTY, FT8	Shack is a work in progress

N1MM+ Tips:

It sometimes helps to know what multipliers are expected to be on the air during a contest. I sometimes find it to be an incentive to keep turning the VFO or keep Butt In Chair trying not to miss a mult. N1MM has a feature I've just begun to explore that helps me keep track of them. It is the Multiplier window. You can track multipliers such as countries, counties, states, grid squares, zones, or roll your own multiplier list.

Let's look at how I intend to use it for the California QSO Party next year.After creating a new log for the contest, I will open the multiplier window and tell it to display counties. The screen looks like this:
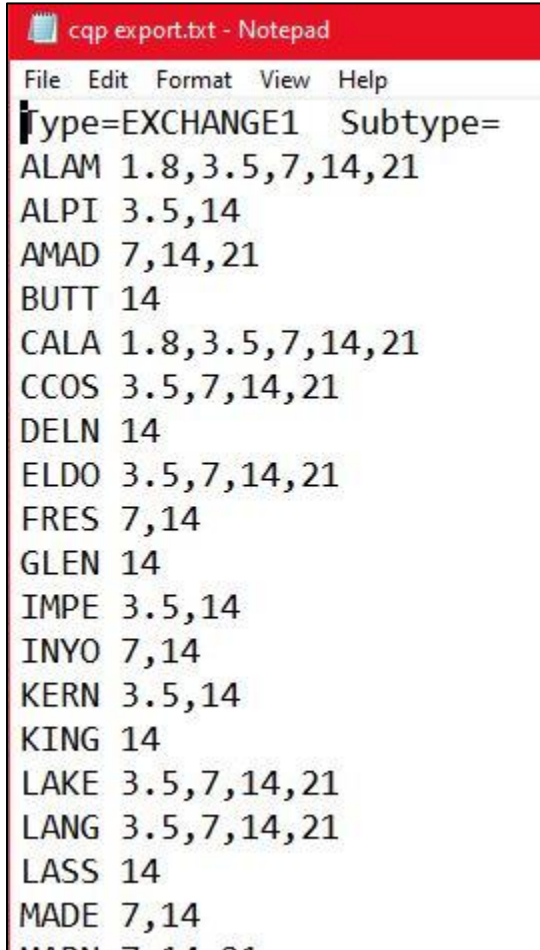

This is a list of all California counties. I haven't worked any yet so none of the blocks are colored in.

Once I work a county the block turns blue. Here is the display after completing the 2020 CQP.
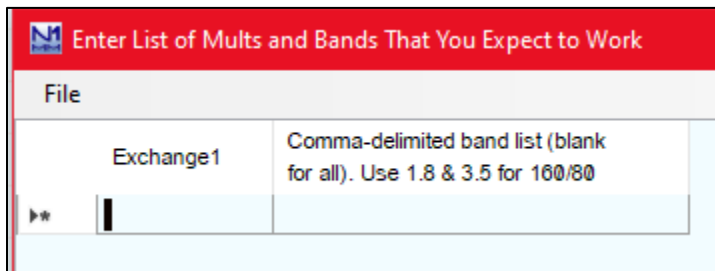
A neat feature to help with next year is that I can export this information and save it to a file. I can load that file for next year to show who I expect to be on again. Right click on the mult list screen above and you will see an option to "Export mults and bands from this contest". Clicking on it brings up the ability

to save your file anywhere, but the default is to N1MM's "GoalFiles" folder. After naming the new file CQP2020 a listing of all the counties, and on what bands, I worked in this time in the 2020 CQP is ready to load next year. It is a text file and looks like this:

You can edit those files directly with a program like Windows Notepad, so if you learn of a new county being activated that wasn't active in 2020 it can be added using Notepad. You can also create your own custom mult lists using a similar format to that shown or just use the form fields available within N1MM itself.

Back to setting up for next year's CQP. When next year gets here, open the multiplier window, right click anywhere in the window, and then select the "Edit expected multiplier list" option.
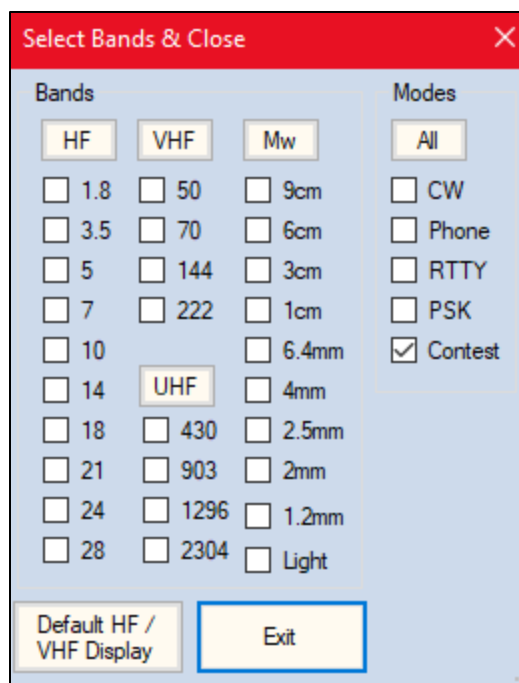

You see this window, whis is where you can either enter your own multipliers or click on "File" at the top left. Since I will be using the CQP list from 2020 I will click on files.

After clicking on "Files" you can import the 2020 CQP list and now you see the list at the left. You can add or remove counties, and also designate what bands they are likely to be on.

Exchange1	Comma-delimited band list (blank for all). Use 1.8 & 3.5 for 160/80
NAPA	7,14
NEVA	3.5,7,14,21
ORAN	3.5,7,14,21
PLAC	7,14
PLUM	14
RIVE	1.8,3.5,7,14
SACR	3.5,14,21
SBAR	14
SBEN	3.5,7,14
SBER	1.8,3.5,7,14,21
SCLA	3.5,7,14,21
SCRU	3.5,7,14,21
SDIE	3.5,7,14,21
SFRA	7,21
SHAS	1.8,3.5,7,14,21
SIER	3.5,14,21
SJOA	7,14
SLUI	3.5,7,14,21

Once satisfied with the multiplier list I will click "OK" and this window appears. The block behind the county name will change color as appropriate.

Select Bands & Close ✕

Bands

HF	VHF	Mw

☐ 1.8 ☐ 50 ☐ 9cm
☐ 3.5 ☐ 70 ☐ 6cm
☐ 5 ☐ 144 ☐ 3cm
☐ 7 ☐ 222 ☐ 1cm
☐ 10 ☐ 6.4mm
☐ 14 **UHF** ☐ 4mm
☐ 18 ☐ 430 ☐ 2.5mm
☐ 21 ☐ 903 ☐ 2mm
☐ 24 ☐ 1296 ☐ 1.2mm
☐ 28 ☐ 2304 ☐ Light

Modes

All

☐ CW
☐ Phone
☐ RTTY
☐ PSK
☑ Contest

Default HF / VHF Display	Exit

Right clicking on the mult window will also let you choose what bands and modes will show as expected, spotted, or worked on the choices you select.

Although there isn't any guarantee all the counties you worked in last year's contest will be on again next year, or new ones not activated last year may be on this year, having a listing of what to expect can be useful. Too bad there isn't a way to set these by time so you could have mobile stations in QP's pop up as expected mults in new counties as they travel around. Unfortunately, the expected multiplier window does not check the clock and update itself.

Upcoming Contests: See WA7BNM webpages

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	57	6321	1296	442	3950	12009
2)	WB4HRL	175	7321	1365	74	2742	11502
3)	K3DNE	54	427	7782	343	0	8552
4)	WN4AFP	74	5710	1693	0	640	8043
5)	NU4E	16	2407	1942	365	2133	6847
6)	N4XL	15	2675	1761	0	0	4436
7)	KG6MC	29	2591	1511	12	105	4219
8)	K7OM	21	1444	255	0	1828	3527
9)	NI7R	26	2747	66	0	313	3126
10)	KS4YX	12	713	55	43	624	1435
11)	KG4IGC	6	408	18	0	971	1397
12)	NJ4F	3	50	0	0	779	829
13)	WU0B	1	0	358	0	0	358
14)	KN4SMO	2	0	243	0	45	288
15)	AJ4UQ	6	8	2	6	127	143
16)	NE4EA	1	92	0	0	0	92

3830 Activity:

Contest	Call	Class	Pwr	Score
144FallSprnt				
9/22/2020 3:11	K3DNE	Single Op	HP	704
9/22/2020 3:33	N4IQ	Single Op	HP	875
9/22/2020 12:01	NU4E	Single Op	LP	1,768
AlQP				
9/15/2020 11:22	K3DNE	SOSSB	HP	8
9/17/2020 11:05	WB4HRL	SOCW	HP	240
9/14/2020 18:31	WN4AFP	SOCW	LP	3,052
ARRL Sep VHF				
9/14/2020 3:36	K3DNE	Single Op	HP	7,137
AzQP				
10/11/2020 15:43	K3DNE	SOSSB	HP	280
10/14/2020 1:22	WN4AFP	SOMixed	LP	168
CaQP				
10/5/2020 1:36	AC4MC	SOFixed	HP	28,665
10/4/2020 21:58	K3DNE	SO(A)Fixed	HP	1,750
10/4/2020 22:09	N4XL	SOFixed	LP	55,029
10/5/2020 14:19	WB4HRL	SO(A)Fixed	HP	5,150
10/4/2020 17:22	WN4AFP	SOFixed	LP	14,171
CoQP				
9/24/2020 9:26	KN4SMO	Single Op PortPh	LP	1
CQ WW RTTY				
9/28/2020 13:53	AC4MC	SOAB	HP	18,915
9/28/2020 0:38	AJ4UQ	SOAB Classic	LP	8,037
9/28/2020 19:38	K7OM	SOAB	HP	86,516
9/28/2020 0:09	KG4IGC	SO(A)AB	LP	12,382
9/28/2020 14:32	KS4YX	SOAB	LP	50,479
9/28/2020 0:20	N4IQ	SO(A)AB	HP	769,370
9/28/2020 0:44	NU4E	SOAB Classic	HP	515,847
9/28/2020 14:08	WB4HRL	SOAB	HP	175,626

Contest	Call	Class	Pwr	Score
IaQP				
9/20/2020 3:05	K3DNE	SO Fixed	HP	288
9/23/2020 14:22	WB4HRL	Out of State	LP	18
9/20/2020 23:35	WN4AFP	SO Fixed	LP	1,855
Makrothen RTTY				
10/11/2020 16:44	KG4IGC	SO/Single Xcvr	LP	882,966
MeQP				
9/27/2020 16:20	K3DNE	Single Op	HP	546
9/27/2020 16:46	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	15,246
NA Sprint RTTY				
9/20/2020 4:21	N4IQ	Single Op	HP	3,503
NCCC RY-Sprint				
9/18/2020 2:23	N4IQ	Single Op	LP	592
NHQP				
9/20/2020 21:45	K3DNE	Single Xmtr Assisted	HP	21
9/23/2020 14:43	WB4HRL	Single Xmtr Assisted	HP	24
9/20/2020 23:16	WN4AFP	Single Xmtr Assisted	LP	112
NJQP				
9/22/2020 3:35	K3DNE	Single Op	HP	35
9/23/2020 14:56	WB4HRL	Single Op	HP	30
9/20/2020 23:32	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	1,634
NvQP				
10/11/2020 20:23	K3DNE	SOSSB	HP	192
10/13/2020 3:01	WN4AFP	SOMixed	LP	204
PaQP				
10/11/2020 19:56	K3DNE	SOMixed	HP	5,352
10/13/2020 4:44	WN4AFP	SOMixed	LP	8,810
Salmon Run				
9/22/2020 3:32	K3DNE	SOMixed	HP	1,256
9/20/2020 23:33	WN4AFP	SOCW	LP	72

Contest	Call	Class	Pwr	Score
SDQP				
10/11/2020 20:28	K3DNE	SO FixedMixed	HP	1,743
10/14/2020 1:19	WN4AFP	SO FixedMixed	LP	160
TxQP				
9/14/2020 19:34	K3DNE	SO SSB	HP	72
9/17/2020 11:49	WB4HRL	SO CW	HP	432
9/14/2020 17:58	WN4AFP	SO CW	LP	7,869
WAE SSB				
9/14/2020 0:02	NU4E	Single Op	HP	160,000

Guest Article:

Maybe next time

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73 es QRT de N4XL