TALES FROM THE SWAMP

November 2022
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Thank you to our group leadership:

President – Ed, K3DNE

Vice President - Dave, WN4AFP

Treasurer – Phil, NI7R

Secretary – Kevan, N4XL

Web Master – Frank, KG4IGC

SFCG Webpage: swampfoxcontestgroup.com

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Contest Tips:

From the Florida Contest Group, Contesting Do's & Don'ts Rev. June 2021

- If your goal is to "win" (section awards, etc.), look over previous results either in QST, CQ, 3830 archives on "contesting.com" or the event sponsor's website. Results from previous years, while not completely reliable (think different conditions, activity, etc.), can give direction to your choice of entry category, goals and planning.

- Read the rules BEFORE THE CONTEST! Not only will you be able to determine your entry category, you may also find out activity band segments, rules changes, etc.

- When starting to S/P on a band, put band edge frequencies into your radio's memory or simply type the frequency into the call sign field of your logging program and press enter. This saves time so that you don't have to manually dial your radio to the edge.

EI8IC Contesting Tips

Always have available a second antenna for a band. I used to use a 40 meter zepp with open wire feedline (which would load on all bands) for a secondary antenna. So when I was beaming Europe and S&Ping and came across a South American station I could work him on the zepp so I didn't have to wait to rotate.

Where's North?
Once you have your antenna up, its important to make sure its looking in the correct direction. To work that out, you'll need a Great Circle Map centered on your location. You can pick one up in my Download section, or check out the Links Pages for software to make your own.

You'll also need to know where true North is. People can get mixed up when it comes to finding out the correct magnetic deivation for your area, then applying it correctly, so a simple solution is provided by Pete, N4ZR, who says 'Get your local paper and find out when local sunrise and sunset are. Split the difference. When that time arrives, go down to the tower and see which way its shadow points. That's true North.' Simple when you know how ! Alternatively, if you are determined to be more technical, follow Dave, AA6YQ's advice - he says 'If you know your QTH's latitude and longitude or grid square and your PC's time is accurate (using a freeware internet-accessible atomic clock like AboutTime, DXView will tell you when the sun is exactly true north of your tower - see www.qsl.net/dxview. If your rotator has a PC interface, DXView will control it for your, displaying your beam heading and the solar terminator on a world map. And its free.'

Use a programmable keyboard to redefine keys so your hands don't have to move as much. For example I use a keyboard with the regular function keys on the left and the shift function keys on the top. I redefine the top function keys as such 'sf1' is equal to 'ctrl-enter' to enter station on band map, 'sf2' is equal to clear key (f11). When I am tired and S&Ping I do the 1, 2 . In other words I type the call in, I notice if it is a dupe or not and then do the sf1, sf2. (known as the 1, 2 punch). I also redefine the tab key so it equals the 'f1' key. The +/= key to equal the '+' , and 'sf12' (since it is to the right) and my 2 nd rig is to the right to equal 'alt.' which takes computer to the 2nd radio band.

From the Reflector:

- Our weekly 80 meter net was moved to 8 PM local. Ed put out "I've noticed 3885 and 3890 have had some AM stations just before 9pm but 3880 and 3875 seemed clear. If someone can post an email to the reflector to let everyone know where we end up that will be helpful."

- Dave, WN4AFP, wrote "This was my best score in [the] NYQP." It's always great to show improvement. Not that Dave needs to much improve his QP performance.

- After a pause in his contesting Matt, NU4E, seems to have rekindled his interest. For you SFCG newbies, in my humble opinion he is the best operator in the SFCG. To back that up you can research him on your own and discover he has some #1 World wins in his resume. Matt wrote "I just returned from a 5300 miles 2-week road-trip on Friday night and had no plans for contesting at the weekend but then conditions got me hooked." about the WAG contest. He was part of the nearly 4 meg score the team turned in from Fred's, K4RM, mountain top station in the CQWW SSB. And after 44 hours of K4RM he returned home to his own shack and added another 110 Q's in 1:15 hours. The man is definitely back!

- Ed, K3DNE, forwarded a link talking about the flow state in contesting. It was well received by the group.

- Ed, K3DNE, is pushing for increased SFCG activity this fall/winter season. Let's help him out. Some have hesitated to turn in a low score, but Ed said it best to a member, "This is great - really! All scores, large, medium and small add to our club cumulative totals and aid in our attempt to climb the club competition standings. Thanks!" I was going to write the same thing but he beat me to it. After writing that he added in a follow up email, "It really isn't about the score - it's about participation. I'm beginning to become concerned that some members are concerned that they won't operate because they can't post that big score of over 1K QSO's or 1M points score (or similar - you get the drift) and don't bother operating at all. That isn't the case... Any and all scores are welcome and count!

    Perhaps y'all can read that between the lines of my email - the bottom line is; big scores are nice but increasing participation is nicer. Depending how many scores trickle in over the next day or two we are around a 35% participation rate in this contest in the past couple of years. Not bad. A 50% participation level is a [number] I'd like to target in the future but it may be a stretch."

- Dave, AFP, had eye surgery. Hopefully now he can see how pretty his tall stack of #1 certificates are. Within a few hours of his surgery he was back on the air running nearly 50 wpm.

- Van, N4VGE, is working on his 2024 DXpedition to Vanuatu. What a great trip that will be! I saw YJ posted in the CQWW SSB but could just barely hear them. No chance of busting the pileup then, but maybe in 2024?

- There were some great scores in the CQWW SSB contest. The team at K4RM led the way with a fantastic claimed Multi-Single score of 3,938,624. The group consisted of Fred K4RM, Bill N4IQ, Bob ND7J, Matt NU4E, and Gary W4EEY. George, N4QI, worked with his compromised indoor antenna to achieve a respectable score of 35,020 for his six hour effort. Keep in mind those first few thousand points are slow going. Ed, K3DNE, pushed for two million but couldn't quite make it and settled at 1,850,205. John, K4QQG, piloted his station to reach his second over 1 million score this year. He ended up with a claimed 1,003,302. Great job everyone, including those I didn't mention.

- Dave's, NJ4F, tower and antenna damage from hurricane Ian is worse than hoped for. Dave said he will probably be replacing his tower along with the new SteppIR antenna he has already ordered. A sad loss. Several SFCG folk are standing by to help when the time comes.

- Scott, N2OG, was regretting his frequent travels when Dave, AFP, wrote he worked Japan on 10 meter CW. Scott wrote "Stop it! It's not fair I am not home!"

- The group really had fun in the ARRL SS CW contest. It isn't often there is so much positive chatter about a contest. Dave, AFP, led the way with an impressive 105,244 points. I though John, K4FT, needed recalibrating. He thought sporting around in his daughter's new fishing boat was more important than CW. Huh. But then he put in 17 hours ending up with 501 q's. Way to go! It's me that need recalibrating. I only did 15 minutes. Ed, K3DNE, posted we

had a new club record with both the most participants (8) and highest team score (308,830 at time of his post)

- Burton, KY4ID, broke the 100 Q barrier in a single CWT. That is hard to do and he received some well deserved recognition. See his article in this newsletter about how he has managed to become a highly accomplished CW operator in a relatively short time. Something in there for everyone, including your Editor.

- There was good chatter about members who are veterans. We've quite a wide array of experiences in the group. Thank you all who have served.

- Frank, KG4IGC, gave some good tips about QTC's in N1MM for the WAE RTTY contest. Thanks Frank! George, N4IQ, figured out how to send them manually in N3FJP. His efforts were met with mixed results.

- Frank, KG4IGC, took a break from the WAE RTTY contest to attack his deck chair. The chair wont the battle by sending Frank to the hospital for stitches and a tetanus shot. Frank seems to have won the war though because his XYL banished him to the radio room for a couple days to recover.

Running on CW

By Burton KY4ID

A topic in last month's newsletter resonated with me; the topic of running in CW contests. I love running. It's my absolute favorite thing to do on the air, sometimes to my own detriment. I probably should have hunted more sections in the ARRL SS. Running on CW carries a bit of a learning curve, but once you move past it, there's nothing like it. You'll place better in contests if that is your goal. I hate to admit it, but it's also much less work. Everyone comes to you vs you chasing after everyone else. I used the same strategy with women when I was younger, just ask my XYL. On second thought, don't ask her. I'm still brand new at this and have plenty to learn, but my goal in writing this is to maybe give you a blueprint on how to get there if you so desire. We have a great group of folks who participate in the weekly contests. It would be great to see that group grow and have more ops join in the fun.

Timelines
Before I got licensed, I hung out in the Amateur Radio subreddit. I struck up a friendship with NA8Q, who is a 40+ wpm CW operator. He picked up CW during some COVID work from home time, using DJ5CW's lcwo.net. He's about my age and age is a factor. It took him 15 months to go from zero to 40wpm. Knowing an approximate timeline helps eliminate frustration with what is a bit of a slow process. It's taken me the same amount of time to get into the neighborhood where he is.

Sidenote - a while back, I had a discussion over email with KB6NU. He said the op that holds the record for going from "zero to CWops" the fastest is VE3OMV. She did it in TWO months. TWO! She's also in 6th grade and speaks 3 languages. Amazing.

Getting started
I decided to learn CW in August of 2021, with the goal of being ready for the ARRL Rookie Roundup CW in late December. I reached out to Brian Byers (WB4IT), who placed well in that contest in previous years. He gave me lots of advice, but what he drove home more than anything was, "Most other ops won't run. If you do, you'll take top spot in your call area."

That's what I set out to do. AFP recommended the Slow Speed Test, which happens every week on Friday afternoon and Sunday evening. That's where I got started. The ARRL RR CW came and went, but I got hooked on the SST and kept going with it. The following focuses on the SST and similar weekly contests.

Practice
Unfortunately, I don't have a lot of time to get on the radio. What I do have, is an abundance of time in the car. Morse Code Ninja (AD0WE) has a TON of practice files on his website that can be downloaded in Podcast format. I listen to those a minimum of 2 hours a day. Most folks advise against that, but it worked for me. I pick a speed above what I plan to run at. In the beginning, I ran at 15wpm, so I used the 20wpm callsign practice files. N2OG mentioned this strategy in one of his newsletters. It works extremely well. It's also very effective for breaking through walls when you get stuck at a certain speed. Dialing UP the speed (and coming back down) makes zero intuitive sense, but it absolutely works.

Other great running practice – Morse Runner (very good), POTA, SKCC, NAQCC, etc.

Pre-contest prep
After I had the rig setup and the latest CHF downloaded and active, I'd put my headphones on (for my iPhone, not the rig) and turn the practice file on again. The callsign practice files come in many formats. The file I use plays a callsign once in CW, says it verbally, and plays it once more in CW.

As each one was sounded out, I'd punch the callsign into the entry window, hit space, then wait to hear if I got it right. I'd delete it and do it again. That's very close to doing it for real. You get to become familiar with looking at the partial window, hitting space to populate name, state, etc. You can even turn off VOX (or whatever), and practice hitting the F keys and hear the sidetone play. I'd do that for 30 minutes to an hour before the start of a contest.

All of the callsigns in AD0WEs practice files are real ops/calls. All of them are in the CHFs for the weekly contests. K4FT and N4IQ are in there for example.

Going live
Most of the regulars show up 5-10 mins ahead of time to hold a frequency. I've found that the best place to be is in the 7.030s (in the case of 40m), which is usually the middle of the action. My experience has been that the further you get to the edges of the action, the lower your rates become. To hold a frequency, most folks send VVV, and CQ (callsign).

I know folks who show up early, don't use spots, and go through the band and tag each station as they're calling CQ. Guys who do that are going to call you early on if you got there early as well and made some noise. Those running with spots are going to call you early on too.

I've had folks respond to my CQ before the contest, so be prepared for that. It's almost always another op who is there for the contest as well. Usually, it's a 599 and some quick pleasantries. Lots of fun and gets you fired up for the opening bell.

Operating
Gotta make a lot of noise for people to find you (or to be picked up by the RBN), so let the CQs fly. Don't be timid like I was. I think everyone knows the following, but if 2 stations call at once, pick out a letter or

two (not K, W, N, A) or a number and send it back. F4 is my "His Call" macro. Easy to get to because it happens a lot. If everyone is behaving, the field will silence and just that op will call. Enter the call, hit space, F3, etc. etc.

If you could clearly hear the other stations call, but couldn't copy all of it, do the same thing. Type in a letter or two and hit "His Call". Don't let it bother you. I did this a ton. Everyone had to start somewhere, and the other op doesn't know why you're doing it. For all they know, you don't "have good ears", or maybe a station they couldn't hear was calling you at the same time. Most guys are just happy to get through.

Probably common sense, but if you get it wrong, the other op should correct you. Change the call in the box, hit "His Call", F3 (TU KY4ID), and keep on trucking. No need to repeat the whole thing. Everyone busts calls. More on that below. Don't panic thinking your ham radio reputation is going to be ruined. It won't be.

Telnet window
I have this front and center above the entry window. I'm watching 2 things – 1) where my signal is landing and how loud it is, and 2) I'm spying on everyone else to see what they're doing. On Wednesday night, I saw spots change from mostly 40m to mostly 80m, which was my tip off to switch bands. I did that at 10:15. AFP did that at 10:05. Better instincts.

If you see that your signal is landing mostly in the EU, time to go down a band. If you see that your signal is 20-40 dB in 3 land, stay put and wait to be found. Again, we're talking weekly contests, which are mostly domestic affairs.

BTW – I don't switch bands after seeing a small number of spots on another. That might be just a guy rolling the dice, or it could be someone running SO2R or 2BSIQ.

Strategy
I try to run the whole time. I just enjoy it. There are lots of "S&P only" ops out there in general, but a sizeable subgroup of them will pop in, make 10 QSOs, and shut off the radio. I'm assuming they're shooting for CWT participation awards or similar. Check out KB4DE's history on 3830. More 100s than a Wells Fargo. 10x10 and done. I always assume ops like that are there at the beginning, but who knows. But based on that assumption, I always start out running. Better try to snag those ops because they're not going to be there long. In a contest like the MST, where participation is low and everyone works everyone, those dabblers determine who ends up at the top of the list.

If the run is on fire, I resist the temptation to chase the red (mult) spots left on the band. You'll get mults running too, and your rate will typically beat S&P. If the run starts to dry up (~ 2 mins with no response) it might be time to go S&P or switch bands. That's always a tough call. If I go S&P, I prioritize mults, then try to leave enough time to run again at the end. My theory is that S&P only ops who started late might be hunting for "fresh meat" in the final minutes. You may also get called by High Power ops whose own runs finally dried up, or SO2R ops who didn't have a chance to get to you before. I've picked up a lot of callers in the final minutes doing that.

S&P
One thing Brian taught me about S&P is to never wait. If an op is busy, I shift up/down on the bandmap and find one who is free.

Goals
My first goal was to make it into the top half of the SST field. Next, I wanted to make the top 25%. After that I wanted to crack the top 10. For me, when it comes to competition, it's not about the act of "beating someone else". It's finding the motivation and drive to make continuous improvements.

Eventually, I got comfortable running at 15, so I cranked it up to 18 (prepping with the 22 wpm practice file), and eventually 20 (prepping with the 25wpm practice file). My scores improved in the process.

There are TONS of operators who don't run. You realize that when you start running and hear all kinds of calls you've never heard before. All the more reason to do it. You have zero access to those ops otherwise. Run in the SST and you'll move up quickly.

N4XL opened my eyes to all the variables that go into contesting. When I couldn't move up any higher in the standings, and found that most of the ops above me were running beams, I turned to station improvements. The biggest opportunity I had was to raise my antenna. While the higher doublet will never match a beam, it has been a game changer, especially on the higher bands. My old antenna was terrible on 20m. Didn't realize how bad it was until the new one went up.

One last note on the SST. Many of the "big dogs" are treating it like a contest. No big deal. Everyone needs a personal reason to motivate them to participate, but mostly they're there to help the next generation of contesters. So, try not to freak out like I did if you make mistakes, bust calls, bust sending, push the wrong F key, forget to put your name and state in the exchange box in N1MM so it sends NAME STATE instead of MIKE SC. All things I've done. That's exactly what the SST is for. If you read through the comments on 3830, most seasoned ops aren't bragging about their scores. What they love the most is bagging brand new calls. You may even get a mention there.

Moving up
This is getting a bit long at this point, so I'm not going to give you the play by play on moving up from there. It's the same process of slowly increasing your speed, getting comfortable, and going up again. When you make it to the CWTs, start high in the band and move down over time as you get faster. Call CQ at your speed (23-25wpm minimum). Sooner or later, someone will blast you with 35wpm. Send what you copied. If you didn't copy anything, send ?. Maybe they forgot to dial it back and they'll come back slower. Maybe they're not interested in QRSing for you and leave. Win/win.

Problematic callsigns
I recently mentioned that I could nail WN4AFP every time, but I never could get N7US. I figured out why:

W – very common as a first letter, and can only be W. Easy.

N – can only be N, easy, and the next character is a number.

4 – easy.

A – ok, it's AFP. The FP also has a distinctive ring to it.

N7US –

N – ok, N

7 – was that a 7 or a Z? And I wasn't really paying attention to the next character…was that a 4?

Simple fix. There's an iPhone app called Morse-it. I plugged in N7US. Listened to it for 10 mins a day for a few days, problem solved. I'm better with 7's and Z's now too. Need to do it again with the absolute worst callsign combo ever – KV.

Realizing all of the above also made me realize I'll probably never switch calls, despite the fact that my call is a bit heavy. Can't really bust KY4. I also think it helps me bust piles bc the KY is attention grabbing.

Mental stuff

NA8Q always talked about the "Zen" of CW pileups. That made no sense to me. Seems like running a CW pileup would one of the most stressful things you could do. There was a recent post on the reflector about the "flow state". It's absolutely a thing and what Rob was referring to. Great place to be, and evidently there are physical benefits to it as well. Weird things happen there. It's bit like an alternate reality. I have things happen I can't fully describe. When I'm typing in a call, I'm racing against my left hand (which seems to have a mind of it's own) and trying to beat it before it hits F2. Nothing quite like it.

Stress absolutely has an impact on performance. There are days where I don't understand anything. It's usually stress related and temporary. The following day my copy magically returns. Getting frustrated, rolling up the sleeves, and trying harder always seems to make it worse. I was explaining this to my 5yo recently. She couldn't get the seatbelt to go into the buckle, so she got mad and started pulling harder. The harder she pulled, the shorter the seatbelt got, which made her even more mad. Funny to watch…sort of. Anyway, one of the tricks I've learned about CW in general is to "never try." It's kind of like that seatbelt. For me at least.

Feedback

We're coming to the end of this. I hear the cheers. I've busted certain calls over and over. I've copied calls, but typed them in wrong. Another call I really struggled copying was KO4VW. Don't know why. His is another that I listened to over and over to try to fix it. Next contest, he calls, I think "I've got something for you this time." I type in his call and push send. He sends it again. I look. THIS TIME I HAVE IT RIGHT. DO YOU NOT KNOW YOUR OWN CALL!?!? I send again. He sends his again. DUDE! WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU!?!? Then I see it. K04VW. I'm a genius. Here is a sample of emails I've received after I've sent apologies. Hopefully they don't mind –

N7US – "Don't be silly. Not a problem at all. I'm embarrassed to work KV8Q. I always try to change the V into a 4. That, plus the fact that I'm not a touch typist, makes me feel like a clutz."

AD4EB – "No problem on the bust, just thanks for working me. I sure do enjoy the CWTs, they have really improved my CW contesting abilities especially with operating mobile in the state QSO parties. Read your FB bio on QRZ, you sure are into a lot of things……I was not aware my call is in the Morse Ninja files, and nice to know my call is easy for you to pick out (I always wonder about that)."

KO4VW – "No problem at all. I'm so used to it. I've known ever since learning CW that my call is an issue. I get K Zero several times no matter which contest….Like you I hope the day comes when copying is subconscious, as now it takes all the mental concentration I can muster. Sometimes it just blows right by me. I just keep getting in there and trying to get better."

N7US and AD4EB are some of best there is. KO4VW is newer, but he's at the very top of the SST/MST lists most weeks. The point I'm making is that this is a great, understanding community and no one is perfect. Don't be afraid to hop in and fall on your face. If you do, don't sweat it. Come back next week and give it another go. No one was born knowing how to do this. No one is going to blacklist you for having a learning curve. Most ops are just thrilled to death to see new ops coming into the fold.

Finally, a disclaimer. I'm brand new and still figuring things out. None of the above is meant to come across like I know it all. I don't. Not even close. I get ideas, then discover later that they were all wrong and I was way off base. Most of the time when I open my mouth, my foot enters it shortly thereafter. Just thought that I would pass along some things that worked for me. They may or may not work for you.

In closing, I wanted to thank the SFCG membership. Each and every one of you has helped me progress in one way or another. That's not a generic platitude. I mean EACH one of you. Even if we didn't talk

directly, I dig through the reflector and old newsletters all the time. I've picked up something from everyone here. Thanks for all your help and support.

Rate Meter Deception

By Kevan N4XL

This excerpt is from a National Contest Journal article titled Secrets of Success: Lessons from WRTC2006—Part One written by Eric L. Scace, K3NA. It is the Sep/Oct 2006 featured article available to read at https://ncjweb.com/ncj-feature-articles/ and can be downloaded at K3NA.org. It addresses an issue many of us find ourselves wondering about again and again. Should I stay where I am or change bands? Although it would be somewhat difficult to apply such detailed analysis during an actual contest, the article brings up points to be aware of when deciding on a band change.

I found it particularly interesting since my contest mentor Jim, VE7ZO, is having decisions analyzed after the contest that he and his partner were making in real time during their winning 2006 WRTC effort. Jim is solidly in the category of "The Best of The Best" and I feel honored to have sat by his side learning from him during many contests at NQ4I.

Annex I Rate Meter Deception and Equivalent QSOs

"Should I stop what I'm doing now and do something else?" A good contester asks herself this question continuously. The winning contester changes operating tactics whenever the new tactic will improve the score faster than the old tactic. But how does one evaluate two different tactics? Many contesters watch their logging software's rate meter: that display of raw QSOs worked recently, expressed as QSOs per hour. If the rate meter goes up, they feel things are going well. When the rate meter heads down, eventually they make a change in tactics: change bands, change mode (for multi-mode contests), switch between running and search & pounce, change antennas or antenna system configurations, or change running frequencies.

Rate meters come in several flavors; last 10 minutes, last hour, last 10 QSOs, and last 100 QSOs are common versions. For brevity I will only state (but not prove here) that, in many contest situations, measuring the last 10- OR 100-QSOs to calculate rate often deceives the operator. Such measurements can tell the operator that his performance is falling off, when in fact it is improving – or vice versa. Measuring the last 10 minutes or last hour to determine rate helps avoid one class of false indications. But even a last-10-minute measurement of raw QSO rate can mislead. Here is an example, taken from the VE3EJ+VE7ZO log.

During the ten minutes 2200–2209z, the team worked 11 QSOs on 20m SSB. Then, switching to 40m CW, in the next ten minutes they worked 12 contacts. Should they stay on 40m CW? The rate meter at 2210z read "66 QSO/hr" and now, at 2220z, it reads "72 QSO/hr". Some contesters would look at that information and conclude that one should continue with the current tactic.

Hold on, though! Those contacts on 20m SSB were almost all 5-point DX. If we had a "QSO points per hour" rate meter, back on 20m SSB at 2210z it would have read "348 QSO points/hr"… and now at 2220z on 40m CW it reads "114 QSO points/hr". Guess that switch to 40m was a big mistake! Sure, VE3EJ+VE7ZO worked an additional QSO in the last 10 minutes, but all their QSOs are of low-point value. And that simple last-10-minute QSO-per-hour rate meter: throw it away!

But wait! There's more to the story. Back on 20m SSB, VE3EJ+VE7ZO worked one new multiplier. Here on 40m CW, they just worked nine new multipliers. So now which operating tactic was best? Help!

What we need is a performance parameter that takes into account the number of contacts, their point value, and the value of new multipliers. Ideally, it should resemble a rate meter, since contesters are familiar with that general concept.

In this article's analysis, I use "equivalent QSOs per hour". An "equivalent QSO", or E-QSO, expresses performance in terms of how many average QSOs would be required to achieve a particular improvement in score.

Let's go back and look at VE3EJ+VE7ZO's score at three recent times:

Time	QSOs	QSO points	Multipliers	Score
2200z	1393	6455	124	800,420
2210z	1405	6513	125	814,125
2220z	1416	6532	134	875,288

During the first ten minute period, the score increased 13,705 points. At 2200z, an average QSO was worth (800,420 / 1393) = 574.6 points to the then-current score. If, over the next ten minutes, the team just worked QSOs of average QSO point value and no multipliers, it would require (13,705 / 574.6) = 23.9 average contacts to reach that score shown at 2210z. We can state that those 12 specific logged contacts (worth 58 points and one new multiplier) are exactly equivalent to 23.9 QSOs of average value. I'll call them "equivalent QSOs". Since these occurred over a ten minute period, multiply 23.9 by six to convert to an hourly equivalent-QSO rate of 143.1 for the 20m SSB run. Applying the same calculations to the next ten minute period, we find the score increase of 61,043 (resulting from 11 contacts worth 19 QSO points and 9 new multipliers) equates to 105.6 E-QSOs. The hourly E-QSO rate on 40m CW just hit 633.3!

Observations by the Editor:

- Some of you may want to confirm q's with mobiles you work during contests. A good reason to do that would be if you are hunting counties. Not being much of an award hunter I wasn't aware LOTW isn't very mobile friendly. The following post from AA4TI was on the QSOParty website and might help folks get a better mobile confirmation percentage.

  When you are a fixed station, it is easy to confirm via LOTW. When you are working a SQP as a mobile, it is a much bigger issue since you have to set up LOTW for each county that you work. It also means scrubbing your log to separate out each county before submitting the log to LOTW. Additionally, LOTW can't be used for the USACA award… you must have QSL's or Mobile Reply Cards.

  Most mobile Ops do not make the effort to submit to LOTW since those confirmations don't count for much other than Worked All States award from ARRL. That's why you have

confirmations from Laci (a fixed station) and not Rich (generally mobile). If you want to confirm those 137 contacts with Rich when he was mobile, send him MRC's and an SASE.

If you want confirmations from any mobile station, it is best to send an MRC and SASE directly to the mobile. My experience has been that nearly 100% of the mobiles will sign and return the cards. Also, do not send a QSL card since that requires the mobile to fill out his QSL and modify it for the counties he operated in.

I've been on both sides of the fence!
Steve – AA4TI
USACA – All 3077 counties confirmed by MRC's - #1161

- In a previous newsletter I mentioned another ham talked about using colored zip ties having a flat tab on the end to label the myriad of cables in his shack. Sounded like a good idea so I bought some. They work very well. You can either directly use a Sharpie marker or write on the provided peel and stick labels. I've recently switched radio positions in my SO2R shack and then removed and replaced one rig when I took it on a field trip. The work was much easier and quicker to do with the wires clearly labeled – and there wasn't a single misconnected wire. Forget what the cost was, but not much. If you wanted more writing area you could even use both sides of the tab. Using a matching color scheme helps too, but despite good intentions I didn't have sufficient attention to detail to manage that nicely. A couple labels fell off because I didn't first clean the plastic with alcohol, but that isn't the zip tie's fault. That's why there are two ways of marking shown. Available on Amazon. (The cables marked "KEY" and "ACC" in the image were provided by microHAM for identifying their cables.)
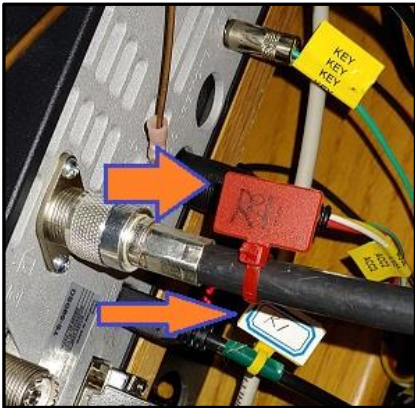
- Although my problems are not nearly as serious of some of yours out there, I have been dealing with a couple physical issues that are making it difficult to keep my BIC for a 36+ hour contest effort. A well beaten, but still underrated, contesting topic is physical conditioning. A fairly active thread on the CQ-Contest reflector titled "Aging contesters" contained this little jewel of a paragraph from Bob, KQ2M. I don't think I've heard things summed up quite so well before.

Contesting, especially SO2R and 2BSIQ, when pursued at the highest intensity, makes enormous physical and mental demands on us, and our performance deteriorates rapidly with sleep

deprivation and as we exceed our reserves of mental/physical stamina. If we are also ill or become ill, the deterioration becomes exponential with the passage of time. But the impacts on performance are not uniform - some competitors experience worse effects than others and in some cases they may be potentially dangerous, likely linked to underlying health issues whether diagnosed or not. As expected, the better conditioned/trained can maintain their level of performance for longer periods and with fewer deleterious side effects. And there are crossover benefits - those with better physical conditioning can compensate to some degree for a lower level of mental stamina, and those with superior cognition and memory (and will) can compensate for physical deterioration. Just like in "real life".

The thread also dealt with memory enhancement supplements like Prevagen, Neuriva, and vitamins; and even diverged into direct electrical stimulation of the brain. People take this contesting stuff pretty seriously! And then there was the other side which referenced Steve Martin's outlook on aging.

- Audacity is a great audio editing tool. I use it to record and adjust .wav audio files for the DVK (Digital Voice Keyer) built into N1MM. Its main use for me is to trim the dead space at the beginning and end of recordings, normalize levels (so every .wav file played through the transmitter has the same volume), remove dead spaces in between words, and to raise or lower volume level of individual sections of the wav file to enhance message clarity. Audacity is very complicated with many features a simple ham shack audio editor does not need. Ran across a reference to an alternative called Ocenaudio and am giving it a try. Simpler interface. Normalizes. Trims. Very fast. And for those of you who use Mac's or Linux instead of Windows it works on those too. Just playing with it now, but it looks like it will do everything I want. Like Audacity, it is free. It seems to be a great little program and I'll likely end up chucking some bucks at them for a donation to thank the developers. https://www.ocenaudio.com/

- Been having problems with the Smart TV in my wife's studio dropping offline out of our home WiFi network. Seems no matter what I try it finds a new way to break a few hours later. After winning (temporarily?) the latest hassle I ran across this post from Fred, K6DGW. He was responding to another ham who asked, "If our machines are so much smarter, how come we aren't?" Fred's take on them thar' computer and network issues plaguing many of us is "The faster the computer, the more quickly it will get to the bug in the program." He's probably right. But I'm not very good at networking stuff so I think I just might be suffering from a recurring `Id10T` error. (Otherwise known as "Idiot".)

- Yet another thread on the CWOPS group asked what tricks the top scorers in the CWT's use. Bud, AA3B, is always a top CWT op and is often #1 in other major contests. He is a very accomplished SO2R op. A video of him in action is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HxsyBjjUiQ . Doug, KR2Q, has captured Bud's real secret though. Doug wrote:
  "This video… does not give you Bud's real secret weapon. To understand how bud does it, you need to see BUD in action, not his video screens." Here is a hint: Below is BUD's photo taken using a special multidimensional camera. Many heads, many arms and many ears. SIMPLE!"

N1MM+ Tips:

- Call History Files (CHF) are a great operator aid. They allow prefilling of exchange fields by simply entering a call sign in the Entry Window. Saves typing and helps you verify you copied the exchange correctly. However -- DO NOT trust them!! They are only an aid and are often wrong. Be sure you copy ALL information yourself as they may be operating from a different location or using a different name than in previous contests. Another advantage to a CHF comes to light when you run across someone who isn't giving their call very often. You can type the exchange info into the Entry Window and with Super Check Partial (SCP) turned on N1MM will suggest possible call signs. If he isn't giving a call or you are having trouble busting a pileup you can type the info in. Sometimes only one possible call sign comes back and I have already worked the station. I could sit around and wait for the call but will normally just move on.

CHF's can be downloaded from the N1MM website at
https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/mmfiles/categories/callhistory/
You may not find a CHF for every contest there. For example, it is meaningless to have a CHF for contests using only serial numbers in the exchange since that number changes every QSO. Some State QP's do not have CHF's either, although with the changes Dave, WN4AFP, and his QP group have made in regard to the State QP Challenge more CHF's for individual states have been appearing on the website.

You change (or update) your CHF for the contest when either first setting up the contest or by opening an existing contest log and using the "Associated Files" tab for that log. Once that tab is open clicking on "Change" will automatically check to see if a CHF exists online or it will give you an option to manually navigate to where the CHF is stored on your computer. This file does not update on its own so be sure to check for an update as part of your routine for contest preparation.
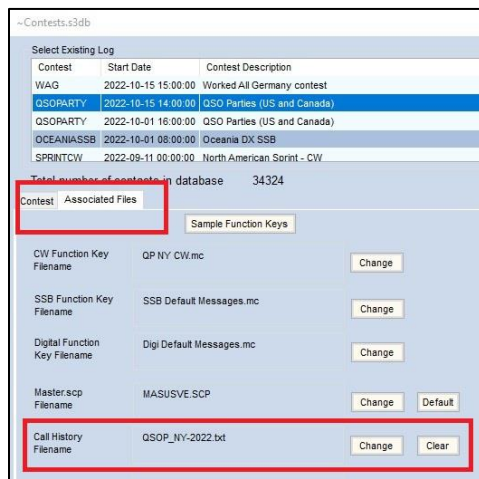
- Bill, N4IQ, uses the digital voice keyer in his TS590's to send contest audio instead of using N1MM's .wav file capabilities. No matter what radio folks were using, a problem with that method is since the messages are triggered inside the rig by using a CAT command sent from N1MM they kept playing until the rig memory playback completed. It didn't matter that ESC was pressed in N1MM the message played on until done. However, if you use N1MM's .wav file playback method using ESC would stop any transmitted audio. Bill solved that issue by putting a separate CAT command in F12 to stop message playback early when needed. He would use F12 instead of ESC to stop transmitted audio. I haven't tried it, but apparently N1MM now recognizes ESC and stops some radios (like the TS590) immediately from finishing their memory DVK messages. Besides just controlling functions within N1MM, pushing ESC key now also sends a CAT command to the radio and stops message playback. You no longer need a separate macro to do it.

- There are two tips in this bullet point… It's well known that N1MM and Windows' OneDrive do not get along. Despite that being well known problems keep coming up with people somehow putting their N1MM info on OneDrive. That makes this solution to a user request

worth repeating. The N1MM reflector post was excitedly titled "Installed N1MM Update and all Configuration Files are gone!" The last advice in the thread given by K3CT was new to me and seems to be particularly useful. If I ever reinstall N1MM I will likely do that.

K9OM: I installed the latest N1MM Logger update on a computer that hadn't been used for several months. After the update my computer acts like this is a first time installation of N1MM on this computer as all of my previous Configuration files are gone including my QTH information and Radio control information is gone. Please advise if there is a simple way I can reset this new version of N1MM Logger to my previous settings?

VE9AA: Find one of the n1mm "day of the week" ini files and rename it to the plain jane n1mm.ini one.
(Editors Note: N1MM helpfully creates backup .ini files in the N1MM Logger+ directory found in the Documents folder. They look like "n1mm logger.ini.Monday.bak". Many hams have been able to restore N1MM's functionality by renaming a .bak file and replacing a corrupted or missing N1MM Logger.ini file.)

K3CT *(N1MM Development Team member):* This is a symptom caused by OneDrive moving your files to the cloud. When you start our program the *.ini file does not exist so our software builds a new file.

If this happened, you have [two] choices. Unravel the damage done by OneDrive or re-install starting with the Full Installer placing the User directory outside of MyDocuments (example: C:\ham\ N1MM Logger+).

Upcoming Contests:

See the WA7BNM webpages https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html

SFOTA Current Leaderboard:

11/14/2022

2022 OVERALL STANDINGS

	CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1)	N4IQ	61	9796	972	1121	4009	15898
2)	WN4AFP	78	7193	1750	0	0	8943
3)	K3DNE	26	605	6696	582	407	8290
4)	K4FT	91	7598	510	0	65	8173
5)	KY4ID	106	7618	121	18	169	7926
6)	K4QQG	48	0	7648	0	39	7687
7)	KG4IGC	23	766	1531	0	3023	5320
8)	N4QI	107	2893	1014	0	1193	5100
9)	AC4MC	37	2796	1828	0	462	5086
10)	K7OM	26	1543	200	32	2564	4339
11)	WA2BCK	6	1834	475	0	0	2309
12)	N4XL	8	920	1360	0	0	2280
13)	WB5NHL	7	343	531	0	1042	1916
14)	KS4YX	10	278	27	391	1032	1728
15)	NU4E	4	500	958	38	0	1496
16)	N2OG	9	6	686	0	547	1239
17)	KN4OQD	6	0	887	0	0	887
18)	NI7R	8	873	2	0	0	875
19)	NE4EA	5	95	632	0	0	727
20)	KG9V	7	0	438	0	0	438
21)	WB4HRL	1	60	0	0	0	60
22)	AJ4UQ	1	0	0	1	0	1

2022 INDIVIDUAL MODE STANDINGS

CALL	CW QSO'S	CALL	SSB QSO'S	CALL	DIGITAL QSO'S	CALL	RTTY QSO'S
N4IQ	9796	K4QQG	7648	N4IQ	1121	N4IQ	4009
KY4ID	7618	K3DNE	6696	K3DNE	582	KG4IGC	3023
K4FT	7598	AC4MC	1828	KS4YX	391	K7OM	2564
WN4AFP	7193	WN4AFP	1750	NU4E	38	N4QI	1193
N4QI	2893	KG4IGC	1531	K7OM	32	WB5NHL	1042
AC4MC	2796	N4XL	1360	KY4ID	18	KS4YX	1032
WA2BCK	1834	N4QI	1014	AJ4UQ	1	N2OG	547
K7OM	1543	N4IQ	972			AC4MC	462
N4XL	920	NU4E	958			K3DNE	407
NI7R	873	KN4OQD	887			KY4ID	169
KG4IGC	766	N2OG	686			K4FT	65
K3DNE	605	NE4EA	632			K4QQG	39
NU4E	500	WB5NHL	531				
WB5NHL	343	K4FT	510				
KS4YX	278	WA2BCK	475				
NE4EA	95	KG9V	438				
WB4HRL	60	K7OM	200				
N2OG	6	KY4ID	121				
		KS4YX	27				
		NI7R	2				

3830 Activity:

Last 30 days NOTE: WAE RTTY scores not all entered yet

Contest	Call	Class	PWR	Score
CQWW SSB				
10/31/22	AC4MC	SO(A)AB	HP	432,816
10/31/22	K3DNE	SO(A)AB	HP	1,850,205
10/31/22	K4QQG	SO(A)AB	HP	1,003,302
10/31/22	K4RM	M/S	HP	3,938,624
	(ND7J,W4EEY,N4IQ,NU4E,K4RM)			
10/31/22	KG4IGC	SO(A)AB	LP	238,798
10/31/22	N2OG	SO(A)AB	LP	240,618
10/31/22	N4QI	SOAB	LP	35,020
10/31/22	N4XL	SO(A)AB	LP	1,065,222
10/31/22	NU4E	SO(A)AB	HP	38,544
10/31/22	WN4AFP	SOAB	LP	24,128
IlQP				
10/17/22	K4QQG	Fixed	HP	1,073
10/17/22	N4QI	Fixed	LP	1,218
10/17/22	WN4AFP	Fixed	LP	15,936
JARTS				
10/18/22	K7OM	Single Op	HP	9,050
10/21/22	KG4IGC	Single Op	LP	102,696
10/17/22	N4QI	Single Op	LP	8,225
KRC SST				
11/14/22	KY4ID	Single Op	LP	2,960
NA Sprint SSB				
10/23/22	K4QQG	Single Op	HP	2,277
10/23/22	NU4E	Single Op	HP	8,918
NyQP				
10/16/22	K4QQG	SOSSB	HP	888
10/17/22	N4QI	SOMixed	LP	495
10/16/22	WN4AFP	SOCW	LP	17,802

Contest	Call	Class	PWR	Score
SS CW				
11/7/22	AC4MC	Single Op	HP	27,150
11/7/22	K3DNE	SO Unlimited	HP	40,320
11/7/22	K4FT	Single Op	LP	84,168
11/7/22	KY4ID	SO Unlimited	LP	31,248
11/7/22	N2OG	Single Op	LP	60
11/7/22	N4QI	Single Op	LP	20,280
11/7/22	N4XL	SO Unlimited	LP	360
11/7/22	WA2BCK	Single Op	HP	93,852
11/7/22	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	105,244
WAE RTTY				
11/14/22	N4QI	Single Op	LP	27,170
WAG				
10/17/22	N4QI	SO Mixed	LP	1,632
10/16/22	NU4E	SO Mixed	HP	111,600

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73 es QRT de N4XL