



TALES FROM THE SWAMP

August 2018

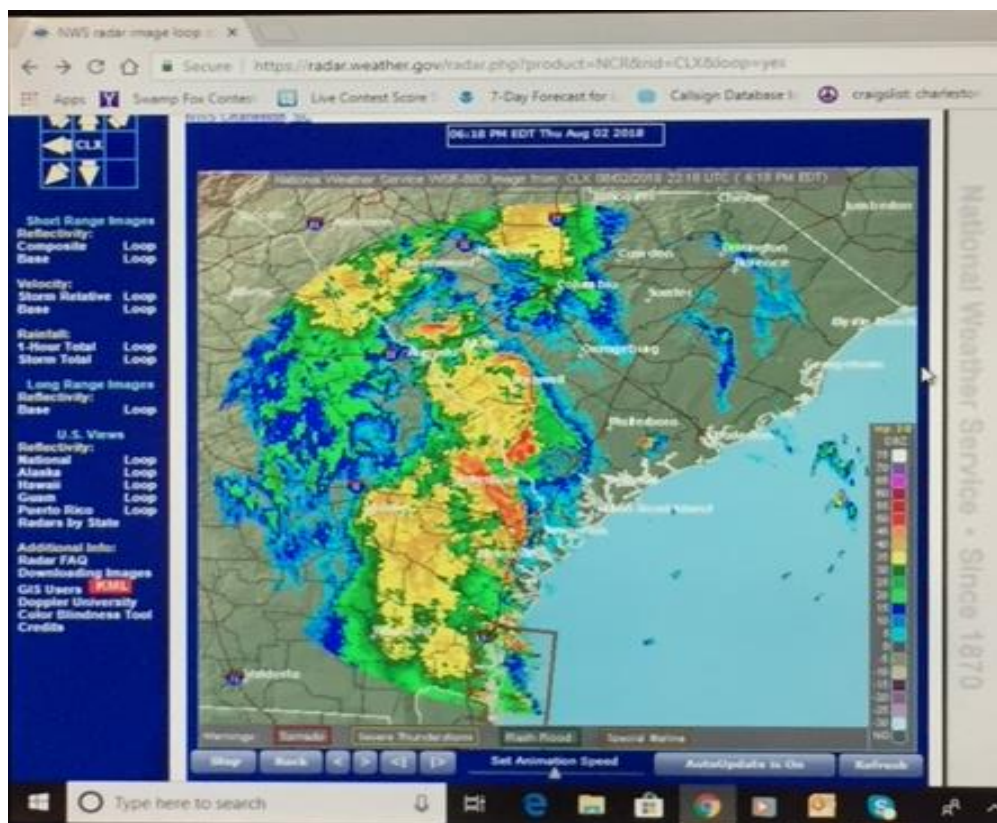
Author: Frank KG4IGC

From Your President:

Greetings Swamp Foxes from the low country! Can you believe that it is August already? The summer months sure are going by fast this year and we are now in the dog days of summer with excessive heat and plenty of thunderstorms. We get thunderstorms quite often during the summer, which means lots of off air times and remembering to disconnect all antennas. It is also beneficial to have proper grounding techniques. If all that you have is a six foot ground rod right outside of your hamshack, then perhaps you might want to consider re-evaluating your station grounding.

If you are unsure how to properly ground your station, towers, and antennas, Kevan N4XL has provided a really good link on our club website that explains proper station grounding. You can find the link about station grounding [here](#).

I have a laptop in my shack dedicated to the local radar, and as I am writing this article, this is what the radar looks like:



During the summer months, I monitor the National Weather Service radar 7/24. That way at a glance, I can see what storms are headed my way. The reason that I do this is because a few years back I took an indirect lightning hit resulting in the loss of my Yaesu Mark V Field, a power supply, computer, and a few other items. As you can

imagine, I was not a happy camper and I was off the air for quite some time. Another good thing to have if you do not have it already is the [ARRL's ham radio insurance](#). I have to say, after taking a lightning hit, I was very thankful that I had my equipment covered.

Membership is starting to pick up again, we have two new members that have joined the SFCG in the past month, Randy Sandstrom N4SXX from Gaston, SC & Peter Moyes AG3R from Taylors, SC. Randy and Peter, welcome to the club!

Just as a reminder, in a little over two weeks the Swamp Fox Contest Group (SFCG) & the and South Carolina DX Association (SCDXA) will be sponsoring another Advanced Contesting Class on Saturday, August 18, 2018. The address is [3056 Greenpond Rd, Gray Court, South Carolina 29645](#) and starts at 8:30 A.M. We would like to thank K9JDP for graciously opening his shack for the purpose of the class. For more details about the class, be sure to check out our [Education page](#). Kevan N4XL will be presenting the class and there is still room for a few more so if you are interested in attending, be sure to let him know ASAP.

[The North America QSO Party CW](#) is this upcoming weekend, Tom W1TEF is looking for team members, *teams have to be registered before Saturday morning* so please be sure to let him know if you are interested in being on one of the teams. For our newer members, this is one of the contests that we can submit our combined scores as a club.

Despite really lousy band conditions, the 13 Colonies SES went really well this year. Tom W1TEF did a really great job of organizing the event in a very short amount of time. The Swamp Fox Contest Group would like to congratulate K2J North Carolina for winning the Top State award for the second year in a row with an impressive 14,840 total Q's! Our South Carolina team, K2L came in 3rd place this year with 13,056 Q's, 1,784 Qs behind first place K2J/NC and 566 Qs behind K2K/NH, who ranked 2nd place.

Tom tells us that we did 44% better this year compared to last year Q count of 9079, which in my opinion pretty awesome! The club would also like to congratulate two of our K2L team-mates, Tom W1TEF for winning the Top Operator QRP with 982 Q's and Brian KI4LXF who took the Digital Top operator award with 2472 Q's.

ARRL DX SSB contest results are out!

http://www.arrl.org/results-database?event_id=99462

In case you have not heard, the CQ World Wide Contest rules have been updated for 2018 Contest Season:

(From the CQWW website)

CQ has announced that, effective with 2018 contests, some modifications to the CQ World Wide Contest rules have been developed and approved by the contest committee.

The “busted call/NIL” penalty is reduced from 3× to 2×.

Email addresses for log submissions have been removed, and the committee now “strongly prefers” using web uploads to submit logs. Paper logs will still be accepted.

The 10× penalty for “rubber clocking” with MS/M2 entries has been eliminated, although the committee “will continue to vigorously pursue time abuses.”

The observer program has been eliminated. “Given the absence of a reasonable pool of volunteers and supporting funding, the program has proven to be impractical,” CQ said.

The top entry in the “Rookie” category will be awarded on a one-time-only basis. Previous Rookie winners are ineligible for plaques in this category.

Submit questions via the CQ WW “Contact Form” page.

— *Thanks to John Dorr, K1AR, CQ World Wide Contest Director*

Brag List:

Tom W1TEF received a Plaque for Top Operator QRP in the 13 Colonies SES.

Notable Mentions:

On behalf of the entire club, we would like to congratulate Russ W4STR & Nancy Warmath. They celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary on July 22, 2018. Best wishes to both of you!

Member Contributions:

IGNORANT

Contributed By: Kevan N4XL

A common taunt being thrown around for a couple years when I was a kid was “You’re IGNORANT!” Being a geek and knowing what the word meant kept that particular insult from ever bothering me. Merriam-Webster says it means “destitute of knowledge or education”. Wow. I think everyone is ignorant. How many of us know how to describe the fusion reaction going on in the sun? That reaction has given many of us a sunburn on these hot July days. Since it hurts many of us we ought to know how that happens. Or how many of us know what the teenagers are using these days instead of the word “Cool!”? Ignorance is neither a good nor a bad thing. It just is. But it can and has cost me money. I can’t count how many times I’ve been almost done with a project and said “Oops. Wish I’d have known about that before I started.”

However, I do understand that an antenna doesn’t much care what type of radio is connected to it when a radio wave hits its metal. How much voltage is generated depends on many things. I may be ignorant and not know it, but I seriously doubt if a discone antenna works much differently if I feed its output coax to a Software Define Radio (SDR) or an “old school” analog one. The signal handling difference happens in the rig rather than the antenna. (If anyone knows differently though I would be more than happy to have them clear that up for me.)

While thumbing through my August 2018 QST I noticed an MFJ advertisement for Discone antennas. I like Discones and have owned several over the years. Bought my most recent one at a second-hand store for \$8 a while ago. It was in great shape and has the stronger style antenna spoke elements. I smiled at the MFJ ad because they want \$69.95 for theirs. That's the problem with growing old. I remember when I thought \$24.95 was too high for my first one. Anyway, on with the story.




MFJ wideband SDR Discone Antenna
Receives 25-1300 MHz

MFJ ultra wide-band *Discone* Antenna receives 25-1300 MHz. Perfect for all band SDR reception. Covers 10, 6, 2 Meters, 220 and 440 MHz and 33/23 CM ham bands and everything in between. It is excellent for monitoring multiple bands simultaneously using multiple SDRs and a multi-coupler. Also test any transmitter 50-1300 MHz using a single discone and single coax. Handles 200W. Includes 50 feet coax, stainless steel elements and mounting hardware.

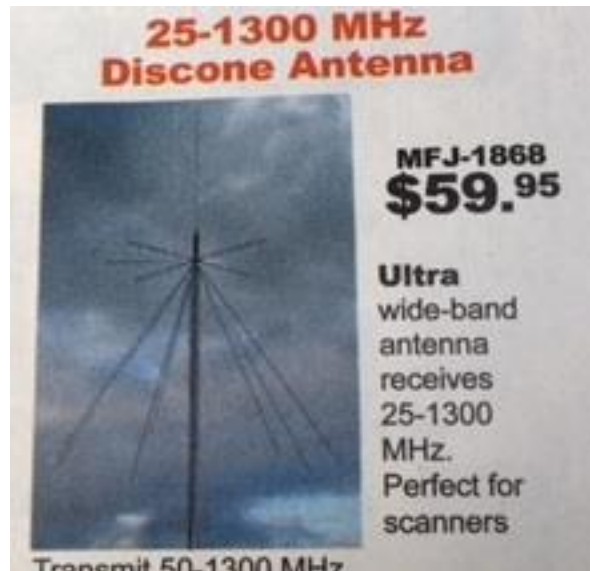
MFJ-1866, \$49.95. Like MFJ-1868 but transmits 144-1290 MHz. Coax and mounting hardware not included.

MFJ-1868
\$69.95



This antenna apparently is designed for SDR operation. It must be better for SDR radio's than other discones. Why else would they put SDR in the description? Notice it is ultra wide-band covering 25-1300 MHz and is model MFJ-1868.

A couple pages later I found this ad in the same magazine.



This Discone apparently isn't wideband and optimized for SDR radio's though. At least they tout that up in big red letters like the other one does. Despite that this too is ultra wide-band covering 25-1300 MHz and is also a model MFJ-1868. I wonder how many people out there will happily pay the extra 16% for the SDR version? Most likely MFJ is looking at the SDR craze and decided to take advantage of ignorant hams (remember – ignorant is not a bad word). I'll guess if you tried to buy the non-wideband non-SDR model MFJ-1868 some companies, if not all, would tell you the price is now \$69.95.

Reminds me of the old way of creative advertising where companies claimed an HF yagi had 20 dB of gain when they actually had an average gain of around 3 dBd. I used to be ignorant and believe

those ads thought Hygain was THE only antenna to have since their gain was so high. I'm glad I've kept trying to learn about my hobby. Knowing better in this case would have saved me \$10 bucks because I'm sure I could have insisted MFJ honor their advertised lower price of the second MFJ-1868 ad. I'd just tell them I didn't need the SDR capability of the more expensive one.

Other News:

Randy N4SXX was looking for aluminum boom material, Kevan N4XL suggested trying a nearby metal supplier or SCHAMSWAP.

Phil NI7R informed the club about raw scores from the WRTC and told us to be sure to check out the video. Raw scores can be found [here](#).

Kevan N4XL asked the group their thoughts about some hams that are looking for a tuner that works with their radio. Seems that they want to be able to use the tune button on their rig to control the auto tuner.

Dave WB5NHL asked when the South Carolina QSO party results would be posted. Dave WN4AFP will be finalizing the results hopefully within the next 15 days. Dave mentioned that they received about 240 logs this year with some really nice scores despite band conditions.

Dave WN4AFP reminded the club about the upcoming North America QSO Party, CW contest.

Kevan N4XL shared some interesting information about what rigs the WRTC teams have used in 2014 & 2018. He also mentioned the increase of usage of SDR pan-adapters in contesting.

Randy N4SXX asked what sort of things that we like to eat or drink while contesting. He was also interested in everyone's thoughts about BICtime.

Bill N4IQ informed us that he will be out of commission for a while, as he is upgrading his SO2R computer to an I7.

Upcoming Hamfests:

Chester Tailgate Party/Mini Ham Fest

Date: Saturday, August 18, 2018 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: New Life Baptist Church, 1044 Columbia Rd. Chester, SC

Talk-in: 145.310 - offset Tone 167.9

Admission will be free.

For more information contact: Don Etters W4DEE, (803) 209-2807, w4dee@truvista.net or Brian Timms KW4BET, (803) 374-9211, kw4bet@arri.net

Shelby Hamfest

Date: August 31, September 1-2 2018

Location: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, 1751 E. Marion Street,
Shelby, NC 28152

Hours: Friday August 31 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Buildings & Flea
Market)

 Saturday September 1 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Flea Market)

 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Buildings)

 Sunday September 2 7:00 AM – 1:00 PM (Flea Market)

 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM (Buildings)

Talk-in: 146.880 (-), No Tone - W4NYR Repeater

Rock Hill Hamfest

Date: October 6, 2018

Location: New Kirk Baptist Church, 175 Museum Road, Rock Hill, SC
29732

Hours: 7:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Sponsored by the York County Amateur Radio Society

Talk-In: 147.030 - (PL 88.5)

For more information, contact: <http://www.ycars.org>

Brent Case, K4BSC, (803) 504-0246, k4bsc@arrl.net

Contests:

NAQP RTTY

Ted K70M Single Op LP 15,023

IARU

NI7R SOAB(A)CW HP 101,000

WU0B SOAB(A)SSB LP 37,947

K70M SOABCW HP 50,250

WN4AFP SOABCW LP 53,853

KG4IGC SOABSSB LP 44,730

Total: 287,780 claimed points

RSGB IOTA Contest

Ted K70M SOHPCW 8568

SFOTA:

Current Leaderboard

2018 OVERALL STANDINGS

CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1) N4IQ	84	6530	289	0	3726	10545
2) K7OM	30	1469	596	16	3268	5349
3) WN4AFP	62	3001	785	0	0	3786
4) NI7R	12	1547	183	0	584	2314
5) KG4IGC	18	547	927	0	722	2196
6) N4XL	2	380	1037	0	0	1417
7) NJ4F	7	437	20	0	887	1344
8) WU0B	4	0	800	0	302	1102
9) KG6MC	4	463	621	0	0	1084
10) KS4YX	4	229	0	0	692	921
11) W4SLT	5	0	528	0	0	528
12) NE4EA	5	222	46	0	0	268
13) AJ4UQ	6	1	132	1	119	253

2018 INDIVIDUAL MODE STANDINGS

CALL	CW QSO'S	CALL	SSB QSO'S	CALL	DIGITAL QSO'S	CALL	RTTY QSO'S
N4IQ	6530	N4XL	1037	K7OM	16	N4IQ	3726
WN4AFP	3001	KG4IGC	927	AJ4UQ	1	K7OM	3268
NI7R	1547	WU0B	800			NJ4F	887
K7OM	1469	WN4AFP	785			KG4IGC	722
KG4IGC	547	KG6MC	621			KS4YX	692
KG6MC	463	K7OM	596			NI7R	584
NJ4F	437	W4SLT	528			WU0B	302
N4XL	380	N4IQ	289			AJ4UQ	119
KS4YX	229	NI7R	183				
NE4EA	222	AJ4UQ	132				
AJ4UQ	1	NE4EA	46				
		NJ4F	20				

Upcoming Contests:

QRP Fox Hunt, Aug 3, 0100z to Aug 3, 0230z; CW; Bands: 20m Only; RST + (state/province/country) + name + power output; Logs due: July 28.

NCCC RTTY Sprint, Aug 3, 0145z to Aug 3, 0215z; RTTY; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: July 29.

NCCC Sprint, Aug 3, 0230z to Aug 3, 0300z; CW; Bands: (see rules); Serial No. + Name + QTH; Logs due: July 29.

10-10 Int. Summer Contest, SSB, Aug 4, 0001z to Aug 5, 2359z; SSB; Bands: 10m Only; 10-10 Member: Name + 10-10 number + (state/province/country), Non-Member: Name + 0 + (state/province/country); Logs due: August 13.

European HF Championship, Aug 4, 1200z to Aug 4, 2359z; CW, SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RS(T) + 2-digit year first licensed; Logs due: August 6.

North American QSO Party, CW, Aug 4, 1800z to Aug 5, 0559z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; NA: Name + (state/DC/province/country), non-NA: Name; Logs due: August 10.

SARL HF Phone Contest, Aug 5, 1400z to Aug 5, 1700z; SSB; Bands: 80, 40, 20m; RS + Serial No.; Logs due: August 12.

ARS Spartan Sprint, Aug 7, 0100z to Aug 7, 0300z; CW; Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; RST + (state/province/country) + Power; Logs due: August 9.

Phone Fray, Aug 8, 0230z to Aug 8, 0300z; SSB; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15m; NA: Name + (state/province/country), non-NA: Name; Logs due: July 27.

CWops Mini-CWT Test, Aug 8, 1300z to Aug 8, 1400z, Aug 8, 1900z to Aug 8, 2000z, Aug 9, 0300z to Aug 9, 0400z; CW; Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10m; Member: Name + Member No., non-Member: Name + (state/province/country); Logs due: July 28.

VHF+ CONTESTS

WAB 144 MHz Low Power Phone, Aug 4, 1400z to Aug 4, 1800z; Phone; Bands: 2m Only; British Isles: RS + serial no. + WAB square, Other: RS +

serial no. + country; Logs due: August 25.

[ARRL 222 MHz and Up Distance Contest](#), Aug 4, 1800z to Aug 5, 1800z; Any;
Bands: 222 MHz and up; 6-character grid square; Logs due: August 19.

From QST:

2018 ARRL RTTY RU:

Affiliated Club Competition SFCG 15th place 281,574 points, 7 entries
(Pg. 89, August 2018 QST)

SFCG Newsletter August 2018