



TALES FROM THE SWAMP

January 2020

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New Kid:

A new year brings new faces. Frank passed the editorial baton to me last month so you lucky people have the dubious pleasure of hearing me expound here as well as on the reflector. It will take a bit to settle into a routine format. If you have some ideas on what you'd like to see in your newsletter pass them along. Articles appreciated.

From Your President:

Forthcoming. (We're still figuring this out too.)

January SFCG Meeting Saturday, January 25th, 2020:

We would like to remind everyone to mark your calendars for our annual meeting/lunch on Saturday, January 25th, 2020 at the Lizard's Thicket in Lexington, SC at 1 PM. As always, XYL's and guests are welcome. If you have a friend or a potential contester that you would like to bring along feel free to do so, they are welcome to join us! We are looking forward to seeing everyone, especially our newest members. The Lizard's Thicket is located on US-1 between I-26 and I-20, west of I-26 in Lexington, SC. Below is the address and phone number.

Lizard's Thicket
4616 Augusta Road
Lexington, SC
803-785-5560

From the reflector:

- Dave's, WN4AFP, new 80-meter OCF dipole has been doing very well for him as indicated by this comment he made about a CWT Ops session he entered shortly after Bill, N4IQ, helped him put it up:
"THIS IS MY BEST SCORE SINCE I JOINED CWOPS! 80m was fantastic and the new antenna was kickin' tonight. I ran on 80m for 50 mins. Had four 3 per min rate."
- Dave, WN4AFP, and others, have added this statement to his reflector postings. "Are you a contester located in South Carolina? If so, visit the Swamp Fox Contest Group website at <http://swampfoxcontestgroup.com>" Thanks for promoting the SFCG!
- Matt, NU4E had fun in the Stew Perry writing: "WOW, awesome, I still can't believe it :-)) that was fun. My first Stew Perry... When I heard the first EU signals I started to make a list which EU station I heard but there were so many and then they even came back to me. Worked 15 DXCC and 12 were in EU."
- Many folks think working 160 is hard to do, especially if you live in a restrictive HOA, so they don't even try. Phil, NI7R, spent 5 hours and showed us how it's done. Its particularly impressive considering his antenna situation.
Summary:
Total: QSOs = 164 Sections = 50 Countries = 2 Total Score = 17,368
K3, KPA500 amp, temporary vertical consisting of a large coil and a 17 foot whip on top of a metal ladder with another large coil as a radial.
- Bill, N4IQ, is known to be a "Digital Demon" when it comes to promoting FT4/8. It surprised me to read this in his comments about the FT Roundup test: "As much as I enjoyed this contest, RTTY is still my favorite digital mode."
- From Dave, WN4AFP, "The 2020 SFOTA program began on December 23, 2019. All contests you worked after December 22 will be included in the 2020 SFOTA program... Note: If you submitted any contest data after December 22nd in the 2019 SFOTA system, you will need to re-enter the data in the 2020 SFOTA system. Data does not carry over from year to year. Also, any data entered into the 2019 SFOTA system will be removed and the scores will be adjusted by SFOTA admins"
- Several members put their BIC for the ARRL RTTY Round Up. Even our long lost friend and member Dave, NJ4F, joined the fun.
- A question from the Editor for those who have read this far. Do you find a rehash of comments made on the reflector valuable? I had started writing things that caught my eye down but began to wonder if it was worthwhile effort since everyone should supposedly be already seeing the information via their email. Shoot me a private comment or reply to the group on the reflector. I have left off many interesting comments that popped up after the last entry above pending member input.

Notable Mentions: Birthdays, anniversaries, deaths, etc.

We will pass around a sheet at our upcoming meeting asking for birthdays and anniversaries. In the interest of preserving your privacy, rather than putting it on the list would you please shoot me a personal email if you are dead so I can let everyone know? Seriously though, if anyone hears of something about a member that might interest the group that hasn't made the reflector then please pass it on to me for the newsletter.

Brag List: Member certificates and awards

Please bear with me on this. I didn't start a method to capture these yet, so it is hit and miss...

PA QSO Party 2019 Certificate Winners

WB4HRL Single Op High South Carolina 5,944

WN4AFP Single Op Low South Carolina 18,952

Worked All Europe DX Contest (WAEDC) RTTY 2019

31 KG4IGC 250 213 155 86 265

Blathers from the Editor:

Improvement by One of Our SFCG Members.

Dave, WN4AFP, is quoted above talking about how pleased he was with his December 19, 2019 Mini-CWT test effort of 75 Q's and 75 mults for 5,625 points during his 80-meter single band effort. It was his best effort to date. Looking back over his 3830 scores I found this from December 31, 2015: "This is my ALL-TIME best CWT with Low Power! What a rush! I ran on 40m from start to finish." Back then his best came with 62 Q's and 62 mults for 3,844 pts during a 40-meter single band effort. It is interesting to note his 2019 single band effort was on the usually harder to work 80 meter band instead of the normally easier 40 meters he used for his 2015 effort. 3830 also shows that until recently his CWT efforts have historically yielded less than 1,500 points with the vast majority being less than 1,000. Dave has always been a great CW operator. He keeps his skills fresh with plenty of BIC time in dozens of contests each year. So, what's changed to improve his scores so much in just a few years?

Here are some things I remember him mentioning these past few years. He uses Morse Runner to improve his already considerable skills. He upgraded from an IC-730 to an IC-751. (Wonder how he'd do with a K3 or IC-7610?) He went from a 40-meter dipole at 15 ft to a multiband OCF dipole at 55 ft. He embraced the dark side by giving up pen and paper logging and now uses N1MM+ instead. He has become more active in the ham community by monitoring several contesting and DX groups and subscribes to the ARRL contest newsletter. Increased involvement lets him keep current with the changing wind direction and trends of contesting. He even started

a reflector about state QP's and honcho's the SCQP for us. Those show he has actively pursued modest, but steady, station improvements while continually working to maintain and improve his operating skills.

Besides the personal satisfaction of self-improvement, those improvements both give him more contesting fun due to the increased rates he now enjoys at his home shack and resulted in an invitation to join the team at the NR4M superstation in Virginia. There he gets to play with stacked monobanders on 190 ft towers, use a four element 80 meter delta loop array, enjoy quiet 1,200 ft beverages, and play with the 8-circle receive array for 160 meters. As a first time team member he sat in a runners chair and significantly contributed to the hugely successful 2019 NR4M CQ WPX CW effort which took them to a #1 in NA victory and placed #6 World.

I salute Dave for working to become a better Ham Radio operator and for giving back so much to both the SFCG and our hobby. You are an inspiration to us all!

Kevan N4XL

N1MM+ Tips:

- 1) It is common while both Running and S&P to have your CW speed be drastically different from the other station. Or sometimes someone with an S9+20 signal comes back at you at your 30 WPM CQ speed but is having trouble copying your exchange info. For the first case I adjust speed to come close and in the second it sometimes helps to drop to 24 WPM or so. Quickly change how fast N1MM sends CW by using the Pg-Up and Pg-Dn keys. I have mine set to adjust speed by 2 WPM for each key press. You can change that amount by using the "Primary CW Speed Step" option on the "Other" page in the Configurer. The Configurer is N1MM+'s setup options area. I used to use the speed knob on the microHAM microKeyer, but those keyboard shortcuts give more precise control and keep my hands on the keyboard for typing call signs.

P.S. Pg-Up is also handy to increase speed if I'm CQing at a changeup up pace of 20 WPM when a speed demon decides I'm not a serious tester and tries to steal the frequency by CQing at 30+ WPM right on top of me. I guess they figure I'll be intimidated and meekly move somewhere else. It's surprising how many of them instead move on themselves after I quickly kick the speed back up!

- 2) Log Editing (From PJ2T comments)
If you enter a contact with the wrong information, there are two ways to edit the log to correct it. You can grab the mouse and chase the contact up the screen as other PJ2T ops

log contacts and double-click on the field you need to change, make the edit, and press Enter.

There is a better way. If you use CTRL + Q the last contact you made will populate the entry window again and you can edit it right there and press enter to complete the process.

No need to mess with the mouse or the log window. Bonus: Only the contacts logged at your operating position are presented. Each CTRL + Q command takes you another step back into your logged contacts. CTRL + A advances you back down the log. Enter to exit

- 3) N1MM+ can support serial ports from 1 to 99. Sometimes a “phantom” serial port is left in the Windows operating system from other programs. These ports remain in the system as assigned serial ports but are not normally visible in the Windows Device Manager. Conflicts sometimes result when you tell N1MM+ (or other programs for that matter) to use a port number that is already assigned to an invisible phantom serial port. Every now and then I tell Device Manager to show me the hidden ports. Unfortunately, it is not unusual to find two ports sharing the same number. N1MM+ describes their way of finding phantom ports in the N1MM+ user manual in the “Exposing and Deleting Phantom Serial Ports” section. Checking for phantom ports has become a routine part of my Windows troubleshooting efforts.

Upcoming Classes or events:

Don't forget the SFCG meeting on January 25th.

Upcoming Hamfests:

(From ARRL website)

01/26/2019 | TechFest

Location: Lawrenceville, GA

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society

Website: <http://www.techfest.info/>

Learn More

02/02/2019 | Roanoke Division Convention (Frostfest)

Location: Richmond, VA

Type: ARRL Convention

Sponsor: Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society (RATS)

Website: <http://frostfest.com>

Learn More

02/02/2019 | South Carolina State Convention (Charleston Hamfest)

Location: North Charleston, SC

Type: ARRL Convention

Sponsor: Charleston Amateur Radio Society
Website: <http://wa4usn.org>
Learn More

02/23/2019 | Dalton Hamfest

Location: Dalton, GA
Type: ARRL Hamfest
Sponsor: Dalton Amateur Radio Club
Website: <http://www.w4drc.com>
Learn More

Upcoming Contests:

See WA7BNM website
<https://www.contestcalendar.com/perpetualcal.php>

SFOTA Current leaderboard (Copy and Paste from Swamp Fox website)

Dave, WN4AFP, will discuss 2019 results at the January meeting.

2020 OVERALL STANDINGS

	CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1)	<u>N4IQ</u>	5	919	0	165	910	1994
2)	<u>WN4AFP</u>	11	878	26	0	236	1140
3)	<u>WB4HRL</u>	11	650	0	0	414	1064
4)	<u>NJ4F</u>	1	0	0	0	469	469
5)	<u>K7OM</u>	2	220	0	0	235	455
6)	<u>NI7R</u>	2	298	0	0	104	402
7)	<u>N4XL</u>	1	141	0	0	0	141
8)	<u>AJ4UQ</u>	1	0	0	0	61	61

2020 INDIVIDUAL MODE STANDINGS

CALL	CW QSO'S	CALL	SSB QSO'S	CALL	DIGITAL QSO'S	CALL	RTTY QSO'S
N4IQ	919	WN4AFP	26	N4IQ	165	N4IQ	910
WN4AFP	878					NJ4F	469
WB4HRL	650					WB4HRL	414
NI7R	298					WN4AFP	236
K7OM	220					K7OM	235
N4XL	141					NI7R	104
						AJ4UQ	61

Overall Standings & 2020 Individual Mode Standings <http://www.sfota.com/>

3830 Activity:

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

Timestamp	Call	Class	Power	Score
9A CW				
12/23/2019	WN4AFP	SOAB	LP	3,140
ARRL 10				
12/16/2019	KG6MC	SO Mixed	HP	2,860
12/17/2019	NI7R	SO CW	HP	612
		SO CW		
12/16/2019	WB4HRL	Unlimited	HP	8
12/18/2019	WN4AFP	SO Mixed	LP	2,142
		SO SSB		
12/16/2019	WU0B	Unlimited	LP	20
NAQP CW				
1/12/2020	K7OM	Single Op	LP	20,460
1/12/2020	KG4IGC	Single Op	LP	24,255
1/12/2020	KS4YX	Single Op	LP	25,056
1/12/2020	N4IQ	Single Op	LP	112,752
1/12/2020	N4XL	Single Op	LP	9,165
1/12/2020	NI7R	Single Op	LP	30,694
1/12/2020	NU4E	Single Op	LP	95,400
1/12/2020	WB4HRL	M/2	LP	26,784
1/12/2020	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	56,168
NCCC Sprint				
1/10/2020	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	280
OK RTTY				
12/22/2019	K7OM	SOAB	HP	21,580
12/22/2019	KG4IGC	SOAB	LP	21,267
12/22/2019	N4IQ	SOAB	HP	40,170
12/22/2019	WB4HRL	SOAB	HP	39,455
12/23/2019	WN4AFP	SOSB/40	LP	96
RAC Winter				
12/29/2019	WB4HRL	M/S	HP	5,712
12/29/2019	WN4AFP	SO Mixed	LP	22,992

RTTY

Roundup

1/6/2020	AJ4UQ	Single Op	LP	2,013
1/7/2020	K7OM	Single Op	HP	16,685
1/6/2020	KG4IGC	Single Op	LP	36,972
1/6/2020	KS4YX	Single Op	LP	32,148
1/8/2020	N4IQ	SO Unlimited	HP	119,325
1/6/2020	NI7R	SO Unlimited	HP	6,136
1/6/2020	NJ4F	Single Op	HP	41,741
1/6/2020	WB4HRL	SO Unlimited	HP	29,394

TBDC

12/29/2019	K7OM	Single Op	HP	576
12/29/2019	NU4E	Single Op	LP	534

TRC Digi

12/16/2019	WB4HRL	SOAB	HP	60
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Space WX: (From TamithaSkov's YouTube page)

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

It was also great to note the first Cycle 25 sunspots have begun to appear. Latest guesstimates for the upcoming cycles are it will have a similar peak as Cycle 24 did. Hopefully that will silence the Maunder Minimum worriers saying high band HF communications are dead for the rest of our lives. (The latter wasn't something I really wanted to contemplate now that I've retired.)

Finis

That's it for this go around. Things can only get better.

Kevan
N4XL