



TALES FROM THE SWAMP

April 2021

Editor: Kevan Nason, N4XL

Thank you to our current group leadership.

President – Ed, K3DNE

Vice President - Dave, WN4AFP

Treasurer – Phil, NI7R

Secretary – Ed, WB4HRL

From the Reflector:

- Scott, N2OG, worked with a group of hams on Special Event station K4P to raise awareness of Phil Ross', AB8PR, need for a kidney transplant. Check out Phil's QRZ page at qrz.com/db/AB8PR
- Dave, NJ4F, mentioned the ARRL Foundation is listed as a charity that can receive a donation when ordering items from Amazon.com
- Scott, N2OG, has discovered the benefits of using a Spectrum Display.
- Dave, WN4AFP, is hearing CW in bird songs. Perhaps a unisleaved white coat is in his future too?
- Frank, KG4IGC, thanked Scott, N2OG, and the SFCG membership for his new antenna launcher. Frank has been trying to figure out how to get his antennas higher up.
- Scott, KG9V, had a great time putting 130 q's in the log during his first CQWPX SSB.
- Kevan, N4XL, is working on a series of N1MM presentations. First up will be information on various setup choices.
- Scott, N2OG, jumped into the Sprint fun with his first NA SSB Sprint.
- Scott, N2OG, came up with a great way to modify a PL259 to be a protective cap for coax ends while disconnected.
- Kevan, N4XL, was pleased to find his 2020 CQ WW DX SSB Log Check Report showed a reasonably low 1.4% error rate. It broke a string of higher error rates that has been plaguing

him lately. His goal is to be <1% in all contests. That isn't as easy as people think for an aggressive contester trying to place well.

- People are figuring out how to use UDC's files (User Defined Contest) in N1MM. That lets them enjoy some of the less popular or new, but still fun, contests.
- Scott, N2OG, asked a question about what power supplies people use. He decided to go with an old time favorite – a linear supply from Astron.

Contest Tips:

K2YWE Contesting Best Practices	
Best Practice	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume a big dog attitude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you act like a big dog, most will believe you. • If they bite back painfully, you can find other turf.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a "friendly sense of urgency" in your QSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chattiness will slow your rate and lose you contacts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always work Dupes. • Set your software accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may not be in <i>their</i> log. • It usually takes more time to rebuff than work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't break a run to pull one station through. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your rate will suffer if you take too long. • You will drive away impatient waiting stations.

K1AR Contest Tips

09 Improve your contest score by being aware of when you send unnecessary information during contest exchanges. CW examples include: Sending a leading "0 or T" in front of your single-digit CQ/ITU zone, ending a CQ with a "K", starting an exchange with "UR" 59905. SSB examples include: "QSL...QRZ," K1AR, "UR" 5905 "OVER," etc. If you think these illustrations are insignificant, trying sending "UR" on CW 200 or more times and imagine working stations during that same time period.

56 Having considered the topic of packet this month, I thought it would be appropriate to suggest something radical--at least for the 1990s! Try operating for a week or so without the packet screen glaring at your face. With the advent of multipliers being "hand fed" to us these days, many of us have lost that treasured skill of "finding them on our own." The art of sniffing out multipliers is a major differentiator in contest score making. Try looking for them the old-fashioned way—it's great practice for your next single operator effort.

68 Do you really study contest rules (especially the ones you participate in), or are you the type who breezes through the numbers and puts the magazine in the pile across the room? I've found over the years that contest reports can truly be revealing about your own results - both good and bad! Try reading the next contest summary with the idea of seeking out areas of improvement. With the summer coming, there's no better time to begin thinking about antenna projects and getting those strategic juices flowing

- Jim, AD1C, told the QSOParty groups.io reflector he made revisions to two programs for mobiles/rovers.

I have recently released new versions of the following two programs:

ADIF County Conversion

https://software.ad1c.us/ADIF_County/

- this program is useful for converting an ADIF contest log containing county abbreviations, into an ADIF file that contains county names as per the ADIF specification. You can then import this new ADIF file into your everyday logging program, and it will import all the counties you worked.

Split ADIF Log by Transmitted QTH

https://software.ad1c.us/ADIF_Split/

- this program is useful for splitting up an ADIF contest log by transmitted QTH. This is useful for mobiles/rovers who would need to sign each separate county operation properly for upload to Logbook of the World.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

73 - Jim AD1C

Jim Reisert AD1C, <jjreisert@alum.mit.edu>, <https://www.ad1c.us>

- From the CQ Contest Archives, 11/1/2008, "How do you get better? A few more ideas..."
 - 1) The CQWW Log database is an INCREDIBLE source of operating information/strategies and techniques based on ops actually working people in the contests!
Go to:
<http://www.cqww.com/ssblogs.htm>
<http://www.cqww.com/cwlogs.htm>
and click on the log that you want to see.

Want to know what propagation paths are/were possible on a given weekend? Then read the M/M, M/2 and single band logs of serious competitors. Want to see what the competition was doing in your category? Then look at their log.

Even with having operated contests seriously for 35 years and still having most of the logs (with handwritten notations!), I am still learning; and "reading" the logs of others is an invaluable source of operating ideas/ information and strategy. With a few hours of "study" I can quickly figure out what I am doing better than others and what I can improve. Also, looking at my old logs is also a good review of band conditions at various

points of past cycles that I may have forgotten about, including those easily missed and obscure, short-lived band openings

- 2) I "operate" daily with five computers and LCD's watching and trading in the stock/bond/commodities and other markets in "real-time". In these exceptionally volatile times, nothing prepares you for the mental/physical demands of SO2R like the mental focus required to watch and then integrate the visual and text information from five computer screens with 100 charts+ and 400+ Quotron symbols, plus simultaneously watching CNBC and answering my office phone.

Of course I am also making split-second "real-time" decisions to buy/sell while all this is happening, just like the split-second operating decisions we must make during a contest. However, unlike contests, there are no time-outs or rest periods when the markets are open!

- 3) Listen to complex music (all types from Jazz to Classical to Rock, etc.) and try to pick out all the instrumental and vocal parts, one by one. When you get good at that, "dial it up a notch" and then try to "see" the artist actually playing their part of the piece with the actual fingering while you are focusing on them. The focus on the next artist and the next and so on. The more complexity and detail that you can "see", the more successfully you are training your brain to develop concentration and focus and to multi-task.
- 4) I regularly watch DX-Summit on one of my computers to get the "feel" of daily propagation as it changes around the world. I also check the various www.noaa.gov solar activity websites and monitor auroral cndx and A/K/SF indices in real time. After a while of doing this on a daily basis, I can usually reasonably predict the A/K/SF indices just by looking at DX Summit spots and seeing what bands they are on.

Although a lot of unusual propagation paths and weak stations are not spotted, overall this is a very useful strategy for learning current propagation and what to expect during a contest. Despite the often busted callsigns, this is an excellent way to become familiar with the DX and DXpedition callsigns BEFORE the contest, so you know who to look for DURING the contest.

- 5) There are a myriad of other ways you can take things from your daily life and work and make them tools for training your mind and body and improving your operating skills. All it takes is a little imagination and creativity plus effort, and having fun.

There is a simple equation that I use every day:
Learning = Improving skills = Having fun!

73 and CU in CQWW CW!
Bob KQ2



606

TECHNICAL DATA

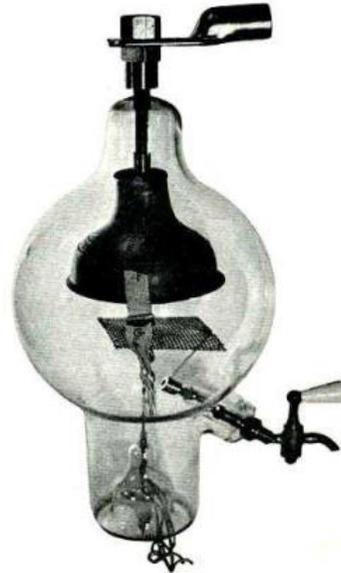
PHANTASATRON

DESCRIPTION

The Umac 606 is an infernal anode, helical beamed phantasatron having a dissipation rating. The unique vacuum in the phantasatron is of the double-pumped type, permitting a clear view of the non-emitting triple-processed plunger-type plate. Because of its unique self-flushing construction, this tube will remain usable throughout its useful life.

The grid is constructed of a rare metal senileium chosen for its total lack of emission.¹ Primary, secondary, and tertiary electrons are fully suppressed by a left-hand inclination toward the ecliptic extending from the nadir to the zenith. This also compensates for aberrations in azimuthal displacements common in tubes of previous design, wherein the focal point was improperly focused due to chromatic sphericalism.

The urinated tungsten filament is unique. This process is secret.² The uranium used for the urination is of the triple distilled, single isotope variety with all neutrons removed. This material is obtained direct from the AEC-Los Alamos.



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

ELECTRICAL

Filament Urinated Tungsten
 Voltage } { Adjust until half as
 Current } { bright as flashlight
 Direct Interelectrode Capacity ... 8.874 gallons

MECHANICAL

Maximum Overall Dimensions
 Length 1.076 cubits
 Diameter 0.643 cubit
 Net Weight 0.069 stone
 Shipping Weight Not shippable

APPLICATION NOTES

COOLING -- In operation, the 606 requires a minimum air flow of 5000 cubic feet per second through, around, and above the base. This air flow must be passed through the base in both directions in such a manner that none of the

seals can exceed a temperature of -20° Kelvin. The pressure drop measured at the hole is equal to three fingers of Old Crow. Forced air cooling of the blank is recommended at all frequencies above 60 cycles. Ordinarily a fan

NOTES:

1. Refer to page 42, paragraph 6, "Notes from the I2U Conference" translated from Russian by A. Popoff.
2. See LS/MFT report, "Secret Process -- One Shovel Full to One Shovel Full".

APPLICATION NOTES

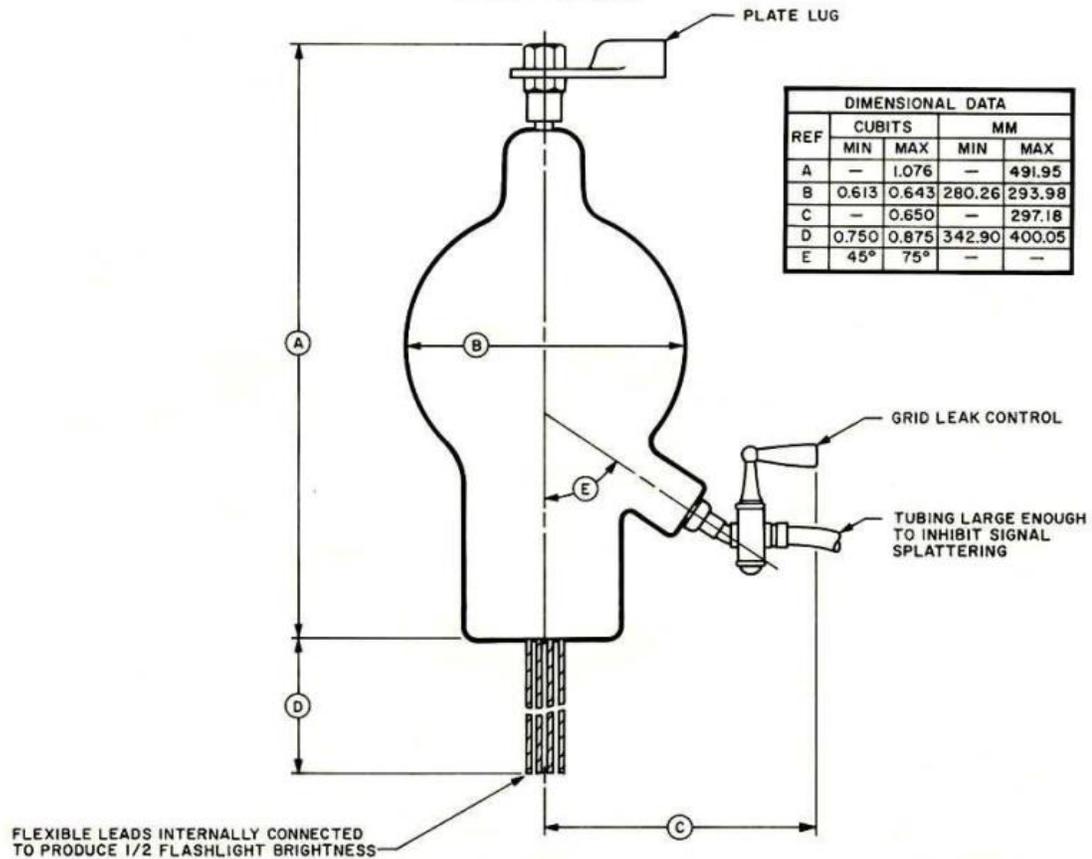
with an 8-foot blade 6 inches from the tube will suffice for envelope cooling. At high altitudes, special precautions should be taken in regard to cooling. Any tube failure is probably due to insufficient cooling and is undoubtedly the customer's fault.

OPERATION -- Because of its unique construction, the 606 can serve as an oscillator, modulator, or amplifier. It usually serves as all three simultaneously. No specific operating conditions are available. Ratings will be avail-

able however, as soon as our competitors issue their catalogue. Exhaustive tests in our advertising department have shown that the 606 will give 50 per cent more output than you will obtain. In case of tube failure, our tests show that you have exceeded the safe limit, regardless of output. In such cases, more air is recommended.

BIAS VOLTAGE -- To prevent splattery signals, a large leak is recommended.

OUTLINE DRAWING



Observations by the Editor:

- Covid 19 shipping disruptions and the worldwide chip shortage is noticeably affecting ham radio. I have been thinking of putting up a ladder line fed long doublet and using an SGC tuner to feed it. While looking at their website I noticed several models were unavailable, but the one I wanted was. A couple weeks later I decided to make a purchase but the unit I wanted was no longer in stock and availability is unknown. Looking at other sites I found alternative units from other manufacturers that met my criteria were also unavailable. And several times lately I have heard hams on the 2 meter repeaters lamenting the months they have been waiting for purchased items to be shipped to them. Despite claims from the vendor equipment was in stock, it wasn't. If you are thinking of improving your station with a purchase and can find what you need it might be worth buying now so it is on hand when you finally get around to it.
- I like spending money, but not on something I can do myself. I'd rather buy a new radio toy instead. Twenty-three years ago, I hand dug a trench and buried the coax and rotor wire running to the antenna at the back of my property. A couple weeks back I ran a water line from the well to an outbuilding. Two water lines were run that needed for a total of 160 feet. They needed to be deep enough so they wouldn't freeze. I decided to rent a trencher with a 2" wide cut. It seemed like a good time to run new coax lines too. One to replace the 23 year old line and one for that doublet I mentioned earlier. I reluctantly forked over \$120 for something I could have done myself. Boy... I won't hesitate to spend that money again. Instead of a couple days digging in hard clay but the trench was completed in four hours. The work still involved a shovel to remove big rocks and a bit of hand sifting dirt before backfilling to remove stones that might press on the direct burial coax, but it really saved this 62 year old man a lot of time and muscle pain
- There are four computer monitors here in the shack. One is 24" long and 14" tall. It has always sat with the wide edge horizontal to the operating desk. I don't really like tall skinny monitors, but when I did some RTTY contesting for the first time I just couldn't lay out the various windows to clearly see everything when those extra data windows were open. So, vertical it went, and Microsoft Windows was told to display it in portrait mode. I appreciate how it now lets me more efficiently position the various windows. It solved the neck and eye strain problem as this orientation is more "friendly" to optimizing the size of critical windows while both keeping them at eye level and close to the center of the operating chair easy viewing area. I am slowly getting used to the odd visual of a tall screen and will likely keep it this way.

N1MM+ Tips:

(Not much this month or next as I'm putting a bit of time on this topic into the presentations I'm preparing.)

- N1MM is complicated.
 - There is a Frequently Asked Questions page at <https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/faq/>
 - "How To" videos are available at <https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/support/how-to-videos/>

- The latest documentation is available at <https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/mmfiles/n1mmplus-pdf/>
- Although many people use the reflector to ask for feature updates and to report bugs, the N1MM team asks you report or request them here on their website. They also ask you create a login ID to do that for their tracking purposes. The forms are at <https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/support/trouble-ticket/>
- I have mentioned before that I had some computer delays when using the Spectrum Window with N1MM. The team put this information out on April 6th:

In last week's build, we released support for N1MM SDR Server. Prior to this support, some SDRPlay users have been plagued with keyboard and/or cw hesitations. These hesitations have proved impossible to eliminate without running the SDR interface code in a separate process from the main program.

To solve that problem we created a new exe file: N1MMSDRServer.exe. The documentation for using this program is here: <https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/.../spectrum-display-window/...>

If you follow the doc, the program will automatically start and stop the server when you open/close the Spectrum window within N1MM. I have attached a screen shot of its UI. Besides preventing the hesitation mentioned above, this approach also supports running the spectrum code on a separate computer and serving it to multiple consumers. The first to connect to the server will control the SDR frequency. Running on a separate computer is a useful approach for those with a remote connection. The volume of data sent by N1MM SDR Server is tiny compared to the raw output from the SDR at the antenna location. This is easy if you are running a VPN, if not, you will need to open a UDP port at each to forward traffic to the server at one end and to the main program at the other.

During the testing of this new facility, previously untested SDRs were able to connect. The main requirement is that your SDR have an ExtIO*.dll written for it. If you have an SDR other than an SDRPlay or Airspy HF+/Discovery, please report your results of using the server on this thread

Upcoming Contests: See WA7BNM webpages

SFOTA Current Leaderboard:

Apr-13-2021

Current Leaderboard

2021 OVERALL STANDINGS

CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1) N4IQ	42	4356	776	207	3816	9155
2) WB4HRL	60	3447	1033	56	1494	6030
3) K3DNE	20	659	4176	37	824	5696
4) AC4MC	19	1909	1305	4	133	3351
5) WN4AFP	25	1963	874	0	0	2837
6) KG4IGC	8	452	916	0	1146	2514
7) NU4E	4	1010	220	0	875	2105
8) K7OM	11	512	80	0	1472	2064
9) N4XL	7	1032	993	0	17	2042
10) N2OG	6	0	870	0	738	1608
11) K4QQG	14	0	1289	0	0	1289
12) NI7R	2	564	0	0	0	564
13) KS4YX	3	120	14	28	368	530
14) K9JDP	3	0	208	0	74	282
15) NE4EA	1	55	0	0	0	55
16) AF7T	1	4	0	0	0	4

3830 Activity:

Contest	Call	Class	Power	Score
144SprngSprnt				
4/6/21	N4IQ	Single Op	HP	84
BARTG				
3/22/21	K7OM	SOAB	HP	62,900
3/22/21	WB4HRL	SOAB	HP	6,468
FTn DX				
4/11/21	N4IQ	Single Op	LP	10,620
GaQP				
4/12/21	K3DNE	Single OpSSB	HP	280
4/11/21	K4QQG	Single OpSSB	LP	612
IdQP				
3/15/21	K3DNE	SOABMixed	HP	99
3/14/21	K4QQG	SOABSSB	HP	150
3/14/21	WN4AFP	SOABCW	LP	90

Contest	Call	Class	Power	Score
IG-RY RTTY				
4/13/21	K7OM	Single Op	HP	2,193
4/11/21	KG4IGC	Single Op	LP	17,544
LaQP				
4/5/21	K4QQG	Fixed SSB	LP	8
4/4/21	WN4AFP	Fixed Mixed	LP	244
MSQP				
4/6/21	K3DNE	Single Op	HP	35
4/5/21	K4QQG	Single Op	LP	140
4/4/21	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	736
NA Sprint RTTY				
3/14/21	N4IQ	Single Op	HP	6,179
NA Sprint SSB				
4/4/21	N2OG	Single Op	LP	2,370
4/4/21	N4IQ	Single Op	HP	9,065
NDQP				
4/12/21	K3DNE	Fixed	HP	280
4/11/21	K4QQG	Out of State	LP	36
4/11/21	WN4AFP	Fixed	LP	792
NeQP				
4/12/21	K3DNE	Fixed	HP	9
4/11/21	K4QQG	Out of State	LP	475
4/11/21	WN4AFP	Fixed	LP	2,696
NMQP				
4/12/21	K3DNE	Single Op	HP	42
4/11/21	K4QQG	Single Op	LP	25
4/11/21	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	21
OkQP				
3/15/21	K3DNE	SOABMixed	HP	21
3/14/21	K4QQG	SOABSSB	HP	336
3/14/21	WN4AFP	SOABCW	LP	18,315

Contest	Call	Class	Power	Score
TBDC				
3/14/21	N4IQ	Single Op	HP	351
VaQP				
3/21/21	K3DNE	SOAB/PhFixed	HP	315
3/22/21	K4QQG	SOAB/PhFixed	HP	5,969
3/22/21	WN4AFP	SOAB/MixedFixed	LP	19,108
WiQP				
3/15/21	K3DNE	SO Fixed	HP	5,940
3/14/21	K4QQG	SO Fixed	HP	6,200
3/15/21	WN4AFP	SO Fixed	LP	85,200
WPX SSB				
3/31/21	AC4MC	SOAB	HP	49,368
3/29/21	K3DNE	SOAB TB-Wires	HP	1,858,926
3/29/21	K4QQG	SOAB Rookie	HP	68,665
3/30/21	K9JDP	SOAB Classic	HP	30,400
3/29/21	KG4IGC	SOAB	LP	250,821
3/28/21	N4IQ	SOSB80	HP	4,004
3/29/21	WB4HRL	SOAB	HP	43,561
3/29/21	WJ4X(@N4XL)	SOAB	LP	202,787
3/29/21	WN4AFP	SOSB40 TB-Wires	LP	130,676

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73 es QRT de N4XL