



# TALES FROM THE SWAMP

July 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

## Presidents Corner:

Please welcome our 3 newest members! Burton KY4ID, Brian N8WRL and Doug W4NWS! All three of our new members come to SFCG via the very successful Annual13 Colonies Special Event and represented SC and operated as K2L earlier this month

KY4ID: Burton is new to the hobby (Extra Class) - on the air for about a month - lives in Trenton (Edgefield County). He enjoys working SSB (mostly), FT8/FT4 and PSK. He's working on getting RTTY going and has an interest in CW. He's a graduate of the W4EEY-KE4EA YouTube license program. His station consists of a TS590SG, SDR Play panadapter, 100ft homebrew doublet. Burton's dad was a ham and he has fond memories sitting in the shack with his dad and looking through old QSL cards. Burton admits he has a lot to learn about the hobby and contesting but is jumping in with both feet. I know being a member of SFCG will help him to get on his way in contesting and the hobby!

N8WRL: Brian holds an Extra Class license, has been a ham since 1993 and lives in Clover SC. Presently his operating is focused on DXing on voice modes. He recently made Honor Roll! He's dabbled in contesting with only a couple of serious entries. His antenna farm includes an 80m 4

square and beams for 40,20,17,15,12 and 10m. Check out his antenna farm photo on QRZ.com! He also enjoys woodworking as another hobby.

W4NWS: Doug holds an Extra Class license and lives in Sumter, SC. Doug served as the 13 Colonies K2L state manager this year and did an excellent job of coordinating and communicating the K2L effort. He has traveled extensively with the Air Force. First licensed in '78 as KA7AHH in OR he also held KBOJCD and N0PDV in KS, HL9NNT in South Korea, KLOKE and KL7DA in AK! Doug says he enjoys casual contesting using a TS440, TS480SAT, IC7300, TenTec Century 21 for QRP CW and FT8900, 40M inverted V, 80m dipole and he's building an 80m loop. Doug prefers voice modes but is also active on digital modes and CW.

Burton, Brian and Doug: Welcome to the Swamp Fox Contest Group!

### SFCG Website:

With several new members joining the last few months it might be time to review some of the resources available on the group website located at <https://www.swampfoxcontestgroup.com/>. Ask the reflector if you would like more information about anything. Thank you, Frank, KG4IGC, for doing such a great job maintaining it!

- List of Officers
- Link to the SC QSO Party
- Link to SFOTA, Swamp Fox On The Air, which is a page SFCG members list their contest results for a year long inter-club competition.
- Current space weather
- A link to the SFCG Groups.io reflector
- Information on joining and club dues.
- Announcements (not much new there lately though. The reflector gets most of that action.)
- Club roster and member contact information
- How to use the club call, WW4SF, when operating. QSL information for WW4SF.
- Information for new members. That one is down the page a bit and at the link <https://www.swampfoxcontestgroup.com/club-business>
- Listing of and links to upcoming contests
- Resources – The club is always looking to increase the available information. Please contribute!
  - Contest software
  - Towers, Antennas, & Feedlines
  - Improving your contesting skills,
  - Equipment
  - Digital modes
- Links to 3830 scores for some club members
- Online Membership Application
- Newsletter. A shameless plug from the Editor, particularly for our newer members... Our past newsletters are available all the way back to 2015. There is a tremendous amount of contest information useful to both new and experienced contesters alike in those files.

Since taking over the newsletter in January 2020, I started a section on N1MM tips that many have found particularly useful; and another on contest tips from experienced contesters I have run across that have helped many hams develop their contesting skills over the years. I highly recommend reviewing them.

- Our Constitution
- Photo Gallery – If you have photos, pass them to Frank.
- Videos
- Links and miscellaneous files

The group is always looking to add to our web presence, improve the group in general, and newsletter input. Forward any ideas or articles you have. Ed, K3DNE, would be a good one for general SFCG input, Frank, KG4IGC, for the web page, Kevan, N4XL, for the newspaper, and Dave, WN4AFP, for the SC QSO party. Member involvement is what keeps a club alive. Those groups that depend on the same few people to keep the ball rolling usually wither and die.

### From the Reflector:

- Several SFCG members supported the 13 Colonies Special Event. Frank, KG4IGC, is in line for being the Top Operator from South Carolina. The event also brought new members to the SFCG.
- 6 meters has been very active lately. Ed, K3DNE, jumped on the band wagon with 422 q's and a claimed score of 59,502 in the June VHF contest. He was a bit disappointed with 2 meters though. He reported "I put a tremendous amount of effort getting 2m QRO and new antenna up and running. Not a big payoff - only 33 Q's (an improvement over the 10 worked last year)." Despite his physical problems, Phil, NI7R, found some time to join in too. We're looking forward to more high scores from NI7R as things smooth out for you, Phil.
- Gary, AF7T, let his FTDX101D go. (For a very decent price too.) Gary says he is too addicted to true SDR GUI/waterfall radios and doesn't really care for the Yaesu menu and human interface structure. Keep us posted on how you like the Anan rig, Gary.
- Tom, WA2BCK, kept up his remote operating from New York during the IARU contest. He logged 817 q's in just over 14 hours. Dave, WN4AFP, thanked him for a q. I was also able to work him on 10 meters.
- Kevan, N4XL, forwarded a posting about EZNEC soon becoming freeware.
- SFCG members K4RM, K9JDP, W4EEY, and N4IQ joined ND7J again at Fred's NC shack in Rosman, NC for the IARU contest. They racked up just short of 1,300 q's for a score of 474,240 points. Good job guys.
- A discussion about whether height above sea level or the terrain profile surrounding a station is more important to HF propagation.

## Contest Tips:

K2YWE Contesting Best Practices	
Best Practice	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call CQ when the bands are dead for the day or worked out near the end of the contest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That's when the stations that have been CQing will S&amp;P for "fresh meat." .</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When running, NEVER NEVER NEVER acknowledge a "jammer". NEVER. Just keep your pace, and don't change your tone of voice on phone or even synchronize your calls to his QRM.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With no response, he can't be sure he is even bothering you, and it isn't any "fun" for him if he doesn't get a reaction.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (When running) Use the widest receiver bandwidth you can stand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less chance to miss off-frequency callers, especially on CW.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call CQ when the band is active if you are able to find a frequency and hold it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will usually beat your S&amp;P rate.</li> <li>• An exception is the start of the contest when everyone is "fresh meat" for you and your S&amp;P rate can be very high.</li> </ul>

### K1AR Contest Tips

**42** The months of August and September are filled with great warm-up contests for the fall season. Check out the contest calendar and get involved. One way to add "db" to your signal is to get your callsign in the minds of others. How do you do that? Get radio active--today!

**49** Here's an often overlooked "transaction" in building contest scores; share your contest operating plans with your significant other! While it may be risky to cross that chasm, the likelihood of arranging that "trip to Mom" may increase substantially, leaving you unencumbered to focus on your score, not making amends. After 20+ years of contesting (and nearly as many wedding anniversaries), I've learned that I'm still the only one in my family who knows what's really happening during the last full weekend of October.

**57** When tuning for multipliers, don't forget to look way up the band. In last year's CQ WW CW Contest, I worked several key multipliers on frequencies such as 14081, 7062, 3566, etc. The only limit to working CW stations in a contest is when the "beeps" stop. Add to your score with your VFO!

**60** Don't ever get so intimidated by the size of a pileup that you simply tune by the station without calling. We all have a story or two about the time we broke through a pileup without a clue how our station pulled it off. Here's the answer: operating skill! There's one guarantee when chasing rare contest multipliers: If you don't at least try to call them, you absolutely won't work them!

## Article:

**Every Q Matters!** by Kevan Nason, N4XL

Some things need repeating. You've heard me say before that the q you make in the first few hours of the contest, the one that only gives you 100 points, is worth just as much as the q you make 39 hours in the contest that gives you 2,000 points. That is hard for some people to understand, but it is fact. Here's why.

The first table shows what 1 theoretical three point contact (Q) is worth in points going from 100 q's in the log to 101. It considers whether that q includes a multiplier or not. In some contests a q can count as two multipliers at the same time so that possibility is included too.

Score after 3 hours							
QSO's	Pts/Q	QSO Points	Zones	Countries	Score	Difference	
100	3	300	10	30	12,000		Theoretical
101	3	303	10	30	12,120	120	If made just 1 more Q
101	3	303	10	31	12,423	423	If that q was a mult
101	3	303	11	31	12,726	726	if that q was a double mult

The next table shows what 1 Q is worth after 39 hours. This chart uses the actual situation from my 2017 CQWW CW effort. I theorized what one more q would have meant to my score.

Score after 39 hours (Numbers from claimed 3830 score N4XL CQ WW CW 2017)							
QSO's	Pts/Q	QSO Points	Zones	Countries	Score	Difference	
1081	3	2983	112	377	1,458,687		Actual
1082	3	2986	112	377	1,460,154	1,467	If made just 1 more Q
1082	3	2986	112	378	1,463,140	4,453	If that q was a mult
1082	3	2986	113	378	1,466,126	7,439	if that q was a double mult

I'm sure everyone would agree that one more q at the end would have made a big difference to my score. But what many people fail to consider is if I had gotten one LESS q at any time in the contest my score would have been reduced by nearly that same large amount. That means if I had missed a q in the first 10 minutes, during the third hour, or during the 17<sup>th</sup> hour of the contest I would have had anywhere from 1,400 to 7,200 less points at the end.

A way to make a big improvement in your score without spending a dime or doing work putting up a new antenna is to keep in mind during the ENTIRE contest that every single q you log is worth over a thousand points – or is worth at least whatever your last q is worth. That understanding helps maintain my enthusiasm and keep my Butt In Chair (BIC) from the moment the contest starts until the very last minute.

Here's a comment I wrote about it after doing a post contest review of my effort for that contest.

Per 3830 I was #3 in the US with a claimed 1,458,687 points. The #2 man, W3KB, claimed 1,463,304. If I had 4 more q's, or 1 mult and 1 q, or just 1 double mult I would have been #2 in the US. I remember going to bed in the middle of the contest on a rest break thinking I could stay up longer, but I'm tired and a long way ahead of him. I've got him so I'll get some sleep. Log check results may yet move me to #2, but probably not.

W3KB caught and passed me while I was sleeping. Oops. I obviously wasn't motivated enough to be a winner. There is no doubt in my mind that I could have been more aggressive at some point during those 39 hours and picked up a few more q's. But I relaxed just a bit too much and he beat me.

If you want to win it is critical to maintain drive and focus throughout the entire time you are contesting.

Not that it matters to the above topic, but I'll share that he proved to be more accurate than I was too. I fell even further behind after log checking. But accuracy is another subject and was discussed in a previous newsletter.

### **Observations by the Editor:**

- EZNEC, by W7EL, has helped many hams with antenna work. Roy is retiring and will be making EZNEC available for free in the public domain. Great news. However, there is often bad news with good and this is no exception. EZNEC will no longer receive support after 2021 and EZNEC 4 will not be available at all. Also, if you lose a program you purchased due to computer issues it will not be replaceable from Roy. <https://eznec.com/retirement.htm>
- Speaking of lost programs... Don't forget to back up your computer now and then. It is also a great idea to document key program settings so you can quickly recover should something like a Windows update mess with your previously working shack.
- During a talk with Randy, W8FN, last night he mentioned an important competitive contesting skill that some operators don't have. Like me, he doesn't understand why so many contesters do not see it as a crucial operating skill. I've even heard people in this crowd mention they lack this ability. Touch typing. If you are a hunt and peck type of keyboard operator you are limiting your ability to handle runs, change log entries for fills, jump out of your contest logger to quickly perform another computer action resulting in lost q's, etc. Becoming a touch typist is another thing you can do to improve your contest scores without spending a dime. Haven't looked, but there must be internet sites to help. Or you could do something as simple as typing something you are reading into a word processor or the Windows Notepad program. Spend some time working at it outside of contests and you will see improvements in your score.

- The ARRL Contest Update mentioned an inexpensive spectrum analyzer is available. The TinySA. With it you can do things like
  - Measuring Harmonics
  - Measuring Spectral Purity
  - Measuring Phase Noise
  - Measuring Third Order Intermodulation
  - Measuring IQ Balance
  - Measuring Spur Free Dynamic Range
  - Measuring Low Frequencies
  - Capturing ISM Transmissions
  - Tuning Sweep Settings
  - Coax Cable Impact
  - Measuring the harmonic content of an Ultimate3 transmitter by AE5X
  - Measuring FM deviation
  - Measuring AM modulation
  - Measuring One dB Compression Point
  - Adding an LNA
  - Using a Tracking Generator to measure a Mixer
  - Measuring the Noise Factor of an Amplifier

It includes a frequency generator and covers frequencies up near 1 GHz. It is available in several places. R&L has it in stock for as of this writing for \$54.95. I am considering purchase to help me with shack projects.

<https://tinysa.org/wiki/pmwiki.php?n=Main.Examples>

[http://www.randl.com/shop/catalog/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=75243](http://www.randl.com/shop/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=75243)

## **N1MM+ Tips:**

### **Recording on the Fly**

If you need to record or re-record a function key file in a hurry, you can do so from inside the program, so long as the Function Key message calls only a single .wav file. This method also assumes that the microphone is connected to the radio via the sound card (either permanently, or temporarily while you are making the recording). Despite the limitations, this is still very useful, particularly for split operation in SSB contests where you want to specify a listening frequency that changes often.

The key sequence to start and stop on-the-fly recording is Ctrl+Shift+Fkey, in either Run or S&P mode.

When you start on-the-fly recording, a message will appear in the status line of the Entry window. If all is well, it will read “start recording:[file path and name]. Press Ctrl+Shift+Fkey after you have finished recording, and the status line will read

“recording saved: [file path and name]. If you get an error message, and the Entry window is not large enough to read the whole thing, simply stretch it horizontally until you can.

If you invoke a .wav file that is not found (for example, by having the wrong .wav file or an incorrect path in the .mc file), you’ll be warned in the same place. To trouble-shoot path problems, you may have to stretch the Entry window horizontally, because there is only limited space for the message in the status line

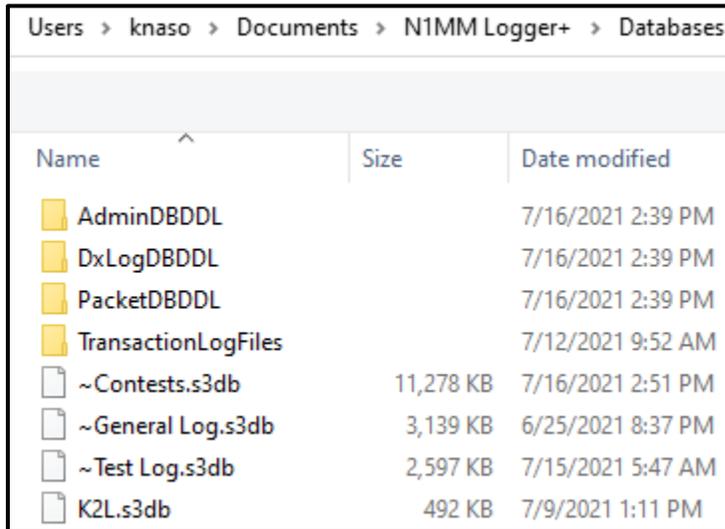
### **Call History things**

- Clear automatically populated exchange on callsign change
  - Sometimes when you enter the wrong call sign when using call history file the program automatically enters puts the exchange information into the Entry Window. Once you get the fill for the correct call that bad information remains in the exchange field.
  - The option to have the exchange cleared for call corrections can be found on the “Other” tab in N1MM’s Configurer.
- Update Call History with current log
  - Call History files are not always correct. A station might be using a different name during a NAQP for example. It’s not a big deal to change, but every time you work that station on a different band you have to catch the error and change it on the new band too. An annoyance.
  - Use the Update Call History with current log option found under the “Tools” menu of N1MM to do what it says. It’s quick and easy to do during a lull in logging q’s. The next time you work that station the automatic fill of the exchange field will be correct.

### **Create a Test Database**

- To prevent messing up your contest log database create a test database for, well... testing. Mine is rather imaginatively called “Test Log”.
- Before a contest I’m not familiar with I will use it to develop my function key and macro files.
- Sometimes there is a contest coming up that I have done before but want to test out how some changes will work. I go into my regular contest database, go to the “File” section at the top left of the Entry Window, and select “Copy This Contest to Another Database”. Up

comes the N1MM directory where the contest databases are kept. I then select the “Test Log” database and the log from the Contest database is copied in its entirety to the Test Log database. That gives you a good simulation of what you can expect to find in the upcoming contest to fine tune your tweaks. I will sometimes open the telnet window too and get some spots to try out the tweaks.



Name	Size	Date modified
AdminDBDDL		7/16/2021 2:39 PM
DxLogDBDDL		7/16/2021 2:39 PM
PacketDBDDL		7/16/2021 2:39 PM
TransactionLogFiles		7/12/2021 9:52 AM
~Contests.s3db	11,278 KB	7/16/2021 2:51 PM
~General Log.s3db	3,139 KB	6/25/2021 8:37 PM
~Test Log.s3db	2,597 KB	7/15/2021 5:47 AM
K2L.s3db	492 KB	7/9/2021 1:11 PM

NOTE: In case you are wondering why some files start with a “~”, it is so my frequently used files appear at the top of the file list and are easy to find. I also start some I rarely use with “zz” so they appear at the end

### Upcoming Contests:

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

## SFOTA Current Leaderboard:

Jul-16-2021							
Current Leaderboard							
2021 OVERALL STANDINGS							
CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S	
1) N4IQ	75	9227	776	254	4032	14289	
2) WB4HRL	104	5789	1082	56	1518	8445	
3) K3DNE	35	1013	4765	161	824	6763	
4) WN4AFP	45	4094	1167	0	0	5261	
5) AC4MC	24	2151	1319	4	133	3607	
6) K7OM	21	1413	80	0	1805	3298	
7) N4XL	9	2059	1089	0	17	3165	
8) KG4IGC	14	632	974	0	1374	2980	
9) K4QQG	28	0	2372	0	0	2372	
10) NU4E	4	1010	220	0	875	2105	
11) N2OG	9	108	896	34	799	1837	
12) WA2BCK	4	1187	536	0	0	1723	
13) KS4YX	4	120	14	77	368	579	
14) NI7R	3	569	7	0	0	576	
15) K9JDP	3	0	208	0	74	282	
16) NE4EA	1	55	0	0	0	55	
17) AF7T	1	4	0	0	0	4	

## 3830 Activity:

	Call	Class	Power	Score
ARRL FD				
06/27/21	K4QQG(WA2BCK)	1D	LP	2,050
06/28/21	N4IQ(AC4Q)	1B	LP	782
DL-DX RTTY				
07/04/21	K7OM	SOAB-6	HP	25,760
07/06/21	N4IQ	SOAB-6-Dipole	HP	16,740
IARU				
07/11/21	K4QQG	SOABSSB	LP	16,512
07/11/21	K4RM	M/S	HP	474,240
	(K9JDP,ND7J,W4EEY,N4IQ,@K4RM)			
07/11/21	K7OM	SOABCW	HP	48,107
07/11/21	WA2BCK	SOABCW	HP	343,057
07/12/21	WN4AFP	SOABCW	LP	159,705
RAC Day				
07/02/21	K4QQG	SOAB/Ph	LP	9,216
07/02/21	WA2BCK	SOAB/CW	HP	81,092

TBDC				
06/23/21	N4IQ	Single Op	HP	74
UkrClsRTTY				
06/21/21	K7OM	SOAB	HP	561
WVQP				
06/20/21	K4QQG	Single OpSSB	LP	377
06/20/21	WN4AFP	Single OpMixed	LP	2,375

=====

73 es QRT de N4XL