



January 2023  
Editor: Kevan Nason, N4XL

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](http://swampfoxcontestgroup.com)

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### SFCG Meeting

After discussion with all the officers it has been decided to hold our annual meeting live on Sunday, January 29th at the Lizard’s Thicket in Lexington SC at 3PM. 3PM is the earliest weekend time they had available where they can guarantee that the banquet room will be available for a private event (apparently business is booming and they now use that room as a dining room overflow on weekends). I would have preferred earlier timing for more daylight drive time after the meeting but that option was not available.

Spouse or a guest are welcome. If you know of a potential member please feel free to invite that person as a guest.

The Lizard’s Thicket is located on US-1 between I-26 and I-20 west of I-26 in Lexington SC (see address and phone # below). There are many Lizard's Thickets in SC - I went to the wrong one in 2020 and was late to the meeting!

Lizard’s Thicket  
4616 Augusta Rd.  
Lexington, SC  
803-785-5560

In addition to the usual business meeting, SFOTA award presentations, lunch (order off the menu and pay individually) a contest associated presentation will be provided. Matt NU4E will give a presentation on “contesting from across the pond” – sharing some of his contest

experiences from DL and elsewhere including a bit about his use of wire antennas at his station here in SC.

I'm sure that Covid and the variants remain on everyone's mind and is a continuing concern. We will monitor and if the pandemic raises its ugly head again to dangerous levels, I will discuss with the club officers to determine if cancellation is prudent and QSY to a Zoom meeting again this year. Attendance is not mandatory, so if a member is not comfortable attending due to Covid then, by all means, do not attend. This is a personal decision and will be left to the individual member. Minutes will be posted on our website as soon as available.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

73,  
Ed K3DNE  
President, Swamp Fox Contest Group

### SFCG Officer Nomination Period

The President shall preside at all meetings and conduct them according to the rules adopted. He/she shall enforce due observance of this Constitution and By-Laws; decide all questions of order; sign all official documents adopted by the club and perform all other duties pertaining to the office of President.

#### Section 2. Vice President

The Vice-President shall assume all the duties of the President in his/her absence. In addition, he/she shall organize club activities, plan, and recommend contests for operating benefits, and advance club interest and activity as approved by the club.

#### Section 3. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of all meetings, keep a roll of members, submit membership applications, carry on all correspondence, read communications at each meeting, and send notices to each member. At the expiration of his/her term he/she shall turn over all items belonging to that office to his/her successor.

#### Section 4. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive and receipt for all monies paid to the club; keep an accurate account of all monies received and expended; pay no bills without proper authorization (by the club or its officers constituting a business committee). At the end of each quarter, he/she shall submit an itemized statement of disbursements and receipts. At the end of his/her term he/she shall turn over everything in his/her possession belonging to the club to his/her successor.

### NJ4Z – Welcome!

John Gendron NJ4Z. John was invited via an email from Frank KG4IGC. John lives in Rock Hill, studied electrical engineering in college, is a member, past President and Trustee of YCARS. John states he got

into the hobby a little later than most at the age of 47. Obtained his Tech license as KM4THP in April 2016, changed his call to KE4PLT and then earned his General in August 2017 and Extra in December of 2018. John was strongly influenced by his dad with CB radio when he was a kid then his Uncle Marcel VE2EKH (SK). He is an avid DX chaser, POTA activator, earned DXCC and is closing in on 5B DXCC. John enjoys phone and CW contesting and has been active with his club in SCQP winning the multi-station category in 2020, '21 and '22! His hamshack includes a FTDX101MP, IC-9700, FTDX10, Expert Linear 1K, an 80 meter full wave horizontal loop at 40 feet and a work-in-progress multiband vertical. Scott KG9V gave John an extremely strong endorsement when he told me that John has been instrumental in growing YCARS from 40 to over 120 members in the last 3 years and that "John bleeds electromagnetic energy". For more info on NJ4Z please check out John's QRZ.com page.

John: Welcome to the Swamp Fox Contest Group!

### W4ANT – Welcome Back! We’ve missed you.

Please welcome back to SFCG; Alan Fitzsimmons W4ANT. Alan was a former member of SFCG and is getting back on the air after a "brief hiatus". His QTH suffered a power surge event that took out his FT-950 and Alpha 87A (ouch!). Originally from Ohio, Alan was first licensed at the age of 14. He states; "life, career and 20 years of skydiving" got in the way of the hobby for a period of time. Alan began his career in public safety as a volunteer firefighter and EMT then moved on as a Telecommunicator Police Officer and then a Registered Nurse for 30+ years specializing in emergency medicine and as a flight nurse (with multiple organizations including the USAF Reserves). His interests in amateur radio includes HF contesting, chasing DX, tinkering with HF amps and a new interest in the digital modes. Since his FT-950 and 87A are presently out of service, based on his QRZ.com page, I see he has a FT-990 and Heathkit SB-220 as a backup! His antenna farm includes a TH7DX at 72 feet, resonant dipoles for 40 and 80m and a dipole for 30m.

Alan: Welcome to the Swamp Fox Contest Group!

73, Ed K3DNE

### Volunteers On The Air (VOTA):

The SFCG was asked by the ARRL to coordinate the two South Carolina activations of W1AW/4 for the VOTA happening this year. Ed K3DNE has solicited input from our membership resulting in identifying and reaching out to many SC operators both inside and outside our group who to participate. If this event is anything like the ARRL's 2014 Centennial QSO party the pileups will often be intense and challenging to control.

Ed has been extremely busy pulling this all together. He thanks Scott KG9V by saying it is doubtful we would be able to provide the ARRL with a satisfactory SC presence without his efforts. Thank you, Ed, Scott, and the others who have helped bring this event much closer to fruition. The kickoff date for South Carolina's first week is the night of January 31<sup>st</sup> our time.

A separate SFCG Groups.io reflector and Google scheduling area has been created which is why little is being heard on our normal reflector about all the work going on.

Please see Volunteers On The Air 2023, A Year-Long Operating Event Recognizing Volunteers at <http://www.arrl.org/volunteers-on-the-air>

## Contest Tips:

From Operating Mechanics: The X Factor in Contesting Success, by Patrick Barkey N9RV

The Basics of Running Stations	• What you nominally communicate: Callsigns and exchanges
	• What you really want to communicate: Frequency control

Do's and Don't's of Frequency Control	• Complete callsigns	• Long pauses before response
	• Establish rhythm	• Needless repeat of information
	• Be professional	• Cursing competition or chatting with friends
	• No "dead time"	• Out of synch
	• Respond to the flow of rate	

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

Before the Contest
• Record and test CW and/or voice messages in advance
• Make sure your signal is clean – no key clicks or SSB splatter
• If using packet, select the cluster to be used, and set up filters if necessary <i>(Editor's note: Remember that in N1MM there are a couple different places filters can be set. Changing settings in only one place may not give the results you expect.)</i>
• Prepare your station, antennas and logging program and test everything in advance...and test again!
• Synchronize your computer clock to WWV or the Internet

## EI8IC Contesting Tips

Learn your radio. All (well, most) of those knobs on your radio have a purpose. Find out what they do. Read and study the manual. Do you know where the manual is? If you can quickly set a split frequency, you might be the first to work a new station on 40m. If you learn how to use those 100+ memories efficiently, you can stack up big stations and throw your call in rapidly to 2, 5, or more stations simultaneously. Get all your filters in place. Get a voice keyer. Learn your DSP. Get a better mike. Tweak the audio until it sounds crystal clear and with all the punch of a buzz saw cutting through aluminum. Remember that setting for the contest, then turn it back to mushy so the boys on 80m don't complain.

Lighting is something else to consider. The existing room light will usually be behind you, causing your body to cast a shadow on the operating desk. Some small spotlights can be installed above the operating position, and should be angled to illuminate the desk without reflecting on the computer screen or other equipment which might then be difficult to read. An anglepoise light is the choice of many operators, and can be added without a rewire of the room. Don't make the operating position too cosy however; a brightly lit room is better to stop you falling asleep in the middle of the contest.

Audio speech compressors have been largely discredited and few are seen these days, new or secondhand. The RF speech processor, a device that converts your microphone output to RF, compresses the signal and then converts it back to audio for feeding into the transmitter's microphone socket is a device that is well worth having and will make a big difference to your readability as long as it is not over driven. There have been many occasions when my signal just didn't get through until I turned the processor on, and it is a device that I wouldn't like to be without in a phone contest, especially if the antennas are not quite up to KC1XX standard. Some of the modern transceivers have an RF speech processor already built in, but external add-ons are available, either new or secondhand.

*(Editor's Note: After purchasing an outboard W2IHY EQplus and its companion 8 band equalizer I was surprised to discover the microphone speech processor in the EQplus performed noticeably better than the built in one inside my TS590's. I never use the rigs processor anymore.)*

From VE9AA's Tip of the Week posts

**PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!**

For newer or older testers alike. Ensure you include a few key comments in your 3830 report so that you can (hopefully) improve your score for next years contest or compare where you were at in years past !

## From the Reflector:

- ED K3DNE forwarded information about the 2023 CW and RTTY Sprints. "Start times for the Feb/Mar Sprints have returned to 0000 UTC. The increased solar activity keeps 20 meters open long enough to remove the need for an earlier start time. Start times for the Sep Sprints have not changed.

- John K4FT decided to keep his wife because she schedules tasks outside of the house on Wednesday's letting him enjoy his CWT time in peace. Not sure, but there is probably a bit of fun time in it for her too? Whatever. Glad you two have worked out a happy marriage, John! And congratulations on using that time to take 2<sup>nd</sup> place on the SOFTA Leaderboard.
- Ed announced the ARRL has asked the SFCG to organize the SC contribution to the VOTA event. Y'all best get your station upgrades completed as the first week of February is coming up fast.
- Dave NJ4F had eye surgery. Guess Ted K7OM needs to start worrying. Dave can finally read the rules and figure out how to whup him. Ted, you are only King of the duo until he gets his antennas back up!
- Frank KG4IGC and Dave NJ4F reminisced about Linwood N4LS (SK). Frank was very impressed with Linwood's CW skills and his never ending willingness to talk all things related to CW. Frank shared some photos of Linwood at the controls of his shack.
- Matt NU4E won a flag from the 3B8M DXpedition. The group is willing to ship QSL cards along with the flag. Might be too late by the time this newsletter comes out, but let Matt know if you would like cards for you included in the shipment.
- A lot of chatter by many folks about sending code. Several ideas were floated. There's an article later in this newsletter about it.
- Dave WN4AFP shared information about a new contest Joe WB9SBD created. Dave didn't mention it, but I'm pretty sure I ran across a reflector somewhere that Dave worked some on the rules with Joe. Dave is very active beyond the SFCG community. Burton KY4ID wants to buy Joe a beer for including a shortened contest format that is friendly to working hams. Dave NJ4F said he'd add a burger to make it a meal.
- Dave NJ4F is making steady progress on replacing his antenna system. He expects to have an antenna raising sometime in the spring.
- Dave WN4AFP is looking to upgrade his rig's computer control capabilities. Just what we need... Dave to be more competitive. Look out SOFTA leaders.
- Al NE4EA is looking to improve antennas over his way and asked Frank KG4IGC about the Delta loops he uses. If I remember correctly, Bill N4IQ was the first Delta loop user in the group with his Super Loop dual band system. We all know how well they work for Bill. I (N4XL) had asked Bill for his plans a few years ago but decided on an Inverted-L instead. I've room for another antenna and am considering adding a 40/80 Super Loop myself. A bit concerned about interaction with my other two existing antennas for those bands on this smallish lot so may do something else – or nothing. I respect those antennas though. They perform well and you get two for one in the space.
- Dave NJ4F has some 1KW HF traps he's donating to the group. President Ed K3DNE is figuring out how best to handle them in regard to benefitting the SFCG. Thank you Dave.
- Excitement and propagation are peaking along with the rise in sunspots. People are happy with the recent increase in DX opportunities. When contesters see "Better DX" we think "More mults". The recent great NAQP scores by the SFCG show we can now begin to factor high band mults into our contest plans.
- Speaking of the NAQP, we reached out to non-members Andy AA5JF and Amanda KY4GS who joined the SFCG team for the January CW test. Thank you both for helping. We had

some excellent scores. Andy reported a 70% increase over his previous scores ending with 226K. Keep it up Andy! Amanda's 91K was very respectable, but she was a bit disappointed with her antenna performance. Bill N4IQ did fantastic with a 220K finish.

- It is good to hear members asking advice from the group about antennas, operating strategies, best practices, and such. That is the core of why a contesting club (in our case group) exists. Thank you all for sharing your "smarts".

## Plenty of Options When Learning CW

By Kevan N4XL

There's been a lot of reflector discussion, ours and others, about the best way to learn CW. While reading a thread on the RSGB (Radio Society of Great Britain) it occurred to me that like many things in life, there is no "best" way for everyone because we each process information differently. Some do seem to work better than others for the majority of people though. Here's what some wrote on the RSGBTechnical Groups.io reflector. The last is a very long post from K9AO, but it contains so much useful information I decided to include its entirety.

G300U: When I hold a morse class I teach the Meg Mills G2ACC method from a very old RSGB publication - it teaches character recognition starting first with the simple characters like eishtmo. (*Editor's Note: in CW those characters are very easy to learn*). Whichever method you choose there are some very basic rules to follow:

1. Little and often is best - 10 minutes each day/evening is far better than 2 hours just at a weekend
2. As already suggested, once you know the alphabet and numbers translate road signs, advertising hoardings etc. (but not while driving of course!)
3. Set your morse generator for about 12-15wpm with large gaps to start with so that you have some thinking time. As you improve reduce the inter-character gaps. The brain needs to be pushed so to get to 12wpm at 100% you should be aiming for 15wpm minimum.
4. Do not go near a morse key until you can copy at least 6-8wpm 100% - too easy to learn bad habits which take a long time to unlearn.

G4LPP: I came back to radio upon retirement to Norfolk 4 years ago and never having used CW since 1981 got talked into re-learning it here by Roger G3LDI. Very good CW classes and about half an hour practice per day and after 2y up to a steady 25 WPM. Now 2 years further on 30WPM is ok and callsigns occasionally at 84WPM. I found G4FON already mentioned to be an excellent learning aid. Listening to the bands at various speeds and Joining CWOPS weekly activity periods great for callsign and number recognition. The biggest boost to speed more recently has been regular use of RUFzXp which sends a series of callsigns from your chosen starting speed with one allowed repeat (by pressing F6) – speed increases with correct recognition of the call and decreases with an incorrect call. Highly recommend spending 10 to 15 mins per day on that. Now teaching CW by zoom and GB3NB on a Friday evening. It was a great way of coping with Lockdown too!

G0KAY: One pitfall that I fell into is that there are too many options available to us for learning morse. It's very easy to end up flitting from one app to the next, this website and that, and then avoiding getting stuck in properly. Choose something and stick with it (like G4FON).

Also it's helpful to join a class if you have the time - like CW Academy from CWOps (it's free).

Whatever you do, don't learn the characters at low speed. Learn them about 18wpm, but leave honking big gaps between letters for you brain to catch up.

Join SKCC and Fists too - lots of help there.

Set aside a fixed regular time to learn your morse - get into a routine, and try your best to stick to it.

There will be times when you'll get ridiculously frustrated and think you can't do it. You'll even get worse sometimes. That's life! Stick with it Paul, you can do it.

### K9AO

As Trystan (and others) already mentioned, do not try to learn the characters at a slow speed.

You want the speed fast enough that you can't count the dots and dashes and fast enough so that the character has a rhythm to it. Try not to even think about dots and dashes. That's just another conversion step in your head that'll slow you up. Learn the sound of each character like say a drum riff or something, get the rhythm and sound of it to decode in your head and you'll be on your way to easy copying. I think too that 18 words per minute is a good place to start and space the characters out and then decrease the spacing as you learn.

One of the things that those of us who learned the code back in the day had to go through was the plateaus that you seemed to always have at 5-7, 10-12, and 15-18 or thereabouts words per minute. You'd get to going and then hit a plateau and have to work through it before you'd get a fast increase in speed suddenly and then on and on. Back in the day we needed to get the speed up to get past the Morse tests for the license classes as we worked up the ladder. Then someone discovered that you could just start the characters fast and spread them out and get around (or so they say) the plateaus. Well, yes, you sure can do that and you'd have an easy time passing the code tests for a license. But there really is a different set of skills in copying at slow, medium, fast, and then blazing fast speeds. Eventually you'll run across these and it'll be easier to get past them if you started out learning the characters at a fast speed. Just be aware of this for later :)

Don't try to send code until you are copying well and you know what properly spaced code sounds like. Farnsworth (spread apart fast characters) is fine for learning but no one wants a QSO that way. There is just something about the sound of properly spaced code that is like a sweet song to your ears. You'll see what I mean when you start copying code off of the air, and you'll run across fists that are just not as pleasant to copy. If you learn right, your fist will be a pleasure for others to copy, and that is something to be proud of. And you'll be able to adjust your speed to what your QSO partner needs with ease.

One other thing. Copying to paper and copying in your head are 2 separate skills. Paper copy is easier and you'll always need to jot down notes throughout the QSO so that is the first thing you learn when you are sitting down and practicing. That's not to say listening to code on the way to work or something isn't helpful. It can be. But that's a second skill you're working on. Not a bad thing, just be aware of it so you understand what's going and don't get frustrated. Say, well I've been hitting 100% in the car but sheesh I can't seem to get it down on paper. (Typewriter, or as they're called a mill, copy is yet another, probably dying skill too.) When you head copy you have to remember the character and then string them together in your memory to get the meaning and make up the sentence or phrase one character at a time (until you get good enough to recognize entire words, but that'll come much later). That's a second skill on top of just copying the character, and paper copy bypasses that, so it's easier to get going on.

Another tip. To get any speed at all you need to copy behind. That's because there just isn't enough space between the characters at any faster speed at all to write down what you heard and not lose the



next character sent. (This isn't a problem in head copy, but you need to be solid on paper copy.) To copy behind you start consciously (try this at a fairly comfortable speed) hearing a character and then not writing it down until the next character starts. Then you write the previous character down as your head decodes the current character, and on and on. You can paper copy easily at well over 20 words per minute like this and it takes away that sort of emergency feeling that you have to hurry and get the character down on paper. Before you start paper copying get a copy of the pencil movement sheet that shows you the most efficient number of strokes to write any letter down. Just practice that writing letters and numbers first so that your hand already knows the fastest and best way to write the character. That'll make it easier and take some pressure off copying too.

Also, remember that what you are doing is causing your brain to make short term changes and then by repetition to move these to long term hard-wired neural pathways. You are causing your brain to wire itself up to do CW (At a few different receive speeds and to paper and head copy as well as sending) so just give your brain time to do its magic for you.

One other thought, there was a magazine called *Morsum Magnificat* that was published for many years and ceased publication in 2017. All of the issues are available online. It's worth grabbing an archive of these magazines and perusing them over a cup of coffee. It's all about Morse and the sending and copying of it and the hardware to do that, keys, bugs, etc. and it is very informative and filled with tips and tidbits from folks who were telegraphers of old on to modern Morse people and hams and aficionados of all kinds. I highly recommend it as a good read and a good source of info.

Here is a link to *Morsum Magnificat*:

<http://www.n7cfo.com/tgph/Dwnlds/mm/mm.htm>

And of course, once you get comfortable sending and receiving the ultimate way to get your speed up and increase your confidence is to get on the air and make contacts. Don't worry about perfection when you get started. That'll magically appear as you make contacts. Anyone, me and anyone else that loves CW, will always be glad and go out of our way to QSO with someone just getting their feet wet. So have no fear about getting the key out and making contacts. That's what this is all about. Make your mistakes, we all did, and we won't notice :)

I like to use a good iambic paddle to do my sending. A single lever paddle is fine too, and I learned electronic keying on that before moving to a WB4VVF AccuKeyer years ago and an iambic paddle. I'm not a fan of bugs, they're cool and I have had a few, but they're sort of a sub-hobby and you can't just move a knob to speed up or slow down, but others swear by them and love them. Later you'll get to decide these things for yourself. But do not, and I'll say it again, do not start out sending on any of these. You'll want to because they're cool, but resist it for now. The same goes for keyboard sending, something I can do (I can type at over 60 wpm) but I just don't like it. Sending with my hand on a key or a keyer just seems right somehow to me. Get a good key and get it adjusted correctly and learn to send well on that. When you have your key sending speed smooth and a pleasure to listen to (I can send at over 20 wpm on a hand key) then and only then get into electronic keying. You should always have your hand key setup and ready to go right next to any paddle or bug (and both properly placed and anchored to the operating desk) so that you can grab it to tap out a little ditty or to just grab it and slow down too.

Have fun :) I have been on CW for over 65 years.

I hope some of this has been helpful to you...

73. Rick Kunath, K9AO

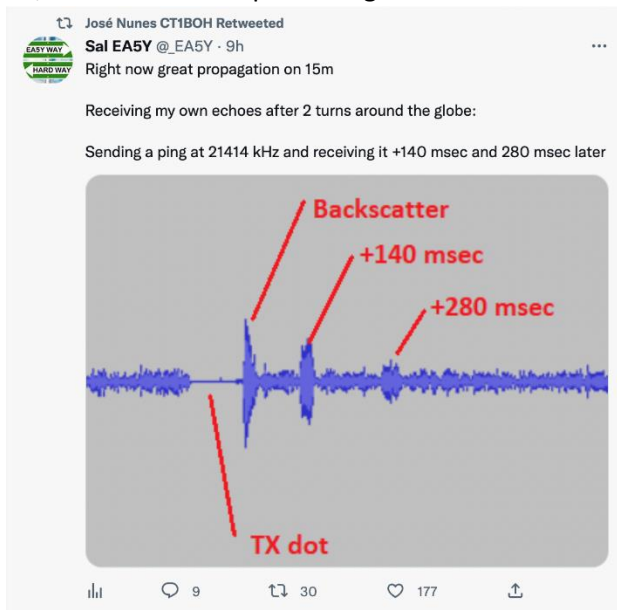
## Observations by the Editor:

- From the ARRL Contest Update for January 4, 2023: Kyle, AA0Z, interviewed Craig, K9CT, for a "RTTY Master Class" - this new video is a nearly 2 hours long and is chock full of tips and tricks to help be a better RTTY contester, and better contester in general.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwWwKI-jhrw>
- Pete N4ZR wrote in the TowerTalk reflector "I have a number of SMA connectors in areas of my station like my RBN SDR and my N1MM Spectrum Display. It seems like every few weeks I start running into problems, and have to go through and retighten them to get rid of intermittent signal losses. Is there anything that can be done to secure them better?" Answers included the following. W4EF and W6RMK worked for companies putting equipment together that went to Mars. It seems likely they are using tried and tested technical smarts to back up their recommendations.
  - Mike W4EF: A tiny blob of something really viscous (so it won't crawl up into the threads by capillary action) like 5 minute epoxy or JB weld would probably work. You could test it on a nut and bolt the same diameter to make sure it isn't too hard to remove.
  - Patrick W7TMT: A small drop of glue from a hot melt glue gun works fine based on my experience with a problematic connector (not an SMA) on a diesel engine. Since the material is not porous it will stick just fine but can be popped off with a fingernail when the time comes. Applied on the outside right at the interface between the nut and the threads would be the safest location and easiest to remove
  - Jim W6RMK: Nail polish is viscous and readily available, and easily removed with a solvent if needed. It's also not too brittle, so it won't crack with small loads. Also because it's solvent based, it tends to work well on fasteners with an oil film, because the oil goes into solution with the solvent. You can also do color coding - red for this year, blue for last year, or bands or whatever. Probably any lacquer or solvent based paint would work. I'm not sure I'd go with an epoxy - too hard to remove if you get too much on. And, some don't stick well if there's an oil or grease film.
  - Grant KZ1W: I've found that red electric varnish is too brittle for sealing. Liquid electrical tape is what I would try. Firm but releases. Amazon Gardner Bender 07315001126 LTB-400 Liquid Electrical Tape. A fine brush or toothpick to apply it I think.
  - *(Editor: My favorite two answers)*
    - Gary NA6O: I've worked on dozens of different airborne and army ground-mobile RF assemblies over my career, as well as poking my nose inside many pieces of commercial RF gear. SMA connectors were everywhere. NEVER have I seen or heard of any kind of sealant, overcoat, or anything of the sort on any SMA connector. Above all, putting anything inside the threads is simply asking for trouble. TORQUE IT PROPERLY and be done with it. A quality SMA connector is a high-precision machined assembly and must be treated with care. See the old HP application note AN-326. They are in fact vibration-resistant when correctly installed. Proper torque is also mandatory to avoid well-known frequency response aberrations in the mid-GHz range due to waveguide effects. Of course, if your connectors are all crap and/or damaged, none of the above applies...

- Wes N7WS: Same here. I worked on Phoenix, AMRAAM, Standard and others. We torqued and were done with it. We used to shock and shake the bejesus out of this hardware. Other things broke but I don't recall any connectors coming undone.
- After about 18 years the water protection on the feed line to my 160 meter inverted-L failed. Water dripped out of the connection point when I disassembled it. Time to replace the feed line. I also decided to replace the wrongly used balun and isolation transformer with an unun. Measuring 34 ohms at the feed point I settled on a 1.56:1 2KW model made by Balun Designs which matched a 32 ohm load to 50 ohm coax. Close enough for me. Since I also use the antenna on 80 meters (using a base mounted tuner) I'm curious how the impedance change will work out on that band, but 160 performance is more critical to me. I had been using a 1:1 balun. That is both the wrong choice of device and now the balun ratio will be affecting the ability of the tuner to match the antenna on 80. While looking at Balun Design's website I ran across their brag page about the quality of their devices compared to the competition. Enough people I respect have told me they recommend the company that I have no worries in that department, but the page had this quote which I both agree with and find amusing. It says: *In the immortal words of John Ruskin, "There is hardly anything in the world that some man cannot make a little worse, sell a little cheaper and the people who consider price only are this man's lawful prey"*. It reminded me of when my wife was painting custom designs in the houses of local doctors, lawyers, business leaders and such. Besides being a very accomplished artist, Elizabeth would make an excellent interior designer and has done some of that for people. Once a client asked her advice for a throw rug. Elizabeth looked in some local stores and took a picture of one she thought would work. The woman said it looked perfect and asked where it was. Said she would go immediately and buy it. When Elizabeth told her Lowe's, the woman balked. She instead found the exact same rug but sold by a store recognized as being respectable enough for the wealthy to patronize. A store 150 miles away near Atlanta. The same rug made by the same manufacturer, but three times the cost. The woman had to pay for shipping and wait days for it to arrive. But she could brag where she bought it from. That isn't quite the same idea John Ruskin talked about with his quote, but I'm sure he also understood the side of human nature that lets some people completely discount price if of dubious benefit too.
- I'm working on a presentation for the SECC about my Little Pistol approach to competitive contesting. Maybe give it to the SFCG if y'all are interested. Ran across a PowerPoint from Patrick N9RV called "Operating Mechanics: The X-Factor in Contesting Success". A lot of good info in it summarized well. Multi-Multi stations are traditionally supposed to have the best ops they can find and be focused on competing. Rate is KING and mults Queen. Patrick has a slide titled Actual Quotes Heard During Multi-Op Contests\*, with the \* stating "Not at K3LR". He gives these surprising examples:
  - "... the band is really hot. Let's tune for a while."
  - "...wow, that was the first 60 hour I've ever had."
  - "There's too many of you calling at once. QRZed."
  - "Who reset my keyer memories with all these short CQs?"

Now... I have said or thought every one of those things, but that was before I decided to contest competitively and studied how the winners did things.

- From the ARRL Contest Update for January 4, 2023: Salvador Domenech, EA5Y, noticed that he was hearing echoes after transmitting a dit on 15 meters. One hundred and forty milliseconds is about 26,000 miles at the speed of light.



*(Editor's Note: In case you haven't had your coffee yet, 140 msec = 26,000 miles = 1 trip around the earth.)*

## N1MM+ Tips:

- A thought rather than a tip. Remote operating is becoming more common. N1MM, and I suspect other programs, does not always work the same remotely as it does in your home shack. This post from the N1MM reflector is an example of such a problem. If you can operate remotely using N1MM it might be worthwhile to set aside some of your precontest preparation time testing logger operation. Run through even common tasks you take for granted. Although you cannot always trust responders to be knowledgeable, Steve N2IC has extensive experience in this area. He is part of the N1MM Development Team and a highly respected remote operator.

George VA2EBI: When in RUN the Entry window should jump cursor to the Exchange field when I enter a callsign. Sometimes it doesn't, so I have to hit the Space bar after sending my Exchange so I can enter their Exchange. Is there a way to change that function from the keyboard? I have had to close and open N1MM, or reboot the radio, or restart the Remoterig in order to get N1MM to operate normally in RUN.

Steve N2IC: George, this is one of your remote/internet issues. N1MM+ is not getting the signal from the Winkey (or Winkey clone) that the call has finished sending. The cursor will not advance until N1MM+ knows that the call has finished sending.

- There has been a lot of discussion on the N1MM reflector about using it to send UDP data to general logging programs like Log4OM and DXKeeper. Those other programs allow QSL and award tracking and some apparently want real time award tracking during a contest. Competitive ops won't do that, but we don't always enter all contests trying to win so I understand why some would like that capability. However, I've had issues a few times after setting up N1MM to provide non-contest services (like feeding Log4OM during a contest or QRZ lookup) and then finding it has affected my computer's ability to process critical features or distracted my attention from being competitive. I tried to remember to disable those unneeded things before starting a serious effort, but too often forgot to turn them off. Apparently, I'm not the only one who feels the need to reduce processor loading as evidenced by this post:

Jim K9YC: I briefly tried that years ago to DXKeeper from N1MM, and found that the last thing I needed to do was ask my computer do more un-necessary things while I'm contesting. It's already sending CW, decoding and sending RTTY, controlling a rotator and SteppIR, and if I'm running assisted, processing a heavy stream of spots and has a browser open with a half dozen windows.

It is trivially easy to export each log after the contest and import it into the main logging program. I've used DXKeeper for nearly 20 years, since getting back on the air in 2003.

### Upcoming Contests:

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

## SFOTA Current Leaderboard:

Current Leaderboard						
2023 OVERALL STANDINGS						
CALL	Contests	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	DIGITAL QSO'S	RTTY QSO'S	TOTAL QSO'S
1) N4IQ	5	1087	0	0	1272	2359
2) K4FT	9	1211	0	0	50	1261
3) N4QI	5	302	0	0	128	430
4) K7OM	2	160	0	0	190	350
5) KS4YX	1	0	0	0	252	252
6) WN4AFP	5	140	0	0	0	140
7) AC4MC	2	126	0	0	0	126
8) K4QQG	1	0	0	0	104	104
9) N2OG	1	12	0	0	0	12

2023 INDIVIDUAL MODE STANDINGS							
CALL	CW QSO'S	CALL	SSB QSO'S	CALL	DIGITAL QSO'S	CALL	RTTY QSO'S
K4FT	1211	N4IQ		N4IQ		N4IQ	1272
N4IQ	1087			KS4YX		KS4YX	252
N4QI	302			K7OM		K7OM	190
K7OM	160			N4QI		N4QI	128
WN4AFP	140			K4QQG		K4QQG	104
AC4MC	126			K4FT		K4FT	50
N2OG	12						

## 3830 Activity:

*Editor's Note: This really isn't indicative of the NAQP CW or other contests ending 1/15/2023. I created this the morning after the NAQP contest and people haven't had a chance to enter their scores into 3830, but I wanted to get the newsletter out due as several commitments the next few days. (I'm not as busy as Ed and Scott though.)*

Contest	Call	Class	Power	Score
9A CW				
12/18/2022	N4QI	SOAB	LP	1,500
ARRL 10				
12/19/2022	KB1QU	SO CW	HP	94,916
NAQP CW				
1/15/2023	K4FT	Single Op Assisted	LP	176,870
1/15/2023	K7OM	Single Op	LP	13,920
1/15/2023	KG4IGC	Single Op Assisted	LP	28,810
1/15/2023	KY4ID	Single Op Assisted	LP	187,750

1/15/2023	N4IQ	Single Op Assisted	LP	220,174
1/15/2023	N4QI	Single Op	LP	20,615
1/15/2023	WN4AFP	Single Op	LP	85,260
OK RTTY				
12/18/2022	K7OM	SOAB	HP	8,502
12/20/2022	KG4IGC	SOAB	LP	11,505
12/18/2022	N4QI	SOAB	LP	234
RAC Winter				
12/19/2022	K4FT	Single Op CW	LP	12,780
12/18/2022	K4QQG	Single Op Assisted	HP	104,636
12/19/2022	KB1QU	Single Op Assisted	HP	2,750
12/18/2022	N4QI	Single Op	LP	36,180
RAEM				
12/28/2022	WN4AFP	SOSB/40	LP	546
RTTY Roundup				
1/9/2023	K4QQG	Single Op	HP	5,408
1/9/2023	K7OM	Single Op	HP	11,590
1/9/2023	KS4YX	Single Op	LP	17,388
1/9/2023	N4IQ	SO Unlimited	HP	146,280
1/9/2023	N4QI	Single Op	LP	6,656
TBDC				
12/19/2022	K4FT	Single Op	LP	474
12/19/2022	N4IQ	Single Op	HP	258
YOTA				
1/5/2023	WN4AFP	SOAB	LP	996

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73 es QRT de N4XL