

Contesting: Beyond Field Day

AMATEUR RADIO CONTESTING: BEYOND FIELD DAY

**South Lyon Area Amateur Radio Club
Frank Maynard, NF8M**

Contesting: Beyond Field Day

Who This Talk Is For

- Not just for newer hams
- Maybe have done Field Day
- Wonder what all that noise is on the weekend
- Would like to give contesting a try
- Or have operated in contests but would like to know more

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- **“We operate for 24/48 hours, log all the stations we contact, and see who can make the most contacts in the most states, countries”**
 - ***“How do you know who won?”***
- **“We send our logs to the sponsor, and they check them”**
- ***“How much money do you get for winning?”***
 - **“Nothing”**
 - ***“Huh?? Then why do you do this?”***

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Why do we do this???

- *The abundant cash prizes*
- *The admiration of family, friends, and coworkers*
 - *The groupies*

Must be something else...

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Contesting Benefits Amateur Radio

- Engages Newcomers
- Club Activity
- Uses our precious allocations
- Encourages Technical Improvement
- Database for propagation studies

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Contesting Benefits Amateur Radio Operators

- Improves Operator Skills
- Explore new modes
- Learn about your rig
- Learn about propagation
- Improve your station
- Sleep? Who needs sleep?

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**Contesting
as a Means
to an End**

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What do you like to do?

Work DX?

County hunting?

Summits/Parks/Islands on the air?

Traffic handling?

Emergency Communications?

Collect wallpaper?

Experimentation?

Try new bands and modes?

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What do you like to do?

Work DX?

Many worldwide contests throughout the year:

February - ARRL Int'l DX contest

March/May - CQ WPX

July - IARU HF World Championship

Oct/Nov - CQ Worldwide

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What do you like to do?

Work DX?

**Many other countries sponsor
contests as well!**

Russia – UK/British Empire – Germany
Spain – Japan – Canada

Worked All Europe (summer)

All Asia – All Africa – Oceania

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What do you like to do?

County Hunting?

**State QSO Parties are perfect for
County Hunters!**

Every State or Region has a QSO Party

Exchange usually includes County

You can win fish, wine, blankets

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What do you like to do?

SOTA/POTA/IOTA?

Operate remotely

Work Summits/Parks during State QSO Parties

RSGB Islands On The Air Contest

International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend

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What do you like to do?

Traffic handling?

ARRL Sweepstakes exchange
emulates a Radiogram header

In general, contesting teaches you to
make efficient contacts, passing
essential information accurately

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What do you like to do?

Emergency communication?

Simulated Emergency Test - not a real contest but there is a competitive aspect

Field Day

In general, contesting teaches you to make efficient contacts, passing essential information accurately

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What do you like to do?

Collect wallpaper?

WAS in a weekend!

NAQP – Sweepstakes

DXCC in a weekend!

ARRL DX, IARU or CQ Worldwide

*Needed states, countries, prefixes,
zones, grids add up fast!*

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What do you like to do?

Experimenting?

Build and test new antennas

Try something different: radio, shack layout, interface, logging

VHF/UHF/Microwave

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What do you like to do?

Try new bands?

Band-specific contests for

160 Meters

10 Meters

6 & 2 Meters

VHF/UHF/Microwave

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What do you like to do?

Try new modes?

Contests for

CW and SSB

RTTY

PSK31- FT8 - FT4

Feld Hell

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What do you like to do?

Try other new (or old) stuff?

Contests for

QRP

Portable

Straight Key or “Bug”

Vintage Equipment

You Name It-There's Probably a Contest

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**What is a
contest ?**

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What is a contest ?

- Fixed period of time
- Usually a specific focus
- Make (lots of) two-way contacts
- Multipliers
- Keep score
- Rules

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Three broad categories of contests

- Major contests
- Minor contests
- Specialty contests

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MAJOR CONTESTS

- CQ Worldwide (Fall)
- CQ WPX (Spring)
- ARRL DX (Winter)
- ARRL Sweepstakes (November)
- IARU (Summer)
- Field Day (not a contest)

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MINOR CONTESTS

- Regional (WAE, Oceania)
- Country-specific (WAG, RAC)
- State QSO Parties
- North American QSO Parties
- Single-band (10, 160, VHF)

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SPECIALTY CONTESTS

- Sprints – NCCC, SKCC
- CWOps, NAQCC, PhoneFray, SST
- FYBO, ARS
- CQ WE, OMISS, YLRL
- 10-10, SMIRK

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CONTEST SCORING

QSO Points

- Usually 1 or 2, sometimes more for DX

Multipliers

- States-Counties-Zones-Prefixes depending on contest

$$\text{Score} = \text{Points} \times \text{Multipliers}$$

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New to contesting? Getting started

Try a “casual” contest

- North American QSO Party
- RAC Contests

Read the rules

- Who can you work?
- Start and end times
- Exchange
- Listen to other stations

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Contests for Technician Class

- VHF/UHF contests
- 10 Meter contests
- 10 Meters in HF contests
- CW in 80/40/15 Meters
- Guest Op with a General, Extra or Club Station

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Contests for General Class

- All bands & modes available
- But subbands limited on some HF bands
- Best DX found in the Extra segments

Upgrade to Extra

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Contests for Newer Hams

- ARRL Rookie Roundup
- Rookie Overlays in CQ contests
- School Club Roundup
- Collegiate QSO Party

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The Contest Exchange

Information sent and received

- RST and serial number
- RST and location
- RST and zone
- Name and state
- Sweepstakes = Message header



Must be sent & received correctly by both to count as a complete contact

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Run vs. Search & Pounce

Run

- Calls CQ and others answer
- High rates possible
- Big Guns primarily run

Search & Pounce

- Answer other stations' CQ
- Usually produces more mults per QSO
- Little Pistols usually S&P

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Making a S&P QSO

Find a run station

Answer CQ – Call sign once

Copy his exchange

- Ask for repeats if needed

Send yours briskly but clearly

- Be ready to supply repeats

Log and move on

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Making a S&P QSO

Him

You

CQ Contest K1DG

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Making a S&P QSO

Him

You

CQ Contest K1DG

KX8ABC

Contesting: Beyond Field Day

Making a S&P QSO

Him

You

CQ Contest K1DG

KX8ABC

KX8ABC Doug New Hampshire

Contesting: Beyond Field Day

Making a S&P QSO

Him

You

CQ Contest K1DG

KX8ABC

KX8ABC Doug New Hampshire

Thanks - Bob Michigan

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Making a S&P QSO

Him

You

CQ Contest K1DG

KX8ABC

KX8ABC Doug New Hampshire

Thanks - Bob Michigan

Thanks K1DG

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After the contest ends

Submit your log! See rules for how

- Email, web upload, 3830, paper
- Rename log file to *yourcall.log*

Confirm receipt on contest website

Pay attention to log due date!

- Most are due 30 days after
- SS is 15 days - CQ are 5 days!

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After the contest ends

Should you....

- Correct errors in log?
- Category shop?

Post summary to 3830scores.com

Upload to LOTW

Brag on the club reflector

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The Cabrillo Log

START-OF-LOG: 2.0
CREATED-BY: NA Version 10.63
CONTEST: CA-QSO-PARTY
CALLSIGN: NF8M
OPERATORS:
CATEGORY: SINGLE-OP ALL LOW
CATEGORY-OPERATOR: SINGLE-OP
CATEGORY-POWER: LOW
CATEGORY-BAND: ALL
CATEGORY-MODE: MIXED
LOCATION: MI
CLAIMED-SCORE: 9792
CLUB: Mad River Radio Club
SOAPBOX:
SOAPBOX:
NAME: Frank Maynard
ADDRESS: 44683 Mansfield Dr.
ADDRESS: Novi, Mi 48375

QSO: 14028 CW 2016-10-01 1606 NF8M	0001 MI	K6RB	16	SCRU
QSO: 14032 CW 2016-10-01 1607 NF8M	0002 MI	KG6N	16	SONO
QSO: 14032 CW 2016-10-01 1610 NF8M	0003 MI	W6YX	14	SCLA
QSO: 14033 CW 2016-10-01 1611 NF8M	0004 MI	K9JM	17	NEVA
QSO: 14034 CW 2016-10-01 1612 NF8M	0005 MI	AA6PW	16	ORAN
QSO: 14035 CW 2016-10-01 1613 NF8M	0006 MI	N6MU	22	ORAN
QSO: 14036 CW 2016-10-01 1615 NF8M	0007 MI	N6G	35	TUOL
QSO: 14036 CW 2016-10-01 1617 NF8M	0008 MI	KI6RRN	50	SDIE
QSO: 14037 CW 2016-10-01 1618 NF8M	0009 MI	N6T	23	TEHA
QSO: 14037 CW 2016-10-01 1619 NF8M	0010 MI	K6LA	54	LANG
QSO: 14039 CW 2016-10-01 1620 NF8M	0011 MI	AE6Y	56	SCLA
QSO: 14039 CW 2016-10-01 1622 NF8M	0012 MI	N6O	74	CCOS
QSO: 14040 CW 2016-10-01 1623 NF8M	0013 MI	W6K	20	TUOL
QSO: 14040 CW 2016-10-01 1627 NF8M	0014 MI	W6JAZ	53	YUBA

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Some Cautions

- No extraneous stuff
- No screwy phonetics
- Exchange in correct order
- Give complete exchange
- Run station goes first
- “Please Copy”

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- No extraneous stuff
- No screwy phonetics
- Exchange in correct order
- Give complete exchange
- Run station goes first
- ~~“Please Copy”~~

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Tips for more enjoyable contesting

- Learn your rig
- Test everything beforehand
- Use contest logging software
- Use a headset
- When in doubt, ask for a repeat
- Don't rely on the spots

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Tips for more enjoyable contesting

- Time = rate = score
 - ▶ Don't waste time in a pileup
 - ▶ Don't waste time with alligators
- K3ZO rule of twice
- Friday night is for the Big Guns
- Slower CW high in the band

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Logging Software

- Keeps your log
- Interfaces with rig
- Prompts you for needed info
- Checks for dupes
- Shows wanted & worked mults
- Tracks your score
- Generates Cabrillo & ADIF

Logging Software

- **N1MM+**

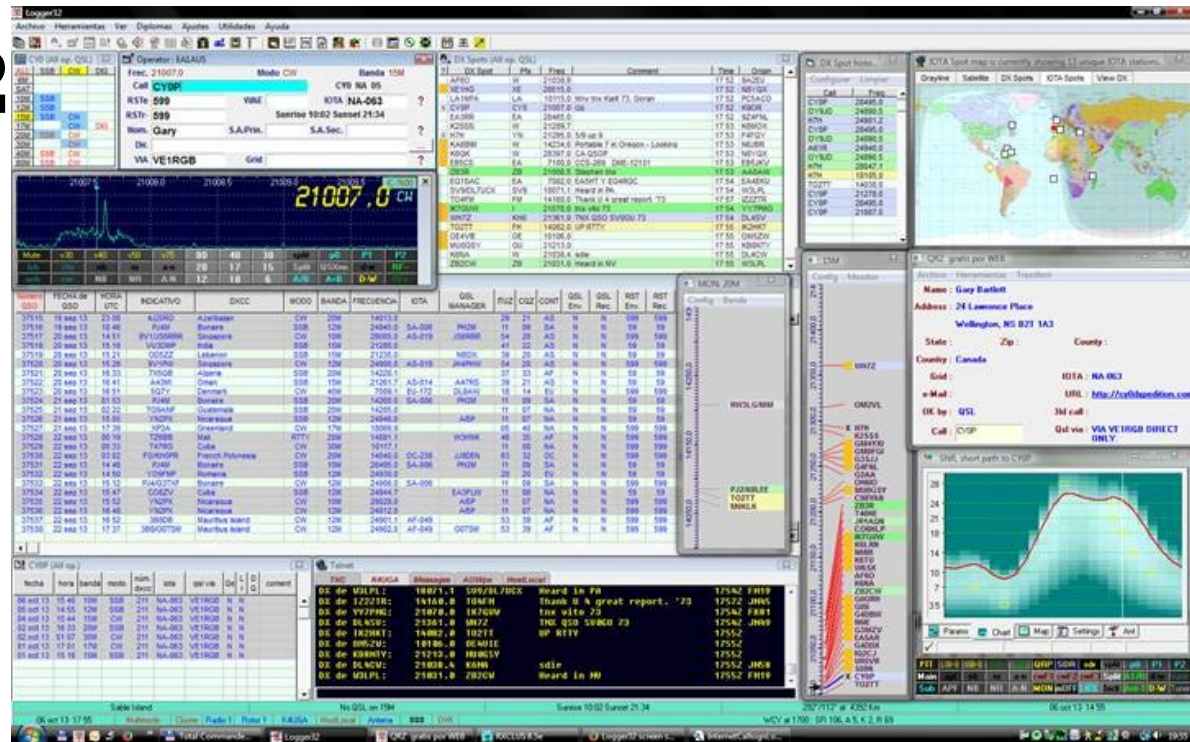


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Logging Software

Many flavors:

- N1MM+
- **Logger32**

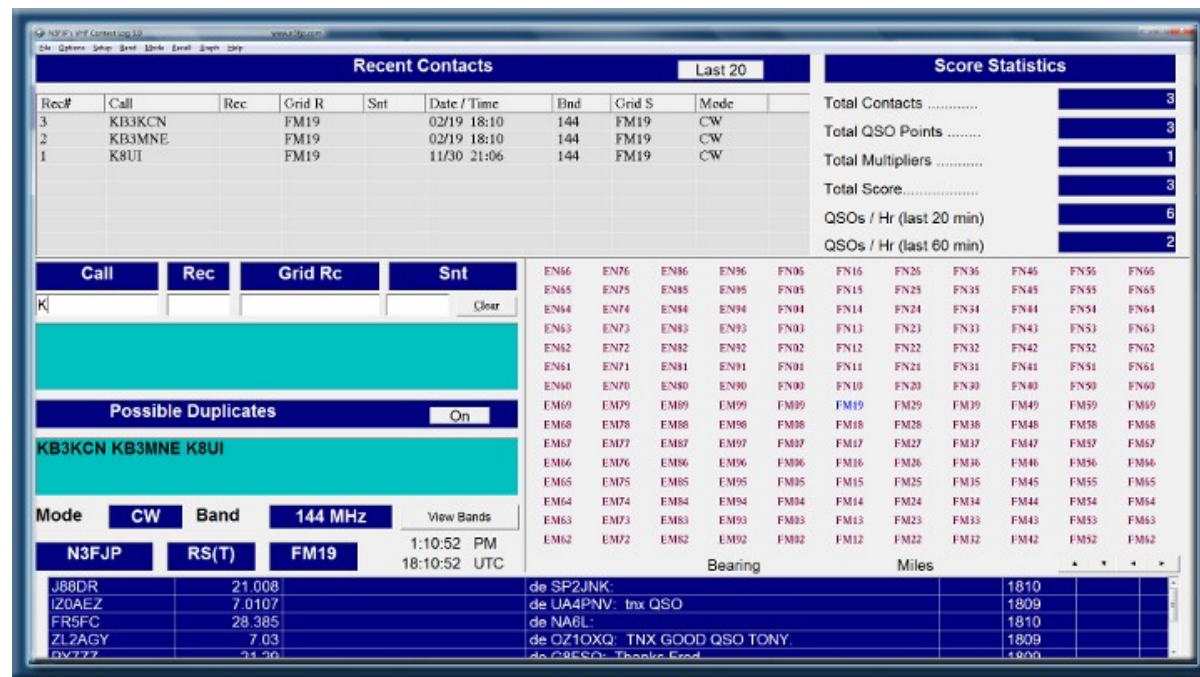


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Logging Software

Many flavors:

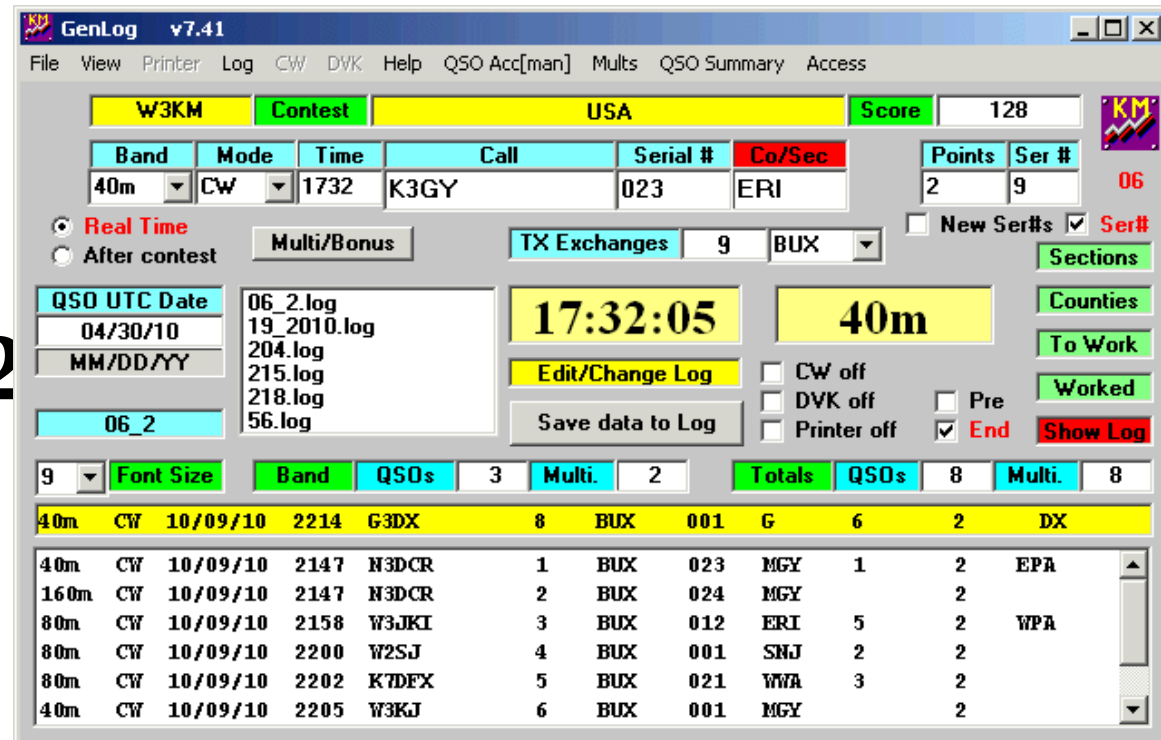
- N1MM+
- Logger32
- **N3FJP**



Logging Software

Many flavors:

- N1MM+
- Logger32
- N3FJP
- **GenLog32**

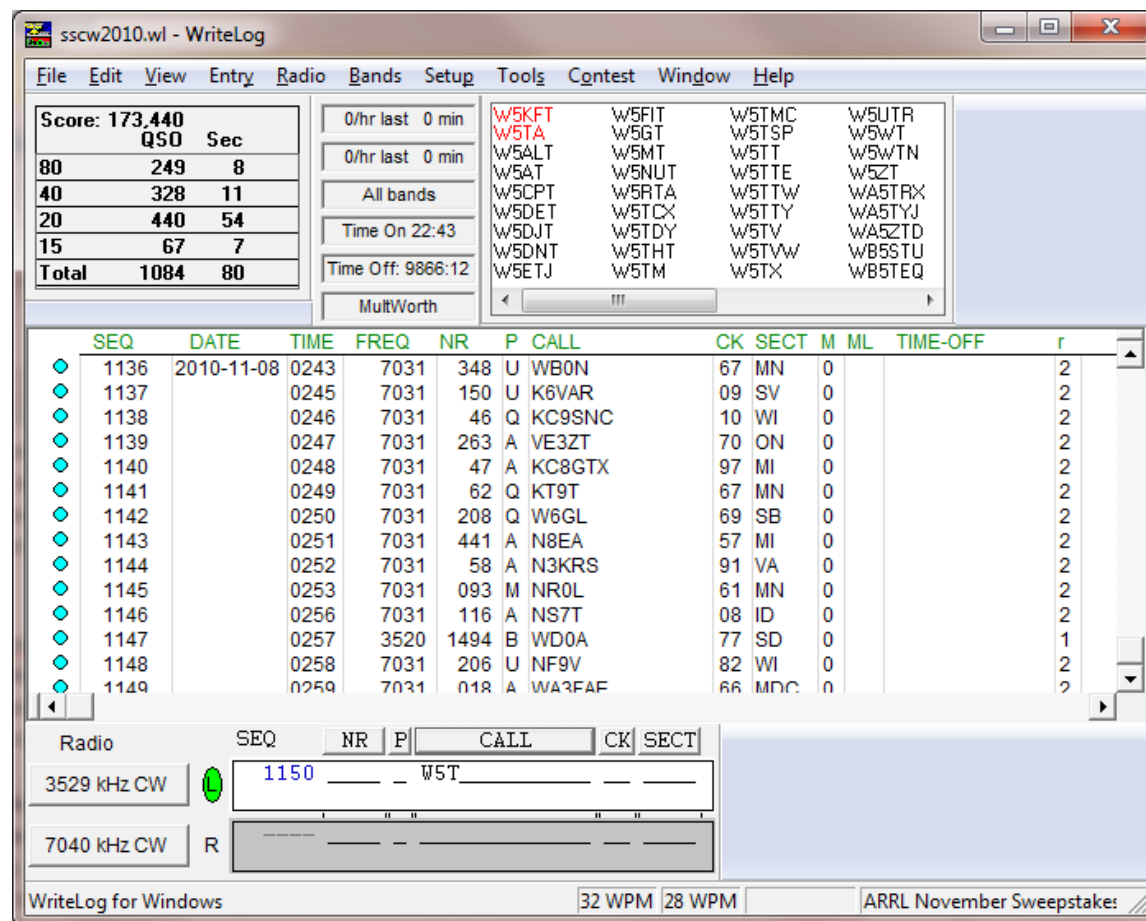


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Logging Software

Many flavors:

- N1MM+
- Logger32
- N3FJP
- GenLog32
- **WriteLog**

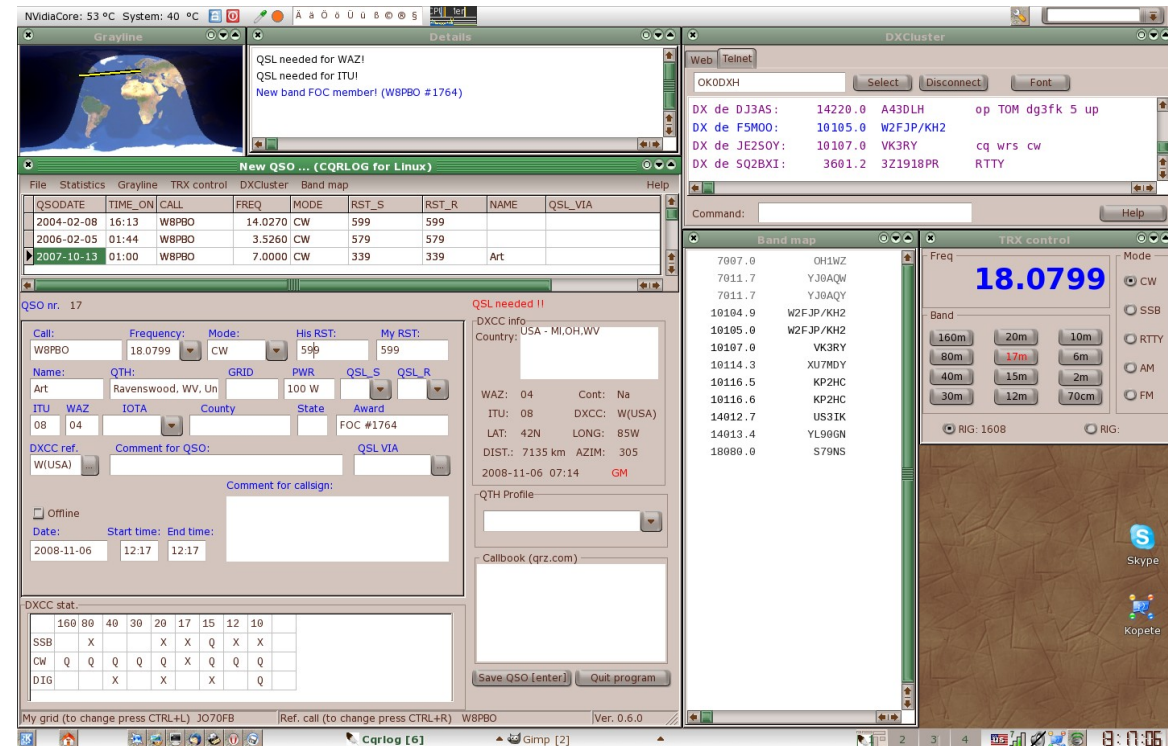


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Logging Software

Many flavors:

- N1MM+
- Logger32
- N3FJP
- GenLog32
- WriteLog
- CQRlog



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Next Level - Station

Improve shack ergonomics

- Equipment layout



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Next Level - Station

Improve shack ergonomics

- Equipment layout
- Chair comfort
- Headset & foot switch

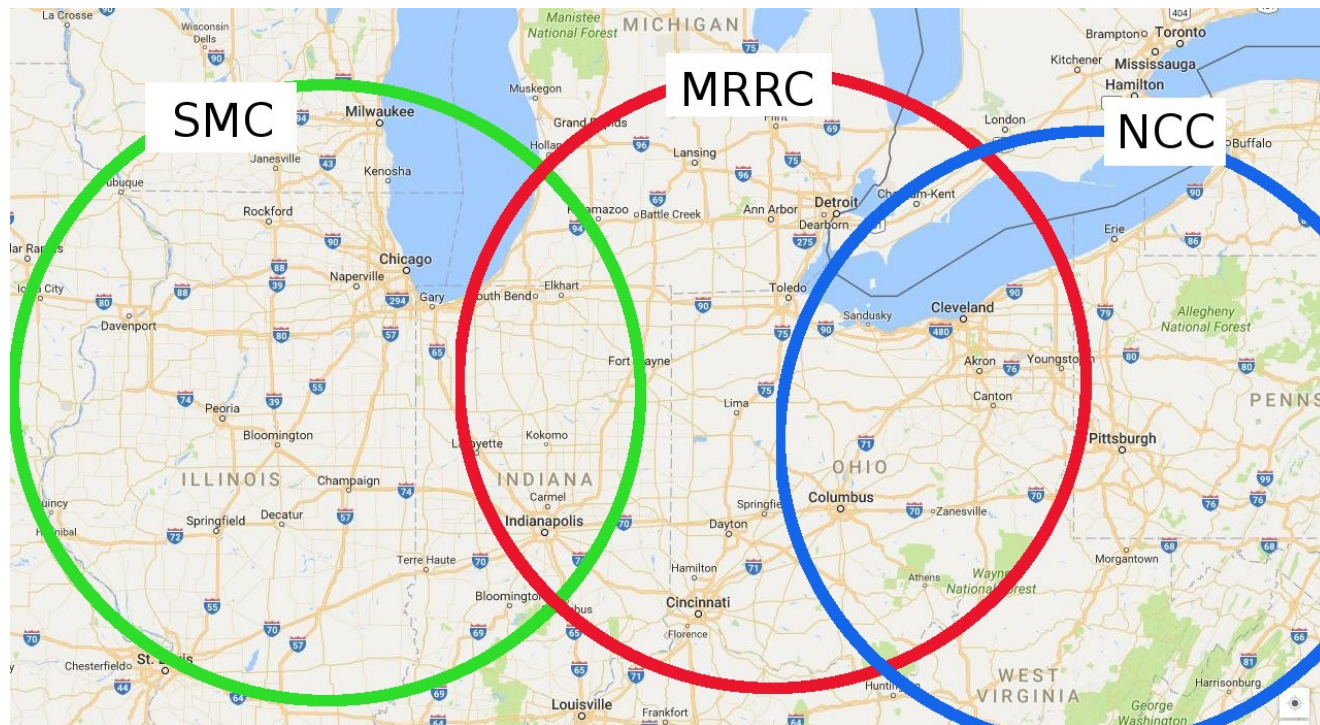
Equipment performance

- Local receive noise
- Antenna farm
- Rig specs

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Next Level - Operator

- Join a contest club



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Next Level - Operator

- Join a contest club
- Subscribe to NCJ



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Next Level - Operator

- Join a contest club
- Subscribe to NCJ
- Study the Log Checking Report

=====

SWEEPSTAKES LOG REPORT FOR NF8M

DUPE CHECK RESULTS

There were no dupes found in your log.

TIME ON CALCULATION

2313-0003 = 51
0338-0405 = 28
1320-1336 = 17
1856-1955 = 60
2033-2118 = 46
0133-0259 = 87

On time = 289 minutes (max of 1440).

CALLSIGN CHECK RESULTS

N3GL is a busted call. The correct call is N3ZL.

You had 1 calls in your log which were not found in the database of good callsigns. All of these were judged to be busted calls and will be removed from your score - along with an additional penalty of one QSO per busted callsign.

Unique percentage = 0.0

EXCHANGE CHECK RESULTS

QSO #66 WA7NB : B 84 Az should be B 74 Az
QSO #125 N40GW : Q 96 Ms should be Q 86 Ms
QSO #129 N2IC : U 68 Nm should be B 68 Nm
QSO #137 K3TX : A 50 Ep should be A 59 Ep
QSO #147 K3TEJ : B 63 Ep should be B 62 Ep

99.3% of your non dupe QSOs had their exchanges checked.

There were 5 exchange errors found. These QSOs will be removed from your score with no penalties.

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Next Level - Operator

- Join a contest club
- Subscribe to NCJ
- Study the Log Checking Report
- ARRL Contest Update
- CQ-Contest reflector
- Help with a multi-op
- Attend a Contest University

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Resources

WA7BNM – Bruce Horn

- contestcalendar.com

- 3830scores.com

- b4h.net/cabforms

contesting.com

<http://www.arrl.org/hf-contesting-guidelines>

ARRL's Contest Update email

Contestuniversity.com

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To Sum It Up

Play By The Rules

Get On The Air

Stay Awake

Have Fun!

