

# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## **AMATEUR RADIO CONTESTING: BEYOND FIELD DAY**

**Livonia 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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**What is a  
contest ?**

We'll answer that in a minute...

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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

# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

**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 ?**

# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## **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-Grid Squares 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

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](http://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	SCRJ
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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## **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



# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## **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

# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## Logging Software

Many flavors:

- **N1MM+**

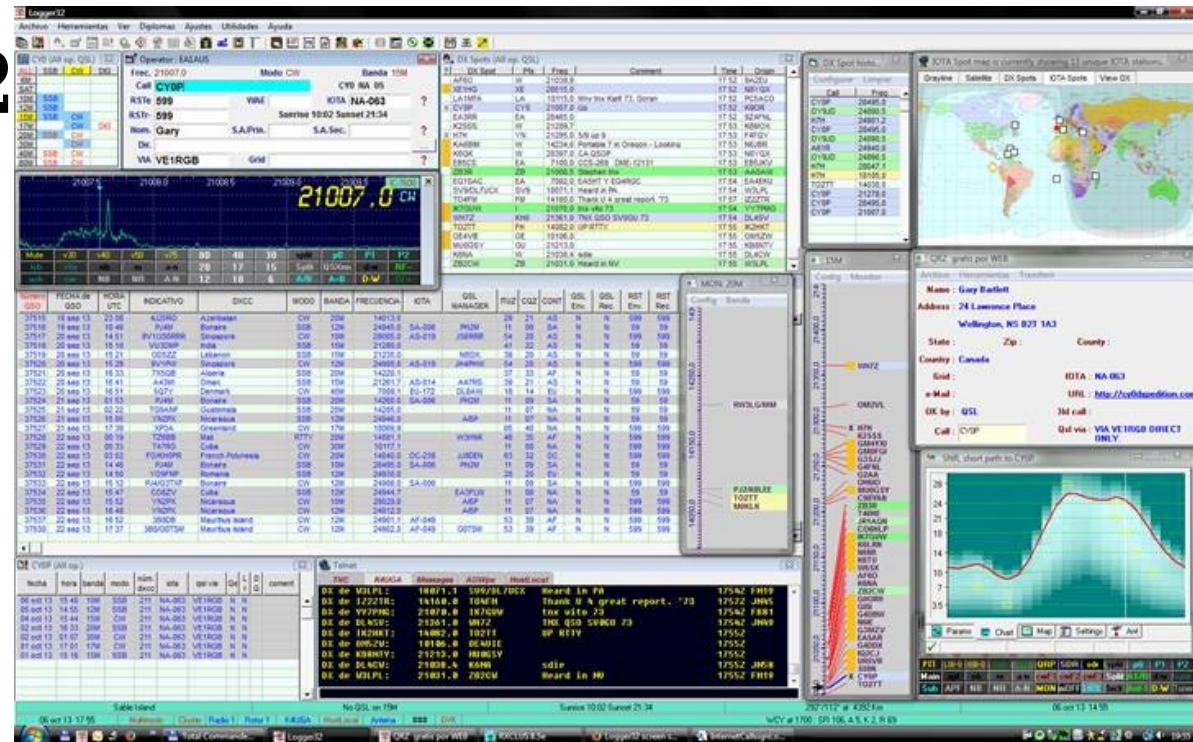


# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## Logging Software

Many flavors:

- N1MM+
- **Logger32**

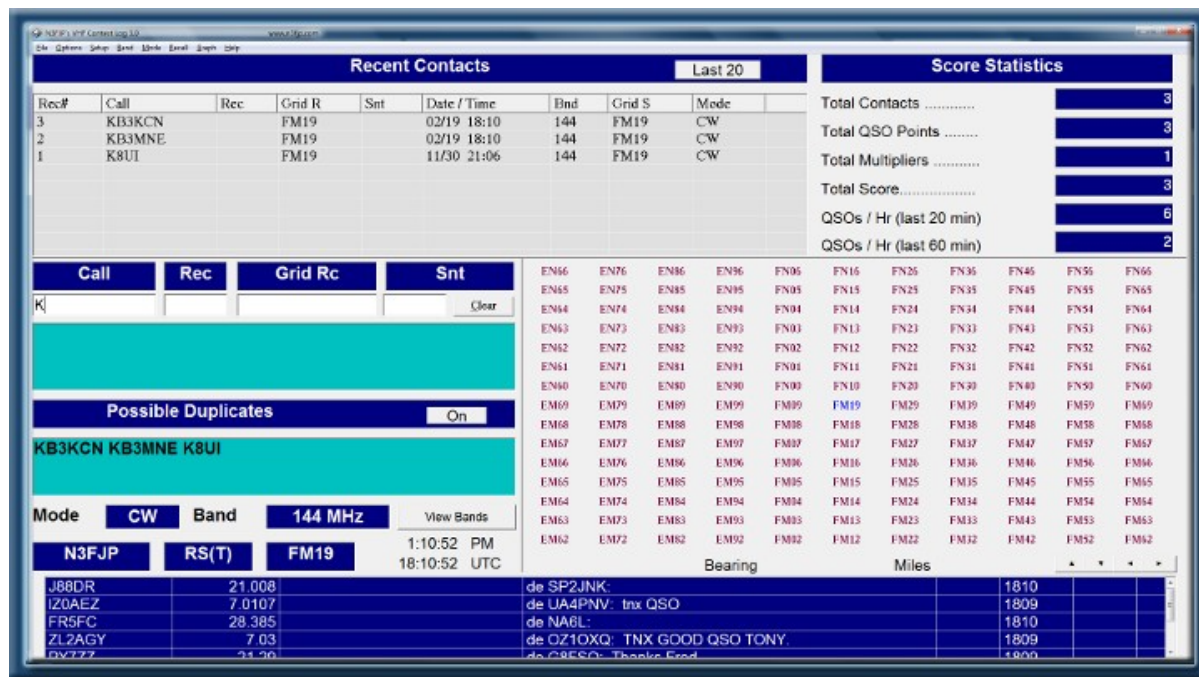


# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## Logging Software

Many flavors:

- N1MM+
- Logger32
- **N3FJP**





# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## Logging Software

Many flavors:

- N1MM+
- Logger32
- N3FJP
- GenLog32

The screenshot displays the GenLog v7.41 software interface. At the top, the title bar reads "GenLog v7.41". Below it is a menu bar with options: File, View, Printer, Log, CW, DVK, Help, QSO Acc[man], Mults, QSO Summary, and Access. The main interface is divided into several sections. The top section shows the contest name "W3KM", the country "USA", and the score "128". Below this, there are fields for Band (40m), Mode (CW), Time (1732), Call (K3GY), Serial # (023), and Co/Sec (ERI). The Points section shows 2 points for 9 serial numbers. The Real Time section has radio buttons for "Real Time" (selected) and "After contest", and a "Multi/Bonus" button. The TX Exchanges section shows 9 exchanges for BUX. The QSO UTC Date section shows "04/30/10" and "MM/DD/YY". The QSO log section shows a list of log files: 06\_2.log, 19\_2010.log, 204.log, 215.log, 218.log, and 56.log. The Edit/Change Log and Save data to Log buttons are also present. The Font Size section shows a dropdown menu set to 9. The Band, QSOs, Multi, and Totals sections show various statistics. The bottom section is a table of QSOs.

Band	Mode	Time	Call	Serial #	Co/Sec	Points	Ser #
40m	CW	1732	K3GY	023	ERI	2	9

06\_2

06\_2.log  
19\_2010.log  
204.log  
215.log  
218.log  
56.log

17:32:05

40m

9

Font Size

Band

QSOs

3

Multi

2

Totals

QSOs

8

Multi

8

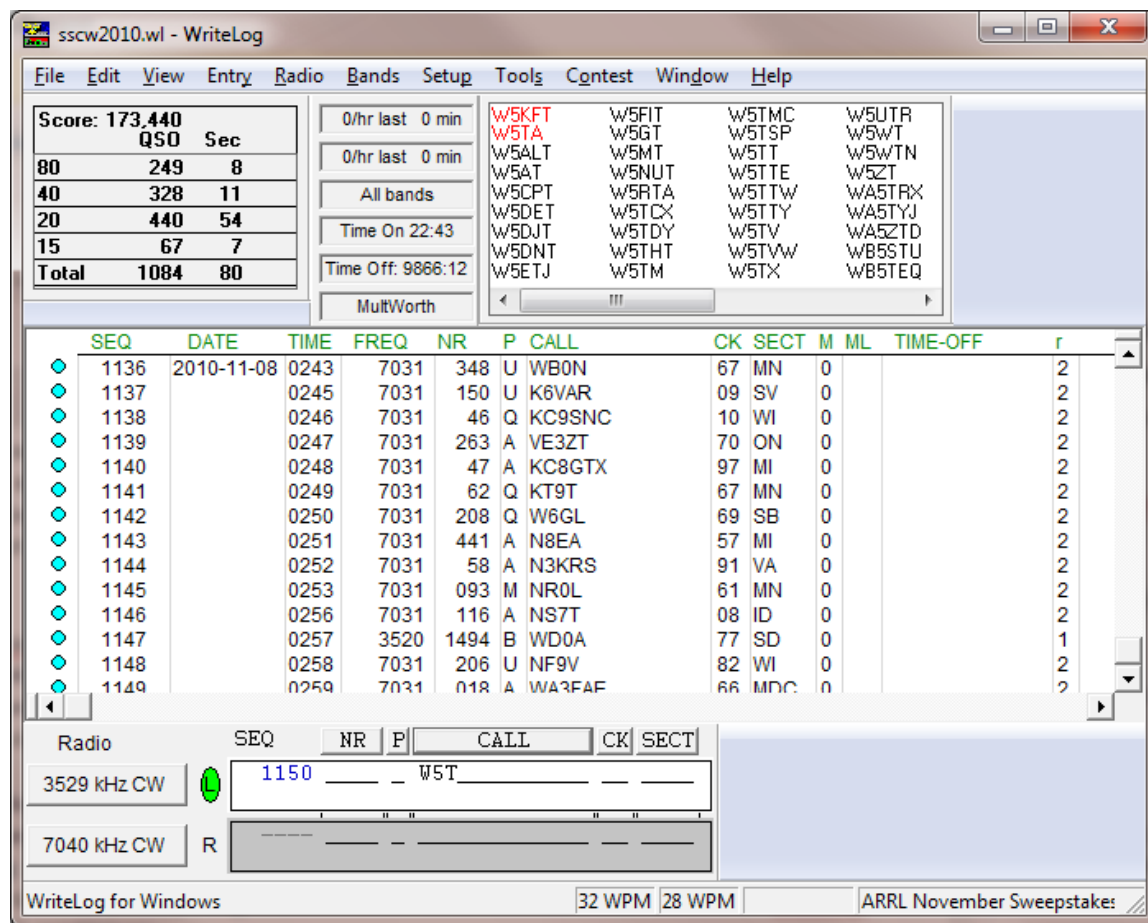
Band	Mode	Time	Call	Serial #	Co/Sec	Points	Ser #
40m	CW	10/09/10	2214	G3DX	8	BUX	001
40m	CW	10/09/10	2147	N3DCR	1	BUX	023
160m	CW	10/09/10	2147	N3DCR	2	BUX	024
80m	CW	10/09/10	2158	W3JKI	3	BUX	012
80m	CW	10/09/10	2200	W2SJ	4	BUX	001
80m	CW	10/09/10	2202	K7DFX	5	BUX	021
40m	CW	10/09/10	2205	W3KJ	6	BUX	001

# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## Logging Software

Many flavors:

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

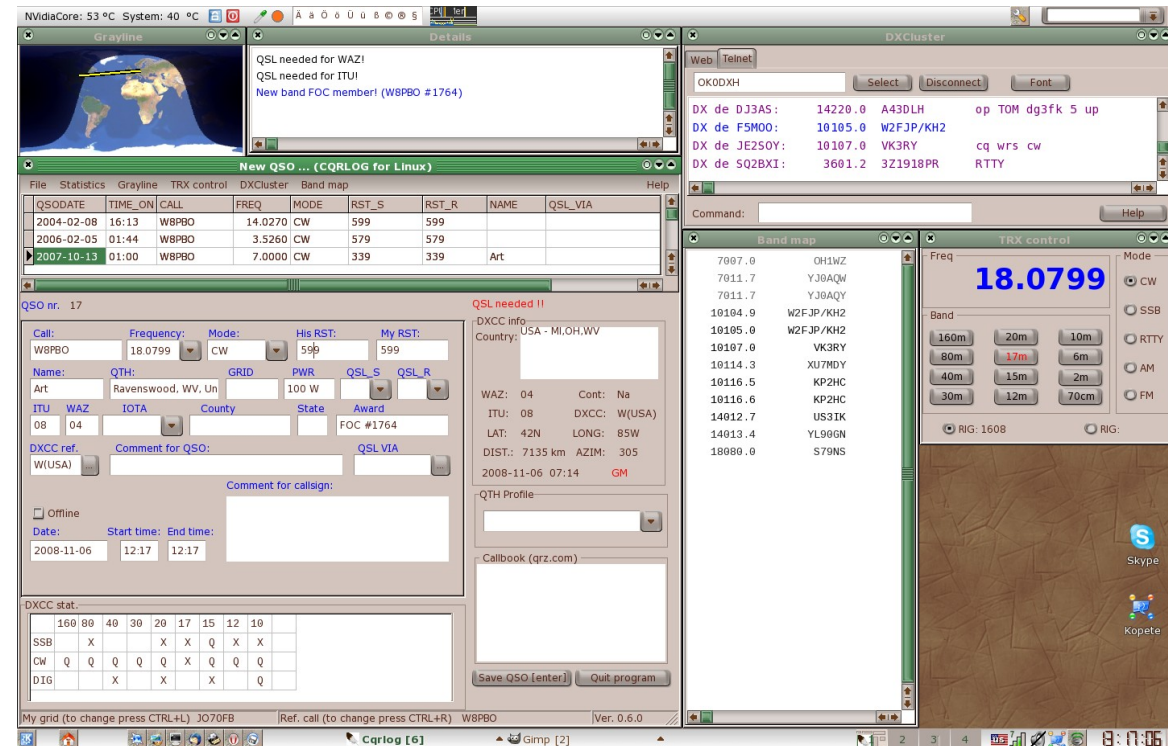


# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## Logging Software

Many flavors:

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





# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## Next Level - Station

Improve shack ergonomics

- Equipment layout



# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## **Next Level - Station**

Improve shack ergonomics

- Equipment layout
- Chair comfort
- Headset & foot switch

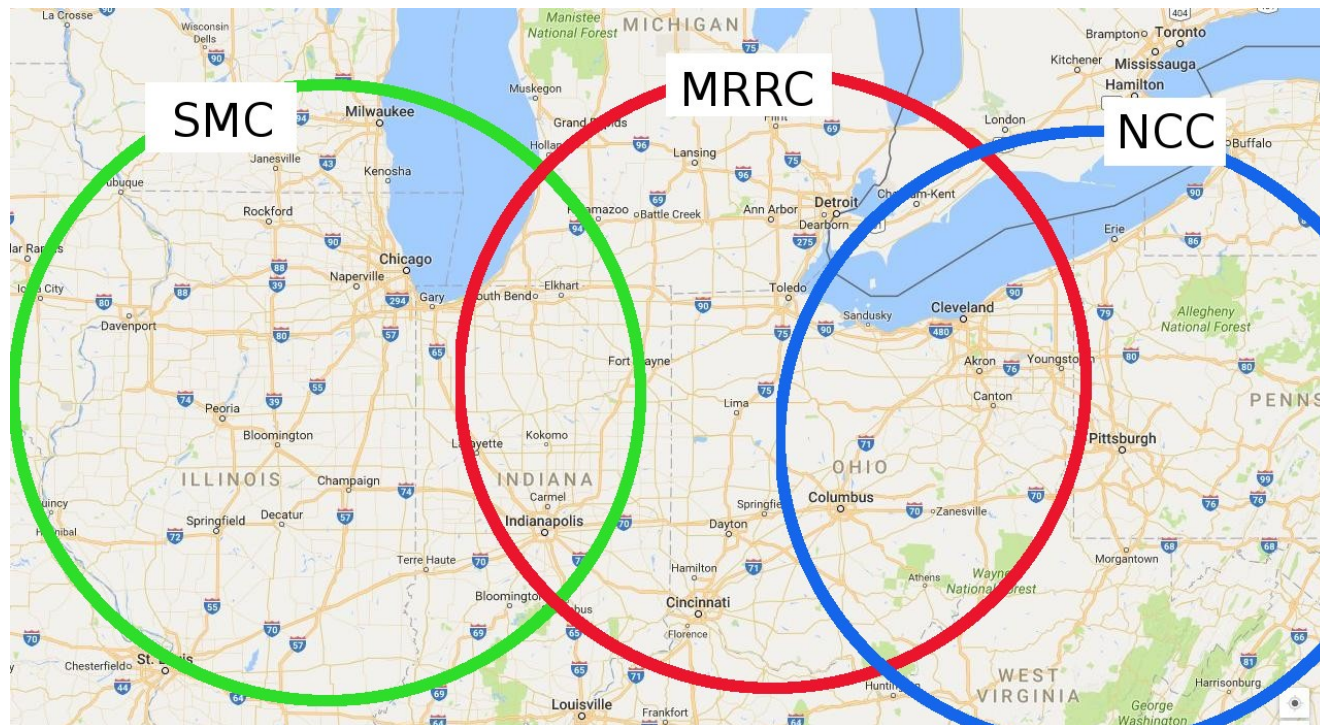
Equipment performance

- Local receive noise
- Antenna farm
- Rig specs

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## Next Level - Operator

- Join a contest club



# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## Next Level - Operator

- Join a contest club
- Subscribe to NCJ





# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

## 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](http://contestcalendar.com)

- [3830scores.com](http://3830scores.com)

- [b4h.net/cabforms](http://b4h.net/cabforms)

[contesting.com](http://contesting.com)

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

ARRL's Contest Update email

[Contestuniversity.com](http://Contestuniversity.com)

# Contesting: Beyond Field Day

**To Sum It Up**

**Play By The Rules**

**Get On The Air**

**Stay Awake**

**Have Fun!**

