

TENNESSEE CONTEST GROUP

Where Radio is a Contact Sport



News and Events — July 2023

LEBANON LUNCH MEETING JULY 22

Bert W4KW has procured for TCG a private room at Shoney's on July 22 from Noon to 2PM Central time, on the day of the Lebanon HamQuest. We hope that TCG types attending the hamfest will be willing to stick around long enough for an eyeball lunch meeting. We understand that many folks just want to come to the hamfest for an hour or so, and then go home. Since it's so rare for us to meet up in person, we are trying to take advantage of the proximity opportunity. If you are planning to attend the hamfest and are willing to stick around for a TCG lunch together, please let us know. We could use a rough head count. Also, any friends of TCG are of course welcome, so bring a fellow hamfester. The room seats up to 36, and we're not even half-full yet.

WHERE: Shoney's - 814 South Cumberland Street – Lebanon, TN.

This is just off I 40 Exit 236, on the North Side

WHEN: Noon to 2:00PM Central Time.

WHAT: They offer a Buffet Bar or you can order from the menu.

WHO and WHY: Visiting with your fellow TCG contest operators, of course!

We hope to see many TCG faces in Lebanon next month!

LEBANON HAMQUEST

Of course, we really want you to stick around for the TCG lunch. W4KW wants to remind us that this year, the Lebanon "Hamquest" will be 100% air-conditioned. TCG will have a presence at table #16 (thanks Bert.) We plan to have some fliers for the Tennessee QSO Party available.

FIELD DAY

TCG ops posted 14 scores to the 3830 scores site for Field Day. AD4EB led the way with 1000 QSOs. Naturally, the TCG scores were single operator efforts. Most club efforts of course submitted logs under their own club name. 3637 TCG QSOs were reported to 3830. Operations were completed using both commercial and battery power. Several TCG members lost power the weekend following Field Day. There was barely time to re-fuel the generators and re-charge the batteries between events. Those using emergency power options on Field Day certainly had a leg up when the storms brought the power down the following weekend.

IARU HF World Championship

The IARU HF World Championship has come and gone. TCG posted 22 scores, led by K4RO, K0EJ, AD4EB and W4NZ. TCG generated an astounding 13,506 QSOs in 24 hours! Activity worldwide was above average, and radio conditions were particularly good for the second half of the contest. Many areas in Tennessee unfortunately experienced persistent thunderstorms; in some cases the only option was to shut down and disconnect. All in all, a very strong showing by TCG. Thanks again to our Zoom presenters for helping to get us all in the proper mind set for the contest.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

AD4EB – My early radio days

There is much I would like share about my ham radio story, but to keep it short, this bio just about some of my radio experiences as a youngster.

Like many in the TCG, my interest in radio started at an early age. At the age of 8 or 9, my father bought me one of those experimental electronic boards with various components and springs to attach the jumper wires to. This set just happened to have a crystal radio and also a single transistor and diode. One of the experiments was building a simple AM transmitter using the transistor. using the transistor components, I strung a wire up in one of our trees and played LP records over the air which my next door neighbors could listen to (just barely). These were my first radio transmissions. At the age of 12 I built a Heathkit GR-64 general coverage shortwave radio which led me to becoming an SWL. Using this radio, I entered a SWL competition sponsored by Radio-Electronics magazine. First place was a large console Heathkit TV kit which really motivated me. I collected as may QSL cards as I could over the next few months, but not enough to win that top prize, however scored high enough to win an Ameco R5A solid state shortwave radio. This event was my first radio-sport contest I suppose.

My JR high geometry teacher, Charles Wallace (K9AIU SK), mentioned in class that he was a ham radio operator. I shared with him my SWL endeavors, and he invited me over to his home where we had a phone QSO on his Drake TR4. At that instant I knew ham radio was in my future. Then one day, out of the blue, my mother asked me if I would be interested in getting my ham radio license. She had just run across a very tiny article in the newspaper announcing a novice license class to be taught at the farmhouse of Nelda Reifsteck (WA9YXZ SK). It was not long before I became WN9IZQ in 1972 at the age of 16. I was a very active novice using my crystal controlled Heathkit HW-16 with a simple trapped dipole for 80, 40, and 15 meters. I fell in love with CW at that time. But it was RTTY that had the biggest impact towards this hobby and my future professional career in electrical engineering.

Soon after getting my novice license, a family friend from church gave me a fully functional Model 19 teletype machine. After a little research, I was surprised to find that there was a small company in our town named HAL Devices (later HAL Communications), which sold RTTY demodulator kits and other amateur related items. I built their ST-5 kit, but did not have the necessary equipment to accurately tune the filters. After contacting the company, one of the founders, Bill Henry (K9GWT recent SK), invited me to the factory one evening and performed the necessary tuning. Soon I was in teletype heaven, with that heavy model 19 shaking the house typing out news reports from the AP, UPI, and Radio Havana Cuba, weather reports, and of course amateur radio communications. Shortly thereafter Bill Henry called me up and offered me a job, as he was impressed by how I had built the kit and soldered the boards. I worked at HAL part time for a few years before heading off to college.

So that is the story about how I got my start in ham radio. I enjoy radio as much now as during those early years, due in a large part because of the TCG.

ZOOM SESSION #1

TCG hosted its first Zoom session on June 29. We had presentations from K0EJ, AA4NU and K4RO. Nineteen (19) TCG members were logged in. Topics included a contesting basics review, plus a detailed look at the IARU HF Championship. Mark and Billy provided an excellent overview of the contest, plus a deep dive into specific operating strategies and considerations. The information they shared in their presentations may have been geared towards the IARU HF contest, but there was a wealth of knowledge they shared which is applicable towards any contest. Many thanks to Mark and Billy for their presentations. Special thanks to Brad WF7T who helped to provide a smooth Zoom experience for us all. Given that Tennessee is 440 miles long, it's simply not practical to serve every member with in-person meetings. If you have a topic of interest, we would like to hear from anyone interested in giving a presentation to the TCG.

MRA UPCOMING CONTESTS

Following is a list of the upcoming contests which qualify for the TCG Most Radioactive Award. For more information on the MRA, please refer to K4TCG.ORG under the TCG INFO section. Thanks to AD4EB for this list, and to Ted W4NZ for administering the TCG Most Radioactive Award.

July 1, 2023 DL DX RTTY (Retired)
July 1, 2023 Marconi Memorial HF Contest
July 1, 2023 RAC Canada Day Contest – July
July 8, 2023 IARU HF World Championship
July 15, 2023 CQ Worldwide VHF Contest
July 15, 2023 North American QSO Party, RTTY Jul
July 29, 2023 RSGB IOTA Contest

August 5, 2023 North American QSO Party, CW Aug
August 12, 2023 Maryland-DC QSO Party
August 12, 2023 WAE DX Contest, CW
August 19, 2023 North American QSO Party, SSB Aug
August 19, 2023 SARTG WW RTTY Contest
August 26, 2023 Hawaii QSO Party
August 26, 2023 Kansas QSO Party
August 26, 2023 Ohio QSO Party
August 26, 2023 World Wide Digi DX Contest
August 26, 2023 YO DX HF Contest

UPCOMING EVENTS

Final reminder for the Lebanon Hamquest on July 22, and special TCG Lunch at Shoney's!

ALSO – stay tuned for an announcement about a special celebration of TCG' 30th anniversary in the upcoming North American QSO Party in August!

73, —Kirk K4RO