



News and Events — November 2023

CW SWEEPSTAKES!

TCG mounted a strong effort in the CW edition of the November Sweepstakes contest. So far, eighteen (18) scores have been posted to 3830scores.com with credit listed for the TCG. Those 18 logs generated over 10,000 QSOs in the CW SS contest, with an overall average of 375 QSOs per log. These QSOs constitute one half of our overall club score. The SSB contest on November 18 will make up the other half. Let's be sure to get on for SSB, and get that club score as high as we can make it. In one interesting twist, TCG member W9SN wound up working his grandson KA4JAM in the contest. I'm certain that other TCG ops worked Jake as well (he's in my log.) Well done, Jake and Steve.

NOVEMBER ZOOM MEETING – Sweepstakes Review and CQWW CW Preview

Please join us Thursday, November 16 for the next TCG Zoom meeting. Our topics will include an overview of the CW Sweepstakes contest. We'll also cover planning for the upcoming SSB Sweepstakes and CQ World Wide CW DX Contests this month. We will compare notes and strategies used, including specific techniques most useful for the different power classes. November is the busiest month of the year for contest operators, and there is a lot of information and operating crammed into one month. Please try to join us November 16 at 7:00PM central / 8:00PM eastern time.

TENNESSEE QSO PARTY

The final minutes of the October 5th Zoom session were spent on discussion of the TN QSO Party. Several topics were discussed and TCG began conducting surveys to see how the membership feels about any potential changes. It's important that we get any possible changes nailed down and publicized several months in advance of next year's TQP. Among other things, there needs to be time for software developers to make any necessary changes to their programs, in order to accommodate rules changes. The results of our first survey are listed below. Two questions were posed:

#1: TN QSO Party - Rover Category

1. YES - Add a rover category to the TQP (39 votes, 90.7%)
2. NO - Do NOT add a rover category to the TQP (4 votes, 9.3%)

#2: TN QSO Party - County Line QSOs

1. YES - Allow county line contacts (37 votes, 86.0%)
2. NO - Do NOT allow county line contacts (6 votes, 14.0%)

** 43 ballots cast, 82 ballots sent = 52% voted

These numbers indicate strong support for adding a rover category, and for adding the capability to make county line QSOs. The topics were also discussed on the TCG discussion reflector. Stay tuned for another survey regarding VHF/UHF, Digital modes, and contest time slot.

NEW MEMBERS

We have *three* new members to report this month:

Randy Ruemler, KK4OVW

Neal Sulmeyer, K4EA

Phil Hejtmanek, K9UC

Welcome to the TCG. We're glad to have you contesting with us. All members new and old, please don't forget the main purpose of the TCG reflector, which is to ask questions and learn from one another. One of the greatest joys of contest operating is learning new techniques and integrating new tools into one's station. The best way to learn about new developments in contesting is from your fellow contest operators. We suggest subscribing to the *National Contest Journal*, naturally, but nothing beats learning directly from your fellow competitors and contest friends. For example, your editor recently visited with another TCG member. I got to see how he did things around the shack. I learned a great deal, and came away with some new things to try and new ideas for the future. Another good way to share information is during our monthly Zoom meetings. Be sure to catch the next one coming up November 16.

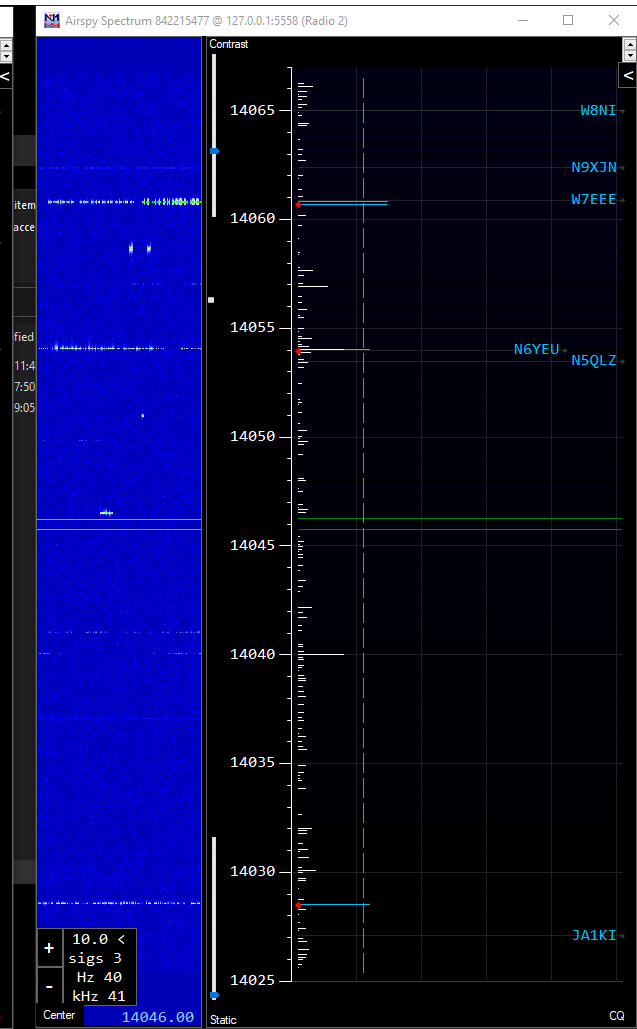
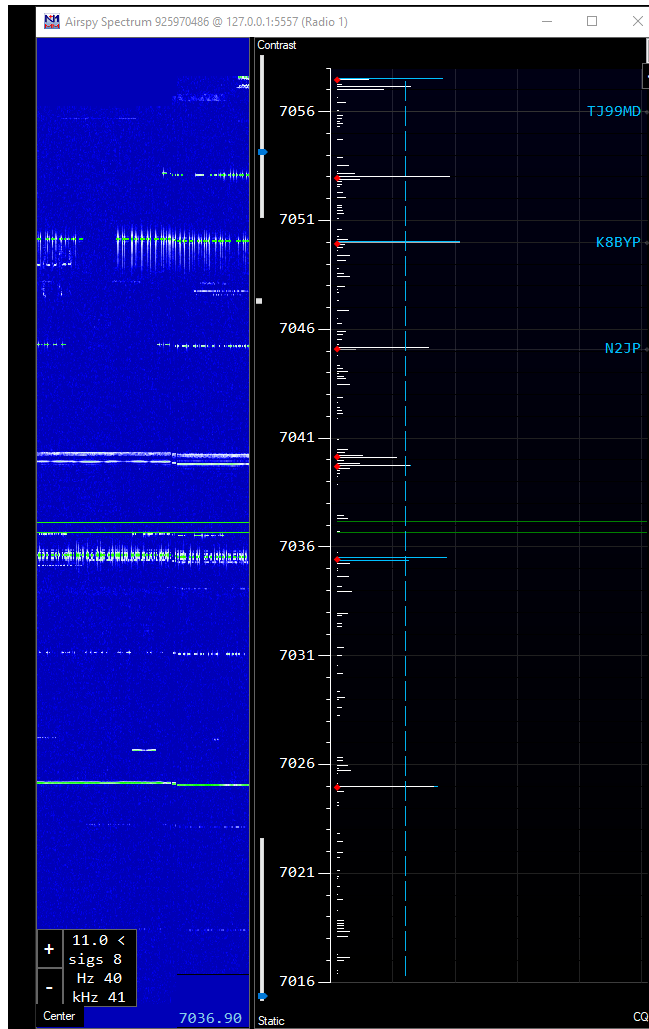
TCG wishes to express our deep condolences to our member John Almon, WA4JA. John lost his wife Cecilia suddenly during the CQWW SSB contest. I'm sure that all TCG members are joined in sympathy. You may read Cecilia Almon's obituary at the following link:
<https://www.springhill-memorial.com/obituaries/cecilia-almon>

N1MM Logger+ Spectrum Display

Your editor may be one of the last contest operators to discover the capabilities of the N1MM Logger+ *Spectrum Display* window. The Spectrum Display window provides a high-resolution panadapter display which can show comprehensive band activity at a glance. It can also display call signs that you enter manually or from packet (telnet) spots, right next to the signal peaks. The Spectrum Display also includes quite sophisticated functions which can automatically locate unknown and/or unworked stations. It can even suggest a clear CQ frequency based on current band loading. In short, the Spectrum Display is a powerful tool that is worth the time investment to understand.

For those with modern radios, all it takes is a USB cable connection to the radio to use the Spectrum Display. For those with older radios like myself, there is still a way. Basically, an external SDR receiver is used for the sole purpose of capturing RF and providing an I/Q baseband output stream to N1MM's Spectrum Window. Almost any SDR can be used, from the cheap RTL dongles to something designed for HF operation, such as the Airspy Discovery HF+ SDR receiver. Typically, a 2-way RF splitter is used to send the same antenna RF to the radio and the SDR. If your radio has separate RX antenna IN/OUT jacks, that makes it even simpler to integrate an SDR with an older radio.

It took a considerable amount of head scratching to get two radios and two SDRs working properly here at K4RO, but it was worth the effort. Currently, I am using Airspy Discovery HF+ SDRs with two instances of their "Spyserver" software, each running on its own port. The Spyserver program routes the I/Q data to the Spectrum Window. The N1MM Logger+ application seamlessly integrates the SDR and radio frequency tracking. Turn the Big Knob on the radio, and the SDR QSYs with it. I'm now completely sold on the Spectrum Window, and I look forward to using it in future contests. *Big* thanks to Jim AD4EB for convincing me that this was a rabbit hole worth pursuing to the end. Below is a screen capture of my logging setup. I have two ancient 4:3 aspect ratio monitors "stacked" vertically, which is why it probably looks a bit odd to most people who have a large horizontal monitor.



7036.90+0.00 CW IC-7700 Radio 1

File Edit View Tools Config Window Help

Name State/Prov/DX

36

F1 CQ F2 XCG F3 S&P TU F4 Me F5 Him F6 KIRK

F7 Nm? F8 ? F9 A-Q F10 LCQ F11 QRL F12 T3

Heading appears here when enabled.
Call history UserText appears here when enabled.

Check Master/Reverse L...

Master 97715

Reverse lookup 13806

14046.00+0.00 CW IC-7700 Radio 2

File Edit View Tools Config Window Help

Name State/Prov/DX

17

F1 CQ F2 XCG F3 S&P TU F4 Me F5 Him F6 KIRK

F7 Nm? F8 ? F9 A-Q F10 LCQ F11 QRL F12 T3

Heading appears here when enabled.
Call history UserText appears here when enabled.

Contest: K1USNSST

Band	QSOs	Pts	S/P	DXc
14	32	32	18	0
21	8	8	8	0
28	1	1	1	0
Total	41	41	27	0

Score: 1,107

Mults & Qs

	160	80	40	20	15	10
Mults	0	0	0	0	0	0
Qs	0	4	5	9	5	11
Total Qs	0	4	5	9	5	11

Call	Freq	Dir	Mult?	S/N	Time	Spotter
W8NI	14065.0	036°	No		2158Z	KX4UJ
708AD	14086.3	048°	No		2214Z	W9HBF
A25R	14019.7 ±	097°	No		2200Z	NB4F
N5QLZ	14053.5	242°	No	21dB	2241Z	NG7M
N6YEU	14054.0	278°	No		2225Z	KX4UJ
W7EEE	14060.9	290°	No		2158Z	W6LEM
JA1KI	14027.1	325°	No	23dB	2242Z	K2PO7
XX9XX	14000.0	338°	No		2218Z	IZ1UKG
N9XJN	14062.4	349°	No	04dB	2241Z	ND7K4

Info - K4RO - Exch: Name State/Province/DX

SFI/A/K: 10-NOV-2023 21 144 10 1 NO STORMS -> MODERATE W/C

Q's - 10, 100, 60m, 41m

Q's/Hr

Next Goal 50

Contest Start Time: 11/10/2023 20:00:00Z

22:41:51 Winkey Version = 23 on COM7

Telnet

Type: Reconnect

AEBE	Clusters	Bands/Modes	Filters	Sr
DX de N6TV-#:	14100.0	W6WX		
DX de KC0DWZ:	28515.0	KK7MMI		
DX de K075S-#:	24930.0	4U1UN		
DX de W3UA-#:	21150.0	VEBAT		
DX de K2PO/7-#:	14027.1	JA1KI		
DX de W2NAF-#:	28039.5	N5SMO		

SKIM SKIM K4RO NA ALL NO DX

DX DX 80 DX 40 DX 20 DX 15 DX 10

11/10/2023 22:42:47Z K1USN CW Slow Speed (con)Test - K4RO-2023.s3db

MM-DD HH:MM	Call	Freq	M.....	Name	Exch	Pfx
11-10 20:57	N4HAY	14038.17	CW	39 DICK	NC	K
11-10 20:58	KB5QHO	14038.17	CW	40 MARVIN	TX	K
11-10 20:59	AC5OS	14038.17	CW	41 BILL	TX	K

HOW IT ALL STARTED – Bruce Smith, AC4G

I became interested in electronics while in high school in 1975. My father ordered and purchased for me a Heathkit electronics lab that had about 35 experiments to teach me some basic electronic theory. As soon as the kit came in the mail, I was working hard to tackle all of the experiments in the book.

Later in the year, Santa brought me a Citizen's Band Single Sideband Transceiver for Christmas and my dad gave me a Quad antenna for my birthday. I was able to make contacts locally to talk to my high school buddies and even meet teenagers that I did not know across the county. I was also able to catch some skip and talk to people in South America, Central America, and Australia with my barefoot CB radio.

A couple of ham radio high school friends suggested I get my ham radio ticket. After some persuasion, I asked my father to help me purchase a study guide. He purchased the Heathkit Novice Class Study Guide that was shown in their catalog in approximately 1977. The course included Morse Code tapes. I next began studying the guide and listening to the code tapes. After graduating from high school in 1978, the summer before college, I was able to finally take the Novice test. I passed and received my ticket. My first callsign was KA4CSC.

In the Fall of '78, I entered Electrical Engineering at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, TN. We had a fantastic club station. I operated an HW-12 to check into the Tennessee Slow Speed Net and to rag chew with hams East of the Mississippi. After I built my speed up, I called the TN Slow Speed CW net several times. I also began using the main club station twin rigs, a Drake R4B receiver and a TR4 transmitter. Using the club's tri-bander and Drake twins put me on the air to work DX. In a short amount of time, I upgraded to Technician class (N4GAK), then to Advanced class. By my sophomore year. I attended Summer School and operated quite a bit. The DX bug had bit me. In the summer of 1980, I worked VQ9CI, Phil Ramey from Powell, TN who was in the Navy on Diego Garcia. We had some good chats. Later, I worked VK0HI, Jim Smith on Heard Island. I went on to work many DX stations in my spare time. I was definitely in the DX mood.

After graduating in 1984 and having been married to my wife, Suzy, we moved to Fayetteville and then to Taft, TN where I commuted daily to Huntsville, AL to work. I continued to work DX and enter ham radio contests. I upgraded to Extra Class 1985 and changed my callsign to AC4G in 1996. I also became a QSL manager for V73C, Ken Wells who lived on Kwajalein Island in the Marshall Islands. Ken did not stay on the island long and departed.

Another friend of mine living on Kwajalein Island talked me into moving to Kwajalein, 7080 miles from Huntsville, AL in 1999. Since I already worked in Huntsville, my organization transferred me to the island where we tested intercontinental ballistic missiles. The motive behind my move was to be "DX" and operate in contests. While on Kwajalein, I set country records for the Marshall Islands and Wake Island for some of the major contests. My best was placing 7th in the world in the ARRL 10m Contest (2001) with 1.6 million points.

In 2001, we moved back to Taft, TN where I currently live. I have installed antennas and setup a station. I have increased my DXCC total lacking only North Korea (P5). I continue to chase DX, operate in ham radio contests, and am currently President of the North Alabama DX Club. I am currently retired as an engineer, but still maintain our farm which has allowed me to installed some

towers, antennas, and receive antennas covering all directions. I currently have 228 countries on 160m, and enjoy discussing 160m activity. I enjoy the ARRL 160m contest because it gives me a chance to work some of the TCG members located across the state of Tennessee. I also enjoy chasing AD4EB/mobile in state QSO parties across the country giving Jim some points. Since I have relatives in Clay County, TN, I try to visit them to activate Clay County for the TN QSO Party from time to time. I hope to see you on the air soon - Bruce/AC4G.



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.

November 4, 2023	ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW
November 11, 2023	OK/OM DX Contest, CW
November 11, 2023	WAE DX Contest, RTTY
November 12, 2023	North American Sprint SSB Contest - Nov
November 18, 2023	ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB
November 18, 2023	LZ DX Contest
November 25, 2023	CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW
December 1, 2023	ARRL 160-Meter Contest
December 2, 2023	FT-8 Roundup
December 9, 2023	ARRL 10-Meter Contest
December 16, 2023	OK DX RTTY Contest
December 30, 2023	RAC Winter Contest – Dec
December 30, 2023	Stew Perry Topband Challenge - Dec
Canceled	Ukrainian DX RTTY, Classic
Canceled	DRCG RTTY

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 18-19	ARRL SSB Sweepstakes – Let’s go for a TCG WIN this year!
November 24-26	CQWW CW – The Biggest CW Contest of the Year!

73, —Kirk K4RO