

# Part I

## Introduction to Contesting

- What is Contesting?
- Why would I do this?
- How to get started?
  - Getting started.
  - After the Contest!
- Station Equipment

# What is Contesting?

- An activity where one tries to make as many contacts (QSOs) in a specified period of time.
- Events sponsored by the ARRL, CQ, and various other entities
- Modes: CW, Phone or Digital (RTTY)
- Operating categories (Single Op, Mult Op)
  - About 12 individual categories in most contests
- Field Day (FD) and Simulated Emergency Test (SET) are contests in the broadest sense. There are literally thousands of contests each year.

# Why would I do this?

- **To have Fun!!**
- Enter to increase WAS, DXCC or other awards.
- Enter to beat your neighbor down the street
- Enter to beat the top players in your State/Section.
- Enter just for the “entertainment” of it for a few hours just to see how many stations can be worked in a few hours.

# How to get Started?

## Gaining Experience

- Listen, Listen, LISTEN!
  - Just listening to contests that are on the air will help you figure out what “to do” or “not to do”
- Field Day (FD) is a great event to develop skills for contesting.
  - Often from more experienced operators that are participating
- Another place to gain experience is in Rookie Roundup, QSO parties, etc
  - Pace is a bit slower but just as much fun

# How to get Started?

## Planning

- Pick a contest that interests you
  - Google “Contest Calendar” for this weeks contests
- What would be the best time for you to operate?
  - Operate when it works for you!
  - Most contests have different starting time.
    - You don’t have to be there at the start
    - You don’t have to operate the whole thing!
  - If you have got a few minutes (or hours) of free time here and there just operate when it is good for you and your family.
- What is the best category for your station?
  - Single Op, Single Band, Assisted, Unassisted, etc

# How to get Started?

## Coordinating

- Let your family and friends know that you are planning to participate
- If you are going to do more than a few minutes then you may want to plan your refreshment and breaks for eating.
  - Ms Bonnie will help me in this area and she will plan Dinner around a time that I choose.
  - If I want to operate through dinner she will plan food that I can pickup and eat while operating.

# Getting Started

## Pre-Contest

- Read the rules, **READ THE RULES**
  - You at least have to know what the exchange is and the operating periods
- Set a Goal: may be as simple as working a number of QSOs, etc
- Contest Strategy
  - What time ? Band? Mode?
- Try a minor contests first (QSO parties, etc)

# Getting Started

## Basic Operating Techniques

- Contest Exchanges
  - Keep it short !



# Very Important Information

- Contest: ARRL DX SSB Contest
  - Objective W/VE work as many DX as possible
- Calling a DX station
  - Give your call once and phonetically
- Example: CQ TEST Delta Alpha 1 Juliet Oscar
  - KC4HW will say: KILO CHARLIE 4 HOTEL WHISKEY
  - DA1AF will say: KC4HW 59 500
  - KC4HW will say: 59 AL
  - DA1AF will say: QRZ

# Very Important Information

- Contest: ARRL Field Day
  - Objective: work as many stations as possible
- Calling another station
  - Give your call once and phonetically
- Ex: CQ Field Day Whiskey 4 Delta Hotel November
  - KC4HW will say: Kilo Charlie 4 Hotel Whiskey
  - W4DHN will say: KC4HW 1a ALABAMA
  - KC4HW will say: 1A ALABAMA
  - W4DHN will say: QRZ Whiskey 4 Delta Hotel November

# Getting Started

## Basic Operating Techniques

- Search and Pounce (S&P)
  - Most new contesters start out tuning around the bands to find a station that they are interested in working.
- Running
  - This is a technique where you land on a clear frequency and start calling CQ.
    - The object here is to work as many stations as possible
    - You will be surprised at the number of multipliers that you will work
- The more competitive operators will do both.
  - This way they can get the best of both worlds.

# After the Contest

- Submit your LOG!
  - No matter how small, contest managers want to know how many folks are participating in their event
- Plus you might want to submit it to LOTW for your awards program!
- Evaluate your participation
  - See where you could improve
    - Operating techniques
    - Station

# Equipment/Station

## K5WP Dothan Station

- So what do you need to get started?
  - Simply one radio, one antenna, a computer and perhaps a tuner



# Equipment/Station

## K5WP Geneva Co Station

- Single Op – One radio, a tri-bander and Inverted Vees for 40/80 and an amplifier



# Equipment/Station

## KJ4LTA Henry Co Station

- A real antenna farm!



# Equipment/Station

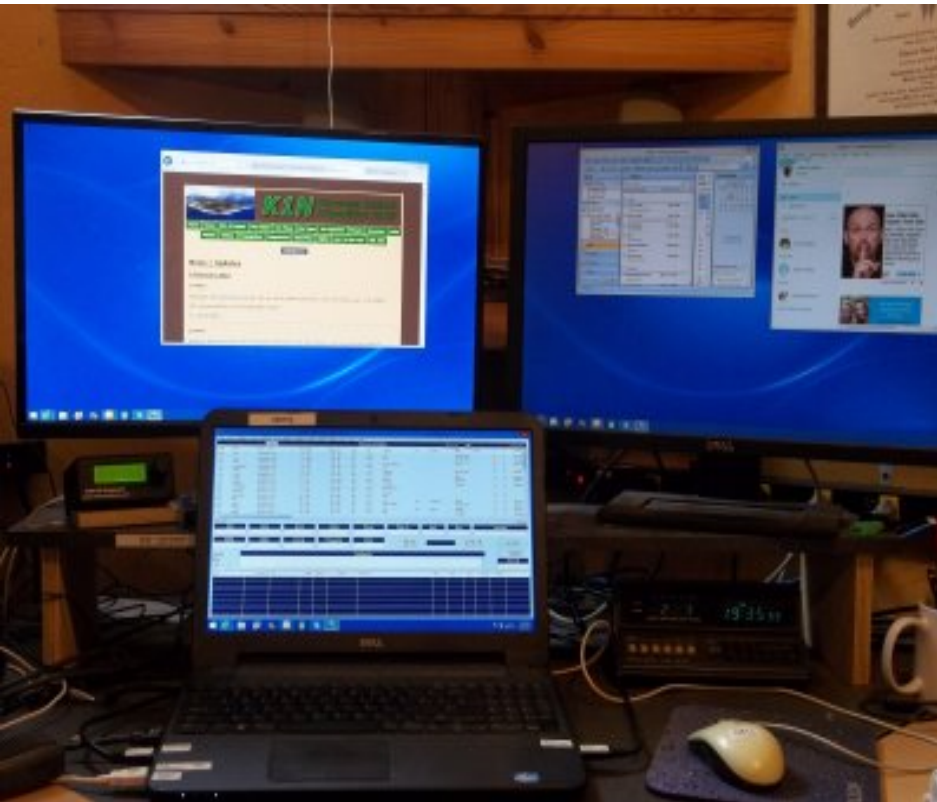
## KJ4LTA Another Antenna





# Equipment/Station KJ4LTA Super Station

- Henry County, Al



# Equipment/Station (Mult Op)

- AB4B Tim, Rogersville, Al
- Multi Op and Multi Two operations



# Future Contesting Programs

- Part II – The Contest Station
  - Computer Setup and Interfaces
  - Logging Programs
- Part III – Other Contest Topics
  - Operating Aids
    - DX Cluster
    - Propagation Tools
    - Grey Line Map
  - Categories: Single Op and/or Multi Op
- Are these topics that the group would find interesting?