TENNESSEE CONTEST GROUP

VOL. 3. ISSUE 4

Top stories in this newsletter

JULY 2020











Upcoming Contests

Final Chapter: Ham Station Comfort

IARU HF World Championship

Member Spotlight Ted Bryant W4NZ

IARU HF World Championship:

TCG and the Deep Dixie Contest Club (DDCC) had the honor of conducting a joint operation of IARU member society HQ station callsign W1AW during next month's IARU HF World Championship. Preliminary Scores are in., and as usual, we were FANTASTIC!!!

TNQP: Coming Soon

If you are looking for a way to increase you "Radio Active" time, here is the perfect opportunity—the TN QSO Party. Let's help TCG to shine at this annual event. Time to start thinking about the times, modes and frequencies you can work the contest. Please mark September 6th, 2020 in your calendar for the next running of the TNQP block your calendar (so nothing else sneaks in)!

More details to follow on: www.tnqp.org

Member Spotlight

Our **Member Spotlight** for July features Ted Bryant, W4NZ. Learn some interesting facts about one of TCG's longtime members (since 1999) and his story that led up to his current life as a "full time ham"!

FINAL CHAPTER: Ham Station Comfort & Layout is Critical for Contesters & DX'ers By: Bruce Smith/AC4G

'Do you have room to improve your ability to endure in contests while perhaps being a top contender in most of the major amateur radio contests and DXpeditions? Stand back, make an objective evaluation of your shack, make a realistic plan, and execute the plan even if it is only moving clutter out and rearranging equipment"

MOST RADIO-ACTIVE (MRA) Report

Find out more about the Most Radio Active Guidelines at http://k4tcg.org/files/2019/12/TCG-2020-Radio-Active-Award- Guidelines.pdf

SUBMIT YOUR SCORES

Not only does the submission help to include you in the monthly "TCG Most Radio Active Report" (MRA Report), published by Ted. W4NZ, it also helps you to maintain your membership in TCG. Whether you make the "Top 25" list, or participate in a few a year, stay Radio-Active and report your scores!

TCG HF Net

We're missing you… on the TCG Weekly Net! Join us each THURSDAY night at 7:30 p.m. Central Time Zone on **3.620 MHz** for some friendly discussion, TCG News, and a little bit of rag-653chewing with TCG members.

2020 IARU HF World Championship

2020 IARU HF World Championship (July 11-12th)

The 2020 IARU HF World Championship is over, and of course, TCG participation meant a great showing for the team!

A very BIG THANK YOU to Juan Lopez, AC6ZM, all all of the team members who worked hard to get things coordinated on relatively short notice for the team for this event!



Unofficial Scores:

We are still awaiting the official tally, but the team definitely pulled their weight in this World Championship!

The final raw score (Thank you Juan) is over 8400 Q's and 5,558,164 score

One suggestion (Thanks, Bert!) that may be applicable for all "heavy hitting" contests: (Just for kicks) you might add to your Next Check List to replace the batteries in your mouse, prior to starting the contest. HI HI (do I sense the voice of experience from someone?)

CQ TN QSO PARTY, CQ TNQP

If you are looking for a way to increase you "Radio Active" time, here is the perfect opportunity—the TN QSO Party. Let's help TCG to shine at this annual event. Time to start thinking about the times, modes and frequencies you can work the contest. Please mark September 6th, 2020 in your calendar for the next running of the TNQP block your calendar (so nothing else sneaks in)!

It's our time to "party hearty" and be the sought-after stations on the air! Prep your logs, tune up your radio, and get ready to spend some quality time on the air on September 6. What better a way to spend Labor Day weekend than spending some time with your keyer, or you microphone ?!

Opportunities to sign up for your favorite times, modes and bands will be coming soon, so please check the <u>TNQP</u> (TN QSO Party) web page regularly at <u>www.tnqp.org</u>

More details to follow!



Member Spotlight

Meet Ted Bryant, W4NZ

Our **Member Spotlight** for July features Ted Bryant, W4NZ. Learn some interesting facts about one of TCG's long-time members (since 1999) and his story that led up to his current life as a "full time ham"! Read Ted's story below, as told by none other than—TED W4NZ



I grew up in Gallatin, Tennessee, a small town about 30 miles Northeast of Nashville. We moved there from Waverly in 1955 when my dad was transferred by TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority). Our home was very modest with my two brothers and I having to share one bedroom.

"CQ,CQ,CQ 40 meters W4WGH, William Four William George Henry". Those were the first words I ever heard on amateur radio. They came through the earphones of a crystal radio I had gotten for Christmas when I was in the eighth grade. But they were enough. They planted a seed (virus?) that grew into a life-long avocation. The adventure began with a lot of shortwave listening and eventually getting a license with the help of my Elmer, Ray W4WGH. I can still remember sitting in Ray's garage shack on cold December nights copying code practice from W1AW through the 10-inch Hallicrafters speaker sitting atop Ray's SX-71. I got my Novice license, KN4SXD, in January 1960. Being in high school at the time, the radio budget was rather small. I did manage to buy a used Heathkit AT-1 transmitter from World Radio Labs. My parents gave me a National NC-60 receiver for Christmas that year and I was in business. I quickly discovered that one of the most important things about building a radio station was the antenna. This started almost endless experiments with different types of dipoles, verticals and almost any configuration of wires you can imagine. And today nothing has changed. There's still that quest for "just a little bit better" antenna. Novice licenses were only good for a year then so I managed to upgrade to General the next August, dropping the "n" and becoming K4SXD. Eventually the AT-1/NC60 was replaced by a DX-100B/SX101 combination. This led to chasing DX, cw traffic nets and cw contests. The old CD Parties were a favorite. I gravitated to cw because my bedroom was next to my parents' room and being on phone late at night disturbed them. But they couldn't hear me on cw.

Because of the interest in radio and electronics my interests gravitated toward an electrical engineering path in college. I entered Tennessee Tech University in 1962. But in the Summer of 1966 the Army draft called my number which led to a 3-year stint in the US Army. After basic training, advanced training led me to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Of course that's where the MARS/ham station K2USA was located. Spent a lot of weekends there. Those huge antennas and six studios stocked with Collins S-lines only fueled my interest in "bigger, better" radios and antennas. After completing training, I was sent to Germany as part of the US Army Signal Corps for a 2-year assignment. Imagine my surprise and joy when learning I was being assigned to a US Air Force detachment for their communications support and their communications system consisted of Collins equipment (3 S-lines!) While there, I managed to get a station together and was assigned the call DL4EG. Operating the CQ WW and ARRL DX contests from the "other side" was a lot of fun.

The Army was finished with me in July of 1969 and I returned stateside. That Fall I returned to Tennessee Tech to finish my EE degree, graduating in 1971. While I was at Tech, I met future TCGers Steve NA4K, Pat W4PV (both now SK's) and Don N4ZZ. Don and I have spent many hours building, playing with antennas and comparing results. After graduation, there followed a career with TVA. I spent the larger part of my career in their information technology organization. I was in the telecom engineering group which was responsible for installation of telephone systems and computer networks. I played with all the latest technology toys. This career lasted 32 years until retirement in October 2003.

I met and married my wife, Cheryl, in 1977 so naturally family and career took precedence over ham radio. But as our two kids eventually made it through school and moved away. I was able to carve out more time to play radio, but almost 20 years had passed. Then when I retired in October 2003, I became a full-time ham.

Because of a letter from Ric WA6KUI (aka WO4O) I joined the Tennessee Contest Group in 1999. That re-kindled my radio interests then and cw contesting became a serious interest. What contesting showed me were all the deficiencies in my station. Upgrading from the 25-year old Drake C-line to an Icom 765 was like a breath of fresh air. Now the computer could do more of the work. Little did I know then that this started a series of equipment upgrades that are continuing today (one of the "secrets" of contesting: a contest station is NEVER finished!) The current station is configured for SO2R with a new Flex 6600M. This recently replaced a K3/ProIII and DX Doubler. The amps in use are an AL1200 and a recently acquired Alpha 99. It replaced an older-than-dirt BTI LK2000 which has a virtually indestructable 3-1000z. Antennas are spread between two towers. One is 80 feet of Rohn 25G with a 2L40, 4L20 and 4/4 on 10m. The other tower is another 50 feet of 25G with a 3L20 and a 5/5 stack on 15M. An 80m dipole and 160m inverted "L" finish taking the rest of the available space in my small back yard. Birds don't fly across the yard but they do sit on the antennas!

I enjoy the fellowship of our TCG. My first encounter with the membership was a gathering at K4JNY's in Cleveland. There, among others I met Jeff, K4JNY and Scott, W4PA. The eventual association with them led to many hours of fun doing multi-ops or small projects (like a 4/4 stack rebuild on 20m!) or getting ready for the next contest. It also led to meeting K0EJ, K4RO, AA4NU and W9WI. The camaraderie is one of the things that keeps my interests and keeps me motivated, especially the multi-ops. I'm looking forward to many more years in our wonderful hobby and to seeing you all on the air soon.

Member Spotlight—TAG, YOU'RE IT!!!

TAG, YOU'RE IT!!!

During a recent "get to know your teammates virtual event, one of my fellow project management team at my "day job" decided to write a bit about himself in an email, then send it out to the team, TAGGING another person on the team to do the same! We had a lot of fun learning about each other about their experiences, families, and interests. In the spirit of fun and getting to know our fellow Tennessee Contest Members, our featured **Member Spotlight** "star", Bert Noll W4KW said "Tag, You're It" to Ted Bryant, W4NZ, who is in our Member Spotlight this month, and Ned Swartz, K1GU. Ned, I am looking forward to seeing a brief bio in my inbox (w4cmg.dx@gmail.com) so we can share your stories in the next edition!

MOST RADIO-ACTIVE (MRA) Report

Did you know.... There is a monthly "TCG Most Radio Active Report" (MRA Report) published by Ted. W4NZ? Although it comes to all members through the reflector, it may be lost in the emails that are generated. Did you make the "Top 25" list? Find out more about the Most Radio Active Guidelines, including the topics below, at: http://k4tcg.org/files/2019/12/TCG-2020-Radio-Active-Award-Guidelines.pdf

Goals and Objectives	Operating Time
Qualification Period	Score Calculation
Operating Classes	Qualifying Contests
Scoring	Particulars
Multipliers	Awards

SUBMIT YOUR SCORES! A Gentle reminder from our TCG Constitution http://k4tcg.org/tcg-constitution-by-laws/

TCG has a large number of members across the state (and a few beyond), and we love having our members actively participate in contests, both within the US and Worldwide! To keep our membership up to the TCG Constitution, though, we really need our members to submit their logs to keep their membership up do date.

Here is a gentle reminder about the guidelines from the constitution to stay on the active member roster. They're pretty simple, and the leadership team and other members are always happy to help if you need some assistance:

- 1) Contribute to at least one TCG composite score in a sponsored contest
- 2) Host a TCG guest operator.
- 3) Guest-operate at another station or
- 4) Participate in a multi-operation, as long as the score is credited to the TCG.

The score contribution must be submitted to the contest sponsor with credit to TCG. We also ask that all scores are reported to the public score reflector at http://3830scores.com/

CONTACT INFO:

Tennessee Contest Group tcg1@googlegroups.com

Cathy Goodrich W4CMG TCG Secretary/Event Coordinator Email: w4cmg.dx@gmail.com

Click to unsubscribe <u>here</u> Next edition: August 2020

WEEKLY TCG NET

Each THURSDAY night at 8:30 p.m. ET/7:30 p.m. CT

Frequency: 3.620 MHz

Topics: TCG News, Technical discussions, upcoming contests and events, friendly discussion (aka a little bit of rag-chewing with TCG members).

Got a topic? Call into the net and speak up!

VOL. 3, ISSUE 4 JULY, 2020

Upcoming Contests



There is a LOT of activity through the end of the month, for both CW and other mode operators! Not to mention, of course Field Day, which will present some unique opportunities for TCG this year. See the "short list " below, and check these links to some of the commonly used websites more information:

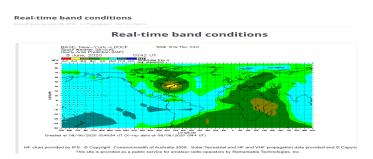
Date	Contest Name	Mode
15-July	RSGB 80-Meter Club Championship, CW	CW
16-July	NAQCC CW Sprint	CW
18-July	North American QSO Party—RTTY	Dig
19–July	CQ Worldwide VHF Contest	CW-Ph-Dig
19-July	RSGB 80-Meter Club Championship, CW	CW
19-July	Run for the Bacon Contest	CW
19-July	CQC Great Colorado Gold Rush	CW
23-July	RSGB 80-Meter Club Championship, CW	CW
25-July	RSGB IOTA Contest	CW, Ph
26-July	ARS Flight of the Bumblebees	CW
27-July	QCX Challenge	CW

As you can see, July and August are a bit "short" in contest activity, so check the additional links below, find your favorites, and GET ON THE AIR!

Contest Calendar Links

- ⇒ CQ Amateur Radio: For links to Contests, plus tips for New Hams, Awards, Amateur Radio Club Listings and more: http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/cq hobby radio links/cq hrl contest links.html
- ⇒ July Contest Corral is available at: http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2020/July%202020%20Corral.pdf
- ⇒ DX Zone Contesting Calendar listing: https://www.dxzone.com/catalog/Contesting/Calendars/
- ⇒ WA7BNM Contest Calendar: http://www.contestcalendar.com/ 8-day, 12 month, etc.
- ⇒ Annual CQ Contest Calendar: http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/cq contests/cq annual contest calendar.html
- ⇒ DX Zone Contest Calendar: https://www.dxzone.com/catalog/Contesting/Calendars/ \
- ⇒ Click pictures below for real-time band conditions, courtesy of QRZnow.com





Ham Station Comfort & Layout is Critical for Contesters & DX'ers

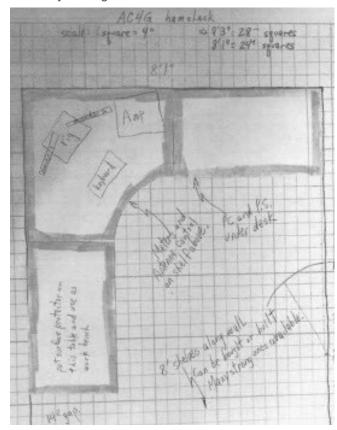
Final Chapter....

By: Bruce Smith/AC4G



Last month, I described my need and desire to renovate my ham shack to improve contesting and DXing efficiency. I cited many reasons why I needed to do this. Below in Picture 1 showing the simple layout to improve my operating abilities and increasing my contest scores to hopefully be a top contest contender, I have been busy trying to make my dream come true of having a first-class ham shack. The remainder of this article will describe and show the improvements made. This construction project forced me to clean out excess equipment and junk making the shack a better place to operate.

After formulating a plan, I began removing everything out of the shack. My problem was to figure out where to permanently place my hunting gear and the extra ham radio treasures collected over the years. After figuring out a home for these treasures, I was on my way to removing "junk" and developing a first-class ham shack. My shack was originally a corn crib years ago.



1: Future AC4G Ham Shack Configuration

As a reminder, the inside of the shack is shown in Picture 2 and shows the inefficient layout & mess in my shack. The space allowed for only one person to be in the shack and that was the operator. Visitors had to stand by the door to look in and see any activity and AC4G in action. My DX and contesting activity did not lead to fun operating due to the layout. Operating has been very, very inefficient.



2. Inside of AC4G Ham Shack Prior to Renovation January 2020)

In late-March thru late-May 2020, as time allowed I began my renovation project. Many saw the clutter in my shack as they visited us in the past and realize why I needed to spend time on my shack renovation. [Photos on the next page] Photo 3 shows the subfloor installed and floor AC electrical boxes being added. Photo 4 shows the drywall removed, new walls study installed to frame the addition of a new window. Photo 5 shows the new fiber composite flooring being installed. This flooring is supposed to be "child proof", "pet proof", "scratchproof", and "everyday life proof". I am hoping this to be sturdy and endure the long hours of time DXing and contesting.

Photo 6 below shows the drywall being installed around the new window and new subfloor/floor. With a new window comes a new entrance door (Photo 7).

(continued next page)

Final Chapter: Ham Station Comfort & Layout is Critical (cont.)



Photo 3: New Subfloor



Photo 4: New window installed



Photo 5: New flooring



Photo 6: Drywall Work



Photo 7: Newly installed door

As works nears completion, the walls have to be painted with an appealing, pleasant color since so much time will be spent in the new shack. Paint is being mixed by AC4G (Photo 8). A low yield, overhead light was added for activity after dark when the low band propagation picks up. Finally, the completed shack reveals her beauty after many hours of hard work and labor (Photo 9).



Photo 8: AC4G mixing paint

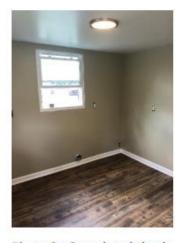


Photo 9: Completed shack

(continued next page)

Final Chapter: Ham Station Comfort & Layout is Critical (cont.)

Part of the construction included adding base boards and quarter rounds to accent the floor and lower walls. The extra window adds additional lighting during daylight hours, but also allows me to look outside at current weather conditions as I do not like operating during thunder storms. I have been lucky in the past to be able to hear thunder and disconnect antennas and power down as thunder storms approach. And finally, it's complete (Photos 10 and 11). A tired AC4G taking-in the beauty and getting a breath of fresh air during a sigh of relief realizing the hard part is over. Was it worth all of the work? You bet! The cherry colored furniture set alongside the walls and the corner will provide me an opportunity to operate reaching all controls from chair located in the corner of the room.



Photo 10: Furniture added



Photo 11: AC4G glad it's finished

The next step is to bring in the equipment (Photo 13), organize it, and set it up. Oops, we dropped an antenna switch-box during the transfer from the storage area to the new shack, but hopefully it survived the drop. The test will be during operation when switching between antennas. After a short period of time, I realized I need to build shelves for various other equipment such as antenna switches, low band receiving switches, and books that I have accumulated. These shelves will need to be either purchased or built from scratch.



Photo 13: Installing Ham Radio Equipment



Photo 14: Mixing Concrete



Photo 15: Smooth Entrance Way

(continued next page)

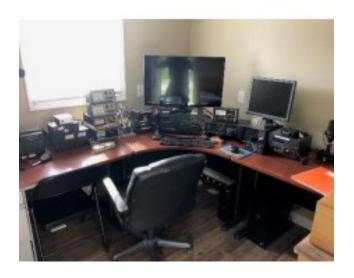
Final Chapter: Ham Station Comfort & Layout is Critical (cont.)

Not only did the inside get a facelift, but the outside of the shack had a few improvements. Photo 14 shows AC4G manually mixing concrete to improve the entrance to the shack. This walkway is constructed beside a 70 foot deep well (cistern) that used to supply the century-old farmhouse with water. The finished walkway near the deep well is revealed in Photo 15. One last addition is the single point ground (Photo 16) for the station equipment, antennas, and AC service to single point ground (SPG). This includes the ground shield that's placed on the operator's desk just below the equipment and connected to SPG to improve noise and help control stray RF energy in the shack. Grounding and bonding is very important for SPG which helps protect against lightning strikes and high EM fields. Also, note the service entry box where the rotor cables and feedline enter the AC4G shack.



Photo 16: Single Point Ground

In conclusion, a lot of planning, thought, true grit, determination, hard work, and elbow grease has gone into making my shack come to fruition. Thanks to my son, Zak and wife, Suzy who also helped in this endeavor. I have been inactive since mid-March 2020 missing a lot of contests and DX activity even the six-meter openings to Europe and Asia, but hoping my effort has not been futile, but worthwhile. Soon I will get my station setup and expect to see you in the pileups. Contesters and DXers beware! - 73 Bruce/AC4G.



Contest University 2020 was held online free via Zoom Thursday, May 14th

[Source: https://www.contestuniversity.com/course-outline/]

The Contest University took place as scheduled using remote technology on May 14, 2020. You may not have been able to attend, or to dedicate your whole day, but never fear... **YouTube comes to the rescue!**

Here is the YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEEUpsWUtAA

Click on the presentation to view/download the slide deck

8:45 am EDT/12:45 UTC Welcome to CTU 2020 from W8CI, K3LR and N9JA

9:00 am EDT/13:00 UTC W3LPL - "Effective Low Band Receiving Antennas"

10:00 am EDT/14:00 UTC W2NAF – "2020 Solar Cycle Update and the HF Response to Ionospheric Storms and Traveling Ionospheric Disturbances"

11:00 am EDT/15:00 UTC N6TV - "Everything You Need to Know About USB and Serial Interfaces"

12:00 pm EDT/16:00 UTC K1AR – Memorial reading of the Silent Keys for 2020

12:05 pm EDT/16:05 UTC Lunch on your own

12:30 pm EDT/16:30 UTC NN1C – "Exuberance and Youth Contesting – Update on What is Going On"

1:00 pm EDT/17:00 UTC W0YK – "Digital Contesting Hints & Kinks"

2:00 pm EDT/18:00 UTC K1DG – "Optimizing your Station for Contest Operations"

3:00 pm EDT/19:00 UTC NOAX – "Grounding & Bonding for Contest Stations"

4:00 pm EDT/20:00 UTC NCOB – "Contest & DX Performance A Complex Subject Today: Great RX Performance – TX Limitations"

5:00 pm EDT/21:00 UTC W3LPL - "60 Years of Competitive Contesting — the W3LPL Story"

6:00 pm EDT/22:00 UTC K3ZJ – Presentation of CQ Contest Hall Of Fame 2020

See the website for more information at: https://www.contestuniversity.com/course-outline/

Interested in???

Is there a new mode (FT4, FT8, RTTY...) that you might be in? Or do you have an active interest in a radio-related topic that you would like to share with our TCG members? In today's world of Virtual meetings via Zoom, MS Teams, freeconferencecall.com and many other modes (not to mention some VERBAL radio discussions) let's find some common interests and get a group together. If you are not interested in meeting, but would like to see a topic in print, or have an article to share, we can do that too! Please send you ideas to topics to learn, or to share, to Cathy Goodrich at w4cmg.dx@gmail.com, or post them on the TCG Reflector to start the conversation.