## **Contest Logging Software**

John Miller, K6MM

Contest Academy • IDXC • Visalia, CA April 4, 2014





#### What is Contest Logging Software?

- Specialized computer software for use by competitors in amateur radio contesting.
- Most contest loggers are written by individual or groups of programmers who are active radio contesters.
- The primary purpose of these applications are to record the two-way radio contacts and specific exchange information passed during the contest operation.

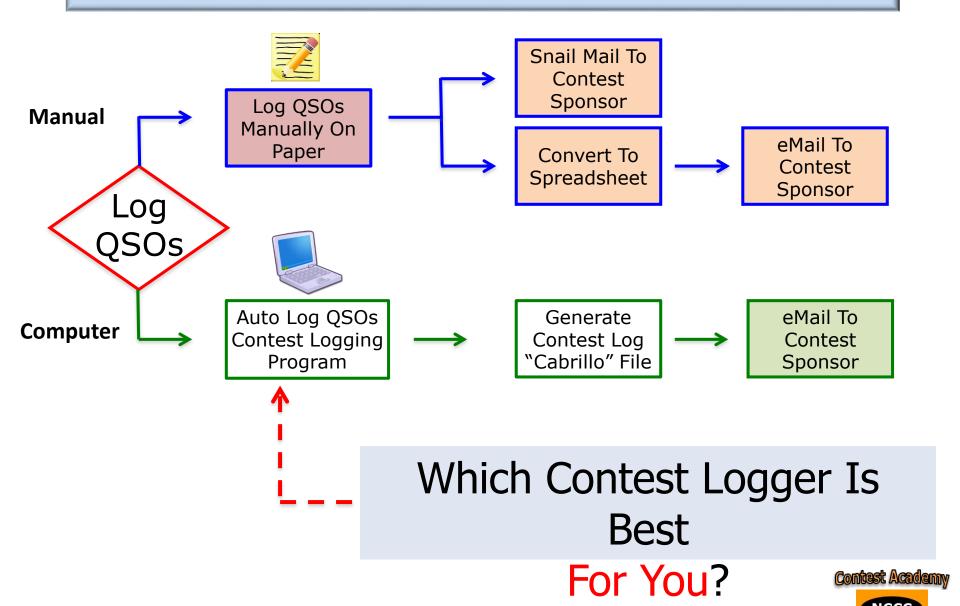


## **Contesting: Why Bother?**

- Sharpen your operating skills
- Get the most out of your equipment
- Compete against your peers
- Support your local Contesting Club
- Prepare for WRTC 2014
- Become part of the contesting community
- Prepare for a DXpedition
- Have more fun with the hobby



### Logging QSOs: Paper or Logging Program?



## Most Popular Contest Loggers

- N3FJP Logger
- TR4W (TR Log For Windows)
- N1MM Logger
- WriteLog
- Win-Test
- DXLOG.net
- Skookumlogger (Mac OSX)



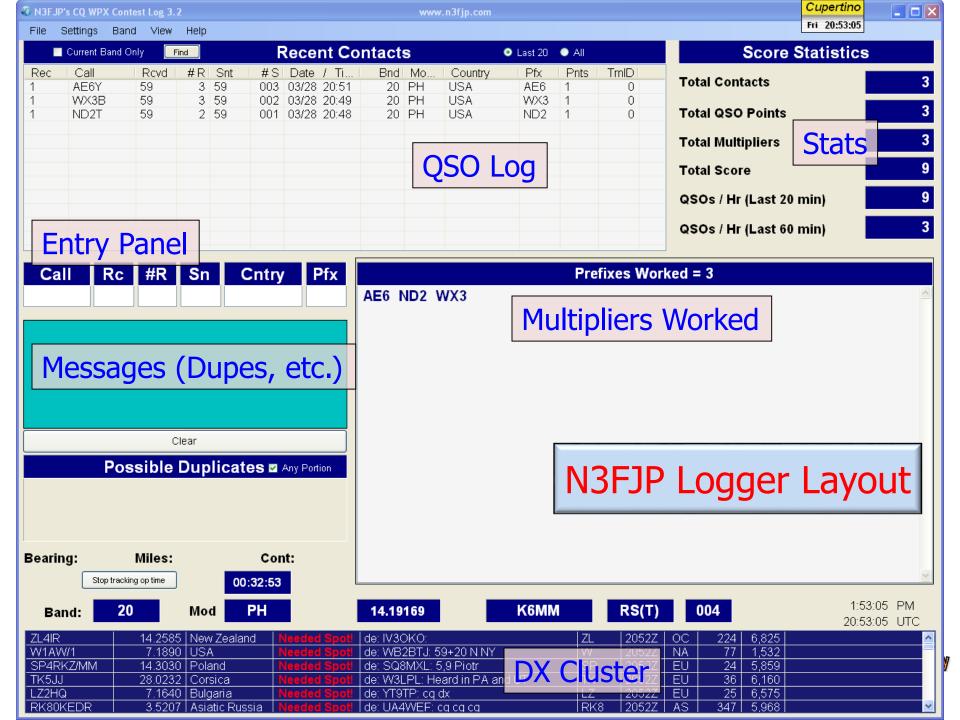
Contest Logger	DXLOG.net	N1MM	N3FJP	TR4W	Win-Test	WriteLog
Comparisons	(9A5K)	(N1MM)	(N3FJP)	(UA4WLI)	(F5MZN)	(W5XD)
Audio Recording						
Bandmap						
Check Callsign - Partial						
Check Callsign - N+1 Search						
Check Multipliers						
Contest Support - Number Supported	190	>200	70	150	100	112
CQ / S&P Modes						
Current Version	2.0.25	14.03.01	Varies by Contest	4.248	4.0	11.19
Current Version Date	26-Mar-2014	18-Mar-2014	Varies by Contest	12-Apr-2013	07-Jul-2009	12-Mar-2014
CW Keyboard Mode						
CW Decoder						
Digital Voice Support						
Documentation	Online	Online	Very Basic	Fragmented	Online	Fragmented
Dual/Multiple Monitor Support						
Dupe Sheet - Visible						
DX Cluster Support						
ESM = Enter Send Message Mode						
Continuous Improvement-Customer Support				no longer supported		
External Keyer Support						
Free Demo / Full version	n/a	n/a	30-Day	n/a	15-Day	
Grayline Display (Real-Time)						
Graphical User Interface (GUI)	Very Flexible	Very Flexible	Basic	Very Flexible	Very Flexible	Very Flexible
Import-Export (Cabrillo, ADIF)						
Instructional Video						
Keyboard Shortcuts						
Live Score Support (cqcontest.net, getscores)						
Macros - Programmable Messages						
Multi-User Support						
Multipliers Window						
Networking Support	Extensive	Extensive	Basic	Extensive	Extensive	Extensive
Post-Contest Statistics						
Price	Free	Free	\$9.00 per contest or \$50 for All	Free	\$70	\$30
Rate Calculations (Real-Time)						
Resizable and Floating Windows						
Rig Control						
Rotator Control						
RTTY Support	MMTTY	MMTTY		MMTTY	MMTTY	Rttyrite
SO2R Support	Advanced	Advanced	Basic	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced
Soundcard DVK Support						
Telnet-Packet Support						
User Group + Email Support						
WinKeyer Support						

 Which
Contest
Logger
Is Best
For You?



# N3FJP Logger by Scott Davis





#### N3FJP Target Audience

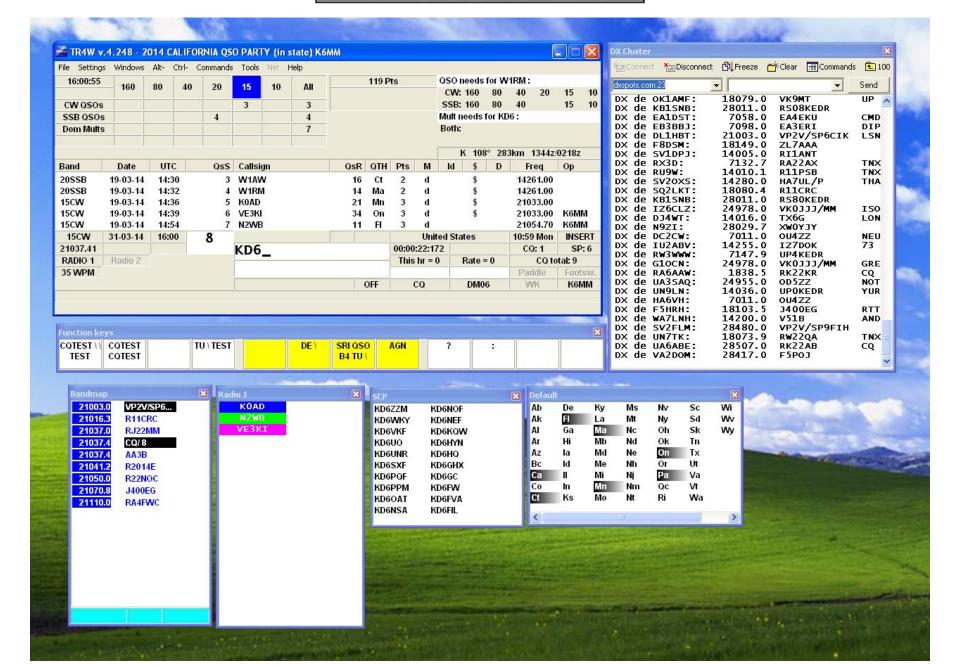
- Someone wanting to graduate from paper logging to computer logging
- No frills, basic features
- EZ learning curve
- Contest Modules integrate with AC Log = N3FJP's general logging program for daily logging
- Solid Author support
- Cost Effective: Purchase just the contest modules you want (\$9 each) or all software for \$50.



## TR4W By UA4WLI



#### TR4W Screen Shot



#### TR4W: Summary

- (+) It's free
- (+) Supports all contests
- (+) Stable
- (+) Clean, Compact Interface
- (+) ESM feature + many message memories
- (+) Excellent SO2R implementation
- (+) Multi-Op
- (+) Networking Support
- (-) Author (Dmitry, UA4WLI) no longer has time to support it
- (-) Future updates unclear but several US hams interested in supporting it with code updates, etc.

## N1MM Logger By Tom, N1MM

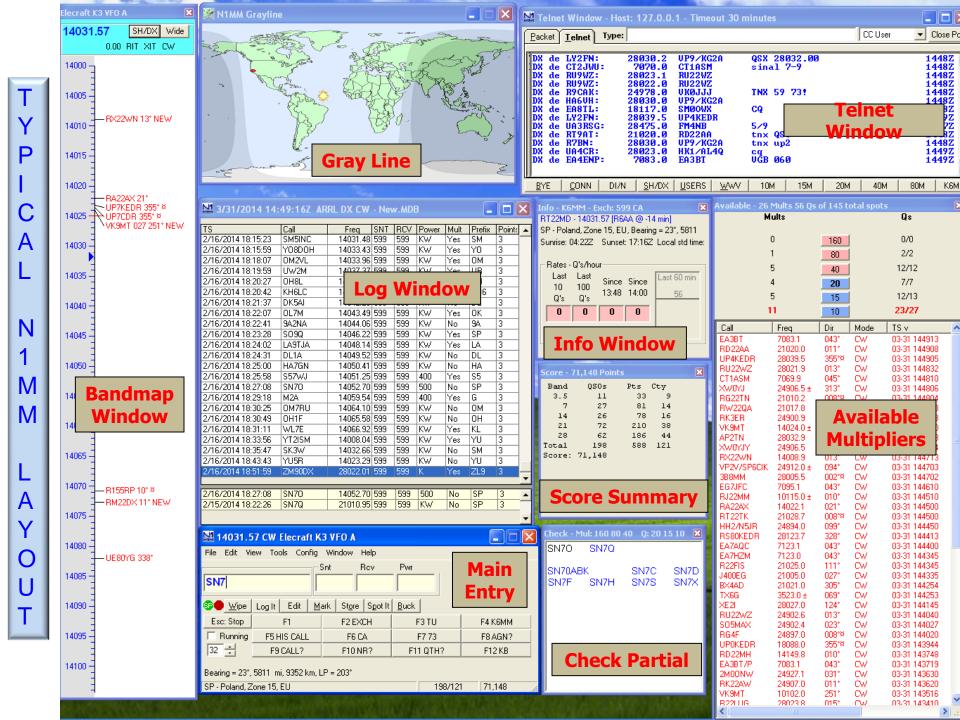


## N1MM Target Audience

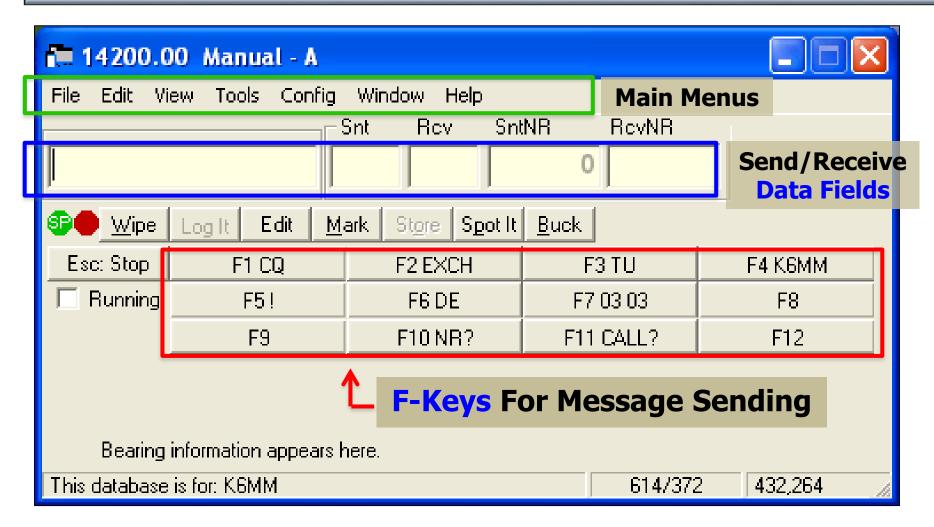
- Someone Wanting To Upgrade from DOS-Based To Windows-Based Program
- A Beginning User Wanting To "Upgrade" With More Features; Intermediate 

  Advanced
- SO1V Moving Up To SO2R Capability
- Stations Needing Multi-Operator Networking Capability (M/S, M/2, M/M)

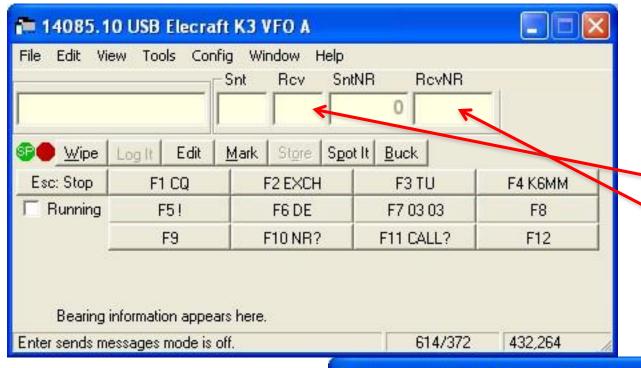




## Main Entry Window - N1MM's "Dashboard"



The Send/Receive Data Fields Are Configured Automatically When Contest Is First Selected



CQ WW WPX (CW, PH, RTTY)

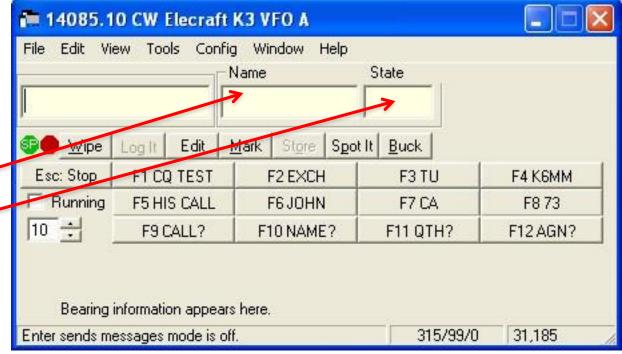
#### **Exchange**

- 1. RST
- 2. Serial #

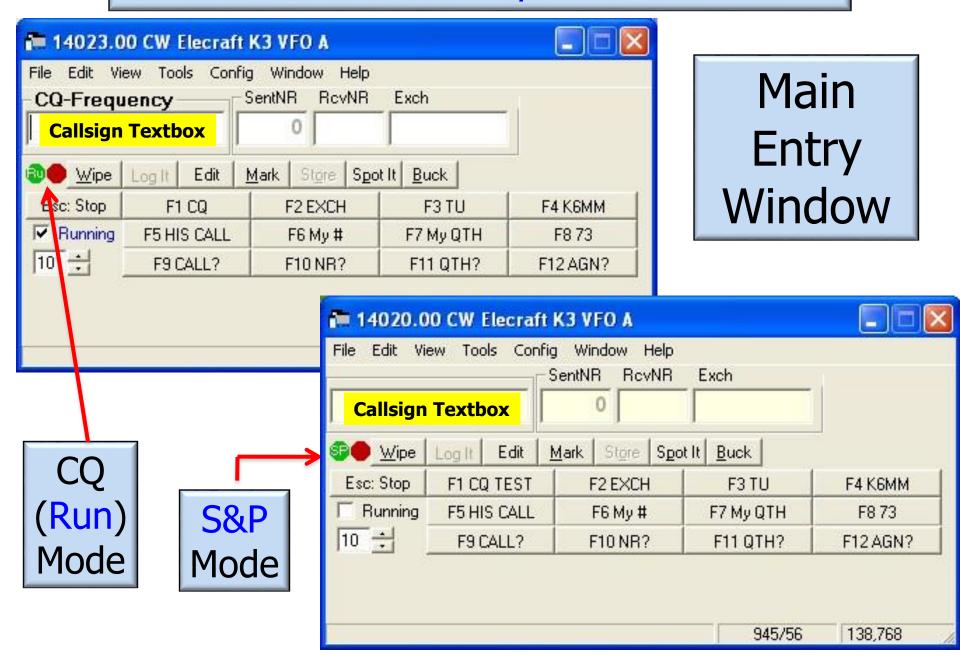


#### Exchange

- 1. Name
- 2. State



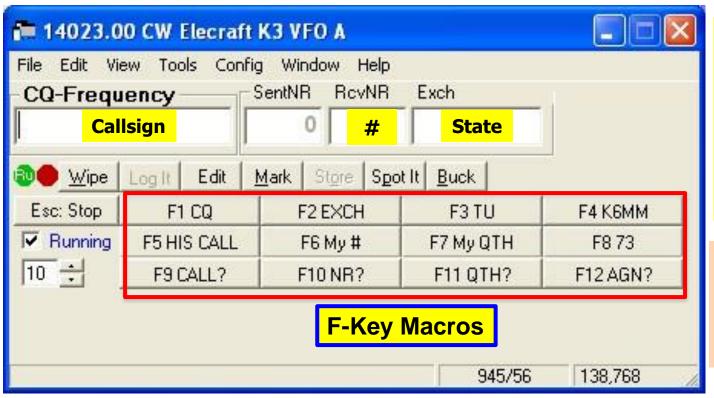
#### RUN versus SEARCH/POUNCE MODE



#### F-Keys: Automatic CW Generation

Pre-Programmed Exchange Messages

Example: California QSO Party (CQP)



#### Copy

- Callsign
- 2. Number
- 3. State (or County)

#### **Send**

- 1. My Number
- 2. My County

#### **Options**

- 1. Send Serial #/County manually via keyer
- 2. Automate using the F-keys



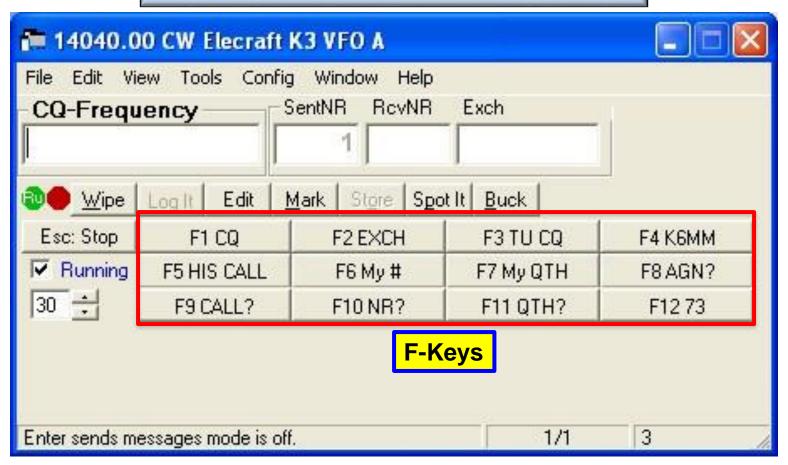
## N1MM F-Key Macros (CQP)

Button Caption Run Mode	N1MM Macro Run Mode
F1 CQ	CQ TEST * * CQ
F2 Exch	# SCLA
F3 TU	TU CQ DE *
F4 My Call	*
F5 His Call	<u>!</u>
F6 My #	#
F7 My QTH	SCLA
F8 Agn?	AGN?
F9 Call?	CALL?
F10 #?	NR?
F11 QTH?	QTH?
F12 73	73

Button Caption S&P Mode	N1MM Macro S&P Mode
F1 K6MM	K6MM
F2 Exch	# SCLA
F3 TU	TU
F4 My Call	*
F5 His Call	!
F6 My #	#
F7 My QTH	SCLA
F8 Agn?	AGN?
F9 Call?	CALL?
F10 #?	NR?
F11 QTH?	QTH?
F12 73	73

F-Keys Easily Be Customized And Saved For Each Contest And For Each Mode (CW, SSB, Digital)

## Automatic CW Generation California QSO Party



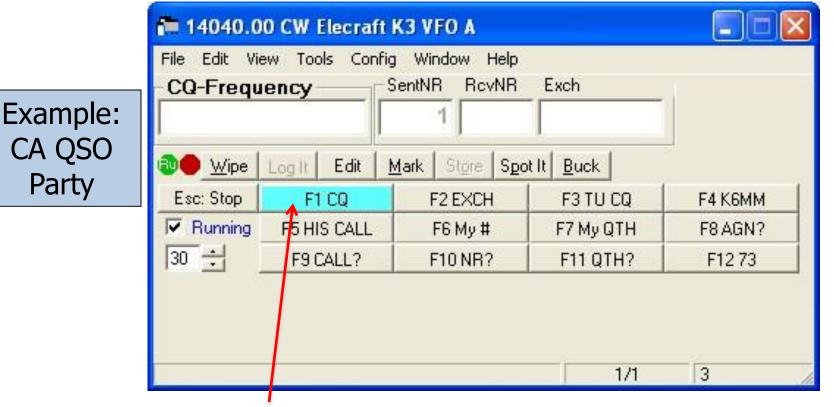
#### **Sending Choices:**

Option 1: Send each F-Key message manually

Option 2: Automate Process with ESM



#### **ESM** = Enter Sends Message)

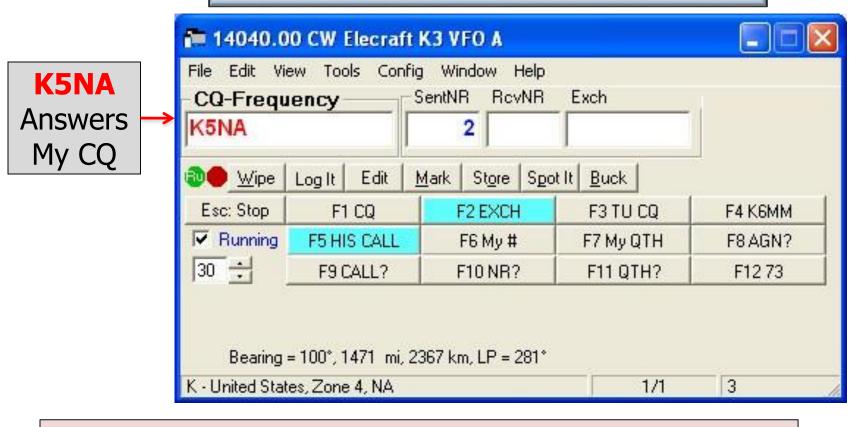


Color-Code: Tells you what happens when you hit the Enter Key

"ENTER" Sends F1 Macro: F1 (CQ Test K6MM K6MM)



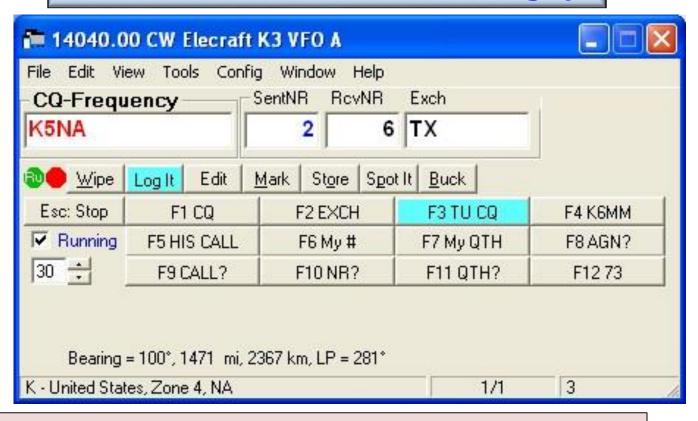
#### **ESM** = Enter Sends Message)



- Type in K5NA
- F5 + F2 Keys Change Color To Aqua
- "ENTER" Sends: F5 (K5NA) + F2 (002 SCLA)
- Cursor automatically moves to RcvNR field



#### **ESM** = Enter Sends Message)



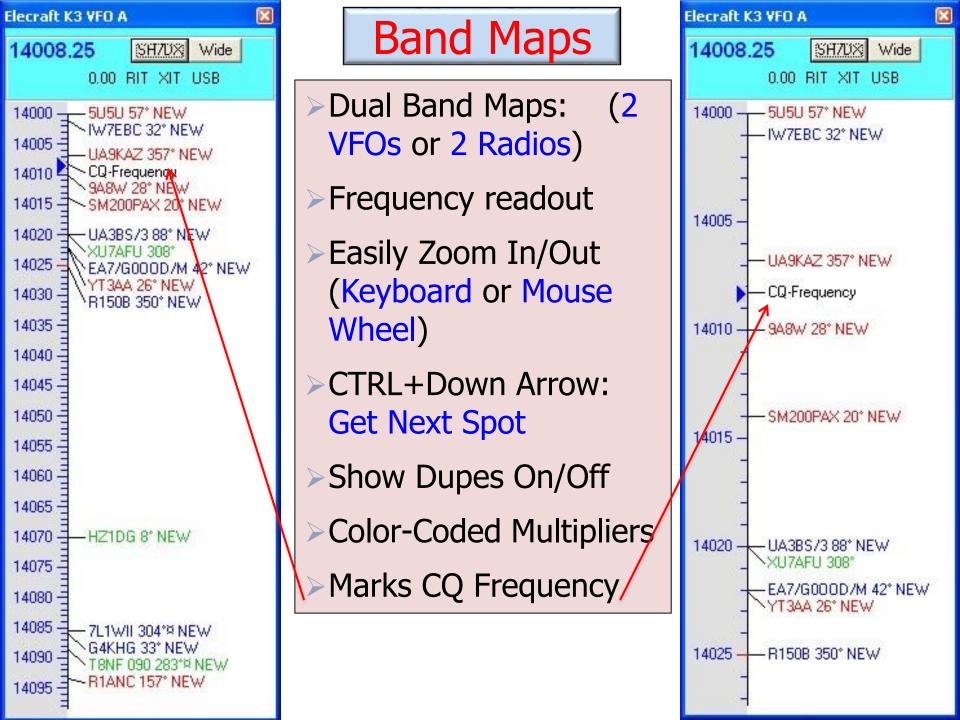
- K5NA Sends His Exchange: Type in 6 TX
- F3 + Log-It Keys Change Color
- "ENTER" Sends: F3 (TU CQ) + Logs The QSO
- Returns to RUN CQ Mode



## Powerful N1MM Feature ESM (Enter Sends Message)

- Automated 3-Step QSO Process
- F-Keys Change Color Automatically
- F-Key Macros:
  - CW = CW messages
  - Phone = WAV files
  - > RTTY = RTTY macros
- Use ESM For Both Run and S&P Mode
- Saves Keystrokes and Time
- > A Bit Of A Learning Curve, But Worth It





#### Visible Dupe Sheet

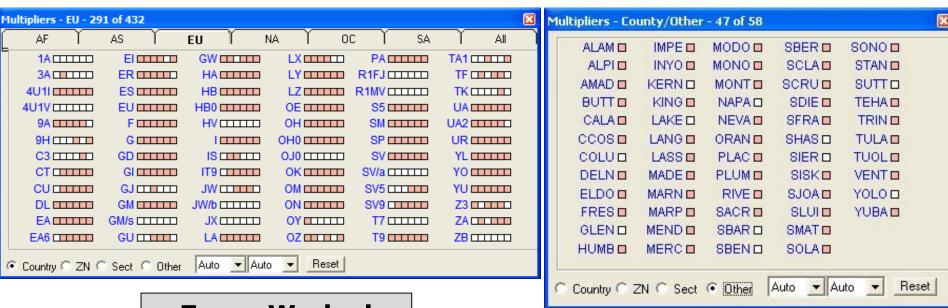


- Quick Visual Dupe Check No Key Entry Needed
- Separate Dupe Sheets For VFO (A) and VFO (B)

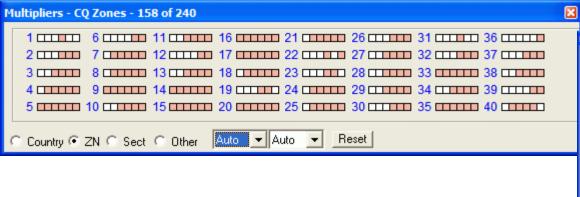
#### Multiplier Map Examples

#### **Countries Worked**

#### **CA Counties Worked**

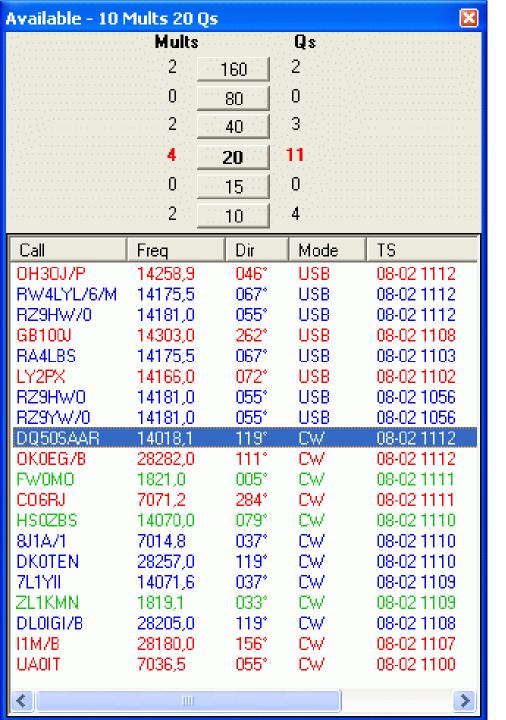


#### **Zones Worked**



#### **ARRL Sections Worked**





# Available Multipliers & QSOs Window

- ➤ Checks Call & Country
- ➤ Display All Bands or Single Band
- ➤ Bands Show Needed Multipliers or QSOs
- Needed Multipliers or QSOs Color Coded
- ➤ Sort Any On Column
- > Powerful For:
  - > Search & Pounce
  - > Check Band Openings
  - > Recent Packet Spots

### N1MM Shortfalls?

- Lots of developers software a bit "bloated"
- Lots of updates
- Too many bells and whistles?
- Steeper learning curve than other loggers



#### My Top 10 Reasons For Using N1MM

- ① Us "MM's" Have To Stick Together ©
- 2 Powerful Windows (Entry, Bandmap, Check Partial, Dupesheet, Grayline, Mults Available, Mults Worked, Score Summary, Telnet)
- ③ F-Key Macros
- 4 SO1V, SO2V, SO2R, Multi-Modes
- **(5)** Post-Contest Statistics

- 6 All Major US, DX Contests& QSO Parties Supported
- 7 Enter-Sends-Message(ESM) Mode
- 8 Extensive Support for CW, Phone, Digital
- (9) Creative User Interface
- ① Excellent CustomerSupport ContinuousImprovement

#### N1MM Logger Contest Software

## It May Be Free, But It Is A *Serious* Piece Of Contest Software



Tom Wagner, N1MM www.n1mm.com

#### **Developers:**

- Nick, NA3M
- •Steve, N2IC
- Eric, N2AMG
- •John, K3CT
- Larry, K8UT



## WriteLog by W5XD

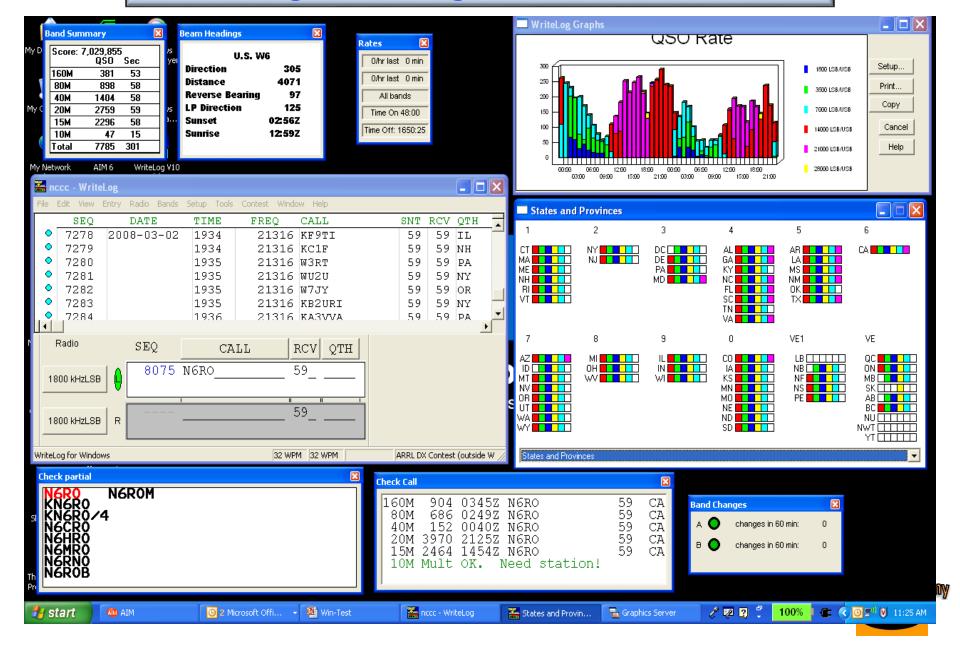


#### WriteLog Highlights

- One of the oldest loggers
- Reliable; does not lose data; rarely goes down
- Supports all popular contests
- Supports most radios and accessories
- Excellent RTTY support
- Multiple RTTY decoder windows per radio
- SO1R, SO2R, SO3R, and SO4R on single computer, or multiple networked computers
- Very good Multi-op and Multi-multi support
- Contest recording and playback of individual QSOs
- Built-in CW Decoder window



### WriteLog Floating Window Interface



## WriteLog Shortfalls

- Very "mature" application; Current Version: 11.11
- Interface not as "sexy" as other loggers
- First Windows version: Version 6.0, 1993
- \$30 licensing fee (includes 12 months of updates)
- Disjointed documentation from multi-sources
- Lacks some features (N+1 call checking, dupe sheet, etc.)
- Steep learning curve
  - it takes time to solve config problems
  - it takes time to become proficient



# Win-Test By F5MZN and F6FVY

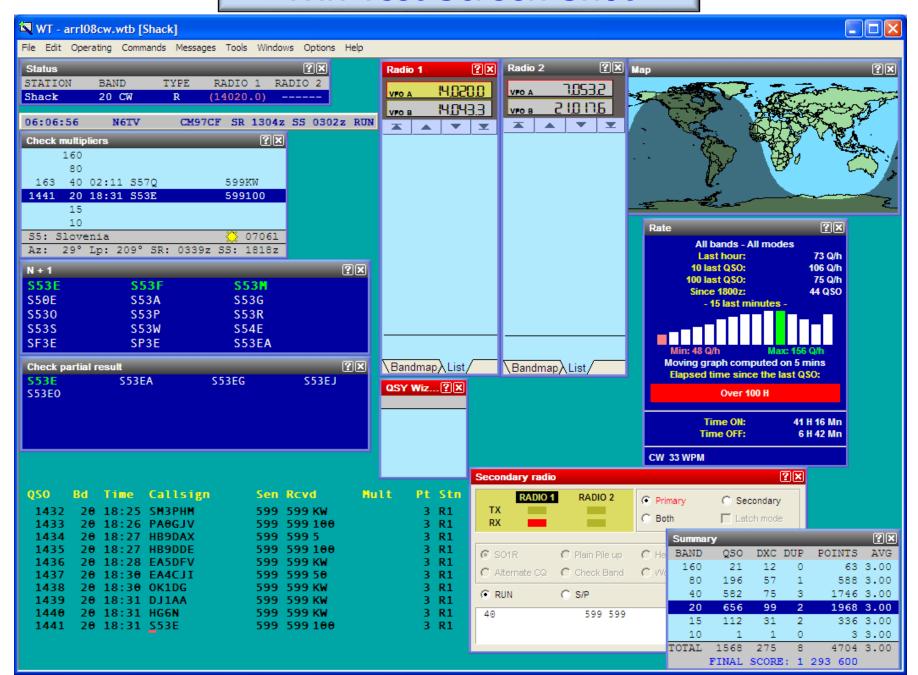


#### Win-Test: Type Of User?

- Any serious advanced contester
- A multi-multi operator
- An advanced SO2R station
- A simpler station without any DVK or external WinKeyer hardware
  - Great CW sent via LPT port (including PTT)
  - Good DVK using Windows Sound card
- A DXpedition operator
  - VP6DX logged 183,000 QSOs with Win-Test



#### Win-Test Screen Shot



#### Win-Test: Distinguishing Features

- Clean look and feel
  - Keyboard remapping via DEFINEKEYS command
  - Data entry done right
  - Right click for appropriate context menu
- 2. Bullet-proof networking
  - Important for any multi-multi
- 3. Advanced features
  - Super Check Partial N+1
  - Gray line map
  - Integration with Ham CAP propagation SW (QSY Wizard)
  - SO2R support, secondary radio window
  - Advanced rate charts / real-time statistics
- 4. Good documentation and User's Groups



#### Shortfalls of Win-Test

- 1. Euro-Centric (popular with top European contesters)
- 2. Lacks support for most State QSO Party contests -- including the California QSO Party ©
- 3. 50 Euros = \$70.00
- 4. Has not been updated for over one year



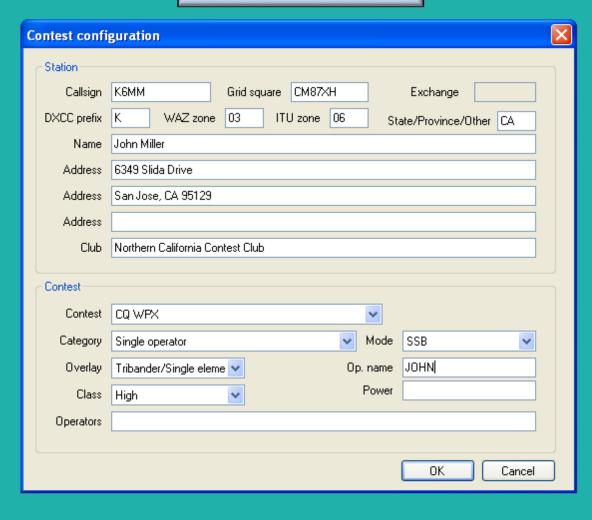
## DXLOG.net By 9A5K

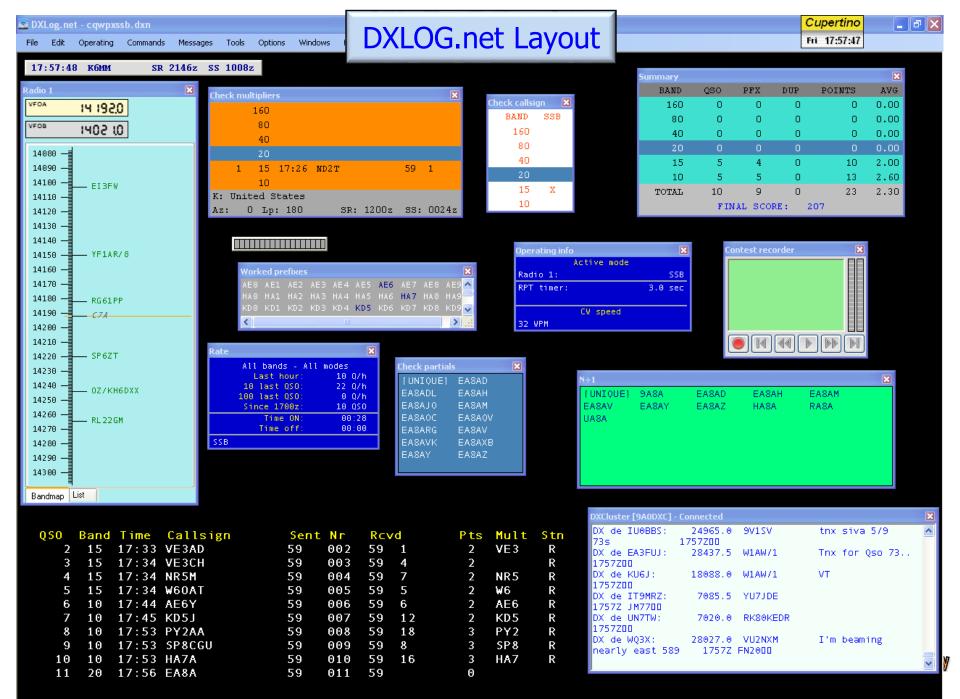
The new "Win-Test" Clone

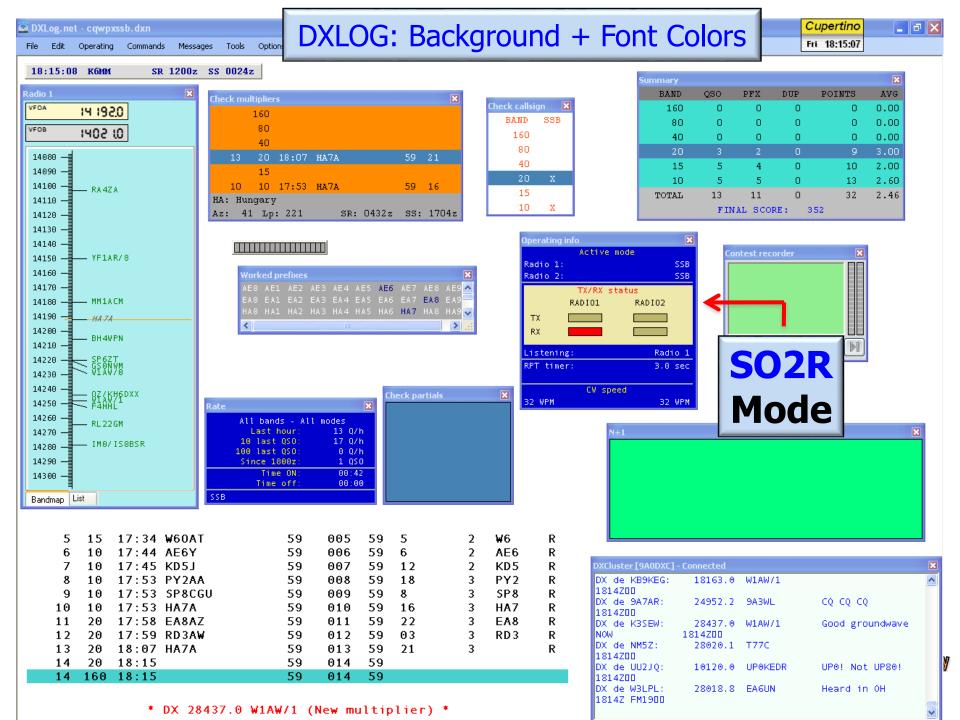


Options Help

#### DXLOG.net







#### **DXLOG.net:** Highlights

- 1. It's currently Free
- 2. Covers all popular contests plus you can add your own
- 3. ESM feature
- 4. Overall Layout Options
- 5. Strong author support
- 6. Speed
- 7. No Winkey required
- 8. Win-Test compatibility (= easy to switch)
- 9. DEFINEKEYS dialog (remap keys to your preference, like PageUp/Down for CW speed)
- 10. Advanced SO2R scenarios



#### **DXLOG.net: Shortcomings**

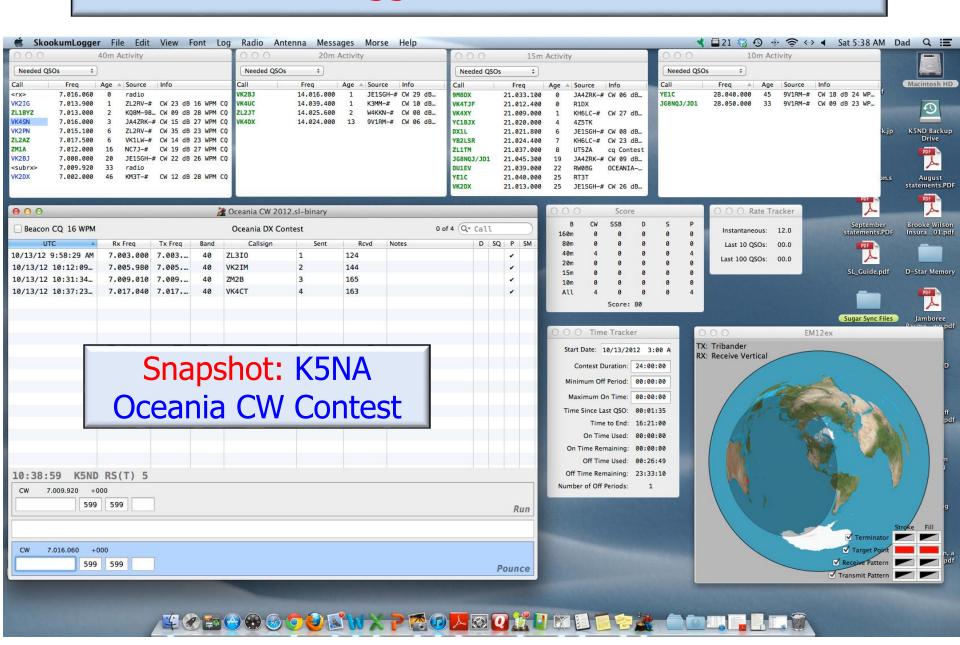
- 1. "New" Introduced on Sept. 2013
- 2. Learning curve
- 3. SO2R not as clean as N1MM
- 4. Multi-Op and Networking (implemented but not stress tested)
- 5. Every release seems to fix some bugs, but adds others (however quickly fixed when reported)
- 6. Euro-Centric (popular with top European contesters)
- Bottom Line: Work-in-Progress but definitely worth a look

#### SkookumLogger Mac OSX Users





#### SkookumLogger: For Mac OSX Users



#### SkookumLogger Mac OSX Users

- (+) Newer application but gaining support
- (+) Beautiful Interface
- (+) Handles most popular contests
- (+) Uses Winkeyer to send CW
- (+) Excellent documentation
- (-) No Network, Muti-Op or RTTY support yet
- (-) No email reflector or user's group
- (-) No other choice ©



#### **Summary**

- Several great Contest Logger choices today for all levels: Beginner – Intermediate – Advanced
- N3FJP Great for Beginners; \$
- TR4W: Future cloudy; solid current version; Free
- N1MM: Feature-rich; Free; Advanced Users
- WriteLog Long-in-tooth; \$\$; good choice for Intermediate/Advanced Users
- Win-Test: Advanced Users; Not updated often; \$\$
- DXLog.net: Work-In-Progress but promising; Free
- Skookumlogger: Only practical OSX choice; Free

### My Advice

- 1. Don't be intimidated by this type of software
- 2. Download and try a few loggers
- 3. Find the user interface you like the best
- 4. Stick with it for a few contests
- 5. Join a local contesting club for more support



### **Questions**? Discussion?



