



Florida Contest Group Contest Gazette

www.floridacontestgroup.com

Volume 32, Issue 1

January 2026

From the President's Corner

Chris Plumblee, W4WF, FCG President

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to write another President's lead to the FCG Contest Gazette. Please join me in welcoming NF6P as the new editor of the Gazette. The Gazette has a proud history, with inaugural editor W1YL (SK) and longtime editor K4LQ (SK) giving way to N4GL and now NF6P. We try to have great content for our newsletter, including recaps of meetings and contests and tips and tricks for upcoming contests. If there is something that you'd like to see in the Gazette, please reach out to Dave, NF6P (dave@nf6p.com) with ideas or to offer your services.



There is a lot going on in the contesting world as we prepare to turn the calendar over from December to January. We're in the midst of preparing for the Orlando Contest Dinner. NK4O is hard at work as our prize elf, securing donations from many top manufacturers. AJ has gotten a number of prizes already committed and shipped, including the grand prize IC7610 (sponsored by DX Engineering) which is at my house waiting on the winner.

Thanks again to K1TO and his extensive Rolodex, we have our speaker for the 2026 Contest Dinner. KM3T is a recent inductee (2022) to the Contest Hall of Fame. Dave has extensive experience in multi-op and single-op contesting, including a FB score in the recent 10m contest from KC1XX. He also is very involved in the back office work that makes many of the CQ and WWROF contests possible. I'm looking forward to a great address from KM3T at the contest dinner on February 13, 2026.

I had a great conversation with M0DXR, the head of WRTC 2026, and K3LR shortly before Christmas. To support WRTC, DXEngineering is donating an IC7300 to raffle at the Orlando Contest Dinner in addition to the IC7610 that we've already received. That is a significant vote of confidence from DXE that the FCG will step up and raise significant money to support WRTC.

The FCG leadership believe strongly in the importance of supporting WRTC, so we have made the decision to donate all profits from the 2026 Contest Dinner to WRTC. That means that, after we meet our expenses, 100% of your donations and prize ticket purchases will go to support WRTC 2026. So, in addition to having 2x the chance of leaving the dinner with a brand new radio, you'll be supporting WRTC 2026 at the same time.

Inside this issue:

President's Corner , Chris Plumblee, W4WF	1
Quick Facts: HamCation and Contest Dinner	2
FQP Update Dan Street, K1TO	3
Get In The Game—NAQP CW This Weekend Dave Mueller, N2NL	4
ARRL 10 Meter Contest from Montserrat Requires Perseverance , Franco Gerosa, VP2MAA	5
2025 ARRL Sweepstakes SSB – Initial Observations of Text-to-Speech as Another Station Automation Tool , Rick, N0YY and courtesy of the PVRC newsletter	8
Quick Guide PIPER TTS	11
Meet the New Gazette Editor —Dave NF6P	12
Contest Calendar	16

The Contest Gazette is the newsletter of the Florida Contest Group (FCG). The Gazette is published quarterly and notifications for input and publication will be on the FCG reflector.

Please send input to the editor, Dave Kalahar, NF6P, dave@nf6p.com.



From the President's Corner continued:

Speaking of contest recaps, how 'bout that sporadic-E on Friday night in the 10m contest? We had outstanding conditions to the whole continental US and most of VE. Check elsewhere in the Gazette for a recap of the 10m contest from VP2MAA. We had notable efforts in various categories by several FCG members. The ARRL RTTY Roundup also provided great score from FCG members.

Though the 10m contest is in the rearview mirror for 2025, we have many exciting contests to look forward to. January will bring the CQWW 160m contest as well as the NAQP CW and SSB. Look elsewhere in this issue for a short article from CW NAQP manager N2NL with some tips for maximizing your score in that contest.

The ARRL DX contests in February and March should still have usable 10m conditions to EU, though we're definitely on the downward slope of Cycle 25. Florida will benefit from our southerly location and will hold on to good 10m conditions longer than New England and the Mid-Atlantic, so 2026 is a great time to leverage that advantage with longer and deeper openings than the rest of the US on the high bands.

Finally, the FCG has been approached to coordinate the activity from W1AW/4 in the ARRL's WAS250 celebration for the entirety of 2026. The announcement was in January 2026 QST. The URL is <https://www.arrl.org/america250-was>. Our weeks fall on the week before Hamcation in February and the week of December 2. Our weekends include the WPX RTTY contest in February and the ARRL 160m contest in December. We are working on a schedule link so that we can manage the demand and ensure that we don't have 1 person on a given band-mode at a time. Look for more information on the reflector in late January or early February.

If 2026 is anything like 2014, then demand for W1AW/4 QSOs will be high, and we'll have enough sunspots to ensure that there's plenty of DX in the log. Please consider taking a shift or two...the event includes all modes (including FT4 and FT8 as well as traditional RTTY, CW, and SSB) and includes the traditional bands, WARC

bands, and VHF. There will be a role for everyone, and we'll welcome big stations with yagis and 1500w as well as smaller stations with wires and 100w signals to enjoy the pileups.

I expect that Hamcation will activate the callsign at the fairgrounds for most of the weekend, but that will be limited to SSB and CW; I hope we'll have a group or an individual who will put W1AW/4 on the air for the WPX RTTY contest all weekend, for example.

More details to come later in January!

73/OJ/LN,

QUICK FACTS

HamCation and Contest Dinner Info



Central Florida Fairgrounds and Expo Park

4603 West Colonial Drive - Orlando, Florida 32808

February 13, 2026 | 9AM to 5PM

February 14, 2026 | 9AM to 5PM

February 15, 2026 | 9AM to 1PM

Tickets online at: hamcation.com/hamcation-tickets

Ticket Price \$30 - Parking is Free



Orlando Contest Dinner

Friday February 13th, 2026 at the American Legion Department of Florida building at 1912A Lee Road
Orlando, Florida 32810.

2026 Contest Dinner Speaker is Dave Pascoe, KM3T

Order tickets <https://floridacontestgroup.square.site>

Ticket are \$30 each

Extra Raffle Tickets \$10 each



KITO Updates



Dan Street, K1TO
Vice President, Florida QSO Party

Florida QSO Party

2025's Florida QSO Party (FQP) was banner in many ways:

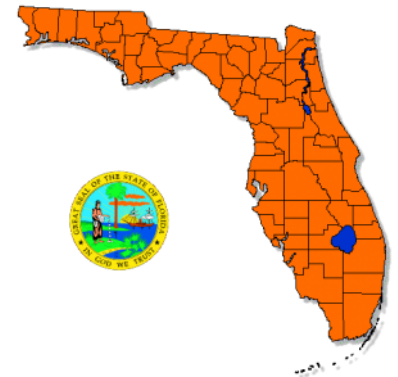
- A single-op mobile had almost 4000 QSOs!
- The earliest County Sweep was from offshore, and Sweeps were way up!
- The Canadian club in Ontario regained the top spot!
- Pirates 1x1 Sweeps were hugely popular, too!
- The Golden Log winner had more than 500 Qs!
- There were significantly more QSOs made than in the supposedly higher spot in the sunspot cycle a year earlier.
- 40/20/10 were close to flat, but 15M was way up, something you would expect in prior years.

Log checking, score tabulation, ID of plaque winners, and many of the standard tables are done. After a few multi-ops answer re additional plaques, that will also be done, and plaques should again be available in Orlando.

The write-up and assembly of the final product have just begun. Still left are the line scores, records, and various website updates. We are also usually invited in Jan to write for a VE publication.

The 2026 FQP in the 250th birthday year of the USA promises to also be big, with the 1x1 word(s) and station hosts yet to be identified.

The FQP always starts the last Saturday of April at 16Z in a 10 hours on - 10 off - 10 on format, so mark Apr 25-26, 2026.



FQP April 25-26, 2026





GET IN THE GAME—NAQP CW—This Weekend

Dave Mueller, N2NL NAQP CW Manager



The Winter NAQP CW will be held this coming weekend, January 10-11. The contest starts at 18z and runs for 12 hours, with Single Operators allowed to operate for a maximum of 10 hours (breaks must be at least 30 minutes). This is a really fun contest with very high

rates: the top-scoring stations average 220 QSOs per hour, and a minimum of 140/hour to make the top 10 box. This said, it is still a highly enjoyable contest with a single radio and modest antenna, and the 100W power limit makes it possible to add a second radio without an extravagant filtering setup. If you are considering participation, please read the rules as published on the NCJ website, as there are some nuances to note. For example, unassisted single ops are not allowed to self-spot (the NAQPs are *not* ARRL contests), assisted single ops can. The logic behind this decision is that the unassisted category should be the “op and a radio(s)” and not need to worry about the DX cluster connectivity when they cannot use its data.

The January event generally provides big rates for stations in the Western US early in the contest, as east/west propagation is prevalent on 10 and 15 meters, and those guys can work into the highly populated East Coast, while those of us back east have a more limited selection of W6’s and W7s to work. That said, there have been quite a few winter Es noted these past couple of days, which could provide some bigger QSO and multiplier totals on 10 and 15 than FL stations would typically see in January.

From a strategy standpoint, it is recommended that you operate from 18-20z, even if part-time, to maximize 10m, especially, and 15m before activity migrates to the lower bands. There are many more hours when 20-160m will be open than when 10/15 will be open. I will generally take a 30-minute break around 20-21z, depending on the rate, because by 22z, 20m activity is peaking and you want to be there making QSOs. 40 really starts taking off at sunset, and that

NAQP CW

Will be the “money band” until 0300z or so. In the evening hours, I will generally take a second 30-minute break around 01-02z, depending on the rate.

The final hours of the contest are usually focused on 40 and 80, with relatively short jaunts to 160m. Historically, people have gone to 160m at the top and bottom of the hour, which is generally good advice. Looking at the QSOs-per-hour data from January 2025, there was a noticeable peak of activity on Topband between 04-0445z. This would be a good time to try there.

Generally, I will save my remaining off time for the end of the contest. By 0500, most activity has narrowed to 80m, so the two radio guys will usually find their QSO rate has started to drop by then. Saving time for the end will also allow for an unplanned break should something come up during the contest, such as a computer crash.

Unfortunately, I don’t feel exceptionally qualified to suggest strategies for the NAQP SSB or RTTY, as I’ve historically only operated the CW NAQP events and don’t have as much visibility into the other two contests as the CW NAQP manager. I would think the strategy in the SSB event would be similar, given the adjacent contest dates.

Finally, if anyone is interested in a copy of the NAQP CW log check report, feel free to drop me a note at my QRZ email address anytime after mid-February, and I will be happy to send it to you. It is surprising how few LCR requests I get. Relying on pre-fill data is a good way to log incorrect exchanges, since people often use different names, and these exchanges can lead to pretty significant score reductions in some cases. When in doubt, ask for a repeat!



ARRL 10-Meters from Montserrat Requires Perseverance

Franco Gerosa, VP2MAA



Every great story has its beginning, and mine traces back to a bygone era of ham radio.

I first earned my license in 1979, under the callsign IK2BTI.

With it, I embarked on a quest to connect with every DXCC country.

This passion soon carried me to some of Italy's most captivating islands. Pantelleria, perched closer to Tunisia in Africa than to Sicily itself, and Stromboli, with its black volcanic sands that burned your feet if you dared walk its beaches – I suppose volcanoes must be a recurring theme in my life.

IK2BTI became my faithful companion through countless contests, guiding me through the sleepless nights of T70A and the long days spent preparing for 9G1MR.

And then, in 1998, I stopped.

That is, only momentarily. Life had taken its course and carried me far from my homeland in Italy. Stationed on the island of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I made a decision and, in 2024, I dove once again into the world of ham radio. What I found was a landscape transformed: lightning-fast digital interfaces, state-of-the-art equipment, and technologies driving the dramatic evolution of the radio world.

Facing this new challenge, I felt my passion ignite once again and, after a few tentative first steps, I returned to the world of contesting – which, for me, lies at the heart of my experience as a ham radio operator – with the support of my dear friend Jim, KM4HI, whom I thank for introducing me to FCG.

At the end of my contract in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I was called to work on the Emerald Isle of Montserrat. With this new opportunity at hand, I decided to build a station far superior to the Saint Vincent one, finally moving on from my trusty wire

antenna and placing an order for a last-generation linear amplifier alongside a new antenna system.

Unfortunately, fate was not on my side. The new linear amplifier worked perfectly for at least 30 minutes. Defective! And the antennas? Shipped from Germany, they somehow got lost in Peru!

And there I was, at the starting line once again with no antennas and running low power. My goal of topping my score from last year's DX contest, where I had placed second, just behind LZ4TX, was clearly not going to be a simple task.

Armed with goodwill, the support of my friend Mats, SM0FPR, who ran the tests, and the help of my daughter Emma, who assisted me in the field, I prepared a movable 7-element vertical wire beam aimed towards Europe or the USA at need.

Could everything be ready at last, my superior station finally ready to transmit? Could that really be possible?!

Well, one might think a 6-metre-tall mast with a carefully designed base quite sturdy – and it might've been had a diligent gardener not driven his roaring lawnmower straight into it, tipping it right over, along with the clothesline and with it, our hard work, without a chance ever to test its functionality.



The Gardner's Job

Continued on next



ARRL 10-Meters from Montserrat—Continued

With time running out, wet laundry still in the washer, and a decision to make, I raised the lowest corners of my only usable antenna – an 80-metre loop WIRE.

My trusty antenna, once again, paired with a type DJ0IP hybrid 4:1 balun, is ready – my only challenger: the wind. Pushing through the ever-changing Caribbean weather, the Soufriere Hills volcano fuming in the back, the sun just at the right angle to blind you, and the strongest wind Montserrat had felt all December, I battled to raise my antenna.

And finally, against all odds, I succeeded.



Raising the Loop's Edges

Quite curiously, despite an empty stomach, N1MM was still unconfigured, and the pressure of being mere moments from the deadline, along with all the worry about not being ready in time, vanished the instant the contest began. Once it started, I dove headfirst into the adventure.

The goal was clear: 700,000 points—enough to beat my previous score. With everything finally in place, I braced myself for the inevitable furious pile-up. After all, Montserrat is rare enough *and* a multiplier. And yet... with only 48 QSOs in the first hour and 52 in the

second, something felt off. Looking over at the online scoreboards, the picture looked quite different at other stations: my North American colleagues were mining QSOs, collecting points, and riding to the top.

I locked in on the task and concentrated on the long hours ahead, earning a mere 113 QSOs and a good dose of perplexity the first night. The following day, propagation seemed much more welcoming, 23 and 76 QSO from 6 AM to 8 AM local time, not bad for 10m.

The ride was not going to be smooth much longer; the 100w and the limit of my antenna were beginning to show through, preventing it from generating enough pile-up and catching multipliers. These limits served as a screen throughout the contest, and I never managed to get more than 80 QSOs



The Gardener's Job #2

Continued on next




ARRL 10-Meters from Montserrat—Continued

per hour. Nevertheless, through steady effort and the wise choice of frequency – especially in CW – the numbers began to grow, pushing me further up in the standings. And with 953 QSOs, the first day came to a close.

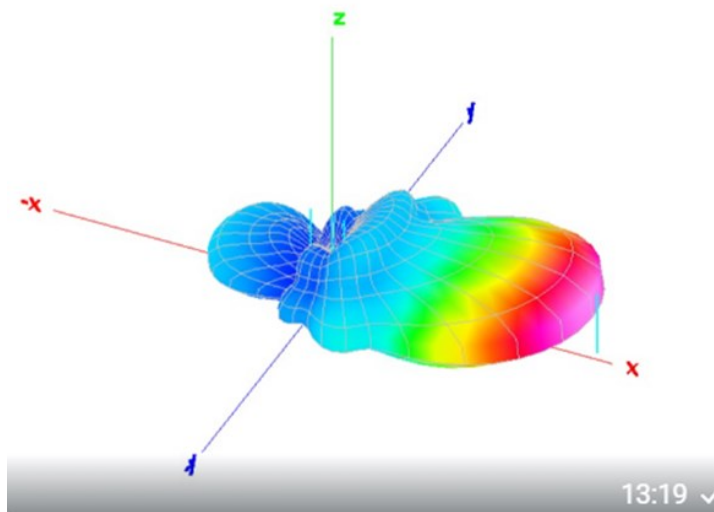
After resting for a few hours, I sat down at my station again and found worsening conditions. The second day had begun with a slow start, forcing me to spend the morning skimming the frequency and only picking up the pace once the sun lazily rose above the horizon, giving way to the day ahead.

I pushed through, and with persistence, I managed to make some good connections, collecting crucial multipliers by the end of the 48 hours.

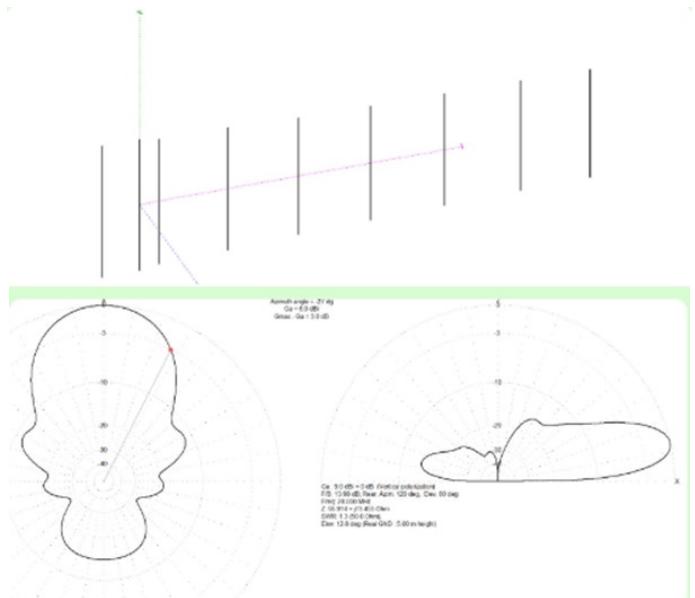
 VP2MAA Score - 1.040.000 Points

Contest: ARRL10M						
Band	Mode	QSOs	Pts	S-P	Cty	Pt/Q
28	CW	1014	4056	55	64	4,0
28	USB	472	944	44	45	2,0
Total	Both	1486	5000	99	109	3,4
Score: 1.040.000						
1 Mult = 7,1 Q's						

With a total of 1486 valid QSOs, 5000 points, 208 multipliers, and a raw score of 1,034,172, the contest had come to an end.



Antenna Design and Measurements from SMOFPR



After comparing my numbers with those of other stations on 3830, it seemed quite possible I could be at the top of the DX scoreboard. I had surpassed my past self, who, under the callsign J8AA, had placed second.

After patiently waiting for the raw scores to be published, I eventually learned that LZ4TX placed second this year. :D

The moral of this story is: never give up! Consistency and perseverance are, after all, what truly make the difference.

ARRL 10 Meter Contest - 2025-12-13 0000Z to 2025-12-15 0000Z
VP2MAA Runs >10 QSOs: for computer named: FRA

2025-12-13 0002 - 0020Z,	28433 kHz, 28 Qs, 97,7/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 0045 - 0118Z,	28011 kHz, 23 Qs, 41,4/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 0145 - 0157Z,	28434 kHz, 22 Qs, 103,0/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 1042 - 1207Z,	28091 kHz, 105 Qs, 74,4/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 1222 - 1254Z,	28094 kHz, 50 Qs, 91,5/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 1305 - 1321Z,	28078 kHz, 14 Qs, 52,0/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 1347 - 1505Z,	28108 kHz, 99 Qs, 76,2/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 1514 - 1527Z,	28496 kHz, 21 Qs, 93,3/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 1547 - 1841Z,	28101 kHz, 233 Qs, 80,6/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 2007 - 2115Z,	28101 kHz, 100 Qs, 87,5/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 2149 - 2240Z,	28102 kHz, 56 Qs, 65,5/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-13 2319 - 2349Z,	28054 kHz, 19 Qs, 37,6/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-14 0016 - 0037Z,	28546 kHz, 22 Qs, 63,6/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-14 0116 - 0152Z,	28405 kHz, 27 Qs, 45,7/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-14 1130 - 1215Z,	28102 kHz, 28 Qs, 37,7/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-14 1227 - 1241Z,	28101 kHz, 12 Qs, 52,5/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-14 1245 - 1341Z,	28408 kHz, 77 Qs, 82,7/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-14 1430 - 1614Z,	28394 kHz, 132 Qs, 75,9/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-14 1616 - 1627Z,	28103 kHz, 17 Qs, 98,4/hr VP2MAA
2025-12-14 1719 - 1735Z,	28101 kHz, 15 Qs, 56,3/hr VP2MAA



2025 ARRL Sweepstakes SSB – Initial Observations of Text-to-Speech as Another Station Automation Tool

by Rick N0YY and courtesy of the PVRC newsletter

For those familiar with N1MM and voice-keyer integration, there are several approaches. First, .wav files are created, which are then embedded in the Function Keys for message and response generation. Second, it uses macros (embedded computer commands) to access the messages stored in a radio's voice-keyer message files. (In the case of the K4, there are eight storable messages.) And there is an evolving third approach. Using a process called Text-to-Speech (TTS), where you can type callsigns, words, numbers, etc., and the computer will “voice” them with a trained voice.

Voice keyers are not new. Creating .wav files to voice contest exchanges has been around for years. But the issue was that you needed to voice unique .wav files for each contest exchange. Voicing callsigns and serial numbers was a bit cumbersome, as it was hard to ensure the character spacing “sounded” right for the information being exchanged. Several text-to-speech platforms have been built by individuals for their personal use very successfully. They had their voices cloned using third-party AI services. These intrepid designers developed large libraries of callsigns based on Super Check Partial callsign databases. They developed bulk-processing algorithms to trim character spacing to produce natural-sounding responses for contest exchanges. But much of that was not ready for individual use.

The thing that caught my attention was that N1MM had embedded an application description that allowed a user to create a text-to-speech utility for contest exchanges. Piper TTS was introduced by Kari, OH2XX, with some early work that yielded very good-sounding audio clips for contest use. That generated a lot of interest among the N1MM users, and as it matured, a team of users worked together to put together a “how-to” set of instructions for using the Piper TTS model for contest exchanges.

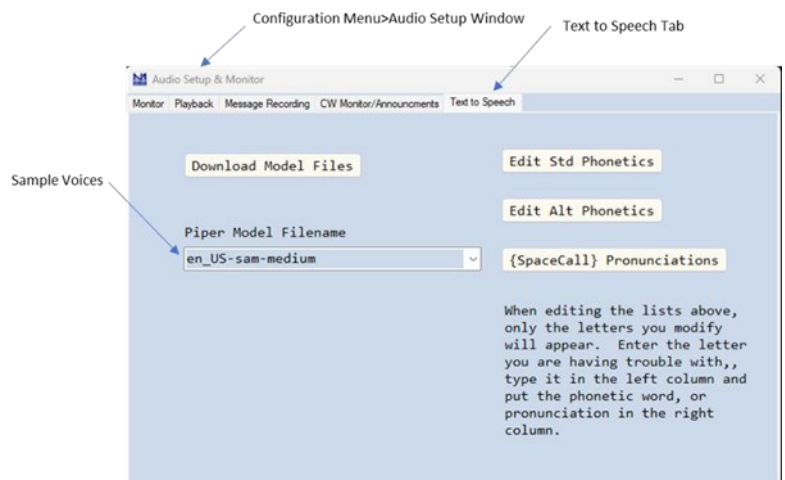
The application notes are surprisingly easy to download and to begin learning how text-to-speech can be used for voice contest exchanges. The application is downloaded, and 27+ selectable trained voices are used to generate contest messages accessed via the Function Keys. The text-to-speech process creates .wav files “on the fly,” unlike the previous process, which created a library of pre-designed .wav files used for structured messages for each contest.

Tom, N1MM, and his team of wizards recognized the value of this approach and worked the magic necessary to make it available to the community.

A new tab, called Text to Speech, was added to the Audio Setup Window, providing a detailed description of the required sequence of actions to bring this function to life.

As I prepared for my entry into the 2025 ARRL Sweepstakes SSB, I decided now was the time to go beyond canned messages in my radio to support the voicing of callsigns and serial numbers. This was another of my “science project” efforts that was discussed last month.

You start by opening the Configuration tab in N1MM. Then, select the Audio Setup Window. The screen looks like this. When you select the





this is the window that opens. Here you see several things:

- Download Model Files
- Piper Model Filename
- Editing existing words, phonetics, and establishing custom “words.”

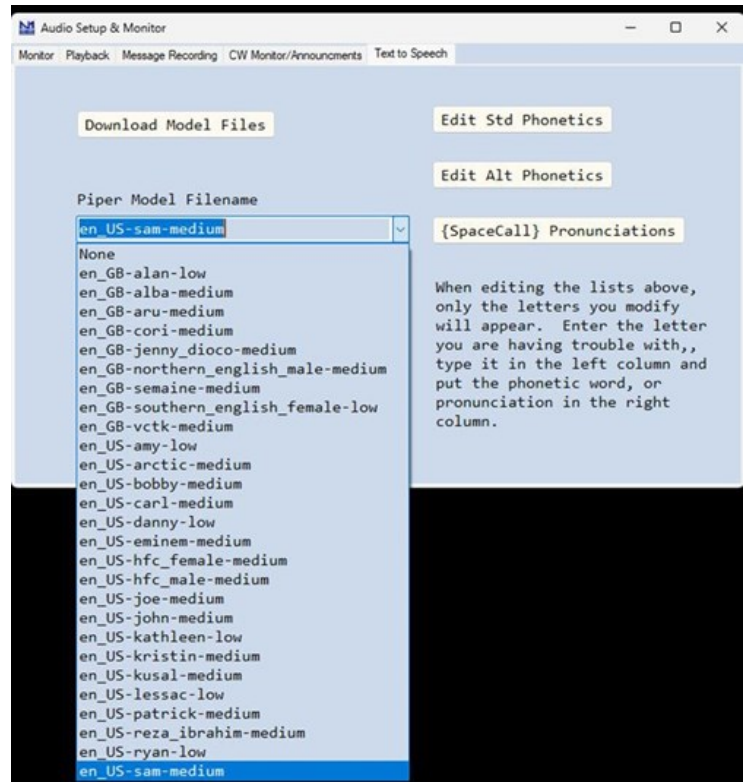
I’ll show you some examples when we look at my Function Key implementation.

I mentioned the available trained voices. Here is a list of the voices included in the Piper TTS Filenames.

I chose Sam – the bottom name for my “experiment.

With that, you are ready to start creating your contest exchange messages.

You must read the entire Text-to-Speech section within the Audio Setup Window. <https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/setup/audio-setup-window/>



There are descriptions of all the variable parameters to tailor the various voice models to your personal preference. It is essential to play with the parameters to better understand how

“Traditional” speech can be tailored to become a “contest exchange”.

Here is an example of my Function Key messages as an example of the macros and other phonetic examples that are adjustable for each voice:

```
# ARRL SS SSB Function Key File #
#####
# RUN Messages
#####
#
F1 CQ, {TTSPARMS 0.7, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS CQ Sweep Steaks, Norway ZeeRoh Yankee Yankee, Norway ZeeRoh Yankee Yankee, Sweep Steaks.} {SPOTME}
F2 Exch, {TTS Numbur.. {SpaceNR}, Uniform, Norway ZeeRoh Yankey Yankey, Six Seven, ??? Vurginya.} F3 TNX, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Thanks, Norway ZeeRoh Yankey Yankey.}
F4 N0YY, {TTSPARMS 0.6, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Norway ZeeRoh Yehkey Yehkey.} # Replace "-" with "!" if you are using voicing of callsigns
F5 His Call, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS {ICAO !}}
F6 Ur Call?, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Your call, again.} F7 QSL/Roger, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS QSL.}
F8 Agn, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Again.}
F9 NR, {TTSParms 1.0} {TTS Numbur. Numbur.} F10 Prec,{TTS Precident. Precident.}
F11 Check,{TTSParms 1.0} {TTS Chec. Chec.}
F12 Sec,{TTSParms 0.8}{TTS Sekshun. Sekshun.}
#
```



#####

S&P Messages

#####

#

F1 S&P CQ,{OPERATOR}\Cq.wav

F2 Exch, {TTSPARMS 0.7, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Numbur.. {SpaceNR}, Uniform, Norway ZeeRoh Yankey Yankey, Six Seven, ??? Vurginya.}

F3 TNX, {TTSPARMS 0.7, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Thanks, Norway ZeeRoh Yankey Yankey.} F4 NOYY, {TTSPARMS 0.7, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Norway ZeeRoh Yankey Yankey.}

Replace "-" with "!" if you are using voicing of callsigns F5 His Call, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS {ICAO !}}

F6 Ur Call?, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Your call, again.} F7 QSL/Roger, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS QSL.}

F8 Agn, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Again.}

F9 NR, {TTSParms 1.0}{TTS {SpaceNR}. . {SplitNR}.}

F10 Prec, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Uniform. Uniform.}

F11 Check, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Six Seven. 67.}

F12 Sec, {TTSPARMS 0.8, 1.0, 0.5} {TTS Vurginya. Victor Alpha.}

A little walk-through is in order. I will assume most are familiar with setting up Function Key messages for CW. Once programmed, they are part of the Enter-Sends-Message (ESM) keystrokes that exchange messages and log the contact. That is precisely what is happening here. But there are differences, and those differences are the same kind you make when you program NIMM Function Keys for an RTTY contest!

The first thing you probably notice is that I don't know how to spell or have some other delusion. This is where we all return to our elementary education when we were exposed to phonetics, how we sounded out words so we could read. This is precisely the same – but a bit backward.

First, let's consider the goal. This is a contest. We want to exchange information as though we are speaking into a microphone. But there are different dialects, intonations, etc., that we need to recognize so the Text-to-Speech process can create a word the way you would speak it. For example, you want to send a message asking for a repeat of the other station's section. When you type Section into the function key message and play it back, does it sound right? Maybe, depending on the voice you chose. For me, I needed to find a way for it to sound "more like me. I substituted Sekshun for a "better" sounding conversion of TTS to what I "wanted to hear". Similar with Virginia – it did not sound "right," so I played with phonetic

elements to get Vurginya which sounds and flows much better – to MY ears.

Remember, we are trying to optimize the readability and intelligibility of what we chose to "speak". And it will take a lot of tweaking, but you want it to be as close to you as possible.

The second thing you notice is all of the {bracketed} items. These are the macros that do the right text-to-speech conversions. Some of them are how fast you want the message to be, "said." Too fast, and you lose intelligibility and readability; too slow, and you become inefficient in the exchange.

The translator is very smart! Do you want to voice the other station's call as Kay Three Zed Oh, or as Kilo Three Zulu Oscar? The first is a "simple" response to the letters entered. If you identify it as {TTS {ICAO!}} then you get his call (!) using the ICAO Alphabet – Kilo Three Zulu Oscar.

You can spend a lot of time working on all of these details when you set up your Function Keys!!!

What I learned from my implementation of Piper TTS was that it did not fit the high rate in the first hours of the SSB Sweepstakes. It was "too slow" for high-rate S&P and insertions. BUT it was outstanding for voicing other stations' callsigns and serial numbers, only a bit too slow.



The integration with N1MM was perfect. I'm not giving up, but I want to learn from other users' implementations and how they have improved on my observations.

When the Sunday afternoon rates slowed, Piper TTS worked well. I consider this a work in progress. The tug-of-war on priorities is, do I do all of the tweaking on the parameters of the pre-canned voice I chose, or do I bite the bullet and do the voice training for my own voice and then work on the detailed tweaks? This is where I need insight from other implementations. There are valuable lessons to be learned, as you could tell; there were many Piper TTS implementations in the contest.

Be aware that there are already N1MM instructions for creating a trained voice based on YOUR VOICE! I've not done that yet, but if there is a lull in weekend contests or a house full of family for Thanksgiving and Christmas, I will jump in. But I hope to share observations and findings with other users to help better understand the implementation alternatives.

Text-to-Speech is a vital tool for station automation. It removes variability from the processes used. The speech cadence is consistent, and responses are predictable; both are important as you integrate solutions to high-performance contesting with operations that include SO2R, 2BSIQ, and others, where interleaving voice communications across two or more radios becomes more predictable and easier to integrate.

The challenge is to find a way to make it sound like you, and not sound robotic, and how you speak as you expand beyond solutions for sounding the same for a 48-hour contest as your voice tires, or a tool to be used as you fix a busted exchange while the computer continues to call CQ.

A QUICK GUIDE TO WHAT PIPER TTS IS TO HAMS

Piper TTS is a fast, local, neural text-to-speech (TTS) system that is integrated into ham radio software for generating natural-sounding voice announcements, especially during contests and automated operations. It provides a modern, AI-powered alternative to older, more robotic-sounding engines like eSpeak.

Key Features and Use in Ham Radio

Local Operation: Piper runs entirely on a local computer or low-power devices like a Raspberry Pi, meaning it doesn't require an internet connection or reliance on cloud APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) for speech generation. This is crucial for privacy and reliability in various operating environments, including remote or portable ham radio setups.

Natural Sounding Voices: Utilizing neural networks and AI models (specifically VITS and ONNX models), Piper produces high-quality, human-like speech with natural intonation, which is significantly clearer and less robotic than traditional TTS systems.

Integration with Ham Radio Software: The primary use in ham radio is its integration with logging and contest software, such as N1MM Logger

Plus. Amateurs use it to:

Voice Announcements: The software can convert call signs, serial numbers, and other contest exchange information into spoken words automatically.

Automation: It enables dynamic voice responses during automated operations, which can be useful for accessibility or operating efficiency.

Customization: Users can post-process the generated audio (typically WAV files) using tools like SoX or FFmpeg to modify the pitch or add audio effects (like reverb) to create different sounding voices, thus avoiding the "chaos" of multiple operators using the exact same default voice during a contest.

Open Source: Being an open-source project, it is free to use and can be modified, allowing the ham radio community to develop custom voices and integrations. The source code and pre-trained voices are available on the Piper GitHub page. <https://github.com/rhasspy/piper>



Meet The New Editor—NF6P

Dave Kalahar—NF6P, FCG Gazette Editor

It all started at a 500-watt radio station in Sarasota, Florida. At hand on a bunch of tape cartridges were a shotgun jingle, a few commercials, and a lot of hits. The owners decided that a kid could operate his radio station, putting that FCC broadcast license at risk. That was me chatting up the hits on WYND 1280 AM in the late 70s, having the time of my life.

But the story goes back even further. It really started with a Sinclair gas station giveaway transistor radio that my grandpa gave me when I was 8 years old. I listened to the Chicago-area rock-and-roll stations and Cubs games, but at night, something magical happened. When I first heard radio stations in San Antonio, Texas, or Atlanta, Georgia, I had to look them up on a map. They were so far away, yet the radio brought them close. That sparked a lifelong love of radio in all its forms. I wanted to be one of those people on the radio, but I also wanted to know how it all worked technically. The “Science Fair” 100-in-1 Electronics Project Kit started my training. Later, a simple shortwave radio brought in HCJB and Radio Habana Cuba, and so much more. My first QSL cards arrived. At this



point, I was a 100% radio electronics geek.

My first “transmitting” involves a bit of a story. You see, in 1969, I discovered my Jr. High School in Arlington Heights, Illinois, had a TV production studio.

The teacher found that I figured out how to use tape recorders and could load 1-inch videotape on the Ampex VR-7000. I learned about TV cameras too.

Somehow, the teacher agreed to let me take home and play with an old RCA CCTV camera. The camera had a video output, but it also had an RF output on channel 3 or 4. I placed the TV Camera on the top of our home console TV and connected the twin lead from the camera's back to the TV antenna input. It was convenient to leave the antenna hooked up. You might see where this is going.



Before long, the neighbor kids discovered the new channel three. We were broadcasting to the neighborhood, and I was clueless. Kids were doing pantomime shows in our den on camera (no audio). It was black and white magic, all coming from our home. A while later, I pointed the camera into our kitchen, when just then, my mother came downstairs in her bra. The phone rang. “Hey Carol, is that you in the bra?” That concluded the broadcast day of channel three. A strange van was spotted in the neighborhood that evening with rods and wires decorating the roof. We escaped the FCC that day, but I felt cool for the first time in my life.

Fast forward to 1974, and my family moved to Sarasota, Florida. I was a freshman in High School. And moving across the country was not fun. However, an opportunity was available to explore TV broadcasting and Amateur radio. My electronics class built an HW-101. The ham ticket would come later. First came the Radiotelephone 3rd Class with Broadcast Endorsement license. My grandad drove me to the Tampa FCC Field Office. I was 14 years old, and the steely-eyed examiner didn't know what to do with me.



Meet The New Editor—NF6P—Continued

I passed, and “Pop” drove me to every radio and TV station around to announce that I should be hired.

Shortly after, I passed the 2nd and 1st Class exams but failed my first try at 2nd Class. I picked up a part-time after-school job at a radio shop in Sarasota. Sitting at a bench, modifying CB radios, turned out not to be for me.



Directing TV in Storer Cable Remote Truck at 15 Years Old

I wanted to be “on the radio,” and finally those jobs came. Call signs I worked at included WKZM, WQSA, WQSR, WYND, and WOKF. A move to Savannah followed with a great job at WWSA and



At a remote broadcast as “Dave Kay” with fellow Air Personality “Tom Jones” on WYND, Sarasota

WCHY. It’s also where I became a volunteer fire-fighter, then an EMT and Paramedic. I’d work at the radio during the week and fill in for EMS on the

weekends. During this time, an interest in computers began with the Timex Sinclair 1000 and later the Commodore 64.

In 1985, a 10-year stint at WAIV-WKQL radio in Jacksonville started. I met my wife, had children,



Working with Wolfman Jack on 92.9 COOL FM in Jacksonville, Florida. I was “Dr. Dave Kalahar” in those days

and picked up my ham ticket. KC400 lent me a TS-520, and off we go. It was the Orange Park ARC and Field Day events that sparked my interest in contesting. I had many mentors, but Jim, NU4Y, was a guru to me. Jim regularly traveled to VP5 for the CQWW SSB. He agreed to allow me to work the 1993 CQWW from his house with my FT-990. At the time, he had a stack of 10-meter Yagis at 50’ and 100’. I entered LP 10-Meter only. I ended up winning first place in the USA. To this day, I don’t know how that happened, because I was so inexperienced.



With N5TB, Tony, and my daughter Olivia mugging for the camera during our M/S Attempt at CQWW



Meet The New Editor—NF6P—Continued

The bug hit, and I started building a tower with an A4 at 55'. I scrounged for everything, all of it used and in need of repair. An attempted M/2 with N5TB for the 1994 WW was interesting. Then, in December 1994, I entered the 10-meter contest. The rate was impressive during a huge opening on Saturday afternoon. But Jeanine and I were hosting a massive Christmas party that night. In the middle of an enormous run, I had to shut down for the party. The party was epic, by the way, and I still ended up 2nd Place US and Canada Phone Only LP. That low triband did it.

About that time, I attended the Tampa Hamfest and learned that Jim White, K4OJ, was forming what would become the Florida Contest Group. Just a handful of contest-interested hams participated in the impromptu meeting, including Ellen, W1YL. We were invited to their house, and I met Bob, W1CW. Bob was running CW on his Tec-Tec Omni V. In those days, the loss of the Whites' home in South Florida during Hurricane Andrew was still a bit raw. But Ellen, ever the optimist, talked about settling in Tampa. Jim and a few others made some plans, and the new club was off and running. I would not be living in Florida much longer.

Just like that, in early 1995, I was transferred, moving up the radio ladder, and asked to program a radio



My view of Crater Lake National Park, Oregon, while assigned on a Civil Air Patrol Mission

station in Tucson, Arizona. Later, we spent some years in Louisville, Kentucky.

That led to other moves and a shift in my focus to television production. I had learned to edit commercials on computers. Later, I started directing live TV programs and did some engineering. We ended up in California for nearly 20 years. Over those years, we operated a ham station with compromised antennas, but we made the best of it and won a few sections or divisions in the limited contests I entered. The job and family became the focus. I did become a member of the United States Air Force Auxiliary, the



Completing a Homeland Security Mission for the Civil Air Patrol. Maj. Kalahar, Col. Brickman, and Master Sergeant Calhoun, Fresno, CA., Air National Guard

Civil Air Patrol, in California. My interest in aviation was re-ignited. I was flying again and loved the missions and deployments, doing good things for America.

In 2021, we decided it was time to retire and, frankly, we wanted out of California. We sold our house, and pretty much everything, and purchased a 32-foot RV Motorhome.

We spent the next 4 years doing the full-time RV thing. We saw the USA, visited family and friends, and made a bunch of new friends. I activated many POTA stations across the country and learned a lot about portable hasty antennas. We loved our 30,000-mile adventure. Along the way, we were recruited



Meet The New Editor—NF6P—Continued



Our home for four years—Newmar Motorhome

to come to Lakeland in the winter and volunteer to help set up for the annual SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo. They discovered I could do TV production, we built them a TV production studio. I'm the Chairman for Media Productions at SUN 'n FUN.



With crew and hosts of SUN 'n FUN Live Today show

We ended up buying a house in 2025. We're on Lake Mariana, near Winter Haven with our backyard facing west for endless sunsets. We have a few wires up, and we're contesting again. Jeanine and I are blessed with our son, David, and our daughter, Olivia. We have two grandchildren.

My radio interests now extend to Air Force MARS. Maybe later I can chat about aviation, flying, and photography. We've always had too many interests, because life is so short.



RV Travel allowed a stop at W1AW. While I worked the pileup, Jeanine read a book in the motor coach



Contesters are also DXers. I'm proud to have earned the new ARRL DXCC Trident Award



Weekly CW (1 Hour) Events

Other Weekly Events

ID	DAY	UTC	EXCH	WP M	Spon- sor	ID	DAY	UTC	EXCH-BANDS	Spon- sor
SST	FRI MON	2000-2100 0000-0100	Name+SPC	<20	K1USN	Phone	WED	0230-0300 Tue Eve NA	Name+SEC 15,20,40,80,160	HAMS
MST	MON MON TUE	1300-1400 1900-2000 0300-0400	Name+QSO#	20- 25	ICWC	NS-FT4		0100-0145 Thr Eve NA	GRID Square	NCCC
CWT	WED	1300-1400	Name+CWO# or Name+SPC	20>	CWops	RTTY	FRI	0145-0215 Thr Eve NA	W/VE:Name+State DX: Name+CTY PFX	W3QE
	WED	1900-2000				NS-CW	FRI	0230-0300 Thr Eve NA	SR#+Name+QTH	NCCC
	THU THU	0300-0400 0700-0800								

PERIODIC TABLE OF SELECT AMATEUR RADIO CONTESTS

<https://Radiosport.World/>

Start Day (UTC) → 1 → 2 → End Day (UTC)
Start Time (UTC) → 0000Z → 2359Z → End Time (UTC)
Contest Name
Select Contest of weekend as chosen by N3QE

off-the-air SSB VHF/UHF
Multimode CW Digital

2026

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3 1800Z ARRL RTTY Roundup	4 1 2400Z SSB Sprint	1 7 0000Z ARRL DX SSB	8 4 0000Z SP Polish DX	5 2 1500Z varies 7QP/IN/DE New England QSO Parties	3 6 1800Z ARRL Digital	7 4 2400Z Marconi Memorial HF	5 1 1400Z NAQP CW	2 5 0600Z All Asian DX SSB	6 3 2400Z California QSO Party	4 1 1600Z SSB Sprint	1 4 0000Z ARRL 160
10 1800Z NAQP CW	11 8 0559Z NA Sprint CW	8 15 0000Z NA Sprint RTTY	15 11 0359Z JIDX CW	12 9 1300Z Volta WW RTTY	13 15 1800Z ARRL June VHF	11 12 1200Z IARU HF WRTC 2026	8 9 0000Z WAE CW	12 13 2359Z WAE SSB	10 11 0600Z Oceania CW	7 9 2100Z ARRL SS CW	12 13 0000Z ARRL 10
17 18 1800Z NAQP SSB	14 15 0000Z CQ WPX RTTY	21 23 0200Z BARTG HF RTTY	18 19 0900Z CQMM DX	14 17 1100Z Contest University Dayton Hamvention	20 21 0000Z All Asian DX CW	18 19 0559Z NAQP RTTY	15 16 1800Z NAQP SSB	19 20 1200Z SAC CW	17 18 1500Z Worked All Germany	14 15 0000Z WAE RTTY	19 20 1400Z Croatian DX
23 25 2200Z CQ 160 CW	21 22 0000Z ARRL DX CW	28 29 0000Z CQ WPX SSB	25 26 1600Z Florida QSO Party	23 24 0000Z -	27 28 1800Z ARRL Field Day	25 26 1200Z RSGB IOTA	22 23 varies KH6/OH QSO Parties	26 27 0000Z CQ WW RTTY	24 25 0000Z CQ WW SSB	21 23 2100Z ARRL SS SSB	26 27 1500Z Stew Perry Topband
	28 1 1800Z NAQP RTTY			30 31 0000Z CQ WPX CW			29 30 1200Z WW Digi			28 29 0000Z CQ WW CW	

© 2025 Tim Shoppa N3QE
<https://Radiosport.World/>



WORLD RADIOSPORT TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

8-13 July, 2026—United Kingdom

WRTC is a means to demonstrate international goodwill and friendship in the true ham spirit. It also allows youth operators to demonstrate their skills within this highly competitive event.



President

Chris Plumblee, W4WF
Orlando, FL

chris.plumblee@gmail.com

Vice President

A.J. Stockton, NK4O
Miami, FL

ajstockton@me.com

Vice President – Florida QSO Party

Dan Street, K1TO
Myakka City, FL

k1to@aol.com

Treasurer (Interim)

Taylor Plumblee, KI4GHK
Orlando, FL

treasurer@floridacontestgroup.org

Secretary

Fred NP2X (K9VV)
Christiansted, VI

k9vv@arrl.net

Newsletter

Dave Kalahar, NF6P
Lake Alfred, FL

dave@nf6p.com

Web Page

Jeff Clarke, KU8E
Ellerslie, GA

ku8e@ku8e.com

The Florida Contest Group



"I love contesting. There is something about the camaraderie, discipline and knowledge contesting demands that fits me; it doesn't fit everyone . . . but it sure fits me." – Jim White, K4OJ (SK)

The Florida Contest Group (FCG), an ARRL affiliated club, is Florida's amateur radio contest club. Its members share a common interest in the sport of amateur radio contesting. FCG members have a wide range of contesting experience, from beginners to World Champions. They willingly share their knowledge and skills to promote ham radio contesting in Florida. Members, who number in excess of 400, range from Jacksonville to South Florida. FCG has a "Panhandle" division for those contesters living in the Florida Panhandle who are outside the ARRL's 250 mile "club circle". Additionally, the FCG has members in states outside of Florida and in several DXCC Entities.

The Florida Contest Group supports and encourages all types of contesting, from HF to light, all modes, power classes and skill levels.

FCG Shirts

If you would like to purchase an FCG shirt, you may contact Joyce Ann at Stitchin' Waves in Sarasota. Joyce Ann has both Orange and White FCG shirts and FCG hats if you are interested. She embroiders the FCG Shirts with the FCG Logo and First Names and Call Signs. Hats are embroidered with the Call Sign.

Stitchin' Waves
Joyce Ann Wright
ja@stitchinwaves.com

(Phone orders not accepted)

To place an order, send an email to Joyce Ann, and provide the following information:

- Identify yourself as an FCG member
- First and Last Name
- Call Sign
- Mailing Address (not a PO Box)
- Size of shirt
- Color: Orange or White

