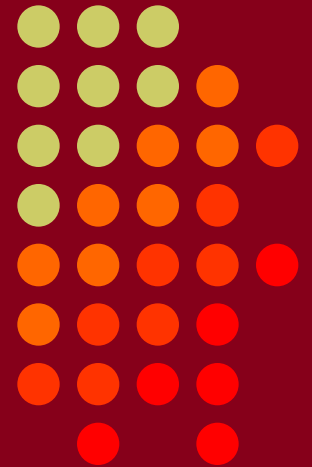


# Radio Contesting – Having Fun is Easy

Doug Grant, K1DG



• CTU •  
CONTEST  
UNIVERSITY

ICOM®

# Explaining Radio Contesting to a non-ham (or non-contester)



“We operate for 24/48 hours, log all the stations we contact, and see who can make the most contacts in the most states, countries”

*“How do you know who won?”*

“We send our logs to the sponsor, and they check them”

*“How much money do you get for winning?”*

“Nothing”

*“Huh?? Then why do you do this?”*

# The Four Stages of Contesting



- Starting out
- Getting hooked on the game
- Making it more fun
  - The right way
  - The wrong way
- Passing it along

# My First Contest: 1968 Novice Roundup (WN1ICD)



- 2 QSOs x 2 sec = 4 points
- Wait! Where's the score?
- You mean you have to submit a log?
- Would have been dead last in W1

WNØTLT 3705- 95-39-38  
 WNØSQG 3008- 94-32-21  
 WNØRMB 2464- 78-28-19  
 WNØSYI 583- 53-11- 4  
 WNØTAY 9- 3- 3- 3

*Nebraska*

WNØSHO 2100- 70-30- 5

**NEW ENGLAND DIVISION**

*Connecticut*

WN1HVL 20,496-321-61-38  
 WN1IQJ 16,856-286-56-40  
 WN1JAD 14,734-268-53-35  
 WN1HUN 12,180-200-58-23  
 WN1IWD 4440-111-40-11  
 WN1HUE 4288-134-32-12  
 WN1IBD 4170-124-30-36  
 WN1IXJ 2320- 80-29-25  
 WN1IBT 902- 31-22- 9  
 WN1HOL 720- 25-16- 6  
 WN1IZN 315- 15- 9-15  
 WN1IVE 144- 16- 9-10

*Eastern Massachusetts*

WN1HRT 20,480-305-64-30  
 WN1JDW 18,900-300-63-36  
 WN1DP 9888-206-48-24  
 WN1ISH 6930-155-42-25  
 WN1HYA 3420- 85-36-23  
 W1KBN (WN1ION, opr.)  
 3078- 81-38-14  
 WN1HQV 2596-118-22-21

WN1HTC 2324- 83-28-21  
 WN1IDO 1134- 54-21-10  
 WN1IRV 1020- 68-15-15  
 WN3ITR/1 208- 26- 8-21

*Maine*

WN1HOG 3030-101-30-26  
 WN1IUT 1456- 56-26- -  
 WN1IGG/1 368- 23-16- 5

*New Hampshire*

WN1IHH 2958- 87-29-20

*Rhode Island*

WN1IJB 15,576-264-59-40  
 WN1IJC 14,952-267-56-39

*Vermont*

WN1HUQ 5220-106-45- -  
 WN1HRM 897- 41-17- 6

*Western Massachusetts*

WN1HYT 13,974-274-51-25  
 WN1IPZ.1 13,530-236-55-37  
 WN1IHS 7350-140-49-18  
 WN1JCT 5371-131-41-17  
 WN1LJI 3937-127-31-27  
 WN6WKN/1 2016- 69-24- 8

**NORTHWESTERN DIVISION**

*Oregon*

WN7IOK 304- 38- 8-33



# What's this Sweepstakes thing?



- 1969: WA1JYY, Advanced Class
- DX-100, SB-10 SSB adaptor, SX-110, fan dipole at 20 feet
- Band changes took 5 minutes



NEW ENGLAND DIVISION			Connecticut			
KIPKO	109,075	723-75 B24	WA1KYY (+WA1s HQB LGE)	35,090	308-58 B23	
K1LHQ	107,361	745-73 B24	WA1KYY (4 ops.)	23,500	236-50 A20	
W1EYB**	106,450	703-75 B24	WA1KDL/1 (+W1TUP)	2161	118-31 A24	
K1VTM	99,494	668-74 B24	<i>Maine</i>			
E1JHA	87,100	615-70 B20	K1GAX	34,070	255-65 B12	
W1CW**	79,480	545-72 B23	WA1JFX	6040	131-20 A24	
K1GHD	71,720	520-68 B23	<i>New Hampshire</i>			
W1ETU**	60,280	457-65 B19	W1IKL	62,524	598-69 B21	
K1DPB	55,128	401-68 B24	W1PYM	38,780	277-70 B17	
W1BIM	47,212	320-74 B12	W1BUT	36,600	301-61 B14	
W1TCL	47,020	384-60 B21	WA1JTM	3430	45-27 B02	
WA1JLD	38,818	287-66 A19	K1CTQ (6 ops.)	25,023	221-57 B24	
K1ASJ	34,048	305-56 B24	<i>Rhode Island</i>			
W1VQ**	34,200	240-65 A16	W1VVPY (WA2LE1, op. 1)	30,580	278-46 B12	
K1OO	31,906	303-51 B14	WA1JG	28,180	239-55 A17	
WA1IQJ**	27,660	311-43 A20	W1BFB	23,085	203-57 B14	
W1YYM**	23,440	221-51 B06	W1FLN	20,708	167-59 A19	
K1LWC	22,848	251-51 B22	WA1KZL	12,700	129-50 A15	
WA9HHU1**	19,027	180-53 B08	<i>Vermont</i>			
W1HCP**	16,640	128-65 B11	W1MRW	5120	70-30 A10	
WA1JYU	14,664	141-52 A09	W1ES	260	15-10 A01	
W1SKOM/1**	14,610	145-47 B08	W1DU/1 (K1KNI, WA1s DRO E1H)	24,425	490-73 A24	
WA1JGX	13,563	207-33 B21	<i>Western Massachusetts</i>			
W1DEP	9418	139-34 B15	K1KDP	181,326	730-69 B24	
WA1HNR	9025	161-25 A06	K1NWE	82,584	658-74 A23	
WA1JZ/1	9286	98-42 A17	W1YK (WA1ABW, op.)	82,056	596-88 A24	
WA1JG	5300	100-41 A03	WA1JZ	29,140	315-47 B19	
WA1JOL	6180	74-35 B08	WA1HF	28,608	300-48 A23	
K1PQA	2575	53-23 B15	W1EZO	20,808	153-68 B12	
WA1GEW	610	29-11 A02	WA1EBX	7360	92-40 A09	
W1KRF**				WA1ABW/1	1002	1-1 A01
			NORTHWESTERN DIVISION			
			<i>Alaska</i>			
WA1FJUT (+WB2HHZ)	28,556	562-69 B19	K1JDD	53,328	404-66 B12	
W1FLM (+WA1KOC)	55,660	464-60 B24	K1JMT	728	28-13 A04	
WA1ADT (+WA1CJE)	18,720	209-45 A16	K1JATK (K1J2a GCV GFS W1JCS)	24,840	207-60 B15	
W1AW** (W1QIS, WA9HHU)	1944	54-18 B02	<i>Idaho</i>			
<i>Eastern Massachusetts</i>			W1CNI	49,100	372-65 A13	
K1LED	79,632	562-72 B19	<i>Montana</i>			
WA9NRS/1	61,050	407-75 B21	W1GKI	43,578	407-54 A16	
WA1JMR	57,576	416-66 B24	W1TTY	21,536	291-64 A14	
W1BHV	43,267	290-73 B21	K1CTV/7	21,472	177-61 A16	
WA1JOF	41,032	278-72 A21	WA1ZR	8257	94-39 B16	
K1KTH	36,000	300-60 B06	WA1BKW (4 ops.)	71,820	533-70 B23	
WA1HOS	27,450	223-61 A13	W1NML (W1NML, WA1JQY)	27,918	212-66 B22	
W1AX	19,200	150-64 B	<i>Oregon</i>			
W1DYU	17,172	161-54 B14	K1WWK	24,462	199-59 A08	
WA1FRU	15,729	161-49 B14				
W1OP	15,070	137-55 B15				
WA1JLE	12,694	162-40 B13				
WA1KBZ	12,508	159-53 B19				
WA1JYY	9126	117-39 A16				
WA1KAG	8184	128-33 A10				
WA1FCD	7000	101-35 A17				
W1PLJ	5082	76-43 B07				
WA1HAA	2808	619-24 B04				
K1CHY	2625	53-25 A07				
WA1JNM	1110	37-15 B09				

NEW ENGLAND DIVISION			Connecticut		
W1WLO	76,812	520-74 B23	WA1KAG	51,440	262-60 A19
K1DKJ	49,560	660-70 A20	W1JIN	51,192	223-68 B10
WA9NVE	48,268	691-61 B18	K1JJA	28,700	211-70 B18
WA9DXR	39,372	168-58 A14	K1OME	21,112	204-62 A18
			WA9NBU1	20,572	134-34 B16
			WA1FD	12,650	128-60 B21
			W1EYB**	11,458	125-43 B13
			W1JHX	94,746	651-22 B24
			K1VTM	92,150	628-23 B23
			W1ETU**	87,400	663-22 B24
			K1LHQ	85,607	580-72 B24
			W1BIM	78,210	543-70 B20
			W1FLM	72,520	516-39 B18
			WA1JDU	68,968	495-69 B24
			K1GHD	64,963	468-69 B19
			W1YYM**	63,480	460-69 B22
			W1PFI	58,888	423-68 B18
			W1CW**	58,300	442-63 B23
			E1ASJ	54,198	397-67 B15
			W1VQ**	53,576	408-66 B24
			WA9HHU1**	48,600	350-68 A16
			WA1HOL	46,432	373-62 B17
			WA1JG	44,428	329-66 B18
			W1JLD	42,000	350-60 B
			K1DPB	42,310	313-60 A20
			W1P1X	42,000	325-64 B24
			W1BUT	38,741	288-73 A16
			K1LWC	37,060	373-68 B
			WA1JZL	32,610	275-58 B22
			WA1JYU	30,323	249-59 A22
			WA1HNR	29,824	177-56 B06
			W1JLJ	29,941	204-47 A11
			W1KRF**	15,440	185-42 A16
			W1EZO	15,300	150-68 B08
			W1BDO	14,921	174-63 A16
			W1DGI	11,710	105-41 A10
			WA1KQM/1**	11,182	166-34 A09
			K1COO	10,240	110-42 B07
			W1LLJ**	9,067	117-39 B14
			W1BFW	8,726	73-74 A17
			W1NIM**	3,596	62-29 B02
			WA1JYU	3,336	71-24 A16
			WA1LLB	2,832	89-24 B02
			WA1JSH/1	2,408	52-12 A04
			WA1JAD/1	1,364	43-17 A10
			K1P1G	1,092	1-01 A
			W1NIRW	624	26-12 B03
			W1NIRU	308	14-11 B01
			K1MYF (4 ops.)	300	15-12 A18
			W1CYE (WA1ABW, op.)	11,708	149-46 A15
			W1EZO	6,100	40-35 B04
			W1BIPW	108,950	734-75 B24

**WA1JYY**  
**1969 SS**

**183-41-19 CW**  
**117-39-16 SSB**





# Who else was in the 1969 SS?

<i>DIVISION LEADERS</i>				
C.W.			Phone	
Single Operator	Multi Operator		Single Operator	Multi Operator
→ K2K1R	W3NKI	Atlantic	→ W3AZD	W3GN
W9RQM	W9YB	Central	W9YT	W9YB
K0GRK	W0HSC	Dakota	→ W0AIH	WA0DGW
→ K4PUZ	W5YM	Delta	W5RUB	WA4UCE
→ W8SH	WA8LVT	Great Lakes	W8SH	K8RMK
→ W1BGD/2	W2SZ	Hudson	W2MB	WA2PXB
→ WA0EMS	K0GXR	Midwest	→ WA0EMS	K0UKN
→ W1BPW	W1MX	New England	→ K1PKQ	WA1JUY ←
K7WWR	WA7LFP	Northwestern	W5QQQ/7	WA7BKW
K6EBB	W6BIP	Pacific	WA6IVN	WB6TOJ ←
W4KFC	WB4KPD	Roanoke	W4KFC	WB4FDT ←
WA7KUW	WA0VPQ	Rocky Mtn.	K9LBQ/7	W7OHR
→ K4BAI	WB4IQD	Southeastern	→ K4BAI	WA4ECY
W6RW	WA7IFD	Southwestern	K6UYC	WA7IFD
→ K5YAA	K5LZO	West Gulf	W5JAW	K5LZO
→ VE7BDJ	VE5AA	Canadian	VE5US	VE5AA

©

# Why are these guys still at it *50 years* later?



- The abundant cash prizes
- The admiration of family, friends, and co-workers
- The groupies
- Must be something else...



# 1973 Open CD Party (prehistoric version of NAQP)



WALJCN 600-18-6- -  
 Eastern Massachusetts  
 WALRBR (WALJYY, opr.)\*  
 331,055-903-73-20  
 KIOME\* 160,300-458-70-12  
 WALOLV 83,250-333-50-16  
 WLAX 71,390-235-59- 5  
 WALNKI\* 22,145-103-43-12  
 WALLAI\* 11,900- 66-34- 7  
 WALPGY 11,725- 64-35- 8  
 WALQQK\* 10,850- 70-31- 4  
 WLUIJF 1820- 26-14- 3  
 WALLKU (+WALS LAK LKX)\*  
 151,470-455-66- -  
 Maine

## Top Scorers

: WB2OEU WA5RXT WA5LES K5PFI **W9DOB**  
 opr.) WB5DLW 94,105-319-59-17  
 -530-64-17 WB5FML 70,755-262-53-20  
 -315-62-12 WB5EIN 17,850-100-34- 5  
 -178-41- 5 W5LL 4600- 40-20- 4  
 -100-34- 3

Illinois  
 W9DOB 331,150-889-74- -  
 WB9HAD 183,400-520-70-18  
 K9UQN 24,420-106-44- 5  
 W9VBV 21,000-100-40- 2  
 WB9EBO 20,865-104-39-12  
 WA9MZS\* 15,990- 78-41-15  
 W9LVH\* 11,715- 66-33- 1  
 W9AES 10,560- 59-33- 2  
 WB9GXQ\* 7840- 56-28-11

**W9DOB (now W9XR)  
beat me by about  
0.3 QSO**

# Top Scorers in 1973 Open CD



- CW

- W6PAA WA2UOO K4PUZ WA5LES W9YT

- SSB

- WB2OEU WA5RXT WA5LES K5PFL W9DOB

- Still crazy after all these years !?!

# Fun!

## It comes in many forms



- Personal Satisfaction
  - Better score than last year
  - Better score than “that guy”
  - Cool band opening
  - Finessing through pileups
- Part of a team
  - Help your club (or multiop) win
- Peer recognition

# At some point, you make a decision



## Play by the rules

- Work on improving skills
- Power consistent with class
- Don't use cluster when SO
- Submit log when contest ends

## Make your own rules

- Work on being obnoxious
- More power (turn to "11")
- Use the cluster – who will know?
- Take time to scrub log (fix calls, add calls, "adjust" times, etc.)



# Why people cheat



- Desire to be a “hero” on the field of competition
- Achieve immortality via community legend, fame, and lasting peer recognition
- Seeking current community “stardom”
- Prove superiority over others (sibling rivalry)
- A means to prove self-worth
- These are *Powerful forces*, worthy of study and caution

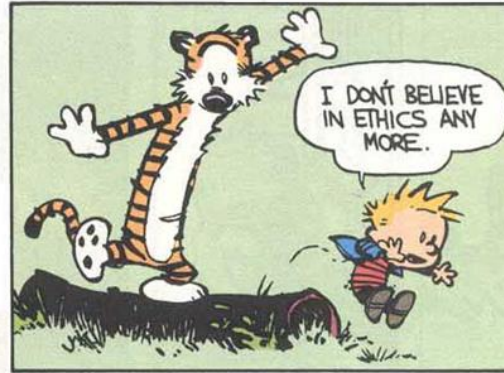


# Rationalizations for cheating

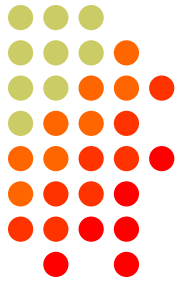
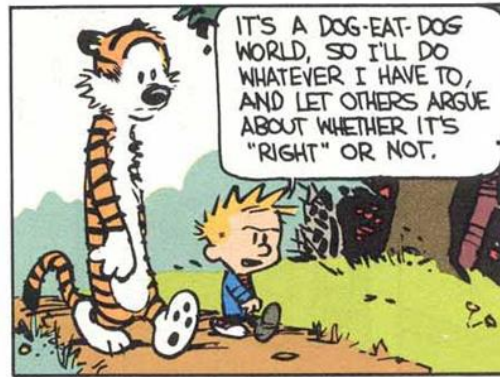
- *Everybody is doing it*
  - *(#1 Reason, and provably false)*
- Nobody was hurt
  - *(Except those you beat)*
- Nobody was watching
  - *(Not any longer)*
- Overcome unfair disadvantages
  - *(Life is not fair)*
- Rules don't specifically disallow a practice
- Rules apply to others, not me/us

# Calvin and Hobbes

BY WATERS



GET WHAT YOU CAN WHILE THE GETTING'S GOOD - THAT'S WHAT I SAY! MIGHT MAKES RIGHT! THE WINNERS WRITE THE HISTORY BOOKS!



# But people DO notice...



- “That guy was too loud in the NAQP”
- “That guy uses a pair of 8877s”
- “That guy has remote receivers in ...”
- “That guy uses spots but enters as unassisted”
- “That guy padded his log with bogus QSOs”
- “That guy operated with a broad signal to push away nearby stations and keep his channel clear”





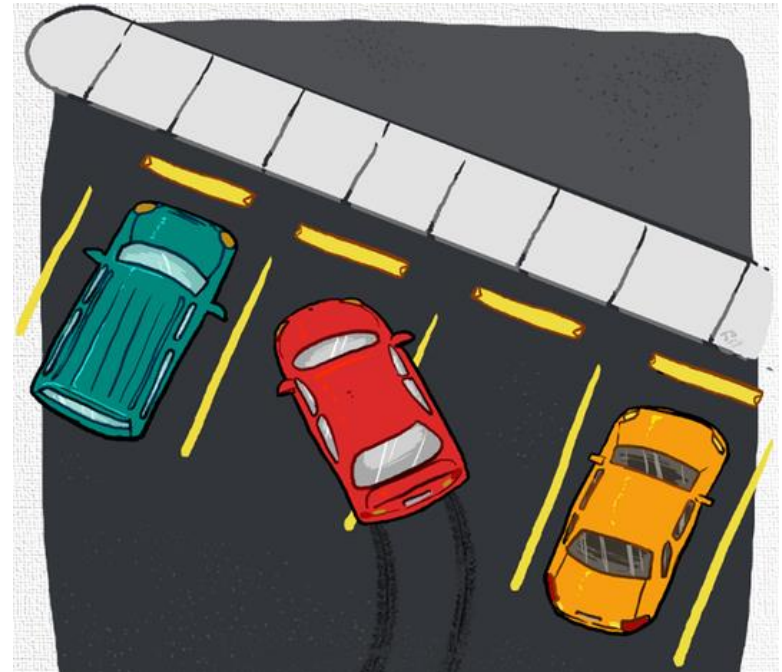


# Cheating = Rudeness

Breaking a written rule



Breaking an unwritten rule





# Excessive Power

- Do not exceed power limits for your category
- Just because the knobs go to 11...
- Applies to ALL power categories



# Examples of Unwritten “Rules”



- **Do not** make pre-arranged schedules
- **Do** identify frequently
- **Do not** ask friends to work you ... only
- **Do** encourage club members to work everyone
- **Do not** work friends with multiple calls
- **Do** work and spot stations equally

# Examples of Unwritten “Rules”



- **Do not** telephone or text message multipliers
- **Do** make an effort to help casual callers enjoy the contest and make a contact
- **Do not** let others “help” your single-op effort
- **Do not** plop down 100 Hertz away from your competitor to intentionally disrupt their run

See the ARRL’s *“HF Contesting - Good Practices, Interpretations & Suggestions”*



# No “Log Washing”

- Using QRZ.com, spot history, 3830 reports, LoTW, club databases
- Using utilities to analyze and correct the log
- Replaying the contest to change the log
- Asking others who they worked or if a call sign is correct
- “Fixing” off times or band changes
- It’s **over** when the 2359 rolls over to 0000

# Some people just don't "get it"

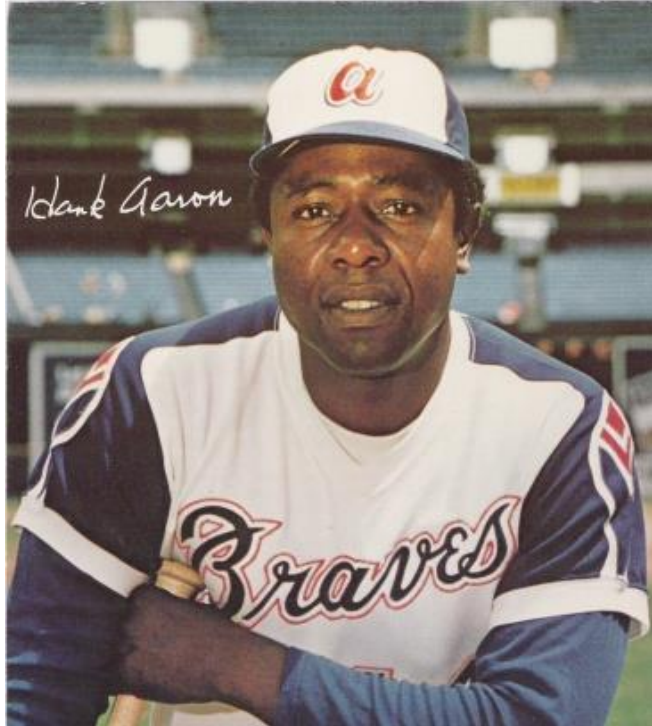


Lance Armstrong admits he would still be lying about doping if he had not been found out

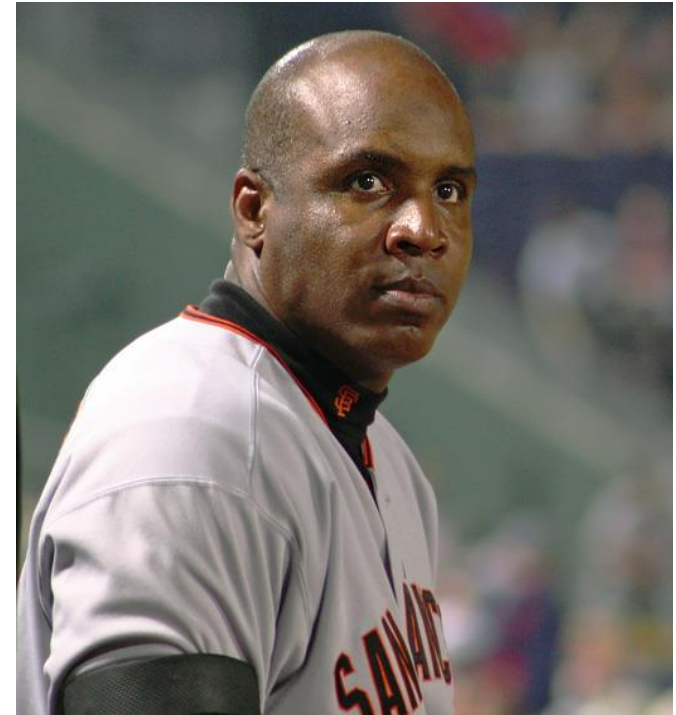
Seven-times Tour de France winner, who is serving a life ban from sport, says only federal investigation stopped his lying about taking drugs



# Honest competitors earn respect; cheaters do not



Hank Aaron  
755 Home Runs



Barry Bonds  
762 Home Runs





- **Banned from all CQ Contests for 5 years**
- **Previous wins deleted**
- **This does not sound like fun**

# Cultural differences (according to Wikipedia, not me!)



- England: “Everything which is not forbidden is allowed”
- Germany: “Everything which is not allowed is forbidden”
- France: “Everything is allowed even if it is forbidden”
- Russia: “Everything is forbidden, even that which is expressly allowed” (Everything which is expressly forbidden is the best way to succeed)



**RULES**

**Not forbidden**



**Allowed**



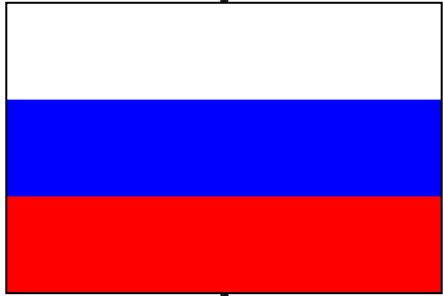
**BEHAVIOR**



**Not allowed**



**Forbidden**



# Covering your cheating takes too much effort to be fun



- The RBN and wideband recording systems can verify what really happened
- Packet/Skimmer cheating is easy to detect
- Power outliers sometimes obvious (plots, RBN)
- Waiting until the log deadline so you can pad your log with guys who did not submit a log will be detected
- Open Logs allow an element of crowd-sourcing

# Cheating leads to more rules



# Expend your time and energy in more positive ways



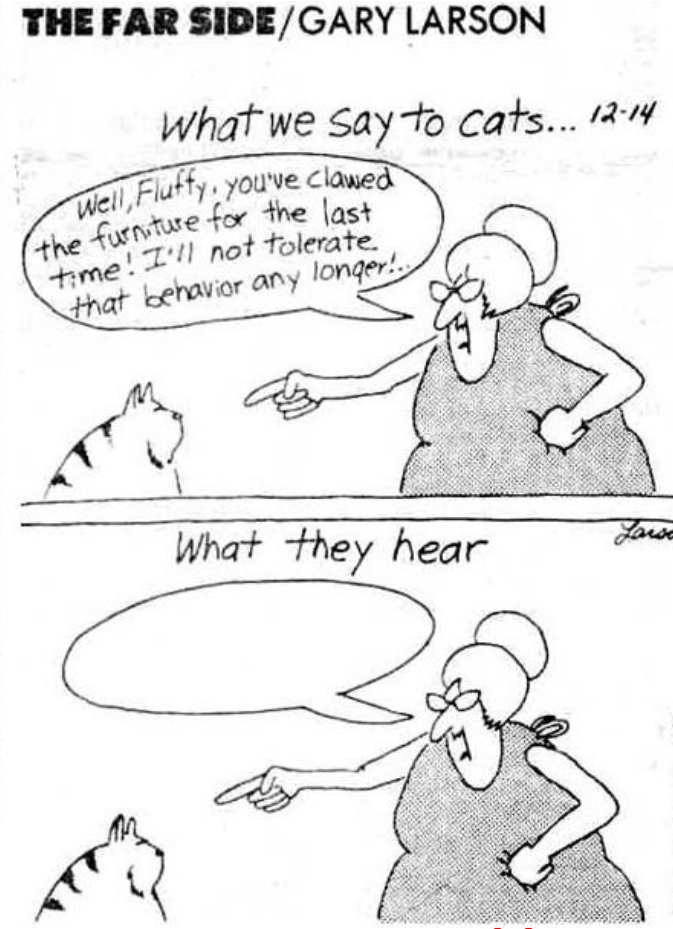
- If someone beats you, ask to exchange logs/rate sheets
- If you are getting clobbered on a specific band, figure out why and work on it (hint: antenna)
- Review your Log-Checking Report and learn from it
- You will gain great satisfaction from improving your station and skills

# Applying Positive Peer Pressure to a Suspected Cheater



- Be aware of your motives
  - Is it personal?
  - If necessary, enlist others to help deliver the message
- Give the benefit of the doubt
  - They may not realize what they are doing is against the rules
- Choose the right time
  - Can they listen without feeling attacked?
- Don't be angry or accusatory
  - Treat the issue as a mistake, not a crime
  - Focus on actions, not character
- Be there
  - People cheat because they see others get away with it
  - Not confronting the problem hurts everyone

# Communication Success is Defined by the Receiver





# Non-contesters Don't Like Us



- And we give them plenty of reasons!
  - CQ first, ask if frequency is in use later
- A few bad apples create a bad reputation for all of us
  - “Contesters all run high power”
- Contesters take over all the bands
  - (pssst...ever try those “new bands”?)

# When you are confronted by a non-contester during a contest



- Assess the situation
  - Did you just fire up on the frequency?
  - Maybe there really \*is\* a net there
- Are you possibly overdriving things?
  - A clean signal attracts more callers
- Try to compromise
  - “I’ll move up a little if you move down a little”
- The bottom line – put your ego aside
  - Which approach will put more QSOs in your log?



# Outside a contest...

- Assure the hater that the vast majority of testers run legal power
  - They are loud because they have good antennas and locations and are on the best band
- Tell them that testers do some good
  - Their skills apply in EmComm situations
  - Have you done something you can use as an example?
- Be polite!

# Contest Code of Ethics, expanded



1. I will learn and obey the rules of any contest I enter, including the rules of my entry category.

*No spotting if not permitted, no second op or skimmer for single ops, off-times per rules, correct output power*

2. I will obey the rules for amateur radio in my country.

*Power, frequencies, licensing – wherever you transmit.  
Remote operations must be especially vigilant!*

3. I will not modify my log after the contest by using additional data sources to correct call sign/exchange errors.

*When it's over, it's over*

# Contest Code of Ethics, expanded



**4. I will accept the judging and scoring decisions of the contest sponsor as final.**

*No whining, no lawsuits, no threats or defamation of any sort. No operation is that important.*

**5. I will adhere to the DX Code of Conduct in my operating style (see [dx-code.org](http://dx-code.org)).**

*Listen, listen, listen; only call when you can hear the station; never trust the cluster (copy the call!)*...

# Contest Code of Ethics, expanded



**6. I will yield my frequency to any emergency communications activity.**

*Contesting is a game. Emergencies are real life.*

**7. I will operate my transmitter with sufficient signal quality to minimize interference to others.**

*Mic gain set properly; amp not overdriven; no splatter!*

*Note that CQWW rules have added language specifically emphasizing this rule of conduct. Expect increased scrutiny as SDR archives reveal the worst offenders!*

[www.wwrof.org](http://www.wwrof.org)

# Acknowledgments



This presentation draws on material developed by:

Ken Adams, K5KA (SK)  
Randy Thompson, K5ZD  
Larry Tyree, N6TR  
Dave McCarty, K5GN  
Ward Silver, NØAX  
Kirk Pickering, K4RO  
Tim Duffy, K3LR  
Joel Harrison, W5ZN

And my biggest contest influence, K1HHN/W9HG (SK)

***“Relax, kid. This is supposed to be fun!”***

◦ GTU ◦

CONTEST  
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