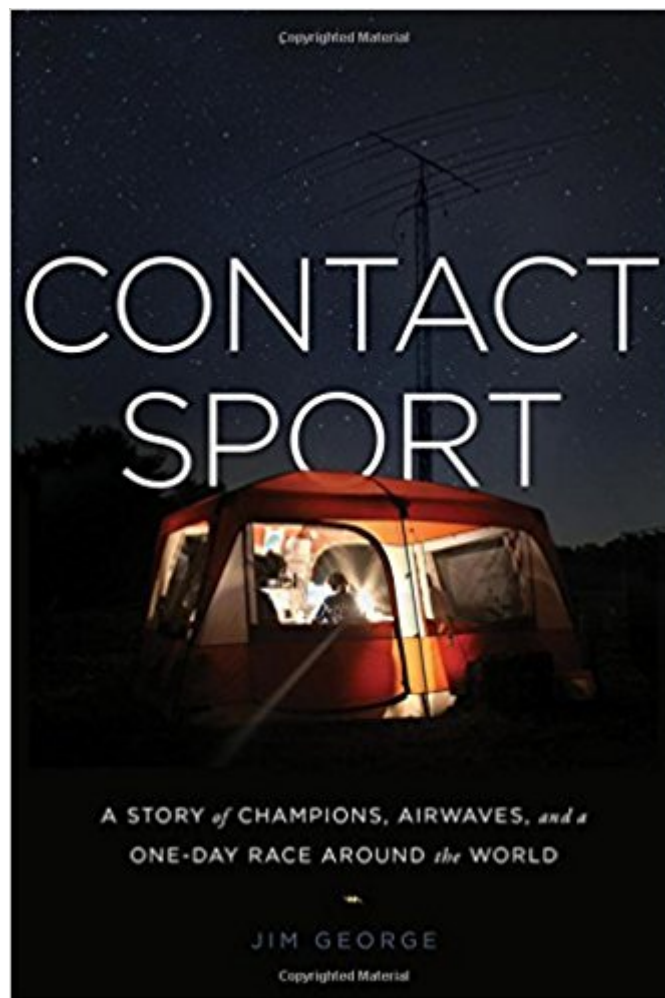




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Contact Sport: A Story Of Champions, Airwaves, And A One-Day Race Around The World



Synopsis

In the woods of Massachusetts, pairs of contestants huddle in tents filled with communications equipment. Their voices soar through the air, riding waves into the atmosphere, as they comb through static and noise for a response from the other side of the world. They're searching for loot--in the form of other voices in the sky. The rarer their contact, the more valuable their treasure. Joining them in their quest is author J. K. George, an experienced radio operator himself, who guides you through the exciting world of amateur radio competition and the intriguing characters of the 2014 World Radiosport Team Championship. The competitors hail from across the planet--from youthful challengers to veterans with decades of radiosporting experience. You will meet fascinating personalities not only among the teams themselves but also among their "widows"--spouses left behind for the allure of the airwaves. They battle computer malfunctions, getting lost, and staying at the top of their game for 24 hours in a hot, stuffy tent. The final scores bring surprises, disappointments, even a recount, and decades-long friendships will be stressed in the fight for the crown of amateur radio--the ultimate "contact" sport.

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Customer Reviews

J. K. (Jim) George has operated amateur radios for more than fifty years. An electrical engineer by trade, he spent his career in the semiconductor industry, where he became a corporate VP at Motorola. A native of Appalachia, he now lives in the Texas Hill Country outside Austin with his wife and family. This is his second book.

I thoroughly enjoyed this very well researched and well written story of an unusual competition. The competition is in the form of a ham radio contest by nearly 120 of the best ham operators in the world, operating nearly identical ham stations spread over much of Massachusetts. This could have been told as a "techie" story, but it's not. Rather, it's a story of very human competitors prepared for almost anything, and dealing with things that go wrong. We learn of their backgrounds -- where they're from, how they got into ham radio, their professions (some techie, by many not), and their history in prior runnings of this event that's repeated at four year intervals. Prior events have been held in Russia, Brazil, Finland, Slovenia, and the west coast of the US. Jim George got his first license as a teenager, and with his Electrical Engineering degree enjoyed a long career with a major electronics company. A skilled tester, Jim had competed in earlier runnings of the event. He knew many of the competitors, the referees, and the organizers (all volunteers) who made the event happen. His perspective, his decision to make this a human story, and his ability to tell it make "Contact Sport" a great read. His story of growing up in a small town in the mountains of SE West Virginia parallels mine in another West Virginia town 100 miles away. We both used our EE degrees for a happy and successful techie career, and we're both active testers. This is Jim's second book; his first is fiction about a guy much like himself growing up in that same small town. I liked it a lot, because its story was of a guy who loved music, loved ham radio, and was dealing in a very positive way with the social upheaval of school integration. As a ham and active tester, I know many of the US hams that George writes about, and have contacted nearly all of them over the years. I found Jim's observations quite perceptive for those I knew fairly well, and I gained good insights into those I didn't know or knew only casually. My wife of 25 years is not into ham radio, but I'm giving this book to her to read. I think she'll enjoy it.

I love Amateur Radio and factual books about events involving ham radio. This is one of those books and I did love it. The story is about a special ham radio contest. Each weekend, there are various contests where amateur radio operators contact other amateurs in order to rack up points, the winner having the most points. For the most part, ham operators operate from their personal stations. Each operator has a different level of skill operating these contests and because of the differences in skill, equipment and location, there is always some debate who truly is the best tester. The contest which is detailed in Contact Spot is a special contest, where the very top testers are transplanted to the same general location, given equipment as similar as is possible in order to level the playing field. Then, for 48 hours, they battle against each other to truly

determine who is the best of the best. As with any technical undertaking, "Murphy" ensures that unforeseen problems arise which are handled by volunteers all during the contest. The story isn't overly dramatic and the author does a good job of striking the right tone. As with many contests, the act of participating is the real fun and is the heart of this book. Probably not a great read if you are not somewhat intrigued with ham radio but if you are, it will be a page turner!

Wow! I had listened to an interview of Jim George on the popular podcast, "QSO Today." However, I never expected this book to meet my expectations, much less to surpass them at galactic dimensions! With the turn of each page, I found myself becoming increasingly engrossed in not only the details of this story, but also the intense suspense that made it extremely hard to put the book down. I have highest regards now for what Mr. George accomplished by penning this treatise. It's a terrific read not only for us ham radio operators, but also for any person who has even the slightest inclination to investigate amateur radio. Hats off to the author for a job supremely well done. It was especially rewarding to read the names of so many of my contesting friends. That just made this documentary that much more realistic. If you haven't yet read this book, I encourage you to leave no stone unturned before you purchase and read this book. Then, pass it along to another eager reader. ---Dr. Larry S. Anderson, WB5EINTupelo, MS (birthplace of Elvis!)

Contact Sport is a story of the intrigue, skills and frenetic pacing of radiosport or "contesting". Amateur Radio operators who organize and compete in contests will enjoy this book as it has the flavor of a contest and gives outsiders a look not only at radiosport itself, but at the individuals who compete at the sport's highest levels. Contesting combines technical skills along with knowledge of radio propagation in addition to being able multi-task during a contest. Contact Sport shows the difficulties of organizing the event, creating relatively equal stations and the logistics of putting up antennas, power and radios. Using CW (Morse Code) or Single Sideband (voice), the competition is explained in detail, but it is not boring in any sense of the word - Non-contesters along with new "hams" and non-hams will enjoy this book. Jim George has created a masterwork for a sport that not a lot of people know about keeping the heavy tech talk down and understandable. As a contesteer, I appreciate Jim's effort to bring our sport out into the open for all to see and enjoy. I highly recommend this book to anybody interested in the nexus point of technology and sport. Very best regards, Tom Francis, W1TEF/4

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