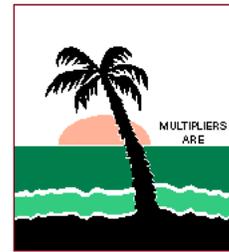




# Contest Gazette

## Florida Contest Group

www.qsl.net/fcg/ or www.fcg.club



Volume 9 Issue 4

WRTC-2002 Issue

August 2002

### From the President's Corner

By Dan Street, K1TO

*Ed. Note: We're going to replace Dan's usual lead this month with a series of e-mails that Dan sent to the reflector while traveling in Europe during his WRTC trip.*



#### WC4E & K1TO Trip Update - Sunday 7 July

Now in Oslo finishing up a wonderful 3.5 days in Norway. The fjords are magnificent!! We loved Bergen and stayed there 2 nites. Several long days driving thru the mtns and valleys, but all worth it! The rain finally looks to be letting up, but it has not really hindered us much so far. The Norwegians speak English quite well, so we have had zero problems so far. Pretty soon, I will think about radio again, but for the moment, we are immersed in Norway and about as far from "reality" as one could get. Mission accomplished. Actually, we enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of OZ7YY for a quick lunch and tour. He has 270 DXCC on 160M!! Other than that, very few antennas spotted and no eyeball QSOs. Hope to send one more msg b4 next weekend's on-the-air event. Hope everyone had a wonderful 4th. We laid low over here (surprisingly few Americans encountered so far). 73 to all, Dan (& the other guy across the Internet cafe)

#### Arrived Safely in Helsinki - Tuesday 9 July

Fun ferry ride over from Stockholm last night. Ran into several folks - N4GN, TG9AJR, K7LXC and W7NG. Smooth ride and lots to see and do on the ferry itself. We're at the WRTC participant hotel right now. Wx is nice today - sunny and about 75 deg. Quite a welcome change from the daily constant rain that we have seen prior to arrival here. I think that condx will be OK for this weekend. The OI2HQ folks posted a message listing the expected peak times to the USA by band, so I will repeat them here: 80 & 40 - 00-03Z, espec. 0130-0230 20 - 22-09Z 15 - 12-1930Z or later, then again from 1030-1200 10 - maybe 12-19Z, then maybe the last hour 11-12Z No sign of N2NL yet. N6MJ is rumored to be

here, but I have not met him yet. My partner N5TJ apparently was not on his scheduled flight and I do not have e-mail from him, so no idea what happened yet. See you all on the radio this weekend, but we cannot say hi and give away our identity. If you are spotting, please refrain from things like "OJ5E Sounds like K1TO...". 73, Dan

#### Well, it's Official - Monday 15 July

Here it is 5 AM in Finland. The sun is up. Many of the competitors are already on buses to the airport. Alarm clocks are sounding all up and down the hall. I have been up all night (again) and am the only one that I know of still awake from last night. The Finns were tremendous hosts overall and they had a really FB dinner last night at a restaurant on an island that required small ferry service to get to. Now that the contest is over, the beer, etc. has been flowing freely. Many FCGers were worked from our OJ3A QTH, most of them loud! Several people commented on the fabulous level of activity from Florida - nice job, folks. Compared to the rest, we had a very average QTH with a flat takeoff in most directions and a slight uphill takeoff to the east. It seemed

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like propagation from up here was not nearly as bad as we expected. The top scores had around 2800 QSOs for the 24 hours. Congrats to Dave, N2NL for a very solid 4th place finish. He very much appreciated all the FCG support and was quite open about sharing his positive FCG sentiments with the crowd. His frequent attempts at "physically intimidating" me were quite comical. Jeff, WC4E enjoyed refereeing. In my current sleepy state, I cannot even recall which team was "his". I learned here that Jim, VE7ZO may be moving to the WCF area soon and that we will learn of his decision in the next week or so. Jim just happened to be half of the #6 team, so that would be very neat to have 3 FCG ops in the top 6 WRTC finishers! Oh yeah, our finish... We won! The N6TJ/N6AA score was inflated by TR and they finished about 15th. The German team had some minor scoring issues with Writelog and dropped just a bit. Our logging accuracy allowed us to hang on for a narrow victory over them and the same Russian team that was second in Slovenia. Wish I could send pix, but this is a public machine. Plenty of pix to follow when we return. Off to bed. I will be taking N5TJ to the airport in less than 7 hours, then packing and leaving for western Finland where WC4E and I will take a ferry over to Sweden, beginning the journey home. We plan to see the SK0UX station, then have lunch with SM0AJU in the Stockholm area, then drive to Copenhagen and have a late dinner with OZ1AA and maybe OZ1LO. From there, we drive back to Amsterdam the next day and fly home Friday at noon. Only 534 AOL messages to wade thru - ugh. Hope everyone is well back in FL. C U soon. vy 73, Dan



*Dan and Dave congratulate each other at the conclusion of WRTC-2002*

## Top 10 at WRTC - 2002 in Helsinki

1. **OJ3A N5TJ/K1TO** 438/2782 = 1.629.798
2. OJ8E RA3AUU/RV1AW 426/2627 = 1.619.226
3. OJ2V DL2CC/DL6FBL 473/2468 = 1.608.673
4. **OJ3R N6MJ/N2NL** 436/2705 = 1.560.008
5. OJ8K KQ2M/W7WA 394/2816 = 1.479.470
6. OJ5A VE3EJ/VE7ZO 437/2635 = 1.473.127
7. OJ1M K5ZD/K1KI 457/2519 = 1.469.255
8. OJ6E UT4UZ/UT3UA 416/2637 = 1.468.064
9. OJ5W LY1DS/LY2TA 416/2638 = 1.459.744
10. OJ5M DK3GI/DL1IAO 440/2534 = 1456.840

## Three FCGers in WRTC-2002 Action Teams with FCGers take 2 of top 4 spots!

As noted in his modest summary to the left, Dan K1TO and his teammate Jeff N5TJ took top honors for the 3rd Consecutive WRTC Competition! WRTC Rookies Dave N2NL and teammate Dan N6MJ took 4th Place and Jeff WC4E refereed for the Austrian Team. The picture below shows the trio on scene in Helsinki. Great work, Guys!



*First Place Awards at WRTC 2002*



*The top three teams at WRTC-2002 on the podium in Helsinki. In the center in First Place from the USA N5TJ and FCG's own K1TO. On the left in Second Place from Russia, RA3AUU and RV1AW, and on the right in Third Place from Germany DL2CC and DL6FBL.*



*Above: The OJ3A Operating Position*



*The Tribander used by K1TO and N5TJ at OJ3A*

## FCGers Greet Dan and Jeff at Tampa

To say that this was all a surprise would be a gross understatement!! Imagine the surprised looks on the faces of Jeff and me as we rubbed our eyes in disbelief at the sight that awaited us at TPA. 12 great friends (plus 2 others that could not stay that late), with signs, balloons and huge smiles - wow!! All I could mutter was "Unbelievable!!!" over and over again. And to realize that they all waited for 4+ hours until 1 AM, thanks to the lingering thunderstorm activity in Philadelphia that kept all planes grounded, is all that much more special. THANKS!!! Special thanks to Fred, K4LQ and Sheila who (along with Vic, N4TO) drove me home in the wee hours of the morning and must have arrived home after 4 AM local! Also thanks to Joe, W4SAA who drove a huge number of miles to be part of the greeting committee since he will be unable to attend the Vicnic next week. Something's wrong - it's 6:30 AM and there is not bright sunlight outside. ;<) I guess we are not in northern Europe any longer! (Many of you know that I would not normally be awake at this hour. However, I've slept 18 of the past 24 hours and am now hopelessly messed up sleepwise! Did the TV coverage happen after all? No follow-up e-mails seen, so I suspect it missed the cut.) See you all at the Vicnic next Saturday. vy 73, Dan



W1YL Photo

*Dan KIT0 and Jeff WC4E walk down the ramp at Tampa Airport returning from Helsinki*

*Ed note: the following is a summary taken from the ARRL web page - used by permission*

### **Florida Contest Group greets the top dawg:**

About a dozen enthusiastic members and friends of the Florida Contest Group were on hand to greet their president Dan Street, K1TO as he returned in triumph as one half of the top team at the recent World Radiosport Team Championship in Finland

Accompanying Street as he arrived in Tampa July 20 was Jeff Bolda WC4E, a referee at WRTC-2002. Once again Street and Jeff Steinman, N5TJ, finished first out of the 52 teams taking part in the international competition July 13 and 14. Street and Steinman had also taken home the gold at WRTC 96 in San Francisco Bay area and at WRTC 2000 in Slovenia. The bleary eyed travelers, who had been flying for 21 hours, were greeted by posters, balloons and official hoopla at the Tampa International Airport - *Dave Ambrust, AE4MR*



*Left Greeting Committee Organizer K40J greets KIT0*

*Below: The FCG Greeting Committee*

*AE4MR Photos)*



Meeting to welcome our FCGers home from Finland were Jim, K4OJ & Teresa, Ellen W1YL, Bob W1CW, Joe W4SAA, Vic N4TO, Paul K4FB, Dave AE4MR, Bill K4XS & Holly, Ron WD4AHZ, Roxy W1ROX, Fred K4LQ &

*Obviously preparing for a long night at the airport Vic N4TO went to work on this little snack at the Rio Bravo.*



*FCGer Dave Ambrust, AE4MR ARRL West Central Florida Section Manager stands ready to capture the KITO/WC4E arrival on film. (See pix on facing page)*

*Below l to r: : Greeting Committee Organizer Jim K4OJ & Teresa, Ellen W1YL.*



### FCG Greeting Committee meets at Rio Bravo Restaurant in Tampa prior to welcoming WRTC returnees



*Top:  
Vic  
N4TO  
Joe  
W4SAA*

*Middle:  
Bill  
K4XS &  
Holly*

*Left:  
Ron  
WD4AHZ  
Roxena  
W1ROX*

## WRTC-2002 N2NL'S Story

### PART 1: THE BEGINNING

Dan, N6MJ, and I first met on the air back in the early 1990's. At the time he was KC6CNV, and I held KE2PF. We were both beginning contestors spending a lot of spare time chasing counties on the county hunters net. This was enjoyable, because every time a mobile moved into a new county, there would be a new mini-pileup to break in order to work the "new one". Dan and I often found us in the same pileups. I guess we had something in common as we were both young – Dan in his early teens and me in my early 20's. Dan went on to successfully work all 3,000 plus counties, I lost interest with about 2500 confirmed.

In addition to county hunting, we found ourselves working each other in a lot of the domestic contests, such as NAQP and the Sprints, in which we were both beginners. We quickly became friends as voices on the air.

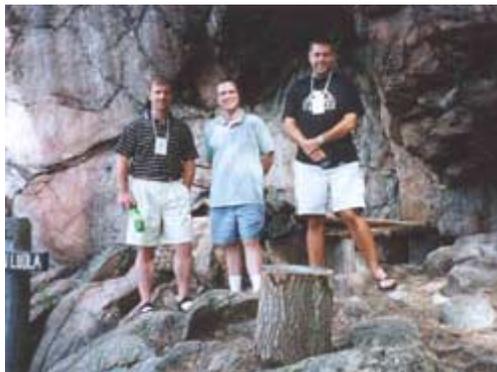
Later in the decade, I was transferred back out to Guam for a second tour of duty (I am an active duty member of the US Coast Guard). By this time we were both making a name for ourselves by often placing in the top 10 and winning our category in an occasional contest. This is about the time the WWYC, the World Wide Young Contestors, came into existence. This is a club for active contestors from around the world under 30 years of age. We didn't have any dues, no president, and no meetings, however in the advent of the Internet we had the IRC chat page #WWYC. I often spent numerous hours chatting with others my age here, including Dan, and our friendship improved.

About the time of WRTC 2000, I'm not sure who asked whom first, but Dan and I commented that it would be really cool to be able to compete at a WRTC event as teammates. We figured we had the skills to really do well! We discussed it quite a bit and determined that it would be a goal of ours. At that point I made it the top priority of mine: to have the honor to compete at WRTC!

As WRTC 2000 finished, rumors began flying about another one being held in 2002, this time in Finland. How cool! I've never been to Europe, and Finland isn't one of those countries you normally visit on a package European tour. Our excitement built as the details firmed up.

By this time I had rotated back stateside, transferred this time to West Palm Beach Florida where I quickly became involved with the Florida Contest Group. This is a great bunch of guys and I finally had the opportunity to meet two-time WRTC winner (at the time) and FCG President K1TO. I mentioned to Dan my interest in competing at a WRTC event and he mentioned that it wasn't out of the realm of possibility. Fortunately, Paul K1PT, another FCGer, lived nearby and allowed me to guest operate from his station. His modest station is extremely competitive and Florida is a great location for domestic contesting, as I succeeded in winning the 2000 NAQP CW – the first contest I operated since returning stateside. I made an effort to make myself as visible as possible, operating as many contests as possible, trying as much as pos-

sible to make myself known as a possible WRTC competitor.



W4AN, N5KO and N2NL in Finland

In November 2000, I was fortunate to be able to operate alongside K1TO from K4XS's in the CQWW CW contest. I was finally able to see first hand how the mutant operated! I'll be honest,

one side of me expected to see multiple arms extending from his body each controlling a different function.... rotators, keyboard, paddle, RIT.... everything moving at double speed. After all – he's the Mutant, right? I was pleasantly surprised to see his operating style wasn't very much different from mine – he had just fine-tuned it a little more. At this point I just KNEW I could do well at WRTC.

Over the next few months, as details firmed up about WRTC 2002, Dan N6MJ and I continued to be active. Dan was a perennial top scorer in both modes of the Sprints and NAQP, and I broke the low power USA record in the ARRL DX CW contest from K4XS's. We were both working on the goal of selection as WRTC competitors.

Finally, the details emerged. There would be 10 teams from USA, and the top 10 contest clubs each would select 10 nominees, 5 from each side of the Mississippi. I was somewhat disappointed by the selection process; I had hoped that the top 10 clubs would be able to select their own competitor such as the case for Slovenia (K1TO was already guaranteed a spot as past WRTC winner). Although the new selection process was probably fairer, since it gave the chance for a top competitor not a member of a top 10 club to participate, it did leave the door open for it to be a popularity contest. I figured Dan would have a much better chance at getting selected, since it seemed that there were fewer guys interested from the west. Dan figured I had the better chance since I had been around longer and possibly had more exposure. The one thing we were sure of is that we decided to pick the other as a teammate if either or both got enough votes to be one of the 10 team captains. We kept our fingers crossed as the clubs held secret ballots and the votes were tallied by the Finns.

Finally there was a press release – the 10 team captains had been selected – and N6MJ was one of those nominated!!!! WOO HOO!!!! Our dream to compete is coming true!!!!

### PART 2: PREPARATION

Now that we knew that we were going, we realized now that we had to prepare. Heck, neither of us owned a competitive rig!! Fortunately, Paul K1PT came to the rescue

once again. He was considering buying a FT1000MP to see how it performed compared to his Omni VI. We found one and he bought it, and outfitted it with INRAD filters. Although he owns the radio, he was letting me use it during contests to familiarize myself with it. Dan figured he was going to be able to borrow a rig from someone.

We also wondered how well we would operate as a team. Although we are both very easygoing people who have known each other for years, we had never actually met in person and operated a contest together. K4XS's station was once again available for CQWW CW in 2001, and Dan joined me there for a M/S effort. Things went perfectly – we won the M/S competition by more than 1 million points! Granted, conditions that year greatly favored us, but it was still a great morale booster. We discovered that we worked extremely well together, neither wanting to hog the run radio and both open to ideas from the other. Although we are both good CW operators, Dan is outstanding on SSB where frankly I consider myself a lid, almost like a fish out of water. On the other hand, Dan's weak point is his technical skills, which are a strong point of mine, with computer and station setup knowledge learned from several years of guest operating and moving around the country. It seemed like we were good to go as a team, with one's strengths covering the others weaknesses.

After CQWW CW, preparation sort of took a back stage to other things going on in our lives. I was still extremely busy with work, focusing on preparation for an advancement competition in May. Dan was attending college classes and working a part time job to boot. Once that was over in early May, we totally focused on preparation for WRTC.

The first thing and the most important was station setup. We were going to use K1PT's FT1000MP as the transmit radio. Dan's parents bought him a FT1000MP MKV, and that would be used as the spotting radio. We decided on this because not only had we both used the older MP, it was fully outfitted with INRAD filters and had the key click modification performed on it. Additionally, the power output was 100w versus 200w for the MKV, so it would give us one less thing to have to watch during the contest, making sure we didn't exceed the 100w contest limit. Since Dan's MKV was brand-new and untested by either of us, we determined it should be delegated as the spotting radio.

Once we had the radios, it was time for the accessories. Almost all of the teams were going to use automatic band switching and bandpass filters. I just couldn't see how using automatic band switching for just 2 antennas would be a major asset. Not only that, it would be more gear to carry over and something else which could possibly break. Neither Dan nor I even owned any of this equipment either. I decided the easiest way to do it would be manually changing the antennas and filters, using PL-259 quick disconnect fittings. This turned out to be a MAJOR error on my part and I will go into it more during the contest play-by-play.

In addition to the antenna switching, we also needed a CW and voice keyer. Dan owned a good CW keyer, but neither of us had a DVK. Since I owned neither, I was able to purchase at the last minute a Super Keyer Combo, designed

and built by ZS4TX. I was looking for the best of both worlds, and I wasn't very impressed by the MFJ DVK. The W9XT card couldn't be used with a laptop, so ZS4TX's unit was pretty much the only option. The ZS4TX keyer combines the best of both worlds, a very good voice keyer combined with the best CW keyer on the market. I received it just a couple weeks before we had to depart for Finland, and I was just able to get the cables made up before departing. This was my second mistake. I ended up wiring the cables wrong, creating a ground loop, which put an A/C hum on the recorded messages. Although we used it for CW, we didn't use it for SSB, which ended up making it very difficult late in the contest for Dan. I highly recommend this keyer to anyone – it is a very high quality piece of equipment if the cable assemblies are wired correctly (N2NL=LID).

Finally, we would need logging software. CT was made available to the competitors, and since we were both familiar with it, we decided to use it. Dan owned a laptop and my Mother donated an older one to me to use for the contest. I spent about 2 weekends, several hours a day, trying to get NETTSR to work so we could network them via Ethernet. I was banging my head against the wall because no matter what, I couldn't get the packet drivers to load correctly to make the DOS version work. We really needed the single COM port freed up to be able to have the transmit rig networked with CT. Finally, I gave up, and we decided to use the Windows version. We had very few problems compared with other teams during the contest, however we didn't end up using most of the functions. Ken, K1EA, created several updates to CT during the week in Finland trying to correct some problems but wasn't able to get them all worked out by the start of the contest. I think he felt bad because of some of the problems teams were having but I think it was solely a result of a lack of beta testing and feedback by the teams before the contest. The software locked up only twice during the contest for us, but I think it was a result of RF in the laptop, not a software issue. There were, however, some problems with the band map and some other special CT functions, but we ended up not using any of these tools.

For the most part, we had the station setup. There were a couple more things that we were considering. First of all, I read up on the windom antenna, and discovered it worked best against an earth ground. A little light bulb went on in my head. I figured that the antenna would perform better if we had a good ground underneath it. K1PT, an outstanding electrical engineer, recommended we used aluminum foil for grounding since it has a much lower impedance compared with copper braid. We decided to try to lay some radials under the grounding point to try to improve the antennas performance. This was one of our "Secret Weapons" which ended up being worthless – we didn't even try it. Our other secret weapon was a tuner. I figured it would be much better than the rigs internal tuner at loading the windom. Additionally, I wanted to try to load the tribander feedline as a receive antenna for 80m if for example we were running guys on 40 with the windom. This also ended up being worthless as the windom ended up matching good on all bands and we were able to hear fine with the tribander on 40/80 without match-

ing.

Finally, we printed out as much information as possible. We analyzed logs, both previous Finland logs and the logs from WRTC 2000 to try to glean as much information as possible. We printed out bearing maps, propagation forecasts, and anything else we figured might help us for the contest.

Once we had all this together, it was time to pack. Two solid months of preparation, all down to this. I packed the radio into its original shipping box, packed into an additional box for protection. All the other equipment fit into a suitcase along with my clothing. I carried my laptop as carry on luggage. Dan packed similarly. Now all that was left to fly to Finland! My excitement was building!

### **PART 3: ARRIVAL AND THE WEEK PRECEDING THE CONTEST**

Monday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, was an early day for me. I needed to get to the airport in Miami for my 5PM flight. I had heard nightmares about the airport and decided to get there early. I ended up arriving at the airport at about 10AM, expecting a huge line at the ticket counter and security. I was completely wrong. No line at the ticket counter. Although one bag was several pounds overweight, nothing was said. Security as well was a quick procedure as well. Although I was selected for additional screening (checking all my bags and even shoes), I was through in 10 minutes. I ended up spending the remainder of the day hanging out at the gate, waiting for the flight, which was still more than 6 hours away.

The day crept along, and finally it was time to board the flight. I'm finally on my way! The first flight was 10 hours long, a DC-10 red eye flight to Amsterdam. Although I'd been on much longer flights in the Pacific, this particular flight was much more painful. I couldn't sleep, and couldn't get comfortable. I finally arrived in Amsterdam at 8AM Tuesday morning, July 9<sup>th</sup>. Although I was sore and tired from the flight, I was excited to step foot on European soil for the first time!

I had a 4-hour layover in Amsterdam before my connecting flight to Helsinki. The time passed quickly, as the airport was excellent. I was able to kill some time at an Internet café, and enjoyed my first European meal at McDonalds. I spent the last hour waiting at the gate, watching the people walk back and forth. We finally boarded the 737 to Helsinki at noon.

I discovered during that flight that Europeans are much smaller. I don't know how KLM could put the seats any closer than they were. I'm lucky no emergencies occurred during the flight, because it would have taken me 10 minutes to just pry myself out of my cramped seat. I was dead tired, having been up for more than 24 hours at this point. Fortunately the sky was clear and I was able to look out the window at the sights as we flew over Denmark, Sweden, the Aland Islands, and finally Finland proper.

The flight lasted just over 2 hours, but due to the time zone changes it was 3:30PM when we landed in Helsinki. My mind was racing – I thought it was so cool – I'm now in Finland! I never would have thought I'd be here a

few months earlier. At the same time came apprehension. Did my bags arrive OK? Will I have problems at Customs?

The airport in Helsinki is beautiful. I walked to the baggage claim to find my bags in good condition – it looks like they made it. I proceeded to customs, looking for a customs officer to present my paperwork. Before I knew it, I was already through. No customs officers – nothing whatsoever. I just walked into the receiving area with my bags. Standing there was Martti, OH2BH. I've never met him before but his face is unmistakable. Wow – I'm in Europe, shaking Martti Laine's hand!

Martti looked more ragged than I did, trying to arrange transportation to the hotel for the dozens of competitors. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I shared the flight with the Hungarian team of HA1AG and HA3OV, and the English team of G4PIQ and G4BWP. We shook hands all around, loaded our gear into a trailer, and hopped into the minivan for the ride to the airport.

The beauty of the country overwhelmed me. Everywhere was evergreen trees. Finland has three primary species of tree; not much variety but beautiful due to the density and dark green color of the foliage. The roads were immaculate, and traffic light. I was later told that studded snow tires were the law in the winter, and due to the studs every road in the country was repaved every two years. I never saw a pothole during my stay. Additionally, there was no pollution. The air was warm and clean, and there wasn't a piece of trash to be seen on the road. I can easily say that Finland is the cleanest country I have ever visited.

About 30 minutes later, we rolled into the Raddison hotel in Espoo, the center of operations for WRTC. I gathered my bags, and walked into the lobby where I was blown away by the people I saw. K1TO was there. There's James, 9V1YC. K1AR and K1DG, practically twins, walking down the hall. All these famous callsigns, guys I've talked to dozens of times over the years and never before met. I definitely wasn't tired anymore.

I registered, got the room key, and went up to the room. My teammate Dan was already there, resting from his flight. I dropped my bags, and we both went back to the lobby.

The first night was a blur, never ending handshakes and greetings from the who's who of contesting. There was a large tent set up outside where a light meal and drinks were served. There I met AG9A, NT1N, K7BV, K1ZM, DL1IAO, ETC, ETC, ETC. The list is just too long to remember. Soon, Dan and I turned it into a contest. Every new person who's hand we shook was a new QSO, and if that person was in a new country, it was considered a multiplier. I gave up count after 100 QSOs and 30 some countries. I even ran into ZL1ANJ, whom I still remember as my first real good DX contact as a novice.

Slowly, the drowsiness returned, but it was still bright sunlight out. I looked at my watch – 10:30PM – holy cow! I guess they weren't kidding when they said it was the land of the midnight sun. I forced myself to stay away longer, to see just how dark it would get. I finally went to bed at about 12:30AM Wednesday morning. Although the

sun had gone down, it was a kind of twilight, which allowed you to see everything clearly. I went up to the room – jeez it's hot in here. Since there are only two or three weeks of summer, nothing is air-conditioned. It was in the 80's the whole week and the rooms were extremely warm. I laid down in bed and instantly fell asleep.

Soon later, I awoke with bright sunlight in my eyes. What time was it? I looked at my watch – 3:00AM. Ouch! Midnight sun? They aren't kidding!

The next morning we were up bright and early at 8AM, and after eating breakfast it was time to take a quick walk to a local grocery store with N6MJ, N2NC, and KM3T for some bottled water. Although tap water is safe to drink, we wanted to make sure we had some on hand since it was so warm and it didn't seem water was readily available else-



***K4BAI, KM3T, W4AN, N5RZ, K2UA, N6MJ and N2NL***

where. At 10AM, the initial kick off meeting began at the Dipoli center (nice name!), a convention hall next to the hotel. There, in a big auditorium setting, we were introduced to the head-honchos that

be in the Finnish community, and an introduction of the week to come. After lunch, we were to head to Himos in south-central Finland for a couple days of rest and relaxation before the WRTC competition was to start.

After the meeting, we had a buffet style lunch where I was able to sit and chat with DL1IAO and LY1DS. It was really nice to be able to see the faces behind the call-signs of two good friends of mine.

Once lunch was over, there was a mad scramble to pack before the trip to Himos. It was expected that the trip would be a time away from the competition and would truly be a time to celebrate and meet other hams. All of our radio gear was to be left in the hotel rooms, where its safety was guaranteed. In fact, I never heard of one instance of theft during my trip, showing how trustworthy and how little corruption there was there.

At 1:30PM, we boarded the buses for the 3-hour trip to Himos. We were fortunate to have Martti Laine as our host for the ride, and during the trip up he told us stories of Finland, Nokia, and his personal life. In addition, we had Ward, N0AX, lead us in a sing along of some WRTC contesting songs prepared before the event. Although he tried, about the only people he was able to get to participate were himself and K1ZM's daughter ☺

During this time, we were discovering the fun you could have with a cell phone. Each of the team captains were given a cell phone for the week, with free air time to

keep in touch with the WRTC committee and the other competitors. In addition, they had the ability to send SMS text messages back and forth. As the trip progressed a flurry of SMS messages began flooding the airwaves. K1TO teasing and calling me "Mr Big Tires", me giving him a hard time, N5KO sending "blah blah blah" to everyone. The text messaging was one real enjoyable memory of the trip.

Finally, at about 5PM, we arrived. Himos is a large campground surrounded by a large lake and wooded areas. Every summer the Finns have their version of Dayton, with a week of camping and get-togethers at the site. The area includes a large hotel and restaurant surrounded by campsites and cabins. Each of the teams were assigned a cabin, with two teams per cabin. We found out that Gator,



***WRTC Open - W4AN teeing off, K3LR, K2UA, K1TO, N2NT, N5TJ (I think) and N2NL***

N5RZ, and Rus, K2UA would be sharing our cabin with us. That turned out to be a great thing – they were both great guys and I really enjoyed the stay. Across from us was a cabin

shared by W4AN, K4BAI, and N4GN.

That evening, following the dinner, we were allowed to participate in a pileup competition. OH6YF made the tapes himself, which were played over the speaker system. The audio was lousy, which made copy quite difficult. This coupled with a lot of local QRM by non-participants upset some of those trying to make an effort of it. One funny note, since OH6YF made the SSB pileup tape as well, all the callers sounded exactly alike. He imitated a JA and W5 accent however which was priceless! I personally only took the CW pileup competition, and didn't feel all that good about it. I really can't operate a radio without headphones, and had a difficult time with all the people talking. I talked with K1TO, and he also said he did lousy

Thursday morning, we had an additional competitors meeting, followed by the opening ceremonies. Teams were led in by country, with Dan and I following in between N2NT and N6RT, and the K1AR/K1DG twins. This was followed by some formalities by the WRTC committee, and introductions of the judging staff consisting of G3SXW and K1ZZ.

The afternoon was open, so a large number of us decided to play a round of golf on the small, 9 hole, par three golf course located there. We had three teams of four each, playing best ball. My team consisted of K5ZD, W4AN, K3LR, and myself, with N6MJ acting as caddie.

Since none of us had golf clubs, we shared a few between us. The funniest moment was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole, a 60-meter par 3. Randy K5ZD was teeing off, and asked me for a 9 iron. I mistakenly gave him a 5 iron, and he took quite a swing at the ball with it. The ball was launched, flying well past the green, bouncing off the roof of KQ2M's cabin. This shot however, was destined to be on an ESPN highlight reel, and bounced back off the roof, rolling back onto the green where we tapped it in for birdie.

That evening we had dinner under the large tent. It was a large affair, with a large number of the station host families present as well. At this time the results of the pileup competition were announced. It turned out that James, 9V1YC, won the SSB portion, proving that in order to break his pileup on SSB all you need to do is call in a high pitched voice with a Finnish accent. Second was N5TJ – no surprise there. On the CW side, N5TJ won once again, followed by – can you believe it – K1TO! I went up to Dan and called him a King Lid for telling me how poorly he did. His reply was memorable: “Dave, you have no idea what you’ve gotten yourself into”. This completely deflated me! I walked back to my table, and sat down. Sitting right next to me was one of the contesting gods himself, N5KO. Looking at Trey, I was completely deflated. Here I am, completely out of my league. All my pitiful attempts at intimidation were wasted. For the first time I was actually nervous about the competition.

Friday morning, following breakfast, was the moment we were all waiting for, selection of the referees and the contest. In order to speed the process, there were 52 envelopes, each with a number written on the front. Inside was hidden a callsign. Each team captain's call was written on a piece of paper and placed in a bucket. One by one, papers were picked out of the hat. The selected team captain would walk up to the front and pick any envelope of his choice. Each number corresponded to a referee and station host, which was read out loud by Pasi, OH2IW.

Each of the competitors had a magazine containing a map showing the locations of each of the sites. As the teams selected their envelope and discovered their location, everyone would look to see where each of the competitors was going. Personally, I looked as each host was announced, happy if it was a bad looking spot and worried when a good-looking spot was assigned. Finally, N6MJ's call was pulled from the hat and he went up, selecting our envelope. My heart was beating as Pasi read our assignment. Our judge was going to be Mika, OH2JA, and our host was OH2FQ. We quickly looked at the map. It wasn't on the ocean as some of the stations were but it looked pretty good! We met our host, Mika, who was an extremely nice individual. He informed us that our host was elderly and was unable to meet us at the hotel. Once we returned to Helsinki, he would bring our gear and us to the contest site. He also kept hold of the envelope, which contained our callsign, not to be opened until the last 10 minutes before the contest started.

Once the stations were assigned, we boarded our buses for the ride back to Helsinki. This time, our host was

Jukka, OH2BR, well known for his VP6BR operation. During the return trip he told us of his travels to Pitcairn and Malyj Vysotskij Islands.

As soon as we returned to the hotel, it was a mad dash to gather our gear for the trip to the host site. We packed our gear into Mika's car, and we were off.

OH2FQ's home was about one half hour west of Helsinki. As we turned off the main road, I got nervous, as we got closer to the location. Would it be a good one? My heart skipped a beat as we drove down into a valley. I hope it isn't here! I began to feel better as we drove up the other side. We turned off the road onto a driveway and up an incline through a heavily wooded area. There it is! I can see the antennas!

Jansson, OH2FQ, has a beautiful house located in a densely wooded area next to a small lake. He lives there with his wife, and pet dog. He built his home in this particular location for the sole reason of Amateur Radio, and he considered it to be a very good location. That was a great morale booster for Dan and I! Mika introduced us, and led us to the operating position, a large table in a room next to a Sauna. He left Dan and I to set up while he and Jansson went to the other room to talk.

I looked at the antennas. Each of the 52 sites have identical antennas. A Finnish made tribander (similar to a Force 12 design) and Yaesu rotator atop a 12m mast. In addition, there was a windom antenna strung between two trees. One end was about 45ft high, the other about 20. They set the windom up so the average height above ground would be 9 meters for each of



*QTH of OH2FQ, windom can be seen in the foreground*

antennas.

Dan and I quickly set up the stations, and except for some RF in a computer, we had absolutely no problems. There was almost no inter-station interference and band pass filters were not needed. We got on the air for the first time and were amazed at the strengths of the European stations. I called CQ, signing OH/N2NL and quickly had a pileup. This looks like it's going to be fun!

the 52 sites. Jansson had a large tower of his own but for the most part it was invisible in the trees and not located anywhere near our WRTC

Once the station was set up, we returned to the hotel to try to get a good night's sleep. There we met up with several of the other teams, some of which were happy, some not, of their station. The team consisting of K1ZM and N6ZZ had horrible line noise, and their station had to be moved in the middle of the night to OH2BH's contest station site. It must have been disheartening, because they mounted the tri-bandner 12m high on a 60m rotating tower, which held a three element 80m beam! On the contrary, N2IC and K6LL were both happy with theirs. Some of the guys commented on working some real good DX into Asia and North America, however all we worked was Europe. That slightly worried me; maybe our station wasn't getting out as well as some of the others.

Saturday morning we awoke, and after breakfast returned to OH2FQ's station to make some final station setups before the contest started at 3PM local time. We played around a little bit with the computers, trying to get everything as perfect as possible for the contest. I decided to get on the air again, and quickly had a pileup again. Conditions seemed excellent!

About this time, a large caravan of dignitaries led by OH2BH stopped by. They were visiting a few of the stations before the contest start, and the group included Martti, K1ZZ, G3SXW, and W6AQ among others. Dave, W6AQ, was filming for the WRTC video and wanted to get a few shots of me running the pileup. He set the camera atop the rig, pointed directly at my face, as I picked callsigns out of the pile. No pressure here! It was perfect timing. I had a SP station call me, at about 15 words per minute, and proceeded to tell me his name, QTH, rig, antenna, and pet cat's name. All the while I'm sitting there with this camera pointed at my face. What an uncomfortable position! During this time, the other guys were looking at our setup. They noticed our manual antenna switching setup, the only team not to have automatic antenna switching. Although Dave K1ZZ commented that simple may be better (My opinion exactly!), Martti had a look on his face of "these guys don't know what the hell they're doing!" We hoped to prove him wrong!

They left us after a while, and we took a break to have lunch with our host and Jarmo, OH7JR, who had joined us in case we ran into any station troubles. We had an excellent local meal consisting of a hearty soup with bread. It was about time for the contest start! We handed our cell phone to Mika, who would use it to send in the hourly scores for the real-time score web page. The minutes finally ticked down to 2:50PM. We were as ready as we'd ever be! For the last 10 minutes, we took off our headphones and turned the volume down on the rigs for the required quiet time. Mika handed me the envelope. I quickly tore it open. OJ3R. Cool call! Phew – at least it wasn't OJ5S or something worse!

We were fortunate to be busy for the last 10 minutes so not to get too nervous. I was busy loading the callsign into CT's configuration file, and Dan was doing some final station arrangements. The clock ticked down to the 1200z mark. Just a few seconds left... there! We quickly threw on our headphones, Dan at the run station and me at the mult station, and we were off!

*Ed Note: That was Part One of the N2NL WRTC story, stay tuned for Part 2 next newsletter as well as complete coverage of the N4TO Vicnic. Tnx to WIYL, K5KG, K1TO and N2NL plus a number of internet sources for much of the photo coverage in both newsletters.*



**Flags in the big tent at Helsinki**



**Dave N2NL in Finland - (K1TO Photo)**



**Jeff WC4E in Finland - (K1TO Photo)**



June 25, 2002

Dear FCG Members,

On behalf of the Northern California DX Foundation, I want to acknowledge and thank you for your donation. It is only through the collective generosity of many amateur radio related organizations and individuals that the funds needed to organize and conduct the 2002 Radiosport Team Championship can be obtained.

We are excited about WRTC-2002. We believe it will be another in a series of incredibly successful events featuring the highest level of amateur radio competition coupled with the wonderful camaraderie that has been the hallmark of past WRTC's. Thank you for helping to make it a reality.

.....In compliance with recent tax code revisions, we acknowledge that your donation was made without any exchange of goods and services between you and NCDXF.

Warmest regards,

Charles J. Epps, W6OAT  
Director

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**Events Calendar**

**North American Sprint CW Sep 8 0000Z - 0400Z**

**ARRL Sep VHF QSO Party Sep 14 1800Z - Sep 16 0300Z**

**Melbourne Hamfest Saturday Sept 14 Doors Open 9 AM  
FCG Luncheon Meeting - Members gather by the entrance at noon**

**North American Sprint SSB Sep 15 0000Z - 0400Z**

**Scandinavian Activity Contest CW Sep 21 1200Z - Sep 22 1200Z SSB Sep 28 - 29**

**CQWW DX Contest SSB Oct 26 0000Z - Oct 27 2400Z**

**ARRL Sweepstakes CW Nov 2 2100Z - Nov 4 0300Z**

**ARRL Sweepstakes SSB - Nov 16 2100Z - Nov 18 0300Z**

**CQWW DX Contest CW Nov 23 0000Z - Nov 24 2400Z**

**ARRL 160 Meter Contest Dec 5 2000Z - Dec 8 1600Z**

**ARRL 10 Meter Contest Dec 14 000Z - Dec 15 2400Z**