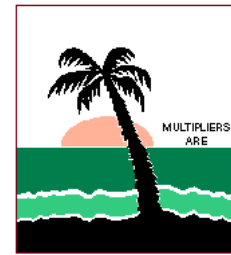




Contest Gazette

Florida Contest Group

<http://www.qsl.net/fcg/>



Volume 8 Issue 3

June 2001

From the President's Corner

By Dan Street, K1TO

Never a dull moment!!

The 4th FQP was a total success, despite less than stellar conditions. The activity from the Florida mobiles was fantastic, led by several high-profile imports – the K5WA/N6MU team and W5WMU. K4XS again broke the 2K QSO mark for the 20-hour activity. The log deadline has now passed and my sense is that we again have broken the log submission record! Ron and I are working with K8CC on the log-checking process, so hopefully that will reduce the overall effort to produce results.

Planning for WRTC-2002 in Finland is well under way. By the time you read this, we will have already selected 10 USA candidates. Hopefully, one or more other FCGers will get a chance to go again. Please bear with us. The list of nominees will be kept private for a while, to prevent the selected team captains from being inundated with shameless self-promotions from the “deserving”. There has been some great discussion on the FCG e-mail reflector about some method of helping to fund a needy contester that will attend WRTC. Keep those ideas flowing, folks.

FCG membership continues to grow steadily. It was great fun to meet Art, W4AA (ex W2IB) at Dayton. In my early years of contesting up in CT, Art was a single-op force in the DX Tests. Dayton was very well attended with white- and orange-shirted FCGers! (See picture in this issue.) The Society of Midwest Contesters was awarded their plaque to thunderous applause for the #1 club in SS at the Contest Forum. Considering that they have 400+ members at the moment, I'm even more proud of the FCG for climbing all the way to the #3 Medium Club with, at the time, 70 or less members!

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I had the opportunity to work with Jeff, WC4E to finally install a C4XL and 2M antenna for the UCF club station. Originally, this work was to be done right after the Orlando meeting, but an untimely fender-bender, followed by an unexpected roof-level lockout delayed that for a while. We got most of the work done before the standard afternoon thunderstorms rolled in. Ken, W8EK has asked for assistance up near Ocala, so hopefully we can assemble a crew and get the Simpsons fixed up, too.

Thanks to Pete, N8PR for hosting our most recent meeting and first southeast meeting that was not at the Miami hamfest! Pete's place is well equipped and it's easy to see why he is closing in on 5BWAZ and doing real well on 160, too.

A June meeting was just not in the cards this year, despite several offers from potential hosts. Our next gathering will likely be the annual BBQ meeting at Vic, N4TO's in Sebring.

How about the huge outpouring of club activity in WPX and in the ARRL June VHF Test? Wow! See claimed scores elsewhere in this issue. Remember that WPX CW log submission deadline of July 1.

Hope to work many of you from the Field Day effort in Sarasota. Plans are for a 2A effort as NJ4M, with a number of FCGers crashing the party. WD4AHZ is the ringleader for that one. Many other club members regularly activate a station during FD. What are your plans?

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IARU is coming up real soon, too. That will mark the half-way point between the amazing WRTC-2000 in Slovenia, coupled with the equally amazing W1AW/4 FCG efforts, and the upcoming WRTC-2002 in Finland. If the thunderstorm activity does not get in the way, try to spend some time in that one. It is 24 hours of terrific fun, with lots of DX and USA activity and on both modes, as well. I believe that there is a CQ VHF test that same weekend. Their announcement in CQ indicates the possibility of moving to another weekend to avoid overlapping with the IARU Test – great idea!

That's all for now. Let's keep having fun, learning a few things along the way, and piling up those points for the FCG! See you at Vic's or another future meeting!

vy 73, Dan



Jeff WC4E shaking hands with President Bush

The President stopped by recently at the Habitat for Humanity site in Tampa where Jeff volunteers. Jeff said that the President made an effort to meet everyone working at the site. Suggestions that the President was actually congratulating Jeff for a fine NAQP and FCG Chad effort were pooh-pooed by WC4E who said "T'aint So"!

Welcome Aboard



The following new members have joined FCG since the last newsletter:

K2SG Tony DeBiasi, 33 West Hanover Avenue, Morris Plains NJ 07950 e-mail: K2SG@arrl.net

N4QV Randy Shirley, 820 Renmar Drive, Plantation FL 33317-4220 email: rshirley@gate.net

W4OV Bruce Phegley, 3940 NW 4TH CT, Coconut Creek FL 33066 e-mail: w4ov@qsl.net

W3AZD Don Search, 10550 SR 84 147, Fort Lauderdale FL 33324 e-mail: w3azd@arrl.net

WB3ANE Hope Smith, 218 Normandy Drive, Silver Spring MD 20901

K4PB Alan Harp, 12396 158th St N, Jupiter FL 33478-6666 e-mail: k4pb@mindspring.com

W4AA Art Youngblood, POB 860111, St Augustine FL 32068 e-mail: artw4aa@aug.com

Changes and Corrections

Gary, WB4IHIs PO Box was listed incorrectly in the last newsletter. It should be PO Box 353876.

In describing the C6 operations in the ARRL CW Test calls for N4RP and N4BP were incorrectly listed. Dick, N4RP holds C6AKP and Bob, N4BP holds C6AKQ. C6AKP, operated by Dick and Joe, W4SAA scored 2599 293 2,284,521

Ed, KN4Y, was a member of FCG CW Team 2 in the NAQP, but his score was left out. Ed (Chad) made 284 QSO's x 107 = 30,388 score

Steve, KG4MBZ/YV5DTA is now W4DTA. Congrats!

Activity Calendar

ARRL Field Day 1800Z, Jun 23 - 2100Z, Jun 24

IARU HF World Championship 1200Z, Jul 14 - 1200Z, Jul 15

NA QSO Party, CW 1800Z, Aug 4 - 0600Z, Aug 5

WAE DX Contest, CW 0000Z, Aug 11 - 2359Z, Aug 12

NA QSO Party, SSB 1800Z, Aug 18 - 0600Z, Aug 19

Florida QSO Party Pictures



Frank, NA4CW celebrates his 58h birthday during FQP-2001. Happy Birthday Frank!



The K4OJ/N4KM FQP Mobile



*Kevin K4PG operating N4BP/Mobile
On his lap is the "shadowbox" that kept the sun off the notebook screen and IC-706 control head.*



N4BP Mobile. On the back of the car is the mag-mounted Hustler with 15/20/40 meter Resonators. The green nylon guys attach to clothes hangars inside the back door.



Eric, K9ES at the controls of his home station, which he and Chuck AD4ES used to run up the winning score from the Echo Sierra club of Brevard.



N4TO/Mobile - Dan KITO on the left in the cab in his orange FCG tee shirt, N4TO on the right in the cab. The driver was not identified, rumored to be an FCG member who wishes to remain anonymous. The stealth antenna is mounted on the rear of the cab thus cannot be seen. (That's why it's called a stealth antenna!)



Charlie, NF4A at the controls of NF4A/M during FQP



NF4A/M Motor home (belongs to N4DXC). Note the TA-33 driven element just above the roof.



*NF4A/M and N400/M cross paths in Liberty County.
L to R Terry, K4RX - Charlie, NF4A, - Ink, N400*



Red Man is still the official chewing tobacco of the FQP!



FCG Members at Dayton !

L to R Back Row - Ed NT4TT, Bill K4XS, Charlie NF4A, Jim K4OJ, Mikem, W4UM, L to R Front Row JAIWSX, (not a member) Dan K1TO, Sherry WA4SLR, Steve KG4MBZ

Not shown, but also seen at Dayton were Dave W4DN, Blake N4GI, Ink N400 , Jeff WC4E, Jim NU4Y, Bill W2CQ and Terry K4RX.

May Meeting at the N8PR QTH

Twenty –Three members and guests assembled Sunday May 6 at Pete Rimmel, N8PR's QTH in Hollywood for a combo picnic / FCG meeting.

Festivities began around noon with an informal tour of the antenna field and swapping some Florida QSO Party war stories. About 1 PM Pete heated up the grill, and he and Bruce, W4OV began production of some cooked to order hotdogs & hamburgers along with all the fixins. If I remember correctly, Bruce specialized in the garlic hamburger. Paul K1PT brought along some of his famous NewEngland clam chowder, produced from his grandmother's recipe. Must say I haven't tasted chowder this good since I left New England back in 1955, outstanding!

These delectables were followed by multiple varieties of pies, ice cream, cheesecake, cookies and other abdomen-expanding sweet things, enough to keep your try to stay in shape editor in constant trouble.

About 2:30 the group got together in Pete's shack for the meeting. Pete had a mini-auditorium set up in the same room as his shack, with lots of seating and a sound system complete with microphone.

Dan began the meeting by thanking Pete for his hospitality.

There was an extended discussion of the recently completed Florida QSO Party. Despite terrible band conditions for a good part of the weekend, a number of the mobiles did better than last year. Every county was covered at least twice, most three times. There were at least 6 sweeps on CW, and K4XS made over 2100 Q's. There appeared to be more European activity than last year, and although Asian openings were few, VR2BG appeared in at least 10 logs. There was some discussion of possibly adding Cups and/or pins to the FQP awards, but no decision was made. Dan brought up the possibility of moving FQP dates into late September where band conditions would be better. This idea was eventually scrapped since the consensus seemed to be that having the 3 major state QSO parties on sequential weekends might be viewed by some as overkill and reduce participation. Dan noted that there has been a lot of positive feedback on the certificates and plaques, and thanked Jeff, WC4E for his work on the certificates.

The upcoming WRTC-2002 in Finland was discussed briefly. The team selection process is dramatically different than in previous WRTC's and require some strategizing to try to get an FCG representative selected.

WPX CW is coming up in a couple weeks, it was noted that WPX is one of the contests whose club scores have been used in the past to select nominating clubs, so Dan encouraged members to try to get on and help run the club score up as much as possible.

Remember that in this contest you get double points for 40, 80 and 160 meter Qs, so working 40 as much as possible can prove productive.

Dan, K1TO will be operating WPX CW as NJ4M. Dave, N2NL will operate from K4XS as WK4R.

Joe, W4SAA noted that the SS results have just been published on the ARRL website, and that several FCG calls were noted in the summary.

Three new members signed up during the Meeting, Randy, N4QV, Don W3AZD and Hope WB3ANE. Bruce, W4OV who had to leave early, signed up immediately thereafter via the internet. This brings our current member total to 87.

Randy, N4QV started contesting back in 1974. He operated at a lot of the multi-op efforts in stations around Atlanta GA. Randy prefers phone contests.

Don, W3AZD started contesting 45 years ago in the Novice Roundup. He operated many contests over the years from W3AU and W2PV. He moved to FL in 1992 and currently operates an 18 year old rig using an R-7 vertical.

When the meeting concluded, Pete played the WRTC-2000 CW pileup competition tape through his stereo systems so members could hear what K1TO and WC4E had to contend with. There were 100 calls on the tape, most attendees copied somewhere in the 30's through local chitchat QRM.

Attendees included: K1PT, K1TO, K4LQ, KD4RWN, N2NL & Mickey, N4BP & Julie, N4QV, N4TO, N8PR, W3AZD, W4DN, W4FMS, W4OV & Sandy, W4SAA, W4SLR, W4SO, W4UM, WB3ANE, WC4E, WD4AHZ.

Thanks again Pete, a fun time was had by all.



Left: Dan, K1TO conducts the meeting: Above: Some of the meeting attendees in the N8PR's mini-auditorium.



Chowtime on the N8PR patio. Left to right: Standing: New Member Don, W3AZD, Seated: Bob N4BP, Julie, XYL of N4BP, Sandy, XYL of W4OV, Frank, W4FMS, Joe, W4SAA, Standing behind Sandy, Scott, W4SO. Not sure who the gentleman in the orange shirt is.

Pictures from the N8PR



Pete, N8PR at the controls. Pete has his station wired so that it can be converted to muti-2 very easily.



Paul, KIPT on the left, Dick N4RP on the right



Jeff, WC4E on the left, Joe W4SAA on the right.



New Member Randy N4QV on the left, ye editor Fred K4LQ on the right.



New Member Don, W3AZD on the left, Vic, N4TO on the right



New Member Bruce, W4OV preparing his famous garlic hamburger for a hungry Frank, W4FMS

WPX SSB Claimed Scores*By Jeff, WC4E*

Call	Pwr	Mult	Q's	Hr	2R	Score
SOAB	HP					
WC4E	HP	1010	3575	36	Y	8,370,880
K4VUD		744	1891	25		3,365,112
W4SAA	HP	398	756	30		762,966
SOAB LP						
N4IG	LP	551	1046			1,494,312
K4UCF	LP	516	952	22		1,159,452
(KD4RWN op)						
WB4IHI	LP	297	475			325,215
N4PK		72	80	2		13,104
Single Band						
N4BP	HP	754	1800			3,019,770 10M
NA4CW	QRP	320	429			362,240 10M
4.5W!						
WK4R (K4XS)	HP	425	798	15	1	1,000,025
SB 40M						
M/S						
NF4A @N4PN	HP	1134	3952	47		10,633,518
(NF4A is in FCG-PANHANDLE						

WPX CW Claimed Scores

Call	Category	QSOs	PX	Score	Hrs
NJ4M (K1TO)	SOABHP	3241		833 7,542,815	36
WK4R (K4XS)	N2NL op SOABHP	2896	807	6,723,117	29
KR4Z (N4PN)	SOABHP		2278 761	4,601,767	30
K5KG	SOABHP	A	2067 737	4,266,493	36
KZ4DX (N4BP)	SO10M HP		1500 627	2,120,514	
KG0Z (W4ZW)	SOABHP		450 274	301,674	
N4IG	SOABLP		1238 546	1,811,628	
KG4DGB (N4PK)	SOABLP		13 12	408	1
WC4E	SOABHP		2337 723	4,510,797	29
NF4A	SOABLP		971 490	1,185,310	19
WD4AHZ (MP)	SOABLP T/S		1410 591	2,111,643	36
N4DL	SOAB QRP		81 70	15,680	2.5
KB4N	SOABLP		266 180	124,200	7
K5KG	SOABHP A		2067 737	4,266,493	36
KN4Y	SO10M LP		632 356	432,896	36
KD4RWN (@K4UCF)	SOAB T/S A		157 133	52,003	
WX4CW (W4SO @ N8PR)	SOHP 40M		759 423	1,345,986	
KA2DIV (N4GM)	SOLP 10M		305 236	162,604	15
K4LQ	SOABHP T/S		1034 506	1,417,306	36
W7QF	SOABHP		197	94,395	
W4UM	SOABLP		172 135	71,415	8
W4FMS	SO10MLP		777 397	690,383	23
K4PB	SOABHP		543 310	461,590	
W4SAA	SOABLP T/S		764 389	760,106	32
W4IR	SOABHP		476 315	296,415	
NU4Y	SOABHP		605 339	622,065	
KG4MBZ	SOABLP		93 78	12,324	
K4FAU (AB4RL op)	SOABLP A		17 17	578	
N4RP	SOABLP				
WB4IHI	SOABLP		331 237	206,190	

KN4Y SO10MLP 632 356 432,896 36
 AB4RL @ K4FAU SOABLP A 17 17 578

Total CW score so far (Including Panhandle) 41,942,427
 Total SSB Score 29,732,168
 Combined CW and SSB scores ==> 71,674,595!!!

We completely eclipsed our 2000 17 log effort of 41,863,293 points. Every point counts! Part time efforts were greatly appreciated, they make up the bulk of the scores! Well done by everyone!!

FCG Hero of 2000 ?

The following e-mail was posted to the FCG reflector by Dick , N4RP - To all FCG: I hereby nominate Joe, W4SAA, for our hero of FCG for 2000. His Stew Perry contest score, number two in the world, on the face of it is outstanding. But let us look at the finer details.

- (1) This was his first time ever excursion below 3500KHZ.
 - (2). He drove 107 miles to do it.
 - (3) He paid \$50 for his spot in the park.
 - (4) He then tried two balloon suspended antennas, which were blown away by the gale winds, and had to settle for a kite suspended 1/4 wave vertical antenna (kindly provided by old pro N4BP), with two submerged radials which he had to wade out into the frigid cold Atlantic Ocean to place correctly,
 - (5) He then settled down to operate the contest from his picnic table in a TIKI HUT, totally exposed to the 40 mph, 40 degree F, 100% humidity winds (you are welcome to calculate the wind chill factor).
- Final Score = totally outstanding and far above what is expected from FCG members
 73 Dick



Joe, W4SAA, working the Stew Perry 160 Meter Contest from the Keys

Pictures from the ARRL DX

K4NNN at the W1CW/WIYL QTH (WIYL Photos)



Jim, K4OJ



Kevin, N4KM

To the right is the K4XS 10/20 meter tower

6/6/6/6/6 on 10 Meters

5/5/5/5 on 20 Meters

On the 200 Ft Tower ! (N2NL Photo)



K4XS's shack - shows the SO2R setup; IC775 in the middle and IC756 to the left. K4XS was operated for ARRL CW SOAB by Dave, N2NL for a # 1 USA



ARRL DX CW from K4XS

By Dave Mueller - N2NL

After every serious single op entry, I try to do a complete write-up afterwards. That way I have something to look back onto in the future, be it strategy planning or just reminiscing. As I mature as a contester, I look up to those who have achieved year after year, such as N2AA, N2NT, ETC. One of those people is Fred, K3ZO. I've read his past write-ups with interest, trying to pick up every little bit of knowledge to help me in my future efforts. Hopefully, some new contester will read this story, and learn a new trick, or feel inspired to achieve more.

Originally, I had planned to join the multi-multi effort at K3LR. I am an active duty member of the US Coast Guard, and circumstances rose where I was unable to leave South Florida for the ARRL CW weekend. I apologize to Tim for backing out, but it was a situation out of my control. I had asked Bill, K4XS, and Dan, K1TO, if there was interest in a multi-single effort like we had done for CQWW CW last year, but no one was really up to it. I mentioned interest in a single op effort, and in late January Bill sent me an email offering use of his station for a single op, low power effort. His amplifier was broken, so a high power effort was out of the question. I jumped at the chance to operate from his station.

Another downside of being in the USCG is housing; they don't consider antennas to be important when providing housing. As a result I'm living in a NO ANTENNA apartment complex. I was able to sneak some hidden wires on the roof and was very successful with them, however after my 1300 QSO effort in the 10m contest, the landlord caught wind of my antennas after I worked just about every TV and telephone in the complex. So since mid December I've been QRT except the times I operate from K1PT's QTH 1/2-hour north. As a result, I'm forced to guest-op from various stations, at least until I retire a few years down the road.

Bill's station is quite a sight. He has done an amazing job engineering, building, and maintaining his station. I've taken some pictures; you can see them at www.qsl.net/n2nl. His station consists of three 200-foot towers. One tower holds 6/6/6/6/6 on 10m, and 5/5/5/5 on 20m. The second tower holds 6/6/6/6 on 15m. The third tower holds 4/4 on 40m and several tribanders, which can be pointed in various directions for working multipliers. Between the three towers, Bill has an amazing array of 80m delta loops, including a 4 el quad to the northeast, 2 el southwest (sharing the reflector of the NE array), a northwest loop, and a sloping dipole for the Caribbean. The northeast quad kicks butt into Europe, beating out W4AN's 4-square every time in pre-contest testing. In the CQWW CW, 160m was our weakest band. He replaced the old vertical with a new 1/4 wave elevated vertical. The base is about 50 ft high, with 12 elevated radials. He recently installed beverages, one NE, the other NW. As you can see, the aluminum he has put up is quite amazing. Even more amazing is the shack with all the rotator boxes. All his antennas are rotatable. That adds up to a lot of rotor boxes!

In the weeks leading up to the contest, I prepared the best I could. Dan, K1TO, let me see his log and rate sheet from his record setting LP effort in the 2000 ARRL CW. That turned out to be invaluable to me. The propagation from west central Florida is far different from the Northeast. Not only is it almost in the central time zone, it is an additional hop into Europe. Bill's station does a lot to make up for those disadvantages. I studied his rate sheet, to try to set a game plan

I set three goals for myself. #1 was to operate the entire 48 hours without a break. I had done it before from KH2, where it is easier. In Guam, 0000Z is 10AM, so you can start the contest after a full nights sleep. It was still painful. I figured however, that if K3WW and others could do it, I could do it too, especially since I'm several years younger (I'm 29). #2 was to break the existing SOABLP record, which was 3.1 million. #3 was to break 3000 QSOs. Dan made 2650 QSOs in his record-breaking effort operating from his home station. I figured 3K was attainable simply due to the additional aluminum I had at my disposal.

The week before the contest, I tried to get as much sleep as possible. You can't save up on sleep, but you can be well rested at the start. I also built a new SO2R switch, to allow me to listen to both rigs at the same time. I had tried SO2R in years past but never successfully. I never figured out a good way to switch audio between radios into my headphones. The first time I operated from K1PT's QTH last year, it all "clicked" with me. He had a simple setup I have been very successful with since. It is a simple circuit, consisting of 2 SPST switches, one for each ear. It allows me to listen to either radio in either ear, or either radio in both ears. I drew up a simple schematic you can see at www.qsl.net/n2nl/. It can be built with parts from Radio Shack.

The Friday of the contest, I woke at 7AM after getting a good 8 hours of sleep. I made the 4 hour drive to K4XS's, arriving at about 12:30PM. It allowed me plenty of time to set up. I set up 2 complete stations, with 2 rigs, 2 keyers, and 2 computers. It makes SO2R much easier for me that way. 2 computers is the key. I could have a 2nd rig QSO lined up, entered in the computer and ready to work, and still run stations on the primary radio without having to delete the info from the 2nd rig. Station one was an IC-775; station 2 was an IC-765. Setup went easily, except when it came to networking the computers. I just couldn't get them to "talk". After a couple hours of frustration, and when I was about to give up, it hit me. I had forgotten to set one up as "station 1" and the other as "station 2". After correcting that, they were networked and I was good to go. By this time it was close to 4:30PM, and I tried lying down for a nap to prepare for the 7PM start. Unfortunately, I couldn't sleep. I was too excited. After about 45 minutes I got up and walked around, looking at the antennas, trying to stretch my legs since I knew I'd be sitting for a very long time.

At 2345Z, I sat down at the rig. I had everything set up around me. Run rig in front of my, 2nd rig off to my left, cooler with drinks and food off to my side. There was also a TV off to my right I could take a look at if I wanted. Bill said "good luck", and left for the evening. I checked WWV and set the clocks, and looked for a hole on 40m.

I started at 0000z at about 7055 KHz, with OL7W as the first QSO. The contest started "OK", but the rate wasn't amazing. I had Kato's breakdown sheet beside me, and was pushing myself to try to keep the rate up. I figured I could try to out-rate him every hour, and the record would be mine. I started immediately with the 2nd radio scanning 15m, which actually didn't sound all that good. My 1st second radio QSO was PY3MHZ. I continued to work Europe on 40m, while scanning 15 and 20m with the 2nd radio. The first hour ended with 82 Quos on 40m, and 16 2nd radio Quos. I stuck it out on 40m until 0220Z, continuing to scan the other bands with the 2nd radio. I didn't work anything real exotic, except 4K5CW and a couple Auk's who called me. I was able to pick up some easy multipliers with the second radio, as well as many Quos. I worked everything I could find with the 2nd radio, multiplier or not.

Granted, some of the easier stuff would be easily worked later, but by working it now I wouldn't have to scramble to find it later. I ended the 02Z hour with another 89 Quos in the log. By 0220Z, the rate had really slowed down on 40m. I figure most of Europe was sleeping. I had worked several loud Auk's on 20m, and moved there to see if there was any rate to be had. That gave me the opportunity to scan 40m with the 2nd radio. Although the IC-775 has a 2nd VFO, I didn't like it and didn't touch it the entire weekend. The rate on 20m was slow, although AH8I and VU2TS called me for nice mults. At 0230 I decided to "fire-up" the 4 el 80m quad for the first time. I was rewarded with instant rate, working a quick string of 20 QSOs. RX9TX was my first QSO, so I knew 80m was wide open. 4K5CW called in again to make it 2 bands. By 0245, the rate had slowed again, so I moved to 160m for the 1st time. I CQ'ed the entire contest except for the time I spent on 160m. Due to the weak signals and pileups, I concentrated 100% when on topband. 160m is always one of my favorite bands, although it has frustrated me in recent years due to my limited antenna situations. I knew the band was good when I worked G0IVZ with one call. We didn't even hear a European on 160 in the CQWW CW, and here I worked one with a single call barefoot. It just so happens that G0IVZ was the first European EVER WORKED on 160 from K4XS's present location. Over the next few minutes I worked several more Europeans, including S5, OK, and OM. Nothing overly exciting, but exciting enough to me since I was running low power and it was still a multiplier. For the rest of the evening, I switched Cqing between 40 and 80m, always scanning with the second radio for new QSOs and multipliers. Although not working anything real exotic, I was working a steady stream of multipliers. By 0500Z, 20m had opened back up into Asia, and I moved back there.

I worked a string of European and Asiatic Russians, including EX8W and VK3IO. Meanwhile, I worked ZS4TX and OD5/OK1MU with the 2nd radio on 40. A second excursion to 160m brought T48K, HG6N, RW2F, and a few other new ones. I tried some short CQ's on the other bands, but 20m was the only thing going at the time. From 0545-0730 I hung out there at about 14045 KHz, working mostly Eastern Europe. We can't thank enough the huge activity in every contest from our counterparts in Eastern Europe. I think they are the primary reason for the record scores we've been seeing. They seem to be an endless source of QSOs. At 0730 I knew I had to get back to 40m for EU sunrise. From 0730 until 0945 I stayed there. 40m was amazing. I was working deep Europe several hours past their sunrise. I was running them all night at about 60-70/hr, supplemented with QSOs on the 2nd radio.

I'm most worried about being tired between the 09-11z hours. This is the time most of us on the East Coast are sleeping, and the time the body is at its deepest part of the sleep cycle. I was yawning, but the rate kept things interesting and as a result I never really felt tired. By 10Z, 20m was wide open, and I had a great run going which kept me busy. I ended up with 135 QSOs during the 10Z hour. I'd never seen anything like it before. I always remembered that hour as one of the slowest hour of the contest. Not this year, and not from K4XS. Bill says he is "king" on 20 and 40m, and I believe him. His 4 stack on 20 really played. By the 11Z hour, things get interesting on the East Coast. 15m starts to open to Europe, and the low bands open to Asia. I had planned on running JA's on 40m at this time, but 20m was rocking and rolling into Europe. While running that band, I took one last listen on 80m, working KH6/W6PH, VK4EMM, and JA7YAA. JA7YAA was quite a struggle, required several tries, but finally he heard me. I went up to 15m, and heard guys in the Northeast were already working Europe I couldn't hear yet. I tuned the band, working a few loud Europeans, but 20m was still the place to be. At 1145Z, I made the move to 15m, and made my 1000th QSO. The rate was incredible.

We can't thank enough the huge activity in every contest from our counterparts in Eastern Europe. I think they are the primary reason for the record scores we've been seeing. They seem to be an endless source. The band opened quickly and I had the "perfect run". I'd only have one or two callers every time, so I could pull out a complete call just about every time. During this time, a friend of mine in Europe recorded me from his end. There's a 3 1/2 minute wav file I posted you can listen to at the above listed web address. During this time I listened to 10m, waiting for it open, and worked the occasional 2nd rig QSO. By this time, SO2R had really clicked with me. I had it down really well.

I had the monitor gain turned way down on the CQ rig, allowing me to concentrate on the 2nd rig while transmitting on the 1st. Once I had a 2nd radio QSO lined up, I'd pause long enough to call, then send a quick CQ, then pause to send the exchange. If I was running, I'd wait until I was timed right, then send my call (by pushing the F4 key) while receiving the exchange from the station I was working on the 1st radio. I'd send QRZ while the 2nd radio guy sent me his exchange, and then send my exchange (F2 key) while copying the next caller on the 1st rig. This worked out well for me with a few exceptions when I left the 2nd radio guy hanging (sorry!) until I finished transmitting on the Cqing radio. I made the move to 10m at 1200Z, with 96 QSOs for the 1100-hour. With 12 hours gone in the contest, I had been awake for a full 24 hours already, but worked 1180 QSOs and 276 multipliers. I was well ahead of K1TO's numbers from the previous year, but knew I had to keep it up. The next 2 hours were just amazing on 10m. 164/hr followed by a 150/hr. It was some of the best rates I ever had, even from Guam. 10m was wide open, and I worked several UA9's. At 1417z, a very loud JA3YBK called in on 10m LP, which caught me off guard. I kept my ear open for VR2BG who always seems to find the 10m LP opening, but he never called in. I think he was there though, after reading other writeups. I was probably a result of being low power. Yes, I was probably one of the louder stations on the band, but not one of the "beacons" such as W3LPL, KC1XX, or K3LR. I worked 10m until 1455Z, when I moved back to 15m. VQ9IO rewarded me as my first caller. The rest of the morning I swapped back and forth between 10 and 15m, again not working anything super exotic, but the mults kept coming in. I found a very weak and watery T32RD on 15m at 1618Z, and quickly he was in the log. During the noon hours and early afternoon, the rate wasn't amazing, yet stayed on the 60's. I kept pushing the 2nd rig, working about 20 QSOs an hour on that rig. I started running into some packet pileups, including TF3GB on 10m. By this time I had discovered a trick, which helped out immensely in the pileups. I'd hear 8 or 9 guys calling at once, but they were all zero beat. I'd set the RIT off a few HZ, and call. Since I would be the only guy calling slightly off frequency, my tone would be different from everyone else, and I'd win in the pile. I learned this first while at KH2. It was frustrating while on the receiving end of a pileup - dozens of guys calling all zero beat, all the same strength. I'd always listen to the edges, picking up the callers who were slightly off frequency, even when they were weaker than the rest. I left the 2nd radio's RIT set a few hz off the entire weekend, and it was very successful for me. I busted several pileups, beating even the "big boys".

The afternoons in Florida are very slow times in a DX contest. 10/15m are on the way out, and absorption is way too high on 20m to work anything. It is frustrating to listen to W1's work Europeans on 20m we can't hear, but there's nothing we can do about it. We make up for it into Asia. The W4's were always the loudest into KH2 on almost all the bands, especially 40 and 80m. The problem is that there isn't any activity out there.

. For the remainder of the afternoon, I pushed on, supplementing with the 2nd radio, to keep the rate up in the 60's all afternoon. Later in the afternoon 15 and 10m opened to South America, giving me something new to work and new multipliers to be had. By this time, Bill had returned home and was impressed by the totals. I was well on my way to breaking the record. I started to feel like crap however. My body was starting to protest all the hours in the chair. It helped to stand up, and operate standing or kneeling in front of the radio. I tried anything to get my lanky 6'4" body into a different position to stretch out. By 2200Z, I had 2084 QSOs and 346 multipliers in the log. I had not gotten out of the operating chair for more than a minute. Here's another "detail". I don't drink coffee, however I'm a big fan of Diet Coke. I drank them through the night so the caffeine would help me stay awake. I've tried doing the health food thing, without much success. I have the most luck when I eat the foods my body is used to eating (junk food nut). Anyway, back to the Diet Cokes. There's a by-product to drinking all those soft drinks. In order to prevent losing my run frequency, I had an empty Big Gulp cup I used to relieve myself so I didn't have to step away from the radio. During a slow time, I'd push the "F1" key to send a long CQ and run to the adjoining bathroom to empty the cup. That way I never lost a possible QSO, and never stepped away from the radio with the auto CQ function engaged (which I believe is unethical). I told you I was serious! By 2200, I had noticed 15 and 10m were opening nicely into Asia. I made the mode to 10m and worked a nice string of JA's. ZL2BR called in for the mult, and I worked OA7/NB31 on 15m with the 2nd rig. I stuck it out on 10m until the 00z hour. The band was wide open to Asia, but I worked few multipliers. DS2BSK called in for a nice one. I wonder why there seems to be such little activity out of Korea. I worked hundreds of them in contests from my KH2 days, and you would think that they would be easier to work than they are, even from the East Coast. At the halfway point, I had 2200 QSOs in the log. I was well ahead of the record setting pace from K1TO the previous year. I figured I had a shot at 4.5 million points. Before the contest, I spoke on the phone with TO. Dan joked to me that if I broke his record, it wouldn't be as impressive unless I eclipsed it by 50%, the amount he surpassed the original record. So, at the halfway point, I set my final goal at 4.5 million. I started the 2nd 24 hours on 40m. The rate was extremely slow. C6AKP called in for a mult. Dick is a friend and fellow FCGer and I realized I needed C6 on 15m. I asked him to move, and he did to finish up C6 on all 6 bands. During the previous 24 hours, I had attempted to move multipliers although I was mostly unsuccessful. Either I'd get a flat out "NO" or they wouldn't reply to my request. It was extremely frustrating. Since I was usually running high in the band, I figure these stations had been asked over and over again to move by the time they called me, and were tired of doing it. 40m was lousy. The band had gone long, so I moved down to 80m. It sounded like all the single ops were there, so I felt it was the right thing to do. The rate picked up a little bit, but conditions definitely seemed down from the previous night. PA5WT called in for the mult - those PA's seemed to be everywhere this year. The next hour and a half I ran on 80m, and hunted the other bands for additional QSOs. The multipliers were coming slowly however.

At 0200z, I listened to 160m, working three stations including OHOPM who was a multiplier. 160 was far worse than the previous evening. A cold front had just passed through, and the band was extremely noisy, unlike the previous night. I heard several multipliers I needed, but called to no avail. I quickly went back to 80m, tuning 40m with the 2nd rig now that 20m had shut down. I snagged EX8W on 40, while Z31MM and OE2S called in on 80. Later I found and worked D68C and UP4L on 40. By 0300Z, 20m started showing signs of life. I snagged D68C, and started CQing after finding a hole. In between a sting of Russians and JA's, a weak UK8UDX called in, then FR5FD

The rate was really slow, however, and at 0525 I moved back to 40 to try to take advantage of European sunrise. The next several hours I stuck it out on 40. The rate was dreadfully slow.. in the 40/hr range. About every hour or so I made a sweep of 160m. Every time I heard new mults I needed, but conditions seemed way down from the previous night and my efforts were frustration filled although I eventually worked GJ3YHU and V47KP.

Staying awake was getting difficult. It was time to break out the secret weapons. By this time Diet Coke wasn't producing the "kick" it used to. I supplemented it with a couple no-doze tablets. I know many contesters say never to use it, but that is them, and I'm going to use what helps me. Shortly after I woke right up and was good to go. It tore up my stomach though. I had not really eaten anything by this time, except for some fruit, crackers, and other munchies. Another problem that developed was some backaches from all the hours of being seated. I had a bottle of Tylenol, which helped that problem. I continued to switch positions to keep from getting too drowsy and too uncomfortable. Bill had three different chairs in the operating room, and I constantly switched from chair to chair. One of the chairs is an "ergonomic" chair - the type to don't really sit in, but kneel on. That really helped me. My legs were starting to cramp up and changing positions helped with that.

At 0800z, I was still pounding out the QSOs, slowly but steadily. Europe was still coming in on 40. By 0900Z JA's started to replace the European callers. At 0935 I surpassed K1TO's QSO total of 2655 from the previous year. I hoped for a 20m opening like the previous day, but it never developed. The band was about as dead as it could be. It gave me the opportunity to search for Asian multipliers on 40m, which I was unable to do the previous day. I found and worked my good friend Jun, WH0V, as well as AC4G/KH9. I also tracked down a ZL, which I still needed. Fortunately, at 10Z, 20m finally opened back up to Europe. The rate was slower than the previous day, although it was faster than I suffered through the night. Among the Europeans, Brett VR2BG finally found me and called in. At 1120, I switched the 2nd radio to 15m. I immediately heard a signal, and quickly worked TZ6DX without moving the dial. Meanwhile HS0/G3NOM called me on 20. Things were getting interesting as the sun rose above the horizon, which always is a boost to help me stay awake. 15m finally opened up at 1130Z, and I started a decent run there. The next hour had a half, I ran on 15m while making the occasional 2nd radio QSO on 10m.

My QSO total was lacking on 15m so I figured the best rate and chance for multipliers calling in was on that band. EX2M and A45XR called in for new ones. While tuning very high on 10m, I found GJ2A and TA2BK. By 1300Z, I made the move to 10m, and started scanning 20m for Asia. I worked a loud YB0ECT, followed by JT1CO and BV7FF. BV7FF was weak, but he heard me right away. K4XS's 20m array rocks! During this time, there was some confusion on 10m. W3BGN ended up just above me. He didn't hurt my rate, but after a few minutes I heard VQ9IO. I assumed he was calling me, but it turns out he was actually calling BGN slightly off frequency. I called VQ9IO directly, and he came back to me with a report. I'm not sure if W3BGN ever did work him, but I hope I didn't steal a multiplier away from Steve.

At 1442Z, I hit 3000 QSOs, and had completed 2 of my 3 initial goals. I was still working toward 4.5 million, although slowly. At 1458Z, IS00MH called in on 10m. Although I had a bunch of IS0's on 10, I still needed one on 15. I had tried moving several without luck. I tried moving him, and he said, "OK". I attempted moving him to 21150 kHz, nice and high in the band.

Little did I realize this was a beacon frequency, and upon calling him there, I promptly got chased off by someone. It's the first time I've even been run off a frequency by the beacon police! I never did successfully move him, but just below 21150 I found and worked TA3BN for another new one.

10m continued to be the place to me. 9K9C called me, but he said "later" when I asked him to move. At 1600, 10m had really slowed down and I moved down to 15m. It allowed me to scan 10m with the 2nd rig, and I found TZ6DX there. P3A called in on 15m, followed by IS0UWX, which finally gave me my IS0 mult for that band. The rate had really slowed down, into the typical late morning/early afternoon W4 conditions. 10/15m slow, and the absorption on 20.

By Sunday morning I still had not really eaten anything. I was extremely hungry. Bill came in and told me that I looked like crap (thanks!). He did me a big favor and picked up a sandwich for me while running some errands. He got me a big, 7-eleven turkey sub. Uh oh. I heard turkey puts you to sleep, but it was all he could find. I was hungry, so I slammed it down anyway. I immediately felt sick, and thought I was going to have to throw up. That was followed by a spell where I was immensely tired. I was close to quitting by this point, but I stuck it out since I had made it as far as I did. In the early afternoon, I had started seeing things, and having odd thoughts. I imagine it was almost like tripping on acid. A high derived from a lack of sleep. I imagined that all these little creatures—call signs - lived in a long tube. The radio gave me access to this tube. As I turned the dial to the right, I moved down the tube to the right, and vice versa. When I came across one of these creatures I still needed, I would call it and work it. My run radio was similar. I was one of those creatures in the tube, with others calling me. It was just so amazing.. Some person in a room on the other side of the world was listening to ME, and calling ME. It felt like such an honor to be called by them. I was really tripping. Visually, I wasn't overly effected, with one exception. The sub VFO on the 775 was like a melting stick of butter. It was drooping and spongy. The rate was slowing and imagination intensifying, and caffeine doing nothing.

Fortunately in the early afternoon, I was able to turn on the TV and watch the Daytona 500. I'm a big NASCAR fan, and watching the race reinvigorated me. During this time I somewhat ignored the 2nd radio. By this time I was getting very frustrated with it anyway, since it seemed as if I had worked everyone already. It was almost as if there were a limited number of active stations, and I had worked everyone. I had a large number of stations I had already worked on 4 or 5 bands. Obviously with the big M/M scores there were thousands of QSOs still to be had, but in my little world, I had already worked just about everything I found.

Also during this time I had my one-and-only frequency fight, which itself was anticlimactic. I was frustrated finding a run frequency on 15m. During the contest, I wouldn't even look at the lower 20 kHz of the band for a hole. This one time I started from the bottom, and discovered 21000.8 was wide open. I started CQing and working stations. It was cool.. Low power and running band edge. After a couple minutes and 6 QSOs, KC1XX started CQing zero beat, directly on top of me. That REALLY upset me, especially in my present state of mind. I told him to QSY, and he made a short comment I didn't catch ("HI" I think) and slid up a few Hz, still pretty close, and continued to CQ. The 775 has sharp filters and I continued working guys, including CT9L for a mult, so I stuck at it. I could hear him off to the side, sometimes weak, sometimes crushing loud. I think he was just pointing in different directions while CQing instead of trying to run me off the frequency though.

By 1940Z the band was about toast, and I moved to 20m, which had opened back up finally. On 20, I found a nice hole up around 14045, slightly below K1DG and hung out there while watching the race. Occasionally I'd make a sweep with the 2nd radio, and I found HP1AC on 10 that way. The race was one of the best I've ever seen, and it took away all my tiredness. I had the volume turned all the way down so the sound wouldn't disturb me. I saw Dale Earnhardt's wreck on the last lap and my heart just sunk. Although not a fan of his, the wreck looked real bad and I knew something was wrong by the way the rescue people were working on the car. I wouldn't find out until the next morning that the wreck was fatal. He owns a house about a mile up the road from where I live and it hit me pretty hard although I never met him in person.

Back to the contest, things were still pretty slow. I realized I wouldn't make it to the 4.5 million goal, but when the race was over I worked it as hard as possible to make the best possible score. At 2230, I moved to 40m where I finished out the contest. A string of multipliers called in the last hour on 40 including JY, GU, IS, and 5B. My last 2nd radio QSO was ZF1A at 2339z, on 10m. Close-in Caribbean multipliers are extremely difficult to work on the higher bands. I had been trying to work a ZF all weekend on 10, without luck. I finally worked him back scatter by pointing the entire 10m stack away from him.

At the 0000Z, I listened to the great scores on 3830, ate dinner, and went to sleep at 9PM local after being awake for 62 hours straight. I finished the contest with 3422 QSOs, 421 multipliers, for 4,314,408 points. It surpassed my wildest expectations. K4XS's station is simply incredible, the conditions were awesome, making for a great record breaking effort. In hind site I could have improved somewhat. I still need to refine my SO2R skills. I probably tuned the bands too slowly with the 2nd radio, missing valuable multipliers. I should have attempted to move multipliers more often. I think I could have added another couple hundred thousand to my overall score, but I'm totally satisfied with the result. I hope this is enjoyable and worth your time to read. Hopefully someone, somewhere, learned something by reading this, just as I learn by reading the write ups of others. Congratulations to KQ2M and W4PA (@K5ZD) for their HP efforts, K11G's amazing QSO total (being a rare mult is cool, isn't it!), and W4AN for taking the MS category from 4 land. And finally, a big, big thanks to K4XS for opening his doors for me, K1TO for all the tips and inspiration, and the entire Florida Contest Group for welcoming me to South Florida with open arms.

73, Dave N2NL

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