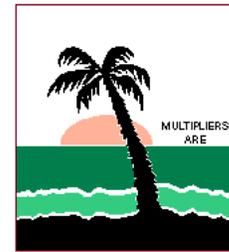




# Contest Gazette

## Florida Contest Group

www.floridacontestgroup.org



Volume 10 Issue 5

October 2003

### From the President's Corner

By Dan Street, K1TO



CQWW SSB literally ended yesterday. Did we ever dodge a solar bullet?! The doomsayers predicted a complete wipeout of the bands. Well, that happened for a very short time on Sunday, but the rest of the contest was not all that bad at all! FCGers made a giant showing, including DX operations at PJ2T, NP2B, KP3Z, VP5DX and VE3EJ. Those operations, plus multi-ops at N4PN, N4TO, K9ES, K4LOG, K4FAU, WQ4U and K4FCG, plus LOTS of FCGers operating when they could from home, will lead to a terrific club score for sure. Thanks to everyone who got on for your contribution.

Who said 10 Meters is dead? It's unknown yet what page Bob N4BP reached in his "good book" he had planned on reading while pushing F1 endlessly, but it's a good bet he made less progress on the book than expected. Bill K4XS may repeat as 40M champ, despite giving up early. It looks like the 3-peat Multi-Single streak for Team Whoopass (N4PN) is finally over. Congrats on that achievement, guys!

Many commented on the proliferation of ex-VHF only licenses in Europe making themselves available on HF for their first major contest. PG prefixes from the Netherlands, DGs from Germany and G7s from England were among the prevalent newcomers.

As you read this, SS CW is only days away. Jim, K4OJ assembled a lengthy treatise on how to operate SS in this issue of the Gazette. The neatest things about SS are that conditions are less affected by sunspot activity, low power entrants can score quite well and tall antennas are actually a hindrance! That tribander at 35' that seemed to be overmatched in CQWW suddenly becomes a strong force in SS. K3UA routinely made the top ten in CW SS from WPA in the late 1970s with a tribander at 35' and wires for the low bands.

Several other large contest clubs have made a commitment to push hard in SS this year. We've reached the size where we are likely to have over 50 combined entries and thus will be thrown into the Unlimited pool with the large mega-clubs that have 2x and 3x our membership. While it would be fun to pull off the upset of the century, we have to be realistic and not expect that just yet. On the other hand, the YCCC and FRC, who dominate the DX contest scene, do not typically make a run at SS. I suspect that a large part of that relates to

their location in the northeast, which means that their signals on the high bands skip right over the population center. We in Florida don't have that problem!

In general, find the band that is open best to W8 and W9 and you'll do just fine. Taking a look at the SS results, you find the largest number of entries from those call areas. While the lure of working another KH6 or KL7 might be fun, that typically happens on a band that does not allow you to take advantage of the propagation to more populated areas and forces you to break a pileup with the rest of the USA fighting you for that QSO. Unless the urge for a clean sweep overwhelms you, work into the population center on bands that we are loud on and you will be most successful.

Meetings at Melbourne in September and at K4XS earlier this month were well attended and enthusiastic! See the in-depth summaries and plentiful pictures in this newsletter if you missed them on the reflector.

Welcome aboard to our new members. Interesting to see all those ex-W1s joining the club! Last one out of New England – please turn the lights out... For you new folks - please take a moment to read the article in this issue about our Contest Buddy program that allows all of us to help each other out in an organized fashion.  
Vy 73, Dan

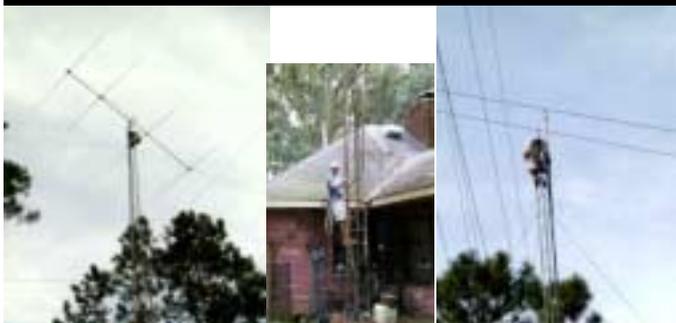
#### Inside this Issue

<i>Welcome Aboard, Events Calendar, Antenna Party Pix.</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Pictures from around the Club.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>September Melbourne Hamfest Meeting.....</i>	<i>4,5,6</i>
<i>Working FQP with milliwatts, Note from NIIC.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>The TICO Experience - 1998 by Fred K9VV,,,,,,.....</i>	<i>8,9</i>
<i>October Meeting at K4XS.....</i>	<i>10,11,12</i>
<i>Elmers—The Elmo's Glue by George K5KG .....</i>	<i>13,14</i>
<i>Tower thoughts for K4XS.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>More Club pictures.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>SS CW Ideas by Jim K4OJ.....</i>	<i>16,17</i>



*FCGers wondering what to do for added effectiveness on 80 meters this season might want to consider one of the above! It's a 5 element array in use at 7J4ARL. Construction was supervised by JA4UEP. It was finished October 19. The small dot on the boom left of the tower top may be a worker, perhaps JA4UEP himself! (Tnx Bill K4XS for bringing this monster antenna to our attention).*

### October 5, 2003 Antenna Party at W1YL



*Above L - Jeff WC4E readies the gin pole for the repaired 10M yagi - R - Jeff finishes installation of the 4 element 10 M yagi. Center - Last man off the tower, Dan K1TO*



*Day winding down, K1TO and N4GI are still in the air.*

*Pictured at Left: WC4E, K4OJ, N4KM, W7SE and one of our newer members ON6MN.*

*Tnx for all the help!  
Jim K4OJ*

## Welcome Aboard



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

**N1PA** Paul Ash, 1295 Caudle St. Orlando FL 32828  
e-mail: bluesdude@cfl.rr.com

**W4XLG** Lyle Haney, 506 Ruckel Drive, Defuniak Springs FL 32433 e-mail: lhaney@freeportfl.net

**KB4BBB** C. Kay Neary, 7487 Saddle Creek Place, Sarasota FL 34241 e-mail: katneary@aol.com

**N1IC** Nick Palomba, 7287 Westminster Abbey Road, Orlando FL 34202 e-mail: n1ic@hotmail.com

**W1ZA** Duke Brown, 8186 Natures Way, Apt 33, Bradenton FL 34202 e-mail; dukepat@tampabay.rr.com

**OM6NM** Norbert Moravansky, Thurzova ST 863/4 Bytca, Slovak Republic 01401 e-mail: norbertmoravansky@jfmed.uniba.sk

**WIIS** Dave Schaller, 3 Lazy Eight Drive, Port Orange FL 32128 e-mail: dschaller@earthlink.net

**This brings our member total to 164**

## Events Calendar

**ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW 2100Z, Nov 1 - 0300Z, Nov 3**

**November FCG Meeting - Orlando Nov 8**

**1:30PM Applebees @ University & Alafaya  
ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB 2100Z, Nov 15 - 0300Z, Nov 17**

**CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW 0000Z, Nov 29 - 2400Z, Nov 30**

**ARRL 160-Meter Contest 2200Z, Dec 5 - 1600Z, Dec 7**

**ARRL 10-Meter Contest 0000Z, Dec 13 - 2400Z, Dec 14**

**ARRL RTTY Roundup 1800Z, Jan 3 - 2400Z, Jan 4**

**North American QSO Party, CW 1800Z, Jan 10 - 0600Z, Jan 11**

**North American QSO Party, SSB 1800Z, Jan 17 - 0600Z, Jan 18**

Pictures from around the Club



*The J75A Contest Station  
(K5KG Photos)*



*The J75KG Six Meter Station  
(Ed: Thanks for a new one on 6 Meters George)*



*Above: Bob N4BP had to cancel mobile plans for FQP because of a motorcycle accident just prior to FQP Ouch!  
Below: Our FCG Banner hangs at the SERC Field Day site near Sarasota.*



*Above: WC4E can be seen speeding around race tracks around Florida in his new sports car. Picture shows Jeff waiting in the pits at Sebring raceway Note car number!*

*Below: Background Dan KITO wraps up a tour on 20M SSB during Field Day, Jim K4PV on 15M CW*



## September Melbourne Hamfest FCG Meeting

FCGers turned out in reasonable force for the Melbourne Hamfest.

Some members met for the traditional annual lunch at Franco's Ristorante, chewing over contest activities as well as copious amounts of Italian food. Seen there were Dan K1TO, Jim K4OJ, Fred K4LQ, Charly K4VUD, Ed N4EK, Trish KD4BRJ, Joe W4SAA, Gary K9AW & his wife (Maria?), Rox W1ROX with friend Bart and daughter Ariel, Eric KU4TF and his guest KG4Y??, Kevin N4KM and new member Doug K4DDR.

Then to top off the afternoon, members met at the QTH of Eric K9ES at 4PM. Eric's XYL Sylvia put on a wonderful spread of hot dogs, hamburgers, chili, beans, salads, lots of dessert items, etc, etc! Chuck AD4ES did a masterful job at the grill. Members attending made a significant dent in the food inventory prior to starting the meeting.

Attending were David W4DKB and Sherri W4STB, Jim K4OJ, Chuck AD4ES, Lee W4UUM, Tom KK4TA, Jim W4YA, Fred K4LQ, Dan K1TO, Art AB4RL and his dad Peter, Jon W4JN and Kay KB4BBB, Jim K8OSF and Sharon, Bob K4LW, Howard AA4RX, Kevin N4KM, Eric K9ES and guest ARRL SE Division Vice Director Sandy W4RU.

Dan began the meeting by welcoming everyone and acknowledging those who had traveled far to the meeting. (W4RU traveled the farthest from GA.) The group applauded Eric and Sylvia for their hospitality.

Dan told the story of his "lucky undefeated Marlins baseball cap", then passed it around for voluntary donations for Eric and Sylvia.

Dan asked each attendee to introduce themselves and tell what their contest plans are for the upcoming season. A wide mix of contests will be entered by those present, not the least being a Multi-Single at Eric's for CQWW SSB. CQWW was the most frequently mentioned contest (including RTTY in a few weeks), with SS, ARRL 10, ARRL DX, CQ WPX, SAC, FQP, CQP and NEQP all garnering mention.

First time meeting attendees were Lee W4UUM and Kay KB4BBB. Lee enthusiastically spoke about his ability to work DX on CW with very modest antennas and is happy to be part of the K9ES multi-op team, while learning the fine art of using the keyboard for logging

and sending CW. Kay thoroughly supports hubby Jon W4JN with all of his contest pursuits (and we appreciate them making the long trek over from Sarasota for the meeting).

Jim K4OJ noted his plans to build the W1CW Memorial station at his mom's (Ellen W1YL) home into an effective Multi-Multi competitor. He plans serious M/M efforts in all the major CW contests this coming season (and even hinted at doing some SSB as well!), plus trash talking a bit for the ARRL 10 Meter test. ;<)

Dan noted that in last year's CQWW, the FCG was the # 4 USA club behind only the megaclubs in the Northeast - YCCC, FRC and PVRC.

Dan said he was proud and happy to be completing his 5th year as FCG President and looked forward to continued service. The club has grown from about 35 members then to 160 members now.

Dan gave a summary of the this year's FQP log situation. Working with Dave K8CC on computerized log checking didn't work out, so we are now working closely with Bruce WA7BNM toward the same goal. Ron WD4AHZ is working especially hard on this project. One of the things holding us up a bit is the different Cabrillo outputs generated by different versions of the various contest logging programs. We received about 670 logs this year vs. 440 last year for a 50% increase!

NCJ Editor Carl K9LA is soliciting an article about the FQP. Dan asked for contributors and volunteered to coordinate the inputs as required, hopefully publishing soon before FQP 2004 so that the material is fresh in participants' minds.

Dan briefly reviewed the history of the FQP and how it was rejuvenated by FCG after several years of inactivity after Florida Skip magazine ceased sponsorship.

We are looking at creating an additional category for next year's FQP. Mobile Assisted (or perhaps "Chauffer Class"??!!) for single operator mobiles who have a separate driver to distinguish them from single-op mobiles who do both the driving and operating. This would address the current FQP inequity between someone using a driver and someone who does not. This idea met with approval by attendees. In the theme of "Driving Miss Daisy", it was later proposed that KN4Y's wife be labeled as "Driving Mr. Ed".

For the benefit of our newer members, Dan also reviewed the mechanics of our Contest Buddy Program and urged everyone to participate, either as an Elmer (expert) or Elmo (needing help), since all of us have a bit of both. Following in Charly K4VUD's lead, several other FCGers

are QRV on 60 Meters now. Sandy W4RU pointed out that by being solid citizens on that band, hams were likely to get a broader spectrum and get away from the current channelized approach, maybe in a year or two.

Jim K4OJ announced his intentions of holding a stub building party sometime soon to build stubs to reduce interstation interference both for his planned M/M operations and for any other multi-op or 2-radio station that needs to filter out the transmitting band while receiving on another band. W2VJN literally wrote the book on stubs, providing a solid blueprint.

Dan noted that we now have the capability in the club to do lots of antenna work and volunteered his services to anyone needing help with antennas prior to the contest season. He noted that Hurricane Isabel was currently tracking toward a landfall north of FL, so hopefully that won't cause us any antenna problems for the upcoming season.

Two subjects of great interest to the amateur community were discussed at some length:

(1) BPL

After many FCGers contributed their Reply Comments (and money!) on this topic, the next step would possibly be a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking from the FCC. Sandy W4RU speculated that the FCC may just wait on this issue and let further testing take place without modifying any regulations.

(2) The possibility of the FCC deleting CW knowledge from the amateur license exam requirements and possible subsequent reduction or deletion of the CW sub bands.

Most members stuck to the notion that CW should be a required element, with a few dissenters. Most also realize that the ARRL, in its interest to increase membership, may actually join the no-code bandwagon.

Code elimination is just at the petition phase at the moment and any proposed rulemaking is a long way off.

ARRL's Logbook of the World is due to go live on Monday, 9/15. Several FCGers participated as beta testers.

Dan closed by announcing that the next meeting will be at the K4XS super-station QTH in New Port Richey (N of Tampa) on Saturday, October 4th.

I chatted with several members inside the hamfest hall prior to lunch, including Norm W1MO, Grant N4GM,

and Fred K9VV, plus I also had an opportunity to meet one of our newer members, Lisa K14CCO. Others spotted at the hamfest and not at lunch or dinner were Bill K4XS, Dale W4QM and Jeff N4JT. That makes at least 32 members who attended at least one facet of Melbourne (sorry if we missed anyone).

Thanks to Dan K1TO for his usual FB job of editing this report,

73, Fred K4LQ



Above - A collage of pictures from the FCG lunch at Franco's Ristorante.



*K9ES kitchen before the chowline began*



*Chuck AD4ES at the grill*



*ARRL was well represented by (L) Sandy W4RU and (R) Sherri W4STB above*



*Our host Eric K9ES at his station (K9ES filephoto)*



*First pictured at an FCG meeting (above) L - Lee W4UUM, R - Kay KB4BBB. Below L - Art AB4RL watches as R - Dan KITO conducts the meeting.*



*Left and below -*

*Members pictured at the K9ES meeting*



**WD3P*****Mighty MilliWatts and  
the Florida QSO Party -  
WD3P***

**This was a contest I just played around in. The goal was to work a county at less power than I had worked it previously. Prior to the contest the average power needed to work a Florida county was 123 mWatts. After the contest that had dropped to 98 mWatts. Total take was 13 QSO with a total power out of just over 1 watt. To the right is my log for the contest. Equipment for the contest was a K1 with a Ten Tec Attenuator and a simple dipole.**

Date	Time	Band	Call	mWatts	County
4/28	1626	20	W4SO	100	Broward
4/28	2002	20	W4FMS	7	Broward
4/28	2026	20	N4IG	250	Polk
4/28	2132	20	N4PN	10	Flager
4/29	0037	40	K4FQP	300	Sarasota
4/29	0053	40	NU4Y	70	Clay
4/29	1757	20	K8IJ	50	Dade
4/29	1827	20	W4ZW	2	Sarasota
4/29	2110	20	N4BP/M	100	Palm Beach
4/29	2122	20	KB4N	50	Hernando
4/29	2149	20	W4SAA	250	Dade
4/29	2153	20	W4QM	10	Brevard
4/29	2156	20	NO4S	50	Volusia

**Note from N1IC**

Hello team, I just wanted to take this time to say a quick hello. I have just joined the Contest Club and wanted to give you a quick background on myself.

At this time I do not have a station here in my Orlando home. I'm in the process of moving to Ft Lauderdale and hope to have that completed at the beginning of the new year. I will be living in a Condo so I won't have much of a station there either.

I am mostly a SSB Contester, I know that doesn't mean much to most of you as you don't operate those contests but as a member of the YCCC I was able to be an active contributor to the team score. I have operated contests from K1KI (Tom now has my 4 Element 40 on his tower and I can't wait to try it), K1TTT and others. I am normally looking for a seat at a Multi during the big contests. I will do and prefer single ops if you don't operate SSB contests... So if you have a station you don't mind sharing I would love to chat. My best contest was 10 SSB SOHP, 9th overall in the W/VE and 1st in New England.

I'm 34 years old and I'm in the software industry. I have been a ham since I was 15.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and allow me to join your club.

de N1IC

Ed note - Nick sent along his photo, reproduced Below - Welcome aboard Nick!



## The TI5N Tico Experience - 1998

*By Fred Kleber K9VV & Tom Moeton K6CT*

It was the combination of two of the things I enjoy most about amateur radio – contesting and meeting fellow hams in other countries. In my former home of San Diego we had a tradition of periodically having “Barbies-By-TheBay” (BBQ) for visiting amateurs. Between a couple of great times at Visalia and a BBQ-by-the bay, I had become more than casual acquaintances with Keko, TI5KD and his wife Sophia, TI2IY. Earlier, Tom, K6CT (ex-KT6V) and I discussed our options for operating the CQ WW CW contest from abroad. After a quick exchange of e-mails with Keko, our adventure was set. To ensure sufficient operating time, we decided to enter in the multi-single category. Tom and I were elated when Keko sent us an e-mail telling of his success in getting the contest call TI5N. We worried about confusion with W5NN and TK5NN, but this did not prove to be an issue.

After an uneventful flight to San Jose, getting through customs was a breeze. No lost baggage, no secondary, no twenty questions... Welcome to Costa Rica. We renewed our friendship with a smiling Keko who met us outside of the customs exit. To tune up my español a bit I worked a few of the locals on 6m as we drove back to contest central. When we reached Camp Keko, my XYL was introduced to the lovely Sophia, TI2IY. Sophia is an avid entomologist and a known DXer from her previous OM/XYL expedition to TI9. She's a cross between Charro & an auctioneer which makes it no surprise she can rip off phone QSOs like a machine gun. She's also fiercely competitive. Keko & Sophia have two adorable children. (Adrian & Fabiana) Of course they were shy about meeting two foreigners who spoke a foreign tongue. The Leggos we brought for them proved to be the ice breaker. Sophia said they both fully understood and spoke English, but were still understandably shy. The next day we did a few errands with Keko and savored some of the local cuisine. We saw many villages with the traditional church adjacent to a town square. The architecture and gardens were beautiful. Keko gave us helpful hints for driving & navigating the Costa Rican infrastructure.

The next evening my XYL and I headed to a beach condo in Playa Jaco, on the Pacific Ocean side of Costa Rica. My Baja back country (XE2) pot hole navigational skills were well exercised by an army of strategically placed pot holes! It's amazing how well they can hide in the dark on those unlit roads... Add the switch backs down several thousand feet of a mountain range, and the hotel was a welcome sight some-time well after midnight!

We lucked into a 5<sup>th</sup> (top) story room adjacent to the jungle. The next morning, an eye-opener of the smooth Costa Rican (caffeine saturated!) coffee assured me that staying awake in the contest would definitely NOT be a problem!! A rock and

good arm quickly produced an inverted L (top fed) that announced K9VV/TI8 was radio active. The noise level was dead quiet and the 40m European pile-ups were respectable given my 100 watts. (Hats off to the HA8BE that worked me on 160m!!) While running EU one night I was called by Willie, TI2WGO. After a short CW rag chew, Willie passed along his phone number and asked me to give him a landline when I returned to Keko's.

Tom, K6CT and his XYL Martha, KD6OTN came down to Jaco and stayed with us for the weekend. They had arrived well ahead of us and had been attending a two week total immersion Spanish class. They lived with their Tico “familia” and rode “el autobus al escuela”. Tom was well into his two weeks and soaking up “la vocabularia” like a sponge. His pilot and Navy ways had been shunned as he sported a stylish beard. The week at the beach had been relaxing, but now it was time to get to the good stuff. (CONTESTING!)

Keko's Tico antenna farm proves that steel and aluminum grow well in the tropics. Keko has three towers in the 100' range. (A tri-band quad on one, a KT-34XA and 2 element forty on the second, and 15 and 10 mono-banders on the third) Knowing the importance of the low bands, Keko craftily hung the following spaghetti between the towers: two 80m delta loops (N-S & E-W), a switch-able 4 element horizontal vee array for 80m, and an inverted L for 160m.

Tom had been to Keko's before our arrival and quickly ascertained that the quad at 80 feet seemed to be the hot antenna. Tuning the 160m inverted L was a bit of a challenge and we finally succumbed to the trusty Nye tuner. We lengthened the 80m vee array to resonate on CW and tweaked the 80m delta loops a bit. Knowing the importance of a second antenna on 40m, we put up a N-S dipole at 60 feet.

Now that the aerial aluminum forest was adjusted, next came the shack. Tom brought his FT-1000MP and Keko had a TS-940. A pair of Dunestar filters greatly reduced inter-station interference. On the transmit side, Sir Alpha & Sir Henry added a little recognition to the TI5N signal. We got the laptops networked and TR Log was off and running. I didn't know TR had a bazillion “switches” that could be customized to one's needs. The keep it simple principle prevailed and we were set. Tom and I spent the next day / evening getting to know propagation and exercising the call & station. I also worked a few LUs and PYs on 6m.

Keko mentioned that he had a couple of friends he'd like to have join us in the contest. An opportunity to meet more locals – great! I gave Willie a call and asked if he'd like to join us for the contest. He quickly agreed and was given directions to Keko's. “Team Tico” was materializing. The night before the contest Eduardo (TI2CCC), Jerry (TI2OY), and Willie (TI2WGO) joined us at Contest Central. Willie had been “forced” to learn CW as his late night SSB operating habits were not appreciated by his sleeping mother in the adjacent bedroom. He operated his first contest (WPX CW)

only six months before. Our host and his countrymen were quickly introduced to the benefits (and frustrations!) of computer logging. After all, this was the first big contest for some of the operators, and the first time any of them had used computer logging. We showed them the important keys and let them practice logging a few contacts and making a few QSOs.

00:00Z – Ding! Off to the races. Captain “Turbo Tom” took the left seat while “Fast Fingers Freddie” took the right seat. The din & magnitude of the pile-ups kept our Tico hosts intimidated & wide eyed for the first few hours. Quickly the intimidation faded as our hosts started copying callsigns from the pile-up. Next came the side-by-side buddy method of operating. Of course everyone’s “natural bandpass” filters were able to assist the main op with additional calls from the pile. Multiple cups of the smooth Costa Rican caffeine laden coffee assured that we were wide eyed all night.

After Tom and I showed the real “Team Tico” members how easy it was to run piles, they slowly accepted our invitations to operate. (I think it was well into the first night of the contest by this time.) Tom and I assisted our budding electronic contesters when they couldn’t locate a key or had questions. Willie combined a wide spread of technology by using his Vibroplex bug along side the laptop. Tom got a good grammatical work out of his español when typing notes and passes.

Of course the pile ups were horrendous and finding a clear frequency proved to be a challenge. The TI5N “aerial junk yard” proved worthy in controlling the masses and punching through the pack. The delta loops on 80m really showed directivity and the equatorial location provided many good multipliers from the deep Russian (Central & Southern) contesters.

Day two found good conditions to Europe on 15m. The mult station fished around 10m looking for those juicy Caribbean mults that we probably wouldn’t hear calling us. Nice to catch TF3IRA for the elusive zone 40 too! I was snoozing in the bedroom adjacent to the shack and heard hysterical laughing coming from the operating room. Seems that Tom was running ‘em on 10m and went QRX to recycle some coffee in the bathroom. When he came back the screen saver had kicked in. Like all good operators would do, he hit the space bar to clear the screen saver. Of course the TR logging program responded by sending “TI5N TI5N”. He then put the cans on and heard someone sending, “TI5N 5nn33, QSY 15m?”. Dumfounded by his apparent success, and embarrassment, he asked who the zone 33 station was. I’m sure 3V8BB had no idea of the sequence that had just unfolded.

Our Tico friends learned fast and quickly had the QSO rate meter well up over 100 / hour. Conditions were slightly better the second night. Perhaps due to less QRM. Some of the juicier multipliers we found were: 3DA, 3W, OX, V8, 9K, 5A, JW, 5V, 9G, 9M6, A4, 8Q and VQ9. We focused on 40m, 80m & 160m. Fellow Tico contester TI1C (TI4CF) could be heard on 160m picking inaudible stations out of the noise. The 40m European piles were awesome! There are some REALLY loud 200 watt and 400 watt stations from... you know which countries. UA2AA was LOUD everywhere!

It was interesting to see how quickly the Ticos took to the computer logging. While our score may not have been in the top ten, it’s likely they’ll be a few more CW entries from Costa Rica in the future. A million thanks to Keko & Sophia for letting us invade their house for the weekend. If anyone is contemplating a visit to Costa Rica, I highly encourage you to go. The natural beauty is diverse and breath taking. It is only topped by the warm Tico hospitality which we experienced everywhere in the country.



*Keiko TI5KD in his shack*



*Working on one of Keiko’s Quads.*

## October FCG Meeting at K4XS

First, let's list the attendees:

AA4RX, AD4ES, K1TO, K4GKD, K4LOG and K4SXY, K4LQ, K4LW, K4NW, K4OJ, K4XS and K4XSS, K5KG, K9ES, KU3O and Tammy, N4EK, N4GI, N4KW, NF4A and Jennifer, W1ZA, W3TMZ, W4EBA, W4SAA, W4YA, WC4E, WD4AHZ, WK2G and Maryanne.

Guests were Walt W7SE, Norbert OM6NM, Kyle KG4JPL, Alex KG4OGN and Rob.

Prior to the meeting, members and guests attacked the great lunch put on by Holly and Bill with gusto. Several platters of various types of chicken, sausages and all the fixin's disappeared as if by magic. As Saturday is my "don't go to the gym and eat what you like day" on my current stay in shape regimen, I did more than my share to eliminate the platter contents! As members began the meeting, a delicious dessert in either chocolate or pistachio varieties was served, making concentrating on the meeting notes difficult for ye secretary. (I'm not complaining, I can take meeting notes anytime, but can only get a Holly original dessert at K4XS meetings.) Great job Holly!

Several members were visiting the K4XS QTH for the first time, and as Ron WD4AHZ put it on the reflector, expressed "shock and awe" at Bill's antenna farm.

Dan K1TO began the meeting by thanking Bill and Holly for their hospitality, and noted that this was 3rd or 4th time that Bill had sponsored a meeting at his QTH.

During the round of introductions, Dan asked members to review their contest plans for the upcoming season with the group. CQWW was the most frequently mentioned contest, followed closely by Sweepstakes and the 10-Meter Contest. Others enthusiastically look forward to the 160-Meter Contests, Worked all Germany and even the new upcoming Worked All Pinellas Zip code contest!

K5KG and VE7ZO are going north of the border for a M/2 in CQWW SSB at VE3EJ's fine station. WC4E once again is going to PJ2T for a M/2 in CQWW SSB along with K1AR and others. NF4A and N4PN are again going to Croatia to operate with the 9A1A gang for CQWW CW. OM6NM will again join the OM5M crew for CW -- unless we can convince him to stay in the USA a few weeks longer than planned.

New member Duke, W1ZA spoke about his contesting background. He was a member of the Golden Triangle club in the Clearwater area along with several current FCGers many years ago, plus W4ETO who went on to found Alpha Power. Duke then built a nice contest station in E. Mass. and hosted M/S operations that in-

cluded K1EA, K1IR and K1VR. Here in Florida, Duke will be in a deed-restricted community in the Sarasota-Bradenton area and will be available for SSB multi-ops.

Fred then gave a brief treasury and membership report which indicated that the club remains in healthy shape and growing.

Dan asked the group several CQWW SSB trivia questions.

Q: Who is the only FCG member that holds a current World Record?

A: Jeff WC4E as part of the PJ2T M/2 operation from last year.

Q: Who are the FCG members that hold a current Continental record?

A: The 1979 VP2KC Multi-Multi is still the North America record holder. N4PN, N4WW and KB4ET were all part of that operation!

George, K5KG discussed our Contest Buddy Program and encouraged members to sign up as an Elmer or Elmo. He will write an article for our upcoming newsletter on the program.

Ron WD4AHZ discussed some upcoming rule changes for the 2004 Florida QSO Party. We will be dropping the Novice/Technician category as there has been no activity and they are essentially being eliminated with new FCC licensing rules.

We will also subdivide the single-op mobiles into two categories -- those with drivers and those without. Up until now, those with a driver have a distinct advantage. Safety for those without drivers will be specifically encouraged in the rules. Ron will be drafting language for the new rules soon, in preparation for publication in the various magazines.

Ron also noted that he had reviewed nearly 670 logs, reformatting those that did not come in the standard Cabrillo format. Ron continues working with WA7BNM on automated log checking tools

Dan noted that Carl K9LA, the Editor of the National Contest Journal, has asked for an article on the FQP. It would be good if we could put something together in time so that it could be published in the edition that immediately precedes the April 2004 running of the FQP. Dan volunteered to edit any inputs that members would like to provide.

Some comments were made on the ARRL's new "Logbook of the World". Some members have been able to upload their logs successfully, while others are

having problems. Ron WD4AHZ said he had a problem uploading a 62,000 QSO log, but when he split it into two logs of 31,000, it uploaded okay. Dan noted that Trey, N5KO is preparing to upload the 350,000 HC8N QSOs soon as an even bigger test of the system.

Flyers for an upcoming hamfest in Jacksonville were received by Dan, but none of the attendees planned to attend.

Dan noted that the expected conditions for the upcoming CQWW SSB contest are expected to be about the same as those in 1993, based on predicted sunspot numbers. 10 Meters will be especially affected as opposed to last year and will be open for a shorter time. Based on 1993 CQWW results, you can expect to work about half as many stations on 10 as on 15. Often, 10 Meter conditions are much better one day than the other, so don't be too concerned if you don't do well there on Saturday, since it may pick up on Sunday. K5KG noted that 10 meters has been pretty active over the last 10 days or so with DX.

Dan noted that in the most recent edition of CQ Magazine, John K1AR wrote an article entitled "What Makes A Great Contester?" In it, he listed some rules of contesting, some developed by Trey N5KO and some by John himself.

**Know the bands:**

There's no substitute for knowing what band to be on to improve your score.

**Know your station:**

Knowing whether or not your station has the gusto to run people or crack pileups under given conditions on a given band is a real time saver.

**Stay in the chair:**

You can't be the best station in a contest if you are not on the air.

**Get on the air and operate:**

Experience is king, expect to learn something every time you operate.

**Solicit advice from a variety of experienced people:**

Some of the "experts" will be more compatible with you on a personal level than others, so shop around and get a variety of opinions.

**Know the call signs of stations in the target area:**

This is strongly related to the "operate a lot" advice. Familiarity with common call signs is a big plus.

**Understand how the scoring rules affect your operation:**

For example, mults are not as important in CQWW as in ARRL DX, since there are more of them available. Your score might increase just as much by working 3 LUs as it might by breaking that monster pileup on the rare DX!

Understand how the scoring rules affect your operation:

For example, mults are not as important in CQWW as in ARRL DX, since there are more of them available. Your score might increase just as much by working 3 LUs Be familiar with planned DX operations for contests: NG3K has a website that lists upcoming DXpeditions. Ron has now added the link to the FCG home page.

We wrapped things up with our host Bill K4XS going over details of his antenna farm (by request). Bill noted that he hoped to make this pre-contest season meeting at his QTH an annual event.

Dan thanked our hosts again for their hospitality and the meeting broke up around 4 PM.

In chatting with Walt W7SE, we found we had worked on 6 Meters, as well as both having spent some time on Mauritius many years ago. Ham radio certainly helps create a small world!

Thanks to Dan, K1TO for his usual FB job of editing this report.

73, Fred K4LQ



*Holly K4XSS (top) and Bill K4XS (bottom) hard at work preparing lunch for the assembled masses*



*The Chow Line at K4XS*



*L - R Joe W4SAA, Fred K4LQ, Walt W7SE*



*Above, Dan KITO conducts the meeting from the porch, (the family room was full of members)*



*Foreground L - R Jim W4YA, Jeff WC4E and Norbert OM6MN. Norbert joined the club shortly after this meeting).*



*A little known breed of Florida reptile, the K4XS cobra. (Three of them no less.!)*



*Bill K4XS describes the size of the multiplier that got away last contest.*

**Elmers - The Elmo's Glue***By George Wagner K5KG*

October kicks off with CQWW Phone followed by Sweepstakes and CQWW CW in November. December then brings the ARRL 160 and 10 meter contests and the Stu Perry Topband Challenge at end of the month. NAQP CW & SSB and CQ 160 follow in January. February brings NA Sprint CW and ARRL DX CW followed by ARRL DX Phone and CQWW WPX SSB in March. April then brings the FCG signature event, the FQP! Along the way are other goodies such as Kids Day, Dutch PACC, CQ 160 SSB, Holyland, Argentine GACW and the Swiss Helvetia contests.



Are you ready for all of this? Do you have a plan for which contests you will tackle. In which ones will you put in a full effort to earn a plaque or certificate? In which ones will you just play, perhaps to catch some new band countries? Is your station up to snuff? Do your antennas need a boost? How are you fixed for computer logging and rig control? Are you going to bite the bullet and try SO2R this year? Are you confident that you know the tricks for maximizing your Sweepstakes score? How are you going to take advantage of Florida's southern latitude in a year of diminished sunspots?

If these questions ignite more than a curious tickle in your tummy, you may wish to seek the help of a registered Elmer in the FCG's Contest Buddy Program. These folks have graciously volunteered to share their wealth of knowledge about contesting. On a broad scale, they are masters of station design, contest strategy, antennas, towers, computer control & logging and propagation & band planning. Here is the list of registered Elmers by Florida section:

**North Florida**

NW5E	Gary	Geneva
K0LUZ	Red	Longwood
W4YA	Jim	Longwood
K4PV	Jim	Milton
N4OO	Ink	Sopchoppy

**South Florida**

N8PR	Pete	Hollywood
K9ES	Eric	Indian Harbor Beach
NA4CW	Frank	Merritt Island
N2NL	Dave	Key West
K 1PT	Paul	Palm City
N4BP	Bob	Plantation

**West Central Florida**

N4TB	Terry	Avon Park
N4DL	Gary	Lakeland
K1TO	Dan	Myakka City
K4XS	Bill	New Port Richey
AA2MF	Richard	Redington
K3MQH	Dick	Sarasota
K5KG	George	Sarasota
K4OJ	Jim	Seffner
N4GI	Blake	Tampa

If you are not familiar with the Contest Buddy Program, in a nutshell, its purpose is to serve as a contest oriented knowledge base of Club members' (Elmers) talents, skills and knowledge for Club members (Elmos) who may need assistance. Many of you have joined the FCG over the past year to learn about contesting. By registering as an Elmo or Elmer (or both) in the Program, you can highlight the particular areas in which you would like to receive help or offer help to others. **AND IT'S FREE!**

Every FCG member is encouraged to register. If you haven't done so, please go to <http://www.floridacontestgroup.org/> and click on CONTEST BUDDY PROGRAM under CLUB INFORMATION, which will take you to the Contest Buddy Program home page. Once there, click on "Add your info" to enter your Operator, Elmer and Elmo info.

If you have used the Program to find someone to give you a hand, please drop me a note with your story. We are always looking for interesting ways this knowledge base has been put to use. And if you have suggestions about how it can be improved, please let me know. Red, K0LUZ, is the CONTEST BUDDY PROGRAM web site designer, and he is always looking for new and interesting challenges!

George, K5KG  
K5kg@arrl.net

### Tower thoughts for K4XS



*Jon, DU9/N0NM raises his Bamboo tower at his Philippine QTH*



*Jon's son David sits on the tower before erection begins*



*Delivery by tricycle, now there's an idea Bill may want to try !*

### W4PA Thanks FCG

Dan:

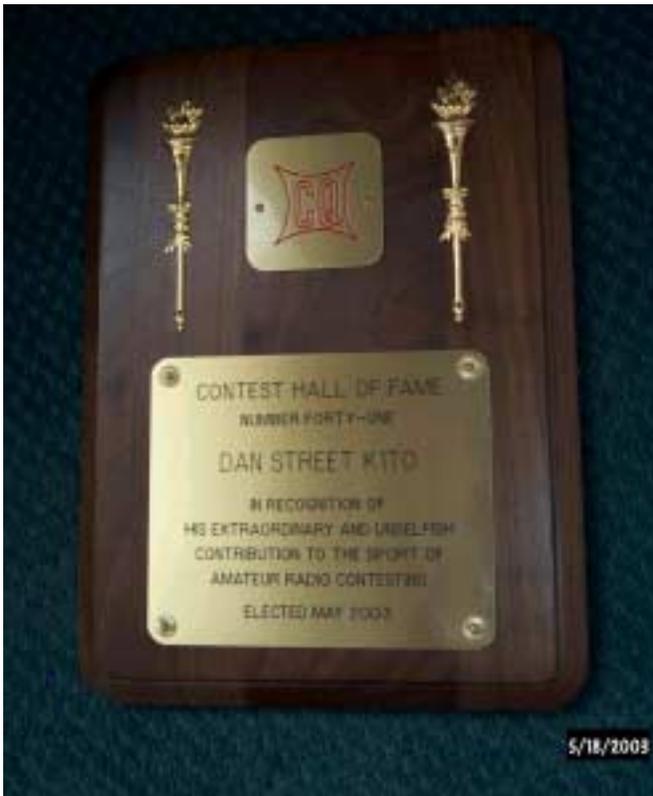
Please pass along to Florida Contest Group my appreciation for sponsoring the NAQP CW single operator plaque. I received mine yesterday for my win in the August 2002 running.

I had admired W4AN's white bordered plaque each time I made the journey to guest op from his tool shed in Atlanta over the past 5 years, and now I have one of my own to put up in my attic ham shack at my house in Knoxville.

My only regret will be my non-title defense next month, as my XYL and I could only work out a vacation the week of July 27-Aug 3, meaning I'll miss the August 2 contest. Ah well!

Thanks again,  
Scott Robbins, W4PA

**More Club Pictures**



*KITO's Contest Hall of Fame Plaque - (N2MG Photo)*



*A popular orange badge debuted at this year's Dayton contest dinner: See Left . (W1YL Photo)*



*Above: Dave N2NL's operating position at KG4NL Guantanamo Bay Cuba*

*Dave operated there during early August (N2NL Photo)*



*K5KG's new SteppIR Big Vertical - looking up*



*Can you spot the vertical? Must be a SteppIR Stealth!*

## SS CW Ideas

*By Jim White K4OJ*



There was just a post on CQ Contest about how you can sort the scores in a contest by any of the line score information and then you can output to a file which you can massage with Excel or other spreadsheet....There has not been much talk in the FCG about SS, and that saddens me as a big SS fan. Perhaps it is time for me to stoke some of the FCG fires!

Out of curiosity I output the Southeastern Division Scores from SS CW 2002 unto a spreadsheet sorted them to get a tally on QSO breakdowns...

I felt personally reassured in seeing the results, but it reminded me that this year may look a little different with the declining numbers - how were condx on the 1st and second, the 28 day repeat is a good indicator - anyone?

Last years numbers per band for all entries in the Southeastern Division of the ARRL broke down like this:

0 869 6835 8358 6030 4353  
160 80 40 20 15 10  
0% 3% 26% 32% 23% 16%

What does this mean to you as an FCG member? First off you work a station once in the contest, NOT once per band...so, anyone anywhere as far as what band you make the QSO.

It will probably be a three band contest...mebbe 4 if ten opens

Plan on 40/20/15 for SS CW

OK... now what?

My guess is that 40 will show the biggest change in that during daylight hours without ten to rely on both 15 and 20 will be the workhorses, and they will get "worked out"...so 40 is gonna become real "popular". I hope that K1TO will summarize for the club the great 40 meter 2 element design he employed at the NJ4M Field Day.... I used it for a few hours on Saturday night and it was clearly working well.

Having been in FL for 15 years now, I can tell you that you can simply forget about 160, and that 80 is not a real producer... further sorting of the SE division numbers to only include FL logs reveals that there were only 430 SS QSOs made from NFL/WCF/SFL - this is roughly 1 and a half percentage points worth of the SE division QSOs. I.E. Do not spend a lot of time there and do not go out of your way to construct a major 80 meter antenna... spend that time on your 40 meter antenna!

The vast majority of club members have tribanders, and as such are all set for 10/15/20 antennas... those with monobanders I offer you a caution.

The first year K1TO had his yagis up he totally hosed WC4E and K4OJ on 20 meters in his first SS from FL... Jeff and I had our antennas set up for DXing and they were too high. I was reminded of

You do not need a really high antenna on 20 for the bulk of your QSOs. An antenna at about 60 feet probably is about right... Dan reminded me after I told him how p.o.'d I was at the 20 meter numbers of years ago when we both were up North in Connecticut. We would hear N4BP/W4OZF like a beacon on Sunday AM on 20 - great signal... I think at the time Bob's tribander was at around 45 feet :-)

SO, what are the bulk of a Floridian's SS QSOs?

For two reasons I want you to look up who won the unlimited category in SS the past few years... the first reason is that they are in the ideal "footprint" - these are the guys who fatten up your log by responding to your CQ's - DO NOT BE AFRAID TO CQ IN SS - even on Sunday! ALSO - this club has grown huge in numbers and since it is a beautiful path to FL from there they are just as willing to call us as anybody on the higher bands AND 40.... and there a LOT of them!

Hint - this club has a lot of members with 9's in their calls!

Yes, if you are a newcomer the SS exchange is daunting, but... what about it is so tough?

# Power Call Year first licensed Section

The number 1 is the first QSO number in - these are issued sequentially STARTING with 1 (in the seventies a smart guy started with #100... NOT!)

-...-

The second piece of information is what is referred to as the "precedence" - the "M" in my exchange indicates I am a multiop entry along with Kevin, N4KM and Ellen, W1YL. Other types of precedence's are:

A For lower power (barefoot)  
B For high power (linears)  
Q For NA4CW, oops, QRP entrants

also look for

S For School

-...-

K4OJ is the call we are using for the contest

-...-

70 is the "Check" it is the last two digits of the year I was first licensed (no wisecracks, please) - sometimes you will get a check like 14, this will usually be from a "S" entrant - a college, and the radio club was first started in 1914, etc. If you just got your ticket this year, your check would be 03.

-...-

WCF Is the abbreviation for my ARRL section - West Central Florida

-...-

If you are wondering why the terminology is so weird - "Precedence" and "Check"???? This has to do with the history of the contest, it is contesting's oldest contest! Originally the ARRL used SS as a way for hams to get comfortable with handling traffic.

The beginning of a piece of traffic contains information which includes the importance of the message - its "Precedence" and also, there is a number which indicates how many words long the message is so that the guy receiving the message can verify he has it all - this is called the "check" (kinda like checksum to you new computer kids).

SO...are you overwhelmed by this long exchange? Don't be?

There is only one piece of the exchange which changes with each QSO, the number! SO, if you are worried about your CW ability - park the rig on some guy calling CQ and copy the information sent - you can even do it for a couple of QSOs if you are nervous... then you will see he is just sending the same stuff over and over again - the stuff you copied down, except that when you call him he will give you the next serial number - otherwise it is all the same!

SS starts at 4:00 PM local time and runs for 30 hours until 10 PM Sunday night. You can only operate 24 of those hours and that leads to a favorite debate as to when to take your times off. Years ago when writing a similar piece as this some guy from the Murphy's Marauders club named Dan something or other suggested that Sunday afternoon gets slow and if you burn all your time outs during your sleep time you will be kicking yourself. I have proven this to myself as fact after about 20 some odd SS entries. Do not take all your off time to sleep - instead try a mix. Next question is: If I am operating the full 24 how do I know when to stop on Saturday night? Usually around 0700 or 0800 in the AM is good (i.e. mebbe 2:30 in the morning).

Since off times must be at least 30 minutes in length, plan on peppering them over Saturday afternoon and evening. What else is going on in the "real world"? FOOTBALL SEASON...

The major games start at 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM - so take a time out for the beginnings of those games... you know there will be loyalists who will walk away from their radios during this time - in the same vein WC4E says: "Avoid Sixty Minutes" - as one of the most watched TV shows it is a good time period to block out - mebbe a good one for a dinner break before the final push.

I try and sleep about 3 to 4 hours and take the remaining off periods as a succession of 30 minute time offs starting at 1:00 local. Watch your off times - I always keep a note pad next to the rig so that I know the rolling off time amount - do not catch yourself in a position where you cannot take the off time allowed due to the 30 minute minimum... I will usually work in a fudge factor and end up stopping a few minutes before the end at 10:00 PM. By keeping the running total of your off times next to you you can see what a thirty or forty minute addition will do for you... do not forget that those football games that last about 3 hours have half times when you should be at the rig - some guys will slide back into the shack for a few QSOs before they go back to watching their team on the tube!

SS is a good contest for us in the South as the cycle goes down - soon there will be lotsa 4's and 5's dominating SS results... with a country as large as ours is - and the phenomenon of North South propagation coupled with the facts that those big population centers are in the Northeast and Midwest and we are to their South - heah - its a natural!

In case you did not look it up, that winning club in the SS unlimited category was the Society of Midwest Contesters - SMC... they do a very good job of getting everyone on the air - and their club roster is something like 400 members... they do not have many high scorers but they have a ton of average guys getting on and it shows in the bottom line. The Northern California Contest Club and the Potomac Valley Radio Club will both be more than happy to have a go at the SMC. For years it was PVRC who ruled SS... then in the seventies the upstart NCCC had motivational T-shirts printed up for SS that said "East Coast Sucks". Even little old Murphy's Marauders won SS once! This kinda club rivalry is fierce... and it is fun, too!

Please try SS CW - if you have any questions drop me an e-mail and I will be more than happy to try and answer them... you may find that you had so much fun in SS CW you will be back two weeks later for the SS SSB!

As a matter of fact, I think we need a new club award for the station making the most points combined for SS. Yeah, in honor of my father, W1CW we will sponsor an FCG plaque for the operator making the greatest contribution to the FCG club score by virtue of having the highest combined single op scores in SS CW & SSB.

Go FCG!

Jim, K4OJ

*Ed Note: A watch on the reflector indicates FCGers have been tuning up for the coming contest season by participating in a lot of smaller contests over the past few months. Members have been heard in action in the New England QSO Party, CQ-M, IOTA Contest, Ohio QSO Party, ARRL Field Day, CW and SSB Sprints, WAE, IARU, Tennessee QSO Party, The Salmon Run, Texas QSO Party, CQWW RTTY, California QSO Party, the Pennsylvania QSO Party, and some I may have missed. With all that practice we should be raring to go for the major contests in the coming months. CQWW SSB results are being compiled as we go to press, and will be in our next edition.*

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