



Contest Gazette

Florida Contest Group

www.floridacontestgroup.org



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September 2005

From the President's Corner

By Dan Street, K1TO

As this issue goes to press, Hurricane Katrina has just left Southeast Florida with a mess and lots of rain. A number of club members had antennas and towers that were adversely affected. Here we go again. A full two weeks later in the season than Charley hit last year, Katrina is having a huge impact in W5 and was recorded with the 4th lowest pressure ever at 902 mb. Here's hoping that there is no more loss of life or damage to deal with for the rest of the season.



Coming up in less than 2 weeks on Sept. 10 is the Melbourne Hamfest, around which we are holding 2 FCG meetings. Many thanks to Eric, K9ES and Sylvia for kindly opening their home to us once again for a cookout and meeting. See back page for full details. Prior to that, we will hold the annual traditional pizza luncheon at Franco's, the birthplace of the FQP!

Franco's is just a mile or two west of the hamfest in a plaza on Babcock St. Our club center is just west of Melbourne, so as to include the maximum number of folks up into the Jacksonville and down into the Miami areas, while still including the west coast. Hopefully, the hamfest will be better than usual, since it was canceled due to one of last year's storms.

The latest CQ Magazine arrived with the CQWW CW results and thus the club results for both modes as well. Despite our antenna challenges in the wake of the horrible 2004 storm season, the FCG amassed over 71 Million points, enough to place 5th in the USA and 10th in the World! Bill, K4XS tickled the key and keyboard to a 1st place USA finish on 40 Meters with a whopping 1357 QSOs and completing the 40M sweep, having won SSB, too. Andy, WB4TDH took top USA Low Power 15M with a score that would've been #4 HP. Others finishing "in the box" included K4MM (10), N4CC (40), N2NL (LP), KW4CW (N4GM) (28-LP), K9AW (14-LP), NA4CW (28-QRP) and N4WW (M-2). Yours truly was fortunate enough to be part of a talented HC8N Multi-2 team that set a new world record. The disturbed conditions allowed us to really dominate on 10 & 15.

If the WW CW results are out, then WW SSB for THIS year must be just around the corner! We had a blast as a club, splitting

our single-ops (including Assisted entrants) into 5-person groups and fielding 6 teams in the Team Contesting sub-competition within WW SSB last year, including the number 2 finisher! Look for a "planned operation" e-mail soon for the fall contests, starting with WW SSB. Who will activate the W3AU memorial callsign? Kudos to Dick, K4GKD and Pete, N4KW for keeping the callsign close at hand.

The ARRL released the results for SSB and thus for the full DX contest. Once again, the FCG amassed enough entries to place in the Unlimited Category, although it's a huge hill to climb to reach the mega-clubs. We finished behind 7 Unlimited and 7 Medium clubs for a 15th place finish - clearly ARRL DX is not our "sweet spot". Oh, and guess who won 40M. Yup - K4XS. Only a 2nd-place finish in ARRL CW kept Bill from accomplishing a seasonal DX test 4-sweep of 40M!

Inside this Issue

<i>Welcome Aboard, Events Calendar</i>	2
<i>Member Profile Maurice W4CEO</i>	3
<i>July Vicnic Meeting Report</i>	4
<i>Pictures From The Vicnic</i>	5,6
<i>N2NL Relocates To W6</i>	7
<i>T93M /N4EXA builds contest location in Bosnia</i>	8,9
<i>Bruce W4OV Visits Bill KG4WW in Gitmo</i>	10
<i>The Last Contest - W4UM, FCG County Hunters</i>	11
<i>FCG 10 Meter Record Holders</i>	11
<i>KJ4UY Antenna Work After The Hurricanes</i>	12
<i>N4GI New Tower Construction</i>	13
<i>Line Noise - Lessons Learned by K4XS</i>	14
<i>CW Forever, NAQP Claimed Scores</i>	15
<i>Melbourne Hamfest Planned Activities</i>	16

I'd like to see us sponsor a SSB and CW plaque for CQWW, SS and ARRL DX. Specifically, I suggest CW plaques dedicated in memory of our club founder K4OJ for CQWW CW and in memory of our club founder's father W1CW for ARRL CW. Open plaques are plentiful in the 2 ARRL tests, but hard to locate for CQWW. What suggestions do you have as to the specifics of each of the 6 plaques? Should they cover various power levels? Single-ops or Multi-ops? Conventional categories or something different? Recognize those in our region or outside?

The last of the paper log submissions for FQP 2005 are now keyed in electronically, thanks to Ron, WD4AHZ. We're working with a local ham over in the Sarasota area who is a professional programmer and has some interest in helping us automate more pieces of the FQP log checking process. Meanwhile, there are still a few outstanding logs from FCGers.

Welcome aboard to our two returning members and to Bonnie, WB4FSF whose call I recognize from past FQPs - on CW, I believe!

It's great to have so many Gazette pages devoted to tower and antenna raising! What are YOUR antenna plans for this year? With professional tower expert Dennis, KI4DII now on board, maybe we can get him to give us a tip for each Gazette.

I did manage to get that 4-square controller for 80M and need to get moving on building that antenna for use while the sunspots are dormant. 80M is probably the band on which we suffer worst as compared to the W1s in a DX contest.

You've all read about my failure to get QSLs through as Media Mail. Well, thanks to Ward, N0AX and his QST article on Logbook of the World, I'm finally over the hurdle of how to do that and have started uploading recent logs. Ron, WD4AHZ was teasing me about my progress, saying that of our 68 QSOs that HE has uploaded, I've now confirmed 3. I do admit to concentrating on the DX Test logs first. Anyway, the more electronic confirmations, the less physical QSLs, right?

Hope to see many of you in a few weeks in Melbourne!

GO FCG! OJ!

vy 73, Dan, K1TO

Welcome Aboard



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

KW3Y Jim Stone, 5594 SW 30th Avenue, Ocala FL 34474
e-mail: jcs5594@ yahoo.com. Jim is a returning member.

WB4FSF Bonnie W. Taylor, 304 W. 24th Street, Sanford FL 32771
e-mail: WB4FSF@ aol.com

N4DL Gary Powell, 907 N. Wilson Ave., Bartow FL 33830
e-mail: garyandbev@verizon.net Gary is a returning member.

Total membership as of 1 August 05 is 188.

Events Calendar

Melbourne Hamfest - September 10 Luncheon Meeting at Franco's at Noon - Meeting at K9ES 2:30 PM Cookout at K9ES 3-7PM

ARRL September VHF QSO Party 1800Z, Sep 10 to 0300Z, Sep 12

North American Sprint, CW 00Z-04Z, Sep 11

North American Sprint, SSB 00Z-04Z, Sep 18

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY 0000Z, Sep 24 to 2400Z, Sep 25

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Oct 29 to 2400Z, Oct 30

ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW 2100Z, Nov 5 to 0300Z, Nov 7

ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB 2100Z, Nov 19 to 0300Z, Nov 21

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW 0000Z, Nov 26 to 2400Z, Nov 27

ARRL 160-Meter Contest 2200Z, Dec 2 to 1600Z, Dec 4

ARRL 10-Meter Contest 0000Z, Dec 10 to 2400Z, Dec 11

Member Profile - W4CEO

By Maurice Schietecatte W4CEO



First licensed May 1979 in Clinton Twp Michigan as KA8FVH (I hated this call; it was the incentive to upgrade). As a novice I spent more time correcting my call than just operating. A good friend, Dave Pool, WD8COA gave me my novice test. There were five of us who were on CB together that decided to become ham radio operators. Three of us are still licensed and one is a SK.

Shortly after Field Day in 1980 and operating the novice station with the L'Anse Creuse ARC, I upgraded to General receiving the call N8CEO. About a year later, thanks to the BASH study guides, I upgraded to Advanced. I got my Amateur Extra when they dropped the 20 wpm code requirement.

It was during this time my first wife, Virginia received her ticket and upgraded to General receiving the call N8EOA. We had a lot of fun in ham radio together. Unfortunately, Virginia was diagnosed with a brain stem tumor in June 1990 and became a SK in August 1990. She loved contesting, especially QSO parties and Field Day, plus DXing.. Virginia was the first YL to get DXCC as a member of SEMDXA (South East Michigan DX Assoc.) Also, she was the first YL President of the L'Anse Creuse ARC.

The two hams that influenced my contesting and DXing in my early days was Gary Rutledge, KR8V, a neighbor and Ted Pauck, K8NA. Ted was one of the founders of SEMDXA and very active in contesting. He went around to all the ham clubs in the Detroit area promoting both DXing and contesting. His presentation was a great influence on me. Gary and I would get on the air together and see who could work the station first. We both had similar stations, so it was a good comparison. Gary was a great CW operator as he was an intercept operator in the Air Force.

I was very active until the death of Virginia. I had 305 countries confirmed and my mixed DXCC. Her death took the wind out of my sails quickly. We had recently moved to a small community called Fowlerville; bought a new home in the country to get away from causing TVI. I put up an 80 foot tower with a Mosley Pro 67 on top when she passed away. The only good thing was that with some of the insurance money I was able to purchase one of the first Yaesu FT1000-D. Now I had this nice station and no one to share it with. However, in July 1991 Mother Nature came through Central Michigan with a violent storm, broke the tower in two sections and stuck the Mosley in the garage roof.

My homeowners covered everything so I didn't lose any money. I purchased a new antenna and the broken tower sections when Murphy struck again. In November of 1991, I received a phone call that the MetLife office I was administrator in was closing at the end of the year. Since I had 30 years with them I was able to transfer to a large Territorial office in Aurora, IL. I bought a new home in Sandwich, IL with the intention of putting up the tower and getting back on the air.

I did join the local radio club, Fox River Radio League and was very active with them being their hamfest chairman for 10 years. However, I never really felt like getting on the air. I remarried in September 1992 and my new wife, Shirley was not really interested in ham radio. Plus we did not like the Illinois environment, the winters were really cold and all our family was in Michigan. We had decided that after retirement we would go south to warmer weather. We actually purchased a lot in Aiken, SC to build a new home on.

Murphy struck again! I had the opportunity to take an early retirement 12/31/1997 and I did. We put our home on the market and could not sell it after a year and a half. So, decision time, we decided that it looked like Illinois was going to be our retirement place to live. We sold the property in South Carolina and figured Illinois was home.

It was about this time that Paul Gentry, K9PG, President of SMC came to one of the FRRL club meetings. He gave his pitch that he felt that the SMC could win Sweep Stakes. Along with Bill Erickson, WA9TPQ (SK), they got me pumped up to get back on the air. I forget what year it was but I took the FT1000D out of the box, ran 100 ft of coax up the basement steps and out the garage to Hamsticks on my truck. I think I had 25,000 or 30,000 points but it helped the SMC knock off those east and west coast clubs. I really felt good at Dayton that year when Paul received that gavel.

Well, I did get the tower up in Sandwich but only had a vertical on it. I worked a number of FCG members using the call W9CEO. To this day Bill, K4XS is the loudest station from the south. WOW! Is he loud! When 20 meters is almost dead, he is still 20 over 9.

Since retirement I have become very active again. While still in Illinois a very close friend, Jack Ekstrom, K9JE asked if I would like to join the J6DX team in St. Lucia for the 2002 CQ WW WPX SSB contest. Wow! One of my dreams to go to a foreign country was about to come true. Naturally I said YES. Those two weeks in St. Lucia were unforgettable. I currently hold the call J68MS. I'm a member of the SWODXA and get together with them every year in Dayton. I really need to thank Scott Lehman, N9AG for letting be part of the J6DX Team.

OK, how did I get to Florida? My wife's health took a turn for the worse. Doctors said she had to get out of the cold weather. My son Craig lives in Orlando and works for the 911 system that takes care of Disney World. So in November of 2003 during a visit with him, on the way home we stopped at the Del Webb Spruce Creek Golf and Country Club in Summerfield, FL. Friends of ours had purchased a home here and we were curious. I knew it was a deed-restricted community by I wanted to keep my wife happy. On August 31, 2004 we moved into our new home and love it. Since I knew I was moving to Florida, I got the vanity call, W4CEO. At one time I also held the call K4CEO but never made any HF contacts with it.

Before we moved here I had joined the Silver Spring Radio Club and since being here I've been elected a Director. They have a nice Club radio station and as soon as some work gets done on it, it will be ready for HF operation.

Currently my station is in the garage. I have a Yaesu FT1000-D, antennas are Hamsticks on my truck and an Outbacker 500 on a tripod, and it's portable in case a neighbor complains. I also have 2 meters and 440 in the house and truck.

I feel being a licensed amateur radio operator is a privilege. Just like your driver's license. You screw up and it's taken away from you. I also feel every ham should belong to a club, its part of the hobby. Plus you never know when you will need help.

Just like the various clubs I belong to up north, the FCG hams are just super. I'm closing in on 63 years of age, but I'll still try to give as many points to the FCG causes as I can with my limited station. I know my 100,000 plus points aren't as much as some. But this old goat will not be on the bottom of the list. GO FCG!!!

Some other accomplishments: US Navy Submarine Veteran – Plank Owner on the USS U.S. Grant, SSBN 631(B); Twice Ham of the Year for the FRRL; Got C.E.R.T. qualified while here in Marion Country. VE for both ARRL and W5YI; ARRL Awards Manager (so if want WAS check, see me); also have Phone DXCC and 10 Meter DXCC (have CW to submit); Retired after 37 years with MetLife; Certified Fraud Examiner; Have two children and five grandchildren.



August Meeting at N4TO's

By Fred Perkins K4LQ

Vicnic Attendees included:

AA4Z and Ranzie, AD4ES, K0LUZ, K1PT and KD1BG, K1TO, K1XX and Martha, K4LQ and Sheila, K4MM and Ingrid, K4OJ's widow Teresa, K4VUD and Somjit, K4WJ and Susan, K9ES, KI4DII/AG, KI4JKO, KJ4UY and Mel, KK4TA, KP2N, N4GI, N4KM, N4OO, N4TO, N4WW, N8PR, W1MO, W1YL, W3AZD and WB3ANE, W4CEO and Shirley, W4IR and Barbara, W4IX, W4JN, W4KPG, W4QM, W4STB and W4DKB, W4TV, W4YA, WA4AW, WJ9B, plus non-FCGers "Mean" Gene (the main cook) and Sandy, Duane and Barbara.



By about 1:30 PM attendees had made short work of the burgers, hot dogs, salads as well as beans, chili, and numerous dessert specialties washed down with copious amounts of cerveza and soft drinks.

Dan began the meeting by tapping our new gavel on a bag of OJ buttons, which were then passed out to members who had not already received one.

He thanked Vic for his hospitality, followed by thunderous applause for Vic, and the hat was passed for contributions from members.

The gavel Dan used was awarded to the FCG for our performance in the 2004 ARRL 10 Meter Contest winning the Unlimited Club Category. This was our second gavel in two years for the 10 Meter Contest and our first ever for winning in the Unlimited category which requires more than 50 log entries.

We then went around the group for introductions, during which members gave their county and their plans for fall/winter contests. Members were present from 22 Florida counties. Many are still recovering from storm damage, but others are back at full strength (or more!). Most members plan operation in one or more contests in the rapidly approaching season, with the 10-M Contest, CQ WW and SS being most frequently mentioned.

First time attendees who were asked to speak briefly about their background and interest in contesting included Dennis, KI4DII/AG, Jeff, WA4AW, Eric, W4KPG and Maurice, W4CEO.

Dan reviewed the severe line noise situation at N4TO, which is essentially preventing Vic from operating at all, since it is present at a high level across all bands. WA4AW suggested contacting the Technical Coordinator for the WCF section.

Dan noted that the several of the top scoring teams from CQWW SSB last year were from the FCG and also that teams were being put together for the NAQPs coming up in early August.

Dan noted the level of effort expended by Fred K4LQ and Ron WD4AHZ in supporting club activities as secretary/treasurer/newsletter editor and VP FQP/website(s) guru respectively. VP George K5KG is now back in the area

and hopes to be more active soon.

Fred K4LQ gave a brief summary of club statistics. We currently have 188 members. 13 new members have signed up this year, and 17 resignations have been received during the same period, primarily caused by moves out of state, members taking up other interests etc. Treasury total is \$2739.49. The W1CW/K4OJ Memorial Fund contains \$2117.00.

Fred thanked members for inputs to the newsletters. Over 200 pictures of club members and their stations / antennas in action have been received this year.

We currently sponsor plaques for the NAQP contests. A brief discussion ensued concerning adding plaque sponsorship for CQWW, ARRL DX, and SS contests. The group present endorsed the concept of the club sponsoring a plaque for each mode in each of those 3 contests. This discussion will continue on the club e-mail reflector.

Dan noted that Dave N2NL is in the process of relocating to California, where the Coast Guard is sending him to college for work related studies. Dave hopes to retire in FL after his USCG duties end and is retaining his membership in the Club.

Bill K4XS is currently working with the USCG on Attu, an island in KL7 at the end of the Aleutian chain, and is attempting to get on the air while there. Another member Ellen W1YL will be heading for KL7 shortly on a cruise with the QCWA.

Dan said he had not had an opportunity to read all the discussions yet on the reflector concerning the FCC plan to eliminate CW as part of the licensing requirements, so would defer discussion on that subject for the moment.

A discussion was held regarding possible methods of bringing younger hams into the Club to get them interested in contesting. Jim W4YA said he had that positive experience as a youngster by being invited to a Field Day operation. He suggested we do some active recruiting of younger hams and perhaps sponsor one per year to join the FCG for free, along with perhaps a shirt. Eric K9ES is inviting some young Technician licensees to his station to work the Sept VHF contest, in the hopes that it will then lead to interest in HF contesting. Dan reiterated his positive experience in past years with the Sarasota club Field Day GOTA station with some very young non-hams tracking the QSO locations on a map. A Windows program called SQUIRL was cited as doing exactly this as an add-on for FD logging programs.

The meeting wrapped up with an invitation by Eric K9ES to have the next meeting at his QTH in Indian Harbour Beach on Saturday afternoon of the Melbourne Hamfest, September 10th. Dan noted that we would meet for lunch at Franco's Italian Restaurant as usual. Details to follow soon.

Although it was a typically very hot summer day, the rains kindly held off until after the meeting was adjourned.



Sherri W4STB and David W4DKB



John W4IX, Pidge KD1BG and Paul KIPT



Charlie K4VUD and Somjit



Dale W4QM in the white shirt greets Joe W4TV. Ink, N400 (in suspenders) greets Bruce AA4Z. Dale and Ink came a day earlier and helped Vic get setup



Left to right, starting with the guy in the blue shirt - Tom K4MM, Teresa, widow of K4OJ, Ellen, W1YL, Hope, WB3ANE, Joe, W4TV, and Ingrid XYL of K4MM with back to camera.



L-R: Barbara, Sandy and Sheila



Pete N8PR and Gene, Chief Cook pause for a picture



Martha and Charlie K1XX



Joe W4TV and Blake N4GI



Will WJ9B and Dennis KI4DII/AG discuss antennas



This photo was taken while Dan was conducting the meeting. Thanks to Ron KP2N for this and several photos from N4TO's

Left to right around the table: Eric K9ES, Chuck AD4ES, Hope WB3ANE, Fred K4LQ, Dan K1TO, Charlie K4VUD, Somjit, and Don W3AZD with his back to the camera.

N2NL off to California

I'm writing this from the ship, cruising up the Old Bahama Channel toward Key West, with the mountains of Cuba just visible to the south. I'm finishing up my last patrol on the CGC THETIS, and will be transferring out of state this summer. Early next week my family and I will begin a 4-week trek clear across the country.



The Coast Guard has seen fit to pay me to attend college for a couple years, and I will be studying Engineering at the College of Marin in the Bay Area beginning this August. As much as I tried staying in FCG territory, there simply aren't any schools here that offer the coursework and degree that satisfies the requirements and timeline of both me and the USCG.

My wife and I are looking forward to moving to Marin County, and to experience a beautiful part of the country I've only previously visited for short periods of time.

Before leaving, I wanted to publicly thank all those members of the Florida Contest Group who've helped me since my arrival in 2000. I've never been part of a group that welcomed me so openly as the FCG, starting with the emails from K1TO, K1PT, and K4OJ before I even stepped foot in Florida. I clearly remember my first club meeting - the Vicnic. K4OJ was in amazement at how young I was, and led me around to the different club members asking "Can you believe how young he is?!" Eventually, he got me up to the TOad, and asked the same thing. Dan shrugged his shoulders and said "yeah, so what?". Not Impressed. I guess you had to be there.

Thanks to K4XS, N4TO, and especially K1PT for allowing me to guest operate from their QTHs. I'll never forget the support I received from the entire club before and during WRTC 2002. There are too many of you to mention - I'd certainly leave someone out if I tried.

The good news is that my departure from FCG territory is only temporary.

The recent move of my parents to Brooksville confirms without a doubt that I will be returning to Florida permanently once my time in the CG is over (6.5 more years). They recently bought 5 acres in rural horse country and have even offered their land as a sprouting point for a couple future towers.

Although I'll likely be spending the next few years in California, I will remain an active member of the FCG, contributing whenever possible. It's the very least I could do to try returning the hospitality. I'll be looking forward to working everyone from W6; I'll try to make the SF section a little easier to work in Sweepstakes.

73, Dave N2NL/MM

253 San Jose Drive
Novato CA 94949

n2nl@n2nl.net



Another mystery picture! K1KNQ asks: Where is he? When was it taken? A small prize awaits the person closest to the answers. Reply direct to Jack at k1knq@aol.com

**T93M/N4EXA builds new
contest location in Bosnia**



Road to contest location under construction



Touchdown of shack container



Danny's wife Viki helps with assembly of the first tower section



Construction continues



Finished tower



Finished Shack



Finished beam on tower - several perspectives, above below and left



Bruce W4OV visits FCGer Bill KG4WW in Guantanamo Bay



Bill KG4WW and Nancy



Bruce W4OV at the KG4WW station. Bruce signed KG4OV for about 300 QSOs on CW



Above: Bruce W4OV/KG4OV and Sandy

Below: The NE gate at Gitmo. The sign says "Republic of Cuba, territory free from America".



Above: Bill's QTH and antenna

Below: Marines raise flag at HQ Building



The Last Contest

By Mike Raskin W4UM

I didn't really do as well as I could have in the last contest because of poor conditions and Murphy. I only made a total of 756 Q's. A few hours before the contest, my 756ProIII went south - nothing but gurgling sounds. CPR was unsuccessful. All I had left was my 2M HT which I modified for HF with some aluminum foil and parts from an old phonograph. I was able to get a solid 5 watts into the Bird. Unfortunately, after about an hour, my rate dropped below one hundred and I intuitively knew something was wrong. The Bird was now showing less than 3 milliwatts. Looking inside the HT I saw that the aluminum foil was toast. I didn't have anymore foil so I had to finish the next 3 hours at 3 milliwatts. That really didn't matter because I noticed that the driven element was missing from my tribander. QRN was 40 over - I found out after the contest that my wife had accidentally left the vacuum cleaner on in the garage for the entire contest. Murphy again struck at the end of the contest when my hard drive caught fire and I lost all my Q's. Luckily I also keep a hand written log just in case. I'm just waiting for the paper to dry since the fire department hosed the shack. Boy, I wish I used a ball point pen instead of a water soluble felt tip pen. Does anyone know someone who can restore writing to wet paper? Oh well, at least I worked ET.73, Mike, W4UM



FCGer County Hunters

FCGers known to hold the award for working all 3077 US Counties include:

- KB4ET
- KN4Y
- N3ISH
- N4PN
- NF4A
- W4OV

There may be others.

ARRL 10 Meter Contest All Time Records Held by FCGers

Cnty	Category	Station	Score	QSOs	Mults	Year	
=====							
WORLD RECORDS							
=====							
K SO	CW LP	K1TO	1218000	2040	150	2002	
=====							
W / V E RECORDS							
=====							
NFL SO	SSB LP	K4XS	815300	2630	155	1999	
SFL SO	SSB HP	K4XS	1151580	3387	170	1991	
WCF SO	CW LP	K1TO	1218000	2040	150	2002	
=====							
D I V I S I O N R E C O R D S (FCGers hold 7 of top 10)							
=====							
Southeastern	NFL SO	MIX QP	K9OM	786318	1076	221	2002
Southeastern	GA SO	MIX LP	W4WA	967434	1320	237	1998
Southeastern	NFL SO	MIX HP	WC4E	2574438	3273	277	1999
Southeastern	SFL SO	SSB QP	NJ2F	110860	482	115	2002
Southeastern	NFL SO	SSB LP	K4XS	815300	2630	155	1999
Southeastern	SFL SO	SSB HP	K4XS	1151580	3387	170	1991
Southeastern	GA SO	CW QP	K9AY	276860	545	127	2000
Southeastern	WCF SO	CW LP	K1TO	1218000	2040	150	2002
Southeastern	GA SO	CW HP	W4AN	1400168	2272	154	1999 W4PA
Southeastern	WCF MS	NE4AA	2347370	2867	265	2003	K1TO K6AW

**Post Hurricane Antenna Work
At KJ4UY - Haines City**



Above pictures are before repairs, below after repairs. Antennas below: An M2 3 element 30 meter/40 meter with an 11 element 6 meter Telrex (survivor of the hurricanes). In the background is a 4 element SteppIR, 6-20 meters with 8 element 2 meter Telrex on top (survivor of the hurricanes) and to the right background is a 2 element Lightning Bolt quad, 6-20 meters . Thanks Larry KJ4UY for sending in the pictures.



**New Tower Construction
At N4GI - Plant City**



From a hole in the ground to finishing the base at the left, to the finished product below. Blake N4GI sent in these photos of construction of the first tower at his new location in Plant City.



Line Noise - Some Lessons Learned

By Bill Kollenbaum K4XS

Following are some of my experiences with line noise and recommendations developed over the last 20 years.



Smaller co-ops are rough to work with. Even when and if they want to help, their poor training and second rate equipment is a real hindrance to getting the problem fixed.

I have found most of the problems myself and then contacted the company. Being retired helps as you can tell them to call when they do come out. When you are with them, even if they are inexperienced, you can show them at approximately which pole the problem is located. Usually the RF specialist has a bucket truck.

I generally try to localize the problem in the following manner.

First, using a tribander, turn the antenna to the strongest signal. Sometimes, this can't be done since there may be more than one source. Once the offending direction is found, then try to null it by turning the beam 90 degrees off the signal. Run the check on 20, then run the check on 15 and 10. I have found some poles to be greater offenders at 15, than at 20 or 10. Generally though, the higher the frequency, the easier it is to locate. This brings me to step two.

Second, I like to use a car radio set to 1650 to "run" the line. Although this will not pinpoint the location, it will give a rough idea where the problem(s) lie. Another and perhaps better idea is to use a mobile HF radio set to 10 meters on AM, since it will give a more exact location. The higher the frequency, the easier it is to pinpoint the problem pole.

Now the hard work. You have to get your butt out of the car and use a VHF radio set for AM. An FM one will not do it. I have an MFJ 852 RFI finder which I have used pretty successfully and can usually get results down to one of two poles. You simply walk the line and see which pole or poles give you the highest reading. Write down the pole number of all suspected poles, so you can give it to the specialist when you contact him. Often you can see the problems from the

ground if you know what you are looking for. In our area, the main culprits are blown arrestors. Sometimes, the wires are blown right off the arrestors, and these are easy to spot with a pair of binoculars. Sometimes you can see cracked arrestors, and blown up arrestors with them.

The second culprit is blown insulators. Sometimes, there is a carbon track that gets really crappy when wet.

Check for bad splices. These can be hard to see, as are their cousins loose hardware connections. Loose hardware connections generally occur at poles hit by cars, trees, and at poles which have lines meeting at less than 180 degrees, like at a bend in the road.

I am not recommending you do this, but loose hardware can sometimes be found by giving the pole a wiggle by shaking the tie back guy. The noise will become intermittent when you do this. I found one pole nearby my place by doing it. Please no flack on this though. I know it is not in the OSHA book.

Lastly, look for any plant growth on the lines...Kudzu, leaves brushing the line and so forth. These can be especially nasty in wet weather.

Now that you have all the offending poles recorded, call the company and explain the problem to them.

Be polite! Get the phone extension number and name of each person you speak with and act like you know what you're talking about. Expect to be a little patient. After all, most of the companies will think you are a pain the tail, and servicing your complaint is a bother, but you have to be persistent. Only as a last resort, threaten them with the FCC etc. Hopefully the RFI guy will come out in a bucket truck and can take a look at the problems you have isolated. As you lead him from pole to pole, it helps especially if he is inexperienced, to mention what he may be looking for at each pole and to have the radio or RFI sniffer you used to see if his prodding and shaking of the lines helps. As he does his thing and slowly corrects the problems one by one, make sure you contact his supervisor and tell him what a great guy the RFI specialist was. An "atta boy" really helps in the future.

By the way, not all problems occur at the pole. I once found an especially nasty RFI problem about two miles from my house between two poles on a 130K line. Some bird had dropped a piece of extension cord approximately 8-9 feet long which had wrapped itself the line and arced intermittently for months and the cord made a great 1/4 wave radiator on 10 meters!

CW Forever

Ed. Note - In view of the upcoming demise of CW requirements in US amateur licensing, this little poem may be appropriate. Thanks Charlie NF4A for sending it to the reflector

You must have, at time, thought into the past,
When some things go out, while other last, What
comes to my mind is the Old Morse Code, That has
weathered the storms from any abode, To talk with
ones fingers, is surely an Art, Of any info you care
to impart, In most conditions the signals get thru,
While the same about phone is simply not true.
Those Didhs and Dahs cut through the trash, Of
nearby noise or lightning's crash, To the sensitive
ears of the ham receiver, Who records this data
with ardent fever, He knows he's doing something
unique, (in such poor conditions, that's quite a
feat!) To roger the message that came from the air,
These brass pounders sure do have the flair, They
say Morse ops are a dying breed, But don't despair,
there's always that need.

That when conditions get rough for the new auto-
mation, Be rest assured, there'll be need for your
station, CW is dying? Believe it never, This mode
will be 'round for ever and ever, But one thing is
sure, what we really need, Is to relay our knowl-
edge to the younger breed. To carry the torch, long
after we're gone, To send Morse Code thru the air
like a song, When at last, Silent Key pull that final
lever, We can rest in peace, it's CW for ever.

Jim Haterley WA1TBY

Seventh of April Nineteen hundred and eighty five

NAQP SSB CLAIMED SCORES

NAQP SSB AUG 05

NF4A	403	112	45,136	SOLP	
N4KK	279	81	22,599	SOLP	K9VV
K9ES	245	72	17,640	SOLP	
KA0GGI/M	216	53	11,448	SOLP	
K6BW	70	53	4,187	SOLP	N2NL
K8NZ	38	15	570	SOLP	
KI4CCO	25	19	475	SOLP	

NAQP CW Claimed Scores

WJ9B	769	187	143,803	SOHP	
WK2G	609	151	91,969	SOLP	
NF4A	506	141	71,346	SOLP	
KA0GGI/M	329	120	39,480	SOLP	
N4KW	267	107	28,994	SOLP	
KN4Y	250	87	21,750	SOLP	
WD4AHZ	201	70	14,070	SOLP	
W4ZW	160	73	11,680	SOLP	
KE1F	165	70	11,550	SOLP	
N4KK	34	23	782	SOLP	K9VV

**The Essence of Ham Radio
According to W2SKE, SK**

Bill Leonard, W2SKE, was a man of many accomplishments, both in his professional career and as a ham, and also as an ARRL Member of over 60 years standing. He and I were close friends from the time we met at Dartmouth in 1934. I believe some of his remarks made at the Dayton HamVention 10 years ago captured the essence of our hobby in words that bear repeating.

Bill told the attendees that, after half a century of hamming, he still could not help but regard radio as a miracle:

"Yes, I know how it works. I know how electrons flow, and how the Sun spots and the Moon bounces. But, to me, it is still magic. I have never lost that sense of awe and mystery. No matter how much radio I studied, no matter how many kits I put to-gether, no matter how many trees and tow-ers I climbed to put up no matter how many antennas, no matter how many contest QSOs and countries worked and QSL cards received-way down deep, I can hardly believe it. I hope the next generation of hams will carry with them, through the years, just-a little of that sense of the won-der of it all. And I hope it gives them a lifetime of pleasure, as it has me."-Gene Kern, W2BAK, Tenafly, New Jersey

Could anybody say it better?

Pres Graham W4FDA since 1937

Melbourne Hamfest Activities Information

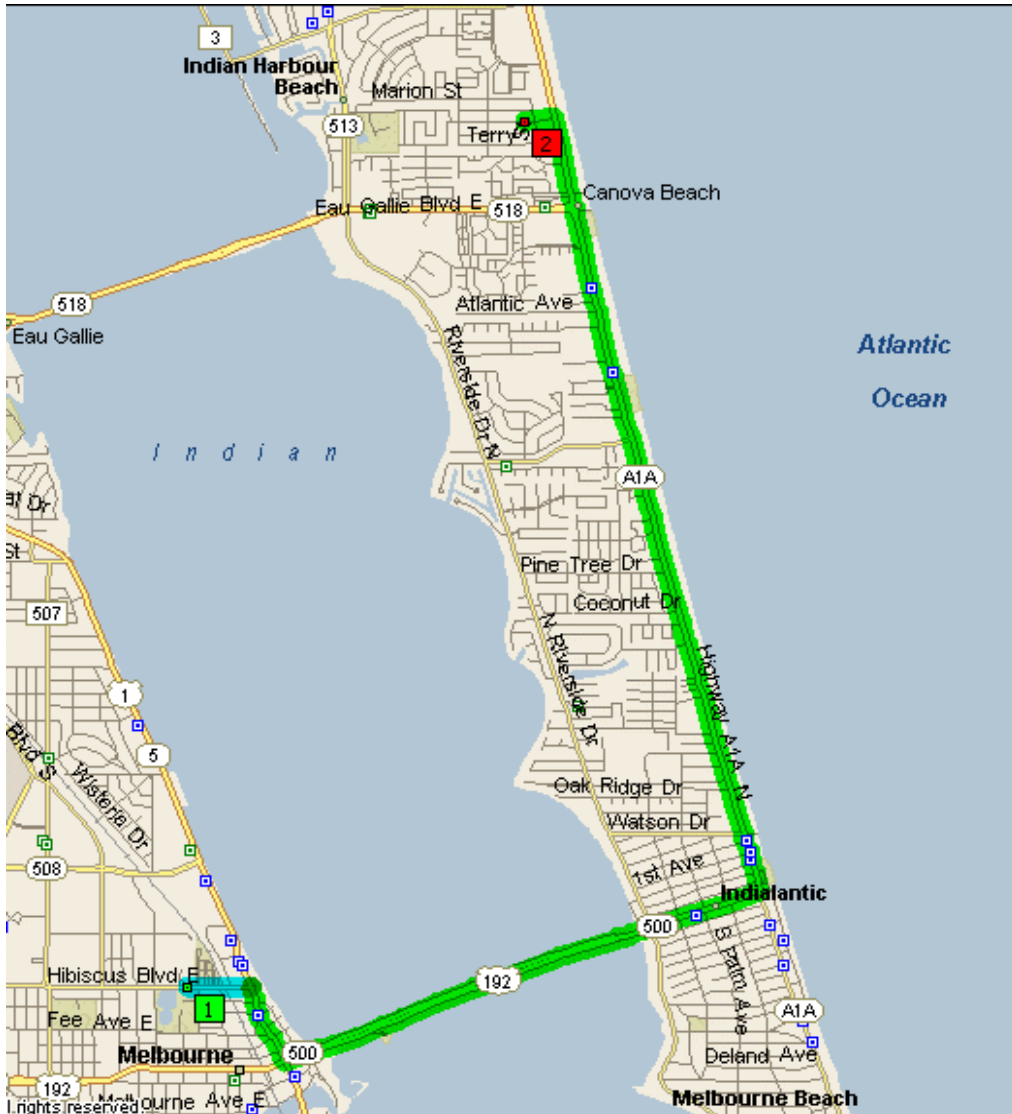
The plan is for FCGers to meet at the ticket barrel at noon Saturday 10 September, after which we will travel to Franco's Ristorante & Pizzeria at 1369 Babcock St in Melbourne for lunch and an FCG Meeting. As in several previous years, Eric

K9ES has invited us to his QTH for an afternoon meeting and cookout. The meeting is scheduled at 2:30 PM and the cookout begins at 3 PM and continues through 7PM. Directions to Eric's QTH are shown below.

Look forward to seeing many of our members at Melbourne!

Instructions to K9ES QTH	Mile	For
Depart Melbourne Auditorium [625 Hibiscus Blvd E, Melbourne, FL 32901, on Hibiscus Blvd E (East)	0.0	0.3 mi
Turn RIGHT (South) onto US-1	0.3	0.4 mi
Turn LEFT (East) onto US-192. Cross Indian River on Causeway. Continue to A1A	0.7	2.4 mi
Turn LEFT (North) onto SR-A1A. Go past Eau Gallie Blvd (where Walmart Shopping Center is)	3.1	3.8 mi
Turn LEFT (West) onto Atlantic Blvd. This is where Shell Station is located.	6.9	0.1 mi

Arrive 107 Atlantic Blvd, Indian Harbour Beach. Park on lawn on Martin Street, or in front of house. Come in..... We may listen on 146.55 MHz SIMPLEX.



Florida Contest Group

Dan Street, K1TO, President
 9993 289th Street East
 Myakka City, FL 34251
 k1to@aol.com

George Wagner K5KG
 V.P. Operations
 5113 Higel Avenue
 Sarasota FL 34343
 K5kg@arrl.net

Ron Wetjen, WD4AHZ
 V.P. Florida QSO Party
 5362 Castleman Drive
 Sarasota, FL 34232
 wd4ahz@arrl.net

Fred Perkins, K4LQ
 Secretary/Treasurer
 Newsletter Editor
 3437 Lake Josephine Drive
 Lake Placid FL 33852
 k4lq@arrl.net