



Contest Gazette

Florida Contest Group

www.floridacontestgroup.com

Volume 31, Issue 1

January 2024

From the President's Corner

Chris Plumblee, W4WF, FCG President



Greetings to the FCG! I hope that the 2023-24 contest season started off on a great note at your station. I enjoyed my first trip overseas for a contest with a trip to C37N for CQWW CW (recap elsewhere in the *Gazette*). It was definitely a highlight of my contest career so far.

I enjoyed participating in the recent NAQP CW as W1CW from N4WW's station in Apopka. Kudos to NK4O for getting a big group of FCG members (seven full teams of five operators each) on the air for the NAQP CW. If you're a fan of domestic contests, the NAQP SSB is going on as I write this report and the NAQP RTTY is coming up in the next few weeks. AJ will be organizing teams and working to encourage activity on the other modes going forward. Historically, we've had very strong participation in the CW leg of NAQP and our activity in the other modes has dropped off considerably. If you're an enthusiastic phone or RTTY operator, we welcome you to join one of the FCG teams. If you're interested in learning more about RTTY or SSB contesting, or are looking for a way to incentivize yourself to operate more, perhaps joining a team is exactly what the doctor ordered!

The preparation is well underway for the Orlando Contest Dinner in February. ICOM has again committed to sponsoring the event, and the brand new IC7610 arrived at my house on Christmas Eve. Getting to draw and hand out the grand prize at the Orlando Contest Dinner is a highlight of my year as the President of the FCG, and I take the responsibility very seriously. Thank you again to the great folks at ICOM, including but not limited to N9JA. Please take a few moments when you see Ray around at Hamcation or at the dinner to thank him and the rest of the ICOM team for their sponsorship of the dinner.

Speaking of the contest dinner, I saw some discussion on the CWOps reflector about their dinner at Dayton. Some of their members had suggested that they open up their dinner venue for socializing at 3pm before the dinner started at 6pm to allow for more discussion among the members (and to alleviate parking problems with everyone arriving all at once). We should be able to do something similar at our dinner...is there any interest in opening the doors to the American Legion at 4pm (or perhaps even earlier?) for regular attendees? Historically a few folks have arrived early and I've put them to work spreading tablecloths and laying out literature from our sponsors. Those tasks typically don't take long though, and afterward you'd be able to chat with other early arrivals and enjoy a beverage. One wrinkle... the dinner breaks up between 9:30pm and 10pm, and I couldn't in good conscience

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The Contest Gazette is the newsletter of the Florida Contest Group (FCG). The Gazette is published quarterly and notifications for input and publication will be on the FCG reflector. Please send input to the editor, Marty Brown, N4GL, n4gl.marty@gmail.com.

All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication.

Submission suggestions:

- For text, Word documents, PDFs
- Pictures and graphics, PNG, JPG, or PDF
- Text and pictures in the body of an email also work

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send anyone out on the road who had been drinking beer since 4pm. So, the beverage selection will be more limited until the more customary door opening time of 5:30pm.

So, if you're done at the hamfest early on Friday afternoon, please drop by the American Legion after 4pm. I'll be setting up, and you can help if there is anything that needs to be done, and otherwise enjoy a little more time to chat with your fellow attendees!

The ARRL 10m Contest in December was another fun time from Florida while the SFI is high and conditions are good. Congrats to all the high scorers...I was in Sarasota during the contest on a family trip. I see great scores from many FCG members, including great scores in SO CW by K1TO (of course), and SO Mixed Unlimited by NP2X, WO4O, K2SG, and N4UU. Welcome also to re-

cent part-time Florida residents NV9L and WB9Z, who posted a commendable score from the WB9Z/4 station in EL88 as NV9L. It sure is nice to shovel that sunshine instead of snow, isn't it Jerry?

I hope that you're looking forward to the ARRL DX CW and SSB contests coming up in a few weeks. If you have any questions or are planning a DXpedition or trip for any of those contests, please send an email to the reflector. ARRL DX is a great time to go to a Caribbean island to work all the W's. I know the PCARS group is planning another expedition to PJ2T for ARRL DX SSB in March...is anyone going to challenge them for top M/M in the contest this year?

I'll see many of you in Orlando in just a few short weeks!

73/OJ/LN, Chris W4WF

NF4A Speaker for Orlando Dinner

The speaker for the **2024 Florida Contest Group Contest Dinner** is **Charlie Wooten, NF4A** from Lynn Haven, FL. He is a long time FCG member and one of the most active members from the panhandle.

[FCG Orlando Contest Dinner Signup](#)

Friday, February 9th at the American Legion, 1912A Lee Road, Orlando. Doors open at 5:30. Dinner at 6:30.



White Family Memorial Fund

Chris Plumlee, W4WF, FCG President

Upon W1YL's sad passing, the FCG officers decided that a tangible way to remember Ellen and her vital contributions to ham radio generally and to the FCG specifically would be to create a White Family Memorial Fund, to be administered by the FCG. We considered calling it the Ellen White Memorial Fund, but Ellen was so inextricably linked with Bob and Jim, and the White family is so inextricably linked with the FCG, that it just seemed right to honor and remember the entire White family with this effort.

The White Family Memorial Fund is a separate fund within the FCG Treasury. Funds will be used for extraordinary contributions that advance amateur radio contesting. Contributions can be made at <https://floridacontestgroup.square.site>, via PayPal

to Payments@floridacontestgroup.org, or via check (made out to the FCG with White Memorial Fund in the memo line) mailed to

Taylor Plumlee KI4GHK
4719 Fontana Street
Orlando, FL 32807

Contributions to the White Family Memorial Fund made after March 1, 2023 are tax deductible. Your contributions will not be used for general FCG expenses. Rather, they will be used for extraordinary contributions to organizations, individuals, or campaigns that are, in the judgment of the FCG officers, working to advance amateur radio and contesting in a way that honors the memory of W1YL, W1CW, and K4OJ.



FQP Update

Dan Street, K1TO



The FQP 2023 is close to finished. Log checking is done which includes cross-checking and Uniques. Scores are calculated for each entry. Tables are assembled for the results by category, club competition, plaque winners, QSOs by band, County sweeps, 1x1 sweeps (768!), golden

logs & honor roll, logs by grouping/year and (new) QSOs by state/band. Records are mostly done. Good progress has been made on the write-up and this will continue as a focus. Plaques will soon be paid for, ordered, delivered, sorted and some will be handed out personally in Orlando. Other State QSO parties saw a much larger decline despite the lousy condx and comparison to our 25th year that we experienced.

The FQP 2024 1x1 "word" and hosts will be decided in the near future and posted to the web site. At least one new mobile is hitting the road. Rules for 2024 will be tweaked and the results soon posted to the web site. With the sunspot cycle so high and the VFB planning/emails from Chris NX4N, the FQP 2024 is poised for a big year!

The 2024 Florida QSO Party will be held the weekend of April 27th – 28th



Worth Repeating



John Bayne, N4EEB, shared his **ARRL November Sweepstakes** on the reflector, but lets take another look! John says: Kevin K4KM (below) was a beast!





N4GL Receives Gift from W1YL Estate

Marty Brown, N4GL

My curiosity was seriously aroused last fall when K5KG wanted to be sure I would “be there” because he had “something” to give me.

The “there” was the annual FOC Florida dinner held the first weekend in December in Orlando. Now, George had a right to ask, because I am not the family representative for FOC, the OM, Wayne, N4FP, holds that honor. However, its one of my favorite events of the year and I assured George I would be present.

The “something” that George had for me was a beautiful Bencher paddle that belonged to Ellen, W1YL. Because he was involved with the family managing Ellen’s things, he was able to save some meaningful possessions, and this paddle is certainly one.

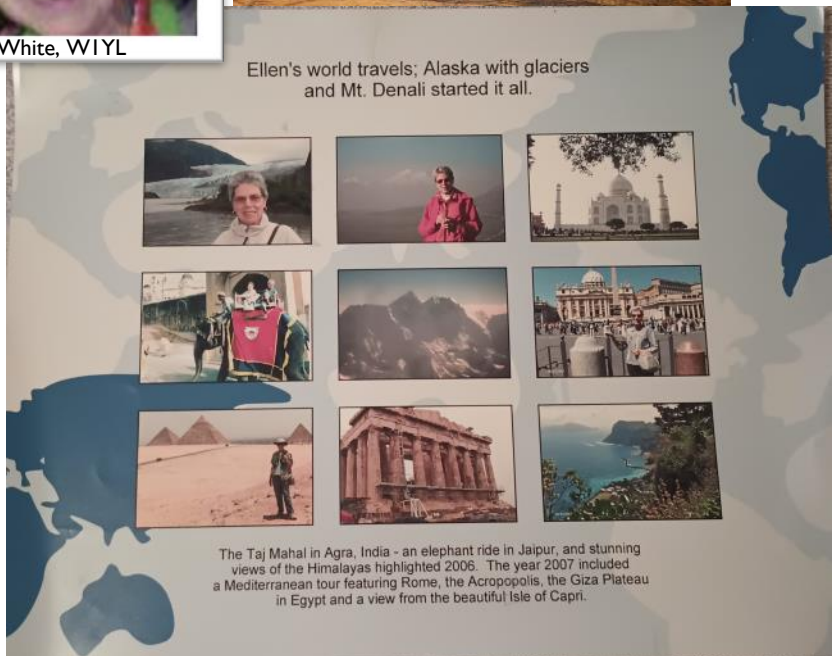
George also gave me a poster of Ellen’s travels that many of you who knew her well have seen.

Thanks you, George. It’s truly my pleasure to be Trustee for the W1YL and enjoy these treasures.



Ellen White, W1YL

Ellen's world travels; Alaska with glaciers and Mt. Denali started it all.



The Taj Mahal in Agra, India - an elephant ride in Jaipur, and stunning views of the Himalayas highlighted 2006. The year 2007 included a Mediterranean tour featuring Rome, the Acropolis, the Giza Plateau in Egypt and a view from the beautiful Isle of Capri.



Planning/Selecting C3

Chris Plumblee, W4WF, FCG President

K1MM, who has a great deal of experience traveling for ham radio expeditions around the world, had been talking about going somewhere rare for CQWW CW while conditions on the high bands were good. However, he wanted somewhere that didn't require a week of station building ahead of time. After we batted around several ideas for places that were relatively uncommon, we couldn't think of anything that was also easy to get to. We were discussing our self-inflicted conundrum just prior to Orlando Hamcation and the FCG's annual contest dinner in 2023, and I suggested that we consider C3. Bill had traveled to Andorra in 2018 and 2019 while attending Mobile World Conference in Barcelona. He is great friends with C31US, the longtime president of the Unió de Radioaficionats Andorrans (URA), the national IARU society in Andorra. Fortunately,, Bill had joined URA on his previous trips, so was able to request access to their club station, C37NL.

I did some checking on flights, and there were very affordable non-stop flights from Miami International Airport to Barcelona. There is no direct flight service to Andorra; you must fly into France or Spain and take a rental car or a shuttle bus into the country. The timing was excellent; I was able to recruit some close friends to who were already in Orlando for the hamfest to join the trip.

This trip would be my first venture outside the country for a contest – I did a marathon 3-week EU vacation with family in the summer of 2023, but purposely did not include any ham radio in the itinerary for that trip. In CQWW, I knew that we were unlikely to win our category from EU with the huge number of 1-pointers we would work, but I also knew that Andorra, being in far western EU, would have long openings to the USA. The EU pileups also offered an opportunity for big rate, which is my favorite thing in ham radio. We would be a multiplier for everyone, which would almost guarantee us big rate when we called CQ. On the flip side, our unusual callsign would make S&P and calling multipliers somewhat cumbersome.

Operators

For operators, I recruited K1CC, who has extensive travel experience for CQWW, including a recent operation in Ireland with a group of SP hams. Rich was very enthusiastic about the trip, particularly given the relative ease of traveling to C3 from Miami and the undoubtedly big pileups we'd generate.

The next operator who joined was a result of a happy coincidence. I was walking by the lobby at the Hope Hotel in Dayton at Hamvention 2023, and the desk clerk asked out loud if anyone knew Ed Parish, as he'd left his phone at the hotel. I knew K1EP from his many trips down from New England to the Orlando Hamcation, so I volunteered to take him his phone when the shuttle bus to the Hamfest site left (in a short 90 minutes). After we finally rendezvoused at the hamfest site, Ed expressed his interest in hearing more about the operation.

The final member of the operating team was NI1L, who was recruited by K1CC. Les is a computer scientist who lives in the Boston area, and he and K1CC are longtime friends. Fortunately, his schedule was open and he was able to join the team on relatively short notice a few weeks before the contest.

Other members of the team who were unfortunately not able to join us in the final op list included K1MM, who had a work commitment on the Monday after the contest and was unable to break away. EA3HSO was an enthusiastic team member until his mother scheduled an ill-timed (for us) visit from Peru to Allan's house in Barcelona. NK4O also was initially very interested also, but the birth of his first grandchild in November made him unavailable as well.

Licensing

Once we had the kernel of a team, we approached C31US and URA to express our interest in operating from their station. For this part of the endeavor, K1MM's previous visits to Andorra were priceless. Bill speaks fluent Spanish and Catalan, and he had made fast friends with many of the members of URA when he joined them for the ARRL DX SSB contest in 2018 and

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2019. C31US was favorably disposed to our request, and he spoke with the rest of the URA, and they gave their consent shortly thereafter. Licensing in Andorra is somewhat more restrictive than in most of the EU. CEPT licensing is not available, and it's not possible for non-residents to get an individual license. However, we were able to join the URA as non-residents, and as non-residents we were able to use the club callsign from the club station for up to 15 days per year, which allowed us some time to operate before the contest as well as the three days of the contest.

Station Equipment/Antennas

URA have made a significant investment in their club station. The station is located at Naturland (naturland.ad), a nature resort in the mountains in Andorra. There is a 15m tower with a Nagara tribander at the top, a 12m tower with a 40m rotatable dipole, another 12m tower with an Optibeam OB 9-5 tribander, an 80m sloper off the Optibeam tower, and a commercial 160m vertical. The antennas are all located along the top level of the Naturland lodge with a commanding dropoff to the east, through the north, and to the west. The south is blocked by a mountain directly across the road that rises for an additional 400m, which makes it extremely difficult to work Africa, particularly Zone 36-38.

Topographically, Andorra is a Y-shaped river valley, with the bulk of the population near the bottom of the valley at an elevation of between 900m and 1000m. Naturland is situated on the south side of the valley at 1600m elevation, so the nearby terrain is very favorable to the north...the terrain drops 700m to the valley floor. However, on the opposite side of the valley a few kilometers away, the mountains rise to a similar altitude. The combination of topography and demography make C3 rare outside of contests...most Andorrans live in the valley, including all the hams. If they have a station at home, they are surrounded by mountains that rise at least 500m on all sides.

When we were planning the trip, I had initially thought we might use the radios that are on-site. URA has several Icom transceivers, including an IC-756 Pro-III, an IC-756 Pro, and an IC-775. One of the critical elements in a M/2, particularly with antennas relatively close together, is spectral purity. The cleaner the transmitted signal, the less inter-station interference

one transmitter causes to the other. For that reason, and because it seemed relatively simple to accomplish, we had planned to bring our own transceivers from home. K1EP has a new K4, and I have a K3. The Elecraft radios are light and relatively small, easy to transport, and most critically, have cleaner transmitters than the Icoms. If you've read the classic children's story *If you Give a Mouse a Cookie*, you can probably guess how the discussion went. We were going to bring our own radios, so it would be simpler to bring our own computers. If we're bringing computers, we'd better bring US keyboards to avoid trying to hunt and peck our way on a European keyboard. Since we're bringing our own radios, we could bring band decoders and a 2x6 or 2x8 switch to automate the antenna switching. If we're bringing antenna switching hardware and different transceivers, we could also significantly improve any inter-station interference by bringing high power bandpass filters along.

Each of those steps was relatively achievable on its own, but each one added to the complexity of the station setup, and each one was an opportunity for failure. Fortunately, K1EP is an experienced RF engineer who has done considerable work engineering and supporting remote stations where reliability is critical, so he had a good grasp of how to set up the station so that there was minimal chance of problems. One of Ed's ideas was that we needed to minimize or eliminate any manual antenna switching. K1CC and W4WF both operate a multi-op stations where the level of automation is relatively low. It was not unusual for either of them to use a few jumpers and a barrel connector to change which radio had access to which antenna, or to defeat a hardware interlock to set up a temporary in-band station. Ed was adamant that we needed to configure the station for maximum flexibility, then leave the antenna switching alone. With that in mind, we conceived of one crucial enhancement to the antenna flexibility of the station.

With the solar flux in the 170's, we'd spend lots of time with two stations on the high bands. We could assign one station to one tribander and the other to the second tribander. However, that invites inter-station interference and would sometimes involve



the tribanders beaming into one another, which is less than optimal. We could use a triplexer to run both stations off one tribander, but then the stations would share a single rotator.

K1CC did extensive station diagramming, and conceived of a model with two high power triplexers, one for each tribander, and 2x1 switches on the output of each triplexer. This arrangement would allow us to switch independently which tribander we were using at any given time, crucially without risking hot-switching the other station at all.

The final station configuration was K1EP's K4 on one radio, with EA3HSO's K3S as the other run transmitter. My K3 was the partner radio paired with the K3S. Each radio drove an Acom 1010 linear amplifier, which is capable of between 600w and 700w output. We had a fully automated switching matrix that included VA6AM high power triplexers on the two tribanders, plus a 40m rotatable dipole on a 12m tower, an 80m sloper off a 12m tower, and a 160m inverted L.

Travel

The flight to Barcelona from various locations on the US East Coast (NI1L left from Boston via Philadelphia, K1EP drove from his home to New York and flew non-stop from JFK, and K1CC and W4WF drove from their homes in Florida to MIA and flew on the same flight) on Tuesday before the contest was uneventful. All three flights arrived on-time in Barcelona Wednesday morning, and all luggage arrived on time as well! Hooray American Airlines!

After we gathered everyone together and picked up our rental van, we drove to EA3HSO's home in Barcelona. Allan has a lovely home on the top floor of an apartment building in the city with a sea view from his patio and a 5-band quad on a roof tower atop the building. We picked up our second radio, the second triplexer (which K1CC had purchased in Poland and had shipped to Allan's) and some radial wire to potentially improve the 160m antenna at C37NL. While we were there, Allan fed us a wonderful lunch and sent us on our way in style.

Pre-Contest Setup

When we arrived at Naturland after a three hour drive from Barcelona. C31US was there to help us unload the

van and start laying out equipment in the shack. None of us had slept particularly well on the plane, so after we stashed the radio gear in the shack, we retired to the on-site hostel to sleep.

K1EP and W4WF were the first ones awake on Thursday, so they opted to start moving the existing URA gear off the desks in the shack and start setting up the radios and switching equipment that we'd brought along. K1CC and NI1L came up to the shack about 90 minutes later and worked with C31US to set up an inverted L on 160m with three radials outside. Both teams worked for most of the day improving the 160m antenna and setting up two run stations and one partner mode station in the shack.

We finished the station setup on Thursday afternoon local time. C31US had invited us to join the URA at their annual Christmas dinner, so we got dressed up and headed down the mountain for a lovely dinner at a local hotel. At the dinner, which was conducted half in English and half in Spanish, Joan awarded pins to several local hams who had been members of URA for more than 20 years.

After dinner, we returned to the station and I operated for about an hour on 160m to test the new antenna. We worked several NA stations on topband in this brief foray, as well as a number of Europeans. I tried to keep a sked with a fellow FCG member on top band; N4II reported that we had quite a pileup of stateside stations, which we couldn't hear at all. Our inverted L was clearly getting out well, but we couldn't hear any but the loudest callers at 0000z or so. Fortunately, we caught an opening at 0400z on Sunday when we had a much better noise floor, and we managed a total of 42 QSOs with Zone 4 and 5 during the contest.

The Contest

The contest begins at 1am local time Saturday morning. We spent Friday morning finishing the shack setup and testing partner mode, which had recently been revamped in N1MM+. After lunch, we went on a tour of Andorra with C31US, who was keen to show us around the country. We toured a number of sites in the valley, including the office of the URA, where we toured the QSL bureau and the conference table



where C31US gives license exams to Andorran residents. We returned to the station in time to complete preparations for the contest. At 9pm local, we went to a local pizza restaurant for the traditional pre-contest pizza dinner. We got back to the station around 10:30pm and tried to relax before the contest.

Before the contest, we had done extensive benchmarking of our planned operation against the ED1R M/2. We were hoping to reach 80% of their rates for a given hour. The big unknown for us was multipliers. We would be a unique multiplier, so most serious entrants should call us. However, we had an unusual callsign, relatively low power (700w), and significantly smaller antennas than the competition, so S&P would be a challenge. We made the decision to focus on running and not spend too much time S&P for multipliers.

Operating the contest was something of a blur. K1EP had been fighting a sinus infection for a couple of weeks prior to the trip, and Ed spent a lot of energy getting the station set up and all the antenna and filter switching laid out, so his actual availability to operate was limited. If the N1MM stats are to be believed, K1EP operated about 12 hours during the entire contest. That left K1CC, N11L, and W4WF with plenty of chair time. We found the pattern of activity to be mostly as we expected before the contest. The high rate hours were immediately after sunrise, when we could run EU and AS on the high bands. We worked some tasty multipliers (to these stateside ops), including Zone 22-26, during those hours. Shortly before the sun rose in North America, we would switch to the NA tribander on both radios. The opening tracked the sun across the continent, with New England and Atlantic Canada the first in the log. We worked our first Zone 5 and USA station Saturday on 15m at 1040z (K1LZ). In the next hour or so, I worked mostly EU with a smattering of the largest US multi-ops. It occurred to me that, before the US runs started in earnest, I should try to work some of the multipliers that were spotted in Europe and Asia, as well as a few of the Eastern Caribbean stations that hadn't called us yet. I spent a few minutes S&P for multipliers, and worked several multipliers, including V47T, P40L, A92GE, 4W8X, 3B8M, TF3W, MW0BRO, CR6K, and 3W9A. Our posture of calling CQ and hoping that multipliers would come to us had left some common and uncommon multipliers on the table after a few hours of run-

ning mostly EU. The US runs were exhilarating as expected. Unlike in the USA, from Europe the highest rates aren't automatically the 1200z-1500z hours. The 0100z hour on Saturday had a combined rate of 315, including our top rate hour of the contest on a single band-mode (176/hr on 40m). The 0900z hour on Saturday morning was a combined 296 hour, with 173/hr on 15m and the rest split between 20m and 10m. 1000z Saturday had another 170 hour on 15m with 124 on 10m, all to EU. 10M didn't really open to the US until 1400z on Saturday, when we had back to back hours of 134 and 148.

After 10m and 15m closed both days, we had good luck on 20m in the late afternoon. 1800Z on Saturday featured a 155 hour on 20m, mostly stateside. On Sunday, we had our 2nd highest rate hour of the contest on 20m at 1900z with 175 QSOs. On Sunday, 15m persisted a little later, so while I was operating 20m and racking up huge rates, N11L was running off 129 QSOs on 15m. Our pre-contest benchmarking hadn't indicated that this sort of rate was possible at this hour – our target combined rate for that hour was 141, so the ED1R combined rate for the 1900z hour on Sunday was 177. After the contest, several knowledgeable friends theorized that most of those stateside QSOs that I was making on 20m in that hour would have worked ED1R earlier in the contest, and we had either been on other bands (probably trying to work 15m and 10m to the US) or had not maximized the rates on 20m at the beginning of the high band openings to the US. However it happened, I was pleased to be in the right place at the right time. Signals weren't the loudest, but it seemed that there were seldom more than 2-3 callers at once, and I was able to pick out full calls most of the time and put many new stations in the log across the USA, including lots of Zone 3. I followed the 175/hr at 1900z with a 146/hr at 2000z, also on 20m; our location in southwestern Europe had us well-positioned to keep the high bands open to the US late in the day.

Problems & Lessons Learned

We didn't have any significant technical problems during the contest. We had some interference from 80m to 40m that was troublesome. The VA6AM filters worked great to keep interference from adjacent bands to a minimum, but 80m generated some broad-band noise on 40m that was difficult to filter out. We

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think the proximity of the antennas to one another, with the end of the sloper near the 40m tower, made the interference worse than on the other band combinations. We also had a problem where 160m RF would cause the internet to drop, so when we were running on 160m we lost RBN spots. That phenomenon had the effect of driving us to call CQ more when we had one station on 160m, but we really spent little time S&P in the best of circumstances, so I think the effect on our score was minimal.

We found the partner radio to be helpful, though we were limited in how many hours we could staff it. Given our preference, we'd have had 1-2 more operators so that we could staff the two run radios and the partner radio for all 48 hours of the contest.

The facilities at C37NL, while not luxurious, are more than adequate to support a high-scoring entry. The key is the on-site hostel. The station is on the top floor of the main lodge at Naturland, and the hostel is in the basement, so there are 50 steps to climb between them, but we had a clean, comfortable room to sleep in for 16EUR per person per night...a steal compared with the hotels in the area, which are a minimum 15 minute drive away from the station anyway. The antennas were more than adequate to support our M/2 entry – the additional gain from being a unique multiplier and the favorable terrain made up for the > 3db we were giving up in our transmitted signal, compared with the 1500w legal maximum. The antennas worked flawlessly for the entire contest. I was concerned about our 40m antenna being only a rotatable dipole, but it didn't require any turning during the contest to work EU and US, and in the end we worked virtually all the multipliers we expected to work. The zones we missed on 40m were either antipodal, like 27, 32, and 31, or blocked by the mountain to our south, like 38 and 37. We managed a surprise QSO with zone 36 (D2UY on 80m), and zone 35 was easy with the big group at D4C.

Wrap-up and Summary

So, was the contest a success? We made 9200 QSOs net of dupes, so we vastly exceeded our QSO count goals. Our score suffered because our points per QSO was too low and we missed some easy multipliers because we didn't S&P enough. However, we

made a multiplier widely available...if you missed C3 on any of the money bands this year in CQWW, it wasn't our fault! I didn't get to operate very much outside the contest...only a couple of hours on 10m Thursday afternoon and an hour on 160m on Friday morning. We had a number of requests for the WARC bands which we were not able to accommodate.

I hope to go back to C3 for a future CW contest...perhaps a summertime visit to Spain and France can coincide with the IARU contest and I can help the C37HQ team add to their CW score. I cannot say enough how welcoming and accommodating the URA members were of the four Americans, only one of whom spoke much Spanish, who invaded their club station, moved all their radio gear, and connected a bunch of strange switching and filtering equipment to their antennas. We had a wonderful time. Andorra is a wonderful place to visit for non-hams as well. The economy is very focused on tourism, they use the Euro so there are no worries about changing money, and customs was simple. There are several daily shuttles from the Barcelona airport (the nearest large international airport) to Andorra La Vella for approximately 90EUR per person per way; for 1-2 people, that is probably the most efficient way to get to Andorra.



The crew on EA3HSO's balcony. L-R NI1L, W4WF, EA3HSO, K1EP, EA3DZ, K1CC

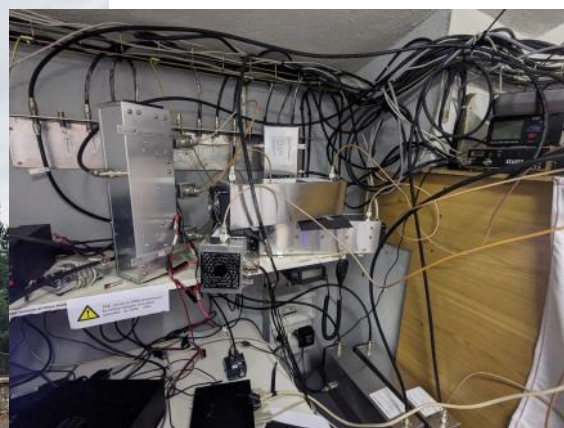
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EA3HSO with his rooftop quad in Barcelona



K1EP, W4WF, K1CC, NI1L holding the Andorran flag outside the station. Visible behind is the 12m tower with OB 9-5 tribander.



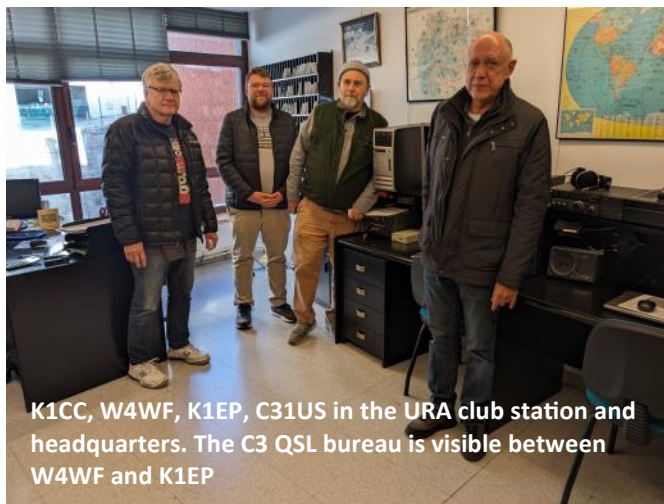
Obligatory "and they call it wireless" photo. This is in the corner between the two stations. The silver boxes are bandpass filters and triplexers.



W4WF operating



NI1L operating



K1CC, W4WF, K1EP, C31US in the URA club station and headquarters. The C3 QSL bureau is visible between W4WF and K1EP



K1CC taking a short break from operating

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K1CC and N11L take a short break from erecting the 160m inverted L. The station building is just across the road on the left side of the photo



N11L and W4WF at the URA Christmas Banquet Thursday night.



A sense of the topography. This is from the high end of the 160m Inv L looking north toward the Naturland lodge. The elevation is between 1600 and 1700m. The mountain continues to rise to the south (behind the camera) another 400m or so. The mountains visible in the photo are several kilometers away, across the valley floor.

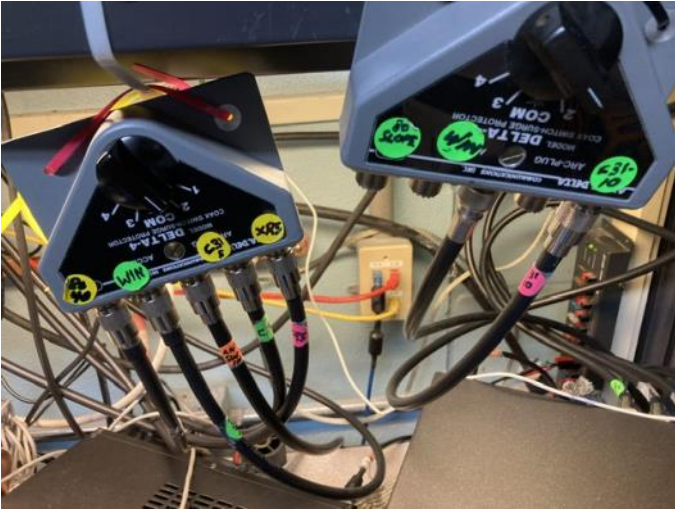
The Contest Gazette is now archived on DLARC

Digital Library of Amateur Radio & Communication, DLARC, is a project of the Internet Archive (the not-for-profit online library best known for The Wayback Machine.) DLARC is growing to be a massive online library of the past and present of ham radio and related communications. It is funded by a grant from Amateur Radio Digital Communications. <https://archive.org/details/dlarc>



Sweepstakes CW, Tampa ARC

Chris Blake, NX4N



Antenna Switches



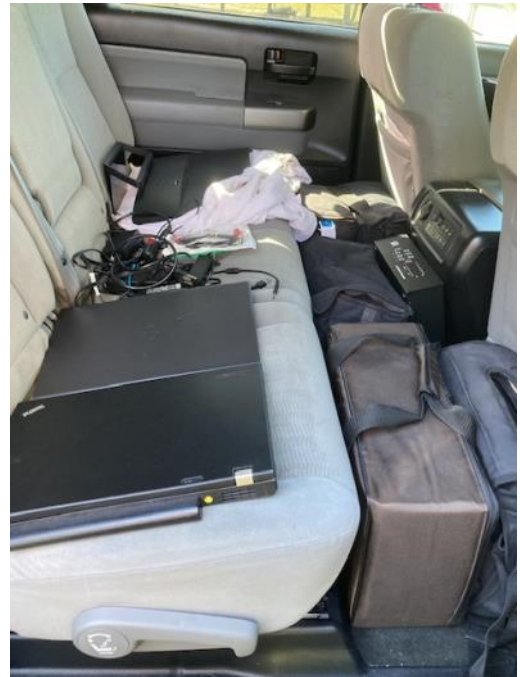
Home away from home@ TARC



Inflatable Bed at Tampa ARC



SO2R Setup

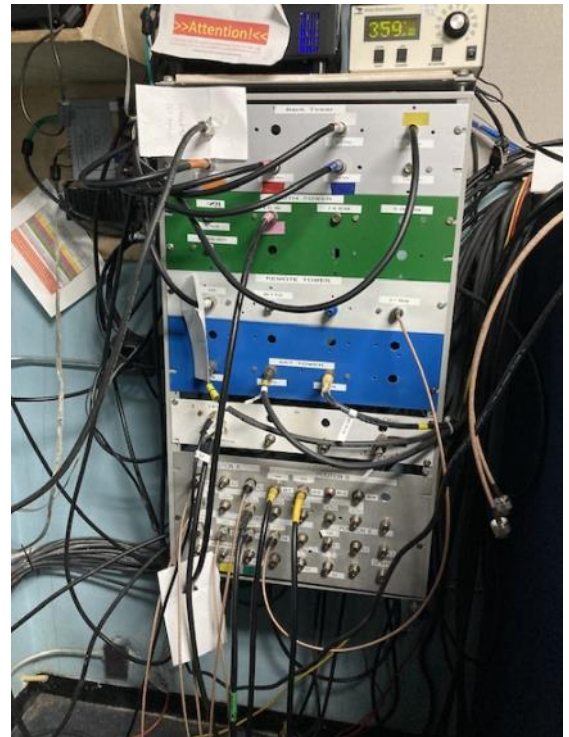


SUV 2nd Row full !!

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Tampa ARC Antenna Farm



TARC Ant Patch Panel

Orlando HamCation Needs Your Help!

It takes an army of Volunteers to make HamCation happen every year. If you volunteer for HamCation for just four hours, we will give you a ticket to get into HamCation all weekend. We need volunteers starting on Tuesday morning all the way through Sunday afternoon, after the show ends.

Just to highlight a few of the areas that are needing help right now, Tailgate, RV, Forums, IT, Logistics, On Site

For more information on volunteering for HamCation, including signing up, go to www.hamcation.com/hamcation-volunteer. Also on this page is the full list of volunteer areas and the

HamCation gives back Track your hours that you volunteer and HamCation will make a donation to your Ham Club/501 C 3 organization of your choice. (We'll provide you with the form).





ORLANDO HamCation® 2024

CENTRAL FLORIDA FAIRGROUNDS AND EXPO PARK
February 9th, 10th, & 11th



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Start the 2024 Hamfest season by visiting the 2nd largest Hamfest in the United States. Come check out the latest in amateur radio electronics, accessories, and gear. Stroll thru the largest tailgate in the Southeast. Find great deals in our swaps building with more than 200 swap tables. You can even catch a great lecture or forum while you're here. Bring the family and spend some time before or after HamCation at one of our area attractions. Attending is so easy because we partnered with a select group of preferred hotels to provide you with great accommodations at special rates. So make HamCation your next vacation destination!

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- Over 150 Commercial Booths
- More than 200 Swap Tables
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WWW.HAMCATION.COM

Friday/Saturday 9AM - 5PM, Sunday 9AM - 1PM.
Tickets are \$25 at the gate.

Orlando HamCation®
4046 N Golden Road STE 106
Winter Park, FL 32792
(407) 841-0874





FCAP Approved Contests thru May 2024

Stan Zawrotny, K4SBZ
FCG Frequent Contester Program Administrator



<i>Your Log Submission is Indispensable</i>			<u>Contest Schedule</u>				<u>Modes</u>					<i>Revised 12/27/22</i>		
Contest	Type	Pts	<u>Start</u>		<u>Finish</u>		C	S	R	F	D	Bands	Duration	Rule
			Date	Time	Date	Time								
January														
ARRL VHF Contest January	Maj	10	20-Jan	1900Z	22-Jan	0359Z	C	S	R	F	D	VU	33	http
CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW	Maj	10	26-Jan	2200Z	28-Jan	2200Z	C					160	24	CQ 1
REF Contest, CW	DX	5	27-Jan	0600Z	28-Jan	1800Z	C					80-10	36	htth
BARTG RTTY Sprint	DX	5	27-Jan	1200Z	28-Jan	1200Z			R			80-10	24	http
UBA DX Contest, SSB	DX	5	27-Jan	1300Z	28-Jan	1300Z		S				160-10	24	http
February														
Vermont QSO Party	QSO	7	3-Feb	0000Z	4-Feb	2359	C	S	R	F	D	All	48	http
Mexico RTTY International Contest	DX	5	3-Feb	1200Z	4-Feb	2359Z			R			80-10	36	http
Minnesota QSO Party	QSO	7	3-Feb	1400Z	3-Feb	2359Z	C	S	R		D	160-10	10	http
British Columbia QSO Party	QSO	7	3-Feb	1600Z	4-Feb	2359Z	C	S				160-10	20	http
European Union DX Contest	DX	5	3-Feb	1900Z	4-Feb	1900Z	C	S				160-10	24	http
North American Sprint, CW Feb	Maj	10	4-Feb	0000Z	4-Feb	0359Z	C					80-20	4	http
CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest	Maj	10	10-Feb	0000Z	11-Feb	2359Z			R			80-10	48	CQ V
KCJ Topband Contest	DX	5	10-Feb	1200Z	11-Feb	1200Z	C					160	24	http
Dutch PACC Contest	DX	5	10-Feb	1200Z	11-Feb	1200Z	C	S				160-10	24	PAC
ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW	Maj	10	17-Feb	0000Z	18-Feb	2359Z	C					160-10	48	ARRL
CQ 160-Meter Contest, SSB	Maj	10	23-Feb	2200Z	25-Feb	2200Z		S				160	24	CQ 1
REF Contest, SSB	DX	5	24-Feb	0600Z	25-Feb	1800Z		S				80-10	36	Com
UBA DX Contest, CW	DX	5	24-Feb	1300Z	25-Feb	1300Z	C					160-10	24	http
South Carolina QSO Party	QSO	7	24-Feb	1500Z	25-Feb	0159Z	C	S	R	F	D	160-6	11	SC Q
North American QSO Party, RTTY Feb	Maj	10	24-Feb	1800Z	25-Feb	0559Z			R			160-10	12	http
North Carolina QSO Party	QSO	7	25-Feb	1500Z	26-Feb	0100Z	C	S	R		D	80-2	10	Rule
March														
ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB	Maj	10	2-Mar	0000Z	3-Mar	2359Z		S				160-10	48	ARRL
Open Ukraine RTTY Championship	DX	5	2-Mar	1800Z	3-Mar	1359Z			R			80-10	20	Ope
North American SSB Sprint Contest, Spring	Maj	10	4-Mar	0000Z	4-Mar	0400Z		S				80-20	4	Rule
YB DX RTTY Contest	DX	5	9-Mar	0000Z	9-Mar	2359Z			R			80-10	24	YB D
Oklahoma QSO Party	QSO	7	9-Mar	1400Z	10-Mar	2100Z	C	S	R		D	80-6	19	OKQ
Stew Perry Topband Challenge Spring	Maj	10	9-Mar	1500Z	10-Mar	1500Z	C					160	24	Stew
EA PSK63 Contest	DX	5	9-Mar	1600Z	10-Mar	1600Z					P	80-10	24	EAP
Idaho QSO Party	QSO	7	9-Mar	1900Z	10-Mar	1900Z	C	S	R		D	160-10	24	Idah
North American Sprint, RTTY Mar	Maj	10	9-Mar	2300Z	10-Mar	0300Z			R			80-20	4	http
Wisconsin QSO Party	QSO	7	10-Mar	1800Z	11-Mar	0100Z	C	S	R		D	All	7	Wisc
BARTG HF RTTY Contest	DX	5	16-Mar	0200Z	18-Mar	0159Z			R			80-10	24	BAR
Russian DX Contest	DX	5	16-Mar	1200Z	17-Mar	1200Z	C	S				160-10	12	Rule
Virginia QSO Party	QSO	7	16-Mar	1400Z	17-Mar	2400Z	C	S	R		D	All	26	http

Continued on next page....



<i>Your Log Submission is Indispensable</i>			Contest Schedule				Modes					<i>Revised 12/27/22</i>		
Contest	Type	Pts	Start		Finish		C	S	R	F	D	Bands	Duration	Rule
			Date	Time	Date	Time								
April														
Louisiana QSO Party	QSO	7	6-Apr	1400Z	7-Apr	0200Z	C	S	R		D	160-2	12	LAQ
Mississippi QSO Party	QSO	7	6-Apr	1400Z	7-Apr	0200Z	C	S	R		D	160-2	12	2021
Missouri QSO Party	QSO	7	6-Apr	1400Z	7-Apr	2000Z	C	S	R		D	All	20	Miss
SP DX Contest	DX	5	6-Apr	1500Z	7-Apr	1500Z	C	S				160-10	24	SP D
JIDX CW Contest	DX	5	13-Apr	0700Z	14-Apr	1300Z	C					160-10	30	JAPA
OK/OM DX Contest, SSB	DX	5	13-Apr	1200Z	14-Apr	1159Z		S				160-10	24	...: C
IG-RY World Wide RTTY Contest	DX	5	13-Apr	1200Z	14-Apr	1800Z						80-10	30	IG-R
Nebraska QSO Party	QSO	7	13-Apr	1300Z	14-Apr	2200Z	C	S			D	All	21	http
New Mexico QSO Party	QSO	7	13-Apr	1400Z	14-Apr	0200Z	C	S	R		D	160-2	12	New
North Dakota QSO Party	QSO	7	13-Apr	1800Z	14-Apr	1800Z	C	S	R		D	160-2	24	2022
Georgia QSO Party	QSO	7	13-Apr	1800Z	14-Apr	2359Z	C	S				160-6	20	Geor
Yuri Gagarin International DX Contest	DX	5	13-Apr	2100Z	14-Apr	2100Z	C					All	24	Cont
Holyland DX Contest	DX	5	19-Apr	2100Z	20-Apr	2059Z	C	S				160-10	24	Holy
Worked All Provinces of China DX Contest	DX	5	20-Apr	0600Z	21-Apr	0559Z	C	S				80-10	24	Mula
YU DX Contest	DX	5	20-Apr	0700Z	21-Apr	0659Z	C	S				80-10	24	YUD
CQMM DX Contest	DX	5	20-Apr	0900Z	21-Apr	2359Z	C					80-10	40	Rule
Michigan QSO Party	QSO	7	20-Apr	1600Z	21-Apr	0400Z	C	S				80-10	12	Rule
Ontario QSO Party	QSO	7	20-Apr	1800Z	21-Apr	1800Z	C	S				160-2	17	Onta
Quebec QSO Party	QSO	7	21-Apr	1800Z	22-Apr	1800Z	C	S				160-10	10	http
SP DX RTTY Contest	DX	5	27-Apr	1200Z	28-Apr	1200Z			R			80-10	24	Pols
Helvetia Contest	DX	5	27-Apr	1300Z	28-Apr	1259Z	C	S	R		D	160-10	24	USK
Florida QSO Party	QSO	20	27-Apr	1600Z	28-Apr	2159Z	C	S				40-10	20	Rule
May														
ARI International DX Contest	DX	5	4-May	1200Z	5-May	1159Z	C	S	R			80-10	24	ARI
7th Call Area QSO Party	QSO	7	4-May	1300Z	5-May	0700Z	C	S	R		D	160-10	18	7QP
Indiana QSO Party	QSO	7	4-May	1600Z	5-May	0400Z	C	S				160-10	12	Indi
Delaware QSO Party	QSO	7	4-May	1700Z	5-May	2359Z	C	S	R		D	160-10	31	FSAI
New England QSO Party	QSO	7	4-May	2000Z	5-May	2400Z	C	S	R		D	80-10	20	Rule
CQ-M International DX Contest	DX	5	11-May	1200Z	12-May	1159Z	C	S				160-10	24	Posi
VOLTA WW RTTY Contest	DX	5	11-May	1200Z	12-May	1200Z			R			80-10	24	Micr
Canadian Prairies QSO Party	QSO	7	11-May	1400Z	12-May	0200Z	C	S				40-10	12	http
UN DX Contest	DX	5	18-May	0600Z	19-May	2100Z	C	S				80-10	15	Rule
His Maj. King of Spain Contest, CW	DX	5	18-May	1200Z	19-May	1200Z	C					160-10	24	His P
Arkansas QSO Party	QSO	7	18-May	1400Z	19-May	0200Z	C	S	R		D	160-2	12	The
Baltic Contest	DX	5	18-May	2100Z	19-May	0200Z	C	S				80	6	LRSF
CQ WW WPX Contest, CW	Maj	10	25-May	0000Z	26-May	2400Z	C					160-10	48	CQ W

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The Florida Contest Group



“I love contesting. There is something about the camaraderie, discipline and knowledge contesting demands that fits me; it doesn’t fit everyone . . . but it sure fits me.” – Jim White, K4OJ (SK)

The Florida Contest Group (FCG), an ARRL affiliated club, is Florida’s amateur radio contest club. Its members share a common interest in the sport of amateur radio contesting. FCG members have a wide range of contesting experience, from beginners to World Champions. They willingly share their knowledge and skills to promote ham radio contesting in Florida. Members, who number in excess of 300, range from Jacksonville to South Florida. FCG has a “Panhandle” division for those contesters living in the Florida Panhandle who are outside the ARRL’s 175 mile “club circle”.

The Florida Contest Group supports and encourages all types of contesting, from HF to light, all modes, power classes and skill levels.

FCG Shirts

If you would like to purchase an FCG shirt, you may contact Joyce Ann at Stitchin’ Waves in Sarasota. Joyce Ann has both Orange and White FCG shirts and FCG hats if you are interested. She embroiders the FCG Shirts with the FCG Logo and First Names and Call Signs. Hats are embroidered with the Call Sign.

Stitchin’ Waves
Joyce Ann Wright
ja@stitchinwaves.com

(Phone orders not accepted)

To place an order, send an email to Joyce Ann, and provide the following information:

- Identify yourself as an FCG member
- First and Last Name
- Call Sign
- Mailing Address (not a PO Box)
- Size of shirt
- Color: Orange or White

