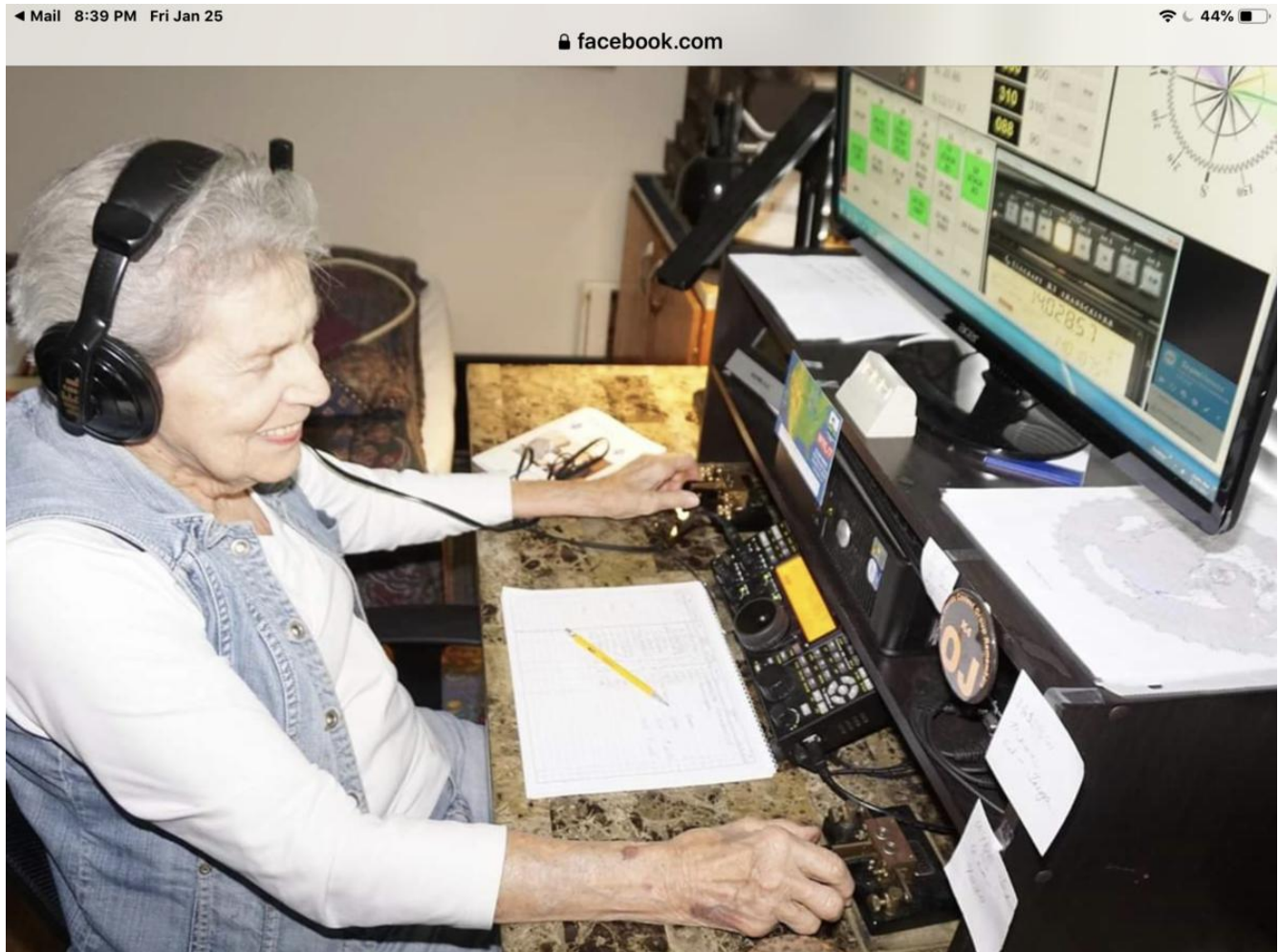


It's the end of an era, not only in Florida but in ham radio in general and in the contesting world in particular. W1YL, who was instrumental in the founding of two big contest clubs, died peacefully this past weekend while many of us were operating SS CW. Virtually everyone who was active in contesting in the 1960's - 1980's knew Ellen. Most old timers probably knew her better than I did, but for the benefit of the next generation of testers I thought it might be beneficial to give a superficial overview of Ellen's biography to highlight her impact on ham radio and contesting.



Ellen had served as the contest branch manager at the ARRL for decades alongside her husband Bob W1CW who oversaw DXCC. I was reminded in preparing to write this email that Ellen was the first licensed woman to work at ARRL HQ when she and Bob joined the staff in 1952.

Ellen and the rest of the Whites were instrumental in the founding of Murphy's Marauders, which morphed into the Yankee Clipper Contest Club. Thanks to some crackerjack detective work by K1CC who unearthed the original Murphy Messages and very helpfully scanned them, I can pinpoint February 21, 1968 as the first meeting of 29 W1's who formed Murphy's Marauders.

Surviving charter members of Murphy's Marauders include (according to the first Murphy Message)

K1GUD (K1BV)
K1JHX (K1RM)
K1THQ (K1WA)
K1UDD (K1DD)
K1ZND (K1ZZ)
W1RAN
WA1DJG (K1CC)
WA1HOL (AF3I)
WA1JCX (K6JJR)

Other members present were Ellen W1YYM, Bob W1CW. and Jamie White (then unlicensed, later to be WA1NNC).

Bob and Ellen retired from the ARRL and moved to South Florida in the 1980's. Hurricane Andrew destroyed their home in SFL in 1992 and they moved to the Tampa area to be nearer to K1ZX. In Seffner, Jim and Bob built a formidable contest station with a 40m yagi to soothe Bob's insomnia and sufficient other antennas to support multi-op and competitive single-op entries in major contests by K1ZX/K4OJ. Highlights included several competitive M/S and M/2 efforts in the CQWW and ARRL DX CW contests and a 3-peat in Multi-op in SS CW from 1996 - 1998. This station formed the core of the very successful (and perhaps still the record score for W1AW/x) W1AW/4 effort in the 2002 IARU contest, and sadly was the site of the W1CW memorial M/M in CQWW CW 2003.

While attending the annual FOC Florida Dinner in the early and mid-1990's, Jim, along with G4BKI got the idea to form a Florida-based contest club. They recruited Jim's long-suffering parents, who were happy to provide their living room again. The first meeting of the Florida Contest Group was held in the White's living room in Seffner in about 1994. Attendees included all three Whites (again) as well as AC1O, G4BKI, WC4E, WB4TDH, K4XS, and a handful of others (Ellen was not the secretary, so early records of the FCG are fragmentary).

Sadly, Bob passed away in 2002 and Jim passed away in 2004. Ellen lived for another decade in the White House, though after Jim's death all the towers but one were taken down. In 2015, Ellen sold and moved out of the White House and into a condo with no outside antennas in the Tampa area. She had resigned herself to not being active on CW any longer. Fortunately, thanks to the generosity of a number of FCG members and of K5RC, we were able to purchase and provision a RemoteRig box and K3/0 for Ellen's use. With local IT support from W4LT and K1KNQ, Ellen was able to be on remote from the W7RN station quite often, resolutely working her way through the JA callbook and maintaining friendships on the air with her FOC confederates, thanks to the magic of the internet.

Ellen would have been 96 years old in December 2022. She was endlessly optimistic and enthusiastic about life, and specifically about ham radio's role in her life. Until July (according to RBN data) she was active on the air frequently, most often between 0800 and 1100z when the other W7RN remote users were asleep.

Ellen was a fierce proponent of the ARRL, and received her 70-year member pin in 2016, having joined shortly after she earned her license in 1946. At the time of writing, I don't know any

arrangements or memorials that may have been set up in her memory, but I can theorize that a contribution in her memory to the ARRL would be most appreciated.

Feel free to share this email with other groups who you think might appreciate it. Any errors of fact above are mine.

73/OJ to LN...

Chris Plumblee W4WF
President, Florida Contest Group