



Contest Gazette

Florida Contest Group

www.floridacontestgroup.org



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April 2009

Beyond Contesting

By Fred Kleber, K9VV



As another season of the “big ones” comes to a close, I’m sure you’re thinking about those antenna projects and the other fun amateur things which will occupy the summer months. It’s the time of the year when our families get to see more of us, or is it? Our mantra is contesting. Our hobby is expansive. Wait? You mean there’s more than 59(9) xxx? You bet! Not only is amateur radio the world’s largest fraternity, it is a treasure trove of “hobbies-within-a-hobby”. OK, so DXing is a close relative to contesting, but what else is out there?

Antennas – The “business” side of getting ‘er done on the radiation front. OK, we all can’t have long yagis on tall towers, however you’d be surprised how well wires can play! Verticals: simple and effective. (Last year, Team N4BP topped the single 1* FD category with a simple 4-BTV and 5-watts!) Of course the ole adage location, location, location still applies. Salt water = nature’s amplifier.

Rigs / Software – Face it, software is a fact of life. While the purists may not like packet, one must acknowledge the huge advancement in logging & spotting software. Heck, some OTs find the “point-and-click” a refreshing change. Still thumbing your nose at how software enters into your purist hobby attitudes? How about the software that copies EME signals 15-20dB BELOW *your* audible hearing range?

Digital modes – How we communicate has changed too! Enter digital modes APRS, JT65, PSK31, etc. I am always surprised at the participation in digital mode contests. A by-product of no code? Maybe, but you can’t discount its value in disaster recovery situations.

Construction – Largely gone are the days of amateurs being able to build a transceiver or amp. Antennas, cables, etc. are the norm these days, and even that’s dying. The USA educational system sadly lacks a formal vocational track, unlike Europe. Little wonder most of the jobs have gone off shore...

County Hunters / IOTA / Light Houses – These challenges push the limits after you’ve worked them all and have your triple play behind you. They’re also fun DXpedition destinations!

Other Contests – States QSO Parties / Field Day / FQP – These all offer different challenges and variety. Of course NOTHING tops FQP, but then again I’m biased. I had never done much mobiling 3-years ago when we decided to do N4KK/m. I’m hooked now!

EME – Satellite – I have a DXer buddy who is retired and his goal is to be the first to work DXCC on 1296 MHz EME. He has a 30 foot diameter dish. Think he’s serious? I remember the first time I worked OSCAR barefoot with minimal antennas. Coooollll.

VHF DXing, Grid squares – Did you know that 6m is the ONLY band which receives ALL modes of propagation? 2m sporadic-E is something to behold. FL enjoys an awesome E’s climate. Working XE2-W9 on 2m double hop was unbelievable.

Public Service – Triathlons, walk-a-thons, parades, WX4NHC, CERT, etc. Ham radio makes a GREAT telephone system after hurricanes! In Joe Public’s view, this is the *cornerstone* of our wonderful hobby’s public value! (Ditto for FCC) Want to get near? VOLUNTEER! W4LIS took her first stint as NCS this morning at the FAU “Tri”. I predict another N4BU budding contester in the near future.

Recruitment – There’s power in the numbers! Face it, if we don’t protect our precious spectrum with LOTS of use, commercial entities will LOVE to take it from us, just like a portion of 220 MHz! Yeah, the net may be cool, but radio does it with more frequency! We need to pre-position “new-keys” for when the OTs become silent keys.

Education – The Elmer system at its finest! To me, being able to give back to such a wonderful hobby has special meaning. FCG “Contest 101” presentations at hamfests. K4PG licenses lots of high-schoolers. W4ZW donates a

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station to the Pine View school. WA0USA helps local no-coders increase their CW ability with a local CW net on 2m. FCG is blessed with a bevy of talent and willingness to share. The FCG reflector! 'nuff said...

Clubs – Remember, FCG is kind of a “virtual club” by not having regular meetings. Support your local club! Its pathetic Boca has 1,000+ licensed hams and the local club is challenged to have a meeting with 20 attendees.

Eyeball QSOs – OK, if all of this technology stuff is boring, how about good old fashioned eyeball QSOs with the staples of beer & BS? Hit the local hamfest & after-breakfasts. How many counties will be represented at VicVicNic#3?? Come share your FQP stories in Boca on 5/23! (Info elsewhere in this issue)

So, if you're becoming bored with your hobby, look around! Many new frontiers await you. Who knows, you might even like them. Looking forward to working everyone as N4KK/m takes to the highways & byways for our third M/2 effort. CQ FQP! 73 – Fred, K9VV

Ed Note: A tip of the Editor's FCG cap to Fred Kleber K9VV for his fine article on the J68 trip, his lead article "Beyond Contesting" and his continued work on constructing score spreadsheets for use in the newsletters.

Don't forget VicVicnic #3 at the K9VV QTH May 23

Florida QSO Party Next Weekend!

There are two 10 hour operating periods
1600Z April 25 - 0159Z April 26
1200Z - 2159Z April 26

All stations may work operate the entire 20 hours.
Florida stations work the world ... the world works Florida!!
A reminder for Home stations in Florida, please do not call CQ or "run" stations in the "Mobile window". This window is for mobile stations

only. Frequencies to avoid, are:
CW 7.025-7.035, 14.040-14.050, 21.040-21.050, 28.040-28.050 MHZ
SSB 7.180-7.190, 14.265-14.275, 21.340-21.350, 28.480-28.490 MHZ

The mobile stations are expected to be out in force again - traveling from county to county - but we'd like to see more home stations active as well, especially on phone.

Please get on if you have a chance, and either listen for those "CQ Florida" calls ... or for even more fun, call "CQ" yourself and stand by!

More details and complete rules can be found at <http://www.floridaqsoparty.org>
See you in the FQP!
Ron, WD4AHZ

Contributors to this newsletter included K9VV, K1TO, K4PG, KE1F, W4ZW, K9ES, K1NSS, WD4AHZ The ARRL Letter, Science at NASA, The ARRL Contest Update Newsletter.

Welcome Aboard



NN4X - Steve Sacco, 5775 Jack Brack Road, Saint Cloud, FL 34771
e-mail: nn4x@embarqmail.com

KO4PK - Rowe Hudson, PO Box 110368, Naples FL 34018 e-mail: ko4pk@yahoo.com

W3TMZ - Jack Colson, 718 E. Buckingham Drive, Lecanto FL 34461 e-mail: w3tmz@amsat.org Welcome back Jack!

W2TX - John Lundberg, 4140 Rosewod Avenue, Malabar FL 32950 e-mail: w2tx@arrl.net

K4GRD - Robert Norman, 1015 W. Bell Street, Apt. 43, Avon Park FL 33825 e-mail: k4grd@juno.com

W4DAS - Doug Shields, 14509 SE 11th Street, Stuart FL 34996-7830 e-mail: w4das@arrl.net

N1ADY Bill Hanlon, 9911 Tradewinds Drive, Port Richey FL 34668 e-mail: blueboat17@yahoo.com

NY4PD - Brian Silva, 7606 Seafoam Court, Boynton Beach FL 33437 e-mail: ny4pd@yahoo.com

K3USC Brian M. Hemmis, 720 31st Street NW, Naples FL 34120 e-mail: bhemmis@mac.com

Since last newsletter it has been reported that three members or former members of FCG have become silent keys.

Al Alviani N4LML Sarasota FL
Jim Rowe K4BK Jacksonville FL
Dick Phelps N4RP Delray Beach FL

No further details were available at press time.

Events Calendar

Florida QSO Party 1600Z, Apr 25 to 2159Z, Apr 26

New England QSO Party 2000Z, May 2 to 2400Z, May 3

VicVicnic # 3 Saturday May 23 from 11 am at K9VV QTH Potluck with burgers, brats etc. Fred says y'all come

CQ WW WPX Contest, CW 0000Z, May 30 to 2400Z, May 31

ANARTS WW RTTY Contest 0000Z, Jun 13 to 2400Z, Jun 14

ARRL June VHF QSO Party 1800Z, Jun 13 to 0300Z, Jun 15

ARRL Field Day 1800Z, Jun 27 to 2100Z, Jun 28

Photos from the Melbourne Hamfest



Lu W4LT (orange shirt) discusses merits of a purchase with a friend while Ron K8NZ (white shirt) looks on.



Warren W4WR focuses hard on the meeting audience.



Norm W4QN (standing, white shirt) tells the meeting about his newly reconfigured station. Listening attentively are L-R 1st Row—WF3C, N4BP, KE1F NA4CW. 2nd Row: N8JUC W4WR, W4EIP, KD4BRJ, N4EK. Standing (left) AI4QY

Ed. Note: FCGers are not involved only in contesting. The note below was received recently from Jon Hamlet W4ZW who has been working closely with the folks at Pine View School to provide encouragement, equipment and training to potential new hams there. See the note below for some of the very positive results.

Pine View School Amateur Radio Club

One Python Path, Osprey, Florida 34229



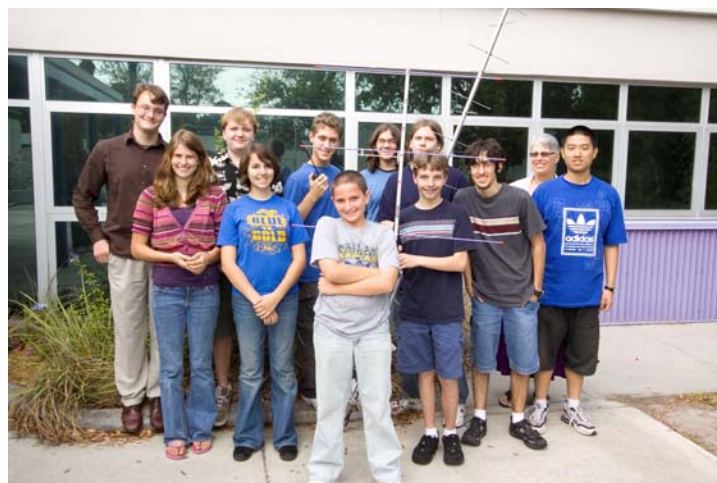
Fred,

Here's a picture of my new hams in the Pine View School Amateur Radio Club including the newly licensed teacher. All have been licensed in the last four months. Five were absent for the picture. They range from 8th grade through 12th grade.

Station equipment: M2 440 and 144MHz cross polarized long boom yagis; TA-33 Jr, 33' elevated vertical, Yaesu G5500 with computer control, Kenwood TS-2000, ICOM 846 Pro, two ICOM 706's, Kenwood TS-50, HT's for each member.

More new hams in the works.

Jon Hamlet, W4ZW
Trustee of W4PVC, Pine View School Amateur Radio Club
602 South Casey Key Road
Nokomis, FL 34275
(941) 485-9900



Orlando Hamcation Meeting Report

By Dan Street K1TO

The FCG's Orlando Hamcation meeting was held Saturday off site at the nearby Golden Corral restaurant. We managed to squeeze the 62 attendees into the double room.

Members: AD4Z/HI3A & XYL Maria, HI3CCP, K1KNQ, K1RQ, K1TO, K2EUH, K4GRD, K4LQ, K4LRP, K4PB, K4QD, K5AUP, K8DSS, K9ES, KC4HW & grandson Trent, KE1F, KI2G, KJ4AWM, KT4Q, N3ND, N4EEB & XYL Tracy, N4EK & XYL KD4BRJ, N4GI, N4KM, N4LZ, N4PJ & XYL K4IRI, N4TB, N4WO, N6AR, W1YL, W3TB, W4EIP, W4KPG, W4LT, W4QM, W4QN, W4STB & OM W4DKB, W4TBB & XYL AE4TE, W4UH, W4YA, W4ZW, WA0USA, WC4E, WD4IXD & son KJ4EUT, WF3C & Dad WA4FJK, WK2G, WO4D

Guests: AC8W, K8DD, K8MR, KA4BOB, KL7MF, W9OKI

Others spotted at the hamfest: AI4QY, K4AC, K4DLF, K4GKD, K4PG, K4RX, KP2N, KP3AC, N2WB, N4BP, W3AZD & WB3ANE, W4DN, W4FDA, W4KFH, W4TV, W4UM & W4SLR, W4ZE, WA4AW & K3PGH, WA4EEZ, WC4H

Applause was given for Jim, W4YA who once again secured the reservation at the Golden Corral. Even though it was Valentine's Day, the group wisely refrained from smooching Jim, at least at that moment.

After a round of self-introductions in which nearly everyone in the room announced plans to operate the 2009 Florida QSO Party (FQP), Dan then presented certificates and plaques to a number of winners from the 2008 FQP, the first time we've been ready to do so at the Orlando meeting. Each winner received a nice hand from those present. Several of the multi-op groups had extra plaques made up so that each operator could receive one.

Jeff, WC4E toiled to get the certificates out in time, and Eric, K9ES smoothly handled things with the trophy shop. As FCG VP, Ron, WD4AHZ handles the web sites, paper logs and updates the FQP record scores on-line. All 3 were recognized with applause from the group. It was mentioned that Dan, K1TO spends a bit of time handling various FQP aspects as well, so he was also given a round of applause.

Fred, K4LQ updated the group. Membership now stands at 238, an all time high. Dues collection is going well, 74 % of members had paid going into the meeting. At that point 45 members still owed dues. We are in good shape financially, have \$4276.23 in the treasury. The W1CW/K4OJ Memorial fund contains \$1366. Hope to publish the next edition of the

newsletter in mid-March. Inputs are solicited. Disposition of the radio portion of the N4TO estate is going reasonably well. Half a dozen FCGers have helped in this task. We hope to have this activity wrapped up in the next few weeks.

Guests included K8DD and AC8W from our Mad River Radio Club friends who were headed to a rental QTH in YN for a multi-op in ARRL CW.

With the Orlando Hamcation being one of the largest hamfests outside of Dayton, the idea of ramping up the Friday evening activities was discussed. Many present who would otherwise drive home stated that they would stick around for a hospitality suite or other activities. With plentiful hotel selections nearby, it should be a matter of picking a convenient venue. The concept of getting vendors to chip in as sponsors was also brought up. We will continue this thread on the reflector.

W4STB announced that the Florida East Coast DX Club welcomes FCGers. The price is right – dues are free. Lots more info at <http://www.freewebs.com/fecdx/index.htm>

K1TO announced that he is launching the A1 Tower Service. More information is coming on this soon.

Vy 73 Dan K1TO



Dan K1TO



Hamfest Entrance



Julio AD4Z/HI3A and Maria



Scene from the Main Building



Tino HI3CCP



Security In Action



*Kevin K4PG
(Who took these photos)*



*The Gang of Four
Terry N4TB, Dan K1TO, Carl WC4H and Jim K8MR*



Dave W4DN



Don W3AZD



Eric K9ES



L-R Norm W4QN, Steve W4DTA, Sherry W4SLR, Mike W4UM



Greg Sarratt W4OZK Southeastern Division Director addresses the ARRL meeting

Antenna Progress at K9ES

By Eric Smitt K9ES

Last Sunday (4/5/09), we put up another 40 feet of the Rohn 55G. Jeff KG4IPO and John KF4PFI provided the high work, while Chuck AD4ES, Mike WM9D, and I did the ground work. We put up all the sections up to the one containing a Tic 1022-D Ring Rotor. Everything has been and will be lifted using a Gin Pole. We did not have enough rope to really go higher, and decided that the 3rd weekend in June would be the continuation where the next 90 feet would be put up. I have received 400 feet of 1/2 inch nylon rope rated for 4000 pounds breaking strength. That means between now and then, I have to fabricate 15 lengths of Polyrod guy with respective grips and 30 foot of 5/16 EHS guy ends, and assemble the 3 Tic Ring Rotors. At 57 feet, a 1022 Ring Rotor will be installed. Then at the top joint of the 65 foot / 75 foot section, a Torque Ring gets installed, with 6 guy assemblies. At 80 feet, a 1032 Ring Rotor gets installed, and at 110 feet, a standard guy assembly is installed. The top Tic 1022 D is installed at 111 feet, and finally the top Torque Ring goes at 145 feet. When we put the last sections and guy ring up, we will include the Chrome Moly mast.

Once completed, the antennas will be assembled and installed. The goal is 2009 CQWW Phone, when we hope to have the Magnum 620/340 at 146 feet, a stack of C31XR's at 111 and 57 feet, and a EF340 at 80 feet. The Magnum 620/340 will stack that 3 elements on 40 with the EF340 at 80 feet, and the 20M elements of the Magnum will be stacked with the 20M elements of the C31XR's. The 15M elements of the C31XR are stacked, as well as the 10M elements, for separate band feed on the C31XR's and Magnum 650/340. A WARC dipole (D3W) will be installed at 160 feet, with 6M and 2 M beams between the D3W and Magnum 620/340. The very top antenna will be a 2M J-Pole / Lightning rod.



Operating Tips

Continuing with the cut numbers theme...they really aren't necessary on RTTY or any of the digital modes! Except for the modes that use variable-length character encoding (Morse, PSK31), every digital character has the same number of bits and so takes the same length of time on the air. Not only that, but on RTTY to send text followed by '5NN', requires TWO extra shift characters! (Thanks, Peter N5UWY)

Contest Visualizer—2009 Contest Calendar

Bob K0RC has just written a program called Contest Visualizer. This version incorporates the entire 2009 WA7BNM contest calendar. You set your UTC offset and the date you want to view. The 7-day window will display all the contest timelines during that period. This is a 3-Mb Excel workbook. You can add other contests and events as desired. It is downloadable from <http://tinyurl.com/cbbhqp>. Thanks Bob and CQ Contest

QSL Card Collector

Ed. Note: In the process of moving out 20,000 plus QSL cards from the N4TO estate I was put in touch with one of the leading US collectors, Tony W2VRK. Tony was able to take all of Vic's cards, pay for the shipping and make a donation to the estate. Tony asked that I put a note in our newsletter that if any members or their families are in the future in need of moving out estate QSL cards he would like an opportunity to help. Tony may be reached at tpllrs@comcast.net or at his QRZ.com mailing address.

ARRL Sweepstakes and RTTY Roundup Set New Records

The lack of good HF propagation didn't seem to affect participation in the 2008 Sweepstakes or the 2009 RTTY Roundup contests. According to ARRL Contest Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X, both contests were record-breaking events. "We have received 3298 logs for the November SSB and CW Sweeps combined in 2008," Kutzko said. "That is -- at bare minimum -- a 5 year high. The 2009 RTTY Roundup in January saw 1564 entries, also a 5 year high." Kutzko said he attributes some of the increase to the hoopla surrounding the 75th running of Sweepstakes: "The excitement over the new Triple Play Award <<http://www.arrl.org/awards/#tripleplay>> was likely a large factor in the RTTY Roundup increase. Interest in contesting in general is on the rise."

J68V—A Renewal of Vows & Friendship

By Fred Kleber K9VV



How many times have you heard fellow amateurs lamenting the fact that one should *never* wed on contest weekends? Being especially fond of George Thorogood's line, "Doing things wrong is my way of doing things right", I didn't subscribe to this "conventional" wisdom and 20-years ago wed the love of my life, Lisa. Being that many attendees to our wedding came great distances, we married on Thanksgiving weekend. Ops from the N6ND M/M came down in shifts to attend the big event. N7CW allowed us to operate /mm as he ferried us away from the wedding in his yacht.

Lisa, my bride, remembers my earlier DXpeditions well, as she would be one of the several people sitting around the table and duping logs for several days! (This was in the pre-logging software era.) A subsequent move to Florida convinced us to be well prepared for hurricanes and found us joining CERT. After seeing the value of ham radio, Lisa waved the white flag and became licensed (W4LIS) after 15-years of marriage. She found assisting at the county EOC rewarding and shifts at WX4NHC enjoyable. Oh yes, lest I forget the LOVES the FCGers and we'll definitely be hosting Vic-Vic-Nic #3 this summer!

Throughout the years we enjoyed many anniversary DXpeditions, but this year was special as we were celebrating our 20th. I told her we could go to any exotic destination she'd like. Tahiti, Australia, etc. I also mentioned there were also some nice places in the Caribbean we had not visited that would give us another couple of days together as flight times are measured in hours and not days. I showed her some photos of the Pitons & rainforests of St. Lucia. "Wow, that looks pretty", she exclaimed.

OK, where to stay? I looked at some of the nice hotels and was encountered with severe sticker shock! (Let's just say you could buy a K3 in 3 or 4 nights, OK?) We're not big hotel & resort types, so I availed myself of the power of the web and came up with a nice house overlooking the Atlantic on the north tip of the island at about half the price.

Location? Check. Accommodations? Check. Purchase air tickets? Check. On to licensing & station provisioning. We fondly leverage "the worlds biggest fraternity" to see other lands through the eyes of natives. A quick check of the Palm Pilot quickly helped ole "fog brain" to remember meeting Lionel, J69KZ at a WX4NHC conference. After a few e-mails & Skype sessions, Lionel has the ball rolling on the import & licensing fronts. I return the applications and he investigates obtaining a shortened call.

Now let's see, what else? Station? Hmmmm, FT-1000MP not exactly transportable. Ditto for the Alpha. Hmmmmmm, the trusty 30L1 will survive the luggage gorillas and meets weight requirements. Next, need a small transceiver with descent CW filters. Enter Vic WA0USA, a fellow teammate of the soon to be activated FQP N4KK/m M/2 team. He kindly offers the use of his IC-7000. Oh, did someone say J6 is 220 VAC? Time to rewire the 30L1 and order a 120/220 VAC switcher.

Some of you probably know Vic as a recent FQP member, but our friendship goes back nearly as long as I've been married. I know Vic as "Mr. Half Square" due to his affinity for this very efficient radiator. We put one up for 40m at the home QTH a couple of years ago and it really HONKS! While messing around with the amp, Vic and I start talking about antennas. Something along the lines of the Team Vertical golf case transport is my idea of what I can handle. Oh yes, the airlines are MUCH more stringent on baggage weight limits, so that was another concern.

The half square purveyor says, how about half squares for 20-10m, a K8CH 40m wire GP array which can be modified to an 80m inverted L? Sounds good to me! I show him a few pictures of our QTH-to-be, and he says, we could use the 2nd floor balcony as the elevated feedpoint for the half squares and the base of the elevated the 40m wire GP.

For those not familiar with the K8CH array, it's basically a wire GP with a couple of elevated radials. It can be easily converted into a 80m array by extending the vertical element and using an inverted-L configuration. Have to extend at least one of the radials too.

A welcome e-mail from Lionel provides the import and licensing documentation. He passes along the good news that J68V has been granted for the operation. FedEx delivers the power supplies and other goodies show up

Vic came down for another design session and we cut wires and soldered connectors on the RG8X. We put up the half squares & trimmed them. Wow! Surprising they're very broadbanded and a snap to match. (Just adjust the ends from the ground) We put up the 40m array at the home QTH & trimmed 'er out. I call several of the VU4/VU7 expeditions. One call on most of them. Man, this thing plays! We extend it to 80m. A few calls later, a VQ9 is in the log. OK, what about 160m? I'll just take a tuner & inverted vee that I can tune there & on the WARC bands...

OK, now how to support the wires? A bit of a challenge not having sufficient photos to know what I'd encounter. A quick trip to home depot, some schedule 40 PVC, & a few cuts with the hack saw yield a convenient set of adjustable supports (held together with PVC reducers/couplers). This fits the bill, and they all fit in the hardened golf case we selected to carry our gear! Time to start weighing bags... I get on the web and happily learn as it's an international flight, we are permitted two carry-ons and two checked bags with zero surcharge. Cool.

Off to MIA. Lisa waits with the pile of bags while I park the car. We board. Three hours later, lush St. Lucia comes into view. I exclaim, "Oh look Lisa, there's the world famous Pitons!" I snap a photo which ends up on the QSL card.



Graphics for the QSL card by K5WW

We roll up to customs with our mass of stuff and the friendly lady asks if all of this is for our personal use. "Yes" I reply with the full intention of having to produce our import documentation. The agent flashed a friendly smile and says, "Enjoy your stay in St. Lucia". Phew! One hurdle cleared. Outside of customers, a smiling Lionel greets us at the airport & drives us to rent-a-car facility. The line of the song: "On de left hand side..." now has real meaning! We manage to find the rental house in the blackness and beautiful stars. We arrive & unload. On the horizon, over the ocean, we see the lights of Martinique. We're pooped! Time to crash...

I wake up early & begin to survey the new QTH for antenna layout. The beautiful views and steep drop off to the north, confirm the QTH has a good radio horizon. Wow! Look at that cool caterpillar. I hope he doesn't like to munch on wire & RG8X! Wouldn't want him to be a crispy critter anyway...



The balcony and yard are perfectly oriented to install the half squares broadside to Europe. The bottom of the 40m GP will be at about 15 feet. I spend the morning unpacking & getting supports installed. We hit the store & decide it's time for some sightseeing. We visit a nearby island and enjoy the local brew in a pub inside of a 18th century ????. Hey, Piton beer is pretty good stuff! We return home and enjoy the nice breeze off the ocean on the balcony. The stars are beautiful as there is no light pollution. We fall asleep to the sound of the crickets.

I wake up again and continuing installing & tuning antennas. I wait until evening to put up the mast for the 40/80m antenna. I proceed to assemble the station. The 220 VAC supplies & amp work. I make sure that the operating position has a view. This is a must in my book if I'm going to be hitched to a radio for long periods. Lisa and I decide to explore again.

We set our sites on Soufriere, on the West coast. The map shows a LOT of winding roads, but I didn't know my Baja pot hole navigation skills would get such a work out. Let me tell you, second gear is YOUR FRIEND when driving on this island! We marvel at the natural beauty of the island as we drive through the lush rainforest.

We return to the house & log in to e-mail. We receive friendly ribbing e-mails from friends & QSL manager saying, "Where are you? I haven't seen any spots! Are you OK?!" I get on 40m late one evening to make sure the "Yes, we're OK and QRV" box is checked...

Time to meet the locals! Lionel organizes a wonderful get-together at his house with several of the local hams and his congenial family. He is the FIRST one in his neighborhood to proudly display his Christmas lights and we're not even at Thanksgiving yet! We savor the wonderful local cuisine expertly prepared by his loving wife. Wow! This is ham radio at its finest. Sorry guys, but QSOs pale by 60 dB to this type of hospitality...

Well as much as we have been enjoying ourselves, I guess the time comes when we REALLY should get some mileage from the J68V call that Lionel has so kindly arranged for us. Based on previous expeditions, I set a goal of a couple thousand QSOs. Zero zulu arrives and it's off to the races

Day 1 - I decide to start on 80M thinking that all of the big fish would be dominating the higher bands. First hour is 55 QSOS, but some of that was probably me settling into my new surroundings. I decide to stay on 80M and have a couple of 100+ hours. I know the system is working as I log 4L, EN, and KL7. Vic, WA0USA calls in and says that spo3ts are 3:1 on 40Mm vs 80m. I leave 80m at 03z with 265 QSOs in the log.

I QSY and find a bevy of customers on 40m. EU is booming in and as you'd guess, it's a mix of EU & NA. The 40m GP plays like a bastard and even the 10kW Italians will listen when I transmit. Hi hi. I log juicy mults like 4L, OD, zone 17, KH2. I even manage to work an FM from the lights of Martinique which I see on the island on the horizon. Wow, this is starting to get fun! I hang on 40m the balance of the evening and finally get tired around 08Z. Time to listen to the crickets again! Oh wait, not anymore as the previous night the open windows welcomed the mosquitoes, and they had their own version of Field Day munching on Lisa. I pull the comforter over my head as the AC blasts to keep Lisa comfortable and bug-free.

I wake up around 11z to the chirping of the birds. 20m to Europe is SMOKIN' by this time. A 150+ wake-up hour is enough to get the adrenalin going and convince me that the simple wire antennas are working. Head not working 100%, so I stumble downstairs to fire-up with a good cup of J68 jo. Wow, there's lots of big fish in this HF pond! I feel like a minnow with my wire antennas. I keep getting beat up by the big guys who run more kW than sense and at 12:30z decide a short sojourn to 15m would be worthwhile. The band still isn't open, but I work a few juicy mults. Back to 20m, and then I return to 15m around 13:30z, thinking the band must be open by now. My instinct pays off as the rate meter hangs at 150+ and spikes at 183/hour. I'm sure the J6 call was probably worth an additional 20dB, minus the "packet fade" of dupes caused by those who don't know code.



The J68 Station

I hang on 15m until around 18Z (Just after EU sunset) when the rate falls off on 15m, so it's back to 20m with I*#XYZ, HG#* and 9A#A running mega-gallons and teaspoons of RX to slug it out. The rate falls back to the low 100's and noticeably fewer EU stations. Back to 15m for one last sweep of mults before it closes down for day one. I check the total QSO meter and see it's just below 2,000. So much for my "goal". Guess things are going better than I had anticipated! Onward!

Now it's time to work the USA "after dinner crowd" as the sun rolls across the various time zones. Surprisingly, some of the USA is weak on 20m probably due to the fact of being off the end of the 20m half-square. Regardless, life is still good as the rate meter hangs above 125+. The pile ups are intense. Man do I miss my roofing filters! A few JAs start coming in over the pole around 22z.

Around 23z, I return to 40m and immediately bag Kazakhstan (UN) and the elusive UA2. The rate jumps back up to 140+, but now it's almost all lucrative 3-point EU stations. 40m continues to produce handsomely and I hang on 7049 MHz for another 4 hours.

A little after 04z, I take a short break and decide it's time to return to 80m. A nice mix of EU & USA keeps the rate meter just below 100. A lucky packet spots yields 7 mults in 10 minutes. I start to tire and miss the last part of EU sunrise. Shortly after 06z, I QSY to the horizontal as I can barely keep my eyes open. My vision must be blurred as the QSO meter says 3100+.

Day 2 begins with the chirping crickets. I stumble downstairs and do the J68JOE coffee thing again. It's just before 10z and the rig was left on 80m, so I take a tune around. Soon JA, KH2, KH0 and VK are in the log. Mr. Sol makes his appearance, so I guess that means it's time to QSY to the high bands...

I figure I've hit 40m hard enough for now, so shortly after 11z I jump in the fray on 20m. EU is in full swing as one would expect. I'm happy to QSO 4K9W, 4L0A, UP2L, and other juicy mults. The rate meter bounces back above 100/hour. Ahhhh, the coffee is kicking in! The 2nd and 3rd tier Euros provide a steady stream of customers. I also pick up a bunch of the "local" Caribbean / SA mults. The half squares play amazingly well for simple pieces of wire! I check out 15m around 13:30z, but not a lot of activity. I return to 20m, staying high in the band, as I have previously done. At one point, I have a nice run of 110/hour on 14.127! I drop lower in the band with the hope of picking up those elusive multipliers.

15m comes alive around 18z, but not a whole lot of activity. I work a few sporadic guys on 10m, but the amp has a problem with 10m as I smell the burning of the parasitic resistors. I opt to work low power and pick off a few mults.

Sunday afternoon finds Lionel and friends stopping by to inspect the operation. A few obligatory Piton 807s and station explanation to our guests convince me that there is life after contesting, hi hi! My weary brain welcomes the break from the radio. Lionel & Company depart and it's back to the Sunday afternoon doldrums on 20m... enn8, enn8, enn8, etc. At 21:30z, it's back to 40m for the home stretch. Lots of EU customers. Wait! Who's that? XW1B calls in at 20dB/S9 on 40m long path! Zone 26 will be MUCH easier to work in the future with a signal like this!

DING! Contest over. Lisa and I celebrate with a couple of Pitons. So much for the 2,000 QSO goal, hi hi. Bottom line: 41 hours operating. 4,463 QSOs. Best hour 194. Best 10 minutes 42. Best minute 6. My head is numb. Heck, guess I might have to enter NO-tri-bander and ALL wires category! Oh wait, that contest is coming up in May...

I wake up the next morning to a refreshing morning sprinkle to break down the "wire farm". All of the masts, etc. find their way back into the golf club carrying case. The tubes come out of the 30L1 and are packed with care. Rosa the maid arrives and says that something weird is going on as all of the gas stations appear to be closed. Oh DARN! I really should have filled up the rental car so we could make it to the airport, some 1 hour driving away. A panic call to Lionel yields the solution to leaving that day versus staying another night. Note to self: Remember that when the government of a small Caribbean island changes the gas prices, all of the pumps must be recalibrated & adjusted before they're returned to service. You can guess they didn't have many folks to accomplish this! Thankfully, we make our flight and welcome the skyline of MIA.

I'd like to close by thanking Vic, WA0USA for his countless hours of assistance. I'm surely a believer in half-squares & K8CH arrays! I'd also be remiss without acknowledging K5WW who is the lucky (and gracious) QSL manager recipient of the J68V QSLs. To Lionel and his wonderful family: You are a true friend who has made our 20th anniversary dream come true! We hope to visit again soon, or host you on this side! Finally, to my bride and best friend of some 25 years, Lisa. You are my life, my love, my everything!

See everyone from TI5N in WPX CW! 73/OJ Fred, J68V AR



Fred K9VV and Lisa W4LIS on St. Lucia with the Pitons in the background

2008 FQP Plaque Winners

SPONSOR	PLAQUE	Winners
K9VV	Top Florida Mixed Mode	NO4S (K9OM)
K1PT	Top Florida CW	N2NL
W1YL	Top Florida CW High Power - Honoring W1CW / K4OJ	K4LQ
W4DTA	Top Florida CW Low Power	N2NL
ARA SWF	Top Florida SSB in Memory of Jordan Mash WB2QLP	N2WB
N4BP	Top Florida QRP	W5JBV
K1TO	Top Florida Mobile No Driver	NF4A
N4LZ	Top Florida Mobile Plus Driver	NO5W
K4RX	Top Florida Mobile CW	N4EEB
N4DL	Top Florida Mobile Running Multi- 2	N4KK
		K9VV, W4RIS, WA0USA
K9OM	Top Florida Mobile SSB	N1XC
WC4E	Top Florida Mobile Multi-Op	K4KG (K5KG, VE7ZO)
N4TO (SK)	Top Florida Mobile Multi-Op CW (N4TO Memorial Plaque)	K4OJ/m (K1TO, N4KM)
N4TO (SK)	Top Florida Multi-Single	WK2G (and N4WO)
K4LQ	Top Florida Club Station	W4GAC
YCCC	Most QSOs Florida Single Operator	K4PV
NF4A	Top Non-Florida Mixed Mode	W8MJ
N4OO	Top Non-Florida CW	K9LJN
KT4PD	Top Non-Florida SSB	W9QL
NA4CW	Top Non-Florida QRP	K3TW
K4PG	Top Non-Florida School	K0HC
W4LIS	Top Non-Florida YL	W4KRN
AA4HP / K4MVO	Top Non-Florida Club Total Entry (minimum 10 entries)	Contest Club Ontario
N4PN	Top Canada Mixed Mode	VA3DX
N4LZ	Top Canada CW	VE3KZ
K4CC	Top Canada SSB	VE3XD
N2NL	Top Score Oceania	KH7XS
KE1F	Top Europe CW	CT1ILT
N4OK / K4FO	Special Achievement Award	N4AO/m (WC4E Op)
W4SO	Top DX Mixed Mode	OM2VL
K1TO	Largest Golden Log (Zero Errors)	N8NA
K5KG	First Station to Work All Counties	W8MJ

Ed Note: Thanks to Eric K9ES for the work he does in handling the FQP Plaque Program. Eric provided the spreadsheet above.

Deep Solar Minimum

From Science@ NASA

April 1, 2009: The sunspot cycle is behaving a little like the stock market. Just when you think it has hit bottom, it goes even lower.

2008 was a bear. There were no sunspots observed on 266 of the year's 366 days (73%). To find a year with more blank suns, you have to go all the way back to 1913, which had 311 spotless days: plot. Prompted by these numbers, some observers suggested that the solar cycle had hit bottom in 2008.

Maybe not. Sunspot counts for 2009 have dropped even lower. As of March 31st, there were no sunspots on 78 of the year's 90 days (87%).

It adds up to one inescapable conclusion: "We're experiencing a very deep solar minimum," says solar physicist Dean Pesnell of the Goddard Space Flight Center.

"This is the quietest sun we've seen in almost a century," agrees sunspot expert David Hathaway of the Marshall Space Flight Center.

Quiet suns come along every 11 years or so. It's a natural part of the sunspot cycle, discovered by German astronomer Heinrich Schwabe in the mid-1800s. Sunspots are planet-sized islands of magnetism on the surface of the sun; they are sources of solar flares, coronal mass ejections and intense UV radiation. Plotting sunspot counts, Schwabe saw that peaks of solar activity were always followed by valleys of relative calm—a clockwork pattern that has held true for more than 200 years: plot.

The current solar minimum is part of that pattern. In fact, it's right on time. "We're due for a bit of quiet—and here it is," says Pesnell.

A 50-year low in solar wind pressure: Measurements by the Ulysses spacecraft reveal a 20% drop in solar wind pressure since the mid-1990s—the lowest point since such measurements began in the 1960s. The solar wind helps keep galactic cosmic rays out of the inner solar system. With the solar wind flagging, more cosmic rays are permitted to enter, resulting in increased health hazards for astronauts. Weaker solar wind also means fewer geomagnetic storms and auroras on Earth.

A 12-year low in solar "irradiance": Careful measurements by several NASA spacecraft show that the sun's brightness has dropped by 0.02% at visible wavelengths and 6% at extreme UV wavelengths since the solar minimum of 1996. The changes so far are not enough to reverse the course of global warming, but there are some other significant side-effects: Earth's upper atmosphere is heated less by the sun and it is therefore less "puffed up." Satellites in low Earth orbit experience less atmospheric drag, extending their operational lifetimes. Unfortunately, space junk also remains longer in

A 55-year low in solar radio emissions: After World War II, astronomers began keeping records of the sun's brightness at radio wavelengths. Records of 10.7 cm flux extend back all the way to the early 1950s. Radio telescopes are now recording the dimmest "radio sun" since 1955: plot. Some researchers believe that the lessening of radio emissions is an indication of weakness in the sun's global magnetic field. No one is certain, however, because the source of these long-monitored radio emissions is not fully understood.

All these lows have sparked a debate about whether the ongoing minimum is "weird", "extreme" or just an overdue "market correction" following a string of unusually intense solar maxima.

"Since the Space Age began in the 1950s, solar activity has been generally high," notes Hathaway. "Five of the ten most intense solar cycles on record have occurred in the last 50 years. We're just not used to this kind of deep calm."

Deep calm was fairly common a hundred years ago. The solar minima of 1901 and 1913, for instance, were even longer than the one we're experiencing now. To match those minima in terms of depth and longevity, the current minimum will have to last at least another year.

In a way, the calm is exciting, says Pesnell. "For the first time in history, we're getting to see what a deep solar minimum is really like." A fleet of spacecraft including the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO), the twin STEREO probes, the five THEMIS probes, Hinode, ACE, Wind, TRACE, AIM, TIMED, Geotail and others are studying the sun and its effects on Earth 24/7 using technology that didn't exist 100 years ago. Their measurements of solar wind, cosmic rays, irradiance and magnetic fields show that solar minimum is much more interesting and profound than anyone expected.

Modern technology cannot, however, predict what comes next. Competing models by dozens of top solar physicists disagree, sometimes sharply, on when this solar minimum will end and how big the next solar maximum will be. Pesnell has surveyed the scientific literature and prepared a "piano plot" showing the range of predictions. The great uncertainty stems from one simple fact: No one fully understands the underlying physics of the sunspot cycle.

Pesnell believes sunspot counts will pick up again soon, "possibly by the end of the year," to be followed by a solar maximum of below-average intensity in 2012 or 2013.

But like other forecasters, he knows he could be wrong. Bull or bear? Stay tuned for updates.

ARRL DX Contest - CW Claimed Scores

Station	Score	QSOs	Mults	Class	Section	OPS	HRS
AD4ES	?	541		SOABHPA	SFL		
C6AKQ	161,448	961	56	SB160HP	C6A	N4BP	
C6APG	287,640	1,598	60	SB80HP	C6A	K4PG	
K0LUZ	461,718	681	226	SOABHPA	NFL		10.0
K1PT	1,716,624	1,834	312	SOABHPA	SFL		26.0
K1TO	1,145,595	1,441	265	SOABHP	WCF		18.0
K4GKD	496,125	675	245	SOABLP	NFL		17.0
K4LQ	373,842	602	207	SOABHP	WCF		
K4LRP	?	286	?	SOABHP	SFL		
K4MF	700,245	819	285	SOABHP	SFL		
K4MM	354,000	500	236	SOABLPA	SFL		20.0
K4PB	798,574	814	327	SOABHPA	NFL		
K4PBY	45,630	169	90	SOABQRP	SFL		
K5RQ	799,470	1,269	210	SOABHP	WCF		
K8NZ	38,148	187	68	SOABLP	SFL		
K9ES/m	24	4	2	SOABLP	SC		
K9OM	456,228	1,334	114	SB40	NFL		
K9VV	206,424	488	141	SOABHPA	SFL		12.0
KE1F	423,678	586	241	SOABHPA	NFL		27.0
KN4Y	119,301	299	133	SOAB	NFL		
KT4PD	21,528	104	69	SOABLP	SFL		3.8
N2NL	1,110,816	928	399	SOABHPA	SFL		16.0
N4CJ	277,236	453	204	SOABLPA	WCF		
N4DXI	32,148	141	76	SOABLP	NFL		
N4EEB	285,570	1,002	95	SB20	NFL		18.0
N4GG	26,862	121	74	SOABLPA	SFL		6.0
N4IG	504,000	750	224	SOABLP	WCF		28.0
N4LF	101,616	292	116	SOABLP	SFL		7.5
N4LZ	129,861	307	141	SOABHP	NFL		
N4PJ	111,600	300	124	SOABLPA	NFL		
N4TB	1,379,754	1,520	306	SOABHP	WCF		27.0
N4WO	133,152	304	146	SOABLP	NFL		20.0
N4WW	554,838	589	314	SOABHPA	NFL		
N6AR	1,424,592	1,522	312	SOABHP	NFL		27.0
NA4CW	151,686	318	159	SOABLP	SFL		8.0
NF4A	606,630	730	277	SOABHPA	NFL		18.5
W1MO	97,152	254	128	SOABHP	NFL		7.0
W2TX	773,118	927	278	SOABHP	SFL		
W3TB	265,029	529	167	SOABLP	WCF		
W3TMZ/4	51,726	233	74	SB80	NFL		
W4CU	450,996	637	236	SOABHPA	WCF		
W4EE	158,907	329	161	SOABLPA	SFL		10.0
W4LT	71,535	251	95	SOABHP (TBW)	WCF		5.3
W4QM	800,040	904	295	SOABHP	SFL		25.5
W4UH	311,040	384	270	SOABHPA	SFL		
W4YA	355,668	554	214	SOABHPA	NFL		
W4ZW	58,410	177	110	SOABHPA	WCF		3.2
WB4TDH	20,625	125	55	SB15LP	WCF		14.0
WD4AHZ	709,830	990	239	SOABLP	WCF		32.5
WJ9B	1,383,837	1,781	259	SOABHP	NFL		
WK2G	552,156	979	188	SOABLP	WCF		21.0

Total 21,523,534

OTHER SCORES

Station	Score	QSOs	MULTS	Class	Section	OPS	HRS
CX7TT	348,384	764	152	SOABHPA	CX K6CT	14.0	
KH7XS	313,920	1,744	60	SB20	KH6	K4XS	21.2

Contester John Scott Redd, K0DQ receives National Security Medal

(From the ARRL Letter)

Vice Admiral John Scott Redd, USN (ret), K0DQ, received the National Security Medal in a White House ceremony in December. . In one of his last official duties as President of the United States, George W. Bush recognized Redd for "his more than 40 years of exceptional service to the Nation, strengthening its intelligence capabilities and improving national security," and called Redd "an innovator, a strategic thinker, an inspirational leader and a dedicated servant to the Nation, respected for his vision, courage and integrity." During his remarks, the President also thanked Redd's wife Donna for her service over many years. The Redds' daughter and sons also attended the White House ceremony.

The National Security Medal is America's highest intelligence award. It is awarded to any citizen of the United States with distinguished achievements or outstanding contributions, on or after 26 July 1947, in the field of intelligence relating to the national security of the United States of America. Previous recipients of the National Security Medal include Bill Donovan, founder of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS); J. Edgar Hoover, former FBI Director; Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, and Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor to Presidents Gerald Ford and George H. W. Bush.

In 1995, Redd founded and was named commander of the Navy's Fifth Fleet <<http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/>>. The fleet operates in waters surrounding the Middle East and is the only new fleet since World War II. He served as director of strategic plans and policy on the Joint Chiefs of Staff <<http://www.jcs.mil/>> from 1996 until he retired from the Navy two years later. Redd was named Chief Operating Officer of the Coalition Provisional Authority <<http://www.cpa-iraq.org/>> in March 2004, but the White House recalled him a month later to lead the commission that examined the intelligence failures that led up to the Iraq war. He earlier served as Deputy Administrator and Chief Operating Officer of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, for which he received the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service.

In August 2005, Congress confirmed Redd -- a 1966 graduate of the US Naval Academy and a Fulbright

Scholar -- as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) <<http://www.nctc.gov/>>; he retired in November 2007. The NCTC is the nation's repository for counterterrorism intelligence and sets the nation's war plan for fighting terrorists. The center has few employees of its own and, instead, brings together approximately 400 analysts and other employees from agencies such as the CIA, the Homeland Security Department and the FBI to pore over data collected by other agencies. The NCTC houses the nation's terrorist watch list and distributes it throughout the government nightly. It holds video teleconferences three times a day to keep the White House and the intelligence community informed about terrorist activity and counter-terror operations. "We say, 'Mr. President, here's what the intelligence community believes, and here's where agencies disagree,'"

Redd said in describing how the NCTC operates. "So now he can see what the disagreement is and why. Because intelligence is not an arithmetic thing, there's a lot of judgment that goes into it."

An active ham, contester and DXer for more almost 50 years, Redd -- a native of Sydney, Iowa -- enjoys both CW and phone. In 1971, Redd, then K0DQI, won the CQ World Wide DX Contest (phone) from Mexico as 6D1AA. He also won the ARRL International DX Contest, both phone and CW, in 1972 from Mexico as XE1IJJ; this was the first time a single operator surpassed 10,000 contacts in a contest. In 1973, Redd won the ARRL Phone DX Contest from the DX side (Mexico) as 6J9AA, and in 1986, he won the ARRL CW from the US as W3GRF. All of these wins were as Single Operator, High Power. Redd went on to place third in his first CQ Worked All Prefix (WPX) (CW) contest in 1995 as A92Q from Bahrain. Throughout his ham radio career, Redd has held many DX call signs: P40Q, 3V8DQ, A92Q, XE1IJJ, 4A4AA/1, 6J9AA, 6D1AA, 6G1AA, 6J9AA, 4C5AA and 4C9AA, just to name a few.

In 2008, Redd was inducted into the CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/05/16/10100>. The CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame honors those individuals, whether licensed hams or not, who have made significant contributions to Amateur Radio, and those amateurs who have made significant contributions either to Amateur Radio, to their professional careers or to some other aspect of life on our planet.

ARRL DX Contest - SSB Claimed Scores

Station	Score	QSOs	MULTS	Class	Section	OPS	HRS
AE4TE	26,775	119	75	SOABHP	SFL		
K4GKD	134,850	310	145	SOABLP	NFL		9.0
K4IRI	362,370	514	235	SOABHPA	NFL		
K4PB	426,390	610	233	SOABHPA	SFL		29.0
K5RQ	689,850	1,050	219	SOABHP	WCF		
K9OM	45,000	250	60	SB15HP	NFL		
K9VV	485,022	706	229	SOABHPA	SFL		
KT4Q	684,726	833	274	SOABHPA	NFL		32.0
N4BP	543,906	902	201	SOABHP	SFL		
N4BP	45,900	255	60	SB15HP	SFL		
N4DXI	86,868	228	127	SOABHPA	NFL		17.0
N4IG	164,592	381	144	SOABLP	WCF		
N4LZ	32,880	137	80	SOABHP	NFL		12.0
N4WW	570,090	613	310	SOABHPA	NFL		
NA4CW	3,840	80	16	SB10HP	SFL		9.5
W3TB	46,155	181	85	SOABLP	WCF		
W3TMZ	27,027	143	63	SB40HP	NFL		
W4EE	189,540	390	162	SOABLP	SFL		13.0
W4LT	7,482	58	43	SOABHP	WCF		2.3
W4TBB	181,944	361	168	SOABHP	SFL		
W4WR	13,098	74	59	SB20LPA	SFL		
WX4G	281,568	419	224	SOABHP	NC		17.0

Total 5,003,973

Other Scores:

Station	Score	QSOs	MULTS	Class	Section	OPS	HRS
CW7T	317,520	840	126	SOABHPA	CX	K6CT	6.0
KH7XS	442,080	2,456	60	SB40HP	KH6	K4XS	29.0

CQ WPX Contest - SSB Claimed Scores

Station	Score	QSOs	MULTS	Class	Section	OPERATOR(S)
4V4JR	3,381,490	2212	670	MSHPA	HH	AF4Z, K4QD
AD4ES	392,726	646	358	MSHP	SFL	AD4ES, K9ES
AK4K	668,833	887	451	SOABHP	WCF	W4LT
K5RQ	2,702,571	2277	733	SOABHP	WCF	
KT4PD	2,036,395	1758	655	MSHP	SFL	KT4PD, WB4PAP
KT4Q	27,048	89	84	SOHPTBW	NFL	
KT6V	543,906	800	402	SOABHPA	SFL	K9VV
N4DXI	78,570	220	162	SOABHPTBW	NFL	
N4IG	506,520	559	378	SOABLPA	WCF	
N4LZ	41,500	166	125	SOAB HP	NFL	
N4WO	38,304	194	133	SOAPLP	NFL	
N4WW	63,648	225	153	SOABHPA	NFL	
W4CU	155,980	300	220	SOABHPA	WCF	
W4EE	300,246	410	307	SOABLPA	SFL	

Total 10,937,737

Other Scores:

Station	Score	QSOs	MULTS	Class	Section	OPERATOR(S)
CW7T	1,825,596	1062	612	SOABHPA	CX	CX7TT/K6CT
HS0ZCW	1,420,478	1176	551	SOABLP	HS0	K4VUD
KH7XS	17,949,361	4562	989	SOABHP	KH6	K4XS

ODE ON OLD CANS



OLD CANS KEEP ME IN STATIC AND WHISPERS,
ONCE THEIR BAKELITE CAPS BOXED TENDER EARS,
BUT NOW THEY SMASH UP AGAINST WHITE WHISKERS,
SAME OLD CANS ON MY MIND FOR YEARS AND YEARS.

AS EVER SO, THIS WORN HARDWARE RESTS LINEASY,
BUZZING WITH THE NOISE OF NOTHING SPECIAL,
TILL RATTLED BY HISTORIC SQUAWKS AND SCREAMS.
WHY WEAR THIS ANTIQUE HEADDRESS, I PUZZLE,
FROM THE PAST OF PARLORS AND PACHISI,
WHEN RADIO ROARED THE STUFF OF DREAMS?

Ed Note: Jeff KINSS sends me an occasional cartoon about the latest exploits of Dash the Dog-Faced Ham. Jeff follows the likes of Gil Gildersleeve W1CJD (SK) the QST cartoonist for many years. More Dash can be found at www.dashtoons.com. Jeff has a book out now, published by 6SJ7 comics. It is available at lulu.com. He sent me a copy to review. Plenty of chuckles. It is about (among other things) lids and kids and space cadets.

Brings back memories of 75 meter AM in the late 40s and early 50s although it started earlier. Mike Premus W2OY was a fixture on 3810 khz with a BC-610 and lots of wire in the air. He could be heard all over the Eastern half of the country nearly every evening calling CQ for "No lids, no kids, no space cadets, no phony phonetics, no K calls, A-1 operators only!" I first heard him listening on my Grandfather's living room radio "with a shortwave band" when I was about 12 years old. Pretty heady stuff for a kid listening to shortwave. I marveled at the nasty things people said to him on the frequency. Little did I realize that in later years I would be sending out citations for such activities from an FCC Monitoring Station :<)

SCP Files to New Web Site

The Super Check Partial files have moved to a new Web site - www.supercheckpartial.com. There are now 46,695 different calls in the master file. The masterdx.dta file no longer includes any VE calls. (They are in the master file, of course, just not in the DX file.) File manager, Randy K5ZD, says, "I am moving the SCP files off of my personal Web site and on to their own. This will enable a consistent Web address for the files going forward. It may also enable some options for how to upload files in the future

Online Prop Charts from ARRL

An important part of creating an operating plan is planning for propagation. If you need a general set of propagation charts in a hurry or you're away from the computer with the propagation software, try the online monthly propagation charts from the ARRL. For fun and review, charts are available back to 2006. The url for the site is <http://www.arrl.org/qst/propcharts/> (Thanks, Larry N6NL)

QTH.com e-flea market

More good stuff! Scott KA9FOX reminds the Contest Update readers that since the ARRL stopped running their classified ad service, the QTH.com e-flea market is a recommended destination for the ham shopper. The url is <http://swap.qth.com/>

Ed note: The above items are from the ARRL Contest Update newsletter.

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