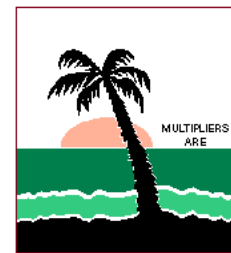




Contest Gazette

Florida Contest Group

<http://www.floridacontestgroup.org>



Volume 10 Issue 4

August 2003

From the President's Corner

By Dan Street, K1TO

Since our last issue, a few contests of importance have come and gone. FCG members worked together with the Sarasota Emergency Radio Club for a 3A effort again this year. Although our results weren't quite as superb as last year, and the weather was often challenging, we had none of the severe problems that the N4BP team had (see K4PG's article on pages 6-7 of this issue!). The Get-On-The-Air station was again a personal focal point of this year's FD effort and the satisfaction gained from working with some non-hams and less experienced hams was just tremendous. Many other FCGers participated in FD efforts scattered around the state, often helping others to learn about our hobby just as many of us were introduced to it way back when.



The IARU HF Championship was "back to normal" this year, with no WRTC excitement adding to the mix. A few groups did get on "WRTC style", though. Although conditions were challenging, many FCGers made some time to get on and work the world. Scores can be found on page 3.

Plenty of members signed up for teams for the two NAQP weekends this month. See page 3 for claimed scores.

How about our club finish in the two major two week-end DX Contest events?! In CQWW 2002, we finished 4th in the USA, only behind the 3 huge clubs in the Northeast! And in ARRL DX 2003, we entered the Unlimited Club category for the first time ever, finishing 5th behind those same 3 W1/2/3 mega-clubs, plus the SOMC in W8/9/0 who managed over 100 entries. More detailed summaries of FCG efforts will be available soon on the reflector. Kudos to the ARRL for getting those results out earlier than ever and including some neat regional input to boot.

What a super turnout at the Vicnic this year! Enjoy lots of pictures and a meeting summary on pages 8-12 in this issue. Thanks to all of you who made the effort to attend and to those who submitted material!

Right after the Vicnic, I took off on a 4500-mile road trip that included healthy doses of family, friends and baseball (but only a little ham radio – hi). Hope you've all been able to find a way to escape the tedium of daily summer storms. Unfortunately, I came home to find more lightning damage, despite everything being unplugged. Lightning is insidious!

This year's FQP logs received count ended up at 663 after all stragglers were in (up from 447 last year!). Our log checking approach will not be assisted by K8CC, as mentioned last time. However, Bruce, WA7BNM has stepped up to help. Stay tuned for more info on that.

Welcome aboard to our newest healthy crop of members. It's great that almost half of them made it to the Vicnic and are pictured in this issue!

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It was sad to hear of W2JDH's passing. Walt made a nice on-the-air contribution to the FQP in recent years. See the sidebar about Walt below RIP OM.

The BPL (see page 17) response rate was quite good among our membership. Once we figured out the correct FCC bureaucratic approach, many of us posted our thoughts. Let's hope that our input makes a difference and that the FCC can be objective about this topic, rather than simply being a "cheerleader", per the ARRL's Reply Comments.

SM5DJZ and his wife Birgitta were in Florida for a few weeks and managed to get around to a few of the FCG stations. Jan is a long-time friend and it was really fun to dig through my QSLs from the 1970s and see how often we worked even back then. One highlight was having him identify a QTH for an SM7 QSL I already had as being in the one laen that I needed for Worked All Laens.

CU all in person at the Melbourne hamfest. Thanks again to Sylvia and Eric, K9ES for hosting us again this year.

With only 8 weeks left before CQWW SSB, be sure to let us know if you need help with antennas or tower work! GO FCG!

Vy 73, Dan

Walt Petersen W2JDH SK

Walt Petersen, W2JDH of Morristown FL passed away Saturday 23 August of a heart attack.

Walt grew up in Northern New Jersey and was first licensed as W2JDH in 1951. He worked mostly CW, enjoyed working DX, RTTY and talking to Novices and beginners. He was active in Navy/Marine Corps MARS. Walt noted in his QRZ.com bio an interest in older radios, specifically R-390s and ARC-5s.

Walt retired from the local power utility, and was a forum Elmer on eham.net, where he assisted members with resolving grounding and lightning related problems. Walt joined FCG in February of this year, but was active for the past several years in the FQP from the rare Levy County, always on CW, sometimes QRP. RIP Walt!

Melbourne Hamfest - 13 Sept - Members will meet at the ticket barrel at noon, then to lunch at Franco Ristorante, 1369 Babcock St. FCG meeting at 4PM at K9ES QTH 107 Atlantic Blvd Indian Harbour Beach, with food to follow. Directions to K9ES QTH are on the FCG Web Page.

Welcome Aboard



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

W4DJ John Mayger, 5960 NE 6th Terrace, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33445 e-mail: w4dj@hotmail.com

KW3Y Jim Stone, 5594 SW 30th Ave., Ocala FL 34474 e-mail: jcs4494@yahoo.com

KG4TBQ Eddy Golden, 1100 Sunshine Way SW, Winter Haven FL 33880 e-mail: airratt@yahoo.com

KX4WW Bill Walker, 7878 Cahone Ct., Macclenny FL 32063 e-mail: kx4ww@bellsouth.net

W7HN Denny Sarver, 36 Newport B, Deerfield Beach FL 33442-2620 e-mail: w7hn@arrl.net

AG4TO Herbert Atwood, 5119 N. Lincoln Av, Tampa FL 33614 e-mail: herbertatwood@ij.net

NW5E Gary Vest, 349 Seminole Woods Blvd, Geneva FL 32732 e-mail: vestg@bellsouth.net

WK2G Merrill Brown, 7201 Yardley Way, Tampa FL 32767 e-mail: Mjbrown@mfire.com

KC4PX Ivars Lauzums, 5150 Del Sol Drive, Merritt Island FL 32952 e-mail: ilauzums@cfl.rr.com

AG4MQ Bernie Lavezza, 11461 NW 29th Manor, Sunrise FL 33323 e-mail: Blavezza@BellSouth.net

K4DDR Doug Rehman, 19711 SR 44, Eustis FL 32736 E-mail: rehman@surveil.com

This brings our membership total to 158!

Events Calendar

North American Sprint, CW 0000Z - 0400Z, Sep 7
Melbourne Hamfest 12,13,14 Sept.

ARRL September VHF QSO Party 1800Z, Sep 13 - 0300Z, Sep 15

North American Sprint, SSB 0000Z - 0400Z, Sep 14
CQ/RJ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY 0000Z, Sep 27 - 2400Z, Sep 28

California QSO Party 1600Z, Oct 4 - 2200Z, Oct 5
CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Oct 25 - 2400Z, Oct 26

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

Claimed Scores IARU 2003

K4PB	474	145	180,960	SOABHP	MIXED	
K4LQ	260	103	83,636	SOABHP	MIXED	
K4GKD	697	162	280,098	SOABLP	MIXED	
N4KK	262	86	65,016	SOABLP	MIXED	K9VV
N4PN	1027	174	618,918	SOABHP	CW	
K1PT	783	145	360,000	SOABHP	CW	
K1TO	709	139	302,325	SOABHP	CW	
K4FK	352	139	158,182	SOABHP	CW	K9AW
K1UM	295	101	76,659	SOABHP	CW	
W1MO	35	23	1,771	SOABHP	CW	
NJ2F	351	108	119,340	SOABHP	SSB	
W4IX	784	153	324,666	SOABLP	CW	
WD4AHZ	558	105	159,810	SOABLP	CW	
W4DJ	410	134	152,894	SOABLP	CW	
N4GM	354	57	44,460	SOABLP	CW	
W4YA	143	68	27,540	SOABLP	CW	
KB4N	126	58	18,212	SOABLP	CW	
KN4Y/M	83	18	4,770	SOABLP	CW	
K4JAF	185	89	50,997	SOABLP	SSB	
K5KG	1338	217	893,606	M/S	K5KG, W4SAA	
K9ES	1341	169	754,585	M/S	K9ES, AD4ES, W4UUM, 4X6TT	
N4BP	1795	136	673,472	M/S	N4BP, K4PG	

Claimed Scores Summer NAQP

NAQP SSB				NAQP CW					
K4XS	1130	232	262,160	SOLP	N4TB	220	89	19,580	SOLP
N4BP	861	138	118,404	SOLP	KN4Y	194	88	17,072	SOLP
NF4A	630	171	107,730	SOLP	NF4A	118	60	7,080	SOLP
W4IX	615	138	84,870	SOLP	N4BP	100	31	3,100	SOLP
K5KG	457	142	64,894	SOLP	K4FCG	55	26	1,430	M/S
KK4TA	190	84	15,960	SOLP	(K4FCG was operated during the Vicnic at the N4TO QTH with all attendees listed as operators)				
W8OSF	121	50	6,050	SOLP					
K1HG	79	27	2,993	SOLP					

Member Profile - K9VV

By Fred Kleber, K9VV

Ham radio has played a prominent role in the life of Fred, K9VV. Besides countless hours of entertainment and technical training, our wonderful hobby has been the source of many worldwide business and personal friendships. First licensed in 1972 as WN9JEN, like his signals, he is a man “on the move”. Born in San Diego, CA, he took to hamming at the tender age of 11. A family relocation took him to the Chicago area where the radio bug bit for the first time. A simple question, “What’s that tower for?” asked of a kind gentleman on his paper route, spelled the beginning of good things to come.



Fred’s parents drove him (no drivers license yet) to the train station for the trek into Chicago for the first of many upgrade exams. Good-bye WN9, hello WB9. With his trusty Drake TR-4 and a 2-element tri-band quad, he routinely patrolled the HF bands in search of elusive DX. High school Spanish classes were augmented with real-life QSOs en Español. The contest bug was hatched from a combination of the CD parties, SS and Field Day. His understanding parents welcomed the installation of a huge ground screen in the front(!) yard and even a 6-element 40-meter wire beam in the trees above.

Fred thought it was super cool to operate /VE3 in Field Day from his Uncle’s Canadian cabin. About this time, the FCC decided to allow selection of 1x2 calls for Extras. Having just made the cut-off date for Extra, his first choice of K9VV was granted in 1976. Unfortunately Fred wasn’t around to exercise his new call.

The DX bug had bit again. His senior year of high school was spent in The Netherlands as an exchange student. After navigating the bureaucratic red tape, he was granted his first DX call – PA9AWG. In between wearing his wooden shoes and drinking Heinekens, he connected with PA0GMW and learned about low band DXing. The sub-sea level QTH provided an awesome ground plane for 75 meters!! Ten months abroad also wet his appetite for travel and polished his command of the Dutch language.

Playtime was over when Fred returned to further his education at the University of Illinois. Of course it was love at first sight when Fred laid his eyes on the pair of 150-foot self-support towers at club station W9YH. Being the peak of the sunspot cycle, the F2 flu hit hard and found Fred at the helm of YH during many contests. Not being content to stay in Illinois during the summer months, he was selected to be a summer intern with Radio Free Europe in Spain, Germany & Portugal. True to his radio roots, he majored in electrical engineering with an emphasis in communication systems. Now all the theoretical stuff he had memorized for his ham

was starting to make sense.

With Euro-Rail pass in hand, Fred connected with F6EXV and enjoyed his first DXpedition as C31WK. He encountered many friendly European amateurs during his continental wanderings. (EA3SF, CT1FL, TA2BK, etc.) Meeting the legendary Don Riebhoff, ex-K7ZZ, in Portugal was an experience. The DXing pinnacle was lighting up an unused Radio Free Europe rhombic pointed at the USA during his 5-week stint outside of Lisbon. Helloooo raaaddiiooooo!

With a freshly minted sheepskin in-hand, Fred hit the professional job market. You guessed it – wireless communications, travel, languages & meeting people. The dawn of cellular spelled opportunity! A stint with Motorola as an international project / system engineer had him traveling worldwide designing and installing communications systems.

When in country, Fred’s contesting skills were kept in shape by the K9HMB / K9GL multi-multi station. The combination of contesting and speaking Spanish were called to public service in 1985. The Mexico City earthquake found K9VV passing thousands of health & welfare traffic for victims. (Packet radio was just emerging) Another crazy outing found him operating an ARRL VHF contest aeronautical mobile and on-the-ground from many rare grids.

Years of Midwest winters left Fred yearning for a warmer climate. He returned to San Diego and married the lovely Lisa. Before the wedding bells, Fred decided it was time for a REAL DXpedition. He was the prime organizer of the XF4DX team in 1987. Not wanting to be bored with days of /MM operation, an aerial assault was utilized.

Many ask Fred why he wed on Thanksgiving weekend, the holiest of contest weekends. As the newlyweds left their matrimonial site in a sailboat, Fred chatted with the N6ND M/M team on VHF. Fred will attest that there are women that understand anniversaries and ham radio can peacefully coexist, especially in DX locations! Many fun contest weekends were had “Baja style” south of the border.

Wedding behind him, it was back to work in a variety of positions with a wireless carrier in San Diego. A special work project created many trips to South Korea. This found Fred eating funny food and speaking a bit of Korean. Opportunity in the wireless world found Fred & Lisa on the move again. Four moves in two years landed them in Indianapolis, where he was tasked with staffing, design and implementation of the Sprint PCS system. Following this, Fred made the leap to the entrepreneurial world.

The Indy QTH provided many good times at the world’s most famous oval and the Indy 500. The Dayton Hamvention was close by. Just a few more miles down the road

was the "aerial junkyard" of K3LR. Fred's fluency in several languages provided K3LR an advantage for those stations uncomfortable in speaking "contest English".

Changes in life led Fred & Lisa to South Florida last year. Their scuba logbooks are filling up fast and they anxiously await the opening of lobster season! Several temporary antennas have sprouted at their Boca Raton QTH, however the tower awaits FAA approval due to airport proximity. Once the federal & local roadblocks are cleared, some of you may be getting a call for an antenna party! Primary rigs include an FT-1000MP and Yaesu FT-726. Another station project includes the construction of an IRLP node.

A recent trip to the Bahamas with fellow FCGer N4BP provided exercise for C6AKU. Now that the Caribbean is in Fred's backyard, more contest expeditions are a certainty. On the air K9VV prefers CW and is enjoying the SFL propagation, especially on 6 meters! As an accomplished DXpeditioner, Fred understands logistics & teamwork. His past expeditions include: C6AKU, C31WK, FS5PL, J87J, P40M, PA9AWG, TI5N, VP2V DX, VP5FUX, XE1FUX, XE7X, XF4DX, XX9VV, ZF2VV and other operations from CT1, CX, EA3, JA1, KH6, KP2, VE3, VS6 and 6Y5. Fred's other hobbies include: playing drums, scuba diving, golf. Mr. & Mrs. K9VV look forward to meeting many other FCGers at the world-famous VICnic in Sebring!



K9VV operating from K3LR (40M)



Gus Browning imitation @ XF4DX - 1989



Field Day 2003

By KB K4PG

I think Murphy caught up to us with a vengeance this year! After many years of mostly trouble free Field Days, Murphy appeared before, during and after Field Day in 2003.



Bob Patten, N4BP, and I have been doing Field Day at the Fiesta Key campground (mile Marker 70) as the Guano Reef Bashful Perverts (GRBP) for more than 30 years. We always have a new pervert or two join us from time to time. For the last two years, Grant Mitchell, N4GM, joined us. We are pretty successful at being prepared and we operate skillfully during Field Day. Our set-up is so simple; Murphy never really visits us except for an occasional blown fuse, until this year.

It started Friday night. Grant and Bob were going to copy the ARRL FD message. I had a previous engagement and was not able to copy it. Happily, Bob and Grant copy the message perfectly, but Grant's computer crashes and he lost everything on his computer! Bob thought this might be an omen, but I thought it was just an unfortunate accident.

Saturday morning I arrived at Bob's house. Bob and Grant jumped into Bob's pickup truck, which towed the Scamp trailer we operate from. All was packed and ready to go, or so we thought. More on this later. Two meters kept our vehicles in communication. Upon arrival at Fiesta Key campground we moved into our campsite and surveyed our equipment. Two antennas were to be erected. A 4BTV on the seawall replacing our ugly vertical (an antenna we had used for almost 30 years) and a 40 meter dipole held by a 40 foot push up mast lashed to the Chickee (Thatched roof hut) near our campsite. There is nothing but 270 degrees of salt water to help our puny 5-watt signal make its way across the US. At 2 p.m. the antennas went up...the vertical was not a problem and was very fast and simple to erect. But the dipole is another story.

I started to operate the first shift on 20 meters. The door of the trailer flew open and Bob asked, "Are you in the middle of a run?" I said, "Bob, we are QRP and the band is thick with signals. I am search and pounce right now." "Come out and help us with the dipole. The mast is too heavy and we need help to push it upright." Out I went. Up the mast went, down it went right into the Gulf of Mexico! We removed it and decided this time would be a super human effort to push it upright. Bob and I pushed and Grant guided the base from slipping sideways. We almost did it. Bob thought we should quit and let it down. I thought we should give it one more effort to get the mast upright. We pushed and it moved! It broke in half! Experienced old hands, as we are, we did not put the guys and the transmission line back on the ground toward the base clear of rocks and obstacles. They caught in the coral seawall and we pushed until the mast buckled.

Out came the hacksaw. Grant removed the bad part and did get the mast up and lashed in place okay (although it is 10 feet shorter). Checking the antenna with the analyzer showed a short. After some time, we deduced the balun was shorted by seawater. The balun was removed and all was well. But the mast went up and down two times before the shorted balun was discovered. Boy it looked good up there!

We would have a great 40 meter 5 watt signal, if only the transmission line reached the K2! The K2 has two antenna connectors. We needed to reach the second connector. Fortunately we had another 50 feet of coax with PL259's on each end. But the usually always ready experienced old hands left the jar of barrel connectors at home. Bob had a switch box that did the trick. (Wrapped in a plastic bag to protect it from the weather).

From this point on, Field Day proceeded as usual, almost. We decided to do four-hour shifts through the night. Grant relieved me, Bob relieved Grant, and I relieved Bob. I hit the sack at 4 a.m. knowing 8 a.m. is my next shift....sleep is needed badly. A shake on my shoulder and the words, "you are up" woke me from a sound sleep. Boy! That was the shortest four hours ever! I peeked at the rig it was Grant! He woke me by mistake after two hours of sleep. I reached up and shook Bob. Grant thought Bob was not feeling well and he is waking Kevin to take the shift. Then Bob jumped out of the rack and Grant went oh, oh! Yes, it was very hard to get back to sleep!

Toward the last hours of Field Day, conditions deteriorated from our location and signals became scarce. We packed up after 25 hours of operation and headed out for dinner at a seafood restaurant in the middle keys.

Relaxed and headed for chow, Bob and Grant steadily moved north on US 1 getting closer to dinner. I stopped to fill the SUV with fuel. Bob and Grant got about three minute's ahead of me after getting tired of waiting for me. I got back on the road and we eventually made contact on 2 meters again and started our usual chitchat about "stuff." Traffic was very heavy and stoppages were long. Just as traffic started to move at the 112-mile marker, the SUV in front of me made an emergency stop and started to fishtail, turning sideways. I hit my brakes and moved over to the shoulder to avoid him and avoid a rear end collision from the car behind me. Big mistake. The shoulder of the road was loose gravel and spin grass. I started to fishtail. When I steered back on to the pavement the wheels caught the pavement and at 10 miles an hour, I rolled over!

My first thought was to get out, get out, get out! But I was trapped upside down with my head tilted on the inner roof liner and glass everywhere. I turned off the engine, unlocked the doors which would not open. I tried the window and it would not open. Then I spotted my cell phone lying next to me. I called Grant. We had exchanged cell numbers as we left the campground, at my request, just in case we needed each other. Was that ever a foreshadowing of events to come?

I dialed Grants number about five times until I got it right. Grant answers the phone and I said, "Grant, tell Bob to stop, turn around and come back to get me. I rolled over my SUV and I am trapped upside down. I will need a ride when they get me out of here." There was a three-second pause. Grant asked, "Who is this?" I told him it was me! He assured me they are on their way back to me.

By now bystanders are all yelling questions and instructions into the vehicle. Even the kids swimming in the Atlantic came by my window to look in. "He's moving!" one of them exclaimed. Where are their parents I wondered? The rescue squad got me out. The EMT's examined me for injuries. Bob and Grant picked up all of my belongings and put them in Bob's pick up truck. We headed out, finally, three of us with our knees trapped against the dash and each other. We all agreed to skip dinner and head home.

Feeling guilty about holding everyone up and missing our Florida Keys seafood dinner, I thought I would pay the tolls on the return trip. I had a bunch of quarters and began to give them to Grant to pass to Bob to pay the tolls. But each time I gave Grant quarters, he dropped them. The quarters went to that place all quarters go when they do not want to be found! Okay, I thought. I drop quarters too. Next toll, again, Grant drops the quarters! They get away also. The next toll I handed directly to Bob with the precision of an operating room nurse, smacking them into his hand and making sure he closed his hand tightly around them. We must have been giddy because we were all laughing pretty hard by then!

I got home about 10:30 p.m. and just about fell asleep standing up. I was jarred into awareness when, to add insult to injury, my XYL informed me the lawn guy mowed my transmission line in half! I checked the antenna Monday evening. I removed one end and soldered on a new connector to other end. Re-connected everything and discovered I needed a barrel connector to complete the run! I should have the barrel connectors soon!

I should mention I walked away without as much as a scratch. The seat belts did their job. Thank goodness. We did achieve a "best score" ever for Field Day with better than 1K in contacts.

I can't wait until next year's Field Day!

Right Column - Top to Bottom:

KB K4PG at the Key

The N4BP Field Day QTH

The infamous fall down vertical

K4PG upside down SUV



Vicnic at N4TO's QTH another FCG

First of all, who was there? Club members and spouses attending were AA4RX, AA4Z and Ranzie WA4WWL, AB4RL, AG4MQ, K1HG and Daisy KT4KW, K1KNQ, K1TO and Mary Ann, K1UM and Kate, K4GKD, K4LOG and Michelle K4SXY, K4LQ and Sheila, K4LW and Charlotte, K4MM, K4OJ, K4PB and Jan, K4PG, K4VUD K4WJ and Susan, K4XS and Holly K4XSS, K5KG and Kay, K8DSS and Susan, K8OSF and Sharon, K9ES and Sylvia, K9VV, K0LUZ and Pat, KJ4UY, KK4TA, KC4PX, N4BP and Julie, N4GI and Donna, N4OO N4TB and Karen W4JA, N4TO, N8PR, NA4AR, NS4W, NW5E W1ROX, W1YL, W3AZD and Hope WB3ANE, W4DJ and Pam KC4QJM, W4DTA and Elizabeth, W4IR, W4IX, W4OV, W4QM, W4SAA W4STB and W4DKB, W4UM and Sherry W4SLR, W4YA WD4AHZ and WK2G,

Thanks to John W4DJ, George K5KG, KB K4PG, Ellen W1YL, Tom KK4TA and Kevin N4KM and Fred K9VV for the Vicnic and other pictures in this issue.

Dan, K1TO began the meeting with a call for applause for Vic, N4TO, the gracious host of the FCG event of the year. Dan then removed his "hat", an empty Diet Pepsi cardboard case, and passed the hat around for donations to defray Vic's expenses.

As part of the round of introductions, each attendee was asked to state their home county and number of times attending the Vicnic. 19 Florida counties were accounted for, covering almost 30% of the 67 counties in FL! Counties included BRE, BRO, CLR, DAD, HIG, HIL, IDR, MRT, MTE, OKE, ORA, PAL, PAS, PIN, POL, SAR, SEM, STL, WAK

It was pointed out that with 90 people in attendance, over 4000 one-on-one interactions were possible! With the swap meet portion growing healthily, few in attendance disputed the claim that the Vicnic will overtake the Miami Hamboree for most popular ham event in FL in a few more years...



Dan K1TO conducts the meeting while Fred K4LQ takes notes.

In fact, Vic himself is such a draw that he has begun to "brand himself". No, he's not using a hot iron! All picnic attendees were dubbed "VICtims". Dan displayed the first foray into the apparel industry – VICKNICKERS. With chewable VIClets and lottery VIC PICKs available at the local convenience store, there is no doubt about Vic's widespread appeal! When the FCG won the ARRL 10M Test this past test, N4TO was indeed leading us to VICTORY!

FCG members that were attending their first FCG event were asked to get up and speak for a minute about their ham radio interests, favorite contests, station setup and how they learned of the FCG. Thanks to: Bernie AG4MQ, Howard AA4RX, Ivars KC4PX, Gary NW5E, Merrill WK2G, John W4DJ and Fred K9VV or sharing with us.

Dan took a few minutes to highlight the fine on-going contributions of these FCGers:

- Fred, K4LQ was applauded for his continued excellent work on the Gazette newsletter, as well as being Secretary and Treasurer.
- Ron, WD4AHZ handles the FCG and FQP web sites and mailing lists, as well as contributing heavily to the FQP log checking efforts by keying in all the paper logs and working with various software authors on many topics.
- Jeff, WC4E (not present) does a thorough job with the FQP certificates and mailing an FB packet of FQP material to accompany those certificates.
- Bill & Holly, K4XS & K4XSS handle the FQP plaques
- Ulysses, NS4W maintains the page of FQP planned operations
- Pat, XYL of Red, K0LUZ did a great job on the graphics that were used in the production of our new FCG banner that was proudly displayed (see the picture of it at Dayton in this issue)
- George, K5KG, the idea man behind the Contest Buddy program and Red, K0LUZ who does a great job with the web pages that support the program, were recognized for those efforts, then...



Vicnic Host
Vic Dubois,
N4TO

...George and Red spent a few minutes reviewing the purpose of the Contest Buddy program and encouraged all present to add their information on-line for their strengths (for which they could be Elmers) and weaknesses (for which they could be “Elmos”).

With a large number of attendees wearing orange and white FCG gear (shirts & caps), members were encouraged to see Joanne, KT3O to obtain their own high-quality items.

At 2 PM local time, the NAQP CW test was to begin. As discussed on the FCG reflector, we would use the name “ED” in W3AU’s memory and list all Vicnic attendees as operators. W3TMZ, who could not attend, is leading the efforts to dismantle the 6 towers and substantial station that Ed had amassed up in Brooksville. Jim, K4OJ kindly saluted the efforts of several of us who have given our time and effort towards that dismantling.

Ron, WD4AHZ spent a few minutes addressing the Florida QSO Party. With about 670 logs received this year, we have about 50% more logs to process than last year! Discussions with K8CC concerning assistance with log checking software are now over. Bruce, WA7BNM has kindly stepped forward to offer similar support. Ron and Dan are actively working with Bruce to define the details of the programming. Bruce has already assembled an on-line input form for folks to enter their logs into directly. It then generates the correctly formatted Cabrillo output used in the log checking process. That should encourage more folks to submit logs and encourage others to key in their own logs rather than submitting a paper log. Interest in the new Worked All Florida counties award was quite disappointing so far (it was instituted to coincide with the start of this year’s FQP).

With CQWW SSB only 12 weeks away, the heavy contest season is rapidly approaching. Dan encouraged members who need help with antenna or tower projects to “raise their hands” and let us know so that we can help each other out.

Jim, W4YA raised the topic of Broadband over Power Lines (BPL). Several emphasized the severity of this issue and encouraged attendees to file Reply Comments with the FCC stating their opposition to this QRN-generating nightmare.

There was some discussion about FCC Part 15 QRM levels at 24 GHz and from RF ID tags at HF frequencies just below 14 MHz.

. Pete, N8PR was applauded for his fine accomplishment of 5BWAZ. Pete’s last one was Zone 18 (Middle Siberia) on 80M.

Our friends at the Univ. of Central FL have been kicked out of their nice top floor ham shack on campus and the antennas and towers are to be removed. Several FCG members are also UCF attendees or alumni and there has been a close kinship between the two clubs, so this is truly a sad occasion.

Jim, K4OJ spoke about hosting a “stub party” at his mom’s (W1YL). Coax stubs can be an effective way of reducing inter-station QRM in multi-op stations.

US Towers is apparently now marketing Rohn clone tower, with adapters to Rohn tower. This is perhaps in response to the difficulties that Rohn is experiencing at current.

Gary, NW5E discussed the intriguing idea of establishing a new 6 Meter CW-only contest.

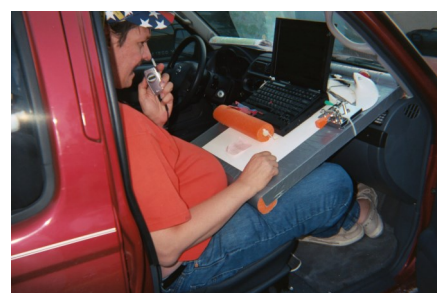
The next FCG meeting will be held in Melbourne once again at the home of Eric, K9ES and Sylvia. Details are available on the reflector and web site. Once again, the club will also have an informal lunch gathering down the street from the hamfest grounds. Both events are on Saturday, Sept. 13.



(N4KM Pictures)

***The K4FCG/M FQP Team
L - Kevin N4KM
R - Jim K4OJ***

***Below:
Jim K4OJ at the K4FCG operating position.***





Bernie AG4MQ Jan and Alan K4PB



**George
K5KG**



**Bill K4XS and
Terry N4TB**



**Jim K4OJ operating K4FCG
during the Vicnic**



**Left L-R
Tom K4MM
Jim K4YA**

Right L-R

Howard AA4RX

Chief Cook 'Mean Gene'



**Members who have not been seen before in the Gazette: L to R Standing: Daisy KT4KW, David W4DKB, Bernie AG4MQ, Howard AA4RX, Ivars KC4PX, Gary NW5E
Sitting Ray K1HG, Sherri W4STB, Merrill WK2G, John W4DJ, Fred K9VV**





Bruce W4OV, Art AB4RL



Bob N4BP



Ed K8DSS and Susan



Jack K1KNQ



Blake N4GI and Donna



Larry KJ4UY



Charly K4VUD and Ink N400



Ed K8DSS



Don W3AZD and Hope WB3ANE



Ron WD4AHZ



John K4WJ and Susan



Merrill WK2G



**Left: L-R
Ellen W1YL
Jim K4OJ**

**Right:
Members listen
attentively at
meeting**





Eric KU4TF and Ulysses NS4W



**Tom
KK4TA**



**Fred K4LQ and
Sheila**



**Mary Ann and Dan
K1TO**



Kate and Ken K1UM



**Roxena
W1ROX**



Red K0LUZ and Pat



**Dick
K4GKD**



**Fred
K9VV**



**Left
John W4DJ and
PAM KC4QJM**



**John W4IX, Joe W4IR,
Dale W4QM**

**Mike W4UM and
Steve W4DTA**



**L-R Standing
Sandy, Sylvia
(xyl K9ES)
and Eric K9ES**

Sitting

**Sharon (xyl
K8OSF) and
Sheila (xyl
K4LQ)**



L - R

**Sherry
W4SLR**

**Elizabeth
(xyl
W4DTA)**



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From the Reflector - CQWW SSB Results notes from K1TO

August CQ arrived, including the CQWW SSB results & line scores. Despite the smaller print, I still love going through those scores!

FCG highlights:

- N4PN M/S - #1 USA! Ops were 'PN, N4OX, NF4A, KB4ET (K3EST's lead states that they operated from "George Island" - hi)

- K4XS 40 SB - #1 USA! Runaway victory for Bill, with a QSO total that far exceeded all of the M/Ms and a multiplier that was pretty close.

- N8PR 40 SB - #3 USA

- N4BP 10 SB - #5 USA

- K4VUD 15 SB - #5 USA

- N4IG SOABLP - #7 USA - lots of competition in this category!

N4TO M/M - #4 USA, including finishing ahead of past winner N2RM. Vic has stated that there will be no more M/Ms. Nice way to go out...VE7ZO did 40 and had the highest country total of all M/Ms.

Ops were: AD4Z, K1TO, K4MM, N2NL, N4DL, N4TO, NS4W, VE7ZO, W4IX (sorry if I missed anyone - the "expanded results" which include the operator lists is not yet posted to their web site)

-- PJ2T M/2 - #1 World, including WC4E as operator and crew chief!

- K5KG Assisted - just missed the Top Ten USA

Other FCG entries:

SOABHP: K0LUZ, W4IR, K4FK (W4SAA), W7QF, WT2J, N4GI, W4UM

SO10HP: K1ZYW (now K1UM)

SOABLP: K4GKD (just missed Top Ten), KK4TA, N4PSE, AA4RX, KB4N, N4EK, KU3O, K4JAF, K4LOG, K4RFK, W4YA, KE1F, K4LW

SOABQRP: NJ2F, K4LQ

SOABAssisted: K1PT, K4OJ, N4WW, W4ZW

Multi-Single: K9ES

The SteppIR 3 Element Yagi

By Tom Smith KK4TA



I began writing this article before Ward Silver's review in the May QST was published. I subsequently removed some of the nuts and bolts information that was just repeating Mr. Silver's article to concentrate more on operating and impressions. I am neither a technician nor any type of antenna expert. For more detailed data, read Mr. Silver's article or visit Fluid motion's website at steppir.com.

The laws of physics and the existence individual preference preclude the design of the perfect antenna. I'm defining perfect here as one antenna being the best antenna for all occasions. The perfect antenna is elusive because there are times when an omnidirectional or broader beamwidth antenna is needed, others when high gain in a particular direction is needed, and others when some forward gain needs be sacrificed for front to back ratio to help eliminate interference. Other attributes of the perfect antenna would include low SWR at all amateur frequencies, with optimum gain and FB at all frequencies too. The perfect antenna should cover the WARC bands as well the standard 20/15/10 and must do it with the same gain and FB characteristics. A bonus, since many HF radios now include it, would be the 6 meter band. The antenna must function at a high level of efficiency without high loss components such as traps. This antenna needs to be relatively small with low wind loading. The antenna should be resistant if not (impervious to the elements (wind, rain, salt water and ice) and should have a limited number of connections to corrode. Finally, it must not offend the neighbors.

Except for the last item listed, there is an antenna that does everything listed pretty well, and your wife might prefer the glossy forest green finish of the SteppIR over the metallic sheen of aluminum. It's not perfect, and the longevity of its mechanics and construction remain to be seen. The Fluidmotion SteppIR is a 3 element yagi on a 16 foot boom with individual elements that are adjustable in length through the use of stepper motors controlled by a microprocessor based control box located at your operating position. It will follow your transceiver's frequency automatically, adjusting all elements appropriately for a reasonable balance between forward gain and front to back ratio while keeping the SWR at typically less than 1.2 to 1 at all frequencies between 13.6 and 54 MegaHertz. There are no traps—all elements are full-sized. As element spacing relative to frequency gets larger, the attainable FB goes down while gain goes up. The opposite is true at the lowest frequency where gain and FB are more balanced. This antenna does not adjust for optimum spacing, but neither does any other 3 element 3 or 5 band yagi. It obtains its good results through a narrow-band de-

sign—a shortcoming that would matter in any other antenna except one with adjustable elements.

The elements and motors are protected in sealed cases and fiberglass tubes. There is nothing to rust or corrode on this antenna. The only entrance for moisture is at the end of the tubes through a foam insert. This provides a weep hole for moisture, pressure, etc., but is separated from the mechanics and contacts by 18 feet of downward sloping fiberglass tubing. The copper-beryllium tape used for the elements is connected at the center by four-contacts which are said to be self-cleaning, even when the copper tape has been soaked in a brine solution. (Perhaps this might be the sea front solution for some of our group who must refurbish aluminum antennas every year)

There is a "create mode" on this antenna which allows the user to adjust each element to the tenth of an inch. Custom antennas can be designed to counteract the affect of nearby metal objects, guys, or other antennas which may cause a less than optimum SWR. By retracting the reflector and driver all the way, a dipole can be created for any frequency if you need an antenna that approaches the omni directional. I have not found this to be necessary as the antenna has a bi-directional mode built in for every frequency. This mode has the effect of lowering gain and broadening the beamwidth of the antenna while having gain in two directions. The side rejection is still fairly high. It is possible to use the create mode and a program like YO to design beams with the highest possible gain while ignoring front to back to be used for special purposes when rear rejection is not important.

Another built in feature is the 180 degree mode. With the touch of this button, the antenna swaps places with the director and reflector in about two seconds, electrically aiming the antenna in the opposite direction. This is a great feature in the DX contests from Florida where the axis of Europe/Central America and Japan/South America cross. You are never more than 90 degrees from any direction and you can very quickly check long path propagation. I had never realized how many signals were coming long path until I got this antenna. If I had a reasonable signal short path, it was not worth the 180 degree turn to find out. Now it's worth hitting a button to increase the chances of getting in on one call by determining the best current path to a region.

Through the associated newsgroups on this antenna, I have learned that it has survived this year's ice storms in Minnesota and North Carolina and high winds in Texas and the great plains. In fact not only did it survive ice storms, it was operable while loaded with ice because the elements were still adjustable inside the fiberglass tubes. Another plus is that rain or snow noise is non-existent on this antenna since the elements are isolated. Only time will tell how long the mechanics of this antenna will hold up since the oldest SteppIRs out there are only approaching 3 years. As far as what I have heard on the reflectors, not one stepper motor has failed. One person had a problem with a tube that had not been secured

properly.

On the air performance has been outstanding in my experience since receiving mine in October of last year. I moved from a 2 element Gem quad to the SteppIR and have enjoyed increased QSO totals even the face of deteriorating propagation conditions. This year should see the antenna move up another 20 feet from its current 46 feet, which should help me out on DX.

Though my wait for delivery at that time was ten weeks, delivery time is now less than half of that. Assembly was very straightforward and quick since there is no measuring—all element tubes are the same length. My first control box's transceiver interface did not work correctly—apparently a test jumper had been left on at the factory. A call had another one on the way overnight. I cannot say enough about the support of the Fluidmotion folks both before and after the sale.

This is not the antenna for many contesters. It cannot rival 4+ element monobanders on each band in gain and FB. (However, Fluidmotion is now offering a 4-element beam on a 32 foot boom) But if you are limited to one modest tower and a single small tribander, this antenna has features that will give you advantages in the contest environment beyond simple gain and front to back.

The capabilities of the antenna enter into the contest strategy, i.e., a wide beamwidth may be more important than gain when working a domestic contest or not wanted to beam a specific area. Still, within 2 seconds, you can be doing just that.

All in all, if buying a new antenna, I think it's hard to beat the price of the SteppIR if you want good performance on the WARC bands and 6 meters in addition to a standard tribander. Add up the prices for separate antennas and they will be close in price or more than the SteppIR, and they will not have the bandwidth or other features of the steppIR. If you occasionally like to step outside the ham bands to listen to some of the other interesting things between the bands, this antenna will serve you well.

For more information, check out the review by Ward Silver in May issue of QST or go to the Fluidmotion company web site at www.steppir.com.

73, Tom KK4TA

Below is Tom's SteppIR antenna at the top of his 46 ft tower. Other antennas include s 160 through 30 meter sloper, a 40 meter EDZ fed with ladder line, and an OCF dipole cut for 160 Meters.



Peaceful Coexistence

By Ward Silver N0AX

(Reprinted by permission from the ARRL Contest Rate Sheet)

This fall is shaping up as a Return To the Low Bands for most DXcontests. The 10-Meter contest will revert to its alternate personality as a VHF contest. The Rip Van Winkles among us will stir to life as 80- and 160-meter DX paths begin to open for mortals. The passing of Cycle 23 will also lead to another inescapable fact of life that comes with low sunspot counts - congestion.

The lack of lengthy quality openings on 10- and 15-meters will be most strongly felt on phone. In better times, 10-meters fills up to the top, but mostly we occupy the 400 kHz from 28.3 to 28.7 MHz. 15-meters also provides 250 kHz of phone band, of which 200 kHz is active contest territory. When 10 and 15 go away, we lose 600 kHz of spectrum - about half again as much as 80, 40, and 20 meters combined if you leave some space at the top end of each band. Yikes!

I think you can see where I'm going with this. A large group of testers accustomed to the wide open spaces above 20 MHz is going to be looking for QSOs on bands that are full even at the peak of the cycle. This is going to put a lot of pressure on the usual inhabitants along with the other migrants heading down the dial in search of an open band.

Most testers are pretty reasonable individuals and will do their best to share the bands with their fellow hams. A few testers won't be reasonable and will give our sport a black eye by being obnoxious in any number of easily imaginable ways. Sometimes it's accidental or unintended, in which case "Sorry!" goes a long way. Sometimes, we're unnecessarily obnoxious to each other - "can" is not the same as "should", you know. And, hey, guess what? Sometimes the non-testers will be obnoxious, too!

There's really no point in escalating the argument to a giant conflagration. Every second you spend in a shouting match is time that you're not making QSOs, destroying your focus and concentration. If things just get too heated, take a five-minute break and clear your head.

Here's a few get-alongs that not only help us coexist with other band users, but make us better operators and improve our contest totals:

- o Set the amp drive, mike gain and processor for a super-clean, clear signal.
- o Become familiar with all of your receiver controls, such as the attenuator and RF gain.
- o Know where the major nets and calling frequencies are on each band.
- o Listen an extra millisecond or two before calling CQ or calling split.
- o Time to buy that extra filter, maybe?
- o Think and practice courtesy - always.

It's also a good time to consider your strategy for the changing conditions.

- o Little Pistols and even Medium Guns should brush up on search-and-pounce technique.
- o Learn how to tune a second radio for extra multipliers and QSOs.
- o Would a single-band or multi-op effort be more fun this year?
- o Be realistic in your expectations for clear frequencies and pileups.

Diplomacy is also a handy skill to learn for dealing with complaints.

- o Does the complaining party have their noise blander turned off?
- o Suggest that they reduce RF gain or use the attenuator to fight front-end overload.
- o Remind them that the WARC bands are contest free year-round.
- o Sometimes, it won't kill us to move a little.
- o Offer to QSY if the guys in the net will give you a QSO!

We all have a perfect right to operate on any frequency we choose, but that's not a strategy for anything but conflict. If you're going to derive the maximum amount of satisfaction from contesting this year and for the next few years, the most important rule to follow will be the Golden Rule.

73, Ward N0AX

Special BPL Message to Clubs

(Reprinted from an e-mail received by K1TO)

August 2003

Dear Amateur Radio Club Members,

As summer fades and we anticipate a return to the rigors of fall, you will be reinvigorating Amateur Radio club operations in your communities. But before you club launches its activities, I hope you can take a moment at your next meeting and consider a disturbing and critical topic - Broadband over Power Lines (BPL).

BPL is a devastating threat to the Amateur Radio spectrum - especially the HF bands. There has been a lot of publicity on this issue - articles on the ARRL website (www.arrl.org/bpl <http://www.arrl.org/bpl>) and other ham radio sites. Your ARRL is at the forefront of the campaign to defeat BPL and will continue to work tirelessly to protect your Amateur Radio bands. And you can help.

This summer individual hams - and clubs - have responded generously to fund ARRL's efforts to fight BPL, and have filed comments to the FCC. But we still need to raise an additional \$55,000 to fund the field measurements and document filings necessary to defeat this threat. We're all in this effort together, so I hope your club will jump on the bandwagon and support the campaign financially. We've received club contributions ranging from \$50 to \$2000. If your organization has already made a donation, thank you.

And if your club is considering a contribution, I hope you'll do so right away. With a contribution of \$100, \$250, \$500 or more, your club can join the roster of clubs that are joining the effort. Your commitment will make a tremendous difference. And we'll put a list of contributing clubs on the ARRL website this fall as our way of saying thank you.

If you need more information on BPL for your club, go to the ARRL website (www.arrl.org/BPL <http://www.arrl.org/BPL>) for the full story, including copies of the two FCC filings and a video that graphically demonstrates the interference radio amateurs would experience from BPL. The video can be downloaded and played at your next club meeting, and there's a PowerPoint presentation you can use. Just follow the link above to an "Understanding the NOI" page and a resource page where you'll find the presentation.

ARRL President Jim Haynie calls BPL the biggest threat to Amateur Radio in decades - and hams have lent their voices to the cause. If BPL becomes a reality, many Amateur Radio activities, like Field Day, will be meaningless. Your club's support with a generous financial contribution now will help fund this effort.

Thank you for considering this request. Contributions can be made on-line at www.arrl.org <http://www.arrl.org>, or by mail to BPL Special Spectrum Defense Campaign, ARRL, 225 Main Street, Newington CT 06111.

73,

California QSO Party Notice

To: Florida Contest Group

California QSO Party (CQP) 2003 - <http://www.cqp.org/>

1600Z October 4, 2003 -- 2200Z October 5, 2003

Sponsored by the Northern California Contest Club (NCCC)

FUN FOR CLUBS OUTSIDE OF CALIFORNIA

Last year 20 clubs turned in scores for the "Top Non-California Club" plaque. The Tennessee Contest Group won the plaque with 16 logs and a score of 703,996 points. You can view the TCG 2002 plaque at <http://www.k4ro.net/tcg.html>

INTRODUCTION

Start your contest season with a "big bang" in CQP 2003. Participation was up a whopping 21% in CQP 2002. Come join us and win awards (plaques and wine), earn a certificate, buy a t-shirt and most importantly "have fun" in one of the largest state QSO parties.

OBJECT

Stations outside of California work as many California stations in as many CA counties as possible (CW and phone, 160-80-40-20-15-10-6-2 meters). Stations in California work everyone.

* Updated Multi-Single rule for 2003 allows unlimited band changes!

* Complete and final rules and other information at <http://www.cqp.org/>

EXCHANGE

* Stations outside of California send QSO number and U.S. State, ARRL Canadian section, or Country.

* California stations send QSO number and county.

AWARDS

The most plaques and awards in any state QSO party

* 34 Plaques (wood and metal, not mere wallpaper!)

* 40 Bottles of California wine (commemorative CQP labels with your callsign)

* Certificates to the top Single-Operator in every state, province, country, and CA county

* Certificates to each and every entrant who makes at least 100 QSOs

Commemorative CQP 2003 T-shirts are available for purchase if you make at least 100 QSOs (waived for DX entries). Please include your size (M / L / XL / XXL) and \$10 (\$15 for DX entries).

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR LOGS !

Complete and final rules and other information at <http://www.cqp.org/>

Free logging software CQPWin at <http://www.cqp.org/Software.html>

Entries must be submitted no later than November 15.

* Logs should be submitted by e-mail to cqp@contesting.com

* Logs may be submitted via postal mail to: NCCC, c/o Al Maenchen, AD6E, 3330 Farthing Way, San Jose, CA 95132-1908.

- Marc, W6ZZZ, a member of the CQP Publicity Team

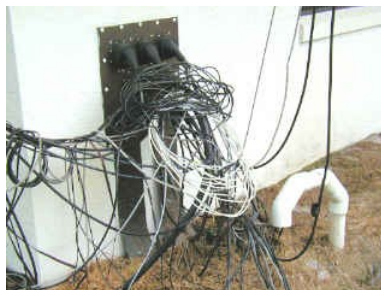
K4VUD in first Transatlantic 5 MHz QSO

(From the ARRL Letter)

First UK-US amateur QSOs logged on new band: The first transatlantic contact between the US and the United Kingdom on their overlapping 5-MHz channel--5405 kHz (5403.5 kHz)--has been reported. Charly Harpole, K4VUD, in Florida, worked Paul Widger, G0HNW, in W Yorkshire, England on July 4--the day after the band first became available to US amateurs. Harpole reports the QSO took place at 0345 UTC. John Easey, G4XBE, in Essex confirmed overhearing the contact. "Subsequently K4VUD and G0HNW worked a string of stations, and I worked N1WJ," said Easey, who also worked K4VUD and reported hearing NP4A/m and other stations on the US mainland.

Harpole, who participated in the ARRL WA2XSX 5-MHz experimental operation, used a Yaesu FT-1000MP Mark V reprogrammed for 60 meters and running 50 W into an inverted V. In 2002, Harpole's WA2XSX signal on 5 MHz was received by Paul Gaskell, G4MWO. Harpole said several other US stations worked G0HNW and G4XBE on 60 meters on July 4 until propagation quit. While it is legal for US hams to work UK amateurs, US hams are advised that UK operators are on the air specifically as part of propagation and equipment experiments and not for the purpose of making routine contacts.

Can you identify this FCG Station?????



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