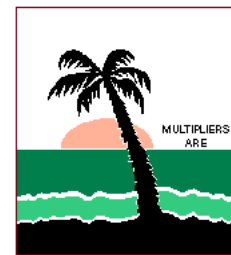


# Contest Gazette

## Florida Contest Group

www.floridacontestgroup.org



Volume 19 Issue 4

December 2012

### From the President's Corner

*By Dan Street, K1TO*

We hope that your Holiday season is joyous and upbeat so far!



2012 turned out to be a year of ups and downs. (I'm not just saying that because I climb towers!) After a stellar fall 2011 contest season, we were all poised for a tremendous year throughout 2012. Instead, Mother Nature has really not been kind to us, with the solar flux falling back below 100 recently. Could 2011 have already been the peak of Cycle 24? The ARRL 10-Meter Contest was sure a dud a few weeks ago, although three FCGers find themselves atop their national category listing.

On the up side, the Florida QSO Party (FQP) in April was one for the ages! We smashed our previous highs for log submissions and total QSOs logged with over 152,000 QSOs. Our special promotion of using 15 1x1 stations whose suffixes spelled out "FLORIDA QSO PARTY" was a big hit, with over 200 people sweeping the 15 stations and 65 Floridians, most of them FCGers, manning the 15 special stations. Special thanks to Art, N4PJ for crunching the raw log data to ID the 200+ "sweepers" and to Steve, WB4OMM for the neat certificate design. Look for our usual awards presentation at the Orlando luncheon coming up in about 6 weeks, with lots of plaques and certificates to be handed out.

Speaking of Orlando, Yaesu has already signed up to be the major prize donor for the Contest Dinner once again, with another FT-950 to be awarded to the fortunate winner. There will be lots of other prizes, too, and your chance to win is included in the already-reasonable price of the dinner! I hope that we are close to announcing our speaker since he is a very well-known leader in contesting in many ways.

Welcome back in a big way to Bill, K4XS/KH7XS who went from no station to the biggest station in the southeast in a short time! Bill's station in Brooksville went up more than 10 years after perhaps the biggest station in Florida at the time, also in Brooksville, was taken down at the QTH of Contest Hall of Fame SK Ed W3AU.

Another downer for 2012 was the sudden passing of Bob, KI2G, barely 3 months after he posted his best-ever FQP effort. Not many other FCGers had the privilege of knowing

### SEASONS GREETINGS FROM K1TO, K4LQ, K5KG, WD4AHZ AND WF3C

Bob as well as I and Chris, WF3C did. Despite being legally blind, Bob managed to complete his Worked all Counties award and was close to 5BWAZ as well, all using a very modest 2-element quad at a low height and homebrew verticals for the low bands. A number of items from Bob's estate will soon be available, with the first purchasing opportunities going to FCG members at reduced rates.

Back to an upper – the FCG sponsorship of WRTC-2014 operating tents. As of this writing, the FCG remains the only club in the world who has ponied up for FIVE tents! Thanks to Charlie, NF4A for spearheading the fund-raising. We are barely a year and a half from the big event now. It was obvious for a while that Fred, K9VV/NP2X would likely win the Team Leader spot for NA-13, but it's been great to see the late charge from Julio, AD4Z/HI3A as he has now unofficially overtaken the field in our own NA-4W Selection Area! Dan, W4UH deserves special mention as the enthusiastic and able station host for so many of Julio's efforts.

I'd like to take some space to publicly thank all of those who have helped to make the FCG such a great club, as we once again knock on the door of 300 members. We are truly fortunate to have Fred, K4LQ's deep well of talent applied to his roles as Gazette publisher, Treasurer and Secretary. George, K5KG supports us in many thoughtful and creative ways. Chris, WF3C has embraced his new role as Activities VP really well. The score postings from Fred, K9VV after

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each major contest sure take some time, yet remind us of how each and every one of our scores count towards the overall total. And we've grown accustomed to the weekly posts from Frank, K4EJ reminding us to be radio-active each coming weekend.

Ever since the FQP was rebirthed back in 1998, Ron, WD4AHZ has been an integral part, serving as FQP VP all along. (The FQP rules were hashed out in his family chat room back in the fall of 1997!) Due to an increased real-life workload, Ron has asked to reduce his FQP involvement and thus we need to fill a couple of specific roles. The most pressing of these is to produce the final results publication for the FQP each year. Ron has taken my raw write-up and line scores and blended them into a really nice document that incorporates pictures and many other elements of a professional document. Anyone with publishing skills they'd like to help us with? We need to get the 2012 FQP results published early in 2013, once the log checking, final score calculations and raw write-up are finished. The other need that will come up in late 2013 is to contact all of the ham publications in which the 2014 FQP rules will be published. Thanks to Ron, K8NZ for volunteering to be the recipient and keyer of the 2013 paper logs. Ron, 'AHZ will stay on board and continue his FQP (and FCG) web-related tasks – thanks, OM!

There are other roles for potential volunteers to fill. For one example: the mega-clubs in the northeast are big on awarding yearly prizes for contributing scores all year long. Any one interested in becoming the club scorekeeper?

OJ!! GO FCG in 2013!!

Vy 73, Dan

## 2013 FCG Dues are due 1 January

The FCG 2013 dues collection season is fast approaching.

As in past years, dues collection season will be January and February. Current members who have not paid by 1 March will be removed from the roster.

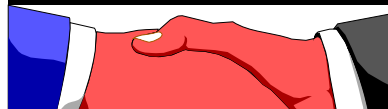
Please mail dues to :Fred Perkins, 3437 Lake Josephine Drive, Lake Placid FL 33852. Make checks payable to Florida Contest Group.

Thanks for your cooperation. Have a great Holiday Season.

73/Fred K4LQ

Contributors to this issue included: K4PG, K1TO, K9ES, K5KG, K4LQ, ARRL Contest Update Newsletter.

## Welcome Aboard



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

**KJ4GOV** - Al Soto, 1233 Chenille Circle, Weston FL 33327  
e-mail: asoto66@gmail.com

**W4LWZ** - Lawrence Zimmer, 1719 NW 21st Street, Cape Coral FL 33993 e-mail: W4LWZ@arrl.net

**K4NNX** - Brad Humelsine, 120 Seashore Drive, Islamorada FL 33036 e-mail: nl7au@bellsouth.net

**NA4RR** - Roger Rockwell, 1855 Conway Drive, Pensacola FL 32503 e-mail: flkitfox@juno.com

**K1CC** - Rich Assarabowski, 306 Vernon Avenue, Vernon CT 06066 e-mail: asto66@gmail.com

**VO1MP** - Gus Samuelson, 26 Skinners Road, Portugal Cove, St Philips, NL A1M 1S1, Canada

**W4KFH** - Kurt Hoyer, 1825 SE Balleto Street, Port St. Lucie FL 34952 e-mail: w4kfh@bellsouth.net

**NT4TS** - Laing Batchler, 2602 NW 15th St., Cape Coral FL 22993 e-mail: nt4tsh19ts@comcast.net

**W4ABC** - Jon Pearl, 5881 42 Ave. No. St. Petersburg FL 33709-5333 e-mail: jonpearl@tampabay.rr.com

## Events Calendar

Stew Perry Topband Challenge 1500Z, Dec 29 to 1500Z, Dec 30

ARRL RTTY Roundup 1800Z, Jan 5 to 2400Z, Jan 6

North American QSO Party, CW 1800Z, Jan 12 to 0600Z, Jan 13

ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes 1900Z, Jan 18 to 0359Z, Jan 20

North American QSO Party, SSB 1800Z, Jan 19 to 0600Z, Jan 20

CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW 2200Z, Jan 25 to 2159Z, Jan 27

CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest 0000Z, Feb 9 to 2400Z, Feb 10

North American Sprint, CW 0000Z-0400Z, Feb

## Melbourne Hamfest & K9ES Cookout Meeting Report

*By Fred Perkins, K4LQ*



The 26 attendees at the K9ES meeting included: AD4ES, K1CC, K1KNQ, K1TO, K4LQ, K5KG, K8NZ, K9ES & Sylvia, K9IA, KC4C, KE1F, N4FP, N4TB, NA4CW, W3AZD & WB3ANE, W4DKB & W4STB, W4DN, W4EBA, W4GV, W4LT, W6KW & Elizabeth Ann, WF3C.

FCGers spotted at the hamfest: AB4GO, AF4Z, K4GRD, K4LRP, K4PG, K4QD, K4XS, KB4T, KD2JA, KM4HI, KR4X, N1TO, N4GI, W2TX, W4AMS, W4DAS, W4GJ, W4IR, W4KPG, W4OZK, W4UH, W8EK, WA4AW, WB4OMM, WC4H.

Dan began the meeting with a big thank you to Sylvia and Eric for their hospitality which evoked much applause. This was the fifth time that Eric and Sylvia have hosted an FCG meeting/cookout, at two different QTHs.

The hat was passed.

Attendees made short work of the hot dogs, hamburgers and all the fixins', as well as salads, corn, desserts and other items too numerous to mention.

Dan asked everyone to identify themselves and let us know their operating plans for the upcoming contest season. (Rather than to list those plans here, we will include them in the e-mails that precede each contest that announce our members' intentions.)

At least five folks were at their first FCG meeting - Rich K1CC, Chuck K9IA, Walt W4GV, Peter W6KW and Elizabeth Ann.

Note that in the coming SS contests there are now 83 mults. The Ontario section has been eliminated, and replaced with 4 new sections - Ontario North (ONN), Ontario South (ONS), Ontario East (ONE) and Greater Ontario Area (GTA).

The FCG has now sponsored 5 tents for WRTC 2014, more than any other contest club in the world! As one of the WRTC-2014 Directors, Dan expressed his appreciation for the high degree of FCG support

Fred K4LQ gave the treasurers report. The Club now has \$1409.24 in the bank. The W1CW/K4OJ fund stands at \$666.02.

N4FP noted that the FCG now has at least 5 members who live in The Villages -- Byron W4EBA, Wayne N4FP, Chuck K9IA, John NP2B and Jeanette NP2C. Wayne said that John and Jeanette are just settling in after moving from the Virgin Islands, and sent their regards. The number of golf carts in The Villages was quoted as 48,000! (Anyone plotting a Golf Cart Mobile for the 2013 FQP?)

Dan also noted that one FCG Member ARRL Section Manager in VI (John NP2B) has been replaced by another -- Fred K9VV/NP2X -- now that John has moved to NFL.

Dan asked for input on the Contest Forum held earlier in the day at the hamfest. It was noted that we ran over time and had standing room only attendance, while the ARRL Forum had about 7 attendees and ended early. Some good suggestions for future topics were made. George K5KG handed out an updated version of "Contest Dos and Don'ts" to those who didn't receive the handout at the forum. (Who gets the survey forms that were handed out at the end?)

It was asked if FCG has considered a Contest University. Dan discussed how we have been considering it, even though it would be labor intensive, require support from a number of members as well as appropriate space. One suggestion was to host it at a private home, but another attendee who had attended the CU at Dayton said he didn't think it would work in a private home. About half those in attendance raised their hands to driving up to 2 hours to attend a CU. It was suggested to use Web-X or a similar on-line tool. (The PVRC has had a successful series of webinars on various contesting topics in recent years.)

It was suggested that we re-activate the contest-specific strategy discussions at future FCG meetings, as well as just prior to each contest on the e-mail reflector.

George K5KG raffled off an FCG tee shirt from Stitchin' Waves in Sarasota and the winner was Hope WB3ANE

Chris WF3C reminded us of the upcoming Contest Dinner at the American Legion Hall in Orlando the Friday night of the Orlando Hamcation (2nd weekend of February).

Thanks to Dan K1TO for his usual FB editing of this report.

73/Fred K4LQ



## Melbourne Pictures



*Above - Dave K4DLF*

*Left - Jack K1KNQ*



*Above L-R Eric K9ES, Wayne N4FP*



*Above - Dave W4DN*



*Above - Lu W4LT*



*Above L-R ARRL SE Division Director Greg W4OZK, Steve WB40MM*



*Above - Fred K4LQ*





**L- Byron WN4R**



**Above L-R - Lou KE1F, George K5KG**



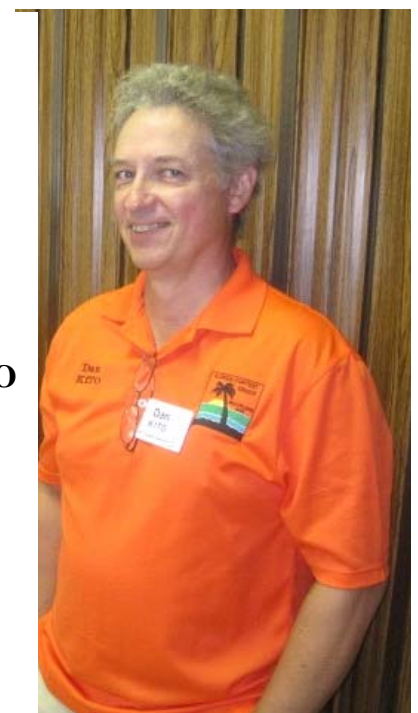
**Right - Glenn KD2JA**

**Right -  
Sherri  
W4STB**



**Left - Chuck  
AD4ES**

**Right - Dan K1TO**







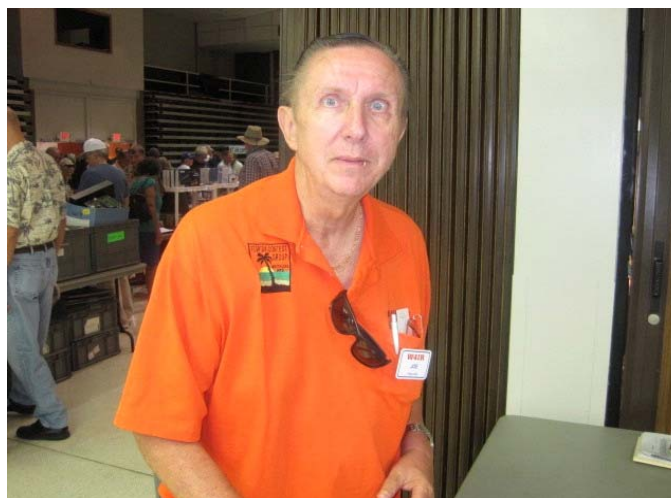
Above L-R—Terry N4TB, Ron K8NZ



Above - Another view of the swap table.



Above L-R Don W3AZD, Hope WB3ANE



Above - Joe W4IR

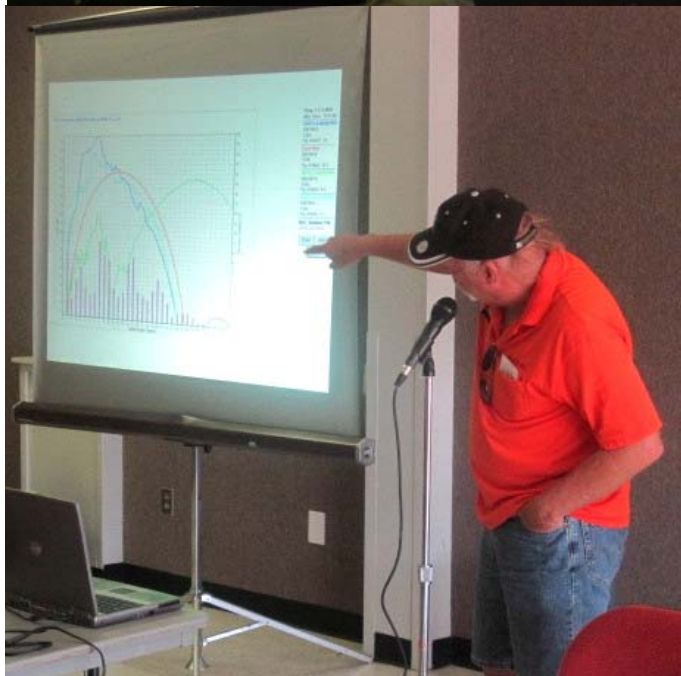


Left - Dan W4UH



Chatting at the swap table - L-R Ron K8NZ, Chris WF3C, Lu W4LT, Blake N4GI





Above - Bill K4XS gave a presentation on building his super station  
Below - Standing room only at the FCG Forum.



Above - Eric K9ES gave a presentation on Advanced Antenna Switching and Rotor Control



Above - Chris WE3C gave a presentation on the history of the Florida Contest Group.

Below - Time out for Pizza!





**Eric K9ES whips up some burgers at the cook-out at his QTH**



**Above L - R Chuck K9IA, Wayne N4FP and Byron WN4R**

**Below - Sherri W4STB chats with Dan K1TO at the cookout**



## Rod Newkirk W9BRD SK

Rod Newkirk, W9BRD/VA3ZBB, of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada -- who penned the *QST* column "How's DX?" from 1947-1978 -- passed away on Monday, November 19 after a long illness. Newkirk was credited with coining the term "Elmer," as well as for his humorous take on DX in his column, especially with limericks in his DX Hoggery and Poetry Depreciation Society and the accompanying cartoons of Jeeves by Phil "Gil" Gildersleeve, W1CJD (SK).

The term "Elmer" -- meaning someone who provides personal guidance and assistance to would-be hams -- first appeared in *QST* in Newkirk's March 1971 "How's DX?" column, where he wrote that "[t]oo frequently one hears a sad story in this little nutshell: 'Oh, I almost got a ticket, too, but Elmer, W9XYZ, moved away and I kind of lost interest.' Sure, the guy could have burned through on his own, maybe, but he, like others, wound up an almost-ham. No more Elmer. We need those Elmers. All the Elmers, including the ham who took the most time and trouble to give *you* a push toward your license, are the birds who keep this great game young and fresh." Newkirk was probably not trying to coin a term at the time, but the name stuck, becoming a general term for the mentors Newkirk called "the unsung fathers of ham radio."



## Skywarn 2012 at the National Weather Service Office in Melbourne

*By Eric Smitt K9ES*

During the first weekend of December, the National Weather Service Office in Melbourne, Florida participated in SKYWARN™ Recognition Day for the 14th consecutive year. The event for Amateur Radio (ham) operators was held from 7 pm Friday November 30th until 7 pm Saturday December 1st and was co-sponsored by the NWS and the American Radio Relay League. We hosted a SKYWARN™ Open House from 10 AM to 4 PM on December 1st, where local amateur radio operators and thier family members stopped by for tours of event operations and of the National Weather Service office.

SKYWARN™ Recognition Day (SRD) provides a venue for National Weather Service (NWS) offices to recognize Amateur ("ham") Radio operators for their commitment in helping keep their communities weathersafe. During every tropical weather threat, and many other major weather events, Amateur Radio operators staff local NWS and American Red Cross shelters and stand ready to provide emergency communications should standard services fail or become overloaded. Many Amateur Radio operators are also trained as SKYWARN™ weather spotters by local NWS offices, to provide valuable information during hazardous weather situations. Often, these spotter reports allow NWS meteorologists to issue severe weather warnings with greater advance notice and confidence than would otherwise be possible.

During the 24-hour event, Amateur Radio operators throughout the country will visit their local NWS office, set up portable radio stations to simulate emergency conditions, and work in teams to exchange weather reports with other hams across the nation and the globe.

During last year's 2011 special event, operations from NWS Melbourne included two High Frequency (HF) stations, a Very High Frequency (VHF) station, two digital stations (RTTY and

PSK-31), and a PC-based EchoLink (VoIP) station. HF operations utilized the 10, 15, 20, 40, 80 and 160-meter bands. Antennas used were two rotatable beams at 35 feet (10, 15, 20-meters), a GAP Voyager (160-meters), a GAP Titan (digital modes), a rotatable beam at 35 feet for VHF (2 meters), a G5RV dipole, and a 40/80M dipole.



*CL-33 on 10-15 Meters*



*Eric K9ES on 20 Meters*

Amateur Radio operators from the Treasure Coast Weather Net (TCWN) and Martin County ARES/RACES participated as well as operators from groups in Brevard County (Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society and the Florida Contest Group). Licensed NWS Melbourne meteorologists also operated during the event. The NWS Melbourne East Central Florida SKYWARN™ Group special call-sign **WX4MLB** was used. During the 2011 event WX4MLB contacted more amateur radio stations than any other NWS station, contacted stations in all 50 states, 44 countries, and 81 NWS offices.

This year, Gap also loaned us a 20M Mono-Gap vertical which was placed right in front of the NWS main doors. And this year, we had 3 HF stations, the "shack" station used on 20, 40, 80, and 160 with the IC756Pro-2 and



*Gap 20 Meter Monopole*

AL572, and in the main conference room we had 2 other stations, a IC-756Pro-2, and an IC746Pro.

So in the 24 hours, we made over 1200 QSO's, had operators from Martin County Skywarn, Indian River Skywarn, Osceola Skywarn, our club PCARS (FCG) and guys from Titusville.



*3 Element 20 meter  
Yagi and Gap  
Voyager*

During this weekend, the ARRL 160M contest occurred. We managed to operate in that contest for 7 hours while the activity of Skywarn died down. We contacted 160 stations in 59 sections, 8 countries, for a score of 19,765 points. The operators for 160M CW were K9ES, AD4ES, and N8KH. Our thanks go to GAP Antennas for their loan of the Gap Voyager antenna which enabled this operation. The station consisted of an Icom 756 Pro-2 and a Ameritron AL572 Linear, operating from 110VAC. The most output was 900 Watts. The Skywarn Recognition event ran from 00:00Z Dec 1 to 00:00Z Dec 2, so we only really operated from 5PM to 7PM EST Friday, and then when the low bands closed Friday night until the low bands opened on Saturday morning. The operation ended at 7PM Saturday night and all equipment was torn down.

FCG members operating at NWS Melbourne Skywarn were K9ES, AD4ES, KT4PD, and K4QD

## Notes from ARRL Contest Update Newsletter

Crank-up towers often squeak and squall when being lowered or raised and sometimes when flexing from the wind. Spencer K5GAK says he "solved that problem with some bicycle dry Teflon lube from one of the online bike shops. It goes on as a liquid and the solvent evaporates leaving a Teflon coating."

Array Solutions has announced that both the 2500A (automatic tune) and 2500HF (manual tune) OM Power amplifiers were recently granted approval for sale in the USA by the FCC.



Jim K1TN confirms that radio-sport.net has ceased online publication, noting that a final wrap-up by Jamie NS3T has been posted on the site in the past couple of days.

It's a good idea to perform a test transmission of your CW messages before the contest gets going - I heard one station sending "CQ SS" at the beginning of the WW CW contest. Maybe "SS" is a cut form of "WW" but I doubt it - I can't say that I've not made similar mistakes though

**Comfort** - In the ergonomics department, Kirk K4RO reports that the best new accessory in his station during CQ WW CW was a big exercise ball. Using it as a chair at times stretched muscles and provided "huge relief to lower back and legs.

*Ed Note—I've been using one of these for some time now at my trading desk. It works as advertised above.*



## VO1/K5KG - VO1XX OPERATION

*By George Wagner K5KG*



For ARRL Sweepstakes CW this year, I went to St. John's Newfoundland. Gus, VO1MP, and I met in Florida earlier in 2012, and after some discussion about working SS CW from VO1, Gus extended an invitation for me to do the contest from his station. As the time approached, Gus and I had a number of phone calls and emails to make the arrangements for the visit. I was pleased to learn that Gus had a fully equipped SO2R station, monobanders on 10, 15, and 20, and wires on 40 and 80. Gus' hardware included an FT-1000MP, an FT-2000, a K3 and two Alphas.

We discussed which call sign to use for the contest, and he volunteered that I could use one of his calls, VO1XX. For brevity, I took him up on his offer to use VO1XX in SS, but I would use VO1/K5KG for running pileups prior to the contest. As it turned out, Gus had obtained VD1M as a special call sign. It was the first VD1 call sign that had been issued, and Gus would inaugurate it in CQWW SSB. The deal was clinched, and I flew to St. John's on Saturday of CQWW SSB weekend, and became his second op upon arriving that evening. SS CW was the following weekend.

Gus and I spent the ensuing week doing antenna chores as well as enjoying the sights and sounds of beautiful St. John's and surrounding countryside, or perhaps I should say the surrounding seaside since Newfoundland is one extremely large island – NA-027 for you IOTA lovers. Up there, Newfoundland is known as "The Rock", since the entire island is a massive rock outcropping from the sea. From almost any vantage point, the take-off is awesome. One of the highlights of the touring led by Gus "Master-Tour-Guide" was a trip out to Cape Spear, the easternmost point of North America. From there, Greenland is a mere 1,000 miles to the NNE! In the summertime, Cape Spear is a favorite place for whale watching. Newfoundland's economy today is thriving due to the support of oil and gas production from offshore platforms on the Grand Banks, some 200 miles to the east. In the past, fishing was the primary industry, but now support of the energy business prevails.

Another major highlight was visiting Signal Hill. It was from this location in 1901 that Guglielmo Marconi first copied radio signals transmitted from across the Atlantic. It is recorded that he copied the Morse letter "S" some 25 times over the course of several days when it was transmitted from a station in England. Today, Signal Hill is the location of VO1AA, operated by the Society of Newfoundland Radio Amateurs, of which Gus was the President for several years.

My report would not be complete without a mention of the fabulous radio conditions that I experienced. In the week

between the contests, and when not touring around, I spent a lot of butt-in-seat time running pileups. As you would imagine, the European stations are nearly always there, and it was fun to have them follow me from band to band. Gus did not have a 17m antenna, but with his monobanders, and 80m and 40m dipoles, I was able to work the other hf bands (I did not try 160m). One day, I received an email from a JA who asked me to try 17m at 2200z. I told Gus about this, and he immediately rigged up a 17m dipole from his 15m tower. I called CQ at 2140z and the JA's were waiting! I worked 150+ of them that day, and a somewhat fewer number the next day at the same times. By the third day, the propagation had changed, and I only worked a handful. Handing out VO1 to the JA's was fun, and many responded immediately with QSLs.

Here are the totals from my daily VO1/K5KG operation.

80	63
40	363
30	172
20	343
17	610
15	325
12	18
10	516
	2520

Here are the totals from my SS CW VO1XX operation. I got a sweep at 1245z on Sunday when I worked KE0A in ND.

80	98
40	244
20	499
15	219
10	100
	1160

And one thing to report is that Gus, VO1MP, has earned his ORANGE shirt, and is now an honorary member of the Florida Contest Group. If all goes as planned, you will all get to meet Gus and his friend Ilona in Orlando in February. Gus spends the winter months at his condo in Largo. He is a dedicated golfer, but he admits that his game just does not get better.

In summary, thanks to the wonderful hospitality of Gus, and the use of his fine station, I had a great time. The only question now is, where next for SS CW? VY1, hmmm...

73, George K5KG



**George K5KG  
at VO1MP/  
VD1M/VO1XX  
Station**

**George and  
Gus decked out  
in their FCG  
Tee shirts at a  
local mall**



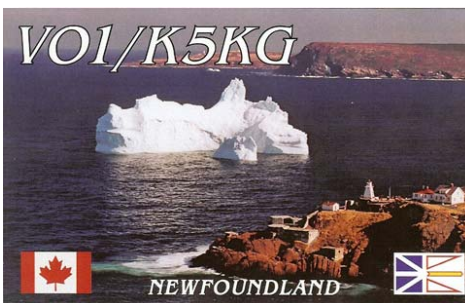
**Gus VO1MP  
hoisting up  
the 17 meter  
antenna**

**VO1MP QTH  
Picture taken  
from a nearby  
hilltop**



**VO1MP QTH  
Left to right:  
4 element 20  
5 element 15  
5 element 10**

*While in VO1, George was also able to visit the site where Marconi heard the first trans Atlantic radio transmission, which was a Morse S sent from a station in England. Nearby is the Eastern most point in North America.*



**Great looking  
QSL card  
George!**

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**Below: Gus with his  
hilltop tower**

