The 4th FQP was a total success, despite less than stellar conditions. The activity from the Florida mobiles was fantastic, led by several high-profile imports – the K5WA/N6MU team and W5WMU. K4XS again broke the 2K QSO mark for the 20-hour activity. The log deadline has now passed and my sense is that we again have broken the log submission record! Ron and I are working with K8CC on the log-checking process, so hopefully that will reduce the overall effort to produce results.

Planning for WRTC-2002 in Finland is well under way. By the time you read this, we will have already selected 10 USA candidates. Hopefully, one or more other FCGers will get a chance to go again. Please bear with us. The list of nominees will be kept private for a while, to prevent the selected team captains from being inundated with shameless self-promotions from the “deserving”. There has been some great discussion on the FCG e-mail reflector about some method of helping to fund a needy contestor that will attend WRTC. Keep those ideas flowing, folks.

FCG membership continues to grow steadily. It was great fun to meet Art, W4AA (ex W2IB) at Dayton. In my early years of Contesting in CT, Art was a single-op force in the DX Tests. Dayton was very well attended with white- and orange-shirted FCGers! (See picture in this issue.) The Society of Midwest Contesters was awarded their plaque to thunderous applause for the #1 club in SS at the Contest Forum. Considering that they have 400+ members at the moment, I’m even more proud of the FCG for climbing all the way to the #3 Medium Club with, at the time, 70 or less members!

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I had the opportunity to work with Jeff, WC4E to finally install a C4XL and 2M antenna for the UCF club station. Originally, this work was to be done right after the Orlando meeting, but an untimely fender-bender, followed by an unexpected roof-level lockout delayed that for a while. We got most of the work done before the standard afternoon thunderstorms rolled in. Ken, W8EK has asked for assistance up near Ocala, so hopefully we can assemble a crew and get the Simpsons fixed up, too.

Thanks to Pete, N8PR for hosting our most recent meeting and first Southeast meeting that was not at the Miami hamfest! Pete’s place is well equipped and it’s easy to see why he is closing in on 5BWAZ and doing real well on 160, too.

A June meeting was just not in the cards this year, despite several offers from potential hosts. Our next gathering will likely be the annual BBQ meeting at Vic, N4TO’s in Sebring.

How about the huge outpouring of club activity in WPX and in the ARRL June VHF Test? Wow! See claimed scores elsewhere in this issue. Remember that WPX CW log submission deadline of July 1.

Hope to work many of you from the Field Day effort in Sarasota. Plans are for a 2A effort as NJ4M, with a number of FCGers crashing the party. WD4AHZ is the ringleader for that one. Many other club members regularly activate a station during FD. What are your plans?
IARU is coming up real soon, too. That will mark the half-way point between the amazing WRTC-2000 in Slovenia, coupled with the equally amazing W1AW/4 FCG efforts, and the upcoming WRTC-2002 in Finland. If the thunderstorm activity does not get in the way, try to spend some time in that one. It is 24 hours of terrific fun, with lots of DX and USA activity and on both modes, as well. I believe that there is a CQ VHF test that same weekend. Their announcement in CQ indicates the possibility of moving to another weekend to avoid overlapping with the IARU Test – great idea!

That’s all for now. Let’s keep having fun, learning a few things along the way, and piling up those points for the FCG! See you at Vic’s or another future meeting!

vy 73, Dan

Results - 2000 CQ WW VHF Contest
NJ2F/4  25,070 points # 9 USA All Band
NW5E/4  13,674 points # 4 USA 6 Meters

Gary, WB4IHIs PO Box was listed incorrectly in the last newsletter. It should be PO Box 353876.

In describing the C6 operations in the ARRL CW Test calls for N4RP and N4BP were incorrectly listed. Dick, N4RP holds C6AKP and Bob, N4BP holds C6AKQ. C6AKP, operated by Dick and Joe, W4SAA scored 2599 293  2,284,521

Ed, KN4Y, was a member of FCG CW Team 2 in the NAQP, but his score was left out. Ed (Chad) made 284 QSO’s x 107 = 30,388 score

Steve, KG4MBZ/YV5DTA is now W4DTA. Congrats!

Jeff WC4E shaking hands with President Bush

The President stopped by recently at the Habitat for Humanity site in Tampa where Jeff volunteers. Jeff said that the President made an effort to meet everyone working at the site. Suggestions that the President was actually congratulating Jeff for a fine NAQP and FCG Chad effort were pooh-poohed by WC4E who said “T’aint So”!
Frank, NA4CW celebrates his 58th birthday during FQP-2001. Happy Birthday Frank!

Kevin K4PG operating N4BP/Mobile
On his lap is the "shadowbox" that kept the sun off the notebook screen and IC-706 control head.

N4BP Mobile. On the back of the car is the mag-mounted Hustler with 15/20/40 meter Resonators. The green nylon guys attach to clothes hangars inside the back door.

Eric, K9ES at the controls of his home station, which he and Chuck AD4ES used to run up the winning score from the Echo Sierra club of Brevard.

N4TO/Mobile - Dan K1TO on the left in the cab in his orange FCG tee shirt, N4TO on the right in the cab. The driver was not identified, rumored to be an FCG member who wishes to remain anonymous. The stealth antenna is mounted on the rear of the cab thus cannot be seen. (That’s why it’s called a stealth antenna!)
Charlie, NF4A at the controls of NF4A/M during FQP

NF4A/M Motor home (belongs to N4DXC). Note the TA-33 driven element just above the roof.

NF4A/M and N4OO/M cross paths in Liberty County.
L to R  Terry, K4RX - Charlie, NF4A, - Ink, N4OO

Red Man is still the official chewing tobacco of the FQP!

FCG Members at Dayton!
L to R Back Row - Ed NT4TT, Bill K4XS, Charlie NF4A, Jim K40J, Mikel, W4UM, L to R Front Row JA1WSX, (not a member) Dan K1TO, Sherry WA4SLR, Steve KG4MBZ

Not shown, but also seen at Dayton were Dave W4DN, Blake N4GI, Ink N4OO, Jeff WC4E, Jim NU4Y, Bill W2CQ and Terry K4RX.
Twenty –Three members and guests assembled Sunday May 6 at Pete Rimmel, N8PR’s QTH in Hollywood for a combo picnic / FCG meeting.

Festivities began around noon with an informal tour of the antenna field and swapping some Florida QSO Party war stories. About 1 PM Pete heated up the grill, and he and Bruce, W4OV began production of some cooked to order hotdogs & hamburgers along with all the fixins. If I remember correctly, Bruce specialized in the garlic hamburger. Paul K1PT brought along some of his famous New England clam chowder, produced from his grandmother’s recipe. Must say I haven’t tasted chowder this good since I left New England back in 1955, outstanding!

These delectables were followed by multiple varieties of pies, ice cream, cheesecake, cookies and other abdomen-expanding sweet things, enough to keep your try to stay in shape editor in constant trouble.

About 2:30 the group got together in Pete’s shack for the meeting. Pete had a mini-auditorium set up in the same room as his shack, with lots of seating and a sound system complete with microphone.

Dan began the meeting by thanking Pete for his hospitality. There was an extended discussion of the recently completed Florida QSO Party. Despite terrible band conditions for a good part of the weekend, a number of the mobiles did better than last year. Every county was covered at least twice, most three times. There were at least 6 sweeps on CW, and K4XS made over 2100 Q’s. There appeared to be more European activity than last year, and although Asian openings were few, VR2BG appeared in at least 10 logs. There was some discussion of possibly adding Cups and/or pins to the FQP awards, but no decision was made. Dan brought up the possibility of moving FQP dates into late September where band conditions would be better. This idea was eventually scrapped since the consensus seemed to be that having the 3 major state QSO parties on sequential weekends might be viewed by some as overkill and reduce participation. Dan noted that there has been a lot of positive feedback on the certificates and plaques, and thanked Jeff, WC4E for his work on the certificates .

The upcoming WRTC-2002 in Finland was discussed briefly. The team selection process is dramatically different than in previous WRTC’s and require some strategizing to try to get an FCG representative selected.

WPX CW is coming up in a couple weeks, it was noted that WPX is one of the contests whose club scores have been used in the past to select nominating clubs, so Dan encouraged members to try to get on and help run the club score up as much as possible.

Remember that in this contest you get double points for 40, 80 and 160 meter Qs, so working 40 as much as possible can prove productive.

Dan, K1TO will be operating WPX CW as NJ4M. Dave, N2NL will operate from K4XS as WK4R.

Joe, W4SAA noted that the SS results have just been published on the ARRL website, and that several FCG calls were noted in the summary.

Three new members signed up during the Meeting. Randy, N4QV, Don W3AZD and Hope WB3ANE. Bruce, W4OV who had to leave early, signed up immediately thereafter via the internet. This brings our current member total to 87.

Randy, N4QV started contesting back in 1974. He operated at a lot of the multi-op efforts in stations around Atlanta GA. Randy prefers phone contests.

Don, W3AZD started contesting 45 years ago in the Novice Roundup. He operated many contests over the years from W3AU and W2PV. He moved to FL in 1992 and currently operates an 18 year old rig using an R-7 vertical.

When the meeting concluded, Pete played the WRTC-2000 CW pileup competition tape through his stereo systems so members could hear what K1TO and WC4E had to contend with. There were 100 calls on the tape, most attendees copied somewhere in the 30’s through local chitchat QRM.

Attendees included: K1PT, K1TO, K4LQ, KD4RWN, N2NL & Mickey, N4BP & Julie, N4QV, N4TO, N8PR, W3AZD, W4DN, W4FMS, W4OV & Sandy, W4SAA, W4SLR, W4SO, W4UM, WB3ANE, WC4E, WD4AHZ.

Thanks again Pete, a fun time was had by all.

Chowtime on the N8PR patio. Left to right: Standing: New Member Don, W3AZD, Seated: Bob N4BP, Julie, XYL of N4BP, Sandy, XYL of W4OV, Frank, W4FMS, Joe, W4SAA, Standing behind Sandy, Scott, W4SO. Not sure who the gentleman in the orange shirt is.
Pictures from the N8PR Meeting

Pete, N8PR at the controls. Pete has his station wired so that it can be converted to muti-2 very easily.

Pete, K1PT on the left, Dick N4RP on the right

New Member Randy N4QV on the left, ye editor Fred K4LQ on the right.

New Member Don, W3AZD on the left, Vic, N4TO on the right

Jeff, WC4E on the left, Joe W4SAA on the right.

New Member Bruce, W4OV preparing his famous garlic hamburger for a hungry Frank, W4FMS
I set three goals for myself. #1 was to operate the entire 48 hours without a break. I had done it before from KH2, where it is easier. In Guam, 0000Z is 10AM, so you can start the contest after a full nights sleep. It was still painful. I figured however, that if K3WW and others could do it, I could do it too, especially since I'm several years younger (I'm 29). #2 was to break the existing SOAQL world record, which was 3.1 million. #3 was to break 3000 QSOs. Dan made 2650 QSOs in his record-breaking effort operating from his home station. I figured 3K was attainable simply due to the additional aluminum I had at my disposal.

The week before the contest, I tried to get as much sleep as possible. You can't save up on sleep, but you can be well rested at the start. I also built a new SO2R switch, to allow me to listen to both rigs at the same time. I had tried SO2R in years past but never successfully. I never figured out a good way to switch audio between radios into my headphones. The first time I operated from K1PT's QTH last year, it all "clicked" with me. He had a simple setup I have been very successful with since. It is a simple circuit, consisting of 2 SPST switches, one for each ear. It allows me to listen to either radio in either ear, or either radio in both ears. I drew up a simple schematic you can see at www.qsl.net/n2nl. It can be built with parts from Radio Shack.

The Friday of the contest, I woke at 7AM after getting a good 8 hours of sleep. I made the 4 hour drive to K4XS's, arriving at about 12:30PM. It allowed me plenty of time to set up. I set up 2 complete stations, with 2 rigs, 2 keyers, and 2 computers. It makes SO2R much easier for me that way. 2 computers is the key. I could have a 2nd rig QSO lined up, entered in the computer and ready to work, and still run stations on the primary radio without having to delete the info from the 2nd rig. Station one was an IC-775; station 2 was an IC-765. Setup went easily, except when it came to networking the computers. I just couldn't get them to "talk". After a couple hours of frustration, and when I was about to give up, it hit me. I had forgotten to set one up as "station 1" and the other as "station 2". After correcting that, they were networked and I was good to go. By this time it was close to 4:30PM, and I tried lying down for a nap to prepare for the 7PM start. Unfortunately, I couldn't sleep. I was too excited. After about 45 minutes I got up and walked around, looking at the antennas, trying to stretch my legs since I knew I'd be sitting for a very long time.

At 2345Z, I sat down at the rig. I had everything set up around me. Run rig in front of my, 2nd rig off to my left, cooler with drinks and food off to my side. There was also a TV off to my right I could take a look at if I wanted. Bill said "good luck", and left for the evening. I checked WWV and set the clocks, and looked for a hole on 40m.

I started at 0000z at about 7055 KHz, with OL7W as the first QSO. The contest started "OK", but the rate wasn't amazing. I had Kato's breakdown sheet beside me, and was pushing myself to try to keep the rate up. I figured I could try to out-rate him every hour, and the record would be mine. I started immediately with the 2nd radio scanning 15m, which actually didn't sound all that good. My 1st second radio QSO was PY3MHZ. I continued to work Europe on 40m, while scanning 15 and 20m with the 2nd radio. The first hour ended with 82 QSOs on 40m, and 16 2nd radio QSOs. I stuck it out on 40m until 0200Z, continuing to scan the other bands with the 2nd radio. I didn't work anything real exotic, except 4K5CW and a couple Auk's who called me. I was able to pick up some easy multipliers with the second radio, as well as many Quos. I worked everything I could find with the 2nd radio, multiplier or not.
The following e-mail was posted to the FCG reflector by Dick, N4RP: To all FCG: I hereby nominate Joe, W4SAA, for our hero of FCG for 2000. His Stew Perry contest score, number two in the world, on the face of it is outstanding. But let us look at the finer details.

1) This was his first time ever excursion below 3500KHZ.
2) He drove 107 miles to do it.
3) He paid $50 for his spot in the park.
4) He then tried two balloon suspended antennas, which were blown away by the gale winds, and had to settle for a kite suspended 1/4 wave vertical antenna (kindly provided by old pro N4BP), with two submerged radials which he had to wade out into the frigid cold Atlantic Ocean to place correctly.
5) He then settled down to operate the contest from his picnic table in a TIKI HUT, totally exposed to the 40 mph, 40 degree F, 100% humidity winds (you are welcome to calculate the wind chill factor).

Final Score = totally outstanding and far above what is expected from FCG members.

73 Dick

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**WPX SSB Claimed Scores**

*By Jeff, WC4E*

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<th>Call</th>
<th>Pwr Mult</th>
<th>Q's Hr</th>
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*NF4A is in FCG-PANHANDLE*

**WPX CW Claimed Scores**

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**Total CW score so far (Including Panhandle) 41,942,427**

**Total SSB Score 29,732,168**

**Combined CW and SSB scores ==> 71,674,595!!**

We completely eclipsed our 2000 17 log effort of 41,863,293 points. Every point counts! Part time efforts were greatly appreciated, they make up the bulk of the scores! Well done by everyone!!

---

**FGC Hero of 2000?**

(1) This was his first time ever excursion below 3500KHZ.
(2) He drove 107 miles to do it.
(3) He paid $50 for his spot in the park.
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Final Score = totally outstanding and far above what is expected from FCG members.

73 Dick
Pictures from the ARRL DX Test

K4NNN at the W1CW/W1YL QTH (W1YL Photos)

Jim, K4OJ

K4XS’s shack - shows the SO2R setup; IC775 in the middle and IC756 to the left. K4XS was operated for ARRL CW SOAB by Dave, N2NL for a #1 USA

Kevin, N4KM

To the right is the K4XS 10/20 meter tower

6/6/6/6/6/6 on 10 Meters

5/5/5/5 on 20 Meters

On the 200 Ft Tower! (N2NL Photo)
Granted, some of the easier stuff would be easily worked later, but by working it now I wouldn't have to scramble to find it later. I ended the 02Z hour with another 89 QSOs in the log. By 0202Z, the rate had really slowed down on 40m. I figure most of Europe was sleeping. I had worked several loud Auk's on 20m, and moved there to see if there was any rate to be had. That gave me the opportunity to scan 40m with the 2nd radio. Although the IC-775 has a 2nd VFO, I didn't like it and didn't touch it the entire weekend. The rate on 20m was slow, although AIH1 and VU2TS called me for nice mults. At 0230 I decided to "fire-up" the 4 el 80m quad for the first time. I was rewarded with instant rate, working a quick string of 20 QSOs. RX9TX was my first QSO, so I knew 80m was wide open. 4K5CW called in again to make it 2 bands. By 0245, the rate had slowed again, so I moved to 160m for the 1st time. I CQed the entire contest except for the time I spent on 160m. Due to the weak signals and pileups, I concentrated 100% when on tophand. 160m is always one of my favorite bands, although it has frustrated me in recent years due to my limited antenna situations. I knew the band was good when I worked GO1VZ with one call. We didn't even hear a European on 160 in the CQWW CW, and here I worked one with a single call barefoot. Just as it happened that GO1VZ was the first European EVER WORKED on 160 from K4XS's present location. Next the few minutes I worked several more Europeans, including S5, OK, and OM. Nothing overly exciting, but exciting enough to me since I was running low power and it was still a multiplier. For the rest of the evening, I switched Cqing between 40 and 80m, always scanning with the 2nd radio for new QSOs and multipliers. Although not working anything real exotic, I was working a steady stream of multipliers. By 0500Z, 20m had opened back up into Asia, and I moved back there.

I worked a string of European and Asiatic Russians, including EX8W and VK3IO. Meanwhile, I worked ZS4TX and ODS/OK1MU with the 2nd radio on 40. A second excursion to 160m brought T48K, HG6N, RW2F, and a few other new ones. I tried some short CQ's on the other bands, but 20m was the only thing going at the time. From 0545-0730 I hung out there at about 14045 KHz, working mostly Eastern Europe. We can't thank enough the huge activity in every contest from our counterparts in Eastern Europe. I think they are the primary reason for the record scores we've been seeing. They seem to be an endless source of QSOs. As W3LPL, KC1XX, or K3LR. I worked 10m until 1455Z, when I moved back to 15m. VQ9IO rewarded me as my first caller. The rest of the morning I swapped back and forth between 10 and 15m, again not working anything super exotic, but the mults kept coming in. I found a very weak and watery T32RD on 15m at 1618Z, and quickly he was in the log. During the noon hours and early afternoon, the rate wasn't amazing, yet stayed on the 60s. I kept pushing the 2nd rig, working about 20 QSOs an hour on that rig. I started running into some packet pileups, including TF3GB on 10m. By this time I had discovered a trick, which helped out immensely in the pileups. I'd hear 9 or 8 guys calling at once, but they were all zero beat. I'd set the RT off a few Hz, and call. Since I would be the only guy calling slightly off frequency, my tone would be different from everyone else, and I'd win in the pile. I learned this first while at KH2. It was frustrating while on the receiving end of a pileup - dozens of guys calling all zero beat, all the same strength. I'd always listen to the edges, picking up the callers who were slightly off frequency, even when they were weaker than the rest. I left the 2nd radio's RT set a few Hz off the entire weekend, and it was very successful for me. I busted several pileups, beating even the "big boys."

We can't thank enough the huge activity in every contest from our counterparts in Eastern Europe. I think they are the primary reason for the record scores we've been seeing. They seem to be an endless source. The band opened quickly and I had the "prefect run". I'd only have one or two callers every time, so I could pull out a complete call just about every time. During this time, a friend of mine in Europe recorded me from his end. There's a 3 ½ minute wave file I posted you can listen to at the above listed web address. During this time I listened to 10m, waiting for it open, and worked the occasional 2nd rig QSO. By this time, SO2R had really clicked with me. I had it down really well.

I had the monitor gain turned way down on the CQ rig, allowing me to concentrate on the 2nd rig while transmitting on the 1st. Once I had a 2nd radio QSO lined up, I'd pause long enough to call, then send a quick CQ, then pause to send the exchange. If I was running, I'd wait until I was timed right, then send my call (by pushing the F4 key) while receiving the exchange from the station I was working on the 1st radio. I'd send QRZ while the 2nd radio guy sent me his exchange, and then send my exchange (F2 key) while copying the next caller on the 1st rig. This worked out well for me with a few exceptions when I left the 2nd radio guy hanging (sorry!!) until I finished transmitting on the Cqing radio. I made the move to 10m at 1200Z, with 96 QSOs for the 1100-hour. With 12 hours gone in the contest, I had been awake for a full 24 hours already, but worked 1180 QSOs and 276 multipliers. I was well ahead of K1TO's numbers from the previous year, but knew I had to keep it up. The next 2 hours were just amazing on 10m. 164/hr followed by a 150/hr. It was some of the best rates I ever had, even from Guam. 10m was wide open, and I worked several UA9's. At 1417Z, a very loud JA3YBK called in on 10m LP, which caught me off guard. I kept my ear open for VR2BG who always seems to find the 10m LP opening, but he never called in. I think he was there though, after reading other writeups. It was probably a result of being low power. Yes, I was probably one of the louder stations on the band, but not one of the "beacons" such as W3LPL, KC1XX, or K3LR. I worked 10m until 1455Z, when I moved back to 15m. VQ9IO rewarded me as my first caller. The rest of the morning I swapped back and forth between 10 and 15m, again not working anything super exotic, but the mults kept coming in. I found a very weak and watery T32RD on 15m at 1618Z, and quickly he was in the log. During the noon hours and early afternoon, the rate wasn't amazing, yet stayed on the 60s. I kept pushing the 2nd rig, working about 20 QSOs an hour on that rig. I started running into some packet pileups, including TF3GB on 10m. By this time I had discovered a trick, which helped out immensely in the pileups. I'd hear 8 or 9 guys calling at once, but they were all zero beat. I'd set the RT off a few Hz, and call. Since I would be the only guy calling slightly off frequency, my tone would be different from everyone else, and I'd win in the pile. I learned this first while at KH2. It was frustrating while on the receiving end of a pileup - dozens of guys calling all zero beat, all the same strength. I'd always listen to the edges, picking up the callers who were slightly off frequency, even when they were weaker than the rest. I left the 2nd radio's RT set a few Hz off the entire weekend, and it was very successful for me. I busted several pileups, beating even the "big boys."

The afternoons in Florida are very slow times in a DX contest. 10/15m are on the way out, and absorption is way too high. The rate on 20m to work anything. It is frustrating to listen to W1's work Europeans on 20m we can't hear, but there's nothing we can do about it. We make up for it into Asia. The W4's were always the loudest into KH2 on almost all the bands, especially 40 and 80m. The problem is that there isn't any activity out there.
The rate was really slow, however, and at 0525 I moved back to 40 to try to take advantage of European sunrise. The next several hours I stuck it out on 40. The rate was dreadfully slow... in the 40/hr range. About every hour or so I made a sweep of 160m. Every time I heard new mults I needed, but conditions seemed way down from the previous night and my efforts were frustration filled although I eventually worked G3YHU and V47KP.

Staying awake was getting difficult. It was time to break out the secret weapons. By this time Diet Coke wasn't producing the "kick" it used to. I supplemented it with a couple no-doze tablets. I know many contesters say never to use it, but that is them, and I'm going to use what helps me. Shortly after I woke right up and was good to go. It tore up my stomach though. I had not really eaten anything by this time, except for some fruit, crackers, and other munchies. Another problem that developed was some backaches from all the hours of being seated. I had a bottle of Tylenol, which helped that problem. I continued to switch positions to keep from getting too drowsy and too uncomfortable. Bill had three different chairs in the operating room, and I constantly switched from chair to chair. One of the chairs is an "ergonomic" chair - the type to don't really sit in, but kneel on. That really helped me. My legs were starting to cramp up and changing positions helped with that.

At 0800z, I was still pounding out the QSOs, slowly but steadily. Europe was still coming in on 40. By 0900z JA's started to replace the European callers. At 0935 I surpassed K1TO's QSO total of 2655 from the previous year. I hoped for a 20m opening like the previous day, but it never developed. The band was about as dead as it could be. It gave me the opportunity to search for Asian multipliers on 40m, which I was unable to do the previous day. I found and worked my good friend Jun, WH0V, as well as AC4G/KH9. I also tracked down a ZL, which I still needed. Fortunately, at 10Z, 20m finally opened up back to Europe. The rate was slower than the previous day, although it was faster than I suffered through the night. Among the Europeans, Brett VR2BF finally found me and called in.

At 1120, I switched the 2nd radio to 15m. I immediately heard a signal, and quickly worked TZ6DX without moving the dial. Meanwhile HS0/G3NOM called me on 20. Things were getting interesting as the sun rose above the horizon, which always is a boost to help me stay awake. 15m finally opened up at 1130Z, and I started a decent run there. The next hour had a half, I ran on 15m while making the occasional 2nd radio QSO on 10m.

My QSO total was lacking on 15m so I figured the best rate and chance for multipliers calling in was on that band. EX2M and A45XR called in for new ones. While tuning very high on 10m, I found GI2A and TA2BK. By 1300Z, I moved the 2nd to 10m, and started scanning 20m for Asia. I worked a loud YB0ECT, followed by JT1CO and BV7FF. BV7FF was weak, but he heard me right away. K4XS's 20m array rocks! During this time, there was some confusion on 10m. W3BGN ended up just above me. He didn't hurt my rate, but after a few minutes I heard VQ9IO. I assumed he was calling me, but it turns out he was actually calling BGN slightly off frequency. I called VQ9IO directly, and he came back to me with a report. I'm not sure if W3BGN ever did work him, but I hope I didn't steal a multiplier away from Steve.

At 1442Z, I hit 3000 QSOs, and had completed 2 of my 3 initial goals. I was still working toward 4.5 million, although slowly. At 1458Z, IS0OMH called in on 10m. Although I had a bunch of ISO's on 10, I still needed one on 15. I had tried moving several without luck. I tried moving him, and he said, "OK". I attempted moving him to 21150 kHz, nice and high in the band.
Little did I realize this was a beacon frequency, and upon calling him there, I promptly got chased off by someone. It’s the first time I’ve ever been run off a frequency by the beacon police! I never did successfully move him, but just below 21150 I found and worked TA3BN for another new one.

10m continued to be the place to me. 9K9C called me, but he said “later” when I asked him to move. At 1600, 10m had really slowed down and I moved down to 15m. It allowed me to scan 10m with the 2nd rig, and I found TZ6DX there. P3A called in on 15m, followed by IS0UWX, which finally gave me my IS0 mult for that band. The rate had really slowed down, into the typical late morning/early afternoon W4 conditions. 10/15m slow, and the absorption on 20.

By Sunday morning I still had not really eaten anything. I was extremely hungry. Bill came in and told me that I looked like crap (thanks!). He did me a big favor and picked up a sandwich for me while running some errands. He got me a big, 7-eleven turkey sub. Uh oh. I heard turkey puts you to sleep, but it was all he could find. I was hungry, so I slammed it down anyway. I immediately felt sick, and thought I was going to have to throw up. That was followed by a spell where I was immensely tired. I was close to quitting by this point, but I stuck it out since I had made it as far as I did. In the early afternoon, I had started seeing things, and having odd thoughts. I imagined it was almost like tripping on acid. A high derived from a lack of sleep. I imagined that all these little creatures—call signs—lived in a long tube. The radio gave me access to this tube. As I turned the dial to the right, I moved down the tube to the right, and vice versa. When I came across one of these creatures I still needed, I would call it and work it. My run radio was similar. I was one of those creatures in the tube, with others calling me. It was just so amazing. Some person in a room on the other side of the world was listening to ME, and calling ME. It felt like such an honor to be called by them. I was really tripping. Visually, I wasn’t overly effected, with one exception. The sub VFO on the 775 was like a melting stick of butter. It was drooping and spongy. The rate was slowing and imagination intensifying, and caffeine doing nothing.

Fortunately in the early afternoon, I was able to turn on the TV and watch the Daytona 500. I’m a big NASCAR fan, and watching the race reinvigorated me. During this time I somewhat ignored the 2nd radio. By this time I was getting very frustrated with it anyway, a spell where I was immensely tired. I was close to quitting by this point, but I stuck it out since I had made it as far as I did. In the early morning, I had started seeing things, and having odd thoughts. I imagined it was almost like tripping on acid. A high derived from a lack of sleep. I imagined that all these little creatures—call signs—lived in a long tube. The radio gave me access to this tube. As I turned the dial to the right, I moved down the tube to the right, and vice versa. When I came across one of these creatures I still needed, I would call it and work it. My run radio was similar. I was one of those creatures in the tube, with others calling me. It was just so amazing. Some person in a room on the other side of the world was listening to ME, and calling ME. It felt like such an honor to be called by them. I was really tripping. Visually, I wasn’t overly effected, with one exception. The sub VFO on the 775 was like a melting stick of butter. It was drooping and spongy. The rate was slowing and imagination intensifying, and caffeine doing nothing.

Also during this time I had my one-and-only frequency fight, which itself was anticlimactic. I was frustrated finding a run frequency on 15m. During the contest, I wouldn’t even look at the lower 20 kHz of the band for a hole. This one time I started from the bottom, and discovered 21000.8 was wide open. I started CQing and working stations. It was cool. Low power and running band edge. After a couple minutes and 6 QSOs, KC1XX started CQing zero beat, directly on top of me. That REALLY upset me, especially in my present state of mind. I told him to QSY, and he made a short comment I didn’t catch (“HI” I think) and slid up a few Hz, still pretty close, and continued to CQ. The 775 has sharp filters and I continued working guys, including CT9L for a mult, so I stuck at it. I could hear him off to the side, sometimes weak, sometimes crushing loud. I think he was just pointing in different directions while CQing instead of trying to run me off the frequency though.

By 1940Z the band was about toast, and I moved to 20m, which had opened back up finally. On 20, I found a nice hole up around 14045, slightly below K1DG and hung out there while watching the race. Occasionally I’d make a sweep with the 2nd radio, and I found HP1AC on 10 that way. The race was one of the best I’ve ever seen, and it took away all my tiredness. I had the volume turned all the way down so the sound wouldn’t disturb me. I saw Dale Earnhardt’s wreck on the last lap and my heart just sunk. Although not a fan of his, the wreck looked real bad and I knew something was wrong by the way the rescue people were working on the car. I wouldn’t find out until the next morning that the wreck was fatal. He owns a house about a mile up the road from where I live and it hit me pretty hard although I never met him in person.

Back to the contest, things were still pretty slow. I realized I wouldn’t make it to the 4.5 million goal, but when the race was over I worked it as hard as possible to make the best possible score. At 2230, I moved to 40m where I finished out the contest. A string of multipliers called in the last hour on 40 including JY, GU, IS, and 5B. My last 2nd radio QSO was ZF1A at 2339z, on 10m. Close-in Caribbean multipliers are extremely difficult to work on the higher bands. I had been trying to work a ZF all weekend on 10, without luck. I finally worked him back scatter by pointing the entire 10m stack away from him.

At the 0000Z, I listened to the great scores on 3830, ate dinner, and went to sleep at 9PM local after being awake for 62 hours straight. I finished the contest with 3422 QSOs, 421 multipliers, for 4,314,408 points. It surpassed my wildest expectations.

K4XX’s station is simply incredible, the conditions were awesome, making for a great record breaking effort. In hind site I could have improved somewhat. I still need to refine my SO2R skills. I probably tuned the bands too slowly with the 2nd radio, missing valuable multipliers. I should have attempted to move multipliers more often. I think I could have added another couple hundred thousand to my overall score, but I’m totally satisfied with the result. I hope this is enjoyable and worth your time to read. Hopefully someone, somewhere, learned something by reading this, just as I learn by reading the write ups of others. Congratulations to KQ2M and W4PA (@K5ZD) for their HP efforts, K1I1G’s amazing QSO total (being a rare mult is cool, isn’t it!), and W4AN for taking the MS category from 4 land. And finally, a big, big thanks to K4XX for opening his doors for me, K10 for all the tips and inspiration, and the entire Florida Contest Group for welcoming me to South Florida with open arms.

73, Dave N2NL