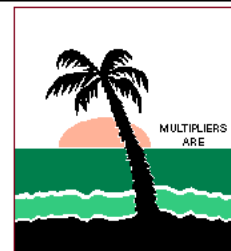




# Contest Gazette

## Florida Contest Group

www.floridacontestgroup.org



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November 2017

### From the President's Corner

By Chris Plumblee WF3C

Greetings and salutations from the midst of prep for Hurricane Irma! I'm taking a break, having battened down as many hatches as I can manage around my house. I hope everyone is able to recover quickly from the storm, as considerable damage to Florida looks almost unavoidable at this point. Our members in WCF are in line to receive a direct hit from the eye of the storm as of the most recent track that I saw, but projections from the meteorologists say that the entire peninsula will feel the effects.



But enough of that...FCG is a meteorology club only as far as the weather affects ham radio propagation and the survivability of antennas. Please be safe as you prepare for and recover from the hurricane!

This is the end of the traditional summer doldrums contest-wise. The CW Sprint is this weekend, though FL will be a rare multiplier with the storm knocking on the door. The CQWW season starts at the end of September with the CQWW RTTY contest, for you digital aficionados. The weekend after CQWW RTTY is the California QSO Party. As announced on CQ-Contest, and in a number of direct emails from the NCCC's leadership, the CQP has changed their club competition rules for this year. Entrants can pre-register their club as a "Small" or "Medium" club. Small clubs have up to 10 entrants. Medium clubs have up to 35. One of the FCG officers has to register the FCG as a medium or small club before the beginning of the contest, otherwise we'll default to the "Large" category. If there is any interest in mounting a serious effort at either the medium or small club category wins, please let me know by direct email before October 7 and I'll pre-register appropriately.

I received my September/October 2017 *NCJ* magazine this week, and enjoyed the article by part-time Floridian and club member K8MR about his experience operating mobile in the FQP in 2017. Jim picked a down year to get started with his mobile operation; N4GI and I found conditions to be the worst we've experienced in five mobile efforts, though apparently they weren't quite as bad for everyone else as they were for us. N4AO (WC4E, opr) and W1NN have both cracked the 2000-QSO level in FQP as a single-op, no driver entrant, so the precedent exists for even higher rate

Speaking of FQP, I've spoken with K1TO a couple of times while he's on another tower work roadtrip around the eastern seaboard, and he's making good progress on the log checking for the 2017 FQP. We're again cautiously optimistic about getting the results article finished before the week prior to the contest in 2018. FQP has some of the most stringent log checking in all of contesting, including verification of all unique QSOs. Those uniques are checked against the FCC database to ensure not only that the calls were assigned during the FQP weekend, but that the class of license associated with each call is appropriate for the frequency and mode of the QSO.

I thoroughly enjoyed my trip to Dayton for the Hamvention in 2017. The move to the new facility was as smooth as could be expected. There were some wrinkles with parking on the first day, and I understand that traffic was considerable. However, by Saturday the wrinkles were ironed out and things seemed to be very smooth. I did enjoy that the sanitary facilities at the fairgrounds were significantly better than what was offered at Hara. The forum space was also particularly notable. As much as we might wish tongue in cheek that Orlando could overtake Dayton as the destination hamfest in the USA, I don't see any signs that Dayton is flagging significantly.

If the organizers are to be believed, attendance was up in 2017 over 2016. The hospitality suites at the Crowne Plaza were as crowded as ever.

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If you've never attended Dayton, it's not too late! All of the big time testers whose callsigns you've been seeing in results articles since the 1970's (or, in some cases, the 1960's) are there. It is very possible to experience the entirety of the hamfest and all that the hospitality suites have to offer without an extravagant budget. If you're thinking about attending and have questions, please reach out to me directly and I'll try to get you pointed in the right place.

Please be careful in the leadup to, the midst of, and the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. Volunteer to serve with your local radio club, ARES, or RACES group, or just monitor and make yourself available if called. Do not self-deploy to an affected area. I look forward to another outstanding year of FCG excellence. Bring on the 2017-18 contest season!

73/OJ,  
Chris WF3C

#### ARRL Press Release—Contest Update October 18

Bart, W9JJ, reminds that there are many frequencies still in use during the hurricane recovery efforts in the Caribbean: "...when selecting your operating frequencies note that 20 and 40 meters continue to have several formal and informal traffic-passing operations between 14.255 and 14.275 MHz - as well as on 7.182 and 7.188 MHz - running throughout the day. Many of these disaster area stations don't have big antennas (many established antennas systems were destroyed by the storms...), and while we on the US mainland may not be able to hear them, they can hear us in the US and Canada with our more capable stations. Please as always "listen first" and if asked to move, or notified of causing interference, please do so."

### Contributors to This Edition

**WF3C, K5KG, WO4O, N4EEB, NX4N, K1KNQ, K1TO, KM4HL, NP2X, NX4N, K4LQ, ARRL Contest Update**

### Welcome Aboard



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### Events Calendar

ARRL SS Contest, CW	2100Z Nov 4 to 0300Z Nov 6
ARRL SS Contest, SSB	2100Z Nov 18 to 0300Z Nov 20
CQ WW DX Contest, CW	0000z Nov 25 to 2400Z Nov 26
ARRL 160 Meter Contest	2200Z Dec 1 to 1600Z Dec 3
ARRL 10 Meter Contest	0000Z Dec 9 to 2359Z Dec 10
Stew Perry Topband Challenge	1500Z Dec 30 to 1500Z Dec 31
ARRL RTTY Roundup	1800Z Jan 6 to 2400Z Jan 7
NAQP< CW	1800Z Jan 13 to 0500Z Jan 14
NAQP SSB	1800Z Jan 20 to 0600Z Jan 21
CQ 160 Meter Contest, CW	2200Z Jan 26 to 2159Z Jan 28
CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest	0000Z Feb 10 to 2400Z Feb 11
CQ 160 Meter Contest SSB	2200Z Feb 23 to 2159Z Feb 25
NAQP QSO Party, RTTY	1800Z Feb 24 to 0600Z Feb 25
ARRL DX Contest, SSB	000z Mar 3 TO 2400z Mar 4
BARTG HF RTTY Contest	0200Z Mar 17 to 0200Z Mar 19

## MY 2017 ZP ADVENTURE

### By Chris, NX4N

It all started with a wedding invitation. Uri, the son of my wife's cousin, was going to tie the knot on July 9...in Asuncion Paraguay. We quickly decided it was one of those life events that we just could not miss. And of course just a quickly I started to think how I could get on the air at ZP5. I applied for the IARP reciprocal license via ARRL and a week later I had it in hand – step 1, check.

Next I pulled out my old IC-706, 20m portable dipole, power supply, benchner yada yada. Step 2, check.

Then I started imagining myself talking with a very unsmiling ZP Customs officer – yikes! Been there, got that nasty smelling T-shirt...nearly every contest expedition I've made is a roll of the dice when it comes to Customs. Impounding, "Deposits" that are never returned and more; that had to be a better way.

Instead of all the schlepping and hassle why not try to find a local ZP HF ham that would let me operate very part time at their station? So first stop was RBN – several ZP CW spots included the venerable Doug ZP6CW, a ZP9 and ZP5DBC. Next stop was QRZ and Google Maps so I could see where these guys lived. Doug and the ZP9 were a considerable distance outside Asuncion where I'd be staying. However, Dany ZP5DBC was located in Asuncion just 15 minutes from our cousin's house – step 3, check.

With fingers crossed I emailed Dany a request to operate a few hours from his home during our 10-day trip, and to my delight Dany said sure. Imagine my surprise when he offered that we stay at his home instead of a hotel, all for a donation to his ham activities! GRIN...now, how to approach my wife about this?

Usually honesty is the best policy, and Lili – bless her heart – said sure! She knew how much it meant to me and that was all it took. Did I mention how great my wife is?

So I replied back to Dany accepting his generous offer but also making clear that I would have very little time to operate due to all the family/wedding activities.

Fast forward – the trip to Paraguay is long since there are no direct flights from the U.S. Our travel started by driving from Tampa to MIA, flying from there to Sao Paulo Brasil with a layover and then another flight to Asuncion...a total of 24 hours travel time. We were numb but excited as we immediately joined family meet/greet celebrations upon arrival Sunday July 2. Later that day our cousin drove us over to Dany's house.

Dany simply couldn't have been nicer; he has a home with his elderly parents in Asuncion and another one about 45 minutes outside of the city (more on that later). He and his folks lived downstairs and there was a very roomy 2nd floor suite that was ours with bedroom, private bath, balconies to their courtyard and a very nicely equipped ham shack. At home Dany has a 20m tall tower with WARC band capability (30m inverted vee and 17/12m duoband yagi); radio is an IC-7600 with matching ICOM PW-1 Amp and Auto Tuner. The shack also has a IC-7100 and RT Remote Rig setup with a homebrew 5GHz link to his remote station site.

After a brief nap I worked up enough energy to drag myself to the station and made my first ZP5/NX4N QSO with KH6DV on 40m (100% CW during the trip); a pileup quickly developed and I was running about 2/min – but only for 15 minutes since we needed to go to dinner with family. Like taking candy away from a baby- Wah! I tried to remember the primary reason we were there and that worked for me - for a while. After dinner we went straight to bed to recharge our zombie-like bodies.

By 8am the next morning I had quietly slipped out of the bedroom and was off and running for the next 11 hours with several breaks, working 120/hr on average – nice mix of US and EU mostly across 40-15m. All of this was with manual benchner keying as Dany and I had some technical issues to work through with both N1MM and the Remote setup. I brought a WinKey with cables as a gift which Dany put to use on the WARC station. Please see **Figure 1**.



Mid-morning N4KM gave me a call and we QSO'ed on 3 different bands; all in all Kevin worked me on 7 bands during the week, including ATNO's on 80m and 12m. Big credit to Kevin's operating skills with his low power and multi-band vertical setup- well done sir! Several other FCGers quickly logged include N4BP and NF4A among others.

Lili and I did get to meet Dany's parents who were warm and charming. We also met Ringo, a good sized Dachshund hot dog who was wary at first but warmed up to us. BTW, all the scraps are legally his. We felt very welcomed in our new home-away-from-home and settled in for a great stay.

Later that morning Lili announced she wanted to spend the day with her cousin – nails, hair, dress fittings – would I be irritated if she 'ignored me' by leaving me to stay at Dany's and playing radio? *No dear, of course not – I'll gladly take one for the team* – SMILE!!! I had all day to play radio until she picked me up for dinner at 8pm. This became our routine for most of the next 5 days until the wedding approached. Did I mention how **great** my wife is?

Now, the remote station setup was far from humble. Tuesday Dany and I made a road trip there so he could perform some mods to make the Remote Rig work with N1MM keying.

After 45 minutes of traveling a highway we turned onto a rocky road up a hill for a mile or two. Near the top of the hill emerged a beautiful site – 2 grassy acres with a huge house and several towers – wow!

The house was built last year and is Dany's ham radio ultra-modern haven with its own shack, 5 bedrooms & 6.5 baths for him and guest ops, fully automated kitchen, a separate huge BBQ building/lounge (very common in South America) and even his own transformer off the road supplying the house electricity. Lots of stone and glass throughout. The views from the two modern terraces include a huge lake and hills to the southwest – very much looks like a California dream house! Breezy on top of that hill too - very nice. See **Figure 2**.



And towers, towers, towers! The primary tower is 29m tall and holds a KT34XA and M2 Linear Loaded 2 el 40m yagi. It also has both 80m and 160m inverted vees. Dany has another 2 towers up, each approximately 23m tall for upcoming expansion. He also had a 35m tall tower with a STEPPIR MONSTIR but all that recently came down in a rare 100MPH windstorm. All towers are commercial freestanding with huge bases. See **Figure 3**.





Dany has a lot of FB plans for building the premier ZP Multi-Two contest station including:

40m: 2 over 2, or 3 over 3

20m: 4 over 4

15m: 6 over 6

10m: 6 over 6

80m and 160m: Phased Verticals, Rx loops, more TBD

All yagis will be custom modeled G0KSC OWA's, even accounting for the aluminum composition he can buy there. He has amassed several amps including a SPE Expert Linear 1.3K, Alpha and L4B's. Another radio or two along with another SPE amp are also in the plans - very impressive indeed!

As you can imagine, Dany has a lot – tons – of station building work ahead but he is very technically knowledgeable and is a tenacious problem-solver. He has a ham-buddy to help with tower work too. Once we were done at his contesting paradise we traveled back home for lunch and then, of course, more operating.

Perhaps the biggest surprise was Dany's offer to have me operate Single Op CW in IARU as the ZP5AA HQ station – such an honor! We both understood that it would be a very part time affair working around wedding activities but he was happy to let me give it a go. I operated about 6 hours total, all running on multiple bands to give folks maximum exposure to my HQ multiplier (RCP). Total QSO's were just over 620; lots of OJ's along the way.

During the week I made more than 1800 ZP5/NX4N QSO's on all bands 160-10m. The 40m yagi worked nice and the KT34XA was a rock crusher – I could tell I was loud everywhere with that beam. 20m was the primo band with super-fun JA pileups and the EU pileups can only be described as full throttle bull riding events.

Quite a few folks worldwide emailed me asking for schedules for ATNO's on 160m and 80m; such fun! I pushed myself each morning to rise early to catch the grayline openings. Even VK/ZL QSO's were made on the low bands, which will get better when Rx antennas are in place.

My favorite operating was running the JA's - I forgot just much fun that is! Great, courteous ops and down there the signals are huge. Reminds me of the PJ1W operation that N4WW and I did in 1988 for CQWW Phone; I haven't experienced JA runs like that since - until now.

BTW, QSL for ZP5/NX4N is LoTW only; ZP5AA QSL is via QRZ directions.

Best of all I met a new, dear friend in Dany – what a super guy! I have plans to work with him on future visits as well as Remote operations from FL. I have offered Dany to come to the Orlando HamCation including FCG dinner and luncheon next year as my guest and to stay with me for his visit, so hopefully he will get to meet all of you then.

Finally, it was time for us to travel home. Lili and I had a wonderful time – the wedding with family and friends, the operating experience, station site visit and our new friendship with Dany.

Please see **Figure 4**.



You know, hams are really nice folks and Dany definitely confirmed that each day during my ZP-land adventure. Thanks to those who worked me!

Vy 73/OJ,  
Chris, ZP5/NX4N



## FQP Pictures 2017



Hi Guys,

I have been hard at work refurbishing my FQP mobile. Attached are some pictures. They are pretty well self explanatory. I am still designing my new route. Charlie, you can use my old starting spot in Escambia.

73/GL FQO 2017  
Jack K1KNQ / K4FCG



## N4EEB/M



## 1]FRONT SEAT OPERATING POSITION

The wooden operating desk was custom built for a Toyota 4Runner. The computer is a Toshiba Windows 10 machine running N3FJP FQP Software. The two wire connections to the left are the power connection from a DC/DC 19V power supply running directly from rear RigRunner 12V bus, and a long USB cable that runs to the back of the SUV and connects to the MicroHAM CW Keyer. The control head is for the Icom IC-7000. Notice the headphone cable plugged into the remote head wrapped up in a massive ferrite donut that is secured to the desk with a cable tie. The paddle is a standard Bencher BY-1 with a cable that runs all the way to the back of the SUV and hooks into the MicroHAM CW Keyer. The headphones, not pictured, were Kenwood HS-5. The mouse was wireless, and the dongle can be seen plugged into the right side of the computer.



## 2]EQUIPMENT IN REAR CARGO AREA

On the far left you see a deep cycle marine battery that floats on the SUV's main 12V system. It ties into a permanently installed heavy gauge power cable that runs from the battery under the hood. There is a 50 AMP breaker under the hood for safety. - The battery voltage is applied to an MFJ Super Battery Booster. This allows 13.8V to the amateur station even if battery voltage drops low. The battery booster feeds a RigRunner. Plugged into the RigRunner are the transceiver, CW Keyer/Computer Interface, and the DC/DC power supply for the computer. From left to right on top are the Icom IC-7000 100W transceiver, LDG AT-100 automatic antenna tuner, and the MicroHam CW keyer. There are two large ferrite donuts behind these devices with many cables wound through them. The LMR-400 cable you see going upward from the antenna tuner goes to a 3-position coax switch near the operator. The shiny silver ground strap can be seen attaching to the ground lug on the rear of the antenna tuner. It terminates to a connection I made on the vehicle's frame. All of the cables are stress relieved either by staples into the wood or by cable ties. The battery and the wooden deck are held in place by bungee cords



## [3]SIDE OF SUV SHOWING ANTENNAS

Not a very good picture. Nothing fancy about the antennas. These are three HamSticks. They are attached to the roof via 3-Magnet MFJ Magnetic Mounts. From left to right 15, 40 and 20 meters. The three coax cables went through the molding on the left rear window and into the coax switch.

73 John N4EEB



K4OJ/M



Above L-R Kevin N4KM, Red K0LUZ, Chris NX4N



Above—Kevin N4KM



Above: Chris NX4N with the NX4N/M Vehicle.



L-R: Chris NX4N, Ted KN5O, Kevin N4KM, Red K0LUZ, Wolf NN7CW, Eric K9ES, Mike KE4YGT, Chuck AD4ES and Chuck NO5W.



## K4FQP



Above: Three views of the operating position, the first with Jim VE7ZO taking a listen on the bands.



Above: Three views of the operating vehicle,



Safety first ! We gotta see where we're going.



## Dayton 2017



Dayton Airport, L to R : Henri OH3JR/OH3X/OH0JR, Jim KM4HI, Seppo OH1VR/OG7O



L-R Dan K1TO, Paul W0AIH and Scott NE9U. Scott operated this year's FQP from Paul's remarkable station along with Ron KK9K and they set a record in their category.



This was a photo taken at the Crowne Plaza in the Harding Room where the Contest Super Suite is held every night.

I enjoyed a 43 year reunion with two of my former team mates that were with me in 1974 in Senegal, West Africa. We supported the Global Atmospheric Research Program Atlantic Tropical Experiment or GATE Program. 6W8 license permits were obtained and two rigs were setup in the hotel where we were housed. From left to right: Dave WB9EGZ/6W8, Jim WA4RXS/6W8 (KM4HI), Gary WB9FRG/6W8 (W9XT).

73 -Jim KM4HI



Spurious Emissions Band—always a hit at Dayton. Friday evening at the Crown Plaza Presidential Ballroom.



This was a series of pics taken from the back of one of the tractor pulled wagons used to shuttle folks from and to the Green County Fairgrounds parking areas. After rains Friday afternoon the grounds started to deteriorate. This is what it looked like Saturday afternoon after more rain had fallen earlier. The Dayton Amateur Radio Association and volunteers did a super job providing these several tractors and golf carts to get people to the exhibit buildings and then back to their rides. Sunday it rained all morning. Can't imagine what it must have looked like by the afternoon—Jim KM4HI





**Left: Dayton soup: the mud left behind by the tractors pulling the "redneck uber" hayride wagons Saturday afternoon.**

**Right: W2SC (8P5A) at the contest forum.**



**Left: W5OV (CQWW Contest Co-Director) at the contest forum**

# NEWS RELEASE (Announcing: 2017 Inductees, CQ Contest Hall of Fame) --

Dave Robbins, K1TTT, and Bob Wilson, N6TV, Inducted into CQ Contest Hall of Fame - (Xenia, OH - May 20, 2017) - CQ magazine today announced the induction of two new members to the CQ Contest Hall of Fame, which honors those testers who not only excel in personal performance, but who also "give back" to the hobby in outstanding ways. CQ Contesting Editor David Siddall, K3ZJ, presented Hall of Fame plaques at an induction ceremony held at the annual Dayton contest dinner on May 20th.

The 2017 inductees to the CQ Contest Hall of Fame are:

\* Dave Robbins, K1TTT, is the builder and owner of a contest super-station in western Massachusetts. Soon after assembling his first contest station, Dave wrote in the introduction to his book, Building a Superstation, "I realized I was not a 48-hour iron pants operator and decided to start doing multi-ops from here..." Over the past 30+years, Dave has hosted legions of operators at his multi-multi station, some veterans, some newcomers, and willingly shared his knowledge and experiences, both in his building book and his annual Contest Cook-books, distributed to members of the Yankee Clipper Contest Club (YCCC), of which Dave is a past president. You can see webcams of his current station and much more information at [www.k1ttt.net](http://www.k1ttt.net).

\* Bob Wilson, N6TV, is an accomplished tester and contest DXpeditioner, but his achievements behind the scenes are as significant as those he's made on the air. A regular speaker at Contest University and the International DX Convention's Contest Academy, Bob has developed new techniques and technologies to enhance logging and score-keeping software and to advance SO2R (Single Operator, 2 Radios) operating, along with the efficiency of software defined radios, CW Skimmer, the Reverse Beacon Network and more.

The CQ Contest Hall of Fame was established in 1986 to recognize those amateurs who have made major contributions to the art of radio contesting. This year's inductions bring the total number of members of the CQ Contest Hall of Fame to 69.



And...A 1st arrival FQP picture—Above: Mark K0EJ operating W4O during the 2017 FQP.

# CQ NEWS RELEASE (Announcing: 2017 Inductees, CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame)

(Xenia, Ohio - May 19, 2017) - The CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame has 18 new members for 2017, CQ magazine announced today. This brings to 310 the total number of members inducted since the hall's establishment in 2001.

The CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame honors those individuals, whether licensed hams or not, who have made significant contributions to amateur radio; and those amateurs who have made significant contributions either to amateur radio, to their professional careers or to some other aspect of life on our planet.

The 2017 inductees (listed alphabetically) are:

- \* King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, HS1A (SK)
- \* John Brosnahan, W0UN (SK) - President of Alpha Power, NOAA physicist and instrumental in design and construction of the HAARP facility in Alaska.
- \* Garrett Brown, W3AFF - Inventor of the Steadicam, which earned him both Oscar and Emmy awards for filmmaking technology
- \* Britton Chance, W2IBK (SK) - Pioneer in magnetic imaging; MIT professor, team leader in MIT Radiation Lab developing WWII radar; US Olympic gold medalist (sailing, 1952)
- \* John Crockett, W3KH - Repeater coordination pioneer; developed Southeastern Repeater Assn (SERA) Universal Coordination System; managed SCHEART system of linked repeaters in hospitals; VP Engineering for SC Educational TV network
- \* Julius T. Freeman, KB2OFY (SK) - Tuskegee Airman and Congressional Gold Medal recipient; frequent speaker at schools and civic organizations
- \* Limor Fried, AC2SN - Founder of Adafruit Industries, major supplier of open-source electronics to the Maker community; honored by President Obama in 2016 as "Champion of Change" and by the Internet of Things Institute as one of the 25 most influential women in the IoT industry
- \* Robin Haighton, VE3FRH (SK) - Founding member of Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS), former president of AMSAT-NA
- \* David Honess, M6DNT - Developed AstroPi project, which sent two Raspberry Pi computers to the International Space Station as platforms for students on Earth to write and run their own computer code in space; honored for this work with the Sir Arthur Clarke Award, presented by the Arthur C. Clarke Foundation and the British Interplanetary Society
- \* Pete Kemp, KZ1Z (SK) - Author and educator, directly responsible for licensing over 700 new hams
- \* Kristen McIntyre, K6WX - Apple software engineer and inventor (her name is on 22 granted or pending patents), promoter of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects for girls through various talks and YouTube presentations
- \* Pat McPherson, WW9E (SK) - Founder and longtime coordinator of SATERN (Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network)
- \* Andy Nguyen, VK3YT - Pico-balloon, pioneered round-the-world microballoon flights carrying amateur radio
- \* Tim Peake, KG5BVI - UK astronaut very active in ARISS program during time on International Space Station; coordinated ISS end of the AstroPi project (see David Honess, above)
- \* Mike Santana, WB6TEB (SK) - Two-way radio engineer, designed Clegg FM-76 220-MHz transceiver and President line of CB rigs, favorites for conversion to 10 meters
- \* Allan Steinfeld, W2TN, ex-KL7HIR (SK) - Longtime Race Director of the New York City Marathon, considered one of the fathers of the modern running movement
- \* Gerald Youngblood, K5SDR - Pioneer of software defined radio (SDR) and founder of FlexRadio



## Hurricane Irma—FCG Notes

Fred, K9VV/NP2X, is involved in the relief effort in the U.S. Virgin Islands. "Our local communications team is doing what we are trained to do. Our NIMS (National Incident Management System) training has paid off in spades. This is the BEST type of 'contest' we could be involved in. The multipliers are 'saved lives,' relief rendered, and loved ones connected



"This is a load of fans, batteries & bug spray given by an anonymous ham donor. They went to a hospital on St. John via private boat to keep patients cool. The batteries were for the local rescue team. Bug spray was for anyone who wanted it because the 'skeeters' are terrible now that we're getting soaked by rain bands



Bucket-brigade style unloading and loading of supplies in St. Croix



Left L-R Fred, K9VV/NP2X and Jarrett Devine, RECC, FEMA Region 1. Fred and Jarrett communicate every week via HF to be prepared for events like hurricane Irma. [Photo credit: K9VV

From the Reflector...a few of the many e-mails

9/12/2017

I have a C31XR up on my tower at 125 feet. In Mathew and Irma, the antenna survived with prolonged gusts exceeding 100 MPH for several hours. No elements came loose and antenna is in 100% good shape. On my smaller 45 foot tower, I had a Force 12 WARC-7 with a M2 7 el 6M Yagi, a 215WB and a 32 el 432 yagi stacked, and at the top, a home-brew Waller Flag made from heavy fiberglass. We "possibly" had a tornado come thru that destroyed the Waller Flag, breaking all of it, still hanging on with the loop wires. The mast bent 20 degrees, the 215WB broke in 2, but the WARC 7 is intact. Force 12 Antennas seem to be the Timex of the antennas - they take a licking and still come out ticking !

Eric K9ES

A week after the hurricane my 17 meter element fell off my 12/17 duobander. The element to boom bracket rivets failed and the element slide off the boom. Might be a good idea the next time you work on a Force 12 antenna that you use through bolts instead of rivets on the boom to element brackets. Since I have older antennas, I was surprised to see that my 40 yo. TH-6DXX did not rotate on the mast and looked to be in perfect shape, with same swr as before. The 160 meter inverted L and the 40 meter EDZ had no problems.

Vant K4LM

9/17/2017

De K4LQ - Power back 10 AM Sunday after 8 days no power, no water, no telephone, cell towers down - could receive cell calls, but not make any. 80M vertical snapped in the middle, otherwise okay ham radio wise. Lots of tree damage, lost some shingles, antenna field flooded, but house okay. Sure good to feel that air conditioning again. Locally some roads were impassible with fallen trees and power poles, some auto accidents with no traffic lights, average wait for gas for generators about 2-3 hours - all those problems pretty well rectified now.

73/Fred

9/17/2017

All good on St. Croix. Minimal damage on island. Towers and house at NP2X OK. One ham on St. John peered from his bunker at the height of the storm and described it as a 'salad shooter'.

St. Croix ARC currently passing safety of life traffic from St. Thomas and St. John and supporting Territorial and Federal partners. We have a MASSIVE Federal response here. Say a prayer for people in STT and STX.

Very 73,  
Fred, K9VV / NP2X  
SM / SEC USVI

## Melbourne FCG Meeting Report

FCG made several presentations at Melbourne this year. They included:

Friday

Navigating in The Florida QSO Party – by Charlie K1XX. Charlie covered his navigation planning strategies and tools for the Florida QSO Party and inspired some current and future mobile operators to improve their route planning. Chris WF3C also gave a brief update on FQP log checking.

Saturday

Contest Audio – by Lu W4LT

How to tell if you're a serious contester – by Chris WF3C

Lu's presentation on contest audio was a comprehensive look at how he adjusts various aspects of his voice in order to maximize readability and "punch" for SSB ccontesting. It was a radio and software agnostic look at what everyone should listen for to make their audio more readable and thus improve scores in phone contests. Lu had video, audio clips and screenshots of his audio as illustrations for the attendees. There were lots of practical questions from the ~30 forum attendees about tools and techniques that they can use. Hopefully FCG audio will have a little more sizzle for the CQWW DX SSB contest at the end of the month.

Chris' presentation was an attempt to understand the unspoken assumptions and skills that more experienced contesters take for granted when reaching out to non-contesters and unlicensed prospective contesters. He gave some possible answers to questions that non-contesters ask, like "Why should I bother. I'm never going to win the contest." (Hint...most golfers never shoot par, but nobody ever says "Why should I bother playing, I'm never going to shoot par!")

Fred K4LQ and Lu W4LT manned the FCG swap table. It was close to a complete bust this year. Several people who had said they had items for sale did not show up. If we have no action next year, we may just cancel this FCG activity at Melbourne.

Eric K9ES and Sylvia invited FCGers to their house after the hamfest for a cookout and to provide a location for the FCG meeting. Members made short work of a delicious repast of burgers, hotdogs, and all the fixins, including dessert. Thanks Sylvia and Eric!

After the cookout, the meeting got underway. Attendees included AB4GO, AD4ES, K1KNQ, K4JC, K4LQ, K5KG, KE1F, KX4TT, N1ZZ, N4FP, N7KH, W3AZD, W4EE, W4LT, WB2VYK, WB3ANE, and WF3C

Chris WF3C began the meeting by thanking Eric and Sylvia for their many years of providing the cookout for FCG members after the Melbourne Hamfest. He thanked everyone for coming out.

Chris asked everyone to give us a quick summary of their plans for the contest season.

It was noted that the ARRL 10 Meter Contest had long been one that FCG had been competitive in. Last year we won first in the Medium Category. Even though we are in the downward part of the Sunspot cycle, there may well still be enough short E's openings to W8/W9 and other places to allow us again be competitive. Even a dyed in the wool CW guy like your Secretary often works Mixed in the 10 meter contest to get the additional multipliers provided by a second mode.

Plans are already underway for the Orlando Hamfest and Contest Dinner. Dan K1TO is working on getting the dinner speaker, and tells us that there is a good possibility that the one he has been working on will accept.

Sandy DL1QQ and Tim K3LR will again be with us promoting the upcoming WRTC-2018. A new feature this year will be the CW Pileup Competition as run by the Kansas City DX Club, made famous by its many appearances at the Dayton Hamfest. Participants are given a set of headphones and a laptop. They are charged with copying as many calls as possible from a pileup of about 100 calls. The pileup file simulates a possible "on the air" experience, with some calls sent once, some twice, at varying speeds and pitches. Some calls are "in the clear", but many are on top each other. The test lasts about five minutes.

Chris mentioned the new ARRL eligibility list requirements and explained briefly what they amount to. The club Secretary is charged with keeping on an ARRL provided website an updated list of club members prior to each ARRL contest who are eligible to compete in the contest. These are members who are within our contest circle, and are identified with their Call and grid square. This requires close contact between the Treasurer and Secretary, to ensure that members are picked up as soon as they qualify, and that departing members are dropped. This requirement was apparently brought about by some clubs complaining about other clubs competing unfairly by counting members that lived outside the circle etc.

George K5KG mentioned that Ellen W1YL has now filled four ARRL logbooks with QSOs she has made with her remote station in her apartment remoting to W7RN in Nevada. Ellen will turn 91 shortly.

Chris wrapped up the meeting by noting that future cookouts at K9ES will begin at 3 PM rather than 4 PM in order to allow for earlier travel home by those who must drive long distances.

George K5KG, who is now Marketing Director for Yaesu setup and demonstrated the new Yaesu Model 991-A transceiver. This unit elicited a number of "Maybe it's time to sell my older radio and upgrade to a modern radio" comments. One of these was from your Secretary, who was last seen checking how the radio could be setup to run FT8/ the radio could be setup to run FT8.

Thanks to Chris WF3C for his FB editing of this report,

73/Fred K4LQ

## Notes from ARRL Contest Update

The most recent Contest Update contained a lot of news about the new digital mode FT8. Comments on the reflector indicate a lot of interest in this mode. It will be used in a certain amount of upcoming contesting. Below is some of the Contest Update content.

The WSJT-X team's new FT8 mode was used by a number of stations in the recent CQ WW VHF Contest. Though a Coronal Mass Ejection wiped out the bands for many on the second day of the contest, soapbox comments were filled mainly with praise for the mode, which was only a week old at the time of the contest! Mike, K7ULS, responded to my request for observations on using FT8 in the CQ WW VHF Contest with:

"Here's how it went:

50 MHz FT8 79 Qs

50 MHz MSK144 3 Qs

144 MHz MSK144 3 Qs

144MHz CW 1 q

50 MHz SSB 47 Qs

I would have rather had more SSB contacts because of the higher rate when it's hopping but it just wasn't there this year so the alternative was FT8 and it's release couldn't have come any closer and it really saved a very boring and monotonous contest using jt65. What I liked was the ability to see multiple callers at once or sometimes they would call a few Hz away and it still would decode in red so you wouldn't get confused by the band activity. With a contest situation it got pretty hectic with the 15 sec sequences but this being the most proficient mode for conditions at least here in Utah made it fun nonetheless."

The FT8 mode is comparatively new for everyone. Some DXpeditions are now using it to open bands under marginal conditions, or provide contacts to stations that don't typically chase DX. The E6AG DXpedition published ['HOWTO: Working E6AG on FT8'](#) to help inform operators on where to listen, and how to call them for the greatest success. The article contains general pointers on how to work split using WSJT-X.

To read the article, go to the October Contest Update Issue at <http://www.arrl.org/contest-update-issues> Scroll down to News, Press Releases, and General Interest. Go to the 4th paragraph and click on "HowTO: Working E6AG on FT8"

*Editor's Note: This FT8 digital mode performance with weak signals is amazing. The other morning I went down on 40 meters and turned the beam toward VK. Not a single VK was coming through on either CW or SSB. I went on 7074 khz using FT8 and 100 watts. I worked all continental VK call areas but VK4, as well as a number of ZLs. Some of these stations were below the noise level, but still decoded okay. Never would have believed it had I not seen the results—Fred*

News Item:

FT8 mode usage continues to increase! According to a [tweet by Michael, G7VJR](#), operator of [Club Log](#), "In September 2017, the number of FT8 QSOs uploaded to Club Log was the same as CW and SSB combined." (Bengt, K7ADD)

### Same-band Alternating CQs Now Prohibited for HF and VHF ARRL Contests

With updates to the ARRL web now in place, the ARRL's Contest Rules for HF and VHF have been updated (as a rules clarification) to clearly **prohibit Alternating CQs** on two or more frequencies in the same band. This is a clarification only to existing rules where "one transmitted signal per band" is discussed. Example is from the "General Rules for ARRL Contests Below 30 MHz", where rule 2.1.2 has now been clarified to read as follows:

*2.1.2. Single-Operator stations are allowed only one transmitted signal per band at any given time, regardless of mode; alternating CQs on two or more frequencies in the same band is prohibited.*

Where "one transmitted signal per band" appears in HF or VHF rules, similar clarifications are now in place in the ARRL web rules (if you or anyone sees that I missed any, please advise). I noted the IARU International HF Championship already contained this verbiage.

As a paragraph describing this action:

"These rule clarifications now add clarity to the intent of prohibiting the use of more than one frequency at a time on one band for soliciting contacts (calling CQ) as well as simultaneous transmissions of any kind. The intent of the rules has always been that a participant would use/occupy only a single channel in a given band, changing frequency in-band from time to time leaving a CQ frequency to work a multiplier or to change the CQing frequency as band occupancy or changing propagation dictated, and this rules clarification will now give the needed added clarity to that intent."