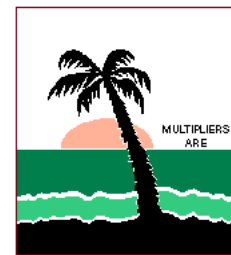


Contest Gazette

Florida Contest Group

www.floridacontestgroup.org



Volume 16 Issue 2

September 2009

From the President's Corner

By Dan Street, K1TO

Wow - this summer has flown by! Whenever the last of the CQWW results show up in the mailbox, that triggers me to go into full-scale contest season preparation mode -- same for you?!



Everyone's fingers crossed? We've dodged the storm bullet so far again this year, so let's hope Mother Nature correlates storm activity with sunspot activity. I just looked at the 45-day prediction for Solar Flux -- guess what? Every single day is predicted to be 68.. Yikes. I thought that sacrificing WC4E to the propagation gods was a *good* thing!

FQP 2009 was the best one yet (we say that pretty much every year!). Well over 100,000 QSOs were reported in the record 950+ logs. Thanks to the efforts of Sjaak, W4RIS, the results of the FQP post-contest survey are collated. Details coming later, but the prevailing sentiment is that the FQP is doing just fine, thank you! The out-of-state scores continue to rise, reflecting the great collective on-the-air efforts of the FCG members. Only the ARRL 10-Meter Contest even comes close to the level of activity generated in the FQP.

...speaking of which, we WON the ARRL 10-Meter Contest again, folks!! After a 2-year dearth of Sporadic-E, it returned with a vengeance and provided us with hours of solid openings! Once again, we collected over 50 entries to end up in the Unlimited Club Category -- 63 to be exact. The FCG finished nearly 80% higher than its closet pursuer -- the Potomac Valley Radio Club! We also had

5 winners and numerous Top-Ten finishers in the 10 USA categories -- great going, folks!

6 Meters provided another wealth of opportunities this summer. I still find it amazing that, for example, N4OX with a modest 20' high antenna can work JA7QVI on that band when there are certainly no JAs being worked on 10 or 15 Meters! With most of the modern radios now including 6M, the activity level there continues to mushroom.

I have seen the future. While at Jim, K4PV's, he demonstrated his Flex SDR-5000. What a different way to operate! Use the mouse to pick the peaks off the spectral display and instantly tune to a frequency.

Looking forward to the events at Melbourne on Oct. 10. Eric, K9ES has volunteered to MC the Contest Forum and is looking for more volunteers to present material. Eric also kindly opened his home up to us again this year for an afternoon FCG meeting.

GO FCG! OJ! vy 73, Dan, K1TO

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P.S. Still looking for a volunteer to design the certificate for the Worked All Florida Counties award.

Friedrichshafen

FCGers Larry KJ4UY and Melanie K4JUY attended Europe's largest hamfest at Friedrichshafen in Germany in June. They are pictured below with some well known Dxers and contestesters.



Larry with (top to bottom)

Martti OH1BH

John ON4UN

Pai VU2PAI

(More pictures next issue)



Welcome Aboard



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

KE4CEC - John Bower, 4425 SE Heartwood Trail, Stuart FL 34997
e-mail: bowerjohn@comcast.net

K5WW - G. Eric. Janssens, PO Box 1074, Bracketsville TX 78832
e-mail: k5ww@arrl.net

KQ4Y - Rick Abshier, 33703 Sunny Parke Circle, Fernandina Beach FL 32034 e-mail: KQ4Y@arrl.net

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

NE8J - Howard Stieber, 2626 CR724, Webster FL 33597 e-mail: ne8j@embarqmail.com

Events Calendar

ARRL September VHF QSO Party **1800Z, Sep 12 to 0300Z, Sep 14**

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY 0000Z, Sep 26 to 2400Z, Sep 27

California QSO Party 1600Z, Oct 4 to 2159Z, Oct 5

Stew Perry Topband Challenge 1500Z, Oct 18 to 1500Z, Oct 19

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Oct 25 to 2400Z, Oct 26

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

WAE DX Contest, RTTY 0000Z, Nov 8 to 2359Z, Nov 9

ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB 2100Z, Nov 15 to 0300Z, Nov 17

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW 0000Z, Nov 29 to 2400Z, Nov 30

ARRL 160-Meter Contest 2200Z, Dec 5 to 1600Z, Dec 7

ARRL 10-Meter Contest 0000Z, Dec 13 to 2400Z, Dec 14

Stew Perry Topband Challenge 1500Z, Dec 27 to 1500Z, Dec 28

Contributors to this newsletter included K1TO, N0AX, ARRL Contest Update, NO5W, K9ES, W3TB, N4EEB, KC4HW, K5KG, N4KM, W4DTA, KE1F, K4PG, N4WW, ARRL Letter., N4LZ, K4LQ, KJ4UY

Pushing the Envelope

By Ward Silver N0AX

(from the ARRL Contest Update)

CQ Worldwide's new "Xtreme" category is definitely a step in the right direction for accommodating new technology without our nearly century-old sport. The times, they are a-changin'. Take a look at the Kansas City DX Club Pileup Contest results for another reality update. There was serious consideration that the default assumption for a single-operator category in any contest should simply be "Unlimited" since the norm has become to be connected to the Internet and not the exception. Other "assumptions" about radio contests may get a stiff challenge over the next few years, too.

Depending on your point of view, this breaking down of barriers is either disturbing or a deliverance. Certainly, the key element remains radio. No one has been able to get QSO points for a logging program to logging program contact yet without a transmitter and receiver being involved. I don't think we're at the threshold of radio-less radiosport by any means, but we do have to keep the deeper principles of radio contesting firmly in our sights. A murmur ran through the Contest Forum on Saturday when moderator Doug Grant K1DG casually mentioned that the entire CQ WW 160 Meter contest had been recorded to hard disk by a network of Perseus software-defined radios sprinkled about the planet - and the data sent to the contest committee. This will definitely change the status quo for contest adjudication. It's just a matter of time before the sponsors of every major contest record the on-the-air behavior for every QSO on every band and mode.

And who's to say they are the only ones that can have that data? A 5-Terabyte DVD was just announced - enough to hold all of that 160 Meter contest and more. Who will be the first to write software that looks for stations transmitting two simultaneous signals? Rubber-clockers will quiver knowing that a band-crawling bot will know exactly when that QSO was made and whether the ten-minute rule was followed.

Of course, this is not just about adjudication, but about new modes of competing. The Xtreme Team



can be anywhere, anytime. Your band partner need not be at your elbow - but perhaps a continent away! There will be new contests created to test entirely new skills. Email and Web sites will be filled with chatter about successes and failures and bugs and features - the entire cloud of concerns that follow every technical advance and challenge.

What does it all mean? I have mixed feelings. I really enjoy the "operator and radio" tradition where it is just me and the ionosphere. That style of station and operating has meant the most to me ever since I got into this sport more than thirty years ago. But I'm also excited at the possibilities of new types of contests and strategies that new technology can make possible.

Realistically, I don't think that one can shoehorn this brave new world into the traditional "I'm Here, You're There" interpretation of radiosport - which remains totally valid and just as difficult and challenging as ever. I can understand the dismay of the traditionalist, but the up-side outweighs the down...to me, anyway. As long as there's a radio in there somewhere, I'll be playing along!

The new radiosport will grow up right alongside the old. Some contesters will make the leap, others won't, still more will try both, but all will share a common bond - the radio. Just as there are motor boats and sailboats and yachts of the latest carbon-fiber and hand-crafted varnished wood, all are spawned of the sea and river and lake. In the coming contest seasons, so too will there be signals that are lightning-loud and whisper-weak, from antennas majestic and minute, linked by hand, wire, and fiber. No matter the source or sink, every signal must make the leap across grid, state, country, and continent by the magic of wireless that has called its ethereal sailors down to the invisible sea since a faint, transoceanic "S" tickled the headphones on a windswept Newfoundland cliff. Welcome to the second century of radio!

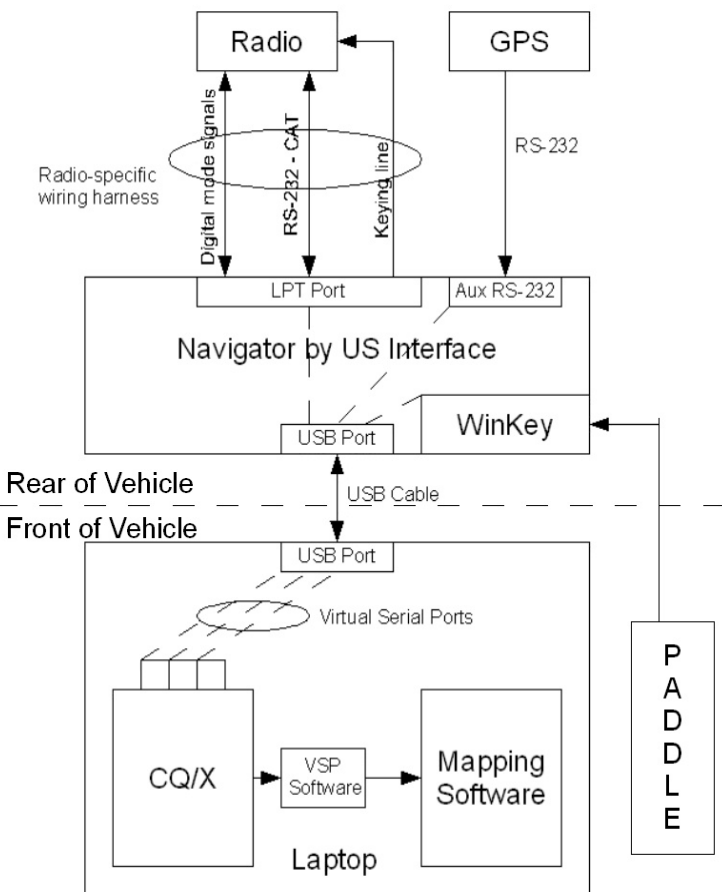
73, Ward N0AX

FQP 09 Mobile Pictures

NO5W/m

Chuck NO5W goes first class, with a GPS, Mapping Software and CQ-X logging software that he developed, configured as shown at bottom of page. He describes the operating position below:

The operating position consists of the above MFJ-1924 antenna controller mounted on the console and a lapdesk containing a Dell D400 laptop, a Palm Paddle, and Heil Pro Set headphones. Connections for the Navigator USB cable, headphones to the radio, paddle to the Navigator or to the radio, and power for the laptop are all made under the operator's seat. GPS data lands on CQ/X via the Navigator USB connection and is passed to Streets and Trips via a pair of virtual serial ports. The main use of Streets and Trips is to allow the operator to help the driver in case we make a wrong turn or there is confusion about the route. Waypoints are defined in CQ/X as decision and/or turning points so that the distance to the next turn is always available to enable the operator to keep the driver informed. The Where Am I function in CQ/X can be used to quickly determine closest waypoint to ensure that the proper waypoint is selected on the CQ/X GPS panel.



Chuck says the HI-Q 4/80 antenna is very well made and provides excellent performance.



The MFJ-1924 controller tunes the antenna

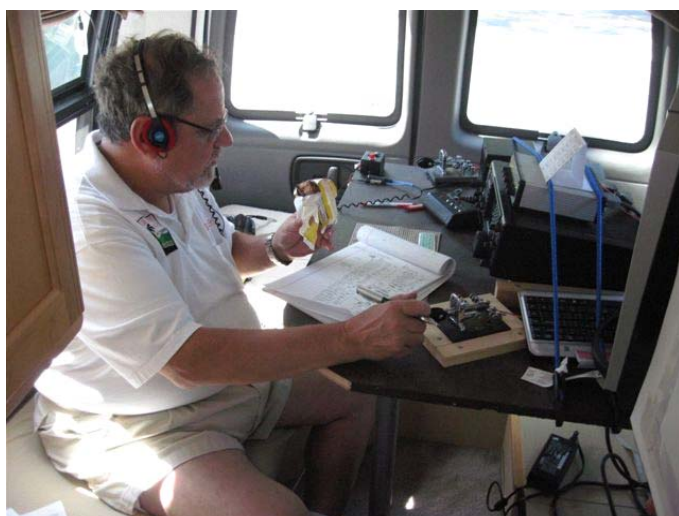


The Elecraft K-3 transceiver is tied down in the rear compartment and controlled by a K-3 remote that Chuck has developed for CQ/X

K9ES/m



K9ES, KD2JA, AD4ES before starting off for 2009 FQP



LEric K9ES operates while logging and eating an ice cream sandwich. Multidextrous?



Chuck AD4ES operating K9ES/m.



The main operating position at K9ES/m

W3TB/m



Ted W3TB at the Polk County line operating with an "off vehicle antenna".

AD4Z/m



Julio AD4Z at the Glades County line.

N4EEB/m

Toyota 4-Runner with 20M and 40M hamsticks



*Operating
Position
Neat!*



Equipment deck in the cargo area of the 4-Runner. Icom IC-7000, LDG AT7000 Tuner, MFJ Boost Regulator, AC inverter, RigRunner



Tracy and John home again after the FQP

FQP 2009 was an incredible amount of fun for us. I am very grateful to my wife Tracy who not only drove, but compiled the entire route on her own for both days. All I knew was that on Saturday we were going North, and Sunday we were going South. When it was said and done, we had operated from 40 counties. That is a personal record for us, and an improvement over our 25 counties last year.

All of the various systems worked without a single glitch. It was basically the same station as last year with a few upgrades. I ran #6 wire from the vehicle's alternator to my deep cycle battery in the rear. This kept it charged the entire time. Also, the MFJ Super Battery Boost Regulator kept the DC bus at 13.8 volts throughout the party. A few strategically placed ferrite chokes here and there made for a wonderfully quiet station.

My observation is that conditions were up and down. Overall, Saturday was much better than Sunday, but each day both bands were up and down without warning.

The highlight for me, again, was the mammoth pileup that waited for me at the Hardee County line. As I approached HAR, stations would ask me if I was going there. The tension was palpable. When I signed /HAR for the first time, all hell broke loose. Several stations thanked me "for the sweep", which was really something. I felt like a VE8 on Sweepstakes.

It was also a thrill to maintain a 105 QSO/Hr average for the entire FQP. That is another personal first for me in any contest. Hopefully the log checking Gnomes will be kind to me.

I'll bet I passed within a half block of N4AO in DeSoto County, because he was blowing my headset off across the entire 20 meter band. I looked around real quick, but I didn't see any antennas that were obvious.

I can't complain about the conduct of stations in the mobile window. I was okay 75 percent of the time, but some out of state stations tried to take up residence on top of me on 20-meters and got my blood boiling a few times. One guy told me QRL QSY after I had been running there for six hours. Overall, everyone was polite and the CW operators out there were truly top notch. I think this is the year of the VE3! They about wore me out. I also made many Q's with G4BUE and DL3DXX. I think I had 14 DXCC when it was said and done.

KC4HW/m



Top - Jim KC4HW

Middle - Arnie W4EIP

Bottom - The vertical was a PCARS club project that was headed up by Jan K4QD. The antenna was dubbed the FB-5. It is similar to the Force 12 Vertical Dipole. It is a 5 band antenna.

K4LQ/M



K4LQ's first venture into FQP mobiling. N4TO's old ICOM 706 with hamsticks for 20 and 40 meters. Not much of a score but next year should show improvement

W4AN/m



John K4BAI operates W4AN/m. KU8E shared the operating duties but was not pictured.

K4KG/m



Above - K4KG /M with ops Jim VE7ZO and George K5KG

Below - the trailer mounted antenna system of K4KG/M. It is a Force 12 Sigma 5 Vertical.



Above: Jim VE7ZO at the controls.



Above - George K5KG operating.



Above L-R K4BAI, KU8E, K5KG, K1TO, NO5W, VE7ZO

Rendezvous



Four Mobile teams met near Jacksonville for dinner on Saturday after the 1st half of the FQP. (Team NN4TO: K1TO + K8NZ; Team K4KG: K5KG + VE7ZO; Team W4AN: K4BAI + KU8E; and NO5W whose XYL Keri was resting up for the long Sunday drive westward. (These 4 teams combined to make 8700 mobile QSOs!)



This guy never sends in a log, but is always spotted somewhere in the FQP routes. That horse must be getting old!

K4OJ/HAR



Kevin N4KM and Red K0LUZ operated K4OJ/m from Kevin's vehicle shown above. Below - Kevin took a couple shots of Red at the operating position.



Dayton Hamvention - New Stuff

Undoubtedly, the most buzz was generated by the monstrosously attractive 44-meter crank-up tower by Luso. A popular activity seemed to be having your picture taken standing next to it. Probably, just to scare the pants off the rest of the family! Kinda tough to get one in the overhead bins on the way home though

There was a lot of interest in the new Elecraft 144 MHz, 10-watt module for the K3. It is an internal module, not an external transverter. This extends the high performance of the K3 beyond the 1.8 - 54 MHz of current versions, including the IF output for SDR accessories. Perhaps adding 2 meters to this state-of-the-art rig will attract more HF contesters to VHF+ contesting?

The folks at Bencher have expanded their Yagi offerings with the new Skylark 12 and 17 meter Duoband Yagi. At 38 pounds and 6.5 square feet of wind loading on a 16-foot boom, this WARC band antenna would look nice above your 20-15-10 meter beam

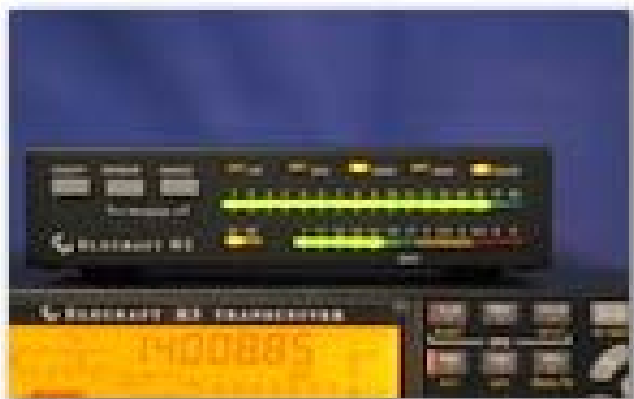
Ten - Tec was showing off the Model 238C, an update to the highly-rated 238B antenna tuner with a silky-smooth variable inductor, and the Model 715 outboard RF speech processor to increase average power on 'phone for rigs without one.

Gary, KD9SV has a new reversible Beverage antenna system that uses old military WD1 or WD-1A Field Telephone Wire or twisted-wire version. (Thanks, Rich KL7RA)

DX Engineering was showing off a couple of new tilt-up verticals for 80 and 160 and a new hexagonal beam that you can see in the photo. Pssst - maybe you can put some fabric over it and convince the neighbors it's a really cool patio umbrella!

Mactenna was demonstrating a portable Yagi called the SB20-10 Simple Beam. The design is similar to that described in the September 2008 QST article on the same subject. (Thanks, Pete N4ZR)

Portable operators should take a look at Super Antenna's YP3 Yagi-in-a-Bag and PR-1 Portable Rotator. (Would that be a Bagi? Just thinking...) Supplemented by mast, tripod, and mobile antenna accessories, this may be the answer to putting out a more potent signal as a stop-and-op entry in your State QSO Party!



Elecraft was previewing a new LED wattmeter and a 144 mhz transverter for mounting inside a K3 transceiver.



Pietro Begali—I2RTF showing off his keys and paddles



Scott Robbins—W4PA showing off Ten-Tec's new RF speech processor. This year Ten-Tec also introduced a new legal limit antenna tuner.



L-R Toni OH2UA, frequent op at CU2X, Dan K1TO and Lou KE1F



Right - Jim K5AUP



Charlie NF4A takes a cerveza break.



Julio W4DTA kept up his tradition of being pictured with attractive young ladies at Dayton. Pictured above is Steve with Claire, the daughter of Dan from the Hamstation,



Left Jim VE7ZO

Below - Don W3AZD and Hope WB3ANE





Above L-R Eric K3NA and Steve W4DTA



The ever photogenic Steve W4DTA with Paul N4PN



SteppIR's new "Dream Beam" (40 through 6 Meters) was on display at Dayton. For a few bucks more an 80 meter dipole can be added.

(May do more detailed description here)



VicVicNic @ K9VV Meeting Report

Attendees included: Jack K1KNQ, Dan K1TO, Fred K4LQ and Sheila, Kevin K4PG, George K5KG, Ron K8NZ and Angela KC8FOD, Hosts Fred K9VV and Lisa W4LIS, Justin KJ4IDT, Brian KP2HC and Ann KP2YL, Randy N4QV and two sons, Don W3AZD and Hope WB3ANE, Mike W4DL with Mary and Fran, Kurt W4KFH, Bruce W4OV and Sandy, Sjaak W4RIS and Ana W4ANA, Sherri W4STB and David W4DKB and Chris WF3C. W4QH also attended as a guest.

Prior to the meeting, thirty attendees made short work of the brats, burgers and all the fixins. Host Fred K9VV presided at the grill.

Dan K1TO opened the meeting by thanking our hosts Fred and Lisa for their hospitality. (Extensive applause). The hat was passed to collect donations to help offset the food and drink costs.

Dan asked each attendee to comment on their plans for operating upcoming summer contests - WPX CW, Field Day, IARU, etc.

- In the upcoming DXpedition arena – Fred K9VV and Mike W4DL will be heading to Costa Rica for a WPXCW M/2 operation as TI5N at the TI5KD QTH along with N6NC and K6AM.
- Other WPX CW activity is expected from K5KG as AB1HZ (ex-HZ1AB op club), K1TO as NN4TO and K4LQ.
- W4OV mentioned a VP5 operation for WW SSB, while K9VV is headed to CX7TT's for WW CW and maybe KP2 for WW SSB.
- 5 attendees expect to operate in the IARU contest in July. A few mentioned Field Day in their plans.

Fred K4LQ gave the Secretary/Treasurer's report. We are on track to probably break the 250 member mark this year. There is \$4459.09 in the treasury. The W1CW/K4OJ Memorial Fund contains \$1366.02.

Dan cited some Florida QSO Party statistics. This year was the 13th running of the FQP which was revived in 1998 under the sponsorship of the FCG. Last year a record 828 logs were processed including about 320 mobile logs. This year so far we have over 500 mobile logs and fixed station logs are also up. We expect more logs to come in as the log submission deadline has not been reached. Mid 900 to 1000 is the expected final log count.

An e-mail survey was directed at all FQP participants. Sjaak W4TIS volunteered to collate the 40 e-mailed survey results.

When asked how he would make time to take on this project, Sjaak noted "I have a Government job" which caused a certain amount of merriment among attendees.

Some discussion was carried out about the problem of RTTY contesting interference to FQP activities on 40 meters. No easy solution appears at hand.

Several attendees reviewed their specific experiences in this year's FQP. K1KNQ and K4LQ both made their first FQP mobile efforts from their own vehicles, on Phone and CW respectively, doing both driving and operating. That experience generated some ideas on how to do it better next year!

Dan reviewed his experiences at the Dayton Hamvention last weekend. 3 FCGers who became Silent Keys in the past year were recognized at the Contest Dinner - N4TO, N4RP and W7QF. The FCG had attendees at several tables and Dan was honored to sit next to K5GO and OH2UA (better known as CU2X) at one of the orange-shirted tables.

The 2009 inductee to the CQ Contest Hall of Fame was the Rev. Paul Bittner, W0AIH – Paul's contest station near Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is known in Midwestern contesting circles simply as "The Farm." Spreading across 120 acres, Paul's farm grows a wide variety of antennas as well as regular crops of new contesters. Paul constantly seeks out and trains new contesters at his multi/multi station, and welcomes visiting hams from around the world. He was nominated by the Minnesota Wireless Association.



In his acceptance speech, Paul referred to his XYL fondly as the "Winch Wench", evoking an interesting response from the crowd. Paul attended the FCG meeting at Orlando about 5 years ago and gave an enthusiastic brief speech to the group.

Fred and Lisa intend to have one more VVnic next year before QSying to their new digs on St. Croix!

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

73/ Fred K4LQ and Dan K1TO

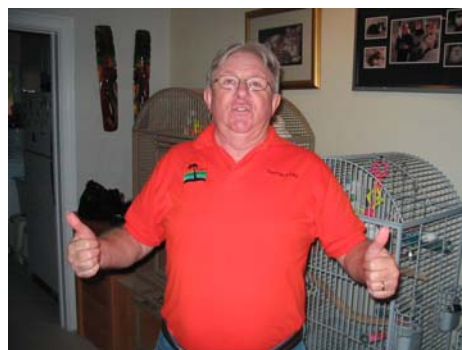


*Hosts Fred
K9VV and Lisa
W4LIS*



*Ron K8NZ and
Angela
KC8FOD*

Chow Time!



*George K5KG
describes the
size of the pile-
ups at K4KG/
m during the
FQP*



*Mike W4DL
with Fran and
Don W3AZD*

Chris WF3C



Randy N4QV's
two sons admire
CH1RP.



*L-R Kurt
W4KFH with
guest W4QH*



*Sjaak W4RIS
and Ana
W4ANA*

*Bruce W4OV
and Sandy*





L-R K4LQ's wife Sheila chats with host Lisa W4LIS



L-R Fred K4LQ listens to Jack K1KNQ describe his FQP antenna.



L-R Host Fred K9VV, Kevin K4PG



L-R Adrian, son of Keko TI5KD, Mike W4DL



L-R Slender Billed Cockatoo Seymour CH1RP. Ann KP2YL, Brian KP2HC



Attendees watch Dxpedition Photos



L-R Fred K4LQ, Bruce W4OV, Randy N4QV



K9VV antenna farm - Cushcraft A3 on the left, 13 element 2 meter beam on the right.

N4WW - All time station high score in WPXCW

The 4 great op's I had this weekend and my moral support turned in the best score of all time from this station.

Everything worked to perfection except one computer clock decided to skip ahead an hour and we are still sorting that out before sending in the log.

Great conditions with NO!!! rain all weekend not one computer networking problem and not one radio/antenna/amplifier problem.

I am currently doing some night shifts and will brag some more about operators when I get time.

73 de Doc n4ww

Band	QSOs	Pts	WPX
3.5	216	705	29
7	1180	4321	364
14	1767	3726	498
21	896	1476	179
28	274	360	28
Total	4333	10588	1098

Score : 11,625,624

CallSign Used : WW4E

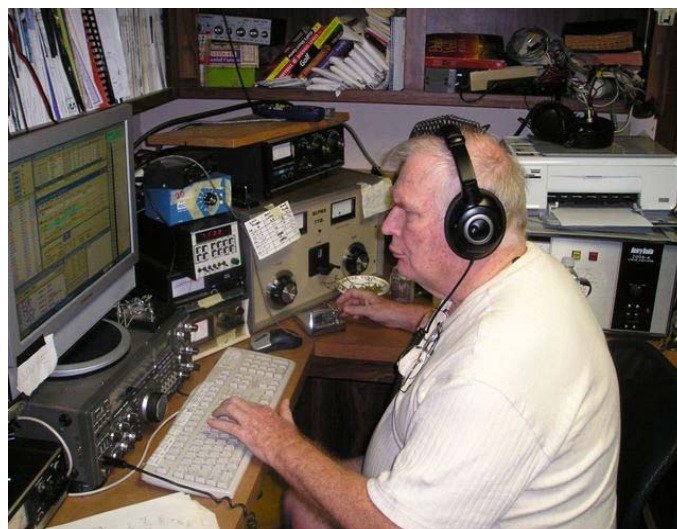
Operator(s) : N4WW N3ND K0LUZ N4KM
NX4N



L-R Doc N4WW and Red K0LUZ on 20 Meters



Dan N3ND on 15 Meters



Red K0LUZ on 20 Meters

Postage Rates Up Again!

Postage rates went up on May 11th and Paul KØJPL extracted the necessary info that hams care about from a US Postal Service bulletin:

- Letter (1 oz) 44¢
(2 oz) 61¢
- (3 oz) 78¢
- (QSL in US) 28¢
(QSL to VE) 75¢
(QSL to XE) 79¢

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