



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

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Another Tragic Loss – WA9S Passes Away on August 16



Keith Wishmeier, WA9S, 1948 - 2020

<https://www.palmerfuneralhomes.com/obituary/Charles-Wishmeier>

As you saw from my E-mail we suffered a tragic and unexpected loss in CCC when Keith passed away on Sunday, August 16. As we all knew, he had been fighting lung cancer since October 2019. He had been in very frequent contact with me as he made his way through that difficult process, and was always 100% upbeat, joking with me how beautiful and brilliant his oncologist was, and how proud that he had missed

nearly zero work throughout the treatments. By late spring he reported that he was cancer free, miraculously, and that he just needed a few more immunotherapy treatments to strengthen his system. In all that time there was never a hint of negativity or defeatism – he dug into the treatment process as an engineering project, did all that was necessary, and continued to live as normal a life as possible.

For example, here's part of an E-mail from him very recently. Keith was the organizer of Field Day for his local club. (He had multiple nicknames: Ken and Waldo....)

W9AB ran a 3A IN Field Day this year and had 1209 Q's and 3782 base points (no bonus included). One of my better years with 581 Q's in about 10 hours. Conditions were terrible at contest start but began to improve 700 pm Saturday and were great Sunday. I had always been told NOT to operate in the Extra section on FD. However, the operators in the upper frequencies on 40 and 20 were mostly inexperienced. Most of my contacts came from the Extra section on both bands where I found real contesters and we could run real rates. Great to know that my brain still works while fighting this "C" thing. Love to Dorothy. Don't forget to let me know when you will be in Ohio.

Down with Covid-19. I want to be in Curacao in February 2021.

KeithKenWaldo

Nothing was heard from him except good news, and he had been planning to make a trip to visit me in Ohio in early September at my W0CG QTH. Then came the shocking announcement.

WA9S was the longest continuous member of CCC. I first met Keith in 1998 when he signed on to operate in a contest group I organized for the February ARRL DX CW contest. We signed VP5FXB in memory of

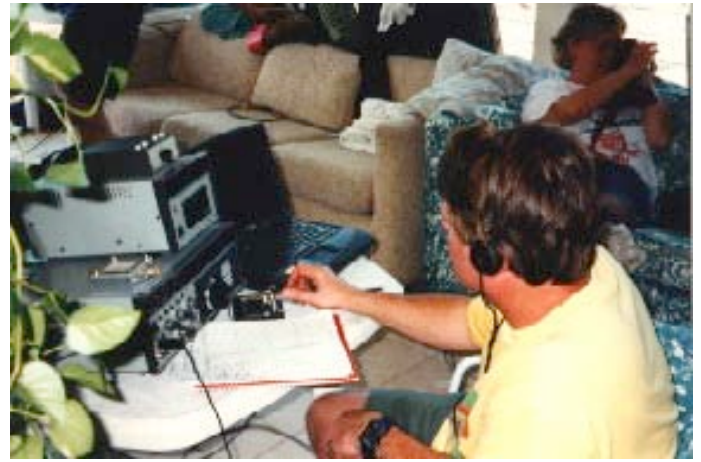
the famous contester and DXer G3FXB and operated from VP5JM's rental home in the Turks and Caicos. He came along with Noel, W9EFL (SK). Keith is in the top left corner in this team photo from February 1998. (I'm at the bottom right.)



VP5FXB Team, February, 1998

I liked him the moment he walked out of baggage claim in arrival, and as we started to chat it was clear that we had much in common including engineering training and a huge passion for aviation.

VP5FXB was a field day style operation – we shipped tower parts, antennas, and lots of crates via ocean freight and then worked madly the week before the contest to set it all up. It was fun working with Keith because he was funny, energetic, extremely bright, and always was emitting the pleasant, sweet smell of pipe tobacco. The contest weekend arrived, and we all worked very hard in those 48 hours. Here's Keith at the multiplier station during the contest.



WA9S at VP5FXB (1998), chasing Canadian multipliers.

Thus began a long friendship. He returned to VP5 in February of 1999 when we again operated in the ARRL contest, this time as VP5CW.



Keith running on 15 CW, February, 1999, VP5CW

When CCC grew tired of the hard work of field day style DX contesting we acquired the Curacao home of PJ9JT and set up shop as PJ2T. Keith was involved in all of those early projects and operated in Curacao whenever his work would permit, but always diligently staying a safe, far distance away from voice contests.

WA9S began his ham radio career in Dayton, of all good places to be born into amateur radio, initially as WN8JBK at a time just before I became WN8KUW. He was one year older than I, and that is reflected in these two call signs.



WA9S and the Jeep at W0CG in Ohio, ready to return to Indiana

The cringing continued when he would arrive at the Curacao house with the current edition of his island rental car. The first outing with each car seemed often to be a trip straight to the dirt dunes along the north shore, often with W9EFL in tow, to see just how hard and far he could push each car. There were some instances of getting stuck, tow trucks, and paying damages, but none of that was about to keep Keith from behind the wheel. His driving was so exuberant that even a routine trip to the Curacao grocery stores became a Grand Prix road rally, and several of the grocery shoppers decided they would rather walk to the store than go on another rally with Keith. He went fast in life and always had fun.

Another big affiliation was the British Car Collectors club. He was as active with that group as he was in amateur radio. Most years he tried to make a long rally drive, off to the Far West with a Jeep and a camper, sightseeing and camping along the way, usually alone because his family was busy (or afraid) to venture out on these wild explorations. One year he modified his drive west slightly to be able to spend three delightful days in Coeur d Alene with Dorothy and me. In the Jeep, of course.



WA9S with his "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" tee shirt, February 12, 2014. He had a LOT of car shirts, mostly British.

He was a highly proficient CW contester. I couldn't find the photo, but in the wee hours of a years-back ARRL CW contest night things got slow and the crew shrunk. I was buried in 160, but was amazed when I finally turned around to see that Keith had started running the 80 and 40 meter stations concurrently. He positioned his chair in the middle and put on two pairs of headphones, and thus undertook a poor man's SO2B (single op two band) operation, interleaving contacts like that the rest of the night until relief showed up at dawn.

Before and after the contest weekends we had too much fun. Here we are at Shete Boka.



WA9S and Dorothy, February 18, 2010

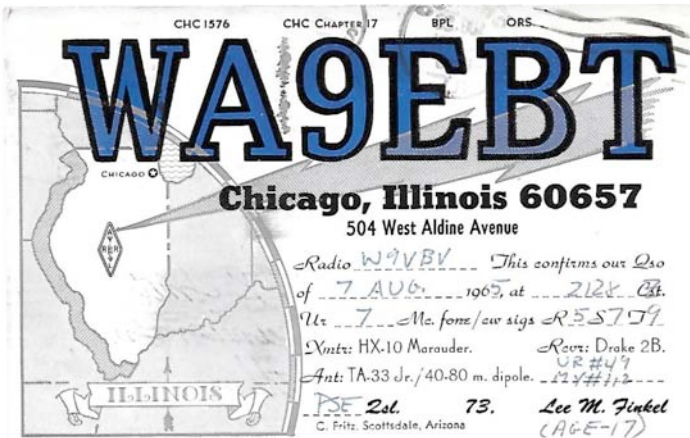


Keith at the 20 meter station, ARRL CW February 2018

Who can understand these tragedies of life? Our lesson continues to be to live each day as the last, to treasure our moments with friends, and to trust nothing to the future. PJ2T has been beset by multiple disabling and potentially fatal challenges these past three years, but we have gotten past all of them, and we'll get past COVID. The time will come when we will all be on the air again, enjoying the sun, warmth, blue ocean and good company, and will hoist lots of cold ones to the memory of a superb friend, Keith Wishmeier, WA9S.

W9VA and KY7M QSO 7 August 1965

After reading Lee's bio last month in this newsletter Bill, W9VA, went digging in his card collection and found this QSL. He worked Lee when he was W9VBV in 1965, resulting in this card! I'm sure that I have a WA9EBT card in my collection also, but it's in Ohio and searching it out will have to wait.



International Health Insurance

Thanks to AI, W1FJ for the below mother-of-all-links for this August 7 story from "Conde Nast Traveler." This is of immense interest to us because some host

nations, possibly Curacao in the future, are requiring that visitors purchase health insurance coverage that is specific to your destination and period of travel. This assures that the visited nations will not end up getting stuck with COVID-19 treatment costs in connection with your visit.

I used the price estimator imbedded in the article, and the premium amounts are completely reasonable. If this becomes one more piece of the puzzle required to get us re-admitted to the island, I'll happily participate. Meanwhile, we continue monitoring the island's policies and hope.

https://www.cntraveler.com/story/these-countries-now-require-international-health-insurance-for-entry?utm_source=nl&utm_brand=cnt&utm_mailing=CNT Intel 081320&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_medium=email&bxid=5cb4e24a3f92a41c2fb14b6e&cnid=38598558&hasha=c18f21793894bdfba0aba32b073f487a&hashb=26cc1754ef0902850367cfee87d5188382e919e3&hashc=9ebce920df99a18458627dbd69bdaf5dffa48b0b50291118f8a24125840f35dd&esrc=AUTO_OTHER&utm_content=Final&utm_term=CNT Intel

More Articles About Dorothy

Here's more of my bragging about Dorothy's long career at the museum. Her retirement is coming up once her replacement is hired and trained. This article appeared in our local newspaper on August 19. The writer, John Wood, is one of the many authors whose books she has published through the Museum of North Idaho Press.

<https://cdapress.com/news/2020/aug/19/for-dorothy-keep-history-alive-5/>

W8WTS' August Treasury Balance

Here's the end of month balance. Last month's optimistic number was in error. \$4459.03

PJ9W Video Revisited

It's hard for me to imagine that there's a ham operator left on the planet who has not seen this video, but a few remain. In 1990 a large group of Finnish contesters led by OH2MM descended on our neighborhood in Curacao to run a huge M/M operation in CQWW SSB, signing PJ9W. They spent about a million dollars and even erected a full size 80 meter yagi in the flats. This video is practically required reading for all PJ2T operators.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=165qx1ENVBI>

Look closely in the video at the linear amplifiers. The amp we use at Station 3 for 40 meters is one of theirs!

In one of life's great coincidences, W8TK (Tom) sent me this YouTube link, and the very next line below his message in my inbox was a message from WA7LNW, the creator of this magnificent professional video. I'm working on recruiting Jack for a future PJ2T contest team, and he's very interested in participating. See the write-up about Jack Reed in the current "NCJ."

We have VHS copies of this video on the bookshelf at Signal Point if you'd like to view it there in order to get the full feel and experience portrayed in this documentary. You can watch the tape while you sniff the ocean, hear the surf, and enjoy QRM in the shack.

Home Improvement Carried to the Extreme

Check out this incredible photo of a roof replacement on a very, very large house with a frighteningly steep roof. Aren't you glad this is not your place and that you don't have to pay this construction bill?

Well Uli, DL8OBQ, a CCC member since 2003 does have to pay the bill. This is his home in Rinteln, Germany, in the midst of a giant roof replacement job. This is a gigantic place for a bachelor living alone, but he used to share it with family. And not visible in the photo, there is a retail store in the front on the bottom level, around the corner.



Home of Uli, DL8OBQ, Rinteln, Germany, August 2020.

At some point, all roofs need to be replaced, and the time came for this one. As you can see from the crane, the scaffold, and the size and steepness of the roof this is a monumental project. He said that this, among other reasons, might be why he decides not to come to Curacao for CQWW SSB. (Germans are permitted to

enter PJ2.) The next time I have to replace my roof in Ohio I'll remember Uli's job and not feel so bad.

(Not Much) News from the Coral Cliff Title Foundation

I received a newsletter on September 3 from Albert Koers, the leader of the HOA for our Coral Cliff neighborhood on the island. Not much is happening. He reports that the security gate across the road still awaits installation of the drive motor, and that part of the holdup is that one of the control circuit boards was found to be damaged in transport from Holland. The rusted out handrails on the stairs for our ocean access will be replaced this month. These were of high quality at the time they were installed but then were not properly maintained, and the ocean ate them for breakfast. The \$2900 cost of the project will be borne by dues payments from the 13 homeowners, and we have been assured that these new rails are of top quality and will be maintained better.

The investment group will decide sometime this fall season whether to proceed with construction of the hotel. In either case, they have assured us that they will definitely finish the road project, clean up the messes, and hopefully get rid of the mountain of rubble across the road from the station. Professor Koers said that one possibility is that they will begin with a much scaled-down version of the hotel and then wait to see how Curacao tourism develops post-COVID.

Curacao News Sources (K8ND)

Jeff (K8ND) is by far our best source of timely information about what's going on in Curacao. He recently shared his secrets with us via E-mail, and here are those links reproduced.

Curacao Chronicle:

<https://www.curacaochronicle.com/home/> (This one also posts to Facebook.)

Curacao News: <https://curacao.nu/> (This one sends a daily email of links to new stories.)

Facebook Group: 'You Know You've Lived In Curacao If...'

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/17257577140>

Curacao Circus: (An interesting blog of personal observations on news from the island)

<http://www.vrcurassow.com/2dvrc/stateofaffairs/circus/2020.html>

He warns that some of these are in Dutch, but his browser (MS Edge) translates them automatically for him.

K0MD on “Today” and “NBC Nightly News” 24 August 2020

I was absent minded watching the “Today” show in late August and abruptly jumped out of my chair when K0MD’s face showed up onscreen. Dorothy will tell you that I shouted so loudly for her that she nearly had an attack.

Much of that story ran again that evening on “NBC Nightly News.” Scott is pretty quiet about his professional accomplishments, but in fact he led the study about the effect of convalescent plasma as a treatment option for COVID-19. While the rest of us are hunkering down and hoping for help, he’s out front leading.

Thanks KY7M for this link to the NBC broadcast:

<https://www.today.com/video/mayo-clinic-doctors-detail-research-into-plasma-treatment-for-covid-90532421705?playlist=mmlsnn todayarchivesmonday>



Photo of my TV screen in Idaho during the “Today” show. NBC’s Cynthia McFadden at the left, K0MD in the center, and Dr. Michael Joyner at the right.

You can read more about their study at this URL:

<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/convalescent-plasma-associated-with-reduced-covid-19-mortality-in-35000-plus-hospitalized-patients>

Scott is the ultimate example of the “Want something done, ask a busy person” phenomenon because he has somehow managed to serve as Editor of “NCJ” throughout this period of COVID. Thankfully for him, he soon hands that job off to our KY7M, as you read in last month’s newsletter.

Thanks for Donations from SM4KYN, W8PT

Anders (SM4KYN) and Ingela have been tremendously generous to CCC, donating many PCs to the station in connection with their years of staying at the QTH over Christmas and New Years. In addition, while it has never made sense to become a CCC member because he can’t be on site for our contest operations, he has made many cash donations. The most recent of these was August 15 when he very kindly sent in \$200 to use as we saw fit during the challenges imposed by the virus mess.



SM4KYN and Ingela at Signal Point, December 26, 2016

Thanks also to Chuck, W8PT, our newest member, for his recent unsolicited and unrestricted donation to the treasury. This is remarkably generous given that Chuck has not even been able to get to Signal Point yet. THANKS!

Ring Camera Self-Resuscitation

As you know we have two Ring cameras at Signal Point, one on each of the east and west porches. These are nearly priceless in helping my peace of mind and keeping the place more secure in this interval when we are locked out of the island. Thus you can imagine my stress when the West Porch camera dropped out of service in early August. It indicated that the wireless connection had been lost. The East Porch camera was still 100% good.

My first thought was that a router reboot would bring back the connection, but doing so would require talking Zoom through a procedure that was totally beyond the language gap, so I settled in to wait for the inevitable power outage to do the reboot for me. No such reboot came. But a couple of weeks later I was shocked to see the West camera reappear online, albeit

it with restricted functions. A quick check showed the battery to be at only 19%. The next day the battery was up to 28% and all of the functionality had returned. Over the next several days of good sunshine the battery charge continued up and up until it finally reached 100%, and all was well.

It's now obvious that the problem was nothing more than a long string of cloudy days in early August. The solar array quit charging the battery. The West camera suffered for this much more than the East because the former triggers frequently on birds, cats, and occasionally a rapidly passing cloud shadow. Its battery was depleting while the East camera, which experiences far less motion activity, held its charge. When the sun returned, so did the West camera.



The small solar panel that powers the West Porch Ring, with the camera itself just visible at the far right, February 2, 2020.

This shows up the tremendous engineering of the Ring software. When the camera detected that the battery had reached an alarmingly low level, it shut down all functions including the wireless connection, and stayed just awake enough to watch the condition of the battery. When it saw the battery beginning to recover, it reawakened the camera in stages, eventually reestablishing the wireless connection. The Mars rovers could not have been smarter. These Ring cameras are incredibly effective. I have three more of them in stock here on my "Curacao shelf" in Idaho, awaiting the next trip.

Curacao Travel Update and Outlook for CQWW Contests

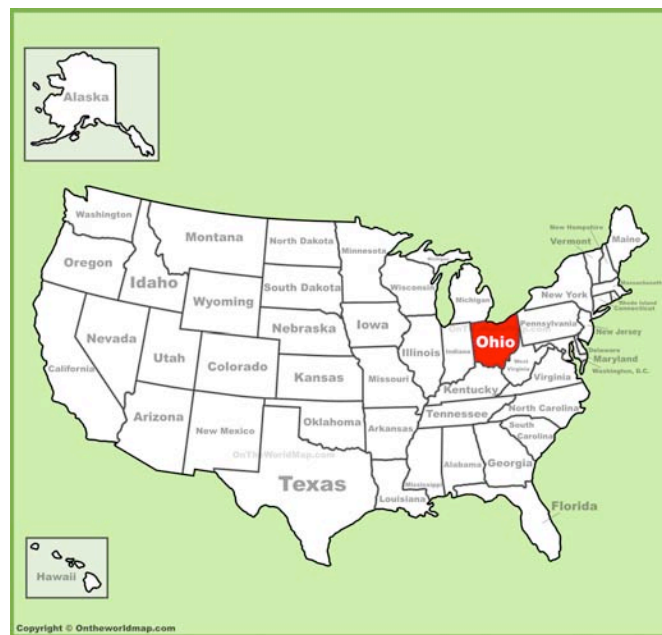
We're still stuck as of today, September 11. I have a flight booking for mid-October but do not expect to be permitted to enter the country. Here's Curacao's official position.

<https://www.curacao.com/en/questions/health-and-vaccinations/response-to-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

The U.S. is still classified as a high-risk country, embarrassingly, so there is no way we will be permitted into the country.

W0CG Ohio Trip Cancelled

With enormous regret I had to at the last minute cancel my August 22 trip to Ohio. The plan was to drive so as to minimize exposure risk, and to stop along the way for quick distance visits with KB7Q, WB9Z, NR0X and, prophetically, WA9S. I was to pick up the donated Commander HF-2500 amplifier in Iowa from Jason and take it to Ohio to prep it for shipment to the island. I make an August trip to Ohio annually to teach three weeks of my Kent State course in person, followed then by 12 weeks of virtual instruction.



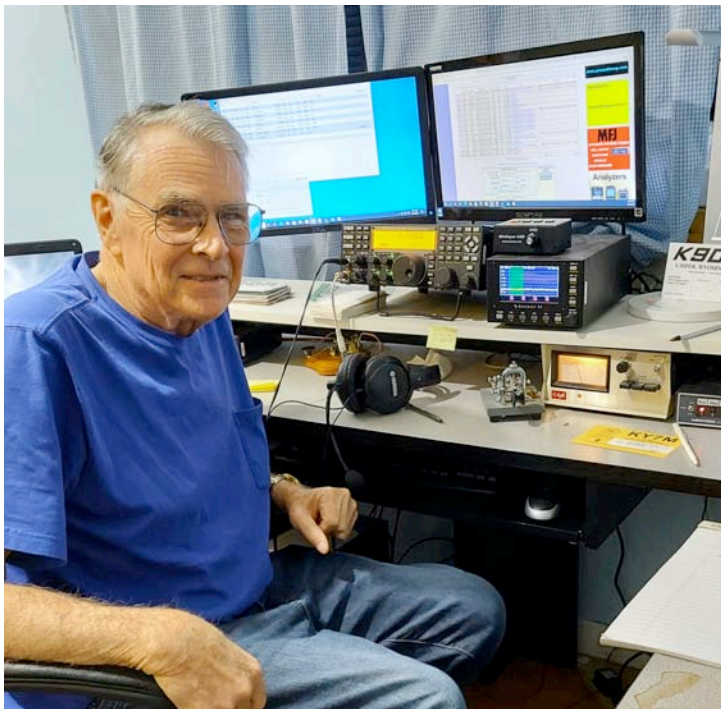
At the last minute before the trip everything seemed to align against me. The biggest factor was that my son, who has been borrowing my Ohio house for a couple of years, told me that I would not be allowed to enter the house except the last three days of my trip when he moved his family into an Airbnb. He and his family are being extremely cautious about the virus, and he said that I could be on the acreage outside, and that he would bring tools out to the garage for my projects, but that I could not come in. On top of that revolting development, Idaho was placed on the Ohio "do not visit" list of six forbidden states because we had handled the pandemic so poorly here.

Also, I had booked myself into an Airbnb near my home for two weeks because there aren't enough beds for me to stay there at my house, pandemic or not, and the owner of the Airbnb informed me after my booking that neither she nor her husband nor any of their three other long term guests wore masks. Finally I just gave

up, cancelled the trip, informed my boss at the university that I was switching to 100% online instruction, and went outside to kick some cans around in frustration.

Now, with this cancellation, the amplifier is still in Ohio, the shipping case that was shipped to Ohio from Oklahoma is now in the wrong place, and many other CCC logistics are snafued. We'll recover from all of this, but at the moment frustration is running very high here in Idaho.

Member Spotlight: "My Life in Ham Radio," Dan Roberts, K9DR



My beginning in ham radio took place in early 1958 while I was a 12 year old 8th grade student in Redondo Beach, California. I'd been interested in electronics and had built a crystal radio from a Cub Scout kit and then a two tube kit. However, I had no idea that ham radio even existed.

The grade school I was attending, in addition to being only a block from the beach, was a brand new school and they were ready to try new things. At the beginning of the Spring Semester, the teachers formed several new clubs. The one that caught my interest was the "Radio Club" which was being headed by the young fifth grade teacher Larry Miller, W6ANB, later W7CB.

Larry had assembled a small station consisting of his DX35 transmitter and SX96 receiver in a corner of his classroom. On the roof, above the classroom, he'd

installed a 40 meter Windom. That first club meeting was pure magic to me as we got to see "Whiskey Six Assorted Nuts and Bolts" talk to a couple of guys over a thousand miles away. I was instantly addicted. Over the next few weeks we learned the code and had lessons on the Rules and Regulations. A couple of weeks before the end of the school year several of us took and passed the Novice license exam.

I have often wondered what might have happened to my life if Miller hadn't started that radio club, back in 1958. Fortunately, we kept in contact over the years and I was able to thank him in person. Sadly, he became an SK about 5 years ago. His son took the W7CB call and his wife has held the W6ANB call for decades.

During those months I was learning the code and the Rules and Regulations from Miller, my father had taken a new job about 35 miles north in the San Fernando Valley and was having to endure a terrible commute. This predated the construction of most of the Los Angeles area freeways, so was spending 3 – 4 hours a day dealing with the traffic. The result was that we moved from Redondo Beach to Canoga Park just a few days after the school year finished in June, 1958.

The three, or four weeks of waiting for my Novice license to arrive seemed to take forever. During that waiting, I set up my first ham shack, and it really was in a shack! We had moved to a family-owned two acre former chicken farm that my grandfather had inherited. I set up in one of the old chicken houses on the property. It really wasn't too bad for the purpose. It hadn't been used for poultry for 15 or 20 years and cleaned up nicely. A new layer of roofing, an overhead run of 120 Volts from the garage for lights and power and it was ready to go.

I built my first transmitter from a design that had been in one of my Popular Electronics issues. Ultra simple, it used a single 6AQ5 oscillator and was built on a plastic sandwich box. My single 7170 kHz crystal put me in the middle of the 40 meter Novice band. I was given an RME70 receiver by a family friend and it had a 250 VDC output on its back panel, which was used to provide HV to the 6AQ5. Filament power was provided by my Lionel train transformer! I've often wondered how much power this sandwich box rig actually put out. The antenna was a dipole about 15' high that I fed with twin lead. Needless to say, the antenna and transmitter combination was not a winning combination!

Finally, my brand new Novice license with the WV6AYU call letters, arrived on July 12. The license was dated July 3, 1958 and I still have it. My new Novice call was one of the first two letter prefix calls the FCC issued for the 6th district. For those of you that weren't around ham radio then, the FCC ran out of sequentially issued W and K prefix calls in the 2nd and 6th call areas in 1958 and began issuing WV prefixes to Novice licensees and WA to them when they passed the General, Conditional or Technician exam. Parenthetically, WH6's and WL7's were also Novice licenses that converted to KH6 and KL7 upon getting a higher grade license.

It took me two days to make my first QSO with K6QXZ. After that first QSO, transmitters and antennas evolved and improved and about a year later, I took the bus to downtown Los Angeles, took the General exam and flunked the CW portion of the test! Fortunately, a couple of weeks later, I went back and passed the 13 WPM test and became WA6AYU.

My family's move caused me to have to find new friends. Fortunately, a couple of older local hams in the area were really helpful in developing my operating skills and getting me set up with better equipment. I credit Carl – K6VTX for getting my CW speed up and Carl – W6ZDO for technical assistance and some equipment which included an ARC5.

At one point, I acquired a screen modulator for my home brew 6146 rig and, with the assistance of a flimsy 3 element 10 meter beam, worked KM6BI and KW6DG in early 1961 for my only ever Midway and Wake Island QSO's. Not bad for about 10 Watts AM output. Sunspot count was down from the 1957 peak and the SFI was probably only about 150 then!

In 1960, my family moved about two miles east to a new house in Northridge. While the house was much nicer, the smaller lot wasn't nearly as antenna-friendly as the 2 acre place. I didn't have much say in the matter though!

Soon after the move, I did get my folks to front me the money for a used Hallicrafters SX96 receiver. Then, I was given a home-brew 400 Watt amplifier using a pair of push-pull V70D tubes. I scrounged the HV power supply components from various War Surplus outlets in the area and soon was working some serious DX.

During my high school years, I joined the San Fernando Valley ARC – W6SD and the Cleveland High School Radio Club. In the picture, from the

school's 1961 Yearbook, I'm in the back row, wearing glasses. In the second row, wearing white pants, is another ham that many of you may remember as KO7X, my late friend Al Brubaker, who held K6QPH back then.



RADIO CLUB—ROW 1: D. Foti. ROW 2: A. Brubaker, T. Lantz. ROW 3: J. Brown, L. Ryerson, D. Ritter. ROW 4: M. Moran, Mr. Cole, C. Brown, M. Gearhart, G. Jacobs, G. Smith, R. Olsen, D. Roberts.

I can't pin down the exact time I began to get interested in contesting, but I vaguely remember operating in a CW Sweepstakes around the end of 1959. I also remember being frustrated that I was only averaging about 5 QSO's per hour! I did three Field Day operations with the W6SD club that helped cement my love of contesting. These Field Day operations were from interesting locations, including the Iverson Movie Ranch, where many old B/W cowboy movies were filmed.

I found a 1961 log showing an effort I made in a September "W/VE Contest." This is a contest I do not remember, but it shows I made 53 QSO's and a score of 17,220, as determined by a complex formula that makes no sense to me today!

I also found the log of my effort in the 1962 ARRL CW DX contest and it shows that I made 116 QSO's in 51 countries and had a score of 23,316. By then, my antennas were on my new 40' Tri-Ex tower. There were other DX contest activities that I conducted from other ham's locations. I remember operating part of a

DX contest from K6VTX and many hours at WA6MFY and using his 6 element 20 meter Telrex. Pretty heady stuff for a kid in his early teens.

There was another good guy that only lived two blocks from me...Gene Real – W6PUY, later K6OJ. That was the good news. The bad news was that our antennas were only 672' apart, according to Google Earth! Gene was one of the original founders of the Southern California DX Club, according to their website. He was strictly a 20 meter CW operator and let me know when I had a key click problem. Believe me, I took care of that in a hurry, because I really respected this guy and he responded by taking me to my first SCDX club meeting. I was probably 15 and still remember the speaker at that meeting, who was non-other than VR6TC, Tommy Christian.

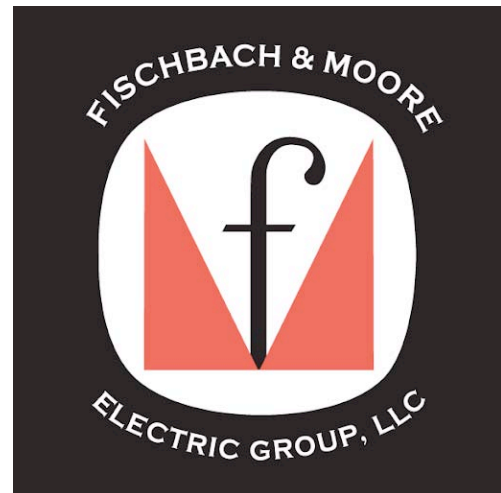
I became a member and maintained my membership through my college years, even though I could only attend the summer meetings from 1964 - 1966. Those were golden years for the Southern California membership. The call letters are familiar to anyone that contested and chased DX back in those years...W6AM, W6AOA, K6EVR, W6RW, W6VSS, W6YY...and there were some interesting kids then too, like WA6EPQ (now N6AR) and his brother WA6IPY, WA6GLD, K6QPH and so many more.

My first year in college was spent at Cal Poly, Pomona studying Electrical Engineering and, when my 1951 Ford was running, I'd come home on weekends. My entire 1963 Easter Vacation was spent building my first SSB rig, a Heathkit HX20. I worked a fair amount of DX during that time too. Just flipping through my logs for that school year, I see I worked YV0AC on Aves Island. Never got a QSL and sure need that QSL now!



After school let out for the summer, I spent several weeks looking for work and the best I could get was yard work at a buck an hour. One day, though, my father came home from work and told me that he had mentioned my summer job situation to a fellow he played cards with at lunch, and this fellow said that his father was an executive with a nation-wide electrical contracting firm called Fischbach and Moore and he'd check with him to see if anything might be available for me in the L.A. Area. Well, he'd checked with his father, and I was to go to Hollywood the next morning to interview for a summer job.

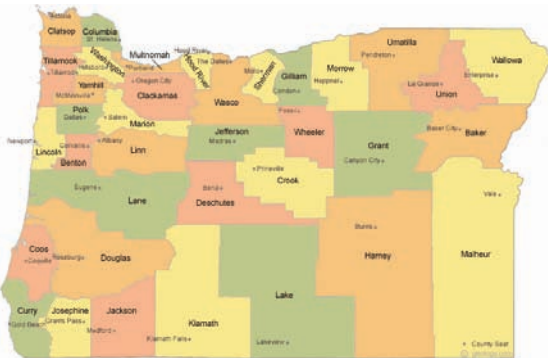
That next morning, I went to the interview and walked out with a job that paid me \$90/week, which was a phenomenal amount for a 17 year old kid in 1963. On top of that, the office I was to work out of for the next 3 summers was located across the street from the Desilu Studios at the intersection of Melrose and Gower. I look back over the 57 years since then and I still can't believe what a fabulous deal I got.



In the fall of 1963, I transferred to Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon. During a "lets get acquainted" session in the dormitory, I mentioned to group of fellows that "I was into Amateur Radio." This fellow, Rick Chace, turned around, and, in his best announcing voice said: "Well, I'm into PROFESSIONAL RADIO!" We all had a good laugh, but later that night, Rick took me to KLOO radio, where he was a part-time DJ, and introduced me to radio broadcasting, which was the beginning of my professional life in the broadcast industry.

During my college years, I was quite active while home for breaks and summer vacation, but did little operating during the school year. That changed in 1965, when I brought my home brew 4CX1000 linear to school with me and set it up in the fraternity for me and a couple of other fellow hams to use. I got the

“Additional Station License” WA7ANB, and again, just missing a K7 prefix, but the ANB suffix, just like W6ANB, who got me my Novice license, was incredible and was completely by chance. Many years later, I ended up getting my “club call,” WA7AN as an abbreviated version of that call and is the call I use for contesting in Arizona.



Except for some occasional DXing those last two years of college, I had time only to enter the second weekend of the 1966 ARRL CW DX contest and ended up winning the Oregon Division with the pathetic score of 26,928. I must have been the only entry from the entire state of Oregon that year. However, that was my first contest win and I still have the certificate!

By the time I graduated from college, I'd become heavily involved in radio and TV broadcasting. At my summer job, I had become the “expert” in broadcasting at the Hollywood office, so was flown to Quincy, Illinois to get data on audio equipment being built by the Gates Radio Company that was to be installed by F&M at the KABC radio studios in Los Angeles. While most of my Electrical Engineering classmates were getting jobs at companies like Tektronix and Motorola, I'd gotten hooked on the broadcasting business. The folks at Gates liked me, and soon I was invited to interview for a Junior Engineering position. The interview went well. They made an offer, which I accepted and, after finishing my degree requirements, moved to Quincy, Illinois in March of 1967.

The next two and a half years were almost completely empty of ham radio activity. I was working hard and living in apartments. When my WA6AYU license was due for renewal in 1969, I ended up with WB9DCI, which is a call sign that I never used on the air. In late 1969, I ended up with a transfer to Sacramento, California and another year in an apartment. When the year lease on the apartment was up, I went and bought my first house in nearby Rancho Cordova and would resume ham radio as WA6NYV in the fall of 1970.

I met my first wife Kaye 50 years ago this past July at a radio station birthday party for the infamous Don Imus, who was just on the second run of his professional life. Shortly after this party, Imus would move to Cleveland and then New York. Kaye and I would marry in 1971 and divorce 18 years later. My son John was born in 1972 and takes pretty good care of me these days, when I'm in Casper. We'll go hunting together in a few weeks.



Don Imus

My contesting moved into high gear, once I had my own place. HOA's and that nonsense hadn't come about yet, so I ended up with 80' of Rohn 25 with a lot of aluminum on top on a 7,300 square foot lot. During the next few years, I regularly won the ARRL Sacramento Valley Section in DX and Sweepstakes contests. In 1973, I won both the phone and CW awards for SV, and my phone performance won the entire Pacific Division.

In late 1975, I accepted a promotion to the company's Washington, D.C. Office and ended up moving back to the Quincy, Illinois headquarters after only 6 months of miserable commuting from Manassas, Virginia to the N.W. 15th & K Street office. In Quincy, I landed a full acre lot on the edge of town and there was plenty of room for antennas. In the Fall of 1976, I submitted my application for the K9DR call sign and about 6 weeks later, received a notice that, in effect, said to apply again and your check has been shredded. Needless to say, I was panicked, but re-applied and my K9DR call was dated February 25, 1977. It arrived after I'd finished the February CW and Phone weekends signing WA6NYV/9. I operated the March halves of the CW and Phone ARRL DX Contest as K9DR, but didn't submit logs.

In May of the following year, I moved my family to Casper, Wyoming and managed an AM/FM radio station combo. I did some contesting, but business kept getting in the way. My first Casper QTH was absolutely my best from a ham radio standpoint. While the lot was not huge, the finger of land it was

located on dropped off about 150' – 200' in all directions, except due south. That was the good news.

The bad news was that it only took a couple of months for the brutal Wyoming winds to cause the brand new 204BA to start losing element tips. This was before HyGain started recommending putting rope through your antenna's elements. Failure of this antenna left me with nothing but a trap vertical on my chain link fence and work became overwhelming. In late 1979, I decided I needed to build my own commercial FM broadcast station and K9DR became almost QRT for the next 19 years.

In February of 1980, I filed the Rule Making Petition to the FCC which ultimately led to my FM radio station KQLT signing on the air three and a half years later. During that waiting period, I built two FM stations for other folks and did some engineering for a local TV/AM radio combo. The FCC Construction Permit came during the summer of 1983 and would be my job 24/7/365 for the next 11 years.



Broadcasting and ham radio technology are essentially identical, except in terms of frequency, size and cost. My FM station used a 20 kW transmitter, which fed 300' of 4" Andrew HELIAX. (Note that HELIAX is in all caps. That was one of the first things taught to new Andrew employees during their orientation!) Up the tower, which is at the top of 8,000' Casper Mountain, was a 6 bay circularly polarized transmitting antenna. This antenna was all brass and included heating elements to keep it ice-free. The radio horizon from that site is about 120 miles in all directions. The site is usually snowed in from mid November until mid May, so I learned to hate snowmobiles. I developed a hernia from getting my snowmobile unstuck many times!

In August of 1994, I'd had enough fun being a small market radio station owner and sold it. I then began an equipment rep firm, selling radio broadcast equipment

throughout the Rocky Mountain states. This is how I met Glen Swiderski, W7GS, who briefly got me back into contesting. At his invitation, he and I operated his station in Buffalo, Wyoming in the 1998 ARRL CW DX Contest. Surprise-surprise...we won the Wyoming Section! The bug bit me hard, but financial realities forced me to QSY from Wyoming to the Chicago area the following year, when I started work at the Andrew Corporation HQ in Orland Park. My first boss at Andrew was Barry, N2BJ, an active contester that I'm certain many of you have worked.

My duties at Andrew involved the sale and manufacture of high power television transmitting antennas for the U.S. TV broadcasting industry, which was going through the transition from analog to digital during my tenure there. My Facebook picture was taken when I was on the roof of the Sears Building with a crew taking measurements for a new system which we built for WSNS-TV. As this was one of the most exotic systems we built, I thought it might be of interest.



First of all, the system had to handle incredible power, because it took the combined power of a 120 kW (Peak of sync) Channel 44 (650 – 656 MHz) transmitter and 100 kW (average power) channel 45 (656 – 662 MHz) digital transmitter. The combined powers were fed to the roof of the Sears Building via WR1500 waveguide. At the roof, a custom splitter took the waveguide and divided the power to two 8" 50 Ohm rigid coax lines. One ran to the east pylon and one to the west, where they fed power to two very custom side-mounted UHF antennas.

These antennas were of the "slot" type, roughly 40' long and made of 8" - 12" O.D. Brass tubing. One was horizontally polarized and the other included vertical

