

P49Y March 2024 WPX SSB Trip Notes

ALF

4/17/24

Tuesday, March 26, 2024 – Wednesday, March 27, 2024. Took my usual AA redeye leaving SFO at 2210 to MIA. Had just one suitcase, about 2/3 full, plus my fanny pack and backpack. The plan is to come back with a smaller suitcase containing the RF deck for the KPA 1500, with the PS in the large suitcase – which is how I brought it down in Feb for ARRL CW. There was very little traffic, and Anza Parking and TSA were very quick, so I arrived in the Admirals Club with about 2 hours to kill. Had a small dinner of corn chowder and a banana. I'm planning to do a 24-hour Classic entry, so didn't need to bring anything for CW or a second radio. Had a busy day at work, so I'm hoping to get a reasonable night's sleep on the plane.

Got in a bit after 4, as the plane was delayed 2 ½ hours in MIA to change a flat tire. Checked antennas, all seemed to be fine, including the SteppIR. Went running at 6:30 from our roundabout. Many people out walking and running in very pleasant temp, about 80 with relatively low humidity. People smile and say “bon tardi” (in the morning they say “bon dia”). Dinner from Taco Bell takeout. Felt sleepier than normal.

Thursday, March 28, 2024. A very nice sleep, just running the a/c in the radio room for the whole house until 8:24 a.m. Off to Lings for a relatively mild \$120 shopping trip and back home through O'stad with three cruise ships in port and lots of passengers walking around, but traffic wasn't bad. After breakfast of frosted wheats and coffee and half a banana, set up the computer on the radio room desk in front of the second radio, using the monitor and wireless keyboard in front of the radio. No extra table this time, though later I brought in the small table from the living room that holds the pot for artificial flowers – good for glasses of water and OJ during the contest. Went running at the airport then back home. Ran some guys but bands in terrible shape until late afternoon, when 15 opened up and then 20 after dinner. Lisandro said it was a solar flair, which gradually got better, till no traces were left by the time the contest started.

Dinner with Lissette and Lisandro at the Sushi Factory in Santa Cruz. Another 50-pc combo plate—excellent sushi, then got back on the air. Doug, K1DG, suggested my audio was too bassy. Spent some time readjusting from John's settings. Found that the critical one seemed to be the 400 Hz slider. After much fiddling, ended up with the 100 Hz and 200 Hz sliders set at -6 db, 400 Hz at -4 db, and the others all at +16 db. You can check by putting the radio in TEST mode and playing recorded messages while fiddling with the sliders. To bed at 11:20 or so for a very good night's sleep.

Friday, March 29, 2024. Coffee and a roll with jam and cream cheese for breakfast. Bands seem to have recovered, and 10 is wide open to Europe. I walked out into the cunucu to admire the vertical and the inv vee John has put up in the cunucu. Then a bit of radio.

Contest Notes.

The contest starts badly, not like my 260 first hour in 2018 on 20. The band is crowded and for the first two hours on 20 it sounds like guys are squealing high-pitched interference in my ears as

I try to pull through stations. Stay on 20 for 2 hours then to 40. Better there, many more points per hour. First break at 0149 (5:47 hours of activity). Now at 398 on 20, 513 on 40, total 912 x 490 for 2.057M points.

Sleep till about 0645 local then have some coffee and a macaroon for breakfast. Get on 15 for 347 Qs then 10 for 373 till a break at 1554Z, total is 1631 QSOs by 763 mults for 4.839M points after 9:58 hours on the air. There seem to be more mults available this year, partly perhaps because the Russians are active and workable. Also Ukrainians; in fact, UX5UO, Gennady, calls in and I thank him for printing my QSL cards. Having some dqrm on 10 that comes and goes. It's mostly single or warbling signals. Later, on Sunday someone actually starts playing on my freq what sounds like an old radio broadcasting program talking about the growth of some kind of popular music. I work through it for a while, but eventually give up and QSY, and it doesn't follow me. I'm generally using the large JK 10/15 yagi pointed to EU but switching back and forth from it to the SteppIR, which seems particularly helpful on 10. I make many hundreds, maybe thousands of Qs on the SteppIR over the weekend. Pointing the Mid-Tri to the US isn't as good for receiving as the SteppIR due to a higher noise level on the Mid-Tri for some reason.

I have a long run on 10 all on the same frequency, 28311.7, which start out clear and has some intermittent problems. Now breaking for dinner at 1744 local with 14:06 on the clock. The total on 10 is now 1158 and the overall contact total is 2416 by 954 for 8.22M points. I have been using the big ant to EU. At times near the end I find if I go to the 180 deg position on the SteppIR for SA it doesn't help because the noise increases, though often it does pull a weak SA out of the noise. I've been getting calls from G and JA on it. Lots of fun for the last hour or two.

After I leave 15 after getting back on I try 20 and 40 with no real results, then I check 15 and hear JP working guys, so I go there and have a very nice pileup until I decide to call it a day at 2246 local, with 17:56 on the clock (i.e., 6 hours to go). As mentioned below, this was lots of fun and included a number of JAs. Totals now are 10-40: 1158, 870, 515, 522, totaling 3065 QSOs by 1063 mults for 11,217,839 points. Many JAs but very hard to work as generally they are all weak and it's hard to pull out even a part of a call. The SteppIR did a great job on 10 and helped on 15, but was not as useful there.

A nice sleep till 0730 local or so, wasn't going to get on yet, but after coffee and cereal checked 10 and heard some Caribs working NA so decided to give it a try; got on for 3 hours and made almost 500 Qs.

Now have exactly 3 hours left at 1604Z at 1661 on 10. Total is 3568 by 1114 for 13.390M Mostly NA, a few Greece and several YBs. Using 6 el mostly but also SteppIR. I generally had the mono pointed to EU. John later said that I wasn't very loud to the US. Maybe should have used the Mid-Tri pointed NW, but that seemed to be too noisy – it might have worked better for transmitting, though not for receiving.

Conditions were much worse on Sunday in the sense that there was less EU. For me that really didn't affect the rate as it was about the same to the US. However, it did mean fewer prefixes, as new ones came up more rapidly with EU than with US. My goal was to hit 4,000 QSOs, and I did so in the last hour, and in the last five minutes barely broke 16 million points.

Then hang out, a relatively short run, and McD takeout for dinner, with a Frangelico nightcap.

Monday, April 1, 2024. After a great night's sleep, I compose and send off a relatively brief 3830 report. Read, have a long call with John. Decide to take both of our small suitcases (the ones I had brought the K4 and the KPA1500 to Aruba in) back, but no radio or amp. One suitcase will fit inside the large suitcase, and one will be a carry on. John has the red Pitaya set up producing spots. All very clever. Went for a hot run at about 2 then a chocolate shake at the Ritz. Had to sit down for a few minutes after getting out of the car, as the blood pooled in my feet. Dinner at PF Changs with JP and Cris. JP did really well as a 15m single band: 3400 Qs and 12.7M points. He commented on the number of Asian stations worked, and I had the same experience, including lots of YBs. He worked 119 DXCC countries. This is a holiday in Aruba, the Monday after Easter. I told them it's a state holiday in CA also, but not for Easter – it's Cesar Chavez day observed.

3830 Report

CQWW WPX Contest, SSB - 2024

Call: P49Y
Operator(s): AE6Y
Station: P49Y

Class: SOAB HP
Class Overlay: Classic
QTH: Aruba
Operating Time (hrs): 24

Summary:

Band QSOs

160:
80:
40: 521
20: 513
15: 1350
10: 1647

Total: 4021 Prefixes = 1192 Total Score = 16,027,632

Club: Northern California Contest Club

Comments:

This was a Classic operation: 24 hours, one radio, no internet. Lots of interesting conditions. The most fun was Saturday night a little before 0200Z.

I had found no traction at all on 20 or 40, so turned to 15. That band seemed pretty dead, but I heard Aruban neighbor Jean-Pierre, P43A, on the band working mostly NA. So I started calling CQ, and had a very enjoyable run of about 160 QSOs for an hour, including a number of JAs. I had to cut it short out of a desire to preserve operating hours for Sunday -- one of the tactical tradeoffs that the Classic category demands.

Thanks to everyone for the Qs. And particular thanks to co-owner John, W6LD, P40L, for all his work on the house and the station, along with Ed, W0YK, P49X. They set up some very convenient antenna switching that facilitated my extensive use of our little two-element SteppIR. It's fixed N-S at 35 feet, and was very helpful, particularly on 10, as its broader pattern allowed a range of stations to be heard when the 6-el was sharply focused in one particular direction. Being able to reverse the pattern when called by a weak SA station is also useful.

Thanks also, as always, to JP, P43A, and Cris, P43C for all their house maintenance.

More details will be on our website at www.arubaqth.com. This is the station's 201st contest.

73, Andy, AE6Y, P49Y.

Station (all towers on a 100x100' lot):

Rohn 45 tower (66'): Single boom 2-element shortened 40m interlaced with 4-element 20m (68') (JK2040, long-boom version); 2 el. SteppIR at 35 feet.

North Rohn 25 tower (56'): Single boom 5-element 15 interlaced with 6-element 10 (58') (JK1015 configured for dual feed)

South Rohn 25 tower (45.5'): Tri-bander (JK Mid-tri)

Receiving antennas: 4 Beverages controlled by K9AY 2x8 switchbox: JA/West-US (800'), East US (500'), EU (800') and East-West (AF and OC) (350')

Rig: K4D

Amplifier: KPA1500

Logging: CQPWIN ver. 14.0

QSO TOTALS BY BAND PER HOUR

Hour	10	15	20	40	All	Cum.	Pts	Pts/Q	Pfxs	Off>10
0	--	--	195	--	195	195	581	2.98	152	--
1	--	--	178	--	178	373	530	2.98	112	--
2	--	--	25	148	173	546	931	5.38	73	--
3	--	--	--	141	141	687	834	5.91	76	--
4	--	--	--	135	135	822	802	5.94	44	--
5	--	--	--	89	89	911	520	5.84	33	12
6	--	--	--	--	--	911	--	--	--	60
7	--	--	--	--	--	911	--	--	--	60
8	--	--	--	--	--	911	--	--	--	60
9	--	--	--	--	--	911	--	--	--	60
10	--	--	--	--	--	911	--	--	--	60
11	--	58	--	--	58	969	171	2.95	33	41
12	--	168	--	--	168	1137	500	2.98	65	--
13	37	121	--	--	158	1295	471	2.98	66	--
14	182	--	--	--	182	1477	544	2.99	69	--
15	154	--	--	--	154	1631	459	2.98	40	7
16	--	--	--	--	--	1631	--	--	--	60

17	73	--	--	--	73	1704	214	2.93	24	35
18	186	--	--	--	186	1890	549	2.95	49	--
19	189	--	--	--	189	2079	553	2.93	41	--
20	185	--	--	--	185	2264	526	2.84	40	--
21	152	--	--	--	152	2416	434	2.86	37	16
22	--	13	--	--	13	2429	37	2.85	2	56
23	--	227	--	--	227	2656	661	2.91	39	--
0	--	123	25	--	148	2804	442	2.99	19	--
1	--	24	92	9	125	2929	388	3.10	20	--
2	--	136	--	--	136	3065	406	2.99	29	13
3	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
4	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
5	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
6	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
7	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
8	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
9	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
10	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
11	--	--	--	--	--	3065	--	--	--	60
12	5	--	--	--	5	3070	15	3.00	--	57
13	144	--	--	--	144	3214	419	2.91	16	--
14	186	--	--	--	186	3400	542	2.91	15	--
15	161	--	--	--	161	3561	470	2.92	18	--
16	7	--	--	--	7	3568	21	3.00	2	57
17	--	--	--	--	--	3568	--	--	--	60
18	--	82	--	--	82	3650	244	2.98	17	32
19	--	157	--	--	157	3807	466	2.97	29	--
20	--	170	--	--	170	3977	495	2.91	22	--
21	--	77	--	--	77	4054	221	2.87	10	29
22	--	--	--	--	--	4054	--	--	--	60
23	--	--	--	--	--	4054	--	--	--	60

Tot	1661	1356	515	522			13446	3.32	1192	23:55
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Hrs	RATES PER BAND				OVERALL		
	9:19	7:49	3:03	3:48	23:59		
Q/H	178	173	168	137	169		
P/H	521	511	501	805	560		
QSOs	10	15	20	40	80	160	
US	957	708	247	338	0	0	2250 (55.50%)
VE	51	85	28	31	0	0	195 (4.81%)
NA	19	18	9	20	0	0	66 (1.63%)
AF	3	8	2	2	0	0	15 (0.37%)
JA	8	41	0	0	0	0	49 (1.21%)
AS	17	29	25	3	0	0	74 (1.83%)
EU	546	429	195	108	0	0	1278 (31.52%)
OC	16	10	3	3	0	0	32 (0.79%)
SA	43	27	4	16	0	0	90 (2.22%)