

Nov 24 CQWW CW P49Y Trip Notes

ALF

12/08/24

Tuesday, Nov. 19- Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2024. The schedule for this trip involved an 11:59 p.m. flight from SFO to MIA, then an uncharacteristically short 2-hour layover before a 1025 flight to AUA. Partly due to having a medical procedure done last week, I had decided to travel light, and not to bring my K4 in a carry-on suitcase. For the same reason, I generally felt weak and rundown for virtually the entire trip. I did bring cables and Winkeyer in the green backpack, and nonessential radio stuff in a suitcase (most of which was filled up with stuff for Lissette, including two wedding dresses and pairs of high-heeled shoes). Also a bunch of small parts for JP from Mouser.

I'm planning to do a classic operation, so will just use the shack K3/P3. I spent some time relearning how to program the K-Pod so that I can use one-button switching from Run to S&P AGC settings. I've been very busy at work lately, so have not really psyched myself up for this trip.

Arrival was on time, and la Bella Carolina at Hertz had a nice, red Kia Rio for me. The cottage looked great. Had some problems getting on the Wi-Fi and ended up using the Arris Wi-Fi, not the old Linksys, using the default password on the information sheets near the modem in the bedroom. Then MS Office wouldn't work. At first that was a setting that the IT guys had used to disable foreign sign-ins, then it turned out that using MS Edge instead of Firefox or Chrome did the trick – wow, talk about an anticompetitive practice...

At about 5 went for probably the slowest run ever in Aruba, from our roundabout up to the new bridge and back. Felt miserable. Wx was pleasant, maybe 82 or so and not very humid. No cause for much sweating. Before that I hooked up all the antennas and verified that they all seemed to work. With one radio, the switching is clear, though it took a while to get my head back wrapped around it. One unit switches between SixPak 1 and SixPak 2. The first is basically our old monobanders, while the second merely accesses the Mid-Tri and the SteppIR, selected by a rotary switch.

Dinner with John Crovelli at Urataka, very good pizza though it was a long time coming – they seem to be very busy every night.

Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024. Went to bed last night at 10 and slept till about 7:30, then some coffee helped revive me. That's about all there is in the house to eat.

Spent about an hour hooking up the computer to the radio:

- 1) As previously, I disconnected John's y-cable from the P3 and instead went back to the old way: a serial cable from P3 to computer and a serial to RJ45 from P3 to radio. Worked fine.
- 2) I was not using the DX Doubler, so headphones and mic to back panel (menu for mic RPH, no bias). Set up the little Sony recorder just using the front headphone jack, for convenience.
- 3) Winkeyer to 4-port usb to serial connector as at home.
- 4) Computer was set up next to the door on one of the end tables from the second br.
- 5) Video using old HP monitor with serial to HDMI converter. Trying to change laptop resolution made a mess – best to leave it alone. Using Logitech wireless keyboard and mouse. Worked perfectly.
- 6) Here are the Kpod macros for tap functions 1-8. Never used c, d, or g. The others frequently.
 - a. RUN AGC
 MN017;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;DN;UP;UP
 ;MN074;MP015;MN255;
 - i. Sets AGC SLP to 2: AGC THR to 12
 - b. S&P AGC
 MN017;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;UP;DN;DN;DN
 ;MN074;MP005;MN255;
 - i. Sets AGC SLP to 12: AGC THR to 5
 - ii. Note that AGC THR can be set directly using the MP command, but AGC SLP cannot.
 - c. SUB RX SWT48;
 - d. A/B SWT11;
 - e. RATE SWT50;
 - f. RIT ON RT1;KPLED4ON
 - g. RIT OFF RT0;KPLED4OFF
 - h. RIT CLR RC;

To Ling's on the new freeway for a \$125 shopping trip. Had to buy some basics, as the refrigerator had been cleaned out of the normal leftover beer, soda etc., presumably by the kids who had broken in to set up a PlayStation club right after John left. Then to Cris and JP's to give JP the Mouser parts he had ordered and to talk about the situation. Cris came over at 1:30 and at 6 to assist me in talking to the grandmother of the miscreant next door, but each time the place seemed deserted, so we will do it later.

Another late afternoon run, at about the same pace as yesterday, but I felt lots better and this time made it up all the way to the Santa Cruz roundabout.

In between spent a bit of time on 10 and 15 dialing in the K3 settings , setting CQPWIN to recognize that local time is 4 hours behind Zulu time, not 8 as in CA, etc. That would be an annoying lapse to discover during the contest.

Dinner with Lisandro and Lissette, after Lissette picked up all the stuff I had transported for her. We went to the Sushi Factory in Santa Cruz again, which now has an expanded menu including Poke bowls. All three of us had a poke bowl and non-alcoholic drinks. Lissette and Lisandro have both lost a lot of weight and look great, so we are now eating less, skipping alcohol and dessert.

Friday, Nov. 22, 2024. Up at 7:40 or so and breakfast was a bowl of frosted flakes (used to be called zucartas here, but no longer), my Aruban vice.

Hung around, ran some guys on 10 but felt very lethargic and needed frequent breaks due to the medical procedure. Am a bit worried about how I'll hold up during the contest. To McD drive-thru for a quarter pounder with cheese meal for lunch.

Checked the Sony manual on line to see how to clear the recorder and set it up to go. The menu system is highly opaque. The model is ICD – PX333.

Contest Notes. Start on 20 for about two hours, as 40 sounded like an absolute zoo – very crowded with strong EU signals. First break at 0731 tired after pileups on 40. Totals are 20:400/60/24; 40:252/58/14; 80: 261/40/13; 160: 63/10/7. Note no EUs on 160.

The first hour is my best of the contest at 199 QSOs. The 1900Z hour is 197 on 10, second best. I'm disappointed not to have 200+ hours, but this year the combination of unruly EU pileups and my own tiredness and need to take frequent breaks seem to conspire against me. At the end of the second hour I tune around on 20 and get 13 more mults. Interestingly, the final rate is within one QSO per hour of the rate in 2014, when the score was 10% higher, due to more mults.

Good run on 20 with the main ant pointed NW Fri evening. JAs were clear and runnable. Saturday night by contrast, their signals were fluttery and uneven leading to it being a waste of time even to try to decode the callsigns

Break at 1612Z. Totals are : 10:304/52/13; 15: 265/54/15; 20:406/60/24. Total is 1674/284/93 for 1,867,281 points.

Saturday night on 15 looking for mults. At 0157 find BY, ZL7, ZL, CX, LU, FW. Turned main ant to SW for the Pacific mults and the SteppIR to the south for the SA ones. Got Pacific and Zone 13 (LU). Also then on 160. Very noisy, on 3810 but suddenly heard faintly MW5B and

easily made the QSO. Then work more EUs, some barely audible: EA, 9A, CN, YL, EI, LY, SM, LA, SP, F. Then pull the switch at 0244 (2244 local) to go to bed. I don't bother getting up and looking for mults during the night. Totals then are 2611/465 = 3.56M points.

Back on at 1425 to start some runs. I have a little less than 6 hours left. I don't move anyone in the contest, but am asked and agree to move for P44W and also EF6T (who cleverly moves me twice to his alternate 2BSIQ frequency). I work several zone 1, 2, and 40 stations on 10 and 15, wrongly assume I'll get them on 20, and end up missing all three on that band – definitely should have moved them.

Monday, Nov. 25, 2024. Up a bit before 8 after a night interrupted with many breaks. Took a quick shave and shower and felt more human to meet John and Lisandro at Huchadas for a post-contest breakfast. John did very well in HP assisted, making over 12M points.

Mostly vegetated in the house the rest of the day, and even canceled dinner with JP and Cris due to feeling blah. Also had two work zoom calls from 8 to 9 p.m. (i.e., 4-5 p.m. in CA). Visited by Marty KE4TT, who is on Aruba for a month and had contacted me by email to see the station. Then clean up, get some medical supplies at the Botica in S Cruz. Sent off a brief report to 3830. Tried to hook up John's Ring phone, but it is trying to connect to the Linksys unsuccessfully; ultimately, though I can get the Ring app working, it won't let me connect to it, as it is registered to John.

Tuesday Nov. 26, 2024. Left for the airport for my 1451 flight to CLT several hours early, thinking that I didn't want to stand in the long afternoon lines at customs or security. Stopped to fill up at the gas station in Santa Cruz, then dropped off my Hertz car with La Bella Carolina. There were no lines at the airport, but getting there early was a good idea, as the lady at U.S. Customs asked me if I had had any medical procedures done in the last 60 days (a question I had never before been asked). I said I had, and she asked me to wait for "special treatment". A very pleasant customs officer said I had set off the radiation detectors. Fortunately, I had brought with me the letter from Dr. Agarwal explaining the procedure and even an image of the radioactive pellets. After a while checking with various people, he actually used a handheld machine that verified the existence of the correct isotope causing the radiation and showed it was consistent with my explanation, so they let me go. I'm very glad I had brought along the documentation. After a 4-hour flight to CLT and a 6-hour flight to SFO, finally home circa 1 a.m. (to get ready to fly to Portland the same afternoon for Thanksgiving).

3830 Report

Call: P49Y

Operator(s): AE6Y

Station: P49Y

Class: SOAB HP

Class Overlay: Classic

QTH: Aruba

Operating Time (hrs): 24

Location: South America

Summary:

Band	QSOs	Zones	Countries
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160:	104	9	22
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80:	261	13	40
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40:	479	23	71
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20:	800	29	78
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15:	699	29	81
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10:	1063	23	71
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Total:	3406	126	363	Total Score	4,915,428
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[Note that the log submission software scored my log about 20k points higher than did CQPWIN – presumably due to counting TO4A as FM, whereas my program leaves it unassigned.]

Club: Northern California Contest Club

Comments:

Well, that was an interesting contest. Everything worked well except the operator, who had, due to a recent medical procedure, to take frequent breaks. Score is down a bit from my best (first time, in 2014), mainly due to fewer mults.

160 and 80 were quite noisy, and it was surprising actually to work some EUs on 160 Saturday night -- barely audible, but clearly making good QSOs.

The only other off note was the unruly EU pileups. I'm not sure if it's just that I have less tolerance (or concentration) than I used to, but they seemed worse than usual, with it often being difficult due to incessant calling to winnow the pack down to just the one station you want to work

As usual, nice to socialize with friends on Aruba, including Lisandro (P43L) and XYL Lissette, John (W2GD, P44W), and Cris (P43C) and JP (P43A) who do a great job of taking care of the house. And as always, thanks to co-owner John, W6LD, P40L, for his devotion to keeping everything shipshape here.

Rig: K3/P3; KPA 1500

Ant: 6 el 10, 5 el 15, 4 el 20, 2 el 40, inv vee 80, vert dipole 160,

2el SteppIR fixed N-S, JK Mid-Tri, beverages.
Software: CQPWIN ver. 15.0