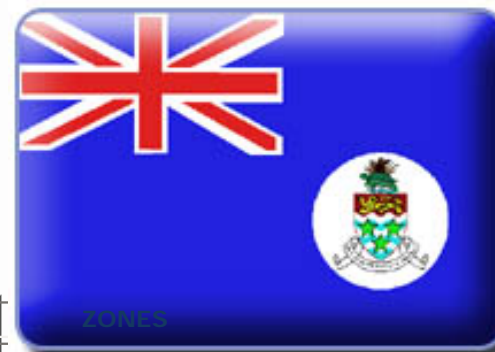


K9PG as ZF2NT , ARRL DX SSB 2001 SOAB HP

By Paul Gentry, K9PG

The idea for this trip came around when I dropped Bruce an email on January 24, 2001 asking him if I could come down. I remember reading after last year s DX SSB contest that he will never do a SSB Contest again, so I figured it can t hurt to ask! After finding some flights that would allow me to get there on Frequent Flier Miles, and getting a flight booked on the puddle jumper from Grand Cayman to Little Cayman, I was all set to go!



BAND	QSO	QSO.PTS	PTS/QSO	ZONES
160	118	118	354	47
80	410	409	1227	58
40	513	512	1536	59
20	2153	2145	6435	61
15	2035	2028	6084	61
10	3630	3608	10824	61
Totals	8859	8820	26460	347

Total Score	9,181,620
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This was the first time that I've ever done a DX Contest SOAB High Power from the DX Side. The only other SOAB that I've done was in 1996 in the ARRL DX CW contest from FS5PL when I was Low Power. Otherwise, I've always been a part of multi ops. I really didn't know what to expect in this one, although I did think that 8000 Qs and 330 mults would have been a top-notch job.

I left Chicago at 10pm on Wednesday night after a 90 min delay. Arrived in Miami around 1:30am or so. Grabbed a taxi for what I thought was going to be a quick 10 minute ride to the hotel, and that turned into a 30 minute joy ride in an attempt to milk a dumb out-of-towner for some extra cash. That turned into just a nice sight seeing tour because I only paid him \$10.

Finally got to the hotel, signed onto the internet right away to find KL2A hanging out waiting for me to check in. I gave him my phone #, he called me and we talked strategy. I really didn't know what to expect, as I have never done this before. One of the best SSB ops that I know, K5TR, won this contest in 2000 with just over 7400 Qs, so I thought that might be a good # to shoot for.



I went to bed filled with the nervous excitement that everyone has felt at one time or another when going off on a new journey. I woke up about 3 hours before my flight and the same nervous excitement that I fell asleep with was back. How would I do? What will conditions be like? Will everything work? Will I blow something up? Will I get a 400 hour for the first time? How many Qs will I have in the first 6 hours? Contests are often decided within the first several hours, so getting off to a big start is crucial. So many thoughts race through one's mind.

The trip to Little Cayman was uneventful. I arrived around 4pm on Thursday. Upon approach to the gravel runway, I saw Bruce's tower. He was sitting there at the airport, which consisted of a small shack no bigger than an average sized kitchen. We got in his Blue 1970 VW Bus and went right to the house.

He had some beef stew cooking... smelled great! Talk got around to strategy and competition. The only other single ops that I knew of that were going high power were P40V and PJ2T (with K6RO at the mic), so I knew that I had my hands full.

Later that night, I was working 160 CW on Thursday night when P40W calls in. I knew that he was going to do this contest, but I'd read that he was planning a low power or QRP effort, so he wasn't much of a concern. We QSYed to SSB on 1848, where he tells me that he lugged the amp down with him and that he's going to do High Power because low power wasn't as fun. Obviously, this worried me, while at the same time, it kind of pumped me up. John and I met in 1993 at Dayton and have gotten to be pretty good friends. He's been at this game for more years than I've been alive (well, almost anyway) and has won just about every contest known to man. If I could beat this guy, who is in the CQ Contest Hall Of Fame, then I've really accomplished something! Deep inside me, I thought that was pretty unlikely. I'd need a nearly flawless contest to and need to stay up the entire time to even have a remote chance at that happening.

My plan was to stay up as late as possible on Thursday night and then sleep in as late as possible on Friday. That was about the extent of my preparedness to stay up the entire time. I'm no expert at this part and should have asked some of the guys who do it all the time how they do it, as well as doing more reading on it. Next time.



As you can see from my Rate Sheet, my first 4 hours were pretty good. While talking to P40W before the contest, I told him that I want a 400 hour, and I got it! My best 60 minute period was 408, and was actually during the second hour and had a band change within it. I think that it's safe to say that you could add another half dozen Qs to that total if you take into account the time it took to find a freq on 20.

At 0400z, I got a report from a friend that told me P40W had 1200 Qs. At that time, I had 1455. John stopped by on 160m at 0818z asking how I was doing. I was reluctant to tell him how many I had, but he told me he had 2400 Qs. I



don't remember exactly how many Qs I told him that I had at that time, but I had just passed the 2300 mark.

The first day ended with 5419 Qs in the log, including dupes.

When the second 24 hours started, I felt like adding 2/3 more QSOs to the current QSO Total would be good. It also became very apparent I would definitely have to sleep for a while. Throughout the early evening on 20 meters, I was slurring my speech, fumbling over call signs and generally sounding like someone who is very tired; and that I was. I am no expert on staying up the entire 48 hours, but I do remember reading K5ZD's article about sleeping in 90 minute increments. So, when 0800 came around, I worked W2GDJ (and signed off for what I thought would be a quick 90 minute nap. I set the alarm for 0945z (4:45am local) and put the clock right by my head. The next thing I remember is opening my eyes and seeing the clock say 6:11am (1111z). Oppss...overslept just a bit, but the first thing that I can remember thinking is that I got two 90 minute sleep cycles. I lay there for a few minutes waking up and was ready to go again.

It turns out that that 3 hour nap was the best thing that I could have done. I was completely out of it when I went to sleep. I was falling over in the chair, and even losing my balance when I was standing up operating which I did a lot of and helped me stay awake the last 24 hours of the contest. If I didn't sleep at all, I'm not sure how effective I would have been.

It was just past sunrise and I went to 80 meters thinking that the east coast guys were starting to work Europe on the higher bands, and it was still dark in the western portion of zone 5 and also in the Midwest. During that run, P40W stopped by again. I didn't write down the exact # that he gave me as his Q Total, but it was somewhere around the 5300 mark. At that time, I just past 6600, but I didn't let him know.

I was still really tired the first few hours after I woke up, but I gradually started feeling better as the day went on. With about 3 or 4 hours left to go, I started getting tired again and operated mostly standing up, jumping up and down trying to stay awake. While it really didn't wake me up any more, it did manage to keep me more aware. I blew quite a few calls and exchanges and had to ask for several repeats. I did have a horrible time saying ZF2NT both with and without phonetics. Thank goodness that I brought a DVS-2! I don't want to think what it'd have been like without that. Thanks to NA9D for loaning it to me about 6 hours before departure!

It sure was great to have guys like N6MJ, N6RT, N5TJ, N5RZ, K5KA and a whole host of members of the contest organization that I belong to, The Society Of Midwest Contesters, stop by and pump me up. Even Thanks to each and every one of you





And a HUGE thanks to ZF2NT himself! Bruce is nothing short of amazing. Building a home might not seem like that big of a deal to some, but Bruce has done everything by himself, or at least 95% of it. It is truly amazing to see the incredible job that he has done so far on his home. It is still very much under construction, but you would never know that he has never done any sort of construction project like this before. Please stop by his web site at www.qsl.net/zf2nt and take a look at the place.

Thanks to everyone for all the Qs!

QSL Via G3SWH



ZF2NT Information