

SSB
INDIANA
W910P

CANAL ZONE
KZ50P
CW



1964 ARRL SWEEPSTAKES TEST

KZ50P

W9I0P

C-W

SSB

To radio W9VNE confirming two-way communications in 1964 ARRL SS Contest. Activity from Indiana at W9I0P home Qth. Activity in C.Z. at Qth of KZ5LT/TT.

Equipment: Collins 32S3 Transmitter plus 516F-2 power supply.

Receiver Collins 75S3-B.

Hallicrafters T O keyer.

Electro-Voice 729 cardioid microphone.

Antennas all Hy-Gain. 3.5MC 2BDQ Doublet; 7-MC 402B 2-element rotary; 14 and 21-MC TH-4 Tribander.

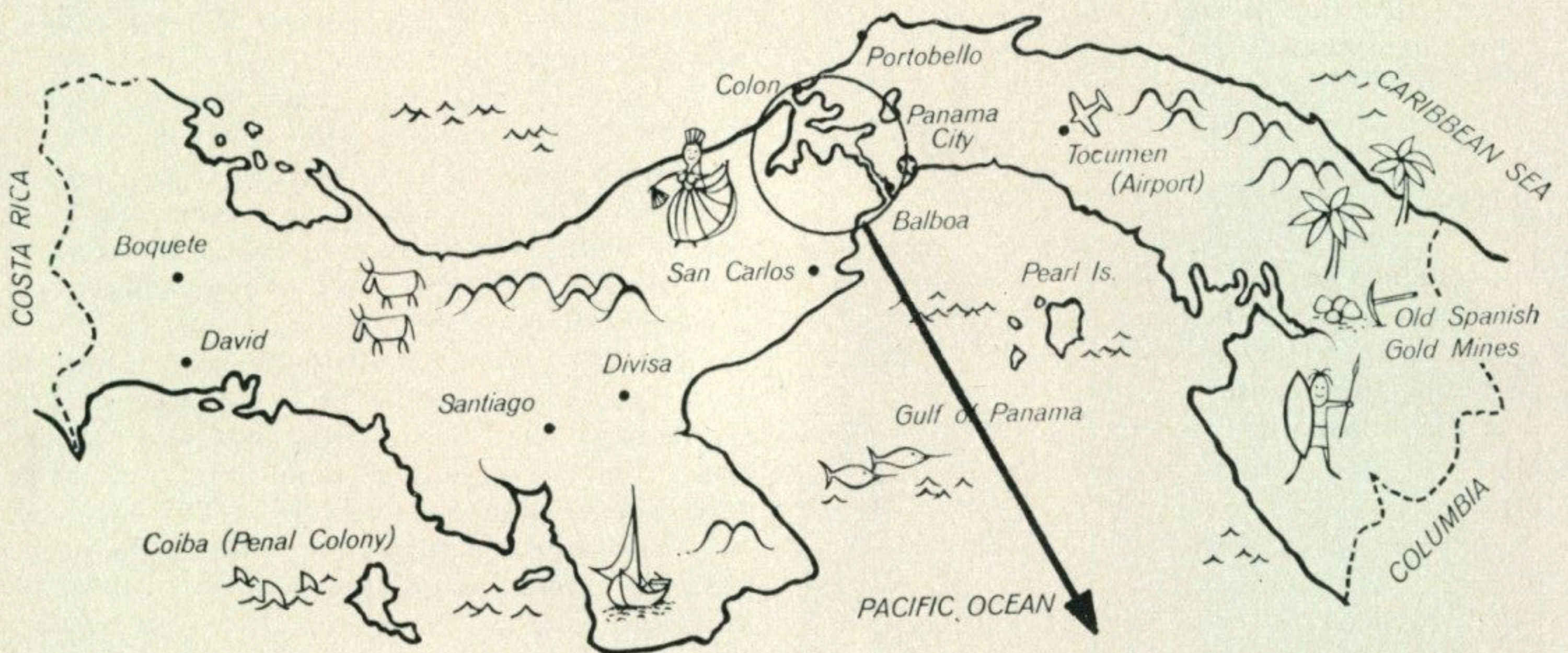
Please QSL this contest QSO. 73

Larry LeKashman
W9I0P/KZ50P
3019 York Road
St. Joseph County
South Bend 14, Indiana

[Handwritten signature]

TX ONLY SBN QSO

SWEEPSTAKES EXPEDITION



TO THE CANAL ZONE

BY LARRY LEKASHMAN,* W9IOP

TWENTY-FIVE hundred miles from South Bend, Indiana, a tiny American escape-ment, surrounded by a less than enthusiastic native population, is about as unlikely a spot for an A.R.R.L. sweepstake section as one can imagine, especially if you make a trip specifically to get on the air from it. What at least some Panamanians lack in hospitality and goodwill, is more than made up by those hams I met during my brief trip to Panama. This story is about a rare experience which, perhaps, can be shared to some extent with the many hams who would like to make such a trip but have not.

An amateur does not necessarily have to be interested in the sweepstakes contest to find this chronicle of ham radio in Central America interesting, but it was the sweepstakes contest, itself, with its significant multiplier for the amateur who works all sections that resulted in this trip. Bob Douglas, W5GEL, and myself both have been keenly interested in the SS contest for many years. During the industry trade show in May of 1964, Bob and I talked about the interesting possibilities of making a trip to Canal Zone to operate in the sweepstakes contest. We visualized such an expedition, if expedition is the proper description, as combining much of the lure of a DX trip with the interesting advantage of being much sought after by sweepstakes contestants. Airplane service to the Canal Zone or the adjacent country of Panama is good, and, most important, we did not visualize any difficulty in getting permission to operate from American controlled territory.

Subsequent to our meeting in Chicago, I contacted the FCC and was advised that jurisdiction for amateur radio is in the hands of the military government of the Canal Zone. Inquiries on the part of Bob Douglas were discouraging in respect to accommodations. There is a single hotel in the Canal Zone, itself. Most of the accommodations are in the Republic of Panama which, of course, would not be eligible for the SS contest even if they would grant us permission to operate. A pleasant idea seemed to be going the way of many similar plans until a fortuitous contact between W5GEL and KZ5TT. KZ5TT, a comparatively new amateur, was intrigued by the idea of such a trip and immediately got on the telephone to make inquiries about our actually getting set up at the Hotel Tivoli in the Canal Zone and to determine what problems we would



Larry, W9IOP/KZ5OP, at the operating position in the Canal Zone.

*V.P. Sales, Electro-Voice, Buchanan, Michigan, 49107.

have with license requirements. Just prior to this contact, I had written to the Commanding General of the Canal Zone and received a pleasant reply, sending a number of applications to be filled out in great detail which included some unanswerable questions such as the name of our "sponsor" entering into the Canal Zone.

In his helpful zeal, KZ5TT was aided and abetted by KZ5LT, who happens to be the administrative assistant to the chief communications officer in the Canal Zone, responsible for the issuance of amateur licenses as one of the less important of their innumerable duties. In a matter of a few minutes, the procedure for obtaining the licenses was detailed quite simply and the hospitality of KZ5TT's residence was offered to us as well as his sponsorship for entering the Canal Zone. The influence of KZ5LT in this particular whirlwind resolution of our problems must be underscored in view of the fact she is Mrs. KZ5TT.

A flurry of correspondence and telephone dispatches back and forth underscored our good fortune in meeting KZ5TT and KZ5LT. They already had set up a handsome radio station in a large room which they added to their residence, fully air-conditioned, and with a Hy-Gain TH14 tri-bander already set up. We made reservations at one of the better hotels in Panama City, but neither Ben or Lil would consider this and a bedroom was turned over to us in their residence. I do not mean to suggest that all trips contemplated by intrepid ham adventurers would end up with this kind of good fortune, but it is an example of some of the remarkable camaraderie in ham radio.

Now with a sponsorer to get into the Canal Zone and with all of the paperwork quickly dispatched to get our Canal Zone licenses, which incidentally are readily available to any American citizen holding a valid FCC license, the mechanics of the trip, itself, had to be planned. One interesting sidelight—Lillian Smith sent us the Canal Zone *Callbook* and we were able to choose any unassigned Canal Zone call that particularly stirred our fancy. I choose KZ5OP; Bob selected KZ5GE.

The hours of darkness had not been reported



This is probably the first photo of what a "brass pounder" really does. Bob Douglas is shown pounding some brass in a local Panama City bazaar.

as particularly productive in the Canal Zone for stateside contacts, and we felt this was an essential ingredient if we were going to utilize at least the majority of the 24 hours available for the contest. As a consequence, we obtained from Sid Kittrel, KØDOM, of Hy-Gain Antenna (a kindred soul when it comes to this type of trip), one of their new 7 mc, 2-element beams. (Model 402B) In addition, it was felt that we should put up a dipole for 3.5 mc, and for this application, one of the new Hy-Gain BN48 broadband baluns plus two Model C1 doublet end insulators were installed. The antennas were shipped by air freight to arrive comfortably before Bob and myself.

R.f. equipment was selected on the basis of our familiarity with Collins equipment and the outstanding reputation it had earned for DX expeditions. Indeed, Gus Browning, W4BPD's fabulous trip in which his Collins equipment survived insurmountable abuse, was the deciding factor. The Smiths already had in their shack the complete Collins S-line, but since this was a domestically planned trip, we decided it was best to take our own equipment. A Collins 32S-3 and a Collins 75S-3B with accompanying power supply was thoroughly checked and packed for the not-so-hazardous trip along with a generous supply of hard pencils, a spare headset, and a pair of electronic keys as insurance against possible failure in the contest. In addition, as an afterthought, at the last moment, I took along a tape recorder to let some of our good friends from up north hear what their c.w. signals sounded like on a comparative basis, many thousand of miles away.

Up to this point, the trip was relatively uneventful. Indeed, it was almost ominous in the ease that everything was falling together. I was called out of town for several days on an urgent business matter in Chicago, and, in my absence, Fred Nichols (W8GGT/K9ZHR), one of my associates, made certain that the equipment on my list was packed and ready for a hasty departure. Bob, basking in the perpetual sunshine of Corpus Christi, Texas, left to rendezvous with me in Miami to catch our flight to Panama City. I left in the first snowstorm of the season only to be delayed due to the weather while United Airlines held the flight to the point where I missed the last possible connection to put me in Miami on the day prior to the contest. United sent a telegram to W5GEL awaiting me at Pan Am. I telephoned and left messages for him, but all of these modern communications devices failed. On a hunch that he might not get the word, I called Panama just prior to the departure of the flight and reported on my plight and that I would try to get the same set of connections the next day which would get me into the Canal Zone about dawn the day that the contest began. This was bad from the standpoint of my inability to help them with antenna work and equally important a total lack of rest prior to the contest.

Ultimately, the weather did break, the flight did leave, and I arrived in Panama at 5:30 in

the morning to be greeted by Bob Nelson, KZ5BO, and Ben Smith, KZ5TT. Lil Smith had come out to meet the flight at its scheduled 1:30 A.M. arrival based on poor information on our previous schedule. Since the Tocumen airport is some forty miles from the Canal Zone, this is no small inconvenience. The customs people were most cooperative, and despite my substantial quantity of cartons and boxes, it was a mere formality, and I was on my way in a matter of moments.

A brief note about the people. The Canal Zone is, of course, under American authority, directly controlled by the military government. With the exception of a single residence in the zone, there is no privately owned property. Everyone directly or indirectly is employed, operating the great canal or protecting it. Economic competition, as we know it in the States, is not a part of Canal life. There is less preoccupation with material things and far more with the business of government and the problems of running normal family groups under abnormal circumstances. The residents are enthusiastic sportsmen with golf courses abounding. There is a very high percentage of hams although, unfortunately, a negligible number of them on c.w.

Except for the military personnel, there is a relatively high stability of permanent residents. I met many Americans who had been there through most of their working career. It is not difficult to understand that living and working in the Canal Zone is a unique way of life. If one comes to accept it and enjoys it, it would probably be difficult to accept a harsher climate and a different set of social conditions. There is certainly no such thing as a utopia, and the Canal Zone is not that, however one can trade values. The climate is kind and living costs are surprisingly modest because of the non-profit nature of the *company*. The Canal itself, is a self-liquidating government business enterprise, however, the services to the employees in the Canal Zone are on a non-profit basis.

What about the Smith's themselves? Captain Ben Smith is the personification of the American's mental picture of what one of our fellow citizens would be like in the Canal Zone, although I am certain that he would quite modestly disclaim this. He is one of the Canal pilots who share the responsibility of taking every single vessel through the Canal. The Canal Zone pilot takes command of the ship, and it makes no difference whether it is a modest pleasure boat or an Essex class carrier. The pilot is in charge with full responsibility for taking the vessel from one ocean to the other ocean. This, after all, is the whole reason for the complex, for the existence of all of the supporting services, the millions of dollars invested in the Canal itself, and the maintenance of this vital commercial and military link. Ben Smith's interesting tales of the Canal and the Canal people were certainly one of the highlights of our trip.



From left to right: Lil Smith, KZ5LT, Ben Smith, KZ5TT, Bob Douglas, W5GEL/KZ5GE, photographed in front of the officer's club.

What about Lillian Smith? Their only son is a student at a school in Tennessee. It was their feeling that the very crowded schools in the Canal Zone, a problem shared at most public schools in the United States, was not a sufficient challenge for their youngster. Lillian, rather than to get involved in a routine that might become tedious at times, put her expert secretarial background to work and is currently administrative assistant to the communications chief.

What about ham radio in the Canal Zone? Does it differ greatly from that in the United States or that in other DX locations? On both counts, from all observations, it does. In the Canal Zone, amateur radio has far more meaning than to most American hams. Two-thousand or more miles is a long way from home. Frequent use of the telephone is an essential morale builder in the Canal Zone. While it was not discussed, it would seem to me that having hams scattered around the Zone who are in daily communication with Americans, create a sense of neighborliness that tends to minimize the comparative isolation of the Canal Zone, itself. Of course, "KZ5" is a DX location. While there are many hams in the area, most of them are interested in relatively mundane communications with the States. As a consequence, for someone interested in DX activity or contest work, this is a fertile territory. There is an abundance of technical knowledge in the Zone, so staying on the air is not as difficult as the geography would make it appear.

Perhaps the most difficult problem facing an aggressive competitive operator from a location such as Canal Zone would appear to be the large number of Americans who still want a contact with this country. Things are relative always, and a new ham who has not been on the air for very long probably considers a KZ5 just as choice as the oldtimer might consider Lord Howe Island. It would appear this way because a "CQ DX" generally brought a preponderance of W's answering. While it is not too difficult to distinguish between W's and Europeans for example, on 21

[Continued on page 105]

USA-CA (from page 84)

for sending copies of POD 26 direct to G3MKR, G6VC, OA4EY, ON4QX, SP6FZ, RAEM, UWØIK and ZS5UP. Also thanks to the many others who have mailed copies to our foreign friends. It has been a most wonderful year for me because of all the new friends I have made and of course without your kind help there would be no column nor USA-CA Program, so again, many thanks and please keep up the kind help. Hope Santa Claus was very good to you all, A HAPPY and PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR. How was your month?

73, Ed., W2GT

DX (from page 73)

VS9MP	via W2CTN.	ZD5D	via WB6CWD.
W6FHM/	Box 2570,	ZD8AR	Hammarlund,
DU	Manilla,		GPO, Box 7388,
	Philippines.		New York,
WA4QKY/	APO San		New York,
KG6	Francisco,		10001.
	Calif. 96415.	1S9WNV	via W4ECI.
YA1AW	via WA6OOH.	4X4TP	via VE3ACD.
YV4NR	Box 524,	5H3JJ	Peter Peham,
	Valencia,		Mission Hos-
	Venezuela.		pital, P. O.
YV7CQ	Calle Urica,		Ifakara,
	35 Carupano,		Tanganyika.
	Estacio Sucre,	5VZ8CM	via W1YDO.
	Venezuela.	9H1R	via W2CTN.

73, Urb, W2DEC

Novice (from page 92)

try that for a local blind ham and if it works I will let you know soon. Can you help on this one? Thank you for the try.

Q. How do YOU tune up a transmitter for maximum output and proper modulation?

A. I have two meters for fast sure tune up of my transmitters. One indicates any type oscillations, both wanted and unwanted oscillations. The other unit is used to tune my antenna for maximum output, at the same time it also indicates modulation. It tells me when my transmitter is operating and how well it is getting the power to the antenna. When you operate low power you must get all of your available power to the antenna. I adjust my grid drive until I have just enough grid drive to cause upward modulation as indicated by the unit described in either figure 2 or 3. The indicator of figure 2 can be loosely coupled to the antenna coupler or the wire going to the antenna. I set my meter close to the antenna to get a half scale reading, proper modulation will cause the meter to increase on modulation peaks to about 20 percent. Check the proper operating frequency with a grid-dip meter, it can also be used as above by coupling to the output circuit. The unit of figure 2 will indicate oscillation and can be used to tune up the multiplier and buffer stages of

either your transmitter or converters, it does not indicate frequency, that must be checked with the grid-dip meter. I couldn't get along without these two units.

Q. Can you send me the diagram for a simple code oscillator?

A. See figure 4. This unit can be built in a very small space with batteries and speaker. I use 3 volts and a 2½ inch speaker. Use the cheapest PNP transistor and a pushpull transformer that sells for about 89 cents. The volume is enough for group (small) use.

Help Wanted

If your need is for some help with the code, theory or getting someone to give you the test, send a letter to me, Walter G. Burdine, W8ZCV, Waynesville, Ohio and I will put your request in this spot for help. We have had very good results from pleas in the space, many letters have proven that this is a good way to get help. Help this fellow, he is the only one that took time to write.

Terry Hendricks, 839 Hilton Drive, Lancaster, Pennsylvania needs help with the code. He wants to meet a local ham to advise him. Thank you.

This copy of CQ may be arriving in your home at the festive season and if so, let me say: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I know that we are read in 47 countries and that it takes up to two and one half months for you to get your copy, I hope you had a Merry Christmas and best wishes for the best year ahead. If you have the time, write a letter and send some pictures.

73 es best DX, Walt.

Sweepstakes Expedition (from page 58)

mc or 14 mc, on 7 mc it becomes quite another matter. Yet, I, for one, felt uneasy about calling "CQ DX no W" and even the few times I did it, the results were fairly predictable—still many W's calling. In view of the similiarity between conditions in the Canal Zone and Continental United States during many of the choice operating hours, I would judge it to be *more difficult* rather than less difficult for someone to achieve prominence in the DX roles from Canal Zone or similar DX locations.

Remarkable to an outsider was the low static level, even during local lightning storms. Except for the fact that 14 mc and 21 mc seemed to stay open later and DX on 7 mc was easier to work (including Japan in early evening), conditions were fairly predictable. 3.5 mc was spotty, but not because of QRN, merely band conditions.

About the contest itself? Only fair. Thousands of Americans were heard on all bands with wonderful signals but they were so busy working S9 and local stations. ■

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