

One unfortunate inevitable fact of life is that we will all eventually become Silent Keys. For the majority of us, it'll happen when we're old curmudgeons. But every now and then, it happens to someone much too early, as was the case with friends like KL7Y, 8P6CV and N8SM.

On February 12 of this year, I was saddened when I read this heart wrenching e-mail on the CQ-Contest reflector sent by Ellen White, W1YL.

Dear friends:

In September of 2002 K4OJ sat at this computer and wrote a poignant obituary honoring his father, W1CW, who had died that very morning.

On this afternoon of February 12, 2004, it is my reluctant turn to sit here and tell you that Jim did not survive yesterday's surgery. He left us about 11:30 a.m. this morning following liver failure after the somewhat risky heart valve replacement.

Just this past weekend he had a tremendous time operating the FOC Marathon and producing a splendid accounting of himself. This was just one more achievement during his lifetime of fun in and service to Amateur Radio and, in particular, the Florida Contest Group of which he was the first president. His operating abilities were manifest and he almost always the first one to volunteer his help, in spite of his declining physical abilities.

*I know many of you will share my loss.
Ellen, W1YL/4 "In"*

Over the next week, there were over 60 posts from people all across the world who wanted to share their memories of him. K1AR said it best in his post, "Whether it was pancakes in Dayton at 4 AM or an e-mail that brightened our day, there are at least enough OJ memories left behind to begin to fill a void that has just been created."

I first met Jim back in the mid '90s at Dayton and had seen him about a dozen more times, including three visits to the "White House" (his parent's house in Florida). My first visit to the White House was in 1998 with K9NW and WC4E, on the day that their big tower was going up. All of the Whites, W1CW, W1YL and K4OJ, exemplified why this hobby that we all share is the greatest in the world! They fed us until we were ready to explode, then threw desert in front of us—and made sure that we had plenty to drink! Every year that Jim attended Dayton, he was always one of the last to leave the Society of Midwest Contest-

ers hospitality suite on the 12th floor of the Crowne Plaza. Once, he was unfortunate enough to fall asleep on the couch while the party was still in full swing. He then became a human platform for an empty beer can stacking contest, but cracked up when he saw the pictures the following day. He was one hell of a guy!

Perhaps the person who knew him the

best is Dan Street, K1TO. For those of you who read *CQ Contest*, this is a dupe—but this February 13 post from Dan exemplifies who K4OJ was, and always will be:

OJ remembered—

One of the many wonderful things about ham radio is that it transcends age. Thus, as a teenager in Connecticut, I spent the majority of my free time with Murphy's Marauders members who had welcomed me enthusiastically into the group. The White family was a prominent segment of that group and, despite a few years of age difference, Jim and I became friends quickly.

I drove to and from Dayton in 1977 with Jim. My Opel Manta's water pump blew on Rt 80 with Jim driving, and we spent the next hour sorting through incoming WA1QNF QSLs while we waited for help to arrive. Amazingly, there was an Opel dealer in the thriving metropolis of nearby Clearfield and we were able to resume the journey home by Monday afternoon. One of the scariest moments in my life was looking over to realize that Jim was having an epileptic seizure, very likely because he'd not brought along enough medicine for that extra day.

"Happiness is a good run." That was



Figure 1—Jim in action.



Figure 2—Jim with Dick, N4RP.

the byline on the 1977 ARRL DX Test results, authored by Jim White, K1ZX/WA1NNC and Dan Street, WA1QNF. Along with Bill Jennings, WA1AH/K1WJ, who became a tragic SK two summers ago, the three of us spent a fabulous summer checking logs and yukking it up. I had just graduated from high school, while Jim was dating the girl that ended up being his (first) wife.

Not long after that, the Whites all moved to Homestead, FL, just south of Miami. Bob, K1XA, another good ARRL friend, and I took a week of vacation in Fort Lauderdale one spring and made a special trip down to see Jim.

Soon after that, Jim had a very serious auto accident and was laid up with multiple injuries for quite a while.

For a number of years from then, the only time I'd see Jim would be in Dayton. Many have, very appropriately, chronicled Jim's adventures at Dayton. Despite being immersed in a ham radio family day in and day out, Dayton was consistently the highlight of Jim's year. It was during those years that Jim met and married Teresa and became an instant grandparent.

After Hurricane Andrew destroyed Ellen and Bob's home, the Whites all moved to the Tampa area on the other coast of Florida. There, they collectively began to build up a very solid contest station.

In March 1994, just under 10 years ago, Jim established the Florida CW Contest Group that soon became the Florida Contest Group. Jim served as President for the first four plus years of the club. When this writer took over in September 1998, the club foundation was solid and it's been a pleasure to build and build upon that.

Jim particularly liked to host multi-ops and consistently invited anyone and everyone to his operations. Perhaps operating at W2PV in the mid 1970s seeded that interest. Here are some recent highlights:

IARU

W1AW/4 in 2000 was a huge success, due greatly to OJ's coordination. While WC4E and I were overseas for WRTC, Jim led the effort to have six separate stations on the air across Florida with two band/modes each. I believe that the score attained by W1AW/4 that year remains the record for all of the W1AW/* operations. There was a terrific write-up about this in NCJ.

ARRL Sweepstakes

In Nov 1996, Jim kindly asked me to join him for an SS CW M/S, even though he had finished fourth as a Single Op the year before and was itching for a win. We managed to win M/S that year, unseating the four-year championship run of AA5B.



Figure 3—Jim with NF4A, then WA4IMC.

The following November, 1997, saw Jim sport his new K4OJ call sign. Along with his folks, he piloted the station to a second straight win in the M/S category.

Two weeks later, K1TO hosted a pair of Multi-Singles for SS SSB and Jim enthusiastically operated some SSB (a mode that was largely banned at the W1YL/W1CW QTH), all in the name of maximizing FCG points. Initially, it appeared that the K0RF team had pushed K4OJ down to 2nd place in SS CW for 1998, but revised results published a month later showed that the Whites had their three-peat.

After two more weeks, OJ returned here for another fun battle of Multi-Singles (although one of the entries never got published). Jim had by far our best hour, something like a 157 contact hour. The fun that he had doing that was just mesmerizing for the rest of us to watch.

ARRL DX Contest

Jim invited me back for a M/2 in February 1997. When another promised op failed to materialize, we did essentially a two-man effort, giving me a good intro to DX from Florida.

February of 1998 was time to try a Multi-Multi. One of the absolutely mind-blowing experiences of my "career" was hearing JAs peaking at 599+30 dB on 160 meters! With a single Yagi on 15 meters, we still beat all the M/Ms.

Along with Kevin, N4KM, Team OJ beat out Team N4WW for top W4 M/S in February 2000 to sneak into the box at #5, less than 5% from #2.

Less than one year ago, as I write this, in February 2003, using the K4NNN call sign, another #5 finish.

CQ WW CW DX Contest

After the passing of Bob, W1CW, in

November 2002, Jim and Ellen set out to expand the station capabilities. This was in preparation for a W1CW Memorial operation for CQWW 2003 on essentially the one-year anniversary of Bob's passing. While those results are not out yet, it was again a labor of love as many contributed to the station upgrades and the ultimate operation. With 10 operators, and using the W1CW call sign, they achieved their goal of honoring Bob.

Jim's health declined over a long period of time, but as many of you recognized and emphasized, his enthusiasm and positive outlook were staunchly consistent. In one of my last e-mail exchanges with Jim, he told me that I'd soon be able to retire from antenna work at the W1CW station because he would once again climb proudly.

When WC4E and I wearily exited our return plane from the WRTC in Finland in July 2002, we were met with a K4OJ-organized group of FCGers waving banners and greeting us back. Quite amazing since we were something like 4 hours late and arrived at 1 AM.

Long road trips to Fort Walton Beach and Miami in recent years gave us a chance to crank up the classic rock and get caught up.

One of Jim's greatest pleasures was developing funny phonetics. For some odd reason, N4BP and WC4E were the butt of many of those cracks.

There are just a zillion stories like this and there is just no way to give a comprehensive recall here and now, but I hope this has provided a flavor of the man that OJ was, from my personal perspective.

Thanks to all of you who have already posted tributes to Jim. Some of the suggestions regarding memorial awards are

great, and the FCG will be setting up a number of awards as well. Thanks also to K5KG, W4IX and K3TEJ for dedicating their J7 effort in Jim's memory. I'm also hearing of some plans to honor Jim at Dayton in May.

The next issue of the FCG Gazette will be solely dedicated to K4OJ, the founding father of this great club (www.floridacontestgroup.org/news-letter/k4oj.pdf—Ed).

Since promoting the FQP was yet another source of joy for Jim, I encourage everyone to circle the last weekend of April on your calendars and get on the air as much as you can in the Florida QSO Party, in honor of Jim.

As mentioned earlier, Jim became a devoted father and grandfather, in addition to all of his contesting interests. Teresa White would appreciate hearing from any of you at 3527 King George Ln, Seffner, FL 33584-6117.

As an only child, Jim ("Jamie") was the apple of Ellen's eye and I just hope that we can all help Ellen through this staggeringly difficult time of losing her husband and only son in less than 15 months.

At Ellen's request, the W1CW Memorial Fund is now the W1CW/K4OJ Memorial Fund. In lieu of flowers, Ellen prefers that contributions be made in Jim's name to that fund. Any donations should be made out to the Florida Contest Group with a note to the effect that it is designated for the K4OJ Fund. Please mail any donations to the FCG Treasurer: Fred Perkins, 3437 Lake Josephine Drive, Lake Placid, FL 33852.

RIP and Keep Smiling, old friend.
Dan, K1TO/4

The QRZ.com bio for K4OJ says the following:

What do you love about ham radio? I love contesting. There is something about the camaraderie, discipline and knowledge contesting demands that fits me, it doesn't fit everyone—but it sure fits me.

It sure did! He was the one of the best and will not be forgotten.

I really don't like writing things like this. I certainly hope that I don't have the opportunity to write something like this for anyone else in the near future.

The Florida QSO Party, which is largely K4OJ's baby, is the weekend of April 24 and 25. The Florida Contest Group has dedicated the 2004 FQP in memory of K4OJ—the FQP's biggest "Cheerleader". Many stations will simply sign "OJ" in place of "73" or "TU". How about getting on and handing out some Qs, and signing OJ for Jim. I'll be there doing it! Stop by www.floridaqsoparty.org for the rules, maps and a list of planned mobile operations.

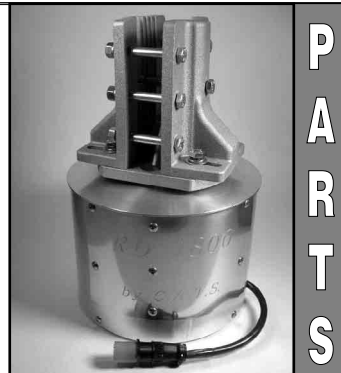
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