AE6Y 2025 October CQWW SSB at P49Y

ALF
11/9/25

Tuesday, Oct. 21 – Weds. Oct. 22, 2025. I was on my usual AA redeye to MIA, leaving at 11:59 p.m., then a two-hour layover in MIA before arriving in Aruba at about 1 p.m. the next day. No trouble at TSA, so I hung out at the Admiral's Club for a while, getting a little food. I was worried that with the Government shutdown in full force that there might be serious airport delays, but the plane was on time. In fact, all four flights were on time on this trip.

I checked just one suitcase, filled probably 25% with stuff for Lissette plus a few Mouser capacitors for JP. It also contained a number of work documents for the CA Supreme Court case that I have to argue for Gilroy on Nov. 4.

Also a backpack and a carry-on suitcase (for the K4). The K4 is a snug fit as before in my small carry-on suitcase, cushioned by towels and some bubble wrap, with the front panel facing the top of the suitcase.

Only a two-hour layover in Miami, spent mostly at the Admirals club at D15. Arrival in Aruba was very quick. Although they were scanning all luggage as you left the customs area, no one seemed to be paying attention, and I sailed right through.

At the house by 3 p.m., after picking up a Kia sedan at Hertz, and all the antennas seemed to work. I needed to calibrate and verify the SteppIR using the AA55 (which is in the 2d br closet, without batteries (two AA's which I had brought down specifically for that purpose and left with the device, but in a plastic bag), but it does seem to work. I left the large 10-80 filters in line, as Ed has set up the cables so they are easiest to connect that way.

So, just using the left radio, there is a Stackmatch controller that switches between two Six-Paks. Six-Pak 1 is the 6 monobanders, and Six-Pak 2 is the Mid-Tri, SteppIR, and 80/40 fan dipole (which I verified later actually isn't connected at the antenna end).

Hooked up the computer with a simple setup:

1) HP Compaq Monitor to hdmi port on computer with adaptor.
    a. Note that resolution of 1280 by 960 works best.
2) One USB cable directly to USB square slot on back of K4, for freq and rig commands. This opened Com 10 and 11, used Com 10 for control with CQPWIN.
    a. Dongle for Logitech mouse and keyboard.
3) Headphones and mic in back of K4. Didn't use DXD, since only using one radio. Plugged in the Sony recorder with a Y connector in parallel with the headphones (for two radios, would do that at the DXDoubler headphone output jack). As usual, could only use the recorder after spending the obligatory 15 minutes with the manual on the computer to figure out its completely non-intuitive controls.

4) Note that John has the acc port siamesed to both the bandmaster and to the KPA 1500. This works really well, as the KPA1500 follows the radio not only on band changes but also as one tunes across the band, so that the amp is automatically recalling stored settings for its antenna tuner. Very slick.

For the internet, plugged in the modem in the master BR and attached the cable input. Then turned on the power to the router in the shack. The laptop recognized this right away and connected to the ARRIS B345-5G network.

Went running from our roundabout at about 6:15. On the way back, John Crovelli called and we met at the Bar and Restaurant in SC for dinner. Huge plate of chow mein, of which I brought 2/3 or so back home. Got on the air briefly on 20 and verified that everything including the KPA1500 seems to work. Also, all the beverages seemed to work.

Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025. Slept till 9:00 a.m., a very sound and needed sleep. Off to Lings, where it seemed that prices have definitely increased. Then coffee and breakfast. Run a few guys on 10. Checked 80m on the AA55. It shows resonance at 3568. I shortened both ends about 3 feet (the max that can be done before running into little zip ties put on the wire that prevent it from being pulled into the plastic end device). You don't need a ladder to do this, though it's close. The new resonance after about 3 feet of shortening was 3688, with 2:1 at 3800 or so. The analyzer showed a sharp dip to 1.12 at 3900, strangely. In any event, the KPA1500 tunes it easily from 3650 to 3800 or higher.

Off to visit with JP and Cris. He's on vacation, the first week of four, and busy fixing antennas, rotors, etc. Cris is recovering from many weeks of having her left leg immobilized in a cast (without surgery), She walks with a crutch, and says she walks like a penguin!. I gave her the rent money and also some flowers I had bought at Lings this morning.

Then some radio checks on the SteppIR. It was a little off calibration. Best settings for the phone bands seemed to be: 20: 14350; 15: 21500; 10: 28900. Then ran a pileup for a while on 15 of both US and EU. Seems like that may be the hot band this weekend.

Another roundabout to roundabout run starting at 6 p.m. (temp about 31 deg C at that time – it's been overcast the last two days due to thunderstorms north and west of us). Lisandro has been monitoring them on his weather station and weather monitoring facilities.

Met John and Lisandro at the Sushi restaurant in Santa Cruz. There are two of them, but our traditional one is between the Burger King and the Subway. Lisandro and I had excellent poke bowls, while John had a hamburger. Then I went over to spend some time with Lisandro and Lissette (who is recovering from surgery at home). They have done an amazing job turning their back yard into the Wind Hill Observatory (named after their region of Aruba: Sierra Biento) and Lisandro's shack, not to mention a barbecue area that has four separate devices, including a smoker. He has managed to fix the old FT1000D that we sold him recently for a song, and it is now the centerpiece of the shack. I've always liked the looks and precision

mechanical feel of that radio, but it's so big and heavy that isn't practical for us compared to newer radios like the K3 and K4. Back home by 10:15 and chatted with Sandy on the phone and sent off some emails. Ended up going to bed close to midnight.

Friday, Oct. 24, 2025. Up at about 8 and made some coffee and a roll with cream cheese and jelly for breakfast. Checked the radio at about 8:45 and 10 is really jumping to Europe. Big unruly pileup. Drove up to the Gold Coast project at Malmok, where our Airbnb is for Chritstman and ate at McD near the high rise hotels on the way back. Then a run from the airport to the Coral Pyramid at 3. The temperature was about 33 degrees, then a chocolate milkshake at the Ritz (for reference 3.2 km south of our roundabout on the right side of the road).

Saturday, Oct. 25 - Sunday Oct. 26, 2025. A few contest notes:

I started with agc slope 10 and agc threshold 7, both set from the Menu control. On Sunday, I raised the slope to 12 to give a bit more agc action. The slope range only goes from 10 to 15 (lower number is less agc action, meaning that the M.rf control can have more effect. The agc threshold goes from 2 to 8, with lower numbers allowing the agc to cut in sooner. I couldn't figure out any commands to set these as you can on the K3, so I couldn't program my K-Pod to have a "run" button and a "search and pounce" button.

Twenty meters was a great place to start. Lots of interesting mults (including four VU's and even a BG0 in Zone 23). First hour was a delightful 314 QSOs [note that in his 3830 writeup, LU9ESD at HD8R said that his opening hour of 341 on 20 was "disappointing"!]

160 and 80 are very noisy, and 160 has very little propagation. Only a few US stations on 160, and no Zone 3.

At 0805Z with 6:59 worked, at 20: 998/69/26, 40:310/55/19, 80: 105/26/10; 160: 11/9/5. Just one q on 10 and one on 15, as P40W and I had run the bands at 0400Z. At the end of the first night, 0955Z with 7:38 hours worked, total is 1522 by 236 for 1.05M points.

Saturday morning on 10 and 15, the EU pileups are very unruly and hard to deal with. These hours were quite discouraging and unpleasant with endless qrm. But then I really enjoyed the runs in the afternoon as 10 started to close in so that you lost eastern EUs, then western EUs and it got faster for US stns. Thus, the hourly rates for the hours of 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16Z were only 206, 190, 194, 183, and 182. But after an hour off, the rates for 18, 19, 20, and 21 hours with much more NA-centered pileups were 267, 259, 225 and 276. Much more productive and much more enjoyable.

At the halfway point (12 hours worked, in the 1500Z hour) at 2334 by 360 for 2.476k points

Saturday night: on 40 at 0141 on 7227 for a nice run with no qrm and manageable sigs, but left after about 150 qsos. 40 was much better than Friday night. Was going to go to bed with about

6:30 left, but got on 20 and it was wide open in the 2300 local hour. Had a very nice, controlled run and worked a number of new mults. It would have been fun to stay on and get some interesting midnight mults, but the 24-hour limit in the classic category forces choices, and I wanted to preserve time for high-rate hours on Sunday.

Sunday morning, on 10 for a nice EU run. Somewhat easier to control than the bedlam Saturday morning. Three hours in the afternoon on 10 and 15 averaging 270/hour.

My 24 hours were up at about 5:50 p.m. local time, 2150Z. Went out for a run and takeout at Taco Bell. Talked to John on the phone and sent off my score to 3830 and to John Fore and Ed Muns.

Monday Oct. 27, 2025. Met John, JP, and Lisandro at Huchada's for a post-contest breakfast. Spent most of the rest of the day working on my oral argument. What rotten way to spend your birthday (actually Saturday) and a sunny day on the Island! Fixed the power plug for the band changer on the right radio, where the inputs were accidentally shorting out. Went for a run at the airport then had a dinner of a PBJ sandwich and egg salad. I called off our usual Monday night dinner with Cris and JP due to a desire to be able to concentrate on work all day and evening. Yecch!

Tuesday oct. 28, 2025. Up at 7 for a run from roundabout to bridge, then breakfast and work on oral argument notes while checking for CQWW scores and packing up. Off to the airport for my 2:45 flight to MIA, then arrived at SFO at just about 11 p.m.

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		
160:	11	5	9		
80:	147	12	28		
40:	510	23	66		
20:	1185	28	81		
15:	1495	28	79		
10:	1808	25	80		
Total:	5156	121	343	Total Score	7,108,480

Club: Northern California Contest Club

Comments:
After several years of doing the "classic" category in this contest, I was thinking of doing a full-bore 40-hour version, but some sudden work issues made me think that it would be smarter to stay in the classic, 24-hour realm so as not to get totally wiped out mentally for the next week.

The overall result was similar to 2023 (and to W6LD's effort in 2024 as P40L), but there were some differences. For example, 80 and 160 were very difficult, and it would have been a lot easier to just latch onto spots. Very noisy, and a seeming lack of propagation to boot. OTOH, the other bands were fun. I was particularly struck by 20 at the start and also when I returned at about 11 p.m. local time on Saturday night for a very enjoyable run. I knew that the band would be exciting when I was called by four VUs in the first hour and a half on 20! It might have been lot of fun to have tried a single band 20.

Anyway, the K4D and KPA-1500 combination worked flawlessly. The autotuner in the amp is very helpful and allows quick QSYs with very little concern. And the self-protection even kicked in instantly when I messed up the antenna switching once or twice...

It was great to have Lisandro, P43L, on as a 10 meter singlebander from his newly rebuilt station. He managed to fix an inoperable FT1000D that is now the centerpiece of his impressive station -- talk about a "classic"!). Jean-Pierre, P43A, was going to get on as a 15-meter singlebander, but got sidelined by the need to rebuild his rotors.

Thanks as always to JP and Cris (P43C) for their efforts in maintaining the house, and to co-owner John, W6LD, and frequent visitor Ed, W0YK, for their unceasing quest for station improvements. Look for them in CQWW CW in a few weeks.

73,
Andy, AE6Y

Rig: K4D plus KPA 1500.
Software: CQPWIN, ver. 15.0
Tower 1: 66’ with 2-element shorty-forty and 4-el 20m Yagi at 68’; SteppIR at 35’ fixed north-south; 80m Inverted-V, 2-el at 65’; and double-L vertical for 160m at 65’
Tower 2: 55’ with single boom interlaced 5-el 15m and 5-el 10m Yagi
Tower 3: 45’ with JK Mid-Tri tribander
Beverages (x4): West US, East US, Europe, East-West