

Why SAC is so special to me

by Charles Weir Jr., W6UM

SAC has been one of my favorite contests for more than 20 years. Let me explain why it has such a personal meaning for me, aside from the chance to work so many of the good operators in Scandinavia.

I entered amateur radio as W3NPZ back in 1947, assisted and encouraged by my father, who was W3FYS. We were members of the Potomac Valley Radio Club in the in the DC area, and operated at multi-multi W3MSK, who later became W3AU. One of the stations we worked on all bands in every contest was OH2AM, and we always wondered how they managed such a consistently big effort. When W3FYS was active before WW II, stations from Finland were relatively rare and hard to work.

My father worked at the National Bureau of Standards, where one of his associates was from Norway. After hearing so much from him about his homeland, my parents decided they had to visit Norway, but since the colleague's wife was from Sweden, in order to please her, they had to go there too. They finally decided to stop also in Denmark, and then continue to Finland. Their flight on Icelandic Airways stopped first in Reykjavik, so they spent a few days in most of the Scandinavian countries on the first trip.

One of the OH2AM operators had given my father the address in Helsinki where the operators used to gather. He just dropped in unannounced one evening, and was pleased to find so many of the operators there. They naturally found they had lots in common to talk about relative to contesting. The goal of the OH2AM gang was to make the world

high score in Multi-Multi score in the Worldwide CQ Contest. He encouraged them, and told them that if they won the trophy he would personally return and present it to them.

They did, and he did. The trophy was presented in 1964 at a dinner held at Vanha Talli in Helsinki that was attended by the OH2AM operators and many other OH operators, including the President of SRAL. The trophy was filled with a mysterious but potent Finnish beverage, and the OH2AM operators in turn had to drink from the cup until it was emptied. This dinner was an experience my father enjoyed recalling many times during the following years.



Charlie, W3FYS and XYL Arie, parents of W6UM, at Vanha Talli in Helsinki with the trophy, 1964.

My parents liked all of Scandinavia so much they returned several times, and saw again some of those they had met first in Helsinki. They eventually retired to live in California, where W3FYS changed his call and became W6UA. They continued to visit Scandinavia, and had a chance not only to keep in touch with friends over the air, but also to enjoy several personal visits from amateurs from the Top of Europe.

W6UA became a silent key in 1987. To recognize his lasting attachment to Scandinavia, the W3FYS Memorial Trophy in the CQ WW CW contest is now awarded to the station in Scandinavia making the highest single-op score. So far, all of the winners have been from Finland.

I also eventually moved to California and got the call W6UM in 1972. Although I had always been active in the SAC, it was not until WRTC 2002 that I first had the chance to visit Finland, and meet

personally so many of the OH gang. I will never forget the events at Heimos, where I enjoyed my first genuine Finnish sauna. I discovered that Nokia mobile phones indeed do function inside a sauna. Within WRTC, I was fortunate to have been chosen as the referee for Team Sweden, SM5IMO and SM3SGP, who operated from the exquisite QTH of OH2MM. And I definitely hope to return to the Land of Countless Rivers and Lakes.

This year, as usual, will find me active in both weekends of SAC, looking for old friends and also hoping to make some new ones. Propagation is not always favorable between California and Scandinavia these days, but I will be there whenever there is a chance. Listen for W6UM, operating from the QTH inherited from W6UA, ex W3FYS.

Kiitos!
Chas., W6UM



W3FYS handing the trophy to Rick, OH2SB, as other OH2AM operators look on. Vanha Talli, Helsinki, 1964.