



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



May
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NCCC Net
Thursday 9PM
3853+/-

Our Next Meeting

TEAMWORK

Shake hands with The Gavel.

Your summer plans?

The Four-Hour House (video and discussion).

Multi-op contesting (video and discussion).

Announcing the NCCC MVP Competition

Date: Monday, 10 May 2004

Time: 6pm schmooz and eat, 7:00pm NCCC meeting & Program

Location: Mountain Mike's Pizza

120 El Camino Real
(4 blocks north of Whipple Ave.)
Redwood City, CA 94062

NCCC Officers

President: Tom Berson, ND2T berson@anagram.com

VP/CC: Dean Wood, N6DE n6de@inreach.com

Sec/Treas: Mark Aaker, K6UFO k6ufo@arrl.net

Directors

Steve Dyer, W1SRD sdyer@interlogue.com

Rusty Epps, W6OAT w6oat@compuserve.com

Matt Thomas, WX5S mmthoma@attglobal.net

Tom Taormina K5RC tomk5rc@aol.com

Webmaster: Ed Muns, W0YK w0yk@arrl.net

JUG Editor: Rob Brownstein, k6rb@baymoon.com

The New Team

Rob Brownstein, K6RB

At the April NCCC meeting we elected the new team of officers. Tom Berson, ND2T, is our new president, and Dean Wood, N6DE, takes over as vice president/contest coordinator (vp/cc). Mark Aaker, K6UFO, assumes the duties as secretary/treasurer.

The following are the new board of directors:

Steve Dyer, W1SRD,
Rusty Epps, W6OAT
Tom Taormina, K5RC
Matt Thomas, WX5S

We wish them all the best.



President Tom Berson, ND2T



VP/CC Dean Wood, N6DE



Sec'y/Treasurer Mark Aaker, K6UFO



Director Steve Dyer, W1SRD



Director Rusty Epps, W6OAT



Director Matt Thomas , WX5S



Director Tom Taormina, K5RC

Two Tango

-- from NCCC President Tom Berson, ND2T

I am amazed to find myself President of NCCC, the most powerful and winningest of contest clubs, a repository of experience, knowledge, wisdom, ability, resource, attitude, teamwork and friendship that is a model for contest clubs around the world. You've visited, perhaps been a member, of other clubs. NCCC is different. We are alive, thriving, organic. One of the things I love about contesting is that it often brings surprises and opportunities which challenge me to adapt to new situations. Being NCCC President is the latest of these. Did you know that I studied and practiced Improv Theater for four years? Improv is a great preparation for life, for business, and for being NCCC President. Bring it on.

Like most NCCC members, I was content to be an NCCC member. Then W1SRD and K0BEE started seduc... er, twisting my arm. They are an unstoppable combination; we owe them tremendous thanks for their great year in office. Steve, at the beginning of his term, put forward the BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal) that NCCC take The Gavel back from that club in the Midwest. You know by now that through imagination, planning, preparation, perseverance and skill we did just that. The Gavel was presented to us at Visalia. It will be passed around at the May meeting for all to admire.

This year we have internal goals and external goals. Our internal goals aim to build value for members by developing our inner strength. We have three internal goals:

1. Improve members' stations
2. Enhance members' operating skills
3. Encourage teamwork

These internal goals are gifts we will give each other. They apply to the beginner as well as to the veteran. They will retain their value for years. The new NCCC MVP Competition supports these internal goals. I will explain the MVP Competition at the May meeting, and again on the Web, and in the next JUG for those who can't make it to the meeting.

The internal goals all support our external goal, which is to win The Gavel again in the face of a not-so-complaisant-as last-year competition.

That's what most of the outside world will know about us. But we will be that and much more.

Please don't think that other contests where we compete or dominate as a club are unimportant. N6DE, our VP/CC, has a full slate in mind. There's a contest for every interest. I view these as important opportunities to sharpen our claws for the main event.

I'm looking forward to working with you all this year, and to the next surprise. KB.

VP/CC Report

Dean Wood, N6DE

Am I Crazy?

It's entirely possible. How can I follow last year's historic success in the NCCC, where it appears we won four contests (WPX, SS, RTTY RU, and Sprint CW) with a potential fifth (NAQP CW) coming down to log checking? This recent club success is what makes me especially honored to have gained your confidence to elect me VP/CC this year.

I am eager to take on the challenge to implement my goals for a 2004-2005 NCCC contest plan: increase NCCC excellence in contests, help each member achieve his/her contesting goals for the next year through teams and mentoring, recognize outstanding club member efforts in any category, and foster our tremendous club camaraderie which makes the NCCC such a fun and rewarding organization.

No member will be left out of the NCCC contest plan, regardless of your station size or preferred operating mode. I am really looking forward to working with all of you in the upcoming year! I welcome your input on all this, including desired focus contests. You can reach me at n6de@inreach.com or at my home phone number in the NCCC roster.

WPX CW

The major contest during the month of May is CQ WPX CW on May 28-30. It runs from 5pm PDT Friday, May 28 until 5pm PDT Sunday, May 30. After a great effort in WPX SSB in

March, we have the opportunity again to win the WPX club competition! Be sure to jump in WPX CW for as long as you can, work the NCCC members going on expeditions for this contest, and submit your log to cw@cqwpx.com. The WPX rules are available at <http://home.woh.rr.com/wpx/WPXRules2004.pdf>. See the NCCC reflector in the next few weeks as we discuss strategies and list the callsigns of NCCC operations to look for in WPX CW.

NCCC – The First Decade

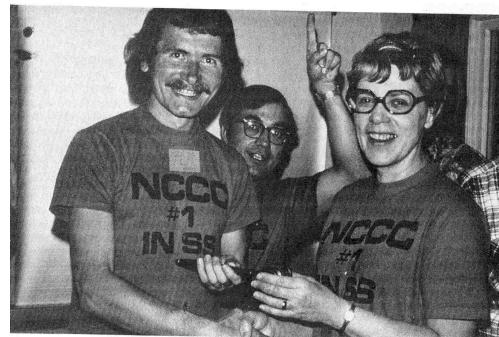
Rob Brownstein, K6RB

Those of you who missed the April meeting missed an extraordinary presentation by Rusty, W6OAT. "How did NCCC begin?" "Where did the name JUG come from?" "What did W6RGG look like in the 1970s?" Rusty answered all these questions and more.

For well over an hour, Rusty regaled us with anecdotes and stories about the early days of NCCC. Back then, Sweepstakes was clearly the domain of the east-coast contest clubs. No one thought a west-coast group had a chance.

Then, just like last year, this group of stalwarts decided to show the "right coasters" what a dedicated group of contest grunts could do – from the "left coast."

When the dust settled, NCCC had won the gavel, and the rest, as they say, is history.



Ellen White, W1YL, presents NCCC president, Bill, WB6CEP, with the 1975 SS Club Competition gavel. That's Bob, W6RGG, giving the victory sign behind them – and he is standing up.

It was a presentation sure to make you proud to wear that yellow (orange?) badge. And, don't forget to ask Rusty why the group decided against a name change early on. The decision was typical NCCC "logic."

Thanks, again, Rusty for an entertaining and informative presentation. I'm sure we are all looking forward to learn what happened during the next ten years.

Mining for Vanity Call Signs

By Tom Taormina, K5RC

While Vanity HQ (<http://www.vanityhq.com/>) is an excellent resource, it only lists call signs that are currently known to be available or coming available. When a desirable call sign shows up on Vanity HQ, there is usually a competition created among several who file on the same day. I have seen upwards of 20 applicants competing for a single call. The "winner" of the competition is (supposedly) randomly drawn by the FCC. The entire process from filing to issuance takes about 20 days (allowing for paper applications), during which you have no idea who will get the call. There is a better way to be certain that you get a call that you desire.

Let's start with some basic truths and ground rules of obtaining Vanity Call Signs:

1. Detailed rules can be found at <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/vanity.html>.
2. You must have a call sign to trade in for a vanity call. If you are going to trade in your present call for a vanity call, you are all set.
3. If you want a vanity call for a club, you must either have a current call to trade in, or fill out a Form 605 and mail it in to get a sequential call sign to trade-in for the vanity call.
 - a. See the ARRL web site for details on filing a Form 605 <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/605ins.html#club>.
 - b. You will need a trustee and one other person to sign the Form 605
 - c. The trustee's license class must match the vanity call sign (see #4)

4. License class must reflect the call sign you are seeking
 - a. 1 x 2 and 2 x 1's are for Extra Class only (K7AA, AA7A)
 - b. 2 x 2 are for Advanced and Extra (AA7AA)
 - c. 1 x 3 and 2 x 3 are for any class (including no-code Tech)
5. You can apply for any USA call sign, except for HI, AK and the territories, unless you have an address in the state or territory (KH6, KL7, KP4, etc).
6. A vanity call sign must be available as indicated by the fact it is not listed in the FCC database
<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>.
7. If it is listed in the database, it can only be applied for two years and one day from the date of expiration or cancellation in the FCC database.
<http://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp>.
8. Don't rely on QRZ.com or any other non-FCC databases for official license information.
9. You must be registered with CORES and have a FRN number and password to use the FCC online system
[https://wtbwww05.fcc.gov/cgi-bin/UlsTinRegistration/UlsTinRegistration.exe?FNC=external underscore\)Ahome\(underscore\)html](https://wtbwww05.fcc.gov/cgi-bin/UlsTinRegistration/UlsTinRegistration.exe?FNC=external underscore)Ahome(underscore)html).
10. You apply for (and pay for) the vanity call on-line at <https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/login.jsp>. Again, you must have your FRN and password to do this process.

Okay, here comes what they don't teach you. These are just some basic ground rules. If you have never applied for a vanity call sign on line, you are in for a treat if the FCC web site not acting 100% stable. If you are a novice at filling out forms on-line, I recommend you have someone who has done it successfully actually walk you through the entire process. I have to warn you that the process involves trying to find dead hams whose families have not notified the FCC of their demise. If you find this distasteful, quit reading now.

1. You must have a computer and Internet access to do this process.
2. Decide on the type of call sign that interests you and that you qualify for.

- Often you will be looking for a W or K 1 x 2 (W7AA, K7AA) in the call district in which you reside. If you are looking outside your call district, you will have to repeat this process for each call that interests you.
3. Make a list of call signs you prefer, followed by those you will settle for. If you will accept any 1 x 2, you have a lot of research to do. Obviously, don't list calls you know are assigned to a currently active ham.
 4. Log on to QRZ.com <http://www.qrz.com/>. Type in the first call you want to research.
 5. If your inquiry turns up "The call sign is not in our database," go to the FCC database and confirm that the call sign is not currently granted. In the FCC database a call is available only if there is no listing at all for the call, it is cancelled or expired for 2 years plus one day).
 6. If the call sign is not listed in QRZ or the FCC database, it is available for immediate issue. This would be rare for a 1 x 2 call sign, but not uncommon for 1 x 3 or 2 x 3 calls.
 7. Given you did not find your dream call was immediately available, the next series of steps are designed to make a preliminary assessment if each subsequent call sign holder is alive and well or deceased and their demise was never reported to the FCC (thus the call may be available).
 8. If the call sign is active in QRZ.com, look for the following information on the first page:
 - a. If there is a web site, email address, photo, biography, etc., the call is probably held by someone who is alive and active.
 - b. Check the "Lookups" at the top of the page. If the number is above 100, the person is probably alive and recently active.
 - c. If a. and/or b. are affirmative, move on to the next call sign. The licensee is probably among the living.
 9. If the first page of the QRZ.com listing has no customized info and the "Lookup" number is below 100, go to the second page. It can be reached by clicking on "Detailed Info."
 10. Look for the following information:
 - a. "Codes"
 - b. Effective date and expiration date
 - c. FRN
 - d. Birthday
 11. From the information gathered in #8, you must next assess the following:
 - a. Codes starting with HA mean the call sign has been issued for a long time. Codes starting with HV mean they were issued under the current vanity call sign program. A desired call that is an HA means the licensee is a relative old-timer. HV means the call was issued in the not too distant past and is probably held by an active ham.
 - b. Effective dates that are more than 5 years old mean there is a greater likelihood that there has been no licensing action with that call. Expiration dates that are two years or less in the future are likely candidates, assuming that the indicators in #7 above make you think the licensee might not be active.
 - c. Licenses that have an FRN number have had activity in the recent past. These licensees are more likely to be active than those who have no FRN.
 - d. The FCC has stopped publishing birthdays. Those listings in QRZ.com that have birthdays are mature listings. This is also an important piece of information if you believe the licensee might be a silent key.
 12. Again, the reasoning for weighing all this information is to decide if the licensee is likely not active and may be a silent key. If the QRZ.com research leads you to believe this licensee may have passed and it was not reported, the following steps must be done.
 13. Open the Social Security Death Index. A free website for this is <http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/ssdi.cgi>. Enter the name exactly as it

- appears in QRZ.com. Click the search button.
14. The search may return none to many names of deceased individuals. Obviously if there are none with the legal name you entered, the person is likely alive and the call sign is not available.
 15. If there is an exact name match, the birthday in QRZ.com becomes extremely important in determining if the person you are looking for is in the SSDI list. A match of birthdays almost always indicates you have identified a ham that is deceased. If this is the case, print the page from the web site showing the information about the deceased, including date of death.
 16. If you aren't sure you found a match, you can subscribe to the Ancestry.com web site. There is a link on the Genealogy page you are currently surfing. There is a charge for using this service, but it can help you assure you have the right person because Ancestry.com contains the last known address of the deceased.
 17. Obviously, this process can take hours of research that can be fruitless for you (but good for the call sign holder who is still alive and well!). I have never done a comprehensive search, however, that did not uncover one or two silent keys with desirable call signs who were not listed in Vanity HQ.
 18. Now you have the inside edge on everyone else. The following few steps are critical.
 - a. Don't go any further unless you are absolutely sure the person in the SSDI is the very same as the licensee you have discovered.
 - b. Don't tell anyone what you have discovered unless you want to share the chances to obtain the call (or as I have done, do the research for others who are computer challenged).
 - c. If the date of death is more than 2 years and 1 day from the current date, notify the FCC immediately.
 - d. Send a letter to the FCC that includes the following:

To:

Rebecca Little
 FCC Wireless
 Telecommunications Bureau
 1270 Fairfield Rd.
 Gettysburg PA 17325-7245

I am hereby requesting that the FCC cancel amateur license (enter the call sign). The licensee, (enter the legal name) died on (enter the date). A copy of the SSDI page showing the required information is attached.

Thank you,
 (signed)

- e. Attach the copy of the web page you printed with the SSDI information and mail the letter. It takes the FCC about a week to cancel the license. You can monitor this by checking the FCC web site every day
<http://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp>.
- f. Within a week of mailing the letter, go on-line and apply for the vanity call sign you selected
<https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/login.jsp>. Pay the fee by credit card and print copies of all the forms and confirmations you process.
- g. In a few days, your application will show up on Vanity HQ as being "unavailable." As soon as the FCC processes the cancellation request you submitted, the call sign will become available and it should be assigned to you within 3 weeks. Since no one else knew it was coming available, there is no competition.
- h. If the date of death is less than 2 years and 1 day, sit on the information until the time period has passed and then follow c. through e.

As I said this process is complicated, time consuming and not for the weak of spirit. On the other hand, it is totally legal and ethical. A call sign assigned to a SK is not serving that person and you can honor their memory by activating the call and keeping it active.

Member News

From Dean, N6BV

At the Visalia International DX Convention this weekend, Wayne Mills, N7NG, from ARRL HQ hand-delivered to the NCCC the coveted club-competition gavel, engraved with the following:

"NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CONTEST CLUB Unlimited Category 2003 ARRL November Sweepstakes."

It's official, team, NCCC is the leader once again in the large-club SS club competition!

Rusty Epps, W6OAT, the architect of the incredible drive to return the club gavel to northern California, accepted the gavel from N7NG. Rusty expressed his profound gratitude to the great NCCC team effort that made this all possible.

I am honored to be the custodian for the gavel this year -- mostly thanks to the generosity of my hosts K6TA and K6KO, and N6RO, who let me operate their great stations.

I will bring the precious gavel to the next NCCC meeting so that all the NCCC members can see the fruit of their hard work and we can all properly celebrate!

From Dean, N6BV (letter to the White House)

President Bush:

I am very opposed to the deployment of "BPL" -- broadband over power lines. The reason for my opposition is the severe interference that BPL can/does produce, as demonstrated in the limited amount of tests that have already gone on in the US and during far more extensive tests done abroad.

Whether or not the FCC is aware of it, there have been a number of BPL trials in other countries -- most notably, Japan, the Netherlands, Austria, and the UK. All such BPL trials have resulted in totally unacceptable interference to short-wave radio services in the High Frequency (HF) range. These services included emergency communication networks, as well as airline and armed-forces systems.

The FCC has rather disingenuously stated that the technology employed in these foreign trials is not up to the newest technology promised by US proponents of BPL. As a private citizen, I consider this to be an incredibly arrogant attitude to display. Certainly the technological infrastructure and technical competence of these countries should not be dismissed lightly, yet the FCC seems to be doing so in "pooh-poohing" their very real, very negative experiences with BPL.

In a time when emergency and homeland protection communications using the HF radio spectrum is a valuable, nay indispensable, resource, we should not rush headlong into deploying unproven technology that has the unfortunate potential of polluting this spectrum beyond the point where it can be used by anyone, even BPL.

I urge you, sir, to reconsider your position on BPL. There are far, far better technological solutions that have much greater economic advantages as well.

Yours truly,

Richard D. Straw

CL

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