



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



September
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Issue 424

NCCC Net
Thursday 9 PM
3610+/-

Our Next Meeting

CQP Plans, K6TD SS Plans, TBA

Date: Monday, 10 September 2007

Time: 6:00 pm schmooze, 6:30 pm dinner,
7:00pm program

Location: China Wok, Vallejo

Eight courses plus beverage – family style

Cost \$22 includes gratuity

Directions:

Go to www.nccc.cc, and select "meetings."

NCCC Officers

President: Bob Tellefsen, N6WG

Vice-President and Contest Chairman: Alan Eshleman,
K6SRZ

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Director: Jim Brown, K9YC

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Webmaster: Ed Muns, W0YK w0yk@msn.com

JUG Editor: Rob Brownstein, k6rb@baymoon.com

Presidential Musings

By: Bob Tellefsen, N6WG

Well, August and NAQP are behind us now. It's getting closer to the winter contest season. Are you ready for it yet? Our two biggees, CQP and Sweepstakes, are coming up in October and November. ON YOUR MARK, GET SET ...

CALIFORNIA QSO PARTY

CQP is almost upon us. This is our very own California QSO Party, famous all over the country as the best party in town. You are personally invited, nay, needed, to ensure that CA QSOs are readily available to those who want them.

And there will be lots of folks who do. Some just want a CA QSO toward WAS, others are working on the WACC award, and some are doing the Worked All US Counties bit. They all will be looking for YOU in this contest. Now is the time for you to plan on helping make this the best CQP ever.

SWEEPSTAKES

What is this Sweepstakes thing?

Sweepstakes is one of the most important contests involving serious contesting clubs in the US/VE. The winner of combined CW and SSB sections takes the gavel as top contesting club for that year, along with serious bragging rights. NCCC won the gavel in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.

What is Sweepstakes to NCCC?

SS is how we measure ourselves against

the other big boys who play in this arena. We have shown we have what it takes to win in the past, and we want to do it again. When NCCC wins, as a member YOU are a WINNER too.

That's all for now, gang. See you in the contest.

73, Bob N6WG

VP/CC Report

By: Alan Eshleman, K6SRZ

First, my thanks to Fred, K6DGW for contributing the VPCC report to the August JUG while I was vacationing on NA 075.

Here are but a few of the contests for September 2007. As always, you can find more details and links to complete rules on the WA7BNM Contest Calendar Web page: <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/>

All Asia Sept 1-2

WAE SSB Sept 8-9

ARRL September VHF Sept 8-10

SOC Marathon Sprint Sept 8

NA Sprint CW Sept 9 (Bob, W6RGG is organizing our club effort. Contact him directly)

Tennessee QSO Party Sept 9-10

South Carolina QSO Party Sept 15-16

NA Sprint SSB Sept 16

CQ WW RTTY Sept 29-30

And every Thursday evening the popular NCCC Sprint gets underway at 0230 Z

NCCC scores in NAQP

CW: As we go to press, NCCC Team 1 (ops N6RO, N5OT, N7MH, W6NL, N6TV) have an aggregate score of 667,275.

Last year's August NAQP CW was won by the Tennessee Contest Groups Team #1 with a score of 652, 524). In 2006 NCCC Team #1 placed 8th with a score of 421,539

This year's July NAQP **RTTY** showed a total NCCC contribution of 633,998.

NCCC's Team #1 (WK6I, K6TD, K6RB, K6MM, ND2T) had an aggregate score of 224,011. This is nearly double the Team #1 score from 2005 (I find no records of a 2006 NAQP RTTY on the NAQP Web page) of 113,896, which was good for 6th place. W0YK had the second highest individual NCCC score this year (72,896) as part of Team K3. At our August meeting, Ed gave a superb presentation of RTTY contesting. It's no wonder he is setting world records!

This report is going to press before the results of the August NAQP SSB contest are known. This year, Jack Brindle, W6FB, stepped-up to organize NCCC teams. Last year's August NAQP **SSB** Team #1 had a 15th place finish with 99,329.

Bob Vallio W6RGG is organizing teams for the NA Sprint, happening this year on September 7.

Call for Sweepstakes Volunteers

My first priority as VP/CC is to help prepare NCCC for another run at the ARRL Sweepstakes Unlimited Club Championship.

Sweepstakes comes early this year. The CW contest runs from 2100 UTC November 3 until 0300 UTC November 5. Phone follows two weeks later. Step one is for all of you to set aside the time. Getting butts in chairs is job one.

Next there comes the hard work--the attention to detail that provides our margin of victory. This work includes setting up pre-fill and super check partial files, organizing phone trees, collecting pledges, and arranging for HMO operations to name but a few.

Fred, K6DGW, has volunteered to help with the phone tree. Don, AE6RF, is working on pre-fill files.

I definitely will need other volunteers to step up.

We'll certainly need a log flogger or floggers to make sure that our logs reach the ARRL in proper format and on time. I also anticipate the need for an informal Geek Squad, or Brain Trust, if you prefer, to help newer contesters with all manner of hardware and software problems. Certainly the membership of NCCC has been an invaluable resource for my contesting efforts.

If more than one of you volunteers for a particular activity, then you can call yourselves a committee!

All of you can begin by sending email to me (doctore@well.com) regarding your SS plans. Let me know if you'll be doing CW, phone, or both. Also let me know if you can share your station for an HMO operation or whether you need a station. We now have a table on the Members' Only area of our Web site that lists the HMO plans that I've so far collected—listings of stations needed and stations available. You can scroll down to the table at the bottom of the "Sweepstakes 2007" section.

Don't delay. If you don't do it, it may not get done. Your help is invaluable.

Finally, take a look at the remarkable NCCC Sweepstakes Handbook in the members section of the NCCC Web page.

73 and KB,

Alan/K6SRZ

My Trip to the Dayton Hamvention – 2007

By Jim Venneman, WX6V

It's been years since I attended the Dayton Hamvention – at least 35 by my recollection. You see, I grew up in Cincinnati and was first licensed as KN8DBW in 1961. I lived

there until I graduated from college in 1969. So, going to the Cincinnati Hamfest and the Dayton Hamvention were annual activities in those days.

My memory of the event was, that while bigger than the Cincinnati hamfest, it was no big deal, other than they filled the main arena and an adjacent hallway with booths. The flea market was fairly big, but again, no big deal.

This time, I was not only going back to visit the Hamvention, but primarily to visit with my long time friend Jim, K8CXM, who I first met on 40 meter cw back in my novice days. And, I was going to see my old high-school cruising buddy, Jeff, W2FU, who now lives in Rochester, N.Y. and owns the Green Heron Engineering firm that sells digital rotor controllers.

The last time we were together, we were all talking about cars and girls. Now we're all old guys with grown kids and when we had a chance to get together and talk – what were we talking about? We were talking about retirement plans and Medicare coverage. What happened? At least we were all still active and playing with radios. Some things just never change.

I was not prepared for what I was about to experience in the year 2007. I have never seen so much electronic equipment and related items located in one place! That doesn't even begin to mention the mass of ham-radio-related humanity on the premises.

Official attendance was set at 19,318 this year and, folks, that's a lotta ham! We arrived at the Hamvention around 8:00 Friday morning and started off in the flea market area. Still living on California time – my body thought it was 5 AM, and here I was walking (more like teetering) around in a parking lot looking at electronic stuff through blurred vision.

I was pretty spacey and was basically focused on the feet of my two buddies that

were with me. I didn't want to lose them. By the time I started to wake up, about an hour or so later, I could not believe what my eyes were seeing.

Ahead of me were row upon row of electronic gear set up on tables as far the eye could see. Very impressive! I saw every kind of electronic thing imaginable – radio gear, parts, books, tools, test equipment, computers, and a lot of things that I have no clue what they were. Down on one end of the row we had guys dressed up like the Blues Brothers selling little laptops for \$99 and cracking jokes over their PA.

Meanwhile, down at the other end, we had the cute little ICOM girls handing out rain ponchos to all the guys. In between, we had every mixture you could imagine, from guys with just a few pieces of gear to sell, to tent covered walkways filled with boxes of stuff.

Oh, can't forget to mention the shack-on-the-belt types, with their interesting assortment of head-mounted antenna arrays. Apparently, I was lucky, because the weather was picture perfect with highs around 85 during the day, and a nice breeze with no hints of rain at all. I loved it!

After several hours of this, it was time to enter the exhibit area and turn in our prize tickets. Whoa! We couldn't even walk through the main arena floor! There was just a mass of humanity in there crushing to get a look at all the glittering goodies on display.

It was then that I discovered just how far the vendor exhibits had expanded since my last trip to Dayton. One of my companions took me on a little walk that ended up encompassing numerous rooms and over 500 booths of vendors selling anything and everything related to ham radio.

Down on one end we had some small women dressed up like shiny robots entertaining the guys over at the ICOM booth. Meanwhile, at the other end, we had

Gordon West, WB6NOA, wearing a giant-size mortar-board on his head and espousing the value of ham education to all who would listen. And, in between, there was shiny new stuff that we all have to have in our shacks -- or so we might think.

At one point, we decided to return to our car for lunch. I didn't know what to expect. Out of the trunk came a small table, some chairs, and a cooler filled with ham and cheese, bread, soft drinks, water, chips, and other goodies. Hey, these guys know how to attend a ham convention!!

After lunch, on the way back to the arena, we couldn't help but notice all of the guys pulling carts into the parking lot loaded with electronic gear that we couldn't recognize. Where did all of this stuff come from? What were people using this stuff for? Just how much money was exchanging hands over the weekend? These were all good questions.

Up the next morning (Saturday), and off we went to the Hamvention for day #2. This was the day we intended to buy all of the goodies that we scoped out on Friday. Off I went to the Microham booth to buy that new Microkeyer that I had been eyeing for several months.

Not bad. I got it for \$25 off the regular price, no sales tax, and no shipping – about a \$50-60 savings! Off my buddy went to get that new 144/440 Mhz. dual-band antenna out in the flea market. I also stopped by the ARRL booth to have my DX QSL cards checked.

I had brought enough cards with me to confirm over 200 contacts. But, I was not expecting them to allow me to submit this many cards. Bill Moore, NC1L, head of ARRL DXCC, was gracious enough to take my cards back to his hotel room and checked them that night. I returned the next day to pick them up and pay my fees. Now that's first-class service!

I ran into some California folks that I knew during the weekend, such as W0YK, K7NV,

N6BV, and W6RGG. Needless to say, 6-land callsigns on hats, shirts, and name badges were few and far between.

By the end of the day, with tired legs, an empty wallet, and a bag full of goodies, it was time to head back home. Did I mention all of the neat free stuff that was given out by vendors – like ICOM and Yaesu hats, mouse pads and pins from Kenwood, and catalogs galore?

My last day in Cincinnati was spent helping my buddy put up that 144/440 dual-band antenna on his roof, and replacing the coax on his 6-meter beam with some “good stuff” that was purchased from “The Wireman.”

In the meantime, I ate as often as possible over the weekend at “Skyline Chili.” If you have never been to a chili parlor in the Cincinnati area, you’re missing out. Just like that, it was time to head back to the airport and the flight back to California.

So, would I be willing to go back again? Absolutely! My only problem is next year’s event falls on my 20th wedding anniversary. Sorry guys, I’m not that foolish! Maybe I’ll be back in 2009, instead. I’ll probably need a new transceiver by then, or how about that new SteppIR antenna, or Alpha-Spid rotor or ...?

CQP in 2007

By: Rob Brownstein, K6RB

It’s getting close to that time again. October 6 and 7 will see the HF bands full of CA stations trying to work as many of the 58 multipliers and QSO points as they can.

Like last year, the same strategies should be adopted. If you’re a CA station, then you should be CQing your head off and trying to run stations for the entire contest. If you’re a non-CA station, you should be searching and pouncing pretty much the whole time.

Trust me. The rare CA counties will not be searching and pouncing, so the only way that non-CA ops are going to work ‘em is by finding them rather than CQing and hoping for the best.

Similarly, the best non-CA operators are going to be searching and pouncing, so all CA operators should be CQing. If a CA operator is searching and pouncing, you’re likely to hear virtually nothing but CA operators calling CQ. You’ll pick up some points by working them, but your single CA multiplier will have long been snagged.

Some would argue that once someone has gotten all 58 multipliers, there’s no need to keep CQing or S&Pping. I would argue that one is still more likely to garner more points sticking to the original game plan.

During good sunspot years, there is great activity from 10 through 160. This year, however, it’s still a toss up whether we’re at the bottom of the old cycle or the bottom of a new cycle. I suspect that like several recent contests, the great bulk of activity will be on 20, 40 and 80. But, if 15 is even slightly productive, CA stations with small yagis or wire antennas may find they have more presence on that band. So, check it frequently and be prepared to move there.

Ten meters has been almost useless for months, now. But, don’t forget the big sporadic E opening during ARRL 10 last December. It lasted for hours, and produced coast-to-coast QSOs. Moreover, it asserted itself around dusk in California and well after dark back east. So, check 10 meters, too, because if it opens, it can be a good source of many additional points.

This year’s CQP is the first one where a lot of newbie HF operators may be getting their feet wet in contesting. Many of these operators will not as yet have honed their CW skills. So, expect to find most of them on phone. Make their experience a good one, and you’ll earn points, possibly mults,

and help attract new blood to future CQPs and contesting, in general.

For the newbies who brave the CW bands, QRS for them and make their effort rewarding rather than frustrating.

CQP is the one time per year when all CA operators become the sought-after instead of the seeking. Let's show the other state QSO party organizers how to do it right. Make sure there's ample activity on both modes. Make sure all counties will be on the air. And, make sure you have fun.

Pacific Division Director and Vice Director

You'll soon be getting mail-in ballots for the upcoming election of Pacific Division director and vice-director. Only one candidate – Bob Vallio, W6RGG – is running for director. As such, he is elected.

For vice director, there are two candidates – Andy Oppel, N6AJO; and Rob Brownstein, K6RB. Oppel is the incumbent; Brownstein is the challenger. Oppel is known for his focus on emergency communications; Brownstein is a familiar HF operator with experience operating all HF modes (CW, phone and digital).

The only choice Pacific Division ARRL members will have, this time, is the vice director. One (Oppel) by his own statement is focused on EMCOMM. The other (Brownstein) by his own statement is a generalist with broad experience in ham radio.

So, members have a real choice – a specialist or a generalist. Vote and exercise your choice.



Some of the group at the August meeting at the Tied House.



More folks at the August meeting.



NCCC's newest member, Jerry, KD6WKY, voted in at the August meeting.



Mr. SO2R RTTY, W0YK, gives an excellent presentation on how he does it.



China Wok 2005 – Ed (W0YK) and Bob (N6WG) awaiting the sumptuous goodies. (Note: Ed is still wearing the same shirt [see left] in 2007). And, what's that thing growing out of his ear?



Andy, AE6Y, donates a never-opened, 4-element two-meter beam to the club, which is immediately put up for auction.



Mongolian Beef – just one of the great dishes that await you on September 10th.



And...the lucky bidder is N6AJR who goes home with a brand new yagi for only \$75!



China Wok – Sept 10 – be there, or be hungry.

All photos courtesy of Robert A. Wilson, N6TV, manualist extraordinaire and reasonably good CW operator.

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ANAHEIM, CA

(Near Disneyland)
933 N. Euclid St., 92801
(714) 533-7373

(800) 854-6046

Janet, KL7MF, Mgr.
anaheim@hamradio.com

BURBANK, CA

2416 W. Victory Bl., 91506
(818) 842-1786

(800) 854-6046

Eric, KA6IHT, Mgr.
Victory Blvd. at Buena Vista
1 mi. west I-5
burbank@hamradio.com

OAKLAND, CA

2210 Livingston St., 94606
(510) 534-5757

(800) 854-6046

Mark, W17YN, Mgr.
I-880 at 23rd Ave. ramp
oakland@hamradio.com

SAN DIEGO, CA

5375 Kearny Villa Rd., 92123
(858) 560-4900

(800) 854-6046

Tom, KM6K, Mgr.
Hwy. 163 & Claremont Mesa
sandiego@hamradio.com

SUNNYVALE, CA

510 Lawrence Exp. #102
94085
(408) 736-9496

(800) 854-6046

Rick, N6DQ, Co-Mgr.
Howard, W6HOC, Co-Mgr
So. from Hwy. 101
sunnyvale@hamradio.com

NCCC
1560 Klamath Drive
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

Check us at:
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