



**Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club**



Issue 491

April 2013

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From the past President...



**NCCC Year in Review
April 2012 – April 2013**

Sometimes it is easy to forget what we have accomplished together as a club. As I look back over these last 12 months, I am extremely proud of what our membership has accomplished. Indeed, it truly has been one of the banner years in club history, thanks to you. Let's take a moment to remember some of our successes over the last year.

In May 2012, we as a new officer and NCCC Board team presented goals for the year. Simply, they boiled down to: 1) increase club member enthusiasm and engagement, and 2) give back to the NCCC members.

One of the tools we used to support these goals was the NCCC 2012-2013 Contest Plan. We divided it into three parts: focus contests, support contests and internal club competition.

Focus Contest Goals and Results:

WPX SSB & CW 2013: Win USA club competition

After the WPX SSB weekend, we are in the lead by 40 million points over PVRC and YCCC for the club competition plaque.

We still have WPX CW upcoming, and PVRC has proven to be very strong in WPX CW. We need a solid performance by our expeditions, local Multi-Ops, and local Single-Ops during the CW weekend to maintain our lead and win the club competition.

Continued on page 3

The May meeting will be held on the second Monday of the month. The location and program will be announced in the May issue of The JUG.

From the President...



I am flattered to accept your nomination for President of the NCCC. NCCC, we all agree, is Peninsula-centric. The drive times and the price of gas are, for some of us, significant obstacles to further participation in club's business. Yet it is the day-to-day attention to the details of our club's operation that makes NCCC both a major force in radiosport and a great bunch of folks to hang out with.

The March awards meeting demonstrated to me that it might be possible to have virtual club officers—that I might be able to chair our meetings from the comfort of my home office. I am currently at home recovering from successful (but painful) surgery. For the May meeting (I need help with locations) I will appear from home through the wonders of WebX. At that time I hope to expand on my thoughts about club goals and attempt to entertain you all with a few visual aids, including my most recent DXpedition video from the 3D2C expedition.

My modest first set of goals includes:

A continued emphasis on contests that do not discriminate against Zone 3 and on RTTY contesting, which has emerged as a major NCCC strength.

Revisiting our methods of awards and recognition: keeping what is good and changing what has become stagnant or irrelevant.

Finishing out my term with an NCCC that is at least as good as I found it and, I hope, maybe a little better.

I need everyone's help and I welcome your suggestions. My email address and phone numbers are listed.

73, Alan, K6SRZ

Phone 707-665-5790 Email doctore@well.com



Northern California Contest Club

Excellence In Amateur Radio Contesting

Officers:

President	Alan Eshleman	K6SRZ	doctore@well.com	Penngrove CA
Vice President /Contest Chair	Alan Maenchen	AD6E	ad6e@arrl.net	San Jose, CA
Secretary/Treasurer	Tom Epperly	NS6T	tepperly@gmail.com	Livermore CA
Past President	Dean Wood	N6DE	cqden6de@gmail.com	Sunnyvale CA
Director	Fred Jensen	K6DGW	k6dgw@foothill.net	Auburn CA
Director	Steve Dyer	W1SRD	w1srd@arrl.net	Redwood City CA
Director	Jim Brown	K9YC	k9yc@arrl.net	Santa Cruz CA

Volunteers:

New Member Mentor	Al Rendon	WT6K	wt6k@arrl.net
Charter Member	Rusty Epps	W6OAT	w6oat@sbcglobal.net
Awards Chairs	Joanna Dilley	K6YL	joanna.k6yl@gmail.com
	Rebar Rebarchik	N6DB	rebar@hamilton.com
CQP Chair	Alan Eshleman	K6SRZ	doctore@well.com
CQP Certificates	Andy Faber	AE6Y	ae6y@arrl.net
K6ZM QSL Manager	George Daughters	K6GT	k6gt@arrl.net
K6CQP,N6CQP,W6CQP QSL Mgr	Ed Muns	W0YK	w0yk@arrl.net
NCCC Email reflector Admin	Phil Verinsky	W6PK	kb-w6tqg@verinsky.com
Webmaster	John Miller	K6MM	k6mm@arrl.net
JUG Editor	Ian Parker	W6TCP	w6tcpian@gmail.com

Thursday Night Contesting:

NCCC—Sprint	Ken Keeler	N6RO	kenkeeler@jazznut.com
NS Ladder	Bill Haddon	N6ZFO	haddon.bill@gmail.com
Slow NS (SNS)	Chris Tate	N6WM	ctate@ewnetinc.com

NCCC Net

Thursday 8 PM
 Freq: 3.610 +/-

NCCC

Monthly meetings take place on the second Monday of each month !

Details in May JUG

NCCC Membership Information

If you wish to join NCCC, you must fill out an [application for membership](#), which will be read and voted upon at the next monthly meeting. ([PDF application form](#))

To join, you must reside within [club territory](#) which is defined as the maximum of:

- Northern California, anything north of the Tehachapi's up to the Oregon border, and
- A part of north-western Nevada (anything within our ARRL 175-mile radius circle centered at 10 miles North of Auburn on Highway 49).

N6DE 2012—2013 Review *continued from page 1*

NAQP: Win NAQP club challenge, be competitive in the team competition, and encourage activity in a fun & short contest which offers something for everyone, from SO2R ops to low power little pistols

We created a 2013 NAQP Club Challenge with PVRC and SMC. Thanks to these clubs for accepting the challenge! After the winter NAQPs, we are in the lead. We still have the summer NAQPs remaining, and SMC and PVRC can overcome our lead if we are not diligent about participating.

We won 3 team competitions with team NCCC #1:

August 2012 NAQP CW
January 2013 NAQP CW
January 2013 NAQP SSB

Other NCCC teams performed very well. We had record NCCC participation and # of teams submitted! Thanks to K6DGW for leading NAQP organization in the NCCC.

ARRL RTTY Roundup 2013: Win unlimited club competition gavel

We won the club competition gavel, setting a new unlimited club category record.

Support Contest Goals and Results

California QSO Party 2012: Encourage members to try something new

Several members did just that by setting a new record! (new county records: WC6H, AE6Y@K6TA/K6KO, K2RD, N6ZFO; new YL record: W6NN).

Other members did something new by going on a county expedition for the first time! (for example, W6OAT joined the K6MM Merced expedition, K6MP went on an expedition with KI6INR, et al).

Victories by NCCC members in the M/M Expedition category (Trinity County: K6YL, N6DQ, K6WX, AA6XV, N6NU, K6RHO), M/M overall (@N6RO), M/S overall (@W1RH), S/O QRP (W6JTI), S/O YL (W6NN), School (W6YX), CW QSOs (N6TV).

73, Dean, N6DE

Welcome to our new NCCC members...

K6RHO
W7IV



From the Vice President/Contest Chair...

The WPX SSB weekend has just concluded and some preliminary scores are rolling in.

First the good news: NCCC put out a respectable showing in expeditions and a couple of really great multi-op logs that should score well and help the club get on the map with regard to the WPX club competition.

The travelers get high marks for going to exotic places like PJ4, 8P, P4, HK. More specifically: 8P9A (W2SC) was on and very active. I've not heard a score rumor yet.

PJ4D (N6DE, W1SRD, K0BEE) reported over 22 megapoints

P40L (W6LD) was also very active, but no score rumor to report at this early point in time.

HK1NA (N6KT and others) was a huge M/M that Rich joined. Again, no score to report yet.

Note that Rich was only one operator, but NCCC can claim a percentage of the big HK1NA score.

The big NCCC multi stations were out in force again, but with a couple of exceptions. N6RO led the pack with 17 meg using the call AK6W. Next was WC6H with 10 meg. Those were the only truly successful large multi operations. W6YX was on as NF1R only because of the heroic effort of N7MH who did a M/2 operation all by himself getting 2 megapoints. Evidently none of the other operators bothered to show up. Similar story at W7RN who couldn't get anyone to show up. W6NV was active as KX7M (no score rumor yet, but I saw >2 meg in the log when I was relieved from my shift Sunday morning). K9YC was active as M/S as KU6W and posted another 2 meg.

Then there were several S/O efforts such as K6XX (NF6A) with 1.6 meg and KA3DDR with 1.4 meg. No one else managed to score over 1 million.

The down side: Space WX was not helpful this weekend with low SFI and an A index in the high 20s making DX very difficult. By Sunday, conditions improved dramatically and I had a nice time working EU on 15 for most of the late morning/early afternoon. The other problem was local WX that included electrical storms that rumbled through the bay area Saturday. I actually shut down the station and went home rather than risk staying on the ridge top. Electrical noise was S9+20 even on 15 meters. This is pretty rare for CA. I've never operated in such conditions. Everything was fine until I started hearing pops in the radio. I thought someone has started an unshielded generator nearby, but it got faster and faster until the whole band was wiped out. I didn't know what it was until BOOM! Then it was all quiet again for a few minutes and I could work a couple more Qs. Then the cycle repeated. Fortunately, it didn't last so I fired back up Sunday morning, but several hours were lost.

The REAL downside was the lack of participation of NCCC members in general. This is something we really need to work on for the future. Granted, poor conditions, poor WX, religious holiday were all detractors from this event. However, I'm worried that we as individual club members can't be bothered to get on the air and make some points for a club effort. In "team contesting" such as NAQP, or Sprint we can usually field teams that are very competitive and WIN. However, when it comes to competition that includes the WHOLE club, we can't seem to do as much. We have our usual high-powered individuals who do the lions' share, but these whole club competitions really need massive turnout to be successful. More on this later.

Don't forget: WPX CW is the end of May. Start planning now. I'm going to be at KH6LC. Where will you be?

73, Alan, AD6E

Thumb-Tip RIT by Hank, W6SX

I like to keep my fingers as close to the home keys as possible. I hate reaching for the VFO or RIT knobs. Griffin PowerMate <http://store.griffintechnology.com/powermate-1> to the rescue.

See the two photos. The stock PowerMate knob pulls off easily. I used a smaller knob to replicate my K3 RIT knob.



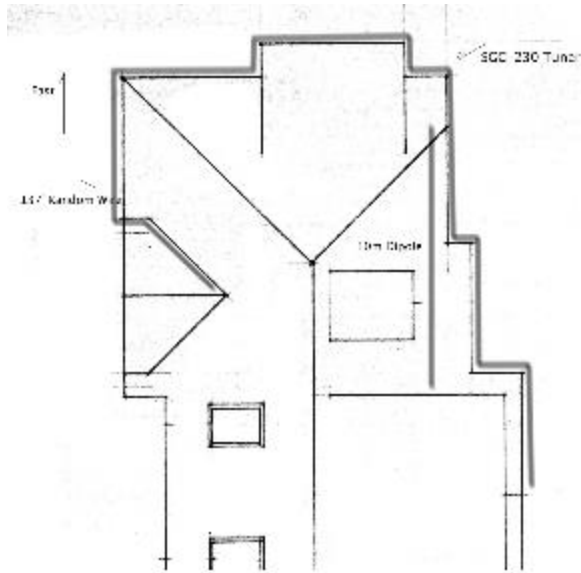
I use N1MMLogger which allows VFO (S&P) and RIT (Run) control with Up and Down keyboard arrows. PowerMate setup was a piece of cake. Using the PowerMate utility I programmed Down arrow to clockwise-knob rotation and Up arrow to counterclockwise-knob rotation. For frosting on the cake, I programmed Alt-U to PowerMate vertical click which allows me to quickly toggle between Run and S&P.

TRLog and TR4W control VFO and RIT with Shift keys. PowerMate setup would be straightforward. I presume other contest logging programs have similar capability.

My Townhome Shack - Byron N6NUL

Life intruded on My Townhome Shack last month. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that if there are topics about building a shack in very limited space anyone would like me to explore, please contact me at the email address below. I would be very happy to either publish your article, or research the topic myself. In the meantime, this month I would like to talk about Antennas Past.

I have not been a ham for very long, but it is already clear to me that the foundation of a station is not the radio, but the antenna system. And, in restricted living, a good antenna system is hard to build. Mostly, what you can have is what you can get away with! How far can you go before the neighbors complain?

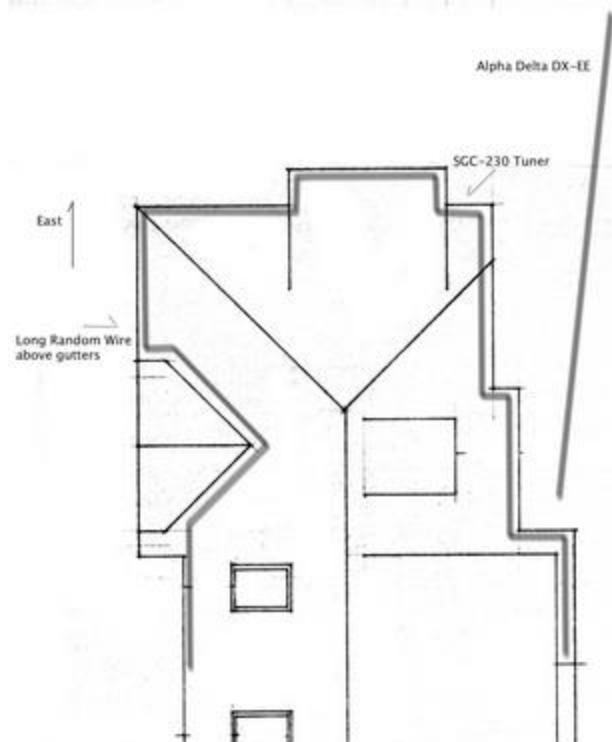


My first system (shown on the left - top down view) was straight out of the ARRL stealth antenna book: a 130-ish ft. (41m) long piece of bright yellow #10 aluminum wire I bought from Halted and cut in half. This I stapled under my gutters in a wildly bent U-shape averaging about 16 feet (4.9m) off the ground and soldered to about 10 feet (3m) of 450 ohm ladder line connected to an SGC-230 tuner. I combined this with a roughly cut dipole for 10m that was at about 18 feet (5.5m) running East/West between my WX station and my TV antenna mast. Right above the gutters.

This system was pretty stealthy, except for the yellow wire, and the fact that the SGC-230 tuner was perhaps 15 feet (4.5m) from my neighbors bedroom. The tuner makes quite a racket when all of the relays are going, and this was a problem late at night in my quiet neighborhood. I made only a handful of SSB contacts using this system, but as a new ham this was caused as much by mic fright as anything, and thought I could improve it by repositioning the wires the following summer and just getting on the air more.

Figure on the right shows my next effort. First, I replaced the #10 aluminum wire with black #12 low voltage lighting wire to match the color of my roof tiles better. I stapled that above the gutters, but basically followed the same path as before and I used the same tuner. Then, I replaced the 10m dipole with a commercial Alpha Delta DX-EE 40/20/15/10 dipole supported (with permission) by a neighbors tree and my house at a height of perhaps 18 feet (5.5m).

This system was somewhat less stealthy, with the Alpha Delta visible from 1 neighbors living room and partially from our street. The low voltage wire did not seem to work as well as the #10 aluminum, either, and in general I was very disappointed. But, I did participate in my first Sweepstakes and claim 100 SSB contacts right before joining the NCCC. Joining the NCCC motivated me to try again.



Continued on next page

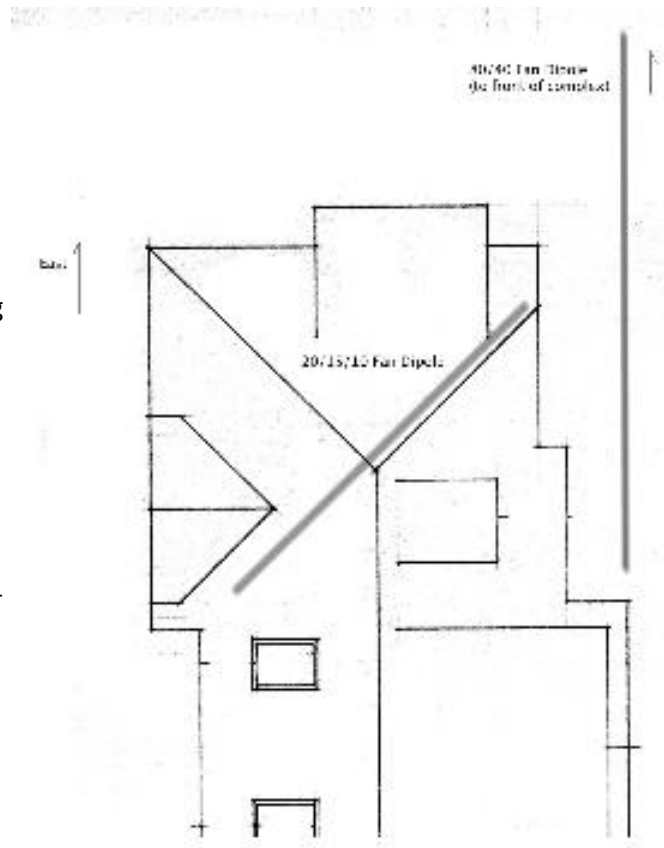
Over that winter, I sold all of my appliances and built an Elecraft K1 in order to make myself learn CW. I also decided I need to be more bold in my antenna choices, and conferred with Jim K9YC and Donald AE6RF about my options. Jim's paper on limited space antennas was also a motivation.

The following summer I asked a few neighbors if they would mind if I hung an antenna above their back yards, with the center supported by a tree in one of them. Being mostly renters or my old college friends, they did not mind. They even helped me hang a full sized 80/40 fan running East/West with a peak in the center at roughly 35 feet (10.5m) and fed with coax that followed the fence back to my yard. For 20/15/10, I built a fan dipole and draped it over my 12 pitch (45 degree) roof. I would have used the Alpha Delta, but it is made with grey wire and stands out too much against my black roof tiles. The Wireman #531 matches my roof nicely, and is very hard to see, so I used that.

I learned a lot building this system, and using a TS-830s borrowed from Fred K6DGW, I nearly tripled my score in Sweepstakes that year. Unfortunately, this was mostly due to adding CW: I scored about 150 QSO's in each mode. The antenna system itself was better, but not hugely. I would have to try again.

Next month, my current system and some of the modeling I have attempted to help me trade off different systems.

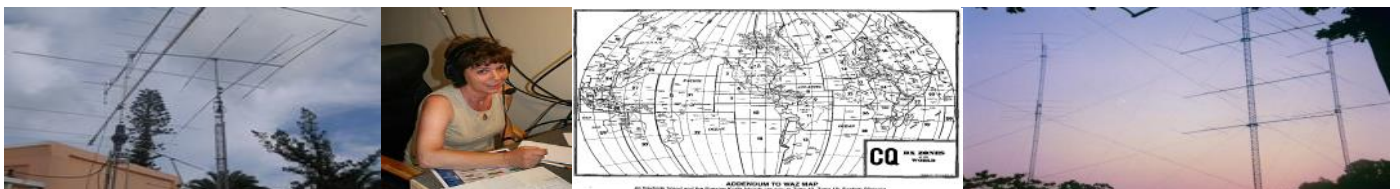
73, Byron N6NUL byron@n6nul.org



Please consider writing an article for JUG !

May 2013 Newsletter Deadline—May 5th

This is your newsletter so lets make it something we are proud of. I hope you will consider writing an article for the JUG! Whether its about your station, recent contest experience or a technical article we would appreciate hearing from you. Send your articles to Ian W6TCP w6tcp@comcast.net



ANAHEIM, CA
(Near Disneyland)
933 N. Euclid St., 92801
(714) 533-7373
(800) 854-6046
Janet, KL7MF, Mgr.
anaheim@hamradio.com

BURBANK, CA
1525 W. Magnolia Bl., 91506
(818) 842-1786
(877) 892-1748
Eric, K6EJC, Mgr.
Magnolia between
S. Victory & Buena Vista
burbank@hamradio.com

OAKLAND, CA
2210 Livingston St., 94606
(510) 534-5757
(877) 892-1745
Mark, W17YN, Mgr.
I-880 at 23rd Ave. ramp
oakland@hamradio.com

SAN DIEGO, CA
5375 Kearny Villa Rd., 92123
(858) 560-4900
(877) 520-9623
Jerry, N5MCJ, Mgr.
Hwy. 163 & Claremont Mesa
sandiego@hamradio.com

SUNNYVALE, CA
510 Lawrence Exp. #102
94085
(408) 736-9496
(877) 892-1749
Jon, K6WV, Mgr.
So. from Hwy. 101
sunnyvale@hamradio.com

NEW CASTLE, DE
(Near Philadelphia)
1509 N. Dupont Hwy., 19720
(302) 322-7092
(800) 644-4476
Bill, KA3IXF, Mgr.
RT.13 1/4 mi., So. I-295
delaware@hamradio.com

PORTLAND, OR
11705 S.W. Pacific Hwy.
97223
(503) 598-0555
(800) 765-4267
Bill, K7WCE, Mgr.
Tigard-99W exit
from Hwy. 5 & 217
portland@hamradio.com

DENVER, CO
8400 E. Iliff Ave. #9, 80231
(303) 745-7373
(800) 444-9476
John W01G, Mgr.
denver@hamradio.com

PHOENIX, AZ
10613 N. 43rd Ave., 85029
(602) 242-3515
(800) 559-7388
Gary, N7GJ, Mgr.
Corner of 43rd Ave. & Peoria
phoenix@hamradio.com

ATLANTA, GA
6071 Buford Hwy., 30340
(770) 263-0700
(800) 444-7927
Mark, KJ4VO, Mgr.
Doraville, 1 mi. no. of I-285
atlanta@hamradio.com

WOODBRIDGE, VA
(Near Washington D.C.)
14803 Build America Dr.
22191
(703) 643-1063
(800) 444-4799
Steve, W4SHG, Mgr.
Exit 161, I-95, So. to US 1
virginia@hamradio.com

SALEM, NH
(Near Boston)
224 N. Broadway, 03079
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