



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



DECEMBER
2003
Issue 379

NCCC Net
Thursday 9PM
3853+/-

Our Next Meeting

Check www.nccc.cc for the program

Pizza and soft drinks - \$7
Please RSVP to KOBEE by 12 noon, Monday, 12 January

Date: Monday, 12 January 2004
Time: 6pm schmooz, 6:30pm dinner, 7:00pm NCCC meeting & program
Location: Tularik, Inc., 1120 Veterans Boulevard, South San Francisco, CA 98040
(650) 825-7000

Our Next Big Club Effort

2004 ARRL RTTY Roundup
18Z January 3, 2004 until 24Z January 4, 2004

See the RTTY Roundup rules at:
<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2004/rtty.html>

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WE DID IT!

Editorial

It was only last April when newly elected NCCC president, Steve Dyer, W1SRD, revealed his presidential aspiration: "I want to win back the gavel." And from all preliminary indications, it appears that we have.

Our score looks to be just shy of 24 million, and SMC's just shy of 17 million. But the numbers do not tell the whole story -- not by a long shot -- which certainly described NCCC's prospects at the time.

We had informally analyzed the results last time around and concluded that short of a doubling of membership combined with big increases in average score, the gavel appeared out of reach. Then, along came Rusty, W6OAT, with a novel approach, one that took advantage of members' willingness to forego individual glory for the overall club score..

His innovative idea of organizing a small cadre of "highly motivated operators" combined with clever use of spotting may not have been the silver bullet, but it certainly seemed to galvanize the club into action. All the NCCC participants

seemed to be pulling out all the stops. And when the RF cloud had settled, the club had attained an amazing increase in aggregate club score. Way to go, NCCC.

“NCCC Crushes SMC in November Sweepstakes”

Al Maenchen, AD6E

That was the proposed QST headline in Rustys' SS presentation at an NCCC meeting last summer. I don't think anyone seriously thought that would happen in such dramatic terms, but it may have come to pass.

As of today, the NCCC total score stands at 23.7 million claimed points. That's up from the 20.2 million points our members pledged before the contest, and a huge jump from anything NCCC has ever done in the past, even in our best winning year. Congratulations to all! This has been a fantastic team effort.

There has been a LOT of speculation as to how SMC did this year. With all the attention on how NCCC can and did pull off this major event, no one was paying any attention to SMC plans for their continued SS dominance. So the BIG question remains; just how well did SMC do? Did we win?

Recently, our club statisticians, N6ZF0 and W6ZZZ analyzed past, present, and posted scores from possible SMC members. The upshot being that N6ZF0 predicts the SMC score will be around 16.6 million points.

The day after the close of log submissions, I contacted K9PG and asked him to share his best guess as to how they did. I was startled by the answer. Paul's best guess matches

almost exactly with Bill's prediction of 16.6 million. So, unless there's some sort of Electoral College method of determining the outcome, I feel safe predicting a huge NCCC win. Again, congratulations to all!

Dear NCCC

Paul Gentry, K9PG

....The point that I wanted to make was proven in 2000 when we came out of nowhere to do the impossible.... that point being that anything is possible with a little motivation (and innovation - ed).

I figured that the NCCC and PVRC would be boiling mad (in a good way, of course) and would be ready to hand out a serious butt-whooping in 2001. So, when the SMC went bonkers in 2001 and 2002, that was sort of a bonus... and wasn't really my intention at the time that I came up with this insane notion. But in 2000, 2001 and 2002, we were really having fun.

.... I heard about your plan to come out in force in SS back in mid October and thought to myself 'it's about time.' I thought that it'd be great to see a million W6s strewn across 10 and 15 meters.... and wouldn't ya know it, that's exactly what happened. I heard several calls that I hadn't heard in years... and some that I've never even worked! I can't ever remember working W2SC with his own call before!

I told Dean two years ago at Visalia that 'there's no reason you can't do what we did.' I think it's fantastic that you guys finally got the kind of activity out there that I knew could be done. I know it's a lot of work.... but it was very noticeable

that you guys were out in force, and it'll probably wind up worth it in the end.

Imagine if the PVRC, FRC, YCCC and other BIG clubs did the same thing that we did the past two years... and you guys did this year....getting 200, 250, 300.... people QRV, all at the same time. Imagine there being another 1000 stations to work in SS! All it takes is a little motivation.

So, congrats to you and everyone in the NCCC. ... hitting 20 mil for the first time is quite the accomplishment and something to be proud of! Good luck in 2004, but not too much good luck ;-)

Canada Explained

Marc Ziegler, W6ZZZ

Every contest has its unique exchange requirements. Some want "state, province, country (SPC);" some want ARRL sections; some want zone numbers.

Look at the difference between the ARRL Sweepstakes and ARRL 10 Meter Contest with regard to Canada. If you're confused, you're normal. So, the following may be of help.

Canadian amateur radio has:

- 8 RAC sections,
- 10 provinces and 3 territories,
- 13 postal codes corresponding to the 10 provinces and 3 territories,.
- one province that has 2 common name areas (Newfoundland and Labrador), and,
- call sign prefix, VE0, for stations at sea making international voyages.

Many contests treat the Canadian multipliers differently (with as few as 8 multipliers, and as many as 14 multipliers), just like for the USA, some contests treat the District of Columbia as part of Maryland, and some treat it as a separate multiplier.

Here is how the various contest rules specify Canadian multipliers.

Many of them have some conflicting/confusing statement about Canada, using the word Maritime to also include the RAC section of Newfoundland, or saying Province and having 14 multipliers.

- 8 multipliers: California QSO Party - "eight Canadian areas: Maritime (VE1, VE9, VO1, VO2 and VY2), VE2 through VE7, and Northern Territories (VY0, VY1, VE8)"
<http://www.cqp.org/Rules.html> - dated October 8, 2003
- 8 multipliers: North American Sprint - "The eight Canadian multipliers are Maritime (VE1, VE9, VO1, VO2 and VY2), VE2 through VE7, and Yukon-NWT (VYØ, VY1 and VE8)."
<http://www.ncjweb.com/sprintrules.php> - dated December 10,2003
- 9 multipliers: ARRL Sweepstakes - "RAC Section plus the Canadian NT (Northern Territories - encompassing VE8 / VY1 / VY0)"
<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2003/novss.html> - dated September 8, 2003

- 13 multipliers: Canada Day - "Canada's 10 provinces and three territories, and may be counted once on each mode on each of the eight contest bands. The multipliers, with their postal abbreviations and prefixes are: Nova Scotia [NS] (VE1, CY9, CYØ); Quebec [QC] (VE2, VA2); Ontario [ON] (VE3, VA3); Manitoba [MB] (VE4,VA4); Saskatchewan [SK] (VE5,VA5); Alberta [AB] (VE6,VA6); British Columbia [BC] (VE7,VA7); Northwest Territories [NT] (VE8); New Brunswick [NB] (VE9); Newfoundland and Labrador [NL] (VO1, VO2); Nunavut [NU] (VY0); Yukon [YT] (VY1); and Prince Edward Island [PE] (VY2)." <http://www.rac.ca/CANDAY.htm> - dated unk
 - 13 multipliers: Canada Winter - "Canada's 10 provinces and three territories, and may be counted once on each mode on each of the eight contest bands. The multipliers, with their postal abbreviations and prefixes are: Nova Scotia [NS] (VE1, VA1, CY9, CYØ); Quebec [QC] (VE2, VA2); Ontario [ON] (VE3, VA3); Manitoba [MB] (VE4, VA4); Saskatchewan [SK] (VE5, VA5); Alberta [AB] (VE6, VA6); British Columbia [BC] (VE7, VA7); Northwest Territories [NT] (VE8); New Brunswick [NB] (VE9); Newfoundland and Labrador [NL] (VO1, VO2); Nunavut [NU] (VYØ); Yukon [YU or YT] VY1; and Prince Edward Island [PE] (VY2)" http://www.rac.ca/downloads/rac_winterrules3.pdf - dated unk
 - 13 multipliers: North American QSO Party - "Canadian provinces/territories (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, Newfoundland/Labrador, Yukon, NWT and Nunavut)" <http://www.ncjweb.com/naqprules.php> - dated November 24, 2003
 - 14 multipliers: 10m Contest - "Canada [NB (VE1, 9), NS (VE1), QC (VE2), ON (VE3), MB (VE4), SK (VE5), AB (VE6), BC (VE7), NWT (VE8), NF, (VO1), LB (VO2)], YT (VY1), PEI (VY2) NU (VYØ)." <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2003/10-meters.html> - dated December 17, 2003
 - 14 multipliers: RTTY RoundUp - "Canadian provinces/territories: NB (VE1, 9), NS (VE1), QC (VE2), ON (VE3), MB (VE4), SK (VE5), AB (VE6), BC (VE7), NWT (VE8), NF (VO1), LB (VO2), NU (VYØ), YT (VY1), PEI (VY2)" <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2004/rtty.html> - dated November 13, 2003
- {Ed. For those interested in a neat table with RAC section, province, prefixes and postal codes, email [Marc Ziegler@accesscom.com](mailto:Marc.Ziegler@accesscom.com) }

About SETI

Editorial

We ran out of space in the November JUG and could not report back about the special SETI program held at Stanford in conjunction with our November meeting. Dr. Jill Tarter was our guest speaker and the lecture hall (one of Stanford's larger ones) was nearly filled.

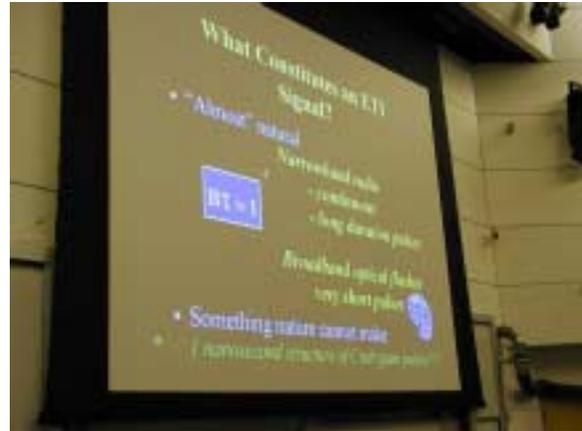
Dr. Tarter talked about the kinds of signals being searched for. One time events, such as a nuclear blast, would create a burst of radio energy, but the chances of detecting it in a monitoring snapshot, and of treating it as a product of intelligent origin rather than some random energy burst, would be infinitesimally probable. Instead, the SETI program looks for a protracted radio-energy pattern -- one that may have been pulsing for thousands of years. As such, says Dr. Tarter, "we're looking for intelligence that has been around far longer than ours."

There has been a lot of innovation both in signal processing and hardware over the last two decades. Instead of using a huge parabolic dish, or even an orderly assemblage of smaller dishes, the coming trend will be one of using a large area filled with a more irregular placement of dishes. This will permit greater resolution of the field of coverage, and very precise positioning. Thus, researchers can concentrate on specific areas of space where there's greater probability of life-spawning solar systems.

According to Dr. Tarter, Paul Allen (of Microsoft fame) has been a large contributor to radio-telescope research and development. The current state-of-

the-art technology, in fact, is a direct result of that research.

The next big site for SETI activity will be in Northern California, Dr. Tarter revealed, and she expects that site to be operational in the next few years.



Dr. Jill Tarter's presentation at Stanford, November 10, 2003.(photo courtesy N6TV)



Dr. Tarter presented to a very "full house." (photo courtesy N6TV)

The Death of the Octopus

Tom Taormina, K5RC

Virtually every contest season, the age-old debates arise about the equity of playing fields in multi-single and multi-two categories. In particular, how do the contestants deal with keeping only one (or two) signals on the air at any given time?

The rules are fairly clear, but, in reality, there is a practical matter of maximizing rate and absolutely not transmitting more than the allowed number of signals simultaneously. One of the most publicized attempts at defining “multi-single” was invented by K5LZO (SK) and WA5LES (K5RC) for the ARRL SS in the late sixties.

Ever since we began operating together (in the 1963 VHF Contests), Chuck and I were given to “pushing the envelope.” In 1964, we became the first Americans to obtain permission to operate from French Polynesia as FP8CB/FO8 (talk about pushing the envelope, that’s another story).

When we both moved to Texas, we began operating multi-op in ARRL SS. With two tribanders, a 40M vertical and an 80M inverted vee. All-in-all we did quite well but were frustrated with the multi-op rules and the constraints of one signal on the air at a time. Remember, these are the days of paper logs, non-memory keyers and unsophisticated equipment. We operating side by side and used hand gestures and profanity to minimize the number of times we would get lax and both transmit at the same time. To keep track of serial numbers, the paper log was continually being swapped back and forth, until each sheet

looked like a page from a 100 year-old novel. Keeping up the check-sheet was another logistical nightmare. The blurred pencil marks were made less readable by coffee stains and cigar ashes.

After some lengthy strategizing and a few trips to the Emporium (Madison Electronics), the “Octopus” was born. It was little more than ceramic switches, relays and diodes, but it became the center of significant controversy. The two ceramic switches allowed either station to select one of the four antennas. They were wired to prevent both stations to be using the same antenna (an early version of a WX0B Six-Pak). The relay keying line from each transmitter to the respective amplifier was diode-ored to a relay. This relay opened the relay keying line on the other amplifier and opened the antenna line between the exciter and the amplifier. When station A was transmitting, the receiver on station B went silent and the amplifier was disabled. 99% of the time this kept us from transmitting simultaneously.

Two more logistical problems were conquered and designed into the Octopus scheme. We found surplus 110Volt mechanical counters and wired them with push button switches to allow each operator to grab the next QSO number. Again, it worked reasonably well. The XYL’s updated a wall-size check sheet after each of us filled a log page and cured the problem of unreadable log sheets, check-sheets and most of the profanity.

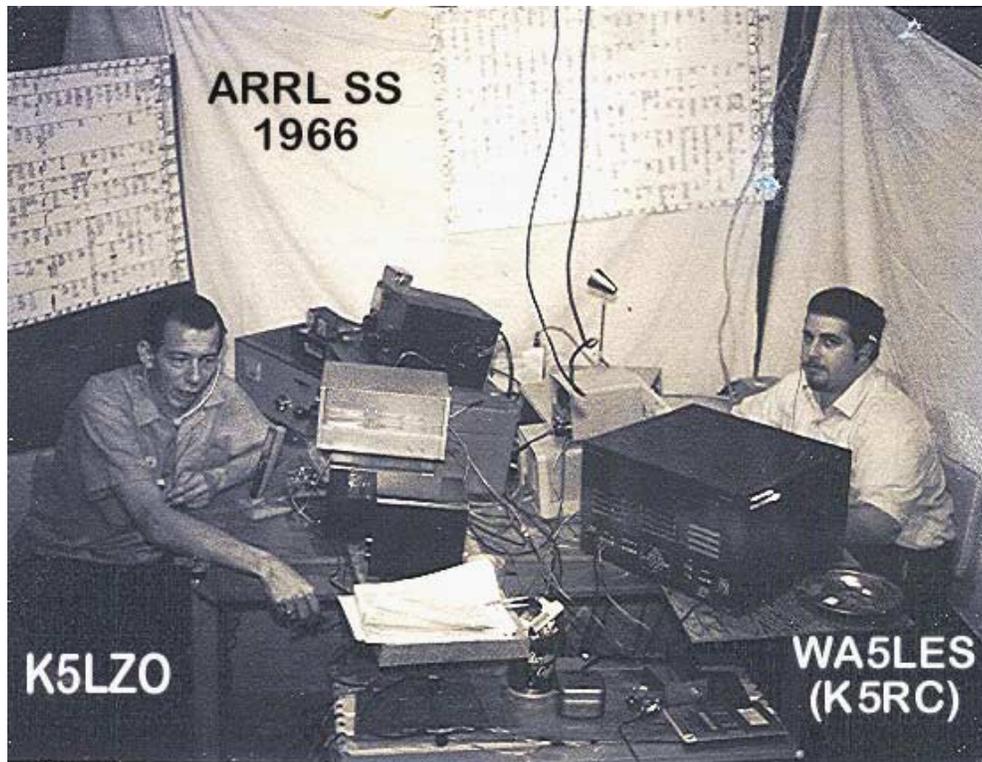
Final refinements are shown in the above photo, where we set up the stations so we were facing each other and could both see the check-sheets. Of course, after the contest, we had to transcribe the

two logs into one and create new check-sheets. The scheme was not fool-proof and took some incredible coordination between the two of us, but it did make a significant difference in maximizing our operating.

The result is that we dominated multi-op SS for a number of years. There were (apparently) so many protests about our score being unbeatable, the ARRL eventually added a rule prohibiting

mechanical interlocks, resulting in the death of the Octopus. Since the ARRL Contest Committee worked in secret back then, we will probably never know exactly what killed the Octopus.

Of course, this ruling raised the bar for us and we moved next to dominating the CQWW DX contest Multi-Single categories for a number of years. But that's a tale for another time.



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