



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club

February
2003
Issue 369



NCCC Net
Thursday 9PM
3830+/-

NCCC Meeting: 10 February 2003

Contest Logging Software

Which is BEST? Or, is it simply personal preference?

Featuring a panel with N6TV (CT), K6CTA & N6XI (TR-Log), AE6Y (CQPWIN), W1SRD (WriteLog) and K2KW (N1MM Logger). Moderated by W0YK.

We will order off the menu, but from a special order window upstairs in our room. Typical cost of a cheeseburger, fries and coke is around \$8.

Date: Monday, 10 February 2003

Time: 6:00pm schmooze, 6:30 dinner (no host), 7:00 meeting

Location: Fuddrucker's, 1975 Diamond Blvd. (Willows Shopping Center, across from Hilton Hotel - former Pacificon location), Concord, CA 94520
925-825-1443

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**Contest Musings from the
VP/CC - Bill Haddon N6ZFO**

January Contests. To recover from the New Year's events, which of course meant late-year contests and other operating events such as SKN for the most enthusiastic of our bunch, we tackled January contests with unrestrained enthusiasm.

January CW and SSB NAQP Contests

For most of us, the first big contest of 2003 was the NAQP CW, a great contest because its restriction to low power provides a kind of leveler for many of us. Here's a fairly complete report on the CW part of this contest, with emphasis on the Team participation. NAQP requires 5-stations teams, and we had a respectable four full teams competing in this event, including many first-time NAQP participants plus a sprinkling of new club members.

For the CW weekend of NAQP, the positively great conditions on all bands, 10-160 made for an outstanding day of contesting, maybe one of the best ever, and another personal best for N6RO, who broke both the 1000 Q barrier and the 300,000 point level. With Ken's magically low error rate, that 300K+ figure might just hold.

As Team Captain, I narrowly avoided the slip of having a Team 2 member

score above any Team #1 member. Thanks, Ed, K6CTA, for not making 3 more Q's. Congratulations to Ed, W0YK, on your first NAQP. Welcome aboard – what a great first effort. In fact, W0YK sounded like a musical machine on 80 cw Saturday night. And, rounding out Team #1, W7TTT (that's K5RC in disguise, in case you hadn't noticed) and K7NV, Kurt provided those much sought-after NV mults to all, and perennial expert K2KW, Kenny, turned in his usual exemplary performance.

I did get "one-upped" by an NCCC newcomer, Fred, K6DGW, who as a Team #3 member outscored N6ZF0 on Team #2 by almost 11,000 points. Oh well. Actually this result couldn't be more flattering -- Fred, congratulations from NCCC and myself on a great first-time NCCC effort in NAQP. We had another outstanding first NAQP performance from Tom, N3ZZ. Importantly, the team effort attracted three new club members, Al, KA6JAC, Jim, WA6PX and Javier, NM6E.

Sadly, we didn't smash SCCC#!, whose members also benefited from the outstanding conditions. But the 1.22M point Team #1 score beats our former NCCC January NAQP record by about 9 percent. Most participants improved their scores by about 10 percent, partly a reflection of good conditions and probably higher participation.

Again, thanks to all who participated on the teams, and to the many other NCCC members who gave us Q's. Particular thanks go to Mike, N6MH for an inspiring SO effort from W6YX, which netted 268,000 points. And of course it's important to mention Tom, K5RC, who was instrumental in establishing these fine events years ago. And maybe that new W7TTT call will really catch on, allowing him to beat N6RO.

Following CW NAQP by one week, NAQP SSB was quickly upon us. Now this is an SSB contest. We always cheer when a predominately CW member joins, but maybe we should cheer in the future when a SSB expert signs up. Just the same, eight members went for this one on teams, and the results were excellent, topped by Tom, K5RC's spectacular 1480 Q's. I'll just summarize these results below, noting that Matt, WX5S, entering this contest for the first time and operating from N6RO scored a strong 2nd place finish. Matt is a relatively new NCCC member, and this was his first NAQP. Would you believe an astounding 218,000 + point effort? Congratulations, Matt.

Another notable effort from W6YX garnered an incredible 2257 Q's for over 600,000 points, operating Multi-2, the only other allowed category for NAQP. Mike was assisted by Stanford club members – Dan, Mark and John, K6IF, K6UFO and W6LD – respectively.

2003 January NAQP CW Team Results

Team #1	Q's	Mults	Score	Team #3:	Q's	Mults	Score
N6RO	1089	276	300,564	NM6E	50	31	1,550
W7TTT(op K5RC)	1034	260	268,840	KE6JAC	102	69	7,038
K2KW(op at K6KM)	949	281	266,669	WA6PX	227	121	27,467
K7NV	884	229	202,436	K6ENT	276	126	34,776
W0YK	846	216	182,736	K6DGW	504	178	89,712
Total:			1,221,245	Total:			125,767
Team #2:							
K6CTA	840	217	182,280				
AD6E	693	204	141,372				
N3ZZ	677	198	134,046				
W6CT(op at W6YL)	473	178	84,194				
N6ZF0	443	178	78,854				
Total:			536,552				

Again, we thank all the non-team members for the many points, particularly Rusty, W6OAT (M class because he used packet), with 808 Q's and 153,000 + points. Rounding out the other over 100,000 scores from non-team participants were K6RIM, K6RB and W6RGG. For more information, see Ed's excellent and timely score compilation on www.nccc.cc.

February NA Sprints

Following his great NAQP effort, Matt, WX5S has showed his true bravery by volunteering to be Team Captain for the February NA SSB Sprint. By the time you are reading this, results should be pouring in to the reflector. I thought you might wish to see the increased enthusiasm in the club for these important contests, regarded by many as the "contesters contest." In summary, our participation in the phone sprints has been as follows, by month, and year, indicating the number of participants and our national club ranking:

Feb SSB Sprints:

1997-9 Very little NCCC activity
 2000 NCCC#1 (8) 3rd place
 2001 NCCC#1 (5) 7th place
 2002 NCCC#1 (5) 7th place

Sept SSB Sprints:

1997-9 Very little NCCC activity
 2000 NCCC#1 (9) 3rd place
 2001 Cancelled
 2002 NCCC#1 (9) 1st place (KI7WX, Captain)
 NCCC#2 (7) 4th place (KI7WX, Captain)

2003 January NAQP SSB Team Results

Team #1	Q's	Mults	Score	Team #2:	Q's	Mults	Score
W7TTT(op K5RC)	1480	268	347,800	N6ZFO	807	183	147,681
WX5S (op at N6RO)	1004	218	218,872	NU6T	190	93	17,670
K6LRN	586	176	103,136	W6ZZZ	91	52	4,732
K6EP	537	164	88,605				
K6DGW	372	126	46,872				
Total:			805,285	Total:			170,083

Although the NCCC #1 team in the Sept 2002 included some non-NCCC members, a combination of high NCCC member scores from team #1 and #2 would have scored first, indicating we are capable of winning this contest nationally.

As you read this column, NA CW and RTTY sprints will be coming up, with the CW event occurring the 2nd weekend in February (see Contest Calendar elsewhere in this issue). I'm very pleased that one of our experienced long-time sprinters Bob, W6RGG will be Team Captain. Please give Bob your best effort in this one.

Top Band Contests

Three of the four top band contests are behind us: ARRL, Stew Perry Top Band Challenge and CQWW 160 CW. Except for one pretty good night on last weekend's CQ WW, it's been a fairly dismal season. It was good to see Bill, K6GNX (NV section) with an outstanding score last weekend. But not even N6RO broke through to Europe. Ken's outstanding 821Q's, 57 US/VE mults and 19 DX mults represents records for him, and indicated general improvement. As always, it was a struggle to find 2nd-night new stations to work following a good Friday night effort. And if you failed to arise before the sun, in particular before 1200Z on Saturday morning, you probably missed the JA's. For top band, the CQ WW 160 SSB remains for the Feb 22 weekend.

State QSO Parties

There are many state QSO parties in Feb and March (MN, VT, NH, DE, NC, OK,

etc; see Contest Calendar). Again, we are pushing these events this year as a way to promote our own CQP. If you enter any of these, try saying "see you next fall in CQP" in your exchanges, and send in the logs. The MN QSO party last year, for example, lacked any CA participants. May you all win generous helpings of Minnesota wild rice in that state's event.

Please take a look at the calendar, as it's a busy month, highlighted by the ARRL CW DX Contest coming up in the third weekend in February.

Dave's Waves



Please join me in welcoming Diana Henneuse as the new Jug editor! Diana is the wife of Kent, K6ENT. Somehow Kent convinced her to take pity on us and lend us a hand getting the news out to the faithful. Diana has a journalism degree, spent 5 years in the newspaper and magazine biz, and many more years in software marketing and public relations. She has edited newsletters and magazines in the past. When I made the announcement at the January meeting, somebody mumbled "She's too good for us!" To which I replied: "Shhhh! Don't let her find out!"

Diana is going to be a great addition to the NCCC team. You can help her out by flooding her with articles and photos. Welcome aboard, Diana!

Before I leave the topic of the Jug, don't forget that you can save the club significant money (and save Diana some work) by opting for a "download only" subscription. Simply e-mail your request to K6RB and he'll flip the switch in the database.

January Meeting Report

Harry's was the place to be in January. We packed the house and had a great time. There were lots of scores to report, of course, as it had been a busy few weeks of contesting since the December. Among those, of course, was the ARRL 10m contest. We had a chance to reprise the war stories and recall how each of us dealt with the howling weather, and Bill N6ZFO had a excellent summary of some outstanding performances.

The 10m contest was a great success for the club on many counts. Despite the weather, we turned in a respectable club score. We had great participation from many excited and highly motivated members. You can count me among those that probably would not have even been on for this one if the club were not pushing for it. Yet in the end, I had a great time and am very glad I participated – I'll be back for it again. We even had nearly a 100 percent log submission rate – thank you to everyone for being conscientious about log submittal so that everyone's hard work can be counted to the maximum. Thanks to K6III for being the official "log reminder" for this one.

Also at the January meeting we had the pleasure of voting in 5 new members. Welcome to Rich K6RFM, Barry K3KOA, Tom KE6FI, John K6MI, and Ron KG6CMS.

Andy Faber, AE6Y, put together an excellent presentation and panel discussion on WPX. The panel of noted WPX Big Guns shared (and debated) their tips and insights for this contest, and answered questions from the group. Thanks, Andy, for a very educational and exciting program.

WPX Contest – Plan Now!

Andy's program last month should have gotten you charged up for this contest. The NCCC usually wins this one, and I see no reason we can't repeat this year. This contest is great fun from a DX location, and an excellent choice for a first time contest expedition. There are more "rent-a-shack" DX locations than ever, and now would be a good time to book one for either weekend of this contest. Our own Kenny, K2KW maintains a web site listing a large number of rental QTH options ranging from "show up and operate" to "hams welcome, but bring all your gear". The URL is: <http://www.dxholiday.com/> -- this is a great resource for planning your contest expedition.

And of course, in this contest you can also run up a big score and have a lot of fun from home. Being 36 hours out of 48 it is quite civilized, and if you can borrow a somewhat exotic prefix you can have even more fun. After all, the ops in the know realize that an AE6 is just as good a multiplier as ZD8, so you can attract some good business with a little creativity.

February Meeting

Do you have questions about contest logging software? Are you unsure which one is right for you? Don't miss the February meeting! Ed, W0YK has assembled a panel of experts in each of the popular logging programs. They'll be doing comparisons and discussing the pros and cons. This promises to be a very enlightening program.

We'll be trying out a new location in Concord. Hopefully this is a convenient spot for East Bay members and also those in the North and toward the Central Valley. Please send me your feedback on how the location works out for you. By the way, it is easy to have a

meeting near you – simply help the prez scout a location. That general rule applies no matter who is president.

At this point, it looks unlikely that I'll be able to attend the February meeting. Family needs back in Minnesota take priority. Bill, N6ZFO will be running the show. I'm bummed – I really want to see the logging program presentation. And let me tell ya, Minnesota February's don't exactly hold a magnetic attraction for me. Ya, shoor, it's a cool day, now den.

As always, your input and feedback are welcome at n6nz@arrl.net, and I'll see you all again soon.

73, Dave N6NZ

Electronic Jug

Do you really need to get it on paper via mail? The electronic Jug is the same – except that on your computer, you get to see the photos in glorious color! It saves the club significant money in printing and mailing if you download the electronic Jug.



Rob, K6RB, is training his future multi-multi team, early. Mitchell (foreground) and Liam take part in their second Kid's Day event. Both were thrilled with their first QSLs from a brother/sister team located in Soquel, CA. Rumors are that Rob is recruiting them, too.

RTTY – Our Contesting Mode of Choice

Ron Lodewyck, N6EE
Chet Jensen, W6XK
Karen Jensen, KA6REN
Aaron Jensen, W6ADJ
San Joaquin Valley Contesters, NN6NN
and VP5NN

Our contest DXpedition to the Turks and Caicos Islands (VP5) began to gel last summer when Chet suggested and Ron agreed to participate in the 2003 ARRL RTTY Round-Up in the multi-operator, single transmitter, high power class from the impressive VP5B contest station. Bud, K4ISV, owns this fantastic beachfront home – fully stocked with two FT-1000MPs, two Alpha amps, band pass filters, computers, and multi-band antennas. Our main objective was to achieve #1 World M/S, with a secondary goal of working the Deserving before and after the contest on HF CW, SSB, and SSTV as well as UO-14 satellite.

The contest lived up to our expectations and proved to be thoroughly enjoyable. Pre-planning was essential and ultimately resulted in impressive final totals. Ron had loaded all of the necessary software (WriteLog, MMTTY, K6STI-RITTY, and MixW) on his laptops, which we hand carried to North Caicos Island. During the contest, we ran both MMTTY and RITTY simultaneously, which proved to be a significant advantage. We were amazed that the programs alternated in their ability to copy weak or garbled transmissions. At other times, both programs performed equally as well. We truly believe that by running both programs, we were able to reduce the number of repeats and significantly increase our QSO total.

At VP5NN (our contest call sign in honor of NN6NN), we logged 1,961 Q's (after dupes) during the 24-hour contest

period – an average of 83.3 Q's per hour. The rate meter hit a max of 173/hour and frequently remained over 120/hour for hours on end. We worked 65 DXCC countries, 48 states/DC (missing DE), and 11 Canadian provinces (for a total of 124 multipliers). We achieved our goal of #1 World M/S based on a claimed score of 243,164 points.

From an operating perspective, the pile-ups were sometimes overwhelming, particularly on 10 meters on Sunday morning. Europe, USA, and South America were equally strong and more determined than ever to contact us. This was the first time in any contest where we found ourselves changing frequency in order to “hide.” In fact, the RTTY pile-ups became so extreme that we could not copy anyone, and the rate meter started to slide! When we did copy a call sign, the remaining stations refused to stop calling, causing unnecessary repeats and mass confusion. Even a brief attempt at split operation failed miserably. Finally, we simply disappeared and moved to another section of the band. Unfortunately, within two calls, we were re-discovered (thanks to the DX Cluster) and the fire storm started anew. Of course, this scenario was specific to VP5 and should not deter a prospective RTTY contester from venturing into this great mode!

We've been contesting for many years, and RTTY contesting has become our favorite mode. Why? Many reasons, of course, but here are a few:

Radio and computer synergy

RTTY contesting requires a computer interfaced to the radio. This presents an additional level of technical challenge which we find exciting. It's actually not that hard anymore to interface your computer to your radio - all you need is a sound card. It's easier if your radio has an FSK mode (most modern radios do),

but it isn't necessary as you can just feed the soundcard audio out to your mike input (called AFSK).

We're more competitive

Even Ron's modest station is truly competitive. In his very first RTTY contest, with a 3 element trap tribander at 45 feet and a 40/80 trap inverted V running about 300 watts he made 800 Q's and wound up 2nd in CA, 12th in US. Ron had downloaded Writelog the day before the contest and finished setting it up less than an hour before the contest began. His first RTTY contact with Writelog was in the contest, and it worked flawlessly the entire contest.

There are many RTTY contests this year.

ARRL RTTY Roundup - January 4-5

WPX RTTY - February 8-9

NCJ NA QSO Party RTTY - Feb 22-23 and July 19-20

BARTG HF RTTY Sprint - March 15-17

CQ WW RTTY - September 28-29

Check out AA5AU's RTTY websites:

<http://www.aa5au.com/rtty>

<http://www.geocities.com/writelog/>

Lots of NCCers are active RTTY testers, and they have garnered many awards. AD6G, K6AW, K6DGW, K6ENT, K6RIM, K6TQS, K6UM, KA6BIM, N5KO, N6DE, N6EE, NA6E, NT6K, W1SRD, W6ISO, W6OAT, W6OTC, W6XK, and W6ZZZ, are all NCCers active in RTTY contests, to name just a few.

As a matter of fact, Glenn, W6OTC, is the contest director for the big CQ RTTY contests. W6OTC, K6AW and N5KO teamed up to set and/or break several world records in both of the CQ RTTY contests in the past four years from HC8N. Also, several world record RTTY contest scores have been made from Carl, AI6V's place in P4.

So, what are you waiting for? You have plenty of time to get ready for the upcoming **WPX RTTY February 8-9**. We believe it's the best RTTY contest of the year with high rates and lots of exotic DX. So come on and join the fun. RTTY Contesting is a blast!

Be sure to check out our website:

<http://cis.csustan.edu/lodewyck/vp5nn>

	A	B	C	D	E	F
13	HF Contests -February 2003					
14	MN QSO Party	1400Z	Feb 1	2359Z	Feb 1	www.w0aa.org Wild Rice Food Prizes :-)
15	Vt QSO Party	0000Z	Feb 1	2400Z	2-Feb	http://www.ranv.org/vtqso.html
16	NH QSO Party	0000Z	Feb 1	2400Z	2-Feb	?
17	NCJ Phone Sprint	0000Z	Feb 2	0400Z	Feb 2	www.ncjweb.com
18	XE Intr'l RTTY Contest	1800Z	Feb 1	2400Z	Feb 2	www.fmrxe.org.mx/
19						
20	RSGB 160M, CW (yeah, sure)	2100Z	Feb 8	0100Z	Feb 9	www.rsgbhfcc.org
21	Asia Pacific Sprint, CW (20.40m)	1100Z	Feb 8	1300Z	Feb 8	isfc.org/apsprint/aprule.txt
22	Fists Winter Sprint	1700Z	Feb 8	2100Z	Feb 8	www.fists.org
23	NCJ CW Sprint	0000Z	Feb 9	0400Z	Feb 9	www.ncjweb.com
24						
25	ARRL Intl. DX, CW	0000Z	Feb 16	2400Z	Feb 16	www2.arrl.org/contests/rules/2003/intldx.html
26	NAQP RTTY	1800Z	Feb 22	0600Z	Feb 23	www.ncjweb.com
27	CQ/WW 160M SSB	0000Z	Feb 22	2359Z	Feb 25	www.cq-amateur-radio.com/infoc.html
28	NC QSO Party	1700Z	Feb 23	0300Z	Feb 24	www.w4nc.com
29						
30	HF Contests -March 2003					
31						
32	ARRL Intl. DX, SSB	0000Z	Mar 1	2400Z	Mar 2	www2.arrl.org/contests/rules/2003/intldx.html
33	NCJ RTTY Sprint	0000Z	Mar 9	0400Z	Mar 9	www.ncjweb.com

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