



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



NOVEMBER
2003
Issue 378

NCCC Net
Thursday 9PM
3853+/-

Next NCCC Meeting

Special Holiday Dinner, Program & Auction

Monday, December 8 2003
Mingle @ 6pm, Dinner @ 7pm
Michaels at Shoreline
2960 Shoreline Blvd.
Mountain View, CA 94043
(650)962-1014

Please RSVP your attendance and indicate
your choice of meal to
k0bee@arrl.net

Dinner Choices:

New York Steak with Peppercorn Sauce - \$32/person
Breast of Chicken in Marsala Sauce - \$25/person
Broiled Salmon in Lemon Beurre Blanc Sauce - \$28/person
Each entree is served with salad, fresh vegetables,
potato du jour, french rolls, dessert and coffee.
Drinks can be purchased separately from the bar.

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QST! QST!

The deadlines for SS logs are fast approaching. Send
your Cabrillo logs to sscw@arrl.org for the CW
portion; and to ssphone@arrl.org for the phone
portion.

If you have a paper log, send it to :

November SS CW or November SS Phone
ARRL
225 Main St
Newington, CT 06111
DO IT NOW!!!!

2003 SWEEPSTAKES

An Assessment

By Rusty Epps, W6OAT

When we formed our 2003 Sweepstakes
plan earlier this year, we stated four
objectives:

- 1) Win the Unlimited Category of the
Affiliated Club Competition;
- 2) Be a fun event for NCCC members;
- 3) Give something of value back to the
participants; and
- 4) Operate fully within the letter and spirit of
the Sweepstakes rules.

So, now that it's over, how did we do?

Well, it's much too early to know
whether we won back the SS gavel.
What we do know, though, is that we
had a terrific turnout of NCCC members,
and we had some great scores.

We also know that there sure were lots
of W9s on, so it's going to be critically
important for everybody who generated
a score to send in a log so that NCCC
gets credit for the points. It doesn't
matter how large or small your actual
score is -- if you were on and
haven't yet submitted your log, please do
so now. E-mail your cw logs to
sscw@arrl.org and phone logs to
ssphone@arrl.org. If you're having
trouble with your SS log(s), call me or
another friend in the Club and let us help
you get them ready to submit.
Did we have fun? We sure did if the
comments on the NCCC reflector are

any indication. I can't believe the number of folks who said things like "This is the most fun I've had in SS in 30 years!" And that comes in spite of the tricks mother nature tried to pull on us with the solar flare induced blackout during the CW weekend and the punk conditions on Saturday of the phone weekend.

Packet was great for maintaining a shared commitment to "the cause", and all the "KB" and "Go NCCC" comments on the air kept the adrenaline pumping. The appearance of all the new callsigns delivered a knockout blow to the normal Sunday doldrums. How exhilarating it was to see so many NCCC members closing in on the last few sections needed for the Clean Sweep.

What I think NCCC should be most proud of though is what our SS effort this year gave back to our individual members. Recall that in past years SS had been pretty much of a one-way street. We urged folks to get on and send in scores for the Club, but we didn't do much to aid the folks submitting those scores.

Not this year! I can't believe how much we shared with each other, from operating tips, to antenna help, to tracking down power line noise, to RFI elimination, to help with installing and using logging programs, to equipment loans, and on and on. And we got to know each other much better -- no longer was someone just a face across the room at an NCCC meeting, but now they are known friends because of the time we actually spent together helping each other solve problems. I truly believe these are benefits we'll reap for years to come.

And we should be proud, too, of the exemplary manner in which we conducted ourselves. Yes, we spent hours pouring over the SS rules to make sure of what we could and could not do. We explored in mind-numbing detail just what was permitted by General Rules 3.3 and 3.5. We shuttled transmitters around to be certain "uncontaminated" equipment was at the right place, and we drove all over town before sunrise to make sure that as operators we weren't signing two different callsigns from the same location. We wanted to beat our competition, but we still spotted them and worked them in the spirit of good sportsmanship.

So, whether or not we actually reclaim the gavel, we already know that what we did was a tremendous WIN -- for ourselves as individuals, for our club, and for contesting in general. A heartfelt thanks and KB to the huge number of club members who pitched in to work as a TEAM in this common effort.



K6TA SS Station
Photo courtesy of N6BV

Contest Rumbblings

By Al Maenchen, AD6E

When I volunteered (arm-twisted?) for this job last April, I was seriously worried that I wouldn't have the time to do even a modest job of coordinating a serious SS club competition. I made my concerns known early and was told "don't worry, others will help". I was also very skeptical about our chances to win what has become basically a recruiting race with SMC.

Yet, here we are in late November feeling pretty smug about just completing the best club effort ever in SS. What happened?

My friends, we have a "white knight" and his name is Rusty.

I talked to OAT back in April, and he was convinced that we could win SS again if we try some novel techniques: HMO 12:12, widespread packet use, serious recruitment, "elmering." He also volunteered to do the whole SS job so that I could focus on CQP. The rest is now history.

Obviously, Rusty didn't work alone. The outpouring of help and support for various aspects of putting this together was totally amazing. The will to win is very much alive in this club. I hesitate to name names for fear of not mentioning some who did significant work, but I'd like to thank N6RO and N6ZFO for hosting the on-the-air mentoring sessions. W6ZZZ, N6DE, and ND2T were relentless in pursuing new members. They combed old logs for calls that seemed to be active hams making contest QSOs, but were not (yet) members. Their efforts paid off with a

dramatic increase in membership. WX5S and others made themselves available to help with logging software and packet issues. W1SRD even established a new telnet packet cluster node specifically for our SS effort. Rusty has his own story in this JUG so I'll defer to him all the details and other "thank you's" except for one: Thank you Rusty!

Now, we still need to follow up and make sure ALL logs are sent in to ARRL ASAP!

Well, now that you've had a chance to relax .. you no longer hear CW in the shower .. your boss no longer sounds like Donald Duck .. in other words; you've recovered from SS ... what next?

Not to be considered light weights, several of our members have taken to the airlines and are heading out to various DX locations for CQWW. This is not a serious club activity, but there will be serious activity from places such as HC8, 6Y, and others.

What next? In December, we have the ARRL 10 meter contest. We made a serious bid last year but we were torn apart by the strong Pacific storm that blew in and caused havoc. PVRC has won this event for five years in a row. Last year we beat out SMC for 2nd place by only a small margin. We're coming off a great SS performance. Our stations are tuned and ready to go. Let's do this! It's fun, and the band doesn't stay open for 24 hours so you don't have to recover at work Monday.

Let's start talking about our spring contest. We have traditionally done very

well in WPX and it's certainly one of my favorite contests. However, there is also ARRL DX to consider. We have never put a serious effort into this one, but if we have available DX QTHs we could make this very interesting.

What say?

VOX POPULI

“True to the SS tradition of things going wrong, we had a major plumbing stoppage this morning. I worked on it with my snake with little luck. It's fixed now... it only took the Rooter dude about 10 minutes, and it's still BEFORE start time!” **George K6GT**

“Glad you got that out of the way! Now that you have time on your hands, why don't you come up here and fix my RFI problem with ISP disconnects?” **Ed W0YK**

“This was a lot of fun and I want to thank everyone who worked so hard to get everyone up and running. I'm anxious to do even better on SSB in two weeks.” **Howard WZ6Z**

“Made my first CW contact EVER with K5YAA on 10m at 1935Z Saturday. (Talk about getting your station working at the last minute an hour and a half before the contest starts...)” **Marc W6ZZZ**

“Thanks to Jim, WX6V, I attempted to make the "OAT Plan" work with two stations. Actually, things came off very well considering my novice-hood in such things and all the other intrusions of life.” **Fred K6DGW**

“Cudos to N6TQS, ans W6ZZZ plus all the other budding CW OP who usually bypass the CW SS weekend.” **Vic KF6RIP**

“After arriving to my QTH i made all kind of possible mistakes such as transmitting to wrong antenna for 1-2 hrs, and couldn't figure out why no one listens to me and i cant listen well. At one point i thought of giving up but once started using beam it was all okay. I sent all exchange with hand from my QTH because every time spot comes in the CW sending from WriteLog stops and messed up CW (Wx5D box is on back order but i will be happy camper after that). So my hand hurts and the head too :-)” **Jig AD6TF**



Al at his K6RIM SS Station
Photo courtesy of K6RIM

“CW SS #51 for me was a first try at using packet and U category. It was pure distraction in the first few hours(40 fewer Qs in the first three hours compared to last year), but it became useful at times, as the contest wore on. VHF packet was sometimes 75 minutes behind on the updates during active hours, so received spots were mostly useless. This proves that the internet is the only way to go, if you want packet to help, instead of hinder. Ended up 40 Qs short of last year, but condx were quite different- low bands had about 30dB of absorption until many

hours after sunset. 10m condx were as good as sunspot peak, but activity didn't match the band. ... Enjoyed the horse-race with K6TA and N6TV, CU on SSB.” **Ken N6RO**



Randy, NR6N and Chet W6XK at W6XK's SS station - photo courtesy of Ron N6EE

“Lets see .. the purpose of all this planning and scheming was to take typical bland log such as what I normally do (150k) and turn it into (effectively) a 200k log by splitting it into two 100k sessions. Nice idea! Whats the reality? Remember, I have never, ever, ever made 1000 QSOs in SS .. ever!

I got maybe one hour of sleep last night and I'm drinking wine as I write this .. so we'll see if I actually get to reporting a score .. or two.” **Al AD6E**

“At the starting line were three CW ops plus one phone op very gamely putting in the hours for code practice. We raced around scenic suburban Truckee keeping four stations on the air for most of the statutory 12+12. Final antenna was erected Saturday morning using marrow bone insulators. Please don't ask. Total score will be close to 600K. Lost one of the day 2 rigs 30 minutes before the start of day 1. Changed logging programs at one of the

stations mid-contest. Fielded RFI complaints from neighbors of our absent team member via his very understanding XYL. Argued about who had the worst solar flare conditions. Learned some pretty ugly things we probably already knew about noise blankers. Outside temp during the musical chairs interlude was around 10F. Gathered for dinner, drinks and post-mortem. Posed with one of the team's two golden retrievers but the visual impact was so severe that the camera died immediately thereafter. No, I don't think it was the dog. More later.” **Rick N6XI**

“Based on historical data, I had a goal of 25000 for CW and 25000 for Phone.. Since this score is 260% of my CW goal, I guess I can skip the Phone contest - right Rusty?” **Rick W6RKC**

“Tom was introduced to the joys of Writelog. It was then I learned that Tom--a successful businessman, degreed engineer and MBA--types with two fingers, and that, as a Mac user, his son's laptop would be his first exposure to Windows. Well, you gotta start somewhere. We got WL running and W1SRD telnet access going via ADSL and set up the pre-fill and Super Check partial functions. But Tom's eyes glazed when he stared at that little 14" display crammed with windows.” **Garry NI6T**

SEND IN YOUR SS LOGS!



Eagle sitting on Sunol ridge 20/40/20 antennas
– photo courtesy AD6E

“I wondered about the mini pileups sometimes on fresh meat. There were several QRS NCCers Sunday afternoon with low numbers who must have gotten on CW just because of the encouragement from the gang. Thanks for being there! It was really great to hear you. Hope you weren't overwhelmed.” **Peter AB6WM**

“Considering all the media frenzy regarding Sol, conditions were great. Evenduring the big fade Sunday morning, we still worked the regionals--somethingthat was impossible a half hour earlier or a half hour later.” **Bob K6XX**

“K5KG commented this morning: "Never worked so many SCV's and SV's before!" He also said K7NV was loud and everywhere.” **Tom K5RC**

“No 10m antenna really hurt I think. I was hoping 10m would be poor, but I wasn't wishing for the complete radio blackout from about 1710-1830z. All I could work were locals and a little short distance E-skip.” **Bob N6TV**

“I decided about an hour before the contest not to confuse myself (further) by trying to do the packet thing. So I decided to do the iron man bit in

"B" power mode without packet. I hit the second radio hard during parts of Saturday and definitely during all of Sunday. I wondered, however, whether I should have had packet to look for VY1JA, the only multiplier I missed, but from what I've heard on the NCCC Reflector he was only on sporadically, especially on Sunday. This is the first time I've missed a clean sweep in about 20 years. Sigh... “ **Dean N6BV**

“This was my first SS contest since high school (23 years ago) and my first serious single op contest effort in about 15 years. Long gone are the days of paper logs and those nasty paper dupe sheets! It's nice to get so few dupes returning your call! Who says 10 meters is dead! WriteLog worked flawlessly. I never noticed any erratic CW the whole time. The only real hiccup was when the 9v battery in my external keyer quit. Good thing I had a spare nearby just in case. Surprisingly, I was able to CQ and sit on frequencies for quite awhile.” **Kelly N6KJ**



Rob, K6RB, doing SS phone at K6RB
- photo courtesy his YF

How shall we recruit thee?

Tom Berson, ND2T

NCCC added 64 members between July 2003 and SS. Some of these were new NCCCRs, and others were returning former members. We're glad to welcome each and every one.

For the record, here are the elements of the 2003 recruiting effort: early identification, but a late start (July); a new dues policy to reduce financial barriers; data mining in contest logs to identify prospects; creation of recruiting material – a long letter, a short letter, and pieces to insert in club newsletters; establishment of a speakers bureau; email, postal, telephone and print campaigns; presentations at amateur radio clubs; over-the-air pitches; neighborly arm twisting; maybe even a jug here or there.

I can't name all the members who participated in this effort because, so far as I know, most everybody had a hand in it. Bravo and KB to each NCCC member who acted as a recruiter so far this year.

Let's make recruiting an all-season business. When you come across a ham who you know would benefit from being an NCCC member, please make a pitch to him or her right there on the spot. Bring them to your shack, to a meeting, to a net. You'll be doing a good deed for them, for yourself, and for the club.

RTTY Roundup

By Dean Wood, N6DE

For the first time, the ARRL added the club competition aspect to the RTTY Roundup contest. Please mark your calendars with the following:

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>

In our tremendous Sweepstakes club effort recently, W6OAT stated the objectives were to win the unlimited club category and help give value back to individual members while having fun and clearly staying within the rules. It's my goal to help the NCCC achieve the same objectives in the upcoming ARRL RTTY Roundup!

Please let me know if you need assistance setting up your station for RTTY contesting. There are many experienced RTTY operators in the NCCC who can help. If you are not interested in operating RTTY, please consider opening your station to a RTTY guest operator who would love the opportunity. Be sure to watch the e-mail reflector in the upcoming weeks for RTTY Roundup discussions.

With your help, we can WIN the ARRL RTTY Roundup club competition!

– CL –

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