



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



October
2008
Issue 437

NCCC Net
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OCTOBER MEETING

Program:

CQP Feedback - Rick, N6RNO
Preliminary SS Plan - Jim, K9YC & Bob, N6WG
Propagation Update - Dean, N6BV

Date: Monday, 13 October 2008
Time: 6pm schmooz, 6:30pm dinner, 7pm program
Location: Tied House, 954 Villa St, Mountain View, CA 94041

Dinner choices tba.

Beer and wine may be purchased.

Please RSVP to K6EU by Friday 10 October with your dinner choice. Pay ahead of time via PayPal or at the door.

NCCC Officers

President: [John Miller, K6MM](#)
Vice-President and Contest Chairman: [Jim Brown K9YC](#)
Secretary/Treasurer: [Tom Carney, K6EU](#)

Directors

Past President: [Bob Tellefsen, N6WG](#)
Director: [Tom Taormina, K5RC](#)
Director: [Dean Wood, N6DE](#)
Director: [Tom Berson, ND2T](#)
Honorary Director: Rusty Epps, W6OAT

Webmaster: Ed Muns, W0YK w0yk@msn.com
JUG Editor: Rob Brownstein, k6rb@baymoon.com

Zero Beat

By John Miller, K6MM

California QSO Party (CQP)

As I write this, we are less than 2 weeks away from CQP -- our big event this month. CQP can serve as your primary preparation for Sweepstakes, and a great way to kick off the entire Fall contest season. In the CQP Single Op category, you will very likely be "running" (i.e. calling "CQ") a lot, and operating for 24 hours, just like SS. It takes a commitment and physical preparation to operate for 24 hours, unlike some of the recent shorter contests, like NAQP and NA SPRINT. These contests, however, were good practice opportunities for improving our operating skills, and gave us a chance to test and optimize our stations for all the big contests coming this Fall.

CQP Chair Rick, N6RNO and County Coordinator Bob, N6TV have worked hard to make sure that CQP is another successful event for 2008.

- When: 1600 UTC October 4, 2008 to 2159 UTC October 5, 2008
- Where: 160m, 80m, 40m, 20m, 15m, 10m, 6m, and 2m
- Modes: CW, SSB
- Logs Due: November 15, 2008

Key Information:

Website: <http://www.cqp.org>

Rules: <http://www.cqp.org/Rules.html>

County Registration:

<http://www.cqp.org/Counties-Plan-2008.html>

Note: As of September 21, all 58 CA counties are scheduled for operation. Thanks in advance to those KB Rovers who've volunteered to operate in more than one county over the weekend.

Operating Strategy:

http://www.cqp.org/pdf/cqp_strategy_k6rb.pdf

Information: info@cqp.org

CQP Flyer:

http://www.cqp.org/2008/CQP2008_Flyer.pdf

One page key information, date, times, frequencies and rally times.

Also, maps showing likely rare counties and state/provinces.

CQP Package:

<http://www.cqp.org/2008/EviteCQP2008.pdf>

General invite, Rules, County/State Abbreviations

The only real rule change this year is that we will not have county line operations.

This means that there is only one county given on a QSO.

We feel this makes it easier for everyone.

So – are you ready for CQP? Please try to get on the air. It's your opportunity to test your skills, endurance, and equipment – and represent NCCC in the best state QSO party in the country.

I hope that EVERYONE has a great time in the contest!

Defending the Gavel

After CQP, our major focus is on the ARRL November Sweepstakes Contest.

Our goal this year is to defend the Club Championship gavel for the 6th consecutive year. Only one other club participating in SS

has achieved this goal. And that Club is – you guessed it – NCCC!

We won the SS Gavel for six years in a row from 1975-1980. Next month is our chance to do another “6-Peat”.

Accepting the leadership role and now leading the charge for SS 2008, is Bob Tellefsen, N6WG.

Bob is putting together a hard-hitting strategy to ensure another successful SS year for NCCC against our East Coast archrival PVRC. Come to the October meeting to learn more. And make sure you're subscribed to the email reflector for the latest NCCC SS news.

Dues

I'd like to say “Thank You” to all of the members who have already paid their dues for the 2008/09 Contest Season. For those of you who haven't yet paid, please take the time to do so.

Dues can be paid by mailing a check to our Secretary/Treasurer: Tom Carney (K6EU); 1545 Elwood Dr.; Los Gatos, CA 95032.

You can also pay Dues via the club PayPal account at this email address:

paypal@nccc.cc. Of course, you can pay via cash or check at any club meeting. The club has a full set of activities planned for this year that should increase everyone's enjoyment of contesting. Your financial support of these activities is greatly appreciated.

Feedback

NCCC is your club. If there is something that you would like the club to do, or to change, please let any member of the Board know. We are always looking for ideas and suggestions for ways to improve the club.

Email Reflector

For those of you who have not subscribed to the NCCC e-mail reflector, you are missing

out on a great service. This is an excellent source of information and help. We have some amazing resources within the NCCC; this is a wonderful way to take advantage of them.

This year alone, we've had some great group purchase opportunities (toroids, generators, foot switches, jackets). And if you have any questions relating to amateur radio or contesting, this is the place to post them! If you need any help getting on the Email reflector, send a note to Ed, W0YK at w0yk@msn.com.

Summary

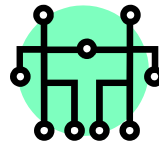
Please try to get on the air for CQP, and use that weekend for station improvements and operating practice. Share your lessons learned in CQP, at the Oct 13 meeting.

At the October meeting, Jim, K9YC and Bob, N6WG will lead a pre-SS discussion that can help Big and Little guns alike increase their Sweepstakes scores. Dean, N6BV will present propagation and band-plan information.

Looking ahead, ARRL Sweepstakes is just around the corner. We're going to need an all-out effort to defend the Sweepstakes Gavel this year. Now is a good time to arrange your family and work plans, to allow you to operate over both SS weekends. And please use NCCC resources over these next few weeks to upgrade your stations, solve any technical problems, and test that new antenna, software, and rig. You'll put yourself in a great position for good scores and much more fun in these contests. We're counting on you!

That's it for this month. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the October 13 meeting. This meeting is our last one before the Sweepstakes CW weekend of Oct 31-Nov 1 -- so bring a friend!

73, John K6MM



Welcome Aboard!

Let's all welcome these new members:
AA6K, Shirley Rose -- Stockton, CA
AF6HC, Skip Lawson -- Elmira, CA

NCCC Meeting Recap – August 11

By John K6MM

Fifty KBers attended the August NCCC meeting in Cupertino. We had a very full agenda for the evening:

CQP

Rick, N6RNO, shared his final plans for the 43rd Running of CQP on Oct 4 & 5. He emphasized the need for committed operation in several CA counties, which at the time of the meeting were at risk of having no (or very low) participation. Check the website for the latest operating plan: <http://www.cqp.org/Counties-Plan-2008.html>

September Contests

The schedule for the month was reviewed, and particular emphasis was given to NA Sprint SSB and the 5 state QSO parties (AR, CO, SC, WA, TX). Most importantly, for CQWW DX RTTY on Sep 27-28, Ed, W0YK emphasized that as a Club, we should be fairly competitive this year. Hopefully, we had a great turnout for this contest.

SS Preliminary Plan

Jim, K9YC was under the weather and unable to attend the meeting, but in his place, Bob, N6WG our new 2008 SS Leader, presented an overview of what it will take to defend the gavel this year.

CW Skimmer Presentation and Live Demo

Bob, N6TV, gave a great presentation entitled, "*Software Defined Radios, CW Skimmer and the Future of CW Operating*".

Bob showed us how to add an SDR to a current station, how to use SDR on the web, and gave live demos of *WinRad* software by I2PHD and *CW Skimmer* by VE3NEA. I'm sure that the use of these new technologies to improve the Radiosport of Contesting will be discussed at many future NCCC meetings. Stay tuned.

Pacificon 2008

This year NCCC will again have an exhibit booth in the main Exhibit Hall at Pacificon 2008. The meeting is a great opportunity to showcase NCCC's accomplishments, recruit new members, and connect with attendees. Last year we recruited 20 new NCCC members at the meeting.

We'll also be there to support at least eight Pacificon speakers who are also NCCC members: Jim, K9YC; Bill, N2RHV; Tom, N6BT; Dean, N6BV; Wayne, N6KR; Rick, N6RK; Bob, W6RGG; and Eric, WA6HHQ.

We will again hand out information packets and souvenirs, and we'll have educational videos showing SO2R and RTTY. I'm still looking for volunteers for Booth Duty.

If you would like to "sign up" for a couple of hours, just let me know via email at k6mm@arrl.net. The dates are October 18 & 19 at the San Ramon Marriott.

Contests For October

By John K6MM

SSB, CW, VHF, UHF, Digital, QRP. It's all there for October.

For a one-page summary of all major contests throughout the year, go to: <http://www.nccc.cc> and click on "Major Contest Calendar" at the top of the page.

For a complete 12-Month Contest Calendar go to: <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

To download ARRL's Contest Corral for October, go to:

<http://www.arrl.org/contests/#corral> and click on October

October 2008

- RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest: Oct 1
- NCCC Sprint: Oct 3
- YLRL Anniversary Party: Oct 3-5
- NCCC Sprint: Oct 4
- Oceania DX Contest, Phone: Oct 4-5
- International HELL-Contest: Oct 4-5
- EU Autumn Sprint, SSB: Oct 4
- California QSO Party: Oct 4-5
- 10-10 Int. 10-10 Day Sprint: Oct 10
- NCCC Sprint: Oct 10
- YLRL Anniversary Party, SSB: Oct 10-12
- Oceania DX Contest, CW: Oct 11-12
- EU Autumn Sprint, CW: Oct 11
- Pennsylvania QSO Party: Oct 12
- FISTS Fall Sprint: Oct 11
- North American Sprint, RTTY: Oct 12
- UBA ON Contest, SSB: Oct 12
- NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint: Oct 15
- NCCC Sprint: Oct 17
- JARTS WW RTTY: Oct 18-19
- Worked All Germany: Oct 18-19
- Stew Perry Topband Challenge: Oct 18-19
- W/VE Islands QSO Party: Oct 18-19
- Feld Hell Sprint: Oct 18
- 50 MHz Fall Sprint: Oct 18-19
- Asia-Pacific Fall Sprint, CW: Oct 19
- UBA ON Contest: Oct 19
- Illinois QSO Party: Oct 19-20
- Run for the Bacon QRP Contest: Oct 20
- ARRL School Club Roundup: Oct 20-24
- RSGB 80m Club Sprint, SSB: Oct 22
- NCCC Sprint: Oct 24
- CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB: Oct 25-26
- 10-10 Int. Fall Contest: Oct 25-26
- NCCC Sprint: Oct 31

VP/CC Corner

Jim Brown, K9YC

N6WG Steps in to Lead us in Sweepstakes 2008

By now, I think everyone knows that Fred, K6DGW, had to step back from this job to deal with some serious health challenges. He's done with one hurdle, but there are more to come.

Although not fully rested from his stint as club President, Bob has stepped into the

breach and will lead us in what I believe is a going to be a real battle for the gavel.

Sweepstakes Strategy

Our strategy to defend the gavel has many parts, but they're all based on two fundamental principles:

1. Maximizing butts in chairs for as many hours as possible, and
2. Maximizing the value of each individual effort!

Each one of us can contribute. We can win, but only if each of us does contribute to the best of our abilities.

Let's look at all the ways a member can contribute. Each of us should think about how we can fit into one or more of these slots.

Super Station, Strong Operator

If you've got a great station and can run SO2R, perhaps you can contribute the most by staying home and running it all by yourself. But if you don't want to put in full time, please think about training a guest operator to sit in your chair to fill up your log and add some mults!

Split Site Operation (One form of HMO)

Do you have more than one transceiver? If your station is anything less than killer, you may be able to make the greatest contribution by operating from another QTH for half the contest.

Got a great tribander but not-so-great antennas for 80/40? Try to operate Saturday using a club call from a QTH with good antennas for 80 and 40, then, operate at home on Sunday with your home call.

Have great 80/40 wires but no aluminum? Reverse the schedule, operating at home on Saturday, somewhere else on Sunday.

Only Want to Put In a Few Hours?

Decide when you want to operate, then, train a guest operator on your station, sit with him for a while to make sure he's on the right track, then turn him loose to fill up the log. Use one of the October contests to let

him/her get familiar with your station. Maybe you'll also get help with antennas, computers, logging, etc. Let your Regional Coordinator know that you're looking for a guest operator.

No Station to Operate?

Is your station weak or non-existent? Sign up to be a guest operator. Contact Bob, N6WG, or your local Regional Coordinator and let them know you've got a butt that needs a chair! Do that NOW, so that you can meet your host, get to know his station, spend some time there during a contest, maybe even help with antennas or other setup issues.

Station Sharing

The key to station sharing is doing the homework it takes to prepare your station for a guest operator, and for both the guest operator and the host putting in the time to make sure the guest is trained on the station.

All this has to happen in advance of Sweepstakes. Is antenna switching labeled? Are amplifier and antenna tuner settings marked? Any non-standard stuff the guest needs to know?

The guest will need to know your logging software. One good way to do that is for him to set it up on his own computer and use it in a contest. Or, use it on your computer during CQP or CQWSSB (the week before SS CW).

Don't forget the simple stuff like keyers and paddles. If you're doing some mentoring, you're both going to want to wear headphones at the same time. Pick up a headphone Y-adapter at Radio Shack.

Multi-Multi Station Are there enough antennas (and transmitters) that two operations can run simultaneously at your QTH?

If so, plan for just enough operators to keep each on the air for at least 18 hours. Why 18 hours? That's often the point of diminishing returns for one call sign, when you've worked most of who's on the air, and when

you need to think about going to another QTH and using another callsign! When things get slow, it's time to fire up a new rig with a new call sign and a new operator!

Sharing Gear

Many NCCC members have spare equipment – everything from a nice contest rig to a power amp and antenna tuner. Let your Regional Coordinator know if you don't have a decent contesting radio, amplifier, or other equipment. Or, put a post out on the email reflector. Last year, someone needed an amp and had five offers in the first four hours! I've got a couple of spare contesting rigs I can loan to someone who knows how to treat them, including a week or so in advance so they can learn the radio.

Maximize Your Effort, Pass On the Glory For the Good of the NCCC Team

Use the cluster – it makes you more efficient, and makes it less likely that you'll miss mults. Run high power – it's good for more QSOs, especially during slow times! Don't even think about QRP for Sweepstakes –we need the points you could make running QRO!

Making the Most of a Split Site Weekend

Try to find a second QTH that minimizes your travel time. One hour should be the maximum one way, and fifteen minutes is better. That 45 minutes difference could mean another 45 QSOs!

Set up as much of the second QTH as possible in advance. Learn the antennas, figure out computer setup and networking, power for you rig and amp. Thirty minutes of advance setup on Friday could mean another 30 QSOs.

Make sure you have everything you need. Make a list, do a complete setup at the second QTH, run through the switching and tuning for all the antennas, make sure your computer can get on line. Don't forget coffee and munchies.

Study the NCCC Sweepstakes Handbook

The NCCC Sweepstakes Handbook is superb, full of great ideas and advice to maximize both your enjoyment and your contribution to the quest for the gavel. Everything from solutions to technical problems to advice on operating strategies from some of the sharpest testers on the planet! Download it from the Sweepstakes section of the NCCC website.

Regional Volunteer Coordinators – Here is the list of the 13 Regional Volunteer Coordinators:

- Coast N of San Francisco – W6XU
- East Bay near the bay – N6WG
- East Bay to the east – N6RO
- Fresno – K2VCO
- Los Gatos, Cupertino, Rte 17 – NI6T
- San Francisco – N6BV
- Santa Cruz – Monterey – AE6RF
- W Bay, Silicon Valley – W6OAT
- S Bay, San Jose – AD6E
- Sierras North – K6III
- Sierras Central – ND6S
- Sierras South – WK6I
- Reno – K5RC
- Sonoma – K6SRZ



The Rusty and Tom mobile going be rolling down the highways of California during CQP

