



**Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club**



Issue 507

August 2014

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Guests are always welcome at the NCCC!
Please join us.

NCCC Meeting

Monday, September 8th

Time:

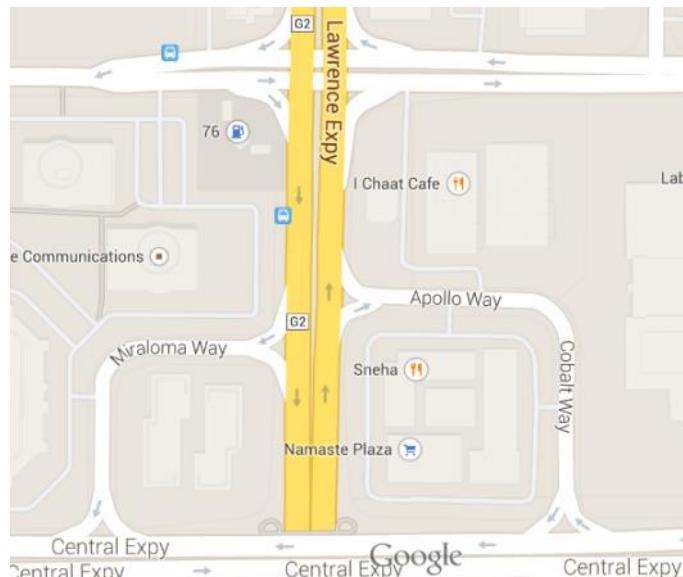
6:00pm Schmooz, 6:30pm Dinner,
7:00pm Program

Program:

- CQP N6WM
- IDXC K6MM
- Recent station upgrades W6SX

Location:

Sneha Restaurant, 1214 Apollo Way, Suite 404 B, Sunnyvale, CA 94085
Phone: (408) 481-0700



President's Report

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

When I took over as president, I felt that the major problem facing the club is lack of volunteers.

Currently, we are looking for a Sweepstakes chair. If we do not get a volunteer for that position, we may not be able to make SS a focus contest. According to the contest survey, there is a lot of interest in the contest, but if no one wants to organize the effort, we can't make SS a focus contest.

We also need volunteers to make calls to other members to make sure they get on the air, and submit logs showing NCCC as their club.

We also need someone to be the awards chair. K6YL has already volunteered to be a worker for this chair, if we can find a volunteer. Byron and I would like to see more awards for the non-big gun stations, especially in SS to encourage participation. Some creativity will be required. I need a person with new ideas.

We also need volunteers to man the table at PacifiCon in October.

Finally, we need a volunteer to organize the hospitality suite at Visalia. If no one volunteers, there will be no suite.

Please contact me if interested.

Rick N6RK



Northern California Contest Club

Excellence In Amateur Radio Contesting

Officers:

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NCCC Net

Thursday 8 PM
Freq: 3.610 +/-

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).

"EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT" - Rick N6RK

Geico Insurance is saturating the TV airwaves with commercials featuring the theme, "Everybody Knows That" (EKT). Now I have a way of describing a syndrome that I have observed in numerous radio clubs.

An example of this in NCCC is NAQP. I see a lot of traffic on the NCCC reflector about this contest, but none of it is tutorial in nature. All I knew was that I was constantly deleting email about forming teams for these contests. Not wanting to be on a team, I deleted ALL mail about NAQP and completely ignored it. Only recently, did I find out that I did not have to be on a team (EKT). I also did not understand about the tri-club competition. The identity of the 3 clubs was also in the category of EKT. Except me. I would say maybe we are not serving newer hams well, except I will have been licensed 50 years next year.

So the message is: if you want to get more participation in a contest, such as NAQP, you need to get the message out to the uninitiated as to what the contest is all about, and why they would want to participate.



VP/CC Corner

The results of the 2014-2015 Contest Season Survey are in and the club has elected to primarily focus on Sweepstakes this fall. Next year we will have a secondary focus on the NAQP Club Challenge. But, first things first: Sweepstakes!

We have not won Sweepstakes in 6 years, and that is a crying shame! We will need everyone to help out to win this first priority focus contest.

What does it mean to be a focus contest? Well, as past NCCC President Tom Berson, ND2T, put it in [2004](#):

We have selected Sweepstakes as our focus contest. To focus on Sweepstakes means to lock in on it, to give it our full attention, and to allow other similar demands on our attention to simply be noise for the moment.

Does this mean that other contests are simply noise? No. But, because we are focused on Sweepstakes, we take a page from Lance Armstrong's playbook and look at other contests and opportunities through a filter of "How can I use this to help me do better in Sweepstakes?"

With the benefit of hindsight we will all now agree that staying away from performance enhancing drugs would be better, but enhancing station performance is an excellent idea!

Fortunately, our survey also revealed that the generosity of NCCC members is intact and we have plenty who are willing to give advice to others on improving their stations. The Antenna Committee will therefore be resurrected we are searching for a committee chairman. Please email any board member if you are interested in coordinating the committee.

This comes at a good time, because as another past board member put it [1994](#):

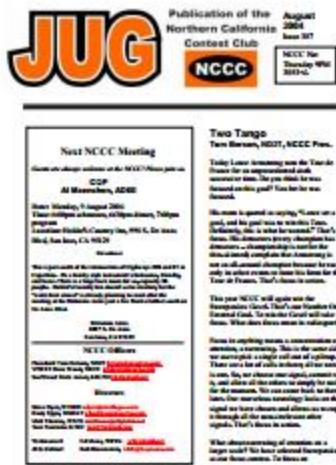
Then -- just 5 weeks after CQP --- the Club's sacred honor is on the line again as we go for our third-in-a-row Sweepstakes victory. To help us get ready, our VPCC, N6IP, has thoroughly revised and updated the "[NCCC Sweepstakes Handbook](#)", originally written by N6OP in 1974. Bob has done a fantastic job of pulling together this rich collection of SS lore and strategy.

While the SS Handbook can help you with strategy, you still have to have your station ready. **And that takes time!**

That it does! In my case, lots and lots of time. Need some station advice and didn't mention it in the survey? Email a board member and we'll find someone to consult with you.

Winter is coming! Don't delay.

Byron—N6NUL



JUG—Looking Back.....

2004:

Sweepstakes selected as focus contest for the year.

1994:

Getting your station together for Sweepstakes takes time. Get started!

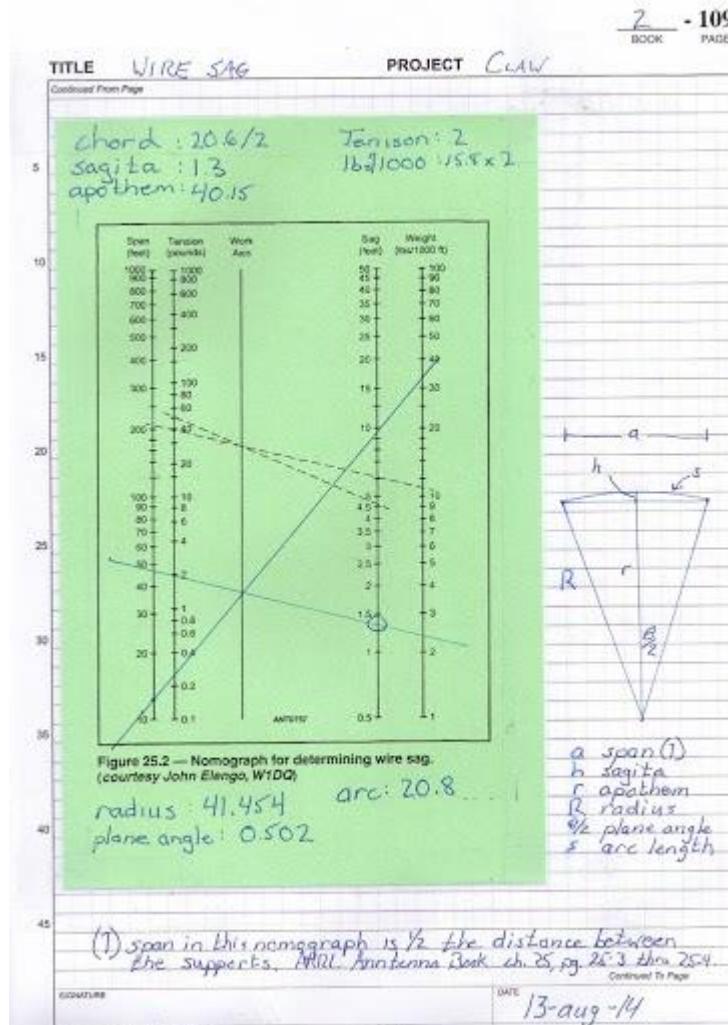
1984:

Los Angeles Olympic Games special event stations K6OG, W84OG, W23OG, and K84OG were on the air completing roughly 11,000 QSOs during the games.

My Townhome Shack - Sagita

It is a simple question: how much wire do I need to use between 2 supports?

Wire sags, so there will be some additional wire needed, but how much? The ARRL Antenna Handbook has an excellent nomograph in chapter 25 to help you calculate how much sag there will be for a given span of wire (warning! The span in the nomograph is for half the distance between the supports. See the Handbook text).



I used Wolfram Alpha to calculate the radius and plane angle; it's been a long time since I was in geometry. It has also been a long time since I took dynamics, but I wish I remembered how to calculate the deflection of a beam, because it turns out that calculating the sag of the wire is only part of the problem here.



Here is 1 element of my antenna with the wire attached. The sag was roughly 2.5 feet, which is greater than the 1.4 or so feet calculated. The difference is due to the deflection of the tubing under the tension of the wire.

Alas, there is no corresponding nomograph or other table in the Handbook that I could find to tell me how much deflection of a tapered antenna element there would be for a given tension on the tubing (usually gravity for yagis, I know, but I would still like to know).

So, it is plan B again. That has happened a lot over the 18 months of this project! Thankfully, this time Plan B is inexpensive: I will switch to a lighter 12 gauge solid wire instead of a pair of 14 gauge wires as shown. This will yield less sag for a given tension, and I will also choose a length that will cause some inward deflection, while hopefully minimizing sag.

How? I am going to attach one end and pull on the wire until it looks right.

Just 5 days until installation of the elements. Then it is time for the feed point matching and phasing.

Sweepstakes here I come!

Byron N6NUL

N6RK HAM RADIO BIOGRAPHY

It was suggested to me that as new elected president, it would be good to publish a biography. This biography is mainly about ham radio and within that category, emphasizing my past experience, good and bad, with radio clubs.

I first got interested in ham radio at the age of 13 when I saw a station set up at the Illinois State Fair. I somehow got the address of ARRL and bought "How to Become a Radio Amateur", but had no one to mentor me and I didn't see any path to actually getting licensed. Shortly thereafter, I started high school, and lo and behold, the shop teacher ran a ham radio club after school complete with Morse code training. Thanks to this I finally got traction and was licensed within a few months as WN9QXT. The high school club did Field Day every year and that was how I got interested in contesting. I eventually joined some other, general interest ham clubs, there being no contest clubs at the time. I didn't know much about contesting and mainly participated in Sweepstakes.

After high school, I got the call WA0ZQW. I attended Iowa State University from 1969 to 1972 and was an officer in a ham radio club that had a club station in one of the dorms. Even then, this club was fading out. The club station was my first opportunity to really work DX. I remember one night in 1970 at a sunspot peak when I stayed up all night working DX.

After getting my BSEE, I lived in Seattle working for Boeing from 1972-1975 using the call WA7VZX. Boeing had a very active ham club, with a club station consisting of a Collins S-line and tribander. I operated this in several contests. It was easy to get access to this station because the club was not much of a contest club.

I also joined the Western Washington DX Association. It served as a contest club of sorts. Their idea of being inclusive was that they let me join without having DXCC. However, it seemed hard to break into the inner circle of the "stars". They had as members, legends such as W7PHO (of PHO DX net fame), W7RM, K7JA, and K7SS. I got exposed to a lot of antenna building activity; it seemed they always needed another pair of hands on a rope. Looking back now, it seems miraculous that there were never any bad accidents from the antenna work.

Free climbing was routinely done, and belts were old leather linemans belts used only for positioning, not safety. All towers were Rohn 25; I never knew it came in larger sizes at time. Some amazing stacks went up on these towers, in complete disregard for torque limitations. One time, an entire 70 foot Rohn 25 tower complete with beams atop was lifted off its base and walked 100 feet (in the vertical position) to a new location.

The lifting was done by a bunch of hams manning timbers stuck through the rungs. Another time, 60 feet of Rohn 25 complete with antennas atop was lifted 20 feet in the air with a crane and two additional sections were inserted below it, to increase the height to 80 feet. W7RM routinely had antennas come down in storms, reminiscent of the saying "if your antenna stayed up last winter, it wasn't big enough." The club also did the original verticals on the beach operation during Field Day on Puget Sound.

Some guys from the club helped me put up a 60 foot Rohn 25 tower with a TH6. By then, it was the bottom of the sunspot cycle and I had nothing on the low bands plus I was behind a huge mountain. So I was not able to effectively operate in contests.

W7RM and W7SFA competed to get the best young operators to win contests. They only seemed to want operators who could win contests, so I never operated these stations. I was not in the same class with these guys. I hear similar things these days from operators who are intimidated from operating big stations due to lack of experience. W7RM is well known. Less well known is W7SFA (sk). Gordon had 60 acres in Is-saquah with a rotating pole and a 180 foot tower set up for multi-multi. I visited his station and he noted that he could work Europe at noon on 40 meters with his 180 foot high beam. Gordon was a very interesting guy, you never knew what he might say or do. His approach to dealing with the world was encapsulated in his later choice of W7FU as a vanity call sign.

In 1975 I moved to California and met Dean N6BV at Konel where we both worked. I was living in a condo in South San Francisco and wasn't on the air. I vaguely remember attending a few NCCC meetings but it seemed to be another club oriented around big guns and I lost interest. I remember one year they put a bunch of towers up in Belmont for Field Day. I didn't feel my operating skill was adequate so I didn't participate. I didn't bother to get a new call in the 6th call area, due to being off the air, until vanity calls were offered in 1977, when I was issued N6RK the first day of availability.

In the 1980's I finally got some decent antennas like a KT-34 at 50 feet and wires for low bands and operated in some contests, mainly Sweepstakes, where I made a clean sweep one year. I remember my last section was VE3 of all things. I couldn't effectively work DX on the low bands from that QTH in Cupertino. Mountains blocked my signals in various directions.

Fast forward to 1997. I bought 20 acres near Galt in Sacramento County and proceeded to get serious about low bands, especially 160 meters. At the time, this was just a weekend place. I did a lot of learning by doing. The first thing I put up was a 1300 foot beverage. It was fairly disappointing and it was only years later that I figured out that the reason was because of my high ground conductivity.

However, I figured out how to build a 90 foot vertical out of irrigation pipe and laid out about 20 miles of radials. Due to the high ground conductivity, it really got out and soon I was turning in respectable scores in 160 meter contests, and working Europe on 75 meter phone. I only had wires on 40 meters and up.

My contest entries got noticed and I was asked to join NCCC. I thought I would give NCCC another try, and I started learning about contesting. When the SteppIR came out, I got one right away and then started working all band contests like SS and DX contests. During this time, I vaguely knew there was a club in the mother lode area, but could never find information on it. At that time, the River City contestants were fading out.

Being in NCCC got me interested, for the first time, in going to Visalia. At Visalia, I ran into K6TA who sought me out to tell me that my vertical put an extremely strong signal into the Caribbean, and this led to joining MLDXCC.

In 2014, I retired from Hewlett-Packard/Agilent after nearly 35 years and now live full time in Galt.



Contest Calendar—August

page 1

QRP Fox Hunt	0100Z-0230Z, Aug 1
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Aug 1
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 1
TARA Grid Dip Shindig	0000Z-2400Z, Aug 2
10-10 Int. Summer Contest, SSB	0001Z, Aug 2 to 2359Z, Aug 3
European HF Championship	1200Z-2359Z, Aug 2
ARRL August UHF Contest	1800Z, Aug 2 to 1800Z, Aug 3
North American QSO Party, CW	1800Z, Aug 2 to 0559Z, Aug 3
RSGB RoPoCo CW	0700Z-0830Z, Aug 3
SARL HF Phone Contest	1300Z-1630Z, Aug 3
ARS Spartan Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, Aug 5
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Aug 6 and 1900Z-2000Z, Aug 6 and 0300Z-0400Z, Aug 7
NRAU 10m Activity Contest	1700Z-1800Z, Aug 7 (CW) and 1800Z-1900Z, Aug 7 (SSB) and 1900Z-2000Z, Aug 7 (FM) and 2000Z-2100Z, Aug 7 (Dig)
QRP Fox Hunt	0100Z-0230Z, Aug 8
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Aug 8
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 8
WAE DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Aug 9 to 2359Z, Aug 10
SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, Aug 9 to 2400Z, Aug 10
Maryland-DC QSO Party	1600Z, Aug 9 to 0400Z, Aug 10 and 1600Z-2400Z, Aug 10



Contest Calendar—August

page 2

50 MHz Fall Sprint	2300Z, Aug 9 to 0300Z, Aug 10
MMMonVHF/DUBUS 144 MHz Meteorscatter Sprint Contest	0000Z, Aug 12 to 2400Z, Aug 13
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, Aug 13
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Aug 13 and 1900Z-2000Z, Aug 13 and 0300Z-0400Z, Aug 14
RSGB 80m Club Sprint, CW	1900Z-2000Z, Aug 13
QRP Fox Hunt	0100Z-0230Z, Aug 15
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Aug 15
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 15
SARTG WW RTTY Contest	0000Z-0800Z, Aug 16 and 1600Z-2400Z, Aug 16 and 0800Z-1600Z, Aug 17
ARRL 10 GHz and Up Contest	0600 local, Aug 16 to 2400 local, Aug 17
Russian District Award Contest	0800Z, Aug 16 to 0800Z, Aug 17
Keyman's Club of Japan Contest	1200Z, Aug 16 to 1200Z, Aug 17
North American QSO Party, SSB	1800Z, Aug 16 to 0559Z, Aug 17
Feld Hell Sprint	2000Z-2200Z, Aug 16
CVA DX Contest, CW	2100Z, Aug 16 to 2100Z, Aug 17
SARL HF Digital Contest	1300Z-1630Z, Aug 17
ARRL Rookie Roundup, RTTY	1800Z-2359Z, Aug 17
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z, Aug 18

Contest Calendar—August page 3

CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Aug 20 and 1900Z-2000Z, Aug 20 and 0300Z-0400Z, Aug 21
QRP Fox Hunt	0100Z-0230Z, Aug 22
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Aug 22
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 22
Hawaii QSO Party	0400Z, Aug 23 to 0400Z, Aug 25
Kansas QSO Party	1400Z, Aug 23 to 0200Z, Aug 24 and 1400Z-2000Z, Aug 24
QRP ARCI Welcome to QRP	1500Z-1800Z, Aug 23
Ohio QSO Party	1600Z, Aug 23 to 0400Z, Aug 24
CVA DX Contest, SSB	2100Z, Aug 23 to 2100Z, Aug 24
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, Aug 27
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Aug 27 and 1900Z-2000Z, Aug 27 and 0300Z-0400Z, Aug 28
RSGB 80m Club Sprint, SSB	1900Z-2000Z, Aug 28
QRP Fox Hunt	0100Z-0230Z, Aug 29
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, Aug 29
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Aug 29
ALARA Contest	0400Z-1359Z, Aug 30 and 0400Z-1359Z, Aug 31
YO DX HF Contest	1200Z, Aug 30 to 1200Z, Aug 31
Colorado QSO Party	1200Z, Aug 30 to 0400Z, Aug 31
SCC RTTY Championship	1200Z, Aug 30 to 1159Z, Aug 31
SARL HF CW Contest	1300Z-1630Z, Aug 31

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memories

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Dual Bander
ID-880H
D-STAR



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mode • Free software download • GPS A mode for easy
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- Wideband receiver

D-STAR ready

YAESU
The radio



FTDX-3000 100W HF + 6M Transceiver

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