April 9, 2007 Meeting

Harry's Hofbrau, San Jose

Program:

Kick, Duck!

- Introductions

- Fiscal results

- Elections

- LoTW: It's Really Cool!

- DXpedition to the Farallons

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                    NCCC Actual vs Budget
                   Third Quarter FY 06/07

YTD   YTD                   FY 06/07
July-Mar Jul-Mar            Jul-Jun
Category Description        Actual          Budget          Budget

INCOME
Donations                     872.00          960.00        1,000.00
Dues  2,945.00              3,300.00        3,400.00
JUG Ads  300.00               300.00          300.00
                           -----------     -----------     -----------
   TOTAL INCOME             4,117.00        4,560.00        4,700.00

EXPENSES
Awards                      1,147.48        1,850.00        2,000.00
JUG                           754.00        1,200.00        1,500.00
CQP                             0.00            0.00          500.00
   Miscellaneous Expense      115.62          187.50          250.00
NS Ladder                       0.00          112.50          150.00
QSLs (K6ZM, K6CQP, N6CQP, W6CQP)  0.00         75.00          100.00
Visalia Hospitality             0.00           00.00          100.00
Web Site                        4.88            5.00          100.00
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TOTAL EXPENSES              2,021.98        3,430.00        4,700.00
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Candidates for 2007-2008 Term

- **President:** Bob Tellefsen, N6WG

- **Vice President/Contest Chairman:** Alan Eshleman, K6SRZ

- **Secretary/Treasurer:** John Miller, K6MM

Candidates for 2007-2008 Term

Board of Directors (3 open seats):

- **Jeff Stai, WK6I**

- **Fred Jensen, K6DGW**

- **Jack Brindle, W6FB**

- **Jim Brown, K9YC**

Logbook of the World (LoTW)

It's really cool!

By Marc Ziegler, W6ZZZ

The NCCC Newbie

Logbook of The World (LoTW)

"Activity begets activity." – W6ZZZ

Here are some reasons why LoTW is cool and why you should send in your logs to LoTW. (http://www.arrl.org/lotw/)

• Anyone may submit log data to LoTW regardless of membership in ARRL. U.S. Amateurs must be ARRL members to obtain DXCC, WAS, or VUCC awards.

• Amateurs residing outside the U.S. can participate in any awards.

I think that LoTW now has enough participation to really build some momentum. I also think that NCCC can "lead by example" and set the standard in the contesting world by having all of our members send their logs in to LoTW after each contest. This includes:

- Any type of contest – domestic or international

- Any mode – CW/RTTY/SSB or others

- Any frequency – HF/VHF/UHF or others.

People have been asked in some cases for LoTW and paper QSLs for NCCC practice QSOs and contest warm-up QSOs.

LoTW Myths and Realities

"I too had some fits-and-starts at first getting fired up in LoTW. But LoTW is the greatest thing since sliced bread once I quickly moved up the learning curve. I've got more than 84,000 QSOs now in LoTW, saving a whole lot of trees from being made into paper QSLs." – N6BV

"The "post card hassle" is what I call a "two-factor authentication". In the world of authentication, it's a good step." – K6TD

Comments Overheard From Folks:

• It's only good for ARRL awards – true, it's only good for DXCC and WAS now. But non-ARRL awards are promised for the future. I did hear of an NCCCer who received a CQ WAZ award by using a "hybrid" application with CQ. Only 4 paper QSL cards were required and all the rest of the 36 zones were LoTW confirmations.

• It's hard to use – not for me. I just export my trusted QSL file directly from WriteLog and then email it in to LoTW. K6TD imports his contest log into DXKeeper and then immediately updates LoTW and eQSL from DXKeeper.

• **The User Interface (UI) is no good – there are a number of items I would like the ARRL to add to the web pages, especially more database searching sub-functions like we have with the ARRL online scores databases for ARRL contests.**

• **The security is overdone and burdensome – some people have reported postcards that never arrived in the mail or they lost them afterwards. The FAQ tells you how to request a replacement postcard via email or over the telephone.** (**https://p1k.arrl.org/lotw/faq**.)

• **VE3EJ and GM3POI have achieved 9-Band DXCC solely by LoTW.**

• **HB9BZA has a LoTW users list of 14,904 calls in 300 current countries. There are lots and lots of other statistics and a searchable database of known LoTW users at the web site (http://www.hb9bza.net/lotw/).**

A Timesaver

"*With proper understanding of LoTW, it is a tremendous tool that personally saves me many hours of admin support for my contesting efforts***.**" **– WØYK**

   I (W6ZZZ) don't currently use a QSL management system like DXKeeper or DX4Win. But all my contest logs have been sent in to LoTW. So if I get any questions about a contact all I have to do is search on LoTW in a single place.

   Of course, you can do the same thing with a database on your own PC. But since I'm going to send in all my logs to LoTW anyway, why should I duplicate the effort on my own PC?

QSL Confirmation Rates

"When I started using LoTW for recent logs I was getting 30-40% QSLs, but when I added all my contest logs from the 90's, my percentage has dropped to 20% overall" **– WØYK**

Right now RTTY contesters seem to be the biggest and fastest group of people who send in their logs to LoTW. The % rate of QSLs from this year's WPX RTTY and NAQP RTTY contests has been immediate and amazing (like 40% confirmations in the first few days).

Here are some overall QSL rates some NCCCers have experienced:

W6TQG – 56% (as WB6TQG, 1658 QSOs and 931 QSLs, 99% RTTY)

W6ZZZ – 38% (10,564 QSOs and 4,006 QSLs, 174 contest logs, CW/RTTY/SSB)

K6TD – 34% (7426 QSOs and 2533 QSLs includes N6RCE, WB6S, K6TD)

WØYK – 25% (79,505 QSOs and 20,815 QSLs, a single LoTW account that includes the activities for W0YK, KY0W, K6YT and P40X/P49X)

N6BV – 6.6% (85,401 QSLs and 5662 QSLs, back to 1989)

Basically if you send LoTW your logs from many years past or you have a lot of DX QSOs then your % of QSL confirmations will be lower than the larger numbers on this list, at least right now.

Sending in Old Logs?

"I've received LoTW QSLs from K1ZZ back to the 2002 New England QSO Party" **– W6ZZZ**

First and foremost you need to concentrate on and plan for sending in your current and future logs to LoTW.

After that you might consider sending in some or all of your old logs if you have the time (and the log records are in computer form). No telling what old friend you might actually get a LoTW QSL from.

Installing LoTW

"I think a big reason RTTY/digital operators are more active with LoTW is they are not as intimidated by the computer and software." **– NA7RF**

All I can say is that I followed the steps in "Getting Started" and it all worked as advertised (https://p1k.arrl.org/lotw/getstart).

Also before getting started I read the "Seven Steps to LoTW" sidebar in "The Logbook of The World: 75 Million QSOs Can't Be Wrong!" article by H. Ward Silver, NØAX (http://www.arrl.org/lotw/silver.pdf).

Entering All Your TQSL Location Information

When you create a location in the TQSL program please include all your possible location information. This will make your QSLs of the maximum value to whatever sort of person you QSL when sending your log to LoTW (WAS, VUCC, county hunter, etc). This is the TQSL program "Station" menu "Add Location" selection.

There are a series of 2 dialog boxes where you can specify 7 items (for the US):

- DXCC Entity
- Grid Square
- ITU Zone
- CQ Zone
- IOTA ID
- State
- County

For example, if you received a paper QSL card and there was no state printed on the postcard then it wouldn't be any good for your WAS award.

Using LoTW

"Like most things, the more you use LoTW, the easier it gets. It seemed complex at first ... now, it's as easy as Notepad." **– WØYK**

"*I forgot to ask the $64,000 Question: What's the cost???***"**
– Locust

You use the TQSL program to digitally "sign" your Cabrillo or ADIF logs before sending them in to LoTW. Even easier, what I do is just export my trusted QSL file directly from WriteLog. You can email your log in or you can upload it via a web page.

You then use the LoTW web pages to access your data, search it, track your progress towards DXCC and WAS (broken down by band and mode) and to request your awards.

It costs nothing to use LoTW.

The ARRL award cost is the same whether you use LoTW or paper QSLs to qualify for an ARRL award certificate. See https://p1k.arrl.org/lotw/faq#cost and https://p1k.arrl.org/lotw/fees for cost details (it's **15 cents to 25 cents** per entry on the award, depending on how many credits you buy at once).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

There is a FAQ on the web that answers 68 questions (https://p1k.arrl.org/lotw/faq).

Instead of having to read the entire web page one trick is to search the web page with the "Find (on This Page)" command for your problem. The command is Ctrl+F or under the Edit menu in Internet Explorer.

I do recommend that you read the 8-part table of contents to see the subjects of the 68 questions.

The Major FAQ Table of Contents Topics Are:

1. General Information About LoTW   (13 questions)

2. Basic Questions   (13 questions)

3. Call sign issues   (11 questions)

4. Troubleshooting   (4 questions)

5. My Logging Program (or not)   (8 questions)

6. Using/Accessing my Data at HQ   (7 questions)

7. Receiving Award(s) Credit(s)   (2 questions)

8. Miscellaneous   (10 questions)

Interfacing with a QSL Management Program

Programs like DXKeeper and DX4Win will interface with LoTW and exchange information in both directions to keep in sync. And users say that it makes the LoTW interface easier to use (it's probably just less to learn, because they already know how to use their QSL management program).

Additional Information on the Web

There is lots of good information out there on the web to help you with LoTW.

- **Getting Started –** https://p1k.arrl.org/lotw/getstart

- **The Logbook of The World: 75 Million QSOs Can't Be Wrong! – 4 page PDF file by H. Ward Silver, NØAX. Also has a short sidebar on the last page covering the "Seven Steps to LoTW",** http://www.arrl.org/lotw/silver.pdf

- **FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions,** https://p1k.arrl.org/lotw/faq

- **LoTW main web page – general information,** http://www.arrl.org/lotw/

- **LoTW Resources – by HB9BZA with lots of statistics,** http://www.hb9bza.net/lotw/

- **NCCC Email Reflector – ask a question and I'm sure that you will get a prompt and helpful answer.**

DXpedition to the Farallons

By Rick Hilding, K6VVA
(the Locust)