

# Which Contests are Best for You?

N6RO, K6XX, AE6Y, W0YK

# Contests Differ

- Quite a bit, actually!
- Variety ...
  - Keeps the interest high
  - Something for everybody
  - Expands skills
- Contester goals also differ ...
  - New band-countries or states for DXCC/WAS
  - Skill improvement; compete with self
  - Thrill of rate
  - DXCC or WAS in a weekend or few hours
  - Station testing
  - Team competition; club competition

# What Are Your Favorites?

- Why?
- What are each contest's advantages?
- What new contests (for you) might be interesting?
- How can you increase your contesting satisfaction?

# Specific Contests

## N6RO:

- North American QSO Party (NAQP)
- North American Sprint (Sprint)
- NCCC Sprint (NS)
- 160 meter Contests (ARRL, CQ, Stew Perry TBDC)

## K6XX:

- California QSO Party (CQP)
- ARRL Sweepstakes (SS)
- Japan International DX (JIDX)
- ARRL 10-Meter Contest
- ARRL DX Contest
- International Amateur Radio Union (IARU)

## AE6Y:

- State QSO parties
- CQWW
- CQWW WPX



# Contests for Everyone! (NAQP, Sprints, 160)

Ken Keeler, N6RO

# North America QSO Party (NAQP)

- CW, SSB, RTTY twice yearly (6 total)
- Six bands (5 on RTTY)
- All levels of station capability
- All levels of operator experience
- Advantages:
  - 100w max (energy & neighbor friendly)
  - NA only: modest & fixed antennas work great
  - 10 hours on Saturday, frees rest of weekend
  - Friendly. CW ops will slow down as needed
  - Best SO2R contest: run & S&P simultaneously
  - Five operator teams in team competition
- Tom, K5RC, founded NAQP!



# North American Sprint (NAS)

- CW, SSB, RTTY twice yearly (6 total)
- Same geographical, station advantages as NAQP
- Rules prevent running; levels playing field
- Improves your S&P skills
- Strategies for smaller or low power stations:
  - Call only LOUD stations (better chance in pileups)
  - Work higher in the band
  - CQ! “Couplet” not a must
- More experienced Sprinters go for the couplet
- SO2R very challenging; master basics first
- Rusty, W6OAT, founded the Sprint!

# NCCC Sprint (NS)

- Thursdays 0230-0300Z; NCCC net on 3610 SSB afterward
- Slow speed NS 0200-0215z
- Based on the Internet Sprint (N6TR)
- Combines NAQP (100w, 160m, mults/band) with NAS (short time, couplet format, 20-80m)
- Legal dupes or no dupes
- Rules vary weekly; practice for key weekend contests
- Advantages:
  - Setup/refine software
  - Practice new skills
  - Learn bands & call signs
  - Stay in “contester shape”, i.e., practice, practice, practice



# 160m Contests (ARRL, CQ, TBDC)

- Stew Perry Top Band Distance Challenge (TBDC) uses Grid Squares for scoring
- NCCC members quite active
- Smaller stations can succeed with limited antennas:
  - Vertical polarization on TX
  - RX antennas, e.g., loops
- National competition requires more property:
  - Bigger/higher antennas
  - Long receiving antennas
- Specialties: remote, SO2R (same band)
- Run all the power you can!!

# For ALL Contests

- Try to operate the whole contest; commit to full time
- Prepare ahead of time
- Practice, practice, practice

# Which Contest is for YOU?

Presented to NCCC  
August 2008

Bob Wolbert, K6XX

K6XX—August 2008

# Why Contest?



*"Why BREATHE?!"*

- Testing/Proving Station Design
- Testing/Proving Operator Skill
- Wallpaper/QSLs/WAS/DXCC
- Goal Setting/Achievement Measuring
- Adrenaline rush from Competition
- Club Competition
- Because it's FUN!



# Fun is...

*Choose one or more of the following:*

- Using what you've built
- Beating your previous best
- High Weekend Country/State Total
- High Rate
- Winning?
  - Alone or with NCCC





# California QSO Party (CQP)

*Simply the most fun we'll have all year!*

## The Best Regional Contest

- Rules fair to all
- Lots of Awards
- Significant Features
  - Everybody-works-*\* us \**!
  - Mixed Mode (But awards for Single Mode)
  - Our (NCCC's) Contest
  - "Interesting" Exchange (with serial number)



# Sweepstakes

*"Grand Old Man" of Domestic Contests*

- NCCC's Main Event
- Significant Features
  - ARRL-works-ARRL sections
  - CW: 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday Nov. Fone: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat. November
  - Once-per-weekend
  - All Power levels
  - Long Exchange w/ serial number
  - "Fresh Meat" especially popular Sunday afternoon (CW)



**K6XX—August 2008**

# Japan Int'l DX (JIDX)

*Win ~~fame, fortune~~, plaques, certificates, QSL cards*

- Activity Declining—a few hours may mean regional victory
  - It's fun to run...  
However rates are *poor*
- Significant Features
  - Everybody-works-JA
  - CW in April
  - Fone sandwiched between SS



K6XX—August 2008

# ARRL 10m Contest

*Big Rates for Little Guns*

- Most popular ARRL contest—lots of activity
- End of the Autumn Contest season
  - Go out with “spiritual experience”
- Temporary station still=Big Signal
- Significant Features
  - Everybody-works-Everybody
  - Single or Mixed Mode
  - All Power levels
  - Huge Rates Possible



**K6XX—August 2008**

# ARRL DX

*Work DXCC in a Weekend*

- Fun Contest
- DX beams our direction
- Significant Features
  - USA-works-DX
  - CW: Late February
  - Fone: Early March
  - All Power levels



**K6XX—August 2008**



# IARU "HFWC"/RadioSport/etc.

*Activity Growing Rapidly—Biggest Summer Contest*

- Many different names, same basic contest
- Lots of Awards
- Significant Features
  - Everybody-works-Everybody
  - Single or Mixed Mode
  - All Power levels



K6XX—August 2008

*That's All,  
Folks...*

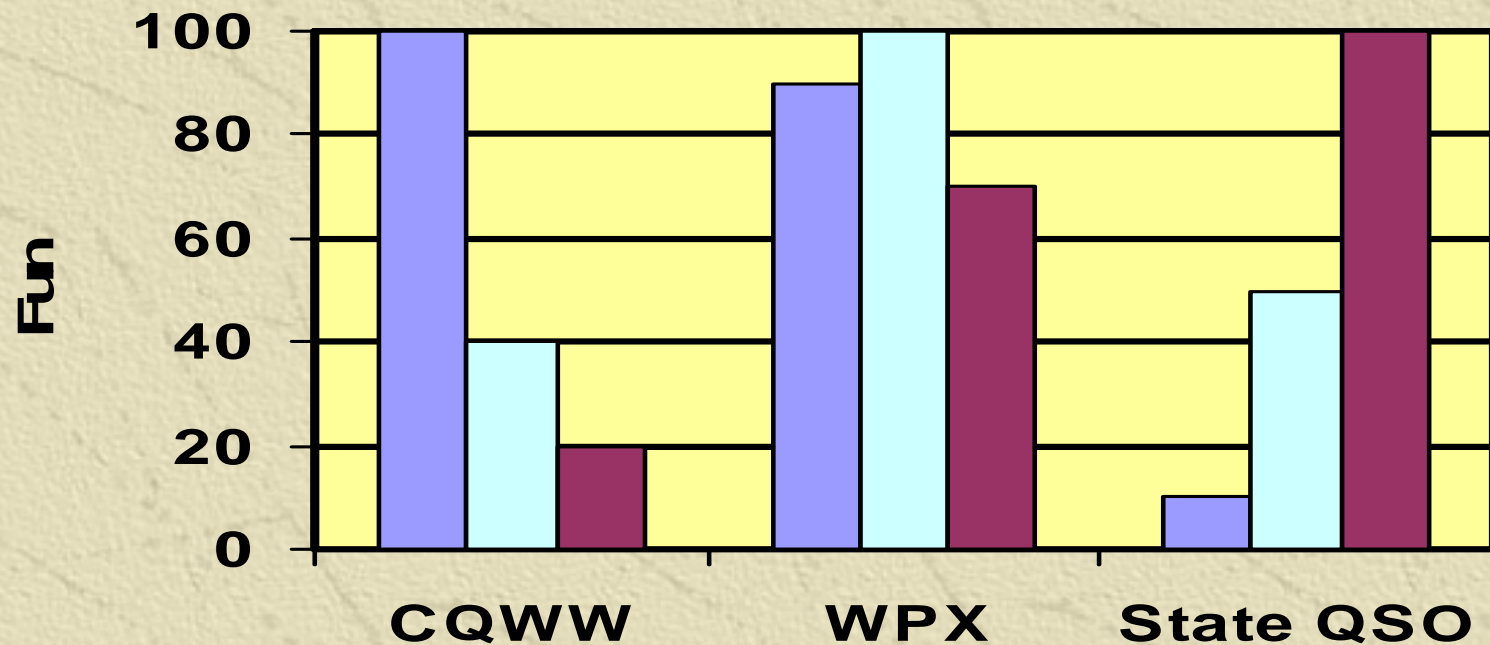
**73 & KB!**

# AE6Y Presentation – CQWW, WPX, State QSO Parties

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- ◆ **CQWW** – The Granddaddy of DX Contests
- ◆ **WPX** – More Fun for the Average Joe
- ◆ **State QSO Parties** – Training for the rest

# Contest Fun Factor



**Big Gun   Medium   Lil Pistol**



# CQWW

✧ The Big One for activity and rare DX

✧ NOT a domestic contest (but, RTTY has US/Canada mults)

✧ Phone Oct., CW Nov., RTTY Sep.

✧ 48 Hours



# Things to do During CQWW

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- ✧ Go on a DX-Pedition
- ✧ Join a local multi
- ✧ Listen to the masters (N6KT, W2SC, CT1BOH, etc.)
- ✧ Stay home, use packet and chase DX
- ✧ Pray for sunspots

# WPX

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- ✱ A grand QSO Party!
  - ✱ Everyone works everyone
  - ✱ Phone March, CW May,  
RTTY February
  - ✱ 36 Hours for Single Ops  
(30 for RTTY)



# Advantages to WPX

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✱ Easy

✱ Fun

✱ West Coast is competitive

✱ Be rare by prefix or location

✱ NCCC wins (e.g., 2001 and 2002)!

# West Coast Success (CW)

## ✧ 2002 CW U.S.A. Scores

- ✧ 3d Place SO
- ✧ 3d Place 20, 1st 80
- ✧ 1st 15 LP
- ✧ 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> Places MM (**KX7M, NR6O, WX5S**)



# NCCC Success (CW)

## ✧ 2002 CW World Scores

- ✧ 3d Place World SO (AE6Y at P40Y)
- ✧ 2d Place World MM(6Y2A – New NA record)



# And of Course.....

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✦ **Club Competition**

✦ **NCCC – 253M World  
Record (2002)**

# WPX Easy – Fun

- ✧ Prefixes can generate pileups
- ✧ Lots of S & P activity
- ✧ Not as cut-throat as CQWW
- ✧ Many categories and awards
  - ◆ Single Op, SO/A, SB, LP, QRP, TS
  - ◆ M/S, M/2, M/M
  - ◆ Part-time effort can win a category





*The Radio Amateur's Journal*

*Takes pleasure in awarding this Certificate of Merit to*  
**ZF2AF (Op: AE6Y)**

*In Recognition of the achievement of winning the* 2002  
*First Place Tribander/Single Element SSB*

## **World Wide WPX Contest**

*for the* **Single Operator - All Band** *division for*  
**Cayman Is. (World 3rd High)**

*A Total score of 13,232,968 points was computed on the basis of*  
*the number of stations worked and call sign prefixes contacted. In witness of*  
*this achievement, we hereby affix our signatures on this day.*



WPX Contest Director



Editor, CQ



*The Radio Amateur's Journal*

*Takes pleasure in awarding this Certificate of Merit to*

**AE6Y**

*In Recognition of the achievement of winning the* 2000

Second Place SSB

**World Wide WPX Contest**

*for the*

Single Operator - All Band  
United States - 6th District

*division for*

*A Total score of 3,581,720 points was computed on the basis of  
the number of stations worked and call sign prefixes contacted. In witness of  
this achievement, we hereby affix our signatures on this day.*

*Steve Bolia, N8BJQ*

WPX Contest Director

*D.S. Wooten W2VU*

Editor, CQ



*S*



*R*

*The Radio Amateur's Journal*

*Takes pleasure in awarding this Certificate of Merit to*  
**AE6Y**

*In Recognition of the achievement of winning the* 1999  
*First Place SSB Low Power*

## **World Wide WPX Contest**

*for the*

*Single Operator - 14 MHz*  
*United States - 6th District*

*division for*

*A Total score of* **348,480** *points was computed on the basis of*  
*the number of stations worked and call sign prefixes contacted. In witness of*  
*this achievement, we hereby affix our signatures on this day.*

*Steve Bolia, N8BTQ*

WPX Contest Director

*Alan W. Huffer, K2EEK*

Editor, CQ





*The Radio Amateur's Journal*

*Takes pleasure in awarding this Certificate of Merit to*  
**AE6Y**

*In Recognition of the achievement of winning the* 1998  
*First Place CW Low Power*

## **World Wide WPX Contest**

*for the*

*Single Operator - 14 MHz*  
*United States*

*division for*

*A Total score of* **208,772** *points was computed on the basis of*  
*the number of stations worked and call sign prefixes contacted. In witness of*  
*this achievement, we hereby affix our signatures on this day.*

*Steve Bolia, N8BTQ*  
WPX Contest Director

*Alan W. H. Huffer, K2EEK*  
Editor, CQ



# State QSO Parties

✧ None are like CQP

✧ Some have decent activity

- ✧ PAQP, TQP

- ✧ Newer regionals: NEQP, 7QP

✧ Good for a lazy afternoon

✧ Work rovers

## Conclusion – KB!

✱ Choose contests that fit  
your station and abilities

✱ Practice

✱ Learn from the masters

✱ KB!