



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



May
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NCCC Net
Thursday 9 PM
3610+/-

Our Next Meeting

Program To Be Announced – Watch the Website

Date: Monday, 14 May 2007

Time: 6:00pm schmooze, 6:30pm dinner,
7:00pm program

Location: Harry's Hofbrau, 390 Saratoga Avenue,
San Jose, CA (408) 243-0434

Dinner: cafeteria style; you buy your own

Directions From 280

Take the Saratoga Avenue exit and go North on Saratoga about 1.5 blocks. Harry's is on the right (East) next to a large Casino.

NCCC Officers

President: Bob Tellefsen, N6WG
Vice-President and Contest Chairman: Alan Eschleman,
K6SRZ
Secretary/Treasurer: John Miller, K6MM

Directors

Past President: Dean Straw, N6BV
Director: Jeff Stai, WK6I
Director: Fred Jensen, K6DGW
Director: Jack Brindle, W6FB
Director: Jim Brown, K9YC
Honorary Director: Rusty Epps, W6OAT

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

Presidential Musings

By: Bob Tellefsen, N6WG

Thanks to all of you for electing me your president for the 2007-2008 contest year. This is my first time in any NCCC official position so things may be a bit disorganized, at first. I have a lot of experienced people to call on, though, and believe me, I will.

I want to thank the outgoing officers for their hard work this past year: Pres. Dean N6BV, VP Fred K6DGW, and Sec/Treasurer Tom K6EU. I'm already developing an appreciation for what they have been doing. Also, I'd like to thank the outgoing Board of Directors members: Past Pres Mike N7MH, Jeff WK6I, Ed K6CTA and Alan K6SRZ.

Please welcome the new officers who will help me keep this train on the tracks. As you know, it isn't enough to stay on the rails, you need to be going in the right direction, too.

We have Alan K6SRZ VP and John K6MM Secretary/Treasurer. The new Board of Directors members are: Past Pres Dean N6BV, Jeff WK6I, Fred K6DGW, Jack W6FB and Jim K9YC. Rusty W6OAT continues as Honorary Director. This brain trust will be a huge help to me.

I suppose I should say a few words about my radio background. I was first licensed as WN7SMC in Seattle in 1952. I made General in 1953, and later, Extra, in 1968. I worked my DXCC from Cedar Rapids, IA,

and I still have the cards in a plastic shoebox. I should apply for the certificate before they compost on me.

I've been a rabid QRPer for the past 35 years, initially to beat TVI before cable TV came in, then I stayed QRP because I enjoyed the camaraderie of the QRP community. I managed to earn QRP WAS 40m, then two-way QRP WAS 40m, and finally 160m QRP WAS. Recently I received ARRL's QRP DXCC certificate, also. I have 140 countries in the log, QRP.

I enjoy all the contests I enter, primarily cw though, as I'm a brass-pounder at heart. Now that I have ssb capability in my rig, I've dabbled in a few ssb contests, also, with the results you would expect from a little pistol caught up in a cannon battle. I've never won a contest, but occasionally I make it into the top-10 QRPers in a contest's results report. There are some serious competitors out there.

My station is pretty simple, a K2 running 5w to a collection of wire antennas--160m top loaded 50 ft vertical, 80m top loaded halfwave vertical (160m vertical), 40m dipole, 20m two half waves in phase (40m dipole), 15m bisquare, 10m bisquare (nested inside the 15m bisquare). For receiving on the low bands I use a full-size Flag loop and a pair of loops that I alternate on a portable stand with TV rotator so I can turn them. I really enjoy tinkering with wire antennas and modeling with EZNEC. For contesting, I enjoy using TR LOG on an old DOS computer dedicated to that task. Okay, that's enough about me.

Our 41st CQP is now history. I wondered how the solar cycle has affected CQP, so I asked Kevin, K6TD, our CQP Chair. He tells me that the total number of QSOs has dropped dramatically over the past few years, but the number of logs submitted has only dropped a little.

Just because we are at the bottom (+/-) of the solar cycle, we don't need to accept

fewer QSOs. If we encourage as many CA stations as possible to participate, we can move the QSO numbers back up a bit. This is our QP, after all, so we need to provide a strong presence on the bands. This should help increase the number of logs submitted. Activity begets activity.

Personally, I'd rather operate in poor conditions and high participation, than in great conditions with few takers out there. I think it was a Civil War general that stated, "Quantity has a quality all its own." Let's make it work for us.

The joint meeting of NCCC and MLDXCC occurs July 7 up in Jackson. Please consider going. Perhaps you can carpool for a day trip up and back. Maybe take your wife and visit Jackson as a tourist, or go to the Rancheria and gamble a bit. The food there is very good. My wife and I will be making an overnigher of the trip, as she enjoys poking around in Jackson.

See you in the contests.
73, Bob N6WG

VP/CC Report

By: Fred Jensen, K6DGW

Since Alan, our new VP/CC, is off to Swain's Island, Samoa, and maybe a few intermediate places handing out a hundred K or more QSO's [OK ... he had some help], and is likely to need some rest when he returns, I volunteered to flog the 7QP and WPX CW on his behalf. Rob also needs input to the JUG, so I'll inflict one more of my columns on everyone until Alan returns home.

May Contests: Here's a few of the more popular, as always, the complete list can be found on Bruce's page at www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/

7th Call Area QSO Party: 5 May 1300Z – 6 May 0700Z
www.7qp.org

New England QSO Party: 5 May 2000Z – 6 May 0500Z and 6 May 1300Z – 2400Z

www.neqp.org

Mid-Atlantic QSO Party: 12 May 1600Z – 13 May 0400Z

www.maqp.org

CQ WPX [CW]: 26 May 0000Z – 27 May 2359Z

www.cqwp.com

The QSO Party Conundrum: 21 April saw the Ontario QSO Party sponsored this time by CCO. The VE3's are big players in our CQP, and several of us decided to return the activity for them. Alas, we were there, the ionosphere was there [sort of], but almost no ON stations were there. I hope we didn't all get the wrong date ☺ The Michigan QSO Party was concurrent, and was much better attended by in-state stations, but the Ontario experience is all too common. "Activity breeds activity" is a common phrase, however its converse is equally true – "Non-activity, especially from the sponsoring group, breeds silent rigs."

I think the increase in the regional contests over the past several years is a good sign. Rich, NU6T, and I had a blast last year from Elko County NV in the first ever 7QP. He, Matt, WX5S, and Tom, K6EU, plan to light up Mineral County NV this year. We all enjoy casual operations, and the QSO Parties offer the opportunity, especially in the summer months when the larger contests are absent from the calendar.

However they can be very frustrating when we out-of-staters have few people to work. And, the situation isn't helped when the in-staters get mult credit for all of their counties as well as the states and provinces, so they stick to the low frequency bands and work each other. Fortunately, our CQP does not fall into that trap

And SS News: By now, everyone in NCCC has surely heard the news that PVRC edged us out for the 2006 SS Gavel. The official results, posted to the ARRL Web recently, showed the top three to be:

CLUB	SCORE	LOGS
PVRC	20,585,820	290
NCCC	20,016,034	260
SMC	12,620,118	220

They bested us by 2.77%. PVRC managed an average of 70,986 pts/log while NCCC posted 76,985 pts/log and SMC did 57,364 pts/log. Our aggregate CW score was slightly better than PVRC, but in the end, it's the total score that counts, and PVRC's showing in the Phone contest, and especially their higher number of logs, carried the day for them.

Competition is what "The Sport of Amateur Radio" is all about, and the 2006 SS was a very hard fought battle between two very determined clubs. Dean and I have congratulated PVRC on their win, and likely other Ducks have as well. I would have liked to see us take the Gavel for yet another year, but I also enjoyed the competition. Discussion has already begun in several circles on how we might triumph this year. Considering that 8 more NCCC logs at our average points/log would have done it, or just 16 more small logs at half our average would have done it too, there does seem to be at least one thing we can attack. So, congratulations PVRC, you won fair and square. NCCC is still out here on the Western Frontier, so watch your back.

While on SS, I want to repeat my thanks as an officer last year and an NCCC member to our SS Organizing Crew. The level of effort expended, the creative ideas, and the organizational level were just super. I also noted that Jim, W6EU; Rick, N6XI; Bob, W6RGG; and Scott, W6CT posted CW error rates under 1.0%. I'm impressed and congratulations! I hope I didn't miss anyone, the full table is on the ARRL Web at www.arrl.org/contests/results/2006/sscw.pdf

Meetings: I finally managed to attend a meeting, two in fact. The Awards meeting in Mt. View was my first, other than a couple of joint MLDXCC/NCCC conflagrations in Jackson, and the elections meeting in San Jose was my second [Andrea

strongly encouraged me to attend that one ... last year I did not and got elected ☺]

I'm figuring this out, I managed to couple up both trips with other activities, one with my annual trek to spend a few days with my college roommate, and the other with Andrea for some hobby purchases for her. Most of you know what that means for me! I think I'll work on making a few more, just getting faces with calls has really enhanced my NCCC experience.

Final Question: In the early days of ham radio, things were done in wavelength ... "600 meters," "200 meters and down" as an example. Somewhere we switched to frequency, and ten meters became "up" rather than "down." When did that occur? For me, in 1953 as a new Novice, ten meters was "up." It must have been before that.

73, and KB/D

Fred K6DGW
VP/CC Emeritus

NCCCer Newest Contest Hall of Famer

By: Rob Brownstein, K6RB

Every year at Dayton (so they tell me, I've never been), a special honor is bestowed on special radio operators. It's called being elected to the Contest Hall of Fame. And, once again, one of our own will be given that honor.

Those of you who attended the contest dinner at Visalia heard, first hand, that Tom Taormina, K5RC, has been so honored.

Many of us are aware of Tom's commitment to contesting, his super station up near Reno, and his hospitality to guest operators. But, most of us are unaware of Tom's history. So, the following is the nomination letter, sent on March 1, which got the ball rolling.

Mr. Bob Cox, K3EST
CQ Contest Hall of Fame
3216 Lothian Road, #202
Fairfax, VA 22031

Dear Bob,

The Northern California Contest Club wishes to nominate Tom Taormina, K5RC, for the CQ Contest Hall of Fame.

Tom was first licensed at age 13 in 1959, on Long Island, as WV2GGB. He obtained his General Class license in 1960 along with the call WA2GGB.

Tom was a member of the Larkfield Amateur Radio Club (NY) and served one term as secretary. He was an honorary member of the Rhododendron Swamp VHF Society (W1BU) and participated in early EME experiments. Tom was Vice President of the Huntington VHF Society (W2AD) and was very active on 6 and 2 meter VHF, AM, SSB and CW. He also worked high-speed CW meteor scatter.

Tom obtained his 35 WPM Code Proficiency certificate at age 14. He was also president of the Walt Whitman High School Amateur Radio Club (WA2WQW).

Tom worked as a partner at Amplidyne Labs in 1963 and 1964, building VHF and UHF ham transmitters and receiving converters. He moved to Houston in October 1964 and became WA5LES. Tom worked for the Busick family (W5GJ, K5AAD, N5JJ, and W5MBB) at Madison Electronics while attending the University of Houston.

After college, he worked for Ford Aerospace at the Johnson Space Center for 14 years where he helped organize the Johnson Space Center Radio Club (W5RRR).

Tom passed the Amateur Extra Class exam in 1965 and became K5RC in 1976. He had a sideline business repairing Drake and Collins radio equipment for 9 years (Communication Labs).

Tom has held the special call signs AA5LES, WJ5SKY, WT5ITU and KT5ITU. He joined the Texas DX Society as member #13 and served several terms as its president during the 1970's.

He activated the TDXS's 147.96/36 Repeater, established relations with the CRANTAC Radio Club in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, and co-founded The Great Armadillo Runs of 1983-85 (in which the TDXS activated every county in the 5th call area).

Tom headed up the The Armadillo Run of 1986 in which 75% of the counties in the US were activated over two weekends; and he led the successful effort to have the Governor of Texas create Armadillo County during the 1986 Texas Sesquicentennial).

Tom obtained the first QST Cover photo for a Club project in April, 1986, and he was active with TDXS during ten years of winning Field Day efforts.

Tom was very active in mobile HF CW in the 1990's, passing out many rare county multipliers in various state QSO parties. Then, he moved to Nevada in 1997 and established NACHO (Nevada Association of Contest Highland Operators), W7RN. He joined the Northern California Contest Club and was a Director in 1999 and 2003.

Contesting:

Tom's first contest was the 1959 SS CW in which he made 35 QSOs in two weekends. Under his various callsigns, Tom has been a fixture of SS Contests ever since. He was also active in VHF Contesting at the K2SWI multi-op station.

After moving to Texas, Tom began to multi-op SS with K5LZO. They set a number of multi-op SS records in the late 60's. During that time, Tom operated DX contests from W5KFL. He set up his first competitive station in 1971 and became active as a single-op in SS CW, winning that contest, nationally, in 1975.

Tom participated in the ARRL 10 meter contest for nine consecutive years, setting several records, winning several national titles, and holding a string of West Gulf Division victories. Tom was also very active in ARRL CD Parties.

Tom built a multi op station with K5GA, and from 1976 until 1983 (Hurricane Alicia) had seven towers and five operating positions. He mentored such operators as K5ZD, K5GN, N5JJ, KN5H, N5EA, NM5M, and NA5R. They set Multi-Single records in CQ WW CW, CQ WW Phone, ARRL DX CW, ARRL DX Phone, and IARU.

Tom started building a second multi-op contest station with NA5R in 1981, which, unfortunately, was also destroyed by Hurricane Alicia in 1983. Tom designed and built the multi-op station at K5XI, where he oversaw the erection of a 250' tower for 20 meters. He led the TDXS multi-op contest efforts from XE2FU which established world records in the ARRL DX CW and SSB Contests.

Tom helped formulate the Multi-Two category in the ARRL DX Contests. Along with K5LZO, K7BV and K8CC, he helped create the North American QSO Party. Tom served two years on the CQ Contest Committee, two terms as Editor of the National Contest Journal (for a total of five years which is the longest tenure of anyone as NCJ editor), and has continued to contribute the "Where Are They Now?" column.

Tom served as a Judge at WRTC 1996 in the San Francisco Bay Area. He co-founded the Seventh District QSO Party (7QP) which debuted in 2006 with rave reviews. Tom was personally responsible for ensuring activity from all the Nevada counties in the first running of 7QP.

DXing:

Along with K5LZO, Tom was the first American to obtain permission to operate from French Polynesia in 1964 as FP8CB/FO8, the year he began serious DXing. He served as DX Editor of the Houston Amateur Radio Club Newsletter in 1965 and was named Editor of the West Gulf DX Bulletin in 1966. Tom served as a Director of the YASME Foundation until 2000. He has achieved DXCC Honor Roll and #1 Honor Roll.

Public Service:

Tom was a member of ARES and RACES from 1959 to 1964, and became Deputy Town Radio Officer for Huntington Township, Suffolk County (NY) RACES at age 15. He participated in weekly Civil Defense drills and provided communications during hurricanes and snow storms.

Tom and K5LZO worked as an independent communications team for over ten years whenever hurricanes and tropical storms hit South Texas.

Tom was an Assistant Director of the West Gulf Division under N5TC and he co-founded Houston Ham Conventions, and for seven years, organized ham radio conventions in Houston.

Tom served as president of HHC and Chairman of the 1983 ARRL National Convention. He co-founded the Stephen F. Austin Radio Club (W5SFA) and the Austin County Repeater Association (TX), and served as President of SFARC and acted as net control for the MS 150 Bike Race for 3 years. He also was active in establishing second tier emergency communications in Austin County, TX.

Personal:

Tom is married to Midge Taormina, K7AFO. They live on the "MT Nest Ranch II" at 6,500' in the mountains of Virginia

City, Nevada. When not writing books or giving seminars, Tom is most active in NAQP and the 10 Meter Contest.

For the other contests, he shares his station with guest ops such as K7BV, NM5M, K7NV and WX5S. Pictures of the station and antenna farm are in "Up Front" in April, 2001, QST.

Tom and Midge hosted "The Great Armadillo Reunion of 2006" which is the subject of an article published in April, 2007, QST.

NCCC believes Tom Taormina, K5RC, would make a great addition to the CQ Contest Hall of Fame. Please contact us if you require additional information which we have not included in this nominating letter.

Charles K. Epps, W6OAT
Director, Northern California Contest Club

Editorial: New Blood Opportunity

By: Rob Brownstein, K6RB

Ham radio in general and contesting in particular are in trouble. We are faced with increasing restrictions on outdoor antennas, much more QRN from household electronic devices, and difficulty in attracting young people into the hobby.

Past efforts aimed at lowering the barriers to entry created an influx of VHF HT operators, most of who lost interest and moved on. For those of us who remember the HF CW bands back in the 1950s and 1960s, these bands – even during good conditions – are now often empty or just barely populated. Even the phone bands are underutilized.

The latest attempt to smooth the way to ham radio has eliminated CW testing. That opens the door to a lot more HF operators ... assuming they don't live in antenna-restricted neighborhoods. Most of that influx, should it actually occur, will be

found on the phone sub-bands initially. For a while, or perhaps permanently, the CW bands will continue to see the attrition of operator numbers.

In the 1950s and 1960s, two factors influenced CW operation. The novice license required CW operation, only, except on 2 meters. And, in those days, DX were predominantly CW operators because of the relative high cost of AM equipment.

Thus, hams who were interested in DX had to embrace CW, and novices hoping to upgrade to their generals, also had to make peace with CW. The introduction of SSB/CW transceivers in the 1960s lowered the cost and increased the efficiency of phone operation, and there has been a steady migration of all operators to SSB ever since.

The influx of new HF blood has no institutional reason to embrace CW. Their desire for DX will be more than satisfied on SSB. Thus, our first opportunity for increasing contest participation will have to focus on phone contesting.

However, if we want to change the tide of attrition in CW, we will need to attract some of the newcomers to that mode, as well. With no institutional or DX reason for doing so, it will be our job to make the case on an aesthetic and fun level. "CW is more challenging than phone, and it's just as much fun, too," we have to tell them.

There are many precedents for things that seem archaic taking on a life of their own. Since the late 19th century, commercial use of the sea has all been via powered vessels. Sailing should have died a rapid death. But, it didn't. Every Wednesday, here in Santa Cruz, I can watch a sailboat regatta sweeping the Monterey Bay. People sail because it is more challenging than piloting a powerboat and it is so much more aesthetic.

CW has to take on the shine of sailing to these newcomers. We get them into the

water (HF) on a powerboat (SSB), then show them the grace of sailing (CW).

Any rebirth that is likely to happen to CW will not come from our licensing institutions or general ham radio organizations. If it happens, at all, it will be a grass-roots-driven rebirth primarily motivated by aesthetics and contesting. Competition, alone, will not be enough.
