



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



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NCCC Net
Thursday 8 PM
3610+/-

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

Next NCCC Meeting
Monday, October 11, 2010
"Review of CQP"
"Sweepstakes Preparation"

Date: [Monday, October 11, 2010](#)

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

Location: The TechShop, 120 Independence Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Directions: [The Tech Shop](#)

Pizza and softdrinks will be served. Cost will be \$10.00.

You can pay for dinner with Cash or Check at the door, or in advance via PayPal: paypal@nccc.cc

Please RSVP to [K6RM](#) no later than Friday, October 8, 2010.

NCCC Officers

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FB's Message

By Jack Brindle, W6FB

Temperatures across the area this summer have been much cooler than normal, much like the solar activity we have experienced over the past few years.

Now as we move into autumn the climate has warmed up, both in terms of temperatures (it is hot!) as well as sunspots (they are hot!). Recent activity reports indicate that the higher HF bands are indeed heating up, with openings during the day on 15 meters and recently 10 meters.

Most days this year have seen sunspot groups of one size or another. At present there are three fairly large groups presenting lots of activity. No wonder

the bands are heating up! It will be very interesting to hear and see the CQP results for activities on the various bands.

As I write this, we are a bit over five weeks from Sweepstakes. With solar activity on the upswing, and the resulting greatly improved band conditions, we should have an excellent opportunity for improving our Sweepstakes scores. It has been said that our greatest chances of winning the club competition come when the high bands are open to us, and it now appears that this will be the case this fall.

Speaking as a little pistol, I have seen mostly search and pounce activity over the past few years, with the big guns staking out frequencies on 20 meters for their tremendous runs. That leaves little space for us low-power guys, especially since 15 meters has not been able to support extensive contest communications. But now this is changing. The increased solar activity means that 15, and maybe even 10 meters will support these activities this year. For us little guys, this means that we should be able to hold a run frequency on 15 meters, where this is plenty of space. Not only is this good news, but it is outstanding! For those relative newcomers who have never experienced this situation, prepare for ecstasy. The thrill of being able to hold a frequency while stations call *you* is outstanding. But then the participants of CQP know that thrill...

And, the NCCC members who have been participating in the NCCC 40th Anniversary Event know it, too. If you haven't taken the time to get on the air, you have really missed it! Members have been experiencing the fun of working pileups where *we* are the center of attention. And, we all enjoy being the center of attention! This is great practice for both CQP and Sweepstakes. And, if you haven't heard, the event has been extended. So now you can get on the air and be the center of attention through the end of the year. All your QSOs count for the event, including those in contests such as CQP and Sweepstakes. While we suggest that you advertise your participation by adding a /40 suffix to your callsign, we also strongly suggest that you do not add that suffix during a contest. There's no sense giving ourselves an unfair advantage, and you really don't want to take the extra time needed to send the suffix.

The important thing is to get on the air. You may find more takers on phone than CW, but be sure to take the opportunity to let everyone know what is going on and how great the NCCC, and its members, actually are!

The 40th Anniversary Event is also very useful for testing upgrades and improvements you may have made to your station this year. The more you exercise the station, the more comfort you will have with its features and the better you will do in contests.

Which brings us back to Sweepstakes. Practicing for this wonderful contest includes operating your station as much as possible. While the best practice is in competitive exercises, you will also gain confidence from the style of operating involved in the Event. Again, running on a frequency is the key to higher scores, and running means handling pileups. The pileups we are seeing in the 40th Anniversary Event operations are providing this kind of operation and is excellent preparation for Sweepstakes.

The keys to Sweepstakes are all back this year. We have high solar activity leading to higher band operations, and lots of practice opportunities. The only thing now needed is information for where and when to operate. The October meeting, at the Tech Shop in Menlo Park, will provide the latter. Look for propagation and other great information. And be ready. Sweepstakes is coming, and this year it is ours for the taking. Now, let's go get it!

VP/CC Report

By Chris Tate, N6WM

Greetings KB'ers

Welcome to the 2010-2011 contesting season. I hope your CQP plans go well, and you have a great time and make lots of Q's!

As we approach the November Sweepstakes, I want to take some time to talk about what I would call, Sweepstakes fatigue. I am sure you will all agree that doing the same thing year in and year out, depending on the individual, could result in a loss of enthusiasm for the contest. Over the last several years, with the solar cycle against us, it becomes an even bigger challenge to be successful. As a result, although close, we have come up second place in the contest that defines us.

So, we need to energize ourselves, get some club synergy going, and make it fun! It can and will be! And, what better way to energize the greatest contest club in the world, than by rising to the challenge and winning the SS gavel.

We must attack this challenge from a number of directions. We have assembled a team of some of the most knowledgeable contesters in existence to analyze different angles and approaches to taking the lead this year. This info will be shared with you, the NCCC membership, with hopes to give each station the knowledge and edge to be successful.

We have continued to recruit new members who are fresh and ready to take on the challenge. These new members need Elmers...someone to look to for guidance. Who are those Elmers? You are, the senior Sweepstakes operators. We need you to set the example for the newer contesters, and we need your butt in the chair. Let's put an end to the PVRC winning streak, and show the newer club members the glory of the Sweepstakes win!

Your leadership team is working hard to make this year a fun and interesting one, and lots of other great ideas are on the table to make things fresh and interesting. All I ask of you is your energy, and BIC!

The fun starts here guys. We can and will win! For the 2010 SS Gavel!

CQP – A Sweepstakes Prelude

It's here, gang. The starting pistol shot hits at 9 AM (PDT) on Saturday morning. Here's your chance to try out whatever changes you've made since last contest season. In my case, I'll be using a pair of K3s instead of a pair of FT-1000Ds. I have had to make some adjustments. Without band-stacking registers, I programmed the K3s so that using M>V the numbers 1 through 9 corresponds to 160 through 10. And, by expeditious use of A/B, I can switch between CW and phone modes and frequencies with one button push.

I am actually enjoying phone mode using the K3s, something I did not enjoy using the Yaesu gear. So, I plan to operate both modes in CQP instead of my usual "CW only" effort. That should be a good learning experience for SS phone next month.

I'll also be using a new headset, this year. After I bought the K3s, I bought a Yamaha headset (recommended to me by Jim, K9YC). For too many years I was using a Heil Pro-Set headset, and the lighter weight Yamaha is more comfortable over the long haul. I also like the sound of the audio, and get very nice reports.

Lastly, I am using a new keyboard. I bought a compact QWERTY keyboard to replace the monster Microsoft Ergonomic keyboard I've been using for at least 10 years. This gave me room to move my Vibroplex Bug and Begali paddle onto the same, lower-height, keyboard pull-out so I don't have to reach around the bug/paddle to get to the right-hand K3. Having the bug/paddle at a lower height also seems to cause much less arm fatigue over time.

So, here's to CQP and the practice it will afford us. Get out there and KB, and apply the lessons learned in Sweepstakes, next month.

73,

Rob K6RB



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