



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



January
2009
Issue 440

NCCC Net
Thursday 8 PM
3610+/-

Happy New Year!

Contesting with the Elecraft K3 (panel of K3 testers; Elecraft CEO/CTO in the audience!)

Date: Wednesday, 14 January 2009

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

Location: Mr. Magoo's Restaurant, 1375 Petaluma Blvd North, Petaluma, California 94952-1952 (707) 763-4346

Dinner arrangements to be announced

NCCC Officers

President: [John Miller, K6MM](#)

Vice-President and Contest Chairman: [Jim Brown K9YC](#)

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JUG Editor: Rob Brownstein, k6rb@baymoon.com

Zero Beat

By John Miller, K6MM

December Meeting Highlights

We had a great Holiday Party on December 8 at Michael's Restaurant in Mountain View. More than 70 Kbers and guests attended the annual event.

During dinner, we were treated to a medley of songs by the incredibly talented Main Street Singers from Los Altos High School. This group of 30 students transformed our meeting room into a virtual theater, with an inspiring combination of Seasonal, Sacred, Madrigal, and Chamber Works for Christmas and Chanukah.

Rick, "The Locust" (K6VVA) received top kudos for getting the MSS to perform at the party. After dinner, I poked fun at our wonderful hobby with a "Lighter Side of Ham Radio" presentation.

We then had our traditional auction of wine, provided by Ed (W0YK), homemade goodies provided by Jennifer (KB4TGE), and music CDs provided by Ken (N6RO).

Our auctioneer and photographer, Bob (N6TV) then treated everyone to his unique Manualism talent – including the impossible William Tell Overture.

The evening closed with Ken (N6RO) leading the charge with his banjo-driven medley of Holiday songs. Jack (W6FB)

organized the entire event and of course Tom (K6EU) collected the money!

All in all – another great Holiday Party!

ARRL November Sweepstakes

The SS logs are in now, so we can relax. The rest is up to the log checking process, but I am proud of our collective efforts this year and regardless of the outcome, want to thank everyone for getting on the air for SS. I hope you had a great time in the 75th running of ARRL Sweepstakes!

Other Contests

By now the ARRL 160M, ARRL 10M, RAC and Stew Perry Top Band Challenge contests are complete. Hopefully you had a good time in one or more of these contests, even though propagation conditions have been less than ideal. Don't forget to send in your log and include Northern California Contest Club in your Cabrillo file.

NAQP and ARRL RTTY Roundup

Looking even ahead, January contests include the ARRL RTTY Roundup and NAQP, where NCCC teams have done very well in recent years.

ARRL RTTY Roundup

For the ARRL RTTY Roundup on January 3-4, 2009, NCCC is going to “go for it” in this exciting contest. It will be our way for everyone to get focused on a winning strategy for the New Year.

We had a “call-to-action” plan announced in December to ask at least 51 NCCC members to submit their logs in the Unlimited Club Competition. Many members will likely get into RTTY for the first time. To help prepare for this contest, we set up a combination of Web-Based training and practice sessions to build excitement and confidence for the contest.

Jim (K9YC), our ARRL RTTY Roundup Cheerleader, is also facilitating operator-station pairings as was done for SS. There are also helpful materials available for the

browsing in the Members section of our website.

With your help we think we have a great chance to win this contest again for the first time since 2005.

New NCCC “Remote” Training Tool

During the last 12 months we've recruited more than 100 new members into our Club. To help them, as well as our existing membership become better contesters, we've decided to employ a powerful “distance learning” tool.

In December, I subscribed to Webex, an excellent teleconferencing and web-conferencing tool hosted and owned by Cisco Systems. Participants attend a Web-Based Seminar, often called a “Webinar”, via telephone and the Internet. Users can share presentations, applications, documents, and desktops, with full-motion video and integrated audio.

Two important advantages of Webinars:

- (1) Participants use their own telephone and computer-internet connection from the convenience of their home or business, and (2) there are no geographical boundaries.
- (2) Anyone, anywhere can participate.

We tested this methodology by holding two identical Webinars on December 17 and 18. The topic: The ARRL RTTY Roundup contest. A total of 30 NCCC members participated in these online learning sessions, hosted by K6MM.

Presenters were Ed (W0YK) and Dean (N6DE). Attendees were from California, Nevada, Washington, and one from Indiana. Feedback was so positive from participants, that we are now planning a seminar series for 2009, to supplement our normal monthly meeting.

In early January, all members will have an opportunity to participate in a survey to help select and prioritize NCCC Webinar topics.

A schedule will then be published and updated throughout the year. Look for more information on the NCCC email reflector soon.

I believe that these Webex “distance learning” seminars have the potential to boost Contesting Confidence and Competence for all NCCC members through a convenient, user-friendly educational and training experience.

Summary

That’s it for this month. I’m looking forward to seeing everyone in the ARRL RTTY Roundup the first weekend in January.

Until then – Happy New Year!

73, John K6MM

January Meeting

By John, K6MM

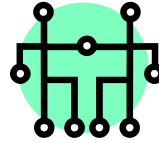
<http://www.nccc.cc/meetings.html>

Check the website for details of our next meeting, Wednesday, January 14, 2009 in Petaluma. This will be a joint meeting between NCCC and the Redwood DX Empire Association (REDXA).

The meeting will be devoted to “Contesting With The K3”. Both principals from Elecraft – Wayne Burdick (N6KR) and Eric Swartz (WA6HHQ) – will be in attendance to listen to K3 users share their real-world experiences with the K3 during daily operation and contesting.

We will discuss the results of the online K3 survey. If you would like to participate in the survey, it’s still available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/6sx6p>



Welcome Aboard!

Let’s all welcome these new members who were voted in at the December meeting:

1. **AF6EV** - David Davison - Santa Cruz
2. **K6MLF** - Mike Fischer - Mill Valley
3. **K6XM** - Greg Olsen - Los Altos Hills
4. **KG6YPH** - Carrol Kerns - Los Altos
5. **KI6GVI** - Paul Trethewey - Nevada City
6. **N6EF** - Bill Mungaven - Sacramento
7. **W6JTI** - Frank Letton - Whitethorn
8. **WB6NER** - David Otey - Oakland
9. **WE6Z** - Doug Phillips - Granite Bay

Contests For January 2009

By John K6MM

For a one-page summary of all major contests throughout the year, go to: <http://www.nccc.cc> and click on “Major Contest Calendar” at the top of the page.

For a complete 12-Month Contest Calendar go to: <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

To download ARRL’s Contest Corral, go to: <http://www.arrl.org/contests/#corral> and click on January.

SARTG New Year RTTY Contest - Jan 1
NCCC Sprint - Jan 2, 10, 16, 17, 23
ARRL RTTY Roundup - Jan 3, 4
MI QRP January CW Contest - Jan 10, 11
North American QSO Party, CW - Jan 10, 11
LZ Open Contest - Jan 17
Hungarian DX Contest - Jan 17, 18
UK DX Contest, RTTY - Jan 17, 18
North American QSO Party, SSB - Jan 17, 18
ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes - Jan 17, 19
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest - Jan 19
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint - Jan 22
CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW - Jan 23-25
REF Contest, CW - Jan 24, 25
BARTG RTTY Sprint - Jan 24, 25

VPCC Report

Jim Brown, K9YC

RTTY Roundup

Your NCCC leadership team is encouraging our members to focus on RTTY RU as a key contest this season. We have a good chance of winning the Club Competition if a lot of our members put together a serious effort.

Our chief rival is PVRC, and they've been winning for a few years. In preparation, we've been treated to excellent presentations by N6DE and W0YK at the November meeting, reprised in two great WebEx "Webinars."

The Power Point slides for their presentation is in the meetings section of the website. Many of us are "all fired up and ready to go."

Here are some key things you need to know:

- ◆ RTTY Roundup is a 30 hour contest. Saturday, January 3, 1800Z (10 am PST) to 2400Z Sunday, January 4, (4 pm PST).
 - ◆ You can operate 24 hours; and must take breaks in one or two periods of any length.
 - ◆ Multi/Single is permitted only 6 band changes per hour. Packet puts you in M/S.
 - ◆ You can operate SO2R or you can use packet, but you can't do both!
 - ◆ Operate 80M – 10M, no WARC bands, no 160M.
 - ◆ Everyone works everyone.
 - ◆ Mults are States/Provinces plus DX entities.
 - ◆ W/VE sends RST and State/Province DX sends RST and serial number.
 - ◆ Work each station on each band for credit, but mults count only once for the contest.
- ◆ Maximize your score with rate and hours. Run high power to maximize DX contacts.
 - ◆ SO2R is easier on RTTY than CW or SSB, and will get you more points than packet.
 - ◆ Don't push your transmitter or amp too hard – RTTY is a "keydown" mode, so rigs should be run at about half their normal power, especially when contesting!
 - ◆ Study Ed and Dean's presentation for lots of RTTY setup and operating hints.
 - ◆ Almost any ham can do RTTY using a computer with a sound card and one or two serial ports, without buying anything but cables and connectors! Study my Ham Interfacing tutorial for advice on how to hook things up and get them working. You'll need two of everything to do SO2R.
 - ◆ Use MMTTY (freeware) to generate and decode RTTY, use N1MM (freeware), WriteLog, or WinTest to do the logging. All integrate very nicely with MMTTY and with many dedicated hardware RTTY boxes.
 - ◆ Study the extensive collection of RTTY material on the Members pages at nccc.cc
 - ◆ For the two weeks leading up to RTTY RU, we're dedicating our regular 30-minute NCCC Sprint practice sessions to RTTY beginning at 7:30 PM PST on Friday Dec 26, Thursday, Jan 1, and Friday, Jan 2. And for our EU friends, we're adding practice from 2200Z – 2230Z on Friday Jan 2 (2:30-3:00 pm PST). Work 40M and 80M only. RTTY RU rules, no dupes. There will be no CW Sprint practice sessions these two weeks.

- ◆ Another brief warm-up opportunity is the 3-hour Scandinavian (SARTG) Happy New Year RTTY contest from 0800Z to 1100Z New Years morning (Midnight to 3 am PST). Operate 80M and 40M only. Exchange is RST + QSO number + Happy New Year in your native language (no abbreviations permitted).

Are you one of those who have never been on RTTY? Except for a couple of experimental Qs, just to see how it worked, that was my story until about a year ago.

With a few contests under my belt, I'm beginning to feel comfortable with it. I got started by hosting AE6RF at my station for a Sprint last winter. Donald brought his computer, interface, and rig and hooked up to my antennas. I fed his rig into my amp and tuned it for him, and for about half the time he was operating, looked over his shoulder to learn what he was doing.

How You Can Participate? As with all of our contest activities, there are many ways to participate. You can operate your own station, you can offer to host a guest operator, you can mentor a new operator, and you can share operating time with a guest as part of a multi-op effort.

N6RO is one of several dozen members who took part in our Webinars -- last I heard, Ken's planning to host at least two stations during RTTY RU!

Several of our members are looking for places to operate RTTY RU. Some are very experienced RTTY ops; some may be completely green. Some guys can bring some or all of their own gear; some can help you set up your station for RTTY; some can do either.

Please let me know if you are looking for a station to operate, or if you would like to host another member. If you're a guest, tell me your experience level with RTTY, what

gear you can bring, how far you can travel. If you're a host, tell me your experience level, whether your station is set up for RTTY, and what, if anything, you would like the guest to help you with.

We will NOT have guests call hosts. Hosts will see a list of potential guest ops and have the opportunity to invite them. I'll help facilitate that, with the help our regional coordinators.

Note that a club effort in RTTY RU does NOT benefit from a split site HMO operation like Sweepstakes. This makes it easy for a guest to come in and operate your own rig.

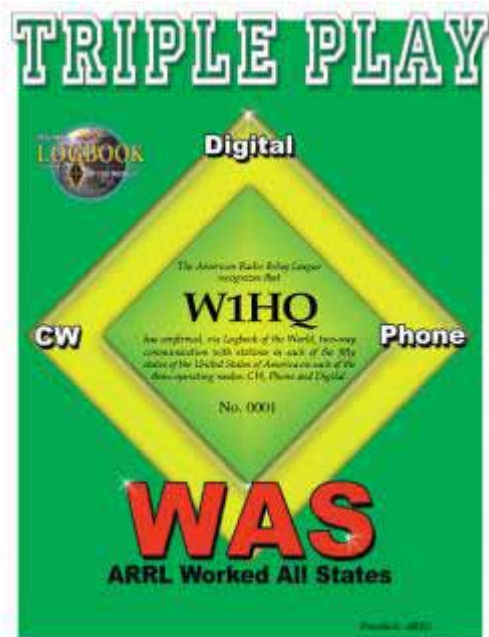
To summarize these action items:

- ◆ Get your station set up and get on the air during one of the practice sessions.
- ◆ Send me email letting us know your plans for RTTY RU. We'll add you to the club team listing on the Members section of the NCCC website. (<http://www.nccc.cc>)
- ◆ Send me email letting us know if you need a place to operate. We'll add you to the listing of guest operators on the Members section of the website. Tell me if you need mentoring, can help the host set up RTTY at his station, and whether you can bring a RTTY rig (rig, computer, and interface) or need to use the host's station.
- ◆ If you think you might like to host a guest (or mentor a new RTTY op) at your station, see the listing on the Members section of the website, and use the Roster to contact them directly. You can also contact me or your Regional Coordinator, and we'll help you select and invite the guest.

ARRL “Triple Play” Award

By: Rob Brownstein, K6RB

In the January issue of QST, Dave Sumner (K1ZZ) announced a new ARRL award in his editorial section of the magazine. It also referenced further details on a later page.



As you can from the award, itself, your goal is to work all 50 states using CW, digital and phone modes. The idea is to get amateurs who are comfortable using one or, maybe, two of these modes to try something new. Sound familiar?

Here's the catch, only QSLs on LOTW are accepted, and only QSOs that occur after January 1, 2009 at 0000Z are qualified. So, it's a level playing field.

For you competitive types, each award is going to be numbered. So, bragging rights go to the ham who snags award number one.

Those of you who did ARRL RU are off to a great start. All the QSOs you made will qualify by date. Using LOTW, you can set up a new WAS Award account and see how you did.

Coming up in quick succession are NAQP

CW, SSB and RTTY. Here's a chance for ambitious award chasers and testers to either lock up an award before the end of January, or put most of the states on the triple-play QSL map.

There's no time limit, so unless you care about your certificate's number, you can go at a leisurely pace. What's nice about it is it doesn't cost you a penny until you've got all your ducks in a row. Then, you pay the usual fee per QSL, and the certificate fee, and you'll have a neat-looking piece of wall paper to hang in your shack.

I set up an RTTY WAS account on Monday morning, January 5th, and I have 47 states confirmed. I also have more than one QSO in each of the three outstanding states, so I should be able to cajole the laggards into posting their RTTY RU logs and getting to first base.

For the last several years, I've become less and less enamored of phone contesting. My hearing is degraded, and I've grown impatient with the noise. But, I may just be convinced to do an NAQP phone shot in a couple of weeks.

What I like about the NAQPs is: the power limit is 100 watts, the time limit is 10 hours out of 12, and they're friendly contests (name and state/province).

So, if you didn't take part in ARRL RTTY RU, you have another chance to get your RTTY spurs on, become part of an NCCC NAQP RTTY team, and fill in the blanks. It's also a good excuse to do a CW and SSB NAQP, too.

I've got over 51,000 QSOs logged in LOTW (I'm a relative newcomer) and about 14,000 QSLs. Yet, I've never paid to certify a single one of them. This may just be my great awakening.



Main Street Singers from Los Altos High School (N6TV photo)



NCCC "gang" at December Holiday Dinner (N6TV photo)

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