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Contest Club



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NCCC - 51 years of Contesting Excellence

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NCCC November ZOOM Meeting
Tuesday, November 16, 2021
6:00-8:30 PM Local Time

"Topband"
Jeff Briggs, VY2ZM/K1ZM

For Details see:

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

President's Report - WD6T

November Superlatives

David A. Jaffe, WD6T

November features both the biggest DX contest of the year (CQ WW) and the biggest domestic contest of the year (ARRL Sweepstakes). As CQ WW was discussed in last month's column, this one focuses on Sweepstakes, which abounds in superlatives.

Sweepstakes was a focus contest for many years at NCCC. Furthermore, for many of us, it was our first contest (well, after getting the bug on Field Day.) Depending on your perspective, it is either the best contest, or the most annoying.

Sweepstakes is also one of the oldest contests. In fact, it actually dates back to 1929, where it was launched as the "January Contest" in Dec. 1929 QST, and lasted a full two weeks. So, if you think Sweepstakes is too long now at 30 hours (of which you can operate 24), be glad they cut it down from its original length!

Another superlative is the Sweepstakes exchange: the longest of any contest (well, unless you include the QTC of the WAE contest.) As such, it requires a great deal of attention to accuracy, as any error loses the QSO. To make it even harder, you can only work stations once, regardless of frequency band, so you can't check the exchange on the second QSO.

Sweepstakes evolved from traffic (message) handling protocol. The exchange looks like the prolog of an ARRL "Radiogram" message. If you think of the exchange as a miniature message, it makes a certain amount of sense, though some of the fields have been repurposed. It includes:



Officers:

President	David Jaffe	WD6T
Vice President /Contest Chair	Andy Faber	AE6Y
Treasurer	Stefan Nikov	AF6SA
Secretary	Gary Johnson	NA6O
Past President	Jack Brindle	W6FB
Director	Roberto Sadkowski	K6KM
Director:	Bob Cox	K3EST
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K6CQP,N6CQP,W6CQP QSL Mgr	Ed Muns	W0YK
NCCC Email reflector Admin	Phil Verinsky	W6PK
Webmaster	John Miller	K6MM
Webinars	Bill Fehring	W9KKN
JUG Editor	Bill Haddon	N6ZFO

Thursday Night Sprint:

The Northern California Contest Club sponsors a Thursday Night Contesting session of thirty minutes duration.

Often, on Fridays prior to a major contest weekend, a special practice session is held.

Generally, on Thursday evenings, a special format is followed, called NS or "NCCC Sprint". The NS began in the summer of 2004 as a snappy, concise contest occurring most Thursday nights, North American time. The power limit is 100 watts. Occasionally multi-week ladder competitions are held. See www.ncccsprint.com for details.

Thursday Night Contesting Director and Founder	Bill, N6ZFO
NCCC CW Sprint	Tom, N3ZZ (initially, Ken N6RO)
NCCC RTTY Sprint	Ken, K6MR
NCCC Sprint Ladder	Bill, N6ZFO
Sprint Web master www.ncccsprint.com	John, K6MM
Ladder Scores Manager	Tim N3QE
Thursday night Contesting Advisory Group:	N6ZFO, Bill (Chair)
	Mark K6UFO, (with W4NZ, N4AF, W9RE, K4BAI, N3BB, VE3YT and W0BH).
The Thursday night NCCC Net	Ken, N6RO



1. Serial Number - originally a message number, now it is the QSO number; so pretty much the same
2. Precedence - originally either "R" (routine), "P" (priority) or "E" (emergency). Now it is the category, which can be "A" (single op low power, unassisted), "B" (single op high power, unassisted), "U" (single op, assisted, aka "unlimited", any power), "Q" (single op QRP, unassisted), "M" (multi-op), or "S" (school station).
3. Your call - originally the station originating the message, now, well... your callsign. Again, pretty much the same.
4. Check - originally the number of words in the message, now it is the last two digits of the year when you first got licensed
5. Section - Originally the place of origin of the message. Now, the ARRL section where you're operating.

Here are a few assorted SS tips:

+ Sweepstakes has more participants than any other domestic contest, but this is offset by the fact that you can only work a station once. By the end of the contest, you are searching around for stations to work. However, if you're doing that, you're not calling CQ, and are missing those who only S&P. Or are you? If you can possibly set up a second radio, even with a compromise antenna, then you can continue calling CQ on one radio while searching for people you haven't yet worked on the other. While this may sound like an advanced technique, by the time the contest is that slow, you are mostly CQ'ing into the void. If you get an answer, you can work the station, then go back to CQ'ing on that radio and searching for people to work on the other radio. Note that the multi-op category in Sweepstakes is unusual in that there is no restriction on band changes. So multi-ops can use two radios without worrying about band change violations.

+ If you are operating with assistance, it is easy to find new stations to work, but it is equally easy for everyone else operating with assistance to find that station, resulting in pileups. Best to either be first, or wait until the pileup dies down. Even if you are not operating assisted, you can often find new stations by their telltale pileups. This trick also works for finding rare mults.

+ Mults are nice, but only if your rate doesn't suffer. What if you need one more mult for a clean sweep? Your rate meter says that one mult is worth 10 Qs and your rate is 30. But you have to spend 1/2 hour getting the mult. NOT WORTH IT. Better to get the 15 QSOs. You will lose the "clean sweep" bragging rights but have a higher score. In addition, the insidious fact is that you don't know in advance if it will take 1/2 hour to get the mult. So you invest time in it, then throw "good time after bad." On the other hand, you don't know if your rate will suddenly dry up. So be flexible.

+ If you are not putting in a full-time effort, you might have more fun focusing on Sunday; that way, you will be "fresh meat" and will have get a lot of callers.

+ If you need a fill of only one piece of information, ask for that, rather than saying AGN? and having to sit through the whole story. On the other hand, some operators seem to get confused when you ask for PREC? or CK?, in which case you're stuck saying AGN?

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+ Working QRP stations often results in losing your frequency. If someone jumps in with "QRL?" (hopefully, they do that), best to respond instantly, even if you have to ask for another fill from Mr. QRP. Otherwise, you'll have even more trouble on your hands when you have to find a new frequency.

+ Be careful of pre-fills, as some devious operators take a perverse pleasure in changing their check (nobody actually checks if the check is really when you first got your license.)

Sweepstakes is not everyone's cup of tea. Luckily there are other tasty beverages to be had this month, including JIDX Phone and CQ WW CW. So whatever poison you chose, go forth and get multipliers!



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November 2021 VP/CC Report

Andy Faber, AE6Y/P49Y

Post-CQP Thoughts Last month I offered up some ruminations on the upcoming CQP, but since it's no longer upcoming and now is in our rear-view mirrors, I thought I'd share some thoughts about the 2021 version of the greatest State QSP Party of them all.

First of all, a great shout out is due to Dean, N6DE, and everyone else who helped him organize, promote, and run this year's contest. There were substantial rules changes this year that, although not without controversy, were the result of serious deliberation and solicitation of viewpoints from participants and interested parties. The website has been upgraded with lots of very helpful information, some of which I highlighted in last month's column. And finally, they really beat the bushes for participation, with the result that all 58 counties were on the air and many in-state stations managed a clean sweep as well.

Here are some observations from my own operation from my home station. One aspect of all longer contests that I have noticed over the years is that nearly all such contests have their ups and downs: times when (a) there's good rate, or interesting mults, or unusual propagation such that operating is just a pleasure, or (b) the rate slows, or you can't find a good frequency, or when no one seems to hear you, or you are running and you just spent minutes trying to understand the call and exchange of a very weak station, and it turns out to be a dupe! And you just want to pack it all in and go have a drink, or a nap, or be just about anywhere except in front of the radio for another 12 hours.

CQP is no exception, though I only notice a slowdown typically on Sunday morning. From my perspective, here are some of the highlights.

Mults seemed plentiful, and I had my fastest sweep ever. As I noted in my 3830 writeup: I was feeling good in the first hour when VY1CO called in on 20 CW. Oddly, my last three mults were MR, WA and NH. When Club member AE6JV in NH called for NH on 20 CW, I think I surprised him at my joy in making the sweep, all in the first four hours of the contest. I was so pleased, I used the excuse to take a short lunch break and exult to the XYL, then went to 20 phone, and immediately got called by Bill again and could thank him properly. Actually, of course, all three of these were plentiful in the contest (my log shows 8 MR contacts, 49 WA, and 17 NH). But I don't think a sweep has ever come my way in the first four hours before. And, of course, there are years when making a sweep becomes a cliff hanger, and years when one has to be satisfied with 57. It was great to work David, VY1XY, Scott, VY1CO and Garth, VE8NSD in the normally elusive NT section. And amazingly, no fewer than 16 VE6 Qs made it into the log.

There was abundant out-of-state participation. My five most worked mults were PA (88 QSOs), OH (89), IL (96), TX (98), and ON (an astonishing 125). The least worked were five QSOs with AL, AK, QC, and NT, four with RI, and three with SD.

It was really nice to have 15 meters back. That band was open for many hours both days. Fortunately, it enabled hours of dual cq-ing on 20 and 15. I did quite a bit of that, and you can see from his rate sheet (and I could tell by hearing him on the second radio) that N6TV spent many hours so engaged, particularly in the slow hours on Sunday. In fact, N6ED com-

mented on this, saying in his 3830 post: "I did the N6TV "ALL CW" effort and I have a MUCH deeper appreciation of what he does each year. The well was dry on day 2 and it felt just like the Sunday slog of SS. I really missed the 2nd radio as that would have definitely helped. I now know why I like the mixed mode aspect of this contest, because when the CW bands slow, the SSB feast is always there to wake you up!"

One marker of the improving conditions is the number of Non-W/VE QSOs. Last year the number was 26, and this year 58. OTOH, in 2014 the number was 224. I was operating from K6TA/K6KO's great station in Amador County that year, but the difference is only minimally due to the difference in stations. Location does make a difference though: this year one of the really nice aspects of the contest was to receive very high numbers from Bob, K6XX during the contest, and to see what a FB score he posted from a makeshift station at his old Santa Cruz QTH. And, on the theme of working DX, on Sunday morning, when CQing on 20 and tuning around with the second radio on 15 phone, I did come across him working EU DX that I literally could not hear – even at ESP levels.

Speaking of the phone/cw split, it is notable to look at Marko, N5ZO's post for his NT6Q operation. Last year he set a low power record by spending 70% of his time on CW. This year he doubled down and spent only 25% of his time on phone. I probably should have done the same. I spent 8 ¼ hours on phone, and note that overall my phone rate was 95 QSOs/hour. The CW rate was 90 per hour. Although that lead to disparate points/hour totals of 268 on CW and 188 on phone, I have to agree with N6ED: it was pleasant to go on phone and be able to say hello to friends, thank guys for contacts, and escape the boredom of endlessly CQ'ing on CW with low Sunday rates. But, clearly with this points differential, emphasizing phone is not the way to go, unless you have such a good signal that your phone rates can be considerably higher than CW rates.

So hat's off to Dean, N6DE, and to all his unpaid volunteers that put in the endless hours of work to make CQP a success. Here's a pome about that:

In Praise of N6DE and his Gang

**As State QSO Parties go
CA's is the best in the show.
Dean's group gets our praises,
Let's give them all raises.
Their efforts make CQP flow!**

SPRINT SSB

Sprint SSB has come and gone, and the Club seems to have notched another team victory. I've enjoyed this contest greatly in recent years. It has generally lagged in popularity behind the CW version, which has always appealed to a cadre of dedicated CW operators. But a few years ago it split off from the NCJ sponsorship and was taken over mostly by Bob, KW8N, who is often a winner as well. Since then, it tends to have less total participation than CW, i.e., fewer QSOs per participant, but higher mult counts (often over 50), whereas in CW mults are usually in the 40s.

Anyway, I was very sorry to have to miss it this year, as this column is being written from Seaside, Oregon, a small coastal resort about 80 miles west of Portland, where one of our daughters and her husband now live. The other daughter and her family are in Portland; the purpose of the trip was to have a birthday weekend as my grandson (turning 10) and I share a birthday, the party for which just happened to be on the same day as the Sprint. So, much as I enjoy radio contesting and Sprints, I had to admit that a celebratory weekend with family trumped the desire to heat up the ether for four hours.

From reading 3830 reports, it seems that this was a very interesting contest, with the Midwest and East Coast left with poor propagation on 20, fair on 40, and good on 80, while West Coasters had reasonable prop on 20 and 40, and poor on 80. The net result was higher West Coast scores, and our teams, organized by Pres, Dave, WD6T, were able to take advantage of the fluke of propagation and narrowly edge out the SE Sprint Coalition for a team victory. Big congratulations to WD6T, W1SRD, N3ZZ, W6SX and K6GHA! And in the top ten, the 3830 results show Dave, WD6T, in second place, just behind leader K7RL, with Steve, W1SRD, in sixth place.

I think this unusual event shows one of the prime reasons we keep coming back to a contest year after year: you just never know what propagation will be like, or who in the competition will show up, have an equipment malfunction, get sick, etc. Every contest is unique – sometimes to your advantage and sometimes not.

Sweepstakes

See the Pres's column for some trenchant comments on Sweepstakes. This is another contest with which I have a love-hate relationship. Love in that I've been doing it off and going on 55 years now. I do enjoy being part of a team (lately, PL259, since NCCC hasn't been prioritizing SS for several years). And I really enjoy trying to get an unassisted sweep. That is usually pretty iffy and not always straightforward or even possible to do, but it gives a good excuse to stay awake and be tuning around on the second radio while CQing on the primary rig, and also for trying to use some strategic thinking as to where oddball mults like VY1, VO1, AK, etc., might be hanging out.

OTOH, Sunday in SS can be a phenomenal waste of electric power, sending endless CQs out into the ionosphere hoping that someone, anyone....even a dupe to keep you awake... will respond. Because you can't work a station more than once in the contest, unlike virtually all other contests in which multiple contacts are encouraged, it can get very lonely on Sunday, particularly on CW.

Speaking of dupes, though the normal advice is to work and log them, in SS sometimes that can be counterproductive. Few things are more frustrating than working hard with numerous repeats to get a full exchange for a weak station, then correcting the call and finding out that after all that effort it's a dupe! Not to mention fighting off guys who send a quick QRL? then immediately jump in to take the frequency while the other station is transmitting but can barely be heard.

SS could benefit mightily from a 12-hour category. In fact, the last time we concentrated on it as a club, we encouraged HMOs ("highly motivated operators") to swap stations on Sunday. This makes you "fresh meat", as you must use a different call, and keeps Sunday interesting, as well as giving a serious operator a higher aggregate score. I remember doing that at Rick, N6XI's, place and was so pleased to get a sweep in my Sunday operation from his station.

ARRL 10M. Although not an official focus contest, it turns out that the Club did very well last year in this one. In fact, with 41 entries, we won the Medium Club Category. I note that last weekend in CQWW Phone, 10m was BACK! Some stations reported 3, 4, or even 5 kilocontacts on the band. ARRL 10M Scores were much higher in general in 2020 versus 2019. So if the 10m contest has anything like the condx that prevailed in CQWW, it will be a lot of fun. It's mixed mode, and mults includes states, province, and countries, so it should be well worth your while to check it out this year.

Upcoming contests

Nov 6-8 ARRL Sweepstakes CW
Nov. 13-14 WAE DX RTTY
Nov. 13-14 JIDX Phone
Nov. 20-22 ARRL Sweepstakes Phone
Nov. 27-28 CQWW DX CW
Dec. 3-5 ARRL 160m Contest
Dec. 11-12 ARRL 10m Contest
Dec. 31- Jan. 1 SKN (not really a contest, but a chance to limber up the old J-38 or Vibroplex original and try to send by hand like in the old days).

K6SRZ, Alan Eshelman. The NCCC JUG, on behalf of all NCCC members, extends deepest condolences and sympathies to Alan, K6SRZ on the mid-October passing of his life companion Carol, following a difficult arterial surgery. For fifty-five years Carol provided ethereal support to Alan's ham radio interests. . Enduring and supporting endless hours of Alan hunched over the radio making contest QSO's, traveling on expeditions near and far, and serving NCCC in many capacities. Carol must have experienced multiple random wires strung around the property and towers full of beams, probably sometimes crashing in the night, but all that time supported Alan and his interests. If ever there was a wife deserving a thousand gold stars, it is Carol. Within NCCC Alan served as president, 2013, as CQP chair, as Vp/Cc (2007), and multiple times as Director on the NCCC Board. He was the first winner of the new KB Competition. On a personal note, I first worked Alan in the 1959 ARRL CW Sweepstakes, then two grueling weekends, while we were both in High School, Alan at Tamalpais High in Mill Valley and me at Drew High School in the city. Little homework was done on those weekends. I shared Field Day operations with Alan with the East Bay ARC several times in the 1990's at Martin Luther King Park in Berkeley. Late at night, with rates plunging, Alan would step in to provide relief. Rates would immediately rise, attesting to his excellence in CW operating. I could never figure out how he did it. [Bill N6ZFO JUG Editor]

JAMES W. ABRAHAM, W6EB SK

Ed Radlo, AJ6V



NCCC member Jim Abraham W6EB became a Silent Key on October 14, 2021 at the age of 78, after fighting a long illness. He leaves behind his XYL Siren, and his three children, Christine, Robbie, and Jan. Jim was a devoted family man; his family was a great source of strength to him.

Jim was an Amateur Extra Class licensee. His former callsign was W6JWA, after his initials. He was also a member of Pizza Lovers 259 and the NXDXC, under whose auspices he managed the raffle at the Visalia convention for many years.

For the past two decades, Jim was an active member of the Los Altos Hills Emergency Communications Committee, an official town committee. In that capacity, he was instrumental in bringing into being the town's two meter repeater, W6LAH. In order to accomplish that, Jim had to deal with the stringent requirements of NARCC (Northern Amateur Relay Council of California) as well as with the technical issues. As one might surmise from its very name, Los Altos Hills has many hills. A corollary to that is that Los Altos Hills has lots of valleys. Before the installation of W6LAH, it was difficult if not impossible for a ham in one valley to communicate with a ham in even an adjacent valley on two meters, the most popular band for emergency communications. The W6LAH repeater fixed all that.

Jim was also active in several other town committees, and served on the Los Altos Hills Planning Commission for several years. In recognition of his outstanding service to his community, Jim was an honored recipient of the Joint Los Altos-Los Altos Hills Community Service Award.

Jim had purchased a KB HF antenna system, but never got it off the ground, due to the complaints of one neighbor who considered Jim's proposed tower to be less than aesthetically pleasing. As a result, Jim had to be content with using low dipoles on HF.

Jim's principal career before he retired was as a pilot for Pan American World Airways. Jim piloted Boeing 747's to many places in the world, and in the process, learned a great deal about many exotic places. He had a keen interest in the politics and culture of many countries, including, of course, his own. Jim also did a stint as an electronics technician for the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center.

Jim was very generous with his time, helping fellow hams with their antennas and amplifiers, and, in the case of Tom NW6P, built Tom's K3 from the kit version and helped Tom recover from his stroke by employing CW therapy, as Tom has chronicled in a previous edition of this journal.

Big Jim, we will miss you. RIP, OM.

Worked All CA Counties Award– WACC
Musings from CQP logs on a stormy day.
Fred, K6DGW, Awards Manager for the CQP

Our Worked All California Counties award is currently at 79 awards issued which seems a little puny considering the 30+ years it has been around. #77 went to Jim Stockwell, W6KC, on 26 Sep, #78 to Bob Olsen, W6BO, on 6 Oct, and #79 to Robert, KC6AWX on 31 Oct. Jim is the first to achieve the award twice under two different calls [also #76 as W6ML], and Bob's operation was the first from a CQP multi with W6BO, K6EI, and W6ESL. Perhaps WACC could benefit from a little more robust marketing? ... more on that later.

If you're looking for California counties, they'll all be available on the first full weekend in October, and, since the logs have been in standard machine readable format for 15 years and nearly all CA stations submit their log, all it takes is the collected logs and a "few lines of code" to verify WACC without the bother of QSL cards. Indeed, most of the recent WACC awards have been verified from CQP logs.

The collected logs begin with 2006, about the time CQP logs became pretty much all Cabrillo. Prior to that the formats varied, and since I was responsible for those "few lines of code," I decided not to wrestle with the earlier logs. It currently extends to 2020, I'll add 2021 when it's available following adjudication around the end of the year from Tom, NS6T.

YEAR	#LOGS	CALLS	CAstn
----	----	----	----
2006	601	9632	211
2007	627	9158	253
2008	690	9078	269
2009	814	11530	274
2010	892	11304	303
2011	995	12888	368
2012	846	11597	313
2013	835	11382	324
2014	969	13706	347
2015	994	9650	347
2016	934	9538	336
2017	913	9696	348
2018	908	8656	306
2019	919	8576	295
2020	1355	9189	440

The database for the 15 years has just over 3.6 million QSO's, and consumes about 232.5 MB. I started wondering if there was any useful CQP information or factoids buried in it so I poked around in it the other day while it rained and snowed.

The table at the left was the result of my first peek inside all those Q's. LOGS is the number of submitted logs, CALLS is the number of distinct calls in those logs, both in-state and out-of-state, and CAstns is the number of CA stations [i.e. number of stations sending a CA county in their exchange] for each year.

First off, it's apparent that the number of logs submitted has been rising. It took a little jump in 2009 which might be attributable to the approaching Cycle 24 maximum ... or not, it might just reflect an increasing interest in contesting over the last decade and a half. I believe the large jump in 2020 is the result of the SARS-Cov-9 pandemic when everyone was stuck at home with nothing to do so "Let's get into the CQP." Anyway, that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

For the number of distinct calls, there's again a small "bulge" around the Cycle 24 maximum. I guess folks got pretty tired of the poor band conditions during the preceding and following minimums, and I'm sticking with that explanation too. I wonder how these totals stack up with other popular state and regional contests such

Submitted logs and number of calls in CQP for 2006-2020.

as GA, TX, and NEQP?

I thought the CA stns data was interesting. In practically all QSO Parties where I'm out-of-state, if I can find 30 stations to work it's a really good day!

Generally, I'll work maybe 15-25 and chase one or two mobiles around. I've tried the DEQP several times as a personal challenge and I have yet to work all three [3] Delaware counties in a single contest. I also have yet to work more than 8 DE stations in a single contest.

The 3.6 million QSO's are 50.7% CW, 49.3% SSB. That surprised me a little, a number of the logs each year are large and CW-only, and I would have guessed that the 3/2 point ratio in the rules would have argued in favor of more CW. In the multi-singles I participated in at Alpine County in 2006-2012, we were more in the 65%/35% range between the modes, and we had one year where we got very little traction on SSB at all.

So, what about clean sweeps? These would all be eligible for a WACC award, and I was a little surprised at the numbers. The following table presents the number of non-CA stations who worked all 58 counties. More on this below.

YEAR	NonCA SWEEPS	CA SWEEPS	
2006	29	26	The first noticeable tidbit is that 2009 must have been a great year to work California! We did have about 2,500 more call signs on the air in 2009, 2010, and 2011, corresponding to the Cycle 24 peak, but then, correlation does not imply cause, and weak correlation implies even less.
2007	26	28	
2008	23	27	
2009	45	46	Then it got to be 2012 and all the years since, and the number of "58's" dropped to less than half the mean of the preceding 3 years yet the number of distinct stations in the contest continued gently rising. I don't have a ready explanation for that.
2010	36	44	
2011	30	35	Clearly, it helps a great deal that CQP manages to get all 58 counties active, many with multiple stations [e.g. SCLA, LANG, SDIE]. Maybe equally or more important, most of the CA stations are fixed – either at home or on an expedition -- full-time or close to it, and running high power with pretty good antennas.
2012	14	25	
2013	14	26	
2014	23	32	Then there are the multiplier rules. Unlike a number of other state contests, CQP subscribes to the "Same number of multipliers for everyone" rule. Ohio, as a counterexample, uses the 88 Ohio counties for out-of-state multipliers. In-state stations use 49 US states [excluding OH], the Canadian provinces, <u>plus the 88 OH counties plus the first DX</u> . "Scores are reported separately, so what's the problem?" I hear you ask. Well, all those additional multipliers encourage the OH stations to QSY to 40 and even 80 well before the sun has set out here on the western frontier. We're already multiplier poor since they never get close to getting all 88 counties on the air, and then 20/15 go dead while all the Ohioans are madly working each other on 40/80
2015	14	26	
2016	16	17	
2017	10	16	
2018	11	28	
2019	12	29	
2020	14	19	

which aren't open for us yet.

In many years, it is usually true in CQP that you have to find the one each ALPI, DELN, or MODO stations for your sweep. But at N6A [ALPI], we were also QRV for the entire contest, with high power, and with decent antennas and typically logged 1,200 – 1,600 QSO's, so you had a lot of time, bands, and two modes in which to find us.

A great number of other QSO Parties rely heavily on mobiles. I enjoy chasing the mobiles in the TXQP and GAQP ... for awhile ... but Texas has 254 counties, Georgia has 159, and many of them will never be activated, mobiles or not, so the concept of a sweep is a non-starter. And, having worked a mobile in one county, I'll have to wait for quite awhile until they reach the next one, making for a slow-rate contest.

Finally, CQP offers exactly two modes. Adding RTTY has been discussed, but there's the practical problem for all the expeditions in that it requires more equipment and software in already physically challenging environments, and the conclusion has always been, "stick to CW and SSB." Adding modes/bands also tends to dilute the number of in-state stations to be worked on any given mode/band.

The recent NVQP is probably a great example. Any mode was permissible ... presumably even blinking flashlight ... oh wait, that would be CW? Any band, repeaters OK, and even QSO paths that included the Internet. There was an FT<mumble> mode category. There are around 8,000 Nevada ham licensees in the FCC's ULS, a sizable fraction of whom are likely SK, inactive, or not on HF. Nevada has 17 counties, 16 real ones and an independent capital city which is treated as a county, and many of those 17 are really sparsely populated – Esmerelda County is home to about 750 souls and 33 hams according to Wikipedia and QRZ.com, all of whom reside in either Goldfield or Dyer, likely because Goldfield and Dyer are about the only places to reside in in Esmerelda County. And, other than Storey and Douglas, NV counties are also geographically large making for a long time between counties for mobiles.

CQP is the premier state QSO Party, it appears for good reasons, and population is not the only one. Activation of all 58 counties, use of expeditions [QRO, full-time, good antennas] rather than a few mobiles racing through multiple counties with short windows for Q's, and two eligible modes. Oh yes, and bottles of wine as awards!

Non-CA		So just who are the 317 out-of-staters who, have managed to work all 58 CA counties in one or more CQP's? Many are the usual suspects you would expect and many have done it more than once in a single year. The table at left shows all the stations over 15 years who have achieved 3 or more 58-county single-year sweeps. I don't have room for a table that includes all of them. Many CA stations do work all the counties on Saturday evening/night, Having pulled the mid-shift at N6A on CW several times in the past, I'd get to the point where any Q, multiplier or not, was better than a zero rate trying to run.

AA3B	3	
K0HC	5	
K0OU	4	
K2SSS	3	
K4BAI	6	
K5TR	4	Over the time I've been the WACC Admin Dude, we've leveraged the CQP log database to simplify the QSO verification process. Just ask me in an email and I'll tell you how many counties we can confirm for you. If it's 58, my answer will include your award certificate as a hi-res JPEG and a coveted entry in the WACC Notebook. I'll print it on photo paper and mail it if you really want me to.
K7SV	3	
K9CT	6	
KE1B	3	
KH6LC	5	Around 2008, we had a discussion on whether we should just issue certificates to those with a CQP-sweep along with any scoring plaques, bottles, and certificates. At that time, QSL's were the only means for QSO verification and the general feeling was that automatically issuing an award without an application was not a good idea, and it sort of "cheapened" the award in the view of a few. We've pretty much done away with the Award Application form, although I do still get them occasionally.
K07C	4	
KU5B	3	
N1CC	3	
N2MM	6	
N4OX	6	Since now that we're sort of already doing something very close to that for the award, we have an opportunity to rethink that. It doesn't take long to mark up the certificate, and while I still keep the handwritten log book to preserve the history continuity, I can tweak that process a bit too. I once received an unsolicited "Mackinac" certificate [a photo of the bridge] in the MIQP one year for somehow working the stations to spell it – similar to "SEQUOIA." I was surprised and thought it was sort of cool.
N4PN	11	
N4ZZ	5	
N5JB	7	
N7MZW	3	
N8BJQ	5	Or, maybe it's not time to make the award automatic with CQP sweeps.
NF4A	3	
NR5M	3	I've also discovered that there are a number of web-based catalogs of available awards and WACC is not on any that I've looked at. Let's include the pros and cons of a little more marketing of our award in any discussions.
NS9I	3	
VA3DF	3	
VA7RR	3	
VA3KZ	8	Meanwhile, you can just send me an email and I'll check your status for you. In case you're wondering, K6XX has achieved a sweep in 11 of the last 15 CQP's, and a number of others are in the 8-9 range [see AE6Y et al].
VE4YU	3	
W0BH	6	
W1UE	9	73,
W7GKF	6	
WA1FCN	3	Fred ["Skip"] K6DGW
WA3HAE	3	WACC Admin Dude
WD5K	6	

Point Generator Profile

Bob Frostholt, KO6LU

Interviewed by Bob, W1RH

Last month's NCCC Jug had a really nice article authored by Gary, NA6O, and Jug editor, Bill, N6ZFO. The article was about the long-standing NCCC 5-Meg Award and mentioned Bob, KO6LU, as the most recent recipient of this great award.

In the Jug article, it was mentioned that Bob was our featured Point Generator in the January, 2016 addition of the Jug. In May, of 2016, I also recalled posting a picture Bob's novice QSL card, which I had found in a stack of my old WN6EUQ novice cards (yes, KB'ers, I once held the call sign, WN6EUQ/WB6EUQ).

All of this had me thinking; why not see what Bob has been up to in the past 5 and a half years. As a result, his updated profile is below, along with a nice picture of his updated shack, which includes a fine new amp.

Name/Call Sign: Bob Frostholt KO6LU (Advanced Class)

Past calls: WA6BVP, WB5GCS, WB6FPP, WN6FPP

Location: Mountain View, CA

How much property do you have? Typical postage stamp lot: 10,000 sq ft

Describe your antenna system: Roof mounted Cushcraft R9 Vertical.

History: My interest in Amateur Radio began in 1959 in Oakland, California, when I listened to my uncle, Carroll Steffen, K6AY, carry on conversations with family members while copying cw in his head at some unbelievable speed that left the dots and dashes indistinguishable to the casual observer. I was fascinated by this skill and would often play with a simple code practice oscillator, trying to imitate him. Sensing my interest, he gifted to me an old Navy BC348R HF receiver that served two purposes. It solidified my interest in amateur radio and kept me away from the television set. While the rest of the family watched the Ed Sullivan Show, I was listening to hams around the world exchange signal reports.

In 1963 I passed my Novice exam as WN6FPP. As an only child, raised by a widowed mother, I had to work for spending money. I had saved money from my three Oakland Tribune paper routes (I had hike it because the hills were too steep to use a bicycle in the Montclair District) to buy an EICO 723 transmitter (featured later in the March 2001 QST) to go with the Navy receiver, and within the allotted year, I advanced to General Class as WB6FPP. With the help of some high school electronics classes, I moved up to Advanced Class a year later, where I remain today. Never could get to that 20wpm for AE status back then and now I'm just too lazy. (I'm hoping that maybe someday they'll grandfather those of us who've been licensed for 50+ years...but I'm not holding my breath)

Throughout the 1960s, I chased DX and collected Certificates/Awards and piece by piece upgraded the shack to include Heathkit SB200, SB300, and SB400 all of which I build from kit. During my last year of college (SF State), I traded the Heathkit gear for a Swan 500, which conveniently replaced the glove box in my 1969 Ford Mustang.

In 1972, I moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, at the behest of my employer and became WB5GSC for a little over a year, then back to California as WA6BVP (in those days you had to have a call reflecting your location). Although inactive since the move to New Mexico, I kept the license up to date, and in the early 1990s took the opportunity to get shorter call sign (KO6LU). Along the way, I had donated the Swan to a local high school radio club. In late 1999, after a successful Hi-Tech M&A Transaction, I decided to retire (that only lasted about 6 months) and become active again. Upon investigating the array of radios available, I found myself facing new brands I'd never heard of and unable to find modern equipment from the old familiar brands like Drake, Collins, Halicrafters, Viking, Heath, National, and Swan with which I was familiar. Somewhere along the way, they were all displaced with names like iCOM, TenTec, Kenwood, and Yaesu.

In short order, I was on the air with an iCOM 775DSP and Cushcraft R-6000 vertical (replaced in 2011 with an R7 and (upgraded with an add-on kit to an R9 in 2015), chasing DX and wondering why I had waited so long to get back into the greatest hobby ever...meeting people.

In 2003 I got hooked on contesting and after turning in a respectable score for CQP, was invited to join the Northern California Contest Club. I don't attend the meetings but appreciate the wealth of knowledge that comes across the reflector.

Future:

What's in your shack? Minimal gear. Currently I have a Kenwood TS990 and an Elecraft KPA1500 Amplifier. The R9 antenna is power limited so I only run 500W. I'm waiting for someone to invent a non-obtrusive all band antenna with full legal limit capabilities.

If you're working, what is your career? If not, what was your career?

After graduating with an engineering degree, I took a job with GTE Lenkurt in San Carlos. I was a field applications engineer, bouncing around the country from hotel to hotel for a little over a year, then back to San Carlos as a project engineer and later I was transferred to Albuquerque to teach in their customer training school. But I missed California and soon found myself back in the Bay Area in the semiconductor industry. My IC career (all of it in Analog) began in 1972,. My first job was to bring the NE555 timer to market for Signetics. There's a full career profile on LinkedIn. Currently, I am a Co-Founder/ CMO for a small Analog full service fabless semiconductor company called Javelin ASIC Devices in Los Altos.

Family? I am married (since 1981) and have 3 sons...Oldest is a contract industrial designer/stay at home dad (he has an autistic son) in Novato. Middle son is a 6th grade science teacher in Tacoma WA, and youngest is a failure analysis manager at Covalent Metrology Services in Sunnyvale.

How many DXCC entities have you worked? Since re-entering the amateur radio realm in 1999, I have worked 234 DXCC entities and have all 234 are confirmed. I have 8 Band WAS (need 3 states on 6m for 9B), also have WAZ, 200 IOTAs, Triple Play, and a certificate from the Navy for my contacting ships in Southeast Asia during the war (late 60s) and running hundreds of phone patches (who remembers those?)

What's your favorite contest? I like WPX because a prefix like KO6 offers a small station like me a slight advantage... if they can hear me...and more importantly, if I can hear them.

Any tips for testers? Just have fun and don't be intimidated when your score is just a few thousand points and the reflector shows a couple of dozen members posting half a million points.

I'm a casual tester...never expect to win anything...just do it for fun. I get excited when I achieve a personal best in contest I've done in prior years. The nice thing about NCCC is that I can operate at my own pace without peer pressure for "more". It took me 18 years to get the 5MEG award! Is there a 10MEG award? I probably won't live long enough for that... maybe we need an endorsement for each additional 1 MEG.

Any other hobbies besides ham radio? You might say my career is a hobby...It is soooooo much fun working for my own company. I've done the Philips, Fairchild, National, Siliconix big Semiconductor company thing and I've been with many ventured funded start-ups and I can assure you, it's great to be away from all the politics.

In my spare time, I go in the garage to my workshop and play with sharp objects. If you ask me what I make, I'd say cabinetry, custom furniture, outdoor decking, etc. but the real answer is that mostly I make sawdust.

My other hobby is screenwriting: www.robertchristianfrostholm.com I've actually won a few writing awards.



An old "KO6LU" QSL unearthed by W1RH.



Bob, KO6LU, Proudly sitting at his well Organized station. Note the new KPA-1500 atop the transceiver. That interesting figure to the left of the plaque display could be inspiring, motivating or frightening.



KO6LU's multi-band Vertical. A beautiful, clean installation that should make any XYL happy.



An older version of the KO6LU contest shack.

Tube Of The Month

7092 – TB5/2500

Norm, N6JV

When the **7092** was introduced in 1959, it was promoted as the world's most compact radiation-cooled high-powered industrial tube. At 10 inches tall and 6 inches in diameter, it is an impressive tube and the square shaped plate is a seldom seen feature. It was made in Europe for use in RF-industrial heating and ultrasonic oscillators and amplifiers. Its filament requires 6.3 volts at 32.5 amps and the maximum dissipation is 800 watts. The amplification factor is 22 and it can operate up to 50 MHz. It can use plate voltages as high as 7000. The TB5/2500 designation is a code commonly used in Europe. This code can easily be translated to give us conservative ratings. The "T" stands for a triode. A "Q" would mean a tetrode. The "B" indicates a thoriated tungsten filament and the "5" is plate kilovolts. The 2500 indicates output watts in class C telegraphy.

The 7092 was made for some decades. Amperex in France supplies a very complete data sheet for this tube. Because the tube was made for industrial purposes that do not require that the DC voltages be filtered, the data is separated into sections for use with unfiltered single-phase supplies and unfiltered 3 phase supplies. I am unsure what the ratings would be if a filtered DC supply was used, but I would guess that 4 to 5 KV should perform well in a ham amplifier. The only mechanical problem is the base that requires cable clamp type attachments on the electrodes especially for the filaments running at 32.5 amps.



The 7092 Triode

Dimensions 10 x 6 inches. Note unusual square plate.

Ed. Note: This tube (1980's, used) has been advertised for sale at tubesocketvintagego.com for \$900.



NCCC Membership Information

If you wish to join NCCC, please fill out an [application for membership](#), which will be read and voted upon at our monthly meeting.

To join, you must reside within [club territory](#) which is defined as the maximum of:

- Northern California, anything north of the Tehachapi's up to the Oregon border, and
- A part of north-western Nevada (anything within our ARRL 175-mile radius circle centered at 10 miles North of Auburn on Highway 49).

Life Memberships.— \$250.00 Contact secretary.nccc@gmail.com. The 80/20 Rule: Members who have reached 80 years of age have and been a NCCC Member for 20 years are eligible for Honorary life membership. Contact secretary.nccc@gmail.com

JUG Articles Wanted!

Your help allows us to produce a quality newsletter. Please consider submitting an article!

The editor welcomes any and all relevant articles for inclusion in the JUG.

The preferred format is MS Word (.doc or .docx), Arial 11 point. Indicate the insertion point and title of diagrams and pictures in the text and attach photos separately. Pictures should be full resolution. Avoid PDF files and email text. Please contact us if that's your only format.

Send material to Bill, N6ZFO at n6zfo@arrl.net 415 209-3084

Northern California Contest Club Reflector—Guidelines

The NCCC reflector is devoted to the discussion of contesting.

Topics include, for example, contests, station building, dx-peditions, technical questions, contesting questions, amateur radio equipment wants/sales, score posting, amateur radio meetings/conventions, and membership achievements.

Postings may not include personal attacks, politics, or off-subject posts. Such postings will be considered a violation of the Guidelines.



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KENWOOD



TS-590SG
HF/50MHz Transceiver



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2M/440 Dualband



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TM-281A
2 Mtr Mobile



TH-D74A
2M/220/440 HT

YAESU
The radio



FT-991A
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K4 HIGH-PERFORMANCE DIRECT SAMPLING SDR



A direct-sampling SDR you'll love to use

Our new K4 transceiver harnesses advanced signal processing while retaining the best aspects of the K3S and P3. It features a 7" touch display, plus a rich set of dedicated controls. Per-VFO transmit metering makes split mode foolproof. Band-stacking registers and per-receiver settings are versatile and intuitive. Control usage information is just one tap away thanks to a built-in help system.

Modular, hybrid architecture adapts to your needs

The basic K4 covers 160-6 m, with dual receive on the same or different bands. The K4D adds diversity receive, with a full set of band-pass filters for the second receiver. (Thanks to direct RF sampling, there's no need for crystal filters in either the K4 or K4D.) The K4HD adds a dual superhet module for extreme-signal environments. Any K4 model can be upgraded to the next level, and future enhancements—such as a planned internal VHF/UHF module—can be added as needed.

Single or dual panadapter, plus a high-resolution tuning aid

The main panadapter can be set up as single or dual. Separate from the main panadapter is our per-receiver *mini-pan* tuning aid, with a resampled bandwidth as narrow as +/- 1 kHz. You can turn it on by tapping either receiver's S-meter or by tapping on a signal of interest, then easily auto-spot or fine tune to the signal.

Comprehensive I/O, plus full remote control

The K4's rear panel includes all the analog and digital I/O you'll ever need. All K-line accessories are supported, including amps, ATUs, and our K-Pod controller. The Video output can mirror the K4 screen or display a high-res Panadapter only screen. Via Ethernet, the K4 can be 100% remote controlled from a PC, notebook, tablet, or even another K4, with panadapter data included in all remote displays. Work the world from anywhere—in style!

K4 KEY FEATURES

Optimized for ease of use

Modular, upgradeable design

7" color screen with touch and mouse control

ATU with 10:1+ range, 3 antenna jacks

Up to 5 receive antenna sources

Full remote control via Ethernet



The K4 interfaces seamlessly with the KPA500 and KPA1500 amplifiers

'The performance of their products is only eclipsed by their service and support. Truly amazing!' Joe - W1G0

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NCCC Lands' End Store

We are pleased to announce that the new NCCC Land's End store is online! You can choose from an array of shirts, jackets, and hats and apply your choice of custom-embroidered NCCC logos: A plain one, or one that also says Fifty Years.

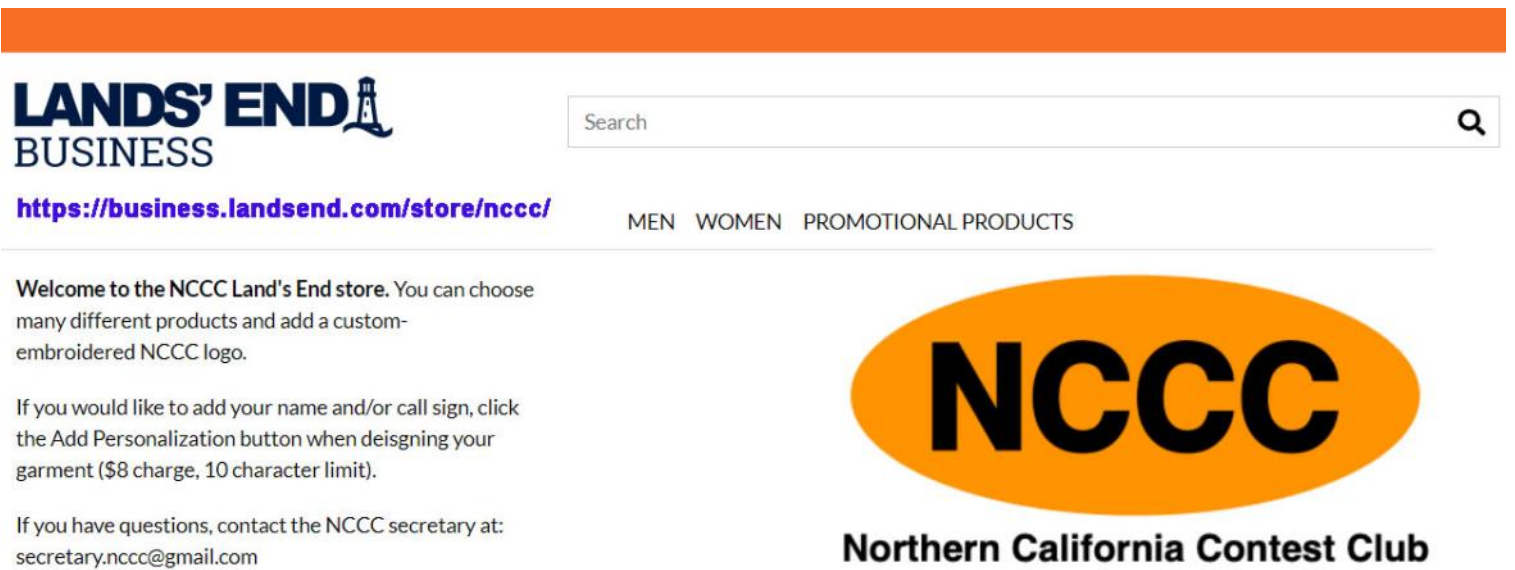
And, you can personalize your item by adding your name and/or call sign. The store is open 24/7 and items are shipped directly to you. No more waiting for everyone else to make up their minds on a group purchase.

Go to <https://business.landsend.com/store/nccc/>

It's easy to use.

From nccc.cc: <http://nccc.cc/members/lestore.html>

Thanks to W6TCP for helping to set this up.



LANDS' END BUSINESS

<https://business.landsend.com/store/nccc/>

MEN WOMEN PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

Welcome to the NCCC Land's End store. You can choose many different products and add a custom-embroidered NCCC logo.

If you would like to add your name and/or call sign, click the Add Personalization button when designing your garment (\$8 charge, 10 character limit).

If you have questions, contact the NCCC secretary at: secretary.nccc@gmail.com

NCCC

Northern California Contest Club

Instructions for purchases from the Lands' End NCCC Store:

1. Go to <https://business.landsend.com/store/nccc/>
2. Click on the Men's or Women's link, and then choose an item.
3. Pick a color, then enter the quantity of each size you want to order.
4. Click Apply Logos and Personalizations. This will display the logo choices. Try them out... It will show you what they look like on your chosen fabric color.
5. Select a location. On shirts, for instance, you can place the logo in one of several locations.
6. Click Apply Logo.
7. Optionally, click Add Personalization to add your name and/or callsign (\$8 charge, 10 character limit)
8. Click Add to Bag. Keep shopping, if you like.
9. Click Start Secure Checkout. Account creation and credit card required.