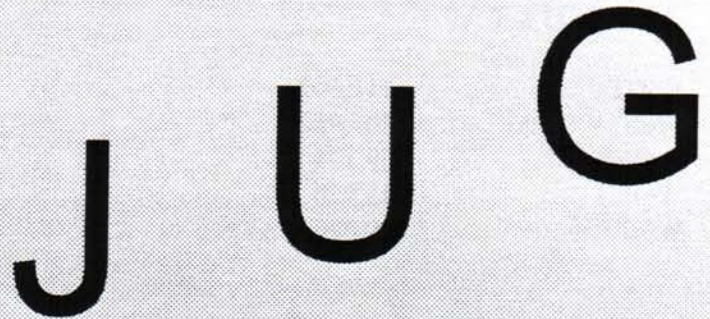


Club Repeaters W6RGG/R 147.24+, 442.200 (107.2PL)



NEXT NCCC MEETING!

The next meeting will be on April 18, in the cafeteria of building 50 at HP Santa Clara. (That's the "usual" HP place.) That's on Stevens Creek Road, between Lawrence Expressway and Interstate 280. The program will start off with a "show and tell" ... if you have anything new (or old?) you'd like the group to appreciate, bring it along; and then we'll have ELECTION OF OFFICERS. Amateur radio operators are very skilled at making themselves heard! Come to this meeting and make yourself heard by the vote you cast. Pizza from "Give Pizza Chance" at 6:30, and the business meeting at 7:30.

Cook Book

Make sure to get to the elections at our next meeting and bring your desire to help our club by volunteering your efforts where needed. I hope you all had as much fun in ARRL as I did in 97. It's good to see those old spots on the rise again. I'm heading down to my old pal W6EEN's place for the WPX and hope to hear a few NCCC'ers in the pileups. I have enjoyed being your prez for the last year, and I look forward to a lot more years of contesting with the NCCC. My hat's off to all the members who helped make this a good year for the club.

73, Carl, AI6V

Funny thing overheard during the ARRL DX SSB:

"It's hard enough to work 'em when they're there; nearly impossible when they ain't!"

Treasurer's Report

1996-97, year-to-date	Plan	Actual
Membership dues	4188	4098
Advertisements	300	
General fund contributions	200	436
CQP contributions	0	630
Non-member JUG subscriptions	0	
<hr/>		
Total income	4688	5164
JUG publishing & special mailings	(3233)	(2055)
NCCC share of CQP expenses	(400)	(631)
Awards	(650)	(489)
Xmas Banquet	0	79
Awards Banquet	0	(136)
Visalia Hospitality	(150)	
Vanity callsign for club call	(30)	
CQWW, WPX awards	(125)	(50)
Contingency	(100)	
Self-funding (Banquets, badges)	0	76
<hr/>		
Total expenses	(4688)	(3357)
Activity credited to FY 95-96 (CQP expenses)		(577)
Activity credited to FY 97-98		144
Activity credited to FY 98-99 (advance dues payments)		24
General fund on March 31, 1996		3699

Note: 26 members have not renewed as of 3/31/97.

Respectfully submitted,
Ed Muns, W0YK

Scores and more

ARRL DX CW

K6GT	111,507
W6BSY (20m)	105,986
W6WB	69,156
W6PLJ	43,956
W6BIP	20,826

ARRL DX SSB

K6BZ	312,924
K6HNZ (40m)	158,364
W6PLJ	17,145
K6MA (40m)	15,288
W6BIP	13,500
KM6F (40m)	2,904

W6EEN	574,740
(W6EEN, K6XC, W6ORD, N7QQ, KI7WX)	
scored for SCCC	

CQ 160 SSB

K6HNZ	59,086
K6BZ	1,139

Well that wraps it up for this year. See you all at the meeting in April.

73, Jim, WA6SDM

Contest Calendar

April, 1997

SP DX Contest, CW	1500Z, Apr. 5-2300Z, Apr. 6
EA RTTY Contest	1600Z, Apr. 5-1600Z, Apr. 6
Holyland DX Contest	1800Z, Apr. 5-1800Z, Apr. 6
Japan Int. DX Contest, 20-10m	2300Z, Apr. 11-2300Z, Apr. 13
UBA HF 80m Contest	0700Z-1100Z, Apr. 13
144MHz Spring Sprint	1900-2300 local, Apr. 14
Australian Post Code Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Apr. 19
YU DX Contest	1200Z, Apr. 19-1200Z, Apr. 20
SP DX RTTY Contest	1200Z, Apr. 19-2400Z, Apr. 20
EU Spring Sprint, SSB	1500Z-1859Z, Apr. 19
Michigan QSO Party	1800Z, Apr. 19-0300Z, Apr. 20 and 1100Z, Apr. 20-0200Z, Apr. 21
222MHz Spring Sprint	1900-2300 local, Apr. 22
SP DX RTTY	0000Z, Apr. 26-2400Z, Apr. 27

Hevetia Contest	1300Z, Apr. 26-1300Z, Apr. 27
Ontario QSO Party	1800Z, Apr. 26-1800Z, Apr. 27
432MHz Spring Sprint	1900-2300 local, Apr. 30

NOTE FROM THE NORTH

I have been up to a lot of things lately, but unfortunately, not much radio. I still show up for contests, when requested....

I will not be able to be on in all of the contests, nor will I be spending as much time in them. From the time I began contesting, I have been encouraging other VY1's to be active in the contests, but the most any will do is the occasional two or three hours of contesting. Unfortunately, circumstances at home dictate that type of operation for me as well for the next year or year and a half. After that I plan to be back, with a vengeance.

Please relay to the guys that whenever they hear me on in a contest, work me then... not later... I will be willing to QSY to other bands and modes to give out multipliers, and will not leave any of my contest friends, particularly at NCCC, out on a limb for VY1/VE8, but they must work me when I can be there.

I would like to make it a point to go for a CQP sweep if circumstances permit. Possibly CW Sweepstakes too, but I'm unsure of either.

If anyone wants to come up and use the station, they can. I have an 850, an Alpha 76, and have antennas that play on 160 and 80 meters now, and should have my 40-10 meter antennas done before fall. It is a free - standing shack, so they will not feel like they are imposing on anyone. The main problem with anyone coming all the way up here for a contest will be the chances that the Aurora will ruin the contest for them.

My sincere apologies, gang... I assure you that I am doing the best by you that I can in this.

73, J., VY1JA

More funny things (MFT) overheard during the ARRL DX SSB:

"QRZ contest this is JA#???"

"November Kilo 7 Woops!" (I assume that meant he had just noticed that the JA was a dupe)

"November 7 Kilo Woops you're 59 500" (I can't imagine what the JA entered for the call!)

CONTESTING CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH!

(The bear facts...)

Some readers of this fine publication may remember the article, written early last year when the Editor was as desperate for material as he is now, when I described how, in my former life as KG6LF, I almost bought the farm at the wrong end of Joe Rudi's hunting rifle while contesting at NK7U. This little story, sad but true, recounts another contesting adventure when I wish a hunting rifle had been close at hand... actually in hand, to be perfectly honest.

I retired last year and my wife (KN6BP), daughter, and I moved to our dream place in the foothills of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. We're out in the country, with enough acreage to keep neighbors and their RFI prone consumer electronics devices at bay, and, of course, plenty of room for the antennas our previous city lot simply wouldn't allow. We're in Ono, California, which is right down the road from Igo, which is where we get our mail. But that's another story and the Oh No!- I Go! jokes will have to wait 'til next time.

Anyhow, one of my dreams has always been to have a decent antenna up for 160. So, after months of planning we recently decided, for starters, to erect a 160 dipole between two very tall trees at the very top of a hill on our property which has an unobstructed "shot" to Europe. I'll spare you the details of just how many tries with a bow and arrow it took to get the lines for each end of the dipole up into the trees. Suffice it to say that we finally got it up, resonant at 1830, at a height of about 160 feet which put it at about 275 feet above surrounding terrain. Of course, like any good contesteer, I completed the project in inclement weather and one day AFTER the 160 contest ended. However, that put the antenna up and "playing" a whole four days before the ARRL DX SSB contest, and naturally, I was looking forward to seeing how it would do!

In the interim, a consulting trip to Seattle forced a late start in the ARRL test. So late that 160 didn't get worked 'til Saturday night. Since I was working the contest "assisted" (the first time I've tried that category) as soon as I saw some local spots on the DX Cluster for top band I decided to give it a try. Besides, at the time (and who would be surprised with numbers like 71 36!!! 4) 20 was pretty well dead and I'd worked about all my antennas could hear on 40 and 80. So, I hit the switch

to select the 160 wire and check the SWR before putting the Alpha to it. Uh Oh! Something's wrong... very wrong. The SWR is terrible. This will never do! What could be wrong? I checked and re-checked that antenna before the Seattle trip. Well, there's nothing else to do, so let's go have a look. I grabbed the high-powered spotlight, threw on a jacket and up the hill I went. I went to the north end of the dipole and all was well. I started the 300 foot trek to the south end and ... woops!, the dipole's sloping. If I'd wanted a sloper (actually I have one as a "back up" antenna) I'd have made it that way.

Reaching the tree at the south end, my keen former police detective mind immediately noticed that the rope (or a portion of it) and the sand bucket I'd used for tensioning purposes were lying on the ground. Now how in the heck could that expensive, UV resistant line break like that? Wait a minute, are those claw marks on the bucket? And are those claw marks on the branch next to where the bucket used to be suspended? And (super UH OH!) what the heck is that creature lurking about ten feet from where I'm standing?

Now, the only bears I'd ever seen in my 50 plus years have been in zoos. But darn, that sure looks like one of them, and this isn't a zoo (well, most of the time it isn't.) So, discretion being the better part of damn near anything, I retreated as quickly and as quietly as possible down the hill and into the safety of the radio shack. The back up antenna would have to do. Fixing the dipole would wait 'til daylight, on another day, and would be done in the company of someone else to watch, with a hunting rifle for good measure, while I fixed.

It took a while for the adrenaline to stop pumping. If this had been a CW contest, I'd have finished for the night, since it took several hours for the hand (and every other part of my anatomy) to stop shaking. So if you heard my weak signal and shaky voice on 160 that night now you know the reason why. And if anyone knows how to make an antenna bear proof, I'd love to hear from you!

73, Jerry Boyd, K6BZ

(Jerry also sent the JUG editor a separate note....)

Dear JUG Editor,

For some reason, my scores don't seem to be getting to you, as I don't see them in the JUG.

Sweepstakes SSB.....	257,244
ARRL 160 CW.....	1,139
NAQP SSB.....	108,281
CQWW SSB	344,127

Thanks & 73, Jerry, K6BZ (ex KG6LF)

Well, Jerry, it's probably time to remind *every* NCCC member that the scores (a copy of your summary sheet) should go to the VP/CC, who will compile them, and forward them to the JUG editor and the 5M award record keeper. Next month there will be a NEW VP/CC, so watch for the name! Better yet, come to the April meeting and help elect the VP/CC of your choice!

73, JUGhead

TOWARD A PORTABLE CONTEST STATION: ARRL DX FROM HP2

A few months ago there was an amusing thread on the "cq-contest" reflector which caught my attention. This discussion began with a bitterly-stated complaint that it was only the well-heeled among us who were able to spend the large amounts of money supposedly required to travel abroad and be successful in the major DX contests. The responses to this accusation were numerous, but the most poignant defense (in my humble opinion) came from John, W2GD (a.k.a. P40W), who described how he and Bob, K4UEE (P40R) had worked together over the years to build, at minimal expense, the station they share in Aruba. They have obviously been quite creative in scrounging parts to create their consistently "top ten" station. Still, they have an investment in that station that could be the basis for a good argument with many a XYL, so it is worth looking to see if the foreign contesting experience can be had for even less money than John described. My purpose here is to talk about the kind of contest station you can fit in your suitcase, that you can check onto an airplane, and with which you can stand a fighting chance of actually winning something.

We should begin, though, by acknowledging that some contests are easier than others for the budget-minded traveler. The ARRL DX contest (CW, of course) is my personal favorite for going abroad, since I think it affords the best opportunity to be successful "on the cheap." I've now been abroad 4 out of the last 5 years for this contest, and each time I go I discover new ways to do it for even less money than the last time. In the first place, this contest doesn't have the "3 point land" anomaly that most of the CQ-sponsored contests have. That scoring quirk puts a big premium on travel

to some exotic location (like EA8 or P4) where you have a large population mass in a nearby but different continent. Travel to these kinds of places is rarely inexpensive, but for ARRL DX the whole of Central America and the Caribbean can be our playground. Secondly, the list of equipment you need to take is much shorter for ARRL DX than for most other DX contests. If you play the game right, you can do almost as well running 100 watts as you can with an amp, so you might just as well leave the amp at home and save the excess baggage charges. If you use a beam antenna, you really don't need a rotator for this contest. This is starting to sound pretty simple, isn't it? It is. I'll illustrate with my most recent venture abroad, operating as HP2/N6NT in the 1997 running of this event.

BACKGROUND

This whole adventure began when I got a call from an old friend who asked if I would be willing to help him bring a large private yacht back to California from the Caribbean, via the Panama Canal. The deal was sealed in an instant, and it took only a little discussion to arrange schedules such that I could join the boat in Panama just a week after the 1997 ARRL DX (CW) contest. I quickly set out to try to locate an existing station I could use for the contest, using the cq-contest reflector as a resource. I got a number of good leads and tried to chase them all, but none of them panned out for me. That meant I would have to do it all myself. Now we've all been on Field Day expeditions, and I have had great fun in recent years mounting expeditions to rare California counties for CQP. But in those situations you are limited in how much gear you can take only by the size of your vehicle. Trying to squeeze everything I would need for this contest onto an airplane as normal baggage was an altogether new challenge.

PACKING

The standard airline baggage allotment is two pieces of carry-on luggage and two pieces of checked baggage. You can take more than that, of course, but you're going to pay extra for the privilege. Particularly if I'm traveling alone, though, I like to pack such that I can pick everything up and walk from one point to another without the need to make multiple trips to move all my luggage. Since the standard allotment is about the maximum that will pass that test, I generally try to limit myself to that set of four items.

Items which must be carry-on, in my view, are the rig and the computer. One bag gets my FT-990, which I chose for its small size, completeness, and the fact that I can operate it off either 12VDC or 120VAC. I also have an IC-706 I often take on trips, but if I also take a 12V power supply and an antenna tuner, then it's

getting into the same size and weight class as the FT-990. Initially, I was going to take the computer in its own carrying case as my second piece of carry-on luggage, but then I couldn't get everything I needed to fit into the other two bags. The problem was solved when I found a piece of soft carry-on luggage which could hold the computer in one pocket and all the clothes and other personal items I would need in the other pockets. Even in February, you don't need a whole lot of clothing in the Caribbean!

As checked baggage, one piece would be my high-band antenna and the other would be a large suitcase containing "everything else". For the high-band antenna, I took an A-3 tribander and packed it into two pieces of 4" diameter PVC pipe with a 4" end cap screwed onto each end of the tubes. The two pipes were each 7' long. I think it may be possible to pack an A-3 into 6' sections, but because of the way the boom is constructed you would have to use a hacksaw to go any shorter than 6'. The prospect of lugging this package around depressed me, though, because it was big and heavy. The worst feature of all for this plan was that I knew the airlines would charge me a penalty fee for any piece of luggage longer than 4'. That started me looking for better alternatives than the A-3.

For this contest, I really wanted to try the trick of mounting a beam for vertical polarization with salt water in the near field. I watched a presentation on this given by AF6S at a NCCC meeting several years ago and have been intrigued by the results of Dave's simulations ever since. I even went out for Field Day last June to try some experiments using a vertical looking out over salt water. It was absolutely amazing to me to see what a difference it made when the antenna was located right at the water's edge. Being just a few hundred feet away seemed to reduce the efficiency by a clearly noticeable amount. Thus I felt confident that if I could just get a beam mounted vertically right at the water's edge, pointed due north, then I would have as good a LP signal as could be had. But my A-3 package was just too much to lug around. So what to do? The alternative that kept popping into my mind was the expedition model of the C3 that Force 12 makes. This is a variant of the C3 that was designed such that it can be packaged into a 4' long container. I have used a C3 and know it to be a good performer. Moreover, the absence of traps and of steel clamps means that the antenna is exceptionally lightweight. Thus it would seem to be the perfect solution for my needs, but there were two problems: these antennas aren't cheap, and Force 12 is not known for keeping a big inventory of antennas ready for sale. In the end I passed on this idea because of those two reasons, but it was interesting that

everybody I called on the phone asking for better ideas than the A-3 kept mentioning this antenna.

As I was mulling over this dilemma, I kept looking up at the R-5 vertical I had mounted on my roof. I kept that antenna up simply because I owned it, but I rarely used it. Even the simplest tribander mounted at my city council-approved 30' height limit would significantly outperform the R-5 at my hillside QTH. But wasn't it interesting, I mused, how many times I had heard a seagoing DXpedition put out a great signal while they were under way on their boat, invariably using some kind of simple vertical, and then have only an ESP-level signal once they got to their destination island and set up the big antennas. One could easily conjecture that those antennas were erected in the center of the island, whereas the seagoing vertical was out over salt water. I finally took the R-5 down to get a better look at the way it was constructed. What I eventually discovered was that the R-5 could be disassembled to fit into a 4' long package. In fact, I was able to get the antenna into a single 4' long piece of 4" PVC pipe. To do this, you first need to drill out the top rivet from the fiberglass insulator which separates the base of the antenna from the radiating sections. When you later go to reassemble the antenna, just put a bolt into the hole vacated by the rivet and hold it in place with tape. With the bottom piece of aluminum tubing thus separated from the base, that lower tubing section is 4' long. Moreover, the next two pieces of aluminum tubing are also 4' long and will telescope one inside the other, so you are left with three 4' long pieces of tubing all telescoped together. Next, you need to disassemble the 10 and 12 meter traps. They can be packed separately in the PVC pipe, but the antenna section containing those traps won't go in the pipe unless you first remove them. The one thing that won't go in the pipe is the impedance matching assembly, but that is easily carried in the suitcase.

For a low band antenna, I built a trapped dipole for 40/80/160 which I planned on mounting as an inverted V. The 40 and 80 meter traps were homemade devices made by winding RG-58 around a 2" OD piece of PVC. I have used these kinds of traps in the past and always had good luck with them. The materials are easy to find and the cost is negligible. Several articles have appeared explaining how to make these traps.

Tuning a multiband trapped dipole is a tedious process, and it took several afternoons over at W6DU's house to get this antenna debugged. Without Eric's help it would probably have taken me much longer than it did, but eventually we got that antenna to resonate right where we wanted it. We knew that there would likely be differences when the antenna was erected again for the contest (different ground conductivity, different

height, etc.) but that was the reason for taking a radio with an antenna tuner.

Beyond the issue of which antennas to pack, there was the question of the "everything else" suitcase. Transmission line is probably the biggest remaining consideration for the traveling contest station. RG-8 is clearly too heavy to pack, but the loss figures for RG-58 are kind of discouraging on the high bands. In my view, RG-8X is the best compromise between weight and performance. It is perhaps heavier than we would like, but still I packed two 100' lengths of RG-8X. The "everything else" suitcase also got my heavy Jones paddle and the Super CMOS keyer (wouldn't ever travel without both of 'em!) a Crossman wrist rocket, a spool of 8-pound test nylon monofilament, a bag of 1/4 oz lead weights, a couple of PL-259's, a barrel connector, enough wire run a ground line and maybe build a wire beam for 20m, several lengths of 1/4" rope, a spool of heavy nylon twine, several rolls of electrical tape, a minimal set of tools, etc. It was astounding how the weight of this suitcase went up as I threw in all the items from my carefully-prepared checklist. When I added in all my SCUBA gear at the end, that suitcase measured 94 pounds. Yes, that meant an excess weight penalty. Anything over 70 pounds will usually lighten your wallet when you go to check your bags at the airline counter!

SETTING UP

My flight south arrived at the Panama City airport late Wednesday evening. Though time was short, I decided to wait until early Thursday morning before striking off into the countryside to find an operating site. By noon Thursday, I had made my way over the isthmus of Panama and sighted the Atlantic. "Plan A" was to drive east along the northern coast of the country and try to find a hotel room right on the beach with a clear view out to the north. By mid-afternoon, I had run out of paved road and was starting to go cross-country along dirt roads. There was now less than 30 hours remaining before the start of the contest and I hadn't even located a site. It was starting to feel a little tense. Finally, I found a group of cabanas right on the beach with a clear view to the north. There was a big hill just to the south with some good trees on it which were within 100' or so of the cabana. That was just what I needed to put up the low band antenna. The only drawback was that I couldn't see any way to put up the wire beam I had wanted to build, but with time so short I figured this was going to have to be good enough. However, my cabana was about as primitive a hotel room as I have ever had in North America--no A/C, just a single bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling, torn

screening, and the plumbing in the bathroom hadn't worked in years. Even at 25 dollars a night, this room was grossly overpriced!

The inverted V for 40/80/160 was the first to go up. This is where experience pays off. I have learned through hard experience how to lay the monofilament out so that it doesn't get tangled when you fire the lead weight with the wrist rocket, how to tie the monofilament to the heavier rope so that you can pull the rope up and over the branches without breaking the monofilament, etc.

The feed point of my inverted V was soon up at about 70', and I draped the ends out so they were 20' or so off the ground. Within a couple of hours, the antenna showed almost identical SWR curves to what we had measured at W6DU's a week earlier.

Reassembling the R-5 was a snap. By this time, I had an audience of the local kids watching me work, and they were eager to help. One of them procured a wooden pole about 20' long, and he quickly used his machete to shape the end of the pole to fit inside the mounting pipe on the R-5. Everything was in place and set up by 6 p.m. that Thursday evening, just in time to admire the sunset out over the Atlantic. It was mildly amusing to realize I could have waited an extra day to travel to Panama! Later that evening, as I dined on the only food available in town (pork & beans straight from the can plus sardines packed in spicy tomato sauce), I bumped into P40W warming up for the next day's events. In response to my description of my primitive setup, John took great care to describe the big steak dinner he had just finished in town. That hurt, as intended, but only a little.

OPERATING

Almost from the moment the opening bell sounded I was reminded how different it is to run low power than high power. On a crowded band, you're not going to be able to hold a frequency for long unless you can attract a pile-up quickly. You are unlikely to win any frequency fights, and you need space around you in order not to be drowned out by the stronger signals. Thus in order to be competitive, you need to be quick in locating and seizing a new run frequency. If you can do that, and if you take care always to keep breathing space around you, I do believe that in ARRL DX you can keep as good a rate as the high - power crowd.

I tried to start the contest on 40, but just couldn't hold a frequency long enough to get a run going. Everybody was intent on running Europe on 40, and I felt like I just couldn't get a word in edgewise. The solution was to stay on 20 as long as it was productive, then to move to 40 after the mob had gone on to 80, etc.

It was more important to have space around me, so that my signal would stand out, than it was to be where the most action was. To do that, I was constantly changing my run frequency so that I had space. The drawback to this frequent shuffling was that I knew I wasn't getting the benefit of the packet spots.

The next morning, I stayed on 20 for just a short while before moving up to 15. Once again, the mob seemed intent on beaming Europe and I just couldn't seem to attract enough attention to hold a frequency on 20 meters. Every time I found a clear run position, some European station would come along and snatch it away from me. Fifteen was another story, though. The Europeans were trying to get through on 15, but they just weren't making it. But for me, 15 was wide open to the states. (The path from Europe to Panama was also wide open, and one of the things slowing me down was the number of European stations who wanted a zero-point contact with me.)

During the daytime there it was always amusing when I got hoots and catcalls in response to my claim of Low - Power status. I knew I was getting out extremely well, and there were quite a few people who let me know they didn't believe I was really LP. I wondered how many times in the past had I derided the common "100 watts into a vertical" station, and now here I was in a major DX contest running 150 an hour with just that configuration! The answer clearly was location. At high tide, my antenna was actually sitting out on the salt water.

One phenomenon I was counting on over the weekend was what I call the "late term consolidation" on 20 meters. I don't know why this happens, but it seems that in every DX contest the number of active pile-ups on 20 goes down as finish time approaches. Those remaining pile-ups, naturally, get bigger. Does Joe Ham just give up on trying to get a run of DL's started and decide to go S&P himself? Do the casuals all come out of the woodwork at the same time on Sunday afternoon and decide to work on their country totals? I don't know the answer, but I was counting on this to pull my 20m total out at the last minute. By mid-afternoon on Sunday, my 20m count was way below both the 15m and 40m totals. I hadn't been able to hold a run frequency on 20 for very long all weekend, and rather than wage losing frequency fights I had been seeking refuge in the less populated bands. But now was the time to make it back up. I spent the last 3-1/2 hours on 20m and averaged 115Q's/hour during the whole period. When you consider that I was sending the full "HP2/N6NT" string after each and every contact, and that most of the stations I was contacting weren't testers, that wasn't a bad rate at all!

At the finish line, my summary sheet showed the following band breakdown:

160:	132 x 34
80:	562 x 55
40:	747 x 56
20:	1033 x 55
15:	1131 x 53
10:	98 x 24

Total: 3703 x 277 = 3,076,362.

In addition, there were 104 dupes in the log (an otherwise good hour's worth of operating). Worse than that, there were about 50 contacts I lost due to logging software problems. The first time I got up to about 1000 contacts in my log, the logging software started beeping at me that it was out of memory. I frantically flipped through the manual trying to figure out what to do while the pile-up kept screaming at me, and after 10 minutes or so I decided just to start a new log and figure it all out after the contest was over. I opened a new log and started running and got about 50 contacts in the log before something happened to make me dive for the ESC key to stop a CW message. In my panic, though, I hit the key right next to the ESC key: the power key. When I rebooted, my newly - started log had exactly 5 entries in it, the 5 which were showing on the screen when I killed the power to the computer. I can't help but worry that I'm going to really regret not having the cushion those 50 contacts would have given me!

CONCLUSION

The biggest lesson that was driven home to me was what a big difference it made to have salt water in the near field. Even as simple an antenna as a multiband trapped vertical turned out to be more than adequate when properly located. This means that it really is possible to pack a standard airline baggage allotment, travel to a DX location, set up a contest station from scratch, and earn a decent score. That knowledge opens up a whole host of possibilities. I probably shouldn't mention this publicly, but I've been staring at a map of Honduras recently trying to visualize what all those little towns along the north coast must look like. Surely there's a great location somewhere along that coastline that could be a killer spot for next year's contest. As a matter of fact, that could provide just the opportunity to check out the expedition C3, turned vertically...

73, N6NT

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(800) 854-6046
Mark, KE6OF, Mgr.
1-880 at 23rd Ave. ramp

NCCC
44 Toyon Terrace
Danville, CA 94526



FIRST CLASS

FIRST CLASS

Full through June 30, 97
Charles K. Epps, W6OAT
651 Handley Trail
Redwood City, CA 94062