



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



November
2004
Issue 390

NCCC Net
Thursday 9PM
3853+/-

Next NCCC Meeting

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

Contester Experience With Hot Transceivers
Tentec Orion, Dan - K6IF
ICOM 7800, AI - K6RIM

Enjoy Chevy's fajita buffet in their private meeting room.

Please RSVP in advance to K6UFO who will be collecting \$16 at the door for those having dinner.

Date: Monday, 8 November 2004

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

Location: **Chevys Fresh Mex**, 979-A Edgewater Blvd., Foster City CA 94404 (650) 572-8441

From 101:

From 101, connect to CA-92 East (towards Hayward). Take the Mariners Island Blvd/Edgewater exit (the first exit after merging onto the 92). After you exit, at the first street light, turn left. This street is called Mariners Island Blvd and turns into Edgewater Blvd after you cross Hillsdale Blvd. Keep driving on Edgewater Blvd. At the intersection with Beach Park Blvd, you will see a shopping plaza on the left side of the street. Either turn left onto Beach Park Blvd, make an immediate right into the parking lot and snake your way to the far end of the plaza OR drive past the Beach Park Blvd intersection and make the next available U-turn into the shopping plaza (in this case, Chevys will be closer to where you pulled into the parking lot).

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Two Tango

Tom Berson, ND2T, NCCC Pres.

One of the great opening lines in American literature is from Steven Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, "As the landscape changed from brown to green, the army awakened, and began to tremble with eagerness at the noise of rumors [of battle]."

So what about us: As the landscape changed from brown to green, the club awakened, and began to tremble with eagerness at the noise of rumors of Sweepstakes.

We've been awake, as a club, since June, working on strategy and tactics, building club infrastructure, building stations, building operating skills, building partnerships. We've been focused on the first and third weekends in November. And now these weekends are almost upon us. We are only waiting for the NIST-F1 cesium fountain atomic clock in Boulder, Colorado to strike 2100Z and we will all simultaneously hit our own F1 keys and call CQ SS.

As I visualize that moment I can feel the adrenaline start to pump through my veins. And I wish it wouldn't. Not now. Not yet. Visualization is important; all champions do it. But adrenaline is pesky stuff. I want it when I'm competing, not

when I'm preparing. I want to save my adrenaline for that moment the competition starts. In the best of all worlds, I wouldn't compete in anything the week before the contest. Of course I'll participate in the practice contests we have planned, but to maintain skill, not to compete.

- Visualize, but
- Save that adrenaline for when it counts.

Speaking of precious bodily fluids, what is the first subtle sign of dehydration? It's not thirst. By the time you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated. Guess again.

Years ago a rafting guide on the River of No Return in Idaho (a/k/a Salmon River) taught us that the first sign of dehydration is a change of mood. Around here now, when I get grumpy, my YF says, "Drink a glass of water." Or, if she is not grumpy herself, she brings me a glass of water. Exercise physiologists tell us that 2% dehydration can lead to a 10-20% loss of performance. Of course, during a 12-hour butt-in-the-chair session the temptation is to skimp on the fluids so that many quick breaks do not lead to a loss of rate (or frequency). There's a tradeoff here. I think on balance it's better to keep sipping water.

- Use a sports bottle with a built-in straw (so nothing spills on the keyboard).
- Stay hydrated during the contest.

And now, protein. Protein gives long energy with gentle skirts. Carbs give short energy with sharp skirts. It's the downslope of a carb high that really

hurts performance. That downslope brings a rapid reduction of blood sugar and feels like a loss of motivation. Try some protein instead of carbs this time out.

- Eat nuts. Eat salami. Eat beef jerky.

And, finally, a word about caffeine. There's nothing like it for a CNS stimulant. I use it in moderate doses to increase alertness. My favorite is green tea. Choose yours. Prepare it ahead of time and put it in a thermos or a second sports bottle with a straw. But lay off for six hours before you need to go to sleep. Caffeine also causes insomnia and you need to start that second twelve-hour stint in the morning as rested as possible.

- Caffeine increases alertness in 15 minutes.
- Use it responsibly.

We are superbly prepared for Sweepstakes. NCCC is a nexus of expertise, talent, skill, hard work, leadership, enthusiasm, and butt-in-the-chair perseverance.

The NCCC awoke with joy and eagerness at the prospect of Sweepstakes. See you in both modes.

KB.

VP/CC Report

Dean Wood, N6DE

Sweepstakes – Now is the Time

CW: 2100Z November 6 – 0300Z

November 8

SSB: 2100Z November 20 – 0300Z

November 22

As a sports fan, I admire the teams that were consistently successful with a known game plan and unstoppable execution. Back in the 90s, you knew Nebraska football was going to run the ball down the opponent's throat all game. The Utah Jazz ran the "pick and roll" better than any team in the NBA. And you would watch Pete Newell coach his Princeton basketball teams to execute the "back door cut" crisper than any team in history. You knew it was coming, but you just couldn't stop it. I also admire the teams that win a championship and then come back to take every opponent's best shot the following year and still win a championship.

The NCCC has a tremendous opportunity. We are using the same masterful W6OAT plan from last year, continue to have terrific club camaraderie, and give value back to many fellow NCCC members and their stations. We have the same goals this year with the addition of one more special goal: the all time Sweepstakes unlimited club record. Now our success comes down to focused determination and solid execution. Our competition knows our game plan from last year, and will be gunning for us this year. Yet, we are better poised than ever to repeat as Sweepstakes champions and achieve all our goals. Let's show ourselves and the contest world what kind of club we really are! Let's KB, win Sweepstakes, and make history in the Sweepstakes club record books!

Your Sweepstakes Plan?

Have you informed us about what you plan to do for both modes of Sweepstakes this year? Do you need a station to operate? Do you need guest

operators? Do you have spare equipment you can loan other NCCC members? How about computer logging help or packet assistance? Do you have an extra callsign available for use by another NCCC member?

Thanks to Denny KX7M, there is an NCCC Sweepstakes 2004 web form where you can fill out all of this information. Please visit <http://ss.kx7m.net/ss2004.html> to let us know your Sweepstakes plans this year.

Sweepstakes Resources

Did you miss the October NCCC meeting? You should download the .PDF file from our web site at http://www.nccc.cc/members/pdf/ss2004_oct04meeting.pdf to see the summary of our SS 2004 plan, detailed SS propagation reports from N6BV, excellent strategy advice from N6RO, NCCC SS 2003 QSO analysis by WA4FIB, and some SS rate sheets.

There is an enormous amount of valuable Sweepstakes content on the NCCC members' web page: <http://www.nccc.cc/members/>

- *All 3 Sweepstakes presentations at NCCC 2004 meetings
- *NCCC Sweepstakes Handbook
- *New NCCC SS master.dta and auto-fill files for Writelog, TR, CT
- *Tutorials on what to do to set up packet with your logging program
- *N6TR's SS CW secrets
- *Many logging software hints
- *Lots more

Please visit the members' page and take advantage of all this information! If you forgot the NCCC username and password, please e-mail W0YK

(w0yk@msn.com) or N6DE
(n6de@inreach.com) for a reminder.

ZF2NT – The Dream Continues

Rob Brownstein, K6RB

Last spring, I drove to Visalia with my YF, Debra, to go to a special dinner. It was Friday night, the same time as the “contester” dinner, but in a small room on the other side of the hall. This was my first FOC dinner. I had been nominated in late November and was still working hard to get my required sponsorships, but I wanted to meet the man who nominated me, and I wanted to hear the featured presentation.

The speaker was our own Bruce Sawyer, N6NT, and he held us all captivated with his narration and slide show about his home and contest station on Little Cayman. Now, I don’t consider myself easily impressed. I was impressed by Trey’s presentation of the building of HC8N. But I was blown away by Bruce’s presentation. Here was a guy describing his dream, and he created the whole thing with his own hands!

Now, I watched my house being built in 1984, so I know what’s involved in home construction. I knew then that there was no way I would have done the job myself. But, here was someone describing the building of his house, on an island where literally everything has to be brought in by ship. Things that we take for granted, like drinking water, have to be planned for. Termites that eat your popsicle stick before you finish your ice cream bar have be planned around.

As Bruce described the planning, gathering of materials, and actual building of his house I had two overwhelming feelings – empathetic fatigue and great admiration. I would have to fill up about four or five JUGs to give you a reasonable account of Bruce’s adventure, but Bruce already has done it far better on his Web pages -

www.gsl.net/zf2nt/ .

Bruce and his wife, Wesley, discovered Little Cayman in their pursuit of an ideal scuba diving area. It is tiny island, about 10 miles long and about 1 mile wide on average. Bruce’s house is in the southwest part of the island.



An aerial photo of Little Cayman

But I’m getting ahead of myself. First he bought the land, then he went through a two-year permitting process, then he started building the house. It began with the construction of a cistern – 25,000 gallons worth. This is where the rain water is caught and used to provide drinking and other water needs.

In the early part of his plans, he decided to build the house on a concrete slab. Later, however, he changed his mind and decided to elevate the house above the low-lying turf. Good thinking, too, because he has now weathered four hurricanes and surging sea water has

passed under the dwelling on more than one occasion.



Bruce in the foreground, the elevated ZF2NT house behind.

We are talking about a tiny island where the air is almost always moist and salty. If you use nails, forget about galvanized nails – you go with stainless steel. If you're putting up a steel tower, you better paint every square inch of that sucker with thick, protective paint. If you're going to use wood, make sure it's pressure-treated, termite resistant, or don't bother.

Over the years it took Bruce to build the house and make it habitable, he shipped in many containers of supplies – even an old Volkswagen bus. And every container had to be hauled to his property and unloaded...by hand.

When he was putting on the roof, Bruce meticulously nailed the plywood sheets with nails a few inches apart. Being a "ham," says Bruce, he opted not to use a nail gun and instead hammered each and every one of those nails...by hand. Can you see why I would be empathetically fatigued?

His first ham radio activity from the property was with a station set up in wooden outdoor shed and a tribander sitting atop a military pushup mast. Plagued by heat, humidity, and insects, Bruce slathered on the DEET-based bug

repellant and found out that DEET immediately liquefies plastics – like key paddles.

Once he started the framing of the house, he also started the tower work, and put up several sections of Rohn 45 next to the western wall. With framing done and sheetrock left to do, Bruce and Bob, W6CYX, did a CQWW for the first time.



Bruce and Bob, W6CYX, do a CQWW, together, even before the walls had been insulated and covered with sheetrock.

With the house completed, and the interior finish work done, Bruce and Rick, N6XI, did an ARRL DX contest as an M/S team. Rick also did some solo operating with his ZF2TN call. Other NCCers also made the journey to Little Cayman. Andy, AE6Y, came to do a WPX SSB and Doug, N6TQS, did a WPX RTTY while there. Andy liked being on the DX end so much that he bought AI6V's Aruba QTH with John, W6LD.



Rick, N6XI, an early visitor to ZF2NT does the ARRL DX contest. Note the covered walls and window treatments.

I asked Bruce to give me details about the current station because it is a perpetual work in progress. Not having been there since Hurricane Ivan blew by, Bruce's reply was equivocal. But, the last time he was there, the transceivers were an FT-1000MP, an IC-706, and a K2. For turbo-powered operation, he has an Acom 2000-A, and a Collins 30L-1. Antenna switching is done by an Acom automatic antenna switch, and CW operators have a choice of Schurr or Brown paddles. RTTY operators have a KAM+ to play with, but Bruce didn't mention a microphone (sorry, sidebanders).



With framing still in its early stages, Bruce makes sure he has his priorities straight.

For 10, 15, and 20, Bruce uses a Bencher Skyhawk tribander, and for the WARC bands (12/17) he has an A3WS (courtesy of Al, AD6E, he says). In addition, the

antenna farm includes a homemade 10 meter ground plane and a 15 meter vertical (which was originally a 40 m vertical until the top rusted off!). There's a 30-meter dipole and two inverted V's for 40, one facing NE/SW and the other NW/SE. For the low band ops, there are 80 and 160 meter inverted V's and two EWE receive antennas for 80 and 160. There are also a couple of yagis sitting on the ground awaiting tower space, says Bruce, but, then again, Hurricane Ivan may have requisitioned them. Bruce says the wire antennas tend to be most in flux because visiting operators have their own ideas of what works best.

Bruce is heading to Little Cayman near the end of October, and according to preliminary reports, the house – and his dream – has made it through yet another storm. All I can say is “great.” I'm looking forward to working ZF2NT in ARRL DX, CQ WW, WPX, and other contests. And I'm so pleased that something for which Bruce literally sweated and bled has survived.



Bruce in a more recent shot of the ham radio room.

Member News

K6DGW - is heading toward some QRP work (excepting SS, of course), with a new basic vanilla K2 and a KX1. He may get the Ant Tuner for the K2, and probably the RS-232 IO, but not likely anything else ("Life Is Too Short For QRP On 160") He'll be on from the Caribbean in Spring while negotiating the Canal. KX1 debut in the Spartan Sprint in Nov.

K6LRN - after almost 50 years of hamming, K6LRN has finally gone over the 100 country mark on 80/75 meters. TJ3FR and TX9 did the trick. Now, all he needs to do is 'get the cards'.

W6OAT - according to latest NCJ received today, Rusty, W6OAT was first W6 in July 2004 NAQP RTTY contest. Congrats!! Many other NCCers had great scores as well.

W6SR - finished adding a 3rd tri-bander to his "stuff." He now has 3 towers, two with C-3E's and one with a TH-7 tri-bander on it. Antennas vary between 50' to 120' above average ground levels, and they all feed into a WX0Bstackmatch. He says the QSB is much less when he uses all three for both DX and Stateside.



Dean, N6DE, on N6TV's tower fixing the coax to the 10 meter antenna. Now, maybe there'll be some SS activity on 10.



The weekend crew at N6O's CQP operation – l. to r. - N7FF, N6BV, N6KLS, WA6O, WX5X, K7NV, N6RO.



All five transmitters going at once at N6O.



Hidden behind a rat's nest of cables is Mike, WA6O, pounding away on 40 m during the N6O CQP effort.

SS – Stay In The Chair!

-- CL--

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