



**Publication of the  
Northern California  
Contest Club**  
**NCCC**

**January  
2011**  
Issue 464

NCCC Net  
Thursday 8 PM  
3610+/-

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

**Monday, January 10, 2011  
Program**

**"Skimmer Technology: Set Up and  
Implementation"**

(The Two Bobs: K6XX and N6TV)

**Date:** Monday, January 10, 2011

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

**Location:** Cattlemen's; 2882 Kitty Hawk Road; Livermore, CA 94551 (925) 447-1224

**Directions:**

<http://www.cattlemenrestaurants.com/liv.htm>

Dinner selections for this month's meeting are:

1. Teriyaki Chicken
2. Broiled Top Sirloin Steak
3. Grilled King Salmon
4. Marinara Cheese Ravioli

All selections include a Baked Potato, Seasonal Vegetables, All-You-Can-Eat Salad, Sourdough Bread, Ranch Style Beans, Soda, Coffee or Tea. The price will be \$25 including tax and tip.

Payment can be via the club's PayPal account ([paypal@nccc.cc](mailto:paypal@nccc.cc)) or at the door.

Please RSVP to ([k6rm@arrl.net](mailto:k6rm@arrl.net)) for his "Headcount" list.

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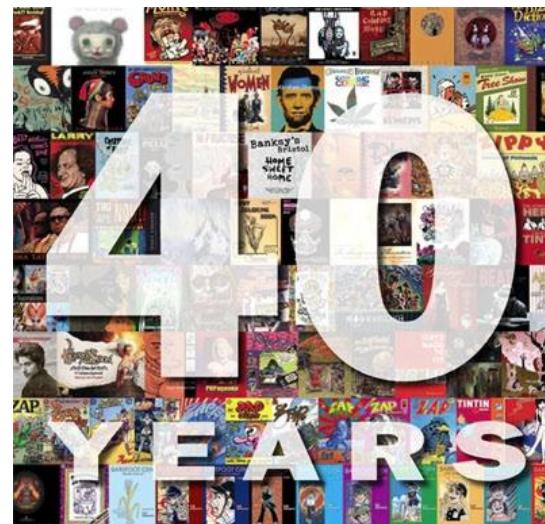
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**FB's Message**

By Jack Brindle, W6FB

**Happy New Year!**

It is that time of the year again. Old Man 2010 is giving way to the youngster 2011. It has been a very good year, with Sunspot Cycle 24 finally showing some life after sleeping for so long. We finally had enough sunspots in the second half of the year to support 15 meters and even some 10 meter contest QSOs.

Things were good enough that 15 became a major component for our Sweepstakes operations this year. But then as December came around the sun

seemed to go quiet again, with the sunspot counts dropping late in the year. Perhaps Ol' Sol realized it was time for several major 160 meter contests? NCCC also began its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration this year, with the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary operating event leading the way. The event went over so well that it was extended to the end of the year. Adding to the celebration, the December Holiday Celebration saw W6OAT present newly uncovered information as to exactly when the NCCC got its start. Great show, Rusty!

As we move into 2011, there are many great things to come. We are only half way through the contest season, and half way through our anniversary year, so there are many more opportunities for contest and club fun.

At this time of the year it has become traditional to make predictions. Not wanting to buck the trend, let's see what my crystal ball has to say. Contesting has come a long way in the last 50 years, with such additions as contest keyers, computer logging programs, and other items which have automated much of contest operation. Perhaps the most controversial addition of the last few years has been Skimmer. The old crystal ball doesn't see a letup in the march towards contest automation.

While full automation is not the goal, there are many things that can be done to move the contest load onto the computer and station equipment and off the operator, allowing him/her to do more things and make fewer mistakes. Better radios will be part of the improvements, allowing us to operate even closer together and squeeze in even more stations. Perhaps the biggest improvement that Skimmer has brought is not the ability to decode stations, but rather a display as to where the stations actually are. In this sense it is an improvement over the bandscopes that have become prevalent. With some additional software, the software could indicate whether the station is in the contest or not, while not showing exchange information.

Many of us remember hand logging and carefully maintaining dupe sheets during contests. Computer logging programs, such as TR-Log, WriteLog and N1MM have provided much needed relief with this process, allowing us to handle other things while providing much needed information. It is time for software to evolve beyond logging, however.

The crystal ball shows a new generation of contest programs that turn around the contest, moving it from the radio and into the computer. The radio will become a peripheral to the computer, being controlled by the computer in all aspects, not just frequency control. This will allow the computer to optimize the radio for the benefit of the operator. Control of the entire station will be brought into play, including antenna and rig selection. In

addition, the computer will keep better track of activity on the bands for the operator's specific conditions, allowing better selection of band.

The program will learn the needs of the operator, making logistic changes to aid the operation. The crystal ball gets a bit fuzzy when it comes to additional features. When will we see these greatly improved programs? Because of the popularity of the current programs and the author's inertia, it probably will not come from them, but from new authors. Watch for these to replace current programs towards mid-decade.

The increased popularity of RTTY and other digital modes will continue, with new tools to greatly improve digital-contest operation. The tools will give far greater decode capabilities with more accurate results. It will also provide decode of a much larger band segment allowing for all the contest bands to be simultaneously decoded.

The crystal ball does not see the addition of any weekends to the calendar, so we will continue to have conflicts from time to time, such as the NAQP CW and RTTY Roundup conflict in January. Contesters will simply adapt their operation to allow operation in all contests in which they wish to compete, even if they are simultaneous.

The NCCC will continue to grow, seeing well over 1000 members by the end of the decade. This will give the club the ability to do bigger and better things, even hosting a hamfest/convention devoted to contesting.

Inside the club, we will see some strange things, like Locust become addicted to RTTY contesting, the N6RO superstation adopting QRP contesting, and W6OAT making the discovery that NCCC actually existed before NCDXC was even founded!

OK, so the crystal ball is not all that clear for everything it tells. Still, we have much to look forward to over the next year and decade. And, I can easily predict that in 10 years we will look back on this next decade with 2020 hindsight!

Happy New Year to all, 73s, great contesting and above all, KB!

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### **Contesting to Start the New Year**

Rob, K6RB

We know that Chris has been burdened with personal issues leading up to 2010, so he's taking a little break in this JUG issue. Instead, let's take a quick look at the outlook for January contesting.

This weekend, right off the bat, we have NAQP CW and RTTY RoundUp. Yes, there has been some controversy about conflicting dates but with only 52 weekends to work with, and lots of contests contending for those dates, it's inevitable that we're going to have some weekends where we have to either choose or play in multiple events.

I have been advocating for more weekday events for a while, now. Ham radio contests were weekend schedules because, in the beginning, we were a young hobby. In 1958 when I was KN2UMU, the average age of novices was probably 17, and there were hundreds between the ages of 12 and 16. A lot of those same guys are still pounding brass, but we're not going to high school or working full-time anymore.

One of the niceties about NS is it's a weeknight event – a short weeknight event! The CWops group has also borrowed from NS's success and adopted a monthly Wednesday night, one-hour event, but it added a new wrinkle. It spaces the one-hour events eight hours apart so that it is prime 20/40/80 m time in Asia, Europe and then the Americas.

When I was advocating weekday events, I was working for myself, and could easily have broken loose for a day or more in mid week. Ironically, I find myself working full-time, over-the-hill, 40 miles from home these days. Yet, I still advocate for weekday events.

Okay, off the soapbox.

Here's what the January contest landscape looks like (courtesy of WA7BNM's contest calendar at <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html?mode=full>)

...

January 2011	
+ AGB New Year Snowball Contest	0000Z-0100Z, Jan 1
+ SARTG New Year RTTY Contest	0800Z-1100Z, Jan 1
+ AGCW Happy New Year Contest	0900Z-1200Z, Jan 1
+ AGCW VHF/UHF Contest	1400Z-1659Z, Jan 1 (144) and 1700Z-1759Z, Jan 1 (432)
+ ARCI Pet Rock Celebration	1500Z-1800Z, Jan 1
+ Original QRP Contest	1500Z, Jan 1 to 1500Z, Jan 2
+ Kid's Day Contest	1800Z-2359Z, Jan 2
+ RSGB 80m Club Championship, CW	2000Z-2130Z, Jan 3
+ ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400Z, Jan 4
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Jan 5
+ QRP Fox Hunt	0200Z-0330Z, Jan 7
+ NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 7
+ Hunting Lions in the Air Contest	0000Z, Jan 8 to 2400Z, Jan 9
+ PODXS 070 Club PSKFest	0000Z-2400Z, Jan 8
+ WW PMC Contest	1200Z, Jan 8 to 1200Z, Jan 9
+ MI QRP January CW Contest	1200Z, Jan 8 to 2359Z, Jan 9
+ North American QSO Party, CW	1800Z, Jan 8 to 0600Z, Jan 9
+ ARRL RTTY Roundup	1800Z, Jan 8 to 2400Z, Jan 9
+ EUCW 160m Contest	2000Z-2300Z, Jan 8 and 0400Z-0700Z, Jan 9

+ SKCC Weekend Sprint	16°	0000Z-2400Z, Jan 9
+ NRAU-Baltic Contest, CW		0630Z-0830Z, Jan 9
+ NRAU-Baltic Contest, SSB		0900Z-1100Z, Jan 9
+ DARC 10-Meter Contest		0900Z-1059Z, Jan 9
+ Midwinter Contest		1000Z-1400Z, Jan 9
+ QRP Fox Hunt		0200Z-0330Z, Jan 12
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test		1100Z-1200Z, Jan 12 and 1900Z-2000Z, Jan 12 and 0300Z-0400Z, Jan 13
+ RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB		2000Z-2130Z, Jan 12
+ AWA Linc Cundall Memorial CW Contest		2300Z, Jan 12 to 2300Z, Jan 13 and 2300Z, Jan 15 to 2300Z, Jan 16
+ QRP Fox Hunt		0200Z-0330Z, Jan 14
+ NCCC Sprint Ladder		0230Z-0300Z, Jan 14
+ LZ Open Contest		0000Z-0400Z, Jan 15
+ Hungarian DX Contest		1200Z, Jan 15 to 1159Z, Jan 16
+ UK DX Contest, RTTY		1200Z, Jan 15 to 1200Z, Jan 16
+ Feld Hell Sprint		1600Z-1800Z, Jan 15
+ North American QSO Party, SSB		1800Z, Jan 15 to 0600Z, Jan 16
+ Run for the Bacon QRP Contest		0200Z-0400Z, Jan 17
+ QRP Fox Hunt		0200Z-0330Z, Jan 19
+ NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint		0130Z-0330Z, Jan 20
+ RSGB 80m Club Championship, Data		2000Z-2130Z, Jan 20
+ QRP Fox Hunt		0200Z-0330Z, Jan 21
+ NCCC Sprint Ladder		0230Z-0300Z, Jan 21
+ YL-ISSB QSO Party, SSB		0000Z, Jan 22 to 2359Z, Jan 23
+ BARTG RTTY Sprint		1200Z, Jan 22 to 1200Z, Jan 23
+ ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes		1900Z, Jan 22 to 0359Z, Jan 24
+ SKCC Sprint		0000Z-0200Z, Jan 26
+ QRP Fox Hunt		0200Z-0330Z, Jan 26
+ NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint		0130Z-0330Z, Jan 27
+ QRP Fox Hunt		0200Z-0330Z, Jan 28
+ NCCC Sprint Ladder		0230Z-0300Z, Jan 28
+ CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW		2200Z, Jan 28 to 2200Z, Jan 30
+ REF Contest, CW		0600Z, Jan 29 to 1800Z, Jan 30
+ UBA DX Contest, SSB		1300Z, Jan 29 to 1300Z, Jan 30
+ SPAR Winter Field Day		1700Z, Jan 29 to 1700Z, Jan 30
+ WAB 1.8 MHz Phone		1900Z-2300Z, Jan 29
+ Classic Exchange, CW		1400Z, Jan 30 to 0800Z, Jan 31

Now, if you're like me, you probably have little interest in some of the less well-known contests, so looking at a mondo list like this one is somewhat off-putting. But, Bruce Horn has done something nice. You can customize the list so that it only shows the contests in which you have interest.

Here's what my customized January list looks like...

<b>January 2011</b>	
+ ARCI Pet Rock Celebration	1500Z-1800Z, Jan 1
+ NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 7
+ North American QSO Party, CW	1800Z, Jan 8 to 0600Z, Jan 9
+ ARRL RTTY Roundup	1800Z, Jan 8 to 2400Z, Jan 9
+ CWops Mini-CWT Test	1100Z-1200Z, Jan 12 and 1900Z-2000Z, Jan 12 and 0300Z-0400Z, Jan 13
+ NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 14
+ North American QSO Party, SSB	1800Z, Jan 15 to 0600Z, Jan 16
+ NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Jan 20
+ NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 21
+ NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Jan 27
+ NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Jan 28
+ CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW	2200Z, Jan 28 to 2200Z, Jan 30
+ Classic Exchange, CW	1400Z, Jan 30 to 0800Z, Jan 31

I'm feeling somewhat conflicted right now because I know NCCC wants to win the club event in RTTY RoundUp, which starts at 1800Z on Saturday, at exactly the same time as NAQP CW. Ordinarily, I would just do RTTY RU and donate my points to NCCC, like I've done in years past. But, I really enjoy NAQP CW. It's 100 watts maximum, it's friendly, and it's CW. So, I decided I would do my 10 hours in NAQP, as I have done in years past; take an extended nap; and get an early Sunday start in RTTY RU. There's no perfect solution for this one.

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**Holiday Dinner Party – December 2010 (courtesy Bob Wilson, N6TV)**



KI6ARW & KE6QR



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N6MEF, N6DQ, W6EB, N6BV



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K6DGW XYL, K6DGW



K6RIM, N6YEU



W6XB, AE6Y



N6AJR, KG6TT



W6CS, NW6P

See all the rest of the photos at:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/rawilson/2010NCCCHolidayBanquet#>



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