



**Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club**



Issue 479

April 2012

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Guests are always welcome at the NCCC!

Please join us.

"Annual Elections"

"Tools & Techniques for Remote Contesting"

Chris Tate N6WM & Stu Phillips K6TU

Date:

Monday 9th April.

Time:

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

Cattlemens; 2882 Kitty Hawk Road; Livermore,
CA 94551 (925) 447-1224

Please RSVP to nccc.n3zztreasurer@gmail.com
with your dinner choice :-

Dinner selections for this month's meeting are:

1. Teriyaki Chicken
2. 10 Oz. Broiled Top Sirloin Steak
3. Grilled King Salmon
4. Mariani Cheese Ravioli



From the President...

Greetings KB'ers.

Its hard to believe that it was 3 years ago when John, K6MM first called me and suggested that I take a position on the NCCC board of directors. At that time I had only been an amateur radio operator for 2 years! I was nurturing my new passion for contesting and was thrilled to have an opportunity to get involved and learn more about this aspect of the hobby that we all know and love.

During this 3 year period, I served on the board, then took on the role of VP/CC, and ultimately president. I learned how the greatest amateur radio club is run, learned of the quality of its operators and the stations they build and run. I also learned how selfless a group of folks can be in keeping an organization like the NCCC running.

One of the things I have heard from all the past presidents, and I will soon stand amongst them, is a sense of wishing we could have done more. It seems that we come into these positions fully charged with great ideas and aspirations, but once the dust settles and we acknowledge completion of managing day to day operations there is only "so much time in the day." And we wish we could have fit it "all" in. If we are lucky we can leave a mark.

I personally think I will find my solace if I have been successful in sharing some of my excitement, enthusiasm and passion for Radiosport with you all. This is a wonderful hobby and in my opinion the best subset of amateur radio.

Continued on Page 3



Northern California Contest Club

Excellence In Amateur Radio Contesting

Officers:

President	Chris Tate	N6WM	ctate@ewnetinc.com
Vice President	Stu Phillips	K6TU	stu@ridgelif.com
Secretary/Treasurer	Tom Hutton	N3ZZ	nccc.n3zztreasurer@gmail.com
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Director	Bob Vallio	W6RGG	rbvallio@gmail.com

Volunteers:

New Member Mentor	Al Rendon	WT6K	wt6k@arrl.net
Charter Member	Rusty Epps	W6OAT	w6oat@sbcglobal.net
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CQP Chair	Rick Eversole	N6RNO	rick@eversoles.com
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Webmaster Chair	Dean Wood	N6DE	cqden6de@gmail.com
Webmaster	John Miller	K6MM	k6mm@arrl.net
JUG Editors	Ian Parker	W6TCP	w6tcpian@gmail.com
	Stu Phillips	K6TU	stu@ridgelif.com

Thursday Night Contesting:

NCCC—Sprint	Ken Keeler	N6RO	kenkeeler@jazznut.com
NS Ladder	Bill Haddon	N6ZFO	haddon.bill@gmail.com
Slow NS (SNS)	Chris Tate	N6WM	ctate@ewnetinc.com

NCCC Net

Thursday 8 PM

NCCC

Monthly meetings take place on the second Monday of each month !

Details [here](#)

NCCC Membership Information

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

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).

I also feel great about the club's future, and hope you will join me in welcoming, celebrating and wishing the best of luck to another fantastic slate of NCCC leaders. I feel fortunate that we have a provision for past presidents to sit on the board for a final year, so I will have further opportunity to watch more greatness in action, learn from the best and enjoy being of service to the hobby I love.

I thank all of you in the NCCC for your guidance, wisdom and support over the years. I hope to now have some time to reach down to my early energy and excitement, get my butt back in the chair and back on the air. I look forward to working all of you in as many contests as possible!

73,

Oh and of course seeya next time!

Chris/N6WM
President

VP/CC Corner

It seems a little strange to think about the contest year coming to an end – after all, there are contests year round that one can enter to fuel the competitive spirit or simply to take part. Yet April marks the transition point in the year for the NCCC officers and directors – so as my unexpected term as VP/CC draws to a close, I'd like to reflect a moment on this "past" contest year.

I approached this contest year with one goal – improve over the previous year. I chose a number of contests to make an all-out effort, balancing work and family commitments against contest time. For the most part, I entered contests where I had the maximum enjoyment last year with the philosophy that more enjoyment meant more enthusiasm to keep my butt in the chair.

I spent last summer on a number of station improvements and completing the current phase of antenna work (like the contest year, antenna improvements are never "done") – the preparation effort was not in vain!

For the most part, I handily beat my personal goal – I improved my scores, got a lot of enjoyment out of what I did and benefited from the planning and improvement work I did last year.

Except in one regard...

My Sweepstake performance this year was considerably down on 2010. As a club, NCCC was clearly suffering from Sweepstakes fatigue and wanted a break. SS is far from my favorite contest – between the exchange and the doldrums of Sunday, I find it a grind. I didn't miss the grind but I did find myself missing the camaraderie of an all-out team effort and being able to "take one for the team".

The all-out team effort put forth by NCCC for the ARRL RTTY Roundup made me realize what I'd missed for SS – the buildup, helping folks deal with station/antenna/software issues in their preparations, the increased meaning behind “KB” when working NCCC members followed by the extra interest as scores were reported on the reflector.

In other words, the “team spirit” – even in events where I personally don't expect to win, it gives a lot more meaning and enjoyment thinking about the team picture. I know from one-on-one conversations with a lot of you that others feel the same way – I hope we can find more ways to encourage and grow that team spirit in the soon to be “new” contest year.

NCCC is a great group of people, providing many opportunities to learn and to give something back. Thank you for having me as a member of Team NCCC.

It means a lot!

73 & KB!

Stu K6TU

Arduino – A Convenient Tool for Contest-Oriented Homebrewing

13 March 2012

by Tom Epperly NS6T tepperly@gmail.com

The Arduino is a popular open-source single-board microcontroller that is designed to support a wide range of projects designed and implemented by electronics novices such as myself (or the more skilled as well). I first started using the Arduino about two weeks ago to help my son with a science/engineering fair project, and I discovered how powerful and reasonably priced it is. I was already thinking how useful it would be for ham projects when I got a link to the SO2Rduino article from the July/August 2010 issue of the NCJ that confirmed it. The basic board can be purchased at Radio Shack for around \$35 or a number of online vendors for less, and an integrated development environment (IDE) can be downloaded for free from the Arduino website: www.arduino.cc.

For the uninitiated, a microcontroller is an electronic system containing a microprocessor, input/output circuitry, and RAM. In the case of the Arduino Uno, the board has a USB/serial interface, 14 digital I/O lines, 6 analog input lines, 32kB of flash RAM, 2kB of SRAM, and a 1kB EEPROM. The microprocessor runs at 16MHz, and it is programmed using a simple language whose syntax is similar to Java.

Illustration 1 shows the front of the credit card-sized Arduino Uno board. The digital I/O lines are shown at the top, and the analog input lines are at the bottom right. The board can be powered and programmed via a USB connection at the upper left, or it can be powered by a wall wart or battery into the plug on the lower left.

What kind of ham projects can you do with an Arduino? The SO2Rduino shows how the system can be used to provide switching between two rigs. Basically, the Arduino can be used for anything involving digital input and output. For example, combined with two optical isolators, I think it would be straight forward to make a PTT switch and CW keyer. I imagine that one could also make a RTTY FSK keyer or a system to control anything that can be directed by a line that goes from 0V to 5V under software control – antenna systems perhaps or your own custom SO2R setup from the NCJ. I am not really a hardware person despite the fact that I am writing this piece, so I suspect you'll have more applications than I can imagine.

As mentioned above, the Arduino has an open source IDE that you use to write programs called sketches for the device. Illustration 2 shows an example of a working Arduino program to make a LED blink. There are two primary parts, the setup function is run once when the program starts running. As its name indicates, it is to set up the appropriate initial conditions for the program. The loop function is called repeatedly after setup, and it keeps running over and over until the unit is turned off or reset. You can define additional functions that are called from setup or loop.

Illustration 3 shows a screenshot of the Arduino IDE with the simple blink program. Clicking the check icon will compile the program. Clicking the right arrow icon compiles the program, uploads it to the Arduino, and initiates execution.

There pre-built hardware expansions to Arduino called shields which can stack on top of the Arduino. SeedStudio offers an Arduino Relay shield with 4 solid state relays that can control DC90W (AC360VA). There are shields to control motors, do wireless internet, wired internet, read/write to a flash RAM device, and others. Overall, it seems like a device that makes it easy to build and program a variety of simple tools, and I think it is a useful component for contesters to be aware of.

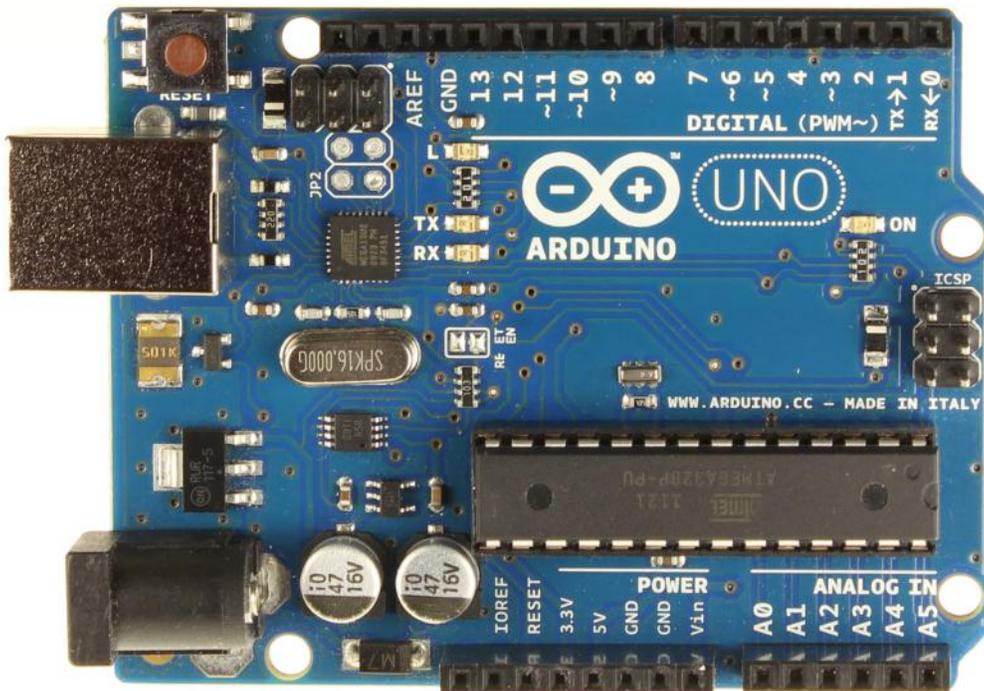


Illustration 2: Closeup picture of the credit card-sized Arduino Uno circuit board.

```

/*
  Blink
  Turns on an LED on for one second, then off for one second, repeatedly.

  This example code is in the public domain.
*/

void setup() {
  // initialize the digital pin as an output.
  // Pin 13 has an LED connected on most Arduino boards:
  pinMode(13, OUTPUT);
}

void loop() {
  digitalWrite(13, HIGH); // set the LED on
  delay(1000); // wait for a second
  digitalWrite(13, LOW); // set the LED off
  delay(1000); // wait for a second
}

```

Illustration 2: Simple Arduino program to make a LED blink.

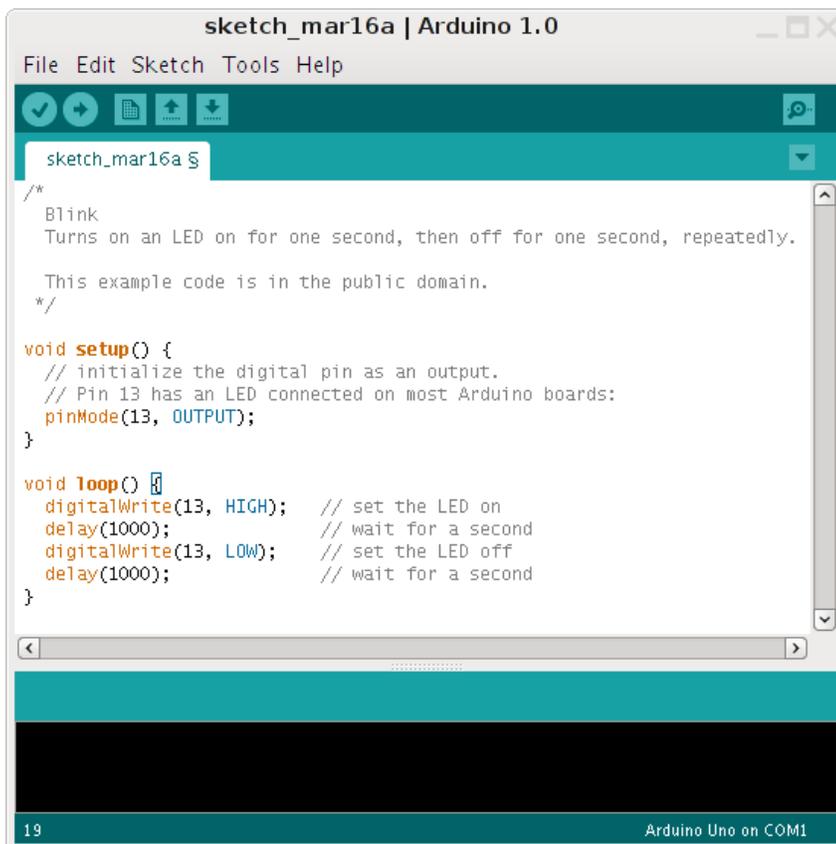


Illustration 3: Screenshot of the IDE running on Linux.

AE6Y Mar. 2012 Aruba Trip Notes – WPX Phone Contest – P49Y

Andrew L. Faber, AE6Y, P49Y

3/31/12 (public version)

Tuesday, Mar. 20 - Wednesday, Mar. 21, 2012.

This time AA flight 272 from SFO left about an hour late at 10 p.m., which was OK since it then arrived in MIA at the more civilized hour of 6 a.m. instead of 5. Slept pretty well, mainly due to choosing seat 10F, which is the one (like 10A) in the second row of coach with extra leg room. On these old 757s, though, the window panels get very cold, but amazingly AA actually supplied a blanket (can't recall the last time I saw any blankets in coach). I hung out at the Admiral's Club at gate D30, enjoying my typical cheese quesadilla breakfast and some napping. The next plane also left about an hour late, so I didn't get to the house till about 4:45 p.m., in my Hertz Chevy Aveo (with only 1300 km, the cleanest rental I've had there in a long time). No questions at customs, though I was a bit worried about how to explain all the stuff I had brought down for Lissette and Lisandro.

I started setting up the station. Fortunately with the new I/O board, the K3 now has pull-up resistors and works properly with the Bandmaster filter system. I also hooked up the internet connection and telephones, which Ed has organized and greatly improved. The drill is as follows, following the directions that Ed had left for us: (1) Connect DSL cable in BR to the side of the black connector hanging from the modem (not the end slot). (2) Plug in modem. Four green light should come on. (3) Plug in router in shack. Worked without a hitch all week.

All the antennas seemed fine except, ironically, the 20m monobander. John had fixed that one by putting in a new balun two weeks ago, but now it wouldn't load properly and the PalStar analyzer showed no real resonance dip, indicative of something amiss in the coax or feed system. In addition, the 20/40 rotor only turned clockwise, not counterclockwise. I left it at 30 degrees, afraid to keep turning it.

At about 5:45 I headed off for a run at Savaneta, feeling stronger than I usually do on the first day of arrival. Very pleasant weather: temp about 80 degrees and relatively low (maybe 50-60%) humidity. Hot and humid enough to sweat and feel good, but not bad enough for sweat to sting my eyes. Then off to dinner at B55 with John Crovelli and Lisandro and Lissette. Quite good food with slightly haphazard service (as John says, he never trusts a waitress who doesn't write down orders). L&L come back to the house to get the stuff they had bought and that I had transported for them, including some heavy study books for him (Seismology, and Research Methodology) and a winter coat for her for their NYC trip in the fall.

Thursday, Mar. 22, 2012. Up a bit before seven, made some coffee and screwed up my courage to climb the tower to check on the 20. Everything looked ok. No obvious feed line problems, no chafing or abrasion on the jumper. It's a long lean out to the driven element feed bolts, and I admired John's ability to change out the balun. I gave each of the nuts a little tightening and headed back down. In the shack, it looked initially as though the problem had been solved, but it immediately reverted to the former state. The K3 would actually load it up, but signals received on it were much weaker than on the C31, so something was

obviously still wrong.

Checking on 10m, I had a nice chat with Jim, CN2R, who is also planning all band, since 10 didn't seem good enough to him to try a single band. Also talked to 5B4AJC (P33W in the contest); as usual, the opening is erratic and not generally to EU.

Went off shopping at Ling and Sons, stopping first to see John Crovelli, then for an hour-long visit with Carl and Sue. They were without power all day, and their guest op Helmut, DF7ZS, had gone off to the beach. On the way back, I noticed a cruise ship in town, the Adventurer of the Seas, which is absolutely enormous. Also the unusual sight of a three-masted square-rigged ship in port.

Back in the shack, I tried out the recommendations from Brad and Glenn at Alpha to try to get the 87A to change bands properly. If you change bands manually, it tunes itself properly, but it doesn't change bands. They had suggested removing the bottom access plate and adjusting a little blue pot, and also reseating connectors. Unfortunately, neither procedure worked. But the amp worked fine with manual band change [and, in fact, worked very well throughout the contest, only occasionally faulting in response to some operator error]. The 86 also loaded up fine on all bands 80-10. I ran guys on 10 for about an hour with the 87A and it was rock solid. The computer wasn't set up and I didn't log the contacts. So if they send cards, I'll reply, but unfortunately LOTW won't help them.

Next step was to hook up the computer. Although at home I had tested it with all serial ports, I decided it would be less fuss just to use the serial ports for rig control and the USB relay box for PTT, R1/R2 and Mic/DVK. It all worked fine.

Strangely, I felt lethargic on my usual run at Savaneta, and actually took a minute more than yesterday. I then picked up John and we drove to the Radisson for a very pleasant buffet dinner with Carl and Sue, JP and Chris, and Helmut. John offered to help out with the tower problems and suggested that I run the resistance checks described in the TailTwister manual on the rotor. Back at the house I did so, and it failed a number, most notably "one half motor" and "the whole motor" (the other half of the motor checked out ok).

Friday, Mar. 23, 2012. After a cuppa joe, off to meet John at 7:30 at Huchada bakery for breakfast. In a marvelous act of true ham spirit and friendship, John spent about three and one-half hours on the back tower. First he disconnected the balun and came to the conclusion that the 10 foot jumper cable that we use to form a rotor loop was defective. He said that water came out of the connector, and the outer part could be rotated on the coax [later I ran continuity checks and it seemed OK, but it must not have had a good connection under power]. We had a spare jumper, which I sent up in the bucket. With it, the PalStar showed it working properly [and indeed it worked fine all weekend]. Next step was to look at the rotor. John doesn't appreciate the elegance of Ed's industrial waterproof connectors, so he cut them off and ran some continuity tests up there, convincing himself that the motor was shot. He then proceeded to swap it out for the CATS-rebuilt TailTwister that we fortunately had in the house. It was difficult to loosen screws on the upper thrust bearing at the top of the tower, but he got one or two loose, and managed to raise the mast with our good come-along (the one John Fore had brought from home in 2008, and which John Crovelli thought was a very high quality unit). I tested the rebuilt rotor first in the shack, and it worked fine. A couple of tower notes from John: (1) he apparently used a u-bolt as a bearing above the lower thrust bearing above the rotor; (2) the rotor cable now terminates in a molex terminal strip (i.e., with screw-in terminals), and one of Ed's evis-

cerated pigtails then goes from that to the rotor. John prefers these because it's easy to run tests; (3) John thinks the tower should be painted.

Anyway, for John it may be a normal morning at the office, but I thought it was an amazing effort, for which I was most appreciative – we celebrated with lunch at the McDonald's at Santa Cruz, then John went off to take a pre-contest nap. I tried to nap also, not very successfully, had dinner, set out some contest food, had a shower and shave, and checked the station out again at about 7 p.m. ready to start the contest an hour later.

WPX Phone Contest Saturday, Mar. 24 – Sunday Mar. 25, 2012 – Contest notes more or less as dictated during the contest. I start off running on 14283 and stay there for 3 ½ hours. At 0334Z I'm at 715 by 290 for 613k points, all on 20. I can't stay here forever, as I do need the 6-point Qs on 40. The first hour on 20 was a very good, 230 contacts, and I'm still amazed at how 8P5A managed 330 in 2010.

After a short time on 40 I have a near-disaster and lose 19 minutes sorting it out. I start to get reports that the audio is breaking up, and notice that the 87A is showing rapidly varying amounts of reflected power. I try using both K3s barefoot and the same thing happens. I fear the worst – a broken feed line or problem with the 40m yagi. Since the PalStar is lying on the table in the shack, I unplug the 40m feed line at the SixPak and put it on the analyzer. Wonder of wonders, it looks perfect! So I retighten it, and everything is copacetic again! It must have been an inadvertently slightly loose connector [the same thing happened to me in an ARRL contest on 160; you'd think I would have learned my lesson and tightened them better.]

At 0600Z I'm at 950 by 438 with 232 on 40. I spent about a half-hour in the American phone band using the tuner, then went down to 7035 to run EUs. I get some intentional CW QRM, then settle down on 7049 to a difficult run with lots of QRM. Back to 7248 for a good US run starting at 0607Z. In fact the 0600Z hour yields what is probably my best ever 40-meter phone total in this contest at 139 Qs.

After a bit over 2 hours running US, I decide at 0822Z to take some time off. I'm OK and the rate isn't bad, but since I have to take off time eventually, it seems a good idea to start now. Totals are: 494 on 40 and 11 on 80; in all 1220 QSOs by 497 mults for 2.5M points. In the 0700Z hour, turning the beam west yielded some VK/ZL prefixes.

After two and a half hours off (including a nap, some coffee and a bit to eat), I get back on 7195 at 1051Z for a while. I work Helmut, P41P, who is also running US, and we are about 30 Qs apart (he says: "a close race").

On the second radio I can see on the P3 that 15 is opening up, so I move there at 1136Z. The strategy is to try to hang out below 21200 to get EU prefixes in the log. It's difficult with QRM and some intermittent ignition-type noise (which mercifully doesn't last long). I stay on 21178 from 1136Z to 1457Z. [An interesting comparison: the rates on Saturday in the 12, 13 and 14 hours running EUs on 21178 are 137, 153 and 128. On Sunday in the 14, 15, 16 and 17 hours on 21174 the rates are 162, 172, 162, and 146. Not sure exactly what to make of that, but a major difference was a much quieter freq on Sunday.] By 1458Z there are 450 Qs in the log, almost all EU with a few out-of-band Americans. I'm hearing signals on 10 now, so will go there.

Well I'm falling asleep and am desperately hungry. It's 2004Z and I've been on 28436 running US and some

EU for the last 5 hours, with 963 contacts on that band. Total is 2681 by 878 for just under 8.4M points. I need a break but don't want to take a full hour off because I've been running at very good rates for some time, so I reluctantly take an 18 minute break to wake up and eat. I've been switching between the C31 aimed NW mostly for US and the 2 el monobander NE for Europe.

At 2209Z I think I'll end my 10m run with 1290 Qs. Since I only have 450 on 15, and they are virtually all outside the US, it should be fertile ground for a late afternoon W/VE run.

OK, I've been running on 15 from 2212Z and it's now 2356Z, almost the end of the first day. Time to go to 20 for a few hours then back to 40 and see if 80 will work at all tonight. Four hours later at 0357Z, almost mid-night local time, and 20 has been a lot of fun the last few hours. Some rare DX has called in: e.g., JT5, 9K2, VU3. Now at 1310 on 20 and have had a pretty steady 150/hour rate.

My plan had been to start the off time at about 0600Z, and it's now 0553Z and I'm ready to quit for the night. I've been on 40 for about an hour and a half, mostly in the US band. I did try 80, but it was very noisy and CQing didn't seem productive. 40 was much better, and I found a pretty nice spot at 7208 to camp out on. Total: 4106 by 1043 for 14.8M points. I really wanted to get above 4k Qs before quitting and was pleased to do so.

Some food, then sleeping the sleep of the damned to wake up a bit before 1300Z, feeling lethargic. But coffee helps. My original thought had been to simply stay off until about 1515Z, thus using up all my remaining off time. OTOH, I still need EU prefixes and I suspect that 15 is wide open to EU now. I decide to try 15, and have a marvelous run from 1405Z to 1803Z all on 21174, which stays very quiet and interference free. I only have to chase away one guy, an ON6, who opens up nearby. Now 1459 Qs on 15, mostly EU. The run was really fun with highly proficient operators and a constant flow of new prefixes. Just when you think you have worked every German or Italian prefix, a new one pops up. Score is 19.4M points, several million above my highest score in this contest. The pileup has been very well-mannered and cooperative in helping me dig out calls (see soapbox below). This whole run has been on the right K3/Alpha 86, to give my K3 and the 87A a rest. Some odd stuff called in, like an HS0, a bunch of YBs (actually, since they are antipodal that isn't unusual), two 9V1s.

At 2042Z, I've just finished a run of US/VE on 10m. The band didn't seem as solid as yesterday, lots of QSB, signals would pop in and out of the noise, etc. In the 18Z hour I worked a bunch of EUs also, then turned the 10m monobander to the SE to pick up a number of SA stations. Now at 4153 by 1244 for 21.5M points. I now have to take my remaining 76 minutes of off time, so I decide to resume at 22Z. I have a good hour on 15 (204) then perhaps unwisely switch to 20 and then to 40 to finish out the contest.

The contest mercifully ends. A quick shave and a shower, then off to pick up Crovelli and head up to Tony Roma's for our post-contest dinner, attended by Carl and Sue, Helmut, and a surprise visitor, Mike, K9NW, who is in Aruba on business.

Monday, Mar. 26, 2012. As usual, Mondays after a contest are enjoyable in Aruba. I awoke from a leaden sleep that easily could have lasted a few more hours at 6:30, because I had agreed to help John take down his feed lines and wire beams this morning. I felt a bit better after a pot of coffee and a PBJ sandwich for breakfast. I spent about 2 ½ hours there, tramping through the cunucu (for this purpose I keep a pair of long

cunucu work pants and old hiking boots in the closet). It's at best semi-skilled labor. Feed lines for both his towers were coiled up at the base of the tower, the beverage feed lines were coiled and taken inside, and the wire beam elements (14 in all: 4 elements on 40 and 3 on 80, all times two) were coiled, taped to the catenary and hoisted back up into the air. John was very appreciative and I was happy to be sweating in the sunshine after a cooped-up weekend. Since I was hot and sweaty, after a quick check of email, I decided to take my usual run and swim at Savaneta in the noonday sun ("Mad dogs, Englishmen, and hams..."), parking at the second pullout south of Marina Pirata. The run was slow, but it still felt great to be outside.

After a shower and shave at the house, I headed off to socialize a bit. Had a coke with Martin and Truus, who were just finishing lunch on their patio overlooking their private beach. What a nice spot. We had a very pleasant chat. They are heading back to Canada for the summer in a week. Then a few hours at Carl and Sues, most of it consumed with a long chat with Carl and Helmut about radio and EU contesting. Helmut treated me to two Amstel lights from his collection that had to be used up before his departure the next day. We verified that the Alpha 86 that was on the operating table (they have another in a closet) put out full output on all bands, and I agreed to buy it, giving Carl some cash as a down payment with a check-in-the-mail promise for the rest. The only odd thing was that the tune indicator stayed way to the right, but the amp seemed to put out full power with low grid current, so I assumed that was OK. I took it back to the shack with me.

Then to Chris and JPs. Jean-Pierre was still at work, but I left behind an assortment of small metal project boxes from Fry's for him to play with; JP had complained that they were no longer available at the island's Radio Shack outlets. Also, a dvd for Chris and Cindy and a walkie-talkie set for Andy (who seemed delighted with it). I had brought double-A batteries instead of triple-As, but he scrounged some smaller ones from various remote controls, and they seemed to work fine. We had been talking about dinner, but I canceled out due to the need to do some legal work this evening. Chris very kindly fed me some pizza a coke instead.

Tuesday, Mar. 27, 2012. The usual smooth sailing from Aruba to MIA to SFO and back home by 9:30 p.m. or so. Tom (W2SC, 8P5A) and Kathy were in the row ahead of me, so we shared some contest tall tales. I had agreed to take back one of Joop's Orion II transceivers for Carl/Yvonne, so I had that suitcase to lug back in addition to me two (though I managed to fit one of mine inside the other and pack my fairly small amount of possessions inside the smaller one, so no worries, mate).

Soapbox, as sent to 3830 reflector.

A very enjoyable contest. Condx here were pretty good, except that 80 for some reason seemed to be a noisy bedlam, and I could never get anything going there (in contrast to a WPX phone a few years ago when I had 500 plus Qs on that band).

There were three high points of the contest for me:

1) 10m Saturday afternoon, during which we had our usual Mideastern opening. It's hard to be blase about being called by 2 JYs and an OD5!

2) 20m Saturday night (circa 0000-0400Z) which was open all over the place at various times and produced a steady stream of interesting callers.

3) 15m Sunday morning (1400-1800Z), when I had a delightful 4-hour run of EUs on 21185, with a clear, quiet frequency, many new prefixes, and a very well-behaved pileup (e.g., if I said something like: "the station ending November", which usually produces bedlam in an EU pileup, this time it really worked and only one or two stations would come back). Then I switched to 10, and it was like going to the zoo -- with many casual, not-in-the-contest "Just stopped by to say hello, what do you need from me?" operators. The contrast was amazing. But you gotta love them also, since they put points on the board.

WPX Phone is a real test of phonetics. I hereby suggest greater use of the geographic phonetic alphabet. For example "Mexico Germany" is much more intelligible than "Mike Golf." Similarly the numbers in Germanic languages (e.g., English) are not differentiated enough for intelligibility in the presence of interference. Thus, "five" sounds like "nine" and the others are too monosyllabic also. It is obvious that, for example, Spanish and Italian work much better. My modest suggestion is that we should all use: zero, uno, due, tres, quattro, cinco, six, siete, otto or ocho, nova or nueve. Doing so would lessen necessary repeats and up the scores considerably.

Back to reality, I can't say enough for the efforts of neighbor W2GD, who spent several hours on our 65-foot Rohn 45 tower Friday morning. With bumbling assistance from myself as ground crew, John not only diagnosed and fixed a bad jumper on the 20m monobander, but also diagnosed and swapped out a broken rotor! In return I helped him on Monday to take down his temporary wire antennas in his nasty cunucu (the cactusy land in Aruba), but that wasn't skilled labor at all. Thanks, John, for help in the true amateur spirit.

73 and thanks to the organizers and all participants,

Andy, AE6Y, P49Y

[Rate sheet and full report will be on www.arubaqth.com]

Rig: 2xK3/P3, "manual" Alpha 87A and 86

Software: CQPWIN ver. 12.5

Ant: 2 el 10, 5 el 15, 4 el 20, 2 el 40, 1 el 80, C31, beverages

Here are some scores for comparison:

Band	P49Y 2012 HP	P40W 2012 LP	P40L 2011 HP	P49Y 2010 LP	P49Y 2008 HP
10m	1666	1201	1308	1210	9
15	1674	1176	1924	1330	1461
20	1343	982	1448	758	1662
40	720	406	443	408	496
80	16	92	81	157	533
160	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5419/1273	3857/1105	5204/1235	3842/1047	4161/933
Score	23,149,505	14,185,990	21,001,175	13,644,504	14,379,396



As always, Aruba is a great place for socializing, this time with dinners and camaraderie with Carl and Sue (P40V, P40YL), JP and Chris (P43A, P43C), John (W2GD, P40W), Lisandro (P43L) and Lissette, Martin and Truus (P49MR, P49MRS), Helmut (DF7ZS, P41P in the contest), and a surprise post-contest dinner visitor on business, Mike (K9NW).

Montana Contesting in Pictures – Roger Cooper N3RC



N3RC Antenna



N3RC Antenna crew



Tower in the Snow

Montana Contesting—continued

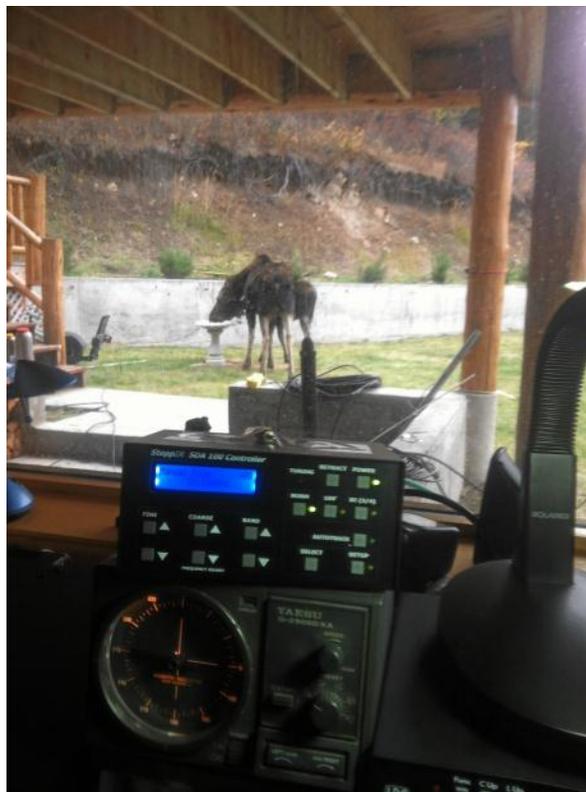


N3RC Shack

Montana Contesting—continued



Antenna in the snow



N3RC second op getting a drink in between shifts



Contest Calendar—April page 1

UBA Spring Contest, SSB	0600Z-1000Z, Apr 1
RSGB RoPoCo SSB	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 2
RSGB 80m Club Championship, CW	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 2
ARS Spartan Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, Apr 3
SARL 80m QSO Party	1700Z-2000Z, Apr 5
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0130Z-0200Z, Apr 6
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 6
LZ Open 40m Sprint Contest	0400Z-0800Z, Apr 7
QRP ARCI Spring QSO Party	1200Z, Apr 7 to 2359Z, Apr 8
PODXS 070 Club PSK 31 Flavors Contest	1200-1800 local, Apr 7
SP DX Contest	1500Z, Apr 7 to 1500Z, Apr 8
EA RTTY Contest	1600Z, Apr 7 to 1600Z, Apr 8
144 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 9
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, Apr 11
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 11 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 11 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 12
NAQCC-EU Monthly Sprint	1800Z-2000Z, Apr 11
RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 11
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 13
TARA Skirmish Digital Prefix Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Apr 14
Montana QSO Party	0000Z, Apr 14 to 2400Z, Apr 15
JIDX CW Contest	0700Z, Apr 14 to 1300Z, Apr 15
New Mexico QSO Party	1400Z, Apr 14 to 0200Z, Apr 15
EU Spring Sprint, CW	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 14
QCWA Spring QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 14 to 1800Z, Apr 15
Georgia QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 14 to 0359Z, Apr 15 and 1400Z-2359Z, Apr 15
Yuri Gagarin International DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 14 to 2100Z, Apr 15
International Vintage Contest HF 1300Z-1600Z, Apr 15	0700Z-1000Z, Apr 15 and 1300Z-1600Z, Apr 15
Hungarian Straight Key Contest	1500Z-1700Z, Apr 15



Contest Calendar—April page 2

ARRL Rookie Roundup, SSB	1800Z-2359Z, Apr 15
222 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 17
RSGB 80m Club Championship, Data	1900Z-2030Z, Apr 19
Holyland DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 20 to 2100Z, Apr 21
ES Open HF Championship	0500Z-0559Z, Apr 21 and
0600Z-0659Z, Apr 21 and	
0700Z-0759Z, Apr 21 and	
0800Z-0859Z, Apr 21	
CQ Manchester Mineira DX Contest	1200Z, Apr 21 to 2359Z, Apr 22
EU Spring Sprint, SSB	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 21
Michigan QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 21 to 0400Z, Apr 22
EA-QRP CW Contest	1700Z-2000Z, Apr 21 (20-10m) and
2000Z-2300Z, Apr 21 (80m) and	
0700Z-1100Z, Apr 22 (40m) and	
1100Z-1300Z, Apr 22 (20-10m)	
South Dakota QSO Party	1700Z, Apr 21 to 1700Z, Apr 22
Ontario QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 21 to 0500Z, Apr 22 and
	1200Z-1800Z, Apr 22
Feld Hell Sprint	2000Z-2200Z, Apr 21
YU DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 21 to 0500Z, Apr 22 and
0900Z-1700Z, Apr 22	
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, Apr 25 and
	1900Z-2000Z, Apr 25 and
	0300Z-0400Z, Apr 26
432 MHz Spring Sprint	1900 local - 2300 local, Apr 25
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, Apr 27
10-10 Int. Spring Contest, Digital	0001Z, Apr 28 to 2359Z, Apr 29
Nebraska QSO Party	1100Z, Apr 28 to 1700Z, Apr 29
SP DX RTTY Contest	1200Z, Apr 28 to 1200Z, Apr 29
Helvetia Contest	1300Z, Apr 28 to 1259Z, Apr 29
QRP to the Field	1500Z, Apr 28 to 0300Z, Apr 29
Florida QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 28 to 0159Z, Apr 29 and
	1200Z-2159Z, Apr 29
BARTG Sprint 75	1700Z-2100Z, Apr 29

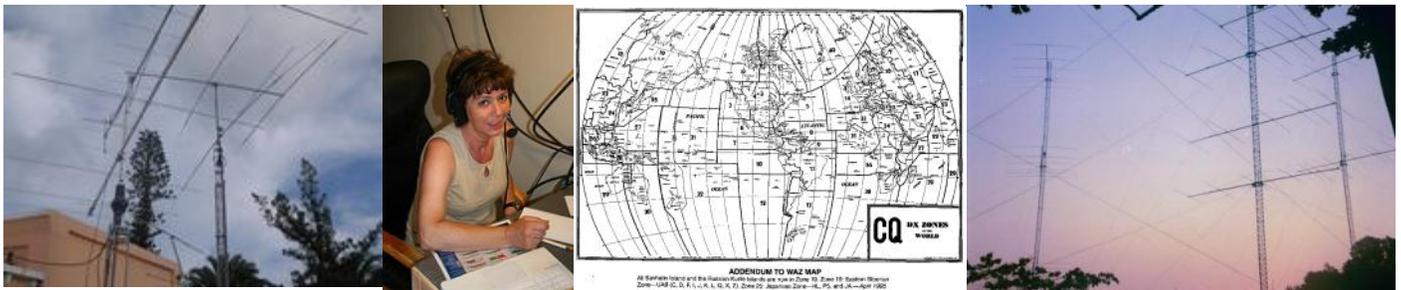


Please consider writing an article for JUG !

May 2012 Newsletter Deadline—April 28th

This is your newsletter so lets make it something we are proud of. I hope you will consider writing an article for the JUG! Whether its about your station, recent contest experience or a technical article we would appreciate hearing from you.

Send your articles to Ian W6TCP w6tcp@comcast.net and Stu K6TU stu@ridgelift.com



12 STORE BUYING POWER



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