



Publication of the  
Northern California  
Contest Club



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NCCC Net  
Thursday 8 PM  
3830+/-

## Our Next Meeting

### CQ WW WPX

**Date:** Monday, 8 January 2005

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

**Location:** Chevy's Fresh Mex, 2000 Powell St., Emeryville, CA 94608 (510) 653-8210

See Web site for meal details, price, etc.

Directions:

<http://maps.citysearch.com/map/view/11403314>

Please RSVP to [K6EU](#) by Friday, 5 January.

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### NCCC Officers

President: Dean Straw, N6BV

Vice-President and Contest Chairman: Fred Jensen, K6DGW

Secretary/Treasurer: Tom Carney, K6EU

### Directors

Past President: Mike Heideman, N7MH

Director: Jeff Stai, WK6I

Director: Ed Schuller, K6CTA

Director: Alan Eshleman, K6SRZ

Honorary Director: Rusty Epps, W6OAT

**Webmaster:** Ed Muns, W0YK [w0yk@msn.com](mailto:w0yk@msn.com)

**JUG Editor:** Rob Brownstein, [k6rb@baymoon.com](mailto:k6rb@baymoon.com)

## Musings from the President

By Dean Straw, N6BV

We had a wonderful Holiday Dinner meeting at Michael's at Shoreline in Mountain View on December 11. I was very pleased at the large turnout, which included a number of spouses. Rayma and I had the salmon and it was great. The other entrees were reported to be excellent as well.

Once again, I indicated to the gathered multitude how enormously proud I am of the NCCC. We all saluted the Founding Father of NCCC, Jim Neiger, N6TJ. Both Jim and Rick Hilding, K6VVA, (in effect the second member of NCCC behind Jim) were in attendance at Michael's. Jim recalled how he scribbled the famous letters "NCCC" on the back of a cocktail napkin in August 1970. Little did Jim and Rick realize that some 36 years later the Northern California Contest Club would still be going long and strong!

I explained the significance behind the Duck Story, and related how our brood of Contest Ducks had put in such a tremendous effort in the 2006 ARRL November Sweepstakes contest. Our claimed score is now somewhat north of 20 million points. The "duck fight" between PVRC and NCCC will come right down to the wire, because PVRC is claiming a similar number. I think it will come right down to how clean the logs are, and it may be as close as one or two logs out of several hundred submitted by each club.

The evening's musical entertainment began with Ken Keeler, N6RO, who not only plays a fantastic banjo, but who also plays a pretty mean guitar. Ken led us in a variety of Holiday songs, including a rather naughty version of "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." After Ken's sing-along, we were treated to the unique talents of TV Bob, Bob Wilson, N6TV.

How can I possibly describe what Bob does with his hands? It's called "manualism" and you simply have to hear it to believe it. Bob's version of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer brought tears to the eyes of most of the audience -- tears of laughter, not sorrow, of course. [Go to: <http://rawilson.googlepages.com/Manualism.htm> to hear many of Bob's musical renditions in their full glory.]

What do we have to look forward to in 2007? A number of RTTY devotees are making a serious charge at the ARRL RTTY Round Up in January. Our VP Fred, K6DGW, is heading up organization for this assault. Not just coincidentally, PVRC is the present holder of the Unlimited Club competition gavel in this RTTY RU, so Fred and company are determined to regain the gavel from them.

In March and May 2007, NCCC will be competing in the CQ WPX Phone and CW contests respectively, again gunning for the position of top-gun contest club in the world. That's a few months away but the organization to pull this off is starting already.

See you all in 2007, and have a Happy Holiday season to finish off 2006.

73, KB and Kick, Duck!

Dean, N6BV



## VPCC News and Views

By: Fred Jensen, K6DGW

A rousing big thanks to all of our SS Floggers, Organizers, Log Dogs, and to all the Ducks who paddled in the SS pond this year for an NCCC win. We posted an impressive score, and best of all, we know that all our Q's will be counted. And, it was fun. We face fierce competition, but then, competition is what the Sport of Amateur Radio is all about, and the thrill of a close, hard-fought win trumps a blowout in my book any day.

By the time you read this, both the Stew and RAC Winter will be history. I acquired a new amplifier from Rob, K6RB (thanks to some very generous airborne logistic help from Rick, N6XI), and will have made my high power debut on Topband, first HP in 53 years! I'm really hoping for a much better showing in the Stew as I have always been able to hear more than I can work ... we'll see. At this point, at or below 23 cm, I believe that 6m is the only ham band on which my call has never been heard [that I know of ☺]. Ahh, so many bands, so little time!

January will bring us the ARRL RTTY Round-Up (see below), the winter running of two of my favorite contests, the NAQP CW and SSB, and the CQ 160. Something for every weekend. I'll have to decide on a name to use for the NAQP's ... maybe it's time to revert to one of the ones my Mom and Dad gave me. I can't believe anyone doesn't know it, but just in case, the complete contest calendar for 12 months is available at [www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/](http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/) and Bruce has also conjured up a perpetual calendar out through 2016 for those contests whose dates can be predicted.

**RTTY Round-Up:** Our two major "focus contests" this NCCC year are Sweepstakes and CQ WPX. Notwithstanding, we have a fairly large contingent of members who enjoy RTTY contesting, and some are set up

to make some big scores with SO2R. So, we're going to take a shot at regaining the RU Gavel from PVRC (who else?) this year.

The primary key for a win for us is "As many Ducks paddling in the RU pond for as long as possible." A close secondary key is to have as many of our high-scoring Big Gun stations active as we can. Being able to work a station on all of the contest bands does tend to diminish the value of the split-station HMO with its attendant logistics a bit, but use your own judgement. The ARRL 10 did demonstrate that 10m will likely open, just maybe for shorter periods, and 15 should open as well.

The new FCC allocations will be in effect. There is a chart on the ARRL Web site available for download. It is color coded, which is unfortunate for those of us who see the world in monochrome, but here's a summary of RTTY allocations as decoded for me by my wife:

160: The whole band for Extra,  
Advanced, and General  
80: 3.500 – 3.600 Extra  
3.525 – 3.600 Adv+Gen  
40: 7.000 – 7.125 Extra  
7.025 – 7.125 Adv+Gen  
20: 14.000 – 14.150 Extra  
14.025 – 14.150 Adv+Gen  
15: 21.000 – 21.200 Extra  
21.025 – 21.200 Adv+Gen  
10: 28.000 – 28.300 Everyone  
except no-code Techs

So, make plans for whatever you can manage and let us know, either email to [k6dgw@arrl.net](mailto:k6dgw@arrl.net) or to the NCCC Reflector. And, if you're an HMO looking for a Big Gun to guest op, or a Big Gun looking for a guest op, do the same and we'll match people up.

In closing, note that WB6S (ex-K6RCE) has magically morphed into K6TD ... [Kicking Six Tough Ducks?]

73, KB/D  
Fred K6DGW, VP/CC (and RU Flogger Dude)

## **SS Cliffhanger** **By Rob Brownstein, K6RB**

For those who thought "it's going to be close" was just rhetoric, think again. In a recent exchange of email messages between Dean, N6BV, and Jim, WX3B (the PVRC honcho), it appears that the 2006 Unlimited Club competition centers around a figure of 21 million, give or take.

Early comparisons seemed to give PVRC the nod with about 760K lead. But, subsequent information points to a smaller lead.

It looks like the gavel's ultimate destination will rest upon the accuracy of every one of NCCC's and PVRC's logs.

In any case, the additional participation stirred up by the rivalry was a boon to every player. PVRC mobilized its troops and gave us a go.

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## **Coastal Marine** **By Fred Jensen, K6DGW**

In my first contribution to the JUG, I mentioned that I had gotten an introduction to commercial CW while in high school. While not totally ham radio, it is fairly directly connected and Rob occasionally needs fodder for the newsletter so here is the story. Stories like this would probably not have been unique in the 20's and 30's, but by the latter part of the 50's, they're probably less common.

KOK was well known to hams in So. California since it pretty much dominated your receiver as you got close to one of it's transmit frequencies. I never saw the transmitter site, but was told that most were 5KW and the remainder LF rigs were 10KW. I and my teen friends used it for code practice as they often transmitted Press Wireless for a couple of hours in the evening, and when they weren't doing that, they were working ships. We knew their QSX frequencies from their traffic wheel,

and it was a lot of fun to see if we could hear the ships on our dipoles. I had received my Novice license near the end of 1953 when I was 13, and my General the next summer. When the required service period was up, I figured I was ready for the Extra. I was 15 ½ and had a permit, but driving in downtown LA didn't really appeal to me and I conned my Mom into a ride to the Federal Building for the test.

I got the schedule screwed up (give me a little break, I was just an excited kid) and we arrived 3+ hours early. The examiner was getting ready for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Telegraph exam, and told me to fill out the application and take the code test @ 25 WPM. If I passed, I got credit for it when the Extra came up that afternoon, and if I didn't pass, I could take the 20 WPM Extra then.

So I did, and I passed, which wasn't surprising ... my friends and I had been competing for top code speed, and all of us were hovering a bit over 30 WPM at that point (we tended to be the Nerds in school, but maybe that's obvious ☺). The examiner then suggested that I sit for the written, "What's to lose?," he said, so I did. I passed that one exactly. Having used the coastal marine service for practice, I'd apparently learned enough operating procedures and their regulations to make up for the rest of the exam I did not know. (That also convinced my Mom to let me stick around for the Extra exam ... it was a profitable day at the FCC!).

On finding out that I now had a 2<sup>nd</sup> Telegraph, my Elmer slipped me into a relief operator job at KOK by prevailing on the Chief Operator who was his good friend. My 16<sup>th</sup> birthday was in a few days as I headed to the station on a Saturday for my first shift.

The crew was all middle-aged and they all knew how the 16 year-old had gotten the job, and as I had expected, they gave me a fairly hard time. That shift was to be "over-the-shoulder" training, which I had assumed

meant I, with headphones, would look over his shoulder and listen and observe. It sort of worked like that, except he was looking over my shoulder as I was operating – well, trying to operate might be closer. Every time I made a mistake, which would have been most every time I touched the key or the mill, he'd box me on the side of my head and then "explain" what I was doing wrong.

You could do that to kids in those days, never any blood but I did spend a number of shifts with a headache and sore shoulders. As I got better at the job and became more familiar, the guys backed off a bit. About half-way through the school year, two of my friends and I built what may have been a predecessor of the TO-keyers. It had 9 or 10 dual-triodes in it, a relay to key the transmitter, and we modified our bugs to key them. They weighed about a brick-and-a-half. I took mine to work and was roundly abused for resorting to such a crutch.

Real operators used bugs and, if a Vibroplex, slowed it down with guy clamps and other weights (I had a really cheap surplus J-36 Lionel-made bug and it didn't need slowing down). My crew must have gotten word to some of the ships because I began to get a lot of QSD's. But by now, I didn't care, I just really wanted to become a regular member of the crew.

As graduation and college loomed, my last shift arrived. As we were finishing the logs and handing off to the next watch, the CO pulled out a small cake with one candle. It had only been 11 months, but no one seemed to care about that either. With the crew around me, he made a little ceremony of taking my ticket off the wall and completing the service record, and I cut the cake. I thought then, and I do now, that I had finally been accepted by those old guys. I would be gone to college in a week, 17 in two, and my 2<sup>nd</sup> Telegraph would eventually lapse for lack of service.

I got to work one semi-emergency – a ship had lost power. No one sank or even got

wet, but it was exciting, I got to taste a little adrenaline, and the CO was behind me all the time, but this time no one boxed me on my head. Walt, the guy I usually ate my swing shift lunch with, had asked me if I'd leave the keyer with him one time. I did and had to plead to get it back on my next shift. He and two others commissioned my two friends to build them each one. So much for QSD.

Obviously, radio played a huge role for me in that senior high school year, I enjoyed that job immensely and I learned a great deal about coastal marine operations. It has to have been the best possible job a young ham could have had, and it probably burned CW indelibly into my brain too. But thinking back on it, two other things stand out more for me now. I learned the responsibilities of an employee -- honest service in return for a paycheck; and I learned what it really meant to be a member of a team. That last one would turn out to be a major contributor to my survival a few years later on the other side of the planet.

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### **The Annual Holiday Party**

We started off with an introduction and toast to Jim Neiger, N6TJ, who with a crew of hard-core young contesters founded NCCC back in 1970. Jim was there to receive the accolades, too.

The food and friendship abounded at our annual dinner, and Dean, N6BV, explained (once again) how the "kick, duck" slogan originated. He should consider "stand-up comedy."

Highlights of the evening were the auction and entertainment. Bob, N6TV, our auctioneer did his usual fine job, injecting his quips while cajoling the bidders to dig deeper and bid higher.

Ken, N6RO, led us in a round of holiday songs as the opening act for the famous NCCC manualist – Bob, N6TV. It is

impossible to watch Bob "do his thing" without laughing up a storm. In addition to the basic tunes, his fills and embellishments accompanied by punctuating hand motions are just unique. He is a still largely undiscovered talent.





## Looking Back at NCCC after 10 Years By: Rob Brownstein, K6RB

It's hard to believe it's been 10 years, now. I still remember that Monday in early 1997 when I rode up to my first NCCC meeting with Lloyd (AA6T) and Trey (N5KO). It was in a little Mexican restaurant in the East Bay.

For years (since 1958), I had been primarily a CW rag chewer. During my first 12 years of ham radio (from age 11 to 23), I used a Viking Adventurer and HQ-110. As I moved around Long Island, I would throw up a random length wire, tune it with a homebrew LC tuner, and work a few stations, here and there.

In 1970, I scraped up enough to buy a new HW-100 kit and matching power supply kit, and for the next 12 years (age 23 to 35), that's what I used. In 1972, I ended up in Israel for a year and used the "hot water 100" and a home made 15 m delta loop fashioned out of old, aluminum, irrigation pipe. It was 16 feet off the ground and hand rotated using a vice-grip pliers and a C-clamp to lock it in place.

Returning to the US in 1973, I moved to California and continued my moving around and random-wire antenna farming. Finally, in 1981 I bought a house on the west side of Santa Cruz and erected my first tower and yagi antenna system (a 40' Rohn 25G with 4-element TET tribander). I was still using my HW-100 but making some impact.

My first contest was the first Israeli 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary contest in the spring of 1973, and I loved it. My next contest was SSCW from my west-side Santa Cruz abode. Now, after almost 25 years in radio, I felt it was time to get my WAS and DXCC as quickly as possible. So, I used SSCW and Phone to snag my 50 states, and ARRL DX contest to begin my quest for 100+ countries worth of QSLs.



It was shortly after moving to this house (in 1984) that I received a letter from NCCC inviting me to become a member. Like Woody Allen, though, I questioned the credibility of a club that would have me as a member. So, I just continued doing my solitary contesting and CW rag chewing things right up to that fateful Monday in 1997.

As for ham radio clubs, in general, I had very little interest. My experience with the Santa Cruz Amateur Radio Club was a group dominated by HT-wielding non-code techs gathered together to collectively support their 2-meter repeater. Sorry, not interested! I never felt that ham radio was a group activity in the sense that it would be fun to sit and watch another ham make QSOs. For me, that ranked right up there with watching grass grow. So, I wasn't sure what NCCC would be able to offer to me, or what I would be able to offer to the club, that would make it compelling to join. But, in 1997, I mentioned to Lloyd that I would like to go to a club meeting.

So, here we were, driving to the East Bay, and I wondered if I had enough credentials to make the cut. Upon arrival, I was greeted by a smiling N6TV and quickly introduced to W6OAT, W0YK, AI6V and several others. They all seemed interested in knowing about my station, my activities, and so on. During dinner (not very memorable food), I had a chance to chat with several of the members, and each seemed uniquely interesting but bonded to one another through some strange connection.

The dinner was over and meeting begun. My application was read out; I was invited to leave the room; and returned a few minutes later to a round of applause. That was 10 years ago, and I still remember the elation I felt when I walked back into that room as a member of NCCC.

These 10 years have been great. I learned to use computer logging, SO2R, and discovered new strategies for the various

contests. When I joined, I had an IC-761, a KLM KT34-XA, and an Ameritron AL-80 (the original). I was hand logging my contests because all of my computers (I had just one) was a Macintosh. I ended up writing my own contest logging program using the Mac and a flat-file database application. Later, I got my first PC and began using Andy's CQPWIN program. What an improvement!

I have always been a "do"-er. In those organizational studies that show 20 percent do all the work and 80 percent go along for the ride, I have always been in the activist group. It's my nature. So, I was pleased to serve as secretary/treasurer for NCCC, and more than willing to step up to the plate and edit the JUG when Kent's wife was no longer able.

These 10 years have gone by in what feels like a flash. I know I would never have become as much of a contester had I not joined NCCC. I get a special feeling helping out in contests where we are doing club competitions. And, I enjoy putting NCCC on the map in state QSO parties.

To celebrate my 10<sup>th</sup> year, I am finally going to put my toe into the RTTY pool. After pooh-poohing RTTY as being cybernetic ham radio, but watching fellow skeptic, Ed (W0YK), become nearly obsessed with it, I just can't sit this one out.

So, thank you, NCCC members, for having voted me in back in 1997 and letting me be part of an august group of contesters who are more interested in sharing than in keeping secret the keys to their successes.

-- CL --

