



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



August
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Issue 447

NCCC Net
Thursday 8 PM
3610+/-

Saturday NCCC Sierra Chapter BBQ at N6XI - Truckee
Informal Agenda - Show and Tell

BBQ provided by the Tavan's. Contributed side dishes are welcome, except pork and shellfish.

Please RSVP to N6XI by Wednesday, 6 August, and mention the side dish you expect to bring.

Date: Saturday, 8 August 2009

Time: 11am to whenever

Location: Rick Tavan's QTH, 12921 Filly, Truckee, CA (530)587-3164

Go to Website for directions

Regular Monday NCCC Meeting

"The 44th Running of CQP" – Rick Ebersole (N6RNO)
"Going on a CQP Expedition" – Fred Jensen (K6DGW)

Order your dinner directly with the RoundTable staff, or check with Jack Brindle, W6FB, to participate in a pizza special deal.

Date: Monday, 10 August 2009

Time: 6pm schmooz, 6:30pm dinner, 7pm program

Location: [Round Table Pizza](#), 4400 Stevens Creek Blvd, San Jose 95129 (408) 983-0900

NCCC Officers

President: [Jack Morgan, KF6T](#)

Vice-President and Contest Chairman: [Fred Jensen, K6DGW](#)

Secretary/Treasurer: [Jack Brindle, W6FB](#)

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JUG Editor: Rob Brownstein, k6rb@baymoon.com



Inland View

By Jack Morgan, KF6T

The NCJ NAQP Contests

This is a really a nice contest series that happens six times a year. Two times each for CW, SSB and RTTY. Some of the features I like are the "easy on your body" 10 hour (out of 12) operating period. It is over in a day and you have the rest of the weekend to relax. I like the fact that you can work the same station on each of the six bands and everyone runs low power so the QRM is not so bad. Low power also makes SO2R operation run with fewer interference issues. So give it a shot – the next SSB competition is on August 15th. Check the rules at ncjweb.com/naqprules.php

Get Ready for CQP!

The California QSO Party is just around the corner. It starts at 1600 UTC on October 3rd. Dust off that Field Day gear and escape to one of the "rare" counties on an expedition. Hopefully Fred, K6DGW will get you fired up to head up to the boonies with his

expedition talk at the next regular NCCC meeting. Also, Rhino, N6RNO will give you the rundown on this year's CQP. Both will be featured on Monday night, August 10 at the RoundTable (very nice meeting facility at 4400 Stevens Creek Blvd, SJ – near Harry's Hofbrau).

Joint Meeting in Stockton

We had about 45 MLDXCC and NCCC members attend the July 25th joint meeting in Stockton. The location allowed some of our distant members a chance to attend a meeting. Your company was great and we all enjoyed and envied Al's (AD6E) free-form P29 island-hopping and operating presentation.

NCCC Sierra Chapter – Truckee BBQ

I hope you make it to Rick's (N6XI) beautiful QTH in Truckee for the "Third Sporadic Radiogrill"! The radiogrill is Rick's secret contest weapon – only shown once a year. Thanks to Rick and Ann (KD6MOB) for their great hospitality!

NCCC Webinars

Thanks to Dean, N6DE for heading up the Webinar program. He has worked out many of the bugs and now several technical presentations are available on-line for viewing. There is something eerie about watching a recorded session that appears to take control of your PC and talk to you!

VP/CC

By: Fred Jensen, K6DGW

The July/August NCJ arrived and while waiting for my truck at the shop, I read through it. It has results for the Feb NA CW and SSB Sprints, the Feb NAQP RTTY, and the Jan CW and SSB, and the more I read, the more impressed I was. For the CW Sprint, our Team 1 [N5KO, W6YX, N6TV, K6XX, N6RO, K6AW, AE6Y, W6RGG, N6XI, KF6T] took 1st by 354 points out of over 133K. NCCC Team 2 took 5th. Our SSB Sprint team which was short one member still took 2nd in the team competition.

In the NAQP RTTY, our Team 1 [W0YK, N6ML, K6RB, W6EI, N6IE] took 2nd and Team 2 took 6th. Our Team 1 [W6NL, AE6Y, K6RB, N6WM, N3ZZ] finished 6th in the NAQP Phone, and in the NAQP CW, our Team 1 [N5KO, W7RN, N6RO, K6RB, W0YK] swept to 1st by over 138K out of 1 million total. N5KO was at the key at W6NL and was 3rd overall single op, while W7RN was operated by N6TV who took 4th in single op.

That is a truly outstanding and impressive showing. Congratulations to all! We also seem to be fielding more teams than our usual competitors, particularly in the NAQP's. One good news item for VP/CC is that our top teams seem to finish in the expected order, suggesting that we've got the team assignment drill fairly well honed. Team assignment gets a little harder for the higher numbered teams because they have mainly part-timers which adds a lot of uncertainty, but we haven't been too far off the mark there either.

I really enjoyed July meeting in Mountain View. Rick's description of his Locust Peak adventures and the amount of work it has taken so far was mind boggling. Don's presentation on Remote Control on a shoestring answered a number of questions I've had about how to do this. And of course, the camaraderie was really neat, makes me want to attend all of them. That's unlikely, but my goal is every other month.

Coming up in August, we have the ARRL UHF, the NAQP CW and SSB, WAE CW, and the OH, KS, HI, MDC, and NJ QSO Parties. I broke down and finally updated Firefox [it wouldn't stop bugging me] which may have been a mistake ... now the PropFire add-in doesn't work. Hopefully N0HR will update it soon. SS #1024 is on the backside of the sun right now and hopefully it will persist long enough that we'll get another shot with it. You know things are bad when one sunspot group is front page news.

73,

Fred K6DGW

Dues

Have you paid your dues for the year? It's still just \$24 (cheap), with students just \$12 (even cheaper) and family members \$12 (what a deal).

Contact [Jack Brindle, W6FB](#)

We can get your dues via PayPal or snail mail or via cash at the next meeting.

August Webinar Schedule:

N1MM: How to Configure and Operate

by John K6MM

Wednesday, August 12

7:00PM-8:30PM PDT

Writelog: How to Configure and Operate

by Mark K6UFO

Wednesday, August 26

7:00PM-8:30PM PDT

July Webinar Recordings:

The recordings are in .WMV format. This should make it easy to view them, as most of you already have a .WMV player on your computer (eg: Windows Media Player).

The file sizes are large, so we've included the option to download a low resolution or high resolution version of each webinar.

How to set up a Microham keyer, by Ira K2RD

Low res (58MB)

<http://bit.ly/k2rd-lowres>

High res (140MB)

<http://bit.ly/k2rd-highres>

Homebrewing a micro based (SO2R) station controller, by Jack KF6T

Low res (46MB)

<http://bit.ly/kf6t-lowres>

High res (173MB)

<http://bit.ly/kf6t-highres>

For those of you who have slow Internet connections, if these file sizes are too large for you to easily download, e-mail me at n6de@arrl.net and I will burn a DVD for you.



Nicole takes the mic at the GOTA station during Field Day (photo courtesy K6SRZ)

First WACC on 6 meters to W5WVO

By Barry, K6RM

At the beginning of July, Bill, W5WVO wrote to Fred K6DGW and asked if Fred was still the "WACC guy". Bill was writing because he had contacted and confirmed 57 of the California counties on 6 meters, but needed some help with the last, Kings County. If successful, Bill would be the FIRST to get WACC on 6 meters.

On Friday, July the 3rd, Fred put out a bulletin on the NCCC reflector and a few days later I wrote to Bill and offered to go down to Kings County (I live in Mountain

View) if Bill would help me get set up for Meteor Scatter (MS) propagation. Bill had suggested the MS mode because it should be reliable on any given day between CA and NM and nobody wants to go that far and HOPE that the Sporadic E will show up.

Bill happily accepted my offer and soon after I downloaded the WSJT software that transmits and decodes FSK441 that is used for MS propagation mode. At first I couldn't get past some basic audio level issues so I called Bill for help. After about an hour and a half of patient tutoring by Bill I had my problems resolved and had set things up to the point where I actually received and decoded a quick burst with both our callsigns via meteor scatter.

I had to break for dinner but I made a rough plan with Bill to get my portable Yagi set up and then see if we could do a two-way QSO within a few days. The horizon from my driveway is blocked by trees and houses, but I wanted to do some kind a dry run with all the necessary gear moved out to my truck. So, after setting it all up on Tuesday, July 7th, I called Bill late in the afternoon to see what we could accomplish. Note that time of day is an issue with MS propagation. Evenings are the worst time for Meteor Scatter contacts because if you are at a place where it's in the evening, you are where the Earth is moving away from, rather than into, meteors crossing the Earth's path.

Nonetheless, Bill could just barely make out my signals that day but I could not hear him at all. So, with two "half-QSOs" to our credit, I made a plan to try again the next morning and this time at a spot next to the bay near Palo Alto Airport. At the appointed hour of our sked I was in contact with Bill by cellphone and the instant I started transmitting he said "there you are!"

Likewise, his sigs were booming into my rig. Well, this was good news, that we made our first two-way QSO, but bad news because there was a nice sporadic E opening that Wednesday morning and we had not

actually tested the two-way path via Meteor Scatter. But, having faith that everything would work out, I got up at 0400 the next day, Thursday July 9th, and drove the 180 miles down to Kings County.

Luckily I quickly found a nice elevated (980 ft per my GPS) place to operate from and I was set up and ready to go by 0835. Having thought that there might not be any cellphone coverage where I would want to operate from, I had earlier emailed Bill of that possibility and asked him to start listening for my FSK441 sigs on 50.255 at 0830 and ever half hour thereafter.

Turns out I did have cellphone coverage but I just thought it would be loads more fun to just initiate the contact by radio. So, just after 0835, I went into "auto" mode, which means, for non-WSJT folks, that I transmit for the first 30 seconds of the minute and listen for the last 30 seconds. Yes, you have to have your computer clocks very accurately set. After a minute or so, I saw a few bursts of signals coming from meteor "burns" and there was Bill's and my own callsign decoded by WSJT!!

We exchanged signal reports and "RRR" and "73" and I shut off the "Auto" mode. Only after the contact had been completed I used the cellphone to call Bill and congratulate him on being the first ham to work all 58 California Counties on 6 meters!



Bill, W5WVO, at his station (photo courtesy W5WVO)



K3 at W5WVO set on 6 meters (photo courtesy W5WVO)



First pings from Kings County (photo courtesy W5WVO)



Stack of 6 meter CA County QSLs (photo courtesy W5WVO)

W4UAT SteppIR Repair

By Larry Word, W4UAT

Recently I was walking home and saw that half of the driven element was missing from my SteppIR! I went out in the backyard and couldn't find it. So I went back into the house and got a glass of ice tea and whilst sitting down in the back yard to my amazement there was the element in the privet tree!

Fortunately it had slid down the 80M dipole and been saved it from any damage. The rubber boots holding the elements to the motor control had rotted due to sun UV damage and had turned the fiberglass pole loose.

I called Steppir and asked about the problem. They said for me to check the motor control and make sure there was no motor damage. Tests were all ok and they shipped a complete set of UV resistant rubber boots in time for the repair!

I called around for help and the following people responded: K6EWN Jon, KX7M Denny, K9YC Jim, K6RM Barry, N6SPP Rick, and N6WM Chris.



Basically the antenna was hung at the balance point at the tower top. It was tied through a pulley arrangement to hold the antenna freely.

They replaced the first director rubber boots and then tilted the beam over so they could replace the reflector's boots,

then move up the tower a little and replace the missing half of the driven element and both boots.



The beam was untied and rotated 180 degrees and the tower crew replaced the rubber boots on the second director and the job was done. To stop boom rotation, the boom truss was reinstalled. The pulley assembly and tools were put into the black bucket and lowered.

All the old rubber boots were in pretty sad shape. I'm sure glad we got it all done. The tower Crew got it all done in 2hrs:45mins.



Most of the crew had to leave, but Jon and Chris stayed, and we had a good lunch at Applebee's. The tower is 72-feet high.



Tower Crew: K6EWN Jon, KX7M Denny.

Ground Crew: K9YC Jim, K6RM Barry, N6SPP Rick, N6WM Chris and W4UAT Larry.

My deepest appreciation for every one's help. Yes, the Beam is back in great operational condition.



NCCC Sprint Update:

NCCers

Total	Total	#Wks	Average	Call
High 9	ALL		ALL	
15,986	19,984	12	1,665	N6RO
13,933	16,981	12	1,415	W0YK
11,847	15,599	13	1,200	K6VVA
7,253	7,253	8	907	K6UFO
7,159	7,159	9	795	N6ZFO
3,107	3,107	3	1,036	K6RB
2,863	2,863	7	409	K6NV
2,206	2,206	3	735	K7NV
2,043	2,043	3	681	N3ZZ
627	627	1	627	K6CTA
9	9	1	9	KA3DRR



Keep the faith, baby. These, too, shall return.

