

(photo by Tom, K5RC)

Ray of Hope

With other testers, I've been reflecting on the events of this week. Most of us are doers and achievers in our daily lives and our competitive spirit is a reflection of our drive for success. It is indeed inspiring that most of us are looking to gain strength from these tragedies rather than being dragged down by them.

As a native of New York City, I was never very proud of my heritage, until the last few days. By the unity of the people, the lack of looting and the lack of inappropriate retribution, I am finally proud of being a New Yorker. As always, I am also proud of the way hams across the world have stepped forward to help.

I have had my share of catastrophes and triumphs. One of the life lessons I have learned in transforming those catastrophes into triumphs is that whenever you are given lemons, make them into lemonade. By the response to the attack on our way of life in the media and in the emails, I believe we are building the largest lemonade factory ever assembled by man. Not only will we all become stronger because of these events, but those issues that seemed so monumental to me a few days ago are now trivial, and there is absolutely no option for me but to grow stronger, with more resolve than ever and with a renewed confidence of those individuals who share my values.

To my fellow testers, I raise my glass of lemonade to toast our future full of new opportunities for excellence.

73, Tom, K5RC, September 14, 2001

MEETING

:

**DATE: Monday, November 12,
at**

**Tibco Software Incorporated
3165 Porter Drive**

Palo Alto (650) 846-1000

directions inside & on our website:

<http://www.nccc.cc/meetings.html>

NCCC OFFICERS

President ...

Rick Tavan, N6XI..... n6xi@arrl.net

Vice President/CC

Andy Faber, AE6Y ...
ae6y@aol.com

Secretary/Treasurer and WEBmaster

Ed Muns, W0YK...

w0yk@arrl.net

Directors

Bob Wolbert, K6XX ...

k6xx@arrl.net

Ken Keeler, N6RO ... n6ro@arrl.net

Dean Wood, N6DE ... dwood@cisco.com

Dennis Motschenbacher, K7BV...
k7bv@arrl.net

ARRL CAC member: Jim Pratt, N6IG...

n6ig@arrl.net

JUG Editor: George Daughters, K6GT... k6gt@arrl.net

A Final Editor's Note

It has been fun! I'd like to thank the numerous people (as a nameless group, because I couldn't possibly make a complete list) who have supported my "tenure" as the JUGhead.

When I took the job, I was of the opinion that the JUG is the "glue" of the NCCC. It is the communication medium that all members have in common. I'm still of that opinion, despite the article by

W6ISQ and my follow-up on the subject "Nobody reads the JUG."

The JUG has evolved as the modes of communications have evolved. When I took over, the JUG was literally a "cut-and-paste" operation, with actual scissors and actual paper. Now, the cutting and pasting are done electronically, and about half of the membership never sees a paper copy of the JUG. The JUG appears on the NCCC website on or about the first of each month.

Conan the Grammarian will continue to submit contributions. (None have appeared for a while, and the new JUGhead may choose to continue this non-appearance trend.)

I would like to thank the Rick, N6XI, Andy, AE6Y, and Jack, W6ISQ, for their kind words about me in their columns this month. Elsewhere in this issue, there is an article introducing Mary, NA6E, the new JUGhead. I'm sure everyone will give her the cooperation I've received, and she will be a very effective editor for the JUG.

So, this issue is my swan song. I suppose that for an old ham, it should appropriately be called my "Swine Song."

Thanks to all, KB, es 73, K6GT

**The NCCC 75 meter
net meets on Thursdays
at 9PM,
3830kHz approximately**

Contest Calendar

November

ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW Nov 3 - 5

Japan Int. DX Contest, Phone	Nov 9 - 11
WAE DX Contest, RTTY	Nov 10 - 11
OK/OM DX Contest, CW	Nov 10 - 11

ARRL Sweepstakes, SSB Nov 17 - 19

RSGB 1.8 MHz Contest, CW	Nov 17 - 18
CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW	Nov 24 - 25

December Contests

Tennessee QSO Party 3	Dec 2 -
ARRL 160-Meter Contest 9	Dec 7 -
ARRL 10-Meter Contest 16	Dec 15 -
RAC Winter Contest 29	Dec
Stew Perry Topband Challenge	Dec 29 - 30

XI-ting Times

“The Truth about SO2R”

Well, I did it. I took my own advice and set up for SO2R. Now, I didn't get it all done and I may never get it “all” done and perhaps even the giants of SOABHP are never really “done.” But I got enough done to give it a try and I owe it to those of you who are still considering it to expose the Real Dirt. As a recent beginner and still a rank novice at this esoteric art, I know better than to compound my prior sins by attempting to give more advice. I won't tell you all (again) to rush out and start buying parts for SO2R. Our members who do it well can give you better advice than I can on how to do it. But for those of you who have not yet succumbed but are feeling the temptation to give it a try, perhaps these remarks will help you to visualize what you are in for from a beginner's perspective. So here goes...

First of all, the good news: Ken, N6RO, and Kurt, K7NV, are right – it's a gas! It's exciting, challenging and once I figure it out I think it will be exhilarating.

And, of course, there is some bad news: Bob N6TV and Fred K3ZO are also right – it's hard, exhausting and exasperating. (Bob operates SO2R very well and Fred refuses to do it at all because he has so much fun and does incredibly well with one rig.)

Let's discuss the bad news first: station set-up can be complex, components can get expensive, integration is frustrating and, once it's all done, operating is one helluva a challenge. If you have enough room to space antennas far apart and operate mainly CW, then you

can probably do without those new-fangled SO2R control boxes and even without bandpass filters. (But land does cost a lot more than boxes!) And, as we see in the CQP, SSB can be important. Eventually even this confirmed CW op will want some pretty fancy switching and stuff. So phase your acquisitions and enter SO2R-land in baby steps. That's what I'm doing and if I must give advice on this subject about which I know so little, that's it – take it one step at a time!

How did I take my first baby step? I used a WX0B Six Pack remotely controlled antenna switch to switch four antennas among two rigs at my new, still emerging station in Truckee. Two of the antennas were on one twelve foot boom – a Force 12 C4S. One was a dipole hung off the same AB577 mast, perhaps eight feet down. Without bandpass filters it was impossible to listen on any of those three antennas while transmitting on another. The fourth antenna was an R5 vertical perhaps 300 feet away. I *could* listen on it while transmitting on any of the other antennas, no filters necessary... and vice versa... both with kilowatts. What this amounted to was a waste of time and money on the fancy antenna relay box. I could have simply cold-switched the tribander and dipoles on Radio 1 and left the vertical hard-wired to Radio 2. That might have reduced some of the funny noise conditions that I encountered, too. I used an inexpensive Dunestar audio switch box to mix audio from the two radios in one headset – choice of Radio 1, Radio 2, one in each ear or variable mixing. I never used the latter option. And I used tlog which has quite a few of its gazillion configuration parameters and operating controls dedicated to SO2R. I tried to use half a dozen of them and several actually seem to have worked. This one piece of highly functional but hopelessly user-hostile software may be more complex than all the hardware integration combined. It violates every rule in the human factors book but ends up doing so many really clever things that I think I'm going to have to keep it.

What's left? Well, I already have the bandpass filters on hand – Dunestar Model 600 multi-band units, one for each radio. I definitely want to install them next and I may be able to parallel the filters with the antenna switch. It gets a little tricky, because each band has its own filter section but some bands share a feedline and that changes as the station evolves. It will get trickier when I try to add in the Top Ten Devices band decoder to let the FT-1000MP (or the computer) drive all this switching automatically when I change bands. Perhaps a baby step of manual switching some of the stuff will come first. And I learned first-hand in CQP that I really do need to switch the paddle and,

especially, microphone. It was annoying to use a second paddle, frustrating to use a second mic and infuriating to have to switch off the VOX on Mic 1 before making a PTT call on Mic 2! I have the commercial parts on hand but ran out of time prior to CQP and didn't get them all integrated. I'll let you know how it works out if I'm still sane when it's done.

Now how about that good news? Can an SO2R newbie find satisfaction in a limited setup? Is it like skiing that you can learn step by step, having fun right from Lesson 1 (oh, OK, more like Lesson 2!)? Or is it like golf in which you must endure a few hundred hours of frustration before you reach a level of competence? In a word, it's closer to skiing. My first foray in SO2R was, as I impulsively advised you all, in this year's CQP, a shakedown run for SS. I made exactly 18 of my 1425 contacts on Radio 2. I think about six of those were smooth enough to satisfy me. The others exhibited enough awkwardness to brand me as either a lid or the SO2R newbie that I am and some of them probably cost me a Q or two on the run radio.

These 18 QSOs were not worth the cost and effort of even my very modest initial setup. However, I also logged 79 band changes in my 17 or so hours of operating. Most of those were influenced by things I learned by listening on Radio 2, and I felt very good about that. In fact, I think the whole exercise could be justified by the ability to eavesdrop other bands without disrupting a run - no Radio 2 QSOs required! It was also fun listening to two signals at a time just to prove to myself that I could do it. How many of my 17 hours were spent in "stereo mode?" I'm not sure, but it wasn't a lot - perhaps two or three... enough to keep tabs on events elsewhere and occasionally snag a loud station calling CQ who might otherwise have been missed. I enjoyed the capability even though it is just starting to come together.

So what's the bottom line? Dunno yet. The journey may be more important than the destination, but the scenery along the way is certainly interesting. I plan to keep on truckin'. "Your mileage may vary!"

5-Meg Award

In a recent column I wrote about performance measurement - how do we know who is a "good" contester, who is the "best?" One of our favorite metrics is the NCCC 5-Meg Award, recognition of outstanding performance by accumulating five million points in any number of contests. It has been a popular program, with over 30 members having received the award. Actually, there are probably over 40 members who have achieved the goal, but some of them have not yet been recognized. Why? Bandwidth, my friends,

pure, unadulterated bandwidth. Not measured in KHz or bps, though. The 5-Meg has languished for a year and a half because of a lack of "Hv" - volunteer hours! When we formed the current administration, volunteers to be club officers were pretty scarce. Webmaster / Awards Manager / All-round NCCC activist W0YK got drafted once again to be an officer, graciously accepting the Secretary/Treasurer post on top of everything else. All these NCCC responsibilities plus a dash of professional, family and social obligations resulted in insufficient time to complete repair to the already damaged database that we use to track and report the 5-Meg Award. Although there have been no visible changes, and no totals have been updated for some time, there has been some activity. We experimented with a new database and, well, ... in industry we would say it was a "learning experience." With knowledge now of what does not work, we are moving forward with long range plans to automate the award and its reporting. In the meantime, we are moving to a self-tracked process that will allow us to stay quite current. Stand by for details. Soon we will see quite a few NCCC'ers who have gone "over the top." Already on-deck with over four million points as of March, 2000 are: VE7NKI, K6III, WB6MZQ, K6RC, WC6H, W6PLJ, K6XV. I'm sure many of them and others have passed the 5-Meg mark by now and we all look forward to recognizing the new award recipients "Real Soon Now." Thanks for your patience.

By the way, you could accelerate progress on this and other projects by volunteering your own time and expertise to NCCC, perhaps directly on the 5-Meg program or, even better, on any of the many tasks that need to be done to keep NCCC moving as a big, active, winning organization. Let's spread the work and the fun around!

Transition

Speaking of volunteering, there is something I want you to do that will only take a few minutes of your time, one time. I want all of you to do it. The next time you see George K6GT, pat him on the back and tell him "Well done, George. Thanks!" You see, George has been our faithful Jughead for almost six years now. Every month, rain or shine, he has devoted much of the last weekend to wordsmithing, composing, laying out, printing, folding, spindling, mutilating and mailing our newsletter. And the only tasks that ever failed were the spindling and mutilating! In fact, they never happened at all except for a few copies occasionally dissed by the USPS. And if you don't see George regularly, drop him a line by email. Tell him how much you appreciate his dedication, hard work and

creativity. Tell him how well you understand the importance of volunteering to keep our club strong and how his example has inspired many others to pitch in as well. ... Think about that yourself, eh? ;-)

And as George passes over the quill and parchment, please join me in welcoming Mary, NA6E, as our new JUGhead. She joined the club last July and is already taking on a leadership role. Thank you, Mary! We look forward to many fine numbers of the NCCC Contest JUG under your care. Gang, let's all send her some great material for upcoming issues!

73 es KB, Rick, N6XI

NOTES

from the NCCC

Meetings of

October 2001

Meetings? We don't need no steenkeeng meetings! Well, actually, maybe we do! For one thing, it's a great way to see old friends, make new ones and bring newcomers into the NCCC fold. And that is just what we did in an unprecedented series of meetings in October. Here's the low-down:

Regular Membership Meeting October 8

We met at HP Mountain View for our regular monthly meeting with a strong turnout of 40 members plus one guide dog. New members elected into our society were Bob Fenwick, K6GX, of Los Altos Hills and Kitty Hevener WB8TDA of Palo Alto. Bob is the one whose antennas tower over I280 just above AJ6V. Kitty is the responsible adult for Sunstar, an extraordinary canine who does everything but copy CW! Welcome to NCCC, Bob and Kitty.

Bob N6TV led a discussion of CQP just past. It seems everyone had a great time in this friendliest of high-rate contests. Conditions were excellent and out-of-state participation, while not record-setting, was very strong.

Andy, AE6Y, and Ken, N6RO, led a discussion of SS coming up in November. Although most of us have our stations in perfect working order (??), a few may have some last-minute tune-ups and enhancements yet to take care of. Go do it, gang! Consensus on NCCC'ers working each other: Focus on 3850/3550 at 11:00PM Saturday night and the last ten minutes of each contest. This is "two for us, none for them" and a

much easier way for us to work each other than by backscatter on ten meters while we could all be running rate to the East Coast. PLEASE respond to your area volunteer score collector with an ambitious commitment! With new members, renewed enthusiasm and lots of new station ideas, we are poised to regain the gavel!

Guest speaker Steve Morris, K7LXC, showed some fascinating slides from WRTC in Slovenia. The mountain scenes reminded me of my own beloved Sierra Nevada. The station scenes reminded me of ham stations everywhere. The ceremonial scenes were a lot like the Olympics, which is what WRTC really is for radiosport. And the architecture scenes were close to some places I have seen in Italy. In fact, Slovenia is close enough for side trips to Italy. It was a very good show arranged at the last minute and enjoyed by all.

Sierra Chapter Meeting October 13

We met at N6XI-Truckee, high above Boca Reservoir and in only the longest shadows of surrounding peaks. About 16 people enjoyed hamburgers, hot dogs and Boca Burgers™ (not named after the lake below but extra tasty for those of vegetarian leanings) on the fall leaf-strewn deck. The pot-luck sides and salads worked out very well, even without coordination. We elected Bob Moore, Jr. KI6IV, and Eric June, KU6J, to membership. Both live in Truckee and have been promising to join if we would only provide a meeting venue close to home. We did and they did. Welcome aboard, Bob and Eric!

Barry, K6ST, presented slides from his 6Y1 expedition with Team Vertical after a frantic and successful effort to interface his computer with my TV conducted by Jeremy, KC6YEW, non-contester but strong supporter of NCCC since, ...er, before his own birth??

Tom, K5RC, brought along a very enticing, professionally produced video by Dennis, K7BV, on Dennis' expedition to PY0, Fernando de Noronha. This tropical paradise is an extraordinary DX location where Dennis made over 4,000 contest QSO's.

Thanks to Ann, KD6MOB, also a non-contesting supporter of contesting, for her invaluable logistics, preparation and support during the meeting!

After adjournment, Kurt, K7NV, and George, KI6CG, helped host N6XI straighten out his AB577 mast – thanks, guys!

Meeting-go-Round October 24

Meetings were scheduled for October 24 in Petaluma, Visalia and Watsonville. As that day is the press deadline for this Jug, we'll just have to wait for a

report. As this is written on Oct. 22, several people are signed up to attend and likely join our ranks at the Petaluma and Watsonville gatherings. We'll see how the Central Valley works out in a couple of days.

Summary

Well, at least no one out there can say "I haven't signed up for NCCC because they never meet in my area!" It has really been fun getting together with contesters all over the northern part of the state in our Fall Meeting Extravaganza. NCCC is a little bigger and a little better. Now if we all just go out there and KB on both modes and send in our logs, ... well, can the gavel be far away?

73 & KB, Rick, N6XI

Andy's Dandies

The JUGhead Succession

I'd be remiss not to pay tribute to our outgoing JUGhead, George, K6GT, who's done a terrific job of putting together the JUG every month for the last five years or so. I appreciated his putting up with my drivel a few years ago when I was president of the club, and once again this year in this column. Under his tyrannical direction as Conan the Grammarian, the JUG has always been readable, always grammatically correct, and genuinely a terrific, informative and entertaining rag.

So we offer up to George Adlai Stevenson's admiring definition of an editor: "one who separates the wheat from the chaff... and prints the chaff!"

I understand that from among the many qualified applicants for the job, Prez Rick has chosen Mary, NA6E, as our new Conanette, so I'd like to welcome her to the post with a pome for both George and Mary:

Good-Bye Conan the Grammarian

As Conan he edits us light,
As long as likes what we write.
The job is now Mary's
While George has a beer... He's
now ready to quit the good fight!

October Meeting

All I can say is Wow! What a great meeting. If you weren't one of the 40 or so attendees, you sure missed out on a fun-filled and information-filled evening. There was CQP talk, SS talk by N6RO and

K6XX, plus propagation predictions by sunspot-guru N6BV, and lots more.

Although not really on the program, there was an SO2R gadget-filled front table, which could be admired before and after the meeting. Ken, N6RO, had his Top Ten two radio box, while Bob, K6XX, had the WX0B unit, along with a marvelous lash up of junk box parts (well, junk box for an electrical engineer, anyway), including military surplus antenna relays and homebrew boxes to prevent having both radios on the same band, and generally to make SO2R operation idiot-proof.

Bob always seems able to analyze problems and come up with unique solutions. Since it's OK again to do pomes, and we need a second one to make up for last month's pome-less column, here's a pome about that (club literary historians may find this the JUG's first ever with a six-syllable word!):

K6XX's Song: "I Did It My Way"

Says idiosyncratic Bob,
"The junk box it's time to rob.
It may not look slick;
I built it real quick.
But hey, it sure does the job!"

(Conan's note: Andy gets very high marks for the first line! He doesn't like me to edit his pomes, but I touched up the above, ever so slightly. If I had his permission to do a complete job on it, the last three lines would read like this:

*"It may not look pretty; (choice of words)
I built it really quickly, (adverbs, not
adjectives, modify verbs)
But hey, it certainly performs the desired
functions in a thoroughly adequate
manner!"*

... ed)

CQP Has Come and Gone

There were lots of stories told about CQP at the meeting. I had the misfortune to be first up, and mentioned that out of 1900+ QSO's, I had somehow failed to find a single MT station. And to cap off my humiliation, Jerry, K6III, sent me an e-mail cheerfully pointing out that of his SIX QRP QSOs, one was a MT. Well, after that, the multitude missed no chance to mention how many MT stations they had worked and how plentiful they seemed to be on all bands. I guess that's the way contesting goes. Twelve Q's with normally-rare MAR, 9 with normally-rare YU/NWT, 15 with normally-rare WY, but zero with normally-common MT.

Many club members produced great scores and/or personal records, though for the regulars, it generally seemed as though the scores were down slightly. My

explanation is slightly less DX activity. Although 10, 15, and 20 seemed open to EU for hours on end, I note that in my log I had only 212 contacts with DX stations this year, versus 325 last year. Domestic activity (except for MT, of course) seemed to be the same or maybe better than last year.

CW activity was high, and Bob, N6TV, actually broke his CW-only record by about 200 contacts, notching up an incredible 1471 QSO total on that mode alone (he even claims to have worked MT, though missing several other mults that just didn't ever seem to show up on CW).

After dabbling for a short while in the Pennsylvania QSO Party the following weekend, I continue to believe that we have the right formula for a state party. I like to help out the PA guys who are always so plentiful in CQP, but there is just a dearth of high band activity. This is due, I believe, to the basic structure of that contest, which allows PA stations to get multiplier credit for PA counties. The result is a huge amount of 40 and 80 meter activity as they all work each other, but a dearth of activity on the high bands from most in-state entrants. Our not giving multiplier credit for CA counties to CA stations is thus crucial to generating the high levels of activity that we see each year in CQP.

Get On For SS!

Guys, as N6RO reminds us, this is a Contest Club! Please get on for SS and help us to regain our club crown. If you haven't already made a pledge on the web site (by emailing N6RO), then you probably will get a telephone call from a club volunteer urging you to get on the air.

Please heed the call. SS CW is the first weekend in November (the 3rd to the 5th), while SSB is two weekends later (the 17th to 19th). The contests begin Saturday at one p.m. local time in the afternoon and end at 7 p.m. on Sunday.

Even if you have family or work commitments, try to get on for a few hours. Actually SS is great fun on a part-time basis, as you are fresh meat and have higher run rates. Maximize your score by using the highest power level you can. Every score counts for the club in this contest, and we need them all. Last year we lost by 400k points, about four average NCCC logs! As we always say, SS is a numbers game.

The members section of the web site has a list of SS pledges that already number in the millions of points (the exact total is not to be printed, but you can see it on the web). If you need the ID or password, drop me or another officer an email. Send an email to N6RO to make your pledge.

We can't say it often enough or loudly enough: we need every score in this contest. It can't be won by huge score from a few great stations. That's not the way it works in SS. Let's prove we're the number one contest club once again!

Don't Forget WPX

This is my monthly reminder that we are going all out in WPX for a club victory in 2002. Start planning those mini-vacations around the contest dates: end of March (Phone) and end of May (CW).

We'll talk more about them at future meetings and in future columns. For now, just start planning the commitment. It's going to be an exciting run at another victory.

If you have limited time, then the Phone contest will produce the most bang for the buck. Activity, and thus scores, are higher than in the CW event.

Apologies to W2SC

In last month's column, I dutifully noted the outstanding scores of NCCC'ers in the 2001ARRL DX CW Contest. Although my list contained the standard apology to those I missed in reviewing the results, I owe a special *mea culpa* to one whom my addled brain overlooked: Tom, W2SC, who finished FIRST in the Single-op DX Category at 8P5A, just edging out ZF2NT (N6NT) by a nose. It's surely a testament to the talent pool in the Club that, although we don't specialize in this contest, four of the top five single-op DX scores were from club members (the others being AI6V at P49V and AJ6V at VP5U.) Congratulations, guys!

See you all at the November meeting.

73, Andy, AE6Y

Holiday Meeting/Banquet

The 2001 NCCC Holiday Party will be Monday night, Dec. 10 at Chef Wang's in Mountain View, the same site as our very successful 2000 party. The food was wonderful last year and it's a bargain at \$25 per person, all included. We won't be collecting reservations for a while yet, but do mark your calendars for this highlight of the NCCC social year.

Rick, N6XI

Details on and Directions to the November meeting

The November meeting is at Tibco Software, 3165 Porter Drive, Palo Alto. The program will be: 1. SS CW lies, SS SSB promises, and 2. Eric Swartz, WA6HHQ, of Elecraft will speak on Receiver Performance. This is a replay of Eric's very well received presentation at Pacificon, plus additional opportunity to ask contest-related questions. Note that N6BT, K2KW and others are planning an all-K2 assault on the QRP single-band records from 6Y in CQWW CW in November.

And, you can count on :

6PM: schmoozing

6:30PM: pizza and drinks

7PM: meeting and program.

Porter drive is easily found.

From 280, go toward Palo Alto on Page Mill Road. Go about a mile, and after crossing Junipero Serra Boulevard/Foothill Expressway, Porter is the next street to the right, and Tibco is on the left, about ½ block from Page Mill.

From 101, take Oregon Expressway across El Camino Real, where it becomes Page Mill Road. Go up the hill, and left on Porter Drive, which is about the third light after crossing El Camino.

RSVP to W0YK so we have a headcount (actually, a pizza slice count.)

Remember!

For a comprehensive contest calendar, log submission details, and due dates for logs, visit:

<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/index.htm>

New 2001 NCCC Sweepstakes Handbook Available

The new sixth edition of the SS Handbook is now available on the members-only section of our website. Newly updated with the latest in SS tactics and intelligence, the Handbook has something to offer every operator. New sections include SO2R equipment and score improvement through error reduction. Best of all, the price is still the same--FREE to all members (and unavailable to non-members).

Get yours today! Did you forget your password? Contact Secretary/Treasurer Ed, W0YK, at

w0yk@msn.net

to get it sent to you.

73, Bob, K6XX, SSHB Editor-in-chief



The CQP mailing for the Y2K event fills AI's trunk!



New member Jake, KK7GP, joined at the September meeting convenient to his home in Martinez.



New member Ron, K6XC, also from Martinez, also joined NCCC in September.



Don, W6OA, from Livermore, was a third new NCCC member to join at the September meeting.



Bob, K6XX, shows the simplicity of SO2R hardware to Dean, N6BV, at the October meeting.



New member Kitty, WB8TDA, having just been elected to membership at the October meeting. Her guide dog, Sunstar, qualifies for “family membership.”



Steve Morris, K7LXC, enthusiastically presented his photo album of WRTC-2000 and other European points to the assembled throng at the October meeting.

A Message from the new JUGhead

I'll be taking over as editor of the JUG in December, and George thought it would be nice if I introduced myself to everyone. My name is Mary Cherry and my call is NA6E. I was licensed in August of 1998 with the call KF6SZC. I applied for a vanity call of WN6HYX right away, so I could put my father-in-law's (SK) call on the air. In June of 1999 I passed my extra exam and yep, another vanity call. This time I chose NA6E. I learned about radios, antennas and CW in the Navy. I served as a CTR in various places around the world. Shortly after we married, my husband Mark, WT6P, decided to get into the hobby again after not operating for 8 years or so and I figured I might as well give it a try too. Mark was first licensed in 1968 and has been an outstanding Elmer.

I operated QRP 'til last year and enjoyed it greatly. I was the editor of the magazine, *The QRP Quarterly*, published by QRP-ARCI for a little over a year. During this time I played around in contests, just to make QSO's. Then I encountered Bill Simpson, N5YA, and he invited me down to his station outside of Dallas and things have not been the same since. I'm hooked on contesting! Just recently I had the privilege of operating M/S at Bill, K6KM's, in the CQWW RTTY contest. This was great fun from a beautiful shack. I have a lot to learn about contesting, but I'm getting invaluable information from the members of NCCC. I admit though, that my first love is building ham gear. I operate mainly CW and RTTY and we are just getting set up to try some SO2R contesting.

I have started a key/paddle collection. Ron, KU7Y, gave most of these to me when he retired. The only thing I didn't get from him was the 1000MP, which went to Tom, K5RC. I'm still working on that....

I think that's about all. I hope to meet all of you soon.

73, Mary, NA6E

(To see a picture of Mary, look at page 6 of the August JUG. Mary is the rose among the thorns, fourth from the left... ed)

High Tech CW Copying

Jack, W6ISQ, and I exchanged a couple of e-mails regarding copying/logging methods, prompted by the following story he had received from a friend.

When NASA began sending astronauts into space, they quickly discovered that ballpoint pens would not work in zero gravity.

To combat this problem, NASA scientists spent a decade and \$12 billion developing a pen that writes in zero gravity, upside down, underwater, on almost any surface including glass and at temperatures ranging from below freezing to over 300C.

When confronted with the same problem, the Russians used a pencil.

As you probably know, Jack uses a piece of paper and a pencil for contest logging, and he always turns in a "golden log."

I've had a slightly different experience with the pencil technique. When we old dudes got our original licenses, we had to sit a test before an actual FCC examiner. We had to copy code; we had to send code.

I was copying my 13wpm (with no trouble, having just finished Uncle Sam's radio operator school) when my pencil broke. I scrambled to get another writing implement going, but missed a LOT by the time the punched paper tape ran out. (I think it was a punched tape. I can't remember that for sure.)

The examiner pounced on me immediately and grabbed my paper. He said "You didn't do very well. You didn't write much down."

I told him "You saw what happened! My pencil broke."

He replied "Well, tell me what two words go here (pointing)." I said "rescue party"... It's weird, but I DO remember that VERY clearly! He said, OK, you've got over a minute of solid copy now. Congratulations!"

Many years later, after deciding that I could come up with no further excuses to avoid upgrading to Extra Class, I took about six nicely sharpened pencils to my VEC test! Of course, because I was so well prepared, nothing broke.

Being prepared for contingencies is a good thing. My mother used to say "Don't tell me worrying about things isn't effective. The things I worry about NEVER happen!"

73, K6GT

Letters to the Editor

(The following unsolicited letter was received in response to the editor's request for a letter... ed)

Dear Ed....ahhh, K6GT,

We, your loyal readership, want to thank you muchly, and also a lot, for your excellent editorship of the JUG for these past 5 plus years. You have done a wonderful job and we appreciate the travail and good humor, perseverance, endurance and all that stuff you've put into the JUG production. Your work keeps the NCCC family together and snarky. Ya done good, gdaught6! Thanks. And you were still able to produce great on-the-air contest-type score results for the club in your spare time on weekends.

Your editorial comments have been to the point and fun to read. But I must admonish you for a breech of your usual close screwtyny of what you let pass into the pages of the JUG last issue. You allowed the pep-talk colyume by Andrew, AE6Y, to be published without his usual pome! I found that omission to be quite unbelievable and mostly nonacceptable. Of course, Andrew must take part of the blame for not composting anything. He had all that time hiking around in the High Andes to get inspirations and rite pomes, but he didn't do it. I presume he will note the error of his commissions and pump out at least 2 pomes per colyume for the next few JUGs.

We are really sorry to see you leave your appointed editorial task. I know I speak for your faithful readers, both of them. I especially will miss sending you emails. I loved to type in that "@Stanferd.edu." Rah!

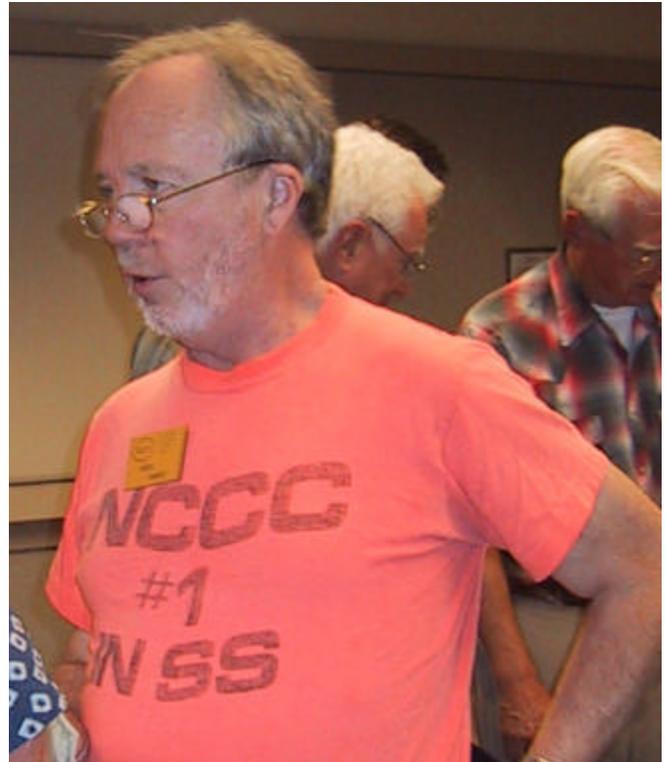
I should say in closing that when you asked for volunteers to be editor of the JUG, I asked sweet Marguerite, KC6NFE, if she would like to take on the job again. After all, we haven't done much for NCCC for 5-6-7 years (except for my fantastic contest scores) and maybe she would consider publishing again. She replied, "No way. Fergit it, get lost. Drop dead!"

I thought maybe she just had a bad day at the bridge table and maybe she just really wanted to be persuaded and encouraged, so I tried again. I said, "Are you sure you wouldn't take on the JUG again?? Remember all the fun we had getting colyumes from members, Andrew's pomes, and staying up typing all nite and sticking on them postal stamps and all that good stuff?" And she hit me! First time in 55 years! She hit me right on the nose. She's pretty fast!

Well, George, I guessed she din't wanna be publisher no more. I tried George, honest.

"Thanks for the memories" as Bob useta say. Well done from us all! CU in the SS pileups on that lone MAR fella.

73, Jack, W6ISQ



Ken, N6RO, Kommandant of SS troops, encourages a member to make a pledge for SS participation.

**"I'll try to
get on
for a little
while..."**

With a couple of days to go before SS, I'd like to thank the telephone campaigners for trying to extract SS score pledges from the lesser active members of

the club. We have pretty much exhausted all efforts to get people to contribute to the club score and are still about 3 million points short of what I think it will take to win. So I ask those who have pledged scores (about 80 of our 180 members) to put in a little more effort, without going over 24 hours operating time!

Many of you contacted by our leadership team choose not to pledge a score, but said you would "try to get on for a little while..." Please turn that "little while" into several hours during each SS weekend, and try to look for club members - remember, that's two for us, none for them (SMC, PVRC, etc.) Club members will look for each other on Saturday nights at 11 PM, 3550 on Nov. 3, and 3850 on Nov. 17. There is a list of club members in the new version of the SS handbook in the MEMBERS pages on www.nccc.cc While logged into the members' pages, check the pledged scores list to see who's doing what for the club in Sweepstakes.

The club Thursday night net will meet near 3830 on Nov. 1, at 9 PM, for discussions on SS tactics, and logging software checkout. We'll probably have a mini-SS to help you find bugs in your program/station. If warranted, we'll have a Friday night session also.

Get on for a little while... or longer! Do what you can in SS, or a little more!

73, N6RO

ANAHEIM, CA

(Near Disneyland)
933 N. Euclid St., 92801
(714) 533-7373
(800) 854-6046
Janet, KL7MF, Mgr.
anaheim@hamradio.com

BURBANK, CA

2492 W. Victory Bl., 91506
(818) 842-1786
(800) 854-6046
Eric, KAGIHT, Mgr.
Victory Blvd. at Buena Vista
1 mi. west I-5
burbank@hamradio.com

OAKLAND, CA

2210 Livingston St., 94606
(510) 534-5757
(800) 854-6046
Mark, W17YN, Mgr.
I-880 at 23rd Ave. ramp
oakland@hamradio.com

SAN DIEGO, CA

5375 Kearny Villa Rd., 92123
(619) 560-4900
(800) 854-6046
Tom, KMGK, Mgr.
Hwy. 163 & Claremont Mesa
sandiego@hamradio.com

SUNNYVALE, CA

510 Lawrence Exp. #102
94085
(408) 735-9496
(800) 854-6046
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