

JUG

Publication of the Northern California Contest Club

February 2002

Issue 357

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

NCCC Meeting

Guests are always welcome at the NCCC!

Please join us.

Program

The Future of Contesting

**February 11, 2002 at 6pm
Café TIBCO, 3165 Porter Drive
Palo Alto**

Email Ed Muns, W0YK (w0yk@msn.com)
to ensure your pizza

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

Mary Cherry, NA6E mary@na6e.com

Contest Calendar

February Contests

YL-OM Contest, CW	Feb 2 - 4
North American Sprint, Phone	Feb 3
CQ/RJ WW RTTY WPX Contest	Feb 9 - 10
Asia-Pacific Sprint, CW	Feb 9
Dutch PACC Contest	Feb 9 - 10
YL-OM Contest, SSB	Feb 9 - 11
FISTS Winter Sprint	Feb 9
RSGB 1.8 MHz Contest, CW	Feb 9 - 10
North American Sprint, CW	Feb 10
ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW	Feb 16 - 17
CQ 160-Meter Contest, SSB	Feb 22 - 24
REF Contest, SSB	Feb 23 - 24

March Contests

ARRL Inter. DX Contest, Phone	Mar 2 - 3
RSGB Commonwealth Contest, CW	Mar 9 - 10
North American Sprint, RTTY	Mar 10
UBA Spring Contest, CW	Mar 10
BARTG Spring RTTY Contest	Mar 16 - 18
Russian DX Contest	Mar 16 - 17
CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB	Mar 30 - 31

May Contests

CQ WW WPX Contest, CW	May 25 - 26
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Antenna for sale from the estate of W6FGD (Sunnyvale). Wilson System 36 6 element triband yagi. Best offer. Contact Ed AJ6V at EddRad@aol.com or 650-8587142."

XI-ting Times

Contesting, The Sport

February, 2002

We got quite an earful...er, screenfull... on the subject of QST coverage of contesting this past month. (If you missed the maelstrom, then you don't read email and probably have a life.) I will not rehash that collective conversation, but I will ask some questions that came to mind during the melee, questions that I think are more important than how many pages of line scores we get to read. Let's get together and talk about these things at the February meeting – I'll bring some experts who have opinions. You can volunteer to be an expert panelist (email://n6xi@arrl.net) or bring ripe tomatoes and chicken carcasses to throw out on the ice. And bring your own ideas, too. This will be an audience participation event.

Is Radio Contesting a Sport?

Most of us believe that it is. Some even call it "radiosporting." (Remember the magazine of that name?) If contesting is a true sport, then why is it perceived as esoteric? Why do so few amateurs, let alone the general public, know anything about it? Why are some non-contesters loath to tolerate it? Why is its space budget in QST controversial? What are the elements of good contest reporting and how do they relate to sports reporting? Would good sports writing make contesting better understood, better loved, more popular to follow and to practice?

What can we learn from sports that are more traditional? Which ones are best organized, measured and managed? Which ones attract media attention, commercial sponsorship, fan clubs, and groupies (just kidding)? What can we learn from American football, international soccer, yacht racing, pro boxing, The Olympics, golf, thoroughbred racing, etc.? And what about sport-like games such as chess, bridge, poker, and go?

What are the roles of national and international organizations in the promotion, management and welfare of sports? How do pickup games, local clubs, scholastic leagues, tournaments and amateur, semi-pro and full professional tiers interact? Which sports do the best jobs of recognizing the best performers? How are we doing, comparatively, in radio contesting?

Would Consistent Rules Help?

Multi-op stations are defined and constrained differently by ARRL, CQ, DARC, JIDX, RSGB and others. Is this a problem? Would it be helpful to have consistent rules for things like club territory, expedition eligibility, multi-op and multi-transmitter categories, multi-op contributions to club scores, reporting subdivisions, power classes, etc.?

Who Is the Best?

(Warning – this is a topic I have preached on before.) There is no way to measure and recognize sustained individual performance across many runs of many contests. Nor is there a good way to compare the performance of one contester to another or one's own result in one running of a contest to another running. We all agree that there are inherent, geographical inequities in contesting. Should WRTC be the only way we overcome these inequities to determine who are the "best?" If not, how can we compare the performance of contesters in vastly different locales? Would radiosport be "better" if we had some kind of metric other than raw point scores, some way to declare who did the best job last SS or who is the best contester in the US or how good a contester is Herman Werkem? Who would administer such a service?

What is Behind All the Rhetoric?

In case you were wondering where I'm heading with all these questions, I'm going to blurt out my bottom line. This may be what one of my business gurus called "premature elaboration." Nevertheless, I'm going to do it even though it might be more prudent to let you all come to your own conclusions without my prompting. Maybe I'm just plain wrong – it won't be the first time! There is certainly a thought gap between the questions above and the conclusions below. I have crossed that gap in my own mind but I lack the space to do it here. However, I think that if we discuss the questions we will concur on much of the following:

1. Radio contesting is a real sport. Still developing perhaps, intellectual as well as physical for sure, but definitely a sport that should enjoy the benefits to its participants and the impact on its followers that are enjoyed by mainstream sports and competitive games.

Andy's Dandies

2. Contesting is little known or appreciated outside its own milieu. This will not change without better reporting. That reporting needs to include personalities, heroics, rivalries, training, rankings, standings and more. It has to be timely, well written, and compelling. Today, it is none of the above.
3. More is at stake than QST page counts. Our frequencies and even the favored mode of many contesters are at risk.
4. Some consistency will be necessary in rules, reporting and ranking to make coverage understandable and the competition closer to equitable.
5. The sport is equipment-intense and its participants are thought leaders in the equipment market. Therefore, manufacturers and retailers should be willing to sponsor contests, contesters, teams, and trophies and to support media coverage and promote rankings.
6. We may need two categories of contest entries, perhaps fee-paying Competitors and free-run Participants.
7. We need national and international bodies devoted to promoting, normalizing, and protecting the sport and its competitors, sanctioning contests and rolling up results of multiple events. Organized contesting should be independent of the organizations that sponsor the individual contests. The contest clubs of the world, the club presidents' forum, the semi-independent NCJ and the WRTC Organizing Committee are a few possible elements of such a future structure.

All this will take work. It will be political. It will be difficult. It is important. You should care. Who will step forward and do it?

73 & CU on the bands,
Rick N6XI

A Novel Thought: a column all about contests

How's this for a thought: a column all about the fun of some contests that I particularly enjoy that either just occurred or are coming up. These are WPX (the one we want to WIN), ARRL DX, NAQP and the Sprints.

WPX

Here's 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). If you have limited time, then the Phone contest will produce more bang for the buck. Activities, and thus scores, are higher than in the CW event.

Our January meeting was chock full of inspirational ideas about what to do to help the club win WPX. Remember, it's the total accumulation of scores that counts, both CW and SSB. Here were some great ideas about how to have fun while contributing to the club effort:

- a) Super-station. Steve, K6AW, spoke and showed pix of the HC8N powerhouse that he, Trey, N5KO, Rich, N6KT, and Dave, W6NL, have put together in the Galapagos. It's a proven world wide winner in any contest (even CQWW if the competition will restrict themselves to 1.5kw!). They have had multi-multi scores over 50M in WPX, and Rich even posted the number one claimed score in 2001 WPX SSB of 25M (an unbelievable single-op total, BTW). They've promised to get on one way or another both modes. I'm sure they would entertain additional ops; so ask someone if you can be part of a rare opportunity (and, of course, think about combining it with a week boating around the fascinating Galapagos Islands on a commercial tour).
- b) Club-Member-with-Exotic-QTH. Several of our members fall into that category. Speaking at the January meeting were Tom, W2SC, who leases an award-winning site in 8P. Absent was Carl, AI6V, with the second highest claimed score in

2001 WPX SSB from P49V. He'll be on in SSB, and one of our members will snap up the site for WPX CW. Bruce's Little Cayman Island powerhouse at ZF2NT will be operated by yours truly for WPX SSB.

- c) Rent-a-QTH. Dean, N6DE, talked about his adventures with other club members at WP2Z, where an initial effort garnered 17M points in WPX Multi-Single. Ed, AJ6V, similarly has done very well from the beautiful Villa Rose location in VP5. Both of these are "turn-key" operations (though you are advised to ascertain current conditions of gear before departing). There are lots of others, including super-stations in TI and elsewhere that is available and are described in detail on Kenny's web site, www.dxholiday.com.
- d) Mooch-a-QTH. Al, AD6E, showed pix of his recent exploits at his friend's station on Oahu, WH6H. Due to great location and DX call, they can get terrific scores from a tribander just off the deck. And the price is right, if you can talk a friend in such a place into hosting your operation.
- e) Team Vertical. Ken, K2KW, has talked in the past about the team vertical exploits in 6Y territory and elsewhere. They even ran a DX University there last year. Can you talk them into a major effort for WPX?
- f) Home QTH. Finally, don't forget you can score several million points in each contest from home in Calif/Nev. I've averaged 3M points per contest for the last two years from an average location (that's about 1900 QSOs). Because no mult passing is necessary, it's possible to be very competitive even if you can't operate more than one or two bands. In SSB, 40 meters can be ignored by us average guys, since 10-20 can be enough for a very good score. On CW, 40 will give you some JA 6-point QSOs, but 80 and 160 aren't necessary, or even particularly desirable. '

As you can see, there are lots of possibilities. I'll be coordinating our efforts, so please email me with your plans. This is a really fun contest, and it will be great to put in a major club effort. So make your plans now for some enjoyable operating!

ARRL DX

While this isn't a contest we enter as a club, it can be lots of fun. The whole world wants to work us, so

you can be in demand, and possibly do some dxing at the same time. While it's not possible from the West Coast to compete with the East Coasters' access to Europe, at least we have an easier exchange to give. Here's a pome about that (it has appeared in print before – a prize will be offered at the next meeting to the first member who can correctly identify the author):

CALIFORNIANS' REVENGE

We say to DX, "California"
One time, so we know we ain't borin' ya.
No need to spell it,
Just sit back and yell it.
"Good Morning, 59 California!"

NAQP

What a fun contest! Due to work commitments, I was only able to get on in the January runnings for 2 hours on CW and 4 hours on phone, but it sure was enjoyable. There are a lot of advantages to this contest: (a) it's only 10 hours long; (b) the exchange is easy, just name and state; this is particularly helpful late in the contest when you can barely hear the call of someone on 80, but you have worked them before on other bands, so you know their exchange and can log them easily; (c) it's low power, so less RFI, interference between stations, etc.; (d) it's the ideal contest to practice two radio operating, whether getting a mult to QSY, or just listening on the second radio while running on the first one; and, finally, (e) rates are high; it's not hard to have hours over 100, and if you only participate for four hours on phone, as I did, you can have them all be over 100 per hour, hi.

So, the moral is to think about participating in the August versions of the NAQP. The low bands typically aren't as good as in the winter, but it's still a blast.

NA Sprints

These are coming up momentarily as you read this. Sign up with Ken, N6RO, to be on a team to help out the club. Unfortunately, I'm going to have to pass this month due to the aforesaid work commitments, but I urge anyone who hasn't tried them to do so. I guarantee that it will be the toughest four hours of contesting you've ever done, but it sure is satisfying to play with the big boys and actually rack up a

score. Don't even think about two radios – just enter with one radio, high power, and work on your timing. Due to the infamous Sprint QSY rule (if the other station called you, then you must QSY right after the QSO and leave the frequency to the other station), it helps to be loud and to have precise timing. What a rush!

If you are worried about your code speed or the frantic pace of the contest, go up in the CW segment and call CQ at whatever speed feels comfortable. You can keep calling CQ, just not on the same frequency. This can be a lot calmer than calling other stations as they finish a QSO (which is the classic way to make contacts in Sprint).

See you all at the January festivities.
73, Andy, AE6Y

EA8KN Receives WACC Award

On November 16, 2001, Ken K6TA, issued the NCCC sponsored Worked All California Counties award to Antonio de Armos, EA8AKN. The award was hand carried and presented to Tony by Will, WC6DX at a recent Las Palmas Radio Club meeting. Antonio's award is endorsed #1 Africa and #1 Canary Islands. Will WC6DX did an interview with him about the award and here's what Tony had to say.

Will: How did you hear about the WACC, and why did you accept this challenge?

Tony: I started off working counties for the USA Counties Award, with a long-term goal of working all counties in all states. Eventually California became one of the states I had almost completed, since I had been participating in the CQP's for over 12 years. I don't remember how I heard about the WACC, maybe through K1BV's Award Directory.

Will: How long did it take you to work all CA counties? By comparison, how long for your WAS?

Tony: I think 15 years for WACC, and 4 years for WAS.

Will: Did you find most of your counties in the CQP's, or in day-to-day activity?

Tony: I think in the CQP's.

Will: Which were the hardest counties for you?

Tony: Kings, Trinity, & Inyo.

Will: Do you have any comments you would like to make?

Tony: On many occasions in the CQP's on phone, it was difficult for me to understand the name of the county being spoken, Shasta, Sutter, Tuolumne, Butte, etc, but I've relied on the friendliness of CA hams to take the time to clarify. Lately I've noticed the use of 3-letter abbreviations which is enough to identify the county, except the "San's." But I am encouraging the club in Las Palmas to try for the award and operate in the next CQP.

Ken also reported that Peter Narins, K2IXQ was issued a WACC award on 17 Dec. 2001, endorsed: All CW. Congratulations Peter.



Tony, EA8KN

FINGER POWER for PERFECT LOGGING

(How timid or OG ops can help NCCC)

One is often asked by envious ops how one consistently manages to submit error-free logs in the various contests. Modesty usually helps one refrain from revealing such matters, preferring to keep that magical secret for personal rare ones. But for the benefit of some new, shy or OG NCCers, who are afraid of making those mistakes, one will confess, explain and tell all how one does 100% correct logging.....use a Repeater Number 2 Pencil (RN2P). Oooops, the secret is out.

One submits: Suppose the op uses keyboard logging. It works like this.... signal comes bouncing offn the ionosphere, then, if op is lucky, flies into your antenna and is caught, then slumps down the lead into your rx where it passes thru a maze of wires and is converted from rf to sound. This sound goes thru the listener's head and is transmitted as impulses to the ops fingers, and then goes into a key boar that has multitudinous keys, all of which may be inadvertently tapped to give a wrong signal. Then the signal goes thru an incomprehensible maze of wires and transmitters and wraps 'round and 'round and comes out here....on a TV screen, where it may or may not be viewed correctly by the op. Then the op's brain is engaged, we hope, and brain sends sig to fingers which taps out a reply that may or may not be correct due to having to read the TV properly, and to the too-close spacing of the keys on the keyboard, which is not amenable to flabby fingers. And then the impulse goes back thru all that maze of wires and goes 'round and 'round thru the system. Then it jumps somehow to the transmitter and flashes thru all them wires and, exhaustedly, struggles onward and upward to bounce off the ionosphere.... if the op is lucky. Result: with all them convolutions of wires and snaggles, and fat fingers, the signal is pooped and it is wonder that even the good ops get the message out of the house rightly.

Now, consider one's Repeater Number 2 Pencil (RN2P). Sig arrives as above, goes thru head to flexible fingers which react instantaneously to score proper info on log sheet. Fingers, directed by alert, tireless brain, tap out correct reply. Sig goes back thru the wires, refreshed and ready to plow into the

ionosphere with vigah. Signal is not tired out and confused chasing thru all them wires and responds to one's call for more.

Witness: Chances of mistakes with a keyboard and associated unbelievable complex wirings going all over, in and out, are multiples of that straightforward message handling capability of a good Repeater Number 2 "Stick" (as we used to say long time ago). All them extra wires and keys are bypassed. Electrons are calm and not racing around the room to cause agitation to the op.

Another advantage for the timid op or OG. In most contests, one does not have to mess with all them extraterrestrial wires and connectors and electrons. This means the Repeater Number 2 Pencil (RN2P) ops do not have to face the frowns and tut-tuts of other ops when it is discovered the timid and OGs made 13% errors in logging on a keyboard. This simple fact should attract new and/or tired OG NCCC ops who don't type too good no more, but wish to help NCCC. In many contests now, one may use one's Repeater Number 2 Stick and one doesn't have to make out a check sheet if one stays under a given number of QSOs. Like under 500 in SS. That is an obtainable and respectable number of Qs for timid new members and tired old ones who would really like to participate, but afraid to make those stupid keyboard mistakes. Get in the next contest ...and practice to rev up to 500 Qs (both ways) in SS. You too can help NCCC.

de W6ISQ

N6IJ Whine and Cheese

We at N6IJ request the honor of your presence at the First N6IJ Wine and Cheese Fest-Ham Gathering at 599 DX Drive, Marina CA. Date is Saturday, February 23, beginning at 13:00 local time. Please lend a hand. We are looking for assistance in planning and setup. Please RSVP as soon as possible to:

Pat Barthelow, AA6EG meamonte@hotmail.com
(831) 905-6652

We need to know a reasonable head count. Directions/details for N6IJ, <http://www.polkinghorn.org/n6ij> or: <http://communities.msn.com/n6ij>

We will provide the Wine and Cheese and accoutrements, and the N6IJ station where you may:

1. Operate
2. Kick back, watch DXer/Contester Videos (Bring them)
3. Eat, Schmooze
4. Tell ARRL DX contest war stories
5. Help us plan the Design of the station (LOTS of ALUMINUM to Put Up)
6. Enter a resonant circuit contest
7. Overnight accommodations, sleeping bags, (bring air mattress) or RVs are fine.
8. Show your own presentations.
9. Plan your next contest operations.
10. Listen to your favorite music in the K6LY lounge. (Op shacks are soundproofed)
11. Practice on the PED contest Simulator
12. Bring: Your Favorite Music, optional..YOUR favorite Wine, cheese, or other food
13. We have a cassette player, Turntable, Small Stereo, Need a CD Player.
14. We are looking for old working 16 bit sound cards.

You are also encouraged to attend the 12th? annual K6LY (Naval Postgrad School) club Radiofest, held the same day, at the Ord Community Center, beginning at 07:00, and a 5 minute drive to the N6IJ superstation. The Radiofest is an overall celebration of ham radio, though very light on HF and contesting. It will feature ARRL representatives speaking, Ham talks, Demonstrations, and a flea market. Details on the web: <http://www.k6ly.org> Click on Radiofest. Come and enjoy, and Please RSVP..

73, de Pat, AA6EG

Who Wrote it?????

There was a contester named Andy
Who was cool but not very Randy
But along came a test
And he put out his best
And Andy's big score was just dandy.
-----Anon

Please submit your guess as to who wrote this via the nccc@contesting.com. We will reveal identity of the budding Jakesbeer next month.

Kitty Hevener, WB8TBA, who joined the NCCC several months ago, and her guide dog Sunstar, had the honor of being chosen to represent the City of Palo Alto in carrying the Olympic torch for one segment through San Francisco.



Palo Alto resident Kitty Hevener and her guide dog, Sunstar, walk two-tenths of a mile in the Olympic Torch relay in San Francisco early Saturday morning. Below, Hevener lights her torch at the start of her leg of the run.



Photo contributed by Jack, W6ISQ, with permission from the Palo Alto Weekly, January 23, 2002 issue.

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BURBANK, CA

2452 W. Victory Bl., 91506
(818) 842-1786
(800) 854-6046
Eric, KA6HT, Mgr.
Victory Blvd. at Beena Vista
1 mi. west I-5
burbank@hamradio.com

OAKLAND, CA

2210 Livingston St., 94606
(510) 534-5757
(800) 854-6046
Mark, W7YV, Mgr.
I-880 at 23rd Ave. ramp
oakland@hamradio.com

SAN DIEGO, CA

5375 Kerry Villa Rd., 92123
(619) 560-4900
(800) 854-6046
Tom, KM6K, Mgr.
Hwy. 163 & Clearmont Mesa
sandiego@hamradio.com

SUNNYVALE, CA

510 Lawrence Exp. #102
94085
(408) 736-9496
(800) 854-6046
Ken, KI2KM, Mgr.
So. from Hwy. 101
sunnyvale@hamradio.com

NCCC
44 Toyon Terrace
Danville, CA 94526

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