JUG

Meeting: Monday, August 11, 2003

P40 Aruba Presentation by Ken (K6TA) & Kay (K6KO) Anderson and VC1R Presentation by Andy Faber (AE6Y)

Time: 6 pm schmooze, 6:30 pm dinner, 7:00 pm program
Location: Chevy's Fresh Mex, 979-A Edgewater Blvd., Foster City, CA 94404, (650)572-8441

Please RSVP your attendance directly to K0BEE (dwong@interlogue.com) no later than Sunday, August 10th by 5 pm. Enjoy an All-You-Can-Eat-Create-Your-Own Combo Fiesta Buffet for $14 (drinks not included but can be purchased separately from the bar).

Please see http://www.nccc.cc/meetings.html for directions to this new meeting location.

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In this Issue:

The More Things Change …
By Steve Dyer, W1SRD

Post WRC-03, the licensing requirement for Morse has been eliminated as an international treaty obligation. Several countries have already weighed in on the issue and eliminated licensing requirements for Morse. The ARRL Executive Committee is currently developing policy recommendations for the FCC to act on WRC-03.

The question now on the table is does the U.S. eliminate the 5 WPM requirement for HF privileges?

I suggest that the current 5 WPM Morse requirement and eliminating the Morse requirement are for practical purposes equivalent.

The lowering of the requirement to 5 WPM for all license classes has eliminated the need to increase CW proficiency. As contesters, we know that higher speeds take practice. Plenty of it. And proficiency is a whole lot closer to the 15 WPM than 5 WPM.

Most individuals now have no reason to increase their CW speed after the ticket is granted. The time and effort invested is lost. Why bother in the first place? Without increasing proficiency, it is a wasted skill.

To me, the heart of the discussion is "Does knowing Morse make the better ham?" I don't think anyone knows the answer, but personally I doubt it.

As a special interest, CW is a lot of fun, especially in contesting. As a skill, CW is as relevant as ever.

But let's be practical. Higher speed requirements for CW will never come back.

Instead of bemoaning the death of radio and contesting along with Morse, Let's show some leadership in this area.

At the upcoming NCCC meeting, I would entertain a motion to draft a document in support of the immediate elimination of CW as a prerequisite to HF licensing to be sent to the ARRL/FCC.

It is far more important to Amateur Radio and contesting as a whole to increase the ranks of new and young hams. Let's keep the licensing barriers that make the most sense and eliminate those that don't.

The era of CW as a special interest group is here. If we are serious about CW contesting, the impetus is going to have to come from somewhere other than licensing requirements. I sure don't have the answers, but I do know that CQ'ing at 30 WPM on Sunday afternoon is not the way to attract new CW aficionados.

Ideas anyone?

**73,
Steve W1SRD**

Contest Rumblings from the VP/CC
By Al Maenchen, AD6E

By the time you read this, the CW NAQP will be history. As I write this, I'm visiting my brother-in-law way out in the middle of Nowhere, IN. I'm also wondering why this particular house has the smallest trees of any house on the block, which will make any long wire attempt shorter and lower than hoped. I guess I'm spoiled.

Many thanks to Matt, WX6S who championed CW NAQP for NCCC and was able to get so many club members on the air in the team competition. Since my situation is tenuous and there is still the possibility that I'll not be able to get on at all, I requested the last spot on the last team. This sure sounds funny as I plan my attack on these trees that sort of look like bushes, but I sure hope you all had fun.

In the works department: N6DE and W6ZZZ are planning extensive publicity for the upcoming CQP contest. I know you'll be hearing much more about this shortly. Last year, their efforts resulted in a significant increase of activity and logs received.

The only rule change for CQP will be the M/S 10 minute rule implementation we discussed and agreed to last year (but didn't have time to implement last year). This changes the rules for M/S entries by allowing unlimited band changes in any given time period. The purpose of this change is to allow M/S operators to share a single station even if that station is configured for SO2R style of operation. The rule also allows M/S operators not actually operating to listen

on a different receiver if they like for spotting purposes so long as there is one and only one "transmitting operator." What's that? It's a new concept. When an operator transmits, he(she) becomes the designated "transmitting operator."

The new M/S rule says that there can be only one "transmitting operator" at a time, and that transmitting operator must stay the designated transmitting operator for at least 10 minutes before anyone else can transmit. This eliminates the dreaded octopus arrangement which the BOD felt was closer to M/M operation than true M/S operation. So far as I know, CQP will be the first contest to try this definition of M/S. To make it simple: M/S is one station time shared between several operators...at least 10 minutes at a time.

Also in the works is a great organizing effort for SS headed by Rusty, W6OAT. Rusty has assembled several teams of experts who will set the tone and organize an SS effort like you've never seen before! This is going to be very interesting! I won't spill the beans here, but I think you'll enjoy the next meeting where Rusty will start getting into the details of how this is going to work. We are going to compete with our strength, which is ingenuity. This is going to be fun!

The basic SS strategy of getting any and ALL members on the air for SS is still the basis for this effort. If you need help with getting your station on the air, or if you have a QRN problem or TVI problem, then contact us.

One of Rusty's team members will contact you and we'll help you get on. Please don't wait for the last minute!!

Help is available only if you let us know in time for us to respond. If you got into the NAQP, then you already know how you fare. If you didn't, then get into the SSB NAQP and try your station out to see where you can make improvements. NAQP went OK? Great!

Next, get into the NA SPRINTs and push yourself along a bit harder. Practice makes perfect is an old and worn out cliché, but "practice" does make "better." Then, for the final test, enter CQP in October and see just how far you can push yourself and your station. If you don't have a station, contact us and we'll find one for you. There's plenty of time to do all of this if you start planning NOW.

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2003 Sweepstakes Plan

We've just placed an overview of the 2003 Sweepstakes Strategy Plan in the Members Only section of the NCCC web site. Here's the URL: http://nccc.cc/members/pdf/2003ssstrategy.pdf

Naturally, there are a zillion details to supplement what's in this written overview, and we'll begin addressing those details at our August 11th NCCC club meeting. I encourage you to take a look at the plan now so you can come to the meeting armed with questions. If you are unable to attend the meeting, feel free to send your questions to me via e-mail at w6oat@compuserve.com or call me at 650-365-5918 if you have thought of something which just can't wait! Recapture the gavel in 2003!

KB de Rusty, W6OAT

The North American Sprint: A Retrospective

By Rusty Epps, W6OAT

A few months ago, I received an e-mail from Tree, N6TR asking if I'd jot down my recollections of just how the North American Sprint contest came into being. I remembered a few of the facts, but it was when I began digging back through my old 1970s-era NCJs that I realized just how much I'd forgotten. What a wonderful flood of memories researching this article has rekindled in my now-failing brain.

It all began in the spring of 1977, just a few days after that year's Dayton Hamvention. I was living and working in San Francisco. The first telephone call came from Tod Olson, K0TO (the NCJ's founding editor who back then was W0IYP). Tod was in town on a business trip and had the evening free. "Let's have dinner," I said. Hardly had I hung up the telephone before it rang again. This time the caller was Jeff Bouvier, K1AM (back then, K1IU). Jeff had been to Dayton and decided now was the time for him to see the USA, West Coast and Hawaii.

He'd just arrived at his San Francisco hotel and was calling to ask about the sights a first-time tourist should be sure to see. "Join Tod and me for dinner" was all I had to say, and a couple of hours later the three of us were together in a local Chinese eatery. After dinner, we drove around the City a bit to show Jeff some of the sights and ended up at the Cliff House, a famous San Francisco landmark perched atop a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean and the entrance to San Francisco Bay. We found our way to a window table in the bar, and with Tod working on margaritas, and Jeff and I splitting a carafe of the house rock-gut chablis wine, we got down to some serious contest talk.

We covered a myriad of topics that night, but when Tod tossed out the question – "What would be the elements of a perfect contest?" – he got our attention. We quickly got the attention of our waitress, ordered another round of drinks, and set to work on the answer. "Let's have a short contest," someone suggested. Yeah, we agreed, after the 24- and 48-hour marathons of the major contests, a short one seemed like a good idea to keep peace within the family and still allow time for doing things other than being on the radio all weekend.

We also concluded that the scope of the event should be somewhat limited geographically so that an entrant wouldn't be required to have a massive antenna array just to have a reasonable signal strength at the other end of the QSO. Thus, the concept of a four-hour sprint emphasizing North American participation was formed.

We wanted the contest exchange to comply with the letter and spirit of amateur radio rules, so we decided to include the sending of both stations' callsigns. Besides, we reasoned, requiring full callsigns would lessen the likelihood of mistakenly thinking that another station is working you when he's actually working somebody else. A serial number seemed like a good idea because that's something which really does have to be copied – it can't be found stored away in a database somewhere. What about RST? Nah…

everybody just sends 599 anyway so why bother. And since we wanted some sort of multiplier to help inject an element of strategy into one's operating plan, we opted for state, province or country.

We debated a bit before deciding to include the operator's name as part of the exchange. I remember telling Tod and Jeff that I'd worked some contest stations for years and yet still had no idea what their names were. By having them "volunteer" their name as part of the exchange, I could avoid the embarrassment of having to ask something which I really should know already. We concurred that this rule might give a slight advantage to folks having short names, so our final compromise was to let the operator sign ANY name he chose, but risk becoming known by a different name if he elected to use a short pseudonym. I chuckle every time I work K4PQL and think how my old pal "Howie" now has become almost universally known as "Al."

We wanted a contest that placed a premium on operator skill. Thus arose the idea of the diabolical "QSY Rule." This rule forces everybody to move around the band rather than being able to camp out on a single frequency calling CQ for the entire contest (as many of the mega-stations were wont to do). I've often been asked how we thought up the QSY Rule, and I wish we could claim credit for being so creative. Unfortunately, we can't. We have to give credit for this rule to the Germans who used it in their DARC Christmas Contest. Klaus, DJ6RX described the ancestor of the Rule in a letter published in the May 1975 NCJ.

Finally, we thought it would be fun to include a team competition as part of the contest. Up until that time, team competitions pretty much were limited to members of one contest club competing against members of other contest clubs. We realized this left out a large number of contesters who happened to live in areas outside the geographical limits of the major clubs.

So, the Sprint teams were opened to any collection of individuals – whether members of a club or not – who formally declared themselves to be a team and who registered a team roster at least 24 hours before the start of the contest. Remember, back in those days there was no such thing as e-mail, so the only way to register a team was via snail mail. Once the team captain dropped his roster in the mailbox, the team was cast in concrete; there was no way to make any last-minute substitutions.

Tod, Jeff and I all admit to being CW aficionados, so we limited the initial Sprints to CW-only events. We knew phone sprints would come eventually, but we left it to others to organize them. It never occurred to us that someday there might also be RTTY Sprints!

The first-ever North American Sprint was held on September 11, 1977. Although similar to today's Sprints, nonetheless, there were some significant rules differences. It occurred two hours later in the evening (from 02:00Z until 06:00Z); it covered four bands (20, 40, 80 and 160m); you had to send sequential serial numbers beginning with number 1 on each band; it had three separate entry categories (single op, multi-single and multi-multi); multipliers were not only American

states, Canadian provinces and North American countries but they also included any other DXCC-list country; and teams consisted of up to 15 members.

That first Sprint garnered 90 logs. When the smoke settled, Tom N6BT was the single-op victor with 231 QSOs and a multiplier of 44 for a total score of 10,164 points. Frank, WA0CWV had teamed up with Bill, N0XX to activate W0ZLN as a multi-multi which netted 267 contacts and 46 mults for a total of 12,282 points. There were no multi-single entries. The W2GD-led team of "Independent Contesters" collected 14 scores totaling 104,100 points to easily dominate the team competition. Nobody found the VT, ID, WY, WV, ND, SD, VE6 or VE8 multipliers.

The October 1977 issue of the NCJ included a questionnaire asking for critiques of the Sprint and its rules. Based upon the responses to that questionnaire, the contest period was advanced by two hours to become 00:00Z until 04:00Z; the multi-single and multi-multi categories were eliminated (thus enshrining W0ZLN as the Sprint's only multi-op entry); DXCC countries outside North America were eliminated as multipliers; 160m was eliminated as a contest band (thereby ensuring N6TV's place in Sprint history as being the only top-10 entrant ever to have made contacts on that band – Bob made two top band QSOs in that first Sprint); separate band serial numbers were eliminated in favor of a single set of numbers; and the maximum number of members allowed on a team was reduced to 10. So far as I know, these are the only Sprint rules changes ever made, and for the last 25 years, entrants

have been able to directly compare their results from one year to the next since they all have followed the same rules.

Tod, Jeff and I never dreamed back in 1977 that the little competition we were sketching out on the back of a Cliff House napkin would catch on the way it did and would become known as "the contesters' contest." I can say with certainty, though, that all three of us today take great pride in having been a part of Sprint history.

Jim Pratt, N6IG, editor of the JUG from 1979-1980, introduces his newborn daughter, Phoebe, born on June 21 of this year.

Contest Calendar – August / September 2003

WAE DX Contest, CW   http://www.darc.de/referate/dx/fgd   0000Z, Aug 9-2359Z, Aug 10
Maryland-DC QSO Party   http://www.w3cwc.org/   1600Z, Aug 9-0400Z, Aug 10 and
1600Z-2359Z, Aug 10
Six Club Perseids Meteor Shower Contest   2300Z, Aug 12-2300Z, Aug 14
SARTG WW RTTY Contest   http://www.sartg.com/   0000Z-0800Z, Aug 16 and 1600Z-
2400Z, Aug 16 and 0800Z-1600Z, Aug 17
ARRL 10 GHz Cumulative Contest   http://www.arrl.org/contest   0600 local-2400 local, Aug 16 and
0600 local-2400 local, Aug 17
Keyman's Club of Japan Contest   http://www.jarl.com/kcj/   1200Z, Aug 16-1200Z, Aug 17
SEANET Contest, CW/SSB/Digital   http://www.qsl.net/seanet2002/   1200Z, Aug 16-1200Z, Aug 17
North American QSO Party, SSB   **http://www.ncjweb.com**   **1800Z, Aug 16-0600Z, Aug 17**
New Jersey QSO Party   http://www.qsl.net/w2rj/   2000Z, Aug 16-0700Z, Aug 17
     and 1300Z, Aug 17-0200Z, Aug 18
Hawaii QSO Party   http://www.karc.us/   0700Z, Aug 23-2200Z, Aug 24
TOEC WW Grid Contest, CW   http://www.qsl.net/toec/   1200Z, Aug 23-1200Z, Aug 24
Ohio QSO Party   http://www.mrrc.net/   1600Z, Aug 23-0400Z, Aug 24
CQC Summer QSO Party   http://www.mtechnologies.com/cqc/   1800Z-2359Z, Aug 24
YO DX HF Contest   http://www.hamradio.ro/   1200Z, Aug 30-1200Z, Aug 31
SARL HF CW Contest   1300Z-1600Z, Aug 31
SCC RTTY Championship   http://lea.hamradio.si/~scc/rtty   1200Z, Aug 30-1159Z, Aug 31

MI QRP Labor Day CW Sprint   http://www.qsl.net/miqrpclub/   2300Z, Sep 1-0300Z, Sep 2
All Asian DX Contest, SSB   http://www.jarl.or.jp/English/0-2.htm   0000Z, Sep 6-2400Z, Sep 7
Quick PSK63 Contest   http://personal.palouse.net/rfoltz/arci/arcitst.htm 0000Z-2359Z, Sep 6
IARU Region 1 Field Day, SSB   http://www.iaru.org/   1300Z, Sep 6-1300Z, Sep 7
SOC Marathon Sprint   1800Z-2400Z Sep 7
North American Sprint, CW   **http://www.ncjweb.com/**   **0000Z-0400Z, Sep 7**
YLRL Howdy Days   1400Z, Sep 10-0200Z, Sep 12
WAE DX Contest, SSB   http://www.darc.de/referate/dx/fgd 0000Z, Sep 13-2359Z, Sep 14
ARRL September VHF QSO Party   http://www.arrl.org/contest   1800Z, Sep 13-0300Z, Sep 15
North American Sprint, SSB   **http://www.ncjweb.com/**   **0000Z-0400Z, Sep 14**

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and   444.2 (PL107.2)

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