



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



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NCCC Net
Thursday 8 PM
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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Next NCCC Meeting

Guests are always welcome at the NCCC! Please join us.

The K2 as a Contesting Radio Bob Tellefsen, N6WG

Date: Monday, 10 January 2005

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

Location: To Be Announced (in the Southeast Bay)

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Two Tango

Tom Berson, ND2T, NCCC Pres.

When I was a wee lad, a wide-eyed crystal-controlled novice, it seemed to me that New Year was a very special time. It called for the Making of Resolutions. And I believed that resolutions made at the New Year carried extraordinary weight. So much weight that I always hesitated to make any, lest I fail to carry them out and thereby come into line for the dreaded Wouff Hong.

Now I know better: any day – including New Year – is a fine day for a resolution, and the Wouff Hong is resting, unused, in a subterranean (or subconscious) vault. But I still choose my resolutions carefully. For me, a resolution has to be something I really want to do, something that I can do (although it may be hard), and something that I can judge whether or not I've done it. Here are some of the amateur-radio related resolutions I am considering for this New Year. I invite you to include them in your list of candidate resolutions.

Have Fun. It's a hobby. Something is wrong if we're not enjoying it. Try a different contest, a different band, a different time of day. Design something. Build something. Fix something. Learn something. Teach something. Go somewhere. Stay home. Set a new goal. Bob, N6WG, our January speaker, just earned WAS/160/QRP certificate #1. What are you working on?

Be Nice. We're blessed to be in a club and in a sport where members treat each other

with respect and kindness, mostly. But there's always room for more kindness and compassion. Some people see a tradeoff between kindness and competitiveness, and perhaps there is at some level, but I'm nowhere near there. For me, competitiveness is still about pulling myself up and not about pulling the other guy down.

Participate. Get radio-active. I am thankful that a terrific team is running NCCC this year. Want to join in? Send me an email. I also know that we are just temporary stewards of the NCCC energy. We were handed the club in great shape by last year's team, and in April we will hand it over to next year's volunteers. Does that include you? Send me an email.

Improve the Station. In the middle of the winter contest season it's easy to see what needs fixing. Take notes and make plans now for summer improvement projects. What will it be? Better antennas? Higher power? More automation? Better ergonomics? Less RFI? Clean up the shop? For me, I'm going to build a 40M wire Moxon. Maybe I won't even wait for summer.

Improve Operating Skills. There are some great pileup simulators out there: Morse Runner, PED, G4FON Contest Trainer. Mike, WA6O, told me that he spends 30 minutes a day with PED as a way to unwind from work and to keep up his considerable CW skills. What a great idea. If CW is not your mode you might be surprised at what Morse Runner turned down slow will do for your ability to copy. I don't know of any RTTY or Phone simulators, yet. Perhaps you will write one.

Make a QSO Every Day. This one's easy, and it's easy to check. If you can make 1000 Qs in a weekend certainly you can make 365 in a year.

Whatever you resolve, if anything, please accept my warm wishes for a healthy and

peaceful 2005, and for a log filled with all the Qs you could ever want.

VP/CC Report

Dean Wood, N6DE

Sweepstakes Score

Thanks to all of you who participated in Sweepstakes this year. We had another terrific year. The current estimate is that our final score will be over 20 million points. This should be well ahead of our competitors. Every one of you helped us to earn what appears to be an NCCC victory and a Sweepstakes 2004 gavel. Thank you! We'll be talking a lot more about this later as the NCCC Awards Banquet nears and when the final Sweepstakes results are published.

January NAQP and RTTY Roundup

The NCCC won the inaugural ARRL RTTY Roundup club competition in 2004. We are going after a repeat victory for the 2005 edition. The January NAQP contests also present a great opportunity for NCCC team success. We are seeking team victories in NAQP CW and SSB, and the most club teams active.

NAQP CW: 18Z January 8 - 06Z January 9

NAQP SSB: 18Z January 15 - 06Z January 16

Rules:

<http://www.ncjweb.com/naqprules.php>

ARRL RTTY Roundup: 18Z January 8 - 24Z January 9

Rules:

<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2005/rtty.html>

You will notice that NAQP CW and the RTTY Roundup overlap on Saturday. We'd like our CW stalwarts to concentrate on NAQP CW, RTTY stalwarts to concentrate on the RTTY Roundup, and everyone else to participate as much as they can in either one or both.

Chuck AK6DV is leading the NCCC RTTY Roundup effort. Please let him know if you'll be active in the RTTY Roundup by e-mailing him at DVChows@sbcglobal.net.

I'm still looking for NCCC NAQP team coordinators. Please let me know if you can volunteer.

NCCC Net and Practice

The NCCC net continues on 3853kHz, every Thursday night at 8pm PST. In preparation for the January NAQP contests and the RTTY Roundup, we'll be having practice sessions on Thursday, 30 minutes before the net, and the Friday before each contest at 7pm PST. Stay tuned to the NCCC reflector for specific information about these practices, including the suggested practice frequencies.

The NCCC Newbie

Volunteer for NCCC – Nine Ways to Have Fun and Learn Something New

By: Marc Ziegler, W6ZZZ

This article applies to NCCC “newbies” and to “old hands”.

Volunteering for NCCC activities is a GREAT way to have fun and learn something new about contesting.

Volunteer for JUG Articles

Any NCCC member can write an article and get it published in the JUG. Just look at this article as an example. To maximize the “value” of your article to the JUG just try to be:

- Friendly and encouraging towards contesting
- Useful to some majority of NCCC members

A series of JUG articles that I have found interesting are the “NCCC member profiles”. This is where somebody visits an

NCCC member and then writes a JUG article about him or her, their QTH and their contesting setup.

Heck, if you are really looking for literary fame you can parley your JUG article experience/acumen into national magazine articles for the NCJ and QST.

To volunteer to write an article, contact our JUG Editor, Rob, K6RB.

Volunteer for the NCCC Web Page

The NCCC web page (<http://www.nccc.cc/>) is always looking for more “content” to make the site even more valuable for folks. Take a look at the following web pages for new ideas or to see if you have something to add:

- Suppliers of parts and services – <http://www.nccc.cc/members/suppliers.html>
- Members Only Section (varied contents) – <http://www.nccc.cc/members/index.htm>
- NCCC History – <http://www.nccc.cc/history.html>
- CQP History – <http://www.cqp.org/History.html>

To volunteer to submit some web content contact our Webmaster Ed W0YK.

Volunteer to Recruit New NCCC Members

NCCC is always looking for new members. These new members could be contesters or just hams interested in learning a little more about contesting. There are many ways for everyone to recruit for NCCC:

- Give a contesting presentation at your local ham radio club or ARES group (there are a number of pre-packaged presentations available in the Members Only section of the NCCC web page)
- Organize or participate in your local ham radio club's Field Day

- Invite hams to your station to operate in a Multi-Single or Multi-Multi contest effort.

Volunteer for NCCC Team Competitions

Besides ARRL Sweepstakes, NCCC enters a number of other contests as a club. You can coordinate an NCCC team effort for a variety of contests, depending on your interests. This includes publicity, building club interest and in some cases organizing NCCC “teams”. In past years this has included contests such as:

- ARRL RTTY Roundup
- Three North American QSO Parties (CW, Phone and RTTY)
- Three North American Sprints (CW, Phone and RTTY)

To volunteer, contact our Vice President/Contest Chair, Dean, N6DE.

Volunteer for a Meeting Presentation

We are always looking for members to make a presentation at the monthly NCCC meeting. To maximize the “value” of your presentation, it’s the same as writing an article for the JUG:

- Friendly and encouraging towards contesting
- Useful to some majority of NCCC members

To volunteer, contact our President, Tom, ND2T.

Volunteer for CQP

CQP can quite arguably bill itself as “the biggest and the best of the state QSO parties”. Running an effort like CQP requires a lot of volunteers. There are more things than I can list but here are a few:

- Publicity (email)
- Postal mailing party to send out the brochures (manual labor is the only qualification)
- Log checking after the contest

- Postal mailing party to send out the results, plaques and t-shirts (manual labor is the only qualification).

CQP has more plaques (lumber) than any other state QSO party. Perhaps you can:

- Sponsor an existing plaque – occasionally Kent K6ENT will ask for volunteers to sponsor an existing plaque. Competition to sign up for sponsorship is fast and furious.
- Sponsor a new plaque – this is a very tough one. Besides coming up with an idea for a new plaque that has “good value for CQP” you also have to advertise, promote, champion and push your plaque to success. And do this for years.

For more information you can go to www.cqp.org.

To volunteer for CQP, in general, contact Al, AD6E. To volunteer for publicity, contact Kevin, N6RCE. And, to learn more about plaques, contact Kent, K6ENT.

Volunteer for ARRL Sweepstakes

When the NCCC targets ARRL Sweepstakes as a “contest to win” there are a lot of volunteer activities. The goal of this effort is to increase our club score and “give something back to the NCCC members” such as help with:

- Upgraded antennas, or a new 80m dipole to contact “close in” NCCC members
- Logging software setup/help (WriteLog, CT, TRLog, N1MM Logger, CQPWin, etc.)
- Connecting the computer to the transceiver for logging/automation
- Connecting to Internet packet for sending and receiving spots

Another volunteer activity is the “SS Log Czar”, the person who makes sure that each and every NCCC log is submitted to the ARRL for our club score.

Sweepstakes is over for 2004. To volunteer for SS in 2005, contact the Vice President/Contest Chair.

Volunteer for NCCC

Certainly at the “top of the list” is volunteering to be an NCCC Officer or Board of Directors member.

To volunteer, just “speak up” at the January or February NCCC meetings. Or talk with our President, Tom, ND2T.

If anyone is interested, I have compiled a list of these NCCC Officer/BOD volunteer “stalwarts” since 1997 that I can email to you.

Volunteer for Yourself

And finally, every one of you can have fun, participate in contests, work other NCCC members, and send in your contest log proudly indicating the “Northern California Contest Club” as your club affiliation.

I attach “Northern California Contest Club” to each and every one of my contest log submissions, whether or not the contest has a club competition. Ditto for any of my ARRL Soapbox postings.

N6TV: Contest Signal From South San Jose

By: Rob Brownstein, K6RB

Most of us, when we think of competitive contest stations, envision acres of land, multiple towers, inter-tower catenaries and loops, and the like. But, Bob Wilson, N6TV, who was one notch away from a Top Ten finish in SS CW a few years back, lives on a regular city lot in San Jose, and has a single-tower station.

Bob at 47 is one of the younger members of NCCC. He started in ham radio, at age 15, as WN6TLV, in Tarzana, California. One of his contemporaries and friends was “Tree,” (now N6TR), so we shouldn’t be surprised that Bob embraced competitive ham radio early on. In fact, just after he finished wiring up his Heathkit HW-16, while pondering what to do with his radio, he read about the impending Novice Roundup, and entered with a vengeance. A local Elmer, WB6OLD (now KR6X) came by to drop off a big handful of crystals to help him QSY around the novice bands.

From the get go, Bob was a CW man. He had little interest in phone, then, and even less, now. He honed his CW skills by engaging in frequent CW message handling. It sharpened both his speed and accuracy. And, with Tree as his contest sparring partner, and WB6OLD providing results analysis and feedback, Bob’s ultimate fame as a world-class tester was virtually assured.

Fortunately, Bob applied and was accepted at UC Berkeley otherwise NCCC’s CW ace might have remained a Southern California asset. After graduating with a degree in computer science, he chose to stay in the Bay Area and work for IBM. Bob did a lot of guest operating before he built his own station. He operated contests at WA6AHF (SK), W6JZU (now W6CS), W6RGG, W6XR (@K6UD), WB6ION (now WC6H), WA7NIN (now W7UA), N6BT, K6HNZ, AI6V, N6RO, and W6NL, and he expresses much gratitude to the fine station hosts of the NCCC.

In 1983, he finally scrounged up enough money to buy a modest house in Coyote Valley. Beginning with only a dipole, then, by 1989, Bob had finally put in place an 89 foot crank up with a Christmas-tree array of monobanders (see photo). At the very top of the mast is a Create 80 m rotary dipole – only 56’ long. Below it are the 5 element 10, 15, and 20 meter monobanders, all optimized and installed by N6BT. At the



N6TV's antenna system sits on a single 89-foot tower. At the top is an 80 m rotary dipole. At the bottom is a 3-element 40 m yagi. In between, from bottom up, are 5 element monobanders for 20, 15 and 10.

bottom of the mast is the 3-element 40 meter yagi. For 160 meters, Bob shunt feeds the tower using a pair of monster-sized variable capacitors housed in a large, plexiglass enclosure near the base of the tower.

Inside the shack, Bob built a station table using the ARRL Handbook design of a wooden door for the top surface, and sturdy supports to keep it rock steady at the ideal height above the floor. On the left of the table is a pair of Nye Viking MB-V-A matchboxes, one atop the other. According to Bob, they “serve as watt meters, and are used to keep the SWR low, cut down harmonics, and keep the Alphas and the low pass filters happy.” Directly in front of the operator position are the two FT-1000 MPs. Above the transceivers are the left-radio's Alpha 87A, and the right radio's Alpha 86. The computer is on the floor near the right end of the table, and the keyboard and monitor are just above it.

Bob is set up for SO2R but as yet does not use the computer to handle radio A/B switching. Switching is done, manually, using a small box with two toggle switches on it that feeds a larger relay box hidden behind the equipment – a homebrew design of Tom's (N6BT).

Bob has the left-hand radio reserved for 160, 80, 20 and 10 meters; and the other reserved for 40 and 15 meters. Band-pass filter and antenna selection is automatic; two Top-Ten decoders monitor each radio and switch the two WX0B BPF-6 filters and two Ameritron RCS-8V remote antenna switches. Rather than having all the coax come into the shack and be switched using a “6-pack,” Bob opted to use two mast-mounted RCS-8Vs, so that only two coax lines actually enter the shack. By mounting the switches on the mast, only two coax loops must be accommodated instead of five!



Bob's station arrangement allows easy access to whatever he needs.

Because Bob lives in a suburban subdivision, he wanted to avoid neighborhood TVI and RFI complaints. Thus, each yagi has been modified to provide 4-to-1 rather than 1-to-1 matches to the 50 ohm coax. Each is equipped, therefore, with a 4-to-1 balun. Bob left it to Tom, N6BT, to work through the engineering but says he has had surprisingly few neighbor complaints. And, even though the spacing between antennas is relatively small, he says interaction has not been an issue other than some degradation in F/B ratio with the 15 meter monobander.

Bob is known for trying to minimize the time involved in processing each contest Q. He has remapped the keyboard keys so that his hands virtually never leave the home keys. And, his efforts have paid off. He has

won the Pacific Division in SS CW twice, and come in first in the USA in CW for the IARU contest. This all goes to prove that you can be competitive, with a single-tower installation, on a city-sized lot. So, next time you hear N6TV beating a superstation operator in a massive pileup, remember it's never just the equipment.



Here's Bob at the wheel of N6TV. The two boxes to his left are his keyer and the manual A/B rig switching control box.

If you missed the annual dinner, you may have missed the best show yet. First off, every member received a gift – a nicely wrapped PL-259, courtesy of HRO. The women had a choice of a second PL-259, or a beautiful long-stemmed rose. Guess which most of them chose?

Dinner was adequate and no one left hungry, but the after-dinner “doings” were the core of the night.

To begin with, each table competed with the others to copy N0SS's contest simulation tape. The objective was to identify – correctly! – the greatest number of calls.

That game was followed by the auction, and our own N6TV proved both adept and funny as he coaxed ham radio operators to dig deeper into their pockets for a wide variety of goodies. The highlight was a framed pair of Rusty's novice QSL cards sent to another novice. Rusty had busted the call on the first

one, and sent the second card to make up for it. The bid got as high as \$25, with Rusty as one of the high bidders. But Bob, with the approval of everyone there, gave the framed QSLs to Rusty, followed by a big round of applause.

After the auction, the real entertainment began. Ken, N6RO, led off with a round of songs played on his banjo while he and everyone sang along. The “surprise” hit of the night was N6TV who had been billed as a “manualist.” Now, we all know Bob has good hands when it comes to sending CW, but no one was prepared for what he did with his hands that night. Let's just say, the man has talent, and he produced some gut-splitting laughter throughout the room.

Dean, N6DE, followed with imitations of distinctive phone operators. That, too, produced its own round of guffaws.

The closing act was The Locust and no written description can do justice to his combination of song, puppetry, and zaniness. The man's an original.



Yes, The Locust!

Have A Great 2005!

--CL--

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