



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



October
2006
Issue 413

NCCC Net
Thursday 8 PM
3830+/-

Our Next Meeting

Finalize SS Plans
moderated by Dean Straw, N6BV

Date: Monday, 16 October 2006

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

Location: [TIBCO Software Incorporated](#) - Building 2, 3301 Hillview Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94304 (650) 846-1000

Pizza and soft drinks at \$3/slice.

Please RSVP to [K6EU](#) by Sunday, 15 October. Pay via PayPal beforehand or cash/check at the door.

From 101: Take the Oregon Expressway exit south (actually, southwest), for a couple miles, crossing El Camino where it becomes Page Mill Road. Continue up the hill to Foothill Expressway which is about the 4th stop light. Turn left on Foothill and then left again on Hillview Avenue, the first exit. TIBCO is on the right about a half-block from Foothill.

From 280: Take the Page Mill Road exit north (actually northeast), for a couple miles, turning right on Foothill Expressway. Turn left on Hillview Avenue at the first exit and TIBCO is on the right about a half-block from Foothill.

The guard or receptionist should direct you to the meeting room. If all else fails, call Rick, N6XI, at 408 896 0476.

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Musings from the President

By Dean Straw, N6BV

If you missed the September NCCC meeting in Vallejo, you missed some great Chinese food and a fantastic meeting with close to 40 attendees.

For those who somehow managed to miss the September meeting, once again Ed, W0YK, our hard-working Webmeister, has uploaded to the NCCC Web site part of the September presentation. (Click on "Meetings" and find the presentations for the September meeting, plus those in April, June and August too if you're a little behind in your meetings!)

It's very nearly October as I write this, you all know what *that* means -- our beloved CQP, the California QSO Party, is almost here. As someone who has operated CQP for about 35 years, I can tell you that it richly deserves its nickname of "California Sweepstakes." Even smaller California stations can run high sustained rates because they're the "hunted" ones. After all, everyone wants to talk to California stations in CQP!

Our on-the-ball CQP committee, headed up by Kevin, WB6S, and Marc, W6ZZZ, and ably assisted by a small herd of devoted volunteers, informs me that all 58 California counties will have operations going on for the 2006 CQP. This is fantastic news and makes the out-of-staters very happy indeed that all possible CA multipliers will be on for the contest.

And of course, CQP is a not only a huge amount of fun by itself, but it is also a serious tuneup for NCCC's other favorite KD [Kick, Duck!] contest: the ARRL November Sweepstakes.

If you're not already aware of it, the Potomac Valley Radio Club (PVRC) has really thrown down the gauntlet for this year's Unlimited Club competition. NCCC has held onto the winner's gavel now for three years in a row, and we definitely intend to keep that precious gavel for another year. Gee, make that a decade, at least!

PVRC is rumored to have 350+ members. NCCC's got lots of members too, but after three years as top dogs in SS we face a real danger this year -- We don't want to fall victim to *complacency*. If we don't get every possible station on the air, with operators sitting in those chairs for as many hours as possible on both SS weekends (preferably 48 hours, for each operator) we may end up slinking away with our tails between our legs. This is a serious possibility because PVRC is really motivated this year. They've seen how we've done it and they think they can out-NCCC the real NCCC. Not!

So, I hope everyone has finished those summertime antenna projects and repairs. Ideally, you've gotten all your antenna work and in-shack tweaking done in time to work out any kinks before CQP. But if you're still waiting for the hot weather to abate and the cooler temperatures of autumn to work on those aerials, then ask your club members to help out. NCCC has a whole bunch of helpful people who can assist you getting things in tip-top shape before CQP and SS.

By the way, I hope each of you has consulted with your family and most importantly your significant other to reserve the following weekends for some serious radio competing:

CQP: Oct 7-8, starting 1600 UTC Saturday (9 AM local), ending 2359 UTC Sunday (5 PM local).

SS CW: Nov 4-5, starting 2100 UTC Saturday (1 PM local), ending 0300 UTC Monday (7 PM local Sunday).

SS Phone: Nov 18-19, starting 2100 UTC Saturday (1 PM local), ending 0300 UTC Monday (7 PM local Sunday).

The meeting this month has been moved to the second Monday of the month, October 16 at TIBCO in Palo Alto. (This was to let the mobile ops recover from their CQP weekend's travels.) Check the NCCC Web site for directions. Be sure to come out for a rallying of the NCCC troops for CQP and SS. Think about what kind of commitment in SS you can personally make to keep the finest contest club in the USA on top in SS!

Here's a table of scores related to the number of QSOs.

QSOs	Multipliers	Hours (Est.)	Rate	Score
500	70	8	60	70,000
800	75	13	60	120,000
1000	80	16	63	160,000
1500	80	24	63	240,000
1800	80	24	75	288,000

73 and Kick, Duck!

Dean, N6BV

Kick, Duck!



VPCC News and Views

By: Fred Jensen, K6DGW

Contests: I've been contributing a contesting article each month to the newsletter of the local Sierra Foothills ARC, and generally include some selected contest data for the next month since almost none of the members are testers.

My goal, of course has been to change that ... not a lot of success so far, but I learned many years ago that, "You may fail, but giving up ensures it." It finally occurred to me that doing the same for NCCC as I have been is a waste of ink and space since everyone in our club either has the calendars or knows how to find them, so unless you all tell me otherwise, I think we'll dispense with that.

Kudos: A little blurb from the Adventure Radio Society informed me that N6RO currently holds the all-time record for the Tubby Class in the Spartan Sprints ... congratulations Ken! The next one is this coming Monday, 2 Oct, and I might actually make it into the contest.

And, congratulations to Jeff, WK6I, for both that stellar showing at HC8N in the CQ WW RTTY, and for his appearance in Sunset Magazine. And, word from the City by the Bay, AI, K6SRZ, is doing well. Hopefully he'll get back to his usual routine soon, but not too fast.

Apology: I have been a less-than-active VP/CC of late. People have had to remind me of the team competitions on more than one contest, and I apologize for that. Andrea's Dad, who is 89, has been involved in an ensemble of various medical problems, accompanied by multiple visits to the Kaiser facilities in Roseville, about 30 miles from here, and it has been occupying a lot of our time. That of course pushes the priorities on the To-Do List downward, and something always falls off the bottom. Ham radio has been one of those things. Tests are pretty

much over, and his treatment is stabilizing to the point where we can begin to actually schedule things around it, so there's a lot of hope on the horizon, and not a moment too soon. CQP and the fall contest season have crept upon us (well ... me at least!)

CQP: Speaking of "on the horizon," I will make the annual pilgrimage to Monitor Pass in Alpine County for the N6A conflagration. My wife enjoys a few days alone in the house, and I really enjoy the crew, the contest, and the fun of it all. The weather is cooling here in the Sierra foothills a bit more than I'd like, but I'm still taking shorts. I'm also taking a lot of sweat clothes and my parka! We intend to make the largest showing that we can.

SO2R Video: All I can say is WOW!! My first viewing was overwhelming ... I couldn't get past Rick's video production skills. I don't know how he does that. Re-viewings of the actual SO2R episodes suggested that, "If you can drive a car, you can do SO2R," but it'll take me some time. In younger days, I could drive, and fly an airplane and a helicopter. Not well, mind you, but I survived all the landings. From the video, SO2R seemed somewhat more complex, at least in the mind.

PACIFICON: Andrea and I will be there barring family disasters ... I do look forward to chatting with as many of you as I can find. And Dean, I will be in your antenna seminar! See you all in the CQP.

73,

Fred K6DGW

Preparing for CQP

By: Rob Brownstein K6RB

CQP may very well be the one contest where California operators – regardless of power or antennas – can run up a good score by CQing from start to finish. As I wrote in my strategy article, it makes no sense for CA operators to be searching and pouncing,

or for non-CA operators to be running under most circumstances.

During high sunspot years, CQP is truly a 6-band plus contest (the plus is VHF). For most operators, it is at least a four-band contest (10, 15, 20 and 40). This year, no one can really count on 10 or 15. CQP may end up being primarily a two bander – 20 and 40. That's where you have to assume you're going to get the bulk of your multipliers. The remaining bands are going to be point rather than multiplier opportunities. So, exhaust yourself on 20 and 40 before migrating elsewhere if you want to achieve your highest score.

If you will be time limited, try to pick the times that typically yield the best rates and distances. The following pages have the N6O rate sheets for 2004 and 2005. You will note significant differences in activity and rates when comparing 10 and 15. Ken, N6RO, hopes this year will be somewhere in the middle. I'm not that optimistic. It could be worse.

Experience in all contests show that the first few hours tend to be real busy. CQP is probably no exception. The serious out-of-state operators are going to hit the ground running at the starting pistol shot. It would be great if they find a blizzard of CA stations all CQing, on both modes, from the get go.

Whether you have a tribander and amplifier, or wires and QRP, start by calling CQ rather than poking around looking for Qs. The savvy out-of-state ops won't be CQing, so you'll end up with close-in CA points but few mults. All the non-CAs are looking for CAs, so find a clear spot, above the crowd, and go for it.

If you are low power or QRP, be prepared to spend more time on CW than on SSB. You'll be heard better and get an extra point per Q. If you have QRO and decent antennas, you may want to shift back and forth between phone and CW, operating

phone on the hour and CW on the half hour for 30 minutes each. If you split your time equally between both modes, most likely your phone Q count will be significantly higher than your CW Q count – but not necessarily! In recent state QSO parties, I've found scant phone activity but plentiful CW activity. If that turns out to be the case in CQP, adjust your time proportions accordingly.

About an hour before the opening shot, check out the bands, listen to the beacons, see which band sounds strongest, and plan to start there.

Take a look at the N6O rate sheets, and the graph on the last page, to get a feel for how the contest ebbs and flows. You may want to map out your own band plan based on these tools, but leave yourself open to modifying your plans based on real conditions.

CQP is a great warm-up contest for the upcoming Sweepstakes CW and Phone contests. You'll have a chance to renew your relationship with your contest logging program and your keyboard. You'll have practice copying serial numbers, too.

CQP is not a great contest for SO2R because as a CA operator, you'll mostly be CQing, and as an out-of-state operator, you'll mostly be searching and pouncing. That said, though, you can practice dual CQing when rates drop sufficiently. You can call CQ on 20, then call CQ on 40, then back to 20, and so on. You'll have practice with SO2R switching and listening to both radios at the same time.

There will be pile ups on stations operating in rare counties, and on mobiles each time they cross a county line. This provides good practice handling pile ups.

Practice sitting in the chair for long stretches; you'll need to do that in November. Set a score goal for yourself before the contest, and meet or exceed it. And, don't forget – have fun!

QSO AND RATE BREAKDOWNS

station: N60
 contest: California QSO Party 2004

UTC	160 CW	160 PH	80 CW	80 PH	40 CW	40 PH	20 CW	20 PH	15 CW	15 PH	10 CW	10 PH	144 CW	144 PH	rate	total
16Z	0	0	0	0	14	8	63	50	30	70	13	28	0	0	276	276
17Z	0	0	0	0	10	10	23	86	35	97	6	45	0	0	312	568
18Z	0	0	0	0	0	30	19	92	19	83	23	47	0	0	313	901
19Z	0	0	0	0	2	11	39	74	21	65	36	35	0	0	283	1184
20Z	0	0	0	0	3	9	21	58	32	52	17	47	0	0	239	1423
21Z	0	0	0	0	2	16	33	45	25	29	14	25	0	0	189	1612
22Z	0	0	0	0	6	23	22	74	29	39	0	21	0	0	214	1826
23Z	0	0	0	0	21	23	17	66	16	54	0	7	0	0	204	2030
00Z	0	0	0	1	40	24	35	55	11	23	0	3	0	0	192	2222
01Z	0	0	6	6	56	34	28	60	1	29	0	0	0	1	220	2442
02Z	0	0	31	15	40	76	0	59	0	0	0	0	0	0	221	2663
03Z	14	4	47	32	56	41	2	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	213	2876
04Z	24	20	44	54	28	39	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	219	3095
05Z	22	15	41	48	6	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	159	3254
06Z	7	15	17	30	6	14	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	91	3345
07Z	11	3	14	17	12	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	68	3413
08Z	3	1	15	20	9	15	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	65	3478
09Z	3	6	6	11	6	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46	3524
10Z	8	3	17	6	15	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62	3586
11Z	7	1	11	9	19	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	3639
12Z	3	2	6	3	21	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43	3682
13Z	1	4	5	5	17	6	0	7	0	4	0	0	0	0	49	3731
14Z	0	0	1	1	14	3	27	40	4	40	0	0	0	0	130	3861
15Z	0	0	0	0	8	2	25	32	13	42	2	6	0	0	130	3991
16Z	0	0	0	0	2	4	19	41	10	63	0	0	0	0	139	4130
17Z	0	0	0	0	1	4	16	38	4	45	20	21	0	0	149	4279
18Z	0	0	0	0	1	8	8	57	13	52	9	52	0	0	200	4479
19Z	0	0	0	0	0	20	16	20	33	11	14	53	0	0	167	4646
20Z	0	0	0	0	6	17	12	33	16	18	8	48	0	1	158	4804
21Z	0	0	0	9	3	27	2	35	24	16	5	13	0	0	134	4938
tot	103	74	261	267	424	541	431	1051	336	832	167	451	0	3	----	4941

You'll note that 2004's results were better than 2005. Part of that is a consequence of 10 meters yielding over 600 Qs in 2004 and only 46 Qs in 2005. And, 15 meters produced nearly 1200 Qs in 2004 but only a little over 400 the next year. Note also that though the rates during the first five hours were consistently high, they were considerably higher in 2004 than in 2005.

Interestingly, in both years, 20 meters produced about 1400 Qs.

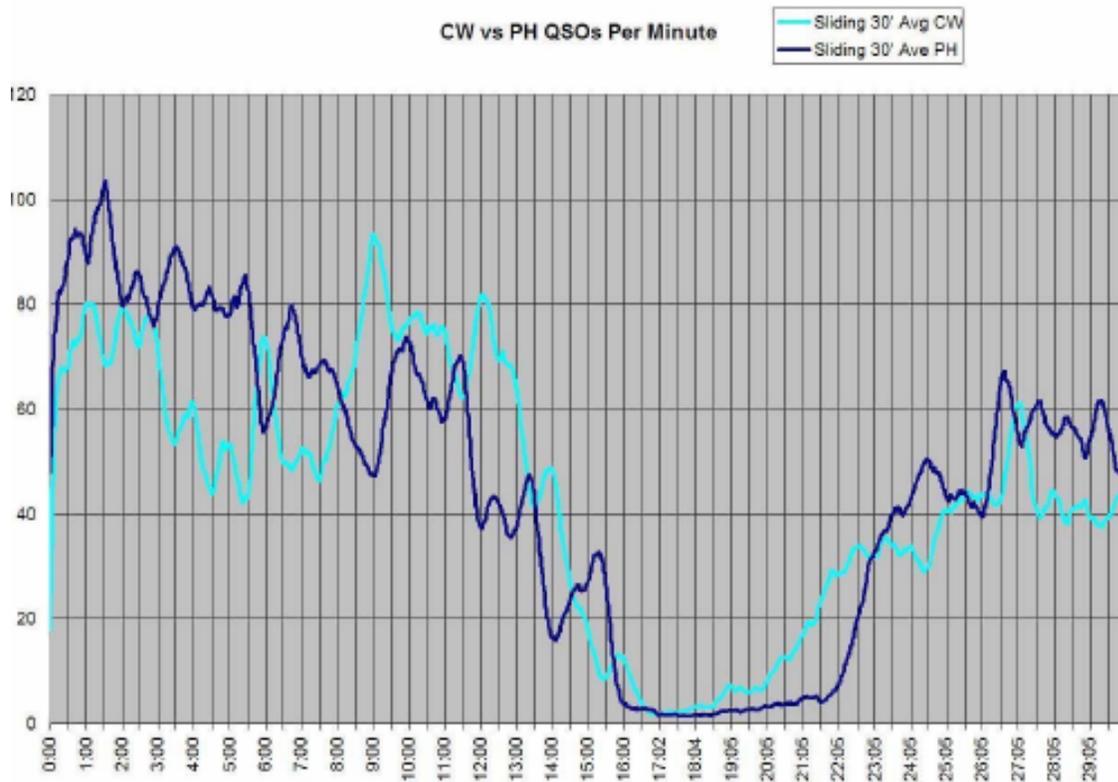
QSO AND RATE BREAKDOWNS

station: N6O
 contest: California QSO Party 2005

UTC	160 CW	160 PH	80 CW	80 PH	40 CW	40 PH	20 CW	20 PH	15 CW	15 PH	10 CW	10 PH	144 CW	144 PH	rate	total
16Z	0	0	0	12	18	11	43	92	7	14	0	0	0	0	197	197
17Z	0	0	0	4	3	45	48	75	16	12	0	1	0	0	204	401
18Z	0	0	0	0	6	28	47	72	15	24	1	1	0	0	194	595
19Z	0	0	0	0	8	31	45	45	15	13	0	0	0	0	157	752
20Z	0	0	0	0	4	8	29	77	27	12	0	0	0	0	157	909
21Z	0	0	0	0	5	29	35	42	15	7	1	2	0	0	136	1045
22Z	0	0	0	0	18	13	29	36	10	14	0	1	0	0	121	1166
23Z	0	0	1	1	0	10	22	46	2	3	0	0	0	0	85	1251
00Z	0	0	0	1	89	33	25	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	178	1429
01Z	1	2	0	15	53	51	1	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	149	1578
02Z	3	2	78	15	62	5	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	172	1750
03Z	10	11	47	34	20	45	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	168	1918
04Z	16	13	36	45	20	18	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	149	2067
05Z	14	20	19	31	8	9	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	103	2170
06Z	17	8	18	8	7	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	74	2244
07Z	8	12	12	29	6	14	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	82	2326
08Z	6	6	12	4	7	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43	2369
09Z	2	4	5	7	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	2395
10Z	5	4	19	7	18	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	71	2466
11Z	3	4	15	8	24	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	70	2536
12Z	3	16	7	6	7	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	2587
13Z	7	7	2	14	4	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	2636
14Z	3	3	5	11	13	0	5	40	1	1	1	1	0	0	84	2720
15Z	0	0	1	4	8	8	27	20	1	3	1	2	0	0	75	2795
16Z	0	0	0	1	0	2	8	71	1	4	1	4	0	0	92	2887
17Z	0	0	0	0	0	1	19	62	7	14	3	3	0	0	109	2996
18Z	0	0	0	0	4	2	16	49	15	47	3	11	0	0	147	3143
19Z	0	0	0	0	1	15	29	46	5	47	0	9	0	0	152	3295
20Z	0	0	0	0	5	8	12	56	18	16	0	0	0	0	115	3410
21Z	0	0	3	6	7	16	11	46	16	12	0	0	0	0	117	3527
tot	98	112	280	263	431	489	453	941	171	243	11	35	0	0	----	3527

The big difference from the previous year was lower results on both 10 and 15 meters. When the sunspots favor us, there is a lot of 10 meter phone activity. In 2004, 10 meter activity dropped by more than a factor of ten. Fifteen meter activity dropped by more than half.

You can expect similar results to 2005 if 10 and 15 meter openings are weak and short duration. There simply is not enough increased activity on 20, 40, 80 and 160 to make up for the shortfall on 15 and 10.



This 2005 results graph shows how activity varied in QSOs per minute over the 30 hour duration of the contest, differentiated by mode. Phone activity tended to eclipse CW activity until the 6th hour; CW activity led phone activity for most of the 14 hours from the ninth through 23rd. During the last ten hours, activity picked up steadily, and phone QSOs were dominant the final six hours.

In planning your time, you may want to stay in the chair for the first 14 hours, hit the sack for six, and catch the wave during the last 10 hours.

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