



Publication of the
Northern California
Contest Club



September
2009
Issue 448

NCCC Net
Thursday 8 PM
3610+/-

NEXT MEETING

"Final CQP Plan" – Rick Eversole (N6RNO)
"Preliminary SS Plan" – Jack Morgan (KF6T)

Date: Monday, 14 September 2009
Time: 6pm schmooz, 6:30pm dinner, 7pm program
Location: Tied House, 954 Villa Street, Mountain View

Dinner selections for this month's meeting are:

1. Half Pound Burger \$20
2. Voodoo Chicken Sandwich \$20
3. Traditional Fish & Chips \$20
4. Beer Mustard Chicken \$24
5. Tortellini and Chicken \$24
6. Pasta Primavera \$20

Prices include salad, soft beverage of your choice, tax and tip. Of course, this is the Tied House, so an excellent selection of beers and alcoholic beverages is available! Note the prices, and respond with your dinner choice by Saturday evening, September 12, 2009 to W6FB. Payment can be to the club's PayPal account or at the door. Please note the clubs Pay-Pal account: paypal@nccc.cc.

NCCC Officers

President: [Jack Morgan, KF6T](mailto:Jack.Morgan@kf6t.com)
Vice-President and Contest Chairman: [Fred Jensen, K6DGW](mailto:Fred.Jensen@k6dgw.com)
Secretary/Treasurer: [Jack Brindle, W6FB](mailto:Jack.Brinkle@w6fb.com)

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Past President: [John Miller, K6MM](mailto:John.Miller@k6mm.com)
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Director: [Kevin Rowett, K6TD](mailto:Kevin.Rowett@k6td.com)
Honorary Director: Rusty Epps, W6OAT

Webmaster: Ed Muns, W0YK w0yk@msn.com
JUG Editor: Rob Brownstein, k6rb@baymoon.com

Inland View

By Jack Morgan, KF6T

Major Wallmetal Received

Some of you remember the CW World Wide WPX RTTY contest back in February. We submitted a collective score of over 25 million points and that put us in *First Place North America* as a Club!



Congrats to Ed, W0YK - whose record score at P49X was a major factor in our win. Speaking of RTTY – don't forget the CQ WW RTTY DX Contest is coming September 26th.

Auburn is on fire!

Whenever there is a fire in the mountains above the south bay area, we Sierra foothills hams are reminded that it could easily happen in our back yard. Luckily we don't have summer winds very often – until yesterday.

A fire started and within minutes, over 50 houses were consumed a very short distance from K6DGW, WX6V and KF6T. Thanks to a major effort by the fire crews, it was stopped before hitting the heavy timber uphill.



Picture caption - My back yard view of the fire shortly after it started. The black smoke on the left is the new Harley Davidson shop in flames and the heavier black smoke is 50 houses burning. You can see the spotter plate at the top of the picture while a borate bomber skims over the top of the trees way below at the head of the fire.

Contest Scoreboard

Thanks to Jim Duffy, W6EU, for info regarding “real time scoreboards” for contests. You can watch others around the country during a contest and “stay motivated.” You can test your loggers ahead of time by visiting <http://www.getscores.org/testing.aspx>. Only a few contests are supported now but more will surely follow.

NCCC Webinars

Make sure you support our Webinars. All you need is an internet connection and a phone to participate. Info about how to attend is on the reflector before each event. In the past few weeks we have had excellent presentations on N1MM and WriteLog and you can see these again at <http://bit.ly/n1mm-recording> (or substitute writelog for that recording).

We Need Your Help!

Volunteers are needed to assist in the following areas:

Awards – Help determine who gets what at the March award ceremony. Help generate the hardware and wallpaper that is handed out.

Web – Help with the maintenance and be a part of new section generation.

Scores – Help analyze and prepare score summaries for the web page. Be a part of an effort to automate Club team signups, pledges and score gathering.

CQP – Become part of a great team that runs the CQP contest.

If you can help, email me or sign up at our next regular meeting on September 14th.

If You Need Help

Now is a good time to resolve those hardware and software issues before the season really starts rolling.

Get the latest upgrades to your logging software and make sure you have the newest country lists on file. Test it out. Spring for that amp/radio you always wanted (it is good for the economy!) or get that new antenna in place.

If you need help, our NCCC reflector is a good place to turn. There always seems to be lots of answers and support available from our membership. Just post a message to nccc@contesting.com and stand back!

73, Jack – KF6T

VP/CC

By: Fred Jensen, K6DGW

First off, thanks to Chris, N6WM, for taking on the flogging job for the NAQP SSB. I was scheduled for a semi-major family event which ultimately fell through. I really appreciate the support, I've had a few distractions in life recently, but got rid of one of them today.

Upcoming Contests:

Bruce hasn't updated the WA7BNM contest schedule as I write this, but the two big ones for us are the NA Sprints ... CW on 12 Sep, 1700 – 2100 PDT. The SSB is a week later, 19 Sep, also 1700 – 2100 PDT.

Bob, K6XX, is flogging the CW in a brilliant fashion, I will need someone for the SSB ... gonna be out of town up to it. Teams are 10 stations, you don't have to be inside any "circle," and we'd like to prevail, as we usually do.

Being a Sprint newbie, I'm working on getting N1MM to do what I think it should. Lots of reading of the scripture [aka User's Manual] and playing around. Also on the 12th is the ARRL VHF QSO Party, and the 10GHz and up, second half, is on the 19th.

CQ WW RTTY DX comes up on the last full weekend in Sep, 25-27 here on the left coast. Haven't heard from our resident RTTY Hero about his plans for this, but it's possible P49X may again be warming the ionosphere.

Meetings and Webinars: I haven't managed to make a Webinar yet ... well I did for part of a BOD meeting but got interrupted with family stuff, but they are getting outstanding reviews. They're full of good stuff to improve your station and operating environment.

Sweepstakes: We're coming up on this faster than a moving freight train. I could

use some help ... I'm going to start collecting plans after the first of the month. Ideas for the forum are welcome. Important issues are:

- Stations available for Guest Ops;
- Guest Ops looking for a station;
- Planned split-station operations [aka HMO's, although that wasn't Rusty's original definition of the term];
- Single-op plans.

If there is any concern at all about being within our "club circle," please contact me as soon as possible. We've got some tools that can help in that.

Team Assignments: I've undertaken a possibly futile effort to put some rigor behind the assignment of stations to teams in the NAQP's and Sprints.

We have the "scores database" on our Web site, but it does not include the level of effort put in. It also doesn't include information about the station, antennas, etc., propensity to sandbag on plans, and I have no idea how it ever really could.

For the most part right now, team assignments are an exercise in "institutional knowledge," which works most of the time, but not always. We'll see, but don't hold your breath,

N6ZFO is the NCCC Chief Statistician, not me. Meanwhile, please don't beat up my contest team floggers about being on the wrong team. We're all volunteers. Looking forward to the winter season and low band propagation sans noise,
73,
Fred K6DGW
VP/CC

Dues

Have you paid your dues for the year? It's still just \$24 (cheap), with students just \$12 (even cheaper) and family members \$12 (what a deal).

Contact [Jack Brindle, W6FB](#)

We can get your dues via PayPal or snail mail or via cash at the next meeting.

September Webinar Recordings:

The 160m antenna Webinar is now online and available for you to view.

K6MM did a great job with this presentation, so be sure to watch this recording if you missed the live Webinar.

The recording is in .WMV format. This should make it easy to view, as most of you already have a .WMV player on your computer (i.e. Windows Media Player).

A 160m Helically Wound Vertical, by John K6MM

<http://bit.ly/k6mm-160m-recording>

This file size is 50MB. Let me know if you need a DVD of the webinar instead of downloading the file.

Dean Wood, N6DE

Sometimes You Have To Improvise

Rob Brownstein, K6RB

Back in February 2005, we had a fierce storm in Santa Cruz and my tower buckled,

bent over, and I lost my tower and yagis in a matter of minutes.

I had a lot of time to think about replacement. Instead of a 51 foot crank-up, I decided to use a 72 foot with an electric winch and positive pull down, and 11 cubic yards of concrete for the base. Part of the disaster was caused by sections binding in the wind and being unable to lower it.

The 20 foot chromoloy mast survived, as did the Yaesu G-2800 rotator. So, all I had to do was decide which replacement antennas to install. The antennas that got bent into a pretzel were a C31-XR and Mag 240N. These covered 40, 20, 15 and 10. For 80 and 160, I used wires anchored to the tower.

Prior to the disaster, I had finally bit the bullet and set up for SO2R. My second radio was hooked to a Hy-Gain Patriot vertical attached to my chimney.

This time, I decided, I would have gain antennas for both radios. And, I wanted gain antennas for 30, 17 and 12 meters, too. I considered the 4-el SteppIR, but for SO2R I would need two of 'em. I looked at some other yagis that offered 17 and 12 meter coverage as an after thought (with lower gain and F/B). Then I found the Force 12 5-BA. It had 15 elements, a 33-foot boom, and covered all 5 bands with specs equivalent to a 4 element yagi on each band.

The 5 BA

The 5 BA

33'	10.8sqft	14,000-14,350	13.5dBi	5.6dBd	23dB	<1.6:1
		18,068-18,168	12.9	5.7	14	<1.5:1
		21,000-21,450	13.8	5.9	20	<1.7:1
		24,890-24,990	12.8	5.4	14	<1.6:1
		28,000-29,700	13.5	5.6	20	<1.8:1

The C31-XR

31'	10.7sqft	14,000-14,350	14.0dBi	6.0dBd	20dB	<1.7:1
		21,000-21,450	14.3	6.3	22	<1.7:1
		28,000-29,300	15.6	7.4	21	<1.7:1

According to the specifications, the 5-BA would be close to the performance of the C31 on 20 and 15, and not quite as good on

10. But, the specs on 17 and 12 were comparable to the non-WARC bands, and it had three feed lines – 20 , 17/15 and 12/10. That meant, with suitable filters, I should be able to use it on, say, 20 and 15 at the same time (SO2R).

Force 12 also had an older 2 element yagi for 40 (EF240), which could be combined with a 2 element yagi for 30 (EF230/240) and share a 24-foot boom. It also had two separate feed lines.

To top it off (literally and figuratively) I put a Sigma 180 S at the top of the mast.



The antenna system was put up in early July 2005 and has been largely problem-free. However, a couple of years ago, during the ARRL 10 Meter, my SWR kept spiking suddenly and the Alpha 87A kept kicking out. I stopped contesting and went outside to find windy conditions and spotted the 10 meter driven element brushing against the 12 meter one.

The 5-BA has three elements to form the driven cell for 12/10 meters. There are two 10 meter elements separated by 9.5 inches, and the 12 meter element is sandwiched in between, 4 inches from one and 5.5 inches from the other. As you can imagine, it doesn't take a whole lot of wind to cause

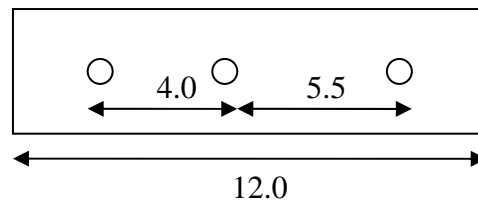
one of the 10 meter element tips to brush against the 12 meter element.



The red circle shows the 12/10 meter cell. Note how close those elements are to one another.

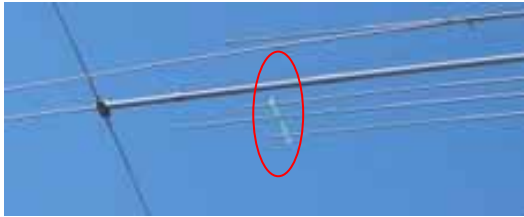
What I ended up doing was creating a pair of spacers for each end that would keep the elements from brushing against each other. I bought a 11 x 14 inch sheet of Lexan UV resistant plastic about an 1/8 inch thick. I had it cut into four 12 x 1.5 inch strips.

Two of each were glued together to create a single strip about 1/4 inch thick. Then, each was drilled out using a 3/8 inch bit with the centers 4 inches and 5.5 inches apart.



The plan was to first put a hose clamp about 14 inches back from the tip of the 12 meter element and tighten it. Then, the device was slipped over the three tips and pushed back until it met the hose clamp. To lock it in place, another hose clamp was slipped down

the 12 meter element until it met the Lexan strip, then it too was tightened.



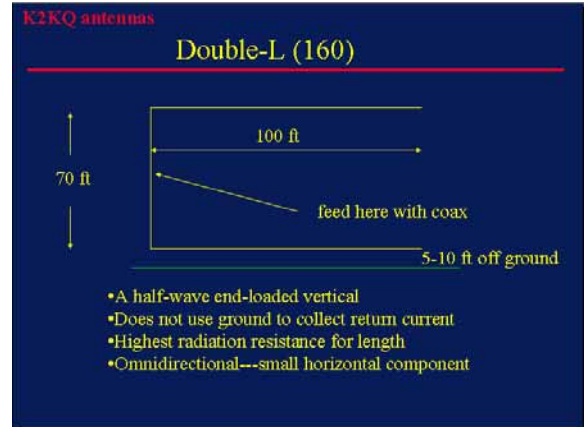
There's no way that those tips will ever brush against one another again.

I spoke to Marc, the new owner of Force 12, to see what he thought about the idea. Apparently, this problem has cropped up on other F12 antennas, too. Marc told me that they had fashioned a spacer made of a non-conductor. It lays flat below the elements and uses hose clamps slotted through the strip to hold it to the three elements.

Because the 12/10 "cell" is quite a way from the boom's midpoint, I ended up renting a 60 foot cherry picker to use for attaching the spacers. To get my money's worth (renting a 60-foot cherry picker ain't cheap!), I ended up doing maintenance on all three antennas, such as re-taping coax lines to the booms, checking coax connector tightness and the like.

I found that the 40 meter reflector on the EF230/240 antenna had a potential problem. The spacer that holds the linear-loading wires above and away from the aluminum element had shifted in position and the wires were now way too close to the aluminum element. So, I re-positioned the spreader and put a new screw in its pilot hole to keep it from shifting again.

I also took advantage of the "picker" to rebuild and re-install the Double L antenna for 160. It's now centered at 1835 and is less than 2-to-1 from 1.800 to 1.870.



Finally, I used the picker to cut off the dead fronds from my 55-foot-high palm tree.

The moral of the story is improvise and optimize. Fix problems that should have been fixed during the antenna design phase. And, optimize your time and cost by fixing all your problems at one time.



A full-size, 5 element, 80 meter yagi (Drool).

