



**Publication of the  
Northern California  
Contest Club**



Issue 516

May 2015



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**NCCC Meeting**

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

**Saturday 6th June 2015**

**Location:-**

El Tapatio, 40 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill,  
CA 94523

<http://eltaps.com/>

**Program:**

- NCCC's Vision - 2015-2016
- W1SRD, N6DE, W6OAT
- + others will present the plans for fun and contesting in 2015-2016

**President's Report**

Hey there, KB'ers!

In some ways, I feel like Carly Fiorina. With no prior experience in NCCC's inner circle, here I am as President of the best contest club in the world. We'll see how far Carly gets in her effort. For me, I'm thrilled that the Club has given me that vote of confidence.

How the heck did this happen?

Well, I must say that I had a lot of fun as President of the Mother Lode DX/Contest Club for the past three years. My final term expired at the end of 2014, and here I am, looking for more fun!

So, let's get down to business. You may note that my first few sentences alluded to politics and mentioned the word, "fun". Politics are not in my game plan.

Fun is.

NCCC is a contest club. We have assembled an all-star team to run the club for the next year or two. All of us on the Board get along famously and it's important to note we all agree that: Our number 1 goal is to put our energy into having fun as a contest club.

You won't see us focusing on bylaws or politics. You will see us building a cohesive team of active contesters who want to win and have fun doing it.

Continued on page 3



## Officers:

President	Bob Hess	W1RH	w1rh@yahoo.com
Vice President /Contest Chair	Steve Dyer	W1SRD	w1srd@arrl.net
Treasurer	Tom Carney	K6EU	k6eu@arrl.net
Secretary	Joanna Dilley	K6YL	joanna.k6yl@yahoo.com
Past President	Rick Karlquist,	N6RK	richard@karlquist.com
Director	Rusty Epps	W6OAT	w6oat@sbcglobal.net
Director:	Rich Cutler	WC6H	wc6h@yahoo.com
Director:	Ron Castro	N6IE	ronc@sonic.net

## Volunteers:

New Member Mentor	Al Rendon	WT6K	wt6k@arrl.net
Charter Member	Rusty Epps	W6OAT	w6oat@sbcglobal.net
Awards Chair	Joanna Dilley	K6YL	joanna.k6yl@yahoo.com
CQP Chair	Chris Tate	N6WM	ctate@ewnetinc.com
CQP Certificates	John Miller	K6MM	k6mm@arrl.net
K6ZM QSL Manager	George Daughters	K6GT	k6gt@arrl.net
K6CQP,N6CQP,W6CQP QSL Mgr	Ed Muns	W0YK	w0yk@arrl.net
NCCC Email reflector Admin	Phil Verinsky	W6PK	kb-w6tqg@verinsky.com
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	David Ashworth	NC6P	nc6p@yahoo.com



### NCCC Net

Thursday 8 PM

Freq: 3.610 +/-

### NCCC

Visit the meetings page of the NCCC website [here](#) for details of the next meeting

## NCCC Membership Information

If you wish to join NCCC, you must fill out an [application for membership](#), which will be read and voted upon at the next monthly meeting. ([PDF application form](#))

To join, you must reside within [club territory](#) which is defined as the maximum of:

- Northern California, anything north of the Tehachapi's up to the Oregon border, and
- A part of north-western Nevada (anything within our ARRL 175-mile radius circle centered at 10 miles North of Auburn on Highway 49).

Those guys and gals in the gold country seem to have a lot of fun. The same seems to be the case for those contesters and DX'ers living in Redwood country. Likewise, that contest group that likes pizza and coax connectors seems to have a lot of fun.

All three of these clubs are very important to the success of the Northern California Contest Club. Many of our members belong to one of more of these clubs. One of my personal goals, as your NCCC president, is to see that we, the Northern California Contest Club, build a strong line of communication and mutual respect with these three fine clubs.

It's not a coincidence that Ron, N6IE, and a long-time member of the Redwood Empire Contest Club is one of our three NCCC Board members this year.

It's not a coincidence that Rich, WC6H, and a loyal member of the Mother Lode DX/Contest Club is one of our three NCCC Board members this year.

It's not a coincidence that Rusty, W6OAT, a member of Pizza Lovers 259, is one of our three NCCC Board members this year.

You see where I'm coming from?

Ron, Rich, and Rusty are loyal NCCC members who have contributed a lot of points to our focus contests over the years. They have also been serious point generators for their respective clubs.

There's room for all of us and, if we all work together....well, that's when the fun will come back to the Northern California Contest Club.

As I mentioned, we have an all-star Board this year, composed of serious contesters and loyal NCCC members. Besides our three Directors, we have:

Steve, W1SRD, VP and Contest Chairman.

Joanna, K6YL, Secretary.

Rick, N6RK, our past President.

If I could have two additional Board members, it would be John, K6MM, and Dean, N6DE. For now, however, since we're not going to be messing with bylaws, let's just consider these two fine contesters, and loyal NCCC supporters, as honorary Board members.

So, I think you can see that our Board is going to try to make this a fun year for the club.

- We're going to have fewer meetings but at each meeting you will find quality speakers and presentations.
- We're going to hold our meetings in the more centrally located East Bay, on weekend afternoons, making it easier for our members from both the Bay Area and the fringe areas to attend.
- We have a plan to make contesting fun for everyone this year.

I'd say more about where we're going with contests this year, but let's save that for our next meeting, on June 6th. Steve, W1SRD, and others will have a lot to say about this subject and I suspect many of you will be pleasantly surprised.

A few words about the Jug: If the Club were a dining room table, the Jug would be the centerpiece. The jug has been a long tradition in this club and we want it to stay that way. If you go to the website you'll find almost every edition, all the way to 1970. Ian, W6TCP, our editor, along with Fred, K6DGW, will continue to put out a terrific edition of the Jug each and every month of the year. This month, you'll notice a couple of new monthly features in the Jug. Norm, N6JV, will be doing a Tube of the Month article, featuring the history of various transmitting tubes. We will also have a monthly Point Generator Profile article, featuring one of our members.

A big thanks goes out to our exiting officers and Board of Directors. Thank you for your time and dedication to this fine contest club. I'd like to give special mention to two of last year's Board members. Byron, N6NUL, put a lot of time and into his effort to motivate the club for last year's Sweepstakes. He not only gave a credible presentation to the group at a NCCC meeting, but also gave that same presentation to the MLDXCC meeting, in Auburn....a long way from home, for Byron. Tom, K6EU, as the exiting Secretary/Treasurer, as agreed to stay on, as Treasurer, until we have that position filled. The new Board has certainly appreciated Tom's contributions to our first two Board meetings. Lastly, I'd like to thank Rick, N6RK, who has been in that thankless job as NCCC President for the past year. I have valued Rick's advice and encouragement.

That's it from me, this month. Scott, W6CT, and Bob, N6TV, did our club a big favor by scouting out a few East Bay locations for our next meeting. We'll see you at one of their picks, on June 6th.

Bob W1RH

## **NCCC Meeting**

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

**Saturday 6th June 2015**

### **Location:-**

El Tapatio, 40 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523 <http://eltaps.com/>

### **Time:**

Lunch at 11:30am , Program commences at 12:30pm

### **Program:**

NCCC's Vision - 2015-2016

- W1SRD, N6DE, W6OAT

+ others will present the plans for fun and contesting in 2015-2016

# Let's Win the CW All Asia Contest

By Rusty Epps, W6OAT

Do you recall the immortal lyrics “Regrets? I’ve had a few...” from Frank Sinatra’s hit song “I Did It My Way”? Well, I, too, have a few regrets, and there is a particular one which just sticks in my craw! Way back in the days of NCCC’s infancy, back in the early 1970s, our club tried to win every single category which somebody in W6/W7-land could win in the CW All Asia Contest. Sadly, we failed because some non-NCCC person always picked us off in at least one of the categories. So recently I’ve been thinking ... after 40+ years wouldn’t it be sweet to finally achieve the goal that has always eluded us? Yes, I’m aware Mr. Sinatra continued his lyrics with the observation “Yes, there were times, I’m sure you knew, when I bit off more than I could chew...”, but what’s to be gained if we don’t try?

So, with the past in mind, let’s charge into the 2015 running of the CW All Asia Contest the weekend of June 20 and 21 (UTC). We won’t treat this as a Focus Contest for NCCC, but rather just as an operating event in which our twin objectives are to have fun and to achieve the Club Goal (explained below). If the CW AA Contest proves to be a hit, then perhaps we can consider doing it again for the SSB AA Contest which is the weekend of September 5 and 6.

The CW AA Contest has nine entry categories:

1. Single Op, Single Band 160m
2. Single Op, Single Band 80m
3. Single Op, Single Band 40m
4. Single Op, Single Band 20m
5. Single Op, Single Band 15m
6. Single Op, Single Band 10m
7. Single Op, All Bands
8. Multi Op, Single Transmitter
9. Multi Op, Multi Transmitter

The “Club Goal” is to win ALL nine of the categories for our area. Winning only eight or fewer doesn’t cut it and we fail, so NCCC participants must work together to ensure we are most effectively utilizing our operators and stations. “Our area” is recognized by the JARL (the AA sponsor) to be the USA portion of CQ Zone 3. That means to succeed we’ve got to beat all non-NCCC members in CA, AZ, NV, UT, OR, WA, and ID. Just think about who else lives in our area – contesters in

such places as Seattle, Los Angeles, San Diego, Phoenix and Salt Lake City – and it's easy to see that achieving our Club Goal of winning everything is not going to be easy. For us to succeed, we're going to need some serious, butt-in-chair operating.

The JARL does not include a team competition as part of the AA, so to make the contest more fun for us and to push each other to achieve the highest scores possible, NCCC will have its own internal competition. We will form two NCCC teams: Team A and Team B. (I'll gladly change those bland team names if somebody sends me two clever, Asian-ey sounding names to replace them. This is supposed to be fun, right?) NCCC members who want to participate on a team will need to register themselves and the category they wish to enter. To do that, go to the NCCC's home page ([www.nccc.cc](http://www.nccc.cc)) and click on the "All Asia" link. That will take you to the registration form you'll need to fill out, and also give you a link to the full AA rules on the JARL's website. It's probably a good idea to actually read the rules before you commit yourself to an entry category! We're looking forward to getting you signed up for this fun contest soon.

Shortly before AA starts, a small committee will assign everyone who registered to a team. We'll make those assignments with an eye toward balancing the teams so they will be as competitive with each other as possible. And to make things even more fun, we will have a live scoreboard running during the AA so everybody can see in real time how their competitors are doing! We'll post details about how to log on to the live scoreboard as soon as we get it all figured out.

Team scores will be the sum of the "team points". Team points are NOT the same as the points you report when you submit your AA log to the JARL. Rather, they are based upon a percentage of the top NCCC score in each entry category. For example, assume the top NCCC scorer in the 10m single op category reports a score of 10,000 points to JARL. For our internal contest, that top score will be 100 percent, or 100 team points. If the next highest NCCC score in that category is 9,500 points, then that entrant will earn 95% or 95 team points. An NCCC team's score will be the sum of the team points accumulated by all of its members, with no one member's score exceeding 100 points. Think about that – the top scorer in any entry category will contribute just as many team points to his team as will the top scoring multi-multi station. Every entry category will be equally important to the final team score. This scoring method also prods each operator to stay in the chair and do his best because, even if he doesn't win his entry category, he can contribute a significant number of points to his team's overall score by making a large percentage of that category's winning score.

It might be that some entry categories just don't have much activity this year. That could happen perhaps on 160, 80 or even 10m. In such case, if nobody makes 10 or more QSOs, then everybody in that category will get a number of team points equal to the number of QSOs they make multiplied by ten. For example, if there are 3 entrants in the 160m single band, single op category and they make, say, 8, 7 and 2 QSOs respectively, then their team points will be 80, 70 and 20.

The All Asia contest runs for 48 hours. Put in full time if you wish, or select a category which better fits the time you have available. Single band 10m and 15m ops most likely only need to be in the chair for a few hours in the late afternoon and early evening. Similarly, 160m and 80m ops probably will vacuum up everybody there is to work on those bands just by being there a couple of hours around sunrise. And you don't need a monster station to do well. Almost everybody has one band that plays well. Enter as a single op on that band. There are not an infinite number of stations to work in the AA, so if you alternate between CQing and S&P, even a modest station will work most of the stations to be had on that band. And you are permitted to use packet cluster spots to make sure you don't miss anybody!

If you're an iron man and want to go for the Single Op, All Band honors, then you can count AA as one of your qualifying contests to get you into the WRTC in Germany in 2018. And if you win SOAB for our area, then the Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications will give you your own special certificate proclaiming how great you are. Wouldn't that be neat to have hanging on your wall?

As for our internal teams, we will recognize two achievements. An award will go to the team which wins more of the nine entry categories than does the other team; and another award will go to the team which makes the larger team score. Maybe the same team wins both of these awards ... or maybe not? At the time I'm writing this article, I have no idea what would be appropriate awards for the winning team(s). I thought about a case of beer, but where would we present it and how would we ever divide it up? So I solicit your suggestions ... please!

For a closing thought ... as the clock approaches the conclusion of the AA at 23:59Z on June 21, know that Frank Sinatra will be watching from above to see how you did. So push back from the operating table, take a deep breath, and belt it out for ole Blue Eyes:

“And now, the end is near;  
And so I face the final curtain.  
My friend, I'll say it clear,  
I'll state my case, of which I'm certain.

I planned each charted course;  
Each careful step along the byway,  
And more, much more than this,  
I won AA my way.”

KB in AA!

# NCCC Point Generator Profile

Welcome to the first of a series of NCCC Point Generator Profiles. These monthly profiles will give all us a way to better know some of our active members. Each profile will show station pictures, as well as where our point generator is located in our 175 mile circle.

This month, features an interview with Verne, who recently acquired the call, K6DN. Verne's previous call sign was W6VMT.

Verne is a classic example of MLDXCC's recruiting efforts. He first learned about contesting at a talk given by a MLDXCC member to the El Dorado ARC. Verne joined MLDXCC, caught the contesting bug, and generated serious points for MLDXCC's CQP effort. Verne later was encouraged by several Mother Lode members to join NCCC. He did, and delivered a nice score on behalf of last year's Sweepstakes effort.

So, without further ado, let's get to know Verne a bit better.

## Point Generator Profile

**Name/Call Sign:** Verne Terwilliger, K6DN

**Past calls:** KJ6MDH, W6VMT

**Location:** Downtown Pleasant Valley – Approximately 12 miles SE of Placerville, El Dorado County

**How much property do you have?** I have 2 acres

**Describe your antenna system:**

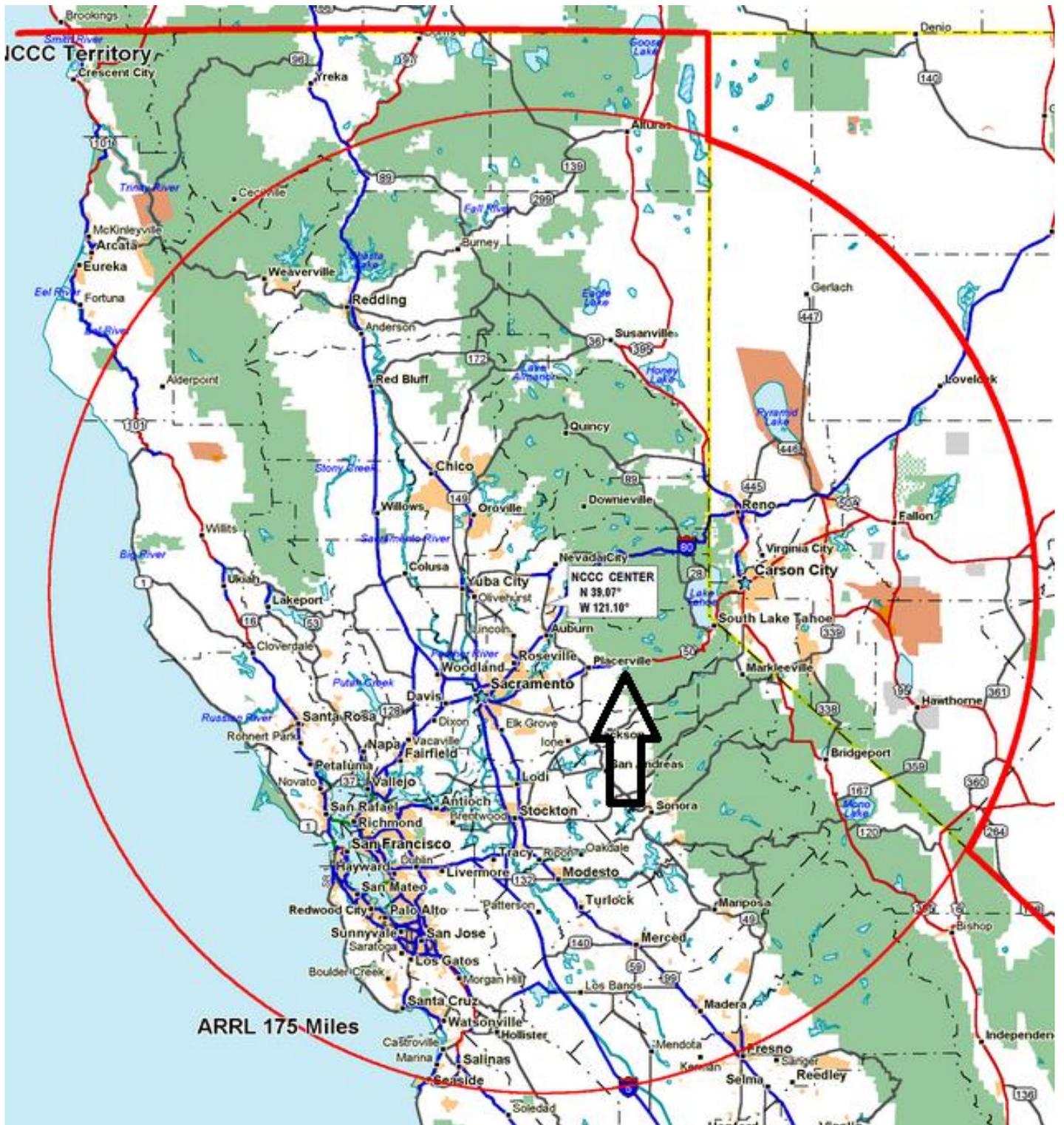
**Current:** I have a 6 band hex beam on a push-up mast currently at 20 feet, due to high wind damage to the pole, and a G5RV at 45 feet.

**Future:** I'm in the process of installing a 51 foot crank-up tower on which I will mount a 3-el Step-pIR with 40/30 dipole and an 80m dipole.

**What's in your shack?** I have a very simple shack. My main radio is a Yaesu FT-1000MP with a Yaesu FL-7000 Linear Amplifier. I have a Timewave Navigator for digital work that I am just setting up. I also have a Yaesu FT-450 and a FT-8800, for local club nets and emergencies.

**What are your previous QTH's?** We moved to this QTH in 2010 from Torrance, CA. I was first licensed in 2011, so this is the only QTH where I have operated from.

**If you're working, what is your career? If not, what was your career?** I retired, with 11 years, from Southern California Edison where I was a senior operations manager. My department was responsible for all of the Load Management Programs, also known as Demand Side Management, throughout the Edison territory.





As kid's we all have professions we are attracted to. Some want to be a fireman, doctor or cowboy. I was fortunate that my uncle managed a ranch in Colorado where I spent summers to learn farming and ranching to some extent. Later in life I was able to work with running horses (Quarter and Thoroughbreds) and then became the cowboy I dreamed of as a kid working a 23,000 cattle ranch near Paso Robles, CA. It wasn't all Gene and Roy though, as days were made mostly of fixing fences and not saving the girl!

**Married? Yes Kids? 3 Grandkids? 1**

**How many DXCC entities have you worked?** I have 192 entities, 153 confirmed, as of 4/11/15. I have a friendly competition with Steve, K6SCA, on entities. This keeps the pressure on us to keep adding ATNO's.

**What's your favorite contest?** California QSO Party – As a little pistol, this is the one time that others are looking for me.

**Any tips for contesters?** As a newbie, I find myself listening to how good contesters operate, keeping their exchange succinct and not saying 'Please Copy'.

**What would you like to see changed in NCCC?** I would like to see better participation of members in major contests that NCCC participates in as a club. I believe we have the ability to be a force to be reckoned with. I have only attended one meeting, in Dixon, due to my QTH, so I am supportive of Saturday/Sunday meetings if they come to pass.

**Any other hobbies besides ham radio?** Yes, there is a life outside of ham radio. In the past I enjoyed Scuba (Rescue Diver, no longer diving though), and Autocross. Currently I compete in Cowboy Action Shooting, do leatherwork, lapidary and silver/gold work. I also produce protein, carbs and sugars on my 2 acres and bake cookies. Life is too short to not have cookies!

I also volunteer for the El Dorado County Animal Evacuation Team, which was deployed during the Sand and King fires last year.

## VP/CC Corner

Greetings KB'ers. No "little pistols". No "big guns". Just passionate and engaged amateurs from all walks of life sharing a common interest in contesting. Brought together to learn, challenge and honor each others achievements. Our mission this year is super simple, yet extremely hard. NCCC needs engaged members that want to contribute. As VP/CC my measure of engagement will be QSO's. QSO's in support of your personal goals or supporting your fellow NCCC members to achieve their QSO goals. It was a real pleasure to talk with many members at Visalia and see the energy and passion for NCCC as a relevant and vital club. Times change. Interests change. Needs change. Passions live on. Please join us June 6th to be part of the discussion and the future of NCCC.

Speaking of passion, no one exemplifies that passion better than Rusty, W6OAT. Please check out his article in this JUG and sign up for what should be a very fun event at <http://nccc.cc>.

Results for SS were recently published and we had many top ten finishers in SS.

For CW, N6TV@W7RN in SOHP, NN7SS (K6UFO) in SOQRP, For SOUHP N7MH@W6YX, W1SRD and K6SRZ.

In phone, N7MH@W7RN and WC6H in SOHP, NN7SS (K6UFO) in SOQRP, W1SRD in SOUHP, W6PZ (K6SRZ & KU6F ops) in MHP.

Congrats to all and many thanks to the members that got on the air in support.

As always, check the WA7BNM contest calendar to see what's coming at <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

Have fun and see you in WPX.

73,  
Steve  
W1SRD

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### Northern California Contest Club Reflector—Guidelines

This reflector is devoted to the discussion of contesting.

This includes contests, station building, dxpeditions, technical questions, contesting questions, amateur radio equipment wants/sales, score posting, amateur radio meetings/conventions, and membership achievements.

This does not include personal attacks, politics, or off-subject posts which will be considered a violation of the Guidelines.

Violations may result in removal of the violator from the reflector and possibly from club membership in good standing.

# NCCC Bylaws

The voting period to revise the NCCC bylaws to separate the secretary/treasurer office has now ended and the revised petition passed by a 89% majority. This is well over the 2/3 majority required and thus adopted. The officers of the club now include a secretary and a treasurer instead of a combined secretary/treasurer.

Here is a direct link to the revised bylaws:

<http://nccc.cc/members/pdf/bylaws-new-04May2015.pdf>

submitted by Tom K6EU

## New Club Secretary

With the passage of the revision to the club bylaws to separate the office of secretary/treasury, K6EU has resigned as club secretary. Joanna, K6YL, has been appointed to the position of Secretary, Northern California Contest Club, for the balance of the 2015-2016 term. Our Board of Directors ratified Joanna's appointment at last Friday's Board meeting.

In making the appointment, club president W1RH noted the Joanna has been a hard working member of the best contest club in the world, recently focusing on awards, so it's only appropriate that she take on the valued position of Secretary. Bob noted that the Club has not had a woman on the Board for at least 20 years.

Please join me in welcoming Joanna as a fine addition to a Board that really works well together!

I want to thank Tom, K6EU, who will continue to fill the office of Treasurer until a new Treasurer is appointed.

Bob

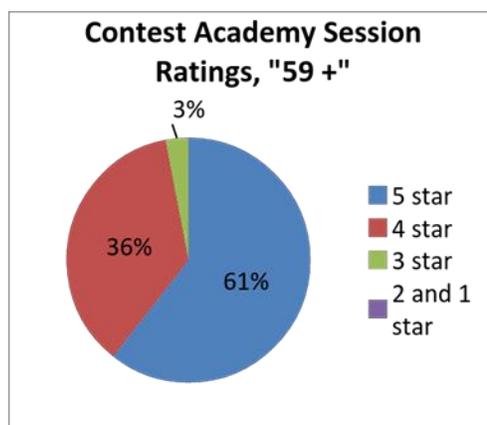
W1RH

submitted by Tom, K6EU

## Visalia Contest Academy 2015 A cornucopia of contest content!

By Don K6GHA and Tom KW6S

Once a year in April, international contesters and DXers converge on Visalia California for two full days of tribal knowledge exchange unlike any other event in the world. This year's 66th International DX Convention has concluded, and if you were there, you really enjoyed some excellent presentations, a super showcase of products, and a social experience which can only be described as energizing.



As part of this event, the NCDXC and NCCC sponsored ten sessions diving into all aspects of contesting called the 'Contest Academy'. We were honored to have had world class presenters offering advice for novices and experts alike. Talks ranged from beginning contesting, terrain analysis, hardware and software efficiencies, and a live session to test your contest skills. We would like to thank the following presenter's for their contribution:

Bob K6XX, Tom ND2T, Tom K5RC, Dean N6BV, Andrew W7VJ, John K6MM, Bob N6TV, Kevin K6TD, Kurt W6PH, Hank W6SX, Jeff WK6I

With over 190 registered attendees and about 50 people attending per each of the ten Contest Academy (CA) session, this year's event was a smashing success

With the entry fee for Friday's Contest Academy, you were granted access to the DX University (DXU) sessions! Concurrently running against the Contest Academy, there were tough decisions on which presentation to attend, from the entire offerings. The successful DXU sessions were coordinated by Darryl K7UT and Wayne N7NG.

At this point, if you are feeling like you really missed something special, you did!

The information shared generated comments like:

"Great. I wish I could have done them both!", "Great instructors, great information", "Good job, keep doing it", and a request for "More time needed for each session, there is a lot of great info here." So, how can you catch up and get ready for next year? Download the slides and see what you missed!

Contest Academy = <http://ncdxc.org/presentations/2015/idxc2015-ca.zip> (zip download)

DX University = <http://www.dxuniversity.com/classroom/session.php?crd=29> (web page)



The Contest Academy ended on a high note by binging back some of the presenters, adding in some luminaries, and have a great rag chew, where the audience could ask the Contest Wizards.

And ask they did! Since there was no recording of the session, you will just have to imagine a solid, nonstop, pile-up of super questions from the attending audience. It is a great reason to attend.

So, download and review the slides, set your calendars for the 67th IDXC in Visalia in April 2016, and participate in a jam packed, fast paced, leaning experience at next year's Contest Academy!

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## Sandy Raeker, DL1QQ

Sandy Raeker, DL1QQ, was in town a couple of weeks ago to attend the IDXC in Visalia and to help spread the word about the next WRTC which will take place in Germany in July, 2018. Sandy was the Team Leader of one of the two German teams competing at WRTC-14 in New England last summer.



W1RH, DL1QQ, W6RGG



N6XI, DL1QQ, W6OAT



ND2T, DL1QQ

This visit was her first ever to the West Coast ... and we got rave reviews from her! That's due in no small part because many NCCers turned out to help show her around. Here are three photos showing her visit to the Stanford Radio Club (W6YX) hosted by Tom, ND2T; her aerial tour of the Bay Area courtesy of master pilot Rick, N6XI (to which W6OAT got to tag along); and at the NCCC hospitality suite in Visalia with the Bobs, W1RH and W6RGG. Following Visalia, she got a real taste of the wild west from Ira, K2RD, and Tom, K5RC who escorted her around Virginia City, Reno and Lake Tahoe.

## Musings of a First Time Contester at P49Y

When Andy Faber (AE6Y) invited me to join him in Aruba to operate in the ARRL DX SSB Contest at P49Y, I was both nervous and excited. Although I have been an avid DXer for many years, my contesting had been limited to searching the bands looking for "new ones". Not once had I ever called "CQ" during a contest, much less been on the DX side of a pileup. The chance to actually "be" DX was just too much to pass up - especially since Andy implied this would be a "low key" operation. My fear and trepidation increased greatly some weeks later when Andy informed me our team had been expanded to include Scott Redd (K0DQ) and Ed Giambastiani (N4OC), both of whom, in addition to Andy, are highly seasoned and well respected contesters. I felt like I had been invited to play in an NBA basketball game with three All Stars, yet I could not make the High School JV team. The pressure was on!



Scott K0DQ operating

Two days before we were scheduled to leave for Aruba it seemed like a good idea to find my passport. Having located the document, I was both shocked and relieved to find the passport had expired several weeks earlier. There it was - my "out". I simply could not make the trip without a valid passport. Having practiced law with Andy for some 25 or more years, I knew how thorough and resourceful he could be. So, before I could employ my "passport excuse" I needed to do some due diligence so I could tell Andy I had tried, but was unable, to renew my passport on such short notice. I soon learned the Internet can be an awful resource, because there are companies which can help you renew an expired passport in as little as 24 hours. I had 48. Yikes!

Well, with my passport renewed and a rescheduled flight, I was on my way to Aruba. By the time I arrived, Andy, Scott and Ed had configured the station for a "multi-two" operation - whatever that meant. Andy gave me a crash course in contesting. I was able to assimilate about 5 percent of what was undoubtedly a wealth of contesting knowledge. I finally asked him to just tell me how to enter a call sign into the logging software and use the DVR in the K3 to send CQ. The rest I would try to figure out as the contest went on.

We agreed to operate in shifts. When Andy said he was ready for a break and my shift was about to begin, the butterflies really started to swarm. As I sat in front of the rig and called "CQ Papa Forty-Nine Yankee" it sounded like the entire world was talking at once. After what seemed like an eternity, I was able to make out a call sign and log a contact. My first thought was - "I'm going to Bouvet!" Well, not really, but I did think "I can do this". Soon my four hour shift was about over and I was ready for a break. I wondered - how can anyone possibly operate for 48 hours straight? After a short nap, I was ready for my second shift, then another, and another. I found myself looking forward to each shift and really enjoyed running the pileups. It was clear this could be addicting. The contest went by far too quickly and I was sad it was over.

Lessons learned (obvious to any experienced contester) included being efficient – don't say "thanks and 73 - QRZ?". Instead, simply say "QRZ" or "P49Y". If you are able to pick out a partial call, say "AE6?". Once the station replies with "Yankee" it is unnecessary to reply "AE6Y, roger"; Instead say "Yankee, thanks" because AE6Y already knows you had AE6 and were only missing "Y". Then, move on.

It is better to call CQ in some places than others. For example, many folks won't tune to the top end of the band so it's better to stay lower. On the other hand, don't limit yourself to the Extra portion of the band either, because that would exclude all those with General, Technician or Novice Class licenses.

Learn to type partial calls into the logging software. Don't wait until you get the full call before you start typing. It saves time!

Practice! This includes using the logging software, calling CQ, and operating the equipment at the contest station. It amazing how much more comfortable, and efficient, I became as the contest progressed once I became more familiar with the whole process. Repetition increases speed and accuracy.

Use headphones that eliminate extraneous noises. It is more difficult to make out calls if there is excess background noise. Also, make sure you have a comfortable chair – especially if you plan to be at the radio for hours at a time.

Be familiar with the contest rules, especially the multipliers, so you will recognize important prefixes. Know the required abbreviations for entry into the logging software.

Select a contest that makes sense for you. While I spend 95 percent of my operating time on CW, my skills could use considerable improvement. I would have been overwhelmed as a first time contester in CQWW CW, for example. It was no accident I picked a sideband contest for my maiden voyage into the sea of contesting.

Have an operating plan before you start! It is much easier than trying to figure out what to do next during the contest. A little planning will go a long way and make the experience more fun and, for me at least, that was the whole point.



P49Y team

What impressed me most about the experience was how incredibly kind and supportive Andy, Scott and Ed were. They could easily have expressed frustration and annoyance at all my rookie mistakes. If they were, it never showed. To the contrary, they were very supportive and offered helpful suggestions in just the right amount and at exactly the right time. Watching three such experienced contesters in action was a big thrill, not to mention educational. I learned a great deal - especially that there is so much to being a good contesteer!

In the end, I needn't have worried. Andy, Scott and Ed were the finest of "Elmers". I really enjoyed the experience! And to think, I almost backed out!"

73,

Bob/AA6VB



# Contest Calendar— May page 1

NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, May 1
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, May 1
AGCW QRP/QRP Party	1300Z-1900Z, May 1
10-10 Int. Spring Contest, CW	0001Z, May 2 to 2359Z, May 3
SBMS 2.3 GHz and Up Contest and Club Challenge	0600 local, May 2 to 2359 local, May 3
Microwave Spring Sprint	0800-1300 local, May 2
ARI International DX Contest	1200Z, May 2 to 1159Z, May 3
7th Call Area QSO Party	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3
Indiana QSO Party	1600Z, May 2 to 0400Z, May 3
FISTS Spring Slow Speed Sprint	1700Z-2100Z, May 2
Delaware QSO Party	1700Z, May 2 to 2359Z, May 3
New England QSO Party	2000Z, May 2 to 0500Z, May 3 and 1300Z-2400Z, May 3
RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB	1900Z-2030Z, May 4
MIE 33 Contest	2300Z, May 4 to 0300Z, May 5
ARS Spartan Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, May 5
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, May 6 and 1900Z-2000Z, May 6 and 0300Z-0400Z, May 7



# Contest Calendar— May page 2

NRAU 10m Activity Contest	1700Z-1800Z, May 7 (CW) and 1800Z-1900Z, May 7 (SSB) and 1900Z-2000Z, May 7 (FM) and 2000Z-2100Z, May 7 (Dig)
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, May 8
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, May 8
HPC World Wide DX Contest	1200Z, May 9 to 1159Z, May 10
VOLTA WW RTTY Contest	1200Z, May 9 to 1200Z, May 10
SKCC Weekend Sprintathon	1200Z, May 9 to 2400Z, May 10
F9AA Cup, PSK	1200Z, May 9 to 1200Z, May 10
CQ-M International DX Contest	1200Z, May 9 to 1159Z, May 10
Portuguese Navy Day Contest	1500Z, May 9 to 1500Z, May 10
FISTS Spring Unlimited Sprint	1700Z-2100Z, May 9
50 MHz Spring Sprint	2300Z, May 9 to 0300Z, May 10
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, May 13 and 1900Z-2000Z, May 13 and 0300Z-0400Z, May 14
RSGB 80m Club Championship, Data	1900Z-2030Z, May 13
QRP Minimal Art Session	1600Z-2200Z, May 14
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, May 15
NCCC Sprint	0230Z-0300Z, May 15
Slobozhansky Sprint Contest	1800Z-1959Z, May 15 (SSB) and 2000Z-2159Z, May 15 (CW)
Aegean RTTY Contest	1200Z, May 16 to 1200Z, May 17
His Maj. King of Spain Contest, CW	1200Z, May 16 to 1200Z, May 17
Feld Hell Sprint	1600Z-1759Z, May 16 and 2000Z-2159Z, May 16
NZART Sangster Shield Contest	0800Z-1100Z, May 17 and 0800Z-1100Z, May 18
WAB 7 MHz Phone	1000Z-1400Z, May 17
UA2 QSO Party	1300Z-1659Z, May 17



# Contest Calendar— May page 3

Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z, May 18
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, May 20 and 1900Z-2000Z, May 20 and 0300Z-0400Z, May 21
NAQCC CW Sprint	0030Z-0230Z, May 21
RSGB 80m Club Championship, CW	1900Z-2030Z, May 21
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, May 22
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, May 22
UN DX Contest	0600Z-2100Z, May 23
Portuguese Navy Day Contest, Digital	0800Z-2359Z, May 23
EU PSK DX Contest	1200Z, May 23 to 1200Z, May 24
Baltic Contest	2100Z, May 23 to 0200Z, May 24
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200Z, May 27
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400Z, May 27 and 1900Z-2000Z, May 27 and 0300Z-0400Z, May 28
UKEICC 80m Contest	2000Z-2100Z, May 27
NCCC RTTY Sprint	0145Z-0215Z, May 29
NCCC Sprint Ladder	0230Z-0300Z, May 29
CQ WW WPX Contest, CW	0000Z, May 30 to 2359Z, May 31
SARL Digital Contest	1300Z-1600Z, May 31
QRP ARCI Hootowl Sprint	2000 local - 2400 local, May 31

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