

SEPTEMBER 2011

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER of the SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

SHORT SKIP



California QSO Party (CQP).

The first weekend of October (October 1st & 2nd this year) sees the annual running of the California QSO Party – a great opportunity for stations in California because everyone else HAS TO WORK US!

For California stations the object of the contest is to work as many stations as possible on SSB and CW. You can work the same station on each band and each mode for score credit. Every US state and Canadian province you work counts as a multiplier – 58 total for us just like the number of counties in California.

Want to be really on the end of a pile up? Plan a “CApedition” to one of the rarer counties in California and the rest of the world will beat a path to your front end!

Every station that submits a log is eligible for an achievement certificate and there are several operating categories.

Starting this year, a New California Contester’s Award. This category is open to any operator that submits a log with at least 100 QSOs, made using either TriBander, Wire or Vertical antennas AND who have never submitted a log in any contest with more than 100 QSOs.

So if you’ve never entered a contest or have only dabbled in the past, this award category is for you!

If you work all 58 counties, you qualify for the “Worked All California Counties Award” sponsored by NCCC.

You can find the full rules and award details on the CQP web site at <http://www.cqp.org>.

Part time or full, home operator or an expedition to a new county, CQP is a blast!

—Stu Phillips K6TU

Calling QRP – ... again, again!?

By Don K6GHA

You may ask “QRP? What is this all about?”, or better yet as quoted in a 1990’s QST, “Why would anyone except a masochist want to operate with less than 5 W output? “ For those who already know I may not be shedding any great insights to Low Power operation (or your obsession), but this article is really about my first time contesting experience running at Low Power or QRP.

On the ARRL website (<http://www.arrl.org/grp-low-power-operating>) Low Power operation is introduced as: QRP is both a popular technical and operating challenge. Low power transmitters and transceivers are widely popular construction projects—they can be affordable yet challenging to build. With power efficient modes like CW and PSK31, a skilled operator can work the globe! Many operators have qualified for awards like WAS, WAC, and DXCC, with no more than a QRP rig connected to simple wire antennas.

CONTEST RULES Many contests operate CW and SSB Phone under the same QRP rules of 5W Peak Envelope Power (PEP). This means you have to watch your power out of your radio and make sure you stay within the operating parameters. Some contests have different QRP rules for SSB than CW. It pays to take your time to read and understand the rules prior to operation; you may find exceptions that benefit you.

EFFICIENCY Five (5) watts PEP out doesn’t mean 5 watts at the antenna. Overlooked breakdowns in efficiency can reduce your transmitted signal. A simple vertical antenna is most likely going to be less efficient in gain and direction than a high-gain Yagi. DB gain counts! But before you get to your antenna, transmission line loss is something that will eat away at your precious power. What if you are located where all you have is a vertical; will that reduce the fun of QRP?

No! The challenge will then be improving your skill.

PATIENTS IS A VIRTUE Think of running QRP as being like lagging pennies. Anyone can throw a penny at a wall, but it takes skill and constancy to ‘know how’ and ‘practice’ to be the one closest to win. QRP requires a lot more operating skill. From timing the pileup (as in most contests), patients working a distant station everyone else is trying to work, or choosing the right time when conditions are best for you to be heard, each improvement separates you from the crowded pileups trying to reach that illusive contact.

THE EVENT – Contacting King Henry (KH) Land Well... the truth? I didn’t know anything about what I have just told you before deciding to run QRP for the Hawaiian QSO Party (HIQP) the last weekend in August. The last minute I decided to try something new that would stand me out from the rest of the DXers; QRP. I felt I had an edge over the other 49 states being closer to Hawaii, and on the coast of CA. And besides, thinking of warm water, clean sandy beaches, Kona Coffee, fresh pineapples, and evening Luau’s was just a great way to start a contest! As usual, I began my planning Friday knowing the contest started at 06:00 UTC. And, sporting a nice Hilo Hattie’s Aloha shirt, I showed up to start my run ... six hours late! Reminder to self..., get your UTC act together and add
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SEPTEMBER RAFFLE

For those of you who missed the August-meeting, don’t worry--the raffle was postponed to September. We have already some great items, and your contributions will make it even more exciting! Remember, anything goes (except no livestock, please).

CLUB MEETING FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 7:30PM



By Art Lee WF6P

CHATTER

Last Sunday I had a frightful experience. While sailing and motoring in fog aboard the Cal 34 Misty en route to Moss Landing, we blew the Yanmar diesel engine. The camshaft punched through the engine block. The seven of us on board were unnerved by the loud "bang" as the engine destroyed itself. Five miles at sea in a heavy fog and with no wind was the wrong time to have an emergency. There was no damage to the hull and we didn't sink. We fell back on our sails for locomotion. Gee! A sailboat and we had to sail! When we got back to harbor, it was a bit tricky to maneuver between all the weekend boaters. A Cal 34 under sail is a bit unwieldy in squeaky-tight spaces.

I received this as a joke, but I suspect that this may have really happened:

Lawrence, Kansas, December 12, 2009

A Kansas farm wife called the local phone company to report her telephone failed to ring when her friends called - and that on the few occasions, when it did ring, her dog always moaned right before the phone rang.

The telephone repairman proceeded to the scene, curious to see this psychic dog or senile lady. He climbed a telephone pole, hooked in his test set, and dialed the subscriber's house.

The phone didn't ring right away, but then the dog moaned and the telephone began to ring.

Climbing down from the pole, the telephone repairman found:

1. The dog was tied to the telephone system's ground wire with a steel chain and collar.
2. The wire connection to the ground rod was loose.
3. The dog was receiving 90 volts of signaling current when the number was called.
4. After a couple of jolts, the dog would start moaning and then urinate.
5. The wet ground would complete the circuit, thus causing the phone to ring.

Which demonstrates that some problems CAN be fixed by pxssing and moaning.

Thinking about the good old days: Many will recall these ham pals. I remember John Sailer being wheelchair bound. He used to do a lot of maritime mobile work. Eddie Pollock (SK) moved up from the Cabrillo College Electronics Department Head to the Computer Science Department. He put in a good word for me and I taught the beginning ham class for about a dozen years. A couple of hams built a nice ham shack so we were able to get the students on the air, even on CW. In the late 1990s, Cabrillo closed the Electronics Department, gutted and transformed the building into a Computer Science Department. Eddy had reconstituted the SCCARC back in the 1960s. They operated from the Math, Science, Engineering (800) Building and the last I knew, the concrete pad for the tower was still visible.

Received this interesting email last week:

Art, your story in Shortskip about Gino Campioni, WA7NUH (ex-WA6ICK) really jogged my memory. I remember going to his home to see his Hallicrafter SX111 receiver. I got one to go with my Hammarlund HX50 transmitter and was very pleased with its performance. A few years ago I attended a hamfest in Bandon where I met a ham from my home area, Jim Welty, formerly NF6Z. His wife was a piano player at Twin Lakes church when I attended there. They live in Florence, Oregon. I used to take John Sailer, K6PZL, in a slowpoke VW van to club meetings. He was a wheelchair ham. Ken Chapman, WA6EMO, would go with us sometime. Once we stopped to pick up Eddie Pollock. His first time to attend K6BJ if I remember correctly. Eddie had just been hired to teach at Cabrillo College. Another ham friend was Arne Hanson, K6JTR. He gave me my novice test. 73, Pat Henry WA6PKM

THIS JUST IN --

LOCAL HAM MAKES RECORD-BREAKING FLIGHT. Early last week ham radio operator and adventurer Ralph Evans, W6ENE, participated in an early morning departure for a circumnavigation of Monterey Bay. Ralph is attempting to break records in two categories: lowest speed and lowest altitude in a Cessna 192. Guinness is presently checking for authentication. At present, we have found no witnesses to substantiate his claim. (See photo.) Ralph was accompanied by his navigator, Carlene. Note: Few knew that in 1937 Ralph tried to stow away as radio operator on Amelia Earhart's ill-fated circumnavigation of the globe. Historians claimed that Amelia didn't know CW. Former Navy TBM turret gunner Ralph said, "I can handle

Frank Wyatt N6FW SK

It is with great sadness that I inform people of the passing of Frank Wyatt, N6FW. He passed away on 24 August, 2011. Frank had a great passion for amateur radio which inspired many, many of those around him to get licensed.

Frank was very active in ARES, as many of you will remember. Frank was San Lorenzo Valley EC during the 90's until 2004. He was a great mentor to many of us as well as being known for his fine contributions to ARES on both sides of the hill. Frank also contributed to the SLVARC for many years including serving on the Club's Board. He will certainly be very much missed by all of his friends.

Please keep Julie, KC6DLE, in your thoughts as she goes through this difficult time.

—73, Brad N6BHT

Dick Damon Sr. WA6GSL SK

Services were held Aug. 26 for Richard E. "Dick" Damon Sr., who died Aug. 20 in Port Angeles, Wash., of complications from pneumonia. He was 89.

Mr. Damon lived in Santa Cruz from 1952 until he retired in 1984. He was raised in Stockton and lived in various cities including Lodi, Port Townsend, Wash., and Sequim, Wash. After studying at Cabrillo College and UC Berkeley, Mr. Damon worked at Prolo Chevrolet in Santa Cruz and taught industrial arts at Soquel High School. He also served in combat areas as deck engineer and engine room machinist in the Merchant Marine from 1943 to 1945.

He enjoyed music, ham radio, photography and computers and was a longtime member and past master of the Masonic Lodge.

—Santa Cruz Sentinial

that." (Don't know why he was bumped from the flight.)



It's Back to School Time... for Ham Radio, too!

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

As I write this, it's about 85 degrees, and I'm sitting on the patio of a cottage overlooking Elk Lake in northern Michigan. This idyllic spot is about as far away from school as you can get. And yet, in less than a month, kids will be back in school, and if kids are going to be back in school, why not ham radio operators?

The fall is a good time to begin teaching a new group of Technicians. I favor the "Tech in a Day" or "Ham Cram" type of class. This type of class focuses on teaching students the answers to questions on the test rather than the material itself.

There's a lot of controversy about this, and many decry this method of teaching, but I think the best way to learn about ham radio is by actually doing it, and you can't do if you don't have a license. Besides, how much more instruction will students actually get in a more traditional eight-week or ten-week course, maybe 16 hours? Will those 16 hours make that much of a difference?

For the sake of argument, let's say that you've decided to offer a one-day Tech class. Now what? Well, the first thing you have to do is to find a place to teach it. Possible sites include your local public library, a township hall, a community college, perhaps even your church.

Now that you have the place, you need to find some students. Your local emergency-management group would be a good place to start. Also, make sure a notice gets published in your amateur radio club's newsletter. Chances are most of the subscribers already have licenses, but they may have friends or relatives who would be interested. Also, make sure the class gets listed in the upcoming events section of local newspapers or magazines.

Once people start signing up, you should suggest that they either purchase a study guide or download my free study guide (www.kb6nu.com/tech-manual). Because I use my study guide when teaching the class, I always advise them to get a copy, but if you'll be using other materials, then your advice may differ.

I counsel the students to read through my study guide a few times and take some online practice tests before coming to class. That will make them familiar with the material, especially areas they may be weak in or have

questions about. By bringing those questions to class, we can address those areas in a little more depth, which will, hopefully, give them the help they need to pass the test.

The class itself is six hours long, running from 9am to 3pm, at which time we give them the test. This is not a lot of time for the amount of material I have to cover, so I move along at a pretty brisk pace. I concentrate on giving them the answers, but with enough context to that it all makes sense.

OK, let's say your class was wildly successful, and you now have a group of newly-minted Techs. What do you do now?

Well, you might consider offering some short sessions on what ham radio operators do-- Ham Radio 101, so to speak. The topics could include how to choose your first radio, the basics of FM repeater and net operation, and building your first antenna (say a 2m ground plane). They'll be more enthusiastic about these classes now that they actually have a license.

It might also be a good idea to schedule a General Class license course for sometime shortly after the Tech class. This will encourage them to upgrade while they are enthusiastic about the hobby.

I hope that this has encouraged you to offer some ham radio courses of your own. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com or phone me at 734-930-6564. Good luck, and let me know how your classes turn out.

Calling QRP continued

another date clock (set to UTC) in your shack! (Oh, what a lid!)

Well after a stumbling start, getting up and running in the contest took me only a few minutes to figure out the only band working was 20M. Conditions change throughout the contest, so when one band falls off, you don't hang around trying to eke out that last contact. Remember you are QRP... LOW POWER. Change frequency and look for better conditions. In fact, when conditions were poor on all bands to Hawaii, I was able to capture some really distant QSOs where I could run at full power outside of the contest. Contacts to places like South Africa, French Polynesia, and the Cook Islands. Why was I able to do that? Because my antenna was already pointing in their direction and their signal was overpowering anything from Hawaii! So I knew the skip would prevent me from making any QRP contacts. I was using the down time in conditions in the HIQP to pick up some

great DX stations I had not logged before.

The contacts to Hawaii were a bit more difficult than I experienced when operating with full power (100w). Your normal full power 2nd or 3rd time (maybe 4-5 or more) of trying to break a pileup, now with QRP becomes a test of will and determination, or just bull headedness. Sometimes 15 to 20 calls to break in aren't enough. I worked one contact (because of rarity) for 30 minutes until the lull in the pileup allowed me to sneak in. Confirmation of my QSO (contact) required multiple iterations of my call sign, signal report and/or state on most contacts. I commend the good ears of the operators at the other end of the signal, most kept with me. I will also respect QRP callers more the next time I am running a frequency. Hint: Say 'QRP' when you send your call. You are more likely to get someone who will help you through bad conditions or a rough contact if they know you are running low power. The highs and lows of any contest are just the same. Capturing an elusive contact, being the first to respond to a call and getting the QSO on the first call, working some great (or strange locations), make each contact a lot of hard earned fun. Running QRP, the contacts are a little sweeter. Around midnight my time, I contacted NH7YK who was looking down on lava flows from around 6-7000 feet on the side of a volcano. Their station was running off a portable generator and a vertical antenna. Tip: Look on the web for Announced Operations for a contest. Those announcements will give you clues on times, frequencies, or special locations for you to listen to get that cool call or location. The Hawaiian Island QSO Party offer up some great contact locations; Military bases, volcanoes, historical parks, and a WWII battle ship are just a few. Oh, and lots of islands! ;-)

RESULTS? Never having had a baseline for operating QRP allowed me a confidence only found in ignorance. Using the previous year's winner of QRP contacts, I set my sights at besting those levels. The good news, after hours of operation I finally did. The bad news...after submitting my log, I won't find out for a while if it was good enough! The best news, I really learned a lot more than I bargained for, and improved my operating skills to boot! But, I know I couldn't have done it without the friendly help of the clubs and people of Hawaii. I had a great time working my first QRP contest, and appreciate the great ears and willingness to 'dig out my signal' by those stations participating. A few stations including KH7T, KH6BB, and KH6QJ allowed me to make multi-band contacts.

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SCCARC Board - 2011

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MONTEREY BAY REPEATER ACTIVITY

Santa Cruz County	K6BJ 146.790- PL 94.8 Santa Cruz (linked to KI6EH) KI6EH 147.945- PL 94.8 Watsonville (linked to K6BJ) K6BJ 440.925+ PL 123.0 Santa Cruz (not linked) • SCCARC Net Monday 7:30 PM 146.79- /147.945- /147.180+ linked • SCCARC 10 Meter Net Monday 7:00 PM 28.308 MHz USB
ARES Net	SC County Wide ARES Tuesday 7:30 PM on 147.180+ PL 94.8 and 443.600+ PL 110.9 linked
San Lorenzo Valley	WR6AOK 147.120+ PL 94.8 Ben Lomond • SLV Net Thursday 7:30 PM
Loma Prieta	AB6VS 440.550+ / AE6KE 146.835- PL 94.8 (linked for net) • LP ARES / LPARC Net Tuesday 7:15 PM
Monterey	K6LY 146.97- PL 94.8 / 444.700+ PL123 (linked for net) Monterey • Monterey Co. ARES Net Wednesday 7:30 PM K6LY 146.970- (PL 94.8) • NPSARC Net Wednesday at 8 PM on K6LY/R
LPRC	WR6ABD 146.640- PL 162.2 / 442.900+ PL 162.2 (winsystem.org) • LPRC Net Tuesday 8:00 PM 146.640-(PL 162.2) • Amateur Radio Newslines broadcast Tuesday
	• Santa Clara Valley Section Traffic NET Tuesday 9:00PM 146.640- (PL 162.2)

FOR MORE INFO SEE: <http://www.k6bj.org/freq.html>

SCCARC Calendar of Events

ARES Meeting (prior to club meeting)	Friday	Sep 16
SCCARC Meeting	Friday	Sep 16
Cake Meetings	Sat	Sep 10, 24
Board Meeting	Thursday	Sep 22
Short Skip articles due	Mon	Oct 10
SCCARC Meeting	Friday	Oct 21

MONTHLY MEETINGS.

The SCCARC Meets at 7:30 PM, on the THIRD FRIDAY of the each month (except December). Meetings are at Dominican Hospital, Education Center, 1555 Soquel Drive, Santa Cruz.

Net Control Schedule:

9/12	Chris KG6DOZ
9/19	Tom K6TG
9/26	Tom K6TG
10/3	Greta KI6NTL
10/10	Phil KE6UWH
10/17	Chris KG6DOZ

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Writer: Ron Skelton, W6WO

Calling QRP continued

However, a special thanks to NK7YK for working the top of the volcano, and the team at KH6LC (NH6V) who made it possible to log contacts on 4 out of 5 SSB bands. Where else do you end a QSO with "ALOHA"? It makes every contact a short trip to paradise.

Till next year, 73 and Mahalo

PACIFICON 2011 Is Coming Soon!

Ham Radio Convention is Bigger & Better at New Santa Clara Venue

October 14-16, 2011, Santa Clara Marriott Hotel, Santa Clara, California

For Events, Latest Updates and Ticket Sales go to: www.PACIFICON.org

Need Net Controls

We're not looking for a tower, reconnections with old friends, or need any repeaters to be fixed. We don't have any boat anchors to sell, or news to spread of any dear and departed hams.

Instead, we're looking for YOU – yes, YOU – to serve your radio club in its time of need. We need a few good hams to be Net Control Stations on the K6BJ Monday Night Net!

So please express your interest as soon as possible to tomg@cruzio.com, or 831.247.6372.



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