

Message from the Prez by Ken Widelitz, AB6FO

I regret to report that Chas, Charlie Oakes, W6UQF, became a silent key recently. It was suggested at the July SCCC meeting that the SCCC create a perpetual trophy in his memory and honor. Charlie was a true blue low power operator so it was easy to decide to make the trophy winner each year the SCCC member with the top score in ARRL Sweepstakes, low power, CW and phone combined. Larry, N6AZE, is getting the trophy made. Each year's winner will hold the trophy and have it engraved with the next winner's name before passing it on. Send your contribution toward the creation of the W6UQF Memorial Trophy to Will, KN6DV. Will's address is listed in the masthead on page 5. I hope every member will send in a few bucks to help make this happen.

I am very pleased to report that the SCCC representative to the World Radiosport Team Championship, Dave Hachadorian, K6LL, and his partner, Steve London, N2IC, won the bronze medal with a strong third place finish. Elsewhere in this issue is Dave's write-up of his experience. Congratulations Dave!

Speaking of the WRTC, it seems the organizers were so successful in generating excitement for the event, many members decided to actually operate in the contest themselves instead of attending the July meeting at my QTH. Imagine that, testers



operating in a contest instead of sitting around BSing. Well, I'll have to host a meeting again in the future so I can show off the shack to a larger group. Next time I won't schedule it in conjunction with a contest. It seemed like a good idea at the time. By the way,

for those who did attend, it is my understanding that all operators in a multi-op are eligible for the WRTC awards, so if you want that T-shirt, deck of cards or letter opener, send in your IRCs. We qualified for them all.

My current project is trying to reconcile the hardware differ-

ences between CT and NA with regard to setting up my two radio single op station. I wish it weren't necessary, but CT doesn't do NAQP or Sprint, and NA doesn't have 50 line VGA display and customizable windows, not does it support COM5 through COM8. Being a creature of habit, I'm reluctant to switch to the N6TR software. The problems evolve around LPT port band data, radio 1/2 and audio toggle bits. NA puts the latter two items on LPT3. How many of you have three LPT ports on your computer? I do now, and it actually was easy to get working.

One more note. Kudos are due to Will, KN6DV, for his efforts in putting teams together for NAQP and Sprints. Please help make his job easier for Sprints by letting him know if you want to be on a team.

Jul - Aug 1996

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Southern California Contest Club Operations, Results and Enlightenment

Vol. 19, No. 4

WRTC 1996 - The W6R Story by Dave Hachadorian, K6LL

The Planning Stage

Early in January 1996, I received an e-mail message from Ken, AB6FO, saying "Congratulations, Dave, you have been selected as the SCCC representative for the WRTC." Wow! What an honor. My thanks to all of the SCCC folks who arrived at that decision. Now it was time for me to get in gear and deliver.

The immediate issue at that time was to select a teammate. WRTC rules prohibited me from selecting a teammate from the SCCC. After a few phone calls, I settled on Steve London, N2IC, who lives just outside of Denver. I really didn't know Steve personally at the time, but knew that he was a terrific operator, that he had won the IARU test as a single operator in 1995, and that his contest scores had been improving dramatically in the past few years. Steve accepted immediately and proved to be an enthusiastic partner throughout the planning stages and through the WRTC itself. In retrospect, I think that selecting Steve was my best move of the contest! Not only is he a great operator, but he concentrates more on DX contests than I do, and is a great strategist. This guy is going to be a major problem in future contests!

It took a few months for the WRTC committee to finalize the rules for the contest. In the meantime, Steve and I had worked out a great system of tying two Kenwood radios together with a serial link, which Kenwood calls the "transfer function." I sent my TS-850 off to Kenwood to have it modified to be compatible with Steve's TS-950SDX. Even before I received the radio back from Kenwood, the WRTC rules had been modified to expressly prohibit

any connection between two radios. Oh well, the perils of planning too far in advance!

Steve and I thought it would be beneficial to have a "dry run" before the actual WRTC, and we settled on the WPX CW contest over Memorial Day weekend. I flew up to Steve's for the WPX, and we operated under WRTC conditions, including 100 watts, low tribander, and a low 40-meter inverted vee. We used three different nondescript callsigns during that weekend to keep the rates up and to test various strategies.

We learned several important lessons during this practice session:

- Without the computer's RS-232 port connected to the transceiver, there was a significant probability that contacts would be logged with the wrong band or mode selected on the computer. For that reason, we decided not to use our favorite logging program, TR-Log, for the WRTC, since it is difficult to correct previous QSOs.
- For a multiplier excursion to another band, it was important to develop a routine procedure. The radio B operator handled the rotor, antenna switch, and computer band/mode. The radio A operator concentrated on getting radio A onto the new frequency. As soon as the multiplier was worked, the reverse procedure was immediately initiated, and radio A went back to the original run frequency. After a while we could pull this routine off like a Richard Petty pit stop.

- At the time of the WPX contest, the WRTC rules specifically prohibited the use of bandpass filters on either radio. We rapidly discovered that synthesized radios transmit wideband noise across several bands whenever they are in the transmit

mode, even with the key up. This is not to be confused with frontend overload of radio B. There is no filtering at radio B that will solve this problem. It has to be done at radio A. After the WPX, the WRTC rules were clarified to allow internal modifications to the transceivers. Coaxial stubs were internally added to both transceivers, and the wideband noise was brought down to insignificant levels. Switches were added in the radios to select the proper stubs. It was real fun trying to stuff 23 feet of RG-58 inside the cabinets of the TS-850 and TS-950! The Kenwood service technicians should have seen these radios.

Contest Week

I drove my car from Yuma and arrived in the Bay Area on Wednesday afternoon. The car was totally loaded with TS-850, TS-830 backup, computer system, accessories, cables, complete toolbox and everything else I could possibly think of to handle any eventuality. The car was also loaded with vacation supplies, since the XYL and I would be leaving for a month in the Colorado Rockies directly from the Bay Area. Steve also drove his car from Denver, equally loaded. As I neared the Bay Area, I could hear a tremendous amount of traffic on the 147.36 MHz NCDXC repeater. It was a hubbub of committee people driving to the airport to meet teams needing transportation, logistics planning for the afternoon get-together picnic, and a host of other administrative arrangements. It was only then that I began to appreciate the scope of what the NCCC had taken on in organizing this WRTC event.

The Wednesday afternoon picnic was held in a park overlook-

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WRTC (from page 2)

ing San Francisco Bay. It was a beautiful setting, with beautiful weather and great food — plus it provided an excellent opportunity to meet participants, judges, referees, committee members, host station owners, and other hams interested in the WRTC. After the picnic, it was back to the Motel 6 for the hospitality suite.

Thursday brought a tour of downtown San Francisco, a superb lunch in a Chinatown restaurant, dinner at the Shell Oil Clubhouse in the East Bay, and another tour of the hospitality suite back at the Motel 6 in the evening.

At a breakfast meeting on Friday morning, each team drew an envelope out of a box. Inside the envelope was the name and address of the station that we would be operating, and the name of our referee. There was also a sealed envelope inside, which was handed directly to our referee. This separate envelope contained our assigned 1x1 callsign, which

was not to be revealed until 0430 Saturday morning, 30 minutes before the contest. Our station owner turned out to be AF6S, one of the more distant stations, located way down South in San Jose. We arrived at AF6S, Dave and Susan Barton's house, at about 1 P.M. We found that Dave has a separate building behind the main house, which is used as his office and radio shack. His antenna system is a Force-12 C-4 tribander, which has two elements on 20, two or three on 15 and three elements on 10. There was a rotary 40-meter dipole just below the tribander, but the committee did not want us to use that. Instead, Dave had erected a 40-meter inverted vee, just for the contest. These inverted vees were mass produced by the WRTC committee. Dave's tower is a 90-foot Skyneedle, but it was cranked down to 50 feet for the contest. The key to the electric winch had been secured.

We proceeded to remove all of Dave's equipment from the operating bench and set up our stuff. For some reason, the latest version of NA software would not key the radio through the printer port on Steve's antique computer. We ran around in tight little circles for about an hour, trying to make it work, and then decided to switch to CT. It worked fine.

When we first cranked up Steve's TS-950, we noticed that the internal wattmeter was reading 150 watts, and my external Autec unit was reading 120 watts. Our host volunteered his Bird wattmeter, and it read 85 watts! Steve and I exchanged glances, and immediately began spouting the praises of the Bird wattmeter, about how it's a laboratory standard, the choice of professionals, the standard of comparison, built like a battleship, etc. We must have overdone that little song and dance though, because our referee pounced on the Bird and dragged it off to the Motel 6 to compare it to the Official WRTC Wattmeter. The Bird turned out to be about 30 percent low, so we didn't get to use it. Darn!

Everything seemed to be working OK, and the line noise was not too bad, so we decided to spend the night back at the Motel 6, rather than crashing at our host's house. We went out to dinner with our host, his wife Susan and our referee, Scott Jones, WR3G. I had some difficulty sleeping that night. The adrenalin was pumping! We had planned so long for this event that my mind kept trying to envision things that we had overlooked.

At 2:30 A.M., two alarm clocks and the hotel wakeup call all went off simultaneously! Here we go! We drove back down to San Jose, let ourselves into the radio shack,

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N2IC (L) and K6LL (R) operating during the WRTC. Photo courtesy of Scott Jones, WR3G.

fired everything up and made a few preliminary QSOs. Everything was working. At 0430, our referee opened the sealed envelope and revealed our callsign, W6R. Whiskey Six Radio definitely had a cool ring to it!

When the contest started at 0500, radio A started running stations so fast that we hardly ever went to S&P. We depended almost entirely on radio B to find multipliers. Preprinted paper check sheets of ARRL countries, zones, HQ stations and WRTC callsigns were used. Each time a new multiplier was found (other than the most mundane, which we were sure to work later), radio A stopped the run, worked the multiplier if possible, and then immediately went back to the run frequency, hopefully with stations still waiting and the packet spots still valid. We could definitely tell when we had been spotted on packet in a particular area. We alternated the operators between radio A and B on the hour. Radio A stayed on CW unless we thought we could double the rate on SSB. There were times on SSB when Steve had the CT last 10 QSO rate over 550 and the last 100 rate over 350. Absolutely unbelievable and unforgettable! Immediately after the contest was over, and before we talked to any other participants, I felt certain that we had won. With 2441 QSOs in 18 hours and our efficient multiplier hunting strategy, it was hard for me to believe that the other competitors had a chance!

Some of our raw statistics are given in Table I.

When the contest ended, at 11 P.M. Saturday, we had 10 minutes to make corrections in the computer log by entering changes that we had noted on a piece of paper. If the notes were not on the paper,

we could not change the log. The corrections were made, and our referee took the floppy disk and immediately headed back to the Motel 6 so the log checkers could complete their overnight task of figuring out the final scores and the order of finish. The entire contest had also been recorded on the audio channel of several VCR tapes. These recordings were also given to the log checkers to assist in resolving questions. My hat is off to the poor referees. These guys got to sit in the background for 19 hours and listen to somebody else operate. Many of the refs, our WR3G included, are excellent contest operators themselves and would much rather be operating.

When we arrived back at the Motel 6, we were very surprised and somewhat deflated to hear that many of the other teams had claimed scores in the same ballpark as ours. It was obvious from the numbers that the team of KRØY and K1TO had won. There were several teams with numbers very similar to ours, so the suspense was pretty heavy. There was some grumbling from a few of the teams about heavy line noise, antennas that just didn't seem to work, high nearby hills, and cramped operating positions. However, most people seemed pretty well resigned to the fact that it is practically impossible to find 52 stations so closely identical that no one team is given an unfair

advantage or disadvantage, and that you play with the cards that were dealt. In retrospect, the only thing I can think of that we should have done differently is to more actively pursue moving multipliers from band to band. We did it a few times, but could have done it more. Steve was more diligent at it than I was.

Everyone slept pretty late on Sunday (except the log checkers who were up all night). Around noontime, it was time for beer and pizza at pool side. More war stories about the contest were told, and the suspense was definitely building! About 2 P.M. one of the judges walked over to me and asked to verify the exact spelling of my last name. Did this mean we were in the money? Of course, he wouldn't tell me. At 6 P.M. it was time for the final banquet. We arrived at the Stanford Faculty Club and were having a pre-dinner cocktail when we noticed that there were two people who had copies of the final results! I caught a glance at one of them and saw that Steve and I had won the Bronze Medal! It was the proudest moment of my ham radio career when we stood up to receive the medal.

It was unbelievable to me how effectively all of the organizers, sponsors, host stations, judges, referees, and contest participants throughout the world came to-

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Table I. W6R Raw QSO Totals (before judging)

Band	Zones	Countries	HQ	CQ QSOs	SSB QSOs	Total QSOs
40	20	16	2	423	101	524
20	32	44	10	706	506	1,212
15	15	14	3	265	177	442
10	7	5	1	165	98	263
Total	74	79	16	1,559	882	2,441

WRTC (from page 4)

gether to make this WRTC an unforgettable experience. The NCCC has established a benchmark of excellence in coordinating this event that will be extremely difficult for the next sponsor to surpass. Thanks again to all of the SCCC members who selected me as the WRTC nominee.

Contester Looking to Guest Op

Editor's Note: I recently received this note from Mark, KI7WX, who has recently moved to the San Diego area and is looking for opportunities to guest op as either a single op or in a multi-op. Mark is living in Encinitas and can be reached at work at (619) 646-8451 or via mark_curran@sequana.com.

Brief Bio: Mark E. Curran, born CT 1966, BS/MS from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, out to Utah in 1989 to work on PhD in human molecular genetics. Now in SDG working at Sequana Therapeutics, a biotech company that studies common genetic disorders (like diabetes). I became interested in radio contesting as one of my roommates, KM1P, was

addicted. WPI had a large station, W1YK, with monobanders for 10-40 at 150 feet and assorted dipoles, VHF/UHF gear, etc. I learned the slow code and studied the questions well enough to get a tech license. Enjoyed CW enough to attain a general within a year. Played a lot on 160 (not sure why) and 40 SSB late at night, while lab experiments were running. The shack was one floor up from my laboratory. K9ES got me hooked on VHF/UHF contests for a bit, and I enjoyed several events from Eric's home in Worcester. Interest tempered after move to UT, then I ran into a friend of Alan's, K6XO, who hooked us up. Al let me into his home for many contests over the past few years and is a wonderful friend and contest elmer. Now in SDG hoping to find a new place to contest as our home is in one of the dreaded "no antenna" developments.

Although very busy at work, radiosport is important to me, and I try to make time to participate in the majors, as well as Sprints and NAQPs. SSB is the mode of choice as I've not dedicated the time to become CW worthy at contest speeds.

Looking forward to meeting the folks in CA whom I've been swapping Qs with for the past several years.

SCCCORE

is the official bulletin of the Southern California Contest Club.

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Membership in the SCCC is open to anyone. Dues are:

Domestic: \$5 per year
Mexico/Canada: \$8 per year
Other countries: \$10 per year

SCCCORE is published six times per year. Please submit scores and other bulletin material to the editor.

New/Membership/Renewal (return to Will Angenent, 43150 Sixth St. East, Lancaster, CA 93535) Cut here

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Dues: \$5.00 domestic, \$8.00 Canada/Mexico, \$10.00 elsewhere Make check payable to SCCC.

If you would like a club badge, check here and include an additional \$6.00.

SCCC Calendar

September

- 7-8 All Asian DX Contest, SSB
- 8 North American Sprint, CW
- 14-15 WAE DX Contest, SSB
- 14-16 ARRL September VHF QSO Party
- 15 North American Sprint, Phone
- 28-29 CQ Worldwide Contest, RTTY

October

- 5-6 California QSO Party
- 12-13 VK/ZL/Oceania Contest, CW
- 12 Asia-Pacific Sprint
- 12-13 Pennsylvania QSO Party
- 19-20 JARTS WW RTTY Contest
- 26-27 CQWW Contest, Phone

November

- 2-4 ARRL Sweepstakes, CW
- 8-10 Japan International DX Contest, Phone
- 9-10 WAE DX Contest, RTTY
- 16-18 ARRL Sweepstakes, Phone
- 23-24 CQWW Contest, CW

Next Meeting: Saturday, August 31

Time: 11:00A

(following the TRW Swap Meet)

Olive Garden Restaurant

2610 Sepulveda Blvd.

Manhattan Beach

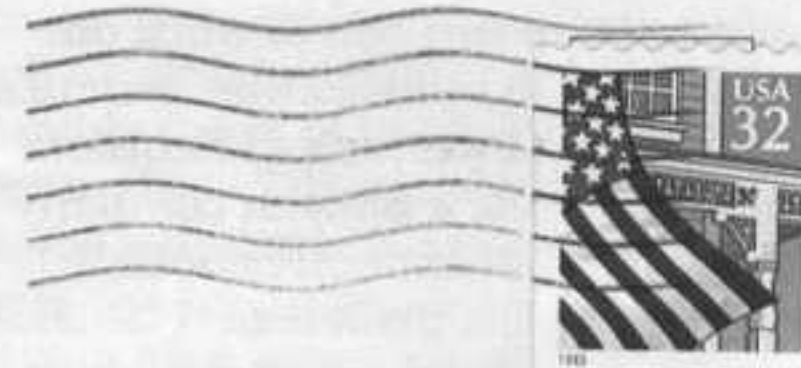
Directions:

From 405 Fwy, take Rosecrans Av exit
Proceed West on Rosecrans to Sepulveda
Bvld.

Turn left on Sepulveda
Proceed to 2610 Sepulveda



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