

# Sierra Signals

Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club  
Auburn, CA  
An ARRL Special Service Club

<http://sf-arc.org>

September 2005

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

## The California QSO Party Turns 40!

(Reported by Richard, NU6T)

The California QSO Party begins 1600 UTC 1 October 2005, and ends: 2200 UTC 2 October 2005. Rules are found on the web at <http://www.cqp.org/Rules.html>.

The California QSO Party has become THE QSO Party since humble beginnings in the fall of 1966. Two Claremont High School students, Tom WB6KIL and Gene WB6EUZ, started the event. The contest languished a bit as the students found other exciting interests and John WA6JDT ran the event from 1968 to 1974. In 1975, the recently organized Northern California Contest Club (NCCC) took over and continues to manage the event today.

Back in 1975, the big events were the Georgia and New Jersey state QSO parties. CQP was a virtual unknown when Rusty Epps, W6OAT, signed on as contest chairman and made an all-out effort to gain publicity and to ensure that there was enough activity from Californians to attract national participation. Rusty had already been down this road; it was he who first organized the Georgia QSO

party. He drew heavily from that experience in tackling the California challenge.

The format of the contest was revised in a departure from then current practice by including a sequential number and multiplier identification rather than the basic RS/T. A significant change in focus allowed California Stations to work

*(continued on page 2)*



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### RESOURCES

#### **REPEATERS**

145.430 (-0.6 MHz/PL 162.2)

440.575 (+5.0 MHz/PL 94.8)

223.860 (-1.6 MHz/PL 100.0)

#### **CLUB NET**

Thursdays, 7:30PM, K6ARR/R

145.430

#### **CLUB MEETINGS**

Second Friday of the month,

7:30PM at the Library, 350

Nevada St, Auburn CA

#### **CLUB BREAKFAST**

Last Sat of the month at Susie's

Café, Cirby at Riverside, Roseville

- 8:00 AM

#### **NET CONTROL OPS**

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## 2005 Calendar of Events

*(Operating Events in Italics)*

[Dates are local unless otherwise indicated]

**Sep 9**

**Regular Meeting**

*Sep 11*

*No. Am. Sprint (CW)*

*Sep 17*

*Washington Salmon Run*

*Sep 18*

*No. Am. Sprint (SSB)*

**Sep 24**

**Club Breakfast**

*Sep 24-25*

*Texas QSO Party*

*Oct 1-2*

*California QSO Party*

**Oct 14**

**Regular Mtg & White Elephant Sale**

**Oct 29**

**Club Breakfast**

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## Forty Years Ago At The SFARC

(Reported by Gary, KQ6RT)

September 15, 1965

President Sage Otow opened the meeting at 2015, with 7 members present. The previous minutes were read and approved. The treasurer reported a bank balance of \$34.40.

Jack reported on prices for a fair booth—inside \$40, \$30 outside. We could get one for \$10 but would have to see the fair board. No action was taken.

Jack has ordered film for the October meeting from ARRL.

The mobile trip was also discussed and decided to try to put it in operation in 2 or 3 weeks.

The meeting was adjourned to enjoy refreshments furnished by Sage.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard H. Lund, WA6HYO

73,

Gary, KQ6RT

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## CA QSO Party

(Continued from front page)

each other for contact points but not for county multiplier points. The first California station a California operator works does give him single California mult. This rule forced California stations to work other states rather than simply working local stations. California stations work 50 US states and 8 Canadian entities for a total of 58 multipliers. Non-California operators try to work the 58 California counties for multipliers. The balance between California and non-California multipliers makes this a unique contest and assures national interest.

Maintaining the balance adds an interesting aspect for California stations. Many counties have a number of active operations during CQP. Other counties, however, have relatively few operators and risk having no operation during CQP. Rare counties are exciting to county hunters and to CQP operators wanting a clean sweep of all 58 multipliers. Operations in rare counties may find themselves on the other end of DX-style pile-ups and so a number of hams make field day like expeditions to rare counties. I like to call these LXpeditions, or local expeditions. The NCCC works to assure that all counties are covered during the contest and maintains a list of announced county expeditions on their web site

(<http://www.cqp.org/Counties.html>). Perhaps you would like to feel what it is to be the desired county LX?

I was fortunate to join the N6A Alpine County LXpedition in my second year as a ham, way back in 2002. Fred K6DGW, our recently retired Newsletter editor, is also a member of that effort. Fred's web site has some information about the N6A experience (<http://www.foothill.net/~andrea/j/Ham21.htm>).

I encourage interested hams to join with others to get on the air during the CQP and have a fall fling on the radio. This is an opportunity to represent California to the rest of our country and to the Canadians, and the many DX who also join in the fun.

For more information on the rules or history of the event, see the NCCC CQP web site at <http://www.cqp.org/>. See you in the CQP!

Richard, NU6T

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## CubeSat Launch Date Approaches

(Reported by Greg, KO6TH)

The next "CubeSat" launch is scheduled for 27-September, 2005. On board are four tiny satellites, each measuring only 10cm (4 inches) on a side, and weighing less than 1kg (about 2.2 pounds). Each of the satellites on this launch are planning to use Amateur Radio frequencies, in various modes.

The overall CubeSat program is a collaborative effort between several universities, including California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo and Stanford University. The effort has created the capability for very low cost (\$75,000, including launch fees) access to Low Earth Orbit. Ok, so to you and me this still isn't cheap, but it has been very popular with educational institutions world-wide. The first launch occurred in June of 2003, with the launch of six cubes. Three of the original six are still reported as being operational. Of the remaining three, one ended operations (failed, I guess) a few months after launch, and the other two were never heard from. A third launch is planned for this fall, currently October 25<sup>th</sup>.

This second launch will include another satellite from the University of Tokyo, CUBESAT Xi-V (sai-five). The satellite was originally a twin to CUBESAT Xi-IV, which they launched in the first group. It carries an improved camera for taking pictures of Earth from orbit, and will host an experiment in solar cell technology. The pictures taken by the earlier satellite are available on the Internet; you can even register to have them emailed to you. See <http://www.space.t.u-tokyo.ac.jp/cubesat/mission/V/index-e.html> for more information.

The second satellite in the second group is UWE-1, from the University of Würzburg in Germany, with the participation of students from Germany, Canada, Italy, Japan, and Indonesia. Its mission is to test how the Internet's TCP/IP protocol can be used for Earth to Space communications, and the linking of the Internet to the spacecraft. It will also be used as a testbed for some new position sensing "micro system component

hardware” (gyroscope). More information is at: <http://www7.informatik.uni-wuerzburg.de/cubesat/>.

Next is nCUBE-2, a project from four universities in Norway. This satellite will receive, store, and forward messages from the Automatic Identification System, a recently introduced tracking system for ships. As a test, they will clip one of these ship transponders to a reindeer and attempt to track it as it wanders with its herd. The spacecraft will also have a digipeater for digital amateur radio communication, and utilize a combination of a passive gravity boom and active magnetic torquing for stabilization. Magnetic torquing is where a coil of wire inside the spacecraft is turned on and off at carefully timed intervals to make an electromagnet in space. The electromagnet pushes against the earth's magnetic field, turning the spacecraft into a large flying compass needle. See <http://128.39.102.180/index.html> for more information.

Finally, there is SSETI Express, the Space Students Exploration and Technology Initiative. This 12 European country project will carry an FM voice transponder, digital packet store and forward system, and an onboard camera. SSETI's website is at <http://sseti.gte.tuwien.ac.at/WSW4/>.

Assuming all goes according to plan, in a couple of weeks we'll have a number of new “birds” in orbit to report on, listen for, and experiment with.

73s,

Greg, KO6TH

### ***Dxpedition In A Bag?***

*(Reported by Casey, W7IB)*

Have you ever thought about how much stuff you need to take along with you to operate an hf station from the Sierra hilltops, or the beach? Let's see, at the very least there's a transceiver, some sort of power supply, one or more antennas, and the materials to support the antennae or hang them in trees (bow and arrow, slingshot, throwing arm, etc.), an input device (microphone, key, etc.), maybe earphones so you don't bother the other tourists (heaven forbid)... In short, it's a good bit of stuff, and all of this goes along with the backpack or suitcase, and all of the various and sundry other necessities (food, extra clothing, prescriptions, sunscreen, toiletries, your rubber duckie (not that one, the yellow one that squeaks, silly). Even the simplest day radio trip seems to require a lot of gear! I know the when Leslie, the girls, and I go for a weekend trip, there's a whole car-full of stuff, and then “Dad” brings along his radio junk! Yes I do!

Yesterday, I met my good friend Marc, W6SQL for coffee and he had a small camera bag with him, about the size you'd use for a small digital camera. We sat down to have our simplified latte's and Marc kept glancing toward the little bag and sort of grinning. “Wanna see what I brought?” he asked. The temptation on my side was to say, :”No”, but I thought I'd better humor him. “Okay,” says I, “what's in the bag, new camera?” (Now for those of you who don't even scantily know Marc, he's a real “widget”-computers, cameras, radios, and

even CW (oh gawd!)— I mean this dude even gets off on building kits! How geeky can you get?) He says, “Nope, whole hf station! Lemme show ya.” I can hardly stand it. After all I was looking for a little “guy time!” I thought maybe we could exchange rib recipes, or talk about how hot it's been or something, but no – ham radio. Jeez!

So he proceeds to pull out an Elecraft KX-1, a really small radio, a qrp radio at that (1.5 to 4 watts out, on a good day!), and only CW! He goes on to tell me that it operates on 40 and 20, and can even be modified to work on 30 (isn't that a CW and digital only band?) He then says that it has six AA batteries inside the cover or you can hook up some others or standard power supply using a receptacle (receptacle?) on the side of the case. (I'm still back at 1.5 to 4 watts out!) He then dives into the side pocket and pulls out one of those 8 double-A trays that Radio Shack sells, to show me an alternative energy source (Lord help me...!) Next comes the ol' straight key mounted on a small piece of wood! I think I then said, “Okay big guy, whaterya gonna do for an antenna, add water?”

I knew I shouldn't have asked the antenna question, but I did. Into the bag goes the hand, and out comes not one but two zip lock bags with wire and a BNC-to-2-wire-terminals adapter in them. “Antenna ‘system’,” sez he. Turns out he has 28 feet of #22 insulated wire with an end insulator in one bag, this is the random length antenna, and in the other 16 feet of the same wire for a counterpoise, and the adapter ties it all into one antenna system according to Marc – hmmm.

“Okay, “ sez I , “but that's a random wire. So where's the antenna tuner, smart guy?”

He gets this all-knowing glint in his baby blues and says, “There's an automatic antenna tuner\_in the radio. Here, I'll show ya.” With that he loosens two little thumb screws on the bottom of the case, opens it up, and lo and behold there's a teeny-tiny tuner (a “ttt”) in there, and there are six AA lithium batteries in there as well! (Marc sez that the rig will absolutely run for hours on those batteries...right!)

I'm still scratchin' my head about this little radio station, but he tells me it'll work stations all over the world! And, it'll all fit in the backpack I take with me, right next to my dop kit and my jelly beans!

As I'm driving back to Meadow Vista, I'm thinking to myself, “Dude, (I always call myself Dude when I'm thinking to myself and driving) a ham could take the whole stinking station on vacation, and the rest of the family wouldn't even know until the first CQ is called! Cooool!” I don't know if all of this can really work, but it sounds plausible.

Now, not everybody's gonna want to run out and build a kit radio, or work CW only (although I'm told a lot more signal goes farther that way!), but you could do a variation on the them with an FT-817 or an IC-703 with an antenna tuner and more battery...might be fun! Think about it, and I'll report again when Marc, W6SQL has some on-the-air stories to tell (or maybe he will!)

73 & gud operating,

Casey, W7IB

## Contest News

(Reported by Fred, K6DGW)

### North American Sprints:

<http://www.ncjweb.com/sprintrules.php> These guys live up to the last word in their name! They are four hours long, with three (CW, SSB, RTTY) in the Spring and three in the fall. In nearly all other contests, a Big Gun will camp on a "run" frequency and call CQ and everyone else calls him. In the Sprints, when you make a QSO having solicited it with CQ or anything else, you must QSY at least 1 KHz before calling another station, and 5 KHz before calling CQ again. This sounds like a recipe for bedlam, and sometimes it is, but they are a lot of fun and unlike the weekend-sucking 48-hour DX contests, these are over in four hours. In fact, N6TR (of TR-Log fame) has been quoted, "The most fun you can have in four hours with your clothes on."

The exchange is the other call, your call, serial number of the QSO in your log, your name and your state or province, in any order. To maximize your score, you want to call someone CQ'ing, complete that QSO, automatically inherit the frequency and call CQ, complete that QSO, QSY, and start over. A protocol has developed to facilitate this pattern. Let's assume that K7GM has called CQ and is answered by N6TR. K7GM responds with "N6TR DE K7GM 154 RICK NC K". N6TR then sends his exchange as "K7GM NR 122 TREE OR DE N6TR K". Note that he put his call at the end, tells you (and everyone else!) that he just inherited the frequency and is ready to be called. If no one calls, he will CQ a couple of times, and then move on to call someone. Thus, QSO's tend to come in pairs.

**Washington Salmon Run:** <http://www.wwdxc.org/salmonrun/> This is really the Washington State QSO Party. There is a moderate amount of activity, however Washington is inside the 20 skip distance right now, so stations will be weak. Worse, all the WA stations are working the much stronger stations in the midwest on 20. However, in the early evening, 40 will open, followed by 80 and it's a bit like a pipeline.

**Texas QSO Party:** <http://www.txqp.org/forms/Rules05.pdf> Most every state has one of these, all of which use the counties in the state as the multipliers. TQP is a bit unique because there are something like 273 counties in Texas, and many have no permanent hams. So, massive mobile expeditions are carefully planned, and this becomes a "follow the mobiles" effort. In fact, one of the reasons for the break between the two sections of the contest is to allow the mobiles to snooze. The TX stations are energetic and there is a lot of interest and activity in this QSO Party.

**California QSO Party:** <http://www.cqp.org> But, the biggest State QSO Party by any measure is ours! It runs for 30 hours (0900 Sat PDT – 1500 Sun PDT), and you are the sought-after stations. The exchange you send is simply the QSO serial number and your county. You'll receive serial number and state or province from non-CA stations, and serial number and county from CA stations. Obviously, Santa Clara, LAX, Orange and other populous counties are well represented. Placer often has W6RFF, K6DGW, WX6V, and maybe KF6T as regulars. This year, I will again be part of the crew at N6A

in Alpine County (at the summit of Monitor Pass at about 8,600'), Jim occasionally activates Sierra County and may again, and I'm not sure where Jack will be, so if you can out gun Jettie, it's possible to get a County Plaque. Out-of-State winners get a bottle of California wine, this year from Twisted Oak Winery in Murphys, owned by Jeff, WK6I. If you're looking for a rare county to activate, hit the web site. Last I heard, Trinity was about as rare as they get this year.

73,

Fred K6DGW

## SECTION NEWS AUGUST 2005

(Reported by Jettie, W6RFF)

**SECTION MANAGER ELECTION:** The ARRL reports that there were no other Petitions for the SM position in the Sacramento Valley Section, so I am more or less elected, again, by default. At one time there were several hams that had showed an interest in the position, but no one showed up this time. This term begins October 1, 2005 and runs until September 30, 2007. If any of you have an interest in the position, contact me and we can talk about it. A couple of members have offered to help out, if needed. Each SM election is for a 2 year term. Think about it.

**EMCOMM:** The ARRL now publishes an ARES e-mail letter, once each month. The first issue was in August. Members can sign up for it on their members page – click on Members Data Page near the top of ARRL's Home page. [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org). Also be sure you have checked to receive the section and division bulletins. At present a little over 800 out of nearly 1700 member have signed up for the section news.

**PLACER COUNTY:** The Placer Emergency Coordinator, Joe WB6AGR has left the section and Dave Thorn, K6SOJ, the Section Emergency Coordinator has appointed Chuck Minton, KG6FFK, to fill the spot. Chuck lives in Meadow Vista. The Placer group is very active and has helped out in several emergencies.

**RIVER CITY ARCS:** The club will be holding its annual Swap Meet on Sunday, September 18 at HSC Electronics at 4837 Amber Lane, Sacramento 95841, near the corner of Auburn Blvd. and College Oak. Time 7 am until 11 am. Spaces are \$10 and buyers are free. Raffle tickets \$1. Check their web page for more information. [www.n6na.org](http://www.n6na.org). The September 6 meeting will be a joint meeting with the North Hills ARC.

**CONTESTERS:** There will be a Gathering of Contesters on September 24<sup>th</sup>, from 11 am to 3 pm. It will be held at Fred, K6DGW, QTH in Auburn. Address is 670 Old Airport Road. For information, directions and map, go to [www.withmy2hands.org/k6kyj/gathering/sept24/](http://www.withmy2hands.org/k6kyj/gathering/sept24/).

**CALIFORNIA QSO PARTY:** CQP contest will be held on October 1-2 this year. This is a chance to work many states and countries as this is the largest of the state parties. For those in a rare county, which is most of the Sacramento Valley Section, you can have your mini-dxpedition with pile ups

waiting to contact you. For more information, go to [www.cqp.org](http://www.cqp.org). The contest is sponsored by the Northern California Contest Club.

**PACIFICON:** The annual Pacific Division Convention will be held at the San Ramon Marriott, 2600 Bishop Dr. San Ramon, on October 14-16. A special antenna seminar will be held on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The convention is put on by the Mt. Diablo ARC, as it has been for several years. There will be many seminars and displays, ARRL Officials, Division Directors and Section Managers will be there. Meet and speak with them at the ARRL booth. Manufacturers and retailers usually have special prices on equipment, parts and books. More information and registration can be found at [www.pacificon.org](http://www.pacificon.org). See you there.

**FCC:** The Code or No Code proposal by the FCC is a topic that is discussed by many of the amateurs. The knowledge of Morse Code has been required by International agreement, for many years, for a license to operate HF in the amateur bands. Many of us had to learn the code to get a license, but times and modes are changing, and the code requirement is being dropped by many countries. The CW bands will still be there for many years to come. Whether you are Pro or Con for the code requirement, you should make your wishes known by sending your comments to the FCC. You can enter your comments on the FCC web pages. Do not just say yes or no but give some reasons for your way of thinking on the subject.

**COMPUTER:** My computer was down a couple of days as the relatively new Hard Drive crashed and I had to reenter everything back on the new drive. I don't think computers are here to stay! I have a laptop that I use for logging and contesting and hope it continues to run. For CW contests the computer is the way to go, as it will send perfect CW for you. All you have to do is copy the information from the other station and type it in.

#### WEDNESDAY NIGHT NETS: 3987 KHz LSB at 1930L

Dave, K6SOJ, has asked me to insert the following information in this newsletter.

Do you know that we have 1600+ ARRL members in the Sacramento Valley Section? Do you know that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month there is an ARRL Section Net? The net addresses ARRL, FCC, and other general ham radio topics.

We average about 17-18 stations checking in to the HF portion of the net. That's only about 1% of all SV Section ARRL members! **WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS! GET ON THE AIR!** Turn off that computer and turn on your radio!

**NOTE:** There is also a VHF net for the south end of SV at 1900L ON 146.085+ pl 127.3.

**OTHER WEDNESDAY NIGHT NETS – 3987 KHz, LSB 1930 L**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday: WINCOM NETWORK – Washington, Idaho, Nevada, California, Oregon, Montana and elsewhere.

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday: WINCOM NETWORK, SAME AS ABOVE

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday: SV ARES NET – ARES and other EMCOMM stations

5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday: Regional ARRL Official Emergency Station Net.

That's it for now 73,

Jettie, W6RFF

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### Farewell from Joe

Just want to thank the Gang for the fine surprise going away party, enjoyed the carrot cake and cheese cake for several days after. Have pretty much unpacked and settled in. plan to get radios back on the air shortly. I really enjoyed being affiliated with the Club and the ARES group, hope to find the same comradery here in Modesto.

73

Joe, WB6AGR

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### Editorial

Given the recent events related to hurricane Katrina, please remember the victims, rescue workers, and volunteers in your thoughts and prayers. Many of us have been touched, saddened and inspired by the stories coming out of the devastated areas.

I'm sure there are many others, but here are a few links if you are able to help out with contributions.

Salvation Army: [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)

Red Cross: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)


Feed the Children: [www.feedthechildren.org](http://www.feedthechildren.org)

World Vision: [www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)

Thanks and 73,

Debbie, KF6LXN

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