



NAQCC News

May 16, 2009

[NAQCC Web Site](#)

Issue #094

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1. SPRINT: Our sprint is this Wednesday evening, May 20 8:30-10:30 PM EDT (Thursday 0030-0230Z).

Our special award certificate for this sprint goes to the winner of a drawing among those submitting a log for the very first time and having the highest score in their division.

If you're are entering one of our sprints for the first time and thus having a chance to enter the drawing, we welcome you and hope you will be a regular participant from now on. Last month we welcomed W9CTB, K5PSH, KT4LF, K4KSR, K9PL, K0MLT, K0IE, N2ICZ, VA3TSK as first time participants and/or log submitters.

Remember this is only a very brief overview of the coming sprint. Be sure to read and understand the full general sprint rules and any specific rules for this month's sprint [here](#).



2. APRIL CHALLENGE RESULTS AND JUNE CHALLENGE PROMO: For the first time in a while, participation in a challenge didn't reach double figures. Only 8 reports were received for the worked members challenge. With spring weather finally arriving for most of the country, probably more folks were getting out of their shacks enjoying the weather, doing lawn work, preparing the garden, fishing, walking, and so on.

Those who did enter apparently enjoyed the challenge from looking at their comments in the soapbox. One intriguing comment came from Don VE3HUR who wrote, "I missed the April sprint and, out of 49 QSOs this month, only came across four members. What do the other members do with the 718 hours in April that are not taken up by the sprint?"

That's an excellent question Don. I've wondered that myself. I do hear more and more members mentioning their numbers in QSO's, but not to the extent that FISTS members do, for example. In a way, that's good because we don't want to become just a 'number exchanging' club. We want our members to get to know each other and go beyond just knowing what their club number is. It's much better to have a good rag chew about someone's garden, military service, hobbies, etc. and look them up on the NAQCC membership list to see if they are a member than to just have a '599 QTH NAME NAQCC #xxxx 73' QSO. Sprints are for that type of exchange, not regular QSO's.

Our April challenge, as did the March challenge, had a prize connected with it. A set of 24 crystals donated by Rich N4ESS of [Expanded Spectrum Systems](#) which went to the winner of a drawing among all who made 3 or more member QSO's and qualified for a participation point. Two of the eight folks opted out of the drawing. Of the 6 remaining, the winner was Paul N8XMS.

The 7 folks reporting besides K3WWP were all regulars who participate in many of our NAQCC events. We certainly appreciate folks like these - KB3AAG, NU7T, N8XMS, WY7N, W2JEK, KU4A, VE3HUR. They are the backbone of a successful club.

In June it's our annual double challenge. The Field Day challenge which has proven to be very popular will be held again this year. And because that event only occupies one or two days time, we also have a month-long challenge as usual. It's our Call Sign Construction Challenge originally conceived by Mike KC2EGL a couple of years ago. It's like a regular alphabet challenge, but with the target 'words' being call signs of our members.

As always, full challenge info and results can be found [here](#).



3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS: - I hope you're reading this newsletter very carefully because with this issue we are starting something new. A member's call sign will be hidden somewhere in the text. Obviously many call signs are mentioned in the newsletter, but this one will be right in the middle of a sentence where it doesn't really belong and will be a mix of upper and lower case letters. That should make it apparent to everyone that it is the 'hidden' call sign. If it is your call sign notify us before the publication of the next newsletter (Jun 6) at NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET. A member only gets one shot at winning. There will be a new member chosen at random in each issue. If the member finds his/her call, a nice prize will be forthcoming.

This idea to encourage members to thoroughly read each issue of the newsletter is the brain-child of Bill KB3XS who is donating the initial prize of 100 NAQCC Club QSL cards to the winner. If no one wins this issue, the prize rolls over to the next issue until we do have a winner. That's a very nice prize that I wouldn't mind winning myself, but darn it, I'm not eligible.

Oh, and don't bother just doing a browser search of the page for your call. It can't be

detected that way. You've got to actually read the newsletter to find it.

● - A few years ago, the Adventure Radio Society did something special for their 10th anniversary sprint. They reserved 30 special 1x1 calls - K#S, N#S, and W#S where # represented the digits 0-9. We had thought about doing something similar for our anniversary celebrations in the past, but were reluctant to blatantly copy another club's idea. However our reluctance was overcome by reality this year.

It had caused a lot of confusion, especially among some newcomers to CW, when they tried to figure out what N3A/4, N3A/5, etc. meant. Those newcomers are the ones our club tries to reach, so we decided to simplify things this year. After checking with the VEC/Special Event department at the ARRL to ensure its propriety, we reserved N0A through N9A for the week of October 12th through October 18th inclusive. That period includes the actual startup date of the NAQCC in 2004 along with our monthly sprint as well.

Now that we have told you our plans, we need more volunteers to help operate our special event calls for that week. About a dozen or so volunteered before the info was released, and we have contacted them to see if they are still interested in helping out. Here is a list of those ops divided by call area and listing the N#A call they will be using. The ones with an OK after their name have replied that they are still interested. If you're on the list without an OK after your name/call, please let us know as soon as possible if you are still interested now that details are released.

W1 - N1A
John, KQ1P - OK
Gary, K1YAN
Geoff, W1OH
Richard, KG1W

W2 - N2A
none

W3 - N3A
John, K3WWP - OK
Tom, WY3H - OK
Jim, AF3Z - OK
Bill, W0EJ

W4 - N4A
Don, WA3ZBJ - OK
Lewis, KF4WK - OK
Jay, KJ4EXC

W5 - N5A
none

W6 - N6A
none

W7 - N7A
Bruce, WY7N - OK
George, KH6OZ

W8 - N8A
none

W9 - N9A
none

W0 - N0A
none

VE4WI also expressed interest, but unfortunately 1X1 calls can't be used outside the USA.

As you see, we still need volunteers from W2, W5, W6, W8, W9, W0. Here's your chance to help out your club and to have fun operating a 1x1 call. If you've ever used a 1x1 call, you know the interest it can provide on the bands. If you have never done so, it will be a great learning experience and I guarantee you will enjoy it. So whether you are a veteran 1x1 op, or would like to try it for the first time, we encourage you to email us and volunteer to help out. You DO NOT have to be a CW wizard who can copy 50 WPM while watching TV at the same time. It's perfectly suitable to a rank newcomer to CW as well.

Keep an eye on the newsletters for more information, and as October draws nearer we'll have a special page set up on the web site also.

- - We haven't updated our recruitment award standings for a while, and the time period for the award is drawing to a close. The member who recruits the most new members between Jan 1 and Jun 30 this year wins an ARRL Wire Antenna Book courtesy of John K3WWP. To count as a recruiter, your call must be listed in the Source field of a member's application, so be sure to tell any recruits to list you as a source.

As of member #3722 on May 10, the leaders are:

K3WWP - 15 (ineligible)

WB9PZB - 4

KC2EGL - 2

KJ4IC - 2

NW7US - 2

W0EJ - 2

W5RCP - 2

Many - 1

- - Paul N4LCD has helped us out with our sprint Autologger and Membership Application forms. He has done the trick by hosting those two pages on his server which has a T1 connection to the Internet. The technical work of putting them up was done by Jonathan W4CGP. The NAQCC deeply appreciates the work done by these two to help us out in our time of need. The forms should be even more reliable and secure than those that were hosted by Windstream. The forms now use php programming versus using the mailform.cgi script previously. We'll give it the acid test for our May 20th sprint if all the minor fine tuning is finished by then, and it should be.

- - If you are near Butler, PA or can be on June 7th, we invite you to come and meet other club members at the Breezeshooters Hamfest. Tom WY3H, John K3WWP, Ethan W3IRS, and Mike KC2EGL will be manning a NAQCC table at the event. This is an annual hamfest that is always very well attended with lots of great merchandise available at reasonable prices.

- - Joan SWL-25 is doing an excellent job of checking out all the web sites on the

members' web site page. She is finding quite a few that seemingly no longer exist, have moved, or have nothing to do with ham radio. When she finishes checking them all, she will send out an email wherever possible to those members who have links that no longer work properly. Those who do not respond will have the sites removed from the page. So you can save her and us some time and trouble by checking your own link on the page, and notifying us if it needs to be updated.

• - Due to the closeness of the May and June sprints as well as the arrangement of the calendar, the next newsletter will be posted on June 6th, rather than May 30th and will be a double issue - #095_096.



4. FEATURED AWARD OF THE MONTH: - Some time back we had this feature in our newsletters and we are going to start it up again to try to drum up more interest in our club awards program.

To get started up again we'll tell you about the Alphabet Prefix Award. This award was instituted because of the popularity of CQ Magazine's WPX award. However we are not copy cats so we felt it should be modified from the CQ rules. Instead of using the standard definition of a prefix, we use the first two characters of a call sign. That is, K3WWP would give you K3, WY3H gives you WY, DQ2006X would be DQ, 3A2MW is 3A, and so on. Unlike the WPX award, this gives a fixed number of 'prefixes' to shoot for. USA Calls (including US possessions) provide a total of 120. DX Calls provide a theoretical maximum number of 1196 combinations although not all 1196 actually exist. The basic certificate is issued for 100 USA and/or 400 DX 'prefixes'. We hope you'll check out and work for this award. So far we have only one winner in the World category - K3WWP. In the USA category we have 6 winners - K3WWP K4UK K7ZYV KD2MX K4PBY NU7T. This award also features an 'Honor Roll' listing on the web site. A listing there requires 'only' 200 World prefixes and/or 50 USA prefixes. We think this award is ideal for those who may think the CQ award is too complicated or too expensive. As always, read and be familiar with the complete rules before embarking on earning this or any award.

Full NAQCC Awards info [here](#).



5. THE NAQCC ELMER PROJECT - FROM K5DUZ and N3IJR: - If you are interested in helping out or need help with any CW and/or QRP matters contact:

K5DUZ - NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET

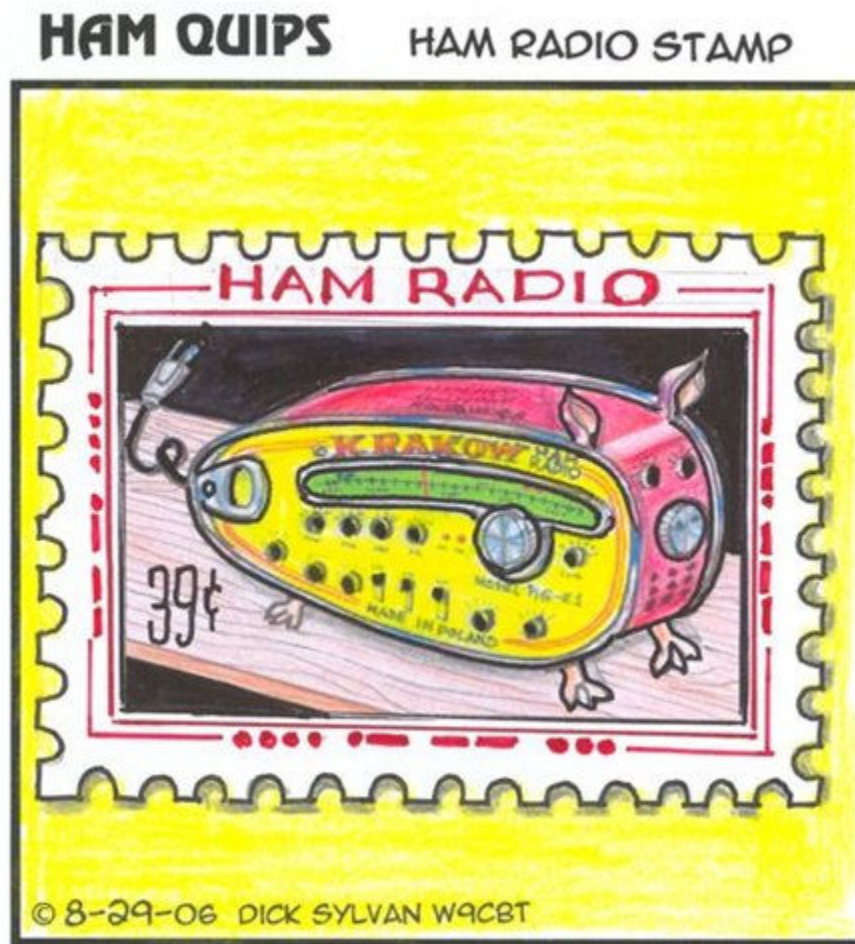
N3IJR - N3IJR@YAHOO.COM

Also see [Elmer Project](#) on the web site.



6. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH: Let's take a comedy and/or nostalgia break now courtesy of Dick Sylvan W9CBT. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a cartoon artist, and he is supplying a cartoon each month for the newsletter. The NAQCC is very honored to be one of just two organizations to feature Dick's cartoons. In addition to our newsletter, Dick's cartoons appear

monthly in [The K9YA Telegraph](#), an on-line only Ham Radio E-zine where he is the staff cartoonist. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via [his web site](#). A new cartoon will be appearing in each of our even-numbered newsletters.



7. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS: This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham $Va3YJc$ bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at KD2MX@ARRL.NET. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window.

(disclaimer) Any views expressed here are those of the member submitting them, and may not be in agreement with those of the NAQCC.

● **From Tim KD8GZ #1262** - In March, despite generally mediocre band conditions, I did manage to work my first non-Western Hemisphere QRP country: Meerbusch, Germany on 14.060 in the late afternoon, Ohio time. He was QRP also! Also worked the St. Eustalius Islands. Back on January 1st this year, I worked my first Alaskan CW QRP (on 20M).

And, I worked a lot of domestic and Canadian hams....all QRP with 5 watts into a simple

wire antenna, barely 20 feet off the ground.

While I respect the interest others have in contesting/sprints/special types of contests, I like everyday operating. I'm not a contest or sprint-lover.

What I'd most like to read about in the newsletter is what other NAQCC members are working...domestic and/or DX, learn about the equipment and antennas they use, including hams with antenna restrictions who've beat the odds with stealth antennas; portable operating adventures, and so forth. [\(That's what we keep begging our members to send. I hope your plea will increase the number of those who do send in such items. - K3WWP\)](#)

I think it's great there's a club exclusively promoting CW QRP. Long live NAQCC!

● **From John KQ1P #3113** - I became aware of NAQCC in the fall of 2008, mostly after working N3A last fall and then having a QSO with John, K3WWP. As if by magic, QRP CW has now become much more fun thanks to the sprints and challenges. I am well ahead of my goal of an average of one QRP QSO per day in 2009. My children like to find out who I have talked to, how many miles per watt, and they like getting new QSL cards as much as I do. I am writing to the NAQCC newsletter to say thank you to all of the club members who volunteer their time and to the many hams who are willing to copy code just above the noise level.

● **From Jay W6HHT #1911** - My e-book "Recollections of a Radio Receiver - the W6TC (SK) HBR Adventure 1976 - 2009" is completing final edit and moving into production. Those NAQCC members interested in the HBR homebrew receiver, Ted Crosby (its designer), its impact on amateur radio 1956 - 1970, and (most amazingly of all) its continuing presence today will find more information on www.w6hht.com. Dates when the book will be available (around mid-year) are provided on the web page.

From the telephone calls and e-mails I have received over the 2+ years I have been working on the book (using as my major source over 100 old letters between Ted, myself and others who built an HBR receiver), I sense a strong link between homebrew hams and QRP hams. Those things that drive many of us away from QRO also drive us away from store-bought equipment with its minimal documentation and the near-impossibility of self-maintenance. I am sure a portion of the NAQCC membership will find the story of Ted and his never-ending vacuum tube receiver designs of considerable interest.

● **From Mitch NA7US #1533** - I have dabbled off and on for years with QRP. During the high point in the sunspot cycle I worked numerous EU stations on 10 meters with 10 watts SSB but so did everyone. To be truthful, it just did not interest me that much until I went to Iraq. It was when I returned and committed myself to QRP that I got hooked. I bought a IC 703 Plus and a PM-1 portable antenna. Sitting in my living room in Washington state with the PM-1 next to me, I worked the Virgin Islands. That was all that I needed. Now after a few weeks of operating I already have 3 countries and 20 states and am now using an 80 meter loop. I have only been on the air for about 4 hours and I am in the Northern Latitudes. I am looking forward to the WAS Bear to wake up from hibernation!

● **From John KM6NN #2879** - QRP at the Train Station - It started with Lewis, KF4WK, in Clarksville, TN talking about an e-mail he received from a fellow QRPer who is interested in putting Train Stations on the air QRP style. You know me, I just can't wait to start any new QRP project. So as it happens I was going to visit my sons in Springdale, AR for a week. As

always I am running with my ICOM 706 radio for 2 meters and for HF. This rig is just the ticket for doing just what I was about to do.

On Monday, May 4, I set out on a nine hour drive for Springdale AR, with rain in the forecast and my radio warming up as I traveled InterState 40 headed toward a new QRP adventure. I arrived in the late afternoon and had to wait to go downtown to look around. The next day I went to the old part of town and what a surprise to find a real operating train station [Arkansas Missouri RR](#). The Arkansas and Missouri line is active and the trains travel between Springdale AR and Ft. Smith AR on a regular basis. They also have a lunch trip that goes to Winslow AR two times a week. When I went into the Railway Express Agency office, I talked with the Passenger Train Operations Manager, Brenda Brown. She listened to my story about QRP with a smile and said that the Conductor of the train was also a ham radio operator and that I should talk to him. She introduced me to Joe Dunn, KD5TLH, who was setting up for the weekly lunch run to Winslow the next day.

Joe was a wealth of information and was happy to show me around the train while talking about a new group he formed for special event stations that would work trains while moving down the tracks. Also Joe mentioned an article in the March 2008 issue of QST which talked about the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad getting on the air. Now I was getting excited with all this radio talk. So after finding out that Joe was planning a special event SSB trip on the train (W5T - on 14260) on Memorial Day, I could not wait to set up my antenna and get on the air. I thanked Joe for all the information and went looking for a place to set up and talk with Lewis, KF4WK, and Doc, NV4T, back in Clarksville TN. After finding a good spot to set up, I strung my DSP3+ for 20 meters (W5GI.com antenna page) and waited for Lewis to give me a call on the phone to let me know he was home and on the air.

While waiting I tuned around the band on 40 meters and listened to KA4WQO talk with KB5KGD. Next I heard KC8BYF and KE9VTM talk about the standard radio traffic. Cool, the antenna was working. Too bad the conditions were not working as good to Tennessee. After hearing from Lewis on the phone, I called and called and called but no reply. I gave Lewis a quick call on the phone and he said that he was calling me also but could not hear a sound when he listened. You guessed it, the conditions were not working for us. I then called a friend in California (N6NPG-TOM). We got on the air and not only was 40 dead but 20 was just as dead. So much for the old radio try. Oh well another day and the conditions will be just right. So long for now from KM6NN-John the traveling Ham, taking QRP to the world.





The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless they specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the [NAQCC Web Site](#).