

Contest Academy Speakers and Panel



TOM TAORMINA, K5RC

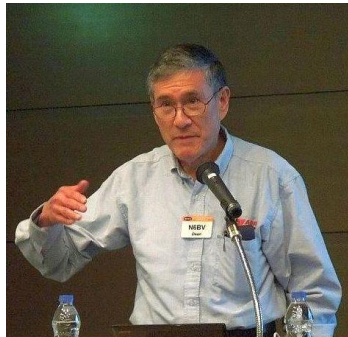
Tom was first licensed as WV2GGB in 1959 and has been an avid contester, DXer and experimenter ever since. He apprenticed at W1BU and was part of the early EME experiments. After moving to Texas in 1964, he and K5LZO teamed-up for many years in multiop SS and DX Contesting.

He is past president of The Texas DX Society, co-founder of the Great Armadillo Runs, Chair of the 1983 ARRL National Convention and co-founder of the North American QSO Parties. He is former editor of the West Gulf DX

Bulletin and the National Contest Journal. He is a member of the CQ Contest Hall of Fame, Life Member of ARRL and has achieved the Top of the DXCC Honor Roll with 373 confirmed countries and is currently EC of Storey County (NV) ARES.

He and his wife Midge, K7AFO, have lived in Virginia City, NV, for 16 years. Along with W5FU, they constructed the Comstock Memorial Station, W7RN. It is dedicated to advancing the art of Radiosport and pushing the envelope in station design and is the fourth large contest station he has designed and constructed. So far, the station has hosted record-setting operations in RTTY and N6TV had the highest overall score from W7RN in SS CW 2013.

Tom is a management consultant and has authored 12 books on business processes, leadership, risk and organizational excellence. His newest book is *It WAS Rocket Science* and chronicles his 14 years at Mission Control in Houston during Projects Gemini and Apollo.



R. DEAN STRAW, N6BV

Dean was a Senior Assistant Technical Editor for ARRL for 15 years, from 1993 to 2008, specializing in antennas, transmission lines and HF propagation. He has been truly blessed by the Good Lord—How many hams can say that their vocation was also their avocation? He was the editor of the last five editions of *The ARRL Antenna Book* and the last four volumes of *The ARRL Antenna Compendium* series. He coauthored with good friend K8CH *Simple and Fun Antennas for Hams* (we call it the “little antenna book with attitude”). Dean was editor for ON4UN’s *Low Band*

DXing and K1VR’s *Antenna Zoning*, not to mention several stints as editor of *The ARRL Handbook*.

Since returning to the west coast in 1998 from New Hampshire, Dean was ARRL’s longest-distance full-time “telecommuter” until retiring in April 2008. He continues to correspond with hams around the world on antenna and propagation topics.

First licensed as WH6DKD in 1959 at age 12, Dean has been active in the fifty-five years since then mainly on HF—and mainly in contests, both phone and CW. The vagaries and subtleties of HF propagation and the thrill of the competitive chase have kept his interest sparked in ham radio for more than 50 years. Experience in ham radio led him to a degree in electronics engineering at Yale University in 1967, where he was active at the W1YU club station, operating (you guessed it) mainly in contests. Dean worked in the marine electronics industry for more than 25 years before joining ARRL staff.

He operates regularly at the N6RO contest superstation in the East Bay or from DXexotic locations around the world. Dean resides with his wife Rayma in the Richmond District of San Francisco, in a house that looks directly into Golden Gate Park, where he tries to run about 9 miles a week, albeit slowly. He has two sons, four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter and one great-grandson.



TOM BERSON, ND2T

Tom was licensed at age 11 as WV2ASJ, and remembers working his first DX, the exotic SP1IB, from home as a rock-bound novice with a 40m dipole. As time passed, Tom upgraded to WA2ASJ, became trustee of W2AJJ, his high school club station, operated from MIT as K1EQT, but eventually let all amateur radio licenses lapse as he pursued education and careers first in physics (BS, State University of NY), then in computer science (PhD, University of London), and finally in information security. After a forty-year hiatus from amateur radio, during which time he was never without an HF receiver close to hand, Tom jumped back into the hobby as ND2T in 2001. He loves the challenges of tight integration among antenna systems, radios, computers, and networked information. He is a keen contesteer, capable of accurately working high-rate runs in CW, SSB or RTTY. He considers Rusty, W6OAT, along with other members of NCCC, to be his contesting Elmer. Tom is a member of competitive multi-op teams at W6YX, and K6IDX. He has contested from W7RN and KH6LC. Tom is a member and Past-President of the Northern California Contest Club, a member of the Stanford Amateur Radio Club, the Chiltern DX Club, and the CW Operators' Club. Tom is a director of the Northern California DX Foundation. Also, Tom was the Treasurer of the International DX Convention ("Visalia") for 2011 and 2013. Tom went to Scarborough Reef BS7H in 2007. He has since been a member of the K4M (KH4), VP8ORK and NH8S DXpeditions. Tom's DXpedition motto is "Any mode, any band, any shift." Professionally, Tom is an expert in cryptography, computer security, information conflict, and high-tech business – with over 40 years' experience. He is a Silicon Valley entrepreneur, manager, and researcher. He works as an independent consultant to industry and government. He maintains international contacts and is a talented communicator across language and culture. Tom has founded four successful Silicon Valley companies, one of which he is still actively working. He is the author of numerous papers and holds about twenty US Patents. For more on Tom's professional activities, see www.anagram.com



STU PHILLIPS, K6TU

Stu has been a licensed Ham since 1973 where he got his license in the UK as G8HQA. After operating for some time in California as G8HQA/W6, he got his first US callsign (N6TTO) in 1988. A professional engineer and business consultant by background, Stu's Ham Radio interests include contesting, DXing, Remote Controlled Stations and construction. A life member of the ARRL, Stu lives in Woodside, CA and operates 100% of the time with a remote controlled station in both contests and DXing. He also created and operates the K6TU.NET "Propagation as a Service" web site.



JEFF STAI, WK6I

Jeff first got interested in radio in the 70s, but didn't get a Tech license until 1996. Upgraded to Advanced around year 2000, learning Morse Code so he could copy 6m beacons. Started to play around on HF and caught the contesting bug in phone contests. RTTY had always interested him but he had trouble setting it up right until he visited Arne N6HC to get cards checked for DXCC. After a great time with Arne going over the cards, they headed down to the shack to see how RTTY should be setup. After that, Jeff got his HF rig working on AFSK but the narrow filters didn't adjust for AFSK so he ran his first RTTY contest with wide-open filters. After that he got FSK figured out and was off. After moving to Northern California he set up his own station and did OK, but was somewhat limited until Rich WC6H said Jeff could operate RTTY contests from his station. That worked great, and then eventually Tom K5RC put out the call for someone to build out the RTTY capability for the fantastic W7RN station. Jeff says: "After every contest we figure out what worked and what didn't, and then Tom proceeds to make it better the next time." Recently Jeff has been working with "SO4V" and "SO6V" - that is, both VFOs on two or three radios decoding at all times. Jeff has had to carve out time for RTTY contests the last few years as he is busy running Twisted Oak Winery in Calaveras County. Twisted Oak proudly provides special wine awards to winners of the California QSO Party.



HANK GARRETSON, W6SX

Hank was first licensed at age eleven as KN2SSX in 1956. He spent twenty years as a career officer in the Air Force, most of the time flight testing aircraft. He is a flight-test-engineer graduate of the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, and was in charge of the flight-test-engineering program at the U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School. He logged 1563 hours as an airborne flight test engineer. He retired from the Air Force as a lieutenant colonel in 1986 and went to work for Northrop Corporation. At Northrop he was a lead flight test engineer for the B-2 Stealth Bomber. Once for the Air Force, and once for Northrop, he was in charge of large outdoor antenna ranges. Hank retired to Mammoth Lakes, CA, in 2004. His major ham-radio interests have always been traffic handling and contesting. He characterizes himself as a journeyman contester who enjoys doing the best he can with the antenna-hand he's been dealt. He made 31,789 contest contacts in 2013. Hank is known for his "Contest Exuberantly" signature on the contest reflectors.



KURT PAUER, W6PH

Kurt was originally licensed as KN6LSG in 1955 in Salinas, CA. He attended his first Field Day in Pacific Grove with the Monterey Bay Radio Club (W6UCS) and got hooked on contesting. He has held the calls K6LSG, W2BQF, W1PH, and now W6PH. Most of his contest operations prior to 1998 were from his home in NH as W1PH. In 1998 he began operating from his Lone Pine QTH as he was approaching

retirement. He has operated the CQWW DX contests from there and has operated the ARRL DX Contests from VP9GE as VP9/W6PH for the last 14 years. Kurt operates in the contests with one radio and no internet assistance and uses temporary antennas at his Lone Pine QTH. He enjoys Dxing and has 350 entities (with deleted countries) confirmed. He has 130 confirmed as KH6/W6PH and 200 confirmed as VP9/W6PH. Professionally he was an airline pilot for 30 years with Eastern Airlines and US Airways retiring in 2002. He also retired from the USAF Reserve after 20 years of service.



BOB WOLBERT, K6XX

First licensed deep in the last century at age 12 as WN6HPF. Later callsign was N6IP, changing to K6XX in 1996. Team Leader in WRTC-2010.

The K6XX station moved to its present location in rural Santa Cruz County in 2000. The station uses more than 40 antennas spread out over approximately 70 acres of land. Inside the shack, six individual operating positions are configured: two are SO2R capable and one is remote-controllable.

Although his motto is "life ends at 30MHz", he is active from 1.8MHz to 1.2GHz. Most activity is on CW, but a microphone is available and is occasionally employed. Even RTTY diddles have emanated from the station, but generally under a pseudonym. When not on the air or filling out QSL cards (bureau shipments always feature several kilograms of JA cards), he is an electronics engineer, specializing in linear (analog) integrated circuits, and is presently employed by a well-known local radio manufacturer.

Married to Miki, and has three daughters: Sarah, Lisa, and Emily. Through bribes and extortion, this is an "all-ham family", although no one ever fights for an operating seat.



BOB WILSON, N6TV

N6TV aka "TV Bob" is an active CW contester and Win-Test supporter. Licensed for over 40 years, Bob competed at the World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC) in San Francisco (1996), Slovenia (2000), and Moscow (2010). He earned numerous Top Ten finishes in the CW NA Sprints from his home station in Silicon Valley, a small suburban lot with a single tower loaded with monobanders. Bob was an early adopter of the

Perseus SDR and CW Skimmer, and has recently been analyzing signal reports using data from the Reverse Beacon Network (RBN). He voluntarily supports Win-Test users via the Win-Test Reflector, and also helps update the documentation. He joined K2KW's original "Team Vertical" group (6Y4A, 4M7X), and has been a member of the multi-op teams at HC8N, K3LR, and W7RN. Bob finished in First Place in the 2013 ARRL CW Sweepstakes Contest, operating at W7RN.



JOHN MILLER, K6MM

John was first licensed as WV2BQJ in 1958 while living in Syracuse, NY. In 1976, John's career took him to Silicon Valley, where he reconnected with amateur radio in the late 90s.

For the last decade, John has focused heavily on DXing, contesting, and recruiting new operators into the hobby. His DXCC total stands at 330 confirmed. He holds 8-Band DXCC, and is working on completing 160M for the 9th band. His article entitled "The No Excuses 160M Vertical" won the cover plaque award for the June 2009 issue of QST.

John was a member of the PJ7E Saint Maarten DXpedition; a member of the K9W Wake Atoll DXpedition; and was the pilot and webmaster for both the NH8S Swains Island and C82DX Mozambique DXpeditions.

John is a Past-President of the Northern California Contest Club (NCCC), a current Vice-President of the Northern California DX Club (NCDXC), and a Director of the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF). He is also a founding member of the CW Operators' Club, a member of the editorial staff of the National Contest Journal, and a proud member of ARRL, REDXA, MLDXCC, and PAARA. John co-chaired the 2011 and 2013 International DX Convention meetings in Visalia, CA, and will do so again in 2015.

In addition to his four grandchildren, John's interests include website design, piano composition, and exploring the back roads of the Bay Area on his Harley Davidson motorcycle.