Message from the Prez
by Ken Widelitz, K6LA

Just when I thought I was finished with totally automating my station, I got into an e-mail discussion with NA's author, Dave Pruett, K8CC, about automating rotator control. Now that I've got stacked antennas, I've got four rotators. Getting them pointed in the right direction as quickly as possible is a two-handed job. And when both hands are on the rotator controls, they can't be on the keyboard, tuning dial or keyer. Yeah, two of my rotators have presets, but they still have to be set and actuated. And the presets are not always easy to set in the heat of battle. I find myself watching the indicator and over-riding the presets more often than not.

I hadn't thought too much about automating rotator control because one of my rotators is an old prop pitch, and I didn't think I could do anything about automating it. I also didn't see how I could give up four COM ports on the computer. Well, it seems as if Dave, K8CC, has made major efforts in solving all of my problems regarding automating rotator control. He has developed a board that goes in each rotator control box that daisychains off of one COM port. From his description, it will be easy to install, not eliminate manual control and cost about $100 per board.

As far as the prop pitch goes, I've learned something about selsyns and pots from our correspondence. It seems I can add a pot attached to some gears attached to the mast outside the

business end of the prop pitch and have that drive a customized version of the rotator interface board and a digital readout in the shack. So I've got my next project lined up.

One more note on Dave, K8CC's, activities. Dave has been doing a lot of upgrades to his NA program. He has been active on the NA internet reflector soliciting ideas about how to improve the program, and then quickly implementing some of them. NA now has great two-radio control and the ability to see the S&P radio's bandmap while CQing on the other radio. Dave is going to be taking some of CT's best features still not in NA (like a frequency based bandmap and 50-line VGA display with moveable windows) and integrating those into future versions.

With no new version from CT lately, I suspect NA will be capturing considerable market share from CT. And yes, I have ignored N6TR's software in this discussion, and I know lots of guys swear by it, and it has lots of advanced two-radio functions, but I'm a CT/NA kind of guy. I've also always stuck with DOS and dislike Windows. In fact, I'm just now getting Windows 95 on my new computer and will need to force myself to learn it just so I can keep up with my kids.

Please look for me with the SCCC group at XE2L in the ARRL CW DX contest. We'll be going head to head in the multi-two category against a team from NCCC at 6Y4A, so try for us on all six bands.

Sprint Claimed Scores

February SSB Sprint, SCCC Team

K6LL	277x48	13,296	
K6LA	255x47	11,985	
KC6CNV	233x45	10,485	
K5OT	204x44	8,976	
K4MA	207x42	8,694	
W6KY	211x41	8,651	
W6EEN	194x43	8,342	
N6HC	205x33	6,765	
WA7BNM	108x30	3,240	2hr
N6RV	?	?	
Total		**80,434**	

February CW Sprint, Team 1

K6LL	341x48	16,368
N6AA	309X48	14,832
N6ZZ	314x44	13,816
K6NA	300x45	13,503
K6LA	303x44	13,332
AC6T	297x43	12,771
N6VR	288x44	12,672
KC6CNV	282x44	12,408
N5OT	275x44	12,100
KO7X	254x41	10,127
Total		**131,929**

This is what K6RO's antennas looked like before his tower failure: 6-el 15m at 102 feet, 80m dipole at 95 feet, 6-el 20m/3-el 40m at 90 feet. Come to the club meeting on Feb. 22 and share Larry's pain.

The Editor's Ramblings, or Bruce's Adventure in South Carolina
by Bruce Horn, WA7BNM

The end of 1996 saw the birth of a new contest: The Stew Perry Distance Challenge. This contest was designed to neutralize the usual location advantages of other 160-meter contests by making the score dependent on the distance between the two stations having a QSO. In other words, a contester would receive more points for a QSO with a station 2,000 km away, than from a station 500 km away.

This sounded like it might be a fun way to spend an evening of the last weekend of 1996. Originally, I had planned to return from the Christmas holidays just in time to participate from the home QTH. However, the unavailability of flights resulted in my being in South Carolina for the contest, rather than Los Angeles.

Heh! No problem I thought. After all, what could be better than spending a 160-meter contest on an island (Hilton Head Island) on the edge of the Atlantic ocean? All

1997 SCCC Meeting Schedule

April 5 (at International DX Convention in Fresno)
June 7
August (TBA, in conjunction with SCDXC/SDDXC summer bash)
October 18
December 20

of us West Coasters know that you can work Europe on 160 with a piece of wire thrown out of a window from the East Coast.

When I had visited my in-laws in South Carolina in June of 1996, I had taken an ICOM 706 transceiver with me and rigged up a simple 20m delta-loop antenna on the side of my in-laws' townhouse. Yes, a 160-meter antenna might be a little bigger, but at least they were already used to the concept of ham radio. So the preparations began.
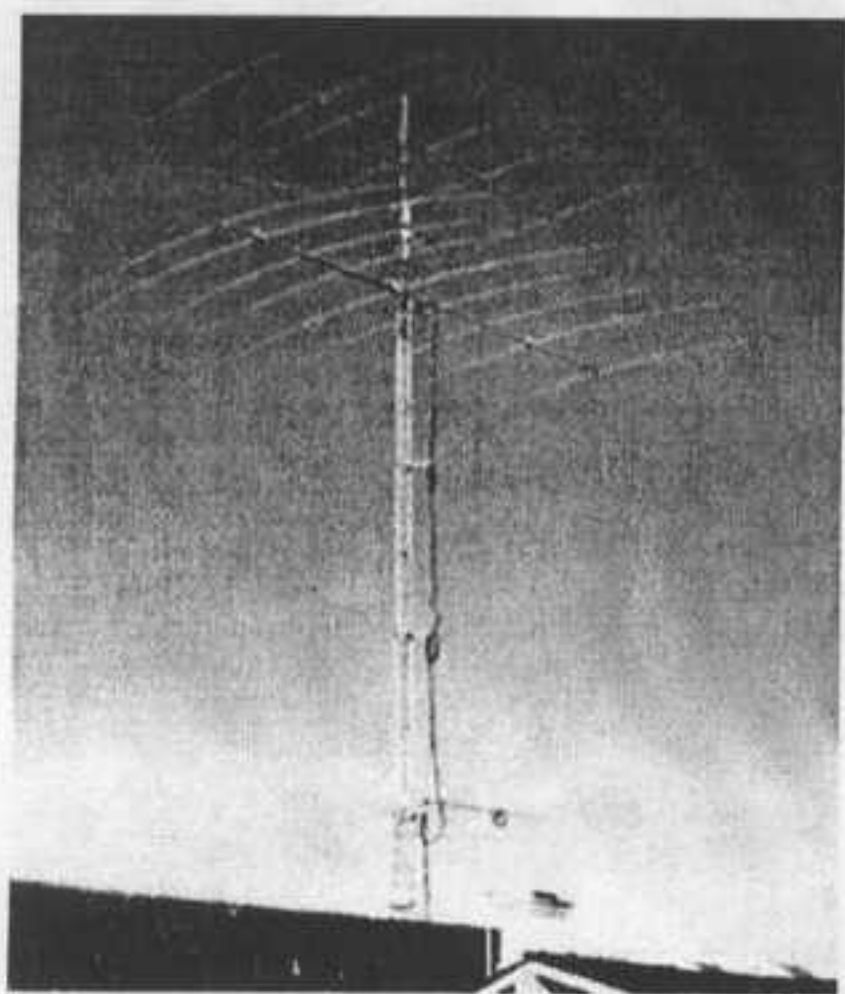
I knew from my previous experience that I needed to take plenty of wire with me. Finding wire on the island had proved to be a difficult task. Also, based on my experience from my home QTH with a nearby 50 kW AM transmitter, I figured I needed a broadcast band rejection filter. ICE appeared to have a filter designed for that purpose, but I hadn't had good experiences trying to obtain anything from ICE quickly. It was now Thursday, and I was leaving on Sunday. So I put a request on the Internet Contest Reflector. I received a couple of flames for having the gall to use the reflector for such a request, instead of more important matters like whether the FCC had randomized the order in which they handled first-day vanity call sign requests. But K6AW sent me a message indicated that he had had good luck getting ICE filters from Cable X-Perts.

On Friday, I called Cable X-Perts and was assured that the filter I needed was in stock and could be shipped overnight with Saturday delivery. I was already visualizing having to copy call signs with prefixes I had never heard before on 160. Saturday came and went. No UPS delivery.

Editor (from page 2)

The flight to South Carolina was uneventful. Made it through security at LAX without having to explain what all of the electronic equipment in my carry-on bag was for.

On Monday, I called Cable X-Perts to have them directly ship me the filter in South Carolina. Meanwhile, a perusal of the Yellow Pages resulted in a source of helium for the 3-foot vinyl party balloons I had brought with me. My father-in-law accompanied me to the industrial gas supplier to pick up the helium cylinder. I think he's always a bit amused by the interests of his sons-in-law.

I spent Tuesday stapling a 135-foot radial around the edges of the townhouse — the gray color of the wire exactly matched the siding color. I ran the second radial across a lagoon next to the townhouse. At this point my in-laws were more good humored about the "wiring" of their home than my wife was.

I also re-erected the 20-meter delta loop antenna I had previously used. Although this antenna was cut for 20-meters and was placed on the western end of a four-unit townhouse, I could copy many European stations on 80-meters. Yep, all ya need is a wire thrown out of a window.

Of course, around this time I discovered that the "100-foot" roll of coax was actually a 50-foot roll. So it was off to Radio Shack (there really is one everywhere) to procure the necessary coax. Not that I had much choice, but I settled on a 50-foot roll of coax terminated with UHF connectors with a label indicating it was designed for CBers.

Finally, on Wednesday evening, it was time to test the 160-meter balloon-supported vertical. The weather seemed calm, with maybe only the slightest of breezes on the ground. The three balloons lifted the 125 feet of wire into the air without a problem. I ran back to the bedroom/ham shack and quickly tuned 160, waiting for European signals to jump out of the radio. Nothing! Back outside. Discovered that once the balloons had cleared the island's vegetation, a wind had blown the antenna into a nearby tree, making its effective length 30 feet.

Although I tried several other times, I was unable to launch the antenna without tangling in trees. So after much effort, I never even heard a 160-meter signal the entire time I was on the island.

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

Call _____   Name _____   Date _____

Internet Address: _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Telephone _____   Work Telephone _____

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

February
15-16	ARRL Int. DX Contest, CW
21-23	CQ 160-Meter Contest, Phone
22	SCCC Meeting

March
1-2	ARRL Int. DX Contest, Phone
15-16	Bermuda Contest
15-17	BARTG WW RTTY Contest
15-16	Russian DX Contest
29-30	CQWW WPX Contest, Phone

April
5	SCCC Meeting @ Intl DX Convention
5-6	EA RTTY Contest
11-13	Japan Int. DX Contest, 20-10m
14	ARRL 144-MHz Spring Sprint
19-20	SP DX RTTY Contest
22	ARRL 222-MHz Spring Sprint
26-27	Ontario QSO Party
30	ARRL 432-MHz Spring Sprint

Next Meeting: Saturday, Feb 22
Time: 11:00A

Larry Shapiro, K6RO
2121 Belmont Lane
Redondo Beach
RSVP by Feb 21 to 310-376-1533(H)
310-970-9233(W)

We will take up a collection and order pizza.
Soft drinks will be supplied by K6RO.
BYOB if beer is desired.

Directions (from North):
From 405 Fwy, take Inglewood Ave. exit
Turn right, go south to 190th St.
Turn right, go west to Rindge (signal)
Turn right, go north to Belmont Lane

Directions (from South)
From 405 Fwy, take Western exit
Left on offramp, right on 190th St.
Then follow directions above.

43150 Sixth St. East
Lancaster, California 93535

USA 32

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