

Orca DXCC 2020 Year-End Report

December 23, 2020—Our last in-person evening meeting was way back in March, just before restrictions and protocols were put into place to control the spread of COVID-19. It was hoped that by September, the situation would have improved enough to meet up at The RiverHouse again but alas, case counts began to rise in BC and, as everyone is now well aware, new orders were issued by the Provincial Health Officer that we all stick to our household bubbles. So... no Orca evening meetings and no after-meeting reports.

But things still happened in the radio world.

Stamps celebrating 100 years of radio in Canada—the broadcasting kind but radio anyway.

You can read more about the stamps [here](#)



VE7ACN is 2020 IOTA Expeditioner of the Year!

On the amateur radio front, a big piece of news was that Mike VE7ACN was named the 2020 IOTA Expeditioner of the Year. Well done! View announcement on Ham Nation [here](#) (starts at 54:48)

Contesting

Contests still spurred activity on weekends, even though conditions were not ideal. I noticed the absence of certain callsigns from the Caribbean or a shift from multi-op stations to single-op, probably because the usual operators were not able to travel from their home countries to their contest locations. But overall, activity was high.

One brand of contesting that acquired a tremendous following this year was the QSO party. This year—2020—marked the start of the State QSO Party Challenge. The purpose of this competition, as stated on the [website](#), is “to be the catalyst to take state QSO party contesting to the next level.” I think it has.

The organizers of this year-long competition included the two Canadian QSO parties—BCQP and the Ontario QSO Party—and BCQP was one of three QSO parties that kicked off the competition. The State QSO Party Challenge was such a success, according to the organizers, that it will run again in 2021.

The inclusion of BCQP in the State QSO Party Challenge raised the profile of our event far higher than I could have achieved through regular promotion channels. And the fact that this competition will run again in 2021, with MNQP, VTQP and BCQP kicking off the effort, is sure to fuel interest on the first weekend in February. A lot of QSO party enthusiasts in the U.S. and other parts of Canada will be looking to make as many Qs as possible with BC stations in BCQP 2021 to boost their QSO count for the State QSO Party Challenge. BC operators who regularly participate in BCQP—and the majority are Orca members—know a steady pileup is a real possibility anyway since we VE7/VA7s can contact anyone anywhere. But the State QSO Party Challenge is sure to enhance pileup potential.

Highlights from 2020 State QSO Party Challenge

- QSOs reported to 3830Scores (*1, *2) exceeded one million.
- Three operators—KI6RRN, N0HJZ and K5CM—contributed 10,000 or more QSOs each. (*ICYMI: KI6RRN was the recipient of the Top US plaque in BCQP 2020)
- 2,111 operators submitted reports to 3830. Nearly half (1,040) qualified for the SQP Challenge with a minimum of two contacts in at least two QSO parties.
- 77 Canadian contesters qualified, with 13 of them reaching Platinum level(*3)
- Although “working all State QSO parties” wasn’t an initial component of the SQP Challenge, it soon became the goal of many contesters, with 32 operators working all 46 SQPs for perfect attendance. That means there were 46 very aware and very keen operators who knew that BCQP—one of the first approved parties—was included in the competition.

- Notes:
1. The competition is based on QSOs rather than points; however, multi-op participants receive a proportional share of total QSOs, so challenge level is described in points.
 2. Eligibility is automatic if scores posted to 3830scores.com
 3. Five challenge levels:
 - Diamond (>50,000 points)
 - Platinum (>10,000)
 - Gold (>5,000)
 - Silver (1,000+)
 - Bronze (100+)
 4. Highlights excerpted from email received from Stan K4SBZ, State QSO Party Challenge Administrator.

Example of State QSO Party Challenge certificate



BCQP 2021 Changes

As BCQP Coordinator, I would have kept everyone updated on BCQP 2021 prep and plans at Orca meetings and offered more details in each post-meeting Orca Report. But that didn't happen, so let me use this opportunity to let you know what's going on.

**The dates—
February 6 & 7, 2021**

The Saturday segment runs from 8am – 8pm local time. The Sunday segment runs from 8am – 4pm local time.

There is a change—one that may largely go unnoticed unless your primary mode is digital. The digital category has been eliminated. Why? Two reasons: 1) Digital was included to make BCQP as welcoming as possible and encourage participation from all mode enthusiasts, but digital never really attracted sustainable interest; and 2) the XE RTTY Contest extended its hours a couple of years ago and now completely overlaps with BCQP, and trading Qs appears to create some issues, mainly because the exchanges

**No digital
in BCQP,
effective from
BCQP 2021**

aren't compatible. At the current time, it does not make sense to maintain the digital category in BCQP.

**Another change—
eligibility for certificates.**

Previously, a log of just one valid QSO might get a certificate if no one else submitted a log in that category. Going forward, certificate eligibility will require at least 10 valid QSOs. This change parallels the existing requirement for plaque eligibility and in-BC district certificate eligibility. Also, due to the huge number of logs submitted from outside BC for several years, it seems only fair to offer top-of-category certificates by state and DX entity.

Therefore, stations with top score in each category of entry will receive the special gift and of course be the top score overall in that category but a separate certificate will not be awarded for that accomplishment. It will be noted on the certificate for top score by category in the state where the top overall score was achieved.

Plaques

There were 10 sponsored plaques in 2020. I have received affirmative replies from all 10 sponsors. Yeah!

******An issue that may need attention is the multi-op aspect of BCQP 2021. If the COVID-19 case count remains high or restrictions on gatherings prevent stations from hosting multi-op teams, I will relax the rule for a multi-op station. Maybe something along the lines of what RAC did for Canada Day 2020. More details will be provided as the date for BCQP draws near. ******

As an aside, while digital is not a go-to mode in BCQP, it has a wide following near and far.

Koji VA7KO had a chat with a guy on the organizing committee for the JARTS WW RTTY Contest about the increasing tendency among RTTY operators to use 14.100MHz during contests. As anyone familiar with RTTY knows, this is the international beacon frequency on 20m. When CONDX is bad, beacons



give operators an idea of how signals are traveling around the world. This is essential info for anyone keen on DX contacts and for operations without internet access, like DXpeditions. However, some operators infringe upon this frequency, maybe by mistake or maybe because there isn't any other available running frequency during a contest. But 14.100MHz really should be kept free—no running, no S&P—and a growing number of contest organizers now make note of 14.100 interference in their respective event rules, with some leaning toward disqualification if a log shows more than a certain number of QSOs or sustained QSO activity over a certain amount of time on 14.100 +/- 1KHz (at least). Just a heads-up to any contester who might venture in a beacon zone, knowingly or not, you risk being disqualified or at the very least lose points. Penalties will probably vary from contest to contest, so check the rules before you play.

For anyone who is unfamiliar with the international beacon network, look [here](#). And a video by Dave Casler KE0OG provides some background about the beacon network and how to use it. View the video [here](#).

Holiday Wishes

Hanukkah is over. Christmas is coming. Then we'll be ringing the new year. COVID-19 has messed with plans to get together with family and friends. But we can all stay connected while staying apart. So email, phone, text, zoom or skype. Say hello. Tell people you are thinking of them even, especially at this time of year, though you can't share a meal and clink glasses.

Be well. Be safe.

de VA7BEC



Open to
reveal ...



... a virtual box of yummy holiday baking!
From our family to yours.