

## Orca Report No. 95 (January 2024)

January 3, 2024—Rebecca VA7BEC here with the first Orca Report of 2024.

How has 2024 started for you? I hope on a good note. Me? My 2024 to-do list already has quite a few items on it, mostly tasks that weren't crossed off the 2023 to-do list. LOL And I'll be adding to the list with BCQP 24 coming up very soon -- Feb 3-4. More on that below.

A great start for Orca DXCC was a lovely lunch today at The RiverHouse that brought together folks some of us haven't seen in a very long time. We were a group of 16. There will probably be another lunch in March.

### BCQP 2024: First weekend in February!

**1600z Feb 3 to 0359z Feb 4 AND 1600z Feb 4 to 2359 Feb 4**  
(That's 8am – 8pm Feb 3 and 8am – 4pm Feb 4, local time on the West Coast)

- Rules, multiplier lists, FAQ, in-depth event analysis from previous years, and past award photos are available for viewing on the BCQP page (<http://www.orcadxcc.org/bcqp.html>).
- At-a-glance, same-weekend event schedule ([http://orcadxcc.org/content/pdf/2024\\_sked.pdf](http://orcadxcc.org/content/pdf/2024_sked.pdf)) with required exchange info for key coinciding events. The schedule shows key events that overlap with BCQP as well as exchange data to facilitate Q-trading if required.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

### New for 2024: An “announced operations” list

For various reasons, self-spotting is NOT allowed in BCQP. I won't get into the pros and cons of self-spotting here, but suffice to say, self-spotting in BCQP is unlikely to benefit the operators for whom getting spotted would make a big difference in results. Big guns already get spotted because they are loud; small pistols, particularly QRP stations, tend to be mere whispers in the wind unless CONDX is fantastic, so a spot doesn't necessarily translate into much additional activity. Stations need to be heard in order to be worked. Besides, self-spotting in QSO parties is often used when a mobile moves into a new county to alert would-be contacts that a Q on the same band/mode for a new mult is possible. BCQP never sees a mobile operation. Some portables, yes. But no mobiles. So, no self-spotting.

As an alternative, I would like to create an Announced Operations list for BCQP 2024. The list will be posted to the BCQP home page a few days before game day, and I

Callsign	Mode(s)	District
VA7ODX	CW, PH	DEL

will include the link in reminder messages. The list should raise awareness of participating stations -- the callsigns -- and potential activity by mode, and also facilitate the search for lucrative multipliers.

**If you would like to be included in the list, please email me with the callsign you intend to use, the mode(s) you plan to operate and the district you expect to be operating from.**

### About NA Sprint CW...

For in-province CWers who figure BCQP is a lost cause when NA Sprint starts up, consider the “everything bagel” approach if you can manage a really long exchange to cover BCQP as well as Sprint data.



For background, go to last year’s BCQP Report ([http://orcadxcc.org/content/pdf/bcqp/2023\\_BCQP\\_report.pdf](http://orcadxcc.org/content/pdf/bcqp/2023_BCQP_report.pdf)) and start reading from bottom of page 2.

If you just want to be persistent, keep calling “BCQP” and stand your ground. If an operator responding to your CQ gives you a seemingly incompatible exchange, cherry-pick the info needed for your BCQP log. The sprint exchange includes state/province and you can assume RST of 599. The Sprinter will know you are in BC from your prefix and delightedly assume “BC” even if you give out a federal electoral district but may ask for your name or maybe consider your district designator as your name if the designator has a vowel in it. Sprinters will probably assume a sequential number of “1”.

Do not include all the sprint exchange information in your BCQP log. It won’t fit in the fields anyway so don’t waste your time trying to make it fit. If you plan to send a sprint log to the organizer of that contest, keep track of the sprint info. But honestly, the sprint exchange is so long and cumbersome that you risk wiping vital BCQP data accidentally, and you’ll definitely break your CQ BCQP rhythm, which opens the door to a Sprinter thinking you have followed the Sprint rule to QSY post-CQ.

The sprint organizer assures me that Sprinters will not take over the frequency after responding to a BC operator calling CQ BCQP. I will be reminding the organizer of his promise before game day so that sprint promo will emphasize good manners.

### Keep in mind

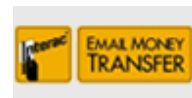
- I have an official invitation, PDF format, if anyone wants to use it to tell friends about BCQP 2024. Contact me if you’d like the file.
- BCQP offers photo-based plaques as well as certificates that showcase scenery or a special landmark. Different every year and thus COLLECTIBLE! Makes our QSO party unique. (Sales point. If you’re talking to people about it. Hint. Hint.)

- BCQP has 10 sponsored plaque categories, but one sponsor dropped out last minute. The **Top YL category is open for a new sponsor**. If you yourself are interested in sponsoring this category, or if you belong to a local club that might be interested in sponsoring this category, please contact me.
- Remember that Orca members who submit a BCQP log of at least 25 Qs will be entered into the club draw for a \$25 gift card. Typically, three callsigns are pulled out of the box. Note, you must have paid your membership dues as of Feb 3 to be included in the in-club draw.

## Membership Renewal



Please renew your membership if you haven't done so already. There are several options: PayPal, cheque/check payable to Orca DX and Contest Club, or



Interac email money transfer for anyone in Canada who uses online banking. Go to the [membership page](#) of the Orca website for further details.



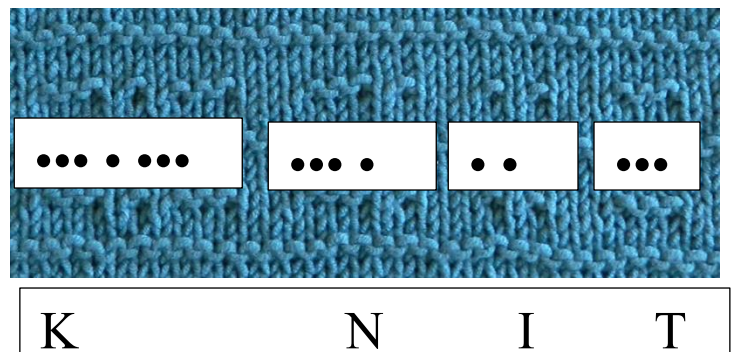
BTW, if you pay using PayPal and you are prompted to create a question and answer, please make sure the Orca treasurer, Dave VA7AM, knows the answer! Either give the question an answer that he would be able to figure out right away or advise him of the answer in a separate email.

Just \$24. The money goes toward club activities/events, including BCQP, the PNW Convention when we are host, donations to DXpeditions that satisfy specific criteria, communication costs and club initiatives as approved by the executive board and, when necessary, membership.

## Steganography: The Art of Hiding Messages in Plain Sight

Did you know that during wartime (World War II), agents used knitting to send coded messages? Knitting lends itself perfectly to binary codes -- including one close to our hearts, Morse code.

By combining two stitches -- a knit stitch, which is smooth and looks like a "v", and a purl stitch, which looks like a horizontal line or a little bump -- the knitter could encode messages into a toque, a scarf, whatever. To the untrained eye, this was just a quirky pattern. The piece of knitting was then passed on to an officer, sent to the appropriate next level, and decoded.



I looked into code knitting when my mother, an avid knitter, related a story to me from WWII about an officer in charge of reading mail to prevent military secrets from getting into the wrong hands. He found a letter with a strange set of letters and numbers that looked like a code but he couldn't decipher it. Turned out to be a knitting pattern! That said, such patterns could indeed be used to pass on sensitive information, and many countries did ban the sending of written patterns by mail.

Coincidentally, I found a knitting-code related article in the Jan-Feb 2024 issue of *The Communicator*, a bi-monthly journal put out by Surrey Amateur Radio Communications. A fantastic collection of articles, BTW. For the story about Phyllis "Pippa" Latour, go to <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uxpQtRKBnl9ZoYTx4thFaRx-pRVaZe2r/view>. Story starts on page 4. Pippa was a Special Operations Executive, an agent, for Britain during WWII and spent several months in Normandy conveying information on enemy positions.

I did some background sleuthing to understand how Pippa used knitting, and after a lot of searching, I realized she didn't actually knit messages into anything. She relayed intelligence to London by radio, tapping out in Morse code. But she hid her sheet of one-time codes, which were printed on fine silk, by wrapping the cypher around a knitting needle and then feeding it into a flat shoelace that she used to secure her hair. As an aside, silk was preferred for cyphers because it was soft and light and wouldn't be felt in a pat-down, while paper would be noticed. She needed a knitting needle and carried yarn and needles as a cover.

That's it for this time. May 2024 be a year of memorable events for all the right reasons. Take care. Be well. QRT de VA7BEC