

**Contest Advisory Committee
Semi-Annual Report**

**For the American Radio Relay League
Board of Directors Meeting**

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Submitted by

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Summary

The CAC has no outstanding projects or assignments in work at this time. The Contesting Guidelines document (see below) has been completed and is in review.

CAC Chairman

Following the July 2005 Board of Directors meeting, the CAC's previous chairman, Joe Staples W5ASP, submitted his resignation and I was asked by Wayne Mills N7NG if I would be willing to accept the chairman's position. I agreed and was subsequently appointed to the post by ARRL President, Jim Haynie W5JBP in October of 2005.

Contest FAQ

Prior to the 2004 Dayton Hamvention, the CAC discussed the idea of creating a set of guidelines for new testers. While not unanimously endorsed by the CAC representatives, enough members thought the project worthy that it was discussed by CAC and PSC representatives (N7NG and W6RGG) at the Hamvention. While it was not assigned to the CAC, we were encouraged to proceed by N7NG and W6RGG with the understanding that the final work product(s) would be subject to review by the PSC prior to public release. On a self-assigned basis work proceeded, led by Ward Silver NØAX, and several key structural changes were made:

- The document was reformatted as "Frequently Asked Questions" to make sure that the guidelines were not seen as pseudo-rules or rules-in-the-making. The goal was just to educate new testers on the accepted norms in the contest community.
- The scope of the discussion was specifically limited to HF contests, since VHF+ contesting is quite different.
- The questions were grouped into similar topics and answers constructed that applied to as many contests as possible. Wherever necessary, gray areas and alternate interpretations of the rules were identified.

Each issue, such as self-spotting, was formulated as a question (or group of related questions). If necessary, definitions were constructed. Questions were answered in an informal, mostly non-judgmental way intended to attract the questioner to the correct method or technique, not to bludgeon them for unintentional mistakes they may have committed.

The final draft was subjected to two rounds of review, not counting that of the CAC members during development.

- Contest administrators of the largest radio contests reviewed the document; N1ND for ARRL, K3EST for CQ WW, and K6AW for CQ WPX. Several excellent and necessary changes were incorporated as a result.

- Each CAC representative was given an opportunity to circulate the draft for review with their divisions and substantive comments were received and incorporated here, as well.

The document (Contesting FAQ - Version 2.3) was released to the PSC in late August. When I returned from the K7C DXpedition, I was unable to ascertain the status of the review and so re-submitted the document to PSC where it is undergoing review at this time.

The next step is to incorporate any changes from the PSC review process and publish the document on the Web - either on the ARRL site or some other contest-related site. As primary author of the document, I will serve as the lead on this project to manage public comment on the initial version. In the long term, a managing author will need to be assigned as it is anticipated that this will be a 'living document.'

Administrative Notes

- I will ask all representatives to review the CAC Handbook and associated processes so that we can all interact with our liaison (Ned Stearns AA7A) and the board more effectively.
- I will undertake a review of all representatives to see who is really interested in participating and if there are any perceived barriers to participation. (I don't think too many testers are shrinking violets, but it never hurts to ask.)
- It will be necessary to determine how the CAC and VHF Advisory Committees will work together, particularly on definitions and coordinating contest schedules. It may be useful to identify liaisons that serve on both committees.

Ward Silver NØAX
CAC Chairman