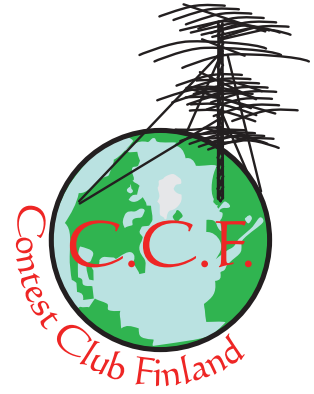


PileUP!




Volume 10(2) 2006



OH2BJ's 36-meter rotating tower. Antennas by Finnish Antenna.

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Editorial

SAC, the Scandinavian Activity Contest is organized for the 48th time this September. It is a contest that brings together hams in JW, JX, LA, OH, OH0, OX, OY, OZ, SM and TF with the rest of the world. These countries we call the Nordic countries or "Norden". Our history is in part common thanks to the Swedes, we almost understand each other's languages and we have the tendency of competing with each other. It is a sort of a web of love-hate-don't care relationships with several partners. In 1959, when SAC got started, the Nordic aspect was strong in different fields of life. Thus the birth of SAC in amateur radio in late 1950's seems quite natural now.

The world has changed since 1959. The Nordic aspect has faded out and new larger webs have emerged. For example we Finns no longer see the Swedes as our big brothers, but something completely different. OZ has perhaps closer links with DL than with SM these days. If the Nordic spirit is fading out - isn't it so that SAC could be called a

relict? Something to be left for the stuffy ones? Passé?

Well, some of us like quaint things. SAC offers one with familiar callsigns and band openings. For those who compete seriously SAC offers a good benchmark; the propagation is rather neutral inside Scandinavia, which means "hand-to-hand" conditions. Adrenalin flows, at least at this side of the ether, when the timepiece says start. I remember well my first SAC at OH1AD club station in 1984. 30 minutes into the contest OT OH1VX reminded me that I did not have a 40-meter antenna and that I would need one. OH1GL helped me in building a dipole that I quickly hauled up to the tower. In the storm of adrenalin I made only 15 contacts the first hour.

You feel it when SAC is approaching. It is in the urge to climb the tower, build antennas and ring around your radio friends. For me personally the signs are the stubbled fields at OH1AD, the fresh apples and lingonberries (and elk flies) at OH5NQ and the sounds of migrating birds that leave us for the upcoming winter.

With this issue of PileUP! Contest Club Finland wants to promote SAC and encourage all of us to participate in SAC. Next year is our turn in OH to organize the contest and this is much needed practice for us.

CU on the bands!
ILKKA OH1WZ
Editor-in-chief, PileUP!



- Humour

Understanding Engineers - Take One

Two engineering students were walking across a university campus when one said, "Where did you get such a great bike?" The second engineer replied, "Well, I was walking along yesterday, minding my own business, when a beautiful woman rode up on this bike, threw it to the ground, took off all her clothes and said, "Take what you want." The second engineer nodded approvingly and said, "Good choice; the clothes probably wouldn't have fit you anyway."

Understanding Engineers - Take Two

To the optimist, the glass is half full. To the pessimist, the glass is half empty. To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

Understanding Engineers - Take Three

A priest, a doctor, and an engineer were waiting one morning for a particularly slow group of golfers. The engineer fumed, "What's with those blokes? We must have been waiting for fifteen minutes!" The doctor chimed in, "I don't know, but I've never seen such inept golf!" The priest said, "Here comes the greens keeper. Let's have a word with him." He said, "Hello, George! What's wrong with that group ahead of us? They're rather slow, aren't they?" The greens keeper replied, "Oh, yes. That's a group of blind fire fighters. They lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime." The group fell silent for a moment. The priest said, "That's so sad. I think I will say a special prayer for them tonight." The doctor said, "Good idea. I'm going to contact my ophthal-

mologist colleague and see if there's anything he can do for them." The engineer said, "Why can't they play at night?"

Understanding Engineers - Take Four

What is the difference between mechanical engineers and civil engineers? Mechanical engineers build weapons and civil engineers build targets.

Understanding Engineers - Take Five

The graduate with a science degree asks, "Why does it work?" The graduate with an engineering degree asks, "How does it work?" The graduate with an accounting degree asks, "How much will it cost?" The graduate with an arts degree asks, "Do you want fries with that?"

Understanding Engineers - Take Six

Three engineering students were gathered together discussing the possible designers of the human body. One said, "It was a mechanical engineer. Just look at all the joints." Another said, "No, it was an electrical engineer. The nervous system has many thousands of electrical connections." The last one said, "No, actually it had to have been a civil engineer. Who else would run a toxic waste pipeline through a recreational area?"

Understanding Engineers - Take Seven

Normal people believe that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Engineers believe that if it ain't broke, it doesn't have enough features yet.

Understanding Engineers - Take Eight

An engineer was crossing a road one day, when a frog called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess." He bent over, picked

up the frog and put it in his pocket. The frog spoke up again and said, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a beautiful princess, I will stay with you for one week." The engineer took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it, and returned it to the pocket. The frog then cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a princess, I'll stay with you for one week, and do ANYTHING you want." Again, the engineer took the frog out, smiled at it, and put it back into his pocket. Finally, the frog asked, "What is the matter? I've told you I'm a beautiful princess, and that I'll stay with you for one week, and do anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?" The engineer said, "Look, I'm an engineer. I don't have time for a girlfriend; but a talking frog, now that's cool."



Engineering your station for SAC. Photo OH2OT.



Ville did not choose an engineer's career. Here as OH0MM. Photo OH2KMG.

Why SAC is so special to me

by Charles Weir Jr., W6UM

SAC has been one of my favorite contests for more than 20 years. Let me explain why it has such a personal meaning for me, aside from the chance to work so many of the good operators in Scandinavia.

I entered amateur radio as W3NPZ back in 1947, assisted and encouraged by my father, who was W3FYS. We were members of the Potomac Valley Radio Club in the in the DC area, and operated at multi-multi W3MSK, who later became W3AU. One of the stations we worked on all bands in every contest was OH2AM, and we always wondered how they managed such a consistently big effort. When W3FYS was active before WW II, stations from Finland were relatively rare and hard to work.

My father worked at the National Bureau of Standards, where one of his associates was from Norway. After hearing so much from him about his homeland, my parents decided they had to visit Norway, but since the colleague's wife was from Sweden, in order to please her, they had to go there too. They finally decided to stop also in Denmark, and then continue to Finland. Their flight on Icelandic Airways stopped first in Reykjavik, so they spent a few days in most of the Scandinavian countries on the first trip.

One of the OH2AM operators had given my father the address in Helsinki where the operators used to gather. He just dropped in unannounced one evening, and was pleased to find so many of the operators there. They naturally found they had lots in common to talk about relative to contesting. The goal of the OH2AM gang was to make the world

high score in Multi-Multi score in the Worldwide CQ Contest. He encouraged them, and told them that if they won the trophy he would personally return and present it to them.

They did, and he did. The trophy was presented in 1964 at a dinner held at Vanha Talli in Helsinki that was attended by the OH2AM operators and many other OH operators, including the President of SRAL. The trophy was filled with a mysterious but potent Finnish beverage, and the OH2AM operators in turn had to drink from the cup until it was emptied. This dinner was an experience my father enjoyed recalling many times during the following years.



Charlie, W3FYS and XYL Arie, parents of W6UM, at Vanha Talli in Helsinki with the trophy, 1964.

My parents liked all of Scandinavia so much they returned several times, and saw again some of those they had met first in Helsinki. They eventually retired to live in California, where W3FYS changed his call and became W6UA. They continued to visit Scandinavia, and had a chance not only to keep in touch with friends over the air, but also to enjoy several personal visits from amateurs from the Top of Europe.

W6UA became a silent key in 1987. To recognize his lasting attachment to Scandinavia, the W3FYS Memorial Trophy in the CQ WW CW contest is now awarded to the station in Scandinavia making the highest single-op score. So far, all of the winners have been from Finland.

I also eventually moved to California and got the call W6UM in 1972. Although I had always been active in the SAC, it was not until WRTC 2002 that I first had the chance to visit Finland, and meet

personally so many of the OH gang. I will never forget the events at Heimos, where I enjoyed my first genuine Finnish sauna. I discovered that Nokia mobile phones indeed do function inside a sauna. Within WRTC, I was fortunate to have been chosen as the referee for Team Sweden, SM5IMO and SM3SGP, who operated from the exquisite QTH of OH2MM. And I definitely hope to return to the Land of Countless Rivers and Lakes.

This year, as usual, will find me active in both weekends of SAC, looking for old friends and also hoping to make some new ones. Propagation is not always favorable between California and Scandinavia these days, but I will be there whenever there is a chance. Listen for W6UM, operating from the QTH inherited from W6UA, ex W3FYS.

Kiitos!
Chas., W6UM



W3FYS handing the trophy to Rick, OH2SB, as other OH2AM operators look on. Vanha Talli, Helsinki, 1964.

SAC – a long term passion

Pertti, OH2PM

The Scandinavian Activity Contest (SAC) was arranged first time in September 1959, the same year when I was licensed. The Nordic countries had negotiated for long about an international contest, where Scandinavian stations would work with the rest of the world. One of the motivations was to make it easier to hunt Scandinavian awards. The organizers are the Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish radio amateur leagues EDR, NRRL, SSA and SRAL. They take turns every year. The Scandinavian Cup is a competition between the Scandinavian countries. The winner is the country who scores the highest total of both CW and SSB contests.

The scoreboard of 1959 contest lists 121 OH-calls on CW and 69 on phone. The corresponding numbers from Sweden were 48 and 19 plus 7 check logs. The first Scandinavian Cup was won by the Finns; the total of all OH-scores was higher than that of all other Scandinavian logs together. In the second year, the Swedish did make a great spurt. On CW the first three were SM calls and there were five SMs in top ten on phone, however the cup was again won by the OHs, but with a low margin. Since then, the fight of contesting hegemony has been mainly between OH and SM, but from time to time some good scores from OZ and LA appear in the top ten lists.

In the early years of SAC the contest period was 27 hours from 15z to 18z. It thus included three grey lines in Scandinavia, a clever idea that enabled more DX-multiplier hunting on 40 and 80. The nature of the contest changed in that respect dramatically when the period was changed to 12z-12z to follow re-

commendations. Sometimes standards can ruin great creations.

In recent years the best Scandinavian stations have made about 2000 QSOs but during the early days of SAC results of over 500 QSOs were rare in SOAB. In the areas where both 10 and 80 have openings to Scandinavia, over 500 QSOs have been made. Due to the northern latitude, e.g. Finland 60-70 degrees North, geomagnetic disturbances can affect the propagation greatly since the paths to NA and JA go through polar areas. Thus a contester should always be prepared for surprises in SAC. Sometimes aurora can also have positive effects in certain locations – we OHs sometimes speak of “good aurora” by which we mean nighttime openings over the North Pole on 20–10.

Thanks to the recent increase in activity in Sweden, the Scandinavia Cup has become more exciting again. In 2005, the Swedish sent in more logs than the Finns. SM stations also scored higher on CW than OHs but a clearly higher total on SSB made Finland to win the Cup again. There is also a 66-year tradition of Finland–Sweden athletic match, which is always organized about a month before SAC. It takes place in Helsinki as I am typing this story. It is a match with high sportsmanship and fighting spirit. It is always hard to predict the winner since when representing their country individuals are often stretching out to new personal records. The Scandinavian Cup at its best is much the same, but with a glimpse of humor on top.

In 1960, I took part in SAC for the first time with my namesake Pertti, OH1SH. The G5RV dipole did not work satisfactory to DX and we decided to put up a quad in the middle of the night and con-

test. I still remember the faces of my parents when we rushed upstairs into their bedroom and opened the window and threw a rope out to get better angle for erecting the mast. We did not score very high because of the antenna building break, but the first international contest experience was immemorial. After the contest I heard even birds singing in Morse code.

Later in 1960's we did run several times SAC as MS together with Pertti and others either from OH1SH or our club OH1AD. It is worth mentioning that until late 1960's we used only self made equipment. It also became a habit to make at least one new antenna and other experiments just before the contest began. It was reason enough to get together for a week-end and have fun with friends. Many times a station was set up just for one or two contests only. All in all, those team efforts during 1960's put my heart into contesting, following very much the SAC marketing slogan of Nipa, OH2XK, (Contest Manager of SRAL in the 60s, now SK) " a man from a house and two from the best ones should participate". There are still several teams assembled for SAC week-ends. This is Ham spirit at its best.

One extreme SAC-experience was the year when I happened to be in southern California during the SAC. I visited N6XJ and K6XT but did not hear a single Scandinavian call. The polar path is sometimes unkind to testers. I think that it is the only year after 1960 when I did not make a single QSO in SAC. When contesting SAC from China, Macau, Philippines or Switzerland I have usually got about 300 QSOs with moderate antennas. After year 2000 and having moved back to Finland, I have worked SAC as OH0R or OH2PM. When I have been in OH0, Ilkka OH1WZ has several times guest operated my home station.

I hope that a great number of testers around the world will join us again this year and the coming years to share the excitement of contacting the Scandinavian stations under the auroral oval. You can read more about auro-
ra/Northern-lights eg. on the following pages <http://www.northern-lights.no/> and SAC rules and last year results from SM3CER's pages <http://www.sk3bg.se/contest/sacnsc.htm>

Good luck in contests!
Pertti, OH2PM



ARC OH6M is also getting ready for SAC 2006. Notice the heap of bricks in the middle. That's the Finnish version of a barbeque grill. Photo OH6KW.



Seppo, OH1VR - has a long tradition of high SAC scores. Here at AE6PP/W6NV. Photo OH1VR.

SAC contest - a far north racing event with a purpose?

Martti, OH2BH

Many foreign contesters pass by these two September weekends without much consideration. Just another contest, that's it. But in view of the timing and the intensity of the SAC events, they shouldn't do so – these competitive events have a role to play. Not only can other contesters greet their Northern brothers; they also have reason to stop and think. Why is that?

EQUAL PROPAGATION IN THE FAR NORTH

These people rarely score in the overall European arena because of their location – with a blazing Aurora Borealis and a close relationship to the Magnetic North Pole. This is their race under truly equal conditions, and they need QSO volume and multipliers to boot. That's you, and you can sense their happiness when your signals reach these Northern parts. Come along.

PREPARING FOR A TRUE CONTEST SEASON

The Northern guys have their own role in the contest community. If not necessarily competing from the North, they have a need to test their contest technology and gear just prior to the true contest season - the CQWW - and see that everything will play to their liking. You are welcome to be their partner in such a trial; notice how well they come through and notice their initiatives to move you to other bands. It's huge H/W and S/W innovations that drive these contesting enthusiasts; you are their natural partner to make the best out of them. There is a saying in the North that if you cannot beat domestic racers, you must keep practicing more on the home front before entering the international circuits. Sco-

ring well in SAC is their ticket to the world.

REPORTING BACK

You may not always know the actual driver since these guys swap identities and go to the best stations on hand to do well. They race with all kind of cars, with the station owner's call sign or a specially obtained contest call sign. But the drivers are there to drive fastest and cleanest – cut the curves accurately with clarity. Why don't you take notes on these stations – observe them and give some feedback with your log entry. They will certainly appreciate it. Who had the loudest signal, best placement or simply who did move you around more efficiently? You are not part of the spectator box; you can be an interactive part of the race and provide these Northern types with valuable and highly interesting feedback.

JOIN THE FUN

Scandinavian Activity Contest (SAC) was born 50 years ago and it has a well established position in the racing calendar. Your participation and your multiplier value are what it takes to make it a true competition in areas that make a difference. Just take a few minutes or hours away from your busy schedule and put in some QSOs and mults.

Go on the low bands a bit during the night and you will see that these people are serious. Just join the fun of being a target for Scandinavian people in their race of the year. Tell your friends and neighbors to do likewise. They won't regret it.

See you there during these two upcoming weekends. I had better go now and get my stuff sorted out for a warm-up. My car is seemingly slower than that of OH2MM who will return to the SAC racing circuit after a hiatus of many years. See you along the way!

Greetings from VK8AV

When I first got licensed as a ham radio operator, I was interested in DXCC! Then, as this novelty wore off after I sent QSLs to everyone I worked hoping to accumulate a variety of QSL. When the return of QSLs turned out to be painfully slow, and slower still, via the QSL buros, I decided to take up contesting! This was an exciting move!

With contesting, I got stirred up every weekend hoping to participate in whatever contest was being held! This way, I managed to contact various friends who were not QRV on a regular basis. I was a late computer user, especially for contesting purposes! Prior to 1992, it was a matter of paper and pen logging! Then, it was editing the log, a laborious process, in preparation for submission! This was a long and painful process which took several days, especially for the international contests, e.g. CQWW, WPX, ARRL DX, IARU, etc., which consisted of editing several hundred QSOs!

With the arrival of contest software for log-keeping, started off by K1EA - I think, entering contests became a more enjoyable activity. There was virtually real time editing, and the log could be submitted within minutes of the end of the contest.

The Contest Calendar showed at least one contest every weekend of the year! The format of some of the contests exasperate me, and, accordingly, are ignored! Other national contests of countries who have relative few contestants, but where the 'other' contestants can contact other countries for points and multipliers, is, in my view, not in the spirit of contesting! For example, in the ON contest, I can contact a few ON stations, and contact 2000 other stations and accumulate a huge score! A totally ridiculous situation!! Of course, there are other national contests which are just that - everyone else has to contact that particular national station for points and multipliers. For example, the HB and PA contests; amongst others.

These days, having accumulated numerous Plaques & Awards, my interest in contesting has declined mostly because it is now difficult to participate in a contest for any length of time due to minor medical problems associated with having a headset on my head for more than an hour or 2. Also, living alone, I have to maintain a house and keep myself fed! Nevertheless, I always make an attempt to enter every contest which is on each weekend, just to keep in touch with my contesting friends.

Alan, VK8AV



Toivo ES2RR and Tonno ES5TV are there for us Scandinavians. It's a short, <1000 km skip from ES5TV to Scandinavia, but Tonno's got the ERP to make it. Photo OH2IW.

A Swedish Perspective of SAC

Ingo, SM5AJV / SE5E

Both contesters and non-contesters in Sweden have a very special feeling about the Scandinavian Activity Contest. Ever since the first contest in 1959 it has been a long tradition to participate in SAC. SAC is a great opportunity for new hams to enter the world of ham radio contesting.

Being a young ham in the late 70's it was fascinating to feel the excitement of being in the middle of a pile-up. That feeling and thrill keeps me coming back to SAC every year. And it is you outside Scandinavia who makes the pile-up so fun! Hat's off for all non-Scandinavian stations that return, year after year.



The author in SAC CW at SK4BX in the early 80's.

In Sweden the contest season in the autumn always starts with SAC. Making plans, strategies and how to beat the Finns in the annual Scandinavian Cup. So far the OH's has always won. But in the last years the interest for contesting has increased the Swedish score.

Maybe this year ... The fight between SM and OH is sometimes very hard but it also makes us come together and making new friends.

Several contest stations has been built in Sweden during the last decade. You have probably worked SK0UX, SK2KW, SK3W, SK6M and several others. Most of the Swedish stations are just small stations using low power together with dipoles for 80 and 40 and maybe a 3-element tri-bander for 20, 15 and 10.



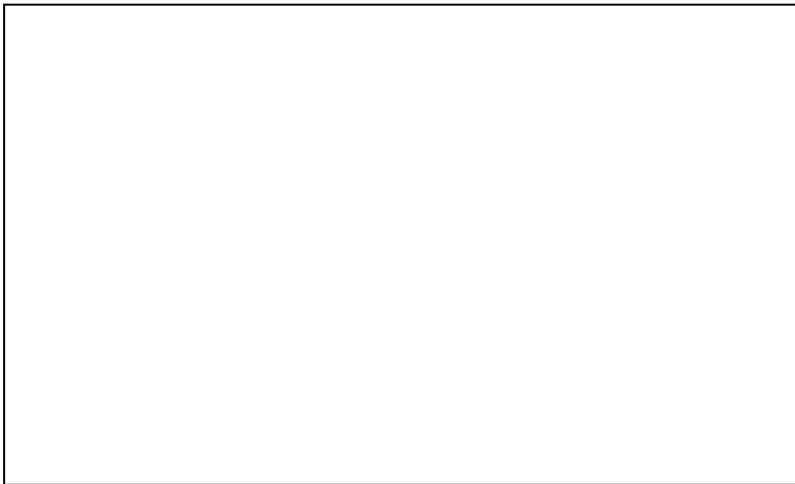
The 80-meter 4-square is almost under water at SK3W.

Vanity calls are increasing in popularity. This year a new series of prefixes are released, Prefixes are 7S-8S and SA-SM. Several stations have applied for a vanity 2x1 calls. So look out for some new short calls like 7S2E, SA1A, SE5E. See www.ssa.se/specialsignaler/ for more details.

SM3CER is the contest manager in Sweden and he maintains the official rules together with results and records from previous SAC's at SM3CER contest service. www.sk3bg.se/contest

Finally, take some minutes from your chores and meet new and old Scandinavian friends during SAC CW and SSB!

CU in the PileUp!



Palautusosoite / Returneras till:
Ilkka Korpela
Bölsinniityntie 13
06830 Kulloonkylä

SAC 2006 INFO

CW: September 16, 1200 UTC to September 17, 1200 UTC

SSB: September 23, 1200 UTC to September 24, 1200 UTC

BANDS: 3.5 - 7 - 14 - 21 - 28 MHz

EXCHANGE: RS(T) plus serial number from 001.

Rules: <http://www.sk3bg.se/contest/sacnsc.htm>

Info by organizer, EDR: <http://saclogs.oz5wq.dk/>



Contesting is to be taken seriously! OH2UA, OH2BH & OH1WZ.