

A Message from the Editor

What gives you the most satisfaction from contesting? I think for many of us the answer is the same — the respect and friendship of our peers. My list of best friends tilts heavily toward testers, and I cherish the chances to get together with them to share the good times. The fact that so many of them live far away makes the times we *do* manage to gather all the more special.

That thought rings especially true in the wake of two of the biggest contest gatherings in North America — Dayton Hamvention and the Visalia DX Convention. For the first time, I managed to make it to both events in the same year, and I thoroughly enjoyed both. Each has its own personality and pace.

I'm less familiar with Visalia, but I found myself quickly appreciating its laid-back intimacy and sophisticated charm. There is definitely a larger signal-to-noise ratio than Dayton, and it seems there's a friend and a conversation around every corner. Dayton remains huge, even after decades of slow decline, and the dozens of rituals shared by groups that come together there every year like migrating birds continue to amaze me.

As you look at our Dayton photo gallery in this issue, you see your contesting peers sharing a beer, a story, and a good feeling. Testers are special people, even if some of them might get on your nerves a bit when they get too close to your run frequency.

And saying that caused me to think: Isn't this part of what we can share with newcomers to contesting? Radio is fun, of course, and so is competition. But, joining a group of people who share the passion for building stations, sharpening their operating skills, and participating in worldwide competitions is the best of all. Getting newbies in a room with testers having fun, whether it's at a multiop or just a social gathering, has got to be one of the best ways to communicate the joy of what

we do. Let's do it more often.

That "Integrity Thing"

Respect is earned from our deeds, of course, and the recent actions of the CQ World Wide DX Contest Committee and contest director Randy Thompson, K5ZD, have certainly been worthy of the respect of all of us. Randy and his committee waded into the weeds of the hundreds of millions of QSOs made during the CQ WW contests last fall. They emerged with a collection of call signs of operators who were judged to be violating the rules of the competition we cherish. The result was an extensive list of disqualified entries — 54 in all.

To put that in perspective, the CQ WW events are the most popular contests in the world. The CW event attracted 7658 entries, while another 8286 logs came in following the SSB contest — a total of nearly 16,000 logs. So the DQ logs represented a paltry 0.33 percent of that total.

For the individuals who were disqualified, though, the committee's action stains their reputations, as it should. Certainly there are many talented operators on that list. For their sake, I hope they realize the repair work necessary before their future scores will have any credibility within the contest community. It may take years of above-reproach behavior on their parts before memories of these transgressions recede. A few *mea culpas* wouldn't hurt either. Let's hope they get started and that the others who are skirting the ethical gray areas step back as well.

Testers are Not Normal

For me it's sometimes a challenge to be a tester. We do have our eccentricities, and we are often busy on weekends when the weather suggests we ought to be doing something other than sitting indoors in front of a radio. As we pour our energy and intensity into our avocation and explain our behavior to our spouses and family,

we need to put our way of life into better perspective.

In the Barkey household, there has always been a simple way to accomplish this. Find a tester who is even crazier than you, and be sure to have your family meet them. Then, when you start hearing negative remarks about how you're using your time, you can say, "I'm not as bad as..."

When I lived in Indiana, that was easy. About an hour down the road was W9RE, who has more towers and antennas than just about anybody I know. I would like to thank Mike for all those years of serving as the foil for my "not as bad as" characterizations. After all, I probably performed the same function in his household.

Moving to Montana has presented a brand new challenge in this regard. Legendary moonbouncer W7GJ lives on the other side of town, and while Lance is certainly a very crazy guy with some really big antennas, his towers just aren't that tall, and he doesn't really contest that much. So it was always a stretch. Now *NCJ* has come to the rescue.

Before we prepared this issue, I had no idea that there was such a thing as a multi-multi mobile. But there it is, in the words of author NX4N, "an overstuffed Calzone of people, equipment, antennas, [and] spares," rolling down the road with a forest of whips on the roof. If ever there was a setup crazier than anything I've come up with, this has to be it. Thank you, Chris, for providing the balance that your fellow hams and testers can benefit from.

Hearing From You

We've heard from a number of readers, especially about the Ellen White, W1YL, piece that K1STO prepared for the last issue. Thanks for those kind words. Any and all feedback — good, bad, or ugly (within reason) — is welcome. Please contact me at n9rvee@gmail.com with any suggestions, comments, or submissions you want considered. We read 'em all!