

Editorial

There are more important things than contesting.

Perspective

I recently found myself on a forced hiatus from contesting. Just as the new year began and the first round of *NCJ* contests for 2014 were underway, my mother Ruth was undergoing multiple surgeries after she was injured in a Christmas Day car accident. I spent the January NAQP CW and SSB weekends far away from my contest station helping her to get re-settled in her home after she was released from the hospital. If this had been a normal year, those weekends would have been spent preparing for and operating the contests. January NAQPs are some of my favorite contests, and I look forward to them every year.

I've given up attending lot of events in the past to operate contests, and sometimes there were tough choices to make. Sometimes I missed important family events, sometimes I sacrificed business or social opportunities to operate a contest. Usually the contests won over other choices, because, well, that's where I *really* wanted to be in the end. Not this time. There was only one place to be, and that was helping Ruth to get back on her feet. I rarely thought of the contest the whole time I was in Pittsburgh. It was next to impossible to focus on anything but her recovery for a while.

Sometimes there are things in life more important than contests. We have to decide for ourselves how important contesting is in our lives, but I think it's possible to get too caught up in the excitement of radio contesting and lose perspective on other priorities. Many contesters (and their families) have made considerable sacrifices to play this game, whether it be lost time with family or friends, living farther from town in order to have effective antennas, pressure on the family budget, or even marriage, and impact on careers in some cases. I am certainly not in a position to tell anyone where contesting should rank in their priority list. I am in a position to say that there are more important things in life than contesting, and too often in the past I have been blind to that fact. I hope to find more balance in future years, as I think that is key to my long term survival in this game. I want to be one of those operators who you hear year after year, enjoying contesting while still leading a balanced life. Fortunately, Ruth is on the mend now, and I am already starting to look forward to the next contest. See you then!

New *NCJ* Website

We are very pleased to introduce a new website for 2014. *NCJ* has had a website since 2000, solely due to the efforts of Bruce

Horn, WA7BNM. We felt that it was time to take the burden off of one person and spread the joy (work) among several skilled individuals. Bruce continues to contribute his considerable talents, and he is responsible for most of the interactive content on the site, such as team registrations and log submittal forms. The "look and feel" layout and design was done by my partner, Susie Coleman. Your editor created most of the static content and is responsible for the overall site maintenance. The hardware is managed by George Fremin, K5TR, whose considerable skill and experience have been a huge benefit. Best of all, the site has room to grow with *NCJ* into the next decade, with a team of dedicated volunteers to make it happen. We have had a few hiccups during the site introduction, but overall it seems to be working well. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Bruce, Susie, George, and many others for their guidance and assistance. Check out the new website at ncjweb.com and let us know what you think.

Rules Update

We have had to update the NAQP and Sprint rules *slightly* in order to accommodate a different addressing scheme used on the new site. Basically the ".php" extension listed in the rules published in January no longer works. An updated version of the rules with the correct addresses for each contest is available on the web site. The easiest approach is to simply go to the *NCJ*

website at ncjweb.com and follow the links for each contest.

In This Issue

WØGJ tells his tale of a dream fulfilled, as he details the construction of his beautiful new contest and DXing setup in Iowa. WØCG relates some of the trials and tribulations involved in the operation and maintenance of a Caribbean multi-operator contesting station. K4UU shares his tale of operating the Kentucky QSO Party. SMØJHF gives us a view of the contesting scene in Poland, while K3KU relates a tale of setting a record in 1979. Former *NCJ* editor KØAD describes his experience using a triplexer for SO2R operation. NØAX describes a temporary rotator mount, and your editor offers a few tips on keeping control boxes in place. Our regular columnists have some great material for you this month as well. N4ZR describes some pileup training and log analysis tools, W9XT has some excellent input from readers on motivation, K4ZA gives some options for painting towers, K9LA examines solar Cycle 24's progress, and VE3GFN offers advice for the casual operator. WØYK has a special RTTY column this issue, directed to those of you who typically do *not* operate RTTY contests. Check it out. You might find a fun new challenge awaits. NØJK shares some tips for those slow hours on the VHF/UHF bands, and K6MM introduces us to former *NCJ* columnist Ralph Bellas, K9ZO. We hope that you will enjoy this issue.

***QST* Contributing Editor Jack Troster, W6ISQ, SK**

QST contributing editor and ham radio humorist John G. "Jack" Troster, W6ISQ, of Atherton, California, died January 11. He was 93.

"While his contributions to *QST* were not limited to fiction, Jack will always be remembered for some of the most humorous pieces ever to be written about Amateur Radio," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ.

Licensed in 1935 at age 14 as W2ISQ in Yonkers, New York, Troster became W6ISQ after moving to California following World War II. Troster, Vince Chinn, W6EE (ex-K6KQN), Lee Shaklee, W6BH (SK), and Don Schliesser, K6RV, founded the Northern California DX Foundation in 1972. Troster served as an NCDXF Board member for 26 years and was the Foundation's third President, from 1975 until 1986. He served as president of the Northern California DX Club and the Northern California Contest Club.

An ARRL Charter Life Member, he held DXCC #1 Honor Roll (Mixed, CW, and SSB) as well as 5BDXCC, 5BWAS, and the USA Counties Award (all CW). He was a member of the CQ DX Hall of Fame, the First-Class CW Operators' Club and the A-1 Operator Club, and he was the Pacific Division representative on the ARRL DX Advisory Committee.

Troster also was a member and director of the Quarter Century Wireless Association and for years wrote the monthly "QCWA" column in *WorldRadio*.

"He was the consummate gentleman," said Rusty Epps, W6OAT. "He was warm and welcoming to everyone he met, and many Amateur Radio operators today enjoy the hobby as a direct result of his nurturing, encouragement and enthusiasm. Jack was known for his quick wit and encyclopedic knowledge of Amateur Radio history. His passing leaves a huge void."

Survivors include his wife of 65 years, Marguerite, KC6NFE.