

## From the Editor

Welcome to the March/April *NCJ*. Spring should be budding soon in at least half of the country, which means antenna and station improvements and the Visalia International DX Convention. Our deputy editor and I plan to be at Visalia again this year, to meet the West Coast contest community and others who travel from faraway places to spend 3 days in Visalia. We attended our first Visalia last year and now understand why many hams consider it their favorite meeting of the year. Please look me up at Visalia and let me know what you like and dislike about *NCJ*.

### **NCJ and Twitter**

I appreciate all of the comments and retweets I receive for the @EditorNCJ twitter handle. There is a lot of activity on Twitter for contesting, especially from the European contest community. It was especially heartwarming that the most retweeted message was about my desire to see *NCJ* also produced in digital format. When we are able to have a digital version, it will be announced first on Twitter, assuming it happens during my tenure as editor. We are a long way from having a digital version, but some seeds have been planted.

### **Need for Mentoring**

It was refreshing to learn that several ham clubs responded to the call for mentoring as outlined in the last issue of *NCJ*. Rich Westerberg, NØHJZ, organized a one-day session on mobile HF contesting to assist members of the Minnesota Wireless Association who wanted to try their skills at mobile contesting during the Minnesota QSO Party. Tim Duffy, K3LR, will host a number of young contesters for the CQ WPX SSB in March. You can read more about these activities in our news section.



Thanks to both groups for what you have done to mentor contest activity. Please let us know what your club is doing so we can share your ideas and practices.

### **Readers Respond**

I enjoyed hearing from several of you about the January/February issue — its strengths, weaknesses, and broad focus. Your comments, positive and negative, compliments or complaints, are welcome; we all share the same goals to strengthen the content of *NCJ* and the promote radio-sport. One contesting and reader wrote a substantive and well-reasoned response to my last editorial. I was impressed with it and have given him some space in this edition to print his ideas and thoughts. We welcome feedback.

### **Increased Contest Activity**

One issue that resonated with a number of readers was that of the “casual contesting.” It is clear that a large number of contest participants get on the air for more reasons than simply trying to win a contest. It is also likely that we are seeing some growth in digital contesting. Ed Muns,

WØYK, points this out in his latest “Digital Contesting” column, which discusses the addition of FT8 to the ARRL RTTY Roundup. It is clear that the addition of FT8 to the RTTY RU brought new contesters into the fold and was a good call by the ARRL Contest Branch. We hope to see some new FT8-only events emerge to stimulate more contesting activity.

The North American Collegiate Championship was part of the January NAQP SSB. The collegiate teams had to use real-time scoring and, as of the print deadline for the editorial, no winner was clear. K9IU (Indiana University) and W4AQL (Georgia Tech) ended the contest each with 537 QSOs and were

separated by three multipliers (110 for K9IU vs 107 for W4AQL). Log checking will determine the winner, but it’s amazing to see our collegiate contesters do so well.

### **New Technology**

We continue to encourage articles about new technology, including the application of SDR techniques in contesting. Pascal Villeneuve, VA2PV, reports in this issue about the new Expert MB1 SDR-based transceiver. It’s a superb report and links to a YouTube video explaining its features. I spent considerable time at Hamvention® last May reviewing the SDR and speaking with one of the design engineers. If you are considering a SDR for your contest station, you will like what you read in Pascal’s overview. Let me know if there are new devices and technology you would like us to report and cover. We want to help all levels of contesters to build and improve their stations.

I hope to see you in Visalia or Dayton at Contest University and the Contest Dinner...as well as in the next contest.