

Editorial

We're actually all in this together.

Supporting Contesting

I recently had an opportunity to look at the slides from a presentation given by KØEJ at the SEDCO/W4DXCC DX and Contesting Convention held in late September in East Tennessee. I was unfortunately unable to attend the gathering this year, but as I looked at Mark's slides, I was reminded of the generous nature of the contesting community. Through the years I have been the fortunate recipient of contributions made by contesters near and far. While I imagine that other competitive pursuits enjoy a certain level of information-sharing, contesting seems unique in terms of the level of cooperation required and demonstrated among competitors.

This interdependence among contesters exists at many different levels. At the highest levels, competitors assist one another in things such as station design, operating strategy and muscle power for antenna construction. At the lowest levels, operators cooperate fully in order to complete a contact accurately. Putting Qs into the log at a rapid rate requires both operators to cooperate quickly and efficiently. The bottom line is that we depend on each other for a *lot* — from building effective stations to maximizing operating efficiency during a contest. The type of cooperation varies. Fast needs fast, and some conditions require much patience from one or both operators. Radiosport is a peer-to-peer activity that depends upon a high degree of coordination and cooperation.

While reading KØEJ's history of the Tennessee Contest Group (TCG), I thought about all of the volunteer work that various individuals have done over the years. For starters, if it weren't for the efforts of W4NL, KA4S, W4UWC and others, there would not even have been a convention for Mark to speak at. A lot of work goes into producing an event where contesters can gather in a relaxed atmosphere and share information and tales. I can only imagine the kind of effort required to produce something like the Dayton hospitality suites, Contest University or a WRTC. The folks behind these events commit a lot of time and resources, so that we may gather together and learn from each other.

I was reminded of the volunteers within the TCG who took on tasks within the club. Some of these club projects expanded into years or even decades of service to the

contest community. From recordkeeping to cheerleading to Internet resource-sharing, the contributions of time and effort by many people have helped to maintain a high level of enthusiasm for contesting in Tennessee. As I look back, I realize that almost every step forward I took in contesting was at least partly the result of someone helping me along the way. That theme continues to this day. One of the best ways to support contesting at the local level is to get involved with your nearest contest club. Clubs are always looking for new members, and the scores you generate serve double duty as you add to your club's total. The most basic way to give back to contesting is to simply get on the air and operate during contests. Your participation helps the game more than you may realize. Contest operators like nothing more than to have more stations to work. Getting on the air and making contacts makes the contest more fun for *everyone* involved. It's truly a the-more-the-merrier situation. It also helps the contest sponsor a great deal when you submit your log. Your log submission — no matter how small your score — helps to build the database of active stations in the contest, and that increases the fairness of contest adjudication.

We All have Something to Contribute

After taking stock of how much help I have received along the way, I was motivated to find ways to give something back to contesting. Fortunately, there are so many avenues available that it didn't take long to find ways to contribute. The great thing is that we can support contesting in many different ways, capitalizing on our strengths. Some contesters have considerable technical savvy and experience and have given back by sharing their research by publishing articles, books or participating in online discussions. Others know their way around towers and have the strength (and guts) to perform the difficult tasks of antenna construction, installation and maintenance. Some contesters have strong organizational or team-building skills, and they can be found managing large-scale undertakings such as a WRTC or directing contests. Contesters with considerable programming skills have contributed to vast advances in the state of the art, from logging programs to adjudication techniques to contest simulators.

For those with the means, there are many ways to support contesting financially. These include award sponsorships, educational grants or support of organizations such as the WRTC, the ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund, and the World Wide Radio Operators Foundation (WWROF.) Probably the most important role of all is to serve as a mentor. Find someone with a passion for contesting, and help them take it to the next level. Share your enthusiasm and wisdom with members of your club. It's contagious, and you might even make a lifelong friend or two.

The main point here is that contesting survives and grows through the contributions of countless contesters. The unique interdependence of competitors compels some of us to maintain the awareness that we're actually all in this together. Why not spend some time considering your strengths and how *you* may be able to contribute to our beloved game?

CQ World Wide Directorship Changes Hands

For the last 35 years, the CQ WW contests have been directed by Bob Cox, K3EST. Bob and the CQ WW volunteer staff have been responsible for many innovative ideas in contest management and adjudication which are now deployed in several contests around the world. Setting the standard in terms of participation and log-checking scrutiny, the CQ WW grew under Bob's leadership into the premier contesting proving ground. See NØAX's article in this issue for more on the story of K3EST and his contributions to contesting. The CQ WW contests (CW and SSB) are now in the capable hands of Randy Thompson, K5ZD. Randy has already demonstrated his contest leadership ability as director of the CQ WPX contests, and we wish him well in his new role as the director of the world's largest radio contests.

In this Issue

K5ZD and K1DG present a detailed update of preparations for WRTC 2014, including the results of station trials conducted during the 2012 IARU HF World Championship. Elsewhere OH2BH presents a report on Contest University — Finnish style. K5KG details his experience automating his station with some new products available to the station builder.

K5OT presents the ARRL November Sweepstakes records to date. N2BA continues his fascinating series with Part 3 of "Game Design for Contesters." K6UFO reports the results of the July 2012 NAQP RTTY. W9RE demonstrates how to get additional automation of the Alpha 87A amplifier using the Arduino microcontroller device. W9KNI introduces us to a yearlong competition, the CQ DX Marathon. N8XX tells the tale of a group of operators who used homebrew QRP transceivers to make some ripples in the August 2012 NAQP CW. Of course, our regular columnists offer some great material for you as well. K9LA does double duty with his "Propagation" column as well as an article offering tips on using amplifiers during RTTY events. K6MM "NCJ Profiles" column features our very own K6UFO! K4ZA teaches us the basic mechanics of wire rope and proper lubrication techniques. N2QT — pinch-hitting for AA5AU — describes the new RCK Skimmer by DL4RCK in "RTTY Contesting." NØJK reminds us about the "forgotten" ARRL August UHF. W9XT digs deep into the importance of grit and other winning qualities in "CTT&T." K9ZO's "Contesting on a Budget" returns in the next issue.

This completes my first year as *NCJ* editor, and I'd like to wish a happy holiday season to contesters worldwide. We hope that you will enjoy this issue.

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