

Editorial

Loving the Sprints

If someone were to ask me what my absolute favorite contest of the year was, I would say it was the North American CW Sprint. I am a Sprint addict! The reasons are many.

First, I feel most motivated when I know I am going to be able to put in a full effort. I just don't enjoy the casual hand-out-a-few-QSOs type of effort as much, although I certainly find myself doing this. With the Sprint at four hours, going the distance is a non-issue.

More important: I think the Sprint puts a premium on skill and strategy, far more so than most other operating events do. While staying on a frequency and running for a while can be fun, I don't feel it takes as much skill as continually QSYing to find new QSOs, as the Sprint dictates. In a contest spanning a whole weekend, you can make a mistake or two and still have time to recover. Not so with the Sprint. If you make a strategy error, there's no time to recover from it. This keeps the adrenalin going for me.

In the CW Sprint, speeds are typically in the 38 to 40 WPM range. Critics may say that's too intimidating to attract new participants. I feel that balancing code speed and finding new stations is part of the strategy. Propagation factors come into play too, as well as the best way to handle SO2R operation. During a Sprint, it's as if typical contest decision making is on steroids.

Although the North American Sprint is held twice a year on each mode, the NS Sprints sponsored by the Northern California Contest Club take place most Thursday evenings during the year. The rules are similar to the NA Sprints, but NS runs just 30 minutes and covers five bands. A loyal group of us look forward to the 30 minute rush every Thursday night, and new sprinters are joining all the time. Some refer to this event as the "fastest 30 minutes in contesting." To encourage newcomers to CW or newly minted ops, the NS

Sprint runs a Slow Speed Sprint at 0230 UTC each Thursday, prior to the real event. Interest in most Sprints remains high. If you haven't given the Sprint a try, I encourage you to do so. Pick your mode — CW, SSB or RTTY — and dive in!

WRTC-2014 Update

Doug Grant, K1DG, reports that World Radiosport Team Championship 2014 (WRTC-2014) has been approved as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization under IRS rules. This means that all donations to WRTC-2014 now are tax deductible, if you itemize when filing. If you have been putting off contributing to WRTC-2014 until tax deductible status was available, wait no longer. On a related note, the WRTC-2014 program that offers an opportunity to sponsor an operator tent is catching on. As of this writing, contest clubs and individuals have signed on to sponsor 13 operating tents. Our local contest club just made this commitment, and I encourage you to talk it up with your contest clubs.

WRTC-2014 will take place in New England, marking the first WRTC on US soil since 1996. Information on WRTC-2014 is available at www.wrtc2014.org.

Moving On

It is hard to believe that this issue of *NCJ* marks the fourth full year in my role as *NCJ* editor. Since 1973 the role of editor has changed hands 14 times. This averages to about 2.5 years per term. One reason I believe that *NCJ* has survived all these years is that the editorial responsibility has changed frequently. This allows for new ideas and perspectives to be constantly injected into the publication. After some soul-searching earlier this year, I concluded that it was time for me to pass the baton. I am therefore pleased to announce that, effective with the January/February 2012 issue, Kirk Pickering, K4RO, will assume the rule of *NCJ* editor. Kirk came

aboard the *NCJ* team early in my tenure, introducing the popular "Contesting 101" column. His clear, easy-to-understand style has helped make radiosport a little less intimidating for the new contesters. Kirk and I had a long talk at Dayton this year, and I am convinced that he is the person for the job. I encourage you all to give Kirk your support and to help him out by suggesting and providing some solid, contest-related content for *NCJ*.

Being editor of *NCJ* has been extremely meaningful to me. It has given me the opportunity to get to know so many new contesters beyond the quick contest QSO. One of the things I worried about when I took over was that I would have a lot of trouble coming up with articles for every issue. This worry was unfounded. Whenever I approached someone about writing an article on a timely subject, the response was affirmative much more often than not. I was blessed with a great team of columnists and contest managers who have been faithful about turning out interesting columns issue after issue. I also felt I was extremely fortunate to have such a stable support staff at ARRL. The same team I started with in January of 2008 is still in place today. I would like to thank Maty Weinberg, KA1EIB, for her super job managing the production of each issue. Thanks also to Shelly Bloom, WB1ENT, for the great layout work and to Sue Fagan, KB1OKW, for her creative and artistic covers. A special thanks to Rick Lindquist, WW3DE, for his fantastic job of editing. Editing author content can sometimes be a touchy job, but I can honestly say that everything turned in to Rick, including my own material, sounded better when he was done with it. Finally, thanks to ARRL Publications Manager Steve Ford, WB8IMY, for giving me the opportunity and for always being there when I had a question. See you in the pileups!

NCJ