

Editorial

Community — One Last Word

2014 has been a year filled with many ham radio and contesting activities. In just the last 5 months, I have attended Dayton, WRTC-2014, Huntsville, and most recently, SEDCO/W4DXCC. Of course, we have had the ARRL Centennial and the related W1AW portable operations all year long. My biggest impression from this year is the vital importance of the contesting community. In many ways, it's the center of all of contesting. While contesting is often an activity performed alone, it can never be a completely solo act. The goal of all contests is to contact *other* operators. Without the community of testers, we would have no one to work. There would be no one to collect logs and generate results. There would be no one to compare scores with or to compete against. There would be no one to complain about (just kidding). Because contesting is 100 percent community-dependent, it makes sense to do whatever we can to maintain the health of the community and to share our game with others who might be interested in joining us.

How do we serve and grow the contesting community? There are as many different types of testers as there are people. The personal satisfaction that we each derive from the activity is unique to our personality, aesthetics, and tastes. We choose our goals and achievement metrics based on our individual preferences, interests and, in literally every case, our limitations. The wide range of approaches and achievement levels available create a very diversified population. The die-hard QRPer has different goals and tastes than the Big Gun. We all have our mode preferences. Some prefer domestic contests; others are only interested in DX events. Some of us are Type A personalities, and some of us have a more relaxed nature. The important takeaway for me is that we all have one thing in common — a love for contesting. I'm not suggesting that we all

have to like each other, but there should be some level of mutual respect, even though I realize that's not always realistic. There are operators with whom I disagree, and I know there are plenty who disagree with me. The challenge in community is not getting along with those with whom we agree, it's in tolerating those with whom we disagree. I encourage all of us to celebrate the things that bring us together — the magic of radio and the thrill of competition — and to spend less time squabbling among ourselves. We have a great deal of common ground, and our entire game depends on cooperation between at least two parties. Think about the big pileups where nearly everyone stands by after the station comes back to a specific call sign. Think about it. Competitive people whose veins are flowing with adrenaline are actually pausing to let another station complete a QSO. That's cooperation in action! Our shared experiences on the air provide opportunities and examples for cooperation and tolerance. Sure, every pileup has a few lids, but the vast majority of participants try to behave in a way that maximizes cooperation and efficiency.

My final suggestion is to find a way to help build and strengthen our community. It's the only tangible thing of value that we have. Having just returned from W4DXCC/SEDCO, my hat is off to W4NL, KA4S, K4SV, and all of backers, presenters and volunteers who made it happen. These kinds of activities bring us together and give us a chance to celebrate our friendships and create new ones. Find a way to help your local club. Give a presentation at a club meeting or a convention. Extend a hand to someone you meet who indicates an interest in contesting. Try to set a good example, and most of all, share your enthusiasm. Nothing spreads the light of contesting like good old honest enthusiasm.

Full Speed Ahead

This issue marks the conclusion of my third year as *NCJ* editor, and it also marks my final year. After 7 years of writing for this publication as a columnist and editor, I'm not sure that I have much more to share with our readers. I came into this role with a vision of being a caretaker. I've tried my best to serve the community through this journal by helping the many people who make *NCJ* happen. Please take a moment to read the masthead of this issue. Those folks are the ones who work hard to bring you a high-quality publication six times a year. Extra special thanks goes to the *NCJ* contest managers. These volunteers work tirelessly to make the NAQP and Sprint events more fun, more exciting, and as fair as possible. I am extremely grateful to the regular columnists who volunteer their time to bring you relevant and interesting material, issue after issue. Finally, my thanks to Rick Lindquist, WW1ME, who put up with me and helped guide my role as *NCJ* editor. I learned a lot from Rick, and it was a joy and a privilege to work closely with him for the last 3 years [ditto for me! — WW1ME].

One of the things that keeps *NCJ* current and vital is a change of editor from time to time. Having shared my perspectives with you for several years now, I am pleased to pass the *NCJ* editor's mantle to Pat Barkey, N9RV. Pat is no stranger to contesting, and his call sign should be a familiar one to anyone who has entered an *NCJ* contest in say, the last 30 years or so. I know that you will join me in welcoming Pat and will support him. Articles and tips are always welcome.

The people behind this magazine love contesting, and they work hard to share their enthusiasm. Without *you*, our readers, there would be no *NCJ* or *NCJ* operating events. You are the real backbone of this magazine, and we thank you for supporting contesting and the people who enjoy it.