

## From the Editor

The fall contest season has arrived and with much anticipation. Most of us have spent time over the spring and summer improving our stations. I spent most of my time and energy on activities between my antenna switch box and my computer. I reorganized my SO2R setup into a configuration that allows more desktop space and less clutter. I installed ferrite beads and cores throughout the station to remove or reduce noise and interference. I added ferrites to all of my coax switching lines, and I upgraded a number of coaxial cables to a low-loss product. Will it help? I hope so.

Propagation is the great limiter these days for contest activity. Last spring, I was very surprised at the difference in band conditions between the ARRL International DX SSB and CQ SSB WPX contests in March and the CQ CW WPX contest in May and ARRL Field Day in June. It was tough making any 15- and 10-meter QSOs in March. It was one of my lowest-scoring contest efforts, despite an M2 event at my station. Contrast that to the CW WPX and ARRL Field Day. I did a 20-meter single-band entry with WPX, and propagation was much better. A month later on Field Day, I was pleasantly surprised to see my rigs' panadapters full of stations on 10 and 15 meters. To what extent the lack of activity on 10 and 15 is due to propagation as opposed to simply no stations to call CQ is debatable, but it was nice to turn the dial and work station after station on those weekends.

The big fall contests are the CQ WW events. CQ has a new contest director, John Dorr, K1AR, and he has announced some rule updates, effective with the 2018 contests.

◆ **Busted call/NIL penalty is reduced from 3x to 2x.** This reflects a more reasonable approach to errors, while simultaneously providing a continued incentive to maintain accurate logging during the contest.

◆ **All CW and SSB email address references for log submissions have been removed.** While historical submission methods (e.g., e-mail, paper logs) will still be accepted in the near-term, the committee strongly prefers the web-upload method, which includes format checking, at [cqww.com/logcheck/](http://cqww.com/logcheck/).

◆ **The 10x penalty for rubber clocking with MS/M2 entries has been eliminated.** The committee advised that it will continue to vigorously pursue time abuses for these categories using a number of sophisticated analysis tools.

◆ **The observer program has been eliminated.** Given the absence of a reasonable pool of volunteers and supporting funding, the program has proven to be impractical.

◆ **The top entry in the Rookie category will be awarded on a one-time-only basis.** Previous Rookie winners are ineligible for plaques in this category.

Complete 2018 rules have been posted, [cqww.com/rules.htm](http://cqww.com/rules.htm).

This edition of *NCJ* includes the announcement for the new Collegiate QSO Party, sponsored by ARRL's Collegiate Amateur Radio Initiative. It was organized by Andy Milluzzi, KK4LWR, and his brother Tony, KD8RTT, and will run September 15-16. The event is open to all radio amateurs, but I hope our college-aged hams will participate in great numbers. The event includes an entry category for college alumni. See "Next-Gen Contesters" for details.

I also am delighted to announce that we will expand the North American Collegiate Championship in 2019. The NACC is a contest within a contest with live, real-time scoring. There will be a SSB competition in the January NAQP SSB and a digital competition within the February NAQP RTTY. These events will be co-sponsored by *NCJ*, the Society of Midwest Contesters, and Icom America. I want to thank Mark Aaker, K6UFO for his willingness to allow the NACC to expand to the NAQP RTTY. I also want to thank Ray Novak, N9JA, of Icom America for stepping up to provide the awards for both events.

This summer, I traveled to a neighboring community to give a talk on contesting — its past, present, and future. The audience was largely non-contesters. The talk was met with enthusiasm and interest in contesting in the future. I heard that several club members are planning to do ARRL November Sweepstakes together as a result. Promotion of contesting pays dividends. I encourage you to offer to do a talk on contesting to local clubs near you. I am happy to loan you my slides or even join/present via web conferencing (Skype), if that is desired.

This edition of *NCJ* includes an article entitled "Contesting 2.0," a summary of short presentations given at the Visalia International DX Convention. The talks highlight the future direction of radio contesting as well as the perspectives of some new contesters. I hope you read it with an open mind and a willingness to think about some of the trends being discussed. Contesting, like any activity, is only one generation away from extinction. We must work to grow our hobby, revitalize it and, most important, evolve to meet the expectations and demands of the next generation.

I predict that DXpeditions will eventually disappear due to funding demands and a lack of younger adults (i.e., younger than age 60) willing to participate in them. DXing will change, or interest will fade. If you don't agree, just look around at DX conventions. Nearly all attendees are age 60 or older. Most of us can work DXCC any given weekend in a DX contest. The growth in ham radio activity is in contesting, especially in Europe. You may disagree. Regardless, we need to consider how we can grow and revitalize contesting. Join the discussion, and send us your thoughts, ideas and comments.