

From the Editor

2021 went by in a flash for me. After Scott, KØMD, twisted my arm during visits to Arizona to recruit me to succeed him as Editor, I finally accepted the challenge. To Scott's credit, he left me a stellar team of columnists and a backlog of articles to get me going. And now, six issues have gone to press and Volume 49 of *NCJ* is history. Did you catch that number? *Volume 49* is history, so that means 2022 will begin the 50th year of *NCJ*'s publication. I had no idea when I volunteered to take the job that I would be the one to lead us through a historic milestone year for this well-loved and respected publication.

This milestone has not gone unnoticed at ARRL Headquarters, and we have their support in making this a special year for *NCJ*. Part of my plan is to highlight some *NCJ* history in each issue this year. It turns out that Scott knew and spent time with our founding Editor, Todd Olsen, KØTO (SK). Scott's story in this issue about the origins and early days of *NCJ* will kick off this anniversary year celebration.

It's been a busy couple of months in contesting since my last column, with ARRL November Sweepstakes and the CQ World Wide DX events. Once again, I teamed up with Fred, NA2U, for a multioperator entry in SS CW (my favorite contest) using our remote station. We had our best finish ever, and the claimed scores on 3830scores.com have us in third place, only two QSOs behind W6YX and 10 QSOs ahead of ABØS. Log checking will be critical for the final standings.

I made a brief appearance in the SS phone to contribute some points for the Arizona Outlaws club score. I wanted to save myself for a big effort in the CQ WW CW (this past weekend as I am writing this column). This was the first attempt at a Multi-2 entry in that contest using our remote station. The good news is that Murphy waited

until Sunday morning to make an appearance and then disabled our second station, but we still posted a score of 5.6 million points. Propagation to Europe from Arizona is always the biggest challenge in DX contests and we had some wonderful openings on 15 and 20 meters during the days and on 40 meters at night. Our usual reliable afternoon openings to Asia on 15 and 20 meters were productive, and 40 meters to Asia carried us through the morning hours beginning at midnight local time (0700 UTC). Ten meters was stingy with mults for us, and I sure hope it improves for the ARRL DX contests in 2022. We will be active in all of the upcoming 160-meter contests with our unique 8-circle antenna.

This is also the time when old Voodudes like me reminisce about our many trips to West Africa with the Voodoo Contest Group. I traveled to Ghana, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Liberia — eight trips in all to West Africa — and I never saw a single lion, tiger, or elephant. But I do have wonderful memories of the camaraderie among our UK and US teammates. Lots of laughs over local beer, spaghetti Bolognese, and occasional mystery meat dishes. We racked up a lot of miles on African roads crossing borders and making new friends at every stop along the way. Seeing the world from an African perspective gave me an appreciation for rich cultures and customs that I could not have gotten any other way. It also gave me an appreciation for how spoiled we are with what we take for granted in the USA.

So, now for something to chew on: Where are we going with distributed multiop entries that were designed initially to overcome the health concerns of the COVID pandemic? It seems that a number of contesters like the idea, including YOTA contesters. Personally, I have been involved in one

version of a distributed multioperator environment for several years using my remote station. We each operate from home using the same remote station, handing off control after our operating shifts end. The new version is quite different. You assemble a group of contesters who will operate under a single call sign but using their own stations. Ideally, you combine contesters whose respective stations are strongest on one or more particular bands. Well, what about geographic limitations? Is it okay to have a combination of east coast stations and west coast stations to maximize working mults? What happens to club circles? Are they obsolete, or do they still serve a useful purpose?

Where do *you* see this concept of distributed multiops going? Can we, or should we, turn the clock back to the way it was? Or, does this concept benefit the contest community by expanding participation and competitiveness beyond a single-site contest superstation? What about club circles? Do they still make sense? Let me hear your thoughts (ars.ky7m@gmail.com), because these issues are impacting the future of radiosport.

About this Issue

In addition to the article about the origins of *NCJ* by Scott, KØMD, we have some good ones for you in this issue. Carl, K9LA, gives his annual prediction for the Solar Cycle as we continue on the upswing of Solar Cycle 25. Manu, LU9ESD, recounts a most unusual SO2R experience operating ZW5B that won the 2021 ARRL DX Phone contest in the SO(U) AB category. John, K6MM, provided us with a profile of someone many of you have worked for a Canadian multiplier — VE5MX, Todd Bendtsen. There are plenty of ideas from the columnists on how to improve your contest scores and an update on the way YOTA contests scores are being highlighted now in contests results.