

From the Editor

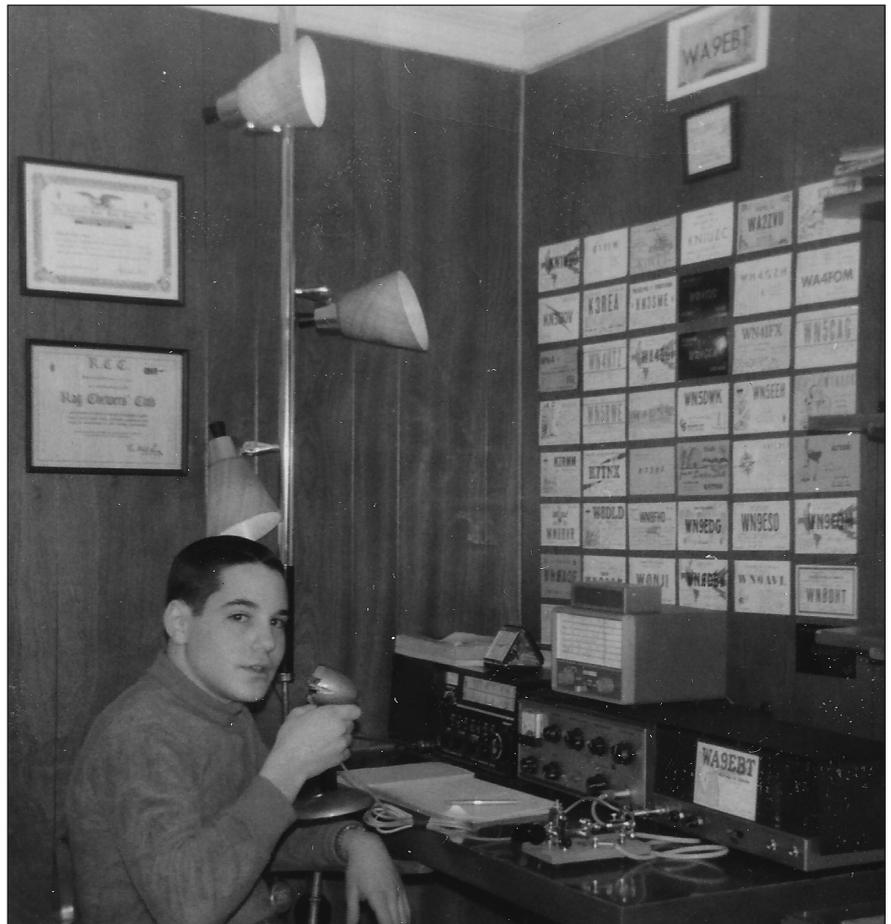
With this first issue of 2021, the baton has been officially passed to me from Scott, KØMD, and I humbly begin a new chapter in my ham career and in the life of *National Contest Journal*, now in its 48th year. I wanted to see the list of my predecessors; *Wikipedia*, of all places, lists all 16 editors who have preceded me — three of whom have served more than once and nearly all of whom have been editor for multiple years.

Scott did an amazing job as editor for the past 3 years. Most of us who know him have marveled that he was able to juggle his responsibilities at The Mayo Clinic with his *NCJ* post, while also finding time to maintain and operate his first-class contest station. My hope is that I will be able to build on his hard work and that of my other predecessors, the very supportive ARRL staff, and an impressive cadre of columnists and other writers, to continue making *NCJ* a valuable resource for the contesting community and all hams worldwide.

Some KY7M History

Many of you know my call sign as an active tester and DXer. It was not long after I got my General license in Chicago in 1963 that I discovered contesting. My involvement as a traffic handler on the 80-meter Illinois CW traffic net (ILN) and the 9RN, 9th Region Net, earned me an Official Relay Station (ORS) appointment that gave me the right to participate in the (now defunct) ARRL Communication Department (CD) Parties. My first contest recognition came when my picture appeared in the October 1966 *CD Bulletin* for having exceeded 100,000 points in a CD Party. I was hooked! I had also discovered DX contests and my still-favorite CW Sweepstakes in those early days.

College and law school kept me away from the hobby for a while, but once my life settled down, I was back



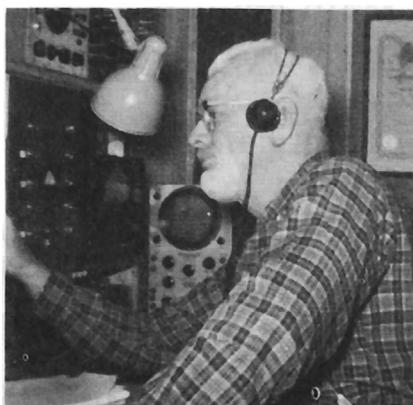
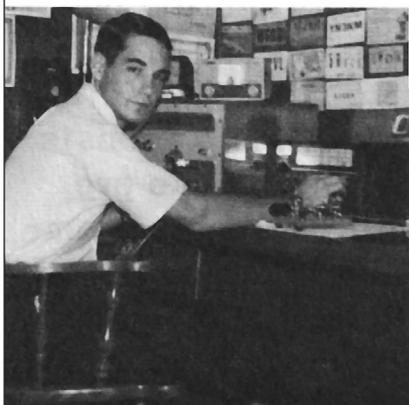
Not long after passing my General as WA9EBT in Chicago.

on the air with little time for serious contesting. It was not until 1981, when Motorola (where I was in-house counsel) moved me and my family to Phoenix, that I got serious about contesting. For the first time, I lived in a single-family home and was able to put up a 40-foot tower in the backyard with decent antennas. After joining the Central Arizona DX Association (CADXA), I was rubbing shoulders with some serious testers. I got to operate K5VT's big antenna station in several ARRL November Sweepstakes and had my first Top 10 finishes. I operated with KC7V at his multi-tower super-station north of Phoenix, including one memorable CQ WPX phone, when Joe Rudi,

NK7U, joined us while he was in town coaching spring training with the Oakland A's. That led to an invitation to operate Joe's Baker City super-station for the 1990 CQ World Wide CW.

In 1988, I got my first invitation to operate outside the continental US, when I was asked to join the multi-multi team at KP2A for CQ WW CW. That was when N6DX and some other California testers were building up John Ackley's antenna farm on St. Thomas (destroyed in 1992 by Hurricane Andrew). I was assigned to 20 meters and could not believe the enormous signal strength of EU stations that were usually whispers in Arizona. Watching the rate meter on the CT computer log flirt with 200/hour

On the right, W6CYO OPS in S.F., licensed since 1920. Bottom (L-R) WA9EBT ORS in Ill., with over 100-K last c.w. Party and W1GU, ORS Maine.



My first published contest photo in the October 1966 CD Bulletin.

was both exhilarating and exhausting for me.

Our team set a new North American record that year but finished behind two Caribbean stations in 3-point territory for NA contacts.

That experience led me to do my first creative writing for ham radio, "The True Contest Adventures of Sparky and Runner," which first appeared in *The DX Magazine* and later in *NCJ*. For a few years after that, I dabbled in my own ham radio business selling 7-Mike Hamstuff QSL Cardboxes and Sparky and Runner T-shirts. While it provided me with an excuse to go to Dayton, Visalia, and some hamfests for a few years, it was not a money-maker, and I eventually sold the business.

In 1998, I got my first invitation to join the Voodoo Contest Group and ventured off to Ghana and Togo,

where I operated with the multi-multi team at 5V7A in CQ WW CW. I have made a total of 10 trips with the Voodudes over the years and have also operated at HC8N and PJ2T in CQ WW CW. I love being on the other side of the US pile-ups, especially when our station is the only active station in a country. In 2020, I got my first opportunity to operate from the DX side in the ARRL DX CW and phone at TI7W and KH7M, respectively. Now with the pandemic, I have no idea when the next opportunity will come along to operate outside Arizona.

I also enjoy domestic contests, and you will find me in NAQP, Sweepstakes, 7QP, and others. I try to get on for some of the CWTs as a charter member of CWOps (#84) and the FOC Marathon and QSO Parties (#1741). Scott has mentioned my involvement with a remote station here



Operating at PJ2T in the 2018 CQ WW CW.

in Arizona, and that will be the subject of future columns. With a 160-meter 8-circle antenna to use remotely in Safford, Arizona, for the past 4 years, my contesting during those years has included serious efforts (usually multiop) from NA7TB in the various 160-meter events.

Where Do We Go from Here?

I will be calling upon many of the contesters I have met through the years to tell their stories during my tenure as editor. In addition to contest results and some of our regular excellent columns, Scott left some articles in the queue that I am delighted to publish in my first issue: Frank, K4FMH, has synthesized multiple information sources to give a thoroughly researched look at price versus performance in HF transceivers; Carl, K9LA, gives his 2021 predictions on the solar cycle; and, John, K6MM, profiles Victor, VA2WA — a distinguished contesteer and innovator.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue. Let me hear from you with comments and ideas for articles. You can access *NCJ* via computer or mobile device anywhere, anytime, with expanded content at ncjweb.com.