

From the Editor

Field Day 2021

Field Day was a real treat for me this year. I tried last year to interest my California grandkids, but the antenna I erected in their backyard did not work well enough to make it any fun. I could not keep them (or me) engaged. This year from my home station with the Honda generator going in the backyard, one of my local granddaughters (age 16) had plenty of fun. After a short tutorial and having already memorized the International Phonetic Alphabet,

I turned her loose on 20-meter SSB, where she had no trouble attracting callers. One memorable QSO came when she could not remember “Uniform” for “U” and improvised with “Unicorn” in a call sign. That was good for a laugh, and the idea that maybe we need a new, catchier, phonetic alphabet for Millennials.

Elana ended up making several hundred QSOs with me as her logger and interpreter. Once we recorded her CQ on the Elecraft K3, it became easy for her to run stations. Now I just need to encourage her to get a license and her own call sign. Grandpa's fingers are crossed.

Olympic Lessons

As I was finalizing this issue, the Olympics were a constant distraction. I love the Olympics, especially the track and field events. As I watched the various sprint heats in these Olympics where only the top finishers in the heats and semi-finals could go on toward the final race where medals are awarded, it was disturbing to see several top US sprinters let up on their stride before the finish line thinking they had easily qualified. In one



KY7M and granddaughter Elana operating Field Day from the home shack — Class 1E with the Honda generator humming in the backyard.

case, it knocked the favored sprinter out of the competition. In another, the sprinter was lucky that his time kept him in play.

What's the lesson for contesters? Don't stop logging stations until the contest is over, especially if you are putting in a full effort. Easing up at the end may cost you an award or a spot in the Top 10. Many times, I have logged a needed mult in the last few minutes of a contest. Recently, I kept looking for 5Z4VJ for a mult on 15 meters, and he was never audible until that last half-hour when the band opened briefly to the west coast, and Andy was finally in my log. Having a VK6 or 9V call in during the last minutes of a contest for a needed mult when running is always exciting. It is not unusual for contest winners to be decided by one QSO or one mult.

The other lesson is that practice makes a difference. Those Olympic athletes practice an astounding number of hours every day for the chance to earn a medal once every 4 years. Radiosport also requires practice for those who seek to improve their score from last year, make the Top 10 in their category or qualify for WRTC.

I don't expect most of us to take it to an Olympic extreme, but there are plenty of opportunities to practice and master our technique and our equipment before the next major event.

About this Issue

“The Big Switch” is an example of how hams continue to innovate as problem solvers. A need was identified and the solution for switching 16 antennas among 8 radios went from the drawing board to the

bread board to an impressive wall of switches at OZ5E.

Station ergonomics is something any contester must confront to keep their butt in the chair for any length of time and to avoid an assortment of possible injuries. David Jaffe, WD6T, offers good advice to consider for your ongoing contesting health.

The Portable Operations Challenge (POC) was the brainchild of K4FMH and a committee of contesters wanting to find a way to level the contest playing field in a way similar to the golf handicap system. Please read it with an open mind and consider the possibilities.

Finally, take a close look at the photo included with the “NextGen Contesters” column from Neil, WB9VPG, and observe all those young smiling faces from this year's YOTA Camp. This is the key to our contesting future. In August the North American QSO Party began featuring a checkbox on the 3830scores.com submittal form for “25 and under” so that we can begin to recognize our young contesters in the printed results. Let's keep the momentum going!