

From the Editor

Spring is in the Air, and So is Change

Starting with the May/June issue, *NCJ* should become available in digital format in addition to the familiar hard-copy version you've come to know and love. Timing is still a bit up in the air as I pen this editorial, but we're hoping that the digital edition will be available online perhaps a couple of weeks ahead of the print edition's arrival in your mailbox. The digital edition will be available only to ARRL members. For those of you who prefer print only, nothing will change. The digital version should be identical to the print version, at least for now. I believe, however, that a digital version has the potential for new and increased content beyond what we now can print, so stay tuned.

ARRL plans to continue printing *NCJ*, as long as paid subscriptions cover the mailing and printing costs. If you like the print edition, remember to renew your subscription, and maybe get one for a contest buddy, so that our subscription numbers stay strong.

We have had our detractors posting to the reflectors, but I feel that *NCJ* remains relevant for today's contesters — and with information and stories of interest to non-contesters as well. Will every *NCJ* article appeal to every reader? Of course not. But, we vary the content from issue to issue to make it interesting to experienced and novice contesters alike, no matter their particular flavor of contesting — HF, VHF, mode-specific, band-specific, etc. We invite *your* articles.

Can we refresh or improve *NCJ* once we begin publishing a digital edition? There are opportunities — once we have a print and a digital edition — to add features or emphases that are only available with a digital format. For example, we could focus new content on younger contesters who prefer digital over print. Longer technical articles could appear only in the digital edition. Opportunities exist, but they need to be carefully thought through and strategically implemented. We invite your input on how *NCJ* can evolve

The Future of the RTTY Sprint

Digital Contesting Editor Ed Muns, WØYK, informed us that the fall RTTY Sprint attracted just 54 participants, and only 30 of them submitted logs. Is interest dwindling, or was this nadir in participation a consequence of a perfect storm of factors that discouraged activity? We have no plans to cancel the RTTY Sprint, but it's hard to justify personnel resources and magazine page space for only 30 logs. The results of this contest are on the *NCJ* website, ncjweb.com, but they will not appear in print. If you like the Sprints and want to rejuvenate the RTTY Sprint, try the March event. If the numbers continue to dwindle, we may need to rethink the long-term future of the RTTY Sprint.

My concern is that the contest community is losing interest in the CW and RTTY Sprints. Declining participation reflects declining interest. I hope this winter's CW and RTTY sprints show renewed interest. Sprint participants, no matter the mode, seem to enjoy them immensely and are exuberant about these events.

April is exciting as it brings the International DX Convention in Visalia. I can't attend this year, but I hope the contesters attending find it fun and stimulating. I do hope to see you at Dayton Hamvention at Contest University and on Friday at the Hamvention. Stop and say "Hi!" if you happen to see me.

Welcome Back, Barry Shelly

The ARRL is in the midst of searching for a new CEO, in the wake of the January ARRL Board meeting. Barry Shelly, N1VXY, who's filled the post previously on an interim basis, is back to reprise that role. We wish Barry well and hope that he enjoys this break from his well-earned retirement, and we appreciate his willingness to return to Newington and help out during this time.

Developing Contesting Skills

I have received some correspondence from contesters who enjoyed our recent series on single-operator, two-radio (SO2R) operating, and they'd like even more. Composing an article can be tough work, especially if you're not in the habit of writing. We'd like to interview several top SO2R contesters regarding tactics, practices, and skill development. So, if you're an experienced SO2R and are willing to share your secrets and tips, let's talk. We'd like to compile an article on more advanced SO2R contesting.

In the same vein, we're looking for someone to write about the even more complex two bands, synchronized, interleaved QSOs (2BSIQ) contesting technique. Contact me if you're active on 2BSIQ and eager to tell others about it.

For various reasons, some contesters are not comfortable with running and find substantial success with search and pounce (S&P). Do you have a favorite S&P tactic that has worked successfully for you? Let us know.

Many of the instructors at Contest University (CTU) are East Coast contesters or operate from a relatively East Coast location. What are the best tactics for contesters in the Midwest, the Southwest, or Mountain West? Does running work best for you? N9RV certainly demonstrates that it does. But what about others? Would any *NCJ* readers be willing to be part of a panel interview on contesting tactics from their regions of the US? I think it would be helpful to organize some expert contesters from across the geographic diversity of the US to discuss their preferred tactics and success stories. If you're willing to share, get in touch.