

From the Editor

Spring 2020 began unlike any other with a global health pandemic that has spawned a lot of anxiety, canceled ham radio conventions including the Dayton Hamvention® and the International DX Convention, and closed schools. We trust you and your families are safe and healthy.

This marks the first online digital edition of *NCJ*. We welcome the additional readers who have now gained access, thanks to ARRL, and we hope you find something you like in this edition.

This edition includes several contest reports, some interesting feature stories on contest mentoring via a state QSO party, VHF contesting advice and an antenna article on receive 4 square arrays.

Innovation or Rule Breaking?

The CQ Contest reflector serves as a forum for contesters to vent, opine, and share, as does the new ARRL contest group featured on Groups IO, <https://groups.arll.org/g/ARRL-Contesting>. An outcry of support and criticism appeared on the reflector regarding the fact that Ray, W2RE, live-streamed his operation on 20 meters during the ARRL International DX Phone Contest. Like many of you, I watched a bit of Ray's efforts *post hoc*, after reading the discussion. Some argued that Ray flagrantly violated the ARRL contest rules. Others interpreted things somewhat differently. Ray's activities stimulated discussion on a second question about whether commercialization of ham radio contesting facilities is good or bad for the hobby.

Let me quote fellow contester and recognized contest leader Frank Donovan, W3LPL, from the CQ Contest reflector:

"... In very recent years competitors in amateur radio contests have found themselves in direct competition with infrastructure built by owners of commercial, profit-making companies in the amateur radio market for — among other things — the purpose of competing in amateur radio contests. In some cases the commercial profit making

infrastructure was operated by the owners of these very same commercial profit-making companies to win highly competitive single operator DX contests. In the latter case, it's impossible to separate their legitimate interests as amateurs competing in amateur radio contests from their commercial profit making motives as owners of profit making companies in the amateur radio marketplace."

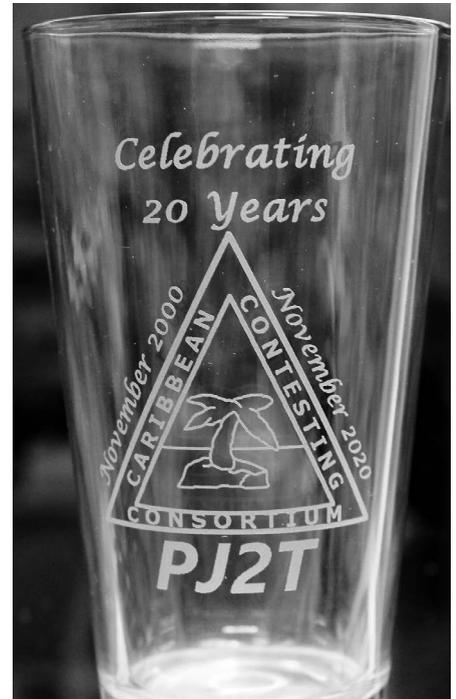
Frank raises important questions that deserve further discussion. What do you think? Let us know. Let's not forget that the demographics of contesting tilt against the status quo. A recent survey suggests that two-thirds of active contesters are older than 60, and one-third are older than 70. Demographics alone will cause the number of active contesters to dwindle. Innovation, creativity, and new methods are all needed to keep radiosport going.

PJ2T Commemorative Mug

The Caribbean Contesting Consortium has designed and produced a 20th anniversary mug (Photo) to commemorate their station activities. They had planned on making them available at the Dayton Hamvention 2020 but those plans have changed. If you are interested in a mug, drop Geoff Howard, W0CG a line with your interest.

This Issue

This issue also includes a technical article by Bob Zavrel, W7SX, on using a four-square as a receive array. These are popular, and I use one for my 80-meter receive array. Contesters who use them on 160 and 40 also sing their praises. We hope this article is of interest as you plan summer antenna improvements. There is a short article on Contest Updates, and an article about how Jamie Dupree, NS3T, operated the CQ 160-Meter Contest during breaks while covering the impeachment hearings from the US Capitol. Jamie's use of remote operation using *Team Viewer* should give many of us ideas for staying connected when away from home. I also want to thank Jim Wilson,



K5ND, and Jon Platt, WØZQ, for contributing articles on VHF contesting. We have tried to expand coverage for VHF contesting during my tenure as editor. We hope to feature more articles on contest-mentoring in the July/August *NCJ*.

This issue marks the halfway point of 2020 for *NCJ*. A new editor likely will be in place starting sometime next year. A number of opportunities exist to expand *NCJ* content in the digital-only realm, especially aimed at younger hams, newer contesters, and niche contesting areas. Send us your thoughts about what new content you would like to see. We will likely see some transition in our contributors after this calendar year. All of them have faithfully written, without compensation, for you and the contesting community for a long time. A big thank you to them.

Stay well, stay active, and I look forward to seeing you when we are all allowed to gather at hamfests and conventions again.