

From the Editor

I don't know about anyone else, but I sure enjoyed having an Assisted category available for the January North American QSO Party, CW. Once again, I participated on a team with other members of the Arizona Outlaws Contest Club. Only one member of our team (N2IC) chose to be unassisted, and it did not slow down his amazing SO2R score. I blew away my old personal record thanks to great conditions on 15 meters at the start of the contest and having exceptional antennas for 80 and 160 meters at the end of the contest. I am curious about the statistics on participation level, QSO totals, and score levels compared to past contests without the Assisted category. Being able to watch the Available Mults window in *N1MM Logger+* made a difference in knowing when to hop on 160 meters or go back to a higher band to fill in a missing mult. The NAQP remains one of my favorite contests because of the opportunity to work stations on all bands and to count mults separately on each band.

As I write this column, this weekend was the CQ World Wide 160-Meter Contest (CW), and it appears rising sunspot numbers deflated Top Band. For the first time in many years, we had no opening to Europe from the western US for the entire contest. We were able to achieve great rates of US/VE stations the first night and had a good opening to Asia on Saturday morning, but the 10-point QSOs to EU just were not there, and our score was way down from 2021's.

And, that leads to one of my personal pet peeves that is common to many of us who are serious contesters in the western US: there is no way to compete with the scores eastern US/VE stations and European stations can generate with their access to so many mults that are normally unavailable to those of us in other parts of the world. I hope that contest committees seriously consider



Your editor in Mali in 2005, when the Voodudes were warming up the bands before the CQ WW CW. I built that Elecraft K2 radio. I was enjoying some Mali cuisine while taming a pre-contest pile-up. [Courtesy of John Warburton, G4IRN]

the Stew Perry model that levels the playing field dramatically by using grid square distance as the multiplier. Until we do that that, regardless of how station equipment compares between east and west stations there will be no chance for a fair comparison of operator and station ability in contests where access to QSOs with more countries is what makes the biggest scores.

We are adding new band-pass filters at our remote station hoping to avoid Murphy when we operate as a Multi-Two in the ARRL International DX Contest (CW), which will have happened by the time you read this. Any reduction in inter-station interference will help our score and hopefully prevent burning out the front end of a K3, as happened a few months ago. I will report on our results from these upgrades in a future column.

About this Issue

We have Part 2 of KØMD's history of the origins and development of

NCJ over the past 50 years. You will also find some fun *NCJ* recollections in the Letters to the Editor that arrived since the last issue announced our 50th year of publication. I encourage everyone who has an anecdote about how *NCJ* has touched them through the years to send it to me.

We are republishing an outstanding article from the *PVRC Newsletter* compiled by John, K3TN, and some of his colleagues, about making better use of the many tools in *N1MM Logger+*. David, WD6T, has written an excellent set of tips on pile-ups from the perspectives of both the DXpeditioner running a pile-up and the DXer chasing a new one in a pile-up. John, NN1SS, submitted an article looking at contest stations through the eyes of an IT consultant concerned about resilience and redundancy that you should find enlightening as you consider how your station can be better prepared if and when Murphy pays a visit during the heat of a contest weekend.