

## From the Editor

August/September are to the contest calendar as February/March are to most people's daily calendar — major transition months between seasons. Fall is on its way, with cooler, drier air and colorful foliage. On the amateur bands, propagation will start to improve — we'll hopefully have one more year of solid propagation on 10 meters — and the DX contests will be firing up. With that in mind, there are a few important changes to note in this issue of *NCJ*.

Over eight years ago, Neil Rapp, WB9VPG, started the "Next-Gen Contesters" column, covering an area of ham radio contesting he is passionate about and active in. As we are reminded each year during the ARRL November Sweepstakes, when we log so few CKs that begin with 0, 1, or 2, building up the next-gen contesting pipeline needs to be emphasized. Over the years, Neil mixed his expertise and enthusiasm with guest columns from young contesters and the more seasoned hams that sponsored them. Now, Neil has decided it is time to hand off the column. Scott Rosenfeld, N7JI, the most recent "Next-Gen Contesters" guest columnist and long-time supporter of youth contesting, has agreed to take over — thanks and best wishes to Neil, and a hearty welcome to Scott!

John Thompson, K3MD, has been contributing to *NCJ* for over 20 years, most recently by reviewing books and online publications of interest to contesters. John's humorous slant will be missed, but he has also decided it is time to put down his pencil. My thanks to John for his reliable and interesting inputs over the years. I think he had mined the

available resources very thoroughly! If any readers come across publications that might be of interest to your fellow contesters, feel free to jot down some thoughts and send them to me at the email address at the top of this column.

This issue's profile of the North Coast Contesters is written by Tom, K8AZ, who was newly inducted into the Contesting Hall of Fame at this year's Dayton Hamvention®. To honor their accomplishment, this issue features photos of Tom and his fellow 2026 Contesting Hall of Fame inductees, Mark, K1RX; Paul, K1XM, and Doug, KR2Q. All four inductees are examples of contesters who have not only competed fiercely over the years, but who have also given back through mentoring, establishing and supporting clubs and foundations, and working behind the scenes to make sure contests are judged fairly and accurately.

Hamvention always serves as a good check on the state of the

hobby in general, and contesting in particular. Crowds were up this year, and young faces made a strong showing at Contest University (if you couldn't make it to Hamvention this year, you can see the Contest University presentations at [www.contestuniversity.com/files](http://www.contestuniversity.com/files)) and the other event forums. Parks on the Air® was a big topic, with several vendors and forums dedicated to portable operations and new portable antennas coming out.

One final note — the ARRL International Digital Contest, held a few weeks after Hamvention, had almost 1,000 logs submitted. With any luck, some of the calls that weren't in the Super Check Partial Database will follow WM6Y's path "From FT8 to CW" (see the April/May 2026 issue of *NCJ*) and become lifelong contesters. There seems to be a lot of traffic on the many on-ramps to contesting!



Usually scattered across Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, members of John's, K3TN, home club, the Potomac Valley Radio Club, got a chance for some eyeball QSOs at this year's Hamvention.