

## NCJ Celebrates 40 Years!

*National Contest Journal* this year marks 40 years of continuous publication! The inaugural issue appeared in January 1973, and the first *NCJ* editor was Tod Olson, W0IYP (now K0TO.) Editorial staff included John Moulder, WA0PRS; Tom Schiller, WA0ENP (now N6BT), and Bob Schoening, W0BE. Other staff included Minnesota Wireless Association members WB0DHQ, WB0DSJ, W0ZHN and WA0VPN (now K0SR.) Each issue was 16 pages in a 5 × 7½ format. After printing, issues were assembled at Olson's home and mailed from a local post office.

Volume 1, No 1 states *NCJ's* *raison d'être*, which begins, "We believe that a genuine desire exists for more information about radio contests."

The first issue contained seven pages of ARRL November Sweepstakes score rumors, along with some soapbox comments and score-vs-rate graphs. Olson relied upon the National Traffic System to gather claimed scores in order to print tables of likely winners — months before official results appeared. "CAC News" provided a report from the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee. The first issue concluded with an ARRL Field Day challenge from the Minnesota Wireless Association to the West Valley Radio Club. Forty years later, we offer some recollections of several past *NCJ* editors. — Kirk Pickering, K4RO

### Tod Olson, K0TO — 1973-1975

It is rather stunning to find that something you worked to create is still considered of value 40 years later. The credit belongs to the many editors who have put their personal stamp on *NCJ*, to the valuable contribution of ideas and articles by contest operators around the world, and to the strong support provided to *NCJ* from the ARRL.

It's been a very long time since I wrote anything for *NCJ*, but in the beginning I drafted almost everything, until I convinced Rush Drake, W7RM, and others to contribute. This happened very soon after the first two issues; otherwise I suspect *NCJ* would not have reached its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*NCJ* editors who followed me really are the ones who deserve credit for making the magazine what it is today. We have been fortunate to have people who are well known in the contest community contribute their time as editors.

The Sprints are a subset of *NCJ*. Over the years they have grown in popularity,

and it's interesting to note that there have been very few, if any, changes to the rules over their history.

I have enjoyed providing the Idaho multiplier to testers for the past 10 years. While that will not happen this contest season, I hope to resume Idaho operation during 2013. Throughout the years it has been fun to work the contest regulars and especially *NCJ* editors and contributors. I do hope *NCJ* will continue to serve the contesting community for many years to come. — Tod Olson, K0TO

### Randy Thompson, K5ZD — 1979-1980, 1983-1984, 1988-1989

*NCJ* first came to my attention when I was in high school. I was crazy about ham radio, especially contesting, so it was an exciting day when an issue of *NCJ* arrived in the mail. It is hard to imagine today, but there was a time when contest news traveled over the air or via the mail! One of my early memories of *NCJ* was seeing unofficial claimed scores from the big contests such as ARRL November Sweepstakes. Another memory was the special issue that listed new 1 × 2 call signs mapped to the holder's old call sign.

When W6RTT announced he could no longer continue as editor, I was just beginning my senior year at the University of Texas. There was some concern as to whether someone with nothing but enthusiasm could handle the job, but those in charge then were clearly desperate and let me take it on. I discovered a mailing list with six paid subscriptions, a few dollars in the till, and no advertisers.

With the help of K5TM and his manual typewriter (with correcting ribbon), we set off on the journey. Everything was hand typed on 8½ × 11 paper and then reduced during the printing process. It was a big discovery when I found businesses on campus that would type for money! Drawings were done by hand. Printing was done by a local ham, WA5BGO, who taught us the ropes and gave us a deal. Production values were low, but the thirst for contest information was out there, and subscribers signed up.

The bulk mailing permit in 1980 allowed us to send 3 ounces for 8.4 cents! Todd, K0TO, gave me some great advice when I was getting started: "Be controversial." I didn't get it at first but soon grew to appreciate how pushing a few editorial buttons would encourage people to write back

K9LA



Figure 1 — Former *NCJ* editors K7BV, K9LA, and K0TO at the Northwest DX Convention in Spokane in 2009.

with their opinions, thereby providing more content for the next issue.

I got my first computer in 1983, and my next round as *NCJ* editor was a bit easier, but the process of printing, folding, stapling, and carrying each issue to the post office remained the same. Chasing articles was always a challenge, but somehow the content would always appear. I learned the value of regular columnists whom we could count on to fill some pages. Gary, W9XT, was one of the earliest and is still at it with his "Contest Tips, Tricks & Techniques" column.

The ARRL did a great service for contesting when it stepped forward to take over the production of *NCJ*. The resulting professional management and production of the publication has been a real benefit to readers, and the League has allowed editors considerable independence.

Today the Internet handles most claimed scores and daily contest rule debates, but there is a place for *NCJ*. I still get excited when an *NCJ* arrives in the mail box. My favorite content is stories about operating experience, information about contest preparation or post-contest analysis. There is always more to learn, and it is these areas where *NCJ* provides a valuable platform.

Congratulations to everyone involved in *NCJ* over its 40 — and especially to the readers for their support and feedback over the years. Contest activity continues to grow, and I hope *NCJ* will continue to do the same. — *Randy Thompson, K5ZD*

#### **Tom Taormina, K5RC — 1981; 1989–1993**

Since my days of editing the *West Gulf DX Bulletin* in the mid-1960s through my two terms as *NCJ* editor, I have used "From the Low End of Twenty" as the title of my editorials. I am sure that concept is a throwback to being an old DXer in the days when you combed the first 20 kHz of 20 looking for the rarest of DX and then from the days of establishing your "run" frequency in a DX contest at the very bottom of 20 CW. Times have definitely changed.

During *NCJ*'s four decades, we've seen the expansion of contesting to cover band-edge to band-edge, as radiosport has grown, and we now operate many more modes than just phone and CW. Being a DXer and a contester has its advantages, but today being an accomplished computer guru may be a more desirable skill set than a knowledge of geography and call sign prefixes. Mastering SO2R may be more important than the brand of radio you have, but I am getting ahead of myself.

It was a hoot going back through *NCJ* CD ROMs to research my contribution. I saw a significant number of call signs that I no longer hear. There were paper logging and dupe-checking issues that are inane today. At the same time, issues such as contest



**Figure 2 — Former *NCJ* editor Tom Taormina, K5RC, visiting China. He reports driving extensively around Shanghai without seeing a single ham radio antenna.**

ethics repeat themselves just as the sunspot cycle does. The takeaway from thumbing back through those old issues is that contesting was great fun then, and it is still great fun 40 years later. Sometimes I miss my Collins 75A-4 receiver, but I sure appreciate the functionality of my Elecraft K3s.

Rather than use my column space for a trip down memory lane, I prefer to look forward to where contesting may evolve. I assume evolution and growth for a number of reasons. First, the ham population of the world continues to grow, despite the Internet and other distractions. Second, high-quality radios and antennas are available even in the most remote corners of the rarest countries, and new contesters are getting the bug all the time. Third, radiosport has evolved with new generations of hams, but challenges remain for us old timers.

WK6I currently operates our station SO6V in RTTY contests (ie, three radios, six VFOs). I can only take in the spectacle and watch him set new records, because I haven't the dexterity to operate two computers, three keyboards and three radios at the same time. I will continue to upgrade the station, antennas and switching systems, so that he can operate SO8V, if he can grow another couple of hands. Pushing the envelope is another reason contesting will continue to grow and challenge us. I am also witnessing the quickly evolving world of VHF and UHF contesting, EME and the inclusion of digital tools.

I foresee "cluster contesting," where a few stalwarts have their butts in chairs in front of radios, complemented by other operators who log in remotely when their shift time comes around. The technology is almost there for overcoming latency and path reliability issues to make "CC" a com-

petitive reality. I've learned how to reliably share four radios with six amplifiers and 24 antennas using touch screen monitors, but I am anticipating scrapping that entire system in favor of one of the new flexible command-and-control technologies that I have yet to learn.

While the white-hair gang continues to contest, the "kids" are rocking and rolling. K5ZD has been operating with me since he was a teenager, and I am really a proud Elmer to see him named director of the CQ WW DX contests. One of my current trainees is Kati, K7KTI. Just 12 years old, she is clearly on the path to becoming a contesting performer.

In the mid 1970s K5TM and I published two entire issues of *NCJ* listing the call sign changes resulting from the original vanity program. Those in the lists who are still active exhibit tenacity in the light of changing technology and sunspots. Little did I know that those attributes would test me to the extreme over the last 4 years.

W5FU (NA5R) and I embarked on our second major contest station build in 2006 at my home in Virginia City, Nevada. The Comstock Memorial Station is dedicated to the memory of K5LZO, N5JJ, K5AO and I2UIY, but its purpose is to groom the next generation of operators and contesters and to transfer the knowledge of building competitive stations to those who follow. The station is on ten acres of open range at 6400 feet elevation. In 2008, some neighbors got concerned that the antennas were affecting their real estate values. They convinced a local assistant district attorney to issue a stop-work order retroactive to 1997. After four years and two trips to federal court, the ADA is gone and we have our building permits back. The legal costs

are more than most hams spend for radio in their entire career. The time taken from business and family is immeasurable.

The lessons are clear. Successful contesting is about overcoming obstacles to achieve our personal and club goals, year in and year out. As for Grady and me — both members of the Mission Control Team during Project Apollo — failure is not an option. As I learned when I was inducted in the CQ Contest Hall of Fame in 2007, contesting is about giving back to the hobby and sharing what we learned with those who have “the right stuff.” I hope to eventually publish the details of our tower debacle to help others avoid the horrors of antenna litigation.

In my five years of editing *NCJ*, I hope readers found the content rewarding and motivating, as I do reading each new issue. — Tom Taormina, K5RC

### John Crovelli, W2GD — 1981–1982

On behalf of all past editors, I want to take this opportunity to thank the hundreds of *NCJ* readers who over the last 40 years have so generously shared their knowledge and experiences with fellow contesters through *NCJ*. Since its inception, *NCJ* has been the product of a motivated readership that has supplied the articles to fill its pages. Without you, *NCJ* would not have enjoyed the extraordinary long run as the only Amateur Radio publication devoted exclusively to radiosport. So, take a moment to congratulate yourselves on a job well done. You’ve really made *NCJ* our magazine. Even in this Internet era of instant communication, when so many very good print publications are fading away, *NCJ* is thriving as never before. The ARRL staff has done its part by continuing to enhance production quality, but the real secret to *NCJ*’s success has been the excellent content that you have supplied. If you haven’t done so already, do your part by submitting an article on any subject that may be of interest to your fellow contesters (new authors are always welcome!). I’m looking forward to several more decades of excellence. — John Crovelli, W2GD

### Rick Niswander, K7GM — 1982–1983

When I was the fifth editor of *NCJ* all those years ago, my wife and I were living in Arizona. I had a tribander and wires (when that was still pretty good for domestic contests) and access to the big station at W7KW when it was still in operation.

How things have changed! Back then *NCJ* was 8½ × 11 copied sheets, collated, folded, and stapled by hand with computer-generated address labels maintained on a *VisiCalc* spreadsheet. Today it is a high-quality publication, professionally typeset, printed, and mailed. Back then *NCJ* was very hand-to-mouth (let’s face it, hams are cheap). The ARRL’s support has significantly reduced the precarious financial situation.

Back then we were starting to get quality transceivers, as the industry transitioned from vacuum tubes to solid state, which could be band-switched in 30 seconds or less. Now we flip bands (radio, antenna, logger, and coffee pot) with one button and can listen on more frequencies than we have ears or grey matter to decipher it all. Back then, N6TR was starting to innovate at the intersection of computers and ham radio. Today he’s still innovating, so maybe not everything has changed.

The point is that all that change, all that remembering, all that “look how far we have come” is all part of the fabric of contesting in particular and of ham radio in general. It is like Drake, Heathkit, Yaesu, Kenwood, Ten-Tec and Alpha. It is like *TR-log*, *WriteLog* and *N1MM Logger*. It is like 4/4/4, quads, phased verticals, twin lead, RG-58, dipoles, and hard line. It is like CD Parties, Straight Key Night, ARRL November Sweepstakes, CQ WW, IARU, Novice Roundup (my very first contest), CQP, and ARRL International DX. It is like the Dayton contest suite, Visalia, and contest club meetings by NCCC, YCCC, MRRC, PVRC, FRC, and zillions of other like-minded gatherings. It is like the smell of a solder smoke, the crispness of a fall contest weekend, the melodic sound of code well sent, the pig farmers on 75, the distinct sound of signals on scatter, and the propagation-twang of a weak UJ8 over the North Pole late at night on 20.

Each of these things is part of the fabric of who we are and what we do. Each evokes memories and emotions. Each triggers past and present events, people, activities, successes, failures, camaraderie, competition, and anticipation. Each helps form the shared experiences that make this hobby and contesting valuable and meaningful, creating lifelong bonds and providing satisfaction, belonging and accomplishment.

A part of that fabric is the publication you are reading right now — a publication that has endured for more than 40 years, chronicled important parts of the contesting record, helped share and shape ideas and techniques, helped promote and support contesting, featured stations large and small and contesters around the nation and the globe. Over 40 years. That’s pretty amazing. It takes lots of folks — subscribers, contributors, advertisers, editors and publishers — to make *NCJ* successful. It is a testament to our hobby that *NCJ* has been around as long as it has.

To all my fellow editors, thank you so very much for what you did and are doing for *NCJ* and for contesting. It is a labor of love in many respects, but it does not go unnoticed. Special thanks to KØTO who was the first.

To our readers, keep supporting *NCJ*. You don’t *have* to subscribe, and contesting will continue if you don’t. But supporting *NCJ* is part of the bigger picture, and we owe it to

those who came before us and to those who will follow to support contesting and *NCJ*. Here’s to another 40 years of contesting, of innovation, of change and, especially, of *NCJ*. — Rick Niswander, K7GM

### Trey Garlough, N5KO — 1993-1994

*NCJ* has been around for 40 years? Really? Looking back at my stints as the manager of the CW Sprint and later as *NCJ* editor, what I remember most is the impression I had of how technology was already changing things during that time. I figured out how to print Sprint certificates on a laser printer at the office. This was a big improvement over doing them on a typewriter!

Sprint logs were submitted on paper in the mail and were checked by hand, but with a little computer assistance I was able to start doing a 100 percent check of each log rather than relying on sampling and spot checks. Eventually this gave way to log submission on floppy disk. Larry Tyree, N6TR, stepped up and wrote log-checking software that automated QSO cross-checking, computing the final score for each log and tabulating the results for publication in the magazine.

This led to changes in the way people think about how logs are evaluated and scored. In the days of paper logs there was a claimed score, and then there would be deductions made for miscopied call signs and so forth. With 100 percent log checking by machine, the old approach gave way to a new methodology, where your log starts at zero points, and your score builds with each contact and multiplier as your log is evaluated.

This changed how we viewed dupes. In the days of paper logs there were severe penalties for claiming credit for duplicate contacts. These were as an incentive for people to mark dupes clearly in their logs after the contest, putting the onus of this time-consuming task on the participant, rather than the log checker. I recall spending hours of my adolescent life at the laundromat waiting for clothes to dry while my mother read call signs out of my log, and I filled the boxes of an *Op Aid 6* check sheet, hunting for dupes. When computerized log checking came along, the penalty for dupes was eliminated, as was the requirement that they be clearly marked in the log. They simply did not matter anymore. In fact, there is even an upside to retaining duplicate contacts in the log to help facilitate cross-checking.

After every CQ WW contest I scoured my log, compiling a list of all GM stations worked, and then I got on the phone and compared my GM list with other guys who were in the contest, asking, “Were any of these GM stations in the Shetland Islands?” If you did not claim them as Shetland Islands stations, then you would not receive

multiplier credit for them. And what if you worked a ZK1 in the Cook Islands, and he turned out to be in the North Cook Islands? Same story — no credit. This problem went away with log-checking automation. Because of the diligent work of Jim Reisert, AD1C, master country files are available. Log checkers use Jim's file, and then modify it as necessary with any additional information that becomes available after the contest. This obviated the requirement for multipliers to be clearly marked. It simply does not matter anymore. Each log is now scored uniformly, using a master multiplier list. This is a beautiful thing.

Some argue that this approach dumbs down contesting. I suppose it is a question of what skills you wish to measure in a contest. I believe that if you make a valid contact with GM7Z in the Shetland Islands, then you should receive credit for it. To me the essence of the contact was the valid two-way exchange of call signs and exchanges that took place during the contest period. If you believe that one essential skill we should be testing in contests is who is best at scrubbing their logs with the aid of Internet research and DX bulletins, then we can agree to disagree. I am at peace with the new approach. It is much more fair and it is true to the spirit of the competition.

I am also pleased to see contest results now published in a more timely fashion than they were during my *NCJ* days. The CW Sprint follows a model that I would like to see more contests adopt: A log deadline of 7 days, preliminary results published online within 14 days, final results printed in the magazine as soon as convenient. The exact time frame is not so important. The point is that preliminary results be published quickly, so participants may review them. In addition to making the results timely, it permits the use of crowd sourcing to audit the results. Maybe a Shetland Islands station was active that did not make it into the log checker's master country file. Better to discover it early than after the final results are published.

So where do we go from here? In 1990 people were first starting to embrace the idea of computerized logging, using software such as *CT* by Ken Wolff, K1EA. By 2000 folks were getting accustomed to submitting their log files via e-mail. By 2010 it was possible to submit contest logs by uploading them through a Web browser.

By 2020 I believe that logging programs will dribble log data via the Internet in near-real time to a log server. When the contest is over you will not need to submit your log, because you will have been doing it throughout the entire contest. If your computer crashes during the contest and loses all its data, it won't matter, because your log will already be "in the cloud." See you then! — *Trey Garlough, N5KO*

### **Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA — 2002–2007**

My tenure as *NCJ* editor spanned the May/June 2002 issue through the November/December 2007 issue. I was the 12th new editor since *NCJ*'s inception, and I took over from Dennis Motschenbacher, K7BV.

Being tapped as the next editor was somewhat sudden. I had been writing the "Propagation" column for a number of years under K7BV, and he approached me in late 2001 about being the assistant editor, to help gather articles and help with *NCJ* contest activities. The November/December 2001 issue announced me as the assistant editor, the January/February 2002 issue included my first editorial, and the March/April 2002 issue officially announced me as the next editor.

One of my goals was to make the *NCJ* editor very visible. This goal meant attending as many Amateur Radio conventions and gatherings as possible, something I thoroughly enjoyed. I learned to keep my eyes and ears open for article ideas.

During my tenure, I used dial-up for our Internet connection. This necessarily meant some of the larger articles took a while to download — especially those with high-resolution images. It was a pain at times, but it certainly was better than doing business via snail mail, as many of my predecessors did.

My biggest disappointment was not being able to increase the subscriber list over the long term. I had some short-term success by appealing to contest clubs, but I've always puzzled over why more contesters don't subscribe to *NCJ*. The interest certainly is there, as evidenced by the enthusiasm over *NØAX's Contest Update*, but that's a free publication. Would more technical articles help increase the number of subscribers?

More detailed contest results? More articles about contesting basics for newcomers? More general-interest stories?

One of my greatest pleasures in being *NCJ* editor was working with ARRL Headquarters staff. I went through a number of managing editors during my tenure, including Brennan Price, N4QX; Steve Ford, WB8IMY; Joel Hallas, W1ZR; Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA, and Rick Lindquist, WW1ME (then N1RL). I hope I didn't skip anyone. I mostly worked on the nitty-gritty details with Maty Weinberg, KB1EIB; Shelly Bloom, WB1ENT, and Sue Fagan, KB1OKW. They all were a delight to work with, and I appreciated their professionalism. I even met many of them personally when my wife Vicky AE9YL attended a weeklong Teacher's Institute at HQ.

I was both sad (for getting out of the daily contest activities as *NCJ* editor) and glad (now I'd have more time for other things) when I turned the reins over to Al Dewey, KØAD. I'll always look back fondly on my 5 years as editor. — *Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA*

### **Al Dewey, KØAD — 2008–2011**

In 1973, the year *NCJ* was born, I was in the process of moving to Minnesota. I grew up in Indiana in the 1950s and 1960s with short stints in W1 and W8-Land before moving to the Gopher State. I can't remember when I ran across my first issue of *NCJ*; I believe it was in the early 1980s. This was the time I became aware of the Minnesota Wireless Association (MWA) and started attending their informal once-a-year meetings. Also active in MWA back then was Tod Olson, KØTO, *NCJ*'s first editor. I have what I thought was a fairly complete collection of *NCJ*'s on a shelf in my shack. When I recently pulled out the oldest issue on the shelf, however, it was dated July/August

KØAD



**Figure 3 — Immediate past *NCJ* Editor Al Dewey, KØAD, in his Minnesota shack**

1993. This was about the time we moved into our new home in Plymouth, Minnesota, so I suspect any earlier issues had been lost. Fortunately, I do have *NCJ* CD-ROMs and find it fun to go back and look at some of the earlier issues.

My association with *NCJ* really goes back to an acquaintance I made back in the early 1960s while living in Indiana. As a teen ager with the call sign K9DHN, I met another teenager who lived about a mile from me named Carl Luetzelschwab, then WA9AVT. We both ended up working at the local power company during the summer while we attended Purdue University. After graduation, we lost touch. About 40 years later, I was attending a WØDXCC Convention in Minneapolis where Carl (now K9LA) was speaking on propagation. He was then *NCJ*'s editor, and he asked whether I might be interested in taking over the magazine's reins from him. I was blown away by the suggestion. Although I was an active contesting and dedicated myself to getting a quality *NCJ* out every couple of months, it wouldn't matter how many Top 10 boxes I appeared in. I found that to be good advice.

I worried a little that as *NCJ* editor the time demands would mean I would not have time to get in many contests full time. That worry was unfounded and, in fact, I finally found my way into some of the Top 10 boxes with the addition of my first Yagi in the fall of 2007. Being *NCJ* editor motivated me to attend my first Dayton Hamvention® in 2008 and my first Visalia in 2010. What a kick to meet all the world class contesters I

had worked so many times over the years.

As I began my 4 year stint as *NCJ* in 2008. I had just lost a good friend, Dave, KTØR. My first issue of *NCJ* included a tribute to him. During my term, I didn't make any major changes to the publication. I was really blessed with a very stable support staff from the League for all four years. Rick, then WW3DE and now WW1ME, always seemed to make whatever was submitted sound better — including my own articles. Maty, KA1EIB, Sue, KB1OKW, and Shelly, WB1ENT, all were a pleasure to work with. If a "heavy" issue came up, ARRL Publications Manager Steve Ford, WB8IMY, was always there to advise. One thing I wanted to add to *NCJ* early on was a contesting column for new contesters. I worried that some *NCJ* articles might be too intimidating for newbies. While I was searching for a contributor, someone from the Tennessee Contest Group said they knew someone who was an experienced contesting and had a knack for explaining and writing things in a clear and easy-to-understand manner. His name was Kirk Pickering, K4RO. I contacted Kirk, and he agreed to assume the job, introducing the popular "Contesting 101" column. After reading a few of Kirk's columns, I knew this was the guy I wanted to see take over as *NCJ* editor when I was done.

Perhaps the biggest technical issue affecting contesting while I was editor was the introduction of multi-channel CW band decoders such as *CW Skimmer*. There were extremely strong opinions on how these should be viewed, or even allowed, in contesting. Some felt that, as long as they were not connected to the outside world, they should be legal in the single operator category. Others felt that they constituted

assistance and should be treated just like Internet spotting assistance. It was a major topic of discussion at Dayton 2008. For the September/October 2008 issue of *NCJ*, Bob, N6TV, and Stan, K5GO, agreed to write a "point/counterpoint" style *Op-Ed* for *NCJ*, presenting the arguments for and against the use of a local (ie, not connected to the Internet) *CW Skimmer*. Major contest committees ruled that these multi-channel decoders, even if self-contained within a station, should be viewed as offering spotting assistance. At the time, the *NCJ*-sponsored North American QSO Party (CW) initially chose to *permit CW Skimmer* in the single operator class, as long as the *Skimmer* was self-contained. The rules were changed and printed. Strong pressure from the contesting community led *NCJ* and the NAQP contest management to reverse this decision and align themselves with the approach taken by the ARRL CAC and the CQ Contest Committee. It was also pointed out that NAQP was one of the WRTC-qualifying events, and allowing *CW Skimmer* would complicate things. Ultimately, *NCJ* aligned itself with the other major contests, and today *CW Skimmer* is integrated into the Internet spotting network as well as the Reverse Beacon Network. Like many other advances, it turned out that the advent of *CW Skimmer* did not mark the end of CW contesting as we know it.

Today, *NCJ* is in good hands. When I first approached K4RO about the job, he had many of the same reservations that I did, such as finding content and time. He accepted the challenge, however, and I'm sure you will agree that *NCJ* is alive and well under Kirk's leadership. — *Al Dewey, KØAD*

