Lee Finkel, KY7M / ars.ky7m@gmail.com

From the Editor

I am writing this the day after the California QSO Party, always a fun event even though being so close in Arizona that making QSOs on the higher bands is challenging. Operating from my home station, I made it a goal this year to log all 58 counties, and I achieved it with a few hours to spare. Interestingly, despite operating "assisted," it was only by using the tuning dial on my K3 that I snagged the needed station in San Joaquin County on 20-meter SSB. Yes, tuning the radio, especially on SSB, can pay mult dividends!

Our small team that remotely operates NA7TB planned an all-out assault on the W7 record for multi-single in the September CQ WW RTTY contest. This was the first time we had a dedicated triband Yagi available for each of our two stations. Everything was going very well for the first 14 hours, but Saturday morning I got a text message that the new KT36XA tribander on our *run* station had an infinite SWR. I fiddled with the radio, the amplifier, *N1MM+*, and nothing made a difference. Then suddenly, after about 20 minutes the antenna came back to life and operated normally again. What kind of intermittent issue were we having?

Saturday went well although we had poor propagation on 15 meters and were stuck on 20 meters for most of the day. We needed those 15-meter mults to break the record. Later Saturday the receiver on our *mult* radio stopped working. We had blown the front end. Murphy was wreaking havoc on our effort!

On Sunday morning the SWR on the KT36XA was infinite again and could not be repaired by intense "fiddling." This happened just as 15 meters was exploding with EU signals and all the mults we needed to break the W7 record. I checked the antenna a few hours later and it was perfect again. The sun seemed to be the fixer of the intermittent SWR issue. We got back on the air with one radio and hobbled home with a 2.1-million point effort, not record breaking but a substantial score, nonetheless.

Your editor in the operating position at home for remoting into NA7TB for the CQ WW RTTY contest.

Ned, AA7A, and I made the drive to Safford, Arizona, a few days later to bring home the broken K3 and to try to determine the cause of the intermittent SWR on a KT36XA, which was up 65 feet in the air with several hundred feet of hardline between it and the remote shack. After several hours of checking everything possible and even replacing the hardline with no success, Ned plugged the coax into a different bulkhead entry panel barrel connector and the antenna started working again. It was a damaged N barrel connector causing our problem with heat and cold creating the intermittent SWR issue. How often does that happen? Thank goodness it was not an issue with the antenna itself.

I have been wanting to write about my remote station experiences, and now you have a first-hand account of what can happen despite trying to make the station as reliable as possible. This is the station originally built by Milt Jensen, N5IA (SK), more than 5 years ago with the one-of-a-kind 160 meter 8-circle antenna he designed. Ned and I have made about 70 trips to the site (175 miles from Phoenix) since August 2016, when Milt's family asked us to preserve the station as Milt's legacy following his fatal tower accident. With help from our Arizona Outlaw Contest Club friends, we continue to build on Milt's dream for a competitive all-band contest station. Without the engineering expertise and innovations provided by Ned, this station would not be operational today. His ability to overcome the technical challenges we have faced is absolutely remarkable.

Let me conclude by saying that maintaining a remote contest station where you own it and maintain it is far different than paying to operate a station that someone else maintains. It takes a major commitment of time, money, and engineering skills to make the station both operational and competitive.

About this Issue

A challenge for many Field Day stations is being able to have two modes operating on the same band without inter-station interference. Nelson, KA2C, has detailed how to build the ultra-sharp, low-loss filters that have been used effectively at W3CWC.

After receiving several emails from readers about how log checking works, I asked Randy, K5ZD, to provide the answers. He has written an outstanding history and explanation of how contest log checking has evolved from its inception to now.

Rejoining the *NCJ* columnists this issue is Pete, N4ZR, writing about the latest developments in the computer and internet technology supporting and intertwined with radiosport. Welcome back, Pete!