

LINE OF SIGHT

A Message from the Editor

Has It Really Been Four Years?

It was four years ago this past January when I met with Dick Ross, K2MGA, CQ Communications owner and publisher, at CQ headquarters in New York to discuss bringing back *CQ VHF* as a quarterly publication. On my return trip to Tulsa, Oklahoma, I was hanging around the car rental agency in New York waiting for my ride to the airport when my cell phone rang. It was Kent Britain, WA5VJB, who asked me about rumors that he had heard about this magazine being published again.

A bit shocked by Kent's "out of the blue" phone call, I asked him where he had heard the rumors and why he was calling me about them. He replied vaguely about the source of the rumors, and then he told me that because I was the editor of *CQ* magazine's VHF column, I should have known about them.

I then replied that the rumors were true and I had accepted the position as editor. Then I asked Kent if he would consider writing a column on antennas for *CQ VHF*, and he said yes. Then and there I had my first columnist. (It is important to note that both Gordon West, WB6NOA, and Ken Neubeck, WB2AMU, agreed to be feature editors as soon as they learned that I was to be the editor.) It was from that beginning of a few regular writers, along with some seed articles from *CQ* magazine, that we have come to where *CQ VHF* is today, four years later.

A look at the masthead in this issue will reveal that we now have more than a dozen columnists, each writing about his or her particular specialty in our niche of the hobby. The significant crossover among the specialties continues to amaze me as well. This crossover is good for all of us, because we learn from one another how to adapt and improve our particular area of interest by way of the previously traveled learning curves of our colleagues.

This crossing over, or cross pollinating, is the key to the future of our hobby on these VHF and above frequencies. Granted, our hobby is comprised of both the HF and VHF spectrums. However, what can be done on HF is limited by spectrum space and FCC and international regulations. On our VHF and above frequencies there are virtually no limits for us—and thus no limits on our experimentation on these frequencies.

Regarding coverage of specialty areas in *CQ VHF*, I would like to add columnists

who will provide material on EME activities, ATV, ballooning, DSP, and SDR, as well as Echolink and VoIP. If one of these is your specialty or you know of someone who could write about these topics on a regular basis, please contact me via e-mail at <n6cl@sbcglobal.net>.

Now that we have looked both back and forward, let's take a look at what we have in this issue. I'm sure you will be delighted with the variety of material and the controversial aspect of some of the topics. Let's begin with the controversial.

Controversial Conclusions

For decades, the differences of opinion over the cause of sporadic-E propagation have generated considerable discussion and many articles. Even myself and features editor Ken Neubeck, WB2AMU, take opposite positions as to the cause. (I am a proponent of lightning, and Ken is an opponent.) In this issue of *CQ VHF* Bob Gyde, ZL3NE/1, presents a strong case for weather as the cause of many different forms of propagation, including sporadic-E. His article begins on page 12.

Complementing Gyde's article is another paper by Rex Moncur, VK7MO, on the appropriate way to calculate tropospheric scatter losses. Rex's paper was originally presented at GippsTech 2005, the annual Australian conference designed to encourage participation in VHF, UHF, and microwave amateur radio operations. His article begins on page 14.

In addition to these articles on propagation, features editor Gordon West, WB6NOA, gives us insight into monitoring 10-GHz beacons using DSP. His article begins on page 16.

ICOM Insights

Last year ICOM rolled out several new products that hold great promise for those of us who favor the VHF and above frequencies. One is a standalone radio and the other is a whole system. The standalone radio, the IC-7000, is essentially a mobile equivalent of ICOM's upscale radios. Steve Hicks, N5AQ, takes the cover off this new radio, gives us a report on it, and suggests a modification to reclaim a previously advertised but later dropped feature—receiving commercial TV stations. His article begins on page 9.

The whole system, D-STAR, is just beginning to make inroads on our bands. Some of us may be put off by its newness and unknown features. However, FM columnist Bob Witte, KØNR, unpacks the mysteries of the system and encourages all of us to take a good look at the benefits it offers. His column begins on page 42.

Hinterland HSMM

One of the definitions of *hinterland* is a region remote from urban areas. John Champa, K8OCL, uses a hybrid of the word *hinterland* to come up with a new word, *Hinternet*. Perhaps its use of the 5.6-GHz band might explain its remoteness on our spectrum. However, John explains, "The *Hinternet* under development by many individuals and groups is intended to eventually become the ham radio digital WANs (wide area networks) formed by the linking of numerous local HSMM nodes or LANs." You see, it's not so remote after all. His explanation begins on page 31.

Capitalizing on the Classics

Borrowing from the classics, authors Dave Holdeman, N9XU, and Malcolm Mallette, WA9BVS, created titles for their articles. Dave borrowed from Charles Dickens' classic *A Tale of Two Cities* to create the title of his article about two classic 2-meter radios. In it he tells the tale of how he once owned one of the radios for all of two weeks (lots of twos in this article), and how he was able to procure a second nearly identical radio on May 2 (see, I told you lots of twos), 2004, thirty years later. Obviously not in new, fresh-out-of-the-box shape, it needed some loving care. Dave begins his story of restoration and reclamation of memories on page 28.

Malcolm borrowed the Sherlock Holmes character from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to introduce us to an updated version of his transmitter characteristic detection software, called Sherlock. His article begins on page 61.

In the Next Issue

We have more articles in queue for the next issue of *CQ VHF*. Perhaps one of them could be yours. If so, we look forward to hearing from you.

Until next time . . . 73 de Joe, N6CL