

From the Editor

Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends: Rules and Regulations

As you go from day to day
Looking for a better way
And you think you've got it all under control
So you bend the rules a bit
As you try to make things fit
But you know you should be doing as you're told
Although sometimes you'll find it so hard
And the wrong way may seem easier
It doesn't matter who you are
Obey the rules and you'll go far

A contest is a competition in which a winner is declared based on being judged against published rules or criteria. I always imagine the rules were pretty simple for the first competition when caveperson 1 said to caveperson 2, "Let's run from the cave to that tree and see who gets there first." But then someone cheated by starting early and the "No starting before caveperson 3 yells Start!" rule was added. Then, after a few years, one of the racers thought to cover his feet and not wear his heavy sloth-skin robe and ran faster. Then, someone said, "I ran to the tree much faster than that last year..." and record-keeping started. Quickly, cave walls began to be covered with rule petroglyphs and some cavepeople had to volunteer to be the keepers and maintainers of the rules and results.

If you look at the rules for the earliest radio contests, they were pretty simple, too. But the same evolution of equipment/technology and competitors' techniques meant updating and adding rules — and making sure enforcement kept up with the new rules. But it's impossible to write (let alone enforce) rules that cover every possible scenario, so there are also contesting norms and traditions that arise over time. Those norms are just as important as the written rules but are usually passed on by experienced operators to new ops. This is another form of "Elmering" and another reason why so many contesters point to their early experiences with a club or a multi-multi for learning how to really contest.

In the next issue, we'll have the



latest Sprint rules, an example of how the CEPT rules are interpreted in PJ7, and an update to the Contest Aaargh! FAQ published in *NCJ* back in 2011. Ideas and demands for updates to rules need to come from active competitors and go to the volunteers who dedicate a lot of time and effort to keeping rules, results, and records up to date. The table of contents page of *NCJ* lists the NAQP and Sprint contest managers — let them know what you think by emailing them directly. Tree, N6TR, also does most of the heavy lifting on processing logs and providing results to the contest managers.

NAQP CW Results

CW results for the 2024 North American QSO Party will appear in the January/February 2025 issue. We apologize for the delay. Preliminary results are available at <https://ncjweb.com/current-naqp-cw-results/>.