

## Its Rightful Place

I am writing this the day after Inauguration Day. As always, I am in awe of the strength of our democracy as evidenced by the peaceful transfer of power from one administration to the next, and particularly from one political party to another. The images of President and Mrs. Bush warmly greeting President-Elect and Mrs. Obama at the White House, then riding together to the Capitol, and sitting on the stage together for the inauguration, speak volumes about our ability to come together as one people once the verbal battling of the election campaign is over. In far too many other countries, such battles are fought with bullets instead of ballots and “transfer of power” comes at the point of a gun. Inauguration Day, once again, was a proud moment for American democracy.

In listening to President Obama’s inaugural address, one line in particular caught my attention. “We will restore science to its rightful place,” said the President. I certainly hope that will happen, sooner rather than later. We need to let science be science.

Far too often in recent years, science has been hijacked by politics and by politicians to advance their goals. And this is not limited to any one party. At one end of the spectrum, you have a new scientific “orthodoxy” about the causes of global warming that rivals scientific orthodoxy in the days of Galileo. If you are a scientist and do not agree that global warming is caused by human activity—despite the absence of conclusive evidence (correlation does not necessarily equal causation)—you risk virtual “excommunication” by the mainstream scientific community for its equivalent of scientific heresy. At the other end of the spectrum, we have had scientific reports changed by politicians, and even had final conclusions reversed, when those were at odds with the politicians’ preconceived notions. Both of these requirements to toe the “party line” amount to nothing more than scientific censorship and stifle the spirit of independent and unfettered inquiry that has been the hallmark of scientific endeavor since the end of the Middle Ages. It is, indeed, time to restore science to its rightful place.

As hams, we have a vital interest in this matter. Technology and science go hand-in-hand. Sometimes, the greatest discoveries are made by going against the common wisdom. Cancer treatment inventor John Kanzius, K3TUP, interviewed in these pages just two months ago, said that if he had been formally educated in the process he developed, he would have known it was impossible, so he wouldn’t have tried. But he didn’t know it would never work. So he tried anyway. And lo and behold, it worked!

There is much science to be done in ham radio, for those so inclined. We depend on the ionosphere and the interactions between the sun and the Earth to propel our signals over great distances. There is room in ham radio for learning about earth science, space science, physics, communication theory and other scientific subjects. More importantly, though, ham radio presents a unique tool to help people learning science, especially young people, to get hands-on experience putting the theories they learn in their textbooks to practice in real-life settings.

We are facing a nationwide shortage of scientists and engineers. Ham radio can help provide a low-pressure, low-intensity, high-fun introduction to a wide variety of fields. We can start helping by taking individual responsibility for welcoming one young person—perhaps one of our own children or grandchildren—into

the excitement of amateur radio. In this issue, 2008 Newsline Young Ham of the Year Emily Stewart, KCØPTL, writes about her challenge to do just that to hams in her home state. The result of that challenge is the Kansas Legacy Project. Emily’s story is on page 28. Accompanying her article is the announcement for the 2009 Newsline Young Ham of the Year Award (CQ is a co-sponsor of this program, by the way). If you know a ham who is 18 or younger and who is doing incredible things, read the rules and submit a nomination. Another way to help young people through ham radio is through the four dozen scholarships administered by the Foundation for Amateur Radio. There’s a lot of scholarship money just waiting to be matched up with worthy recipients. The complete list of FAR-administered scholarships, along with eligibility details, is in the March issue of *WorldRadio Online*, which should be available for download from the CQ website by the time you receive this issue. Just go to our website at <[www.cq-amateur-radio.com](http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com)> and click on the *WorldRadio Online* link.

Speaking of *WorldRadio Online*, and speaking of inaugurations, we posted the inaugural online issue of the magazine on our website on Inauguration Day, January 20. Initial response has been overwhelmingly positive. We believe *WorldRadio Online* is an excellent complement to CQ, and urge you to check out either the February or March issue for yourself.

### Enter eQSL

In January, we announced that we would begin accepting QSO confirmations from eQSL.cc for credit toward CQ awards. Within a week, A71EM qualified for the very first all-eQSL Worked All Zones award. Our award managers have been working closely with the team at eQSL in setting this up. They are all confident that the confirmations they receive via eQSL are at least as secure as those they receive in the form of traditional QSL cards. In fact, their ability to check for a QSO in the log of the *non-applicant* station makes it even more secure than a traditional QSL card. Maintaining the integrity of our awards is their top priority, and we are confident in the integrity of the eQSL process that has been set up.

We believe that the future of QSLing for award purposes is electronic, due primarily to the ever-escalating costs associated with traditional QSLing. However, we do not believe that traditional QSLing for its own sake will ever go away. The feeling one gets when opening a packet of cards from the QSL bureau, or receiving your SASE back in the mail carrying the card of an exotic DX station, cannot be duplicated on a computer screen. But when it comes to operating awards, waiting for cards to come in can literally add years to the process, so we look to the online confirmation services for more and more of the QSOs that will be claimed for award credit.

Many readers have asked why we have not set up a similar arrangement with ARRL’s Logbook of the World (LoTW). It is certainly our intention to do so. We have been talking and working with the folks in Newington for nearly three years now, but progress has been slow. We plan to continue working with them and hope to be able to announce an arrangement for one or more of our awards in the not-too-distant future. Meanwhile, if you want to use online confirmations for CQ awards, then eQSL.cc is the place to be.

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