

Natural Radio

News, Comments and Letters About Natural Radio

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In December of 1999, I wrote my first column as Natural Radio Editor for *The Lowdown*, and it's hard to believe that 16 years have passed since then. However, things have a beginning and an end, so after several months of deliberation I've decided that the time has come to end my stint as Natural Radio Editor of this fine publication.

Over the past year, I have found it harder and harder to come up with fresh, interesting material for my column, so in all fairness to LWCA members I think it best to pass the position on to someone with a fresh perspective and new energy. I will still be expanding and updating the naturalradiolab.com website, which includes an archive of all my *Lowdown* articles.

Many things have changed in Natural Radio over 16 years. Although receivers are essentially the same with a discrete FET front end followed by a high-gain audio amplifier, it's also possible to receive with a software program such as DL4YHF's Spectrum Lab, eliminate the hum in software processing and display your spectrum in real time. We now record on digital recorders, or in programs such as Spectrum Lab, as cassettes have pretty much gone the way of dinosaurs.

The high pitched beeps of the OMEGA navigation system that were always a reassuring sign that your receiver was working are gone, as is most of the LORAN system and its nasty interference. H.A.A.R.P. has come and gone. Earth based observations have been mostly replaced by the many new satellite instruments that have given us a much more thorough understanding of the near-earth space weather environment and the complex connections of the earth-sun system.

Public awareness of space weather has grown and there has been lots of talk and media speculation about the potential devastating effects of a strong solar storm, but as to whether effective policies have been developed to deal with the effects of a storm with Carrington Event magnitude, only time will tell.

Nevertheless, the thrill of hearing the beautiful sounds of whistlers, tweeks and chorus remains the same. I hope the wonder of that experience will be shared and passed on to the next generation, inspiring some to become the scientists, engineers and dreamers of the future.

Thanks to Bill Oliver for getting *The Lowdown* out each month. Also to John Davis and all the other writers and contributors who supply the great content. Thank you to all of the members of the LWCA who support this publication, I hope that my articles had some value for you over the years. In addition, good luck to the next Natural Radio editor. I look forward to reading your articles.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays to everyone, I wish you a joyous and peaceful time with family and friends, and a happy and prosperous New Year.