



**SK CC**  
Straight Key Century Club



Volume 11 Issue 2

*The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club*  
“The Rag Chew”

June, 2018

## Dayton 2018



## 2018 Dayton SKCC Group Photo



Here is a photo of the set-up at Dayton (it will never be anything but “Dayton” no matter where it is located) this year before the hamfest began. The new banner looks great and being inside a building is much better than being in a tent!

Left to right are John N2JKA, Ron AC2C, Larry AH6AX and Larry KA8HFN. Before the hamfest ends the booth will be filled with additional chairs and members as well as those wanting to know more about SKCC and toying with the keys.

## Action at the SKCC Booth

The SKCC booth saw a lot of action of the weekend. Well manned with lots of help and plenty of visitors the booth was “where to be” if you wanted to rag chew with many of the gang you’ve had QSOs with. According to Ron AC2C 260 SKCC members logged in during



the 2.5 days of the hamfest. There were plenty of keys on display for members to try and all connected to a CPO. There were plenty of members to “help” log in other members and to offer their opinion of which key/bug/cootie was the best. The picture below shows the great collection of keys at the booth.

Now, regarding this same picture, just check-out these fellows! Personally I don’t think

I would want to buy a used car from any of them! It’s completely obvious they are enjoying themselves way too much!!

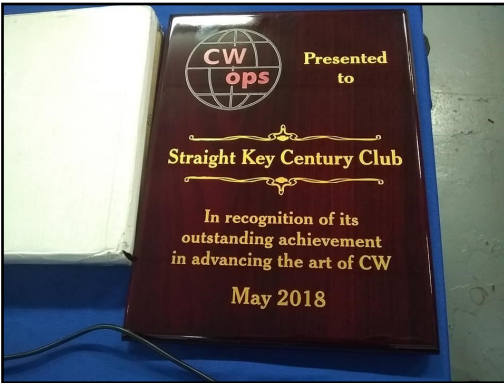
Not only was the booth there to represent SKCC, it was a gathering point to meet,



greet and rest! But this is what the booth is for; promoting SKCC to the unaware, provide a meeting place for members to meet other members and to rest weary feet after walking through the displays and flea market. Next year will be no different, we’ll gather, greet and promote SKCC to those unaware of our club.

Many thanks to AC2C Ron, AH6AX Larry and Curt WA2JSG for organizing the booth plus the many others who helped man and maintain the booth through the hamfest.





This plaque was presented to SKCC at the CW Ops Hamvention Supper on May 17th. Steve Szabo, WB4OMM, was present to accept the plaque on behalf of SKCC and brought it to our booth on Friday. Thank You, Steve !!!

The award read: STRAIGHT KEY CENTURY CLUB (SKCC) for 12 years as a very active organization promoting manual keying of CW through activities, awards, and helping newcomers. SKCC has over 18,000 members worldwide and promotes CW on the air as well as maintaining an excellent mentoring program for assisting in learning CW. They have an awards program including 14 different CW awards. Their operating activities include 2 monthly sprint contests, a yearly month-long straight key month, a monthly straight key night, and a monthly 36 hour "Sprintathon" contest.

Steve accepted with the following:

*This is not my award. I am honored to accept this award on behalf of the thousands of dedicated members of SKCC, and most importantly, those few members that make the activi-*

*ties and awards possible for hams all over the world. Morse code is the universal language - CW, TU, SK all mean the same no matter the culture or country. It is one of the binding common threads of Amateurs across the globe. It is my honor to accept this award on behalf of SKCC, one of the premier international clubs that support and perpetuate the continuing use of Morse code using one of the basics of ham radio, a straight key. Sincere thanks to CWops for this award."*

The plaque is now a part of the "Hamvention display kit" and will return to the table next year. Ron, AC2C

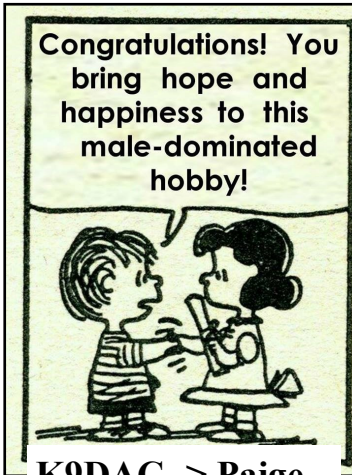


## SKCC on the Air at Dayton

Once again SKCC has been interviewed at Dayton. W5KUB.com broadcast live via internet streaming interviewing various clubs and dealers.



Scott, KD4EE and daughter Paige, who just passed her Technician exam at age 12 and will be operating CW! **Congratulations**, Paige!...de Tom K9DAC



K9DAC -> Paige



Action at the SKCC booth...sign-in, rag chewing and key demonstrations.



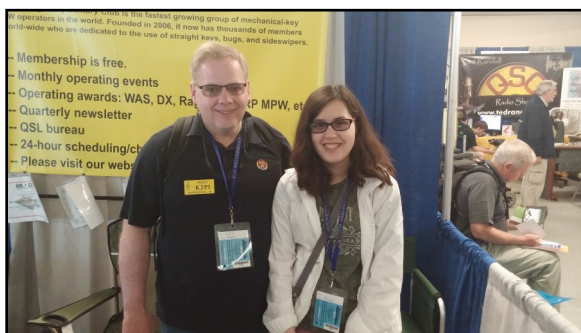
Happy SKCC shoppers Brian, KG8CO #6362 on the left and Mark NU8Z #1123t



Just passed my QLF test with FISTS. Lol — attending [2018 Dayton Hamvention](#) WA2JSG



Ron, blue shirt, discussing keys with a member at SKCC booth.



This is a picture of me, Harv, K2PI, 13782S, and my Daughter, Nycie, who is now KN4MLX. She took the one-day KB6NU tech class at Hamvention and passed.



### Congratulations!

Nycie, KN4MLX and well done Dad Harv for encouraging her!

Nycie you now have a life-long hobby with adventure and excitement you'll enjoy for life ...now, get "pop" to teach you the code!



## Note of Appreciation

40m is a “bread and butter” band for intracontinental communications. Due to different international regulations, conflicts of operation can occur. For North America that conflict is shared by phone operation allowed in the same band segment as cw is allowed. Thus the conflict; phone requires a larger signal bandwidth than cw. CW ops can narrow their receivers to 500-200 Hz while anything much narrower than 1.8 MHz makes phone copy difficult if not impossible.

Everyone agrees that no one owns a frequency, none the less conflicts are never a good thing. Several month ago a Canadian SSB daily net, after more than 40 years on an established and well know frequency, decided to move its frequency from 7055 kHz to 7100 kHz. As you would be aware, moving such a well established frequency after so many years, was a major shift for a group of amateur radio operators. I understand that the primary motivation was to get out of the way from SKCC operations. I think a comment of appreciation to our Canadian friends is certainly in order and I hope all SKCC members will agree and appreciate the manner in which such an effort to resolve this conflict was accomplished...73es TNX K8AQM

## Wow! F6HKA Awarded Cx50!

Can you believe it! Cx50 means Bert has worked 5000 different SKCC members! What a great accomplishment and as you view Bert’s super-fine station you can see why! Great job Bert and we salute your accomplishment! Always glad to hear and work you. You are a true beacon and great friend to SKCC.



## **A Visit with *Golden Valley Ed* – W7GVE**

by N8KR

Many of us in SKCC have missed the *always present* W7GVE in our monthly events. The last time I worked Ed was well over a year and a half ago. Before that, no matter where I was operating CW, W7GVE would find me and give me a contact from AZ. It wasn't until recent weeks that I discovered that my story was not unique . . . actually, very typical! When I announced that I was going to AZ to visit Ed, I received several emails, all with the same story. (One member noted 55 SKCC contacts with Ed over the years.) When I got to Ed's shack, I was reminded that Ed NEVER used a computer and that every single qso made was neatly and meticulously hand logged in spiral notebooks. Ed has been logging this way for his 60 years as a ham! I picked up one of the countless notebooks. This one was dated *December 2012 to October 2013*. Each side of each page contained between 50-62 log entries. That particular notebook had 100 sheets, all full on both sides/ That would number 10,000 to 12,000 qso's in 10 months!! I was stunned to see the enormity of his logs. Looking at the entries, I recognized many SKCCers along with many, many dx stations. Along with his general logs, Ed created log books (handwritten) listing each SKCC number in numeric order along with the corresponding call. His wife, Grace, would retrieve the latest membership list from the internet and Ed would hand copy that info into his notebooks. He would note each time he worked an SKCC member. His goal was to work all SKCC! Ed loves his hobby and SKCC.

Ed's good friend, Rick – K7CNT #8573T met me at Ed's this past Friday morning. We had this visit planned through Grace, Ed's wonderful wife. Not knowing how Ed's memory would be, I had SKCC name badges made for both Rick and Ed so when the three of us were visiting, there was a visual reminder of who we were and what we all had in common. Ed was great! While he said he didn't remember me, he said the call was familiar. (It's been 4 years since I was there last). The three of us talked about SKCC and Ed lit up and talked about all of the SKCC contacts he had made. It was at that time that we gave him a special card with messages from his SKCC friends. Ed looked at it as we pointed out some special memories written: "I was just going over my contacts with you. I have worked you in every WES in which we participated. In addition, you were my AZ contacts for WAS, WAS-C, and WAS-T. I also administer the various WAS awards and you are the AZ contacts for about 80% of the applications." – Urb, W1UL. "I would always greet him with '2 Eds are better than 1'." – Ed, W1EJ. "Ed, you were one of my first CW contacts when I got my ticket in 2010. You were always there. I find myself listening for W7GVE each time I turn the radio on." – Dan, W5BM. Allen, KA5TJS said they would always send "no snakes" each time they worked because Ed once disappeared suddenly from a qso with Allen. A qsl card explained that Grace called Ed to kill a snake (it was a rattlesnake) in the yard and Allen responded with the problem he had with chicken snakes.

After spending time with the 25+ messages in the card, we asked Ed if the radio still works. Ed responded that he uses it all the time but the thickness of the dust and the inoperative power supply suggested something else. Fortunately, after Rick worked on it, the power supply came on and the Yaesu FT-450 came to life. Since Ed has trouble with a conventional straight key, we made sure the bencher paddle was set like a side swiper and I tuned and found a cq on 20 meters. Not sure if the radio and antenna still worked, I sent Ed's call and got an immediate response. Ed took over and conducted the qso. His fist was smooth as ever. There was a little confusion but we got Ed through it. I tuned the radio to 14.050 and Ed called CQ. Bob –



K5ZOL answered. After that qso, we showed Ed what Bob had written in the SKCC card: *thanks for all the great qso's. You were my anchor in every SKCC event!* Ed made one more contact before we returned to the living room to include Grace in our visit. Before we left, we went outside to see his 35' wooden tower constructed by Ed and Rick 6 years ago. . still in great shape with the dry AZ climate. His OCF Dipole still looks great and his sloping 30 meter antenna still works!

I hope we hear W7GVE on the air again. I encouraged Rick to do some multi-op SKCC events with ED using W7GVE. Rick is planning to do that in the future. I hope you enjoy the few pics that follow. Ed's QTH is next to a mountain in typical AZ desert conditions. I have to admit, Golden Valley, AZ is beautiful. I'm sure Ed would love to hear from you all!



Here is ED – W7GVE working Bob – K5ZOL on Friday, May 25, 2018!



Ken N8KR      Ed W7GVE      Rick K7CNT



Ed's backyard: Ken – N8KR, Ed – W7GVE, Rick – K7CNT (notice wooden tower)



Ed's Front/Side yard looking east.

## How a 1950's Boatanchor Rig Made Me an SKCC Centurian ....de Dennis W4DNN #3379t

Ten years ago, I signed up as a new member of the Straight Key Century Club. My member number, 3379, testified to the fact that I was among the first rush of hams to join this new organization. Only one year earlier, SKCC had been founded to promote the use of Morse Code following the FCC's elimination of the CW proficiency requirement to earn a license.

Fast forward to 2017. I am ashamed to say that, in all those intervening years, I had only made a handful of SKCC contacts. Other interests, such as operating QRP in the field, vintage radios and DX chasing had stolen the time. Then, one day while engaged in a CW rag chew, the other op volunteered his SKCC number. It was 16956. Wow! The organization had grown. I needed to get active.

The SKCC was conceived by KC9ECI in January of 2006 following that year's ARRL Straight Key Night. The club's stated objective: "To perpetuate the use of manually operated keying devices including straight keys, side-swipers (cooties) and semi-automatic keys (bugs) that do not rely on electronics to form or space CW characters or weight their elements." Contacts between members must be conducted using these non-electronic devices. In addition to awards and special events, the club also offers Elmering and recommended frequencies reserved for QRS or slow speed CW for beginners.

With the downward plunge of solar cycle 24, my interest in QRP gave way to a desire to earn my first SKCC award, the "Centurian." SKCC presents this award to any member who completes QSO's with at least 100 other members. Centurians may become "Tribunes" by working 50 Centurian or higher stations. Not enough fun? Try for the coveted "Senator" award by contacting 50 Tribunes or higher. During one or two of the club's monthly "Weekend Sprintathons," I was sure I could snag my first award. However, since I really enjoy operating vintage gear, why not use some 1950's equipment to earn a "C" suffix at the end of my number; a challenge worth attempting.

### The Transmitter

Two old transmitters had remained on the closet shelf after the XYL decided that it was time for me to downsize and make space available in our guest bedroom for, well, guests. One rig was a Johnson Viking Adventurer, a little, very basic novice CW transmitter capable of a full 25 watts output. But I did not have a VFO. The transmitter I chose was a rather beat-up Heathkit DX-40 which I had picked up at a hamfest a few years earlier. Matched with an HW-10 VFO, it shouldn't be too difficult to rack up the needed QSO's, I thought. And I knew just where to find that VFO.



Reliving those novice years reminds an old timer of just how easy modern transceivers are to operate.



The old rig was very popular in its day for novices upgrading to general class licenses because it was able to operate AM phone. The DX-40 can output about 40 watts from its 6146 final amplifier tube. I bought the transmitter after being assured that it “works fine.” It didn’t! The problem was not major, only an obviously burned out resistor. It did have a new upgraded transformer, however, a real plus because these rigs tend to draw too much power from their original transformers.

I found the matching VFO, the HG-10 in the shack of a good friend and local radio club president, K7CXW, an avid Heathkit collector and master of repairs. The VFO, powered by the DX-40, worked well together resulting in good stability but with a very slight chirp as voltage drops with keying. Like many of the vintage tube-type VFO’s of the era, the HG-10’s stability is determined by an 0B2 voltage regulator. It’s a great tube to watch in a darkened room as it glows blue while clamping the voltage to 108 VDC. Some hams have replaced this tube with solid state zener diodes for greater stability. Because I like to keep old rigs as close to their original condition as possible, I left well enough alone.

CW sent with a manual key or bug can provide its owner with an unmistakable signature as the receiving ham can often identify an old friend by the rhythm or swing to his fist. The slight chirp on my CW signal also identified my rig as possibly being old and “hollow state.”

Other than the necessity of having to zero-beat each station before transmitting, operating CW with a vintage transmitter is not all that much of a challenge. But attempting to use a 1940’s era receiver presents real problems in today’s very crowded bands.

### **The Receiver**

To relive my novice year of 1960 (the novice license was only good for one year) I turned to a used Hallicrafters S-38A. The five-tube receiver, first manufactured in 1946, is recognized as one of the most popular shortwave receivers ever made. As with many other new novices, it was my first receiver. It wasn’t long before I had saved up enough paper route money for a “real” radio, a Hallicrafters SX-24 Skyrider Defiant. This radio was touted by the manufacturer as containing every technical wonder the company produced. It also weighed a ton and took up half of my desk space. I sure wish I still had it today.

I came upon my current S-38A at the Orlando, Florida Hamfest a few years ago. It looked like a “good-for-parts-only clunker.” A bit rusty, missing both back and bottom panels, it was sitting in the dirt behind a club booth. “How much?” I asked.

“It belonged to a silent key. Proceeds go to the XYL. Just make an offer.”

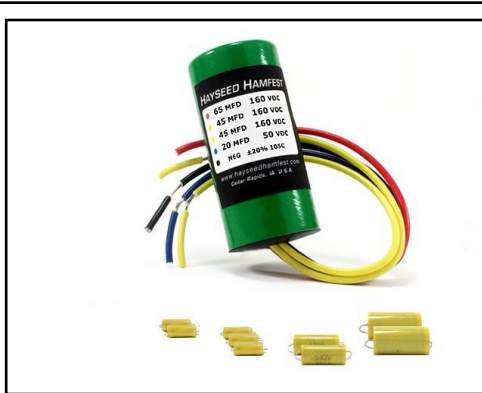
“\$10?”

“Sold!”

On the bench, I found that inside, the power cord was frayed down to the bare wire. This needed to be replaced right away. Once the dust was blown away, the circuitry on the bottom did not look all that bad. The wiring insulation was not cracking, often the case with old boat anchors. I plugged it into my variac and very slowly increased the voltage to prevent exploding capacitors and other sources of smoke and fire. The tubes all began to glow and to my delight, the radio began to buzz loudly. “This radio works!” I thought. “Maybe all it needs are some new filter capacitors.” I was right. Fortunately, a complete set of replacement capacitors for this receiver are available on-line for \$23.50, sparing me hours of searching through friends’ junk boxes and at ham fests. The four-section tubular electrolytic capacitor is reconstructed to look and fit just like the original.



A frayed power cord and some aged capacitors were all that was needed to put an old receiver back on the air.



Capacitor set for restoring the old receiver.

As I remembered from my early days of hamming with this radio, the bands were always a jungle of overlapping signals. Selectivity being almost non-existent, I had built a crude audio filter. Today, there are thousands more stations on the air, especially during a contest weekend. Trying to participate using this receiver would be impossible. Fortunately, I had the answer: a Radio Shack (may they rest in peace) DSP audio filter to make the rig usable.

### Evaluating an Old Rig Safely

When working on a vintage “boatanchor”, hams who have come of age in the era of solid state transceivers need to remember that old rigs employ lethal voltages that can literally cause death by electrocution. Even a little five-tube table radio has 120 volts on its ungrounded chassis. Touching any metal part can zap you. I always keep one hand in my pocket or behind my back when testing the voltages in any powered-up equipment.

Generally, the steps involved in powering up a vintage tube-type radio include:

1. Remember high voltage safety.
2. Look for obvious burned out parts.
3. If everything looks ok, you can try to power it up SLOWLY using a variac or a 60 to 100 watt light bulb in series with the line cord. If you hear sizzling, popping or smell smoke, pull the plug!
4. Most likely the tubes in an old radio will be good, but capacitors do not age gracefully. The electrolytic capacitors in the power supply and the wax covered paper capacitors in the audio output circuits will have deteriorated with age. If you hear a loud buzzing from the speaker, rejoice. You have a working radio. Just seek out a source of some new caps.
5. If the tubes glow but you hear nothing, it's time to test for voltages and trace circuits. Again, be careful and keep that hand in your pocket.

### Running the Sprint

Not having a T/R (transmit/receive) relay to toggle the antenna between the receiver and transmitter, I used two coax switch boxes I had found at the ham fest. One switches the antenna while the other grounds the receiver's antenna input so I can hear my signal while transmitting. Today's transceivers, of course, have a CW side-tone built in. Having to zero beat each station with the VFO and then remembering to throw two switches to transmit was a little clunky at first. But I soon got back into the rhythm of old time operating.

I began my first SKCC Weekend Sprintathon by employing the search and pounce technique, tuning across the 20 meter band and calling any audible contest station. Once my confidence increased, I staked out a vacant frequency and began calling “CQ WES.” The results



The results were fantastic. My 40 watts of old time radio bagged me 78 QSO's in less than four hours. Two Sprintathons were enough to make me a Centurian.

Soon after uploading my log, I received a very special e-mail which began: *"Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Gather 'round and pay heed to the news of this day! Let there be revelry & celebration for yet another SKCC member has advanced to the Centurion Cx1 level of SKCC achievement !!! Dennis Lazar, W4DNN, SKCC# 3379, has achieved the coveted 1st generation SKCC member achievement known far and wide as the Centurion Cx1 award."*

### **CW and Boatanchors are Fun**

A typical CW exchange when operating with a vintage rig can be predictable:

"Ur 569 OM. Sig sounds like ur running vintage."

"RR rig hr is a DX-40 es S-38A."

"Wow, had those when I was a novice. Would like to find another some day."

During a rag chew, this usually begins a long discussion of ham stations now fondly remembered and legendary solar cycles never to be seen again in our lifetimes.

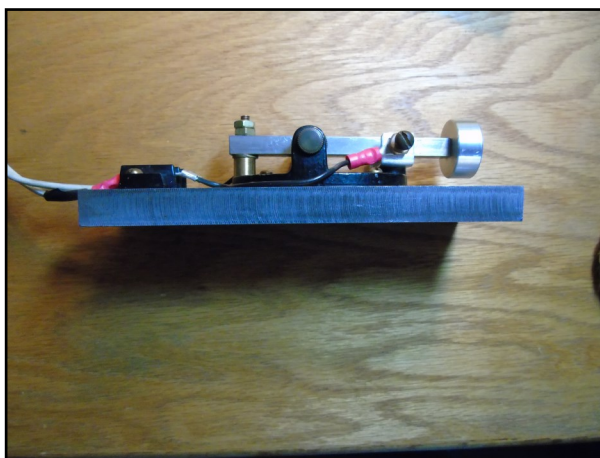
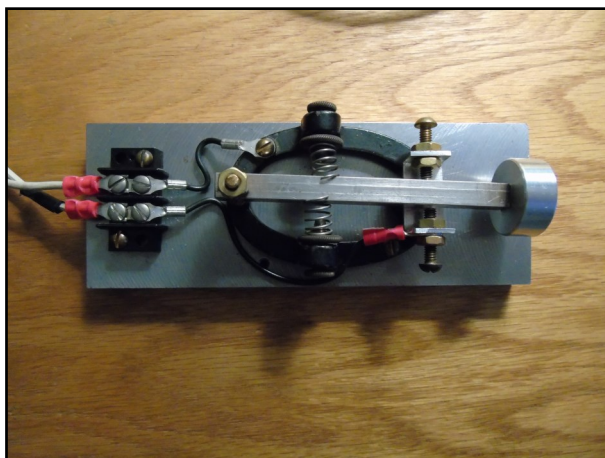
I have enjoyed CW for many years for the unparalleled signal to noise ratio that enables it to cut through QRN and QRM like no other conversational mode. It also is a must for the QRP operator in the field where power requirements and rig size and weight need to be minimized. Sure, CW has many operating advantages both for contesting and DX chasing. However, with that said, Straight Key Century Club members will testify that "Operating CW is just plain fun."

*Ed...This article first appeared in the December 2017 QST and reprinted by permission from ARRL.*

## **K3VYL's Home Brew Sideswiper**

Check out Rob's (#4591) "repurposing" (recycling) an old straight key base and adding a few extra parts. Like most of you, I have a bag/drawer of old key parts and this seems like a enjoyable way to "repurpose" some of these old parts.

*"Here are some pictures of a key that I built using a cast iron base from a hand pump key. It is a joblonski style sideswiper key. Only wrinkle is that I have been using a bug for so long that I am having trouble learning this thing!"*



## QSOs Are Like a Box of Mixed Chocolates

As I tuned across 7.056 MHz I encountered a QSO in progress. Hearing one station say "I have been Ragchew-ing for 35 years" My ears perked up like the Easter Bunny's. I may not be a diehard ragchewer, but I do enjoy the opportunity to have more than the minimum SKCC exchange QSO that too often (IMHO) takes place, so I called WF1S after he finished his QSO.

Jack came right back to my call, we exchanged the usual info and Jack commented that he usually likes to learn about the person at the other end of his coax.

We spent the better part of the next hour in one of the most interesting QSOs of my 30+ years as a Ham.

As it turned out, not only is Jack a charter member in the SKCC (#40), he and I share more than just a few things in common. Jack spent 23 years in the U.S. Navy, retiring in 1974 a Chief Boatswains Mate. Although I spent only 10 years in the Navy, separating as First Class Petty Officer in 1970, We were both stationed on Destroyer Tenders; Jack was aboard the USS Yellowstone AD-27, while I was aboard the USS Arcadia AD-23 and both ships were home ported in Newport, Rhode Island.

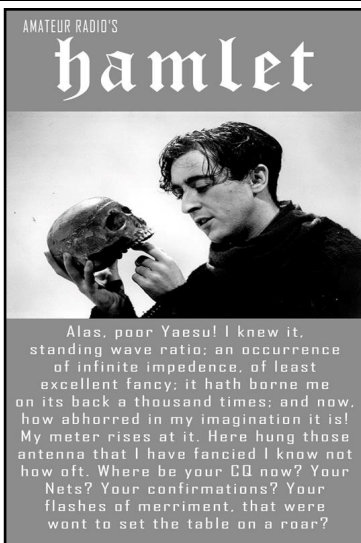
We both learned quite a bit about 'The person at the other end of our coax' and had a most enjoyable conversation which concluded only because the Band dropped out on us forcing us to say 73.

Jack and I have more to chat about and agreed via e-mail that we will again take up our unfinished QSO.

So what is the point of this tale?

You never know who you are going to meet in a QSO. It might be a Barry Goldwater or a King Hussein, a celebrity or someone from your own home town!

You cannot possibly know what fascinating conversation may lie ahead in a QSO, unless you give a call! .....*de Rich W4RQ*



## Hamlet.....What A Ham!

Here is a "ditty" that needs little explanation! Someone had way too much time on their hands and perhaps a bit too much education! Even so, it is pretty clever and worth the read...just once. Truly this author has a problem of mixing his hobbies!

I taught Shakespeare but had never before run across this version of Hamlet...should that be "Ham...let/not?... In all my years of teaching or studying Shakespeare. "Alas, poor Shakespeare, was ever a man so humiliated!" Have you ever run across other "warpings" of Shakespeare turned to amateur radio? If so, I'd love to see them...please send them along to your editor.

"Farewell, parting is such sweet sorrow." *de K8AQM*



## NRR 2018 Summary

I'm really not much of a joiner. Nor do I volunteer much of my precious time off, but something about Novice Rig Roundup spurred me to get involved. Heck, I was never a Novice, having only been licensed since 2009. So what is it with NRR? Fun. It's just plain fun. A whole lot of fun.

I've been an NRR participant since 2015, when Bry AF4K, SKCC 1879S, and Gary WD4NKA, SKCC 11826, dreamed up the idea of an event based on operating classic novice era equipment. The idea struck a chord with many amateurs, and has continued to grow each year. For the 2018 NRR, Bry and Gary passed the reigns of organization to Dan W7PAZ, SKCC 13300C. Paul KB3PUW, SKCC 3812, and I, N3PDT, SKCC 6861S, pitched in to help. To our own amazement, these first-timers pulled it off. We had over 250 users register for Paul's excellent online logger, of which 164 logged 4150 contacts. Once again Jill, N8FQ graciously provided a real-time sked page, <http://n8fq.org/sked/index.php?board=nrru>. It's an extremely useful tool for finding other NRR operators. We had some hiccups of course, but overall the roundup went smoothly, and the feedback has been great!

For some, it's a fun, nostalgic stroll through their early days as a radio amateur. For others, it's another good excuse to repair and play with the old gear, or even homebrew new rigs for the event. Whatever the attraction is for the participants, we tend to have a lot of fun doing it!

While Novice Rig Roundup is geared to operating under the restrictions of 75 watts plate input and crystal-controlled transmitters, anyone interested is encouraged to participate, even if you're not currently running vintage, or novice gear. You'll hear everything from one-tube homebrews to Flex participating. We do keep score, but it ends up being kind of secondary to the experience of just getting on the air and making contacts with like-minded amateurs. The scoring is setup to reward operators of stations with 75 watts input, or less, and transmitting under crystal control. Prizes are awarded, however we do that through random drawings rather than points. There is not much of a required exchange. NRR contacts tend to be actual conversations. Of course, those conversations tend to be centered on our stations!

Anecdotally, we made a bit of a splash on the airwaves this past NRR. I heard multiple stations most every operating session. The upper end of 40m, in particular, was practically "wall-to-wall" at times. We joke about all the chirps, drifts and whoops, but to be honest, most of the stations I worked sounded good to great. Apparently, a Knight T-50 doesn't have to chirp, and there's a LOT of good sounding DX-40s and DX-60s out there.

The post-event soapbox really tells the story of NRR better than I can. There are many great write-ups, operating stories, and a ton of good photos from this past Roundup on the NRR website, <http://novicerigroundup.com/soapbox2018.com>. It's worth the read!

Please take a look around our website, <http://novicerigroundup.com>, and consider joining in with us. If NRR sounds like fun to you, and you just can't wait until March 3-11, 2019, you can join us every Monday from sunup on the east coast, to midnight on the west, for Novice Rig "Night", an informal "event" that is gaining momentum as more participate. We'd love to hear from you!

73, Doug N3PDT, SKCC 6861S

## Photos from NRR 2018



Enjoyed dusting off the "Chief" for a couple of QSO's. Maybe more time next year! Thanks for putting the event on!  
Mike - K5NZ



It's always good to get the DX40 on the air, get the caps charged and fill the room with the scent of warm tubes. Power output is about 35W to my vertical and inverted-L antennas. I have no collection of crystals, so use the VF-1 VFO. The signal sounds fairly clean on 80m and 40m with occasional frequency jumps. On 15m and 10m there's an FM buzz and chirp as well. Warbling, chirping signals have character and add to the fun of the NRR. I was moving between a 1953 Vibroplex bug and an old Swiss straight key. I'm still learning the bug and this was my first on-air attempt with it. Thanks for 50 QSO's and some good transcontinental contacts on 40m. 73, Toby VE7CNF



Rick, N8XI FB station



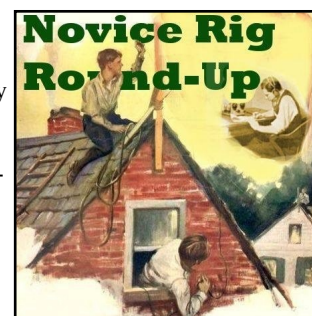
Had a great time working all the old Novice type rigs. TX... used Hallicrafters HT-40 with HA5 VFO, New just finished for NRR 6L6 at 3 watts, was hoping for at least 5 watts, Johnson Adventurer, Johnson Ranger, and T4XB. RX... Drake 2B with 2BQ, R4B, R-390A, and SPR-4. 73, Tim K9SB



During the nine day NRR I used 4 transmitters and 5 receivers to make 23 contacts in 15 states and British Columbia. While not a huge number of contacts, this was a great opportunity for me to try out several of my rigs. Which work best in a variety of situations? Which are easiest to operate? Which are most reliable? Which sound the best on the air? The list goes on....I'm already starting to make plans for next year. Many thanks to the NRR team for their work.  
73, Niel - W0VLZ



Great fun breaking out the old rigs from yesteryear and putting them on the air. Started out really slowly, firing up my Heathkit DX-35 at 95 volts primary input power and let her cook a while before running it at 115VAC. Finally got her up to full power and loaded into a 40-meter SW dipole antenna, not a whole lot different from back in 1972. All systems seemed a 'go'. Propagation was good on 40 meters, and with 48 watts on the output, I began to make some contacts with 'fair to good' signal reports, albeit with some chirp. And then it happened. Right in the middle of a QSO with Ken, VE3FIT, the monitored signal became erratic, tone began to shift wildly, and the stripline breaker tripped. 73, Bill KE3O







I had a great time firing up and working the NRR gang with my old Globe Scout and Chief as well as my newly acquired Adventurer. I set up a separate operating table at the cost of blocking access to most of my storage (including things I later wanted to add to the NRR station).. It was certainly worthwhile. Using the Sked Board was a welcome change from my Novice days and made life easier most of the time. I owe a lot to my Mackay Marine receiver. It really helped to pull in signals that weren't always loud and clear. I have every intention of being back again next year. Thanks to everyone that made or tried to make a QSO with me. 73, K2YWE Dan



I only made 2 WES QSO's using my NRR station. Condx were pretty bad so I just stayed in the basement for the Novice Rig Roundup event this weekend.

Rig: Drake 2NT using all crystal control on 40 and 80.

Rcvr: Collins 75A4. Key was the Vizkey cootie. Ant: 160 meter horizontal loop...de W3NP #3182s



Kinda ruff going this weekend for me with NRR gear.....de Curt KB5JO #2027t



Didn't get to operate for long this weekend, maybe half an hour, but had a lot of fun fielding my homebrew 3d-printed cootie key for its maiden voyage. Worked great and I didn't get asked for a lot of fills so it must have been doing okay.

Thanks to all the ops that make this a great event, 73 Mike N2HTT #203c



I was working Novice Rig Roundup this week. So I thought I would just use my novice gear to work WES, too. Receiver for this WES was Drake 2-C. Transmitter for all but 5 QSOs was a Heathkit HX-11 (40w). The remainder were with a Globe Scout 680 (35w). All were with crystal control. Navy flameproof key. All but one of my QSOs was on 40m. Even with my equipment handicap, I did about as well as I ever do! Can't wait for the boat anchor theme WES!.....de Steve KE4OH #13651s

## RARS Fest

Well for the first SKCC booth at RARSfest in Raleigh, NC I think things went great! The booth received a “Recognition” from the fest committee as a one of the “most popular booths”. It was requested ( with a “Please”) that we return next year. I decided to display a few



The “Official” SKCC booth at RARS Fest...that’s AE4LD Larry #3090t and KB4QQJ Randy #3508t

of my keys, bugs and sideswipers for attendees to look at and test drive. I had 6 bugs, 16 straight keys and 3 sideswipers all active on the table. As Raleigh is a fairly small hamfest in NC I was hoping (optimistically) for at least 10 or 15 SKCC members to stop by the booth and say hello. I didn’t have any great expectations for the general attendee to stop by. Well...I don’t think I could have been more wrong! From 8:00 AM till about 2:00PM (fest closed at 3:00pm) I didn’t have a chance to do much of anything but answer questions and chat with 44...I say again 44 SKCC members that stopped by! Great Googly Moogly. Larry AE4LD

and I had a blast talking with members who I had in my log but had never met. Members were there from Canada to Texas.

The lowest number was AB4PP # 032 and the most recent was Todd NC4TE #18474

A local friend supplied me with some SKCC items from his shop. Shirts, Hats, Mugs and Tumblers and he was very appreciative of the orders he got online while the members were at the fest. No purchase needed but a stop by the site <https://www.skccwear.com/shop> would let Bob at Action Engravers know his donations were appreciated. You might even see something you like.

A couple of interesting meetings also. A week or so before the fest and in a rush to show a verity of instruments I realized I didn’t have a VIZkey sideswiper. Several other manufactures and home brews but no VIZ and VIZ is a very big part of SKCC. So I started searching for one. Found it in Charlotte NC and had it shipped to me ASAP. HA! Want to guess who just happened to stop by and say “ I just sold one of those”. Yup, the very owner I had purchased that one from. And no, I wouldn’t sell it back to him... :-)

Next, I had a somewhat scarce Dentsu- Seiki Swallow on display. While there are hundreds of them imported into the US with “Swallow” on the logo. Only about 50 were imported to the US and even fewer with Swallow misspelled “Swalow” with one “L”. He was telling me how he loved the way his sent and had no idea about the misspelling. About 2 hours later he stopped back by the booth with a photo of his with one “L”!! He was a happy fella to learn the history.

I had keys weighing 4 pounds and one that was the star that fit entirely on a Penny. Photos will be shown where ever Ted can find room in the article. The key was custom made for us



an LNR precision from a friend in Bulgaria. It is fully operational AND fully functioning adjustments. There were scores of photos taken of it and the display.

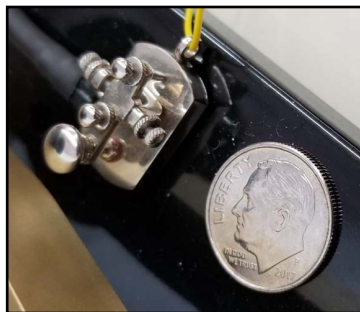
I couldn't get a decent group photo arranged since it was a one day fest. Some folks came early and left early and others came late and left late. So, I just started taking photos of visiting members and having them sign the guest sheet.

It's too late for me to secure a booth at Morganton NC but you can bet I'll be making some rounds to fests in NC. If you would like to display a booth in the South East US let me know and I'll get the Banners, Brochures and Apparel shipped out to you. I'm pretty sure the SKCC will fund a portion or all of the booth depending on price. If I can manage a spot at Shelby I'll be there. If not, I'll certainly be back at Raleigh, Morganton and Wilmington next year. I haven't had that much fun since I was a Novice. "Why, back in them days we were coping on stone tablets, none of these Apple critters" ;-)



A great collection of keys were present at the booth with a lot of interests in the passing members. One of the most interesting keys is the micro key shown here next to the SKCC key. With the dime shown that micro key must be a "little finger" taper.

Note the collection of SKCC items also shown there at the SKCC booth.



Here are a great collection of the SKCC members who were at the RARS Fest taken at the SKCC booth.



AB4PP



AC4FZ



AC4GC



AD4XX

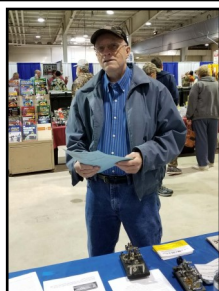


AF4NC



WB4M





K2QJ



K4AOA



N4RF



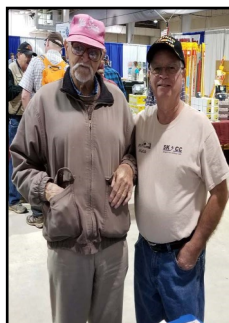
K4RLC



K4TF



K6RM



K8NQQ AA4LD



KAWYC



KE4RUN



KG4RBS



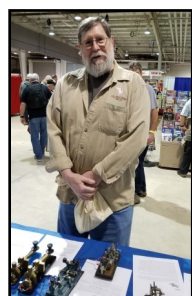
KN4JBM



KS4KSB



KS4VX KF4EUT



KU4AF



N4LQ



N4PIR



NN4OO



N3YUG



NC4TE



W2ZDP



WB4BOH



W4USR



W8HOG



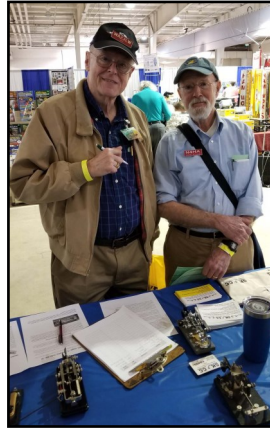
W8WZ

And there are even more continued on the next page!.....

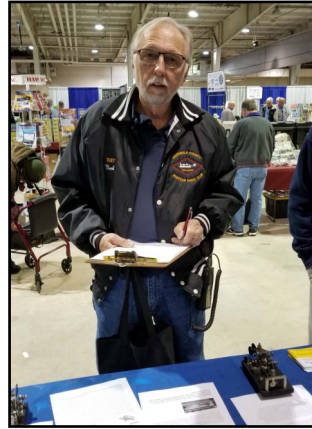




XYL and WA4A



WA2JLW N4HA



W8GY



WK4WC

What a great group of SKCC members stopped by the SKCC booth! Randy sent along a list of the various keys, bugs and cooties that were on display.

### BUGS

1. 1940 Vibroplex Blue Racer
2. 1940 RCAF bug produced by Wilson Co. It has feet on top so it can be turned over and operated left handed.
3. 1951 Vibroplex Zhyper (factory black crinkle instead of Japanned finish)
4. 1938 Vibroplex Martin Jr. (pristine)
5. 1953 Dentsu-Seiki "Swallow" one "L" Scarce
6. 194X Lionel J-36

### STRAIGHT KEYS

1. NT9K Pro-Pump Club Key (Custom Black Base)
2. Custom NT9K Pro-Pump (Custom Blue Base)
3. 2017 SKCC Club Key
4. Hi-Mound 803 "Hi-Deluxe" Key
5. Hi-Mound 802 "Deluxe"
6. Hi-Mound 704
7. Prototype Kent LK-1 Leg Key
8. K2RFP Custom light base
9. K2RFP Custom Dark base Adjustable tension
10. KB4QQJ Homebrew mini key
11. KB4QQJ Minute Man Mini by LNR Precision (designed after Israeli Spy Key)
12. WWII RAF Brass WT 8 AMP
13. French Army Special Forces Miniature Jardillier Key (1950's)
14. A WWII Lionel J-38 and a US Army Signal Corp J-38
15. Micro Custom Key from Bulgaria. 1cm x1cm x 5mm (fits on penny with room to spare)

## SIDESWIPERS

1. Custom NT9K Blue Bounce
2. Kungsimport Kit sold for \$1 in early QST add) About 200 made. ( My favorite of all Sideswipers.
3. VIZ Key Sideswiper

## SKCC Visiting Members

- |                                       |                           |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. N3ND Dan #18370                    | 23. Barry K6RM #10458     |
| 2. KA4WYC (Wild Yellow Chicken) #1889 | 24. Steve WA3TMR #6966    |
| 3. AE4LD Larry # 3090T                | 25. Grant AA4GB #15286    |
| 4. Tom AF4NC #12471                   | 26. Ron KN4JBM #18362     |
| 5. Jim K4AOA #8333C                   | 27. Jake KK6L #7518S      |
| 6. John NN4OO #958                    | 28. Walt K4ZVK #16134     |
| 7. Jason N3YUG #15885S                | 29. Todd NC4TE #18474     |
| 8. Steve N4LQ #3740                   | (Most Recent Member)      |
| 9. Roger KS4VX #3591                  | 30. Hargrove KE4RUN #2365 |
| 10. Wayne W2ZDP #7042                 | 31. Buddy WB4M #6618      |
| 11. Bob K2QJ #5189                    | 32. Bob K4RLC #132        |
| 12. Gerald W8HOG #8775T               | 33. Lane WKWC #17012      |
| 13. Jim AC4GC #18293                  | 34. Jim AD4XX #12937S     |
| 14. John KU4AF #1631T                 | 35. Bill K4TF #17618      |
| 15. Wally AC4FZ #4987T                | 36. Denny KG4RBS #17857   |
| 16. Gary N4PIR #15054T                | 37. Bruce WA4ZLK #4884    |
| 17. Mark WG8Y #7932                   | 38. Bob WA4A 5067         |
| 18. Ed NH7AA #15000                   | 39. Bill KA4KSB #6738     |
| 19. Dennis W4USR #16035               | 40. Roy WA2JLW #16600     |
| 20. JP AB4PP # 032                    | 41. Herb N4HA #12677      |
| 21. Roy K8NQQ #912                    | 42. Darrell W4CX #12349   |
| 22. Bob AA2FD #8641                   | 43. Carl W8WZ #16103      |
|                                       | 44. Randy KB4QQJ #3508T   |



Dan N3ND #18370

Of course there was more to see and do besides the SKCC booth. Randy sent along this picture, I think he's dreaming-scheming on getting a new rig!



Someone had a beautiful R390A receiver for sale that I would love to have bought. It's exactly like the ones I used as a Morse Intercept operator in the USAF. ....deAA4XX



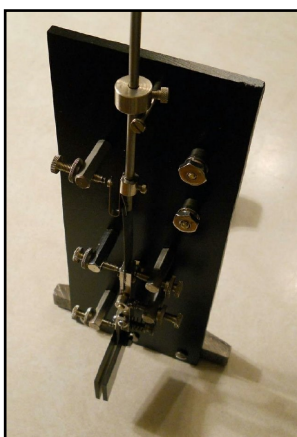
## Origin of the VIZ Key Vertical Bug

Here is the factual story on the VIZKEY Vertical Bug:

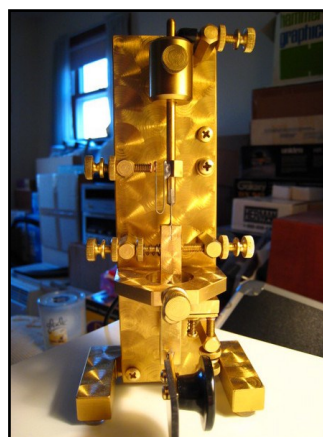
“I had always coveted a Wire Chief Vibroplex bug but I had heard they were insanely expensive even IF you could find one. So about a year after I started the VIZKEY line of bugs and keys I had an idea (unusual for me!). Anyway, one evening I tried out running my 90 degree horizontal bug vertically. I rigged up a clamp and stood it up on end. Low and behold it worked perfectly. All I then needed to do was to extend the base plate and fit a "foot" on it. Plus a little bit of work on the knuckle joint for the operating arm. Low and behold the VIZKEY VERTICAL bug was born. The parts are the same for the most part on both the bugs. Plus it is WAY simpler than the operating mechanism of the Wire Chief. 2 years ago I sold the company to Curt (KU8L) and he continues to do an excellent job making fine keys. Tom Desaulniers/K4VIZ”



Early Mecograph vertical bug



Vibroplex "Wire Chief"



VIZKey Vertical bug



After a week of nostalgic Novice Rig Round Up I was ready to shut down and put the HR10B and T60 back on the shelf..... but I had to work a few WES Q's and do the reporting part because I live close enough to maybe catch a donut if there are enough logs submitted :) Actually, it was a good reminder that WES is relaxed enough, and not so crowded, that even the most basic 50 year old rigs are plenty good enough and fun for a WES QSO or two! 73 Scott ka9p #14095c

## An Ode To CW

**In days of old, when ops were bold,  
And sideband not invented,  
Words were passed by pounding brass,  
And all were quite contented.**

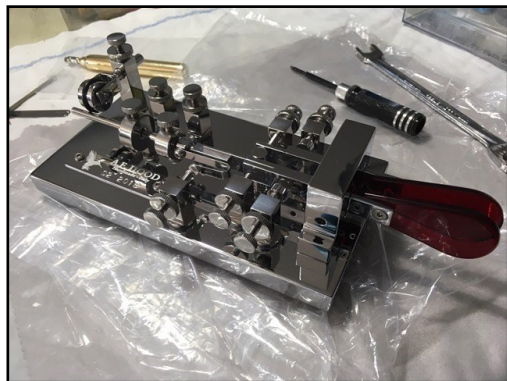
**- Unknown**

de...Kurt W8IQ #7557t

## The Magnetic Bug and Maybe More?

You may use a straight key, you may use a “cootie” and you may use a “bug,” all are great and have many fine points. For many in SKCC a bug is their preferred key and of course there are many varieties and all of them favorites by some of us. I have been partial to those earlier bugs made and designed by TR McElroy. I like their weight and feel and their looks too! Vibroplex bugs are most likely the commonly used bugs by SKCC members and they are very good. But what do you know of the “magnetic” bugs and especially those designed with today’s skill and technology support? Here are some “bugs” with a different twists; “magnetic

returns” rather than springs.



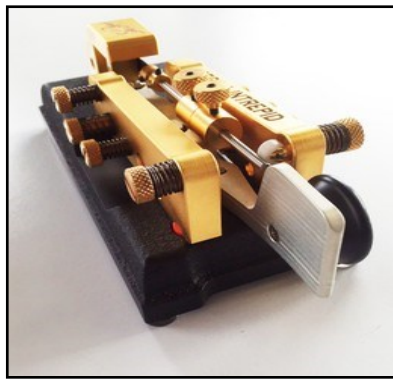
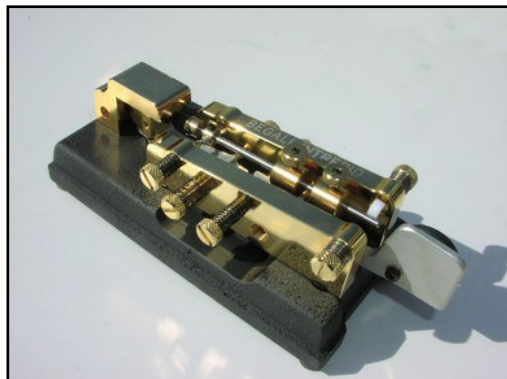
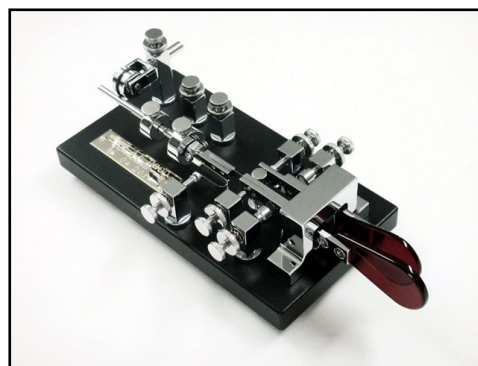
*“I recently received my new “Evolution Chrome” bug made by Alberto Frattini, IIQOD. Besides being a superior bug functionally, it is also a work of art. Alberto is a retired aircraft machinist who has devoted himself to making, perhaps, the best keys in the world. He offers several models, including his version of the classic J-36. One feature of my new key is that there is a separate arm for dits and dahs -- similar to an iambic paddle. Coming from a classic Vibroplex bug, that took a little bit of getting used to. Once adjusted, it is absolutely smooth with no bounce on the dits at all. At 71 years of age, Alberto was lamenting that he doesn't have anyone to take over his work. He only*

*makes between 25 to 30 keys a year. If you want one, expect a wait of at least 90 days between ordering and receiving your key. Alberto won't accept payment of any kind until he is ready to ship. My key cost 453 Euros which, via Paypal ran about \$560 dollars -- which included air package express. Bert, F6HKA has a slightly different model which he really likes.*

*This key is so well made that it will be the last bug I ever buy. I plan on using it until I am no longer able to send cw. 73 Andy, k2oo”*

I recently ordered the “Black Base Evolution” bug from Alberto and am anxiously awaiting it’s arrival. Except for the “chrome vs black base” the bug is the same.

Begali also makes a magnetic action bug and if you have been to Dayton you probably gave it a try. It is extremely smooth and easy to adjust. Unfortunately I don’t have a review of this bug from an SKCC member. Perhaps in the next issue of the Rag Chew someone will have a review of the



Begali magnetic bug.

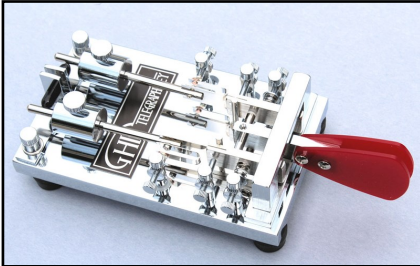
Rumor has it that “VIZKey” may be developing a magnetic action bug soon.

I know there are other magnetic bugs out there, I’d like to hear from their owners too.

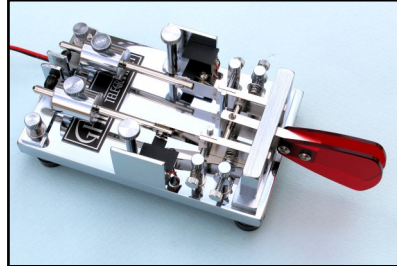


## GHD Bugs

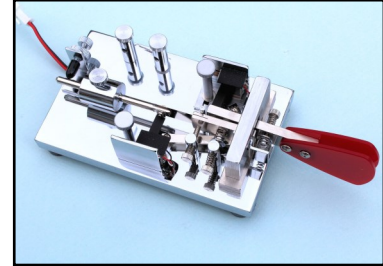
Although not magnetic, these bugs made by Toshihiko Ujiie (JA7GHD) in Sendai City, Japan are quite interesting as well as beautifully crafted. Here are just three of the excellent



GN209W "Autokey" Bug



GN209W-P "Autokey" Bug  
with Optical Sensors!



GN206W with *Optical*  
*Sensors*

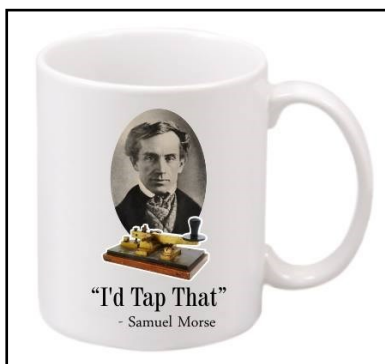
bugs made by GHD. I chose to show these because of the two designs and the optical sensors used in two of them. For more detailed information on these as well as the other fine products of GHD just Google "GHD telegraph keys." It is well worth the read of the article "**Bugs - Want some Technology with That?**" by Marshall G. Emm N1FN/VK5FN if you want to know all about bugs and correct settings.

GHD makes straight keys and iambic paddles as well as fine "bugs." If anyone has these products I'd like to have a report on what you have and what you think of the performance of these products.



The perfect addition to my new truck!!!

Making a few patches to bring to Hamvention tomorrow. Anyone that wants one whom will not be at Hamvention, they are \$5 and you can send it via PayPal to [jeff@jse-repair.com](mailto:jeff@jse-repair.com) I will mail them out first class beginning next Monday. My first batch of 20 is a donation to the SKCC booth to give out.



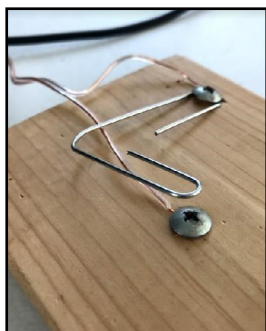
## Shack Toy

KD8GZ... I Google'd coffee cups with Morse code images. I'm sure it's for sale somewhere. Cool cup, huh?

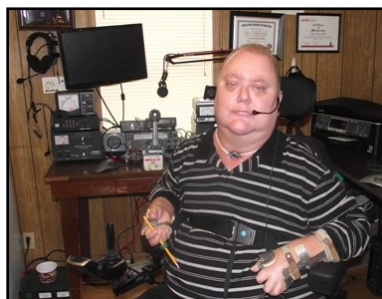
After "Googleing" correctly, this cup can be found at:

***[www.hamcrazy.com](http://www.hamcrazy.com)***

## Great Pictures You Might Have Missed from Facebook



Maybe the simplest key I've ever seen.. By N7TMS #10049



NM5Z at his FB station  
SKCC #17215s



Fine station of WB6IZG #17714t



Radio "N3RDG" headquarters..WOW!

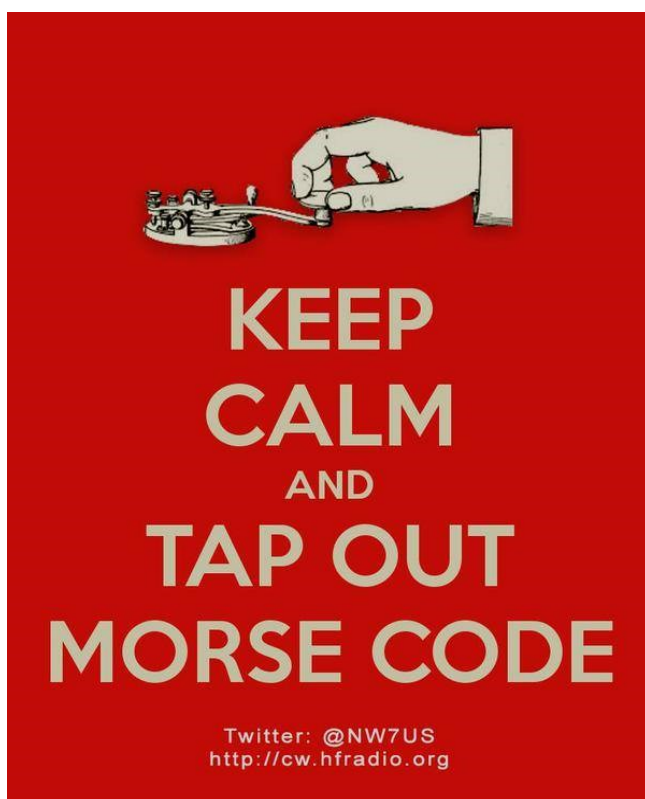


Real Time Wireless, 1938.

Long before there was an internet, Old hands at the key and young alike traversed hundreds of miles, met and conversed regularly on rigs such as this. It was the Social Media of the Great Depression. Glass, Steel and High Voltages, plus knowing Morse and understanding enough about radio to obtain an FCC license, and to build up one of these stations was the goal of many a wee laddy during the Depression. Almost every advancement in electronic technology as pertains communications had at least one Ham's hand at the till, who cut their teeth on rigs like these.

This "rig", the Receiver, Transmitter and Power supply was built by myself from original parts in 1990, and is used on the air quite often. You can hear me using the "1930s Portable Station" between 7100 - 7125 kHz during the second week of March, as I will be participating in an international global contest, "NRR", or Novice Rig Round-up. Oh yeah.... it's all Morse code.

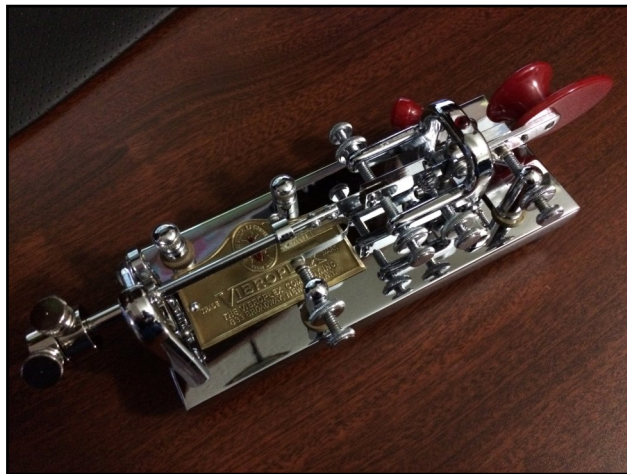
de WD4NKA







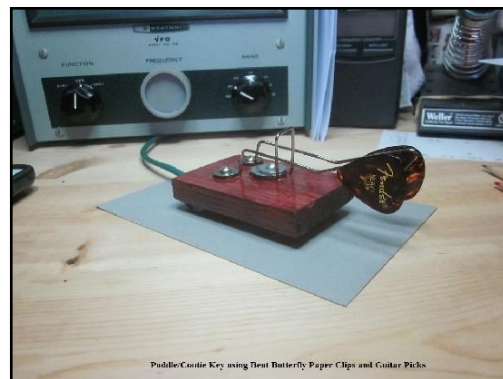
Took the old girl (Central Electric Key) for a ride tonight with the Drake TR7. Made a few contacts even after the sprint. Love the feel and the sound of the feedback of it. Working on getting the base feet replaced and the spring replaced, we will be good to go. Take care everyone, es gud nite. NE5TH #1585t



Pulled out the old Vibroplex Blue Racer Deluxe (S/N 208349) that my father bought me back in the late 50's after I passed my General. It has been sitting gathering dust for a bunch of years, so I took it apart and gave it a detailed cleaning and put her back together. The gadget on the end is a commercially made slowdown piece that I picked up years ago. As it sits there now, the speed is about 13 WPM. Should have it back on line later today....or maybe a few days later after I get back in the groove with it. K3DRJ #17818



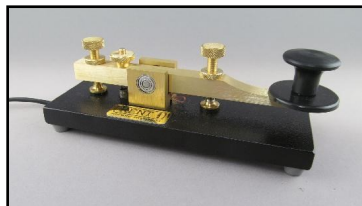
Viking Ranger II - MFJ-962 - SX-101A  
Add a Vibroplex 1944 WWII & the NT9K Pro-Pump This is going to be fun....K0KEX #5220s



Rick N8XI's new key! Love the "paddles"



KQ4MM's sweet "cootie!"



W8ES #9104s has a sweet Kent key!



N4OW's FB cootie!

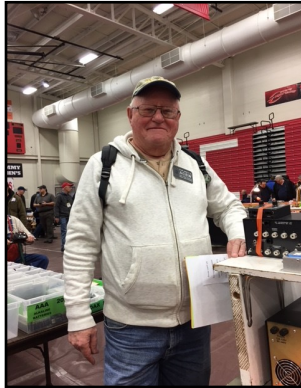
## SKCC Presence at Toledo, OH de N8KR



The Toledo Ohio Hamfest has always been the “beginning” of hamfest season for me. That March Sunday brings together many hams from the tri-state area launching the season of hamfests and giving hams a taste of the upcoming Dayton/Xenia Hamvention. Together with Josh – W9HT (7474T) the hamfest table was set up and thanks to Ted – K8AQM from Michigan, we had the large SKCC banner to display. With hamfest “goodies” including keys on the table, we enjoyed a steady stream of lookers. We also had the “official” sign-in paper for SKCC. While the picture shown only shows 17 members, we had 26 stop by and sign in: KC8TVW (Steve – 13101), N8LJ (Lee-9954C), K9FMX (Terry-1833), KE8CEW (Greg – 15805), KD8VSQ (Jeremy-13072), K8WZY (Mike-6280), KD9GDY (Jim-18156), AC8W (Stan-2813), NQ8T (Steve-5919), WA9BBN (Ed-17763C), KA9GKE (Rose-17764), K8PRG (Rick-14553T), KB9OS (Larry-17415), W8RF (Mike-1853), W8BN (Lanny-1854), W8MAL (Mike-13191), W8KBW (Max-17557), N8KQ (Randy-8934S), K3RC (Bob-4672), KA8HFN (Larry-2046S), W8IQ (Kurt-7557T), K8CLV (Ron-7659T), KW1L (Paul 10700), N8ET (Bill-18432), W9HT (Josh-7474T), and myself N8KR (Ken-7559S). SKCC is alive and well in NW OH/SE MI/NE IN!

Scenes from around the hamfest and close-up of members can be seen on the next page where Jeremy KD8VSQ, Greg KE8CEW and Ted K8AQM also had a table peddling their “wares!”

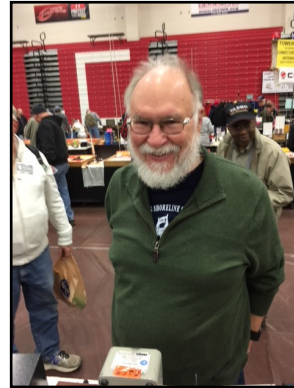




Stan AC8W #2813



Lee N8LJ #9954c



Larry K8MU #14823



Steve NQ8T #5919



Wes AC8JF #10511



Mark K8MGZ #18512



Randy N8KQ #8934s  
Bob W8ARC #8734c



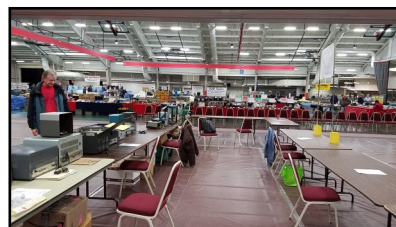
Larry KA8HFN #2046s  
Ron K8CLV #7659t

Other seen but not available for pictures: Jeremy KD8VSQ #13072t, Greg KE8CEW #15805t, Mike NO8C #7239s and Max W8KBW #17557.

Pictures at the hamfest:



KD8VSQ setup before opening



View of setup before opening



Chaos during the event!

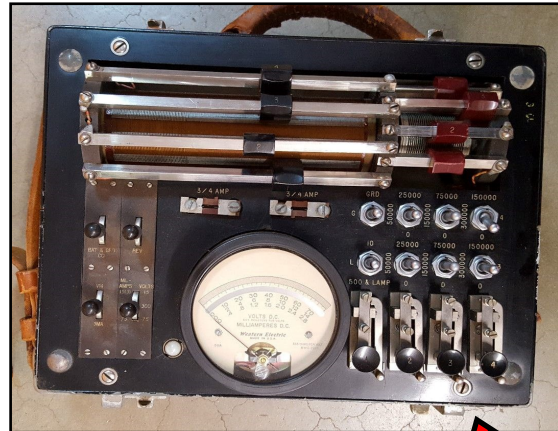


It was a great hamfest with lots of bargains to be found whether looking for rigs, parts or “do-dads” for the shack! Best of all were the great number of SKCC friends to “rag chew” with! The TMRA (Toledo Mobile Radio Association) is one of the larger and better hamfests to begin the new hamfest season; maybe we’ll see you there next year?





SKS cook-out at the KS8KCC multi-multi shack!



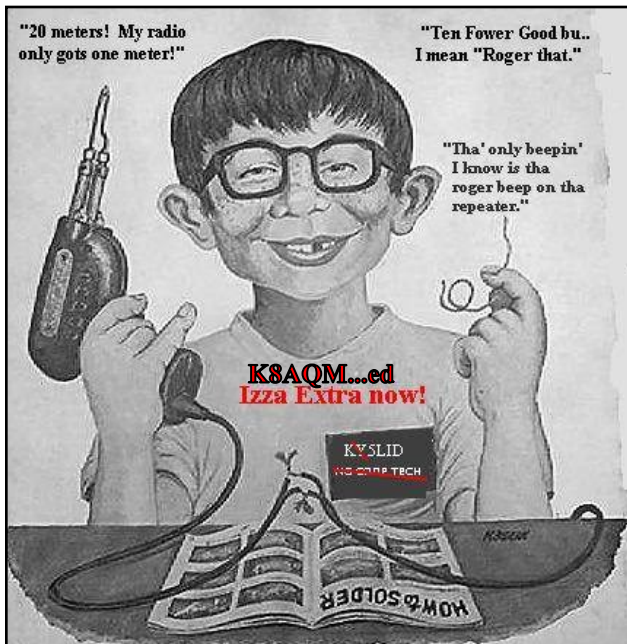
Four keys...What!!!!!!!!!!!!?????



De LU5WE  
....the "perrrrfect" key!  
....a CAT system!  
....keep your "paws" off my key!  
....go ahead, "make my day!"



A fun WES this month, got to spend some good time chasing Q's Saturday and Sunday ! Band conditions weren't the best, ran QRO from the KX3, and put the KX2 to work at 12 watts on 20m Sunday afternoon with good results. Put all four keys to work, the mini SK, TinyBug, SKCC SK, and my new Vibroplex Blue Racer ! Only worked 40 and 20m, no luck on 80m Saturday night. Thanks to all the ops out there, some really good fists ! See y'all next month, all the best and keep CW alive !!....73 de N7EDK, Bradenton, FL



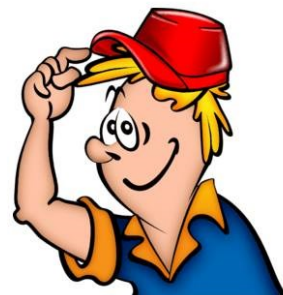
Ham Radio

Is Only an

"Addiction"

If Your Trying

To Quit





## FT8 and SKCC?

Here is a topic you can argue with; there is no denying that FT8 has become very, very popular. It's an easy mode to get started in and can produce some amazing results. Of course the QRP and QRPp folks will say, "big deal, we've been doing these low power QSOs for years and also with amazing results." This is true, indeed they have, just look at the SKCC awards and results as many members have qualified for the "QRP Miles per Watt Award." Hats off to these fantastic achievements and operators; listening intently for those weak fluttery signals and making sure you copied everything correctly...whew, definitely an accomplishment.

But what if your hearing "ain't what it use to be," what if you enjoy the camaraderie of friends and enjoy the chatter that always takes place in a shack get-together? Here at the KS8KCC multi-multi station we really enjoy making QSOs and gathering for great sessions of telling "whoppers" of our great amateur accomplishments and "berating" our friends on their lack of same...ha! We contest for fun but it's a headphone environment and not much chance for the chatter that truly makes the night enjoyable (the SKS specifically). What if we wanted to just gather in the shack, checkout the bands and start the story telling but still wanted to rack up a few QSOs...FT8 is the answer! Since it is 99% computer controlled and automatic (like a video game!...de K8TEZ) it leaves lots of time to chat with the other ops. You don't have to wear headphones, you run way-less power and in a multi station environment you have no intrastation interference!

With Jeremy KD8VSQ #13072t and K8AQM 1629s an SKCC/FT8 event was born! The KS8KCC gang wanted to get together and "shoot the bull," plan for Dayton, think about Field Day and tell those stories...eat too! While doing this we wanted to make some Qs and the KS8KCC station is perfect for a multi-multi FT8 operation. The call "W8F" was secured and the equipment bought to equip the five stations to run FT8. KD8VSQ is the local computer guru (he's the youngest of us old timers) and Jeremy got all the radios doing FT8. On April 28, 2018 W8F was on the air; passing out our grid square so that all those participating in the ARRL grid chasing event would have our grid in their collection. Five stations were on the air letting the computers churn out their "bits" while we laughed, lied and ate! Oh yes, what's a gathering of "hams" without chili, meatballs, sodas and since we didn't have to really worry about sending cw..."807s" were allowed (if you don't understand "807," you don't need to know what it is..."old guy" support food). It was great fun and came with an added "caveat," since we had the call for a week it was "parceled" out like in K3Y to anyone requesting operating time during the week...cool! No two stations on at the same time so all was legal but it also offered different grid squares for the ARRL grid chase! 14 SKCCers had gathered for the day.



Stan, W8ATE explains FT8 to  
Larry K8TEZ



Steve NQ8T on 30m FT8  
Pileup crush!



Brian KG8CO, Jeremy KD8VSQ  
Ken K8KIC, Greg KE8CEW and  
Jeff N8CC...eating!



Greg KE8CEW, Larry K8TEZ, Jeff N8CC, Mark NU8Z and Stan W8ATE and Jeremy KD8VSQ Brian KG8CO



Gregg KE8CEW, Ken K8KIC and Jeremy KD8VSQ



Ken K8KIC and Steve NQ8T discovered they are related!



Running an FT8 pileup Stan W8ATE Oh the pressure!



Jeff N8CC, Stan W8ATE and Brian KG8CO discussing Dayton plans

By now you're thinking what does this have to do with SKCC...everything! We all agreed FT8 won't replace our joy of CW but it provided another excuse for we CW lovers to get together and talk radio, eat and make a few Qs!

While living in Japan one of my JA friends said "Ham radio is the King of hobbies!" He was so right; CW, SSB, rag chewing, DXing, nets, ECC work, digital modes, building gear, restoring gear, satellite operating, hill topping; there is something for everyone in amateur radio. So whatever your second love (first is CW of course) is, use that as an excuse to get together with fellow SKCCers and enjoy this fabulous hobby of ours.

The list of operators who could make the party included:

Jeff, N8CC #7541	Larry, K8TEZ #8426t	Steve, K8QKY #7552
Steve, NQ8T #5919	Ted, K8AQM #1629s	Brian, KG8CO #6362
Mark, NU8Z #11237t	Stan, W8ATE #13165	Ken, K8KIC #2938t
Larry, K8MU #14823	Max, W8KBW #17557	Dave KB8ECG #10169
Jeremy, KD8VSQ#13072t	Greg, KE8CEW #15805t	

So we had a 1x1 call for the week and the final tally of QSOs was 1423... with 625 QSOs on that Saturday alone....48 states ( no Hawaii nor South Dakota..darn) and 63 countries...plus one crockpot of chili, 3/4 crockpot of meatballs 14 cans of soda, 12 bottles of water, big bag of chips and two pots of coffee! Now; "What excuse will you use to have an SKCC gathering in your area?"

73, Ted K8AQM #1629s



## SKCC Presentation Made to FARC

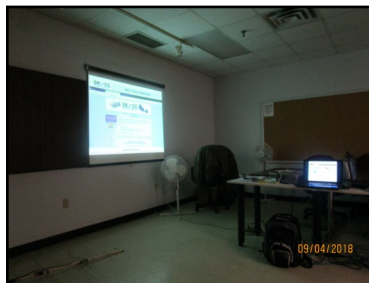
Some time ago Ron AC2C # 2748s, put together a very nice PowerPoint presentation of SKCC. It had become a bit dated with our addition of “skimmers” and a new “sked page,” but was easily updated to represent our club today. I happened to mention this to my friend Dave, VE9CB #12520 while operating as VE9AQM from his home in New Brunswick. Dave thought it would be a great idea to present this PowerPoint to his club, the Fredericton Amateur Radio Club (FARC).

“Good idea Dave, but I can’t make the return trip to Fredericton very easy to make the presentation!”

Dave being a computer guru (which I am not) came up with the idea I could present it via “Skype” with the program running there at the FARC meeting and me sitting in my shack on Skype with the presentation running on my other computer and the PowerPoint running on their projector and 2nd computer...whew! TMT (too much technology) for this old dog! I am proud of SKCC and Dave is a very good friend so on April 9, 2018 the presentation happened!



View from my desk in Adrian, MI of FARC meeting



What the members of FARC in Fredericton, New Brunswick saw.



It was a thirty minute presentation that went “flawlessly”... at least from the technology end. There were several questions after the presentation and now

we’ll see in time if we have any new VE9 members in SKCC. There was an option for FARC members to have a copy of the presentation in pdf form for further review and/or present the SKCC information to members who were not in attendance or other non club members.

If you would like a copy of the of the PowerPoint and pdf to present to your club please drop me a note and I will be happy to email them to you. Who knows, you could have yourself do a remote Skype presentation to some club!

Promote SKCC whenever and wherever you can!

73, Ted K8AQM 1629s



Does that cat have the “purrrfect” key and does it send “purrrfect” code?



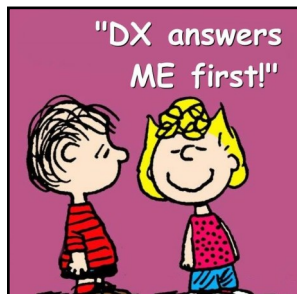
Wow, that is one big “mouse” but where is the keyboard and monitor??!!!! They must be too big for the desk!



"If it wasn't for ham radio, I would have never even heard of Kyrgyzstan, Brunei, Kiribati, Djibouti, Malta, Nauru, Azerbaijan, or Burkina Faso!"

Just some left overs from “April Fools” humor. I remember “WB8ZFB” telling me that in his high school classes every time a country was mentioned the country prefix popped into his mind. I think this is/was common to many of us...we DXers are geography wizards!

And this little Peanuts cartoon adaptation is absolutely true! YLs also get through on SSB first.. but CW levels the playing field!





## CW with a TWIST

Being a ham since 1972 (mainly CW ), about 2 years ago I found I was burned out with rag chewing, DX chasing and contesting, so I started looking for something else. I found a little known niche in ham radio: traffic handling. Initially started by the ARRL, it is basically using ham radio to send radio-grams as a public service. It is used for everything from birthday greetings to health-and welfare traffic in disasters.

The thing I like most about it: moving traffic through an intricate web of traffic nets all over the US and Canada (and now through Europe and Australia) makes you feel like a professional telegraph operator of the old days.

If you are curious how a large CW traffic net with multiple control operators and traffic handlers on about two dozen frequencies move traffic and keep track of everything and you are in the Eastern part of the US, you can listen to the RRIE Net on 3552 kHz at 8 PM Eastern or to the Hit and Bounce net on 7.112 kHz at 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM Eastern.

If you would like to get into traffic handling there are several training nets on the air that can help you. You can listen to these nets and see which one fits you best.

In the Eastern US and Canada you can check out the Carolina Slow Net daily on 3.571 kHz at 8 PM Eastern time. The net itself allows students to listen and participate in a live traffic net. The lessons are done before or after the net in small groups or 2 to 3 students and an instructor.

Then you should check out the famous Maryland slow net daily on 7:30 PM on 3.563 kHz. They offer 5 levels of training: Basic, Advanced, Liaison, Instructor and NCS.

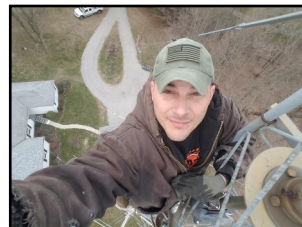
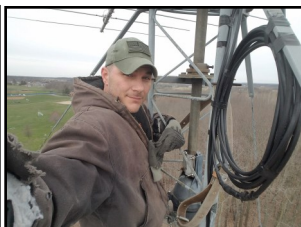
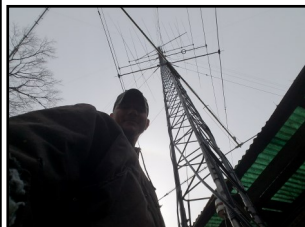
If you have any questions regarding the courses or if you are looking for some classes out west you can send us Email to Bruce- W8CPG, Maryland Slow Net Net Manager at [chickenfarm9@gmail.com](mailto:chickenfarm9@gmail.com) or to Bob- KB4RGC, Instructor Carolina Slow Net at [KB4RGC@gmail.com](mailto:KB4RGC@gmail.com)

If you have a local SSB or FM traffic net we can also show you how to operate in that environment. It is different than CW nets and if you have to move a radiogram from CW to Voice or vice versa you have to translate some of the pro-words.

73 and hope to hear from you!  
Bruce W8CPG and Bob KB4RGC

## Up, Up and Away!

W8MU Don #10953t,... Just got down from realigning K8AQM's log periodic at the top of his 105' tower. All set for SKS! First time above 40 feet for Don...whew!



## Nor'easter and Towers

Towers are wonderful but...they can be no match for Oldman winter! VE9CB (aka W8SR #12520) Dave, woke up to this view in his backyard! Ugh! Dave lives in New Bruns-



wick where nor'easters are not that unusual. This storm was far from "unusual" and after checking his weather source, here is what Dave found:

***"I checked the Environment Canada website for the hour-by-hour wind records from***



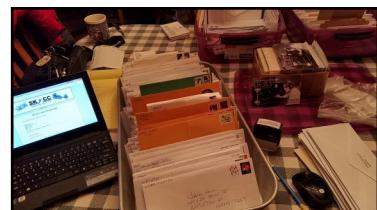
***last night ([https://weather.gc.ca/past\\_conditions/index\\_e.html?station=yfc](https://weather.gc.ca/past_conditions/index_e.html?station=yfc)) . At 2am, they were 50km/h (31mph) with gusts to 76km/h (47mph). Frankly, that doesn't seem all that dire to me. I wouldn't climb in that kind of wind, but I wouldn't worry about this sort of thing happening, either. We have had a lot of sustained winds over the winter, so I suspect torsion on the tower loosened some of the cross-members over the months. My guess is that a cross-member failed, and a well-timed gust gave it the push it needed to go over. "***

That's tower failure, not mast fold over. Dave will have quite a spring project this year. Dave's system worked very well, I was VE9AQM last November from Dave's shack and my QSO totals in the November WES can attest to it. Sorry Dave to see this but I know you'll rebuild it even better and bigger....de K8AQM

## SKCC QSL Bureau

Did you get your bureau mailing this past March? What, you don't know about the "**free**" SKCC QSL bureau! Geez, it's on the SKCC web page but let me explain: "If you are an SKCC member and wish to QSL other SKCC members, send your QSLs to the bureau along with several of your own SASE envelopes. Make sure the SKCC members you're QSLing are also bureau members by checking the listing on the SKCC home page under the title "Member Services." When your envelope has several QSLs stuffed, it will be mailed to you...most likely at least once per year.

The SKCC bureau is run by Jeremy KD8VSQ #13072t with help from his dad Greg KE8CEW #15805t. You get the idea from the pictures here this is a huge job especially when the K3Y cards are distributed.





## More SKCC Buro

*Editor....while we're on the thought of the SKCC buro, here is a reprint of an article Jeremy KD8VSQ, recently posted to the reflector...just in case you missed it.*

“Thanks to everyone for using the SKCC buro! Just wanted to let it be known that there are a number of QSLs that have “no homes.” Please take a look at the SKCC homepage and see if you have envelopes on file. If you do not please follow the instructions on how to send envelopes to the buro.

Also as a note to new and old SKCC buro members, please utilize the list on the buro page that is provided. These are members that **have** envelopes and are awaiting your QSL. If you do not see a member on that list please send that QSL direct to them. As I do not forward QSLs that that do not have envelopes.

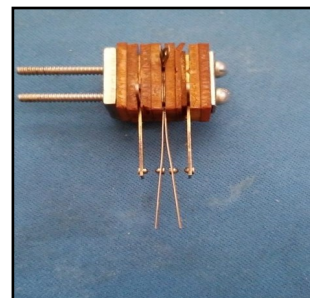
Here is a list of cards that have no way home! “

K0FD	W4NLT
N0NBD	W4QO
W0JBR	WA4GQG
WA0QZK	WB4AEG
WB0SND	KG5DKG
K1CGI	N5CLH
K1PUG	N5IR
NJ1T	WA7IIC
W1EJM	WB7PNC
K1ARR	N8FDI
KD2AEF	NK8S
W2NRA	W8IX
WA2OJN	K9IA
WR2D	KD9GZJ
K3MSB	W9BM
K3SEW	W9PPG
K4IBZ	CT1BQH
K4LNN	F5UQE
K4NVJ	R7DA
KG4WNA	UT3UY
KN4YB	VA6FUN
KM4WIP	

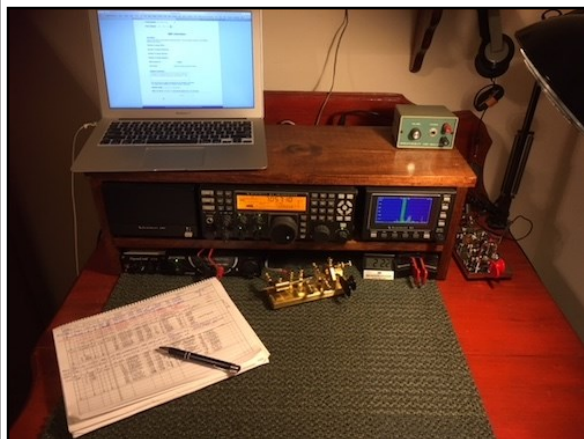


## Home Brew Cooties

Lots of interest in SKCC for the “cootie.” Here are a couple of “neat” homebrew cootie ideas from our Facebook page.



## Scenes From the March SKS



K3 @ 50w to flat black HoA vertical that only comes out after dark: SKCC is getting to be more fun with each activity! Nice strong signals on both 20m and 40m tonight. Was very happy with my 20 contacts in less than an hour. 73 ... Don K3RLL



Good to see 20M open to the West Coast early in the Sprint, then 80M and 40M gave a lot of fun. 73, Steve K4JPN



Started out on a noisy 40M band, got run off by RTTY, tried 7.114 w/d no qso's only spot open was at 7.039 no results. Started S&P. 80M antenna is down for repairs so stayed on a VRY crowded 40. 73 K8CGE



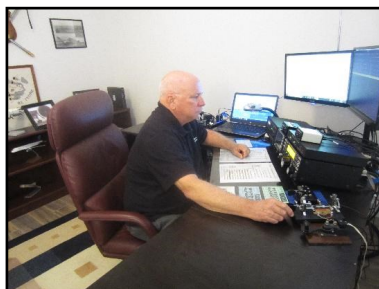
Good to hear everyone. Stan was good from New Zealand. Good to hear Rafael C08RRM on 40 meters! Look for him around 7.062. See you folks in the next SKS! 73 KK4WX



My respects NA SKC's, Hi-Mound HK-706 silver bullet keyer has just been unboxed, plugged into the machine and therefore, I could start this memorable event as by innermost greatest straightening of A1A Xchanging basics with my fellow skcc OM's cross the AO WAV-ING deep into es over MidWest mounts es highlands, parks of nature almost diving into deep blue Pacific (no RXed by VE7, K6 es 7 OM's) but first of all I want praise skcc and this gentlemen ham A1A sprint wherein I took my vy first SKCC activity selfpromised to be around SKC's, its members, Senators, Ts and Cs es SPC's as well.. My gratitude to all see you down the SK Europrint next Thursday. 73, Manu YU4DX



Enjoyed my first sprint! Thanks for a great program that encourages rookies like me. 73, N4ARY



Sure had fun. Sorry to those I couldn't pull out of the QRN. Thanks for the Qs. 73 Dale, K3SEN



I don't know what it is about this old IC-7000. I keep coming back to it. I pumped 75 watts from my Kent Str key to a 30-yr old (hi hi) Butternut up on the roof. I did have the pleasure to find new member Danny ZF1DM in the Cayman Islands who reported 82F ..73, WA2JSG





Great fun as usual. I'm still learning the bug, and it think it'll take a while to get comfortable with it. Thanks for the practice. The rig was an IC-7410 at 100W, with inverted-L antenna 50ft high.  
73, Toby VE7CNF



My Key for CT1GFQ/p working on 14050 and 10120. About <sup>100</sup> □ contacts in One week.  
73, Carlos

We all start somewhere, & some like me may start more than once, twice, 3 times etc etc also over a very long period my latest attempt has began again this year. Last time 2015 was doing ok then family bereavement and basically went QRT (apart from a week in October 16 sv5/g5xw), , time before 07, time before late 90's .... But here we go again & hoping this group can help. Hardest part and probably worst part is requesting QRS QRS please QRS again. Next bit my own fault strangely find it hard to send slow like I need to receive it at (send at the speed you would like it to be sent at). and weirdest if in ssb some one says there name is "Dzzillyqs" lol we have rough idea on spelling but in code not a clue if you get it , well I dont. Cheers to G3PGK for all his help and time, & were keep going, in the deep end later in the yr will be SV8/G5XW-EU052, 73



*Editor...article submitted by Rich K8UV, #2550t*

## **Radiomen**

by Bob 'Dex' Armstrong

In the old Navy, your only link with the civilized world was via the radio shack. A cubby hole on Requin aft of the scope wells in the control room... It was the home of the spark shufflers.

If you were in tight with a radioman, you could get ball scores. Sewer pipe sailors lost touch with the teams they followed... A hazard common to submarine sailors and people who take a moon walk and miss the ride home. Actually, we lost touch with just about everything. In the war movies when they come across some guy who claims to be an American, they ask him questions only an American could answer. If they had picked me up and asked me anything but (A) The names of Roy's and Gene's horses (B) Who won World War II and (C) Blaze Starr's bust size, I would have been one 'up the creek' sonuvabitch. Hell, we didn't know Jack Kennedy was the president until we snorkeled a day later.

Only a complete idiot would make a bet with a radioman. Chances were, the radioman had the final score before you tossed your wampum on the mess table.

I remember one great night brought to us by the spark pushers in the radio shack.

We had finished whatever nonsense they sent us out to do and were making turns for home. The Old Man opened the showers... Guys were bumming razor blades and rooting around in side lockers for something that would pass for a towel. Next thing you know, the foo-foo juice came out. Now there's a myth that all smoke boat sailors eventually bought into, sooner or later... Aqua Velva was never meant to disguise poor personal hygiene. No matter how much of the stuff you poured on a dungaree shirt you had been inside of for two weeks, you were still one disgustingly foul smelling sonuvabitch. You could spray French perfume on an engineman with a fire hose and buzzards would still circle around the bastard when he went topside. But I digress...

A group of us were sitting around in the crew's mess drinking coffee and ragging guys heading fore and aft. A radioman came in and told us we were in for one helluva good laugh. He monkeyed around with the RBO and patched it into something in the radio shack.

For those of you who never had the pleasure of riding diesel boats or other seagoing steel-hulled garbage scows, I must explain something here. You could make phone calls from a ship at sea. Here is how it worked. The radioman would raise someone ashore called a 'marine operator'. Then the radioman would give the marine operator the name and phone number of whoever the bluejacket aboard ship wanted to call. The marine operator would then place a collect call and when the party answered and accepted the charges, the marine operator would form a radio link with the ship and 'Bill the Bluejacket' could talk to his sweetie.

From sweetie to the marine operator was private and confidential... From the marine operator to Barnicle Bill, it was up for grabs... Great evening entertainment.

"Poopsie, is that you?"

"Yes ducky doo, it's me."

"You miss me, peach blossom?"

"Oh yes... YES, darling!"



"Miss me a lot?"

"Oh, I miss you sooooo much I can't wait to hold you and..."

"Okay darling... Are you going to meet the ship?"

"No sweetheart, I parked the car in the pier head lot... Keys are under the mat."

"Why aren't you meeting the boat, sweetheart?"

"Oh, it was supposed to be a surprise... If you must know, the kids are spending the night with the Webbers. I bought a new nightie and I figured we'd break it in tonight."

The animals would cheer,

"LET'S HEAR IT FOR MAMMA AND HER NEW NIGHTIE!!"

And so it went. Bluejackets phoning in after six months in the Med... Great entertainment.

"Darlin' can't wait... Just you and me and a can of Crisco!"

We heard it all... It was great... Laugh after laugh. A very memorable evening... Best and cheapest fun we ever had on Requin. There were times... Moments that we took for granted and that passed with little notice. It's funny how they come back late in life when you have the time to reshuffle your memories... The collected moments that constitute your life.

Radiomen linked us with the world. Another thing we just took for granted and that was so damned important looking back. Never thanked them... Should have. Great guys, all of them.

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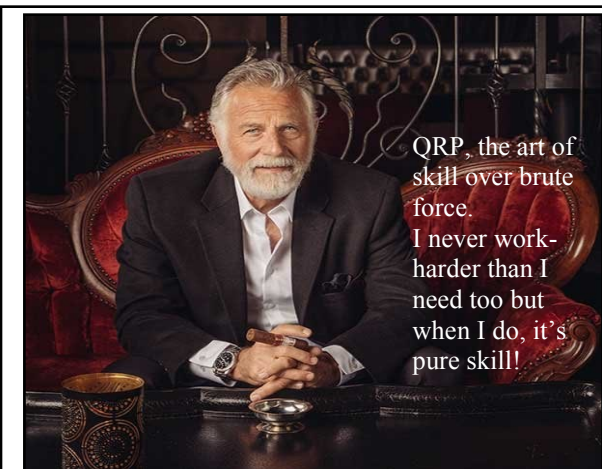
73, de Hans, K0HB

--

"Just a boy and his radio"<sup>TM</sup>



Interesting chart, I must have missed this in "The Radio Amateur's Handbook." If you have tried this fuse application please let us know...if you can.



QRP, the art of skill over brute force. I never work harder than I need too but when I do, it's pure skill!

## KS8KCC; Dit-Dah CW Gang's Secrete Weapon...K8KIC

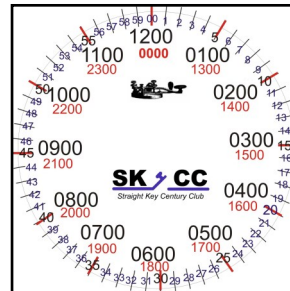


Ken, K8KIC #2938 is a member and "regular" at the KS8KCC Dit-Dah CW Gang operations. Although blind, Ken has a phenomenal memory and excellent cw skills. He can log by himself but enjoys Jeremy KD8VSQ #13072t as a logger. Ken enjoys "watching" goft, playing cards (he cheats, he has a marked deck!), plays various musical instruments. You'll hear him on as K3Y/8

## 24 Hour Clock Face

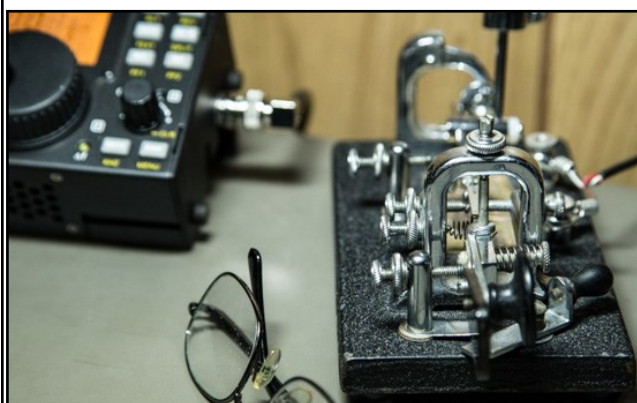
Need a project for the shack? Go to your local "cheap store" and find a nice battery clock and apply this clock face. I found that a 10.5 to 11 inch face worked perfectly in my shack.

I did a lay-over of the straight key with my call using Powerpoint and then converting it to a jpeg for printing. My clock has been running for perfectly for three years and looks great in the shack.



## March Brag

Here is some info from those submitted to the March Bragg:



Tough propagation month. Some good openings now and then. Makes for a fun challenge...de Doug N3QW



Had a very good month of March. Achieved both TX5 and TX6 during this month. Had a record 102 brag QSO's even though I was sick the last 9 days. Biggest highlight was taking delivery of new straight key pictured. It is called the Titan Camelback and is made by K7SU. It uses Neodymium Magnets and is very smooth to operate...de Bruce WB6IZG



Bad month for me - too busy with work and not much time to play on the radio. I even missed the WES! Hopefully April will be better! Photo is me on a SOTA activation of Hurricane Hill (W7W/NO-086) on 30th March, so it wasn't a total loss =)...de Josh WU7H



Curt WA2JSG 3018s FB key!



## April Brag 2018

The "BRAG" activity began in April 2010 as a way to encourage contacts among SKCC members independent of sprints, contests, or special events. The idea is to see how many unique SKCC numbers you can accumulate during any given month. At the beginning of each month, you will have a 15-day window to enter the number of SKCC members you worked during the previous month. Each participant's tally for each month will be displayed on the Brag results page. No prizes, no wallpaper, just braggin' rights! Check the home page for rules. The "Brag" is administered by Curt WA2JSG #3018s.



April was a busy month but managed some great contacts, thanks K9DAC for the bonus station. W5WAX was an interesting contact and the QRZ info brings back memories from my novice days. KB5JO's 2 tube Xtal rig sounded great. Thank's SKCC'ers 73 Rick K0KEX The Vibroplex Jr. still going...



Too many distractions this month. Hope to do better next time...73, Mike K5MP



Have been off the air for 6 weeks. No brags for March and a few for April...Dave, KB1WOD



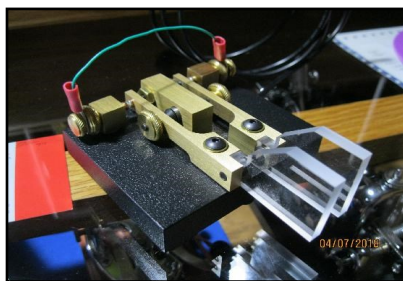
One a day... not bad for me! If you go to Dayton Hamvention, be sure to stop by our SKCC booth and sign in. I look forward to seeing everyone there...73, Curt WA2JSG

Got back into the swing this April, 10 brags a milestone for me considering health issues. I've tried using a cootie since other keying methods bother my shoulder and elbow. So far I'm adapting to the cootie quite well, and tnx to Mike Pilgrim K5MP for a nice homebrew unit (see photo). I did make the bonus station this month which was nice. I also did the SKSE and WES but not for brag points. 73 de Rick, WU1V



This month I decided to top my highest Brag Month. I think my best prior was 155. I logged several old and new members, for the first time this month. Thanks! Pictured is a homebrew (Guitar Pick) Keyer Paddle that I may try as a Cootie or a modified Bencher BY-1 Paddle. SKCC, the Key to Amateur Radio...73 Rick, N8XI

## Some Scenes and Comments from April WES



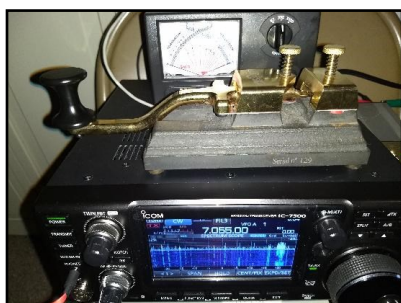
It wouldn't be a WES without QSB. This was my first WES using my new Warrior Jr. with a jumper to make it a Cootie. Sorry for the poor keying at times, but it is getting better and some fun too. Thanks to F6HKA for the EE points and 1st France QSO in 66 years of operation. Herbert AA7XP



Hello to all! Beautiful spring weather hr in south central Alaska this weekend. Operated outside on the deck, FT-840 @ 100w to both a longwire antenna and a 20 mtr dipole, Kent straight key. 73 to all, looking forward to working everyone on the bands. Cul ! John AL7JK



Going was tough here and Sunday worse than Saturday. Still - it was all good fun with the odd Egg surprise. Worked SP2SWI, W3NP (EE), VE1AHX, N9SE, W5ZR, K3WW, IK7FPU, K1EEE, F6HKA (EE), W4AFB, NM1W (EE), WA3GM, K0RO, ZA4KC, NE7D, ND9M, K1LEE, WA2OJN. All on 20m. Rig: Kenwood TS-440s, 100 watts, Cushcraft MA6V vertical aerial, Marconi AS300A straight key. 73,



Borrowed the club's IC-7300 to take for a 'test drive'. So I used it during this WES. And I had a Begali Blade that Mike - K5MP had just sold me, so I used this opportunity to tune it to suit my fist. After 160 QSOs and kazillion CQs, I think that I now have it pretty close. There were a couple I just couldn't pull out of the mud - sorry guys - the 7300 seems like it does 229 signals OK, but not 119 sig-



K3 to stealth black temporary vertical: Practiced with new Cootie Key, but quickly realized "not ready for prime time" this weekend. Found lots of good signals, better listeners with good ears and superb fists that make SKCC events such a joy. New Cootie Key? Maybe May W.E.S.? Thank you all. 73, Don K3RLL



I didn't get on the radio until Sunday afternoon, unfortunately. 20m had massive QSB and only seemed to be open towards the East Coast. 40m was much better late in the afternoon. Wasn't able to work any of the Easter eggs, but that's okay. I picked up a J-45 straight key yesterday at the Belton hamfest and tried it out during WES. I'm pleasantly surprised by how well it worked! Thanks for all the QSOs and see y'all next month! 73, Matt



Up es Down bands in E Ohio, But fun as always. Randy(N8KQ) es Bob(W8ARC) working the WES from K8CGE for a few hours.





First WES using Cootie KEY. OK most of the time but for a few hand control losses. Had lots of fun, 20 and 40 seemed better than expected, 80 a little disappointing. .Brian



Got to operate for about an hour on Sunday, conditions seemed better than last month. Put my new uBitX on the air, along with a homebrew cootie. The 10w moved me out of my usual QRP category, but the little extra power probably made a difference on a couple of contacts. Thanks to all the patient ops who put up with my beginner's cootie fist. 73 to all Mike N2HTT



Fun concept. Enjoyed looking for the Easter eggs. Fired up the Collins Gold Dust twins on 80M Sat evening, otherwise used a Ten-Tec Omni VI plus. Antennas: Lazy-H at 70 feet for 20M and dipoles at 70 feet for 40M and 80M. Keys used: Vibroplex Presentation, Begali Sculpture Swing, Speed-X straight key.. Marty N9SE



Nice weekend for WES! It didn't seem all too strong of signals on 20 meters, although I did work Bert, Bob and Bernard - all in France. Other DX members were Carlos - CT1BQH in Portugal and also Leon - OS0S in Belgium. And last but not least was my friend Rafael from Cuba with that distinct sounding signal! Thanks to all for another good WES. See you at the next



Elecraft KX3 + KXPA100 Amp @75 wts to a 40 meter dipole 5 ft above ground. Mix of Vibroplex Straight Key and 1940s Lightning Bug. Seemed like conditions weren't too great this time, but still worked 23 states. Thanks to everyone who work me. See you next month! AndyWA5RML



Ran 75 watts switching between my two radios into a multiband vertical using Kent Str Keys. Fun WES and thanks to Dave N9EEN and his crew for these neat sprint ideas. It was fun chasing after the rabbits. Looking forward to next month. ...Curt WA2JSG



As promised I make some stops during my drive home from Berlin to activate as EENo luck the first stop, S7 QRM, but here are some pics from the setup: it was a lot of fun being an EE, I wish I had more time to spend behind the radio but I am quite happy with the result. By far my best WES ever. Out of 45 stations I worked about 40 USA stations, we need to get more European stations!..Ward ON8WR







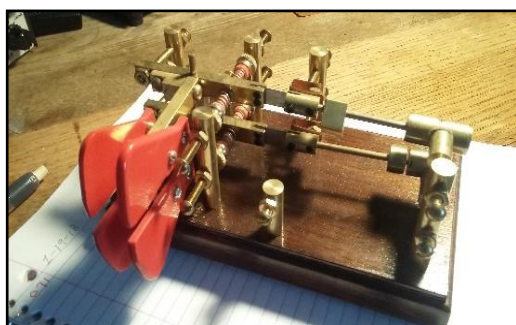
Thank you all for the great time! Alinco DX-SR8, running 100 Watts into prl. dipole at 25 feet in the attic. The key is J38. Thank you and 73, Sergey KD9EBS



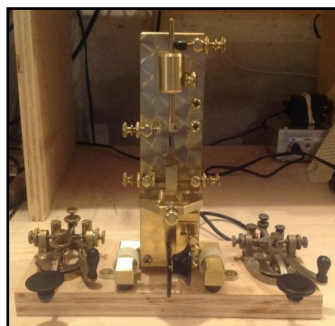
Worked a few hours Saturday, mostly 40m. K1 at 4w to attic dipole. Brian KB9BVN



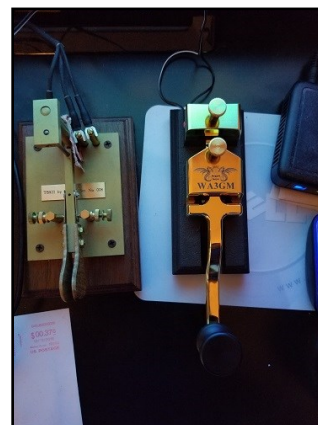
Tnx fer the QSOs. Had fun as always. Ron, N8KZH



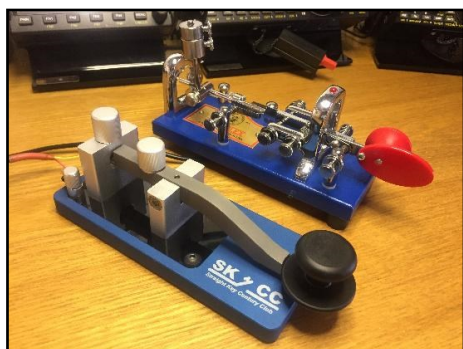
Agn.. Kx2 5 wts g5rv 35ft n/s inv vee..st key and hb DUBBUG... Hello to more new mbrs... cu all in MAY... tnx to board mbrs.. 73 dave larsEn..not O n...ha.. N9ZXL



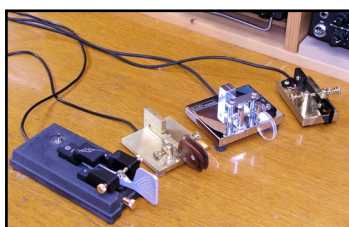
Had limited time, and some of it didn't line up well with band or local noise conditions. Sunday night on 40m was very nice, though. Back to Maine next month, with better antennas! Thanks to all, especially the newer folks. 73, John W1TAG



Finally back from FL from the winter so good to be back on SKCC. Not as much operating time as I would have liked due to some family stuff but had a great time. 73 Greg wa3gm



Another casual fun WES, worked some Saturday and Sunday on 40 and 20m only. Conditions weren't always great, but not bad thou ! Used my KX3 QRO, and K2 with my old HF Packer amp. Antennas used were my Radiowavz Scout multi-band and my EFHW vertical wire up 32'. Used my two favorite keys, the Vibroplex Blue Racer and SKCC Pump SK. Thanks to all the ops out there and look for everyone next month !!...73, Ed N7EDK



A very enjoyable event. Condx not bad on Sat but kinda poor on Sunday. Wrked the other "eggs" (9) but never heard/saw KD2E. Tnx to VE1AHX for 4 bands as well as being one of the few who took up my invite to 160 meters. I made all 158 QSOs using various cooties, sometimes changing keys in the middle of a Q. Just like operators, all cooties have unique personalities. Used the K3/KPA-500 combo into my big 160m loop which did just about as well as the yagi on almost all Q's 73,Dave W3NP

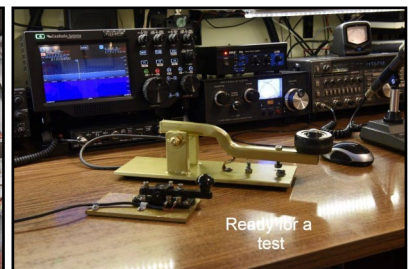
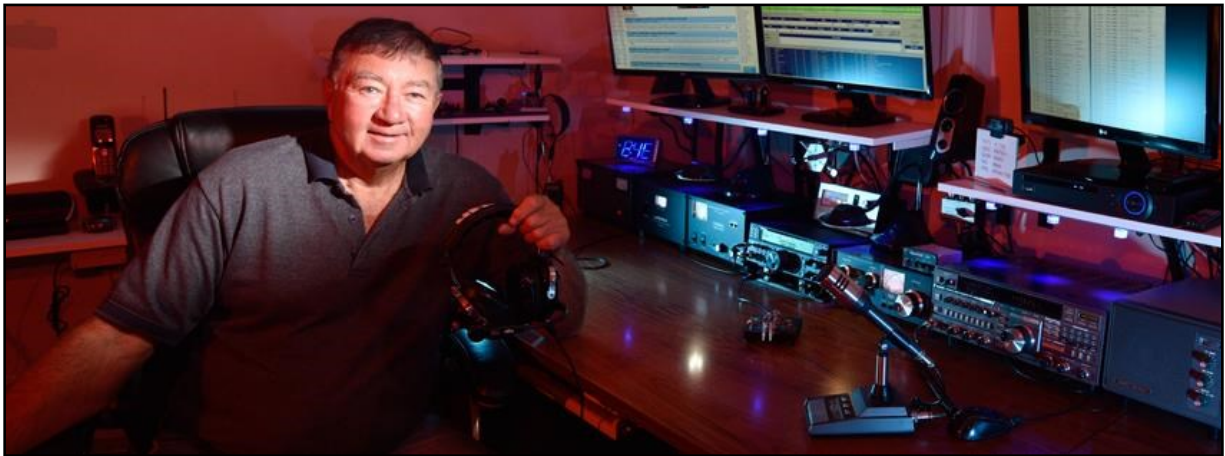


My 1st Sprintathon with an actual SKCC# ! Have been a member of the UBC ham club since 1978 while a student. For WES I used a Nye Viking hand key and this Zephyr bug. Bug has been in the club at least 50 years and its serial no. is one greater than the highest Zephyr no. in WW7P's catalog. - VE7DES, Dan



## Ug! Man Key!

We see many finely crafted keys both on the market and build by various members in our club and they are all works of arts. These are beautiful but there is something about simplicity and ruggedness that appeals to me. While cruising around our Facebook page I ran across this key crafted by Gary VE3DZP #14702t. You can see by the photo of Gary's station, Gary has state-of-the-art gear. But there is an "artistic" bent to Gary, checkout the photos of his "finely crafted" man key:



Now that's a key! I won't be trading-in my "Junker" to have Gary make me one of these but I sure appreciate what he has done and I bet the CW from this key sounds as sweet as any made from the "finer" and more expensive models currently on the air. Well done Gary and I hope to run across you running that key in our next QSO!

73....Ted K8AQM 1629s

## SKCC and the 2018 ARRL Grid Chase

In 2014 did you chase the National Parks special event stations that were on the air? Many SKCCers were involved in both chasing and operating from our National Parks and everyone had a good time. The ARRL National Parks Operating Event was the largest on-air event of its kind and generated 1,108,960 QSOs with 21,344 activations from 366 parks! There were a total of 489 listed possible National Parks and only 75% of them were on the air. So what does this have to do with the 2018 ARRL Grid Chase and SKCC? There are 488 continental US grid squares...only one less than the National Parks. That's only continental US and doesn't include Alaska, Hawaii nor Puerto Rico nor our EU members' grids!

For the past six months many members of the SKCC Advisory Committee have been thinking and planning for an additional SKCC operating event. After many revisions of rules and such, the SKCC has decided to have an annual SKCC QSO Party that has as part of its exchange the four digit grid square where your operation takes place. The event is open to all, both SKCC members and non members. The "official" rules are on the next two pages but basically the SKCC QSO Party will be held October 6 1800 UTC until October 7 1800 UTC, the exchange will be RST, SPC, Name and four digit grid square with your SKCC number optional for those who want to have the QSO count for SKCC awards. This exchange may bring non-members into the event who are participating in the official ARRL Grid Chase as well as just general fun for all. For those who are unaware how the ARRL event runs, the only way for those who want credit for your grid can get it is if you upload your log to LOTW but that is not a requirement to join the event. Be sure to read the official rules, logs are not required for the event unless requested by the administrators. The event is to be on the usual bands and not on the WARC bands. Scoring is basically the number of QSOs times the number of different grids.

And here is a great idea for SKCC members; what a great opportunity for a "road trip" to some exotic grid square(s)...almost a mini DXpedition! It is possible to "go mobile" and operate from many different grids during the event. Again, be sure to read the official rules as this is explained how logging can be accomplished. This is done in many State QSO Parties and can be accomplished in this event too. Several members have in the past operated from needed states for the Senator WAS Award and commented what great fun it was. Here is a chance to experience what it would be like on a DXpedition. Be sure to publicize your trip/plans on the SKCC reflector and on our Facebook page. Take along a friend and make it a multi-multi event or even a multi-multi event from your home station!

For those of us who use the SKCC Logger, there is already a column for logging the grid of the station worked. There may be other programs out there that would work equally well. Scoring might require you to "count" and "multiply" but that should be no big deal. Who knows, maybe there will be a similar program developed before the event that will count grids rather than SPC for multipliers! Programmers, take on the challenge for us poor "counters" and "multipliers"...please! There will be a typical reporting page on our web page.

So there you have it, the "new" SKCC QSO Party, fun, a challenge and excitement for all! Many thanks to Dave N9EEN #15315 who spearheaded the development of this event and "thanks" to all the members of the SKCC Advisory Committee who "proofed" and "checked" all the rules.



## **New SKCC Operating Event Scheduled!**

### **2018 SKCC QSO Party**

**1. Object:** For Amateur Radio CW operators worldwide to exchange information with SKCC members worldwide (SKCC members work anyone and non SKCC members work SKCC members) on any band **except 60m, 30m, 17m and 12m.**

**2. Date and Contest Period:** Starts on Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 18:00 UTC and ends on Sunday October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 18:00 UTC. Contest period is 24 hours with no operating time limits.

**3. Entry Categories (All categories are CW mode only):**

**3.1 Single Operator :** The use of spotting assistance or automated, multi-channel decoders is permitted.

**3.1.1 QRP** 5 watts or less

**3.1.2 Low Power** (100 watts or less)

**3.1.3 High Power** (Over 100 watts)

**3.2 Multi-operator, Single Transmitter :** The use of spotting assistance or automated, multi-channel decoders is permitted.

**3.2.1 QRP** 5 watts or less

**3.2.2 Low Power** (100 watts or less)

**3.2.3 High Power** (Over 100 watts)

**3.3 Unlimited:** Any combination of transmitters, receivers, operators and use of spotting assistance or automated, multi-channel decoders is permitted. All transmitters and receivers must be co-located. All transmitters must claim the highest power level used on any one transmitter.

**3.3.1 QRP** 5 watts or less

**3.3.2 Low Power** (100 watts or less)

**3.3.3 High Power** (Over 100 watts)

**3.3.4 Unlimited class operations** may only have one operator per band at any given time.

**4. Contest Exchange and Calling**

**4.1.1** The exchange must include: RST, SPC, Name and four digit Grid Square (ie: EN41) *NOTE: SKCC member number is optional and not required unless you wish to use the QSO toward SKCC award credit. In that case, both parties must have and exchange SKCC member numbers and must conform to all SKCC rules for valid exchanges.*

**4.1.2** SKCC Members calling CQ should identify themselves as SKCC members by calling. CQ **SKQ** de call sign.

**4.1.3** Non-SKCC stations calling CQ for SKCC members should identify themselves as non-members by calling CQ **NSK** de call sign.

**4.1.4** Stations operating from multiple grid squares should ID with "/P" or "/M".

**4.2 Logging**

**4.2.1** Any logging program that will generate a text file for submission (if requested) may be used.

**Logs are not required unless requested. See section 8.1**

States).

**5.1.1** Non-member to non-member QSOs do not count for QSO points or multipliers.

## 5.2 Multipliers

**5.2.1** For the purpose of scoring multipliers, **each individual four digit Grid Square number may only be used as a multiplier point one time** regardless of how many individual stations you work with in that Grid Square.

**5.3** Final Score: Multiply QSO points by multiplier. Example: KE1BE works 357 stations (including multi band QSOs) and has a multiplier of 67 (67 unique Grid Square numbers). His score would be 357 QSO points multiplied by 67 for a total of 23,919 points.

## 6. Miscellaneous:

**6.1** All SKCC members must abide by the SKCC rules for keying devices as stated on the skccgroup.com website. Non-members may use any keying method but mechanical keys (straight key, bug or cootie) are preferred if possible.

## 7. Awards:

**7.1** Certificates will be awarded to the three top-scoring stations in each category.

## 8. Log Submission:

**8.1. Log submission will not be required unless requested by the event administrator to resolve a conflict or scoring issue.** If requested, any log using a computer generated report in a text format will be acceptable. Hand-written paper logs are not acceptable.

**8.1.1** If requested, logs must contain the following information for each QSO: Call sign of station worked, SPC, band, time and Grid Square. Incomplete entries will not be counted toward the total QSO count or, if applicable, the multiplier number.

**8.1.2** The heading of the log must contain your name, call sign(s) used, grid square(s) you operated from and SKCC number(s) used (if applicable). If you change power level categories, your log will be considered submitted at the highest power level used.

**8.1.3** All information submitted becomes the property of the SKCC.

**8.2 All entries for this contest must be submitted before 00:00 UTC on October 15th, 2018 via the SKCC QSO Party submission page.**

**8.2.1** Results submissions will not be allowed after the submission window closes.

**8.2.2** All questions should be emailed to: [skcc.qsop@gmail.com](mailto:skcc.qsop@gmail.com)

**8.2.3** Any multi operator station or operation must submit their results using a single call sign.

## 9. Disputes

**9.1** In the event of disputes or questions that cannot be resolved by the event administrator, the SKCC Board of Directors shall have the final say.

## 10. Results

**10.1** Results will be posted on the SKCC website.

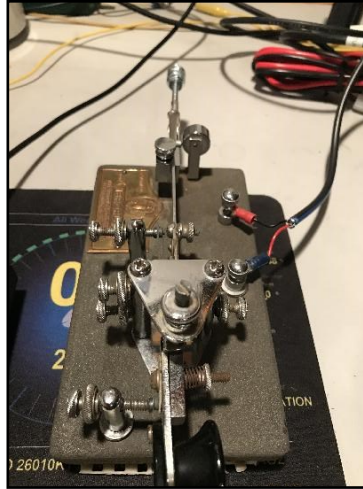
The SKCC reserves the right to make changes or revisions to these rules up to 24 hours prior to the start of the event. Please be sure to check the rules for revisions during the 24 hour period preceding the event.



## April SKS Scenes



K3 to After-dark-only Vertical: Nice strong signals and some good contacts made this yet another very enjoyable SKCC event. Thanks for the patience shown as I switched back and forth between new Cootie and the two bugs. 73 ... Don K3RLL



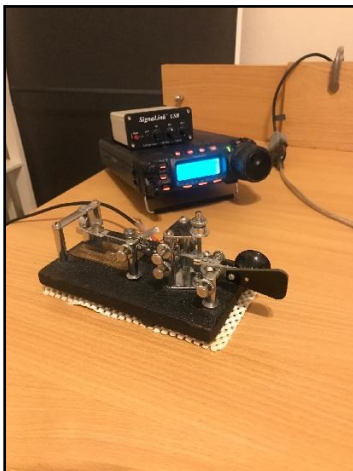
I could only participate for only 30 minutes, but I worked one each on the east and west coast with my home brew 20 meter inverted V. Thanks to K3MSB and AG6V. I used my 1960 Vibroplex Champion with a bug tamer...Terry KE5YUM



40 was in great shape. Short skip to W1LIC was a treat, rarely hear Wes at my QTH. My MFJ 1886 RX Loop made this SKS possible, - killed my RFI. See u all Next month. 72 de N4OW - AL



Not much time tonight, did what I could with the KX2 and Blue Racer Bug QRP. Worked 20 and 40m, conditions weren't too bad thou ! Thanks to the ops out there and see y'all next month ...in the WES !!....Ed N7EDK



Yaesu FT-857D @100 wts to 40M dipole 5 or 6 ft above ground. My first SKS - got on for last 45 minutes and enjoyed myself even though the QRN on 40M was very high at my QTH. If you called me and I didn't respond, it was because I didn't hear you above the QRN - my apologies. 73 & hope to CU next month!  
Andy - WA5RML



What a Pileup on 40m. Wow!!! Thanks again for everyone taking the time to pull out the weak ones. They may be running QRP, I appreciated everyone working this QRP station. ICOM-718 at 5w, Hustler 5BTV Vertical. Had a Great time...AGAIN!!! de Carmen WB8SDA

## Something Smells at April SKS Night!



September 26, 2017 SKS at Ted's K8AQM

Far left: Mark NU8Z...*Light green shirt*  
Ted K8AQM....*Dark green shirt*  
Jeremy KD8VSQ...Red shirt  
Ken K8KIC....Gray shirt



April 25, 2018 SKS at Ted's K8AQM

Far left: Mark NU8Z...*Light green shirt*  
Ted K8AQM...*Dark green shirt*  
Jeremy KD8VSQ...Gray shirt  
Ken K8KIC...Plaid shirt

Shortly after the monthly SKS 2 hour sprint began on April 25, 2018, Ted K8AQM asked me to get some pictures for him to put in the SKCC "Rag Chew" Newsletter.

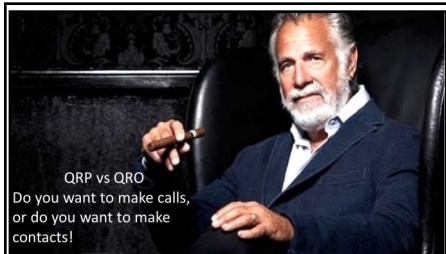
After taking several pictures, I attempted to email them via my cell phone to his email address. For some reason, other SKS pictures showed up. I was confused at first. Wait a minute! Are these the same pictures? Looking at them for several minutes I discovered something.

No wonder Ted has a "stink alarm" in his shack. Mark NU8Z to the far left in BOTH pictures, is wearing the same shirt. Ted is also wearing the same shirt in both pictures. Hmmmmmm? Seven Months apart and same shirts???? Oh but wait! Look more! They are still sitting in the same chairs!!!!

By the end of the two hours of the Sprint, it was a warm 84 degrees in the shack from the heat produced by the amps. Can you imagine 7 months in the same shirts!

Naaaa! I'm sure it was just coincidental. OR Was it?

"Dis-respectively" submitted by Greg, KE8CEW..The Dit-Dah CW Gang KS8KCC



QRP vs QRO  
Do you want to make calls,  
or do you want to make  
contacts!

## The World's Most Interesting Man

Who can argue with this man and his statement after-all, he is the World's Most Interesting Man and he is smoking a fine cigar (N3JJT take note!).



## Nice Operating Position!



Bank holiday Monday popular car park over looking Lyme Bay Dorset/Devon border... 14.050  
@ the moment de Russel G5XW/p

## SKS EU May Sprint

Twenty-two stations participated in the May SKSEU sprint. Top overall honors went to F6EJN Bob with 30 QSOs. Most interesting station photo goes to YU7AE Kare #5790t.



Using my old ex military PRC-320, 25w with little chirpy signal :-), antenna is W3DZZ with LDG tuner unit, tnx for QSOs, thanks G4PVM Paul for 4 band QSO (30m qso not calculated in score :-) 73 de Kare YU7AE #5790

## “NEW” SKCC Brag Page!

We now have a new format for our SKCC Brag page. I thought it would be great if our Brag page was similar in format to that of our SKS, SKS-E, and WES pages, so I submitted my idea to our Webmasters (thanks Ron AC2C and Alton N4IDH) and they got right to work and constructed then tested the page. After making sure all the 'bugs' (hi hi) were out, the page was set in motion the first of this year and we have received many good comments about it. Not only can we now submit comments, but we can also show pictures if we so desire, AND we even have a monthly brag bonus member.

A note of thanks is also in order for all our regular 'braggers' for keeping this important part of our club alive and well.

Remember, no minimums, no logs needed. Just a total of all your different SKCC contacts you made contact with in a given month outside of our sprints. Lets keep this part of our club growing!

**Curt WA2JSG 3018S**  
**SKCC Brag Manager**

## Photos and Chat from May SKS



Had a lot of fun tonight, a few lucky contacts, a contact with K3EW, a tribune and two senators, a lot of QRM, thanks to all, 73 RIC HP1RIS



Had fun in this SKS. Was able to work 5 more stations towards my TX7. Biggest surprise was when Panama came back to my CQ SKS. 73, Bruce WB6IZG



Thanks to all the good ears. Always a fun time. 73, Mike KK7H



I only had time for 3 QSOs this SKS. But I'll bet I'm the only participant using Conar 500 receiver! It just came off the bench an hour before. Transmitter was a Hallicrafters HT-40 with a Knight Kit V44 VFO, dipole antenna, and



Thanks for the contacts tonight. 20 meters held up well here until the last 30 minutes and 40 was doing great. Icom 7410 @ 100 watts to my 80 meter horizontal loop. 73, Jim N5JPX



Home from Dayton, which was a fantastic experience. Working the SKCC table was an honor and a treat. Thanks to Ron, AC2C and Larry AH6AX for their endless energy in supporting and promoting SKCC ! My time at the SKCC booth was the highlight of my first visit to Dayton. My memento is this YETI Tumber, Laser Scanned at Dayton. Ron's idea brought to life. 73 de AL N4ow 11375S



## Interesting Antenna Facts

Here is an excellent collection of antenna facts that appeared in The Villages Amateur Radio Club paper "TVARC Antenna Guide for The Villages." You can Google this club, they have a great program and lots of good information. This is the last page of a 74 page presentation on "TVARC 2015 Antenna Guide for The Villages."

Modulation matters more than your antenna or power output

- AM vs. SSB vs. CW vs. PSK vs. JT65
- 5 W using CW equals 250 W using SSB
- 5 W using PSK-31 equals 2,500 W using SSB
- QST Dec 2013, P30-32

Height (of Dipoles, G5RV, End Fed) matters, except Vert Loops

- Horizontal elements near ground are NVIS
- QST Nov 2009, P 64-65 - May 2010, P 57 - Apr 2010 P 47-48

Short Antennas hurt RF Efficiency

- Loads at base hurt, top loads help, top caps help
- Traps hurt lower frequencies
- QEX Jan 2014, P34-42 - Mar 2014, P18-31

1 Counterpoise above ground = 32 Radials

- Poor soil conductivity hurts radials as counterpoise
- QST Mar 2010, P30-33 - Mar 2014, P35-37

Some timeless approaches for better RF performance

- Anything Tall Helps (except Vertical WL Loops any height works)
- Longer is better (monopole objective is  $\frac{1}{4}$  WL or odd multiples,  $\frac{1}{2}$  WL for dipoles)
- Inverted-L address lower frequencies (160M-40M)
- Vertical WL Loops address most HF bands (80M-10M)



I knew I could make having the shack in the laundry room stylish again:-) 73,  
Rick N8XI

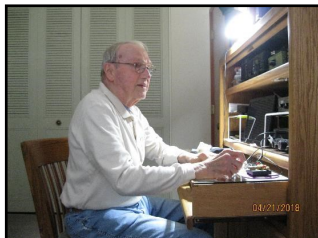


After achieving the coveted "Centurion" award today, I of course had to undergo the required surgery. (little known clause in the SKCC rules).

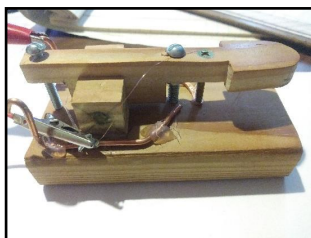
I'm told it has improved my appearance greatly.....

## May WES Photos and Comments

Other than our K3Y celebration the WES events are the favorites for many. The various monthly themes are very popular among our members. Here are just "some" of the pictures and comments from May's "junk box key" theme.



Is WES becoming synonymous with QSB? I got on at 2200 Hours Pacific Daylight Time and it was back to normal operating conditions for two WES contacts. The "Homebrew Keys" shown for this WES are very inspiring. I only ran into one person admitting to keying with "the



First time in a sprint. Working on my CW. Good time, thanks for contacts... Dave, AB9BZ



Several contests and very little spread over 20m. Many non SKCC stations but still pleasant activity. 73 Bob F6EJN



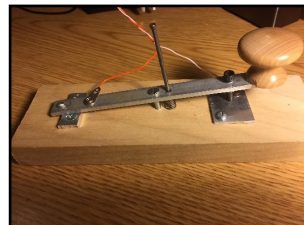
I worked hard on Saturday, needing to get 107 unique "S's" and "T's" to finish my "S". I wasn't sure I could do it but finished the last one at 0236z, with Phil, K3EW. I used my Mac P-500 and SKCC straight key...Mike AD5A



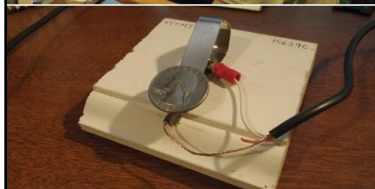
Great fun! My key was made from bits of a dead jig-saw and the ignition points from a 1960s Land-rover. It was designed for horizontal use but worked best tipped up on edge. Tried off-hand keying which was a sort of tiring jabbing from the shoulder. There is also a video here of me in contact with Ralph K0RO. The clattering isn't the key, its the QSK relays in the radio. RBN clocked me at 14 wpm... Peter GM0EUL



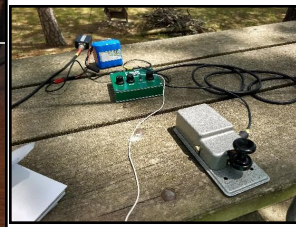
Thanks to K6ELQ, Tony for pulling my weak signal out of the noise. 73 to all ! C u on the bands...John AL7JK



I realized Friday night that building my own key would help my score. So I built one. Not a Begali but it held up for the weekend. The conditions were more of a problem than the key, in particular running QRP...Wolf



I had a lot of fun working with my new homebrew key, which I have dubbed the "Liberty key". Operated entirely with my non-



Tough conditions. Heard many more stations than I could work, including several F calls and CT8, but propagation just wouldn't carry my little 5 watt pea shooter through well enough to be heard...Chas NK8O



Conditions could have been better here. Had to leave early. Look forward to next time... Richard K4CRD



HB key - scrap plexiglass, junk box hardware and a one dollar drawer pull knob. - Great fun. There's a closeup of the key on my QRZ page...Lloyd VE4AEA





Due to poor conditions and other commitments I only had limited time to participate in the WES. I even made a homebrew cootie out of an old knife, which worked surprisingly well. I hope to have more time in the next WES. 73 de Steve VK7CW



Had a great time in this month's WES.... Picked up an extra 40 Ts & S's for my S Quest. 73, Greg WA3GM



I've been absent for over almost a year. My LEGO key was last used in a WES in 2011. Thought it needed an AIRing out. (Pun intended) Not a lot of time for QSOs but getting back to the radio was fun. Happy to all the moms. 73, Chas W9SAY



This month's bonus was a natural for me. I always use a homebrew key made from an industrial push button. I will get a real key, but the radio, tuner, power supply, and antenna had to come first. The photo is courtesy of the XYL, KC1NS, NR 18600. She made her first CW contact during this WES. W1TAG was my first contact this weekend on 40m and was my last contact on 80m. This WES gave me a lot of practice and I feel more confident. Thanks for another fun event...73, Dave NZ1J



Military cross-band test, Arkansas QSO party, and ... OH! In the Mac-Gyver fashion, I realized I had to fabricate a make-shift morse code key quickly or die! I started with only a piece of string, a paper clip and a bowling ball and quickly realized that wasn't going to work. Then I spotted an old WECO 2500 phone and using my trusty Swiss army knife, took it apart, wired the N.O. side of the on-hook/off-hook switch and connected it to my IC-7200! This set up works, but it takes quite a bit of concentration and effort using my non-dominant hand to send... since my right hand wasn't available?... (because it was copying code and logging contacts) It was fun. 73 and c u all agn! Guy WB5UAA



Another rough weekend band wise. But still a lot of fun. I made a sideswiper/cootie key but of course am not up to speed on using it as a cootie. So I just used one side for the key. Since I am having issues with my hand shaking after about 30 minutes on the straight key, this sideways keying was just the trick. It worked for me. Now to getting better at the cootie. Ran my IC-7300 at 5 watts into the ZS6BKW on 40 meters and the Hex Beam on 20 meters. Great fun as usual and thanks to the organizers and of course all those that could hear me and a couple that I couldn't pull out. Maybe next time. Best 72/73 from Wild and Wonderful West Virginia.



Lousy mid-day conditions both days, but it all worked out. Tough to judge the other guy's copying speed, as many seemed to be sending slower with the HB keys. In the picture, I have a paper towel over my regular WU key to keep me from grabbing it. Will definitely keep it for future torture events. 73, John W1TAG

## A Rake Tine Straight Key

Using a segment of a metal tine from a defunct leaf rake, I constructed a useful straight key which other brass pounders should be able to duplicate and perhaps improve upon. Many such keys in which the lever and spring are combined suffer from the problem of limited adjustability. However the key I built has four adjustments which should allow most ops to get the desired "feel" from the key. Construction involves only simple hand tools; screw holes are drilled slightly smaller than the machine screws, allowing them to be self tapping.



The first pic shows the key which is mounted on a piece of laminated wood flooring, although plywood or other materials should work as well. A 5-1/2 inch length of tine was removed by scoring with a file; then snapping off using pliers. Sandpaper was used to remove burrs, old paint and corrosion. A small diameter hole was drilled in one end to allow attachment of the knob, although it can be epoxy glued in place. The other end of the tine is held in place by two screws and overlapping washers. These can be loosened to allow changing the length of the lever. In the middle of the board, a screw was

passed up from the bottom and is used to adjust tension on the lever. Near the knob a similar adjustable bottom screw is used as the contact. Just to the right of the knob another screw, thick solder lug, and nut are used to adjust upward excursion of the lever.

The second pic demonstrates the relationship of adjustment screws on the top of the board; the third pic shows the bottom including rubber feet.

Obtaining the desired "touch" of the key requires a bit of patience, trial and error. This is because all four adjustments interact. It is important to have the knob close to the contacts; otherwise the key may have a mushy feel, especially if you have a heavy fist. I used a rather small knob because I like to send using only the tip of my index finger. If it is too small for you, a furniture drawer knob can be employed as shown in the final pic of another such key.



73, Gene, N5GW #7542





## Meet Bill, WB4DBO #12183s

*Ed...After seeing a post in Facebook from Bill, I dug a bit deeper and enjoyed Bill's QRZ page. I thought you would enjoy reading about Bill and especially his antenna.*



My back yard is very deep and has two large Oak trees. I have included a picture of the back yard. Finally, the new house pretty much set up, time to get a new antenna up and back on the air.

My good friend, Randy, KS4L, SKCC 1,864T came over to my old house, helped me get my old long wire

down and then over to the new house to put it back up. Randy is very good with the slingshot and was able to put the wire up and over a 75 foot Oak tree!



My antenna is the same one I have used for over a year. Antenna is "Myantennas EFHW 8010" 130 feet long, end fed, resonate on 80 thru 10 meters.

The following photos show the yard, tree, end fed box, lead in to my office.

This is an End-Fed Half-Wave (EFHW\*) antenna for 80/40/30/20/17/15/12 and 10m bands. It is resonant Half wave on 80m (3.5MHz) therefore also resonant on second, third and fourth harmonics etc. Due High Impedance feed point, the antenna is less height dependent. You can put it up at 10 or 50 feet in the air without much change in VSWR values.



Here is the link for the antenna technical details - <http://myantennas.com/wp/product/efhw-8010/>

- NO TUNER needed!
- NO counterpoise needed! (Grounding recommended\*)
- Frequency coverage: 3.5-30MHz
- Resonant on 80/40/30/20/17/15/12/10m

- Wire length ~130 feet
- Power Handling: 1kW I.C.A.S
- Stainless Steel hardware
- Stealth Marine #18 AWG black wire

Connector: Silver/Teflon SO-239

For a detailed technical explanation of how this antenna works, go to this link -  
<http://myantennas.com/wp/efhw-8010-is-this-the-ultimate-magic-antenna/>

Following is the SWR values I found measuring the SWR on my installation.

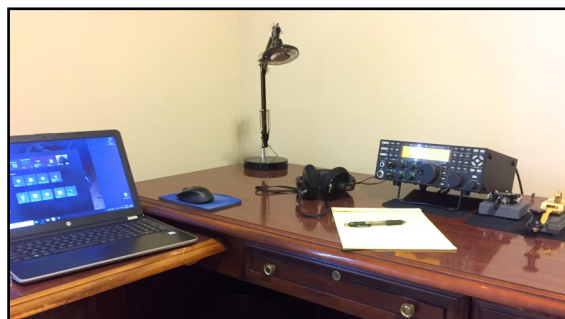
<u>Frequency</u>	<u>SWR</u>
28.050	1.4:1
24.940	1.2:1
24.910	1.1:1
21.225	1.2:1
21.050	1.1:1
18.110	1.7:1
18.080	1.7:1
14.175	1.2:1
14.050	1.1:1
10.125	2.4:1
10.120	2.4:1
7.150	1.2:1
7.055	1.3:1
3.650	1.2:1
3.550	1.1:1

Looking forward to getting back on the  
“Brag” challenge.

73 de Bill WB4DBO



The antenna as it arrives.

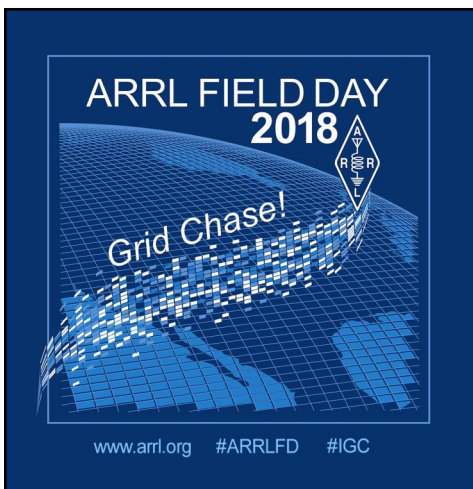


*Don't "mess" with  
Bill! I just had to  
include this fine  
picture from Bill's  
QRZ page.  
Thanks for your  
service Bill!*



*Bill's fine station*





## Field Day 2018

As this issue of the Rag Chew comes out in early June, I would like to remind you to take and send pictures of your Field Day activities...even if they are not strictly SKCC activities. It's always good to see what members are involved in and where Field Day takes them.

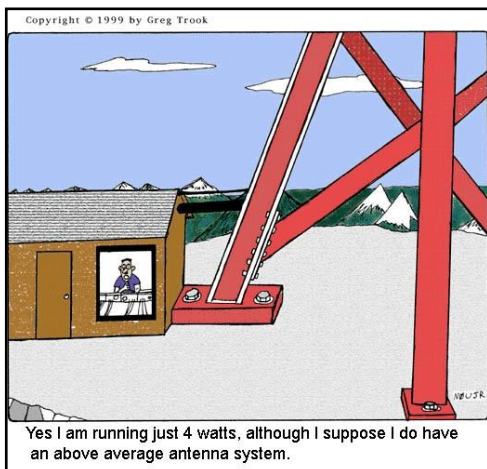
What is your local club doing...we want to know! Are you "mountain topping," operating alone, QRP, QRO, digital, VHF/UHF, solar, battery...tell us please!

k8aqm1629t@comcast.net

## QLF...or QRF?

This photo was sent by Ken N8KR #7559s, who "caught" Larry KA8HFN #2046s in Dayton this year at the QLF booth. Now the questions are...is that Larry's right leg/foot or his left; is Larry trying to pull a fast one and tell everyone he is left footed and to be fair needs to use his right leg/foot? Larry, you're not trying to pull a "fast one" are you?

Let the jury decide (and those of us who know Larry!)



## Improving Your QRP Signal

This is certainly one way to improve your QRP signal; as the old saying goes, "if you can't hear them, you can't work them." Good antennas at booth ends of the QSO are important. Transferring every watt to the antenna is important too; use high quality coax. Today's xcvsr usually have great receiver specs, make sure your's does. Gain antennas, even wires on 40 and 80 have been used with great success. Make sure you're aware of the latest/greatest antenna designs, one s-unit can make the difference between a QSO and "no contact."