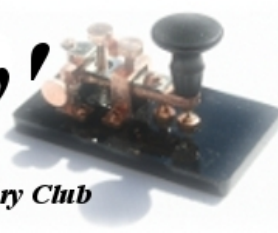


'Rag Chew'

The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club



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Volume 5 Issue 2

March, 2014

Dayton 2014 May 16-18

Hello all you SKCCers! As we look back and see our K3Y event fading off in the background it is time to set our sites on the Dayton Hamvention! I will say this about K3Y...it sure was fun...wasn't it? The Dayton Hamvention... The Mecca of all hamfests, as hams view hamfests! Have you ever been there? If so, have you ever been to the SKCC Booth? Have you ever taken a time slot to sit at the SKCC Booth and talk the club up to potential members, current members, inactive members? If not, then you are missing out on the excitement! Just talk with any of us that have been there and done that! Well, now is your chance.....this year the SKCC Club will be there in force once again.

Ron, AC2C, has secured the booth, Ted, K8AQM, has volunteered his laptop and keys like last year, Curt, WA2JSG, will supply some printed wallpaper, and I will be your host again for 2014! Anyone who would like to participate as a fellow club member to SELL our club to any prospective "straight, bug or sideswipin' CW operatin' varmit in this world"(that was for you MO Outlaws!) is welcome to join us. Time slots are in 1 hour blocks, and we need to have at least 2 members present at the booth during that hour. Last year we did not have to worry about any extra folks being around, but we do need 2 per hour on the schedule. There will be brochures, and we will have a couple of keys to play with, (right Mitch)! We will take some pictures and post them on our site, and we will take a group photo on Saturday for those of you that can be there. More cool activities to follow at Dayton.

Our location is the same as last year, NH254(that's North Hall). This booth is just down from Gordon West's, and in the same room as the Elecraft booth. Looking forward to seeing you folks at Dayton.

If you have any questions feel free to reach out to me at me at my QRZ email address. A sign up sheet is available at the SKCC Yahoo Group.

73/72..de N3JJT 255T Scott



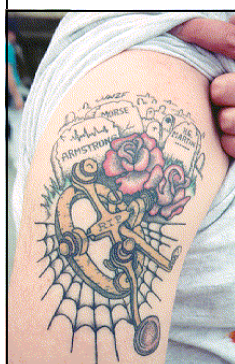
Taming A Bug



Larry, K8TEZ, sent this along and may be of interest to those wishing to slow their bugs down...

“About five years ago I went to the hardware store and got a chrome knob that is used on a drain pull. It goes on the end of the rod and fits perfectly. The Vibroplex is softer than the knob and a half twist snugs it perfectly on the rod. I have removed it several times from the bug and reinstalled it again, it reinstalls perfectly snug. With the added weight and using the existing weight I can tame the bug right down.

CW Dead? I Don't Think So!!!!



This picture was sent to me by good friend Larry, K8TEZ, and my first thought was “cool, this guy really likes cw.” WRONG! This guy has “RIP” headstones around the key, the key shows neglect with cobwebs around it and the roses are like those people send to funeral homes! Ack, how could I not have noticed this before?!? I happened to have the call of this individual along with the picture and after checking on QRZ I see he is an Extra Class from the early 70s! Well, he is wrong, CW is very much alive and well, just check the SKCC roster and you'll find over 11,900 members in our club alone! CW dead, HA! I DON'T THINK SO!

KD8SKO #10953T



In the past year Don, KD8SKO got his license (Tech no code), upgraded to General, taught himself cw, got an FT-840, a straight key and a bug! Wow, this has been a very good year for Don. He joined the Straight Key Century Club, worked 100 cw station in the club, got his “C” and recently worked an additional 50 C and T stations to achieve his “T” status within the club and now has his TX2! He has operated in straight key sprint contests, operated as K3Y/8 and was part of the W8TQE-K3Y/8 team operating 20m and 80m. He has both a Navy Flameproof key and a TAC 1937 bug with the

famous W8TTH “dot extender”. Note the calls there on Don's papers!



Christmas at K8JD!



Well, it's Boxing Day here (the day after XMAS) and I received one more present, but it was the "BIG ONE" .

There was a postal truck in front and the driver had a big box with him at my front door. It didn't quite come from the north pole, but close enough, Whitehorse, YT was the return address. The Yukon Territory, Canada.

My old high school buddy J Allen (VY1JA) had sent me his old Yaesu FT990 rig because he had something newer and better.

I spent the afternoon rearranging my radio desk and rerouting cables etc...Now I have the Yaesu FT990 in the primary operation spot and moved the TS520 off the desk and moved the TS440s into the second spot. I plugged in the keyer paddle into the front slot and turned on the internal keyer and had my first contact on 20M with the new toy. I have to rewire the straight key and bug to a Stereo plug next so I can have some SKCC contacts with the FT 990 soon.

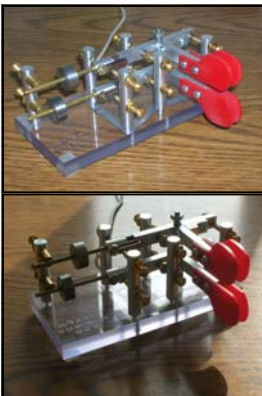
De K8JD John #1395T



Merry Christmas to Me!

In previous issues I've showcased the beautiful work of Dave, N9ZXL's bugs and keys. Dave offered me the chance to purchase "Dub Bug #2." Santa (me) said, "Hey, you've been good and deserve a another key (still working on those N+1 and S-1 formulas). So a deal was made and now I have a "dual speed bug" in my "in-the-house" shack. Rumors are afoot, these unique bugs may be massed produced and sold to the deserving.

73, Ted K8AQM #1629T



Back to CW

Thanks for the contact tonight. I was a little nervous as I am just getting back into my CW. Have not operated CW really since I was a Novice years ago but I am enjoying it more just like the fun I had many years ago.

Tnx for the contact with K3Y/8

73,

Jim, W5JCS # 8072

Stillwater, OK

...ed: received in an email



The Ultimate Shack-cessory

When I casually mentioned on the K3UK sked page that the VK4TJ antennas might be coming down in preparation for a move, your esteemed editor, Ted, K8AQM, thought that it might be appropriate to immortalize in pictures and prose the station that was:

“First VK ever – TU”

“First DX QSO ever – TU”

“First SKCC DX outside USA – TU”

“First VK QRP - TU”

“First VK 2xQRPP –TU, TU, TU!”

for so many of our newbie members, and not a few old timers as well!

The station is surprisingly modest. An old IC-706 original, now pushing 20 years old, has pride of place at the RX/TX end, having survived at least 4 bouts of open-heart surgery to replace lazy relays, fragile front-end devices and vaporized ground traces. I’ve always made sure that my rigs could accommodate a good, narrow CW filter, and the 706 is no exception, with 250 Hz on tap at all times. For really difficult conditions, a homebrew SCAF (switched-capacitance audio filter), screwed right down to 60 Hz bandwidth occasionally joins the ranks, though it will never make the “easy listening” top 10. At various times, I have augmented my firepower with either a homebrew Gi-6b linear amplifier (built for less than \$20!), or an ailing Yaesu FL-7000 solid state PA flying on one engine (half the final devices blown), though neither have been in the line-up in the last year or so (long story).

Outside, things are even less prepossessing – a Hy-Gain TH3MKIII 3 element tribander crowns a stubby 9 mtr high homebrew tower. Both should probably be pulling a pension by now. Anything not addressed by the TH3 becomes, ipso facto, the responsibility of the ladderline-fed 160 mtr dipole. Too low to be anything other than a cloud-warmer on 160 mtrs, it nonetheless makes a good account of itself elsewhere. By pure fluke (read “available skyhooks”), above 160 mtrs it presents as a V beam favouring Europe, and USA via long path. The JA’s tell me that, on 20 mtrs, it has precisely the same gain as the TH3. Never underestimate the power of a bit of wire!

To what, then, do I attribute my modest success in accommodating the above mentioned “firsts”?

1. The QTH is quiet. Though minutes from town, it’s a decent 1.5 acre sized block, so I am not cheek-by-jowl with my neighbor’s noisy electronic gew-gaws.
2. I am served by underground power. No near field antenna obstruction + see point one.
3. I am absolutely rabid about eliminating spawn-of-the devil switch mode power supplies not just from my shack, but from my household entirely. Signs surround the perimeter of my property: “Switch Mode Power Supplies Will Be Shot On Sight”. See point one.

Picture this: arising from the bald-arsed prairie, in the distance we see a conical protrusion, the only obstruction on an otherwise unblemished horizon. Clearly a [hopefully] extinct volcano. Near the apex, we can just barely make out a short, stubby tower and tribander. Geez – it must be....700 mtrs above sea level! Negative horizon all ways but one! Nothing larger between it and USA....bar Panama! Zoom in for a closer look. Yep, it’s VK4TJ, all right.

While 700 mtrs ASL is trivial by comparison to, say, the Colorado Rockies, it ceases to matter, to a point. The key thing is the uncluttered horizon, falling away in lovely, undulating, but low, farm country.

Not happy with your current success rate on 20 CW? Check out the on-line auction sites, and see if you can pick up a slightly used volcano for a song – I highly recommend it! Trust me – it is the ultimate shack-cessory.

And yes, my XYL *still* thinks that we bought the property for the views...*de John VK4TJ*



Here are some shots of John's present home. Talk about views! Maybe the best view is that "critter" in



the back ground guarding John's tower! That sure is a big "mouse" at John's operating desk!

Let's hope your new QTH will provide the same great conditions John.
73, Ted K8AQM #1629T

The Mysterious Awakening!

It was zero dark thirty (actually, about 04:45 AM local time) when I woke up for no apparent reason. Failing to quickly fall asleep again, I crawled out of bed and stumbled to the radio shack, thinking maybe the elusive K3Y/3 might be on the air. Worth the effort to listen, since that was the only blank spot in my basic K3Y sweep.

With the computer still booting up, I switched on the rig & began tuning across 40 meters. The first signal heard had that familiar SKCC sound, so I paused there while a VK station sent his name, number and "BK". Now I don't believe in magic, but am I dreaming? I just heard Jim say his 73 to the VK, and THEN SIGN K3Y/3!!!! Hey, he is 569, and that is DO-ABLE!

In the echo of their final dit dits, I send "K9ZMD". Instead of returning to me, Jim begins CQing. OMG (not really what I said), what is wrong here? OK, there it is; always helps if "BK-IN" is switched on before keying. Again, "K9ZMD K9ZMD" . . . followed by Jim CQing once more. Oh sh_uger, that call only went out at 5 watts! Twist that PWR knob full clockwise NOW!

"K9ZMD K9ZMD" Looong pause. WHAT! Is he QRT now? Into the silence, I tap out a hopeful "K9ZMD K9ZMD", and this time Jim replies "QRZ K3Y/3 K" Come on now, I'm hearing him 579! What is this, a freakin' NIGHTMARE? Rather forcefully on the ol' SKCC Pro Pump, I pound out "K9ZMD K9ZMD K9ZMD". Looong pause. I hold my breath. Turning blue. Finally, I hear: "9ZM ?" ALRIGHT!

From that point forward, everything went as it should, and is now history in Jim's log and in mine.

Am I going back to sleep again tonight? No Way! After nearly 54 years of playing radios, there are still moments that can really get the adrenaline flowing. Isn't this a great hobby?

....Ed: If something like this hasn't happened to you in amateur radio, just wait, it will! I remember sitting on a quiet frequency and suddenly, no warning EPIAA started calling CQ and I was there first!

K9VKY and the Spy Radio

On SKN I had a very enjoyable QSO with Brian, K9VKY, SKCC 750. I heard this CQ that had a very slight chirp to it and knew I had someone with either an old “boat anchor” or some home-made gear. To my surprise Brian was using a “spy radio” (maker unknown) as described in several articles in the popular magazines. Check out Brian’s radio and the

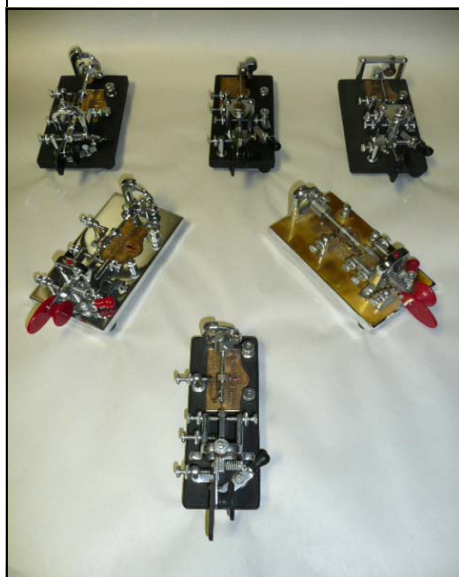


workmanship on the “spy radio” (circa WWII). Brian’s radio runs about 12-15 watts and was putting in a 578 rst from Pennsylvania. We talked for nearly an hour about his radio and our mutual enjoyment with old equipment (unfortunately at the time I was using a Kenwood TS-570).

To the left of the spy radio is an old National receiver (maybe a 5T1?) . For you younger types the long silver plate below that wonderful safe-like tuning dial is a plug in coil. You had one plug-in coil basically for each band. You

had to be able to read a graph to know where you were in the band. It is a wonderful old receiver with excellent audio.

Brian also has a nice collection of vibroplex bugs as you can see. We exchanged stories of restoration of keys and gear throughout our hour conversation. Unfortunately, I had to end our QSO long before either of us had



exhausted stories and information!

Even after our QSO Brian and I exchanged photoes of our collections of gear and telegraph keys via emails.

I firmly believe this is what SKN and rag chewing is all about. This interesting QSO with Brian and his spy radio was one of the more enjoyable QSOs I’ve had in quite sometime. Giving the honest 578 RST triggered an explanation of Brian’s radio thus leading to many more interesting exchanges. Thank Brian, we “have” to chat again!

....de K8AQM

Koffee, Keys and Cooties!

That's Dave KC8ITC (4312), and Bud K8LAR examine a "cootie" that belongs to Dave. If I told someone I had a cootie or several cooties some people would run away while others would want to see, feel and touch them! If you're a CW man you would fall in the latter group. A "cootie" key a cross between a straight key and a bug (hmm, cw guys like cooties and bugs?). Picture two straight keys back to back while on their sides and you slap each side alternately to send your cw...that's how a cootie or "side swiper" (as they sometimes are called) works.

KC8ITC(4312), K8LAR and K1ND (6099)often meet for coffee and "gossip".....well, at least discuss important "radio" issues. Anyway, Dave brought his cootie for the guys to examine and Jan K1ND sent these great photos. This is a very old cootie, possibly pre 1900 and was made by the Burnell Company who made many fine sounders, straight keys, cooties and bugs up through WWII.

You can see and imagine how a cootie works side-to-side from the lower picture. Dave gave a brief history of the his cootie as follows:

"My history with the key is brief...it is a gift from an old friend who said that he picked it up at a local sale. Jan and Bud both thought that it looked rather old...and definitely was made by the J.H. Bunnell Co., which began the production about 1880s." K8LAR, who did the refurbishing, said:

"After I took it apart at first, I thought it had a coating of some kind on it...soaked the brass in acetone with no effect. Used some polish with very little effect and tried a couple non-abrasive cleaners. Finally in desperation on a place that was not easily visible I tried 0000 steel wool...which worked fairly well...the bottom line is I used a wire brush in a moto-tool on the smaller and round pieces and ended cleaning flat pieces with 400 and then 600 grit carborundum paper. Then finally polishing everything with Met-All. The base received a coat of antique paste wax. Wish I could figure how the original base was...it obviously had been

modified, and of course the original shorting switch was not there. The corrosion was unlike anything I have ever seen."



CW Ringtones

A while back on the reflector several members wanted to put cw ringtones on their phones. The web page here will give you the program to add ringtones to your Android phones. I don't know if it will work for Iphones. It creates a .wav file to email and save to your phone.

<http://www.nitrngen.net/morsecode/>



N8KR in the Sun!

Ken N8KR(7559T), was in Florida from November until early January and has been operating as /4. Ken and his wife have given themselves this little Christmas present to themselves in the past few years so it seemed appropriate to list this as a Christmas gift in this issue.

Ken has a Kenwood TS-450, a backyard mounted vertical and a couple of dipoles for an antenna farm where he stays. He was impressed with how well his setup worked in the CQWW CW Contest.

Ken has been working very hard with collecting QSOs from SKCC members on as many bands as possible to apply in his quest for the highest ranking operator award in the Straight Key Century Club, the Senator.

It's hard to look at that station and know that Ken has to have a fan to keep himself cool in Florida while the rest of us up north were battling snow, ice and winds and are freezing!

It hurts to get those 80 degree daily weather reports from Ken and what hurts even more is knowing Ken has removed his favorite "807" beverage bottle that I just know was in the "original" station picture...lucky dog!



SKCC QSL Bureau

Joe, N8TI # 773, reminds us what a great deal the SKCC QSL bureau is. The information on how to use it is right there on the SKCC web site. Jeff, K9JP is running the bureau and does an excellent job. Check it out and get your envelope(s) into Jeff. The "Forever Stamps" makes it super easy to use now. If you enjoy QSLing and enjoy receiving QSLs then this is the best way to go.

As a side note, on my last trip operating as ZF2TA K3Y-NA I QSLed 100% to all SKCC members who had envelopes on file. Again this year I will again QSL any SKCC member who has an envelope on file with the bureau whether they QSL me or not.

Birth of a DXer

"When I was a junior in high school (1950) I had a home made crystal controlled rig on 40 meters. At that point I had never worked west of the Mississippi. One night I woke up at 3 AM with a tooth ache. I couldn't get back to sleep so I turned on the rig and without touching there was a W7 in AZ calling CQ. This was back in the days when a W7 was in the seventh call are. I called him never expecting him to come back but he did and give me a 579. After a nice QSO I tuned around and there was another W7 in WA. Called and worked him. I then called CQ and a W6 came back to me. I thought I had died and gone straight to heaven :-) I will never forget that night. A couple of nights later I worked a KH6 and I've been a DXer ever since."

73, Urb W1UL

PS Urb is looking for someone to go to Kingman Reef and P5 (N. Korea)...he says, "Please!"

K3Y/8 aka W8TQE

Once again it was time for the annual gathering of straight key operators at the K8AQM shack where we operate as K3Y/8 under the club call W8TQE. This year was just as much fun as in the past even with fewer friends who could make the trip to join us.



We ran four stations on Saturday but a shortage of ops on Sunday reduced us to three stations. Each station ran QRO at 400-500 watts and we covered the bands 10m through 160m (only 150 watts on 30m). It was great fun connected to the K3UK web page and answer requests to QSY and listen for stations who wanted to fill their band slots for K3Y/8. Special kudos to N0JRN, KZ5OM and KK6AW who worked us "everywhere".



Photos from top to bottom: The back of Ken, K8KIC, on 40m with KD8TTM, Bill doing the logging, that's "young buck Don, KD8SKO, running 20m and Gerry, KR8W, logging. Rich, K8UV, came Sunday and handled 40m. Again K8KIC wearing headphones on 40m with KD8TTM logging, Curt, KU8L is sitting on 30m and was "glued" to the chair "amazed" with how the log periodic at 100 feet worked! My Jr. High/High School buddy Wes, AC8JF, is enjoying a bowl of chili while logging for the 15m op(me) and KR8W and KD8SKO working 20m in the background.



And have I told you about the food? That's Sunday's crew sitting around for a lunch break; W8VFM on the left, KD8TTM in the back, N8AMM in the orange and KG8CO in the green sweatshirt. That's Ned, W8VFM, and K8AM "snacking." You can see one of the two chili pots, coffee pot, Subway four-footer and all the "snacks;" we eat well! Of course that's your editor, K8AQM in the yellow shirt.



W8TQE finished the K3Y event with 512 QSOs and a lot of great memories. It has become an annual event and will continue next year too. Maybe with better weather next year, those who couldn't make it will return.

73, deThe W8TQE team:

Adrian Amateur Radio Club 2944T

KU8L 5380T	K8AQM 1629T
K8KIC 2938	KD8SKO 10953T
KC8ITC 4312	KD8TTM 11614
KR8W 4310	K8UV 2250T
KG8CO 6362	W8VFM 1589C
AC8JF 10511	N8AMM 3198T



PH6SKCC and More!

Jan, PA3CLQ (SKCC 2765) is the operator behind the call sign PH6SKCC. In mid-2008 Jan applied to the PA Telecom Agency for the special 28 day call sign to begin in January 2009. Since 2009 Jan has operated in the K3Y celebration with PH6SKCC (SKCC 5031). As PH6SKCC, Jan has made many of us very happy to work this unique and unusual call sign. For the past six years Jan has operated as PH6SKCC K3Y/EU.

But that's not the whole story; Jan is also the CW operator of the Dutch Old Timer Club (OTC) with PI4OTC, another special call he uses in February and is SKCC 5315! And still there is more! Jan also operates as PI4RAG and is also SKCC 5624 since July 2009. That's four calls signs with four unique SKCC numbers.

Jan's QSL cards for PH6SKCC and PI4OTC use the winning K3Y QSL design, with the designer's permission of course, each year.



The 25 Buck Bug!

I like to restore old telegraph keys and especially "bugs." I saw this Les Logan bug all bent and corroded for \$25 including shipping! Who could resist! First thing was to take it apart and soak it over night in water and cleaner; with a tooth brush used the next day, the grime and crud of 50+ years came off.

Now to straighten that pendulum arm; if I break it, I have \$25 worth of parts! I took two pair of pliers and holding tightly, gently bent the arm straight. The arm is straight and all is well. Next, scratch up that corroded chrome base and get it ready for primer. Using a circular sander with 80 and 320 grit paper made great grooves for the primer to take hold. Two coats of primer and two coats of "hammered" finished paint makes a beautiful base. Some "Brasso" on the chromed parts, and it's ready for re-assembly.

Now I have a very nice looking and working Les Logan Speed-X bug and all for 25 bucks! What a deal!

de ... K8AQM



ZF2TA 2014

Michigan winters can be bad news and especially this past one! My XYL (WD8LCH) and I had had enough so off to somewhere warm! Last year we headed for Grand Cayman and thought it would again be a great place for a “winter warm-up.” We travel the last week in January (how convient for K3Y!) to give ourselves a winter rest. So off to ZF land we went! We stay at Cobalt Coast, a diving resort on



the very north tip of the island (see red star). You can see the “jungle” bungalow on the left where we stay. The “shack” occupies a desk in the living-dinning-kitchen room. With a computer for logging, my straight key and K2/100 I’m good to go! The antenna

“farm” is a Force 12 Sigma V covering 10, 12, 15, 17 and 20m. You can see the Sigma is a vertical dipole with easy band switching . I installed a 30m inverted V with the apex at 17 ft. I use RG-174 coax and it works well with about 75 ft and some loss of course but still giving me 60+ watts out.

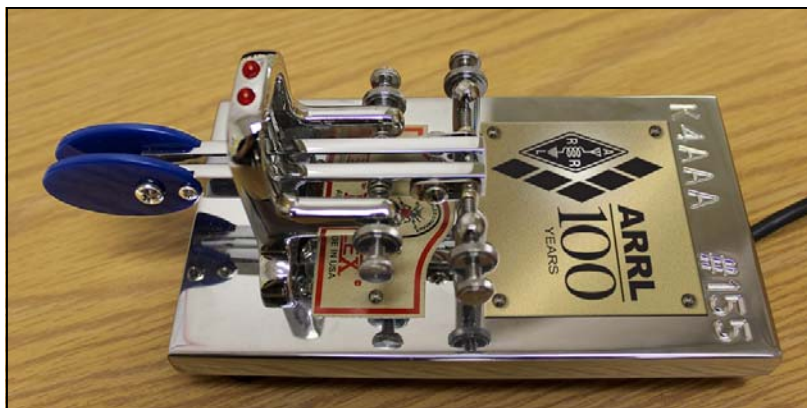
Check out the picture of the ZF1A club station where I got to operate for an afternoon! I used the 17 el log periodic at 100 ft and my K2/100...great signals!

If you want one of the “snazzy” looking ZF2TA QSLs for 2014 just Send direct with SASE. If you use the SKCC bureau and have an envelope on file you’ll get a card regardless!

Thanks to all who pulled my weak signal through. Next year maybe from another warm winter spot; C6A, 6Y5, VP9 or.....

73, Ted
K8AQM/ZF2TA



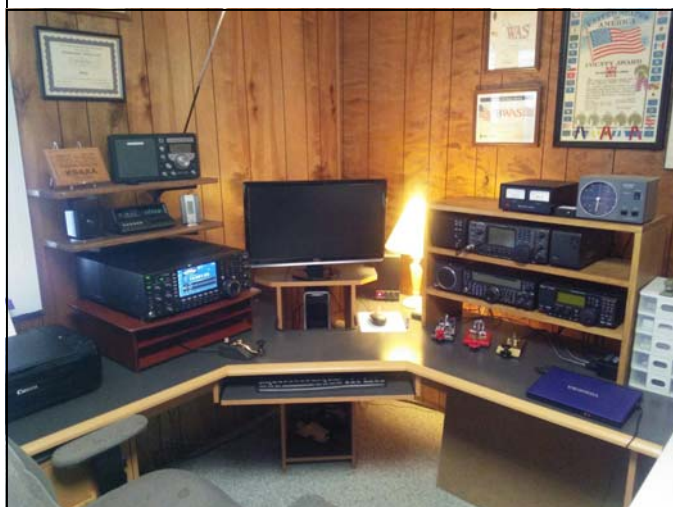


Paddle to Sideswiper

The ARRL and Vibroplex have come up with this beautiful anniversary paddle. Yes, a paddle, but it can also be wired as a sideswiper! This looks like a real beauty and comes with your call and is numbered. Since I do use a paddle when chasing DX, I can switch it back to a paddle if I'm

too far gone to lean sending with a sideswiper! Not to mention, this is a pretty darn good way to support the ARRL. Just "Google" ARRL centennial paddle for more information.

K9AAA's FB Shack!



Many of us have worked Dave, K9AAA, SKCC #270S. Dave lives in southwestern Michigan. He must have been a very good boy because Santa brought him an Icom IC-7700 this year. You can see the new rig on the left connected to his Bengali straight key. You can clearly see Dave has been extremely actively with the very fine collection of operating awards hanging on the wall.

In addition to the IC-7700 Dave has several other rigs and operating positions in his shack. That very nice "brass" straight key shown in the picture is a "N3NZ" model and according to Dave it's

great! Dave formerly handled the SKCC bureau and was recently elected to the SKCC Hall of Fame. You can often find Dave on the K3UK sked page and usually in the WES events. Dave

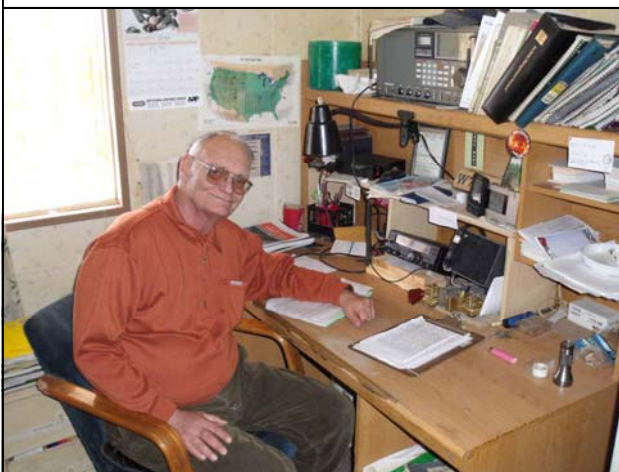


is always willing to give a QSO to those needing his "S."

W7GVE . . . Golden Valley Ed

On my recent travels to “beat the cold and snow”, my wife and I headed to Arizona and Nevada for an extended week. I wanted to capitalize on the event and visit some of the SKCC members that frequent my logbook. My first adventure took me to Golden Valley, Arizona, home of Ed – W7GVE. If you have Arizona in your logbook, or as a multiplier in a sprint or WES, it may very well be Ed! Ed loves CW and is totally committed to SKCC. Of the 11,000 SKCC members, Ed has worked 2,987 of us and takes pride of adding to that number! What is totally amazing to me is that Ed logs everything by paper! He showed me a stack of spiral notebooks, neatly written with every SKCC contact Ed has ever made . . . and that goes back a long time as Ed's number is #729T. He has one notebook numbered from 1 to 13,000 with every SKCC member's Call, name, location and number. Each time he works a new member, he writes the date of that qso in his “master” book! Since Ed participates in every Sprint and WES, he has many, many logbooks!

Ed's shack is in the back of his house. His Yaesu FT-450 is his workhorse and all of his contacts are made with 100 watts or less. Ed uses his paddles as a side-swiper for mechanically sending cw. He finds the conventional straight key hard on the wrist! I had the opportunity to sit at his station and make a quick cw contact on 15 meters . . . smooth! I couldn't find a



microphone in his station but I did hear that he once had a phone qso with his friend Rick (K7CHS) after which he put it away not to be used again!

The W7GVE station antenna is an off-center fed dipole at 37 feet, allowing him to operate most bands without an external antenna tuner. His tower was designed and co-built by Rick (K7CHS - #8573T). It was made out of two by fours, tilt over, with a cinder block as a counter weight! Obviously he doesn't have to worry about rain, snow, and ice. He has



it guyed opposite the direction of his dipole. The sun is very hard on the coax and his 4-1 balun but keeps the tower wood dry and warp-free!





As you can see in the pictures, Ed is at the base of the Black Mountains (looking to the west) and on the far west side of Golden Valley looking east at the mountains at Kingman, AZ. His location is a ZERO noise spot – perfect for HF operation.

I had the greatest time visiting with Ed. Once you sit down with him, it's like you've known him your entire life. He and his wife, Grace, made our visit memorable and I would suggest anyone traveling in the Kingman, AZ area to take the extra 25 minutes and visit my new friend, “Golden Valley Ed!” ... de N8KR

Ken, N8KR, on the road in Arizona

Limited RUN Production!



“The Key Concepts Pro Pump NT9K “Standard” Version will only be produced for a limited run. After this run, the NT9K key will be retired forever and we will shift our focus to other keys. The fine craftsmanship of these keys are outstanding and we know you will be pleased by the performance. It is our plan to use our existing inventory of parts and materials for this key and make it a truly special collector key.

The brass is a matte finish and the base is a black crinkle powder coat. The key also has a new improved contact design from older models.”

Go to:

<http://www.lnrprecision.com/purchase/propumpkey>
for more information.

Here is the original NT9K pump key with the SKCC logo stamped on the pump. It is an excellent key and works very well. Sending never becomes tiring even during SKS or used during K3Y operation. A great design and key.



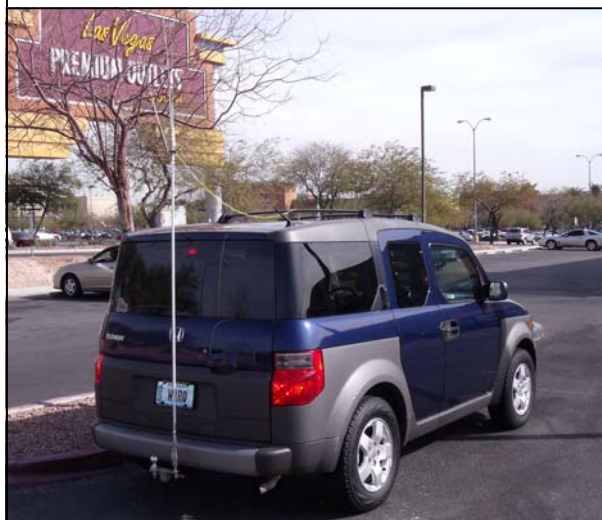
W1RO/7 ... Jim #1379T



Each time I called a fellow SKCC member during my vacation, I was greeted and welcomed like an old friend. And that was certainly true with Jim – W1RO in Las Vegas. While there are 4-5 SKCC members in Las Vegas, I called the one who was in my logbook! Jim is quite an active ham! He's involved with M.A.R.S. and ARES, seems to be the tech person with area repeaters and packet links, but our first meeting best told the story of Jim. We met at a Dunkin' Donut parking lot on the south side of Vegas. Jim was in his

Honda element and, strapped to his leg was a J-37 and he was in the middle of a 15 meter cw qso! Jim explained that his shack was in the middle of major renovation and he didn't want me to see it but he was happy to show his mobile station. The rig was an Icom 706 MK-II coupled to an automatic antenna tuner in the back of his Honda. He had a Hustler vertical(s) on the back. Jim enjoys mobile cw and has been known to park on a mountain during an SKCC event to give out AZ and his "T". Jim also instigates monthly "field day" type events in Red Rock Canyon. One such event happened during my stay so I traveled from 2100 feet above sea level in Las Vegas to the operating site in Red Rock at 3900 feet. While my time was limited, within a matter of a half hour, Jim and two other stations were set up with HF, VHF, and UHF antennas ready to play! (There were additional stations set up after I left.) I sat at Jim's station and hammered out a cw QSO to Indiana on 15 meters. I had a few minutes to visit the other two HF/VHF stations there: KE7WOD (Denny) and WA3PAD (Bob). Bob was working on an HF/VHF cross link. What a good time and thanks to Jim – W1RO for keeping the excitement alive in ham radio with these portable events.

de Ken - N8KR



Rick – K7CHS #8573T

I first met Rick when visiting Ed – W7GVE. When Ed knew I was coming to visit, he invited Rick to meet me also. Rick lives about a half hour away from Ed in Kingman, AZ. On my return trip from Nevada, I stopped for a visit. Rick was first turned on to SKCC by W7GVE and, like Ed, Rick hardly misses an SKCC event! (He's also a regular on the SKCC brag page) Rick has a 32 foot wooden tower, made of two by fours, supporting an off center fed dipole along with an 80 meter inverted vee. He has it anchored with huge c-clamps to his brick/cement fence. I thought it unusual to see a steel tower lying on the ground in his very large “extra lot” back yard. I quickly discovered why he hadn't planted the tower . . . six inches beneath his “pebble-stone” yard is solid bedrock! You simply can't dig a hole in that!



Rick's shack is very comfortable and has two operating positions. The main spot has a Yaesu FT-840 as the radio, antenna switchbox, antenna tuner, his paddles and straight key. Rick DOES log with computer and has started to use AC2C's logging program. His second spot



sports more vintage equipment including his TS-520SE, Hallicrafters S-76, and Heathkit DX-40. Everything works at his station and Rick is very capable of home brewing and radio restoration. Finding radio parts and equipment is a little more difficult in AZ

compared to the midwest.

Besides ham radio, Rick is a master wood worker. Rick also loves the outdoors. His other main hobby is prospecting. Yes, the gold bug has bitten Rick. He showed me his home-built machinery to sift through the dirt and rocks to catch the gold flakes. . . . and next to that is his 1942 Farmall H tractor in near perfect condition!

I was so happy to get to know Rick and, like Ed and Jim, once you sit down with him, it's like you've known him your entire life! Look for Rick on the air . . . always a good signal!

Mr. Mobile!

It was great of Ken, N8KR, to send along all these wonderful adventures visiting other SKCC members while out west. The picture on the left is Ken operating from



the W1RO “shack” he told us about earlier, but did you know N8KR also “flies?” Ken has operated “aeronautical mobile” in several operating events. I know he has done CW that way but complained “air turbulence” causes problem. Maybe next will be “bicycle mobile?”



The Road to Senator

Having had several people ask what all is involved in getting that coveted “S” behind your SKCC number, I thought it might be nice to explain it here, as I did with our *beloved editor* using the K.I.S.S. method.

Work 100 SKCC members and submit log for your Centurion.

Work 50 Centurions, Tribunes or Senators and submit log for your Tribune

Work 350 more Centurions, Tribunes or Senators and submit log for your Tx8 award. (you basically need to work 400 different C, T, S's – Tx8 means 50 x 8 which is 400)

Once you are awarded Tx8, you need to log 200 T's or S's beginning from the date of your Tx8 award. These 200 contacts can be members you've already worked for your Tx8 but a new contact must be made with them for this award.

There are some minor rules regarding working K3Y's and not counting stations for the Senator before August 1, 2013. You can read the *fine print* on the web.

While everyone has their preferred way of keeping track of where they are in the award process, I personally use ZR Tracker. Like with all of the SKCC loggers (and AC2C's is now my favorite for sprints and WES) it's important to keep your data base updated. On some versions of windows you need to manually download the SKCC master data list and copy it to your ZR folder and then do the update. I uploaded all of my sprint .adi files into ZR tracker. (I did that back in November and was at Tx5 status. (remember: 50 x 5 = 250 C, T, S's) So I needed 150 more for Tx8.) Hopefully you save all of your sprint/wes log files.

I found the hardest task is getting to Tx8. Finding new C, T, S's after working 350 takes time. The K3UK Sked Page is great for finding those new C, T, and S's. Once you're at Tx8, the next two hundred is a “piece of cake.” . . . *de N8KR*

New SKCC Informational QSLs



The **Straight Key Century Club (SKCC)** is the fastest growing group of mechanical-key CW operators in the world. First organized in January 2006, our club has grown rapidly to include thousands of members from all corners of the globe.

Here's how it works:

- Membership is **free**.
- Club website: www.skccgroup.com
- SKCC numbers are issued for life. Once you get it, it's yours.
- Exchange SKCC numbers using a straight key, bug, or cootie.
- Monthly operating events.
- Free QSL bureau for members
- Quarterly newsletter
- Live chat page for QSO scheduling:
<http://www.obriensweb.com/sked/index.php?page=skcc>
- Operating awards

The club has designed QSL size informational cards that will be available for free handouts at Dayton. At this time 1000 cards have been ordered and will be available at the hamfest. If any cards remain they can be handed out at other hamfest. This card list some of the advantages of belonging to SKCC. If you are interested in the remaining cards for your hamfest please let the editor(K8AQM) know.

A Very Short Tale about a Very Long Wire

by Bob Irish K5Z0L

Waaaay back in 1960, I had just gotten my general ticket and could do phone on AM! One evening I had a long 40 meter QSO with a KL7 (that's when KL7s were all in Alaska). He was loading his Viking II (same rig as I was using) into the end of a 5 mile long abandoned power line. At 120 watts, he was 5x9+ in Texas. Armchair copy plus.

Fast forward 52 years. Recalling that QSO (my memory isn't gone yet) I got the bright idea of trying a really long wire on 40 meter cw at our place in the country about 70 miles north of Dallas. Using military surplus (read cheap) 32 foot antenna supports, I strung out 1000' of #14 antenna wire (over the river and through the woods so to speak) and terminated it just outside the back porch of the cabin. Then I went in and hooked an extension wire to the antenna tuner and ran it out onto the porch to connect to the long wire. I didn't have a clue how or if it would load up. After a while I found a setting that gave an acceptable SWR for the IC706 on 7.050.

When I got ready to operate, I heard W4JBB, Joel, calling CQ SKCC. I answered and we had a very nice QSO. I gave him a 599 and he gave me a 559. This was at 0300Z. QRN wasn't bad and I was very pleased to learn that I was his very first SKCC contact. And I was his very first contact with his new KX3. A two-fer! After our chat we signed and since it was approaching 0400Z and the weather report called for a good possibility of thunderstorms before daylight, I went out to disconnect the extension wire from the long wire.

You can imagine my surprise when I found that I had not connected it. All 20 feet were laying on the floor of the porch. Propagation must have been extraordinary 2 years ago on 9 March 2012.

Bert, F6HKA SKCC 6069S



If you haven't worked Bert then you haven't been on the air! Bert, F6HKA SKCC 6069S is like a beacon; Bert is always there and usually on every band. I have worked Bert on just about every band and often times from operating places around the world. While running pileups Bert will call and I get to switch immediately to my straight key and give him a DX country. We have worked from T32, JD1 and ZF to name a few.

I got to chat with Bert and he sent a very fine report of his operations from France. The following are Bert's comments to my question and pictures of his shack and antennas. I'm sure you'll enjoy hearing from Bert.

"I've been ham since 1981. I had the chance to learn CW in 1974 during my military service. I was able to copy at 20 wpm after 1 month. 4 hours per day with headphones on ears to listen code. I was very surprised having nothing lost after 7 years. When I started radio I was not very active on HF bands but very active VHF/UHF and SHF. I also did moon bounce on 70 and 23cm This helped me to pick up weak signals. It's a good school. I gave up these activities in 1993 and return on HF bands. I'm trying to be active all bands but I enjoy upper bands. They are less noisy than low bands. I'm often on 10 and 12m when conditions are good.

Equipment here are FTdx5000 with amplifier VL1000 but I rarely use more than 300/400 Watts. I've also got a K3 for QRP use. Antennas are : X9 from Cushcraft for 20/15/10m with it's 40m kit at 20m. A3WS for 17/12m with it's 30m kit at 25m and 7 elements on 6m between X9 and A3WS. Keys are Czech straight key (I've bought it through an advertisement sent by Lyn VK4EI) and IIQOD'bug. I also use paddle for contest and high speed.

I join the SKCC group in December 2009 and I try to work all members. Good challenge but not the easiest. I'm also connected on K3UK sked page every day now I'm retired."



When you see these pictures is it any wonder you hear Bert almost all the time? And just incase you didn't notice the picture of Bert sitting in his shack, be sure to checkout the impressive collection of "wall paper" Bert has acquired.

Bert says he wants to work all members of SKCC and informs me he has worked more than 2800 different members. With such a great station, super antennas and the added benefit of the time through retirement I think he just may be able to do it! You will hear Bert in the WES, involved in K3Y and on the K3UK page so be sure to help him out with his goal to work the nearly 12,000 SKCC members, give him a call!

Thanks Bert for the information, the great pictures and the chance for us to "see"
F6HKA !