

'Rag Chew'

The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club



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Volume 5 Issue 2

June, 2014

Dayton 2014

By Ron AC2C



W1UL Urb....lost?

The SKCC returned to Dayton in May 2014 for the third year in a row. I would like to start off by thanking those members whose individual efforts made this possible.

Scott McCamish, N3JJT

Ted Rachwal, K8AQM

Ken Rogner, N8KR

Karen Russo, W4KRN

Curt Myers, WA2JSG Without the efforts of these players,

Dayton would not be the success that it is for us.



N3JJT Scott, NA4U Tom, and
AH6AX Larry

Most of you know the results of our Dayton experience with 150+ member check-ins, a group photo opportunity, some K9SKC operating, information handouts, a new SKCC key, and a great opportunity for some eyeball QSOs. What you may not know is some of the behind the scenes planning and details that go into putting it all together. I'll try to cover some of those details in this article.

Planning for a Dayton Hamvention for the Club starts in January - during the K3Y event. One of the most basic questions that needs to be settled is how much we have to spend and whether or not we will rent a booth or hope to get a left over booth. As you probably know, the Dayton Amateur Radio Association (or DARA) rents the entire Arena for the 3-day event plus the Thursday before for exhibitors to setup. DARA needs to rent as many of the spaces as they can and will hold out until mid to late April trying to rent every space that they can.



W4KRN Karen, WA2JSG Curt,
AC2C Ron, WQ8Q Rick

Starting usually around mid-April of each year, DARA will start opening up unreserved booths to non-profit clubs on a first-come, first-served basis. For both 2012 and 2013, that is what the SKCC did - we were on a waiting list for any left over booths. I've got to be honest... it is a bit unsettling waiting until the last 3-4 weeks not knowing

whether or not we will have a booth. Scott and I went through the rollercoaster rides in 2012 and 2013.

The other option is to just outright reserve and pay for a booth. The booth we have costs \$575 and includes three admission (Vendor) passes and one parking pass for the Arena. Taking that option immediately reserves the booth and we can proceed

with planning. If we don't take that option, then it becomes an a-la-carte process - pay for each vendor pass, pay for the parking pass, pay for the table cloth, pay for the table skirt, and so on, and so on.

Anyway, to make a long story short, this year we chose to use funds donated to the club though our PayPal account (plus proceeds from the Czech key sales) and paid for a reserved booth. That way, we get an early start on getting members signed up to staff the table at the booth (thanks to Scott, N3JJT) and plan a few other things.

Then there's the booth banner(s) and keys - Many thanks to Scott, N3JJT, Ted, K8AQM, and Ken, N8KR, for all their hard work here. Scott had the SKCC Booth Banner from the previous two years and Ted and Ken had a new banner that they had created along with thousands of QSL-sized handouts. Ted and Ken also provided keys, a bug, a code practice oscillator, and a laptop with the SKCCLogger program so that we could quickly "log in" members as that dropped by our booth. Most of this work was completed Thursday afternoon - with plenty of time left to spare.

Next comes introducing a new 2014 Club Key - the "Patriot" from LnR Precision. There were several emails back and forth working out the details of which key model we would pick as the club key, how and where we would place the logo on the base, how many to have at the table, and so on. In the end everything came together as we picked up two keys from LnR Precision about an hour before the gates opened on Friday morning.



SKCC gang group photo at 2:00 PM Saturday



New club Key

This year, we also had a member, Tom, NA4U, who provided a Blue Collar Antennas Model 2010 Magnetic Loop antenna for use in Karen's (W4KRN) and Jim's (K4JJR) tailgate spot so we could operate K9SKC with the new club key. As it turned out, Tom had signed up for a D-Star class on Friday morning, so we couldn't get setup for K9SKC until the afternoon - just as well as the weather was nasty. We finally got on the air sometime mid-afternoon and made a few contacts before the FT-857D decided to stop working. We think the problem was low voltage on the battery, but are not really sure what happened.

Once the booth is operating, it's a nice chance to take a break and get in some nice eyeball QSOs.

I'm pretty sure that the club will return next year but we will need some help from the membership to help with some of the details. Depending on how our treasury does, we may have to request some donations to help defray the costs. Having gone both the full-pay and the a-la-carte method, the full-pay is definitely the preferred choice. If you plan to attend the 2015 Hamvention and would like to volunteer to help us out with the planning, please contact me directly - AC2C@SKCCgroup.com.



Dayton Flea Market

The Dayton Hamvention is a great place to see new and exciting gear. Anyone who markets to amateur radio is usually there but for me the best place is the "trunk sales" or "flea market." You never know what you find or see in the flea market! Karen W4KRN, had the K9SKC club call running from her flea market



space and there is Curt WA2JSG, pounding brass and using the new SKCC key.

K8AQM Ted and N8KR Ken, run a very busy three-spot shelter of "good fleas." This year we just couldn't keep Scott N3JJT from the site and sharing his wickedly funny jokes! Welcome back next year Scott... we need more jokes!



BX2ABT, Hans 12107



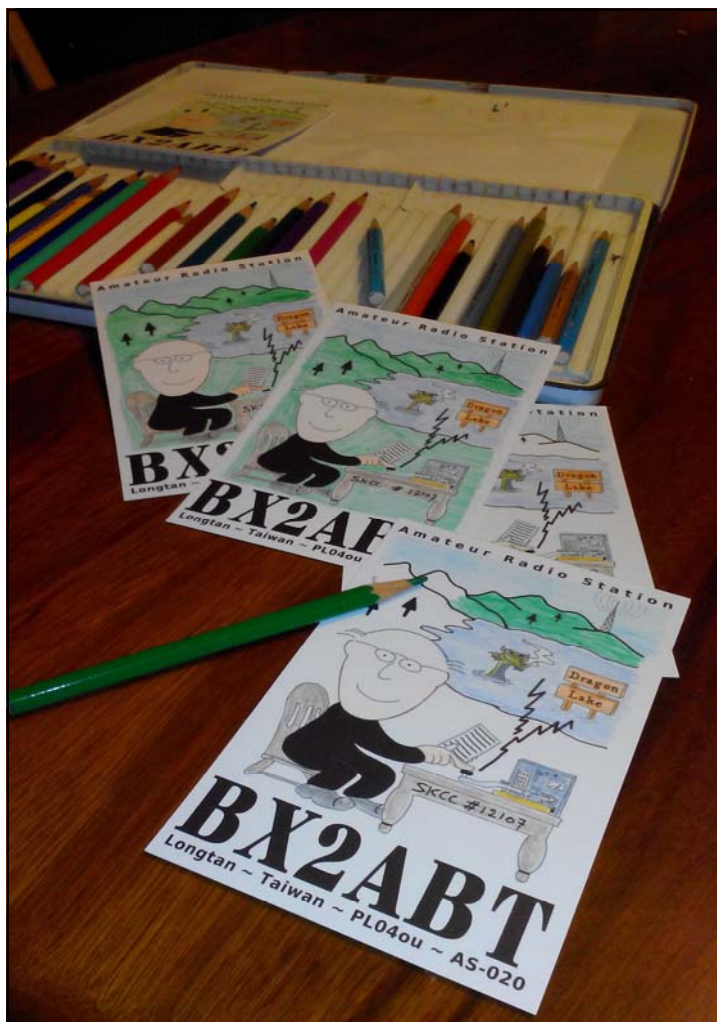
This photo of me was taken on February 28th 2014 on the baseball pitch of my son, just after I finished a QSO with KZ5OM. Who doesn't know that KZ5OM is the alter ego of K6iii, Jerry from sunny California? Because of his gentle persuasion I am now member 12107 of the SKCC and I am having a ball. Let's blame it all on Jerry, folks!

Currently using a J37 (with back up) and Junker on the shelf. Contrary to many I don't like the feel of the Junker,

so use it very little. My antenna situation is very limited with only some verticals on the balcony of our rental 40 km south of Taipei in Taiwan. Think of this when you call me, please. I am more than willing, but if Mr. Sun doesn't want to do his thing I am not able to. If you are one of the few fellows lucky enough to work me you will get a special SKCC edition, hand coloured, BX2ABT QSL card in the mail. My lovely daughter Julia, always helps me at the dinner table during those days where Mr. Sun is in a deep depression. Interesting detail: we use a well worn out set of colour pencils that my parents gave to me almost 40 years ago.

See you on air and "zai jian" from Taiwan.
73,

Hans
BX2ABT / PA2BX
SKCC 12107



De K8UV

From K8UV Rich, SKCC 2250T, I received these photos. First, I don't think I ever saw a "Schlitz" ham radio advertisement. Wonder if Schlitz was "the beer of choice" for hams back in the 50s? Looks like an NC-173D receiver on the left and maybe a Johnson Viking transmitter (Valiant?) there on the right. That's a "flying horse" call book on the desk.

The key below is Rich's latest addition to his shack:

"Below are photos of the key I have been using. German WWII off a submarine. Made well, inside is amazing. A coil, capacitor and diode. Very military for sure. The sub key is all metal and does not move around the desk."

All three of my straight keys that I actually use are military now, Lionel J38, Vibroplex J36 and now the German key."



The Road to the "Shack"

No, this is not the road to "Tara" from "Gone With the Wind" nor is it the road to Harry Potter's "Hogwarts." This is the Cypress Tunnel site of Marconi Wireless Station near San Francisco and once operated by RCA.

In order to achieve a signal powerful enough to cross the Pacific Ocean, a new, more powerful station was built on the Marin Coast. This station was designed and constructed by J.G. White, a New York engineering firm. All of Marconi's transoceanic stations were "duplex" stations, geographically separated complexes for transmitting and receiving. The geographic separation was necessary because the noise of transmission obstructed clear reception. By 1913-14, Marin had a new transmitting station in Bolinas on the bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean and a new receiving station in Marshall, on the hill overlooking Tomales Bay.



These sites formed the "KPH" Pacific Rim station and were the foundation for the most successful and powerful ship-to-shore communications. KPH would broadcast regular bulletins of news, weather and other general information to the shipping community, then relay business and personal messages to and from individual ships. Station operators also monitored the international distress frequencies for calls from ships in trouble.

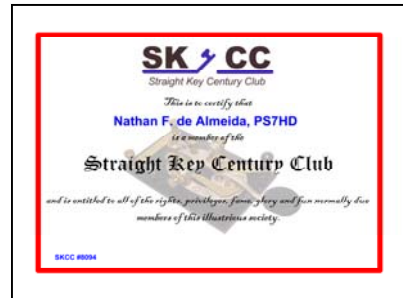
Nat, PS7HD SKCC 8094T

Nat, PS7HD is one of the two very active SKCC stations from Brazil. You can often find Nat on 40 meters with a very fine signal and very good "ears".

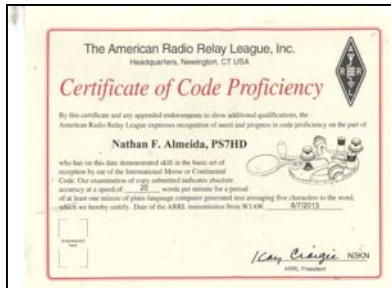
If you have had a QSO with me - thank you! If not, I look forward to chatting with you soon. I am active on CW.

I am happy to QSL. I also upload all my QSOs to the [Logbook of the World](#) (LOTW) and I encourage you to do the same, but if you need my QSL Card I'll send it to you, help (SASE, IRC or green stamp) is welcome, but not essential.

My station consists of a FT-897D, TS-130S, Elecraft K1 and Rock Mite . For CW, my N°1 is a home made key based on the HST key by Liviu YO7FO, a Vibroplex Lightning Bug 1953 and other. I'm in an antenna-restricted house, I use basically wire antennas. I was first licensed in 1999 with the help of a great Elmer - Karl, PS7KM. I have previously held the call PS7NFA. I am a member of [SKCC](#) (8094T), [VCA](#) (227), and the [NDG](#) (1218). I and a small group of friends founded the [Aroeira DX Group](#). Ham Radio remains a lifelong hobby for me. My other passions include biking, checkers, reading, and crosswords.



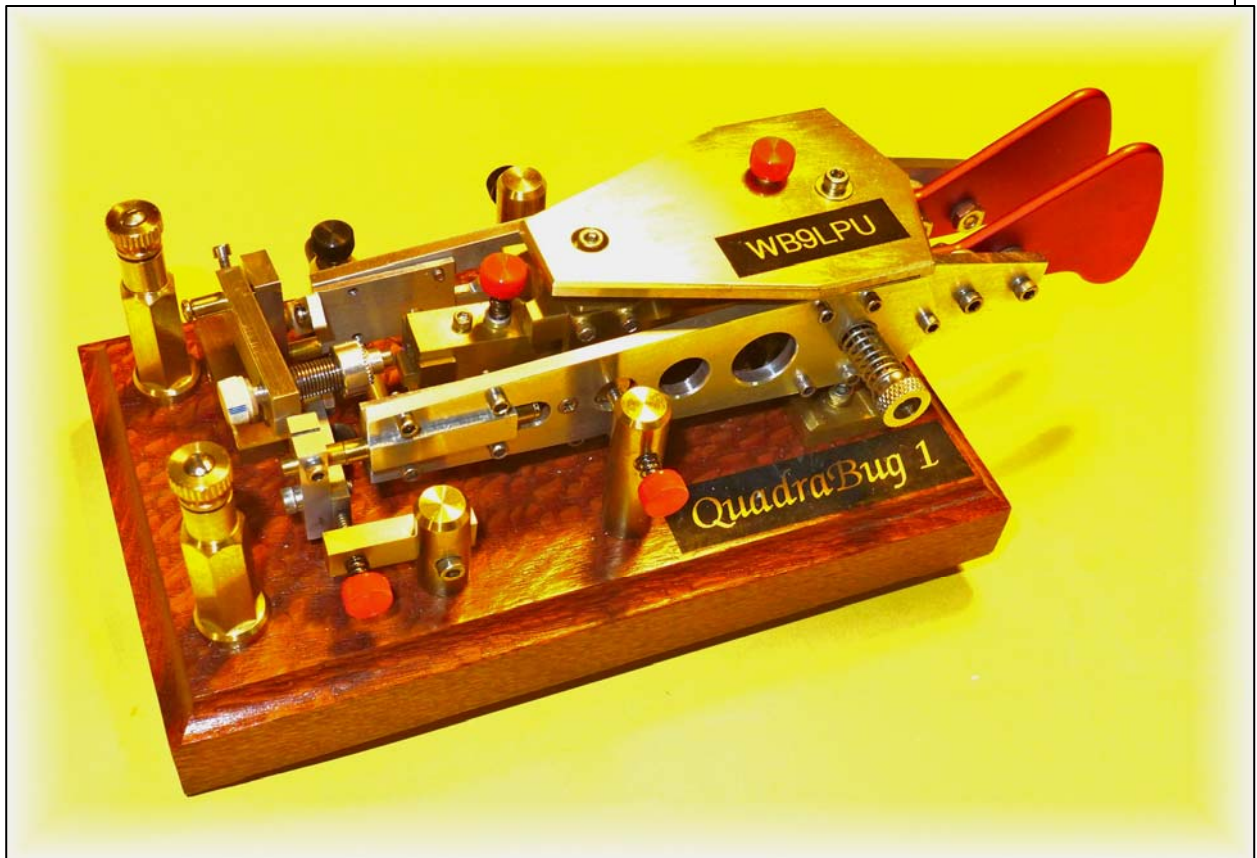
Listen for Nat in the SKS and WES, he is often on and provides a FB QSO and a welcome multiplier.



A Compound-Pendulum Design

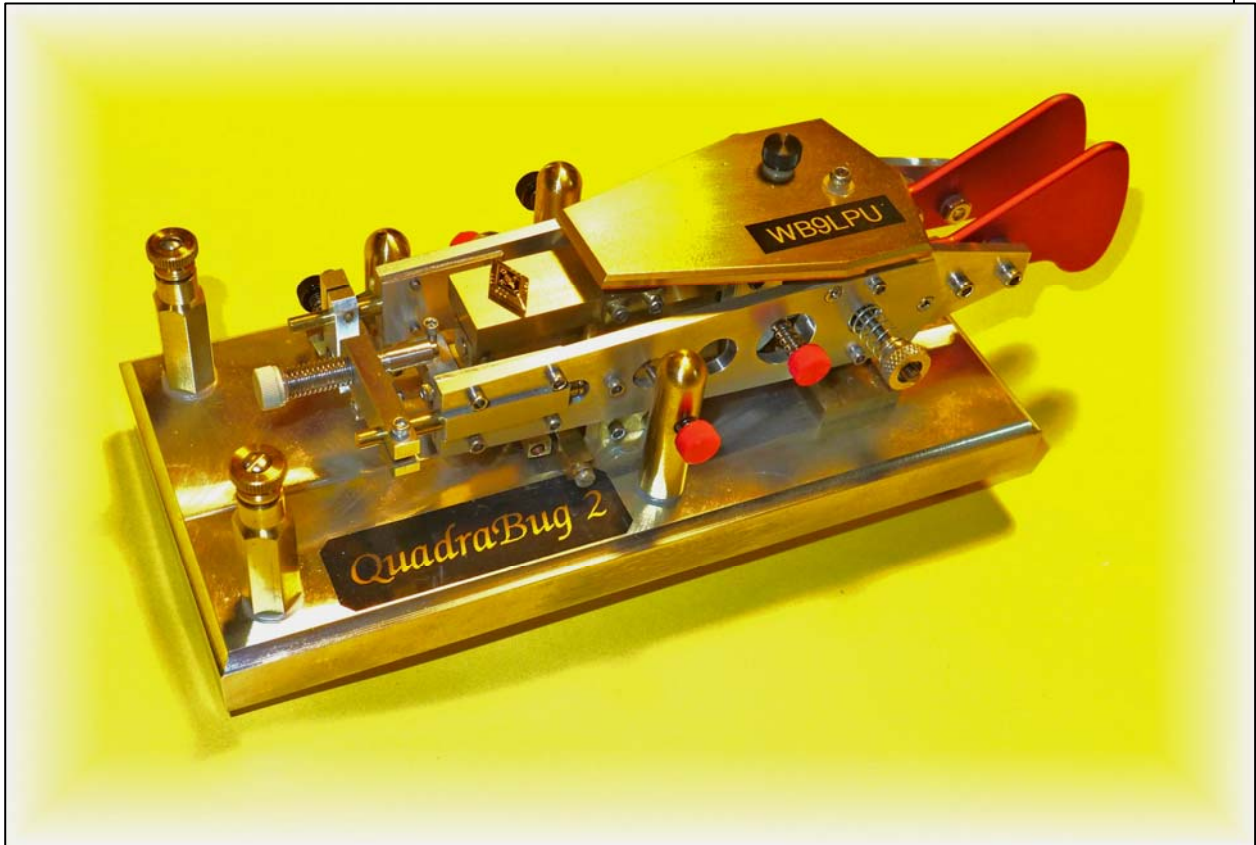
By Richard WB9LPU

The oscillation rate of a pendulum is dependent on its mass. If a pendulum could gain mass when switching from dot to dash operation, and lose mass when operating in the dot mode, then its rate could be changed to make the proper code elements. This pendulum design grew out of the Balanced Bug project, where a short pendulum made of a brass bar was pivoted at its center (the balance point). In the fully-automatic design, a balanced pendulum was constructed that had two components. There was a relatively light one for dots, which moved in a vertical plane; the dot component, with correspondingly greater mass, moved in a horizontal plane. In this way, momentum from the dash operation could not couple to the dot pendulum, which moved 90 degrees out of phase. This gave rise to the name of QuadraBug. Although the linkages necessary to excite each component separately were complex and required significant force to operate, this bug worked rather well. Its operation may be heard at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STCHW5SA92o>



The major problem with this instrument was the presence of significant friction in the dash direction because of heavy loading of the thrust bearings, which were loaded by both components of the pendulum. This resulted in the “run-down” of a string of dashes.

The correction of these problems was the aim of the next version, also called a QuadraBug. The oscillation planes of the pendulum components were interchanged, resulting in improved bearing performance, and the driving linkages were re-designed. A base of Fortal aluminum gave the instrument more weight for greater stability.



Ed....Richard stopped by the SKCC booth and we had a great discussion about his bug projects. In future issues more of Richard's fine work will be presented. Certainly SKCC has promoted cw via mechanical-key operators and the many fine cw key craftsmen have reached beyond the traditional manufacturers producing leading edge keys for our consideration and enjoyment. Richard is only one of many fine craftsmen who are members of SKCC.....



A History of the K3UK Sked Page de K3UK



Before I get too old, and since SKCC has a lot of new members, I thought I would write a brief synopsis of what led to the K3UK Sked Page adding a SKCC Page. First, I should mention that the sked page is not officially connected to SKCC in any way. Often SKCC board members receive emails asking about the sked page, those messages are often forwarded to me with a polite note stating that Andy K3UK runs the sked page. The direct email for questions is k3ukandy@gmail.com

I joined SKCC when it was relatively new. I received 1325 as my number. I enjoyed calling CQ SKCC on the known suggested frequencies. At that time, I had a Sked Page that was almost exclusively used by digital mode enthusiasts. I stole the idea from "Pingjockey"; a web site for scheduling meteor scatter skeds. I also ran a DX Cluster DX Clusters are full of very serious DXers who generally frown on casual chat and "spots" of frivolous stations that are not "real DX". Since my DX Cluster was not very well used, I switched it from a cluster connected to the world, to a stand-alone cluster. I made it available to SKCC members, encouraged them to use it to make SKCC contacts. It was a selfish move, I wanted more SKCC contacts to improve my terrible CW skills.

This was moderately successful, BUT many SKCC members had trouble with the applications needed to access a cluster. Way back then, web access to a cluster was not common. SKCC members had to configure special software and Telnet access. Easy for many, but difficult for quite a few SKCCers.

I can't remember who, but someone else set up a cluster for SKCC as an additional option. Still, the SKCC email list had many questions about setting it up. Partly out of a desire to improve things, and partly out of a desire to steal back the users I lost to the second SKCC cluster, I suddenly thought maybe I should add SKCC services to my already existing K3UK Sked Page. My thinking was... these SKCCers need something as simple as pointing a web page to a site, no having to configure software of telnet ports.

That is how it started for SKCC. Joe N8FQ was the ham that stepped forward when I outlined my ideas for a sked page, I had ideas, but no brain to achieve the task. It was Joe that figured out ways to add SKCC numbers to the page, Joe added the mouse over feature that produces member info. Joe added many more fine touches.

So, there is the brief history. I'll have to research dates.

Andy K3UK

VK7CW, Steve SKCC # 10820T



I reside on a small rural property of 9 acres on the North West Coast of Tasmania, which is about 25 km inland from Bass Strait and situated 420m above sea level.

Originally I learned Morse code in 1982 with the Australian Army and qualified at 22 wpm send and receive. As I am left handed I always used a hand key with my left hand.

In 1995 I obtained my Amateur Radio License and started off using a hand key. Shortly afterwards I moved onto a paddle and keyer which was all new to me. An old ham I knew told me to learn

the paddle with my right hand so I could write things down with my left hand. So I took his advice and subsequently taught myself to use an iambic paddle with my right hand, which I used exclusively from then on.

My previous calls were VK4EMS and then VK8AM. I also made 2 trips with the Army to Bougainville during 1999 - 2001 where I was quite active as P29BI. From mid-2001 I was totally QRT until early 2012 when I obtained VK7CW.

After 11 years my CW was fairly rusty but surprisingly it did not take long to get my speed back and since that time I have been very active on the bands, using CW on a daily basis. I work 99% CW and have recently evolved from using an iambic paddle to a single lever paddle. However, I can use either and have no trouble going from one to the other, both right





right handed.

In mid-2013 I stumbled across SKCC and joined. It did take me quite a while to get used to a hand key again, but then I stumbled across this thing called a sideswiper/cootie. It really got my interest up, so much so, that I made my own out of a steel ruler. I then taught myself how to sideswipe, again with my left hand, and after a bit of practice it did not take me long at all to get the swing of it (pardon the pun). Since then I have been hooked on sideswiping and recently upgraded to a TWanger which is made by Tom G3HGE.

The TWanger is now used for all SKCC contacts.

Occasionally I will send with my left handed 90 degree Vizkey bug; however I am not that good at it and definitely need a lot more practice. But to be honest, I don't find it near as much fun as using a sideswiper.

I also love working DX and contests and for these I use a single lever paddle (Begali HST) with my right hand. My passion for CW has seen me accumulate a small collection of keys and I am always eager to get more.

My station consists of a Yaesu FT-1000 which is my main radio. In addition I also have an FT-990, FT-857D and an MFJ-9020 20m QRP transceiver. My antenna for 20m to 6m is a Hex Beam. For 30m I have a monoband vertical that I made out of an old multibander. It is located on a metal shed roof with raised radials and it works like a charm. For 40m and 80m I use separate inverted v's on the same feed line.

Joining SKCC has certainly been very rewarding and I have met some outstanding people along the way. All the SKCC members that I have encountered have been a great bunch of people. I cherish every SKCC contact that I make and I try to participate in every WES and SKS, which is always a great deal of fun.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers and support team within the club for the outstanding work they do, and it is greatly appreciated.

Hope to hear you on the bands soon.

73 de Steve VK7CW

Ed..... No question Austrailia and especially Tasmania are a great distance for most SKCCers. However, our two very active VK operators VK7CW and VK4TJ, both have great "ears" and are not very difficult to work. VK7CW can often be found in the morning on 30m and I have heard Steve work many QRP station in the south and the midwest. John VK4TJ, explained in an earlier issue of the "Rag Chew" his tremendous listening abilities at his station.

So if you "need" to work VK for a "new one" VK7CW and VK4TJ are sure bets for you. Don't be afraid to give them a call, odds are they will hear you!

A "Quote" From K5ZOL

"On the journey to "S," TX8 takes 90% of the time. The last 200 QSO's from TX8 to "S" take the other 90% of the time!"

Bob K5ZOL 3945TX8+ 121

Editor:.....It's not easy becoming an "S" and either Bob is a little frustrated or maybe his math is faulty? NEWS FLASH! Bob is now an "S!"



de.... Fred (k6rau@arrl.net) SKCC # 11992

(Beginners Code Course)

Those wanting to learn Morse Code, the following link should help. It is a course for beginners not knowing the difference between a "dit" or "dah." The learner with pencil and paper simply follows the voice instruction starting with identifying the sound of dits & dahs and then progressing in twelve lessons to five words per minute...

URLs: <http://www.pdarrrl.org/K6RAU/>

Hunting for SKCC members on the air?

K3UK's site, in the navigation column at left under Community, is the hottest thing going for setting up skeds with other SKCC members. But with more than 11,000 members out there, you can bet there are more members on the air at any given moment than the K3UK Sked Page regulars. To cast a wider net, try these two sites:

Hamjitsu -- <http://ham.jit.su/>

PA4N's Club RBN Bandmap -- <http://pa4n.xs4all.nl/bandmap.html>

Both sites compare reverse-beacon data on who is calling CQ against various ham-club rosters to let you know who is on the air. The SKCC is included in each site's list of clubs. Hamjitsu filters the entries by band and provides SKCC numbers. PA4N's page also filters by band, as well as skimmer continent, CW speed, and other criteria. It gives no SKCC number for members, but you can find those by using the member-search function at the top of this page. Happy hunting!

Toledo, OH Hamfest 2014

The Toledo, OH hamfest in March is one of the beginning hamfest of the season for those of us in northwest Ohio and Southern Michigan. This hamfest is one of the larger hamfest so there are always plenty of SKCC members lurking about. Ken N8KR has a plan to announce an SKCC presence at every hamfest he goes to and to gather all the SKCCers he can to take a group photo (like at Dayton). The first attempt here at the Toledo hamfest brought many of the faithful together for pictures.



On the left, from left to right are N8KR Ken, 7559S, N8LJ Lee, 9954, K8KIC Ken, 2938T and myself K8AQM 1629T. Below us is N8AMM Don, 3198T and KG8CO Brian, 6362. To the right is again N8KR, Mike W8RF 1853, K8AQM in the back, (sri unknown op),



K8TEZ Larry 8426T in the back and KB9IVA Bob 3612 on the right. Below on the left is NO8C Mike 7239T. Finally, on the right are: KA8HFN Lary 2046 and K8CLV Ron 7659T.



N8KR had a great idea of hamfest pictures of SKCCers, why not consider gathering members at your hamfest and sending along the pictures for the newsletter. It's great to see the faces of the calls we've worked. Findlay is our next big hamfest in our area and there will be pictures taken there so join the fun and snap a picture or three to send along!

By the way, Field Day is coming up and pictures of Field Day both the clubs and Skccers are most welcome again this year. Snap a few of those too and send them along to your editor.



KU4GW Discovers A Very Unique Key!



Have you ever seen a CW key like this before? I got the photo off of a post on Google+ made by IV3VJH Emanuele and shared it on my Facebook community page at <http://www.facebook.com/CW.Operators> and someone commented that it is constructed from the brake lever to a Harley-Davidson motorcycle! The engraved label on the key says "A Davidson Navigation Device 1997". Very pretty key, but I would never have guessed that. Anyway, I thought that you may like to see it. I'd like to own one like it!

De Cliff KU4GW SKCC #652

Ed....I wonder Cliff, there must be a Harley-Davidson shop near you. Maybe you could begin to manufacture these for the guys? They would be popular and you could "brake" into the market!

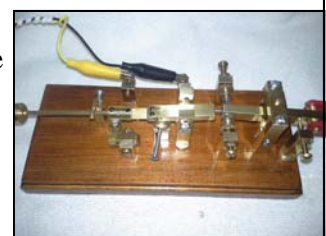
N9ZXL's Latest Creations!

Not to be out-done by the "Davidson Navigation Device," Dave N9ZXL, shows off his latest creations. On the left is Dave's "new and improved" DUB BUG. This one is made of brass, is mounted on a very fine finished base and carries a numbered name plate. This is truly an amazing bug that allows the user to have actually two right angle bugs and each set for different speeds.

I use one of Dave's earlier DUB BUGs and it works very well. The DUB BUG requires just a light touch. Mine has a plexiglass base and I mounted it to a heavier wooden base as my "touch" is less than light! Dave's new base looks great, the brass gives a very professional look to the DUB BUG.



The photos on the right are of his latest shop creation of the "Verdot" bug. Dave mentioned, "The dit movement contact on this bug is a "vertical" connection...not horizontal like other bugs. It works fine and is really different. You can see in the photo where the cam movement changes the horizontal paddle movement to a "vertical" movement."



Ed.. I am continually amazed at the creativity and talents of many of our club members when it comes to building keys producing mechanically generated cw! . Keep those pictures of your keys coming!

WL7WH Bob, SKCC # 2940S

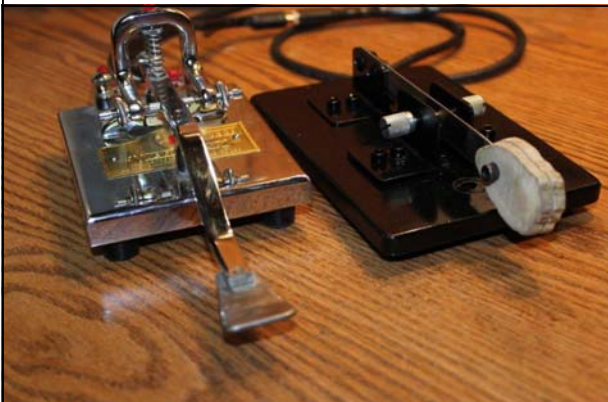
I am 67 years old and have lived in Anchorage my entire life. I live on the hillside overlooking Anchorage at 1150 feet elevation with 4 to 6 thousand feet mountains to my east right behind me.

I have been a ham for 20 years and 99.5% cw. I joined SKCC in 2007 and found it to be the best Ham group I have found! My favorite key now is the sideswiper I made several



months ago from things I had in my garage. The finger tabs(not sure what they are called) are made from Moose brow tines. The other key I use is the Vibroplex SK with modified knob. I like to use my two finger tips to send on the straight key and prefer it to be low. I rest my arm on the desk. The design works great for me. It is a piece of metal and the width is just perfect for my needs. Never liked the feel of a standard knob. The sideswiper works well for me also. Had some pieces of moose antlers hanging around and used the scroll saw to cut two pieces. Looks original for Alaska theme and will last forever!

My favorite band is 20 meters which usually works the best for me at my qth. I have trouble with 40 and 80 meters, probably because of a poor antenna and hope to solve that problem this summer. My beam antenna is a XR-5 by Force 12 that has been up about 2 years and replaced my other antenna and tower that was destroyed in wind storm with 100mph gusts when the guy wires let go.



I enjoy fishing, hunting and 4 wheeling and Alaska is the best place for all these activities I think.

Ed...Bob is very active and always there for a multipiler in our operating events and often a "new one" for many of us. By the way, the "critters" there are at Bob's tower, wonder what would happen if "mom and dad" were to have an itch and rub against the tower... ugh!

*Thanks
Bob for the
pixs!*

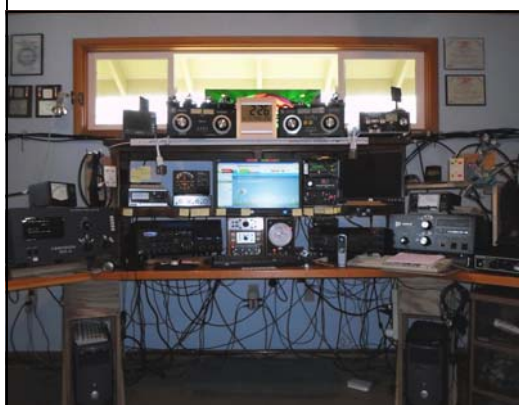


KH6ZM. Max SKCC #727T

I was first licensed in 1963 in Italy as I1MYP, eventually became I0MYP when they subdivided Italy in call areas. One could not get a license before the age of 18.

I played radio much before that in a Swiss boarding school where I met my Elmer, Bill (K9HXO). He introduced me to Morse code and I would practice by receiving the shore stations traffic lists and the clandestine stations sending number groups.

Eventually I moved to the US and received my first US call, N6BAA. I operated MM on a



sailboat for two 3 year stints cruising on sailboats. In 2001 I moved to Hawaii and was able to get my KH6ZM call. 99.9 % of all my qso's are either CW or RTTY. I have logged near 100,000 QSO's from my QTH in Volcano.

Unless contesting and working a DX pile up I use my first Vibroplex "bug" given to me by a friend in Rome when I first started or a bug given to me by W6AN when he retired from commercial shore station service KOK. I use a Kent model KT1 for a straight key.

I have over 12 bugs (all Vibroplex except a coffin key). I have a line of black base Vibroplex including a black based "blue racer." My best is a 1932 Vibroplex bug in "as new" condition.

I don't remember when I joined SKCC, my number is 727T. Gordon N6WK (SK) asked me to join. We had become friends due to CW. He had just started re-learning the code, one day he answered my CQ and was appreciative that I matched my sending to his sending speed. That started our friendship, near 12

years ago (we talked every Saturday).

I like all bands but gravitate to 160 and 10. At times those two bands have the same magic!
Much ALOHA es 73,
Max



Thank You to SKCC

Ed....This letter was received by the SKCC board. The program is supported by the SKCC and many individual members, thanks to all. Truly this is a program well worth supporting. Thanks to K9JP for forwarding to the Rag Chew.

Gentleman,

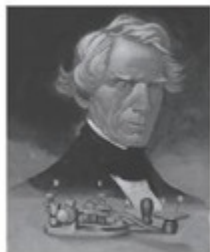
I would like to once again send a personal thank you to the SKCC who have continually supported the Halfway house for Keys program (as displayed on the front page of the SKCC web site) Last year the program was able to place 15 keys with Newly licensed Amateur radio operators ranging in age from 12 to 28 years. Of those 15 key receipts 11 are still active on the air and have completed their once a week 1 hour code practice / QSO/ rag chew requirement with their on-air Elmers.

The SKCC has been beneficial in putting out the word to our long distance key recipients who have had either members or friends of members find our program through the SKCC website. In addition I would like to also thank the SKCC for helping our program collect needed straight keys and key parts donations to be used for recipient allocations. Last year we received approximately 8 keys from the SKCC members and a box full of spare parts which helped us complete the re-building/ repair of 4 other straight keys. To emphasize the generosity of the SKCC members who have donated to our program, I can proudly say that not one of them accepted or requested our offer to pay their donation shipping costs! All SKCC members proudly paid their own shipping / mailing costs in order to get their keys to us.

Without the support of clubs like the SKCC the Halfway house for keys program would be less successful at reaching a large number of people we may otherwise have not. This April the W6SFM and a group of it's volunteers will be presenting a PR booth at the Ranch Cordova, CA "Kids Day in the Park" event where we will introduce Ham Radio and Morse Code to children, their parents and the general public. This event is held each year as a way to offer parents and kids a new hobby as a way to keep out of trouble and off the streets. Or perhaps away from the couch and video games. We hope once again at this event we will find more potential future Halfway House for Keys program key recipients

All the best to you. Thank you once again for all your support. 73,

Michael Aretsky
President Halfway House for Keys Program
SKCC #5051



W6SFM

**Samuel F. Morse Amateur Radio Club
(SFMARC) Sacramento, CA**



WS8KCC #12000T

What a call! One day sitting around with Ken N8KR 7559S, and enjoying an “807” on one of winter’s balmy days in Michigan, Ken came up with an idea for a new club. The club would be the “Ohio-Michigan CW Club” or for short, the “OM Club.” It didn’t take long for the 807s to kick in and the play-on-words of “OM” to hit home! Not only that but a rather great call for those of us enjoying SKCC membership came about too! The “OM Club” quickly stood for “Old Men” and the call “WS8KCC” was born!

We decided that we would use the name “OM n ” whenever we operated with this call. Ken N8KR, being the leader and “club trustee” would be “OM1, Ted K8AQM 1629T, “the lackey,” would be “OM2” while our good friend Ken K8KIC 2938T, the best CW op of the OM Club, would be OM3. You can see the guilty parties in the picture below but you also see Bill KD8TTM 11614, as “OM 3.5. Bill is learning CW and working hard at it. When he “gets



it”, Bill will become “OM4” you know, like getting your C, T or S! The photo on the left is our multi-multi operation in the March SKS. Bill KD8TTM, was the logger for K8KIC OM3. Did you work OM1 on 40m? OM2 was the 20m op and OM3 ran 15 and 80m.

Seriously, we have fun working together and enjoying passing out Qs with this strange call and creating confusion when giving our “names.” We have plans to do mini-domestic Dxpeditions to those states needed by members for their SKCC WAS Award. You can see we took the time to develop a very

attractive QSL and the back will have all the correct information when we “hit the road” for our state Dxpeditions. We will always QSL 100% to all those we work who use the SKCC bureau so if you want one of these “snazzy” QSLs be sure to keep your bureau envelopes up to date! If you don’t use the bureau (and why don’t you?!) then an SASE will get your QSO confirmed with a QSL.

73, cul on the bands....OM2!



WS8KCC is the club call for the OM CW Club
One of the main purposes of the club is to promote portable operation from needed states for SKCC members to achieve WAS. The call is also used for operating events such as SKS, WES and K3Y. 73, and thanks for the contact(s).

WS8KCC ____ confirms QSO with:

Station	Date	UTC Time	Band	Mode	Report
				CW	
				CW	
				CW	
				CW	

Portable QTH: _____ Operator: _____
Home QTH: 1301 Terrace Drive SKCC number _____
Defiance, OH 43512 QSL via SKCC bureau
or direct with SASE Pse

Why I Love SKCC

By Curtis Gidding, KC9UNL #8667T

The first contact that I had with Morse Code (CW) was with the Boy Scouts. You had to learn it to achieve the rank of First Class some 50+ years ago. I can still remember attending the weekly classes to pass some type of test. Other than obtaining the new rank, I really did not know that CW would follow me for years to come.



Of course, when I got the ‘bug’ to get into amateur radio I found that it was a major part of getting any type of license. The time available to get a license did not materialize until I had completed college. At that stage it was 5 wpm for your Novice license and 13 wpm for the General Class. I was lucky that I had a good teacher for the code and reached the 5wpm goal. With my new license, WN9ZQJ in hand, I can still remember those first few nervous CW contacts on 40 meters. Moving forward I worked hard at getting to 13 wpm within the 12 months of my Novice license. I rented an Instructograph

from Chicago, IL and would listen to the paper code tapes every night for at least 30 minutes. When you thought that you were ready to take the General Class exam, it was necessary to go to the FCC office in Chicago. If you passed the code portion of the exam you can then take the written exam. The major hurdle to overcome was getting the confidence and lack of nerves to take the CW test in the large room with other applicants. Luckily the test was passed and I was on my way to more adventures in Ham Radio as WA9ZQJ.

With the new license privileges, the plan was to get to operate SSB and leave the CW activity behind me. Perhaps because the CW was required, there were lots of hams that showed a lack of regard for operating CW. So for a few months, I operated only SSB. I really didn’t get back to operating CW for perhaps a couple of years and actually had rigs which weren’t really very good for operating CW. Eventually I got sort of bored with the SSB and returned to CW. I also got hooked on RTTY.

Due to a lot of conflict from business travel and job responsibilities, I became inactive and finally let my license expire in the late 1990’s. Little did I know that it would not be the end of my attraction to ham radio. In 2011 I took the exams again and got my General license back without the requirement of CW. Now operating as KC9UNL, I again decided to get involved with CW operation. It is amazing that learning CW is just like learning to ride a bicycle - - you don’t forget it! After 15 years, I found an old friend in CW operating. I can operate CW at 10-15 wpm and really enjoy it. I don’t think that speed is as important as good sending and accurate copying.

Continued on page 20.....



Thanks to the internet, I found the SKCC web site and found that there are a lot of amateurs that still operate and enjoy CW. The SKCC really offers (1) Operating events (2) Awards and (3) Learning aids. I really got hooked on the operating events in 2012 when I found the K3Y activity in January. I operated that event in 2013 but was unable to operate in 2014 due to my wife's illness. The other Monthly Sprint activities are also fun. I love them because they really are not contests but just operating events where you can work new SKCC members. Those events got me started in the SKCC awards which are great fun. I also found the K3UK Sked site which allows you to make some skeds for needed contacts for WAS and others. If you get interested in the awards, be sure to learn about the **SKCC Logger and Tracker** programs. They make achieving your award efforts much easier.

In short, SKCC does a lot to encourage CW operation. Once you get your SKCC#, be sure you get active and enjoy operating CW with other members. If you have not checked out all of the great benefits to this group on the web site, be sure to. I am trying to achieve a goal or working a minimum of two new SKCC contacts per day. So, no matter what you do, **just keep pounding that key and calling CQ SKS!**

WS8KCC/5, AKA N8KR..."OM 1"

Ken N8KR, continues his travels and visiting with SKCC members whenever and wherever he goes and recently took time out to operate a bit in the April WES from Mississippi as WS8KCC/5 and "OM1." Ken and his wife were heading to Florida with stops along the way. Here Ken is taking a break during WES. "Me thinks" Ken may be working too hard and getting too old as can be read in the note accompanying his photo:

"Ocean Springs, MS at the Best Western. Had the station set up in the pool area for WES. Deb



said there were some "bathing beauties" in the pool. Darn!!! I must be getting old . . . all I saw was the ts-440s! "

Read on in the "Rag Chew" about Ken's adventures in portable operating and visiting SKCCers in his travels.

N7EDK, Ed SKCC # 7534T

I finally had the opportunity to meet with Ed while visiting my inlaws in Bradenton, FL this past April. I had first called him in February when traveling through Arizona. Ed was



living in Marana just north of Tucson. I was anxious to see his shack and to possibly visit the “boneyard” he was working at only to find out that he had just retired, had packed up his house and station, and was going to move to California! In our chat on the phone, I discovered that he would be in FL in April so it was there that we had our “eyeball”.

Ed has spent his career in aviation, working with Rockwell on military bombers to

Boeing 747's. He has a love for general aviation having a private pilot's license and a love for the outdoors: camping and kayaking. In the middle of this is his obvious passion for ham radio. Ed has been a ham for over 20 years and the CW “bug” really bit him. As you can see in the picture of his old shack, he has a nice little collection of Vibroplex bugs and keys. . . and not a microphone to be seen! He also has been bitten by the Elecraft “bug” with a nice collection of radios. When I met him in Florida, he had his KX-3 with him and a little vertical. His KX-3 goes with him when he camps.

Ed is now out in Northern California. I know he's anxious to get settled and to get his station assembled and back on the air. Hopefully, in his retirement, we'll all have the opportunity to add N7EDK/6 to our logs! de Ken - N8KR



AG8A, Randy from Ruskin

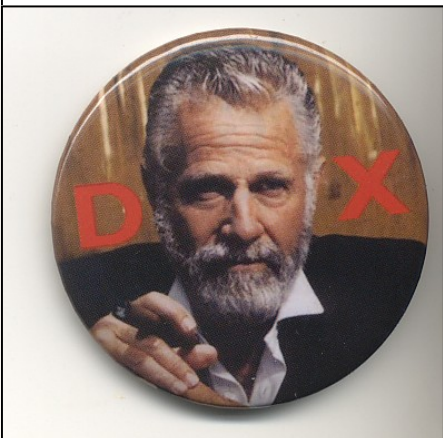
On my “Easter Trip” to Florida, I had the opportunity to visit with another SKCC member, Randy Brunner, AG8A – 2532T. With his “8” call, you can probably guess that Randy is a *snowbird*. (someone from the north that winters in the south!) Randy spends the summer in the lake country just north of Grand Rapids, Mi. His time is spent out on the lakes fishing. When fall comes, the trip back to Florida happens where he is greeted by his comfortable ham shack. His 40 meter dipole is supported by trees overlooking the Little Manatee River in Ruskin, Florida. His radio is a Kenwood TS-570S. His favorite key is the ORIGINAL SKCC straight key. I must admit that this was the first time I had seen one in person. Smooth and attractive, it's a great treasure for your shack and especially for an “old-time” SKCCer!

Like every SKCC member I've met, Randy was most friendly and enjoyable to chat with. We have made plans to operate an SKCC event together this November or December when I return for my two months as a *snowbird*. It's nice that Randy is less than 40 minutes away from my base in Bradenton! . . . de N8KR



Wisdom from World's Most Interesting Man

“I don't always DX but when I do I look for SKCC members first!”



Beginning August 14 through September 1, four SKCCers will journey to Tonga (A35) and Fiji (3D2) for operating. The members of the team will look on SKCC designated frequencies and pack along their straight keys.

Watch for:

A35TR.....3D2TR ...aka K8AQM 1629T

A35LJ.....3D2LJaka N8LJ 9954

A35CO.....3D2CO ...aka KG8CO 6362

A35AC.....3D2AC ...aka AC8W 2813

Operation will be 10-160m.

“Send well my friend and use QRO!”

A Great Little CW Filter

Curtis Gidding KC9UNL SKCC#8667T

We are always looking for ways to improve our ability to copy weak signals on CW and to reduce adjacent QRM from other stations. Of course, your antenna is the first limiting factor in hearing those weak signals. The second is your receiver to reduce the noise levels and bring that weak station right out of the “mud”

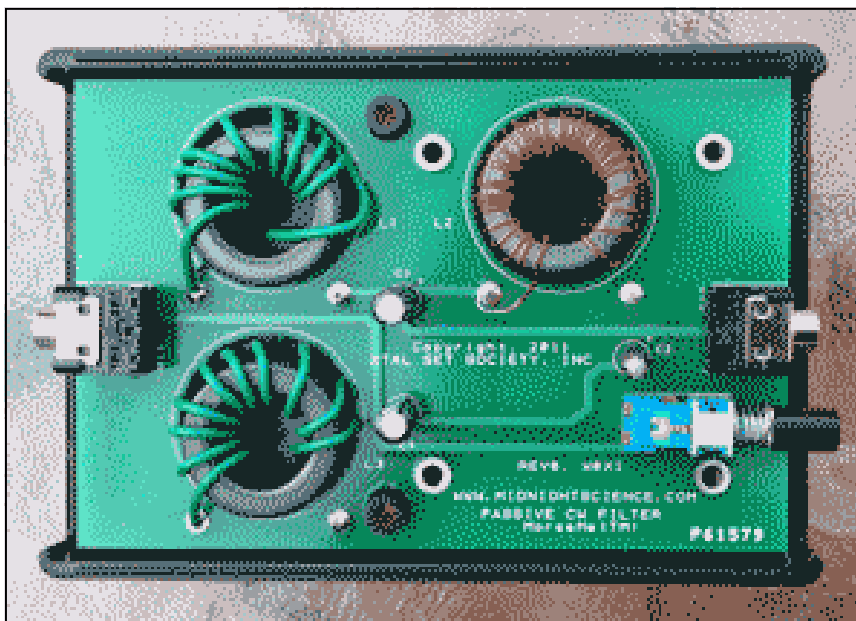
The Xtal Set Society offers two audio filters in kit form which will help with this problem. One of them is an active filter and one a passive filter. I decided to purchase the passive Audio CW filter kit since it did not require any form of power to perform its function. Here is what I found.

I ordered the kit and it arrived promptly within a matter of days. It was complete with all of the parts, an enclosure, and a very good set of instructions. The construction of the filter was very straight forward. If you have never built something before, you could still master this kit. It is a good kit to use your soldering skill and the kit should be completed within 1-2 hours. It does require that you make three toroids which are much easier to do than you might think. The circuit board was excellent and I enjoyed the construction of this kit.

When connected to my IC-718, it made a significant difference in the received CW signal. I tried it with both the internal CW filter and without it. I think that it worked well without the internal filter. I know that it will help to copy some of the CW signals when under noisy conditions or where there is QRM from adjacent stations. The filter has a nice push button switch to bypass the filter.

The kit is available with a 250 Hertz bandwidth and either of the center frequencies, 500, 600 or 700 Hz. The kit is modestly priced at less than \$40.00 and can be ordered from the internet at www.midnightscience.com. There is additional information and options for the kit at the web site.

If you are interested in CW filters, be sure to check it out. I hope to build the active filter in the future.





“New” SKCC Rig

Good friend Lee N8LJ, SKCC # 9954, sent along this picture of his “new-old” SKCC rig. Read on, seems Lee wants to “park” his K3 to work SKCC...sheez!

“I drove to Chicago to pick up a couple of friends a few weekends ago. So far, they work. I just need to find an amphenol mic connector (2 pin) not that I would use it but just in case you know. With a D-104 sitting around, it would add some ambiance. I also need to figure out which hand key or the bug to use for SKCC. Chasing the SKCC awards with a K3 just didn't seem right hi hi. Now to make a decision to replace the tube rectifiers with solid state to help preserve the transformer.”

If I hear Lee using the D-104 (I gave him a mic connector since “I” would **NEVER** need one) I’m going to have to find new friends!.....ed

K3RTV SKKC # 12085



Welcome to the vintage, on-air radio station at the **National Capital Radio & Television Museum** near Washington, DC. The museum has been on the air occasionally for about ten years, starting with the “rescue” and display of a retired broadcast transmitter from a radio station in Florida. The 1951 Collins, model **300-G**, has been retuned to the 160 meter band, and remains crystal controlled using the original oscillator modules now tweaked to 1885Kc and 1925Kc.

More recently, we discovered that we have nearly a dozen licensed radio hobbyists among volunteer staff at the museum, and decided to form a “club” within the museum's auspices in order to obtain the club call sign **K3RTV**. The inaugural use of the new license took place in November, 2012, with special endorsements of QSLs sent to the first handful of contacts. Here is a demonstration video of the layout of K3RTV. Thanks for working our station !

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46TLmROTTqkThis>