



The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club

Volume 9 Issue 4

December, 2017

It's K3Y, the SKCC's January Anniversary Event, And You're Invited!

The Straight Key Century Club's annual on-air event commemorates the club's founding in 2006 following the ARRL Straight Key Night. At that time a group of SKN participants wanted to extend the fun of hand key CW throughout the year. SKCC is the result and K3Y is the call sign granted for this "KEY" event.

The on-air action runs from Jan. 2 through Jan. 31 and is open to members and non-members alike. It's a great time to introduce or reacquaint hams to the fun of hand-crafted Morse code sent with straight keys, bugs, and side swipers.

This year we hope to field K3Y operators in the ten US call areas, plus KH6, KL7 and KP4, along with associated DX stations in a number of Canadian provinces and each of six IARU continental regions.

You can track your progress working event stations by referring to the stats section of the K3Y web pages. Check for frequent updates on the number of areas, bands, K3Y operators, DX entities Canadian provinces & US states that you have worked. K3Y QSL cards and Sweep Certificates are also available to document your success.

You can earn a K3Y QSL card whether you make one contact, or work all ten US call areas; or US 0 through 9 plus KH6, KL7 and KP4. Perhaps you will even achieve a 19-area "grand sweep" card which includes all the above plus contacts with our DX event operators in six different continental areas.

The K3Y event is an opportune time for SKCC members to make progress toward various club awards since contacts with K3Y stations are valid for awards purposes. Also, by signing up as a K3Y Operator you can readily log dozens or even hundreds of award-eligible QSOs with SKCC members.

Would you like to be one of our K3Y Operators? You can try it for just an hour or two. Or operate regularly throughout the entire month. Code speed and station sophistication are not important. Please check out the US or DX Operators Guides and contact the Regional Coordinator in your area for more info. He or she will be eager to sign you up. Our K3Y Ops are key to a successful event!

Check the K3Y web page at www.skccgroup.com/k3y/ for contact info, operator guides & schedules, QSL cards & sweep certificates, stats, operator map and 2018 SKCC print calendar.

DX operators will be coordinated based upon IARU continental region. Some of our DX operators may have their own special-event calls, such as PH6SKCC, if their licensing authorities allow it. Check the K3Y Station Calendar for our DX special stations and listen for their "CQ K3Y" on the bands.

Check the SKCC web page for full details and area coordinators.

73,

The K3Y Planning Group

'Tis the Season!



Well the log book for 2017 is almost closed. As the editor of the "Rag Chew" I want to thank all of you who have contributed news, views, pictures and articles this past year. I hope you will continue to think about and include your future thoughts to the "Rag Chew." With the many events sponsored by SKCC, Field Day, ARRL operating and your local club activities plus your projects and accomplishments there are plenty of great stories to be told during the coming 2018 year.

To those of you who have enjoyed reading the "Rag Chew" and haven't thought about submitting, please do think about it! It's easy and painless and nothing is too small or unimportant to our readers. If it's about amateur radio then it's interesting! If English isn't your first language, no matter, the "editorial staff" (ha, me!) can make it work. With nearly 18,000 members there are many, many stories that are of interest to us all.

Finally, as the holiday season comes upon us and the new year is fast approaching, may your holiday be merry and may the new year bring you health, wealth, good DX and many QSOs!

73, Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM #1629s

PS: Don't forget to tell the Rag Chew of all those goodies that will appear in your hamshack as a result of the holidays!



Novice Rig Round Up, March 3-11, 2018

By Doug N3PDT, SKCC 6861s, NRR 09

I never held a Novice class license. Having earned my ticket(s) in 2009, I didn't have to learn code. I was never rock-bound or power restricted. So why the heck am I having so much fun in Novice Rig Round-up? I'm even not new to vintage equipment, but there's something magic going on above 7.100Mhz these days. The little slice of what's left of the 40m Novice band has come alive with the music of lower powered, vacuum tube-equipped gear that was originally marketed to Novice Class, or soon to be, license holders. There are chirps, clicks, and "yoops", to be sure, but there are even more great sounding old commercial, and homebrew, rigs ringing out beautiful notes of CW. It's even become a bit of an incongruous double pleasure – receiving a 599C(hirp) signal report is a badge of honor. But, one also takes a good measure of pride when the report is "WOW, UR DX 40, (T50, ARC, or HB) SNDS GRT!"



Novice Rig Roundup (NRR) is the brainchild of fellow Floridians, and SKCC members, Bry Carling AF4K SKCC 1879s, and Gary Johanson WD4NKA 11826. They hatched idea of recreating their Novice stations and making contacts with other like-minded amateurs, so in 2015, the NRR was unleashed on the world. Each successive year has seen growth in participation, culminating in last year's big turnout and some well-deserved recognition beyond our little group of enthusiasts. There is a scoring system that favors Novice power restrictions and XTAL control, but the competition/contest aspect of NRR is really minimized. It's more about the fun of getting the old gear on the air and hearing all the other vintage stations. Even the prizes are awarded by drawing, not score.

For a good number of NRR participants, it's pure, unadulterated nostalgia. Set yourself down in front of the glow of your Knight T50 and Drake 2B, and you're transported back to experience the thrill of making a QSO with 30 watts out, a manual T/R relay and only the filters in your head to pick your QSO partner's signal out of the four or five you can hear. For others, like me, it's just a fun challenge. The gear is relatively inexpensive and easy to find. There's still a large knowledge base for the more popular rigs, so getting them going again isn't difficult.





I also enjoy the contrast of using minimalist equipment that requires the more complicated operating procedures of tube gear and separate transmit and receive units. There's always a switch to flip, a plate to dip, and the task of zero beating, or as I call it "finding myself". Also, as a newer licensee, I've learned a lot about how it "used to be", by getting to know the guys that sold or donated equipment, and especially, offered their expertise.

This year I'll be entering the event with two working Novice stations: A new-to-me HW-16 in original condition (read I expect caps to fail at some point soon), and a DX-40 paired with a Drake 2C. If past years are any indication, I'll be busy keeping both transmitters just running, and may have to pull out reserve transmitters from time to time. My desk and bench are continuously in turmoil during NRR!

Please consider joining us. It's not too late to drag out your old Novice transmitter and get it going before the first week of March.

Heck, you probably have time to buy one, order replacement parts, and restore it! But even if you don't have the gear, you are still encouraged to join in the fun. This year's event will take place March 3-11, 2018. It's a nine-day event so as to incorporate two weekends. It's been moved back this year to miss a couple of the bigger contests. Check the website www.novicerigroundup.com for full details of this year's event, suggested frequencies, plus a lot of info on our past events.



What: Novice Rig Roundup

Where: 15m, 40m, and 80m.

When: March 3, 2018 00:00UTC Through March 11, 2018, 23:59UTC



New QSL Manager...KD8VSQ Jeremy #13072t



Thanks to the support of many, I am now the new QSL manager for the SKCC QSL Bureau. I hope that I will be able to help many of you get your QSL cards to their destinations as fast as I can!

If you are an active U.S. station and do not have envelopes sent into the bureau, you may want to look into sending some S.A.S.E #10 business size envelopes to me at the address listed on the SKCC website http://www.skccgroup.com/member_services/qs1_buro/. One Forever stamp will get you about 8 QSL cards or 1oz. sent back to you and because they are Forever stamps there is no worry about postage rates going up and having to send more postage.

Yes it's that simple! If you think about having to send QSLs to each contact you make you're having to use at least two stamps, one to send, and one to get your reply back from the other station. Now if you were to send in five SASE envelopes to the bureau then that's five stamps plus the cost to ship the five envelopes to me to put on file.

Once you have envelopes on file here, sending me QSLs to distribute is easy too. Just address the envelope using the address in the above link and send 7 to 8 cards per stamp or 1 oz. weight including the envelope. Once they get here I will sort them into their outgoing envelopes and once there are enough to send I will mail all full envelopes out to their station owners.

DX stations out side of the U.S. please follow the instructions on the link above to send \$3 dollars to PayPal which would cover two USPS Global Stamps to get your QSLs back to you.

If anyone has questions please feel free to contact me at QSL_manager@skccgroup.com

Thanks Jeremy KD8VSQ SKCC # 13072T



A "Freebee!"

Last week, Fred Lloyd was interviewed on Ham Nation with Bob Heil. Fred shared the news that QRZ is now producing "Good on QRZ" stickers. QRZ stickers are available to anyone who sends us a **business sized**, self addressed, stamped envelope here at QRZ. Your first sticker is free and if you would like us to send additional stickers we'd be happy to do so for \$1 per additional sticker. The stickers are 3.5x4 inches in size. Most business envelopes are OK. We prefer the self-sealing kind - HI.

Friedrichshafen 2017

The biggest hamfest in Europe is in Friedrichshafen, Germany, amateurs from all over Europe come to attend this multi day event which takes place in “blimp” hangers in the area. In last year’s December issue of the *Rag Chew* you can read about KG8CO’s adventures at this venue. Although Brian did not attend this year, his friend Chris HB8ELV, did attend. I asked Chris if he would mind taking some funds from me and purchase whatever this amount would buy in Junkers. The Junker (pronounced “Yunker”) is an extremely crafted telegraph key used in the German armed forces. I had three but needed two more for the remaining of my multi-multi station. Boy, did Chris come through! Chris was able to purchase six Junker keys and a collection of parts for a “repair kit”...not that Junkers ever need repairs!

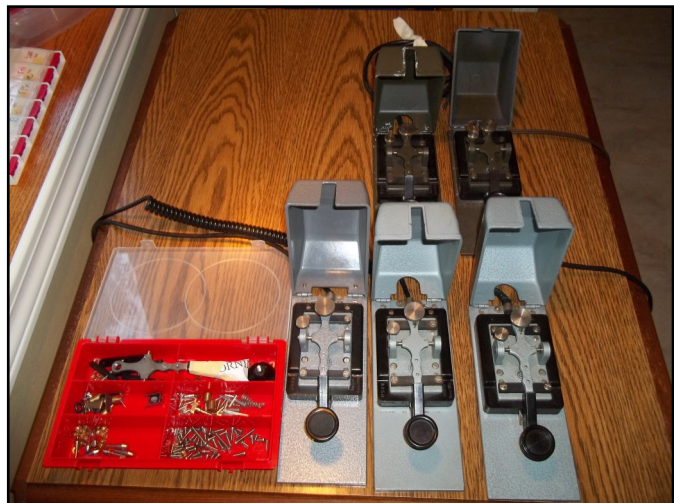
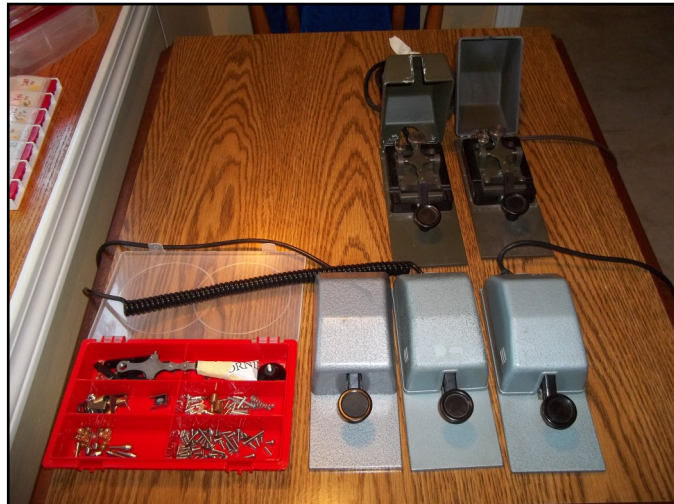
Brian KG8CO # 6362 quickly snatched one from me and Stan AC8W #2813 collected one at the Great Lakes HamCom this fall. I kept two which I needed and after offering the remaining two to the general SKCC membership, Andy KB1OIQ #6265s and Doug N3PDT #6861s quickly snatched up the remaining two.

The Junker key has an extremely smooth feel and is extremely well made. The closest key I’ve come across (in my opinion) to the Junker’s action is the Czech key offered several years ago by the SKCC and can occasionally be found on that “e” place. The Junker is heavy enough that under normal conditions need not be mounted to an additional support or weight. As shown in the pictures the key has a cover of the action and adjustments. This key was also a “t/r” switch and came with an unusual plug but was easily converted to use as a simple straight key.

If you ever have the chance to try one I am sure you will enjoy its action. They are not commonly found at hamfest and on that “e” place they sell or are at least posted, at a ridiculous price (4300 or more!). My suggestion would be that for that large some of money go to Friedrichshafen, enjoy the hamfest and purchase “lots” of Junkers! Of course write an article for the *Rag Chew* when you return and send it along to me!

73,

Ted K8AQM 1629s



Editor....I'm not sure where I saw this but it is certainly true!...

"Ham Radio does not abide by the **'Right Tool for the Job'** rule. Quite the contrary, it often gets the job done with things you wouldn't normally recognize as tools."

A Bit of Antenna Magic! Add 6m to Your Triband Trap Yagi

Every knows 160 meters is known as "top band"(also "gentlemen's band) but did you know six meters is known as the "magic band?" Perhaps because of the mystery of its propagation characteristics; whatever the reason, unlike earlier days, many modern transceivers include 6m and it is a great place for SKCC rag chews.

For many the problem is "another antenna" and although a six meter dipole is quite small it still requires another feedline coming into the shack and it is not the best of antennas to use on six meters. You say you have a tribander at 40 feet, well why not use that antenna feedline to add a three element yagi on 6m to your antenna arsenal?

So here comes the magic, you can add six meters to your tribander using the same feedline without making and "physical" connection to the tribander's feedline! Here is how it works and can be done.

The following is an excerpt taken from a QST article many years ago. The following table shows the layout of the elements on a three element tribander boom. You need to completely insulate the element from the tribander's boom. I used quarter inch poly carbon (I think it's referred to as "bullet proof glass?") and used clamps as shown in the picture here. It was a simple matter to add the elements to the existing tribander boom and I began with the basic measurements shown on the left. I had to "fiddle abit with

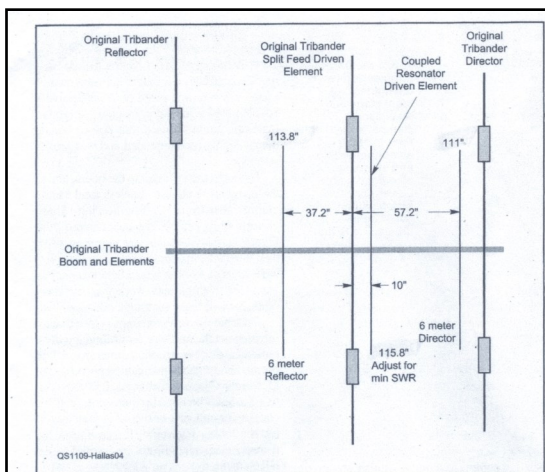


Figure 3 — Dimensions of the elements and spacings referenced to the center of the tribander driven element. The element length shown, assume insulated elements, 1/4 inch diameter, 3 feet long center element sections, the remainder 1/4 inch telescoped aluminum.

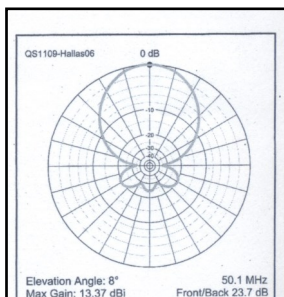
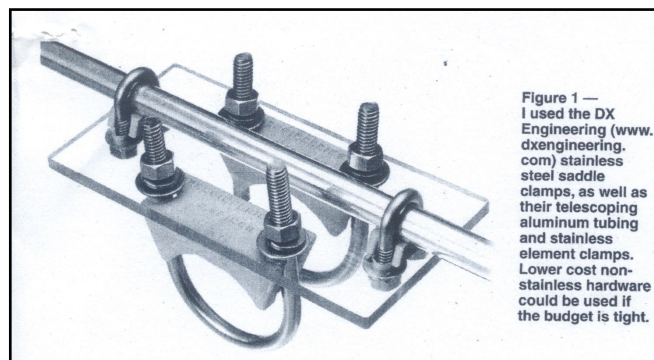


Figure 4 — EZNEC model results showing azimuth pattern including front-to-back ratio.



the distance from the six meter driven to the tribnader driven to get a proper swr it it didn't take much. I set the modified tribander on a ten foot step ladder and used my MFJ analyzer to adjust impedance and swr.

To the left is the EZNEC calculation of what the gain figures should be both front-to-back and forward. I can't verify these figures but the antenna worked very well, if I could here the station I could work the station with my 100 watts.

Included in the article was an additional table that gave other possible measurements.

Table 2

6 Meter Element Dimensions (inches)

Reference is center of triband Yagi driven element.

Element	Element Length	Each 0.375 inch End-Section Length	Distance (c-c) to Reference
<i>Single Element Rotatable Dipole</i>			
Driven Element	113.5	38.75	5
<i>Three Element Yagi — NBS Version (0.2λ Spacing)</i>			
Reflector	113.8	38.9	37.2
Driven Element	115.5	39.75	10
Director	111	37.5	57.2
<i>Three Element Yagi — Compact Version (0.2λ Reflector Spacing, 0.15λ Director Spacing)</i>			
Reflector	114.0	39.0	37.2
Driven Element	115.2	39.6	8
Director	111.2	37.6	45.6

The table gives you some spacing options. You could even just add a rotatable dipole if you didn't want the full yagi.

I didn't pay much attention to tubing size on my antenna as I used whatever I had in the scrap pile. I'm sure that was why I had to fiddle with adjustments from the given dimensions.

I used a TA-33jr as my tribander but had the higher power driven element.

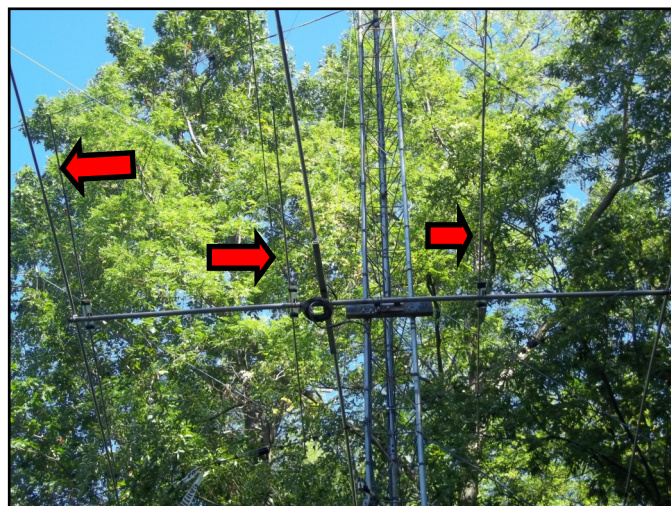
The following are pictures of the tribander as it is today...fixed to the west and side mounted on the tower at 30 feet.



That's the director so close to the triband director



Both the director and driven elements can be seen here. That's a coaxial balun for the tribander seen here. Not part of the actual 6m antenna.



All three 6m elements can be seen in this picture.

So give this magic antenna a try, feeding system is the same as used on many of today's modern multi band and multi element antennas. It will get you on "the magic band" with a good signal.

Sorry I don't have the data for the article, this was in my files from many years ago.

By the way, my friend did this on his Hygain yagi so the number of traps isn't an issue nor even the element numbers.

PS: Found the article! Sept 2011 p40 OST!

An Apartment Balcony Antenna

KI8GM Carl #17512, has an all too familiar problem for amateurs, “how to have a working antenna in an apartment from only able to use a balcony!” Carl’s solution was to use the hamstick dipole arrangement in a vertical configuration. Pictured on the left is Carl’s arrangement. Still in the “work to be done stage,” Carl uses a fiberglass pole “wrapped” to a railing on the balcony.



“I was able to do a \$weep'und noticed pretty quick where the antenna likes to tune. My initial attempt put me somewhere around 6.9MHz, which is a little low for CW; I still hold an advanced class ticket so I need to tune the antenna closer to 7.035MHz or so.”

This type of antenna has about a 30 KHz bandwidth for a 2:1 ratio so Carl will need to do some “extra” tuning. He does use an LDG auto tuner and that will certainly help. This will be especially true as he works to increase the antenna impedance. A balun is being considered.

“During my experimenting and playing Elena (my wife) pointed out to me that I was starting to be noticed by our neighbors, next thing I know a black van will show up outside... Harrumph!”

Not to worry Carl, just because you live near Washington D.C., work with computers and for the government, there should be no reason such an installation will draw any attention...ha!

“I did shorten the antenna a bit but I am still having some tuning problems. I believe it was resonant at



about 6.9MHz or so, it hasn't changed much, but I was able to listen to WJR and catch part of the Michigan / State sparring match from the third floor of our apartment! I did not come up with a 1:1 bal-



un yet, which could also explain matching issues. There a few ideas aside from just the balun, a line isolator that seems to have some great reviews might help. But the one thing that really has been a pain is the terrible noise on the bands - a solid S9! A real spoiler!”

The 43rd Annual Cleveland Hamfest & Computer Show

Larry K8TEZ # 8426t

Sunday September 24th turned out to be an absolutely beautiful fall day for the Cleveland hamfest which is held at the Cuyahoga Co fairgrounds in Berea, Ohio. Berea Ohio is the home of Baldwin-Wallace college and also the home of the Cleveland Browns training and



practice facilities. Berea is about 15 miles SW of First energy stadium where the browns play all their home games. The proximity does not seem to cause any transportation problems as all the players seem to own Bentley's, BMW's, Mercedes or Aston Martin's and get around town quite well. Anyhow let's focus on the flea market today. The main action is centered on the midway exhibition area just inside the gate and flea market spaces are a very reasonable \$6.00 per space plus the \$6.00 admission ticket. Indoor tables for vendors are \$20.00 each and do not include admission ticket. There is no overnight parking

without a city permit. The ARRL forum was at 9:00 AM and they also had ARRL card checking service for WAS-DXCC&VUCC. The first prize was \$400, 2nd prize \$300 and the 3rd prize was \$200 (unfortunately we did not win any of the prizes but there is always next year). I did not bump into very many SKCC members but the many I know around here are not very active it seems, although I do work Gene K8EE & Van W8N-QI in nearly all the sprints. I also work Bob W8BTD #8972 who went along with me today. We kept a rather fast pace through the flea market inner area as all the shade trees are around the fence which surrounds the area and the temp was about 90f!



OK, this was just inside the main gate ..Is this for the people who have been out in the sun for too long ? or is this where the exams are taking place ? The correct answer was, “they were getting ready for their Halloween Haunted house event.....”

We ran into Steve NQ8T SKCC # 5919 & next to him is Bob W8BTD SKCC #8972



Well, this gigantic fan was running but it was well into the 90's in the flea market area inside the race-track.



We have just left the shaded area (the trees behind us) and heading into impact area A (where the full sun is)..



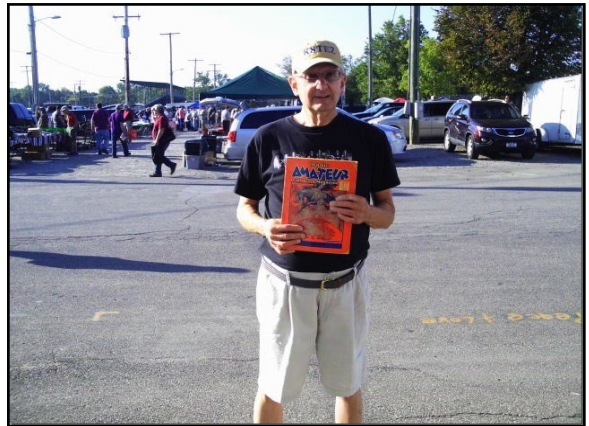
We ran into some old friends there L-R Jim WA8ZHN Bob W8BTD & Paul W8CQU...



Also caught up with Dick K8TEC
now K8ML on Bob's left.....



Well, this OM is none other than K8TEZ
who found a 1956 Callbook to add to
his growing collection.



Bob finally worked his way thru this bunch and located a beautiful KENT hand key which was being sold by my old friend Mike WB8EVI...Mike drove a hard bargain so when he walked off to sell another item Bob made an offer to his XYL who just completed a deal on a meter and we caught Mike off guard....nice key too and in original box with the paper work



Guess that about sums it up for this years Cleveland Hamfest.....Best wishes from our shack to yours.....

73,
Larry K8TEZ #8426t

NEAR-Fest Hamfest

Thanks to Larry KJ1RE, we now have idea of a few of the friendly faces we work from the northeast coast! How about some hamfest pictures from the west coast and mid-west?...Editor

“The NEAR-Fest (North East Amateur Radio-Fest) is an international event run by and for all radio hobbyists and enthusiasts, including “hams”, short-wave listeners, scanner buffs, vintage/antique radio fans, etc. NEAR-Fest is held twice annually, spring and fall, rain or shine, at the Deerfield Fairgrounds, Deerfield NH beginning on Friday at 0900 and ending Saturday at 1500 hours.

NEAR-Fest typically attracts attendees from the six New England states, NY, NJ, PA, MD and other states as well as from Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in Canada. Some attendees travel great distances; one gentleman from Los Angeles has attended fifteen events and in 2010 one radio amateur traveled from Greece to join in for the fun.

The program of activities and events at NEAR-Fest is extensive; a huge outdoor electronic flea market, three buildings full of commercial vendors, forums, technical seminars and symposia, demonstrations, exhibits, displays, licensing examinations, special events radio stations, a “jam session”, good food, fellowship, fun and general mishigoss. NEAR-Fest is the largest event of its kind in the Northeast and has once been described as the “Woodstock of Amateur Radio”. “

Using the SKCC Sked page and email-reflector for coordination, several SKCC’ers set-up a sked for an eyeball QSO at the event. Urb, W1UL, was the most senior SKCC member present, followed by Dave, KB1WOD; Jim, NM1W; John, W1TAG; and Larry, KJ1RE. As you can imagine the stories with all this hamming experience present had a common theme – CW!



L-R... Larry KJ1RE,#16270s, John W1TAG #15461s,Dave KB1WOD #10530s, Urb W1UL #6668s and Jim NM1Ws #13718s

Hope to see more SKCC’ers at the next NEAR-Fest in Spring, 2018.

Until then – 73 from Deerfield, NH

Larry KJ1RE #16270s

Great Lakes HamCon

October 6-7 this year saw the first “Great Lakes HamCon.” It took place at the Michigan International Speedway which is located in southeast Michigan. It was a two day event and the facilities are terrific! Parking was close by and the entire area could easily accommodate two or three Hara Arena and flea market areas! The potential for a “huge” event are certainly there, however this year’s event was somewhat disappointed with barely a thousand amateur attending and three quarters of them were there Saturday only.

SKCC made it’s presence known with a fine booth presence and 31 SKCC members logged in during the two days. The new banner that are available for use at hamfests were a big part of our presentation. We had several keys setup to a cpo and they were extremely popular with both SKCC members and the general ham population who came by.

Curt KU8L #5380s who is CEO of VIZkeys brought his collection and in addition to a general display, they we all connected to the cpo for everyone to “give em’ a try...and they sure did. Curt was engulfed with questions



about all his keys. It was a never ending line of those interested in VIZKeys.



Mr. VIZKey, Curt KU8L # 5380s



Although SKCC was an inside venue, there was an outdoor flea market that took place along “pit row” of the race track. Most outdoor vendors suffered through some very serious weather Saturday night and many packed-up easrly Sunday morning because of wind and rain damage to their setups.



New SKCC QSL bureau manager Jeremy KD8VSQ #13072t was present for the hamfest



All in all, the Great Lakes HamCon was a good event. The growth potential is certainly there and only time will tell if this becomes a “happening.” By the way, the folks from Dayton were there to promote their hamfest...maybe they too saw the great potential of this facility?

Finally, it was a real pleasure to spend time with Jeff K9JP #3008s, our former QSL bureau manager, membership manager and SKCC Elmer manager.... for many years! Jeff made

the long four hour drive down-state from Traverse City, Michigan and spent Saturday “hanging” with the SKCC gang. Be sure to check-out the article later in the newsletter, in addition to being a very good operator, DXer, organizer Jeff who is retired, volunteers some of his time at a local free health clinic in the Traverse City area.



Shack Toy

No, this isn't a 3-500Z outside a QRO amplifier at Stan # 2813 AC8W's shack, it is his new call sign display built from LEDs and an old burned out 3-500Z tube and mounted on a piece of walnut (see KE8CEW's QRZ page). Stan has gone on MANY DXpeditions and offered SKCC QSOs to members if they ask. He is one of the K3Y/8 operators from Michigan and is an official ARRL DX card checker as well as a member of the ARRL DX Advisory board (guess we have some VIP members in our club?). It's quite an addition and very attractive....but does it blink to the rhythm of the code when you key Stan?



Club Ideas!

Does your local club suffer from inactivity and boring meetings where “Robert’s Rules of Order” seem to be the main topics at meetings? It’s an all too familiar happening with many clubs. While visiting my friend Dave VE9CB/W8SR # 12520 we had a discuss of how to bring new amateurs along and what his club the Fredricton Amateur Radio Club has done and is doing.

One of their projects is to get those newly licensed amateurs on the air right away. They held a theory class on antennas and propagation AND then a group building project and testing of a 20/40m dipole at a local ham’s house. Here is a picture of the groups’ antenna “testing/tuning range” as it happened a month ago. You can see the 30-40ft temporary pole setup with guys, pulley and balun at the top. The 20/40m antenna is made from 450 ohm ladder-line. Each student raised their antenna and with the help of club members and an antenna analyzer the antenna was “matched” and tuned to the correct frequency.



But help didn’t/doesn’t stop there; a secession of “how to setup a station” is included along with a visit to an amateur’s station to actually have the new hams make a contact. This concept is used even with those students/newly licensed amateurs who have only VHF privileges so that they will continue advancing to HF license privileges. There are also additional “classes” for those newly licensed on other aspects of amateur radio...working DX, contesting...etc.

Dave asked me if I had a Power Point presentation on SKCC and they could setup a Skype operation where I could make an SKCC pitch at one of their meetings....wow! Unfortunately I don’t have such a presentation...yet...does anyone out there have one I could use?

Finally, the “FARC” has an equipment lend program. Here are “some” of the program points:

FARC will only accept donations of functioning transmitters, receivers, transceivers and accessory equipment.
FARC will not accept equipment that is not in working order.
All donations become the property of FARC, to be loaned or disposed of at the discretion of the FARC Executive.
All FARC Library equipment will be listed on the FARC website identifying:

- The name and call sign of the donor
- The manufacturer, model and serial number of the equipment
- The name and call sign of the borrower
- The loan date and
- The due date for the return of the equipment

Loans

Equipment in the Library is available for loan on a first-come-first-served basis.
Equipment is available for a six-month loan, renewable one time only. On expiry of the loan, the equipment must be returned to the bank, where it will become available for another borrower.
All loaned equipment will be set up and verified by an experienced Amateur at the new Amateur’s location.

These are some great club ideas, do you have ideas to share? Please pass along your great club ideas to share with others.

Editor....Grabbed this from the SKCC Facebook page. What a sweet deal Jim got and what great work he has done to revive the old J-38s!

What A Deal!



Took a break from the CQWSSBDX contest today and went to the local Hamfest. Got there nice and early and spied two J-38's on a sellers table and asked how much he wanted for them, one was missing the knob, he asked which I was interested in, the complete one or the one without the knob...I told him give an asking price on both of them and I'll make a decision that way...He said "How about \$15 dollars for the pair, Does that sound fair?" I threw a \$20 dollar bill at him so fast I almost didn't wait for the change! Does anyone know if Morse Express sells replacement knobs for the J-38? 73 de

Jim



Before



After

Started the cleanup on my Hamfest bootie...Started with the "knob-less" one first. I took it completely apart (there a lot of parts!) and started washing all parts in a ammonia bath.. It either came home from WWII with all the nicotine from the GI who used it or the Ham who owned it previously was a big smoker! The key and especially the Bakelite base were covered in nicotine which made for a very messy brown sludge! Ugh...after washing it off real

good I started with some Brasso and a lot of elbow grease! In the end it polished up very nicely and is looking real sharp! Now to make a replacement knob and put it back on the air! I'll probably start on the other one sometime this week...---> Borrowed the knob off the other one for the pictures!

73 de Jim K2MIJ



Going Retro Ted WB3AVD # 392

Isn't it funny the things that inspire you sometimes.

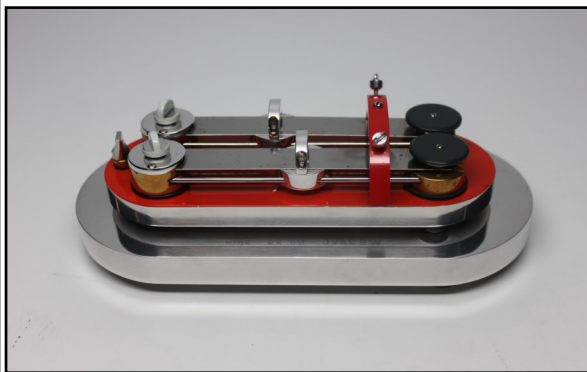
A little ways back, the junk mail disgorged a catalog loaded with appliances for kitchen and bath. Now, I wouldn't ordinarily spend much time on something like that, but the page fell open to "retro" refrigerators, whose styling and colors immediately suggested to my febrile mind some possibilities for a set of telegraph keys.

So, what is "retro," you might ask? A quick shot at Wikipedia rather summed it up: "retro style refers to new things that display characteristics of the past ... mostly the recent past." Specifically, it refers to "mid century styling" such as was seen from, say, the late 1950's into about the early 1970's (I'm guessing a few of us remember those years!).



Have a look at Photo #1, and you'll see immediately what I mean. Here, I've taped a few of my catalog cuts on the computer screen, alongside a web-site selling "retro" appliances (let's give 'em credit, www.bigchill.com). Note the simplicity of the styles and colors—the rounded "soft" edges, generally a single rather-striking color, with chrome or stainless steel accents ... yep, it looks like the 1960's, doesn't it?

Now have a look at Photo #2 ... my first "retro" key, a two-lever design would could almost pass for a last mid-century appliance of some sort! Note the streamlined rounded edges and the red which comes right off of a '60's refrigerator. The two paddles, up front (photo #3), are a charcoal black modeled on the burners from a 60's stove, and the remaining adjustments are all modeled on appliance dials and door pulls of that era. These include the three binding posts at the rear (one silver and two white, photo #4), as well as the two small silver knobs behind each paddle (which constitute the travel limits for each lever)--all of which mimic the dials on a stove. The two silver half-circles which ride above each lever (visible in photo #2) are sliders which adjust each lever's tension, and the curved red yoke which holds the travel limits (behind each paddle) ... all of these are based on door pulls from stoves and refrigerators of that era.



#2. Double-lever "retro" key redolent of the 1960s; the sliders in the center of each lever adjust each lever's tension.



#3. The business end—two paddles like stove burners, the travel limit adjustments (on the curved red yoke) like 60's appliance knobs and door pulls.

Each lever on this key, by the way, is flexible, being constructed from a piece of feeler-gauge steel. The two rails beneath each lever are what the sliding tension adjustments run on, and

moving these sliders essentially changes the length of each lever. Move the slider toward the white binding posts in the rear, and the long lever is quite delicate; move the slider toward the paddles, and the lever shortens and becomes stiff. Gap spacing for each lever's contact is adjustable, as well as each lever's upper travel limit. The key can function with

either a two-wire manual input, or a three-wire electronic keyer input. In manual mode, it essentially acts like a side-swiper (both dits and dahs are manually formed), except of course the motion is up-and-down instead of side-to-side. It's as intuitive as tapping your fingers on a desk. In three-wire mode, it functions electrically like an iambic paddle; though as a "cricket" in this case. I found this key to be an absolute pleasure to use on the air—capable of being adjusted down to the point where one's breath is enough to activate the lever, or stiff enough to accommodate a relatively heavy-handed telegrapher.



#4. The binding posts like stove knobs.



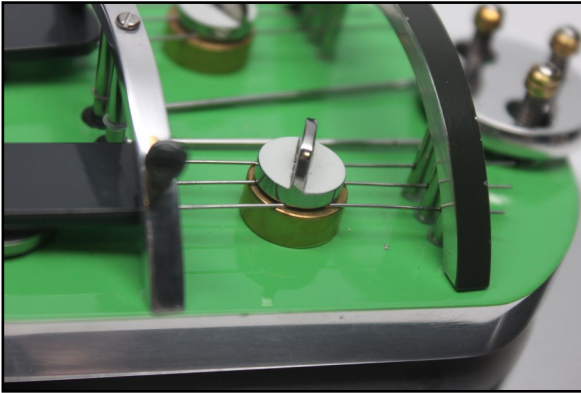
#5. A "retro" key based on a 60's

see that each lever on this key is constructed from three strands of thin straight music wire (photo #7)—so, again, each lever is flexible. Thus the effective length of each lever, and thus each lever's delicacy or stiffness, can be changed in a manner similar to the previous key, by moving each lever's slider back and forth. And again, these sliders look

My next "retro" effort followed much in the same vein, though based (a little distantly, I'll admit) on a different 60's appliance. Have a look at the green key (photo #5) and take a guess ... it takes its inspiration from a bathroom scale (I guess it was a slow week idea-wise!!). This is another two-lever key with the two charcoal black paddles, in essence, being where you would place your feet if you were weighing yourself on the full-sized scale (photo #6). Now look at the round silver circle at the other end of the key (photo #5) which encompasses three posts. These are the key's binding posts, and this assembly appears where the readout on an actual bathroom scale would be! Then there are the two curved overhead yokes which are shaped like refrigerator handles from that era—the smaller yoke at the paddle-end holds a travel limit for each lever, while the larger yoke adjacent to the binding posts actually holds the key's two levers.

If you look closely, you'll



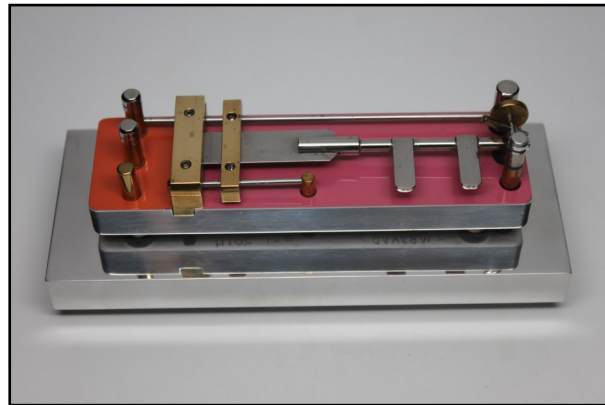


#7. Close-up of one a lever and its tension adjustment (the lever itself is made from three strands of tempered wire).

Now, I'm probably on the verge of exceeding my bandwidth, but let me quickly show you one more "retro" attempt which DID NOT work so well. Have a look at Photo #8.

I have to admit that my friends who have seen this key have basically responded with something along the lines of "that's #%^\$* ugly." Yeah, the colors are still "retro" I think, but stylistically I fear I've begun to drift into the 1970's ... remember what pickup trucks and refrigerators looked like then ... rectangular and "boxy." This is a single lever key—a straight key—with two paddles on the same lever ... my thinking being that I could tap it with two fingers faster than I could work a straight key. And had I made the lever a bit longer (which I eventually did on another key), it probably would have worked just fine. But with a short and relatively stiff lever, the two paddles "felt" too different, and it seemed like I was always missing a "dit" somewhere! I persevered with this most frustrating of all keys until I finally

like the knobs on a stove. Here, each knob (the part above the lever) is actually a neodymium magnet, which attracts itself to the steel slug below each lever (the lever itself being the center of the sandwich, so to speak). This whole assembly—the knob and underlying slug—moves in order to change each lever's tension. Electrically this key is identical to the previous one, utilizing either a two-wire manual input, or a three-wire electronic input. And again, I found this "appliance" to be a real pleasure to use on the air.



#8. The "finger taper" with two paddles on one lever; not quite a success!



#9 All three retros

ish hood with green and chrome on a '38 Graham; the shape and the grill (and the colors!) on those '45 Pontiac 'Silver Streaks,' or that

"cracked the code" and made fifty or so contacts with it. It turns out that I had to begin my keying, regardless of whether the next character began with a "dit" or a "dah," on the paddle closest to the fulcrum. That worked, though for the life of me, I can't figure out WHY?

Well, as a good old saying goes, "two out of three ain't bad." But say, doesn't all this bring up some neat ideas (and this is how I get myself into trouble)! How about a few keys based roughly on the designs and colors of classic cars? Go ahead, look 'em up! Look at that rak-

striking yellow-orange and chrome on a '42 Oldsmobile B-44; just tell me that '56 Cadillac—with its peach-pink paint and all that chrome and fins--doesn't suggest a gorgeous "bug" (long and sleek with lots of "chrome" accents, two binding posts like the hooded headlights on one end, two paddles like the taillight fins on the other, the key's feet disguised like white-wall tires...heck, you could even put in a little LED to light up the interior of the key--like a car interior at night--if you like to operate late without turning all the room lights on).

Ohhh, can ya' just see 'em...

73, WB3AVD, SKCC #392

My 68 Years a Ham

November 24th 2017, the day after Thanksgiving, marks my 68th anniversary of passing my first ham radio license. Shortly thereafter, I was issued W2DEC which I held until 2012 when I became W1UL. A friend recently commented, "Urb is licensed so long his first call had a Roman numeral."

In 1949 there were only three classes of ham radio licenses, Class A, B, and C. The Class C was a conditional license for those who lived too far from a FCC examination location. The Class B license was the entry level license and required a 13 WPM (word per minute) code exam as well as an essay type theory exam. A few of the questions I still remember were: draw a block diagram of a superheterodyne receiver, draw a schematic diagram of a class C amplifier labeling all the parts and list the advantages and disadvantages of two different oscillator types.

I was 16 years old at the time and there were few people younger with a ham license. My Elmer wouldn't let me take the exam until I could copy code at 18 WPM and I shall be forever grateful. At 18 WPM code became easy. In addition, many of my would-be ham friends ran to NYV to take the test as soon as they could copy 13 WPM on W1AW and to a person they all failed. Oh, I almost forgot, at about 14 years I was almost ready to take the test and I discovered girls. That put ham radio on the back burner for most two years. Thank goodness it was only two years before coming back to my senses.

All of this was about two years before existence of the Novice class license. There were no HF phone privileges with a Class B license other than 10 meters. When you were licensed for a year you could take the Class A license which allowed phone on 20 and 75 meters. One year to the day I took and passed my Class A license. I was so excited I purchased a microphone at Harrison Radio even though I had no place to plug it in!

As was common in these days, I took the Second Class Commercial Radiotelephone exam on the same day I took the amateur Class B exam and the First Class Commercial Radiotelephone exam on the same day I took the amateur Class A license.

It's been quite a ride. Ward Silver, QST Contributing Editor once said, "The golden age of ham radio starts five years before a person get their first license, anything before then is a technological wasteland and it ends five years after they get their first license, after that ham radio was going to hell in a hand-basket."

Stay tuned for the second 68 years.

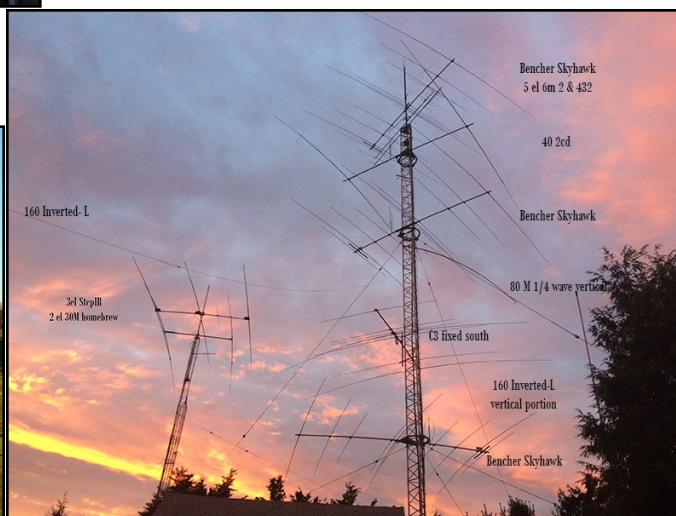
73 Urb W1UL

K3WW...A League of His Own!

The Dit-Dah CW Gang enjoys operating as multi-multi in the SKS events. We do big numbers in Qs and SPC; I knew K3WW operated as SO2R (single operator two radios) and although I once tried this, it drove me nuts...one radio in one ear and another radio in the other! It takes steady control and concentration “NOT” to go crazy! Chas has mastered it and is always “workable” on all bands...now I know why! Check-out Chas’ station! I grabbed this from QRZ and Chas’ web page.



Those are top of the line Elecraft K3 radios and band scopes!



Those are serious antennas and beautiful to see! It's no wonder you “hear” Chas and he hears you! Chas runs QRO and usually has a very strong signal here in Michigan. It's easy for me to say “Chas is in a league of his own!”

I believe there may be other fine stations running SO2R. It would be great to hear from them and to see their setups. Contesters and DXers have become SKCC members and they bring a plethora of knowledge and new ideas to many of us. It takes time, skill and patience to build a super station but it isn't for everyone nor is it desired by everyone but then that's the beauty of our hobby, “a place for everyone and everyone has a place.”

73,

Ted K8AQM 1629s

KB1OIQ Andy #6265s

Editor....Meet Andy. Andy is active and can be found regularly on the bands both rag chewing and chasing DX (Andy just recently got his DXCC...sweet!). But Andy is active in many amateur projects, here is a sample from his QRZ bio.

I was first licensed in January 2007. I earned my general privileges in January 2008, and my amateur extra privileges in January 2009.

I am the President of the [Police Amateur Radio Team](#) (PART) which is located in Westford, MA. PART meets on the 3rd Tuesday of every month, and is a very active club with just over 100 members. PART is recognized as an ARRL Special Service Club. Anybody who is interested in amateur radio is welcome to join us at a meeting.



In 2017, I was appointed to the position of Affiliated Club Coordinator for Eastern Massachusetts (EMA).

I am [SKCC](#) member #6265S. The folks in the SKCC are *great* at helping newcomers with CW, and with keeping the tradition of manually generated CW alive. I enjoy operating as K3Y/1 each January.

Linux fans might be interested in this popular software collection, which I created for amateur radio users: [Andy's Ham Radio Linux](#)

Rigs: ICOM 7300, ICOM 746PRO, ICOM 703, [Elecraft K1](#), [KN-Q7A](#), [BITX40](#), and several other QRP kit radios.

Antennas: G5RV, center fed vertical dipoles for 20m/17m/10m, a homebrew halfwave end fed antenna for 40m (handles 500 watts!), a square loop for 6m (it was a lawn chair in a past life), a homebrew 2-element cubical quad for 2m, and a [grasswire antenna](#) for 160m.

Ampl: Dentron GLA-1000B (500 watts).



Power: With the exception of the amplifier, all radio gear is powered by a 100 Ahr AGM battery with a [TGE N8XJK boost regulator](#). This allows me to run a full 100 watts, if necessary. The battery is usually charged by a 130W solar panel, but I also have a plugin charger for cloudy days. Even the laptop can be charged from this battery via a DC-DC converter.

I renovated a room in my house for my ham radio shack.

N3PDT Doug #6861s

Editor...Also a regular on the SKCC frequencies you'll find Doug N3PDT but don't let the "3" fool you! Doug is active from that super active Missouri! Doug along with those of the "Missouri Outlaws" makes sure that Missouri is in everyone's log. Here is Doug's bio from QRZ.



CW is my primary mode. I participate in the sprints and activities of SKCC, NAQCC, Flying Pigs QRP, and FISTS. I am most active in SKCC. I particularly enjoy a good ragchew, but am not offended if you just want to trade RSTs and/or an organization number.

In the last couple years, I've become active in Novice Rig Roundup. NRR is a group of ops that grew out of SKCC, and get together to make contacts using vintage and homebrew gear that would have been targeted to the restrictions of Novice class operations. We'll have our **next Novice Rig Roundup March 3-11**, when we'll try to contact as many other novice style stations as possible. Extra points for being under 75w input and xtal controlled! We've also been meeting up on Monday evenings between 7.100 and 7.125. Fire up that old rig and join us: <http://www.novicerigroundup.com>

Equipment ranges from vintage and home brew tube gear to somewhat more modern Elecraft and Ten Tec gear.

My main antenna is a 148' inverted L. Its vertical leg is about 55'. I like experimenting with different antennas, so there's a new wire being tested regularly.

I also enjoy /P /QRP CW operation, so it's not unusual for me to give out the "wrong" QTH. Often, I'm just "next door" in KS.

I am an active member of the Johnson County Radio Amateurs Club of Johnson County, Kansas (JCRAC). I am also proud to be a member of the Marshall Ensor Memorial Organization (MEMO). MEMO commemorates the career of one amateur radio's pioneers and great teachers. Website: <http://www.ensorparkandmuseum.org>

Editor...Here's a collection of Doug's boat anchors and station...





Editor....Doug has quite a collection of boat anchors and a sweet "field" setup!

Igge SM5LIB #10653

I'm a retired Chief Engineer from the Swedish Tanker Fleet in Deep Sea Trade. After I had settled down and just enjoyed the life I picked up my former hobby, amateur radio and find that a KNWD TS-590S would be a good choice. Of course, one straight key was a must and I fell in love with the Begali.

I enjoy "Mills On the Air," a special yearly event I like, and I got a vanity call "SE5MILL" for the event.

I sent in my first monthly log with my first QSO and I'm working on "Rag Chewing" and have a few half an hour QSOs.

My English isn't that good and it is hard to be on the air for such a long time. I have QSO's with Swedish speaking amateur.

Hope to hear from you over there when the conditions are better and my beam is pointing your way..

73 Igge SM5LIB #10653



KS8KCC and the Shootout!



L-R sitting NU8Z #11237t, KE8CEW #15805t and K8KIC #2938t
L-R standing K8AQM #1629s and KD8VSQ #13072t

The October SKS saw KS8KCC #16000t, the club call for the Dit-Dah CW Gang as the bonus station for this month. To increase overall activity for the event and especially for the bonus station, a down pdf certificate was offered to any station working KS8KCC. It must have been something of interest because the “look-ups” on QRZ quickly went from 756 to over 1400!

The station was a multi op-multi transmitter setup of three stations all running about 700 watts. 20m had a log periodic at 100ft, 40m, “a Death Ray dipole,” 80m, a quarter wave sloper and 160m an inverted Vee. All stations are equipped with stubs and bandpass filters.



NU8Z at 20m



K8AQM at 80m and 160m and
KE8CEW logging

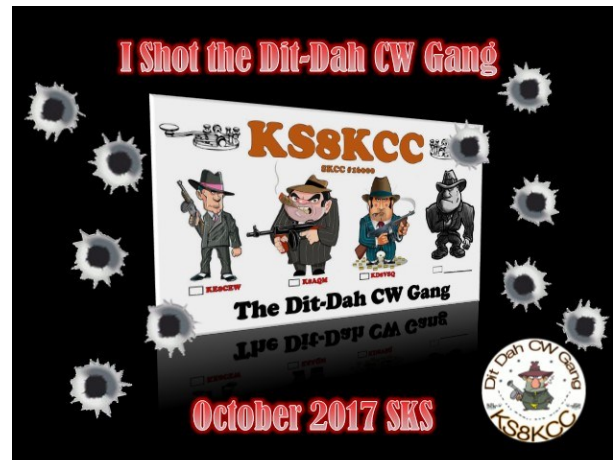


K8KIC at 40m with
KD8VSQ logging

Despite rather high levels of noise we finished the SKS with 103 QSOS, and 37 multipliers for 4616 points. It was interesting that 160m made more QSOs than 20m!

When the event ended the Dit-Dah CW gang was completely shot up! Nobody can beat that SKCC gang! We hope you'll enjoy your certificate and hope you enjoyed the event!

73.....”Dit”



Jeff K9JP #3008s

Editor...Many of you know Jeff because he was the one responsible for issuing your SKCC number, but do you really know Jeff? I'm lucky to count Jeff as a friend of mine and I had heard he has a very special J-38 key. I refurbish and restore keys and offered to do this for his J-38. His response is below and I think you'll enjoy hearing about this key....

"Thank you very much for your very kind offer to restore my WWII J-38. Do you ever rest? I will pass on your kindness and not have the key restored. I want to keep it in its original condition.



The story on the key goes like this. It was used by the father of my 8th grade math/homeroom teacher, Miss Bullock. Before the end of my 8th grade year of school, Miss Bullock asked me if I could paint her house as a summer job. I would make \$2.00 an hour! Major money for a kid in 1968. I said sure and hoped for week or two of work. At the same time I had started to study for my Novice test and was learning code by listening to my Elmer either at his home or code practice received over the air on my Knight Kit Star Roamer receiver. Ralph would send code practice to me every evening before he went to work (3rd Shift). Ralph lived one block away, and all I had to do was set the receiver dial near 3.5 MHz and I could find Ralph without much problem. He would send text from QST or from the Novice study guide called "You want to be a Radio Amateur". The next afternoon, I would go to Ralph's house to see how much I copied much of what he sent. (See my QRZ bio page for more details).

Well, I spent most of that summer painting Miss Bullocks house, garage, and a new fence in her back yard. She had a new in-ground pool built that same summer. I even painted the white sealer paint inside of the pool before the first fill of water. Needless to say I had weeks of work and was making lots of money for my savings account.

When all the painting was finished, Miss Bullock had one more job for me. Help her clean out her basement. Her father had passed away a few years before and all of his belonging were just dumped in her basement. As I sorted items by type or kind, I found a Morse code key. It was mostly black, and dull metal in color and had stamped on the bottom U.S. Signal Corps in paint. I asked her about it and found out it was her fathers from WWII. I do not remember where he was stationed, but the key was in very good but used shape. I told her I studying for my Amateur Radio license and did not yet have a code key. She told me she had no use for the key and I should take it.

So, since that summer of 1968, I have used that key for many, many QSOs. While, I now prefer a Navy Flame Proof key for straight key contacts. My vintage station has the WWII J-38 connected to the E.F. Johnson Adventure Transmitter. So, if I tell you during a QSO that I am using my vintage station, I am sending with the original J-38 given to me. Again, "Thank You Very Much" for your generous and kind offer of restoration, but I think I want to leave it as is.

If that key, got lost in the mail, a part of me would be lost as well."

...and the rest of the story.....

Editor....Jeff's bio from QRZ tells the details of how Jeff got into amateur radio...

My interest in amateur radio started at the age of 14 (1968). A wonderful neighbor, just one block away had this very large square antenna mounted on the roof. It had Bamboo fishing pole looking arms four in the front and another four in the back. Attached to each pole was three sets of wires, which formed three different sized square box shapes front and back. The really neat thing was that the whole massive antenna could turn from one direction to almost all the way back around again. I had to know what TV stations it could pickup! It took more than a week to work up the nerve to ring the doorbell. When I did, I was greeted by Ralph K9BED (SK). I asked about the antenna, and Ralph laughed. Then he asked me to come inside and showed me his Ham Radio Station.

Ralph, turned on the receiver and transmitter. Unusual sounds came out of a large speaker with a large letter H in the center. First there was a rush of static, then a winding sound which increased in pitch, and at last I could hear someone talking but it sounded like they had just stuffed their mouth full of mashed potatoes. Ralph looked at me and started to laugh. I thought, I did something wrong. I later found out that I had twisted my head from side to side just like the dog on the RCA TV commercials. The next thing I knew Ralph was talking to another ham operator in the Panama Canal. I could kind of understand what the other ham was saying, but I would have bet the nickel in my pocket that he still had some mashed potatoes in his mouth. From that day on I was bitten by not only the DX bug, but this Ham Radio stuff was really cool.

Ralph spent many long hours teaching me radio theory and sending practice Morse Code (God Bless You Ralph) so I would soon pass my Novice license and received my first FCC call sign of WN9AJP. I have always enjoyed CW before any other mode. I still chase DX but, enjoy QSO's with members of the SKCC group! For more radio fun take a look at the Straight Key Century Club here: <http://www.skccgroup.com/>

72/73 de Jeff K9JP SKCC #3008s



Ed....looks to be this is a Lionel J-38, the black base is unique to the Lionel J-38 model...no black base plate here.



The key is used at Jeff's boat anchor station, good combination Johnson Adventurer and Drake 2-B. The logo caught a camera reflection (Adventurer so old logo is a "ghost"?).

Fargo...KD9VT/0 #15315s

I retired on March 1st of this year. I have always been the type of person that likes to be at home unless something important like a job, hamfest, QRP outing, coffee and pie, etc. pulls me out of my cave. But, once I realized that I am not doing anything wrong by being home every day, a very uncharacteristic desire to “get out of Dodge” has started to creep into my homebody thinking. I can’t explain it; it just seems like the thing to do.

One evening I was sitting in the shack and playing radio. I love to make SKCC contacts so I started the SKCC skimmer. As you know, it always tells you how many QSOs you need for your next goal, how many brags, etc. But this night, four lines caught my eye:

Total worked towards T: 721, only need 29 more for Tx15.

Total worked towards S: 587, only need 13 more for Sx3.

Total worked towards P: 3,978,601, only need 21,399 more

Total worked towards WAS: 50, none needed.

Total worked towards WAS-C: 50, none needed.

Total worked towards WAS-T: 50, none needed.

Total worked towards WAS-S: 48, only need ND, UT.

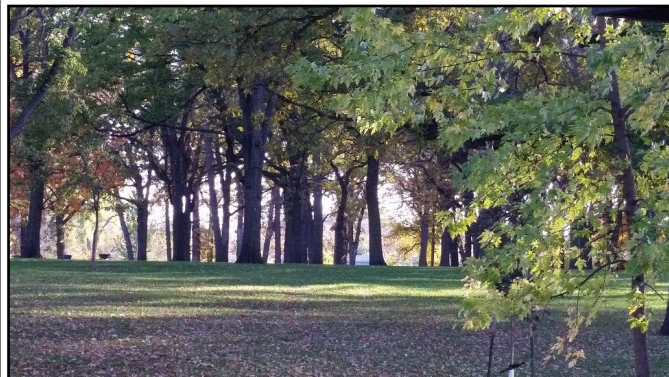
I thought, wow, I only need two more states for WAS-S! A search of the SKCC member list revealed the reason I still need ND and UT. There are not any Senators in ND and only one in UT! It was then that the “get out of Dodge” urge hit. I need to go to ND to help out my SKCC family!

My wife recently retired too so I thought maybe I better ask her if she wants to go since she will be paying for the trip. She says I need her to, “keep me reigned in”. I’m not sure what that means other than maybe she feels men need someone to keep them from spending all the money. I wouldn’t spend it all. I would certainly leave money for the important things (like beer, food, radios, coax, etc.). Well, she agreed to go so I looked for a hotel with a way to get coax to an antenna outside the building. I called a few and one of them told me that I could use the first floor conference room because it has a door I can open and run a coax out to the grassy field on that side of the building. That sounded good so I made reservations at the Residence Inn Fargo. Well, when we got there, I found that there was in fact a grassy field....about 200 feet from the conference room and across a driveway. It was time for plan B.

Plan B was simple, find a better place. I had looked at Fargo park information (just in case) and found one (Lindenwood Park) that has everything I needed. It has shelters with electricity, trees and real bathrooms. The park was only five minutes from the hotel so my wife and I took a drive. As soon as we saw it, I knew it would be perfect. There were trees 50-60 feet tall, big open spaces, nice shelters and bathrooms 100 ft. away. I was hoping the electricity was still on and it was. It was actually the nicest park I have ever seen. The weather was supposed to be nice, sunny and around 60 degrees (with 25-35mph winds). I decided where I was going to set up so I was ready.



After breakfast on Saturday, I headed out to the park. I wanted to set up two antennas so I set up my 30+ foot portable mast for my G5RV Jr. It works great on 40, 20 and 10m and pretty good on 30, 17, 15 and 12m. It was a breezy day and after two hours of fighting wind, tangled ropes and wire, I canned the two antenna idea and got out my slingshot. I shot a weight



over a limb at 40ft, pulled a rope and my G5RV Jr up. It took less than 10 minutes (not counting the time it took to let it back down so I could attach the coax to it). Anybody want to buy a portable mast? From now on, trees will be my support of choice for portable antennas when they are available. Anyway, the antenna was up. Now I can set everything else up and start playing. I had two rigs with me (just in case). I decided to use my Kenwood TS-480 and let the

IC-7200 do stand by duty. After about 15 minutes, I was ready to go. I texted my good friend

Pete, NN9K and asked him to help me test. Both ends were 599 so I got my computer set up and called CQ. The first call yielded a small pileup (which I enjoy when I am on the popular end). The day went well. I worked until about five o'clock and logged over 120 SKCC QSOs. I am sure I would have had 20 or so more but Lindenwood Park is obviously a popular park. There were a lot of people walking and running as



well as a lot of families with children enjoying the beautiful fall day. Several of those children and a few adults wanted to know what I was doing so I had some nice chats. Anyway, there were some non SKCC Qs too but only about 20 of them. Two of them were county hunters but



I wasn't sure what county Fargo is in. So, after telling them I was in Fargo, they were able to figure out where I was. Pretty good since I didn't even know where I was. Anyway, I started to pack up and my wife showed up to help me. We loaded the SUV up and I said goodbye to the beautiful park I was in. On the way back to the hotel, I pondered my next mini-expedition. Maybe UT or NE

NE would be good? Maybe I should go back to ND? I'm not sure where I will go but the mini-expedition bug has bit me. I know how to do it now. It will be better next time. There is only one problem....How am I going to get ND and UT myself?

Thanks to all that called me in Fargo. I'll be back there sometime. It was a very enjoyable weekend.

73 de Dave, KD9VT
SKCC 15315S

Editor....Dave has the "mini DXpedition bug," Dave is also responsible for collecting "Iowa S" for many of us! Here's to many many more mini DXpeditions to you Dave!

Jeff K9JP #3008s Has a New Light!

How is this for a nifty call sign light! Jeff K9JP saw these advertised at the Great Lakes HamCon and decided this was a "must have" for his ham shack. They make great Christmas gifts but there was no way Jeff was going to wait! The tube is a burned-out 3-500Z mounted with 12 vdc LEDs in the base and the entire tube is mounted in a block of walnut. They have become quite the "thing" for several SKCC members and the units are made by SKCC members.



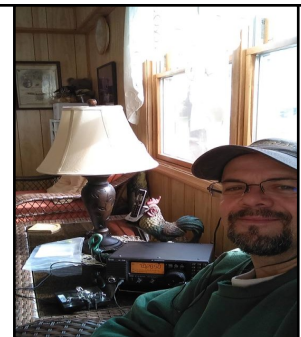
There was some talk that Jeff was going to build some sort of rf detection unit wired to a switch so that when his rig was keyed the stray rf would be detected and the light would flash with the cw being sent. Earlier here in the Rag Chew Jeff had pictures of his Johnson Adventurer station and I'm sure that old boat anchor gear would have leaked more than enough stray rf to activate the lights!

Nice choice of lights Jeff, reminds me of the old 866 mercury rectifiers and OA4 tubes of boat anchor days....had to wait 10 minutes for those 866 tubes to heat the mercury and glow blue!

Tony KD8BBK #2443t Takes to the Field...Sort of

Operated some portable this morning from my parents' house. Icom 718 at 100 watts into ground mounted vertical ham sticks with three radials laid out. Had some very nice QSOs on 40 meter cw.

Editor...wherever the rig is, that's where the shack is!



VE9AQM...aka K8AQM

For many years I have been fortunate to be friends with Dave VE9CB/W8SR #12570. Dave and I have been DXpeditioners to T32 and Dave's list of past DX calls is extremely impressive including calls of BY, 9M6 and ZL7 (DXers know these are rare and long distances from the USA). Since I've had my VE9 call and never a chance to use it, Dave and his lovely wife Melanie invited me to visit (Fredericton, NB) and get on the air. Dave is a solid contester and has the station and antennas so how could I possibly refuse!

The November WES was selected for my visit so I could make the most SKCC QSOs as possible. On November 9th off I flew to Toronto and then on to Fredericton, New Brunswick,



Dave VE9CB/W8SR #12570

Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM #1629s

a total of 3.5 hr flying time but an all day adventure in airports! Friday was a day of sight-seeing in Saint John including a trip to the Bay of Fundy and some of Dave's childhood stomping grounds. Dinner with Dave and Melanie proved to be what may have been the best meal at a restaurant I have ever had! The food was fabulous!

With Dave's help Friday night was a chance to put VE9AQM on FT8, a mode I have never tried but wanted to. Nice thing about FT8, it gives you a chance to chat while the "computer" makes contacts for

you! Before the weekend was done VE9AQM had made 93 FT8 QSOs and with several of them being SKCC members especially back home in my area.

With WES starting Dave and I decided to make a "multi-multi" operation of VE9AQM. Running without amplifiers with Dave's high yagi, four square on 40m, an 80m vertical loop and an inverted L on 160m, QRO was not required. I opened on 40 and Dave was to start 20m, unfortunately his Six Pack switch wasn't working to give him the yagi so Dave just loaded his 80m loop on 20m and worked a few WES stations. With bandpass filters everything was working fairly well until I switched to the yagi and Dave went to 40 with the 80m loop...ugh, the 20m bandpass filter blew and Dave had huge intra-station intermod! Bummer! So after 40 QSOs as a multi-multi team it was decided I would finish as a single op and Dave would begin his packing for an up-coming trip to Senegal (6W1SU) to operate in the CQWW CW Contest. Dave is a high speed CW op with 100+ Qs an hour his normal rate he was amazed at my "patience" with the straight key rates...ha, I enjoy it! When the smoke cleared I had 207 VE9AQM Qs in the WES, a fabulous time with friends and a new insight into the surrounding New Brunswick area!

Aside from these great memories and Qs I did manage to bring home a terrific head cold but hey...I'd do it anytime and many times over! Thanks Dave and Melanie for a fabulous time and such a warm welcome!

73, Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM 1629s

2018 K3Y QSL Card Design Event

The 2018 K3Y QSL card design page has been updated with the latest submissions. You can see them here:

<http://www.skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y-qsl-vote.php>

Have an idea for a card design? Please submit it. The deadline is Dec. 14th at which time SKCC members will vote for the winning design. Twelve other designs will appear in the SKCC 2018 print calendar. Check the above link for more info.

73,

Drew - AF2Z

K3Y Planning Group



REWARD OFFERED

A REWARD OF 500 MICROFARADS IS OFFERED FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE ARREST OF THIS DESPERATE CRIMINAL:

“HOP-A-LONG CAPACITY”

THIS UNRECTIFIED CRIMINAL ESCAPED FROM A WESTERN PRIMARY CELL WHERE HE HAD BEEN CLAMPED IN IONS AWAITING THE GAUSS CHAMBER. HE WAS CHARGED WITH THE INDUCTION OF AN 18 TURN COIL NAMED MILLIHENRY WHO WAS FOUND CHOKED AND ROBBED OF VALUABLE JOULES. HE IS ARMED WITH A CARBON ROD AND IS A POTENTIAL KILLER. CAPACITY IS ALSO CHARGED WITH DRIVING DC MOTOR OVER A WHEATSTONE BRIDGE AND REFUSING TO LET THE BAND-PASS.

IF ENCOUNTERED, HE MAY OFFER SERIES OF RESISTANCE. THE ELECTROMOTIVE FORCE SPENT THE NIGHT SEARCHING FOR HIM IN A MAGNETIC FIELD, WHERE HE HAD GONE TO EARTH. THEY HAD NO SUCCESS AND BELIEVED HE HAD RETURNED OHM VIA A SHORT CIRCUIT.

HE WAS LAST SEEN RIDING A KILOCYCLE WITH HIS FRIEND EDDY CURRENT WHO WAS PLAYING A HARMONIC.

De KD8VSQ

The Minnow and the Whale

By Jody K3JZD #13330s



At least that was the way that way that Don – K3RLL saw it whenever he looked at this picture.

Normally the whale (my SKCC key) is my go-to key. I had just purchased and assembled the minnow (American Morse Equipment KK1-B key), with the idea of using it during my portable park and SOTA operations.

Whenever the November WES rolled around, I figured that I would start out with the minnow and use it for a little while. I did not expect to last real long with it. But I needed to get the gap and spring tension set to where I was comfortable with it. Using it during the WES would give me ample opportunity to diddle with the two adjustments between QSOs.

I found the minnow to be a surprising robust key. If I was looking somewhere else, it was easy to forget that it is such a small key. Although compact, it has the good solid feel of a much larger key. I have a heavy fist and I expected to be chasing the minnow all over my desk. But that was not the case. It is well balanced and remains right in place without any additional anchoring.

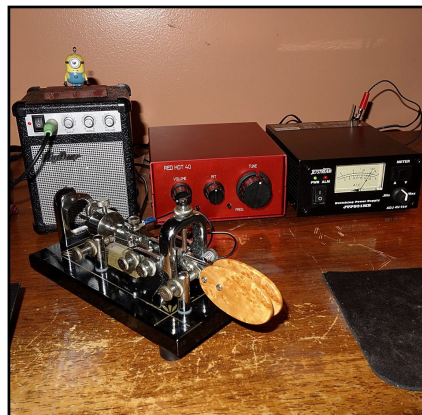
I ended up using the minnow throughout the entire November WES. Once I had the minnow dialed in, I was on a roll with it. 131 QSOs. And many, many, many CQs. I never got tired while I was using it, so I never switched over to the whale. I definitely made a good investment when I purchased this key. <http://www.americanmorse.com/kk1.htm>

George, N2JNZ #2836t



Here is an update on an old friend I haven't worked in quite a few years:

"The TS-130SE is in the shop so I got the Red Hot 40 running ... CQ WW next weekend ... got VP9/DK7LX and VP2MDL tonight with da bug ... about 3 watts out to the ZeroFive vertical"



N2JNZ/QRP

George was very active in all SKCC event and it's good to see him back. George made many very sweet key based for your straight keys. Those paddles on your "ANNIE" look sweet!



Orphan QSL Cards!

Do you recognize your call on the list of QSL cards that are in the SKCC Bureau? Well if you do, **NOW** is the time to act! These cards won't hang around for ever so get your SASE to the SKCC Bureau as soon as possible. Especially if you want to get your K3Y cards to you when you make a QSO with one of the many stations that will be on the air this coming January 2018 for the Anniversary event!

Check out the SKCC Group website at

http://www.skccgroup.com/member_services/qsL_buro/

Follow the directions on how to get your envelopes filled out and what postage to put on them. DX stations **DO NOT** send QSL to the ARRL Bureau. SKCC members residing outside the USA may purchase QSL Bureau postage credits through the SKCC PayPal account. A USD \$3 purchase will convert to TWO - USPS Global mail stamps. You may send your payment via PayPal.com to PayPal@SKCCgroup.com - PLEASE include your Call Sign and comment that the funds are for the QSL Bureau so that we can tell a donation from a QSL Bureau Envelope Credit purchase. SKCC members living with in the US please send SASE to the address provided on the SKCC website link above.

Please mail me if you have QSL Bureau questions or if you see that you have Orphan QSLs and have decided to enter into the SKCC Bureau. **The following pages list the calls of the Orphan SKCC QSLs on hand.**

Thanks Jeremy KD8VSQ 13072T SKCC QSL Bureau Manager

K0FL	W2IX	KJ4H	WA5TCZ
J0JV	W2NRA	KK4ITN	K6BHH
K0JVB	W2SSX	KK4SER	K6ELQ
K0MSO	WA2SDS	KM4FO	K6KPH
K0RO	WB2NVS	KP4CPC	KF6C
K0TTP	WB2SMK	KP4GC	KH6ZM
KA0NES	WD2AGQ	N4HAY	
KF0AF	AK3K	N4OW	
KN0WCW	AK3X	N4QR	
N0AIE	K3ERC	N4RE	
N0TA	K3JZD	NP4IW	
NU0S	K3MB	W4ALF	
NZ0T	K3MSB	W4TY	
W0SZE	K3RNC	WA4MXT	
W0VTT	K3SAV	WB4DBO	
W0YBS	K3SEN	WB4JJJ	
WA0ZSU	K3SEW	WI4F	
WI0S	K3VIG	AC5P	
AA1JD	K3WAS	AD5A	
AB1FD	KA3LOS	K5DP	
K1DBM	KB3MOW	K5AWF	
KB1WOD	KC3DOF	K5EDM	
KO1E	N3AAZ	K5MP	
KO1U	N3BHM	K5TRI	
N1HOG	N3HEE	KA5DWI	
NF1U	N3PDT	KD5GCX	
W1RGA	N3QW	KG5DKG	
W1WQG	NR3P	KK5J	
W1XT	W3MWR	N5GW	
WA1Z	W3NP	N5IP	
WD1AL	W3QT	N5IR	
WS1K	WY3H	N5SJ	
WU1V	W3DRW	N5WX	
AB2DJ	AD4XX	NE5DL	
AB2N	AI4UN	W5BM	
K2PI	AK4JA	W5FKW	
K2UPS	K4BXR	W5HAY	
K2YWE	K4IBZ	W5LD	
KB2SEO	K4NVJ	W5RBG	
KC2NYU	KB4JR	W5GJ	
KD2AEF	KB4QQJ	W5NE	
KD2FSH	KD4RJ	W5TS	
N2KOF	KE4KE	W5ZR	
N2LK	KG4W	WB5KSD	
NA2CC	KI4ODO	WA5PQL	

K6EED	W9LV	VE2FK
AA7FV	W9LW	VE2FSK
AF7LW	W9RFX	VE5UO
K7EP	W9XC	VE9DX
K7ROH	WA9FET	VK4WM
AF4K	W19X	VO1BB
KL7IDA	4Z5BU	VQ9JC
N7DC	CT1GZB	VY2RB
NA7C	DL2HUM	XE1GXG
NS7E	DU3GRT	XE2MWY
W7GB	E50A	ZL2BLQ
W7IXZ	EA5AIO	ZS6JBJ
WL7F	F5DE	
K8FAC	F6ACV	
N8NS	F6EJN	
K8PWL	F5UQE	
K8WSN	FG8NY	
K8XF	G3TEV	
KD8DEU	G3ZRJ	
KF8DA	IK2DJV	
N8GM	IZ2QXG	
NB8F	JA3CJO	
NO8C	JE1TRU	
K8MXC	JH7VHZ	
W8ARC	JI3CJP	
W8HOG	LU4VI	
W8IQ	LW3EX	
W8TBZ	M0TRN	
WA8KOQ	MI0VKO	
WD8CW	OH7UG	
K9DAC	OK1DIG	
K9IA	OK2CQR	
K9JWI	OK2VWB	
K9VKY	OK5JM	
KC9ZKM	ON5UK	
KD9EHB	ON6UU	
N9AKF	P43R	
N9SE	PA3JD	
N9SWA	PS7HD	
N9ZXL	VY1JA	
NT9L	VA2WT	
W9AEM	VA3NQ	
W9BM	VA5CW	
W9DLN	VA6FUN	
W9ILF	VE1PVH	

The ARRL International Grid Chase

Get ready to kick off 2018 with a new year-long operating event!

Bart Jahnke, W9JJ

ARRL Contest Branch Manager



You may not know this, but your station is in a *Maidenhead grid square*. The entire world is divided into thousands of these 1° latitude × 2° longitude squares, each one with a unique designation. They're all part of a geographic location system adopted in the 1980s at a meeting of the VHF Working Group in Maidenhead, England.

Unless you are a VHF enthusiast, this nugget of information may not mean much. But at 0000 UTC on January 1, 2018, the global Amateur Radio community will be *very* interested in grid squares.

Get in the Chase

The objective of the ARRL International Grid Chase is simple: Work stations in as many grid squares as possible and upload your log data to ARRL's Logbook of The World. If you are not currently registered with Logbook of The World, this is a good reason to get started. Go to <https://lotw.arrl.org/lotw-help/getting-started/>. Registration and uploading are *free*.

Every new grid square contact confirmed through Logbook of The World counts toward your monthly total, so you have an incentive to start the chase as soon as you ring in the New Year.

Just turn on your radio and start calling "CQ Grid Chase," or listen for others doing the same. Make the contact, enter it into your log, and you're on to the next (see the sidebar, "[Tips for the Chase](#)").

At the end of each month, your totals on the Grid Chase leader board will reset to zero. Fear not, though. The online scoring system will maintain your monthly totals for a grand total at the end of the year, when an annual summary will be released and awards given to top finishers in various categories.

The ARRL International Grid Chase is open to all amateurs, regardless of location or license class. Any operating mode is eligible as well as every band, except 60 meters. You'll find the complete rules at www.arrl.org/aigc2018.

But What's My Grid Square?

Determining your grid square is easy. David Levine, K2DSL, has a great online calculator at www.levinecentral.com/ham/grid_square.php. Just enter a postal address, zip code, or even a call sign, and David's site will tell you the grid square for that location.

For example, enter "W1AW" and the site will return "FN31pr." The letters "pr" designate the grid square *field*, but you won't need that for the Chase. Just FN31 will do.

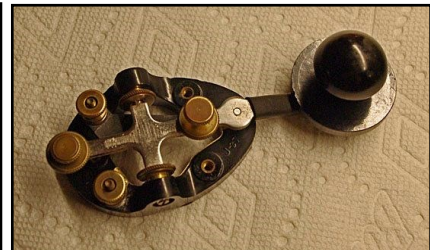
Editor...Be sure to add your grid square to your data on the sked page...you just might create a pile-up for yourself. Combined with K3Y what month January will be!



The former SKCC Yahoo! mailing list group/forum has moved to Groups.io. The entire message base, over 35,000 topics since 2006, is now accessible at our new home on Groups.io. All files & folders from the former Yahoo! group are also included. New photo databases have been set up to catalog members' keys and QSL cards. The web interface is uncluttered and ad-free. More than 3,600 SKCC members are currently subscribed. Please check our new group home page at groups.io/g/SKCC

It's Alive!...J-37

WoW...while going thru boxes of electrical stuff this jewel was found. A quick cleaning and adjustment after re-assembling..the J-37 was used during the November WES. I will always wonder who used this key prior to me...Rick k0kex 5220S



Get Ready!

It won't be long now! Get those guy wires tight, your dipoles secured and all weather-proofed. It has already struck VE2HO!

Hi skcc friends, last week big bad snow storm; my 6M beam lost one parts and my 20m looks like hell.. What a mess !! Hope to meet you on 80M and 40M, look for me on the sked lets try for a QSO. 73 VE2HO.