



SK CC
Straight Key Century Club



Volume 12 Issue 2

The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club
"The Rag Chew"
Editor: K8AQM

June, 2019

Dayton/Xenia 2019



Bert F6HKA

Just "some" of the 211 SKCC members who checked-in
and were available for the photo

So many calls, so many names and so many friends! Dayton/Xenia 2019 had all that and more.



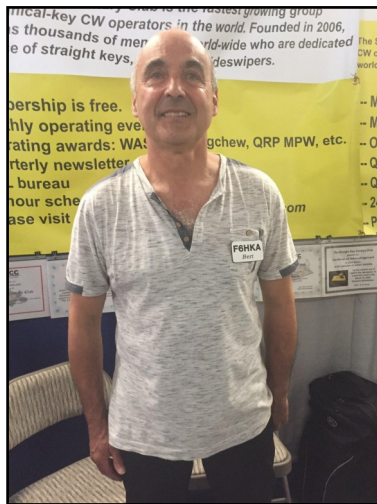
Dayton/Xenia 2019 is in the books and a great Hamvention it was! This year's booth was herded-up by Jeremy KD8VSQ and Ted K8AQM with great help from:
Curt WA2JSG ("he ain't right!") Jeff K9JP Phil K3EW Mark NX1K
Kevin WA9VFD Al KD8DEU Jim KE5AL Ed W8BFT

and John N9OL, who came and offered relief to a talk-weary group of SKCC promoters. Thanks to all!

This year the booth had a fan and five extra chairs for those who were weary and needed a rag chew fix! In addition to the "rest relief," there were twelve different keys; two cooties, four straight keys and six different bugs plus three CPO devices. Curt WA2JSG brought a collection of various certificates offered by SKCC. Jeremy KD8VSQ (QSL mgr.) brought QSLs available for members who showed up and had QSLs in the bureau. The cooties were a great hit and many members had never attempted to try a cootie before. Lots of surprise how easy was to learn just a CQ and think that perhaps they too could master "Mr. Cootie."



Jeremy KD8VSQ and Ted K8AQM at



Bert, F6HKA

Dayton/Xenia 2019 is in the books and a great Hamvention it was! One of the major highlights of the event was the unannounced arrival of Bert, F6HKA. About the only thing I can say is, "if you haven't worked Bert at least once then you haven't been on the air!"

Bert is extremely active in most SKCC events and has been worked many, many times by many of us. Two "Bert" stories come from Curt WA2JSG,

who worked Bert with five watts and a small antenna on the floor of a bedroom in Tennessee while visiting his daughter while Jeff K9JP, worked Bert with a Buddypole in his basement! Bert visited the Hamvention for Friday and Saturday with many requests for pictures to be taken with him. Bert spent many hours at our SKCC booth.



Karen, W4KRN, Al, KD8DEU, Bert F6HKA, and Mark, NX1K

Of course everyone talked about and promoted SKCC to prospective and curious non members. The "no dues" and "no renewals of memberships" were high selling points but the biggest hit with nonmembers AND members was the telling of the up-coming "Slow Speed Saunter." If "talk" is any indication, the SSS is going to be extremely well received and attended.



Resting and Rag Chewing (aka BS'ing)

Chris W4ALF, Bert F6HKA, Jeremy KD8VSQ, Randy N8KQ, Curt WA2JSG

One of the best features of the SKCC booth is the chance to rest and “discuss” operating and other very important issues with fellow SKCCers. One man’s “discussions” are certainly another man’s BS! If anything was learned from Hamvention setup, it is to make sure you bring extra chairs! Hamvention provides you with two but this year five extra chairs were brought for setup and as you can see, they do not remain unoccupied!.

In addition to the activities at the Hamvention, Jim KE5AL, arranged a “pizza get together” at Marion’s Pizzeria

where twelve SKCCer enjoyed “discussions.” If you like thin crust pizza, this is the place to go! Beer is both on tap and by the bottle as well as soft drinks and selections of salads cheesy



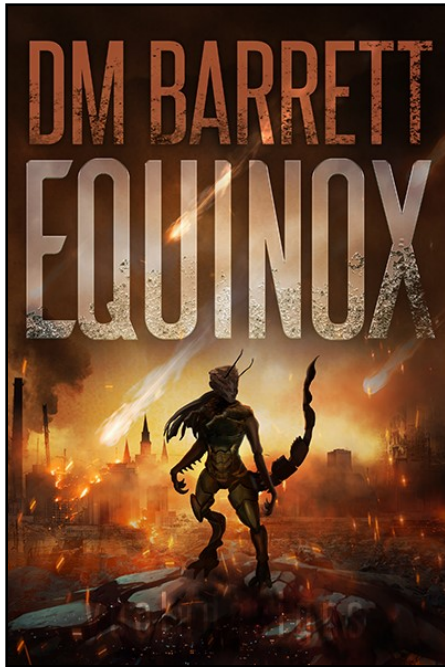
bread and sandwiches. All in all, an evening of good comradery.

One of the best occurrences at the Hamvention were the many, many compliments SKCC received from members who really enjoy the club and how we “made amateur radio fun again” for them. Truly, SKCC is one of the better CW clubs around thanks to you all!

So, 2020 Hamvention will need to measure up to the fun and enjoyment we all had at the 2019 Hamvention!

73, Jeremy KD8VSQ and Ted K8AQM

New Book Feature Sci Fi and Amateur Radio



A new science fiction narrative, EQUINOX, has taken amateur and shortwave radio into the cultural mainstream in its version of a limited alien invasion story line.

“It’s been quite a while since the world depended on amateur and shortwave radio as lifelines. In EQUINOX, both are critical for the success of The Resistance.” – DM Barrett, EQUINOX author DM Barrett, callsign N4ECW, lives and breathes amateur radio. He is well known in the ham radio community having developed and manufactured several different specialized radio antennas through his former company, Transworld Antennas. He holds two earned doctorates with majors in law, economics, and religion.

The EQUINOX story line begins on a warm, slightly breezy day on Florida’s east coast as the vernal equinox marked the beginning of spring. Suddenly, there was a thunderous crash, a blinding light, and a vortex swirling in the blue Atlantic. The invading alien army arrived. The world surrendered. The Resistance made a stand.

Ed....Review and material from QRZ.com

SKCC “Official” Club Call!

SKCC has applied for an “Official” club vanity call, **KS1KCC!** The call will have it’s own SKCC number (20550), and will be available for all club members to use with SKCC events and SKCC operating on a “sign-up-to-use” basis.

KS1KCC could be used as a call in SKS or whatever the user chooses, even just “rag chewing.” Name and QTH would be that of the user of the call, with the SKCC number issued to **KS1KCC**. All logs must be submitted to the coordinator so tracking of awards for **KS1KCC** can occur and information needed by those stations contacting **KS1KCC** for their awards. Length of use of the call is limited to either the length of the SKCC event (SKS, QSO Party, WES, Brag or Slow Speed Saunter or any non-event 24 hour period but excluding use as a K3Y station and as a bonus station) . All logs will be posted on “eQSL” with a downloadable QSL available soon.

Coordinator for the **KS1KCC** call will be: ac2c@skccgroup.com

All logs in adif format are to be sent to: ac2c@skccgroup.com

For “paper” QSLs, QSL via the SKCC bureau to **KS1KCC**



KS1KCC

New SKCC “Slow Speed Saunter” Event!

Yes sir, a new event is being added to SKCC activities! Starting very soon the “Slow Speed Saunter” will begin on the same date as the current SKN, both events will operate simultaneously for the entire time on the first day of each month. It is hoped this new event will help those wishing to improve their CW abilities, maximum speed hopefully is to be 12 wpm. The event will be similar to the current SKCC Brag; very non-threatening, no score, no points, no power groups just great fun making QSOs!

The first scheduled Slow Speed Saunter at this time is July 1st. Watch for announcements on the reflector and SKCC homepage.



What: A Monthly Slow Speed operating event.

Event Name: “The SKCC Slow Speed Saunter”.

Date: On the first day of each month.

Time: From 0000utc to 2400utc.

(This event will be concurrent with SKN.)

Bands: 160-6m, usual frequencies. No WARC bands

Required Exchange: (Minimum Exchange for valid QSO)

Members: RST, SPC, First Name, SKCC #

Non-members: RST, SPC, First Name, None

Rag-chewing is Welcomed and Encouraged!!!!!!!!!!!!

Voluntary submission of participating stations. Event results Submission page (on SKCC Homepage as usual) opens at Event Start Time, Remains Open for 72 Hours.

Submission consists of:

Your Callsign, First Name, SPC

Your SKCC Number, or None (for non-member participants)

Number of valid QSOs you completed during the event

Optional: (please do) Your Soap Box Comment & a Photo

73, Rich W4RQ Coordinator

SLOW SPEED SAUNTER!



73, Rich W4RQ

The SKCC “Slow Speed Saunter”



From “junk” to Junker

By John Edwards, KB2MMU

Ted, K8AQM asked me last year to write an article on my restoration of a WWII Junker key, and, honestly, I felt completely ill-prepared to do so, knowing most of you are engineers, technical minds, and in all cases more qualified to write an article about anything ham radio!

A little background on me, KB2MMU; I am an HR guy who is far more artistic and nostalgic than technical. I restore WWII vehicles, have dabbled in nautical archaeology with the University of West Florida, and love all things rusty, musty, military and metal.

As it relates to ham radio, I was licensed at 13 and am now 41, giving me some baseline street cred in terms of number of years as a licensed ham, but sadly most of those years were as a passive observer of the hobby.

Fast forward to the present; I have a daughter, Sarah, who showed interest in my ham radio hobby, and decided to beat me by becoming licensed at the age of 10. She is now KN4IEH and begged me (quite effectively) to join her in her new passion and get back into the hobby.

After searching for equipment online, I decided I wanted an IC-7300 and, after reading a lot of comments from SKCC members, I fell in love with the idea of getting a Junker key. I searched for a couple of months and after speaking with Tom Perera (the Enigma restoration expert who is well known to many of us) and a few others, I zeroed in on a “DRP” model, which is a “true” WWII version.

Later, after a couple of months searching I found a Kriegsmarine (navy) DRP on Ebay and purchased it. Let’s not talk about price, because I may or may not have overpaid in retrospect. In my excitement I sent Ted a note, to which he responded, “Wow...I’ve never seen a key in such bad shape. You are certainly going to have your work cut out for you!”

In Ted’s defense, this thing looked like it was in a U-Boat that enjoyed a direct hit to the radio room.

Jan van Ooijen, PA3EGH, a Junker-history expert, told me that the restoration was worthwhile, informing me that it was a 1935-1940 model and was definitely a collector’s key. Here are some photos of how it looked when it reached my door:



I made the decision to keep the patina and eliminate the rust, with the end-goal of having a key that showed its age and hinted to its history while halting the march towards obliteration. I used what I learned in nautical archaeology and WWII-vehicle restoration to eliminate rust while keeping the existing paint and metal intact. I created a chemical bath for the key arm, spring, and other corroded metal parts using the following mixture:

1 pint water
1 cup white vinegar
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon dish detergent

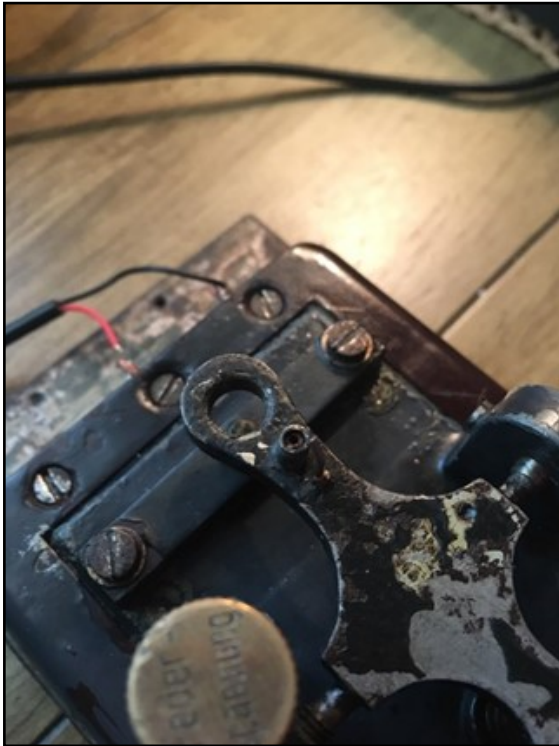
For the brass parts I used a non-abrasive brass polish with a very light touch, bringing the metal back to life without generating a high sheen.

After letting the metal pieces soak for 24 hours, I removed them from the bath and rinsed them in cool fresh water, removing all of the solution from the surface. The only part that required light wire brushing was the spring, which came out looking clean and added a solid “clunk” to the final product. Overall, what resulted was a product that retained the original finish and eliminated surface corrosion.

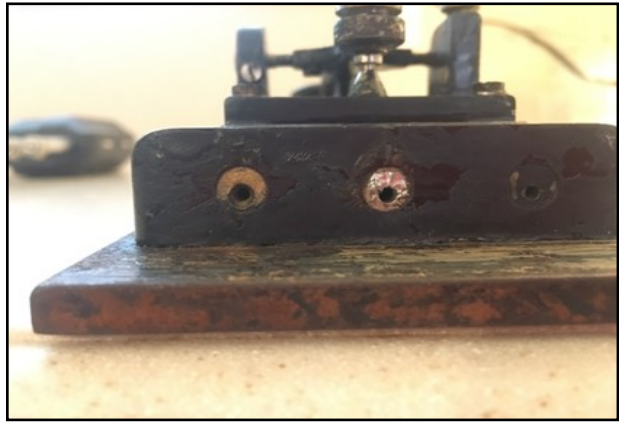
The next step was to replace a few parts that no amount of cleaning could fix. Those parts were the missing ball bearing for the click-stop-tension-adjustment mechanism, which went missing sometime between 1940 and the current day. Luckily, SKCC members were free with their advice and one member had a caliper and similar model, notifying me of the correct size. In addition, **Ted, K8AQM** offered me a newer Junker for the other parts, which I happily accepted and cannibalized. From the key he provided, I was able to replace wire-clamp-terminal screws that had corroded to the point of no return. Without those, I would have had a non-workable key. Thank you to Ted, of course, and to **Doug Palmer, K4KEY** in helping me with techniques to remove the existing corroded screws whose heads were irretrievably stripped.

Below are some views of those screws: frozen and corroded, removed, and replaced:





In addition, in the intervening 80 years between production and when I got the key, somebody went nuts with solder in the connection ports that I had to remove using a soldering iron and some braided wire to wick the solder away from the connection:



The end result is a key that still speaks to me from the past, with all of the patina and originality of a genuine relic from WWII, while being a corrosion-free tool that can be used to speak to the world by both me and the next-generation of Ham Radio operators. I look forward to re-joining the world of CW operators and hopefully connecting with all of you in the coming days, weeks, months and years.



73 and catch you down the log,

John
KB2MMU

Thank you goes out especially to the following people:

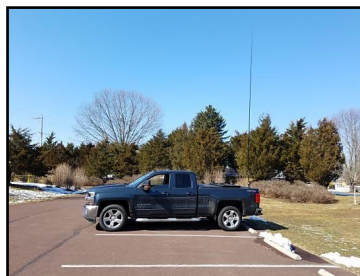
Ted, K8AQM for his guidance and generosity
Doug Palmer, K4KEY for his expertise
Jan van Ooijen, PA3EGH for his historical knowledge of Junker keys
SKCC for the knowledge shared on Facebook, email, and for on-air patience

Editor's note:

John's daughter is KN4IEH, send that in CW.... after discovering her call in CW she asked her dad if that meant she was a "real dits!" LOL!



Just set up my new key! Be-gali Camel-back.
It feels great!
73, Phil
KB5EBB



I could only spare a few hours over the WES weekend but, as always, it was fun. On Saturday, I operated QRP "stationary-mobile" from a local park. On Sunday, I made a few more contacts running 5W into my rainspout.
73, Craig WB3GCK

To a Lady With Red Hair

A Story

By J. C. Flippin,* W4VT

ALL radio amateurs are not men, and this is a story about an amateur who was certainly not masculine; who was not even an operator; who knew nothing at all about antennas and the gear that excites them, yet was, nevertheless, a real amateur. It is the spirit that determines the measure of an amateur, and this spirit can exist wherever it pleases it to do so.

Ann Yardley wore her profusion of bronze-colored ringlets with the careless grace of the very young. Her eyes were grey, direct; the lashes that fringed them were black and very long, and Ann Yardley's mouth was a shade of surpassing loveliness, cosmetic artistry being what it is. The hands that held the booklet depicting modern console-type all-wave receivers for the well-appointed home were beautiful and wholly in keeping with the lady who was not yet an amateur, but who had everything that it takes. The impatient finality with which she now tossed the booklet aside indicated one of those traits associated with ladies who have red hair.

"What I want," she murmured, "is a very small one, like a book. I want it finished in china blue to match my boudoir, and it must get the foreign broadcasts clearly."

Ann's voice was a soft contralto of an appealing type which the expression of her eyes could reinforce with irresistible effect. The salesman could not get their fast ones to work, but clung to the ropes, now and then smacking the canvas.

"The price doesn't matter," she said, hoping that this would make all things right. "Couldn't they make one, special, you know? Like this?" holding up two exquisite fingers six inches apart.

All the talk about the size of the chassis needed for various tubes meant nothing to her. Cabinet acoustics and speaker size meant very little more.

"I guess I'll just forget the whole idea," she thought, examining with commercial intentions the refined spider webs which were stockings. "Charge these," she said, "and these, too."

She whipped the dazzling town car deftly through the traffic, her expression serious.

"If Jug were only here he could tell me what kind to get," she thought. "But Jug won't be here until June, and June is a whole lifetime away."

The length of the time until June occupied her thoughts for two blocks.

"I know what — I'll write and ask him."

That night, resting her chin in her small hand, she wrote to Jug Southgate, who was an engineer

* 3222 Choctaw Ave., Memphis, Tenn.

(well, anyway, he was studying it, and it was all the same, wasn't it?); Jug, who was tall and hard-boiled and decisive; who was the chief operator at the University amateur radio station; who would not talk about radio to her at all, and who therefore very probably knew all there was to know about it!

"Jug, dear — you are so smart, at least I think so, please tell me what kind of radio to buy that will get programs from anywhere, yet which I can, in my feeble way, jiggle. I want it to be finished in China blue to match my boudoir, and it must be small, Jug, like me. And if I want Barranquilla, or Caracas, or Rabat, let it be there, dear Jug, if I turn gadget 1 to 10 and turn gadget 2 to R. I want DX with a capital D and the X is for you.

— Ann"

* * *

This note lay in an A.C. text between the circle diagram of a synchronous condenser and the mathematical analysis of the effects on transmission line characteristics when field excitation is varied, acquiring three days age while Jug worried with schedules. Being an amateur, he assumed that by DX she really meant DX.

His reply was hurried, apparently, for it was written on the blank side of a piece of chart torn from a recording wattmeter.

"Ordered yesterday latest communication type receiver to be shipped here for test. Will send it along when I've tried it out alongside a similar one we have here at the station. Receiver is black crackle finish, like the business end of a dog's nose, only it is not wet. This is a birthday present. Could use the X right now. How long is it until June? Don't say it.

— Jug"

* * *

In due time the receiver arrived, the letter accompanying it being filled with directions that were explicit. Southgate never left any loose ends.

Ann studied the receiver with consternation. It was as big as ten books, encyclopedia volumes at that. It was black and heavy as lead. She looked at the R meter and folded her hands resignedly.

"It looks like some great engine looking sadly from its one glass eye for its wandering carburetor," she said to the maid. "Look, Nora! What is it?"

Nora looked. "It match me, not de room," she said, finally.

The service man who was summoned to install

the receiver was an amateur. He examined it with enthusiasm, inside and out, spinning the dial happily.

"I am a ham," he said.

"He says he is a ham," said Ann, approaching the maid down the hall. "Pipe all hands on deck if he gets violent. In another minute he may be Napoleon."

The two stages of pre-selection ahead of the first detector gave the receiver ears like an Iroquois scouting party. It missed nothing. Japan, Rome, and all the rest came in with sustained strength and clarity, the R meter under the influence of the automatic volume control rolling lazily back and forth in highly amiable fashion. The console-type dynamic speaker that Jug had included had a three-inch voice coil. It did not fool around.

Ann was happy.

"Oh, it is wonderful!" she exclaimed. "Listen, Father! That's London! Isn't it clear?"

H. Carlton Yardley looked under his glasses, then over them, examining the receiver with only perfunctory interest. On an intensity scale it would have been about R1. He was chairman of the board of so many concerns he could not name them all without counting up. A radio to him was just something to turn off. He liked horses, and with horses high-frequency superheterodynes have little in common.

"How did you ever decide to get that kind of machine?" he asked, finally.

The lady raised an eyebrow.

"Jug sent it. It's nice."

"Harrumf!" said H. Carlton Yardley.

No communication type receiver can long endure short-wave broadcasts as a steady diet. Something else began to occupy Ann's grey-eyed attention: the pistol-shot key clicks of commercials rambling at high speed, the rich, 500-cycle voices of ship-to-shore stations; the discordant squawking and disconnected heterodynes of vast jumbles of amateur signals that the twist of the beat oscillator control turned into clear, ringing notes, variable from the highest pitches to the hoarsest bass by just spinning the dial an inch or two. Some sounded very, very fast; others were much slower.

"They must be sending something terribly interesting," Ann decided, looking critically at two hands which were poems, "for it is all so secretive in code."

"I must learn this code," she added, later, snapping off the femininely-attired reading lamp. "I can do it. Jug will be so proud of me!"

Ladies with red hair are persons of determination, not easily discouraged. Behind Ann's wide, grey eyes was a mind that was quick. She memorized the code practically over night. But interpreting it on the air was something else. Weeks passed and there was apparently no further progress. She worked so hard, for she was trying

so earnestly to please Jug! But when weeks passed without success, she became impatient and finally angry, both at herself and at Jug, for it did not seem fair, somehow, that he could do a thing that she could not do if she worked at it. She stopped writing to Jug in her diary, spiritually cutting herself adrift to fight it out alone, for she was a lady of spirit.

And then, one night, she recognized an "a," an "n," and a "d" all tied together! It happened so quickly that it took her breath, and she could only squeal faintly, her eyes starry with delight. Oh, Ecstasy! Leaping to her feet, she rushed madly to her door to tell someone—anyone—but discovering in dismay that she had on only her ear rings and bracelets and a few wispy nothings, she abandoned the idea at once and celebrated with only a little cheer. That night she wrote to Jug in her diary, and after that it was easier.

One cold afternoon in early spring, one of the pale blue envelopes addressed in Ann's handwriting appeared at the Sigma house. Jug got it as he was leaving headed for Machine Design. Behind him marched two freshmen, one carrying very carefully the drafting board, for it bore a plate of a locomotive valve gear. The other carried the instruments and T-square.

"Hope it's good news," said one freshman, loudly.

"If it's good news we won't have to come and get these, maybe," ventured the second.

Jug laughed and lit his pipe.

"Come and get them at three o'clock," he said, without turning his head. Then he tore open the envelope. A barely perceptible expression of shock passed across his face. He read it twice.

"Jug, dear," said Ann's upright, rolling script, "I have been keeping a secret from you, but I am simply bursting with it, and because I am simple and child-like, I must tell. I have learned the code, Jug, precious, and I have been copying the University's twenty-meter signals every afternoon. At least, I have been getting your call, but not so very much of the rest. Jug, send something to me Sunday the eighteenth at three o'clock my time, and don't get somebody else to do it, for my womanly intuition will know, and please, please don't forget, for I will die of disappointment!"

—Ann"

* * *

Southgate grunted something, and shoved the letter in his pocket. Only a week ago he had sent through a letter to all operators and to the Transmitting Staff cancelling until further written notice all 14-megacycle operating activity on Saturdays and Sundays. The press of traffic on the 3.5-megacycle trunks, two of which intersected at the University, combined with the originated traffic from the campus pick-up boxes, had the hook jammed over the week-ends,

(Continued on page 98)

To a Lady With Red Hair

(Continued from page 49)

and it was a desperate pull to shove it through, working into the early hours of Monday. The two-day respite gave the transmitting crew a chance to overhaul and make needed changes on the 14-megacycle gear. He himself had signed the work orders. To call for a five- or six-minute circuit right in the middle of a maintenance job! He could order the circuit, and get it, no matter what. He knew all that. But an order, once signed, was an order, and it was not the way to handle business to call for impractical things, or to force a change at the last minute.

He thought about it all that afternoon.

That night he went over to the North Tower quarters of Marcellus Gehring, Rollins Applewaite, and Pliny Fontaine, the trio who were in charge of transmitting equipment. The reputations which they bore with indifference made them primary objects of interest to visiting amateurs, who were usually much taken aback to discover that the Messrs. Gehring, Applewaite and Fontaine looked just about like anybody else. They were hard men to fool about radio transmission and quick to resort to mathematics, which they employed with a facility utterly staggering to those who could not follow along. But most of their success was due to plain common sense and unceasing attention to business.

Jug climbed the flights of stairs to the top floor, kicking open the door to avoid the necessity of turning the knob. The transmitting staff was at home, a very unusual situation.

"Here is Southgate!" announced Marcellus Gehring with alarm. "Lock up everything!" he added, scooping up a slide rule and throwing it hastily into a drawer of the study table.

"Throw Southgate out," murmured Pliny Fontaine, refilling the glass. "He is a harbinger of bad news."

Jug grinned.

"How about a circuit for five minutes on Number 4 tomorrow at two o'clock?" he asked Gehring.

"I knew it!" exclaimed Pliny Fontaine. "What did I tell you?"

"Who wants it?"

"I do."

Marcellus reached for the Maintenance Record.

"Phone?"

"No, I'll key it."

"Automatic control's off Number 4," said Applewaite.

"It's all right," said Marcellus, straightening up and looking around for the cigarettes. "We can fix it up."

The hands of the clock in the tower of the Engineering Building stood at two minutes to two. Jug glanced at the Western Union timepiece above the operating desk and typed: ". . . and tell daddy not to forget about my check—all my love—signed Henrietta AR BK BK QRX seven min for Nr. 847 AR"

"R," thundered the dynamic speaker.

Swinging around, he pressed the signal button on the control panel. The horn in the basement barked. Stand clear for change over! There was an interval. Safety switch open on one of the power enclosures.

"Close it! Close it!" Jug muttered, looking at the clock.

The operating room horn emitted a penetrating roar. Simultaneously, the automatic control sequence relay snapped shut, Jug grasped the brass handwheel protruding from the control panel and clicked it quickly from "3.5" to "14," his other hand tripping closed the automatic control master switch. With a whit the sequence control went into action. The 14-mc. filament pilots flashed red and the bias set down below could be heard whining in one quick leap into full speed, a prolonged volley of clicks sounding from the transmitter room. In the power enclosures, the plate supply cam switches rotated, came to a halt as the contactors closed in sequence with explosive force, humming faintly. The twelve rectifiers leaped into life as the contactors closed, the oil-filled reactors joining the inter-connected star neutrals, bursting into a 720 cycle song of increasing intensity.

The transmitting crew in the basement surveyed the action warily, watching for an ominous break in the sequence, but it followed through.

The pointer of the milliammeter on the Isochronometer started a leisurely pendulum motion. Jug closed in the dummy load, made a long dash on one of the Vibroplexes, and wrote in the log: "Input 950 freq. 14088. 12:00 p.m. Southgate V beam Nr. 1." and threw the antenna selector cam switch to the right.

The minute hand of the clock stood straight up.

Two deep reverberations sounded in the distance.

On the roof, the motor-driven air-break switch flashed as it swung upward in an arc to engage the twisted-line feeders of the V-beam on the hill, the long radiating arms of which encompassed the eastern horizon.

Setting the keying drive at 5 words a minute, Jug began to type. His eyes were expressionless as the perforations on the tape struck the keying rollers, but Jug was poker faced and only the firmer clamping of his teeth on the pipe stem indicated anything at all.

With cold fury, the 500's unleashed their might and fired it into the grey sky.

Ann waited. It was three o'clock. She could feel the seconds ticking by, and fright clutched her—

(Continued on page 106)

cold, nervous fear. Her tightly-clasped hands felt her heart racing. The second hand on the tiny wrist watch marched inexorably on—on. Fifteen seconds past.

The din was horrible.

"Everybody on the band is right here," she whispered, pressing her hands to her forehead.

There was no use shifting the tuning. It was set where it should be, on the low-frequency side of the University's zero beat. She had checked it too often. It didn't vary the width of a pencil mark on over ten feet of dial spread.

Sudden doubt assailed her. Had she said three o'clock *his* time or *her* time?

"Oh, goodness!" she whispered. "What was it? I just know I said—"

Two new signals started up at that point calling PAOQL. Loud. Oh, so terribly loud!

"I just know I said *my* time."

And even if Jug was sending, could she hear him? The din was steady, a chorus of chirps, rattles, and pinging crystal notes, never ending and seemingly growing louder.

Thirty-five seconds past.

"He forgot," Ann murmured, a crushed feeling coming over her. Her throat began to ache—ache—each a stab that she was helpless to overcome.

"He forgot." Her lips formed the words, but no sound came.

The grandfather's clock on the landing of the stairs clucked with august majesty. It had seen many a clock come and go in its hundred-odd years of timekeeping and it knew a thing or two about keeping time that was not in the books. Its polished pendulum moved with stateliness and precision.

With calm solemnity it willed now to strike.

A mellow chord rang from it. Another. Another.

The top of the Duncan Phyfe table upon which Ann's elbows rested suddenly vibrated as a ringing, crystal signal with an organ-pipe undertone tore from the big dynamic. Behind it was the power equivalent to ten kilowatts and it shook the leaded window panes.

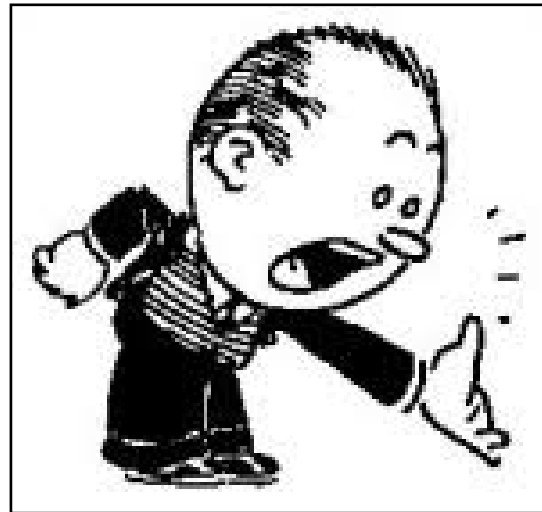
Ann's heart jerked.

She made a faint little sound. Desperate with excitement, she grasped the gold inlay pencil and began to scribble furiously:

"To a lady with red hair—this is Jug—I am proud of you—save the X for me—ARSK"

Ann caught the paper to her and hugged it fiercely. She closed her eyes in a slow sweep of the long lashes and her lips moved in what seemed to be a little prayer.

"Oh, Jug!" she whispered. "I will! I will!"



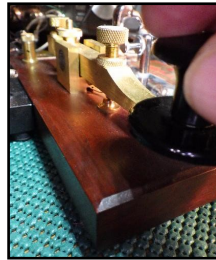
Reading a good story demands a glass of good wine!! White or Red...maybe both?



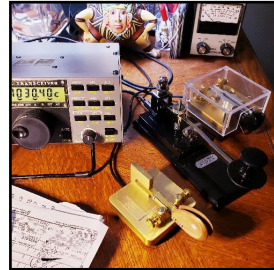
February SKS



Great sprint! Started running of 20m, surprised to get Japan, S&P on 40m, then ended on 80 with a little of both. WAY fun! Pic of my SKCC key used tonight. 73, Mike AC0PR



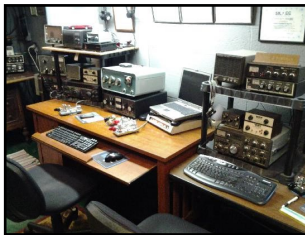
Hello to all, at the start of SKS tried 20 mtrs. Could only hear a few dx stns in Asia, switched to 40 mtrs and the band was dead. Kept at it, 40 mtrs opened beautifully after 02z until late in the evening hr in Ak. 73 to all & C u on the bands. 73, John AL7JK



Fun nite and nice break from shoveling snow. My stable of cootie keys. 73, Larry VA3NU



Strange band conditions but always fun. Good crew KD8VSQ, KE8CEW, KB8ECG, K8KIC, K8AQM and NU8Z(me). Photo is NU8Z foreground and K8AQM background. 73, Mark NU8Z



TNX for 160 & 80 for the bonus Mark. Lots of activity on 80 here tonight & great to work a new one Bob-KC0CGR in So. Dakota. Also picked a few up on 40 which was long tonight -TNX W6LAX. 73, Larry K8TEZ



Fun time with SKCC Club. 73, Kevin NN3E



40 meter operation (no 80m antenna) was very productive even through heavy rains. Nice to work some new members and happy to work Tom - DF7TV. As always, so much fun!! CU



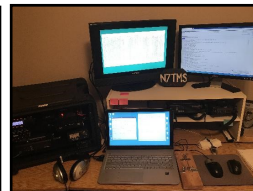
First SKS with my new "T." Just got my new-to-me cootie all cleaned up. 73, Bill KD8TTM



During this sprint, I was limited to using the paddles, seen in the background here, with my backup rig, as my K2 didn't return from the shop until today... the next day. The proper order of things has now been restored, so I hope to run into some of you on the air. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Fun time as always. Ran 75 watts from my TS-590SG into a multi-band vertical. See y'all next month. 73, Curt WA2JSG



It is always a pleasure to [get off work early so I can] work a few great SKCC operators. Thanks for the QSOs. 73, Todd N7TMS



That was fun! I don't know when I last played in the 2-hour sprint, but this evening I managed a good hour of search and pounce. A few nice 20 meter signals were getting into SW Washington, but I found some amazingly strong stations on 40 meters. So many 589 - 599 signals could easily get me spoiled. 73, Gary K9ZMD

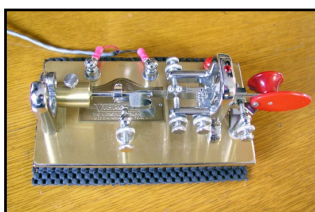


80m was pretty noisy but kinda worked. Next time might try 40m as well. 73, Woody W0UI

More February SKS



One again it was a privilege to be the SKS bonus station! I used my 100 year old bug for the event, a 1919 Blue Racer! Propagation was terrible. I heard absolutely no signals on 20M throughout the SKS. This is the first SKS since I've been an SKCC member in which I made no 20M QSOs! 40M Was dismal. I transitioned to 40M at 0040Z and found the band had gone very long very early; I worked only 3 stations on 40M (CA, NV, TX). 80M Was the "money band", and 160M yielded about 8 QSOs. Surprisingly, for those that got me as a bonus station on two bands, it was on 160M and 80M. I had a great time (even considering the propagation)! 73, Mark K3MSB



40 was long but got DF7TV, CT1BQH, W6LAX, and a few more before going to 80. Got K3MSB on 80 but missed him on 160, did catch NU8Z on top band. 80 was excellent for me so spent most of my time there. Used a bug for the entire event. Rig: K3 line to 160m horizontal loop @ 50' Key: Vibroplex Presentation from 1956. I did work quite a few newer members and a big welcome to them. 73, Dave de West Virginia

A lot of fun this month. 40m got pretty quiet the last half hour, only giving me 5 Q's then (I've got to figure a way to get an 80m antenna up). I picked up 26 new T and S # as I work through my Tx8. Thanks, everyone! 73, Roger W6LAX



I started out on my QRP Labs QCX 40 meter kit with my old bent J-38 key. Then got the dinner key. Then got the dinner call and when I got back to the shack 40 was dead. So I switched to 80 meters on my K3 turned down to 5 watts and the Bencher RJ-2 key. Used an 80-6 meter OCF dipole. Only made 15 contacts but it was fun! 73, Bill NZ0T

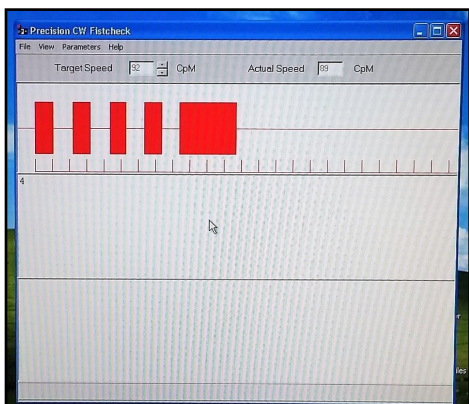


KB8ECG
Dave logging
and K8KIC
Ken running
40m at the
NU8Z operation.

Perfect Characters

Has anyone not yet found Precision CW FistCheck? This (free) ap is a great tool for visually checking & adjusting the timing & weight of your bug. In addition, the decoding & screen print is great for sending practice for any type of key because it is accurate enough to credibly (even brutally) reveal faults like inadequate spacing between characters & words, and poorly formed characters.

Here is a pic I took of how my bug (and my fist) formed the number 4 at approximately 18 wpm. I blush to say how many times I had to send that number to get the display to look this close to ideal (all excellent practice, of course). -73, Gary K9ZMD

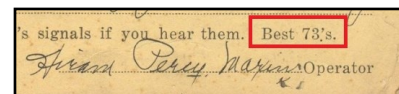
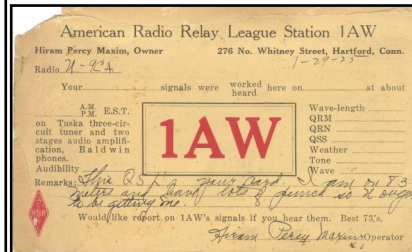


A Rant

Editor...Back in the March issue I published a cartoon that apparently caused a plethora of excitement and responses on the reflector. In short order I received a message entitled "Rant" in my email from Bill, KB8VIT. The following is the email, and the original carton.



There is no such thing as "73s." The meaning of 73 is....."Best wishes"....a plural. "73s" would mean "Best wishes"....duh!



"Was just reading the 2019-03 SKCC Rag-Chew and came across this on page 16. While, we all know the "73"

came from the Philips Code which is/was a numerical code. But, here is a 1925 QSL card from the ARRL and Hiram Percy Maxim himself.

If you look close at the lower right corner...

No need for the "Etiquette Police" to educate us.

If it was good enough for Hiram and 1AW, it should be good enough for all of us.

I'd love to see my retort in the next issue of the Rag-Chew.

73 - Bill KA8VIT #2593"

After a few exchanges with Bill, he admitted the note was a bit "tongue-in-cheek" and his real motive was to stir the pot! Boy he sure did! For the next several issues of the reflector many positions on the use of 73 or 73s and even 73's were debated and discussed....way to go Bill! The discussion has moved on to the use of "SK" and "AR!"

Bill is still chuckling over the "stirred pot" but what I enjoyed most was what his father told him about those who stir the pot. It was something about "licking the spoon." Hmm, I think I'll let Bill tell you the specifics of the spoon and the pot told by his father.

Thanks Bill for the discussions and great entertainment! Perhaps seeing this here as you requested we can take away, "be careful what you wish for!"

Milliwatt Challenge

N9SSA Distance and Miles Per Watt Calculator

FROM: LAT 40.7708333333 LON -72.875 Or Grid-Square FN30ns
 TO: LAT 36.0625 LON -79.375 Or Grid-Square FM06hb
 Ex: Holland, MI is Latitude: 42.792262, Longitude: -86.150646 or Grid-Square EN62wt

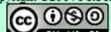
Watts 0.1

Calculate Distance Reset Form Show Google Map

479 Miles away 770 KM
 4787 Miles per Watt 7700 KM per Watt

Tools: [Buckmaster](#) [QRZ](#) [Prefixes](#) [Latitude Longitude Finder](#) [QRP Spots](#) [GreyLine](#)

Great Circle Distance and MPW Calculator by [N9SSA](#)
 See [notes](#) for more information.
 V2.4 Copyright ©2014 Pete Hoffswell.



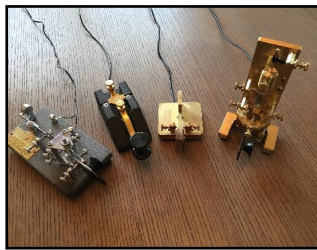
N9SSA MPW Calculator by [Pete Hoffswell](#) licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

This afternoon, Kevin WA4GQG SKCC #4059T was the first contact in my personal 100 milliwatt W.A.S. Challenge...Been playing around with the KX3 cranked down to 100 mW the past few days and have been getting some decent RBN spots so I decided what could be more challenging (and fun!) in the sunspot doldrums we find ourselves in then to try to Work All States with 1/10th of a watt! Kevin gave me a 349 on our first exchange and then gave me a 479 on the next turn over, I was happy with that! Antenna used was a Delta Loop at 16' - Thanks again Kevin, you really made my day! 73 de Jim K2MIJ #5941t

February Brag



DF7TV 73, Tom



Always enjoy working other SKCC members. This month I was focused on my TKA goal. Currently at 60 bug, 16 straight key and 52 sideswiper. The Vibroplex Champion did most of the work this month. IC-7300 to a Force12 OCF Flagpole Vertical from The Villages,



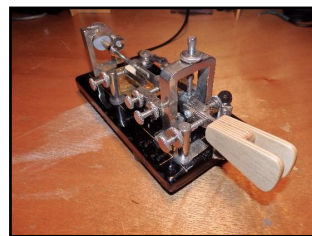
Poor band conditions (again), but I found quality COOTIE time padding my SX4 score. I've heard lots of cootie ops who aren't on our Member Cootie User's list (see link at my QRZ bio pages). Come on out; join in on the Cootie Bragging rights. 73, Mike K5MP



ALWAYS QRP. TNS FER YOR PATIENCE. FIRST MONTH WITH NEW SK FROM SPAIN. 73, Angel N4NSI



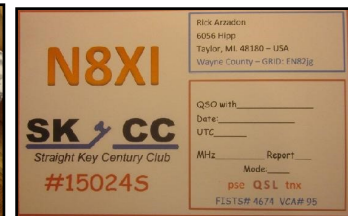
Thought I would upload a re-creation of my first Ham station, a HW-8 that I built and an antenna tuner that I built from an article in the 1976 ARRL Handbook. I didn't make a whole lot of QSOs back then (1976-1984) but I had fun. Even the key and headphones and the exact same ones I used back then. Thanks for all the brag QSOs and 73, Dave KB1WOD



Achieved Senator in February- many thanks to all of the SKCC operators who helped along the way. Also enjoying this refurbished 1920 "Junior" bug. 73, Roy



I never did find the bonus station but enjoyed all the contacts. 73, Paul N0NBD



Slow month for me. In and out of the hospital. Thanks for the QSO gang. 73, Rick N8XI



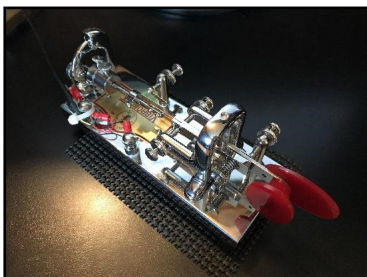
No comment, just fun moments on 20m and 40m! 73, Leon OS0S



Trying to keep up with my 1 a day minimum and almost a third of the way to my TKA (hi hi). Afraid I missed the Brag Bonus Station this month, although I did see him on the sched page. Thanks to all who made contact with me in February. 73, Curt WA2JSG



GRACIAS ATODOS POR SUS CONTACTOS CHE WP3PW 73.



Thanks for the QSOs. For some reason I keep forgetting to turn brags in. Mar 6. and I'm a dozen away from 'S'. Keep thinking about all the contacts these last 2 years and all the fun. Thanks to all. 73. Jim K5TSK

My Father's QRP

Chris Fuller, N3MLB #14758S

My recent adventure evaluating a logging program called Log4OM has been very rewarding. In January of this year, I decided to get out of my comfort zone of using Ham Radio Deluxe and look for alternatives. I never heard of Log4OM but I could tell it had committed followers. I turned on the spotting feature and almost immediately an alert told me that 9LY1JM from Sierra Leone was operating CW on 17 meters. I tuned to the frequency and heard his CQ at about 30 wpm. This speed too was a bit out of my comfort zone but I was keeping up with his speed just fine. My 5 watts (QRP) wouldn't compete against the big boys operating high power. Patiently I waited for an opportunity. That opportunity came and he answered my call. After exchanging signal reports, he acknowledged my QRP and went to the next station. Mission accomplished! Just as it was as a young kid sitting in front of my Pops rig, sending secret coded messages to someone in another country was still thrilling to me.

But obviously the story doesn't end there. I often think of my Pop who has long since been a silent key (SK). When I think of him and amateur radio, I think of the days of his Heathkit SB102 that he built. I think of the amplifier he used and when powered, would hum and glow like a nuclear power plant. I think of the lights in the house and how they would dim and flicker when he pushed a kilowatt. I think of the tower that seemed five hundred feet tall to a ten year old and the three element beam that towered above the house like some science fiction death ray machine. Occasionally and without warning, would rotate at its target. "What does your dad do?" a friend would ask. "He works for NASA" I told him. Of course he didn't.

I also think of the days of Ham Fests and those cold mornings where I was allowed to buy hot chocolate. Or maybe the antenna parties where it seemed dozens of hams would show up at the house just to help Pop hang an antenna. In later years I learned hams in my area were easily bribed to come to these antenna parties because of the free beer and BBQ. Looking back, I don't think they showed up to see what latest invention Pop came up with. It was the Schlitz.

Although we were close, the details of the equipment he used have faded from memory. Today at 53 years old, I only operate QRP. My Elecraft KX3, a hundred year old VibroPlex bug and my G5RV antenna have served me well. It wasn't the bridge of a star ship like Pop had, but I'm impressed with it.

I got back into ham radio after a twenty year absence from the hobby and it has been ten years since his passing. I often wonder what he would have thought of my QRP conquests and if he ever attempted low power. I knew he had a dipole, but what would he think of my dipole, the G5RV? It's not the monster six hundred foot tower like he had. What would he think of my latest contact with 9LY1JM in Africa?

I did a quick QRZ search on QRP and discovered John Shannon, K3WWP's website had come up. John Shannon is an inspiration to me and mainly the reason I'm QRP. If you're new to ham radio and have doubts about QRP, I strongly urge you to visit John's site. I've used his site too many times to count. It has so much information that I'm convinced it will be analyzed one day by scholars, researchers and historians and put into a museum.

I also knew my Pop had worked him many years ago because John keeps a copy of his logs online. But this search returned something different. Within his site is a list of comments people have left him over the years. The link took me to a page that listed comments previous to the year 2000. My Pop left John a message and there it was. His words. It was like he was still alive. What was he saying to John? I bet Pop was a solid 599 with 1,500 jiggawatts of power. What I read gave me pause.

“Hi John, just worked ya on 80 mtrs (18:55 local SUNDAY) ya had a 5-6-9 also...I was running 5 watts to a home brew G5RV..Thought the call was familiar, hi hi. Have your site as a link on my home page. Its been there for a few months and must say you have a great place to visit, 73, Bill - NZ3U (ex WA3MWT)”

Good grief my Pop was running 5 watts? I run 5 watts. He had a G5RV? I have a G5RV. He bookmarked John’s site and found it valuable also.

Yes, I still believe my father was a scientist who invented electricity and used a seven hundred foot tower to send secret messages in Morse code. But he also found the magic of QRP, Morse code and a wire antenna.

73 de Chris N3MLB
#14758S

March SKS Eu



It was fun! -- TNX for all the nice QSOs. My congratulations go to Lloyd, K3ESE -- his 4 Watts on the 20m band made it to Germany with no problem. CUAGN! Vibroplx bug. 73, Tom DF7TV



Two fun QSO's tonight. Thanks to F6EJN Bob, and F5DE Bernard. Both on 80m, and I was using my trusty TS-440s with a home brew vertical antenna and a magnificent Marconi PS No213A pump key. QMM = I am Morsemad. QMM? = Are you Morsemad ? 73, John GORDO

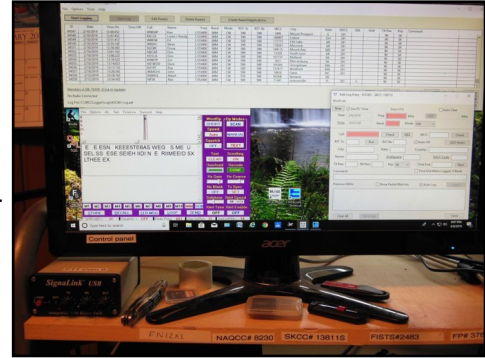


First time operating since I made Senator. Hope everyone got the change as the database was not updated yet. Thanks for the Qs. 73, Dale K3SEN

Keeping Your Code Clean

I have noticed that a lot of CW operators tend to run their words together with minimum or no spacing between words. This leaves the person copying wondering where one word ends and the next one starts. I have the same problem if I don't watch my sending habits. Over time we all tend to get a little sloppy unless we copy the ARRL code practice sessions or listen to some online code practice material. I did find another way to ensure that my code stayed clean. I downloaded a program called "CW Decoder" by Grant Connell WD6CNF version 3.51. The download is free. This little program when installed opens to the left of my SKCC logging program's input window and is about the same size.

I use a SignalLink USB as an interface from my transceiver to my logging computer for digital modes. This also supplies my transmitting signal to the CW decoder. I press my key and put an indelible ink dot on my screen where my 600 HZ monitoring spike shows on the CW Decoder. Now, each time I fire up my Rig, I move the CW decoder program right or left onto the indelible dot where my 600 Hz signal shows up. Now I can monitor my sending. If I start to get sloppy I can see it on my screen.



This little program will also copy the other stations CW but only if he is zero beat to your frequency or if you move the CW Decoders red line to his signal. Just remember to move the red line back to the indelible dot where your signal shows up when you send. This program does not copy bad code. Your ear can sort out bad code much easier, so I don't try to copy the other person with CW Decoder. I keep the red line on my signal. This little program has been very helpful for me over the past four years. I hope you can get some use out of Grant Connell's CW Decoder program.

73, Bob Swarm K3CKO



One-Third of the way to TKA!
Made my 100 different SKCC contacts using a straight key. Now the fun begins for the next 100 using a side-swiper. Never used this type of key before so will be interesting....
Curt WA2JSG 3018S



Getting my station ready for tonight's SKS. Are you feeling lucky? Well, are you? 73, Bill KD8TTM

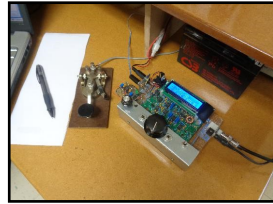


Setting key springs at ww2ind using five dollars in quarters

March WES...the Biggest Yet!



Some QSOs QRO from home, others QRP from the desert/mountains north of Phoenix. 73, Bill AA4Q



Got some WES time on Saturday morning before a big storm front moved in for the remainder of the day. My rig is a QCX 40m QRP 5 watt CW transceiver built from \$50. kit (www.qrp-labs.com/qcx.html). Nice radio, easy build, great performance for \$50. The QCX is mounted on a prototype board for some air time testing before installation into a enclosure. Have added a Zero Beat circuit so far. The rig is operated with straight key to tuner, ladder line and 80m stealth doublet at 30 ft using the real nice SKCCLogger. Many Thanks to SKCC for plenty of on-the-air activities. Till next time, 73, Bob AF4OI



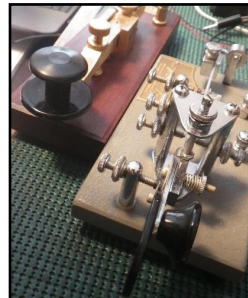
Put in a few hours on Sunday. 20 QSOs on 40 m and 1 QSO on 20 m. YouKits HB1B with 4 watts into end-fed wire. Key is Vibroplex Vibrokeyer as sideswiper. 73, Steve AI9N



This was my first WES and it was one of the most enjoyable activities in my career as an ham radio operator -- THANK YOU! for all the friendly QSOs. CUAGN. 73, Tom



Awesome time as always, although just a few hours total for me. I was planning to participate and get some 20 qso's and stop, got caught in a run on 40m and went on until 46 qso's--very fun! 73, Mike AC0PR



Another fun WES ! Heavy qsb at times, 40 & 20 mtrs worked out well for me. 80 mtrs opened up at 06 utc on Saturday. 73 to all. C u on the bands. 73, John AL7JK



Wow ! Seven hours to go and I give up HI. Normally can rely on 20m for a few QSO's but both 20m and 40m poor to say the least. Mind you - I did have fun. Thanks to GM0EUL-Peter (40m), W0VTT-Mike(20m), K0KEX-Rick(20m) and W1GF-Greg(20m). 73, John G0RDO



Thanks all for the Q's so I could finish the triple key challenge and maybe Senator. The bug this weekend was a restored J-36 Vibroplex. 73, Jim KG4IKQ



ENJOYED UNTIL MY FT 707 BROKE DOWN...LOST THE AUDIO THEN THE OUTPUT...73, Tom K7ROH



I spent most of my time hunting new Ts towards my Sx4, and I was able to get enough! Picture is a recreation of my first station. 73, Dave KB1WOD

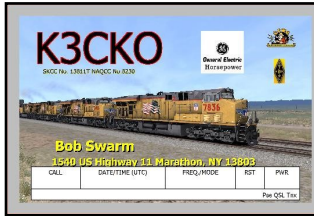


I jumped in at the last minute because I was hearing some strong signals. I used a Yaesu FT-817 @5W with an end fed wire antenna strung around my basement shack matched by an Elecraft T1. 73, Bryan K0EMT

More March WES



1957...Homebrew XMTR XTAL 40m 6146 at 40W, NC-98, J-38, 40m dipole up 20ft
2019...Icom-7600, Icom-718, @ 25W, KX1 @ 3W, Carolina Windom up 25ft. 73, Dick K2RFP



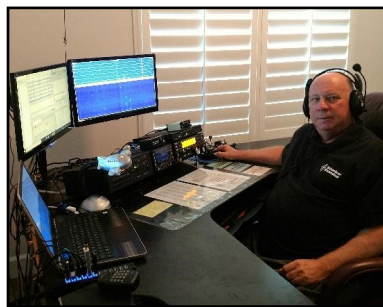
We had to work for our points this weekend. Bands were not good. Signals were week. Started with a vibrokeyer rigged as a cootie but i'm not good enough to keep up the pace yet. Switched to a bug. Rig was a Ten-Tec Pegasus at 90 watts. Ant. was a G5RV at 50 ft. 73, Bob K3CKO



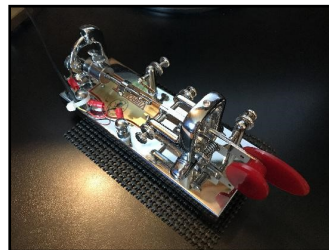
Thanks to all, for helping keep me out of trouble all weekend. Special thanks to John, K8JD, for my first-ever WES Top Band QSO! Here, you can see my new shack addition: ultra-snazzy amplified little speakers. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Bands were really rough here in FL with my HOA-constrained antenna options but had a great time with newly arrived 1944 Vibroplex Champion from WW3KP. Happy to find it. The "Champ" and this old op worked well together, but then we're the same age! 73, Don K3RLL



Not much fun. I have been battling allergies all week. This is worse than a summer cold!. Then while I was working K2MD my SWR jumped thru the roof on 20 meters! Sorry Jerry. After initial investigation I am leaning toward a bad trap on 20 meters. I think the trap shorts when the wind blows. I'll check it out. Just couldn't work more that 2 hours. Thanks for the Qs. 73, Dale K3SEN



Hooked up the KX3 in spite of Sat. AM storms and line noise. Thanks to those who pulled out the QRP4.8w. A special thanks to Ron who processed my 'S' app. Did WES as a'T'. Just rolled over to an 'S'. 73, Jim K5TSK



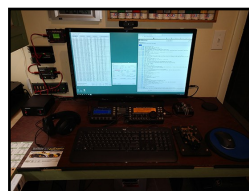
I always enjoy WES. It gives me a chance to stretch my skills, since I'm new to CW. 73, Ralph K7RLN



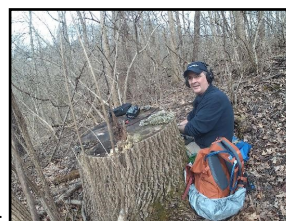
SST-20 @ 1W to EFHW n trees. Fun stuff as always. 73, Curt KB5JO



Again not much time this weekend. This month I used a Ten Tec 544 (Triton IV digital). Keys were a Signal Electric R-62 from the 30's and a 1956 Vibroplex Champion. See you all next month. 73, Noel K8NB



I had an absolute blast working this WES on QRPp 100mw. This was a personal best score for me to date. The bands were working really well for me here in MI. Thanks to everyone for the QSO's. Getting really close now to getting that C working QRP. 73, Tom K8TDM



Only had an hour to myself this weekend. Hiked to a park and set-up my qrp station for an hour. I had great signals into and from CO and OR. Happy March everyone. Spring is almost here. 73, Scott KD4EE

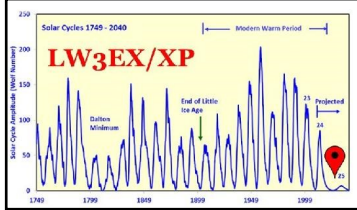


This WES, I was also involved in the Novice Rig Roundup. My transmitters for NRR and this WES were a Heath HX-11 at 35w out and a Globe Scout 680 at 30w out, crystal control all the way. My biggest surprise was Bert F6HKA answering my feeble, chirpy 35w "CQ WES" on 40m just before the end on Sunday. 73, Steve KE4OH

Even More March WES!



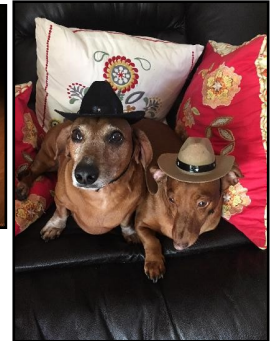
First ever submission. Really enjoyed the event and looking forward to the next sprint. 73, Gary KE2YK



LW3EX/XP, 73, WALT



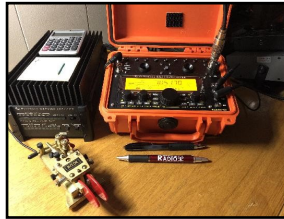
Still working on my 3-key award. TNX to all who could tolerate my fist on the old J-38 straight key. I had a good time and worked some new numbers to boot. 73 and C U all in the next WES! 73, Mike KK7H



Great time, only had a few hours to play but picked up a lot of new numbers. Logged SKCC# 20000, W9TE. 73, Russ KK4WX



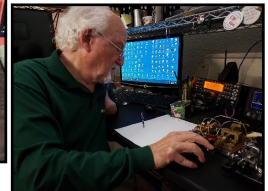
Always enjoy the WES events. I had just enough time for a few Tune & Pounce QSO's, but signals were pretty good this weekend. 73, Rick N3RO



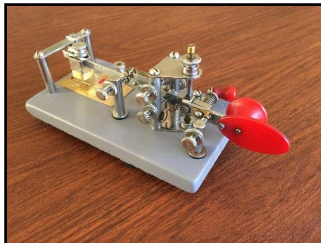
Another fun WES, did most of the Q's on Saturday with the KX2 at 12 watts and the TinyBug. One 40m Q with the KX3 at 80 watts and my Vibroplex Blue Racer Bug on Saturday night. Finished up Sunday afternoon late after work with the KX2 to CA with 12 watts from here in FL! 73, Ed N7EDK



Argo 6 5wts g5rv. .tnx to board mbrs..SUPER on new members. I knew it would hit 20,000, so now we look for more per month..hi.. the soapbox site sure had a lot of dx entered this time.. I don't enter on the Sunday day to put this in.. I hope hams read this site more than once per week.. hi. If the pix goes in, I only have 51 more keys.. hi..just a hobby... so, cu in April..time flies.73, Dave N9ZXL



Operated at friend KK5NA's (a CWOPS instructor) QTH for the first 5 Qs, Elecraft and vertical. Note paper logging and straight key ops. At home, with Elecraft and Hex Beam made 15 more Qs and used SKCC logger and TBK side swiper. Aimed at 20 contacts. 73, Dave NE5DL



Here's my Vibroplex Lightning bug, ca. 1944, same age as the op. 73, Chuck NI0C



TNX to all those who suffered through my terrible fist! I did not get motivated until late in the day. Side swiper, end fed 232' up 60' & home brew tuner. TNX CU NXT TIME 73, Steve NQ8T



Not much time on Saturday so made only 5 QSO's. Much better on Sunday though with much more time to operate. 20 meters was very good and so was 40 for the most part. Used my Elecraft K3 at 100 watts with an OCF dipole and 2 element quad at 40' Key was a Bencher RJ-2. 73, Bill NZ0T



OS0S 73, Leon



Only operated for a total of 5 hours on Sunday. But 40m & 20m were fine... From France to California to Alaska. Used a mix of my new E. F. Johnson SpeedX which arrived last week and my trusty W1SFR Mark I Magnetic Single Lever Paddle. 73, Roger VE3RDE



Really enjoyed getting smooth on the old Speed-x 500 bug, lots of good ops and good operating. 73, Doug NJ1T

More, More March WES!!



Thanks all, enjoyed the weekend event. Made most contacts using a FT1000D at 150w and a handful QRP with a Index Labs radio at 4W. 73, Jack VE6CCM



Haven't worked WES for a couple years or more. This one was fun to work with both straight key and Champion bug depending on your speeds. Hope to make a few more WES this year. 73, Jim W1RO



20 meters had good propagation, but rapid and deep QSB. I got 88 new "T's" and "S's" as I progress through my Tx8 - just 15 left to get my Senator (but I had to shut down and get to my job or I'm sure I could have wrapped it up this weekend). This was another fun event ... thanks to everyone who participated. 73, Roger W6LAX



The WES always makes for a good weekend. I never op the whole 24 hours just sit down when I can and work a few here and there. Got a late start on Saturday. The WX was favorable so I spent the day outside clearing a fence row. Worked 40m and 80m into the night on Saturday then 20m and 40 Sunday. Some wicked QSB on 40m Sunday. Thanks to all for the enjoyable QSOs and also the three Frenchmen F6H-KA, F6EJN and F5DE. I'm always amazed to connect with these FB ops on my low wire. Put a new key on the WES this time around. Last month at the local hamfest I found a nice Bunnell made flame proof. Got it cleaned up and mounted on a nice base and have been growing to really like it. Rig: Knwd TS590 @100 watts to 130' end fed wire. 73, Mike W8MDE



My 1st WES and had fun! 73, Steve W8SC



Decided to work QRP 5 watts this time as our WES Manager had originally planned. Set a goal for myself of 30 contacts and that's what I got. Used my old IC-703 and my Butternut HF6V (elevated). Bencher Straight Key. MFJ power supply in pic is a prize I won in one of the NAQCC events. Fun city! 73, Curt WA2JSG



I had fun using my Ranger 2 and 75s3 in conjunction with the Novice Radio Round-up. I worked several stations participating in both activities. 73, Rich WB2WGX



I had been operating the Novice Rig Round-Up the past week so I used my Johnson Viking Adventurer, crystal controlled for a few SKCC Q's. Fun and chirpy! 73, Jon WS1K



Homebrew 6L6/Xtal/5W. Working the NAQCC monthly challenge this month, the Novice Rig Roundup and this WES. Next WES-- I plan to run a VFO with a 3-500Z final amp. 73, Guy WB5U-AA



For this WES, I used a combo of either the Novice setup which consisted of an Eico 720 and Drake 2B or Collins 32V-2 and 74A-4.. I like to switch keys, but primarily used the Begali Side Swiper. I also used the Begail Blade straight key and Begali Intrepid Bug a little. Haha, yes I like Begali keys. 73, Mike WB0SND



Pictured: Steve - W9SAN sending with Ed-WA9BBN listening with Terry - K9FMX operating station #2. 8 hour multi brought 12 members of the Fort Wayne Radio Club together to activate W9TE SKCC #20,000. We had a few new "fists" getting exposed to SKCC and we're looking forward to our stint as bonus station in the April SKS! See you all next month! 73, FWRC W9TE

If It's Trash Day I'm Collecting!

By Urb LeJeune WIUL
Urb@ham-cram.com

Prologue:

I was born in 1932, which by definition made me a depression baby. This episode in the life of Urb the emerging nerd, demonstrates that people were totally capable of doing economically irrational things during the height of the depression. They would throw things away needing only simple repairs

How it all began:

At the time my trash picking started I was in 7th grade and I was the only student living far enough away from school that I couldn't make it home for lunch, and back, in the allotted hour. I was a brown bagger.

On an early beautiful spring day I was walking leisurely to school and there in front of me was a beautiful floor lamp. I realized that if I waited until school let out the lamp would have been long deposited in a landfill (we call them junk yards back then.) I picked it up and started walking toward school. About two blocks from school was an empty wooded lot. I put my lamp in the lot and camouflaged it with a few branches and continued to school. I agonized all day worrying that someone would abscond with my lamp.

After school, there it was. I took it home and showed my father and he determined that the lamp had a switch that was not functioning, we went to a local hardware store and purchased a new one. (Home Depots didn't appear for many decades into the future.) Lamps similar to my trash pick find were selling for about five dollars of 1940s money.

A new switch cost about 20 cents. Although my knowledge of the consequence of the depression was very limited, I still found it strange that people would throw away a five dollar lamp because it needed a 20 cent switch. The lamp, with a new shade, occupied a place of honor in the LeJeune household for years to come. My mother, God rest her soul, was very excited about anything I did not requiring a trip to see the principal of my school.

After the experience with the lamp, I started leaving for school about a half hour earlier that I usually did on trash day. One day someone threw away a pair of roller skates (the type you attached to your shoes and tightened with a key.) I fashioned a wagon with a milk box and the skates. I was now ready for the big time of trash collecting. I made a camouflaged den in the lot close to school and was in the trash picking business.

Turning Trash into an Art Form:

Even I was amazed at the quality and variety of things thrown away despite the economic conditions. When a discarded item contained gears I was in Trash-Land heaven. If a discarded item contained a motor, functioning or not, I was in paradise. Thrown away items with gears were especially prized, I used gears mounted on a piece of plywood to make Christmas presents. My relatives told me how creative I was but my artwork typically wound up on their basements wall.

At Christmas time I loaded some of my artwork into wagon and traversed my neighborhood selling my wall hangings. When people asked how much? I replied, "Whatever you think its worth." I made enough money to get nice presents for my mother and father.

Spare Parts:

Growing up my family lived in half of a farmhouse. I had a corner of the basement all to myself. My little den served as workshop, storage area, and a laboratory for perform experiments. My attempt at making artificial diamonds was a barn-burner... but an article for the future.

Epilogue:

An event viewed through the key-hole of currency frequently takes on a greater meaning when viewed through the rear-view mirror of realism. As an example, the fact that I lived at a greater distance from school than any other student probably lead me to trash pick. If I walked to school with other students I doubt I would not have trash picked.

I went through a period between jobs, a nice euphemism for being unemployed, and money was tight so I put my trash picking days to good use. On the bulletin boards of local super markets I posted notices, "Small appliances repaired, no fix no pay." The results were a God-send when satisfied customers recommended me to neighbors and friends.

When times are tough we frequently receive the emotional help to give us the strength to get through these period, if we are alert to them.

73 Urb WIUL urb@ham-cram.com

The Quick Cootie

Bob K3CKO

For those of you who would like to get the triple Key Award but can't afford the Cooties on the market Look in your junk box or get on E-bay and buy a set of paddles. I used a spare Vibrokeyer. I changed the paddles to the same on both sides with finger pieces from E-bay. I then added a jumper between the Dit and Dah contacts. I set the contact spacing closer than I use normally and with a few days practice I was on the air. Here is a picture of the K3CKO Cootie:



K3CKO's Cootie

		<p>THE "COOTIE" WIRELESS KEY A "KNOCK-EM-DEAD" BEAUTY, (as one of our customers named it) Thousands in use in every radio district. Will handle 1 K.W. satisfactorily</p>
<p>The "Cootie" key is the snappiest sending device offered on the market for reliable spacing of characters. Listen to 9NV, 9LU, 9MS, 9UG, 9EY, and judge for yourself. Large standards, fornic knob, substantial silver contacts suitable for use up to 2KW. The double action of the "Cootie" key lends an individuality to your sending.</p>		<p>EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVES</p>
<p>PRICE \$5.00 AT YOUR DEALER</p>		<p>9th Radio District MANHATTAN ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO. 114 So. 5th Ave. Chicago, Ill.</p>
<p>6th Radio District L. MEYBERG COMPANY 428 Market St. San Francisco, Cal.</p>		<p>3rd Radio District RADIO ENGINEERING COMPANY 827 Madison Ave. Baltimore, Md.</p>
<p>7th Radio District L. MEYBERG COMPANY 428 Market St. San Francisco, Cal.</p>		<p>5th Radio District ROSE RADIO SUPPLY CO. 121 Camp St. New Orleans, La.</p>
<p>Immediate Deliveries Money-Back Guarantee</p>		<p>Young & McCombs Manufacturers Jobbers Distributors of Radio Supplies</p>
<p><small>Send 4c in Stamps for Our 50 Page Catalog of Radio Supplies</small></p>		

FWRC Members Activate W9TE SKCC #20,000

Eleven Club members activated the newly acquired SKCC #20,000 for W9TE on Saturday March 9th at the N8KR shack. Two stations were set up: a Yaesu FT-1000MP on 40 meters and an Elecraft K-3 on 20 meters. The 8 hour operation was a part of the monthly SKCC event called "Weekend Sprintathon." During that time, SKCC members exchanged true RST reports, QTH, names and SKCC numbers. This was our first time sending #20,000 and many were pleased to work us! During the day we worked just short of 150 stations in 37 states, 2 Canadian provinces, and 4 European countries. All contacts were made with straight keys although WA9BBN brought along his bug and cootie with an oscillator. It was fun to play with those and we had many "moments" of chatting and playing and story-telling with many snacks and soft drinks. At noon, Larry – KB9OS and Carla – KD9ITZ showed up with a couple of pizzas! How cool was that! Some of our members made their first EVER SKCC contact as we tried to get everyone, if possible, on the air. Members present included KB9OS, KD9ITZ, W9SAN, KD9KSB, WA9BBN, K9FMX, KA9GKE, W9HT, KD9INL, K9LI, and N8KR.



Josh – W9HT and Terry K9FMZ on 40m



Ed-WA9BBN and Steve-W9SAN on 20m



Ed-Rose-Cory-Jim-Terry-Larry-Carla



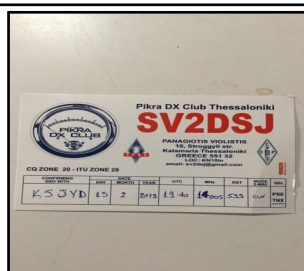
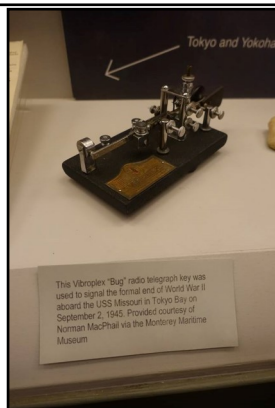
Break Time – KD9GDY and W9HT



WA9BBN, KD9INL, and KD9KSB



The best side of N8KR and K9LI!!!!



K5JYD... The bands are not quite did yet ☺



TMRA Hamfest...Toledo, OH 2019

The Toledo, OH hamfest is a short drive from the Detroit and Cleveland areas and as a result is a very popular hamfest. Again this year SKCC had its presence there and drew a fine crowd of SKCC members. Curt KU8L, "Mr. VizKey" had his keys on display to everyone's delight. A collection of 10 other keys and a couple of CPOs drew many members and non-members to display their CW abilities.

Twenty-five members logged in at the table and as you can see many stayed for the group photo. Kudos to the Fort Wayne Indiana club who came in force to the hamfest (their club station W9TE is #20000). Perhaps the most interesting fact was W3IQ checking in and also W8IQ, now how often do you get to meet a fellow "suffixer?" Unfortunately W3IQ had to leave before W8IQ came to the hamfest...darn!



Curt KU8L, explaining to many interested hams about his development of keys



Greg, KE8CEW enjoying a good "rag chew" with Jeff, K9JP

In addition to the great gathering of SKCCers, the hamfest offered many outstanding deals in an excellent facility. So if you are in the area next March this is an event worth planning to attend. SKCC will surely be present next year so come join us for a day of fun; a chance to meet old

friends and to make many new friends.

Thanks to Jeremy KD8VSQ, Greg KE8CEW, Max W8KBW, Jeff K9JP and Bill KD8TTM for organizing and helping with the set-up. A special thanks to Curt KU8L for filling the table with his many fine keys.

73, Ted K8AQM 1629s



March SKS



YouKits HB-1B to end fed wire. Key is Vibroplex Vibrokeyer as sideswiper. Surprise QSO was with W6LAX. Wasn't expecting to get CA this evening. Thanks, Roger! 73, Steve AI9IN



K3 to 9:1 HB Unun feeding 31' necessarily close to the house. Was going back and forth between smooth 90 degree Vizbug and newly acquired 1969 Vibroplex Lightning this evening. Have enjoyed bugs since 1955. SKCC provides the playground. Thank you. 73, Don K3RLL



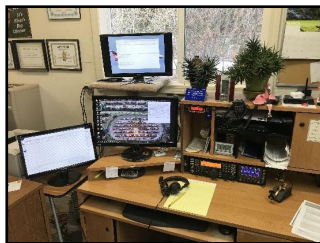
Started on 20M and after only 2 contacts in 10 minutes went to 40M and stayed there with good condx. Thanks to all for another fun Sprint! Elecraft K3 100 watts. Used my 80M OCF dipole and 43' vertical with remote tuner about equally. 73, Bill NZ0T



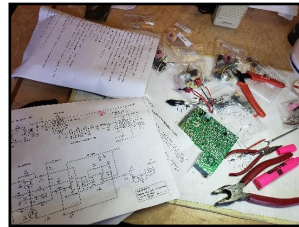
Caught the tail end of the sprint. It was fun anyway. The second sprint I have worked with my cootie. Picture is the easy way to make a cootie. Change the paddles on a Vibrokeyer and set the contacts close. Jumper the dit and dah contacts together. A few hours code practice and your all set. 73, Bob K3CKO



40 & 80 both in good shape here tonight with very low noise & some long haul QSO's. Heard W4PCA & wanted to work him (formerly from Amherst, Oh) but we were both working "seek & pounce" and it was not his frequency when we wanted to call. Did not hear the bonus station at all. 73 to All Larry K8TEZ



40m was open coast to coast and signals were strong into ne Oregon. Thanks for the contacts and to the organizers. 73, Tom WB7EUX



Tremendous fun, as always! Very nice conditions on 40 and 80 meters. With the time change, there's now an hour-long overlap with the QRP Fox Hunt, which took me away for ten minutes or so...Rig was the K2 at 5W to a 20M EDZ up 50'. Later this week, I plan to have a new 80M dipole up at 60' - and maybe get this NorCal 40A on the air! 73, Lloyd K3ESE



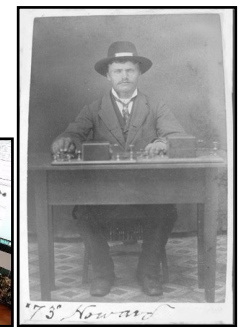
I spent the first 30 minutes calling CQ with no answer. And then realized I was calling on my 2m antenna - - doh! After that...heard lots of activity. 40m was packed. Great event. Thanks for the QSOs. 73, Todd N7TMS



Fun as always, had just finished re-arranging my shack/desk and it proved to be a functional setup. Just need 120 more to go now for my S...See you on the bands .. VRY 73, Brian KQ4MM



Thanks to everyone who came out for the SKS tonight and worked us using light bulb antennas from Ted K8AQM's shack! Thanks to K8KIC, KE8CEW, W8KBW, NU8Z, KB8ECG, KD8TTM, W8MU for coming over to help with the multi op! Here is a link to youtube of the 40m antenna in action at the hand of K8KIC! <https://youtu.be/fQ0MX4tuy3E>. 73, Jeremy KD8VSQ



Good time chasing the "Brightest Bulbs in Adrian"! TNX to all for copying my shaky fist 73 CU next month. 73, Steve NQ8T

More March SKS



Wow! 20 meters was not good here, 40 meters a little better, but 80 meters was Hopping! I missed our Bonus Station, and I missed KD8VSQ who was running tonight using Light Bulb Antennas! That's right, Light Bulb Antennas! Sure wish I could have got them both! Alas, T'was not to be, but I still had a great time on my old Navy Flameproof straight key tonight! Thanks to all !! See you next month! 73, Rich W4RQ



40 meters was in great shape so I spent the entire time there. Thanks, everyone, for a fun event (our poodle Bentley at the Kent straight key). 73, Roger W6LAX



Only operated about an hour. Wasn't feeling too well. Sure wished I would have felt better, 40 meters was hopping. 73 es see everyone on the next one... Bill N0UMP



Tks Dave W3NP, my only qso. This is my "best by test" morse key, 73 Nathan PS7HD

Wiring A Begali HST Cootie



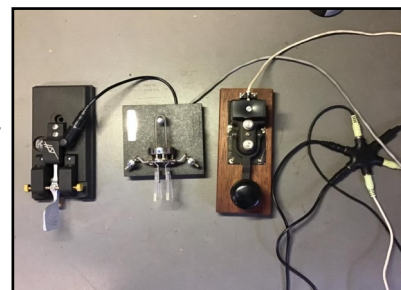
Look what turned up today! A present from my wife, Prue. A new Begali HST III □ I ordered it on Monday from RF Solutions in Brisbane and received it today, Wednesday! Carsten runs a great business there. Cost was about the same as Begali Italy. Lotsa problems interfacing it with my Kenwood TS570S using the stereo-stereo leads supplied. Anyone else have this problem? 73, Simon VK2FK

I have solved the problem interfacing my Begali HST III to my Kenwood TS570S. I didn't want to wire it to suit the Kenwood's "Paddle" jack, as that would mean that whenever I wanted to use my paddle I'd have to scabble around behind the rig and swap plugs. I'm one of those people who like to change keys "on the fly", and I'm used to having the paddle connected to the "Paddle" jack and all other keys connected to the "Key" jack through a hub (I have 3 straight keys and 2 home-brew Cooties at present).

Whilst the HST worked fine when connected through this hub, it would only work in "Sideswiper" (Cootie) mode and not, of course, in "Single Lever" mode, where the left key produces a string of "dits" and the right a continuous tone (for sending "dah").

So, what I did was to wire the HST in parallel with the Bencher paddle (see photo) and, using the Kenwood's menu, switch "Bug Key" mode on (Menu #22j. Now, when I want to use the HST in "Single Lever" mode, I simply select it with the switch on the key. The Bencher behaves the same. Switching to "Sideswiper" mode makes the HST (and the Bencher) behave as Cooties. In order to use the Bencher as an Iambic Paddle, I simply switch off "Bug Key" mode on the transceiver. No need to disconnect the HST.

Thank you to all those people who offered suggestions - that's what Ham Radio is all about .



Lighting Up the Bands!

Wow! Wow! Wow! Who would have thought we could make 67 QSOs in the March SKS using “light bulbs” as antennas!

Perhaps you remember the article in the March issue of the Rag Chew stating how the antennas were built and that they would be used on FT8. We did and made 250+ QSOs! FT8 uses computers and signals are rated as SNR (signal to noise ratio) and signals “usually” are rated negative as below the noise level. -19 means a signal considerably below the noise level.

So how would these antennas do as CW antennas where the human ear has to hear above the noise level? First, a bit of information on the construction of the antennas.

David Day N1DAY, has written a presentation on building lightbulb antennas

(“Dummy Load or Antenna?”). Using his presentation as a basic guide and many years of antenna building; antennas were designed and built. Day’s presentation suggested, “the more filament length, the better the antenna would radiate.” Satco S2431 bulbs have a filament length of 84 inches and became our bulb of choice. Although the Day presentation gave information and directions on materials to build the coils on pvc pipe, it was decided no need for all that work; just get some old hamstick-type antennas for the needed bands, remove the whips and attach the bulbs to them...less work is good! A discussion of resistance in the bulb changing through transmission and causing increased SWR with use

would necessitate the use of remote tuners so tuners were bought for 80, 40 and 20m, unfortunately we never saw a change in SWR through the entire event and the tuners were not needed.. ugh, \$\$\$ spent!

Jeremy KD8VSQ and his dad Greg KE8CEW, designed and built the interface between mobile coils and lightbulbs. The mobile coils and bulbs were attached to some old quad spreaders from the junk pile here. The coil and bulb combinations were always “short”

for our desired frequencies so using more antenna scrap, top loading spokes were manufactured. The 160m antenna was a special case, no “hamstick-type” antenna was available. Through trial and error we found that an 80m and 20m stick connected in series and additional coils from the junk box with a top hat set of spokes worked just fine for 160m! From several years of DXpeditioning on beaches, it was proven to me that two tuned elevated sloping radials would perform far better than ground mounted verticals with many radials.



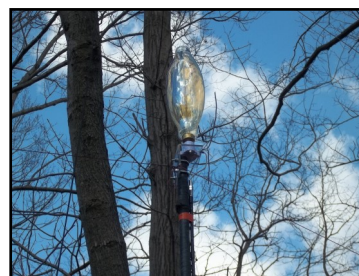
Bulb-to-mast mount



Hamsticks to SO-239 and radials mount



Base showing hamstick mount, radials and coax

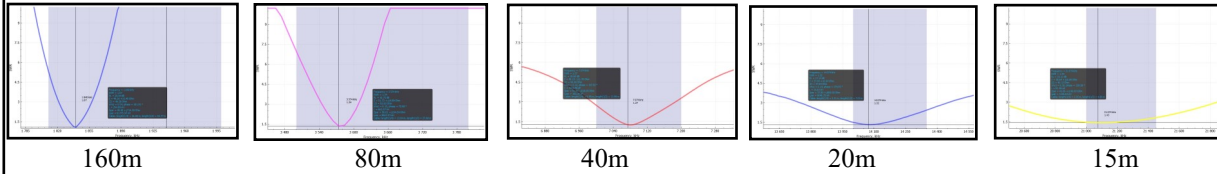


Top loading spokes on 20m antenna



KD8VSQ with 20m antenna

Bulb Antenna SWR Curves at FT8 and SKCC Frequencies



Running as KD8VSQ (Member of the Dit-Dah CW Gang) we began thinking if we could make 25 QSOs it would be a success. We sure were surprised!



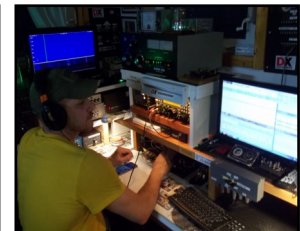
F to B NU8Z & KB8ECG on 80m, KD8VSQ & K8KIC on 40m. KD8TTM on 160m



Max W8KBW on 160m



KD8VSQ & K8KIC on 40m



The loneliest man, Don W8MU on 20m...1 QSO, a local!

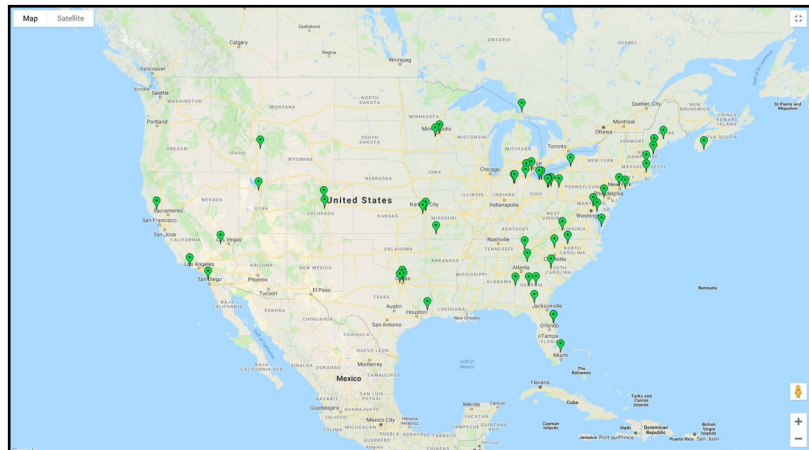


40m antenna in action

We figured if we made 25 QSOs that would be a great job so the 67 QSOs seems amazing to us. There must be and are, some really good receivers out there and many operators with great ears in the SKCC! We received this comment from Larry K8TEZ, regarding our signal and we agree with him regarding changing resistance in the filaments causing the QSB and signal tone.

“I would probably say your average signal strength was 55X to 58X can’t really identify tone...Steve told me about the terrible WX when he was up for the light bulb event but that was FT-8 and no one probably noticed the ambient sound of the tone. I think the very rapid change of current (key open-key closed) is the main reason for what we saw and heard”

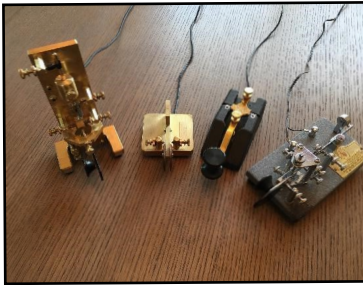
Here is the map showing our QSO distribution



Will the lightbulb antennas replace the log at 100 ft and the 2 L 40 yagis....ha! But it was interesting to see just how well they work and as N6BT says, “anything will radiate some.”

Our next adventure will be to construct some DDRR antennas for SKS. Bet you haven’t worked one of those!

March Brag Results



Thanks for the Brag contacts this month. They were all good ones! Icom IC-7300 to an OCF Flag-pole Vertical with a combination of a WISFR Cootie, Vibroplex Champion and Begali Spark. 73, CU Next Month Bob, K3ZGA



Wow. Been a busy month considering my norm. Thanks for all for the patience shown as I H&Ped many of you on the band after a qso ended. Looking to finally achieve the 'S' and thanks to all, I did. Hope to be able to share the 'S' now for those looking for AR WAS-S. 73, Jim K5TSK



Well despite missing the first 2 days coming back from Big Bend and 4 days in the hospital I did not do to bad. TNX for all the QSO's guys. Conditions were not real good this month and sure hope we get better propagation for April. 73, Allen KA5TJS



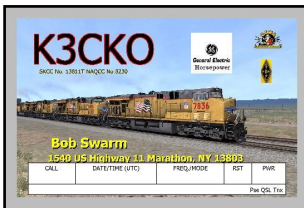
First time submitting for a little while. Had a very nice time this month on CW. I got to work the SKS even. Getting a new Mountain Topper QRP rig, got me back at it so I could reach 1X QRP. Submitted it and waiting to see if all is good. Thanks and good to work you all again! 73, Jason N3YUG



Family medical issues limited time available for radio. Hope for more in April. 73, Les WB5JWI



Most of my contacts were made on 40m, but just a few on 80m, 30m, & 20m. Maybe April will prove to be good on higher frequencies. Surpassed my one-a-day minimum (hi hi). 73, Curt WA2JSG



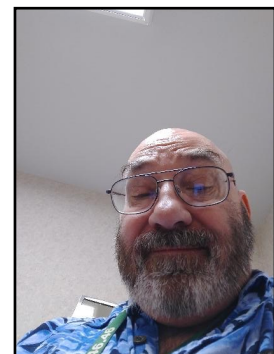
When are we going to get some sun spots?? Bands have been lousy and my G5RV came down in a wind storm. Using a 40 meter dipole at 20 ft. Played with the cootie all month. going back to the Bug in April. 73, Bob K3CKO



I've been having fun using my Navy Flameproof key in March. I usually use a Cootie, but working the Triple Key Award. So far SS=100, SK=54, Bug=0. Soon to dust off my Bug! 73, Rich W4RQ



Finally back from FL where we spent the winter. Thanks to all who could hear my puny signal from my 58 Ft wire on a 25 ft fishing pole.... 73, Greg WA3GM



Lots of fun even when I am busy! 73, Tom KB3CVO

More March Brag



Still moving forward to my "S".... Did my first SOTA activation this month! What a blast! 73, Pete KD2OMV



Someday we'll see band conditions like in the good ole days. Nonetheless, it was good to see lots of our newer members venturing out to get their feet wet. Still hearing many cootie users not accounted for in our Member's Cootie user list....link at my QRZ bio. Pictured here are my keys of choice, all the Torsion Bar models from W1SFR. 73, Mike K5MP



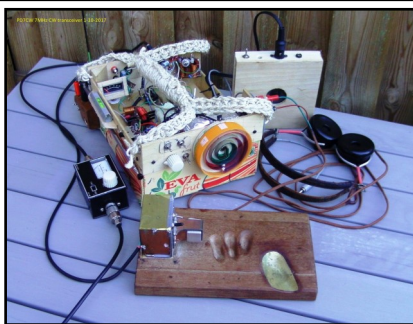
A large portion of my QSO's for March were made in the Novice Rig Roundup where a good many vintage gear ops are also SKCC members. I think I had 96 QSO's with 35 SPC's. Ran all crystal control with 75 watts or less input power. DX-60, T-50, 2NT transmitters and Drake 2B and 2C receivers. Used my WW2 US Army J-36 bug along with a German straight key from the same period. Caught W8RDG later in the month. 73, from WV. Ex KN3KJX novice - 1959/60



First time submission. Photo is Lilly, our tripod kitty. Thanks to all the ops and coordinators who keep this SKCC machine well-oiled and moving along. 73, Tom WB7EUX



Novice Rig Roundup helped increase my numbers plenty! All of my March QSO's were made with an HW-16, crystals, and Speed-X straight key to a G5RW antenna at 35 feet. Just like when I was a wee lad! (Wow....was THAT a long time ago!). It was a great month. Check my web page for 2019 NRR results (almost everyone was an SKCC member!). 73 to all! Steve WB4OMM #8793T



Interesting XCVR

Interested in CW/morse I did design and built my own transceiver, 40m band 4 Watt transmitter and direct conversion receiver both connected to the same analogue VCO with a fixed shift of the frequency during receiving. The receiver is provided with a narrow band tone detector to fine tune the frequency during receiving. The keyer is a iambic side swipper of own design based on analogue technique. The set is (trans) portable with use of a 12,5 V NimH battery pack. I use a 11m long tuned long wire antenna, mounted sloped at my house, tree etc. The greatest distance until now, Netherlands/Iceland, +2000km. Cees PD7CW



PD7CW
12-9-2017

t

The NI9M Hand Cootie

By Dave NI9M

As a retired IT Professional and Systems Engineer/Developer (which are merely names or titles and are not necessarily indicative of my knowledge or abilities), I use a keyboard and mouse a lot. I was working the other day and as I was using the mouse, it occurred to me that a mouse would make an easy to use key. Being an IT person, I have lots of spare “computer things” I have accumulated over the years. So, I dug out an old mouse. It felt like the buttons had a nice crisp action and it was comfortable to hold and operate. As the type of person that loves to take things apart to see what is in them and how they work (an unfortunate trait that my sons also displayed from an early age) I knew that there were switches, an IC, capacitors and resistors in them. I had to take it apart to “modify” the internals. Let me say that a computer mouse looks like a simple device and it really is...until you try to get it apart without damaging it. It took a little while, but I got it open without breaking it. There is (was) a very nice little circuit board in it with the components mentioned above mounted on it. Since the switches are mounted on the board, I had to leave the board in it to use the switches. That meant I had to remove the circuits connected to them. I went ahead and removed all the components; that should do it right? Wrong... even though I had removed all the components, I was able to measure 4400Ω across the open switch contacts. I took the board out again and checked both sides but there were not any components left on that little board (except the two switches). After a couple of minutes, I decided to just cut the traces on the board just before the switches. That did the trick. I proceeded to wire the mouse cable to the switches and test it. When I was happy that it worked right, I proceeded to put it back together. That took longer than getting it apart. I put a 3.5mm plug on the cable and checked it. Everything looked good, so I hooked it up to a rig and tested it. It worked great! It is easier than using paddles with a keyer. Knowing that I needed it to work like a straight key or cootie too, I made a simple adapter to connect it to the rig as a straight key or cootie. That worked great too! I tested it on the air and made a few QSOs with it. I am sure my fingers were not doing a very good job, but it got easier. So, I now have a new key in my arsenal. I call it the NI9M Hand Paddle or the NI9M Hand Cootie. Next time you work me and my sending is not too good (as is usually the case anyway), you may be on the receiving end of a Hand Cootie QSO. By the way, I think it will work great as a mobile or portable key too!

73 de Dave, NI9M





K9SB, Tim, used his Johnson Adventurer and Hallicrafters SX-101A vintage setup as well as a vintage Drake station to hand out 'IL' to many NRR ops.

There seems to be no shortage of era-appropriate Novice gear out there but as the years progress, it will get harder and harder to find and probably more expensive to own. It's wonderful to see so many amateurs that understand and appreciate this older gear and are doing their best to keep it all working ... and the NRR is just one of many opportunities to let these old beauties demonstrate their capabilities.



From what I can tell, NRR activity continues to increase every year and will hopefully be even bigger next year. If you were a participant, don't forget to get your log completed along with your photos and soapbox comments, all of which can be done through the [NRR website here](#). If you enjoyed the NRR, all run by volunteers, consider making a small monetary donation to keep the event going. You can do this via the NRR site as well.

If you're one of the many NRR participants that didn't want the event to end, don't forget that every Monday is the NRN (Novice Rig Night). A short 'CQ NRN' in the usual CW watering-holes, will often provide some nice rag chew time with like-minded operators.

Thanks to all organizers and participants for the CW fun and for another great ride in the NRR time-machine ... see you again next year!

73, Steve VE7SL

Novice Rig Roundup...2019

Ed... The Novice Rig Roundup event has become more and more popular. Not just for older rigs that may have been around in the operator's shack years ago but also some new homebrew rigs from that era too.

The following is a reprint of a blog about the NRR from Steve VE7SL #2153, and his adventures in the 2019 NRR. The NRR has many SKCC members participating in this event; it's a "natural" for us SKCCers! Like me, after you read this, you may be thinking about joining in next year. Just Google NRR for details about the event.

My 2019 Novice Rig Roundup Summary By Steve VE7SL 2153



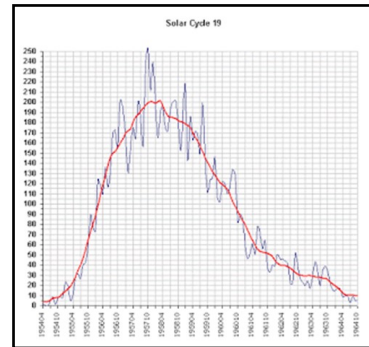
Once again the Novice Rig Roundup (NRR) has come and gone ... and once again, it was the most enjoyable 'contest' of the year for me. What I have come to enjoy most about the NRR is that most participants do not really treat it as a contest but more as an opportunity to spend some relaxing CW time enjoying some of their favorite vintage rigs ... spread out over nine days of activity. Since there was never a Novice-class program in Canada, I was never a Novice, but the NRR brings back all of the good memories experienced as a newly-licensed radio-crazed 15 year old operator! Back in those times, there was a gratifying sense of achievement with every contact. My clap-trap collection of parts and tin gutter-pipe verticals, mounted atop our old four-story city house, magically sent my tiny signal from coast to coast and over the pole. Those were the dying days of big-daddy Cycle 19, and my station was proof that just a tiny bit of RF was all that was needed under such amazing solar conditions.

This year's NRR began by making a couple of contacts with my Drake 2NT and VF-1 VFO but my newly-finished 1936-style **Jones Push Pull Oscillator** was begging to be put to the test. This meant that the remainder of the week would be spent using crystal-control and in all likelihood, sending a hundred or more 'CQ NRR's, hopefully attracting some of the crowd.



Due to previous commitments, I missed a few nights of operating but ended up with 53 NRR contacts in 23 different states or provinces. Operating on 40m in the late afternoon and then for a short period on 80m after dinner, proved to be the best use of my time, as usually, much of the eastern activity had closed shop for the night, just as the band was getting good. There were two nights of superb 80m propagation but with very little NRR activity ... unfortunately for many participants,

late-night operating (even with wonderful propagation) is not in the cards for those that must rise early for work the next morning! There were several highlights for me once again and being able to create them while using my new homebrew rig was very gratifying.



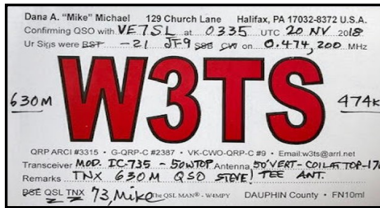


Roger, **VA1RST**, back in Halifax, Nova Scotia, was one east-coaster that seemingly cherished the mid-night-oil! His great Drake 2B ears were able to copy the little 'Jones' on 80m with no problem and his participation added an exotic DX-flavor to the NRR.

Michael, **W3TS**, managed to squeeze enough RF from his one-tube 6AG7 crystal oscillator to be heard and worked here on both 40

and 80m, with a respectable 559 on 40 and 569 on 80!

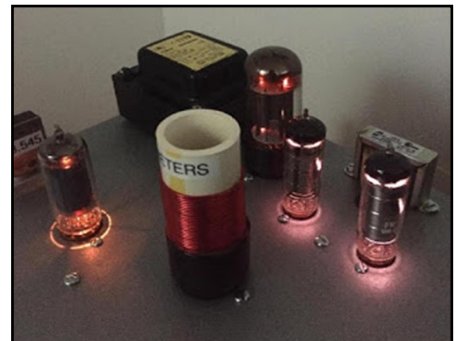
It wasn't until after the NRR was over that I realized why Mike's call was familiar as we had worked a couple of times already this winter on the



630m band(475kHz) ...doh!

More transcon magic was made when Tom, **K3AJ**, finessed a few watts from his single 6CL6 crystal-controlled DX-machine to the west coast on both 80 and 40m. The propagation gods must have been paying close attention as his 40m signal was a solid 579 while his late-night 80m signal was a whopping 589 here ... 80m propagation just like the good old days!

Not to be outdone by Tom, ex-Nebraskan Andy, **KØSM** in New York, kept his vintage '42' clipped together long enough to be worked back here as well. With just a couple of watts from the early '30s tube, his signal was no problem on both bands.



Gary, **W8PU**, with his newly-built mid-30s 6L6 tri-tet oscillator, was another treat from the east when his 559 80m signal arrived here from

Ohio in good form.

A little closer to home, **WB2AWQ**, Howie down in Reno, had a whopping signal all week whenever I heard him on 40m. Howie can always be counted upon for 'NV' in most vintage rig operating events, including the 1929 BK Party. This time 'round, he was using his BC-458A, crystal-





Even closer was new Oregonian, Dave, **WB7WHG**, who was still getting set up at his new location on the east side of the Cascades in Bend. Dave keyed his Knight T-60 for our NRR contacts on both 80 and 40 and was very much louder than when I used to work him at his midwest **WB9WHG** QTH!

The T-60 is a popular choice among NRR ops and its diminutive size is



somewhat misleading as the current-hungry sweep tube used in the PA stage packs a big wallop. If you happen upon one of these under a fleamarket table, don't pass it up ... It's a lethal NRR weapon! Heathkit stations were as popular in the NRR as they were in countless Novice shacks decades ago ... and they sound just as good now as they did back then.



KN8RHM (N8XI), Rick, made Michigan proud with his HW-16 transceiver.



Mark, **VA7MM**, handed out 126 contacts from western Canada with his all Heath vintage station. His newly added homebrew TR switching system provided hands-free break-in, saving wear and tear on the DX-60's precious function switch.

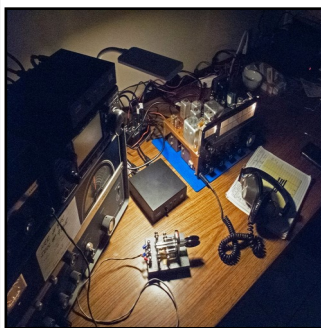
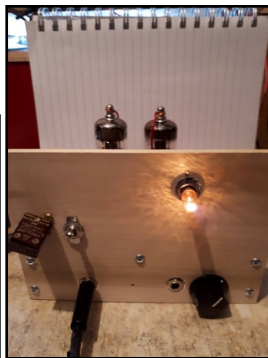
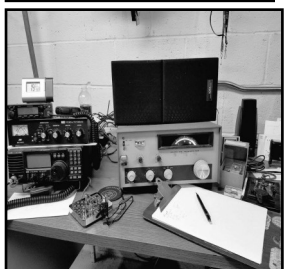


VA7MM wasn't the only west-coaster generating Heathkit RF. Toby, **VE7CNF**, used this efficient setup. The box under the VF-1 is its power supply, a QSK system plus a magic eye for tuning ... very nifty!



Not many Viking Rangers were heard this year but the one keyed by Markus, **VE7CA**, sounded very 50s-like with its oscillator being crystal- controlled for the event.

Pictures of "Some" of the NNR Rigs in 2019



How the Cootie Key Has Changed My Story

Ken N9KJU, #19964

Last December, I got back on the air after being away from Ham Radio for about 18 years. As I got reconnected to my past, I rejoined ARRL, QRZ.com, Ten-Ten Intl and FISTS. And I put up a new profile page at QRZ.com where I told my story. I really enjoy reading other Hams' profiles when I meet someone new on the air.

I won't re-tell that whole story here. The part that matters to this article is that in my first 8 years as a Tech+, I had only 15 CW QSOs in my logs. Now that I am back on the air, I really want to develop and practice my CW Operating skills. I regularly spend time in the car listening to the K7GO code course CD to try to immerse myself in CW. I am excited by the possibility of getting up to speed, proficient and active on CW.

I have also listened to all 24 episodes of the DitDit FM podcast ("The Podcast for Morse Code and CW operators"). During those podcasts and elsewhere, I have heard lots of good things about SKCC. I joined SKCC in mid-February and I am now SKCC #19964. I originally borrowed a straight key from a local friend/Elmer. I was able figure out how to switch my IC-7300 from the paddles to the straight key using a quick macro. I can even use the right side paddle of my Bencher paddles as a manual key so I don't need to change which key is plugged into the radio. It had been over 20 yrs. since I used a straight key. It was coming back slowly. I do believe that the manual keying is making me more aware of timing and spacing.

The other significant part of my story is that in November 2010, I was diagnosed with MS. There are a variety of symptoms and issues that go with that. The relevant ones as far as CW are weakness in extremities (mostly on my right side), some nerve damage such that fingers and all don't always do what I "ask of them". Mostly it is fatigue as the day wears on. CW gets harder as the night gets longer. While I am always impaired to some level, I can say that there are more good days than bad ones.

When I joined SKCC, I was hoping to meet nice Ops who might help me develop my skills and speed. To be honest, I really had no interest in a straight key. I've always found it be a challenge. But as my MS has progressed I'm getting to a point where working a pair of paddles into a keyer is getting messy too. When I send a number 4 with my keyer, it was often coming out as 4 dits and 2 dahs. People probably just figure I'm still new to this.

I know SKCC has their "Policy on Keys and Exemptions." Let me pause here to compliment those who wrote that policy. I have spent a lot of time pouring over it. The policy is written in a way that respects and recognized that some of us can't always use a straight key. But they respectfully suggest that before one self-declares, you make "a good-faith effort to determine that none of the accepted key types provides a remedy to their physical limitation."

I believe that I qualify as one who has a physical limitation that (at times) justifies use of something other than a manual key. I do use the memory keyer on my IC-7300 to call QRL? repeatedly when I move to a new frequency. Before SKCC, when I was calling CQ for any length of time, I used the memory keyer or the CW macros in my logging program. Doing those repetitive things with a keyer helped me save my strength and all for the good stuff. I found I was actually sending better code with a straight key, but tiring very quickly.

In early March, I discovered side swipe keying. I found a quick way to use my bencher paddles as a cootie key. I am loving it! Side to side is so much easier than the up and down. Yeah, the Dah at the end of my number 4 may still be a little long, but no one minds. Once I started using the cootie, I doubt I'll ever go back. Oh and I am sending via the cootie using my left hand. It is stronger and less prone to problems than my right hand. I figured if I was going to learn a new way to send CW, I'd just start with my less damaged hand.

Using a Cootie key does take a little getting used to. I still have a few characters that give me trouble. However, I have actually gotten compliments on my fist. And I'm not running out of steam. In fact typing this article at 9 pm is harder for me than the 40M QSO I finished earlier. I have been known to use a long text for sending 30 mins of code practice using the cootie.

I was so happy when my new W1SFR TBFB (FatBoy) Cootie key arrived just in time for the April WES event. I have not touched any other key since it arrived. It is beautiful and so nice to use. Since I discovered the sideswiper, I have not used my keyer. I told someone recently that moving to a cootie key is a real game changer for me. I have made over 50 CW QSOs in April. That is more than I did in the nearly 30 yrs since I got my license.

Let me highlight one last point. I am grateful for the wording of the SKCC Policy on Keys and Exemptions." It encouraged me to make a "good-faith effort" and try the options. Because of that, I explored and tried using a cootie key. What a great find for me. It won't be the same for everyone, but I am no longer considering any waiver due to physical limitations. I am a very happy cootie key user. It has provided a remedy to my physical limitation.

Footnote: The policy is found on the SKCC web site at "<https://skccgroup.com/keypolicy.php>"

73, Ken N9KJU 19964



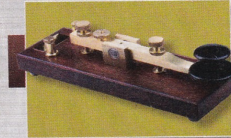
W9TE CW Activity...A Good Idea!

For the past 5 months, the Fort Wayne 146.91 repeater has been active every Monday evening from 7pm until 8:15 with specialized CW training. Thanks to the work of Steve, W9SAN, the W1AW code practice broadcast was aired from 7:00 until 7:30 on the repeater through Echolink. This half hour each week was primarily slow code practice, as slow as 5 words per minute. Following the code practice at 7:30, Ed – WA9BBN (with the help of Terry – K9FMX and Ken – N8KR) lead the “CW Net” designed to help hams in our community learn or become more proficient with sending and receiving cw. Along with on air sending (yes, there was a lot of cw on the repeater), those checking in started simply with just sending and receiving call signs, followed with names and concluding with full qso reports and generating their own code practice. A couple of times we even played “CW Tag” randomly calling each other. Discussions on sending speeds, abbreviations, qso formats, zero-beating, antennas, keys, bugs, cooties accompanied the code sending and receiving. The idea of mentoring and assisting each other culminated with on air qso’s on our HF bands. During my “snow-bird” time in FL, I would connect on Echolink and follow up with qso’s on 40 meters with the Fort Wayne hams. Over a dozen different hams joined us during activity. Some were weekly regulars while others joined as their schedules allowed. Deeming it a success and with the advent of summer, we have decided to take a “pause” during the summer and pick it up again in September. Thanks to Ed – WA9BBN for his leadership!

Interesting Data from April QST

QST QuickStats

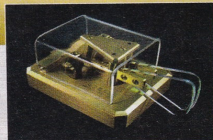
Online QuickStats Poll Results for January 1 through February 1, 2019.
Get on the web and vote today at www.arri.org/quickstats!



What is your top CW sending speed when using a straight key?

5 WPM or less. **3%**
Between 6 and 10 WPM. **12%**
Between 11 and 15 WPM. **26%**

Between 16 and 20 WPM. **23%**
Between 21 and 25 WPM. **8%**
Faster than 25 WPM. **1%**
I don't use a straight key. **9%**
I don't operate CW. **18%**



What is your top CW sending speed when using paddles and a keyer?

5 WPM or less. **3%**
Between 6 and 10 WPM. **3%**
Between 11 and 15 WPM. **8%**

Between 16 and 20 WPM. **11%**
Between 21 and 25 WPM. **16%**
Between 26 and 30 WPM. **15%**
Faster than 30 WPM. **14%**
I don't use a paddles. **12%**
I don't operate CW. **18%**

Do you send CW with a keyboard?

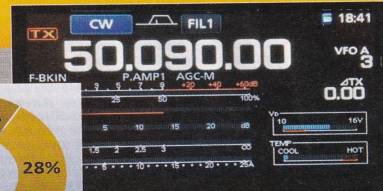
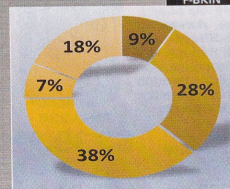
Only during contests or DX pileups. **18%**
Yes, occasionally. **15%**
It is the only way I operate CW. **5%**
Never. **44%**
I don't operate CW. **18%**

CW



Do you ever use CW on the VHF/UHF bands?

Yes, often. **9%**
Yes, occasionally. **28%**
Never. **38%**
I don't operate on the VHF/UHF bands. **7%**
I don't operate CW. **18%**



The Many Ways of Using a Cootie

The following article is full of great ideas about cootie use. The article has been taken from part of the biography of Mike Pilgrim, K5MP on QRZ.com. Mike, as you cootie users may know, maintains an SKCC list of cootie users. Although the presented article here does not contain active hyperlinks, Mike's article on QRZ.com does. For internet security reasons the Rag Chew does not activate hyperlinks within the newsletter. I encourage all interested readers to visit K5MP on QRZ and there you will find activated hyperlinks of those links mentioned here...Editor

THE FORGOTTEN KEY BY STAN, WB2LQF

Looking for a new challenge? Try ‘Swiping! No, “cooties” are not infesting insects and “sideswiping” will not increase your automobile insurance rates! Sideswipers, affectionately known as “Cootie Keys,” are part of the early history of telegraphy. According to Jerry Bartacheck KD0CA, sideswiping (or simply “swiping) represents “... a code keying method that requires no external power source and no expensive electronic keyer. This rarely used but very natural-feeling keying technique is rapidly fading from use and is often misunderstood by today's hams who've never seen a genuine J.H. Bunnell & Co. double speed key which came to be called the cootie key or side-swiper.

It is widely accepted that J.H. Bunnell & Co. introduced the first sideswiper as an antidote to the career ending paralysis called “glass arm” that plagued early professional telegraphers. The up-and-down pumping motion required of a straight key eventually caught up with even the most robust wrist. Today, we refer to such repetitive motion injuries as carpal tunnel syndrome. Bunnell’s new creation was called a “double speed key.” “Double” because it had two contacts and “speed key” because one could send faster than with a straight key. It used a side-to-side motion to close the circuit via one contact on the left and one contact on the right. This provided an easier, gentler rocking motion of the wrist and forearm.

From the Journal of the Telegraph, October 21, 1907, exactly when the first sideswiper was introduced to the market is not absolutely clear. According to most accounts, the Bunnell double speed key was patented in 1888. This is sixteen years before Horace Martin began selling his Autoplex semi-automatic key (“bug”) in 1904. However, according to John Casale W2NI there is no evidence of a patent filing that resembles the double speed key granted to either Jessie Bunnell or the Bunnell Company. Casale’s argument is further strengthened by his research into period advertisements, Bunnell catalogs of 1889 and 1898 and American Telegraphy by William Maver, Jr., a comprehensive volume which was actually published by Bunnell & Co. in 1892. In any case, sideswipers had a relatively short professional lifespan. Regardless of when they were actually introduced to the market, we can accurately state that sideswipers were in professional use from at least 1904 through the early 1920s. We can say this because this timeframe correlates with their appearance in advertisements and print media and their eventual media sunset. Some telegraphy historians speculate that one of the reasons for the demise of the sideswiper was related to its lack of portability. Unlike a bug, the sideswipers were usually screwed to the desk whereas the ubiquitous Vibroplex bug of that era was better balanced, more stable and even came with a carrying case! However, a more reasonable explanation might just be that the “bug” won out in terms of ease of use and speed. Bugs cut the operator’s workload in half because they make all the dits automatically. It was - and remains - pretty challenging to send with a sideswiper at over 25 wpm. Most bugs start at this speed!

How Do You Use This Thing? In a nutshell, you move the contact arm left and right with your thumb and forefinger, never using the same finger twice in a row within a word (and preferably never period!). If you think about it, it’s a perfectly natural movement.

Hence, you don't really have to learn anything new; you just need to harness the energy and practice "command and control." Is it difficult to learn the art of "swipery?" I don't think so and this is from a guy who tried and failed to learn to play the piano, tried and failed to learn to play the guitar and tried and failed to learn iambic mode keying. Like most things in life (except piano, guitar and iambic keying) it just takes commitment and practice! Unlike a straight key, you let your fingers leave the finger piece at the end of each stroke. Note that there is a 'hard stop' when using a straight key because when you pump down and make the contact... well, there's nowhere else to go. With a sideswiper, the movement of your fingers continues and this is another plus for comfortable use and reduced strain on the wrist and arm. Perhaps the following will help to further enhance one's understanding and application of proven technique for using the sideswiper key.

Personally, I learn best by seeing what it is that I am trying to learn, and that seems to imprint an imaginary image in my head which serves as a reminder of what I am trying to accomplish. To that end, here is one of the first UTube demonstrations from my earliest attempts to learn to operate a cootie key. I hope it will be equally beneficial to your own endeavors.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfLrgYHIpjo>

Now to the task of learning to use the Cootie key. I must warn that many have said the Cootie has ruined their Bug fist, but some have mastered both with no issues. I tried and the result was that I sold my Vizkey Bug and decided with a clear conscience that I wish to commit to the cootie exclusively.

I have heard some who say they are learning the Cootie with their left hand, knowing that does not affect their dominant right for the Bug performance.

If there is one message loud and clear it is that there is no RULE for how to use a Cootie. Yes, some will tell you that every motion begins with the finger (if you are right handed), others will begin as if they are using a Bug. I happen to be in that school of thinking albeit I recognize I have sort-of developed a hybrid of my own which I'll try to explain here. Keep in mind this is not easy to talk about since it actually comes as second nature after a short time in use. Here goes. For ease of illustration let me use "t" for thumb and "f" for finger, as follows:

I start a character as if I am on a Bug, for example, if I want to transmit my call sign (K5MP) I begin with (K) f t f, (5) t f t f t, (M) f t, (P) f t f t

Notice my HYBRID example whereas I almost followed the Bug keying in full with exception to my P which followed the thumb of the DAH on the M by alternating to the finger for the first DIT of the P, then alternating to finish the character. In other words, I found my comfort zone by first concentrating on starting a word as if on a Bug, then alternate from finger to thumb to finish the word even if it required to start the P with my finger for the DIT..... Is that understandable? Name of the game is to start as if on a Bug, then alternate thumb, finger, thumb, finger, etc. until end of a word. Don't get into the habit of thinking you must stay with one digit (thumb or finger) to finish a character. That results in a very sloppy sounding fist, and steals from your speed.

Perhaps a good set of drills might be i, s, h, and 5..... all beginning with the thumb, then alternate to complete the character. Be conscious that when trying to do a DAH on the thumb, you need to hold longer than you would on a Dit on the bug. Same is true when attempting a Dit on the finger you must not hold as you would on a bug.

Now practice m, o, and zero beginning with the finger and alternating to complete the character. Next, try throwing in combinations such as a, b, c, d, f, etc..... Trust me, after a few 30 minute training sessions those training sets will begin to pay off. A good way to put it all together would be to turn to a page of a book and start sending what you read on the page.

If you've not located the sideswiper net (www.sideswipernet.org), there are lots of articles, videos and commentary there to help show the way. Also, do a google search for "cootie (or sideswiper) keying demos Utube" where you'll find many demo ideas. Take a gander at this article by fellow SKCC member, N1EA from his page on the sideswiper net pages:

<http://sideswipernet.org/articles/n1ea-sending.php>

There are literally dozens of UYTube demonstrations on how to use a Cootie. Some support my method as mentioned above, others show their own choice. There is no right or wrong way; what matters is what feels best for you. Here is a short UTube demo which illustrates some basic understanding, followed by narrative with various preferences on how to handle a cootie. Give them all some serious review and thought. Then try various ideas to see if one is better suited than others for your fist. If all else fails, let me know so maybe I can come to your rescue.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LsRpn-1bmA>

And finally, here's a great summary picked up from a thread on this topic, amongst sideswiper net members.

1st of all:

HAMs are individuals and each has his/her own style in operating a cootie. Sort-of as with a pair of shoes, one size might fit one person perfectly but nevertheless they are terrible for another.

2nd:

Thank you so much for widening my horizon. I thought I had got all aspects of using a cootie and again I learned that I should be a little more humble-minded - nobody knows all aspects of anything.

3rd - the summary:

Operating a cootie is moving / rolling your hand from left to right and reverse always in an alternating way:

.. left -> right -> left -> right

The classical style is to keep the movement alternating all the time. So sometimes a letter will start with the thumb and sometimes with the index finger. BUT there are many other ways to operate the cootie key. All of them have in common that within one letter the alternating movement is kept strictly. The difference is only from where the operators start a new letter or sometimes with a new word.

The "classical style":

Always keep the alternating movement. Nothing more to say.

The "paddle style":

These operators start a new letter like they were using a bug. Letters starting with a dot ALWAYS start with the thumb, letters starting with a dash ALWAYS start with the index finger. Or they do it the other way round: Letters starting with a dot always start with the index finger letters starting with a dash always start with the thumb. N1EA, David does it this way.

The "always start @ same side"

These ops always start a new letter with the same finger; some always with the thumb, some always with the index finger.

The "random style"

These ops mix all above described styles and take whatever is comfortable for them

The "instinctive style"

These ops can't say which style they are using. They are doing fine but when they try to check out how they are operating a cootie they struggle, the Morse code is interrupted or even breaks down. (Most noticeable when one fails to alternate from side to side.) For example:

"S", "H", or "5" on same side of the cootie key makes for very noticeable rhythm breakdown.

Additional note 1:

Some ops advise not to move the fingers. Alex, UR5FIL describes it this way:

1. Fix the distance between fingers (say 3 cm) and never change it during keying, Freeze it.

1. Fix the distance between fingers (say 3 cm) and never change it during keying, Freeze it.
2. The fingers do not work during keying. They are like steel wrench.
3. Touching of your hand to the table is in one point only. This is point of rolling right and left of your wrench. :)
4. Don't move fingers. You need to roll hand (wrench) against one point you are touching the table.
5. Start form sending dots (endless R-L-R-L-R-L-R-L... rolling)

Additional note 2:

The question came up if a right-hander should use his right hand to operate the cootie. Simple answer: Why not? I am a right-hander and I operate the straight key with my right hand .

For paddle operation I use the left hand and I will do for the cootie too.

Why? I can make notes while sending standard phases (e. g. "bk de DC5GD/p = r r r dr om = all cpi ok" with the left hand. After nearly 60 years you can hardly change habits (writing with right hand). It is easier to learn something new (cootie-ing with left hand). And I have been told that doing things the other way round will keep you agile and awake.

Conclusion:

Use whatever kind of cootie style you want to - as long as it is fun, clear code and you use a cootie!!

So, I hope this little overview will help you on your way with happy "swiping". I'm interested to hear if this has been helpful, and to learn if there might be other ideas I might provide to be of assistance.

Let me hear from you, and don't forget that as you have attained that level of expertise and confidence to put a cootie to good use on the air, be sure to venture to this link (http://bit.ly/SKCC_Cootie_OPs_ro where I ask that you please follow the instructions in the top margin to provide me with required information to be listed as one of us.

Mike, K5MP, SKCC #1537 SX3

April WES



I was only able to get in two hours for the WES this weekend due to other planned activities. Only made 11 contacts and got 4 Easter eggs with my new (to me) navy flameproof, a Ben-dix model made in the 1940's. 73, AA2XB Frank



My first straight key event. I have a black key very similar to the key on the homepage. Thought I had it adjusted...but Noooo.. so I folded my tent pretty quick. Back for more another time after I get the key working correctly and I actually make a few Qs ahead of time! 73, Jim AC0E



Conditions on 80m were not so good for me this time around. By 8:30AM on Saturday the band was dead. Managed a few in the wee hours of the morning, but noise level was high. 40m was decent, especially at night. I had more QSOs than usual on 20m, but mostly weak signals and QSB. 15m was totally dead. Worked some DX: F6EJN (80 and 20), ON7DQ (40), OM7DX (40), KH6ZM (40), and the following just on 20m: F5UQE, OK1AR, DF2PY, G3ZRJ, and DF7TV. F6HKA was notable by his absence. I need a better 20m antenna, my next project, possible a quad. Rig here is a Yaesu FT450d running 100W to dipoles. If you can see them, the photo shows my 40m/15m dipole and 80m dipole (broadside east/west). The 20m dipole is orientated north/south. How does K3WW make 450 QSOs without passing out, LOL? I was exhausted after 258 QSOs.



Operated Sunday only, during the morning I went to a nearby park and operated mobile. Rig Yaesu FT-891, 50W to short hamstick style antennas on a mag mount. 20 and 40m where both usable, but somewhat noisy. During the afternoon and evening more fun on 20, 40 and 80m. Thanks to all those who participated, especially to F6EJN and DF7TV for digging out my signal from the noise. Great fun. Can't wait for the next event. 73, AC2RJ, Ruben.



Hard work. 20m is normally quite reliable in a WES on a Sunday afternoon but was dead today. Got a couple of Easter eggs, thanks to F6EJN and W3NP. And crept closer to my T too. Another exclusively bug WES, I'm beginning to get more comfortable with it and loving it. 73, Peter GM0EUL



Got a late start. Had to raise the antenna blown down by storm and only 4 hours Sunday. Fun anyways. Broke in a brand new IC-7300 at 90 watts and a G5RV. 73, Bob K3CKO



It was an honor being an Easter Egg for this WES, and I had a great time! I mainly used my 1919 Blue Racer Bug but my J-38 saw a lot of action for QRS QSOs. Hats off to Dave NI9M for coming up with this month's theme – home run Dave! 73, Mark K3MSB



Well, that kept me out of trouble all weekend. It was nice to have the new 80M dipole at 70' to fill in where the EDZ at 50' doesn't go. Rig was the K2 at 5W, paddle was the TBFB cootie by WISFR. The picture is our Pharaoh Hound, Wren, who helped by staying out of the shack. 73, Bob K3ESE



Only 9 qso on 80 and 40M. Good spread on Saturdays from 18 to 22 hours. Conditions: ic 7400 + PA and beam 3 elements at 50 feet. Thank you for all your calls. 73, Bob F6EJN

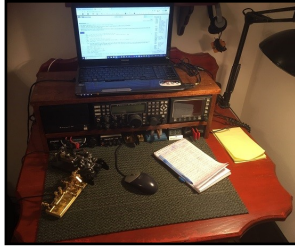


Thank You for all the nice contacts and the two EGGS I found! This will be a happy Easter time. 20m-band propagation was good at late Sunday evening (21:00 UTC) with strong signals from the States. 73, CUAGN Tom DF7TV



Not good conditions at all. 20m was the only band and just 3 QSOs. Thanks to K3WW Chas, IT9QAU Fredi, and IZ2QXG Gino. 73, John G0RDO

More April WES



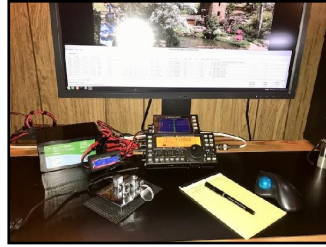
K3 to Stealth After-Dark Vertical (HOA) and dueling bugs (1945 Lightning & 90 degree Vizbug). Pix shows you just can't have too many keys and something big like WES/EE requires a backup Bug!! 40m was good Saturday evening but bands seemed dead Sunday morning and afternoon. Thankfully, picked up here in FL near 'closing time'. Being an E.E. was really a lot of fun! Thank you to all. 73, Don K3RLL



Thanks for all the Easter Eggs!! 73, Dave KB1WOD



Nice to see the bands in better shape this weekend. Glad I got a chance to operate at a local park yesterday. We received 3+ inches of wet, heavy snow today. Still a good time. Thanks to all 73, Warren KC9IL



Thanks to all the kind souls who decided to decode my 4.8 watts fm the KX3 in spite of our scheduled AR-LA-TEX thunderstorms. I carefully H&Ped on the strongest signals knowing with the noise it was useless trying the sub S7 at my location. Only results in busted QSOs and lots of repeats. Thanks for those who tried. 73, Jim K5TSK



Wow, rough WES this month. Thunderstorms Saturday and the power was out from about 1:30 till 8:30 so no contacts in the afternoon. It picked up Sunday but still not very good propagation. I ran 100 watts this month so guys could hear my /EE. It was a blast! Icom 7410 and 80 meter inverted vee. CU all next month. Thanks to DF7TV and F6EJN for my only EU contacts. 73, Allen KA5TJS



Greetings: It was a great WES. Thank you all and especially the EE stations. 73, Sergey KD9EBS



Great WES once again. Missed out on a few hours of 80M due to storms and high winds. Tnx to all that worked us. 73, Randy N8KQ/K8CGE

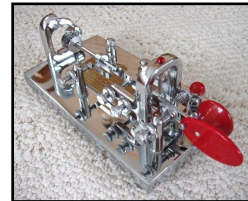


It sure has been busy here in the upper desert of Arizona. The XYL decided we needed to do some remodeling (shack-included) a few before I had back-surgery in early March and only had enough time to do "Shack-Lite" a couple of days before it (was ready!!). Recovering well but can't carry more than 10-20 lbs, stoop and bend much. Plus, I had a couple of personal events (go to Phoenix). Was very happy to sneak in a little operating and working on the skills with a 1942 J-36 with non-Vibroplex weights. Out of stock forever, but thanks to a suggestion on a FB Page, used Brass Stair Gauges. Not bad ... and a lot cheaper (\$40 less). Make a few Q's mainly on 40M, a couple of EE's and one exchange with an old friend before our area 2M SSB Net (SWOT) and the trip to Phoenix. I hope to see you all for the next couple if the creek (washes here) don't rise and I don't get dragged down to

A lot of fun this month again! This is the first time I've used mainly a sideswiper for the event. Thanks to all the put up with my fumbles! 73, Tim KD1W



Tried out a new set-up in my van. Did pretty well for such a cheesy antenna. 73, Gary KF7WNS



The key used A 1963 Vibroplex deluxe. 73, John K8LJG



The band and my crummy (16 feet off the ground) antenna did not cooperate. In three hours total operating on 40 meters, only one station KG4WAE came to my rescue and at least "put me on the board." I used my 8 watt 6L6 on 7062, 7115 and 7110 (my least chirpy crystals). 73, Randy KB2PLW



More, More April WES



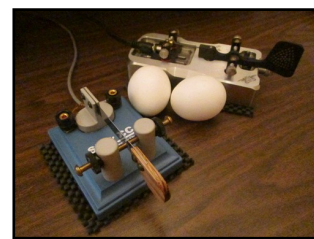
Massive storms in my area caused me to limit my time on air. Still, band conditions were pretty good during the times I felt it was safe to operate. I used my favorite boat-anchor rig, a Heathkit HW-101 with a fan dipole antenna and a Vibroplex straight key. 73, Steve KE4OH



Had lots of chores to do this weekend, but was able to have a little fun in the WES. Tried out my new Bunnell DSK cootie as well. Thanks to all the eggs out there, it was a fun theme. See you on the bands.. 73, Brian KQ4MM dit dit



Fun event! Thank you, Dave (NI9M) for the honor and privilege of being an EE. Ran mainly on 40 meters. Enjoyed a few regular QSOs with some of the newer members, getting to know them and welcoming them aboard. Had a "new" key I had just gotten (1968 Vibroplex Champion), so decided to break it in during the WES. Thanks for all those who were able to "hunt me down." 73, Jack KK0I



Strange conditions -- long stations strong, close stns very QSB. Very enjoyable theme. 73 de AL, N4ow 11375s



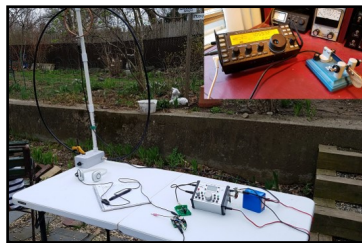
LW3EX/XP, 73,WALT



Same, Argo six 418 amp 90 wts, G5RV. No qrp this time.. hi.. So, agn tnx to board mbrs.. 20,00+ mbrs.. hi.. It seems like 3 or over new mbrs per day.. always abt a 100+ per month.. SUPER...hi-more qrm'ers..hi. So cu ltr 73, Dave



Well, fun as always. I am not a contester but I enjoy holding up the bottom of the stack! 73, Steve NQ8T



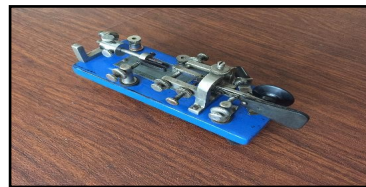
Started with the KX3 indoors but it was the first nice Spring weekend so tried the mag loop and the SKY-SDR outside. Heard lots of stations on 20, and a few /ee but no one could hear me. Still nice to get the gear outside again. Moved back into the shack to finish up after dinner. Thanks to all the ops that make this a great event, 73, Mike N2HTT



Only worked in the last hour. Busy with other stuff. I had fun in that last hour. 73, Bill N0UMP



Always fun to work a WES. 73, W4XX



In memory of my father's birthday in April 1920, I operated with a 1920 Vibroplex Blue Racer. 73, Chuck N10C



Given the level of participation and the enthusiasm I observed (and experienced), I'd say the SKCC boys in the top floor executive offices hit a home run with this WES. The EGG thing was genius! Well done! Too bad the bands couldn't have gotten with the program -- pretty terrible QSB everywhere and all the time. I could have appended "QSB" to nearly all my RST reports. I'm sure this will be mentioned! My fist was far from stellar this weekend. I used my Pre-Restoration 1916 Blue Racer which is really a mess -- but I like it. I had a chunk of foam rubber-banded in to act as the missing damper and a bulldog clip attached to lower the speed. I was constantly adjusting it and my own tendencies all weekend in hopes of getting marginally competent by the end. Almost made it, but many may disagree. 73, Rock NE7D

Whew, More April WES!



Rainy weekend so plenty of time to operate for a change. Except for my power supply quitting and forcing a change to the backup everything worked just fine! Usual station of Elecraft K3 at 100 watts, 43' vertical, OCF dipole and 2 element quad at 40'. Used the Bencher RJ-2 key. Thanks to all the "eggs"! 73, Bill NZ0T



This was my 2nd year as a Easter themed bonus stn and it was fun. I managed to collect 18 other eggs while mostly calling CQ. Conditions were not too bad at times and at other times downright terrible. Had 1 15m Q with Max KH6ZM, a few on 160 but mostly 40, 20, and 80. Wrked SCO, FRA, GER, and CUB but DX condx were way down.

I used my GHD-501A cootie for all 169 contacts - trying to keep all the cooties limber!!

K3 line at 500w to the 3el yagi on 15/20 and 160m horizontal loop for all others.

73, Dave in WV W3NP



Once again only intermittent operation as time permitted. Still had a blast and enjoyed every second of it. This time I am proud to say I was sporting my new "S" suffix which was difficult to remember when sending. I used my Begali Sculpture Swing Sideswiper for about 98 percent of the QSO's. I'm finally getting somewhat comfortable with a SS key. Same boat anchor set up as last time, Collins 32V-2 TX @ 100 W and 75A-4 RX with an 80 meter doublet at 50 feet. I am so pleased there is so much activity within the SKCC and so many new members. One will soon be my step-grandson, now K0SND (yes better call than mine) who is getting quite proficient with a keyer/paddle at 20 wpm, but I need to show a straight key to. Amazingly enough, I haven't even helped him much. He's doing this mostly on his own! See ya on the bands! 73, Mike WB0SND



Great WES Weekend....Saturday was operated portable in the Pocono Mountains with a 16 Ft collapsible Paint Pole fed with center conductor of the coax at the base of the antenna.....4 radials were attached to the shield part of the coax....Yaesu FT891 60 watts and a mfj manual tuner which made the antenna usable down to 80M...Sunday was spent working the rest of the sprint from the home station. Tnx fer letting me be one of the EE's. Had a lot of good runs and most importantly a lot of fun. 73, Greg WA3GM



Poor conditions, but still a lot of fun. I needed to limit my operating time because of work so I set a goal of 100 QSOs. I reached my goal, but I had to dig a lot of stations out of the mud. 73, Roger W6LAX



Great fun this sprint, hunting QSO's and EEs. Rig: Knwd TS590 @100w 130 ft end fed wire sloper. Key: Navy Flame Proof. Very cool to work some new members. A few with high numbers over 20K Thanks for the QSOs. 73, Mike W8MDE



What can I say? Bands stink, stank stunk and I still had fun. I managed to finally finish off my Senator. YAY! I worked 80, 40 and 20 meters and one Q on 160. Station: Kenwood TS-590SG 100W to a 200' Doublet. The key is a Viz Key Cootie. 73, Jon WS1K



Sorry did not put E's in my log. 72, Bud W8BUD

Good stuff. 73, Pete WH6LE



A "Flameproof" Rescue

In January of 1943 a PBY on the way to submarine patrol over the North Atlantic flew onto the side of a mountain at full speed when its experimental radar-altimeter read through the Greenland ice cap to the mountain beneath - so 2000 feet of ice smacked them in the belly - and the plane did a bounce before crashing and sliding to rest, to move nevermore. So there it was, on the Greenland icecap in the dead of winter, on the edge of a bottomless crevasse. Sweet.

During that bounce the radio operator instantly sent a single 4-digit emergency locator code - later, he didn't remember having done so. But an alert operator monitoring the frequency copied that single 4-character string - otherwise, the inevitable search, days later, wouldn't have known where to start. As a result, all 7 crew members of that PBY were pulled off that mountain on dogsleds - after 13 days on the icecap.

My dad was that radio operator.

His key was a Navy Flameproof.

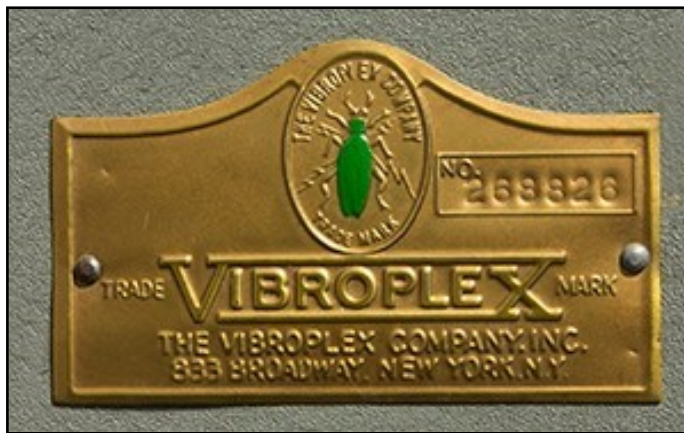
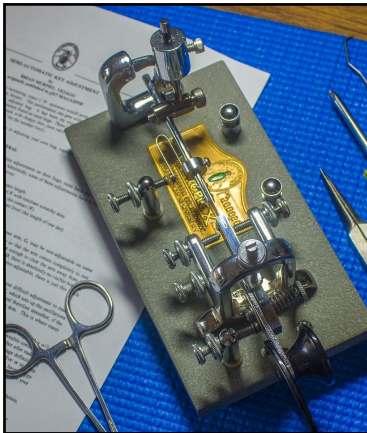
I have that key :-)

73 Chris NW6V #14374 (born 1948)



A Bug Rebuild...and a Good Idea

I just finished disassembling and cleaning a 1973 Vibroplex Original Standard. She cleaned up real nice. I felt that the Bug logo would look better painted green rather than the original red, so Forgive me Horace, for I have sinned! de Joe W1FYL, SKCC 9365.



The Good Idea.....

I'm reverting to a bug after years of using keys. I'm struggling with the timing: the clatter is distracting. My (cheap!) solution is to slip a short piece of RG-58/U coax outer jacket over the tip of the arm. The bit of insulation does a great job of silencing the clatter without adversely affecting the arm's action. 73 es de Joe W1FYL



April SKSeu



I remembered not to forget this SKSE but then forgot what I needed not to forget and by the time I remembered what I had forgotten I promptly forgot what it was I had earlier forgotten. Still - here is a picture of a nice morse key. 73, John GORDO



I jumped into my first SKSE, for a little bit, mostly to play with my newly-built NorCal 40A, which blasts out a withering two full watts of very high-quality CW. It was fun! Leon OS0S was quite loud here, but he no hear me. Is ok! 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Stayed two hours and worked only 8 stations 3 from NA with weak signal K3WW-WU1V-VE1AHX and 5 from EU F5DE-F5UQE-ON7DQ-ON4KNP and a non-member US7WA. 73, Leon OS0S

SKCC Members; Closed Logs and SK

The following SKCC members are now SK:

CALL	NAME	QTH	SKCC#	SK DATE
W0RTK	CLARENCE	ND	66	3-31-2019
W8DKI	JOHN	TX	1493	10-10-2018
KA3RCS	KARL	PA	12623	3-20-2019
KA4TXY	DAVE	FL	718	3-21-2019
KB5HRS	PETE	NM	15691	2-10-2019
W1VRY	JIM	ME	5937	1-24-2019
K0BE	Don	MN	2704	3-13-2019
W1BJ	Paul	MA	9950	2-24-2019

De Dan Morris KZ3T SKCC# 18885S

Home Brew 4:1 Baluns



Building some 4:1 current baluns for antenna projects. I am using 16 Awg enameled wire. These will be wired in parallel and should handle up to 2KW. I wrapped the ferrite in PTFE tape to help protect against any sharp edges. Also makes it easier to see the winding and make sure none are twisted. Getting ready to do another one. This time I am going to stack two of them and just do as one whole toroid. 73, Tony KD8BBK

April SKS



Nice activity level, especially 40 meters. I managed two QSOs on 80, one of which was W9TE. (Pretty good ears, W9TE and K3WW, for working me on 80, where I was using a ground mounted Hamstick!) 73, Gary AF8A



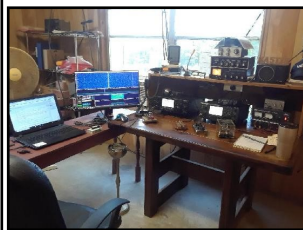
Pretty great conditions tonight, and plenty of action! Just the way a sprint ought to be. As always, the K2 at 5W into, mostly, the 20M EDZ at 50'. Here's the dramatic operating position at Station K3ESE, which the XYL seems to think of as a corner of the living room. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Had SWR problems on 20 Meters. Must have water in the 20 meter trap! Thanks for all the Qs. 73, Dale K3SEN



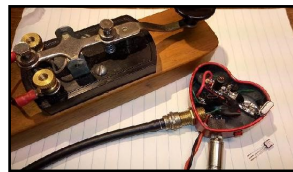
Just "HAD" to watch Star Trek movie and only operated for less than 30m from house station. Worked W9TE on 40 and 80m. Looked for N8KQ on 80m but no luck! 73, Ted



Great signals on 20 meters! Did not expect that. Only worked about 45 min. but great fun. TNX for those who pulled me out. QRP 5 watts with the IC7410 and 80 meter inverted vee and the Begali Sculpture Swing. W9TE was booming in on 20 in ETX. 73, Allen KA5TJS



Only operated an hour or so but did pretty well. I was only on 40m and it seemed to be very good. I heard plenty of participants but no QRN. Rig tonight was my trusty Heathkit HW-101, Vibroplex straight key, and a dipole. 73, Steve KE4OH



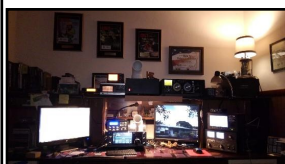
My first SKCC event log. Thank you, WB9PRG (Gene), for copying 400mW and what must have sounded like CW sent by a big toe. It was a pleasure to meet you. 73, Jack KE8AOL



73, Mark KJ4YM



From Campground: Pine Lake State Park in Iowa. 73, Gary N5PHT



Fun evening, thanks to all! 73, Rich W4RQ

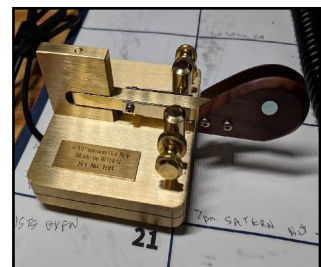


Great fun SKS. 20 was red hot all night for me. Many 599+ stations to be heard and worked. Made all of my contacts on 20. That was a first :) W9TE as booming. Looking forward to next month. 73 de N4ow AL 11375s



Wow. 40 meters was hot tonight. I had a great time. Thanks to everyone I worked and sorry if you called and I didn't get you. 73 for now and see you later. 73, Bill N0UMP

I spent most of the event calling CQ and I only had two QSOs to show for it. I realize most folks are not looking for a QRS QSO during a sprint. The 2 that I did get were nice contacts and greatly appreciated. I should be faster by the time next month's sprint is here. Still loving the TBFB Cootie Key. 73, Ken



W9TE SKCC Bonus Station



W9TE
April
SKS

Pictured are the three stations which operated simultaneously for the April 2 hour monthly sprint for the Straight Key Century Club. Operating as the Bonus Station for the event, hundreds of participants throughout North America were looking for W9TE to get the special 25 point bo-

nus for their final score. The crew from the Fort Wayne Radio Club managed to make 128 contacts during that two-hour event! (That's a little over 1 contact a minute!) The 40 meter station with a Bencher straight key, located on the left side of the picture, ran 200 watts with the Yaesu FT-1000mp into a dipole. The 20 meter station in the center of the picture with a German Junker straight key, was connected to a triband yagi powered with a Kenwood TS-590S and a Tokyo Hy-Power amp. The 80 meter station on the far right, had a simple dipole with an Elecraft K-3 and Alpha amplifier. The straight keys at that station included a Czech military key and a Vibroplex key. During the two hour event, we made contact with 38 states and 4 Canadian Provinces. Josh, W9HT, made a stellar attempt to work 160 meters but there was little to no activity there. He added three contacts to our log. When the dust settled at 10pm, we enjoyed some social time together over homemade apple crisp and ice cream. (Thanks, Josh, for making the apple crisp!) That quality time together is a reminder that this hobby is fun and a great opportunity for us to enjoy each other's company!



The W9TE SKS Crew



Don - K9LI at the 20m station



Ed- WA9BBN running 80m

Our SKS ops included: Jay - W9LW, Don - K9LI, Ed - WA9BBN, Stuart - KD9LFW, Jeff - KB9QG, Ken - N8KR, and Josh - W9HT. Stuart and Jeff are still working on cw proficiency and spent the two hours listening on a second set of headphones. They wanted to support the operation and learn from it! Hey, this is an important element of our hobby: learning from each other! I hope we can involve more in our multi operations as a club! 73, from Ken - N8KR

More April SKS



Another fun SKS!
Started on 20 and did OK but switched to 40 after about 30 minutes and despite pretty loud static did much better there. Elecraft K3 100 watts. Antennas - 20M 2 element quad, 43' vertical with remote tuner, OCF dipole and 160M horizontal loop fed with window line. I use a lot of antennas using a remote switch to pick the best one for the station I'm working. Key - Bencher RJ-2. 73, Bill NZ0T



I spent too much time looking for the bonus station and never heard him. SKS is always fun ... thanks to everyone. 73, Roger W6LAX



Great time as the bonus station! Managed 4 stations but 160 was not very productive. Finished the evening with Apple Crisp and Ice Cream and lots of great stories! Thanks all for the many contacts. 73, de the Fort Wayne Radio Club - W9TE



40 meters was phenomenal this evening and I worked all my 22 contacts there. Even found the bonus station. Ran 75 watts from my TS-590SG to a vertical. One of my better 2-hr sprint scores. 73, Curt WA2JSG

Sweet Key

Picked up this old Kent Hand Key up from SKCC Member Mark KI0I at a local Hamfest yesterday morning. Last night, I used it in a 67-minute QSO with Jerry W6RKE, towards his Marathon award. Didn't set out to participate in a marathon ragchew, but we got to chatting about our somewhat shared professions, and who watches the clock during a nice conversation anyway?



Historical Key

Saturday W7HMY presented me with his first straight key from his Novice days more than 50 years ago. Now for the historical part. This key came from the SS Morro Castle. If you search the internet for the ship you will see it was built in 1930. It caught fire in 1934 and was beached on the shore of New Jersey.

Not waiting until I had time to properly add the wiring you can see in the picture I got it on the air with jumpers. First contact from my shack was a WES station.

Second contact was with WA1WCC/100RCA special event station operating from the 100 year old radio shack of the Marconi built Maritime Coastal Station, WCC. The operator was the last station manager of WCC. It has not been confirmed however, this key may have made contact

with WCC in the 1930s when it was in commercial service. 73, Jim W1RO



How I Learned the Code

I realize that groups such as ours are the only means of bringing those licensees with no cw experience 'up to speed', no pun intended. We (and other groups) provide an on the air environment for new cw users to practice cw and to learn the basic cw qso procedures. This is important work.

Towards that end, I'd like to share with members who are struggling to learn the code with an alternative means to learn the code. Using the following method back in the early 70's, I went from 0 WPM to 10 WPM in 10 days. And, in the next 3 months, I was solidly copying 18 WPM. When I got my novice license in '71, I was copying 18 WPM also. Thus, by the time I was first licensed as a novice, I needed a keyer right away, and in fact the number of qso's I made with a SK was probably less than 10 or 15 during my entire amateur radio tenure. The SK was nearly useless for me because it couldn't send as fast as I could copy, so I never learned to send on an SK because, from day 1, I used the iambic keyer instead.

Anyway, here's how I learned the code, I was blindly following my Elmers instructions.

I was told to listen to cw at 25 to 30 WPM, NEVER as speeds less than that. And, I would concentrate on copying a few different letters at each practice session. As the cw was sent, I noted only instances of those letters. I learned to skip over other letters that I couldn't recognize-without lingering on them. If I didn't recognize a particular letter, it was not copied and there was no pressure to copy every letter. So, I would sit, listing to high speed cw, making marks on a paper each time a specific letter was heard and DISREGARDING everything else!! This taught me to NOT count dits and dahs, and instead learn just by the sound of the letter.

Technically, the procedure I used might (mistakenly) called Farnsworth. However, it is not Farnsworth! Farnsworth does use faster letter speeds, but generally not fast enough so the student can't count dits and dahs. The method I used was 25 to 30 WPM, with letter rates at 30 WPM and word space and letter spacing also at 25 to 30 WPM.

I have never heard of anyone using the method I used, but it worked for me and it worked well. Learning cw with this method was painless, literally....because it doesn't challenge the student to copy every word or letter in the beginning (early stages) of the cw learning process.

So, in closing.....when I joined the SKCC, I had no experience with a SK! And, with an SK (actually 1/2 of a Bencher paddle) that I am currently using, I can't go any faster than about 14 WPM without having the fist suffer::> So, my only option is to learn to use a Cootie-in the early days I tried very hard to use bugs, something about them didn't sit well with me. So.....I have trained my body and mind to use iambic paddles/keyer for the last 48 years, and I'm not sure I can learn to use a Cootie key! I'm sure my cw will sound like crap once I begin to use the Cootie. Time will tell.

I hope the information about the method I used to learn cw is helpful and I invite discussion within the group about it. Email me in private if you have comments or questions.

Regards,

Art,
W1ABA 20177t

They Are Not All "5NN TU" QSOs

When I got started, I was in Walter French Junior High School in Lansing, MI. I ran into Bob Noonan and we had been to a YMCA Summer camp together. Bob's dad, Shorty, had heard about a local radio club, the Central Michigan Amateur Radio Club and invited me to go with Bob and him. At that meeting, Ben, W8VPC, announced that they were going to have a Novice Class licensing class at Lansing Eastern High School and Bob & I signed up. Between Shorty & my mom, we went there. Besides Ben, there were two other instructors, Sunny, KH6ALN, and Harmon, W8DJN. Harmon, who later went by Dale, becoming W4DQS, then W4QM, plus VQ9QM and numerous other DX calls. I am sure you have worked Dale from more than one QTH/DX call. I have kept in touch with Ben & Dale all these 62 years until we lost Ben to SK about three years back. It was always neat to work Dale through his BIG pile ups and have him say "HI JOE" from where ever he was and to where ever I was, K8, VP5, V31, etc.

If you have a December, 1969 issue of QST, CQ, HAM RADIO or 73 magazine, there is a Signal One full page advertisement with me in it. I had won the first Signal One CX7 at the Louisville Hamkenvention. When they opened the envelope with the winning ticket, Dale & I were standing together just outside the doors to the ballroom where the dinner and prize drawing was held! I did not hear my name, but heard "P O Box 288 Holt Michigan." Harmon said, "Joe, that's you!" I had been following the ads since they first announced that radio, but could never dream of affording one at that time, \$ \$ \$ \$!

Of course, running the pile ups myself, it is great to run into old friends calling. Sometimes you get into machine mode and it's a 5NN TU over & over. If you skip over an old friend, it is not intentional, but just being into "Machine mode." It happens when you get over a million QSOs in your logs. I remember a few "next mornings" looking over the previous night's logs and thinking, did I remember to say "HI" to someone special I saw in there!

Yes, I have slowed down. I bought a bike to exercise with, nothing fancy. But, the triple bypass was not like a car accident, but more like being run over by a tank! The cardiologist got involved when I went in with phenomena and messed up my pain meds! I think I got them back to normal this past week and starting to feel nearer to normal. I heard yesterday, my sister-in-law from my first marriage passed away and she was only 63! I just hope I can run CW until the end and keep my error rate low.

73, K8JoePalooka 3171t

More Books for Interesting Reading



Fiction books for young readers. They all came out in 1922, except for the Telegraph Boy, which was published in 1888, even before radio telegraph was invented. These were high-tech themed adventure stories!

April Brag Results



Had a lot of fun completing the 3 Key and I would like to thank all who showed patience while I learned the Bug and the Cootie, to whatever degree that I did. Also tried to spread around AR-S to some who were calling CQ. Thankful for the medium of SKCC for being a good place to learn and practice the art of CW. 73, Jim K5TSK



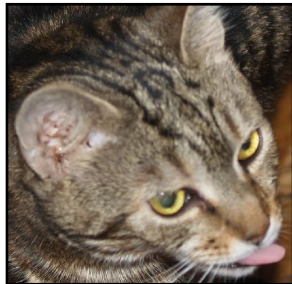
Antenna is a Flagpole. Not what you call something to brag about. But, you do what you gata do. I just hit 30 for the month. That's it, That's All! I'm all thru playen - Now! 73, Chuck K9IA



My first effort at the Monthly Brag. Looking forward to many more. 73, Rod KN3ZOG



Missed my one-a-day routine by a little this month, but not by much. Made most of my contacts using my TS-590SG, and spent a few days portable with my IC-7000. If you are planning on attending the Dayton Hamvention, be sure to stop by the SKCC booth, esp that Saturday for a group photo shoot. 73, Curt WA2JSG



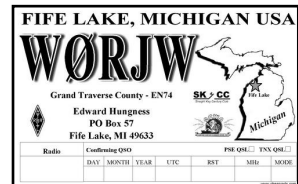
I admit it, I am still having fun! 73, Tom KB3CVO



Happy to get Mike, W15H for the bonus. Another fun month of bragging and meeting new members of SKCC. Best wishes to the Dayton SKCC crew. It was fun working the booth last year and I will be back in 2020. 73 de AL, N4ow 11375s



A pretty good month. 45 in WES, 33 during the month and a couple of duplicates and one non member. May probably won't be quite so large. Kids are throwing my bride and I a 50th wedding party up state a bit so I will probably be off the air a bit. Thanks to all who worked me during the month and during the WES. 73,



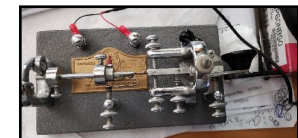
Thanks to all for the Brag QSO's. Always fun and a great way meet more CW enthusiasts. 73, Ed W0RJW



Nice to make contacts with a number of newer members. Watching the group grow has been awesome! Love helping others help gain their confidence with CW. Onward! Received a "new" to me "plain jane" gray base 1968 Vibroplex Champion this past month. Using W7IS Extend-a-Dot to tame those dits to send QRS. Working like a Champ...no pun intended. HI HI 73, Jack KK01



This is my first Brag submission. I really enjoyed working old SKCC friends and making new ones! Most of my QSOs were on 40m and 30m. Thanks for the contacts, guys! 73 es ZUT de Chip W9EBE



Not a bad month especially for being in the Hospital for a week with my cancer surgery. Now working with the Bug for the tripple award Tnx to all I worked. 73, Greg WA3GM

ED...Here is a great project for you to gather parts this summer and get ready for a great fall project. Mike AB3AP will walk you through from start to finish on an old classic that many of us started out on. Hmm, it's also perfect for the NRR! Thanks Mike for the article

An Ameco AC-1T Replica

Mike Markowski, AB3AP

May 2019

Faux Nostalgia

When I got my electrical engineering degree in the 1980s, only solid state circuits were taught with vacuum tubes mentioned as a historical footnote. Though I enjoyed shortwave listening since a kid, it wasn't till years later that I became a ham at age 40 in 2003. To this day, as we all do, I continue learning and enjoying various facets of ham radio, improving CW, and as money allows improving my station. Eventually, I reached the point where vacuum tubes interested me. Hams would talk warmly, pardon the pun, of tubes, describe them by mysterious model numbers, compare tube circuits, and generally talk of them as old friends. I was intrigued, and started reading some ARRL Handbooks from the 1960s on bookshelves in our electronics lab at work.

That led to restoring some old Heathkit gear, a DX-60B transmitter, HR-10B receiver, and HG-10B VFO. Restoration included replacing electrolytic capacitors, restringing dial cords, replacing tubes, realigning, and so on. The newly functioning gear is shown below.

Rebuilding and fixing old kits made me wish I could experience building something similar from scratch. I don't have nostalgia for ham radio gear (yet!) because I became a ham later in life. But to vicariously experience the nostalgia of days gone by in ham radio, I joined the Facebook group "Vintage Ham Radio Advertisements" and enjoy browsing old ads.

Through some sequence of mouse clicks I joined the Facebook group "Novice Rig Up" as well, where an operator posted a photo of his newly built Ameco AC-1T transmitter kit. This simple rig was captivating enough that I Googled, found a ham who creates an impressive replica, and bought one. The Ameco AC-1T replica kit is available from The New Ameco, a business run by Kostadin Stojanov, KY6AA. Kosta is extremely helpful, a model ham. At last, the chance to solder together a point-to-point kit!

The Ameco AC-1T is a simple circuit, ideal for the young ham of the 1950s and 1960s just getting his feet wet. Joe Fell, W3GMS has an extensive collection of both vintage gear and periodicals. The oldest AC-1 advertisement he is able to find is from the 1957 Walter Ashe catalog. The catalog cover and ad are pictured here.



Figure 1: 1960s line of Heathkit gear, newly restored.

found and Round-

A later ad, probably from the late 1960s shows a complete Ameco station, an AC-1T transmitter coupled to an R-5A receiver. I've never heard an R-5A but have read that the Heathkit HR-10, itself not a lovingly described receiver, will significantly outperform the R-5A. Despite that, I will likely be tempted pick up an R-5A at some point, in large part due to the appeal of the following ad. I must be a sucker for good marketing.

Just Getting Started In Ham Radio?

If your interest in ham radio has only recently developed you already know by now that there are hundreds of brands of equipment from which to choose. Some costly... some not too costly. For years, Ameco equipment has appealed to the beginner because of its modest price, yet with engineering and manufacturing quality you would expect to find in really expensive gear. Read about our All Wave Receiver and Novice Transmitter below, then visit our site Ameco catalog to get complete specifications on these and other modern priced items.

Model R-5A All Wave Receiver

An exceptionally fine receiver for the short wave listener and beginning amateur operator. Fully transistorized and solid state. Covers 54 Mc through 5.4 Mc on five continuous bands. Includes standard broadcast bands, all foreign broadcast bands, all amateur bands from 160 through 6 meters, all 7, 12, 17, and 30 Mc. Includes all 25 year radio frequencies from 30 to 30 Mc including "Dial" Frequencies and Call Frequencies. Controls include head, Preselector for external "C" multiplier. Compare with tube-type sets costing as much!

Wired and tested
Battery operated kit (performs operation from 1.5 VDC or eight "C" cells) \$ 9.95

Model AC-1 Novice CW Transmitter Kit

The ideal kit for the beginner who requires a reliable TVI suppressed transmitter. Features a fully controlled CW crystal controlled PI output and a crystal controlled AC Power Supply. For 40 and 80 meters. CW. Fifteen watts input. Kit is simple to build and easy to operate.

Kit with coil for any 1 band, including tubes \$29.95
Extra coil kit for any 1 band, CK 11.00

Ameco Books and Records

How to Build a Ham Radio Station \$1.95
The ABC's of the Radio, Television, Computer and the Internet \$1.95
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The ABC's of the Radio, Television, Computer and the Internet \$1.95

Division of Aerotron, Inc.
P.O. Box 6527 Raleigh, North Carolina 27608

Walter Ashe for '57

RADIO, TV & ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT
FOR AMATEURS • SCHOOLS • INDUSTRY • EXPERIMENTERS • TECHNICIANS
WALTER ASHE RADIO CO., 1125 PINE STREET, ST. LOUIS 1, MO., CHESTNUT 1-1125

AMECO

NOVICE

TRANSMITTER KIT

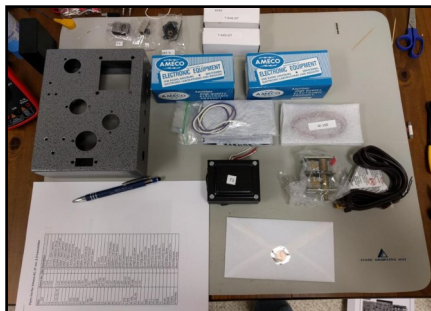
New



CW crystal controlled transmitter for 80 and 40 meters, input 15 watts. Kit includes heavy-duty transformer-choke power supply and PI section output circuit to work with any length wire for antenna. One plug-in coil with enough wire to wind either 80 or 40 meter coil. Uses 6V6 oscillator and 6X5 rectifier. Complete with all parts, simplified and educational instructions. Size: 6x8x2 1/2". Grey hammertone finish. Less tubes and crystal. Shpg. Wgt. 6 lbs.
MODEL AC-1. Net.....\$ 16.95
Extra Coil Form and Wire..... .50

Let's move on to construction. Kosta's kit is painstakingly created, right down to replica Ameco parts boxes! It really ads to the fun of building the kit and feeling that you're stepping back in time. Parts are clearly labeled and instructions are near-duplicate of the originals, which can be found online. There are also minor updates for easier integration into the modern shack, like an SO-239 antenna connector and an 1/8" mono straight key connector.

Before construction is underway, the silver hammer finish paint job must be removed around the mounting area of parts like tube sockets and transformer so that all will share a common ground.

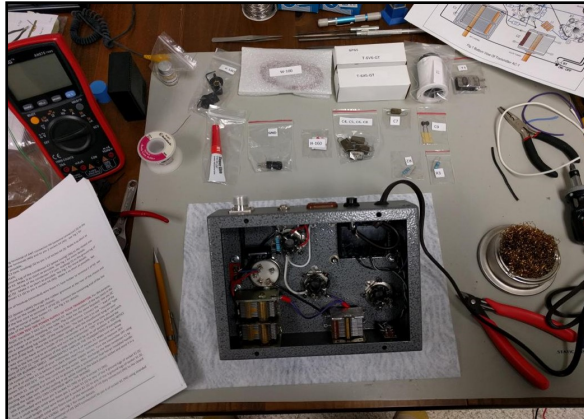


We all have different strengths and weaknesses. Applying the decals was one of the more challenging steps for me. Have I positioned scales properly, are decals level, symmetrical, etc.? Finally, I was happy with placement and carefully clear coated them with 2 or 3 light coats. I recommend placing the chassis with decals facing the ceiling, parallel with the floor, so that clear coating lays evenly on top and there is no risk of the clear coat liquid sliding decals off their backing.



Finally, I was happy with placement and carefully clear coated them with 2 or 3 light coats. I recommend placing the chassis with decals facing the ceiling, parallel with the floor, so that clear coating lays evenly on top and there is no risk of the clear coat liquid sliding decals off their backing.

At last, the fun of construction begins. Tube sockets, capacitors, transformer, terminal strip and other connectors are bolted into place. Now, interconnections and passive components are soldered into place.



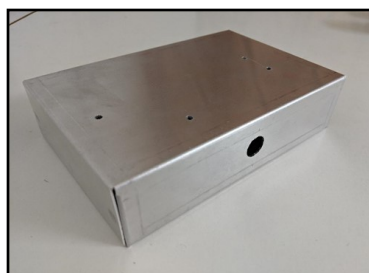
Check all your connections against the schematic. Satisfied all is well? Take a break and recheck in a different order! Now you're ready for the smoke test. Hook up a dummy load, ideally along with an SWR meter. Or you can go truly retro and use the light bulb technique described in the instructions. You should get about 5 Watts out or so, and are now ready to get on the air – almost.

T/R Switch

Unless you have a transmit/receive switch, you need to build one. It does nothing more than interconnect your antenna with either the transmitter or the receiver. Some operators prefer to mute the receiver when the antenna is connected to the transmitter. I prefer not to because it allows me to hear the transmitter on the receiver at the expense of turning down RF gain before keying the transmitter. Doing it this offers added benefits of hearing, in the case of the AC-1T and other single tube transmitter circuits, how chirpy it is and also of tuning your receiver to your transmit frequency.

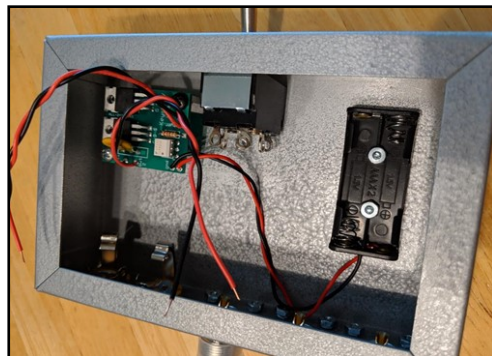
There is another consideration that Mark K3MSB brought to my attention. Because the AC-1T is cathode keyed, high voltage exists across you straight key contacts. This is not only hard on your key contacts, but imagine grabbing your key one hot, sweaty summer day to move it on your desk. If you brush both contacts you will get quite the wake up.

The T/R switch is a simple build. Because it is QRP and because I wanted a simple set up that you might have found in a Novice shack a half century ago, I used a toggle switch. A SPDT is fine, but I had a DPDT and used that. Verify that whatever you use has more than enough current handling capability. To key the rig at low voltage I bought WB9KZY's Keyall kit, whose price is a bargain.



First, I measured and drilled holes in an aluminum project box.

Next, I applied a spray paint hammer finish, and applied water slide decals. Decal paper costs about \$1/sheet. Immediately after printing on an ink jet printer, they must be clear coated several times. Do this *before* cutting them to size. If you cut them first, the clear coat will drip down the sides and you will never get them to slide off backing. Once placed, clear coat the box just like you did the AC-1T chassis. Remember that if you want white text like the AC-1T you must buy special white ink cartridges because color ink can't be used to create white. With chassis looking good, put the connectors in place.



Now solder the wiring and Keyall

I simply connected ground tabs together of the SO-239s and also on the 1/8" mono connectors. With everything in place, my wife took photos of voltage across my straight key contacts when connected directly to the AC-1T and then when connected to the Keyall.

160 V vs. 2.2 V! I feel much better with it in place. Note, too, that you can use the Keyall with any vintage rig, allowing you to use an external keyer if you choose. Most keyers otherwise will let out smoke if connected directly to a cathode keyed rig.



Voltage on the key **before** Keyall installed



Voltage on the key **after** Keyall installed

On the Air!



It's one thing to build a rig and test it with a dummy load, but quite another making that first contact. I tried for an evening or two with no luck and was disappointed, needless to say. But conditions changed and suddenly my chirpy AC-1T attracted a string of QSOs. Ah, happiness. As luck would have it, my first contact was with SKCC member Barry WB1CPY, a Novice licensee according to qrz.com. Must have been fate to contact a Novice on my new Novice station!

I suspect that there is some appeal with minimalism to many CW operators. If you count yourself in that camp, I can't recommend enough building some sort of simple rig, whether it's completely homebrew from an ARRL Handbook, your own design, or a kit like this. As hams, we all have some understanding of RF communication and principles, but putting something on the air that you sweated over is close to magic.

73, Mike AB3AP 2607s

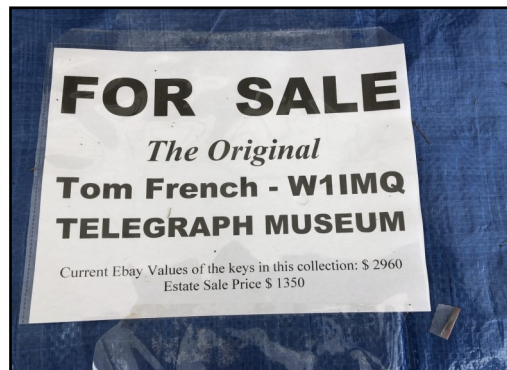
NEAR-Fest 2019

Although the weather wasn't perfect, the Spring NEAR-Fest (New England Amateur Radio - Fest) came off very well with many radios and accessories changing hands and a more than a few boat anchors likely changing harbors! The NEAR-Fest is held every spring and fall at the Deerfield, NH, fair grounds and draws thousands of hams from the New England region and our Canadian neighbors.

From the SKCC perspective, saw several members and caught a few with the camera including Barry (NF1O) and his wife Mary (NE1F), Mike (K1SLT), John (W1TAG) and Dave (KB1WOD).



Also met Tom Perera (W1TP) at the show and marveled at his old (some Civil War-era old!) keys and great reference material on all things telegraph. His information on QRZ is impressive, and his on-line key museum (located at <http://w1tp.com>) where you will find extensive photos, data and further links to telegraph collectors and collections around the world.



TOM FRENCH W1IMQ TELEGRAPH MUSEUM DISPLAY	
Estate Sale	
(Boxes of keys from left to right and low values)	
Civil War Camelback Key/Sounder	\$ 175
Bunnell Slide-switch	\$ 200
Bunnell Key & Sounder	\$ 50
Lang Key	\$ 40
Swedish Key	\$ 150
WW-I Military J2 Wireless Key	\$ 50
Triumph Key	\$ 35
polycharger Key	\$ 50
Early Clapp Eastman Spark key	\$ 150
Western Electric Miniature Key	\$ 45
SE-68 WW-I Spark Key	\$ 350
RCW WW-I Spark Key	\$ 100
Bunnell Wireless Key	\$ 60
Holladay Chromo-base key	\$ 60
Very Early Vibroplex "original"	\$ 175
Bunnell "old bug"	\$ 350
Early MacEroy Semi-Automatic	\$ 175
Early Speedo Semi-Automatic	\$ 100
Rare Electro-Bug Semi-Automatic	\$ 200
Navy WW-II flameproof key	\$ 35
WW-II key made by Lionel toy co.	\$ 35
J-51 Remote hand key	\$ 55
WW-II navy key	\$ 35
WW-II J-7a Military key & Winker	\$ 65
WW-II J-37 Military key	\$ 25
WW-II Canadian Field set key	\$ 45
WW-II British Bathub key	\$ 65
WW-II Canadian Field set key	\$ 35
WW-II British miniature key	\$ 30
TOTAL	\$ 2940
COMPLETE MUSEUM ESTATE PRICE:	\$ 1350

Tom is not, at present, a member of SKCC I extended an invitation to him and hope he will soon apply for membership. I know he would fit right in with our great group of manual CW practitioners and offer all of us another expert reference to the past that we honor with our fists to this day.

73, from Deerfield, NH
 Larry N1FG
 SKCC 16270S

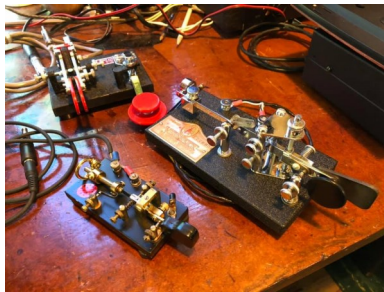
The ENSOR PARK and MUSEUM

Ed...Do you know about The Ensor Park and Museum, Doug N3PDT does. Follow along on Doug's adventure and history presentation of this little known amateur radio landmark.



Historic ENSOR PARK & MUSEUM

Open to the Public
May, June,
September and October
Saturday & Sunday
1 PM to 5 PM



Station keys

Getting ready to activate W9BSP, the Ensor Park and Museum, SKCC #19301. So many choices! I bring my own key usually.

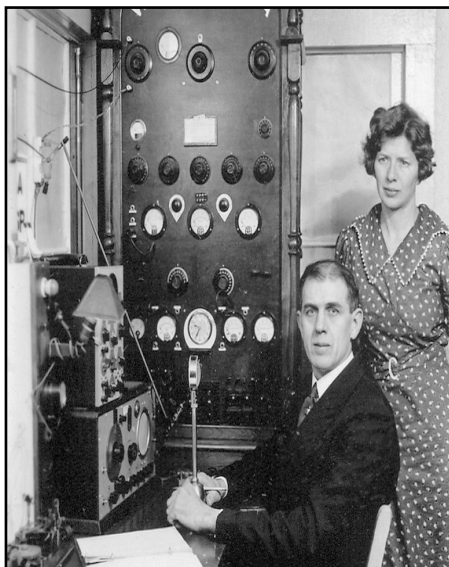
Today was the first day of the season at the museum and it was nice to see everyone again. I only operated for about an hour, and a somewhat dis-



N3PDT key

tracted one at that. I did make five contacts, three of them with SKCC members. If you haven't already, please take a look at the museum's website <http://ensorparkandmuseum.org>. The Ensors were amazing people, and their gifts to early amateur radio, legion...73, Doug N3PDT

The **Ensor Park and Museum** is a dairy farm museum located in Olathe, Kansas, near the southern edge of the Kansas City metro area. This **National Historic Site** was the home of two generations of the Ensor (pronounced En-zer) family.



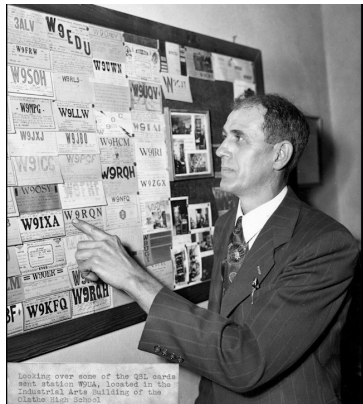
An iconic 90-foot-high radio tower next to the home relates to special historic amateur radio work done over a span of 50 years during the lives of Marshall H. Ensor and his sister Loretta Ensor. Among the fascinating achievements of Mr. Ensor, [1899-1970] to whom this site is dedicated, was his lifelong interest in teaching others.



His father passed on to him an introduction to construction tools and methods while making improvements to the family farm house and making new out buildings as young Marshall became a teenager. In high school Marshall excelled beyond others in the Industrial Arts courses.

Marshall become an instructor of Industrial Arts at the Olathe, Kansas, high School at age 18 upon his graduation. That job lasted 46 years until his retirement in 1965. His thousands of students benefited from the many courses that enabled them to find work just out of school.

The American Radio Relay League nominated Marshall H. Ensor for the 1940 "Wm. S. Paley Award" for his extraordinary work in "**Teaching Radio by Radio**"- also the title of his Masters thesis that same year. The award was given to radio amateurs who performed a particular service of their own desire and for the welfare of our country. Mr. Ensor received the 1940



Paley Award at a huge ceremony in New York City at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel Ballroom with many dignitaries attending. His sister, Loretta, was flown there since she, also a



licensed radio operator, helped on occasion to fill in for Marshall so that no evening was omitted during the 1929 to 1940 series of lessons given annually from the radio room each evening during two winter months.



A radio shack was built on to the house by Marshall and is the radio shack used today for various operations by guest amateurs.

The kilowatt amplifier has been refurbished and is working today.



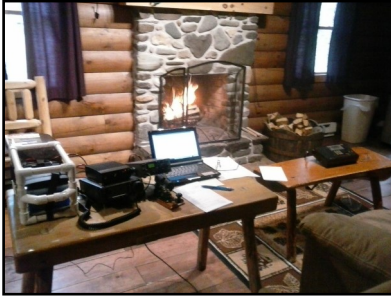
Many local am-



ateurs operate from Ensor Park and Museum for Field Day and it was even the site of a small hamfest! Doug has operated several times from this location and your editor has been pushing him to mount a serious effort for some WES where W9BSP could be the bonus station. Perhaps members of the Missouri Outlaws Club could head an effort? There is no doubt that call would draw huge pileups of SKCCers trying to work this station. What say Doug and you Outlaws?

At the very least, anyone traveling in this area should plan a visit and an operation.

Shack? Ha...I Don't Think So!



These were my QRP operating conditions in New Hampshire this weekend. I successfully made one contact (France TM6M) but it wasn't for a lack of effort. Several SKCCers tried to call me on Friday evening with no success. When I looked on Saturday morning, my wire antenna had all but fallen to the ground. :- (I fixed it on Saturday morning, but the conditions overall were not favorable for QRP .

I enjoyed a couple of Breakfast Stouts from those Adirondack chairs. 73, Andy KB1OIQ

Something Old...Something New?

Here is an ad for something very old, but could it be used as something new? I have never seen this device but I sure have some ideas on trying it out in today's hamshack. It most likely could not be used for transmitting but I wonder how it might be used as a receiving antenna especially on 80 and 160 meters where we make special efforts to build elaborate receiving antennas(it was used for the broadcast band).

Could this device be like tapping into the common ground on today's three-way plugs? Does this device have an impedance issue you would have to deal with? Would there be some sort of safety issue need to protect today's modern transceivers (I would think most definitely!). At any rate unless someone can come across one of these devices we'll probably never know the answer to these questions, but then isn't that what we hams do...dream and experiment to have the best station we can possible put together?

If you have one of these and want to part with it, I'd gladly offer my station to experiment with it!

73, Ted K8AQM 1629s

So practical—so convenient

The Dubilier Ducon is the standard socket-plug.
It takes the place of the cumbersome, unsightly antenna.

Simply screw the Ducon in any lamp-socket and connect it with the radio set. Not only are the broadcasting stations heard clearly, but tuning is sharper.

Dubilier Condenser and Radio Corporation
48-50 West Fourth Street New York

Dubilier Ducon
Socket Plug

Dubilier Micaron
The Standard First Order

Dubilier Vocatron
Variable Area Condenser

Dubilier Detatron
Radio Frequency Transformer

DUBILIER
Devices

May WES



Daytime conditions were generally poor. 40 meters in the late afternoon and evening saved the contest. Very few really loud signals during the day. 40 meters was actually dead during part of the day. Only three DX stations worked: F6EJN, F5UQE, and CS7AFI. Multipliers were tough to get because of lack of propagation to the 7th call area. Despite the challenges it was another fun WES. Some of the QRP QSOs were quite challenging. The photo shows my set up in my basement.... this needs some work. Next project is to install an antenna switching network. 73, Bob AC1GF



This was my first WES. Had a great time. And used vintage gear for the entire contest. Used my Collins 32S-3 & 75S3-C along with the Collins 30L-1 Amp. Included a picture of the station. I used an old TAC Streamkey. It's not in very good condition LOL. 73, Steve K2FW



Played a little bit on Sunday evening. All QSOs on 40m. YouKits HB-1B with 4 watts to an end-fed wire. Key is Vibroplex Vibrokeyer wired as side-swiper. 73, Steve AI9IN



Very hard going with poor propagation. Thanks to IK5IIS Fabi, F6EJN Bob and G4PVM Paul, for my three QSO's. 73, John - G0RDO



73, Paul K1TB



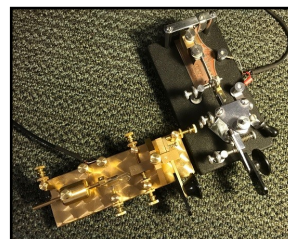
Caught the last 10 minutes of the WES. Used the key from my Novice days. 73, Jeff KA1DBE



Good fun and challenging. K2 running 5watts to a wire dipole on 20m and an end fed wire for 40m and 80m. Bands weren't great but I managed a handful of contacts so I'm happy. See you next month! 73, Peter



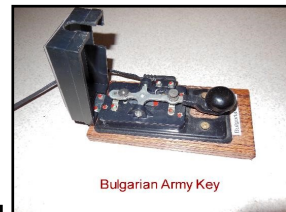
Few 599 reports propagation was somewhat lacking as usually but geomagnetic noise was quite low. Only had Sunday to operate. Had a blast as always with SKCC ops. 73, Mike K1EEE



K3 to 53' Unun stealth wire up and over the garage (HOA Restrictions) with dueling bugs - 1945 Lightning vs. 2017 90 degree VizBug -- set for different speeds to accommodate stations worked. Limited time and even more limited band conditions this weekend, but still fun. Thanks for patient and skilled ops. 73 ... Don K3RLL



I was on a mission trip to southern Haiti working on the Radio Lumiere broadcast transmitters in Torbeck. Ham radio was holiday style at our Guest House in Les Cayes. We had a simple dipole as our antenna. We left Saturday at noon so I had very limited time for the WES, but managed 3 QSOs. My "Key" was a Bencher Paddle used on it's side with the "Key Type" on the radio set for Straight Key. 73, Mark HH6/K3MSB



We had to work hard for every QSO. Not as many operating this time. Search and pounce was the only way to go and I had my spectrum scope at maximum sensitivity to see the weak signals. Not good conditions for QRP. 73, Bob K3CKO

More May WES



We had a weekend away scheduled long ago this weekend, with a bunch of friends, but I couldn't not participate in the QRP WES, since I wanted the experience of getting all those extras points for just doing what I always do... except instead of my wonderful antennas at home, I had to make do with a 40M dipole up about ten feet. (It didn't match on 20M, so it will have 11' added to each leg.) Plus, I had to steal time away to grab a little radio time, now and again. We came home Sunday, so I got in a few hours with the real antlers, only to find band conditions... less than optimal. The sked page was very entertaining, with regards to attitude toward QRP. The portable antenna is shown below, at the upper left corner. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



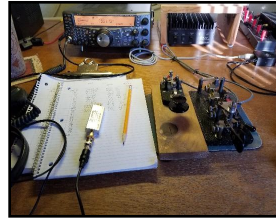
Greetings: It was a Great WES! It combined my two favorite Ham Radio activities: CW and QRP. The Rig is HB-1B Running 5W into Dipole antenna at 25' in the attic. Thank you all, and especially ones who picked my weak QRP signal. De KD9EBS 73! 72



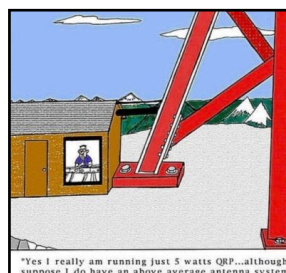
Reached my 20. That's it -- I'm done! 5w to a flag-pole and tough Band conditions are not so good together. My thanks and apologies to all who had to struggle to hear me. QRP is great for the sender but not always for the receiver. 73, Chuck K9IA



Life only left enough time for 5 new bug QSOs, but that was enough to use my new bargain basement heavy weight on my old Cedar Rapids bug. Turns out a 5/8 inch shaft collar from the local hardware was a perfect fit on the old cylindrical weight and slowed the bug down to about 10 to 20 WPM from about twice that fast. Worth a try, especially if you have cylindrical weights to start with. 73, Scott ka9p



Striving for 5,000 total logged QSO's (all modes) since moving here 5 years ago, I picked the wrong SKCC theme before pulling the plug and taking the tower down, QRO it was. I am planning to relocate and the home goes on the market soon. When the WES started, I was at 4,958 Q's. I decided QRO was best. Managed 21 WES QSO's and a big Es opening on 10 & 6 Meters (evil FT8 mode) helped push my total over 5,000. I have had a ball here in AZ and hope to return soon in a new state. Dang it! WAS all over again. Did WAS here on CW. 73 CU all again. 73, Art KA5DWI PS... the RTL-SDR did not play in this event :)



*Yes I really am running just 5 watts QRP...although I suppose I do have an above average antenna system.

Enjoyable WES. 40 Good Saturday night, 20 good Sunday. Nice N/S opening to Walt, LW3EX on 10. Super treat to work him again. Good luck to the Dayton SKCC booth crew. I will be back in 2020, if breathing :) 73 de AL, N4ow 11375s



Great event! Decided to buckle it down to 1w and a wire, made a few nice contacts on Saturday with good reports. Sunday was Frustration City, even for 1w. Never appeared on CW Club RBN but finally made 3 spots (4 and 8dB) on RBN mid-afternoon Sunday. Overall a very pleasant challenge, will rinse and repeat. Very much appreciation for my contacts on the other end. Special acknowledgement added for those who couldn't copy but made efforts beyond the call of duty trying to copy at 1w! Awesome! 73, Cray K5MUG



Playing radio in between all the weekend running around... Which did not leave much time... Tnx to all who participate. 73, Randy N8KQ



DX PROP still AWOL. TA33 - 50W - HM DSK & Junker Kriegsmarine Thank you everyone for the QSOs BCNU 73, Walt- ...- ZUT

More May WES



I went with a full gallon, 5W QRP and my noisy inverted L. The bands, 40M & 20M were pretty good for most of WES. I did 90% S&P with nice results for the time I had open to operate.

Only WK4WC and N8ZIP didn't hear my pipsqueek sigs.

From Left to Right:

1 - SideSwiper (Modified Vibroplex VibroKeyer).

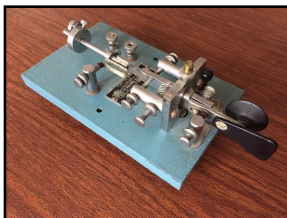
Flat thumb pieces on both sides and I find it easier to operate left handed (I am right handed).

2 - Nye SpeedX Straight Key

3 - Bencher Paddle (Not used in WES)

4 - Vibroplex 1977 Original Deluxe

Used all but Paddle during this WES. Thanks for all the QSO's - Take Care es 73, Rick N8XI



During most of this sprint I used a TAC (McElroy) CP-510 "Hole in the wall" bug that belonged to my cousin, K0SSN (SK), in memory of his 76th birthday (May 16). 73, Chuck N10C



I consider this not bad for only being able to put in less than 8 hrs. I got one new State and 4 new numbers toward my Centurion award. My rig is an IC-7300 into an AHA-4 remote tuner with a long wire (100 ft) at 25 ft from my roof to a tree in the WSW corner of my property. I did the whole event at 80 watts using my new W1SFR handmade TBFB "Fat Boy" Cootie Key. I Love this thing! Just 16 #s to go to get my letter "C". 73, Ken N9KJU



Being sick over the weekend, I made only 4 QSOs but all QRP with my IC-7300 set below 5 watts. One QSO with AD5A was done outdoor with my FT-818ND running the internal battery and MFJ whip antenna. The band condition of 20M this time was not favorable for QRP I guess, while everyone was trying QRP maybe hi hi. The photo is my multi-band wire bent dipole antenna at my QTH. 73, Yoon KM6KJI



I wanted to try out a portable antenna. I used a Buddipole shock cord whip (around 10 feet long) and a couple of 32-inch 'arms' with a short loading coil (very short --I only need a couple of turns), with two elevated radials. It worked pretty well, but band condx seemed a little iffy. Rig was a KX3 at 5 watts. 73, Marty N9SE



It was a fun WES! Sure was tempting to use the beam but I stuck to QRP and wires/vertical. Used my little QRP Labs QCX at 4 watts with a J-38 for 99% of my 40 meter QSOs. Used my Elecraft K3 at 5 watts with a Bencher RJ-2 for 20 meters and a few 80 meter QSOs. Antennas used were a 80-6M OCF dipole, full wave horizontal 160M loop fed with window line and a 43' vertical with remote tuner. Thanks to all who responded to my QRP signal! 73, Bill NZ0T



Argo 6 418 amp 80wts g5rv 35ft n/s inv vee.. tnx for board mbrs work..always nice to SKCC mbrs raising up.. cu ltr 73, Dave n9zxlqrp@gmail.com



A QRP theme is great, but I suggest changing it so that the station working a QRP gets the bonus. Similar to most other theme events to date. This would give an incentive to listen for and work the weaker stations. QRN was pretty bad this time around due to storms in my area all weekend. Still worked plenty of stations. This WES, I used my Heathkit SB-101 with SB-640 external LMO. Tried to use a Speed-X straight key that I just can't seem to get adjusted the way I like. I gave up and switched to a Navy flameproof key for most of my QSOs. 73, Steve KE4OH



QRV with the Yeasu 901DM 100w with the handmade (ON4)MAC key. 73, Joop PA3JD

More, More May WES!



Fun trying to make all QRP contacts, had some high local noise Saturday but scored a few QRP contacts on Sunday, used 5W out on tuner meter into vertical or dipole. Thanks all es 73, Jack VE6CCM from AB.



Poor band conditions but fun all the same. Thank you to everyone who participated. 73, Roger W6LAX



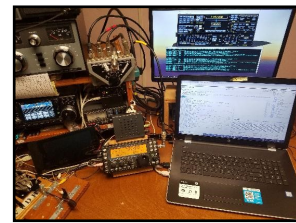
Which rig to use? Decisions, decisions! 73, Jeff WN1MB



First contest I ever participated in. Been a QRP CW rag chewer all my life. Fun but a bit more like work than suits me. 73, Michael W4MHZ



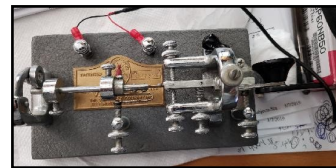
In and out all weekend, but managed 18 contacts using my old IC-703 at 5 watts. Fun time. 73, Curt WA2JSG



Ok, I don't know if all of the weak signals were because everyone was running QRP or if it was band conditions. But it sure was a lot of fun. I was using my new KX3 with an end fed Zep, vertical Buddipole and the 160 meter doublet. My key was half of a cootie. I taped off one side and used only one side as a straight key but sideways. It worked really well. Thanks to everyone who was able to pull out my weak signal and to the organizers of the event. It was a lot of fun. The very best 72/73 from Wild and Wonderful West Virginia, Dave



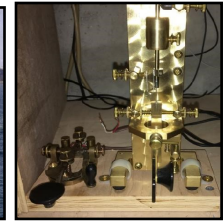
I really enjoyed operating W6DDG, the USS Towers (DDG-9) Amateur Radio Club, this weekend. Thanks to those who copied my rusty fist. 73, John-W8ES/W6DDG



Fun time working the WES with the BUG. Hopefully I will get better with time but really like the bug. Just home from the hospital after cancer surgery so I could not play as much as I wanted. 73, Greg WA3GM



Too many projects this weekend so I only made 2 contacts but I really like this month's theme since I do QRP almost all the time anyway This month I used my "new" 1940 Vibroplex Champion and Flex 3000 at 5 watts into a dipole at 30 feet. Thanks for being patient and pulling put my puny-weak QRP signal. 73, Kerry WD5ABC 73, Kerry, WD5ABC



Limited time this weekend due to company and Mother's Day. Conditions weren't great, but seemed to get better on Sunday afternoon. Lots of QRN in the evening, though, so missed some weak-signal calls. Wish more folks would actually click "Back" on the Sked Page. Nice to work a bunch of >20,000 SKCC numbers. Thanks to all who participated. 73, John W1TAG



Fun. Still learning! Hope to work more next month. 73, James WD0JB



J38 Restoration

Recent restoration of a Lionel J-38. Picked up at Claremore, Ok hamfest last month. Shined up nice for a 75 year old piece. De Mark KI0I 6585s



Another Restoration Project

Latest acquisition ... needs a bit of work. 73, Nick G8SYE.....This is what it should be like!



New Marketing Possibilities?



Many of us have several varieties of "these" items around the shack on shelves (hopefully on the shelf). I found this photo on Facebook of one of "these" items given a new direction and purpose in life. Could these be a marketing opportunity for a new product made from "these" discarded items?

In the past directions have appeared of what to do with "these" items attached to an otherwise good set of headphones but this is the first seen of how to recycle one of "these" items that are not attached to headphones.

I wonder if I can redesign my old D-104 ("these" item) into something similar?

Adventures With Scouts!

In the mid-90's the San Antonio Radio Club would set up an HF and VHF station in a field day type environment in various venues. These included the San Antonio Children's Festival, the Girl Scout Worldwide Games, and the Boy Scout Jamboree. We would demonstrate ham radio to children and parents with all-day long activities. One time we were doing this at the Girls Scout World Wide Games. Interest in HF contacts seemed to be waning so I tried something else. We were operating both phone and CW and I had my computer with a CW decoding program that would print out the text of both sides of the CW contact on the screen. Some of the girls took a keen interest in Morse Code. I asked them if they would like to try it. Receiving an amazingly positive response I shut the RF off on my transceiver and just sent the side tone into the computer to get a local printout of CW sent from a J-38 straight key. I would ask them their name and then send "HELLO JENNIFER HOW ARE YOU?", or some such to the screen. It took only one of those before the girls wanted to try that for themselves. So I had them put their hand on the key, placed mine over theirs, and sent "HELLO MY NAME IS JENNIFER" to the screen. Suddenly there was a line 10-deep of Girl Scouts that wanted the chance to send their name to a computer in Morse Code. This went on for hours. There were two notable instances. One girl sent her name to the screen with my assistance but then wanted to try it on her own. So of course I let her. To my astonishment she sent her name to the computer without error. I said "Oh! You know Morse Code"! She replied "No I don't, but I am a musician and have perfect pitch". I was amazed that she memorized that pattern in CW by just hearing it once and was able to parrot it back perfectly on the first try. But then another girl said what we were doing was all fake and that somebody was hiding somewhere with a keyboard sending the text. Then she said she was going to prove it. So she grabbed the key and started pounding away. Of course nothing but gibberish appeared on the screen. She stomped off in a huff.

We also set up a portable satellite ground station up during Field Day and at the Boy Scout Jamboree. We had a short portable tower section with an az-el rotator and circularly polarized Yagi's mounted on a cross boom. I had printed out the orbital pass schedules for several of the amateur satellites in use at the time. A satellite pass for a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) bird lasts only 5-10 minutes so you had to know exactly when the bird would be in view and exactly where to point the antennas as it zoomed overhead from horizon-to-horizon. The equipment roll-out was rather extensive. Besides the impressive az-el Yagi array we had computers, SSB/CW radios for both 2m and 70cm, and packet decoders for the PACSATs. The analog mode satellites were cross-band transponders that would take a chunk of spectrum from 2 meters and translate it to 70cm, and vice-versa. This type of "bent-pipe" operation is different from a repeater because whatever mode you sent up is what came back down. Both SSB and CW were of course the modes of choice. So we made numerous contacts on both modes as well as downloading some bulletins and traffic from the PACSATs. Now, a satellite pass was a busy time. We had to keep the antennas pointed at the bird, correct the receiver frequency for Doppler shift, and also operate the radios to carry on a QSO. It was a good show and hopefully inspirational for the scouts and their parents. We had just completed several SSB and CW contacts on one of the analog birds (maybe FO-20?) to an audience of scouts and parents. One of the parents was a retired Navy radio operator. We had a good conversation afterwards and as he walked away he remarked "I just can't believe you have all of this hi-tech satellite stuff and then communicated by hand using a 50-year old J-38 Morse Code key".

May SKS



Didn't think thunderstorms would clear my area, but did. Just had some fun being on the air. Listened the first hour and engaged the second. A bit rusty with the key ... Fun evening! 73, Mike, AD0YM



Finally some propagation and a lot of fun in 40 meters tonight, thanks to all, greetings from Panama. 73, Ric HP1RIS



Fun, as always! Thanks to all for playing. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



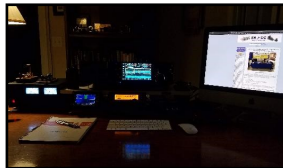
Good running tonight. Was surprised to be answered by W6LAX. Thanks for the points Roger! Thanks for the Qs. 73, Dale K3SEN



40 was the workhorse until dark & then 80 was the place to be. Nice to work CO8RRM Rafael on 40 meters thanks to all for a fun evening. 73, Larry K8TEZ



Enjoyable evening. Thanks for the contacts and looking forward to working again. IC-7300 into a 35 foot End Fed Sloper up 22 feet. Key tonight was a 1968 Vibroplex Champion. 73, Bob K3ZGA



Only had a 1 hour to spare tonight. Was fun as always especially using my newly minted. Swinging a cootie as always. 73, Brian KQ4MM



20 was very long not much activity. Did work W6LAX and N0TA. 40 very good S/P most of the evening. Many new members worked and welcomed. 73 de AL N4ow 11375s



First time with a bug! Thanks to new SKCC Fort Wayne Member - K9FW for the new special weight! 73, Ken N8KR



Another Fun night in SKS. Tonight I dug out my Bug and I was rusty....sorry about that. Thanks Roger for two bands tonight, it's always nice to have QSOs with old friends! 73, Rich W4RQ



I was tuning around on 40 meters with an old Henry Tempo One I am refurbishing. I got the receiver working just last Saturday and was working on getting the S meter set up correctly. Then I noticed that I was hearing stations calling CQ SKS and realized I had forgotten about the Sprint! So I moved the old Tempo out of the way and fired up the K3. Missed the first half hour but had a good time staying on 40 using the K3 at 100 watts to my 43' vertical. Key was a Bencher RJ-2. Thanks all for a fun (75% thereof for me) Sprint! 73, Bill NZ0T

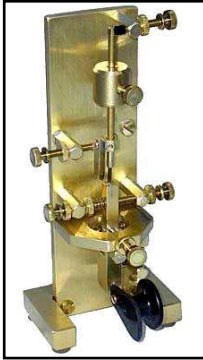


Thanks for the contacts. 73, Tom WB7EUX

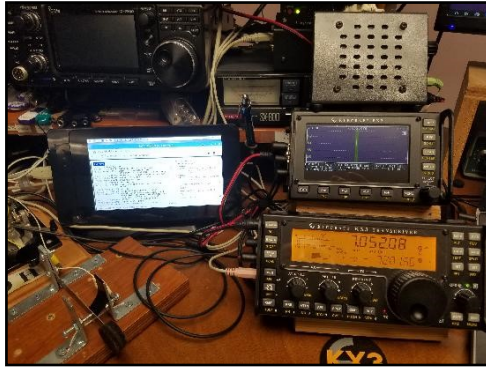


Ran QRP 5 watts from my car using my IC-703 into a 40 meter Big Stick antenna from here in Shelby County Tennessee (near Memphis). I quit when it got too dark to see my writing tablet (hi hi). Used a Bencher Str Key sitting on my lap. Fun time! 73, Curt WA2ISG

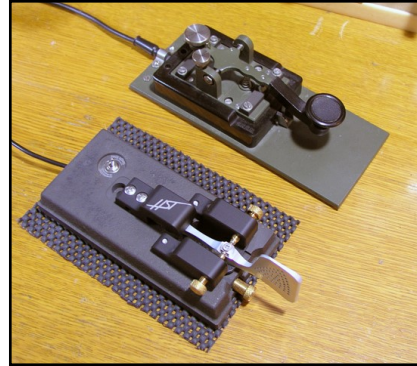
More May SKS



The power failed 10 minutes before the sprint. Electricity was restored at 0045Z and I got on the air. Things were going well until 0114Z when we lost power again. Power was restored at 0210Z. I guess it's time to consider back-up power for the radios! I had fun for the time I was able to be on the air. Thanks for the contacts and hope to see you all in the WES.
73, Jim N5JPX



Well, I got started late due to local club net and then I was playing around too much with the new PX3 and didn't make but three contacts. But still fun and boy was 40 mtrs humming. Lots of strong signals. It was still fun and looking forward to next month. Running my KX3 into the 160 meter doublet up 20 ft around my city lot. Key was 1/2 of homemade cootie as a straight key keying it sideways. Still can't bring myself to key with both sides of the cootie as I am still slurring my letters and that really bugs me. So practice, practice and more practice. 73 from Wild and Wonderful West Virginia, Dave WV8DH

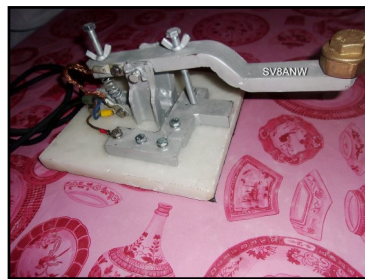


Bands were pretty decent here in WV - even 20 at the beginning. 40 crowded and 80 had a fair amount of activity. Keys for this one: Begali HST II cootie and German Junker straight key (with cover removed). I worked a decent number of newer members and a new T for me - 3 digit 390T Butch in CA.
73, Dave W3NP

Home-brew Keys

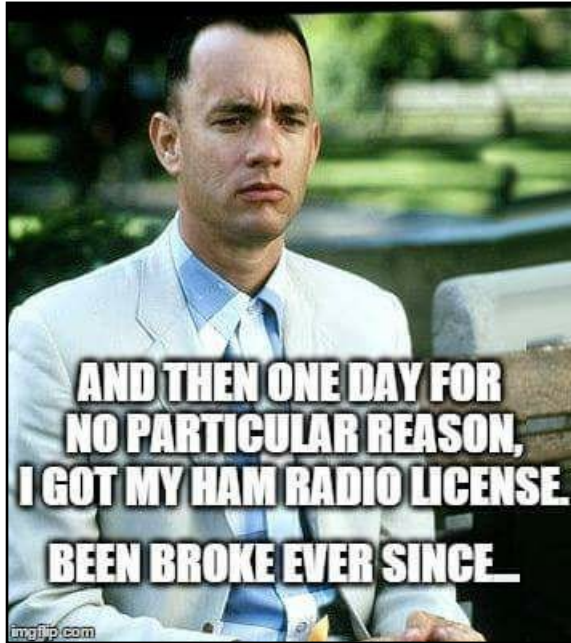


SK from Junk materials, 2 days of labor, 73 Dimitris SV8ANW



It was a year since I first posted this from my QRZ page so lets have some more fun, 73, Gary VE3DZP

From Facebook



And truer words were never posted!



My new Zerofive vertical is finally up. Should be ready for SKS. DE. N8ECC. 8302T Alan



This is my CW hammer. Pretty, she ain't... but she's got a smooth action, and she's getting me through this minimum. I found her on the ZED a couple of years back to replace my barely useable Radio Shack key that i used back in the early 70's when i was Novice. When I got re-licensed and got back into CW, I had to get something better. I think I know what this key is, but I don't see any markings to confirm. Thoughts? Where would I look to find any markings to confirm her pedigree? 73, Chris KD9CLH

....Nye Viking Key....



Gee, I thought that was SSB!

Ed...Here is an article that appeared much earlier in a Rag Chew but still is extremely relevant today.

It's All In Your Head

By Lee WB4QOJ Member SKCC # 10276

Most hams now a day's only see Digital or SSB some AM on HF. FM on VHF or UHF. But, another world is out there and waiting for all to explore, CW. Let me back up a few years (maybe many). Taking your test in front of an FCC examiner. It was tough because most of us waited till they showed up at a testing session once or twice a year. You studied hard, got CW under your belt 5 wpm Novice, 13 wpm General and Advanced and 20 wpm Extra. Then you had to copy five minutes and you had to get a straight one minute error free in that five mins. I was sweating bullets. Well it was not over, you then had to do the same back to the examiner with a straight key WOW ! ROUGH THE PRESSURE WAS ON. Then all the written questions, mounds of math and on and on. Enough to give you an ulcer. It was worth it, you were proud and you had slain the Dragon. A lot of new Hams or want to be Hams today do not have the good fortune of having a mentor. That is why New Hams are lucky when they can connect with a Club or individual Ham to take them under the wing to make sure good practices are followed. WE ALL NEED TO PRACTICE THIS WITH NEW HAMS.

Well, a little off track but it all works together. I have heard a lot of chatter from some hams and others around talking about brushing up on, THAT'S RIGHT CW, Continuous Wave, Dots and Dashes yes MORSE CODE. The original digital. It's fun, it's not dead and it is something that takes time to conquer. Many years ago when I was a Shortwave Listener an inspiring Ham, there was a man that lived two streets over from my house. He had a small house and a small garage he turned into a ham shack. Every time I went by his house on my bicycle there was a new antenna. All wires or homemade verticals all shapes and sizes and configurations. I was amazed. One day I stopped in, I was about 14 years old and asked him if I could see what he was doing, being an old time ham he said, "Sure young-in come on in to the ham shack." He had an old Johnson Invader Transmitter and a National NC303 Receiver, I was drooling. He had 300 ohm twin lead (homemade) coming in through the wall to a kilowatt Johnson Match-box. On his desk was an old Black and White Remington Manual Typewriter. (More on that later) I asked him what he liked about ham radio the most, he said fast and very dogmatically "ANTENNA BUILDING and CW". I understood the Antenna part but not the CW part at that moment. We talked about antennas, matching networks, feed lines and what worked best in his mind. What worked for him was always tinkering and building. (A TRUE HAM IN ALL SINCE OF THE WORD). Then we started talking CW. He had an old Vibroplex a grey one not fancy but it worked for him. He fired up the receiver on 40 meters, his favorite band. Low end CW portion and all I could hear was ringing. Now the Typewriter. He did not write a QSO down he copied it down on his manual typewriter at 45 WPM that's right 45, FORTY-FIVE, 100% COPY. But now comes the fun part. As we were talking CW ringing in the back ground, he started laughing. I thought I said something wrong. It was not me it was the CW ringing out of the NC303 on 40 meters at about 30 wpm. He apologized and said that the QSO in the back-ground was several friends that he talked to all the time and one told a joke he thought was funny. OK THINK ABOUT THAT. We were talking face to face and he was coping 30 wpm CW IN HIS HEAD and heard the joke and thought it was funny. WOW what a talent. I was inspired. Then finally some time later I got my Novice, he helped me with SWL antenna designs and IT WAS FUN. You know 40 meters is a big SWL Band HI HI.

Ed... Here is a nice little wrap-up of the historical use of Morse code and how it has been used since it's early development. Found this on the Facebook page of SKCC..thanks to "Kevin O'something" for posting it.

Before Social Media: How Morse Code altered the way people communicate for 175 years

Posted by [The Conversation](#) | May 24, 2019 | [Syndicated](#) |



By Eddie King, *Ph.D. Student in Electrical Engineering, University of South Carolina*

The first message sent by Morse code's dots and dashes across a long distance traveled from Washington DC, to Baltimore on Friday, May 24, 1844 – 175 years ago.

It signaled the first time in human history that complex thoughts could be communicated at long distances almost instantaneously. Until then, people had to have face-to-face conversations; send coded messages through drums, smoke signals and semaphore

systems; or read printed words.

Thanks to Samuel F.B. Morse, communication changed rapidly, and has been changing ever faster since. He invented the electric telegraph in 1832. It took six more years for him to standardize a code for communicating over telegraph wires. In 1843, Congress gave him US\$30,000 to string wires between the nation's capital and nearby Baltimore. When the line was completed, he conducted a public demonstration of long-distance communication.

Morse wasn't the only one working to develop a means of communicating over the telegraph, but his is the one that has survived. The wires, magnets and keys used in the initial demonstration have given way to smartphones' on-screen keyboards, but Morse code has remained fundamentally the same, and is still – perhaps surprisingly – relevant in the 21st century. Although I have learned, and relearned, it many times as a Boy Scout, an amateur radio operator and a pilot, I continue to admire it and strive to master it.

Easy sending

Morse's key insight in constructing the code was considering how frequently each letter is used in English. The most commonly used letters have shorter symbols: "E," which appears most often, is signified by a single "dot." By contrast, "Z," the least used letter in English, was signified by the much longer and more complex "dot-dot-dot (pause) dot."

In 1865, the International Telecommunications Union changed the code to account for different character frequencies in other languages. There have been other tweaks since, but "E" is still "dot," though "Z" is now "dash-dash-dot-dot." The reference to letter frequency makes for extremely efficient communications: Simple words with common letters can be transmitted very quickly. Longer words can still be sent, but they take more time.

Going wireless

The communications system that Morse code was designed for – analogue connections over metal wires that carried a lot of interference and needed a clear on-off type signal to be heard – has evolved significantly.

The first big change came just a few decades after Morse's demonstration. In the late 19th century, Guglielmo Marconi invented radio-telegraph equipment, which could send Morse code over radio waves, rather than wires. The shipping industry loved this new way to communicate with ships at sea, either from ship to ship or to shore-based stations. By 1910, U.S. law required many passenger ships in U.S. waters to carry wireless sets for sending and receiving messages.

After the Titanic sank in 1912, an international agreement required some ships to assign a person to listen for radio distress signals at all times. That same agreement designated "SOS" – "dot-dot-dot dash-dash-dash dot-dot-dot" – as the international distress signal, not as an abbreviation for anything but because it was a simple pattern that was easy to remember and transmit. The Coast Guard discontinued monitoring in 1995. The requirement that ships monitor for distress signals was removed in 1999, though the U.S. Navy still teaches at least some sailors to read, send and receive Morse code.

Aviators also use Morse code to identify automated navigational aids. These are radio beacons that help pilots follow routes, traveling from one transmitter to the next on aeronautical charts. They transmit their identifiers – such as "BAL" for Baltimore – in Morse code. Pilots often learn to recognize familiar-sounding patterns of beacons in areas they fly frequently. There is a thriving community of amateur radio operators who treasure Morse code, too. Among amateur radio operators, Morse code is a cherished tradition tracing back to the earliest days of radio. Some of them may have begun in the Boy Scouts, which has made learning Morse variably optional or required over the years. The Federal Communications Commission used to require all licensed amateur radio operators to demonstrate proficiency in Morse code, but that ended in 2007. The FCC does still issue commercial licenses that require Morse proficiency, but no jobs require it anymore.

Blinking Morse

Because its signals are so simple – on or off, long or short – Morse code can also be used by flashing lights. Many navies around the world use blinker lights to communicate from ship to ship when they don't want to use radios or when radio equipment breaks down. The U.S. Navy is actually testing a system that would let a user type words and convert it to blinker light. A receiver would read the flashes and convert it back to text. Skills learned in the military helped an injured man communicate with his wife across a rocky beach using only his flashlight in 2017.

Other Morse messages

Perhaps the most notable modern use of Morse code was by Navy pilot Jeremiah Denton, while he was a prisoner of war in Vietnam. In 1966, about one year into a nearly eight-year imprisonment, Denton was forced by his North Vietnamese captors to participate in a video interview about his treatment. While the camera focused on his face, he blinked the Morse code symbols for "torture," confirming for the first time U.S. fears about the treatment of service members held captive in North Vietnam.

Blinking Morse code is slow, but has also helped people with medical conditions that prevent them from speaking or communicating in other ways. A number of devices – including iPhones and Android smartphones – can be set up to accept Morse code input from people with limited motor skills.

There are still many ways people can learn Morse code, and practice using it, even online. In emergency situations, it can be the only mode of communications that will get through. Beyond that, there is an art to Morse code, a rhythmic, musical fluidity to the sound. Sending and receiving it can have a soothing or meditative feeling, too, as the person focuses on the flow of individual characters, words and sentences. Overall, sometimes the simplest tool is all that's needed to accomplish the task.

Ed...Now is the time to be thinking about and building those antennas for fall and winter. Bill KD8TTM sent this article along for getting on 160m for those living with less real-estate. The article appeared in QST and is published here with permission.

A Reduced-Size Half Sloper For 160 Meters

Here's a limited-space antenna that will put you on the Top Band!

By Don Kirk, WD8DSB, 7821 Bryden Drive, Fishers, IN 46038, e-mail WD8DSB@aol.com

Have you ever thought of trying 160 meters? Wintertime is the perfect time for exploring the "Top Band." The atmosphere is relatively quiet, so you can mine 160 meters for all it's worth—lots of stateside contacts and plenty of DX!

If you live on a small lot, you're probably muttering, "This guy must be kidding!" Yes, most 160-meter antennas are *big*. A full-sized half-wavelength dipole is about 260 feet long! But with a little creative design work, it's possible to build limited-space antennas that will get you on the band without sacrificing too much real estate. They aren't as efficient as the full-sized variety, but they *will* get you on the air. Isn't that what counts?

My Approach

Maybe you've seen designs for half-sloper antennas. As the name suggests, these antennas literally slope down to the ground from a tree or tower. Many 160-meter half-sloper designs require supports that are at least 50 feet tall. The problem is that my tower is only 40 feet tall. And what about hams (like you, perhaps) who don't own towers at all? It was time for a different solution.

The typical half-sloper design uses the tower as one half of the antenna by connecting one side of the feed line (normally the shield of the coax) directly to the tower. The center conductor of the coax connects to a 1/4-wavelength wire that slopes back down toward the ground. My idea was to design a half-size (1/8 wavelength) sloper using inductive loading. I decided to place the coil directly at the top of the wire (see Figure 1). Placing the coil at

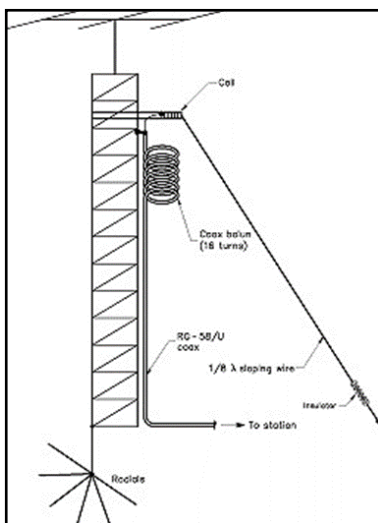


Figure 1—Even a 40-foot tower makes a convenient support for a 160-meter half-sloper antenna.

this location requires the least amount of inductance, but it's a trade-off with efficiency.

Those hams not blessed with a 40-foot tower can substitute a convenient tree or other support (see Figure 2). Just use a wire running vertically to ground as your substitute "tower." More about this in a moment

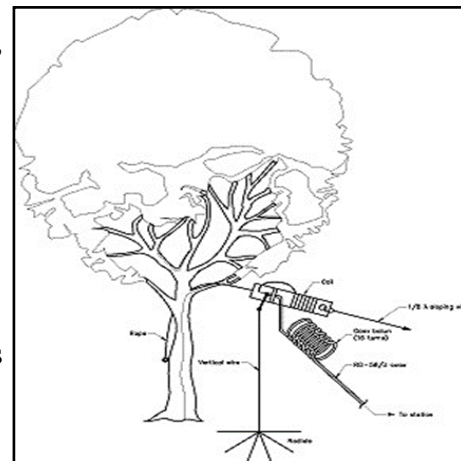


Figure 2—If you don't own a tower, use a tree! The vertical wire (and radials) act as your substitute tower. Just make sure you secure the coax to the PVC pipe for good mechanical strength.

Construction

A 26-inch length of 3/4-inch PVC pipe (outside diameter of 1.05 inches) is used as the coil form. I chose a 26-inch long pipe because I wanted to wind the coil on one end and attach the opposite end to my tower. You can certainly use shorter pipes according to your particular requirements. Bear in mind that this coil is designed for use with 100-W transceivers.

Wind 90 turns of 16-gauge enamel-coated wire at one end of the pipe. Keep it tightly spaced to produce a 4 1/2-inch long coil (see Figure 3). Wrap the coil with two layers of electrical tape (Figure 4). Solder the center conductor of your coax to one end of the coil as shown. Apply silicone caulk to the exposed ends of the coax. Solder a 68.3-foot piece of wire to the opposite end (this is the sloping portion of the antenna).

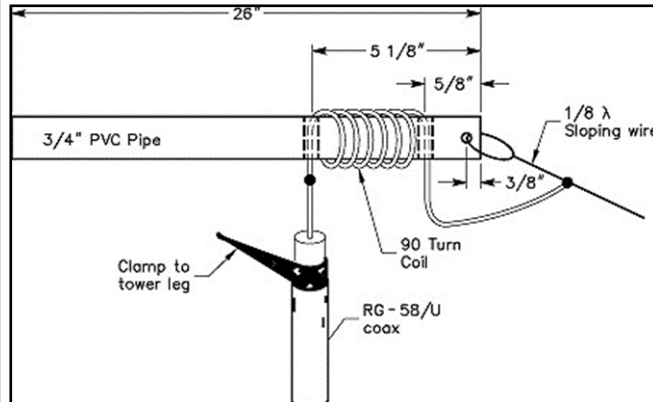


Figure 3—Construction details for the PVC mounting pipe and coil. For a tree installation, secure the coax to the PVC pipe behind the coil.

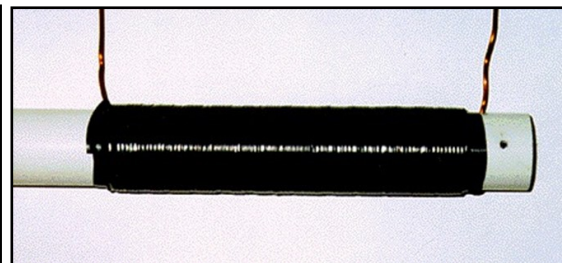


Figure 4—Wrap the coil in electrical tape

Install the coil on your tower and clamp the coax shield to the tower leg using a stainless-steel hose clamp (Figure 5). Make an RF choke (balun) by coiling 16 turns of your coax into an 8-inch diameter coil.

You can use electrical tape or tie wraps to hold it together. Tape the choke to the tower leg 2 feet below the feed point. Slope the 1/8-wavelength wire back to terra firma and terminate it with an egg insulator about 7 feet above the ground to avoid contact with people and pets.

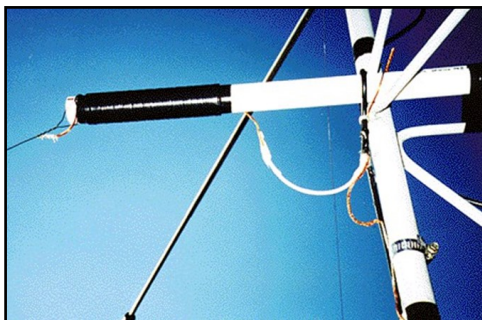


Figure 5—For a tower installation, attach the PVC mounting pipe horizontally and snake the coax down the leg of the tower.

If you're taking the "tree tower" approach, install the coil as high as possible (preferably 40 feet or higher). With some clever rope-and-slingshot manipulation you can haul the coil into the desired position without actually climbing into the tree. Before you take the coil skyward, use some electrical tape to secure the coax to the PVC pipe behind the coil. If you allow the coax to simply dangle from the center-conductor solder connection, it will break in short order! Make the same RF choke as described in the tower installation and attach it to a nearby branch, or just let it dangle. Finally, solder the coax shield to a 40 or 50-foot length of wire. When you have the coil assembly at the proper height, bring this wire down to the ground as vertically as possible. Make sure it doesn't come in contact with the tree trunk or branches.

I manage to get away with using an 8-foot ground instead of the radials shown in Figures 1 and 2. But if you want maximum efficiency from the antenna, you'll need to install some radials. The radial wires attach to the base of the tower or, in the case of a tree installation, to the bottom of your vertical wire. Don't worry about the lengths of these radials. Just run as many as you can for as long as you can. You can bury the radial wires, or simply lay them on top of the soil.

Results

My antenna loaded great and worked superbly right from the start without an antenna tuner. The SWR was plotted (Figure 6) and the 2:1 SWR bandwidth was 120 kHz. You'll note that my antenna is resonant at the bottom of the band (near 1.8 MHz). If you want it to be resonant higher in the band, just trim the sloper wire. If you opt for tree mounting, you may have to tweak and trim the antenna a bit to compensate for any detuning caused by the tree itself. You can also modify this design for use on other bands (80 meters, for example) with the inductive reactance of the coil being 500 Ω for the desired band.

If you're squeezed for space, give this antenna a try. The perfect opportunity is coming up this winter during the CQ World Wide 160-Meter contests. Of course, you can also modify the design for use on other bands (80 meters for example). Have fun!

Learn more about 160-meter antennas and operating with these ARRL publications *DXing on the Edge—The Thrill of 160 Meters* by Jeff Briggs, K1ZM

Antennas and Techniques for Low Band DXing by John Devoldere, ON4UN, *The ARRL Antenna Book—18th Edition*

ARRL publications are available from your local ARRL dealer or directly from the ARRL. Mail orders to Publication Sales Dept, ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111-1494. You can call toll-free at tel 888-277-5289; fax your order to 860-594-0303; or send e-mail to pubsales@arrl.org. Check out the full ARRL publications line on the World Wide Web at <http://www.arrl.org/catalog>.

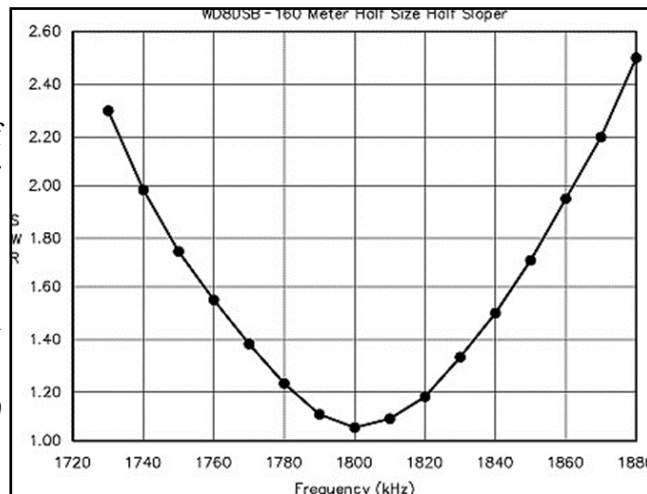


Figure 6—This is the SWR curve for my installation which uses an 8-foot ground rod and no radials. Notice that it is resonant at the bottom of the band. To make the antenna resonant higher up the band, just trim the length of the sloping wire.

Ed....Ran across this posting from Gary VE3DZP:

“I found this on: FRENCH UNION OF TELEGRAPHISTS web site.
It is book by K4TWJ I am sure you all will find it interesting.
73, Gary
VE3DZP 14702T”

It is an outstanding book and really, really worth the pdf download. Here is the title and the Preface from the pdf. The book is 91 pages of wonderful pictures and texts that makes for a great read.

KEYS IV...AND MORE THE FINALE

***New delights, old favorites, more!
(and you thought you had seen them all)***

By Dave Ingram, K4TWJ

PREFACE

Written by Sandy Ingram, WB4OEE (XYL of Dave Ingram, K4TWJ)

Let me begin by saying that I am not a writer...nor will I ever be....but this comes from the heart with all my love, caring...and tears.

Dave was the most enthusiastic person about ham radio that I have ever met. He couldn't get enough of all areas/phases. He was always willing to try out any part of it. Dave helped everybody he could especially through his writing for CQ magazine and others like RadCom, 100 Watts of Thailand and SARL of South Africa plus many more.

Actually Dave was an authority on most areas of amateur radio and was always willing to go that extra mile to help someone interested in becoming a "ham". Unfortunately, he was spread so thin that he didn't always have time to help everybody that needed it, but he tried to pass them on to someone that could help them.

Amateur Radio is certainly going to miss Dave and his enthusiasm. He could light up a room or person with everything he had to say about his hobby. As once told by Wayne Green, W2NSD, he did not have the editing/writing skills he needed at the beginning to write (for 73), but he did have the enthusiasm that was so contagious.

So that is where he got his beginning. I sincerely hope that each and every one of you enjoy Dave's final book. This book was written/put together with an urgency by Dave that somehow he knew God didn't plan to give him much more time on this earth. I believe that with all my heart and he just couldn't give up without one more chance to make his impact on ham radio. It was his fervent, as well as dying wish, that this book be made available to each and every ham that would like it and made available FREE to each of you. I thought of several ways to do this, but via the Internet seemed the best way, so that all of you would be able to see/read/download it without cost to you and limited cost to me. Also please note that Dave's call, K4TWJ, will be preserved throughout the annals of time via a club: **David Ingram Memorial CW Club** with the call letters of **K4TWJ (SKCC # 2684)**.

I wish the best for each and every one of you and I hope that you will not soon forget Dave....he loved ham radio so much.

73 & 88,
Sandy, WB4OEE

2019 SKCC QSO Party

The SKCC QSO Party aims to bring together operators with different skill levels in an informal operating event lasting 24 hours. The event starts at 1800 UTC on Saturday, October 5th, 2019 and runs through Sunday, October 6th, 2019 at 1800Z. SKCC members who participate in the QSO Party must use straight keys, side-swipers (cooties), or bugs. Waivers from this policy are possible. For details, see the club's policy on approved keying devices [here](#). Because this event aims to include newcomers to CW as well as experience brass-pounders, operating speed should be adjusted accordingly.

Please address any questions or ideas for improvement to the QSO Party Manager,
skcc.qsop@gmail.com.

Rules:

1. Object:

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

2. Date and Event Period:

Starts on Saturday October 5th, 2019 at 18:00 UTC and ends on Sunday October 6th, 2019 at 18:00 UTC. Event period is 24 hours with no operating time limits.

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

3.1 Single Operator

The use of spotting assistance or automated, multi-channel decoders is permitted.

3.1.1 QRP 5 watts or less

3.1.2 Low Power (100 watts or less)

3.1.3 High Power (Over 100 watts)

3.2 Multi-operator, Single Transmitter

The use of spotting assistance or automated, multi-channel decoders is permitted.

3.2.1 QRP 5 watts or less

3.2.2 Low Power (100 watts or less)

3.2.3 High Power (Over 100 watts)

3.3 Unlimited

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

3.3.1 QRP 5 watts or less

3.3.2 Low Power (100 watts or less)

3.3.3 High Power (Over 100 watts)

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

4. Event Exchange and Calling

4.1 Exchange

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

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

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

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

4.2 Logging

4.2.1 Any logging program that will generate a text file for submission (if requested) may be used. Logs are not required unless requested. See section 8.1

5. Scoring:

5.1 QSO Points: One point for each unique QSO. QSOs with the same station in multiple Grid Squares on the same band are allowed and are counted as one QSO point each. QSOs with the same station in the same Grid Square but on a different band are allowed and are counted as one QSO point each. These same rules apply to DX QSOs (QSOs with stations outside of the United States).

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

5.2 Multipliers

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

5.3 Final Score:

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

6. Miscellaneous:

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

7. Awards:

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

8. Log Submission:

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

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

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

8.1.3 All information submitted becomes the property of the SKCC.

8.2 All entries for this event must be submitted before 00:00 UTC on October 14th, 2019 via the SKCC QSO Party submission page.

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

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

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

9. Disputes

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

10. Results

10.1 Results will be posted on the SKCC website.

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

Facebook Fun



Hot POTA Today, 94F. 73, Kevin WA9VFD
at Andrew Jackson State Park, Lancaster, SC



Propagation beater! 73, Ted K8AQM