



Volume 13 Issue 4

The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club
"The Rag Chew"
Editor: K8AQM/VE9AQM

December, 2020

Seasons' Greetings!



What a year 2020 has been! No need to go into the horrid details but there were some bright spots; SKCC membership has really increased, all SKCC activities have been very well attended and the "shelter in place" has really promoted SKCC QSOs! I'm sure 2021 will see continued club growth and many, many SKCC QSOs.

Maybe Santa will bring you a new key, new rig and good propagation...we can all hope. From all of the SKCC board and your editor, we wish you Season's Greetings, a great New Year and continued good health!



K3Y 2021

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

K3Y runs from Jan. 2nd through 31st. It's a perfect time to introduce or acquaint hams to the fun of hand-keyed Morse code sent with straight keys, bugs, and side-swipers. Members and non-members alike are welcome to hunt the US based K3Y stations and the participating DX stations around the world. Non-members are encouraged but not required to use straight keys for their K3Y contacts.

This year we hope to field K3Y operators in the ten US call areas, plus KH6, KL7 and KP4, along with associated DX stations in a number of

Canadian provinces and each of six IARU continental regions.



You can track your progress working the event stations by referring to the Stats section on this page. Check for regular updates in your standings for Number of Areas, Bands, K3Y Operators, DX Entities, Canadian Provinces & US States that you have worked. K3Y QSL cards and Sweep Certificates are available to document your success.

Earn a QSL card by making at least one contact with any K3Y event station. Work K3Y/0 through K3Y/9 for a basic sweep; or go for the ten US call areas plus K3Y/KH6, KL7 and KP4. Perhaps you will even achieve a 19-area "grand sweep" which includes all the above plus contacts with our DX event operators in six different continental regions. The K3Y "sweep" card lists one contact for each of the 19 areas that have logged your call. Please check the Op Schedule and Operator Map links to find where and when the K3Y stations are operating.

For SKCC members K3Y is a great opportunity to make lots of progress toward various club awards. Contacts with K3Y stations are valid for SKCC awards purposes. Also, by signing up as a K3Y Operator you can readily log dozens or hundreds of award-eligible QSOs with other SKCC members.

Would you like to sign on as one of our K3Y Operators? You can try it for just an hour or two. Or reserve a series of time slots throughout the month. Code speed and station sophistication are not important. The on-air exchanges tend to be fairly relaxed. Please check out the US or DX Operators Guides and contact the Regional Coordinator in your area for more info. He or she will be eager to sign you up. Our K3Y Operators are key to a successful event!

Be sure to listen for our K3Y operators during January and work 'em when you hear 'em!



Calling all SKCC Members!



In connection with our upcoming Straight Key Month & Anniversary event we are once again running a QSL card design contest...2021 will mark the 15th anniversary of SKCC's founding. Our annual Straight Key Month will start on January 2nd, directly following ARRL Straight Key Night. As usual we are asking members to provide QSL card designs for this very popular event, for which we have again been granted the K3Y call sign. (K3Y because it resembles "KEY", as in "straight key").

If you've ever designed a QSL card, or have any interest in doing so, please consider making a card for K3Y. Designs will be uploaded to the event webpage where members will vote for their favorites starting on Dec. 15th. The most popular design will become the official K3Y QSL card of our 15th Anniversary Straight Key Month.

If enough designs are submitted we will feature twelve of them in the SKCC print calendar for the new year. The calendar will include upcoming events of interest to club members; also telegraphy and radio-related historical dates and astronomical data. You can find the calendar for the current year here:

https://skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y-docs/SKCC_Calendar_2020.pdf

Calendars for prior years (since 2014) are archived in the SKCC Group here:

<https://groups.io/g/SKCC/files/SKCC%20Print%20Calendar>

There were many popular entries submitted for past events that did not win the top spot. Designers of these cards are invited to update them for 2021 and resubmit.

IMPORTANT! Please follow the new design guidelines below.

Required design specifications for card images:

- JPEG high quality format
- Image size 1650 x 1050 pixels, or better (with same ratio)
- Width-to-height ratio 5.5 x 3.5 (to avoid cropping)
- Horizontal layout
- No text within 1/4" of edges (because it may be trimmed)

At a minimum, the following text elements should be included in your design:

"K3Y"
"Straight Key Century Club"
"SKCC"
"2021"
"Straight Key Month"
"15th Anniversary"



You can combine text elements, for example: "SKCC Straight Key Month & 15th Anniversary." The back side of the card and QSO layout will be provided by us. Please follow the guidelines carefully. If you have any questions please check with me before starting your design.

Submit your designs by Dec. 14th at the latest. Designs received before then will be placed on the contest page in the order received but can still be modified and revised up till the submission deadline. You can submit several different designs. However, please don't submit multiple entries having minor variations. For example: the same basic design with differently colored backgrounds. If you include graphics or photos that are not your own they must either be public domain or you must have permission from the original owner. Please advise us if you are using graphics or photos that are not your own.

By submitting a card design you agree that SKCC has the right to use it for the K3Y QSL card, webpages, anniversary logo, mug graphic and calendar. Also, a variant of your design may be used on K3Y DX QSL cards.

Please send any questions or comments to me at af2z[at]skccgroup.com, or post a follow-up in the SKCC group on Groups.io, and I will get back to you. Also send your card images to me. I will confirm receipt and have them uploaded to the webpage.

Have fun!

Drew - AF2Z
K3Y Planning Group



Tony K6ELQ... SK



A very big supporter and big signal from California has been lost to SKCC. In late October Tony K6ELQ became a SK. Tony was a great supporter of SKCC, the 6th area and KH6 coordinator for K3Y and a terrific operator.

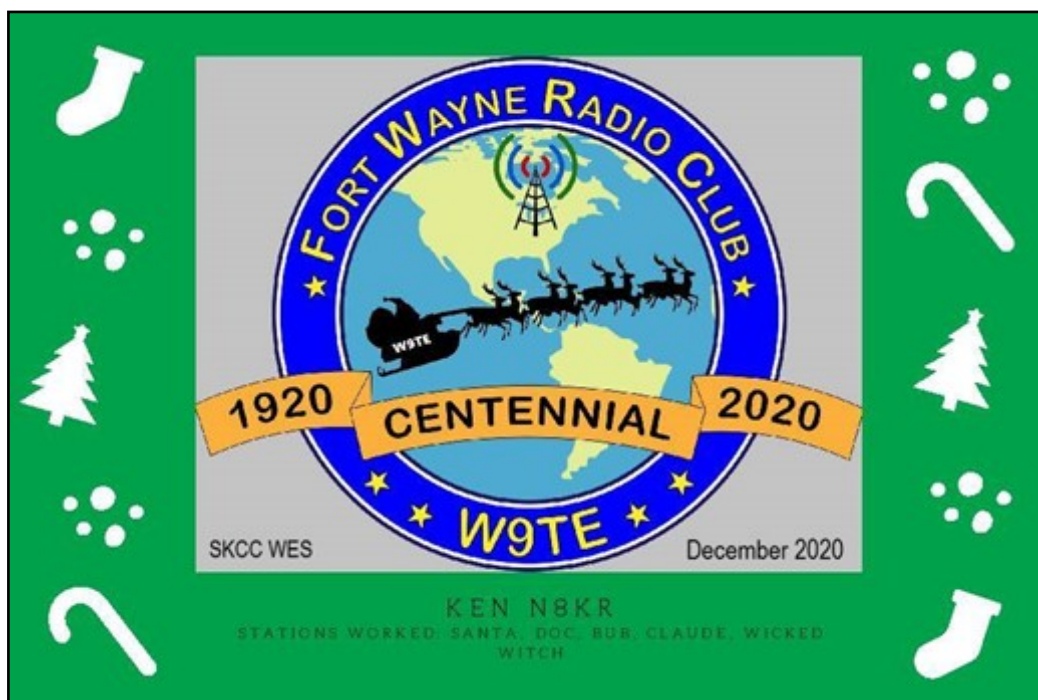
Many thanks to Larry N1FG for this picture of Tony at his shack (2019). Please take the time to view Tony's wonder QRZ page to understand what a great ham Tony was.

December WES – Santa, Reindeer, Scrooge Special Certificate

Santa and his reindeer are all ready and waiting for that big December event: the SKCC WES! This year, Santa and the reindeer are all coming from the Fort Wayne, Indiana area and all are members of the Fort Wayne Radio Club which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year! SKCC is very popular with the Fort Wayne Radio Club as 40+ of its members are SKC-Cers! So, to commemorate this special anniversary, the Fort Wayne Radio Club is offering a special certificate for those who work Santa: **W9TE 20000S** with special endorsements for working his entourage:

Dasher	WA9BBN	17763S
Dancer	WB9EAO	12021S
Prancer	AC9EZ	10658T
Vixen	W9HT	7474S
Comet	K9FW	20492S
Cupid	KD9GDY	18156S
Donder	W9SA	19001T
Blitzen	KU8T	2442S
Olive	K9LI	19153S
Rudolph	W9GT	21069S
Santa	W9TE	20000T (FWRC Club Call operated by a many ops)
Scrooge	N8KR	7559S (FWRC Member <i>wintering</i> in Florida)

If you use the SKCC logger, update your membership database as you begin WES as the names of Santa and his crew have been temporarily changed to reflect their bonus names (ie. If you enter WA9BBN in the logger, You will not see, “ED” as the op but, “Dasher.” This will help identify the bonus stations. Bonus points: earn 5 points for each time you work a reindeer, Scrooge and Santa. (Yes, you can work them on multiple bands for extra bonus points) Requests for a certificate for working Santa with Reindeer endorsements can be emailed to W9HT@ARRL.NET. Include your name, call and stations worked. A PDF of your certificate will be emailed back to you.



Enemy Sub Delivers Unforgettable Gift

By Deseret News Jan 2, 2003, 3:38pm MST
Lee Wayne Maloy as told to Kathie and Scott Armstrong,
Special to Lee Wayne Maloy

In the war years, I served my country as a merchant marine. By the time I was 19 years old I had traveled around the world three times. It was a great adventure for a young man, but life as a merchant seaman was very rough, and I had to learn to be tough to survive.

New men went through initiations called "smokers." This is where you either sank or swam as a merchant marine. I found myself in a small boxing ring fighting the toughest man on board. I was knocked down time and time again, but I kept getting up, and each time I pulled myself to my feet, I got a little better and a little more confident.

Though I never knocked the big guy down, I learned one of the best lessons of my life: to never give up and just keep trying.

My efforts proved to be the right thing because everyone came over and patted me on the back and gave me a big hug. Even the biggest and toughest guy on board became a fast friend who always looked after me from then on. These were the men with whom I would share so many amazing experiences. Though many of my memories have become grayed with the passing of the years, there are a few that still stand out as vivid as if they just happened. Let me preface this Christmas experience with the fact that even at my young age, I had faced death before.

There was the time we were in the Indian Ocean on a tanker carrying war supplies to the troops. The year was 1944, and we had all been on alert for the entire week having heard several ships had been sunk by U-boats. The Germans were relentless and usually traveled in "wolf packs," making it most difficult to avoid being torpedoed.

The moon was bright that night, and I could see very clearly. I was on watch on the bow of the ship with binoculars in hand. I surveyed the horizon keeping myself sharp and alert for my task. My older brother was on board with me and was down in the galley having his coffee. I had been on watch for several hours and was getting a little cold and hungry.

The sea was a fluorescent green, which made every white cap and fish glow. As I scanned the horizon I suddenly noticed two fluorescent streaks in the distance. I blinked my eyes just to make sure of what I was seeing. Yes, it was two torpedoes coming straight for the bow of our ship. I quickly grabbed the phone to warn the bridge, but it just rang and rang without anyone answering.

Later they told me they saw the torpedoes as I rang and didn't think we had a chance. I didn't think we had a chance either, but as the ship rose on the swell of the next wave, the torpedo on our starboard side missed us completely. The one on our port side was invisible and I was invisible, and I wrapped my arms tightly around myself and closed my eyes as though I could protect myself from the impending explosion.

I waited frozen in that moment of time with my shipmates as we heard the torpedo skim down the ship, clanging as it went. It banged into us four or five times, and then silence. By some miracle the torpedo's warhead never came in contact with the ship, and we were saved. Several months later on Christmas Eve, I had just celebrated my 20th birthday on Dec. 21. We were on our way home from the Mediterranean approaching the Straits of Gibraltar on our way to the North Atlantic. We were happily bound for the East Coast of the good old USA. It was a stormy night that Christmas Eve, and I was once again on watch at the bow of the ship.



The sea was covered in white caps, which make it almost impossible to see "turkey feathers," a term we used to describe the white plume that flows behind a submarine's periscope when it is close to the surface. Understandably all of our thoughts were of home and of Christmas and of hopes of soon being with our families.

The past days had been unremarkable, and the sights, sounds and smell of the ocean lulled me into a sense of well-being. Then it all seemed to happen in an instant. I saw the plume of a periscope appear off the port side of our ship. It couldn't have been more than 100 yards away. I had no chance to ring the bridge this time. They must have seen the periscope at the same time I did because the ship was suddenly alive with alarms and shouts of men scurrying to their battle stations.

But there was no time to ready ourselves for a fight. There was no time to protect ourselves in any way. The submarine was already on us, rising up out of that choppy sea. The enemy had us dead to rights. I'll never forget what happened next.

There was a flashing. Dash dash, dot dot dash dot. I mouthed the letters as I saw the German submarine blinking its Morse code message. I couldn't believe what was I was seeing. M-E-R. Could I be reading it correctly? Another "R" and then, dash dot dash dash, a "Y." It was happening so fast as the second word flashed to us in the darkness. C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S. Then it was over. As fast as the U-boat had appeared it sank back into the blackness of the sea and was gone.

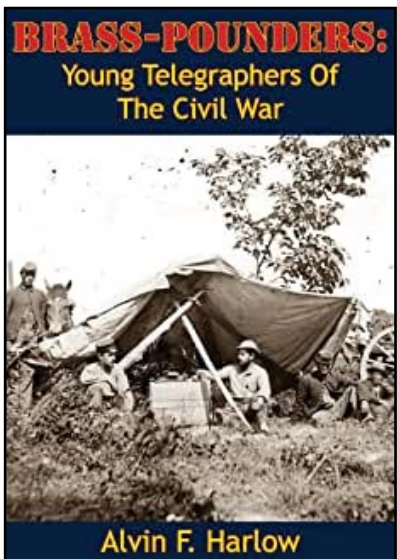
We all stood transfixed. No one moved for several seconds as we recovered from our shock and surprise. We had escaped death before by a twist of fate or maybe luck.

But on this Christmas Eve we had been given a gift. As the reality of what had just transpired and the words "Merry Christmas" took hold in our minds and then our hearts, we unitedly sent up a cheer. A cheer of relief, and of joy and true celebration.

I have had many wonderful Christmases since that Christmas Eve in 1944. I was able to marry and spend 56 years with my lovely wife and help to raise our three children.

Each consecutive Christmas has been surrounded by grandchildren and now, great-grandchildren. None of these memories would have ever been possible if it wasn't for that fortuitous night when the "enemy" gave a ship full of men the gift of peace and one of their best Christmas memories possible.

Enjoyable Reading and Entertainment



This book was mentioned in a post to the IO reflector several months ago. It traced the adventures and trials of Morse operators following the Union Army during the Civil War years. Noted as "historical fiction" (Writing historical fiction requires a balance of research and creativity, and while it often includes **real** people and events, the genre offers a fiction writer many opportunities to tell a wholly unique story.), it is an extremely interesting and informative read. Nothing was more sacred than the operator's straight key so it's right up the SKCC alley!

It is an enjoyable and informative read. It would make a terrific stocking stuffer and it's fairly cheap \$27 paper and only \$4 as a Kindle read!

73, Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM

September 2020 Slow Speed Saunter



Probably my most favorite SKCC event. Made 23 contacts, 22 on 40m, and one on 20m. Good for a quick start on our monthly Brag as well. Ran 75w from my TS-590SG to a vertical using a Kent Straight Key. Look forward to next month. 73, Curt K2CWM



What a great way to get the month started. Have a great Labor Day Holiday. Be safe out there. What better way to start the month than to have a pic of the my Novice Station back in 1974. I did a lot of slow speed back then, with my HW-16 and Radio Shack Straight Key with a dipole hiding in the Apartment complex attic. 73, Bud AA8CL



TNX! to all for qqQRS! Had a nice QSO with Ken, N9KJU!, and a few logged a few new nmbrs to boot. I am usually mistaken for QFL. C U next month 72/73 Steve NQ8T



Gonna give it a shot if I have time. 73, Randy KC2BE

Slow Speed Saunter



A FUN day! Good.QSO's with Vic W4VLL in VA , Jack W9YY in IL using a long wire on a fence 5 ft high... ReAL-LY ! Merlin KD0V in MN whom I worked last 5 years ago? Time flies! Vern AA7VV in OR, Bob AC1GF in NH, and Gerald WA9AGG in IN ! Thanks for put'n up with my Cootie fist ! 73, Rich W4RQ



Good time had here, even with non cooperating bands on Tuesday eve. Monday eve(tues morn) was a hoot working a lot of stations. Good time. 73, NEE NE9EE



Getting back into CW after 5 years doing other modes. 73, Alan W3DVX



Not quantity but great quality! Really enjoyed rag chewing with Gary K1YAN, Randy KC2BE and Alan W3DVX. Got to use my two favorite keys, doesn't get much better than that! 73, Ted K8AQM



Reflections from a New CW OP on My SKCC Anniversary - Thanks SKCC!

By Derek N7PHI

CQ CQ SKCC DE N7PHI _AR_
TNX FER CALL _BT_ UR 599 HR IN UT _BT_ OP DEREK NR 20999T _BK_

A year ago, that exchange was absolute Greek to me, especially when delivered in the dits and dahs of Morse code. And while I'm not able to head copy at 30 words-per-minute (yet), looking back at my progress, I'm actually thrilled that I can decipher on-air Morse code like the example above. Much of my progress is thanks to this group.

I'm writing this note to thank SKCC -- everyone from the managers, moderators, mentors, programmers, awards processors, and on-air operators -- and also a plea: be kind. If you want to read more, let me explain why I think SKCC is a jewel in hobby:

I'm a relatively new Ham, only licensed about 12 years ago when I got interested in emergency communications with an HT. Thankfully I met an Elmer, K4KUS, who coached me on voice nets, traffic handling, and good traffic etiquette. I mention this because I'm realizing now how essential good Elmers are to new operators. K4KUS also introduced me to HF radio and I remember one evening sitting in his car on the waterfront in Virginia where he made CW QSOs with Europe. I was amazed he could translate and decode them without writing anything down. This was so much more organic, mysterious, and alluring than traffic handling. I had to know more!

Family and work shelved the hobby until about two years ago when I dusted off my rig and promised myself I would learn Morse code. But how to start? I had moved from Virginia and finding an Elmer in my new town has been difficult. I began studying letter and number quizzes for months before daring to get on the air, struggling to copy maybe 10 WPM. Contests and special events were the easiest to try because I could "parrot" the quick exchange after listening to a runner for several minutes, slowly picking the call out character by character. As long as everything went perfect and no one asked me a question or deviated in any way from the format, I was fine. It was scary.

My first non-contest Morse QSOs were sometimes disheartening. While there were a few (thankfully) who slowed down and doubled every word and were kind, there were others who were condescending, arrogant, and dismissive. Often after a QSO, I would follow up with an email, asking questions about the exchange, procedures, and sometimes asking for learning resources and suggestions. I was practically begging for an Elmer, but I got no takers. Probably the most common response was a condescending remark about the benefits of the Novice license and the desire that every new operator should be on probation until they could actually send good code at 20+ WPM. When asked about good resources, some would say, "just go to your local library and figure it out, that's what I did." Well, maybe some libraries have good resources, but not mine, and even though I had the internet at my fingertips, finding a consensus was difficult. I simply didn't know what you didn't know. I needed a coach -- an Elmer -- someone to just guide me a little instead of throwing me back into the deep end.

My searches led me to find different CW clubs -- some exclusive with WPM entrance tests or nominations. Then I found SKCC. Wow! What a breath of fresh air! Operators who were welcoming to new, inexperienced operators. A wealth of helpful information and activities to encourage on-air exchanges and rewards. I found the exchange format perfect for learning not just the characters, but the rhythm of the code.

Morse code has a steep learning curve! Even when I felt confident with letters and numbers, "real life" QSOs taught me "I knew nothing." Shortcut words (tks, tn timer, thx, fb, cul, etc.), Q-codes, procedural signs, and operator behavior and keying style were all obstacles to overcome. On top of that, I had to buy a straight key and learn how to use it so I could participate with SKCC :)

Thankfully, SKCC helped give me confidence. With my cheap 3D-printed key in hand, I started making contacts. While still short for some folks, the predictable exchange format was long enough for me to get better experience recognizing word groups, shortcuts, Q-codes, and number rhythms. Longer QSOs followed until my first SKCC Marathon QSO (1 hour, 15 min) with N5IR. I never thought I could do it! Bill was a true gentleman OP with GREAT patience! Oy vey! My wrist hurts just thinking about it!

Sure, not everyone on SKCC is a perfect lady / gentleman, and in my naivete I'm sure I've offended some or been hurt by others, but on the whole, it's been amazing. So my plea: be kind! Without the Novice license or code requirements, or even military skill transfer, there is very little "formal" attention to Morse code. It is no longer a rite of passage. Many new code learners are trying because they want to learn. Encouragement and support are stronger and more valuable than condescension.

Today, a majority of my contacts are made with CW. It's just so much fun. I don't even have a mic plugged into my rig!

Thank you SKCC! Keep up the good work.

P.S., To my delight, I also discovered that SKCC has an Elmer program! I'm signing up!

My Cootie Improvements...Maybe...



New brass screws and special paint.



Special silver conductive paint applied and smoothed

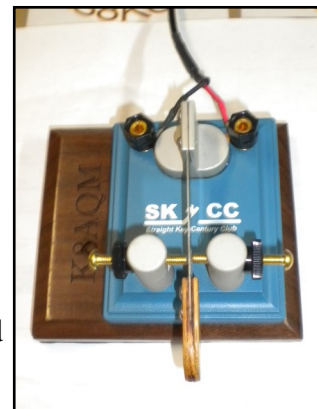
I tried my hand at learning how to use a cootie working toward the TKA, it was fun. However, I do feel sorry for the first 50 QSOs and the operators who kindly struggled copying my "QLF" sending with the cootie.

I found "issues" at times with my cootie skipping making contact and repeatedly had to clean the stainless steel post screws and blade. Others mentioned the same problem with their cooties yet others seemed to have no issue with contacts. Guess I was born under a bad sign....so on to a solution!

First, replace the stainless steel contact screws with brass screws. Maybe not as "pretty" but always a solid contact. What to do about the "blade" with its shiny area. Checking on the internet I found a "paint" embedded with "silver" used to replace circuit-board traces. The paint comes complete with "Chinese" directions but using it seemed logical (looked like my recent flu shot!). I applied the paint and smoothed it with a swab.

To date everything works fine and no more "skipping" contacts. Now how to improve the operator's sending!

73, Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM



Finished project...back in business! Solid contacts!

August 2020 Brag

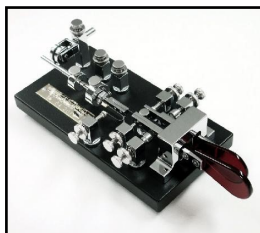


My 10 things:

1. This is my first Brag Posting as AA8CL. As of 11 Aug, I put aside WB8SDA and started using AA8CL. Took me 18 years to get to 20 wpm to take & pass Extra. Then it took me 28 years to finally decide to get my vanity Call Sign. I'm not the quickest guy in the bunch but it was finally time. Boy is there a lot of changes to make with all this integrated web we weave. All the loggers, new email, web sites, LoTW, QRZ, eQSL, Msg boards, QSL Cards, new Vanity Licence tag for the car.
 2. Fun month, 133 Brag QSO's, 181 total contacts, 31 non-members, and a few we just keep stopping in to say hello to each other and catch up on the news.
 3. By my best count Air Force-8 contacts, Navy- 7, Army-2, and Marines-2. I was asked to make sure I got that Marine count up by one. You guys actually read this??? But boy the qso's were great. Where else can you talk to a Submariner, Senior Chief, Marine, Brigadier General, Air Force Doctor, and so so many other Great Vets all in the same month. What an honor.
 4. Still on Covid Lay off, so why not take advantage of the time to play as much CW as I can. My yard projects are winding down and now moving inside for some remodeling projects.
 5. Playing CW is the BEST. I continue meeting great friends, New and Old.
 6. Finally got on the air with my good friend, Kevin-KD8IE. Great DX contact from roughly 4.0 miles away on 20m. Kevin, Welcome back to CW after 15 years.
 7. Had fun Hunting Parks on the Air and Summits on the Air, mostly on CW but got a couple SSB contacts too.
 8. Worked Canada, France, Belgium and New Zealand. Stan, it was fun chasing you in New Zealand for 3 straight nights till I could finally hear you. And how about having friends around the world. And I wonder if my Vertical is getting out.
 9. Always fun to see that you helped in some small way, folks reach key milestones, Cx1, Tx1, Tx8, Sx1, and if you haven't taken the time to answer the call for a Marathon QSO, you have to try it!!!
 10. Enjoyed playing in the Ohio QSO Party, all CW. And then have some SKCC members give you a call, Bert W5ZR for sure and I'm pretty sure a couple more. I won't win any categories but had a great time.
- And as a bonus, #11. If you are new to CW or rusty on CW, stop talking about it and get on the bands. We are looking for more new folks to talk to. Answer those CQ's. We'll slow down for you. Or call CQ. Even if you just want to say HI or HIHI. 73, Carmen / Bud AA8CL



Good month considering the conditions and the evening storms that kept me from operating. I read somewhere how to take a picture that will post correctly. We shall see if it does. 73/72 to all Peter AK3X



Received my new Alberto Frattini Magnetic Evolution Bug in August. It's my 2nd one & this time with a black base. 73, Steve K2FW



So much going on and to be done lately. Aug. 30th was the 25th anniversary of my becoming a ham. 73, KC5"SAM", Virginia



Nice month for me. Mostly used my TS-590SG into a vertical. Always 75 watts and Kent Str Key. 73, Curt K2CWM



Thanks to all who participated in this month's Brag Program. The bands were a challenge, but a new sunspot cycle is coming. So conditions should improve. Hope to see everyone again in September Brag. 73 & God Bless you and your family. Ric KA3LOC



Mainly WES and SKS this month, not a lot of brag QSOs. I did several POTA activations, though. Here's my WES Turtle Straight Key riding in my Go Bag to one of them. He got a couple of second glances, but worked great! 73, Steve KC5F



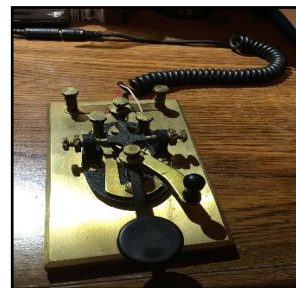
All of my contacts this month were with a Brown Bro's. Straight Key. This is my first



Enjoyed the month although the bands were quite bad for central Georgia. Hurry up Cycle 25. 73, Mark KA4UPI

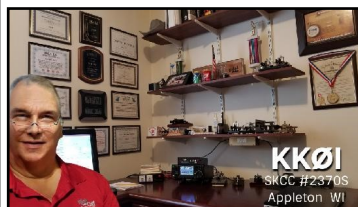


Slacking off lately. Picture is my first station in Wakefield, MA. 73,



73, TomW9TPB

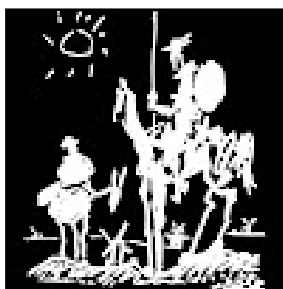
August 2020 Brag II



It was a lot of fun this past month playing the bonus brag station. There were quite a number of new members on the air and a few new lower numbers I had not QSO'd before. Ran my IC7300 on my "droopy dipole" with my trio of keys...1919 Vibroplex Original, Nye Speedx straight key and my Begali Single Lever paddle as a cootie. I would recommend anyone to give it a try. I tried to get on a little each day. I blended a bit of staying on frequency and then some "search and pounce. Thanks for all the contacts folks. It was an honor for me to be our Brag station. 73, Jack KKØI



Not many days in the shack this month, however I was lucky to catch Jack (KKØI) to make up for at least some of my pitiful attendance! Thanks to everyone who I worked, and there was certainly enough QRN pain to go around on the days that I was on the radio. 73 to all from New Hampshire and hope to see you in September! Larry N1FG



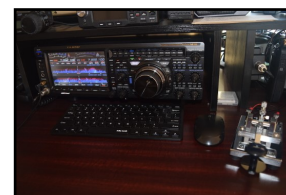
Very few QSO's to report after a busy WES ! One of those 15 was a contact with VO2MPR in Labrador! I included a photo of my son and I shooting up a replacement 80m antenna, after some strong storms. 73, Gene W9KMK



Picture of my stuff for field radio. 73, de Hanz YL3JD



All QSOs worked with my 1938 McElroy Deluxe MAC bug. 73,



Had a great brag month, my best if you ignore the K3Y month. I made 150 QSOs for my brag and also achieved Cx15. Thanks you to everyone who answered my CQs. Key used most during the month was my GHD GT502MIL feeding my Yaesu FTDX101D. 73, Bruce WB6IZG

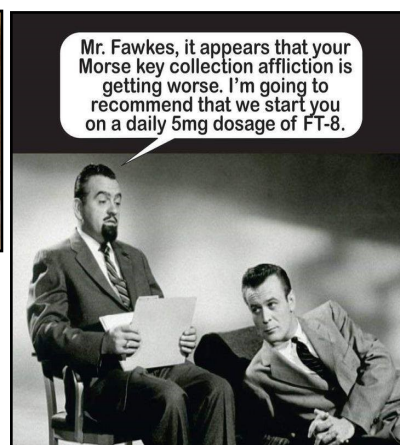
De.... Facebook



Have moved to a new callsign recently. Gotta get used to it as my fingers keep sending AOQ instead of IQ. This will be my new qsl design. Key is from my friend EA1BNF's collection. 73, Chus EA1IQ



New key for my collection, but I really like this one. I plan to be more active in the group. 73, David KN4OK



Discovering the “Trombone Slide”

By John K2IZ

Since my service in the Navy as a Radioman I was always interested in using a bug, unfortunately it never happened. When I was on active service there was a requirement for using a bug, I think it was 35 words per minute, sending and receiving, upon successful completion the Navy issued you a Speed Key Certificate and gave you your own, brand new, Vibroplex bug. When I was in, '65-'69, code was on the way out, teletype was the thing, 100 word per minute units, multiple channel receivers, the only time I used it was when I was stationed in the Azores, Naval Air Facility, we monitored the merchants on 500khz, we received their Weather (OBS) and AMVERS (Automatic Merchant Vessel Emergency Reporting System) which we relayed to Coast Guard, Governors Island, in NYC, all the sending was done with a J-38 key.

Onboard ship (USS Norris DD-859) they only had a J-38 key, I think it was installed when the ship was built in '45. We had to use CW at the start of our Med. Cruise, we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and were having problems trying to send our traffic on teletype.

Around 0200 one of the guys on watch woke me up, said the communications officer wanted me in radio ASAP, seems they tried to send traffic to NAVCOMSTA Rota Spain and everyone was way out of practice, finally Rota sent a ZBM-2, which means put a qualified operator on this circuit, I spent quite a few hours clearing traffic with that J-38 key, I wish I knew how to use a bug or had a keyer back then.

I got my ham license back in '71, General, Extra in '76, at first I did mostly voice but I also got involved in traffic nets, after a while that faded away and I started chasing DX, CW is easier than phone, most people agree that CW is worth several DB over voice.

I've used the WinKeyer-USB for many years, using either a Brown Brothers Iambic paddle or a Brown Brothers dual, Iambic/straight key but it just didn't seem like real CW.

After my retirement I had a chance to pick a never used Vibroplex Presentation bug, I tried it but it never sounded right, but then I joined SKCC and despite my arthritis I wanted to learn to use a bug, thank goodness for GOOGLE search, I found a lot of sites on how to tame a bug, some quite good, others, well. Along the way someone also gave me what I thought was a Vibroplex Original, built in '46, but I found out it's a Blue Racer, I ended up putting a lot of weights on it to slow it down, I'm using it for SKCC but it felt heavy with all the weights.

I came across an article by W7IS, he came up with what's called a “Trombone Slide” ad-



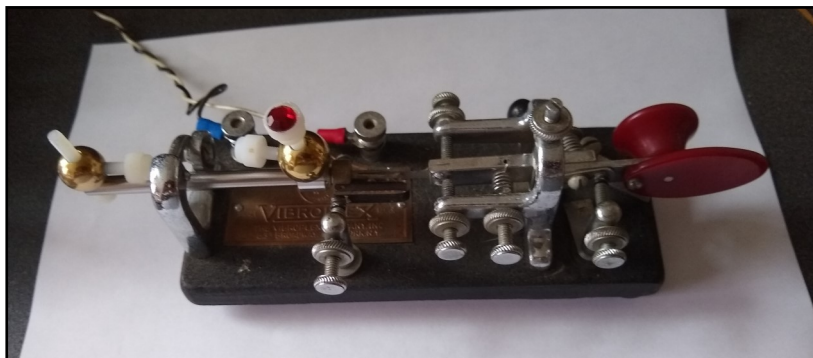
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSexPcF90VA>

justable weight. It follows what many others say about taking a piece of metal rod and extending the reed past the damper on the bug, he was

kind enough to send me one, I'm not sure if he's still making them, and I installed it on the Blue Racer, it makes quite a difference, the bug is easier to operate and with the present settings I can send code slow enough for SKCC, what's the saying? “twenty is plenty”, we need to encourage newcomers and not chase them away by using high speed code.



Various views of the Trombone Slide Weight before installing on my Blue Racer.

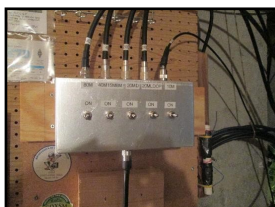


My Blue Racer with the Trombone slide weight installed

I'll be giving the bug a few tryouts, I'll be asking how does my fist sound with the slide weight on it, that and I'll be enjoying myself.

73, John K2IZ 5019T

SKS Eu September 2020



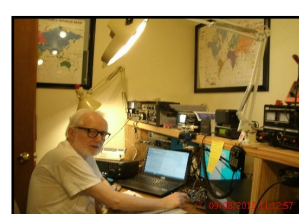
This is the toughest SKCC event for me. This month was no exception. F6EJN was only European station I worked. Pleasantly surprised to work Delaware on 40M. The photo shows my homebrew 5 position coax switch. I had a hard time finding one, so I built my own. Worst case VSWR is 1.23:1 on 50Mhz, but VSWR is typically 1.10:1 or less. If you're interested in building one of these, email me for details. 73, Bob AC1GF



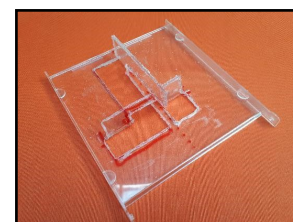
Had a great QSO on 20m with F6EJN Bob, but for the half hour or so I was operating, no other QSO's. On 40m I heard F5DE Bernard and ON7DQ Luc was heard on 40m and 80m. Kenwood TS440S, 100 watts, 20ft vertical, Marconi PS No213A export model key. 73, John GÖRDO



Thanks for all qso and see you later in next WES. On the picture, my new XM 240 Cushcraft at 50 feet of ground; 73, Bob F6EJN



Fun event. 73, NEE NE9EE

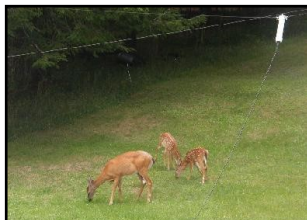


Again great fun with my "CD Box" plastic Cootie. It keys very lightly and I think I finally got the hang of sideswipery ... here another picture of the plastic structure, before adding the copper foil contacts. 73, Luc ON7DQ



"I know we just met but he's so amazing, great smile, nice car and he only operates CW"

September 2020 WES



Found conditions very good on 40 meters Saturday and made all contacts on that band. I had three neighbors come by to check if there was any ground wave propagation under my antennas. Unknown what they found. Rumbles of thunder kept me off the air on Sunday and am looking forward to the next WES. Thank you Dave, W1DV, for your efforts in putting KS1KCC on the air. 73 till next time. Frank AA2XB



Thanks for a fun WES. I hope to see everyone next month! 73, Jim AD0AB

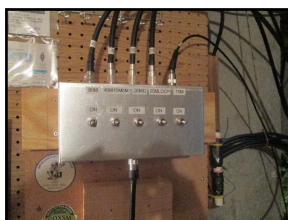


That was good fun. Lots of activity. 73, Bud AA8CL



After a long, non-ham-related Saturday, I wasn't quite up for the NA Sprint that evening ... nice to have WES as a more laid back alternative! Thanks for good ears with my 2W QRP signal ... even worked some DX from here in NJ! Softrock RXTX Ensemble, Quisk S/W transceiver, 1/4-wave fan vertical (40/20), 32 radials. Special thanks to KA9P for his photo of his 1969 Radio Shack key this month ... I use one just like it that I got ~1970 as a novice ... after being off-the-air for 45 years, I've recently only been *suspicious* that it came from Radio Shack ... now I know!!! (and I like it!). Here's a photo my daughter took recently. 73/72

My WES participation #120. Glad to have had three bands contacts with Phil K3EW (many thanks for your patience during our 80 m QSO!) and two bands fb contacts with Ben AC2YD (QRP station). Four club stations contacted including KS4KCC. Always a pleasure to say hello to SKCC friends. On the photo you can see my old multiband GP with which I do all that contacts with my 80 watts transceiver not a very powerful rig but enough to have real pleasure with CW traffic. 73 ! Bernard F5DE



I did something different this WES. I switched from the 100W category to the 5W category. I needed a different strategy for the 5W category. More "hunt and pounce" than usual. Definitely takes a lot of patience. This was the first time I had my Yaesu FT450D down to 5W. Worked some DX:

ON5UK, F6EJN, and YT5DTJ on 20M, F5DE on 40M. Conditions on 20M were generally awful, 80M and 40M were decent. This was a good test for my antennas... now I know they're pretty efficient. Thanks guys for digging out my weak signal. Photo show my homebrew 5-position coax switch. I couldn't find an affordable one so I built one. Works great from 3.5Mhz to 50Mhz, with SWR generally less than 1.1:1. Email me if you want more info. on the switch. 73, Bob AC1GF



Was able to be active for longer time this WES, and it paid off, more contacts, and more fun! Most contacts on 80 and 40m, and one in 20m. Couldn't contact KS1KCC, next time! This maybe my best result ever! :) Thank you so much everyone. See you in the next event. 73, AC2RJ, Ruben.



Coming again for the business but QRP (max 5 W) ... just one QSO done with Peter, GM0EUL lots of calls but no chance ... Thanks Peter. 73, Carlos CT7AFN... in the photo my new bug a McElroy !!! .. a piece of art!



Just a little time Saturday evening. A fun event as usual. Argonaut V at 5W to G5RV-ish inv vee. (102 ft doublet fed directly with 290 Ohm twin-lead). Let's see if this picture posts correctly. 73, Peter AK3X

September 2020 WES II



Many stations present at this WES and QSOs over 20 and 40m. 18 hours of traffic and fatigue at the end of WES. Thanks everyone for the QSOs. 73, Bob F6EJN



Nice to hear old friends as well as all the new members..logged 14 new op's. The KS# stations were rocking..PG4I sent 229 I sent 559..Jo the amp was working. The 59 Blue Racer / Kent St key among my favorites... Thanks to all...73, Rick K0KEX



Fun contest again this month. Thanks for all the Qs. See you next month. Stay Safe. Icom IC-7300 to a 40 meter Vertical Delta Loop. I alternated between my Intrepid, a 1968 Vibroplex Champion and a Begali Spark. 73, Bob K3ZGA



Only managed activity on Saturday but happy with 8 QSOs. 73, Paul G0OXT



Loads of fun. Mostly hunt and peck, then towards end on Sunday parked on 40 meters for about 90 Mins. Heard VK2TNW on 40 meters at 339 but could not contact. Good propagation with some QRN on 80 and 40. Hope to see all again next month. 73, Steve K2DEP



40m OPERATION ONLY. BAND CONDX GOOD. QSOs WITH FOLLOWING BONUS STNS: KS3KCC, KS8KCC, KS0KCC, W4YK/ARC, WINRG/ARC. TS530, J38 KEY TO A 4BTVP GP. 73, DARYL K9QEW



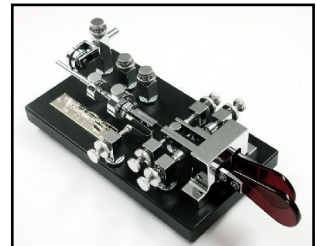
Well I will remember September 2020 WES as I scored absolutely Nil points HI. Spent quite a chunk of time searching for sigs and then trying to work them. Here are stations I tried and failed to work - G4PVM, HA0MDA, IT9FRT, KS8KCC, K3WW, PA2SAM, YL3JD, F5DE, ON4OS, R7DA & KP3W. TS-440s 100 watts, 20ft fishing pole vertical. 73, John - G0RDO



VERY relaxed WES...I just got on for a couple of happy hours, Sunday afternoon, from my back yard. Rig was my SW-3B, a 3Ah LiFePO4 battery, and a VizKey cootie. Antenna was a SOTAbear's Bandhopper, using their 6m pole. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Fun. 20m was OK most of the time and 40 was pretty good on Sunday evening. K2 + Juma PA100-D amp running about 100w to a dipole (40m) endfed (20, 40, 80m) and hex beam (20m). Keys were a Vibroplex Champion and a Himound HK-707. 73, Peter GM0EUL

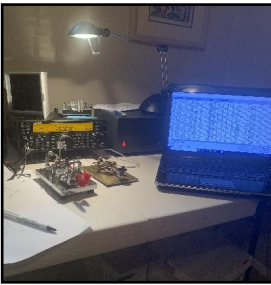


I only worked two QSO's on 80 Meters. Otherwise all QSO's were on 40 & 20 Meters. My first WES with my new black base Alberto Frattini Bug. Tks to all fellow SKCC members I worked. Seemed like quite a lot of members were active. Which is always nice! 73, Steve K2FW



Thanks to all who participated. Family activities limited my participation, but I did work a few new T's for my Sx6. 73 & God Bless you all Ric KA3LOC

September 2020 WES III



Great to see all of the newer members participating. Thank you for all the clubs operating on the contest- lots of bonus points. Great to hear so many EU stations and thank you for my monthly hearing test to all of the QRP stations who called in- must be some fine antenna systems in use out there. Furthest QRP was in NM, Paul NA5N. Special Kudos to Tom, N7WI who was sending left handed on his cootie due to shoulder surgery on his right one- My sending should sound so good. Picture showing operating positin right after contest ended- Op was fast asleep already (well almost) 73, Phil K3EW



Great time this WES. WA9BBN came over Friday and helped me put The Vertical back up. Thx ED! Stopped in N8KR shack to say hello , they were running KS9KCC.73, Jim KD9GDY



I did not start on the sprint until Saturday night, since I did not hear much on 20m during the day. I bounced back and forth between 80m and 40m, and well over half of my QSOs in the sprint ended up being on 80m. I finished up on Sunday morning with five more contacts on 20m. I worked a bunch of the SKCC Club stations, which was a real blast. They were all very good operators. This was a very special sprint for me. It was my first WES, and I also managed to add enough unique QSOs to now qualify for my "C" award. I was using my trusty Soviet TKF straight key. I can't wait for the next WES! 73, Dave K7TRT



Set up at Trine State Recreation Area (POTA K-4182)- enjoyed a beautiful afternoon and a few WES contacts. 73, Bob KC9UR



73, Bob N1MHV



Had a good time this event since I am quarantined and no visitors or interruptions. Not a great way to experience it however. 73, Mark KA4UPI



Thanks for clubs bonus points. See you next month 73, Save KB1WOD



Thank you everyone. I had fun as always, I'll be looking forward to next month. 73, Eric KB3NSK



Greetings. Did not get any bonus points, but still had fun! Thank you all! Xiegu G90, running 20 Watts into attic dipole. Using home-made cootie. 73, Sergey KD9EBS



Great fun as always, but good weather after a week of rain was too much to resist so score was low. Got to exercise the 3 keys I finished TKA with this month, a 1942 Lightning, a homebrew cootie from last month, and my 1969 Radio Shack Special novice key. Kind of a kick finishing TKA with that old novice key. :) 73, Scott ka9p



Was very happy to work Belgium on CW. Enjoyed the clubs. Worked ks8kcc on 80 and 40 and 6 club stations. 73 KC5"SAM", Virginia



Another fun WES. Lots of good prop and FB ops on this weekend. Worked both 40 and 80 meters working four club stations and Alex (R7DA) on 20. (TKA #67). 73, Bill KE3O

September 2020 WES IV



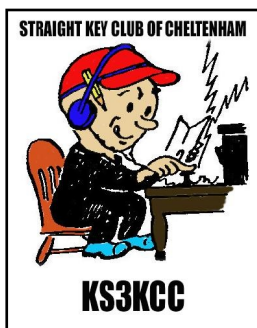
Watching Tour de France had a big impact on my time for WES. Great fun once I got started Saturday afternoon and achieved my goal of working enough stations, with the cootie, to get the TKA award. The bands seemed dead Sunday afternoon, could not get going. 73, Brian KF6C



(KS1KCC op for this WES was Dave W1DV) Busy WES - good to see so many new members. Special thanks to the many Tribunes and Senators that helped push the KS1KCC totals to Senator level! 20M was a disappointment but 40M was (once again) the go-to band. What a great way to social distance! See you all next WES (maybe by then I'll have a new shack photo; I run this one every event!!!) 73 de Dave W1DV



Limited time, smoke, wildfires, and what seemed like a never-ending supply of QSB, hampered my seat time. Nevertheless, I got my first SKCC contact since joining last April and my first CW contact in around 30 years. Thanks to Sam, operating KS0KCC, for his patience and golden ear for decoding my rusty fist. I ran QRP just to make it even more challenging. It seemed fitting that I made the contact on my old friend, the TS-520. What a blast! Thanks to all, even if I didn't contact you, you probably provided me with some copy practice before the QSB hit back. See you all in the coming days! 73, Jon KG7DC



Great time working the WES this month as DAH KS3KCC. Thanks to my KS#KCC cousins for also joining in the fun. Tnx fwer all the Q's and C U Next month. 73, DAH KS3KCC AKA Greg/WA3GM



Took it easy and only worked Saturday. Was a lot of fun and 40 and 80 meters were in good shape for a change. I used my Heathkit SB221 at 350 watts for a change and it seemed to work quite well. Thanks to the organizers and looking forward to next months WES. 73, Dave KI8I



That was a great theme. Plenty of activity and lots of new members to work. Band was long so several DX stations I don't normally get to work. Great so see the different clubs activated. Pleasant surprise was R7DA and HA8KW. Hope we keep this theme. 73, Bugs KS4KCC

Saturday				Sunday			
Time	Band	Call	Call	Time	Band	Call	Call
8-10 am	K8KS	N8UZ	N8ZF	8-10 am	K8KS	N8UZ	N8ZF
10-11 am	K8AQM			10-11 am	K8AQM	N8DF	N8DF
12-2 pm	K8AQM			12-2 pm	N8XI		
2-4 pm	K8AQM			2-4 pm	K8AQM		
4-6 pm	N8DF			4-6 pm			
6-8 pm	N8XI			6-8 pm			
8-10 pm	K8AQM	K8TEZ	K8TEZ	8-10 pm			
10-11 pm				10-11 pm	N8LJ		

A "team" effort; K8AQM, K8KS, K8TEZ, N8DF, N8LJ, N8XI and N8UZ. Lots of "social distancing" as we operated from our own homes. It was great fun and we passed out lots of 100 bonus points. We worked KS1KCC, KS2KCC, KS3KCC, KS4KCC, KS7KCC, KS9KCC and KS0KCC. Missed ND and WY for WAS. 73, Dit KS8KCC



Fun couple days between my part time job at the pro shop. Stayed on 80 and 40 meters. Caught a few new SKCC members making their way through the QRN. Looking forward to next month's TKA event. 73, jack KK0I



In and out all weekend. All 40M contacts were made on the QCX+@4W into a QCX 50W PA @ 40W output. All 80M es 1 20M QSO's were on the 756 Pro @75W with wire antennas. Tnx for the QSO's. 73, Randy, KS7KCC/N8KQ



Used the Kent key this weekend. 73, John AL7JK!

September 2020 WES V



Picture has Jamie - W0CD at the 40 meter station and Josh - W9HT at the 20 meter station. Ken - N8KR also operated and Ed - WA9BBN and Jim - KD9GDY visited for added support and fun! Not the greatest band conditions but a lot of fun and many qso's! 73, Codie KS9KCC



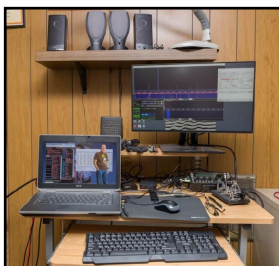
I didn't have much time to devote to the WES this month, but enjoyed it anyway. TA33 - 50W - HM DSK + 1902 SK British Insulated & Helsby Cables Ltd. TU everyone for the QSOs. BCNU 73, Walt - .. ZUT!



Had a good time. Used my new KX2 for the whole time that I operated in the WES. Thanks to all those who pulled out my QRP signal. 72, Bill N0UMP



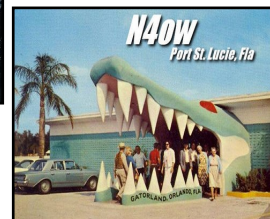
Low solar flux this weekend so conditions weren't the best, at least in New Jersey. However still managed an OK QSO count. New Vizkey Vertical Bug (pictured) arrived on Friday so it got a good workout. Lots of fun as usual. 73, Chris N0CC



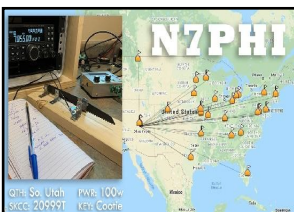
Fun Event. 73, Doug N3QW



My first WES since upgrading from my Kenwood TS-440S to a TS-590SG. I only got on the air for a few hours each day, but had lots of fun. 73, Todd N0IP



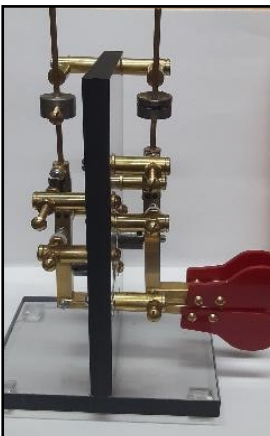
40 AND 20 were dreadful :) Fun in spite of the conditions. Many new members worked. CU all next month, 73, AL N4ow 11375s



Thanks for the great WES! I made my first key -- a cootie -- and decided to use it for WES as I now have no other mechanical key for SKCC events at the moment. A big thank-you to everyone who worked me with my choppy cootie fist :) 73, Derek N7PHI



Decided on a Sunday afternoon "road trip" following operating with the KS9KCC multi. 40 meter hamstick and the Icom 7100 with the German Junker key "backwards" works great while driving. Back roads and frequent stops allowed logging with the netbook. (lots of farmland and back roads here in Indiana!) FUN! 73, Ken N8KR



Argo 6. 5wts g5rv at 35ft n/s inv vee.. wanted 30 QRP QSOS and got them..no p/c hr, only use notebook and every letter and nmbr sent to me is written in notebook.. the good days like being in the Navy in the 60's.. the pix is my key nmbr "62" ..just another hobby to create QRM.wes.. pix is new design , a, VERTICAL DUB-BUG.. fast dits, and slow dits..ha, my hobby. Cu in OCTOBER 73, Dave N9ZXL

Enjoyed the WES and especially the club station theme. Used my TS-590 at 75 watts to an off center fed dipole (40 meters) and a horizontal loop (80 meters). 73, Dick N5KIP

September 2020 WES VI



A storm/high winds brought down my TFD dipole. Spent Saturday replacing all the support ropes and back in the air, so only worked 36 late Saturday and a bit on Sunday. Still fun, of course. Liked the club theme, worked several. Got some new folks on the air. 72, Paul NA5N



Propagation not so good but nice to work a couple of new SKCC members. First time I used a linear amplifier, it's a noisy Ameritron AL-800 which I bought second hand just before the weekend. Used it at about 600 Watts output. Also, first WES with a home-made cootie! Although some characters came out wrong everyone seemed to copy me okay. 73, Jo PG4I



Things are anything but normal with the Covid virus and now terrible wildfires with smoke so thick we haven't seen the sun for a week. Anyway, a good time to escape for a couple of hours and play in the WES. All S&P this time for no particular reason and used three keys: Right-angle VizKey for slowish CW, my ancient Blue Racer for fast CW and my old novice straight key for a few slow Q's. Picture is from this Tuesday of Salem, capital city of Mars. 73, Rock NE7D



Thanks to everybody who worked me. QRM from sea pirates made it challenging at times on 40m. Managed ten QSOs this time from VK. Heaps of fun as always! 73, Adam VK2NNW

A lot of fun. Thanks to these events, I'm improving. All QSOs on my new to me Speed-X. TU all 73, Blue W1BLU



Decided to go QRP this month. Started out with my QRP Labs QCX 40M kit and made most of my contacts using it, a J38 and OCF dipole at 30'. But 40 was dead this morning so I made some contacts on 80 with my K3 at 4 watts. Even worked KU8T on 160 at 4 watts and my 160 loop! Also made some Q's on 20 with the K3 and OCF dipole. But most were made with the QCX. Fun lil rig but no AGC or S meter makes guessing RST tough. And got to keep a hand on the volume control in case a loud station calls! But it was all fun and somehow I made 100 Q's! Thanks to all who copied my 4 watts! 73, Bill NZ0T



Didn't have much time this WES. Worked hard for the stations I did get. 73, Jim W1RO



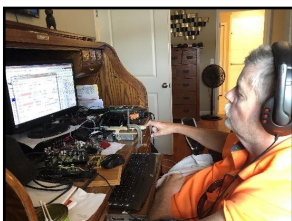
QCWA Chapter 25 used its club call, NE0QP, for the Sept WES. Three members of Chapter 25 operated in the WES: Steve, WB0QQT; John, N0FYE, and Fred, KB0LF. Had a blast. Lots of QRM on Sat with the TX and AL QSO Parties, and Eu contest. But had fun anyway. Attached is a pix of Fred with his HB Cootie, made for the Aug WES. Used it for all his QSOs this month. Thanks to all who had a QSO with us. 73, NE0QP QWCA25



September 2020 WES VII



A good weekend, though Sunday afternoon got kind of slow. Football? Anyway, propagation overall was better than the past couple of months. Good participation level, with plenty of new folks. Nice not to have multiple contests in the same space for the whole weekend. Thanks to all. 73, John W1TAG



Was a great theme, sat was tough qso parties, naqp etc, thanks, 73, Ray W9GHX



Operated for a few hours with the Mansfield/Johnson Amateur Radio Service call sign WA5JRS. The pic shows the Hardrock 50 watt amp, which this was it's first tryout. Notice the water sprayer fan cooling it (no water). I operated mostly on 20M and a few on 40M. Had fun! 73, MJRS WA5JRS



Another weekend of WES fun. My 4th. Last time was my first use of the new G5RV antenna. It enabled lots of QSO's on 80 meters. Same in this WES. Now I discovered that it works on 160 meters also! I was very pleased with the signal reports. However, only made 3 QSO's on 160 because of terrible power line QRN during the rain. Thank you Dave, N3CKI. You are my first QSO on 160...after 61 years!!! A QSL card will be coming your way. 73. Peter W2SKY



Long periods of low activity and poor band conditions made it quite a challenge. Further challenge was using a straight key for the entire WES to earn my Triple Key Award. Key is a Wilson Canada which looks like a McElroy Stream key knock-off. 73, Jack W9GT



Evacuated from the Creek fire, only put up a Hustler 20m mobile whip... still lots of fun! 73, Preston WA6OEF



XYL took pic of me just down from the 48' HDBX tower late Sat afternoon....so got a late start in WES. 2 days to get the KT-34A, rotor, and mast down. Just me at 73 and my ground-man xyl at 70 on the job....and she thinks I am crazy. Hopefully will get new Optibeam up in a few weeks. Band cndx not the best overall but there were some good periods - got KF7WNS and his 1 watt Sat nite. Fun chasing the KSx stations and the club stns of which there were a lot. Mostly hunt and pounce this time. K3 line at 500w to 160m horizontal loop @ 50' on all bands 160 - 20. Keys: Twanger cootie and Junker SK. 73 Dave W3NP West Virginia



Our new SKCC membership is off to a great start. Too bad we couldn't get the "C" sooner, as we could have gotten to "T" by the end! The final "dead band" count was 38 states, 6 Canadian provinces and 9 other countries on our EFHW, running 65w on 40m and 100w on 80m and 20m. What fun! (KC5F - operator and trustee.) 73, BRARC W4YK

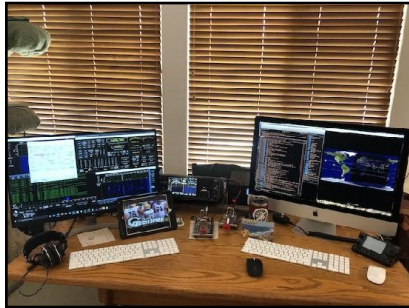


Good WES this month. I worked three bands and mostly hunted and pounced. I got a good report from Bob in France and worked several Canadians. Thanks to everyone! 73, Gene W9KMK



Unfortunately did not get to operate a lot during WES but did manage 4 QRP contacts from inside and outside the camper. Could have worked more but XYL had other plans. Thanks to the 4 stns, that pulled my little signal out of the QRM/N 73, John WB2TQC

September 2020 WES VIII



This was a fun one! Set a personal record for contacts over the event. Still managed to watch some football and work WES hi hi. Thanks to everyone who answered my CQs! 73! Ted WD6TED



Operated less than an hour, unfortunately. Still was fun, as WES always is! Wish some of the club stations would have followed the exchange recommendation, though. See you next month, good Lord willin' and the creek don't rise. 72/73, Jeff WN1MB

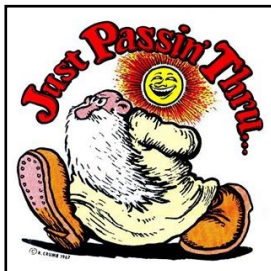


Air quality is pretty bad in CA due to fire. Stay indoor this time. Mainly on 20m at day and 80m at night. 73, Nian WU6P

De Facebook



Some outdoor ops on the deck this weekend. Experimental EFHW wire out to a 23' telescoping poll fed with a home brew 49:1 unun. Made some contacts on 20M and 40M although 40M was pretty busy with contests today. Burning the wire with a astonishing 2 watts via the ubiquitous "Hot Water 8" - HI HI. 72's & best wishes for a safe and enjoyable Labor Day. 73, Mark N9AK



Stormy weather and wet feed lines means I won't be risking ops with the IC-7300 tonight. Monitoring the air waves instead with a recently revived Hallicrafters S-38C. Glowing tubes, the smell of transformer varnish and the sweet rhythmic sounds of CW. It's 1940 again...73, Mark N9AK



My loop. 73, Jeff N2KOF



Thanks for the Qso's NY, NC, PA, on 30m and 40m this afternoon. Playing with the mag loop, is about 4 feet in diameter. Running 100 watts seems to work fine. Still on 40m for a while looking for QSO's.



Sweet Century 21. 73, George N2JNZ

Editor....The following is an article that explains the trials and tribulations of Dave VE4DL expressing issues many of us have faced. This series of articles may be slightly off CW topic but none the less, issues many of us have faced....enjoy and laugh!

Confessions of a Casual Contester **from the shack of DavidVE4DL**

I am not now, nor ever have been, a Contester. I don't see myself becoming a Contester either, if one defines the term to include round-the-clock operations, intravenous fluids and diapers, and frequent relays of cold, one-hand meals. Not my thing, at all. BUT.....

It's a strange circumstance that my shack is at work, not at home. It happened because the bakery has a 150 x 65 foot flat roof, with lots of room for antennae, while my house fills completely its inner-city lot. Not even room for a hammock.

That being the case, and the current emergency orders in effect, I wanted to remote my station to home. Easy? I thought so. Thousands do it.

[The Gods laffed and laffed!]

I have a pretty modern radio, a Kenwood TS-590S, which is an SDR radio with knobs and buttons. Very computer friendly and intuitive, really. The control app from Kenwood is also excellent. In fact, I can do more with it than I can at the front panel. No problems there. The Kenwood server app is also good. But add in the Kenwood soundcard-to-radio client and the Kenwood VOIP app and all bets are off...

Weeks. Several. Pass.

Imagine this; there are 3 apps at the shack to get the radio onto the internet; there are 3 apps in the remote location, to get the radio off of the internet; each app has its OWN mixer function to handle the audio; each has separate sliders for speaker and mic; each can choose from multiple arcanelly-named codecs; each is a separate thorn in my rear end.

Jessy (VE4JBB) and I got it running after a long struggle. Oh Frabjous Day, Callou Callay! NOT

Yes, I was on the air from home, but signal reports were terrible. Lots of distortion, compression, static. More days of nudging sliders around. Change mic. Change jack for mic. No improvement.

Comes the day, and Kenwood's own VOIP app decides my radio isn't there anymore. (I assure you, it is, and the local client knows it.)

So. Here I am. Sitting in the shack at work, when I otta be home, trying to find signals in a geomagnetic storm. Is THIS ham radio? You bet it is.

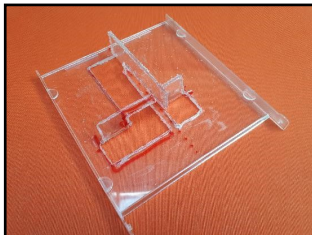
But it isn't contesting. Nope. Not at all.

Editor.... Another "episode" of "Confessions of a Casual Contester" will appear in this issue later.

September 2020 SKSE



This is the toughest SKCC event for me. This month was no exception. F6EJN was only European station I worked. Pleasantly surprised to work Delaware on 40M. The photo shows my homebrew 5 position coax switch. I had a hard time finding one, so I built my own. Worst case VSWR is 1.23:1 on 50Mhz, but VSWR is typically 1.10:1 or less. If you're interested in building one of these, email me for details. 73, Bob AC1GF

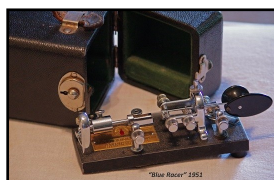


Tks for SKS-E contacts! I used my good old J36 bug key, as you can see not in mint condition but always a pleasure to use it. F5UQE on three bands, F6EJN and ON7DQ on two bands. One new number G0GZN #21334, and one non member, HB9ANE, I informed him about the SKCC club maybe a future new number? 73, QRO to everybody and see you soon Bernard F5DE

Again great fun with my "CD Box" plastic Cootie. It keys very lightly and I think I finally got the hang of sideswiping ... here another picture of the plastic structure, before adding the copper foil contacts. 73, Luc ON7DQ



Thanks for all qso and see you later in next WES. On the picture, my new XM 240 Cushcraft at 50 feet of ground; 73, Bob F6EJN



Nice to hear so many stations even with the high noise here. The key pictured arrived an hour B4 the event. I quickly adjusted and joined in the fun. Tks to F6EJN, F5UQE, OS0O & others that I had SkS-e qso's with....73, Rick K0KEX



Fun event. 73, Al NE9EE

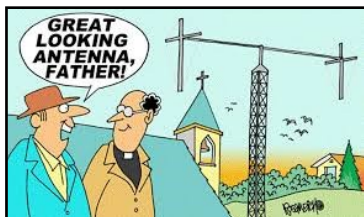


Had a great QSO on 20m with F6EJN Bob, but for the half hour or so I was operating, no other QSO's. On 40m I heard F5DE Bernard and ON7DQ Luc was heard on 40m and 80m. Kenwood TS440S, 100 watts, 20ft vertical, Marconi PS No213A export model key. 73, John G0RDO

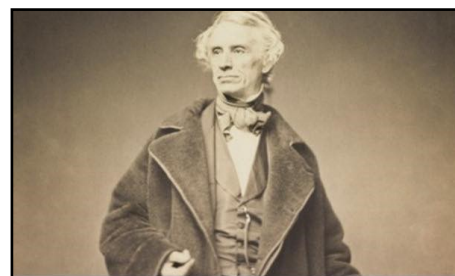
De Facebook



13 colonies. 73 Bob N1MHV



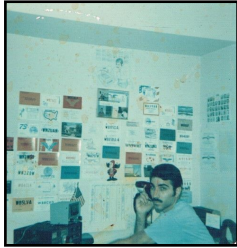
My Knightkit T60 xmtr and Knightkit R55A rx. 73, Scott KA6IOM



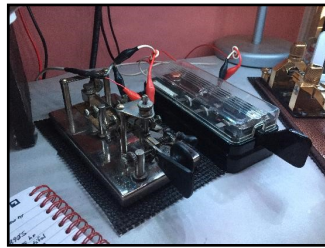
The telegraph was invented because of heartbreak. When Samuel Morse left town to paint a portrait, his wife suddenly fell ill and died. By the time he got news his wife was not only dead - she had already been buried, he was so upset that he shifted his focus away from his art career and instead dedicated himself to improving the state of long-distance communication.

73, Mike W8RF

September 2020 SKS



TOTAL AWE-SOME SHOUT OUT TO BOTH Brian, KF6C & Bob, AC1GF for their difficulties in hearing me and NOT giving up on my QRP. It probably cost KF6C another contact and with AC1GF, it pushed us over the finish line. THANK YOU BOTH. Got a late start because of chasing home internet problems (where are my priorities anyway, sorry), so only ran the last 45 minutes. Goal was to find a spot on 80m and send cq from there. Little did I know that 80m was packed. Another AWESOME SHOUT OUT. And always, an event is not complete unless for the DX contact from Gary, AF8A for cross city DX. (2.7 QRZ.com miles). 599 again Gary. Picture is WB8SDA/4 (aka AA8CL) DP2 Labato working for his Bi-Centennial Worked All States Award in 1976, Ft Belvoir (Alexandria) VA Apartment. 73, Bud AA8CL



Didn't get to work the full two hours but was another enjoyable SKS!! (Will have to get permission from the XYL to work one for the full two hours! Hi Hi) Thanks for the fun!! SKCC is just AWE-SOME!! Used these two bugs for most of the contacts... 73, Kenny AF4QK



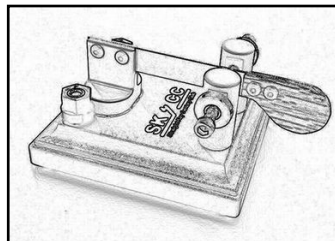
The bands were in pretty good shape tonight, so the action was steady! Very enjoyable; the time flew by. I could hear, but not be heard on 20, but 40 and 80 were productive for me. I answered a few calls successfully, but as always, being QRP, it usually works out better to call CQ, and work them as can hear me. Rig was an Elecraft K2 at 5w to a 20m EDZ at 50' on 40m, and an 80m dipole up 80', on 80m. Key was the inimitable W1SFR TBFB, seen below. Paddles are only for display purposes. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



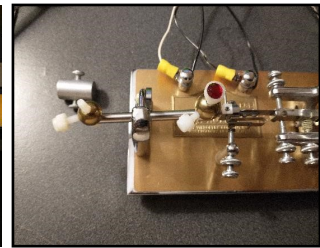
Nice time as always. Set my goal of a dozen and that's what I did. TS-590SG 75w to vertical, Kent SK. Maybe more next month. 73, Curt K2CWM



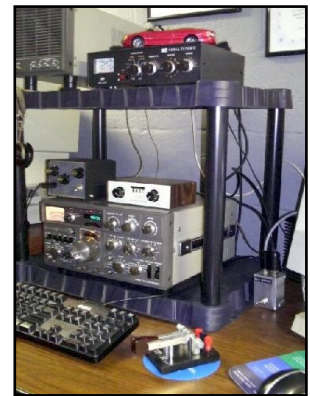
Ran homebrew 6MJ6 with HG-10 VFO to loop. Technical problems... getting ready for classic radio exchange. 73, John K3MD



Late start got in the last hour. 40 was very good tonight. Happy to work SD, MT, CO and NM ... the west was loud here. Many big sigs seen on the band scope. Fun as usual. 73 de AL, N4ow 11375s.



Half way into the SKS I changed the weight on my bug, it was a heavy weight to start with but I never liked the way the dits sounded, I switched to the trombone slide weight and to me it sounded so much better, the dits sounded better at a slower speed. I've put the old weight in the picture. 73, John K2IZ



Got a very late start -only 15 minutes to operate- TNX WB9HFC-N4OW-N0TA- all on 40 with my TS-820 barefoot..73 to all....Larry K8TEZ

Worked the saw cootie again. The frequencies were PACKED! Hard to pick out signals, but that's the game, I guess ;) I was so happy to hear and work K3ESE -- very loud here in UT! I didn't have too much time to participate between shuttling kids and dinner, but it was still fun to search and pounce. 73, Derek N7PHI

September 2020 SKS II



"Team Contesting" with K8AQM. Great conditions on 80 but 40 was really rough. 73, Mark NU8Z



Worked 40 meters until the last 15 minutes when I switched to 80 because 40 was fading. Used the trusty old K3 and Bencher RJ-2 key. Antenna OCF dipole at 30'. Another fun SKS! 73 all Bill



Rough condx on 40m tonight. Used my trusty Green Machine from W1SFR. Had fun as always. See you next month! 73, Roger VE3RDE



Well 20m, my best way to get from Calif to the east coast, didn't seem to be happening at the beginning. So I camped out on 7.053.5 for most of the event. Fortunately 40m seemed to open up just in time! As always a fun event. And I got to try out my brand new Kuroyama straight key for the first time! 73, Ted WD6TED

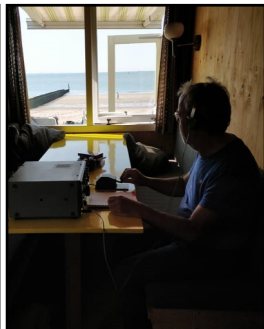


Good condx on 40, surprisingly poor on 20. Tnx to all the runners, you were everywhere! 73, Stan W6SMF

De Facebook



2 weeks at the beach with a vintage TS-520, 40 meter groundplane and a Junker straight key. 73, Joop PA3JD



My go to collection. I have more but these are my favorites. Sorry about the bencher folks but ya gotta do what ya gotta do lol. 73, Curtis KJ4CX



A small achievement to some, but I've been chasing this one since 1987. I have the phone and the mixed but not CW alone. Would never have made it without this groups help and encouragement. Many, many thanks. 73, Jim NJ3B

Team Contesting at KS8KCC

The KS8KCC (K8AQM) station is setup with five stations and is intended for multiple-radio-multi operator fun. The Covid virus has put a big stop to our many operator gatherings where we laugh, eat and enjoy making QSOs. Fortunately a new category introduced in SKCC events provided a semi-solution..."Team Contesting." Members of a club can use the club call while operating from their own home stations, merge their logs and submit as one single entry into the multi-operator class. That's exactly what we did with KS8KCC in the September WES. A chart was made offering two hour operating slots on bands 160m through 20m. Members signed up for what operating slots they would like and on what bands, all with a first come first served basis. Several club members couldn't operate for various reasons in this event but six members signed up for operating slots. You can see on our chart there are many good operating slots that were not filled but even so we had a great time! Some stations were QRO while others were 100 watts or less.

Saturday					Sunday				
Time	Band	20m	15m	10m	20m	15m	10m	5m	2m
8-10 am	K8KS	NU8Z	NU8Z		K8KS	NU8Z	NU8Z		
10-12 noon	K8AQM				K8AQM	N8DF	N8DF		
12-2 pm	K8AQM				N8XI				
2-4 pm		K8AQM			K8AQM				
4-6 pm		N8DF							
6-8 pm		N8XI						K8AQM	
8-10 pm	K8AQM	K8TEZ	K8TEZ						
10-12 am			N8LJ						

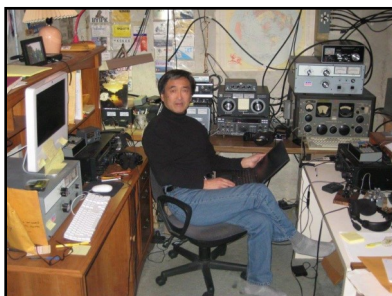
KS8KCC exchange.....599 (State) D1U/ARC 1600T

So how did we do? The merging of the logs wasn't that easy; some operators forgot to list in the SKCCLogger options that the station call used was KS8KCC even though that was the call they sent, but after a few changes all were merged to the tune of 503 QSOs and after removal of dupes 483 QSOs were credited with 72 SPC and a final score of 40,326 points! Our next effort will be to Team Contest using a VPN system with N1MM+ so that we'll have real time logging over the internet.

Team Contesting is fun, but it will never replace the eye-to-eye fun of a true multi-op adventure from one station but under the circumstances, "it ain't too bad!" Hopefully by K3Y in January we'll all be able to gather safely for our usual great fun.



Ted K8AQM 1629s



Kaz K8KS 4444t



Larry K8TEZ 8426s



Dave N8DF 22670



Lee N8LJ 9954t



Rick N8XI 15024s



Mark NU8Z 11237t

73, Dit KS8KCC, "The Dit Dah CW Gang"

CWops Announces 2020 Recipients of Award for Advancing the Art of CW

The CWops Club is a worldwide organization of CW enthusiasts with over 2500 members who strive to promote and encourage the use of CW, educate in the skills and use of CW, and which supports a range of events and programs that allow members to continually learn, practice and improve their CW skills.

The purpose of this yearly award is to recognize individuals, groups and organizations that have made the greatest contribution(s) toward advancing the art or practice of radio communication by Morse Code. This is the fifth year that CWops has made this Award.

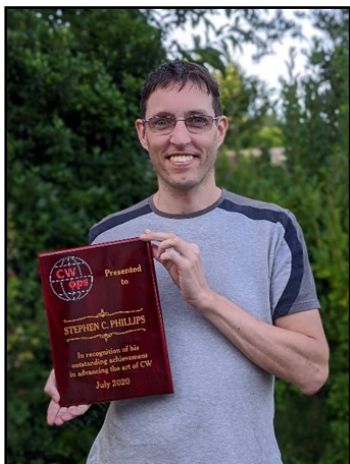
We are fortunate in 2020 to have two honorees for this prestigious award:



Dean Saxton, G4WQI,
Chairman, Essex CW ARC

The Essex (UK) CW Club

Essex (UK) CW Club, for providing a focus for CW interests, and then starting bootcamps, where day long intensive CW teaching takes place. Thanks to Essex CW's lead, there are now CW bootcamps held all over the UK and they are making a real difference to CW interest and activity.



Stephen C. Phillips

Stephen C. Phillips, is the author and maintainer of the Morse code trainer that has been used by thousands of students in the CW Academy to help them learn Morse code. This web tool was created primarily for beginning students but there are some exercises on the web site that can help students at higher levels. The tool has been maintained by Stephen for several years at no cost to the amateur radio community.

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CWops announced the winners of the 2020 Awards for Advancing the Art of CW in a July 28 video conference. The video can be found on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYp318WMPPM>

October 2020 Slow Speed Saunter

Slow Speed Saunter

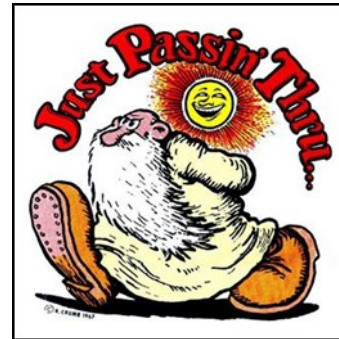


My first SKCC SSS! Operated from a POTA park since I'm temporarily in an apartment. I love playing radio outside with this cool weather! 10 QSOs in 60 minutes which is enough for a PO-TA activation. Had a blast. Can't wait to do it again.

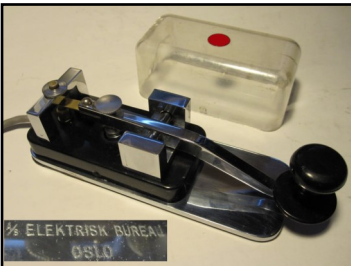


Another fun activity. 73, Nee NE9EE

My fav SKCC event, and gives us all a jump start in the monthly Brag. Used my 12-yr old Icom IC-7000, running 50 watts to a vertical. Kent str key. Stayed on 40m the whole time. Look forward to next month! 73, Curt K2CWM



De Face Book



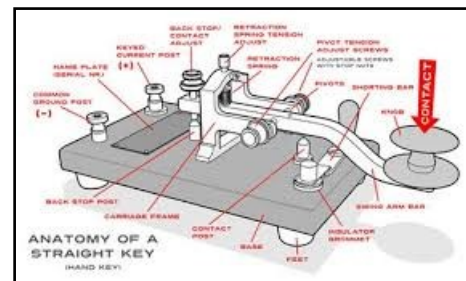
Oslo Elektrisk Bureau key. They came in two models that I know of, the more common one came with a black badge, the rarer one had a red badge. 73, David N1EA



This is my key that followed me around the world. Later I was working developing Sat-coms at EB Nera. Excellent key with SKF ball bearings. 73, Sverre Magnus Berg



My two favorite keys. 73, Rick K8PRG



Editor....Who among us hasn't suffered both wind issues on the antenna and software problems? Please enjoy another "non-contesting" adventure from David VE4DL...

Confessions of a Casual Contester I

from the shack of David VE4DL

I am not now, nor ever have been, a Contester. I don't see myself becoming a Contester either, if one defines the term to include round-the-clock operations, intravenous fluids and diapers, and frequent relays of cold, one-hand meals. Not my thing, at all. BUT.....

May Day weekend, I was attending a webinar for currency. As the computer I was using also runs my shack, I had the Kenwood on in the background. Every time there was a break, I turned up the volume and worked a contact in one of the FIVE state QSO parties I could hear on the air. This is a paper-log exercise, noting which contest they're in and the exchange. Then, after the webinar I put it all in to my personal log software, separating each contact into its proper QSOP tab. Three hours, a ton of information processed and 13 new contacts. It's why I like QSO parties so much. It can be done really off-hand and intermittently and still be good fun. Made a few Ops day with a MB, used my gear, didn't lose any quality time doing other things. Win-win, in my book.

I'll take a video, maybe post it to Facebook: it's gusting 70 kph out there now, and the vertical is doing a nice imitation of a fly-rod. It's pretty limber, giving to the wind instead of resisting. The guys are weighted as well as secured at the base. It looks like the guys are loose, but when the wind stops, the antenna is perfectly upright and there is good tension in all 3 lines. I'm happy with how's it lasted the past 8 months.

A week later, I went up and replaced the ancient feed line with new coax, renewed the guys and generally spruced up the installation. One stub is bowed (the downwind one) permanently. I see no difference operating, unless the wind is blowing again. At speeds over 70 Kph, the SWR on 20m goes from 1 to 3, and returns to 1 when the wind dies away. I may try to calibrate this, see if it happens with all directions of wind. I didn't find a loose connection that would have explained this, so it may be variable distance between stub and antenna due to wind pressure.

I continue to work at remoting my station. The Kenwood software ARUA-10 still refuses to see the radio that it used to find no problem. I've installed RemoteHams RCForbes client and server software, and tested that everything sees everything else. Should be on the air with it this week (25 May) and we'll see. I don't like the UI as much as the Kenwood client, but with the support app not working, I no longer have that option. I'm thinking I'll uninstall and re-install it; maybe that will work? I hate computers. I hate particularly Win10 computers. I'm fekkín surrounded by them.

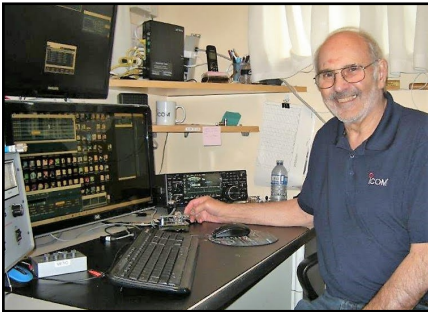
I tried for Day of the YL this weekend, but only found one station, NR4L, on 20m. But tuning through 17m I came upon a CQ from IL of all places. Don't have IL in the log. Well, now I do. Always take time to scan the bands said to be dead. Found 4 stations in all on 17m.

But it isn't contesting. Nope. Not at all.

Editor....And there are more adventures to come....

Socially Distanced Team Contesting with N1MM+ Via VPN

Editor... The following is an article from "The Canadian Amateur" magazine and written by John Schouten VE7TI and first published in "The Communicator" (<https://ve7sar.blogspot.com/search/label/SARC%20Communicator>). It is an excellent article on establishing a real-time logging program via the internet. Given today's troubles with Covid 19, this is a method of having multi multi operations without risking the health of operators.



Fred Orsetti VE7IO

Fred Orsetti VE7IO typically hosts contests at his well-equipped station. Fred is enthusiastic about opening his station to both new and established testers, who enjoy the benefits of a first-class setup. For the past several years a regular group of us have been invited to participate there for major contests and we have developed as a team. In March of this year our team efforts ground to a halt because of COVID-19. Fortunately, Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) opened a possibility for the Canada Day Contest by permitting a group of testers to operate from their individual home locations as a team.

Our contesting software of choice is the free package provided by N1MM [<https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/>]. N1MM+ provides not only logging but a host of associated applets that round out the package with voice and CW audio macros, multiple transceivers, rotator control and digital modes. In short, too many features to list here but a visit to their website will provide the reader with a full description.

The programmers behind N1MM (all licensed Hams from what I can determine) realized that COVID presented some unique challenges to contesting, specifically team contesting. They came up with a solution that would make it possible to create a contest team by entering a contest with a common log from geographically diverse stations. Networking computers attached to separate transceivers has long been a feature of N1MM and its successor N1MM+, and we have used it successfully for years, but those computers were on a common local network.

The N1MM crew suggested that team contesting is also possible by use of a Virtual Private Network (VPN). A VPN gives you online privacy by creating a private network from a public internet connection. VPNs mask your Internet protocol (IP) address, so your online actions are virtually untraceable. Most important, VPN services establish secure and encrypted connections to provide greater privacy than even a secured Wi-Fi hotspot. Surfing the web or transacting on an unsecured Wi-Fi network means you could be exposing your private information. VPNs essentially create a data tunnel between your local network and an exit node in another location, which could be a few or thousands of miles away. VPNs use encryption to scramble data when it is sent over a network. Encryption makes the data unreadable and it prevents anyone else on the network from eavesdropping on your internet activity.



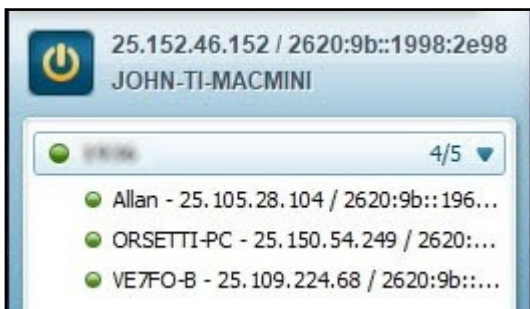
John Schouten VE7TI

Enter the suggested VPN provider, LogMeIn Hamachi [<https://vpn.net/>]. They are a hosted VPN service that, according to their website: “lets you securely extend LAN-like networks to distributed teams, mobile workers and your gamer friends alike. Hamachi uses the server to locate the computers, and all exchanges are done through a peer-to-peer (P2P) protocol. You can easily print a document stored on you home PC from the office, but also create your own virtual local network to play games with friends.” LogMeIn Hamachi offers a free plan for up to five stations, and more at a fee.

Installation is a simple two-step process:

1. The master station creates a free account with LogMeIn Hamachi and sends the invitation. The remote stations reply and log-in to show up on the VPN network.
2. The master station then confirms remotes for access to the N1MM+ network.

Once this is done stations are listed in the N1MM+ network window. It is important to note that, to successfully log onto the N1MM+ network, remote station program version must be exactly as the master station. That includes installing the same program version, CTY file and correct contest name. We decided on a Thursday afternoon to do a log in test because N1MM+ usually updates their software on Tuesday and it would allow an opportunity to resolve any issues.



To their credit, RAC (Radio Amateurs of Canada) recognized that distributed multi-op would be an opportunity to have stations participate in the Canada Day contest as a team, given that operating from a common location was not advisable due to COVID. Although we would not be eligible for awards, Fred VE7IO suggested that this might be a

way for our team to participate as VE7RAC, our usual RAC contest callsign. Fred and I set up a trial LogMeIn Hamachi connection with little effort following the suggested steps. It worked flawlessly! We next launched N1MM+ and opened the networking window. Both of our stations were listed. It couldn't be this simple?

Encouraged, Fred invited two more stations, Al VE7WJ and Jim VE7FO, both experienced contesters. After a minor connection glitch, we found that you do not actually need to create individual Hamachi accounts, but merely follow the steps in the invitation sent by the Master Station. This made a total of four stations connected by VPN. We setup a dummy contest and all of us successfully entered a variety of callsigns and watched them populate the master log.

Fred VE7IO checked for a contest that we could all participate in as a trial for the RAC Summer event and found the 'Portugal Day' contest [<http://portugaldaycontest.rep.pt/rules.php>]. It is an annual CW and SSB event and our score would be submitted as a check log only as there is no category for distributed multi-op. The Portugal Day contest was scheduled on the following weekend, only a few days ahead, so we agreed to use this as an opportunity for a 'live' test of the system.

This contest is listed in N1MM+ but in a test the program would not allow us to log distributed multi-op successfully. Two days before the contest Jim VE7FO sent off an email to one of the program authors. The following day he received a reply saying that they would try to program a patch. The next day we received a follow-up email that the modification had been made. A quick check confirmed that it was working. An amazing response by the N1MM crew, especially since this is not commercial software. Bravo N1MM!

The following day was Saturday, the start of the 24-hour Portugal Day contest. Propagation on phone was dismal but CW saved the day with 69 contacts. The important part was that it all worked as expected. Unfortunately, this was not a recognized category for Field Day 2020, which was to follow the next weekend, so we participated individually.

Forward to June 30th and I was contesting from my home station in the RAC Canada Day contest as a member of the VE7RAC team in distributed multi-op mode. I was connected to the Master Station at VE7IO, as was VE7FO and VE7WJ, who were also operating from



Jim Smith VE7FO

their homes. The spots were appearing on our common bandmap and the master log started to accumulate contacts.

Although not as busy as Field Day, and although the solar conditions were abysmal, there were stations to be worked. Fortunately, we logged quite a few US stations as well. This broke pauses between Canadians and, although many likely would not submit a log, we did encounter some major US contest stations looking for the official Provincial RAC stations as they are worth 20 points. Canadian stations are 10 points and all others 2 points.

The end of the contest, at 1700 Pacific time, and there had been a steady flow of contacts including a few, but not many, runs. VE7IO and VE7FO worked CW while VE7WJ and VE7TI worked sideband. The LogMeIn

Hamachi and N1MM+ combination was flawless, and at no point did it fail or cause concern.

I'll repeat the two most important points to note if you contemplate using this setup.

1. Make sure that all stations on your network run the same version of N1MM+. My version had updated just before the contest and I was out of sync with the other stations, unable to connect. Once we were all on the same program version connection was immediate.
2. Designate a Master Station. This station should create the LogMeIn Hamachi account, set up N1MM+, and share the spots. The Master Station sends the Hamachi invitations to the VPN client stations.

Not critical, but advisable, ensure all stations have the same *wl_cty.dat* country file. You can update it under the 'Tools' menu in N1MM+.

Given the COVID situation, distributed multi-op was a necessity for team contesting. Credit to RAC for permitting this, although it is unfortunate that doing so made us ineligible for awards. It works well enough that it will hopefully become a recognized category for this and other contests going forward.

~ John VE7TI

Editor... There is a wealth of great information on many topics to be found at:

"The Communicator" (<https://ve7sar.blogspot.com/search/label/SARC%20Communicator>)

The latest issue has 106 pages...well worth subscribing to (and it's free!)

Part II....Socially Distanced Team Contesting With N1MM+ Via VPN In SKCC Events De K8AQM/VE9AQM

Following the directions presented in the previous article, Jeremy KD8VSQ and Ted K8AQM used “Hamachi” to install a VPN at the K8AQM station. After extensive tests using N1MM+ for several SKCC events we are pleased to say this system really works! It wasn’t quite as “simple” as the VE7IO crew found.

One issue we discovered here where we have stations (5) that do network through N1MM+’s local LAN caused rethinking. We put one station in the shack on Hamachi and thought the local stations on the N1MM LAN would communicate with all stations on the LAN and the Hamachi WAN...it did not! Hamachi will only see machines with Hamachi IP addresses and WILL NOT pass contacts from N1MM+ LAN stations to the WAN stations using Hamachi and stations on the WAN do not pass data to the LAN stations In other words, **ALL STATIONS** must be connected to Hamachi and obtain a Hamachi IP address. You can not mix other LAN networks with different IP addresses to a Hamachi network. Once we put all the shack stations on Hamachi, all stations shared all data.

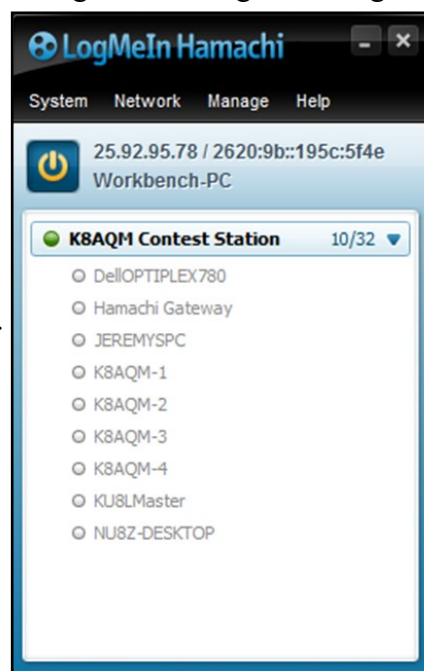
Using N1MM for SKCC events takes some learning. There are UDC (User Defined Contests) add-ons for N1MM and SKCC events. It takes a bit of N1MM understanding to have N1MM used for SKCC events and fortunately Jeremy KD8VSQ, (our resident computer guru) is up to the task. The big issue is to update before each event the SKCC user data base for allowing auto fill of log information. SKCC member Tim K9TM, wrote an executable file that updates the SKCC user data base automatically in N1MM+. If “auto fill” is not used then a user data base update is not needed.

We could of course just use SKCC Logger at each station and merge logs after an events (which we have done) but N1MM+ allows us to “see” who has worked “what,” where” and “when” in real time thus preventing dupes and helping search and pounce operations. We can also “chat” real time between each station on the network. Why do we do all this work? Covid 19 has disrupted our multi gatherings of operating, gathering of friends, good eating and terrific comradery. We don’t multi operate to “win,” we multi operate to have fun and share laughter. Using N1MM with a VPN does present the opportunity to “sorta” share our fun times together and may have implications for our K3Y/8 operation when 15-20 of us use to gather for fun and operating.

Finally, “KS7KCC” was operated in the November WES with success using the Hamachi VPN setup and worked flawlessly. Here is a look at the “Hamachi” network here at K8AQM for the November WES. We had four other stations as part of the team but they operated using SKCC Logger. After the WES the SKCC Logger adi files were merged with the N1MM created file.

We’ll be back as “KS1KCC” in the December WES enjoying “Social Distant Multi Multi Operating!”

73,
Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM



SKSE October 2020



Struggled to hear sigs here, mostly due to poor aerial. One QSO in the log on 80m thanks to a valliant effort by Bernard F5DE - he persevered where many would have given up. Stations I did hear but no QSO were F6EJN, ON7DQ, OE8FB?, G4ZXN, G4DSK, EA7EM. TS-440s 100 watts, 20ft fishing pole vertical. 73 John - G0RDO



Only 1 QSO, thanks Bernard F5DE for nice QSO, bad propagations and only monoband antenna here on my /p locationin JN95ud, 5w and Inv Vee antenna. 73 de YU7AE/qrp

Overall results

Rank	Callsign	Name	SKCC #	SPC	QSO's	SPC's	S/T/C	Score
1	VE3KZ	Bob	22804T	ON	11	10	6/3/0	230
2	F6EJN	Bob	508S	FRA	9	9	2/6/0	171
3	K4BAI	JOHN	3280	GA	9	9	4/2/0	161
4	VA3RSA	Richard	21258T	ON	9	7	1/4/2	128
5	F5DE	Bernard	6247S	FRA	8	6	3/2/0	113
6	ON7DQ	Luc	14984T	BEL	5	3	3/1/0	70
7	HB9CPS	Geo	20350	SUI	6	4	2/1/0	64
8	G0DJF	Paul	20600T	ENG	4	4	1/1/0	41
9	G0RDO	John	2133S	ENG	1	1	1/0/0	16
10	F5UQE	Duc	13468S	FRA	1	1	0/1/0	11
10	YU7AE	Kare	5790T	SER	1	1	0/1/0	11
12	KF6C	Brian	3398S	NY	0	0	0/0/0	0

Air and Sea Rescue



The hand of God watched over them and a miracle happened, 40 years ago tonight. 40 Years Ago Tonight, I was woken up by autoalarm bells from the SOS of the burning luxury liner MS PRINSENDAM / PJTA as my ship was sailing southward from Valdez, Alaska on Prince William Sound. When the burning ship lost main and emergency generators, their radio officer told me to take over and I sent out three additional DDD SOS DDD (MAYDAY RELAY) calls. According to FCC Washington, over 350 ship logs were received, according to RCA San Francisco / KPH senior operator, Hansen who copied my hand-

ing of the SOS in Morse, he'd been there for 35 years and never heard a fiber job of communications. I believe this rescue where all 535 passengers and crew who were all rescued safely without even one death from lifeboats were greatly helped by the International cooperation involved: The United States Coast Guard, United States Air Force who supplied two rescue swimmers as at that time USCG didn't have that speciality, Canadian Armed Forces who supplied massive long trade helicopters able to fly 300 miles out to sea, engage in hours of rescue work by lifting survivors out of lifeboats one at a time and dropping them on my ship, the SOHIO INTREPID and USCG cutters Mellon, Woodrush and Boutwell, United States Merchant Marine and foreign Merchant Navies, including the men and women on Ocean Station PAPA / 4YP (manned by Canadian Coast Guard. US Air Force also sent a flight surgeon (physician.) Because the distress was handled on long range 500 kHz radiotelegraphy, communication with Rescue Coordination Center Juneau, Alaska was instantaneous, because sitting at RCC was a USCG radioman who simply tuned in 500 kHz and copied the Morse beating the interoffice teleprinter circuits by 5 minutes. The City of Sitka, Alaska sent two paramedics. Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System on Governor's Island, New York City sent SURPICS telling us what ships were in the area. Such beautiful cooperation! Morse XXX and SOS recordings, radio logbooks from WIL-LIAMS BURGH and EXXON NEW ORLEANS / WNDM who's Radio Officer, Richard Singer provided his excellent assistance as did Radio Officer, Carl Williams on SOHIO INTREPID. Hundreds of people were involved in what has been called "The Greatest Air-Sea Rescue in history. See The Internet Archive for more <https://archive.org/details/SosMsPrinsendamOctober41980> 73, David N1EA

And Don't Forget to Bring Y'all's Dawg Along!

I was lucky enough to run across this wonderful PDF file of articles written by Articles Written by *Art Marshall, W1FJI (SKCC SK)* and edited by *Mike Maynard, K4ICY (SKCC)*. The articles first appeared in *The Printed Circuit*, newsletter of the Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society. In the next several issues of The Rag Chew several articles from this wonderful "free" PDF will be presented but I encourage you all to download these wonderful articles for yourselves from: <https://www.pinterest.es/pin/430375308144245181/> or simply google "And Don't Forget to Bring Y'all's Dawg Along!"

And You Think Your Family Had Dark Secrets?

Published October 2013 in *The Printed Circuit*: "Hamified History"

I thought you might be interested in this potentially dark and infamous legend from the early days of Amateur Radio, one that pins the ARRL itself with that of the secretive occult traditions of underground fraternal orders of the time - a tradition of *secret works and combinations* that still may be a rite of passage at some ARRL Conventions (or *Hamfests*) to-day. I hope you enjoy reading about it. I can remember the Hamfests of the 1950's, on Saturday evening and I believe it was after the ARRL Dinner; The Loyal Order of The *Wouff-Hong* would meet at 12-midnight. Those brave souls who wanted to become members of this sacred order would attend, and if found worthy, would be inducted. The following is an article by an old friend who is no longer with us. I hope you enjoy reading it:

– Art Marshall, W1FJI

The Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch: Lost Traditions?

L. B. Cebik, W4RNL

"The Wouff-Hong is amateur radio's most sacred symbol and stands for the enforcement of law and order in amateur operation."

"The Rettysnitch... is used to enforce the principles of decency in operating work."

The Radio Amateur's Handbook, 1930, page 11.

In 1930, the Handbook had pictures of both instruments of enforcement. By 1936, only the Wouff-Hong appeared, and by 1947, the Handbook had deleted both photos. Just when we needed traditions of law and order and of decency in amateur operations to guide its growth in the post-World-War-II explosion of technology and easier licensing, the symbols had disappeared from view.

Many of today's hams have no idea what a Wouff-Hong and a Rettysnitch look like. To rectify that gap in hamdom's essential history, [a photo of each instrument is provided]. The first photo is that of the Wouff-Hong. The two main pieces appear to be wood banded by metal strapping and by heavy wire. [Note] the darkness at the upper end of the longer wood piece, as if stained by blood or purified for its grave duties in the fires of purgatory - or both.



The Wouff-Hong...for the enforcement of law and order in amateur operation

The Rettysnitch is an all-metal tool [see photo below] and of the 5 teeth [oriented] around the disk near the pointed end, only three remain. According to tradition, the other two have done their work and perished in the effort. The photo actually fails to convey the device's true and terrible demeanor, and therefore of its full and relentless force to ensure operating decency among amateurs.



The Rettysnitch...to enforce the principles of decency in operating work

Perhaps the last time the story of the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch was told was in 1934. Thanks to Ed Guilford, AA7HQ, in Bothell, Washington, I have the May, '34, QST in which Rufus P. Turner – famous in the annals of electronics writings – recounted "Hamdom's Traditions: A Bedtime Story for Young Squirts." But even by Turner's time, the Rettysnitch was relegated to a paragraph on the story's continuation page in the back of the magazine, with no picture. Somehow, even then, folks had forgotten that you can never have law and order without first having decency. Some pessimists think that we now have neither.

I do not subscribe to the pessimist's view. Sure, the number of rotten operators has skyrocketed, but not their proportion to the main corps of good, legal, and decent operators, capable and courteous to a fault. We should not be troubled by the size of the job of curing amateur radio of its illegalities and indecencies, for we have more folks to help use the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch just where and how they ought to be used - No, not on others, but on ourselves - to make sure that we set a model for how amateur operations ought to be conducted. Turner offers no prescription for using either device, but thought the Wouff-Hong able to beat out King Kong's brains or easily plow up acres of Manhattan bedrock. That will tell you something of the power of these machines. But it won't tell you how they came to be.

Remember T.O.M. - *The Old Man* (Hiram Percy Maxim for you "newbies") - who wrote in the earliest days of "Rotten QRM." His very first article in 1917 blasted concocted abbreviations just coming into use. Among the almost unintelligible gibberish in his headphones were words like "wouff hong" and "rettysnitch," surely instruments of terrifying punishment! By mid-1917, the ARRL was besieged by orders for these contraptions, orders that could not be filled because the League staff had [purportedly] never seen either device.

In 1919, after World War I (then called simply the Great War since no one could imagine doing all that destruction and killing all over again), the League once more took up its work in earnest. At just this critical time, the Directors received, from The Old Man, a package containing an authoritative and well-preserved specimen of Wouff-Hong. Turner described the contents of the package as "the gruesome instrument of torture." By order of the Directors, it was hung in the office of the Secretary-Editor, within easy reach. Its first portrait appeared in QST for July that year. At each Board meeting, the Wouff-Hong stood on display, to the blanched looks of the humbled Directors.

The Old Man also presented the world with its first glimpse of the Rettysnitch. In 1921, the monstrous machine was presented to the League traffic manager by the Washington, D.C., Radio Club, ostensibly after receiving it from T.O.M. Even at its first public appearance, two of its teeth were missing, suggesting a long history of necessary and effective use. However, to this day, the Rettysnitch has lost no other teeth. It was ordered to hang by its mate. In the 20s and 30s, many a reproduction of both instruments, but especially the Wouff-Hong, materialized across the country. A group of hams in Flint, Michigan, created the mystic society called the *Royal Order of the Wouff-Hong*. The society endures to this day, according to legends to which I have so far not been privy. And The Old Man has been given a name: Hiram Percy Maxim, W1AW. At least, legend tells the story that way, perhaps based on the fact that T.O.M. glared at "Kitty" while reflecting on the "rotteness" of everything. Maxim did have a cat. However, true to feline nature, Maxim's cat never spilled the beans.

But what has become of the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch? More important, what has become of their power to enforce both decency and law and order on the ham bands? Hams used to cringe at the thought, let alone the sight, of these dreadful tools of enforcement. But, we do not hear of them much anymore. Oh, a tremor of curiosity every now and again brings out a ripple of questions and speculation - but not much more than a ripple. You see, today, we have much more terrifying weapons, things like Oozies, H-bombs and the like. They scare us in ways that seem to make the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch tame and toothless. However, even in Maxim's day, objectively more powerful weapons were used in France, like tanques and gas more poisonous than that made by Texas chili. Why were the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch so powerful to those early hams?

Because those hams cared about amateur radio in their hearts. They wanted what they knew they could never have: a perfectly lawabiding and decent radio service that would inspire young and old alike to become hams or, lacking the inclination to electronics, to become admirers of hams. Every minute of on-the-air time was a chance to show how noble a pursuit amateur radio was and should always be. They feared the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch as instruments of their own consciences, as they strove to meet the standards they set for themselves.

And that is where today you will find both the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch – deep in your own conscience. If they seem to hold no power, then you know it is time once more to elevate your standards a notch higher, and then to strive to achieve them perfectly. Each of us [if even in the recesses of our minds] has a secret and private office where no one else may go. Above the door, facing our individual operating tables, hang two instruments, one of law and order, the other of decency. However, much the outside world may neglect the tradition of these terrible reminders of responsibility, each of us possess our own Wouff-Hong and Rettysnitch. May you never deserve their sting!

Like all legends, this one, too, must end with special words: *pass it on*.

And Don't Forget to Bring Y'all's Dawg Along! Why such an odd title? Well, at the end of each article written for "The Printed Circuit," the monthly newsletter of the Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society by Art Marshall, W1FJI, he'd plead with the reader to just make time, go outside and enjoy the great weather, and then add a friendly reminder to not forget your dog! [I omitted that line from all but the last article in this publication as they were part of his signature line and this arrangement is continuous.] *Arthur S. Marshall*, or just Art, lived a good 79 years before succumbing to lung cancer after months of chemo. His time on this earth was spent well as a good father and dear friend to many who enjoyed his many pursuits with passion. I don't believe he actually owned a dog, but it could be said that he truly understood the value of appreciating all that God made for us, the precious time we are allotted and the care for our loved ones....De Mike K4ICY

New ARRL Website

Editor...Here is an interesting new website if you are a contester and/or you have been part of an ARRL contest multi operator team. The information comes via the "Allen County Ham News" in an article about contesting from Jim AC9EZ

Recently, the ARRL has created an extensive, contest-specific website containing all sorts of results for ARRL contests. This contest website includes such information as contest results, logs received, and other contest-related information. An interesting section on this website is a tab called "Certificates". Clicking on this tab, one finds a search box where a ham may type in his callsign. Upon hitting enter, the website will show the pdf (and a corresponding jpeg file) of any certificates one may have won in any of the ARRL contests (June VHF, September VHF, ARRL International DX, etc.). By clicking on the pdf or jpeg icons next to each contest mentioned for the callsign entered, a file will open of the awarded certificate(s) which may be printed. These certificates can then be framed and placed on the shack wall, a practice known as adding "wallpaper" to the shack.

If you would like to see if you have received any certificates from the ARRL for a past contest win, go to this web address:

<https://contests.arrl.org/certificates.php>.

Simply type in your callsign (or your club's callsign, etc.) and the website will immediately show if you have received any certificates. The certificates will frequently list what placement you received, both in your ARRL section, and ARRL division.

An Old Trick (gimmick capacitor)

From "Hackaday" website here is an old trick (used in tube gear especially) where a small amount of capacitance is needed:

If you search through an electrical engineering textbook, you probably aren't going to find the phrase "gimmick capacitor" but every old ham radio operator knows about them. They come in handy when you need a very small capacitor of unknown value. For example, if you are trying to balance the stray capacitance in a circuit, you might not know exactly what value you need, but you know it won't be very much. That's when you want a gimmick capacitor.

A gimmick capacitor is made by taking two strands of insulated wire and twisting them together; the length and the tightness of the twist determine the capacitance. Tightening or loosening the twist, or trimming some of the wire off, makes it tunable.

These are most commonly found in RF equipment or high-speed logic because of the small capacitance involved — usually about 1 to 2 pF per inch of twist or so. The thicker the insulation, the less capacitance you'll get, so it is common to use magnet wire or something else with a thin insulating layer. You can take this one step further and decrease the spacing by stripping down one wire as long as it isn't going to touch anything else.

Obviously, the insulation needs to be good enough for the voltage on them, an important consideration in tube circuits, for instance. But other than that, a gimmick capacitor is a straightforward tool to have in your box of design tricks.

My First Marathon QSO

I had my first Marathon QSO with Rob, KN4IXU, on Wednesday, September 30th 2020. He messaged me on the SKED page and asked if I would like to try one. Never having done so, I immediately agreed on a time and place! We started out exchanging the usual SKCC pleasantries, and got into all kinds of other fun conversation. We discussed our equipment, hobbies, families, and upcoming winter plans. The coolest part is that we were both using our Kent Straight Keys. The hour went by as fast as any quick exchange I've ever had. I encourage any member to do a Marathon. You will improve your copy and have a great time! 73, Andy AC8SV



My favorite key

De Facebook



Just got my Knight T-60 rebuilt, I got it off ebay, so new caps and diodes and new painted cabinet, cleaned and scrapped tube pins, dexo the switches ext. Puts out 40 watts CW, perfect! My friend built a nice little regen Receiver solid state with Collins filter in it, it works great, it's a 40 meter rig, but I've got a Hallicrafters SX-99 also, I need to go through it, but it's a good solid rig! So I thought I would share this with you folks! 73, W7PAU Paul



Update on the T-60 Project!
I got the Hallicrafters SX-99 done tonight, it was a 10k pot giving the sensitivity adjustment cracked tone! New pot new sound! Also I found a old piece of gear a Autek Audio Filter, it was a AC unit, but I took out the AC and just fed it with 12volts DC, a little paint and cleaning good to go! So good clean selective CW now! So here it is!
73, Paul W7PAU



Gordon College Ham Radio Club AC1GC got two pieces of wonderful equipment: two all-wave radio receivers Hallicrafters SX110 (circa 1960) and S38 (circa 1947). The first one works, in the second only lights go on. For both, good hands are needed. Many thanks to KA1KU. 73, Alex AC1AJ



I thought I would post a pic of my shack and the key I'm using now, normally I use a VibroPlex standard straight key, but I'm really enjoying this key. 73, Joe KI5JCO

Confessions of a Casual Contester... II

de the shack of DavidVE4DL

I am not now, nor ever have been, a Contester. I don't see myself becoming a Contester either, if one defines the term to include round-the-clock operations, intravenous fluids and diapers, and frequent relays of cold, one-hand meals. Not my thing, at all. BUT.....

It's a strange circumstance that my shack is at work, not at home. It happened because the bakery has a 150 x 65 foot flat roof, with lots of room for antennae, while my house fills completely its inner-city lot. Not even room for a hammock.

That being the case, and the current emergency orders in effect, I wanted to remote my station to home. Easy? I thought so. Thousands do it.

[The Gods laffed and laffed!]

I have a pretty modern radio, a Kenwood TS-590S, which is an SDR radio with knobs and buttons. Very computer friendly and intuitive, really. The control app from Kenwood is also excellent. In fact, I can do more with it than I can at the front panel. No problems there. The Kenwood server app is also good. But add in the Kenwood soundcard-to-radio client and the Kenwood VOIP app and all bets are off...

Weeks. Several. Pass.

Imagine this; there are 3 apps at the shack to get the radio onto the internet; there are 3 apps in the remote location, to get the radio off of the internet; each app has its OWN mixer function to handle the audio; each has separate sliders for speaker and mic; each can choose from multiple arcanelly-named codecs; each is a separate thorn in my rear end.

Jessy (VE4JBB) and I got it running after a long struggle. Oh Frabjous Day, Callou Callay! NOT

Yes, I was on the air from home, but signal reports were terrible. Lots of distortion, compression, static. More days of nudging sliders around. Change mic. Change jack for mic. No improvement.

Comes the day, and Kenwood's own VOIP app decides my radio isn't there anymore. (I assure you, it is, and the local client knows it.)

So. Here I am. Sitting in the shack at work, when I otta be home, trying to find signals in a geomagnetic storm. Is THIS ham radio? You bet it is.

But it isn't contesting. Nope. Not at all.

Loss of Frequencies....de FCC

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has recently made changes affecting the Amateur Radio Service in the United States and this has also raised concerns among Canadian Amateurs.

The FCC has ruled that it will withdraw US Amateur privileges at 3300-3500 MHz (the 9 cm Microwave band) in order to make the band available to 5G Mobile and Internet Service Providers. The dates when this is to take final effect have not yet been decided.

SKCC QSO Party October 2020



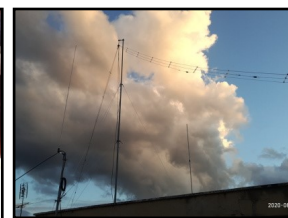
My second qso party with only 3 hours of sleep. The Cushcraft XM 240 antenna is really effective at night. 44 qso on the 40m band. Several grid square are missing because the OM did not know him. Thank you for all the qso and see you soon on the next WES WE. 73 to all. Bob



It was the first time to participate in this event and also the first time to use my new magnetic key. Thank you for all the QSO's, although it seems like there are only a few operators in the EU and my ant is not capable for DXing 73, Marton HA0MDA



Had fun in the short time I had to operate and worked some new ones. Next time I hope to do better. Thank you all. 73,



SKCC, a very interesting meeting point! 73, Stefano IU0LSQ



73, VIRGINIA/SAM KC5SAM



Ran the old TS-820 @ 100 Watts . Good activity on both 40 & 80 Saturday night & also Sunday morning. Thanks all & 73, Larry K8TEZ



Enjoyed spending a few hours outdoors on Sunday operating 25w portable from my neighborhood community center. Thanks for the contacts. 73, Roy KD1RT



Had a lot of fun working the QSO-P with my wife KA9CGX #23000, 73, Nee NE9EE

I started with SKCC just under a year ago, so this was my first QSO Party. Hard to find space with the CA and RSGB QSO Parties going on, but still lots of fun. A couple of relaxed hours each day, and a few nice chats, as well. Thanks, all! 73, Steve KC5F



Participated in this lazy Sunday morning and afternoon, 11 QSOs made with my LH 2004 standard Vibroplex. 4 high SKCC nrs, 3 non-members were introduced to this activity. Hpe cuagn in CW! 73, Gerrit

Ran QRP 5 watts for this one, using my old IC-703 off a 12v battery. American Morse Str Key and vertical antenna, all on 40m. I reported 14 contacts (and 13 different grids}, but I actually did 17 contacts, but 3 of them did not send me a grid, so left them out of my score. All in all, a really fun event. Thanks to all that gave me a contact. A great kick-off for my Brag score. 73, Curt K2CWM

Participants and QSOs by SPC

AR: 1 / 5	ARG: 1 / 6	BEL: 1 / 11	FRA: 3 / 151	GA: 4 / 59
HUN: 1 / 5	IL: 3 / 17	IN: 5 / 153	ITA: 2 / 21	KY: 1 / 35
LA: 1 / 9	MA: 2 / 24	MD: 6 / 189	ME: 1 / 23	MI: 3 / 21
MN: 2 / 11	MO: 1 / 7	MS: 1 / 33	NC: 4 / 158	NED: 1 / 11
NH: 2 / 108	NJ: 1 / 14	NV: 1 / 1	NY: 2 / 18	OH: 7 / 168
ON: 1 / 41	PA: 2 / 11	TN: 1 / 17	TX: 6 / 68	WI: 1 / 26
WV: 1 / 70				

Restoring the Champion

By Bob K3CKO

I have twelve Semi automatic keys in my collection. They are Six Vibroplex Bugs, Three Speedex keys, and one Electrical Specialist key. They were all bought over the internet or at ham fests most of them in less than usable condition. Some of them could be classified as junk. The key I just restored is a Vibroplex Champion first patented in 1939. Vibroplex serialized their keys. Look up the serial numbers on the internet. My champion was made in 1951. When I got it, the key was covered with what I describe as a thick layer of dust that at some time had got wet. The first thing I did was completely disassemble the key. The parts are all readily removable except for the name plate which has to be removed with a small drill bit poked up through the bottom holes. Don't lose the springs. All metal parts including the name plate can be cleaned with wall-mart jewelry cleaner. The base was scrubbed with hot soapy water. The original grey paint was found to be in good condition. The insulating washers were also good and cleaned up with Isopropyl alcohol. These washers I have often found damaged or missing on other keys. They can still be purchased at Vibroplex. The black thumb piece was broken and I found a replacement on E-Bay. Any other missing parts can be purchased on line at Vibroplex.

Next comes the assembly. Go online to the Vibroplex home page. You will find drawings of your bug along with pars list. Most important is the "Semiautomatic key adjustment" page that shows how to adjust every setting on the key. If you don't have the dot lever stop adjusted to about .015" from the dot lever, you will never use the bug. If it is properly adjusted the bug will be your best friend. I keep a .015" feeler gauge in the shack at all times. If something goes wrong it is always dirty contacts or the dot lever adjustment. If the contacts don't line up facing each other the dot-dash arm can be moved up and down using the upper and lower trunion screws. Lock these screws when properly adjusted.. Contact spacing determines the dot and dash length they should be somewhere around .020 to .025" but will vary depending on your fist and speed. The adjustments on an Original bug, a Lightning bug or a Champion are the basically the same.

I have dyslexia so my speed is 12 to 14 wpm. So I had to build a gadget to slow the bug down below its 20 wpm minimum. It is a small brass rod from a hobby shop, a fork terminal and a weight from an original Vibroplex bug. See figure 1.

The completed restoration is shown in figure 2. I will use it in the October 10th Weekend sprint.

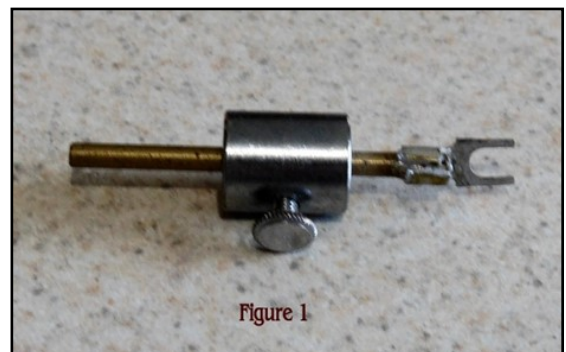


Figure 1

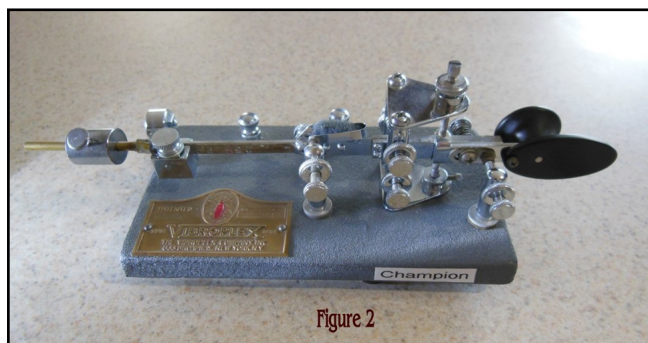
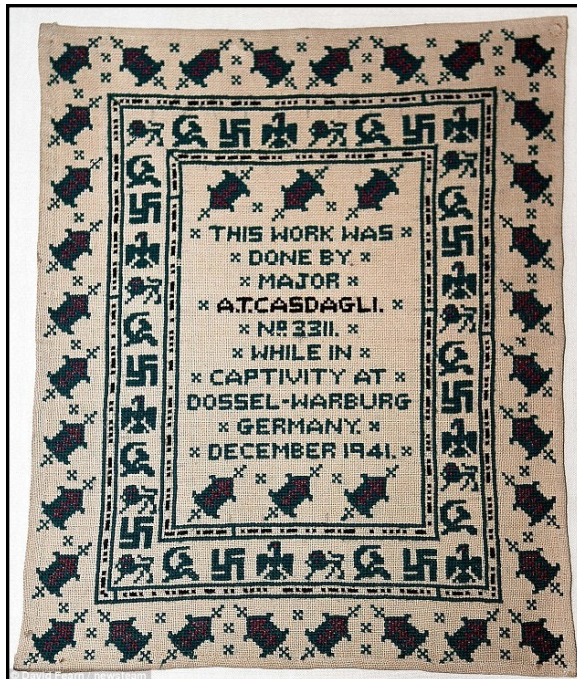


Figure 2

You operators that are slow like me don't have to be afraid of the bug. They can be slowed down to as slow as 7 wpm by moving the weigh beyond the damper. It is easy to get used to a bug especially if you have used paddles before. So learn the bug, Have fun, and get that Triple Key Award.

British POW Uses Morse Code to Stitch Hidden Message During WWII



Many of us geek love codes, cyphers and other types of hidden messages, and there are few more famous codes than [Morse Code](#). Developed in the 1800s, Morse Code is simple and easy to learn, it's also easy to write down once you know the correct sequence of dots and dashes that represent each letter. It was this ease of writing down and reading the code without the need of any special equipment that allowed a British prisoner of war to use it to create a subversive piece of art during his time in a Nazi prison camp.

Major Alexis Casdagli was taken prisoner by the Germans in 1941 and sent to a series of prison camps where he whiled away the long hours by sewing. A piece he created in December 1941 looks innocent enough, indeed it looked so innocent that guards allowed him to hang it on the walls at all the camps he stayed in. However the piece contains two subversive messages coded into the borders, messages that if they had

been discovered by guards would have put his life at risk. The outer border spells out "God Save the King" and the inner border, the decidedly more risky "F**k Hitler". To create the piece, Casdagli used threads taken from a disintegrating pullover that belonged to a fellow prisoner, a Cretan general.

For the four years the piece hung on the walls of the prison camps until his release, the Germans never spotted the secret message of defiance hanging in front of them. In fact the Germans were so impressed with the officer's skills that they had him give classes to other prisoners. Major Casdagli's defiant stitching has even recently been on display in the [Victoria and Albert Museum](#) in London. The major continued stitching until his death in 1990 and his son, a retired Royal Navy officer, continues the habit today.



Key History

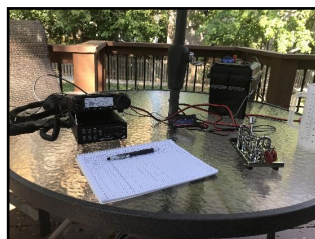
MP Pederson of Copenhagen made beautiful telegraph keys. Later on Danish company SAILOR acquired them and furnished them with their SAILOR ship radio stations. Here's mine. I had a special knob made so it fits in the hollow my palm, beautiful key. Also a photo of the complete SAILOR Medium Frequency, High Frequency (Shortwave) and VHF radio station made during the 1980s and 1990s. The station included equipment for high power operation from ship electrical generator as well as low power equipment for running off of batteries which were supplied by SAILOR as part of the installation.

73, David N1EA

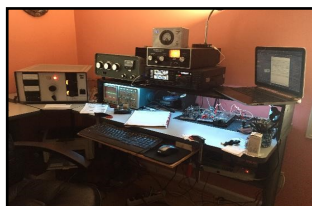
October WES 2020



Great WES, great theme. As a TKA op I had quite a pile-up calling CQ on 160 meters Sat. night. Used my old Kenwood ts 450 I bought new in 1994, 100 watts into a Carolina windom and a pleasure to use with it's two 500 HZ filters. A real treat for me was working VE6CCM as I have never worked a station in Calgary, Alberta, Canada eventho I have the Canadian Orange Maple Award. Thanks to all the ops that make this a fun event and thanks to the guy's that think up a different bonus for each month. 73, Frank AA2XB



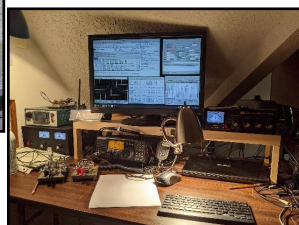
I wasn't OTA as much as I wanted to be, but still had fun, especially Saturday on the deck. 73, Kevin AD0IM



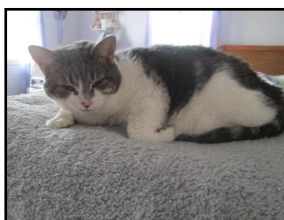
Thanks for all of the enjoyable contacts... sure wish I would have had more time but other things come first. 73 to all and long live CW!! Kenny AF4QK



What fun. Running QRP again as usual for the special events and kicked off with Duc & Chris in France right off the bat then it would 2 1/2 hours before my next contact. I think it's great, I can work 5w across the pond but not across the states, hihi. Anyway, still had a great time. Boy it sure is great to hear 80m crowded, especially Sunday night. Pic of me working WW II Subs on the Air in May 2005 in the radio room of the WW II Submarine, USS COD here in Cleveland OH. Walking distance from the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame. You have to check it out when you visit Cleveland. 73, Bud AA8CL



The far end of my long wire antenna came down from the tree over the summer. I hoisted it up onto a 4 section army surplus mast in the rain for this. I was hoping to perhaps get to S in this WES but it was not to be. Never the less - it ia always a joy and a needed re-entry exercise. I am more motivated to get that antenna fixed now. Also - I wanted to share that I use fldigi as a 'zero-beat' tool and center the audio peak at 600 Hz which is my BF. 73, Rich AE4OK



This was a good WES for me. Never worked 60 SPCs before, I got 61 this time. Almost worked Alaska for the first time during a WES. KL7IH answered my CQ on 20M, but I just couldn't get his information, bummer. Conditions were all over the place, sometimes good, sometimes bad. Worked a lot of DX this time around. Many French stations including F8DGY, F6HKA, F5JWH, F5UQE, F6EJN and F5DE. Worked F6HKA on 40M at 3:17PM local time with 599 signals both ways! Earliest I ever worked Europe on 40M. Heard first Finnish SKCC station (OH2MGA) calling CQ WES, but he didn't hear me. Worked K2DEP twice,, he was only using 1 watt. I hope to try the 1W category as soon as I get the parts to build my 10dB attenuator. I was impressed with KD8JDC's 1W QSO total. Thanks to K6III for the bonus spreadsheet, it helped a lot. Photo shows my cat "Nina". She likes F6EJN's cat. Thanks for all the QSOs! 73, Bob AC1GF



Thanks for the QSOs, the bands were really open between KS and France. Especially thanks to Jerry, K6III for his excellent spreadsheet. Regards, Jim AD0AB

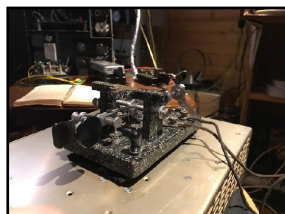


"ANOTHER FINE MESS YOU GOT ME INTO, OLLIE" ... but had a lot of fun chasing the calls! Thanks to all for QSOs and to those I missed... get ya next time! God Bless - Stay Safe/Well. 73, Larry AH6AX

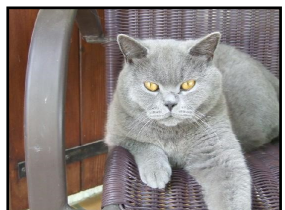


Fun weekend, multitasking with the ARCI Qrp Fall Qso Party taking place this weekend & WES. Used a Hilltopper 20 & straight key by CW Morse LLC, 20 mtr roof mounted vertical. Power output was at 3 watts. Thanks to WD6TED & WB6IZG for pulling my qrp signal out of the noise floor. Band condx were a challenge operated the whole weekend. Signal levels would " spike " and then disappear. 73, John AL7JK

October WES 2020 II



Good propagation and a new bug were the key factors for fun. 73 and GL for all SKCC / WES lovers !! Carlos CT7AFN



Increasing participation? Cycle 25? Covid 19? In any case, a WES not to be missed. I remain in admiration for these OM's which can handle 3 different devices. Thank you all for these QSOs and see you soon for new SKCC adventures. 73, Bob F6EJN



Thank you all. I enjoyed it even if the time was short and the propagation was not great! Nice WES!!! 73, Luca IZ2XAO



Contacts were done only the Sunday afternoon and night. Nice to log ten SKA contacts and four new members. I used one of my cooties, a Hi-Mound MK-701. On the photo are all my cootie key models, some home made, some not. After several years not using them, I started again to key with Side-swipers as I would like to try getting the TKA level. Starting the right beginning date, for that I have more than (far enough) 300 bug valide contacts and some 35 straight key contacts, now en route to get at last a hundred more callsigns with my cooties before taking again the good old pump keys style to achieve the award rules, I have enough of them in my key collection to choose one per day during a long time, hi ! Sorry for some keying mistakes as I just reuse a cootie key! Many thanks, 73 and see you all next time! Bernard F5DE



It was great and exciting to work with many new members! Thanks to everyone next



Most of my operating was Sunday. Bands were pretty good. Worked several EU stations on 20 meters. 73, Randy K8ZAA



Thank You for the October WES QSOs. GL and 73, and stay well. 73, Phil F5JWH



Hello everybody. Thank you so much for the nice contacts. Conditions ont too bad for a change. I was working with temporary equipment. 400 watts on 20m and 90W on 40m. Had fun as usual. Thanks Jerry K6III for the TKA bonus spread sheet. 73 to everyone and see you maybenext month. 73, Bert F6HKA



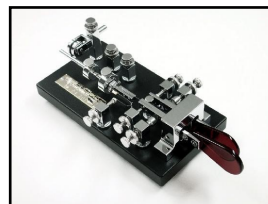
Time was divided between Zoom meetings, service bench work for a local ham. In addition a nice visit with a TWA workmate that is always a great time. Compliments to the "TKA" operators Thank you. This "Blue Racer" came with history, Original owner Andy W7GLA. I am the 4th owner. I always wonder the QSO history of these cool machines. 73, Rick k0kex



Good opening on 20M and 40M, working some qrp stations Using cootie Begali HST 1,500 watts into 3 elements yagi on 20M, vertical GP home made on 40M. 73, Duc F5UQE

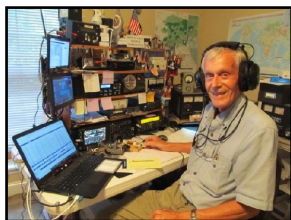


At last a few sunspots (26) and 20m propagation on Saturday was fair into the USA. Played with a couple of morse keys, one of them a big "Clunky" Marconi 365A ships key circa 1930's. 73, John G0RDO SKCC 2133s



The bands were in very decent shape. 20 Meters was open to the west coast all day long. Lots of activity from all of the SKCC members. Thanks to everyone I had the pleasure of working. 73, Steve K2FW

October WES III



I enjoyed the chance to add a bit of value to my Triple Key Award by providing points for those I worked. I didn't anticipate that back when I was working on the award. Thanks to those who thought this theme up. Hurricane Delta went far enough west of me so as to cause no trouble. Others were not so fortunate. I used my old familiar J-38 for the entire event. Had I had my wits about me a bit earlier, I would have made at least a few with each of the triple keys. Maybe next time. Fourteen European stations boosted my SPC count. It's always fun to do a bit of DX during these events. Several were not members so it was a chance to cast a little light on SKCC for them. 73, Ralph K0RO



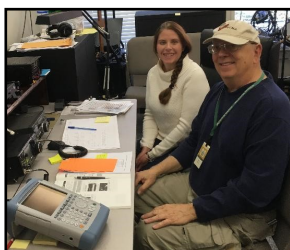
Nice rainy weekend activity with a lot of good signals and skilled ops. Could have done without the RTTY signals but someday they'll see the light. (SMILE) E.F. Johnson Speed-X bug but never got to the 'new' Navy Flameproof. The Speed-X is such a joy. 73, Don K3RLL



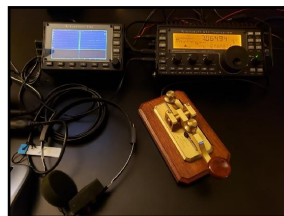
Again, set my goal for 50 contacts and that is what I got. Used 80m, 40m, & 20m bands. I did go on 10m for awhile Saturday in hopes of killing two birds with one stone in 10-10 numbers, but it wasn't to be (hi hi). Always a fun time on WES Weekend. Kenwood TS-590SG at 75w, Kent SK, vertical antenna. Curt K2CWM NJ



Fun contest as always! Enjoyed giving out my TKA bonus. Alternated between my Begali Spark, Begali Intrepid and W1SFR Cootie. Thanks for all the QSOs. Stay safe. IC-7300 at 100 watts to a 40 meter vertical delta loop. 73, Bob K3ZGA



Our club had a very enjoyable time even with only the one contact. It was good training to copy the various fast-paced QSO's. 73, McEachern Methodist Church ARC K4MMC

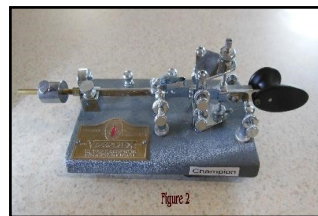


This was great fun. At 1 watt I was getting stepped on a whole bunch. Thanks to Bert F6HKA for picking me up on 40M @ RST 569 and all our Canadian friends who worked me. Couldn't get any contacts out West even though I heard stations. My KX3/PX3 into my G5RV @ 28ft did a great job for me this weekend. Thanks to all who answered. At 76 years old, I'm trying hard not to slow down. 73, Steve K2DEP



This WES was a lot of fun. I made around 2/3 of my contacts on 20m, around 1/3 on 40m, and only one on 80m. Conditions on 20m were pretty good on Sunday, with a sunspot number of 26.

I am looking forward to the next WES! 73, Dave K7TRT



Band conditions not great. Lots of noise. Used a freshly reconditioned Vibroplex Champion Bug for this WES. Rig was a IC-7300 and G5RV up 60 feet. Got both France and Alaska from my New York station so maybe sun spots are coming back. 73, Bob K3CKO



That was fun, but considering the misery I dealt out learning the cootie, I should have been worth more than 5 pts. QRP and tnx to those who copied, particularly W4JF who triple banded my puny signal. Crammed 3 keys on the desk and used them all at least once. 72 y'all. Hank K5TSK



40 was THE BAND for this WES TNX for all the calls & we wish for everyone in SKCC to stay Safe...73's Also These are my Kenwood Twins from about 1972 or so models T-599- & R-599-A Antenna is 110" End Fed Vee with radials in the creek behind house..Tuner is Dentron At-1K. 73, Larry K8TEZ

October WES 2020 IV



WX was too darn nice to spend the weekend in the shack! Lots of fun making QSOs and even more being outside and shooting drone shots of the beautiful colors around the shack. 73, Ted K8AQM



Great fun being a TKA Bonus station. Thanks to everyone that called in. No new keys, but got a chance to break in the new homebrew receiver, and it's a fine CW machine, with 2 khz/rev on that old HRO dial. Apologies to anyone I could not hear on 20, the neighbor's QRM machines and power line noise conspired at times to take out the weaker stations on 20, especially if off the side of the beam. See ya next month. 73, Scott ka9p



My first WES working QRPp 1 watt. Had a great time! 73, Ryan KD8JDC



Most of my operating was Sunday. Bands were pretty good. Worked several EU stations on 20 meters. 73, Randy K8ZAA



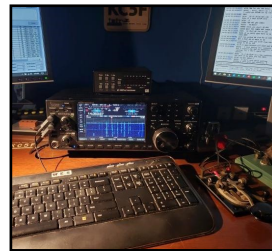
Put in about 23 hours on this one- Trying to get to my SX5 level. Conditions were okay to EU, they had been much better on 20 late peak 2100-2200Z, and concurrent and later 40 meter peak this past week. Also had significant grey line propagation around 2200-2300 from my QTH to VK6 on 80, and VK3 on 30m. Evening or morning grey line did not appear over the weekend at this location. I knew propagation wasn't great because could not qso with Stan ZL2BLQ on 20, could not pull through KL7IH on 20 on Sunday afternoon, We had some EU spurts to G land and Eastern Europe but both short lived. Rest of the time EU signals were down, even for our French contingent except for some spurts at times on 20. Great to see so many new members participating- Newest member I worked was Brian K2ACX, DC Multiplier, 23083. Great to see all of the TKA awardees participating- Seemed to me to be up from last month Close up picture of my implements- mostly use the Brass Bunnell Key- super smooth operation and use the Vibroplex at times for nostalgic reasons- Been at this over 61 years. 73, Phil K3EW



Thanks to all who participated. Family activities limited my participation, but was fun as always. Bet 73, God Bless. Ric KA3LOC



Fun working the TKA operators. Hope to see you all next month 73, Dave KB1WOD



It didn't look promising at first, with the RTTY and QSO parties taking up so much of the bands, but it ended up just fine, here. More 20m contacts for me than usual. All done with my J-38 and the IC -7610 to my 80m EFHW. Lots of fun handing out TKA bonus points, too. Thanks, all! 73, Steve KC5F



My first WES after XYL and I recovering from Covid! What a nightmare but made it I think. Yea I yearn for the very good ole days when things were much simple. 73, Mark K4UPI



And a grand ole time was had. Worked a lot of new members this time. Glad to see the activity. Best call was "WB1LLY". You get three guesses what his name was. Cool Call Billy! Phil was blasting into NC at 40 and 50 over. Bands seemed to be in good shape. Happy Halloween! 73, Randy KB4QQJ

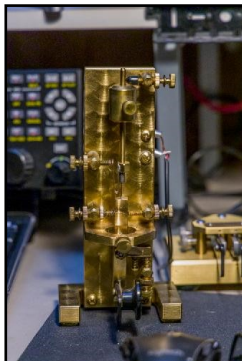


Fun weekend! Used SK and Bug. Good activity. 73, Jim KD9GDY

October WES 2020 V



Lots of fun this month. Learning to send with three different keys was a challenge but in the end very rewarding to pass out the TKA points. Hopefully, this sprintathon will inspire members to push themselves to learn a new operating skill. Prop was good, with little QRN ... I alternately ran 90 watts into a Mini-Quad on 20 meters and an inverted V on 40 meters. Worked 11 TKS's and a mix of lots of familiar callsigns and many new operators as well. Hpe 2 c u next month. 73, Bill KE3O



Fun event as usual. 73, Doug N3QW

20 was very unstable early Sunday. Late it was much improved. 40 Saturday was plagued with very rapid QSB. Lots of fun, anyway. 73, AL N4ow



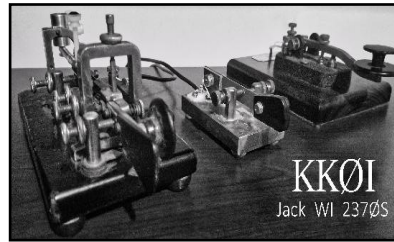
This was the first time I ran a frequency. Did it for about an hour and got 13 QSO's. Much fun. Will do more of that in future WES. 73, Randal KG5IEE



I really enjoyed participating in my first WES event with my new SKCC friends. Here is a picture worth 100 bonus points! My son and I taking apart and cleaning the J-38 a few days ago. Now it's in great condition and works better than ever. 73, Aaron KO4GBD



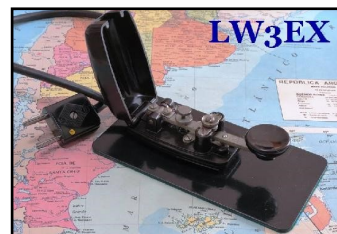
Had a great time as always. Used mostly the bugs but had a few QSO's with the straight key and cootie. 73, Jim N3MVX



Again another fun event with limited time...used all three keys (even used the 3 keys on one QSO a few times). Many thanks for all the contacts and those other TKA's out there. See you all the next event. 73, jack KK0I TKA #4

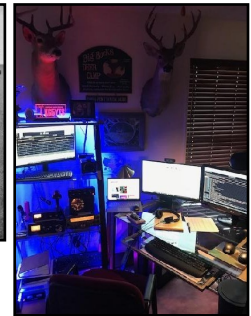


First day condx very good, second day slope got steep with band condx up/down. Good WES lots of fun 73, Jose KP3W



DX PROP just got a little bit better at least allowed me to contact some old CW friends again TA33 - 50W - HM DSK + 1941 Luftwaffe "Maus" training key made by Firma Hoppmann & Mulsow. I had a great Radio time. TU everyone for the QSOs. Take care & Stay safe BCNU 73, Walt LW3EX - ...- ZUT

Lots of fun! 73, Dave N9FGP



Another WES has come and gone. Here in the Lone Star State the band hung in there pretty good. For only being a Tech and getting on 40 and 80 I was really happy. Thanks for all the WES and TKA contacts. Until November. 73, to everyone, be safe and CW rules. Lo KG5YTS



This was fun even though we were butting heads with a RTTY contest. TNX to all the bonus TKA stations. 73, Russ KK4WX



October WES 2020 VI



I used my antique Russian training key again. Loving my TS-590SG! 73, Todd N0IP



Lots of fun! 73, Dave N9FGP



Glad to work a few new ones for my TKA, but I'm not there yet ... still need 77! All QSO's made with the "One Piece Plastic"(OP²) Cootie key in the picture, made from the lid of a CD box. An anti-slip pad and a block of lead weighing 2.5 kilos (= the base of my other Cootie) keep it firmly on the desk. 73, cu in next WES! Luc ON7DQ



Had a great time being a bonus station (TKA #37). Conditions not very best but better than the last couple of months. Thanks to all and 73, Dick N5KIP



The new yagi and rebuilt Alpha were kept busy. Nice propagation on 20 meters but still waiting on the high bands to open up! I did work Walt - LW3EX on 15m and Take - JR2IUB on 20. The Fort Wayne gang was active and also nice to work W9GOO (John) and KB9QG (Jeff) from neighboring Auburn, IN. Good operating time on Saturday and later on Sunday after church and a nice long nap! Hope to see many more SKCCers work toward the TKA award! 73, Ken N8KR



Very fun activity, as usual. Lots of stations to work. 73, NEE NE9EE



I didn't have a lot of time to operate, but had a lot of fun. About half on 20m and half on 40m. I didn't have a lot of expectations working QRP, but I made more contacts than I ever had! Sideswipers are a TON of fun! Thanks to all those who worked me! Special shout out to Allen, N4NN and Gary W7EE, for pulling me out! 73, Derek N9PHI



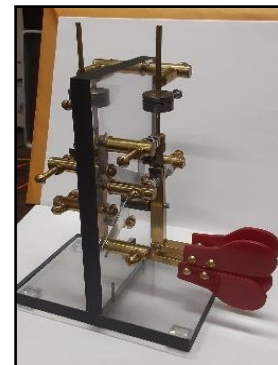
Another fun WES. Tried operation with a 20 AH LFP battery and a 50 watt amp. On Saturday it gave out late at night after a good few hours of calling CQ. Sunday, after a recharge, it quit a couple of hours before the end of the day. Really trying this out for portable ops and 50 W, but will include a solar panel for recharging. Also tried SO-TABeams linked dipole set to forty meters on a 10 M pole as an inverted vee. Most of my contacts were on 40 M. Work all over the US and Canada with Bert in France and Cuba late on Sunday. Although no Northwest stations. Used a TBK side swiper. 73, Dave NE5DL



First WES, KX3 @ 12 Watts, J-44 key, Butter-nut HF6V ground mounted vertical w/o radials. Tnx to all. Russ, Portland OR. 73, Russ N7QR



Another Fun event. Decided to do S&P on 80, 40 and 20 Meters. Of my 81 Contacts Only 15 (20 Contacts) were TKA members. Thanks to Jerry, K6III for providing his ExCel Spreadsheet. 73, Rick N8XI



Argo 6 90wt amp g5rv..50 qso's..no p/c hr, all is written a log with a pencil. was on 40 and 20mtrs. I had 2 VE's, and pg4i, ok2vwb, and fg8ny. fun there..WOW from last month, skcc has 294 new members. worked 25 states.. no machine shop key type project right now. so, u all take care and keep making Q R M. cu in November. 73, Dave N9ZXL

October WES 2020 VII



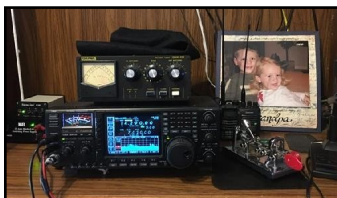
Excellent WES with the highest score so far. Barefoot on Saturday and with 600W on Sunday with a second hand Ameritron AL-800. Thanks for all the QSOs! I wish there was some more EU activity. Happy to work a new Dutchman: Roel PA2RG. 73, Jo PG4I



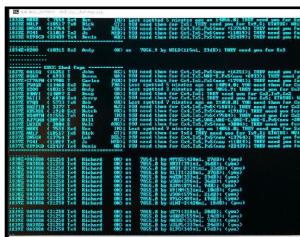
Thanks to all who joined in, 73 from AB Jack VE6CCM



Enjoyed another WES, picked up only 46 contacts but 6 new S and Ts toward my S. Picture is me operating as DL4UP in 1956 as I was in school in Germany at age 16. 73, Denny W0NZZ



No time For WES this weekend. I hope all had a great time. 73, Dan W5BM



This was a fun contest but initially I didn't try to maximize my TKA count - I just wanted to make contacts. It wasn't until the second day of the WES that I started looking for the TKA stations. The enclosed photo (yes a shameful attempt at gaining an extra 100 points) shows a screen shot of the SKCC Skimmer program taken on Oct. 10 at 18:39Z just after I called out CQ on 40m during WES (see bottom of photo)- I wanted to see how I was getting out. My antenna is an inverted-V fan dipole up 25 feet but the span is aligned North and South so the radiation of the ends is reduced to the South. As expected with a low dipole, my signal strength is OK within a few hundred miles but the antenna is not a DXer. The top part of the photo is the SKCC Sched page listing calls versus the goals and targets that I set for myself. The combination of the Sched page and stations calling CQ is very useful. From experience I found that setting a maximum radius of 300 miles from my QTH (NE corner of Toronto) works best in terms of me actually hearing the station through the local noise and them hearing me. By the way, at one point today, a 15m station, W8BFX in WA, popped up at the bottom of the Skimmer listing and I QSY'd to 15m and made a new contact. 73, Richard VA3RSA

Lot's of fun. I guess 2 cooties and 1 straight key don't count as TKA :) CU next month. 73, Randy WS2NR



I decided to give my amplifier a workout to see what it felt like and how it would affect the score and the operator. I was pleased that it made operating easier, no small consideration when half-way between 83 and 84! I have modified the connections on my Bencher keyer to use the mechanical part of the Dash paddle making it a sideswiper, also a physical consideration compared to the SK. If I could just get rid of these "Senior Moments"! On three occasions my contact had to remind me to send my information. Spending almost an hour on 20m using my 40m Vertical was definitely a low point! I learned a few lessons and made some minor adjustments to the operating procedure making the second day a little easier and less error prone. The only problem on Sunday was just fatigue. My TS-590SG enjoyed being turned back to 40/45 Watts and my amplifier got a bit of work at a conservative 500W output, running much cooler than at full power. Maybe both the equipment and the operator will last longer! It was great working all you guys and gals and I will enjoy SKCC even more from now on. 73, Bob VE3KZ



Lots of fun, if only for a few hours. 73, Dave VE3KIU



Severely limited in time for this WES, (relatives visiting S.FL from up north, lol). Had fun though, as always. Switched between straight keys just cuz. 73, Blue W1BLU



Have not participated in WES for a long time. I obtained a bug several years ago at a hamfest and finally decided to play with it. My apologies to AC1GF for my truly awful CW on the first contact. I made some adjustments after each of the first couple QSOs and it's much better now. 73, Dave W0ZF

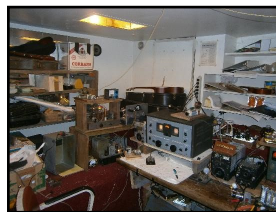
October WES 2020 VIII



Nice weekend! Participation seemed to be high, and it was fun to be able to offer the bonus points. High static levels kept me off 80m on Saturday night, but the rest worked out OK. Did make a couple of contacts on 15m. Too many contests in the same spectrum space, but the gang seemed to be making the best of it. Worked some fairly new members, which is always great. Thanks to all. 73, John W1TAG



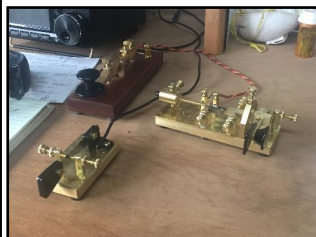
First WES running over 100 watts. Ran anywhere from 500 to 800 with the delta loop abt 30 feet above gnd. Used the Begali Intrepid bug. Noticed a heck of a lot of Senators and Tribunes in the WES this weekend. Some good DX SKCC members as well! Great Stuff! Thanks everyone for a great WES! 73, Joe



On 20 meters! rig a HQ129X with a 6SN7 cqascode preamp tx an ARC5 hulk (6c5/6bg6 doubling in the final to 40 meters) driving a jkeyed DX 20 on 40 meters to a push push pair of 811s to 20 meters at about 60 watts output. Antenna a semi vertical dipole. 73, Mike W7DRA



I haven't done a complete WES in quite a while. Had a blast. Thanks and see you next time. 73, Ed W8BFT



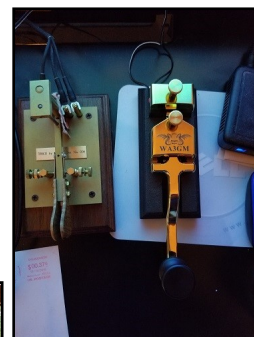
I tried to work as many as possible, but only had 56 QSO's. I did not list on the scheduler but did get 7 other TKA's. Hope to see more TKA's next year. 80 Meters on Saturday night was amazing!! 73, Gene W9KMK



Thanks to all of the TKA members who participated - it was fun hunting for you! And thanks to our WES manager, Jeff. I am working on my S and TKA with a way to go for each. Beware of my cootie fist in the next month! 73, Jack W9YY



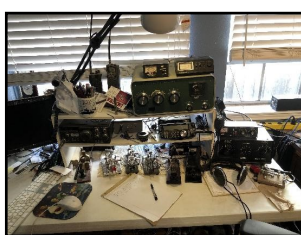
Saturday evening and Sunday were slow on all bands. Even the hummingbird was watching me. 73, Tom WA8ZNC



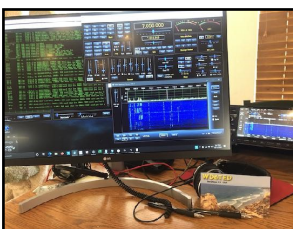
thanks for all the Q's this weekend. had to work so I did not get as much time as I wanted plus the PA QSO Party was this weekend also. C U all in Nov 73, Greg WA3GM



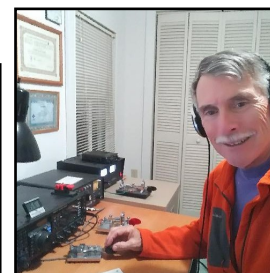
I operated on and off from my little camper in Gifford Pinchot State Park (POTA K-1356, WWFF KFF-1356) in York County, PA. 73, Craig WB3GCK



I finally got an antenna up in time for Sunday. Only got 2 hrs operating time but it was fun. Thanks for all the QSOs guys. Oh, the amp remained unused - I ran 90 watts for the WES. Best band conditions for me in quite a while. 73, Les WB5JWI



A memorable WES indeed. 20m on Sunday morning was working really well to EU from California. Bands in general were just great here. And I earned my S during the event! Thanks to everyone who helped me out. 73, Ted WD6TED

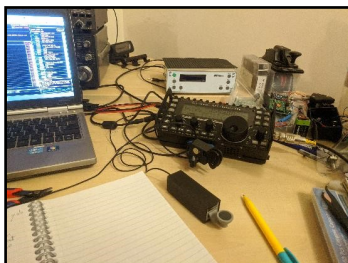


Running FTDX-3000 at 100 watts to inverted vee wire antennas up 40 feet. Likely my best WES results to date with some unexpected DX multipliers and some good runs on 20M and 40M when conditions permitted. After 200 QSOs with the Bencher straight key, my fist was getting tired. Thanks for all the QSOs and bonus points. Always a fun event. Stay well. 73, Mike WB2FUV

October WES 2020 IX



Thanks for the qso's and TKA bonus points. Rig was Yaesu ft1000 for 20-160. I used ft757 on 40m during OM's rtty contest. Had a band pass filter on 20m but the coil fried due to faulty connection with an amplifier. Due to a pet emergency my last hour was off the air. 73, Donna WB9TFF



Only managed an hour or so on Sunday evening and tried QRP with my Palm PPK straight key and my new (to me) KX3. Great fun as usual, thanks to all and see you next time out. 73, Peter GM0EUL



Fun theme for the WES. 73, Ray W9GHX



Thanks to all for the contacts and especially Bob AC1GF: my new set-up in had a bad patch cable I'd made which wasn't apparent until transmitting (and not always), thus proving that Morse code isn't the only thing I can mess up. I was using WN3F instead of WN3F/4 from my VA location but hope it wasn't a problem since I always sent my QTH, however correction is welcome. 73, Roy WN3F



A very big THANK YOU! to everyone who helped make this happen. It was a lot of fun for this returning CW enthusiast. I appreciated the great guys who were so patient. I used our church club station, K4MMC and hope to get some of the members interested in CW. 73 and God bless, David W4QDV



Lots of QSB but it's always fun. Activated the old OMNI VII and it's a pleasure to use. 73, Rick WO8L



Working with 2 miniature valve TX (Sputnik QRPP TX) VXO 14.055-14.062KHz, 1W output into double windom antenna. Key is FuG-7 german key, RX is TS-950sd. Thanks for nice QSOs, 73, Kare YU7AE

The SKCC Marathon Award

To earn the Marathon Award, one must engage in 100 QSOs, each 60 minutes or longer, and each with a different SKCC member using SKCC qualified keying devices. There is no time limit to earn the award but only QSOs logged after 0000Z 1 January 2008 count.

Members who achieve the Marathon award will receive a special commemorative plaque.

Rationale: Create a true operating challenge that involves the fundamental ideals of ham radio as celebrated by SKCC: operating skill, a good station, conversation skill, and a consistent, quality fist. Create an award that cannot be achieved easily or quickly yet promotes quality content in every contact. The Marathon Award requires people to actually ragchew. Ragchews build camaraderie and long-term friendships. These are ideals worth working for.

The Marathon Award has been deliberately designed to be a challenging achievement for an Amateur Radio Operator. Ragchewing is an art. Anyone can send a brief exchange in a few seconds and move on. Engaging the other station in an extended, informative, and entertaining exchange for a lengthy period requires real skill, a quality station, and a creative mind. The intent of the Marathon Award is to recognize these rare and special talents with the highest level of ragchewing recognition created to date. Few will be able to earn this award.

Here's how it works:

1. Both parties to the QSO must send an email "QSL" to the award manager, Cecil Turquette, K5YQF, at marathonmanager@skccgroup.com showing the date, time, frequency band, both call signs and SKCC numbers, and duration of the QSO. When a member reaches 100 QSOs lasting 60 minutes or longer in the database, he or she will qualify for the award. A suitable announcement will be published, the commemorative plaque will be prepared and sent to the operator.

2. Participants must use straight keys, sideswipers (cooties), or bugs. See the club's policy on acceptable keys [here](#).



Gotta Get One of These!



Who Knew?

American (Morse)	Continental (Gerbe)	International (ITU)
A
B
C
CH
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
M
N
O
P
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V
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Z
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9
0

Confessions of a SKCC Newbie

Memphis, Tennessee. Christmas Day, 1978. Dad's Super 8 is rolling. The annual vinyl Christmas LP record is turning on the stereo. My brother and I are rubbing our eyes as we stumble into the living room clad in PJs. Mom and Dad shower us with goodies that include a pair of walkie talkie radios. The birth of a life long passion. In high school I heard about ham radio, but I was too intimidated. Instead I joined the United States Army as a Combat Signaler 31K.

After my enlistment, the Technician class license no longer required Morse Code. I studied and listened to the ARRL Morse cd set for hours anyway. KE4SVD is finally ready to hit the 2 Meter Airwaves. Operating a second hand mobile, I faded into the noise of silence after my radio no longer functioned. I turned once again to the military life and let my license expire. 2011, I returned home from my second tour in Afghanistan. My neighbor and friend, Dave KI4AWH persuaded me to not only test for my license, but to upgrade to General class (KK4EVJ). I did not have a big budget, so I found a kit, the 'Dixie Pixie' to build my first QRP rig. Now all I needed was to learn the Daunting code. Here I am nine years later, I think I'm finally ready. In my search for a 'cootie' key, I found a subculture that fits my specific amateur interests.



Here I am new to SKCC (member 23168). Ready to make my first cw QSO. Now with a new challenge, I found the 20 meter pixie I ordered on amazon is actually a 40 meter pixie with an infamous 7.023 crystal I can't use with General privileges. So once again, I'm in the hunt for the rig that will get me on the air. Keep your QRS ears open, because I'll be knocking the air waves soon enough. 73, Eddie KK4EVJ #23168

SPARKY... Dr. Billie Adels Pennings By Sheila Sova



COMELY 'SPARKS'—Soldering was never like this! The U.S. Merchant Marine now has a woman radio operator, the first girl to be so licensed. She is Billie Adels, single, under

Found "SPARKY" Dr. Billie Adels Pennings, female radio operator in WWII and spoke to her today! Sharp as a tack at 99! She trained at a six month training class in San Francisco to become a radio operator. She finished in four months because she did so well on the tests. Crew lists show her at Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, France and Germany during the war.

She will be the fourth woman to receive an Honorable Discharge as a Veteran in WWII. She is also in the Hall of Fame for radio operators (forgot the name).

Today I spoke with MARAD also and they plan to honor her next Maritime Day with her DD 214, her medals, and a shadowbox with the flag. She will also be receiving the Congressional Gold Medal for her contributions in

WWII. When Jens Inge Egeland gives Charles Mills his Norweigen Convoy Cup award, he can give Billie hers as well! They live 20 minutes away from each other. I thank Ian Watts for finding me a trail that led me to this remarkable woman!

September Brag 2020



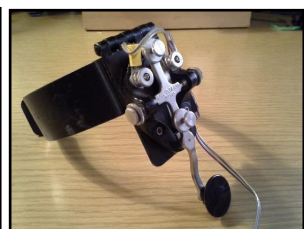
213 QSO's, 50 SPC's, 16 of these QSO's were Marathons. All were made with a Vibroplex Bug with a Vari-Speed. 73, Billy AA8KY



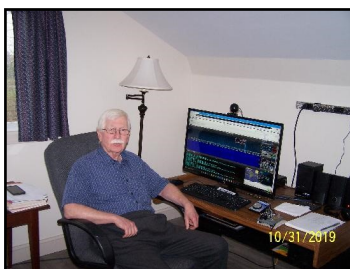
What a fun month. Thanks for all the contacts. Re-aquainted with old friends and made many new friends. The picture is me in the radio room of the USS Cod operating on 1 May 2005. You have to make this a stop when you pass thru Cleveland. Check in with Bill-KA8VIT SK#-2593 for the tour. 73, Bud AA8CL



Had a great time when I managed to get on the air Six new stations logged..73 Rick k0kex



Thanks to all who participated in this month's Brag Program. The bands were a challenge, but conditions should improve move into the fall & winter months. Attached is a picture of my J-45 military leg key, which I use for portable operations. I've also started using it for QRS (<10 wpm). 73 & God Bless you and your family. Ric KA3LOC



Always fun to make brag contacts. Hope to see you again next month 73, Dave KB1WOD



Really good month for me, esp since I lost 2 weeks because of visiting family in Tennessee (Sevier, Knox & Shelby counties). Took a little radio and antenna with me hoping to operate as /4, but it wasn't to be.. too much going on. But I got the Brag Bonus Station. Ran 75w from home in NJ using my TS-590SG to a vertical using my Kent sk. Really a fun month for me. 73, Curt K2CWM



Not many contacts but still lots of fun. 73, Tom KB3CVO



Another fun event...even made a few marathons out of a brag. Thanks for all the contacts folks...and again, very nice to see new members out there pounding that brass. 73, jack KK0I



Always fun. Made a few 10 watt portable. KX3 and Buddipole vertical. 73, Doug N3QW



Getting setup in my new home in my new QTH. I moved from Lincoln, Nebraska and am now on the air from Perry Township, Ohio (near Fayetteville, Ohio). Temporary antenna is up off the ground, but not by too much, yet. I'm really happy to start in on the Marathon QSOs, too. 73, Tomas NW7US



Some of my brag QSOs were done from a beach house near Flushing. I brought along an old TS-520 and a Spiderbeam mast with wire antennas. 73, Jo PG4I

September Brag 2020 II



Seeing the club theme for WES, I (KC5F) decided it was time to get the Blue Ridge Amateur Radio Club started with SKCC, after having been the trustee for decades. Lots of fun! Got to "C" (twice) during WES, and to "T" shortly thereafter. It's lots of fun to be in demand with a new "T"! 73, Blue Ridge ARC



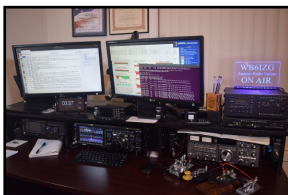
Had little time but enjoyed what time I had to operate. 73, Bud W8BUD 11340S



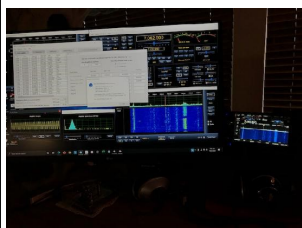
Few brags this month! The bad atmospheric and solar conditions are hitting me hard! The WES was OK this month. I am enclosing a photo of my son and I replacing my 80 M antenna. Thanks for all the QSO's. 73, Gene W9KMK



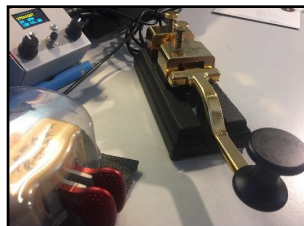
A little busy this month with work and stuff. C U All in the next WES. 73, Greg WA3GM DAH/KS3KCC



Had an OK month for brags. Conditions seem so bad that at times its hard to even have a QSO of 2000 miles. 73, Bruce WB6IZG



It was a good month as I started on my S quest. Only 57 to go. Maybe I can make it during the October WES. Thanks to everyone who has been helping out! Also added one to my marathon count for a grand total of ... 3. 73, Ted WD6TED



My new Begali Blade. 73, Hanz YL3JD

Due to reduced air pollution we can finally see Pluto



De Facebook

Found this old Bug at the Melbourne hamfest. No markings other than Japan stamped into the bottom of the base. Sure looks like the Lafayette Radio Bug from the 60's and later. Let me apologize in advance for the terrible fist that is going to hit the airways soon. If you hear something indiscernible with lots of extra dits on 40 meters it will probably be me. Haven't used a bug in almost 50 years and I wasn't any good at it then. de k2mrk SKCC #1763

'LIKE LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE'



Howard Bernstein teaches Morse code to his daughter Alana at their home in Manhasset in Aug.

Even though Alana Bernstein of Manhasset, NY is a 17-year-old high school senior, this spring she had to learn the alphabet all over again.

Bernstein signed up for a new, free Zoom course in Morse code created by a Long Island Ham Radio Operators' Club to offer kids a chance to learn a new skill and stay occupied during the pandemic.

"This is a good opportunity for me to connect with people around the world, make some Morse code friends

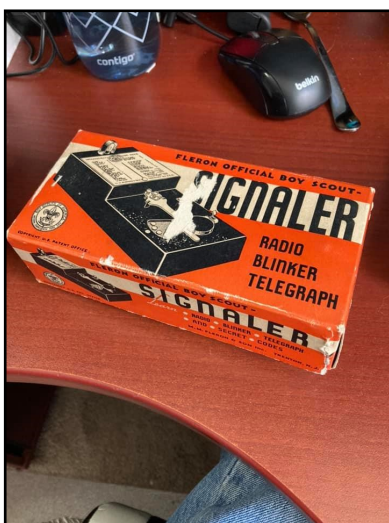
and have some fun," Bernstein says. She finished the beginner course and is now taking a summer intermediate course that meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The program has reached 125 children in kindergarten through high school since it launched in March, says Alana's father, Howard Bernstein, 68, of Manhasset. He cofounded the Long Island CW Club — the CW standing for continuous wave — in 2018 with Rich Collins, 57, a UPS driver from Hicksville. The men are known by the call signs WB2UZE and K2UPS respectively when they're on the air.

Alana says seeing her father's passion for Morse code during her childhood inspired her to pursue the class; the fact that classes take place on Zoom has allowed children from all over the United States and Europe to participate and she's made new friends from Wisconsin and Mississippi.

'LIKE LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE'

Learning Morse code is like mastering a new language, Bernstein says. The code was developed in the 1800s by Samuel Morse and other inventors, using electrical signals sent through wires between telegraph stations. It assigns a combination of dots and dashes to every letter of the English alphabet that recipients decode to translate to words.



CW History

Found a little piece of history.... and it even had the manual for it. 73, Steve K0SAZ

The Cootie Bug With "COOTIE DASHER"

By David Ringer N1EA

Here is a document written by Lery, UA3AO a former Soviet Merchant Marine Radio Officer and historian of Soviet and Russian radiotelegraphy equipment. A quote from the beginning of the document is included here as a brief summary of what is in the document.

The Semi-automatic Key With Two Dash Levers

If semi-automatic Cootie Bug and even automatic keys, are studied in all their myriad constructed options, from 1904 to the present day, then the Cootie Bug with "cootie dasher", that is with two dash levers, which when alternately pressing the index finger to the left, then to the right, producing a nearly uniform sequence of dashes, is practically unknown to the world.

Such a Cootie Bug actually exists and it was made in the beginning of the World War II (or as it is called in Russia, the "Great Patriotic War" (i.e. World War 2) in the solely for use on communication lines of the special services which had the most skilled radiotelegraphists on the circuits.

Advantages of semi-automatic with two levers are obvious - it exhibits a noticeable improvement of the timing of the dash. At medium operating speeds of 130-160 characters per minute transmission (26 to 32 wpm) on the Cootie Bug with two levers is indistinguishable by ear from a transmission using the electronic keyer, indicating a high quality of transmission in the absence of "Handwriting", or peculiarities in the sending, which could identify a certain operator. This "Handwriting" is called an operator's "fist" in English.



A BUG with two levers is practically unknown in the world but in Russia cos it was made in The USSR just before The WWII for Special Radio Services.

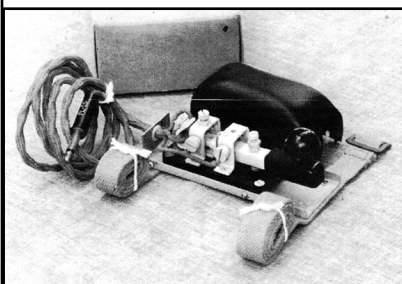
The benefits are obvious. You can see this key in operation here :

<https://youtu.be/9g6z7-d1fI>

The British WT 8 Amp Key

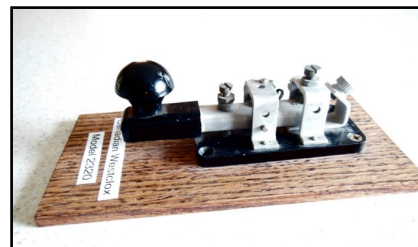
By K3CKO

Here is a telegraph key that is dear to my hearty. I have eighteen straight keys in my collection but there are two that I use more than any other. They are both part of a large family of keys designed in England and mass produced in six countries during the Second World War. They are both WT 8 amp keys. There are well over 100 varieties of the WT 8 amp key, they were the workhorse of the allied forces in World War II. Many were part of key and plug assemblies that were used in armored vehicles, tanks, command vehicles, ships and aircraft. Most had a metal cover but a few in land service had no cover. Between March 1940 and June 1942, 254,559 WT 8 amp keys were ordered and delivered. All of the WT 8 amp keys were characterized by the main contacts being at the back or remote from the knob. Some keys have three stirrup shaped metal brackets and support a normally closed contact for screen grid keying. Some keys have only two stirrups and only one set of normally open contact. All keys have a heavy duty 3/8 inch rocker arm and tungsten contacts. All keys are on a 3 x 6 inch 3/4 inch thick Bakelite base with 4 mounting holes. Many keys were mounted on a metal tray with fiber straps for mounting on the operator's leg. The WT 8 amp key is delightful to operate. It has a feeling of solidity and contributes to good sending. There is not a trace of side play or sponginess. A picture of a key & plug assembly is shown with cover removed:



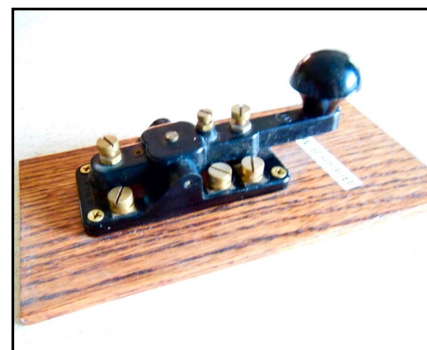
One of the keys I have is a WT 8 amp produced by Westclox in Canada:

After the war a major change took place in the 8 amp key. The rocker arm is now a plastic covered assembly. The pivot posts are injection molded onto the base. The normally open contacts have been moved to the front of the key near the knob. There are also a set of normally closed contacts at the rear of the key for screen grid keying of tube type transmitter.



This key has a single "normally open" contact at the rear of the key. The key came from e-bay with no cover.

I mount my keys on a piece of trim Oak and stick them down to my operating position beside me with double backed carpet tape so I can change keys every month or so.



This key is my favorite straight key. It has a little better feel when keying. Both of these keys can be regularly seen on e-bay; usually for under \$50.00.

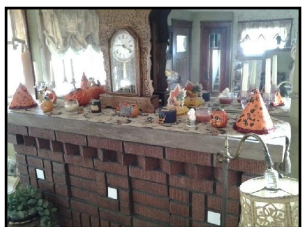
October SKS 2020



Only able to get on for the last 30 minutes and did great, HIHI. Tnx for the contacts. 80m was hopping tonight. Great to hear all the stations. All contacts made tonight from my 1977 Vibroplex Deluxe Bug. 73, Bud AA8CL



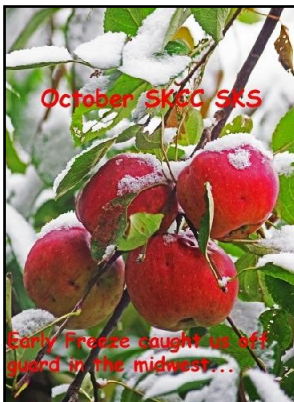
Ran 75w from my TS-590SG into a vertical, 40m & 80m. Kent Straight Key. Always fun event. 73, Curt K2CWM



TNXX Dave for the bonus big sig here on 80. worked K8XXX on 160 & 80 40 was not good at all here tonight so missed K8XXX there but we did have a great QWO on 40 with Rich W4RQ and also Pat W5WTH so someone was out there at least....also tnx Dave W3NP-and K2FW Steve- both BIG sigs on 160...That being said we hope everyone has a great HALLOWEEN THIS WEEKEND AND PLEASE STAY SAFE. 73, Larry K8TEZ



EF Johnson Model 590 J-38. 73, Jeff AA9WJ



Began on 40, moved to 80 due to conditions here. Among the 10 stations worked, three are new in my log with two from Canada. Better check for the Maple Leaf award. Our weather has been mild before the storms Monday. Caught us with an Apple tree filled with fruit. Several neighbors have harvested ..Oh well that's Mo weather. TU for



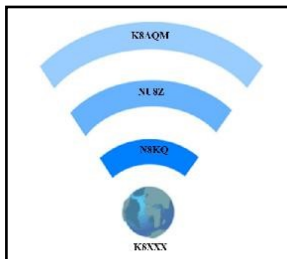
80M was hot last night, tried 40M and had only one local SKCC QSO, nothing heard on 20M. Thanks to all who pulled out my QRP 4W signal. 73, Steve K4JPN



Bands weren't in the best shape, from my location 40M was long, and 80M noisy. Few QSOs but still a lot of fun. Thank you so much to all of you. See you in the next event! 73 de AC2RJ, Ruben.



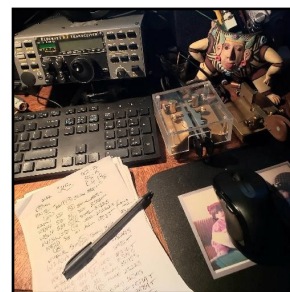
Was only on a short time for 9 contacts to test out my new KWD TS-890S. What a fantastic transceiver and a joy to use for CW. Lots of useful features. Kept my 590S to use as a sub-receiver. Thanks to all who responded on 40M. That band was horrible but 80 was alive. Hope to see you all next time. 73, Steve K2DEP



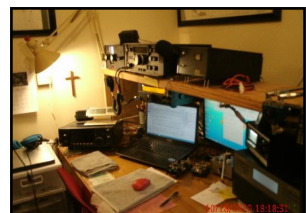
First attempt at real-time on-line logging not a complete success. K8AQM(20/160m) and NU8Z (80m) worked great but we never could get N8KQ(40m) logged in successfully. His log was later merged with K8AQM and NU8Z log. Hopefully we'll have N8KQ resolved for the November WES. It was fun and the Hamachi VPN has real possibilities! 73, Dah K8XXX



Late start as usual. Used my 80 meter OHR 100A for this sprint. Kept trying to tune around on my Argonaut which was turned off and no antenna connected. Worked Dave W1DV and had keying issues... think it was an intermittent in the keying line. Finally got it to work Let's see if this picture is upside down. 72, Peter AK3X



Fun! I only worked the second hour, and all on 80m and Top Band. 5W to a 20m EDZ up 50' on 160m, and an 80m dipole at 80' on 80m. 73, Lloyd K3ESE

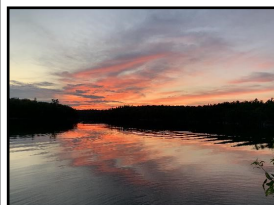


WOW!! What an adrenaline rush. Tons of stations to work. More Qs than in any other SKS. Loads of fun. 73, Al K9FW

October WES 2020 II



Thanks for the fun everyone. If my picture is sideways, my apology. I haven't figured out how to fix that. If not, ignore what I just said. 73, Eric KB3NSK



Not the best of conditions but any time spent in the shack is better than time spent watching TV :). 73, Dave



1st SKS. Just happened across the event when tuning the SKCC frequencies. Fun Stuff! 73, Jim W1RO



I had to leave early to get ready for an early POTA activation. I hope 40m does better tomorrow than tonight. 80m sounded a lot better! Thanks, all! 73, Steve



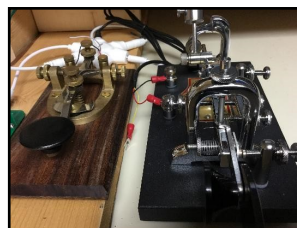
Great fun as always. Bands didn't seem very good here. Ran my IC-7300 at 100 watts and multiple antennas. 73, Bill N0UMP



40M sigs very weak here but did manage to work CO8RRM, which was a nice qso. 80M was the money band tonight, lots of strong sigs. Had fun as always!! Pix shows my new KN4YB bug, which is nice one! 73, Mike KG4MTN



Started on 20 found Zero SKS action. 40 and 80 were good. Happy to find W1DV on 80. Good fun as always. 73 de AL, N4ow 11375s. Missed that big sig from K6ELQ. Rest in Peace, Tony.



Thanks for a good sprint. Most contacts here were on 80. 40 faded out early tonight. I got good use of my new S and look forward to hearing everyone on the bands. 73, Jack W9YY



Made three contacts on 20m then moved to 40m for two more. Baptized my CW Morse key which worked surprisingly well. 73, Paul Ki7LW



I am not much of a contester but I certainly enjoy these sprints! TNX! to all who worked me! GL to all! 73 Steve NQ8T



20 meters was Blah, good activity on 40 meters tonight but the band was strange, stations strong one moment were weak the next. I got on 80 meters just in the last 10 minutes and that seemed to be good tonight. Want to thank especially DAH K8XXX on 40m- you were the strongest station on the band tonight, K8TEZ on 40m - great to work you again Larry, and Bert K5ZR on 80m - great to hear that big sig from LA again ! Y'all have fun, and see youu next month! Take good care of yourself, and others ! 73, Rich W4RQ

Editor...There has been much said about how best to become a user of a "cootie" or "sideswiper;" here is a method advocated by Jerry KD0CA. Of course there is no sense saying "this is the absolute correct way to use a sideswiper," the only thing that is truly important no matter how you send with a cootie/sideswiper is that you send perfectly readable code!

Today there are several commercially available sideswipers but at the time this article was written there weren't many commercially available sideswiper/cooties available and most amateurs used made cooties.

THE ART OF SIDE-SWIPERY

by

Jerry L. Bartachek KDØCA

No, this is not about traumatically removing the doors of parked cars while speeding on your way to the office half an hour late on Monday morning! I want to discuss a code keying method that requires no external power source and no expensive electronic keyers: the side-swiper. 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. I shall just call it a "swiper" as I describe below the technique and equipment needed to try it yourself.

First, a bit of history. The early Bunnell model "W" was called the double speed key and was developed to overcome telegrapher's paralysis or "glass arm" (carpal tunnel syndrome according to modern medical parlance). The Bunnell double speed key was patented in 1888 (16 years before the emergence of semi-automatic keys) and sold until the 1920's. Bunnell's sideswiper was operated using a horizontal motion of the hand and arm. It has two fixed contacts-- one left and one right. The circuit is closed by moving the lever to the right or left. A repeated rocking motion of the wrist and hand was used to send the dot and dash elements of The code. Genuine Bunnell or other antique sideswipers are somewhat scarce among collectors. Since the key was not designed to be portable in a manner similar to the bug, but was attached to the operating desk with screws, may have made it unpopular among professional telegraphers.

The semi-automatic key (bug) that could make dots automatically was first patented in 1892 and sold to telegraphers c.1904 by Horace Martin to help operators send faster code with less effort. This is the key which became a family of Vibroplex bugs which are still sold and used today. Talking on the air with other hams about my swiper, I often find that there is some confusion between bugs and swipers since they both use a similar side-to-side wrist motion. As lovely as they are and fun to collect, the subject of this article is NOT about the Vibroplex bug, the Mac-Key, the Speedex, or any of the other semi-automatic keys.

Because [commercially produced swipers](#) are relatively rare, some hams over the years built inexpensive home-brew swipers for themselves. However, I want you to know that the swiper key does not HAVE to be made from a hacksaw blade, a razor blade, or scraps of sheet metal as in the past. I have found in Dave Ingram, K4TWJ's excellent books and CQ magazine articles about collecting telegraph keys that some sophisticated antique bugs actually had a built-in swiper mode. But YOU can try a swiper by adapting currently available commercial keys to the task. For example, you could use a Vibroplex single paddle Vibrokeyer or a Kent single paddle key as a swiper by jumpering the dot and dash binding posts and connecting them to the "hot" side of your rig's key jack while using the normal ground connection, of course.

Let's get down to business and try our hand at side-swipery. First, place your thumb and index finger (or preferably, the 1st two fingers) lightly on the paddle. Oscillate your hand side-to-side on the paddles allowing your finger(s) to leave the paddle briefly at the end of the stroke to the right with the thumb, and allowing the thumb to leave the paddle briefly at the end of the stroke to the left with the finger(s). Make a string of dashes, keeping them very evenly spaced and each the same length. Then try a long string of dits, slowly at first and speeding up only a little as it begins to feel natural. Lastly, send a string of alternating dots and dashes beginning with the finger making the dots (di-dah di-dah...), and then try it with the finger making the dashes (dah-di-dah-di-dah-dit...) In QSO's I have been accused of using a bug due to the sound of my steady, rapid-fire dits although I am also happy to report that these comments are usually coupled with compliments on my being "easy copy" on the air. Making fast dits on a swiper is fairly easy, but one must develop a habit of sending consistently good code rather than just showing off.

Practice every number, punctuation, prosign, and letter off the air until you feel confident about your sending. Begin swiper training by learning the numbers "0" and "5", followed by the rest of the numbers and then the punctuation before trying the alphabet. Each character should be repeated many times to imbed the feel of it into the brain. This is similar to what pianists and other musicians do to learn fingerings and chords, etc. Learning and practicing the longest characters first will help prevent bad habits.

This is important: Every character begins with the index finger! Therefore the 1st, 3rd, and 5th elements of a character are made with the index finger. Conversely the 2nd, 4th, and 6th element, whether a dit or a dah, will be made by the thumb (symbol: T). Remember, don't think dots and dashes, just think about the sound of each letter or word in the code. See the following examples:

"0" - Dah-Dah-Dah-Dah-Dah

I T I T I

or: Dah-Dah-Dah-Dah-Dah

L R L R L

"5" - Di-Di-Di-Di-Dit

I T I T I

or: Di-Di-Di-Di-Dit

L R L R L

"?" - Di-Di-Dah-Dah-Di-Dit

I T I T I T

or:

L R L R L R

Adjusting the key or paddles that you are using as a swiper is very important if you want to send really solid copy. Adjust your swiper the opposite way you adjust a paddle for use with a keyer: use WIDE contact spacing and firm spring tension, which is very similar to K4TWJ's advice on how to adjust a bug. Side-Swipery, like using a bug, is best described as slapping the key around the table rather than pussyfooting around tickling the paddles! The wide contact spacing yields crisp, well-separated dits. Narrow spacing and/or weak spring tension makes a "5" sound like "Lolly-Lolly-Lah" instead of the more desirable "Digga-Digga-Dit".

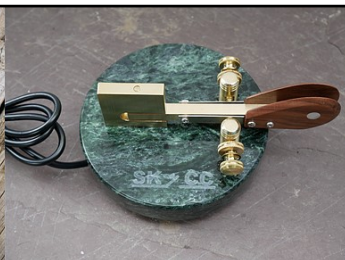
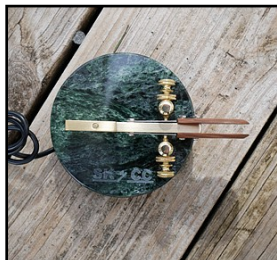
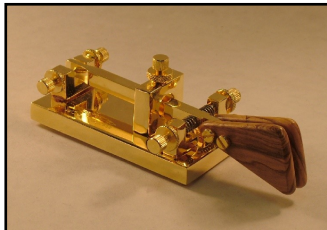
I have found that the action of magnetic paddles is a bit too light to become a good swiper. It can be done if you are careful to hold your keying hand like the letter "C", keeping your fingers and thumb far apart while keying. The extra spacing is created by your hand rather than the wide spacing of the contacts on the key, since the contacts have limited travel even at the widest setting. It requires an inordinate amount of practice to pull this off well, though. I find that a spring loaded iambic key is somewhat better as a swiper than a magnetic paddle, but not as good as a Vibrokeyer.

The technique is very simple and feels very natural after a short practice period. Most references to side-swipers in the literature about key collecting say that using a swiper is very difficult to learn and is in some way inferior to using a bug to send Morse or continental code. This is simply not true! The hand motions necessary to form certain letters and punctuation like the letter "C" or periods are identical on both bugs and swipers. It's granted that many letters are formed differently on these keys, but learning proper swiper technique is easier by far than learning proper iambic keyer technique. As I see it, the only real limiting factor to swiper use is that it tends to be most comfortable at speeds of 25 wpm or less.

My first swiper was actually two J-38 keys mounted back-to-back (base-to-base, actually) on a sturdy "L" bracket anchored on a flat, heavy base. The two straight keys are oriented 90 degrees off from the way you normally see them in this configuration. In February 1996 I worked a fellow who was using back-to-back J-38's as the paddles for his keyer, and he had a very good fist. Way back in October 1970 I passed the examinations for both general and advanced class as administered by an FCC engineer (no VE's then). In those days we had to demonstrate that we could send as well as receive continental code. We were allowed to bring our own familiar key if we wished or we could use the examiner-supplied straight key. I wish you could have seen the looks on the faces of the other examinees when they saw my back-to-back J-38's on that monstrosity of a frame I had built!

I learned from reading Tom French W1IMQ's biography of T.R. McElroy that code sending contests were held at 1930's hamfests where each contestant would send a given sentence 4 times; once on each of the following keys: a straight key, a side-swiper, a right-hand bug and a left-hand bug! If our forebears could do that then surely we can give this very old technique a try. Maybe we could start a side-swiper night (SSN) similar to the SKN, only we could hold it on April 1st!

73, Jerry L. Bartachek KDØCA

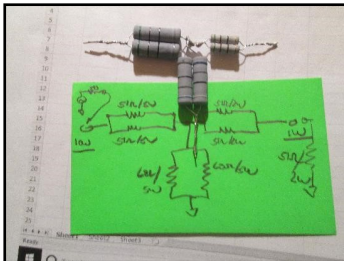


Slow Speed Saunter, November 2020

Slow Speed Saunter



Either a "chat" room or a pileup!



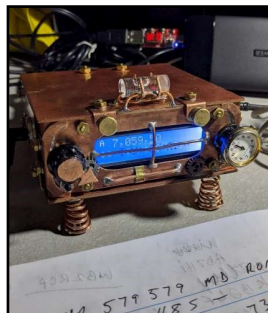
Much better participation than last month. Worked some newbies: KE8NUM (23114), KD2SRH (23046), WB2ZEU (22685), VE9DCD (22439T), KQ4CW (22743S), WA3RSR (23232), NQ3K (23223). I was happy to add six new "T's" and "S's" to my SX4 quest. Photo shows my 10W/10db attenuator I am building. Just waiting for aluminum enclosure to finish it. Once done I hope to enter the 1W category in the WES. Thanks for all the QSOs! 73, Bob



TNX! to all who copied my shaky fist ALWAYS an enjoyable start to another month. Did not have much time Sunday, spent the day on the chain saw .. CU in December GL. 73, Steve NQ8T



Another great time. Good to see/hear all the QRP stations that were participating... good signals, too. I ran 75w from my TS-590SG into a multiband vertical and a Kent Str Key. A great kick-off into the new Brag month. 73, Curt K2CWM



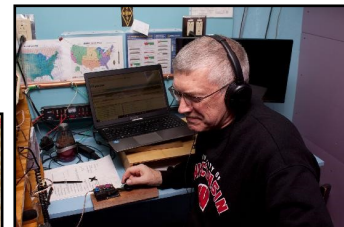
I was glad to make a few QRP contacts, including a QRPx2 with AH6AX using my new Steam Punk QCX 40. Hoping to get more active in the next few months. 73, Dan



29 QSOs using a Signal Electric R48 straight key. It was fun having slow speed exchanges, both with new operators, and with operators who usually send much faster! See you on the air, 73, Jack, W9YY



Lots of stations to work. Lots of fun. 73, Al K9FW



Propagation was no one's friend in Nov 2020, but I met some new SKCC friends. 73, Ken KD2KEH



Lots of fun. Will be looking for everyone in WES. 73, Randy W2NR



Editor...Taken from a post on the SKCC reflector. How many of us can relate?

Is That a Short Wave Antenna?

De Brian VE3VAW

We have new neighbours moving in across the street. They were by last week looking at things and checking out and introducing themselves to the neighbours who might be out and about.

The wife of the couple asked me if that was a short wave antenna (3 el. Yagi). I said....Well.... yes.... and TV up there too (sort of wanting to deflect the issue for fear of generating some negative feeling on its presence).

She said... Oh, I took the ham course a few years ago with a my friend.. mostly for something to do. But you had to so the Morse code stuff and.... well.

I said that Morse was gone now as a requirement, but personally that's all I choose to do, and in fact I do it with a somewhat old and archaic type of keying mechanism (bug).

She thought that was interesting that 'you all still do that'.

Well, we do.

The reason I was deflecting off of the antenna presence was that about 1994 or so I had a next door neighbour who had a myriad of off-shore hands-free phones and cheap-o guitar effects pedals. Needless to say.. I got 'into' them. After many calls to me personally complaining and to Industry Canada .. IC called me and said 'what's up... she keeps calling us' (I referred her to them as the responsible and licensing agency). Two IC engineers came by, tested down to negligible power out and told her to never call me or IC again... the stuff she had was totally off of any allowances, not IC or FCC approved etc.

Funnily... some years later that rental house was purchased by an IC elec engineer, but not before, having spotted my tower, he went to one of the personnel in the IC Amateur Licensing division and 'checked me out' re. interference reports etc. Turned out the guy he asked about me was one of my canoeing partners! He told the guy that I was OK in their books.

Anyhow, a bit off track, suffice to say that most people see the antennas and are happy to think that I am just a major Over the Air television fan not willing to pony up for satellite or cable/fibre.

Never have had problems otherwise in over 26 years. Now... if I can find the person out there who is giving ME grief with some major noise around 3560 mhz.....

73, Brian VE3VAW



3 lbs of Steel!

I love my old J-38, and gave it a good cleaning a while back. Looks like new. But keeping it from walking all over my operating desk (most often the picnic table, or tailgate of my Honda Element) was difficult, and took two hands. I ordered this yesterday. Excited to get it! Three pounds of steel ought to keep the key in place. 73, Dennis KD1JT

SKSEu November 2020

Straight Key Sprint Europe Results

Results for SKSE: 05-Nov-2020

Overall | QRP | QRO | QRO+ | SWL | By SPC | Soapbox

Overall results

Rank	Callsign	Name	SKCC #	SPC	QSO's	SPC's	S/T/C	Score
1	F6EJN	Bob	508S	FRA	26	19	10/8/0	724
2	K3EW	PHIL	10605S	MD	26	17	10/4/2	642
3	K9LJ	Don	19153S	IN	23	17	10/5/2	601
4	AC1GF	Bob	19399S	NH	24	16	7/4/1	534
5	K4BAI	JOHN	3280	GA	19	13	6/4/2	387
6	W5ZR	Bert	2931S	LA	20	13	3/4/2	355
7	F5DE	Bernard	6247S	FRA	18	11	6/6/0	348
8	F5UQE	Duc	13468S	FRA	16	12	4/6/0	312
9	VA3RSA	Richard	21258T	ON	15	10	6/2/1	265
9	VE3KZ	Bob	22804S	ON	14	10	7/2/0	265
11	PG4I	Jo	11019T	NED	13	9	4/5/0	227
12	ON7DQ	Luc	14984T	BEL	16	7	3/2/1	182
13	W15H	Mike	11770S	TX	9	7	2/3/0	123
14	WU6P	NIAN	18640C	CA	7	7	2/3/1	114
15	K1EEE	Mike	12006S	VA	5	4	3/2/0	85
16	K5BZH	Jim	447T	TX	6	5	2/2/0	80
17	HB9CPS	Geo	20350	SUI	4	3	2/2/0	62
18	GORDO	John	2133S	ENG	3	1	2/0/0	33



Good fun but not many sigs. 3 QSO's F6EJN and F5DE on two bands. Stations heard but not worked were 2E0CVN, ON7DQ, PG4I, K3EW. 73, John GORDO



Surprise, the 20m is empty today. Fallback on the 80m and 40m. 2 qso on 2 frequencies: YU7AE, ON7DQ, F5DE. 3 QSOs over 20m, 8 QSOs over 80m and 15 qso over 40m. Thanks to the XM 240 and the 300 watts. Thanks for all the qso and see you Saturday on the WES. It will be Bob / 26. Many thanks for This QSO. Picture is XM 240 at 50 feet up. 73, Bob F6EJN



This month nobody heard on 20 m. On 40 m : ON6EO, N1GKE, AC1GF, K1EEE, F5UQE, W2ITT, WB9ICL and VA3RSA. On 40 and 80 m: ON7DQ, GORDO, F6EJN, YU7AE and PG4I. Many thanks to all. Contacts realized with one of my cooties, a Hi-Mound model MK-701. 73, GL and see you next time! 73, Bernard F5DE



Who Knew?

These are actual beer labels for a beer company called "Transmitter." They come in four packs; would have been nice if you could buy the collection in some sort of "sampler."

You can find info about these "Transmitter" beer at:

<https://www.printmag.com/post/beer-packaging-design-ham-radio>

Too bad they didn't have a brew like, "CQ WES," "CQ SKS," "CQ SKCC," or even "CQ DX?"



History of CW on Canadian Coins

Editor...Here is the latest Canadian coin to include CW in the minting. Information provided by Wes AC8JF.



Canada has released a 2020 "twonie" coin commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Allied victory in World War II. The coin is based on the "victory" nickel, and like that nickel carries messages in Morse code. It's hard to make out in this photo, but next to VICTORY and VICTOIRE are the slogans "We win when we work willingly" and "La bonne volonté est gage de victoire." A plain metal version is in circulation and might show up in change for those lucky enough to get into Canada. 73, Wes AC8JF

Editor...Historical information of CW on Canadian coins provided by David VE9CB.

For three years during World War II, Canadian five-cent pieces featured a message in Morse Code. The slogan "We Win When We Work Willingly" appeared on the special "Victory" 5-cent piece in 1943, 1944 and 1945. The message starts at the bottom of the reverse of the coin, and runs clockwise.



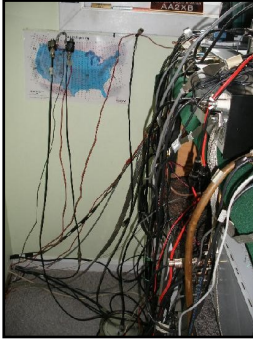
Pre code coin



In 2005, we brought back the Victory nickel to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the war. No Morse on this coin, however.

This may be the only example of Morse Code appearing on coinage anywhere in the world.

November WES 2020



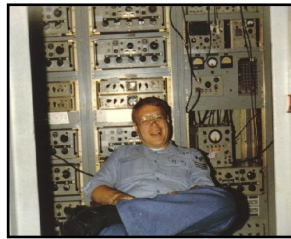
I like to change my set up each month and use a different rig each WES. If your wife thinks your shack is too messy show her this picture of mine. I have been a member of SKCC since 2006 and it keeps getting better and better. Thanks to all. Hope to "see" you next month. 73, Frank AA2XB



This was my 2nd WES and I had a lot of fun. I managed to operate about 6-7 hours or so and finally made a FRA contact (thanks F6EJN) and also snagged 2 new states (LA and NY). 73, Jon AD5RX



Thank you all for these good QSOs. The propagation evolves and changes schedules. Always interesting to practice the WES although the contest gets in the way a bit and forces you to go over the upper part of the 40m. 18 hours of traffic, 109 QSO on Saturday over 20m except 6 over 40m. 100 QSO on Sunday including 26 over 15m; 39 over 20m; 35 over 40m around 7.110. The photo dates from 1988 at age 43; next month I will post a current photo. 73 qro to all and stay healthy. Bob F6EJN



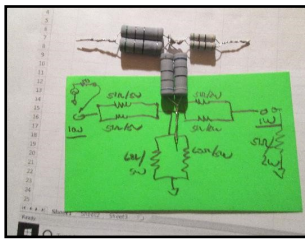
73, Wes AA4XU



Well, I guess I can't multitask. I tried to work the WES and the SS tests at the same time. Screwed both of them up. It was amazingly hard to enter each call in the proper logger. Thanks everyone for cutting me some slack. 73, Jim AD0AB



Had a great time chasing fellow vets... Thanks to all who served, both here in USA, Canada, and abroad. Ya'll stay safe & well. 73, Larry AH6AX



Very rough conditions this WES. Except for a couple runs, really had to work for QSOs. Contacts west of the midwestern states were scarce. Only worked AZ and UT for "7 land" QSOs. Worked North Dakota and South Dakota, go figure. Highlight was working F5UQE on 80m. Alternate SKCC frequencies came in very handy with all the SS noise. Most of my QSOs were on the alternate frequencies. Photo shows 10db attenuator I am building. If all goes as planned I will use it to operate the 1W category next WES. 73, Bob AC1GF



Back to the 90's with my ICOM ic-765 and a "Llaves artesanas" Straight Key. Very glad to have several NA Qso's on 80m with my doublet antenna. 73, Joao CT1DGH



Lots of stations on Saturday morning, but later on the evening the SS started and few SKCC station could be heard from my location. Casual operation on Sunday. Glad to notice activity moved to around 7.115, there was more room there. All my contacts where in 40m, and I contacted 3 Bob's in a row hi hi. Thank you everyone. See you in the bands. 73, Ruben AC2RJ.



Thanks to all for qso. Not enough time at the radio with thunderstorms. 73, Phil F5JWH

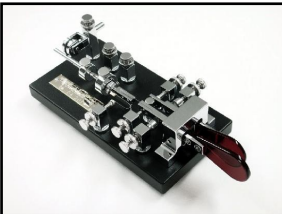


Thanks everyone for the nice contacts. Conditions were not too bad with good opening on 15m. I could work some. I was able to contact a few people on 3 bands. I could use my K3 again, which had broken down. It's a change from the TS570 lent to me by a friend who didn't have any CW filters. 73, Bert F6H-KA

November WES 2020 II



Good fun on the old Morse keys. 73, John G0RDO SKCC 2133s



I tried working some of the bands that I needed more SKCC QSO's on. However, on Sunday 40 meters was terrific. Lot's of SKCC stations on the air for this WES. I salute all of our Veterans! 73, Steve K2FW



Another wonderful WES. I operated outside in the patio as the weather was summer-like here. Saturday was my day for WES. Sweepstakes dominated the bands on Sunday where I worked a few. A pleasant Veterans Day to all the vets out there and thanks to all those I worked on WES. Here I am in the patio with the IC 706 MK II G @ 100 watts. 73, Jerry K9PMV



QRPp and the November SS don't mix too well, so just a few QSOs this time around. Happy Thanksgiving to all from the home of "The Rock." 73, Gary K1YAN



I was only able to operate for a few hours here and there, which worked out ok, since that contest made things...unusual. I decided to do a monoband WES with my newly-built QCX+, which did a terrific job. Key was the marvelous TBFB by W1SFR, and the antenna was a 20m EDZ up 50'. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Thanks to all who participated. Conditions were fairly good until we had to avoid the Sweepstakes contesters. I was able to help a few folks with their upgrade goals. Everyone have fun and look forward to seeing you in the monthly Brag program. 73 & Go Bless Ric KA3LOC



Got my old IC-7000 out of the closet and ran 50 watts to a vertical for this WES, using my old Kent Str Key. Tried for 50 contacts but only made 40. A lot of competition from our SS friends for frequencies. Always fun....73, Curt K2CWM



Started slow on Saturday, picked up sum on Sunday. Fun as usual. 73, Al K9FW



Thank you everyone for the enjoyable WES, CU next month! 73, Eric KB3NSK



Lots of fun. Using my new Kenwood TS-890S. A wonderful radio for CW. I can't of any more features that anyone could want or need. Thanks to all the Vets out there. 73, Steve K2DEP



QRM from ARRL SS Contest. Only operated a short time. Heading for Mesa, AZ to winter. 73s and STAY TUNE, 73, Daryl K9QEW USN 1961-1965

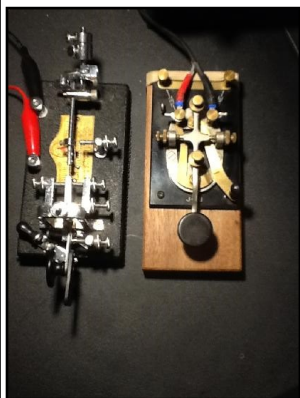


Perfect weather for portablehorrible conditions for portable...heh heh It seemd like 40m just died when the sun went down saturday for anything stateside. The French connections were coming in blasting but state-side was not happening for me and my portable set up at the park. Sweepstakes was going gang busters but plenty of room to play up higher on the bands. Took the QCX-40 and my KX3 to a local park to play for a while. Plenty of fun despite conditions. 73, Randy KB4QQJ

November WES 2020 III



Another fun WES. It was nice seeing how many of our members are military vets, and not just in the US. Thanks to all who logged me. CU next WES unless we meet on the air before then. Radio- KX3 Key-US Navy Flameproof (fitting for a military vet themed event). 73, Mike KC2EGL 553T

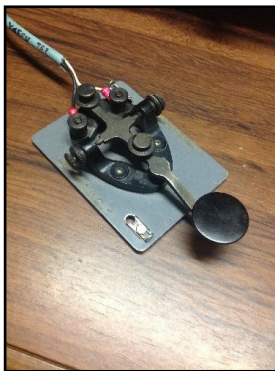


Thx fer the QSO's everyone. See you next month. 1940 Left hand Bug with the J38. Back and forth on these all weekend. 73, Jim KD9GDY

Want to give a great big shout out to all the veteran's who served our great nation and protected from foreign and domestic battles along with the ones who still carry that torch everyday to keep us safe and out of harms way. This was a GREAT theme for WES and I had a blast as always. Looking forward to Decembers WES. 73TNX QSO's thru QRM all weekend.73, Doug KG5YTS



Lots of fun. Just had to go to the higher freqs to get away from the sweepstakes activity. 73, Curt KC9UL



Only had a very limited time to operate this weekend. Lots of QRM on the bands from the SS contest. Broke out an oldie but goodie key this WES to offer my /4 points ... maybe John (G0RDO) could id it.

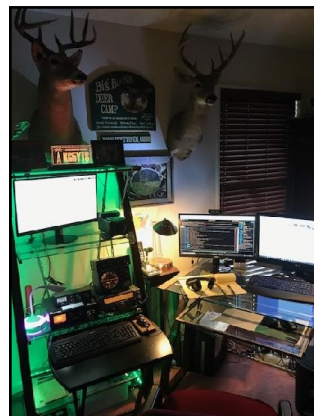
Tnx to all who participated and especially our veterans. 73, Bill KE3O



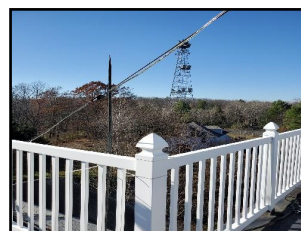
Thanks to all the veterans who served! I took advantage of the sunny and warm November weather to operate portable for a combined POTA and WES. Rig was a battery powered KX2 with amp running 35 watts into an inverted vee antenna. With solar flux at 92 (whopee!), worked the strongest station on 20m, F6HKA. Who has more fun than a ham? Thanks to all who participated. 73, Bob KC9UR



Only worked 2 Stations on 15M but enjoyed wes. 73, John KG4WNA



Fun weekend. I always enjoy SS and WES. On the mend from surgery on the 30th. So not as active as I wanted to be. Nice to hear activity on the higher bands. Tip of the hat to all the Veterans in the club. 73, Kd4ee Scott/10



WX was to good to spend much time working WES. All set to go on 80 and 160 Saturday evening but antenna had a fault. Sunday morning up on widows walk fixing antenna, simply a failed bypass capacitor on one of the switching networks one of which can be seen just to the left of the lightning pole in the picture. Had a great time from 4 - 7 pm Sunday on 40 and 80, could not raise anyone on 160. Low band Antennas was good with 1 KW applied, hope it stays that way for the winter! Picture is part of low band ant with neibours 300 ft. tower in background, the horns are no longer in use. 73, Brian KF6C

November WES 2020 IV



Well, that was fun! I considered doing the SS CW when I remembered that the WES was going to be this weekend. So, when I cranked up the panoramic on Saturday, I saw that 20m was almost wall to wall fast cw. So, I poked around a little bit and found a few straight-keyers here and there. I came back Sunday afternoon and the SS CW had settled down a lot so I tried a little more of the WES. I started H&P (huntin' n peckin) on 40m and the first cq I answered was N3MVX. He came back almost right away, so I moved on and found K2MZ. I called him a couple of times and he sent back ?. Then I realized I had been away from the radio for awhile, so I checked my xmit power - it was still down at 0 watts. I usually turn the transmit power down when I am away from the radio for more than a few minutes. So I turned it back up to 5w (indicated) and completed the exchange. Then I realized that my qso with N3MVX was done at the lowest level of power possible, and he even came back to me almost right away! Shazam! In any case, thanks for everybody who to the time to thank me for my service - and thanks for all of you for the q's and participating in this great event. I put the picture in just to get the extra points heh heh.



Good fun to be had. The ARRL SS was really strong into WV and could not pull out too many contacts after that started. But it was still fun. Only worked 2 stations Sunday due to other things going on. Everyone take care, stay safe and well. 73 from Wild Wonderful West Virginia, Dave KI8I



It was difficult with ARRL SS on the way but we got through. Thanks to the upper band on 40m! 15m was great with solar flux above 90 - 73 to all, Jose KP3W

Tropical Storm ETA had a impact on my active hours and my antenna system. I used my Hustler Hat Rack special with no radials. (see photo). I was impressed with how well it preformed. Winds of 40mph as I type this comment. :) 73 de AL, N4ow 11375s



Great event once again. Many thanks to all the veterans who participated. Used the 1919 Vibroplex Original for a majority of the QSOs. Again, nice to hear a number of new members. Thanks again and catch yo all down the log...73, jack KKOI



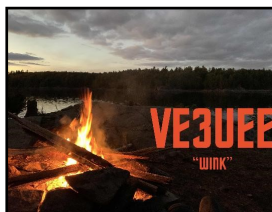
Running the Ham Radio Cure for Covid "Multi Multi." A Big Thank You to all the Operators who participated in our November WES Multi Multi Operation and also a Gigantic Thank You to all the Veterans (past es present) for you service es sacrifice to keep our nation free. Operators: Ted,K8AQM, Curt,KU8L Mark,NU8Z Kurt, W8IQ Scott,N3JIT Larry,K8TEZ Steve,NQ8T Bob, W8ARC Randy,N8KQ es Tech Support, Jeremy,KD8VSQ. 73, CW KS7KCC



Had a great time as always. Thanks to all the vets for their service. 73, Jim N3MVX



Not sure if my scoring is correct, but I tried. I have decided to get busy on my "C", so see you on the bands more often. 73, Dennis N0SMX

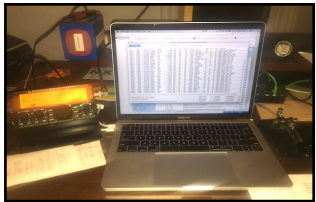


Tough conditions with the SS, but lots of fun. 73, Wink VE3UEE

November WES 2020 V



I was looking forward to this WES for a while as I thought with my vet status I'd attract more QSOs -- well, with the bands as bad as they were (and the Sweepstake contest taking over), I ended up with only a dozen QSOs, and since I used 50w to complete three of those, I couldn't enter the QRP category as I wanted :/ So, while most of my contacts were with 5w, I want to be honest. It was fun, but not as fun as I was hoping. Thank you to all who I was able to work. The photo is when I served in Fort Myer, VA, just above Arlington Cemetery. Lots of great memories. 73, Derek N7PHI



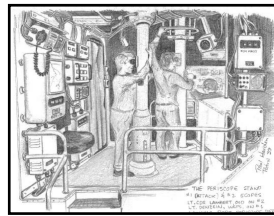
First WES since May due to work on house and roof. Assembled basic station - KX2 and Nye Master Key. Good to be back. Thankful for the QSOs, the better band conditions and the service of our veterans. 73, Mark NX1K



Thanks to all the Veterans for their Service! This past week I worked 100 Stations for our yearly November Edmund Fitzgerald SES as W8F. The W8F station operates from Nov 2 thru Nov 16 so I will probably add a few more CW QSO's to the N1MM+ log :-). Then I will be entering the CQWe (Western Electric) Contest on Nov 14th and 15th. 73 & Thanks for all the WES QSO's, it was a blast! SKCC, the KEY to Amateur Radio. Rick N8XI



The majority of my operating time was spent using a club call. I actually enjoyed the challenge of operating on the crowded bands with serious QSB, QRM, the "ditdit" robot and whatever that other QRM is. TNX! to who suffered thru my shaky fist!! I fine-tuned the bug, fired up the little amp and clamped the cans to my head. C U for the 2 hr. sprint GL! 73 Steve NQ8T



Another fun WES in spite of the SS (they deserve their fun, too, I suppose). Wish more would use 7110-7120 or 14110-14120 when the bands are crowded. VET theme was very nice and fun. Thanks to all for their service. I made 10 patrols on the Polaris submarine USS Robert E. Lee, SSBN601. Here's a sketch I drew about 1974 of the periscope stand -- just so you can see what a real submarine looks like inside. CU next month. 73, Paul NA5N



First of all my thanks to all the vets for their service! And for the bonus points too of course. It was a beautiful early November weekend here on Table Rock Lake so a boat ride, watching the K-State football game (they lost - boo) and the Chiefs game (they won - yay) took up a lot of operating time. Used the old Kenwood TS-530S which is a pretty good CW rig with the 500 Hz filter for a 35 year old rig. Antenna was an OCF at 30' and I used my J-38 key. Thanks all for fighting through the SS QRM. 73, Bill NZ0T

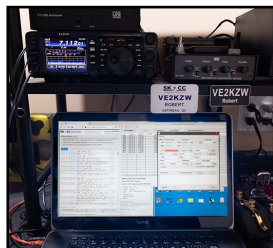


Kx2 10wts g5rv 46 qsos.. tnx to service guys... had to go up on the freqs.. gud deal there..worked 8 VE hams... 1 FRA.. WOW, this month another 127 new mbrs.. my newest was ve3uee skcc nr 23289.. wow.. Worked only 40 and 20 mtrs.. so, agn, tnx to skcc club organizers.. I wish they would ask for a 1 dollar bill from all mbrs to put towards their work sites for the SKCC.. so, u all take care and c u in December with snow on my grass.. hihi.. pix is my key nmbr 63, now have 65 keys mainly homebrew.. my hobby. This is a VERTICAL DUBBUG.. fast dits and slower dits.. 73, Dave Larsen n9zx1qrp@gmail.com

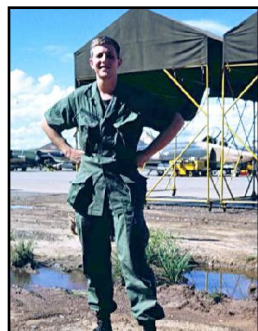


Thank You Veterans for your Service! I had a fun operating from my driveway in great warm fall weather. 73, Jeff NS8A

November WES 2020 VI



That was a good weekend, as long as I stayed clear of SS. 40m and 20m worked good. MFJ -2982 vertical. I am not a veteran but my father did WWII; these guys deserve a lot a respect. 73, Robert VE2KZW



Had a busy weekend and the SS made it a bit of a challenge to work the WES but all in all, it was fun. Wrked a lot of other vets and gave out my V6...welcome home my vet brothers. First WES with my new Optibeam 10-3w yagi (the old KT-34A finally bit the dust). At 73 years old, I don't see many more tower jobs anytime soon...that was rough!!with 14 trips up the hard to climb HDBX-48.Used K3 line and horiz loop as well as the yagi. Used all 3 keys on the desk...SS, SK, and BUG. Condx were up and down with EU stns coming in strong on 40 with the sun still out here. 73 Dave W3NP de West Virginia



Had a great time and love the Vet WES, great to see the activity. My salute to them all. Welcome home Brothers. 73, Bill W0EJ



Murphy's Law - had to load 300 bales of hay into our barn loft this weekend; seriously impacted my QRV time!! And the SS action didn't help. But what a great WES - so glad we have many military vets in our club. Thanks to each and every one of you and your families for sacrifices you made. 73, Dave W1DV



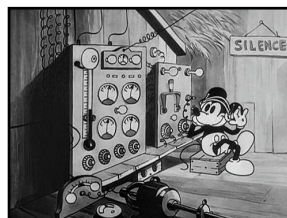
Fun handing out 45pts/QSO with 30 yrs service in the Navy. Worked 16 other vets. Picture (if it uploads) is my original station -K2OQV- back in 1955. 65 years off and on pounding brass. Still fun. Current rig IC-7300 with 84' end fed and some I1QOD keys (more chrome than brass. J-38 is resting. 73, Andy W4NLT



In and out this weekend. Weather was too nice! Conditions were reasonable -- great to EU. The SS contest kind of fragmented things, though. Made 26 QSOs with vets - thanks to all of them. 73, John W1TAG



Thanks to all the vets who reveiled their years of service in this WES. I totally phased over to QRP in the past 2 weeks. Been getting very good signal reports with my G5RV at 70 feet so my 5 watt signal is getting out very well. I'm thinking about building a QRP portable rig and operating on the patio for next spring. My hours during this WES were very limited because of the Honey-Do-List and excellent weather but the weekend was still very enjoyable. 73, Peter W2SKY



Sad that WES was on same weekend as CW SS!!! 73, Jack W9GT

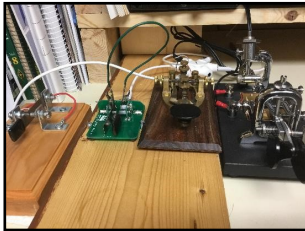


Really look forward to each WES. Too bad Tropical storm Eta curtailed radio operation to a very large degree. It was still fun. Thanks to those that repeated info to me during the QRN from the storms, (before it intensified). Many others were affected as well. I'm sure our Cuban SKCC participants dealt with Eta. I hope they're safe. Hope to see you all for December's WES! Got to at least try out my Speed-X after it's Cerakote facelift. 73, Blue W1BLU



1st time I've been on the air in two months. Wish I could have given more of you 28 points. Hope to c u agn next time. 73, Guy, W5UAA

November WES 2020 VII



Fun handing out 45pts/QSO with 30 yrs service in the Navy. Worked 16 other vets. Picture (if it uploads) is my original station-K2OQV- back in 1955. 65 years off and on pounding brass. Still fun. Current rig IC-7300 with 84' end fed and some 11QOD keys (more chrome than brass. J -38 is resting. 73, Andy W4NLT



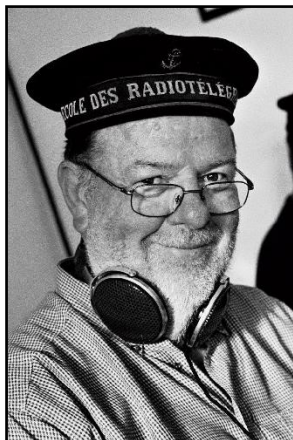
I was out operating QRP-portable on property owned by my daughter and her husband. I was running 5 watts to a homebrew vertical mounted on my truck. It was an absolutely beautiful Fall day here in southeastern Pennsylvania. The bands sounded good, and it was nice to work Bert F6HKA again. (His was the loudest signal I heard on 20M yesterday afternoon.) Thanks to all of my fellow vets for their service! 73/72, Craig WB3GCK (former RM2 USN)



Again big fun !! ... contests on the bands disturbed operations ! Pity !! TNX to all & 73, Carlos CT7AFN



Tnx everyone for a fun WES. Hopefully more time next month and maybe we will activate the club station KS3KCC. 73, Greg WA3GM / DAH KS3KCC



Only a very little WES participation this month due to the biggest European CW contest on the 2 m band (the Marconi Memorial Contest) I was participating for 24 hours. A few years ago, for fun during this MMC CW contest I was wearing my military service hat I had in 1968 when being at the Radiotelegraphy courses of the French Navy, see photo. 73 to all and see you soon! Bernard F5DE



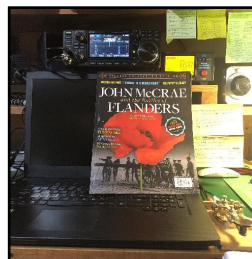
*** To all our Veterans, Thank you !! ***
This November WES was extra special, the Hallicrafters HT-32 pictured came from a local auction. A bit of TLC and it was ready. The challenge, to get the rig in place for the WES. Thanks to all for the great reports. 73 Rick K0KEX



Only on for a few hours Sunday afternoon. Bands bad early but go a little better later. Still a good WES. Thank you guys and thank those of you who wore the uniform. 73, Les WB5JWI



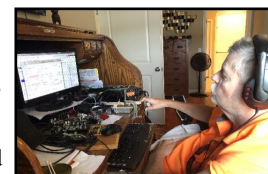
STARTED WITH VETERAN'S WES UNTIL HALF HOUR BEFORE SWEEPSTAKES. THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE VETERANS FOR YOUR SERVICE. THANK YOU FOR ALL OF THE QSO'S. GREAT TO WORK ALL OF THOSE VETERANS. 73, Phil K3EW



My thanks to all those that served in the armed forces and took the time to share their years of service in the November WES. And November 11th, Remembrance day, is just around the corner. My photo shows my operating station and the cover of a special edition magazine devoted to John McCrae and the battles of Flanders Fields. He was the Canadian who authored the famous poem "In Flanders Fields". 73, Richard VA3RSA



As always, love the Sprintathons. Early opening to our colleagues in France on 20m was fun. Glad to find clusters of SKCC up higher when much was dominated by the SS contest. 73, Oliver K3FA



Had fun SS ARRL Covered me up. 73, Ray W9GHX

Doing a “Simple” Multi-multi SKCC Event

I enjoy operating with friends, my station is setup with five operating positions; it's what I like to do, operate, joke and enjoy some good eats! Covid 19 has dashed that style of operation for now so new thinking was required to do what I enjoy most. Fortunately the SKS and the WES allowed me to think outside the box.

I have written about using a VPN and the N1MM logging software for real time logging of stations but there is a much easier way to have some SKCC fun and to enjoy operating with your friends. We developed a chart to sign-up for operating times just as is done for signing up for being a K3Y operator. Here is the chart we used for the November WES when we operated as KS7KCC and how it looked when “the gang” signed up for operating times. We wanted to make sure there was only one station on a band while trying to make sure all “open” bands were covered. 15 meters should have been added but by texting we did some 15m operation since that band was “open” and made sure only one station was on that band. As you can see we had a couple pretty good operating slots left open but “Honey-dos” and football bit into

Saturday					Sunday				
time	Band	20m	40m	80m	160m	20m	40m	80m	160m
7-9 am									
9-11 am									
11-1 pm									
1-3 pm									
3-5 pm									
5-7 pm									
7-9 pm									
9-11 pm									

KS7KCC exchange.....599 (State) CW 21877C

Saturday					Sunday				
time	Band	20m	40m	80m	160m	20m	40m	80m	160m
7-9 am			N3JJT	N8KQ			N3JJT	N8KQ	
9-11 am	K8AQM	N3JJT				NU8Z	N3JJT		
11-1 pm	K8AQM	N8KQ				K8AQM	N8KQ		
1-3 pm	KU8L	W8IQ				K8AQM	W8ARC		
3-5 pm	N8KQ	???				N8KQ	NQ8T		
5-7 pm		KU8L	???			KU8L	N8KQ		
7-9 pm		K8TEZ	N8KQ	NQ8T					
9-11 pm			NQ8T	N8KQ					

KS7KCC exchange.....599 (State) CW 21877C

operating time.

When done operating in the WES everyone sent their SKCC Logger adi file to one station where the files were all easily merged into one log for submission and sent in as a multi-multi category station. Although we didn't really do it, you could use text messages, 2m repeater or emails back and forth to encourage or “heckle” the other local stations. Certainly you don't need to be a computer nerd to merge logs but you need to make sure each station log has the same call for proper merging.

It doesn't really matter what the score is, it's a chance to interact with friends while enjoying what we hams do...make contacts! I encourage you to give it a try whether with a friend or as a club. There is fun to be had even in these trying times and it can make for great bragging and stories in the newsletter.

73,

Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM



Brag, October 2020



It was a good month. Not on the air as much as in warmer weather but still a good time. See you in November. Thanks for all the contacts. Looking forward to the WES to offer my 10 USN/USNR years. 73, Bud AA8CL

SKCC Monthly

Month/Year: OCTOBER 2020

	Log	Day	Call	Name	SKCC
1	EA1ARW	OCT 4	IK2CFD	GRASIM	22069
2	EA1ARW	OCT 5	K9GVH	NICK	21174
3	EA1ARW	OCT 13	IK7XJA	FRANCO	21253 T
4	EA1ARW	OCT 21	VE3KZ	BOB	22801 S
5	EA1ARW	OCT 26	K0HGB	AA0WJ	22936 C
6					
7					
8					

I finally took a break from the paddle and started sending with a cheap cootie key built out of a saw blade! It is both fun and challenging! 73, Luis EA1ARW



Some new numbers for me, the propagation wasn't great but it allowed me some very nice Qso's. Thanks for your patience, sometimes the deep Qsb has shortened the time for chatting. 73, Graziano



I didn't work too hard this month. All of my contacts were made with a SpeedX bug. 73, Billy AA8KY



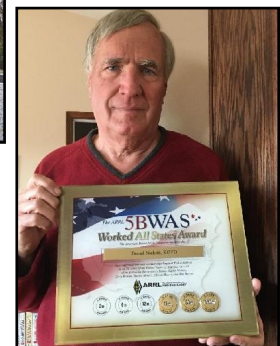
Another fun month. See y'all in November. 73, Curt K2CWM



Thanks to all who participated in the monthly Brag program. I hope to work everyone in the the upcoming SKCC activities. A picture of me operating from a local park, rig is the FT-817. Winter is coming, so more time for radio. Best 73 & God bless you and your families, Ric KA3LOC



AA4AZ, Ted great job as "Bonus" op Thank you. A shout-out to the new stations logged AD5RX, W9YY, ON5UK, & KP4GL. The month was filled with Winter prep work. The past few years we have had early Snows & below 32f temps. Yep, that's apples needing to be picked.. Ready for Nov. 73, Rick K0KEX



Managed 82 brag contacts even though I made the first one on the 21st of October. Great to contact old and new friends after a few months of limited activity. In June I completed 5 Band WAS thanks to a lot of SKCC members. The plaque finally arrived from the ARRL along with the medallions for 160, 30 and 17. Still need three more states on 12 and three more on 6 to get to 10 band WAS. 73, Dan K0FD



More and more funner all the time! 73, Tom KB3CVO



Not a bad month as propagation seems to be improving. Jack, KK0I gave me my first SKCC Marathon QSO, 67 minutes' worth. Two more notches for my Ragchew Award :-~) TNX all! SKCC, The KEY to Amateur Radio. 73, Rick N8XI



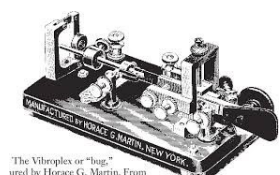
A fine month for brags with a few new members. Also, I acquired a few more marathon entries towards that prestigious Marathon Award. Thanks, Ted, for being there for the Brag Bonus. See you all next month! 73, jack KK0I



See you next month.. I hope. 73, Dave KB1WOD

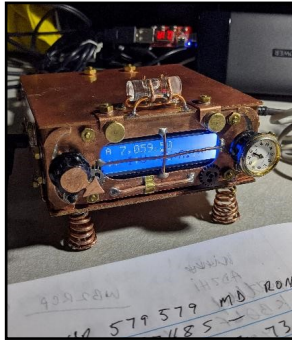


Learning to use Bug. Hope I get better. 73, KC5SAM, Virginia/SAM



"The Vibroplex or 'bug,' used by Horace G. Martin. From

Brag, October 2020 II



It was a tough month to get on the air for me, but I was able to make my first contacts with my new Steam Punk QCY 40! 73, Dan W2DLC



I earned both my S and TKA on the same day, October 24th! Thanks, everyone. Pictured below is the key lineup - a home brew cootie, a seldom used paddle, a 1950 Signal Electric straight key, and a new Vibroplex bug. They are all connected all the time, so that I can switch between them as needed. Rig is an IC7300 fed to a long wire on the fence in the backyard, up 5 feet! See you on the air, 73, Jack, W9YY



Tough month for time. November is already better for brag count! See you on the air. 73, Les WB5JWI



73, Hanz YL3JD

Left Adrift in the Ether

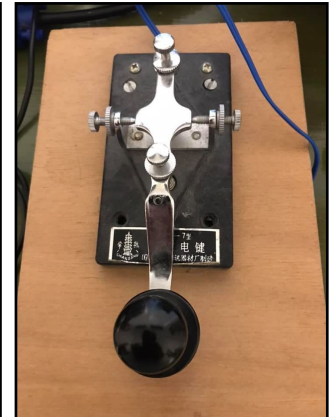
I had a most disappointing QSO recently. I called CQ, and a station came back. I gave him his report, my QTH, and name and turned it back to him. He came back like this (name and QTH changed intentionally): 599 MO Andy 12345 BK. So I went back and gave him my number, rig, age, and years as a ham. When I turned it back to him - crickets. Signals were strong. The band was in nice shape. Apparently the only thing he was after was my number without the courtesy of coming just back with a final 73. Was it too much to spend two minutes copying my transmission? This is not the first time something like this has happened, although I usually get a report -name - state - number and 73 in the same 20 second transmission. Maybe something just happened to him, but listening around a bit afterwards I am not so easily convinced. For contesting such practice is fine, but I hope SKCC is not nurturing what looks like a numbers-pounce mentality. I'm not suggesting that every QSO has to be a ragchew, but I am suggesting there's a certain polite ham protocol that ought to be just as important to cw ops as 20 second number exchanges. If numbers are all the op's interested in, fine, but at least take the extra 20 seconds to end a QSO rather than leaving your QSO partner adrift in the ether. If you're learning the skills necessary to do good cw on a hand key then let the brass sing a little. Get to know a bit about your QSO partner. I sincerely hope cw operations never become like FT8 QSOs, but, as I just listen to a lot of SKCC QSOs the direction is unmistakable. I'd personally rather not have a QSO outside of a contest that goes like this: 599 PA Mike 3844T 73. Save it for the WES. Perhaps we need some sort of identifier if the op is only interested in collecting a number like is used with WES. I'm not writing this to offend anyone, but hopefully this meets some of the criteria of what John Lewis used to call "good trouble."

Mike W3QT #3844T

De Face Book



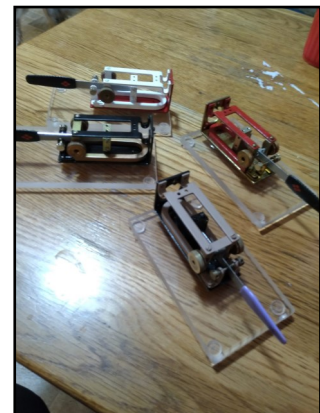
The speed X with Navy knob is my preferred key now. The connecting co-ax was in a box I received that belonged to my grandfather WD5GUO SK. I have also used RCA plugs with because they are cheap to use with tel-



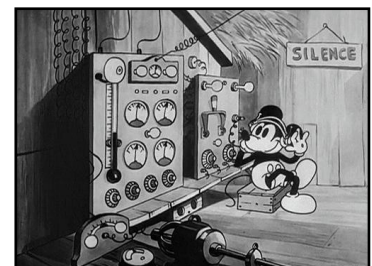
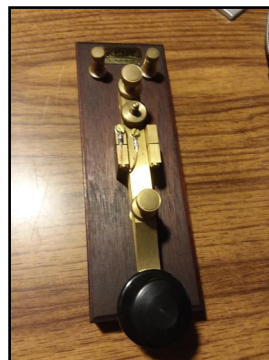
the appropriate adapter ephone wire. I used to



I've been off the air for 3 years, but I'll be back in business in a couple of weeks. Glad I kept the Drake twins, and my 3 favorite keys....73, Jim N4EES



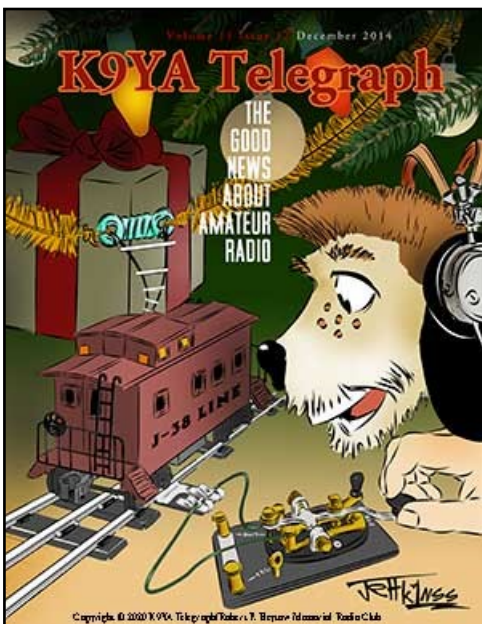
Marc Polar relay keys done, making 2 coot-ies, 2 single paddle. 73, Marc AD4CW



I refurbished a Hallicrafters S-38B for a member of the local Ham club. I returned it to him at the meeting last night and he gifted this to me. I've been using it this evening during the WES. 73, Barry WA9ZWA

The K9YA Telegraph

For several years I have subscribed to the “K9YA Telegraph” which is the newsletter/magazine of the Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club. The “K9YA Telegraph” is a monthly newsletter and the slogan as the cover shows here is a newsletter about “The Good News About Amateur Radio.”



As the editor of your SKCC newsletter, my job (as I see it) is to report the activities of our club and to find stories and information that also tell “the good news about amateur radio.” The “K9YA Telegraph” is a great newsletter full of wonderful stories and adventures. The newsletter is free and easy to subscribe to. It would be well worth your while to “google” (now officially a verb) “K9YA Telegraph” and consider subscribing to this fine newsletter.

The following story appeared in the December 2014 issue of the K9YA Telegraph and appears with permission from the Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club and the K9YA Telegraph staff.

I sincerely hope you enjoy this wonderful story.

73 es “MX”

Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM

Christmas Cheer

By Kimberly L. Elmore, N5OP

Cold. Cold, windy, snowy, tired, and far, far from home. That’s all Lt. Gene Nielson could think of that Christmas Eve in 1944. How he hated this crummy war and the crummy Germans. Oh! For some hot chocolate, the glow of the family’s Christmas tree back in Okla-homa, and his cat, Peter, in his lap.

Medium height and bordering on skinny, Gene found the relentless cold bone-chilling. As he took his comms shift, he thought one of the best things about being a signalman was that the equipment always kept the room warm in winter. He’d just finished the last exchange with “MX” when, as if on cue, the door flew open and with it, a blast of cold and snow.

“Criminy! Close the door! Ya born in a barn, ya stupid sonofa...” He turned to glare angrily at the intruder. “Oh. Sorry, Reverend.” Chaplain Skaggs was older than even the CO, gentle, fit, and gray around the temples. The men loved him because he listened.

“That’s alright. And, as a matter of fact, I was born in a barn.” The chaplain’s eyes sparkled with mischief. “Well, it’s a barn now, anyway... Stayin’ warm, lieutenant?”

“Barely. More equipment would help. What brings you by, reverend?”

“Oh, well, I came by because you’ve got about the only warm place in camp.” The chaplain smiled again. Gene pulled his coat closer, and resettled the earphones so one ear was uncovered.

“If I’m bothering you...”

"No, no. I can talk with you and copy at the same time. I'll catch anything for us. I was just thinkin' about radio and Christmas Eve."

"Do you really like these radios, or is this your way of staying warm?"

"Both! I'm from Oklahoma, so I hate the cold. But, I've loved radios ever since I can remember. Call it a passion."

"A passion? Really?" Skaggs chided.

"Oh, yeah. When the war broke out, I was the chief engineer at KOME, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I filled a 'necessary' role at home and had a draft deferment. The station manager offered to extend it, but I refused and volunteered."

"A job like that must have been tough to give up."

"You bet! My family was pretty bad off during the Depression, so a good job is a treasure. Times were hard, so I went off to the NYA when I was 16 and..."

WPA and NYA

"NYA?"

"Yeah; National Youth Administration, part of the WPA. They offered to teach me radio, and I jumped at it. Earned my ham radio license and became W5JHJ. After I studied some more, Dad drove me to the FCC office in Dallas where I passed the First Class Radio-telephone and Second Class Radiotelegraph exams and... Say, do you really want to hear this?"

"Sure! Go on," urged Skaggs.

"Well, when I volunteered for the Signal Corps, I was commissioned as a 2nd 'louie right off 'cause of my experience. I skipped basic radio training, and went straight to the final test: tuning one of these babies," he patted the huge BC-610 cabinet to his left, "at 18 mc, the top of its frequency range, into a light bulb. It's not easy 'cause the load is reactive. Most guys fumble with it, but I'd done it before." Gene chuckled at the memory. "Anyway, the light bulb was too small and it lit up almost blue-white. The sergeant watching me wasn't ready. I can still hear him yell: 'OK! OK! Knock it off, already!' Must've been the only bulb they had. Anyway, I shipped out in Spring '43,"

Chaplain Skaggs thought. "And you were assigned here?"

"I'm lucky; it beats stringin' wire on a battlefield. I'm good at Morse code – CW – and fast, so they assigned me to company command."

"Hmmm. So, what is it about radio and Christmas Eve?"

Radio and Christmas Eve?

"I was just thinking that on Christmas Eve, I'd wish everyone Merry Christmas, 'MX' in CW. Haven't managed that for awhile..." Gene sighed and trailed off.

Chaplain Skaggs regarded the young man carefully. "Well, it's Christmas Eve again. You'll find gifts in the unlikeliest places." Skaggs got up and stretched his legs. "I'm warm enough now. Guess I'd better turn in. Good night, Gene. And, Merry Christmas."

"Thanks, Reverend. Merry Christmas to you, too." He readjusted his headphones and thought briefly about the Allied forces desperately fighting to close "the Bulge" in a Belgian forest called the Ardennes. He'd heard enough to be grateful he wasn't there.

Around 2300 local time, Gene finished copying General Eisenhower's Christmas greeting to the troops. Gene knew the operator at division HQ, another ham, so they both chatted briefly about home and family, ending the exchange with a sincere "MX OM." It wasn't quite the same, but it lifted their spirits. As Gene opened the latest available issue of "Stars and Stripes," dated November 12, 1944, for the third complete read-through, he heard a faint, slightly chirpy signal a bit off frequency.

Hmmm... It was a fast, crisp fist, but the signal was weak. He closed the TRANSMIT switch and sent a quick "?"

It sounded like “FWMK,” or perhaps “FWOK.” That was no Allied ID he knew. Again: “?” The QSB worked in his favor this time because he copied, quite clearly: “FW OM K”

German?

His mind raced. What’s this? The signal characteristics sounded...German. FW OM? If it was a German operator harassing him (a common occurrence) he wouldn’t bother with such decorum. His curiosity was peaked. “Let’s find out,” he thought.

“QRZ?” Might as well; he sent “OM,” after all.

“DE D4BVI FW OM K”

Call letters?! German ham call letters? Ham radio had become legal in Germany some-time in the 1930’s and, to his delight, he’d worked a couple of Germans early one morning on 20 m. Sadly, the war soon broke out and all European DX vanished. Shortly after, all DX was prohibited; then came Pearl Harbor and ham radio was silenced “for the duration.” What about the “FW OM” business? His high-school German came dimly back to him: FW could mean Fröhliche Weihnachten, German for “Merry Christmas.” But, why would a German wish an American Merry Christmas?

“D4BVI DE W5JHJ FB OM -- QTH? K” Why not? Might as well use my own call.

“GERMANY,” was the appropriately useless reply. But, there was more: “NAME HR THEO -- QTH? K”

“TNX -- OP GENE -- QTH FRANCE,” equally useless information to humor the guy. For no good reason, Gene added “WX HR COLD K”

“WX HR COLD -- AGE 26 -- THGS GO BDLY K”

What kind of ruse is this? But then again, maybe it wasn’t a ruse at all. Maybe it’s simply another homesick soldier. Or rather, ham. A cold, scared, lonely ham who wants to be home for Christmas.

“HW BDLY? K” was all he could think of.

“DEFEAT IS ONLY A MTTR OF TIME K”

Gene was mystified. While this could still be a con game, Gene had serious doubts. Nevertheless, he couldn’t continue the QSO as he had to change frequency.

“KEEP UR HEAD DOWN ES GL -- MX THEO SK”

“TNX -- ONE DAY WE WILL BE FRIENDS -- FW DR GENE SK”

A Christmas Eve QSO

That was it, over in a couple of minutes. This brief exchange—a Christmas Eve QSO—disturbed and touched him deeply. For the briefest moment, the enemy wasn’t a faceless monstrosity: the enemy was a ham, just like him. He decided that strange things happen in war. Maybe this was his gift – his Christmas Eve QSO. It was a busy night and he had little time to dwell on it. As the Battle of the Bulge and the Rhineland campaign ground on, the event was pushed from Gene’s mind.

VE Day and Occupation

VE Day came and went and Gene volunteered to be part of the occupation force stationed near Stuttgart, or at least what was left of it. As they progressed across Germany, he was amazed at the destruction. If I were on the receiving end of this, I’d sure take any help I could get. Now a Captain, he was in charge of division HQ communications. With the war over, his division was in relatively permanent digs, so most traffic was on land-line and radio became secondary. As a Signalman, he had to handle all of it and as a Captain, he had to administer all of it.

Many Germans, some ex-military, volunteered as civilians to assist in the rebuilding. Americans and Germans weren’t supposed to fraternize, but they had to work together and naturally became acquainted. Gene was asked one day in early June to help assess some surrendered German communications equipment with the help of a German ex-signalman.

Relaxed and cordial, the German was heavier and taller than Gene, with sandy hair and brown eyes. To Gene's surprise, he spoke impeccable English. The surrendered equipment had unusually intricate design, making it hard to repair in the field, but was otherwise routine.

"I'm sorry; no one introduced us. I'm Captain Gene Nielson."

The German signalman paused and seemed oddly attentive. "Gene? Excuse me for asking, but are you, by any chance, a radio amateur?"

"Yes," said Gene slowly, "I am. Why?"

"Are your call letters W5JHJ?"

"Yes. How did you...?"

"I am Theo! D4BVI! I was Leutnant Theo Blaufeld, a signal officer with my command staff. The Christmas Eve QSO!" said Theo, nodding excitedly. "You are Gene!"

"Well, I'll be...!" They shook hands as old friends might. After a pause, Gene admitted "You know, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for that QSO."

"Good! I'm pleased!"

"Really? Well..." Gene stumbled for the words. "I know it sounds corny, but all of a sudden, I knew that there were people, like me, on your side. I guess maybe I thought that I could help undo some of the war somehow if I stayed around a bit."

Theo thought a moment. "And I am truly grateful."

"Yeah, well, here we are." After another awkward silence, Gene couldn't restrain his curiosity.

"But, why did you contact me and then wish me a Merry Christmas?"

Theo's Ritual

"A personal ritual," said Theo, eyes twinkling. "Before the war, I used to make contacts every Christmas Eve and wish everyone Fröhliche Weihnachten. This was one of my favorite things to do. I even did it before amateur radio was legal in Germany."

"That's amazing! I used to do the same thing! In fact, I'd been thinking about it when I heard you. Still, why did you tell me that things were going badly?"

"Well," chuckled Theo, "they were!" Then, more seriously "We are not all Nazis, you see? Strangely, I began to see in my country's defeat its only hope for a future. It was the only way we could be rid of the Nazis. They were... Terrible. I know this especially because..." He stopped short, and winced. "I handled the messages. Even so, I did my job and served my comrades and my country."

"Besides," and Theo smiled, "I was taught that whenever I transmit, I represent Germany because radio has no boundaries. Even in war, I must consider appearances."

Gene was quiet for a moment. "It's funny you say that, because I was taught the same thing. But, I have to admit that I, um... Expected a trick. I've certainly been taunted and jammed by you guys."

"Yes, and I may have done some of it," laughed Theo. "To be honest, I was nervous, too. You are the only American I've done that with. But it was Christmas Eve, a special time. I heard you and the other American send each other MX and well..." Theo trailed off. "Did you know that once, during the Great War, on Christmas the fighting stopped and there were no enemies, only soccer teams? The men even exchanged gifts across the trenches. If we cannot set aside our differences for a single day, we are truly doomed."

Family and War

Through pleasant small talk, Gene learned Theo's family was northeast of the small village of Fellbach, famous for its winemaking, and that Theo's parents owned a small vineyard and winery there. Theo finished with "And then I volunteered for the Wehrmacht. It was the safest thing to do."

“What? How could volunteering to fight be safe?”

“Well... Another time, perhaps.” Theo abruptly changed the subject: “Some day, I would like to be on the air again, but it will be difficult because the Nazis took all the equipment when the war started.”

“Most of ours went to the war effort, too. We got paid a little for it, but I’ll have to rebuild my station. There will probably be tons of war surplus equipment that should work, though. A lot of the stuff the Army uses is patterned after ham gear.”

Theo smiled ruefully, looking at the ruined German equipment. “I think there will be little surplus German equipment. But, I will manage.” The small talk continued, forging their friendship.

August brought VJ Day, and with the war now completely over, Gene learned that the amateur 2 1/2 m band had already reopened. In November, Gene quietly learned that some of the HF ham bands might be open by Christmas. It’s not even Thanksgiving and 10 m is already open, he thought. He missed ham radio and so began working on a way to get back on the air. There were no guarantees, but it looked like 20 m would be available before Christmas. With a little effort, Gene was granted authority to operate with his own call, signed with a /D at the end. He got a five-day pass centered on Christmas and put his plans into motion.

Already, time was short. On the 18th, over a beer with Theo, he idly said “Y’know, I can’t go home for Christmas. I know that times are hard, but do you think maybe I could visit the Blaufeld estate instead? I could help out with anything that needed to be done...”

“Times are difficult, but the little region around my parent’s estate seems to have escaped the worst of it. We are not on any main roads and so anyone wanting to find the area must look for it. We, and a few of the neighboring estates, refused to use any of the Nazi’s slave labor, we helped a few as much as was safe, and so suffered little from retribution when Germany collapsed. I’m sure my parents would happily welcome you,” replied Theo, smiling. Plans were made on the spot.

New Gear and a Visit

Gene’s mind was now racing: all the equipment had to fit in a jeep, and it had to be manageable by only two men. The receiver was easy: the Army’s BC-312 was heavy, but a fine piece of gear that also tuned to 18 MHz. The transmitter was a problem. While wonderfully tough and reliable, at over 500 lbs, the BC-610 was too big and bulky. The Army had little of equivalent quality that tuned above 13 MHz. Digging through equipment listings, he came across a new transmitter: an ART-13, used by the Army Air Force. A small 100 W transmitter tuning 2-18 mc powered by a 12 V dynamotor, it had but one drawback: it was used on B-29s, and there were none in Europe nor would there be in the near future. Now what?

“Yeah, I got ten of ‘em back in, ah,” Sgt. Roy Inman, a gruff Boston “southie,” paused chomping his trade-mark un-lit cigar to check a fat clipboard, “Yeah. October. Outta the blue. Never ordered ‘em.” Then he brightened: “Here’s the deal: you take whatever you want. And keep it. I know nuttin’ about it, see? I already got enough surplus to supply another war.” As the cigar wandered to the other side of his mouth, he added “But that don’t go for the jeep!”

One last check verified that everything worked flawlessly. On Saturday the 22nd, he carefully loaded the equipment into the back of a jeep, covering it with a tarp. In the passenger seat, he cushioned a J-44 straight key and a J-36 “bug” in a towel. He barely slept that night: he was a kid at Christmas again!

Greeted warmly at the modest Blaufeld estate, Gene was served a meal as he hadn’t had in... Well, he couldn’t remember. The Blaufelds obviously dug deep for such a lavish meal. The wine and Christmas decorations were right out of a fairy tale, along with the marzipan and chocolate dessert. To show he was truly welcome, their spoiled cat, Rudy, curled up in Gene’s lap as they sat before the fire, sipping an estate-bottled Eiswein.

The Blaufeld Story

Unfolding with the evening was the Blaufeld story. Theo's Great Grandmother was from a well-to-do Jewish family, while his Great-Grandfather was from landed nobility. The two met and fell desperately in love. But, as she was forbidden to marry outside her faith, and he to marry outside his class, they eloped to the tiny town of Fellbach. While penniless, their love was sincere and so they were married by the local priest.

Lightning ignited the town hall a few nights later, destroying all official records. Reconstructing what they could, neither the priest nor the burgemeister saw fit to replace all the details of the Blaufeld's marriage. They put in a few good words with a kind, old vintner, childless and long-since a widower. He took them in to help with his small estate and came to love them as his own children. Upon his death, all was bequeathed to them thus founding the Blaufeld Estate.

When the Nazis rose to power, Theo's family hid all evidence of their past in the cellar, yet lived in constant fear of discovery. Now Gene understood why Theo considered volunteering for the Wehrmacht safer than remaining with his family: as a patriotic German soldier with no officially-traceable Jewish ties, no one would question his, or his family's, heritage.

After dinner had settled, Gene was certain he'd made the proper choice. "Theo? I need your help with something out here."

The night was clear and cold. Snow sparkled on the ground and in tree branches like diamonds in the moonlight. Gene pulled back the canvas tarp, stiff with cold, and turned a flashlight on the contents.

"What...?"

All the Christmases to Come

"Well, Theo, you remember all that surplus radio gear I said I'd get? I got some. Ham radio is legal again in the US, and I have permission to operate in Germany using my call with a /D at the end. Twenty meters officially opened a couple of weeks ago and I thought you might like to try it with me. It should be no problem to get all this set up tomorrow, in time for Christmas Eve. We can power it from the jeep until something better is worked out.

"But, there's one other thing," he said, reaching inside the jeep, unwrapping the keys and handing them to Theo. "I've been told, in no uncertain terms, not to bring any of this stuff back. Since I don't want to get in trouble with my supply sergeant, I guess it'll have to stay with you, if that's OK. Fröhliche Weihnachten, Theo."

Reprinted with permission of the *K9YA Telegraph* (<http://www.k9ya.org>)

Editor...I hope you enjoyed the story as much as I did. How about SKCC starting a new tradition as "Theo" did and during the holidays we sign every QSO with "MX" for Merry Christmas or "HH" for Happy Holidays is more appropriate for you. It would be fine tradition to carry on. Besides, if "MX" started to appear in QSOs or on the reflector I would know who reads "The Rag Chew!" Ha! Seriously, you really should check out the "K9YA Telegraph" on the web and enjoy the wonderful writing in the newsletter.

Don't forget to send pictures and notes of any fine Christmas gifts for your station Santa brings you. Make all of us envious of your new gear!

November SKS 2020



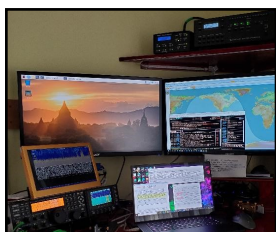
Tough night tonight. was on the 2 hours and only got contacts the 2nd 30 minutes. no one hearing me thru pileups. ah well. Plenty of activity which is great. Happy Thanksgiving to all my fellow Hams. Stay Safe, be well and Wash Your Hands. 73, Bud AA8CL



This month was a lot more fun (less stressful) than October since I'm starting to get the hang of it a bit more. Mostly worked 40m and used a cootie for all contacts. Had a great time! Thanks for the new numbers and all the QSOs! 73, Jon AD5RX



Only had a few minutes to work, but, as always enjoyable. Got to try out a new key, that arrived just in time for SKS, a W1SFR Torsion Bar Horizontal Straight Key, TBHSK. Very nice! Happy Thanksgiving. Stay well. IC-7300 at 100w to a 40m sloped delta loop. 73, Bob K3ZGA



Worked 40 and 80 both seemed poor. My noise level was not that high but many signals well into noise with QSB. Just could not copy many, sorry. Running 1KW to Steppir DB18. 73, Brian KF6C



73, ORESTES CL30R



40m was a wash. 80m was doing great. Had to cut it short tonight. Always a fun event. 73, Al K9FW



40 was busy. 80 so-so. Never heard k3MSB. Always great to work the new numbers and old friends. Happy Thanksgiving to all. 73, AL N4ow



Could not find our Bonus Station but did contact our SKS Manager (tnx Rich). I ran 50w from my old IC-7000 into a vertical using a Lionel J38 that was recently gifted to me by a good friend and member. Fun event as always....73, Curt K2CWM South Jersey



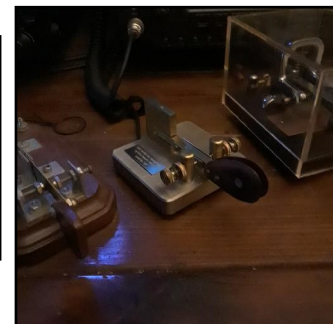
Opened the show with KS7KCC on 80 & then moved to 160 ..finished up on 40 working KP4Q-Virgilo..Lots of QRN up here on Lake Erie tonight but a very nice turnout for the sprint...Wishing everyone in SKCC a safe Holiday Season 73, Larry K8TEZ



Ted,K8AQM and I (Randy,N8KQ) my clubcall, KS7KCC as multi Ops. I ran 40 which was long es noisy. Pipeline to FL all nite with big sigs...Even worked CL30R, both ways, 5nn.. Ted also did great on 80. made a run to 160 with 10 mins left es worked 3 stations there. Thank You everyone fer the Q's es Tnx Ted fer playing radio this evening. 73, Cw KS7KCC



Once again it was an honor to be a bonus station. I think this was the only time in an SKS in which I made no contacts on 20M. I heard a faint W6 station and that was it. 40M was very long. 80M was the money band! I had a great time! 73, Mark K3MSB



20 was dead and 80 was S9 noise, did an hour on 40. Signals were pretty good. Did some S/P and CQing. Got ON for DX. Icom 7410 @ 50 watts and a doublet at 30ft. Used my W1SFR cootie key. 73, Allan KA5TJS



I do not do this Sprint very often. It was fun but 40 was strange. Tried out my new FT891. Nice little rig. Used my Vibroplex Standard Bug. Happy Thanksgiving everyone! 73, Scott N3JJT

November SKS 2020 II



Tough conditions on 40 - my only band! Maybe its just the new qth! Anyway, I had a great time, as always, working many familiar stations! Happy Thanksgiving! 73, Ken N8KR/4



My Cootie Keys (one on left is hooked up as a paddle). Love my Cooties & Can't decide which I like better, so I'm constantly shifting back and forth between the W1SFR and the Begali. They're both great! 73, Rich W4RQ Had the pleasure of working W1DV, W3NP, K4BAI and for the first time since Curt got his new callsign K2CWM. Thanks Guys! 73, Rich W4RQ



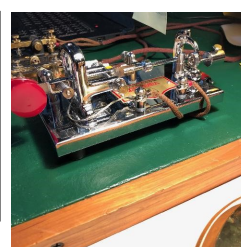
As always, an enjoyable evening. I spent an hour trying to QSO with Randy and make a 40m contact, JUST 1!!! on 40, no soap! Did get Ted on 80 & 160. Salve for the pain! TNX! to all for the contacts. Enjoy your family this Thanksgiving .. 72, Steve NQ8T



Had planned on 40 the first hour then shifting to 80 for final hour - but condx on 40 were abysmal. Spent pretty much the whole time on 80; signals were down but filled up my log fairly well. Good to hear the activity despite poor propagation. 73, Dave W1DV



Condx were not all that good. 40 was long and had 9 contacts there. 80 was the best band for me but it was a bit noisy and crowded. 160 was very good but not much activity there and I had only 3 Q's there but the highlight was working new member Dom WA1AYY Nr 23358. Used my Vibroplex Presentation circa 1956 for all contacts. 73 de West Virginia Dave W3NP



I'm just learning to use my Vibroplex bug. I used my bug in this SKS - first time used in a contest. In the photo you can see the Vibroplex vari-speed shaft passing through the damper arch with the weight sticking out beyond the base. I can get down to about 10 WPM with the weight all the way out. I just mounted the vari-speed shaft upside down with the thumb screw at the bottom and it passes through the arch with no interference. The arrangement is very handy because it uses the standard weight that came with the bug. At 10 WPM I can send resonable CW without messing up the dits and dahs all the time or getting too many dits in a row etc.. 73 Richard VA3RSA



Left for Dead, Twice, RadioShack Gets Another Shot Online



RadioShack, a fixture at the mall for decades, has been pulled from brink of death, again. It's the most prized name in the basket of brands that entrepreneur investors Alex Mehr and Tai Lopez have scooped up since the coronavirus pandemic bowled over the U.S. retail sector and sent a number of chains into bankruptcy protection. Mehr and Lopez plan to make RadioShack competitive again, this time online, rather than on street corners or in malls. However, unlike RadioShack's glory years, it's Amazon's world now. The big question is: How much value does the RadioShack brand have when the prized target audience of younger consumers may have never owned a radio, let alone stepped inside a RadioShack store?

News Flash!



← back

Notice

Dear Friends Of Universal Radio,

Time waits for no one, and that includes Barbara and myself. We have decided to retire and our current location in Worthington will close on November 30, 2020. Even though the store is closing we will fulfill all existing customer orders and have a large amount of inventory to close-out. The Universal Radio website will be maintained for the foreseeable future to sell this remaining stock, publications and some select products. Unfortunately the lack of a store front showroom will preclude us from carrying some manufacturers' products.

I am very fortunate to have been in the radio business for over 50 years, 13 at Radio Shack and 37 at Universal Radio. We have met many wonderful people along the journey who have supported me personally as well as Universal Radio. It has been a privilege to have a continuous career in the fascinating field of radio since 1969.

Please accept our sincere "Thank You" for your support of Universal Radio for these many years, and for the months to come.

Our new address for correspondence and mail order is below. This is not a store front.

Universal Radio Inc.
752 N. State St. Unit 222
Westerville, OH 43082

Phone: 614 866-4267

Thank you.

73,

Fred Osterman N8EKU
Barbara Osterman KC8VWI

In the 1950's there were a plethora of radio gear manufacturers and also many amateur radio suppliers. Manufacturer names such as Collins Radio, National Radio, RCA, Hammarlund, Hallicrafters, Mosely Electronics, Electro Voice, Cosmo Electronics, Multi-Products, Wescott Radio, Vibroplex, Groth Manufacturing, Lettine Instruments were only a few of the name brands that even appeared in television ads of the mid 1950's. Distributors of the many manufacturers included Walter Ashe Radio, Barry Electronics, Van Sickel Radio Supply, World Radio Labs,

Amateur Electronic Supply, Evans Radio, and Hargis Austin Electronics. They were just a few of the names routinely appearing in amateur radio journals such as QST and CQ. If you were a ham, no vacation was complete if your travel map did not include stops at stores along the major routes scattered nationwide. In the 1966 release of the movie, "The Glass Bottom Boat", early television icon Arthur Godfrey (K4LIB) starred in the movie as a boat owner on a Florida lake obviously centered around Florida's tourist attraction at Cypress Gardens called Glass Bottom Boats tours. His role was that of a wealthy retired tycoon who spent his days on his boat indulging in mint julips and talking to other boaters on the lake using his amateur radio gear.

In the late 1960's many of the players begin to close their doors. Stalwarts such as Heathkit were showing signs of attrition. Big names such as GE, Motorola, RCA, Tung Sol etc were retiring their amateur radio marketing efforts.

Then in the late 1960's the death knell for domestically produced amateur equipment appeared in the form of a radio brand called Yaesu. Chatter among many amateurs indicated literal lust for one of the first Yaesu HF offerings. Not long after Kenwood entered the US amateur market and later Icom. Japan had begun to shed the negative aura of the label, "Made In Japan". And the domestic amateur gear producers seemingly were unable to compete with the new Big 3's esthetic appealing products that did not turn off the XYL.

Circa 1982 Heathkit announced their closure. They had produced many kits and the amateur world was flooded with kit designators such as DX-100, SB-100, SB-303 and dozens of other kits that made amateur radio feasible for many financially challenged operators. Tokyo's Akihabara electronics district had become the new amateur mecca for all things ham.

By the mid 1980's many of the above named amateur radio suppliers had closed. A few new names did appear such as Electronic Equipment Bank in Vienna, Virginia, but even the traditional electronic parts jobbers were fading away as the technology landscape moved rapidly into the age of computers.

In the late 1990's the better known names in Amateur Radio were down to Electronic Equipment Bank, Ham Radio Outlet and Amateur Electronic Supply. Electronic Equipment Bank (EEB was the better known name of the business) had morphed into a leviathan provider of commercial and amateur gear. Their local storefront was a regional draw with ops driving hundred of miles to peruse the toys displayed on the shelves. The owner and his girl friend understood marketing it seemed. When you walked into the store the displays were bright, clean and the place was well organized. Then one day federal agents descended on the store and the owner's home. With the owner snarled in a debacle the store was shuttered. Amateur Electronic Supply and Ham Radio Outlet were now the two major players. Other stores were still out there but were mostly single store operations. Fortunately the small operators continued to carve a niche that allowed some local access to amateur stores for ops in diverse localities.

In July 2016, after 59 years of successful operation and continuing expansion the owner of AES announced the closing of their stores. Located originally in Milwaukee with subsequent stores opened in Las Vegas, Orlando Florida, Clearwater, Florida and other spots the dynasty of a father and son closed at the end of the month. A 1960 ad for AES is shown below.



We are now left with Ham Radio Outlet, DX Engineering and a few other providers for our needs.

Best wishes to Fred and Barbara Osterman.

Editor... Thanks to Steve NQ8T for this article and information.

Internet CW QSOs with VBand

Byon Garrabrant, N6BG & David Steffen, W6DS

We are excited to announce the availability of VBand, a website that enables an easy and fun way to have a live CW QSO with others via the internet, and improve your CW skills. By surfing to the URL <https://hamradio.solutions/vband>, users can send Morse code messages using either their computer keyboards, or with a USB adapter use an actual iambic paddle or straight key. The site supports multiple virtual channels to allow for several simultaneous conversations, and can optionally decode both sent and received code to easily readable text. By watching the decoded text, a user can see if they are sending clean code, making VBand a great tool to practice and improve CW sending. VBand provides a way to experience CW without having to buy a radio, install an antenna, deal with noise or fading, or even have a license.

Before coming together to create VBand, we worked together as software engineers in the mid 80's, were both licensed a few years later, and became active on VHF and UHF, but not on HF or CW. We wanted to upgrade to Extra in order to give back to the hobby as VEs, so started training to copy 20 WPM code, a requirement at that time for the upgrade. As part of our training, we developed hardware and software to enable us to send, receive, and decode modulated CW over our dual band FM HTs, at speeds up to 80WPM. Eventually we passed our 20 WPM, got our Extras, and then proceeded to forget most of what we had learned about CW over the next 30 years.

Last year we decided to give HF a try with FT8, and both enjoyed earning WAS on 20 and 40 meters. Soon after the Covid lockdown, we decided to try some HF kit building. We started by building the Phaser FT8 transceiver over virtual build sessions on zoom. That process was enjoyable and successful, so we did it again, this time with the QCX+ CW transceiver kits, again over a few zoom sessions. About halfway through that build we remembered that we didn't really remember CW anymore, and were going to require a lot of practice before we were going to be able to have an actual QSO. We had also learned through our FT8 experiments that we rarely had quality propagation between our homes in Central AZ and Southern CA, so over the air practice together was going to be tricky.


Since we were both software guys, we decided to build a system to let us practice CW together over the internet. We decided it would be best to make it web browser based, so we wouldn't have to deal with builds for multiple operating systems, or installing applications. Just surf to a website, and start pounding keyboard keys as a straight key, and the other guy could hear what you sent real-time. We also implemented an Iambic keyer on the site, so one keyboard key could be used for dits, and another for dahs. We quickly learned that a keyboard is not nearly as comfortable as an actual paddle or straight key, so we designed a USB adapter to allow us to plug in an actual paddle or key, and that proved to be a better way to send code.

We had created a website a year ago to share a Yaesu Fusion receiving project we built together. We chose the name Ham Radio Solutions for our projects and VBand was a perfect second project to add to that website, <https://hamradio.solutions>. We shared VBand with a few local friends, but since we knew almost nothing about sending CW, we needed to find some experienced CW ops. We learned about the Long Island CW Club from a ham radio podcast, so we contacted them to see if they would like to use VBand to help their CW students. The site has been very well received and used by about a hundred LICW members over the last month. After the success working with LICW, we decided we were ready to share VBand with an even larger group, so we recently joined SKCC, and offered to share VBand with all SKCC members.


Getting on VBand is very simple. You don't even need an account on the site. Just point your web browser to <https://hamradio.solutions/vband> . We have found that Chrome and Firefox work best. Enter your name and/or callsign, choose a channel, and listen or send to all other users in that channel. Each user in the channel will be able to hear and send to every other user. After each user you will see what they have sent, decoded to text, and the speed that they are sending, both as character speed, and effective Farnsworth WPM. There are also buttons to hide the sender's decoded text and to mute the audio from that sender. Each sender in the channel will have a slightly different code tone to help distinguish them as you listen. In addition to decoding others, VBand also decodes what you send, which makes a great way to practice and see how clean your fist is.

Ham Radio Solutions Virtual CW Band


Channels Channel 1 Settings About

N6ZAV-MARTY 25.0/18.1 WPM 

DE N6ZAV **SK** EE HI BYON ! **BK** G BA D H SO FAR **BT** FAILED SMO G
CHECK WITH BMW **BT** H I N O S **BT** MIGHT NEED N EW CAT **BT** H W * DAY?
BK RRHIDAVID **BT** LAST NIGHT IWOKED DAVID IN KUWAIT ON V Z BAND
BT CANT WAIT R FOR MY QSL CARD ! HI HI **BT** GO BYON BGBK OK TNX
FER THE QSO GUYS ! TALK SOON 73 N 6BG ES W6 DS DE N6ZAV **SK** EE

N6BG - BYON 18.0/12.8 WPM 

HI MARTY HOW IS YOUR DAY ? K I AM B DOI NG WELR L . JUST
BEEN WORKING MON VBAND **BT** H OW R U DAUVE * KOGK M NOT TOO MUC H
2 ADDGOOD TO SEE YOU BOTH73 N6ZAV ES W6DS DE NBEGB K

W6DS DAVID CA 15.0/8.6 WPM 

K .I NEED TO GOTOO . 73W6DS **SK**

There are 4 tabs along the top of the VBand page. The first gives some basic instructions, plus lists all the channels supported by VBand, along with which users are currently in each channel. You can return to this list to select a different channel any time. The second tab shows all the users in your current channel, plus includes a text area scratchpad. The scratchpad is not used by VBand, so you are free to use it however you want. Some users like to copy what they decode from other stations, and others prefer to use it to type out what they want to say before they send it.

The third tab is for settings. The most popular ones are used to set your name and callsign, select straight key or iambic modes, set your keyer sending speed in WPM, sidetone frequency, and enter "Dummy Load Mode" which does not send your code out to others, but still lets you listen to what they are sending. It's a great way to practice. The last tab gives an email to contact us, plus provides information about the USB paddle / key interface.

VBand software has 2 parts. The web based front end, coded in Javascript, and the server back end, coded in C. The back end maintains a list of which users are in each channel, and echoes any received data to everyone else in the channel. The front end handles the playing of the audio, decoding to text, implementing the iambic keyer, and allowing the user to select the channels. It was important to us to accurately reproduce the fist of the sender to everyone receiving, so we measure and replay each mark and space independently in milliseconds.

We learned that having the software decode others is a bit of a crutch when you are working to improve your own decoding, so in addition to allowing users to disable decoding on other stations, we have created some channels that do not allow automatic decoding of any stations, except your own sending. We have learned that there can be multiple QSOs going on in each channel, simply by muting all but the station you want to copy. We have had successful users running on Windows, Mac, Linux, and even Android phones. On a small number of computers, we see that the delay between pressing a key and hearing the sound can be too much to send reliably, but in those cases, we've found that using an external keyer or sidetone generator will hide the latency problems.

We are excited to invite the SKCC members to try out the site. We are always open to questions, feedback, suggestions for improvements, and bug reports. We can be reached at support@hamradio.solutions.

De Face Book

00997	11/18/2020	21:08:14Z	K4ZDH	Riley
00996	11/18/2020	21:13:36Z	W2ITT	Rob
00997	11/18/2020	21:19:24Z	KC9UL	curt
00998	11/18/2020	21:26:07Z	NN9K	Peter
00999	11/18/2020	21:31:15Z	N3KRX	Jerry
01000	11/19/2020	03:50:22Z	K9DRP	don

Members in DB: 23,326 (Click to Update)

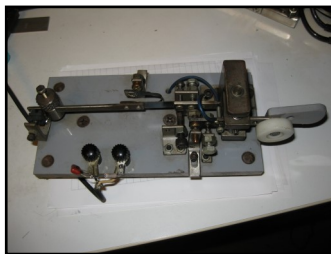
No Radio Connected

Log File: C:\Users\James\Documents\HamRadio\SKCCLog

Hit a milestone today. Made my 1000th all time CW qso. Courtesy of K9DRP. Vast majority made on my TS-520 and homebrew dipole, and maybe a handful of field day qsos made on a TS-130. Here's to the next 1000 73, Jim KD8YQX



I am also a member of SOWP, QCWA, Flying Pigs CW Club, & A1 Ops. Licensed for 73 Years. Cartoonist for NAQCC Newsletter RSGB, ARRL.... 73, Dick W9CBT



Hello, Everyone. I will join Bug Roundup. (short time

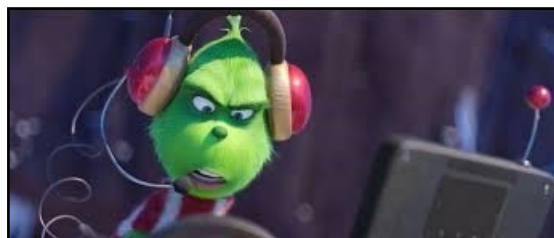
working) PSE QRS 🤪 The adjustment is perfect but my bug is dirty.... 73, Take JR2IUB



BYOTA for some WES on a sunny morning. 73, Ted K3R-TA



Madness! At Canadian Tire, you can buy a KFC-scented fireplace log for \$20. For \$20, you can buy a ten-piece bucket of KFC chicken - you'll get the smell, you'll get to eat the chicken and the bucket will burn in your fireplace. What kind of eejit would buy the log? 73, Dave VE9CB



Merry Christmas and Season's Greetings!