Computer Logging?

Kevin der Kinderen K4VD SKCC 605C

A Few Thoughts

I had a conversation with an SKCC member on the telephone last night. The discussion turned to computers and their use with ham radio. He mentioned he began using his computer much more since joining SKCC to keep track of messages but he still did not feel comfortable using it for logging and other uses around the shack. We didn't explore the reasons for avoiding computer loggers but I'll assume it is one of the following:

•Mixing computers and ham radio just doesn't appeal to him. He may have the feeling it just doesn't fall into the tradition of ham radio.

•His computer is old and fragile and may not run the newer logging software.

•He's never been shown the benefits of computer logging.

•He has had no guidance in the initial setup of a logger and is not aware of what is available.

These are just guesses and none may apply to his specific circumstances but I thought they would give a good basis for discussion.

Is using a computer somehow against the traditions of ham radio? I don't believe so. Hams have been lauded since the beginning for their technical innovations. Technical innovation is our tradition! We have discovered new modes and new techniques from the first time a key was closed on a spark gap transmitter by a ham. FCC Rules 97.1 Basis and purpose clearly states advancement of the radio art, advancing skills in communications and technical phases of the art, expansion of trained operators, technicians and electronics experts is the basis of the Amateur Radio Service. It is not difficult to extend this to tools that make on-air operation easier and more effective.

Computer logging (and by extension, any use of a computer in the shack) fits nicely into the basis and purpose of ham radio. Logging becomes more accurate, information is available at your fingertips by using search features, on-air experiences are documented and readily available for review so techniques can be evaluated and adjusted over time. In short, computer logging represents an advancement in one phase of Amateur Radio operation and therefore could be embraced by those who agree

with the FCC's stated basis and purpose.

Most of the software available today for logging expects fairly recent computer hardware and operating systems. However, computers were originally built to organize and analyze data. Therefore, it shouldn't be difficult to perform logging functions with any computer that still operates. Modern logging software provides conveniences such as call-sign lookup, QSL label printing, automatic display of previous contacts with a station and many other features. However, a log can simply be a text file. Most computers, regardless of the age, have built-in text editing programs. These programs have basic logging features such as the ability to search previous QSOs for information. If your computer has a spreadsheet or database program, these can make wonderful loggers with extended capabilities that you can include as you gain more knowledge. Based on this, if you still have a Commodore 64 hanging around in the closet, you have a computer logger available.

One of my favorite features of computer logging is the ability to look up previous contacts. Before I started using computer logging I maintained my log in the ARRL Logbook. It was fun to flip through the pages and read some of my notes from previous years. However, this breaks down in real-time operations. Because I hang out on certain parts of the band, it is not uncommon for me to have multiple contacts over the years with the same hams. With my computer logger, all my notes from previous contacts are immediately available. I can look over past notes and continue on with the conversation. This is in contrast to the way I used to operate where every QSO was independent of all previous QSOs. Every QSO was a first meeting. I might vaguely remember that I chatted with someone before but the details of that conversation are lost. Basically, I was meeting this ham for the first time again.

With a computer logger, I have a thread of our previous conversations. For example, I know that I first met Tex while he was sailing in the Gulf of Mexico. He is now hanging out in the Buede River in Georgia for the winter before making the trip further north. I know he is considering INRAD filters for his TS-2000 and will probably ask him about them in our next chat. I know Tex just started using a Vibroplex bug and that it is kind of difficult to use when he's out in the open sea. My first chat with Tex was back in March 2005. I would never have remembered these details without my computer logger. Tex has become a friend by any definition of the word thanks to keeping my log on the computer. I simply enter his call and I can

see notes from all previous conversations.

To me, the ability to recall previous conversations is the most important advantage of using a computer logger.

Modern computer loggers have many other features that make on-air operation more enjoyable. For example, if you are a DXer, some logs interface with spotting clusters and your rig. A click on an interesting spot can set the frequency, split and mode of your rig to the DX station. This quickly sets you up to jump on the DX station improving chances for success. I can come up with many other examples of how a computer logger can make life easier. The logger does not become the focus of my operation. It takes care of many of the small details so I can spend more productive time on the air.

As mentioned, a computer logger can simply be a text editor (Microsoft Notepad), a custom spreadsheet or database, or a full-featured computer logging program made specifically for the type of operation you choose. I have used a number of loggers in the past two years and have settled on two that I find useful depending on the circumstances. For day-to-day operation, I use DXKeeper, part of the free DXLab suite. For contesting, I use the free N1MM log. It is finely tuned for each contest and removes nearly all of the logging burden so I concentrate on making the contacts fast and furious.

After months of use, I find DXKeeper to be intuitive. In the beginning this was not the case. It can be a complex piece of software and if not approached properly it can be very frustrating. (I'm using DXKeeper as an example, I've had the same experience with other logging programs.) The best approach is to keep things very simple at first. Don't get bogged down in all the features. Simply install it, read a little about how to use it and start logging. As you go along, you discover additional features and can make use of them. The N1MM logger is a little more of a challenge as I contest only a few times a year; each time I have to relearn the program. In this case, I start it up a day or so before the contest and practice with it. The couple of hours of preparation pays big dividends when the contest begins.

This short article is intended to help put computer logging into context. It is just another tool, not unlike a straight key, interconnecting cables or the radio itself. Computer logs remove some of the burdens of a ham radio operator so they can focus more on the QSO. Anything that allows me to concentrate more on meeting people and keeping up with my friends is a welcome tool.

Editor's note: Amateurs today have access to a myriad of computer logging software. The choices can be formidable and dizzying. A Google search for "Amateur Radio Logging Software" yields several pages of hits, most are free.

Cushcraft Sold

MANCHESTER, N.H. -- A Manchester company that makes high-performance antennas has been sold to a U.K.-based firm for more than $89 million in cash.

Cushcraft Corp., once the world's largest producer of ham and short-wave radio antennas, will become part of the Laird Group, officials said.

About 100 Cushcraft employees are based in Manchester and another 20 elsewhere.

The Laird Group employs 12,500 people globally.

Getting It Just Right

Part two of a four part series describing how to set up your keying devices. Parts three and four will follow over the next two months and will address *paddles and Bencher paddles.*

Reprinted with permission from Marshall Emm, N1FN. Morse Express http://www.mtechnologies.com/index.html

These instructions use simple, generally familiar examples of equipment types and are designed to help you find the adjustment that suits you best. What you are looking for ultimately is a particular feel, and that will vary from person to person. Not all keys and paddles offer the same adjustments, or even use the same terminology, but hopefully this will be enough to get you started and to illustrate the general principles.

The Bug (Semiautomatic Key)

"Bug" is a term used to describe an automatic or semi-automatic Morse key, that is, a mechanical device which will automatically generate a series of dots and/or dashes. The most common varieties, like the Hi-Mound BK-100 shown above and the most familiar of the many GHD and Vibroplex models, are semi-automatic. This means the dots are formed automatically, while the dashes are formed manually. There have been many bugs with fully automatic dashes as well as dots, and the author owns an early THREE-paddle bug which had automatic dots and dashes, and a separate manual dash paddle for "long dashes" used in landline telegraphy.

Virtually all of the bugs which you are likely to encounter work the same way. When the lever is moved to one side, a pendulum is allowed to swing back and forth, making repeated closure of a pair of contacts to generate dots. The oscillation (and generation of dots) stops when the lever is released. The speed of the oscillation is controlled by the position of the weight on the pendulum arm. The closer the weight is to the pivot, the faster the pendulum will move.

When the lever is moved to the other side, it closes the dash contacts, acting very much like a straight key turned on its side.

Naming of Parts

Over the years the critical parts of a bug have had a lot of names, but I've tried to use the most commonly understood ones as shown in the diagram. You won't find exactly the same parts on every instrument, but usually you can figure out what does what if you understand the basics. And at this point I'd like to thank Bill, W1HIJ, for kindly providing a lot of back-

ground information for this article, along with some judicious quotes from an Army Tech Manual (TM11-459, 1945). I'll be paraphrasing those instructions, along with a simple method for testing adjustment using a VOM which Bill also described. In describing the parts there are a couple places where I'll show the name used in the Army Tech Manual in parentheses.
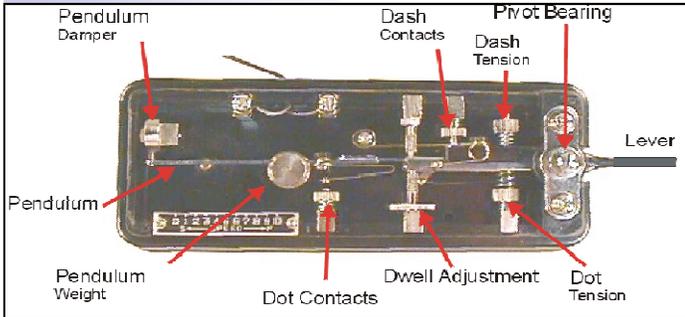
Hi-Mound BK-100

The Lever. The lever on a bug is usually split, that is, what appears to be a single control at the front of the bug actually drives two separate levers at the back of the device. The dash part of the lever is short and simple, while the dot part is more complex, being attached to the pendulum.

Bearing Tension Adjustment Screw. The lever his held in place on a pivot bearing, and there is usually a screw to adjust the tension so that the lever swings freely in both directions, without any sloppiness.

Arm Tension Adjustment Screws. These adjust the tension of springs which press against the lever to return it to the center or resting position.

Dash contacts. The adjustment screw adjusts the spacing between the contacts, which determines how far the lever must move when making dashes.

Dot Contacts. The screw adjusts the spacing between the contacts, which is quite different from the spacing on the dash contacts. The spacing here, in conjunction with the dwell screw, determines the "shaping" or weight of the dots.

Dot Stop Screw (back stop screw). This screw adjusts the resting position of the lever, so that oscillation is stopped by the damper.

Damper (deadener). The damper is a flexible device for instantaneously absorbing the momentum of the pendulum so as to stop (damp) the oscillation. In the case of the BK-100 (illustrated) it is a loose metal sleeve on a shaft. Other bugs use rubber "bumpers."

Pendulum (reed). The pendulum consists of an arm along which a weight can be moved. The position of the weight determines the "moment" of the pendulum, or the speed at which is oscillates.

Dwell Adjustment Screw (front stop screw). This screw adjusts the width of the pendulum's arc, and to the extent that the pendulum moves farther than is necessary for an instantaneous meeting of the dot contacts, the contacts stay closed (or dwell)

until the pendulum swings back.

Procedure For Adjusting the Bug

1. Back out the two lever tension adjustment screws so that the lever moves freely to left and right.

2. Check and adjust the pivot bearing tension. The lever should move freely left and right, with no up and down sloppiness. If it requires adjustment, loosen the locknut and the screw until the lever feels sloppy. Tighten the bearing screw until the slightest amount of friction is felt as you move the arm, then back the bearing screw off until the friction just disappears. Tighten the lock nut.

3. Adjust the dash contacts as desired for comfortable movement of the dash lever. If you aren't used to a bug and don't know exactly what you are looking for, start with about 1/16 of an inch. Adjust the dash tension screw to a comfortable level of tension.

4. Adjust the resting position of the pendulum. Do this by adjusting the dot stop screw until the end of the pendulum just lightly makes contact with the damper.

5. Adjust the pendulum weight to a position appropriate for the speed you want to set the bug up for. If you have not used a bug before you will probably want to set the weight near the end of the pendulum arm, for relatively slow speed.

6. Adjust the dwell screw so that there is a small gap between the end of the screw and the side of the arm when you swing the lever to the dot side and hold it. This gap will vary significantly depending on the position of the screw along the length of the arm or pendulum. On the BK-100 it will be about 3/16", but the Army Tech Manual (for use with a particular Vibroplex) specifies .015".

7. Swing the lever over to the dot side and stop the oscillation with a fingertip, but still holding the paddle over. Adjust the dot contact screw so that the contacts *just* meet.

8. Adjust the dot lever tension to suit.

At this point, normal activation of the dot lever should result in a string of 20 or more dots being generated before oscillation slows down. If not, try some different adjustments of the dwell screw (and then readjust the dot contacts)-- you should be able to see easily whether a wider or narrower gap on the dwell screw is necessary, and find an appropriate adjustment. Most bugs can be adjusted to provide 20 or more dots from a single closure, but if yours can't, don't worry about it-- just set it for the most you can get out of it.

Note that when you change the bug's speed by moving the pendu-

lum weight, you may need to repeat steps six and seven, particularly if you are changing speed by more than a few wpm.

Verifying Proper Dot Formation

As mentioned above, Bill W1HIJ describes a simple way to use a VOM to determine that your dots are being generated correctly. Keeping in mind that in a string of dots, the signal should be on and off for exactly the same amount of time (space between dots equals length of dot), just hook up an analog VOM (set for resistance) to the bug's output connections. Key the bug, and you should observe the meter vibrating at about the mid point of the range. While observing the meter, fine-tune the dot contact spacing until the needle hovers at midrange, indicating a "50% dwell" or perfect weighting.

Application Avalanche

Reprinted with permission from ARRL

NEWINGTON, CT, Feb 28, 2007 -- The avalanche of Amateur Radio license and license upgrade applications prompted by the FCC's elimination of Morse code as a licensing requirement is well under way with no end in sight. ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, reports that paperwork from upward of 450 Amateur Radio exam sessions held since the new rules went into effect February 23 has arrived so far this week. The ARRL VEC, which typically receives paperwork from about 70 sessions each day, has had to add personnel and schedule extended hours to keep up with the workload.

ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, with several US Postal Service bins of Amateur Radio exam session packets. Paperwork for some 250 sessions arrived February 28.

"We've been seeing some of the largest brand-new Technician sessions ever," Somma said. "These examination sessions are huge, and a ton of new Technician license applications has been coming in -- sometimes 60 or 70 at a clip." Somma says license upgrade traffic also has been brisk, and, with some 650 examination sessions already on the calendar for March and more arriving daily, it doesn't look like the pace will slacken anytime soon.

New Rules Driving the Demand

New Amateur Radio rules are driving the demand for new licenses and upgrades. Effective February 23, the FCC no longer requires Amateur Radio applicants to pass a Morse code test to earn operating privileges below 30 MHz. As of the same date, Technician licensees who never passed a Morse code test gained new CW privileges on 80, 40 and 15 meters and new CW, RTTY, data and SSB privileges on 10 meters. Since the Technician ticket has not required a Morse code test since 1991, most current Technician license holders will face a learning curve to take advantage of their new CW privileges. As of February 25, there were approximately 324,200 Technician licensees in the US -- more than any other license class.

Technicians may begin using their new privileges without having to apply for them. No other license class acquired new privileges as a result of the new rules that went into effect February 23, however. All license upgraders must first apply at an examination session, pay any application fee and either successfully pass the appropriate written test or present valid exam element credit.

Details, Details

ARRL VEC personnel must go through "every single piece of paper" that arrives from an examination session, Somma explained. Before keying application data directly to the FCC's licensee database, the staff must make sure that session paperwork is in order, each application is filled out correctly and signed and any element credit is attached. If an applicant took an exam element, ARRL VEC must ensure that the test questions came from the correct question pool and that the applicant indeed passed. She said it typically takes up to 90 seconds for staff members to key in an application for a new licensee, but only about 30 seconds in the case of a license upgrade.

Among the growing stack of incoming paperwork February 28 was a package from a session held in the Bahamas for 56 US citizens -- more than likely retirees and members of the cruising and sailing communities in the Caribbean. Somma said it included applications for 12 new Technician licensees. The rest were upgrades.

Handling the Rush

Normally with a staff complement of six, ARRL VEC now has as many as eight full-timers plus three part-timers to handle the rush. Somma says her team by and large has been able to review each application and transmit license and upgrade application data to the FCC within three or four days of receipt. She also had words of praise for the Volunteer Examiner (VE) teams.

"I want to thank the VEs," Somma said. "Most of the paperwork is neat and orderly, and this makes it easy for us to just key it to the FCC." She did caution VEs to make sure they include any proof of prior element credit -- usually a Certificate

of Successful Completion of Examination or CSCE -- when submitting applications.

Some VE teams have been sharing observations and photos from their examination sessions. "We're enjoying those," Somma said. "Keep 'em coming."

Hinode

Japanese for *Sunrise*, formerly known as Solar B, Hinode spacecraft has started taking pictures of the sun. Launched September 22, 2006 from Uchinoura Space Center in Kyushu, Japan, it's on a mission to study the sun, specifically sunspots, which give rise to powerful flares and solar storms.

Hinode is a joint mission of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC).

Hinode carries three advanced space telescopes:

The **Solar Optical Telescope (SOT)** provides crystal-clear images of features on the sun's surface. A vector magnetograph attached to the SOT will be able to trace sunspot magnetic fields, which harbor energy for explosive flares.

The **X-ray telescope (XRT)** can see million-degree gas caught in the magnetic grip of sunspots and, higher up, floating in the sun's atmosphere, the corona. For reasons no one understands, the sun's corona is much hotter than the sun's surface—another mystery Hinode may help solve.

The **Extreme Ultraviolet Imaging Spectrometer (EIS)** is a device that can tune into specific spectral lines emitted by ions in the sun's atmosphere. By watching these lines shift back and forth (the Doppler Shift), astronomers can keep track of solar material as it moves around. Dynamic movies from the EIS will not only entertain, but also provide crucial clues to solve the dual mystery of flares and coronal heating.

Point your browser to this URL http://www.spaceweather.com/

swpod2007/23mar07/SOT_ca_061213flare_cl_lg.mpg or http://www.spaceweather.com/swpod2007/23mar07/SOT_ca_061213flare_cl_lg.mpg for breathtaking videos taken by Hinode.

Solar Storm Warning

March 10, 2006, Courtesy NASA

It's official: Solar minimum has arrived. Sunspots have all but vanished. Solar flares are nonexistent. The sun is utterly quiet.

Like the quiet before a storm.

This week researchers announced that a storm *is* coming--the most intense solar maximum in fifty years. The prediction comes from a team led by Mausumi Dikpati of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). "The next sunspot cycle will be 30% to 50% stronger than the previous one," she says. If correct, the years ahead could produce a burst of solar activity second only to the historic Solar Max of 1958.

That was a solar maximum. The Space Age was just beginning: Sputnik was launched in Oct. 1957 and Explorer 1 (the first US satellite) in Jan. 1958. In 1958 you


Intense auroras over Fairbanks, Alaska, in 1958

couldn't tell that a solar storm was underway by looking at the bars on your cell phone; cell phones didn't exist. Even so, people knew something big was happening when Northern Lights were sighted three times *in Mexico*. A similar maximum now would be noticed by its effect on cell phones, GPS, weather satellites and many other modern technologies.

Dikpati's prediction is unprecedented. In nearly-two centuries since the 11-year sunspot cycle was discovered, scientists have struggled to predict the size of future maxima—and failed. Solar maxima can be intense, as in 1958, or barely detectable, as in 1805, obeying no obvious pattern.

The key to the mystery, Dikpati realized years ago, is a conveyor belt on the sun.

We have something similar here on Earth—the Great Ocean Conveyor Belt, popularized in the sci-fi movie *The Day After Tomorrow*. It is a network of currents that carry water and heat from ocean to ocean--see the diagram below. In the movie, the Conveyor Belt stopped and threw the world's weather into chaos.

The sun's conveyor belt is a current, not of water, but of electrically-conducting gas. It flows in a loop from the sun's equator to
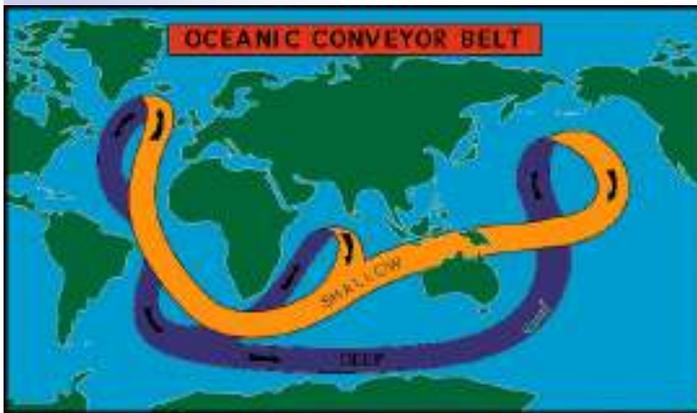
Earth's "Great Ocean Conveyor Belt"

the poles and back again. Just as the Great Ocean Conveyor Belt controls weather on Earth, this solar conveyor belt controls weather on the sun. Specifically, it controls the sunspot cycle.

Solar physicist David Hathaway of the National Space Science & Technology Center (NSSTC) explains: "First, remember what sunspots are--tangled knots of magnetism generated by the sun's inner dynamo. A typical sunspot exists for just a few weeks. Then it decays, leaving behind a 'corpse' of weak magnetic fields."

Enter the conveyor belt.

"The top of the conveyor belt skims the surface of the sun, sweeping up the magnetic fields of old, dead sunspots. The 'corpses' are dragged down at the poles to a depth of 200,000 km where the sun's magnetic dynamo can amplify them. Once the corpses (magnetic knots) are reincarnated (amplified), they become buoyant and float back to the surface." Presto—new sunspots!

All this happens with massive slowness. "It takes about 40 years for the belt to complete one loop," says Hathaway. The speed varies "anywhere from a 50-year pace (slow) to a 30-year pace (fast)."
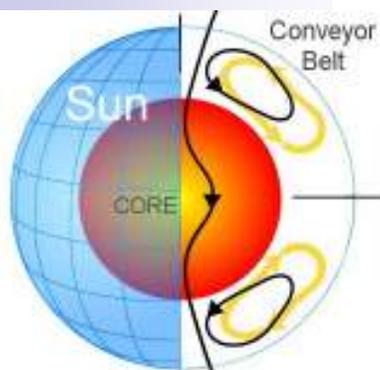
The sun's "great conveyor belt."

When the belt is turning "fast," it means that lots of magnetic fields are being swept up, and that a future sunspot cycle is going to be intense. This is a basis for forecasting: "The belt was turning fast in 1986-1996," says Hathaway. "Old magnetic fields swept up then should re-appear as big sunspots in 2010-2011."

Like most experts in the field, Hathaway has confidence in the conveyor belt model and agrees with Dikpati that the next solar maximum should be a doozy. But he disagrees with one point. Dikpati's forecast puts Solar Max at 2012. Hathaway believes it will arrive sooner, in 2010 or 2011.

"History shows that big sunspot cycles 'ramp up' faster than small ones," he says. "I expect to see the first sunspots of the next cycle appear in late 2006 or 2007—and Solar Max to be underway by 2010 or 2011."

Who's right? Time will tell. Either way, a storm is coming.

SKCC Weekend Sprint

Bill Crosier,NT9K SKCC 1926C

So who is NT9K and why is he doing this? I'm a 44yr old disabled programmer with a lot of free time. I've been a SKCC member for almost a year now and also belong to other CW clubs. Those clubs are great and each one has it's own appeal, but I enjoy the Straight Key Century Club the most because of the member interaction. I can't find the level of fellowship the SKCC has in any other club. Learning from each other, sharing ideas and planning events together using the internet is a powerful tool. I can't understand the idea of discouraging internet member interaction as in some clubs. Learning about someone or something that you read about them online only helps make a better QSO and even better friendships.

After having so much fun in the month long K1Y event, it seemed like everyone wanted to keep the momentum going. Ideas for events ran rampant, good ideas that seemed to be going unused because of a way to make them actually happen. With all those good ideas floating around the internet, I tried to think about a way to use those ideas in an event that everyone could help plan. The trouble with planning events is the schedule. Conflicts with other events and finding time in all our busy lives to participate. I sometimes have trouble staying awake for the regular SKCC sprints and efforts to get a daytime event going never came about. My solution was to have a monthly weekend event, 24 hours in length with a 4 hour sliding contest window. Changing themes contributed and planned by the members. Work as much or little as you want. Submit your most productive "continuous" 4 hour log window and your 24 hour total QSO count.

The primary goal of the weekend sprint is to get members on the air. To give everyone a chance to plan events, make more friends and practice your operating skills. Having daytime weekend operating hours should also allow for DX participation too. If you would like to get involved, email me or post your ideas in the SKCC forum.

"This idea evolved in the SKCC forum and starting this Sunday March 11th, at 0000z thru 2359z we have approval for our first monthly weekend sprint" said Bill NT9K.

Rules will be posted in the Files section on Yahoo and are already posted in the forum. Rules will be subject to changes as we learn. A lot of thought and discussions have gone into planning this event in the hopes to provide something for everyone, even our SKCC DX members.

The weekend sprint will differ from the regular sprint in that:

1. It will run for 24 hours. - Work as much or little as you want on your own schedule.

2. Have a sliding contest slot window. - Pick you most productive continuous 4 hour log entries to submit.

3. Have monthly themes. - Each month we can alternate the themes. One month might be QRP and for those that operate QRP a bonus or multiplier. One month could be a bug sprint with a bonus for using a bug. Other ideas are collecting ages, pets, new members etc. *Note, the first sprint may not have a custom theme since time is short.*

SKCC Monthly Sprint rules are posted on the SKCC website, http://www.skccgroup.com/sprint/wknd-sprint-rules.htm.

The first weekend sprint was held March 11th and 16 logs were submitted.

Justin - N5BO SKCC 57C took the top spot and was declared "Weekend Warrior".

Because the sprints were too close together, it was decided to move the weekend sprint to the 4th Sunday. The 2nd weekend sprint used the "JunkBox Warz" theme, an idea by Mark KJ7BS SKCC 2240C. The event took place Sunday March 25th. (See the April issue for results).

Editor's note: Members, take note of these operating events. These are excellent and easy ways to get log entries towards SKCC awards or other awards you may be chasing. Operating as few as three events could fully account for your Centurion award.

Key of The Month

This key is the very reason I decided to learn CW.

Eric Fairbank, N3EF's Bunnell Radio Key

I was not interested in CW when first licensed in February of 2002. In the spring of 05, I was having a conversation with my dad about amateur radio and he told me his dad was a ham in the late 1920's. He passed away many years ago and I never knew he was a ham before. My dad went through his old junk boxes and found my granddads old Bunnell Radio Key and a

bunch of QSL cards he had received. Well, just knowing my granddad was an amateur radio CW operator and having his old key intrigued me. So, I started practicing in late April and finally made my first CW QSO on June 16th. Boy, was I nervous! I felt that I wasn't quite ready yet and needed more practice before trying again. I cleaned up the key and made a base out of mahogany and epoxied some lead in a recess in the base. Then on July 4th, I had an accident and severely shattered both bones in my lower left leg, so I got sidetracked for a while and the fact that my shack was in the basement made it that much more difficult. I didn't make another QSO until August 23rd, and then only 28 more QSO's that year. But then in January of 06, I got busy on the air and a month later joined SKCC. I was hooked and am up to 1,085 QSO's as of January 31st not including several contests I have participated in.

So, when I'm working a fellow SKCC'er, this is the key I'm using.

Shack of The Month

Rig is an ICOM 746PRO. I use an MFJ Deluxe Versa Tuner II when my internal tuner doesn't work (it happens!), keys are Speed-X Straight Key and a MFJ Electronic Keyer Paddle.
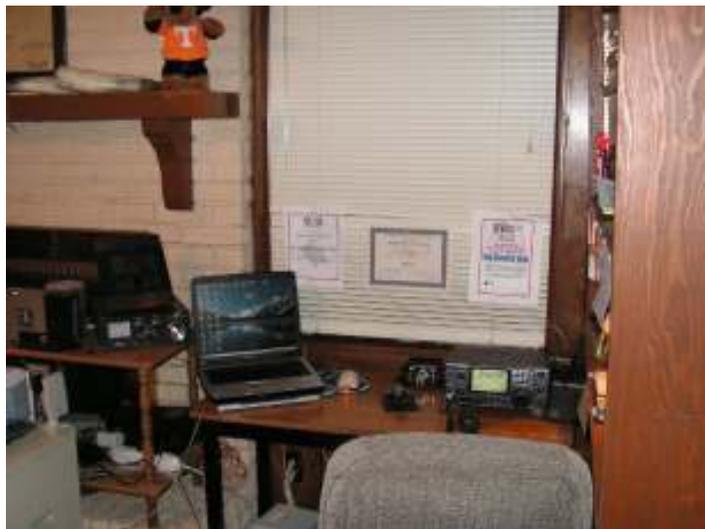
KI4CIA,Melinda Alsobrook's tidy shack.

Riding shotgun on my QSO's is 'ole Smokey, my husband's idea of a joke since I'm a Bama fan. That's the dog with the bright orange "T" on his shirt.

Contest Corner

ARS Spartan Sprint	0100Z-0300Z, Apr 3
SARL 80m QSO Party	1700Z-2000Z, Apr 5
SP DX Contest	1500Z, Apr 7 to
	1500Z, Apr 8
Missouri QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 7 to
	2400Z, Apr 8
JIDX CW Contest	0700Z, Apr 14 to

	1300Z, Apr 15
EU Spring Sprint, CW	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 14
Georgia QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 14 to
	2359Z, Apr 15
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300Z, Apr 16
Holyland DX Contest	0000Z-2359Z, Apr 21
TARA Skirmish Digital Prefix	0000Z-2400Z, Apr 21
ES Open HF Championship	0500Z-0859Z, Apr 21
EU Spring Sprint, SSB	1600Z-1959Z, Apr 21
Michigan QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 21 to
	0400Z, Apr 22
YU DX Contest	2100Z, Apr 21 to
	1700Z, Apr 22
SP DX RTTY Contest	1200Z, Apr 28 to
	1200Z, Apr 29
Helvetia Contest	1300Z, Apr 28 to
	1259Z, Apr 29
Florida QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 28 to
	2159Z, Apr 29
Nebraska QSO Party	1700Z, Apr 28 to
	1700Z, Apr 29

New Members

2950, 5A1A/DU1AL, Abubaker, Paderborn, Germany
2951, W7MAS, Mary Anne, Portland, OR
2952, K8GX, Richard, Adrian, MI
2953, K9TB, Tom, Memphis, IN
2954, W7AAC, Bruce, Everett, WA
2955, ZS5IAN, Ian, Durban, South Africa
2956, W1TPB, Ted, Randolph, MA
2957, WA2FJK, Frank, Elmira, NY
2958, KC9ANB, Jeff, Thorntown, IN
2959, KA6KKE, Ken, Chino Hills, CA
2960, AC7KL, Steve, Gresham, OR
2961, K4CNW, Jack, Irmo, SC
2962, F6HKS, Marc Francis Castres, France
2963, K9QEW, Daryl, Decatur, IL
2964, N0LT, John, Iowa City, IA
2965, K9TJL, TJ, Carterville, IL
2966, N1HRF, Geoff, Cullman, AL
2967, KB9HAH, Ralph, Crystal Falls, MI
2968, WA3SCM, Dave, Murrysville, PA
2969, WA6CJK, Rem, Rohnert, Park, CA
2970, AC6AO, Dan, Santa, Monica, CA
2971, W3DL, Douglas, Manheim, PA
2972, W1WFG, Bill, Grey, ME
2973, K7GLE, Glenn, Seattle, WA
2974, WL7CDC, Douglas, Anchorage, AK
2975, N5LH, Bud, Mountain, Home, AR
2976, KC2LMX, Robert, Sctoch Plains, NJ
2977, NQ5V, Steve, Dallas, TX
2978, W8SA, Jon, San Juan Capistrano, CA
2979, N7OMS, Alan, Tacoma, WA
2980, 3W/K5UI, Jim, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
2981, AB0KZ, John, Minot, ND
2982, N2KDK, Paul, Morristown, NJ
2983, DL4CF, Joe, Reinsdorf, Germany

2984, WA3VWK, Stan, Arnold, MD
2985, N7HWW, Eric, Medford, OR
2986, K8LA, YS1ZTM, Thomas Lakeland, GA
2987, MM0DHQ, Arthur, Irvine Ayrshire, Scotland
2988, KA6WXR, Tom, Hibbing, MN
2989, W7AYN, Bob, Mesa, AZ
2990, K4CEH, Chuck, Tampa, FL
2991, W0WKS, Don, Wichita, KS
2992, K8ASA, John, Fremont, OH
2993, W9LHG, John, White Bear Lake, MN
2994, VE7SGB, Garth, Penticton, BC
2995, KA5KMS, Terry, Aberdeen, MS
2996, W5FBQ, Bob, White Deer, TX
2997, KB3OPS, Jim, Olney, MD
2998, KN3DZY, Jim, New Tripoli, PA
2999, KA2NJY, Mike, East Northport, NY
3000, K7MKS, Joe, Bellevue, WA
3001, W5ZRK, Jim, Hattiesburg, MS
3002, JJ1VKL, Mit, Tokyo, Japan
3003, WB5OJJ, Alfred, Odessa, TX
3004, WA5LPW, Keith, Memphis, TN
3005, WB9JOX, Ted, Palos Heights, IL
3006, KC9LDH, Kurt, Canton, IL
3007, N6UK, Fritz, Atherton, CA
3008, K9JP, Jeff, Traverse City, MI
3009, K8INN, Igor, Canton, OH
3010, W5RE, Bob, Crestview, FL
3011, F6DDR, Phil, Nancy, France
3012, N7HTS, Gary, Cheyenne, WY
3013, KC0TTY, Kevin, St.Peters, MO
3014, KC2LSI, Frank, Scotch Plains, NJ
3015, W7IEX, Van, Reno, NV
3016, KI4OWY, John, Irvine, KY
3017, WA0VDD, Joe, Afton, IA
3018, WA2JSG, Curt, Carneys Point, NJ
3019, KE7KZT, Ray, Great Falls, MT

New Centurions

74, AF2Z, 2082, Drew, Collingswood, NJ, 21 March 2007
75, K8AQM, 1629, Ted, Adrian, MI, 23 March 2007
76, W4RMM, 2471, Bill, Albertville, AL, 30 March 2007
77, W6VFA, 1659, Web, Galt, CA, 30 March 2007

Awards

40 Meter Endorsement
2417C, W6UT, Dennis, Stockton, CA, 07 March 2007
2240C, KJ7BS, Mark, Glendale, AZ, 13 March 2007
0036C, NN8B, Don, Hanoverton, OH, 31 March 2007
WAS Award
1681C,AA2XB, Frank, Maryland, NY, 30 March 2007

The SKCC Centurion

13226 N. 62nd Dr.
Glendale, AZ 85304
Phone: 623-606-1976
kj7bs@arrl.net

With SKCC every day is Straight Key Night!

The Straight Key Century Club is the fastest growing CW club focusing on manual generation of Morse code. Founded in January 2006, SKCC has grown to over 2500 members in calendar 2006. Members enjoy a very active email list server, SKCC forums, monthly sprints, and a monthly 24 hour operating event. Information about the Straight Key Century Club can be found at http://www.skccgroup.com .

Operating Frequencies

These are the <u>suggested frequencies</u> (+or - Khz) for SKCC members to congregate and look for other SKCC members. These are suggestions only, nobody owns any frequency. Be courteous and find a clear spot.

1.820 MHz	3.550 MHz	3.530 MHz
7.120 MHz	7.055 MHz	10.120 MHz
14.048 MHz	18.080 MHz	21.120 MHz
24.910 MHz	28.170 MHz	50.090 MHz
	144.070 MHz	

Operating Events

SKCC Sprint: SKCC Sprints take place each month on the second Wednesday of the month from 0100z to 0300z (Tuesday evenings 2000 Eastern Time). Rules for participation can be found at http://www.skccgroup.com/sprint/sprint-rules.htm. For more information , contact SKCC Sprint Manager Kevin Kinderen at kkinderen@gmail.com or check the SKCC Yahoogroup Calendar.

SKCC HighER Speed Gathering: Every Wednesday at 0300z , SKCC members interested in building their sending (and receiving speed) gather around 3550 on the 80 meter band or 7055 kHz on the 40 meter band for some higher speed CW. Speeds from 23 WPM on up are typical but any speed that pushes your personal envelope is welcome. Straight keys, bugs, cooties or other sideswipers or any other mechanical key is welcome. The Gathering is NOT a Net. Pick a spot on or about 3720 or 7055 and call CQ SKCC HS at your desired higher speed.

SKCC Weekend Sprint: Every 4th Sunday of each month beginning at 0000z UTC and ending 2359z UTC. This operating event is open to all licensed amateurs. Operate as much as you can and submit your best contiguous 4-hour window for score. Periodically themes will be announced for upcoming weekend sprints. See http://www.skccgroup.com/activities.htm for more information and rules.

SKCC Member Resources

SKCC website—Everything you need to know about the Straight Key Century Club. Check back frequently as this site changes, http://www.skccgroup.com.

SKCC Yahoo Groups Email List—http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/skcc/. A moderated email list for the exchange of ideas about SKCC.

SKCC QSL Bureau—Dan Rhodes, KA3CTQ manages this free service for SKCC members. Send and receive QSL cards for QSOs between SKCC members via this service. To receive your QSL cards, you need to have SASE (self addresses stamped envelopes) on file with the SKCC QSL Bureau. Dan also says non-members can send you QSL cards through the SKCC Bureau. For more information see http://www.skccgroup.com/qsl.htm. There are currently 121 members participating.

Award Tracker—Don Kemp, NN8B (SKCC 0036) maintains an SKCC Award Tracker spreadsheet to assist members in keeping track of their current standings with SKCC awards. Don posts updates to this valuable tool in the files section of the SKCC Yahoo Groups http://groups.yahoo.com/group/skcc/files/.

The SKCC Centurion—The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club published monthly. The SKCC Centurion is posted on the SKCC site, in the files section of the SKCC Yahoo Groups site, and distributed via email to your email inbox. To join The SKCC Centurion email list, send an email to The_SKCC_Centurion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com with Subscribe in the subject. There are currently 128 subscriptions.

Spotting Cluster—Andy O'Brien, K3UK (SKCC 1325) provides a spotting cluster for use with domestic spots where self spotting is ok. SKCC members, check this cluster frequently to find other members looking for QSOs. This is more timely than posting to the SKCC email list. To access this spotting cluster point your Telnet client to cluster.dynalias.org port 23 or cluster.dynalias.org:23. Login using your callsign.