The SKCC Centurion

Portable Station

Portable operations are fun. Unfortunately for some, portable means lugging around a substantial amount of gear. However, for some members of the HF Pack group, going portable is a minimalist event. One member of the the HF Pack group, PY1XHD Alex Grimberg of Brazil, has this figured out. Here is a description of his portable station.

- A complete portable HF QRP station mounted on a collapsible banner holder

- The complete station was designed to be set up in just a few minutes

- Operates from 7 to 29.5 Mhz

- All the accessories are clamped to the banner holder with standard fluorescent lamps clamps

- The radio is mounted by a security camera clamp

- The radio panel is positioned between the operators knees and is pointed at the operator's eyes

- The operator's hands naturally touch the radio controls with the elbows resting on the legs giving a comfortable ergonomic position for long operating periods

Alex with his portable station.

- A mobile loudspeaker shoots the audio directly to the ears for a easy listening

- A big screen clock with temperature reading

- A voice recorder ready to use

- Mounted above all those accessories is a high intensity LED flashlight that allows for night work

- A compact solar panel that allows supplemental power or battery charging

- The antenna is a small magnetic loop

Security camera mounting clamp for securing the radio

Loudspeaker and microphone. Notice the fluorescent light clamps

This view is looking at the radio from the operating position.

The operator's knees would be on either side of the radio.

Visit Alex's web site and see more of his amazing things for portable operations and operating Pedestrian Mobile, http://hps.infolink.com.br/py1ahd/. There are some ingenious things on Alex's site. You too, will find things on his pages the will make you stop and go hmmm.

Clock, digital voice recorder, and LED light

Keep in mind, everything is attached to the vertical pole using florescent light clips for easy setup and take down.

CW Practice On The Internet?

CW on the Internet? You're kidding, right? No, I'm not. If you are a little rusty, you find HF a bit too crowded, you don't have HF equipment, you want to practice for your CW 5wpm test, or for any other host of reasons for using CW off the air, you can use CW over the internet!

There are several ways to accomplish this. I will mention two

excellent methods for transmitting CW over the Internet. The first method is through a program called MorseMail. The MorseMail website can be found via this URL: http://www.seanet.com/~harrypy/MorseMail/.

MorseMail is simply a program that takes advantage of XML programming and allows you to record your CW via a bug, key or mouse. From this recorded CW you can copy and paste it into an email message or you can send it through to the MorseMail server or "repeater". Currently, the "repeater" method is used most often.

The repeater is a server program which records and stores the recorded messages sent via the MorseMail client programs. A recorded message would look like the following:

<MorseMail>
+168-56+56-56+168-56+56-168 +168-56+168-56+56-
56+168-392+168-56 +56-56+168-56+56-168+168-56+168-56
+56-56+168-392+168-56+56-56+168-56 +56-168+168-
56+168-56+56-56+168-392 +168-56+56-56+56-168+56-
392+168-56 +56-56+168-168+168-56+168-56+168-56 +168-
56+56-168+168-168+56-56+168-56 +56-168+56-56+168-
56+168-392+168-56 +56-56+168-168+168-56+168-56+168-
56 +168-56+56-168+168-168+56-56+168-56 +56-168+56-
56+168-56+168-392+168-56 +56-56+168-168+168-56+168-
56+168-56 +168-56+56-168+168-168+56-56+168-56 +56-
168+56-56+168-56+168-392+168-56 +56-56+168-500
</MorseMail>

The numbers indicate tone and lack of tone. Basically, it's a time representation of your transmitted CW. You literally copy the code above including the <MorseMail> and </MorseMail> tags and paste it into the MorseMail program and click play if someone sent this to you via email. If you were to do this on this message, you'd hear the following in CW:

CO CO CO DE K9TRW K9TRW K9TRW K

By default, however, you can connect to a MorseMail server and either "listen" for new CW transmissions or throw a call out there yourself. Through this method, there's no cutting and pasting needed.

The program allows you to connect a straight key or bug through the serial or USB ports of your computer. Harry Pyle, AB7TB is the brainchild of this wonderful program and has included information on how to connect your mouse to a key or bug.

This was my first exposure to CW over the Internet. For further detailed information on this program, please visit his website and give the program a try.

The second program, which allows you to send CW over the Internet, is a program called CW Communicator. This program can be reviewed and downloaded from the following website:

http://www.mrx.com.au/d_cwcom.htm

John Samin, VK1EME is the author and brainchild of this program.

http://www.mrx.com.au

This client program connects to an "ionosphere" server. The ionosphere server is a virtual representation of the radio airwaves. The program is setup so that you can connect to "channels". A channel can represent a frequency. For instance, if I wanted to connect to channel 7125 this would be a representation of 7.125 MHz on the 40-meter band.

By default, however, the program connects to channel 1000. This could be considered the gathering place for initial CW contacts via this program. Everyone connects to this channel when they initially connect to the ionosphere server unless they've changed the program's settings.

With CW Communicator, you can also connect a straight key or bug to your computer. Once the connection to your key is setup just right you're ready to go.

CW communicator is a good program to use if you are new to CW or need some practice. By default the translation option of this program is turned on. If you're CW timing is good, then the translation should work. Every time you key dit-dit-dit and if your timing is right, you should get an 'S'. If you get an 'I' and an 'E', then you either need to work on your timing or tweak the settings of the keyer in the program.

For those of you who know CW but perhaps don't use it, this will help you with your timing. If you have a straight key, this is excellent practice for getting on the air.

Practical Dipole Antenna

A classic dipole antenna is 1/2-l long and fed at the center. The feed-point impedance is low at the resonant frequency, f_0, and odd harmonics thereof. The impedance is high near even harmonics. When fed with coax, a classic dipole provides a reasonably low SWR at f_0 and its odd harmonics.

When fed with ladder line (see Fig A) and a Transmatch, the classic dipole should be usable near f_0 and all harmonic frequencies. (With a wide-range Transmatch, it may work on all frequencies.) If there are problems (such as extremely high SWR or evidence of RF on objects at the operating position), change the feed-line length by adding or subtracting 1/8 l at the problem frequency. A few such adjustments should yield a workable solution. Such a system is sometimes called a "center-fed Zepp." A true "Zepp" antenna is an end-fed dipole that is matched by 1/4 l of open-wire feed line (see Fig B). The antenna was originally used on zeppelins, with the dipole trailing from the feeder, which hung from the airship cabin. It is intended for use on a single band, but should be usable near odd harmonics of f_0.

Most dipoles require a little pruning to reach the desired resonant frequency. Here's a technique to speed the adjustment.

How much to prune: When assembling the antenna, cut the wire 2 to 3% longer than the calculated length and record the length. When the antenna is complete, raise it to the working

height and check the SWR at several frequencies. <u>Multiply the frequency of the SWR minimum by the antenna length and divide the result by the desired f0. The result is the finished length; trim both ends equally to reach that length and you're done.</u>

Loose ends: Here's another trick, if you use nonconductive end support lines. When assembling the antenna, mount the end insulators in about 5% from the ends. Raise the antenna and let the ends hang free. Figure how much to prune and cut it from the hanging ends. If the pruned ends are very long, wrap them around the insulated line for support.
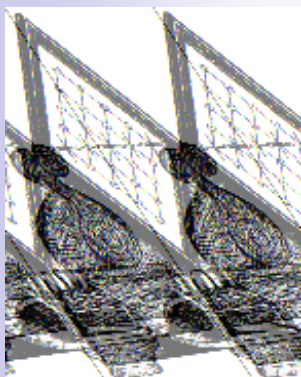
What Are These

This month The SKCC Centurion has a challenge for SKCC members.   The first person to correctly identify all of the following things and who invented them will receive five (5) SASE at the SKCC QSL bureau.   Send you entries to kj7bs@cox.net. Date and time stamps of correct entrants will determine the winner.

(1)
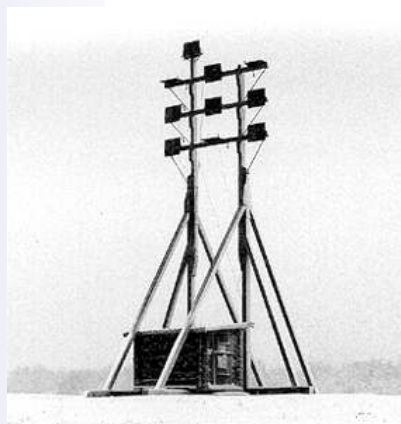
(2)

(3)

(4)

Answers and winner will be announced in the November issue of The SKCC Centurion.

Editor's Soapbox

Mark Saunders, KJ7BS SKCC 2240T

I sure don't hear many SKCC members on the air these days. There are days when calling CQ on or near SKCC center of activity frequencies (watering holes) brings no responses.

Maybe it is the season. The weather is nice and there are lots of things to do before the winter months set in. After all, there are antenna projects to be finished before that white stuff starts accumulating. I'm just glad the daytime temps here are no longer above 100 degrees F. Now I can work on antenna projects.

Maybe it is because there have been no sun spots. Propagation has been so low and we just passed through a period of no sun spots for an entire month. Fear not, as there have been five sun spot clusters in the past two weeks. I don't know if this is the beginning of cycle 24 in earnest or if the Greek sun god Helios is simply toying with us. Regardless, better times are ahead.

With nearly 4800 members in the Straight Key Century Club, it sure is quiet on the bands.

SKCC Contest Results

SKS Sprint

September 24, 2008—Congratulations to John, K4BAI who placed first with Russ, K0LUW placing second and Jon, K1NV, place third. Well done gentlemen. A special thank you for Tom, K4GZB operating the club call K9SKC, his score was second highest in points, but the club call is not eligible to place. Nice showing by 64 participants.

WES Sprintathon

September 14, 2008—Congratulations to Dennis, W6UT who placed first with Hans, WA1LWS placing a very close second and Ron, K9DTH placing third. Well done gentlemen. A special thank you for Randy, KB4QQJ operating the club call K9SKC, his score was third highest in points, but the club call is not eligible to place. Nice showing by **48** participants.

New Members

4724, K8TWM, Tim, Marion, OH
4725, W1HAT, Mike, Marion, OH
4726, SP9WAV, Piotr, Czestochowa, Poland
4727, VK4EBP, Jan/John, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
4728, N5HEI, John, Albuquerque, NM
4729, KM4DB, David, North Conway, NH
4730, KE5WIQ, Neil, Sugar Land, TX
4731, N2FCZ, Henry, Riverhead, NY
4732, WA8BIJ, Vince, Mt. Clemens, MI

4733, ND8G, Bernard, Aurora, IL
4734, W1AEC, SEMARA - South Eastern Massachusettes
      Amateur Radio Assocation, Dartmouth, MA
4735, KC8FS, Fred, Litchfield, MI
4736, W8AO, Bob, Wooster, OH
4737, WB3HQH, John, New York, NY
4738, G0ANV, Daryl, Girton, United Kingdom
4739, M0BDB, Roland, Essex, England
4740, N5OGE, Butch, Richton, MS
4741, WD0HOR, Ray, Kansas City, MO
4742, W7RIP, Roger, Bozeman, MT
4743, N9AYM, Bob, Georgetown, IN
4744, 4X6ZZ, Howard, Jerusalem, Israel
4745, KI4QCX, Matthew, Ooltewah, TN
4746, K2SHN, John, Rochester, NY
4747, KA0YLP, Charles, Sioux Falls, SD
4748, IW7ED, Fabio, Brindisi, Italy
4749, KA9KQH, Dwayne, Riverton, IL
4750, M5IAN, Ian, Derby, Derbyshire, United Kingdom
4751, AB1II, Jay, Quincy, MA
4752, N5XH, Jim, Denver, CO
4753, G7VAC, Vic, Swanscombe, Kent, United Kingdom
4754, AF5DM, David, Plano, TX
4755, KD0FGD, Remi, Stilwell, KS
4756, KC9LTO, Ann, Plymouth, IN
4757, N8CEI, Jeff, Westerville, OH
4758, NW7US, Tomas, Stevensville, MT
4759, N3ZU, David, Monterey, CA
4760, G5CL, Ryan, Aylesbury, United Kingdom
4761, W9JOP, Bob, Bealeton, VA
4762, VE3FRJ, Robert, Caledonia, Ontario, Canada
4763, WX5SD, Steve, Aspermont, TX
4764, KC2QGD, Steven, Queens, NY
4765, SV4FFL, Costas, Volos, Greece
4766, G3YHO, Tony, Dereham, Norfolk, United Kingdom
4767, AB0RE, Dan, Marshall, MN
4768, G4CQI, Dennis, Bristol, United Kingdom
4769, AC7ZL, Pete, Tucson, AZ
4770, KG6MGE, Troy, Germantown, MD
4771, G4EAG, Simon, Cambridge, United Kingdom
4772, WB0OEW, Elwood, Socorro, NM
4773, KD6JII, Chuck, Ramona, CA
4774, W6GMT, Brock, Marcell, MN

SKCC Awards

Centurion

236, KE5PWL, 4229C, Eric, Mt. Hermon, LA, 8 September, 2008
237, WA1BXY, 4105C, Don, Tiverton, RI, 8, September, 2008
238, AC7AF, 961C, Brian, Rock Springs, WY, 8, September, 2008

Tribune

121, KA2BSK, 3875C, Eric, Jackson, NJ, 19 September, 2008
122, K9DTH, 3698C, Ron, Godfrey, IL, 19 September, 2008
123, WA1BXY, 4105C, Don, Tiverton, RI, 30 September, 2008

Key Of The Month

Key of K2RFP

If you would like your key featured in Key of The Month, send your picture and a short description to kj7bs@cox.net.

Shack Of The Month

Equipment left to right, top shelf; HTX10,MFJ versatuner+Autek filter, MFJ Grandmaster keyer+SWR meter for 10M antenna, MFJ 80M Cub.

Lower level; TS440s, Hallicrafters W9TO keyer, TS520.

Foreground; my various keys and paddles. This cabinet has doors that close to please XYL when station is not in use.

73....K8JD

Email pictures of your shack with a description to kj7bs@cox.net.

QSL Of The Month

Send images of your QSL card and see them posted for all members to see. Email images to kj7bs@cox.net

Member Products

Wooden Key Bases

George Osier, N2JNZ, makes beautiful key bases for your keys. I have made bases in Redheart, Chechen and Santo Mahogany in 5/8 and 1 inch thickness. I finish the bases in Minwax Wipe On Poly Gloss which gives a great shine but doesn't make the wood look like its covered in plastic." Samples of the bases are on the SKCC YAHOO group under "photos" and then to the N2JNZ Keys Folder. These are made from exotic woods and some are almost too pretty to drill holes into for mounting your key. Contact George gosier@twcny.rr.com for a list of exotic woods currently available. Key base pricing is $10 each plus $5 USPS Priority Mail shipping.

Her are two samples of his work. On the left is Redheart and on the right is Chechen.

These key bases are 8 1/2 inches long, 5 1/2 inches wide and 1/2 inch thick. These will make any key look good and will be a nice addition to your shack.

Gold SKCC Stickers

Mark Saunders, KJ7BS, is making Gold SKCC stickers available to all SKCC members. These stickers are 1 inch in diameter peel-and-stick gold foil stickers. The gold stickers come 63 to a sheet on an 8 1/2 x 11 inch page. The sticker has the SKCC key logo centered on the sticker and member numbers can be printed below the logo, including Centurion and Tribune designators. Pricing for the Gold SKCC stickers is very reasonable $0.60 per sheet of 63 plus shipping.

1 sheet (63) $1.19
2 sheets (126) $2.18
3 sheets (189) $2.78
4 sheets (252) $3.38
5 sheets (315) $4.15
6 sheets (378) $4.75
7 sheets (441) $5.35
8 sheets (504) $6.12
9 sheets (567) $6.72
10 sheets (630) $7.32

(Prices include shipping)

Quantities over 10 sheets, please contact Mark for postage quote. Processing is 5-7 days excluding weekends. Orders and payments via PayPal to kj7bs@cox.net ,USPS money order or check to:

Mark Saunders
13226 N. 62nd Dr.
Glendale, AZ 85304

Please include the above pricing when ordering,

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 3700 members in calendar 2007. 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 suggested frequencies (+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
14.050 MHz	18.080 MHz	21.050 MHz
24.910 MHz	28.050 MHz	50.090 MHz
	144.070 MHz	

Operating Events

Monthly 24 Hour SKCC Operating Event: The first day of each month from 0000Z to 2359Z is designated as a monthly SKCC operating event. For SKCC members and non-SKCC members to work each other for credit. Contact with 100 SKCC members will qualify that person for a certificate of accomplishment. Visit http://www.skccgroup.com for more info or contact n6wk@n6wk.com.

SKCC Sprint: SKCC Sprints take place each month on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 0100z to 0300z. Rules for participation can be found at http://www.skccgroup.com/sprint/sks/.

SKCC Weekend Sprintathon: Every Second Sunday of each month beginning at 0000z UTC and ending 2359z UTC. This operating event is open to all licensed amateurs. Periodically themes will be announced for upcoming weekend sprints. See http://www.skccgroup.com/sprint/wes/ 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 re-ceive 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.

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. (485 members subscribed to electronic delivery)

Spotting Cluster—Phil, AI4OF (SKCC # 600) has launched a spotting cluster and is making it available to SKCC members. Use this spotting cluster to announce your operations or to find other SKCC members to work. Point your Telnet client to skcc.matrixlist.com:7300. Login using your callsign.

SKCC Sked Page—Andy, K3UK (SKCC # 1325) maintains an interactive web page where SKCC members can arrange a meeting with other members to work towards SKCC awards or just to rag chew. Check it out at http://www.obriensweb.com/skccsked/skccsked.php.

SKCC Elmers—Jeff, K9JP (SKCC # 3008) manages the group of SKCC members serving as Elmers for the club. Anyone wishing assistance can visit the SKCC Elmers page for more information, http://www.skccgroup.com/elmers.htm .