



KEY NOTE



Sec: E. (Geo) Longden, G3ZQS, 119 Cemetery Rd., DARWEN, Lancs, BB3 2LZ England. 0254 703948

Listings: Ed N7CFA 2628 Lilac St Longview WA 98632 Corrections & Callsign changes appreciated. SASE for updated list
 Club Supplies: Irene WO8E 25206 Hayes Roseville MI 48066 Lapel pins \$3.50 Stickers 200/\$5.00 Cloth patch \$1.50 prices include postage
 NA QSL Manager: John N8FU 4441 Andreas Ave Cincinnati OH 45211 PSE keep a couple SASEs on file to get your cards
 NA Century Award Manager: Lee N9NVV 4530 N 15th St Terre Haute IN 47805

Subscriptions: \$15 US to Nancy WZ8C POB 47 Hadley MI. FAMILY PLAN: All CW folks at the same address can join FISTS for one sub fee with full privileges, but only one KeyNote will be mailed per household.

NETS: Sunday 2000Z on 14.058MHz & 2400Z (7pm EST) on 7.058 MHz Scott KE3NV is Net Control Relays appreciated
 Slow Traffic Net: Tuesday and Thursday 9pm EST on 3.682 Net Control op varies. SLOW QSO GROUP: WB8I 8pm EST Wed on 3.720
 PSE keep watch on the Novice bands and the frequencies ending in ".058"

NORTH AMERICAN MEMO



by WZ8C - Ms. Nancy Kott
 P.O. Box 47

Hadley, Michigan 48440-0047
 WZ8C @ KF8JS.#NEMI.MI.USA.NA
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Hello FISTS Everyone through number 2117 SHOULD HAVE received their membership certificate. If you haven't, or if I have your callsign wrong, please let me know and I'll fix it. It's a great feeling to be all caught up and I really appreciate your patience with me! I've been getting a lot of questions about basic FISTS info and activities, so I hope this issue answers your questions.....

WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT WHAT

We have quite a few people who generously volunteer their time and effort to help keep FISTS running smoothly. You can help by contacting the right people so you can get the best attention to your FISTS needs!

FISTS ON LINE: Brian N8IAG is making a listing of FISTS with Internet mail capability. Send him a message with your Email address: blafont@tir.com .

PHOTOBOOK: Ken WK8F 25206 Hayes Roseville MI 48066. Send in your photo! If your callsign is wrong on the photopage let Ken know so it can be corrected!

CONTESTS: Pete K8OUA is our Activity Manager. Send him your logs for our contests, like Novice Round-Up and the Sprints.

SUPPLIES: Irene WO8E 25206 Hayes Roseville MI 48066 has our stickers, logo pins and new patches. The stickers are gold with black printing and look like the logos on the masthead of this page. The pins also look like the logo and are gold metal with light blue enamel background. The patches (NEW!!) are also the octagon shaped logo - light blue twill cloth background with FISTS in red and CW CLUB in bright blue. The embroidery around the edges and the lines going across are black. Size is 3" x 3". These are embroidered, not cheap transfers (like you sometimes see on T-shirts) and will look terrific sewn on your hats, jackets and shirts - I'm looking forward to seeing lots of FISTS wearing FISTS patches this May in Dayton! They are made in USA (that cost .30 more, but I thought it was worth it) and cost \$1.50. Stickers are \$5.00 for 200; pins \$3.50. Prices include postage and checks should be made out to FISTS.

MUGS: Joe AA8HV 9614 Arden Ave Livonia MI 48150 has beautiful heavy ceramic dark blue coffee-type mugs with the FISTS logo in gold on the front and back of the mugs. They cost \$6.50 including shipping and checks should be made out to Joe Falcone.

QSL BUREAU: John N8FU 4441 Andreas Ave Cincinnati OH 45211 is our QSL manager. Please keep a couple SASE's on file with him, and save postage by sending him your FISTS QSLs, both DX and NA

CERTIFICATES: Lee N9NVV 4530 N. 15th St Terre Haute IN 478805 takes care of the Century Awards. Lee has to submit a request to England HQ for a serial number for each award, so please be patient and allow sufficient time for processing.

LISTINGS: Ed N7CFA 2628 Lilac St Longview WA 98632 is our Listings Manager. If you have upgraded or changed your callsign, let Ed know. If there is a mistake on the list with your callsign, it's much more efficient to let Ed know directly rather than tell me about it. I can't fix it, Ed can!

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$15/year to WZ8C at POBox 47 Hadley MI 48440-0047, checks payable to FISTS. Family plan members subscriptions run concurrently. Renewal dates are on your mailing label.

ADS: Personal for sale/trade/wanted ads are free for members. FISTS owned businesses can advertise free if they give a break to FISTS members, like free shipping or discount -- and newsletter space permitting.

WELCOME TO THE NEW FISTS

2121: AD4FJ Ed in Key West Florida (NY2V)
2120: WA9WME Quentin, Jeffersonville IN (N9BWG)
2119: WL7IM Len in Anchorage Alaska (WZ8C)
2118: W3BRZ Jerry in Cavetown Maryland (NY2V)
2117: WE3H John in Cornwall New York (NY2V)
2116: VE3KXJ Bill in Estero FL/Barnie ONT (WZ8C)
2115: NU4N Dave in Paducah Kentucky (WZ8C)
2114: N7DEN Ruth in Phoenix Arizona (KC7IG)
2113: KA2STU Ben in Rochester NH (WN8MWM)
2112: KB2VTN Elmar in Middle Village NY (NY2V)
2111: KG8QO Bob in Wooster Ohio (WZ8C)
2110: N5EIF Bill in Roundrock Texas (AF5Z)
2109: AE4LQ Ron in Forest Park Georgia (KR4FC)
2108: W7GB Don in Moses Lake WA (KA2GJV)
2107: K5APB John in Minden Louisiana (WB2FXK)
2106: AB4TH Del in Lowgap NC (Dortha 2082)
2105: N6YIU Al in Woodland Hills CA (KJ7NR)
2104: NU2G Steve in Hamburg, New York (WA0FGV)
2103: KE4FPS David in Louisville Kentucky (NY2V)
2102: KJ5XF Tony in Austin Texas (AC5CM)
2101: N3MGS Dick in Philadelphia PA (WZ8C)
2100: WB5HLR Doug in Sallisaw OK (WB2FXK)
2099: W3ERU Wes in LaPlata Maryland (NY2V)

FISTS ON-LINE

The reaction to posting the KeyNote on the Web was a resounding NO!, so we won't be doing that. Fred **AA8FQ** and Rich **N3QEN** have offered to put FISTS info on their homepages. I think that will be helpful in spreading the FISTS word and maybe take some paperwork off my hands by having the applications/info available on line. We are still planning to have a FISTS Web page, where you can get updated versions of the memberlist and applications, but we will not print the KeyNote there.

Another Viewpoint on CBers on 10 *by Hans AA1KU/US Army Mars AAR11Z/FISTS 2027*

My sincerest thanks go to **W9X** for his timely article on CB infringement on 10 meters. It grows increasingly important that all licensed radio operators greatly improve our vigilance in policing our frequencies. Various agencies want access to our valuable spectrum including business interests and illegal operators from 11 meters. All of us in amateur radio EARNED the frequency privileges that we have thru hard work and dedication. I, for one, resent hearing the foul mouthed and semiliterate boobs from CB on amateur bands. **THEY DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO OPERATE THERE!** (Simple isn't it!!) (admittedly, some hams shouldn't be allowed radio privileges either)

Now, let's mention QRM and what it really means. QRM is man-made interference. Intentional QRM in interfering with an ongoing QSO between two or more stations who are operating within their spectrum assignments and who are licensed for that particular parcel of radio real estate. Since chicken (criminal)

banders on 10 meters do not operate within these parameters IT IS IMPOSSIBLE for CB-ers to have a LEGITIMATE QSO ON ANY AMATEUR FREQUENCY! Therefore, using a 10 meter frequency occupied by CBers DOES NOT CONSTITUTE INTERFERENCE!!!

Since the FCC has been emasculated by budget cuts IT IS UP TO US to protect our frequency privileges from those radio hobbyists who are either too lazy, stupid or pigheaded to work for a legitimate radio license. Compromise and weak-kneed responses to this problem will only hasten the demise of the amateur radio service. (I'm not telling you to stick pins in their coax while they transmit but up here in Conway, NH we don't have too much of a problem with chicken banders on ten meters anymore.)

Also it is important to state that this letter IS NOT directed against 11 meter ops who behave themselves and stay on assigned frequencies.

Until next time 73 and GUD DX my friends!!
Respectfully submitted, Hans Hildebrand

The Contrapolar Radio Frequency Spectrum

by Gunnar C Carlson AE4W

The contrapolar radio frequency spectrum, first postulated in the February 1944 issue of QST, is now an exciting new operational possibility.

The contrapolar (frequencies below zero Megahertz) spectrum can now be generated due to the advent of polarized AC house current. You will notice that the male plugs on all your household appliances have one big prong and one small one. This is due to the new polarized AC and with a few simple modifications to an older (tube type) ham rig you can generate RF in negahertz and change "frequency" to "seldomcy" in your ham radio lexicon.

The basic changes required are to rewire your power plugs by switching the wires on the big and small prongs of the transceiver's power plug. You will then need to rewire the driver tube so that the filament and plate are reversed. Now instead of dipping the plate current to load-up you must dip the filament current - - don't forget to rewire the meter circuit!

It turns out that negative (contrapolar) RF works very well with an omni directional yagi allowing a 10-12 negabel loss in all directions. This new yagi concept consists of a multi element array, whose driven element is fed through the shield of the coax (center conductor is ground). The yagi is then spun at about 3500 RPM to achieve the appropriate loss in all directions.

Contrapolar RF will be exempted from the new ANSI RF radiation standards even though some environmentalists fear the effect on nearby flora and fauna if the yagi should stop spinning during a transmission at a seldomcy around 14 negahertz. They guess that a server cooling could harm any living organism in the antenna's near field. It is possible that the antenna itself could ice up, even on a warm day.

The good news is that the contrapolar spectrum is not effected by the solar cycle--so drag out that old

boat anchor transceiver and be among the first to try this exciting new mode which should find great popularity with newer hams. There is plenty of room in the contrapolar spectrum for all the digital modes so that digital operators will no longer need to violated the Considerate Operators Guide by operating in the CW Bands. Since the FCC is not yet equipped to monitor these new bands, all the hams who enjoy using profanity on SSB can do so with impunity.

(I probably should have saved this for our April issue in honor of April Fools'Day!! de Nancy)

Letter from a New FISTS

Dear CW Ops,

What a wonderful opportunity it is to belong to a group whose interest is in helping the brand-new operators on the air, something I've done for years.

At age 62 I received my novice ticket in May of 1978, first radio in 1979. The straight key terrified me and my sending was atrocious so I ordered an iambic keyer, put it together (loved doing that project) then seriously started making contacts on the air. My OM, at that time, was not a ham. I hold those operators who patiently and kindly worked me in my highest esteem. Due to them, I vowed if I ever upgraded my ticket, I would get on the novice bands to help and encourage the new and not so new hams in any way I could. This I've done, I'm proud to say.

My biggest thrill is working a brand-new ham his/her first time on the air and being as kind to them as others were to me.

Many many QSL cards from new hams express their appreciation for patience, kindness and understanding that was shown to them.

What better reward could any ham receive! Now, you can see why your organization appeals to me and I'm so proud to be a FISTS member. Thank you for helping the new hams 73 Beth **KA7AKK**

From the Radio Room of AA3LM A Glossary of Little-Known Q Signals

QBE: My spouse has me by the ear and says I'm leaving the shack now.

QBB: I can't wait any longer; I must take a bathroom break! (Also heard on the QSO party as **QTP!**)

QTV: I must stop for an hour; my neighbors favorite TV program is on.

QRW: Work is interfering with my play time on the radio.

QOG: My station consists entirely on old tube gear.

QPS: No, my fist is not bad; my paddles are sticking.

QBT: My brain is too tired to copy anymore.

QRD: Your melodic CW signal is being interfered with by those newfangled discordant digital signals.

QET: Wow, you are fast! I copied about every third letter you sent.

SUNDAY QSO PARTY

To all FISTS, greetings from Scott **KE3NV**: As every one knows by now, Don **KC4UUG** has decided to take a well deserved break from the Sunday QSO Party. We are thankful for the excellent job he has done.

Since I have started running the Party for Don, I have received several letters about the format of this net. Here are some of the questions that have been asked so far:

Is the QSO Party for chewing the rag with the regulars or for meeting new members?

Why does everyone send so slowly?

Shouldn't the net be used to help FISTS get their Century Award rather than rag chew?

Why does it have to take so long to get my turn?

I would be more than happy to run this net the way the majority of the members would like to see it go. All I ask from you is your input, or any tips.

Please feel free to write me with any concerns, suggestions, comments, ideas etc. I will do my best to make everyone happy. Remember that your input is important. The results will be in the KeyNote

73 Scott POB 392 Odenton MD 21113

Check-Ins:

14.058 2000Z:

Dec 24 1995: N4VEF, K4SV, AD4EI/QRP, N1NGM WB3KMX, N7CFA

Dec 31, 1995: WP2T, KB0JTS, W4JTU, N4VEF AA2WG, K7WF, NA8G, N7CFA

Jan 7, 1996: worst condx ever! One QNI: VE5RD 7.058 2400Z:

AE4AZ, N9LGP, A5FY, WA0RSX, CO6AP (nonFISTS)

Maritime Disasters Book

This is from a letter from Mike **KE4GBE** (thanks for the kind words about the KeyNote Mike!)

Two years ago, while browsing the local public library I came across a wonderful book about radio telegraphy, their operators and daring rescues at sea. It's called "SOS to the Rescue" and it details a number of maritime disasters and the courageous, resourceful radio operators who saved many lives through their actions. Written by Karl Baarslag in 1935, it's one of the best books I have read recently and it's especially interesting due to the information about the radio equipment of the era and texts of the actual traffic. I would recommend any member looking for an engrossing read to try and find a copy.

I say "try and find a copy" because when I went back to the library a month ago it was gone! Turns out that the movement to put the filing system at the library in my area on computer has resulted in all books with a publishing date of more than about 25 years prior to be sold off for pennies. There's a happy ending to this story; my lovely wife found an antique book store who managed to track down a copy halfway across the country and now it proudly resides in my bookcase. At any rate, I urge everyone to search out a copy of this fine book. I think you will find it enjoyable reading!

Bits and Pieces

Lea **AB5TY** in Texas says it's so cold her water pipes have been frozen and she can't get a plumber, but looking on the bright side, there is nothing to do but play radio!

Carl **KR4VQ** in Miami is busy with tourists and preparing to move. He bought a condo on the beach about five miles from his present QTH. It has 2 balconies and he's on the 5th floor, so he's hoping to be able to get out, maybe with a mobile antenna! Also, his call-sign is incorrect on the photopage, he is **KR4VQ**, not **KR4VG**. I've forwarded the correction to **WK8F**, Carl, and he will put a correction on the index page, as well as correct it on future sheets.

Fred **NY2V** has been busy sending out applications in response to a packet message he's posted and wondered about the "success" rate for the return of apps. Well, I've never kept track of how many I send out, but I am getting an average of one new FISTS member per weekday. My thanks to all who send out applications and sponsor new FISTS, we are growing by leaps and bounds!

ANONYMOUS OR NOT?

There has been an ongoing "controversy" about whether or not to print anonymous commentary in the KeyNote. I did so a while ago, and got all sorts of flack from the members, particularly Across The Pond. Geo said he will never print unsigned materials and thought I should do likewise. I agreed at the time, but after thinking about it, and getting the following letter I decided to go ahead and print anonymous contributions. I would prefer you sign your name, just so I know the article is from a FISTS member, but will keep your name confidential if you want. Part of the appeal of ham radio to some people is the anonymity afforded by the CW key. I can understand this and will respect it - even if it means you won't send in a photo for the FISTS Photobook!!

Here is a letter I got regarding the anonymous contribution issue, and I am withholding the authors name as requested:

"Your apology for publishing an anonymous article in the February issue of the NA KeyNote reminded me of a previously published letter airing the views of an anonymous writer regarding the condition of present-day ham radio.

Other letters were subsequently published criticizing the above mentioned writer's desire to remain anonymous. It was suggested that anonymous letters should not be published (presumably without regard to the merits of the letter's contents). The Editor agreed to do so. I think this was a mistake. It seems to me that the KeyNote has lost something valuable by this decision.

I think it is the Editor's prerogative to print anything he/she deems worth of publication, even if the subject matter is controversial and submitted anonymously

because of the writer's timidity, or his wish to avoid contentious mail or phone calls. We are the losers when we are contemptuous of opinions contrary of our own. All points of view should be welcome and represented -- and all retorts should be confined to the message and not to the messenger."

(At least I've learned how to spell "anonymous" from all this, hi!!)

More on commercial marine CW

I had such wonderful comments on the article submitted by Rich from the Boat Anchor News, here is another installment on the same subject.---

"The operation in Washington is about 5 people - the operators bought the station from the former corporate owner and operate it themselves. Their business is mostly with tankers to and from Alaska. It looks like what is happening in general in the business is that the former corporate owners of those stations decide that HF is finished, satellite is the wave of the future, and bail out. Then other entrepreneurs see the vast number of low-budget ships out there, and the expense of satellite communication, and start buying up and operating the HF stations.

Someone asked how they get paid and the answer is that each ship has a billing agent, usually in the country where the ship is registered. All the bills go to that agent. The agent pays the bills and collects from the ship owners. They don't have much trouble with dead-beat ships, because if word gets around that a ship doesn't pay then none of the shore stations will take their traffic. More often, if there is a problem with payment, it's because the ship has recently changed billing agents and not everything has caught up with the change. There was a problem getting paid for Russian traffic during the breakup of the USSR when the economy was in chaos; but that has been cleared up now.

Rod mentioned that the very next day after the Coast Guard discontinued CW watches on 500 KHz a ship was in trouble and was calling for help in CW. The absence of Coast Guard didn't really affect the outcome because the commercial shore stations and other ships heard the calls for help and relayed them to the Coast Guard. [and once in a while we hear of a ham or SWL hearing ship distress calls and passing the information to the C.G.]

I asked about how the operators get their training. In former days there were a number of commercial radio schools; he mentioned a famous one in California that was unfamiliar to me. Now these are all gone because there isn't enough turnover in operators to keep a school in business. Most of the operators now are former military people, or a few who get their CW skills as hams. He opined that the former Coast Guard operators are of better quality than the former Navy ones. In the former Soviet Union there were about six state-owned companies running the shipping, one company for each general kind of cargo. The radio officers attended a 4-year maritime academy and had to pass 35wpm CW to graduate. Then they worked in

shore stations for about 5 years before being sent to sea. He has two former USSR operators at KFS - both of them jumped ship in the U.S. during the former regime. They are trained to send CW with their left hands and copy with their right hands at the same time. But many of the operators on ships today are from small countries where licensing standards are mediocre and training is hardly adequate.

If you want a job like this, you need to be very good at CW, have your commercial license, and hope to hear about it when some operator dies or retires. There just aren't many job openings and turnover is very low.

The TCI receivers he mentioned are maybe 7" high in a rack and a 19" rack space holds up to four of them. The Ten-Tec receiver is in a 1-3/4" high rack mount case that is quite deep. [so probably what's inside is a single large printed circuit board, or maybe a motherboard with one layer of daughterboards] The only front panel control is an audio level setting; everything else is controlled through the ASCII interface. They control the Kenwood receivers in Slidell through the ASCII interfaces. If you want one of the Ten-Tec receivers, they are in the \$3500 price class."

Another sea story concerned a mutiny, sort of. There was an electrician who really wanted off the ship immediately. First he sabotaged the generators but the rest of the crew were able to figure that out and fix it. Then he tried to set the cargo of naphtha on fire. This had the rest of the crew scared enough that they insisted on heading for the nearest port to put the man off, which was not a port the ship captain had intended to go to.

A typical ship today has a crew of about 15. Some ships need larger crews. An example is a container ship that calls at many ports up and down the coast. They make so many stops at such odd hours that they need about 3 times as many crew. That is, a ship like that has crews working in 3 shifts around the clock."

Rich recently picked up an old military receiver (BC-348) and was encouraged to hear several commercial CW stations. Credit for the articles should go to Rod Deakin NR7E. If you are interested in Boat Anchors or Shop board equipment, here are a few Web pages that Rich likes. They offer nice pictures of old equipment and links to others:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepage/sweetbay>

<http://www.zynet.com/~johnb/>

<http://epsilon.cs.unc.edu/~nick/hobbies.html>

<http://www.theporch.com/listproc/listproc.html>

http://fohnix.metronet.com/~nmcewen/techno_weenies.html

What goes around comes around

by Lea AB5TY

The year was 1942, the year of the Big War for you FISTS who were not around then. It was my junior year in high school and time to start planning for a career (back then it was called a job).

Many of the men had been drafted and the railroad was looking for someone to do a man's job. So who

do they send? A YL, of course. They were teaching code at a nearby high school, so to prepare myself for this fine career, I enrolled and passed with flying colors. The next year when reporting for work at the Sante Fe in Temple TX, I thought I would be an operator right off the bat. Not so. Seems they were using something called American code. Hmmm....

Learned that. Used an old Vibroplex bug, and thought I was pretty good, but we were never told how fast we were sending/receiving, so I suspect my speed was about ten wpm.

I was 17 years old and after two years, I had "been there, done that." Time to move on. Later I worked for KFJZ Radio/TV for ten years, then became a court reporter and did that in Dallas, TX for 25 years before retiring. But that's another story. By the way, words on the Stenotype, that funny little machine that court reporters use, are very similar to Phillips code.

I had almost forgotten the railroad experience, when in 1993, 'lo and behold I met some people speaking in a foreign language. At least it sounded that way. They were hams. I became interested, and two months later I had my novice ticket. Haven't been off the bands since more than 15 minutes at a time, at least according to my OM John.

I have most of the FISTS members flagged on my data base, and have enjoyed visiting with **K5DQ**, **KB0ZE**, **N3PM**, **KA0FGV**, **AE4W**, Scott and many, many others. I still need 72 more points for my Century Award, so give me a FISTS up when you hear me.

So fifty years after the railroad "career", I became a ham. I am now relearning American Morse as well as trying to use the old Vibroplex bug. It seems that the word is out on 40 meters that I was a RR OP. Now the RR OPs are coming out of the woodwork and sending Morse to me, none of which I can copy at speeds over three wpm.

And that bug? You have never heard so many excuses in hamdom to QRT when I get on that thing, i.e. QRM, QRN, the XYL just came in, and the classic, "I need to cover the parrot"

*(don't feel bad about those excuses Lea, **WO8E** was told an OM had to QRT because he had to smash a bug walking across his rig, and another time they had to QRT because the pizza delivery boy was at the door!)*

My new 60' tower has been up since October, and surely to goodness the beams will go up this very day, at which time I will hear all of you better.

It's been a ball all along the way, folks, and CW is the icing on the cake.

My best to all, and y'all call when you hear me. And to my friends across the pond, whom I have not had the pleasure of working, ta ta. Now I must cover the parrot, 73/33/88 de Lea

FISTS Activities

written by Pete, Activities Manager, K8OUA

Just what do FISTS do, anyhow? Ever get asked that question? The fact is that FISTS conduct a great number of on air activities of all types, each of them relat-

ed to the promotion of CW on the bands, the building of camaraderie and spirit among its members. FISTS activities are started and sponsored by individual members, just like you. Many different activities have been tried. Some of these have been very successful, while others have fallen by the wayside after only a short time. If you have an activity that you'd like to try, feel free to do it -- let me know and let Nancy know so that it can get the publicity it deserves in the Keynote. Here is a list and short description of the activities that come under the FISTS umbrella early in 1996.

QSO PARTIES -- these have been favorite FISTS activities from the very beginnings of the club. We've had some very active QSO parties in the past run by Maggie, NP2GP, and Don KC4UUG. Scott, KE3NV, has taken these over, and you can join him on Sundays on 14.058 MHz at 2000Z, or on 7.058 MHz at 2400Z. These parties are a great way to work new FISTS and add to your collection of FISTS numbers.

NETS -- for good slow speed QSOs join Charlie (KA8OQF) using the Dayton ARC call W8BI, on 3:720 MHz every Wednesday night at 2000 Eastern time. This net is a ragchew netsimilar to the QSO parties.

For traffic handlers try the FISTS Slow Net, a traffic training net run by Pete, K8OUA every Tuesday and Thursday evening at 2100 Eastern time on 3.782 MHz. The purpose of this net is definitely not ragchewing. It is meant to be a traffic net, and regulars are sent traffic, and encouraged to originate traffic and put it into the system on FSN. It is hoped that eventually FSN will feed new traffic handlers to the National Traffic System through various Section Traffic Nets.

CONTESTS -- FISTS are not traditionally high powered testers, though there are some FISTS who are. FISTS does, though, sponsor several popular contests through the year.

FISTS Novice Roundup -- when the ARRL dropped the NR after last year, FISTS decided to pick it up and sponsor it. Rules for the first FISTS Novice Roundup can be found in the February issue of QST and later in this issue of the KeyNote

FISTS Spring Sprint -- this four hour free for all is held on the second Saturday in May each year. FISTS and non-FISTS try to work as many others as possible.

FISTS Fall Sprint -- is identical to the Spring Sprint, except that it occurs on the second Saturday in October each year.

FISTS Straight Key week is run from the FISTS HQ in England. Held in September it is open to all and it is not necessary to use a straight key if you are participating for "fun". If you want to win FIST of the Year, you must use a straight key. This leisurely contest results in friendly ragchewing type contacts, and nominations for the best fist among those using hand keys are sent in to G3ZQS.

AWARDS -- FISTS and non-FISTS are eligible for two different awards sponsored by the club. The Century Award is the oldest and the most sought after. To achieve this award it is necessary to earn 100 points. Points are achieved by working North American FISTS

(1 point each), and DX FISTS (2 points each). Send your application for the award to Lee N9NVV. The FISTS Novice/Tech Ragchewers Award is awarded in the true spirit of FISTS. To earn this award one must carry on a Morse ragchew in which at least four different pieces of information are exchanged -- name, QTH, RST and at least one other additional piece of information) with sufficient novices or technician-plus class hams to earn 50 points. FISTS novices and techs are worth two point, non-FISTS novice/techs are worth one point. Each contact must be a genuine rachew, contest type contacts do not count. Thus far none of these has been issued, so you could be number 1 !!

CODE BUDDIES -- The idea behind this program is great. Unfortunately the implementation has not been as good as it might have been. The idea is to team up experienced CW ops with newcomers to CW to enable the experienced ops to offer their assistance and reassurance to the newcomers. The program has not really been as successful as it might because we have a lack of individuals requesting a Code Buddy. While you only need listen on the bands to know that we have many hams who need assistance with working CW, identifying these and teaming them up with a Code Buddy has been difficult. So, if you have volunteered to be a Code Buddy, and many of you have, please be patient, and as more newcomers come forward asking for help, we'll try to pair you up.

FISTS activities are designed to promote camaraderie among members of the club and to help hams hone and improve their Morse skills. If you are a member of FISTS and have other ideas for FISTS activities, please let us know! You, too, can play your part in making FISTS an even better organization by taking part in our activities. Join us and promote the mode that offers the most in Amateur Radio satisfaction . . .

FISTS Novice Roundup

Are you taking part in the first ever FISTS Novice Roundup?? The contest begins at 1600Z on Saturday February 24, and runs for a week and two weekends, till 2400Z on Sunday March 3. The rules are fairly simple -- Novices and Techs work everyone, Generals and up work only Novices and Techs.

Exchange: RS(T), state/province/DXCC country, and FISTS number (if member) or power output (non-FISTS). Novices and Techs must sign /N or /T. Work stations once per band and mode - this means you can work someone on SSB and CW on the same band. Any band that a licensee can legally operate on can be used (including VHF and UHF bands for Tech Plus ops). No crossband or cross mode contacts, no repeaters, satellite, or other relays can be used. Score 1 point/phone QSO, 2 points/packet (real time direct contact only) QSO, and 3 points CW QSO. Add one point per contact with FISTS member. Multipliers are states/Canadian Provinces/DXCC countries worked, counted only once. Final score is QSO points times multipliers. Send logs by April 9, 1996. This is FISTS

first attempt at taking a major contest and sponsoring it, and we need all FISTS to get on the novice bands and begin working this contest. This is especially true for FISTS novices and techs, but also true for higher class licensees as well. How about it, support FISTS by getting involved in the FISTS Novice Roundup, and let's see if we can make the contest that many contestants cite as the beginning of their contest activity into an activity that the ARRL wished they had kept going. Get involved and spread the word. Certificates will be awarded depending on the amount of participation. WI luk fer u on NR 73, Pete K8OUA.

As an added incentive, the top FISTS Novice/Tech high scorer and top FISTS General/higher winner (with at least 10 contacts in their log) will win a year's free sub renewal! de Nancy

FISTS Slow Net

Yes, the FISTS Slow Net is still running. Our numbers are down, our traffic totals over the past few months have not been as good as they were, but we still have many hams who QNI regularly. My wife wonders out loud why I keep calling the net together on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but I don't really expect her to understand. How can I explain that one of the great traditions of amateur radio is the handling of message traffic by Morse code, an activity that goes back to the very roots of the hobby. How do I tell her how much more satisfaction I get from handling a message using a Morse key than I get from handling a message using a mike? I do both, you know. I QNI the Ohio SSB Net once a week to take through traffic to the Eighth Regional Net (a CW net), but, frankly, the satisfaction of handling traffic by phone just isn't there.

I have an uncle, a very good ham, a fellow who was my Elmer, and who is a very good and active DXer. He's been a ham for over 35 years, probably closer to 40 years, and is on the DXCC Honor Roll. In all that time, however, he has never handled a single piece of traffic. He looks at me as though I am some sort of nut for my traffic handling activity, as though the only worthwhile thing to do with a ham license is sit with your kilowatt warmed up waiting for the next DX pile-up to dive into. I, too, enjoy working DX. I love contesting, and try my hand at it in a limited way running QRP. I, too, enjoy a good CW ragchew. I guess I'm a pretty typical ham. None of my activities, though, compares with the times that I've been fortunate enough to deliver a message from a military person overseas to his wife or sweetheart somewhere in northeastern Ohio. I once had a young lady burst into tears when I read the message from her husband to her over the phone. Sure, I'd like to work a ZA (I haven't yet), or win my section QRP in the ARRL Sweepstakes, and I'll continue to try to do those. I can guarantee you, though, that neither of those will beat the thrill I've already had in delivering a message to someone from a loved one far away.

The sad thing is that the real tradition in traffic handling is in danger. It's as though all the old salts had

died and no one else ever wanted to race a sailing dinghy. Without new blood feeding the CW traffic nets, we will, one day see them no more. Another tradition, another one of the roots of this great hobby will have withered and died. Most of us, I guess, don't care, we're too busy with other things to worry about CW traffic nets. But, I hope there may be a few out there who would like to do something, in a small way, perhaps, to keep the tradition alive. If you're one of those, why not join a CW traffic net and learn a bit of traffic handling. You don't have to get totally involved, and you might only want to QNI once a week. Perhaps you're nervous and afraid that someone will be critical of your inexperience. OK, then, join us in the FISTS Slow Net, the only FISTS activity that is designed to keep this facet of the hobby alive, and I promise you that not only will you not be criticized, but you will be helped and welcomed.

Over the past couple of months we've had some very good FSN sessions. One night we had stations from across the country check into the net -- from California to Maine -- not bad on the 80 meter novice band. There have been some evenings, though, when I simply have been unable to make the net, like the night my car broke down about half an hour before the net was to begin, and I had to have it towed home and got there about an hour late. This will happen and I invite anyone to take over the net if I don't show up. Please don't let it just fall away, take over the NCS spot yourself and put out a CQ FSN for me. For those of you who have been regularly checking into the net, send us some traffic!! Also, don't limit your activity to FSN, but use your traffic handling skills and join in one of the section CW nets in your section. If you don't know where to find them, I'll send you the info or you can check the ARRL Net Directory yourself. OK, hv a gud one, es I sure hpe CU on FSN sn, 73, es ARF, Pete K8OUA.

License Plates

Joe **AA8HV**'s vehicle is sporting a new vanity plate CW4EVER! Dan **WB8BHP** also had a plate one year that read FISTS (he generously gave me one of the plates when the year was over -it looks very FB in my shack!) John **WB9CIS** also had a CW4EVER plate and sez he was complemented by Country and Western music lovers, hi! Can you come up with any other CW related phrases for use on license plates? In MI, we have seven spaces to work with.

Poetry Corner

by George Hall N2CG

CW forever, right or wrong
Those ditties ring like a song;
Some go slow, some go fast;
As operators sit there pounding brass:
Those who can't hack it
Put it down, and say forget it;
They don't know the thrills and joys;
On being where you separate
The men from the boys.

From Across the Pond

GREETINGS

Greetings people and first of all, apologies for the late circulation of the last Keynote. The Queen may have had a lousy year but I had one lousy month when the press lost impression and I had to send for an engineer twice. Jack G3LRB relieved me of a whole box of envelopes and stuffed 'em but was unable to get back on the road to return them after being isolated with the weather condx. Up here in West Lancashire, we need only three inches of snow to bring everything to a grinding halt and you can bet we are paying the same community charges as most of the country. Hi.

It is a shame that the first Saturday in February produced such fine condx on 20m. The band was alive with US stations varying between 599+40 and 569 depending I suspect on power and antenna, but it coincided with the FOC marathon and in view of my indifferent activity in previous years, conscience goaded me into taking part. Sunday, you heard hardly a peep and the rest of the week found me far too busy to even contemplate activity.

It was early autumn and around midnight when Tammy and I sallied forth on our usual stroll accompanied by the cry of owls which hardly registered, so common were they. The road we take is generously lit with sodium vapours. A broad expanse of grass with a few carefully chosen saplings ended in the darkness of a steep bank which Tammy calls his toilet. A movement in an area of mature trees caused me to enter the shadows to investigate whilst Tammy loped off to the bank to do what a dog has to do. From where I stood, the only thing visible was the very tip of his tail trembling somewhat due to his attitude when there was a soft "floop floop floop" and an owl stooped. It must have seen the trembling extremity and thought "Oooh supper!!!" and was within a few feet of its prey when it became obvious that there was more to it than at first was perceived. As the bird made an undignified crash landing on the grass, I stepped out into the light and for one brief moment the confused wise one blinked first at Tammy and then at myself before recovering its wits and escaping to the darkness above the street lights. I was so overcome with the comic nature of the encounter that I sank back to the roots of the tree consumed with laughter, Tammy licking my face. Moments later I wondered what some passer-by thought. After all, he knew nothing except that some nut with a dog was lying on the ground laughing like a drain!

Nev, G0FOD, advises me that besides the FISTS number 1890, GB2BP has been allocated the RNARS number of 0011. Boy they must have been scraping the barrel to dig that one up. Question - to whom was RNARS 0011 originally allocated? Anyone know?

Further to last month's warning about checking your phone bills for incorrect call charges, I learn that some people are parking up in busy places with a highly questionable gadget that monitors calls from portable phones and extracts the registration and other details

which can be used to make phone calls leaving the legitimate user to pick up the bill. It would seem that the problem is recognised by some companies and steps have been taken to prevent unlawful use of the essential ID codes but this is rather akin to the trend adopted by software companies of launching high powered programmes onto the market at a high powered price and using the purchasers as beta testers to uncover the bugs! The difference is that the former do not make a charge for correcting their errors whilst the software companies charge the purchaser for a bug-free version. Boy; what a rip-off.

Internet and the World Wide Web has taken off like an explosion over in the US. The reason for the popularity is doubtless Ma Bell's generous gesture of FREE local calls. I think it is quite likely that when BT is eventually obliged to succumb and offer the same privileges over here we may well find a much reduced activity on VHF and UHF allocations.

INTERNET PAGE

George, G0TIP in an e-mail msg left me with the address of his home page: <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/town/square/ad698> from whence many interesting hypertext links were investigated. He keeps a separate page for FISTS as well as another for RSARS. Worth a visit if you are on the system.

HELP FOR LIBERIA

From Dickson EL2NC, a plea for equipment for Novices in a Liberia which is still reeling from the after effects of war. Dickson is acknowledged as the best CW operator in EL and is currently engaged in tutoring other interested amateurs.

He first extends 73 and thanks to his sponsor, **WB2FXK**. Dickson is very proud to be a member of the club and is spreading the word within the Liberian Amateur Radio Association.

At the present time, for CW practice, they are crammed into a small temporary centre with ONE transceiver for 9 novices. This situation is set to deteriorate when the centre closes in the near future since the transceiver does not belong to them.

In order to sustain and promote CW activity in Liberia, they need more equipment. What may seem useless or outdated kit to you may well be of use to them and getting a few more African stations QRV would be a tremendous boost to the club. Anything you can offer should be sent via Transglobal Express Services PO Box 440, Brooklyn, NY 11230 to:

Dickson Tamue . EL2NC.
Liberia Radio Amateur Association,
PO Box 1477 Monrovia, Liberia West Africa

This of course is primarily for the use of North American members but perhaps Dickson could sort out a route for UK and other European countries!

FROM ACROSS THE POND

Marshall, AA0XI who also sports the call VK5FN, takes Patti to task on the subject of "a breath of bad air" suggesting that patience will not solve the problem. Patience is certainly required for the (happily rare) op with unreadable keying but it does not solve the problem; only helping you to hang in there until there is some sort of resolution.

I dare say that most of us at some time have had to keep a hand on the RIT or VFO to follow someone who was skating up and down the band. Not to tell him that he has a problem (which in such a case may well be causing serious QRM to innocent ones in the path of his wild deviations) would be uncharitable and I prefer to adopt the same tack with poor keying. Here however one cannot be as objective without causing offence so "All OK OM but u run some chars together es not easy copy". The guy is happy because I have read him (albeit with difficulty) and is now aware that he needs to concentrate on his inter char spacing. (Geo).

WI9X (Jim) notes that some CBers seem to believe that the bottom 325KHz of 10m represents additional channels to where they can retreat when the need arises. I know that it is something of a problem over there (here in the UK most CB activity is on VHF FM) and questions the practicality of QRMing 'em back where they should be. Nancy, quite rightly, will have no part of deliberate QRM but opines that making use of the band is a good idea. If the CB brigade are up there then it must also be useful for legitimate users! This is a prospect which I have personally long supported. 10m is every bit as good as 2m for short haul working with the advantage that it often opens briefly bringing many surprises. Even QRP here could be very useful for local nets.

Mitch, WA4OSR runs the Vibroplex company which is anxious to build up a collection of Vibroplex bugs, keys and memorabilia to help the company to document its place in telegraph history.

WZ8C. Nancy has a quirkish side to her nature which has hitherto been hidden from me. She cites 10 top reasons for using phone

LICENSING TREND - IS IT GLOBAL?

From Ken, WK8F, a synopsis of Ham Radio status 1991 v 1995 following the introduction of the no-code licence over there:

Total Hams in the US: 1991: 522,312
 1995: 688,332

No-code Techs have sprung from 0 in 1991 to represent a staggering 34.5% of the total ham population. No-code Technicians now outnumber:

Novices 2.42:1
General 1.86:1
Advanced 2.09:1
Extras 3.41:1

Because of the easy availability of No-code licences, it is clear that they are set to become the majority faction with a louder voice than all the other classes combined. A disturbing thought!

There is an ITU World Communication conference scheduled for 1999 and QST printed in the February issue an editorial entitled "Managing the Morse Issue". The editorial states that in 1994, the IARU (which makes recommendations to the ITU) reviewed the Morse requirement at regional conferences in 3 regions. In all cases there was overwhelming support for no change so New Zealand's proposal to eliminate the CW requirement for HF bands was defeated.

This should have been the end of the matter but here - less than 2 years later - the ARRL is starting a low key campaign to convince us that this was a mistake and we must now prepare for WRC99 to get it right. Surely, the results of the last conference were clear enough so what's all this about "getting it right next time"?

THE COMPUTER CHAPTER

Riley reports virtually no enquiries which does seem rather a shame. However, he advises me that he has opened a BBS on 01224-899073 which accepts data and fax calls at up to 14,400 Baud and is part of the ElectroNet, Fidonet, IGA-Net, LDSS-Net, RA-Net and TrakNet networks and if sufficient interest is shown, he is prepared to set up a MorseNet or even FistNet. The prime requirement seemingly is a comms package with ASCII emulation and Z-Modem - don't ask me, I am konfused. Hi. He is also on internet kb8ppg@g7heaven.wintermute.co.uk and although he does not check his mail on a daily basis I am sure traffic directed thus would be read reasonably quickly.

THE STRAWBERRY BASKET

G3VQO. Les, like so many others, has succumbed to the entreaties of the advertisers and recently splashed out on a PC. Whilst initially intended for his Daughter's school work, he now wonders whatever he could have done without it. His FISTS database helps him keep track of who he has worked or (perhaps more importantly) who he has not yet landed. It is no doubt helping with his accumulation of QSL cards for his credits to his CW-DXCC with 261 countries.

G4EIB. Jim notes the comments re Bletchley Park and the gadgetry developed there during the war. He served in the airborne forces during that period and recalls the buttons and also a small hacksaw blade which was sewn into a thick seam down the front of the uniform jacket. concurs with 2M0ALU and has thus far sent out 150 cards in order to accumulate his century award. Hey Jim... you DO NOT NEED QSLs for the century mate.

G4YJB. Ron's XYL who never reads keynote, picked it up whilst they were enjoying a cup of tea in bed and was heard to mutter "Oh yes.. I agree, you never know

what these things do to you" (referring to my unnerving experience with medication) and she then went on to read the whole of the "Greetings". Says Ron, if she had read on she might have enjoyed the "Katz" item but you have to do these things in easy stages.

G0DAF. You learn sump'n new every day and Jim's Son-in-Law hit the button with the fact that -40 degrees is a meeting point for both "F" and "C".

G0UGZ. Thanks for the good wishes Len. Now that I am back to near normal and again polluting the atmosphere, then at 68 years, I follow the advice of one learned gent on TV - "If you are getting on a bit then beware - the trauma of giving up the weed can rob you of more time than you would otherwise gain".

G0TZW. John is suffering withdrawal symptoms since his since his Trio TS950 developed a whoopsie and I guess he can't wait to get it back from Kenwood. He encloses a QSL from N8UJZ who had at the time of despatch, just started on his Century. "The FISTS club is very popular over here. It's nice to see that CW is still alive and doing well".

G5WW. Recently celebrated his entrance to the ranks of Octogenarians. In the last couple of years he has been forced to accept some limitations such as climbing on the roof. Notes that during DX contest, you will sometimes hear GB5WW which, Paul asserts, has absolutely nothing to do with him but has been told that it is perfectly legal. How can it be he asks, that a contest station should be classified as a special event station. Yes Paul, VE is exactly the same as SK - I guess it's just the way the compound signal is interpreted.

G3GUR. John wonders how Practical Wireless can suddenly jump in price from ú1.90 to ú2.20 and noted a letter which I QSP'd from a US members. A parish magazine which he read told of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 and the title of "The Society of Harmonious Fists". Heck-we are nothing if not harmonious - are the world governments keeping a cautious eye on us? Hi.

UA4LFR. Alex's Christmas card arrived somewhat late due to an indifferent postal service between Russia and the UK but most appreciated. Whilst thanking **WB2FXK** for his kind sponsorship, he was delighted to note two calls in the listing which correspond to great friends in the US. The call in parenthesis is an aid to myself for identifying the sponsor Alex. By the way, I am not sure of your e-mail address yet - can you please send me an e-mail with the full address info.

Late Breaking NA NewsBits:

Congrats to Ralph **K8AN** on his reappointment as Assistant Director for the Great Lakes Division of the ARRL, a position he has held since 1988! And thanks Ralph for the plug for FISTS in your always excellent magazine The TSRAC Amateur Radio News Bulletin.

Congrats to Don **KC4OCS** on his new granddaughter Kajtlen!

Congrats to Ric **KB8WZV** on his whirlwind blitz of passing the theory tests for General and Advanced and the 13 wpm test! Ric says "I was so nervous taking the cw test that my copy looked like a bunch of

random code groups! When I was given the 10 questions to answer, I was very shocked. I wasn't aware it was a multiple choice test. I'm proud to say I passed without having to guess any answers. I feel having multiple choice tests is absurd, it defeats the purpose, after all it's a proficiency test! I didn't see any problem with having a no-code class, but I feel that eliminating CW is a bad move & this kind of test is one more step in that direction. I'm curious to see what others think about these tests. My next step is to become a VE"

Don't forget to make your plans for Dayton May 17-19, it will be here before we know it. FISTS will be at the same booth as the last few years, C-15 on the ramp that leads to the central cafeteria. Our Eyeball Party is Friday night at Stouffers Hotel in the Window Lounge. Stouffers is in Downtown Dayton, we will be on the top floor. It's pretty tricky to find your way around the hotel complex (at least WO8E and I thought so!), so just aim for the floor with all the windows around it. I know there are a lot of evening activities, so no matter which night we chose it would conflict with something. But luckily most of the dinners take place at Stouffers anyway, so plan on stopping by after you attend that QRP or whatever banquet! Geo will be there and there is never a dull moment when he is around, hi!

I got a phone call on Valentines Day from a writer at 73 Magazine. He had a nice CW chat with a FISTS member who included some FISTS info and a sample newsletter with his QSL card. He wants to print an article about us in his column! I was taken totally by surprise, not just from getting a call from a magazine, but because 73 is notorious for being not exactly nurturing to Morse. I was so stunned that I didn't get the name of the FISTS member who sent him the info. You must know who you are, so Thank You! The article will be in a column called QRX in the April issue.

Congrats to Rich **N3QEN** on the /AG upgrade!

Thoughts on the World Conference Wanted

If you have been following the ham radio political scene, you know that our CW tradition and frequencies are STILL endangered. Hams have spoken and told the ARRL we want to keep the code requirements and want to stop the "dumbing down" of the exams, and the last Conference was a victory for CW. But the threat doesn't stop now, the next conference coming up in a few years will be a big test. FISTS, being a part of the International Morse PRESERVATION Society needs to get involved with this - but in which capacity? Are you willing to get actively involved? Write letters/make phone calls? Serve on a committee? Since this is a global concern as well as one for North American FISTS, I've written to Geo and asked for input from the DX members as well.

I hope this issue clears up some questions about FISTS activities, supplies, awards, etc. If you have questions, drop me a note and I'll do my best to get the answers in the next KeyNote! CUL! de Nancy

**The International Morse Preservation Society
and
FISTS C.W. CLUB**

_____ de G3ZQS

_____ 1996

Dear _____,

You have been sponsored for membership of the above club and it is my great pleasure to enclose herewith the membership application form.

There has long been a demand for an organizations such as this not only to fill the void left by the declining numbers of ex-professional operators but to nurture the interests of those who are drawn to the mode but lack the operating skills. It's just these Amateurs who would otherwise be tempted to exchange the key for a microphone if the satisfactions and pleasure of Morse were to be denied them by a lack of opportunity. Such opportunity is rare when one is a beginner and the bands appear to be populated by c.w. signals which are well beyond their limited skills.

FISTS is peopled by those whose love of Morse has urged them on to encourage the beginner, to dispel those initial moments of fear and help them reach out for a joy known only to a small minority of Radio Amateurs.

A love of MORSE and a concern for its perpetuation are the only requisites for membership. There is no specific speed requirement and neither is membership of the RSGB or other National body demanded. The aims of the club are:

- a) To further the use of Morse Code on the bands
- b) To encourage the newcomer to the mode
- c) To engender friendships within the membership

You will appreciate that in order to effect these goals, the club must render itself open to the novice operator and have a healthy sprinkling of Veterans to encourage them.

Your subs are due on the anniversary of the month in which you joined. There will be approximately 12 newsletters per year which will depend largely on your own contributions and you are encouraged to offer comments and observations.

We have our own QSL bureau which distributes members cards free as far as is possible and members may also chose to adopt the club QSL card.

In addition, we have a talking newsletter for those who are visually handicapped.

One of the greatest spin-offs of a club of this nature is the firm and lasting friendships which are a direct result of membership and consequent on-air contacts. You are encouraged not only to meet other members on the air but, if the opportunity is there, on a Social basis also. Should you wish to invite your current friends to join the club, you are at liberty to nominate them bearing in mind the criteria mentioned above.

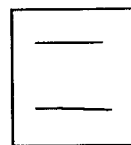
We look forward to receiving your reply.

73 de

red

G3ZQS

FISTS C.W. Club



Membership Application Form

Callsign _____ Name on the Air _____

Mailing Name and Address:

The following info provides a synopsis of members' working conditions:

Rig(s) _____

Antennas _____

Other club affiliations (ARRL, RSGB, etc) _____

Other interests _____

Birthdate _____ Phone _____

Are you visually handicapped? _____

Email address (if applicable) _____

Packet address (if applicable) _____

Please enclose annual subs of \$15 (U.S. funds)

Date _____ Your sponsor _____

Signature _____

Please make checks payable to FISTS CW club and return to:

Nancy Kott WZ8C, POB 47, Hadley MI 48440-0047 USA