

Dear ARRL Board of Directors and Section Managers:

The March 1997 Issue of QST, page 55 invites comments from members in regard to a committee proposal the ARRL is considering about the Amateur Radio licensing structure.

I would like to offer my opinion and comments on this proposal. The Committee proposes a lowering of the code requirement for General class to 10 wpm because of a "learning plateau in the vicinity of 10 wpm." The Committee also "observed that the Morse code requirements for different classes of amateur license ought to follow a logical progression." Since the next proposed level for Morse proficiency is 20 wpm, lowering of the code proficiency requirement does not create a logical progression. Reducing the General requirement to 10 wpm makes the progression to 20 wpm appear to be even more difficult to obtain. If the standard IS lowered to 10 wpm, a logical progression may be adding a requirement of 15 wpm to obtain Advanced license privileges. However, there has been no proof that lowering the requirement to 10 wpm would not be merely a lowering of standards.

Additional comments:

I do not agree with the proposal to give 125 kHz of the currently CW-only band sub-band to include SSB.

Additional comments:

I support the investigation regarding the abuse of the medical waiver licensing situation and urge you to address this as a matter of urgency.

Additional comments:

In regard to the proposal to eliminate the Novice license and restructure the license classes I have the following suggestions and other comments:

Respectfully submitted,

Member of FISTS CW Club/ International Morse Preservation Society.

FOLD ON LINE AND MAIL

From: FISTS CW CLUB MEMBER

STAMP

AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE
225 MAIN STREET
NEWINGTON CT 06111-1494



KEY NOTE



Sec: E. (Geo) Longden, G3ZGS, 119 Cemetery Rd., DARWEN, Lancs. BB3 2LZ England. 0254 703948

Slow Traffic Net: Tuesday/ Thursday 8pm EDT on 3.682

Slow Ragchewing Group: W8BI 8pm EDT Wed on 3.720

Century Award Net: Sunday 2000Z on 14.058MHz (W3CV/W4JTU N CS)

Please keep watch on the Novice Bands and frequencies ending in .x58 (.058, .158, .258 etc)

Saturday QSO Groups: 14.058 at 2000Z (WP2T) and 7.058 at 2300Z

North American Memo

by Nancy Kott WZ8C
 PO Box 47 Hadley MI 48440-0047
 email: nancy@tir.com
 phone: 810-797-5388



Articles from The Keynote may be reprinted if credit is given to the original author.

Hi FISTS! I'm calling this Issue a "CALL TO ACTION" Issue. As I mentioned last month, and you have no doubt heard from other sources, the ARRL is seeking input about changes to the requirements for licensing, as well as changes to the band plan. Because it is so very important that you make your opinion known, I'm putting a form in this Keynote that I strongly urge you to fill out and mail in. I've even addressed it, all you have to do it put a stamp on it, fold it and put it in the mailbox.

FISTS: The International Morse Preservation Society is easily the fastest growing ham group in the country, if not the world. Please take a minute to fill out your form and then, most importantly MAIL IT! If every North American FISTS member sends in their form, the ARRL will receive about 2000 pieces of mail - they can't ignore that (can they?). Let's stuff their mailbox and let them know we are a force to be reckoned with!

ANOTHER CALL TO ACTION: Also, along the same line - please mark your calendar on afternoon

Saturday May 17. There is a new forum at the Dayton HamVention called a Town Meeting. There are going to be four topics discussed, one of which being "should there be a CW requirement for HF privileges?" I will be giving the Pro-CW point of view, with Fred Maia W5YI giving the Anti-CW argument. Len Winkler, of Ham Radio and More will be in the audience with a microphone taking questions and comments. It will be the first forum to be broadcast live over the Internet. Those who cannot attend the Town Meeting can join in via the Internet and are welcome to Email in comments or questions.

I need a lot of support from FISTS at this meeting. Being up against W5YI will be a challenge - W5YI is a professional speaker and makes his living from Ham Radio (you may remember his corporation will file your 610 for you for a fee of \$15 to renew your license! - you can do this yourself for free). I will need you all there to cheer for CW and BOO for the bad guys and help me thru my stage fright! You will be tired from walking around the flea market and arena all Friday and Saturday morning, so please set aside to join me in Room 5 (check the program in Dayton for exact time) for a lively group discussion. I know there will be at least 100 FISTS at Dayton. It's the perfect opportunity to show them that support for CW is alive and well! I really will need everyone there, so I can look out and see friendly faces to give me courage to do battle!!

If you have any specific thoughts on the "Should CW be a requirement on HF", pse send them along to me as soon as possible.

We also have the FISTS Spring Sprint the second weekend in May. Geo printed Pete's article explaining the rules and times of the Sprint, so I won't reprint it in the Memo part. Hopefully by putting it in the DX part of the Keynote, we'll get some DX FISTS participation - won't that make it exciting!

We are also having a FISTS Group Buy of a QRP kit! No, FISTS isn't turning into a QRP club - but, many have expressed in interest in building a kit, having a way to get on the air inexpensively or having a small portable rig to take camping or traveling. We found one that fits the bill and you'll find more info about that inside this issue when we get On With Your Keynote...

HOW DO I...?

...**ORDER CLUB SUPPLIES?** Irene WO8E 25206 Hayes, Roseville MI 48066 has gold logo stickers 200 for \$5; a logo stamp (for use with ink pad) for \$5; blue enamel/gold metal clasp-back logo pins \$3.50; cloth logo patches 3" octagon shaped \$1.50. Pse make checks out to FISTS, prices do include first class postage. Mugs are available from Joe Falcone 9614 Arden Ave, Livonia MI 48150 for \$3.50 plus \$3 postage - make checks payable to Joe Falcone.

...**GET AN UP-TO-DATE MEMBERLIST?**

Send a SASE with TWO additional loose stamps to Ed N7CFA 2628 Lilac Street, Longview WA 98632.

...**Get on the FISTS On-Line Email List?**

Send your Email address to blafont@tir.com

...**GET/SEND FISTS QSL CARDS Via BURO?** Brian W8BL 3050 Rochester Rd, Dryden MI 48428 handles the Buro. THIS IS FOR FISTS contacts only - DO NOT INCLUDE CARDS FOR NON-FISTS QSOS. **PLEASE put cards in order by call area, alphabetically.** To get cards you may have waiting, send loose stamps to Brian and he use them to send your cards to you. If you are including out-going DX cards, please include a stamp or two to help defray the costs and help the Buro to be self-supporting.

...**RENEW MY KEYNOTE SUBSCRIPTION?** Send a check/money order made out to FISTS for \$15/year to Nancy WZ8C POBox 47 Hadley MI 48440

Sponsor a DX FISTS?...

The DX FISTS have a separate block of numbers; their Keynote is mailed from Geo G3ZQS. Send their QTH to Geo and he will send them a DX application and info.

...**HAVE APPS/SAMPLES SENT TO FRIENDS?** Send the address, preferably with a SASE to hold down expenses, to Joe K5HLR 29 Melrose Dr, Marrero LA, 70072. Or reach Joe via Email at jparduc@jep.com.

...**APPLY FOR THE CENTURY AWARD?**

You can earn a Century Award by accumulating 100 points. DX FISTS QSOS are worth 2 points. North American QSOS are worth 1 point. There is a separate QRP Century Award for those making ALL the contacts using 5 watts or less. You may earn a Century Award for each 100 points you accumulate, but you cannot use repeat QSOS for Award Credit. A FISTS member may only be counted only ONCE - ONE TIME ONLY, no matter how many Century's you apply for. Send a list of contacts to Lee N9NVV 4530 N 15th Street Terre Haute IN 47805 - Don't submit QSLS

...**VOLUNTEER FOR or GET A CODE BUDDY?**

Ed WA3WSJ 775 Moonflower Reading PA 19606

...**SHARE COMPUTER SOFTWARE?**

Joe WZ8U 5428 Bolander Grand Blanc MI 48439

...**GET MY PHOTO ON THE PHOTOPAGES?** Send a snapshot of yourself to Ken W8ROG, 25206 Hayes, Roseville MI 48066.

...**FIND THE WEB PAGE?**

<http://n9nvv.qrp.com/~fists>

...**SUGGEST IDEAS FOR THE WEB PAGE?**

Contact WebMaster Bill KK4KF at bjmyers@arc.net

...**IMPROVE MY CODE SPEED and MEET LOTS OF**

NEW FRIENDS? Join FISTS! Get involved in the nets and activities! Volunteer to be a Code Buddy! Write an article for the Keynote about your interests!

FOR SALE

Greg K9GC has the following items for sale:

Vibroplex VibroKeyer Deluxe Chrome Single-Lever Paddle. Mint condition with xtra springs, hook up plug, and a dust cover, and original box \$95.00

Opto Keyer (electronic keyer) for single lever paddles like the VibroKeyer, like brand new, barely used \$20.00 Contact Greg Ganz K9GC 1843 Ridge Road, Munster IN 46321-2042

At the Rochester NY Hamfest May 30,31, June1, Kevin T. Kedzierski WA2FKV Special Events Coordinator for the Radio Association of Western New York will give a beautiful certificate to those participants who copy at least one perfect minute at 7.5 words per minute (WPM). There will be endorsements for levels from 10 WPM to 75 WPM in increments of 5 WPM.

It is a memorial to Clara W2RUF a silent key who for many years helped people attain their tickets and was a great message handler. Kevin has done this for over 15 years now. His e-mail is cclutz@buffnet.net His address is 767 Loretta St. Tonawanda, NY 14150. Tel (716)-834-3042 after 6PM and (716)- 693-3917 8am to 5 pm. Thanks-Marty NC2B #1028

A CENTURY AWARD FIRST!

Fellow FISTS, it is with great pleasure that we announce that AL, KB1FK has earned FISTS QRP/Century Award Number 001. Al is FISTS #0916. Al used a TenTec Corsair II turned down to 4 watts and an Index Labs QRP Plus. His antenna is a 7 element beam on a 20 foot boom at 55 feet. Congratulations Al!

When Nancy, WZ8C and I first started discussing the QRP Century Award last year we thought it would add another dimension to the FISTS awards program. We never imagined that it would take such a short period of time before someone qualified. It is indeed quite an achievement!

Al also spoke highly of the FISTS buro. So a job well done to everyone who made this possible. 73 es etc. Lee N9NVV

Attention Century Awardees: There were a few Century Awards sent out with errors on them. If yours has a typo, pse drop Lee N9NVV a note with your Award number and he'll replace it. Sorry for the inconvenience!

CORRECTIONS:

Sorry Scott W3CV - his callsign is incorrect in the Issue 3 Century Net Report.
Hack #2999 should have been identified as W9LUI
Jeremy KB8LFA was incorrectly listed as KB8LEA.

Welcome to the New FISTS

This list is shorter than usual because I am getting the Keynote to the printer only two weeks into the month. This represents about two and a half weeks of new FISTS since the last newsletter! I don't see how anyone could possibly even entertain the thought that CW is dying when we are growing by leaps and bounds -- and just by word of mouth.

I hope you can understand that the volume of New FISTS is creating a backlog for the membership certificates. Please rest assured that if you are getting the Keynote, you are on the list of Active FISTS and I will get your membership certificate out to you as soon as I can. I appreciate your patience! And thanks to all who are recommending FISTS and especially to those who send in their renewals! It's wonderful to get the new applications in the mail - but it's the renewals that really make my day and let me know we're on the right track with FISTS and the Keynote!

- 3104 Terry KF6FKR
- 3105 Dwight WD4AEV
- 3106 Enrique LU3MFE
- 3107 Ed W6GSE in Thousand Oaks CA (K5HLR)
- 3108 Richard AC4NW
- 3109 Wayne K1ERB
- 3110 Ken KB2VQW
- 3111 Karen AD4UI
- 3112 Jim K3KDC
- 3113 Jim KB5V
- 3114 JohnWB3UEC
- 3115 Richard WA6NUT
- 3116 William NN6I
- 3117 Phil KE3FL
- 3118 Joe N2ADP
- 3119 Bill N1CO
- 3120 Everett W1EAK
- 3121 George N1MKE
- 3122 Bill K7UF
- 3123 Phil AC4Q
- 3124 Vito WA2PJF
- 3125 Lee W8RTN in Flushing MI (KI8AP)
- 3126 John WB8APR in Whitmore Lk MI
- 3127 Tom WB3JJK in Youngstown PA (N3IJR)
- 3128 Smokey KN6AE in Ontario CA (KF6GUH)
- 3129 Dwain AC5EH in Jonesboro AR (KK5IB)
- 3130 Dwayne VE6QX in Red Deer Alberta Canada
- 3131 Mike N3PUR in Dubois PA (KB2SWI)
- 3132 Denny KC8D in Orrville OH (N2ZHF)
- 3133 Dean W7VWV in Quincy WA (WJ0C)
- 3134 Al WN6Q in Santa Barbara CA ((AC6QO)
- 3135 Nel AA1RX in Dracut MA (WB2FXK)
- 3136 Packy AE3O in Mt Airy MD (WN3T)
- 3137 Roy W5RJ in San Antonio TX (WJ0C)

- 3138 Ken VE7CTW in Richmond BC Canada(W7GB)
- 3139 Tim N3NSL in Edinboro PA (AL7NM)
- 3140 Don W8MON in Dayton OH (AA2YH)
- 3141 Steve KF8KS in Troy MI (K8JV)
- 3142 Bob N1HOG in Lynnfield MA (N2ZHF)
- 3143 Anne W12G in Elma NY (K2BCL)
- 3144 Bob W7BMI in Billings MT (AA3DU)
- 3145 Aaron KB2BWO in Bayside NY (NB2T)
- 3146 John KC8GCD in Copemish MI (KB2SWI)
- 3147 Alan N6RNP in Chico CA (WA7MMG) —
- 3148 Bill WF6W in Littlerock CA (W6DDB)
- 3149 Ralph W6RVY in MountainView CA (KQ4VH)
- 3150 Steve N2MNN in Livingston NJ (QRP-L)
- 3151 Al WA3PTY in Hummelstown PA (WB2FXK)
- 3152 Terry Barnett in Dublin OH (WB2FXK)
- 3153 Paul NI6P in Auburn CA (W3CV)
- 3154 Troy WI0K in Wichita KS (K5HLR)

CALLSIGN CHANGES

Norman WB2KDA is now K4YKI
Jose #1706 WP4IIV is now KP3W.
Jacqui #2330 is now KF6JAO
Chris #2355 KE6UQK is now W6VL
Tom #2100 WB5HLR is now W5NQ
Chuck #2730 N3TSO is now N3ON.
Len #2134 KG8SF is now W8VQ
Ken #2354 AC6NV is now K7PU
Bunny #1788 KC4LHZ is now AE4P
Matt #1412 N9ESP is now WD9DMM

SUNDAY APRIL 27

I will be a guest on Len Winkler's Ham Radio and More on April 27, presenting a pro-CW viewpoint against W5YI's anti-CW viewpoint. It will be a "pre-view" of what will be happening at the HamVention, mentioned on Page 1 of this newsletter. The show is broadcast live on WWCN Shortwave, 12.160mhz at 2200Z. Pse listen in and use the 800 number announced during the show to call in your support. FISTS have always been there during my past appearances on the show - lets clog their phone lines one more time!

THE PHOTOPAGE WINNER IS

***** Larry WR2F #2008 *****

Larry is the winner of 50 FISTS stickers and a FIST cloth patch, just for sending in his photo for the photopages! Each month we hold a drawing with a computer generated winner. To be eligible for the drawing all you have to do is send in a photo for our photopages. All FISTS with a photo on the pages, or in the process of being put on a page, are eligible to win each month, unless you've already been a lucky winner. You can only win one time. Why not send your photo in today to Ken W8ROG, 25206 Hayes, Roseville MI 48066 and **BE A WINNER!**

News and Views From FISTS Members

Norman **K4YKI** writes: Numerous highlights during the year as a FISTS. Met some great folks and but most exciting, was a QSO with Irene **WO8E**. Have now worked 39 FISTS the ragchew way on 40 and 80 only. I'll get there eventually.

Things that didn't suit me during the year was a 4-way bypass in October and an abdominal aneurysm to be repaired on 4/30. Trust that I'll snap back as I did from the bypass and be in command of my faculties or I probably would not be renewing my Keynote subscription. Many of my ham friends on the Sunrise net helped pull me thru the last one so they will be there on this one. Enclosed is the renewal fee. It's been worth the price, for sure, to belong to such a group.

Thanks for renewing and the kind words Norman. Good luck with your surgery on the 30th - we'll be sending good wishes out your way for a successful operation and a speedy recovery!

John #2199 **KB7OMU** sends his renewal and says: "Here are my dues for another year. Am enjoying the FISTS and glad to see it growing. Hope to meet you on the bands." *Hope to CU during the Sprint, John!*

Mike **KE4GBE** bought a Vibroplex Lightening Bug at a hamfest and is in love with it! It came with the box and is in great shape - made in 1940 or so, probably owned by a SSB man! There was an original price list and instructions included - they are pretty quaint, misspellings and all.. The original price of his "new" bug was \$23.95 (\$2.50 extra for a left handed model). Mike says he begged the guy down to \$68. He thinks the OM finally got tired of hearing him whine! *Mike sent a copy of the price list to me - It lists the Original Model, standard finish at \$24.95, De Luxe finish is \$29.95. The Blue Racer lists for the same prices. The Vibro Keyer is \$18.95. A cord and wedge for all models is \$1.75, and a circuit closing switch for use on Morse or land wires is \$2. The carrying case is \$6.75 - and it says you can contact Vibroplex by their "cable address" -VIBROPLEX NEW YORK. Mike asks "can you still send a cable, hi?"*

From Mike **LA0HA**: Dear fellow members, I would like to promote the use of CW among yachtsmen. I would like you to give me your opinion and have FISTS endorse this project. I would take the initiative to mail the following to many yacht clubs worldwide, write to yachting magazines, use my home pages as an information site, post messages in sailing news group, etc. As you guessed I love CW and sailing. hi. Please send your comments to:

Michel Verheughe, Seljeveien 18A, N-3150 Tolvsrod

Norway e-mail: michel@online.no
or meet me on the air. I usually "hang around" 14058 kHz at 1700UTC 73 de Mike **LA0HA** FISTS 2821

From Pete #2178 **K4PTU**: A ham I was working today sent "CUL ES 161 GL TU". Well, I just had to ask what the 161 stood for. Back came the reply that it was 73 plus 88, and that this adds up to 161. Pretty neat, I thought. May use it myself now and then. What will these ham minds come up with next? - Ha! CUL!

From Craig #1573 **AA3JV**: Enclosed is a check to renew my membership with my favorite club. In my short, 2 1/2 years, as a ham, I've found the friendliest operators are on the CW bands, and FISTS members are the icing on the cake. I hope to meet more FISTS members as well as encourage others to join. Keep up the great job - Love the newsletter! *Thanks Craig, I really appreciate the kind words and I totally agree with you about FISTS being the icing on the cake!*

From Bill #2096 **WA6YPE**: I just finished reading KeyNote Issue 2, **WA2BQI**'s "SKN 96" article and **KB5IEU**'s request for hidden antenna ideas, which reminded me of a recent CW QSO I had.

I always enjoy listening to CW as I tinker around in the garage. Not really satisfied with the short wire strung helter skelter in the roof trusses and hooked up to an old shortwave receiver, I decided to set up a QRP station in the garage. Early one Monday morning I started the project. Out of storage came the Heathkit HW-9, matching speaker, power supply, and Vibroplex bug. For the antenna, I stapled some 22 gauge wire under the eaves of my 26' x 40' garage in a loop. Fed it in the center of the 40' run with 450 Ohm ladder line to a MFJ 4:1 balun box. A short run of coax through the garage wall to the tuner then to the HW-9. A 6' run of coax braid to a ground rod & I was ready to try it out.

The antenna tuned up on all bands 80 thru 10 meters. I then tuned it up on about 7.050 and sent CQ. Nothing heard, so I tried it again. There was some very weak, slow CW just barely audible just about the noise. I sent "QRZ? de WA6YPE", and sure enough the weak station in the mud was calling me. It took over a half hour of digging and asking for repeats to accomplish one of my most memorable two way QRP QSOs.

The station calling me was Steve **N0TU**. His QTH was a SNOW CAVE at a place called Rabbit Ear Pass in the Colorado Rockies. His power was about 1 watt to a dipole supported by skis. The temperature was 25 degrees F. His hand warmer was serving dual purpose as a battery warmer. If you're on the Internet, find the story of the QSO at <http://www.webaccess.net/~S&P>, then click on "getting ready for FYOB'97"

COMMENTS On Proposed Licensing Structure as presented in QST, March 1997

Let me first state that I am 51 years old, have been licensed for almost 1 year. My first license was a Tech Plus which I was awarded on 4/19/96. I had a burning desire to explore other frequencies and modes of Amateur Radio, so I worked very hard and a month later, I earned a General Class License. Now I was able to enjoy other bands using a wide range of modes.

Like many newer hams, my ambitions did not match my finances, though, I spent about \$3000 on my primary and only rig. The joy of talking for hours with exotic far off stations was not a myth, however, I quickly learned that unless I had a 100 foot tower, a multi-element yagi and about 500 watts, I would be stepped on by most of the big guys who have spent years accumulating their gear, and upgrading their equipment. More power to them, oh a slip of the tongue! hi. My point is this. With CW, I can go anywhere with 100 watts and a simple vertical antenna, around the world on most days. It is the most desirable, least expensive form of communication available to the ham. Certain frequencies offer a unique opportunity to contact other foreign stations on CW (DX)> These frequencies ordinarily are at the lower end of the bands. Specifically, 7 MHz, where Generals now enjoy privileges from 7.025 up and thought the Novice-Tech Plus section. The very best portion of the band, and one that already has plenty of QRM, occurs between 7.025 and 7.050. To allow the new Intermediate Class to utilize this frequency spectrum amounts erosion of the General and above CW privileges, without replacing the bandspace with additional frequencies designated fro CW on 7 MHz for General and above.

I suggest that reconsideration be made to either change this part of the resolution or to allow General Class Licensees access to the area between 7.000 to 7.025MHz. Of course, this may generate an objection from our Extra Class citizens. All this commotion because 13 WPM code speed is too fast, too hard for someone to learn.

Additionally, in the section of the article on pgs 55-57, the Q & A section asks, "Doesn't the proposed reduction in General and Advanced code speed from 13 to 10 words per minute amount to a lowering of standards?" You answer to this question with the statement that "Code test standards are not consistent, that whether an applicant passes or fails may have more to do with the design of the test...etc." has nothing to do with 13 WPM code speed. Theoretically, the same thing happens at 5 wpm and at 20 wpm. All in all it has nothing to do with required code speed 13 wpm, if at all it has to do with administration of the tests. I am a ARRL VE and I suggest that all is needed is to tighten

test administration. Why even think of changing the code speed? Even to the casual observer, there is no logic in this rationale.

Changing to a sending test does not take into consideration the fact that most hams use devices other than keys, i.e. bugs or keyers. I'm confident that the intent of establishing code speed at any level is to establish competency in sending or receiving, regardless of method, key, bug or keyer. Gentlemen, I believe that you are far from arriving at a representative solution to the question of Licensing Structure. Please take my comments and observations to heart and reconsider your positions to date. Respectfully submitted Dave Berutich **KF6DCU**

I am a member of the FISTS Morse Preservation Society and I would like to take this opportunity to request that you reconsider your stand on the lowering of importance of CW in amateur radio. In case you have not spent much time down on the CW end of the bands, there is still a large block of hams who use and enjoy CW. To those who cannot and/or will not learn to use this mode, do not count us unimportant just because you do not use this mode. It is just as enjoyable to us as your SSB is to you.

The SSB people will try to tell you that just because they can't do it, it must be no good. Remember that CW is THE most efficient use of spectrum and I do not need to remind you that CW is also the MOST power conservative mode. We in the FISTS organization are now over 3100 strong and we are only a VERY small part of the CW fraternity. Please do not let the mouths override the fists. I have been a ham for over 32 years and have been an ARRL member for many years and I would like to feel that you are representing me also, but recently I do not get that feeling. Tom Desaulniers / **K4VIZ**

First, I do not think the word "technician" should be used to identify any kind of amateur license. A technician, in this case an electronics technician, is one who is knowledgeable in electronics theory and repair. The idea that the present Technician Class license is one who experiments, builds, tests, and operates on the amateur bands above 30 Mcs is a misnomer. I presently know three Technician Class licenses, who run around with HTs, and they do not know an electron from a brickbat. I think amateur radio has been dumbed down to its present low state by the ARRL for the sake of business.

Here is what I would suggest. Lets go to three classes of licenses only. Lets call them the Brass Key License, the Silver Key License, and the Gold Key License. Give the Brass Key licenses the privileges now devoted to the Novice, the Technician, and the Technician

Plus. Morse requirement would remain at 5 WPM. All Technician Plus would be converted over to this new license. The Novice and the Technicians would be given a grace period in which to upgrade to the Brass Key License, or have it revoked. The FCC would charge a \$20 fee a licensing period of five years.

The Silver Key license would cover the General Class and the Advanced Class licenses. Grandfather all General Class and Advanced Class into this Silver Key license. Band privileges would include those enjoyed by the General Class at the present, and half of those presently allotted to the Advance Class licenses. Code speed would remain at 13 WPM. Advance Class licenses would be given a grace period to upgrade to Extra by passing the 20 WPM Morse test, or remain as a Silver Key. The FCC would charge \$25 fee for a licensing period of five years.

The Gold Key license would replace the present Extra Class and retain their present privileges, The FCC would charge a \$30 fee for a licensing period of five years.

I heartily agree that the Morse test requirement should be changed to require one minute of solid copy and include a sending test. The FCC should use some of the licensing fees to supply tests to the VE's, and they should stop giving out the Q&A answer pool. You may not agree with me on this point, but let me digress a moment. Lets just suppose the SC State Board of Engineer Examiners gave out the Q&A pool to their exams. An accountant could obtain a copy for a few dollars, memorize the questions and answers, and, for sake of argument, become a licensed Civil Engineer. Would you go to him to design you a bridge across the Potomac River? The rest of the fees the FCC could use to crack down on the vulgarity, filthy, and obscene language you can hear most anytime on the HF SSB bands. As the ARRL Board of Directors are concerned over the operation and finances of the League, amateur radio operators should be dually concerned that the FCC has the needed revenue to administer the amateur radio rules, requirements, and penalties.

My biggest pet peeve that the ARRL has opened up is the vanity call signs. You used to be able to tell where a fellow ham was located by his call. Not any more. I have worked KH6s in California, and a KL7 in Washington state. Florida is loaded with W1s, W8s, and some W9s. I'm off the subject, or maybe not.

The WRC-99 Planning Committee proposal to simplify the licensing structure, in my opinion, is just mudding the water more. We do not need to complicate the structure as proposed by the Planning Committee. Their present band plan would require every amateur radio operator to have a computer just to keep up with which frequencies are legal for their class of license.

73, Wyatt "Pete" Propst, K4PTU
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FISTS GROUP RIG BUY

No...FISTS isn't turning into a QRP club. But just like ham radio -- FISTS has something for everyone. Many FISTS are interested in building a kit. Many have expressed an interest in trying QRP. Still others have told me they would like to have a small rig they can take along easily on camping trips or vacations. Or would like a simple kit to get their feet wet in homebrew.

When Scott W3CV suggested we do a Group Buy and offered to organize it, I thought it was an excellent idea. Thanks to all who responded to our request for input. He was overwhelmed by letters. It was a daunting task to find one rig to fit the needs of everyone

After evaluating many different brands of QRP kits, we've decided on the Emtech NW Series monoband transceiver. The rig is available in your choice of 80, 40, 30 or 20 meters. The 80 and 40 meter versions include coverage on the Novice bands. Features include: Tuning from a 8:1 vernier variable capacitor - Variable bandwidth crystal filter - full smooth QSK, internally adjustable sidetone level, full QRP gallon, internally adjustable down to milliwatts.

Easy of assembly was important, many FISTS indicated this would be their first attempt at homebrewing. Assembly of this rig is done in steps and each step is tested before proceeding, so you know it will work when completed. Scott bought/built one and he said the parts are all sorted and labeled by steps, so you don't have to search thru a pile of parts to find the right one. He estimated the building time at 8 hours for a beginning/intermediate experienced builder. The fiberglass PC board is silkscreened and solder masked.

The painted/silkscreened cabinet is 6.5"W x 2.5"H and 5.5"D. And best of all, there is a FISTS logo decal on the front! The price to FISTS members is \$120 and that includes cabinet, hardware, filter and shipping. Specify which band you would like. There will be kits available at Dayton, for \$5 less, since they wouldn't need to be shipped. *Order directly from Emtech at 3641A Preble St, Bremerton WA 98312 phone:360-415-0804 email: roygregson@aol.com* There are spec sheets available, if you would like more information, please contact Emtech directly.

FISTS member Marshall AA0XI/Milestone Technologies has a memory keyer kit available at a 10% discount to FISTS members: The MEMORY keyer kit is \$19.75 or \$30.75 with the hardware if you want to build it stand-alone. Marshall can be reached via Email at aa0xi@mtechnologies.com or his web page at <http://www.mtechnologies.com/mthome> I don't have the address or phone number at the time of this printing for Milestone Technologies.

FISTS is not receiving any profits from the sale of these products we are offering them as a courtesy to our members.

CW ELITISTS?

by Marty Reid #2668

Hello fellow FISTS, I would like to address a problem I think has become all too common on our beloved CW sub-bands. The problem of becoming a CW "elitist". No, I am not talking about hams who sneer at Tech-plus licensees or those who question the manhood of someone who operates SSB (I don't approve of that attitude either) but I have noticed a disturbing trend toward considering hi-speed code as an exclusive club.

I have heard 30 wpm CQ's sent, then heard answering stations ignored if they were below a certain speed. Or worse, the "old hand" would simply refuse to lower himself to sending slow speed code and blast the poor fellow with a blur of CW he has no prayer of deciphering. Some wouldn't be caught dead in the Novice band because they would be bored to tears trying to copy "those greenhorns."

My definition of a good CW op is more than how fast you have your bug or keyer set up. In my humble opinion a good CW op is: Someone who shares his knowledge of operating technique with newcomers so that they can improve their skills. Someone who does the gentlemanly thing and matches his speed to that of the other station. Someone who sets aside operating time to go up to the Novice bands and chat with the newcomers. I can still remember my days as a Novice. A lot of my QSOs were spent trying to figure out what the other guy was saying between long stings of "error" dits or crammed together letters -- we weren't fast enough to cram words together yet. The reason our code was so rotten was we didn't know what good code sounded like. Every so often a kindly Extra class op would come up and patiently pound away at 5 - 8 wpm with us. I would marvel at how these fellows would send for minutes at a time with crisp swingless, error-free code. "So that's what it is supposed to sound like!" I thought.

Those are the type of hams we need more of today, if we are to keep CW alive. We have to make the learning process less painful for the newcomer and encourage them with helpful hints and kind words. I will never forget the pride I felt the first time someone told me "you have a nice fist, a pleasure to copy."

Those few words made me work harder to perfect my sending and on the air technique than if I had been offered a million dollars to do it. So please, set aside a little of your time to help new ops. Don't ignore or look down on them, for they are our future. If the elitist trend continues, you may be more elite than you think, you may be the last CW op.

Quick - Up Antennas

by WA4DQU #2449

I get a real kick out of operating outside with quick-up antennas. Experimenting with low or on the ground antennas with QRP rigs is a real blast. I am sorry to say that it is not a good idea to try to explain the antenna over the air.

This experiment will give you some ideas and may motivate those who must hide their antennas.

I use a Oak Hills Research QRP 20 transceiver kit that has an output of about two watts for most experiments. The antennas for 20 are shorter and save money on wire. The rig, lawn mower battery and all fit into a wood slat crate. I can carry it anywhere and just hook up the antenna and go.

This antenna started as a wire dipole at 7 ft no inches above natural dirt. Notice I did not say ground because I do not know where ground is. It may be twenty feet below natural dirt. The legs of the number twelve insulated wire were 16 feet 3 inches for each 14.05 MHz with Radio Shack RG58U coax at 48 ft 2 inches.

At this point the dipole measured 1.2 to 1 facing east and west. The rig was 33 ft west of the dipole. Twelve feet to the east of the dipole and 4 feet above the natural dirt. I added a wire reflector 33 ft 5 in long. So now I have a wire beam facing west at an average of 6 1/2 ft above natural dirt. The field strength meter measured 12 microamps 25 ft from the dipole to the west and .5 microamps 25 ft from the reflector to the east.

On March 21, 1997 at 2245 UTC I worked Jose EA1CKO in Lueca Spain. He gave me a 559 report. If that antenna was going west that was a long hop for 2 watts.

I believe that with the 100W rigs we have today and a good tuner anyone could work the world with a 100 ft drop cord lying on the grass.

PS: I cannot make a statement that I have not tried. I cut a piece of old TV coax 55 ft 6 in and a counterpoise 11 ft 3 inches long and hooked them to a hasty L-network. Tuned up with a field strength meter. The antenna laying on the grass worked N1VWD in VT. I am in GA. He gave me a 539 report. Only three CW signals on 14 MHz at the time 1:30 pm EST. The antenna would be close to the famous W3EDP times .66 for the coax. Now I am thinking of making it a DDRR tuned at the front end. Boy, it's fun. Eat your heart out 5 Y I. 73 all and those that can -- get on 80 meters nine to noon. Kent WA4DQU

CONGRATS TO:

Chuck N4WDH on passing his Extra written!

Jacqui on earning her new callsign KF6JAO!

Gene K10FM on his upgrade to Extra! Harvey #2194 N6MM for getting over 100 countries using less than 5 watts!

Rather too often in FISTS KEY NOTE I read someone who is unhappy that it is hard to learn the Morse code, or that he/she just can't copy faster than about 10 wpm. That need not be true.

May I suggest that THE WAY WE START TO LEARN very largely determines how hard or how easy it will be — and how fast we will be able to receive and comfortably.

In 1929 I began the way most people did then, with mental pictures of what the dots and dashes looked like. This meant that as I listened to the letters at very slow speeds of 5 to 8 or 10 wpm, I had to do some intense mental flip flops to come out quick enough that DITDAH means "A", and DAHDIT means "N". That approach almost guarantees that I am going to be limiting myself to speeds rarely over 10 wpm. It may even discourage me from going on.

Is there a better way? Yes, indeed, and good teachers have known and used it for a very long time. It was published in QST (7/1923 issue). Let me paraphrase what it said: The first step in learning the Morse code is to recognize that EACH CHARACTER IS A PATTERN OF SOUND. Never think of the letters and numbers as made up of so many dots & dashes.

Learn these patterns so that as soon as the letter is completed you immediately "know" what letter it is. This is far, far easier than going about it from mental pictures of dots and dashes, and it is starting good learning habits which will make sending and receiving real fun -- enjoyable.

If you want to put it this way, learn that DIDAH IS "A", and that DAHDIT IS "N", etc.. Learn to think of the letters as sound-letter patterns. This cuts out a lot of time-consuming mental steps, translating through several stages to get to where you finally recognize that DIDAH IS "A"! What a tedious waste of time and effort that is.

I know because that old way of memorizing the code by a mental picture of a table of printed dots and dashes was how I began in 1929. It has badly affected my code skill for years, and sometimes even today when code is slow (less than about 13 wpm).. I tend to analyze each letter consciously — and that is slow and tedious -- hard work. It makes us consciously think instead of automatically recognizing — that is the problem.

Our goal as FISTS members should be to have instant letter recognition. In the very beginning It may be fun to be able to copy at that speed - and to me it was - but not the kind of later enjoyment it should be. We need to be able to receive and send at speeds from at least about 16 to 20 wpm to really enjoy using Morse code.

What is the best way to start out? -- Experience shows that we need to hear the code characters at speeds fast enough so that we learn them as PATTERNS OF SOUND -- too fast to try to analyze how many dots and dashes they are made up of.

Learning the code is learning a set of HABITS. Bad habits can be very hard to overcome. So if you are one of those who is having trouble, I urge you to start over by listening to the code at these higher speeds and practice hearing the patterns and recognize that they ARE the code letters, just like written letters are patterns of ink on paper. You didn't learn to read by analyzing the various strokes making up each written letter, did you?

The old QST admonition ended with the words: "If you learn from the first to recognize the sounds as letters immediately without reverting to dots and dashes, you will make much better progress."

We may add, that learning this way will be much easier, and you will enjoy learning the code. Make learning fun, like kids do when they are learning to play baseball, or whatever they want to do. It is enjoyable, not tedious. Your progress will be much better and rapid. And advancing in speed will be much, much easier and quicker.

These principles and more are thoroughly discussed in the book "The Art and Skill of Radio-Telegraphy, published several years ago by FISTS.

We're in the process of revising The Art and Skill of Radio-Telegraphy for its second printing. Bill has revised a few of the chapters - when it's printed and ready for distribution, I'll put a notice in the Keynote.

QRP With John Shannon K3WWP

This month some ideas about things to do with QRP. First some comments about the column. Thanks to Bud WA2BQI, for the kind words in the latest Keynote(2/97), saying my column encouraged him to give QRP a try. That is why I decided to write this column in the first place - to encourage those who may be handicapped by their location and forced to run low power to keep RF interference to a minimum, those who can't afford to buy a big commercial rig, those who don't have room for a huge antenna system, etc.

All too often the newcomer to the hobby or someone contemplating getting into the hobby is intimidated by reading articles in the mainstream amateur publications that show only the stations with thousands of dollars of equipment and huge antenna arrays. That's all well and good, but I want to point out that you can also succeed with QRP and very simple antennas. Once that is realized, and you do get on the air with QRP, it is important to learn how to do things correctly so your confidence on the air increases and you don't become discouraged.

For example, if you know what you should be doing when you enter a contest or a traffic net, you are much more likely to join the contest or the net. That's what this column boils down to - showing the way to have fun in amateur radio.

As we are all painfully aware, propagation conditions have been terrible over the past 3 or 4 years. Ironically, that matches exactly the period when I got back on the air after many years of activity. So I have had to figure out things to do with QRP to pass the time until good conditions return again.

No matter what the conditions, you can always find a rag chew or two each day, probably on 30M, 40M or 80M. I prefer to call CQ when I want to rag chew. That way you can be fairly sure that a station who answers you is copying you well, and you can have a good rag chew. If you answer someone's CQ, there is a chance he might not be copying you well, and if that

happens too often you can get discouraged. If your objective is a good rag chew and you do it by answering a CQ, pick out only the strongest, steadiest signal to answer. You can make this into kind of a contest or activity by seeing how many consecutive days you can get a QSO. On April 30, 1997, I will hit 1000 consecutive days with at least one QRP QSO. If you have the time, this is an easy thing to do with your QRP station.

Perhaps the next easiest thing to do is to try for QRP WAS. Start with a general WAS, i.e. a contact with each state using any combination of bands. Do it with rag chews, get into contests, check into nets. Any way you can get a new state and get closer to that goal. If you have trouble with Alaska, I would say get into the big contests, SS, ARRL DX, CQWW DX, etc., and watch out for stations like KL7Y and KL7RA that I seem to work in most big contests. Look through the contest results in CQ, QST, etc. and find a station that was very active from the state you need, make a note of his call and watch for him in the next big test. Getting a basic QRP WAS is not at all hard. I just checked, and as I write this (3/6), I have worked 41 states in 1997, and probably could have them all had I been trying. In last year's SS, I worked all but AK, HI, ME, and WY. The ARRL endorses the WAS award for QRP so this is an easy way to get a nice piece of wallpaper for your shack.

Once you get the basic WAS, you can make the WAS concept more challenging by trying for single band WAS. I have done this on 40 and 20, and need only KL7 to complete 30. Then you can move on to getting WAS on all 5 main bands (80,40,20,15,10). I need 5 on 80, 3 on 15, and 18 on 10 to reach that goal. The 18 on 10 and the 3 on 15 will come when conditions return. The 5 on 80 will be harder, especially KL7 and KH6. Next you can add in the WARC bands and 160M and go for 9 band WAS. Choose something that suits you. Perhaps WAS with a straight key or WAS with less than 1 watt. Working only 2 letter calls. Whatever. The methods are endless, and none are impossible to achieve - it just takes a little effort. And it can really keep your interest in hamming going strong. Once you achieve one goal, move on to the next, slightly harder one. It's a great feeling of accomplishment.

When you get tired of doing things working states, I guess the next logical step is to work the next smaller political division here in the USA, the county. This activity consumed a lot of my ham time back in the late 60's, and can be very addicting. You can make this as hard or as easy as you want to.

You can very quickly get the basic USA County Award for working 500 different counties. If you've been a ham long enough to have 1,000 QSO's, you probably have 300-400 counties already. Get into the state QSO parties, check into the CW County Hunters Issue 4 1997

Net on 14.056 Mhz (which WA8EOH and I founded back in 1966), check someone's county before you answer their CQ, and work all 9 HF bands regularly. Soon you will have 1000 or 1500 counties.

At this point, to continue racking them up you will have to concentrate on working the mobiles in contests and on the net. I am working on seeing how many I can work by counting only QSO's with a ham who actually resides in the county, i.e. no portables, no mobiles. I am now at 1650 and the going is very slow. I know I'll never get them all that way, but I still do work a new one now and then.

There are also awards for working all the counties in a particular state. This ranges from easy to very hard. The 3 counties of DE or the 8 in CT are quite easy. All 21 counties in NJ have a sizeable ham population and that state is not too hard either. The 5 in RI are another easy group. At the other extreme, TX has 254 counties, many of which do not have any antenna connected to a kite. The society encourages the attendance of their XYL's and lady friends. The society was formed because their local clubs did not focus on operating and building. If this is true in your area, you can do something similar to this in your area. If you would like more information, contact W3RDF at DLShips@aol.com

I don't have a specific overall idea for next month's column. I do have several odds and ends including many of your comments and questions and I think I'll build the column around that. If you are new to FISTS and would like to see some of my earlier QRP columns, they are now available on my web site on my CW page under the FISTS emblem. The URL is <http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/3852/> As always, you can contact me via Email at johnshan@alltel.net or regular mail (hate to call it snail mail as many do since my dad worked for the PO for many years) at 478 E. High St., Kittanning, PA 16201-1304. And that's it for now. -30-

ARTS NET INFO

From George XE1/KG8DA: I am thrilled with ARTS [Amateur Radio Telegraphic Society] traffic net. This is a very fine group. They are so very helpful and have taught me a lot. I am hooked on traffic. But it all started with Pete's K8OUA articles in the Keynote. I would highly recommend this group to any FISTS who would like to get into traffic and can't get on during the FISTS net, or who can't get enough! The morning net is around 1230Z 7.061MHz, and the afternoon net is at 1900Z on 14.030 MHz. They make everyone welcome. For those who have e-mail, Arts sends out some very interesting things by forwarding correspondence etc. FISTS Members Arley WB5NKC and his wife Pat WB5NKD are the main movers and shakers in this group. Their e-mail address is wb5nkd@juno.com



KEY NOTE



Sec: E. (Geo) Longden, G3ZQS. 119 Cemetery Rd., DARWEN, BB3 2LZ, England. 01254-703948
 Packet: G3ZQS@GB7HVU. E-Mail: fist1@compuserve.com or morseman@airtime.co.uk

OFFICES

QSL Manager: G0FRL. Bob Löwe
 PO Box 190. BOLTON. BL1 4UL.
U.S. Rep: WZ8C. Ms. Nancy Kott.
 5450 Diehl Rd., METAMORA, MI48455

PRO: G4YLB. J.A. Welsh

3 Minster Cresc, DARWEN, BB3 3PY

CONTEST MANAGER: GM4BAE

Northbrae, Brookfield Cresc, STRANRAER, DG9 0HY

NETS

Sunday QRS 0900 (loc) 3.575 2E0AJS
 US 0100Z on 14058

Tues: GC0IPX/P 1930 ON 3.558 (+/-)
 Wed: US Net 0100z on 14058

Thurs: QRS 1900 (loc) on 3575. 2E0AJS
 DX 14/21/28.058 on the hour for 15mins

Pse keep watch all Novice allocations
 UK Net Controls use GX0IPX/P

Up-dated listings may be obtained from HQ. SAE plus current stamp. **Lapel Badges**, £1.50 incl. **Fabric patches** £2.50 incl. **QSL Cards** £5.00 per 100 or £8.00 per 200 (UK and EU pse add 50p for p/p. DX members - on advice.

GREETINGS

Wow! I think I had better keep my big yap shut because my remarks last month about the lack of correspondence has resulted in an absolute flood, much of which I am unable to handle so, to those who I am unable to include, my apologies.

At the end of last month, I noted unusual behaviour amongst the squirrels when an uncommonly large number of the creatures were spied in a single tree. My suspicions that these mass gatherings were the results of sexual drive proved to be valid since apart from a few blustery days, we have entered into a period of spring like weather. This euphoric tingle is not restricted to fur and feathers however since the band conditions also seem to have been affected with much early to mid evening activity of 20m. I am told that 10m also opened with a wild free for all on a couple of occasions recently and certainly, reports from our members indicate some dx conditions on 15m also.

Nancy's updates sent the membership soaring to 2,099 as I type this and the snowball continues to roll (sorry Flower, no reference to your typical Michigan winter intended) and we continue to attract EU and UK members also. What have I started ???

SILENT KEYS

G13HNM attended the funeral of FISTS member G13NQH Joe Beattie who died suddenly. It was very well attended with a lot of Amateur people there, a last fairwell was given by a representative from the British Legion who rendered 'The Silence' on the Bosun's Pipe and then the Navy prayer (Joe was ex Merchant Navy). Cliff says that the term 'Silent Key' really applies to Joe as he was always a CW man.
"We are not strangers, merely friends who have never met".

Also, from Alma, widow of GW0URS, a note that her husband Fred, passed away peacefully on Feb 2nd after a long illness. *"His Morse key is now silent - let silence speak"*.

An e-mail from Nancy refers to AC5CM Marion who became a Silent Key on Feb. 13 age 53. She is not sure but thinks it was cancer.

G3YLT. Belated advice from his Wife that Tom became silent key in November 96.

THE SPRING SPRINT

It's that time again, time to bring out that special keyer, check out the antenna farm, and start preparing for the first 1997 Sprint — the FISTS Spring Sprint!! This time, with our numbers reaching over 2000 in the membership list, we should really be able to make the bands rock with CW during the four hours of the Sprint. Yeah, I know, you're not a contester. OK, but this contest is a special one — first of all, it's for the nicest people, FISTS, CW lovers, family. The FISTS Sprints are friendly events — they're intended to be, and time after time, those who partici-

pate confirm that they are. Our Sprints grow each time we sponsor one, and this spring we are anticipating the best one ever. Now, don't forget to forward your logs and get printed up in the Keynote. Support FISTS by supporting CW activities on the air. If you're a top notch contester, show the rest of us how to do it. This year there is a special category for novices/tech pluses. Essentially, if you work a FISTS novice or tech plus, that contact is worth double — 10 points a QSO. Working a non-FISTS novice or tech will be worth the same as working a FISTS member — 5 points. So, how about spending some time on the novice bands and working some newcomers to the contest world. That is, after all, what FISTS is all about. Again, this year, we will continue to have two sections — QRP at 5 watts or less, and QRO at above 5 watts. Multipliers remain as they have been — each state or Canadian province worked (count each only once, no matter how many worked) is a multiplier, and each DXCC country worked — other than US/Canada — (count these each time worked, no matter how often).

OK, here is the info — Date/Time — Saturday May 10, 1700 - 2100 UTC Bands — 3.5, 7, 14, 21, 28 MHz bands; special bonus points for working novices and techpluses; work stations only once per band Exchange — name; state/province/DXCC country; FISTS number (members) or power output (non-members)

Power sections — QRP = 5 watts out or less; QRO = over 5 watts output

Scoring — 10 points for contacts with FISTS Novices/techpluses; 5 points for contacts with non-FISTS Novices/techpluses; 5 points for contacts with FISTS General Class and higher; 2 points for contacts with non-FISTS General Class and higher Multipliers — Each U.S. state, Canadian province counts as one multiplier but can be counted only once. DXCC countries can be counted each time they are worked, remembering that each station can be worked only once per band. Final Score — QSO points X multipliers. Identify novices and techplus stations worked with /N or /T on log.

Send logs, by June 10 to: Peter Kozup, K8OUA, 5115 N. Park Ave., Warren, OH 44481.

I am hoping the bands are going to be in reasonable condition by this time and it would be nice to see our EU members active in this event even if not intending to enter a claim. (Geo).

DK0WCY BEACON

The AGCW president (DL5QE) responded to the earlier complaint to EUCW concerning the DK0WCY beacon's location on 3557.5 KHz. This business appears to be simmering if not actually on the boil and DL5QE feels that the AGCW has been the target for those who object to possible QRM from the beacon but points out that it has little or no influence upon whether or not the beacon is in operation. The AGCW arranged with the DARC HF manager (DL1VDL) that the beacon be switched off on request by any QRP contest manager who felt that the beacon could be a source of QRM to such contests but the complaints continued. The AGCW is doing a balancing act here in supporting the beacon because it is host to a large cw interest in Germany and the information value of the beacon has to be weighed against possible interference. We must remember that the beacon is using CW exclusively and therefore should be located

within the CW allocation and a re-location of the beacon is difficult to achieve because approval of the authorities needs to be sought. It is pointed out that complaints emanate mainly from individuals and there are many more serious problems affecting CW and it's future within the amateur service than a QRP beacon being a source of nuisance for individual amateurs. I feel we should not take sides on this issue. It must be remembered that the beacon is operating QRP though not within the QRP segment and that any nuisance value is due more to band conditions than other factors. I have checked this beacon on a number of occasions recently and found it to vary between S3 and S9 according to the time of day and conditions. I have also been able to successfully copy S2 QRP signals within 200 Hz either side so suspect that as band conditions return to "normal" these complaints will probably disappear.

MARITIME MOBILE NET

Mick continues his theme of the above with a "dream":
*The year is 2001 and I just sailed out of Gibraltar to Madeira then to the Azores. Being alone on board, I rather take the long way northward than sail up the Portuguese coast within the shipping lane. When I got out of the traffic heading in and out of the Strait, I decided to go below and announce my departure to the FISTS MMN (Maritime Mobile Net). As I switched on the radio, I thought: "It is best to spare the battery before this long journey, I will start with QRP and only 5-8 Watts". Calling on 14.058 MHz I was lucky to get G0*** at the first try. No problem, I am now in his log and at the MMN Manager. I will try to report each day but at least once a week. Otherwise people might start a search for me. Then, as soon as our QSO was over, I got Jean Luc on the frequency. He had just left Camaret in Bretagne en-route to, guess where? the Azores! What a nice surprise, I think I won't stay too long in Madeira and rather try to meet my friend as soon as possible. With the phone I could have called him from anywhere on the 7 seas ... or from the top of the Himalayas, for the matter. Then again, why do I bother to sail to the Azores? I could have flown from Gibraltar to the Azores via Lisbon, being there in no time. Why facing spells of calms and that odd couple of gales alone in a sailboat? Because it feels good, I guess, just like trying to get a QRP contact with an old friend from a straight key at the tip of my fingers. It is about life quality versus quantity. Well, this is nothing but a dream ... but it is my dream LA0HA*

PRESS CUTTING

The following from The Dominion Newspaper, March 8, 1997 via ZL2AOH:

Sir:

The survivors from the burning trading ship in the Cook Islands near Palmerston Atoll were able to signal by Morse code, using just a torch, to a Qantas jet investigating an emergency beacon signal alert, only a day or so before it was announced that Morse code had been made redundant by modern technology.

Morse invented telecommunications with his signalling system on May 18 1844 taking the world's total telecommunications bandwidth from zero to about 25 bits per second. Within 20 years it spanned the globe, crossing the Tasman in 1876.

The demise of Morse has been regularly forecast for at least the past 50 years.

Now, at last, Morse has pretty well disappeared from commercial use everywhere.

However it lives on in cheerful co-existence with other communication methods as an important and much loved system of personal communication for many of the world's radio amateurs.

When the chips are down, silicon or otherwise, Morse can still get the message through with an absolute minimum of technology, provided somebody knows the code. The end of Morse will continue to be announced for a few years yet.

MIKE KERR Kilbirnie

For info, Mike Kerr is ZL2BCW. You may recall an article by him in QST last year about how he came across a vintage Collins pre WW2 transceiver in an antique shop, and his efforts at eventually restoring it.

Dear Folks;

The current position is that I am still able to operate on 40 and 80 metres with a sloper antenna, without causing any RFI. Once I go to 30 metres or higher frequencies there are problems.

I have been travelling to Lower Hutt (a city about 20 kilometres north of here) to use a club rig on Wednesday afternoons to maintain a 20 metre sked with my friend Mack JE1CLH. 14.040 MHz/04:00z.) This is not particularly convenient, as it involves the branch chairman having to be there to give me access. Furthermore it also had a peripheral disaster as on the way there last Wednesday I managed to damage the front of my car on the way there!! Nothing serious but embarrassing: the first time I have been involved in a collision which was my fault, after over 50 years driving. The car goes to the repair shop on Monday - abt \$1,000

In consultation with a fellow resident who is an electronics engineer involved with airways communications, we have decided that a magnetic loop antenna is probably going to solve my problems. We researched the matter and found three manufacturers. The preferred manufacturer is in Germany but his price was more than twice the price of the USA options. AEA marketed a loop which was favourably reviewed but sadly they went off the scene in December 1996. They had a good reputation and would probably have been my preference. However the other vendor is MFJ and a QST review gave their product good marks. So about ten days ago I sent an order for one of their loops covering 15 to 40 metre bands. They have acknowledged the order but I haven't had any word on despatch. Meantime I am working on 80 and 40 metres, but conditions have been very indifferent of recent days so it has been hardly worth trying. I can hear plenty of traffic on 20 metres which is very frustrating.

An interesting development is that my own branch has just obtained a lease on a disused broadcasting monitoring station, which has an antenna farm of considerable size. It has long wires, rhombics, horizontal Vees, and Beverages. Not all are in operational condition, but we are working towards getting several in good shape, with the first available in about a month. I think that we should be able to get some good DX from there. The local SWL members are also interested in gaining access to this new exciting project.

Watch this space!

Vy 73 de RALPH ZL2AOH

CONGRATULATIONS

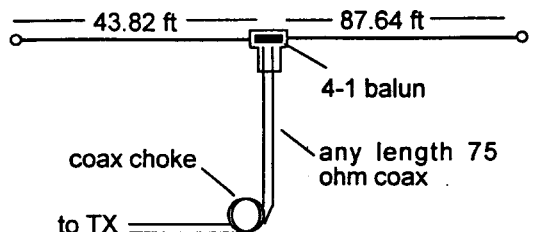
To Peter KI0EG on his upgrade to Extra!
 To Kevin KI0DS on his upgrade to Extra!
 To Dick KU4AV on his upgrade to Advanced!
 To Al WA0FAX on his upgrade to Extra!
 To Jerry KG9JD (ex-KB9NMU) : upgrade to Advanced!
 To Corb K8UCL on the upgrade to Extra!

THE FD4 WINDOM

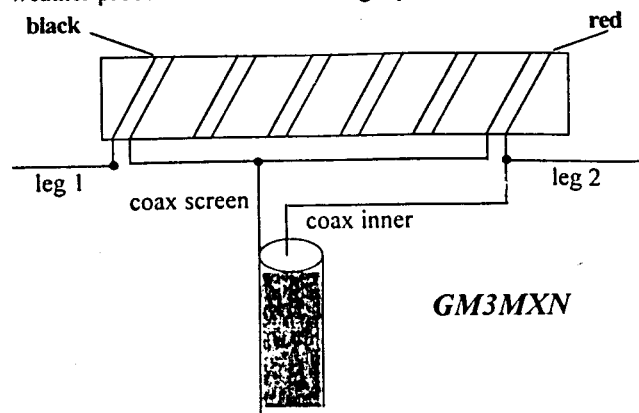
What an odd coincidence. Following last month's reference to the "carolina", GM0PIV sent a copy of the MEGS news letter and there on the back is the equivalent - the FD4 per GM3PIV.. *It is better than the G5RV and can be bent to suit just about any garden. If you use 50 ohm coax, the balun is more difficult to make but the device shown overleaf is a comparatively simple 4:1 version for 75 ohm coax.*

SWR is good on 80, 40, 20 and 10 metres and acceptable on 18 and 24 MHz.

It is however poor on 30m so he recommends running a separate 30m antenna fed from the same coax at the balun feed point (should be aligned so as not to create undesirable effects on the FD4)



The 4:1 balun mentioned on the previous page is a 2.5 inch length of 3/8 ferrite rod (mark length with a sharp file cut and break) which is fixed to the "T" piece central insulator and weather proofed with self anealing tape.



Two separate coloured wires (say black and red) are wound side by side, six turns each connected to the legs, the coax being connected also as shown.

The coaxial choke shown overleaf consists of 10 turns of coax wound over a diameter of about 8 inches.

This is going to be a very handy antenna I feel for those members who have restricted garden space and reports on performance would be appreciated at this end.

Morsum Magnificat



Samuel F. B. Morse
1791-1872

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WINTER STRAIGHT KEY WEEK

Quite a bit of activity for this one again. We note a number of callsigns which have hitherto fallen into the "shy" category and it is great to see the enthusiasm. GW0SGG (second place) should have been pushed into 3rd place by G4LHI and G0MRH but since both of them had achieved the same score - 284 we had to take a different stance (why is it that when you do not legislate for something, it just happens) and Bill was followed significantly by KC5VJY (3rd place). This is the first occasion when a US member has figured in the listings and you will see that he is not alone. The problem presented by the joint top score called for some thought. Do we toss a coin or shoot one of 'em? The logical answer was to issue TWO winning certificates and take note that not only could this position recur but could do so with greater numbers in contention. In order of score, the remainder follow as: G0TBD (114), G0THD (110), G0FVS (104), G3VQO (74) G3HBN (66), G3VNG (64), G0WAS (58), G0VCY (52), G0VBH (52), G0WLC (52), G0SDA (52) (note the run of four identical scores), G0LZA (44), G4KLQ (40), WA5ANF (30), PA3AFF (20) and G4XPE (18). Late logs: WP4LNY, KZ4EW. A special mention from Jerry here for G0WAS who played an excellent hand for his first serious attempt and for myself, I was sorry to see Dick, G8PG, absent from this list due to some serious antenna problems (he lost it in a storm). I must say that a few calls were missing which I fully expected to be in contention but circumstances often intervene on these occasions. The event has been enthusiastically described as "great fun, friendly, magnetic" and "superb relaxation therapy". Thanks to all who

took part and I trust it has whetted your appetite for the real thing in September. Hi. The level of activity was most significant and must surely have left an impression on those who think the CW has no place in amateur radio.

AGM

We have had to drag this a little because yours truly completely forgot and since I need to give 7 days notice, we have set it conservatively for the 3rd Tuesday in April, 7:30 pm at the Cemetery Hotel, Cemetery Rd, DARWEN. Any nominations for officers in writing please before this date.

G3TUX

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G4ZIPPY

Since his op, Gordon is back producing keys and paddles for an significant backlog of orders. Despite an enormous waiting list, he will give priority to club members and a SASE (office size) will bring you a brochure. He is currently filling a massive order of miniatures for the Far East and has kindly agreed to append a FISTS sticker to each item together with a brief introduction to the club which I previously printed for him. Because of the scar left by the operation, he is now known locally and by his friends a G4ZIPPY.

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RSGB MORSE TEST

Following the successful 10th anniversary celebrations of the RSGB Morse test service in 1996 when more than 10,090 on-air contacts were made by Special Event stations operated by Morse Test examiners, many hundreds of letters were received requesting that the occasion become an annual event. To satisfy these requests and to encourage the use of CW, county Morse testing teams throughout the UK will again be on the air during the 11th anniversary weekend of 10 to 11 May, 1997. For ease of identification, the stations will use a special event GB0 prefix followed by the RSGB county code suffix e.g. GB0IOW (Isle of Wight) GB0NOR (Norfolk). Additional stations will also be active from RSGB HQ (GB0ORS), the Chief Morse Examiner (GB0CW) and the Deputy Chief Morse Examiner (GB0MTS). A Morse Test 11th anniversary certificate will be available to any amateur who makes contact with 10 of the special event stations. The cost of the certificate is £2.000 (cheque or PO made out to the RSGB), \$5.00 US or 6 IRCs. Applications with log extracts should be sent to the Chief Morse examiner, Roy Clayton, G4SSH, 9 Green Island, Irton, Scarborough, YO12 4RN. QSL cards are not required to claim the award which is also available to listeners. Activity will be concentrated in the

80 and 40 metre bands and in order to encourage newcomers to apply for the award, each team will spend some time working QRS in the Novice CW segment of the 80 metre band. The event is not a contest and examiners will be happy to reply at any preferred calling speed. There is no restriction on the type of Morse key used: straight, bug, sideswiper, semi-automatic or keyboards will all be welcomed. Just call in to say hello and enjoy the friendship. There will be a minimum of 26 special event stations active.

COHERENT CW

Peter, G3IRM says that version 2.0 of the CCW program is now available and he can supply the share-ware version of this at £1.00 to cover costs. CCW is a system where TX and RX are coordinated in terms of time and frequency, the receiver's filter opening only when a character is expected to be received from the TX. The filter itself is in the order of 10 to 20 Hz (yes I did say Hz) and whilst in the early stages of development it was quite complex, the system has largely been automated by some pretty nifty hardware and dedicated computer software. I'm sure that Peter will be able to provide further information for those interested but believe me, it is well worth the effort involved in setting up. Oh that I had a little more free time.

ODDS 'N ENDS

I got a e-mail from Chris, G3TUX who indicates that he is making plans for visiting Dayton this year. Says he is getting quite excited about it but not half as excited as his bank manager when he finds out.

"I have picked up a GNT paper tape Morse sender. I am now looking for the corresponding Tape Punch Machine (2 unit code). I have also acquired a Creed Undulator and 3 US and British Army Morse training sets. These will be used as props in the shop and when I go out to radio clubs to talk on the keys I peddle." Chris, I sure wish I could help. I remember that paper code well. The punch left one side rough and we used this to orient the tape so it could be read by eye - very easy indeed. With all these shore stations abandoning CW, I am surprised that a few of the punch machines have not found their way on to the market although I must confess that if I worked for the service, I would certainly have an eye on one if only for sentimental reasons. Can anyone help find one for Chris??

Talking of keys, I remember handling a superb pump handle (home brewed) when I was still a SWL. The owner was lucky because now I would cheerfully kill for it but despite some very rough and makeshift engineering, it had a wonderful feel and - here's the thing - he used a miniature gold medallion from a charm bracelet cut into two parts and mounted edge to edge as contacts. Also, for many years I used a home brew copy of the lightning bug having removed the weight and replaced it with one of three loaded crocodile clips for speeds which varied from 10 to 60 wpm. Ah... memories.

How often do I read of the terrible noise on 80m. It seems some of us have still not learned but here the FT1000 receiver section is fitted with attenuators switchable from 6 to 18 dB. I invariably switch in the latter and in spite of this I still find myself winding down the RF gain, disabling the AGC and keeping the audio as low as possible. It really does work.

THE STRAWBERRY BASKET

2E0AIZ. Tom is feeling a little miffed because little is happening on the novice part of the spectrum and whatever is there is masked by RTTY, Data and other transmissions. This applies to the whole band Tom when conditions are as lively as they are at present and much of the krud you hear would normally be well down. Be patient, the bands will revert but in the meantime, an opportunity perhaps to suggest more activity from the membership as a whole on the novice allocations. G4ZPY. Hi Gordon. the QSL bureau is strictly inter-club although we do shunt cards to G-QRP and the services organizations (RNARS etc). In this event, pse mark 'em clearly VIA (service) on the reverse. A bouquet for Waters and Stanton for their service (a couple of glitches appearing in Gordon's FT1000MP). G4LHI Peter's involvement in the winter SK week included some welcome response to his CQ FISTS calls with KP4DJ and KA1OX on 80m via his G5RV and 80w. G14CBG. Roy was somewhat dismayed by the number of UK. ops who failed to recognize the

significance of GN4BJC/P (the club call of the ISWL). Bill is just about being accepted as GC01PX/P Roy so your obs came not as a surprise. Hope you have a nice visit with Jerry, GM4BAE mate - don't let him lead you into bad habits though. Hi. G3DOV. Says his memory is still working (just) which puts you into the same category as myself Derek. Hi. Glad you enjoyed SKW. GX0000. Roy wants to know how I managed to bribe the Post Office into issuing their latest franking device. Something had gone amiss there and the word "Post" was missing resulting in the encouraging "REMEMBER to use the CODE". I like it. G0WAS. Thank you for the endorsement Alan. I shall re-type your letter with a view to using it on some future occasion. G4GJY. Sid reminds me that G4FRN is currently running a SSB service for yachts on the lines of that suggested by LA0HA. G4GYD is our latest contender for the million dollar man having been in dock for knee replacement and later for a hip replacement. I wonder if some surgeon somewhere keeps bits like this in his "junk box"? 2M0ANP. Diana's work is demanding upon her time and precludes everything except eating and sleeping. Roll on retirement or lottery win whichever comes first. Hi. PA3AFF. Hi Piet. Congrats on your 2nd Century and vmt the obs re listing. Got most of the anomalies sorted out and hopefully Nancy will help with the rest. G0TNY. VMT Tony. We gave up on the company that was producing rubber stamps due to months of delay. Now use the labels in preference. Hope the sked works out OK mate. GW0SGG. Tnks for the update Bill. He is prepared to stay on after the Tuesday evening net either for a natter or to catch those who were unable to call in earlier. G0GKE. Les has only been living in the clotted cream country for twenty odd years so is still regarded as a "furriner" but nice group of brass pounders in the locality.

NEW MEMBERS

Not too many this month but we do have a lot of application forms outstanding.

2387	3Z6AEF	Wald	2388	M0APC	Michael
2389	M0ALO	Don	2340	G0UYF	Roger
2341	2E0AOZ	Ian	2342	M0ANQ	Jim

The latest number of active FISTS climbed to 2099 so the Century is now becoming very easy indeed to attain.

FINALE

Well truthfully people, I really did not expect squeezing everything in this month. We have a couple of items outstanding which I will deal with next month but in the mean time, being a simplistic creature, could I ask why so many of these contests introduce unnecessary complications with the inclusion of "multipliers". Am I alone in this? I see that dreaded word and any inclination I had of taking part in the contest is promptly smothered. OK; so I am not a contest freak. No doubt if I were, I would soon be able to handle the concept but laziness and an inborn fear of anything arithmetical sends me scurrying for the air raid shelter. Hi.

I see that Practical Wireless ran an introduction to the break with tradition that heralded the arrival of the vibroplex straight key and John, G0SKR (FISTS 1115), startled me with reference to the name of Horace Martin. This took me back many years to a scene where a Chief Petty Officer was surrounded by sprawling matelots for an informal chat and I found that I was not the only member of that group who was suffering the "glass arm" syndrome. We were to be disappointed because although this worthy Chief produced a bug key he also explained that it's use was forbidden (at least to those of us of lesser rank) and although my memory is poor, the name Horace Martin for some reason rang this distant bell.

Bob has still not had the opportunity to sort out the projected "Century of Centuries" where a special award will be offered for a given number of points accrued by working Century Award holders. We will probably be able to get our heads together at the AGM but in any case will surely come up with something. A listing is available from HQ for those interested in current Century Award holders. In the meantime, if you would like us to introduce a dedicated QRP version of the Century such as they are running in the US, let me know.

That's yer lot folks. Thank you for your continued support and look forward to seeing you on air.

73/88 de Geo.

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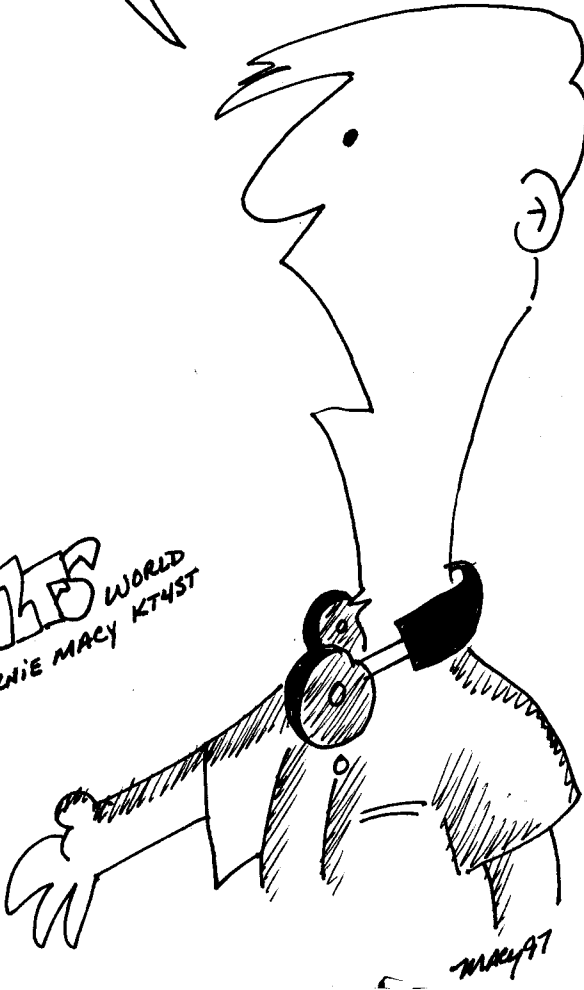
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