


THE KEYNOTE
Newsletter of FISTS CW Club - The International
Morse Preservation Society
Issue 4, 2012



If you've ordered club supplies, you've met FISTS Supply Manager Irene, WO8E. Here she is at her operating station, working the Summer Sprint.



"When You've Worked a FIST, You've Worked a Friend"



INFORMATION PAGE

When you have a question about FISTS, go to the source for the correct answer.

Posting a question on a chat room or email reflector may result in a lot of opinions, but your best bet is to ask a FISTS volunteer or look in the reference issue.

Please put the word 'FISTS' somewhere in the title of your email.

This will help the volunteer recognize that your email is important and not spam.

For questions about:

Awards and Certificates contact

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4658 CAPITAN DR, Fremont CA 94536

The QSL Bureau contact

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Our club call KNØWCW contact

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The membership roster, call changes, name changes contact

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To get an **application or sample** Keynote sent to a friend contact

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Web page changes, getting your personal or club webpage linked, etc contact

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Code Buddy volunteers and buddies contact

Nick Yokanovich, K3NY, & The Historical Electronics Museum Amateur Radio Club,
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108 BRENT RD. Arnold MD 21012

Sprints contact

Fall Sprint, PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440; email to
FallSprint@hotmail.com

Get Your Feet Wet Weekend /G3ZQS Memorial Straight Key Contest contact

Lee Hallin, N7NU, hallinl@lanecc.edu
3413 WALTON LN, Eugene OR 97408

Ordering supplies: Irene Kott, WØ8E

44609 North Bunker Hill Dr, Clinton Twp MI 48038
or paypal to fists@tir.com.

Irene has no email capability. Some shirt sizes are sold out — check web page or email Nancy, WZ8C at nancy@tir.com.

All other questions, callsign/email/ postal address changes, (NO we do not get this info directly from the FCC!) renewal dates, membership questions and MOST IMPORTANTLY — articles for the Keynote, contact Nancy WZ8C, nancy@tir.com; PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440, phone 810-797-2033, fax 810-797-5808.

Please check your label for your renewal month/year — dues are \$15/year. and include award certificates, newsletter and use of the QSL bureau.

FISTS CW CLUB

The International Morse Preservation Society



"When You've Worked a FIST, You've Worked a Friend"

North American Memo • Issue 4, 2012

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Hi FISTS,

I hope you had a good time in the September operating activities. The bands are still not-very-good, but contacts were being made. That brings me to the Fall Sprint. I can't get ahold of Gil, WA1LAD, the Sprint Manager. Does anyone have any info on him? Since we haven't gotten in touch with him to confirm that he will do the Sprint logs, please send your logs to FALL Sprint, PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440, or email to FallSprint@hotmail.com, or fax to 810-797-5808. If anyone is interested in taking care of the Sprints, in case we can't find Gil, please let me know. The Sprint is the 2nd Saturday in October.

Several FISTS are getting v-e-r-r-y close to earning their 25th Anniversary Awards! Keep working on it right up to Straight Key Night at midnight 2012. It's quite an accomplishment and you can be very proud to have these certificates in your shack.

PLEASE keep sending in your stories and photos. I have enough to get started on the next newsletter, but not to finish it. Maybe I should make it 16 pages instead of 24? Would you rather have the newsletter shorter, but receive it more often?

Our "cover girl" this issue is our Supply Manager, Irene WO8E. She's at her shack working the Summer Sprint!



WELCOME TO THE NEW FISTS

Member Number	Callsign	First	ST	Member Number	Callsign	First	ST
15738	K1REZ	REZ	MS	15752	KA1KU	DON	MA
15739	W5JMJ	McLEOD	MS	15753	N5AN	BUD	LA
15740	W1ZMB	TONY	NY	15754	K3JP	JACK	DE
15741	K2DEP	STEVE	MD	15755	UA3LMR	STAN	
15742	AK4VL	JULIO	NC	15756	KC8RPI	DOUG	OH
15743	KK4IAJ	WILLIAM	GA	15757	NM8U	STEVE	OH
15744	KB3WLB	BODIE	PA	15758	NZ1MT	MIKE	MA
15745	N2CVE	JIM	NY	15759	KE2EB	GEORGE	NY
15746	KB9GZG	LEE	WI	15760	KC0SKD	DONNA	ND
15747	AB1QP	FRANK	CT	15761	KA0SVY	JOHN	ND
15748	WU1V	RICK	MA	15762	K0EIE	TOM	KS
15749	K6EGE	WALTER	AZ	15763	KV9B	TERRY	IN
15750	K5BRY	JOE	TX	15764	KB3NOZ	DE NOZ	MD
15751	KF5PWJ	GREG	TX				

(continued on next page)



Member Number	Callsign	First	ST	Member Number	Callsign	First	ST
15765	KA2BED	CHARLIE	NY	16008	AL7RS	DAN	AK
15766	K0WFS	RUSS	MN	16009	W1ALI	ALICE	NY
15767	W0BUX	BOB	MO	16010	K2UNI	KEITH	NY
15768	KC9EDY	HAROLD	IN	16011	K9EU	ERIK	IL
15769	NY3A	STEVE	PA	16012	N7US	JIM	IL
15770	W5HFS	JIM	TX	16013	WM9I	JOSEPH	IL
15771	KW4J	BILL	AL	16014	KD8PZV	JACK	OH
15772	KD8OLJ	SHANNON	OH	16015	KF5MOS	PAUL	TX
15773	KC2IQV	CHUCK	RI	16016	K3EMS	GEORGE	PA
15774	WD8C	BERNIE	OH	16017	W4DX	JOHN	NC
15775	K5JK	TOM	CO	16018	KF7VXZ	CLARENCE	WA
15776	VA3IC	IAN	ON	16019	KG8NK	LOU	MI
15777	VE3FGU	MIKE	ON	16020	AC0LV	BILL	MN
15778	VE2SRP	SIMON	QC	16021	W8ST	BOB	IN
15779	KC9VPQ	TERESA	IL	16022	WX2S	STEVE	NJ
15780	VE3GBK	GLENN	ON	16023	KF4AM	BOB	SC
15781	KC4VBE	STEVEN	WA	16024	K2YS	MATT	NY
15782	KR4V	RICHARD	VA	16025	KB7HRS	MARK	AZ
15783	W8VT	ED	WV	16026	AC0SX	CHARLIE	KS
15784	KD8IOQ	MICK	OH	16027	K3PSD	PAUL	PA
15785	AA0CL	GARY	MO	16028	VE3ENX	BOB	ON
15786	K8VJ	CHRIS	MI	16029	K7LV	GEORGE	NV
15787	K1EP	ED	MA	16030	JE5AMW	GARY	
15788	WD4EXI	VAL	GA	16031	W4WMA	MIRL	NC
15789	W4ZDU	RUSSELL	DC	16032	K6JWM	KENNETH	CA
15790	WB9VGO	BOB	IL	16033	KD8HQC	BYRON	OH
15791	N1RU	JAMES	IN	16034	WA2GVA	DANTE	NY
15792	W3IHM	SAMUEL	PA	16035	NX8Y	RON	OH
15793	KD6G	GEORGE	IN	16036	W8PO	LARRY	KY
15794	W8DOS	FRANCIS	OH	16037	WB8HF	BILL	MI
15795	W6YDE	MIKE	CA	16038	K8EBR	THOMAS	CA
15796	N0JYU	DICK	MO	16039	KH2BR	ROBERT	CA
15797	N3XT	DAVID	CA	16040	KJ7GG	MATTHEW	AZ
15798	KE7SLX	LES	OR	16041	N2IW	JAMES	NY
15799	KD6A	DAVE	NC	16042	W4NWX	JOHN	GA
15800	UK number block			16043	AK4FC	JERRY	GA
15900	UK number block			16044	N3EFN	BERNIE	PA
16001	KU4GW	CLIFF	NC	16045	W7TAO	TODD	WA
16002	KI4LNG	MATTHEW	NY	16046	KF7WZF	MIKE	WA
16003	WA4MQW	BOB	NC	16047	KF0U	COREY	MO
16004	KB1MAM	KEN	CT	16048	KF5IQW	DENNIS	AR
16005	AI2H	BARRY	MO	16049	KD8SAV	GARY	OH
16006	KO5H	GUNNER	TX	16050	W7WST	DON	WA
16007	WB9GZP	DAVE	WI	16051	K1OGF	ERIK	MA
				16052	AE7US	ROCKY	OR

FISTS AWARDS

by Dennis Franklin K6DF, Awards Manager

Award activity has been a little slow these past few months. Things should pick up a little with the last weeks of summer activities coming to a close. The cool temps of the fall season should encourage most of us to do more things indoors, which will allow us to turn our attention to getting on the air.

CONGRATULATIONS to Darren McDonald G00TT for being the second FISTS Member to obtain the new

25th Anniversary Prefix Awards Version One and Two! Three others have also been awarded the first two Prefix Awards as well . . . Congratulations to K0LUW, OK1KW, and WB0PYF.

Not much more to report in the way of awards activity. I will again suggest that you look over the Awards page on the FISTS web site as it has been recently updated. The rules for the 25th Anniversary Awards are detailed there as well.

We gathered a number of new members at the Dayton Hamfest this year and I, for one, will be looking for those new calls on the bands. If you work one of our newest members, please remember to not only exchange FISTS numbers with them, but also spend a little extra time to welcome them to the club. To our new members . . . I extend a hearty Welcome and I hope you will have a grand time earning some of the awards available



QRP WITH K3WWP — COLUMN #95

by John Shannon, K3WWP

to the membership.

You may use the following e-mail address, (fistsawards@gmail.com) for sending in your award logs. Excel, Word, Open Office, and Text files are the only file types accepted. Please read the e-mail log rules on the FISTS web site for details.

Send in complete logs for awards. That means all of the following information; Call, Date of QSO, Band, FISTS Nr., Point/s claimed for each QSO. Incomplete logs will delay receiving your award.

Check the FISTS Web Page for additional information regarding current FISTS awards and how to apply for them: <http://www.fists.org/awards.html>

If you have any questions about the awards that are not answered on the FISTS awards web page, feel free to e-mail your questions to me at: fistsawards@gmail.com

— *Keep banging the brass . . . I will CU on the bands . . . 73, Dennis K6DF*

FISTS AWARDS ISSUED

May 4, 2012 To Aug 28, 2012

Century Award	PA7RA KA5VZG G0XCF AA8MI
Gold Award	G4MLW
Millionaire Award	KA5VZG
2 Million Award	W1XH
3 Million Award	AB0BM
5 Million Award	WB6SZZ
19 Million Award	W5GXV
25 Million Award	K0LUW
Prefix 1 Award	G0TT K0LUW WB0PYF OK1KW

One of the questions I am frequently asked is “Which band is the best band for QRP?” Often someone considering a single band QRP rig will ask the question. Also someone who has limited space for antennas with room for only one antenna will ask it.

I love many different facets of ham radio, as long as they deal with CW and QRP. Therefore I feel the best option is to have a rig that operates all 9 HF bands perhaps with 6M thrown in. Until several years ago, there were no good dedicated QRP rigs that fit that category. Since then several have appeared on the market including the K2 and FT-817, to mention a couple. I recently obtained a K2 which I wrote about here in one of my columns not long ago. That supplanted a Kenwood TS-480SAT and a TS-570D which I used for several years turned down to 5 watts output as my ‘QRP rigs’ of choice.

I always suggest getting an all band rig when someone asks me to recommend one. However that is not always possible because of budget or other considerations. Study my band descriptions a little later in the article to help you decide on a one-band rig if that is what you really want.

First a few words about antennas. I definitely fall into the category of a ham with limited antenna space, yet I manage to operate all 9 HF

bands successfully. How? I have described my antenna situation in detail before and the info is on my web site as well. Let me just say simply that I use an end-fed random wire for 160-30M and I have 20M, 15M, and 10M dipoles. The 15M dipole also works on 17M and 12M. All of that is fit into a small town lot that is about 100 feet by 20 feet. The house takes up most of that area. So don’t necessarily let limited space limit your choice of operating to a single band. You can squeeze antennas into a small space and still have them work very well.

Now let me give you my thoughts on each of the HF bands. Each band description starts with the number of US states, countries, continents, and CQ zones I’ve worked on that band. This will give you a quick idea of how the band works for QRP and simple antennas.

160M - 42, 3, 1, 3 - It is very hard to be successful on this band with a minimal QRP setup. My only non-W/VE contact was a VP9. It takes a really big, well designed antenna to work much beyond a

few hundred miles easily. Small or low antennas if not vertically polarized will emit high angles of radiation that are greatly attenuated by the large number of hops they take to reach a distant destination. Those stations I've worked in the western states (CA, OR) copied a signal from me that was well down in the milliwatts by the time it got there. I have had many good rag chews on this band with local (0-400 mi. or so) stations. This is pretty much a winter only band for QRP as static during the other months will almost obliterate a minimal QRP signal. I believe this band works better near a sunspot minimum when the ionosphere is not as absorptive. I have easily made around 250 QSO's in the 160M contests when near a minimum, but near a maximum it was very hard for me to get to 100 QSO's.

80M - 49, 49, 5, 13 - This band

is similar to 160M but the antenna limitations are not as bad. A simple antenna will work pretty well here. I probably will never work EU on 160M, yet I have done so on 80M several times, working as deep into EU as OK. This is a very good rag-chewing band, especially in the late fall, winter, and early spring seasons when static levels are low. Signal levels are steady over long periods of time with little fading. As with 160M, this seems to be a better band near sunspot minimums.

40M - 50, 119, 5, 23 - If you're a rag-chewer looking for a single band, this is probably the one for you. There is always someone around, day and night. Minimal QRP works well here, even for DX. When conditions are right it is possible to easily work the world here, perhaps with the exception of those places that require your signal

to pass near the highly absorptive polar regions of earth. For me, that means Asia, and I haven't worked that continent yet on 40M. I seem to easily work VK and ZL with a single call in contests or some rare Pacific Island on a DXpedition just as easily. There have been times in DX contests when I could work EU and AF almost as well as on 20M. This band does not change all that much during a sunspot cycle. One thing on the down side is the large amount of digital and phone junk that is creeping into the Morse areas of the band.

30M - 50, 145, 6, 26 - This is a favorite band of mine. You can come here and work DX very easily, and then have a nice long rag chew with a domestic station. It is often open worldwide, especially in the evenings. I have had stations from Australia and Turkey answer my minimal QRP CQ's on this band. Like 40M, this band doesn't seem to change all that much from sunspot minimum to maximum.

I'm out of space for this issue, so I'll have to cover the rest of the HF bands in a future column.

If you can't wait, you can get an idea of how those other HF bands work for minimal QRP now by visiting my web site at <http://home.windstream.net/johnshan/>. Or I'll answer any specific questions at jsk3wwp@windstream.net or 478 E. High St., Kittanning, PA 16201-1304. Till next time, 73 from K3WWP -30-



BACK ISSUE OF THE KN?

Mike wrote to me (Nancy WZ8C) with this request, but we don't have any back issues, we gave them all out at Hamvention and as samples when requested for other hamfests and code classes. Can anyone help him?

I was wondering if it was possible to get a back issue of the Keynote. Specifically, the issue that had a fairly lengthy article about CW "Apps" for phones, etc.

Apparently, I discarded that issue and now would like to re-read the reviews of the CW apps. Can somebody help me with this? Hopefully, I am not too late.....

Obviously, I am willing/happy to pay for any related costs.

Thanks and 73, Mike, K0ZN (4418) DeSoto, KS jmpoks@aol.com

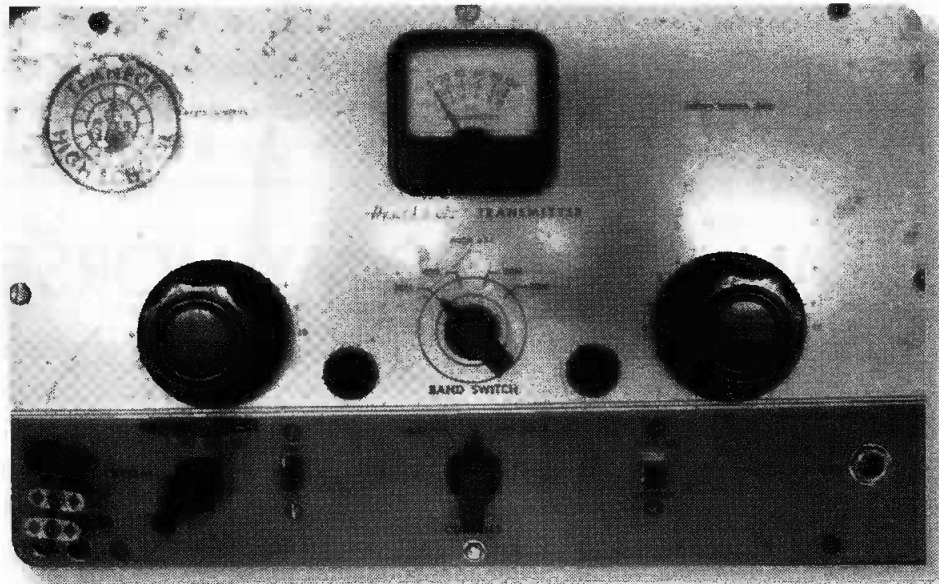
BECAUSE "SI" COMES BEFORE "SK"

by Earl Skelton, N3ES (former KN2OOJ and former WA3THD)

In 1954 in Teaneck High School, located in the northern New Jersey town of the same name, students were seated alphabetically. For that reason, I found myself sitting next to Bob Simon in most all of my classes. In time, Bob and I became good friends and one day, after school, I went home with Bob and he took me down to his basement. WOW! Bob was a ham and he had his own radio station. It just "knocked my socks off!"

Bob recently had advanced from Novice to General and, having dropped his "N", he was now K2KLR. Although a classmate and the same age, Bob became my Elmer. Soon after being enthralled by the cool gear in Bob's shack and the fact that he was communicating with the world via a simple telegraphy key, I started preparing for my Novice license. After a few weeks of "cramming", I could copy the necessary 5 wpm and had learned enough theory to qualify for my Novice ticket. I became the proud possessor of the FCC license, KN2OOJ — but I didn't have a station.

My first QSOs were made using Bob's rig. I remember being frustrated because I had to operate crystal controlled and Bob had a brand new VFO that he would only let me look at — not use. After I saved up enough nickels and



My Heathkit AT-1 Transmitter circa 1955 — note the THS Decal.

dimes, I sent away for a Heathkit AT-1, a rock bound 25 W CW-transmitter kit that operated on amateur radio bands, 80 through 10 meters. (Another band was the old 11-meter band, but that was turned over to the CBers in 1958. Not only did we lose operating privileges at 26 MHz, but getting a linear amplifier for 10 meters became much more difficult thanks to Smokey and the Bandit.)

After the fun of wiring and soldering my AT-1, I used it in conjunction with an old Hallicrafters S20R receiver that I found in what was then known as "electronics row" on Courtland Street in lower Manhattan, NYC. I then went through the usual "wallpaper chasing" — WAC, WAS, and several years

later, DXCC. Bob and I remained good friends and established a weekly sked — CW only, of course. We had a friendly competition for ARRL CW Proficiency Stickers, but Bob was always a few WPMs ahead of me. I recall that when I finally qualified for my 25 WPM sticker, Bob already had his 30.

We both graduated from Teaneck High School in 1958 and went our separate ways. Because of my love for radio and electronics, I started out as an EE-major in college, but was persuaded to switch to physics by the Chairman of the Department. That ultimately led to a career in electromagnetic radiation, but at frequencies far, far above the MHz realm. Much of my research was conducted at the x-ray synchrotrons

at Stanford and the Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Although there were breaks over the years, caused by the usual distractions, marriage, kids, job, and so on, Bob and I never stopped our weekly CW sked. At least not until

1981; that was when Bob, then living in southern California, became a premature Silent Key. His memory lives on and I will always be grateful to him for introducing me to amateur radio, the electromagnetic spectrum, and the wonderful

world of CW . . . and all because Si comes before Sk.

— *Earl Skelton, N3ES (former KN2OOJ and former WA3THD), 6311 29th Place, NW, Washington, DC 20015-2221, efs9@georgetown.edu*



HOW I LEARNED MY MORSE CODE

By Joe. T. Gabus AB5RE #14901

While studying electronics in the U.S. Army, I found the Military Affiliate Radio Station (MARS) K5TYP on the base and visited. The operator allowed me to use a tape-fed audio code sender in another room at the station. I carefully copied the letters and dots & dashes of the code to the top of my practice page. At slow speed settings it was not hard to hear the code character, then look for it at the top of the page and write it down before the next code character was sent. This added visual memory to sound memory, doubling the impressions and helping me to learn.

Soon I was copying more of the code each session, without as much copying from the top. The characters at the top of the page became fewer. I gradually cranked up the code speed I was copying until I was copying fast enough to meet the Novice requirement (5 WPM, before the no-code licensing.) The ham at

the station tested me and I soon had my Novice call KN5UZC.

There was an article in Popular Electronics Magazine called “The Nifty Novice”, which was a fifteen meter CW one-tube transmitter. I bought the parts and an aluminum pan for a chassis. I don’t remember the name of the Pentode tube, but it was one that was commonly used in television sets to sweep the raster back and forth in the picture tube. I wish I could say that the transmitter worked the first time, but it didn’t, and I had help getting it to work.

I strung a 15-meter dipole from my second story window in the Army barracks to the support pole of a volley ball net, and contacted VK3VJ in Australia. What a surprise; what a thrill! I didn’t imagine that the station was further from me than Pennsylvania until the DX operator patiently corrected my mangling of his call. I was miscalling him K3VJV instead of VK3VJ. Embarrassing learning experience, and the first step toward years of happy hamming as my skills improved.



New FISTS member, Rocky AE7US, is a county hunter. If you hear him, give him a call! He is in Portland, Oregon. His primary station is an Elecraft K3 with 10 watts output to an inverted "V" at 60 feet.



THE CW ROAD

by Bob Leo W7LR, w7lr@aol.com

My travel on the CW road began at age 12. There are many crucial turning points along that road. It took me almost 80 years to travel this road, so there is more to cover than we can do here.

The start along this road occurred when my dad brought me a Hugo Gernsback radio magazine, with plans for building a simple CW receiver. I built that with a coil wound on an oatmeal box, a 30 tube, and a few small parts. I sat for hours and days with earphones on, listening to commercial shore stations, sending V V V WBC as they looked for ship to shore radio communications. At first I discovered the difference between V and H, and went on from there.

Jumping ahead I took the ham exam in SF in 1937 at age 16 with the callsign W6PBV. Lots of hamming and filled logbooks followed.

Later I joined the local Naval Reserve Unit to learn the Navy message handling procedures. Our instructor was Dave Baker, W6WX (SK), whose callsign is now used on the Stanford CW beacon.

All this lead to being called up by the Navy in early 1941 to be one of the CW operators at NPG SF, the main Navy CW station on the west coast to contact ships and stations all over the Pacific and far East. I'd handle up to 180 messages a

shift, using a bug and typewriter. It was not QRP, we could use 50 kW if needed. My earlier CW training and experience meant that I could start doing this right away.

Soon the Navy sent me to Japanese code school to learn JA CW.

That uses 48 characters which we copied by hand or a special typewriter. They sent me to their d/f station on the Farallone Islands, off the coast of SF, and during WW-II I copied the Japanese code from their ships and stations even during the battle of Midway. The CW road helped some in that effort.

Later I did radio intelligence work for our State Department and at an Army station, and then was one of two from the 12th Naval District to be selected to attend Cal Tech to obtain an EEBS degree leading to being a Naval officer. So the start down the CW road led to these five years in the Navy.

After the Navy I received an offer to be the fourth engineer at Hughes Aircraft. I turned it down. That was a crucial turning point in my road.

I saw an ad in QST in 1947 about a DXpedition to British East Africa. Out of many, Bill Snyder W0LHS (SK) and myself were selected as the expedition radio operators. To join the expedition road, I traveled by train from SF to NY in late 1947. I met a beautiful Dutch young lady

(Cobi) on the train – another important turn in the road – more later.

We traveled by freighter from NY to east Africa, 48 days, with stops in Cape Town, Zanzibar and Mombassa. We were in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda for about six months, operating VQ3, VQ4 and VQ5, as the first postwar ham DXpedition. Again more CW with a bug and a logbook. The story of this road is too long for here – I'll add a few references at the end.

After the expedition, instead of a trip down the Nile thru Sudan and Egypt, I went on a tanker to Saudi Arabia, and worked there two years in the great Arabian Desert, and at HZA and guest op at HZ1AB, and my little station MP4BAL on Bahrain. I ran 20 watts with a short wire antenna, and had one W6 QSO and many in Europe. Cobi and I were married in Florence, Italy October 1949, our best man was I1KN – another long story.

The stories of the road well-traveled get even longer after this, so we need to save that for another day.

Cobi and I now live in Bozeman, Montana – she is 95 and I am 91 and active as W7LR, a FISTS member but need to do more on that.

It has been a fun CW road through 40 countries and many adventures. That long ago start on the CW road led to all this.





IN PURSUIT OF THE ULTIMATE CW CREDENTIAL

How Two OM Achieved Their Lifelong Goals

By Tony Castellano W1ZMB (FISTS #15740) and Stan Levandowski WB2LQF (FISTS #14992)

Tony and I lived within a few miles of each other for over twenty years but never knew it until a chance meeting at a local ham event. We struck up a conversation and discovered that we were both dedicated to CW QRP and operated Elecraft K2/10 transceivers with only simple wire antennas. In fact, neither of us owned a microphone!

We are both Navy veterans and have always felt very strong connections to maritime wireless. Each of us had long desired to earn the commercial radiotelegraph certificate as a symbolic link to the history of wireless and as outward evidence of proficiency. In early 2012, as the publicity surrounding the 100th anniversary of the Titanic disaster ramped up, we began to wax philosophic and made a pact to “just do it.”

On April 28th, 2012 Tony and I passed our exams and were awarded our commercial Second Class Radiotelegraph Certificates.

About Commercial Radiotelegraph Certificates

CW was retired as the international maritime standard in July 1999. But to paraphrase Mark

Twain was this death of Mr. Morse’s Code “greatly exaggerated?” Not only is Morse a major operating mode in amateur radio, but throughout the world Morse is still used on the high seas by a number of nations. Three or four letter Morse identifiers still beep their greetings to pilots intercepting Instrument Landing Systems and crossing VHF navigation beacons around the world. Even public television stations frequently use it to satisfy their FCC ID obligations just as amateur repeaters do.

It may come as a surprise to many hams that commercial radiotelegraph certificates are still obtainable today. At the present time (May 2012), all three original commercial radiotelegraph certificates are still offered. Commercial radio operator testing is now directed by private groups known as Commercial Operator Licensing Examination Managers (COLEMs). Eight COLEMs, the commercial counterpart of the Amateur Service’s VEC, have been certified and have entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the government in much the same manner as VECs (Volunteer Exam-

iner Coordinators). The Commercial Radio Operator examination program is patterned after the very successful VEC System in the Amateur Service. Commercial Operator License Examination Managers (COLEMs), Examination Schedules, Fees and Testing Locations can be found at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/commoperators/index.htm?job=cole>

There are three commercial certificate levels. The Third Class certificate requires a 16 wpm cipher group exam (Code Element 1) and a 20 wpm plain text exam (Code Element 2). The applicant must copy one error-free continuous minute. Provisions exist to grant credit for Code Elements 1 and 2 to Amateur Extra Class licensees whose grant date was prior to April 1, 2000 at which time the 20 wpm code requirement was eliminated. Amateurs seeking such credit must produce their original CSCE document. The written exam consists of Written Element 1 (basic radio law and general operating practices) and Written Element 5 (radiotelegraph operating practices).

The Second Class certificate adds Written Element 6 (advanced

radiotelegraph technical theory).

The First Class certificate requires one year of documented experience in sending and receiving public correspondence by Morse at either a public coast station, ship station, or both, and a code test of 20 wpm cipher groups (Code Element 3) and 25 wpm plain text (Code Element 4). There is no additional written exam. At this time it is very difficult — and often impossible — for an applicant to satisfy the one year public correspondence requirement. This explains why only two First Class certificates have been granted since 2007. Written Element 8 is optional and if taken will add the Ship Radar Endorsement to either the First or Second Class certificate. This endorsement cannot be added to the Third Class certificate. The FCC does not mandate a sending exam because the ability to copy infers the ability to send. However, the examining entity has the leeway to administer a sending test if it so desires.

What's the Attraction for Hams?

Given that a commercial radiotelegraph license requires considerable effort to obtain, carries a hefty fee, may require traveling to a testing location, provides marginal economic value, and grants absolutely no additional operating privileges to an amateur radio operator, why bother?



Stan WB2LQF (L) and Tony W1ZMB (R) holding their Certificates of Successful Completion along with the W5YI/NRE commercial examiners team in Milford, CT.

According to the FCC ULS database, a total of 78 applicants earned (any level of) a commercial radiotelegraph certificate in the five year period ending on March 31, 2012. Seven Third Class Certificates, 69 Second Class Certificates, and two First Class certificates were awarded. *Ninety percent — 71 grantees — held current amateur radio call signs.* It appears that at least for some hams, a commercial ticket provides a personal benefit powerful enough to overcome the logical arguments against pursuing it. Averaged across the five years between March 2007 and March

2012, fourteen applicants per year have earned their commercial radiotelegraph credentials, qualifying for membership in a rather exclusive club!

Change in the Wind?

On August 31, 2010 FCC published an NPRM, Docket Number 10-177, which included proposals relevant to the radiotelegraph certificates. Specifically, FCC sought public comment on the following: 1) Cease accepting any applications for the First Class Radiotelegraph Certificate because of the near impossibility of meeting the experience requirement and 2)

Cease accepting any applications for the Third Class Radiotelegraph Certificate because its scope is currently covered by the newer Marine Radio Operator Permit (MROP) and 3) Rename the current Second Class Radiotelegraph Certificate to “Radiotelegraph Operator Certificate” with no further modification to it. This would streamline the licensing process and create the radiotelegraph equivalent of the General Radiotelephone License (GROL). An inquiry to the FCC in March 2012 determined that no action has yet been taken nor is any action planned at this time. Thus, for now and into the foreseeable future, the original commercial radiotelegraph exams remain intact.

Stan Comments on the Code Elements

“I was a Navy Radioman Second Class attached to Marine Amphibious Squadron Four aboard the USS BOXER during the Vietnam War. Aboard ship, I had *Kaufman's Q and A Manual* tucked away in my locker. My career plan, hatched with a fair amount of youthful exuberance, was to earn my radiotelegraph license, become a radio officer on a merchant vessel, and grow rich, famous and well-traveled.

That never happened. However, my shipboard experiences always made me feel somehow a proud but very small part of that con-

tinuum of wireless ops who kept the watch at sea. The history and romance of wireless and the maritime industry has always fascinated me. I wanted to “own” a piece of that history before it vanished. To earn my T2 as close as possible to the 100th anniversary of the Titanic disaster became my goal.

Tony had upgraded to Amateur Extra Class in 1995 when the 20 wpm requirement was still in force. Fortunately, Tony had safely filed his original CSCE document. As a result, Tony was granted credit for both Code Elements 1 and 2. Because I had upgraded to Amateur Extra Class after 2000, I had to take Code Elements 1 and 2.

With over fifty years of CW experience I thought this would be a no-brainer. Then I learned that I had to copy one continuous error-free minute by hand. I've been copying in my head, including entire words, for a long time now and just jotting down notes. Whenever I need to copy with greater precision I clamp on my “cans,” put my station PC into “Notepad” mode and then every character becomes a single keystroke. In the military, we learned to copy CW on a “mill” which was a manual typewriter with all capital letters and I've never lost that skill. Copying by hand almost did me in! It slowed me down terribly and caused me to miss characters and then become even further confused. “Copying behind” became

much more difficult because there was the added burden of having to write out characters legibly, each of which required a different number of pencil strokes. 1, I, and / and 5 and S were especially troublesome when written at a furious pace because I couldn't read my writing afterward! I began to regret the laid-back style I had so proudly developed over the years and I realized that I had some serious un-learning and re-training ahead of me.

My *Begali* CW Machine with the Trainer option proved invaluable. It permitted me to tailor my practice sessions to focus on problem areas with greater efficiency and effectiveness. Both the CW Machine and the code exams are based on the PARIS standard so it worked out great. The ability to generate completely random cipher groups from a pool of letters, numbers, punctuation marks, and pro-signs of my own choosing really allowed me to focus my preparations for Code Element 1. Being able to load plain text into the CW Machine's message memories from any source proved equally effective in preparing for Code Element 2. At first, I loaded in all the WIAW practice files available at www.arrl.org. It later became evident that there was a very strong “ham flavor” to my practice sessions and I was guessing ahead all too well. Whenever I saw “imp” I just knew it was

going to turn into “impedance!” That’s when I began loading snippets from online novels, chunks of travel brochures, papers on environmental issues — anything and everything I could find to challenge myself. That’s one cool little CW accessory!

On the day of the test I was a bundle of nerves. The cadence at certain speeds can invite mental excursions that lead to disaster! For me, 16 wpm is one of those troublesome speeds! Indeed, I managed to choke on some early cipher groups but did successfully recover and earned my passing grade. The 20 wpm plain text exam which followed, Element 2, was much easier. Unlike amateur exams, the commercial examiners were not permitted to disclose my score but, being plain text I could pretty much figure out that I had either “aced it” or come very close. I seem to remember copying “here” but writing out “hr.” Earning the T2 has been the high point of my ham radio career. I’ve always felt just a bit guilty that I’d never been properly “CW stress-tested” because I had upgraded into a no-code Extra Class license.”

Tony Comments on the Written Elements

“Like Stan, I also served in the Navy. I was a Sonarman First Class aboard a sub chaser during the Korean War. Many folks are

unaware that sonar operators had to know Morse code just like the radiomen. It’s how we communicated with submarines, albeit at only 6 or 7 wpm! Fifty-seven years ago, we were tied up to the pier in Boston on the morning I was scheduled to take my Second Class Radiotelegraph exam at the uptown FCC office. Unexpectedly, I awoke to the shrill call of the bosun’s pipe and the IMC announcing we were to set the sea and anchor detail and make preparations to get underway immediately! I’m now 79 years old and I figured it was time to complete some unfinished business.

The written exams for us consisted of Elements 5 and 6. Because Stan and I had our GROLs with Ship Radar Endorsements we were granted credit for Written Elements 1 and 8. Element 5 gave us the most trouble. This element deals with commercial radiotelegraph procedures, including just about the entire Q code as well as a litany of CW abbreviations. In amateur radio, we use only a small subset of the Q code. The entire Q code is quite extensive. One useful technique I found was to keep in mind that “RSTU” are the only valid middle letters in any Q signal. That allowed some narrowing of the answers by process of elimination. The CW abbreviations required pure memorization. A few, such as TU (Thank You) or SIG (Signature), are shared

with amateur radio and intuitive; others, such as DJ (Bearing doubtful because of interference) don’t reveal much of a clue at all!

Element 6 could be described as a more detailed and challenging version of a vintage Amateur Extra Class written. The current question pools are dated 1994. Questions about factors that determine the bias voltage, space charge, and the debugging steps to use for an ailing regenerative receiver really brought us back to our roots! Unlike the current GROL, there were no questions about positive logic devices, digital logic states, or the characteristics of an inverting operational amplifier circuit! I didn’t need a scientific calculator for the exam; I needed a history book! Also unlike the current GROL, there are no published study guides or software instructional programs available. There is only the FCC question pool which can be downloaded directly from http://wireless.fcc.gov/commoperators/index.htm?job=question_pools as individual MSWord files. Alternatively, a question pool booklet can be purchased through W5YI/NRE (<http://www.w5yi.org/catalog.php?sort=10>). In either case, all you get are the questions and answers. It is up to the applicant to hit the books and research why an answer choice is correct, incorrect, and how it was arrived at. I took issue with a few of the “correct” answers but decided that

it would probably be in my best interests to avoid confronting anyone. I earned my degree in electrical engineering in 1960 and have extensive experience in RF engineering and receiver design as well as test equipment and repair. Even so, I often found myself referring to a well-thumbed and yellowed copy of Kaufman's Q and A Manual from a half century ago!

When I was told I had passed I

was elated! After 57 years I had finally done it. I had also proven that, even as I approach my 80th year, I can still set and achieve meaningful goals. I've been a ham since 1953 and earning my T2 is my proudest accomplishment."

Reflections

Today's employment prospects for either coastal or shipboard radiotelegraph operators are

admittedly dim, especially for two old guys. We put a lot of time and effort, and a portion of our Social Security checks, into earning a credential with absolutely no economic value to either of us. What we did gain, however, was priceless – the personal satisfaction of ultimately having accomplished that one goal that "got away" from us so very long ago.



WHAT IS HAPPENING TO CW AS A MODE ON THE HAM BANDS?

By Bill, K6MGO

Once again I struck out as far as making a CW contact on HF, this morning. It seems to me that it is becoming increasingly harder and harder to make CW contacts on HF, even though we are supposedly climbing out of the bottom of the Sun Spot 11 year cycle.

I realize that I am operating at a slight handicap, using an indoor antenna, low power, (5-30 watts) and have a high (S-5 to S-9) noise level, but I know for a fact that I am getting out. I say this is because I have discovered and been using the Reverse Beacon Net, to verify that I am indeed, getting out for almost a year now.

Here are the facts. From 1543z on 22 Aug. 2012 till 1840z same day, I was calling "CQ" on 20,

17, 15 and 10 meters. I have 22 reports from Reverse Beacon Net, testifying to the fact that I was getting out and being heard.

I live in the Los Angeles CA area, and here is a breakdown of where I was heard and the signal report that I was given.

I called CQ on 28.029.6 and 28060.1 MHz and was heard by K3MM in Damascus MD, clear across the U.S. from my home, at 9 and 13 dB SNR. I did not hear another station, tuning from 28.000 to 28.070. And nobody answered my CQ.

I then called CQ on 18.07.5 MHz and was heard by W3OA in Mooresville NC again across the U.S. but at only 2 dB SNR so I didn't call for more than a few minutes

and moved on to 15 meters:

I called CQ on three different frequencies from 21.010.5 MHz to 21.026.3 MHz and was heard by W3OA again, at from 7 dB to 11 dB SNR and WZ7I in Pipersville PA at 10 dB SNR twice, without any replies to my CQs once again. So I moved down to 20 meters.

I called CQ from 14.013.1 MHz to 14.058.5 MHz and was heard by WA7LNW at 14 dB SNR in Washington UT, KU7T in North Bend WA at 9, 12, 15 & 15 dB (from 4 different frequencies), N0TA, in Louisville CO at 5 dB, KH6LC in Hawaii at 5 & 22 dB and VE7AB in Victoria BC at 5 & 6 dB. Once again, no replies to my CQs.

I'll admit this was a weekday morning, and many Hams are



working still, not all are retired like I am, but when I first started working CW at the end of the 1980s, beginning of the 1990s I was working DX all over the world with the same indoor antenna and 50 to 100 watts during the same weekdays in the early morning hours. I also had just joined FISTS, and got my CC award and Platinum award, very easily with the indoor antenna. Nowadays, I can call CQ near the FIST'S calling frequency, and if I'm lucky, have a QSO, without being asked for my FISTS Number. In fact I can't remember the last time I was asked if I had a FISTS Number, scary isn't it?


I send my CQs via the memory in my Built-in Electronic Keyer, at 18 wpm, not exactly high speed to discourage a reply, and the code is clear and accurate as generated by the keyer, so we can't say that people have trouble coping my fist.

So once again I say, where are all the CW operators that I hear during Field Day and major contests?

I have heard and read that even with the No-Code Licensing more and more young Hams are discovering and using CW. I sure hope that is true and not just someone blowing smoke. I'd sure hate to see our CW portions of the HF bands taken away from us from disuse. Not all of the guys who operate contests and Field Days are working, surely there must be many retired guys like myself who are home during the weekdays.

I have asked myself how can these guys who only seem to get on the air during contests, blast me away sending 25 wpm and up? A friend of mine told me that they use computer programs with canned calls and responses for the contests,

easy to do, as it's not rag chewing, which I prefer. Is this true?

Anyway, after this morning's frustration, I just had to get this off of my chest. Am I alone with my concern about the future of Morse Code on the Ham Bands? 


WHAT DOES A COUNTER COUNT?

By Bob K3FQP

While monitoring a local 2 meter repeater I heard a fellow getting a "HI" signal from the repeater. "The repeater must be off frequency," he said, "because I have my counter on right now and it says 146.70 right on the nose." He then emphatically added "Yessiree --- if that is what the counter says, that's what it is! You can't argue with a counter. What it counts, it counts. And you can't get any more accurate than that!"

O.K., maybe you can't argue with a counter but what is it counting? It is counting events per unit of time. The time interval of the counter is provided by its time base or "clock". That means a crystal oscillator in the usual counter. So what? You say. Well to paraphrase Shakespear, "the time base is the thing". To put

this in simple terms so that you can explain it to your XYL, let's use an example. Say you want to take your pulse rate. Also, let's say that you use very accurate stop watch and furthermore your actual pulse rate (still unknown to you at this time) is 60 beats per minute. O.K. so far. Now what do you do? You count your pulse for exactly one minute as indicated by your watch. If the time piece is right on in accuracy, you'll get a count of 60 beats. Now that is a rate of 60 per minute. Now suppose your watch is off by 1.6% or 1 second per minute (for convenient numbers). Then you'll count either 59 or 61 depending whether it is fast or slow.

It is the same way with frequency counters. The key to accuracy is the time base. Have you checked your time base lately? 



INSTANT RECOGNITION

by Nancy Kott, WZ8C

Some Hams are content to rag chew at slow speeds and don't have a desire to go faster. This is not! As long as you are getting on the air and having fun with Morse code, that is what is important. However, many frustrated Hams want to go faster. "How can I increase my code speed?" is the most commonly asked question.

After learning the alphabet, Hams seemingly reach a "plateau", a period where they can't make further progress. Usually they can copy 5 or 6 WPM fairly well, but they go to pieces above 7 or 8 WPM. The answer is simple: they have not adequately learned the alphabet.

They may deny this is true since they obviously must know the characters to copy 6 or 7 WPM.

However, to copy CW at higher speeds requires more than merely recognizing characters: the recognizing must be instantaneous. By instantaneous recognition I mean the ability to recognize a CW character within a half-second after hearing its completion.

Bill Pierpont, N6HFF, author of "The Art and Skill of Telegraphy," puts it this way: "Associate the code signal with the printed letter so intimately that when you hear or think of one, the other immediately pops into mind. Instant recognition is what we strive for. We must develop

that patient, receptive state of mind that allows us to recognize each character instantly and accurately as soon as it has been completed."

How do you find out if you have instant recognition? One way is to play a code practice program. As each letter plays, can you immediately say or write the letter? Or do you think "ummm...A" or "...dit dah... ummm...A"?

If there is a split second delay in your recognition of the letter, then you haven't learned that letter to the point of instant recognition. A split second may not seem like much; it's not going to make much difference when you're going 5 or 10 WPM but when you get to higher speeds it's going to mess you up. The time it takes you to think "...ummm" before recognizing the letter will be long enough to make you miss the next letter after it. It will snowball to the point where you lose whole words. You may

get enough of it to make sense of the copy, but you will not feel comfortable chatting on the air. It might discourage you enough to make you want to give up because you feel you are practicing and practicing and aren't making progress.

I'm sure you've heard the stories of legendary CW operators who can carry on a high speed chat on the air while drinking a cup of coffee and eluding questions from people in the room. These operators are comfortable with the code because it's so familiar they don't have to think about what they're copying.

Irene, WO8E, feels she is at a plateau. Even though she has passed the 20 WPM test and has her Extra class license she doesn't feel comfortable carrying on a conversation at 20 WPM. We wondered if she had instant recognition, maybe she didn't and this was holding her back. She listened to the code characters one by one and sure enough

there are a handful of characters that she has to think about before identifying them! Once you find you don't have instant recognition, how do you acquire it? There are two ways: the hard way and the easy way. The hard way is to proceed as you are doing, eventually instant recognition will come to you. With some people it may take years.

The simple way is to go back to the alphabet and learn it as it should have been done in the first place. Your first reaction is probably to think it would be a waste of time because you may feel you've already memorized the alphabet. But, you've proved that you don't really know the letters because you don't have instant recognition of them yet. Once properly learned, the alphabet will produce faster speeds quickly and easily. The key is to overlearn the alphabet so it becomes so ingrained in your brain that it's second nature. In psychology there is a "Law of Contiguity", which says that if two events occur no more than one-half second apart, the mind associates the two events. This means when a Morse code character is heard and it is followed within one-half second by a spoken letter of the alphabet, the mind will associate the Morse sound with the translation. The association works automatically, as a workman thinks "lunch" when he

hears the noon whistle blow. But we quickly forget things learned by this association method, so we need to "overlearn" them to make the code a part of our permanent memory. Overlearning occurs when we continue to practice something we feel we have already learned. However, boredom soon sets in when we go over and over material we think we've already mastered. This is why practice sessions should be short, two or three minutes at a time. Short, frequent practice sessions produce more results than fewer longer sessions. Concentrate, stay focused on your goal!

Determine what characters you don't recognize immediately after they are played and concentrate on these. You should be able to say the name of the character as the last dit or dah is heard. If you don't, add it to your list. You can relearn the alphabet by using basic code tapes, listening to slow code on the air or even whistling it to yourself. It would be ideal if you could make your own tape concentrating on your problem letters, but don't omit the letters you already know. Remember, our goal is to overlearn the code: all the reinforcement you can get is good for you.

The key to success with this method is to say the letter within a half second of hearing it; hearing it and quickly say-

ing it over and over and over. The INSTANT you recognize the letter being played, say it out loud as fast as you can. Use spare moments during the day to whistle the code under your breath and quietly say the letter to yourself immediately afterwards. Do it while driving, sitting at your desk at work (no one will even suspect!), during commercials while watching TV, anytime you think of it. Spending just a few minutes many times a day will work wonders. By tapping out the letter with your finger as you say the letter aloud or whistle it, you involve more of your brain's memory centers. This increases your learning efficiency by reinforcing instant recognition with what is called "motor memory". Doing a practice session right before you go to sleep has also been proven to help your brain commit material to memory.

When you find that you have instant recognition with the letters, your code speed will increase effortlessly. Then you will get to the point where you can work on having instant recognition with common words. As always, I welcome your comments. Contact me at *Nancy Kott, WZ8C, PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440* or via Email at nancy@tir.com



A BASIC KEY BOARD

By Virgil Holcomb KA2REY

This is a photo of a straight key mounted on a long piece of plywood. I refer to it as my portable Key Board. This perhaps is an old idea revisited. Though, I have not seen a CW key mounted in such away in either old or newer pictures of radio rooms.

The prime purpose of the key mounted on the long board is that the weight of the operator's forearm keeps the key from moving around while sending. With that, the operator's finger tips and forearm are kept inline with the key knob. This provides a more optimum comfort zone for the operator while sending. Often I see pictures of ham radio shacks on the internet where insufficient space is allow to fully support the operator's forearm and wrist. By not doing so this increases the likelihood of muscle fatigue and stress on the hand and forearm. This could lead to the painful phenomenon known in the radio world as the infamous Glass Arm.

In my radio room a donated classic J-38 key is screwed down to the desk top within a pigeon hole area between the radio equipment. This location provides full support for my sending arm. It also provides a permanent location for the key which does not interfere with other



items such as my paper log book which maybe on the desk top.

This portable Key Board was made from a scrap piece of 5/8 inch plywood. It is 6 inches wide and 28 inches long. The type of wood used and it's size is not critical provided that it is sturdy enough to resist warping. The thickness of the wood should be such to allow the key to be either screwed or bolted to the wood. In my case I used small bolts with lock washers and nuts. The board was sanded and varnished prior to mounting the key.

I can think of a few enhancements to this basic idea. A nice personal touch would be to stencil or paint your name and call sign on the face of the board prior to applying the varnish. Or perhaps, if the equipment belongs to a club organization it's name. If you are a key switch hitter the operating end of the board could be made to accommodate the placement of

other keys of your choice whether it be a bug, paddle, or a side taper. However, be mindful that it will add additional weight to that end of the board. On those warm muggy days I lay a small car wash cloth on the board to keep my forearm from sticking to the board. If you plan on using the board on top of a finished desk top you may consider attaching a rubberized mat to the bottom of the board. This would prevent marring to the desk surface.

Enclosing, if you are a high peaks mountain climber or a deep woods back packer this probably would not be the idea equipment to take. However, for that readily accessible field day location or those casual dit dah'n times from the picnic table in the shade this Key Board may provide that platform to help keep that fist steady. It's an easy project to do at a minimum cost. enjoy.



SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF PRACTICAL INFORMATION, ART, SCIENCE, MECHANICS, CHEMISTRY, AND MANUFACTURES.

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(NEW SERIES.)

NEW YORK, JULY 8, 1871.

\$3 per Annum
(IN ADVANCE.)

PROFESSOR MORSE AFFIXING HIS SIGNATURE TO THE GREETING TELEGRAPHED BY MISS S. E. CORNWELL AT THE MORSE CELEBRATION.

Our engraving illustrates one of the most interesting ceremonies that has ever taken place in this city—the father of the telegraph greeting his children. The sharp click of the instrument having responded to the expert manipulation of the lady whose name is intimately connected with the early history of the most remarkable invention of the century, the message only awaits the signature of the venerable Professor to be complete. The audience with difficulty suppress their enthusiasm as he seats himself before the magic tongue whose utterances clear space, in defiance of time and distance. The name is recorded, and the deafening cheers of the audience make the roof of the Academy of Music ring again and again with glad echoes.

The name is written not only in telegraphic characters upon sundry slips of paper, but in letters of light upon the scroll of fame.

"One of the few immortal names
That are not soon to die."

Truly the whole nation has a right to rejoice at the appropriate memorial erected to this great man, and to share in the delight of this memorable occasion. For upon the whole nation is reflected the glory of his invention, the effect of which upon the welfare of the human race is absolutely beyond estimate.

And though we would not rob others who prepared the way before him, of their meed of glory, we hesitate not to avow that the honors paid to Professor Morse have been well earned and justly paid, and that they alike reflect credit upon the telegraphic fraternity by whom they were origin-

ated, and upon their esteemed recipient who so graciously accepted the ovation.

In response to the greeting of Professor Morse, numerous telegrams were received. Among these were messages from the Chambers of Commerce of Hong Kong, Bombay, and Singapore. A poetical one from Chicago we append:





"A thousand flashing wires tonight
Meet in one circuit—grand, complete—
And o'er them, with the lightning's pen,
We write our father Morse to greet.
"But we, dear chief, a circuit form
Which far exceeds the electrician's art.
Affection's battery across the line,
Each "zap" a telegram's heart.
"Depending stations there are none;
Unbroken flows the electric stream!
"That bears you this eventful night
Our love, our reverence, our esteem."



This was sent to us by Sig 5Z4EE (NV7E). He writes, "I have another hobby, collecting newspapers. I found a copy of the Scientific American magazine from 1871 which might be of interest.

On the front cover of the magazine there is a picture of Samuel F.B. Morse. It was not long before his death. They had a ceremony commemorating his invention of the electric telegraph. The picture shows Morse at a telegraph key. Although he is given credit for inventing the Morse code, he was not a telegrapher. I don't think he really knew the code himself, but at least he knew enough to send his call sign.

The picture shows him at a telegraph key, perhaps the only picture of its kind. There is a caption with the picture describing the event. (According to the caption, the message Morse was signing was actually sent by a "YL"!)

 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">FISTS DOWN UNDER</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Newsletter – September 2012</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Editor & QSL Manager for ZL: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX, P.O. Box 15078, Otaki 5542, New Zealand. - Tel: 06-364-6339</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter Distribution & QSL Manager for VK: Chris Thompson, VK2CTN, P O Box 65, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Membership/Awards Liaison: Ralph Sutton, ZL2AOH, 12c Herbert Gardens, 186 The Terrace, Wellington 6011, New Zealand Tel: 0-4-473-0847. Fax: 0-4-473-0848</p> <p style="text-align: center;">QSL Manager for ZL6FF: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX at address above. QSL Manager for VK2FDU: Chris Thompson VK2CTN at address above</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Address e-mails for all persons above to: <fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz> Web site –: <www.fistsdownunder.org></p>	  <p style="text-align: center;">FISTS 25th Anniversary</p>
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SUGGESTED FISTS CLUB CALLING FREQUENCIES

1.808 MHz (160m) – 3.528 MHz (80m) – 7.028 MHz (40m) – 10.118 MHz (30m) –
14.058 MHz (20m) – 18.085 MHz (17m) – 21.058 MHz (15m) – 24.918 MHz (12m) – 28.058 MHz (10m)

Members are reminded that the above frequencies are suggested calling frequencies. If they are busy, it is suggested that once you establish contact with a station, it may be prudent to change frequency down the band, avoiding other calling frequencies of known clubs.

NEW MEMBER

This month we welcome **VK2YN-Derek Nelson #14148** from Annandale, New South Wales. Annandale is a suburb of Inner West Sydney located within 3-5 kilometres west of the Sydney central business district. In applying to join, Derek said "You may recognise the Call sign, which i picked up a few years ago, when updating to a 2 letter call. My understanding is that Lindsey ? , was a previous holder of the call and a well respected CW operator, although i would like to learn more of his history. I am happy to follow in Lindsey's footsteps as a keen CW operator." *Can anyone tell Derek more about Lindsey? We hope to publish a brief personal profile of Derek in a forthcoming issue.*

MEMBERS NEWS

ZL3PAH-Phil #14103 has been appointed to the Council of NZART. Congratulations, Phil.

Thanks to **VK4BUI-Les #9617**, **VK2HGQ-Terry #9660**, **ZL2AUJ-David #9668** and **ZL4SA-Peter #9694** for enclosing a donation when renewing their subscriptions.

ZL2SWR-South Wairarapa Amateur Radio Club #9618 has been put into recess by NZART. It was down to one member. Consequently it doesn't now qualify as a new contact as a FISTS Awards club station.

Recently joined **ZL3WD (Ex G4CWD) Les Bagnall # 14146** sent is this personal profile:- I am 79 years old and reside in Mosgiel, Dunedin. My potted history is: Emigrated from United Kingdom to New Zealand in May 2008. Wife died in 2004. Three sons moved to NZ with their families and took up residence in the south Island. (Dunedin Timaru & Queenstown). Having visited them I decided to settle in NZ.

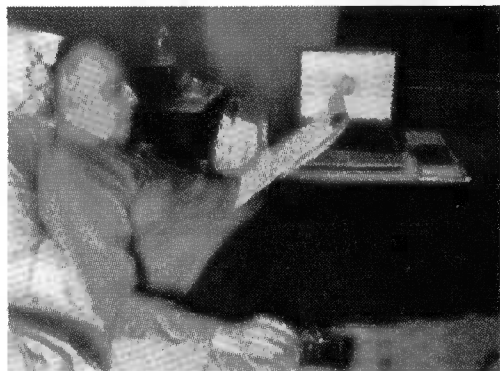
Active on HF using SSB, CW, RTTY and PSK. Over past two years have worked 160 countries and have 80 confirmed. Station consists of a Yaesu FT DX-5000MP and a Kenwood TS-2000AT. Explorer 1200 Linear AMP amplifier. 4 Element TA-53-M Mosley beam, Cushcraft R7 Vertical, 80 and 40 Meter Dipoles. Photos of shack and antennas on QRZ.com.

As G4CWD I obtained DXCC Honour Roll, 5 Band and Challenge awards. As an IOTA activator I received the Millennium Platinum award in 2000 for activating two new African islands in Ghana and Gabon. Activated more than 20 Scottish islands for the IOSA (Islands of Scotland Award).

My other activities are Motorcycling, Microlight and model aircraft flying and building. I am currently attempting to improve my Morse reading skills.

This is from WIA News:- Recently, several **Redcliffe & District Amateur Radio Club** members (**VK4RC FISTS #9066**) were addressed by a pirate station on their local Redcliffe repeater. The station was using the call sign, VK4NFL.

OTHER MEMBERS'NEWS



We are sorry to report that an old friend of FISTS Down Under, **I2VRF-Giancarlo Vaia #8325** recently became a Silent Key. From being very active and athletic Gian became completely disabled through a degenerative disease, though he retained his mental faculties completely. With assistance from his family he had his radio equipment and computer set up alongside his bed so was able to operate and communicate with his friends worldwide. – Gian used to regularly acknowledge the receipt of our newsletter and several times rang us to wish us a +happy Christmas. An inspiration to us all, he will be greatly missed. We have sent condolences to his wife Concetta and his family, on behalf of FISTS Down Under.

A discussion has been brewing on the UK FISTS internet chat group There were various options suggested and one is the use of the Morse prosign "II" to denote that a group was being repeated, e.g. "My FISTS No is 10743 II 10743".

N1EA David # 9227 posted this amusing story of how it was used once in a news flash. "II was used famously by the RCA Globcom Station WCC during their 0300Z PX transmissions.

One hilarious moment was their sending:

BOSTON (AP) POPE JOHN PAUL II II II ARRIVED TODAY FOR A PAPAL VISIT WHERE HE REMARKED QUOTE I GREET YOU AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL UNQUOTE TO A CROWD OF ALMOST 400,000 II 400,000. POPE JOHN PAUL II II II CELEBRATED MASS ON BOSTON COMMON IN THE HEART OF BOSTON

It was John Paul 2 in Roman Numerals which is II and WCC added II after the II for the number 2 so it came out: JOHN PAUL II II II that completely flabbergasted about every R/O who copied the PX that night so very long ago at 0300Z October 2, 1979. Well maybe some of them weren't flabbergasted, but I was thrown for a loop the first time."

The information has already been passed to the ACMA, the Australian regulatory authority..

It just goes to prove that the club's regular foxhunts can not only find the fox but in this case are close to finding a pirate! The club's activities are frequently recorded in the weekly WIA News.

This from **G5VZ-Chris #12540**. – We have recreated the Antenna Experimenters group on Yahoo! Some of you may have seen the message I posted on the G-QRP list or you might recall the group's previous incarnation. As it is, we've retained the original AntExp name.

It's a group focusing on radiating RF and the design of systems to do just that; plus modelling and construction then evaluation of the results. The creation of an aerial that's smaller, better, stealthier or otherwise innovative is a quest many of us pursue and there always seems to be something more to share with the rest of us. AntExp is the place to share it!

I would like to take this opportunity to ask each of you if you'd like to join us. The joining link is antexp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com by email or <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/antexp/join> on the Yahoo! Groups web site.

I look forward to welcoming you into the experimenters' lab!

LZ1AF-Dimiter #0416 will be in Brisbane, Australia from 23rd September to 23rd December 2012 and intends operating as **LZ1AF/VK4** with a TS590S and a dipole. Lazy holiday style operation on the 14 – 50MHz Bands. No "599 up" and mostly CW. He reports that he has already had QSL cards printed so look for him around the bands!

TRAWLING THE WEB

Alltop - Ham Radio News - Ham and CB radio news and headlines from around the web: [http:// ham-radio.alltop.com/](http://ham-radio.alltop.com/)

A group of radio amateurs using Morse code have established an informal web site to promote the use of the sideswiper (cootie) Morse key: <http://www.sideswipernet.org/>

A retired lorry driver creates a replica of the Titanic radio room : <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2188270/Titanic-communications-room-created-retired-lorry-driver-parts-bought-eBay.html>

IMPORTANT PLEASE READ!

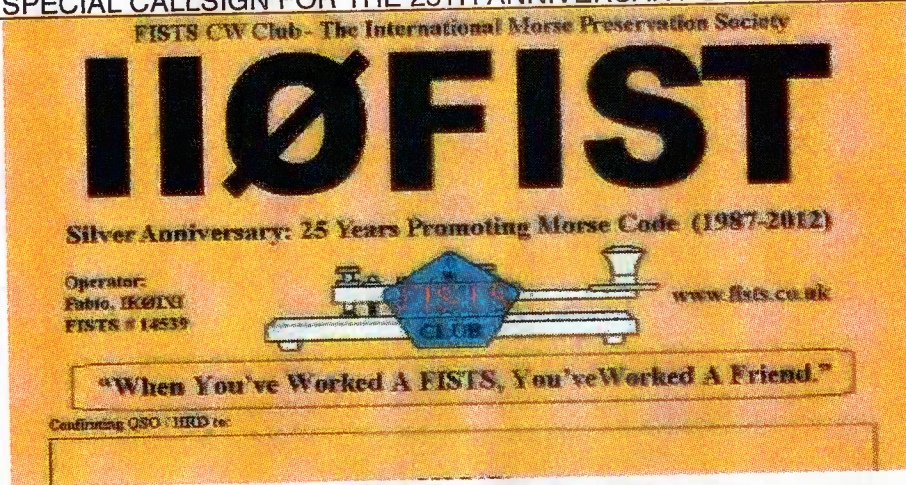
HOUSEKEEPING

A reminder that now members will receive a renewal notice by post in the month before their membership expires. Reminders will no longer be e-mailed. If the membership renewal has not been received after three months, a final notice will be sent through the post, which will point out that, if the membership has not been renewed within one month, it will be considered as a resignation. If you are unsure about the status of your membership, just sent us a message.

Our email messages to **hatzis.esc@gmail.com** are being bounced. If any of our readers recognise this address, please ask the member to contact us with a valid email address. It is probably because they are using one of the association email addresses that on-forward to the individual's address, (e.g. wia.org.au or nzart.org.nz).

To avoid this type of problem, please always inform us of any changes to your contact details.

II0FIST – SPECIAL CALLSIGN FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FISTS CW CLUB



Fabio Bonucci, IK0IXI will be on the air with special callsign II0FIST between September 2nd and 8th to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the FISTS CW Club (1987-2012). QSL via IK0IXI.

SPARE A THOUGHT FOR THOSE WHO MAN YOUR QSL BUREAU

By Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX

Spare'a thought for those people who man your National or FISTS QSL Bureau's. They do an excellent job, involving many hours work, tediously sorting through your QSL cards to send overseas. I know what it's like as I did a stint at the National QSL Bureau in the 1970's when it was run by the Upper Hutt Branch of N.Z.A.R.T.

In 2004 I sent a batch of QSL cards to our National ZL Bureau and sometime later received in my inward cards a card that I had sent to JT1CO in Mongolia for an 80 meter CW contact. It had a note attached to it by the QSL Manager Barry, ZL2RR who kindly advised me that JT1CO only accepted QSL cards Direct. At the time I didn't have any IRC's or the more commonly used Greenbacks and so I left it, as I had recently moved and wasn't active at the time.

Some years later I received a QSL from FISTS Member, Rob M0TIX in England who enclosed two crisp US \$1.00 notes. He wanted QSL cards from myself and Syd ZL1BRS. I contacted Syd who said he had already sent him a card and so I replied with mine and Syd's letter. I filed the two Greenbacks away in a drawer until suddenly in 2012 I was looking through my logs and realized I really did need Mongolia confirmed on 3.5MHz It's so rare on any band that I thought what the heck. Out came Rob's Greenbacks and I posted a new card to Chak, JT1CO wondering if he was a pirate or not and would he bother looking up a QSO that was made in 2004.

You could have struck me dumb. Three weeks later there it was, an envelope from Mongolia and inside the confirmation of our contact. Another rare country confirmed! It made my day!

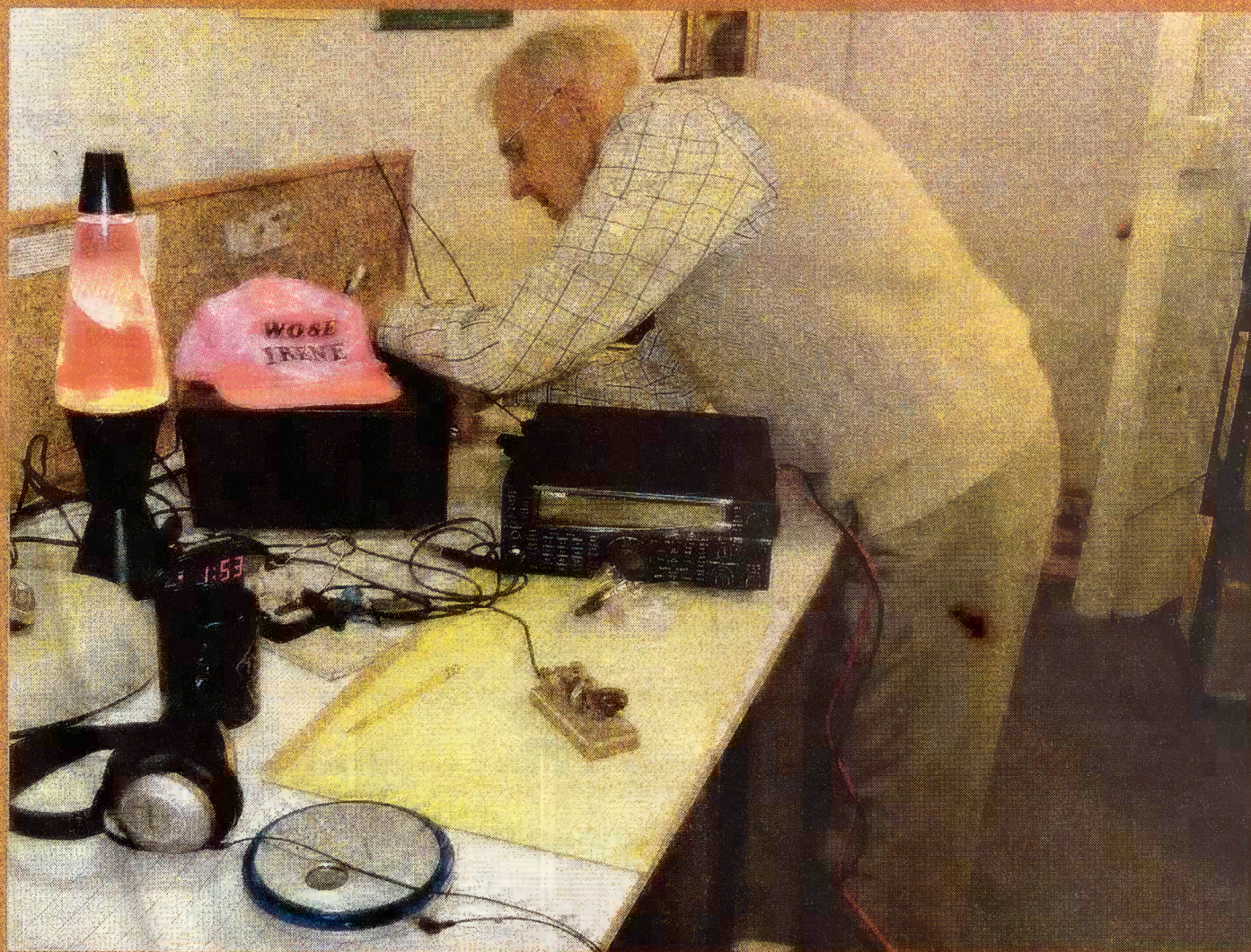
My thanks go to Chak, JT1CO, Rob, M0TIX, Barry ZL2RR (who made it all possible by enclosing a simple note when returning my original card) and the ZL2 Inward Manager Tony , ZL2AGY (who returned the original card amongst a pile waiting for me)

THE TREASURED JT1CO QSL CARD



FISTS CW Club
PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 762
MICHIGAN WEB PRESS
ROYAL OAK, MI 484068



Until recently, Ken W8ROG, did our photopages and duplicating of the tapes for the blind FISTS. Here he is, setting up the rig for WO8E's Summer Sprint adventure. If FISTS members are looking for an opportunity to volunteer and take over the photopages and tapes for the blind, please contact Nancy WZ8C.