

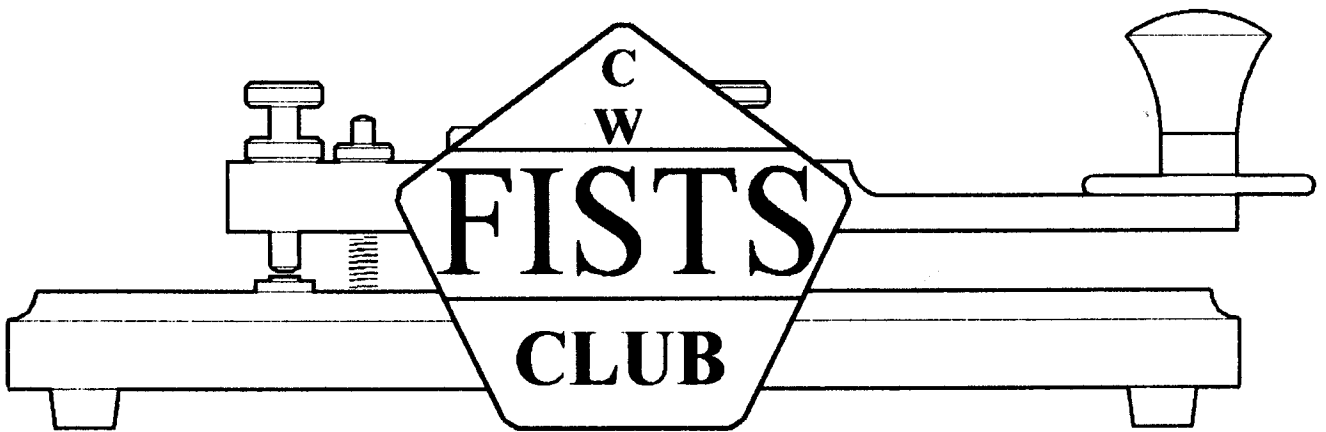
Issue 9/10  
combo 2006  
Last issue of 2006

# The Keynote

Newsletter of FISTS CW Club

The active chapter of the International Morse Preservation Society

**“Accuracy Transcends Speed”**



## **Our Goals:**

- ✕ Further the use of CW
- ✕ Encourage newcomers to use Morse code
- ✕ Engender friendships among members

**“When You’ve Worked A FISTS, You’ve Worked A Friend.”**

**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, look in the reference issue, or on our web page <http://www.fists.org>**

**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  
Dennis Franklin, K6DF, [fistsawards@comcast.net](mailto:fistsawards@comcast.net)**

**The QSL Bureau contact  
Stan Reas, K4UK, [k4uk@rev.net](mailto:k4uk@rev.net)**

**Our club call KN0WCW contact  
Karl Zuege, KB1DSB, [kb1dsb@sover.net](mailto:kb1dsb@sover.net).**

**The membership roster, call changes, name changes contact  
Ed Hayes, N7CFA, [n7cfa@msn.com](mailto:n7cfa@msn.com)**

**To get an application or sample Keynote sent to a friend contact  
Jim Ranieri, AA9LS, [aa9ls@turbotoads.com](mailto:aa9ls@turbotoads.com)**

**Web page changes, getting your personal or club webpage linked, etc contact  
Webmaster Bill Myers, KK4KF, [kk4kf@cox.net](mailto:kk4kf@cox.net)**

**Club presentation packets contact  
Joe Spencer, KK5NA, [kk5na@kk5na.com](mailto:kk5na@kk5na.com)**

**To change or include your email address on the FISTS email list contact  
Kathi Hilton, N0FKA, [fistelist@comcast.net](mailto:fistelist@comcast.net) (note no "s" in fistelist)**

**Code Buddy volunteers and buddies contact  
Nick Yokanovich, K3NY, & The Historical Electronics Museum Amateur Radio Club,  
[w3hem@arrl.net](mailto:w3hem@arrl.net)**

**Sprints contact  
Dan Sheperd, N8IE, [W8PIG@yahoo.com](mailto:W8PIG@yahoo.com)**

**Get Your Feet Wet Weekend and G3ZQS Memorial Straight Key Contest contact  
Lee Hallin, N7NU, [hallinl@lanecc.edu](mailto:hallinl@lanecc.edu)**

**All other questions, including supplies, tapes for the blind, address changes, general membership questions and articles for the Keynote contact Nancy Kott WZ8C, [nancy@tir.com](mailto:nancy@tir.com); PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440, phone 810-797-2033, fax 810-797-5808.**

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# FISTS CW CLUB

THE INTERNATIONAL MORSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

## NORTH AMERICAN MEMO

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Hello FISTS! Ham Radio has seen some changes in 2006 - and not in Morse code's favor. But, I'm sure we will make the best of it. I was discouraged and disheartened when I read of the drastic changes in the band plan until it dawned on me that they really hadn't changed anything about the CW band plan. We can still operate anywhere on the bands that we could before. They didn't outlaw it on any frequencies; they just gave us some more QRM to work around. Of course, we will still ask QRL? and listen before transmitting to make sure that we don't interfere with any on-going conversations. No one owns a frequency, and that goes for FISTS, too. We don't own the .058's, and if we have to change some calling frequencies, we will. It is hard to predict how it will all play out, but until the dust settles and the nets decide what they are going to do, nothing has changed in regard to our frequencies. Just be sure to be extra courteous and don't be malicious - not that you would be anyway, right? But remember, we have a right to transmit where ever it is legal as long as we don't interfere with an ongoing QSO. Invest in a good filter or learn to use the one you already have.

If you are in charge of a net that is changing its calling frequency, please let Phil Kroth, KA2QIK/7, (7956 East Feathersong Lane, Scottsdale, AZ 85255 or via email [pjkroth@juno.com](mailto:pjkroth@juno.com)) know so he can change the web page listings.

This is a good time to remind you to check your club's link on the FISTS web page to make sure it is still a good link. Sometimes the URLs change and we don't get notified, which makes the link on the FISTS web page useless. Take a minute and click on your link to verify it still works.

If you belong to a club and would like a link to it put on the FISTS web page (and we hope you reciprocate on your web page!) drop a note with the club's name and URL to Webmaster Bill. Sometimes Bill's email program puts legit emails into the spam bucket, when you get a verifying email back from him so you know he received your message.

We have been having problems with the Code Buddy links on the web page. Your best bet is to send a postal mail to Nick Yokanovich K3NY at The Historical Electronics Museum, 108 Brent Rd, Arnold MD 21012-1143 or [w3hem@arrl.net](mailto:w3hem@arrl.net). All the info he really needs is what you are looking for (practice buddy your same speed, faster op to teach you, or to volunteer to help someone improve), what bands you use and what parts of the country you can reliably receive. Hopefully the on-line application will be fixed soon. It's been intermittent for at least six months that I know about, so if you have sent in an application via the on-line form, please shoot Nick an Email or postal letter.

Issue 1, 2007 is the Reference Issue. That means it's time to print the roster. *If you have had a callsign change that you didn't tell me about, please do it now so it will be correct in the roster.* I don't have a crystal ball or direct link to the FCC to automatically update the info each time someone gets a Vanity, so help us keep the records accurate and TELL ME. If there is a typo in your listing, let me know that, too. You can check it by going to the web page <http://www.fists.org> and clicking on North American FISTS search. Type in your call or number. If it doesn't come up, it means your subs have expired, which brings up another thing to do (boy, I'm being bossy today!!)...check your Keynote mailing label for the expiration date. If it has passed or coming up in the next month or so, please send in your renewal. We make it easy by accepting Paypal on line, to [fists@tir.com](mailto:fists@tir.com) or, of course, by postal mail.

In 2007, we will be celebrating TWENTY years of FISTS CW Club. If you have an idea for a new operating activity that has uncomplicated scoring, is simple, fair to all, please let me know - we want to get a lot of FISTS on the air to celebrate our anniversary. And more than ever, Use It or Lose It. More Morse!! 73 88 33 WZ8C

## Welcome to the New FISTS Members

Gerald, KE0KI 12275, was inadvertently left off the list in a previous month. Sorry Gerald, and welcome to FISTS! Gerald lives in Nixa, MO.

### FISTS # callsign First QTH Sponsor

12632	N3EDB	Edward	DE	N4ATN
12633	AG4PA	Bill	NC	
12634	KC0URU	Floyd	KS	
12635	WA1OWQ	Raymond	MA	
12636	KS7D	Mike	FL	
12637	AD5VJ	Robert	TX	
12638	KF0RT	Robert	CO	
12639	AC2C	Ron	MD	
12640	KD8EDC	Mark	MI	
12641	PENDING	Spenser	MI	
12642	KG4URF	Doyle	KY	
12643	WI5F	Paul	TX	
12644	KF0X	Randy	AZ	
12645	KI6BKB	Doug	CA	
12646	KC2PSJ	Thomas	NY	
12647	PENDING	John	TX	
12648	KC9GSM	Dick	FL	
12649	K9UH	David	IL	
12650	W2FAM	Club: FISTS Along the Mohawk	NY	K2NPN
12651	KL7SB	Stephen	AK	
12652	W1EM	Roger	MA	
12653	K5ENA	John	OK	KE5AQD
12654	PENDING	Jim	MD	
12655	N0HU	Max	CO	
12656	KI4ECL	Debbie	TN	KI4KGU
12657	KM7I	Zach	WA	
12658	VE3HMK	Mark	ONT	
12659	N4DCC	Bill	VA	
12660	KC0IDJ	Matt	MO	W7GVE
12661	WB4OUF	Frank	NC	
12662	VA3GRV	Vincent	ONT	
12663	AI4RE	John	FL	
12664	W6PN	Bill	CA	
12665	W4FMC	Glenn	FL	
12666	N0ZYG	Dewey	KS	
12667	KM5PS	John	AR	
12668	WB8LSV	Barry	FL	
12669	KH6RQ	Gene	HI	
12670	KE4RQ	Clark	GA	

### FISTS # callsign First QTH Sponsor

12671	K5BEE	GLEN	AR	
12672	K9MM	JOHN	IL	
12673	N4PCV	DANIEL	IN	
12674	KC1TN	HARRY	TN	
12675	WA2RUE	Club: CW Operators Club	NY	W2PL
12676	W4WLC	DAVE	FL	
12677	WD8AJF	DANIEL	OH	WB2FXK
12678	KE7IZH	AL	OR	
12679	N4XEP	Phillip	TN	K4UK
12680	N1YDX	Lee	NH	
12681	N5FG	Floyd	MS	
12682	N8MHD	Peter	MN	
12683	KA1NZA	Eric	VT	WB2MIC
12684	K0MDS	Mike	KS	W8III
12685	AA2NA	Rich	NY	
12686	KB9AU	Bob	MN	K1TG
12687	NA9P	Jim	IL	
12688	WB5JWI	Leslie	TX	
12689	KC2GJV	Steve	NY	
12690	NK2X	Larry	NJ	
12691	KA9HJZ	Tony	IN	
12692	W5MPC	Mike	MS	
12693	VA3NU	Larry	ON	
12694	K5JUC	JimM	AR	N5DRB
12695	VA6CS	Craig	AB	
12696	WA4LBN	Carroll	TN	KI4KGU
12697	AF8G	Karen	OH	WB8MON
12698	AA9JM	Jane	MN	
12699	WA5LPW	Keith	TN	
12700	W5ANR	Club: Fort Smith Area	AR	N5DRB
12701	WL7BR	Joe	AK	WZ8C
12702	WB4DAD	Skip	TX	
12703	W3GOE	Dave	NC	
12704	K7MDM	Mike	CA	
12705	AD7JT	David	AZ	
12706	K5NER	Noel	AR	
12707	N6VL	Steve	CA	
12708	KE5CNF	Robert	NM	AI5F
12709	W7OM	Rod	WA	
12710	K4EV	STEVE	GA	
12711	KD8EGT	TIM	MI	
12712	AD7HI	DAN	UT	

<b>FISTS #</b>	<b>callsign</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>QTH</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>FISTS #</b>	<b>callsign</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>QTH</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>
12713	KE5FIK	CHUCK	TX		12757	WP4AQK	JOE	FL	
12714	W7EXB	BILL	OR	KC2AIO	12758	K8PON	DENNIS	AZ	WB2FXK
12715	W6TUR	RON	CA	WB2FXK	12759	KB5DRJ	DAVID	TX	
12716	K7WRB	RICK	ID		12760	KC9HQB	KRISTY	IN	K9FMX
12717	K4JCP	JOE	FL		12761	W5VYN	RON	TX	
12718	VE3CPO	DARRYL	ON	Marconi	12762	KA2KCA	JOHN	NJ	
12719	KB1NSB	DAVE	CT		12763	KU4MY	Tom	SC	
12720	W5XTL	JERAMY	OK		12764	NJ9S	BRUNO	IN	
12721	KB0ADD	JOHN	MN		12765	KU9D	MICHAEL	IN	
12722	W0SED	ALAN	KS		12766	K6TZZ	BILL	WV	
12723	K0DXV	Doug	CO		12767	K2EEF	WADE	NJ	AA9LS
12724	WA2MKB	ANDREA	NY		12768	K5SHT	DICK	TX	
12725	WW2NJ	Friends in	NJ	KG2GL	12769	AD5YU	JIM	AR	N5DRB
12726	VE3IQ	JAMES	ON		12770	KB3ILS	Keith	PA	
12727	WB5TWK	CHRIS	FL	K5WTA	12771	TI2CLX	Luis		
12728	KF4LJA	JAMES	FL	K5WTA	12772	WD9EDM	DOUG	MN	
12729	VE3VKP	Alvin	ON		12773	WA0AVA	DON	KS	KA3NZR
12730	WB0YPG	JAMES	KS		12774	N2YHQ	MARCELO	NY	
12731	KC2OQE	DENNIS	NJ		12776	K6EEE	James	CA	
12732	K9IA	CHUCK	FL		12777	N4NI	Jeremy	VA	
12733	N5KSR	MILLYNN	TX	KA5REJ	12778	KE5HAG	KYLE	OK	
12734	KC8SQC	Paul	MI		12779	KC9EHQ	David	IL	WB9UJS & WB9VDT
12735	KD8BIL	MATT	OH		12780	W9BYA	MIKE	IN	
12736	WD5EAE	Stephen	TX		12781	WB5BNV	FRED	MS	
12737	KD7MDH	Roman	OR	N7QR	12782	KO5Q	ROGER	GA	KG4W
12738	KI4PDH	NANCY	TN	WG0T	12783	N3KRS	Rick	VA	
12739	K5CTM	CHUCK	OK		12784	K5SEE	John	TX	
12740	WU9Q	Bob	IL		12785	AA2DC	DAVID	NY	
12741	W9BMW	MONTE	WA		12786	N3EJS	CHARLES	DE	
12742	W5AAW	BILL	TX		12788	NN1T	JOSEPH	NV	
12743	KK0I	JACK	WI	WA0WMV	12789	VE1YVN	SAM	NS	VA3UU
12744	KN0N	Brian	WA		12790	KD8DEG	TOM	MI	
12745	PENDING	SAMANTHA	NY		12791	KC7WQ	LOREN	OR	
12746	N0PHW	Dave	IA	K0LUW	12792	KO0Q	GARY	MN	
12747	WA0VJM	DENNIS	IA	K0LUW	12793	KD5XN	BILL	TX	
12748	N0JNS	Duane	NE	K0LUW	12794	W0FH	FRANK	MN	
12749	KI4RZE	CHARLES	FL	K0LUW	12795	WB5NUK	JOHN	TX	KG4W"
12750	W2US Club:	HF Radio Group	NY	W2PL	12796	K1HTJ	BILL	VT	
12751	KI4QOP	BILL	VA		12797	N8UU	RUSSELL	MI	
12752	N4JMG	MIKE	FL		12798	KE7HLS	STEVE	NV	
12753	WA9OFM	Chauncey	IL		12799	KC0VRK	JAMES	NE	
12754	WA4FRJ	Don	MI						
12755	VE3KGJ	William	ON						
12756	K8GJW	John	OH	W8KYD					

By John Shannon KK3WP

- I always like to share feedback I get from these columns with you so here's something I received from Mike N9JIY.

"John, ...always enjoy your items in Key-note, & that I'd pass this along.

I like to build/operate QRP stuff, too, & used to worry about tuners for the little xmtrs. Now I don't think this necessarily has to be a worry for (say) sub-500mW rigs.

I recently built a RockMite-40. Final amp is a little metal-cased 2N2222. I put a heatsink on mine. Before putting it into an enclosure I tested it by running key down for a minute with the antenna wide open. Then did the same with a dead short across the antenna. 2N2222 got hot, but didn't fry. Listened to signal & sounded fine in both cases. So I operate it with no tuner at all.

It's now in a plastic soap dish, and antenna is just a banana socket for the 20' single-wire feed to a classic Windom I use portable.

Maybe not all transmitter designs could stand this stress. Maybe some would wander off frequency, chirp, etc. Dunno, but if final transistor is cheap & easy to replace, it's worth a try.

Keep up the good writings & 73 de Mike/N9JIY/1282/1107."

That's a good point. With 500mW you would have to have a pretty bad mismatch with your antenna to get enough reflected power to burn out a final transistor. There are other considerations involved in using or not using a tuner besides destroying a final transistor though.

With a tuner, the loss in the components might be worse than a loss from a mismatch between transmitter and antenna. In that case, it's best not to use one.

However, I still would make sure the antenna is matched well enough to the transmitter output to give you an SWR close to 1:1 to give you the best results. If you can't achieve that good a match with no tuner, I'd consider using one.

Folks like me who use just a hunk of wire for an antenna with no idea of the antenna impedance are better off using a tuner. That way we can get an SWR of 1:1 on several different bands with the same non-resonant hunk of wire.

I'm not sure what the impedance of your Windom is, but since it is such a popular antenna I imagine it would be in the 50-75 ohm range which is what most good transmitter final circuits are designed for so you should be in fine shape without a tuner.

Let's change gears now. How are you doing with your QRP during these down days of the sunspot cycle as we wait for the wonderful conditions to return in a few years when the Sun becomes spotted again?

While the DX may be harder to work and less abundant now, it is still there for the taking. Especially on the bands from 80-20 meters. In fact you may be surprised to know that 17-10 meters are still good for DX from time to time, although few hams operate those bands during a sunspot minimum simply because they believe those bands completely die during such a period.

I've said this before and I'll probably say it again. Get on 17-10 and don't just listen, but try calling CQ. You might be surprised at who answers you. The bands definitely will be 'dead' if everyone listens and doesn't transmit.

Talking about a different band, I often will listen to 30M and find it devoid of signals, yet when I call CQ, I get an answer, and now and then it's from some DX station. Those who answer will be quite strong and give me a good report as well. So

propagation conditions are definitely good, it's just a lack of hams transmitting making the band sound dead. The same is often true on the higher bands although at times during the sunspot minimum the bands are actually propagationally dead except perhaps for stations running KW's and huge antennas who can communicate virtually any time. It's interesting how 15 and even 10 can come 'alive' during a major contest.

Incidentally a good indicator of propagation on 30M is a German meteorological station that seems to transmit 24/7 sending RTTY at the very low edge of the band. If that station is strong, you know that conditions are good to Europe.

Remember if we don't use the CW bands, we will lose them just like we are losing a large chunk of CW room on 80M because of a lack of CW activity. It's all well and good to talk about preserving CW, but the bottom line is if we use up too much time talking about it, and not getting on the air and using CW, we are going to continue to lose CW frequencies. So get on the bands, and stop just talking about it.

Need some incentive to get on the bands? I'll talk about some in the next column. Visit my web site, email or write me in the meantime, but don't waste too much time doing it - get on the air with CW! -30-

## Zero Beating

*We received some good answers to our Question of the Month concerning how to zero beat:*

A suggested reply to the new ham. This is common. When answering, put the VFO "on top of" the calling signal. A slight difference in transmit vs receive signals is compensated at either end by the RIT control which does not effect the transmit frequency.

73, Bob Linker W5SQA

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I would reword the question to: On CW, using a transceiver, how do I know when I'm zero beat and not anywhere from a few Hz to a lot of Hz off the other station's frequency? Or - another way to zero beat with most modern day transceivers!

With transceivers that have the CW and CW-R modes -Tune the station in and switch back and forth between CW and CW-R until the tone of the station is the same on both. I have use this method on the Icom 706 & 746 and also on my Elecraft K2/100.

Another way to do it -If your radio has a "SPOT" function, turn on the spot and tune across the CW station until the tones match.

Or, if you do not have the "SPOT" function, turn off the VOX so you will not transmit and send a string of dah's with your keyer, bug or straight key until the tones match.

On a properly aligned radio this should get you very close to the other station's frequency - at least well within his/her bandwidth - assuming the other station does not have their RIT/XIT turned on!

73 Hank K8DD

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## This is what we like to hear!

Thanks for all the QSO's over the past 8 months. I had all of 2 CW QSO's last year but decided to have a few more after I renewed my FISTS membership. 400 contacts later and I'm having a ball ! FISTS is a good club for novices to CW and offers a lot of incentive to work hard and improve. Thanks for all your help (especially Stan K4UK) . 73, Don FISTS 11349 CC , Silver CC, 1xQRP, Millionaire

## Running Morse Runner

by Bob MacKenzie VA3RKM #11797

One of the better CW training programmes I've used is Morse Runner. It's certainly the most fun!

Morse Runner is a freeware contest simulator for Windows and Linux created by Alex Shovkoplyas, VE3NEA (700kB in size, free to download and use from Alex's site: [www.dxatlantis.com/MorseRunner](http://www.dxatlantis.com/MorseRunner)). What the K7QO code course is to learning basic CW, Morse Runner is to mastering basic contesting skills. It provides a good framework for beginners and takes them up to a higher level of contesting proficiency, even offering a competitive challenge to expert contesters whose simulation scores can be posted on the Morse Runner website.

The programme is amazingly realistic. Once the user has chosen the type of operation (pileup, single call, etc.) and code speed, all sorts of sound effects can be added. I usually set up with 15 minutes of single calls in QSK mode with QRN, QRM, QSB and LIDS activated. Even with the computer's speaker turned up loud these factors make for difficult copy at times. Add to that that some ops act as "Lids" according to major contest standards by

sending their info more than once, making errors in serial numbers, or not giving a 599 RST report and you really have to pay attention. Log checking is done immediately so if anything is miscopied it shows up right away. Continual copy perfection is hard to come by, even when you ask for several repeats.

By turning up the speed of the exchange, once can practice the high-speed copy needed for the big contest events. It may only be a simple exchange of a dozen Morse characters, but if they are coming at 30wpm and have a lot of H's, E's and V's in them it's very difficult to get it right.

A valuable feature of the software in this case is its audio recording capability. The whole simulation can be recorded so that at its conclusion troublesome exchanges can be played back as many times as it takes until the exchange is copied correctly.

Not only is it lots of fun and good CW practice, Morse Runner lets a low power op like me copy rare call signs from all around the world that I will never get a chance to hear until sunspots return in force.

Locals callsigns sometimes pop

up as well. But that's not always a good thing for their reputation. I had a laugh when I "worked" an expert QRP op from Ontario and he muffed his exchange. Perhaps it pays not to get into the author's bad books or you could end up as the ultimate sloppy op in the programme!

For some, the ultimate question to be posed about Morse Runner is whether or not the simulator helps one become a superior contesteer in "real life." I would have to say no, in the same sense that the K7QO does not automatically make one a proficient CW op when actually operating. Both are great starting points, but there is no way to simulate the excitement, confusion, and the fatigue that comes with on-air operation and which impede our efficient and accurate copying. I spent four hours running QRP power in a recent National Contest Journal CW sprint, certainly one of the craziest events going, and was glad to make just a handful of QSOs. What the simulator can provide, however, is a level of confidence in basic skills that makes real-life contesting experiences much less stressful. And this is a big plus even if you never go beyond the always enjoyable NAQCC monthly and FISTS Quarterly CW sprints.



Open Letter to George (KN2GSJ FISTS # 1538)  
and Ward (AE6TY FISTS # 11845)

Reference **THE BIG EAR AWARD!!!!!!**

Dear George and Ward,

Regarding the " BIG EAR AWARD" (B.E.A) which appeared in the 2006 issue #2 of the Keynote. I regret it took so long to respond to you e-mail QSO. You were the only two e-mails received on the B.E.A. issue. George being for and Ward being against. Of course there were articles in issue #3 of the Keynote from NP4FW, WB1HGA both pro QRP and the humorous picture of Awards Manager K7DF changing his transmitter driver tube. Definitely not a QRP'er Hee Hee.

My plan was to promote some humor and spread some fun never thinking the article would show up in the Keynote.

I felt obligated to experience this world of QRP, so emptied out a large jar of loose change searched the internet decided to purchase a Ten Tec 1320 T-Kit during a very rainy weekend in upstate NY. Using my best skills and blow torch I assembled approximately 270 components applied power made some adjustments and was able to get a Diawa RF power meter to indicate 2.2 watts across the twenty meter band. Was pleasantly surprised at the receiver, which was great in sensitivity, but boy very touchy tuning.

I have worked stations state side who deserve a B.E.A. for working me. On the other hand Slovenia, Italy gave me 569 signal reports. In order to keep some credibility I also joined the NAQCC and am # 1473.

So what are my conclusions, I still feel that QRO operators should receive the B.E.A. and the hardest part of QRP operating is having good fingers to get right on the correct frequency to complete a QSO.

Therefore maybe a compromise may be in order. A Big Ear Award for copying QRP and a BIG Finger Award for QRP digital skills needed for frequency stability. Truly I would love to have both of those awards. Of course I don't think I stand a chance.

The one thing I did get from all of this was great satisfaction for all my FISTS friends who take their views seriously which make being, a FISTS a thing to be proud of. It is fellows like you I believe make up the best of this hobby. Please know that all I stated was done for humor and fun never to be taken seriously.

Gob Bless Keep Pounding Brass. Your very good friend 73. John Killian N2UC / QRP/QRO FISTS # 3114 jrk1775@dreamscape.com.

### **KN0WCW Goes GLobal**

*Have YOU activated KN0WCW yet? It's fun and easy, and as you can see from the letter below, you can make friends all over the world, just like Ed did when he operated using KN0WCW! Contact Karl Zuege, KB1DSB, kb1dsb@sover.net*

Hello Ed,

On 2 Novembre 2006 on 14 Mhz band in CW mode I had a QSO with you from out of my car. Your call KN0WCW/4.

I could not finish this QSO with you, my fuse 10A from my car was damaged hi !!! Sry I was lose you.

Transceiver was FT897D abt 100 Wtts (was forget to bring back that to 50 wtts hi) Antenne ATAS-120 on my car.

QTH was south of Amsterdam on parking place train station. Hope I can make this qso again with you from out my car.....

Best regards Ed from [pa3cjp@casema.nl](mailto:pa3cjp@casema.nl)  
HomePage [www.qsl.net/pa3cjp](http://www.qsl.net/pa3cjp)

73 Jan PA3CJP/M

## FISTS Awards

By Dennis Franklin, K6DF, Awards Manager

Congratulations to KC0JKD, the first club member to earn the 7 Million endorsement sticker for his Millionaire Award!

Roger K1TG ran across an interesting article on page 82 of the May 1940 issue of QST. Seems the Chester Radio Club of Chester, PA ran a club contest called "Alphabetical Soup". Their contest is the same as our NANFA award. Only a couple of differences, their contest didn't have any zero column since there were no zero calls at that time. Also no "X" row needed since the FCC did not issue any "X" suffix for call signs. See the image below which is re-printed here with the permission of the ARRL. This image is also Copyright ARRL.

**A Unique Contest**

Something "different" in QSO contests for its members has been successfully staged by the Chester Radio Club, Chester, Pa. It is called "Alphabetical Soup" and is conducted as follows. Ruled forms are prepared with nine vertical columns, having headings of 1 through 9, and with an outside column with letters A through Z (with the omission of X), thus:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A									
B									
C									
D									
E									
etc. (omits X)									

The idea is to see how many blocks the operator can fill in, one point being allowed for each block filled. If W1AW were worked, the letters AW would be placed in the "1" column opposite "A"; if W4ABT were worked, ABT would be placed under "4" opposite "A," etc. If another W1A or W4A were worked, it would not count. There are a possible 225 total points. The Chester Radio Club's contest ran for one week and one operator made 84 points. Prizes were given for (1) the greatest number of blocks filled, (2) greatest number filled in any one district and (3) greatest number of any particular letter filled. W3DGM, president of C.R.C. writes, "This contest encourages the less experienced operator to participate and also proves interesting to the seasoned operator." It looks good to us, OM.

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I have had to return several award logs since the last column due to no Dupe Sheets being sent with the log. Please remember to send in a Dupe Sheet with all logs of over 100 QSO's. Dupe Sheets for the Millionaire need to be separated by band as per the rules on the FISTS Awards web site. If you send in a log without a Dupe Sheet, it will be returned to you without being processed.

You may also use the following e-mail address, ([Fistsawards@comcast.net](mailto:Fistsawards@comcast.net)) for sending in your award logs. Excel, Word, 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, delay receiving your award certificate. 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 me with your questions.

Keep banging the brass . . . C U on the bands . . .  
73, Dennis K6DF

**AWARDS ISSUED**  
Aug 24, 2006 TO Nov 6, 2006

### Basic Century (CC)

AB5X  
AB7LK  
AD5UU  
AD5VK  
DH4NWG  
DK7VW  
K3MQ  
K3PBY  
K5ENA  
K7JAL  
K9WWT  
KA8WOG  
KD7LEE  
KG4W  
KU2US  
N5DRB  
N9AMW  
NR4AW  
W1IDL  
W2FAM  
W3VL  
W8CAG  
WA2MUX  
WA7OET  
WD9DWE  
WI0S

### Silver Century

AB1BW  
DK7VW  
K0LUW  
KA2REY  
KD0V  
N2JJE  
N5DY  
VE3HUR  
W7JI  
W8DIT  
WB2MIC

**Gold Century**

DK7VW  
K1MLP  
KE5AQD  
N2UC  
N5DY

**Diamond Century**

K0TC  
WA7CS

**Platinum Award**

AB1BW  
KB9BVN  
KD0V  
N5DY  
NC0A  
NN9K  
W4XJ  
W5PAA  
W7BWI  
W7POE

**Platinum 250 Award**

G3MNS  
KE5AQD  
WQ9Z

**Platinum 500 Award**

WG6M

**Worked All States (FISTS)**

K5YQF

**Rag Chewers Club**

W9FFU

**1 X QRP**

VE3HUR

**Millionaire**

AD5VK  
AD5WI  
K1TG  
KG4W  
N2ZHF  
N4FI

N5DY  
N9AMW  
NX2GW  
VE3HUR  
W1IDL  
W4FCR  
W5AJX  
W5KL  
W9FFU  
WA7CS  
WB0QQT  
WD5DWC

**2 Million**

AK7O  
K1TG  
KE5AQD  
K10J  
N5DY  
W2IX  
W9FFU

**3 Million**

KA8HFN  
W7PFZ  
W9FFU

**4 Million**

K0TC  
K4UK  
KA8HFN  
N3RSD  
W5GXV  
W9FFU  
WB8MON

**5 Million**

K4IA  
W7GVE  
W9FFU

**6 Million**

KC0JKD

**7 Million**

KC0JKD

**CABRILLO?**

I had fun during the November 2006 CW Sweepstakes contest. It was a cold dismal weekend here in upstate, NY. It made for a good weekend to dive into the contest with my HW-8 and MFJ-9020 QRP rigs. I had to swim through the QRM and patiently fight for some of the big-gunned frequency-masters to hear me. My persistence seemed to eventually credit me with a contact every once in awhile. Most of the operators exchanged "A" or "B". For example, "A" for QRO power and "B" for QRO-plus power. The "A's and B's, seemed to be the Frequency-Masters. I happened to be a "Q". A few of the masters said " Q?, Q? " I replied with a mighty 2 watts of "Dah-dit-Dah-dit".

When the contest ended, I learned that my log had to be sent in with Cabrillo format. I thought, "What is the world is Cabrillo format"?

I must admit, I've been aware of the word but I never heard an explanation or definition of it. I asked my computer guru friend, "Do you know what Cabrillo is"? He thought it was an Italian frying pan scrubber. Someone else said it was the Italian word for a cab driver. I ended up searching the web to educate myself. I found that it's a data-style, used by the ARRL. I guess it's kind of a standardized format to enable the ARRL to check our log sheets. I copied their format and sent in my "lil" log sheet. From this day forth, whenever I scrub a frying pan, I will think of a QRP log sheet! Maybe Cabrillo is especially good for removing ham from a frying pan!

73 Phil - K2NPN

## Saved by the Low Allowance!

Ray Albers K2HYD

My first awareness of ham radio came from a short story I read as a kid, in which a boy was stranded in a log cabin during a blizzard, but was able to communicate with the outside world via ham radio – using CW, of course.

But my first hands-on exposure was via a friend of a relative on his 10m mobile AM phone setup. And I this made me think I wanted to become a ham and work phone.

When I got my Novice license in 1954, I simply could not afford to buy 2m gear to get on the Novice phone band, so I started working 40m CW. Why 40? Well, the ham mentioned above had given me a very old Hamarlund receiver with plug-in coils and uncalibrated tuning dials, and 40 was the only Novice band I could find.

OK, we've already established that I didn't have enough money for phone gear. But my limited allowance also meant that I had only one crystal for the transmitter. And one of my first contacts was with another junior HS boy, Phil, (sorry, forgot his call) whose QTH was only about three miles away, and who also had only one crystal – on the same frequency! So, thanks to my low allowance, any time I got on the air, if Phil was also on, there was no choice but to work each other and get in some code practice.

Just think, if Pop had given me a bigger allowance, the world might have lost another CW op!

By the way, although the practice sessions that Phil and I enjoyed were a major factor in developing a love of on-the-air CW, I have to give most of the credit for enabling me to upgrade from Novice to General in only three months to my after-school code sessions listening to the beautiful fist of Mrs. Ann Gray in her home. And Mrs. Gray had to unlearn continental Morse – she was the first woman hired as a telegrapher by Western Union.

## Determination will get you there

I had passed my written General test. When I first went for the code test after a mini-stroke, on my 4th try I was informed I had passed 5wpm and qualified as a tech-plus. After several more attempts I passed the 13 wpm and was then a General. A few years later I was advanced, then two months later passed my Extra class. By then, you only needed 5wpm.

That's my story, I want so much to get on the air with CW. I'm still trying to get it down for understanding the words better. The best help for me these days would be prayer. Thank you for reading this and I enjoy belonging to FISTS, thank you for all the club is doing to promote Morse code. I was born in 1920. 73 and 88 Sid, K1SJ, #11599

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FIST VK visit to QTH of Chuck - M0AVW  
Left to right Mandy, Chuck - M0AVW, Carol and Chris - VK3CGB (Chuck runs the UK QSL Bureau)

An enjoyable time was had by all, Chris even had some of my Home brew (Beer) hi.

# A 2007 New Year's Resolution for FISTS Members

Written by Dan KB6NU

I don't normally make New Year's resolutions, nor do I suggest that others make them, but with the recent bandplan change and the imminent (?) elimination of the Morse Code test, here's one suggestion that I will make. I would like to suggest that every FISTS member find a ham in their club or community with even a remote interest in CW and become his or her "CW Elmer." The goal, of course, would be to encourage and help him or her to become a proficient, active CW operator by the end of the year.

If you can't find anyone right off, don't get discouraged. I think there is a lot of latent interest in CW out there. To activate that interest, one thing you can do is offer to give a talk on CW operation at your club. To make this easier for you, I've posted the slides I used last February at our club on my blog. The URL is <http://kb6nu.com/a-cw-presentation-for-your-club/>.

This is a very basic talk, but there are also a number of other things that you could talk about to build up interest in CW, including:

- \* the history of Morse Code,*
- \* the different types of keys - straight keys, bugs, cootie keys, paddles, etc.*
- \* traffic handling on CW nets,*
- B the CW/QRP connection,*
- \* etc., etc.*

Even if you're not big on public speaking, there are many things you can do to get more people interested in working CW. You can:

- \* Constantly remind people about some of the advantages of CW.*

For example, I'm always reminding the guys who like to work contests, that it's a real advantage to work CW during contests. Not only will they make more contacts, they get more points per contact.

- \* Rig up your 2m FM rig to send modulated CW over your repeater.*

N0XAS's Pico Keyer ([www.hamgadgets.com](http://www.hamgadgets.com)) has an MCW mode that lets you easily send CW over your local repeater, especially if you have a newer one that has a packet port. For information on how I did this, go to <http://kb6nu.com/picokeyer-mcw-mode/>.

- \* Invite people over to your house to watch you work CW.*

During the 2006 Spring Sprint, I invited a fellow over to work the contest with me. He ended up being a little key shy, but he has since gotten on CW and made some contacts.

- \* Be on the lookout for used paddles at hamfests to pass along to interested operators.*

A couple of times, I've found Bencher BY-1s at good prices. I snapped them up and then resold them to interested hams for what I paid for them. These guys may have been hesitant to purchase them used or to purchase them for a higher price new, but getting one from me was a good deal for them. Now that they have the paddle, they have the capability to get on CW, and they have.

Do these things consistently and pretty soon someone will come out of the woodwork, and you will have someone to mentor. If each of use would find just one other ham, and help him or her get on CW, we would soon have more active CW bands and better operators, and isn't that a worthwhile goal?

## Having a Code Class?

Want to give a friend a helpful nudge?  
Want to get your speed up?

Get a FREE K7QO Code Course CD,  
courtesy of FISTS.

Send an SASE big enough to hold a  
CD to Nancy WZ8C at PO Box 47,  
Hadley MI 48440.

It's just listening... how hard can that  
be?? Thousands have done it, you can  
too. IT WORKS IF YOU DO.

## **Falling For Fists**

By: George Armstrong, K9GA    August 28, 2006

I'll bet most North American Fists operators are sorry to see summer end. The daylight hours grow shorter, but the conditions improve on almost every band. Let's take a look at what we might expect from the bands!

By the end of September, 80 meters starts to quiet down. With many clear frequencies and improved conditions, 80 is a great place to hunt for new Fists numbers. It's also a fine band to meet a code buddy, or check into nets. In the wee hours, listen for Fists Down Under. 80 meters has great propagation to the South Pacific as spring comes to the Southern Hemisphere.

Back from the cycle bottom summer doldrums is 15 meters. Despite the sunspot cycle, mornings can come alive with Europeans, as our UK friends search for new Fists numbers. 15 is a steady band during daylight hours to meet code buddies across Canada and the US, as well as DX Fists.

30 meters is ready and steady for the fall. This band seems to be under used, and there seems to be many clear frequencies. If you have a code buddy at a fair distance, 30 Meters is a great choice. No dodging massive kilowatt signals here! Lower power limits are a plus for everyone on this band.

It's tough to beat 40 meters as a Fall CW hang out. With the summer static gone, you'll hear Fists ops from all over North America. Daylight hours are fine for medium range QSO's, but listen for UK Fists after midnight, or at sunset. And, look for Fists Down Under in the wee hours.

17 meters quiets down in the fall, much like 15 meters. It doesn't take a lot of solar activity to bring a mix of F1 and F2 propagation to this band. Try for Europe late morning and early afternoon, with

openings to Fists Down Under late afternoon for most of North America. 17 meters is a great choice if you run low power, or have a code buddy in the 600 plus mile range.

I'll always remember an analogy I once read. If you're running 100 watts and a dipole on 20 meters, the relative strength of your signal is that of a light emitting diode. Despite the crowds and the big signals, I suggest a CQ near but below the fists calling frequency. Or, listen, and you may find some new fists numbers lurking above the massive pileups, and below the kilowatt plus RTTY signals.

A more cerebral, but underused alternative is 160 meters. With fall and the cycle bottom, you can count on 160 for steady short, medium, and long range QSO's. The "gentleman's band" is a fine choice for Fists. There are some antenna challenges, but it is well worth the effort.

I always enjoy the transequitorial and E layer propagation during winter on 10 and 12 meters. Near the winter solstice the tropospheric E peaks as it does at summer solstice. The E layer propagation allows you to meet new Fists ops in the 400 to over 1200 mile range. During the 2005/2006 winter season both 10 and 12 meters opened with F1 and F2 skip, enabling longer distance QSO's. Listen for the beacons starting at 28.2 up to 28.3 Mhz to get a feel for the conditions. And, don't overlook the great ground wave conditions on 10 meters for local nets and code buddies.

Six meters also has a great ground wave, with tropospheric E near the winter solstice. Listen for the beacons on 6 too!

As the cold weather nears, warm up your key, and Fall for Fists!

## Get Your Feet Wet Weekend Results

The results are in from the Get Your Feet Wet Weekend. Thanks to Lee, N7NU, for getting this out so quickly despite having eight pins and a plate in his broken ankle!

The abbreviations in the table below are: CALL (callsign) POINTS (total points) # Q's (number of QSO's) E (number of Experienced QSO's) N (number of newbie QSO's) 2000+ (number of stations worked that were licensed in 2000 and up) CLASS (entry classification) FIST# (fists number) STATE (QTH) Last year we had 61 log entries, so considering the discouraging propagation, the event is holding its own. It will be the same weekend next year, watch the web page for the dates, as well as the KeyNote, WorldRadio and anywhere else we can publicize it. Nancy WZ8C

56 logs were received  
 327 different calls were heard and logged at least once  
 4186 was highest score (K1LOG)  
 3990 was 2nd highest score (K3MQ)  
 3537 was 3rd highest score (W10S)  
 80 was highest QRP score (N2ZHF)  
 104 most Q's in any log received (W10S)  
 77 most E's worked (W10S)  
 37 most N's worked (K3MQ)  
 29 most logged licensee's licensed since 2000 (K3MQ)  
 7 different DX countries participated  
 3 different provinces participated  
 45 different states participated  
 TX state with most participants (24)  
 26 different states represented in 61 logs received

<u>CALL</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u># Q's</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>2000+</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>FIST#</u>	<u>STATE</u>
K1LOG	4186	97	64	33	25	N	12159	ME
K3MQ	3990	85	48	37	29	N	11194	DE
W10S	3537	104	77	27	26	E	12093	MN
W7JI	3480	88	57	31	23	N	11079	KS
W7GVE	2712	81	49	32	23	E	12077	AZ
KG4W	2392	72	40	32	22	E	12448	VA
N5DRB	2020	62	39	23	19	N	11297	AR
AD5UU	1674	57	36	21	17	N	11808	TX
KK7YJ	1620	51	30	21	19	N	100w	MT
K4BAI	1139	49	31	18	16	E	2158	GA
AD5VC	1022	45	28	17	13	N	12296	LA
WA1LWS	1020	48	28	20	14	E	100w	MD
N5RDN	930	40	22	18	14	N	11984	TX
KI5XP	810	35	19	16	14	N	12330	LA
NA4O	546	28	14	14	12	E	10158	GA
KC2OJZ	517	31	16	15	10	N	NJ	
VE3HUR	490	21	7	14	13	E	11349	ON
WT6D	456	26	14	12	11	E	11504	CA

KO4ZS	440	26	14	12	10	N 25w	GA
AA3II	324	25	14	11	8	E 9746	PA
K5PAX	319	20	11	9	10	E 10946	NM
KE5AQD	306	25	16	9	8	E 11507	TX
K0LWV	240	22	14	8	7	E 2589	MO
KC0VKN	234	18	8	10	8	N 12091	IA
W7RCK	234	16	6	10	8	E 11018	OR
AD7MI	225	18	7	11	8	N 12051	VA
W1TPB	210	20	10	10	6	E 12192	MA
K8VFR	189	19	11	8	6	E 5602	MI
N4IN	150	19	13	6	5	E 2103	KY
KS0M	147	14	7	7	6	E 3067	MO
W5VDM	132	14	8	6	5	N 12127	TX
AI4RE	130	16	10	6	4	N 100w	FL
N2SV	95	15	11	4	4	E 2104	NY
N4OF	84	11	3	8	5	N 11862	VA
N2ZHF	80	12	8	4	4	E 2151	NY
W9SJW	76	15	11	4	3	E 10004	IL
AD5QB	70	10	6	4	4	E 11210	TX
K7EX	65	9	4	5	4	N 11205	OR
N5KEV	56	10	6	4	3	E 11320	NM
WB2LOS	55	7	3	4	4	E 6178	NY
KC2LSD	52	10	7	3	3	E 11793	NJ
N2JF	48	14	12	2	2	E 10441	NJ
W1LIC	44	8	5	3	3	E 2697	ME
KN8C	39	8	5	3	2	N 12427	OH
KB3AAG	36	9	6	3	2	E 10915	PA
JR0BAQ	32	6	2	4	3	N 100w	JA
VA3RKM	22	7	3	4	1	E 11797	ON
KL1JP	16	4	0	4	3	N 11766	AK
NH7WB	15	3	2	1	2	N 11899	HI
K7TP	12	4	2	2	1	E 11104	CA
W7HSA	12	4	2	2	1	N 17179	WA
KI4NZU	10	5	5	0	0	N 50w	NC
KO6YG	10	3	2	1	1	N 9115	CA
KG1W	4	2	2	0	0	N 11342	CT
KD7TAX	3	2	1	1	0	N 12420	OR
WO9L	2	1	0	1	1	N	IL

### Get Your Feet Wet Weekend Comments

I recently participated in the Get Your Feet Wet Weekend 2006. This was my second time in this contest. I thoroughly enjoyed it again. I participated as a (N)ovice. To me this contest has represented all the aspects of amateur radio I like, but have been too new to really enjoy.

First, I get to practice CW. There is nothing like continuously for a whole day sending and receiving code. It can't be anything but a benefit. Second, the thrill of a contest. I spent quite a considerable amount of time sending CQ FC. I also did quite a bit of search and pounce. The search and pounce is normal. Zero in on a signal and hammer out my call. Sending CQ is a completely different animal. I got to experience long lulls and quick runs. There were even a few pileups. My favorites (sorry big guns) were digging the weak signals out of the pile and noise. There were plenty of signals out there during the contest, it just took listening deep in the noise. I even got a few thank you's from new QRPr's. All of this fun was had at about 10-14 wpm, depending on the speed on the other end.

I especially liked it when an (E)xperienced op on the other end sent faster than I was used to. That was a great challenge, and what I get in this contest for.

When searching and pouncing for the next DX, they usually won't change their speed. I don't have a problem asking another Ham to QRS, but I would rather push myself. Even though I am at about 16wpm daily, practicing at slower speeds is just as helpful as the fast ones.

I encourage everyone to participate next year in the GYFWW. Paul AD5UU

-----  
Had a great time operating the GYFW weekend. Being a slow-coder I've been working a lot on my copy speed. but it's tough to talk yourself into getting on the bands and working. I made many more contacts than I've made since I've been licensed, and I really had a great time. Pass my thanks on to all involved; especially the /e's who got out there and worked with us /n's! 73, Joe KC0VKN



## FISTS Summer Sprint, 2006 Results

Hello fellow FISTS! Hope everyone had fun. We had a good showing despite the bad conditions, and we also had a good mix of both old and new FISTS members.

73 Dan, N8IE FISTS #498, Spring Manager

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### QRO Category

Call	Name	FISTS#	State	Score
W6RK	Risto	10908	CA	15147
K4IA	Buck	6702	VA	15008
K4MVA	Patrick	9372	VA	8764
N3EF	Eric	11863	MD	5796
K5YQF	Cecil	8077	TX	5720
NA9U	John	11821	IN	5152
WE9N	John	8069	IN	4920
KS0M	Dick	3067	MO	4305
WB4JJJ	Alan	2433	VA	4180
W8EQA	Daniel	2469	UT	4040
K4WFM	Frank	10245	FL	3933
WB5RYB	Billy	5021	GA	3420
WB8RFB	John	6844	IL	3366
W7GVE	Ed	12077	AZ	2250
K8VFR	Rosemarie	5602	MI	2025
AE2L	Joshua	1912	NC	2000
K0TC	Ron	10722	MN	1575
K8CI	Dick	5270	OH	1568
K8FN	Robert	2455	OH	1365
WB8FAI	Charles	10116	OH	1170
WB2FXK	Jack	918	NY	1050
KB3CVO	Thomas	8110	PA	924
K9XL	Ray	8469	IL	825
AB1BW	George	10794	CT	560
W8KYD	Ron	10121	OH	540
W7DPW	David	10410	WA	520
NT9K	Bill	12063	FL	450
KI0KY	Steve	10531	CO	420
AA5CH	Brad	8133	AR	400
K4DXU	William	10646	TN	280
NR4AW	Jesse	12171	NC	280
W4GTM	Karen	2407	VA	210
AA3II	Gerald	9746	PA	175
N7EIE	Leroy	9926	WA	140
W4KPG	Eric	10774	FL	125
NO6X	Ken	11721	CA	125
K9JWI	Clyde	3051	IN	75

## Club Category

Call	Club	FISTS#	ST	Score
W8EOC	Medina 2 Meter Group	10250	OH	18504
W4FFF	FISTS Club Of North Carolina	9700	NC	8034
N5YFC	Red Stick FISTS Club	9250	LA	2415
WA7YYY	Cowlitz FISTS ARC	1900	WA	609

## QRP Category

Call	Name	FISTS #	QTH	Score
VE3HUR	Don	11349	ONT	585
KW4JS	John	8041	TN	560
K2NPN	Phil	1988	NY	385
W5KDJ	Wayne	10060	TX	245
W1ILC	Wes	2697	ME	175
K3PBY	Chuck	3634	FL	150
KI0DH	Edward	3490	MA	150
KI4EBD	Bill	11711	FL	60
VA3RKM	Robert	11797	ONT	45
KI4DEF	Kevin	10620	NC	10

## Summer Sprint Soapbox

George, AB1BW, CT FISTS #10794

As usual, it was a great contest. I doubled my score from the spring sprint, so am happy about that. It was a busy Saturday, working both the FISTS and the IARU contests. I'm already looking forward to the next sprint.

Ron, K0TC, FISTS #10722

Conditions: weren't the best, but the shack was cool and the sprint was fun.

William, K4DXU, TN FISTS #10646

It was easy to pick out the FISTS among the IARU folks - 18 WPM instead of 30!

Frank, K4WFM, FL FISTS #10245

Lots of fun, bands were lousy from FL.

Cecil, K5YQF, TX FISTS #8077

Tough band conditions here - QSB and lack of propagation to the usual places. I heard nothing out of New England and only a few from California. Still a nice way to spend four hours on a hot Texas afternoon.

Dick, K8CI, OHFISTS #5270

Called it quits early...poor band condx, low participation and battling another contest.

Clyde, K9JWI, IN FISTS #3051

Reschedule next year so as not to compete with IARU test.

Kevin, KI4DEF, NC FISTS #10620

Wow! Was that a lot of activity on 20m or what?!? Presumably that was from the IARU HF World Championships--great to hear all those high-speed EU stations!

Dick, KS0M, MO FISTS #3067

It was a great contest, even with the IARU competition. I found that calling CQ got me more contacts than S&P. I also found out that many operators don't know to use "QRL?" before they call CQ on a frequency. I certainly will be back for the next FISTS sprint. I only worked four calls with FISTS numbers lower than mine.

John, KW4JS, TN FISTS #8041

Rig use Elecraft KX1 and 42 ft random wire in the field.

Leroy, N7EIE, WA FISTS #9926

I only heard a few stations on 20 meters this time, and all other bands were closed. CU this fall.

Ken, NO6X, CA FISTS #11721

RIG: YAESU MARK V, QUADRA AMP

PWR: 900 W

ANT: Dipole 10,15,20,40; Vertical 40,80

Bill, NT9K, FL FISTS #12063

This was my first fists event. Not many contacts, only operated on 20 meters. Still had fun.

Robert, VA3RKM, ONT FISTS #11797

FT817, 5W, dipole. Poor condx and the IARU contest made it difficult for QRP from Ottawa.

Don, VE3HUR, ONT FISTS #11349

Missed the first hour. Signals here were weak but it was still fun.

Kevin, K4FFF, NC FISTS #9700, FISTS Club of North Carolina

Thanks to everyone who operated for making this a fun afternoon! 40m was our best band. Lots of activity on 20m from the IARU HF World Championship but still had a few FISTS contacts. One QSO on 15m but 80m and 10m were dead. Have a good summer! See you in the fall. -73-

Wayne, W5KDJ, TX FISTS #10060

Fun contest. See ya'll on the next one.

David, W7DPW, WA FISTS #10410

Once again a FUN contest, BUT not much activity heard and band conditions quite poor here. Looking towards next sprint.

Alan, WB4JJJ, VA FISTS #2433

Great fun, even if conditions were not the best.

John, WB8RFB, IL FISTS #6844

Conditions were really poor and signals faded a lot. Still fun but wish more stations would participate.

John, WE9N, IN FISTS #8069

HAD FUN BUT MAN DID YOU HAVE TO WORK FOR CONTACTS, WITH THE IARU GOING.

Jesse, NR4AW, NC FISTS #12171

Summer Sprint was a lot of fun! Even though band condx wer not much better than decent. I am pretty happy with my score considering I was only able to operate for one hour. Hopefully next time I will be able to operate the full Sprint for 4X the un.

Robert, K8FN, OH FISTS #2455

Perhaps a better Sprint would happen if we had it on a Saturday when a phone contest was in progress. 2 contests on same spot is confusing! 73, Bob

Wayne, N5YFC, Red Stick FISTS Club, LAFISTS #9250

We enjoyed working another Sprint. Had some new members join us and they had some fun too.

Buck, K4IA, VA FISTS #6702

Without a doubt the toughest Sprint I can recall. Very few signals with lots of QRM fröm the other contest.

Ron, W8KYD, OH FISTS #10121

Not much of a score, but a few hours of "CW therapy" works wonders, especially with poor band condx and age of 71!

Rosemarie, K8VFR, MI FISTS #5602 Only had 1.5 hours! Had to go to a party. Lots of fun any how!

Jack, WB2FXK, NY FISTS #918

XYL's birthday yesterday, 80yr. and think all relatives and old friends came today. Had a good time showing them what I was suposed to be doing. Met a few old friends had not heard in long time. Hope they get back on more often. FB that Sprint gets them out and on here. Had a ball. 73 Jack, WB2FXK

Daniel, W8EQA, UT FISTS #2469

Conditions were poor - not a lot of FISTS operators for this one.

## Belize - A Ham Dxpedition, the Easy Way

By Cal White V31EA (FISTS # 12237) Nancy Kott V31AN (FISTS #379) and Eddy V31MR (FISTS # 12236)

Requirements for the "easy" DXpedition:

- 1) A near perfect climate - nice beach
- 2) Friendly native people
- 3) Superb food and accommodation
- 4) Exotic things to do when not hamming.
- 5) A complete ham shack setup - you only need to bring yourself

All of the above are available in Placencia, Belize. Bob Fox, V31MD, has just that place for rent. Our DXpedition headquartered there.



### TDXS / FISTS Straight Key Dxpedition

6 September found Nancy Kott WZ8C (V31AN), Eddy Reynolds K5WQG (V31MR), Bob Mennell WB5IUU (V31UU) and me, Cal White WF5W (V31EA), gathering at the Belize City airport awaiting transportation via small plane to Bob Fox's shack in Placencia to launch the first all straight key DXpedition in 50 years. This is the first DXpedition for Nancy, Bob and Eddy, but it will not be their last!

### Background

After the TDXS Malta DXpedition in March this year, I wanted to do something different to highlight the art of CW.

My long time straight key friend, Eddy, was easily recruited. Nancy, Editor of WorldRadio and Director - Queen Bee - of FISTS, a real CW organization, was asked if she might be interested. When asked, she said, "I have the best fist in the west." She was then challenged to come along and prove it! She soon joined as the third member of the team.

Bob Mennell had been off the air for some time and recently began a re-acquaintance with a straight key. He had wanted to come along to video the trip when our 4<sup>th</sup> team member, Bill Frink K5WAF, was unable to come due to the sudden sale of his home. Bob, instead of being just the videographer, became the 4<sup>th</sup> team member.

### Murphy pays a visit

Surprise! Murphy came along. On arrival at the airport, Eddy, Bob and I (Nancy took longer going through customs and had to take a later flight) took a taxi to Bob Fox's QTH. Kitty, Bob's sister had started a dredging project near the shack and the only access was now a muddy watery path. Saks Resort, a few blocks down and across the road from Fox's saved the day with alternate accommodations. We slogged in to the shack and set up for hamming.

I brought an IC7000. Marshall Emm of Morse Express and GHD Keys donated two model 502 keys to celebrate the Morse code traditions.

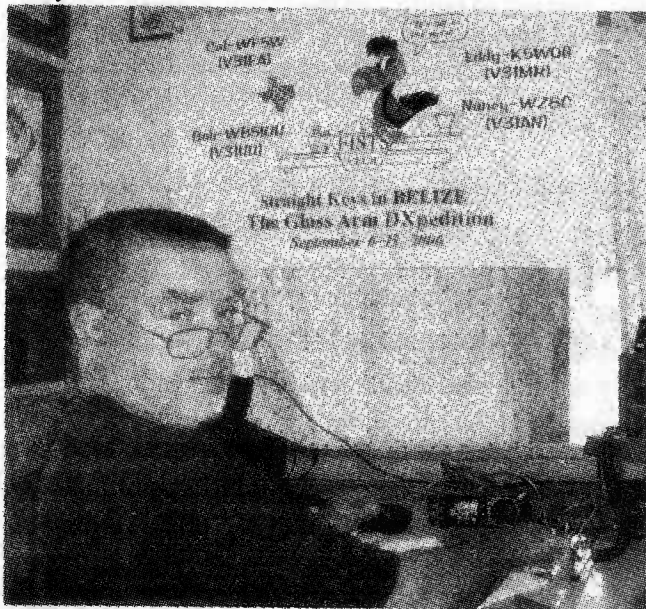
Now, many of you say, "I can use a straight key." HOWEVER, try it for six hours a day, seven days straight and it will grow on you. Having the premium keys to use made it easy. Yes, there really is a difference between a J-38 and the GHD 502, like

driving an army jeep and a Rolls Royce.

Off-duty found the Queen Bee of FISTS snorkeling and shopping for black coral jewelry. Other off time was occupied by the Monkey River Mayan Ruins, the magnificent beach and pool at Saks. Her following kept asking for her - we did not let her off easy (yes we gave her up) They will probably "roast" her on the return.

I sit writing this under a thatched roof hut at sea side, with no one else in sight - about as close to paradise as I care to be at this stage of life.

The first of the week got us all in shape for the contest. Lots of DX and many QSO's with our home club members. The FISTS contest brought out many new contacts. Straight key work is more time consuming so we were very happy with the numbers. Our week QSO count is over 2000. Not Mega numbers but believe me, that's a lot of brass pounding. The FISTS QSL bureau is going to be busy.



Murphy got into play one more time - I dumped part of Eddy's log when trying to make my input, but the paper logs saved the day.

Wednesday the 13th, we (all but Eddy who stayed an extra day) were back on our little plane and a few hours later, back in the states. Many newfound

friends and a historic week of straight key Morse code. Many hams still care about and love this stuff! This is what tradition is made of.

See you on the next one. Keep on pounding the BRASS..... Cal WF5W / V31EA



"We're sorry about the problem with the ham shack." Those are not the words I want to hear upon arrival at Saks. Saks is across the road from Bob Fox's (V31MD) ham shack and home, which we also rented for the week. "Problem? With the shack?" I repeat. "What problem?"

"A big problem," the owner of Saks replies. "The wives of the other operators (Cal, V31EA and Bob, V31UU) took one look at the swamp and refused to stay at the house next to the shack. We were able to put them up in one of our haciendas. Eddy (V31MR) is staying at the house."

After spending 16 hours getting from Detroit to Belize, I am not overly concerned with a bit of mud. I mainly want to find the cabana I will call home for the next week and relax for a while. The plane ride from Belize City to Placencia had been a white-knuckle experience. I had never been so happy to have my feet hit the ground.

The cabana is very clean and was much nicer than I expected. It measures about 20' x 20', built on stilts with a corrugated metal roof that also serves as a residence for a pair of iguanas. The inside of

the cabana is one big room with a refrigerator, three beds and a table with four chairs. A modern bathroom, separated from the rest of the room by two half-walls, takes up one corner of the room. Two hammocks are hanging on the covered porch. It is only a few yards from the ocean, where the owners thoughtfully placed some Adirondack style wood chairs and more hammocks. The resort compound is beautifully landscaped and impeccably groomed. The whole area is sand, no grass or stones, and Saks employs a crew of groundskeepers who rake the pathways and the ocean beach morning.

Exhausted, I flop down on one of the beds to ponder how bad the shack situation could be.

I didn't have to wait long to find out. About ten minutes later, Bob Fox knocks on the door. I change from my travel clothes into something more suitable for the oppressive tropical heat and humidity, and he leads the way to the shack.



Muddy doesn't describe the situation. It is mucky, sticky and overpoweringly smelly. Planks had been placed over the muck to provide a walkway. I hadn't expected luxury, so it was not really a big deal but I can see where the wives would have not been happy about it. I am relieved it isn't worse and glad that I packed flashlights and sturdy walking sandals, because slipping off the planks would not have been pleasant.

Walking to the shack, Bob identified many of the native plants and birds, including orchids, cranes and hummingbirds. His house is beautiful. He con-

structed many of the shelving units, doors and furniture from native woods.



*Bob Fox and Cal in the shack*

The ham shack is in a little building behind the house. It is absolutely charming; like having a ham playhouse in paradise! It's a tiny building up on stilts (like all the buildings in Placencia) about 10' x 10'. It has two operating stations and a couch, bookshelves and a ceiling fan. Maps, QSLs and awards decorate the walls. I fell in love with it at first sight.

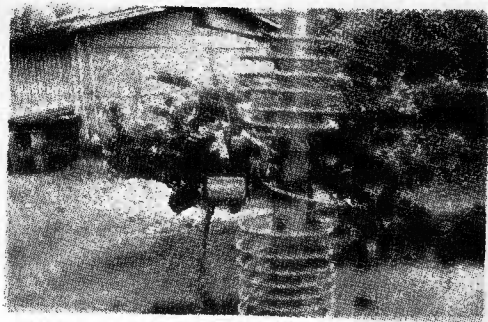
Cal and Eddy were already operating; Eddy arrived the previous day. Cal and Bob V31UU were on a previous flight that day. Cal brought his Icom-7000 from home and Eddy is using the shack's Kenwood-540. There is major interference between the two rigs - hopefully Bob Fox will have filters available next time - so the Icom was used as the main rig and the Kenwood was the secondary, mainly working the WARC's.

Eddy brought his personal GHD telegraph key and Cal brought the two 502 GHD keys provided by GHD and Morse Express.

The Icom is hooked up to the Butternut vertical outside the shack and the Kenwood is on the cubical quad. Bob Fox helps us adjust the vertical to get a good SWR on the CW portions of the band, but suggests that we'd have better luck using the other vertical he installed in the salt water. It took a while to get the Butternut set up, so it didn't seem



necessary to try to do it with the salt-water vertical, too. Besides, no one really wants to wade out to it and try, at least not yet. We just want to get on the air.



*Hams can always improvise when clamps break!*

Cal stepped aside so I could operate, but he was really psyched and I was exhausted, so I turned it back to him after a couple dozen contacts and planned to start fresh in the morning.

September is "off-season" because it is hurricane time in Belize, which is terrific because we are about the only people at Saks. It has a downside though; their restaurant doesn't serve dinner. Not having eaten in 24 hours, I am very hungry. I didn't want to go to "downtown" Placencia in the dark, so Bob Fox suggests a deli within walking distance that sells basic groceries and sandwiches. That sounds good, so my first dinner in Belize consists of a chunk of cheese, rye crisps and Belize salami. Don't ask me what is in Belize salami...I didn't ask since I didn't really want to know!

After a good night's sleep and a wonderful breakfast of papaya, lime juice and some type of yogurt, I venture to the shack. Eddy and Cal are hard at work, running pile-ups and having a great time. When Bob V31UU shows up, we have a meeting to decide our specific operating times for the G3ZQS Straight Key Contest. We want to keep at least one station on the air for the entire 48 hours. We decide that I should kick it off with the first shift from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., then Cal will take over and Bob V31UU will do the midnight - early morning (after all, he is the newbie!). Then Eddy will take over for him the next morning. Since Eddy is staying right there at the QTH and can virtually operate any time he wants, he was very generous

about allowing the rest of us to have the main bands while we were operating. He stayed up most of the nights logging contacts.

Propagation surprised me. I was expecting non-stop pile-ups, but there were times when we called CQ for hours on end with no replies. But when the band opened up, look out! It was the first time I experienced anything like that and my inexperience showed. Eddy and Cal were very patient and nice about it - explaining that I don't need to send my name and QTH each time; in the pile-ups, ops are happy with (and expect) just a signal report. That is easier said than done for a rag chewer like me. Once I got the hang of it, it was thrilling and a real rush. It can be addictive.

I had a hard time getting used to the GHD keys. They are so finely machined and such precision instruments that if you don't have it perfectly set for your fist it is difficult to send smoothly. When I first tried it with the settings Cal was using, I sounded choppy; throwing in extra dits and my spacing really stunk. It was embarrassing. Since Eddy had his own key and Cal had claimed one of the GHD's, I spent some serious time tweaking the 2<sup>nd</sup> GHD key until I got the spacing and tension to fit my fist. From then on, it was like a dream. I could not believe the difference adjusting it made - I'm used to sitting at a rig and using any key that is there. Not so with this one, I have never seen a key that is so sensitive and responsive. Smooth as silk and genuinely a joy to use.

The time just flew by. The only other time I've experienced camaraderie and radio fun like this is at that rare Field Day that "clicks". And this week was like a perfect Field Day on steroids.

### **I shall return!**

Cal doesn't go back to DX destinations, there are too many 'new' places for him to discover. I, however, can't wait to get back to Placencia. This Glass Arm Dxpedition was one of the happiest, most re-



laxed yet exhilarating weeks of my life. I only hope that there isn't too much "progress". Saks is tearing down the little cabanas and putting up luxury condos...and Bob Fox is talking about replacing his perfect shack with a bigger one.



*Saks has a beautiful pool and beach*

Cal has predicted this won't be my last Dxpedition and I have a strong suspicion that he is right. This trip is a good example of how Elmering helps our Amateur Radio service grow. Cal recruited three Hams who had never been on a DXPedition, selected a perfect location to get our feet wet (no pun intended, none of us fell into the swamp), thereby creating three new DXers who can't wait for a chance to go on another trip. When we do, we will probably take along at least one new operator, Elmer them and gain experience ourselves along the way, helping ensure the future of Dxing in our own small way.



*Bob V31UU getting some beauty sleep in the shack after working a long shift.*

## Eddy's turn

I enjoyed not having to think about work, etc. - just ham radio. It was a lot of fun working with other operators close by. Improved my ears a LOT listening through pile-ups. Glad I practiced a lot before, my hand/arm never bothered me or got tired. Didn't use enough insect repellent - won't make that mistake again!! Local food was GREAT and the water tasted better than any bottled. This is something that all hams need to try to do, if possible - definitely worth the effort.

## Odds and Ends

### Getting a Belize License

Getting a license to operate in Belize is easy, but apply for it at least two months in advance. The average time to get in via the postal mail was 6-8 weeks. It is a nice looking license, and they include a laminated wallet size license. The cost was \$20 US money order (no checks). The license apparently is issued for the calendar year. Mine expires 12/2006 but it is renewable for \$15.

To get a reciprocal Belize license, all you need to do is send a copy of your US license, a letter of intent, and the money order, to: Public Utilities Commission  
Office of Telecommunications  
Mr. Kingsley Smith, Sr. Tech Officer  
P.O. Box 300  
Belize City, Belize



## What to pack

Amateur gear is not necessary if you are renting a shack in Belize. Bob Fox had just about everything we wanted. You may want to bring a laptop computer for logging and paper for making QSO notes and/or logging.

Of course, take any medications or over-the-counter products you will need or think you might want to have during your stay. The hotel provided soap, but not shampoo, blow driers or other 'extras' we take for granted. Bug spray is a MUST. The sand fleas can make you miserable. The mosquitoes were not bad but it might depend on the time of year.

You won't need "nice" clothes; a couple pairs of shorts, some t-shirts will do fine and maybe a light jacket. I overpacked by about 80%! Multiple swim-suits are necessary, nothing is worse than putting on a wet bathing suit. With the high humidity it took at least a day to dry one out after it was hung over the railing or back of a chair. I took four with me (mainly because I couldn't make up my mind) and was very glad to have all four there. Beach towels are generally provided. Walking sandals with good traction are handy to have.

American money is happily accepted, but you will usually get your change back in Belize money. One US dollar is worth 2 Belize. This sounds simple, but it gets confusing!

## Bugs and Other Creepy Crawlies

I'm happy to report that I did not see a single spider the whole week! We didn't see any snakes, either, but there are lots and lots of lizards and geckos. I like lizards, and had a pet iguana, so those were pleasant to have around. The little salamanders and geckos took some getting used to, but once I saw how they loved to chow down on the sand fleas and other little bugs around the shack, they got a lot cuter. Toward the end of the week, I wanted to take some home with me – it is interesting to watch them crawl around on the walls without falling.



*V31UU (kneeling) V31AN, V31MR*

When the band is dead and you're calling CQ for hours with no reply, you'd be surprised how happy you'll be to have the diversion of watching those little guys.

If you go into the ocean, watch out for jellyfish -- they sting!

## Alternate activities

There are many alternate activities. Being a third world country, there is not a big variety of restaurants and bars, but even the ones that looked questionable served delicious food, although we got a bit tired of eating fish every day. (We had been advised to not eat the beef). Since it was off-season, there weren't menu choices; what the cook felt like cooking that night was what you had for dinner. Breakfast and lunch at Saks was delicious, and had a cook's specialty-of-the-day luncheon in addition to sandwiches.

The shopping district is very small and offers mainly Mayan crafts and jewelry. Small Mayan schoolchildren sit alongside the road, displaying the baskets, wooden masks, necklaces and bowls made by their parents and family. It was hard to resist buying something of everything. There are no typical tourist type souvenirs (like caps and t-shirts) for sale in the town of Placencia, but the small Placencia air-

port is filled with those sorts of shops, as well as duty free shops selling perfume and crystal.

Many tours are offered and are highly recommended. The Spouses went on the Howling Monkey River tour and returned with tales of being chased off by howling monkeys who threw feces and urinated on them to get them to leave their territory. I wasn't sorry to miss that, but they had a terrific time. The scenery is quite spectacular and the tours of the other local towns are interesting and eye-opening to a way of life that we don't get to see very often.

One tour that I did take is the snorkeling trip. I am practically blind without my glasses, which I couldn't wear under the snorkeling mask, so I didn't really enjoy it to its full potential, but everyone raved about the coral and fish. I took a disposable underwater camera and when the photos came back, I was amazed at how gorgeous everything is. Someone said that snorkeling masks with magnifying lenses for glasses wearers are available, so I'm going to look into that for next time.

There are many day-trips available to keep Spouses happy, but I would not recommend Placencia as a place to bring children. It might be too Third World for some people. Do your homework and see if it is a place that the Spouse will want to visit. If they expect a Disneyland type place with activities for the kids and fabulous shopping, you will have an unhappy camper on your hands. But if the spouse has a sense of adventure and wants to get away from it all for a moonlit beach/poolside days (you remember how to be romantic, right?) vacation, get your reservations in for the shack and hop on the next plane.



*Bob, V31UU, dashing around the Belize City airport getting one of everything. Belize City airport is a good place to get "typical" souvenirs like t-shirts and hats as well as jewelry, although the prices of the jewelry and crafts are higher than buying from the natives in Placencia.*



*V31AN with the GHD key*



*Eddy, V13MR, was able to put in the most operating time because he rented the lovely home of Bob Fox, V31MD, and the shack was right in his backyard.*

This is an article about a home brew antenna I built that may fit the bill for a number of hams. It is perfect to attach to a balcony in an apartment or if in a frame house, it may be merely leaned against a wall. The antenna is a compromise, but at least you are on the air.

With a random wire tuner and only 8 feet of wire to the transceiver, the antenna loads up just fine from 3.5 to 30 MHz. Forty years ago, a similar antenna was marketed by Partridge Electronics in the United Kingdom, however, they have long been out of business.

When I lived in New Zealand I used a Joystick and running QRP, 4 watts on 80 CW and with a 600 foot high extinct volcano between me and Australia 1500 miles to the west, I had no difficulty communicating between the two countries. If anyone has any questions they can write or email me at [remorden@telus.net](mailto:remorden@telus.net) 73 Bob VE6RI, ex VE3EIM FISTS # 5373

## An improved solder connection for the PL-259 plug

By ROBERT MORDEN, VE3EIM/VE6RI

Several improvements can be made when attaching a PL-259 plug to RG-8/U or RG-213/U coax. They are outlined below, and are easy to perform.

The time spent doing them is worth it. The finished job is more durable and efficient than the standard method of attaching PL-259 plugs.

### Step (a)

Cut the end of the cable even. Remove 1-5/8" of vinyl jacket. Don't nick the braid.

### Step (b)

Bare 5/8" of the centre conductor. Don't nick the conductor. Trim the braided shield back 1/4" exposing that amount of insulation. Inspect this area making sure that there are no slivers of copper braid left that could possibly short out the centre conductor when you assemble the plug on the end of the coax. Tin the copper conductor and slide the coupling ring on the cable.

### Step (c)

Modify your PL-259 plug as per the drawing. Drill four holes at point B to match the four original holes on your plug (point A). I select a drill bit slightly larger than the original holes, as this will allow more solder to flow on the copper braid when filling in holes. This makes a more solid connection.

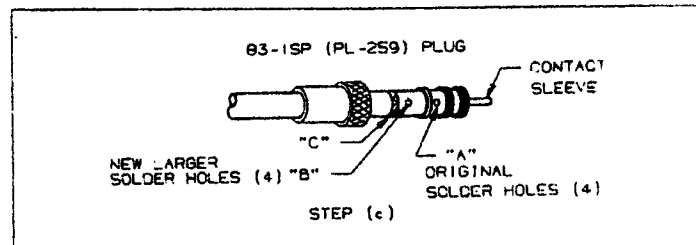
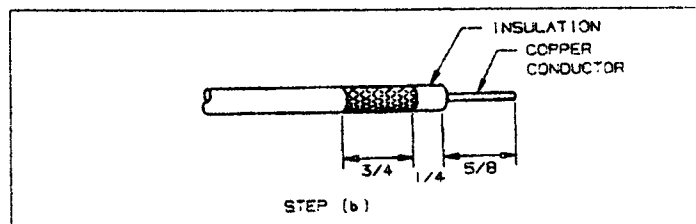
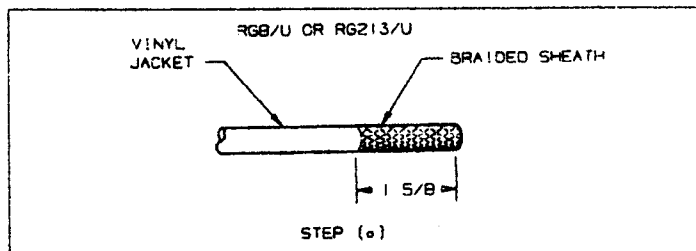
### Step (d)

Screw the plug assembly on the end of the prepared cable. Solder the plug assembly to the braid through all eight solder holes using a 30-watt soldering iron. Solder the centre conductor to the contact sleeve.

You may wonder why you should bother soldering the four holes at "A" when there doesn't appear to be any braid appearing in the holes. The answer is to form a shield, preventing stray RF energy from escaping which could be a source of TVI.

Arriving at this stage, you will notice at point "C" there is about 1/8" of exposed braid. Solder this braid to your plug all the way around providing a nice, electrically sealed connection. Be careful you don't overdo it by using too much solder, otherwise the coupling ring might not slide over this point.

Again, this effort is to provide a shield to keep RF from escaping. It is always good practice to check your work with an ohm-



meter for a possible short or even an open line on the coax before installation.

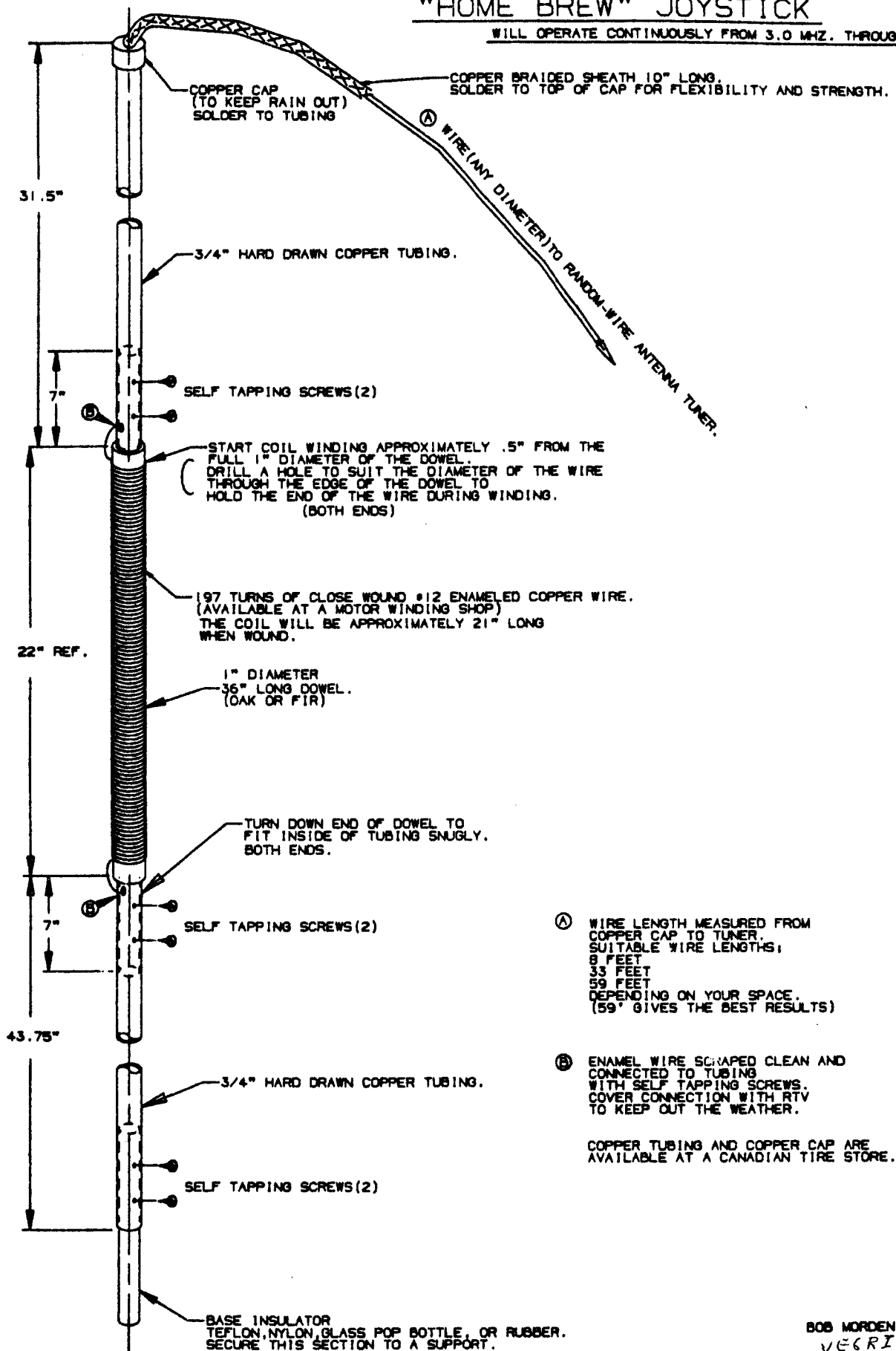
If your coax is to be used outdoors, don't forget to seal it against the weather at the plug union with the coax using a suitable sealant, such as coax seal, or Dow Corning RTV-Adhesive, or silicone sealant. These items can be bought from most hardware or electrical supply stores.

I have used this system of plug connection to large coax for several years and coax prepared in this way has been used for various Field Day conditions, Canadian Islands Award DXpeditions, plus switching coax lines to different rigs a number of times per week at home.

I have not experienced even one failure in a coax line connection when the line was prepared in this manner. Using the handbook system of mating a PL-259 plug to RG-8/U or RG 213/U coax has resulted in many failures over the years, and they always happened at the most inopportune time.

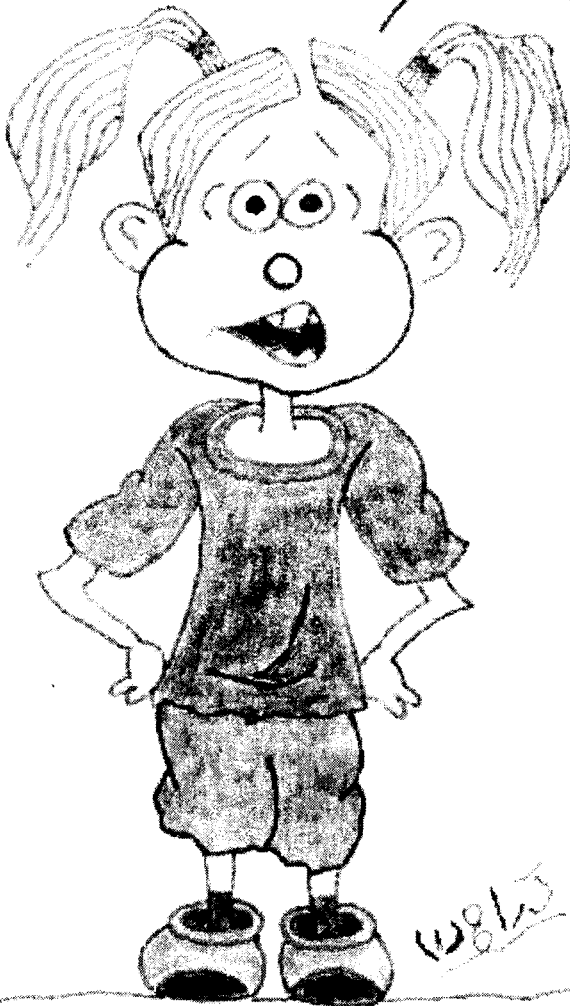
# "HOME BREW" JOYSTICK

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BOB MORDEN VESEIM  
VECRI

HAVE YOU  
WORKED  
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# FISTS CW Club Membership Application

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Call sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Name on the air: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Please print clearly. We do not give out or sell your email address to anyone)

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

The newsletter is offered on audio cassette to blind members at no charge. If you require this service please check here: ☐

Favorite bands: \_\_\_\_\_

Other club affiliations (ARRL, QCWA, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

Other interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ How did you hear about FISTS? \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks (\$15 per year, includes newsletter) payable to FISTS CW Club and mail to:

Nancy Kott WZ8C

PO Box 47

Hadley MI 48440

Also payable via paypal.com to FISTS@TIR.COM

FISTS CW CLUB  
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