

The Keynote

Newsletter of FISTS CW Club • The International Morse Preservation Society
Issue 1, 2012



"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 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.

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Ordering supplies: Irene Kott W08E

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.

All other questions, including supplies, tapes for the blind, callsign/email/ postal address changes, (NO we do not get this info directly from the FCC!) general membership questions and articles for the Keynote contact Nancy Kott 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. Payable to FISTS CW Club or paypal to fists@tir.com.

FISTS CW CLUB

The International Morse Preservation Society



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

North American Memo • Issue 1, 2012

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Hi FISTS,

I'm sorry for any inconvenience caused by the web page being down for so long. There was a conflict between the host and the server and took them a while to figure it out and fix it. We are planning on doing some overhauling of the web page to make it simpler to navigate and easier to find things, but hopefully that won't cause any major downtime.

The polo and t-shirts look fantastic! These commemorative shirts to celebrate our 25th anniversary will only be available during 2012. They are in sizes S-3X. Tshirts are \$7 plus \$3 postage. Polos (no pocket) are \$15 plus \$3 postage. We are planning on having mugs available also, but don't have them yet. We will have them in time for Hamvention.

Hope you are having fun with the Prefix Awards — we've had reports of people making good progress despite the crazy band conditions. I worked the Winter Sprint and only made two contacts, which was disappointing. I'll try to get on more to get my WZ8 prefix out there. Don't forget that you can sign up with Karl at hmc.ret.karl@myfairpoint.net to use KN0WCW — slower ops are encouraged to give it try; it's fun and will help others get the callsign in their log. Karl will give you all the info you need, so don't be intimidated! A friendly fist is all that's required (as well as paid-up dues and a legal ham license, that is!).

— 73 88 33 Nancy WZ8C



WELCOME TO THE NEW FISTS

Member Number	Callsign	First	ST	Member Number	Callsign	First	ST
15654	W7CBR	Chuck	AZ	15678	WA6RIC	RICHARD	CA
15655	W9EFW	EDWARD	IL	15679	AK4LF	TY	KY
15656	N3JFD	JOHN	PA	15680	KD2UJ	Bob	NJ
15657	KF5MUG	CRAY	TX	15681	KJ4EZ	TERRY	NC
15658	KB0SNE	MIKE	ND	15682	KD4NUL	CLARK	GA
15659	WB4MJ	MICHAEL	SC	15683	K2LEB	JONATHAN	MA
15660	VU2MUD	Madhkar		15684	W7JSD	SID	AZ
15661	W8KI	RUSS	MI	15685	KR4AE	ALAN	GA
15662	KF7IOT	PHILLIP	IN	15686	AB9YU	COLIN	IL
15663	W5BM	DAN	OK	15687	K2YEO	TOM	NY
15664	KJ6NYH	SAM	CA	15688	KA0USD	IMELDA	MN
15665	WA2LTH	RUSS	NY	15689	WB0OLX	CRAIG	IA
15666	WA6OEF	PETE	CA	15690	K8HRO	RANDY	MI
15667	AK4HY	OTIS	VA	15691	VA3OT	DAN	ON
15668	WA4CYD	BARRY	SC	15692	KF7NDH	PAT	WA
15669	N5ZS	FRANKIE	AR	15693	KC9BPI	ROY	IL
15670	KC9UNL	CURT	IL	15694	K7CHS	RICK	AZ
15671	KO9U	PAUL	NY	15695	K3NDE	GENE	WA
15672	N3UFJ	TOM	MD	15696	WV5I	DWAYNE	TX
15673	AB4RH	BILLY LEE	GA	15697	KN0TEM	TOM	CO
15674	W5MRM	MARTY	TX	15698	AJ1DM	JOHN	RI
15675	KH6SAT	RICK	HI	15699	AD5VB	MARTYN	ME
15676	K1IEE	RICHARD	ME	15701	WB5RLF	LEE	LA
15677	AD4WG	RONALD	FL	15702	WB5HOW	VICTOR	TX

FISTS AWARDS

by Dennis Franklin K6DF, Awards Manager

Hope you're working toward our Anniversary Awards! To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of FISTS CW Club three versions of a new operating achievement award are available starting 0001Z January 1, 2012. Contacts must be made after 0001Z January 1, 2012.

Version One (also known as the Perpetual Prefix Award) is a basic open-ended award for working 25 different prefixes in each of the ten callsign zones (zero-nine). Each prefix is one point, regardless of country. The contact must be a valid two-way CW QSO between two licensed hams. No relays or repeater contacts allowed. Any type of Morse code device may be used.

For the purpose of this Prefix Award, the callsign zone is the number in the legally assigned callsign, regardless of location. Mobile/portable contacts are permitted, but the callsign zone is the one in the callsign, not any modifier used because of location. The prefix is the letter(s) before the number in the callsign.

For example:

K6DF operating from the UK with the callsign K6DF/GM0 will be entered as a "K" prefix in the "6" call zone.

DL4ABC/G5 would be a "DL" prefix in the "4" call zone.

V31AN would be prefix "V3" in the 1 call zone.

If you work AB1CD, and count the AB prefix in the 1 call zone, then work them again after they get the vanity call A1CD, you may count them again as an A prefix in the 1 call zone, if you don't already have an A1 in your award log. For this award, the prefix is what counts, not the operator or location.

There is no time limit to earn this

basic award and successful applicants working the total of 250 prefixes will receive a Perpetual Prefix Award certificate. Endorsement stickers may be available if there is the need for them at a future date (hence the "perpetual" prefix name — it is non-ending).

Version Two follows the same rules as Version One, with the exception of the completion date. It must be completed by 2359Z December 31, 2012.

Successful applicants of this award will earn an FISTS 25th Anniversary Prefix Award certificate.

For Versions One and Two, contacts may be made with active, lapsed and non-FISTS. At least one of the contacts in each of the call number districts (0-9) must have a FISTS number.

Version Three

A plaque will be awarded for those who complete the award as described in Version Two, with the exception of the prefix contacts being only with hams with FISTS numbers. The prefix can be from a FISTS (active or lapsed) anywhere in the world. Contacting FISTS numbers outside your country is encouraged. The FISTS number should be exchanged on the air.

To give all Chapters an equal playing field for a plaque, Chapter plaques may only be earned by someone belonging to that Chapter. If no one in a Chapter completes the qualifications, a plaque will be awarded to the FISTS member in that Chapter with the highest number of prefixes worked. The number of plaques for each Chapter is still being determined.

Logs must include the complete callsign, time and date of QSO, QTH and first name of the operator worked. Exchanging of RST is encouraged so the contact can be counted toward

other awards and contests but it is not necessary to have in the log for these awards. Conversation is also encouraged. "Hit and run" QSOs (except for during scheduled contests, nets, etc) are perceived as rude and this is a friendly event. Remember, when you've worked a FISTS member, you've worked a friend!

If applying for Version Three (the plaque), the FISTS number of the operator worked must also be included.

It is possible to earn all three versions of the award.

The certificates and plaques will not be numbered.

Dupe sheets/worksheets and entry forms will be available on the web page <http://www.fists.org>

Entry materials must be submitted by January 30, 2013 for Version Two and Three. There is no ending date for Version One (The 250 Prefix Award).

Here are the new award certificates earned as of the time of this printing.



AWARDS ISSUED

Century	K8AAI	RCC	OH7QR
Silver	G4MLW WU1E OH7QR	2 Million	WU1E G3HAL OH7QR W3QT
Gold	G3HAL OH7QR	3 Million	KB9MLE G3HAL OH7QR
1 X QRP	OH7QR		
Platinum	WU1E OH7QR	4 Million	G4LHI VK4TJ WB6SZZ
Millionaire	G4MLW G3HAL OH7QR	5 Million	G4LHI
		18 Million	W5GXV

QRP WITH K3WWP — COLUMN #93

by John Shannon, K3WWP

On October 10, 2011 I got an Elecraft K2 rig from my friend Mike KC2EGL. I also got the KX-1 that he and I built as a NAQCC project a couple years ago. I'm going to talk a bit about the K2 in this column.

After a couple months of using it, I believe it is the best rig I have ever owned. It is also the most customizable rig I've ever owned by far which contributes to it being the best rig. This model has a wide range of 'add-ons' like a 160 meters module, a 6 meters transverter, automatic antenna tuner, and best of all a great DSP filter. The filter made a world of difference in my reception here. It knocks out just about all my local QRN except for some furnace noise on 15 meters. I may be able to reduce that some more also after I get a chance to play with the 'denoiser' configuration.

Over the couple months I've had it, I've fine tuned just about every setting to my liking except for the denoisers which are still set at factory defaults. I firmly believe that this is the rig that anyone serious about CW/QRP work should have. While this is a QRP column, I will mention that with the 100 watt add-on that I don't have or need, it makes a great 'regular' rig also, I'm sure. Although it has been superseded by the K3 and the upcoming KX-3, many folks say the K2 receiver is better than the K3. The KX-3 will

probably be shipping in February or March of 2012. Then folks can compare the KX-3 to it also.

I gave it a good workout in the recent CQWW DX contest to see how it would perform in contest conditions. Here are excerpts from my story of that contest I have on my web site.

With the Sun finally very nicely spotted with resulting great propagation conditions, I set out to put in a pretty serious effort in the contest to give the new K2 a workout in a big DX contest.

I started out just about at the starter's gun on Saturday at 0000Z, and made my first contact at 0005Z with P40L on 20 meters. However the pile-ups on 20 were absolutely awesome and after working NP4G there, I decided to try 40 meters.

The situation was just about the same on 40. I don't think I'd ever heard the band so busy in a DX contest. Perhaps it was increased activity with a lot of folks coming back to DX contests with the improved propagation. Or maybe the great receiver in the K2 was just allowing me to hear more than I usually do in my noisy location. More about the K2 as we go along.

I did manage 5 QSOs on 40 in the 0000Z hour before I gave up. Three were EU and two NA. I was surprised how easily I worked PJ5G which is still a quite in demand country, I would think. He wasn't strong and I got him on the first call if I remember correctly now.

I came back to 40 in the 0300Z hour and found the situation pretty much the same. I fought the activity for about an hour before giving up again. I managed only 7 QSOs, all in NA except EE2K. It was nice to work Montserrat, a somewhat less common country. That was VP2MWG. That was it for the night. I went to bed. I woke up a couple times during the night but didn't even try the bands. I figured I'd wait till Sunday to do that since competition should be less on the second day. Anyway I was actually more looking forward to seeing how 10 and 15 were in the morning than doing 40 and 80 in the middle of the night.

I got up around 1315Z and hit the dial around 1330Z. 15 meters was alive with DX from deep into EU and the usual Caribbean stations. I stayed mostly on 15, with a brief excursion to 20, until 1410Z.

In that time I made 27 QSOs with some of my favorites being ED9M from Ceuta, and RT5Z/UA5A/RT4F.

At 1410Z, my curiosity got the better of me and won out over the nice runs I was having on 15 meters. I had to check 10 meters. It was decent, but not up to the conditions at the peak of the last sunspot cycle by any means. So I switched back and forth between 10 and 15 for about 3 1/2 hours or so before also including 20 meters in the mix. I did take a break from 1500 to 1535, and then pretty much stayed on the air until 1945 or so when I took a longer break for chow and just for a break in general as late afternoon is kind of a down period here for DX as the higher bands are closing and crowded 20 is about the only really good band at that time.

As far as the K2 goes, I was continually impressed by how it knocks out my local noise. Except for when my noise-making furnace came on, there was virtually NO noise to be heard on 15 and 10. I could literally hear stations at the S0 level. I was hearing many of the very weak (to me) stations that were in the pile-ups chasing the DX stations. Probably what I was hearing was very similar to how I sound at many of the DX stations, and I can understand how with their big antennas and a quiet location with a good receiver they can easily copy me if the competition doesn't overwhelm my signal. It

was also impressive how I could work some of those very weak stations I was hearing here. The last QSO before my 1945 break was with ZM1A whom I was barely hearing.

Let's go back now and pick out some more favorite QSOs from Saturday morning and afternoon. Of course I enjoy each and every QSO in a contest like that, but some do stand out for one reason or other. TC3A because I can't recall working a TC prefix before, and it's always nice to work Turkey anyway. Many of the SN, SO, SQ stations from Poland again for the chance of them being a new prefix. The tiny country of Luxembourg always fascinated me along with Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and a couple of the other small EU countries. I like the way they stood up over the centuries and resisted incorporation into some larger country and thus maintained their independence. I still have never worked Andorra, but I did work LX1NO and T70A in this contest. I've worked Monaco, but not in the contest. Another small EU entity OH0Z from Aland Is. MD2C for the prefix. 4O3A for a still somewhat new country. PA0LOU because he was among my first DX stations worked back in the 1960s when I was still new to the ham radio game. I don't know if it is the same person, but it brought back memories. TK4W because he wasn't all that strong from a rare

entity and I beat a pile-up to work him very easily. That takes us up to late Saturday afternoon. At 1945 I had 130 QSOs and 103 multipliers.

The rest of Saturday wasn't too eventful with a couple exceptions. Although I only made 20 more QSOs before going to bed, one of them was WL7E. Why was that special? After trying KL7RA on 10 meters endlessly with 900 mW with no success, a little while later I found WL7E and worked him easily with the 900 mW. That finally completed a mW WAS for me. I already have a LotW verification for the QSO also. KH6LC and KH7M came easily on 10 meters as does Hawaii most every time for me on either 10 or 15 meters no matter how weak their signals may be. Another country I seem to work easily is Cape Verde. If you look at the antenna farm they have there, it's no wonder I snagged D4C with no effort at all on 40 meters not long before giving up for the night at just 0105Z. Overall the bands were just not working for me then. 20 meters was pretty much dead except for stations I had already worked. EU stations were not hearing me at all on 40 meters, and I had worked most of the Caribbean stations there. So I called it quits for the evening with 150 QSOs and 127 multipliers.

I woke up around 1100Z and thought I'd see what was happening on 40 and 80. I figured I could work some OC stations on 40

and possibly find a KL7 on 80 to complete an 80M WAS. However neither panned out at all and conditions were pretty awful on both bands at that time. So it was back to bed.

I got up again at 1300Z and joined in the fray. The pattern for the first part of Sunday was very similar to the first part of Saturday with somewhat equal conditions. 15 remained the star performer, but a lot was to be had on 10 and later 20 also. Some of the favorite QSOs from Sunday morning included the following: PA3BWK who has a great Morse Code web site. YQ6A for a new prefix. After chasing Bosnia for a while I finally got it with E7DX and E73W back to back. UX1UF whom I worked on Saturday on the same 15 meters, but I know he logged me as W3WWP then so I worked him again and he got it right this time around. M3I for a neat little call who was quite popular later on in the contest with a big pile-up. The always easily workable DL1IAO. Another country that evaded me for a long time — EI2CN. I had really concentrated on working as many countries as possible so I could make it to a total of 100 since I got the K2 and get the Elecraft DX Chasers award. TK4W again easily, this time on 15 meters. I1EIS because the dit, di dit, di di dit suffix makes for a nice rhythm. ZS4TX for another country I took so long to work originally, then worked ZS6EZ so easily

several years ago. I 'complained' about it being 'too easy' in one of the contest reports on my web site and got a comment from ZS6EZ on his QSL card to the effect that he wouldn't make it so easy the next time. HI.

As morning turned to afternoon here, I worked C5A — hadn't worked The Gambia in several years. ED9M again — I'd eventually make it 3 bands with him. 6V7V greeted me by name. I couldn't figure out who it was till after the contest despite him telling me about the operation. It was my young friend Jeff N1SNB who submitted one of my first ever 'Teens and CW' reports for the web site many years ago. Shortly after that, it was OQ5M operated by Franki ON5ZO, another friend from via the web site many years ago. We had a brief chat. Two new contest countries back to back in 6Y3M and GI0RQK. I almost didn't get GI0RQK. I tried him before but then the furnace noise came on, so I put him in the K2 memory and went back after the noise quit and got him. A few new contest countries also as the contest was winding down came from PZ5T, CO6LP, 8P5A, HC2SL, VK6LW. The VK6LW QSO came on 20, and was one of those whom I could barely hear. It took a while to work him. He wasn't hearing me at all, then suddenly came back with WWP. I sent my complete call twice and we made the QSO. Without the K2, I

probably wouldn't have even heard him. OH8X late on 20 meters. I can usually hear and work Finland after the rest of EU has disappeared due to some factor of propagation. That brings us to the end of my contest.

I shut down just after 2330. I had been trying to reach 300 QSOs, but just couldn't find anyone new and was getting tired, so I quit at 296 QSOs, 213 multipliers, and 178,068 points.

Among the 213 multipliers were a total of 93 countries which is the most I've ever worked in a contest. I find my best previous total was 83 in the 1999 CQWW DX contest.

With the 93 countries in the contest and 13 others from October 10 to November 25 that I didn't work in the contest, that made 106 countries with the K2. so I reached that goal, and have applied for the Elecraft DX Chasers award.

I found out one important thing in the contest. My 15 meters vertical dipole will tune nicely on 10 meters with the wide range antenna tuning unit in the K2. It seems to work just as well as, if not better than, my sloping 10 meters dipole plus it has a better S/N ratio.

Overall the K2 passed its contest test with flying colors. Ergonomically, it is very well designed. Generally rigs that have small panels with multi-function pushbuttons and a menu system are very hard to use, but a lot of thought went into the K2 and everything that needs to be accessed immediately is right



there with a single push of a button and things that only need changed occasionally are accessed via the menu system. Split frequency operation is achieved much easier than with my Kenwoods - 570 and 480. The RIT is very easy to work with. I just can't say enough about the ease of operation.

A couple days after the contest I got to thinking about how well my 15M antenna tuned on 10M with the built in ATU, and decided to see if my random wire would tune

without the external tuner I had to use with the Kenwoods. Bingo — I got an SWR of 1.5:1 or less on 160, 80, 40, and 30 with just the K2 built in ATU. Probably more efficient without the extra tuner in line and certainly a couple less switches and knobs to have to use to change bands.

If you have a chance to get a K2, I'd say go ahead and do it now. Don't put it off as long as I did. Many folks have upgraded to the K3, or are going to get the new

KX-3 and are selling their K2's at a reasonable price. Get one, and optimize all the configurations to your personal preferences, and you won't regret it.

No, I'm not affiliated with Elecraft in any way. I'm just a very satisfied user of their equipment.

For continuing reports on the K2, check my web site at <http://home.windstream.net/johnshan/>. Email me at jsk3wwp@windstream.net with any questions or comments.



THE 2012 NORTH AMERICAN CW WEEKEND — MAY 4-6

By Don, W4ZYT

All hams with an active interest in CW are cordially invited to attend the 2012 North American CW Weekend will be held May 4-6 at the Fairview Park Marriott Hotel near Washington, DC. Those attending will include members of various CW groups, ham clubs, friends and guests.

There will be a variety of gathering and scheduled events, including a Friday evening pizza supper, a Saturday evening dinner at a local restaurant, and a brunch on Saturday morning. The Washington, DC area has excellent museums, top-of-the-line shopping centers, beautiful parks, and historical sites. The typically gorgeous weather of early May helps make a visit to Washing-

ton, DC an ideal destination after a long winter. Meet up with old friends and meet new ones, but do plan on coming this year!

The room rate at the Fairview Park Marriott is \$87 per night, which is a bargain for this metropolitan area. This special rate will be honored from May 4th until May 7th so you can extend your stay to take in the sights. You may register at www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/wasfp-fairview-park-marriott.

Washington is served by three airports, has fantastic Metro transit system and is readily accessible by highway, so getting here and getting around is easy. There will be modest fee of \$25 per person to cover incidentals and the brunch. Information

about the pizza evening, brunch and Saturday restaurant will be available closer to the date. Of course, the heart and soul of the event is meeting other CW operators, folks you've worked on the air or met some time in the past. Please make this a great event — do plan on coming.

Registration online at www.cwops.org/DCweekend.html Checks for \$25 should be made out to Donald Lynch, W4ZYT, and should be sent to Don at 1517 West Little Neck Road, Virginia Beach, VA, 23452-4717.

— Please contact Don. W4ZYT [w4zyt.don@gmail.com], Jim N3JT, John N3AM, or Pete WIRM for further information. Vy 73, Don W4ZYT





WA7CS operating CW at W6RO - radio room of the Queen Mary.

DID YOU SAY QM OM?

By Carl, WA7CS, FISTS 4561

My XYL, Dana, and I had a conversation a couple of months ago – it went sorta like this:

“I’m booking a cruise to Hawaii.”

“I don’t wanna go.”

“C’mom – It’ll be fun.

“Nope. Don’t wanna go.”

“We’ll stay in LA for a few days first and visit my family, then go on a Hollywood bus tour.”

“Now I really don’t wanna go.”

“We’ll see all the sights and maybe even visit the Queen Mary on our way to the cruise ship terminal.”

“Nope. Wait; did you say the Queen Mary? The one in Long Beach?”

“Yup.”

“OK. I’ll make a copy of my ham license and pack my Vibroplex.”

Why, you may ask, was my abrupt change of attitude accompanied by a desire to Xerox a ham ticket and take a Morse key to Hawaii?

Somehow, I recalled that even though the Queen Mary has been out of service for 45 years, her radio room is alive and well and on the air. Somewhere in a shoebox is a QSL card I received from W6RO after working this very famous station.

A couple of weeks before our departure I sent a memo to John Rogers (KF6TTR) of the Associated Radio Amateurs of Long Beach (ARALB) to ask if I may be able to work some CW as a guest operator

in the W6RO radio room.

Arriving in Los Angeles, I endured visits with relatives and throngs of camera-toting tourists as we hopped from hotel to hotel. The first night was at the Roosevelt on Hollywood Boulevard. The second was at the Los Angeles Biltmore on Grand Avenue. Don’t get me wrong — these places are not flea bags. Not only are they historical landmarks rich in history and jaw-dropping architecture, they are also five-star hotels with fabulous food and the best in white-glove service. If you must stay a night or two away from home, I give these two joints my highest recommendation.

Finally — the morning of



November 8th brought us to the Queen Mary. Dana went to look for the spa to see about a manicure, and I made a bee-line for the Sports Deck: QTH of W6RO — Radio Room of the Queen Mary.

John Rogers had made all the necessary arrangements and told me that the ARALB club officers would roll out the red carpet for me. And that they did. When I located the Radio Room, it was a beehive of activity. I was given the warmest of welcomes and was invited to take a seat at the CW position.

Happier than a pig in mud, I fired up the CW transceiver and started making contacts. Several of our fellow FISTS were ecstatic to swap numbers with W6RO.

I cannot recall meeting a friendlier or more accommodating group of hams than those standing watch at W6RO. During a break, Bob Grubic (NC6Q FISTS #12429) and Art Borges (WA6UNC) escorted me to the Grand Ballroom where, over coffee and cake, we chewed the rag about all things ham radio.

The absolute and penultimate highlight of our three week Hawaiian vacation (for me at least) was as a guest operator at W6RO and an overnight stay aboard the Queen Mary. The opportunity to operate the radio station of the most famous ocean liner in the world will, without a doubt, remain as one of the most memorable moments of more than 40 years as a Radio Amateur.

— Carl, WA7CS, FISTS 4561 

KN0WCW WINS THIRD PLACE 2011 STRAIGHT KEY WEEK

Stan, K4UK, operated Straight Key Week from 0001 Sunday 4th September to 2359 UTC Saturday 10th September 2011 UTC using KN0WCW. KN0WCW is the North American FISTS Club Call. Anyone can operate it after obtaining permission from the KN0WCW trustee.

Stan's first QSO was with Milan, OK1KW - FISTS# 4827 at 2128 UTC on the 5th. He made a total of 90 QSO's during the week, the last one being with Paul, K1SEC — FISTS# 5658 at 2230 UTC on the 10th.

He operated using the straight key which Hector, NP4FW had made using a door hinge.

Stan worked 9 different European members of FISTS and worked Peter, G3JFS, FISTS# 8985 on all six days while running KN0WCW.

34 different U.S./Canada members of FISTS and worked Ron, W5VYN FISTS# 12761 on five of the six days running KN0WCW.

It was great fun and then by golly I came in Third Place for the SKW and received a certificate.

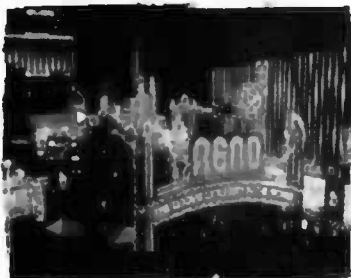
The "KN0" prefix is relatively rare and is sought after by many members for this year's anniversary awards and the Perpetual Prefix Award. So, pick a time when you can run KN0WCW and join in the fun!





QCWA 2012 Convention **Reno, Nevada**

September 24 - 27, 2012



A great deal of the growth and dynamic character of QCWA, since it was founded in 1947, is a direct result of the Chapters chartered across the continent and around the world; there are 220 Chapters with members in over 60 countries. In 2012, we are bringing together amateurs from all over to share in our rich history. Bring friends, relatives and other fellow hams to the event.

The QCWA is for all amateurs that truly enjoy the hobby, appreciate the effect it has had on their lives, want to share their experiences, and preserve the amateur traditions.

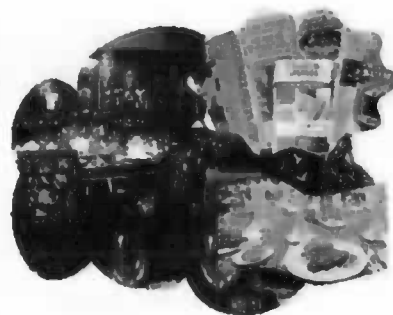
We will showcase some of the rich history of amateur radio from the days of the spark gap transmitter to the present. It will also highlight a look at the future amateur radio as a technical, social, and emergency media.

This convention is not just for QCWA members but for all amateurs and individuals interested in amateur radio communication.



Harrah's Reno is the site for the 2012 convention. In addition to the excellent facilities, they are providing us with special room convention rates (\$59/night single or double occupancy) and packages in their West Tower. The amenities include free wi-fi access, free use of their spa, show discounts, and a special coupon package. The hotel is located one block away from the train station and bus station, has a free shuttle to/from the international airport, and ample free parking for guests and convention attendees.

Besides the main tour and presentations during the convention, there are many other tours, shows, attractions, and dining facilities available for the convention attendees and their guests. An e-mail convention newsletter will be published to keep everyone informed on the latest shows and events in the Reno/Tahoe area around the time of our convention. The newsletter will list tour information, presentations, and acknowledge our corporate and individual supporters.



For more information, contact:

Al Montoya, WB6IMX

2012 QCWA Convention Chairperson

P O Box 4181

Mountain View, CA 94040

U S A

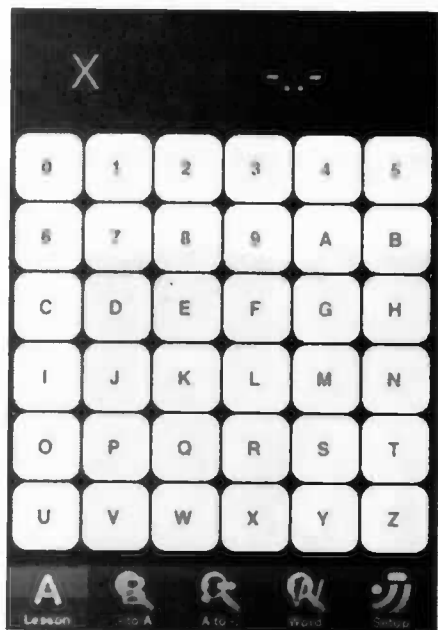
WWW.QCWA.ORG

WWW.QSL.NET/QCWA-11

e-mail: ADNYP@ATT.NET

iPhone Apps for studying /improving your A great way to use those lost hours in

by Theodore Diehl, PA1Z/AH6F



iMorseXpro

It has always fascinated me to see how world changing, disruptive technologies can also befriend and support those same older technologies they nearly wiped out- once enough time has passed under the bridge. Today in the 21st century we can hook up keys and sounders to our computers and communicate exactly like 19th and 20th century landline telegraphers did- only without the telegraph poles. Not to mention using amateur radio to send Morse around the world in the year 2011 even though it seems superfluous to many today. In the final call, broadcast radio didn't kill the concert hall, and Internet didn't kill the book, as many commentators would have had us believe. The originally disruptive digital world has become complementary and in my view that's a fantastic tool to be used in the hectic times of 21st century life for Morse fans like everyone here.

I think for many, a good old key, sounder, patience and practice are a great method to learn, master or improve one's code and that's a fine way to go. However, did you ever consider how an iPhone can help you really put

those lost hours in the week to good use? Take me for example: going to the airport, waiting in line for check-in and boarding, stuck in traffic, or in the supermarket- in total I personally lose about 10 hours a week like that and the iPhone with ear buds — in combination with various Apps for Morse (and news, Ham radio, language and history podcasts to boot) — helps fill those lost periods easily and efficiently without effort, thus making that lost time useful. I'll try to give a rundown here of the typical Morse Apps available for the iPhone, since I have tried almost all of the better programs, and perhaps my comments can save you time in making your choice.

There are a lot of Morse based iPhone Apps out there, two full pages of them in the iTunes store; be aware though that many are just text encoders or decoders for playing around, lots of flashing light type Morse Apps or other versions of these 'educational' Morse Apps. For learning or improving your ability seriously with Morse, there are really only a few good Apps available in that

Morse — the week

whole extravaganza.

Another problem is that many of the available Apps were not thought up by real Morse users or hams, and they rely on visual memory for learning rather than forcing you to listen only- a major drawback in my personal view.

iMorseXpro *

This particular program looks great at first, but isn't worth the trouble. First of all, it is buggy and can occasionally work strangely. But the most irritating is the fact that the dots and dashes stop and start with an unclear attack as well as bad spacing, which really begins to irritate within minutes of serious use. Here also, it puts a lot of accent into learning the code visually, which is a really bad way to learn. For beginners or people wanting to improve their code, this program can be easily avoided.

Ham Morse *****

This is one of the best Apps for Morse and you may find it quite useful. The layout is clear, concise and real easy to use with a straightforward interface. There is a speed and a tone adjustment,

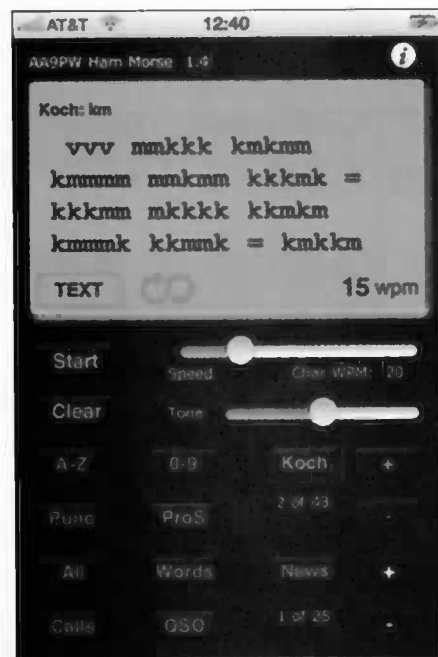
choice of Koch method or not. In Koch mode, one adds letters with the plus sign and removes them with the minus sign. Letters, pro-signs, words, newsfeeds, call signs, even simulated QSO's are all just a question of touching the right button. The text in the screen can be left on or hidden so you can check your receiving afterwards. More expensive at \$4.99, but you can tell it was well thought out. The maker, AA9PW has his own website for more info. Highly recommended and the App I use the most.

Koch Trainer (v1.2) *****

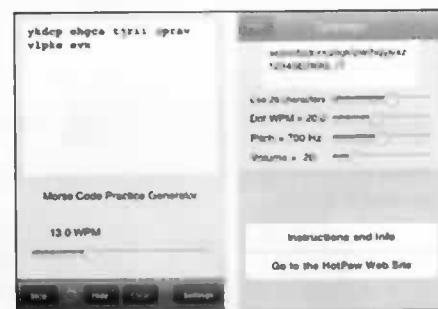
Just that and nothing else: type in your wpm, frequency, lesson level and get started copying. Code can be displayed or not accordingly. Works very well. At \$0.99 a cheap and well thought out alternative for Ham Morse if you don't need/want the other features.

MorseTest ****

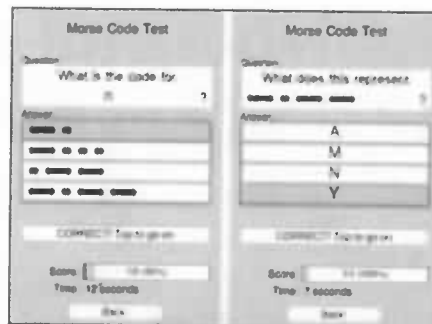
This is a simple but effective code generator from 3 to 40 wpm. Frequency, groupings, volume easily adjustable, and the text of the sent code can be hidden or seen as you wish. \$ 1.99



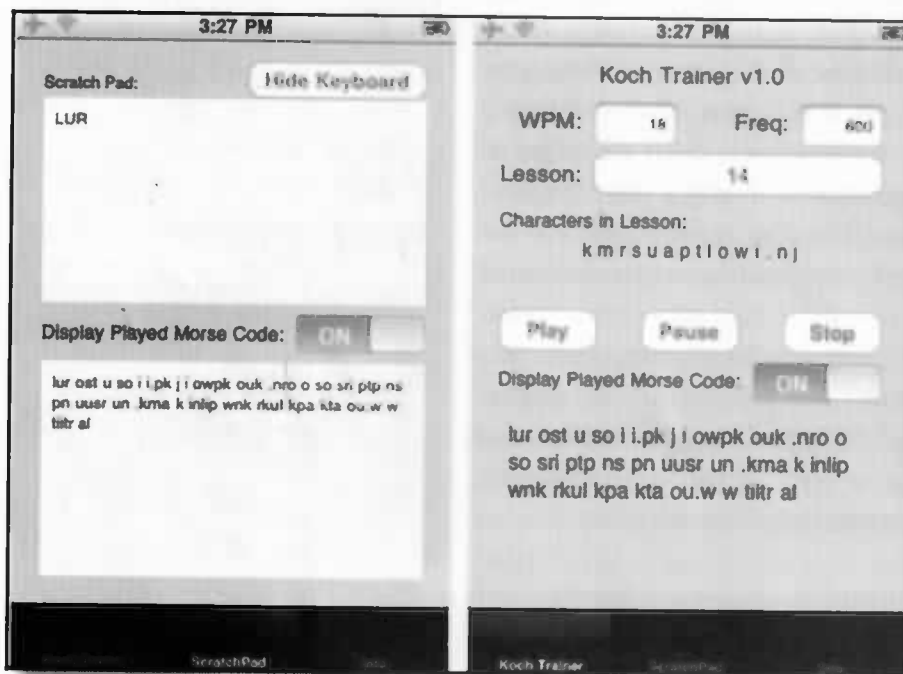
Ham Morse



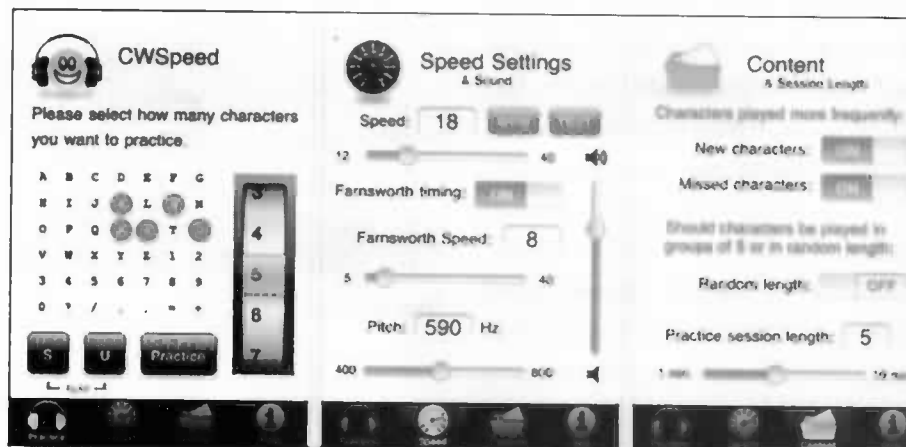
Morse Test



MorseCode Driller



Koch Trainer



CWSpeed

CWSpeed *****

Great program, this time based on the Farnsworth method. Has three main sections: Practice, Speed and Content for adjusting each aspect. In the speed settings area, you can adjust all parameters, including even the phase of the signal. Easy to use, straightforward and handy. \$ 2.99 (CWSpeed Lite version is free)

Morse Code Driller

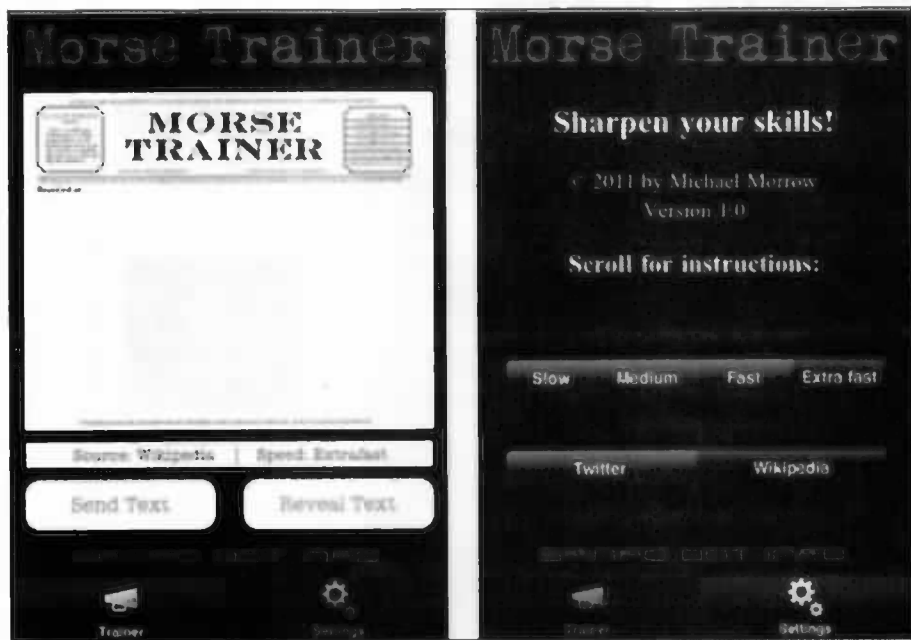
Utterly useless free program. Based only on visual recognition of code, you will learn nothing with this program!

Morse Trainer App (Michael Morrow) ****

A free program for practicing receiving code with a quaint old fashion 'telegram style' interface layout. Has four speeds for receiving; uses texts from Twitter or Wikipedia as chosen. (It seems to buffer these, as it also works when there is no WiFi connection). This App has the best, most realistic audio quality of dots and dashes of all the Apps mentioned here. The only drawback is that the speed is not steplessly variable, but that's a small point.

MorseTrainer ***

Not to be confused with the above program. Freeware with slow speed settings, but good for absolute beginners to learn code.




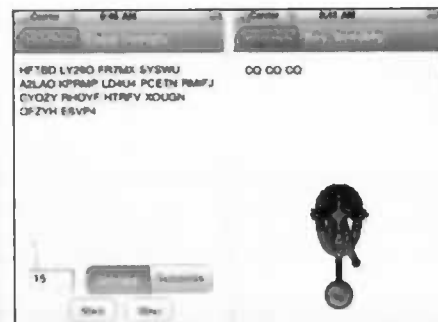
Morse Trainer App



MorseTrainer

Morse Mania *****





Another winner here at \$2.99 and worth every penny. Program was also written by a ham and you can tell. His version for Mac has been on my computer for a while now and it works very well indeed. This is the version to use when you are traveling. Has simulated QSO's, for fun you can also tap code on the screen and the App will decode it, choice of Farnsworth or Koch modes, selection by the user of groups or individual characters to study, etc. Flexible and friendly in use, highly recommended. 



Morse Mania

Know Code = DNR?

Terry W1QF is married to an RN and she laughed like mad when she saw his FISTS sweatshirt with "I'm proud to be a know-code ham" on the front. Apparently, "No-Code" is medical slang for DNR (Do Not Resuscitate). Terry advises that since we have lots of Auld Geezers in the club, it might be a bad idea to show up at a nursing home wearing our beloved slogan across your chest, hi hi!

 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">FISTS DOWN UNDER</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Newsletter – March 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>	  FISTS 25 th Anniversary
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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.

SILENT KEY - ZL2ABZ

It is with deep regret that we have to inform members of the passing of John Moore ex FISTS #9005. John was a founder member of FISTS Down Under and was most supportive in our early years. He had been in indifferent health for a number of years but regularly attended old timers' meetings in Wellington. There he entertained us with interesting stories of his long career in radio in the RNZAF and the New Zealand Post office as an operator and later as a radio inspector.

Until his health intervened he was an active supporter of the Quartz Hill contest station and often took part in working bees. On one occasion he surprised himself by walking into a bog when taking a short cut across a field; much to the amusement of everyone present except John.

Condolences have been sent on behalf of FISTS Down Under to his wife Nerissa and the family.

DOWN UNDER MEMBERS' NEWS

We appreciate the donations made by VK6QH-Bill #14106, ZL2IH-Ian #9027, VK2PS-Steve #9022, VK5BSC-Brian #9601, and ZL1AAR-Gwynne #9028.

VK4EI- Lyn #14132 has been holidaying in Ireland. She wrote: We are enjoying mild weather compared with the UK and Europe. Haven't been on air yet but have been invited to the QTH of EI9JU next weekend to try to work back to VK and maybe get my Marconi 365A on air for the first time

ZL1AZE-Brian #9073 who is now living in Melbourne reported that he had made a presentation on the Wellington Amateur Radio Club's former Quartz Hill station, ZL6QH at the Central Victoria Radio Fest. A copy of this interesting PowerPoint presentation can be seen at

[http://www.fistsdownunder.org/-%20Additions/zl6qh%20presentation`](http://www.fistsdownunder.org/-%20Additions/zl6qh%20presentation)



Congratulations to Brian who has just been made an honorary life member of the Wellington Amateur Radio Club. This is in recognition of the long service he has given to the club, particularly for the establishment and management of the Quartz Hill station.

ANNIVERSARY MERCHANDISE

As we advised earlier, both the UK and US FISTS Club Chapters have taken the initiative on making available souvenirs to celebrate the 25th anniversary of FISTS.

M0BPT Robert #5576 reports that the first batch of FISTS mugs has been manufactured and distributed. - See pictures at **25th Anniversary Mugs**.

There will be a second batch produced in April with the aim to dispatch them by the end of April. Be aware that if you order a mug now, it will be for one in the April batch and postage to VK/ZL/JA is approx 10.00 Pounds U.K.

Depending on the demand for the April batch, we may or may not produce a further batch mid-year. So, to be absolutely sure of getting your mug, please ensure you order in time for the April batch. Robert can be contacted at **m0bpt@yahoo.co.uk**

WZ8C-Nancy #0379 advises that there are now souvenir T-shirts and polo shirts available in a range of sizes. The prices are \$US 7.00 for the T-shirts and \$15.00 for the polo shirts. Postage to ZL/VK is \$US10.00 for one shirt and \$us 7.00 for each subsequent shirt. Nancy can be contacted at **nancy@tir.com**

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the CW contest/event offerings in March 2012 most of which will be of more interest to our northern hemisphere readers. Thanks to WA7BNM Contest Calendar **<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>**

Wake-Up! QRP Sprint	0600Z-0800 Mar 3
ARS Spartan Sprint	0200Z-0400 Mar 6
AGCW YL-CW Party	1900Z-2100 Mar 6
AWA John Rollins Memorial DX Contest	2300 Mar 7 to 2300 Mar 8 and 2300 Mar 10 to 2300 Mar 11
RSGB Commonwealth Contest - BERU	1000 Mar 10 to 1000 Mar 11
AGCW QRP Contest	1400Z-2000 Mar 10
Idaho QSO Party	1900 Mar 10 to 1900 Mar 11
SKCC Weekend Sprint	0000Z-2400 Mar 11
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400 Mar 14 and 1900Z-2000 Mar 14 and 0300Z-0400 Mar 15
RSGB 80m Club Championship CW	2000Z-2130 Mar 14
Russian DX Contest	1200 Mar 17 to 1200 Mar 18
AGCW VHF/UHF Contest	1400Z-1659 Mar 17 (144) and 1700Z-1759 Mar 17 (432)
Virginia QSO Party	1400 Mar 17 to 0200 Mar 18 and 1200Z-2400 Mar 18
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest	0100Z-0300 Mar 19
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0030Z-0230 Mar 22
SKCC Sprint	0000Z-0200 Mar 28
CWops Mini-CWT Test	1300Z-1400 Mar 28 and 1900Z-2000 Mar 28 and 0300Z-0400 Mar 29

TRAWLING THE WEB

ZL1CDX-Turner #9048 and **David VK3DB #3756** spotted this oddity -
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mEz_hcYumQI

M0HJA-Billy spotted this site of interest to key enthusiasts: **<http://www.goofus.org/kk4dw.html#directory>**

ZL2DW David, searching the East Anglia University film archives found this fascinating film about Wartime Radio Interception -
<http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/5108>

FROM OUR MAILBOX – THE SEQUEL

Readers will recall the item about the Californian Brighter Futures Charter School in last Month's *Fists Down Under*. This "feel good" story has an interesting and weird follow-up.

Ralph ZL2AOH thought that it would be a nice gesture to send some information about New Zealand to the children of Miss Cassandra Smith's class. He emailed asking how many children were in the class and the postal address of the school. After a few days without a reply and a follow-up email he started investigating the situation. There is a very comprehensive nicely illustrated web site about the school and the school community. However it did not give the location. The "contact us" form provided, somehow failed to forward. Ralph looked for the school on the California State schools web site, but Bright Futures didn't appear. An inquiry to the administrator of the list confirmed this.

A Google search revealed a listing from a blogger that is worth reading - <http://mr-pandakun.livejournal.com/> The blogger reported that another organisation had received an almost identically worded letter from Miss Smith on another topic. This came to the same conclusion that we had; that the whole business is a fiction. Goodness knows what purpose this elaborate deception is supposed to achieve. Someone has gone to a lot of trouble and expense setting up the web site and email address, researching the topics and sending out the emails to the various organisations. There was no request for (and certainly no parting with) money so apart from our feeling foolish at being hoaxed we don't think any damage has been done. We wonder how many other organisations have been affected?

RMS TITANIC 1912 – 2012

As reported last month, a lot of effort by radio amateurs worldwide is going into commemorating the Titanic disaster. UK FISTS has organized the TITANIC 24 hour Sprint on Sunday 15 April 2012 0000-2359 UTC and Members and the Redcliffe & Distract ARC are planning a special event station in Brisbane. We will repeat the event's details in next month's *FISTS Down Under*. We trust that all of our members will participate in some of the day's on-air activities. Those wishing to operate using the FISTS Special Calls please contact Ralph (for ZL6FF) and Chris (for VK2FDU) respectively as soon as possible. It would be nice to have 24 hour schedules for both calls.

VK4BCM-Bevan #9043 reports on developments on the Brisbane special events station.

Application has been made for the special event call sign **VI4MGY**

A team of guys at Redcliffe Radio Club is being rallied to visit the Southbank site to ascertain logistics. They have already compiled a list of equipment they consider necessary. That is all actually at the moment.

The support we are getting internationally and around the country is wonderful. It looks like it is to be a memorable day. We need to decide on an identifier. For what it is worth I suggest TC being for "Titanic Centenary".

We just need the word to be spread where ever we can. I trust the FISTS organisation is promoting this around the globe.

Last Monday was "World Radio Day". I managed to get 5 minutes on ABC radio about some old radio broadcasting valves we have in our museum c.1925. I also managed to squeeze in info about the contest, Marconi, amateur radio and the FISTS Club. This triggered a 12 minute live interview on site at the museum later in the day which was very rewarding.

RE: OPERATING AWAY FROM HOME BY ZL2AOH RALPH #1073 – ANOTHER MAN'S VIEW

I read with interest Ralph's article sharing his experience of setting up a transmitting station 7J5AAN during 1995. Whilst my definition of "working away from home" differs greatly from Ralph's insofar as he had the politics of another country to contend with, I just wanted to work a portable station 10 kms up the road.

So what is the best way of setting up a portable station? What is the best equipment to use? Is it better to work QRP or the full 100 watts? Should one use a "quick to erect antenna" or spend more time erecting a decent wire antenna such as a G5RV? Should one use a matching unit? What happens if the band of choice is dead? What key or paddle to use? What power supply to take along? If you have pondered any of the above questions before setting up a portable station, then perhaps this may be of interest to you.

I will start off by saying that I don't like to lug around a lot of weight, hence I will always opt for a QRP station. Secondly, I want to use the smallest lightest power supply that will give me at least 4 hours of fun. Therefore my rig must be mean on current usage. The rig must be of solid design and preferably have a built-in tuner. The antenna must be quick to erect, must be multiband so that if one band is dead, there are other bands that I can use. Whilst I normally use a Vibroplex paddle, I prefer to go for a smaller unit and hence use a Palm Mini Paddle. Whilst I love the Elecraft K1 and K2 QRP rigs, I have found that the convenience of having a sturdy rig

such as the Icom 703+ is a good idea as I would hate to subject my K2 to any outdoor abuse. If truth be told, I would like to use the K2 as it is the rig of my daily operation and know its menus etc, I use the IC703+ as otherwise I would have no justification for having bought it!



Icom 703+

The first thing that I do is to explore possible sites for operation. Top of hills or close to the sea? In my experience I have found that I get better luck operating close to the sea than I do when up in the mountains. I have no firm scientific basis for saying this other than what has worked for me in the past. I like to work from a sturdy table and seat rather than lug along a table and chair. Luckily in the Coromandel where I live, lovely sturdy picnic tables with benches have been provided at many beautiful spots near the sea. I look for a spot that would have some shade if needed as well as some trees in the vicinity to hook my antenna up on to. I do this as a pre plan so that I don't have to faff around with last minute hitches on the day of operation. I also take into consideration the proximity of power lines as I will be throwing a wire into the air and don't trust my aim. (My aim is great, but it is just that the weighted line does not always go where I want it to go.....)



Tairua Estuary showing vertical pole and wire to tree in background.

Let's start off with the antenna. As I said earlier, I prefer to use a multiband antenna and have a tuner to do the work for me. I have experimented with many different antennas for portable operation including half size G5RV in inverted vee formation, half size Carolina Windom antennas in inverted Vee formation, Buddipole De Luxe in various shapes, ATX Walkabout antennas, Hustler coil and whip antennas, Icom AH703, Miracle Whip etc etc, but the simplest and quickest to put up is what works for me. I don't want to waste a lot of my transmitting time trying to get a dipole into a branch or trying to fine tune a Buddipole with an antenna analyser. Therefore I go with a long wire. What I do is the following;



Method of clamping pole to table

I use an extendable paint pole for the start of my antenna. It is about 1.7 metres long when collapsed and must extend to about double that length - about 3.4 metres high. Seeing as the picnic tables that are scattered around our peninsula are very sturdy, I have made up a type of clamp fixture that secures the paint pole to the table whilst resting its base on the bench seat. The seat is already about half a metre high, so now I have a height of nearly 4 metres off the ground. I had started off using a length of insulated wire about 15 metres long which tuned up nicely on most bands except the 30 m band, so I added a few more metres and it now tunes up on all bands. Here's how I go about putting up the antenna. (It won't tune up on 160m but it is not a band that I would use for portable use.)

I use a fishing weight tied on to some soft thin nylon type rope. (I use the word nylon loosely as it may well be polypropylene or similar.) I throw the weight underarm to a point up the tree. I attach the insulated antenna wire to the other end of the rope, and pull it via the weighted end of the rope. The OTHER end of the insulated wire, I attach to my unun and feed it up the paint pole to the top. I hold it in position with some cheap plastic clamps but you can use insulating tape or whatever. The wire then slopes towards the tree. I tie the weighted end to a branch on the tree in order to anchor it and keep the wire fairly tight.



Some time ago I read an article on using an unun as opposed to a balun for a long wire. I built it using the plans of KC8AON's QRP projects. I mounted it in a plastic box and used loudspeaker spring loaded connections for attaching the antenna and counterpoises.



The counterpoises are just insulated wire cut to approximately a quarter wavelength on all the bands. The longest being 20 metres long for the 80 m band and the shortest being 2.5 metres long for the 10m band. I bound them together so that they don't get tangled up and soldered them all together at one point for inserting into the unun box. The counterpoises I lie along the ground in a straight line in such a way that they won't trip up any visitors.



The power supply. I had always used 12 volt 7 Amp Hour batteries in the past as they were easy to obtain. This is fine if you plan on using the radios full potential of 10 watts. However I still have my original Icom

BP228 Ni-Cad battery which puts out 9.6 Volts and is fine for 5 watts output. Just bye the bye, the battery is one that I bought in about 2004 and still performs well. I have fitted Anderson Power Poles to all of my radio and power source equipment making it easy to change from one power source to another.



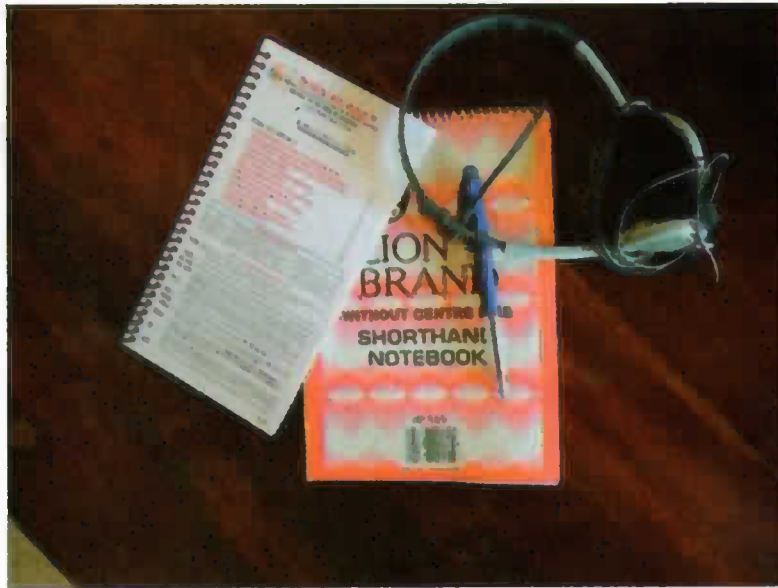
I mentioned the Palm mini paddle earlier. However if my call is answered by a straight key, I like to also answer with a straight key. I have a Jardillier key that was used by the South African army. It is very lightweight and has a nice "give" in its movement. It does mean a quick plug change at the rear of the rig and a quick menu change, but having a paddle and a straight key is just my personal choice.



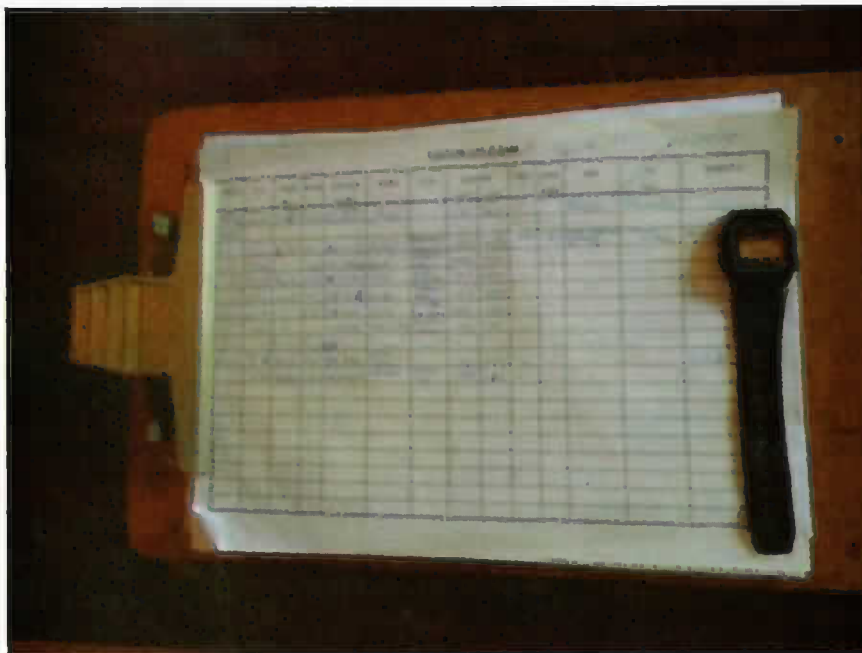
Having passed my 65th birthday, I like to make a list of things to take along with me so as not to arrive and find I have left my short length of RG58 at home. I suggest you do the same regardless of age..... I have made up

a few sheets of a log book from a spreadsheet for my portable operations. This I keep on a clipboard with an old LCD watch attached. The watch is set for UTC time and date.

I like to use earphones when operating portable. I use a pair of cheapies that are obtainable at any Dick Smith outlet.



As the Icom 703+ is not my normal rig, I find that the menu's are a bit confusing if only using the rig occasionally. Therefore the Nifty Mini Manual is a handy thing to have when out in the field.



Lastly don't forget the logbook complete with old watch set on UTC date and time!

For me, little beats the fun of working outdoors in paradise Coromandel with a quick to erect antenna, 5 watts in hand and a decent paddle or key to make that DX contact.

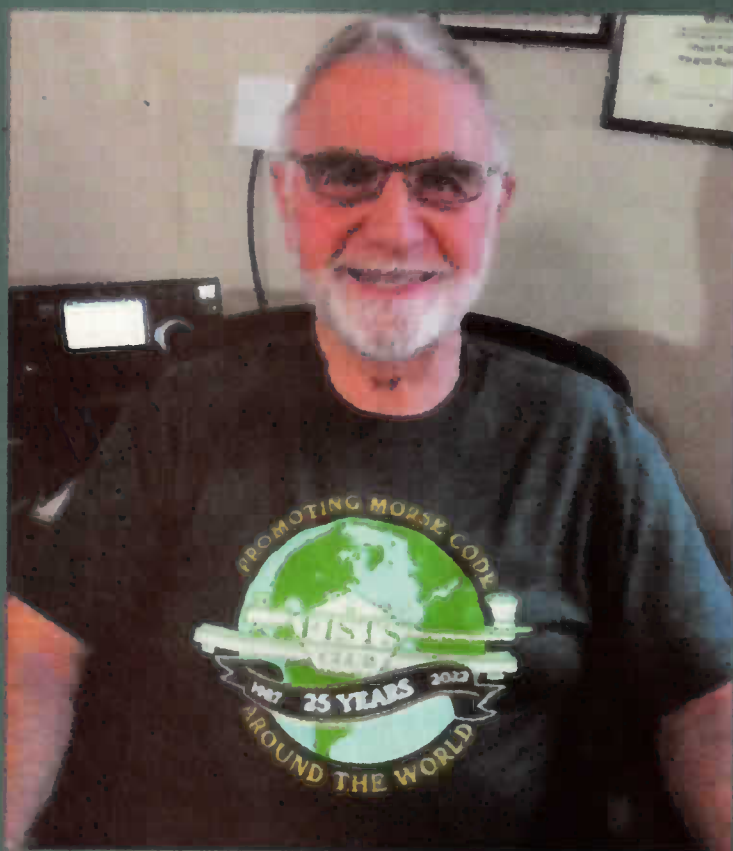
Enjoy your qrp/p De ZL2AIM

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Steve, W7VI, looking good in his FISTS commemorative 25th Anniversary shirt!

In This Issue: **iPhone Apps for** **learning CW** **Operating from** **the Queen Mary** **News from the** **Down Under** **Chapter**

Please look at the renewal date on your mailing label and renew so you can proudly say you are a member in good standing! To renew, please send \$15/year to FISTS, PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440 or if you have Paypal you can send it to fists@tir.com

If you are 80 or older, or under 18, renewals are free but they are NOT automatic. You have to let us know you are still interested in continuing your membership. Drop Nancy WZ8C a note at PO Box 47, Hadley MI or email at nancy@tir.com or call the phone number on the masthead of the newsletter.