

# The KeyNote



Newsletter of the Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club—The International Morse Preservation Society  
Issue 2, 2023

## Morse Code: Practical Applications Today

Bryan Bergeron

Last week I received an email from Daniel, an 11th grader who asked for help with writing a paper on the practical application of Morse Code today. My knee-jerk response was simply Ham Radio, where many practitioners (myself included) enjoy Morse Code as a sort of sub-hobby, separate from setting up a rig, antenna, and circuit design and building. But then, several hours after my hasty response, several additional applications came to mind, namely:

**Signaling:** Morse code is still used as a distress signaling method in search and rescue operations. Although I haven't seen the equivalent of the original Radio Shack flashlight with built-in signaling button for Morse Code, flashlights and headlights are routinely used in emergency situations where other forms of communications are damaged, dead, or otherwise unavailable. Think hiking and rock climbing or sea kayaking.

**Accessibility:** Morse code can still be used as a communication method for people with disabilities, especially those who are deaf, blind or have limited mobility. By using a system that translates Morse code into text or speech, individuals with disabilities can communicate with each other and perhaps their care providers.

I'm sure there are other practical applications of Morse Code, including simply exercising your

mind. If you've discovered or developed another practical application for Morse Code, please let me and the other readers know.

73, Bryan, NU1N



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**"When you've worked a FISTS, you've worked a friend."**

# INFORMATION PAGE

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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 yield the answer, but your best bet is to ask a FISTS volunteer or look in the reference issue. Several volunteer contacts and/or email addresses have changed from the last reference issue of *The KeyNote*. Please make note of the following listings.

When emailing a volunteer please put the word FISTS in the title of your email. This will help the volunteer recognize that your email is important and not spam.

## Awards and Certificates

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, [awards@fistsna.org](mailto:awards@fistsna.org)  
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

## Club Call, KN0WCW

“Vacant”

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, [store@fistsna.org](mailto:store@fistsna.org)

## Membership Questions; Renewals; Call Changes; Name, Mailing, and Email Address Changes

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, [membership@fistsna.org](mailto:membership@fistsna.org)  
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

## FISTS Store Manager

Joe Falcone, N8TI, [store@fistsna.org](mailto:store@fistsna.org)  
9880 Musch Road, Brighton, MI 48116

## Activities Manager

“Vacant”

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, [store@fistsna.org](mailto:store@fistsna.org)

## Website Changes (including getting your personal or club web page linked)

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, [webmaster@fistsna.org](mailto:webmaster@fistsna.org)  
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

## Code Buddy Volunteers and Buddies

<http://www.fistsna.org/codebuddy.php>

## FISTS Sprints

### Ashley Lambe, KX4ASH

E-logs to [sprintlogs@fistsna.org](mailto:sprintlogs@fistsna.org)

Mail Logs to: FISTS Sprint Logs

4305 Roundwood Ct.

Indian Trail, NC 28079

## Get Your Feet Wet Activity Day/G3ZQS Memorial

### Straight Key Contest

“Vacant”

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, [store@fistsna.org](mailto:store@fistsna.org)

## The KeyNote Newsletter

Bryan Bergeron, NU1N, [keynote@fistsna.org](mailto:keynote@fistsna.org)

**We need articles and reviews for  
*The KeyNote!***

**NOTE: Image files need to be high resolution  
JPGs (at least 1000 pixels wide).**

**Send your Word or text files to  
[keynote@fistsna.org](mailto:keynote@fistsna.org)**

## The KeyNote

The Newsletter of the Americas Chapter of FISTS

Issue 2, 2023

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Send articles to:

[keynote@fistsna.org](mailto:keynote@fistsna.org)

Production: Sandra Lindemann

## President's Message

By Joe Falcone, N8TI

Do you want to have some fun? Then get a QCX Mini transceiver, a key, headphones, battery and some wire and head outside to work some QRP CW.

A few months ago, I received, as a gift from my family, a QCX Mini transceiver. This is a single band CW transceiver that you can hold in your hand. It is about the size of a pack of cigarettes. (Goggle "QCX Mini" and get all the details.) With the enclosure, it costs about \$130 U.S., assembled. The cost is around \$80 U.S., if you want to build it yourself.

The transceiver is made by QRP Labs out of Germany. Get this: It is a single band, CW transceiver, (HF bands 160, 80, 60, 40, 30, 20 or 17m bands). It has rotary encoder synthesized tuning, VFO A/B/Split, Iambic keyer, CW decoder, memory keyer and a bunch more. The case is really heavy duty and made of aluminum. There is none of that plastic stuff here.

The transceiver puts out about 5 watts, depending on the power supply. There is no power adjustment; you have to lower the voltage to bring it down.

Now, in life, there are two things that really make me happy. The first is those little balsa wood airplanes that you used to get for 10 cents back in the fifties. I think they cost \$2.00 nowadays. Those things are just a blast for throwing around the office for a few minutes. There is absolutely nothing about them that relates to radio, but they are a lot of fun.

The second thing that makes me happy is a simple (or relatively simple), QRP radio. You get one of these things, grab the accessories you need, (that you already most likely have), get some wire and go! If you have a little antenna tuner, that is really nice because you don't have to tune your antenna. I like to use an end fed random wire, say either 21 or 29 feet long, attached to an antenna tuner or an unun, either 4:1 or 9:1. My QRP antenna tuner, a LDG Z-817, will tune anything, with or without an unun, and the unun will get the match well enough. Alternatively, just get some speaker wire, split it apart for the length you need on the band you want and make a dipole, using the unsplit portion of the speaker wire as a feedline. That will work as a balanced feed line at about 100 ohms. I don't understand why more people don't use speaker wire as a feedline. It acts as a balanced line. By the way, until relatively recently, I didn't understand why coax is called "unbalanced line." The reason is that the signal is transmitted one way through the center conductor, but with the shield, the RF goes up the inside of the coax shield and down the outside of the shield, thus having three paths for the RF and thus "unbalanced." At least that is what I understand. So, with speaker wire or any "balanced line," you don't have that third pathway and somehow you end up with very little loss of signal regardless of the SWR on the line. Don't ask me how that works, but apparently it does.

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Production: Sandra Lindemann

## President's Message (continued)

Anyway, where were we? Oh yes, QRP radios (second only to balsa wood airplanes), make me happy. This is because it is such fun to get outside, or even inside, hook up a QRP radio after making sure that everything is connected, your battery is good and things match up with the antenna and give it a go. As with any QRP operation, it is always somewhat easier to answer CQ's. But, sometimes, when people are hunting for you, your QRP signal magically increases in signal strength. For example, with Parks on the Air, operators go out all the time with QRP radios and "compromised" antenna and make contacts. I hear these QRP operators all the time coming in strong and I am often surprised to hear "72" at the end of their transmission, instead of the normal "73," with "72" meaning that he or she is running QRP. I'm surprised because the signal is so strong. Of course, propagation has a lot of do with QRP. If you catch it right, QRP is fine. If the bands are not favorable, then QRP is, how should we say, "slightly frustrating?"

But here is the point, regardless of how long it took me to get to it, a QRP radio, as the QCX Mini is, is basic CW radio. It is just you against the Radio Gods. You are armed with CW, which is the best form of transmission mode, being able to get through anything, anywhere, but you are still David against the Goliath of the weather and propagation. So, when you do make a contact that is a few thousand

miles away, all the wonder of radio comes back to you. You pump your fist in the air, yell "Yes, I got him!" and in general just get taken back to the first time you heard Morse Code on the radio and wondered if there were spies out there or some secret transmission going out. I always thought of some British guy in an attic sitting next to a beautiful French girl transmitting something out from the Iron Curtain. Obviously, France was never behind the Iron Curtain, but that is just an unimportant detail.

This is what Fists is all about: learning radio, using the code and having a lot of fun.

"72," de Joe N8TI

### What's Your Story?

Do you have a story to tell? Members would love to hear how you got interested in ham radio. Did someone mentor you as a child? Did you learn it in the service? What is an interesting experience you had using Morse Code? What is your favorite key/rig? Do you have an interesting QSO you'd like to tell members about? Or photos to share?

Send your stories/photos to [keynote@fistsna.org](mailto:keynote@fistsna.org).

## FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis K6DF

Congratulations to all who earned operating awards from Feb 16, 2023 to May 15, 2023.

Award certificates are available, from the Members Area of the Americas Chapter website, for members to download to their own computer for printing. A list of awards issued to your call/member-number is available in the Members Area. FISTS members may log into the Members Area from the following web page:

<https://fistsna.org/memlogon.php>

**New Members** can earn a free FISTS Club Key Patch for making their first 10-minute CW QSO with any FISTS member on any band, so get on the air and make your first 10-minute QSO with a FISTS member to earn your free KEY Patch!

### New Member Patches Earned:

KD0EVP Darren—QSO with KA8HFN  
KO4BGC Brent—QSO with KB1ND  
VE6VIC Victor—QSO with W7ZDX  
KB1ND Ron—QSO with KO4BGC  
WB9RAS William—QSO with WB8LZR  
K9FRO Jeff—QSO with WV3V

We have a list of new members shown elsewhere in this issue of the Keynote. Please listen for them on the bands and help them to earn their FISTS Key Patch!

Award certificates are available free to all club members, in PDF format, so get out your favorite key and get on the air. You can also use the free “Log Converter” program to track your club awards, it’s also a good general logging program as well. The author of Log Converter, Graham G3ZOD, is constantly providing updates and improvements to the program. **This program was last updated on October 13, 2022 to version**

**4.3.0. If you are using a version older than this please update your program as older versions will not work properly due to a recent server update.** This FREE software will track your FISTS awards automatically and allow you to send in your award logs to the FISTS Awards Manager at the click of a button! The best thing about it is . . . it’s FREE! Log Converter is available for download on the Americas Chapter web site. Look for the download link on the main web page just below the “Welcome New Members” list.

Be sure to check the Americas Chapter web pages for updated awards information and how to apply for them:

<https://fistsna.org/awards.php>

If you have any award questions or suggestions, send e-mail to me at:

[awards@fistsna.org](mailto:awards@fistsna.org)

My email address has changed to:

[awards@fistsna.org](mailto:awards@fistsna.org)

Wishing you good DX during 2023.

73, Dennis K6DF . . . . \_\_\_\_ (30)

### FISTS AWARDS ISSUED:

**Feb 16, 2023–May 15, 2023**

**Basic Century:** VK5GG, KB9ENS, G0OEY, IU0ITX, VA4ADM

**Silver Century:** AF5Z, G3WGE, IU0ITX, DK2LO, VA4ADM

**Gold Century:** AF5Z, G0OTT, G3XVL, W7ZDX

**Diamond Century:** IZ2FME

**1 X QRP:** G3XVL, GW0KRL

**Millionaire Award:** AF5Z, KB9ENS, G0OEY, G3WGE, VA4ADM

**2 Million Award:** AF5Z, KB9ENS, G3WGE, VA4ADM

*(continued on page 6)*

## FISTS AWARDS (continued)

**3 Million Award:** AF5Z, G0BON, IK7UKE, G3W-GE, DK2LO, VA4ADM

**4 Million Award:** G4PRL, G0OTT, VA4ADM, AF5Z

**5 and 6 Million Award:** G3XVL

**7 Million Award:** G3XVL, W7ZDX

**8 Million Award:** W7ZDX

**9 Million Award:** W7ZDX, IZ2FME

**10 Million Award:** IU0HMB

**16 Million Award:** IK0IXI

**18 and 19 Million Award:** NP3K

**Spectrum 80M:** G3XVL, IU0HMB

**Spectrum 40M:** W7ZDX, HK5NLJ

**Spectrum 15M:** W7ZDX, IU0HMB

**Spectrum 20M:** AF5Z, G3WGE

**Spectrum 10M:** IK0IXI

**Perpetual Prefix 50:** G3XVL

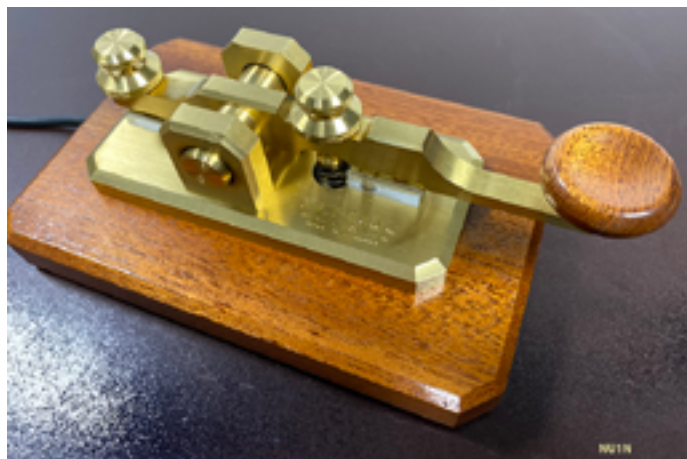
## JAN. 1, 2021 CHANGES TO AMERICAS CHAPTER MEMBERSHIPS

All Americas Chapter memberships will be dues-free.

- Expired memberships were changed to Life memberships on Jan 1, 2021.
- Current paid memberships that expired were changed to Life memberships on their expiration date.
- All New Memberships received since April 2, 2020 are entered as Life memberships.

Details about printed/mailed newsletter subscriptions appeared in Issue #4, 2020 of the *KeyNote*, which is available on the FISTS website at:

[www.fistsna.org/publickeynotes.php](http://www.fistsna.org/publickeynotes.php)



Schurr handmade straight key from Germany.  
Courtesy NU1N.

# WELCOME NEW FISTS AMERICAS CHAPTER MEMBERS

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C	Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
AI7PT	22007	Frank	ID	KC7UNO	22043	Danny	OR
AG6VT	22008	Erik	CA	W7FYR	22044	Tom	UT
K4WNY	22009	Ron	TN	LU5BE	22045	Hoc	DX
K6WRW	22010	Randy	CA	N9EEE	22046	Dick	WI
K2CMC	22011	Charles	FL	VO1BQ	22047	Joe	NL
W9ST	22012	Gary	IN	KQ4HEB	22048	Sylvester	GA
KM3K	22013	Jerry	PA	W1RBG	22049	Rose	MA
VE2OGU	22014	Roger	QC	KC1FUU	22050	Jon	RI
KK4LW	22015	Richard	KY	W3JZ	22051	Shawn	PA
K9FRO	22016	Jeff	IN	KC2PSA	22052	Ron	NY
W3AZZ	22017	Greg	NJ	VE3MRX	22053	Bill	ON
KI7KOH	22018	Gene	ID	AE7AP	22054	Robert	MT
KB2ZHB	22019	Dan	NY	KB9YYM	22055	David	IN
KA3WGF	22020	Jimmy	PA	KC3TWY	22056	Mahlon	PA
NB7N	22021	Bryan	OR	XE2NI	22057	Ruben	DX
K4VAX	22022	Jasper	SC	W4EDJ	22058	Tracy	GA
KA1VHF	22023	Becky	ME	KT0T	22059	Graham	CO
W4CLW	22024	Charles	AL	WB4QOJ	22060	Lee	GA
KE7RRO	22025	Mike	OR	K8OCN	22061	Delbert	MI
AK1VT	22026	David	VT	N2QM	22062	Tim	NY
N3XC	22027	Thomas	PA	K3CDY	22063	Bill	CO
KC3VPJ	22028	Steve	PA	N0ORF	22064	Brian	NE
KO4DUQ	22029	Mark	AL	N4REE	22065	Robert	FL
KC5SKY	22030	Sharron	OK	WT2X	22066	Doug	NY
K5BVM	22031	Michael	NM	W5MTN	22067	Todd	AZ
KD5EDV	22032	Mark	MS	AD8IO	22068	Mark	OH
KB7DYP	22033	Kevin	WA	KF0GVX	22069	Ryan	NE
KL1FF	22034	Randy	AK	AE0UO	22070	Cena	MN
K5BDH	22035	Brad	TX	KO4EOD	22071	David	FL
KK6ITT	22036	Dave	CA	W6EFI	22072	Connie	CA
N2IT	22037	Ken	NY	KK4HMQ	22073	Jona	TX
KG5OA	22038	Doug	TX	WB5ORA	22074	Kenneth	TX
KD0OCZ	22039	Brice	KS	KK7MNH	22075	Julian	OR
AD6AE	22040	David	CA	NN5SD	22076	Club	SD
VE1CNS	22041	Bryne	NS	AB8YZ	22077	JoAnn	TX
KO4VRM	22042	Jerry	NC	W2NF	22078	Richard	NY

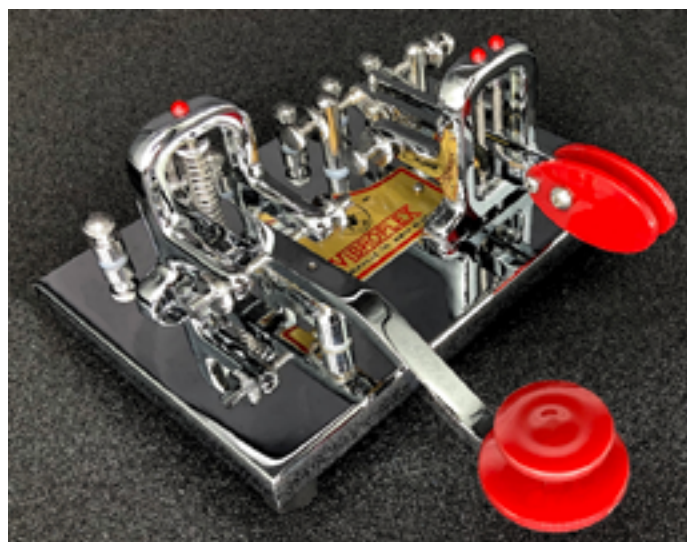
## Silent Key List

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
G4OIV	551	Don	DX
KA3FHV	4393	Jeff	PA
OK1KW	4827	Milan	DX
K5BQ	8055	Dale	TX
KB2TRZ	8065	Rick	NY
K6FFY	8081	Nick	WA
K8UFO	8093	Jeff	WV
N2OSL	8102	James	NY
WD9CVX	10479	Leonard	IN
W0IKE	15491	Bill	MN
G0PHP	16673	Kevin	DX
G3GJW	18408	Smudge	DX
W4KIK	21500	Charles	OH



## Get More Involved in FISTS-NA!

1. Enter one of the quarterly Sprints. If you are a new ham, it is a great way to practice your Morse Code. You can get on the air, meet other club members, and have some fun!
2. Submit an article, or articles, for the newsletter. We welcome all articles, photos, and experience levels. You don't have to be the great American novelist! Articles are lightly edited for typos and grammar.
3. Earn a free FISTS Club Key Patch when you make your first 10-minute CW QSO with any FISTS member on any band.
4. Volunteer! We are currently in need of an Activities Manager.
5. Submit suggestions about how FISTS-NA can be more relevant in 2021 and beyond.



Vibroplex dual keyer.  
Courtesy NU1N.



# SPRINT INFORMATION

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Sprints will be held eight times throughout the year on the second Saturday and third Sunday in each of the following months: Feb., May, Aug, and Nov. Sprints will now run over a 24-hour period.

## OBJECTIVE:

To exchange specified information with as many FISTS members as possible using Morse Code only, and within the time frame stipulated. Sprints are a great opportunity for our newer members to get on the air, meet other club members, and have some fun! We encourage more experienced operators to please QRS to match the other operator's speed.

## PARTICIPANTS:

Any properly licensed amateur radio operator, FISTS member or non-member is invited to take part in the contest. At least one of the two stations in each QSO must be a FISTS member.

## DATES AND TIMES:

**SUMMER SATURDAY SPRINT:** from 0000 UTC to 2359 UTC on second Saturday in August.

**SUMMER SUNDAY SPRINT:** from 0000 UTC to 2359 UTC on third Sunday in August.

## BANDS:

Operation is limited to the following amateur bands: 3.5, 7, 14, 21, and 28 MHz amateur bands. Look for other participants around the FISTS frequencies: 3558, 7058, 14058, 21058, and 28058 kHz. You may NOT work the same station more than once.

## ENTRY CLASSES:

There are three entry classes: QRO, QRP, and Club.

1. **QRO:** Over 5 watts to legal limit.
2. **QRP:** 5 watts output power or less.
3. **Club:** (regardless of power).

Entry class **MUST** be shown on logs to be considered for entry in a particular class, or will be assumed QRO. An entry must be ONE class only, no combination of classes allowed.

## EXCHANGE:

The following information must be exchanged by both stations and shown in your log for each QSO to count as a valid QSO:

*FISTS members:* RST, S/P/C, first name, FISTS number. *Non-FISTS members:* RST, S/P/C, first name. (Enter "0" Zero if your logging program requires a power entry for non-members.) S/P/C = U.S. State/Canadian Province/DXCC Country

## DX COUNTRY STATUS:

U.S. states and Canadian provinces are those states and provinces that are contiguous and found within the North American continent. DX are those entities listed in the current ARRL DXCC publication, other than the above.

## MULTIPLIERS:

Each U.S. state (50) and Canadian province (13) counts as 1 multiplier. Count each only once, no matter how many times worked. Each DXCC country counts as 1 multiplier. Count each only once, no matter how many times worked. Canada and the USA do not count as DX multipliers

## BONUS POINTS:

If the submitted Sprint log has a total of 25 or more listed QSO's, a bonus of 250 points will be added to the final calculated score.

## SCORING:

Each QSO with a FISTS member: 5 QSO points. Each QSO with a non-FISTS member: 2 QSO points. Final score is total QSO points times the number of multipliers worked, then Bonus points are added.

## CERTIFICATES:

Certificates will be awarded to the first, second, and third place finishers in each Sprint for each Entry Class. End-of-Year Certificates will be awarded **ONLY** to FISTS members with the highest cumulative point totals in the QRO, QRP and Club categories for all Sprints at the end of the year. Certificate will be sent to the winners via email in PDF format.

*(continued on page 10)*

## New Sprint Information (continued)

### LOG SUBMISSIONS:

All log entries must be received within 7 days after the Sprint to be considered valid. Logs not sent to the proper address will not be considered for entry. The logs will be spot-checked for accuracy and correct scoring procedures. All logs **MUST** contain the following information for entry:

1. Your name, call sign, mailing address, and FISTS Number if a member.
2. Club name and call sign if entry is for a club station.
3. Sprint worked—Date of the Sprint worked.
4. Entry class—QRO, QRP, or Club.
5. Number of FISTS members worked.
6. Number of non-FISTS worked.
7. FISTS number for FISTS QSOs.
8. List of multipliers.
9. Your claimed score.

An entry form is available here and on the FISTS website at:

[https://fistsna.org/pdffdocs/sprint\\_entry\\_form\\_rev2.pdf](https://fistsna.org/pdffdocs/sprint_entry_form_rev2.pdf)

### ELECTRONIC LOGS:

We will accept electronic logs in standard Cabrillo or ASCII Text File format. If you're not sure about your format, please contact the Sprint Manager before the contest entry deadline. E-logs are sent to:

[sprintlogs@fistsna.org](mailto:sprintlogs@fistsna.org) ONLY.

### PAPER LOGS:

Send log and entry form to: FISTS Sprint Log, 4305 Indian Trail Ct., NC 28079.

## QRO Category

Spring Sunday Sprint Results for May 21, 2023 ... no logs were received for the Saturday Sprint May 13th.

Call	Name	State	Fists #	Mem	Non-Mem	Points	Mults	Score
K6DF	Dennis	CA	3076	10	2	54	8	432
WB9HFK	Mark	IL	7606	8	2	44	6	264
KE4QZB	Brian	NC	1934	2	2	14	4	56
KX4ASH	Ashley	NC	21671	1	0	5	1	5

## SOAPBOX... Call

*K6DF—Good Sprint, although lots of QSB on 20, signals up and down within seconds. Still good fun, thanks to all stations contacted. 73 Dennis K6DF*

*KE4QZB—Was cool working California on 20m! Despite the poor conditions, was still a fun contest!! Glad we made it home for the last hour of the Sprint.*

*KX4ASH—Was making dinner but jumped on quickly to get my dear friend Dennis, K6DF in my log after my husband Brian did! Was really excited to hear Dennis booming in all the way from CA, even though conditions weren't very favorable.*

Looking forward to the Summer Sprints!

73, Ashley KX4ASH

# FISTS SPRINT ENTRY FORM

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Check Sprint Entered: Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday \_\_\_\_\_ Sprint Date \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Class: QRO \_\_\_\_\_ QRP \_\_\_\_\_ FISTS Club \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_ FISTS # \_\_\_\_\_ Non Member \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

If Club, Club Name, Call \_\_\_\_\_ FISTS Nr. \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

SCORING:    Number of FISTS member QSOs:        \_\_\_\_\_ × 5 = Total [A] \_\_\_\_\_  
                  Number of Non-FISTS QSOs:        \_\_\_\_\_ × 2 = Total [B] \_\_\_\_\_  
                  Number of multipliers worked:                = Total [C] \_\_\_\_\_

Add [A] to [B] and multiply by [C] to get your TOTAL CLAIMED SCORE = \_\_\_\_\_

----- **CIRCLE WORKED MULTIPLIERS** -----

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	VE	DX
CT	NY	DE	AL	AR	CA	AZ	MI	IL	CO	NB	NF/LB
MA	NJ	MD	FL	LA		ID	OH	IN	IA	NS	NT
ME		PA	GA	MS		MT	WV	WI	KS	PE	YK
NH			KY	NM		NV			MN	QC	BC
RI			NC	OK		OR			MO	ON	
VT			SC	TX		UT			NE	MB	
			TN			WA			ND	SK	
			VA			WY			SD	AB	
						AK					

Please enclose paper logs ONLY, photos, comments, ideas, etc., with your entry and mail promptly to:

**FISTS Sprint Logs**  
 4305 Roundwood Ct.  
 Indian Trail, NC 28079

Statement: "I have observed all FISTS Sprint competition rules as well as all regulations for Amateur Radio in my country. My report is correct and true to the best of my knowledge. I agree to be bound by the decisions of the FISTS Awards Committee."

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Call sign \_\_\_\_\_

SOAPBOX COMMENTS: