The KeyNote



Newsletter of the Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club—The International Morse Preservation Society Issue 3, 2024

Developing a Good Ear Takes Time Bryan Bergeron

I just finished one of those made for streaming movies. It involved a chunk of the moon heading toward earth, the International Space Station, a pair of scientists and a makeshift communications system that included one of the scientists using Morse Code over a smart watch. In short, with 17 minutes before the end of the world, the scientists have to split up. The scientist using Morse Code had to teach the others Morse Code in about 3 minutes in order to save the world.

I won't spoil the movie for you by mentioning the title, but for me, in addition to saving the world with a smart watch and Morse Code

didn't add much to the credibility of the story. We all know that developing a good ear—or a good hand—takes time. There's a common reference to the 10,000 hours required to become an expert at anything, but that probably represents the higher end of the experience required.

For me, developing the confidence to conduct a QSO with modest QRM and at a reasonable speed spanned my time as a Novice. Of course, part of that time was devoted to developing a reasonably good fist.

What was your experience developing your Morse Code chops? Were you a natural or did you have to devote hours and hours to practice?

73, Bryan, NU1N



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.

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INFORMATION PAGE

When you have a question about FISTS, go to the source for the correct answer. Posting a question on a chat room or email reflector may 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, <u>awards@fistsna.org</u> 4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

Club Call, KN0WCW

"Vacant"

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org

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

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, membership@fistsna.org 4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

FISTS Store Manager

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org 9880 Musch Road, Brighton, MI 48116

Activities Manager

"Vacant"

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org

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

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, 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 Mail Logs to: FISTS Sprint Logs 4305 Roundwood Ct. Indian Trail, NC 28079

The KeyNote Newsletter

Bryan Bergeron, NU1N, 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

The KeyNote

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Send articles to: Production: Sandra Lindemann

keynote@fistsna.org



President's message

By Joe Falcone, N8TI

Sunspots, sunspots! Most of the predictions for this cycle of sunspots predicted cycle 25, the one we are in now, was going to be a dud, much like cycle 24. However, the sun has surprised a lot of people and is roaring along, producing a high number of sunspots. For example, the "granddaddy" of all sunspot cycles, at least in the modern era was cycle 19, peaking around the year 1959. It hit 332 or so sunspots at its peak. So far, our cycle has hit about 233, the last I checked. It goes up and down. 233 might not seem like a lot, but cycle 24 did not go over 150, the best I can see. I am getting my information from spaceweatherlive. com. (I see different numbers on different sites. depending the way the sunspot activity is measured, but the comparison is about right.) The point is that the high sunspots means that the 10 meter band will open a lot more and, unfortunately when the sun is active, there are a lot of solar storms. Lately, there have been a lot of "dead bands" at times because of solar storms.

As a matter of fact, at my home West of Detroit, Michigan, I saw the Northern Lights for the first time a few months ago. So, Mr. Sun is very active.

During a good sunspot cycle, CW really shows its worth. A small amount of power output can reach around the world and when bands are dead to SSB, CW seems to come through.

These are the days when it is worth getting up at 5:00 a.m. and trying to catch Australia

coming through. There is a lot of DX available. When I started in Ham Radio, my son had just been born. As a result, I would be up in the middle of the night and was working all over the world. What really helped me was to check the spots on the various DX Clusters and see when the people in my call area were spotting the various countries. It was then just a matter of being on the radio at the right time on the right frequency. It was neat to be up in the middle of the night, tuning the dial, trying to pick up the DX. The DX stations seemed to be on the Extra portion of the bands, so it helped to have an Extra Class license. Of course, there were, and still are, a lot of tricks you would use to be heard. Most of the "tricks" involved trying to predict where the DX station was going to listen as most of them worked split frequencies.

Often times, when things were quiet on the bands, I would hear a station in Europe calling CQ and we would have a longer chat. On several occasions, those contact lead to us writing letters back and forth to each other and exchanging small radio related gifts. It was very interesting having a "friend" in a foreign country. Now, of course, you can get on the internet and find a webcam that shows the daily lives of someone living in Italy or Iceland, but back then, pre-internet, the everyday world of a foreign citizen was still a mystery. Ham radio would open the door to those strange worlds.

It is still wonderful to meet people through Ham Radio, foreign and domestic. Ham Radio

(continued on page 5)

FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis K6DF

Congratulations to all who earned operating awards from Apr 27, 2024 to Aug 14, 2024.

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:

KD6XU Barry—QSO with K6DF KY4CQ Brady—QSO with W4CMG KL3NJ Alan—QSO with W6RKE

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 July 29, 2024 to version 4.7.3. If you are using a version older than this please

update your program as older versions will not work properly due to recent server updates.

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://www.fistsna.org/awards.html

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

awards@fistsna.org

Wishing you good DX during 2024. 73, Dennis K6DF ... (30)

FISTS AWARDS ISSUED: Apr 26, 2024–Aug 14, 2024

Basic Century: G6HH, M0MZB, VA3LMI,

SV8SXF, DL6NAN

Silver Century: G4YVM, M0MZB, G0FOZ

Gold Century: W8SCS

Millionaire Award: M0MZB, M0SDB

2 Million Award: G4CLB, M0MZB, M0SDB

3 Million Award: M0MZB

4 Million Award: IU0ITX, M0KTZ

5 Million Award: M0KTZ

7 & 8 Million Award: W8SCS

9 Million Award: G0ILN, W8SCS

13 Million Award: I5ECW, VA4ADM

(continued on page 5)

President's message (continued)

operators are mostly normal, everyday people. But, their lives are interesting and they are friendly people. CW operators, I believe, are the friendliest. We have to have great imaginations to picture the person on the other end of the QSO. We get a lot of information from just how an operator's keying comes across. Unless we having a computer pulling up the licensee information, we don't know if the person we are talking to is a man or woman, young or old, or an old timer or a novice.

What is really interesting is how you can communicate with people who are running portable stations. It is nice to have a ragchew with someone who is at a campground or even in their back yard. They are usually pretty excited to have contacted someone given that the portable station is usually using a low power and a compromised antenna.

To summarize, we are at the peak of the solar cycle and it is a pretty good cycle. Take advantage of it. See if you can work a little DX. See if you can have a nice conversation with someone in another country. Ham Radio and especially CW is fun stuff. Enjoy yourself!

73, de Joe, N8TI

FISTS AWARDS (continued)

14, 15, & 16 Million Award: VA4ADM

20 Million Award: IK0IXI 23 Million Award: NP3K

WAS Award: VA4ADM

Spectrum 20M: IU0ITX

Perpetual Prefix: G0FOZ, M0SDB, SV8SXF

Prefix 50 & 100: MØSDB, SV8SXF

Prefix 150: M0SDB

International Morse Code

On a Saturday morning, the year 1993, I tuned my Heathkit Rig to a conversation with the mode known as CW (Morse Code), one person was an OM in the state of Florida and the other person was in Japan. I listened and copied each CW operator as they communicated back and forth.

The thing about their conversation was the Japanese operator always had a noticeable pause of one to one and a half minutes between his receiving and sending response to the Florida operator. I was wondering about that and wondered why. Finally, the operator in Florida asked the Japanese operator about the delay. (Must have been receiving my telepathic question in Florida!) Ha Ha!

The Japan operator had the customary delay, then answered that he had to translate from English to Japanese and then back to English with his response! This proved to my satisfaction, Morse Code is an **International language** completed in English!!!

On the other hand, some time later, in weeks or months, I do not recall, I heard two Russian operators talking to each other, utilizing Morse code in their native language.

On a different occasion, while another Florida CW operator and I were chewing the fat, the Band started fading out and became very noisy with QRN. We kept on until we could only hear the noise coming and going, and finally signed off before we lost even that aspect of "communicating" into the ether.

And That is Why I Love CW So Much.

73, de Phillip, KJ5ZW

WELCOME NEW FISTS AMERICAS CHAPTER MEMBERS

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C	Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
WU2L	22562	Jacob	S/P/C CO	W5ETM	22602	Ed	TX
W9JOM	22563	James	IN	KJ5GOO	22603	Bill	TX
KQ4CMA	22564	Jeff	DC	N5OCT	22604	Bill	MS
VA3UZ	22565	Tim	ON	KK9T	22604	Tim	MI
KK4UTO	22566	Steve	KY	WE9F	22606	John	WI
K4MMC	22567	Club	GA	WE9F KC1TIA	22607	Mark	MA
		Bob		KOTTIA K9BMX		Peter	
KO9V	22568		CO		22608		CA
KF0PQR	22569	Jeffrey	CO	N4SC	22609	Roman	MI
KB1AWM	22570	Gregory	SC	KA8KCR	22610	Richard	FL
N6LN	22571	John	CA	N3AR	22611	Matthew	CA
KE8PX	22572	Ronald	OH	К5ОНҮ	22612	Timothy	TX
W4YDL	22573	Joe	NC	WA2FWE	22613	Thomas	NY
KK7OAX	22574	Wayne	OR	KJ5EKH	22614	Brian	OK
W3NCK	22575	Nick	DE	WU1D	22615	Arthur	AZ
KJ5DC	22576	Donald	LA	AK6FB	22616	Allen	CA
KO4BVP	22577	Richard	KY	PY1FOX	22617	Jeff	DX
AC3WM	22578	Willian	PA	K8EKO	22618	Terry	MI
KO6EPS	22579	Kris	CA	KD6HNN	22619	Kenneth	CA
KK7MPR	22580	Beau	OR	VA3CWU	22620	Paul	ON
AE6Z	22581	Chris	CA	KO6DHI	22621	Merle	CA
AI6O	22582	Ed	MO	K2HRT	22622	Bill	SC
KD9MDL	22583	William	MO	W9DWR	22623	David	IL
KF0QKG	22584	Michael	CO	KL3NJ	22624	Alan	AK
KX3Y	22585	James	AL	KH6KW	22625	Craig	HI
K4ESV	22586	Rich	FL	N1PO	22626	Joshua	FL
VE7LW	22587	Allen	BC	KA9JLA	22627	Scott	WI
W1SLM	22588	Sam	CO	PY3TX	22628	Cleber	DX
K1FJG	22589	Jay	CT	KF5MAX	22629	Nick	TX
W9NAI	22590	Daniel	IL	KD9ZHF	22630	Jason	IL
KY4CQ	22591	Brady	AL	AI7EX	22631	Matt	OR
KQ4IOI	22592	Dave	FL	W0LED	22632	Clayton	MN
W7DRK	22593	Derek	OR	KM6LBW	22633	John	CA
KC5AAV	22594	Scott	KY	W5TTA	22634	Rebecca	TX
K5VOX	22595	Anton	TX	KO0T	22635	John	MO
W2GSP	22596	Victor	VA	N6BRY	22636	Bryan	CA
W4WIL	22597	Travis	FL	N6TRC	22637	John	CA
WM0S	22598	Lyle	WV	KA8FQS	22638	John	MI
KD2ZZN	22599	Charles	NY	K5RFO	22639	Joel	LA
AD2ID	22600	Jose	NY	N3BIL	22640	Bill	FL
KK7UCA	22601	Kevin	WA				

Silent Key List

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
NS3E	909	Ed	DE
W8SYU	2091	Harold	MI
N3AO	2367	Carter	VA
W6UJX	3002	Jim	CA
N5XRD	3660	Richard	TX
W0CLS	4466	Jim	SD
KA0W	5116	Ken	IA
K0WNR	5123	Roy	IA
KB0TWL	5142	Stephen	TX
W5TVW	5144	Sandy	LA
KE7XX	5191	Tom	WA
K3NXP	5822	Bill	FL
W4EAT	6265	Carl	NC
KA1SAW	7036	Neal	MA
AF4RK	7453	John	FL
K4CMS	7496	Larry	KY
W3EOP	8162	Bob	PA
K7AAA	8185	Fred	OR
K2TTT	8207	Jay	NJ
AB8EL	8237	Don	OH
K1AVE	9438	Gene	NC
W5NW	2195	Nelson	OK
W2LN	9947	John	TX
W7IBC	10039	Albert	WA
N0RWR	12938	Donnie	IA
K5SS	13154	Dave	TX
AE7VU	17160	Bill	WA
K8DZR	18631	John	OH
W4FKM	19240	Claude	TN
W2ZMZ	19564	Cono	NJ

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



QRO Category

Summer Saturday Sprint Results for August 10, 2024.

Callsign	Name	Fists #	QTH	QSO's	Mem	Non-Mem	Points	Bonus	Multi	Score
IU3BRO	Attilio	22451	IT	40	0	40	80	250	40	3450
WB0CJB	Paul	12460	TN	19	9	10	65	0	12	780
WB9HFK	Mark	7606	IL	14	10	4	58	0	12	696
K6DF	Dennis	3076	CA	2	1	1	7	0	2	14

QRO Category—no logs received

SOAPBOX ... Call

K6DF—Lots of signals on the bands from the WAE DX Contest as well. 73 Dennis K6DF

IU3BRO—WHERE ARE THE FISTS MEMBERS? Attilio IU3BRO

QRO Category

Summer Sunday Sprint Results for August 18, 2024.

Callsign	Name	Fists #	QTH	QSO's	Mem	Non-Mem	Points	Bonus	Multi	Score
WB0CJB	Paul	12460	TN	33	19	14	123	250	17	2341
WB9HFK	Mark	7606	IL	20	9	11	67	0	12	804
K6DF	Dennis	3076	CA	11	3	8	31	0	10	310
KE4QZB	Brian	1934	NC	3	1	2	9	0	3	27
QRO Catego	ory									
KI4DEF	Kevin	10620	NC	1	1	0	5	0	1	5

SOAPBOX ... Call

KE4QZB—Hello FISTS! Enjoyed firing up my Vintage Viking Adventurer transmitter crystal controlled, with a Hallicrafters SX40 receiver. Made 3 contacts in under an hour and was pleased with the results of the new wire antenna—thanks to the XYL's help (KX4ASH) with her sharp shooting skills to get the rope over the right branch! Hope to see you all in the Fall! Thanks for the fun! Very 73, Brian

K6DF—Thanks to all for the QSO's and a fun day. 73, Dennis K6DF

KI4DEF—I was operating /p from my "backyard shack," a partially-restored 1970 VW camper, set up for the NJ QRP Skeeter Hunt. Rig was a Mountain Topper (MTR3b) powered by 8AA rechargeable batteries feeding an end-fed wire up about 30 ft in a pine tree. 72/73, Kevin KI4DEF

WB0CJB—Thanks to everyone who took the time to give me a contact. Looking forward to the future sprints and seeing more FISTS members on the air. Paul WB0CJB

73, Ashley, KX4ASH

SPRINT INFORMATION

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:

SATURDAY SPRINT: from 0000 UTC to 2359 UTC on second Saturday in Feb., May, Aug., and Nov. **SUNDAY SPRINT:** from 0000 UTC to 2359 UTC on third Sunday in Feb., May, Aug., and Nov.

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.

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/pdfdocs/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 ONLY.

PAPER LOGS:

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

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 2024 and beyond.

FISTS SPRINT ENTRY FORM

Check Sprint Entered: Saturday						Sunday Sprint Date					
Entry Class: QRO							QRP FISTS Club				
Name	Call					F	ISTS#_		Non Member		
Address											
City								State		_ Zip _	
If Club, Clu	b Name	, Call									FISTS Nr
E-mail Add	ress (op	tional) _									
SCORING: Add [A] to	Nu: Nu: [B] and	mber of mber of multiply	Non-FIS multiplion by [C] t		s: ed: ır TOTA	L CLAI	× 2 = = T MED SC	Total [I otal [C] ORE =	 		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	VE	DX
CT MA ME NH RI VT	NY NJ	DE MD PA	AL FL GA KY NC SC TN VA	AR LA MS NM OK TX	CA	AZ ID MT NV OR UT WA WY AK	MI OH WV	IL IN WI	CO IA KS MN MO NE ND SD	NB NS PE QC ON MB SK AB	NF/LB NT YK BC
	'I have o	observed is correc	all FIST	TS Sprint	FIST 430 Ind	S Sprint Lo S Round ian Trail tition rul	gs wood C1 , NC 280 les as we	t. 79 ll as all	regulatio	ons for	nptly to: Amateur Radio in my decisions of the FISTS
			ignature	2					C	all sign	
SOAPBOX			0							<i>y-0</i> **	