

“The Rag Chew”



The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club

Volume 2 “Special” Issue

February, 2013

Welcome to a special issue of “The Rag Chew.” This issue will feature collected Christmas radio goodies received this year and a look from some of those stations operating as “K3Y” event stations throughout our membership.

Many thanks to all of you who have contributed!

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De K6HTN

Here’s a unique key Kate K6HTN, used for the December SKS and found in a box of keys from an estate sale of her former code practice buddy Peter, KA6RJF. Kate didn’t say if this a right handed or left handed model!

De K8UV

K8UV Rich, got a FB Christmas gift; Rich got a refurbished Burnell telegraph sounder for Christmas. Key and sounder look and work great.

Hey Rich, I heard something about an article coming out in QST soon that will show you how to connect your “sounder” to activate when you actually transmit with your rig! Now wouldn’t that be a neat side tone for you?





De W0SZV

“As you see it all came in a nice aluminum carrying case. A FT817nd, a Z817 auto tuner, solar battery charger, wall charger and power supply, and a 102ft G5RV in a separate box. Am building another mag loop to go with this setup.”

Eldon was a “good boy” and Santa brought him a very fine Christmas gift!...ed



N5HCW's Haul!

Here are pictures of my Christmas haul. The radio is an MFJ-9200 with 20 & 40 meter plug-in modules. The key is a Whiterook pocket micro-key and the power supply is "Stealth Cam" 12v battery in a weather proof enclosure with charger. I saw a demonstration of it used as a power source for QRP field operations on YouTube. I was lucky enough to find one in a local sporting goods store. I am very pleased with the rig and am looking forward to lots of QRP operations in the New Year.

I had fun with the ARRL SKN event again this year. And though I did not make many contacts the ones I did make were fun. They were all good operators, but for me, the best fist of the event was definitely AD0AB Jim. A real pleasure to copy and a first rate Op. I am currently enjoying the K3Y event as always. Lots of good operators out there!

Clyde N5HCW SKCC #5559T

It would appear Clyde is definitely on the “Nice” list! ...ed

A Perfect Christmas/Birthday Gift!

My “Elmer”, Bob, K5DZE, introduced me to a Vibroplex Original Deluxe in 1986 when I was a novice. I was impressed with the construction and the operation of this device and used it for a few contacts but was intimidated by the speed. I got the largest weight Vibroplex had and wrapped it with solder to try and tame the beast but never really got comfortable with it and moved on to a set of Brown Brothers paddles picked up at a hamfest for \$15.00. Bob got his Vibroplex back and I pressed on with the Brown Brothers paddles and machine crafted CW. In 1999, we moved and started construction on a new house that included a hamshack. The construction was finished in 2001 but I didn’t have an antenna. I finally put up an 80 meter loop in January of 2012 and started assembling my hamshack. I got on the air in March of 2012 and immediately started participating in the SKS and WES events with a new Vibroplex straight key. I did acquire a Hi-Mound bug in August and used it for the WES Halloween bug sprint but I still had memories of that Vibroplex Original Deluxe from my novice days. I started spending free time on the “keys on ebay” link on the SKCC website specifically looking for Vibroplex bugs. I had a lot of fun looking at the condition and started trying to date each one to gauge condition vs. age. In late November, I came across an Original Deluxe in very nice condition that was manufactured in 1947. My birthday is December 22 and I was born in 1947. I thought it would be really neat to get a 65 year old bug to celebrate my 65th birthday and I was successful in winning it on Ebay. I inspected it when it arrived and then boxed it up and gave it my wife to give to me for my birthday. This article is probably about neat Christmas gifts but with a birthday on December 22, Christmas and birthday are pretty much the same thing for me.

The pictures show that it is in really nice shape for a 65 year old semi-automatic sending device. After seeing some of the ingenious methods and devices used by SKCC members to tame their bugs, I started to experiment with different things for this bug. What you see added is a 4 ½ inch piece of thick wall steel tubing with a set screw added that effectively slows the bug down to around 12 wpm. I have made a few contacts with it and find it very comfortable to use and a real pleasure to operate.

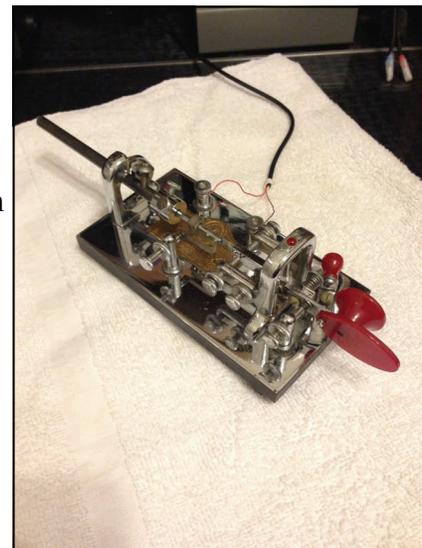
I hope your Christmas was as great as mine was!

73,

Jim, N5JPX



Here is the bug in position with the “speed control” installed.



N8KR Scores Big!

Ken N8KR really scored big for Christmas, Santa and one of his elves managed to find a “brand new” pump key for Ken. He must have been a really good boy since those pump keys are really rare.



Not only did Ken get the key, but the key is engraved with his call and can be seen in the picture below! So I guess that means that Ken’s cw will now be perfect as he can’t use the key as an excuse.

Check out the fine station at N8KR. You can see Ken’s new key along with his J-38. Sure looks like the K3UK SKCC board loaded there in the background! Ken is at a new QTH and is slowly building his antenna farm, currently Ken has a Butternut vertical and an 80m dipole.



A Surprise Gift!

Not exactly a Christmas gift, I received this great little plaque “around” Christmas time. The sign is etched plexi-glass and the wood is slotted on an angle for displaying the sign.



More on this plaque is coming up in

the future and you too can have one of these outstanding SKCC signs with your call.



K3Y 2013 Wrap-up

In January the SKCC held its 7th annual on-air anniversary celebration. The sound of manually formed CW was often times quite evident on the HF bands, originating from numerous K3Y stations across the US and from DX counterparts around the world. Well over 23,000 contacts were made using Morse straight keys, bugs and sideswipers: the original instruments of the old radio art.

The event did perhaps not seem very unusual to long term SKCC members who've had the opportunity to participate in the annual celebration multiple times now over the last seven years. But I think it must be a little surprising to all that the popularity of the original language of radio continues to grow. Some 5,000+ more QSOs were logged this year than last, and the number of members who signed up as K3Y operators and DX special station ops increased to an all-time high of 175.

I've often thought that the appeal of ham radio, apart from the natural wonder of radio itself, lies in the varying formulation of skill, technology and luck that characterizes it. If you add to that the tradition and art of hand-timed Morse rhythms, perhaps it should not be too surprising to us the great attraction that old, original CW still holds.

On behalf of the K3Y Planning Group I'd like to thank all who were involved in making this year's event the success that it was. Most especially, thanks to the K3Y Operators, both the K3Y veterans as well as the many new ops:

K3Y/Ø: ADØAB KØCW KØFTC KØLUW KCØRSX KCØU NØJL NØNB N3PDT
N8VCL NDØCW WBØPYF WIØS

K3Y/1: K1PUB KX1NH K1EDG KB1OIQ WU1V W1PNS N1DN NF1O WA1VIL

K3Y/2: AB2ZI AF2Z K2PAY K2TV KA2FIR N2SO W1DV WA2JSG WB2SXY

K3Y/3: AC2C AF3Z K2DEP K3DRQ N3MVX W3YX WA3RF

K3Y/4: AB4PP AE4LD K4BAI K4CNW K4NVJ K4UPG K4ZGB K8QI KA5VZG
KB3DT KB4QQJ KC4FLT KC4HCH KI4TI KK4BOB KL7GLL KU4GW
N4KGL ND9M NN4K W1LIC W1SGC W4CJV W4EON W4FOA W4IO W4JBB
W4KLY W4PCA W4QO W4RQ WA4ZOF WD4ON WN4AT

K3Y/5: AD5VC K5ENA K5LSU K5WL K5YQF K5ZOL KC7QY KD5MMM KK5NA
N5KIP NE5DL W5PEH WA5KMA WB5JWI

K3Y/6: K6III KK6AW KO6R N6WK W1EJ

K3Y/7: K7TKT K9ZMD KF7DS KF7YHB KI6FCT KO7X NØBOE NE7D NG7IL NG7Z
W1RO W7CQW WA7NB WB7EUX

K3Y/8: K3YP K8AQM K8KIC K8MXC K8SSS K8UV K9AAA KA8VIT KU8L N3JJT
N8AMM N8KQ N8KR N8XE W8TQE

K3Y/9: A19IN KKØI KK9U N9OL ND9M NV9X W9DLN

K3Y/KH6: KH6ZM

K3Y/KL7: KL7IDA KL8DX WL7WH

K3Y/KP4: KP4SJ NP3CW NP4KT WP3C WP4L

K3Y-AF: EA8BVP ZS6JBJ

K3Y-AS: 4X1WQ HL5NLQ JE1TRV VU2LID VU2UR

K3Y-EU: CT1GFQ DL9YCS F5DE F5JWH F6HKA G3TZA IK2RMZ MØTRN PA1FOX PH6SKCC
PI4OTC

K3Y-NA: V31JP VA2BBW VA2SG VA5LF VA7POP VA7WWV VE1PVH VE2PID VE3FAL VE5KM
VE9CRM VO1BB ZF2TA

K3Y-OC: DU3/W5LFA VK4CC VK4EI VK4WM VK7AD ZL2BLQ

K3Y-SA: HC6EP LW3EX PS7HD

Thanks also to all of you who found an excuse (as if any were needed) to work as many different K3Y operators as possible during January. You kept the hand-key CW flowing throughout the entire month!

We hope you will all join us again next year for more.

73,

Drew /AF2Z
K3Y 2013 Event Coordinator

Multi-Multi K3Y/8...aka W8TQE 2944T



The Adrian Amateur Radio Club each year participates in the SKCC K3Y event. The K3Y/8 operation is staged the same as a Field Day event except for no “emergency power”. Using club members’ resources, a multi station operation is setup so that three or four stations can operate at the same time on different bands. Locals and friends are invited to come and “play” having fun making QSOs, eating well and laughing at each other. There are plenty of laughs, plenty QSOs and even more food! When the operation this year was over 620 K3Y/8 QSOs were uploaded to the master log.

We operated all bands from 6m through 160m and both straight keys and bugs were in operation depending on the operators choice. The rigs were an FT-1000MP/Alpha 374A, K2/100 es Alpha 374A, another K2/100 es Alpha 374, finally a TS-720 for 6m was used. Computers were used at each station, lots of wires and aluminum were in the air for support.

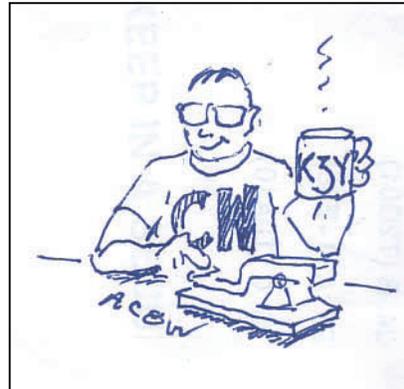
The operators in attendance were:

K8UV 2250T AC8W 2813 AC8JF KG8CO 6362 K8KS 4444T
W8IQ 7557 N8CC 7541 NU8Z N8AMM 3198T NF8J
N8KR 7559T WA8ICK 9962 K9AAA 270T KC8LTL 4197T
K8KIC 2938 K8AQM 1629T KU8L 5532 and KB8ECG 10169

We had plenty of food, chili, ham sandwiches, snacks, soda, nuts and even some “CW wine”. As usual we all consumed more calories than QSOs made but we all had a great time. Thanks to all of you who worked us on many bands. A special thanks to AC8W our resident cartoonist!

73,

The Adrian Amateur Radio, W8TQE 2944T



KI4WXI Scores a Sweep!

I wonder who might be the youngest member of SKCC who achieved a sweep? Hey, it just might be KI4WXI Mike Stooksbury, age 16. Mike got his Technician Class license at age 10 and operates a K2 at five watts into an 80m one wavelength vertical loop feed with 450 ohm twin lead.

Here is Mike's log with all contacts made on the Novice/Technician sub-bands. The list is the first time worked of K3Y stations:

K3Y/1	1/1/13 0204 80m	
K3Y/5	1/1/13 0303 80m	
K3Y/2	1/1/13 0347 80m	
K3Y/3	1/1/13 2305 40m	Note that Mikes operation except for the K3Y/8
K3Y/4	1/2/13 0304 80m	are done in the evenings. Why, because Mike is
K3Y/0	1/2/13 0322 40m	a high school student who is also deeply involved
K3Y/NA	1/2/13 0348 40m	with his school's marching band, concert band
K3Y/EU	1/2/13 0547 40m	and his school's robotics team!
K3Y/9	1/3/13 0130 40m	
K3Y/7	1/4/13 0242 40m	
K3Y/8	1/6/13 1246 80m	
K3Y/KP4	1/6/13 2305 40m	
K3Y/6	1/26/13 0233 40m	Finally, Last station needed!

Here are Mike's own words about the K3Y event:

"This was a fun event. I worked all my sweep calls in the first six days except for K3Y/6, which seemed to elude me and my peanut whistle transceiver for weeks! I tried ?6 on January 18, but the pile up was just too much. I couldn't break through the chirping crickets. I used the SKCC sked page extensively in my search for that California surfer dude, /6. After a week off from school due to flooding and a snow storm that never arrived, I found K6III one Friday night on the sked page working as K3Y/6. I asked him to come down to the Novice/Technician 40m band to see if we could hear each other. Presto: K3Y/6 was in my log! The credit all goes to Jerry, K6III (K3Y/6), SKCC number 6830T, for pulling my weak signal out of the 40m band noise."

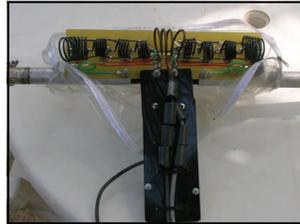
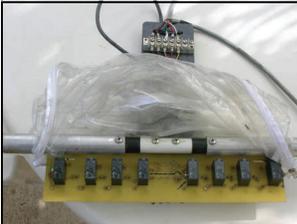
Without a doubt this young man will be a force to be reckoned with! Congratulations Mike on a job well done!

ZF2TA K3Y/NA Adventure 2013

With only five days left of the K3Y event my wife and I headed for the Grand Cayman Islands. Amateur radio is a “severe” passion of mine and my wife understands this so with her “blessing” I was “allowed” to bring my K2/100, my Force 12 Sigma V and the other necessary “goodies” to setup a station for the remaining five days of K3Y. You can see the station setup below. Thanks to Ron AC2C, I was able to schedule my operating as ZF2TA K3Y/NA. Although the internet connection was only available regularly at the pool and bar (boy it was tough to send in logs!), I was able to get my logs daily to Ron.



The Sigma V is a five band (10-20m) antenna with switchable (from inside the shack) bands using coils and relays and is actually a vertical “dipole”, not a vertical as there are no radials and it is center fed. You can see the center board with the relays on one side and the coils on the other. You simply “tune” (via squeezing/stretching) coils and the antenna will cover the entire band! The plastic bag in the picture was used to cover the switching incase it rained. Force 12 uses a big heavy PVC pipe but I opted for light weight. You can see the overall height of the Sigma V is only 11 feet and that includes the two foot ground stake. Even in a lush jungle area the antenna performs very well. I have used it on all my DX trips with great results for such a small footprint. I used RG-174 micro coax as it takes up little room and handles 100 watts easily! I also had an inverted V for 30m and the apex was only 15 feet up in the tree and it seemed to work very well!



My first QSO was with George K4GM (who quickly spotted me on the K3UK board) and my last 225 Qs later, was with Dan W9DLN. My best DX was with John VK4TJ (he is amazing!) and I worked all K3Y/* except K3Y/7 (K9ZMD really tried to pull me through but couldn't) and K3Y/9, wouldn't you know W9DLN my last Q and he wasn't K3Y/9. The last QSO made with Dan was two minutes before the event ended.

Here is the front of the QSL that is being printed. If you would like a QSL

just send your card either direct (SASE) or to the SKCC QSL Bureau (via K9AA). K9AAA will forward cards to me (K8AQM) via the bureau.

Thank you all for pulling me through and making the trip so much fun!

73, Ted K8AQM/ZF2TA
#1629T #9955

