



SK CC
 Straight Key Century Club



Volume 12 Issue 1

The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club
 "The Rag Chew"
 Editor: K8AQM

March, 2019

2006



2019

The Straight Key Century Club's Thirteenth Anniversary Celebration

Thanks to everyone who participated in the SKCC 13th Anniversary event in January. It was our best ever for overall activity with nearly 33,000 QSOs logged by 200 K3Y operators. Great job keeping all those straight keys, bugs and sideswipers on the air throughout the month!

Special thanks go to our operators outside the US. Conditions were not good for DX, so a big "THANK YOU" to them for hanging in there with the weak signals and QSB. That definitely required some serious CW skills! When conditions improve, hopefully by next year, the DX activity will be more plentiful, if less challenging.

Please see the links on the K3Y home page at www.skccgroup.com/k3y/ to claim K3Y Operator Certificates, Sweep Certificates and QSL cards. You can also check the final stats & event results. Hope to catch you all next year. Plan on it!

73, Drew - AF2Z

K3Y Planning Group



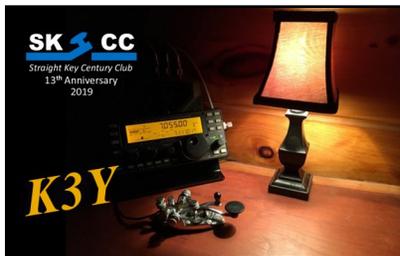
Map showing the location of all stations operating as K3Y 2019

SKCC Membership Hits 20,000!

Can you believe it? The popularity of CW and our philosophy of mechanical CW sending is overwhelming! Contrary to the beliefs of many that CW is dead, we continue to grow, and that growth is staggering! With that growth comes our challenge to continue to welcome our new members and find ways to encourage activity in our events and awards. My personal thanks to our founders, our board, and my fellow SKCCers for making SKCC so much fun! Oh, yes, and welcome to our new members especially the Fort Wayne Radio Club – SKCC #20000! Look for them as the bonus station for the April SKS. They are an active group with nearly 25 individual SKCC members!



K3Y 2019 QSL Winner and Runner Up



The winner is design #1, by
Bob, W2DL, 9702



Second place goes to design #5
submitted by Jake, KK6L,
SKCC 7518S



Third place goes to design #16
submitted by Jake, KK6L,
SKCC 7518S

Great designs all! Make sure you have your envelope on file with the SKCC QSL bureau to receive your 2019 K3Y QSL card!

A Classic Station With History

I really enjoy the vintage gear.

I like tubes.

I like point-to-point wiring.

I like the style of operating the old rigs require.

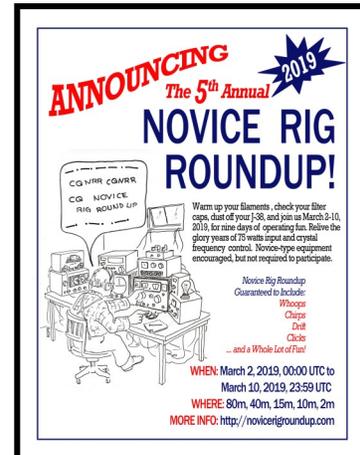
Mention you're using a vintage rig during a QSO, and be prepared for the guy in the other end to wax poetic about the DX-40, or equivalent, that he ran as a youth 50 years ago. They're just plain fun.

Over the years I've had a number of the more "boat anchor" popular rigs - Johnson, Heathkit, Globe, etc The June WES boat anchor theme has always been my favorite of the year. Then five years ago I found Novice Rig Roundup and began to focus more on the equipment marketed to Novices in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Eventually, I ended up with what many consider to be the ultimate novice station from that era, the Drake 2-NT/2-C combo. Besides being very fun and very cool, this station is also very special to me personally.

I picked up the 2-C a couple years ago as "working, in good shape, but needs a little TLC." I bought it from one of the founders of Novice Rig Roundup, Bry AF4K, when he offered it a great price as a fund raiser for that year's NRR expenses. I played with it enough to see that it was a pretty good receiver, despite its apparent simplicity, but it seemed to have a pass band problem and it ended up on the project shelf.

Fast-forward a couple years, Bry has "retired" from running NRR, and somehow I became co-chair of the event, along with Dan W7PAZ. Also over the past couple years, I'd become acquainted local ham and service guru, Jack W0YZS, and would assist Don W0DEW when Jack needed some things moved, or light maintenance in his shack/shop. As Jack's health declined and he moved out of his house, I was honored to be among his group of friends trying to help him move all his treasures. One day during the moving, I ran across the 2-NT in a cabinet. I showed it to Jack, and he said with a little smile, "Doug, that will go with your 2-C. Take it home and get it on the air again!" I was floored. A few days after I brought the transmitter home, I found the receipt in the manual. Guess who Jack had bought it from 15 years ago? Yep, Bry AF4K, the same place the receiver came from!

I took it home and paired transmitter with another receiver and it performed flawlessly. Jack passed within a couple weeks of us getting his stuff out of the house. It was definitely time to get that 2-C in top shape, so it could sit next to Jack's transmitter on my desk. I put new filter capacitors in it and another local guru, Tom N0GSG, kindly offered his assistance in aligning it. We spent a Saturday morning with the 2-C on his bench. Tom guided me through aligning the BFO, and he made some minor alignment tweaks. The receiver really sings now! I told this story to my NRR co-chair, Dan, the other day during one of our "NRR business" chats. He was as enthused as I was with the station and the coincidences and "good ol' ham spirit" that led it to my operating desk. Then he said, "All you need now is the 2-CQ to make the package complete. It really makes the receiver sing." A few days later, practically out of the blue, Dan sent me one as a thank you for my help with NRR! Talk about generous, and man that little guy really comes alive with the 2-CQ attached.



I look at this little vintage novice station as my “meant to be” station. Each piece has a story, and a wonderful link to hams that have really bent over backwards to pass that ham spirit on. It’s a personal treasure that reminds daily to keep that spirit alive and moving on through my actions and activities.



Here’s Doug with his refurbed Drake 2C with a History”



The completed “Classic Station

Doug -N3PDT
2019 Novice Rig
Roundup: March 2-
10, 2019
[http://
noviceriground-
up.com](http://novicerigroundup.com)

So You Want to Go on a DXpedition?

“Ah yes; sand, palm trees and the lap of warm water on the beach, guess I’ll go offer a DX contact to a few hundred in the pileups.” ... YEAH RIGHT! Not all DXpeditions are to some south sea island, some you really need to be dedicated to go on. In January Dave VE9CB (#12520) and Chris VE3FU (non SKCC) headed to Newfoundland/Labrador. Just checkout the



pictures showing the conditions they have to deal with. Unfortunately Dave (VE9CB) had no time to be involved with K3Y from Labrador, he would have been extremely popular!

Here is a note from Dave regarding the conditions he and Chris faced:

“After about 30 hours of driving in temperatures from -36c to -20c, Chris VO2AC and I (VO2AAA/

VE9CB) are back in southern Labrador, getting ready for the CQ 160m CW contest. Frank VO1HP will join us Tuesday. We’ll have to travel the last 2km to the Point Amour lighthouse by skidoo and komatik.”



Skidoo and komatik trip



The lighthouse operation site



Just a bit of snow in the doorway!

Dayton/Xenia 2019

Whether you call it Xenia or Dayton it doesn't really matter, because it is time to think about going and spending time at the SKCC booth! If you've followed the pictures on Facebook and "The Rag Chew" in the past, you know it's a good time; a place to meet old and new friends and even a place to sit and rest between checking all the new gear and those "fleas" in the outdoor market! What makes the SKCC booth such a great place is the number of SKCCers who volunteer their time to "man the booth" and this year will be no different. Jeremy, KD8VSQ (SKCC QSL Bureau manager) and Ted, K8AQM (editor of The Rag Chew) will "herd the cats" and be responsible (ugh) for ensuring a "good time" at this year's booth.

As in past years we'll put out a notice asking for "volunteers" to man the booth, most likely early March. Manning the booth is not difficult! You get to sit and rest your weary bones, play with various keys that will be set up with code practice oscillators, log members in the "SKCC Logger" who stop by and check in, drink the available booth water, eat the snacks brought to the booth, laugh with other SKCCers who stop by you know and answer questions about SKCC who as yet are unfortunately not yet SKCC members!

Because the SKCC QSL Bureau manager will be present, you'll have the chance to sign-up for SKCC QSL Bureau services if you haven't already joined. There may even be YOUR QSLs available from the bureau if you request they be brought to Dayton and hand delivered to you. Just drop and email to: QSL Bureau Manager, Jeremy, KD8VSQ, gsl_manager@skccgroup.com. Hope to see you at Dayton/Xenia!

73, Ted K8AQM & Jeremy KD8VSQ



Pictures from booth scenes 2018

We All Know 73 & 88 ... But 161?

So I'm tuning across 40 this morning and stop to eavesdrop on a pair of OPs in conversation around 7040, and I can tell they're wrapping things up. I decide to stick around to see if I might know either one. And when they finished, each sent 161 as a closing, much like we might send 73. 161? At first, I thought that might be code for some organization or society with which I was unfamiliar ... maybe a Shriner's code or military designation. So I did what we all do these days, I asked Google. After skipping results that included 161 Morse Street in both Connecticut and Massachusetts, I ran across a Kent Keys Morse abbreviation listing (<http://www.kent-engineers.com/abbreviations.htm>). And sure enough, right after 73 and 88 was the abbreviation 161. Only the mathematically-inclined will catch that



161 is the sum of 73 and 88. That's right - 161 apparently means the sentiments expressed by both 73 and 88 -- Best regards and Love & Kisses. Now I certainly don't profess to know all there is to know about Morse Code abbreviations, but I have been around the proverbial block more than a few times, pounding out CW abbreviations myself since 1962, and I don't recall ever hearing 161. Is this some arcane abbreviation whose use has mostly disappeared, or could it be chiefly British, since Kent is an English company after all ... or have I just been missing this over the years? I did, after all, know almost nothing of cooties and sideswipers until recently :-)

73 de Bill WA4FAT

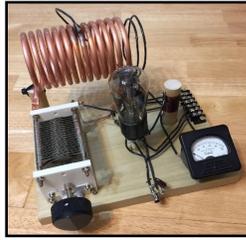
November Brag



Thanks for all the fun, everybody! This month got me to Tx8, and all were done at 5W to a 20M EDZ @ 50'. Pictured below are my two weapons of choice, both lovingly handmade by skilled and talented hams: the TBFB cootie, by W1SFR, and the PB213, by G0NVT. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Great month. I finished my Senator award and worked a bunch of guys. It was a blast. 73, de Paul N0NBD



Made a few contacts on 80m with a 1929 Hartley oscillator at 2 watts. 73, Marty N9SE



I HOPE TO WORK MORE FOLKS AS BONUS STATION THIS MONTH. MOST SKCC QSOS WERE THE BUG SHOWN. SINCE PHOTO IT HAS A VERY LARGE WA9TGT WEIGHT AND W0EB DOT STABILIZER ADDED. I REALLY LIKE THE TAN BASE. 73, Benny K5KV



Helping others up the awards ladder while personally in my SX4 quest. Surprised so few cooties pictured here, and many missing from our SKCC Cootie User's list, see link at my QRZ bio page. Pictured here are my three favored keys, all Cooties from W1SFR, from left to right, the TBCP, TBFB, and TBKII. 73, Mike K5MP



Spent a lot of time on my career this month (I am a composer), but enjoyed getting on the air from time to time. Worked a few French stations, otherwise all US. I worked mainly 20 and 40 meters, QRP/5watts except I needed to bump up to QRO to work the bonus station. All in all, my modest 17 QSOS this past month are brag-worthy, if only to myself! 72/73 de Rick WU1V (PS: Pictured is my Torsion Bar Cootie crafted by Steve Roberts, W1SFR. I love this key and now use it exclusively!)



This month saw the most activity from me since last winter. Working on the TKA was the prime motivator for me. 73, Dave W3NP



Another good month. Thank you all and 73, Dave KB1WOD



Thanks for all the contacts this month folks. Was working hard towards my TKA. Sorry Bry, our QSO didn't count as we only worked in the sprint. Had to purchase a straight key to finish the TKA. Purchased a Speedx online. Had to knock the rust off a bit, but it came back. Again all the best....73, Jack KK0I



Busy Month....Hopefully more next month. 73,\ Greg wa3gm



My first since being off for the winter at golf course great to be back had fun running qrp 5w with KX3 and wire antenna thanks to all for the contacts 73/72 BudW8BUD #11340s



gracias por todo 73, Che WP3PW dit dit

Items From Facebook



Please consider joining us on Mondays for Novice Rig Night, a weekly activity of the Novice Rig Roundup. NRR was conceived and implemented almost five years ago by SKCC members Bry AF4K and Gary WD4NKA, and currently administrated by SKCC members Dan W7PAZ and Doug N3PDT. Use of Novice style gear not required, but of course highly encouraged.

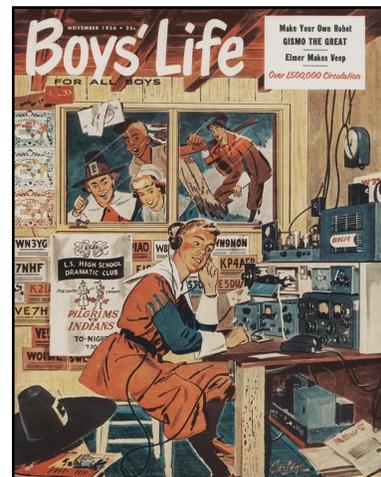
<http://novicerigroundup.com/>
NOVICE RIG "NIGHT" IS Every Monday! Where: Suggested 7100-7125 Kc, 3550-3600Kc, plus any other CW-legal frequency on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters you care to arrange, or find someone. 73, Doug N3PDT



Making several good SKCC contacts on the little 2 bander, may try to go for one of the qrp/qrp awards. 73, Marc AD4CW



Got this just in time for the 160 contest. Happy camper! 73, Chance W5LWD



The "Burning" Truth!

My worse RF burn came when I was working at a suburban Chicago AM/FM radio station. We had a 200 Ft tower on the roof of a 5 story hotel building, and one of my duties was once a week, when my shift relief engineer came in, we had to check the calibration of the AM side remote antenna current meter. There was an intercom speaker box on the side of the antenna tuning enclosure and I had to lean around the open door of the enclosure to talk to the inside man, down in the studio/transmitter room. So I could not see the control knob or my arm. Of course one morning my hand slipped off the knob and I accidentally got my hand within an inch of one

of the tuning coils and drew a big 1000 Watt RF arc ! I nearly leaped off the roof then!

My radio is Ham Radio...CW is Real Radio 73, John...K8JD

December WES Comments and Photos

Editor..... The chase for bonus points was on! Wow...what a turnout!



Great WES and a great theme to kick off the holiday season. My hat's off to whoever thought this up. Wanted to work all the bonus stations but only got 20 of them. I did make 128 contacts, my best ever in a WES. Thanks to all the ops from a low of 641 to 19399 that contacted me. I've belonged to many clubs and nets over the past 25 years, you guys are the best. Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy holiday season and new year. 73, Frank AA2XX



A great wknd for radio, 10m opened Friday thru Saturday. In cking for WES stations I was pleased to hear the bands hopping..Logged the "Grinch" and realized I needed to get busy..So many great Fist's. Key's for the WES Kent SK & "55" Blue Racer..The "59" Blue Racer was set for the 10m contest. A great event Thank you all 73 Merry Christmas Rick K0KEX

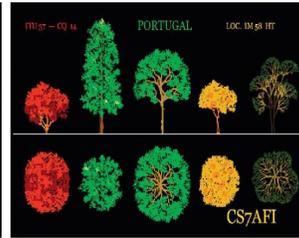
Thank you to all the OPs that came back to my weak signal. Thanks also to all the Xmas bonus stations. I had a great time. Merry Christmas 73 Steve W0PWR



On Saturday I operated mobile from a nearby park, Yaesu FT-817 with homebrew 50W amplifier to a 3ft RF Shark 20m antenna on a mag mount, it worked great! On Sunday, operated QRP from mother in law house, 100ft long wire in the backyard to homebrew antenna tuner and FT-817, 5W this time. Bands were favorable and I made contacts from France to CA, and bagged 4 bonus stations. Thank you everyone that participated, the bonus stations and the organizers. Can't wait for the next event! See you in the bands, 73 de AC2RJ,



Merry Christmas too all! Sent CW on "Pine Board" transmitter with Hallicrafters S19 re-



73, José CS7AJFI



Westerly Storm Force 9 broke my vertical aerial so had to use my fishing pole vertical, ground mounted and 20ft tall. Works OK on 40m but poor on 20m. 73, John / G0RDO /



Just finished building this nice 40 meter QCX. What a great little transceiver for \$49. It has a lot of features including RIT, SPLIT, realtime CW display, narrow filter, etc. I was putting out 4.2 watts. All those good thing aside I was limited to 1 band that limits QSOs. My key is a SCHURR MMK key baby to my SCHURR Mahogany standard size straight key. 73s to all and thanks for the QSOs, Steve K2DEP



Happy Holidays to all ! Completed 3 SKCC qso's, signals were weak up north hr, with plenty of Qsb. Thanks to the stations that took the time to work me, took a couple repeats. 73 & Cul John A17JK



SunSDR2 Pro or FT-1000D + dipole (100W). 73, Jerry F4FLO



Only spent about an hour, but enjoyed the QSOs! 73, Randy - KS4L

More December WES



Being a bonus station was immense fun! Thanks to all the great ops out there. All contacts made with my K2 at 5W to a 20M EDZ @ 50', fed with ladder line, right to the tuner. 73,



I really enjoyed this WES - like last year it was a lot of fun, and being the Grinch was right up my alley - HA! ...I wasn't always mean though. I got all of the bonus stations, but of course, I couldn't work myself. Got the Scrooge on 3 bands. Even though I already got the TKA, I continued with using all 3 key types alternately - that bug to SS and back is still a bugger (pun intended). Had QSO's on 5 bands 15 - 160. Rig: K3 line. Ant: 160 meter horizontal loop @ 50' Keys: German WW2 SK, Began HST II SS, US Army J36 Bug. Merry Christmas from the mountain state of West Virginia - where most of the snowflakes fall from the sky. 73, Dave W3NP



Wow, what a WES! I bested my best effort so far by a lot this time. Being a bonus station had a lot to do with that. I was on the air more trying to let as many as could get the bonus. TNX to all who worked me and hope you all had as much fun as I did. I got 9 bonus stations and both multipliers and I was not even trying to get them. Sure hope everyone who was looking for me got a shot! 73, Allen KA5TJS



Good time for sure. TNX to all had the patience to copy me! 73 Steve NQ8T



First WES I spent any time in at all. Didn't try to find multipliers but the bands were pretty good. Put a few of the bugs to work that have been collecting dust. Looking forward to the next one. 73, Bob W0YBS



Operated mobile traveling to Florida. Some contacts in Indiana while most on I-65 in Kentucky. Used the TS-590 with better filtering and a 40m hamstick. Best mobile contact was Bert F6HKA! Thanks to all who called and special thanks to my wife for driving so I could operate. 73, Ken N8KR



For this month I used a Heath HW-16 that is the next project up on the bench for a restoration. Key for this month was a 1956 Vibroplex Champion. See you all next month. 73, K8NB Noel



Argo 6. 5wts g5rv St key and hb DUBBUG. Tnx to board mbrs. C U next YEAR.. hi hi...73, Dave N9ZXL



Well it was fun till I was interrupted by nearly 11 inches of snow on my favorite operating position. Not sure if it was Santa or The Grinch who got dates mixed up but snow is supposed to be at Christmas not WES.... ;-) Had a great time but steady shoveling to keep walk and driveway clear kept me to limited time on air. I always =enjoy this theme. KX3 to doublet and QUAD ended at 33 feet. Keys were SS, SK and Bug. No drums or flashlights this time. 73, Randy KB4QQJ



Band conditions were good. Used my 1918 Vibroplex Blue Racer bug. Had a weight come loose during a "hot run", but fixed it without losing the frequency (hi hi!). Worked five bonus stations: K0NIA, VE3RDE, K3SEN, N9SE, and W3NP (thank you!). 73 Jim N6KZ



Great sprint. Thanks to all especially for the practice on the bug! 73 Gerald WA5AFD

Even More December WES!



My plan was to work 18 with my SS to finish my 100 for the SS TKA part and then quit. Got up early (4 AM on the Left Coast is 1200 UTC) to hit the road running. After 9 QSO's in the bank the local power grid went down for almost two hours so I went back to bed. Got up when the power came back on and picked up another 12. Mission accomplished and went for a M/C ride. Came back and thought I'd pick up a few BUG contacts and try for those elves. A few hours on Saturday and Sunday got me to 101 BUG TKA and all 16 elves. I'll save the SK for the K3Y event. Quit early around 1700 UTC to do the chores I was supposed to do. Worked only 20m and 40m. This was the first WES where I worked more on 40m than 20m by a wide margin, 4:1. I thought the bands were in GREAT shape. QSB not too bad and bands were quiet. 73, de



Participated around my work schedule, but the bands were in pretty good shape so I was still able to get 95 Q's. A lot of fun ... thank you, everyone. 73, Roger W6LAX



Thanks to all the elves who gave us a merry WES. Asked Santa for a helicopter. Non-committal. May have to settle for the 'leftie' Blue Racer I ordered during WES. Thanks all for the contacts. Used the 'dah' side for SK. Hope that's legal. 73, Jim K5TSK



Limited time, too many xmas honey doo's. Elecraft K3s at 100w, 240ft loop up 10ft. Outlaw Cootie Key #3 firing .45cal dits and dahs. LLAVES double key as backup. 73, Eldon W0SZV



Thank you to everyone I contacted in WES. My first experience as a bonus station. Unfortunately on Sunday due to rainy WX I had a very important QRN that did not allow me to hear and especially to understand all the callers. For this activity I used the following manipulators, an I1QOD BUG and a German WWII straight key. 73, Leon OS0S



It was one of the best WES this year! Thank you all for lots of fun. Even tried my side-swiper ones, and chickened out back to my trusty J-38. Happy Holidays!!! 73, Sergey KD9EBS



Great fun on cold days in the mid west. I was using my IC-7300 and home brew straight key. Hope to see everyone on the next sprint. 73, Bill N0UMP



It's been a while since I participated in WES and it was great fun! 12 of my 23 QSOs were made QRP (5 watts). Thanks to all that dug me out of the noise. The other 11 were made with my Heathkit HW-16 (50 watts). Kept the room warm on Saturday night. TU 72/73 de Dave WD8KRV



Best WES ever. Finished the cootie part of TKA, and broke out my 100+ year old solid brass Bunnell straight key and manages to add 48 to my SK count. Thanks to all for the QSOs and see you next month. VRY 73 Brian KQ4MM dit dit



Well. That was fun. Not much time. about an hour. Spending a few days down on Longboat Key, FL. Brought my K1 and a Mag-loop along. Signals were loud but most folks didn't want to hear me. Hard to imagine why. Three watts to a Magloop? Even called F6HKA several times. No luck. Imagine that. 73, Chuck K9IA



Lotsa fun! But Rudolph escaped with his nose so bright. 73, Rick N8XI

SKCC "SK" Members During 2018

Dan KZ3T, has compiled a list of some of the SKCC members we have lost during the past year. The list is most likely not complete but it is proper we recognize known members who have become "silent keys."

| Call | Name | QTH | SKCC# | DATE of SK |
|--------|--------------|-----|-------|-----------------|
| W3QN | HAL | PA | 14171 | 5-24-2018 |
| WE2M | PAUL | VT | 13252 | 10-31-2018 |
| K9XE | RAY | IL | 17321 | 4-19-2018 |
| W1NQU | ARNOLD 'TOM' | MA | 16930 | 4-26-2018 |
| W1DEA | JESSE | MA | 18487 | 6-16-2018 |
| W6KY | ART | CA | 622 | 3-16-2018 |
| WA2DAC | LYNN | NY | 4498 | 3-5-2018 |
| K6SOJ | DAVID | CA | 1200 | 1-17-2018 |
| KT6DX | PAUL | CA | 6681 | 7-9-2018 |
| K6FFY | NICK | WA | 1221T | 8-2-2018 |
| AG5CC | CHARLIE | MS | 17612 | 7-29-2018 |
| W4LSC | DON | AZ | 1213 | UNKNWN |
| KK9U | MARK | IN | 3818T | 7-4-2018 |
| K5MVR | RON | AR | 7894 | 9-20-2018 |
| NR7Y | LAWRENCE | UT | 5300 | 2-29-18 |
| KD8DD | MIKE | MI | 9661S | DATE UNKWN |
| W8LVL | EVANS | SC | 2007 | 9-29-2018 (QRZ) |
| KC0HHO | WRETHA | KS | 13756 | 10-3-18 |
| K7DRA | David | WY | 2267 | 5-19-18 |
| W4BGH | BERNARD | FL | 2889 | 12-30-2018 |
| KI4ZM | SAM | VA | 5514 | 12-23-2018 |
| WA1GCT | ROGER | TX | 1797 | 11-28-2018 |
| WR2D | ED | PA | 12443 | 2-4-2019 |
| WN1OTV | DON | ME | 2903 | 12-13-2018 |

The Rag Chew will try to keep members informed with each issue of most recent SK SKCC members. Their fists and QSOs will be missed. If you have any information regarding SK members please forward to Dan KZ3T via his QRZ email. To the best of data collection, this list is accurate but still may contain errors.

Is CW the Elixir of Life?

There's no doubt that CW makes for a healthy firing of neural networks and that can't be a bad thing, but could CW actually keep us alive longer? I don't know the answer to that question, but there's a good chance it might -- at least based on recent Morse Code contacts with nonagenarians on 40 meters. First case in point is Jim Robinson, W4DDD who can be heard almost daily on 7 MHz sending beautiful CW



W4DDD

with his faithful Vibroplex. Jim doesn't let his small city lot in Mandeville, LA deter him. Why he just loads his gutters and downspout, or more recently a chain link fence. And age is no impediment either -- Jim turned 97 recently. Another testament to the magical properties of CW is Cecilio Pino, CO2FC, who can be heard regularly around 7055 KHz with his TS-520 and home-made dipole. Cecilio is arguably the eldest Amateur in all of Cuba and at age 98 sends enviable CW with aplomb. Thanks to the inspiration of these and other senior CW OPs I plan to keep plugging away myself with the hope that this daily act of joy just might be the best medicine of all. 73, de Bill WA4FAT



CO2FC

The Story of TKA #14



I was intrigued when the SKCC Triple Key Award was announced and decided early on to go for it. But not without some doubt and trepidation.

I'm relatively new to CW, having last touched a key back in my Novice days in 1955. Just three years ago I decided to get back to CW, put away the microphone, and broke out my old Novice J-38. SKCC and my journey from new member to Centurian to Tribune to Senator has made me reasonably proficient on it.

But the Cootie and Bug were different matters. I've never owned a sideswiper and the 1955 Vibroplex Lightning Bug I've owned for 50 years has never been on the air. In fact I'd never even connected it to an oscillator to try it out. It's a beautiful machine but a bit intimidating.

I decided that I would start with the toughest key first—the Bug. I read a couple of articles on line to learn how to adjust it, keyed a mock SKCC exchange with the VOX turned off, bit the bullet, and sent out a live CQ. Bert, F6HKA, responded and graciously ignored the uncontrolled dits. There are 13 dits in Bert's call. I probably used 20. We're in each others' logs enough that he already knows everything about me. So a few extra dits apparently didn't confuse him. With one QSO out of the way, I figured I could slog my way through another 99. That was on December 3. For the first 15 or 20 contacts I was just hoping to get to 100 and put the Bug away for another 50 years. But a funny thing happened. At about QSO 25 or so I started to get the hang of it and actually started to enjoy using it. By 100 I had the extra dits fairly well under control and decided to leave the critter on my desk and use it from time to time. Then came the sideswiper. I've never owned one so I built one using a hacksaw blade, some scrap Teflon, and a few screws. Boy, is that action ever different from the Bug! I thought it would be an easy transition. Not so. I'm sure most of the problem was in the crude mechanics of my construction but I never got comfortable with it. By the time I got to 100 I decided to permanently retire it.

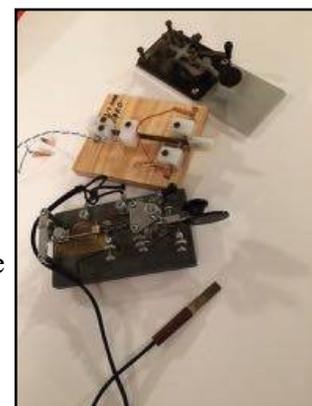
Two hundred QSO's down and 100 to go on the J-38. That was a piece of cake and I breezed through them without a problem.

It took me 340 contacts to get the 300 members. With very few exceptions they came from calling CQ-SKCC. I started on December 3 and finished on December 16. I got the logs submitted and TKA 14 was awarded on December 18.

The SKCC stated intent of the TKA is to give incentive to use a different key from one's usual key. It did that for me. I doubt I ever would have tried either the homebrew sideswiper or the Lightning Bug without that incentive. While my J-38 will likely remain my favored key, I'll keep the Bug hooked up next to it and use it often enough to improve my technique.

Thanks to the SKCC leaders who conceived of and manage the award. It was much fun.

73,
Ralph Bolt, KØRO



Ed...Although a bit seasonally late, this is worth the read....fun!

“Twas the Nite Before....”

By Mike VE9AA

Twas the nite before TEN opened and all through
the shack not a signal was stirring, for outside it
was black.

The dipoles were hung by the tower with care
in hopes that strong signals soon would be there.

The harmonics were nestled all snug in their beds
while visions of pileups danced in their heads.
With me in my PJ's and Mom in her thong
we wondered about DX and where we went wrong.

When out on the snow there arose such a mess
I sprang from the bed and forgot to get dressed.
Away to the window I flew like a streaker
Tore open the amp and became suddenly weaker.

The coax was ripped and the new fallen amp
fell onto the floor and the 'Test was now damped.
But what do my wondering eyes suddenly see
but a miniature stack of 10m yagis and deer !

With a little old man, so adept at the key
this could be our good luck if only it could be....
More QRQ than Hastifisti and with power to spare.
Now Dasher, now Dotter, now all deer he yelled
proud “We doing this right and we're going to be
loud!”

On Meteor, Aurora and Backscatter too
we'll work everyone till the tubes they turn blue.
To the top of the hill we ran with our tools
now dash away, dot away, lids and QRM fools.

As dry dummy loads that before the current that
flows, I will rid you of keyclicks, splatter and gosh
Heavens knows.

So up to the house-top the signals they flew
with antennas and amplifiers and St. Nicolas too.

And then in a moment I heard on the stairs
DX being worked, that was extremely rare.
As I logged with N1MM (plus version of course)
St. Nick was working them, SSB and on Morse.

He was dressed all in fur and looking alive
and his clothes were all sweaty from working
a P5.

A bundle of coax he threw on his back
and he looked like a Slim, who would never
come back.

His eyes how they looked, his cheeks were
puffed out from a SSB pileup that was tucker-
ing him out!

His droll little mouth, behind the headset from
Heil

Did not conceal that rare DX smile.

The stump of his pipe he held tight in his face
as lots of DX was coming and this was a
race !

He had a big smile and a big gut too from sit-
ting too much and working DXCC on Two.

He was fast and fat and a right happy old elf
I looked in the mirror and imagined myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of the key
He said 5NN and worked a P3.

He spoke not a word as he worked the Morse
code his rate behavior never gets old.
He filled all the stockings between contacts
he said, “Once this is done, Mike, you go
back to bed!”

Laying a finger up side of his nose
he started another pileup and the din, it arose.
This is VE9-Santa and you are Five-by-Nine
I'll work you all quickly and leave no one
behind.

He sprang to his sled and with a nod of his
head, he worked the last contact (Long path to
ZD8Z!)

Away the stats flew to the ARRL
I'll be back next year people,
Perhaps from Z2

He yelled as he faded and went out of sight
TNX, 73 and to all a GN !

.....

Merry Christmas from New Brunswick
dit dit
Mike VE9AA and family

December SKS



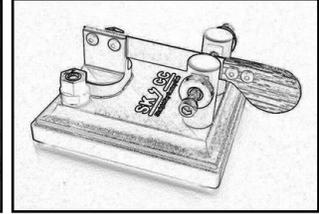
Thank you all, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. 73, Ric HP1RIS



Started a bit slow but nice Christmas turnout. Several Europeans on 80 which was probably a better band than 40 tonight. 73, Chas K3WW



20m. was dead, worked 6 on 40m, 80m. was in gud shape here in WNY. Rig: TenTec Argosy II at 50w into G5RV Dipole up 25 ft. w/ old WWII Junker Key. 73, Tom KA2KGP



FUN SKS ! Conditions were pretty good down this way. Happy to work Chus EA1AOQ for EU on 40. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all. 73 de N4ow AI



Tony K6ELQ great sig from CA tonight. Merry Christmas to everyone in SKCC. 73, Larry K8TEZ



Well it was fun but the bands sure are being finicky. I didn't hear the first signal on 20. Forty was going pretty good but no one stateside could hear me in the first hour. Moved to 80 and had pretty good success. Lots of strong signals to pick from. I moved back to 40 for the last 15 minutes and picked up a few more including Dave, NI9M for the bonus! I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and wishing you all a very Happy New Year. Now on to Straight Key night and K3Y!! KX3 to doublet and endfed at 33 feet. Keys were bugs, side-swipers and straight key depending on what you were on. 73, Randy KB4QQJ



Haven't worked an SKS in quite a while, conditions not great on 40, at least for me. Used my KX3 at 80w and EFHW vertical antenna and my Blue Racer Bug and SKCC SK. Merry Xmas to all and see everyone for K3Y shortly! 73 de ED



Great way to finish Christmas. 73, Roger W6LAX



40M was pretty noisy es busy.. Went to 80M es stayed there rest of the sprint. Did pretty gud there. Tnx everyone for the Q's Merry Christmas es Happy New Year to all. Cya for K3Y soon. 73, Randy N8KQ



Merry Christmas from sunny FL! No activity on 20 meters but the 25 foot 40m dipole did just fine! Great to work friends from back home including W9HT, WA9BBN, and KD9GDY! (and not forgetting Larry - K8TEZ who always has a stellar signal from OH!) See you later as K3Y/4 in early January! 73, Ken N8KR



Things seemed slow tonight, like there was some damn big holiday or something hi. Obviously things were a bit slow with it being Christmas night and all but still lots of fun! Elecraft K3 at 100 watts. 80M OCF dipole or 160M loop fed with ladder line. Bencher RJ-2 key. 73, Bill NZ0T



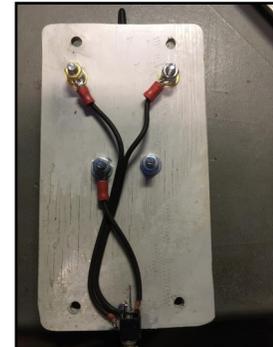
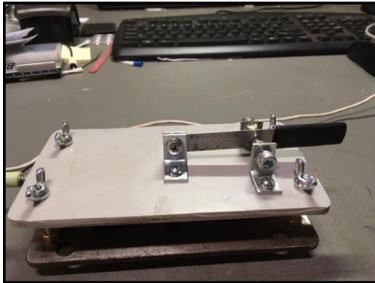
Didn't seem like there was much activity but can certainly understand why. Bands didnt seem to be real good either on my end. Still had a good time though. Just finished refurbing my 1919 Vibroplex Double Lever and it may just end up being my favorite key now. Thanks for the qso's and will see you in the next one. 73, Bob W0YBS

Snatched From Facebook

A few pics of my latest project - a Cootie key made out of junk I had lying about the shack. The "2 story" design allows for adding more weight and altering paddle height. I'd appreciate your comments/questions.

73 de

VK2FK Simon





Santa brought me the Iportable antenna analyzer and the Elecraft AX1 antenna to go along with my K1. Kx2 is in my future, I hope. I set up my K1 with battery operation and used the AX1 on a camera tripod in the backyard. I used 3 radials just temporarily setup on the Elecraft tripod assembly. I will later make the connections more permanent.

I first had the radials too high off the ground and my SWR was around 5 ! I lowered them to about 1 foot off the ground and got the SWR down to 3 without the tuner function.

Signals on 20 this Christmas Day were limited but

VY1JA in the Yukon Territory was 599 here in Ga. I finally got heard and received a 339. Not exactly a great report but he heard me with 5 watts, a battery and the AX1 portable antenna.

I expect that with more tweaking I will get the SWR closer to 1 without the tuner. I'm happy so far !!!

73, Jerry - K4KBL



I've loved the postings here reminiscing about Christmas mornings so many years ago, but how many of you actually have the photographic evidence? Here's Christmas at my house on a still-dark Alabama morning in 1961. You can see the two main gifts for my brother and me ... a new bike complete with training wheels already attached for 9 year-old Paul (later to become NZ1M) and my glorious National NC-183 D which was put into service in January as 12 year-old WN4FAT hit the airwaves.

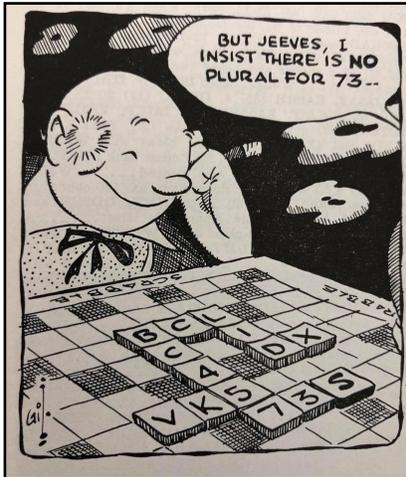
Here's to cherished memories each and every one!

73, Bill WA4FAT

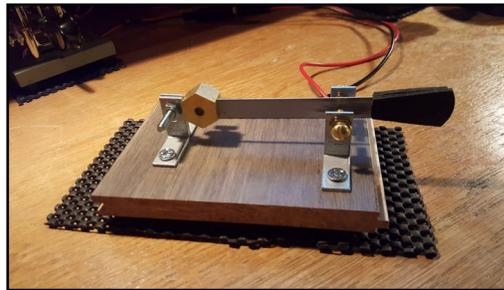




I am a QRS operator and sometimes get distracted by our cats. Hard to send CW with a cat attempting to get your attention. I came into the shack this noon and was checking out the computer when I looked up, this is what greeted me... This is Zowie. She has made it clear I am "HER" human and so she has found a place to supervise my radio operations... Can you see her in the photo??? 73, Hal KB1ZQ



There is no such thing as "73s." The meaning of 73 is....."Best wishes"....a plural. "73s" would mean "Best wishess"....duh!



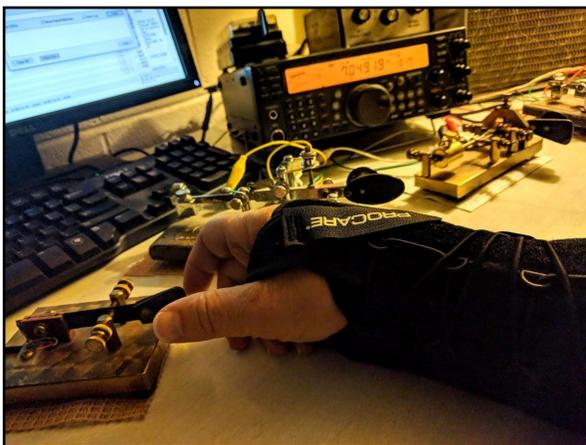
Home Brew Cootie Model 2A. A little shorter and a little tighter. Plays very well. I needed an extra key for another rig. De 73, Scott N3JJT 255T



This bug was designed by TR McElroy and is also known as "the hole in the wall bug." It may have the heaviest base of any early manufactured bug, it will not slide or move.

Not sure when this ad was published but it is pre WWII. Today this bug is often sold for \$100-150 and needs a lot of TLC. If you find one, buy it. You'll love it!...73, Ted K8AQM

Cootie Benefit



Yet another wonderful benefit of using a cootie or sideswiper is the lack of necessary up and down wrist motion -- an unfortunate requirement for me now after a spill. 73 de WA4FAT



After two surgeries (and two large scars later) - I can completely understand! Steve K0SAZ

The "Barn" J-38



A few months ago I went out to "The Barn", an outdoor antique/flea market that takes place in May and October in Oakdale, Mississippi.

I enjoyed telling my six-year-old grandson about the old farm and household implements.

To top it off, I found an old, broken down J-38 key marked at \$10. My first key as a Novice was a J-38. I still have it and I use it every day. So this dusty old key caught my eye. I offered the vendor \$7 and we had a deal.

The key was missing a few parts: The knob for the shorting bar and two of the connecting-wire post screws were missing. And it was deeply stained with nicotine. Three days of tumbling in my son-in-laws ammunition brass polisher cleaned all the parts very nicely.

On my first trip to QRZ.com to look for a parts key, I discovered what the seller called a J-38 and while missing some parts, it did have the ones I needed. I made an offer to him and another key deal was formed.

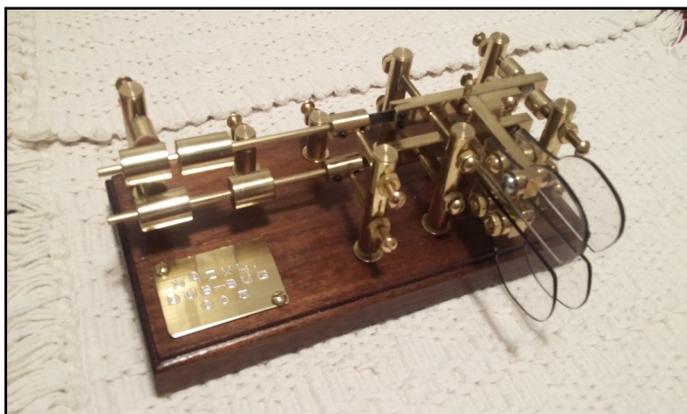
When the QRZ key arrived it proved not to be a Lionel J-38 but a Standard Model J.H. Bunnell key. Bunnell keys are made of solid brass as opposed to the much cheaper pot metal most Lionel J-38's are made from. And they're somewhat more collectible.

A bottle of Brasso cleaned it up and instead of using its parts to restore the \$7 J-38, I used the J-38 parts to complete the Bunnell.

So now I have a very nice Bunnell, albeit somewhat of a hybrid, and the old J-38 missing even more parts. I'll keep looking for a parts key to restore it.

"Dubbug" Nr. 005

Ed...Dave N9N9ZXL enjoys making keys, here is his "Dubbug"(double bug) Nr. 005. The idea is to have one bug set at a slower speed and the other a bit faster. The idea is not new but double bugs today are no longer being commercially manufactured that I know of.



Nr 005 has no springs, it has magnets at the end.. also I do not use or need bearings for my keys.. also on this dubbug it has no special dit contacts.. my keys just make the dits and dahs touching brass to brass.. 73, Dave N9ZXL

So, Do You Know Who Annie G. Ellsworth Was?



De Jeff KA4WYC , #1889

Well, as most of you know, I love CW, I'm not good at it, but I love hearing it and collecting telegraph keys. I also like the mystique of the history of Morse Code. I'll try to bring y'all some interesting facts on CW in upcoming articles. Now, do you know who Annie was, without looking it up on Google, (like I did!)?

Let's go back to the EARLY days of The Wireless, say 1843. Yep, our old friend Samuel F. B. Morse has been experimenting with electrical currents and the possibility of sending messages through the wires from one place to another. But to do this he needed CAPITAL. So he petitioned the US Congress for \$30,000.00, to install a line from Washington to Baltimore. But who's Annie...??? I'm getting there! Morse had an ally in Congress. An old College chum from Yale, Henry L. Ellsworth, Commissioner of Patents. Henry was standing in Congress as they had 119 bills in front of Morse's plea for funds. It was getting late, and although Morse had hopes of gaining the funds to build the wire, it did seem hopeless. Some members of Congress thought it was a joke. Others wanted to cut the funds up to suit their interests. But Henry was as passionate as Morse. So with a mere 5 minutes till Congress adjourned for that Session, Morse got his funds! Only one other bill was passed after Morse's request!! That's close to changing history, as we know it!!

Morse also had a young protégée that joined him in history. Enter Annie G. Ellsworth, yep Henry's Daughter! She came to Morse's hotel room to deliver the news of his long awaited Congressional triumph. They were to celebrate by having breakfast with her parents. For her report of the good news, Samuel Morse stated Miss Ellsworth will present the first **Recorded Telegraphed** message! Although it took a year to build the span of wires 28 miles, from Washington to Baltimore, Morse was true to his word. Miss Annie brought, from her Mother, the most famous message ever to be penned, "**What Hath God Wrought?**" !!! Just where did that phrase come from? Look up Numbers 23:23(KJV). Below, the hand written message found on the tape used in the Transmission:

"This sentence was written from Washington by me at the Baltimore Terminus at 8.h 45min. A.M. on Friday May 24.th 1844, being the first ever transmitted from Washington to Baltimore by Telegraph and was indicted by my much loved friend Annie G. Ellsworth." {signature-Sam F. B. Morse.} Superintendent of Elec. Mag. Telegraphs.

** Alfred Vail made this **key**, believed to be from the first Baltimore-Washington **telegraph** line, as an improvement on **Samuel Morse's** original transmitter. Vail helped **Morse** develop a practical system for sending and receiving coded electrical signals over a wire, which was successfully demonstrated in 1844.

** Information for this article was gleamed from several other articles in the Inter Web. Mostly from an article from *The Electrical Engineer*, New York, New York 8-19-1891 (that's not a TYPO !!) 73 Jeff KA4WYC

Getting Into HF and When

Ed...If you're on the SKCC reflector you may have seen these. Here are some great historical shorts from SKCCers who have "been around the block." How and when did you get into radio ...post on the reflector.

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Nate Bargmann](#)

My journey started as documented here:

<http://www.n0nb.us/blog/2016/12/my-first-introduction-to-amateur-radio/>

<http://www.n0nb.us/blog/2018/11/a-personal-milestone-and-a-look-back/>

Sometime in late 1981 or so I ordered the Heathkit HD-1416 code practice oscillator as I documented here:

<http://www.n0nb.us/blog/2012/12/kit-building-a-journey-into-amateur-radio/>

Sometime in January 1982 I ordered the Heathkit SW-717 shortwave receiver which was probably never aligned properly and thus left me frustrated for years. I did enjoy listening to some VOA broadcasts to Africa and Armed Forces Radio which at the time aired various programming from the various radio networks of the time. Then I discovered WRNO on shortwave! I never made much use of it for its intended goal of copying W1AW code practice as the lack of proper align likely never permitted the BFO to work properly. I did get my Novice in late 1983--35 years ago--as told in the second link above.

73, Nate, N0NB 6225

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Ben VE1AHX](#)

66 years for me. VE7AFP went on the air with a single 6V6. Other calls in the next 16 years were VR2DG, VK4DE, VK5BP, G3PAH - and for the past 50 years VE1AHX. Age seems to cause some failure of the link between brain and keying hand, but I'll do my best to represent NS as a K3Y station next month!

73, Ben VE1AHX 18100T

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Jim...N3MVX](#)

50 years ago this summer I was setting in a bunker at Edwards Air Force base playing with a Collins R390. This was a spare receiver in the radio shack full of what was then modern modular Collins equipment. My how time flies.

73,

Jim...N3MVX

Re: 50 years on

From: [Phillip Barsky](#)

This coming May will mark 60 years since I put my 6AG7-807 transmitter and a modified (bandspreaded) BC455 receiver on 40 meters as WV2FUL. Had a lot of Elmers back in those days who assisted with rig- and receiver mod. My dad WV2FRW (now SK) put up 40 meter bent dipole on roof of house in Brooklyn. TR switch, between 75 watt lightbulb dummy load and antenna, was a knife switch. Good ole days, but I'll stick with my TS 590.

73 to all

Re: 50 years on HF -

From: [John Paul Keon](#)

50 years ago I was sitting on Yap Island, Marianas Islands, Micronesia. I was studying my books to get my general license. They had to fly in a person to administer the test to me so I could operate the ham station, KC6BY so we could make phone patches back to the states. I had to learn the code, study the books, and then take the tests. I did, I passed and I became WA2LYC and operated that station for the rest of the year. I was rare DX and had no idea what DX was.

We had a Hallicrafters receiver, a home brew linear with a pair of 811 with grounded grid, and a ta 33 junior for an antenna in the shack. I made hundreds of phone patches back to the states before I left. After I learned how to operate the radio station in the radio room of the loran station I had access to a Collins receiver and several rhombic and vertical antennas with a 15KW linear and a Nitrogen filled tuner/coupler that would tune up to 1 or 2 KW In a hurry. I liked it so much I changed my rate from ET to RM and went to my second A school and became a radioman. Best thing that ever happened to me. CW4EVER. de John Paul // AB4PP

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Leslie Hock WB5JWI](#)

My one and only exposure to Collins ham gear was in the radio truck of a Pershing Missile Battery. They used KWM-2s as backup comm units for the AN/TRC-80 troposcatter system http://military.wikia.com/wiki/Tropospheric_scatter. This was also the first time I saw a radio set illuminate a neon tube without electrical connections. It was a fascinating system, one of the few radios that actually worked better after a nuclear explosion. It was supposed to guarantee that DC could issue launch orders to the field units after an exchange. It also identified which units in the field were nuclear units to the Soviet signal analysis. Oh, well, I loved those Collins rigs but could never afford one of my own.

Les

Leslie Hock

WB5JWI SKCC 5013 S

wb5jwi@yahoo.com

lhock@comcast.net

REAL RADIOS GLOW IN THE DARK AND KEEP THE SHACK WARM!

Re: 50 years on

From: [Bob Irish](#)

Yes, those were the days. It'll be 59 years for me come January. 6AG7 and 807 here too, to a long wire with a heathkit long wire antenna tuner borrowed from W5JNX (my elmer) and a Heath AR3 receiver. My first RST was 444 !!!Back then we had sun spots, lots and lots of lovely sun spots.

73 and C U all in K3Y,

Bob K5ZOL 3945S

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Roger Barkley](#)

I started in ham radio 58 years ago with my dad's encouragement, and even though I was QRT for a number of years it has always been part of me. I got relicensed in 1992 while attending seminary. When we moved here to L.A. for me to pastor a local church, my wife was in late stages of cancer; she insisted that I put a tower and beam in our backyard because she wanted me to have something that engaged me and that I enjoyed while I grieved her loss. What a gift ... ham radio helped me through the combination of pain from losing her and the stress of a starting a new career. Ham radio has been with me through many stages of life.

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Leslie Hock WB5JWI](#)

A home-brew transmitter for 40 and 80 and a BC-348, both borrowed from my Elmer, K5HXU - SK, got me started. This was the fall of 1961. That Christmas I received my Hallicrafters HT-40, SX-140, and R-48 speaker from my folks. Coupled with a vertical I was in tall cotton. I left that rig in West Germany to some hams that did not want to pay the German VAT. I bought the same setup last year from a ham on QRZ.com's swap meet. In between I've had a FT101, an Alinco DX-70, a Ten Tec Corsair and Century II. I'm trying to restore an EICO 720 and re-cap the Hallicrafters gear. Loved the Hallicrafters rig, enjoy it but now but I much prefer my Kenwood TS-480 and my new (to me) Heathkit SB-200. It has been an interesting 57 years.

Les

Leslie Hock

WB5JWI

50 years on HF

From: [Brian Webb](#)

Today is a radio anniversary for me. It will be 50 years ago late this afternoon that I opened my Christmas present, a Realistic DX-150 communications receiver. My dad quickly went outside and put up an end-fed wire antenna between our house and the back corner of our neighbor's garage (with our neighbor's permission). It was the start of a long journey through many aspects of radio that eventually led to my getting licensed.

73,

Brian, KD6NRP
SKCC #7424T

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Grant NQ5T](#)

This coming June will mark 60 years since my first Novice CW contact with the then freshly built and shiny new DX-40. Hard to believe — well ... at least until I look in the mirror :-)

Grant NQ5T
SKCC 18434

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Fr Richard R](#)

Just over 51 for me when I got

My DX-60.

Fr Richard
WB8YXF

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [ka9p@aol.com](#)

And my 50 year old gently used, not very well performing Heathkit HR10 b was opened 50 years ago tomorrow, beginning a love hate relationship that continues on some WES weekends. Happy anniversaries and Christmas radio memories all around.

Scott ex wn9bcr

From: [Barry K2MF](#)

I earned my novice (WN2NWM) in June 1964 (54.5 years ago) and have been continuously licensed ever since (although certainly not actually active on HF for all that time). I upgraded to general (WB2NWM) in February 1965 and eventually advanced in July 1971 and extra in August 1977. Along the way, I also earned a 1st class Radiotelephone License in December 1973 and a 2nd class Radiotelegraph License in 1977 (now foolishly expired). My first equipment was a Johnson Viking Navigator transmitter and Hammarlund HQ-160 (not a typo) receiver. My elmer was WB2IBK, who was my local neighborhood TV repairman. My novice examiner was WA2QNH. I upgraded to a Viking Ranger II and Viking Courier 500-watt amplifier when I became a general.

I have checked my logs and it looks like I first worked the following SKCCers between 1964 and 1967:

WB2MDR (now K2MD) SKCC #10070T - 10/10/1964 on 40m CW

WA4WKL SKCC #3832 - 1/23/1965 on 40m CW

WA9EIC SKCC #3416 - 4/22/1965 on 40m CW

WA8NWT (now N3WT) SKCC #4968T - 8/3/1965 on 40m AM

K8EQH (now K4EQH) SKCC #15992 - 8/24/1966 on 40m AM

K9ENC (now K9ZT) SKCC #1488 - 2/11/1967 on 40m CW

Ok so don't shoot me for the AM contacts. :) Although I never actually worked SSB on my own until 1978, I have been active on CW for all the years I have been active on HF.

73, Barry K2MF

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Robert Reff](#)

Got my novice in 1957 all homebrew gear no money to buy thing would find old tvs on street and take what I could after getting tech went to general then advanced finally extra now I'm all over bands even dx on 40 from Japan to far west all Europe, no foot warmer.

Re: 50 years on HF - 61 for me in a few weeks

From: [Fr Richard R](#)

Ok my expanded brag, was first licensed in 1967 or so while in HS, as WN8YXH in Toledo OH. Let it expire and retook test and became WN8YXF, then took the General in Detroit becoming WB8YXF and a couple years later the Advanced also in Detroit. Also obtain a 3rd class Radiotelephone license, a very viable license, hihi. Had a variety of gear, though my Novice setup was a DX60 and Hammerlund HQ 110 into a dipole. Used a Twoer, AM, for 2m local (still have the Twoer in storage someplace). Was inactive for a couple of years, Getting back on the air in the mid 70's in OH. Inactive again for a few, Then in the mid 90's, in VA, obtained a Kenwood TS 520S, then a TS830 both with matching accessories; speaker, tuner, VFO etc. into a Dipole. Always used a straight key and a Kenwood mic for SSB. Also had a TNC for Packet and Pastor. I did obtain an old amp but didn't use it much. In the mid 90's, went to the VA Beach hamfest. Took my code test for Extra, and passed it, which was a surprise. But failed the written exam. A week later took the written exam again and passed as well as passing the General Radiotelephone exam. Was off the air for a few more years and in 2010, while living in FL, bought an Icom 706 MK 2 G and an AT 180 tuner and a G5RV antenna. Still had the Kenwood gear though it was in storage someplace. Eventually sold the Kenwoods. Joined SKCC in 2011 as I was and still using a straight key. Moved back to VA and eventually purchased a FT 2000 and still using a wire. I do now have a sideswiper which I haven't sat and practiced enough to use on the air yet. I also have a Bencher paddle which I bought to participate in the CW Academy. I do use it once in a while when chasing DX Outside of SKCC ops. Anyway that is my history.

Fr Richard
WB8YXF
8053T

Re: 50 years on HF

From: [Simon Lister](#)

Only 44 years for me from Novice, but didn't start till age 32 so age has rusted my keying somewhat. Trying to learn to send with a Cootie I built, so you won't forget my fist 🤖 Also a K3Y station for OC next month - hope to work you Ben VE1AHX!

69 years on HF

From: [Urb LeJuene](#)

Hi Day after Thanksgiving was the 69 anniversary of my passing my first Ham Radio license. It was the old class "B" license, and about 2 years before there was a Novice license. 13 WPM straight away and a really tough theory test. I was 17 years old and a Junior in high school. I'm trying to write a book, "70 Years a Ham" watch for it on Amazon hi.

73 Urb W1UL



Antenna Work In January

According to Murphy's Law: "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong"...like antennas in January! Personally I think Murphy was an optimist! There is nothing worse than having antenna issues in January especially when hunting/working K3Y. Coax is stiff, tape is both stiff and doesn't stick well, switches don't switch, rotors freeze and that's not to mention your fingers and feet nearly freeze off! Randy N8KQ/K8CGE lost rotor control, coax feeds to his many antennas and K8AQM/KS8KCC had similar issues. A corollary to Murphy's Law is, "The more important the antenna and the more antennas you have, the more Murphy's Law applies! But according to experience, "You just can't have too many antennas!" Don't you just love January antenna work!

Facebook Pictures and News



AA4Q



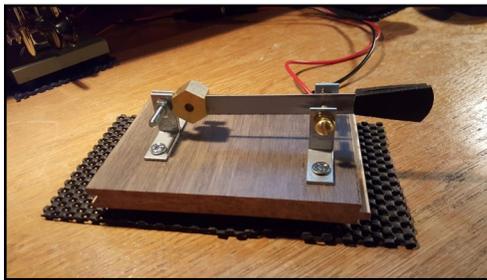
Christian Fitzharris



K9VPR



Thomas Peterson



Home Brew Cootie Model 2A. A little shorter and a little tighter. Plays very well. I needed an extra key for another rig. de Scott N3JJT 255T



Chuck Liebow, AC1BS became a Centurion!



K3Y/3 is QRV, and so is his tea. 1300-1400z



Should I buy it? 73, Tom KC9ECI ED...Heck YES!



Got my 3D Printed Straight Key from Joe KC5ILR. Very nice work. 73, Skip N2EI



How to do a little CW during K3Y event! hi. 73, Jim W1RO



K3Y/9

K3Y/9 multi-multi at home of Ken N8KR 7559s. Photo by JoshW9HT 7474t

December Brag



It's almost K3Y time!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
73, Dan K0FC



An interesting year for me,
thanks to everyone... Looking
forward to K3Y
73, Rick K0KEX



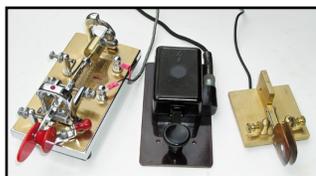
Thanks to Benny (K5KV) for his diligence as
our Bonus donor this month. I found joy as I
toiled to respond to all the 19000+ member
numbers flagged in my Skimmer. I wish them
all good speed toward their "T" and look for-
ward to logging them in my own SX5 quest. All
three of my Cooties got a fair workout in De-
cember. Look for more of the same in the new
year. 73, Mike K5MP



Happy New Year!
Was a fun month with lots
of Brag QSO's including
many new members.
Worked on the TKA and
finished the requirements
for SK & Bug then started
torturing contacts with the
SS (Cootie) starting with
Pat, AA2R on Dec 22. I
found my modified Vibro-
plex VibroKeyer to be
easiest to use for me vs the
homebrew cootie and
modified Bencher and
much easier to use left
handed (I'm right hand-
ed)...Thanks for the QSOs
vy 73, Rick N8XI



December was a
good month for me.
Wishing everyone a
Happy New Year ☐



I spent the month trying to
improve my ability to
switch between key types
more smoothly - even in the
midst of a QSO. Like they
say - practice, practice,
practice. Most used keys
this month, left to right:
Vibroplex Presentation
Deluxe (1956), WW2 Ger-
man Baumuster T1 (I
think), and a W1SFR
TBCP cootie. 73, and a
Happy New Year to all -
from WV Dave W3NP



Another wonderful
month of CW! My
participation certainly
has, um, 'relaxed,'
once I got my S.
Looking forward to
K3Y!!! HNY to all!
73, Lloyd K3ESE



HAPPY NEW YEAR
2019 TO ALL THE
BRAGGERS AND BIG
THANKS TO CURT
WA2JSG THE BRAG
MASTER ! 73, de AL



This month, I worked
most of QSO with an old
German WW II straight
key. I hope to meet you
in K3Y. Happy new year
to you and yours !! 73,
Leon OS0S

MUCHAS GRACIAS ATO-
DOS Y MUCHAS FELICID-
ADES Y TENGAMOS MU-
CHOS CONTACTOS EN
ESTE NUEVO AÑO 73S DE
CHE WP3PW.



I don't usually have enough con-
tacts for a brag but I did better in
December. I hope to eventually get
TKA. I cleaned up an "EL-KEY"
and it seems to work well as a
cootie. Thanks to John K8JD for
enduring my first cootie contact!
73, Lane WK4WC



Got my average goal of
3 brags a day. Thanks
to all for the QSOs. 73,
Dave KB1WOD



My brand new Vibroplex
chrome plated SK!! Thanks to
my om Gil, WB9TFH. I used
it the day after Christmas.
Thanks to the brag bonus sta-
tion and all the brag stations. I
had fun. HNY!! 73, Donna
WB9TFF



My Memories of K3Y/8(KS8KCC) 2019 Event



Larry K8TEZ Steve NQ8T on 30m

Having had no snow to date and expecting above normal temperatures Steve NQ8T and I were anxious to hit the road for our annual trip to Michigan to participate in K3Y/8. I had forgotten that Ted had replaced all the stations with Elecraft K-3 radios and I have never operated one but nevertheless we were quite anxious to start pounding out CQ K3Y on 30 meters which is the band we usually work. I gave out a quick CQ and had multiple replies to my call. Unknowingly the rig was set up with a wide filter and finding it impossible to pull out any one call I quickly called out for help to reset the filter and

“clarifier”. This seemed to get everyone’s attention. We had 5 stations on the air and about 10 people in the shack at the time. Everyone started laughing and told us that only CB radios had a “clarifier” (I had one on one of my Yaesu rigs !) and we finally realized that what I needed to tell them was that “WHERE IS THE RIT CONTROL!” Jeremy KD8VSQ, finally came to our rescue -set up the narrow cw filters and got into the menu to set the RIT for us. Ah, great, now to see how Ted’s Junker key sounds. Another CQ K3Y, but the key is not sending the dits correctly. Yikes! Another call for help to K8AQM who told me the contacts were silver and the key is only used once a year for K3Y. Great, but how do I open the case to clean the key, I finally figured out that the case lifts up from the front (sort of like the hood on my dad’s 39 Pontiac Silver Streak” I used to pull up on the Indian’s head and dad would lift the hood up to check the oil and antifreeze). Ok, got it now. Now to try Ted’s Junker again. Oops, Ted’s “Official” SKCC coffee cup is on the edge of the desk very close to the key and being half full of coffee I was afraid to move it as I remembered that a couple of years ago Ted set his sandwich near where I was working so I had no choice but to eat it and he still tells people about that incident! Nevertheless, we had a fantastic time again and Ted is right, “it’s not about winning, it’s about the comrade –the food- and all the fantastic lies we tell each other (we wouldn’t have it any other way.)”

I want to personally thank all of you who contacted us at K3Y/8 (KS8KCC); at the time Steve and I had to give up the key and return to Ohio, I believe we had worked around 36 of you on 30 meters...Ted will probably have a write up in the newsletter with the final count in it.

Finally I will leave you with a picture of the 39 Pontiac Silver Streak on the hood and it was the memories of this thing that enabled me to open the case to work on that Junker key.

73 to everyone in SKCC,

Larry K8TEZ 8426t



It's All in Your Head

By Lee WB4QOJ Member SKCC # 10276

Most hams know a day's only see Digital or SSB some AM on HF. FM on VHF or UHF. But, another world is out there and waiting for all to explore CW. Let me back up a few years (maybe many). Taking your test in front of an FCC examiner. It was tough because most of us waited till they showed up at a testing session once or twice a year. You studied hard, got CW under your belt 5 wpm Novice, 13 wpm General and Advanced and 20 wpm Extra. Then you had to copy five minutes and you had to get a straight one minute error free in that five mins. I was sweating bullets. Well it was not over, you then had to do the same back to the examiner with a straight key WOW ! ROUGH THE PRESSURE WAS ON. Then all the written questions, mounds of math and on and on. Enough to give you an ulcer. It was worth it, you were proud and you had slain the Dragon. A lot of new Hams or want to be Hams today do not have the good fortune of having a mentor. That is why New Hams are lucky when they can connect with a Club or individual Ham to take them under the wing to make sure good practices are followed. WE ALL NEED TO PRACTICE THIS WITH NEW HAMS.

Well, a little off track but it all works together. I have heard a lot of chatter from some hams and others around talking about brushing up on, THAT'S RIGHT CW, Continuous Wave, Dots and Dashes yes MORSE CODE. The original digital. It's fun, it's not dead and it is something that takes time to conquer. Many years ago when I was a Shortwave Listener an inspiring Ham, there was a man that lived two streets over from my house. He had a small house and a small garage he turned into a ham shack. Every time I went by his house on my bicycle there was a new antenna. All wires or homemade verticals all shapes and sizes and configurations. I was amazed. One day I stopped in, I was about 14 years old and asked him if I could see what he was doing, being an old time ham he said sure young-in come on in to the ham shack. He had an old Johnson Invader Transmitter and a National NC303 Receiver, I was drooling. He had 300 ohm twin lead (homemade) coming in threw the wall to a kilowatt Johnson Matchbox. On his desk was an old Black and White Remington Manual Typewriter. (More on that later) I asked him what he liked about ham radio the most, he said fast and very dogmatically "ANTENNA BUILDING and CW". I understood the Antenna part but not the CW part at that moment. We talked about antennas, matching networks, feed lines and what worked best in his mind. What worked for him was always tinkering and building. (A TRUE HAM IN ALL SINCE OF THE WORD). Then we started talking CW. He had an old Vibroplex a grey one not fancy but it worked for him. He fired up the receiver on 40 meters, his favorite band. Low end CW portion and all I could hear was ringing. Now the Typewriter. He did not write a QSO down he copied it down on his manual typewriter at 45 WPM that's right 45, FORTY-FIVE, 100% COPY. But now comes the fun part. As we were talking CW ringing in the back ground, he started laughing. I thought I said something wrong. It was not me it was the CW ringing out of the NC303 on 40 meters at about 30 wpm. He apologized and said that the QSO in the back-ground was several friends that he talked to all the time and one told a joke he thought was funny. OK THINK ABOUT THAT. We were talking face to face and he was coping 30 wpm CW IN HIS HEAD and heard the joke and thought it was funny. WOW what a talent. I was inspired. Then finally some time later I got my Novice. He helped me with SWL antenna designs and IT WAS FUN. You know 40 meters is a big SWL Band HI HI.

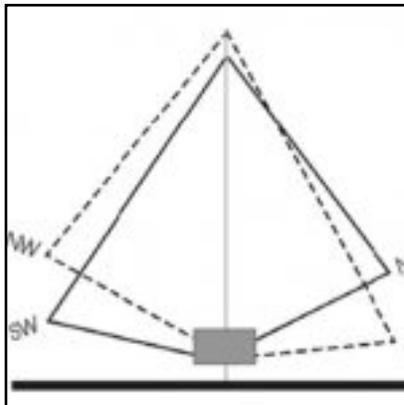
So, if you are brushing on your CW GO FOR IT. New Ham Seasoned Ham, you may not be like my ham friend from years past. BUT, HAVE FUN, Contesting, Rag chewing or just tuning around, QRO or QRP, It's all part of the hobby and it's not dead. Then or NOW. Dah-Dit-Dah

K9AY Listening Array...Wow!



I had a chance to acquire a used K9AY listening array, used for 160m and 80m at a very reasonable price. Long ago in my contest days I had several beverage listening antennas running through my woods. Age has caught-up a bit with me and I can no longer maintain wires running through woods and the onslaught of down trees and limbs. With the much smaller footprint of this array I can maintain the K9AY in the woods. But does it work as well as a beverage listening antenna? No....but it is darn good!

After installing the antenna a test on 160m would tell the tale. Unfortunately 160m during the day doesn't offer much to test....but the broadcast band sure does! With the direction selector set to NE a weak AM station was found; turning the direction indicator to SE the station disappeared...but a new station was clearly heard...wow! Again the direction selection was turned to the SW; that station too disappeared and new third station was heard...wow, wow! At the fourth position of NW nothing new appeared and all signals were reduced to nil copy. This system really works...wow, wow, wow!



Two triangles set up and attached to a switch system for choosing directions

During 160m operation in the December SKS (KS8KCC) the antenna was great. Our 160m operator Max, W8KBW enjoyed separating and pulling stations out on 160m that the inverted L just couldn't do. It was a pleasure to use this antenna as a "signal rejecter," "an unwanted noise rejecter" and a "signal enhancer."

73, Ted K8AQM



Inside control box for a four direction K9AY array



This is my new key. I haven't used a Bug since the 60's. 73, Dean K7NO



New desk...new shack set up! 73, Jim KD8YQX



January WES Pixs and Notes



Saturday operated from the car at a nearby park, using a new Yaesu FT-891, running 50W, and a short Hamstick style antenna (3 ft. long) on a magnet mount. 20m was great and made contacts all the way to CA and FRA from NY. Sunday only an hour of operation, 40m was already long and 80m had a sky high noise, but still managed to have a few QSOs. Lots of fun! Thank you everyone. Can't wait for the next SKCC event. CU in the bands! 73 de AC2RJ, Ruben.



Still had the Drake TR-4 on the desk from SKN. Used it this month along with a Lightning Bug from 1942. My Dad bought the TR-4 new when he upgraded to General in 1971. I used it for my first QSO in '76. My sister had it for a while to keep skeds with Dad and I. Spent all my time on 40 meters. Hope to see you all next month. 73, Noel K8NB



Always a pleasure to have a few QSO with SKCC friends even if my station is not a powerful one! HNY to all and see you soon for SKCC contacts. All contacts were done with my good old 1942 Lionel J36 bug key. 73, Bernard F5DE



Portable on NE WY border on Jan 12th. QSO's include those made while K3Y/7 and also before K3Y/0 shift started. Does not include QSO's made on WARC bands as K3Y. 73, John K0FTC/7



Primarily used a bug this WES. Spent most of Saturday fabricating a bug tamer so I could slow it down. Only two trips to the local hardware store hi hi. The result was a 17 wpm 1937 Les Logan SpeedX. I even called CQ a few times with the bug on Sunday. I had fun... 73 to all who suffered through my form-



Not much to report really. Poor condx and poor antenna, but still good fun. 73, John G0RDO



Portable on NE WY border on Jan 12th. QSO's include those made while K3Y/0 and also before shift started. Score does not include QSO's made on WARC bands as K3Y. 73, John K0FTC/7



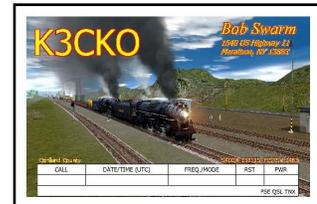
Only had time to work one -Here is my excuse- Thanks Ed K1EDG for K3Y/1 on 160 meters - Great signal down here on Lake Erie . 73, Larry K8TEZ



Very brief openings... entering Gleissberg Cycle? TA33 - 50W - HM DSK + a German Kaiser epoch SK. 73, Walt LW3EX



Operating as GBOKEY. Getting almost nothing after dark at the moment, 20m during the day is variable but can be pretty good. About half these contacts with HW-100, remainder with K2 + Juma PA100-D. Hexbeam (20) Dipole (40) EFHW (80). Good fun, thanks all 73, Peter GM0EUL



Not much time to operate this weekend. Most of my contacts were 80 meters Saturday night. It was fun while it lasted. Rig was a Ten-Tec Pegasus at 90 watts. Antenna was a G5RV up 50 feet. Key was a British A.T. M. Screen grid Straight key. 73, Bob K3CKO



40 was very QSB on Saturday. Sunday 10 opened for about 30 minutes to the NE all sigs 599, lots of fun. Spent much time during the WES getting my Butternut HP6v up in the air, fine tuning tomorrow. NAQP jammed 20 and 40. 73 de AL N4ow 11375s

More January WES



This was a special WES for me. In the picture I attached is a Vibroplex lightening bug (circa 1928) that was given to me by my aunt this past week. This key belonged to my late grandfather and he used it during his time at Western Union in the 1930's and afterwards until his retirement from the C&G railroad in Mississippi. What a honor to have and now use this special piece of my family history. 57 more contacts with the bug and I will have my TAK finished as well Thanks all for putting up with my fist as I learn to master the bug... 73, Brian KQ4MM



Operated QRP-portable on Saturday and Sunday from two different local parks. Made some more progress on my slow-but-steady march towards Tx7 and worked some K3Y stations. Cold but fun! 73, Craig WB3GCK



The quantity was nothing to write home to Mom about but you can't argue the quality! BIG TNX to Barry, W4LSV!, and all who suffered through my horrible fist. The "foeToe" is of my "K8TV 1 ton tun-



I only had time for 2 contacts this time. Sat. night I was tuning around for WES contacts and found Tony, KG5GGI in the old novice band on 40m. We exchanged numbers then chatted for about 35 minutes. Rig this time was a Flex 3000 at 5 watts into a doublet at 30 ft fed with ladder line. The key was a 1941 Vibroplex Original that I haven't had on the air in about 9 months. It was good to get back in practice with the bug. 73, Kerry, WD5ABC SKCC #12



Good 40M opening to the east coast Sunday morning. Was able to finish up my TKA. Thanks to those who suffered through my bug fist. Feeling more comfortable using a "FatBoy" cootie key made by W1SFR. Now a favorite. WES was challenging but fun as usual. 73, Dave WB9EGZ



Not much time to work Sprint. QRN/QRM es QSB really bad. 73, Les



Another fun WES, used only my KX2 @ 12w, K1 @7w and KX1 @ 4w along with my TinyBug and EFHW wire antenna. Covered 40/30/20 and 17m on Saturday, managed two more Q's on Sunday after work on 40m. Conditions were pretty fair on Saturday here in Florida....Got tough thou with NAQP contest underway in the afternoon. Had a fun time with the low power radios ! Thanks to the ops out there, you guys are great !! Back to K3Y now, have slots to fill and areas to catch ! 73, de Ed N7EDK Bradenton,



As often happens for the January WES, I was alias K3Y/7 during the two hours that I devoted to this month's sprint. I'll include a photo of where the rubber meets the road (figuratively) in my radio shack - the two keys that I used during the WES. The pic is carefully cropped to hide the glorious mess that surrounds them. 73, Gary K9ZMD



Had a blast. Bands and noise not the best but managed to work a handful. Thanks everyone! 73, Steve W0PWR



The beginning of the NAQP seemed to really slow WES activity. Some of us moved up to our alternate frequencies but it would have been better if more followed. In any case, it was a lot of fun. 73, Roger W6LAX

Working K3Y the Hard Way!



Thank you very much Art (W2NRA) for hearing my weak signal with lots of QSB here today. You are the first QSO from my new QTH in Brownstown Township, MI. Kris and I moved into a newly built condo just about a week ago, and I am using a Buddipole antenna in the basement. I was running 50 watts from my bench radio (ICOM 718) into the antenna at ground level. HI See the attached photo. Your great station and excellent ears made this KY3/2 contact possible on 40 meters at 2 in the afternoon.

73 es TU, de Jeff K9JP SKCC #3008S

Ed...Received this note and picture from Jeff K9JP. He also worked Bert F6HKA on 40m! Must be the "southern propagation" Jeff is experiencing as he has moved from northern Michigan (Traverse City) to the southern tier of Michigan counties!

Books All Amateurs Should Read...just for fun!

When the bands are dead or you're on vacation with the XYL and radio is "verboten," you might want to consider reading some of the books below. Walker A Tompkins (K6ATX) a SK, wrote a great series about "Tommy Rockford" and his adventures in amateur radio (the bottom row of books). "Isle Royale Calling" is an exciting adventure of a sinking ship in Lake Superior, finally of course if you're old enough to remember reading "The Hardy Boys," you may remember "The Sort-Wave Mystery" and might enjoy rereading that...again. Finally, Cynthia Wall wrote some amateur radio adventure books. All these books are very quick reads and meant for younger readers....hmm, a path to get the "grandkids" into radio?

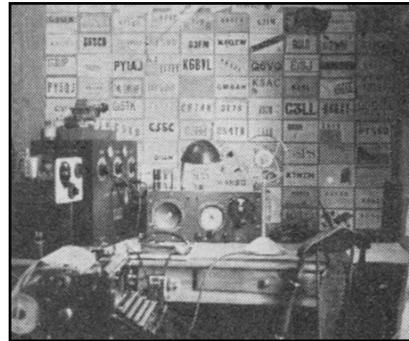
There are many more interesting books on amateur radio of a non-technical nature, do a Google search. The biggest problem is finding these used books (many out of print) at a reasonable price. Check the internet and your local library along with used book store for these enjoyable amateur radio adventures.



A Reading Adventure We Can All Relate To

The following article is reprinted with permission from the ARRL. The story first appeared in QST pre-WWII and although the equipment may be unfamiliar, the story emotion may ring true for many of us.

Perhaps further stories from W4VT may appear here in the Rag Chew. John C. Flippin W4VT, produced several excellent radio stories in QST.



A Tug at Your Memory

By John C. Flippin, W4VT*

THE fire in the shack of the university radio station burned low and conversation lagged. Every now and then someone yawned lustily. The hands of the old clock pointed to five minutes after two, yet half a dozen seniors lingered, for the fire was magnetic, the walk back to the dormitory and fraternity houses long; and the night was cold. Lazy, feathery flakes, beginning to drift down at midnight, had changed to a fine, peppery mist swirling in from the north, and the wind moaned down the chimney in icy cadences.

Jug Southgate stood up and stretched.

"See you mugs in church," he grunted, looking around for his overcoat.

"Wait a minute. I will let you walk with me. Hey! get your big feet off me!"

"Freshman, where are the earmuffs?"

"Right here, sir."

"Put them on at once. Anybody would think you had no modesty at all."

"Get up! Get up!"

"Coming, Ivy?"

"Let's go."

Exiled in a shadowy corner, a group of freshmen had been listening in respectful silence. Now they rose, after a discreet interval, and removing their sky blue caps from their hip pockets placed them carefully on the backs of their heads. Beside them stood a little fellow who was busily engaged in wrapping a rather frayed scarf around

* 3222 Choctaw Ave., Memphis, Tenn.

his small neck. Judging from his stature he could not have been much older than fourteen, and he looked very small and out of place beside them. The shadows from the fire treated mercifully the worn places on the elbows of the coat which was so obviously designed for a larger occupant; they shielded understandingly the worn, cracked shoes with the scuffed toes.

His name was Jim. Nobody knew much about him except that he lived up in town some where, and that every Saturday night he appeared at the shack, slipping quietly into a seat amid the shadows in the corner, and listened with rapt attention to every word that anyone uttered. He always stayed until the group of fellows broke up. Jim replied feebly and shyly to those who would talk to him, apparently embarrassed at the attention. His face and hands were very thin and his eyes were very bright. He was a small outsider looking in on a gathering with which he could join only in spirit. College would never be for Jim.

The wind whined savagely. A flurry of snow beat a faint tattoo on the window.

"Ouch!" muttered Ivy. "Listen to that!"

Jug cast his gaze around as he pulled on his gloves. The staccato clatter of the keying relay in the adjoining room reminded him to caution Parkes about playing the end of the band too closely since the multivibrator was down for revamping. Turning back, his glance rested for an instant on Jim stretching his hands out to

give them a last warming. Something about the little fellow's appearance arrested Jug's attention. Maybe it was the tattered edge of that scarf about Jim's ears.

"What do you say over there, sport?"

Jim didn't notice.

"You over there by the fire! Got a way to get in?"

Jim looked up, and saw Jug looking at him. He straightened up quickly and thrust his hands into his coat pockets.

"Sir?"

"Got a ride into town with somebody?"

"No."

"What are you going to do—walk?"

"Yes," answered Jim.

"Pretty long way, isn't it?"

A pause.

"Not so much."

Jug embarrassed Jim a great deal, because Jug was the chief operator and wore sterling crossed bars of chain lightning on the shoulder of the navy blue jersey. There was no greater this side of Heaven, save perhaps the three comprising the transmitting staff.

Jug shoved his pipe in his mouth and turned the bowl down. He squinted up at the clock.

"Hold on, frosh!"

He pulled off his gloves and searched in his hip pocket, producing nothing but a handkerchief and a crumpled pack of cigarettes.

"Can't find 'em. Listen! You know where the Sigma House is? OK—you go over there and look around in the back. My iron ought to be there, but if it isn't, get any of them that will start. You know mine?"

"Yes, sir."

"Look around in the front seat and find you a hairpin or something and short around the switch under the dash. You know?"

"Yes, sir."

"And hurry up, frosh!"

Rather bewildered, Jim listened.

"I can get there all right," he said finally.

Jug grunted and sat down.

"Where do you live in town?"

"Er—down by the depot. The third house from the corner."

"Guess you know all the trains."

"I guess so. The freights make an awful lot of QRM when I'm trying to listen."

Jug stuffed his pipe slowly and extracted an ember from the hearth.

"You one of these amateurs, too?"

"Yes, that is—I mean, I have a station, but it's not much good, I guess."

A flicker of surprise crossed Jug's persistently sunburned countenance.

"Didn't know there was another station within fifty miles of here," he admitted. "What do you use? Never heard you."

"A 201-A," answered Jim.

The rectifiers down below howled faintly.

"Any DX?" asked Jug, quizzically, glancing at the little chap out of the corner of his eye.

"No, I—you see, I never worked anybody."

"What's the trouble?"

Jim stopped the nervous movements of his small hands and wiggled his thumb, just to see if it would wiggle.

"I don't know."

"Just don't come back, eh?"

"No."

"Call many of them?"

"Yes, I—well, I call a lot of fives and nines and fours."

"Sure you're in the band?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I cover up my receiver with a cracker box and then I can hear the transmitter. After I take off my receiving aerial," he added.

Jug looked at Jim for an instant, and then gazed again into the fire. There was a pause while Jim twisted his small, thin hands nervously.

"I know it's putting out," said Jim, faintly, "because I get a burn."

"Burn, eh?"

"Yes."

"Just don't come back."

"No."

The pity of it.

"Much of a burn?"

"Well, I can feel it on the back of my finger."

Jim held up the radio frequency detector.

"How long have you been trying to raise them?"

"Since about May—I mean, April."

"Nine months."

"Yes," answered Jim, after a pause.

Jug exhaled a cloud of smoke through his nose and regarded the fire. Some game, this! Nine months and never a break.

There was a dull rattle of contactors down below, followed by a volley of clicks in the adjoining room.

"What made that?"

"Sounds like he switched in the '7'—the forty-meter rig."

"You mean he's using another set, now?"

"Just the amplifier. Switched over the exciter from the 80-meter to the 40-meter amplifier."

"Oh!"

"Sit down! Sit down! Make yourself comfortable. Guess it'll be about fifteen minutes, yet."

Jim slid cautiously into the nearest chair. Suddenly he turned and regarded Jug inquiringly.

"Would you mind—I mean, would it be all right if I looked in there?" he asked, pointing to the transmitter room.

"Sure! Go ahead. Help yourself. Wouldn't get too close, though, to the one nearest this side."

Jim opened the door cautiously and craned

his small neck. He stood transfixed for long minutes.

"Gee!" he whispered.

"Look all right?" Jug asked, pulling his pipe apart and blowing through it with two short snorts.

"Gee!" said Jim again.

Five minutes passed with only the wind, the old clock, and the keying relay breaking the silence.

Jug looked at the swirl of smoke ascending the broad black throat of the chimney, and his thoughts travelled back to a day—so long ago, it seemed—when that UV-202, its plate glowing brightly, brought the antenna ammeter to life. As he recalled, the pointer moved over about a thirty-second of an inch, but at the time, it looked like a foot!

And then that red-letter day. He had just called CQ. It was just one of many scores of CQ's. There was nothing to distinguish it from all the others except that on this occasion 9EKY in St. Louis came back. The wild shout that brought the gardener, the chauffeur, and both maids breathless to the sanctum over the garage was not, as they feared, Mr. Edward Southgate III getting a mortal shock from his peculiar conglomeration of wires and sparkling Mason fruit jars, but merely the result of Mrs. Southgate's youngest son making contact number one with his trusty bottle!

Jug looked at Jim standing in the door. The frayed scarf. The worn old overcoat hanging awkwardly from his small body.

"Know the code pretty well?" Jug asked, rising slowly, and returning the tobacco pouch to his pocket.

"Sir?"

"Can you copy pretty well?"

"Yes—well, I guess I can copy ten words a minute, I guess."

"Want to go upstairs?"

"Upstairs?"

"Want to see the operating room?"

"Oh! Yes!"

Jug led the way with Jim following at his heels. A series of coughs escaped Jim at the top of the flight, and alarm possessed him that he would disturb the operator. He tiptoed in behind Jug, his small face radiant with excited expectation.

"What say, Jug?"

"Lo, Bohunk. How goes it?"

"Fair."

"Where you working now?"

"Using 7005. Don't worry, it's inside."

"Did you check it with the oven?"

"Yes, it's right on the line."

Jim was all eyes. He looked at the Single-Signal receiver, at the typewriter, at the 100-kc. secondary frequency standard, at the steel front control panel alongside the operating desk. The shiny brass handwheel on it. The meters. All

the relays in the back. The lacing on the cable runs. Resistors standing upright in groups. Jim's excited inspection saw it all!

"Anything coming through?"

"Few. Good many VK's and ZL's. Heard J2GX a minute ago. May be pretty fair later on."

Jug rested his elbows on the operating table and said something to Collier Parkes. Jim didn't hear. Jim was busy. He was looking intently at a Kleinschmidt perforator partially disassembled, wondering what manner of thing it was.

Parkes grinned.

"Sure! Sure!"

Jug's voice dropped lower.

"No," said Collier, "I got one with K6BAZ in fifteen minutes. Plenty of time for that, though. You go ahead while I go out here and look up another pad of message blanks—or something," he added.

He disappeared, clattering down the stairs.

"Want to listen in?" Jug asked, motioning to the receiver.

Jim came over to the operating desk and looked at Jug, then looked at the receiver. A great fear came over him. It was too beautiful to get close to; the baffling controls marked "R.F. Gain," "Selectivity," "A V C" "Voice—C W," and "Crystal Filter" were formidable. It was only to be looked upon from a distance.

Jug pulled the swivel chair up with his foot.

"Sit down. Sit down."

Jim let himself down slowly and looked around at the control panel. His elbow touched the shiny handwheel, and he hastily pulled it back, and then let it slide down again. This was real. It was not a dream.

Jug tripped one of the switches up with his thumb and motioned to the knob in the center.

"Turn that one."

Jim looked up at him inquiringly and touched the knob timidly. The shadow scale above it moved slightly. How easily it turned! Encouraged, he moved it a little more. A faint hiss which had begun to evidence itself in the dynamic speaker was at that instant ripped asunder by a kaleidoscope of crisp, bell-like signals which caused the moving coil of the speaker to wiggle perceptibly. Jim looked at it quickly. The sound seemed to hit him in his stomach, like when the bass drum passed in a parade. Just listen! A procession of grunts, drones and crystal ringing notes shrilled slowly by.

"Slow! Slow! Back this way."

Jim turned the knob back. Gee! It turned so easily, just seemed to glide! Entranced, he watched the shadowy divisions and numbers slip across the sloping, ground glass window. Was this real? His elbow slid back against the handwheel inquiringly. Yes, it was real, all right.

Slowly the dial moved back toward the 7000-kc. end. The terrific honk of W6's tore through. A myriad of faint signals in between that a touch

of Jug's finger on the gain transformed into car-splitting intensity.

"Whoa!"

A faint lisping note. Jug brought it up to a good level. It seemed to stand out on top of all the rest, miraculously. The lisp increased in intensity. It signed.

"Hear that?"

Jim nodded.

"Japanese."

Jim's heart skipped a beat.

"Go on."

The dial crept back up the scale. A terrific shot of 100-cycle r.a.c. A fluttering rattle.

"Alaskan."

A hollow ringing crystal note with a peculiar wavering undertone.

"Get this one."

It was a long, slow CQ DX. It signed.

Jim's hands were trembling.

"KA1HR. Get it?"

Jim nodded.

"Philippines."

Jim's trembling increased.

The signal faded in slowly, dying away into the background roar, returning.

Jim's heart was pounding so hard it shook him.

"Calling DX."

Thousands of miles of black, tumbling ocean intervened. Outside, the two great towers, outlined irregularly in white, rose up and up into the swirling snow; downstairs the input reactors sang monotonously in the ghastly glow of the rectifiers. The filaments of the push-pull stage in the 7-me. amplifier imparted a dull radiance to the polished edges of the neutralizing condenser discs. All were waiting, ready to hurl the dynamite.

"AR," grunted Jug, and with his thumb tripped a breaker closing switch at Jim's side. "OK! Go after him! Use the straight key over there."

Little Jim was shaking noticeably. He reached hesitantly over the battery of Vibroplexes strewn before him and grasped the key knob. He felt paralyzed. An hour seemed to pass. Suddenly the knob gave. Awkwardly he sent "KA" and stopped.

"What was his call again? Oh, yes—er . . ."

He began to call slowly and erratically. After a little he steadied a bit, but his heart was pounding so hard he couldn't control his arm. He was trembling as with a chill.

Downstairs, the pair of 204-A's, no respectors of persons, fired skyward all the savage energy that 4400 volts could impart. At every closure of the relay, the burnished plates of the tank condenser paled fitfully in the semi-darkness.

"Give him a long buzz."

Jim heard, but couldn't obey. The strength was gone out of him. Suddenly he found himself signing. He signed twice. K.

"Boy, you sure must believe in this signal all right," grunted Jug, tripping the breaker release.

For an instant only the background roar. Then the wavering drone started up.

Calling them.

"Well, what do you say now?" muttered Jug, glancing quizzically at Jim.

He didn't answer for a moment. Two large drops deposited themselves suddenly upon the log.

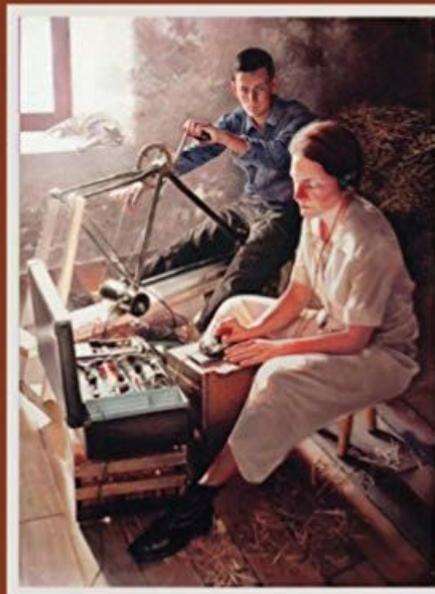
A faint sob came from the little fellow.

"I worked somebody," whispered little Jim.



The Spy with the Wooden Leg

THE STORY OF VIRGINIA HALL



Nancy Polette

April, 1935

Another great book for radio reading for pleasure. (I just ordered it)

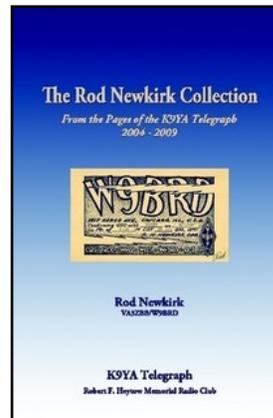
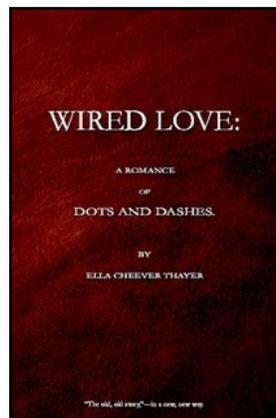
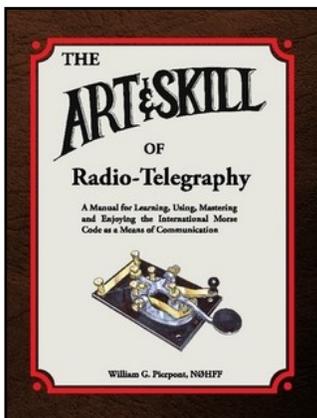
If you liked the last story then you might want to consider the following:



The K9YA Telegraph is a great newsletter published monthly that contains many great articles, cartoons and stories. It's a free subscription. It's not a QRP club, not a QRO club, not a DX Club; it's just plain good reading. Go to K9YA.org and start enjoying many well written amateur radio adventures.

They offer some great books (I have all three) that you will enjoy and all at very reasonable prices.

"The Art and Skill of Radio Telegraphy" is a "must" for reference on sending and copying skills. "Wired Love" is just an enjoyable story to read. "The Rod Newkirk Collection" is excellent and full of humorous and interesting stories of amateur radio as told by W9BRD, Rod (SK)



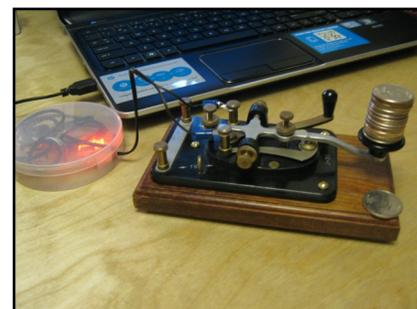
Key Tension?

Ken N7KO, asked the question, "What is the tension on your key?" Well, he asked it a bit differently, "How many quarters does it take to make a contact?" If you have the quarters needed, give it a try and let him know! It took me eight quarters; also on a Lionel J38.



A J38 Made by Lionel. 73, Ken N7KO

How many Quarters does it take to make a contact? . I am trying to figure out spring setting to have on my straight key, if you all would stack quarters on your key and let me know how many it took to make contact then it would give me a better idea on where to set my spring adjustment. By the way I made contact when I set the 18th quarter on.



News via Facebook



Visiting my daughter here in West Tennessee and got K3Y/EU in France with 5 watts using a big stick antenna sitting on the rug of my temporary (messy hi hi) 2nd floor bedroom. This stuff is really fun! Curt WA2JSG/4 TN



Proud and delighted to have made it to C today! Thanks to everyone who worked me over the last couple of years and thanks to everyone who helped me over the line in this current K3Y. I've really appreciated the calls during the "final countdown" over the last few days! 73 Peter GM0EUL/GB0KEY



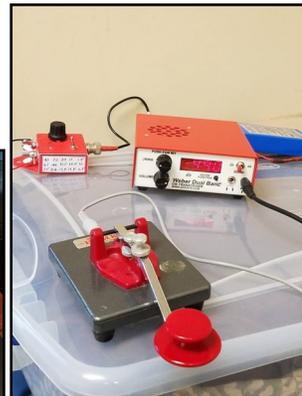
Last days of 2019 K3Y...it's been fun, even with my limited antenna farm & high QRN levels up here in the PNW. Thanks to all for the contacts (and attempts)! 73, Vic KB7GL



VE3FDZ my first CW tnx to VE3RRD for your help as an Elmer. 73, John VE3FDZ



Here u will see my new vintage hand key, made in 1901. Now I will use this wonderful hand key. 73, Vagn OZ1OXQ Below, same key but cleaned and ready for use



Not much of a set up, but already made me a couple K3Y contacts, I love activating SWOTA, (semi-working-on-the-air)! 73, Marc AD4CW.



Operating ye ole bug just before Sunday sunrise on Winter Field Day. At least 3 SKCC members were at the K7CCN Winter Field Day site. 2 locals and one from Ohio. Fun Stuff this CW, no matter where you are using it. 73,



Got the \$40 SE1443A cleaned up and mounted on a brass base. Not a bad little antique shop find. 73, Cody

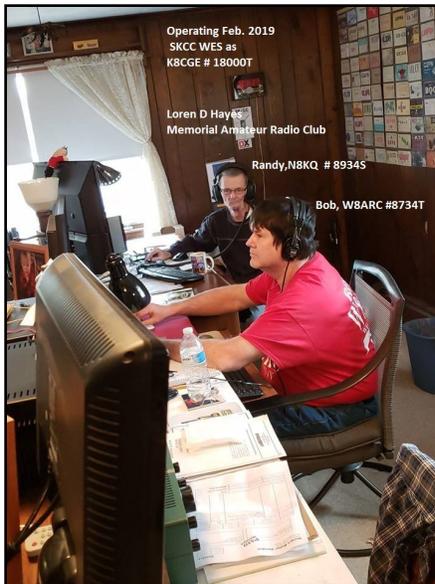
Just wondering if anyone in this group has ever used a BaMaKeY EHT-I if so your feedback would be much appreciated. 73, Enzo VE3VTG

K3Y/8 Multi-multi @ K8CGE 2019

The K8CGE/N8KQ station has two major operating positions and is a QRO operation from Ohio. You can see from the photo both stations are well equipped and comfortable for operations. K3Y/8 and WES weekends have been the K8CGE station's favorite operating events.



It's only been in the last two years the station has been really built up. There are always issues to contend with and Randy(N8KQ) and his cousin Bob (W8ARC) have tackled and over-come multi-multi QRO shack issues. The biggest problem is intra-station interference, a problem many of us have experienced in our club Field Day operations. The use of bandpass filters, better grounding, antenna placements and better quality coax have all helped



K8CGE/N8KQ has become one of the premier "big score" stations in SKCC...including two very quality ops!

It helps when you have quality equipment as this beautiful Henry 2KD amplifier providing a solid signal on the band. No doubt you have worked that head-phone-blowing 40 and 80m signal from K8CGE, now you know why!



But as stated earlier in the newsletter

"Murphy" and the wx play no favorites to either QRO or QRP stations. Check out how Randy overcame the WX to fix a frozen rotor in sub zero wx!

None of three multi multi stations shown in the newsletter would tell you it's easy to set up, but all would tell you how much the fun of operating with friends is. We would no doubt all quote the old "A Team" slogan, "I love it when a plan comes together!" TNX Randy!



Randy, N8KQ-- Ready to head out into the sub zero weather to check out all the antenna problems. Not in July, oh no... Only in East Ohio in January... Dedicated Ham....



Align the tower, Rotor Problems. Hand turning the beam on the hazer can be lowered... N8KQ



Loosening the rotor bolts so we can turn the beam and lower the hazer and remove the rotor. N8KQ



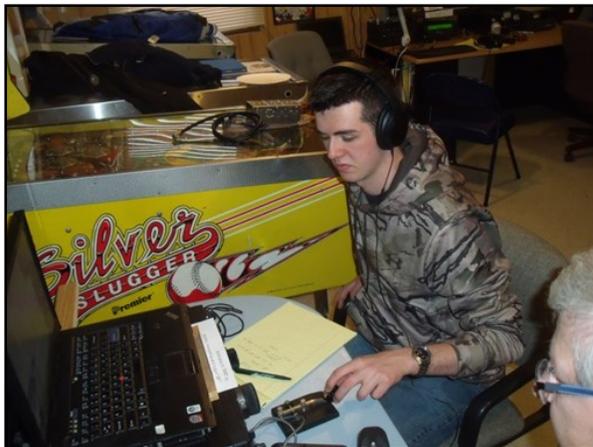
Ready to remove and install a new rotor capacitor in the Rotor Control

K3Y/9 Multi-multi @ N8KR 2019

Ken – N8KR was assigned K3Y/9 for 12 hours on January 12. For the 3rd straight year, the N8KR shack was home to area SKCCers who multi-op'd the K3Y/9 callsign. This year, 10 area hams, most, members of the Fort Wayne Radio Club, made over 200 cw contacts covering 46 states and 8 countries. Ben, KD8VMU made his first contact with Japan while operating.



Pictured above are Jim, KD9GDY and Terry, K9FMX at the 30/40m station on the left, Ed , WA9BBN and Joe, WB9EAO at the 160/80/17m station in the center, and Jay, W9LW at the 10/15/20m station on the right. Other visitor/ops included Carl, K9LA, Josh, W9HT, Ben , KD8VMU, and Don, K9LI. While the pictures show everyone busy at the radios, there was plenty of time for face to face “ragchewing” with plenty of food and snacks and pop to add to the fun! We’re all ready to do this again next January with more area hams!!



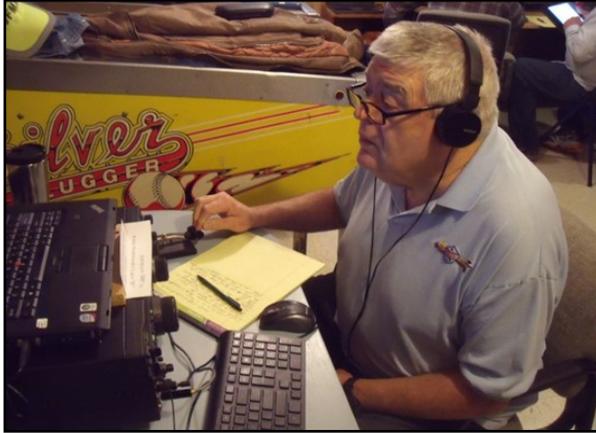
Ben ,KD8VMU...



Jim, KD9GDY Ed, WA9BBN...what's with these *southpaws*??

Noteworthy: The two ops pictured above have been hams for less than two years. Ben is just 18 years old! Both joined SKCC just over a year ago and both are active SKCC cw operators. Ben is working on his T while Jim is working on Tx2! Jim also ran K3Y/9 at his station this year! Look for them in upcoming events along with Ed – WA9BBN (also pictured above) who also joined SKCC a little over a year ago and is working on Tx8!! SKCC is alive and active in the Fort Wayne, IN area! CU on the bands de Ken – N8KR

More K3Y/9 Multi-multi @ N8KR 2019



Terry – K9FMX #1833



Joe – WB9EAO #12021S

Ed...This there were three known multi-multi operations, K3Y/9 @ N8KR, K3Y/8 @ K8CGE and another K3Y/8 @KS8KCC. What's the fascination with multi-multi...it's like an indoor Field Day; laughs, food and cw! Do you need a super station...no! A couple dipoles, a trib-ander and some good friends and you're all set. You could do multi single too, one radio and two ops...geez, everyone likes laughs, food and CW so why not give this a try next year!

Keeping Your Key in Place

After many years of use, I noticed when I was using my old Bencher iambic key, it tended to slide across the smooth Formica table top of my operating desk. I found this was due



to age-related hardening of the rubber feet. Consideration was given to either trying to rejuvenate the foot surfaces or perhaps just replace them. Then I tried an old trick of setting the key on a rectangle of fine sandpaper as shown in the pic. This completely stabilized the key.

If you try this remedy, use the better quality sandpaper material - it has a gummy back surface which holds the rectangle in place against the table top.

73, Gene, N5GW

Ed....Although Gene used this for his iambic paddle, the method would hold true for straight key, cootie or bug. This semi adhesive sandpaper is available at many big box stores.

K3Y/8 Multi-multi @ KS8KCC 2019

The “Dit-Dah CW Gang” (KS8KCC) operated multi transmitter-multi operator again this year as K3Y/8. It is a gathering of friends, food and CW contacts over a two day period.



Front to back: George KC8CJG on 17m, Stan AC8W on 20m

This year 24 SKCCers gathered over the weekend to collect 654 QSOS, loads of laughs and maybe 10,000 calories each! It's a gathering of friends discussing new equipment, operating practices and a multitude of sins both past and present! Two new members were added this year and both Randy N8KQ and Andy AC8SV slipped right in like longtime members of the crew. Those present this year



Front to back: Ken K8KIC and Randy N8KQ on 30m

included:

AC8W KB8ECG N8CC N8KQ KU8L K8TEZ NQ8T NU8Z KG8CO
K8UV KD8VSQ N8LJ W8KBW K8QKY K8KS K8PRG KC8CJG KD8TTM
K8AQM KE8CEW K8KIC N8GAS AC8JF AC8SV

The weather was perfect, for some of the operators had a 3.5 hour drive and we always worry about road conditions here in the Midwest. The bands were pretty but so too were the conditions in the shack with the food! There were actually times when all operation ceased and we sat enjoying food and great lies! There was chili, chicken potpie, chips/salsa, nuts, homemade banana bread (Tnx KU8L) and of course coffee, sodas and water.



All operations stopped as we gathered plates of food and got ready for a great “bull” session.

No one left hungry nor unhappy! Check out Andy AC8SV, talk about happy!



Mark NU8Z on 30m



Andy AC8SV enjoying the operation



Ted K8AQM on 80m and Randy N8KQ on 20m

More K3Y/8 Multi-multi @ KS8KCC

Of course the best part of the operation was the camaraderie of the weekend and the “fabulous lies and bragging” by the gang!



Randy N8KQ Jeremy KD8VSQ



Mark NU8Z Brian KG8CO



Curt KU8L Lee N8LJ
(Rick K8PRG op at 20m)

The Lier’s Club! The tales these guys can spin!



Steve K8QKY, Curt KU8L, Jeremy KD8VSQ, Bill KD8TTM



K8QKY KU8L N8CC



Lifetime “Emperor” of the Lier’s Club... Jeff N8CC! Honorable mention to Curt KU8L (Junior Emperor)!

So ends another great year of operation at the K3Y/8 (KS8KCC) multi-multi operation. Really nothing better than operating with friends, enjoying food and swapping lies together of operating skills, tremendous antenna projects, cw ability, and other topics you want to claim yourself “expert” in. All things willing, we’ll be back next year enjoying ourselves in a Field Day-like setting. We’ll leave you with a few operating pictures to fill the page.....73, KS8KCC, The Dit-Dah CW Gang



Randy N8KQ



Steve NQ8T at 30m



Bill KD8TTM and Ken K8KIC on 40
Steve NQ8T and Larry K8TEZ
In the background on 30.

January SKS



Got in on the last 15 minutes of the Sprint to test out my new QCX 40m QRP 5 watt transceiver (\$50. kit from QRP Labs). Nice radio with great build instructions. I have added a LED Zero Beat circuit, and still need to add an automatic volume control circuit before I put it in an enclosure. Antenna is 80m doublet fed with window line. Operating with straight key and the real nice SKCCLogger. Many Thanks to SKCC for organizing plenty of fun operating events. 73, Bob - AF4OI



A rough start but things finally got rolling. Tig was an old Ten-Tec Pegasus at 90 watts to a G5RV up 50 ft in Trees. I used a different key, A Bulgarian Army Surplus key. It worked great. Similar to our J-38 but easier on the wrist. 73, Bob K3CKO



Very fun sprint, as usual! but WHERE MY SENATORS AT????! only a third of my Q's this time... shout out to AA90M for a solid job of giving out bonuses. These are my two antlers. the top one is the EDZ you hear me on. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Tried 20M, but nothing, then went to 40M with a little bit of success. 80M seemed to be the best for this Sprint for me. 73, Steve K4JPN



Played hunt and pounce for an hour. Forty seemed in fair shape. Thanks for the contacts. 73, Jim K5TSK



First time using the "house" shack. Apologies to the 25 ops who suffered through my learning/bubbling use of a sideswiper. Sending was so bad that during my QSO with KB4QQJ I was "attacked" by two "stink bugs" who tried to end my torturing of ops with my sending. Total of 71 cootie Qs, only 29 to go! 73, Ted K8AQM



Nice to work a few new members and old friends. I used my SK and Bug. I'm left handed but learning the bug with my right. Vry 73 fm Scott kd4ee



Started slow! It took 9 minutes to get my first QSO. But then it picked up. 40m for the first hour, 80m for the second hour. After the smoke cleared, I was very surprised to find that I worked 21 states in just 2 hours. As always, I was using boatanchor gear. The rig to-night was my favorite Heathkit HW-101, low fan dipole, and a Navy flameproof straight key. 73, Steve KE4OH



My thanks and my apologies to Jim ND9M. for letting me answer a call from Mark after our QSO! Jim had the frequency and I answered Mark because he had tried to contact me on another frequency and we QSY'd up but I lost him. Jim patiently waited for Mark and I to finish our exchange, and then calmly resumed his CQ's. Thanks Jim. 73, Rich W4RQ

January Brag



Had a great time working everyone. Also would like to thank everyone of the K3Y operators for all they did in this event. 73, Joe AC4NY



Good start for 2019. Thanks at all for QSOs K3Y and Brag. 73, Bob F6EJN



Most brags were from K3Y operators. Thanks to all the K3Y ops!! 73, Dave KB1WOD



Thanks for all the QSO's and the K3Y operators did very well even with the iffy propagation. Made TKA#22 and found out that by replacing the index finger piece on my Vibroplex VibroKeyer with a thumb piece and keying with my left hand all worked out well, as a Cootie. 73, Rick N8XI



Still loads of fun. 73, Tom KB3CVO



Most of QSO with an old German WWII straight Key. 73, Leon OS0S



Great month - K3Y was fantastic in spite of poor band conditions. 73, Les WB5JWI



Had a great month in January. Participated as a K3Y op and was able to achieve Cx9 and Cx10 as well as Sx2 levels. Highlight was operating as a K3Y/6 op and had a 6M opening and was able to make 4 contacts as K3Y/6 on 6M. 73, Bruce WB6IZG



Had a great time during K3Y and was very pleased to get over 100 Brags for the month. I wish it was like this all the time! Thanks to all who worked K3Y/OC, 73 de Steve VK7CW



Due to my job as a senior software engineer, I had many days even on weekends where I was at work instead of at the key. I enjoyed every minute I was in QSO with SKCC members, though, as a guest K3Y/0 operator. The /0 team rocked, and we did pretty well as a region (second place). I love SKCC! 73, Tomas NW7US



Fun to be back on the brag page and participating in K3Y! Thank you to all the ops who gave me some business while K3Y/1! 73, Larry KJRE

I'm afraid I couldn't participate in our activities this month as much as I would have liked, as I was away for half the month visiting family in Tennessee. I was able to make a few QRP contacts from my portable location using an indoor antenna sitting on the floor of my temporary bedroom (hi hi). Anyway, I'm back home now so many thanks to all my contacts. Picture is my TN operating position (hi hi). 73, Curt WA2JSG

February WES



Been gone from WES for a few years. Why? I don't know! It's always so fun! Good to get a few from way back and a lot of first-time contacts. Thanks all! Pic of my old, faithful J-38. 73, Mike AC0PR



Not a lot of operation time this weekend, just an hour in total, I will have to do extra in the next one! Sunday evening 80m was the band to go until the noise level got too high in my location. Thanks everyone. See you in the next SKCC event. 73 de AC2RJ Ru-



Good fun, but wish the bands would open up. Even 20m has been poor here. 73, John GORDO



Fun WES. First time I've exclusively used a bug all weekend! 73, Peter GM0EUL



Limited WES time but I got in a couple of hours on 80M and 20M. I don't know where the "7"s were but the east coast and central US were well-represented. VE7, VE4, and VE3 were also worked. 73, Jon K1NV



Only had Saturday to operate this weekend but the bands treated me well. 40 was lost to the RTTY boys but 20 and 80 were great! I had a lot of pile-ups going. Rig was a Ten-Tec Pegasus, a G5RV, and 1941 McElroy stream key. I probably finished the 100 Strait keys this week. I'm working on a cootie but not brave enough to put it on the air yet. 73, Bob K3CKO



Thanks for another fun WES! I have hatched a plot to put up a 2nd 20M EDZ, oriented WNW-ESE, at 60', to complement the one oriented N-S at 50'! Look out for my 5W, then! Key, as always, is the un-paralleled TBFB cootieswiper, by W1SFR. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



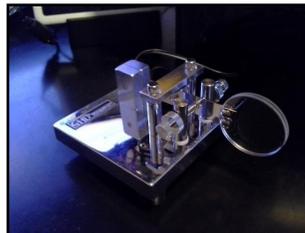
Here are most of my keys that I use on and off. I use my two SCHURR hand keys the most and bugs some times. Still learning the iambic key trying to squeeze some sense out of it. The paddle also prevents a learning curve for me. Enjoyed my short time on the air in QRP. I was out of town for most the weekend. 72/73, Steve K2DEP



Bands up and down both days here in E.Ohio. But lots of fun as always... 73, Loren K8CGE



The no-bonus format was a nice change. Had great fun during this WES and met many relatively new SKCC members. My shack sits on a corner desk in a bedroom and is the result of downsizing from boat anchors to QRP gear. 73, Al KC4ZA



Thanks to everyone who participated. This was a busy weekend with family activities, but managed a few hour on Saturday. 73 & God Bless. KA3LOC



Nice to work many new to me members. I used my Les Logan 1937 Model 500 for all but 2 QSOs. My homemade bug tamer fell off for those two.... 73, Scott KD4EE



Just on and off a few times over the weekend. Thanks to all who pulled out my QRP signal Especial thanks to F6HKA who pulled me out. 73, Steve K4JPN

More February WES



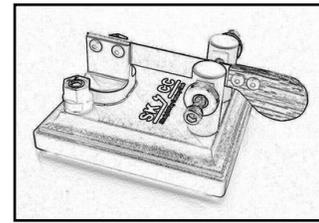
I sort of miss having a theme, even though I usually don't benefit much score-wise from having one. For a change, I did fairly well on 20m. 40m was covered up with RTTY/digi, but got some QSOs above 7.100. Rig was my favorite Heathkit HW-101 with a Vibroplex straight key. 73, Steve KE4OH



Thanks everyone for a great WES, lot of new members in the log. 73, Mike KK7H



73, Yoon KM6KJI



Busy Saturday - Did a few hours SP on Sunday. Conditions seemed dreadful. See you all next month. 73 de N4ow AL (Love My SKCC Sideswiper!)



Sorry to say I didn't get the chance to work but a few minutes of the WES. TNX to the ones who answered my CQ... 73 Russ KK4WX until next time.



73, N3PDT, Doug



Once again wanted to spend more time with WES than was possible - but did get to play a little bit. RTTY contest on 40M made the upper portion around 7110 more attractive. 20m was pretty good, and there were quite a few stations on 80m. Got a few more sidwiper QSOs towards TKA - thanks to all those patient ops that make this such a great event. 73, Mike N2HHT



Thanks to the ops out there, great job guys !See everyone next month....73 de Ed



Hello to all. Spent Saturday at the radios, operated from 8am to 11 pm (local time). Of the three skcc members I heard Saturday, was able to complete qso's with two of them, K6JF & VY1JA. 73 to all, see you on the bands. John AL7JK



Limited time, lots of power line noise, but still a lot of fun. Thanks for the QSOs. 73, Ben VE1AHX



Limited time this weekend, but Sunday went pretty well. Lots of folks need to clean the contacts on their keys! Thanks 73, John W1TAG



TNX every one for your patience! I was chasing new ones for my "T". Nice to work Randy. CU Next Month 73, Steve NQ8T

I'm glad I got to spend a little time with the WES. I always enjoy them. I just fixed my 32V-2, so I thought I'd put it on for the weekend. It seemed to do well....at least not bad for a 70 year old transmitter. Today, we had an ice storm which drove my 450 ohm window line crazy. I had to re-tune every third QSO or so. Thanks again for a fun weekend! 74, Mike WB0SND



Still More February WES



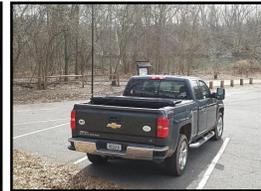
Was only able to work the WES on Sunday but very good condx (especially on 20M) allowed me able to do pretty well in limited time. Thanks all for a fun WES! Elecraft K3 100 watts, Benchner RJ-2 SK. Antennas 2 element Quad, OCF dipole, 43' vertical and a 160M loop for with window line. Yes, I use all those antennas lol. 73, Bill NZ0T



Depending on the speed of the correspondent, I used the bug IIQOD or an old German WWII straight key. Both are on the picture below. Thanks to all for the QSO's and the help for the way to my S. 73, Leon OS0S



20 M was in great shape. I was going to stop at 100 QSOs, but the band was so good and there was so much activity that I stayed longer and got 150, which allowed me to finish my T8. Thanks, everyone to all who participated. 73, Roger W6LAX

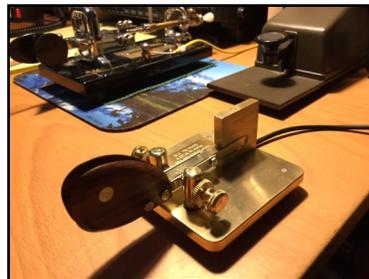


Most of my WES contacts were made QRP-portable from two different parks over the weekend. It was nice to work some familiar call signs and enough new ones to get to Tx7 this weekend. 73, Craig WB3GCK

Facebook Posts



Picking up my custom bug with its builder Stan, WD0BGS. 73, Kevin WA9VFD



Just received my W1SFR TBCP Cootie...good time to practice sending technique while snow-bound, before I launch an assault on everyone's ears! Nice engineering and build...hope I can do it justice. 73 Vic



A SKCC Straight Key and Cootie, now I just need a SKCC Bug. Was one ever made? Is this something to consider? 73, Marc KM4AHP



Portable at Standing Stone Park, TN. AD4CW. Looking for few contacts I have set up 40 meters. 73, Marc AD4CW

An Antenna?...Really?

I just gotta find better friends! My “friend” Jeremy KD8VSQ, told me about a goofy event in March requiring all “antennas” to be light bulbs! Now I’m old enough to remember using a light bulb as a dummy load antenna to tune my DX-40 in my Novice days; heck, I still have a light bulb dummy load antenna on a shelf in the shack! I have to admit, it sounded interesting...off to the races! It was decided we would do a multi-multi operation from the station here. Light bulbs were purchased, remote antenna tuners (seems as the filaments in the bulb tend to heat up after key downs even running just 75 watts the impedance changes) and thought was given to “how” to build an effective light bulb antenna. David Day N1DAY, made a 30 page (wow) presentation on building a light bulb antenna. The presentation can be found at: HAMSIGNAL.COM. and is an excellent starter for building the antennas.

As a DX traveler I have learned a few tricks about antenna efficiency; Jeremy (KD8VSQ) and his dad Greg (KE8CEW) and I decided we could make a better “bulb antenna.” Rather than wind a loading coil on large diameter pvc, we decided to use Hams Stick antennas. Additionally since this is a vertical, the addition of elevated tuned radials would increase the efficiency and improve the impedance issues. Using some old spreaders from a quad, Greg (KE8CEW) designed a mount for our light bulbs and Jeremy (KD8VSQ) designed an efficient interface between bulb, loading coil and radials. The result of our first effort of a true light bulb vertical can be seen below:



Jeremy KD8VSQ holding the finished light bulb vertical.

Using just the 40m Ham Stick as a loading coil gave us a resonant frequency in the high 9 MHz range (hmm, 30m possible?). This we figured was due to the length of filament in the bulb (Satco S2431 bulb has 84 inches of filament!). As a result, we needed to wind more coil on the Ham Stick, shown below.

So after trial-and-error coil additions, the results were worth it!



This light bulb antenna event is an FT8 operation; we’ll be on 80, 40, 20 and 15m additionally perhaps 160m too. We have the gear to start building the other antennas and we will give you an update of how successful these antennas are.

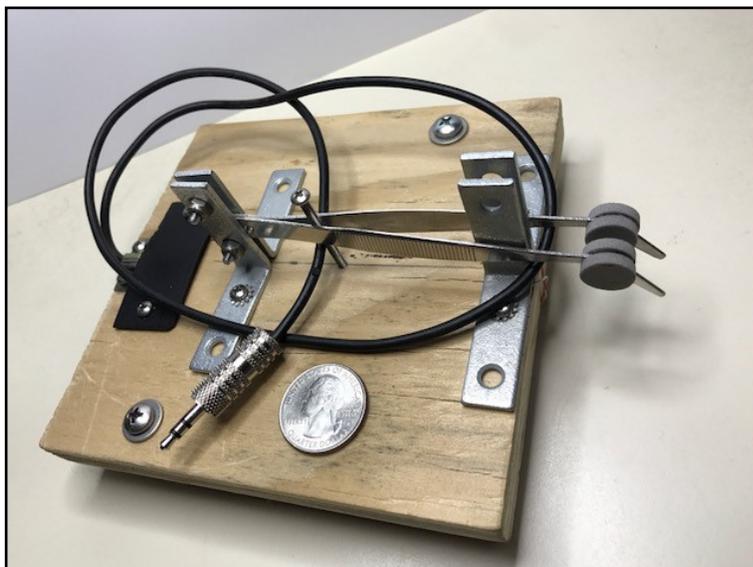
So what does this article and antenna have to do with SKCC? Well, the plan is to operate as multi-multi in either the April or May WES using these antennas at KS8KCC!

73, Ted K8AQM #1629s

Addendum.... In talking with several KS8KCC ops it was suggested the antenna could be slightly redesigned to be a yard light in HOA situation...thanks Steve NQ8T!

"Tweezer Squeezer"

The homebrew key shown in the first pic was designed for iambic (squeeze) operation but can be modified for single lever electronic or sideswiper use. It is versatile because there is



provision for several adjustments: tension, contact spacing, lever length, paddle selection, paddle height, and even weight of the base.

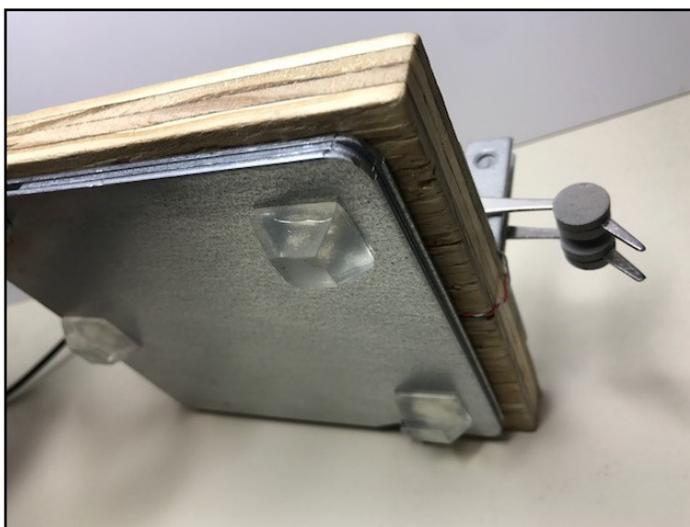
Needed parts are suitable tweezers, a 5/8 X 5-1/2 inch plywood base, four 1-1/2 inch corner braces, a few 4-3/4 inch electrical box cover plates, and misc. screws & nuts. The CB to wood screws are the same length as board thickness but are only half the diameter of the CB metal holes - this allows some adjustment.

After clamping the tweezers between two of the CB's, the assembly is centered to the contact

CB's, and lever length is selected. Pushing the tweezers against the spreader screw causes the levers to move apart slightly, but more importantly, increases the amount of finger pressure required to close the contacts. The CB's are next fastened in place, and paddles such as stick-on rubber feet are attached. Base plates, each weighing about 6 oz., are attached to the undersurface as shown in the second pic. Three plates were required to stabilize this key on my smooth desk top. Notice there are three rubber feet on the bottom base plate; two on the near end and one on the far end. If four feet are used the key is likely to be unstable, especially if placed on an uneven surface. The final step involves setting the height of the paddles and the contact spacing. Fine adjustment of the latter can be performed by slightly rotating the CB's.

Since the various adjustments interact, initial setup may be somewhat tedious. However a bit of patience will be rewarded by achieving the desired "feel" of the key.

Although this gadget is rather wide, such actually aids stability. If desired, its appearance can be dressed up by painting the base.



SKCC and Hamfests

Whenever and wherever SKCC members can get together for “eyeball” QSOs is great! Hamfests are easy places to get together; whether it’s a large hamfest or small hamfest it really doesn’t matter. Any SKCC attendee who has a table can hang a sign encouraging SKCC members to gather and perhaps sign-in. A few extra chairs and you’ll have a great gathering with cw talk, awards chasing, new gear, antennas and many more topics of interest to the group.



The most recent gathering at Ham-cation in Orlando had no table or gathering point but discussions on the reflector gathered members for a group photo and an additional gathering at a flea market sight. SKCC has a major presence at Dayton and gathers 200+ members who stop by and “check-in” and rag chew with others. Toledo, Ohio has a hamfest where SKCC makes it’s presence known with a table and area for SKCCers to gather. Scott N3JJT and Tony KD8BBK attend a small hamfest every year in Ohio and at their table (selling gear) they have a small SKCC sign that causes a gathering of SKCCers also attending the hamfest, it works and Scott and Tony always have a good time! Randy KB4QQJ, has also “sponsored” informal SKCC gatherings at hamfests where he shared tables with another SKCCer and had a great turnout of SKCCers. There are rumors that the Fort Wayne, IN hamfest will have a major presence at their next hamfest. If you’re wanting to be really serious about having an SKCC gathering then the SKCC club can really help. We have sets of banners for loan, we have information about SKCC to hand to inquiring prospective members and other ideas to help promote SKCC.

Ideas for your SKCC presence at hamfests:

- Some form of banner or sign with the SKCC logo
- Handouts for inquiring non members
- Extra chairs for relaxing and rag chewing
- Collection of keys with a cpo so keying can be tried
- Examples of various SKCC awards displayed
- Water on hand for rag chewers
- Laptop running SKCCLogger to aid “Check-ins”
- Copies of the SKCC newsletter, “The Rag Chew”
- Possible after-hamfest gathering for lunch/dinner

Whether large or small, hamfests are excellent places for SKCCers to gather, to promote SKCC and to enjoy amateur radio. Start it up, get something together, you won’t be sorry! Don’t forget pre-publicity on the SKCC Facebook, on the SKCC reflector and both pre and post articles and pictures in the “Rag Chew” will insure your gatherings were and will be a success!

73 es hope to see you at the hamfest!

Ted K8AQM 1629s

Florida Hamcation 2019 de N8KR (pictures by KD9FBD)

There's nothing like a hamfest in the winter where you can walk around in shorts and a t-shirt! Once again, Hamcation 2019 provided 3 days of sunshine and 80+ degrees of temperature. My second year, and still only one day of attendance, rivaled the Dayton experience with many dealers and virtually all of the major ham radio manufacturers. This year Josh – W9HT (7474T) flew down and joined Ron – KD9FBD and me for the drive from the gulf coast to Orlando.

The Central Florida Fair Grounds on the north side of Orlando is a perfect site for the event. It is easy to find with plenty of on site parking. (no mud, either!) The three main buildings take care of the dealers and manufacturers, organizations, and inside flea market. The court yard, like Xenia/Dayton, is filled with food and drink vendors and, with the hot sun and 82 degrees, the cold drinks were plentiful. The outdoor flea market had more sellers and, for some reason, there was an abundance of Rohn tower for sale! There were many campers/ motorhomes in the flea market area so following row by row was often replaced by clusters of campers – all who were selling. I met up with several SKCCers throughout the day and managed a few pictures. Most were looking for an official SKCC booth as we have in Xenia. (Since this is the 2nd largest hamfest in the country, perhaps we should make an official presence with a booth. This would provide a place for us to sit and visit and promote SKCC!)

I have to admit that there was an abundance of ham radio equipment and there were bargains to be had. I found a chrome Vibroplex bug and Josh found a nice Johnson straight key and Ron came home with a FT-480. It was a successful day. Here's the picture of the group with several smaller shots. I missed taking a picture of John – K4BAI but we had a nice chat and he reminded me that this was also WES weekend! (I see he managed a few q's after he got home.)



Jeff – KA4WYC Carl – W8WZ Josh – W9HT Ken – N8KR Greg – WA3GM Chuck – K9IA Ed – N7EDK

Chuck – K9IA and Fran, XYL, met up with my wife and I back in January. They live in the Villages in FL but were vacationing across the bay from us on Anna Maria Island. Deb and I had breakfast with them and heard about their adventures as hams. Following retirement, Chuck and Fran spent 2 years county hunting and activating counties throughout the country. . . and they have worked them all! Now, in the Villages, they operate with stealth antennas but are always active in our events!



N8KR – K9IA



K3EW – KA4WYC



N7EDK – WA3GM



W8WZ - W9HT



N8KR - W4RQ

Thoreau's 202nd Birthday Anniversary Radiograms

Arrangements have been made to hand-deliver radiograms celebrating the 202nd anniversary of Henry David Thoreau's birth to The Thoreau Society(R), Inc. at their annual gathering in Concord, Massachusetts. Plans call for these to be typed on a manual typewriter or written in pencil delivered during a book signing Saturday evening, July 13, 2019 local time. He was born July 12, 1817.

We need Thoreau's brave individualism, today as much as or more than ever. Suggested subjects, with examples are:

1). Best wishes...

BEST WISHES TO THE THOREAU SOCIETY ON THE 202ND ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

2). My favorite quote...

CHILDREN WHO PLAY LIFE DISCERN ITS TRUE LAW AND RELATIONS MORE CLEARLY THAN MEN

3). Thoreau's biggest concern today would be...

THOREAU'S BIGGEST CONCERN TODAY WOULD BE TURNING WAR INTO BUSINESS

4). Thoreau inspired me to...

THOREAU INSPIRED ME TO ENJOY LIFE MORE APART FROM COMMERCIALISM

5). Conveying a fascination for the telegraph... (trying to match his fascination with the music of the wires)

THE PURE NOTES OF A TELEGRAPH CAME OVER THE RADIO FROM A DISTANT STATION NOT FOUND IN ANY INTERNET SEARCH

Radiograms should hit the airwaves using any mode by July 1, 2019 to allow sufficient time. Delivery will be in one stack of radiograms taken off the air from a Morse circuit. Please address to:

THE THOREAU SOCIETY
CARE OF FRED BEIHOLD
NV1N FRAMINGHAM,
MA 01701



Public Domain, Wikipedia, from the National Portrait Gallery, Washington DC

Amateurs?...I Don't Think So!

One of the best things about our hobby is the various ways to become involved. Of course there is the hf activity of rag chewing, DXing and contesting, the same three areas apply to vhf/uhf activity. There are digital modes, SSB, FM and ATV along with constantly new modes within these areas. But there are other areas of interests for many amateurs; amateurs also enjoy computer programming, experimenting and building. Here are some photos taken from our Facebook page showing a few "work benches" for experimenting and building.



I honestly like to build more than I like to operate. To me, it is tinkering with parts and pieces. QRP is my choice of power but have been known to work on a few boat anchors.

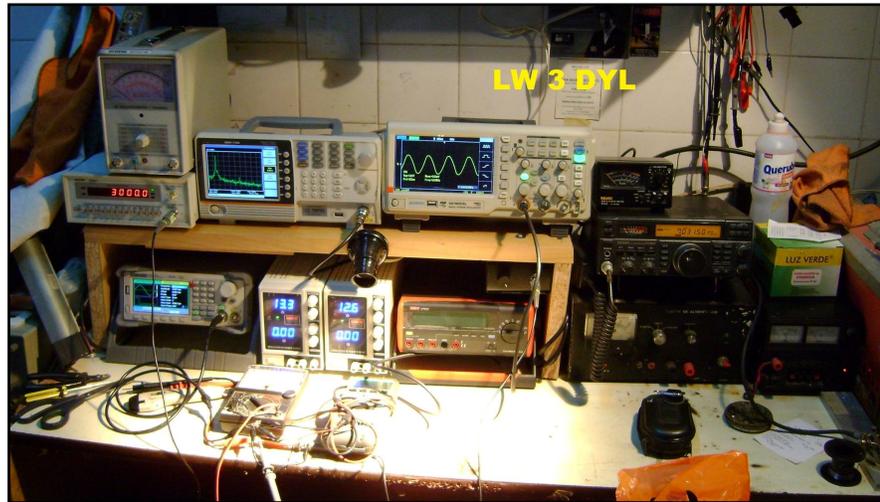
Just thought I would show a picture of my test bench. I've been adding to it over a few years. I like taking a schematic and if I have the parts and pieces do a test run on a board and then make the pc board to mount everything and put it in a altoids size can or pvc box.

If anyone wants to show their test bench then show it. Mine is not the greatest but it does serve the purpose.

Thanks

Richard Haas WB4SNU

I have the older leader rf signal generator. The LSG16. But the last three years I am going to the Friedrichshaven Hamfest and I brought a lot of good stuff like HP Signal generator, oscilloscopes etc... 73, Stylianos LW3DYL



I need to start upgrading my test equipment, almost all of it is from when I was a teenager and before I had a job. That massive frequency counter is more of a conversation piece than it is useful. 73, Alex KC2VDM

Whatever your pleasure, there is a niche in amateur radio for you... maybe several niches!

HT-1A QRP Transceiver Review

By James KH2SR #18553



The HT-1A is a compact 20/40m dual band CW QRP transceiver from CRKITS that comes in either kit form or fully assembled. I received the fully assembled model, so this review won't cover the kit building process. Even though I didn't build this one, I did take a peak inside. SMD components are used, but not to worry. All the SMD parts are pre-mounted, and you will only have to solder through hole components.

Measuring 4.33" x 4.09" x 2.32" and weighing in at only 400 grams (14.12 oz), the HT-1A is a great option for

hams that enjoy portable operating in the great outdoors. It'd be a good fit for SOTA & POTA activations or even quick LTOTA deployments (Lunch Time On The Air).

It has a transmit range of 7.0-7.2 MHz and 14.0-14.35 MHz. Even though this rig only transmits CW, it does have the ability to listen to SSB signals. It also has an extended receive range, which covers everything between 5.9-16 MHz which means shortwave broadcast reception while in SSB mode. Filter bandwidth is set at about 300 Hz for CW and 1.8 KHz for SSB. Spurious suppression is no worse than -50 dBc. I was impressed that the receiver is surprisingly sensitive considering the size and price of the radio. Using simple base loaded MFJ single band telescopic whip antennas with no counterpoise and no grounding, I was able to copy quite a few QSOs on 20m and 40m.



RF power output is 5 watts with 12 volts input power, but it can handle up to 15 volts. However, the transceiver can be powered off a 9 volt battery in a pinch if needed. Speaking of batteries, this little guy even has room to install an internal lithium ion battery pack! Current consumption during receive is about 60 milliamps with the display backlight on and only about 45 milliamps when the backlight is off. During transmit, the HT-1A draws 1 amp.

No internal speaker is provided with the HT-1A, however there is plenty of room inside the enclosure to install a small speaker and audio amplifier. I used a tiny external LiPo powered amplified speaker and a set of headphones to keep things simple.

The HT-1A has some great features for such a small and affordable QRP transceiver. These include: 16 user programmable memory channels, built-in keyer for iambic paddles, full break-in QSK, RIT, XIT, AGC, S-meter, and even side tone selection. The HT-1A can even automatically detect whether you are using paddles or a straight key. The built-in keyer is adjustable from 5-40 words per minutes and is set at 15 WPM by default.

I was able to easily fit it into a small rugged waterproof case along with a couple single band telescopic whips for 20m/40m, a small 12v LiPo battery, headphones, a MK-11 Pocket Spy Micro Straight Key, and a bulldog BD6 Mini Iambic Key.

I had a blast with this compact QRP rig. It's just so easy and fun to use! With an interface consisting of only 2 buttons, 2 knobs and an on/off switch, you can learn to operate the HT-1A in just a couple minutes and without ever reading the user manual. I think this ease of use makes it a great option for preppers who typically want a compact affordable emergency back-up transceiver. Plus, you don't have to take much time to relearn the interface if you haven't used it in a long time.

The HT-1A from CRKITS should appeal to a wide demographic of ham enthusiasts, builders, beginners, preppers, SOTA, and especially the budget savvy ham crowd. If you fit into any of these categories, then I highly recommend you take a close look at this great little dual band 20m/40m CW transceiver.



Kit Price: \$150 USD

Fully Assembled Price: \$175 USD

Available for purchase at the following links:

<http://crkits.com>

https://qrvtionics.com/CatHAM_Radio/Products/HT-1_CW.htm

Technical Specifications

Chassis Dimensions: 110 x 59 x 104 mm (not including protruding parts like knobs)

Weight: About 400 grams

Power supply: 9-15 V DC

Current consumption:

During RX: About 60 mA when backlight is on and about 45 mA when backlight is off

During TX: About 0.8 A (@ 12 V)

Local oscillator: DDS, reference frequency 54 MHz
Display: LCD

RF output power: About 5 W (@ 12V)

RX: 5.9-16 MHz continuous (peak sensitivity only in 40 m and 20 m bands)

TX: 7.0-7.2MHz and 14.0-14.35MHz

Side tone: 600 Hz

Keyer: Built-in, 5-40 wpm adjustable

Memory: 16 memories, user programmable

RX mode: CW, SSB (LSB only if it is below 10 MHz, and USB only if it is equal or above 10MHz)

AGC: Audio derived AGC with S-meter to show relative strength just for reference

QSK: Full break-in

Spurious Suppression: no worse than -50dbc

Filter bandwidth: about 300 Hz for CW and 1.8 KHz

Antenna Connector: BNC

Audio Connector: 3.5mm

Key Connector: 3.5mm



Facebook Pictures and Such



K8TEZ GUILTY of too much fun!



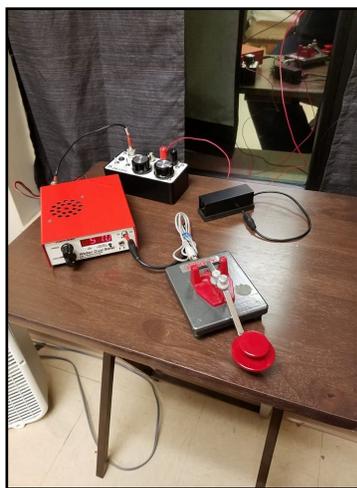
Not new, not expensive, but it sure does feel good. 73, Marc AD4CW



Just received my K3Y cup...filled with Nespresso Cafe de CUBA. And, still on the steep learning curve with the WIFSR Cootie, hopefully getting closer to not abusing everyone's ears! 73, de Vic KB7GL



What! Scott N3JJT, "Say it ain't so!" What are you doingpppphone? For shame! SHAME!



Valentine's gift from XYL a nice little table for work! 73, Marc Richardson



After the ARRL DX Contest.... If I only had a beam!



Enough snow, ice and swinter storms for 2019 already!