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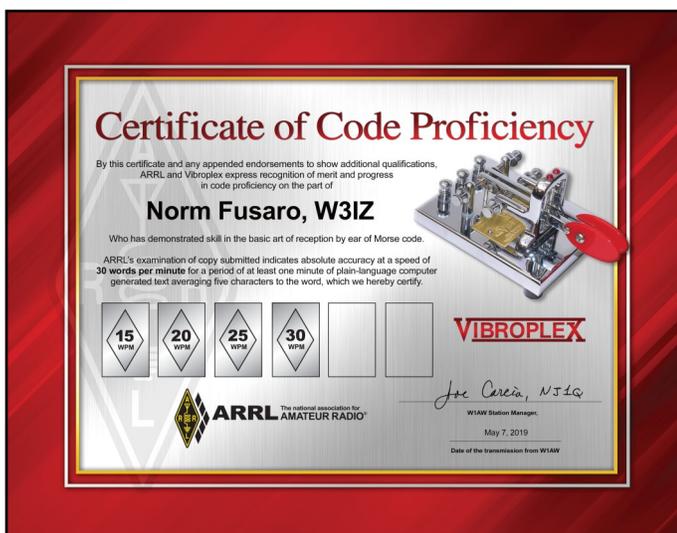
The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club
"The Rag Chew"
Editor: K8AQM

September, 2019

New ARRL Code Proficiency Certificate and Program

Greetings Morse Code Enthusiasts.

I have some exciting news that I want to share with you! The ARRL has reinvigorated the W1AW Code Proficiency Certificate program. Several things have changed beginning with our new sponsor, Vibroplex, a legend in Morse telegraphy equipment. If you see Scott Robbins W4PA and the Vibroplex team at a hamfest or convention please be sure to thank him for his support. The Vibroplex logo will appear on the newly designed certificates and in the award recipient page that will appear every month in QST. That's right, each month in QST we will publish the most recent recipients of the W1AW Code Proficiency Certificate, beginning with all the 2019 recipients. As a bonus, we are sending all the 2019 CPC holders a new certificate at no cost to replace their older style award.



The award is available to anyone who copies one solid minute of code during the qualifying runs. Complete program details can be found on the web at

< <http://www.arrl.org/code-proficiency-certificate> >

And to make the award available to more people we will double the number of opportunities to copy the CW text. Beginning September 2019, the qualifying runs will increase from twice per week to four times per week.

I am sharing this advanced notice with the Morse code clubs so that you can share it with your members. I have attached PDF files of the new certificate and the announcement that will appear in August QST, available in digital format July 8. I hope you are as excited about this as I am.

In closing, I want personally thank all of you who promote the use and proficiency of Morse code on the air waves and ask that you challenge your club members to submit their copy for the W1AW Code Proficiency Certificate.

73,
Norm Fusaro, W3IZ

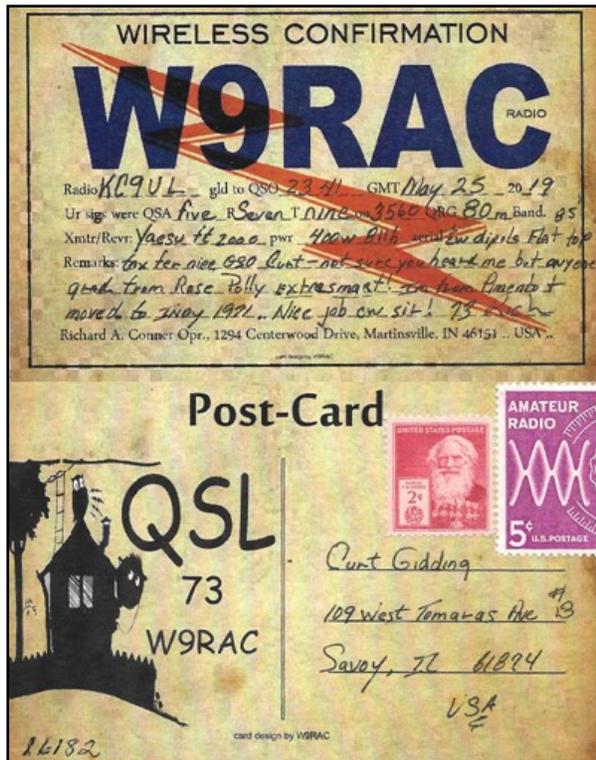
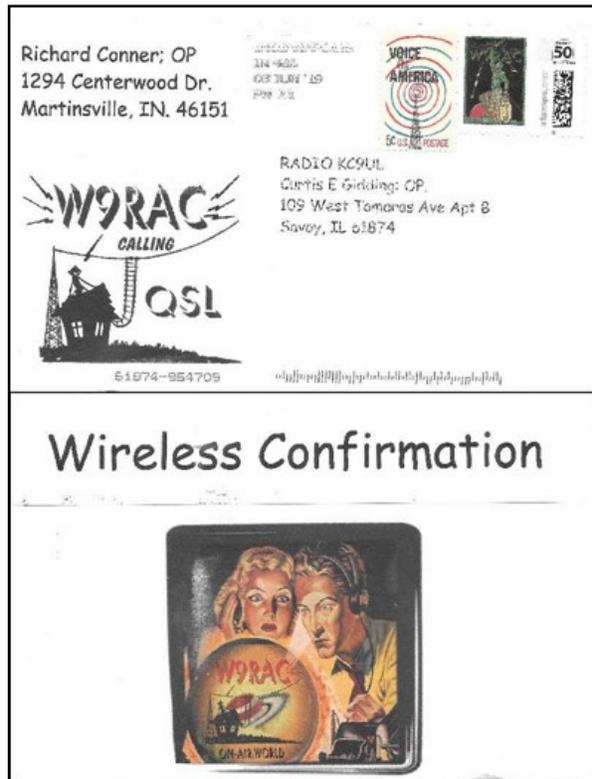
A QSL Can be a Special Surprise

I like to exchange QSL Cards with SKCC members. So many have great pictures of keys and other items of interest. On May 25, 2019 I worked W9RAC on 80 meter CW. Rich is located in Martinsville, IN and I always want Indiana Qso's and cards. We had a nice Qso and I promptly sent my card.

Boy, was I surprised when I received his card in return. Rich appreciates QSL cards and receiving them like many of us. In today's electronic age, many hams don't have much regard or appreciation for QSLing with a real card. Well, that is not the case with W9RAC.

When I got my mail, I was quickly attracted to the envelope. Rich has taken the time and effort to produce a real "eye-catcher". He even uses a custom designed stamp with a radio motif and also an older stamp for the voice of America. See below:

Inside the envelope I found an attractive QSL Card which was an "old style" type of QSL card. The sender had taken extra care in preparing the reverse side of the card even though it was not going to be mailed. Rich had added a 1944 stamp honoring Samuel Morse and the 1963 Amateur Radio stamp. A very nice touch.



The QSL card was a special card because of the care and special additions that were made to it. As a result, I will long remember the call, W9RAC.

Making QSO's and collecting SKCC Numbers can be great fun along with the SKCC sprints. But, collecting the cards of fellow members is a great reminder of the QSO and a history

of your personal activity as a SKCC member. If you want to receive a QSL Card - - - then send one!

73, KC9UL Curt SKCC 8667S

Get Ready Now for This Winter's Operations

SKCC activity peaks during the long winter evenings so now is the time for antenna work to get ready for the coming winter season. If you were active last winter you know that 40 meters proved to be very unreliable during the solar minimum. Most evenings 80 and 160 were the bands to operate, so you want to be prepared to operate on those bands.

If you already have antennas for 80 and 160 check them now. It is much easier to do antenna work in the fall than in the dead of winter.

If you do not have antennas for those bands it is time to begin planning and testing antenna configurations that will radiate signals on those bands. Most of us can not install optimum antenna configurations like full size dipoles at a quarter wavelength elevation or quarter wave verticals with 120 radials. What you should be considering is antenna configurations you can install that will get you on the bands. My approach is to review antenna books and the many online antenna designs to look for ideas that will work for my situation.



When I was scratching my head for antenna solutions for 80 and 160 I came across an online article that described a dual band inverted L design that used ladder line as the vertical section. **Bingo!** I had found a solution for me that was dual band with a single feed point and a single set of radials. So I have 48 feet of ladder line hanging from a tree with separate wire sections at the top to resonate the antenna on both bands. The ladder line is tied together at the bottom. Whatever wire I had in my collection was strewn about on the ground to serve as the radials along with a short ground rod. I have worked all states with that antenna on both 80 and 160 so it works for me.

Consider how you might use your existing antennas for those bands. A 40 meter dipole can be configured as a top loaded vertical by shorting the coax and feeding it as a random wire from your antenna tuner. Give it a try to see if it will load on 80 and 160. String out a random wire, it does not have to run in a straight line, configure it based on your available supports, hook it to a tuner and see how it loads on the low bands.

Do not miss the fun on 80 and 160 this winter! Hope to work you on the low bands this winter and during the K3Y activity.

Dan K0FD 15034S

Ed....Taking Dan's antenna idea to heart, I've built a multiband vertical for 40/30m and tied it into my 160m radial system.....wow! As Dan says, "Bingo" the antenna really works!



"I know we just met but he's so amazing, great smile, nice car and he only operates CW"

Story of My Life!

...or every ham's dream...

.....TNX Kevin WA9VFD

June WES 2019

The June WES is one of the more popular WES events. The "Boat Anchor Regatta" produces joy in firing-up those old tube rigs.



Only had Sat. morning to work WES but what a great event. Fired up my 1939 Hallicrafters S19R receiver with 6 tubes and my 1951 Heathkit AT-1 with 3 tubes and crystal controlled and putting out a 10 watt signal. These two rigs had been sitting in my closet unused for the past dozen years. Antenna was a Carolina window up 40 feet and best signal report received was 599 from Dave, W3NP, and worst was 329 from Jim, K3DRJ. Thanks to all who participated and thanks to those who responded to my CQ but that I was unable to complete the exchange. 73, Frank AA2XB

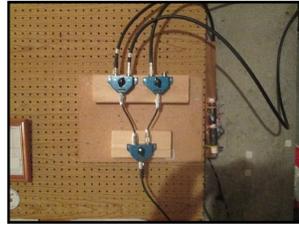


Bulgarian Army Key

Not much time to play radio this weekend. It was fun to work the boat anchors I used to work in the 1950's. Used a Bulgarian Army key as well as my beloved Bug. 73, Bob K3CKO



Great fun! Looking forward to boat anchor pics!
73, Ron KG1T



Propagation conditions were very similar to last month.... daytime poor and nighttime very good. Vast majority of QSOs made on 40m (217 QSOs). Disappointed by the lack of activity on 80m. 20m continues to be a problem for me, maybe it's because my dipole is orientated NORTH/SOUTH. R7DA was booming in on 40m and 20m. Finally got my antenna switching system installed, made switching bands a lot easier. Photo shows the switches and switch system. Thanks for all the QSOs guys and sorry to the couple stations I just couldn't pull out of the noise. 73, Bob AC1GF



73, K1TB, Paul



I set up portable while camping in Dworshak State Park. I didn't work too many stations due to RFI and poor conditions, but it was fun as always. I didn't add any bonus points for tubes, I guess the webpage doesn't like numbers not divisible by 5. Oh well. 73, Cliff AG7CC



I need these extra 200 points so: I was using my Heathkit HW100, it was built from a kit by the first owner in 1969. I bought it at a radio rally in Leicester in about 1986 when I passed my morse test and upgraded to a class A license. It had new finals last year (2x 6146) after one blew causing an RF choke coil to melt at the same time- lots of smoke and an acrid smell- I had to rewind the coil myself, they are very rare, and it has worked beautifully ever since. I replaced all the capacitors in the PSU at the same time. The box sitting on top is a home-brew ATU which incidentally has a big roller-coaster variable inductance in it that I bought at the same rally where I got the radio. The key I was mostly using, in the pic, is a 1945 Vibroplex Champion. It was a very quiet WES but this evening picked up a bit. Great fun as always, thanks everyone. 73, Peter GM0EUL



Not able to get any NA members in the log, only heard one all weekend (K3WW Chas on 20m), but did get to play with the Holy Grail of morse keys - the Marconi AS No300A c 1920's. My score of 5 QSOs were located in France, Spain & Italy. TS-440s, 100w, fishing pole vertical ground mounted. 73, John GORDO



QCX-40 4 watts to a 40m dipole @ 25'. 40m seemed to be up and down. Some of those good old many-tube receivers were not hearing my QRP signal. 73, Jody K3JZD



Ranger is a work in progress but put on the air to make a few contacts...73, Tom K7ROH

More June WES



With storms in the area, but only when the band conditions picked up of course, operating time was more limited than my budget. Pictured TS-520 boat anchor was what got me back on the air some years ago, then it moved on to get another oldtimer active again, but came back to me when he became a S.K. It's a keeper! 73, Don K3RLL



My boat anchor station for this event was a crystal control Johnson Viking 1 transmitter and a National NC 300 receiver. A "Legless #2A" WUTEL (Western Union) railroad key was my straight key. Operated for a short time Sunday afternoon on 40 meters only. Band conditions here were not good at all but I managed to pull out 12 QSOs. Sorry for asking for so many repeats. However, it was a fun time seeing this old gear work like it did. My exchange was 23 X, 23 tubes, crystal control. Best wished to all and see you on the next SKCC event. 73, Jerry K9PMV



Lots of Thunderstorms in our area this weekend. Tis the season! But I enjoyed making some contacts and adding a few new numbers. It was exciting to work Alexy, R7DA and Carlos, CT1BQH and of course, Bert, F6HKA. CU Next time. IC-7300 running 100 watts to an OCF Flagpole. Used both my new Begali Intrepid and 1968 Vibroplex Champi on this weekend. 73, Bob K3ZGA



One of my favorite events. Wish I had more time. Ran my vintage DX-60B with matching VFO, a Drake 2A receiver with a Heathkit QF-1 Q Multiplier. This setup was not my original Novice setup of 1957 but still brings back the days of twisting knobs to tune rigs and looking up and down frequencies for crystal controlled stations. Lots of fun. Thanks to all that worked me. 73, Joe KD2JC



Only had an hour to operate but had fun firing up the old Gold Dust Twins. 73, Ted



Tube Rigs? There were a few. Starting with a DX35 as a Novice December 1958 to Dec 1959 (75w xtal controlled). Then a Viking Ranger and a DX100. Next a Galaxy5 followed by a T4X. None remain and I could not even find photos. Now, I am using a K3/P3. Several other rigs here in the shack. K1, IC-7000, IC-706, KX2 and an IC-703. For this WES I used the KX2 with an American Mores KK1B at Five watts to a Flagpole. My apologies to the folks who battled to work me. Fun for me --- Perhaps not so much for those battling to copy my signal. 73, Chuck K9IA



73, KC9UL, Curt



I dug out one of my Heathkit HW-16s for the boatanchor theme. I had one crystal, 7.053. Yes the HW-16 chirps with a crystal, thanks for the few stations that mentioned that to me. Key was a 1943 Vibroplex Lightning Bug. If you look in the background of the pic, you will see the chassis of one of my other HW-16s that is getting a full rebuild. See you all next month. 73, Noel K8NB



Drake 2B/2BQ receiver, DX-60B xtal controlled transmitter @ 50W output to 80M Dipole up 50'. Note SKCC circled on QSL in photo of station.



Lots of fun putting my Kenwood TS-530 on the air with its 3 original 38 year old tubes. As a new General class ham in 1981 this was my first new radio. 73, Roy KD1RT

Again June WES



Great fun as always. Per the bonus rules rig was an SX115 and a Ranger 2 using crystal control except for 3 QSOs, and key was a 1943 Vibroplex Lightning bug liberated from the Hamvention Flea Market for 20 bucks this year and rebuilt in time for the weekend. Two new rules I learned.....don't try to send with a bug on a folding TV table, and just because an old tube rig sounds great with its vfo doesn't mean a funky crystal won't chirp - I earned a few C's in my RSTs with a couple old timers pulled from the junkbox. Always love the Boat Anchor weekend, and thanks especially to KE4OH, WB9EGZ and W3NP for connecting on off freq for some big crystal to crystal QSOs. 73, Scott ka9p



Had a great time. And hadn't operated the TS-530s for a while. She got a workout this weekend! 73, John N9OL



As the operator of a 100% boatanchor shack, June is always my favorite WES of the year! This year, for a change, I worked a bunch of the "heavy hitters", which made my bonus pretty decent. But my main goal in June is to let all the other participants log a bonus for working my primitive station. This year I was /22X. Transmitter was a KnightKit T-150A, crystal controlled for all QSOs. This transmitter puts out around 100w. And chirps. I bought this TX as part of a nearly matched pair. The transmitter is pretty good. The matching receiver, and R-100A, is not. So I didn't use it for WES. This TX has 8 tubes. The receiver this time was a Drake 2-B with a 2-BQ Q-multiplier. The 2-B has 10 tubes plus one more for the crystal calibrator plus another for the Q-multiplier. The Drake 2-B, in my opinion, is the best receiver for the money both in its day and now. Rounding out my gear is a Gonset Monitone CW monitor. It has 2 tubes. You can just see it in the lower left of the photo. This is a nice accessory to have when operating separates. Can't wait for next June. I plan to have my DX-100 ready by then, which will put more tubes in action that I have now. 73, Steve, KE4OH



73, KG1T, Ron



Ran the KX2 and Palm "Cootie." Thanks for all those good ears out there. Until next month... 73, Jack



Hardly anytime to play this weekend. Lots of outside work and trying to catch up on everything, while the sun was shining. 73, Randy



Fun as usual! Happy to handout /21 tubes from my Drake Twins - T-4XB (made in 1968) and R-4B (1971). Had them for about 3 years now and love to operate them with my 1926 Vibroplex Lightning and my Navy Flameproof keys! Thanks for the Qs! 73, Randy, KS4L



Thanks for the WES QSO's it was fun using my Heathkit HW-16 for the first part of the WES. I had an HW-16 back in the 80's and found it to be a nice XCVR with QSK. I recently joined NRR and in my search for a rig I found one being offered by a gent in Ohio.

I am using one XTAL with it for now, a 3.555 Mhz that is usable for 7.111Mhz also. I am amazed what 35 Watts and a XTAL can do.73, Rick N8XI



I managed to squeeze in a little on-air time this weekend in between family obligations. I love the boat anchor regatta. I used my trusty Collins Gold Dust Twins (KWS-1 / 75A-4). The majority of the action seemed to be on 40m. 73, Marty N9SE

More June WES



The Boat Anchor Regatta is my favorite theme of the year! I really enjoyed the addition of the xtal bonus as well. My daily-driver boat anchor is the Drake 2NT/2C/2CQ pictured here. For the Regatta, I pulled a Collins 51J-4 off the shelf and set it up out of gram to the right. This is a special station to me, and it is described in the March 2019 Ragchew. The transmitter was a gift from a friend, now SK. The Q-Multiplier was a gift from my Novice Rig Roundup Co-Chair Dan NS7U. I bought the 2C from NRR founder Bry AF4K. The unseen Collins was also a gift from my SK friend Jack W0YZS. I am a fortunate man. Thanks for all the contacts, it was a lot of fun! 73, Doug N3PDT



TNX! High points were a comment that I had good ears, who me?! and working Steve in Tasmania! Again TNX for putting with my very shaky fist! 73, Steve NQ8T



Used the Schurr to finish the SK portion of the 3KA - then went to the HST for SS. Thanks to all! 73, Mike W1BV



My novice Tempo One still works! I use it once a year for this event. It has NO filtering so I hear multiple stations at once - then try to figure out where I'm listening as you need to set the RIT for the 800hz offset. Once set, it's good even while the rig drifts (sorry Dave - WB9EGZ when I drifted out of your pass-band!) It took Phil - W6UG and me 15 minutes to find each other and get our offsets set - and that was using the sked page! While fun, I sure enjoy our modern rigs! 73, Ken N8KR



I only had 3 tubes to give out!! Thanks for the Qs. Kenwood TS-530S, Be-gali Spark and AC2C SKCC Logger. 73, Mitch NWØM



K2 5wts g5rv...stkey and hb bug.. wow, I got 1 qso on 10mtrs.. ha..unreal..ha.. only on 40 and 20 and 10.. tnx to board mbrs.. WOW more new mbrs.... super... tnx to all cu in july.. Dave n9zxlqrp@gmail.com



Enjoyed providing /22 to everyone. Beautiful weekend here so spent a lot of time out on the lake and operating time was limited. I used my Drake T-4XB and R-4A at around 100 watts using an OCF dipole, 43' vertical or 2 element Quad at 40' depending on band. As far as history on my Drakes the T-4XB was manufactured for 1967 to 1973. I acquired mine about 6 years ago. The R-4A was manufactured for 1966 to 1967 and I acquired mine about a year after the T-4XB. I was looking for the matching R-4B but the deal I got on the R-4A was too good to pass up and it works well with the T-4XB. Key used was a J-38. 73, Bill NZ0T



I used my Swan model 500-CX boat anchor. The rig is about 50 years old with 14 tubes. I acquired this rig 3 years ago in an estate sale. The rig had been completely restored. I enjoyed working with this old rig and had a blast in this month's WES. 73, Jerry NF5U



That sure was fun and for poor conditions it was one my better WES scores for quite a while. Many thanks to those who worked me . I used a combination of my 1953 Vibroplex Presentation bug and Czech Army key to build up my Triple Key Award QSOs. I look forward to next month's WES. 73 from Tasmania de Steve VK7CW



Much fun was had, saw many new 'faces' (fists?). Even had a few contacts on 10, always nice in these solar cycle doldrums! 73, Ryan WINU

More, More, More June WES!



Nice weekend! Did get in swimming on both days. Mid-day band conditions not great, and east-west propagation was limited much of the time. Wish more would actually log into the sked page. Many thanks to the folks running tube gear. As always, it was nice to work the newer members. 73, John W1TAG



After getting my vintage 100 watt station fine tuned for my favorite WES - (even modified the Viking II for grid block keying), I was only able to operate a limited time and then only on Saturday - our pastor was away and I had the privilege to give the Sunday Eve message as well as teach an adult Sunday school class, so I needed to be prepared - Priorities!! I had ground and etched a lot of useless xtals so I wasn't as limited as last year. Had over 60 xtals for 80, 40, and 20. I only wrked 3 other tube stns running xtals (KE4OH, AA2XB, KA9P)so that hurt my bonus. Transmitter: Johnson Viking II with xtals and a Collins 75A4 receiver. Used a B&W electronic TR switch for switch-less ops. 37 tubes with an /x Keys: Junker sk and my J36 bug. Even though I had 36 xtals for 40 alone, it was still very hard to get stns calling CW 1/2 khz away to tune around when they had a lot of on freq replies. Called Tony K6ELQ repeatedly Sat eve but to no avail. Those who have never operated "rock-bound" with tube type gear just cannot appreciate what can be involved.Thanks to KS4S and his 120 tube Navy gear stn. Conrad, if you were xtal control you would have been worth 14,400 points!! **Edited: forgot to include one tube/x to tube/x QSO worth 2458 points!73 from WV, Dave W3NP



Ran my IC-7000 at 75 watts to a simple G5RV at 16 ft up. Didn't make too many contacts but I managed to work Alex on 2 bands. Always fun. 73, Curt WA2JSG



This was a fun WES trying to keep these boat anchors tuned to each other and manually switching from xmit to rcv... reminiscent of the good ol days!

XMTR: 1948 9 tube Collins 310A exciter driving a 1962 4 tube Collins 30L-1 amp. I zero beat with a KX2 just to make sure I'm in band, hi. Also reads freq to logger. RCVR: 1955 22 tube Collins 75A-4 Total 35 tubes. Note SKCC arduino driven display (blue screen next to exciter). Thanks to all for chasing my drift..now you know why.73, Phil



Boat Anchor weekend is my favorite! I normally use boat anchors, anyway. This weekend, I used my Collins Gold Dust Twins (75A-4 RX, KWS-1 TX) with a total of 53 tubes. The transmitter has a pair of 4CX250B's in the finals for a power level of 550 to 700 watts output. I have this pair (and all of my vintage gear) set up for full QSK. My 75A-4 has cascaded filters for superior selectivity for a boat anchor receiver. It's performance rivals that of a modern receiver. I primarily used the Begail Sculpture Swing Cootie Key, but sometimes switched to the Intrepid Bug or the Blade Straight Key. I found band conditions on Saturday to be pretty good, but Sunday was pretty lousy. I had a hamfest until about 3 this afternoon and found conditions horrible. Also, nice meeting some of you at Hamvention. I wish I could have spent more time at the booth, but as an outdoor vendor, I had to be there. 73, Mike WB0SND



My SKCC "boat anchor" is a Kenwood TS-530S. It was my first HF rig and still one of my favorites. I bought the radio from one of my favorite Elmers on April 14, 1995 and I still have the hand-written bill of sale. This is one of only a few objects that I own that is not for sale. Using a rig with a manually tuned final stage is a bit of a challenge and does not allow quick band or even frequency changes but I became reacquainted with the old rig and remembered what a joy it is to operate. Thanks for all the contacts... Great Fun 73,

I worked a few hours on Saturday from Valley Forge National Historical Park (POTA K-0761). Great to hear some strong signals on 15M. 73, Craig WB3GCK



Great Event.... Worked mostly Saturday. Could not get in till the late afternoon on Sunday due to a Confirmation and a Baptism.....Tnx to all I worked especially those with thee Boat Anchors. 73, Greg WA3GM

Final Page of June WES!



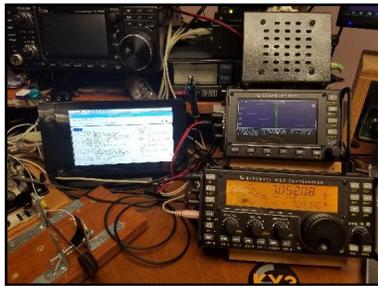
I got several queries on my tube count ... I guess most stations aren't running 120 tubes. The R-390A uses 26 and the SRT-14 has 94. 66 of those are in the synthesizer. I guess I could stretch it and claim I was crystal controlled because the synth has its reference crystal buried in an oven the size of a pickle jar. This transmitter was a rescue from an old CD warehouse that was being demolished. There were three there ... two had been hauled outside and left in the weather for years and the one I took looked pristine. Sadly, the high power modulators and power supplies were ruined by weather so I am left with 100 watts out of a 4-400. The synth is a little cranky these days and I had to reseal a few tubes in the middle of the WES to get her to settle down. I used this transmitter on 600 meters as a unit of the WD2XSH effort. A few years back this was my everyday rig. It sounds awesome on CW. 73,



I used my Johnson Valiant and Collins 75A-4 with a 1940 McElroy Deluxe BUG and 80 meter horiz loop. I had a ball and wish I had more time to operate. 73, Rich WB2WGX



Morse Code is getting easier! Still not where I would like to be, but I am able to make quick exchanges. Thank you to Tony K6ELQ for my 1 QSO. 73, James WD0JB



Another fun sprint. Saturday was good but Sunday was not so good. But a good time was had. Thanks to all who managed to pull out my weak signal. Again, I used the KX3 into the 160 meter doublet on 40 meters and the Hex Beam on 20 and 15 meters. Still using only half of the cootie as a side operated straight key. Works pretty good. Best wishes and 73 from Wild and Wonderful West Virginia, Dave WV8DH



Thanks to K9FW for the custom weight! 73, JoshW9HT



I have only one straight key...this is Vizkey Camelback. Looking for some inexpensive ones to try out. Steve KD1XH



SKCC and KD8YQX



My name is Jim Kubinski and I am so glad that I found the SKCC! I am a 29 year old middle/high school band teacher in the Detroit area. If I'm not directing the marching band or going for a motorcycle ride...I'm probably playing radio.

I was first exposed to ham radio by my uncle starting around 2012. One thing led to another and sure enough I took my technician test at the Dayton Hamvention in 2014. VHF/UHF was neat...but I wanted to upgrade. After taking a class offered by a local club, my uncle and I both passed our tests and upgraded to our General. I also took the Extra too (because why not??) and got pretty close to passing that-not too bad for having no intention of taking that test on the same day!

I found SKCC because I had a desire to learn CW. I started out just listening-some on the air and a lot of W1AW code practice. I found myself searching Google for various things about CW and a lot of time I found myself on the SKCC website in the "Beginners Corner". After a while I looked into what SKCC was all about and figured that I should join. SKCC has been a huge help for me to get better at my code. I love that there are monthly events to look forward to-but not too many to where it becomes cumbersome and exhausting. It's a very low pressure environment for a newbie. There have plenty of times where I've had to respond with a simple QRS and the person on the other end has been happy to do so.

I am proud to say that after about a year I can copy 12 wpm without issue, and possibly up to 20 wpm during a contest where the exchange is somewhat predictable. One of my favorite events thus far has been the K3Y. I took a leap and signed up for a few slots to work as K3Y/8 and it was a lot of fun getting to work a pileup! I am really looking forward to Field Day 2019 where I plan to work exclusively CW.

My current station consists of a gifted Kenwood TS-520 (unfortunately no CW filter) and a handful of keys that I've acquired from various Hamventions and local swaps. My newest key (and probably the one I'm using if you work me) is my brand new Begali Camelback that I just purchased at the 2019 Hamvention. I love the feel of it and the weight of it. It feels like it's built like a battleship!



I also have a Vibroplex Champion Bug that I acquired at a local swap almost a year ago. I took it with me to 2019 Hamvention to have the Vibroplex folks take a look at it. They confirmed that it is indeed from 1949. I also asked about how to adjust it, but unfortunately I am missing a spring that is no longer manufactured. I wonder if there are any SKCCer's out there that would happen to have an extra laying around, or know where I could get one?

Bottom line, SKCC is a great group. Very helpful for a new CW operator and a genu-



inely great fun thing to do. The best part is that it is free! I haven't met many SKCCers in person, but those that put their time and effort into keeping it running must be pretty awesome people!

Hope to work you sometime! And if you're able to help out with that spring for my Vibroplex please let me know-you can find me on QRZ!

73, -KD8YQX aka
Jim Kubinski
SKCC #18094T

***** News! *****

Ed...Jim got his spring and sent this...

Took the whole thing apart. Used silver polish (from work for instruments) and q-tipped all of the metal. That took a long, long time.

For the base I didn't want to scrub since some finish is already missing. Good thing I own a Harley-Davidson and have some cleaning products! I used a foam cleaner/polish to eat at the dirt and patted it dry. Did that a few times. I did also use the silver polish on the Vibroplex name plate. Afterwards I took Harley engine brightener to add the 'wet' look to the base. The engine brightener is actually designed for parts of the engine that aren't chrome but are instead what they refer to as 'wrinkle black'. Stuff like between cooling fins, top side of transmission and such. It has a similar texture to the base of the bug so I figured I'd give it a whirl. It did a nice job!

Put the whole thing back together and tested it out. Works great!



May Brag



Always enjoyable. Thanks for the QSOs. CU next month. A friend brought this back from Dayton for me! That makes two straight keys, two cooties and three bugs. IC-7300 to either an OCF Flagpole Vertical or a WISFR end fed sloper. 73, Bob K3ZGA



Too much time fly fishing (can now mark off the Peacock Bass from my bucket list), not much time for radio. So, the cootie keys pictured here were not too active this month. I offer my open invitation for all cootie users to please come join our User's list (link at my QRZ page). 73, Mike K5MP



Thanks to all who participated. With summer activities and the thunderstorms, its getting harder to find time for radio. I must work on getting my priorities correct. Everyone have a great summer. 73 & God Bless. Ric KA3LOC



Bands weren't very good this month, but had fun anyways. Thanks for all the QSOs. 73, Dave KB1WOD



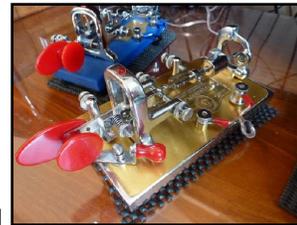
Haven't been active in years, and now this last month I racked up almost my full 100 for T. I'm in between rigs using an old Ten Tec Triton IV. I have been running barefoot to a doublet good through 80 meters. 73, Ron KG1T



Good brag month in spite of conditions. After sunset 40 has been in fine shape. Great to see all the new numbers showing up. Tip of the hat to our loyal Brag master Curt ! 73 de AL, N4ow 11375s



Thanks for the QSO's everyone. Propagation was up and down. A few of my club members worked to get the driven element of my tribander w/40M repaired. Now I can hear much better versus using my INV 'L'. TNX Dave, KB1WOD for being bonus got you early in the month :) 73, Rick



A very surprising month considering the poor conditions of late. Thanks to all who worked me and to Dave, KB1WOD, for giving me the bonus points. Most QSOs made with my Bug which is now finally qualified for the TKA. Now to finish off the straight key and sideswiper contacts. 73, Steve VK7CW



I enjoy this time of year because of the sporadic-E we get to enjoy on the higher bands. My count of 14 contacts is not a high number, but it consists of 11 QSOs on 10m and 3 QSOs on 6m which me is equal to a much bigger number on 40m and 20m. I hope more SKCC members will venture up to 28.050 and 50.090 when we have the summertime sporadic-E openings. It doesn't take much for an antenna. I use only a mobile antenna attached to our mobile home here in Florida. 73, Wes W1LIC



Good to be back in the seat here after the cancer surgery. Thanks to all I worked. Hopefully next month will be better. 73,Greg WA3GM



Western Union 2A Legless

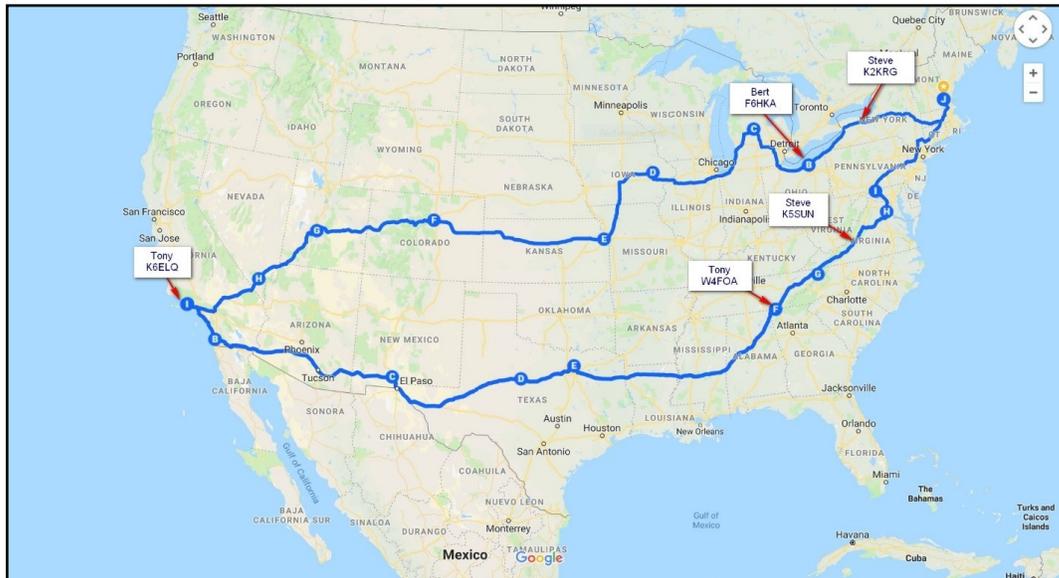
More time on the air this month, despite only fair conditions. Some QSO's done on 10m, so that's nice. Thanks to all who participate in the Brags. 73, John W1TAG

N1FG Coast-to-coast Road Trip

An older ham who I knew during my novice period liked to say that a “real” ham was someone who could dial a random number on the telephone, and then talk with whoever answered for 30 minutes.” His feeling was that getting to know someone you met on the radio wasn’t just nice – it was the point of making the contact!

I never developed his love for hours-long CW rag chews (although at the time I was just using CW until my license upgrade and microphone purchase of course), but have always enjoyed visiting other hams I have met on the air to “have an eyeball QSO” and put a face to the voice – or fist.

So, when planning a coast-to-coast road trip to visit family and friends I tried to hook-up with some of my SKCC friends who have helped learn how to enjoy CW again.



N1FG Coast-to-coast Road Trip



Steve, K2KRG, at the Longhorn Steakhouse, Rochester,

After departing Deerfield, NH at 0230 on May 13th, the first ham on the sked was Steve, K2KRG, SKCC member and previous classmate in CW Academy. He is a former Army paratrooper who works in Rochester, NY area, and was in the right place, literally, for a lunch date as I blasted through town on the NY Thruway! What a pleasure to meet in person after our many QSOs (and several Skype sessions during CW Academy).

His new Ford “Raptor” pickup is fully equipped for CW on the road with a TS-480HX feeding a Tar Heel 100A antenna. As he drove into the restaurant parking lot, he was just finishing up a CW QSO with an Italian station. I wish my skills were as good as his! Thanks again Steve for taking the time for a quick lunch!



Larry, N1FG, and Bert, F6HKA at Hilton Garden Inn Downtown,

Unfortunately, I couldn't spend nearly enough time with Steve as I needed to get back in the saddle and head for Cleveland, my first overnight stop. I was looking forward to meeting Bert, F6HKA, as he was also staying in Cleveland that night on his way to Dayton for the Hamvention.

For CW folks around the world, Bert's strong signal, great fist and big ears are legendary. For those of us in SKCC he is not only famous for his skills, but also for being always ON the air! I, like many others, have benefitted from working him when possible and listening to him at every opportunity as a great example of skill and behavior to emulate.

We had a long chat about his first trip to the USA, his sightseeing in Toronto, Niagara Falls and Cleveland and his anticipation for the Hamvention in Dayton. In person he was the same kind of gentleman as on the air, what an honor and privilege to meet this legend, thank you so much Bert!

After seeing Bert I was just as happy as I could be but early the next morning hopped back in the car and headed for points west. Although I had several folks to see on the way, I was already anxious to meet my next ham target, Tony, K6ELQ, a "big gun" in California and couldn't wait to get out there.

My first QSO with Tony was early on in my SKCC time as his signal was strong and fist perfect for my pitiful copying skills! It was great to hear him on the air so often and he always has a very dependable signal even in poor conditions due to his great station. He has helped me (and many others) climb up the SKCC experience ladder with encouragement, kind ears and likely a very large bottle of aspirin!



Tony, K6ELQ at his operating table, Oxnard, CA

His beautiful new Optibeam OB15-7 antenna was an easy locator once I turned onto his street. The custom operating position inside his shack was also very well thought out and I sure took some ideas for my own use. (FYI – if you have never read the K6ELQ QRZ writeup put it on your list as it is fascinating!) Thank you, Tony, for letting me swing by and torment you with questions!

After seeing Tony in Oxnard, the next "ham" stop on the itinerary was another Tony, W4FOA just outside Chattanooga, Tennessee. This is a man who I not only credit with improving my CW skills, but also helping me establish a home orchard (of sorts) here in New Hampshire.

Tony has a great fist, kind ears and a very welcoming attitude for any who use CW. He always has time to chat and, in my case, that started us talking about fruit trees and I have learned a ton about them from him! It was super to finally put a face (and voice) to the musical fist I hear in my headphones. He came over to meet me at the hotel, and then drove us to a Cracker Barrel restaurant where we could share a meal and have some laughs about hamming, fruit tree crop thieves (flock of crows/ravens) and just about everything under the sun. It was a great experience and I hope I can someday gain some of his skills. In any event I will look forward to seeing him again and learning just a bit more about hamming and/or gardening! Thanks, Tony, for letting me interrupt your afternoon! (I owe you some NH Honeycrisp apples if I can keep those birds away this year!)



Tony, W4FOA and Larry, N1FG at the Hampton Inn, East Ridge, TN



Steve, N5SUN, and his wife, Pam in Lynchburg, VA

It was fun to catch up with him via voice as opposed to code, and I sure appreciate his wife Pam putting up with a strange and almost deaf man stopping by to chat about radio.

Thanks, Steve, for letting me swing by and I sure hope to get together again soon!

I ended up where I started, back home, but with lots of great memories and stories from the hams I can now identify in a line-up, and 7443 more miles on the

The last SKCC ham that I got to visit was Steve, N5SUN, who is generally one of the “morning” folks on the sked page. He has a problem a LOT of us have, or have had, living in an apartment community and using “stealth” wire antennas and low power to be a good neighbor. Lots of opportunities for frustration, but just like fishing a whole lot of opportunities for the “Got Him!” smiles and great feeling when all the right pieces fall into place.



N1FG QTH in Deerfield, NH

F6HKA de K200...and Wine!

I had the pleasure of hosting Bert, F6HKA, his wife and daughter for dinner at our local Outback restaurant the night before the Hamvention. While his wife and daughter went on to the Cincinnati area, Bert spent the night with me. The next morning, we drove to Xenia and the rest of his stay in Ohio is well known after that. Bert was the perfect guest. He was kind enough to bring me 3 bottles of French wine. He told me that the Bordeaux needed to set quietly for a few months as it had been agitated during the trip. I later told him that I'd be opening it up next February to celebrate my 70th birthday. Never turn down the opportunity to have Bert as a guest!!!

73, Andy, K200
SKCC 10315s



Facebook Posts



In the process of moving to east Texas and taking up the life of a country gentleman ☺so this is my complete ham station for the present. 73, Larry K5JYD



Not having any luck so far, but winning the Fun Contest. Thanks Curt Myers WA2JSG for trying to reel me in....73, Randy NC4RT



At Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge. 73, Kevin WA9VFD

For those of u that worked W1AW on 40 meters yesterday here are pix of the rig and 2 element 40 meter beam at 100 ft. It is hard to see however, I was told it is the beam on top. I hope to get back there to operate again in the next few weeks....73, Jim W1RO



Ed... The following is a story submitted by Jaimie Charlton, ADØAB. Jamie sent the following email:

“I write short stories for the Johnson County Radio Amateurs Club of Johnson County, Kansas where I am the VP. Our club members like the stories and I thought that SKCC members might enjoy them, too. So, I've attached one that is loosely related to CW to see if you agree.

The stories revolve around four characters: Elmer, a retired electrical engineer, long-time ham and generally smart, old guy; Elmer's nephew Hambone, a ham in his first or second year of electrical engineering college but not as smart as he thinks he is; Dude, Hambone's younger, precocious non-ham brother still in high school; Joey, their non-ham friend roughly Dude's age but no longer in school. There are other characters as needed such as Prof. Erlenmeyer Flask and Hal the detective. Many club members seem to enjoy associating themselves with the characters or the situations the characters face but that is coincidental.”

Dueling Keys: A Hambone Adventure

By Jaimie Charlton, ADØAB 9697s

“Well, one of the biggest differences is DMR has two time slots which means you can have two independent conversations over the same repeater at the same time,” explained Dill for about the tenth time to a new owner of a TYT HT who hadn't a clue as to what he bought.

A little farther down the table, Dom offered some wisdom to a new ham who had been agonizing over which of many expensive antennas to buy for his first attempt at HF, “I really like simple wire antennas. They are easy to build, almost invisible and work great.”

This was not what the newbie wanted to hear. He was sure that he could just spend his way to DXCC and WAS awards if he only knew what to buy.

But the most interesting conversation was at the end of the table where Hambone, with his little brother Dude and his uncle Elmer, were enthralled by Kit's stories of his childhood with the moonshiners in rural Tennessee. Such was a typical morning breakfast club of the Johnson County, Kansas hams.

Now, the breakfast club isn't a real club. It has no membership lists, no dues, no regular meetings, no clubhouse – nothing that would identify it as a traditional club. But a club it is. Just ask any of the guys or ladies at the table that morning. The club meets nearly every morning around 8:45-9:30 AM at some local restaurant. Somebody gets on the local 145.29 MHz FM repeater and asks if anyone is going for breakfast. Literally out of thin air, voices appear and quickly a time (usually right then) and place is established. Like every other day, that's how this meeting of the breakfast club kicked off. But this day was going to be different.

At first, nobody noticed the tall, thin and very elderly gentleman walk up to the table. “It sounds like you guys are hams, too,” he said. “Me and the missus are just passing through on our way to visit our son in Utah,” he continued, offering a little too much information too soon as hams are inclined to do.

“Well, why don't you join us? We've got an extra chair right here if Dom will just move down a little,” invited Elmer. “By the way, I'm Elmer and these are my two nephews, Hambone and Dude, and that's Kit at the end. Where are you coming from?”

“My name's Alber, not Albert, and we're from Tennessee and ...” He started to say but stopped in midsentence staring at Hambone. “I don't believe it! You are the spittin' image of my great-great grandfather when he was a kid! His name was Hammish,” exclaimed Alber. “Do you have any kin in Carter County?”

"I, I ah, don't know," stammered Hambone, caught off guard. "Unck, do we?"

"I sort of remember grandpa saying something about his grandpa living in Elizabethton where the fishing was better than any place else in the world," offered Elmer, not sure where this was going.

"I bet you are a CW operator, aren't you?" Asked Alber getting more excited by the minute.

"Well, I do run CW quite a lot," said Hambone getting his composure back. "But I also like SSB and PSK31."

"I am almost sure we are kin!" shouted Alber. "Do you know that your great-great-grandpa, I'm not sure how many 'greats', Hammish was a famous CW operator? There's a statue and a street named after him in Elizabethton and, even to this day, he's a legendary hero to moonshiners."

"Moonshiners?" asked Elmer. "I don't think our family was ever involved in anything illegal."

"Yeah, moonshiners," continued Alber as he pulled his chair up closer between Hambone and Elmer. "Let me explain." "Way back at the beginning of the twentieth century a pretty large number of immigrants from Scotland came over and some of them settled in Tennessee. They were simple people, mostly farmers and craftsmen, who didn't bring much with them, except the knowledge of how to make whisky."

"I think I remember dad saying something about us having roots in Scotland when we were watching a curling match on TV," added Dude.

"Well, they soon discovered that Tennessee was considerably different from Scotland," continued Alber. "Mainly, it was warmer and they didn't have the ingredients to make their traditional whisky. But then they discovered that corn could be made into excellent whisky. Even back then it was against the law to make and sell whisky without paying tax on it. But the rugged Tennessee terrain and the fact that most of the product was made and transported at night made enforcement nearly impossible. Eventually, the distillers became known as 'moonshiners' and the tax men as 'revenuers'.

Well, time passed and the dark shadow of prohibition fell across the land and out of it came a new and stronger breed of revenuer. The new revenuers had faster cars and were so skilled at catching moonshiners that a whisky production crisis was at hand. Not to mention that a lot of the good ol' boys were in jail."

"Did they put Hammish in jail?" asked Dude.

"No, no, they never really caught him. He was a big guy, mebe twice your size, dreadlocks, beard and tough. Some say he would bring a knife to a gun fight just for the hell of it. But that didn't happen very often because he was amazingly clever at avoiding the revenuers. Sometimes they would see a wisp of smoke up on the bluff, but they could never find him or his still.

All that aside, Hammish made the best whisky in the county. It is said that one sip of his crystal-clear white lightnin' and you could hear angels sing. All that made Hammish the prime revenuer target and he knew it. He also knew that the revenuers were getting closer. Something had to be done. But what?"

The answer came one summer when Hammish was visiting a show in the big city of Nashville. World War I had been over for several years and companies were displaying their new marvels for the consumers. Everything from shiny red cars, to gleaming white refrigerators and chrome toasters was on display.

But what caught Hammish's eye was two guys who called themselves 'hams' for some unknown reason. They had some funny-looking boxes they called radio sets and were sending telegraph messages back and forth without wires!

Okay, radio was not new, but Carter County was not exactly on the leading edge of technology. Hammish had seen the telegraph operator in Elizabethton send messages over the wire. But these guys were doing it without wires!

That gave Hammish his big idea. He bought several radio sets and took them home. The local telegraph operator, a moonshiner himself, was all too happy to teach the guys to send code. He also helped Hammish install the radios in some of the transport trucks and in hidden spots in the hills. Now, when the 'shine was on the move', spotters in the hills would watch for revenuers and radio their locations to the drivers who could then avoid getting caught.

It worked great and Hammish was a hero – at least among the moonshiners. In fact, the radio system worked so well that the boys began using it to send all kinds of other messages when they weren't transporting 'shine. And that became a problem because the new chief revenuer in Elizabethton was also a ham and could easily read all of the boys' messages. Discovering this, the boys jumped around in frequency and developed secret words for their activities. But that revenuer also learned to jump in frequency and eventually figured out what the secret words really meant. The revenuer even started talking to the boys on their radios." "Are you saying that the moonshiners actually talked to the cops while they were smuggling?" asked Hambone.

"Yes. To the revenuers, it became sort of a game of hide and seek, but with serious consequences for the moonshiner who got caught. To the boys, it was not a game. They started sending faster and faster and keeping their messages very short and hard to read. And on it went, more frequency jumping, more secret words and faster and faster code speeds.

Finally, a standoff was reached. The revenuers were finding only a few stills now and then and stopping a few of the boys' transport runs. So few that the cost in money and man-hours greatly exceeded the value of the whisky they captured. Likewise, the moonshiners were hiding their stills better and the radios were helping the transporters avoid traps. But again, the cost of adding more and more watchers, buying more radios and faster cars was so high it almost wasn't worth it. Then, the big surprise came."

"A surprise?" asked Dude, fully caught up in the story.

"Nobody knows why he did this," continued Alber. "Some speculate that the chief revenuer also had a secret still someplace, although that was never proven. Some say he was just tiring of the game. Still others say he needed to end the problem so he could get a promotion and move to Nashville. Whatever the reason, that glistening Tennessee morning heard the revenuer send Hammish a message offering a deal (Yes, by now they all knew each other's names.). He proposed a duel between himself and the moonshiners' best telegraph operator. Not with guns, with telegraph keys. If the moonshiners won, he would back off and let them make and sell whisky as long as they did not sell it out of Tennessee. If he won, the 'shiners would stop all production and tear down their stills. After a long meeting, the boys accepted the duel and selected Hammish as their contestant.

The rules were simple. Both contestants would meet in the park on July 5th (July 4th is sacred in Tennessee) with their radios and as many supporters as could fit in the park. Each contestant would bring pages of text to send. On his turn, a contestant would send a page of his text and the other would copy it or simply recite it. If the received text matched the sent text, as judged by the audience, the receiver won that round. Then they'd switch. The duel would continue until one contestant could not copy the other's text.

The hot Tennessee sun rose that July 5th upon a park filled on one side with moonshiners and their fans and customers and on the other side with revenuers, revenuer-wanna-bes and lot of snooty people who were against anything that seemed like fun. In the center were two radio sets on two tables with two operators settin' at them.

Each operator had snacks and a pitcher of ice water sweating on his table. A hush fell over the crowd as the revenuer won the coin toss and sent the first message. 'You are going to

lose this match, Hammish,' came across at a leisurely fifteen words per minute pace that Hammish copied easily. The crowd cheered.

Upping the ante, Hammish tapped out a 20 WPM version of, "Oh, say can you see" The first verse of the Star Spangled Banner. This caught the revenuer by surprise, but he recovered and not only copied it correctly, but sang it to the spectators. The crowd went wild. Buoyed up by the cheering, the revenuer retorted with, "I was dancin' with my darlin'," the first verse of the Tennessee Waltz at a much too fast – for a waltz - 40 WPM.

Not to be out done, Hammish began singing that old time favorite and some of his fans started dancing. Tiring of the softball musical references, Hammish shot back, "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence" He hoped that the revenuer would be unable to copy the last line of the Declaration of Independence at 50 WPM, but he did.

Sweat glistening on his brow, the revenuer's fingers were a blur as he pelted Hammish with a long piece of text from an obscure Tennessee law. Not expecting such a long text, Hammish struggled to capture it all. He actually missed a word or two, but the audience gave it to him anyway.

The Tennessee afternoon sun blazed hot and the telegraph keys spit fire as the transmitters struggled to keep pace with Hammish and the revenuer as they dueled for the future of moonshining. On they went through the afternoon and into the gloaming. Sweating like their water pitchers, they fought into the night. Keys blazed blue and insects buzzed around the red Dietz lanterns as a full moon rising replaced the sun adding metaphorical punctuation to the evening that nobody noticed. Even in the moonlight, it was clear that Hammish, sweating and shaking, was in dire straits.

Sensing his opponent's exhaustion, the revenuer continued to pound him with long obscure texts at stratospheric speeds. Hammish copied all, but just barely. To the average listener, dots and dashes are indistinguishable at seventy words per minute. It just sounds like an annoying buzz. Even to the skilled telegrapher, those speeds require full concentration and that is what Hammish was losing. Sweat was running down his arms and off his hands. He could feel a tingle as the salty liquid leaked over the button on the key and bridged the gap between his fingers and the voltage on the upper contact. Nevertheless, he managed to fire off a long Shakespearian sonnet whose antique English words, he hoped, would end this brutal duel.

The revenuer wavered, but didn't collapse and responded with yet another withering barrage of dots and dashes. Hammish could not go on. He called for his last one-minute break, mopped the sweat off his brow and prepared to admit defeat. But something in his snack bag caught his eye.

Some say it was a wink from an angel, others say it was just a lightning bug. Whatever it was, it appeared to have come from a Mason jar filled with his legendary 'shine that someone slipped into his snack pack. A glorious liquid as clear as the finest spring water and so pure that it captured the moonbeams and shone with its own silvery light. Hammish unscrewed the metal ring, popped off the top and took a big sip. It's hard to say what exactly happened next and a lot of people have different opinions. But Hammish himself said he heard music, like angels singing and encouraging him to go on.

Although the entire experience lasted less than a minute, he now knew how to win. He set down the jar and reached for the wreckage that his key had become and began to tap out his final message. Not fast, but with perfect precision and a compelling musical rhythm. This strange message caught the weary revenuer off guard. Instead of a blistering attack, this was a sweet melody. So taken by the musical sounds and rhythm, the revenuer missed all the text except 'wire', the last word of the short string.

Well, I'm sure you know what Hammish sent.* What was left of the crowd went wild and carried the victorious Hammish around on their shoulders. True to his word, the revenuer

stopped chasing the moonshiners. And true to their word, they did not sell their booze out of state.

And that, my boy, is why there is a statue of Hammish, your ancestor, in the town square and why in Elizabethton, Independence Day celebration is always a two-day event. So, Hambone, that's your name, right? Keep practicing your code, you may be another Hammish."

"C'mon. Alber, you've been jawin' long enough, we gotta get goin'" she said dragging Alber from the table.

**Author's note. If you don't know the rest of Hammish's last send, it is, "Ben's best bent wire." This unusual phrase sounds like a song when sent properly in Morse code. In fact, it is so musical that it was featured at a ham club Christmas party one year.*

Ed...I think we can count on more stories from Jamie in future issues of the Rag Chew.

SK SKCC Members

The following is a list of SK who were SKCC members. This list was compiled by Dan KZ3T 18885s

Call	SKCC#	Name	QTH	Date of SK
W9NT	16060	Gurnee	ND	04-17-2019
KA2EE	2358	Thomas	NY	05-10-2019
WD5JNC	854	John	MS	06-10-2019
WA5TCZ	206t	Darron	LA	07-08-2019



My new display, in the middle is my call sign, each side is a Morse key in the wood, I will find something that show more, too dark on dark wood, maybe brass, any idea? Thanks de VE9VIC.

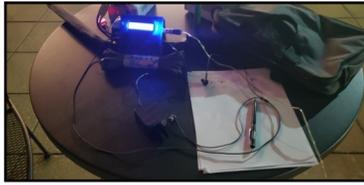
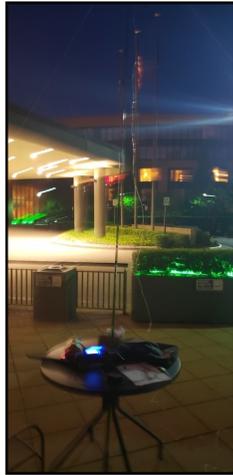


This pic was taken a few years ago in the radio room of the ex-USS Massachusetts at Battleship Cove in Fall River MA. This is one of several local operating positions (LOP) in Radio Central. Some were used for copying the fleet broadcast while others were for ship/shore or ship/ship circuits. What I wanted to point out is the location of the key in the small recessed compartment to the right of the mill (typewriter) behind the paper. The Navy definitely used the American style of sending. ☺ It is an interesting place to visit if you're ever in the area. ~W1LIC Wes

SKCC Members at Field Day 2019



Doug N3QW and a car -full of gear.



Operated as 1B VA from a hotel outside lobby on my qcx 20m. Heard lots of stations and was picked up by the Reverse Beacon Network, but didn't make any contacts. Had to call it a night due to work early tomorrow am. 73,Alex KC0REL.



My antenna right now, a piece of wire draped over 1st floor curtain rods; wanted at least 1 contact and file a field day report; nobody heard me on 40 meters ssb. Got 1 response 40 meters cw; could not complete; to my surprise, my aging fingers get confused, can't send the code. Golly, I can receive 18 or more wpm, can't send the Morse at any speed! Not without practice. Been practicing without the juice or the sound, problem clearing up already; in just a few minutes. 30 years ago I would not have needed practice sending straight key; things are different now. So. Practice and be back next year, God willing. 73, John KA1LHJ SKC#19120



This is my field day setup. FT-817 with an American Morse strait key attached to a small clip board. The antenna was a quarter wave vertical with three radials tuned to 40m. Making lots (35 during my 2 hour morning session) of contacts and having fun. Do you really need more? 73, Charlie KM4ZZ SKCC #17381T



Bob, W8ARC operating 40m cw station at The WV8HAT Field Day. Hancock County, WV. 73, Randy N8KQ



Ken, AB8KT (SKCC #4500) copying the W1AW Bulletin for the WV8HAT Field Day Event.. 73, Randy N8KQ



Dave, KD8AZO, getting ready to be the cw contact person for the Jay County ARC on field day. Note his cootie ready at the right hand.



Non SKCC members looks-like this operating Field Day! Might be trying "modulated cw!"

D'oh!

Field Day From the AH6AX Radio Ranch



Party! Party! ...naw, Field Day at the AH6AX Radio Ranch!

“Unfair! Using an AH6 call gives you extra QSOs....which leads to too much fun for the AH6AX gang at Field Day!”

At Field day one is suppose to encounter bug, hot stuffy tents, thunderstorms, leaky tents and school lunch sandwiches! Clearly the photos here show that this group of operators had too much fun, too much food and too little technical problems!



Jim Sears K3YBN for WANDEL'S RADIO RANCH

Field Day 2019 was a beautiful sunny weekend at AH6AX in Maryland. Not too hot and not too cool. Perfect for operating a ham station on Larry's deck and sharing food with friends.

Although we had a few generator problems in the beginning, we finally got everything working as it should. Everyone got chance to operate and add to the score. The hot dogs and hamburgers were also excellent and Miss Linda's potato salad was a big hit.

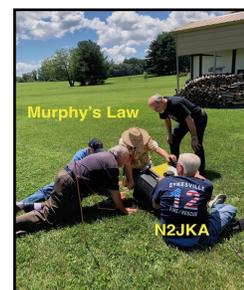
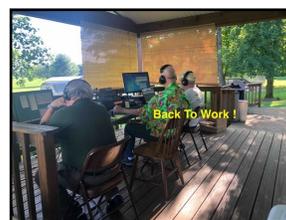


Participants were:

- Ron Bower AC2C (2748)
- John Aymold N2JKA
- Jim Smith K3YMI (16055)
- Larry Wandel AH6AX (11165)
- Jim Sears K3YBN (13305)
- Lloyd Lachow K3ESE (19100)
- Call Used: **AH6AX** Class: **2E**
- (2 Transmitters/under emergency power)**



Making QSOs...”Yes, AH6 and yes, MD....OVER”



Field Day with AA2XB & Co.



Here is AA2XB operating using a 20 meter hamstick, using four metal 25 ft. tape measures for radials, QRP with Navy flameproof straight key.



Anmarie, N2YGG, was the FT-8 op, using solar power.



And we had a visitor, (no not from outer space) but it was Jessy, KC2SJQ, in his 1972 MG.

Three SKCC members got together with six other hams and searched out the highest point in Otsego County, NY. Located in the town of East Worcester at an altitude of 2421 feet we set up for field day. Les, KB2KNX, SKCC #140 and myself, Frank, AA2XB, SKCC #1681S were the cw stations, the other op's used some other strange methods of communicating.



Les, KB2KNX, #140 tried clicking his soldering iron to send code but could not get the dot-dash ratio, so he switched to his trusty old J-38.



Ken, KB2NBY, brought his wife, Pat, N2YDY so he could use her knitting needles for an antenna in case his dipole blew down.

The gang say's hello to the SKCC. Now all that is left is to say "thanks for the memories" 73, de Frank, AA2XB

More Field Day 2019



I was the sole SKCC member operating with the Boschveldt QRP Club (W3BQC). We were 2A on battery power in the EPA section and operated all CW this year. We were hosted by a local business man who graciously allowed us to camp out on a large section of his property. The picture shows me in my tent, which served as both operating position and lodging for the weekend. 73, Craig WB3GCK



It was a hot day in NC, even the wildlife sought shade! Everything for operating except the triband vertical is in the bag.

MTR 4B Radio,

EFT 10/20/40 endfed attached to the top of the umbrella to the tree line.

3. Cloth line 80meter endfed

4. Kent Prototype straight key and American Morse PortaPaddle

5. 8Ah LiFE battery

Logging on cell via Pignology HamLog

The vertical is a QRPGuys Tri Band and it works great. Battery power is supplied by a small 30 watt solar panel.....and there was plenty of sunshine! Total of 203 contacts and 39 states. Fresh fish from the pond for supper as well and some "essentials" brought from home.

This is my 43th straight FD in 54 years as a Ham. Always an adventure and never know what the weather will hold. 73, Randy_KB4QQJ

***** Comments from Members on FD 2019 *****

334 CW and 16 SSB QSOs - all QRP. Antennas were a pair of CFZ. Had to halt operations at 2:30 AM due to friend's potential medical emergency. All OK. We slept in until 8:30 which lost us 3 to 4 hours of op time. 73, Mark K3MSB

I had a great time this weekend on the SK for my club. They set me up with a three element beam and a 500 watt amp. I went back this morning for a few hours and used a vertical with 100 watts and I think that was more fun! 73, Frank W1ZAH

I've been having trouble with my right hand and arm, and sending CW has been very difficult. I've been saving it for the CWA L2 Prep class I've been taking, so I guess I sort of chickened out and ran SSB this year 1D from home. I went to my club's FD site, but ran out of energy and had to leave before doing any operating.

Being disabled stinks on ice. :(But at least I had some fun making some contacts. I'm sure I'll feel up to making CW contacts in the future.

*73,
Gwen, NG3P*

A few years back just before Field Day I decided I wanted to be a better CW operator. I went into Field Day confident that I can copy code between 10~13 wpm. It was a rough evening and most of the operators were going between 20~30 wpm. I tried my best to copy his exchanges before I tried to make a contact. However, their speed and the closeness of other stations completely frustrated me. I ended up with 1 cw contact.

The next year, I was more prepared. I ended up with ~50 contacts in the couple of hours that I worked.

*This year, my role at work changed and I have very little time for ham radio. It really showed as I didn't make a single cw contact. However, I re-sparked my commitment to the mode. I'm going to set a goal of 100 contacts next year.
Kurt, KR2C, 4770*

Same here Kurt. qso's were way too fast for me to copy. Most would not even QRS for me. I usually only get on the air during K3Y so it is all my fault I copy so poorly. I just decided to relax, have fun and do what I could. I would sit on a qso and wait til I finally got all the info. I would concentrate on getting the call prefix then the suffix. Next the class and finally the section. Then I would call the station for the exchange. I sat on a qso quit a while sometimes but in the end, I found it rather satisfying. I even snagged the 2019 Museum Ship, W2C. I only made 35 straight key contacts but had a good time. I am getting ok at copying brief info like SKCC exchange info. That is why K3Y is fun for me. If I have to copy a rag chew I am lost. Anyway all in all I had a fun FD from home during my current convalescent. By the way folks, I don't plan on submitting my log from N1MM because I am not interested. Is there a compelling reason why a home station should? Even though I am not a very dedicated cw operator, I really like the SKCC group. 73, KG4SFB

I was not able to attend our club's Field Day this year. Our son's College Orientation was at the same time, and we even were able to spend the night in the dorms. Loads of fun and worth doing, even though I had to miss the club. I did use my K2/10, bug, and end-fed wire late on Saturday for a few contacts. I was ignored by several folks who were set on sending their own CQ, as fast as they could with as little space to listen for a reply as possible. That reminds me of somebody talking just to hear themselves talk and not really for anybody else to be involved. Oh well. There were many other folks out there who were trying to make a contact.

73, Steve - KI4EZZ

I also encountered many 30+ wpm ops sending what sounded like memory keying CQ's coming so fast there was no time to respond. Being new to CW this was very disappointing. Was able to get 11 QSO's in a 2 hour period Saturday so did have fun. Sure would like to see FD as having fun and not a contest.

73, Dick WR6D

I enjoy FD every year, and have for the past 50 years. I love CW and usually end up on either the 20 or 40 meter station. I don't like SSB but I can do it. I don't like the QRM and the noise. CW I can filter and enjoy. With a new KX3 and 5 watts I was having a ball this year. I used some homebrew antennas, a J-Pole for 20 and a dipole for 20. I can send faster speeds with no problem. I usually do S&P and then some CQ in between. I have found for years that the best way to get the contacts is to send as fast as they do. If a new op gets on there sending 30 or more I will answer at about his speed. If he is overdoing it, I will notice and slow down and let him get my report. I can see a lot of newer/older ops sending more than they can copy for some reason. It is a hobby, a fun event, a contest of sorts, but we need to make the contacts. IT IS NOT A JOB!!! Fun and frolic. I even interject some conversation in there when I hear someone I work a lot and have fun with some stations. I have even sent 229 to N4BP/Bob Patton for years. It is an inside joke and we frolic about it. He is usually 599 plus whenever I hear him but that makes the whole thing more fun. So, if you get in there, slow or fast, just enjoy. I had a real hard time 50 plus years ago copying and got lucky enough to develop an ear for CW and it is a language all its own.

For the most part, just enjoy, and don't get pissed off when you don't get through and picture puny stations like me working QRP all the time, 5 watts or less in the events. Antennas and good radios make the difference with QRP and good ears. I had a ball all weekend. I did not work all I heard, and they did not either I am sure. But that is what makes it fun.

I don't do as much SKCC as I should. I am usually chasing SOTA's on the bands. I get in there once in a while and give out my number for those chasing. That is fun too, to just ragchew and meet new people.

Have a good day and see you all in the next one. If you want to see some of the fun stuff we do, go to YOUTUBE and look up W4MPS and he has made some awesome video presentations about our group. We have fun.

ENJOY HAM RADIO!

de John Paul // AB4PP (WQ4RP for the contesting)

It has been quite unfortunate, but the last few years when I could make a FD, I found few CW operators and the few that were there were not really CW operators. I remember one FD, they set me up with an antenna and I used my rig and computer, etc. Fortunately, the antenna was good and I started to crank out the QSOs. FD is a simple event and should allow a fast rate, but so many FD operators, this seems to be their only CW of the year. So, when I make 60 QSOs in an hour, I am pleased. If I remember correctly, into the night, I actually had one hour with over 80 QSOs. The other CW station had not made 80 QSOs total yet. I had to take a nature break and the other CW operator came to my set up and operated. I grabbed a bite to eat and then went to where he had been operating. Soon, I put in about another 150 QSOs in that log.

Later, someone commented about the different QSO amounts and I did not reply, I just kept making QSOs, experience and skill do count. I commented or made a suggestion at one time, but the other op more or less poo pawed it and I left it alone. Once a year CW operating on CW does not make it. I set with one other operator for awhile. He did good sending, but was weak on receiving. After a bit, I would enter a call I received and he would call and send the exchange. I, in turn, logged his information. It made for a good combination and we logged quite a few QSOs. After awhile, he was actually picking up the calls as well. He learned, we had a good time and we added to the club's score.

With my recent medical issues, FD this year was out of the scheme of things. When I miss FD, it is a sorrowful time for me, but it does bring back many fond memories. I hope all had, at the least, a fun time and a time to build good memories on.

73, Joe, K8JP/K5

I'm at Field Day now. No wind, so can't raise my kite antenna. Forecast to go to "too much wind" over the next hour, as thunderstorms pass. Static on radios loud enough I can't hear much of anything else. Doesn't look like I'll stay overnight... Never did get wind, but my Cricket is hooked up to another 80m half wave dipole in a tree and I'm calling CQ on 3.560.

Stayed on the air for most of an hour last night (then had to give the antenna back to the other 80m operator). I listened on 3.535, 3.550, hearing too many stations sending too fast (and high pitch, meaning well off my center frequency) and overlapping digital traffic (I thought the bottom end of 80m band was reserved for CW?!). I had a nice open frequency on 3.560, a couple CW stations audible a few kilohertz away, but no one heard me. 3.910 was hopeless -- SSB and digital. The 3.579 crystal that came with my Cricket kit was swamped under PSK31 traffic (but that one is in fact well out of the CW-only sub-band).

No QSOs -- though I'm now convinced Field Day was possibly the worst time to try with a QRP rig. "Field Day is not a contest" -- but it does a really good imitation of one at times. I need more Morse practice, still haven't successfully copied a call sign on the air, and my sending is pretty ugly, too. As far as I could tell, the Cricket radio and American Morse Equipment KK-1b worked fine, and I was impressed with how much the Cricket's receiver picked up with a decent antenna.

I was amused and amazed to learn that I was the only club member at the Field Day gathering who had even my minimal level of Morse. Members who've been at this long enough they had to have learned it to get their license seemed to have lost it since getting their Extra, and newer members never learned it.

Still, worth going just to get the Cricket on a decent antenna and under the gray line and try to get out. I'll try again when the traffic is lighter. Meantime, I may hook it up to the FM broadcast folded dipole I've been using on my Hallicrafters S120.

73, Don KX4QP

I read quite a few of the posts following Field Day, 2019, due to family commitments my operating was not that much this year, but operate I did and had fun, for me it was just a matter of notching the CW filter down to 250, setting the sending speed on N1MM and started running contacts.

For those new to SKCC and CW in general, notice I mentioned setting the CW filter notch setting to 250 HZ, this is where you need to learn, RTFM (Read That Fine Manual) to understand just what your radio is capable of doing in the CW mode, as a side note, years ago I bought a Drake TR-4 transceiver, for CW it was the worst mistake I made, the radio was made for sideband, the bandwidth on CW was as wide as the proverbial barn door, eventually Drake came out with the TR-4 CW with a notch filter in the IF stages of 500 HZ, but by then I had moved on to a Kenwood TS-530S. Back to the subject, so for those that said you called and didn't get an answer, you might have been outside his CW filter notch and the station never heard you, do not get discouraged, this comes with practice, once you get into any type of contest it's not like calling on the SKCC frequencies, patience, practice, it will come.

The second thing I mentioned was N1MM CW setting, N1MM is a very popular, free-ware, contesting program, among it's many features is it's ability to link up with the K1EL (can be bought as a kit) WinKeyer USB and it gives you the ability to program the function keys on your computer keyboard, the basic sequence for "Run" mode is key F1 calls CQ, F2 is programmed to answer the call that has been entered in the Call Sign box and send the report, the far stations information is entered and F3 is usually programmed to send "R QSL TU BT CQ" or however you want it to, the other F keys can be programmed to resend your call and section, N1I gets a lot of requests for repeats.

And the one feature right on the logging window is "CW SPEED", you can set your sending speed anywhere to your hearts content, for Field Day and local contests, including special event stations, I usually have it set between 21 and 25 wpm, , DX contests, it's usually about 28 wpm, those DX stations do send at high speed, back to the subject, even though the speed is set between 21 and 25 wpm I do slow down if I hear a station coming back, it's a matter of adding more space between the letters, hopefully stations are at the stage of understanding the complete letter and not counting the dits and dahs, but, if needed, I will try to hang in there to get the contact.

For those that want to get their feet wet in contesting, the state QSO parties are usually a great place to start, the rules are available on line and it does give you practice in contesting, back when I first got on the air in the early 70's people were always complaining how hard it was to get WAS, the word was spread that all you needed to do was get in a state QSO party, and this was well before the internet and cell phones.

To me, I can't understand why a station has to send high speed on Field Day, with a lot of stations on the air from remote sites, but hopefully I've given people something to ponder upon, always ask questions, some of us out here will always be glad to help, as for me, when I operate SKCC it's with a bug, tamed to slow down, my wrists are toast.

73 John K2IZ SKCC 5019C



New little guy. I like the feel, will hopefully make first QSO on it soon. Steve KD1XH



My wife got me the Blue Bug for Fathers Day so the Original wouldn't be so lonely. I ordered the Vari-Speed and it does a good job slowing it down.....One more challenge for me; I will use it with my right hand like with the Bug...I'm left handed for Paddles & Straight key. ☺ Cootie by W1SFR. It feels real smooth and the workmanship is great!! 73, Abe NP3K

The Time Machine

First of all, a little history. I became a ham in 1959 at age 14. Like everyone then, I first operated as a Novice on CW with a J-38 straight key. But pretty quickly, I got a bug as a gift from my parents. I used it all the way through high school but when I was in college, there was an article about an electronic keyer that used RTL (Resistor Transistor Logic). Well I wanted to build one but the chips were very expensive! My Dad, who worked for a NASA contractor, told me that he knew a guy who was the sales rep for Fairchild Electronics who manufactured these RTL chips and that maybe he'd give me what I needed. So my Dad asked him and sure enough he was more than glad to give me the chips, about 16 IIRC. So I hand wired this keyer ("The Micro Ultimate" IIRC) and put a pair of J38 keys back-to-back to use as paddles! And it was paddles for the rest of my ham life! That is until the SKCC fever struck in April.

I didn't know much about SKCC but my friend Jim NG2J saw the Sprintathon on the Contest Calendar so we checked SKCC out and signed up. I knew I had to use a straight key so I dug out both a straight key and a Vibroplex bug that I got in trade for something maybe 10 or 15 years ago. I'd never used it since getting it so I practiced for a while with the bug on Friday night before the Sprintathon and realized it was going to be pretty ugly. I did a little arithmetic and found that it had been about 55 years since I'd touched a bug. Even so, I was still able to send on it but with plenty of errors.

During the SKCC event, I worked 115 stations, only two were not members and most of them were C T or S level members. So I qualified as a Centurion after this one event and am now SKCC 20193C! And the following month, I qualified for Tribune! And the month after that, I made Tx3! I plan to keep on going for Senator and beyond! And working 115 QSOs really improved my bug operation!

Now for the clincher. Because I'm a 35+ wpm CW operator in all the big contests, I started out being bored with the slow rates of SKCC QSOs, with guys who sent their name three times and the sloppy fists that a few (very few) operators have. But after a while, I realized that this was actually a lot of fun. I wound up relaxing, taking my time and then I thought, **"Wow, this is exactly the way I made QSOs when I was 14 years old as a new ham!"**

Once I had this insight, I chilled out, relaxed and was patient with all the other operators. And in the end I thoroughly enjoyed the SKCC event. (as well as the other WES I've been in now) I had a really fabulous time and I look forward to more of the same!

I've now named my Vibroplex ***"The SKCC Time Machine"*** because it transported me 55 years back in time. I felt like I was 15 years old again and re-experienced the joy and wonder of my first radio contacts. It made me "slow down and smell the roses" as they say. Some things really are priceless and SKCC is in that category.

So, look for me and ***"The SKCC Time Machine"*** to be on the SKCC frequencies as often as possible. I celebrated my 60th year of Ham Radio on May 26 2019 and I'm not stopping now!

73, Steve...K3SW....(a.k.a. Kilo Three Scotch Whisky) SKCC 20193T Tx3



June SKS



No matter how long I'm away, I always have a great time with SKCC events. Thanks, fun stuff! Used the first J-38 I ever purchased and cleaned up. 73, Mike AC0PR



The skip wasn't happening for me, tonight. a lot of loud stations couldn't hear me. Sad trombone! Had fun, though! Thanks to all who played. See you next time! 73, Lloyd K3ESE



20 started pretty well, 40 didn't seem as busy as some times but seemed fine. I needed NY near the end so went looking for K2LI our bonus station, found KA2KGP in NY instead. Thanks for all the contacts. I did QRP for FD with an end fed wire so was nice to be back QRO+ with the big antennas. The photo is of a few guest ops at Field Day. 73, Chas K3WW



Started out on 20 & worked a few until the sun set then qsy'd to 40 where most of the action was & also worked a few on 80 after it got dark. Had a great turnout tonight & bagged a few new numbers too..Thanks to all who participated 73 from the shores of Lake Erie K8TEZ Larry



Operating my FT-818ND and MFJ-1820T whip antenna under not very good band condition with lots of QSB, I realized that calling CQ with 5 watts sometimes works better for making QSOs than competing in a pileup with the low power. 73, Yoon KM6KJI



73, N3PDT, Doug



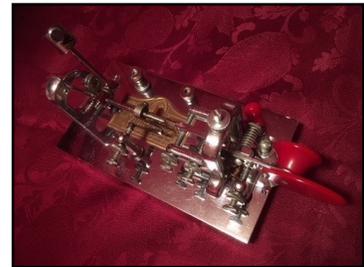
I got no love from California tonight. I sometimes was CQing for more than 5 minutes between answers ... I began to think my antenna had fallen off the tower :- (But it was good o see a lot of activity on my P3 screen.73, Roger W6LAX



Noisy bands tonight here in SW MO! Finally gave up about 01:50 because the QRN was loud even on 20. I am sorry I couldn't hear some stations well enough to copy over the noise. Elecraft K3 100 watts. Antennas 2 element quad at 40', OCF dipole at 25', 43' vertical and a 160M loop fed with ladder line. I used all of them at least once. Key was a Bencher RJ-2. 73, Bill NZ0T



Twas another FUN SKS ! Thanks to all, especially Brian KF6C, you had a beautiful signal into FL tonight! 73, Rich



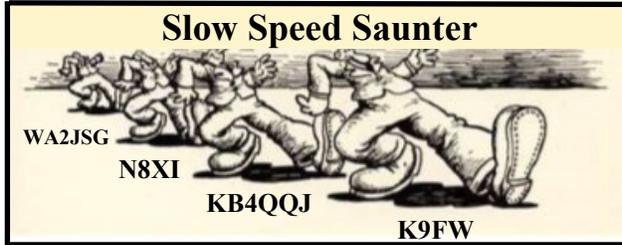
1946 Vibroplex Deluxe keying IC-706 to G5RVjr "high & in the clear" @ 1150' ASL from rural PA. 40m sounded good with strong signals. Surprised to see RBN reports from Europe. Life after sunspots? Mowed lawns at age 11 to buy this bug in 1955. Money and fame can't eclipse such treasures. (SMILE) 73, Don K3RLL



Thanks to G0DJF, Paul, for coming back to my 1st CQ, good to see the band open as I was running QRP (4W). Band conditions were crazy as 20M open to the West Coast and yet rough copy on the Midwest. 73, Steve K4JPN

Inaugural Slow Speed Saunter

The Inaugural run of the SKCC Slow Speed Saunter is in the books. The submission window is now closed, with 31 folks submitting their results!



I figured if we had 25 submissions I would consider the new event a success. We had 31 submissions, many with comments made in the soapbox, and reading through the comments I see many 'old hands' as well as new members took part in this. The

comments are positive, enthusiastic, and encouraging. Take a moment and read them for yourself, better yet, participate in next month's SSS and write your own comment, Please!

During this first running I spent a bit of time looking around on the bands to get an idea how much activity it was stirring up, and I was pleasantly surprised.

I think the standard exchange of numbers provided a good script for newbies, and helped them dive into the fray of making QSO's and I heard several QSO's that went beyond that script as well. It was good to hear some old fashioned Rag Chewing!

I could go on to say more, but the bottom line is that we had a good start for a good event. Come August first why not join us and enjoy the party? I look forward to it!

Slow Speed Saunter

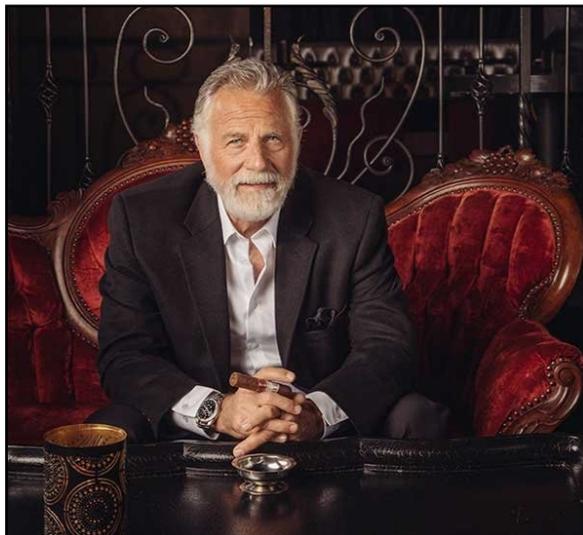


W4RQ Rich

73, Rich W4RQ
SSS Manager

Participants and QSOs by SPC

CA: 2 / 7	FL: 3 / 13	GA: 1 / 2	IN: 6 / 142	KS: 1 / 1
MD: 3 / 12	MI: 2 / 29	NC: 1 / 20	NJ: 2 / 20	NY: 1 / 1
OK: 1 / 1	PA: 1 / 1	QC: 1 / 6	SCO: 1 / 1	TN: 1 / 7
TX: 2 / 10	WI: 2 / 17			



"The Slow Speed Saunter is the best way to make beginning CW operators into good CW operators. It makes already good CW operators into great CW operators!

This how we improve our hobby and promote the enjoyment of CW."

Ed.....World's most interesting and talented CW operator (call withheld by request!)

Slow Speed Saunter July 2019

Ed...The first Slow Speed Saunter is in the books and mildly successful. A total of 31 stations submitted QSOs amounting to ~268. K9FW lead the gang with 132 Qs!



That was fun, even if the bands weren't in the best of shape. for a while 40m was doing well but then it just tanked. Still managed to work a good bunch of members and two non members who wanted to know what CQS was all about. Looking forward to future CQS events.
73 for now,

Not a bad start to the Saunter. But had home duties and a test at the hospital. 73, Rick N8XI



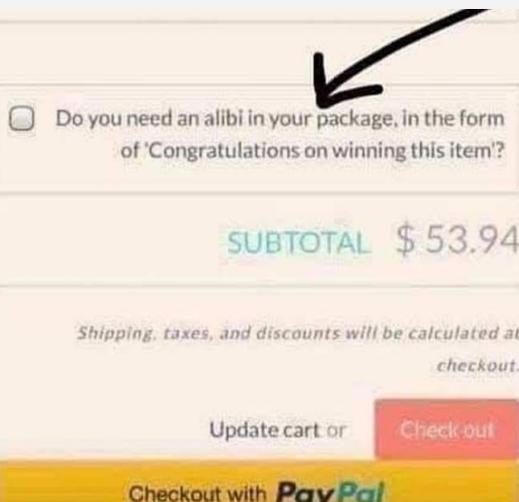
Pictured is SKCC's newest member (Got his number 45 minutes before the start of the Saunter) Jeff-KB9QG #20712 at my station. Another Fort Wayne area ham!! Jeff made 5 contacts with his new number! 73, Ken N8KR

Our first Slow Speed Saunter is in the books now. Thanks to all who participated! I had good QSOs and Fine chats with other members in TX, IL, NC, and CT at speeds from 7 wpm to 12 wpm and really enjoyed myself. I also eavesdropped a bit around 20m and 40m and was happy to hear quite a bit of slow speed activity. I hope to contact many more of you next month!
73, Rich W4RQ

Nice time, with several members on the sked page. Ran 75w into a vertical using my Kent sk. Looking forward to this event in future months.
73, Curt WA2JSG



WHEN THE XYL SAYS YOU CAN'T BUY ANY-MORE HAM GEAR!



Dealers Take Note!

Now here is an idea who's time has come! How many times have you had to "sneak" that new piece of gear into the ham shack....and how many times have you been caught?! Or have you asked your ham buddy to keep a piece of gear at his shack until the XYL has gone away so you could safely "sneak" the piece of gear in?

Well DX Engineering, AES and HRO, as well as you other dealers, how about paying heed to this "simple addition" to you order form; it would make things a lot easier for us!

A Taste for Torsion

Have a quick look at Photo #1, and tell me what's missing. Yep, you got it (didn't you?): there are no springs! And it may not be immediately apparent just *how* this key's tension can be varied. Welcome to torsion bar telegraphy! The idea isn't new (instructions for building a torsion bar paddle appeared in QST way back in December 1982), and several simple and elegant designs are available on-line ... but still, you don't see them every day.

So what exactly IS a torsion bar key? Simply put, in this instance, the key's lever is attached to a horizontal bar. That bar is held tightly in a fixed position at one end, while the key's lever is usually attached close to the other end, which floats (in, say, a simple sleeve bearing). The bar to which the lever is attached does NOT rotate (remember, its one end is held fast). When you depress the paddle, that bar TWISTS a little bit. That's it: this "torsion" provides the tension for the key to operate, and as well, returns the lever to neutral position after you've depressed the paddle. No springs necessary!

Well ... it didn't take me long to convince myself that I just had to build one of these, with a few (not exactly necessary) embellishments added just to make things interesting. Lets take a quick tour; see photo #2. The straight key lever is immediately apparent; the round bar to

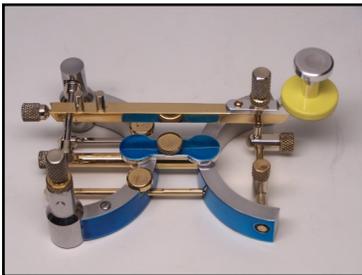


Photo #2: The key's lever is attached to a torsion bar, which sits between the two posts on the left side of the photo.

which it is attached at the end opposite the paddle, is the torsion bar. A small flat is milled into the torsion bar, so that the thumb-screw at the end of the lever (again, opposite the paddle), can affix the lever tightly to the bar. Note that the torsion bar is supported at both ends by vertical posts, one of which has a large thumb-screw on top of it (Photo #3). That's the clamp which holds that end of the torsion bar tightly in place. The other end of the torsion bar (which terminates in the other vertical post), simply floats there. Hence the key is set up for use by clamping the torsion bar in a position such that the key's contacts are somewhat separated. Then the gap spacing can be fine-adjusted using the knob on the lever, which sits just behind the paddle (Photo #2). The "apparent" tension experienced by the lever (and the operator) is effectively shifted by changing the contact gap spacing.

Nonetheless, on this particular key, several additional methods by which to substantially change the instrument's tension are available. It should be apparent with a little thought, that if one shortens the torsion bar (all other things being equal), the tension will increase (the key will be stiffer). Similarly, affixing the lever as far as possible from the locked end of the torsion bar softens things up a bit. This key's lever can be shifted back and forth along the torsion bar. And as photo #4 shows, the front lower contact can also be shifted

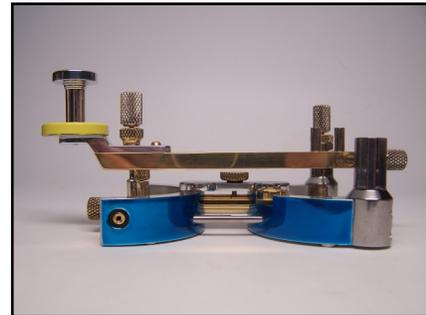


Photo #1: The torsion bar straight key from the side ... no springs!

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Photo #3: The rear of the key. The horizontal bar between the two posts is the torsion bar. The clamp which anchors the torsion bar sits atop the post on the right side of the photo. Three rods exit at the bottom: the center rod is one of the key's two binding posts for electrical connection. The smaller rods to left and right of this, are the two spare torsion bars in storage.

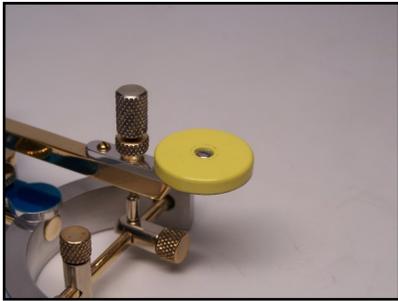


Photo #4: The operator end of the key. This shows the paddle in its 'flat button' configuration. The lower contact, directly below the lever and paddle, can be moved to accommodate the location of the lever on the torsion bar. The vertical post at the left, also moveable, is one of the key's binding posts.

ways. If one prefers a flat button paddle, the 'top hat' can be removed and screwed into the rear section of the base for storage (photo # 4). If an elevated paddle is preferred, leave the 'top hat' on (as seen in photo # 2). And finally, well ... here's where things really get fun! See photo #5. Note that our previous paddle pieces are removed and stored elsewhere on the key, while the blue 'bow tie' visible at center in photo #2 is now deployed as the paddle.



Photo #6: Double-finger keying of the single-lever straight key, using the 'bow-tie' paddle. Yes ... this actually works!

My thinking was that I could increase my straight key paddle speed by using TWO fingers to tap the paddle, alternating between my middle and index fingers, hitting first on one side of the paddle, and then on the other. Have a look at photo #6, and imagine that you are simply drumming two adjacent fingers on your desk top. It works just like that. And sure enough, you can tap two fingers more quickly than you can tap one! I found I could increase my sending speed by a good 50% without a lot of practice! There seems to be one inviolable rule for this style of keying, though: only *one* finger must be in contact with the paddle at any *one* time (just think about it!).

So that's it: a visually-interesting straight key with, I think, some unusual attributes ... another project from someone (me!) who spends too much time thinking about keys, and too little time actually putting them on the air! But don't worry, I'll no doubt show up soon in an SKCC Weekend Sprint, just to see "how the rubber meets the road." And stay tuned for Part II: this key's companion, a torsion bar cricket (with two side-by-side straight key levers, each with their own torsion bar), is nearly complete. I'll be in touch after I take *that* for a test drive ...

to accommodate the location of the lever!

Additionally, the key as it is currently set up for use employs a torsion bar constructed of 1/8" drill rod steel. I produced two additional accessory torsion bars, one utilizing 1/8" brass rod (which affords a softer "feel" than the steel), and a 1/8" titanium torsion bar which is even stiffer than the steel rod. Any of these can be easily swapped in or out. The two torsion bars which are not in current use are stored on the key (Photo #3). They are not necessities, but they do offer some additional tensioning options, and ... hey ... they sure do look cool!

Note the rear-most end of the key (Photo #3). In this photo, we see the torsion bar with lever attached, above. And below the torsion bar, three horizontal rods emerge. The larger central rod structurally holds the key together, and the knurled adjustment on it's end affords one of the key's two binding posts (the other being at the front of the key). The thinner rods on either side of this central binding post are the two stored accessory torsion bars.

The paddle on the key can be configured in three different



Photo #5: The key with its alternate paddle configuration. The paddle seen in photo #2 is now in storage on the key, having been replaced by the double-finger 'bow-tie' paddle.

be configured in three different ways. If one prefers a flat button paddle, the 'top hat' can be removed and screwed into the rear section of the base for storage (photo # 4). If an elevated paddle is preferred, leave the 'top hat' on (as seen in photo # 2). And finally, well ... here's where things really get fun! See photo #5. Note that our previous paddle pieces are removed and stored elsewhere on the key, while the blue 'bow tie' visible at center in photo #2 is now deployed as the paddle.

Something Worth Knowing

I know that a lot of us use sticky pads — specifically some of the small really sticky ones designed for cellphone use — to hold keys mostly stable on the desk.

Just a word of warning about these things — the acids in them can leave permanent marks on painted surfaces. Even the acids in the kind of pads usually used for drawer liners (Home Depot variety stuff) can do that. I made the mistake of using one of those cellphone pads to stabilize an item on top of a radio. It left PERMANENT and unremovable marks in the powder coat cabinet finish (fortunately, I could order a replacement cabinet top from Elecraft). Alberto Frattini (IIQOD) sent me a warning about using any of this stuff with his black base keys, along with a photo of the significant damage done to the paint finish AND the rubber feet. It seems this stuff is really corrosive to surfaces it comes in contact with.

Just an FYI ... YMMV, but I don't use them anymore.

73, Grant NQ5T

Jeremy KD8VSQ, Got a New Toy!



Jeremy KD8VSQ recently got a new rig, a Kenwood 590S. Darn if he didn't get another new toy! Jeremy now is the proud owner



of an Elecraft KPA-500 and the matching KAT-500 tuner!

Watch for new and improved BIG SIGNAL from KD8VSQ #13072!

October SKCC QSO Party Fun!

This year the SKCC QSO Party (details on the home page) will be October 5-6. To add to the fun this year KS1KCC, the "official" SKCC club call, will be on the air along with KS3KCC, KS4KCC, KS8KCC and KS9KCC (maybe calls from other call areas). Enjoy the QSO Party and give a search for those special KS#KCC calls as several will be multi op-multi stations on all SKCC frequencies.



KS1KCC.....MD
KS3KCC.....PA
KS4KCC.....NC
KS8KCC.....MI
KS9KCC.....IN



July WES



This was quite the interesting WES. Saturday was disappointing with the seemingly lack of participation by SKCC members. 20m, 15m, and 10m were open, but the other HF contest seemed to scare SKCC members away. No long propagation on 40m to the west on Saturday night. Usual 6th and 7th area call signs were not to be heard. Sunday was better as far as participation was concerned (with ending of other contest). 40m was good Sunday night, worked KS for my last QSO and new SPC (W0ZWS). Too bad we didn't have this propagation Saturday night. Almost exactly half of my QSOs were with "colony" stations. Operating in NH was definitely advantageous for that. I got a kick out of DF7TV's alphabet chart. I had to up with a similar chart to figure everything out. Only had to use the "I's" and "S's" twice to spell everything out. Photo shows 32' mast in backyard where the 80M and 40m dipoles are attached. Other antenna is a 6m bisquare antenna which I have yet to fire up. Thanks for all the QSOs! 73, Bob AC1GF



Good time in Carolina. 73, Richard K4CRD



Amazing WES! Had a string of contacts early on Saturday morning on 40m and a few more on the afternoon operating portable from the backyard with a 100ft. long wire 20ft. high on the trees. A Yaesu FT-817 with just the internal battery and 2.5W is a lot of fun when the propagation works, like when 10m opened up late in the afternoon. It would have been great if more stations would have switched to 10m! On Sunday, no too much luck with propagation until the last 2 hours, where a few more 40 and 80m contacts where completed. 8 original colonies contacted and 3 names spelled! Yay!! Great level of activity. Thank you so much to everyone. See you in the next WES. 73, Ruben AC2RJ



Great Fun! 40M was good, 20M had some QRM and QSB. 73, Paul K1TB



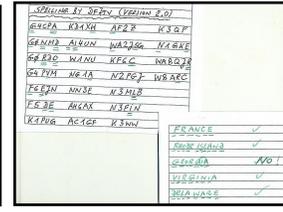
Spelled: Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania this WES gave me Tx5 and TKA - you guys are the best! Joy. 73, Rich AE4OK



Thank you all for the QSOs under such poor condx! 73, Joeg DL9YCS



Poor conditions to the west so the only colony I got was PA thanks to K3WW. Other than that my contacts were in France, Germany and Italy, so I got some bonus points with FRA. Worked Bernard F5DE on three bands and Tom DF7TV on two. Used my K2 running 100 watts to wire antennas and my 1945 Vibroplex Champion. Good fun as usual. 73, Peter GM0EUL



Took part on Sunday afternoon and night. After 20:00 UTC signals became stronger on 20m. Spelling some colonies and "France" was a tough homework -- would have needed some "y"-s and extra "i"-s. Thank you for the fun! 73, Tom DF7TV



Not much time available for this WES. National holiday and family on vacation at home (2 hours of traffic). Only on 20 m with my only active antenna at 50 feet from the ground. Activity always so pleasant and see you soon. 73, Bob F6EJN



morsemad.com

7 QSO's with 6 on 20m and one on 40m. Thanks to PA3JD Joop, CT1BQH Carlos, DL9YCS Joerg, R7DA Alex, DF7TV Tom, F5DE Bernard, F6EJN Bob. Kenwood TS440s, 100 watts, ground mounted fishing pole vertical. GPO Double Current Telegraph key, nickel plated for use in the Colonies. 73 John GORDO SKCC 2133s

July WES...II



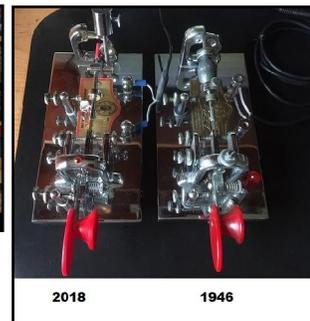
The bands were not too bad. Worked only 40 & 20 meters. Wish I had even more time to devote to operating but had a lot to do over the weekend. Operated with my Vizkey Bug that I got a month ago. Never used a Bug before but it's been fun learning to use it. 73, Steve K2FW



Hard to believe how many 13 colony call signs there were this month. Hard to believe I worked Delaware three times. It was a fun weekend. Rig was my new IC-7300 and a G5RV up 60 feet in maple trees. Bob K3CKO



Spent the first 24 hours working in the IARU contest which seemed to bury most bands in the SKCC region. Started WES Sunday morning just after 1200 UTC. Got the Colonies and France and only ran out of Ss for MA..... Photo shows the operating position with my 60 year old novice key. 73, Chas K3WW



1946 Vibroplex Deluxe keying IC-706 to G5RVjr. In spite of competition from another CW contest this weekend, this was fun. So enjoy the 1946 V-Deluxe I bought in 1955 by mowing lawns. I can't think of anything I've had longer other than my teeth. (SMILE) Old one is so, so much smoother than the new one -- now in a display case. 73, Don K3RLL



Lots of listening, but not a lot heard. When you think the flux is going to bounce back, it goes lower! Still had fun. Lost a power supply, monitor and linux machine to power spikes, so on battery power and a 3 day old Mac Pro. Thanks to the fine work of AC2C and others, I had SKCCLogger up and running before WES. Thanks guys. 73, Jim K5TSK



Not my best, but not my worst. DE and RI were not on much. Only saw 1 DE, and the RI station for some reason I can't seem to qso with. 73, Dave KB1WOD



Greetings: Thank you all for the good time. Xiegu G90 running 20 Watt into the attic dipole antenna at 25 feet. 73, Sergey KD9EBS



Saturday conditions were dreadful with very rapid QSB on all sigs. Sunday 20 was improved. Last 45 mins of the WES on 40 was a lot of fun. Missed MA DE EU stations were very weak at my QTH. 73 de AL N4OW 11375s



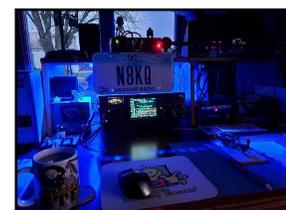
Great theme! I worked the 13 Colonies but was pretty busy this wk end so did not have much time. THANKS to all for your patience and the new numbers! HP TO C U down the log! 73, Steve NQ8T



Nice conditions. I managed to get some time both Saturday and Sunday and bounced between 40M and 20M. Rig was a ICOM 7410, antenna a balanced line fed 110' inverted V at 35'. Just put the antenna up this week, and the WES was a great way to see how the station is working. Looking forward to the next WES and SKS. 73, Jim KF9VV



I knew I didn't have much time this weekend, so I just got on when I could. I only had 19 QSOs, but I still got 7 colonies. Not a bad average! I was only able to spell "Georgia" to get the extra bonus. Rig this month was my favorite HeathKit HW-101 and a Vibroplex straight key. All QSOs were on 40m at ~100 watts to a dipole. 73, Steve KE4OH



Not much operating time, had me feeling blue.. 73, Randy

July WES...III



Great fun, even for an operator with limited skills in working normal CW QSOs. Sitting on top of a small mountain, 2000 feet ASL, in New York with 500 watts and a gain antenna helps. After failing to work GB13COL in the 13 colonies special event it was great to work Paul G4PVM, all be it week signals. My following QSO with Bob F6EJN and, in the last minutes of WES, Tom DF7TV was a real treat. I failed to work anyone on 160, 15 and 6 but all the other bands worked well for me at times. Total colonies count of 9 GA, 2 SC, 3 NC, 11 VA, 8 MD, 12 PA, 1 DE, 6 NJ, 5 NY, 3 CT, 1 RI, 3 MA and 7 NH meant quite a bit of work to get the bonus, I used a crude Excel sheet. Many thanks to all I worked and sorry to all those that called, and it didn't work out for some reason. My next challenge is to add learning to work normal SKCC QSOs and rag chews, to my CW learning of trying to reliably read, in my head, and send with a paddle at 25 wpm. The way things are going I may well get to 25 wpm on the cootie before the paddle. An antennas eye view. The base of the tower in the background is at the same ASL as the 3 story + attic house on which the Steppir is mounted. 73, Brian



Thanks - always fun. 73, Gary N5PHT



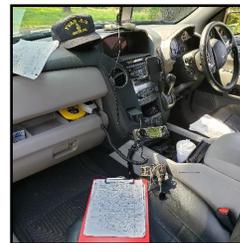
Ran QRP with my QRP Labs QCX 40 meter kit at 4 watts. Most of my contacts were on my 160 meter loop fed with window line but made a few on a OCF dipole and a 43' vertical with remote tuner. Key used was a J-38. Condx were poor and my time was limited but still had a blast. My thanks to all who heard my QRP signal! 73, Bill NZ0T



Once again, I really enjoyed the event. I found useful information on how to set my radio for better reception of CW and this, combined with slightly increased skill in copying, made things much more interesting for me. I set up my Buddipole in the backyard, first as a vertical for 20m, then as a dipole for 40m later in the day. I wish to thank my CW Elmer, Roger VE3RDE for getting me into this. 73, Robert VE2KZW



Thanks for the fun and QSO's gents. I was in and out of the shack both Saturday & Sunday. Stuck with 40 and 20 Meters. Using Excel & MS Word I was able to spell out 8 of the 13. Missed NC, NY, PA, RI & SC. Late in the WES I needed SC & DE. Bruce, WA8OJR (SC) replied to my CQ on 40M at 22:01 and Mike, KA4CDN was visiting a beach in DE with his daughter and friend using a Tripod, Vertical and radials in the sand. Also on 40M. This is how I slow my 1977 Vibroplex Orig Deluxe. 73, Rick N8XI



1st WES I've worked in a long time. Fun when operating portable from Chatham MA, Grid FN51aqq, on Cape Cod. Mobile station connected to an Inverted L antenna. Horizontal section at 30 ft. 73, Jim W1RO



Argo 6 80w amp g5rv. St key, and bug.. tnx to all.. I didn't hear K6ELQ, he must have DRIVEN to HAWAII. .. hi.. worked 80, 40, 20 mtrs... the pix is HB (hatefull) COOTIE keys... hi... the one is VERTICAL contact type... look at it... my DUBBUGS are the most fun to use.. So, c u in August. . 73 to all.. I like cking the number of NEW mbrs each month.. a few each day of the month.. 73 dave n9zxlqrp@gmail.com



Only worked 5 hours this month. Propagations were very flaky, at times getting 599 from across the continent, at others not getting across the Great Lakes. Fun as always. Got 9 of 13 colonies and spelled out 3 of them. Used my beautiful W1SFR Mark I magnetic sideswiper (pictured) on both days. Thanks to all and CU next month. 73, Roger VE3RGE



Due to the IARU HF Contest and poor conditions I only managed to work 3 stations in this months WES. Key used was a Begali HST MKII sideswiper. 73 de Steve

July WES...IV



Western Union 2A Legless

Could only do the WES on Saturday, and that time was limited due to company. A camp on a lake in Maine is a big target for family members! Conditions heavily favored the eastern U.S. and Canada. No EU or western U.S. stations were heard. Wish I could have devoted more time. Thanks to all who participated.



I only got to operate in the WES for a short while on Sunday. Worked 20 meters with KX3 and KXPA100 amplifier running 50W most of the time. 73, Mike WI5H



Limited time. Got 11 colonies and spelled 2. Condx not very good and that cw contest didn't help. Rig: K3. Antenna 160 meter horizontal loop. Used my newly acquired Twanger cootie for the first time in an event. 73, Dave W3NP



I operated on and off while camping in Cunningham Falls State Park in Maryland. Between the surrounding mountains and the quirky propagation, it was a struggle at times. To improved my odds, I cranked my KX3 up to a whopping 10W (gasp!). So, this was my first non-QRP WES. I worked 11 of the 13 colonies (missing MD and DE) and made some progress in my long, slow march towards Senator. While struggling at times to work domestic stations, I somehow managed a QSO with Alex R7DA on 40M. Kudos to Alex for his patience and persistence in pulling my meager 10W signal out of the noise. Also, if you worked me over the weekend, you'll be getting credit for POTA K-1566 and WWFF KFF-1566. 73, Craig



Had a great time in this one. I set a goal of 50 contacts but due to time restraints I missed my goal by 3. I ran 75 watts from my IC-7200 and TS-590SG to a multi-band vertical using my Kent SK. Hats off to Dave and his crew for another fine theme-related sprint. Bands used were 80m, 40m, 20m, and 10m. Didn't bother with the cross word matches but used the other bonus features. Look forward to the next time. 73, Curt WA2JSG



WES never fail to entertain! I spent half the weekend working the IARU contest so got a late start on the WES. Spelling colony names was a fun bonus - I needed more vowels! Especially the letter 'E'... Lots of fun - see ya next month! 73, RJ, WF4W



Not many QSOs, but it was still fun. Decided to make it a Speed-X weekend, with the E.F. Johnson bug, and the Nye Viking straight key. 73, Dave WB4BIN



Not a whole lot of time this weekend due to some family stuff but fun as always. Operators need to LISTEN AND CALL QRL BEFORE CALLING CQ.... I had to move twice and it WAS NOT going to happen a third time nor will it happen again. This was not from the lack of hearing my station as the one guy worked me with a 599 before taking over the frequency. Again it WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN. Still had a lot of fun because the WES is always fun. 73, Greg wa3gm



Was a Lot of fun. I ran QRO instead of QRP just to see how well I would do. Not bad for me. Rant my Icom IC-7300 into the 160 meter doublet except for the 4 contacts on 20 meters and used the Hex Beam for those. Bands were still not too good for me but oh well what you going to do. Thanks for the organizers for a fine job. 73, Dave WV8DH

CW in the White House



The Whitehouse Historical Association

Custom-designed with 22 gold nuggets, platinum, and a five-inch block of marble, this telegraph key was crafted for President William Howard Taft in 1909 for the opening of the Alaska-Yukon Pacific Exposition in Seattle.

It was given to President Taft by George W. Carmack, an Alaskan gold prospector. Prior to exiting the White House, President Taft left the key in the care of

chief White House telegrapher Edward W. Smithers.

The key was subsequently used at the White House for ceremonial presidential telegraphs opening various public events across the country. *TNX Jeremy KD8VSO*

Facebook Posts



HB to slow down bug below 20 wpm... that's a bent 8-32 2 inch machine screw... with the head hacksawed off...five minutes.73, Burt KA2L

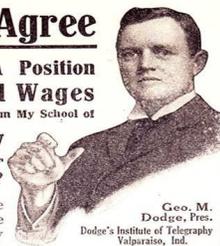


As of July 1st, there are new laws in Illinois regarding mobile phones and driving. There are exceptions for amateur radio. Now the photo is for example only (UK type 48 key).



If I Will Agree

To Get You A Position
Paying Good Wages
When You Graduate From My School of
Telegraphy



Will You Come?

My graduates are given immediate employment by Railroads, Telegraph and Wireless Companies, because my school is recognized as the only one graduating thoroughly practical operators. Demand exceeds supply. If you want

Good Wages, Easy Work
and a Bright Future

write today. I offer you advantages unequalled anywhere

1. Oldest, Largest and most Successful Telegraph School in the World. 2. Expert Instructors. 3. Best Equipment — (we occupy exclusively two large modern buildings with R. R. train and Western Union wires and complete wireless station installed.) 4. Low Rates. 5. Easy Payments. 6. Living expenses earned while learning. Correspondence courses if desired. *New Course in Railway Accounting* makes my graduates proficient station agents. May be taken alone if desired. Write me today for illustrated descriptive catalog and interesting testimonials.

— GEO. M. DODGE, Pres. — 8th Street
DODGE INSTITUTE OF TELEGRAPHY, VALPARAISO, IND.



Dodge Institute 1926

You know you're a ham radio operator when....(feel free to add your own)

1. you buy electrical black tape in ten packs.
2. you can't walk in your backyard at night for fear of getting close-lined by guy wires
3. you've stripped wire with your teeth.
4. you've told your son that, "One day, all this will be yours", and he doesn't respond.
5. you've driven off the road admiring someone's antenna
6. you'd rather help a buddy put up a new tower than mow the lawn.
7. you've grabbed the wrong end of a soldering iron.
8. you start giving out RST reports when you are on the telephone.
9. the propagation forecast means far more to you than the local weather forecast.
10. the microphone or visual aids at a meeting don't work and you rush up to the front to fix it.
11. your family has no idea what to get you for Christmas...even AFTER you tell them
12. you tell the XYL, when she notices a new rig in the shack, why that has been there for years.
13. your watch is set to UTC time.
14. you ever had to patch your roof after an antenna project.
15. ham radio magazines comprise more than 50% of your bathroom library.
16. you ever put a GPS tracker in the XYL's car, just so you could watch her on APRS.
17. the UPS and Fed Ex guys know you by name/call.
18. you and the XYL took a cruise so you could visit the radio room.
19. you ever tapped out HI in Morse on your car horn to another ham.
20. your kids are embarrassed to ride in your car because it looks like a porcupine.
21. you know the Latitude and Longitude of your home QTH.
22. you go into the local radio store and the clerk asks you where something is.



Love my Kent Key. Have used it for several years. Well made at a reasonable price. 73, Curt WA2JSG



My key is an old Remler CRL 26012 WW2 vintage Navy key. I keep the gap very close and the adjustments tight. It is a pleasure to use and makes hardly any sound at all. I prefer around 20 wpm but am always ready to QRS upon request. For non-SKCC QSOs I very occasionally use the built-in keyer in my FT-450D with an old Vibrokeyer paddle, but I really don't enjoy it. For me, a well adjusted straight key is still the way to go after 52 years of experience. I'm not very likely to ever go for the TKA because I don't have a bug or sideswiper nor the funds to buy them. 73, Wes W1LIC 1142S



14 year old grandson Dylan Skaggs K0SND (SKCC #20577) with his new birthday present: A Begali Spark Straight Key. And, yes it is complete custom engraved callsign. (Thanks Bruna!) We will be seeing him shortly in SKCC events. As you can see from his poses in the pictures, he is a ham in more ways than one! 73, Mike WB0SND

June Brag



73, Kike EA2CAR



A fun month with SKCC WES & Field Day, Thanks Duc for the Bonus and four new op's...

Jerry K6FN & I shared the CW at NR0AD 4F MO Storms forced us to shut down overnite. Breakfast was good and the bands were crowded Sunday. 73, Rick K0KEX



Thanks for your efforts on QSO with my QRP indoor Radio. The picture is my straight key from Alberto on Spain. Called Tortukey 4th Aniversary. 73, Dit ditAngel N4SNI



Thanks for the Ragchews this month gang and new numbers. 73, Rick N8XI



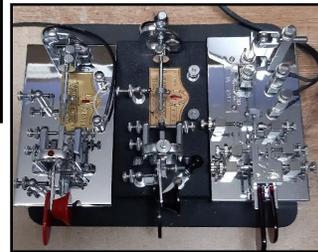
AT THE END OF THE MONTH, I WON A 1951 VIBROPLEX ORIGINAL STANDARD ON EBAY. THEN ADDED A WA9TGT WEIGHT AND A W0EB DOT STABILIZER AND SOME NEW RUBBER FEET. ALL READY FOR SOME GOOD RAGCHEWS. NOW I HAVE TO DECIDE IF IT STAYS ON THE OP TABLE OR GOES IN THE DISPLAY CABINET. 73, Benny K5KV



More fun! 73, Tom KB3CVO



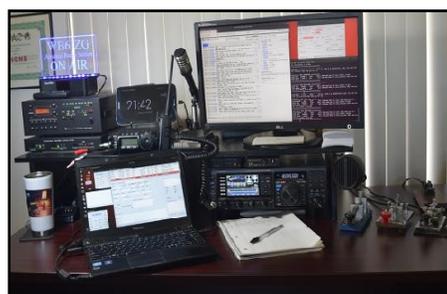
In and out of the hospital a few times this month. Hopefully this is the last of it. 73, Greg WA3GM



73, Leon OS0S



Had a great month for brags in these so called poor conditions. I am getting much closer to the Triple Key Award and thanks to those who had to put up with my straight key sending where required. 73, de Steve VK7CW



Activity for June:
Total QSO's 83
SKCC "c" 4
SKCC "T" 12
SKCC "S" 17
73, Gene W9KMK

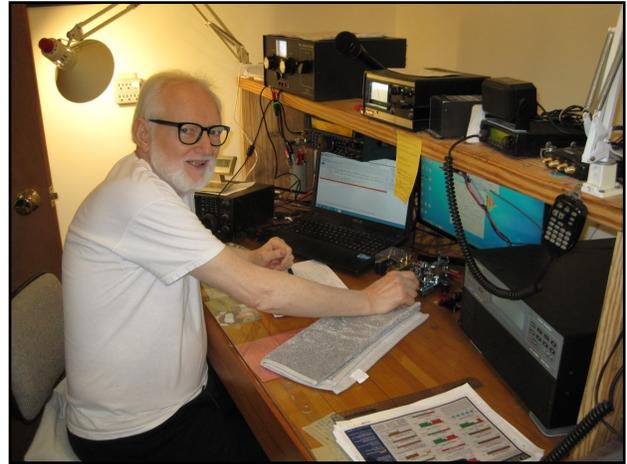


Had an average month with very poor conditions on the west coast. Used 2 new keys this month. Bought a used SKCC straight key and a new beautiful GHD Telegraph Key GT502MIL. 73, Bruce WB6IZG

From New Member to Senator in 60 Days!

Meet Al – K9FW #20492S

It's always fun to watch new SKCC members get "hooked" on the fun of working SKCC events. Usually it's a gradual process but with Al, it was, "full speed ahead!" With all of the SKCC interest here in Fort Wayne (yes, even though my SKCC city is New Haven, IN, I live 4 houses from Fort Wayne!), and with all of the SKCC talk on the local repeater, it wasn't long before K9FW wanted to know more! Al joined on May 14th and with a little persuasion, he participated in the May SKS a week later. His 41 contacts that evening were the beginning of a 2,200 qso march to Senator. By May 25th Al was a Centurion, 5 days later a Tribune, 5 weeks later a Tx8 (we all know how difficult that is!) then finally Senator on July 15! Al was on the air a lot; in fact, whenever I turned the radio on, he was easy to be found! Al lives about 6 miles away. His station includes a Kenwood TS-590S with a little help from his 2kw SPE amp from Expert Linears. With wire antennas for the low bands and a 2-element quad for the high bands, Al's signal is always strong. After using an old rusty Vibroplex Presentation bug that he got from me, Al decided on a shiny new Vibroplex bug which he uses almost exclusively. I noted a straight key when I visited his shack today. Perhaps "Triple Key" will be his next goal! Look for "K9FortWayne" in future SKCC events . . . you won't have to look very hard!



de Ken – N8KR 7559S



New Antenna... "Low" Bands?

After a recent storm Jim, W1RO found he had a new antenna...perhaps for working ... the low bands?

"My dipole at 30 ft became a 2.5 ft high NVIS 'V' antenna when a fast moving storm broke off the 5 inch diameter branch pulling the center down. That is one tough antenna! 73, Jim W1RO"

July SKS



Another fun SKS! As usual, started in 40m and worked all the stations that could hear my 559 signal (most repeated RPRT), and then moved to 80m, where there was plenty of room for everyone, but somehow some stations were really close to test my receiver IP3 HI HI. I didn't hear the bonus station and I was able to contact 3 stations in quick succession right at the start of the sprint :), that was a first. Thank you so much all of you for making the SKS possible. See you in the



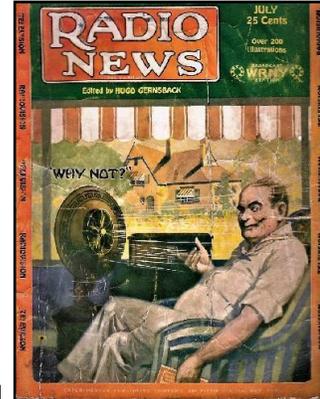
Really nice wx and I felt like playing, so I temped in an inverted L by adding 60 ft of stranded 12ga. wire to a reduced height DXE vertical up 29 ft. Tied the KX3 and tuner straight into the base of the vertical and fed with 0.9 watt. Hats off to WF4W, NG2J, K9DAC, WB8SCT, and WS8G. Takes no skill to run QRPP, but a lot to pull your signal out. Thanks guys. 73, Jim K5TSK



50min operating an old Kenwood TS 120S no cw filter, 20 Q's= SOME FUN!!! 73, Al K9FW



Lots of fun, could not work it the entire sprint. 20M was bad off, 40 was ok. Thanks for the members who take the time to volunteer to manage the workings behind the scenes. 73 to ya! Carl KC4FLT



Been very warm even up here on the shores of Lake Erie but 80 & 40 were also hot tonight. Gary TNX for the bonus on 40. 73, Larry K8TEZ



Started late and made only a few QSOs, but it was fun to operate my new manpack portable (or pedestrian mobile) Xiegu G90, about 18 watts to the whip antenna from Bay Trail Sunnyvale, CA. 73, Yoon KM6KJI



20m Was fun the first 30 mins West Coast, WA7IIC/TG9 and CT1BQH. 40m packed the 599 sigs. Just amazing. Had to QRT the last 30 min due to approaching Thunderstorms. Very FUN SKS! 73. Al N4ow



Thanks to Everyone for making this a good evening of CW! 73, Rich W4RQ



2 contacts on 20M, 4 on 80M and the rest on 40M. 40 had a lot of activity tonight. A big thanks to N5PHT for 2 bands tonight and a great signal! Fun as always. KX3 at 100 watts to the 80 meter loop antenna and the VIZ KEY Vertical Bug. Thanks for the contacts. 73, Jim N5JPX



Good to hear everyone tonight! Didn't work too much, but was able to score N5PHT for the bonus! Thanks! 73, Russ KK4WX

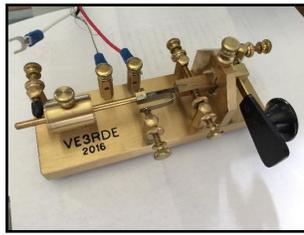


Didn't forget this time. Always fun. 73, Curt WA2JSG

July SKS...II



Tried 20 meters for 5 minutes no luck so spent the rest of my time on 40. Used my Elecraft K3 at 100 watts into a 43' vertical with a remote tuner. Key was a Bencher RJ-2. Thanks everyone for another fun SKS! 73, Bill NZ0T



It had been a while since my last SKS. Lots of fun and relatively busy bands on 40 & 20m. Used my trusty Vizkey 90deg throughout. I felt out of practice after obsessing over sideswipers for the last several months, but it feels great to hit the bug again. See you next month! 73, Roger VE3RDE



SKS is always fun, but it was especially so tonight because we had some good propagation. Thanks to everyone who participated. 73, Roger W6LAX



I only had time for 5 contacts, thanks for listening for my 5w signal. Tonight's station was my Flex 3000 at 5 watts into a dipole at 30', the key was a 1940 Vibroplex Champion. Now that I've gotten it working right I think I like it better than my 1941 Original. 73, Kerry WD5ABC



First two hour sprint for me in a long time. Spent the first hour on 40 meters, the the second our on 80. Thanks to all who worked me. 73, Bob K3CKO



Tried 80M and 20M, with no luck, but it is rough with QRP. Fortunately 40M was hopping. Thanks to all who pulled out my 4W Signal 73, Steve K4JPN



I had just a little over an hour to operate. 20 dead in WV, 40 and 80 were very lively with strong signals - both close in out to CA. Wrked and heard a number of newer members. Used the TWanger cootie for the entire event. K3 line and 160m horizontal loop. 73, Dave W3NP de West Virginia



Could only work for 1 hour but had fun. Was hoping to work Gary N5PHT but could not find him but then again I was running not S&P. 73, Greg WA3GM



Here is my new Begali Sculpture Swing, ciao everybody de Gino IZ2QXG

T. R. McELROY
World's Champion Radio Telegrapher
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You can send better with a MAC KEY or your money refunded after five day trial

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FOR TELEGRAPH OPERATORS SWOP
I have a special model with violet clear and my Mac Card fitted to binding posts, which I've made up because so many telegraph operators wanted my key but needed them extra for use on telegraph wires.

MAC OSCILLATOR @ \$1.95
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These oscillators, 1000, 800, and 600 cycle ones. These output 5000 ohms and 10 DB. Separate model \$10.00 - 10 DB. This oscillator is made a great deal in Germany under name, Model P. No. 30. Sales

All Mac Items Stocked and Sold by Nearly All Distributors



A Handy Key Interface Box

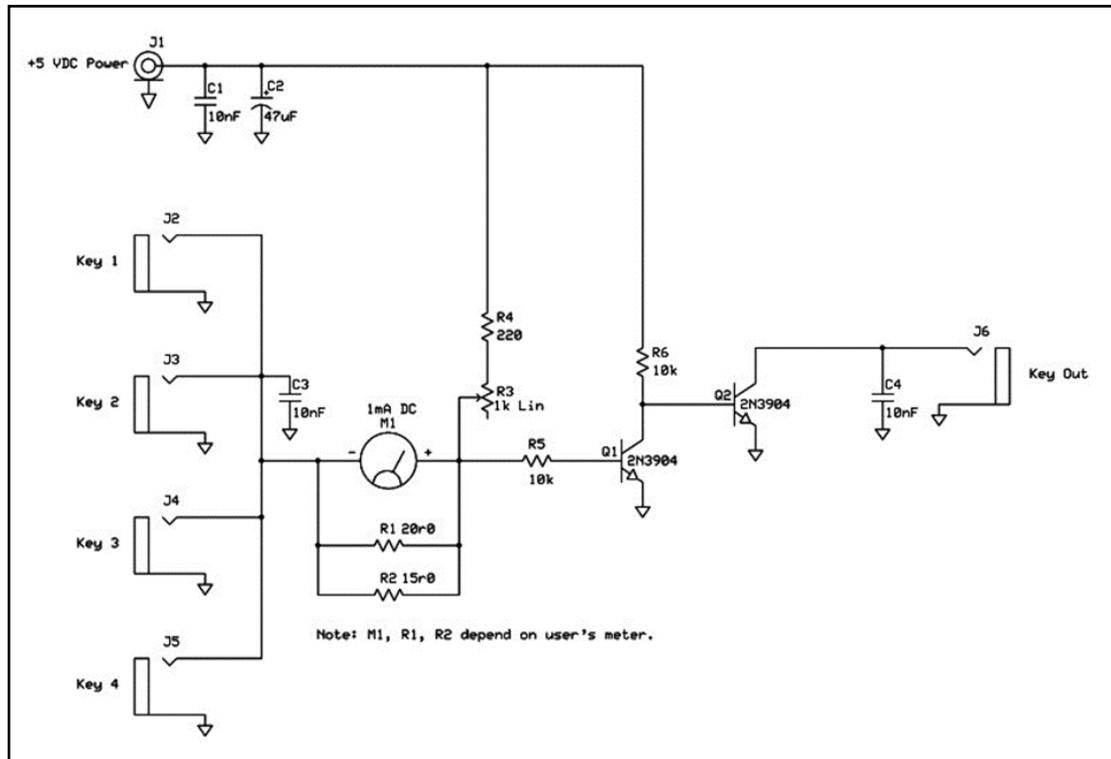
John Andrews, W1TAG



I've had cellar ham shacks most of my life, and they have always been damp, particularly in the summer months. Two of the keys I've been using for the last couple of years are very new: a Viz-Key Vertical bug, and a Begali HST (set up as a sideswiper). The bug has silver contacts, and the HST has gold. Both are well suited for modern solid-state rigs, where you are keying a very low-current circuit. I have had few issues with either key related to dirty contacts or effects of the dampness in the shack. A recent QST article about conditioning the output of a bug got me thinking about solving my straight key problem, however.

My SK's are all fairly old, however, with my favorite being a 100 year old Western Union key. Tungsten was a common contact material in those days, and I have had to clean the contacts frequently during the summer to avoid intermittent characters. All of the keys are used with an Elecraft KX3, and I recently found that the key-down current was only 0.3mA. That's pretty low compared to old telegraph circuits, or later cathode-keyed radio transmitters. Figuring that this might be the culprit, I did some playing with an interface to run more current through the key. Success!

I decided that a key current of 10mA would be appropriate, and figured that an LED optocoupler would make a good interface. Alas, the junkbox was empty of anything suitable, so I cooked up the circuit shown below.



With no need for the isolation provided by an optocoupler, two transistors will do the job quite well. You will notice that it strangely includes a meter to monitor the key current. Since there's nothing fussy about the actual current level, why bother?

If you've ever read instructions for adjusting a bug, you may remember being told to connect it to an ohmmeter, and adjust the dot contacts for a 50% deflection of the meter. Great idea, but in these days of digital multimeters, some of us no longer have the old stuff! So, I decided to include a milliammeter, and a pot to set it to full scale. That way, I can adjust bug dot contacts with my regular keying setup, which is kind of handy. If you aren't interested in bug adjustments, you can eliminate the meter, R1 (and R2), the pot, and make R4 = 470 Ohms.

Referring to the diagram, the interface is powered from an existing external 5VDC regulated supply. You could pick a different voltage, and scale accordingly. Four jacks are provided for various keys – in my case, three of them are 1/8" mini-jacks, and one is a 1/4" jack. The 1k pot adjusts the current to the key. With a goal of 10mA current, I used parts on hand, and wound up with 10.9mA. My meter is an old Radio Shack 1mA meter with 85 Ohm internal resistance, and R1 in parallel with R2 give the 10.9mA full-scale. If you have a 10mA meter, skip the resistors, and use it directly. If you use anything else, you will have to calculate (or play with) a shunt resistor to bring it up to 10 mA. Finding the internal resistance of a meter is really easy these days, as most digital multimeters provide a low voltage in the Ohms position, and won't pin the meter. For example, if you had a 100uA meter, and measured 400 Ohms internal resistance, the meter would be full-scale with 40mV across it. With a current of 10mA, you get 40mV across 4 Ohms. You could pretty much ignore the 400 Ohm in parallel with that, and just set the shunt to a total of 4 Ohms.

I built the interface with tie strips and point-to-point wiring, so no boards are available! The transistors are not critical, just garden-variety NPN's. 2N222A's would also work well. R5 is set high enough to limit the base current to Q1.

We have just been through a very humid period at my summer QTH, and all of the keys have operated flawlessly without the need to clean contacts. If you use old keys on new rigs, this little project might be of interest.

Grow Light and Plasma TV RFI Partial Solution de Anonymous

Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) can certainly have detrimental effects on the Ham Radio hobby. Originally, it appeared that the possible RFI culprit was a neighbor's automatic battery charger for his boat, but further investigation revealed that the RFI was caused by "Grow Lights". These lights are used for indoor growing of plants, and can be heard at regular intervals, during the grow season, each day. These lights, which put off spurious emissions, are sold, even though they are not FCC approved device, at various retail stores.

Interference sounded like a loud rasping noise, which renders all weak and moderate level signals uncopiable. Only the most powerful signals on the band could be heard. Also at this QTH, Plasma TV RFI, typically on 80 and to a lesser extent on 40 meters, was daily encountered. By using a SDR receiver, the amplitude and bandwidth of this RFI could be easily observed on the band.

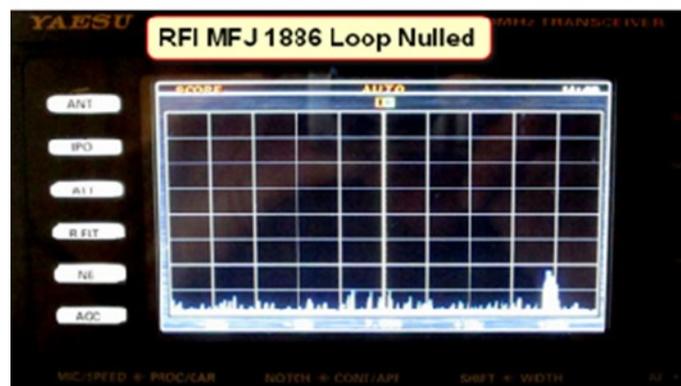
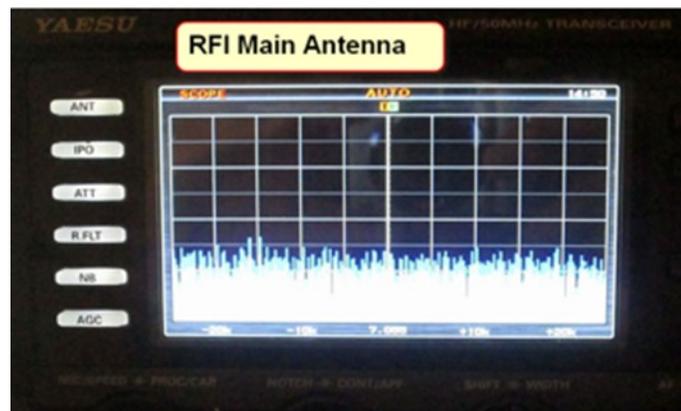
Technical solutions tried were lowering the receiving antenna and using the house as a shield from the Plasma RFI. If the plasma RFI is at only one location, to a limited extent, this reduced the plasma noise, but did not eliminate any of the Grow Light noise. Ham radio operation was limited to those times in the cycle when the plants are being harvested.

After exhausting all known solutions, another way of reducing Grow Lights RFI was finally discovered, after reading reviews about the MFJ-1886, receive only loop antenna. The directional loop antenna, coupled with the FTDX-3000 secondary antenna input, allows the user to greatly reduce interfering signals by pointing the loop in the exact direction of the Grow Lights interference and nullifying the signal.

So far, the receiving only loop antenna has not been able to eliminate the plasma RFI, but I suspect that if there is only one source and it can ever be identified, the loop can be pointed at the offending house and reduce the noise.



He forgot and transmitted through his receiving loop!



July Brag



Thanks again to all who participated in making the Brag program so much fun. Here is a picture on my original Novice rig, a Kenwood TS-120S, that I used for make many of the July Brag contacts. 73, Ric KA3LOC



Fun, Fun, Fun, even when I didn't get on as much as I wanted to. 73, Tom KB3CVO



This has to be my worst month ever. The bands have not cooperated to SE KS at all. I'll keep plugging away. The bands HAVE to get better! 73, Paul N0NBD



Poor conditions and antenna damage contributed to a low Brag total this month. I have been using my Begali HST MKII in Sideswiper mode to finish off the Triple Key Award. Bug and straight key finally finished. Thanks to all who worked me and I hope to do better in August. 73, Steve VK7CW



Actually had time to enter this month and enjoyed the QSOs. Who knows, maybe a higher score next month! 73, Ted K8AQM



That was fun! While I did miss a week in the middle of the month, it was a pleasure to be the Bonus station for July. It appears that I worked 55% of the stations that submitted in June, so that feels good. Conditions were generally pretty poor, and only three EU contacts were made. The US west coast was tough, too. The most fun was a good 10 meter opening on the 28th - almost like a contest. Thanks to all. 73, John W1TAG



A few more high band QSOs this month. New shack almost done! Thanks for all the brags!! 73, Dave KB1WOD



Nice month of Brags. The Slow Speed Saunter helped me with my Brag score, and I worked our Brag Bonus Station. 73, Curt WA2JSG



I had a fun time. Here are my two keys. I just finished cleaning and reassembling the J-38. 73, Robert KG4KGL



Good month for new SKCC members. Crazy month for conditions. 10 popped open a few times same with 6. More and more "screen watchers" showing up on 40m CW freqs. 73, Al N4OW



Poor guy, making all those calls and didn't realize his power level was set to "0;" he had been practicing with his new cootie!



Thanks all for the Q's and especially John, W1TAG for the extra 25 points. See ya next month for the next round. 73, Rick

A Flagpole Antenna...in Style By Frank W1ZAH



6BTV Hustler - Flagpole Antenna

I became interested in putting up an HF vertical multiband and trying to make it stealthy. I do NOT live in an HOA but I didn't want to make it obvious that I was putting up a radio antenna (the J-Pole is only 35' long and is in the back yard, so blends right in). I tried to do business with Greyline Performance and purchased an \$1100 flagpole antenna, but they didn't deliver so I got a refund and decided to make my own flagpole antenna. I chose the Hustler 6BTV from DX Engineering because the antenna has received positive reviews. Also, DX Engineering has done an extensive re-work of the installation directions and they stress ground radials and tuning the antenna with an analyzer on initial setup. These steps are kind of tedious but once done, the antenna performs as advertised (what a concept!).

Making the flagpole was an exercise in trial and error, but after a few weeks of modifications I am satisfied with the finished product. If you are interested in doing this yourself here is some information that might be useful;

Parts List

DXE-HSR-6BTV-P2 - This package includes the antenna, Omni Tilt base, radial plate, 80M whip, stainless steel hardware, U-Bolts, and misc. hardware, and it costs \$536 delivered. Separately from DXE I purchased an extra set of SS hardware for extra radials and biodegradable wire staples that secure the ground radials to the grass. That brought the total cost to \$639.

- 2 - 10' lengths of 2 1/2" (ID) Schedule 40 PVC
- 500' 14G stranded copper wire
- 1 - 6' metal pipe (10' with the field modification)
- 160 LBS of Kwik Set cement

Misc. hardware

The antenna will NOT fit inside 2" ID PVC, though it is close. The big box stores do not stock 2 1/2" PVD so I had to go to Graingers, an industrial supply company, for those. The cost for 2 - 10' lengths of 2 1/2" ID Schedule 40 PVC was \$60 (including the connecting joint. All the other hardware, ground pipe, radial wire, etc. was purchased at Home Depot. The total cost for the antenna and flagpole components was under \$700.

The DXE directions are very clear in how to assemble the antenna, which is pretty straightforward. The Omni-tilt base is pricey but makes the initial antenna tuning much easier - plus you can lower the antenna in case of extreme weather.

The Antenna, Radial Base, and Tilt Mount

I dug a 4' deep hole and lined the bottom with gravel for water drainage, then secured the 6' metal pipe with cement and fill. This resulted in about 22" of the mounting pipe above grade, as specified by the DXE directions. I clamped both the radial plate and tilt base to the pipe above grade. I used all 500' of copper wire for 25 ground radials and secured them to the radial plate and laid the wire down and secured it in grass with clips. Due to the location of the flagpole up against a fence I was only able to run radials on one side of the pole but the guys at DXE said run as many as you can and try to use the entire 500' role of wire. The day after I laid down the radials the lawn guys cut the grass and there was no damage done. In about 2 weeks the radials were completely beneath the grass and not visible. Although the tuning process is a bit tedious it actually only took us 30 minutes to tune all 6 bands and the highest SWR was 1.5, easily handled by a tuner in the shack. The tilt mount makes the tuning process much easier. After tuning I removed the antenna and brought it inside and began the flagpole.

The Flagpole

Fabricating a flagpole was by far the most difficult task in this project for several reasons. The first is that the antenna will NOT fit inside 2" (ID) PVC. Although the traps DO fit inside 2" PVC the tolerance is very small and when you get about 3-4' of the antenna into the PVC the clamps will not pass. The DXE guys supplied me with a couple of documents provided to them by customers who tried this and one person's solution was replacing all of the clamps with lower profile clamps. This makes the initial tuning problematic because the lower profile clamps are not easily removed. I thought 3" PVC was too wide and would really increase the cross section of pipe that would be fighting the wind (more on this later), so I ordered 2 1/2" PVC from a local Grainger's.

After assembling flagpole I made a couple of dry runs to see how it would go together and it was ragged. The antenna is about 1" OD and although the traps are just over 2" OD, there is a lot of "slop" between the antenna and PVC. In addition, the PVC merely slips over the antenna and doesn't attach to it or the mount in any way. The first time I raised the flagpole and antenna there was a very pronounced sway without a flag attached and with barely any wind. In addition, with any sort of wind the pole would weather vane on the base and the entire assembly seemed very unstable. Time for Plan B.

Initially I had run PVC all the way up the antenna, covering the 40M trap and 80M whip; a total length of around 24'. That is a LOT of PVC in the air with "no visible means of support", so I sacrificed stealth for stability. I cut about 2 1/2' off of the top section, which left the 40M trap, and 80M whip visible at the top, but still looking "flagpole-like". I also set 8 - 3/4" SS screws in the connecting joint between the 2 sections of PVC. When I raised this version it was more stable for sure, but it just bugged me that there was NOTHING securing the flagpole to the mount except gravity. I left this version up for a couple of weeks and used the antenna anyway.

After obsessing (my wife's words, not mine) about the problem for a bit I resolved this problem by inserting a 10' length of pipe inside the pipe buried in the ground. Had I known stability was going to be an issue I would have purchased a 10' length of pipe initially, buried 5' of it and left 5' above grade. This added pipe extended parallel to the PVC flagpole and about 8" away from



The tilt base and radial plate. The PVC flagpole slips over the base (the chrome pole with the yellow sticker on it) with "no visible means of support" until the mod. (the ground radials are all on the left side of the plate and obscured by the rocks).

it. I fashioned an 8" clamp that attached the PVC to the pipe (see picture below). The stability was greatly improved and the flagpole no longer spun around the base. The top of the flagpole still sways in the wind a bit but the bottom 6' or so are very stable. The only additional modification I will make is replacing hardware on the clamp with SS or galvanized, but I think the concept is a big improvement.

My Druthers

If the tilt mount wasn't so convenient for tuning I'd suggest NOT using it in the flagpole application because I think clamping directly to the buried pipe makes the unit much more stable. If you decide to use the tilt mount then something similar to the ground pipe clamp will be necessary to make the flagpole less wobbly.

As a side note, if you used the 6BTV **without** the flagpole



The pipe extension clamped to the buried pipe. Using a 10' pipe in a 5' deep hole would alleviate the necessity to make this "field mod".

it would likely be necessary to guy it anyway because it is pretty lightweight. We live near the shore (the area is called Breezy Point!) so wind is definitely a concern. In the event of extreme weather I would lower the antenna and bring it inside.

It would be much easier if there were no ground radials required and if the flagpole could be made of metal, but that one is twice the cost of this and that company doesn't deliver. This version requires a bit more work, but DC Engineering supports the product after the sale, and the antenna works great. New Zealand and Russia were the first two contacts with the "Flagpole 6BTV" using 100 watts.

73 es gud building! Frank W1ZAH



The "clamp" secures the pole to the pipe and reduces sway and weather vaning around the base.

Findlay Hamfest...Sunday Sept. 8

If you're in the area of Findlay, Ohio on Sunday September 8, SKCC will have a gathering spot in the flea market. Findlay, Ohio south of Toledo is easy access off of I-75 and a short distance from southeastern Michigan, eastern Indiana, southern, eastern and western Ohio, Stop by and chat a bit , bring you're non SKCC friends and we'll introduce them to the

fastest growing cw club in the world!

Have something to sell? Bring your gear and use our table setup . We'll be there from 8-12. Plan is to have a group phot taken for the "Rag Chew" about 10:30. Buying "goodies? Bring them by and store them with us as you continue to search for those great "fleas!" See you there!



73, Ted K8AQM and
Jeremy KD8VSQ

Our Future?? . . . An Old-fashioned Solution!!

de Ken – N8KR, 7559S

I often wonder what amateur radio will look like 50 years from now. The concern for perpetuating the hobby is one shared by many, including our League officials. While “waving” the digital modes as the future of our hobby and as a way to get people involved, I tend to side with Rick Roderick, K5UR, our League president, with his views expressed at the convention banquet last November at the Fort Wayne Coliseum. His views? My story . . .

In 2018, Jim – KD9GD - 18156T, a newbie ham and working on code proficiency, joined SKCC. The following January during our annual SKCC K3Y event Jim came over to the shack during our multi-multi special event weekend and started his quest in making contacts.



The picture shows Jim with his elmer, Ed – WA9BBN – 17763S, working together in listening, copying and sending. That extra help and encouragement from Ed continued as Ed went to Jim’s shack as KD9GDY operated as K3Y/9. It wasn’t long and Jim was “flying solo!”

So, now, fast forward to July, 2019 to a weekend operating event with SKCC. Jim decides to invite a new FWRC member and SKCC member, Fred – KB5DFS - 20541, to his shack and help him get on the air and make contacts. The positions have now changed and the student now becomes the “elmer” and yet, another ham is encouraged and helped to become active on the

hf bands. During their time together, Fred made 8 SKCC contacts. One of those happened to be with me and Fred had a nice, easy-to-copy fist! In that short qso, Fred told me that he was at Jim’s. In complimenting Jim on his efforts to help Fred, he simply said that he was paying it forward!”

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Mr. Elmer – Jim – KD9GDY



Fred – KB5DFS

The whole idea of hams helping hams was one of K5UR's major talking point last fall. Each of us, helping another ham, using our varied talents and abilities, will help perpetuate our hobby. It's not just the old-time hams. Jim – KD9GDY has been a ham since 2016! And I would be remiss if I failed to mention Rose – KA9GKE - 17764 whose on-the-air qso's with Larry – KB9OS - 17415 has helped further his cw operating! Helping with CW? How about helping with station setup, antennas, digital operating, computer logging, LOTW. As many in our hobby get older, more assistance is needed to keep them active in the hobby. Our future? How about simply helping and encouraging each other – newbies and oldies – to keep our bands full of activity! I'd like to think it would be contagious!

73,

Ken N8KR

August Slow Speed Saunter

Only a few pictures submitted for this month's Slow Speed Saunter but 25 stations turned in 291 QSOs. Guys, turn in more pictures and see them published here!



I bettered my score of last month by one, but still a lot of fun. Seemed like much activity on this one. Good to get a big jump on my monthly Brag. 73, Curt WA2JSG



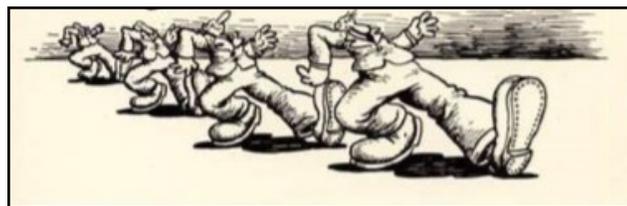
Our 2nd month of SSS and I was happy to see many on the air and engaged in chatting, not just the minimum exchange. I hope this a trend and one that will continue to grow. See you all in September! 73, Rich W4RQ



Many thunder storms moving through here this time but still managed my 20 contacts. Nice surprise contact was PZ5JW, Rico. Thanks for last minute contact Rico! BCNU next month. 73, Randy KB4QQJ



Weather was so good just couldn't sit at the rig; got busy building and installing a new antenna for 15m. I did take time to work a few and enjoyed a great ragchew with Hank K1PUG who's signal was pounding in here from his old Omni D. Maybe next month the WX will cooperate and be too nasty for antenna work and I can spend more time at the rig! 73, Ted K8AQM

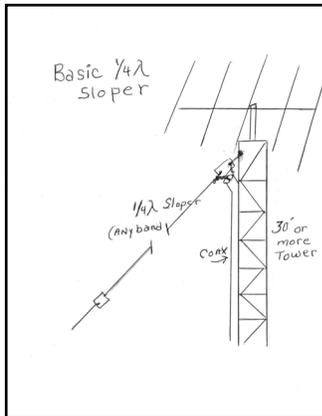
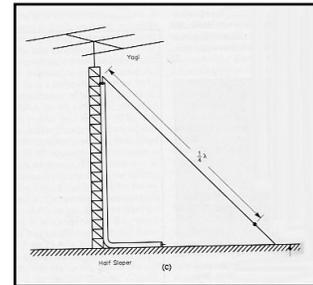


How About a Quarter Wave Sloper?

I have long lived with my mantra, “You just can’t have too many antennas.” However I must confess, my yard is a nest of wires and towers and I am running out of room for additional dipoles and such. To help reduce antenna foot print I’m going to the $\frac{1}{4}$ wave sloper using my existing towers. So what is a $\frac{1}{4}$ wave sloper and how do you build one; here is a definition found on the internet that describes it fairly well:

The classic sloper antenna is a top-fed $\frac{1}{4}$ wave vertical antenna sloping down and away from a tower. The sloper's feed point is anchored high above ground near the top of the tower on which sits a grounded HF yagi beam antenna. The yagi plays the role of a ground plane, while the tower plays the double role of reflector and grounding "rod".

I have used $\frac{1}{4}$ wave slopers for years especially as my 160m and 80m antennas as well as dipoles. At one time I had four $\frac{1}{4}$ wave slopers around a tower that were switchable in the four directions...I must confess, I saw very little change in directivity with this arrangement. I needed an antenna for 60m work so work began assembling and antenna that would be hung on a 35 foot tower in the yard. Now there is the “text book way” and “the K8AQM way,” my way is to do things as easily as possible while making sure the darn thing works!



Basically my design looks like this.

The far end of the antenna will be secured to the nearest tree and above the K8AQM head while cutting grass!

I read somewhere that the ideal angle down from the tower was 45 degrees but I have had antennas at a steeper angle and even some almost 90 degrees from the tower and all have worked very well. The thing I noticed is the antenna could be “tuned” a bit by changing the downward angle (like an inverted Vee antenna)...cool! Sometimes I had to add more wire and sometimes less; according to “theory” the type of ground under the antenna causes this change in length.



The $\frac{1}{4}$ sloper looks like this

A $\frac{1}{4}$ wave on 60m is roughly 43 feet 8 inches. The center conductor goes to the $\frac{1}{4}$ wave length while the shield of the coax is bonded to the tower. Some use a 1:1 balun but I have never found that necessary at my station. I use a dipole center device that has an SO-239 making the connection of coax very easy. From the shield side of the coax connector I attach a short random length of wire (red wire in picture) that will be secured to the tower leg (allowing for several wraps for strength to hold the antenna securely) with a hose clamp.



60m 1/4 wave sloper in place at K8AQM (red line)

Does it work...certainly! SWR at 5.375 is 1.2:1. And just FYI, that's a 5L 6m antenna and a 4L 10m antenna above along with an FM radio antenna and several dipole on that tower.

There are many ways to reduce your antenna footprint, the $\frac{1}{4}$ wave sloper is a cross between a true vertical and a dipole. It has worked well for me for many years and is extremely easy to install. Some installation use a counterpoise wire rather than a tower; just "Google" $\frac{1}{4}$ wave sloper antennas and there will be a plethora of antenna installations of these antennas including multi band $\frac{1}{4}$ wave slopers!

73, Ted K8AQM/VE9AQM 1629s



This beauty arrived today BaMaKey EHT-I made by BaMatech, Germany 73 OZ7ADL



WA7NBI...My meager key collection. I have two Bencher paddles also but we won't talk about those here. I've been packing the J-38 around since 1969. The brass base was made by N7APN.

August WES

The theme for August was "working club stations for bonus points." There were many club stations on the air for 10 points each and if you submitted a photo with your score you could claim an additional 100 points...boy, it sure brought out the photos as you'll see.



Just spent a little bit of time, 9 QSOs, but I used a different SK for each QSO. Used the IC-7300 (powered by a solar-charged battery) and a wire vertical on a push-up mast. 73, Bill AA4Q



There seemed to be less QSB than usual for a WES. I find the "Over The Keyboard" desk top cover keeps the keyboard and keys out of the way and makes a good place to keep cribs during a WES. 73, Herb AA7XP



Some notables:
1) Worked KS4KCC, KS8KCC, and KS9KCC, KS1KCC not heard
2) Worked Bert/F6HKA again after missing him last couple months
3) Worked N5NU/VY2 (Prince Edward Island), ON7LG, GM0EUL, F5DE, and F6HKA on 40m.



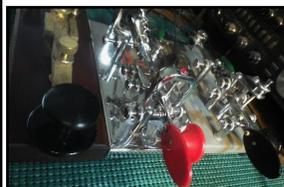
Thanks for a fun WES. Two great things happened. I worked Bert F6HKA whom I met at Dayton. Working Bert is always a highlight of any WES. And, I worked Dave K0DZX. Dave's a new ham and I had the honor of being his very first CW contact, ever. It was a good weekend all around. 73, Jim AD0AB



Lots of fun. My fist is SO bad...Jim ACOE k3/100F P3 N1MM+Old Navy key. 73, Jim ACOE



Excellent WES with good condx to this QTH. Unfortunately, I only had about 4 hours split during Saturday to operate. Great bunch of ops and a lot of fun! 73, Keith AG0H



Hello to all & thank you to all the fellow skcc members that make this event possible. Started out Saturday morning at 12 utc on 40 mtrs. Could only hear stns in Asia & eastern Russian, was hoping to take advantage of the morning grey line enhancement to the lower 48 on 40mtrs but it didnt happen. Spent the remainder of the day on 20 mtrs. With Saturdays condx, there was extreme qsb, weak signals rite down in the noise floor. Took advantage of the sked page & rbn to aid in search and pounce. Used two transceivers simultaneously on various antennas. Checking my notes, I copied 9 stns in 18 hours of operating and completed 4 qso's. Fun weekend !!! 73 to all & c u on the bands. 73, John AL7JK



Better conditions than I expected. Managed QSOs on 20m, 40m, and 80m. YouKits HB-1B and MFJ Cub, both with 4 watts to end-fed wire. Key is homebrew side-swiper made from contacts from a double pole relay obtained from Jan Pieter PA3CLQ (Thanks Jan. It works great!). 73, Steve, AI9IN

I did not know that PEI was a province!
4) All bands seemed to be a dead zone from 1-4PM local time, must be the nice weather keeping people away.
5) Toughest QSO was AE4Y with Kent, but we finally pulled it out.
6) Worked a quite a few QRP stations: KI4MZC, WX2R, N0BPA and probably others who didn't identify as "QRP"
7) Contrary to popular belief I don't think there are any hams in North Dakota.
Thanks to all the "regulars" like KIARR who give me the tough sections like VT. worked much better than expected. I hope to build a 20m version, but need to get a 52 foot mast or tree to get it done. 73, Bob AC1GF



Had a blast operating (back porch)portable on my new IC-7300 into a CrankiR or Alpha Loop. The W1SFR portable Cootie also got into the act. Most contacts were made on the CrankiR at 100W but the Alpha Loop scored 5 contacts on 20M at 50W. Thanks to all who worked this station. 73, Brad AI6D



73, Roger KC4HCH

August WES...II



Well this time I took part for only one hour (club station DK0SU participated in WAE-DX Contest). Managed to get seven QSO's in WES and my thanks go to Tony W4FOA, Amir 4Z1AR, Bernard F5DE (next time we will get several bands done again), Bert F6HKA, Chas K3WW (strong signal as usual), Geert ON7LG and Vince S52CC (glad that finally the 40m band worked for us). Picture showing the Titanex V80S vertical antenna (160/80/40/{30}m) at DK0SU. CUAGN next time, 73 Tom DF4TV



Always a pleasure to be in front of my several keys trying to get friendly SKCC contacts during this nice event, the WES ! I got two clubs bonuses, thanks to ON4OS and KS4KCC. I am very proud to wear the SKCC hat, hi! 73 and see you all soon Bernard F5DE



Thanks to fellow W0ERH club member AD0AB for my first ever CW QSO, clumsy as it was! 73, Dave K0DZX



Shared my time between WAE and WES. Conditions on high bands not very good but I had fun as usual. Thanks for the



Fun as always. Tried for a bit this afternoon but no takers except I answered a FISTS call but could barely hear him, we just about managed the exchange with lots of repeats. Back for an hour or so before bed and the bands were much better. Made it to NH on 40m-thanks Bob AC1GF, I think you are a new number for me. One club bonus and a photo bonus so a reasonable score considering. K2, 100w to ended for 20, 40 and 80m, Vibroplex Champion and HiMound HK-707. 73, Peter GM0EUL



Very hard going, with my QTH and poor antennas I only do well when propagation is good. 4 QSO's Many thanks to F6HKA Bert, F5DE Bernard both on 40m. ON7LG Geert and EA1YQ Jose both on 20m. 73, John G0RDO #2133s



Twenty meters was a bit slow early Saturday so I moved to 40 after an hour. I was back and forth between those bands the rest of Saturday and for a couple hours on Sunday. Storms shut me down a time or two. Early on, I wasn't properly focused on the exchanges and I think I missed a few clubs. My fault. It was nice to work Ron, AC2C and Ks4KCC. The contest activity netted a few Europeans but I got just three European members. But I worked the four corners of the US and several Provinces. It was especially nice to work Mike, VY0CF in Nunavik, Canada. My first for that Province. I took advantage of this WES to practice on my Vibroplex Lightning. My apologies to those who put up with my crippled bug. It was poorly adjusted and I was poorly skilled. Thanks to the organizers who do so much to keep this club well organized and fun. And thanks to all operators for their participation in another fun event. 73, Ralph K0RO



Operating with my Drake B-line Twins at 120w into an end-fed antenna and an 80m dipole. Thanks for the Qs! 73, Randy, KS4L



Spent most of my time operating KS4KCC and having a ball. 73 for now, Randy_KB4QQJ K3/10 at 5w to doublet at 33 feet.



While not a lot of stations worked. I did qso with two new to me members. Good fun. 73, kd4ee Scott

August WES...III



Got my sons to help clean garage and had to forgo a lot of radio time this weekend ;D Tried to load a picture but maybe not working. 73, John K8JD



I had a blast, thanks everyone! 73, Eric KB3NSK



Great WES! Worked couple of hours portable, in our local Ham club activity: "Hams in The Park". Xiegu 20G, 20 Watts into vertical antenna. The rest of the time from home. ALInco DX-SR8, 100 Watt into the attic dipole, at 25 feet. Thank you all for the good time. 73, Sergey KD9EBS



Another WES here and gone... One of these days I'm going to buckle down and put some effort into this just to see what I could do. Next time.. 73, Tim KD1W



I only had time to operate on Sunday evening VK time. I thought I would log a couple of calls due to the poor conditions of late. How wrong I was, turned out to be great conditions and I had lots of fun for a couple of hours. Thanks to all who worked me. I used my cootie for most QSOs. 73 de Steve VK7CW



I had a very nice time working the WES this weekend. I was able to devote about 9 hours to it this time. 40Mtrs was in tremendous shape on Saturday night with low noise for this time of year. I used 40 & 20 mtrs mostly, but ended up on 80mtrs near the end. I'm impressed at the skill level of most of the SKCC members. We have quite a lot of very skilled people within the SKCC! I included a picture of my Vizkey right-angled Bug which I used the entire time. Have had it for about 3 months. 73, to all SKCC members Steve K2FW



Another rough weekend. Bands died both Saturday and Sunday for most of the day here. Ran my KX3 at 5 watts into the 160 meter doublet at 20 feet on 40 and 80 meters and the Hex Beam on 20 meters. had 5 contacts on 20 and 3 on 80 meters. The other 39 were on 40 meters. But overall it was fun as usual and thanks to all that were able to hear me. Looking forward to better bands but that may be a while away yet. 73, from Wild and Wonderful West Virginia, Dave WV8DH



KX3 @ 1 watt and 100mW, Delta Loop @ 15'. Found some time this weekend for a little WES action, did all my playing on 40 meters...I ran this one from the backyard from my small shack inside of my RV...worked 4 of them at 1 watt and Bob, AC1GF was so strong I dropped to 100 mW's and got a nice 559 report from him! Great ears Bob, thanks for the contact! 73, Jim K2MIJ



Just picked off a few. Didn't really have my act together this round. Will be in September WES from the Adirondack Mountains while camping. 73, Jeff



TNX! every one for nw nmbrs & a great wk. end! C U next month. 73, Steve NQ8T



Very modest shack Icom IC-7300 and homebrew Windom antenna @10m. 73, Geert ON7LG



Not much time to operate this weekend. A lot of family stuff going on but glad to get who I got. C U L 73, Greg WA3GM

August WES...IV



Trouble in the first few hours, two QSOs lost in QRN and QSB. Much better in the last hours but still strong local QRN. Thanks again for the fun and challenge. No selfie proper but my personalized Begali Spark should fit the purpose for now :-). 73, Robert VE2KZW



A busy weekend with grand-kids here and our 40th anniversary meant I only got on the air for a while on Sunday among very poor condx here in SW MO. Used my K3 at 100 watts, a Bencher RJ-2 key and a 43' vertical. But fun nonetheless! 73, Bill NZ0T



An exceptionally fun WES with an abundance of enthusiastic participants. Thanks to everyone who had the patience to pull my signals out of some challenging QRN. 73, Arnie N4SET



As a newbie to CW, WES is a great way to get over your "key fright". I more than doubled my CW contacts over a casual weekend. Thanks for the friendly, comfortable contesting experience. 73, Evan N7MHZ



1946 V-Deluxe keying IC-706 to G5RV-jr @ 35' - Rough going Saturday morning amidst other contest but conditions improved significantly Saturday evening and Sunday. This was the first real ride on my new "S" (SMILE) and it ran well! Many thanks to all those who contributed to it. 73, Don K3RLL



It was tempting to give up on QRP from time to time. Tough conditions. Great reports and comments from a few stations. I noted my power so folks didn't think their receivers were failing them. All in all, QRP is lots of fun for the sender and perhaps not so much for the receiving station. My apologies. 73, Chuck K9IA



Great fun working everyone. Both 40 and 20 were very good. Highlight was working KS4KCC and KS9KCC but never heard KS1KCC....nuts! Great to hear other clubs too. Thanks to all for the good time. 73, Dit KS8KCC



80,40 es 20 all great at their times this weekend. 80 was really good Saturday evening here in Eastern Ohio. Cousin Bob, W8ARC came out from the hills of Almost Heaven "WV" for a few hours Sunday morning as we worked the Loren D Hayes Memorial ARC Call "K8CGE" Tnx to everyone that participates and the great hams that put these sprints together, they are a blast. On a quiet night, I can hear K8CGE pounding brass from behind those Pearly Gates..73 de Randy N8KQ8934S es Bob



SOME FUN!!!!!! 73, Al W9TE



Strong QSB this WES. 73, John KG4WNA



Fun weekend but my arm is tired from the straight key! 73, Paul K4JAZ



Photo: Bain, K8LBQ, at rig with hand on CW key. 73, Brian K8LBQ

Had fun operating KS1KCC and got enough to qualify the call for Centurion. 73, Ron KS1KCC

KS1KCC
SK CC
 Straight Key Century Club
 SKCC #20550
 www.skccgroup.com

Straight Key Century Club
 10227 Feaga Farm Ct
 Ellicott City, MD 21042

Confirming QSO with _____ Date _____ UTC _____ MHz _____ RST _____ MODE _____
 Day / Month / Year

_____ Pwr. QSB. Tnx.

August WES...V



Thanks - lots of fun. Tried 100 watts this time. 73, Gary N5PHT



Conditions did not seem to favor running QRP from WPA. But I popped in from time to time and managed to make a few QSOs. I was using a new mini-key that was designed and built by Dave-K0MBT. It has a nice 'larger key feel', and worked quite well for me. QCX-40 at 4w to a 40m Dipole. 73, Jody K3JZD



Another fun event. Caught a few /club calls. 40 was my go-to band. IC7300 and 1919 Vibroplex Original along with the Begali HST "Cootie" for QRS. Also, nice to hear a few more new member stations. See you down the log. 73, Jack KK0I



KS1KCC, KS4KCC, and KS8KCC in the log. Fun event, as usual. 73, SKIN - Straight Key Indiana



A fun couple of hours - good propagation and a fair number of stations active. Thanks to everyone who participated. 73, Roger W6LAX



For a change, I actually remembered to set some time aside for playing in WES this month. Fun, and conditions seemed pretty good to me. It was great to bump into some old friends on the air as well as catch some club ops. In fact, I had a 40% hit rate for club stations without even trying, so there must have been a bunch of them participating. Thanks to all for the fun. For 100 points, a pic of my hobby room is attached. Yes, there really is a radio station somewhere in there. 73, Gary K9ZMD



Enjoyed the event and had fun. Hope to have more time next go round. 73, Mark KA4UPI

Got to do a little of the WES this weekend. I has been awhile, and I was glad to hear some familiar calls, and so many new calls! Used my newly acquired British WT key. It has a pretty



Had fun using my paper-clip key. Definitely getting better at copying, but still much room for improvement. Thanks for all the patience! 73, James WD0JB



I had lots of fun this weekend! Several other events I was involved with. Operated when I could. 73, Jim KD9GDY



I ran 100W at home with the IC-7300 to the wire dipole, and also 20W on the hilltop nearby with the Xiegu G90 to the GRA-1899T telescopic whip. Thanks everybody who made qso with me. 73, Yoon KM6KJI



I set up camp for my yearly week of camping with friends, in Belfast, Maine, but this year, a SOTA beams Bandhopper, and an LNR Precision EF-MTR endfedz also got set up. Rig was an Elecraft KX1, power supply was a Bioenno LiFePO4 9Ah, key was a Whiterook cootie. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



Bands didn't seem very good on Saturday, so I did other things that day. Sunday was better. I kinda liked the theme this time. I worked 5 club stations and heard a few more that I didn't work. This WES, boatanchor rig was a HeathKit SB-101 and a fan dipole. I used a Speed-X and a Vibroplex straight key. 73, Steve KE4OH



Enjoyed the event and had fun. Hope to have more time next go round. 73, Mark KA4UPI



August WES...VI



That was fun! I (KB4QQJ) normally operate QRP but when operating a bonus station I drive a modified Ten-Tec 405 with my K3/10 at 5 watts. That gives me about 78 watts out. The bands never really opened up here but there was plenty of activity. Most of my work was on 40 meters. Met a lot of new members this time. In the photo the keys are left to right a custom NT9K Pro Pump, a 1938 Martin Jr bug and an SKCC club Sideswiper. Spent plenty of time on all three of them. Hilight contact was working Lloyd, K3ESE from his tent location!! 73, Key_KS4KCC



Only radio time was Saturday morning 14:25 until lunch time. I decided to let the big rig and bug take the day off. My cootie had been gathering dust anyway so I pulled the cover off the KX3 and ran QRP to make 9 contacts. I only worked two club stations, but I have a pic of my dusty cootie. 73, Mike W15H



Saturday was really bad. Bert F6HKA was PEAKING 559! Not a good sign. Very few EU stations heard on Sunday. Still a fun time with the Club bonus. A great theme. Picture of my mighty Station Attached. 73 to all and welcome to the New Members. AL, N4ow



Super busy weekend with 2 different hamfests to attend, so I was only able to get on the air for a couple of hours at the end. Still had fun! I used the Gold Dust Twins and you can see my stable of Begali Keys. I mostly used the Sculpture Swing Cootie, but as usual I switch between all of them. 73, Mike



I normally work the sprints QRP but I was working on this old ragged TS-430 so I ran about 80w on a few contacts. It seems to be working! The key is a J37 without the leg clamp, antenna is a 40m inverted vee at 30 ft. 73, Kerry WD5ABC



Had a great time but +20dB noise level on 80m counted me out there. 73, Paul N5PT



This was fun this time. Little city noise (solar inverters) and 20 and 40 were pretty good. See ya'll from SC for the Sept/Oct sprints. Sorry about the bad lighting in the shack photo. 73, Phil



Just 25 for me. Hard to pass up the nice weather outside to sit in the shack (hi hi). Used my TS-590SG, 75w to a vertical and Kent Straight Key. Nice event, as always.



I am a sporadic sprintathon participant but with the club bonus i figured i would put KB1NH on the SKCC map. 73, Barry NF1O



Conditions were very good this weekend. Some seriously nice signals on 20, 40 and 80. Wish we could do a couple more day's worth. CU for the SKS. 73 from Tygart Valley, WV. John



My trusty Kenwood TS-850SAT and MESCO key. 73, Terry W7AMI



Had fun working with the club call and QRO for this month, worked a few on 15M and 20 M seemed to go up and down but was the work-horse band for me. Operated QRO for this month. 73, MJARS WA5JRS

August WES...VII



Great fun, I worked a few more QSOs than last time. Tried to work all permitted bands but could not raise anyone on 6 or 10 meters. I thank John K8JD for my only 160 QSO. Only made 7 QSOs on 80 including Pat AA2R close to midday Sunday. Two QSOs, Jerry K5DMC and Bert F6HKA seem a little strange for a dead 15-meter band. Had 2 rag-chews, Bernie KB4JR 23 mins and George KQ5H 20 min, this is my real week point so I could not give up the opportunity. As I am sure those who have worked me know, my exchanges are not exactly very long. This gave me the hair brained idea that maybe a WES like event that gave bonuses based on QSO duration would encourage those like myself who would benefit from longer QSOs. It would probably be quite a challenge to compile reasonable rules, but I am putting the thought out there. Quite a challenge at times with the other contests on. Holding a frequency working QRP stations on a congested band can be both fun and stressful. Asking a 599 station for many repeats feels a little off. My apologies to those I said were off frequency, it took me a while to realize that with a 50 Hz bandwidth I was missing stations just 25 Hz off. I monitor my sending (Begali HST as Cootie) with a Begali CW machine which tells me, most of the time I am sending code at least it can read. It also showed that as time went by, I was beginning to run my 73 GL DE together and in the end my sending was getting ragged. My thanks to those on the receiving end of the ragged stuff. I have come to really like this little mountain I am sat on, 500 watts to a Steppir DB18 clear in all directions, except for some close in trees, seems to work very well. Not too bad in QRP events either. 73, Brian KF6C.



Thanks for the WES QSO's everyone. Got a late start (01:33 Z) 9:33PM EDT Saturday after a full day at my XYL's Family Reunion. Mine was last Saturday J. Gave 10 points to others with my Club Call KN8RHM. My Nov-ice call from 1959. Club Calls worked...K8CGE, KS4KCC, WN8YGR, KS1KCC, WA5JRS, K5LSU, KZ5OM, W0CSR & N04GA..THANKS! Extra enjoyable because the propagation was working, on 80, 40 & 20 and the noise was almost nil for a change. 73, Rick N8XI

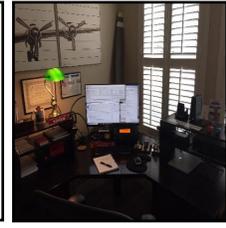


Enjoyed the event, especially since I was using my club call. Bands were pretty good. Had to use the amp to fight the CW contest going on, they don't listen. Thanks for working me. Fred, N0ZS-club aka K0FG- 73, Fred N0ZS



As discussed on Facebook I was working portable from MA. i WAS USING A kNEE KEY in my vehicle with my new IC7100 through the SGC tuner to a 33 ft vertical help up by straps on a down tree. Some stations did not copy MA because I'm in the data base as NV they did not listen to what was sent. Part of the event is copying Morse Code. Since this event used International Morse Code I choose to use International procedures. Therefore if stations sent something like: CQ WES DE (THEIR CALL SIGN) OR AR K I did not call them as means no response is expected or required. The stations calling CQ WES and ending with a K got a call from me. K means: invitation to transmit. I'll be back in NV for the next WES using international procedures with my International Morse Code. 73, Jim WIRO

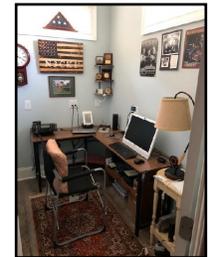
Was away until Sunday afternoon, and didn't get much time on the air. Conditions seemed to be reasonable here in ME, contrary to reports from elsewhere. Hoping for more free time next month. Thanks to all. 73, John W1TAG



Great working all the club calls! Great theme Dave. 73, Hal K5HEM



Bands weren't great but had lots of fun. looking forward to the next one. 73, Chris N0CC



Good WES. Props from my QTH weren't that good, especially on 20M. 73, Dave N3CKI



Awesome being a bonus station! 40M was in good shape. 73, Frank W6DDG

August WES...VIII



Condx were poor on 20 and only fair on 40. 80 was noisy. Worked quite a few new members.

Used my "new" Bunnell Double Speed key from the early 1920's for the very first time. It is a noisy key (solid brass bar) but after getting used to it I really like the feel and sound of the characters it produces - very easy to send with. Rig: K3. Antenna: 160m horizontal loop. 73, Dave W3NP



My apologies to a few that I had problems sending. It seems my Flex Maestro, unknown to me, was sending what they call Jitters which resulted in dropped dits and dahs. I figured this out much later and solved the problem. So, I was able to work through the WiFi from my deck and my couch this weekend. Very cool. 73, Chris N3MLB



Just glad to be able to make a qso with an attic end fed in this new condo! Good Luck to all.



Had fun chasing club stations. See you next month 73, Dave KB1WOD



I worked the contest for a few hours on Sunday while on vacation on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. This picture is my antenna's view of Currituck Sound. 73, Craig WB3GCK



This was a fun event. Lots of QRN on 40 and lots of QSB on 20. Managed to log 2 Qs on 15. See y'all next month. 73, Jim W9BM



Great WES theme. Decent band conditions Sat. evening and a lot of activity. I had a great time. 73, Les WB5JWI



Thanks everyone for the exceptional operating event. With the big beam facing east I had lots of QRM from the EU contest but managed to hold on the 20M frequency for a long time. Lots of heat in Texas and FTDX3000 was overheating down to 45 watts several times- external fans did the trick. First time the FELLOWSHIP of the FLYING GOATS CLUB was in a contest! Operating station was K1YAG. Best contact was a station using a "Paper Clip" Key. 73 -- Tailwinds and Three Greens, Bill WG0FLY K1YAG



Operated using Family Club call that my Dad (SK) had for many years. Mostly operated on Sunday with time out to repair my 40m antenna. Lots of fun to work the various clubs and also to work so many new members. Fell one short of my goal to qualify for Tx4. That will happen very soon. 73, Swart WA9ZDC



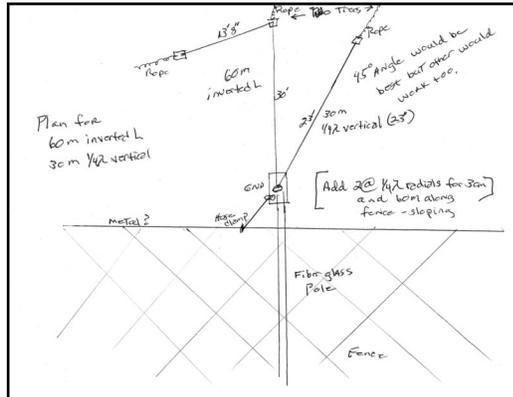
Had a couple hours to work portable. Bands not great but always fun to work fellow SKCC'ers! 73, Warren KC9IL



Making Use of What You Have @ KD8VSQ

Seems like you never have enough antennas to cover the bands you want to work and if you do then you have a yard full of wire and an empty wallet paying for all that coax! Jeremy KD8VSQ worked to solve both those problems!

Using an existing wire fence in his back yard and a couple of trees Jeremy designed a dual band antenna for 30 meters and 60 meters. The 60m portion is an inverted L while the 30m portion is a sloping vertical.

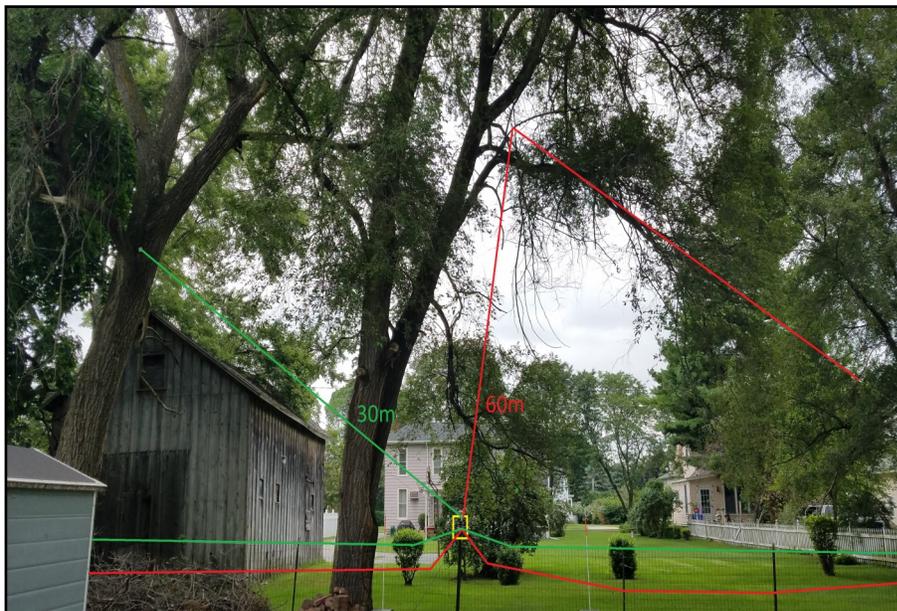


The two antennas share the same feed point which is an SO-239 in Plexiglas and put on a fiberglass pole about one foot above the wire fence. There are two tuned radial using insulated wire for each band and embedded in the wire fence. The wire fence is also connected to the ground side of the SO-239. The fence is supported by T-poles which are driven into the ground and providing even more grounding for the system.

The nice thing about RF and antennas, is RF will always take the path of least resistance thus making “dual bands” on one feedline possible. Dan K0FD, used this principle in his article on page 3 in this issue of *The Rag Chew*.

Basic antenna design showing radiators and grounding system...both tuned “raised radials” and random fence wire radials.

Just a bit of tuning Jeremy said and the SWR on both antennas is 1.2: 1 and they work and hear very well.



View of the antenna system at KD8VSQ. You can clearly see the fence, T-poles and where the antennas go off to the trees. UV resistant rope is used at the end of antennas and an insulator and rope provide the pivot point for the inverted L. With the feed point elevated the system acts like any ground plane and the tuned radials make it an easy system to tune.



Feed point of KD8VSQ's dual band antenna.

Be the DX! Josh Long, W9HT/VP9

This summer marked my 20th anniversary as a ham operator, and I decided that I wanted to do something different for a change. Combining my love of travel and ham radio into a single trip sounded like a logical and fun move.

After some research and checking to make sure that my passport was valid, I discovered that Bermuda was an easy place to visit. I also found that Ed Kelly, VP9GE, has several apartments available for rent and includes use of his ham equipment for visiting hams—and help with obtaining a Bermuda ham operating permit! After a series of emails with Ed, I booked my trip to Bermuda.



Ed VP9GE and Josh W9HT/VP9 having dinner and enjoying local beverages

Ed VP9GE picked me up at the Hamilton airport after two short flights. The station waiting for me at the rental apartment was almost everything that I needed: a Kenwood TS-590SG, CW paddles, a triband Yagi along with wire antennas for 160/80/40m and the WARC bands. Ed also has a 6m Yagi that points at the United States. Ed recommended that I bring my own straight key.

Over the next six days, I casually made a total of 1,249 contacts (besides swimming,

touring, and enjoying the local cuisine). I logged into the SKCC Sked page and was available for contacts with SKCC members. While I decided that a CW pileup was beyond my current skills, it was delightful to work so many SKCC members, including many that I had worked from my home call and/or knew personally. I also made hundreds of phone and digital contacts. At Ed's recommendation, I checked out 6m and made several dozen FT8 contacts on that band during a band opening.

The weather was warm and sunny each day I visited, with the exception of the morning before my return flight. The ocean was an amazing combination of turquoise and aquamarine—and the water was a perfect temperature. The local food was delicious, although it was slightly pricier than comparable meals back in Indiana. The local “national drink” of Bermuda is the rum swizzle, a delicious concoction of multiple rums, fruit juices, and bitters.



The view from Ed VP9GE's home looking towards the ocean



W9HT/VP9 working a nighttime pileup

Now that I am back home, several tasks await. Once I pick up my new W9HT/VP9 cards at the post office later this morning, I need to respond to



Amazing ocean view

a stack of cards from operators in multiple countries. Also, I need to plan my next excursion.

I will have some leftover W9HT/VP9 cards, so why not return for a second trip? I am currently planning on operating from Bermuda again in October over fall break. The weather should be gorgeous, the people are friendly, the food and beverages are good, and the bands should be open. Why not be the DX for a change?

73,
Josh W9HT/VP9

Tools of the Trade



A warning for those of you who have 1931-1945 Junkers at home: they reproduce. I don't know how, although per the promise to my wife I'm looking into it. I started with 1 and now have 3, at no fault of my own.

Bethany, if you're reading this rest assured we'll get to the bottom of this mystery...although I may need a larger sample size to fully research the issue...John KB2MMU



Got a NOS key in the mail today. Wow, these are smooth and nice to operate! Glad I grabbed it. 73, Jason N3YUG



And now there are three... The collection grows. The Flameproof Navy key is mounted on a base of quarter inch thick iron slag, covered in a fake metal plastic shell (part of an old lamp). I don't even have to hold the key down with the other hand. I like the Navy key WAY better than the J38. After 4-5 days practicing on the new bug, I feel I can get on the air with it. The thread on the SKCC forum this last week on how to switch from a keyer to a bug helped a lot. 73, Vic Wa7nbi

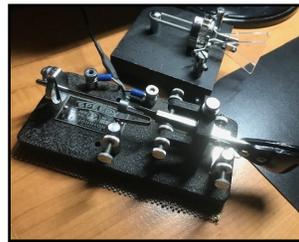
August SKS



Lot's of fun! Almost all of my time was on 40mtrs. Some very nice signals including from the west coast. 73, Steve K2FW



Excellent fun to be the bonus station, even while QRP. Rig was an Elecraft K2 at 5W to a 20m EDZ up 50' or an 80m dipole up 70'. Key is a TFBF cootie by W1SFR. 73, Lloyd K3ESE



40m was really noisy here in rural PA this evening but still enjoyed trial run of 'new' vintage E.F. Johnson Speed-X 520 bug. I think it needs a second weight on pendulum. (SMILE) Fun hour. 73, Don K3RLL



20 was slow but seemed open, 40 and 80 very busy. Not one W1 SCP called in, I guess they were having too much success CQing. Thanks to K3ESE for calling. Bruised index finger from antenna work yesterday but held up for 2 hours. 73, Chas K3WW



Computer failure. Lots of fun tonight, in less than an hour! Many stations, lots of QRM Thanks for the Qs. 73,



KS1KCC thanks for both 80 & 40 meters Big signal on both bands. Also thanks Lloyd K3ESE for the bonus. I hope all the activity tonight is a good indication of fall & winter activity for the two hour sprints. 73, Larry K8TEZ



Worked the first hour on 20 meters and got 12 then one on 40 and had to go to supper. Good band conditions. Very hot here in ETX. Thanks for the QSO's and CU all next month. 73, Allen KA5TJS



Nice bands on 40 and 80 tonight. A few more new members out there. Used the 1919 Vibroplex Original, Begali HST Cootie and Speedx straight key. Couldn't find where K3ESE was lurking. Oh well. Thanks again for all the contacts. 73 until next time, Jack KK0I



Pretty good condx especially 80 and 40. We only had two ops so couldn't get to 160m but we sure had fun. Happy to work so many and to help promote the club call KS1KCC. TNX to all 73, SKCC KS1KCC



It's been a while. Looks like we're still having fun. 73 and see every one later,,Bill N0UMP



First time on as a CLUB...Bands not great...New Call coming in a few days.. you guys will like it. 73, Dah KC3NXB



40 Was hopping, 80 full of RFI, 20 one QSO. Thanks to Lloyd for the bonus. The last 30 minutes was super fun on 40. Thanks to all who worked me. See you next month, 73 de N4ow, AL



Setup in my pickup truck. Used Buddipole vertical on 40 and Wild River Coils SB1000 for 80. Made first 80 mtr QSO on the SB1000. 73, Doug N3QW

August SKS...II



Worked 80M only. A lil noisy but not too bad here. Tnx everyone that called me es sri for the couple I just could not pull out. Tnx also fer KS1KCC in MI. tonite. 73, Randy N8KQ



Great fun! Apologies to Ed for taking so long to get his call. QRN got me. A couple new nmbrs .. My "Barry's Bug" has so much weight hanging on it I had to add another brace to the counter in the shack HI HI! CU next month GL 73, Steve NQ8T



I also worked KS1KCC tonight! Good fun on 40m throughout. Thanks to all and see you soon! 73, Roger VE3RDE



Good to see the bands lit up! Thanks to KS1KCC, RJ, And both Randy in Ohio, and Randy in GA tonight on my little Bug. 73, Rich W4RQ



It was nice to see so much activity tonight. 20 M was open for first part of SKS and 40 M was packed. Thanks everyone 73, Roger W6LAX



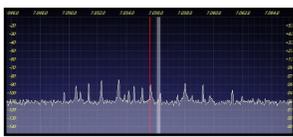
Set my goal for 10 contacts and made 20 (hi hi). Band was pretty good and lots of activity. Used my TS-590SG at 75w to a vertical. Kent SK. Always a fun event. I predict a good turnout for this one. 73, Curt WA2JSG



Got in a little late tonight. Calling CQ SKS on 80 but few people coming back. 73, Greg WA3GM



Good band conditions and enjoyed the sprint as always. Great to hear lots of familiar calls and some new ones too. Pic is of our annual gathering of purple martins before the migration south. They do this every year! 73 from Mustang, OK Gerald WA5AFD



Thanks for listening for my puny-weak 5w signal. Tonight's rig was the Flex 3000 and 1941 Vibroplex Champion into a doublet at 30'. I'm attaching a screen shot of 40m, it looked like Sweepstakes, it's great to see this much activity. I worked several other guys on bugs, that was fun too! 73, Kerry WD5ABC



Broke out the trusty ole straight key (Hamkey) for this sprint and decided to just S & P on 80 meters. Surprisingly, 80 meters was open at my QTH and signal strengths were great. Pleased to have worked the bonus station (K3ESE), some old familiar call signs, and the club station (KS1KCC). Very enjoyable sprint. C U next time. 73, Bill KE3O



Had limited time this evening and 20 was dead by the time I got on. 40 was in excellent shape - best I've seen it in a while. 80 was also good. Wrked bonus station Lloyd K3ESE on 160 and 80 and also wrked Don K9LI on 160 which was very quiet for summertime. K3 @ 100 watts to 160m horizontal loop and the key for the evening was my "clacky" (according to xyl) vintage Bunnell double speed key sideswiper. 73, Dave W3NP



Good to see 20M open for a little while, I had my best results on 40M and a few on 80M. 73, Steve K4JPN

Noise...I Know Where You Are! de Greg KE8CEW

We have all seen these before.... "An AC Line Noise Detector." Nothing new! In fact, I got the design from a QST article. Did I need one? Eh!

Our first line noise issue we had was tracked down using a hand held AM/FM SSB radio. Tracked the issue down to a neighbor's Plasma television on its last leg. Sure enough, three weeks later, his television smoked and actually crack the glass screen from top to bottom. Issued solved.

Last spring, Ted K8AQM found noise on his 80 meter band. He borrowed a home brew AC Line Noise Yagi and tracked down the issue across the road from his home, in a swamp where someone had hooked up a sump pump to pump out a flooded area. Of course eventually it had worn out and began arching inside the pump. He called the power company and with Ted's assistance they quickly were able to track down the problem and took care of the issue. Seeing his detector he borrowed, I began investigating the plans to build my own; using scrap archery arrows, (\$5 for a huge box full) a beam from an old scrap television antenna (Free), pieces of CPVC water pipe and bicycle handlebar grip (\$3 for the pair of grips) plus an article from QST magazine, (which I modified to make a take apart fold up yagi) all I needed was a radio or meter.



Yagi AC Line Noise Detector made for easy storage.

I read many articles to find out a 135 MHz AM Airband radio is what was needed. I still couldn't find exactly what I wanted. I wanted an MFJ-852 meter that I could visually see the meter and listen too. Wow, they were just too much money for me to justify buying one to use once in a great while. Then one day a fellow ham listed one on QTH.com for \$30 shipped. I quickly emailed him and in a week, it was slightly modified and mounted to my Yagi.

Last night, an issue developed on my 2 meter radio with what I thought was an issue demanding me to get out my AC Line Noise detector. After putting it together I went fishing for the culprit. Up and down the street and the only real issue I could find was at my own home. Finally, pointing the Yagi at my electric meter, pegged the meter at 90 decibels of noise!

Hmmmm? This must also be the source of my HF noise levels I have been experiencing too. I called the power company and the next morning, out came the tech. First thing he said to me was he loved us ham radio operators. Ham radio operators make our job so easy and pinpoint the problem for us. Then he began telling me about a fellow ham radio operator the next town over whom had a similar device and went on to tell me about him. Why Yes! I knew him. It was Ted, K8AQM!

He then explained that the power company has expensive devices for locating issues with their equipment but would not let a lineman use

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AC Line Noise Detector assembled and ready to "snif-out" that noise!

them. I guess only the engineers could have them and kept them locked up. He wanted to know if I would build him one. Sure I said if you buy the meter.

Anyway, after calling in another tech, they had to rebuild my meter box with all new contacts and wire terminals because they had corroded so badly. We did find out a cell phone charger also causing issues just on the other side of the wall from my electric meter.

While the crew was here, they also put rubber insulators over the wire connections at the pole and before they left, they had me check all around for other noises issues.

Well, I have a quiet bunch of radios now.

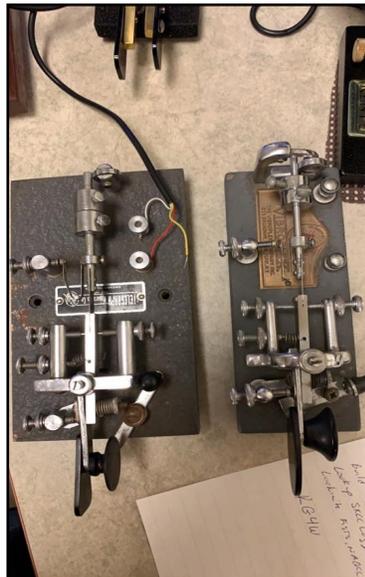
73, Greg KE8CEW

Bug Restoration



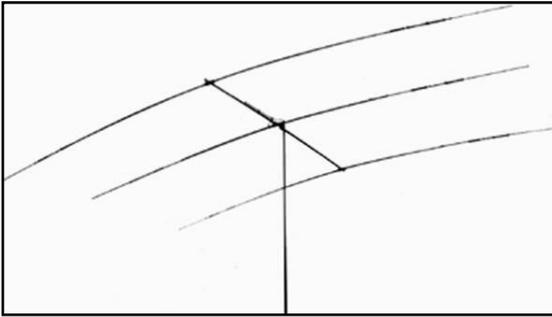
The base on this 1934 Original was in pretty good shape, but as often happens, the pinstriping had deteriorated somewhat. After cleaning and very gently polishing, I applied a clear coat and redid the pinstriping over the original, which is now protected underneath. The paint I used is oil based, and will clean off easily with a little alcohol if need be without harming the original pinstriping, or the clear coat.

The pen is a Sharpie brand extra fine point paint pen, oil based metallic gold, and the clear coat was just a regular gloss spray can. I did 3 coats with very gentle 0000 steel wool in between. I used a very fine artist's brush for the "lightning bolts" "sparks" or whatever those things are.
73, Art KD0GY



This Telegraph Apparatus Company "hole in the wall" bug followed me home. (Bought on eBay actually). Massive key and feels quite different from my other Vibroplexes. Heavy and precise are words that come to mind. It's pictured next to my blue racer for comparison. 73, Bob KT8DX

The High Band Operating Event



The first SKCC High Band Operating Event was held the weekend of August 17th. The purpose of the event was to encourage SKCCers to look for sporadic e-layer openings and make contacts on the 15 through 6 meter bands. Unfortunately limited e-layer openings limited participation in the event.

The best openings occurred in the mornings on Saturday and Sunday in the northeast. John, W1TAG in Maine was well positioned to take advantage of the propagation and

made a total of 18 contacts on 10, 12 and 15 meters. Most of his contacts were with 8-land, with some 4's and 9's mixed in. John made good use of the Sked Page, posting his operating frequencies so stations could listen for him.

Ted, K8AQM reported making six contacts during a two hour period. Not surprisingly Ted worked John on all three bands. He also managed to make three other contacts on 10 meters.

Thanks to all the participants, whether or not you were able to make any contacts. Hopefully some learned about chasing e-layer propagation on the high bands and can add it to their ham radio bag of tricks.

There are a couple of reasons why you may want to chase e-layer propagation. First of all, it is fun, you can make high band contacts even when there are no sunspots. Secondly, it is about the only way to work stations that are too close for F-layer propagation. If you are chasing WAS on the 20 through 6 meter bands, you likely will need short skip, e-layer propagation to work the closer states. This season I was able to complete my mixed WAS on 15 and 17 meters and make significant progress on 10 and 12. I also made SKCC contacts in a number of the closer states on 20 meters and now only need Arkansas (8 miles south of my qth) for my 20 meter endorsement for SKCC WAS. The key is checking the online e-layer maps and finding stations to work on the Sked Page.

Even though the peak season is winding down, sporadic-e can occur anytime. December is another peak time for sporadic-e activity, if you are on the air then be sure to check the maps and Sked Page. The e-layer activity does spill over into early January. With all the K3Y activity that is a great time to make some high band contacts.

A High Band Operating Event is planned for next spring. Hopefully there will be more sporadic e-layer activity then and more of us will be able to join the fun.

73, Dan K0FD 15034S



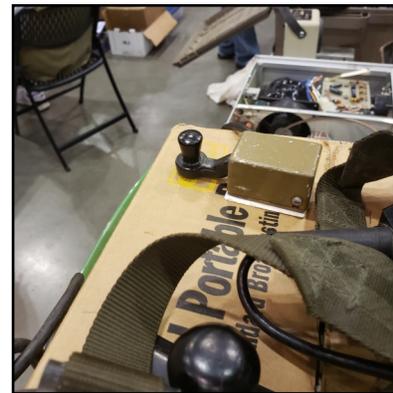
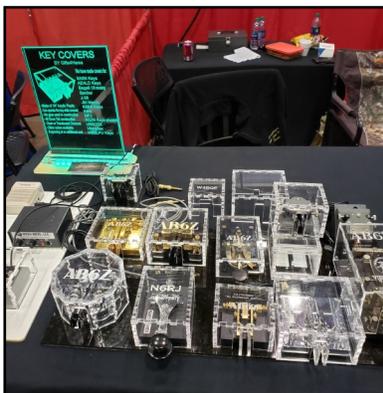
Here's a neat product that may be of interest to those doing mobile and mountaintop operation.

Huntsville Hamfest 2019

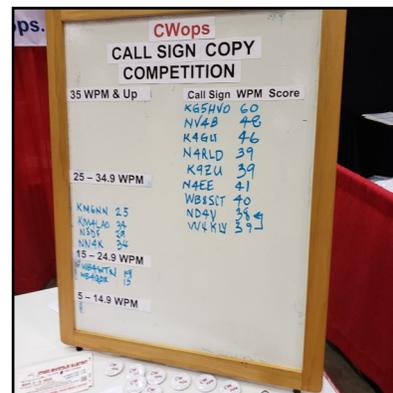
Thanks to Jim WIRO for scenes from this year's Huntsville Hamfest.



Huntsville has lots of room for vendors and there are lots of vendors. In addition to vendor room there is plenty of room for buyers and a very nice looking rest area!



Now if you're looking for keys then this just might be the place. Photo shows custom key covers for any style of keys. Those are Russian keys in the other pictures. Good looking J-38 keys shown in the photo below along with a great shack display of your call and interest in SKCC. The calls sign copying results at various speeds is a neat idea, modeled similar to the old Kansas City DX Club suite pile-up call sign copy from years past in Dayton.



Maybe next year someone will head-up an SKCC booth at Huntsville?