

The International CWops Newsletter

April

Issue No. 3



CWops Events

On-Air Monthly CWT Next one: 14 April 2010

Start time:

1100Z Asia/VK/ZL region 1900Z Europe Region 0300Z (April 15) NA region 1-hour each region Exchange name/number (members)

Exchange name/SPC (non-members)

CWops "neighborhood"

Look for CWops on 1.818, 3.528, 7.028, 10.118, 14.028, 18.078, 21.028, 24.908, 28.028

CWops Officers and DirectorOfficers

President: Pete Chamalian, W1RM

Vice President: Art Suberbielle, KZ5D

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Webmaster: John Miller, K6MM
Publisher: Rob Brownstein, K6RB

From the president...



I don't know about you, but I sure hope we've seen the last of winter and the bad weather. The Mid-Atlantic States got more than its share of snow. New England didn't get so much but did get totally drenched with some

very heavy rains. All the rain on top of snow makes for some dandy flooding, even for those of us who live on a nice hill. I've often joked that I don't need flood insurance. If it got so bad that I had to worry about a flood, the rest of Connecticut would be in some very serious trouble – I live at 950 feet above sea level.

Well, not having to worry about flooding isn't quite true. The heavy rains of the past few weeks put some serious stress on the conduits I have running from my tower into the basement. The conduits (6 of them, each 4 inches in diameter) are there to bring in coax and rotor control cables. I have one dedicated to bring some AC power to the tower. The conduits are sealed at both ends (or so I thought) until the rain. I had water running into my basement from some of the conduits!

So much for my expert sealing efforts. After the first rains ended, I set about working on the seals and found some were less than perfect. With the use of silicone sealant (on the ones that are not used – each has a 4 inch plug that plumbers use to seal a conduit and then pressure test to see if any joints are leaking) and coax seal on the ones that have coax, I think I have the problem solved. Time will tell...

Expanding Membership

At this point, we have 670+ members from around the world but it's interesting that we don't have any from LU, OZ, F, VR2, EI, LA, EI, HL, EA and BV to name just a few. We currently have 26 on the nomination list. Please

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check it periodically to see if there's anyone on there that you wish to support (or if you know of a problem or issue of concern about a nominee be sure to raise it).

CWT Participation

Now that we've had three months of CWT's, I thought it would be interesting to take a look at participation, and I found some interesting data taken from the reports posted on our web pages...

In January we had 62 individuals and 97 total reports. In February 121 and 202 and March saw 85 and 135. I'm guessing the weather during the February session must have been very conducive to stay indoors and get on the air! The 03z session is the most popular, followed by the 19z session. The 11z session is the least (and yet we see plenty of participation from the die hards in W6 land for whom it's 3 AM).

Total participation shows 171 unique calls reporting scores. Of them we have two gold star participants who made all 9 sessions – N2AA and K2VCO. A silver star goes to N6RO who made 8 of them and a bronze to W1UE and N3JT who made 7. Nine made 6, eight made 5 and nineteen made 4.

Hopefully, participation in the CWT's will grow – as I said, a contest may not be to everyone's liking but this is a great place to meet other CWops and say hi. It's also a perfect place to see who might be interested in joining CWops. One goal is expanding the membership more globally by encouraging nominations from other countries like LU, OZ, F, VR2, EI, LA, EI, HL, EA and BV to name just a few.

The CWT is also a great place to add to your award totals if you're so inclined. You can find details here: http://www.cwops.org/awards.html

Congrats...

In case you haven't seen the announcement, Bud, W2RU (CWops #65), was one of those honored by the ARRL Board of Directors as a recipient of the George Hart Distinguished Service Award. Bud has been a life-long active supporter of the National Traffic System (NTS) serving in a wide range of roles including been Eastern Area Net (EAN) manager since 1964. Of course, all of Bud's traffic activities have been on cw nets. You can read more about the award here:

http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2010/01/21/113 00/?nc=1

Bravo, and hearty congratulations Bud!

Inaugural CW Operator's Club Annual Dinner

This dinner is scheduled for the weekend of October 2, 2010 in Plymouth, MA. Hopefully this will be the first of many social events for CWops members.

Don, N1DG, is the horsepower behind this one. Don says, "Plymouth is a fitting location, the site of the first thanksgiving, one of the first colonies in the new world and fitting location for the celebration of the new CW Operator's Club. It is 40 miles South East of Boston with easy access via train or bus from Logan Airport."

Don has arranged for a very interesting dinner, ala 1620 with such items as

- Ciderkin
- · Cheate Bread and Butter

FIRST COURSE

- · A Sallet
- · Mussels Seeth'd with Parsley and Beer
- · A Dish of Turkey, Sauc'd
- · A Pottage of Cabbage, Leeks & Onions
- A Sweet Pudding of Native Corn

SECOND COURSE

- · Stewed Pompion
- A Chine of Pork, Roast'd
- · Fricassee of Fish
- · Cheesecake made with spice and dried fruit
- · A Charger of Holland Cheese & Fruit

This should also be a great time to enjoy the fall foliage that New England is famous for. It's

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also a great opportunity to meet some of your fellow CWops members. If you're interested, do let N1DG know so he can get a head count.

Happy Spring to all, except those in the southern hemisphere where it's happy fall! See you in the April CWT if not before.

Pete, W1RM

From the VP/Activities Chairman...



As conditions continue to improve in the sunspot cycle, I hope that you've all had some time to spend on the bands. Whether it's chasing DX, contesting, or rag chewing, it's always nice to tune across the lower

portion of the bands hear lots of CW signals.

The monthly mini-CWT has really caught on. We've got lots of activity from around the world. Our unique format of holding three separate 60-minute events provides the opportunity to get on the air and participate whenever it fits into your schedule.

Although the only logging program that completely supports our event is N1MM, there's work-arounds being used by stations that prefer other programs such as WriteLog. Even if you have to resort to logging by hand, it's worth the effort to get on and enjoy the fun of the mini-CWT.

Your Activity Team's original plan was to also hold two - 24 hour events on a weekend during the year to provide a format for those who are too QRL on the second Wednesday to participate. And some enjoy a longer event. So we're looking for a couple of fairly open dates.

We've discussed holding our events on weekends where there is primarily only a major SSB contest, such as the recent SSB WPX. As always, there are pros and cons for doing this. We're not sure if any of you CWops own a microphone and like to use it.

Personally, I have one, but am not sure where it is. How about giving us some input as to when you would like to have us schedule these events? Would you like to see them on a SSB contest weekend, such as the last weekend of October when there's the CQ WW SSB event, or do you have another suggestion? Send your ideas to me or post them on the club reflector.

Besides the mini-CWT and our maxi-CWT, the Activity Team has come up with some operating achievement awards based on the number of contacts made with fellow members. Full details of these awards are on our Website.

To work towards these, we need to try to be available for fellow members whenever we have the opportunity. That's why I encourage you to operate on or near our club primary frequencies. Please do listen before transmitting, but if the frequency is available, try CQing and attracting other club members. The primary suggested frequencies are (MHz):1.818, 3.528, 7.028, 10.118, 14.028, 18.078, 21.028, 24.908, and 28.028 plus or minus a few kHz. Give it a try next time you're on the air.

This brings us to the next item for your consideration. What other activities would you like to have CWops sponsor? We're open to suggestions and invite your input. If you post your ideas on the reflector, it could easily encourage dialogue that will lead to a well-planned operating activity. Or, you can email me directly and I can pass it along.

I'll be looking forward to hearing from you. Email: kz5d@aol.com

73 til next month de Art KZ5D, Activity Team Chairman.

From the Editor...



I'm actively looking for content for future issues. If you would like to author an article, I'd love to publish it.

Email me and let me know what you have in mind – or

attach something you've already written.

I asked a couple of folks if they had anything brewing, and the following piece comes to us from Vic, K2VCO.

Vic and I both grew up on Long Island (my call used to be K2UMU). We saw first hand some of the neat tube-type equipment of the 1950s era. I indulged myself back in 1992 (while awaiting the arrival of my first child) by buying basket-case 1950s receivers and transmitters, fixing them up, and putting them back on the air. At one point, I had six vintage stations all sharing the main station antenna system.

I paired up each RX and TX based on a complicated mix of aesthetics and size. So, I had a Viking Valiant teamed up with an NC-303; a Viking Ranger paired with an HQ-170; a Viking Adventurer and HQ-110; and an Eico 720/722/730 coupled with a Drake 2B/2BQ. The favorite station (and the one I still have) was a Globe King 500 and 75A-4 (see photo).

One of the things I did was to start literally from scratch and build a plate modulator for the Viking Adventurer using metal 6L6s, a 12AX7 and 6C4 (I still have that, too). And, as you'll read, Vic has a homebrew project in mind, too.

One of the things I took pride in with all my vintage gear was having good sounding audio and properly shaped CW signals.



Taming down the Globe King 500 was a real challenge. It is cathode keyed and had virtually no key shaping. To say it was a "click monster" is gross understatement. But, even the grid-block keyed Ranger and Valiant could be key shaped by playing with the values of R and C in the keying circuit. Have any of you done some of that? If so, let me know, it could be the kernel of an interesting future piece.

Rob, K6RB

813 fever

By Vic Rosenthal, K2VCO

There are two things that say "ham radio" to me more than anything else. They are CW (of course) and home-made equipment. My first transmitter in 1956 was the well-known single 6L6 crystal oscillator, and it was a few years before I had a store-bought rig, a Heathkit of

course. But almost nothing is more fun than building amplifiers.

I built my first one in the 1960's, a single 813. It produced about 275 watts, but made a huge difference compared to the 45 watts or so I was getting from my DX-60.

Some years later, when my daughter was two years old (she's 36 now, something I have a hard time believing), I built another, a pair of 811A's. Mollie came down to the basement and announced that she too wanted to build an amplifier. So, I collected a bunch of 'parts' (mostly little pieces of wood and aluminum) and made her a little work bench, a 'drill' and a 'soldering iron', and every evening before her bedtime we worked on our amplifiers together. Even then she could read the colors on resistors better than I could, so she was no small help.

Since then there's only been one scratch-built amplifier project, a pair of 3-500Z's that was never completely finished – it was too big and inconvenient.

Now I have a perfectly good SB-1000, which works on all the HF bands and is good for about 750 watts. But I can't stop thinking about 813's. I like the way they look. They don't require loud blowers like ceramic tubes. They warm up quickly. They are still cheap and available, and ones made in the 1940's keep their vacuum. Did I say that they are cool looking?

So it occurred to me: why not build something with 813's? You are probably waiting for the connection to CW, so here it is: an amplifier used only for CW doesn't have to be linear. It can be class C, for example, as long as you take steps to ensure that the high bias doesn't sharpen up the keyed envelope and produce clicks.

My first 813 amplifier used a clamp tube circuit to accomplish this, but there are other ways. And a class C amplifier can easily exceed 75% efficiency, which means that a pair of 813's can loaf at 750 watts of CW output.

I am starting to plan, collect parts and even clean up my workshop. I have some sockets, a couple of tubes, a filament transformer, meters, lots of coils and capacitors, etc. Naturally the goal is to do this at as close to zero cost as possible. What I am thinking of is a class-C version of the G2DAF circuit, in which the screen voltage and operating bias are derived from the drive power. That will kill a lot of birds with one stone: the screen supply, key-up protection, envelope shape preservation, etc. There are lots of details to work out, but that's ham radio!

I have no idea what I'll do with it when it's done. Will it replace my SB-1000? Who knows? It's not so easy to build an amplifier that works smoothly on all the HF bands. Just the plate RF choke can be a challenge, although I've made one that looks pretty good on the bench (yes, I know you can buy one from RF Parts. But what fun is that?)

Luckily, I have a collection of ARRL and Bill Orr handbooks going back to 1938. There's lots of good information there about tube amplifiers and 813's. The new ones aren't much use; lately it seems that the ARRL is afraid to encourage us to build anything that requires more than 12 volts.

The only problem that I can't solve so easily is that Mollie lives 9,000 miles from here and is busy enough with her own baby that she won't be able to help me with mine!

CWops in Action

In March a bunch of CWops members got together at another club's event, and did what they love best – talked and played CW.

For some of them, it was the first time they'd seen a Flex 5000A. One of the activities was a pile-up contest using Tom's (NOSS) famous program. Interestingly, a CWop won (Tom, K5AX) and he did it with paper and pen!

Another member (and activity chairman), Art, KZ5D, was crowned (literally) for having won in NCCC's weekly NCCC Sprint events. (More about Sprints will follow).

When you get a bunch of CWops together at any event, you know the conversation is going to turn to ham radio...and beer.



(L to R) Jim, N3BB; Wes, AC5K; and Jim, W5JAW



Standing: Richard, K5NA, giving the Flex 5000A a good looking over.



Left: Susan, K5DU; Right: Bert, W5ZR



Left: George, W1ZT; Right: Richard, K5NA



L: Marv, N5AW; R: Wes, AC5K



L: Tom, K5AX; R: Gary, W5ZL tackle the N0SS pile-up challenge



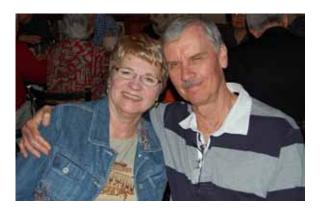
L: Chuck, NO5W; R: Tom, N0SS prep the pile-up challenge system $\,$



Gary, W0CGR, takes a whack at it.



L: Art, KZ5D; R: Rob, K6RB going for the burn.



R: Jim, W5JAW and better half.



L: Gary, W5ZL and Leslie



L: Art, KZ5D; R: Tom, K5AX get crowned.

The CW Sprint from a Rookie's Mind's Eye

By: Rob Brownstein, K6RB

[This article was written a few years ago, but it's still pertinent]

I wanted to take a few swats at the NA CW Sprint before commenting on it. Having done it four times now, I guess I'm ready. For years I had been hearing about "the Sprint." It was the contest to end all contests – four hours of grueling operating requiring constant focus and top-notch reactions. So, I avoided it like the plague.

I think contesters develop preferences. My preference is to find an open frequency and run like crazy. That's probably why the California QSO Party appeals to me so much. There's no benefit to searching and pouncing for an "instate" operators...so I don't. I like contests to be like a Morse Runner session. No knob twiddling – just copying, typing in the call, and hitting the right buttons.

So, at first glance, the Sprint was the antithesis of everything I enjoy. It is equal measure CQing and S&Ping. If you want to do it right, you've got to be willing to twiddle knobs. But, it's more than that. You've got to stay alert. You must keep track of whether you called someone, or were called by someone, and send the correct exchange (more about that in minute).

In addition, you've got three hours and fifty-nine minutes to do your thing. There's no time for bathroom breaks (if you're serious). There's little time for brain freezes or getting spaced out. It is three hours and fifty-nine minutes of focus, focus, focus.

The Rules

For those who have never tried it, the Sprint is unlike any other contest you've done before. Or, I should say, it combines features of various contests plus some that are entirely unique. There are no "gimmies" in Sprint. There's no RST exchange, for example. It is serial number, name, and SPC. And, of course, the call sign. So, you had better be comfortable with copying numbers, and names. The easiest part is the SPC – unlike Sweepstakes, it is "states" not "sections."

Remember how in Sweepstakes you found that rare VE4 running Qs on 40 meters and just camped out waiting your turn until he finally called you? Well, when you hear that rare state in the Sprint, you essentially have one shot at him. If he comes back to someone else, after the exchange, he's gone!

What? Yep. You have one deterministic shot at calling someone you have not worked yet on a particular band. That's when he has inherited the frequency. After that, it's a large measure of luck as to whether you'll work him when you want to work him.

The rules of the Sprint say that you can work a station once per band. There's nothing unique about that. But, the QSY rule is the uniqueness factor. If you call CQ, QRZ, or "NA" to solicit a call, and someone calls you, after that QSO you either have to move a minimum of 1 kHz before calling someone else, or 5 kHz before calling "CQ," again. If you answer someone's CQ, you inherit the frequency after that exchange, giving you an opportunity to receive a call and have another exchange, after that you have to move on, as described above. When you call someone, get the Q, then get called by someone else, and get that Q, that's called a "couplet." I call it a "two fer."

So, you start out at the whistle, hear a CQ, call the guy, give the exchange, hope someone else calls you, call CQ if they don't, work another guy, grab two Qs on that frequency, then move at least 1 kHz and find another CQer, and repeat the whole sequence. What could be simpler? NOT!

But, how do you know who of the two calls you stumble onto will remain behind after their exchange? That's where the de facto "protocol" comes in. The rules do not insist you do this, by the way. They state simply that an exchange can be either "his call, your call, number, name, and SPC," or some combination thereof. However, those who have developed the Sprint into a fine art have come up with a protocol. When you call someone, his exchange to you is "your call, his call, number, name and SPC." When you reply, you give "his call, number, name, SPC and your call." Your call at the end of the exchange alerts a listener that you will inherit the frequency.

So, you have a contest now where there are two forms to the exchange, and to avoid confusion, you need to know when to send each one.

The Dynamics

The CW Sprint starts at 0000Z and ends at 0359Z. It covers three bands – 20, 40 and 80. You can start on any band, move around, and end on any band. However, my experience so far shows that people start on 20, move to 40, then finish up on 80. Some will jump back and forth, but most tend to "play out" a band before moving on (except for those brave souls who do this contest using SO2R).

At the beginning of the contest (i.e. 0000Z), virtually everyone is new meat. You call someone and a listener knows you're fair game when you're finished with that Q. However, as time rapidly rolls on, you start hearing "dupes"

inheriting a frequency and have to move on. That percentage, of course, begins to rise.

For greatest rate (I believe) at the beginning of a new-band effort, you want to maximize your "couplets" or "two fers." For me, it seems, that period when most of the inheritors are still new calls begins to end after about 20 minutes. It begins to take longer to find a new one inheriting a frequency, and longer to scare up a second Q because you've become "old meat." Somewhere in that transition, it makes strategic sense to stop concentrating on couplets and decide whether to QSY to the next band, or change strategy to one of CQing and QSYing 5 kHz after each Q.

The Set Up

I have heard the TRLog is the quintessential Sprint contest program, just as WriteLog is the RTTY champion. Having never used TRLog, though, I have to make do with WriteLog.

Though I have an SO2R capability, and have both radios and amps on and ready, I have ended up (so far) never listening to two radios. I am exclusively working 20 on the left-hand station, then simply switch to 40 on the right-hand one, and go back to the left-hand for 80. ("Shame on you," says CWops member and master Sprinter, Ken Keeler,N6RO.)

To try to prevent a brain freeze from causing me to send the wrong exchange and create confusion, I have just four F keys programmed for this contest. My keyboard is a split, ergonomic, type where the F keys are split between the F5 and F6 keys. So, F4 has "na na k6rb" and F5 has "your call, my call, number, name and SPC," and F7 has "my call" and F6 has "your call, number, name, SPC and my call."

My left hand is the CQ hand, and my right hand is the S&P hand. This last time out I never blew

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the exchange choice once (yay). All I have left to do is get the incoming call sign right, the exchange right, and being ready to twiddle the knob.

Editor

CWops has several members who participate in the Thursday night NCCC Sprint. Perhaps some of them can shed more light on strategy, especially SO2R strategy, for the rookies among us.

Others of us are real experts at working DX pile ups. Want to share some of your secrets?

And, some of us are high-speed code types who are comfortable copying 50+ WPM. How do us mortals who hear nothing but a smear of dots when someone sends an "h" or a "5" at those speeds learn to copy faster?

What about the proper way to adjust a paddle or bug? What should one look for in a headphone for CW use? I know there's a wealth of information out there. Share some of it with us. Thanks.

Current CWops Nominees

AA3EJ	Dave Runk
AC8W	Stanley Arnett II
DJ1YFK	Fabian Kurz
HB9DAX	Manfred Eisel
IS0AFM	Simone Santus
JA5TNF	Takashi Morioka
К0ТО	Tod Olson
K1TO	Dan Street
K1ZZ	David Sumner
K2DB	Paul Mackanos

K2EGJ Edward Jones K2ZF James Douglas K4LTA Bill O'Kain K6QU Jerry Lewine K6SSS Fred Capossela K7GT Allan Taylor		
K4LTA Bill O'Kain K6QU Jerry Lewine K6SSS Fred Capossela	K2EGJ	Edward Jones
K6QU Jerry Lewine K6SSS Fred Capossela	K2ZF	James Douglas
K6SSS Fred Capossela	K4LTA	Bill O'Kain
	K6QU	Jerry Lewine
K7GT Allan Taylor	K6SSS	Fred Capossela
	K7GT	Allan Taylor
K8GL Greg Surma	K8GL	Greg Surma
KL7RA Richard Strand	KL7RA	Richard Strand
KX9X Sean Kutzko	KX9X	Sean Kutzko
LZ2RS Rumen Stefanov	LZ2RS	Rumen Stefanov

N0AT	Ronald Dohmen
N0KK	Kirk Pengelly
NOSM	Steve Miller
N1TO	Ed Koerner
N2ZN	Ken Boasi
N6WM	Chris Tate
N8LJ	Lee Dziekan
NK7U	Joe Rudi
OK1WF	Jaroslav Bazant
PA3DBS	Peter Hendrikx

T77C	Tony Ceccoli
UY5MB	Vladimir Yenenko
VK3ZL	Robert Briggs
VO1HP	Frank Davis
W2FU	Jeffrey R. Ach
W6OSP	Bruce Butler
W9RNY	Mike Mayberry
WB9Z	Jerry Rosalius
ZL1BYZ	John Shaw