



CWops Events

On-Air Monthly CWT

Next one: 12 May 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 Director

Officers

President: Pete Chamalian, [W1RM](#)

Vice President: Art Suberbielle, [KZ5D](#)

Secretary: Jim Talens, [N3JT](#)

Treasurer: Harry Wilson, [W1AAX](#)

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Bert Donn, [G3XSN](#)

Shin Onisawa, [JA1NUT](#)

Vidi La Grange, [ZS1EL](#)

Webmaster: John Miller, [K6MM](#)

Publisher: Rob Brownstein, [K6RB](#)

From the president...



Where did April go? It seems like yesterday when I was finishing the April message then getting ready for our two week vacation to Florida. It was a long drive (3,300 miles) but well worth it.

We got to visit K2SX (CWops 124) and Betty at their lovely home in South Carolina on the way down. We got to meet some of their neighbors, including mama alligator and two babies (met from a respectable distance I might add). In Florida we visited one wildlife refuge that was teeming with water birds – egrets, herons, and many others – a photographer’s paradise for sure. I’m still going through the 2,000+ photos I shot on the trip – mostly “critters” – birds and animals. I was thrilled to get my first ever bald eagle in the wild among the wide variety of birds we saw and photographed.

This past month on the bands has seemed as if summer conditions have arrived very early in the Northeast. Not too much activity on the bands and what there is, isn’t all that loud. It’s probably just as well since the garden and lawn are begging for attention!

According to the latest ARRL Propagation Bulletin, “For the next 10 days NOAA/USAF predict solar flux at 78, 78, 80, 80, 80, 78, 76, 80, 80 and 80. Solar flux values above 80 aren’t predicted until May 20-23, with a value of 85, but that is too far into the future to predict accurately. They also predict the return of sunspot group 1061 on April 23-25; that sunspot group was previously visible on April 5-10.”

But I think we've all observed what I'll call the contest phenomena where conditions seem poor until there's a contest and like magic all the RF seems to energize the ionosphere and we have openings galore! Sounds like we need a lot more activity on the club calling frequencies of 018 and 028 on the various bands.

Dayton is nearly upon us. CWops will be well represented by members and we have a booth, 459, opposite the ARRL booth. If you're going, be sure to stop by the booth and say howdy. There's always plenty of exciting things – new equipment and happenings, and opportunities to see and connect with old friends and make plenty of new ones.

And if you're looking for a great event in August, check out the one in Reno the weekend of August 13 --

<http://k5rc.cc/CW.htm>

A special word of congratulations is in order for John, K6MM (CWops #11) who was newly elected to the Board of Directors for NCDXF.

That's it for this month – hope to see many of you in the next CWT on Wednesday, May 12, 2010.

Pete, WIRM

From the VP/Activities Chairman...



CWops is into its fifth month and the club is getting a lot of interest across the globe. There

was a recent piece about CWops in “Radcom,” the RSGB journal. I'm sure many of you have had fellow amateurs ask about our club. Take advantage of every opportunity to tell other CW fans about our club. We welcome new members who share our passion for communicating via CW.

CWops were well represented in the recent Florida QSO Party. Many of the gang were busy operating mobile from county after county. It's a whole new kick, if you haven't had a chance to try it!

Speaking of operating, one of my all time favorite contests is the CQ WPX CW event taking place May 29th and 30th. Everyone with a unique prefix is a multiplier, so plan to spend some time in this fun event. I'm confident that you'll have an opportunity to work a good number of other CWops.

Have you taken the time to mark up your calendar with the dates of the monthly mini-CWT events for the remainder of the year? Lots of stations find the 60 minute format just right for their appetites. Be sure to jump in on Wednesday, May 12 at 1100z and 1900z, and then later on Thursday, May 13th at 0300z. Operate any one or all three segments. If you want to report your results, we're fortunate to have an easy to fill out form on the 3830 score submittal reflector (<http://www.hornucopia.com/3830score/>). Log in and fill in the blanks and let everyone know how you did.

Starting in next month's issue, we'll publish member standings in our CWops ACC award. This is the annual award that allows a station to count one contact per member per calendar year. We plan to update the standings each month in our listing. So how many different CWops have you worked? An easy way to keep track of your member contacts is with the free software written by

Bert, W5ZR. You can download it from our website. It's easy to use and comes with instructions for installing and using it. I've downloaded it and now worked a total of 234 members. Where do you stand? Email your total to me between the 20th and 25th of each month to be included in our listing. Email to: kz5d@aol.com

Your Activity Team's hearing from several participants in the mini-CWTs asking for more. Specifically, it's been suggested that we hold the event a second time each month. What do you think? Would that provide you with more opportunities to make contacts with fellow club members? Another opportunity to get on the air and make lots of CW contacts in a 60 minute window? Post your comments on our CWops reflector, or send me an email at the above address.

One last thought – are you going to Dayton? I'll be there and actually look forward to spending some time in our CWops booth. Drop by and say hi. It's always fun to make eyeball QSOs.

Whenever you have a chance to get on the air, try a CQ on one of our primary club frequencies: (MHz): 1.818, 3.528, 7.028, 10.118, 14.028, 18.078, 21.028, 24.908, and 28.028. These are suggested frequencies and please move away from any activity plus or minus a few kHz before calling.

I'll be looking forward to hearing you during the next mini-CWTs on May 12 and 13th.

73 til next month de

Art KZ5D, Activity Team Chairman.

From the Editor...



Time to put together another issue of Solid Copy. As I've written before, I would love to get your articles for inclusion in upcoming issues.

We have some very talented members in this club. One, Francisc Grunberg, YO4PX, has an interesting Webpage (<http://vo4px.blogspot.com>). Right at the top there's a propagation forecast that gives you a good indication of how the bands will play. But, Fery is a multilingual operator who speaks several languages. He also has on his Website a Conversation Guide (Ghid de Conversatie) that has some really useful expressions in Romanian, English, French, Italian, Spanish and German. You should definitely check it out.

Another interesting member is Vidi, ZS1EL, one of CWops' directors. He provided me with this very interesting history of his ham radio life and career.

Rob, K6RB

An unusual voyage into the world of CW

Vidi - ZS1EL

My voyage into the world of amateur radio and especially CW involved many forms of transportation in one way or the other. The first was by bicycle. It all started at the age of 14 in Hillcrest, a suburb of Pretoria where I grew up.

My daily bicycle trips to school and back took me past a house not far from us, where I noticed mysterious wires between trees and ladder-like feeders leading into the house.

One day coming home from school, my curiosity got the better of me and I decided to find out what it was all about. I parked my bicycle at the front gate, locked it up with padlock and chain and rang the doorbell.

After a while I was greeted by a man in a terrible hurry who, without introducing himself, or even asking what I wanted, said that he was busy on the radio but that I should come inside. He hurriedly led the way into a room where, on a very tidy desk, there was a row of impressive looking electronic equipment. The letters ZS6AIC was displayed on a wood and brass plaque above the desk.

Crackling noises and beeping sounds filled the room. He went straight for his chair and started writing on a pad of paper with the pencil he was still holding in his hand since he opened the front door.

When the beeping sounds stopped, he reached out and moved the lever of a large knife switch fastened to the side of the desk. Silence filled the room for a brief moment and then he started pounding on a brass instrument, which had a black, round, wooden knob. A pair of wires was connected between it and the big black box closest to him on the desk. I noticed several meters and dials on its front panel. The meters all came to life and their pointers started dancing around to the rhythm of the pounding. I was baffled and just stood there speechless, trying to absorb the strange things going on around me.

There was no side tone and I could only hear the clicking and clacking of the brass instrument as the man kept on relentlessly pounding it. It dawned on me that I was actually listening to a conversation going on in Morse code! The process carried on,

changing from the crackling noises and beeps to the click-clack of the pounding.

After a while this activity stopped and the man turned to me and introduced himself as Johan van der Linde. Only then he asked my name and the reason for the visit. He explained that he was a radio amateur and that he just had a conversation with his brother, Dr Emil van der Linde in a town way up in the northern part of the country.

I was given a tour of the station during which Johan pointed out the receiver, transmitter, power supply, Morse key, antenna and feed line. The transmitter had a lid which he opened to show me the glow of filaments in the several bottle shaped glass tubes. I was so interested in what I saw, that this visit led to many more. Watching and listening to Johan tune the receiver and seeing him operate the station while 'talking' to his brother on Morse code was fascinating and all I could think about.

After one of the many visits he gave me an old Morse key and a piece of note paper with the alphabet and dots and dashes next to each letter. He suggested that I should start memorizing the code and practice tapping the letters on the Morse key the way he did on the air. I had no audio oscillator and all I could do was to try my best to emulate Johan.

This went on for a few months until on a day during one of my after school visits, he showed me how to send the letters CQ followed by DE and his call sign, using his big brass Morse key.

He carefully checked how I did that and fussed about the spacing of letters and letter groups. He had me do that over and over again many times until he was satisfied. Then he moved the lever on the knife switch and said I was on the air!

I will never forget the excitement when after several CQs there was a reply from a station in Port Elizabeth! Johan quickly took over, because my knowledge of code did not go much beyond these few letters at that time.

In November 1954 my dad, who was a professor in educational psychology called a family meeting. This was only done when really serious things had to be discussed. Filled with anticipation my mother, sister Jana, and I got together in my dad's study. Then the news broke that he was successful in obtaining a Carnegie Grant which would take him to 15 American state universities over a period of 12 months. Of greatest importance was that it would be possible for all of us to go along, provided we were prepared to rough it a bit and live on a very tight budget for 12 months in the USA.

After some serious discussions about ramifications like interrupting schooling, etc., it was decided that we would all go along come what may, even if it meant spending an extra year at school when we return.

Our year of traveling and living out of suitcases began in January 1955. The second form of transport on my way to becoming a code operator started when we left Cape Town on board the Sterling Castle, a mail boat which operated between England and South Africa.

After two weeks at sea, sailing on fairly calm waters to Southampton, England, we boarded the Queen Mary for a one week 'hop' to New York. Being mid winter in the northern Atlantic, seas were extremely rough. This was the worst week in my life, ever. My stomach simply could not handle the motion and I was still staggering and suffering from nausea long after we set foot on firm ground in New York.

We moved into a furnished apartment on the 31st floor of Butler Hall near the Columbia University where my dad started a research project which would take three months to complete.

The elevator of Butler Hall was the type which had to be operated by a trained person - - no pushing of numbered buttons. There was a large crank handle which had to be moved manually from one position the opposite, depending on whether you were going up or down. This was the third form of transport which had a significant impact on me becoming passionate about code.

During the many trips riding up and down I became friendly with the operator, Bob Bailey, and found out that he was a retired telegrapher from Trinidad. He was happy to meet a teenager from South Africa who had an interest in becoming a radio amateur.

Bob had an office, no more than a small cubicle on the ground floor, where there was a hotplate and kettle, two chairs and a small steel desk.

One day, Bob, or Mr. Bailey as I always called him in respect of our big age difference, invited me to his office to show me an audio oscillator Instructograph and a straight key which he brought from his home in the Bronx.

The Instructograph was an early code-training instrument which, by running a perforated paper tape at variable speeds past a spring-loaded pair of contacts, keyed the audio oscillator. The following URL has some interesting information about this antique code training equipment.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instructograph>.

The straight key was a WW II surplus model J-37 as can be seen at the following URL:

<http://www.morsekey.net/j37.html>

This really started something and before the end of the three months in New York I had all the letters of the alphabet memorized thanks to the motivation and regular quizzing by Bob Bailey.

I helped my dad pick a used Plymouth in Hackensack New Jersey with which we planned to make the long trip by road from one university to the next. This was the fourth form of transport which had impact on my future ham radio activities.

Before we took to the interstate highways, Bob gave me the Instructograph, key and oscillator as gifts so that I could to keep up my code practice 'on the road', so to say.

In the months which followed we drove from one university to the next and stayed over in guest houses which were ubiquitous wherever we went. At the end of the year we had completed a full anti-clockwise circle of the USA and covered about 8000 miles by road.

During all this traveling there were many highlights including visits to National Parks such as Yellowstone, Sequoia, the Petrified Forest, Knots Berry Farm, the Grand Canyon and more. The trip took us via Salt Lake City, and we even spent a night in Las Vegas!

My mother and I had the responsibility of navigating and keeping family stomachs filled. Jana (eight years old) was a bit young to take any real responsibility and kept herself busy reading most of the time. Whenever we stopped over, her first priority was to check whether the guest house had TV so that she could watch her favorite

show, the Howdy Doody Show. I also helped out with the driving to give my dad a break from time to time. Despite a very full schedule of travel and living out of a suitcase, I managed to make time to keep up with some school work, and also keep up with code practice, using the equipment given to me.

Before sailing back to South Africa at the end of 1955 we made a final stop in New York. Although he was completely non-technical, my dad was very supportive of the interest I showed in amateur radio. On the last day in New York the two of us visited Harvey Radio on West 43rd Street. I was out of my skin when my dad said that he wished to buy me an Eldico, crystal controlled transmitter kit to take home!

Back in South Africa my priorities had to change due to academic pressures, especially after missing a year at school. However, my enthusiasm about learning Morse code helped me keep up listening to the perforated paper tapes and practice sending code using the J-37 surplus key.

Unfortunately I lost contact with Johan, ZS6AIC, because we relocated to the Western Cape where my dad took up a position as professor at the University of Stellenbosch.

Soon after my 18th birthday, the minimum required age for an amateur radio license, I made an appointment with the Post Master of our new hometown. On the big day, I cycled to the Post Office and arrived there, a near nervous wreck, carrying a basket containing the battery operated oscillator and key imported from the USA. I reported at a counter and was shown into the postmaster's office.

It was a large, impressive room with heavy wooden furniture, lots of books on shelves behind glass doors and an enormous desk. Behind the desk sat a heavy built, cross-looking elderly man, wearing a suit and tie.

He was busy seriously paging through some paper work. This was worse than any exam I have ever written at school, I thought. While hardly breathing due to nervousness, I patiently waited for the gentleman to finish with what he was doing. His secretary pulled a chair up for me to sit directly opposite him. After what seemed a very long time, he looked up, gave me half a smile and introduced himself as Mr Oosthuizen. He asked my name and wanted to know the purpose of the appointment.

He must have realized that he was dealing with a completely stressed-out code candidate who would get nowhere in the state he was in. He started a friendly conversation and asked about where I was born and how I became interested in amateur radio.

I managed to settle down a bit and started fumbling around with sweaty hands to set up the oscillator and key on my side of the desk. Mr Oosthuizen opened a thick book and paged around for a suitable paragraph for the test. He pointed at a paragraph, slowly slid the book towards me and asked me to start sending.

At this time he turned his head towards a window in an obvious serious listening mode. Wow, I thought with a sigh of relief, sending was the easiest part and I was happy to do that for starters rather than battling to read code in a style different to the sound of the paper tapes I had memorized by now. I took a deep breath and started sending, carefully concentrating on letter and word spacing as Johan had taught me.

A fumble here and there did not seem to upset Mr Oosthuizen too much and after sending only a few sentences I was interrupted by: “Stop maar boet, ek sien jy ken die storie” (You can stop kiddo, I see you know your stuff) Instead of him taking over the key to test my reading ability, he started filling in a form and said that I had passed!

I could not believe this and with a completely puzzled, blank look on my face, he said something to the effect that he did not have to go through all the formalities because he recognized a successful candidate after just listening to the first few words. I felt relieved and rather flattered but on the other hand disappointed that he did not put me through the whole drill for which I have been preparing for so long.

A few weeks later I received my first license with the call sign ZS1AL assigned to me. By this time I had 2 plug-in crystals in the CW part of the 40m band for the Eldico. I was a full time student at the University of Stellenbosch by then, doing a bachelor's degree in physics and applied mathematics.

I had great pleasure in building the Eldico in my spare time. My soldering was not wonderful, but good enough for the transmitter to pass its first test on the air! For a receiver I had a very junky Hallicrafters SX-43 which my dad found, by coincidence, at a used furniture store of all places. My antenna was a Windom fed with a single wire feed line. It was supported by a crooked bamboo pole of about 7m at one end and a telephone distribution pole in the far corner of our small city lot.



Vidi, ZS1AL, in 1960 with his Eldico and Hallicrafters station

The 12 months of code slipped past with many QSOs in the log. Although 'phone' was now permitted, CW remained my favorite form of communication. One of the main reasons was that it was so thrilling to work DX with my down to earth (near to earth) Windom antenna. During the first year of operating I was surprised how unnoticed my code skills had picked up and that I could even follow a conversation without taking notes.

The first real friend I made on the air was Mac McKesson, W5KF, of Albuquerque NM, where he held a technical position at the Sandia military base. In his younger days, like in the early 1950s, he used to be a telegrapher on board one of the thousands of cargo ships operating on the great lakes of the USA.

He used a Vibroplex mechanical bug and had what was known as a Great Lakes Swing, with the first dah, typically of C, Y, W, etc. stretched out extra long. I still miss those musical, rhythmic fists which disappeared from the bands since electronic keyers became the norm.

Mac and I met regularly and we started early morning CW skeds on 20 meters before I

had to cycle to the university for lectures. This continued for more than a year during which time I often received small gift parcels containing a variety of used components. These helped me build up my early junk box of electronic odds and ends. He also sent me schematics with written instructions to help me build my first electronic keyer, using a pair of triode vacuum tubes and an open frame relay.

It was unusual for Mac not to show up for sked a few days in a row. While waiting for his reply to my many calls one morning, my mother came to the shack and handed me a telegram from Mac's wife. Shock and disbelief filled me when I read that Mac had passed away due to a heart attack a few days earlier.

It took me a very long time to put the loss of a friend, who I never met in person, behind me, and get back on the air to make new friends. But it did eventually happen and I can look back at years of enjoying amateur radio, making many friends all over the world.

After obtaining a bachelor's degree in physics at the University of Stellenbosch, I applied for my first job at the Joburg satellite tracking facility which was run by the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in a contract with NASA.

My call sign then changed to ZS6AL. This era was in the early days of space research and South Africa played an important role, being the first continent a satellite would cross after being launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

I enjoyed those interesting and inspiring years during which I met many American radio amateurs who were involved in space research at the time. The first who comes to

mind is Hugh Turnbull, W3ABC, with whom I had skeds on CW over many years until ill health made him retire from ham radio and settle in a frail care center.

The more automated and sophisticated space technology became, the more long term career potential dwindled at the CSIR. In 1972, I accept a position with the South African Iron and Steel Corporation which, for financial reasons, was a move I had to make away from electronics. After a long and successful career I retired in 1994 after holding a position Manager Tin Plate Technology for a number of years.

I met Hester Ann, N4MPQ, of Hendersonville, NC on 20m CW shortly after I retired. It was a hot summer evening in South Africa and a cold winter morning in Hendersonville. Regardless of weather conditions, a warm friendship started from the moment I answered that CQ call on 14.014mHz.

At the time we met I had already made plans to travel to Canada and the USA and spend time with a few special radio friends I made over the years. The week in Halifax visiting Don Watters, VE1BN, was unforgettable. This was followed by a week with Jim Talens (N3JT) and Nina in Arlington VA from where I made daily excursions to the Smithsonian complex.

Needless to say, a stop over in Hendersonville on the way home had to be fitted in. That turned out to be the highlight of the trip when Hester and I discovered that there was more in store for us than just being friends.

In September 1996, the most important and

exciting journey, this time not leading to code but as a result of code, was when Hester flew to South Africa with a one way ticket. This took quite a lot of explaining at the port of entry. Imagine a person holding an American passport coming to Africa and not having a ticket to go back!

We are both retired and enjoy life in Somerset West. From our house we have a view of the Atlantic Ocean, the vast water mass which separated us for the few years after our first QSO. I still enjoy amateur radio, contesting and chasing DX while Hester started other interesting hobbies like painting and doing lots of reading.

CWops Members at Visalia

The annual DX Convention at Visalia California took place the weekend of April 16. And, a whole lot of people (over 50 of the 750 who attended) were members of CWops proudly wearing their club pins. These photos are courtesy of John K6MM, the CWops Webmaster.



WA6EO and K6TD



W6SZN



AD6E



N6ML



N6BV



AE6Y/P49Y



KF6T (right)



K6XX



AE6RF (left) and daughter, Cece, KJ6BNO



K7NV



K6VVA



W3UR (QST editor)



N6JV



W6OSP



N16T



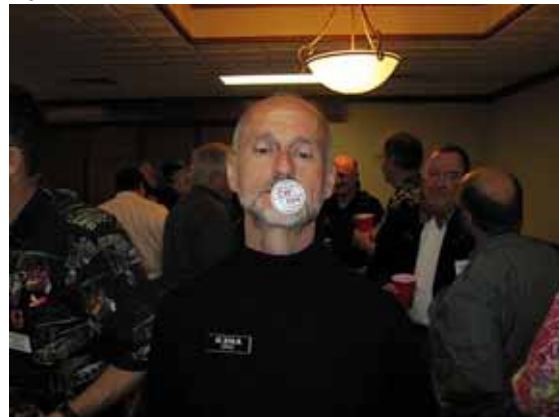
K5NA, W1WEF, K5DU and K6RB



K0AD



K6SRZ



K3NA



N6ZFO



ND2T



K6MM



K6RB and K6UFO

Current CWops Nominees

4X4KF	Michael Barak
AA3EJ	Dave Runk
AC8W	Stanley Arnett II
DJ1YFK	Fabian Kurz
EA1WX	Juanjo Herrero
JA5TNF	Takashi Morioka
JH1GNU	Shigeru Kobayashi
JM7OLW	Suke Matsumoto
K0DTJ	Brian Hunt
K0TO	Tod Olson

K1TH	Tom Hurley
K1TO	Dan Street
K2EGJ	Edward Jones
K2ZF	James Douglas
K3STX	Paul Roche
K3WT	Tom Menas
K4AB	Larry A. Crim
K6QU	Jerry Lewine
KB5KPD	Fred Coates

KI7Y	Jim Cassidy
KQ7W	Matt Vanni
KW1U	Marcia Forde
N0KK	Kirk Pengelly
N0SM	Steve Miller
N2ZN	Ken Boasi
N3AO	Carter Craigie
NA2M	William Hellman
NK7U	Joe Rudi
OK1WF	Jaroslav Bazant

PA3DBS	Peter Hendrikx
UY5MB	Vladimir Yenenko
W1HIJ	William Scholz
W1QS	John Lawrence
W3WL	Wes Lamboley
W5CW	David E. Horn
W6XU	Joshn Fiden
W9RNY	Mike Mayberry
WB9Z	Jerry Rosalius
WD4ELG	Mark Lunday
ZB2FK	Ernest Stagnetto
