

Solid Copy

The CW Operators Club Newsletter

February 2019 — Issue 109



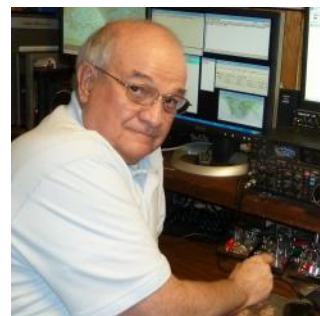
Marine Mobile in Style



John AF3K recounts his mobile operations from the *Nellie D*. [See page 7.](#)

President's Message

The Winter storms kept many members coping with snow and ice along with school and business closures. Airports suffered from the effects and many flights were delayed or cancelled. But if your radio and antennas were operational then a lot of fun could be had during the shut-in times. Where I live near Atlanta, the weather wasn't a hindrance so I could log a lot of activity in contests, chasing special stations and making contacts to help keep my northern neighbors company with a QSO or contest contact.



Looking at scores reported on

(Continued on page 2)

CWops "CWT" Every Wednesday

Start: 13Z, 19Z, 03Z (+1), 1 hour each session

Exchange: name/number (members)
name/SPC (non-members)

Avoid DX pileups!

Next slow speed CWT is March 13-14, 2019

US Vanity Callsign web site:

<http://cwomc.org>

CWops "neighborhood": Look for CWops on 1.818, 3.528, 7.028, 10.118, 14.028, 18.078, 21.028, 24.908, 28.028, 50.098 "and up"

13+ wpm practice: Tuesday, Friday, Sunday 6-8 pm "local time" 7.035-7.045

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www.3830scores.com you can see that many of our members participate more than I do and we all enjoy CW a lot. The CWops Club CWT weekly events are a highlight happening for one hour three times on Wednesday (technically the last hour happens on Thursday UTC time.) The bands can deal us good conditions and then mix things up propagation-wise. I think most of us would say that any day one has fun operating CW is a successful day. With higher numbers being assigned to new hams who are becoming members of our club, we always have a high impression of the skills they bring with them and welcome them to the activity. The reports to 3830scores.com generally include comments about something members have tried with antennas or software, maybe learning about SO2R operating techniques and their results. Afterall, we all are experimenters and hearing about someone's conclusions following an experiment helps a lot. Even the humor goes over well because we may have had similar results ourselves.

Our newsletter, *Solid Copy*, is really appreciated by lots of other hams. Compliments to CWops is often heard from friends and acquaintances regarding its style and contents. The biographical sketches that are submitted enable the readers to get to know you better. In most cases, we may share some things in common. Keep sending in your information. It's possible that some members have had unique operations with CW. Maybe they were related to work, military duties, DXpeditions, SOTA or POTA operations. There is room in the newsletter for many of those human interest stories. I'm personally intrigued by stories coming to light of how CW was vital in WW2 operations and even how it was practiced during the Cold War years. Code intercept operators may not be able to talk about content or other sensitive information from those days, but they might be able to share how they developed the necessary skills for high speed operating, the training that they used to copy at 60+ wpm. Younger readers may never know you but would love to be inspired by your CW stories.

I learned that intercept operators learned to copy CW in alphabets other than English. For instance, Japanese and Cyrillic were mastered and useful for the needs of those days. I think about my CWops CW Academy students and how they might benefit from learning how the masters applied their skills and knowledge to learn CW in another language. How much time did it take, how many hours a day did you have to practice in preparing for those duties. Another area of interest is about the Radio Officers in the Maritime Services. Ships at sea may use a lot of new technology for satellite navigation at sea, but stories of using CW before it was faded out would present interesting information. To those of you who read this column, perhaps you'd like to start writing your article and when finished, share it with your club member friends by submitting it to the Editor of the newsletter. I don't want to restrict the articles to just military or maritime operations, maybe there were stories that happened on land, unique places and situations I haven't mentioned.

Spring contest season is in full swing and I hope everyone is getting their share of activity. Let me encourage more CW activity so our sections of the amateur bands become busier and busier. Join the fun.

Mac, NN4K, President



From the [Editor](#)

A Dirty Little Secret

This month I yield my column space to a point-of-view article by Pat N9RV, which originally appeared in the January/February issue of the *National Contest Journal*. CWops member Scott K0MD is the *NCJ* editor and was instrumental in securing permission to reprint the piece in *Solid Copy*.

Pat writes from a contesting perspective and anyone who is active in contesting will quickly recognize his call; he is a former editor of *NCJ*, a former WRTC contestant, and when you hear him running stations in a contest you know you are listening to an accomplished operator regardless of the mode. But as you read this, set your interest in contesting (love it or hate it) aside. He raises a fundamental, timely and thought-provoking question about how new operators learn CW today, in an era where entry-level licenses and slow speed CW band segments have essentially disappeared around the globe, and Elmers are an endangered species.



Whither CW?

Pat Barkey N9RV

Morse code seems to have a new lease on life these days. It was 1991 when the FCC dropped the code requirement from its licensing requirement for the Technician class license, amid an avalanche of rhetoric on how voice and data modes had made dots and dashes obsolete. The Morse requirement went away altogether in 2007. Fast forward to today, and what do we see? Massive activity on CW during contests and DXpeditions. Consider the OSO counts by mode for the KH1/KH7 Baker Island DXpedition last summer (see table).

Of course, the really amazing statistic is the explosive growth of FT8 - more than 15,000 contacts. *Wow!* The growth of this new data mode seems to have come at the expense of RTTY, with fewer than 1,000 contacts recorded. Yet eclipsing all of this is the amazing fact that our so-called obsolete mode of CW remains head and shoulders above any of the others. Operators who want to make contacts fast over difficult paths still prefer CW, it seems.

Why is that so? Of course CW is efficient in its use of spectrum space, it is simple in its technical requirements, and it is a skill that hundreds of thousands of people have learned and perfected.

Mode	SSB	CW	RTTY	FT8	Total	Total %
AF	19	36	0	31	86	0.1%
AS	7,713	12,342	693	6,277	27,025	41.9%
EU	3,042	5,860	35	2,501	11,438	17.8%
NA	6,229	11,219	172	5,779	23,399	36.3%
OC	790	730	25	630	2,175	3.4%
SA	71	168	1	71	311	0.5%
Totals	17,864	30,355	926	15,289	64,434	

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But the continued popularity of CW in contesting and DXing comes about for a reason unanticipated by those who developed International Morse Code (the "radio code") - namely, it is a mode that computers like, perhaps even better than humans do.

The modern CW contest station, particularly in multioperator categories where internet assistance is allowed, has become a giant data-processing machine. Spectrum and waterfall displays show the entire band at a glance, with skimmers (either local or remote) decoding the call signs and laying them out like a dinner menu. With the touch of a key, your software can take you up the band to the next station CQing that isn't already in your log. On the reverse side, you can get an instantaneous picture of propagation, complete with signal reports from the skimmer reports that flow in seconds after your CQ.

The fact that these same amazing capabilities don't exist on SSB has changed the competition between these two modes for operator popularity. Multioperator stations in SSB contests still have to tune the bands and copy the call signs. The spots that do come in via the internet are the human-generated kind, which are much, much less numerous (and even less accurate, in some cases). It is almost a complete reversal of the "skill" argument that CW has made for decades. On CW, the contacts are served up on a digital platter, and it is the SSB operator who has to figure things out on his or her own.

The Dirty Little Secret of CW Contesting

All of these trends have given rise to something that might surprise you - the CW operator who doesn't know CW. In DXing this has existed for a long time. An operator who knows where the DX is, knows what the DX's call sign is, and recognizes the sound of their own call sign can hop into a DX pileup with the best of them. Hit the button on the memory keyer or computer, and call away. When you hear the size of some of the pileups on the big DXpeditions, and all of those call signs they contain that you never seem to hear on the air or in contests, you have to wonder how many are doing this?

And then, of course, are the much more numerous contesters who rip along at high speeds doing contest exchanges, but stop dead in their tracks when someone asks them a question or they encounter a situation where they have to go "off script." Some of these contesters are in the Hall of Fame! It's not a question of CW ability, exactly. At least as far as contesting is concerned. They are great contesters who just don't see the point of using CW to converse, and haven't bothered to master the art.

But the data revolution that has propelled CW activity to greater heights has brought more people into casual contesting - perhaps from SSB or even data modes - who hardly know the code at all. Much like those DXers calling in pileups, these developing operators can follow skimmer spots to your frequency, check the skimmer spot against a database to see that the call sign is valid, and hit some computer keys to call and work you. And maybe even use a code reader to help copy the contest exchange.

Before you castigate these newbies for not learning CW "the right way," consider this question: How else do we expect them to learn? (Emphasis added.) The days of Novice bands,

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segments of slow-speed CW activity perfect for building skills and confidence, are long gone. For the new operator, it's either dive into a contest, where the speed may be intimidating but the software tools, data support and predictable format of OSOs makes participation possible - or don't operate CW at all.

And, besides, should "real" CW testers really complain? Those new operators calling in, even if their computers are doing most of the work, count for points just like anybody else's. And that makes the slow times of a contest go a lot faster.

Getting to the Next Level

Keeping the interest and enthusiasm of these non-CW CW testers is another matter. They have a very distant relationship with our branch of the hobby and our competitions. At the very least they are learning a lot of bad habits, especially in trusting their computers and data tools instead of their ears. Indeed, they can't trust their ears at all because they have not yet acquired the skill. They are getting their feet wet, and that is great. **But how can we get them to the next level, to where they can develop better CW skills?** (Emphasis added.)

That is a very difficult question to answer. One thing that we probably don't want to do is to embarrass or shame them. There is no sin in not knowing CW or in not knowing it very well. Communication skills are learned through experience, and we were all inexperienced at one time in our lives.

The ARRL International DX Contest made a big mistake, in my opinion, when it published an "accuracy index" for all logs submitted for the 2018 CW contest. Making accuracy counts public for top scores is one thing, but I am not sure any useful purpose is served by publishing scores from logs containing 50 contacts that have 20 percent error rates, instead of simply sharing those findings with the participants privately.

I think that the close relationship between computers and CW gives all of us who love CW contesting a great opportunity to bring more people into our sport, if we can figure out how to motivate them to take the next step and actually learn the code.

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This is your editor again. I will close with a final thought. If you are a member of CWops, you are a member of an organization that is dedicated to advancing the art of CW and, in particular, teaching CW via the CW Academy to those who "have not yet acquired the skill" or who want to improve their skills. Check out the CWA column on page 22 by Joe AA8TA and Kate K6HTN which includes a call for more CWA advisors.

"How else do we expect them to learn?"

73,

Tim, K9WX, Editor

News and Notes

[Jerry Weisskohl AC4BT](#)

Wayne, N4FP: I had lower back laminectomy surgery, L3-L5, Tuesday morning and the surgeon had told me I might need to spend a night or two in the hospital. Not wanting to miss a CWT session (I've only missed 2 since Jan 1, 2016), I packed up my Flex Maestro and took it to the hospital so I could remote back to my Flex 6400 at home using my Samsung Galaxy S7 smart phone as a hot spot. As it turned out, the Dr. encountered an issue where I was restricted to lying flat on my back for 24 hours following the surgery.

With some help from my XYL Marty, Tuesday evening, we got the Maestro set up on a chair on the left side of the bed, all ready for Wednesday 1300 CWT. I was able to hold the paddle on my stomach with my left hand. The nurse was cool with this. It took me 18 minutes to get my 10 contacts, due to 2 interruptions by medical people, but it was worth it!



I was released Wednesday afternoon in time for the 1900 session and painfully worked 10 additional contacts. I planned to work 10 contacts at 0300 but 40 meters was in such great shape I turned on the KW and ran for 57 contacts in 24 minutes before going QRT. Unfortunately, I am experiencing quite a bit of pain along the incision, but I'm told it should improve in a few days.

Marty, WB2VYK (my XYL, #1644) took this picture of me in the Hospital.

Glenn, VE3GNA: It's a small world!

I was just on HBN (Hit and Bounce Traffic Net, an independent wide area net which meets daily at 8:30 ET on 7112 kHz) this morning passing the welcome message for K8AZT. The receiving station, Henry WD8Q, mentioned that he had a local ham in or near Lucas OH who had just graduated from the CW Academy (CWA) help him with his CW. Henry is typically around 15 to 18 wpm which is fine for most CW nets but he admits he has not mastered copying "bug" code.

The CWA graduate David KD8MSZ is a Chief Master Sergeant with the Air National Guard in Mansfield OH.

Just thought I would pass this tidbit along to showcase the great work CW Academy is doing.

Perpetual Marine Mobile aboard *Nellie D.*

[John Howell, AF3K](#)

Perpetual Motion - "If you want to keep your boat in good shape, keep it moving." Perhaps in our case we have taken that advice a bit too literally. My brother Dave (N7PO), his wife Vicki, my wife Susan and I (John AF3K), share a cruising boat. For us it's turned out to be a great arrangement. Not only do we split costs (We call them 'boat dollars', everything is 50% off including ham gear!), but our boat definitely keeps moving. We aren't all usually aboard at the same time, but between us we have cruised thousands of miles in California, Washington, Alaska and British Columbia. On the Atlantic Coast we've cruised from the Chesapeake Bay to the Florida Keys, and the Bahamas. Dave and Vicki left our dock in Naples, Florida a few years ago and went up the Gulf Coast to the Mississippi, through the Great Lakes to Montreal and then to Quebec City. Susan and I will take the helm for a bit this summer in Canada, and so it goes!

Our Boat - *Nellie D.* is a 37 ft. tug-trawler built in 1987 designed for coastal cruising. We travel at sailboat speed, usually 6.5 knots per hour (7.5 mph). This requires a bit of a mental adjustment if you are accustomed to typical powerboat speeds. Going slow has its benefits however. It's peaceful. We tell our guests; **"As soon as you step aboard....you are there."** Going slow has practical advantages too. Like great fuel efficiency. At cruising speed, the engine consumes just 1.7 gallons of diesel per hour. We can go 800 miles before needing to refuel, which is great for getting-to and exploring out of the way places.

Ham Radio Aboard - As other CWops that are cruisers can attest, it's reassuring, useful and fun having HF amateur radio aboard. Especially once out of cellular and VHF range. Did I mention



Nellie D. - at anchor in Margerie Glacier, Glacier Bay, Alaska.



Saloon and Galley

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you can send CW while underway? CW is also a great mode to run with the engine off, and using just the boat's house batteries while at anchor. It's especially fun to operate from quiet areas where there is no local RF of any kind. Having the full range of amateur frequencies to choose from, combined with the efficiency of CW means we almost always can find a way to make contact should the need arise, even if surrounded by 10,000 ft granite peaks as has sometimes been the case. RF propagation over water is especially magical.

As you can guess *Nellie D.* is equipped for communication. For HF we use an IC-7000 with built-in CW keyer to an AH-4 auto tuner and 23' Morad vertical mounted next to the pilothouse. The counterpoise is provided by a Dynaplate bolted on to the bottom of the hull and then connected to the AH-4. The antenna is hinged at the bottom, so it takes just a few seconds to tilt it aft onto the deck for getting under low bridges. On VHF we use a



Morad antenna

Bi-coastal cruising - So how did a couple of east coast hams end up cruising on both coasts? When we were shopping for a boat, we felt location wasn't as important as condition. That's how we wound up purchasing *Nellie D.* in Long Beach, CA. Our original plan was to spend a few weeks cruising around Long Beach, then truck the boat back to Dave and Vicki's dock in Church Creek, Maryland. Then one night we were looking over some charts of the Puget Sound, which led to dreaming about going to Alaska. The next thing you know, the east coast trip was put on hold, and *Nellie D.* was being trucked to Olympia, Washington, one of the southernmost points of the Puget Sound. The decision being made after one of those "if not now, then when?" conversations we use to talk ourselves into doing things.



Pilothouse - The IC-7000 and the Kenwood TM-D710 are just above the Garmin Chartplotters

And so began several years of cruising in the Pacific Northwest. We rented a slip at the Van Isle Marina in Sidney, British Columbia, which served as our home base and was easy to reach by air

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for trips back home. From Sidney, we explored Vancouver Island, the San Juan and Canadian Gulf Islands and then headed north toward Alaska,

If you would like to get a feel of what all this is about, we have a four minute [YouTube video](#) of highlights of our trip to Ketchikan AK. (Google "Nellie D. goes to Alaska") On this leg we were thirty days en route, along the beautiful "Inside Passage" with overnight stops in tiny towns and incredibly scenic anchorages hundreds of miles from civilization.



Stateroom

While in British Columbia and Alaska It was great to have ham radio aboard as a way to meet the locals and get the latest info. There are several organized HF SSB nets for boaters during the summer months including the Great Northern Boaters net on 3.870KHz at 7:30 AM PDT

East coast and Bahamas - After cruising in the Pacific Northwest, *Nellie* was trucked across the continent (if you saw a tugboat in the Badlands of South Dakota...that was *Nellie D.*) and splashed in the Chesapeake Bay. From here we have cruised up and down the inter coastal waterway several times, traversed Florida via Lake Okeechobee, and traveled throughout the Florida Keys.

We've made several passages back and forth to explore the Bahamas. It's quite the opposite of the Pacific Northwest in almost every way: shallow vs deep; sandy vs rocky; warm vs cold; etc. Fortunately, the Bahamas are only 50 nm from the Florida coast. Because weather and sea conditions in the Gulf Stream can change quickly, we always wait for a suitable "weather window" before making the eight-hour crossing.

Our favorite Amateur Radio net covering mainly the southern East Coast and Bahamas is the Wa-



***Nellie D.* - at anchor somewhere in the Exuma Islands, Bahamas.**



My brother Dave (N7PO) and his wife Vicki aboard "Henry" the dinghy. Departing for some up close exploring in the Bahamas. (always with VHF HT's!)

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terway Radio and Cruising Club Net which meets daily at 7:45 AM Eastern Time on 7.268 MHz LSB. There is a CW version of net that meets at 0700 on 7.047 (which I'm embarrassed to say I haven't checked into) which is attended by some I also see in the CWOps roster, including: NK7B, W4EDE, N1GKE, KA3OCS, W9UCR, KP3W and AF1Z.

Because 2 meter APRS coverage in the Bahamas is almost non-existent, we also send our position on Marine AIS on 161.975 MHz (Marine VHF channel 88) which is received by commercial vessels and an increasing number of cruisers within VHF range.

Where To Next? - *Nellie* is currently "on the hard" in Belleville, Ontario for the winter. This spring We plan to head back to the St. Lawrence river and then very slowly (remember?) head down the coasts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The route might look something like this (below).

As new member #2186 of CWOps, I look forward to continued participation in the CWT's while onboard *Nellie D.* this summer as AF3K/VE. See you on the air!



We named our boat "*Nellie D.*" after our great grandmother, Ellen "Nellie" Davison Howell, who was born in Nova Scotia in 1880. Her mother's family built and operated ocean going sailboats in New Brunswick and her father's family owned a lumber mill in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. As with her namesake, the "*Nellie D.*" Nellie Davison loved adventure and travel.

VE7DZO and the CQ WW CW

David Samu VE7DZO

Preparation for the 2018 CQWW contests (CW+SSB) all started around August, 2018.

I made numerous attempts in CWTs to get a higher score, but I wasn't able to exceed 70 QSOs. That's when I realized my simple dipoles were not going to be adequate in a contest environment, especially from VE7. Knowing that I wanted to improve in the CQWW contests, I had to make a change. So, in mid-August I started preparing everything for a tower installation. My plan was to put up a 60-foot tower with a 4 element, 20m Yagi on a mast at the 60-foot mark, and a 2 element, 40m Yagi 10 feet above that.



I started preparing the antennas, tower sections, bolts, rotor and everything I could think of! As you can imagine, there are many little bolts that can make or break the installation. I was running to the hardware store just about every other day for a bolt or two. Just when I thought I had all the bolts, I realized I needed one more. That happened a few more times than I would have liked!

After much preparation, and lots of bolt hunting, we were ready to put it up! It took a couple days for my dad (VE7KY) and I to erect the tower, but that wasn't the hardest part. The hardest part was putting both the antennas on the mast without a crane. We had to first build the tower with the mast inside. Since it was 20 feet long, there was no way we were going to be able to lift it and put it down through the thrust bearing. When the tower was up, we had to push the mast up inside the tower until a few inches were poking out of the thrust bearing. We then clamped the 40m Yagi to the mast. Next came another hard part, pushing the mast up the rest of the way with the 40m Yagi on it. After much struggling, we realized that wasn't going to happen. We needed a third person. Thankfully Jurgen (VE7FE) could spare an afternoon to give us a hand. Although even with three people, we still had to use a come-along with a sling around the mast to effectively "jack" it up. We were able to do this a few feet at a time by repositioning the sling as needed. By the time that was done it was dark, but we weren't going to stop until we finished. We hoisted up the 20m Yagi and clamped it to the mast, which was no easy task in the dark.

Unfortunately, I had missed CQWW SSB due to the antennas not being installed in time, but I was

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not going to give up on CQWW CW.

Now came the “real” preparation for CQWW CW! Five days before the contest, I started tearing apart the shack, got out the contest radio, set up the amplifier and configured N1MM. The station consisted of a Yaesu FT-1000MP MARK V, paired with an Ameritron AL-82 amplifier supplied by Brent (VE7SNC). Finally, the station was ready, just minutes before the 1900z CWT on November 21st. I was very excited to be able to test the station in the CWT before the big contest. Many bugs were eliminated, and a fantastic score was achieved in the CWT, at least for me, it was great! I was almost ready for the “big one!” I spent all day Thursday building and tuning a new 80m inverted V that is up at 100 feet, which I completed later that night.

I used Friday to rest and prepare myself. Friday, November 23, 2018, the contest started at 4:00PM local time (00:00 UTC). I managed to work a few JAs on 20m just before the band closed. Then, I jumped over to 40m and quickly realized that it was not in good shape, but 80m was rocking! I had a few good runs and worked some mults. That night, I spent some more time on 40m and 80m trying to figure out the patterns and get familiar with the two “new” bands. When everything started to close, I went to bed at 10:30PM (0630z).

I was up at 4:30AM the next morning. Worked a lot of 80m and 40m up to about 1500z. When things slowed down, I had breakfast and jumped over to 20m and spent the rest of the day learning a lot more there. As evening arrived, I was in for a real treat. I was about to find out Europe is VERY hard on 40m. This is where my patience really got tested. The rate was slow, with many unworked stations. Unfortunately, 80m was not nearly as good the second night, so I went to bed early, around 7:30PM local time (0330z).

The next day, I repeated what I had learned the previous morning. I woke up at 4:30AM, worked VK/ZL/JA on 80m, caught a few Europeans on 40m, proceeded to run the “W’s” and worked a few mults using the second VFO during the low times. Sometime later, JA opened up, so I ran JAs until the end of the contest, although they were not as plentiful as they had been on Saturday afternoon.

Before I knew it, the contest was over! Just like that, the band cleared out! Now, it was time to begin preparing for the next one!



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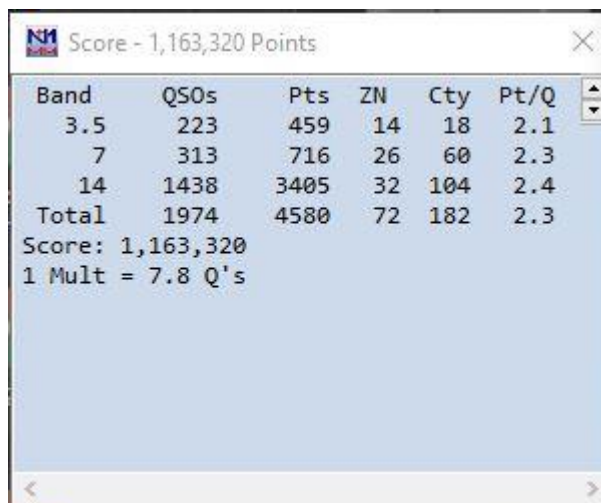
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What did I learn? What were the challenges? Well, the biggest test was sitting in the chair when rates were almost non-existent. Also, since I'm rather new to radio and contesting, I didn't know exactly when the openings were to the different parts of the world. As most operators know, the West Coast and, even worse, VE7, is not a good place for working EU mults. Europe is very challenging on the low bands and Asia doesn't bring in nearly as many mults.

I learned that for the next contest, getting full callsigns is probably one of the most efficient ways to increase rates. When you have many callers, and you start asking to confirm partial calls, most stations move on. Although, when you can work them quickly, you are much more likely to work them all. Another important thing I need to improve on is "time in chair." My goal is to operate at least 40 hours next time. Even in the low times, I can work unexpected multipliers and stations that others didn't because they weren't operating. A good strategy that I like to use is the second receiver/VFO. When rates are low, I tune around the band with the second VFO looking for multipliers, and quickly work them when I have no callers on the main VFO. This can dramatically increase your score if you are efficient with the VFO and are familiar with the radio. I'm still learning all the tricks of the trade, but I really like that method of multiplier chasing. Most importantly, I learned a bit about propagation from my QTH. Some of the major things I noted are that 40m is very challenging, I must be very strategic, I need to aim for Europe on 80m and cover more bands!

There are many little things I learned that I will apply to the next contest. I'll keep practicing in the CWTs and keep learning!

Thanks for the QSOs! CU in the next one!



Band	QSOs	Pts	ZN	Cty	Pt/Q
3.5	223	459	14	18	2.1
7	313	716	26	60	2.3
14	1438	3405	32	104	2.4
Total	1974	4580	72	182	2.3

Score: 1,163,320
1 Mult = 7.8 Q's

Memories of the Past: DXing in Zaire

[Richard Kwiatkowski WN7S](#)

Kinshasa, Zaire: Yesterday, I received a letter today requesting a 9Q5DX QSL card confirmation. My initial thought was "boy, it was a long time since I operated in Zaire". As a matter of fact, the country is not even called Zaire any longer. Since I still had my 9Q5DX logs and QSL cards, I was able to fulfil the request. Zaire: that brought back many great Ham memories. I was in my Ham prime and full of energy and had a head full of hair. Most of my many QSOs and contest operations were CW.

I was assigned to the US Embassy Kinshasa, Zaire from 1988 through 1990. Zaire is now called

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the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I encumbered a State Department, Foreign Service Regional Officer position. Hence, I was assigned to Kinshasa and had regional responsibilities to travel to a number of African Countries. It was a great location for Radio Amateur Operating. Since the above QSL request jogged my memory, I thought that I would jot down (and share) some thoughts of DXing from Zaire.



Station Equipment: Once I received my assignment, I ordered a Rohn 25, 60 foot tower with all the accessories and a Cushcraft A-4. I had a Sloper for 40 and 80 meters. That was my standard package when traveling to overseas locations where I could obtain licensing. Note: no computer, no auto keyer, no logging program, etc. I had an Alpha, B&W antenna tuner, and FT980 for inside the shack. Oh, add pencils and paper to the list. Aside from travelling in Africa, I had the unique scenario. Since employment options were limited, my wife had opted to remain State side so I qualified as a "Ham Bachelor". That translates into meaning that I could get on the air as much as I wanted. The sunspot cycle was favorable and my QTH was on the highest point in the surrounding area and contiguous to the international diplomatic community. Also I had no "honey do" projects.

Licensing: That was a relatively easy endeavor. President Mobuto declared radio amateur operations outlawed in Zaire. No legal ham activity was permitted in Zaire. The short reason was that some US Missionaries were thought to be aiding politically disruptive forces to Mobuto's administration with Amateur radio transmissions. Strikes and civil unrest were common – in common vernacular: the natives were restless but Mobuto ruled with an iron fist. Having said the above, the practice was to submit a request for a license to the Department of Telecommunications and have it rejected. However, since the US had a special relationship with the Zaire government (we didn't want the Russians to get a foot in the door), conditional exceptions were made. That night I received a visit from a Ministry of Telecommunications official. My house had no street name or number – however, the locations of all US diplomatic personnel were known by appropriate officials. Once pleasantries and "gratuities" were presented/exchanged, a license form was provided. You could pick your own call (whether it was previously used or not). There were no official stamps or signatures affixed to the form. I immediately chose 9Q5DX. The GOZ (Government of Zaire) did monitor the HF spectrum. A ham from Poland tried to operate and had a visit from the Kinshasa Security Police telling him to get off the air. He was an architect and worked in Kinshasa. They said that we would confiscate his equipment the next time that he tried to get on the air. He told me that Ministry of Telecommunications would not grant him a license so he tried to "wing it". The Colvin's also tried unsuccessfully to obtain an operating license. However, the last

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10 years there have been 9Q5 stations on the air so the policy must have changed.

On the Air: Thanks to the favorable sunspot cycle, band conditions were great. I ended up spending about 70 percent of my time in Zaire, so I hit the major contests. Pencil and Paper. I would spend about 3 days after each contest scanning for dupes and figuring out my scores. The old timers know what I'm talking about. In essence, a major contest was not just 48 hours but 48 hours plus 3 additional days of paperwork. I would have given one of my kidneys for an auto keyer and computer logging. Contest or not, it was just beautiful following the sunrise stateside and in the background hearing the flutter of CW signals from the VK/ZL's via long path. It would give you goosebumps. With a little experience, I'd get to know when to swing the beam around for the 9M and YB's. Multipliers, Multipliers, Multipliers... You could catch the JAs by the bucket load. One of my favorite contests was the All Asian. After some practice, it was easy to run JAs in a pile up... they were polite and great operators. With my tower and beam, there was no location that I could not contact with a reputable signal. Having said the above, the second night was always the hardest... after running continuous pile ups all call signs started to sound the same. It was similar to being punch drunk.



My CW exception: I was visited by my W3HM. Howard was a Signal Officer from the State Department Liaison. I was quickly schooled on AM operation in the HF bands. He showed me the AM portion of 10 meters and met some of the old hard core AM operators. I had never worked AM before. Names like Amerillo Slim, Dayton Doug appeared with no sideband residue. There was a staunch cadre of old AM Hams out there. When Howard told them we were in Kinshasa, Zaire - they couldn't find it on their encyclopedia - after a while they did find Stanleyville, Congo. The name changed about 40 years prior to our QSO. One AM operator indicated that he had not sent out a QSL card in over 20 years - nor wanted any. Propagation was great and we worked well into the night on 10 meters. Note: I haven't seen W3HM, Howard since his visit to Kinshasa. I believe he currently lives in West Virginia. The fault for not seeing him is mine.

I almost exclusively ran the CW contests. During contests, I was constantly plagued with power outages. I've had power outages as long as 3 days. There was a considerable amount of down time. This also meant drinking water from the pool and flushing the toilet with pool water. Power outages and surges and brown outs were very hard on the equipment. There were plenty of hardships associated with my Kinshasa tour.

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QSLing: My QSL manager Jim, KQ3S (SK) said that fulfilling QSL requests was almost a full time job. He was a retired NSA employee. I bet that we put W4MPY into a new tax bracket as we were ordering thousands at a time. When I returned back to the States, he gave me about 8 large boxes of received QSL cards. They filled my trunk and all of my back seats, and I even had one in the passenger's seat. Oh, before I got rid of them I went through each and every one of them. According to Jim, I had a tad over 300 countries QSL'd. I am DXCC from Stateside and four other locations. Because of the nature of obtaining licensing in Zaire, I did not submit my cards for DXCC in Zaire. Consider it a "not fair to other countries that could not obtain licensing in Zaire" issue. Believe me, I'm not a strict moralist; however, there could have been some political implications associated with US diplomats operating in Zaire.

Who is Talking: I was licensed in 1961 in Celoron, New York - A small obscure village in western New York. Its claim to fame: Lucille Ball was born here. I was a Navy Radioman schooled in Bainbridge, Md. I also worked for the US government for 35 years and spent almost all of it overseas working at US Embassies. I was licensed at a number of locations with foreign DX call signs. Hope to see you on Wednesday's CWT - I'm number 1945.



Zaire map from wikia.com

Current Thoughts: Back then, if you were at a good DX location, and the sunspot cycle peaking, you could have a great time and be very competitive worldwide. I won single operator, high power, Continent, 1st place three times from two different continents in major contests.

You didn't necessarily need a specialized antenna for each specific band. Oh yes, having a good DX call sign gives you an additional 20 dB of go power. I've been told countless times that I was a solid S-9 plus... and then ask for my call sign about 3 times. Now things are totally different, technology is light years ahead of where I was back in Kinshasa.

I'm now in the twilight of my hobby. Oh, how lucky I've been - so many great memories. I've eyeball QSO'd with many a great peoples and cultures in far off lands. The next time we have a QSO and you hear a shaky key and hear me state that I am in a HOA with wire, don't feel sorry for me. Zaire is only one of a number of countries where I've operated and had a great time. Maybe next time I'll tell you about another country.

The following is slightly modified and [borrowed from William Wordsworth](#):

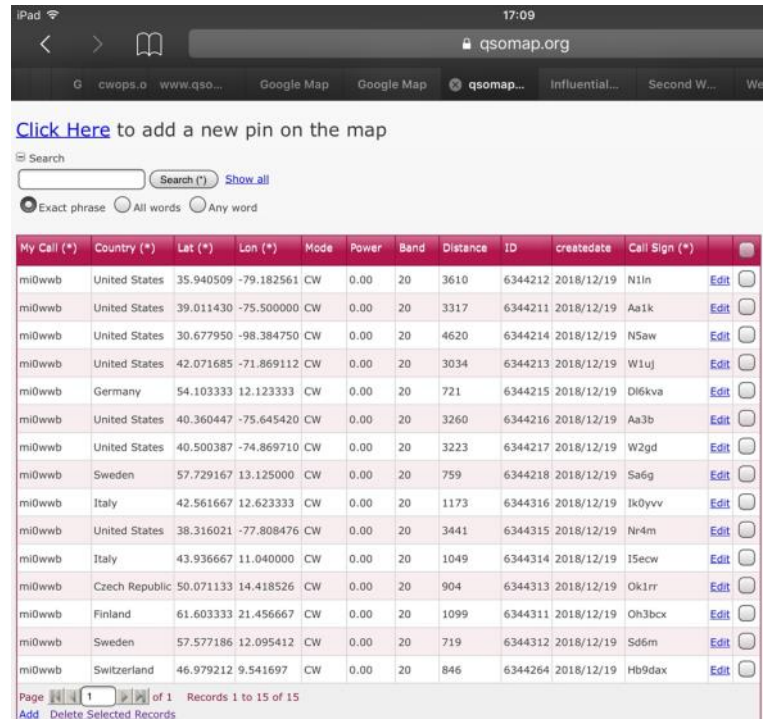
"Oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude
Then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the QSOs."

How to create pin maps

[Will Bradley MI0WWB](#)

Social media is a great way for amateur radio enthusiasts to share their radio experiences thereby promoting our hobby. The use of graphics greatly enhances the text and, in particular, maps displaying the spread of QSOs made provide a powerful visual record of our radio station's performance. As they say a picture can speak a thousand words.

There are many ways to achieve this, but one method I have recently used is a Web App called [QSOmap](#) which is free, although it is worthwhile making a small donation to support the developer - I should add that I have no financial interest in QSOmap! The app works on both Windows and Mac operating system platforms, including iPad.



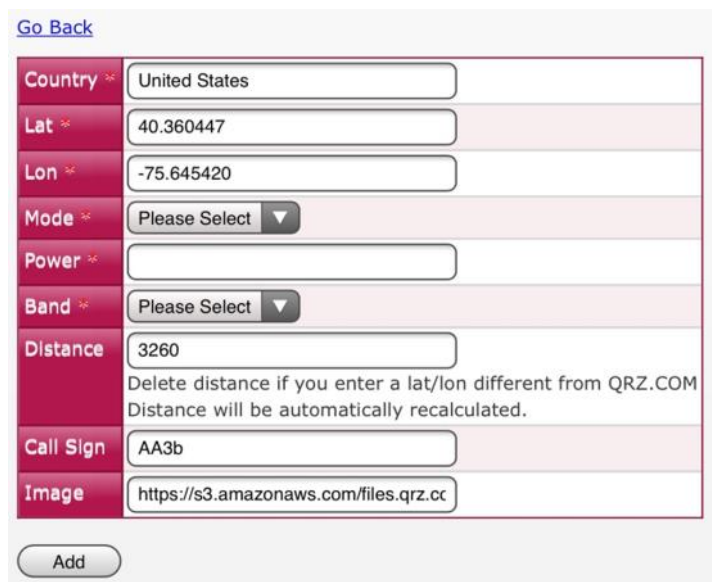
My Call (*)	Country (*)	Lat (*)	Lon (*)	Mode	Power	Band	Distance	ID	createdate	Call Sign (*)	
mi0wwb	United States	35.940509	-79.182561	CW	0.00	20	3610	6344212	2018/12/19	N1ln	Edit
mi0wwb	United States	39.011430	-75.500000	CW	0.00	20	3317	6344211	2018/12/19	Aa1k	Edit
mi0wwb	United States	30.677950	-98.384750	CW	0.00	20	4620	6344214	2018/12/19	N5aw	Edit
mi0wwb	United States	42.071685	-71.869112	CW	0.00	20	3034	6344213	2018/12/19	W1uj	Edit
mi0wwb	Germany	54.103333	12.123333	CW	0.00	20	721	6344215	2018/12/19	Dl6kva	Edit
mi0wwb	United States	40.360447	-75.645420	CW	0.00	20	3260	6344216	2018/12/19	Aa3b	Edit
mi0wwb	United States	40.500387	-74.869710	CW	0.00	20	3223	6344217	2018/12/19	W2gd	Edit
mi0wwb	Sweden	57.729167	13.125000	CW	0.00	20	759	6344218	2018/12/19	Sa6g	Edit
mi0wwb	Italy	42.561667	12.623333	CW	0.00	20	1173	6344316	2018/12/19	Ik0yvv	Edit
mi0wwb	United States	38.316021	-77.808476	CW	0.00	20	3441	6344315	2018/12/19	Nr4m	Edit
mi0wwb	Italy	43.936667	11.040000	CW	0.00	20	1049	6344314	2018/12/19	I5ecw	Edit
mi0wwb	Czech Republic	50.071133	14.418526	CW	0.00	20	904	6344313	2018/12/19	Ok1rr	Edit
mi0wwb	Finland	61.603333	21.456667	CW	0.00	20	1099	6344311	2018/12/19	Oh3bcx	Edit
mi0wwb	Sweden	57.577186	12.095412	CW	0.00	20	719	6344312	2018/12/19	Sd6m	Edit
mi0wwb	Switzerland	46.979212	9.541697	CW	0.00	20	846	6344264	2018/12/19	Hb9dax	Edit

It is simple to register online using your callsign and email address, the password will then be emailed to you. What I like about the app is that you can generate random maps to suit your purpose. The map can be set to show all modes, or just the mode of your choice, CW in our case.

Simply fill in the data asked for and it produces a table as shown above. This table can be edited or added to at any time. Alternatively you can populate the map by uploading your log file in .adi format, note that this particular function cannot be used on the iPad

Adding pins representing your QSOs is simple, by clicking on the manual entry method, see a graphic above of the table created from the entry screen. One useful feature is when viewing the map in your web browser is that if you tap on a particular pin, it will display basic information: callsign, country, mode, band, and power used if entered will display the distance from your QTH, and milliwatts per mile - quite neat!

To add an individual pin, click add and you will be presented with a dialog box (right).



Go Back

Country *	United States
Lat *	40.360447
Lon *	-75.645420
Mode *	Please Select
Power *	
Band *	Please Select
Distance	3260
Delete distance if you enter a lat/lon different from QRZ.COM Distance will be automatically recalculated.	
Call Sign	AA3b
Image	https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.qrz.cc

Add

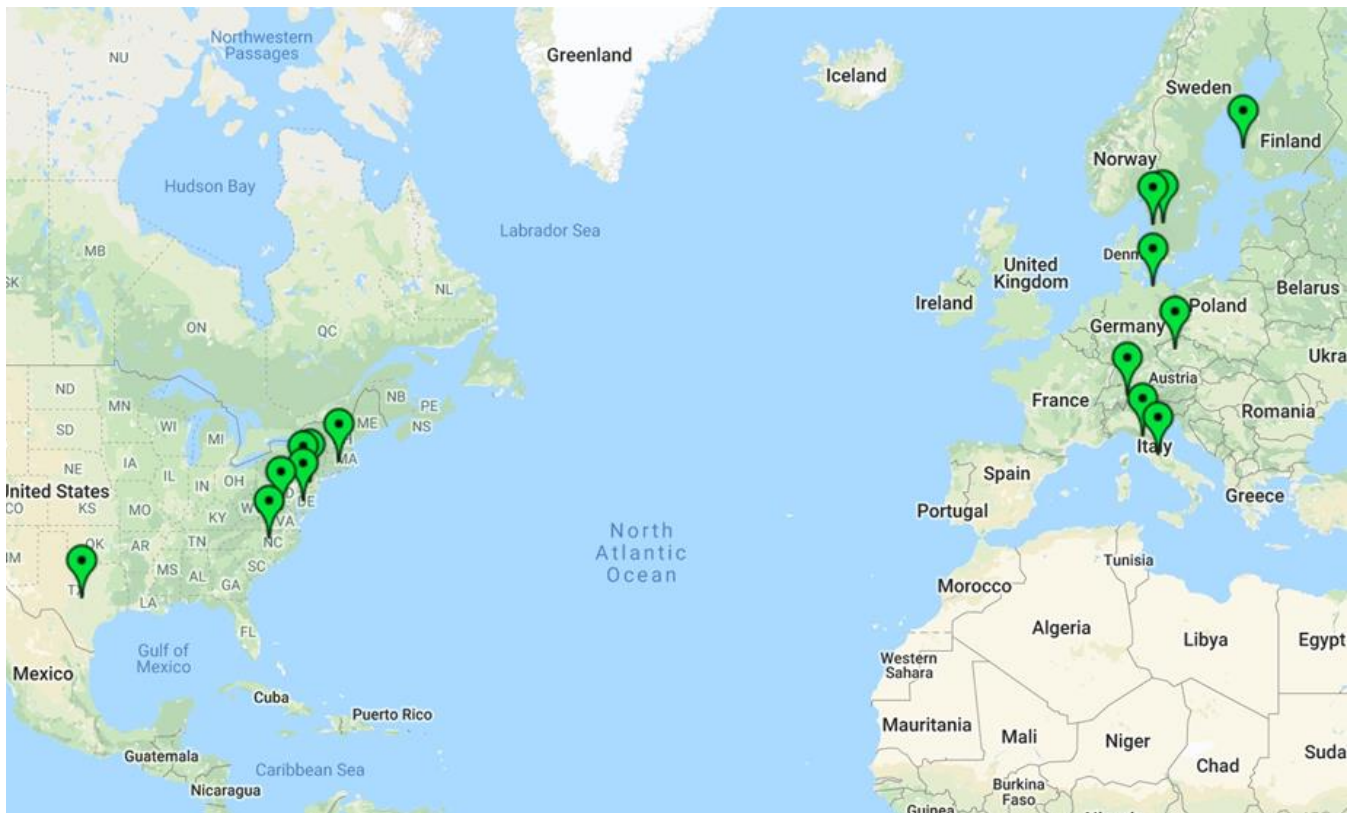
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As you can see, I have used Bud's callsign as an example, AA3B, the country, latitude and longitude and distance from your location is auto filled, you just have to add the mode, band and power use. Simple!

When you want to use the map in another application, such as Face Book, simply take a screen shot of the screen and crop the map image to suit and it is as simple as that. The map shown below was one I created following one Wednesday CWT session. My home QTH is Northern Ireland, GI-Land, just for reference.



Maps generated following, say CWT, contests or DX sessions, can provide useful information regarding how your antenna(s) are working in given propagation conditions. In my case I use a mini-beam on a rotator, so I can maximise directional gain, but for 40m and 80m I use a dipole and so orientation cannot be changed. The spots on the above map were all on 20m with the mini-beam beaming westwards, therefore the European QSOs were obtained off the back of the beam. A rather nice east - west split!

Nevertheless, maps generated illustrate how my antennas are performing and to what geographical areas I am reaching. Clusters of QSOs are also interesting, although this can just be down to numbers of operators in given localities as opposed to less populated areas. QSOMap is worth having a look at; it's easy to use and it's functional and best of all it's free. Give it a go and share your QSO contacts for others to see. I hope you find it useful.

The CWops Award for Advancing the Art of CW

[Riki Kline K7NJ](#)

CWops is pleased to announce that it is now accepting nominations for this prestigious award for the year 2019.

The purpose of the award is to recognize individuals, groups, or organizations that have made the greatest contribution(s) toward advancing the art or practice of radio communications by Morse code.

Criteria - Candidates for the award may be one or more of the following:

- Authors of publications related to CW
- CW recruiters, trainers, mentors, coaches and instructors
- Public advocates of CW
- Organizers of CW activities
- Designers and inventors who advance the art or practice of CW
- Other contributors to the art or practice of CW

Note: The award is **not** limited to amateur radio operators and organizations.

Nomination:

Nominations may be made by anybody (not limited to CWops members). Nominations should be emailed to

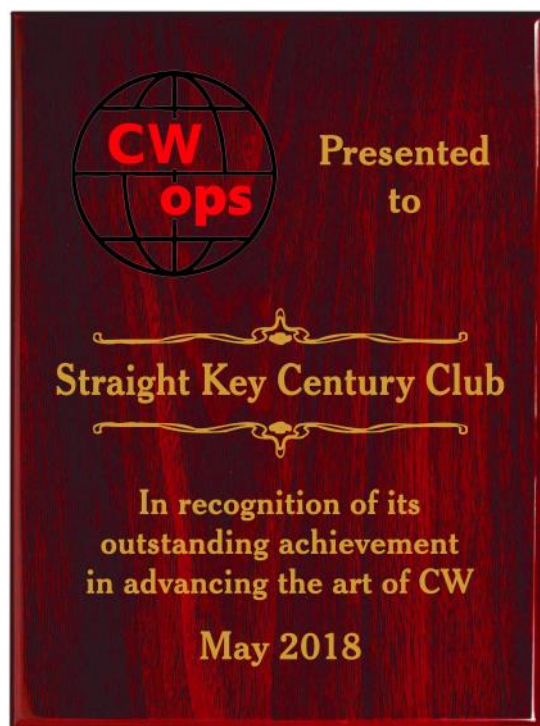
<awards@cwops.org> with a copy to

<secretary@cwops.org>. In order to be considered, a nomination must be received by March 1, 2019 and include:

- Name and call sign (if applicable) of nominee(s), and complete contact information including their postal address(es), email address(es), and telephone number(s).
- A detailed explanation supporting nominee qualifications according to the above criteria.
- Name, telephone number, email address, and call sign (if applicable) of the person submitting the nomination.

Presentation of Award

A plaque will be presented to the recipient(s) at the Dayton Hamvention. If not attending, it will be sent to them.



SKCC was one of three recipients for 2018

CWops and Friends Awards Dinner

[Bill Perkins, KC4D](#)

It's again Dayton Hamvention & time for our Annual CWops & Friends' Spaghetti Warehouse Awards Dinner.

Again this year we have reserved the venue's largest rear Dining Room "C" for our Banquet Event. For the past two (2) years we've maxed-out the room's capacity of 100, but have again been promised added overflow space in the adjoining restored Streetcar Dining Room. Send your reservation in promptly & we'll reserve space for you in the main dining room.



The wait staff will take your meal and beverage orders upon your arrival at your tables. To speed service to our large group, you'll be asked to select from among six (6) Spaghetti Warehouse Banquet Favorites: Spaghetti with Meatballs, Incredible 15 - Layer Lasagna, Four- Cheese Manicotti, Fettuccini Alfredo, Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad, & Chicken Parmigiana. All of these selections include a salad, bread, and non- alcoholic beverage. You may order any of the first Five (5) Spaghetti Warehouse Favorites with the associated sides etc. for the fixed all-inclusive price of about \$21.00 per person (including tax & standard gratuity). The Chicken Parmigiana commands a small premium. You will receive individual bills including your adult beverage(s) if any, before you depart. These should be paid individually at the front desk. Two of the selections are meatless, but if you have other special dietary needs, I recommend you call the restaurant a few days in advance & explain your needs and they will try to comply, where possible. They are in general a very congenial and accommodating group. As always, everyone is welcome: CWops, spouses, significant others, and friends.

Don't be caught in the last-minute rush, reply immediately, and I'll reserve your spot(s). To secure your spot, I need a name, call, and e-mail address for my records.

I look forward to greeting you on Thursday evening, May 16, 2019 at 5:30pm. Remember, the Spaghetti Warehouse venue (35 W. 5th Street) is a short two block walk west of the Downtown Dayton Convention Center & the Crowne Plaza Hotel, the traditional home of K3LR's Contest University, which concludes that same afternoon at 5:00 PM.



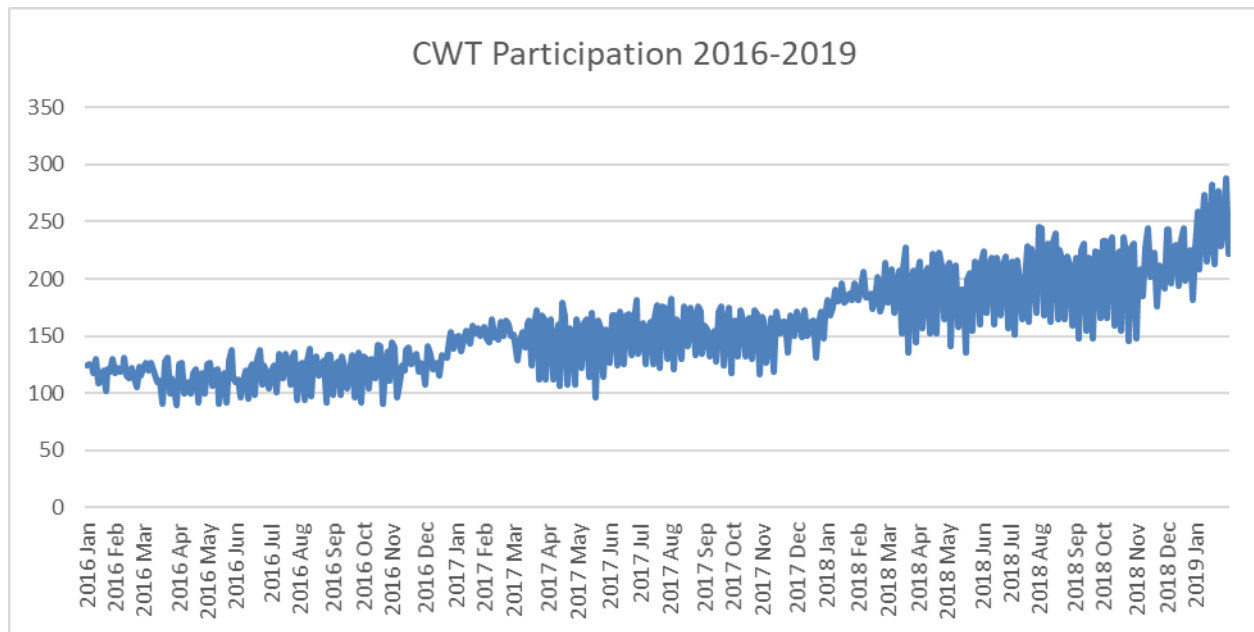
CWops president Mac NN4K addresses the crowd at the 2018 dinner.

CWops Tests

[Rich Ferch VE3KI](#)

We are a month into the new year now, and as in January in past years, participation in the CWTs is on the rise again. While I was doing the first round of data collection for the 2019 participation awards chase, the number of reported scores in each session caught my attention.

In all of 2018, the highest participation count had been 245 reported scores. In January 2019, that former record number has already been exceeded six times. Our new peak is 288 reported scores, from the 1900Z session on January 30. The lowest number of entries reported in a CWT so far this year has been 208. The first time we had ever had that many entries reported was less than a year ago (end of February 2018), but now even the low numbers are higher. Here is a graph to display the growth in the CWTs over the past three years:



The growth in participation brings with it increases in the top reported scores. We may eventually reach a point where more stations taking part no longer helps the top individual scores (i.e. the top scorers will be going as fast as they can and adding more stations to work won't make any difference), but we haven't reached that state of affairs yet. The highest number of QSOs reported in a session last year was 230. That has been exceeded four times this year already, and the new record is 244 QSOs, reported by N4YDU in the 0300Z session on January 17.

The overall score is composed of two factors, QSOs and multipliers. For the first time, the highest reported multiplier total has also broken the 200 barrier. The new record is 205, in the 1300Z January 9 session by K3WW. Chas's total score in that session was 47,765 – another new record. A 50,000 score now seems to be within reach.

Part of the increase in top scores may be the result of increasing average CW speeds. A few years ago, typical CW speeds in the CWTs were not much more than 25 wpm, but lately it seems as if a

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typical speed, at least for the top guns, is well over 30 wpm. It would have to be, considering that the record QSO rate is just over 4 QSOs a minute!

For those of us doing the CWTs every week, that kind of CW speed may be fine, but it could be intimidating to a newcomer. In that regard, it's time to remind everyone that **the CWTs on March 13 will be special slow-speed (20 wpm or less) sessions.** to celebrate the completion of another CW Academy term and welcome new graduates. The top scores won't be threatening any records on March 13, but we can look to add some new participants instead and get some new call signs in our logs.

We do the CWTs because they're fun; let's all make sure they continue to be fun for everyone.

73,

Rich, VE3KI CWT Manager

CW Academy

[Kate Hutton K6HTN](#) and [Joe Fischer AA8TA](#)

By the time you read this, the January-February, 2019, CW Academy class will be nearing an end for many classes. This means that there will hopefully be many new CW operators on the air or many CW operators practicing the techniques that they were taught to improve. If you are not a CW Academy advisor, you can provide a valuable service by listening for these operators and giving them some real-world operating experience, the best kind there is. We should be seeing even more congestion in the weekly CWTs as Level 2 and Level 3 students gain some contesting experience. We hope to see many from all three levels in the "slow" day events on March 13 and 14.

We get signups from students every day, usually many a day. It should not be surprising that most are Level 1 candidates, but we'll see many Level 2 and 3 signups in March. We can always use advisor help to serve all these students.

There was a discussion among advisors recently on bad habits that students must un-learn. How many of these do you recognize perhaps from not so long in the past: counting, a mental lookup table, distractions and clinging to unrecognized or missed characters? Counting is trying to count the dits and dahs; the lookup table is scrolling through a table in your head trying to match the sound you heard to the actual character; distractions are writing or typing every single character

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and clinging means getting so hung up on the character you missed that you stop paying attention to what comes after.

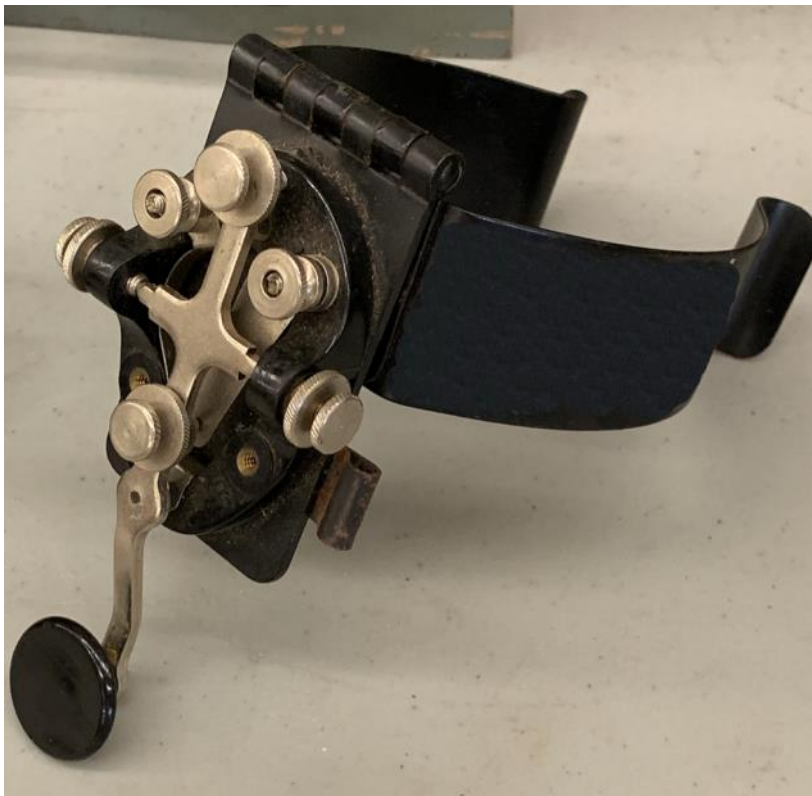
Surprisingly, it was reported that some students who have completed Level 1 can count dits and dahs at greater than 25 WPM. All of these bad habits, and others, are things that have to be discarded before true CW nirvana is reached. Being able to identify these bad habits is the first step to figuring out what to do to get past them.

The CW Academy is designed to recognize when these traits occur in students and to give them tools to learn new habits to replace the bad ones. Continual practice is key, and students can improve. Many are amazed what happens when they work on the techniques suggested by their advisors and keep trying.

As mentioned, the CW Academy is a victim of its own success and students are constantly signing up because of what they heard from other people who took a class. We would love to see you as an advisor. For Level 1, students are taught the skills of instant character recognition. For Level 2, students are given a rapid immersion in head-copying skills. In Level 3, advanced head-copying and contesting skills are emphasized. Please consider advising even if it is just one class a year.

73,

Kate K6HTN and **Joe** AA8TA



Spotted in the Orlando HamCation flea market by John N3AM who believes, "No respectable mobile CW op would leave home w/o strapping on this key."

New Members

Trung Nguyen W6TN

With great pleasure we welcome the following new members to CWops:

CWops	Call	Name
2194	K2OS*	Frank
2195	K3PH*	Bob
2196	K3IN	Pete
2197	WK0P*	Bink
2198	N5OT	Mark
2199	W9RNY	Mike
2200	IK2WAD	Joe
2201	K2CJ*	Carl

CWops	Call	Name
2202	W4UT*	Ron
2203	WO9B	Michael
2204	GM3JOB	Rod
2205	YO3LW*	Cris
2206	NG7A*	George
2207	W1WBB	Bill
2208	K2LNS*	Herb
2209	G3WRJ*	Dick

CWops	Call	Name
2210	K8AZT	John
2211	W6GMT	Brock
2212	VA2WA*	Vic
2213	NJ1T	Doug
2214	AA8R*	Randy
2215	N7MQ*	Steve

*Life Member

Current Nominees

As of February 8, 2019

Need Sponsors: KE8EAS, K3MIY, W4XO, K2NEL

Invitations Extended: N2EY

For more details about nominees and up-to-date status, check the "Membership" then "Members only" page on the website: <http://www.cwops.org>. For information about joining CWops, check the "Membership" page on the website: <http://www.cwops.org>

Notes: If you have updated your personal info, e.g., new qth, new callsign, or additional callsign, please send it to membership@cwops.org so I can add it to the roster. Vice versa, if your callsign becomes inactive I can remove it, too. Then the roster will be accurate and current for our usage.

Thank you.

73,

Trung, W6TN, Membership Secretary



CWops Member Awards

Pete W1RM and Peter W1UU

The Annual Competition Award (ACA) is based on the number of members worked each calendar year. You get one point per member worked, once per year. It resets to zero at the beginning of each year. The Cumulative Member Award (CMA) is based on how many members you've worked since January 3, 2010 on each band and continues to grow in perpetuity. The CWops Award Manager (CAM) software, available at no cost, will help you keep track of your ACA and CMA totals.

In the table below, members whose call sign is in **RED** have achieved a milestone: 100 DX entities, 40 WAE entities, 50 states (WAS). Members who wish to track their totals for these awards can use the CAM software developed by N5RR. It's available at no cost here: www.bbcyber.com/cam/

Call	ACA	CMA	Call	DX	Call	WAS	Call	WAE	Call	WAZ
AA3B	752	7837	W1RM	186	N5RR	50	W1RM	49	W1RM	38
WN7S	673	1330	F6HKA	169	W1RM	50	DL6KVA	49	F6HKA	38
VE3KI	512	4964	W4VQ	149	W4VQ	50	F6HKA	47	W4VQ	37
K4QS	510	2069	N7WY	143	F6HKA	50	G4BUE	46	N5RR	37
K3WJV	440	2487	G4BUE	136	W1UU	50	N5RR	44	G4BUE	37
W1RM	410	5642	DL6KVA	135	VE3KI	50	VE3KI	43	VE3KI	36
KG9X	323	1187	N5RR	129	G4BUE	50	N8BJQ	43	N5PHT	36
K1ESE	311	3531	N8BJQ	122	EA8OM	50	W4VQ	42	DL6KVA	35
K8AJS	301	2370	VE3KI	119	W0EJ	50	I5EFO	42	I5EFO	33
KB8GAE	262	518	EA8OM	111	F6JOE	50	EA8OM	42	VK7CW	32
DL6KVA	232	2876	K1ESE	108	W6KY	50	AA3B	42	I5IYJ	32
K4WW	218	1726	AA3B	103	N1EN	50	K1ESE	40	F5IYJ	32
KE4RG	190	811	I5EFO	102	N5PHT	50	K3MD	37	RM2D	29
NN4K	185	1902	N5PHT	98	F5MNK	50	IT9VDQ	36	W7GF	26
K9WX	184	2863	EA1WX	97	K5IX	50	IT9MUO	36	JF2IWL	25
KB4DE	174	452	W9ILY	95	K3SEN	50	IN3FHE	36	N1DC	22
W8DN	169	647	W0VX	94	AD1C	50	G4ILW	36	G4NVR	19
K6DGW	157	2031	IT9MUO	87	AB7MP	50	F6JOE	36	CM8NMN	18
W1UU	153	2261	VK7CW	86	AA3B	50	EA1WX	36	WN7S	17
K0MP	132	1213	N1EN	86	K5AX	50	W9ILY	35	K8AJS	17
AB7MP	132	990	KY7M	86	I5EFO	50	W1UU	34	G4ILW	17
K8RJW	132	225	F6JOE	86	VK7CW	50	W0VX	34		
AA8TA	127	1360	AD1C	83	DL6KVA	50	RM2D	34		
G4NVR	112	703	4X6GP	83	K0TC	50	HB9ARF	34		
NU7Y	82	965	IN3FHE	82	KY7M	50	4X6GP	33		
VK7CW	68	1587	I5IYJ	82	NA6O	50	N1EN	32		
HB9ARF	65	1192	F5IYJ	81	K1DJ	50	KY7M	32		
MODHP	64	171	K5AX	79	N8BJQ	50	I5IYJ	32		
CM8NMN	60	652	DL8PG	79	K9WX	50	F5MNK	32		

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Call	ACA	CMA	Call	DX	Call	WAS	Call	WAE	Call	WAZ
AJ1DM	54	413	IT9VDQ	74	WT2P	50	K5AX	31		
ON4VT	49	476	RM2D	73	K1ESE	50	F5IYJ	31		
MI0WWB	45	203	W1UU	68	K6DGW	50	DL8PG	31		
I5EFO	43	1078	N1DC	68	K3WJV	50	G4NVR	30		
SV2BBK	42	139	F5MKN	68	K4WW	50	G4HZV	30		
I5IYJ	27	812	KE4S	65	K2QB	50	N1DC	29		
N8BJQ	0	5273	NA6O	64	W7GF	50	K4QS	29		
F6HKA	0	5111	K3DMG	63	WN7S	49	K8AJS	28		
N5RR	0	4961	K8AJS	61	W9ILY	49	AD1C	28		
K3WW	0	4669	KT5V	60	W0VX	49	ON4VT	27		
K6RB	0	4032	K1DJ	60	ON4VT	49	M0DHP	27		
K5AX	0	3634	HB9ARF	58	NU7Y	49	KE4S	27		
W9ILY	0	3557	K9WX	57	NN4K	49	K3WJV	27		
G4BUE	0	3506	K4QS	57	N1DC	49	K1DJ	27		
KY7M	0	3252	W6KY	56	KT5V	49	G4DRS	27		
W0VX	0	3219	K6RB	56	KE4S	49	VK7CW	26		
N5PHT	0	3184	G4DRS	56	K8AJS	49	K3DMG	26		
F6JOE	0	2975	W7GF	55	K6RB	49	JF2IWL	26		
W4VQ	0	2760	G4ILW	55	K3MD	49	G0MGM	26		
EA8OM	0	2758	K3WJV	53	K0MP	49	NA6O	25		
NA6O	0	2598	K0TC	53	IT9VDQ	49	N5PHT	25		
N1DC	0	2276	K3SEN	51	AA8TA	49	K6RB	24		
AD1C	0	2101	JF2IWL	51	WT9U	48	MI0WWB	23		
W6KY	0	2088	G4HZV	51	K4QS	48	K4WW	22		
K0TC	0	2048	NN4K	50	K3DMG	48	SV2BBK	21		
N1EN	0	1928	ON4VT	49	EA1WX	48	NN4K	21		
WT2P	0	1925	WT2P	48	DL8PG	48	K9WX	20		
EA1WX	0	1910	G0MGM	45	CM8NMN	48	K3SEN	20		
N7WY	0	1838	G4NVR	44	4X6GP	48	KT5V	19		
DL8PG	0	1789	K3MD	41	W8DN	47	WT2P	18		
KT5V	0	1774	K6DGW	39	VE1OP	47	W6KY	18		
K3DMG	0	1773	WN7S	37	KG9X	47	VE1OP	18		
K3MD	0	1734	W0EJ	36	KE4RG	47	K0TC	17		
K1DJ	0	1720	K4WW	35	JF2IWL	47	WN7S	16		
IT9MUO	0	1702	KB8PGW	33	HB9ARF	47	W7GF	15		
K3SEN	0	1643	VE1OP	32	G4DRS	47	CM8NMN	13		
IT9VDQ	0	1516	M0DHP	32	IT9MUO	46	K6DGW	12		
W7GF	0	1406	CM8NMN	32	I5IYJ	46	K7QA	11		
4X6GP	0	1381	MI0WWB	29	F5IYJ	46	W0EJ	10		
RM2D	0	1182	SV2BBK	27	VE6JF	45	AJ1DM	10		

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Call	ACA	CMA	Call	DX	Call	WAS	Call	WAE	Call	WAZ
KE4S	0	1181	AA8TA	25	K7QA	45	WT9U	9		
F5MKN	0	1111	WT9U	24	AJ1DM	45	KG9X	9		
KM4FO	0	1107	K5IX	24	RM2D	44	K0MP	9		
IN3FHE	0	1033	K0MP	23	KB4DE	44	KE4RG	8		
WT9U	0	983	AB7MP	23	KM4FO	43	K5IX	8		
JF2IWL	0	931	NU7Y	22	KJ4M	43	AA8TA	8		
K5IX	0	892	W8DN	21	G4NVR	43	W8DN	7		
F5IYJ	0	795	K7QA	19	IN3FHE	42	AB7MP	7		
K7QA	0	777	KG9X	17	G4HZV	42	KM4FO	5		
VE1OP	0	768	KE4RG	16	K8RJW	39	KJ4M	5		
W0EJ	0	754	AJ1DM	13	G0MGM	35	KB4DE	5		
G4DRS	0	692	KM4FO	10	MI0WWB	29	VE6JF	3		
G4HZV	0	603	KJ4M	10	G4ILW	27	NU7Y	3		
G4ILW	0	555	KB4DE	10	SV2BBK	17				
KJ4M	0	498	VE6JF	8	M0DHP	17				
G0MGM	0	495	K8RJW	4						
VE6JF	0	376								
KB8PGW	0	218								
K2QB	0	125								



Curious About SOTA?

Paula K9IR has written a comprehensive article about this CW-intensive activity: What it is and how to get started. Look for it in the March issue of *Solid Copy*.

Photo courtesy EA1AER.

QTX Report

Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

[Gary Stone N5PHT](#)

Welcome to 2019 rag chew fans!! Hope your new year is getting off to a good start. We had some bitter cold during January and more snow than normal (at least twice the normal) so for a Texas grown boy it has been interesting living in Iowa. (late note: 30 Jan we had actual temp of minus 21 F and wind chill of -40 F). I took a hard fall on the ice and trying to learn to be more careful – this body don't do well with falls these days but thankful nothing was broken. Hope you are enjoying spinning the dials and finding some good stuff to chat about on the air!

I hope you may have had the pleasure of a rag chew or two with 97 year old – W4DDD Jim in Louisiana is a great rag chewer! Also I made a few rag chews on 60m and my first rag chew on 6 meters!

If you have any questions about QTX or MQTX don't hesitate to ask N5PHT via email. If you want to be added to the QTX listings please send in your count for QTX and for MQTX for the month from the Members Only Section of the Web Page. Please do consider sending in your points.

2018 QTX Plaque Winner!!

Our 2018 Plaque Winner is Bill, N5IR and here we have him holding his 2018 plaque and a plaque from 2015! Congrats Bill.

Rag Chewer Comments

(Missed this one from last month – sorry Bill): **N5IR**: Excellent 1-hour bug-to-bug QTXs this month with NN6T, K5YQF, KP3W, and K6RB. Several others over 45-minutes. Many guys had vacation this month, which helped.



WN7S: I've worked Chris, N8AI a number of times. He is a great rag chewer. N8AI spent 12 years in Oman. He obtained an A4 call. That really brought back memories...When I was in New Delhi I worked and obtained the Royal Omani Society A4XXV award in 1987... There were numerous A4's on the air for that activity. Boy, you don't see scads of A4 all over the band any more.

K6DGW: Rotten head cold first half of month gave me some time for radio chats. Blood clots in leg and lung in latter half of month resulted in way too many people wearing scrubs messing

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around in my life. All quiet now.

N6HCN: Nearly all Qs from off-grid North CA site on maiden voyage of my own 25W "Wren" 2-band CW transceiver, designed & homebrewed from scratch (even some recycled e-waste!) Highlights: Greg K7ZX, Dave WB6TOU, Stan N7OC. Vacation regulars W7JL and K6YUF were also in log. Full QSK, shaped keying. Still grinning. ZUT!

W3PNM: Most interesting QSO I has this month was with 77 year old ham who had a stroke several months. He kept apologizing for his "fist" not being as good as it used to be. Truth be told, it sounded pretty good to me.

W0ITT: In the new year, I am running into friends from last year and before. One of them and my favorite January QSO was Pete K4EWG. He answered a CQ from my QRP Paraset radio (1.5 watts crystal controlled TX and a regenerative RX). We spent a nice hour on 40 meters with good signals both ways.

KB6NU: My count is from 0000Z on the first of the month to 2359Z on the last day of the month. I ended last month with a QTX QSO just before 2359Z and started this month with a QTX QSO just after 0000Z.

KC0VKN: A good start to the year! -30F does wonders for operating time!

WB6TOU: I am beginning to find I know a few hams I talk to now. Since I returned to the hobby just a few years ago and had to rebuild my code speed to play in the sandbox, it is a nice reward for the effort.

KB8GAE: After joining Cwops last fall I have been having fun getting back into CW rag chewing. I enjoyed interesting chats with Robert NW2Z, a CWA level 2 graduate and K4JYS Bill, who is having a blast with his collection of over 20 vintage rigs

AJ1DM: Tnx to K2KRG, W3PNM, K1CHM, and W4TG for all the good rag-chews this month!

GM0EUL: A few of my longer calls this month were from operating in the SKCC K3Y event. Members tend to do the basic exchange and move on, but non-members often stayed longer and exchanged pleasantries and information, some were interested in SKCC and the event. I think some were attracted by my special GB0KEY call and my leisurely operating compared to many special event stations that operate contest style. My favorite mQTXs this month were a couple made with my old Heathkit HW100, both on 40m. I like to fire it up from time to time and keep it in use. Also, its a great point of interest in longer qso, "rig is heathkit hw100" always gets a reaction!

MEDALS

Remember that we give out QTX Medals at the end of the year for 3 levels: (QTX). Maybe we can develop something for MQTX later.

Gold Medal – 400 QTX Points
Silver Medal – 300 QTX Points

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Bronze Medal – 200 QTX Points

MEDALS for 2019: It would be a new record if someone earned a medal so far!! 200 QTX in a month would be a lot. However, Bill N5IR has received his plaque for 2018!

Starting this month we are listing QTX and MQTX separately. Hope you enjoy this change.

QTX TOTALS FOR JANUARY 2019

Call	January	Call	January	Call	January	Call	January
KC0VKN	100	W0ITT	22	K5YQF	7	WB6TOU	4
N5PHT	81	N4PIR	13	N9SE	7	SV2BBK	3
N5IR	53	DL5DBY	11	K0DTJ	7	GM0EUL	2
W9EBE	48	K4AHO	10	N6HCN	6	W5LA	1
K1ESE	40	W3PNM	10	K6DGW	6		
K2KRG	37	W3WHK	10	WN7S	5		
F5IYJ	28	HB9CVQ	8	KB8GAE	5		
I5EFO	27	N4DT	8	K8UDH	4		
KB6NU	22	AJ1DM	8	WA8IWK	4		

Our leaders for the Month of January, QTX: First place is KC0VKN with a commanding lead of 100! and 2nd goes to N5PHT and 3rd to N5IR – great start to the new year.

MQTX TOTALS FOR JANUARY 2019

Call	January	Call	January	Call	January	Call	January
W9EBE	48	W0ITT	22	HB9CVQ	11	N9SE	5
N5PHT	41	N4PIR	22	GM0EUL	9	K5YQF	4
SV2BBK	32	K1ESE	20	K4AHO	8	W3WHK	3
I5EFO	25	KB6NU	15	N6HCN	7	WA8IWK	2
K2KRG	24	KB8GAE	13	W3PNM	7	W5LA	1
DL5DBY	24	K6DGW	13	K8UDH	5	WB6TOU	1

Our leaders for the Month of January, MQTX: First place is W9EBE with 48 and 2nd is N5PHT and 3rd is SV2BBK.

QTX / MQTX 2019 Totals is course above in the January totals. Next Month we will start reporting the year totals again.

Hope to CU on the bands. NOTE: If you ever find me with missing reports, numbers or anything on this column please email me so I can get it corrected!

73,

Gary, N5PHT, QTX Manager

Upcoming CW Operating Events

[Joe Staples, W5ASP](#)

This list of operating events is intended to provide members with options for using and improving their CW skills in not only the more popular contests but also in other more casual on-the-air activities.

Both the ARRL DX CW and the Russian DX contest have become familiar experiences for most CW operators. Both provide the opportunity to work a wide range of DX entities staffed by experienced operators. Even short periods of checking the bands can be quite productive.

The Stew Perry Topband Distance Challenge is now a major low band event with an ever growing participation level. While it enjoys strong activity, is somewhat less congested and perhaps a bit more "friendly" than other 160m contests. This provides more chances for the modest station to make DX contacts. It is CW only.

While the QCWA is familiar to most operators, its contest presence is often ignored. In mid-March the QCWA invites all licensed radio amateurs worldwide to participate in the 24 hour QCWA QSO Party. The QCWA QSO Party is an open annual operating event in the format of a contest. The exchange includes call sign, year of license, name and chapter or QTH. For stations not belonging to a QCWA chapter, the state, province or country will do. Chances are it will be an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and experience the nostalgia of your early days in ham radio.

Don't overlook the various state QSO parties. They often provide sufficient activity to justify some of your operating time. And remember to submit your log. It encourages the sponsors to put their efforts into making these events worthwhile.

Although the activity level falls off after the weekends, there's still the CWT and various Sprints to provide a spark of CW activity.

Till next time ... Keep on pounding.

FEBRUARY / MARCH EVENTS

ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW
<http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>

0000Z, Feb 16th to 2400Z, Feb 17th

Stew Perry Topband Challenge
<http://www.kkn.net/stew/>

1500Z, Mar 9th to 1500Z, Mar 10th

Russian DX Contest
<http://www.rdx.org/asp/pages/rulesg.asp>

1200Z, Mar 16th to 1200Z, Mar 17th

South Carolina QSO Party
<http://scqso.com/rules/>

1500Z, Feb 23rd to 0159Z, Feb 24th

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North Carolina QSO Party http://ncqsoparty.org/rules/	1500Z, Feb 24 th to 0059Z, Feb 25 th
Oklahoma QSO Party http://k5cm.com/okqp2018rules.pdf	1500Z, Mar 9 th to 0200Z, Mar 10 th and 1400Z-2100Z, Mar 10
Idaho QSO Party http://idahoarrrl.info/qsoparty/rules.htm	1900Z, Mar 9 th to 1900Z, Mar 10 th
Wisconsin QSO Party http://www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm	1800Z, Mar 10 th to 0100Z, Mar 11 th
Virginia QSO Party https://www.qsl.net/sterling/VA_QSO_Party/2019_VQP/2019_VQP_Main.html	1400Z, Mar 16 to 0400Z, Mar 17 and 1200Z-2400Z, Mar 17 th
Louisiana QSO Party Solid Copy February 2019.docx	1400Z, Mar 16 th to 0200Z, Mar 17 th
High Speed Club CW Contest www.highspeedclub.org/	0900Z-1100Z, Feb 24 th http://
TESLA Memorial HF CW Contest http://www.radiosport.org.rs/HFTeslaMemorial/index.php/rules	1800Z, Mar 9 th to 0559Z, Mar 10 ^h
QCWA QSO Party http://www.qcwa.org/2019-qso-party-rules.pdf	1800Z, Mar 9 th to 1800Z, Mar 1 th
NCCC Sprint NCCC Sprint NCCC Sprint NCCC Sprint NCCC Sprint http://www.ncccsprint.com/rules.html	0230Z-0300Z, Feb 15 th 0230Z-0300Z, Feb 22 nd 0230Z-0300Z, Mar 1 st 0230Z-0300Z, Mar 8 th 0230Z-0300Z, Mar 15 th
SKCC Sprint SKCC Weekend Sprintathon http://www.skccgroup.com/operating_activities/weekday_sprint/	0000Z-0200Z, Feb 27 th 1200Z, Mar 9 th to 2400Z, Mar 10 th

73,

Joe, W5ASP, Upcoming CW Operating Events



My Story: New Member Biographies

Bob Schreibmaier K3PH

First, let me thank CWops for having me, and for Bud, AA3B, for nominating me and to Ed, DK1WI, Bill, K3WJV, and Mats, RM2D for sponsoring me. It is my pleasure to now be CWops member 2195!

I am a retired electrical engineer and technical writer, having retired in 2002. Born and raised in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, I obtained my Novice license, WN3GYT, on 30 November 1966, thanks to the efforts of Emil, W3OHX. General class came in July 1967 and Extra in August 1969. When I moved to New Jersey in 1977, a callsign change was required, so I obtained K2PH. Upon moving back to Pennsylvania, I was able to obtain K3PH. Apparently, nobody else wanted it!



As a Novice, I was convinced that I would give up CW forever once I got my General class license, but a strange thing happened. It turns out that once you get reasonably good at Morse Code, it actually becomes fun! Who knew?

I became involved in contesting in 1979, largely as a result of becoming friends with George, K2DM, and Steve, N2IC, while working at Bell Laboratories in Holmdel, New Jersey. Steve and I actually shared an office for a short time before he moved to Colorado. My first major effort in a contest was the 1979 CQWW DX CW contest. When I remarked that it was fun, but a few stations were sending faster than I was comfortable with, Steve gave me exactly two words of very sage advice: "Get faster."

In the 1980s, I lost some interest in contesting, but then I met Gerry, W1GD, at Bell Labs, and he reignited my interest. Gerry convinced me to join the Frankford Radio Club in 1990. The rest, as they say, is history.

Currently, I share the station of my brother, John, W3MF. In the shack, we use an IC-7610 and Alpha 87A. Antennas include a Bencher Skyhawk, Cushcraft XM-240, an 80-meter dipole, and 160-meter inverted L.

I hope to meet **YOU** on the air!

Cristian Simion YO3LW

My HAM Radio journey have started in early 90's. At that time, my interests were oriented towards basic electronics as an "inheritance" from my father. Because the Communist regime has been gone, most of my neighbors were buying CB stations. This was the inspiration for me, as well.

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In one evening, I borrowed a CB station and I was amazed about what I could hear. My ham ambitions got above this limit, and I went to the local radio-club in Bucharest. This was the place where I met special Ham friends. They encouraged me to pass the exams and to get my amateur radio license. Thus, I become YO3GLH. My Elmer, YO3DP (one of my father's best friends) gave me his HM station, running just 5 W.

Although, my knowledge in CW were limited, at the beginning I tried to use SSB to get in the air. Very disappointing approach. I might say that initially I use to hate CW...but it was the only way to join the ham radio community.

Later on, I met Andy, YO3JR (probably the most dedicated contestman I ever met). He was the one who gave me fever to join contests. Since in CW I encountered issues with the last letter "H", I decided to change my callsign. Then, I become YO3LW.

Right now, I can say that CW is part of me. Moreover, I describe myself as a person strongly oriented towards learning all the time new things. This is because, I'm quickly bored with things going well. This is one of the reasons why, I continuously build various types of HF antennas (especially those end fed like antenna). Right now, I am using an HM version of End Fed Antenna which withstands up to 1kW.

Steve Nickles N7MQ

Thanks to Hank W6SX for nominating me and all of those who sponsored me.

I was licensed in the spring of 2014 and received my first call KG7KBS. I have also carried the call WY7FRV. Then about a year after earning my extra I picked up the N7MQ call.

I had some early exposure to radio when I was a teenager while growing up in Anchorage, Alaska. I had a buddie that was using SSB on the CB frequencies and making contacts into New Zealand and Australia. I quickly became interested and was able to set up my own station for a couple of years, but after leaving for college and life hit, I really never had any contact with radios again, except at work.

Fast forward to 2014, my son and I had really fell deep into the 4x4 world. We set up some CB's in our rigs but they were not adequate. My son Monte KG7LSU suggested we get our ham licenses, so we did. After that happened I fell deep into the rabbit hole of ham radio. I just really wish I could have found this hobby earlier. Since receiving my license I've participated in race events,

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put up my own solar powered repeater with a 45' tower, I host the XLX307 reflector connected to the multi-protocol Quadnet Array, portable operations, and list keeps growing.

I started becoming interested in CW and I have always wanted to learn it. After trying to learn myself I ran across the DITDIT.fm podcast where I learned about the CWops Academy. I signed up and was placed into class last fall with Bill K0MP. What a great experience! Bill was a



great instructor and kept everyone engaged, challenged, and gave extra help where it was needed. I've thoroughly enjoyed my learning experience and working others in CW. One of my big reasons for learning CW is to start doing SOTA, which I plan to start doing this summer.

My current station is an IC-7100 and a newly placed Steppir 18E on a HDX-572 tower. I'm currently working on an option for 80m.

I've been married to my wife Megan for 30 years and we've successfully raised three kids together. So far she has tolerated even the tower in the back yard. We look forward to exploring the country and foreign lands in the future which I'm sure I'll have to get a new radio for. I'm thinking for SOTA of course hihi. I hope to work everyone in the CWT's soon.