

## Need a Tune-up?



How to give your paddles a much needed alignment and balance. The story begins on page 15.

## President's Message

As we fast approach the end of another year I find myself about to embark on a second term as President of CWops. Two years have gone by quickly and I feel honoured that you all consider me worthy to continue in the role for



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**CWops "CWT" 1 hour 'tests**  
**Every Wednesday** at 1300z and 1900z  
**Every Thursday** at 0300z and 0700z  
Exchange: name/number (members)  
name/SPC (non-members)  
**Avoid DX Pileups!**

**CWO Mini-club 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"

### CWops Officers and Directors

President: Stew Rolfe, [GW0ETF](#)  
Vice President: Peter Butler, [W1UU](#)  
Secretary: Jim Talens, [N3JT](#)  
Treasurer: Craig Thompson, [K9CT](#)  
Director: Theo Mastakas, [SV2BBK](#)  
Director: Raoul Coetzee, [ZS1C](#)  
Director: Matt Frey, [CE2LR](#)  
Director: Bert Banlier, [F6HKA](#)  
Director: Barry Simpson, [VK2BJ](#)  
Director: Riki Kline, [K7NJ](#)  
Director: Ken Tanuma, [JN1THL](#)  
WebGeek: Dan Romanchik [KB6NU](#)  
Newsletter Editor: Dick Strassburger, [N9EEE](#)

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another 3 years. Thank you all and let's hope I don't run out of things to write each month in this column!

The review of the club Bylaws mentioned last month went ahead and created some differing views in respect of the very first section relating to membership criteria (Section 1.A.1). The removal of the reference to the English language requirement was generally welcomed though not universally so; the removal of the reference to being able to carry on a *conversation* in CW was more controversial and led to a lengthy discussion on the reflector which I have no intention of continuing here.

This has been a topic under consideration with the board for a while now. It was felt time to reflect the reality of the way CW is used in today's world. Some like myself mix and match with rag-chewing, casual contesting and the occasional bit of DX chasing. Others, especially many contesters, plough a lone furrow and excel; any of these can be proficient in the art of CW and worthy of CWops membership. I can pull up any number of leading contesters' calls in Logbook of the World and see page after page of QSOs under my contest only call. These invariably are active, competent CW ops and are keeping Morse Code alive on the bands but many have nothing to say in a 'conversation'. Finding language to convey inclusivity can be tough at times and this issue will probably rumble on, a bit like Brexit in the UK! The element of this Bylaw which has never changed states that any nominee must, **in the assessment of 4 current members**, be capable of two way CW communication at no less than 25wpm. Individuals can be suggested for possible membership but the onus remains with the nominator in the first instance and the sponsors thereafter to agree that an individual passes the threshold of proficiency implied in the widest sense by this statement. Remember that new members invariably feel a sense of pride in being accepted into CWops and many are proud that a personal milestone has been passed on their CW journey. Let's not lose sight of that.

In situations such as this it's necessary to keep the membership updated. This is done by mass emailing every member personally, a task which has always been done by Lar K7SV. In this instance some of the new joiners never received the email containing the revised Bylaws because they were not yet included on the latest email lists supplied to Lar. Steps are being taken to help mitigate this but it's impossible to guarantee these lists will always be 100% up to date. For this reason all new members are urged to subscribe straight away to the CWops reflector at <main@cwops.groups.io> where important information will also be posted. I can never remember anyone else carrying out this role but after many years Lar has decided to stand down. The club owes a lot to Lar for doing this in the background and offers our sincere thanks. We are also delighted to welcome Kathleen Kerns KK6CN (#3188) as a worthy replacement. Kathleen is already doing good things in the Membership Committee and will I'm sure fit easily into the role. Welcome Kathleen...!

And so 2022 rolls to a close and we can consider what has happened these past 12 months. Covid lockdowns have finally eased and we are now meeting face to face again in clubs and gatherings including the Dayton CWops get together which was resurrected in May. People are travelling again and Dxpeditions are reappearing on the bands including a few operations from exotic locations in last month's CQWW DX CW contest. Closer to home we welcomed 3 new Ambassa-

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dors and the editorship of this newsletter passed seamlessly from Tim K9WX to Dick Strassburger N9EEE. A Membership Committee was established and some redundant ones no longer required put to rest. The core activities and programs continue to grow and membership, while having slowed this year, increases steadily. Thanks to all those many volunteers who have worked so hard during 2022 to make CWops the ongoing success that it is.

The one note of regret occurred on February 24<sup>th</sup> when a significant section of our membership was effectively forced off the air and silenced. The senseless and cruel war in Ukraine shows no sign of being resolved and we hope and pray for the safety and well being of our Ukrainian members and their families. The tactics being employed become more and more depraved while the resilience and determination of the people appears to grow in response. As we approach the Christmas festive season our thoughts as always are with you; for everyone else a Very Happy Christmas and good wishes for a successful and healthy 2023.

**73, Stew GWØETF**, President (CWops #919)

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## Bylaws Vote

The board is pleased to announce that the November vote for the changes in the bylaws passed by a vote of 415-54. The [Bylaws](#) are posted on the CWops website.

Jim Talens, Secretary, N3JT

## Dues Increase

Reminder about Dues Increase

As published in the November issue of Solid Copy, CWops dues will increase beginning January 1, 2023. The new dues will be \$15/year, \$60 for 5 years; and \$125 for life membership. Many clubs' dues are in the \$35/year range, so this is still quite a bargain. For those who are year-to-year members this might be a good time to consider 5-year or life membership because until December 31 the dues are \$12/year, \$50/5 years, \$100 for life membership

The CWops Board



# **Twas the Night Before Christmas.**



**as told by Dick Strassburger, N9EEE**

*Twas The Night Before Christmas  
and all through the shack  
not a CWop was stirring  
including ol' Zack.*

*Exhausted from QTXs, CWTs,  
and CW Open,  
this CWop lay in bed dreaming,  
of a first place finish, he was hopin'.*

*Meanwhile on 20 meters  
there arose such a clatter,  
it was the Bouvet Island DXpedition  
with a lone CW paddler.*

*From K-land to JA,  
Zack worked through them all,  
As that 3YOJ op from Wisconsin,  
let out such a call...*

*"CQ DX, CQ DX" arose from the din,  
with a tail twister rotor his yagi would spin,  
working all countries, zones, and grids,  
through QRM, QSB, and an occasional lid.*

*His CWA training  
he would credit his speed,  
head copy at 35 wpm  
in just two months, indeed!*

*The short stories and QSOs  
and CWTs each week,  
prepared ol' Zack's confidence  
for the DXpedition QSOs he'd seek.*

*Ol' Zack rolled over  
and awoke from the dream,  
finding QSL cards piled high  
from floor to the beam.*

*Was it a dream or was it real,  
ol' Zack couldn't tell,  
except for the familiar voice  
on the rooftop he would hear yell...*

*"On Yaesu, on Icom,  
on Alinco and MFJ,  
Merry Christmas to all,  
and Peace on this day."*

*Zack rolled back over  
with a new Begali in his hand,  
dreaming of the commemorative QSL card  
he'd send to that bearded man.*

*Back on 20 meters  
the bandscope went blank,  
73 from this CWop,  
and to all I will thank.*



# News and Notes

**Duncan (Mac) Fiskén, G3WZD**

We regret to report that the following Members have become a Silent Keys

**Rod Linkous, W7OM #680 on 30<sup>th</sup> November**

**Matt Hollins, AA4WW #2650 on 2<sup>nd</sup> December**

Condolence cards have been sent on behalf of CWops

*From the News & Notes editor*

*My apologies if any Members submitted items to News & Notes that have not made it into this edition. The company hosting my several email accounts suffered a 'security incident' on 2nd December (most probably a ransomware attack) resulting in a complete loss of email service. There is currently no time-line for a restoration of service. I have set up a temporary email [radiog3wzd@gmail.com](mailto:radiog3wzd@gmail.com) (also embedded in the link above) so please use this until I have made alternative hosting arrangements.*

**Dave, WN4AFP #1208** was recently hospitalised for eye surgery and **Pete, W1RM #8** for pneumonia.

**Martin, OK1RR #87** On November 5, 2022, I suffered a relatively complicated heart attack, accompanied by a cardiac arrest lasting more than 4 minutes. A secondary effect was pneumonia. I spent the time from that date to Nov. 25 in intensive hospital treatment. I was kept in artificial sleep for 5 days.

Believe it or not, today I have more serious problems than FT8...

*(N&N Editor's Comment; wishing Dave, Pete and Martin a full and speedy recovery!)*

**Theo, PA3HEN #2481** Last October we ([NTC](#)) had our first Friendship QSO Party together with the [AGCW](#) from Germany. This first QP was a pilot to check if it is interesting to have such a QSO party. We can say that we received a lot of positive replies about this QP.

In cooperation with the AGCW we decided to continue this Friendship QSO party.

Beginning in 2023, the QSO party will be held twice a year, on the third Tuesday in April and October. In 2023, this will be April 18th and October 17th. Please note it in your agenda and spread the message. The rules will remain the same. See [here](#) for more information.

We hope to meet you all again during the forthcoming Friendship QSO Parties.

**Chuck, WS1L #2411** The most fun for the month was being able to operate from the K1TTT superstation for CQWW CW. Being able to work into EU on 40M until nearly our sunrise was a

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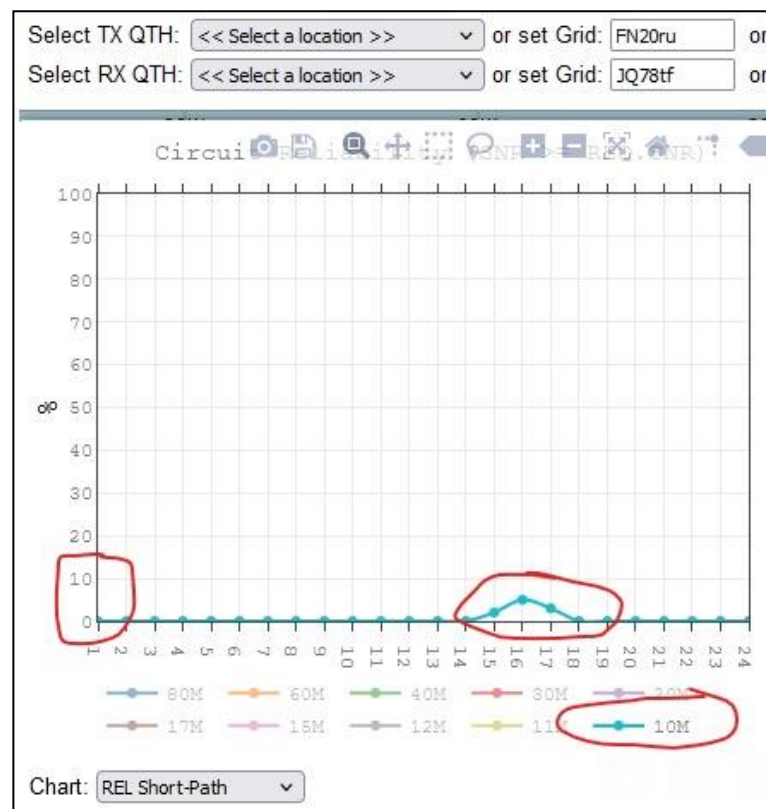
blast. Thanks to Dave for such a great experience.

The least fun was having my big beam go flaky with high SWR, fortunately just after CW Sweeps. Right now it's out of service while I wait for parts to replace the split feed and get it installed. Hopefully by the time you read this it will be back in use.

**John Paul, AB4PP #2572** I can't really give a long story. I got in there for a while here and there to work the CQWWCW test and had a grand time. I was trying to find some new DX mostly but answering the other stations I could hear while tuning around. I was totally frustrated in that I had tried for weeks to get my N1MM logger + program to work with my new keyboard. I did not get to use it and had to just log away as normal and keep adding up the count. I took several breaks for meals, sleep, and to go to Church. When it was all over I was satisfied that I had worked all I could hear and those who could hear me.

Wouldn't you know it, Wednesday I played with the program (N1MM+) and figured out what I had done wrong, and now the program was working. So it will be ready for the next CWT's and any other contest down the road. I had a blast and did my share of chasing (S&P).

**Doug, KR2Q #438** In CQWW CW 2022, after 56 years of chasing DX and filling in band slots for the DXCC Challenge, I finally had a QSO with JW on 10m. From NJ, this feat is as close to a radio miracle as one can get. Shown below is screen shot from VOACAP, showing the likelihood of finding supporting propagation between NJ (FN20ru) and JW (JQ78tf). Pretty slim odds.



**VOACAP Screenshot**

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My entry in CQWW CW was QRP. But when I heard JW7AJA on 10m, who was barely Q5, and knowing that I've been chasing this one for over 50 years, well, I just had to turn on the pair of 3-500s. Our QSO was completed at 1714 UTC. Further, shown below is part of the post-contest communication we had via email. From Andreas:

*Most of the signals on 10 weren't too strong, but there were a few exceptions. I worked 92 QSOs, and it was just by luck I checked on 10m at that time. I worked 18 countries and 11 zones in that opening.*

*When you are operating from JW, some times the openings defy the predictions. We were battling with aurora the whole weekend, and conditions weren't as good as they could have been. Any way, it was fun to visit there again. This was my 5th trip. 73, Andreas LA8AJA.*

**Stan K5VBA #3182** A Tale of Two QTHs.... (just a story, a snapshot in the life of a CWOps ham)

I live in two places, about 50/50. North Alabama and northern Michigan (Grayling Township), the latter is my preference in winter. So the time has come for my twice-yearly driving migration between north and south (800 mi). I will be operating LP category (100W, Yaesu FTDX10) in Michigan from December 18 to probably early March, but the exact reverse migration date is not certain. Might operate QRP or 10W a few times with Icom I-705 and hamsticks on tripod. Like maybe Winter FD.

My Up North antenna is a wire inverted U or lazy C, if it is still up, about 136 ft flattop between two maples with about 20 ft dropped ends and a center support about 24 ft high, end fed. It has pulleys on both ends of the flattop, and a hanging weight on one dropped end; the other dropped end at the feed point is mechanically tied to an insulated ground anchor and electrically tied to the unun. This antenna was designed using the Universal Theory of Antennas, which says put up as much as you can as high as you can and where you can. So far this winter, the weather hasn't been too bad there. One 12" snow, but it went away pretty quickly, except in shaded areas. So maybe it has survived. I first put it up in wind and snow in Jan-Feb 2022, then redid it in August-September or so. After the redo, it seemed to tune well 80-10 meters with the Yaesu. I now have an antenna analyzer and can get a better look at antenna system characteristics. The logbook is the real test.



**Me with my my hamstick-on-a-fence-post antenna farm here at my Alabama QTH**

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When I get up there, in addition to the usual matters of the house and getting firewood, I have some RFI issues to address. I think they are mostly from sources in my house, since I am in the woods on a small river (AuSable) and no close neighbors, no other houses visible. The downside is that I am right on the river at the bottom of the river valley. A 200-ft tower would be nice. There is no HOA but there is a Natural River District.

Down South is another story. I live in a retirement community with apartments, duplex houses and single stand-alone houses (they call them cottages). The houses and duplexes are close together (15 ft or so). We now have a cottage after living in two different apartments in the Big House. I had no radio then because it was Before Current Era of Licensing, which began just a year ago for me. Initially, my antenna at the cottage was monoband hamsticks on a camera tripod out in the yard. It generated a lot of curiosity and questions from neighbors and other residents (inmates), but no one voiced an objection, I think because I brought it in when not using it. But I wanted more.

Earlier this year I was helping a friend prepare a new homesite on a bluff lot overlooking the Elk River about 60 miles west of here. Among the trees he had to cut were two young hickorys, which I decided could be used as antenna masts. They were 6-8 inches at the base and about 35 ft tall. And heavy. We trimmed them up, got a 20 ft utility trailer, loaded them onto the trailer and hauled them 60 miles back to the cottage. My wife recruited help from a couple of landscape workers and we hauled one tree to one end of the house and the other to the other end. Man, I'm too old for that! My friend is a little older at 83.

The next day we gathered some rope, a come-along and some 2x4s and cobbled up an antenna erection mechanism, then raised one tree and tied it to an existing wooden fence post (I had pre-rigged the masts with pulleys and pulling rope). Then the problems began. Two geezers (neighbors, and members of the residents' council) showed up and began demanding answers to what the hell we were doing. They said it is against the rules (there are no such rules) and is ugly and dangerous. I won't argue the ugly part. Then they went and complained to the Executive Director, who is an employee of the owning company, and as I later learned, told all kind of crazy stories about the dangers of a radio antenna and especially my radio antenna. Our location is about five miles from a military airfield which has a lot of rotary wing traffic, some of which flies low and right overhead of us. I am very familiar with that airfield, as I was a member of an on-field flying club and an instrument airplane flight instructor there. The two meddlers said that the antenna masts would fall down, thus presenting a danger to persons and property, and that my radio signals would bring down the helicopters. This was a sensitive topic at the time when the 'FAA vs FCC 5G transmitters near airports issue' was hot. The outcome was that, the next morning, the Executive Director called me and demanded that I take the proto-antenna down. So out comes the chainsaw and down came the tree.

Now I still use hamsticks, but now they mount to a quick-disconnect on top of a fence post and I just change them out as needed, often during a CWT. Takes me about 2-3 minutes. No meddlers yet.

Life goes on. I haven't given up on having a somewhat better antenna Down South. I want more.

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**Joe, AA8TA #1821** A term that many hams are unfortunately familiar with is “unobtainium.” It can apply to some other things that have perhaps non-obvious ham radio uses.

Exhibit 1: this is a staple gun that I had for decades and served me quite well. The ham radio connection is that it was used for stapling wires to forms for antennas, RF and audio cables and other things.

On a recent project, it refused to fire out a staple because it was empty. No problem, off to the big-box hardware store to restock. Except the exact type of staple needed for this has not been made for years. Cannot even find at the usual online sources for these hard-to-find items. So now I have a perfectly good staple gun not usable because cheap little staples are no longer available.

Exhibit 2: This is a multi-function crimper/stripper/trimmer tool for RJ-45 Ethernet connectors. The ham radio connection here is I was going to re-do the network cables to my shack computer and an existing Linux server to a network switch when I decided to add another Linux server (that is a story for another time).

Unfortunately, AA8TA’s stock room, otherwise known as the stash-o-junk, did not have any more RJ-45 connectors so off to various dealers of computer items to get some new stock. Except, this tool takes a certain type of connector which is not stocked locally. Fortunately, connectors are available online although it would take a couple of days for delivery.

Should I order 100? 500? 1,000? When will these things join my staple in not being made by anybody? How long will Ethernet as we know it continue to be a thing? Hope I got enough for a while.

Exhibit 3: another crimper for F-connectors. The ham radio connection here is making cables for non-resonant, small receiving loops. This gadget takes connectors that seem to be fairly available and are not specific to a particular brand. Even though I have not run out of these connectors, yet, I again wonder as above: should I order a couple hundred for when/if they stop being made?



**Staple gun**



**F-connector crimper**



**RJ-45 crimper**

There is something going on with manufacturers forcing us to buy new tools every few years even though existing tools work FB (fine business).

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All they have to do is to discontinue the cheap staples or connectors. Brilliant!

**Duncan, G3WZD #1979** November was a significant month for me; 7/11 was my 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being licenced as G3WZD. Now, I know that there are members licenced way longer, but that is still a major milestone for me.

Around the same time I had finally gotten around to applying for a Special Contest Call Sign (a UK -issued SCC has to be earned by achieving [minimum performance criteria](#) in specific RSGB-approved contests) and I was delighted to be issued with M3F on 17/11. M3F had its first serious airing in the recent CQ WW CW contest when I entered the SB 40M Unassisted QRP category; many thanks to all the CWops members who pulled my puny signal out of the melee! Having a 40M Moxon close to the Atlantic Coast of North Cornwall certainly helps!

Lastly, November was also the month when I recorded my 120<sup>th</sup> CWT of the year. Gold in the bag for the second year running; hooray! Thank you everyone for all the Qs.

**73, Duncan, G3WZD (CWops #1979)**

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## How We Were

[Hank Garretson, W6SX](#)

G3WZD, Duncan 'Mac' Fiskin, CWops # 1979



My 1967 RAE & Morse Test Pass slips

Sadly, no photos remain of my early amateur radio days in the late sixties thanks to losses during a home move. Although my RAE (Radio Amateurs Examination) and Post Office Morse Test pass slips survived, my first log book and pictures of the first station, comprising homebrew 10W AM/CW TX for 160/80m and HRO RX are no more.

Wanderlust was in my blood, possibly thanks to my seafaring father's genes, and I moved to Singapore in 1979 for what was supposed to be a two-year stint. Twenty-three years later I returned home to the UK. I was licenced as 9V1UG from 1979 to 2002 and, owning a British-registered sailboat, I also operated in SE Asian waters as G3WZD/MM. I drifted away from CW for several years and did not really become seriously interested in the mode until I finally unpacked the rigs and got back on the air around 2012.

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Fast forward to 2017 with the CW bug having bitten again, I was referred to CWops and the excellent CW Academy. I graduated from the Level 2 course run by Keith G0HKC, followed by the Level 3 under Jerry AC4BT, who then proposed me for membership. I can honestly say that being accepted for membership was one of my proudest moments!

Now retired, I am enjoying amateur radio more than ever and am 99% CW. I also derive immense satisfaction Advising CWA classes at Beginner, Fundamental, and Intermediate level and am looking forward to advising another Beginner class in the January/February 2023 semester.



*9V1UG in 1979 (the FT101ZD is still in my shack and works FB!)*

Thank you Duncan. A great ham story with a great CW ending.

I know there are lots of good pictures and stories out there. Then-and-now pictures particularly welcome. Please, send your How We Were picture(s) and story to [w6sx@arrl.net](mailto:w6sx@arrl.net). Note--Were doesn't have to be ancient history. If you were first licensed five years ago, send me your Were picture.

CW Exuberantly,

**73, Hank W6SX** (CWops #61)

## CWops Dinner Announcement

We are pleased to announce initial plans for the 2023 Annual CWops Dinner event, to be held in conjunction with Hamvention-2023, generally known as the Dayton Hamvention. The CWops dinner will be held Thursday May 18, 2023, the night before the major Hamvention activities begin in Xenia. There are some major changes this year.

Most important, due to a shift in the focus of activities to Xenia as well as seeking a larger venue to accommodate more members, we have relocated the CWops Dinner to RONA Banquet Facility in Fairborn, just 3.5 miles east of the Hope Hotel where many indoor activities takes place and where many people stay. The catered dinner itself will be buffet style, with an Italian theme consisting of several sumptuous (what else?!) choices.

Dinner is expected to begin at 7 p.m. with an interesting program thereafter. The RONA will be available to CWops and friends from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. that day for meetings, presentations and the like any time prior to the dinner.



Look for the official announcement of the Hamvention CWops Dinner soon!

**73, Peter, W1UU and Jim, N3JT**

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## The CWops Award for Advancing the Art of CW

CWops is pleased to announce that it is now accepting nominations for this prestigious award for the year 2023.

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. Details about the recipients of this award since 2016 can be seen at [CWops Award Winners – CWops](#).

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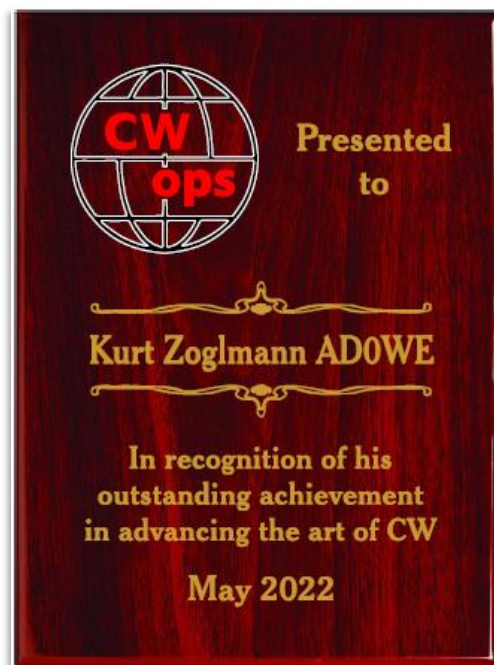
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## Criteria

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 or their organizations.



## Nomination

Nominations may be made by anybody (not limited to CWops members). Nominations should be emailed to <[awards@cwops.org](mailto:awards@cwops.org)> with a copy to <[secretary@cwops.org](mailto:secretary@cwops.org)>. An email confirmation will be sent acknowledging receipt of each nomination. In order to be considered, a nomination should be received by March 10, 2023 and include:

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

## Presentation of Award

A plaque will be presented at the Dayton Hamvention. If a recipient is not present, it will be sent to them.

**73, Riki K7NJ**, (CWops #271)

Chair, CWops Committee for Advancing CW Award

# Holiday Gifts for the CW Enthusiast

## Dick Strassburger, N9EEE

What would Christmas and the gift-giving season be without preparing a wish list for the CW Enthusiast? To crowdsource ideas for this list, I checked in with active contributors on the listserv to find out what makes a great gift for a CW Enthusiast in 2022. Santa's bag is going to be stuffed this year. Here we go.

VE9AA, Mike—For 4 years running I bought myself a different N3ZN paddle (one for the car, one for the shack, one for my VHF rig, one for Dxpeditioning (etc). It's been a couple years since my last and I am salivating over the N3ZN keys webpage again, hi !

KJ5ET, Steve—The list I shared with my wife included the Sidekar Extreme which has a built-in K1EL Keyer, great for portable contesting (AE0Q uses one for logging in the CWTs that de deos from the POTA sites). Also on my list is the KX2PD Paddles for my KX2, not that the little CW Morse 3D printed paddles are that bad, but I did get my hands on the KX2PD at Huntsville and I did like it. Not specific to CW but also on my list is the TruSDX, which if I get one it will primarily be used for portable CW QRP work.

K2PI, Harv— CW and Telegraph history. A framed print of the original Bunnel straight key patent to be placed on the shack wall (inexpensive) all the way to a section of the first Transatlantic cable, mounted on shale (not inexpensive). CW lovers might appreciate something that reflects the rich history of CW instead of another key.

K6DGW, Fred—A WKUSB is a great gift @ around \$150. It will send RTTY [FSK] too. K1EL has several other cool things on his site Any of the Elecraft test devices QRP wattmeters, Noise source, Signal generators, etc If your ham has been a particularly good girl or boy, hard to beat anything from N3ZN or Begali. If he or she has been exceptionally good, there's always a K4D...

KC8J, Walt—I make custom, laser cut paddle dust covers. Also I make custom laser cut finger pieces from acrylic or hard wood.

G3WZD, Duncan—Top of my Santa list would be a simple (I emphasise SIMPLE) remote control system that would allow the use of a paddle, rather than a keyboard. This would be followed in a very close second place by the desire for a more amenable neighbour; one who does not force me to keep my masts wound down below the tree line.

KK0U, Jim— Yuri UR5CDX has a newish paddle out [here](#). I bought one of his CT599MB two years ago as a Xmas present to me, and I must say I'm very well pleased with it. It has a very crisp response, and a light touch. EDIT: I just looked at his web page, and this key was added in 2013, so not new! Time to head upstairs for more coffee.

N9EEE, Dick—Earbuds are more comfortable for me, so I'd like a set of wireless earbuds with a Bluetooth transmitter from Anker for the radio. I'd also like an out-of-production W1SFR Green Machine key for use as a paddle. **73, Dick, N9EEE** (CWops #3113)

**Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!**

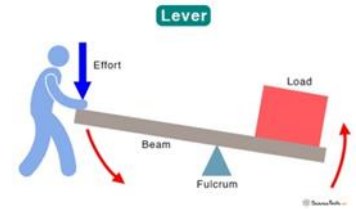


# Using a Dynamometer to Set up CW Paddles

[Kevin Hedgepeth](#), NB7O (CWops #3112)



What do CW paddles, teeter totters, and screwdrivers have in common? Well they are all levers! Of course you knew that and that was the first response that you could think of when the question was posed.



All levers require a certain amount of force to move one end of the lever, the load, with the other end of the lever, the effort. A lever uses a fulcrum as a pivot point and a beam as the connecting tissue between the load and effort. The actual amount of energy required to move the load end of the lever can be measured. Then the load, effort, pivot point, or the length of the effort end of the beam may be adjusted to accomplish the task of the lever.

Take for instance the Teeter Totter. Imagine that you are 10 years old and your parents take you and your siblings to a park where there are teeter totters. Your mother orders you to go play on the teeter totter with your five year old younger brother; which you begrudgingly do. Since your weight is greater than the weight of your younger brother there is a load differential between the two ends of the beam. So after both brothers settle onto the teeter totter one end of the beam is resting on the ground and the other end is elevated as high into the air as the beam length beyond the pivot will allow. The older brother, thinking it will be great fun, slips off the end of the beam resting on the ground. What happens to the younger brother? He rapidly descends to the ground on his beam end because his weight (thus effort) is now greater than the weight (thus no load) of the recently vacated beam end. This was great fun right? Well it was until the younger brother ran off and told the parents about the event and the older brother gets grounded for a week.



A screw driver has a unique method of adjusting the effort to overcome the load. The screwdriver has built into it a system of gears that increases the effort applied to overcome the resistance of the load. Look at the image of the screw driver and you will see that the blade is on a shaft and that the fulcrum of the lever is the center of the shaft. The shaft is rotated in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction to apply effort. To overcome the load presented by a screw the screwdriver shaft is connected to a larger shaft, then the intermediate shaft is connected to a mid-range handle, and then the mid-range handle is connected to a larger outer handle with enhanced grip characteristics that also allow an increase in effort to overcome the load. Some screwdrivers have a socket in the distal end of the handle to allow a large lever to be inserted into the socket to apply additional torque to the handle of the screwdriver and thus overcome the load of the screw. Thus each incremental step up in the handle diameter provides a greater gear ratio from effort to load.

But what does all of this have to do with a CW paddle? Well all paddles have a beam, fulcrum, and two ends of the beam where load and effort are applied. Some CW operators have multiple CW paddles and desire a means of establishing the amount of effort to overcome the load of the paddle that most often is applied through a magnet or a spring. The CW operator can use a Dy-

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namometer to measure the amount of effort to move the paddle arm (effort end of the beam) from its resting position to the point where the contacts (load end of the beam) touch and a closure is presented to the radio that allows the RF to be sent in the patterns of International Morse Code that we know and love. Used Dynamometers may be found on EBAY or purchased new from Amazon; among many other sources. An example of a Dynamometer that meets my requirements may be found on [Amazon](#).



To use the Dynamometer the testing needle is set alongside the paddle arm and the paddle is depressed either to the right (dit paddle) or to the left (dah paddle) and the amount of effort is measured on the dial gauge. Testing both paddles lets you adjust the magnet or spring until the paddles have an equal effort to provide contact closure. After the effort to provide contact closure is set to equal in both paddles then the adjustment of both may be made until the CW Paddle operates with a beam effort that you prefer. I like a light effort on my paddles with a very narrow contact gap. Good dynamometers have a sweep needle that follows the measurement needle thus marking the amount of effort that was used to move the paddle beam the requisite distance to have contact closure when the measuring needle is allowed to return to reference (0 grams). This measurement may then easily be recorded and stored in a permanent record. I recommend that a dynamometer used for the purpose of adjusting CW paddles have a sweep that covers from 0 to 50 grams of effort.

The Begali Sculpture in the image is set for 22 grams of effort to provide closure on both the dit and dah paddle. The Bencher in the image is set for 15 grams of effort and my Vibroplex Square Racer is set for 22 grams of effort. The Begali and Vibroplex are both magnetic returns and the Bencher is a spring return. I find the lighter setting on the Bencher makes it feel less spongy due to the spring return.

I created a very short, non-professional video for showing to my CWA students the use of a dynamometer. You can view it on [YouTube](#).

Having a dynamometer that can be shared amongst a CW group is something I encourage. If you do not have a group of CW operators in your area, the devices are not that expensive at under \$50.

Did your **CALL SIGN** change recently?

Did you move to a **NEW ADDRESS** or change your **NAME** ?

Congratulations!

Help us keep our **DATABASE UP-TO-DATE**

Click [HERE](#) to update your contact information.



# 170<sup>th</sup> SOTA Mountain Goat in North America

[Richard Dervan](#), N1RBD (CWops #2983)

On December 2, 2022, Richard Dervan (N1RBD CW Ops #2983) did a combination SOTA/POTA activation of Mount Mitchell and the associated state park in North Carolina to attain SOTA Mountain Goat (MG) Status. He becomes the 170<sup>th</sup> MG in North America and the 9<sup>th</sup> in the W4G (Georgia) SOTA Association. Attaining MG status means that he was able to acquire 1000 SOTA activator points. It took 137 Activations of 59 unique summits with 2285 QSOs to achieve this, each summit averaging 7.3 points.

The final push to MG started on November 29 with activations of Cowee Bald and Black Balsam Knob on the way from Atlanta to Asheville. Allen Mountain and Peach Bald near Asheville were activated the next day. On December 1, the SOTA Winter Bonus season started, meaning certain summits had an extra three points added to their normal points value. On this day, Jumpoff Mountain and The Pinnacle, both eligible for bonus points, were activated which brought the points total to 987.



His wife arrived Thursday evening and preparations were in place to activate Mount Mitchell, the highest summit East of the Mississippi River at 6684 feet and worth 13 SOTA points, on Friday.

Friday dawned as a cloudy day with temperatures in the low 40s. The drive to the park wound up being 90 minutes instead of the original planned 45 due to closures along the Blue Ridge Parkway on the west side of the park. Upon arriving, the clouds had begun to dissipate, and the sun was shining with temps in the mid-50s and very light winds. Upon reaching the summit and setting up for HF, CQ was called on 2m with the first contact being Dean Blair (K2JB), a local SOTA Goat. After two more 2m contacts, a Sked with Richard's Elmer, Doug McAlexander (N4HNN, of YouTube FTDX10 fame and a SOTA Goat) was completed on 40m CW which marked a successful activation and official Mountain Goat status. Some additional 2m contacts were garnered, followed by another Sked on 40m SSB to work friends Mark (AE1MS) and Jean (AE1JS) Swann in Young Harris, GA. Another friend, Eddie James (WD3D) was also able to get in on the SSB action. Additional contacts were made on 40m CW before going QRT on HF and tearing down the station. Just before leaving the summit, a Summit-to-Summit contacts was made on 2m with Richard (KN4LRI) and Tom (W1PTS) who were doing a SOTA activation on Rough Butt Bald, 50 miles away as the crow flies.

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Richard started participating in SOTA using a 2m HT only a couple of weeks after obtaining his license in July 2019, and upgraded to general in August. His CW journey started in early 2020 and now operates almost exclusively 2m FM and 20/30/40m CW for SOTA using an MTR-3B with an EFHW or Elecraft AX-2 antenna. He made the decision to learn CW before testing for his Extra, but hopes to have that completed by mid-2023.

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## Iceland DXpedition

**Steve Hawley, K4EU (CWops #1329)**

George/K5KG (CWOPS #970), Steve/K4EU (CWOPS #1329) and Tom/K4NMR (CWOPS #2298) operated a DXpedition from Iceland (IOTA EU-21, CQ Zone 40, ITU Zone 17), September 6 – 20, 2022. The trip was originally planned to operate in the Scandinavian Activity CW Contest. Due to political reasons the SAC CW Contest was canceled, however the team decided to proceed with our Iceland DXpedition and operate CW-only running mostly pileups. George was able to work the FOC QSO Party and one CWOPS CWT session while Steve was able to work two CWT sessions during our time there. Since Iceland is a CEPT signee, we only needed to carry the required

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forms, passports and licenses to operate as TF/K5KG, TF/K4EU and TF/K4NMR without issue.

Our very gracious host, Benni/TF3T, owns the TF3D QTH some 70km (50 miles) southeast of Reykjavik near the village of Stokkseyri and 20km (12 miles) south of Selfoss. Benni was enormously helpful with the logistical arrangements while concurrently upgrading his station by building and installing monoband Yagis. Helping Benni were his brother, Gudmi/TF3SG, and Oskar/TF3DC.



The TF3D station is a former SuperDARN radar installation which was decommissioned in 2019 and turned over to Benni

K5KG and K4EU in Iceland

in 2021 by the Space Plasma Environment and Radio Science Group at Lancaster University. 24 heavy duty 50' towers, most with Log Periodics on top, and a spartan shack comprise the facility situated on a multi-acre moon-like barren landscape some 2 miles from the North Atlantic Ocean. Benni and Gudmi are currently reconfiguring and rebuilding the LP's for Amateur Radio use. During our time there, 5-element monobanders for 10, 15, and 20 meters plus an Optibeam for the 12, 17 and 30 meter WARC bands were available for our use. At the end of our visit, our Icelandic hosts completed building and installing a 2-element 40 meter monobander. In addition to these antennas, 80 and 160 meter verticals were available with Beverage antennas for receiving. An automated computer switching antenna matrix system designed and built by Benni provided easy access to all antennas with the click of a mouse button. This amazing engineering/homebrewing work was a pleasure to use and a great tribute to Benni's many technical skills. We can't say enough about Benni's very pleasing personality and his amazing engineering and mechanical abilities!!!! As for radios, two K3's were available along with two KW amplifiers, one commercially made and the other homebrewed by Benni, each with band-sensing circuitry. SWR was flat on all bands with no tuning required!!!! N1MM+ (preferred by K5KG and K4EU) and DXLOG (preferred by K4NMR) were used as our preferred logging software.

Upon arrival at Iceland's Keflavik International Airport we rented a car and proceeded to our home base, a Guest House provided by Benni's in-laws located some 20km (12 Miles) North of the small town of Selfoss making our commute to the TF3D station approximately 40 minutes each way. Our daily routine was to make the trek from the Summer House to Selfoss and visit a local GK Bakari (Bakery) for coffee and fresh-made pastries. We also picked up lunches from the bakery and proceeded to the TF3D QTH. Entering the property was always fascinating because the unpaved road went through a swampy area occupied by many sheep and small Icelandic

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Horses. Benni cordoned off the QTH with electric fencing so we had to pass through three barriers to get to the shack, often accompanied by curious sheep. Once in the shack we quickly fired up the rigs and resumed working the constant CW pile-ups.

We made 8435 CW QSOs and 2 SSB QSOs during our time in Iceland. Propagation was very interesting and totally dependent upon the polar region aurora and the A and K indices. Our first week we had very poor propagation below 30m and above 15m.... During our second week the aurora and A and K indices had improved dramatically, hence 10m, 12m, 40m and 80m came to life for us..... You can see our QSO totals below.

As a footnote, we were very pleased to contact many members of CWOPS. We appreciated the quick and snappy CW exchanges by our accomplished CWOPS brethren. Thank you for the QSOs!!!

QSO Log	
BAND	QSOs
10	58
12	476
15	1,860
17	1,642
20	2,536
30	1,305
40	475
80	85
TOTAL	8,437

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## VK9NT DXpedition Boot Camp

[Chris Chapman](#), VK3QB (CWops #2949)

*Have you ever wondered what DX-peditioning is all about?*

*Would you like to dip your toe in the water without a full-on commitment?*

*Would you like to join a DX-pedition but are unsure of how to get on the invitation list?*

*Do you want to experience being on the business end of the pileup and build DXing skills?*

*A DX-pedition is a great way to improve your operating skills as well.*

Well, the Norfolk Island DX-pedition Bootcamp might be for you.



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Experienced DXpeditioners will be on Norfolk Island for 12-14 days in the second half of March 2023 (est 15-28 March – NOTE: dates subject to fine tuning) . The format of the event will be hands-on, with some presentations and a Bootcamp dinner (or two). Most importantly, you'll get hands-on experience in a safe, friendly environment.

The stunning Emily Bay is the only beach on Norfolk Island.

You will be able to visit the DXpedition station and watch the action, ask questions, as well as book time in front of the radio. Make a friendly, fun, and educational entry into this exciting facet of the hobby, without having to do the planning, logistics or complexity of transporting and setting up a station.

Maybe you're an experienced operator, and you'd like to combine a holiday with some exciting on-air operation... the pile-ups are a load of fun and conditions are likely to be very lively.

CW Ops members will be especially welcome... you can help us with the CW pileups and have some fun too. Please feel welcome to reach out to me at [yk3qb@hotmail.com](mailto:yk3qb@hotmail.com).

Don't book your flights just yet. We are still in the planning phase of this DXpedition but we are ready to accept expressions of interest.

For more information, or if you'd like to register an expression of interest, or have questions, please send an email to: [dxpeditionbootcamp@gmail.com](mailto:dxpeditionbootcamp@gmail.com)

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SPEED	XXT	DAY	TIME (UTC)	EXCHANGE	SPONSOR LINK
20 - 25 wpm	MST	Monday	1300 - 1400z	Name and QSO serial number	<a href="#">International CW Council</a>
20 - 25 wpm	MST	Monday	1900 - 2000z	Name and QSO serial number	<a href="#">International CW Council</a>
20 - 25 wpm	MST	Tuesday	0300 - 0400z	Name and QSO serial number	<a href="#">International CW Council</a>
25+ wpm	CWT	Wednesday	1300 - 1400z	Name and CWops # (or S/P/C)	<a href="#">CWops</a>
25+ wpm	CWT	Wednesday	1900 - 2000z	Name and CWops # (or S/P/C)	<a href="#">CWops</a>
25+ wpm	CWT	Thursday	0300 - 0400z	Name and CWops # (or S/P/C)	<a href="#">CWops</a>
25+ wpm	CWT	Thursday	0700 - 0800z	Name and CWops # (or S/P/C)	<a href="#">CWops</a>
< 20 wpm	SST	Friday	2000 - 2100z	Name and S/P/C	<a href="#">K1USN</a>
< 20 wpm	SST	Monday	0000 - 0100z	Name and S/P/C	<a href="#">K1USN</a>



# On Learning Instant Character Recognition (ICR)

[Tom Weaver](#), W0FN (CWops #2364)

Instant Character Recognition requires knowing your Morse code ABC's. That's all. Morse code comprehension isn't complicated, but it does take time, diligence, and study. By comprehension I mean listening to Morse code, not writing letter-by-letter, then reading it later to see what was said.



Have someone quickly spell a common 4 or 5-letter word out loud to you. Like HELLO or GREEN. Did you recognize each letter? Did you 'get' the word? Was it difficult? Probably not. You've experienced Instant Character Recognition and 'word building' because you already have ICR with the spoken alphabet.

Did understanding a spelled word require a special technique? Nope - all it took was knowing your ABC's and a little spelling. When Morse code sounds are synonymous with their spoken letter sounds you've achieved ICR. However, truly *knowing* your Morse code ABC's isn't like 'remembering' them, it isn't decoding them, and it isn't a conscious process; they are too slow.

Your subconscious handles spoken letter ICR. You aren't 'remembering' or consciously 'decoding' spoken letters; you *know* them. You could think of it as having 26 finely tuned high Q receptors that automatically 'resonate' to the sound of one spoken letter each. These tuned sound receptors free your conscious mind to focus on what's being spelled instead of needing to work on recognition. Spoken letter recognition feels effortless, allowing you to build words, 'Go With the Flow', and follow the train of thought as sentences are being spelled. Morse code ICR will feel the same.

Building and recognizing words as you listen to Morse code letters arriving in rapid succession creates a sudden need for 26 tuned high Q receptors. It surprises students who feel confident they know the alphabet because they've been decoding dits and dahs successfully. Individual character practice will remain foundational throughout the ICR learning journey - that's why we continue to practice alphabetic ICR with ever-shorter recognition times even as we begin learning new skills. However, word building presents a much more rapid-fire recognition challenge - the necessity to deal with 'character flow'.

**Building Words and Recognizing Cars:** My group of childhood friends decided to get good at identifying as many makes and models of cars as possible. To improve my 'Make & Model' recognition skills and (hopefully) impress my friends I studied parked cars and many magazine pictures of cars *one at a time*.

Eventually we were standing beside busy streets competing with each other as we tried to identify as many cars as possible as they whizzed by. Cars were moving fast and each one I missed really bothered me. There were some makes and models I wasn't very good with, so I focused extra hard on those in an all-out effort to win the game. At that age it was very important to win. I kept losing - no fun!

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I finally realized by concentrating on one car to make sure I got it; I missed even seeing other cars that were right behind it. I began to think perhaps I should closely 'glance' at every car as they went by and not visually follow any one car down the road. I clearly remember that risky feeling when I abandoned 'trying to make sure'. I decided I had to accept the ones that got past me and just see what happened. Hmmm - I started winning the game!

So, how to practice ICR? I like using Word List Trainer to build sound-to-letter associations: (<https://morsecode.world/international/trainer/words.html>). Select A-Z, make the Board and Text visible, and set the Character Speed between 25 and 35 words per minute (wpm).

Click on each letter in any order you wish or in groups of five letters and listen very carefully to each sound rhythm: its unique and characteristic Morse code 'sound shape'. Rinse and repeat in three to four 5-10-minute sessions/day. Also click on each letter several times in a row and focus on associating that sound to that letter. Faster Character Speeds make hearing 'sound shapes' easier. Look at the letter, click the letter, hear the code, and speak the letter. Your goal isn't to 'decode', it's to make the Morse sound *be* the letter in your mind – just like the spoken letter. You're creating 26 high Q sound receptors, and that takes time, patience, and practice. Speaking the letter immediately after hearing its code sound helps create those tuned receptors.

NOTE: If you're a beginner and you'd like to double your fun by learning Morse code twice, that's easy! Start with a slow Character Speed of 10-12 wpm. Then later when you're ready to learn Morse code again, set the Character Speed between 25 and 35 wpm and learn the alphabet a second time - by 'sound shapes' instead of by dits and dahs. Be warned though; escaping from counting dits and dahs once you've learned it that way is tough. Creating high Q sound receptors as you listen at fast Character Speeds, and then slowing down later is easier than learning by counting dits and dahs at 10-12 wpm and then trying to speed up.

After studying Morse code letter sounds via many short practice sessions per day for at least a week, add recognition into the game. Set Morse Count = 1, Enable 'Repeat', enable 'Random', enable 'Speech' in Show and Say After, and set the Recognition Time between 1000-1500 ms; 1 to 1.5 seconds. Click 'Play' and try to 'Beat the Computer' by speaking the letter before the computer does. Keep it fun and keep your practice sessions under 10-15 minutes.

You always want to miss some – adjust the Recognition Time up or down to stay in or near the 'Learning Zone' where you miss about 40% and get about 60%. Missing isn't failure in this game; it's essential practice. You won't become proficient at recovering instantly from missing if you don't practice it. Recognition and non-Recognition are two sides of the same coin; ICR with Morse code requires mastery (and acceptance) of both outcomes.

As you improve, drive your letter Recognition Time down – to 100 ms or less. Spend extra time on troublesome characters. Even a few slow-to-recognize letters can derail your comprehension. As you improve and Recognition Time shortens, you're transitioning from slow conscious 'decoding' to the faster and nearly effortless recognition enabled by your newly created 26 tuned sound receptors. Be patient, their 'tuning' will continue to improve with time and practice!

Get on the air as soon as you know the alphabet reasonably well (assuming you have your ama-

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teur radio license) and have practiced enough with numbers to recognize most of them. Get an HF radio, a straight key, or a dual lever paddle, and put up a simple wire antenna. Being on the air supercharges the ICR learning process. In fact, achieving ICR without being on the air is virtually impossible. As Glenn Norman W4YES says *“don’t wait to get good to get on the air, get on the air to get good”*. Find a code buddy at or near your level and schedule regular on-air QSOs. Laugh about mistakes and mess up with reckless abandon together. As Dr. Seuss would say “If you never did you should. These things are fun, and fun is good.”

Variability plays an important role in mastering complex skills; being on the air exposes you to a variety of Morse code at different speeds and tempos. Some good, some bad, but all are good practice! Don’t worry about mistakes or not understanding what’s being sent to you in a QSO; resist the temptation to write letter-by-letter - that eliminates comprehension. Just close your eyes and listen; you’ll get better, and nobody cares about mistakes. Don’t be the only one that cares; it will really hold you back.

Achieving Morse code ICR will begin to feel like someone is spelling words to you in English. The temptation to jump into word practice once you think you know the Morse code alphabet and leave letter-by-letter practice behind is strong. That’s OK – go ahead and give it a try. You’ll soon learn that word and phrase practice quickly reveal poorly tuned sound receptors and weak sound-to-letter associations. *Continue working on your alphabetic ICR every day!* Be patient with yourself; get on the air and practice consistently with several short 10–15-minute sessions per day. Keep it fun, no self-judgement allowed!

So, the initial value of word practice is a quick check on the strength of your ‘alphabetic ICR’ skill level. Being unable to comprehend 4 or 5-letter words as letters arrive indicates ‘decoding’, a slow and laborious conscious process. Words longer than three letters will be very difficult, and short phrases will make your head explode. You may think you *know* the Morse code alphabet, but you really don’t. Building words as letters arrive and following a train of thought require finely tuned ‘high Q’ Morse code sound receptors that bypass the need for conscious recognition.

See (<https://morsecode.ninja/learn/index.html#LearnToFollowLetterByLetter>) to see what I mean about listening to spelled-out words, phrases, and sentences. Major thanks to Stephen Phillips for creating Morsecode.World and to Kurt Zoglmann for creating Morsecode.ninja. Sincere appreciation to both of you!

*The path to ICR requires building new high Q sound receptors and/or strong sound-to-letter associations every day in addition to practicing with words and phrases and being on the air.*

As you approach alphabetic and numeric ICR, your conscious mind is freed from recognition duties and on-air QSOs become more fun and less scary. Your mind will build words as the letters arrive and follow trains of thought. It begins to feel like a spoken language. ICR is a foundational skill that benefits all aspects of the art; it frees you to experience and enjoy the gratification of communicating with Morse code around the world. Sending conversational CW will feel like musical instrument mastery; it’s addictive, rhythmic and very gratifying.

Morse code comprehension using ICR on the air with other CW operators and soon-to-be friends

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around the world can occasionally put you 'in the flow'; an amazing feeling normally reserved for world class athletes and musicians. That rare feeling is something you *permit* to happen; you can't make it happen. When it does, it feels spooky it's so effortless.

The Long Island CW Club <https://longislandcwclub.org> and CWops <https://cwops.org> are both great places to learn Morse code. CWops offers the well-known CW Academy, and the Long Island CW Club is a large welcoming community that offers approximately 70 open classes on every aspect of Ham radio and Morse code imaginable. The Long Island CW Club hosts an Introduction to ICR class by me (W0FN) and Glenn (W4YES) on Wednesday evenings, with perhaps other ICR classes to come in 2023. If you're a member of the Long Island CW Club, stop by sometime; we'd enjoy seeing you.

Achieving Instant Character Recognition with Morse code is worth the effort. It's simpler than you think, it's a remarkably rewarding learning journey, and its great cognitive exercise.

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## A Walk Through a CWT

[Jack Schuster](#), W1WEF (CWops #48)

I love the CWTs. They have become my favorite contest. I try to do all three sessions every Wednesday. One hour in the chair is perfect for this OM...I cant sit for 20 or more hours straight any more.

I thought I'd share what a CWT is like for me from my station in CT and offer a few tips for less seasoned testers along the way. I always run 1500W with my IC-7610 and AL1500. My single 108 ft tower is topped by an XM240 at 116 ft and a TH6 at 108ft. On 80m I have an 85 ft high dipole, and a wire 4 square, and on Top band an Inverted L. My goal in CWTs is to top my personal best, and to have fun no matter what the propagation allows. Of course I look at how I place among my one radio peers, and I even beat W8FJ ONCE...hi. My dear old friend Dean, N6BV, used to say the fun is AFTER the contest when you see how well you did.

I love to RUN, and often sit on one frequency for the whole hour. Today I'm on 14.026 MHz. I never use spots, and my motto is SO1V forever! Call me lazy if you like, but my way is easier than S&P or SO2V or SO2R and especially 2BSIQ! If I was in a DX test, I certainly would stop running at least once an hour to look for mults and every time I do I find them.

N1MM is my preference for logging with more features than I need. I'm sure many newbies looking at MM for the first time are intimidated by the manual with over 900 pages, but I think everything I use could be covered in three pages! One lesson learned was to turn my radio on before starting N1MM. If I bring the program up first, it sometimes does not log the right frequency or control the radio. An alternative I'm told is to bring up the band map and click "Reset the Radio"

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Before the start, I look for a clear frequency about 15 or 20 minutes early. Sometimes I find a nice quiet frequency but 5 minutes later I get clobbered by key clicks and have to move. This reminds me of something NC0B pointed out in the last Dayton CTU I attended. Rob said probably the most important improvement for radio manufacturers to work on is KEY CLIX! This happens too often, and I have to wonder if everyone has their rise time set to 6ms or more. It is also important to have the transmit delay to 15ms or more. I learned these two points the hard way, by having friends point out that I had clicks!

OK, its getting close to the starting bell. I like to keep the frequency warm by calling CQ and working a few stations. Besides holding the frequency I get a feel for propagation. Let me first mention code speed. When I started doing CWTs I usually did 36 wpm and always wondered if the new slower ops could copy me. I've moved up to 40wpm and it is gratifying to have many CWA ops come back. Once in a while when the response to my CQ's slows, I'll reduce my speed but it doesn't seem to matter. I just hope no one is using code readers...I doubt if they are.

The clock hits 1900Z. My IC-7610 clock is manually synched with WWV but occasionally gets off by a few seconds and I readjust it. The clock in the 7610 is the only one I have that displays seconds. I call CQ CWT W1WEF. There are a bunch of guys responding, all on the same frequency! Rather than say QRZ and have them repeat, I wait and one guy realizes I didn't go back to ANYONE, so he drops his call again and I work him. If S&Pers would just set their XIT off zero beat by as little as 30hz, I would distinguish them from the rest and read their call, even if they are weaker than the others. At the end of the first minute I have 5 Qs in the log. I like to thin the initial pileup by intentionally not signing my call for up to a minute. Later, I'll sign after no more than 3 Qs, but if I had a pileup at the start and I signed every time, it just may get bigger; I would wind up working the loudest station first. Those who were there before I signed may go away.

The next two minutes put 8 more Qs in the log. I can tell this is going to be a good day! I'm usually happy with 3 Qs a minute, but today I have loud Europeans in the log in the first few minutes. In the third minute, 1902Z, SM0CCE, F5PLC, M0RYB call in, and the next minute includes SM7CIL, OL8R (always loud!) and HB9DAX. Although the band is exceptionally good to Europe today, my SECRET weapon helped to attract all those EU stations. My "secret" weapon is a dipole broadside to Europe. I can switch to the dipole with the flip of a toggle switch, and it's amazing how much louder EU gets compared to the back of the beam. At 1915 I have 49 Qs including one dupe. If a dupe calls in its easier to work it again than to start explaining "we just worked two minutes ago". It's a good idea to always put dupes in the log. At the halfway mark I have 97 Qs, better than my average.

The rate keeps up with 2 or 3 a minute, but it sometimes drops to 1 and I have to CQ ten times before getting an answer! I hate when that happens, but luckily it picks up again and I'm back at 3 or 4 per minute. I think I might have operated more CWTs staying on one band and one frequency than I've operated on more than one band, but when conditions aren't as stellar as they are today, when the rate drops to one a minute, I would be seriously thinking of changing bands. When I do change bands, I have to switch my tube amp manually and retune to the pre-marked spots . I recently built an automatic antenna switch interface though, that makes band changing easier by selecting the primary antenna for whatever band I select on the 7610.

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When you operate CWTs as often as I do, you get to recognize calls and some fists. Sometimes if I only catch the last two letters I know who it is...but not always. Was it K1DW or N4DW? Sometimes I guess wrong and have to revert to the reverse lookup feature in the call history file. Thanks to VE2FK for providing it, but CWT is the only contest I would ever use it in. You still have to copy the exchange because there are a few mistakes to keep you on your toes.

I have a few buddies who know enough to call a bit off zero beat, so when I hear "ZZ" I recognize Stu's fist and I log N7ZZ. If it's "SS" it's Danny K7SS. "NA" is NA8V. If "UU" calls and is puny weak it's W1UU, but if it's LOUD it's N2UU. Then there are the "KWs", but both K2KW and KD2KW are Ken's, so the name doesn't help... especially if it was VE7KW!

With 15 minutes to go, I'm still happy with my rate but the last 15 minutes can make or break a good score. Sometimes the last 5 minutes makes the difference. I wrap it up with WS5C just making it into the log. What better station to wrap up a great hour than a guy named "HAM"? In the end I have 179 Qs and 32,041 pts, one of my best hours ever. I counted 38 EU Qs, which I think is the most ever for me. It's been fun and I'm looking forward to 0300...after a nap! See you in the next CWT.

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## CWops Digital Voice System

**Dick Strassburger, N9EEE (CWops #3113)**

CWops members have the availability to talk with each other, globally, through the CWops Digital Voice System. If you have a System Fusion, D-Star, DMR, P25, NXDN radio, or FM analog radio for AllStar and a hotspot or digital access via a repeater, you have the necessary capability of talking with other members wherever they may be, at home, on vacation, or motoring the roadways.

The system was designed by Ed Parsons, K6HP and implemented with Raspbian / Linux coding help from Dave Young, WB6DTB (not a CW enthusiast...yet !). Initially, they used Yaesu's WIRES-X digital voice system and then evolved to include the other digital modes, and analog AllStar. It's almost a study in quantum electronics to understand how all these modes tie together without looping, interloping, and interfering with each other, yet Ed says it's quite simple, yet complex. We'll get to that in a moment.

The driving initiative behind Ed's desire for this digital voice network was to provide a means for CWops' CW Academy students and CWA Advisors to arrange skeds with one another for on-air practice. As an instructor, he was looking for a means for the dozens of instructors and hundreds of students to connect with each other, albeit randomly, in pursuit of developing the on-air skills being learned in the twice-weekly Zoom sessions. A byproduct of this effort would be in creating relationships that may last beyond the 8-week courses. Previous

### VOICE MODES SUPPORTED

DMR

Fusion (Yaesu)

D-Star (ICOM, Kenwood)

P-25 (Tier 1 & 2)

NXDN (Kenwood)

Allstar (analog)

[How to connect](#)

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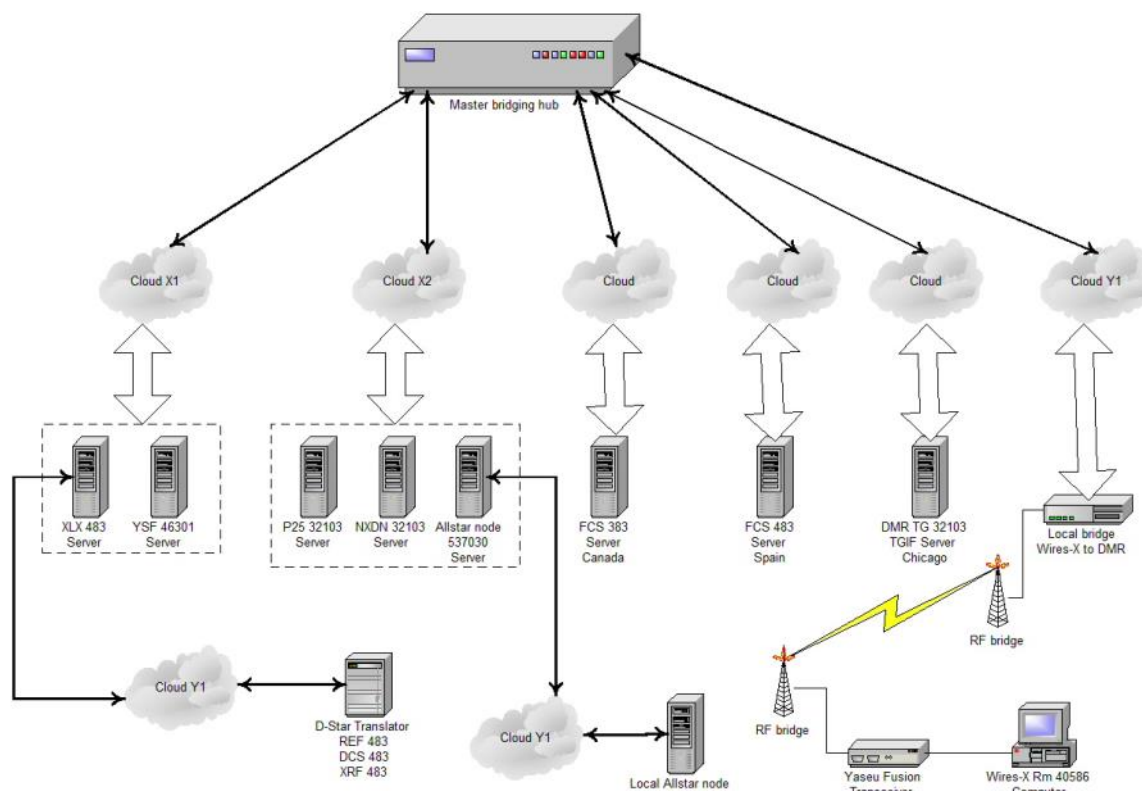
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attempts at using email to set up on-air skeds fall short due to the latency of sending the request and receiving a reply after the fact. The SKCC Sked page had also been off-line for over a year leaving no known real time place to set up skeds, as well as having the opportunity to talk about CW on-air when propagation was not decent on the HF bands.

Like any new effort, it is experiencing a slow ramp-up of usage, so Ed wants it known that the CWops Digital Voice System is for all CWops members to use, not just the Academy. For example, a "soapbox" could be created for CWops members to globally discuss their challenges and successes during the recent CWO, CWT, DXpeditions, or large contests, as well as DX discussion. Consider it the digital voice version of the [groups.io](https://groups.io) listserv in real time.

Ed and I had a nice, long QSO - me on Fusion, him on DMR - without any glitches. The system is not tied to any repeater, leaving the system unencumbered other than the pesky 3-minute time-out timer embedded in the WIRES-X software. The audio was clean and clear with no latency issues, though combining digital voice modes may introduce some cut-off issues if one is not leaving at least a one second pause between transmissions.

The majority of the software to make the digital system mix or "bridge" each mode to the others is all done on a server at a server farm. Unfortunately, using D-Star and Yaesu's Wires-X (digital linking system) cannot have the hardware placed at the server farm so Dave and I host the software, hardware and internet connection needed to provide bridging back to the server for D-Star and Wires-X. The bridging between modes is transparent unless you have an ear for audio. The audio between modes and their bridges to the other modes needs to be improved a little but is acceptable. Dave provided me with this block diagram.



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## Hot Spots and Apps

A “Hot Spot” using a Raspberry Pi, the RF board (available from several sources) and if fancy over functional is desired a 3.5” touch screen with display software from basic to interactive can be added with a C4 Labs case for Pi-Star information display. The Pi-Star based “Hot Spots” can cross mode to other modes except for D-Star. Another “Hot Spot” that can cross mode from any of the available modes to other modes, including D-Star yet only on newest model, is the Shark RF Open Spot 4 Pro, not to be confused with the OS-4 Standard which can’t cross mode on D-Star. The OS-3, 2 and 1 are available on the used market. I do not recommend the OS-2 as it had Wi-Fi issues making connections to your internet source untenable at times. If you can find an OS-3 used it is a good “Hot Spot” as well as the OS-1 (but OS-1 with no Wi-Fi – uses ethernet connection only). The Open Spot 1 is no longer supported by Shark RF for firmware upgrades but it is perfectly capable of being used on all of the digital audio modes within the CWOps system unless a previous owner has attempted modifications (D-Star will not cross mode and it cannot connect to actual D-Star trust server reflectors – It can connect to any of the many XLS servers that have D-Star enabled ). The newest version of the Open Spot is the model 4, which is expensive. However, the OS-4 can be tethered to your cell phone or cell modem and with a built-in battery (inside the OS-4) it easily slips into a pocket. Add your favorite flavor of digital radio and you can operate portable from your car or while taking a walk, during which you can be in QSO to someone else on the same system from around the world. Their website is here: [openSPOT4 – SharkRF](#)

There are two applications available for cell phones and tablets using Android on the Play store. The apps are Droid Star and Dude Star. Droid Star seems to be more stable currently. Normally the best modes to use on the Droid Star app is either DMR or Fusion. No radio or “Hot Spot” is needed when using these apps. A caution though as the apps are beta and have some glitches. One glitch I found on Droid Star is a PTT lock up. Closing and re-opening the app is the only way to stop the “transmitter” from a constant key up (i.e. a “stuck mic”). There is no official version of these apps for Apple / iOS to my knowledge but here is a URL explaining how to use it on an Apple device.

There is software for a “Hot Spot” (Pi-Star) written by Andy, MW0MWZ and two other EU hams who provide it free of charge to hams. It is constantly being updated and is used with a Raspberry Pi 3B or 3B+ (a Raspberry Pi 4B will work but heat becomes an issue) with a daughter RF board plugged into the Raspberry Pi GPIO pins, to create the “Hot Spot”. Check out the Pi-Star site for more information: [Who is behind Pi-Star? - pistar.uk](#)

[How to Install Droidstar on an Apple iPhone / iOS Device – W4ULH.net](#) I have not watched the You Tube video or checked to see if it works but it appears it is possible. The apps are a fantastic way to try using digital audio until you decide to invest in a digital radio and some form of a “Hot Spot” to do RF to VOIP to RF so that it is more like using a repeater than just talking into your cell phone or tablet. It is safe to say that the CW Ops digital system is not currently overloaded, so I have been passing the information for use of it to SKCC and FIST members, to use for making Skeds etc. —Ed Parsons, K6HP

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In our hobby, as technology evolves so do our behavior and habits using them. Only by testing and using new technology do we understand its true value.

This is a free service from a member volunteer, so it goes without saying, but I'll say it, respect the system for the purpose as it was intended, and use it so the architects feel appreciated for their efforts. **My thanks to Ed Parsons, K6HP #1267 and Dave Young, WB6DTB for the use of the digital voice network and background and technical information necessary to write this article.** There is some significant financial investment that created and maintains this system. But it's their pure joy in making it available to CWops members that provides all the rewards.

Ed recently related that D-Star and Wires-X are down due to a local internet issue. Hopefully, they will be back up soon after the new year.

**73, Dick, N9EEE #3113**

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## Membership Committee Update

**Mark Beckwith, N5OT (CWops #2198)**

### **2023 Will be Remembered**

I thought I could write a few words about the ongoing effort of your Membership Committee. We've been talking with the governors and committees, and everyone agrees there are still a lot of amateur radio operators out there who might yet make excellent members of our club. Our committee's task is to maximize the efficiency of the process!

We want to make it a goal: "2023 is the year of the big membership push." Instead of leaving the identification and nomination process to chance as we have up to this point, we are considering how to identify more candidates, and how to more methodically get them nominated and sponsored. Remember, it takes four CWops members to agree a given operator is qualified for the honor!

Starting in 2023, we will use various methods to identify candidates, and upgrade the way we engage CWops members to nominate and sponsor those candidates. The ideas include examining a spectrum of possible sources: as always, on-air QSO activity reported by members, but also seeking clues from more organized programs like Parks on the Air, Summits on the Air, the Giving Back Program, the Reverse Beacon Network, the CW Academy, and logs from CWops and other on-air events. Our committee has been examining ways to tease the desired clues out of the various programs. For instance, an analysis of the past three years of CW Open logs yielded 73 operators who are not members of our club who'd made 200 or more QSOs! With further analysis, it would not surprise me to see the same callsigns begin to appear over and over.

We will centralize the activity by posting these callsigns, engaging CWops members for a reality check, asking candidates if they are open to nomination, then making it easy to nominate and

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sponsor with mouse clicks rather than filling out separate forms. The list will be longer, and the action required simpler, than they currently are. This will result in a greater throughput of nominations and sponsorships.

At the CWops dinner at RONA during the Dayton Hamvention in May, our committee will enjoy an in-person meeting of all committee members and liaisons who are present at the Hamvention. We will follow that with an in-person focus group for interested CWops members who wish to participate. It is our hope that accelerating this plan will allow us to look back on 2023 as the year of the surge!

As always, see you on the air!

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## Giving Back Update

**[Rob Brownstein](#), K6RB (CWops #3)**

CWops' Giving Back (GB) program is meant to provide on-air QSO experience and practice for anyone who wants it. It was initially intended as a way for our CW Academy students to get some on-air experience. We all know that when there is activity on the bands, these days, it's usually a DXpedition pileup or a contest. Today's CW aspirants have had little chance to work others who are skilled at CW, operate at moderate speed, and are committed to helping. That's the mission of Giving Back. The GB volunteers get on the air at approximately 7 PM local time and seek out CQers, or call CQ, and engage in routine QSOs including some conversational tidbits. The operators' schedule appears on the next page.

Here are the November results:

**AA0YY:** WA4IAR, WI0S, KI5NVM, KA2BKG, KF9JA, N5DR, KC5WN, WB6NMR, NS7E, W01W

**E25JRP:** E25HGQ, E24ZST, E20MWE, HS2KWO, BD7OB

**G0POT:** M0NNK, HB9GUR, IV3GSO, 2E0HXE, M7KTE

**GW2CWO:** UX0DA, EA3HTZ, IU5DAH, EA7BGR, SM6Y, SA7JQ, HB9BSU, SP1NQU, DG9VH, OZ7MA, OE6AJD, IU1FOV, R7KBB, IU3EGK, M0MZZ, IW2US, DL2DBG, I5ECW, IZ1FIJ, DL1CWM, G4HXY, EA3AKP, R4LA, IK4WLA, DH3JZ, DK5KF

**JJ1FXF:** JA2CJE, JA4IJ (2), JH3KDZ, JA3EBL, JF5XPJ, HL5BLF, DS1TZE, JE6WGA, JO2NZH

**JJ1VNV:** JF5XPJ, JS2LOG, JQ1JFW, JH1BSK, JF1DFA, JK1MGC, JG1UQD, JK1EDT/1

**JO1DGE:** 9M2LAN, JJ5QLV, JM8GWK

**JM4AOA:** JE6WGA, JR1JWR

**JR1WYW:** JG1BGT, JF3TBK, JF5XPJ, JI5JPR, JF9RXH

**K6RB:** KC9FLI, K1CAL, W3WHK, VE7BGJ (5), NF7N, KK7RR, K2ZNC, NX6BC, WA9VDW, W0ITT, KH6DLK, W0BAC

**K7NJ:** K5LG, WB3JKQ, WB6DMX, K3LU, WB6RVP, WA6JCH, VE7ZWA, N6EED, WB5YPZ, W5PB, F6ABG, KA5IFX, KD2NFZ, K4ZNC, N5OLA, WA5APW, AB0BM, KE5HL, WA4JYX, K9WWT, KG9DW, N0IMJ, NU2J, VE4AKF, AE4GX, AG5XU, AA2UP, W4HTM, KY4GS, NN0QTE, W3IMD, NC1IA, W4EAP, KD2CRG, NS7E, K1DFT, NE9H, N0ZT

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**K8UDH:** AC5P, W9BZ

**KV8Q:** K8MPH, N5VF, W1AAF, KC0MY

**N2GSL:** N2TNN, K1PUG, K1YRW, KU4E, K4NE, AA8NN

**N4TMM:** N2JPR, KP4Q, K3NVI

**N5OT:** K2OHK, WB0GKH, CM3OR, K1CAL, W4CI, KA1EFO, K1KTF

**W2XS:** AA2YK, AC4BN, AA2YK, W3ZRW, NR3M, VE2DEQ, K4LXY, KC0CCR, K3WWP

**W5DT:** N3HAM, N5URL

**W8OV:** WB8APR, KI5PGL, W4YGT, KK7CCP, W4MA, K4ZNC, KK4BMB, KB0HXL, K0CDJ, K3HZP, KC7VOU

**WE5P:** VE1YVN, WB4DKF

**7N2XZB:** JE6WGA (3), HL5JYJ, JF5XPJ (2), JA4IJJ (3), JF9RXH, JK1PWT

Giving Back Operating Schedule - 7 PM Local 40 meters 7.035-7.045 MHz and/or 80 meters 3.535-3.545 MHz											
UTC+9	UTC+7	UTC+3	UTC+2	UTC+1	UTC/BST	UTC-1	EDT UTC-4	CDT UTC-5	MDT UTC-6	PDT UTC-7	Hawaii UTC-9
<b>Mon</b>											
JH2HTQ					G2CWO		W2XS	AA0YY		N6HCN	
JO1DGE							WK4WC				
<b>TUE</b>											
JH2HTQ	E25JRP		SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N4TMM	W8OV	K7NJ	K6RB	
JR1WYW							WE5P		K0ES		
7N2XZB											
<b>Wed</b>											
JH2HTQ							K3ZGA	W2ITT			
JM4AOA								K8UDH			
<b>Thurs</b>											
JH2HTQ			SV2BBK				KV8Q	N5OT	K7NJ		
JJ1VNV											
<b>FRI</b>											
JH2HTQ			SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N2GSL	AA0YY	WB7S	K6RB	
JR1WYW											
<b>Sat</b>											
JJ1FXF											
JM4AOA											
<b>Sun</b>											
JJ1FXF				IZ8NXG			W5DT			K6RB	
JM4AOA											





# CW Academy

[Joe Fischer, AA8TA](#) [Bob Carter, WR7Q](#) [Roland Smith, K7OJL](#)

By the time this article is published, we will have released student-advisor assignments ahead of the January 2023 semester. Students continue to sign up and even those who sign up in December could be placed in a class. This depends on how many students and how many advisors are available in certain areas. In some cases, we need more students so we are able to place late signups. It does not always work out for everyone who signs up right before a semester starts but sometimes things work out.



We would like to remind students that the CW Academy does not charge a fee in order to participate in a class. Some students may need to purchase a paddle or a keyer/code oscillator combination although we recommend trying to borrow if finances are tight. We list the items that students are expected to have on hand at the start of the semester on our web site and we invite potential students to peruse this list ahead of time.

Questions about adjusting paddles sometimes are sent to us and we encourage advisors to assist their students in setting up their paddles for ease of use and comfort. We do not recommend making frequent adjustments since “muscle memory” quickly develops and sending can be hampered by making frequent adjustments.

One of our requirements is committing to practicing for 45 minutes to 60 minutes every day. This does not have to be 60 minutes of continuous practice and for many people, it works out well to break practicing into several smaller units. Each person will probably learn or know when their mind starts to tire. Pushing things at this point is not always productive. We do not recommend practicing much more than 60 minutes (total) in a day in order to keep from getting burned out. Some people can practice much longer than that but it is not something everybody can or should do.

We emphasize quality practice over just sitting in a room for 60 minutes and staring at a wall. Quality practice involves actually training the mind and not letting it wander off to other things or not paying attention to what is being practiced.

An additional expectation is having and keeping a positive attitude. Coming into a class expecting to fail or have a hard time will probably lead to just that. Telling oneself that one will be successful is a big part of being successful and having some fun.

Many of us have learned things during the course of our lives such as learning a musical instrument, a foreign language, a sport or a professional skill. These efforts usually involve studying which is training our brains for something new. Learning Morse code is no different really. It can be done and has been thousands of times.

Give us a try. You'll learn something cool, meet some interesting people and have some fun.

**73, AA8TA, Joe (CWops #1821)** CWA co-Manager

# New Members

[Trung Nguyen, W6TN](#)

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

<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>
3278	N1QD*	Joe	3281	N6TN*	Bruce	3284	E25KAE*	Bun
3279	ZA1ME	Miri	3282	K4PV*	Jim	3285	E29TGW*	Mew
3280	VA6TI*	Ty	3283	G4KLE	Merv			

\* = Life Member

## Current Nominees

As of December 6, 2022

### Need Sponsors:

### Invitations Extended:

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](mailto: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** (CWops #1707)

Membership Manager

Did your **CALL SIGN** change recently?

Did you move to a **NEW ADDRESS** or change your **NAME** ?

Congratulations!

Help us keep our **DATABASE UP-TO-DATE**

Click [HERE](#) to update your contact information.



# CWops Tests

[Rich Ferch](#), VE3KI

We are into the final stretch in the chase for CWT medals or certificates. As of December 2 we had completed 192 of our 204 CWT sessions this year, and 449 CWops members had reached at least the bronze medal level. By the end of the year, that number will undoubtedly grow, probably to somewhere close to last year's total of 478. The total number of reported CWT participants so far this year is 1,450. This number will also grow during the remaining weeks, again most likely until it is somewhere near last year's total of 1,471 amateurs who reported CWT scores at 3803scores.com.

The participation certificates and the gold, silver and bronze achievement certificates will be managed the same way this year as last year. By mid-January, the list of callsigns qualifying for certificates will be compiled and sent to Fabian DJ5CW, who manages the certificate web page. If you reported at least one CWT score during 2022 to 3830scores.com, once the list of certificates has been finalized you will be able to go to the certificate web page at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/certificate/>, enter your callsign and download your 2022 participation certificate as a pdf file. If the number of your reported scores reached the gold, silver or bronze medal level, your certificate will automatically reflect that status. You can see what the gold, silver, bronze and participation certificates look like on that web page.



There will be a change in the way the gold, silver and bronze medallions are distributed to qualifying members this year. They will no longer be free. There will be a \$10 USD charge for each medallion to help defray the procurement and mailing costs. The procedure for requesting a medallion will change as well. First, you should check to make sure that you qualified for a medallion, either by checking the list that will be published in the newsletter in early 2023, or by downloading your 2022 certificate to see whether it is a gold, silver or bronze level award. If it is, you will be able to order your medallion through the CWT page on the CWops website at <https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/>. The deadline for ordering medallions will be the end of February. Once the procurement order has been sent at the beginning of March, it will no longer be possible to add to the order, so you will need to get your orders in on time. To jog your memories, there will be reminder announcements on the groups.io listserv and in the coming issues of *Solid Copy*.

Enjoy the CWTs and keep those reported scores coming!

**73, Rich VE3KI** (CWops #783)

CWT Manager



# CWops Member Awards

[Bill Gilliland, WØTG](#)

## Monthly Update

**The January 2023 Member Awards summary will reflect the final QSO totals for 2022. Please submit your December logs by January 2, 2023, so they may be included. ACA QSO totals will revert to zero to begin the new year on January 3, 2023.**

During November, additional members submitted logs and the number of active participants in the awards program increased to 274 participants. The QSO totals and rankings for the first week of December 2022 have the same familiar calls in the top four positions with **KR2Q** remaining in first place and leading second place **AA3B** by 117 QSOs. The changes in the top ten rankings this month are **KG9X** moving into fifth place followed by **NA8V**, **K3WJV**, **N5ZO**, **K7QA** and **DL6KVA** in sixth through tenth place. The top ten this month are **KR2Q**, **AA3B**, **K3WW**, **N5RZ**, **KG9X**, **NA8V**, **K3WJV**, **N5ZO**, **K7QA** and **DL6KVA**.

With the addition this month of **DJ5CW** fifty-eight members have now contacted CWops members in 100 or more DXCC entities. The number of participants who have accomplished CWops WAS grew to 167 this month with the addition of **F5SGI**, **K0HB**, **K0WA**, **K1RF**, **KY0Q**, **KY4GS**, **N3C-KI**, **W4CMG**, **W8OV** and **WN7S**. You can see complete rankings for all award categories at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/scores>.

## CWops Award Tools Participation

The Top 100 ACA scores reported in Solid Copy represent **active** participants only, meaning you must have submitted a log in the current year. Since ACA scores reset to zero at the beginning of each year, active participants are those shown with a non-zero ACA score.

At the end of 2021 we had 257 active participants in the Member Awards Program. As of December 4, 2022, we have 274 active participants, exceeding last year's participation. If you haven't yet submitted any logs for 2022, please do so soon, and we can include your score among the participants.

Inactive participants previously achieved scores in categories other than ACA that are not shown in the Searchable and Sortable Scores Table. To see rankings and scores for both active and inactive participants please use the Score Overview Table where inactive participants are listed with ACA scores of zero, but their scores in other categories are listed at the highest level that was previously submitted.

You can see the final 2021 scores or final scores for any other year by going to the Score Overview Table and selecting the desired year from the "Final scores:" list at the top of the page. All scores categories on the page will then show the final scores and standings for the end of the selected year.

The Searchable and Sortable Table can graph your current year's ACA scores by date and allows you to compare your progression to that of others. Check the Plot button for the calls you wish to

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see plotted and they will all appear on the same graph.

The CWops Award Tools website main page provides a means of printing your CWT Participation Certificate. You may request a downloadable certificate by clicking the "CWT certificate download" selection at the top of the page. For more information about CWT Participation Awards, please go to <https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/>.

## About the CWops Member Awards Program

Several operating awards are available for contacting CWops members. These include Annual Competition Award (ACA) recognizing the total number of CWops members contacted in a single year, Cumulative Membership Award (CMA) recognizing the total number of members contacted on each amateur band since January 3, 2010, CWops WAS Award for contacting members in all 50 states, CWops DXCC Award for contacting members in countries on the ARRL DXCC list, CWops WAE Award for contacting members in Europe, and CWops WAZ Award for contacting members in each of the 40 CQ zones. All contacts must be via CW and between current CWops members. To qualify for these awards, you must submit your logs via the tool at the CWops Award Tools website <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/>. You can also print out your awards certificates at that same website.

A set of tools for managing your awards status is provided on the CWops Award Tools website and if you regularly upload your logs your awards will be automatically tracked for you. **To view complete data for all currently active participants and see where you and others rank among active participants in the awards program, use the tools at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/scores-by-call>.** For more details on the tools provided, see the August 2021 Solid Copy article.

## Please Join Us!

Fabian, DJ5CW, who created the website and the tools, made it extremely easy to participate in the awards program. If you are not among the CWops members who are currently participating, please join us! It adds a lot of friendly competition and fun to your operating.

## More Information

For more information on the CWops Awards Program, please go to <https://cwops.org/contact-us/awards/>, and address any questions or comments to [cwopscam@w0tg.com](mailto:cwopscam@w0tg.com).

## Current ACA Top 100

Here are the top 100 ACA scores for the first week of December 2022:

Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ	Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ
1	KR2Q	1885	7423	161	50	56	37	8	N5ZO	1372	8336	109	50	46	34
2	AA3B	1768	12697	130	50	48	38	9	K7QA	1337	5729	86	50	39	29
3	K3WW	1625	9827	133	50	50	38	10	DL6KVA	1336	6978	182	50	62	37
4	N5RZ	1533	8455	124	50	46	36	11	N7US	1318	6023	113	50	43	33
5	KG9X	1416	5863	90	50	40	27	12	K4WW	1273	5061	84	50	38	29
6	NA8V	1389	7738	112	50	47	35	12	W1RM	1273	8433	216	50	62	38
7	K3WJV	1379	7171	115	50	49	31	13	N5AW	1261	5606	97	50	45	33

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Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ	Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ
14	KC7V	1247	5455	90	50	36	32	59	K4TZ	912	2801	43	50	20	16
15	DK9PY	1238	4219	102	50	45	32	60	KY0Q	900	2804	57	50	26	24
16	K1VUT	1232	5241	78	50	41	24	61	KT5V	896	3325	79	50	29	29
17	VE3KI	1223	7287	139	50	53	37	62	K0HB	894	4029	84	50	36	31
18	AA5JF	1215	3859	89	50	43	30	63	AC6ZM	890	4074	66	50	36	22
19	K3JT	1196	5501	103	50	46	30	64	KC4WQ	889	3172	57	50	28	25
20	WT9U	1193	5620	103	50	41	30	65	N2UU	883	5319	112	50	46	31
21	K3PP	1183	5393	103	50	45	28	66	DF7TV	862	2700	100	50	48	34
22	K6NR	1180	4677	66	50	32	28	67	KM4FO	855	2910	46	50	18	16
23	W1AJT	1177	3553	93	50	43	31	67	N3CKI	855	1865	45	50	25	16
24	CO8NMN	1166	4201	72	50	35	23	68	KA1YQC	854	2131	61	50	33	20
25	VE3TM	1161	3677	88	50	43	26	69	W2CDO	843	2701	64	50	36	21
26	VK2GR	1129	2221	73	49	38	28	70	WS7L	836	2241	50	50	23	20
27	K1ESE	1113	5799	130	50	47	36	71	W4CMG	828	1771	44	50	21	18
27	K9WX	1113	5079	101	50	40	30	72	OZ3SM	824	2801	104	49	49	35
28	K5AX	1111	4852	93	50	38	32	72	PA0INA	824	2078	89	48	44	31
29	W0UO	1110	3853	64	50	34	23	72	W1UU	824	4322	114	50	41	33
30	K0WA	1109	2356	40	50	18	17	73	W6LAX	820	2303	42	49	20	21
31	N4CWZ	1097	3090	57	50	33	20	74	K0AF	817	1312	45	50	22	18
32	W8FN	1096	4023	72	50	36	23	75	KE8G	810	3361	78	50	35	25
33	NJ3K	1092	3515	66	50	38	21	76	EA6BF	807	1974	72	46	42	29
34	K1DJ	1091	4690	107	50	44	29	76	F5SGI	807	2176	95	50	49	30
35	WT3K	1086	4235	83	50	42	27	77	K4EU	803	1411	47	48	27	19
36	W9ILY	1083	6198	134	50	45	36	78	G4LPP	801	2130	86	49	45	30
37	K3QP	1077	3083	76	50	37	24	79	K4GM	798	3833	85	50	37	27
38	N5KD	1061	2532	87	50	40	33	80	SM6CUK	797	4565	156	50	56	38
39	N1DC	1050	4921	86	50	40	24	81	N4FP	792	2650	59	50	32	20
40	WN7S	1039	4200	77	50	37	26	82	EA1X	791	2570	76	48	42	28
41	9A1AA	1035	4424	125	49	52	38	83	W9SN	783	1353	51	49	30	21
42	K1EBY	1034	3968	94	50	42	31	84	W0NF	778	1418	27	50	11	15
42	KK0U	1034	2372	53	50	28	22	85	W3WHK	777	3118	73	50	34	21
43	W4WF	1030	4529	92	50	42	32	86	K8AJ	776	4202	104	50	44	31
44	W0VX	1019	5758	128	50	45	36	87	EA3FZT	762	2169	78	48	45	25
45	NA4J	1008	3700	74	50	34	24	87	W0GAS	762	1988	44	50	18	20
46	KV8Q	983	2904	67	50	33	23	88	DJ5CW	758	3040	100	48	53	34
47	N3QE	966	7346	128	50	48	35	89	K8JQ	742	4699	65	50	31	23
48	N8BJQ	962	7480	133	50	48	39	90	K3ZGA	741	2080	56	50	30	19
49	K3ZA	959	2549	50	50	33	18	91	I2WIJ	739	3811	93	49	44	32
50	WA4JUK	946	3810	84	50	41	26	92	GW0ETF	730	3984	115	50	50	35
51	WT2P	944	4642	85	50	31	27	93	W6AYC	724	2524	45	50	19	22
52	K1SM	935	4167	132	50	46	36	94	OK1RR	718	3842	148	50	52	38
52	K2TW	935	3728	62	50	32	22	95	K0TC	717	3019	62	50	27	22
53	AF5J	931	2627	57	50	23	23	95	WS1L	717	2664	60	50	36	19
54	AF4T	928	2945	72	50	36	26	96	EA4OR	712	2482	78	50	46	27
55	AA2IL	927	1984	42	50	18	19	97	W0TG	700	3040	68	50	29	25
56	VE3MV	920	3537	82	50	41	21	98	AE1T	698	4367	111	50	49	33
57	KY4GS	915	1763	46	50	23	19	99	VE3KIU	696	1396	39	48	26	15
58	N5XE	913	3262	78	50	36	27	100	VE7KW	694	1838	27	50	11	16

### 73, Bill WØTG (CWops #1873)

CWops Operating Awards



# QTX Report: Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

**Bruce Murdock, K8UDH**

In the comments from our QTXers, Chip W9EBE had an interesting observation. "Cold weather and seasonally-improved band conditions bring old friends back into their shacks making for good QSOs and catching up." Many of us are experiencing these seasonal changes with more time for conversational CW QSOs. My hamshack is a great place to be when the wind is blowing and snow is falling outside my window.

It has been my privilege and honor to serve as the CWops QTX Manager since August, 2019. Every good thing in life must come to an end at some point, and now is the time for me to step away from leading the QTX Program. I have discussed this decision with our President, Stew GW0ETF, and he fully supports the search for a successor.

My motivation for accepting this position 3+ years ago was a desire to give something back to CW and CWops. I sincerely appreciate the support I have received from both CWops and so many outstanding CW ragchewers. Without your support the QTX Program would not be possible. I thoroughly enjoyed my time as the QTX Manager.

If you are interested or even just curious about what is involved in being the QTX Manager and think it's a role you might fill, please send me an email at [murdock27@gpcom.net](mailto:murdock27@gpcom.net) and I will be glad to discuss it with you. Please let me hear from you. Thank you.

## **Comments from QTX Submissions**

**KB4WLF:** These QSOs were made as part of our weekly CW Roundtable held each Wednesday at 2000z on 3.725 kHz. Come on in and join us!

**KG5SSB:** Had some nice rag chews this month. The longest one was on 10 meters. Lots of fun!

**W80V:** Had a couple QSOs in the Giving Back program at 5 and 6 wpm. Glad to hear some beginners on CW.

**KF6NCX:** The most interesting QSO this month was when I got on 15 meters late in the afternoon and heard Mike, JR7HAN, calling CQ. I answered him and expected only a brief signal report and 73. Instead, we chatted for almost half an hour. This was one of my first QSOs with my new Buddihex antenna. I was running 100 watts. Mike had a tribander and was running 200. It was a new experience to have that long a QSO with a dx station.

**W3WHK:** Too many contests for much ragchewing, but my one QTX was a good one with K6RB, as always.

**M0KTZ:** Some very nice longer rag-chews this month! Proper conversational CW is much more than just a chat with a random fist somewhere else. It resembles the performance of two dancers: you rarely focus on the single moves by either of them, as much of the beauty in the overall picture they draw on air. Keep it fun! 72/73 de Enzo M0KTZ

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**VE3WH:** One interesting rag chew this month was a 56-minute 17-meter QSO with Peter KJ4RMJ/MM. Peter was near Carabelle Florida. He was using the back stay of his sailboat as his antenna. I am grateful to all amateurs that make music with their fists.

**WA2USA:** I had a nice QSO with an 18 year old young lady licensed in February of this year already sending and receiving over 25 WPM. It shouldn't be too long before she is becomes more proficient with Morse Code. Who says there's no youth in ham radio. LOL.

**K5YQF:** Lot's of nice QTX ragchews this month. But the one that struck me was with WN2A in RI. He operates an all HB station with no commercial gear. That was a goal of mine at one time, but I never made it. He reminds me of W6JL who is an avid builder. Both have FB web pages. We should all build more!

**F5IYJ:** Awaiting some spares parts for my Vibroplex Champion, all QTX contacts were made by the French version of this key: the 'Vibromorse' made right after the WWII by RadioLune, a radio manufacturer established in Paris. The issue on my Vibroplex was a good opportunity to reactivate some old keys.

**N0BM:** It was a pretty quiet month given the Thanksgiving holiday and some other commitments. Nonetheless, several good old-fashioned ragchews. Looking forward to next month. :>)

**AA5AD:** This total includes October as I neglected to send mine in last month! Had a great time on the bands with the rag chews, just not enough operators wanted to spend the whole 20 minutes, guess I need to be a better conversationalist.

**AA0YY:** Had over an hour QSO with one of the current QTX top runners K5YQF Cecil. I jokingly called him a QTX hound.

**KG5IEE:** Highlight of the month was a QTX QSO with K8CTR who was a student in my CW Academy Beginner class last fall. Always fun to have a QSO with former students and see how they have progressed.

**W9EBE:** Cold weather and seasonally-improved band conditions bring old friends back into their shacks making for good QSOs and catching up. Happy holidays & Merry Christmas everyone! 73 es ZUT

**K9OZ:** I had a couple of long contacts with past students in CW Academy. Very gratifying to have them participating in conversational CW.

**N6HCN:** An interesting QRS conversation beats a dull QRQ one, but real QRQ conversations that flow can't be beat. Especially with an op like Phil, NE0S, who's tolerant of me pushing my hand-sending speeds. Merry Christmas to all!

**KB6NU:** Memorable ragchews this month included F8BII and W9ZN.

**N2DA:** Nice ragchews with AJ1DM, WA3JJT, WA3PYU, W4TG, and WA3SWJ. QTX QSO's limited this month given the Thanksgiving Holiday, which by all accounts was enjoyed by all!

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**AJ1DM:** In spite of a bit of travel my qtx #'s are up a bit this month. I've been more deliberate about trying to meet new ops on the air and it's starting to add up. But better than higher scores, I'm having more fun with the hobby. Happy Holidays to all! 73 de John AJ1DM

**KG5SSB:** I had a great contact this month on 80 meters. We were both using J-38 straight keys. Happy Holidays!

**K6DGW:** Hope I'm still in time, life has intervened in ham radio at the end on Nov. First time my 20 min Q's exceeded my mini's. This is due to starting a regular sked with Rich, NU6T, an old friend who thru CWA is becoming proficient. We usually get 30 mins in, again... life does intervene sometimes

**NE0S:** Thank you for running this program

**K8UDH:** We had another fun month with conversational CW QSOs. Some were with good friends, some were with Giving Back, and some were with new friends who answered a CQ or called me at the end of a ragchew QSO.

### Awards and Medals for 2022

Medals for 2022 are awarded for three different levels in QTX.

Gold – 400 QTX QSOs  
Silver Medal – 300 QTX QSOs  
Bronze – 200 QTX QSOs

With one month to go this year, K5YQF, VE3WH, and K9OZ have earned a Gold Medal, WS1L has earned a Silver Medal, and N5IR, KB6NU, F5IYJ, KC0VKN, and WA2USA have earned a Bronze Medal. Congratulations.

### QTX for November

<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>
VE3WH	86	AA0YY	19	K6DGW	11	K4AHO	4
K5YQF	74	N6HCN	16	AJ1DM	10	KF6NCX	4
K9OZ	38	NE0S	16	K8UDH	10	KG5SSB	4
WS1L	35	KG5IEE	14	W9EBE	10	K7VM	3
WA2USA	26	KY4GS	14	K0ALT	6	N0BM	3
F5IYJ	24	N2DA	13	W8OV	6	WT9Q	3
KB6NU	23	M0KTZ	12	WA9ZZ	6	GW0ETF	1
N5IR	21	K5KXJ	11	AA5AD	4	W3WHK	1

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### MQTX for November

<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>
M0KTZ	51	GW0ETF	14	AA5AD	6	WT9Q	4
VE3WH	34	KG5IEE	13	N6HCN	6	KF6NCX	3
AA0YY	24	KG5SSB	13	W8OV	6	N0BM	2
K5YQF	20	W9EBE	12	K5KXJ	5	K7VM	1
KY4GS	16	AJ1DM	9	NE0S	4	K8UDH	1
SV2BBK	16	K6DGW	8	WS1L	4	WA9ZZ	1

### QTX Totals (2022)

<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>
K5YQF	624	W9EBE	146	AA5AD	43	GW0ETF	14
VE3WH	483	NE0S	130	K6DGW	38	N0BM	14
K9OZ	437	KG5IEE	114	WA9ZZ	37	AC8RG	10
WS1L	365	AJ1DM	102	KF6NCX	35	SV2BBK	10
N5IR	290	K8UDH	101	KG7A	33	WT9Q	9
KB6NU	270	K4AHO	96	W0GAS	33	AB7MP	6
F5IJ	216	N8AI	67	AA0IZ	32	EI6LA	6
KC0VKN	208	K7VM	57	K0ALT	31	KB4WLF	5
WA2USA	206	W7JRD	55	KY4GS	29	MI0WWB	4
AA0YY	166	M0KTZ	49	W8OV	23	N9EEE	4
N6HCN	164	EI5LA	44	W3WHK	20	G3WZD	3
N2DA	153	K5KXJ	44	KG5SSB	17		

### MQTX Totals (2022)

<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>
M0KTZ	278	K6DGW	88	EI5LA	34	WA9ZZ	10
VE3WH	230	AA5AD	79	MI0WWB	34	AB7MP	9
W9EBE	197	KG5SSB	61	KG7A	33	W3WHK	7
SV2BBK	184	N6HCN	44	NE0S	25	WT9Q	6
AA0YY	172	K4AHO	43	AA0IZ	24	KB4WLF	5
KG5IEE	156	K8UDH	41	KF6NCX	24	EI6LA	4
K5YQF	123	W7JRD	39	K7VM	20	AC8RG	3
WS1L	122	AJ1DM	37	W8OV	19		
GW0ETF	119	K5KXJ	37	N0BM	17		
N8AI	97	KY4GS	37	G3WZD	11		

We have numerous ways to enjoy CW. For many of us, CW ragchewing is our favorite way.

**73, Bruce, K8UDH** (CWops #1654)

QTX Manager



# My Story: New Member Biographies

Compiled by [Tim Gennett, K9WX](#)

## Mike Conatore, K7NT

I grew up interested in radios and electronics. Some of my interest came from my Dad developing, teaching and administering vocational electronics programs for community colleges in the 1960s and 1970s. But even more of my interest came from late night car drives tuning the AM bands in search of faraway places like Seattle, San Francisco and even Salt Lake City and Kalispell. As I got older I always relished the times I'd get to see ham radio in action! An aunt and uncle had a counter top radio that had shortwave bands and I could spend hours tuning that and hearing stations from around the world.

I started to learn Morse code at 11, but didn't have the patience or attention span at the time. When I was 12, my grandpa came to visit and brought his boat, which had a CB in it. I spent a few hours listening and talking on it and I told my Dad I wanted a CB. He told me he thought ham radio would be a better choice for me, so I read everything I could find on ham radio in the junior high school library.



I went to Radio Shack and bought a Morse code LP and actually learned the code to 5 wpm in a weekend. One of my grandpa's friends was a ham and lived nearby. Oscar gave me my Novice test in May 1974 and my ticket arrived in late July. I became WN7ZTN!

Between May and July I sold my minibike and bought a Hallicrafters SX-101 Mk III, and delivered newspapers until I had enough to buy a Heathkit Apache. Dad and I strung a dual dipole with 80m and 40m elements between trees and set up my shack below the basement stairs. I remember plateaus at 8 wpm, 11 wpm then I was doing 15 wpm and sat for my General. I failed the theory. Then we moved to Eastern Washington and a new station was set up. Meanwhile my mastery of CW developed very rapidly. I traveled to Seattle in the spring and passed the 20 wpm code and managed to get my Advanced.

Through high school and college I remained active and worked in electronics-related jobs. I moved to LA in 1981 and had a few years of inactivity due to being apartment-bound. In 1988 I got a station set up and began to get to know the local DXers and contesters and soon found myself working on and operating N6DX on top of Rainbow Ridge. This was my introduction to Multi-Multi contesting and big stations and I spent a lot of time up there until I moved to Portland in 1992. There I met the Oregon DXers and Contesters and got very involved with W7RM and N6TR. I learned a huge amount from Rush and Tree and cherish the memories of those days!

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I took about a 20 year hiatus due to family, work and sports car racing. I kept in touch with my friends in the hobby and operated once in a while, but didn't have a station of my own until 2022. My dear friend Dan, K7NXL moved into the area and began reactivating himself. I live in a HOA neighborhood so no big antennas here, but the Greyline 28' flagpole allows me to get on and become active again. I love a good CW rag chew and have also discovered that WSPR is quite a fascinating mode for indicating propagation paths and openings.

I have collected a lot of steel, aluminum, copper and even some beryllium that I hope to put to good use some day when I find a place to build a station. Until then I'll just pound out my little 100 watts low in the bands. Hope to work you soon!

### **Bob Isman, K6YDS**

I first became interested in ham radio through an uncle, K6DOF. Though he wasn't using CW, I was fascinated watching him carry on conversations with hams all over the world. A high school buddy and I decided to go after our licenses together, and I was first licensed as a Novice in 1957, at the ripe old age of 14, with call sign KN6YDS. At that time, you had to pass a 5 wpm CW test administered by the FCC. Also at that time, you could only stay a Novice for a year: you either had to get a higher class license or drop out. So I got my General class license—K6YDS—which entailed passing another CW test at 13 wpm, and I was off to the races...but only for as long as I remained in high school. As soon as I got to college, I forgot all about ham radio, and frankly have no recollection of what ever became of my gear (including Heathkit transmitter and VFO).



So for 60+ years I rarely gave a thought to ham radio. Then, a few years ago, I got a brief glimmer of interest and bought an ICOM IC-R75 receiver off Craig's List. But I didn't have much of an antenna and so couldn't pick up much of interest, and lost interest again. Then one day, out of the blue, I received a QSL card from the high school buddy noted above (Mike—W6MK), with whom I'd had no contact since high school. All that was written on the card was his email address (incorrectly scrawled, so I had to figure it out)! I contacted him, invited him to lunch (we're about a 1 ½ hour drive from each other), found out he had also dropped out for many years but gotten back into it about 10 years prior to our meeting, and that was the inspiration for me to come back. He gave me a straight key and a paddle, a power supply and a tuner designed for a KW rig to get me going. I was fortunate that the FCC allowed me to get my general privileges back while only having to pass the Technician class test, and I was subsequently able to get my old call sign—K6YDS—back.

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I decided to see if I could still remember how to solder by building a little 40m QRP rig (QCX+ from QRP Labs), code practice oscillator and a few other gadgets, but still didn't have a decent antenna. I finally got an inverted dipole up, peaking about 35 feet up off a telescoping fiberglass pole, then an ICOM IC-7300. I was amazed to realize that I still remembered Morse code after all these many years, although I could copy maybe 10 wpm at best. I looked into several online Morse courses, including Long Island CW Club and others, but nothing really grabbed my interest until I learned about CW Academy. I was able to enroll in the Basic class after waiting the better part of a year and was fortunate to get Buzz Tarlow, AC6AC as my advisor. I stuck with Buzz, and he stuck with me, through the Intermediate and Advanced classes until my recent graduation and nomination to CWops. Now I just have to overcome my perpetual key fright and start making some new on-the-air friends.

On a personal note, I'm married to a wonderful woman—Bev—with no kids but two cats. My professional career was as a public health dentist (an administrative position involving planning oral health services at the community level, rather than direct clinical dentistry) for a county, regional and eventually state public health agencies. Hobbies include travel and photography.

Looking forward to meeting you on the air.

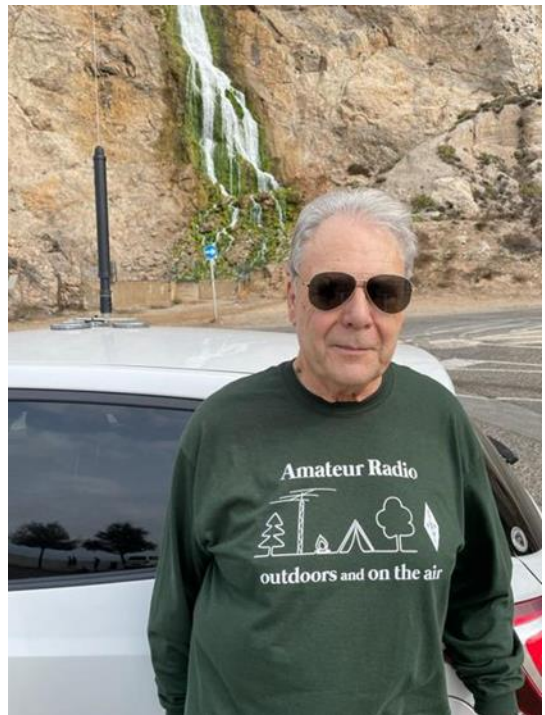
### **Ernest Stagnetto, ZB2FK**

I was born on the Rock of Gibraltar on the 14th of April 1948 and have lived here ever since.

Around the early 1960s I remember my first interest in radio started when my Dad gave me a crystal set for my birthday. I could tune in to 3 different MW stations (induction tuning moving a ferrite slug inside a coil) without using a battery laden transistor radio of the day. At the time it was magic of sorts?

During the late 60s I acquired a monstrous military surplus receiver R206 from a local technician for the then princely sum of £5. Dad was slightly worried as to where it would land, when my brother Wilfred helped me heave it up the stairs to the first floor of 58 Engineer Lane. There followed many years as a SWL, which was when I discovered amateur radio. I was immediately captivated by our treasured hobby, but continued listening to radio amateurs on AM & SSB for many years. In the late 60s I became a member of the R.A.F.

Amateur Radio Club and was introduced to the AR88 receiver and KW Vespa transmitter, sometimes being allowed to operate ZB2A under supervision. I passed the City & Guilds of London



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Institute Amateur Radio examination in 1978. I was given my hard worked for ZB2FK, after passing my 12 wpm CW exam at Cable & Wireless (the then ZDK) in 1979.

Having been literally forced to pass my CW exam in order to obtain my ticket left a negative after-taste for a few years, till, in the mid 80s my interest in the mode was slowly rekindled almost instinctively. At first it was quite intimidating, but with patience and practice it became my preferred mode as from the 90s. During the years I learned how to pick out one call sign at a time from a group of callers. I keep my QSOs brief so as to give the Rock to as many as I can. Lately I am trying to experiment and get some outdoors at the same time by trying to operate /P from different locations around Gibraltar.

For further details and even anecdotes please see ZB2FK at [qrz.com](http://qrz.com).

My job was pen pushing for my first 5 years as clerk for the M.O.D, but from 1970 I was lucky to work in the Met Commcen for 3 years and then with the Radio Sonde unit of the Met. Office.

Creed Teleprinters in Commcen. Atmospherics cumbersome DF sets, Racal RA17s, Cossor 353 RS Tracking Radar, Brit Mk2B Radio Sondes & German Grawsondes. Retrained to complete my Met Office years at the Main Office under ATC after 1993 when my Radio Sonde dept. was disbanded. My retirement in April 2008 seems like yesterday, yet it is incredible how time flies by faster with every year.

When I was invited to Join CWops I had mixed feelings, but when I received a massive demonstration of friendship from those who sponsored and welcomed me, I felt deeply honoured to join such a prestigious family. Hoping to be worthy, I offer you all, my heartfelt thanks and reciprocal affection.

### **Ini Cerda, EA6EJ**

I was born in 1956 on the beautiful island of Mallorca. I studied medicine, specialized in plastic, aesthetic and reconstructive surgery and I am currently active in the reference hospital in the Balearic Islands.

I'm hoping to retire next April and thus increase the QRM on the bands. Hi, Hi. Although my other hobbies include cycling with friends, close-up magic, good food and good wine... I don't know if I'll have time for so many things, especially if I take into account that in February my first granddaughter will be born. Hi, Hi!

Back in 1975 I made my first forays into the world of CB and active beacon listening, much earlier, on a commercial OM receiver. In 1976 I obtained my license and have used the same callsign ever since.



I started and progressed in the world of telegraphy from the beginning with the help of other ra-

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dio amateurs from the Air Force (EA6DO sk) and commercial aviation. With the help of a good friend (EA6DD SK) we set up a PA with an 813 tube, hand winding the primary and secondaries and so on. Hi, Hi. Part of 1983 Hispania CW Club primal core (HCC-023).

Since then and almost uninterruptedly I have maintained contact with the telegraph bands. Due to the COVID confinement, I modernized the station and made the big step from analog to digital and entertained myself by entering my contacts into the computer. A lot of work, but also many compensations and facilities. What a difference with new technologies!!!

I remember with great pleasure those pile-up with JA, VK, ZL & W stations many years ago... Although EA6 is not a country as in demand as in my beginnings, I still enjoy to be active on bands... Also very proud of EA6AOL, Pedro, my son, with his recent license and telegraphic knowledge.

Thank you for the kindness and friendship with Jim, N3JT, who very kindly and insistently introduced me to our fantastic world of CWops.

In the presentation photo you can see me driving a QRP station in one of our paradisiacal places located in the south of the island.

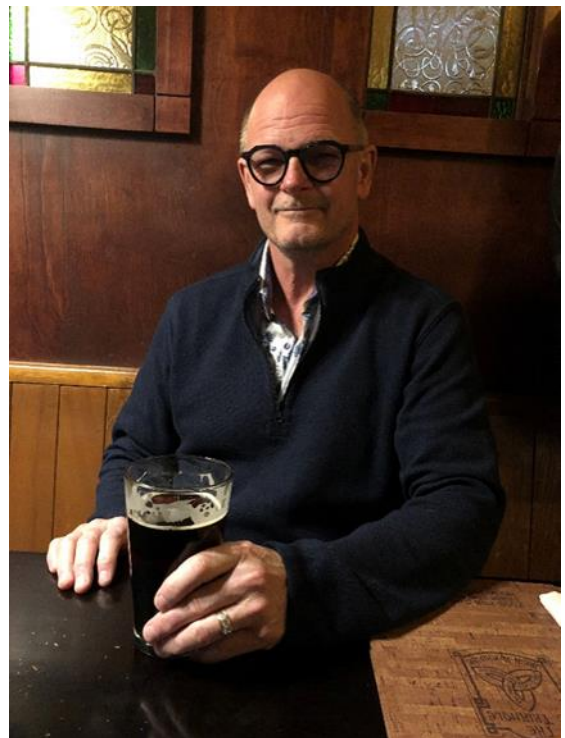
It will be a pleasure to meet you in the bands.

### **Mike Weir, VE9KK**

I want to begin by thanking Jim N3JT for his nomination and N7US Jim, KG9X Fred, K6SX Henry and 9A1AA Ivo for their sponsorship.

From when I was very young I can remember listening on shortwave radio to far-off broadcast stations. Back then all stereo Hi Fi units had short wave broadcast bands as a standard feature. Now and then my searches took me to the amateur radio bands where I heard CW and thought "what a cool language" not understanding CW at that time but it sounded great. In the 70s CB radio was the craze and my interest in radio waves was sparked again. CB radio was OK but I wanted to talk around the world. This path eventually led me to amateur radio and a journey of a lifetime.

I worked part-time at a local ham radio store which helped me better understand the art of radio. The licensed operators I got to know while working at the store were instrumental in me attaining the skills I needed to get my ticket.



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I became licensed in 1989 and at that time Morse code was mandatory, little did I know then how much I would end up enjoying the art of CW. My journey with CW became serious while operating in a SSB contest (RAC Canada Day Contest) and neighbours informed me I was being heard on their sound systems. At that point, I decided CW was my best bet for making contacts and doing it at QRP levels to keep those around me happy. With many hours of practice both on air and computer programs, my CW speed and more importantly my skill moved upward.

I was bitten by the contest bug and CW contesting allowed me the opportunity not only to increase my speed but also my accuracy. Contesting along with QSOs had me further enjoying the CW experience. I also very much enjoy kit building. I have built 2 Elecraft K2s and a KX1 along with most of their test kits. I was the proud owner of a fully loaded K3 as well as a KX3 but those were sold for the purchase of my current rig an Icom 7610.

I retired 3 years ago from a 33-year carrier at an electrical utility where I was an electrical technologist. My job mainly involved programming and calibrating protection relays and configuring protection zones and associated relays.

Outside of ham radio, I very much enjoy doing home renovations and anything to do with computers.

### **Don Zank, AA9WP**

First I would like to give a big thank you to Rob, K6RB for his time and efforts in providing an interesting advanced CW class. I really enjoyed the lessons and exercises, and Rob gave the class some great information on operating in the CW mode and contesting. I would also like to thank my sponsors George, NE5A; Mike K4RUM; Mike K5UV. Fellow students Steve, K4WA #3252; Bruce N4OQV #3253; and Claude, VK1TE, helped create a positive training environment.

Shortwave listening was, like many others, my entryway into amateur radio. At high school, John Marshall in Milwaukee, WI, there was a small amateur radio club. But I did not get my license until after I graduated. I was first licensed in 1972 as a Novice, WN9NZH. The first rig was the Heathkit HW-16 transceiver and the accompanying HG-10B VFO. The rigs were connected to a simple dipole antenna. This was the station for the next few years.



When the Novice license was approaching its expiration date I decided to obtain a General Class

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license. I received the call sign of N9FGS. However, amateur radio activity came to a stop with a career path change in 1979. After five years of being employed in television repair work, it was obvious that the days of actual troubleshooting were coming to an end. So the next step was as a field service technician for Allen-Bradley. This required extensive travel throughout the United States, and some international travel. I worked in the Drives division that built DC motor controls. My responsibilities included the startup and repair of DC drive controls and systems. Eventually, the travel came to an end when engineers were employed in more local offices. I then became an inside technician responsible for supporting the customers and field engineers.

Being off the road I could get back to amateur radio. So I built an Elecraft K-1 transceiver. The K-1 is a small QRP rig, 5 watts, which requires swapping boards to swap bands. It was a fun little CW only transceiver.

In October 1998, I obtained the Extra Class license with the present call sign of AA9WP. I wanted to pass the 20 wpm requirement before that was eliminated. And this was just in time. Radio Shack had the 10-meter mobile rig, HTX-100 on sale. I purchased the little rig, installed it in my pickup truck, and built a small 10-meter whip antenna. That little radio provided loads of fun when 10 meters was hot during the early 2000s. With only 25 watts I worked many DX stations including DS4NPL in South Korea. I would work stations in Europe drive to work in the morning then South America and the Asia Pacific at night driving home.

Looking to upgrade the home station I added an Elecraft K-2 transceiver. Since it has only 15 watts for output power, an external Hardrock-50, 50-watt, power amp was added to the station setup.

Yes, I like building equipment. My keyer is the K3NG Arduino CW Keyer.

I am involved with Amateur Radio Emergency Services, with the Ozaukee County ARES group otherwise known as ARES. I have been the Emergency Coordinator for the past five years. Member of Ozaukee Radio Club, NAQCC #1104, SKCC #6568, Flying Pig # 1464, and member of the Driftless Zone Contesters.

Most of my ham activity takes place during the winter since sitting in the basement is not that enjoyable when the weather outside is sunny and warm. My newly acquired CW skills were a benefit during the 2022 November ARRL CW Sweepstakes contest. I am looking forward to many more CW contests, including the fun CWTs and MSTs. A little ragchewing to keep things fresh is also in the plans. Thanks again to everyone at CWops. Looking to cu on the air.

## **Don Stumbo, KN6OMN**

First, many thanks to those who have helped me along my CW and ham radio journey to date, including my son Matt (KS6PKY) and his wife Dana (KM6WKD), my two Elmers, Al Rendon (WT6K) and Bob Neff (N6EFF), as well as my CW Academy instructor Buz Tarlow (AC6AC), his associate

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advisors and my classmates. All of these folks have been instrumental in my CW journey to this point.

My first introduction to ham radio was back in 1975 when I was working on my Boy Scout Electronics merit badge. My merit badge counselor was a ham and I started learning Morse code with his help and he even helped me obtain an old Hallicrafters vacuum tube receiver. I fiddled with the receiver for about a year, listening and barely was learning Morse code when I graduated high school. Then it was off to four years of college at Auburn University (War Eagles), followed by marriage to my lovely wife Linda (41 years and counting), four years in the Navy (USS Canisteo AO-99, now razor blades), a 32 year engineering career in aerospace, three kids (all married with 4 grandkids to date) and retirement in March 2017. Ham radio had thus been set aside and over the years long forgotten, but the spark still remained.



In 2019 my son Matt thought I might be interested in rekindling my ham radio interest. So for Christmas he and his wife Dana gave me a Baofeng VHF/UHF FM portable transceiver and book titled "The ARRL Ham Radio License Manual – Level 1 Technician." He also encouraged me to start learning Morse code through the online CWops Morse Code Trainer app and to get going on my Technician's license. This I accomplished on April 21st, 2021 by obtaining my Technician's license followed by my General license on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

As I worked at learning Morse code, my son-in-law's dad Tim, (AF6TF) suggest to a ham buddy that I might benefit from his help learning Morse code. I thus was introduced to Al who with help from Bob became my two Elmers. As I progressed under their tutelage, they suggested that I take a CW Academy Intermediate Class which I then followed with the Advance Class.

In my brief time as a ham, I have had a grand time chasing - SOTA and POTAs, QSO Parties, K1USN, MST, CWT and a few other contests plus several standard QSOs and ragchews, all on my Elecraft KX-3 Transceiver with KXPA 100 Amp/ATU. At present I utilize a home built 20-40 meter fan dipole antenna with plans to expand it to cover 10-15-30 meters as well.

So again thanks to those that have helped me thus far on my ham radio and CW journey. I hope to hear and work fellow you on the air waves!

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### **Fatmir Elezi, ZA1ME**

Radio amateur since 1975, when I was only 10 years old, at Sports Club of Berat, Albania.

Started after learning the Morse code alphabet and slowly starting to transmit signals accordingly. This sport, which in Albania was called "Radioamatorism" was practiced only in closed doors, given that Albania was also isolated from the outside world.

Only in 1994, for the first time, I have broadcasted under the signature ZA2FE. This thanks to some Hungarian radio amateurs which gifted us some radio stations, antennas, etc.

From 1995 I haven't been able to practice this sport, because of emigration, to return in 2021 with ZA1ME (Miri) callsign, but always with keys. I've been practicing paddle keys for 9 months now.

I usually take part in the international competitions that are organized by IARU or HST.



### **Tyler Kacsor, VA6TI**

I was first licensed in 2014 having moved to Lethbridge, Alberta from Ontario. I had some time on my hands and had always been fascinated with radios in my youth. I figured I should put that time to use and after studying for a while I wrote the test in Medicine Hat as I couldn't find anyone local at the time to administer the test, either that or I was too impatient to wait. I drove down on a snowy January day and the rest is history.

I was active on the bands for a few months with 10m being pretty good to me at the time but eventually a new opportunity came up on the east coast so I packed my bags (and radios) and made the move. I often considered hooking up my rig and did in fact create a temporary set-up in New Brunswick but didn't wind up using it. I put in some brief stints working at the U of S in Saskatchewan around 2016 and eventually an opportunity came up for



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me to come back to Lethbridge circa 2018.

I stumbled across some videos of K4SWL on YouTube doing his real time POTA activations and I became interested in the compact rigs and QRP operation. I began to learn with LCWO and after that I was hooked. I decided to treat myself to an IC705 and then a KX2 for better CW. After all, (n+1) is always best.

I joined CWops and learned from KA7MDM whom I am grateful to for having provided such great classes and steadfast instruction. I quickly started activating a few times a week and began racking up contacts, you can follow some of the exploits on my website [tylerkacsor.com](http://tylerkacsor.com) if you're so inclined. From POTA I ventured into contesting over the last year and more recently rag chews.

I have many hobbies including playing chess on [chess.com](http://chess.com) as well as following the game. Otherwise I enjoy cycling, hanging with my dog Moose & partner Carrie. I also maintain hobbies in music, writing (business), and photography.

Thanks for reading and I look forward to working you all in the near future.

### **Mervyn Foster, G4KLE**

I started my communications trained back in 1963 (aged 15) as a Radio Officer for the Merchant Navy at the "North Easter School of Wireless Telegraphy," Bridlington, and then finished off at "Plymouth Polytechnic" (Plymouth University). I gained my Post Masters General Cert in 1965 to go to sea (with 25 wpm CW). Instead, I joined the British Army and served with the Royal Corps of Signals, Queens Gurkha Signals, & Special Forces for over 24 years.

My amateur radio journey started when I was stationed in Gibraltar in 1967/69. I had the privilege of operating the Royal Air Force Amateur Radio Club Station, as there were no operators or interested RAF staff in the station who wanted to use the station, so I was given special permission (by Gibraltar Post Office) to operate the Club Call Sign (ZB2A) to keep it active.

Gaining my own UK Amateur FULL Licence and call sign G4KLE back in 1979, I worked from my first QTH in Portchester, Hampshire. Moved to Hong Kong (1982-85) and operated as VS6KL, following that to Germany (1985-87) as DA2MS. On returning to the UK my QTH was Herefordshire (1987-89). On leaving the Armed Forces in 1989, I joined Cambridgeshire Police (for 11 years) and set up at my present QTH in the village of Nr St Ives, Cambridgeshire.



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I was absent from Amateur Radio for 20 years (1993 - 2013) when work took over my time, I retrieved my equipment (ICOM 720A) from the loft and set up the station again in June 2013. My main HF Rig is now a KX3 with KXPA100 amp, also have a Kenwood TS2000X which I use for Sat-Com plus VHF/UHF, I also have a Yaesu FT891 (using an MFJ 939 Tuner) into my antenna systems, a half G5RV or Hustler 6-BTV Vertical.

I work mainly CW (95%), a straight key operator using a Junker Straight key mainly but have been known to use my special Paddle key (K8RA P4 (#46)).

Now semi-retired (aged 75), I am still very much a Portable/QRP operator and can be heard on most bands either from the back of my car or having travelled by bicycle to local QTH (POTA). With KX3 and/or FT891 on 5 - 8 watts, using ex-military fiberglass 10m mast vertical with home-brew G5RV or SOTABeam BandHopper 4. More antennas are being constructed and experimented with for working portable/QRP.

I am a member of the Huntingdonshire Amateur Radio Society, a volunteer at the RSGB National Radio Centre at Bletchley Park ([home of the code breakers](#)) and RSGB Regional Rep 121 for Cambridgeshire.

I must thank Nigel (G3SZU) for his nomination to joining CWops, Stuart (GD0OUD), Nigel (G4BSW), and Andy (G0LXX) for their sponsorship. Thank you, gentlemen, very much.

### **Mike Parker, KE0QKF**

Fairly new ham operator, became licensed in 2018, and it took until 2019 to get a station up and operating. First became interested in CW in Boy Scouts (1960s) and memorizing the dit dahs of the alphabet to earn a merit badge. Not the way to learn CW, but it was always an interest after that. Ham radio interests began when I became a prepper. Not an off the grid, board up the house kind, but just to be ready if things get rough for a short while. That goal, led to my becoming licensed and buying an HT. It was supposed to stop there but didn't. Soon I was putting up antennas and buying an Icom 7300, and used Icom 7000. There always seems to be something else I would like to add to my shack. An affliction I think we all have.



A ham radio friend mentioned POTA one day, and after looking into it I began activating parks. Great way to get WAS and I soon discovered that there are a lot of CW operators hunting parks. I found that they were very patient with my slow CW and many errors. I was able to master the

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standard POTA QSO quickly, but often got lost if it was a park to park and they were sending numbers. My practice at that point was using apps which helped me to master the code but not very efficiently. That is when I discovered CWops and attended the intermediate and advanced classes this year. My speed has greatly increased and I have to give a shout out to the teachers I had along the way (Buzz AC6AC, Rich N4DPM, Carol K6NF). I also need to give credit to Morse Ninja (Kurt AD0WE) and the developers of the Morserino.

I am a member (presently vice president) of the local ham radio club (Iowa City Amateur Radio Club) and my main task is to organize Field Day.

Prior to ham radio, I worked as a veterinarian for the University of Iowa. I was in private veterinary practice before that, primarily caring for dairy cows in Pennsylvania. Other interests are birdwatching, fishing, pickleball, and working with Habitat for Humanity. I have led 10 teams to Guatemala to build houses. All that stopped with the pandemic but hope to pick it up again in the future.

Thanks to CWops for the training and letting me become a member.

## **Jerry Pyle, WB7S**

First of all, I would like to thank Jim, N7US, for nominating me. I would also like to thank my sponsors.

I got my Novice license in 1979 when the Code was still a requirement and I struggled to learn it at 5 wpm counting dits and dahs. I remember the first time I sent CQ. I was afraid someone would answer it, someone did. That first QSO was pretty short!

After passing the Technician exam I finally decided to go for the General Class license which required I pass the 13 wpm code exam. I couldn't wait to hook a mic up to my rig and get on SSB. I would use CW once in a while but never was very good at it.

I decided to try for my Extra Class License and that required me to pass a 20 wpm code exam. By that time I was fortunate to have a CW Elmer who had been an airborne radio operator in the Air Force. My Elmer's name was Harry and his Call was KZ7V (SK). We lived within three blocks of each other and would get on our radios in the evening transmitting into our dummy loads at very low power and do crossword puzzles over the air for practice. Harry slowly kept increasing his speed. Finally the day came for exams.



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My youngest son, Charlie, KA7UTV, passed his Novice written and code exams. I was encouraged, by the VE team to take my Extra Class code exam. I knew, in my mind, I was not ready but gave it my best and low and behold I passed it. I missed one word which I could have guessed but didn't. I handed in my answer sheet to the examiners and told them that they must have used the 13 wpm tape. One of the examiners popped the tape out and handed it to me and it did say 20 wpm on it. I found out after the session that Harry had got me up to 30 wpm. CW was still not my favorite mode but did enter a few CW contests now and then.

Fast forward to about 5 years ago I decided to get serious about CW and became a member of SKCC and used my straight key for the contacts. One day I saw where one could use a bug for SKCC so I got one of my Vibroplex bugs out, cleaned it up and adjusted it to send good dits. I had lost the ability to copy much above 18 wpm so started practicing more to increase my sending and copying speeds. I still felt I needed more help so I happened to find the CWops web site and saw classes were listed there but I was too late to sign up as all of the classes had finished for that year. Another search lead me to the Long Island CW Club so I joined it and found some of the resources I had been looking for. I did eventually sign up for one of the CW Academy Advanced classes but didn't do as good as I felt I should have because I had not been practicing enough and was kind in over my head.

Almost a year ago I was setup portable at my son's house in Cheyenne, WY with my KX3 and my home brew magnetic loop antenna. I tuned to the 20m band and heard all of these CW signals. They were calling CQ CWT. I tuned around and found a few stations that I could copy so I entered my first CWT as a QRP portable station. Many stations were sending well above my copy speed and those I had to bypass. I logged my contacts in a small notebook I had with me and was quite surprised I had made 5 CWT contacts running QRP and my magnetic loop. That was the day the bug to practice more at higher speeds bit me and that was the day I really got to liking CW! To this day 99.9% of my contacts are CW. I like CW so much that I bought a Begali Simplex Mono for my birthday!

I have been one of the instructors for LICW and fill in once in a while if one of the instructors needs to take some time off. I prefer to work with those who in the 15 to 20 wpm range and work to get them on the air. I also participated in the CWops giving back program as one of the Friday evening operators before I became a CWops member. It was fun but I finally got burned out.

I have had many hobbies over the years from fly fishing, building and shooting muzzle loading rifles, brain tanning deer and elk hides to do quill work on, building powder horns, Dutch oven cooking and camping but now due to mobility issues I can no longer do them. Ham radio and CW keep me going these days.

I worked for WYDOT (Department of Transportation) for 39 years and 3 months. I started pounding wooden stakes in the ground and finished being a District Maintenance Technician where I worked for the District Maintenance Engineer. As a Maintenance Technician I was the District HAZMAT Tech, developed and tracked the multimillion dollar budget for WYDOT District 5 and a District Computer Tech where I was responsible for the District File Server and 60 computers.

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My CW goal is to become proficient at speeds from 35 to 40 wpm! A long difficult journey but with practice I will get there!

### **Christoph Zehntner HB9AJP**

In 1960, when I was 14 years old, I began experimenting with the Kosmos Radiomann. Then I read "SOS at Midnight" by Walker A. Tompkins which definitely hooked me up to ham radio.

I learned the Morse code in the military pre-course. To prepare for the license, which I got in 1967, I read among other things parts of the ARRL Handbook. My first transceiver I ordered in the States: a Heathkit HW-104 which works still today. In the meanwhile I studied Electrical Engineering at ETH Zurich and then worked at Armassuisse in Science and Technology.



With family and career there was a gap in ham radio until late 1980. In 2006 I became a fan of FlexRadios when I had my first SDR, the SDR-1000. After having seen the signals in addition to hearing them I could not be without it anymore. Later I had the Flex-5000, Flex-1500 and at last the SmartSDR Flex-6700.

During the time we had a summerhouse at the west coast of Denmark I was QRY as OZ8AP for many years. In 2012 the HST (High Speed Telegraphy) world championship was held in Beatenberg. For our USKA, Union of Swiss Shortwave Amateurs, I was responsible for public relations. So I was asked to become a member of the Swiss HST team. I joined the team not as a high speeder but as supporter and to improve my CW and so I could attend many championships. I got to know RUFZXP and Morse Runner which I still like to perform daily.

This year I read in the Danish Amateurradio bulletin about CWops and the Academy which offers free courses in CW. I was lucky and could attend the Advanced Class with Buzz AC6AC. Now as member of the CWops I have new friends and will enjoy ragchewing. Apart from the local clubs I am a member of AGCW, FISTS, HTC, EDR and SDXF.

### **George Dorner, W9ZSJ (How COVID improved my CW skills ... and made me a CWop)**

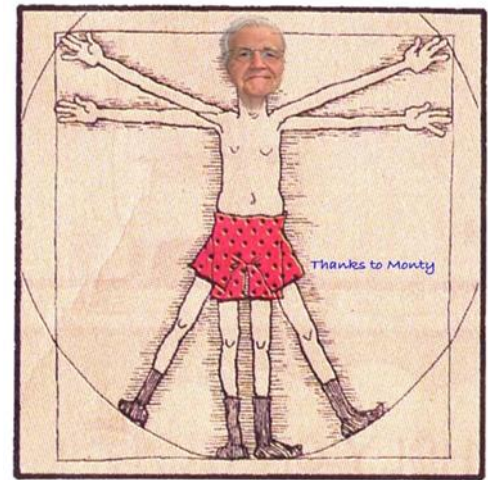
I was licensed as a Novice in 1953 at the age of 13. I learned Morse code to satisfy the Second Class badge of Boy Scouts, a choice I made over semaphore with flags. My friend in the same

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troop, Donnie, talked me into going to the high school one night a week where his father, Don, W9URS (SK), taught the theory half of the ham license prep course. After that another ham taught the Morse code. Getting a ride with his dad when we couldn't drive and learning the code in the second half would help us satisfy the Scouting requirement. Donnie wasn't interested in what his dad had to say, but I was, and I caught the ham bug. Don became my Elmer. Donnie never became a ham, and Don never became a General class because he couldn't pass 13 wpm. Nonetheless, as a radio-TV serviceman (remember them?), he was a good Elmer.

So I became a Novice with the call WN9ZSJ. That was a natural progression from my role as an SWL, who loved submitting signal reports to international broadcast stations and receiving their colorful cards.



Three of us young guys sat for the Novice exam together, traveling to Indy from our rural town in central Indiana. Exciting it was when the ticket arrived. I dashed off to the hardware store for a roll of copper wire. I think it cost 35 cents. I strung up about 135 feet of it. Of course, we had all mastered 5 wpm to that point. I was an overachiever, and I applied for and got a 15 wpm ARRL Code Proficiency Certificate within a couple of months. A year later, almost to the day, I qualified for the 20 wpm endorsement. I proudly had that wallpaper showing in my shack with a Hallicrafters S-40A and a BC-746 surplus transmitter converted to work with the aforementioned wire on 80 meters. It ran a full Novice gallon - 75 watts. Shortly thereafter I built "3 watts in a coffee can" which used a single tube as line voltage rectifier AND oscillator to transmit. It was "hot" - when you touched it, but it worked and made me a QRP operator for most of my subsequent ham career.

About the time that the pandemic started I experienced a sequence of events which brought me to this keyboard to share the tale. I was rummaging through a box of old papers and ran across the ARRL certificate which reminded me of my early CW prowess. In the intervening years I had pretty much remained a QRP operator and had toyed with all the QRP organizations, QRPARCI, SKCC, FISTS, Flying Pigs, and others. I still have two HW-8s and an Argonaut V. The ham career was interrupted by college, marriage, the arrival of kids, and starting off as a college teacher looking for tenure. But I was drawn back to hamdom after a hiatus of just over ten years, again in QRP, with very few QSOs over 15 wpm. So, when I spotted the page in QST which listed those CW ops who qualified for ARRL certificates, and I spotted on the same page the VibroPlex paddles that I was using most of the time, a goal was set. I was over 80 years old and thought, "Has anyone has ever applied for an endorsement of five or even ten wpm greater AFTER AN INTERIM OF MORE THAN 65 YEARS?" That became my challenge. I began to copy W1AW and to look for tips on how to increase one's CW speed. By this time I had mastered the electronic keyer so that I could hang in on contests and Field Day at 20+ wpm, but sometimes only for call letters and signal reports. There was work to be done.

Should I use a mill? That would relieve the pressure on my elbow when I tried to manually copy

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20 or 25 or more words per minute while not making an error, at least for a full one minute. I read somewhere that one should be able to type twice as fast as the receiving speed to get good at typing CW. I am self-taught in typing (never learned the top row), and I despaired at the idea of typing at 50+ wpm.

Fate treated me kindly. Another avocation had been and continues to be my membership in the Rotary Club. There is another ham club you may not have heard of: ROAR, Rotarians On Amateur Radio. Attendance at the various nets that this group supports was lagging, mostly due to crummy propagation, but the President of the group, N4EDT, Ed Tyler, initiated Sunday one hour ZOOM sessions during COVID which brought a number of international Rotarian hams together. We shared what our ham activities and our Rotary meetings and service projects were last week, and we continue to do so.

One Sunday session Bill, KC4D, mentioned to the ROAR ZOOMers that several of those participating and a few more met each weekday morning for a CW round table. Invitations were given to all listening. Bill is located in Lynchburg, VA, so when he issued the invitation for 6:15 AM on 80 meters, my first inclination as a Central Time Zone ham an hour behind Virginia on the clock was to think, "Thanks, but no thanks." However, the invitation was to an activity which would surely help me achieve that next ARRL endorsement at 25 wpm or more. So I relented and soon was stumbling into the shack every weekday morning after an old man's quick stop along the way, and was tuning in to the early bird round table. I continue to do so.

Rolling out of bed at an ungodly hour has become a habit. The session is similar every weekday, opened by KC4D, Bill, (we call him VABill), the organizer of the CWops banquet at Dayton this year. There are eight of us, all of whom are CWops or have been invited. Others are welcomed on occasion. Our skills are varied, and I, as the newcomer, am on the bottom of the heap with often too many dits making inroads on my contribution. Others, besides VABill, KC4D and me, George, W9ZSJ, whom you might find on the CWops list include Dan, AK4SQ; Dave, WN5V; Mike, AA4MC; Joe, AA1E; Chris, KC0TVD; and NCBill, K1ZJA. Several have "Given Back" as CWops mentors. A couple of us sometimes get help being heard from the RemoteHams setups of VABill and Joe.

We usually share the local weather prospects and what our plans are for the day. Normal ham palaver is a big part of the exchanges, and a new antenna or rig is sure to bring up comments from each of us as do accomplishments of our kids or grandkids and mention of our current aches and pains. We wrap it up, usually after only one round in about an hour. Meeting five times a week, we can stand waiting until tomorrow for more commentary. We move along at just above 25 WPM, with some a little bit higher, even me when my thumb gets really awakened before having it passed to me from Iowa by Chris, KC0TVD.

It is remarkable that we have learned so much about each other and our spouses and family in such brief exchanges. (We sometimes text alongside the CW chit-chat to share photos or sage commentary.) I feel that my attendance, bolstered by the CWA, CWT, and other CWops influences have expanded my core group of friends and my awareness of what is going on in this remarkable hobby. During COVID and the recent political strangeness, that fellowship was very supportive while we were locked down and wondering what would happen next or on the next

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election date. (We don't talk politics, however. I'm pretty sure that ranting would be difficult in CW and would lead to expulsion from the group.) The benefits greatly exceeded any initial ambitions and interest in just improving my fist and head copy. And, I lost the urge to pursue the ARRL CW certification.

The cap to the story was when I received notification that I had been proposed as a CWop. That came far before I really felt comfortable with my ability to satisfy the requirements, but with so many Q's at fairly fast speed I guess those who supported me felt OK about it. As far as I know there was no discussion like the one about the recent Bylaws proposal. Getting the OK by four other members in just a couple of days was a piece of cake with so many exposures to my dit-extra skills. I got the nod in what must have been a record. Thanks, guys, for no blackballs and for the positive support. That was a confidence builder and a singular honor.

The original goal setting for the ARRL and the transition to CWA and CWops were a while back, and I still roll out of bed each weekday to do what old men do, grab some coffee, turn on the rig and wait for my turn. Occasionally, you will find me on CWT. Barring illness, medical appointments, travel plans, and unfortunate acts of God the group is often all there. We cover VA, NC, IA, IL, and TX (formerly LA), exchanging weather reports, family activities, sports chats, and whatever else is likely when a bunch of experienced hams get together.

And, when looking back at my original goals for CW accomplishments set some time ago, I can put them aside. And, thanks to the two great Advanced CWA mentors, Joe, KK5NA and Mark, VE3BXG for "Giving Back". The CWops Membership certificate dated in 2023 now is joint wallpaper with the 1953-54 ARRL CW proficiency certificate, additional endorsements of which I no longer covet. CWops involvement has been a worthy replacement. Thanks, folks. It's been great.

