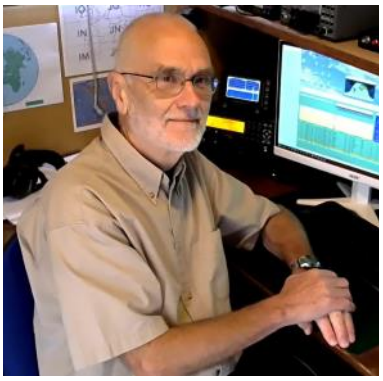
Solid Copy

The CW Operators Club Newsletter
February 2023 — Issue 157

The Yasme Foundation Award of Excellence, for excellence in CW mentoring and activities.

President's Message



Members of CWops and other CW operators are presented with choices when it comes to putting their skills into practice on the air. For the competitive there are contests of one sort or another on the majority of weekends not to

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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"

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mention the weekly CWTs. Those that prefer more variety can get on the air whenever they want and enjoy a relaxed rag-chew. List tickers and awards chasers can amuse themselves chasing DX and 'New Ones' and also taking part in the increasingly popular game of so called 'Radio Marathons'. These latter are extended events typically lasting a month or more celebrating some notable event or perhaps an anniversary. Some established Marathons like FOC take place regularly but there has been an increase in one-off Marathons marking specific occasions which may not even be radio related. The RSGB has organised several in the last few years such as the Football World Cup in 2018, the Cricket World Cup the following year and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022. Last year was closed out with a month long 'Marathon' during December in celebration of 100 years since the original Transatlantic Tests conducted by the RSGB and ARRL and which is recognized as the beginning of amateur intercontinental DX. And now as I write this in January I'm having fun chasing the many special calls activating the WRTC 2023 QSO Marathon. These unrepeated events seem to have a habit of generating huge interest and frequently develop into real 'pileup fests'.

Radio Marathons are not trivial to organise. Fortunately we seem to have a doyen of Marathons at the RSGB in the form of G4FAL the HF Contest Chair. Typically a number of special callsigns have to be granted. Then an online web-based booking system is required for individuals wishing to activate the calls. A volunteer will be needed to look after each special callsign; s/he will collect the logs from operators to begin the process of submitting them to Logbook of the World, Clublog etc, and for updating an individual's real-time progress in their awards chase. Instant QSO confirmation is often in the mix too – in WRTC 2023 my call will flash up against the relevant call within a second or two of being worked. It's impressive stuff..!

I've been involved in all aspects of the RSGB Marathons, from administering a callsign to operating the calls at the 'sharp end'. Now in WRTC 2023 I've been in the pile-ups chasing the calls and watching the boxes gradually fill up. Marathons are fun but can be a valuable training tool too. It's common to have several special calls on a band at the same time attracting significant queues of callers and can be a great opportunity to polish your pile-up busting techniques like XIT, timing and tuning a duplex split pile. Actually operating one of these calls is not everyone's idea of fun but for me it's a golden opportunity to experience the 'sharp end' of a 'DXpedition' environment without spending thousands lugging vast amounts of kit across the globe. I'll always jump at the chance to develop this technique; maybe one day I will be able to winkle out a callsign first time from half a dozen or more zero-beat cluster callers like others seem able to do with ease!

Moving on to some club matters now.....

I am pleased to report that every edition of Solid Copy is now stored in the Internet Archive at https://archive.org/details/solidcopy. The intention is that our editor Dick N9EEE will submit each new edition so it remains up to date. There are powerful search facilities to select years etc and global text search capability across the whole archive back to February 2010. Try it and see what you think. Our thanks go to Kay Savetz K6KJN, the Program Manager for Special Collections for making this possible.

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In last month's edition Bruce Murdock K8UDH announced his wish to stand down from his 'QTX Report' column in Solid Copy. He invited potential successors to contact him to discuss the role and he is delighted to tell me that M0KTZ has offered to take over. Enzo is a product of last year's Advanced Academy course and a recent new member. He and I worked each other in my Giving Back sessions during his course and followed up with email chats. He's a committed QRP rag-chewer and even topped the 2022 MQTX table. I had no hesitation in confirming Bruce's recommendation. Welcome Enzo!

Finally this month a reminder that February 28th is the final date to apply for both CWT and QTX medallions. Qualification criteria and how to apply are at https://cwops.org/qtx-awards/ for QTX and at https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/ for CWTs. Medallions now incur a flat rate charge of $10 worldwide but you will note that in both cases attractive certificates are available for free download. Our thanks to Fabian Kurz DJ5CW (#1566) for providing this nice facility.

Have a great month!

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

SC

Editor's Notes: The Internet Archive

by Dick Strassburger, N9EEE

The Internet Archive is now hosting back issues of the CWops newsletter, *Solid Copy*, from 2010 through last month's issue as an alternate resource to our own website archive. Not only that, they have also scraped our website pages as well as previous iterations dating back to 2010. It was a hoot to be able to see the progression of the website since 2010. Just to stagger you a little more, the Internet Archive, home of the Wayback Machine, stores over 790 billion web pages in addition to a mindboggling number of books, movies, transcripts, etc. And you thought the Library of Congress was huge. Their aim is to be THE online library for anything that can be digitized.

So what's in it for CWops? Since our website archives our history of *Solid Copy* dating back to 2010 - in fact, the Internet Archive scraped our website to collect those copies of the newsletter - its not clear what's in it for CWops except the cool factor. I haven't seen any search engine returns on Google or Bing that include results from the Internet Archive. And I don't readily see any marketing potential from the inclusion of out-of-date web pages and archived newsletters in their digital library. However, if in the course of functional evolution they should include dynamic search capability, such as search by author, call sign, title, and subject matter - we would see great value. I started a similar project shortly after I became editor last May and after about 40 hours invested I realized this would be a mountain of which I may never see the crest. Yes, I hope we see topical search as an awesome use of the Internet Archive...search by subject in a rich collection such as *Solid Copy*...the resource for CW.

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

News and Notes

Duncan (Mac) Fisken, G3WZD

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

Fred Smith, VE7FO #1368 on 1st November, 2022
Mike Shapiro, WA6O #42 on 15th January, 2023

Condolence cards have been sent on behalf of CWops

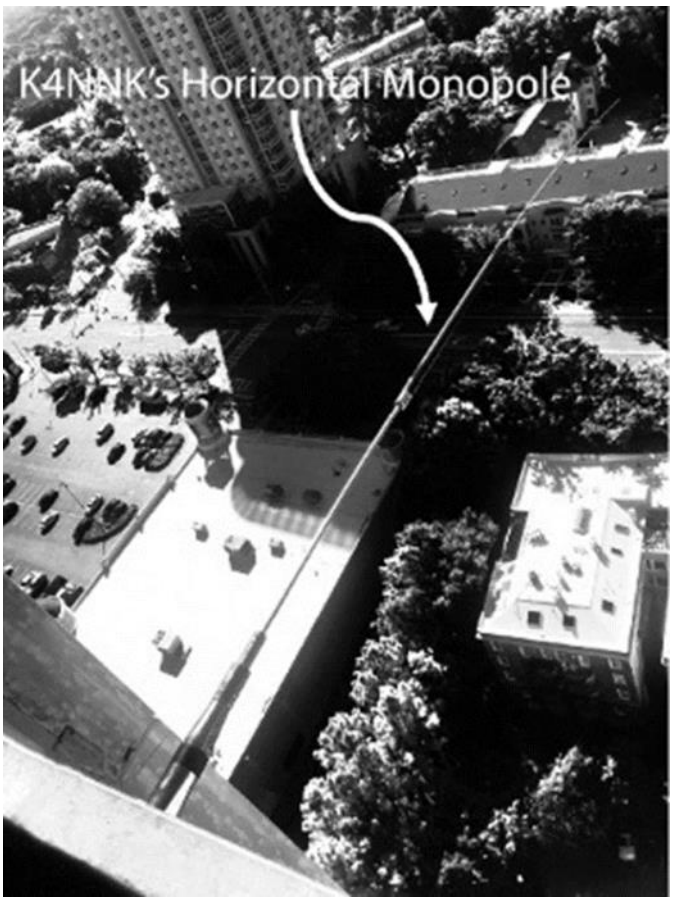
A nice mixed post-bag this month, ranging from a CW-themed cocktail to new keys, a 250' tower, weedwhackers and even vacation rentals on Bouvet Island! Thanks to all the contributors and folks, please keep your submissions coming in (no need to wait until the monthly call for items!).

Mike, K4RUM #1182 Have you ever been exhausted after a gruelling evening's CWT and thought to yourself… "Gee. I sure wish I could make a CW-themed cocktail to help me unwind." If so, today is your lucky day. Behold -- Three Dots and a Dash!

This recipe calls for some fancy ingredients, so get your shopping done before the next CWT!

(News and Notes Editor's Comment: Thanks, Mike; I am certainly going to try this one!)

Gary, K4NNK #3165 My 250' Tower! I configured a simple antenna system which is effective and doesn't violate my condo restrictions. I mounted a Diamond HF20CL antenna horizontally through the guard rail of my balcony and used the guard rail as a counterpoise.



Evidence of success: I have worked 42 ARRL entities in the last 25 days using 85 watts input to the antenna system. It helps that I am on the 26th floor. Also, I ranked 35th out of 20,082 in the 2023 WRTC for 20M CW.

I have built antennas of various types while living in condos and apartments in California, Florida, and Maryland. An earlier attempt was my beer can antenna system in Maryland: see QST, March 2005, page 53. *(News and Notes Editor's comment: I can thoroughly recommend reading Gary's QST article!)*

The current setup in Atlanta is the most successful.

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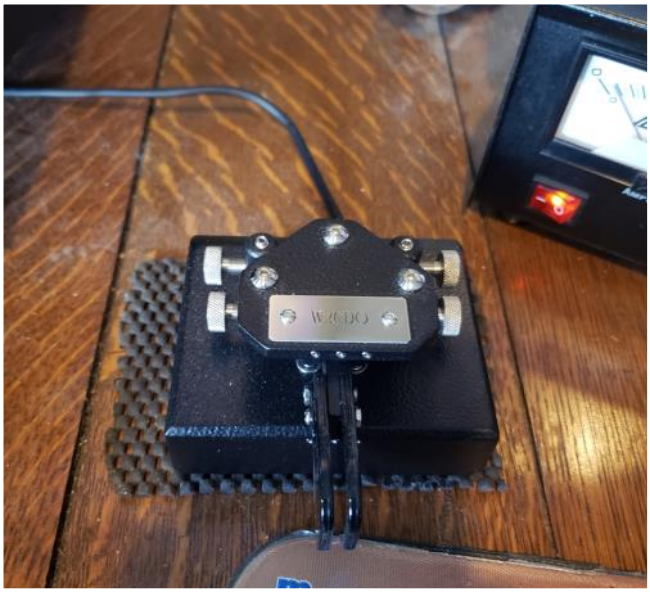
I read "Array of Light" by Tom Schiller, N6BT, "Antennas and Wave Propagation" by John Kraus et al., the excellent articles by W4RNL, AD5X and many others as well as the ARRL Handbook. Each is helpful and interesting but after understanding the basics, experimentation seems to be the most effective route to success even though it is an inefficient process.

Please listen for my CW signal on 20M; I'm only 3 dB below the noise level.

Peter, W2CDO #2526 I'm a slapper not a squeezer and so after years of procrastination I finally decided to buy a single lever paddle, so I moved my trusty Kent TP-2 (which I love to use) to the shelf and bought a lovely ZN-SL. So far, it's been a ton of fun to hunt down morning ragchews on 80 and 40 to play with the new paddle – which I can adjust to feel a lot like my old Vibroplex Original if I wish. I like to think my sending has improved but really, that might be all in my head. The surprising thing is how much I'm enjoying the ragchews.



Lee, NS8O #1496 I was feeding my Tower on 160 but could only run 25 watts and xcvr seemed to jump to a high SWR like an arc to ground or something. I use a homemade ground mounted tuner that matches a three-wire cage going to the top of the 55' tower; spaced about 2 feet from said tower. I feed the tuner with RG 59 coax that is only 25' long, so low loss.

The tuner is made with WWII surplus silver mica caps and variables from a WWII tuning unit. Covered with a plastic 5-gallon Lowe's bucket for stealth, weather, dogs, cats, etc.

Sooo... keeping the yard looking nice for the XYL is important, but don't overdo it like I did all spring/summer. Look for your coax before weed whacking... Especially if you don't think coax is vulnerable to yard implements! Check out the pic for the reason why.

Apparently, water had got into it and over a certain RF voltage it acted like a wet noodle and conducted the RF to ground, enough to fool my rigs internal tuner; (No amp for 160.) Anyway, fixed it 5 minutes before the end of the 160 contest today and made 2 more Q's: N2KW and VE3EJ!

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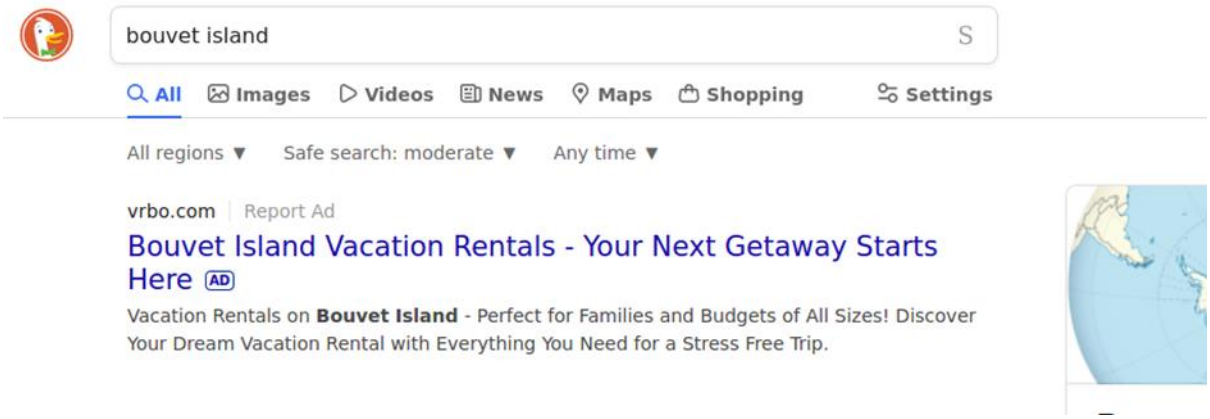
Saul, W3WHK #1392 It was fun using one of our local club callsigns, K3FI, in both the CW and SSB NAQPs. It sure was nice having a short, contest-friendly call for a change, as opposed to my own call or our other, better-known club call WM3PEN. Because I announced I'd be the K3FI op beforehand, I got greeted by a lot of CWops.

My exchange was "Saul PA". On SSB, interestingly, this elicited three "Better Call Saul" replies, one "Better Call...", and (surprisingly) only one "Paul?" [For non-NA readers, "Better Call Saul" is a TV series, a take-off from "Breaking Bad".]

Vic, 4X6GP #5 I've finally converted all my computers from Windows to Linux! The holdout was my shack computer. The GP logging function, formerly performed by DXLabs Suite, has been taken up by CQRLOG, a native Linux program written by CWops members OK2CQR and OK1RR. It lacks some features of the former program, but so far is proving quite satisfactory. Some other programs, like EZNEC, have been set up to run under WINE. The most serious remaining issue is N1MM. I am going to try running it in a Windows virtual machine, much as I dislike having any vestiges of Windows around.

Doug, KR2Q #438 On Dec 29, 2022, I set up my new IC7610, taking my 3-digit SN K3 out of service. During January, I made 4,610 CW Qs using the 7610. On Jan 11, I made my first (and only) SSB QSO. I was just testing the new radio to make sure it worked on phone. My thanks to everyone reading this for all the QSOs!

John, N6HCN #1914 I was excited to find the attached hit when searching for the latest DXpedition. (No, I didn't photoshop it.)



How did we EVER get along without the internet?

Duncan, G3WZD #1979 A couple of things from me to round off this month's News and Notes. Firstly, I must commend Tony of N3ZN Keys LLC for superlative customer service. Tony quickly shipped a no charge a replacement my ordered ZN-9+ paddle after it was pilfered during courier transit (the courier delivered two empty cartons showing clear evidence of tampering). I'm now having lots of fun with my new paddle. I am also indebted to the member who posted on the email reflector a suggestion to use Dycem silicon mats; super sticky and large enough for my ZN-9+ and Begali Spark.

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By the way, if anyone comes across a new ZN-9+ paddle (with serial number 119) being offered for sale, please inform me or N3ZN Keys LLC as that is the one that went missing.

Finally, it has been great to see Amateur (or Ham) Radio receive some positive press exposure of late, including two articles in The Times here in the UK. I had hoped to receive permission from The Times to reprint one of the articles here, but they insisted on a licence fee! Nevertheless, these articles seem to be out there in the public domain.

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

SC

Dayton Hamvention®

Sponsored by Dayton Amateur Radio Association Since 1952

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CWOPS ANNUAL DINNER ON MAY 18 AT THE DAYTON HAMVENTION 2023

For many years our annual Hamvention CWops dinner was held at the familiar Spaghetti House in Dayton, but we have now changed the venue. It will be held instead at the conveniently located Rona Banquet Hall, 1043 Rona Parkway Drive, Fairborn, OH 45324. The new location is only a few minutes from the Hope Hotel and Conference Center. By this change we will have more indoor space, easier parking and our own food caterer. During dinner, we will have our usual interesting presentations and updates, with lots of opportunities for chatting and shaking hands with folks you have only met on the air. It is the CWops social event of the year!

Note that the Rona Banquet Hall will be ours from 10 a.m. until 11 p.m. on Thursday, May 18, meaning we will have an opportunity to hold meetings, discussions and even just hang-out before the dinner. Our buffet dinner will commence at about 7 p.m. (No alcoholic beverages will

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be available.) W1UU will orchestrate the pre-dinner meetings and discussions. Anyone with ideas on topics should contact Peter, W1UU.

The cost of the dinner is $36/person, inclusive of the buffet meal, facility rental and soft drinks, well below the meal charge at the Hope Hotel.

You may make your reservation now by going to https://cwops.org/contact-us/events/cwops-2023-hamvention-dinner/#dinpay to submit your payment. W1VE, Gerry, will manage the list of attendees and track payments.

The following CWops members have registered. KC4D, AK4SQ, WS1L, W9NXM, N8DNA, NJ3K, WA1VQY, AF1E, AJ1DM, W8FN, K9WX, KM4FO, KM4CH, W1UU.

It is not too early to reserve your seat at this great event!

See you at Dayton!

73,

Peter Butler, **W1UU** (CWop;s #91)
Jim Talens, **N3JT** (CWops #1)

SC

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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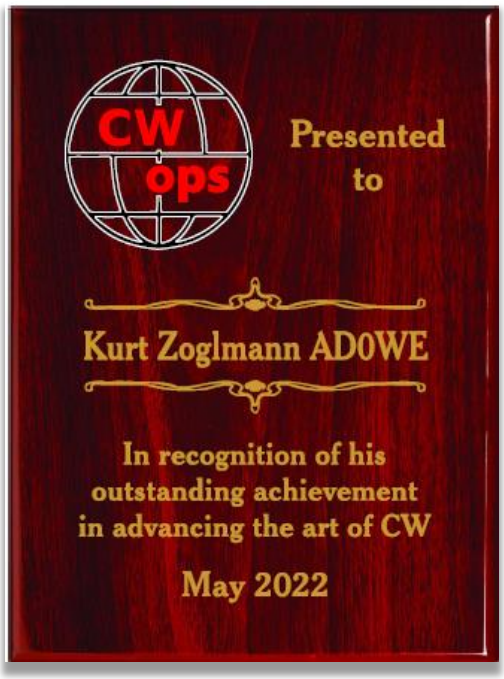
Criteria

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> with a copy to <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)

How We Were

Hank Garretson, W6SX

W2CDO, Peter Alterman, CWops # 2426

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Hams Say LIRR Train Makes Ideal Disaster Radio Center

A Long Island Railroad passenger car makes a fine disaster communications center—even when it is rolling along at close to 60 miles an hour.

That's what eight Long Island amateur operators proved when they ran a radio-on-rails test in a regular train making the run from Jamaica to Greenport.

"Hams" regularly provide emergency communications for police, firemen and the Red Cross during and after such disasters as hurricanes.

To do this, they need emergency sources of power for their transmitters and receivers.

Learning that over 200 of the LIRR's cars have the same 110 volt power found in homes, the hams got the railroad's okay for the experiment. It proved that the passenger cars—ideal "command posts" because they have light, water, air-conditioning and are moveable—were also good locations for short-wave stations.

The most unusual contact of the trip came when the rolling radio center, passing Mineola, talked to an amateur in Seattle, Wash., who was operating a transmitter in his car.

There was another exciting contact as the train rolled through Ronkonkoma. Fourteen-year-old Peter Alterman "hooked" his father, also an amateur, who was working their home station in East Meadow.

During a five-hour stopover in Greenport, the group set up the same type of portable aerials that would be used once a permanent emergency center was set up, then talked via key and mike with other operators all over the U. S.

As the short-wave stations roll along the rails, Al Grey, left, a veteran amateur who is chief of the Jamaica Motor Vehicle Department, logs the contacts made. That's Ted Basile of East Meadow, an electronics student, next to him holding a microphone and Lou Goulding of Kew Gardens, an electronics technician, at the right bent over his telegraph key.

Little Neck, Ready and Glen Cove ght, by pre- g on is for- rain of Bay- osed of trial ens.

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irman of the ence which ow.

"In 1961 I was a fourteen year old General, WA2ONO, with a 50w 80/40 transmitter and receiver my father and I built from the ARRL Handbook. I also had a borrowed Heathkit Twoer and home-brew ground plane that I used to log in to the weekly 2 meter AREC net. There was an informal

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club of local hams in central Nassau County who would get together for events like Field Day, etc. I don't remember how we found out that the Long Island Rail Road had acquired some cars fitted out with 110v AC running on the main northern line to Greenport but the light bulb went off: it was a perfect opportunity to demonstrate emergency communications. A few adults volunteered to look after us kids and the railroad was willing to allow us to use the last car on a weekend run. Our equipment consisted of Gonsets for 6 and 2 and an HF TX + RX (maybe someone will recognize the rigs from the picture. I've forgotten what they are). The gear sat on a long board set across the top the seats along one side of the car. VHF antennas were placed along windows and a trapped vertical for HF was lashed onto the back of the car sticking out beyond it and fed through the open door at the end with the steel car itself serving as ground for the antenna and I think we had a 6 meter halo out back as well. As the article says, this arrangement worked better than any of us expected. A conductor was assigned to the car and got a lot to talk about when he got home that night. In the picture I'm the kid in the back, face half blocked."

Thank you Peter. That was great.

Please send your How We Were picture(s) and story to w6sx@arrl.net. Then-and-now pictures particularly welcome.

CW Exuberantly,

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

SC

I Heard Gus (W4BPD) at LH4C – Bouvet Island?

Fred Hopengarten, K1VR (CWops #57)

In November 1962, the late Gus Browning, W4BPD, a printer from Cordova, South Carolina, and world-famous solo DXeditioner, activated LH4C. I'm told the license was acquired with the help of LA5HE, Rag Otterstad – still active today.

I was a member of the high school class of 1963, and, as it was November in New England, afternoons got dark quickly. Lacking other interests at that time of year, except studying and preparing college applications, I was tuning my HQ-140X around on 40 meter CW. In the late afternoon, that would have meant an all darkness path to Bouvet Island. My antenna was an 80- meter dipole fed with 300 ohm TV twin-lead, into a Johnson 275 watt matchbox.

Here's a photo taken the previous year, 1961, showing Marshall Goldberg, K1LUV[1], me (then W1NJL), and Jeff Dorsey, K1MMB (currently active as TZ4AM). The HQ-140X can be seen over the left shoulder of K1MMB. The Heathkit QF-1 Q-Multiplier, seen to the right of K1MMB, helped a lot on CW. The amplifier we are hovered over was homebrew, by K1LUV, featuring a single 803 in the final, and capable of 300 watts on 80 and 40, on a good day. Less on 20. It would go into self-oscillation and not work on higher frequencies.

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But back to 40 meter CW. To my surprise, there was Gus, and he was loud. He could also send easy-to-copy CW. While I didn't work him, I listened a lot while trying. And thus here is the story that results.

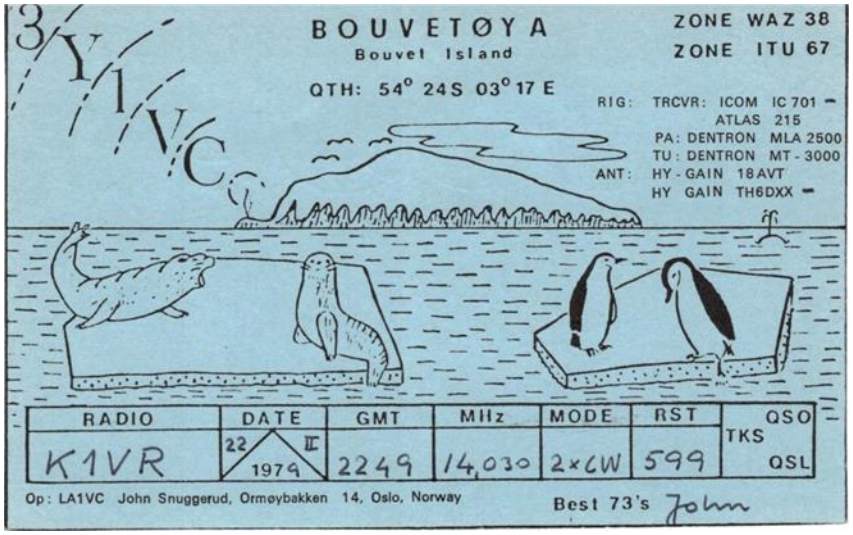
Left-to-right: K1LUV, K1VR, K1MMB

Check https://www.dxcc.info/dxing/04/index.htm and you will see that it says that Gus was "QRV, but not on island." Check http://hamgallery.com/qsl/country/BouvetIsland/lh4c.htm and you will see that it says: "This was said to be a shipboard operation!"

And now, for the first time, I'll tell my small story.

I heard Gus, on CW, say something to the following effect: "AS AS (the CW symbol for standby). QRX." Then there was about a two minute pause. He then sent: "Wow. Amazing. A big chunk of ice fell off the side of the island and splashed into the ocean."

At the time, I wondered how he could see ice falling *from his location on the island*. With the later word that he might not have actually been on land, the answer to my wonderment became clear. He had witnessed it from his boat.



I can't recall ever seeing any published word on how he got ashore with his gear – 75S-3, 32S-1, PM-2 AC, and MP-1 power supply, survived on the island (food and shelter?), powered his equipment by generator, etc., as a famously one-man expedition. And how did he subsequently get it all off the island? He must have had a terrific Zodiac driver.

Those were the days when you followed the dictum: "WFWL. Work First, Worry Later."

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Adrian (KO8SCA), Otis (NP4G) and my other friends on the 3Y0J DXpedition, I'm not worried about you. With the modern rule of "photos, or it didn't happen," I'm not worried. I can't wait to see the photos.

P.S. As you might expect, I did eventually work Bouvet for an all-time new one. The only problem was that it was 17 years later.

[1]Still licensed, the only one of us that actually got a degree in engineering, a now retired Microsoftie, living in Ravensdale, WA -- but he hasn't been on the air in decades.

SC

U.S. Navy Code Story

or, Are There Any Real Radiomen in the House?

Paul H. Bock, Jr. K4MSG (CWops #315)
ETCM, U.S. Navy Retired
(Commercial T/PG/DM/Radar)

BACKGROUND

In the late 1960s the U.S. Navy announced that it would no longer require candidates seeking promotion to Radioman 2nd Class (E-5) to pass a 16 words per minute code test. Not surprisingly the response was mixed, with older radiomen decrying this change in the promotion requirements while younger RMs were jubilant, seeing the code requirement as archaic amid the use of narrow-band, multitone radioteletype and the just-emerging technology of shipboard satellite communications.

There were also those who expressed concern about the time when code might be needed and no one would know how to use it. Thankfully I know of no disasters caused by the demise of the code as an operational tool, but I did have one personal experience that is interesting enough to share.

THE STORY

In 1969 I was assigned to the U.S. Naval Communications Station located at Sidi Yahia, Morocco. I had recently been promoted from Chief Electronics Technician (E-7) to a temporary appointment as Warrant Officer (WO-1) and was assigned as the officer-in-charge of the Receiver Site located about a mile from the main communication complex Terminal Building. Our job was to keep radio receivers tuned to high-frequency communication channels as directed by Facilities Control (or FACON, in the aforesaid Terminal Building) to maintain encrypted radioteletype communications with the east coast of the continental United States, other overseas military commu-

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nications facilities, and ships of the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Atlantic and Mediterranean areas. In addition to banks of receivers and acres of rhombic antennas, we also maintained several Local Operator Positions (LOPs) for "emergency at sea" radiotelegraph communications on the international distress frequency of 500 kHz, each position being equipped with a medium-frequency receiver and a telegraph key. The key could be connected by remote wire to the transmitter site at the Naval Radio Station (T), Bouknadel, Morocco, about 20 miles away.

My staff consisted of a Chief Electronics Technician and a maintenance crew of ETs, and a Chief Radioman with a rotating watch staff of RMs. The Chief Radioman, RMC Decker, had been in the Navy for around 16 years so he had "grown up" in the Morse Code era as a Navy radioman.

One morning about 0900 I received a telephone call from my boss, the Communications Operations Officer (a lieutenant commander) at the Terminal Building, who informed me that there was an American commercial freighter believed to be located off the coast of Morocco that might have a bomb hidden on board. The ship's owners had been unable to contact the vessel by radio and NAVCOMMSTA Morocco was being asked to use the 500 kHz international distress frequency to send an International Morse Code message prefaced by the International Urgency Signal, XXX, "in the blind" (i.e., without knowing if it was being received) during the 3-minute "quiet times" at 15 minutes before and 15 minutes past each hour. My boss wanted us to run this operation from one of the CW LOPs at the Receiver Site.

I explained the situation to Chief Decker and he set about the task at hand. After a few minutes he returned to our office and said that we had a problem because none of the younger RMs had been taught code in Navy "A" school and the older ones hadn't used it in years. A quick check of the off-watch operators (at least, those we could locate) and the personnel at FACON revealed that we had a definite "operator problem."

"Well, I know the code," said Chief Decker. Having been a ham radio operator and code-lover since my teenage years. I replied, "So do I. Let's set up the LOP and do it ourselves."

Chief Decker grinned broadly and we went out gleefully to tackle our new assignment. With the LOP receiver set to 500 kHz and the telegraph key connected to a medium-power (10 kw!) transmitter at Bouknadel, the Chief and I took turns sending a repeated message (with 10-second pauses to listen for a reply) for a three-minute interval twice every hour. I don't recall the merchant ship's call sign ("KABC" is typical of what it might have been) or the exact format of the message but the following is representative. CNL was NAVCOMMSTA Morocco's call sign:

XXX XXX XXX KABC KABC KABC DE CNL CNL CNL BT POSSIBLE BOMB ON BOARD CONTACT OFFICE ASAP BT XXX KABC DE CNL AR K

We sent the message at about 15 words per minute while the RMs on watch observed us with a mixture of curiosity and perhaps a little envy; it was a history lesson in how Naval communications "used to be." We continued throughout the morning and the noon hour, taking turns going for coffee or lunch, with one of us monitoring the 500 kHz distress frequency continually between transmissions although we never received a response from the ship. By early afternoon

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we had begun discussing how we would set up a two-man watch schedule to continue our vigil into the evening when I got a call from FACON notifying me that we could stop the transmissions because the problem "had been resolved."

We were never notified whether the merchant ship ever heard us calling.

POSTSCRIPT: About eight months later the operating spaces at the Receiver Site were totally reconfigured to incorporate additional cryptologic radio teletype circuits to pass traffic "of high interest." The Morse code LOPs were removed and never replaced.

(Above) Navy AN/WRR-3 VLF/LF/MF radio receiver, the same type Chief Decker and I used.

(Left) NAVCOMMSTA Morocco receiver site, located in the middle of a large antenna field about a mile away from the terminal

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(above left) Morocco NRS_VLF-LF-MF towers

(above) Morocco NCS Rx Rhombics

(left) U.S. Navy SB-315 telegraph key

SC

Towards Ergonomic Keying

Jim Smith, KK0U (CWops #3067)

Years ago, when I first started learning to use a dual-lever iambic paddle, I quickly learned two things: send with the hand you don't write with, and do something about the ergonomics of paddles.

The first lesson is simple enough, and I was enlightened to this method by Rich High W0HEP (SK), who gave a presentation on his trip through the Baltic states to the St. Louis QRP Society. Apparently, Soviet-era hams were taught to send with the hand opposite of their writing hands, so that they could copy QSOs without having to 'unman' the key.

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As for the second lesson, I was inspired towards this by the design of the venerable Vibroplex Bug. If you look closely, you will see that the thumb piece of the bug is extended past the finger piece. If you also look at your extended, yet somewhat relaxed hand, you will see that the tip of the thumb is well behind the tip of your forefinger. Here is where our ergonomic journey begins!

While trying to learn to send with a dual-lever iambic paddle, I noticed that my scrunched up hand would get tired and/or a little crampy after long periods at the key. The Vibroplex bug gave me the direction to forge out on my own to try to improve the ergonomics of my key so that I didn't experience this hand fatigue.

In order to capture the Vibroplex effect on my keys at home (I don't own any bugs), I tried a number of things. Figure on the left shows the X-1 Prototype. It was a dismal failure. After much head scratching and many hours of work on the bench, I arrived at the Mark I N0OCT (my former call sign) Thumb Extender, shown on the right. This provided exactly the correct amount of thumb piece extension so that I could send CW without scrunching up my hand.

This brave new innovation allowed me to send CW for hours without fatigue. Among its many benefits:

- It is a completely reversible modification, requiring no welding, brazing, hole tapping, refinishing or disassembly of the key
- The extender is available in a variety of materials – wood for the environmentally conscious, and plastic for those wishing a more colorful experience
- It is completely adjustable for height, allowing you a natural placement of your hand
- It can be easily deployed for right- or left-handed operation
- It is lightweight
- It is available from a number of world wide distributors under a variety of names, including clothes peg, Wäscheklammer, прищіпка, 衣夾, مشابك الغسيل etc.

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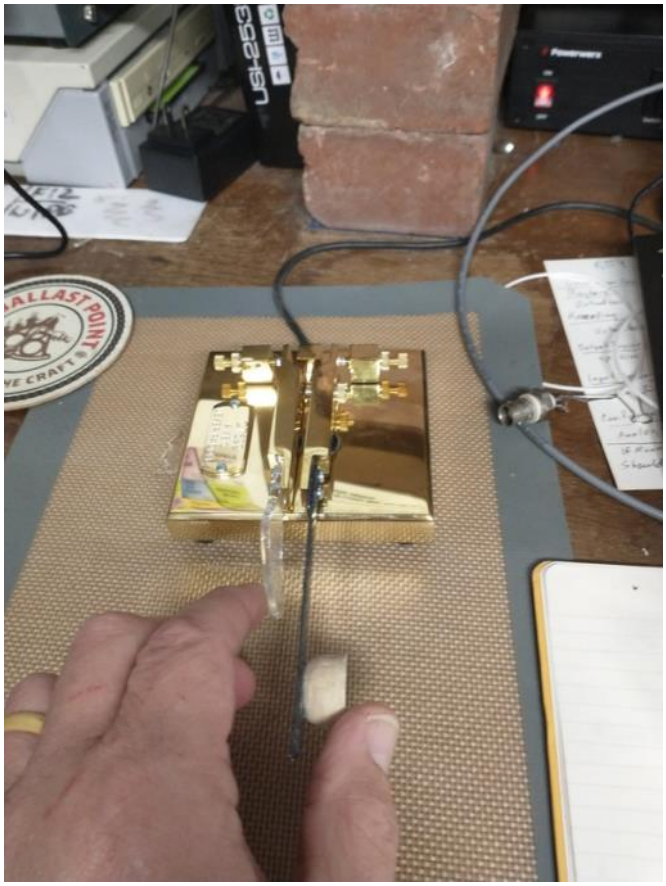
- It contains no PCBs, depleted uranium or 1,4-dioxane. (Probably contains Prop 65 materials, for those in California).
- It's cheap

While the Mark I has its clear advantages, innovation never sleeps at KK0U (rumors of my CQ 160m contest somnambulance notwithstanding). After acquiring a CT 599MB key from UR5CDX (my new favorite key!), I thought about a more permanent solution to the ergonomics question. Again, after much head scratching and time on the bench, I arrived at the Mark II KK0U Thumb Extender, shown below. This is an overengineered, feature-creep-packed solution to a question that wasn't asked. It required some extremely sensitive and delicate thumb-piece reassignment surgery on the key, consisting of unscrewing the existing piece and screwing the new one on.



The Mark II has the following features:

- High-performance Sailboat Grade Carbon fiber extender for ultra-stiff, lightweight performance
- Vintage Merlot wine cork gap extender for perfect thumb-to-forefinger distance
- Easily detached to restore key to original condition
- Sleek black color for stealthy operation

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While these disruptive new technologies aren't for everyone, if you notice your hand tires easily from the traditional position of using your dual-level iambic paddles, I suggest you give the Mark I N0OCT Thumb Extender a try. If that works for you, perhaps a Mark II KK0U Thumb Extender is in your future! [footnote, not sold in any stores, this is custom created]. Good luck, and here's to more relaxed CW!

SC

TX7G & FO/F6BCW - The Marquesas, Hiva Oa,

Didier Cadot, F6BCW (CWops #2818)

Thanks.

First of all, a big thank you to the 12 Sponsors and to the private donors who helped me, without you this expedition would not have taken place.

Thanks to F5LRL Michel for creating and updating the QRZ.com and Clublog pages, to F1COB Jean-Michel Webmaster of the Radio Club F6KJS for the site: https://tx7g.f6kjs.fr/

Thanks also to all of you, Radio Amateurs, SWL, for your "Ham spirit" which largely dominated during the traffic, allowing QSOs with NA and EU QRP stations.

Thanks to all of you, Operators who are patient in the pileups and who often shifted their frequency higher, always higher, by spreading the pileup well, which largely contributed to increasing the number of QSOs per hour, making more happy.

Thank you finally for your emails of support, encouragement, it's good for morale... And suddenly, the team of the next DX'p of November 2023, (between 9 and 13 operators) is very confident in the success of this next adventure that I am organizing.

Objectives of the DX'p Les Marquesas 2022.

This DX'p had 2 goals, first to make 9000 QSOs and test as many antennas as possible in order to prepare for the big DX'p in November 2023. Result: 9866 QSOs and 9 antenna tests carried out.

The trip.

6 days of travel between Burgundy and Hiva Oa were necessary there and back. I arrived at Hiva Oa in the Southern Marquesas, 1500 km NNE of Tahiti on September 27 with 6 large suitcases of equipment, (2 will remain there at the end of the Expedition with equipment for 2023) and left the 30. 6 suitcases, it's heavier at 71 than at 20... hi!

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Radio: Immediately the QSOs started in a big pile up.

On September 28, (29 in the morning in Europe) I started with the K3, 500W, N1MM and AT1000:

1. Wired LPDA (log-periodic dipole array) from 10 to 20m, 12 elements, oriented ENE, distance 110m from the shack.

2. Lévy 2x26m at 12m from the ground from 30 to 80m, distance 20m from the shack.

3. On the evening of the 29th, the Spiderbeam (10 to 20m) was in place 20m from the shack allowing comparative tests with the LPDA. I steer it by hand, no rotor.

4. On the 30th at noon, the vertical 60m 2 high radians manufactured on site is QRV.

5. On October 2, a Quad 1 element (10 to 20m) completed the antenna system.

6. On October 5, I turn the LPDA to the LP to compare it with the other ANTs.

7. On October 7, I change the location of the LPDA, it is oriented LP and I bring it closer to 30m from the shack, it is less clear, but I have less loss in the coaxial.

8. October 8 I build a Moxon for 6m on a plastic dryer. Hi!

Throughout the DX'p, the Spiderbeam was oriented 80% of the time towards SP and 20% towards LP.

All TX7G ANTs are home-built, including the Spiderbeam which is an improved copy of the famous German manufacturer.

Antenna Test Results:

The QTH is in the center of the caldera of the old volcano on a steep slope. The lower part of the site is 40m above the Pacific, the shack 50m and the top of the hill 75m. As we saw with the Can-AM DX Group team (TX7T) in 2019, it was impossible to place a Beverage to listen to the 80 and 160m. The coaxial used has 2.2dB of loss at 100m.

I have very little noise on the antennas. The testing of the guidelines took place SP and LP.

The NNE-oriented LPDA with 110m of coaxial is on the top of the hill, top of the Boom at 9m from the ground, bottom at 2m. The Spiderbeam placed 30m from the shack is 50m above the Pacific. The Quad is 30m from the shack and 40m above the Pacific. Comparison between LPDA and Spiderbeam: Same results on 17 and 12m, Spiderbeam is better on 10, 15 and 20m. Normal, the gain is plus 1 point on the Spiderbeam.

With the bidirectional Quad, I did interesting comparative tests between the Spiderbeam and the LPDA (LP and SP) and I was able to compare the front to back ratio of the antennas. The RSTs

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with the Quad in vertical or horizontal polarization are identical. At the very beginning and at the end of the propagation openings over Europe, the signals remained audible on the Quad, whereas they had disappeared on the Spiderbeam and on the LPDA. Mick F5LRL, my neighbor in France with his Quad 2 elements at 6m from the ground and his yagi at 12m from the ground made the same observation. See photos of Mick, his station and antennas at: https://www.qrz.com/db/F5LRL

Subsequently I moved the LPDA to put it 30m from the shack and 50m above sea level like the Spiderbeam. The LPDA was towards the LP and was pointing in the foliage of a large tree, a pepper tree... hooray!). With the LPDA, I lost more than one point S/meter on the Spiderbeam towards the LP. So I cleared the LPDA from the pepper plant by raising it to 7m just above the crown of the tree, I then found the same results as before. The pepper plant absorbed part of my HF. (Make sure the peppercorns have been roasted).

Now the LPDA is via the LP, the top of the boom 12m from the ground, the bottom 8m. The rear of the antenna "sees" the hill rising rapidly with a 30% slope. From then on, I didn't hear anything towards the SP, even the Big One Americans no longer passed. Fortunately the Spiderbeam via SP maintains excellent signals with the US. Hi!

The Lévy 2x26m proved to be very efficient, QSO with the East Coast in QRP 5W on 40m and 30m, excellent RST in Europe: up to 599+20dB on 30m.

The 60m high vertical radians allowed me to make a few QSOs with the US and Europe, but a lot of noise in the headphones. I listened with the less noisy lévy With only 15W of PAR, I suffered for my correspondents who had to receive me very weakly.

I built a Moxon on site for the 6m.

The antennas have been specially developed and adapted for this DX'p (very light, easily transportable). They have stood up well to bad weather conditions (rain and wind), they are easy and quick to install.

In conclusion for the November 2023 DX'p antennas, I plan:

From 10 to 20m: 2 x Quad 2el vertical polarization, 1 x Spiderbeam, 2 x 12-element LPDA.

On 30 and 40m: 2 x LPDA 7 elements 30/40m, (one is built and being tested here in France).

On 60m: 1 x dipole.

On 80m: 1 x 2 wired elements and 1 x Vertical L inverted high radians on Spider 18m mast.

On 160m; 1 x L inverted high radians on 18m Spider mast.

On 6m either ; 1 x Moxon or 1 x 3 elements Quad.

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Expedition Highlights:

Good propagation with nice openings on the 12m and 10m high bands allowing QSOs with QRP Eu and AN stations and with modest 100W stations in a dipole.

Very interesting tests of different ANT via SP, via LP, on all bands except 160m.

Good European signals, same as my 2012 solo DX'p "TX5EG".

Extremely interesting comparative antenna tests with F5LRL Michel on the 20m, 17m, and 15m bands. Michel used a home-made Quad with 2 elements at 6m from the ground and a professional Yagi with 3 wide-spaced elements at 12m from the ground.

The DX'p Les Marquesas 2023 project is confirmed with guaranteed accommodation and catering for up to 12 Operators.

Expedition Weaknesses:

Disappointing propagation openings on 80m.

Very difficult traffic on 60m with only 50 QSOs in 18 hours of traffic, average of 2.7 QSOs per hour.

Numerous digital signals going up to S7 on 50.313. I tried several CW tests on 50.110, with auto spot without any success.

I did not traffic in digital mode.

Some kHz of F6BCW history:

SWL at 15, F6BCW at 19, between 18 and 40 I worked in the Navy as a radio operator, then a technician, then a trainer and technical manager for radio telecom centers. I finished my career as a sailor at the Navy Signals R&D Center, one of my missions was the study of long-range ionospheric propagation using oblique sounders. Returning to civilian life in 1991, I have worked in the strategic organization of SMEs/SMIs to this day. I have been retired for 11 years but I still work 25 days a year. I was successively FO8EG, FM0COO and FM0COO/MM, CT2FN, FM5ES, TX5EG, FM/F6BCW, FG/F6BCW, TX7T (collective call), TX7G... Plus a few appearances in Africa.

Since 2012, I have been organizing DX'p and VOACAP helps me prepare the propagation plan that I strive to optimize and follow to give consistency in radio traffic.

Conclusion :

A solo DX'p is an extraordinary but complicated and tiring adventure for an old man over 71 like me. I keep in mind the many encouragements you sent me and I take advantage of this report to thank you warmly for your emails. It did me good to know you by my side, alone on the other side of the world in the "Doldrums" of Radio du Pacifique Sud! ”

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I'm going back to France more convinced than ever that 2023 will be a great year for DX and that we're going to take the opportunity to do a great DX'P in Hiva Oa next November.

See you soon for new adventures, long live the RADIO, long live the CW!!!

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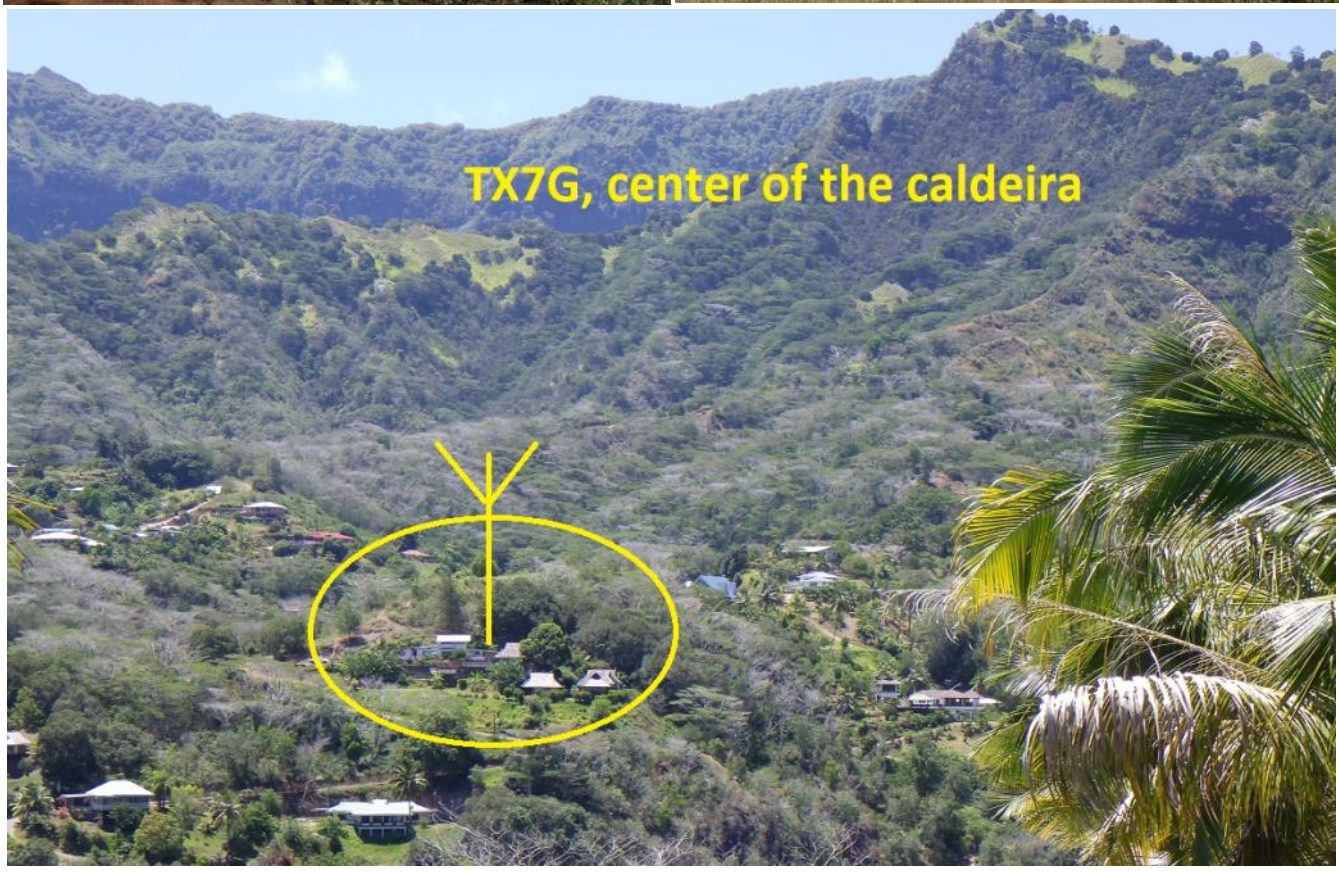

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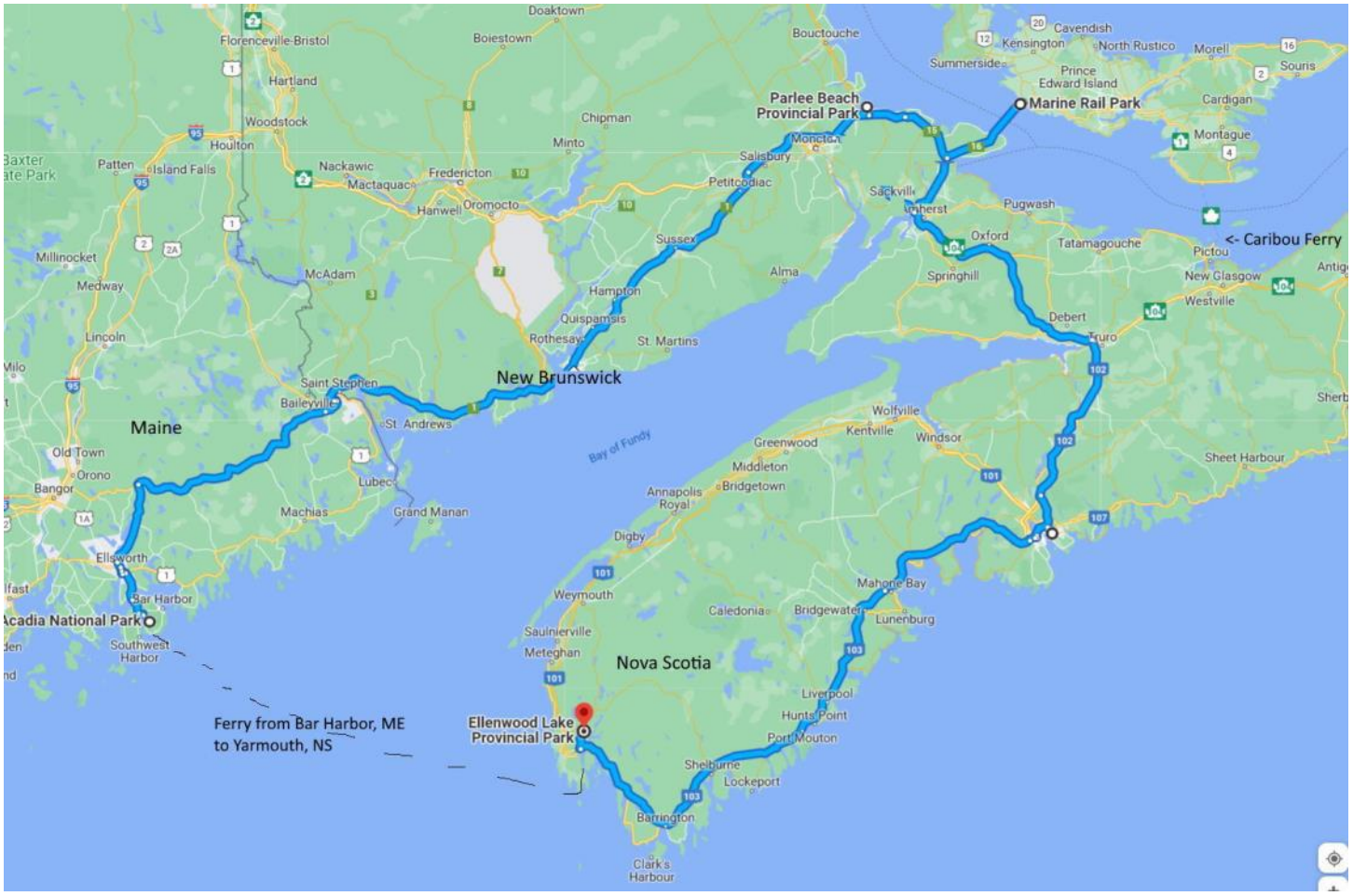
POTA CAN-AM

Jim Carson, WT8P (CWops #2456)

I spent a week up in Maine and the Canadian Maritimes geocaching and brought my radio to try a few Parks on the Air (POTA) activations.



Equipment

Elecraft KX3

Begali Adventure Mono paddle

Digirig Mobile card (which acts as external sound card and CAT control)

6Ah Bioenno lithium battery

Frame.Work laptop

Antennas

Packtenna EFHW 20/40

Elecraft AX2 on a SignalStuff BNC mag mount

Sotabeams BandHopper portable dipole and 7m telescopic mast

Random wire and homemade balun

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I had a reservation to drive up to the top of Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park (K-0001) and thought that would be a great spot for an activation. Because I was unable to find anything pro- or con- about ham radio on their NPS web site, I made a general inquiry. *Big mistake.* An innocuous inquiry resulted in a lot more questions back and an increasingly concerned CC: chain. Ultimately, I had "You can operate from your car."

The moral here is, for casual portable use, **don't ask permission in advance**, because it's too easy for someone at a desk to conjure a scary scenario and say "no." Instead, **ask when you show up in the park** where there can be an in-person conversation and they can see you're harmless.

First activation: Acadia National Park (K-0001)

After driving up to the top of Cadillac Mountain and hiking around, I was thinking how much of a doofus I was in trying to ask ahead. There were plenty of spots I could have set up incognito while enjoying a view.

Still, *because I was told,* I found a pullout to "operate from my car" using the Elecraft AX2 and BNC mag mount, and counterpoise running out the passenger window.

After securing enough contacts to count, I dropped off my ham stuff at my AirBnB and explored the park / geocached the rest of the day.

Not the most pleasant area

Earlier, the view from on the hike.

Nova Scotia's Ellenwood Lake Provincial Park.

All of the stars aligned for this activation. The folks in the check-in center were very chill and recommended I use one of the shelters. No day-use fee was necessary.

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The Band Hopper worked well for this environment. The center pole was held to a post with a Gear Snake, each dipole end attached to a tree. A nice breeze kept the mosquitos at bay. Timing this to the second ("less crazy") half of CWT made this a very fun experience as I worked some familiar friends (N4AF, N5RZ, NT6Q and WT9U).

Third Activation: Prince Edward Island's Marine Rail National Historical Park (VE-5775) In planning this, I noticed three parks at the PEI terminus of the Confederation Bridge, none of which had been activated. The first stop had good vibes, a clean working toilet (something I appreciate more now that I'm in my 50s), and the blessing of the park administrator to use the sheltered area. I anchored everything down because there was heavy wind. Made all my contacts as WT8P/VY2, packed up and did some geocaching nearby.

Second activation. This is more what I hoped

Third activation. PEI. The Confederation Bridge in the background.

Fourth activation: New Brunswick Parlee Beach Provincial Park (VE-0792). I didn't want to do this in full sun, so I stopped for lunch and enjoying local specialty, a Lobster Club with poutine fries.

There weren't any sheltered and uncrowded areas to set up, so I just plopped on the grass in front of my car, antenna tucked between trees. Although awkward, it was good for 22 contacts as WT8P/VE9.

Final thoughts:

- This was a fun jaunt to mix up my hobbies.
- In-field logging was helped with the HamRS phone app. I exported its ADIF file, cleaned it up and then uploaded to the gaggle of logging sites (pota.app, LoTW, QRZ, eQSL, ClubLog) when I was back within WiFi.

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- The Elecraft AX2 antenna was terrible on 20m (its target band), though I was able to tune it to 17m, 15m, and 30m.

- I forgot a small BNC patch cable, which prevented me from using the simpler Packtenna. The Band Hopper worked well, though it is more effort to put up and pack. While in Nova Scotia, I tried to participate in another CWT fairly late into the session. I was only able to eke out one contact before it ended.

- The 6Ah was fine for a few hours on the KX3. Laptop power for digital modes seemed to be a bigger concern, though I had a USB PD power bank available if I needed it.

SC

Gary Mikitin, AF8A (CWops #2092)

CWops Members Filling the Role of Citizen-Scientists

An exciting opportunity is on the horizon for CW operators to serve as citizen-scientists. No special skill, education, or background is required to be a citizen-scientist, merely a desire to make meaningful contributions to the understanding of the world around us. In October, 2023 and again in April, 2024, solar eclipses will pass across the continental United States and teams of researchers will be studying how each eclipse affects shortwave propagation. CWops members can participate in the research by operating in the upcoming Solar Eclipse QSO Parties. While the rules for entry (hamsci.org/seqp-rules) look like those of any other QSO party, the end goal is quite unique.

Planet Earth, Long-Distance Communication and Our Sun

All of us should be familiar with the story of how, in 1901, Guglielmo Marconi demonstrated that radio signals originating in Europe could be received thousands of miles away in North America. Scientists of that time wondered how radio signals propagated across the Atlantic. They developed (and later proved) the theory of long-distance skywave propagation, in which transmitted signals from the Earth's surface are refracted by some part of the atmosphere and

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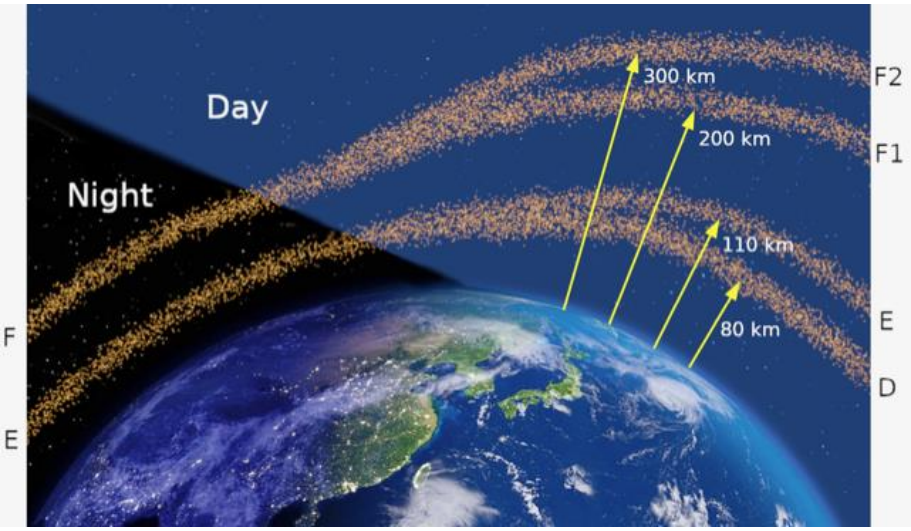
returned to Earth. What was then known as the Heaviside Layer was later defined to be the ionosphere, the region of charged particles roughly 80 to 1000 kilometers above the Earth's surface.

Today, over 100 years later, there are lingering questions regarding the ionosphere. One topic of interest and research is QSB, known to the science community as ionospheric variability. It can be beneficial, raising signals out of the noise and making them easier to receive. It can also be detrimental, making signals weaker, even causing them to disappear entirely for seconds or minutes at a time. A better understanding of ionospheric variability could lead to improved propagation forecasts and other benefits to users of the HF radio spectrum.

The Sun's Impact on Radio Communications

One factor which influences skywave propagation is the amount of Sun-sourced extreme UV and X-ray radiation striking the ionosphere. The Earth's rotation exposes the ionosphere to varying amounts of this energy in different locations. The energy variation causes the ionospheric regions to separate into distinct layers during the day and recombine at night. The layers - D, E, F1 and F2 - are well known to most hams.



Diurnal Transition of the Ionospheric Regions

(Credit: Carlos Molina at commons.wikimedia.org)

During a solar eclipse, the Moon passes between the Earth and the Sun, dramatically lowering the amount of radiation striking the ionosphere. The variation during an eclipse occurs over a matter of minutes, not hours, in effect creating a 'controlled experiment'. The rapid loss and recovery of solar radiation should make the ionosphere respond in ways that are easier to detect than when the response happens slowly over 24 hours. During the 2023 and 2024 eclipses, researchers will be noting how many shortwave signals are refracting from the ionosphere and how far they travel immediately before, during, and after the eclipse. Their data sources will be SEQP participants' logs, and the extensive databases that are the foundations of the Reverse Beacon Network, PSK Reporter and similar 'skimmer' aggregation sites.

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Solar Eclipse QSO Party, Sponsored by HamSCI

There will be two SEQPs, once for each eclipse event. Operators are encouraged to make QSOs using CW, phone and digital modes. After each eclipse, participants' logs will be scored based on the number and geographic coverage of their contacts. The results will be summarized on the SEQP website.

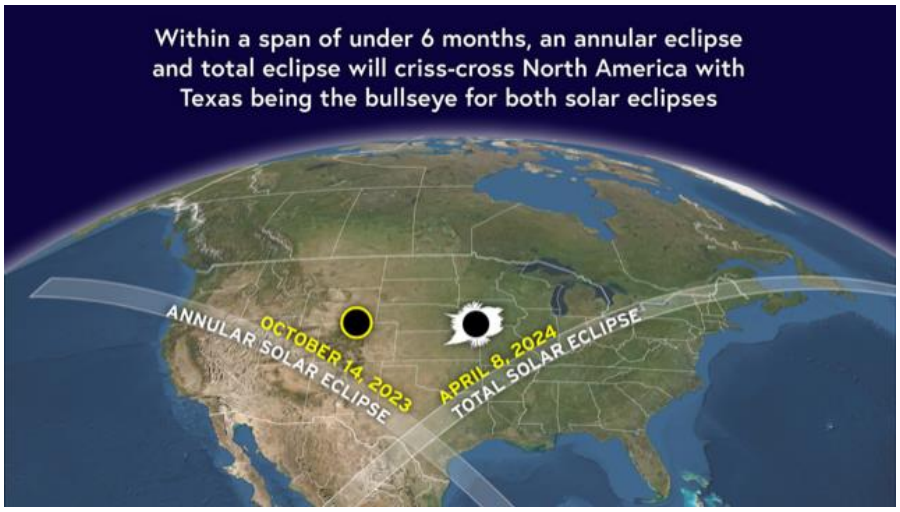
The SEQP is sponsored by the Ham Radio Science Citizen Investigation (better known by its acronym, HamSCI: hamsci.org). Researchers affiliated with HamSCI meet on a regular basis, along with ham radio citizen-scientists, to discuss past findings, new theories, radio equipment, antennas, and ways in which the SEQP might assist their research. HamSCI's goals are:

Advance scientific research and understanding through amateur radio activities.

Encourage the development of new technologies to support this research.

Provide educational opportunities for the ham community and the general public.

CWops members, many of whom are active on the HF bands and who possess a good degree of technical competence, would likely find HamSCI's work to be of interest. Learn more about HamSCI, including how you can participate, at hamsci.org .



Upcoming Eclipses Across the US Mainland

(Credit: www.greatamericaneclipse.com)

Your role

Participation by CWops members will mean more research data, yielding more interesting eclipse results

Operate in the SEQPs, whether full or part time. More QSOs = more data.

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If you have a CW skimmer node, send data to an aggregation site such as PSKReporter.info for eventual analysis by the research team

Set up a WSPR transmitter or receiver. Suggestions can be found at hamsci.org/gssc-faqs

Go portable and operate a station *under the eclipse paths*

SC

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 -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 January results:

AA0YY: KC8JR, N9EEE, KC4AXN, KI5QZD, K2HYD, K3IBZ, W2PDY/4, K4EJQ, W3FSA, AD5UA
G2CWO: AD0SN, KD4RAX
GW2CWO: UR3VZ, PE1RYX, IV3VIR, F6HPY, IK2TYL, F5MGK, MM0UMH, DF8CS, PA3GLH, IK4GNK, HB9DAL, S57FF, EA6EJ, R1WBU, IZ1RRJ, YL3JD, SP3DGV, 4O3RB, SP9BRP, JA5CIC, IK6RHT, EA3FCQ, DF3NA, OK2PJ, EC4CWT, US7WA
JJ1FXF: JH1XUP, JN1FAO, JH5PHC, JF6UZS/JR6, JA3IIJ (3), VK3MJ, VK2GR (2), VK2GAZ, JA6VGC, R8DW, JA1SJR, JM4AOA, BH3OQQ, JS6ULK, JA6BZH, VK2DVA
JJ1VNV: JN1FAO, JJ1TYD
JM4AOA: DS1TZE, JA1SJR, JA6BZH (2), JA6VGC, JG1BGT (2), JH0DOE, JH6SIZ, JJ0SFV, JJ1IZY (2), JK1EDT/1, JM8GWK, JO2NZH, JQ2NUD (2), JS6THD, VK2GR, VK4RT
JO1DGE: DV9ARR, JA1LNQ, JA1SJR, JA2GUO, JA4MRL, JG1BGT(2), JH6SIZ, JK1AZX, JP1JUY, JQ2NUD(2)
JR1WYW: JA3MDU, JR2RAT, JO2NUD (2), JJ5QLV, JA1UWF, VK5LJ, JJ1VNV/6, JA2EMP, JS6THD, JA6BZH, VK3TBR
K6RB: W5SG, WA1RWO
K7NJ: N2DGQ, AC6YY, K0QLM, K1SP, AG5XU, K8VBL, W8FJ, K2JY, KD2HAY, WB1GYZ, NV1B, K4IBZ, KO4KP, KD2FSH, WA6ICH, W9GS (2), WB6DMX (2), K7TXA, K6YIS, K7XU (2), K9YII, KB7BY, W2PDY/4, KA0DCU, KD6XU, WD4EX, K6FAT, W0KMF, W7AIT, KT3K, NK3H, WD6BNR, WA4EDE, W0DQ/7, W7ZDX, K7NNR, LU4KED, KG8DA, W2SH, KN6QER, W7RCS, WB6RVP, N2DA, KD7ZNC, W5SG, W8DXU, W7NNR, W0KOM, N2FJR

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N2GSL: AA1IY, K4ZNC, W2JEF
N4TMM: W9DOR, N0W, W8SK
N5OT: WA0JLY, VA3KRJ, VE3EJ, AC5P, W5THC, N9ATF
W5DT: W8BJO, KA9S, K9YII, W1AU, WA3GYW, K4FET, W3RJ, WB3GIN, K2OH
7N2XZB: JF6AOI, JH1QKG, JM8REB, JA4IIJ (3), JA5DQR, JF6UZS, JQ2NUD, JH6SIZ, JF5XPJ

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	EST UTC-4	CST UTC-5	MST UTC-6	PST UTC-7	Hawaii UTC-9
Mon											
JO1DGE					G2CWO		W2XS	AA0YY		N6HCN	
							WK4WC				
TUE											
JR1WYW	E25JRP		SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N4TMM	W8OV	K7NJ	K6RB	
7N2XZB							WE5P			W7ZDX	
Wed											
JM4AOA								W2ITT			
Thurs											
JJ1VNV			SV2BBK				KV8Q	N5OT	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
FRI											
JR1WYW			SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N2GSL	AA0YY		K6RB	
Sat											
JJ1FXF											
JM4AOA											
Sun											
JJ1FXF				IZ8NXG			W5DT			K6RB	
JM4AOA											

CW Academy

Joe Fischer, AA8TA Bob Carter, WR7Q Roland Smith, K7OJL

Some frequently asked questions that come across the CW Academy desk…

Q: What kind of key should I get?

A: We ask students to use paddles, either single-lever or dual-lever. Some used keys show up at hamfests or local hams might try to sell excess inventory or they might loan one out. The unit should be in sound mechanical shape. Some people have been happy with Kent keys. The MFJ EconoKeyer or Vibroplex Code Warrior are also possibilities. There are some other possibilities depending on availability.

Q: What about a keyer?

A: Most radios have these built-in so this usually is already on-hand. Morserino is quite capable. The Mini Yack Pro Morse Code Keyer has been reported as working well. K1EL makes keyers and audio oscillators. There used to be several kits from QRP groups but some of them have had parts supply issues.

Q: Do I need to use iambic?

A: No. Some advisors prefer their students to not use squeeze keying while others are more open to that. Regardless, it is not necessary to use that.

Q: Is a single-lever paddle acceptable?

A: Yes, many people enjoy these.

Q: How do I know what class level to sign up for?

A: There are audio files that can be listened to during the student signup process that can help to decide. One can also look at the first two or three sessions of a given class (look for the home-work and practice assignments documents for each class on the CW Academy web site) and try the exercises for those sessions.

Q: When do classes start?

A: Class times are set by advisors. Many classes are on Mondays and Thursdays, local time and many are in the evenings, local times. Some advisors have classes on other days and times. The first day of class is usually the first week of January, May or September.

Q: How much do you charge?

A: The CW Academy does not charge a fee to take a class.

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Q: Do advisors need to be CWops members?

A: No. What they do need is enthusiasm to encourage their students to try and help them to improve.

Q: How many students are in a class?

A: Six is the usual number but advisors can have more or fewer.

Q: Are classes always on Zoom?

A: Zoom is popular but other video-conference programs are used. The choice is up to the advisor.

Q: Can I invite my spouse or child to join me?

A: This is up to the advisor. If this is acceptable, the other person should be expected to do all of the work that everybody else does.

Q: Does graduating from the CW Academy mean that I can become a member of CWops?

A: That is a great goal and some students do. The CW Academy trains students so that they can become CWops members but they still must be nominated and sponsored as usual.

Since the question about keys and keyers comes up so often, we hope to explore this in more detail in the future.

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

SC

New Members

Trung Nguyen, W6TN

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

CWops	Call	Name	CWops	Call	Name	CWops	Call	Name
3291	N8XE*	Jason	3294	KN7Y*	Jack	3297	KE8NJW	Jeff
3292	AD4TA*	Tim	3295	N8HN*	Stan	3298	HB9HSX*	Tony
3293	KE4EA	Dave	3296	AI7DK*	Ronnie			

* Life Member.

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Current Nominees

As of February 5, 2023

Need Sponsors: ZS5PG, IZ4APU, KP4PI, WA0I

Invitations Extended: AI3W

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

For information about joining CWops, check the "Membership" page on the website: https://www.cwops.org

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

***73, Trung* W6TN** (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

This column is mainly a reminder about the certificates and medallions for the 2022 CWTs.

First, the certificates. If you submitted at least one qualifying claimed score for a CWT in 2022, regardless of whether you were a CWops member or not, you can download a personal certificate from DJ5CW's website at https://cwops.telegraphy.de/certificate/ . Just enter your callsign into the box and click on the button, and your personalized certificate will be generated as a PDF file ready for you to download it. If you were a CWops member in good standing at the end of 2022 and you reached the gold, silver or bronze medal participation level, your certificate will be gold, silver or bronze. If not, but if you did submit at least one qualifying score (10 or more QSOs), your certificate will be a participation certificate. The certificate web page for the 2022 CWTs will be active throughout 2022.

Now for the medallions. They are not free this year. There is a $10 USD charge for each medallion to help defray procurement and mailing costs. First, check whether you qualified for a medallion, either by looking for your callsign in the lists published in the January issue of *Solid Copy*, or by consulting the list in the files area for the cwops group at the groups.io website at https://cwops.groups.io/g/main/files/CWTmedals2022.txt , or by downloading your certificate and checking it for gold, silver or bronze status. If your callsign is on the gold, silver or bronze medal list, you can order your medallion through the CWT page on the CWops website at https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/ (near the bottom of the page). After entering your callsign, clicking on the "Add to Cart" button will take you to a payment processing page provided by PayPal. You do not need to have a PayPal account to order a medallion; PayPal is acting as the payment processor.

The deadline for ordering medallions is the end of February. After February 28, the order list will be frozen and the medallions will be ordered from the supplier. 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. Delivery of the medallions will be by post, as in previous years, in late spring or early summer.

The 2023 CWT season is now well under way. For the first 16 CWTs in 2023 the average number of reported scores per session was 301, as compared with an average of 302 across all 208 CWTs in 2022. The average number of QSOs per reported score in the January CWTs was 62, up from last year's overall average of 59.

Enjoy the CWTs and keep those reported scores coming!

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

CWops Member Awards

Bill Gilliland, WØTG

Monthly Update

This is the first CWops Member Awards summary for 2023. The Annual Competition Award (ACA) reset to zero on January 1 and this February 2023 Member Awards summary shows totals reported for the month of January. The final totals for 2022 and other years are available at the Awards website https://cwops.telegraphy.de/. If you had not uploaded your log prior to February 5, 2023, you are not a current participant and your QSO total will not be shown. Please submit your logs so we can report your totals correctly. You may submit logs from 2022 and other previous years and your totals for those years and for other awards such as CMA and DXCC will be correct.

Since the number of active participants is based on members who submit logs in the current year, we now have fewer active participants than in December. During January, 153 members submitted logs so we now have 153 active participants. The QSO totals and rankings for the end of January 2023 have the same familiar calls in the top three positions with **KR2Q** remaining in first place and leading second place **AA3B** by 155 QSOs. The top ten this month are **KR2Q, AA3B, K3WW, NA8V, KG9X, N7US, K7QA, K9WX, KC7V, and K3WJV.**

With the addition this month of **ON4CAS** and **SM0FPR**, 62 awards participants have now contacted CWops members in 100 or more DXCC entities. The number of participants who have accomplished CWops WAS grew to 179 this month with the addition of **N9UNX, NE2V** and **NJ6Q.** 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 on the Awards website.

At the end of 2022 we had 257 active participants in the Member Awards Program. As of February 5, 2023, we have 153 active participants. If you haven't submitted any logs yet, 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 2022 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.

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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 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.

Current ACA Top 100 as of February 5, 2023:

Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ	Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ
1	KR2Q	1181	7993	162	50	56	37	6	N7US	743	6229	113	50	43	33
2	AA3B	1026	12920	130	50	48	38	7	K7QA	742	6178	87	50	39	29
3	K3WW	989	10094	133	50	50	38	8	K9WX	730	5274	102	50	41	30
4	NA8V	880	8154	113	50	47	35	9	KC7V	720	5910	90	50	36	32
5	KG9X	846	6217	90	50	40	27	10	K3WJV	698	7376	115	50	49	31

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Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ
11	W0UO	690	4086	65	50	34	23
12	N5RZ	681	8747	125	50	46	36
13	K1VUT	672	5553	79	50	41	24
14	K0WA	635	2946	45	50	21	19
15	W1RM	621	8667	216	50	62	38
16	WT9U	614	5801	103	50	41	30
17	KY4GS	606	2235	49	50	24	19
18	AA2IL	580	2423	44	50	18	21
19	K4WW	566	5343	84	50	38	29
20	K3QP	564	3240	76	50	37	24
21	W0VX	552	5987	128	50	45	36
22	K6NR	531	4919	66	50	32	28
23	KK0U	529	2630	55	50	29	23
24	WA4JUK	516	4077	84	50	41	26
25	NJ3K	503	3713	69	50	38	23
26	N3CKI	499	2208	45	50	25	16
27	N4FP	492	2903	60	50	32	20
28	VE3TM	489	3927	89	50	43	27
29	WN7S	470	4481	78	50	37	26
30	AA5JF	465	4167	91	50	44	30
31	K3ZA	463	2673	52	50	33	19
32	N9UNX	461	1241	20	50	10	11
33	KM4FO	460	3124	47	50	18	17
34	K3JT	454	5714	103	50	46	30
35	K1DJ	444	4862	107	50	44	29
36	KV8Q	436	2982	67	50	33	23
37	K1RF	432	1408	41	50	25	15
38	W4WF	426	4921	93	50	43	32
39	AF4T	422	3116	72	50	36	26
40	KT5V	415	3549	80	50	30	29
41	KW1X	414	691	11	47	6	8
42	K1SM	412	4310	132	50	46	36
43	K4TZ	408	2858	43	50	20	16
44	N5XE	406	3505	78	50	36	27
45	W0TG	400	3277	70	50	31	25
46	N5KD	394	2685	90	50	41	33
47	VE3KI	388	7341	140	50	53	37
48	WT3K	385	4430	84	50	42	27
49	N8BJQ	363	7542	133	50	48	39
50	AF5J	352	2815	57	50	23	23
51	KB8GAE	346	1989	55	50	26	22
52	W1AJT	343	4023	97	50	45	32
52	NA4J	343	3738	74	50	34	24
52	K0TC	343	3190	62	50	27	22
53	VE3MV	341	3729	82	50	41	21
54	N4CWZ	325	3291	58	50	33	20
55	NE2V	321	2349	62	50	33	22
56	CO8NMN	303	4427	74	50	35	24
57	KE4S	293	3192	109	50	46	30
58	K4GM	292	3987	85	50	37	27
59	W2VM	285	2427	62	50	32	18
60	W0NF	284	1679	27	50	11	15
60	K3PP	284	5505	103	50	45	28
61	AB7MP	277	2149	36	50	11	17
62	N2EIM	275	450	28	46	18	12
63	W4CMG	273	1943	45	50	22	18
64	KT4XN	256	2405	66	50	29	20
65	OZ3SM	255	2864	105	49	50	35
66	W8OV	251	2485	54	50	23	21
67	G4LPP	249	2250	88	49	45	31
68	N2UU	248	5351	112	50	46	31
69	KC4WQ	244	3454	61	50	28	25
70	VE3KIU	243	1479	39	48	26	15
71	N5ER	240	1213	30	49	16	13
72	KA1YQC	234	2239	61	50	33	20
73	K3ZGA	233	2228	57	50	30	19
74	OK1RR	231	3886	148	50	52	38
75	9A1AA	230	4492	127	49	52	38
76	W9ILY	229	6270	135	50	45	36
77	WJ0C	226	982	19	49	7	12
78	W8EWH	221	488	17	46	10	10
78	AC6ZM	221	4174	66	50	36	22
79	KC8J	217	2098	37	50	15	18
80	N1EN	216	3427	126	50	47	34
81	F5SGI	212	2297	95	50	49	30
82	SM0HEV	208	2500	109	50	49	33
82	EA6BF	208	2101	73	47	42	29
83	M0RYB	207	2349	85	47	46	27
84	W2XYZ	202	1492	42	48	25	14
85	W2CDO	201	2788	65	50	37	21
86	W3WHK	196	3172	73	50	34	21
87	F6JOE	193	4409	114	50	49	33
88	K9CPO	191	1588	52	48	26	19
89	SP7OGP	189	1155	76	41	43	23
90	N5IR	187	4560	121	50	45	33
90	G4PVM	187	2677	101	50	48	33
91	W7GF	183	2340	58	50	18	24
92	SP4JFR	182	731	51	36	34	18
93	WE5P	181	2103	80	49	30	29
94	W7PEZ	172	1266	42	50	20	18
95	WA5PFJ	169	1152	36	49	22	15
96	AJ1DM	167	1693	49	50	24	22
97	WT8P	166	1187	37	50	15	19
98	W2KU	165	914	38	47	24	14
99	KB4DE	164	1806	52	50	28	17
100	K1IG	163	1005	59	50	34	16

***73, Bill* WØTG** (CWops #1873)

CWops Operating Awards

QTX Report: Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

Bruce Murdock, K8UDH

You probably saw the opening comments in this newsletter from our President, Stew GW0ETF, introducing your new QTX Manager. If not, please read it.

Enzo is an active CW operator, with a passion for conversational CW. Compared to many of us, he is new to CW, which is outstanding. Please look at his New Member Biography in the July 2022 issue and his QRZ page. As a relatively new CWops member, he will bring new ideas and a new perspective to CWops. The way he puts it is, "I am here to help encouraging and fostering CW rag -chewing on the bands."

Last year was a good year for QTX. The high scorer in 2022 was Cecil K5YQF with an outstanding score of 694 QTX QSOs. He received a handsome plaque (right) commemorating his accomplishment. All medal winners are shown in the Awards and Medals for 2022 section below. Congratulations to all of you.

As I turn my QTX responsibilities over to Enzo, I would like to say thank you for the support and encouragement I received from CWops leadership and so many dedicated QTXers over the years. Please give Enzo your same support and encouragement as he encourages QTXers and conversational CW.

Now let's take a look at the interesting comments from our CW ragchewers.

Comments from QTX Submissions

AA0YY: worked the QTX KING Cecil K5YQF, also the Marathon animal VE3WH Sam, who has logged over 65+ Marathon Q's. He has a motorcycle with a sidecar, so we talked Motorcycle stuff. Tnx Bruce for all the work you do for the QTX program & CWA.

AJ1DM: Good month of rag-chewing with a nice mix of old and new friends. Tnx fer all the q's!

GW0ETF: Too much chasing WRTC stations..!

K5YQF: Nice start to new year and looking forward to many good ragchews. I had a mini QTX with a VK, VE, and XE which is a little unusual for me.

K6DGW: Sorry, just a little late. Skeds with NU6T are keeping my QTX totals up and helping him with his CW, the busy-ness of life has cut into my mini QTX totals.

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K8UDH: Last month I had a QSO with a ham who was very new to CW. It was a thrill for both of us.

K9OZ: The year is off to a good start. With 10 meters open lots of mornings even finding some good rag chews up there.

KB6NU: Had 3 nice ragchews with Chris, N8AI, who helped me once again reach my goal of at least one per day.

KC0VKN: Finally QRV from new QTH in Mi. Enjoying more activity!

KF6NCX: My most interesting QTX in January was a surprise DX call on 10 meters. I was calling CQ on a band that seemed mostly empty at almost 0100Z when I got a call from Nick, UA0CDO, in Asiatic Russia. We had a chat lasting a few minutes. It was fun and definitely quite a surprise. With my peashooter station, working DX is not common, and having a DX station answer my CQ is really rare. So this QSO was quite gratifying.

KG5SSB: My first QTX of the year was with KT5X during Bug Day (SKN). I really enjoy bug to bug ragchews. Thanks for the great chat! Also, thanks to W6RKE for my very first Marathon QSO! 73, Dan

KG5IEE: Bruce, thanks for serving as the QTX Manager. It's been fun to watch the number of submissions increase during that time. And thanks for the fun Vintage-to-Vintage Rig QSOs!

M0KTZ: All good fun, as always. Longer rag-chews are not always feasible, due to other commitments, but I really enjoyed each and every QSO, as usual. Keep it fun!

N2DA: Many enjoyable CW sked QSOs this month - always great catching up and practicing our CW!

N6HCN: Wonder if we should have a QTX Maxi class for QSOs over an hour. A QTX Mega (QTXXL?) for over 2 hours??!?

N9EEE: Five of the six QTX were nearly an hour long with W0FN. Does that make us long-fisted, or just very interesting? Ha!

NE0S: A bit of a slow month. Every time I QTX with N6HCN, either he or someone else in the house is newly diagnosed with COVID. His wife Lisa this time. She is the tough one and hardly had symptoms.

W0GAS: Good start to 2023. missed a couple of weeks due to Covid malaise.

W3WHK: Worked one Indiana ham who had been on temporary duty in Vietnam, and we had a nice discussion on beer served in officers' clubs in VN. Always a pleasure to chat with Vic K9UIY (#505); in this case we were among each other's first contacts of the GMT new year.

WB4IT: This is my first time submitting QTX QSOs. I started tracking QSO length back in October

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2022. I'm not sure if I should include QSOs from last year in the lifetime totals though.

W9EBE: Looking forward to more QSOs in 2023! 73 es ZUT.

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

For 2022, K5YQF, VE3WH, K9OZ, and WS1L have earned a Gold Medallions. N5IR and KB6NU have earned Silver Medallions. KC0VKN, F5IYJ, and WA2USA have earned a Bronze Medallion. Congratulations on your achievements!!!!

QTX for January 2023

Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX
VE3WH	59	F5IYJ	27	KG5IEE	11	N9EEE	6
K9OZ	49	N6HCN	25	M0KTZ	11	K4AHO	5
KC0VKN	37	N2DA	20	K8UDH	10	KG5SSB	5
WS1L	37	AA0YY	19	NE0S	10	K5KXJ	4
N5IR	35	WA2USA	14	AJ1DM	9	W3WHK	3
KB6NU	33	WB4IT	14	KF6NCX	9	GW0ETF	1
K5YQF	32	K6DGW	12	W0GAS	9	SV2BBK	1
KY4GS	29	K0ALT	11	W9EBE	7		

MQTX for January 2023

Call	MQTX	Call	MQTX	Call	MQTX	Call	MQTX
M0KTZ	42	VE3WH	14	GW0ETF	7	W3WHK	2
KG5IEE	24	K5YQF	13	AB7MP	4	K4AHO	1
AA0YY	22	AJ1DM	10	WS1L	4	K8UDH	1
WB4IT	19	KF6NCX	10	K6DGW	3	N6HCN	1
KY4GS	15	KG5SSB	9	W0GAS	3	N9EEE	1
SV2BBK	14	W9EBE	9	NE0S	2		

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

***73, Bruce* K8UDH and *Enzo* M0KTZ**

My Story: New Member Biographies

Compiled by Tim Gennett, K9WX (CWops #1462)

David Warr, G4RQI

The first time I encountered amateur radio was around the age of 9 during a 5 minute local TV news slot. The radio amateur was demonstrating his station and I remember thinking 'I wouldn't mind doing that.' I then promptly thought no more about it. Aged 11, I started secondary school and soon joined the school electronics club. There I etched my first PCB and built a variety of circuits but it was the crystal set I built at home that fascinated me the most.

Things ticked along slowly but in February 1980, the magazine *Everyday Electronics* published 'Simple S.W. Receiver' by RA Penfold. A few weeks later I turned 15 and with some money saved up from my birthday I rode my bicycle to the local electronics store, Dorset Radio, where I purchased all the components I required to build my first two-transistor TRF set. To say it wasn't pretty would be an understatement but it worked and with 14ft of wire hidden behind the bedroom picture rail, a Denco green coil covering 1.67 to 5.3Mhz and some very tatty headphones I began to tune the airwaves for signs of life.

I soon discovered a couple of local nets on Top Band AM on a Sunday morning and I started to make a point of listening in. One morning, one of the amateurs happened to mention he had a callsign badge in the back of his car. Having no idea where he lived, I spent two weeks cycling around the neighbourhood looking in the back window of every car I could find. After two weeks I found a car displaying the callsign G3YWG and after placing the property under surveillance, I eventually found him cleaning his car one Sunday afternoon. I decided to approach him and asked if he was a radio amateur. This didn't elicit much of a response so I tried again, 'I've been listening to you on Top Band.' At hearing this he smiled, put down the sponge and said 'follow me'. Tony's shack was located in a large garden shed at the bottom of his garden, from there he gave me a rundown of the homebrew equipment he had built and was using on Top Band. Over the course of the next few weeks, I visited several other local amateurs and attended my first radio club meeting. I was hooked.

A year later, I was leaving school and applying for jobs. With the knowledge I had gained from the school electronics club and from starting to study for the Radio Amateurs Exam (RAE) I managed to secure a four year apprenticeship with the MoD. After passing the RAE, I was taught CW by an ex-RAF instructor, George Gunnel G3AVV (G4DLE) who had taught Morse code at Number 1 Signal School RAF Cranwell from 1939 - 1942. On passing my Morse test at Portishead Radio Station (GKA) I became G4RQI in December 1982 and I have used CW ever since.

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Brad Buck, KE8HXE

I've always been interested in radio. My first radio memory was of a crystal set my eldest brother made. I heard Petula Clark singing "Downtown" via the earphone. I thought it was so neat, that I asked him to replay it. He said it didn't work that way. I was disappointed, and mystified.

Years later, the same brother got me a 10-in-1 Electronics kit with one project being a crystal radio. No expensive batteries required! I was able to lay in bed at night with the earphone running under the covers, my parents never suspecting that I was up past my bed time. The kit also included an AM broadcaster, my first time on-the-air. The people up the street could hear me spinning my records.

About the same time, I was at the house of a neighbor that had a ham shack set up. It looked like the set of a science fiction movie! I knew what I wanted when I grew up. I wanted a ham shack! Except that as I grew up, I had an unnatural fear of Morse code. Who could remember all those characters and numbers?

I grew up, and pretty much forgot about ham radio, immersing myself into the world of work. My engineering job kept my mind busy for the most part. Then the job got to be less technical and more clerical. And then I came across my grandparents console tube radio, with a shortwave band.

The radio didn't work, and there were no repair shops left in my town. So I researched how to repair old electronics. I got the radio working just after September 11, 2001. As I first powered it up, I heard Spanish! I was on the shortwave band. I tuned again, this time getting an anti-American broadcast from Afghanistan! The broadcast ended abruptly, but I was hooked. It led to more ancient tube receivers with shortwave, and the dreaded ham bands! A local ham helped me with some repairs, and suggested I get my license. No code required!

I got my license, and listened a bit on UHF/VHF. I occasionally joined a net. I listened to some SSB and AM on my National NC-300. But the mysterious dits and dahs got my attention. It wasn't hard to memorize the code (although I now know I didn't "learn it the right way" initially). Then I signed up for the CWops class feeling like I had a leg up "knowing the code", which I didn't. It took several levels of classes before I got brave enough to get on the air.

My first QSO outside of a CWT didn't go so well. I answered a CQ that was not sending too fast, but the other operator quickly got annoyed with my sending and started "CQing" again on the same frequency, ignoring me. The next operator was more forgiving. I kept with the weekly CWT and have started listening for POTA and SOTA activations. I'm working up to doing my own activations, having found several SOTA summits in my state that have not been activated. My trusty dog and sidekick, Dash, will be fitted with his own backpack to help carry our ham gear to the summits. Hope to hear you on the air!

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Stan Kurmas, N8HN

I got off to a late start compared to many ham radio operators. I received my ticket in 2003 at the age of 37. I'm still not sure why it took so long as I have always had an interest in radio and electronics; I'll just go with "better late than never." I kept my momentum and moved along to Amateur Extra as soon as time permitted. I started out with a mix of SSB and CW until I got comfortable and proficient enough with CW and decided to make that my only mode of operations.

I'm usually working on growing my DXCC count chasing new DX, carving out time to remain active with SOTA, both activating and chasing, looking for a good rag chew or building some type of radio related gear. SOTA coupled with CW is my favorite part of the hobby. I enjoy getting outside in general and love the outdoors, camping, hiking, and an occasional back backing trip. I keep a modest station at home, have a few QRP radios that I love to use, especially for SOTA activations, and I'm a big fan of Elecraft gear.

Outside of my ham activity I'm pretty quiet and reserved, usually I can be found involved with family. My XYL and I have two children (grown now) so home life is quiet around the house as well.

I'm very happy to be a part of CWops! Thanks to Chuck WS1L for getting my foot in the door and all of those who have taken the time to help me become a member. I appreciate the kindness, warm welcomes and great chats. Looking forward to building on those relationships and finding new ones.

Many Thanks!

Bob Chudek, K0RC

My "radio career" started when I was quite young, maybe 7 or 8 years old. I would visit my grandfather and listen to his Philco floor-standing radio. It had both AM and shortwave bands and a green "Magic Eye" tube to help tune in stations. The foreign languages, dits & dahs, and sounds of "roaring airplane engines" I heard coming out of the loudspeaker were all new and a mystery to me!

Eventually Grandpa gave his radio to me and I brought it home to install next to my bed. Soon I graduated into a broadcast band SWLer when I acquired a modern 5-tube

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receiver. White's Radio Log was used religiously to help identify the distant radio stations that would fade in and out amongst the static crashes from distant storms.

Time passed and when I entered my sophomore year in high school, a classmate (Mike White - KØEZK) suggested we create a high school radio club and invite kids to get their ham radio license. At that time (1961) the Novice license required 5 wpm CW skills, some basic radio theory, and radio regulations knowledge. The code came relatively easy for me and by November I was ready for "The Test." It would be administered by my neighbor who conveniently lived right across the street! His name was John Lonsky – WØBSI (SK).

John added to my suspense of getting my license. He said the test had to be graded by the FCC and it might take a month or two. He said I should include a self-addressed postcard so they could indicate whether I passed or failed. If I passed, I could simply wait for the official license to arrive.

All of the paperwork was mailed to the Saint Paul FCC Field Office in early December. The postcard came back a few days later with "Passed" checked off! Next was my agonizing wait for the license to arrive. It came in the third week of January 1962 and I would soon be on the airwaves known as WNØBGF.

My next steps were on-the-air operating to gain proficiency and studying for the General Class test. By June, I was ready to make the trip to the FCC Field Office to take that test. I was more confident in my CW skills than the written test. I was so confident, I brought my Vibroplex clone key with me! The FCC engineer hooked it up and I sent code for a minute or so when he said "Okay, that's good!" In a few weeks my upgraded license arrived with WAØBGF as my new call sign.

And now, fast forward into the very late 1960s and early 1970s. There was this new "Incentive Licensing" system to contend with. That program motivated me to pursue the Advanced and Extra Class licenses to avoid losing any band privileges.

I was operating CW in the 30 wpm range during many contests so I thought the Extra Class 20 wpm requirement would be a "walk in the park." My confidence plummeted into nervousness when it was my turn to be tested and graded! But as nervous as I was, I passed everything and became an “Extra Class” licensed operator.

I believe the incentive licensing program, and the huge backlash that ensued, might have been a catalyst for the FCC to accept call sign requests of an operators’ choosing. As I remember, there was a 3-gate system to qualify and apply for a new call.

I qualified for the first group and requested KØRC, my initials. It was “first come, first served” processing so I drove directly to the main post office to elevate my chance to get my first choice. It worked.

I have focused my introduction with highlights of a few facts and emotions of the first decade of

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my 60-year amateur radio career. CW remains my first choice of operating modes with RTTY following closely behind.

I want to thank Larry Menzel, WØPR for his initial nomination and all my other friends in the Minnesota Wireless Association who voted to include me in this CW Operators organization. I'll see you on the air.

Tim Adkinson, AD4TA

Winter of 2015 found me nearing the end of 45 years in electrical construction in one form or another, sitting in my recliner surfing the web. I ran across a 'Prepper' website talking about the use of amateur radio for communication when the poopy hits the ventilator. It sounded interesting, and with nothing else much going on, I researched a little more and found some online sites that offered free training to help pass the tests. I also contacted a local club, inquiring about taking the Technician exam, and was told 'Sure, and if you pass that you can take the General, and if you pass that, you can take the Extra!' That sounded like a worthy challenge, and since my job at the time required long periods of monitoring activities with no real work to do, I spent hours going through the flash cards and memorizing the answers.

January of 2016, I sat for the Technician and then the General, but they ran out of Extra tests, so I didn't get to take that until February. So by the end of February, I was a licensed Extra class amateur radio operator, and didn't have a clue what the meant! I only knew how to pass tests.

Fast forward to summer, I had hooked up with a local club and all the talk was about Field Day, and that became my first real exposure to the hobby. I found quickly that the noise on HF phone was painful, with my hearing loss and hearing aids, and was extremely mic shy. One station was operating PSK, and there I found a niche. Thanks to Odis (W4IOD) I began learning how to operate, and soon set up a digital station with a Kenwood 440SAT I bought online. The first time a station from Brazil answered my call, my hands were shaking so bad I could hardly type a response! But I finally made the contact and ran upstairs to tell my wife, which merely confirmed to her that her husband had indeed lost his mind.

Wanting to understand what was 'under the hood' I started trying to learn some electronics theory and troubleshooting. My first victim was a Heathkit HW-101 that I finally got working well enough to have a QSO on. I have enjoyed building and learned from several QRP Labs kits as well. Presently, there is a FT-101EX on the bench, and I think if I torture it long enough, it will give up its secrets as well.

Digital modes, smoke from the bench, and building antennas occupied my available time until a few years ago when John (KM4CH), offered a Morse code class at the local library. Intrigued, I

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attended, and became enthused with the mode. What a challenge. Working at it off and on since, I am thoroughly enjoying the journey. Fellow hams have since encouraged me and kept me at it when it seemed I was making no progress at all, so huge thanks and gratitude to John (KM4CH), Dwight (KM4FO), Bill (WE5P), a Morse code palindrome, by the way, and John (K4FT). Thank you John for nominating me, and to my sponsors for membership in this group. It is an elite group and I am honored to be part of it. Maybe, one day, I will even deserve it.

SC

Solid Copy is a monthly newsletter focused on the amateur radio world of Morse code (CW) and is written by members of The CW Operators Club (CWops) providing news and information, technical articles, member activities, contesting and operating events and awards, and club announcements. All content (text and images) remains the property of the author and/or originating source who should be contacted for reprint permission. Permission is granted—in fact, encouraged—to post on social media outlets or forward to friends with attribution to the author and the source being CWops' *Solid Copy.*

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