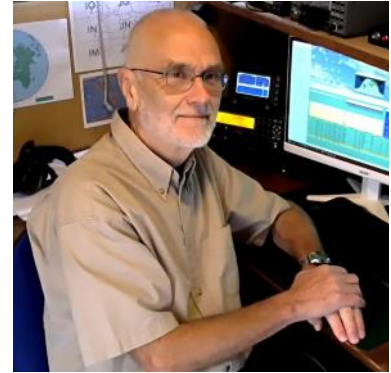




## President's Message

Our Membership Committee is continuing with its efforts to identify likely new CWops members. I think we all realise there are many proficient and active CW operators out there who may never even have heard of CWops and who



W2TR, Gary Sienkiewicz, proudly displays his membership on his car.

*(Continued on page 2)*

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

**CWO Mini-club callsign web site:**  
<http://cwomc.org>

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

**CWops Officers and Directors**

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

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would jump at the chance of joining us. We ought to aspire to have every like minded individual with a membership number no matter where they live; as with any type of representative body numbers and belonging means power and influence. We must continue to expand and widen our influence particularly amongst those that could maintain CW when the 'old guard' have moved on. It's a noble but worthwhile aim even though we know it will never be totally achieved. Some for various personal reasons will have no interest or perhaps are involved with other CW clubs like FOC, but we will never know unless we ask. The membership committee can help but it still remains for individual members to nominate and sponsor potential candidates and I've been giving this some thought...

I understand that the membership committee could include as part of their methodology the use of historical logbook data to help identify potential new talent. Bud AA3B used this approach in his interesting article in the June 2020 Solid Copy "Hunting for New Members" which is well worth a (re)read, and I know others do similar. My musings though have centred on recognizing talent during on air QSOs in real time and is a different technique altogether. The first problem to tackle is the clear divide between so called 'rag-chew' and rapid fire contest/DX contacts; in both situations the focus of my thoughts has been on how to make the process convenient by removing obstacles as far as is possible.

Conversational aka 'ragchew' QSOs are relatively straightforward. There is time to judge the competence of someone on the other side of a contact and even perhaps discuss CWops with them. One 'obstacle' could be *"Are they already a member?"* For everyday logging I use Logger32, a very mainstream general log keeper which has available a 3<sup>rd</sup> party utility courtesy of JA1NLX ('CheckCall') which can avoid the time consuming inconvenience of having to look up the club roster web page – once linked with a current membership list this little utility will flag up a member callsign entered in the Logger32 entry box with their name and membership number. It's simple and quick and saves time, and I suspect other general loggers have this capability.

Identifying potential new members during contests is far more problematic as we're always in a hurry! There is no way I would ever expect someone in the middle of a flurry of callers to interrupt their flow and divert their attention from the job in hand. In a 12, 24 or 48 hour contest though I often find quieter moments, maybe I'm not loud enough! For someone who often can't remember what I was doing this time last week I seem to have a supernatural recall capacity for calls that I have worked before, even a long time before. I hear a call and recognize it as a 'familiar call'. I can guarantee that if I look up this call in my main log I will find other contacts. It rarely fails. If I hear such a callsign in a more relaxed period I will want to put a check against it for a follow-up but scribbling on bits of paper has never had a great success rate in my shack(!) so I normally make use of the keyboard where my hands live most of the time anyway. But first is that same question *"Is s/he already a member?"*. These days I use Dxlog for contesting and this has an 'Extra Information' window which can be 'fed' with membership lists in the same way as 'CheckCall' in Logger32. So I can see immediately if a call I've entered is a CWops member along with name etc if I feel like being sociable. Wintest has the same and I'd be surprised if N1MM didn't have something along the same lines. Armed with the knowledge that this person is **not** a CWops member I can then spend a couple of seconds flagging them – providing that is I don't get a sudden flurry of callers! It's simple enough and very quick: <Alt-N> brings up the 'Note' window

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followed by hitting the hash key which is short for “..this individual is worth checking”, then hit Return and it's done. It's literally seconds and at the end of the contest I can look at all the 'hash' notes and think about following up the callsigns as possible new members. Certainly N1MM has this same feature with <Ctrl-N> and others probably have it too; time to dig out that manual! Most 'contest-alert' callsigns will need some follow up to ensure they satisfy our 25wpm requirement but I tend to find most that I work multiple times in different contests are way above that. Common sense, QRZ pages, contest histories and RBN data etc are all things worth checking too.

Finally I thought a bit about numbers. CWops now is approaching 3000 members. If just a tenth of those introduced one new member each year our membership would grow by around 300 annually assuming they are out there. Except for a sudden rush the year after our formation and a slight increase during the Covid pandemic we've never exceeded 300 new members in one year. It doesn't really seem like such a big ask.

Have a great month and enjoy reading another fine edition of *Solid Copy*!

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

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sc

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## Editor's Notes:

# Building Relationships

by [Dick Strassburger](#), N9EEE

As I was planning my brief sojourn to sunshine and warm temperatures in The Villages, Florida this winter, I inquired about club meetings and use of the repeaters with The Villages Amateur Radio Club. (Their [website](#) serves as an extensive resource on stealth antennas). Gary Sienkenwicz, W2TR, (CWops #2136) replied which led to multiple emails and a lengthy on-air QSO. It what happens when two CWops discover each other. So, now whenever I travel outside my home area, I refer to the CWops membership roster and look for a local member to connect with. You should, too.

A mention of The Villages can't go by without noting how many hams live within this deed-restricted community of 135,000 with very strict zoning and HOA rules. This community looks pristine, so the zoning and HOA rules are doing their job. But rules hurt ham radio you say. These folks have found some interesting ways to get on the air. One of which is the flag pole antenna which these hams have mastered. I spent a good amount in my rental golf cart whizzing through village after village in search of food, golf, or swimming pools and became addicted to analyzing flag pole installations in my sleuthing for local hams. Kind of like how you have your eyes to the skies looking for hexbeams or tribanders. It's amazing how you can spot a ham if you know what to look for.

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

**Editor, Solid Copy** (SolidCopy@cwops.org)



# News and Notes

## [Duncan \(Mac\) Fisken, G3WZD](#)

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

**Steve W Szabo, WB4OMM #1943 on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**

**Steve Courts, K8JQ #1402 on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023**

**Ron Stone, GW3YDX #100 on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023**

Condolence cards have been sent on behalf of CWops

*Thanks to all my contributors for another varied selection of topics sent to this month's News and Notes mailbag. Please keep the submissions coming and no need to wait until the monthly call for articles (deadline for next issue is 1<sup>st</sup> June).*

**Rob, K6RB #3** I attended the 15<sup>th</sup> April a meeting of the Northern California Contest Club - which I joined back in 1993 - and met one of my CWA students, Nian Li, WU6P, in person.



Nian, who is relatively new to ham radio and CW, has been elected an officer of NCCC and won two awards for his impressive success in contesting.

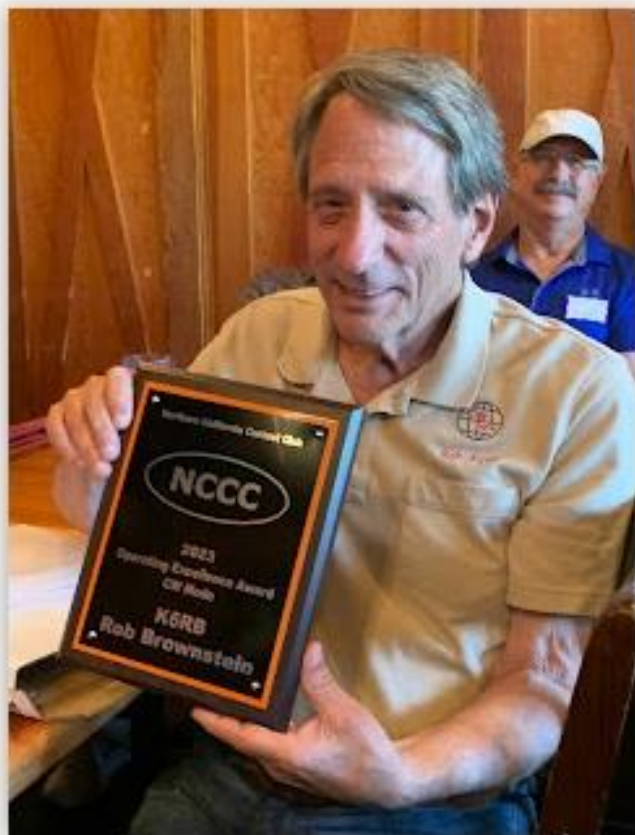
Then, a complete surprise...

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NCCC president, Dave, WD6T, presented me with an award for Operating Excellence CW Mode. The mentoring played a big part in it, I'm sure.

Note, I was wearing my CWops shirt (*N&N Editor's Comment; Congratulations, Rob!*)



**Frank, W3LPL #29** Thanks very much to the officers and members of CWops for sponsoring the Multi-Two plaque for last year's ARRL CW DX Contest which arrived today. This was our 52nd consecutive W3LPL ARRL CW DX Contest entry since 1971 and our 44th consecutive ARRL CW DX Contest multi-operator entry since 1979. (*N&N Editor's Comment; that's a mighty impressive track record, Frank!*)

**Lar, K7SV #1004** Many thanks to CWops for sponsoring the 2022 W/VE Overall Winner plaque for Single Operator Low Power CW in the ARRL DX CW contest that was received 21<sup>st</sup> April! (*N&N Editor's Comment; congratulations, Lar!*)

**Doug, KR6Q #438** On April 23, I started prep work for upgrading my DB36 (shown next page) just lowered and at the base of the tower. At the top, is a D3W WARC dipole being installed so I am still QRV on the WARC bands. Not shown is my other tower with an OB16-3 for 10, 15, 20. Unfortunately, my 40 and 80 inverted Vees were hanging off the tower pictured, so they are now on the ground too. It has been raining all weekend (EOM April), so no progress yet. I'm the guy on the ground.

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**Fred, K6DGW #142** News from Sparks NV: My K3-RRC1258 remote to W7RN died. Troubleshooting anything Internet-related, and especially remote ham radio, is a massive pain in the butt; there are what seems like an infinity of "moving parts," half of which are at the end where I'm not, and the names of literally everything are indecipherable acronyms. I do long for the days past when all you needed to know was Ohm's Law and a bunch of vacuum tube electronics.

**Rich K1DJ, #1556**, will be attempting operation in Japan for the first time between May 18 and May 31. Please watch RBN and POTA spots and listen for his new reciprocal Japanese call, JK1SQU. As family schedule permits — since the primary reason for the trip is to attend Japanese grandson's wedding in Tokyo — he plans to try to make at least a couple of CWTs, AWTs, POTA activations, and some random QSOs during this time. Max power is 10w, probably all CW, from the hotel room in West Shinjuku and daughter's apartment in North Shinjuku (Tokyo) and nearby parks, using a KX3 and whatever little vertical/wire antennas he can manage.

**Steve Dick, K1RF #3003** I recently gave an in-depth [talk on Off Center Fed Dipoles](#) at the Greater Norwalk Amateur Radio Club (GNARC).

**Duncan, G3WZD #1979** The downside of a QTH near the Atlantic Coast of Cornwall is the frequent storm-force winds and resulting risk of antenna damage. Having been twice repaired after previous storms, April's Storm Noa was the last straw for my 40M ¼ wave ground plane. The antenna comprised 10 x 1-metre lengths of GRP tubes from a 5-band Spiderbeam and 8 x buried

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radials, supported by two sets of 3-point guys.

The vertical radiator was a wire up the inside of the tubes. One distinct advantage of this approach was the ability to easily adjust the length of the wire radiator for resonance by means of a line attached to the end and run out of the top section and down the side. The antenna worked extremely well but just could not withstand wind-speeds over 110 km/h, especially when hit by flying branches!

I decided that a completely new approach was required and, having my old Optibeam OB1-40 40M rotatable dipole still unsold after I replaced it with the OB2-40M Moxon, I thought to try one of the elements as a vertical radiator. I also had an old DX Engineering tilt plate used years ago with a Hustler 6-BTV.

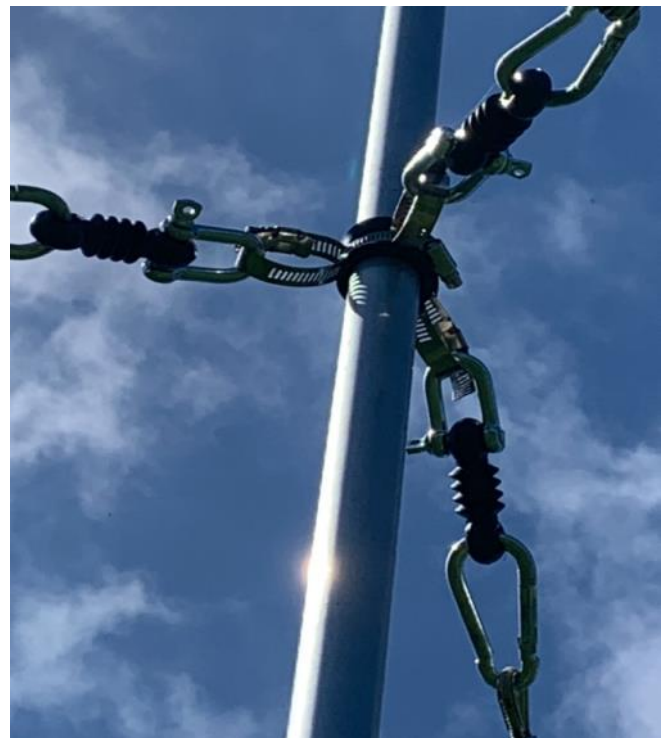
The resulting antenna is significantly more robust than its predecessor but just for good measure, I have still opted for a 3-point guy arrangement.



**The broken 40M vertical**



**New 40M Vertical using one OB1-40 radiator**



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Luffing the antenna takes less than 60 seconds by simply unclipping the West-facing guy and lifting the antenna into the hinge position. The antenna is fed via buried coax and a 50 Ohm/25 Ohm UnUn. The result is 1.1:1 VSWR at 7.050 MHz.

The antenna can also be quickly adjusted for 30M operation by simply removing the top section.



DX Engineering tilt plate and Balun Designs 2:1

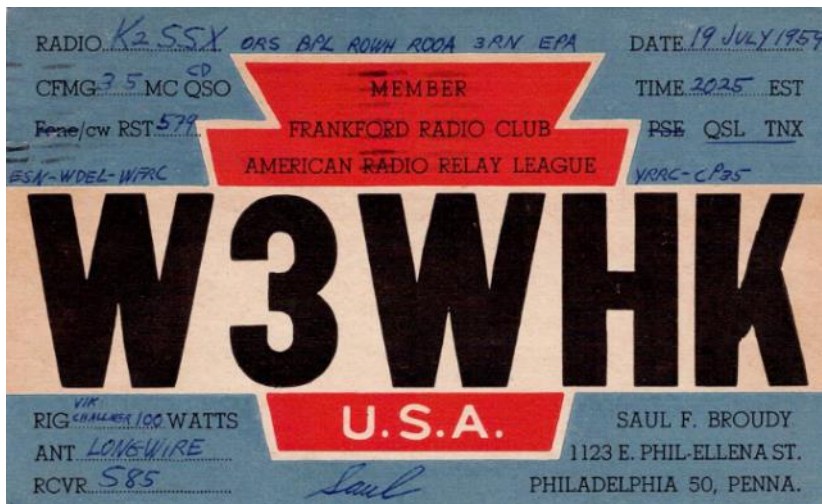
Finally, I will be QRV as EA6/G3WZD holiday-style from the Spanish island of Majorca from 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> May, operating low power with my IC-705. I look forward to working some CWops members.

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

SC

## How We Were

[Hank Garretson, W6SX](#)



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W3WHK, Saul Broudy, CWops # 1392

Sorry for no personal or shack photo, but hope this old QSL that Hank dug up from our 1959 QSO will do.

In 1953, age 10, I was helping my friend Alvin with his newspaper delivery route. When he asked if I'd like to join him in becoming radio hams, I agreed. We proceeded to practice code over the telephone by voice, dit-doo-ing to each other 15 minutes daily. (Alvin thought "doo" sounded more like the real thing than "dah"). When we reached 5 wpm, we both passed our Novice tests at the Philadelphia FCC office; Alvin became WN3WHJ.

My first rig was a Heathkit AT-1, which I could not have assembled without help from my neighbor W3YAL. With my terribly mismatched long wire antenna, I rarely worked DX. Instead I took to the CW traffic nets: EPA, 3RN (under the tutelage of W3UE), the legendary W3CUL's TCRN net, and the Eastern States Net. The ESN was a friendly affair on 7080 kc, where I got to know good ops like W3ZSX (now W3GC) and K4EZL (SK) - ZP6CW in recent years.

At Central High School in Philadelphia, I was active in our "807 Society", and we even had a small station, K3GTZ. At my local York Road Radio Club, now defunct, I was the young kid from whom everyone would buy crystals and meters that came from W3YAL's spare parts collection.

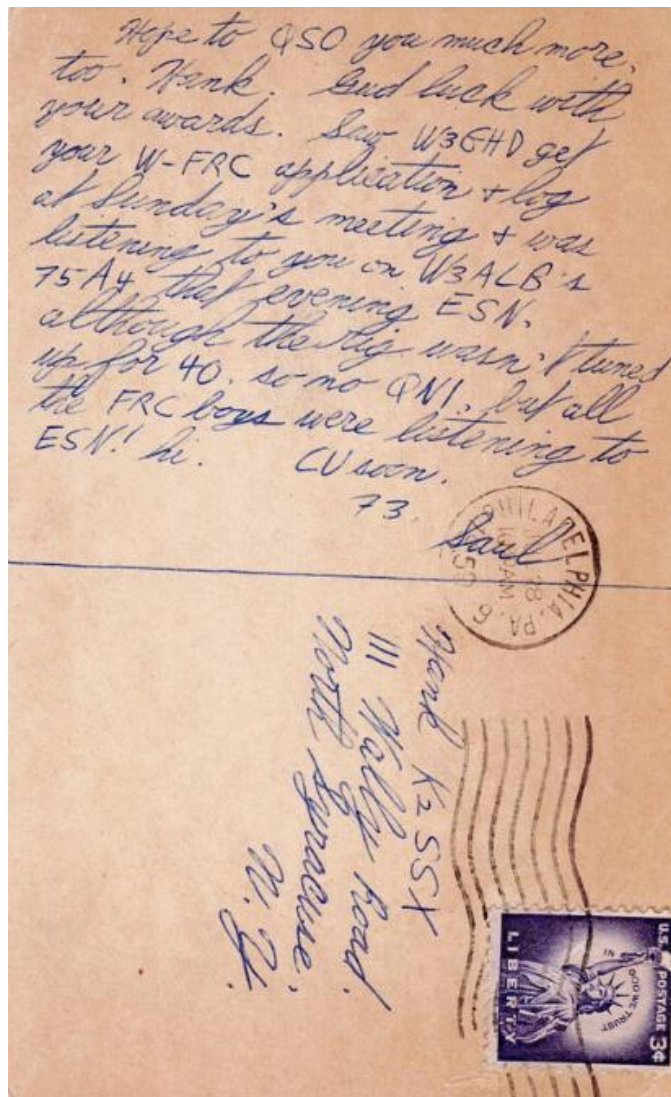
I left ham radio in the early 1960s for university, the US Army, and life as a folklorist and traveling folksinger. I finally returned to the fold in 2014, and am mighty glad to be back!

Saul W3WHK

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)



## **CWOPS ANNUAL DINNER AT THE DAYTON HAMVENTION 2023 This Thursday, May 18**

Dayton is occurring this week, which means the CWops dinner Thursday night is nearly here! If you haven't reserved your spot there is still time. Go to [CWops 2023 Hamvention Dinner – CWops](#) but please send N3JT ([jim@n3jt.com](mailto:jim@n3jt.com)) an email so he can add you to the list. We have some 130 people attending the dinner, so it'll be quite an event!

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 be available.)

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

Act now! Make your reservation now by going to [CWops 2023 Hamvention Dinner – CWops](#) to submit your payment. **Please send N3JT ([jim@n3jt.com](mailto:jim@n3jt.com)) an email so he can add you to the list.**

Are you on the registration list? Click [HERE](#) for updates.

See you at Dayton!

**73, Peter Butler, W1UU** (CWops #91)

**Jim Talens, N3JT** (CWops #1)



# North American (DC) CW Weekend

## June 9 - 11, 2023

This year's North American CW Weekend is on, scheduled for June 9 -11, 2023.

As in the past, the Weekend is primarily aimed at those amateur radio operators with a particular interest in Morse code (CW) operation - FOC, CWOPS, SKCC, FISTS - but anyone with an interest in Morse code communication is welcome. After two years of cancellations due to COVID restrictions, we had a good 2022 weekend, and are pleased to welcome regulars back, and look forward to meeting some new players.

Although COVID-19 increasingly appears to be in the rearview mirror, we are asking participants to be vaccinated and to use good sense with respect to any recommendations about COVID in force at the time of the weekend. At this point, masks are not required, and there are no other special precautions.

Here's the hotel information (our usual place):

There will be a hospitality suite between 1800z-2400z on Friday and Saturday. Refreshments and snacks will be available, plus plenty of collegiality and good conversation.

There is a nominal registration of \$ 25 per couple or \$ 15 per single person. This will help defray costs and fees. Any excess will be donated to the CWops Scholarship fund. Please send your check, payable to "Don Lynch W4ZYT" with your call sign in the memo line, and mail it to:

Don Lynch, W4ZYT  
1517 West Little Neck Road  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452-4717

We are looking forward to a nice weekend and good participation. Please stay safe and well, drive carefully, and come prepared for a good time. For more information: [w4zyt.don@gmail.com](mailto:w4zyt.don@gmail.com)

**Fairview Park Marriott**

3111 Fairview Park Drive

Falls Church, VA 22042

Phone: 703-849-9400

Reservations: 800-507-8235

[Reservation link](#)

Last day to book: May 12, 2023

**Block ID: "North American CW Weekend"**

Start: Thursday, June 8, 2023

End date: Monday, June 12, 2023

UPDATED INFO: Rate: \$109.00 plus taxes/night (Friday/Saturday). Rate is good from June 8 through June 12. Taxes and fees not included.

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**Friday Evening:** Pizza Night - 6:00 pm

[The Italian Oven](#)

6852 Old Dominion Dr  
McLean, VA 22101

Salad, beverage (non-alcoholic), unlimited pizza. Dress casual. Individual checks

**Saturday Brunch:** 9:00am - 12:00pm

Nina Lane (K4NML) and Jim Talens (N3JT)  
6017 Woodley Road  
McLean, VA 22101  
Phone 703-241-1144

**Saturday Dinner:** 6:00 pm

Metro 29 Diner  
4711 Lee Highway  
Arlington, VA 22207  
703-528-2454

Menu: [Metro29Diner.com](http://Metro29Diner.com)

This was our dinner venue last year and proved to be a good choice. Don't be put off by the "Diner" moniker- take a look at the menu on the web site.

This is an informal place with a class kitchen and a full selection of meal options which should suit every taste.

Cocktails, beer, and wine available. Dress casual. Individual checks

— **sc** —

## QSL Cards: Love 'em or Hate 'em?

[Dick Strassburger, N9EEE](#) (CWops #3113)



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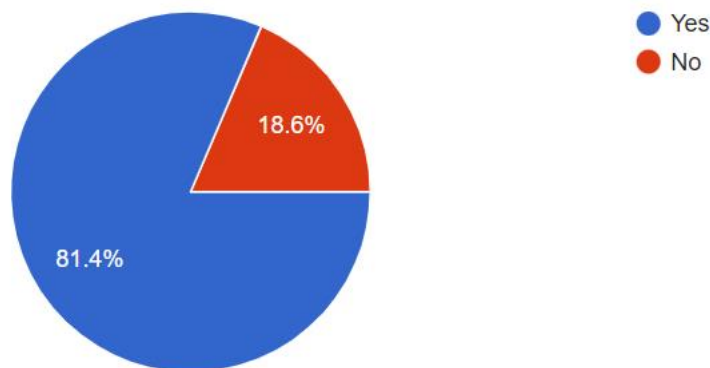
A recent dialogue on the CWops reflector (Groups.io) revolved around the value of QSL cards which stoked a lingering question of mine. Since I haven't sent out a QSL card in many years, I thought it would be interesting to see if I paper QSL card collecting was still an enamored and endeared part of amateur radio, or if it had gone the way of the paper log into the ether. To be transparent, I openly admit I was satisfying my curiosity of the underlying question, should I buck up and have some QSL cards printed? But alas, not just the all-text ones printed back in the 1980s. No, today's QSL cards display graphics thanks to digital capture, design, and printing making this very affordable. There are some really cool ones from POTA activations, architectural icons, geographical references, and (ahem) provocative views such as those seen over 1960's garage workbenches.

Not only am I interested in the current state-of-mind regarding an analog practice, but also that of the CWops membership who are comprised of high-speed ops amassing thousands of contacts from hams around the world.

A survey was prepared and promoted on our Groups.io reflector. Ninety-seven respondents provided their point of view, which is presented below. Not all responses were printed due to redundancy.

### Do you actively participate in exchanging printed QSL Cards?

97 responses



### If yes, what about exchanging QSL cards to you enjoy?

Just takes me back to when I was a kid receiving a packet from the incoming bureau stuffed with cards. I still get excited when I check the mail and have an envelope that is clearly from a QSL manager.

I only use real QSL cards for confirmations. They are personal reflections of the human being or club with which I have made contact, even if only briefly. Cards often include comments of interest, and I know that a real human being has borne the expense, and taken the time to write a re-

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sponse. It's like receiving a letter, and it is always a pleasant surprise to receive one nowadays.

"Actively" probably overstates it. I do not send out unsolicited cards. I send a card for every card received. What I enjoy is the nostalgia. I enjoy each card I receive. I still have every card received since 1956.

The only ones I try to get are rare dx, or special events. As a courtesy, if I receive one from anyone I will send one back.

I enjoy receiving physical cards. They tell me a little more about the personality and interests of the op I had an exchange with. I also enjoy going through a stack of QSL cards and remembering the QSO and and experience.

The personal nature of QSLs, comments, aesthetics, photos and other graphics

That they are personalized unlike LoTW. I see them and think of the QSO situation. For DXCC I remember the country unlike having the go my LoTW and rediscovering the QSOs later.

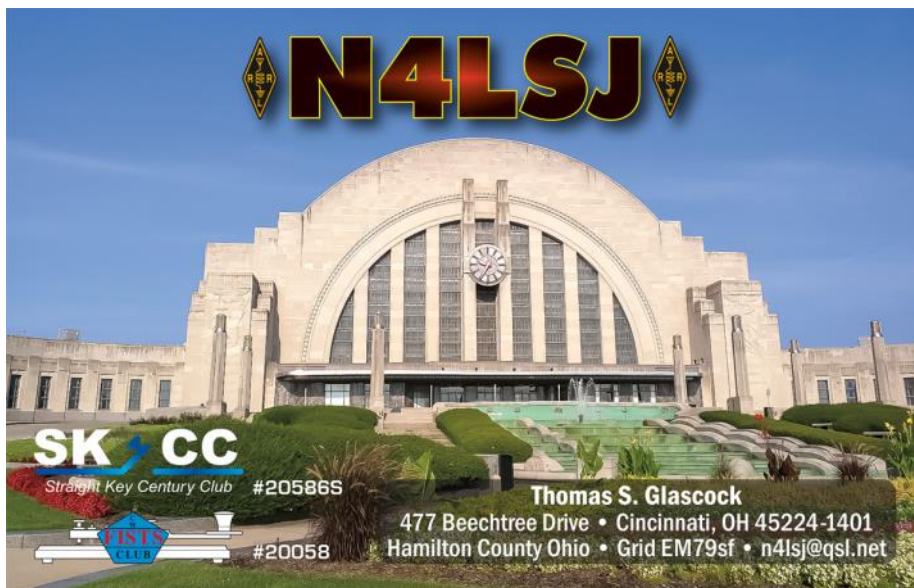
Physical QSL cards are not only a permanent record but are an absolute foundation of ham radio history and practice. They always said (and some still do!) "A QSL is the final courtesy of a QSO." I believe that to be so. I have

QSLs back to SWL days in 1960s and each one is a memory on paper. For those who don't have the urge, it is small effort to reciprocate the courtesy when someone sends a card. Asking for PayPal to even write a card should be declared a crime.

I think that it's a nice personal touch. I especially enjoy sending QSL cards to newcomers to amateur radio. I try to be the first one to send a QSL card to new hams in my area.

If the card is from a good ragchew, or from someone I contact frequently, the card is a pleasant reminder of the QSO(s).

Someone taking the time to send me a direct QSL card, through the mail, and not via an Internet QSL to be printed, shows me they are interested in what I might return to them. I often have people sending me money for a return QSL. I always put the money back into the return envelope. I get many QSLs via the QSL bureau for QSOs that are 1-2 years old. They use a printed QSL service. If one has the desire to monetize QSL services, that may be the way to the future, and I



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am less interested.

I am old fashioned, and all my QSLing was for certificate applications. I got to the top of the Honor Roll that way back in 1981. Many operations wanted "green stamps", AKA, send money. A lot of the QSLing was using USA QSL managers. Regardless of what I did in "olden times", I think it is normal to exchange Internet QSLs, as long as they are not bogus. I probably have 100,000-300,000 QSL cards sitting in several boxes, but I have award QSLs separated for "posterity". Sometimes I relive ancient history. The best one was my first QSL card for my first QSO.

Personal memories of having reached out to someone and they responded in kind. Priceless!!

The graphics on the QSL card or the enjoyment of getting a nice card from a rare contact

Having the printed card unique to that station.

The individual creativity that went into making one's QSL card and the human touch of a personalized note when an operator sends it. This especially reinforces some of the more memorable QSOs, like an all time new one or someone's first Q on a particular mode.

Having the actual QSL which I can hang on wall. Some of them have great photos.



I receive few printed QSL cards, mainly through ARRL QSL bureau and occasionally from US QSOs, such as one with one of my CWA students. If a QSO meant enough for someone to send me a card, I enjoy reciprocating, hoping they will also appreciate one back.

Having a permanent confirmation of a QSO which looks good to display or put in an album. Some cards are beautifully designed and look impressive.

The fact another ham decided to make the effort to send me a card.

Reading the gear in use, seeing the photos, anything personalized.

Tradition. I have done it for 63 years.

I like to see cards from exotic places, or have reminders of memorable QSOs

I enjoy receiving cards, especially those from overseas.

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I enjoy the tradition. I am relatively new to the hobby, but I think it is nice way to confirm the contact and exchange information in a tangible way. I also confirm via LOTW and QRZ. I try to exchange QSL cards with every new first time contact I make, unless they explicitly state that they do not exchange QSL cards on their QRZ profile.

I do not particularly enjoy exchanging printed QSL cards anymore. However, if somebody sends a printed QSL card to me for a QSO that we had, then I am going to return one of mine to them on my dime. I believe this is a very important and integral part of the hobby I signed up for nearly 59 years ago and I will always reply to receiving a printed QSL card with a printed QSL card of my own.

A warm feeling from receiving cards from faraway fellow amateurs.

Seeing pictures of equipment and places activated.

The camaraderie they reflect, the personal touch to meeting a fellow ham. Having a physical reminder of an enjoyable experience.

I love getting QSL cards and always have for my entire 62+ year ham radio experience. I especially like the creative ones that tell unique things about the operator's interests and his location. I always have a selection of those displayed on my wall.



Getting a pretty card from a really cool place out west, or a good DX card.

Recalling special QSOs, e.g. with my CW Academy students; colorful proof of contacts with exotic lands, including contacts with hams who do not use LOTW. I try to get an actual QSL card from every new country I work, and keep those cards in albums to enjoy.

I truly "enjoy" maybe 1% of the cards I receive via the bureau. Over here in Europe it is unfortunately still considered the default to send a card for most QSOs. QSLs I enjoy are those for memorable QSOs with a personal note, or maybe home made/designed cards (not the glossy stock photo type of card!). Looking through hundreds of QSL cards from different countries also makes you aware of some country specific habits (like the style of handwriting which has very country specific characteristics) and learn many little (some trivial) things about the countries that you'd possibly never have learned otherwise (e.g. special calls for historical or otherwise notable events).

I have several thousand QSL cards in my collection which dates back to my pre-Ham SWL days,

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circa late-1950s and Novice days in 1964.... I'm very traditional and old-school and very much appreciate QSL cards. I have several albums filled with special cards: DXCC Honor Roll, all the 2014 centennial W1AW/x operations, college and military club station QSLs, cards picturing planes, trains and automobiles, etc. Some cards are works of art in my opinion. If they ever catch on with the general public as baseball cards did, I'm sitting on a gold mine!!!! ((I know it will never happen but I can dream!)) QSL cards also provide a visual record that can be presented to visitors and used to flash back to "the way it was." Remember, the final courtesy of a QSO is a QSL....

I like having something tangible, and frequently interesting looking, to point to and say "look at where I was able to talk to someone with my piddlin' little station."

I send a card if I receive one and hand write on the back of a postcard of the local castle

I still enjoy getting snail mail. So much of what I receive in the US Mail is advertising and bills, when I actually get personal mail, and about a QSO I enjoyed, it gives me a frisson.

I enjoy the individual designs and often the personal notes included

I respond to received QSL card requests. It's the gentlemanly thing to do as well as being a ham radio tradition.

They're a great 'show & tell' when you're explaining DXing to non-hams - it's similar to looking at photos from your vacation, a fond trip down memory lane...

I like the human touch and the fact that it takes time and effort to make the connection and confirmation of a QSO. Always a pleasant surprise to find one in the mailbox!

I always include a personal message related to our QSO. I see cards as a way to promote our hobby. I look at my growing collection as evidence of how much I have enjoyed using my station. Even my wife can see how great this hobby is when I show off cards and the hand written notes that I have received. I have a couple of cards from Hams where I was their first CW contact, and I treasure these cards the most.

I am a volunteer at the 4th callsign district ARRL Incoming QSL Bureau. I sort and distribute Bureau QSL cards bound for anyone with "Z" as the first letter of their callsign suffix. It's a labor of love!!!

I really enjoying getting cards in the mail, and it may seem strange, but my wife likes to see them come in as well. It kind of makes this crazy hobby real to her.



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I don't QSL all the time of course, but when its a nice rag chew or a special DX I always try to get a real card in the mail. I hope this part of the hobby continues. I really like OQRS and don't mind paying if I get the card I want.

Just getting a glimpse into what the other person wants you to learn about him

### **If no, what about exchanging printed QSL cards do you NOT enjoy?**

The time it takes to write them out. The cost of buying and posting them. The environmental impact of cards generally and the accumulation of clutter personally. I much prefer the electronic acknowledgements when required and automatically QSL via eQSL LoTW, QRZ.com and ClubLog. I will send a card directly if someone specifically requests it.

Sending a card with a SASE and then getting no response. I hate to see my effort and postage going to waste.

Receiving the tenth card from a contest station is simply a waste of time and resources.

Find eQSLing/LOTW much more convenient

As a contest afición and an active DXer there are waaaay too many QSOs to even think about sending cards to everyone. That would be prohibitively expensive and time consuming. I DO QSL 100% via LOTW, and eventually via eQSL for those using that. I need confirmations for new entities worked for award purposes and LOTW is a strongly desired confirmation route to me, especially for DX contacts. Thanks to all who make the uploads to LOTW.

No need or desire for them. I've got boxes, and don't need them for awards.

Even though DXLab printing is easy it still takes time and expense to process Bureau cards received from affluent Western Europe. My QSL explores then to use LoTW

The chore of writing out hundreds of cards in one go when they arrive from the bureau. Perhaps I should computerize my log one day! I don't automatically send cards but reply to all incoming cards 100%.

Bottom Line: Cost. I have over 200,000 QSOs on record on LoTW. More than 125,000 QSL Records. Imagine if I had to pay for postage for 125K QSLs. Let alone the administration of mailing by envelopes. I therefore compromise. LOTW is my main QSL method. I have a note on my QRZ.com page that I do NOT use the QSL Bureau. Here is my main method for QSLs now: Via LoTW and I will Always answer a Direct Mail request for a printed QSL card.

I no longer solicit anyone for printed QSL cards anymore, essentially because I am ambivalent to collecting any more cards in my 59 years of being licensed. I am at the stage of life where I am trying to downsize and I am no longer personally seeking any awards which require printed QSL cards as proof of contacts.

Thanks to the local postal service, it's expensive and complicated. It's hard to purchase stamps to send cards outside the country and often a trip to the post office is required.

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I despise clerical work of all kinds.

Cost of postage for direct cards and having to file them when received. I would complain about the headaches of sorting outgoing bureau cards, but I avoid it by using the Spanish QDURE system.

Ones with minimal input. E.g., a printed sticker on the back.

Time it takes. I have a shoebox partially filled with them that I rarely look at. Would rather use LoTW.

Hassle; time; expense

Really the main downside is cost (printing, postage). Having a place to store or display cards is a challenge.

I tossed my collection of cards several years ago because they just sat in a box.

Paper is ridiculous in this day and age.



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## My POTA Debut

[Tom Hain, KV8Q](#) (CWops #2175)

Once I retired about three years ago, I had a bit more time to play radio. My initial endeavor was to complete my CW effort at working all counties. I had about 2,000 confirmations prior to retirement. I am now sitting at 2,845 and still looking for the other 232. Along the way, I bumped into a CWT event. What sort of contest is this on a Wednesday, I asked. It didn't take long to find out and I started looking forward to Wednesday's all of a sudden. Before long, I was a CWops member (#2175). Looking at their website, I realized that I could be an advisor for the CW Academy. I started that and also got involved in the Giving Back program. It's been a real joy being active with CWops.

I had a student, Ben, KA3BEN now K3GG, in one of my classes who said he wanted to learn CW so he could use it on his Parks on the Air (POTA) activations. After the completion of the Beginners class, we made a schedule and still meet on the air on a weekly basis. He spurred my interest in POTA and I had a spare rig, a Ten Tec Jupiter, sitting on the shelf. It's not exactly a sort of radio you would find on most POTA activations but it was FREE and I like free stuff. After picking up a battery and hooking up the connector to the power plug on the rig, I build an antenna. Some green 22 gauge wire which I got free became a 32' longwire and a 17' piece became a counterpoise. BTW, green wire radiates better

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than red because it's a shorter wavelength, I think (hi, hi). I put an eye screw into an old baseball, tied on a piece of Dacron cord, and tossed it over a tree limb to pull up the antenna.



I dumped this rig, antenna, paddles, laptop, Dacron cord spool, baseball with eye screw, tablecloth, battery, etc into a yellow container and headed to a park with my wife. We found a picnic table with a nearby tree. I tossed the baseball and with my expert pitching arm from years ago, I got it over the intended tree limb on the first try. The longwire went from the back of the radio to the tree with the end of the antenna about 8' high. Shortly after that, I had a rig connected to a battery, a set of paddles, an antenna and a counterpoise. I turned on the laptop to find that I couldn't see the screen(!!!) I knew there was a way to increase the brightness but had no clue what that was so I put the laptop away and just logged on paper. Turning on the rig, I heard a station calling CQ POTA on 20 meters. I gave him a call and my 1<sup>st</sup> POTA QSO was in the log from South Dakota. This was absolutely amazing. I called CQ and put another nine Q's in the log which almost blew away in the wind. I went to 40 meters and found someone calling CQ and got him in the log as well.

Looking at the RBN when I got home shows that I got out a bit on 20 and 40. More and better antennas are already swimming around in my mind. I have lots more of that free wire! I checked, but found no new counties in this effort. They will come. It was a lot of fun and there will be more POTA activations from me in the future. Before anyone asks, my knees won't take SOTA. You should have told me about it years ago.

# Are you addicted to speed?

[Doug Zwiebel](#), KR2Q (CWops #438)

In late April, 2023, there was post made to the CWops Groups.io reflector asking about CWT's wpm rates going too fast. Several other emails followed. 50 wpm was mentioned. "Slower speeds" above .040 MHz was also mentioned.

As many of you know by now, I love data analysis. This sounded like another good opportunity to do some data mining and see what, if anything, might be discovered.

## Methodology

I downloaded the zip file from the Reverse Beacon Network for April 26<sup>th</sup>. I then filtered the file for the 1300z and 1900z hour slots (CWT). Next, I selected only CWops members using the most current file available (April 27, 2023) from the CWops member roster [web page](#).

I further refined the search by frequency (just non-WARC bands) and for only the frequencies from the "bottom" of the CW band to .053 MHz. Further, I removed CWops member QSOs which were obviously not participating in CWT (such as one RBN spot I found for 2 wpm).

Next, I removed all duplicate spots. Duplicate spots had to be a spot for the same station being spotted, during the same minute, on the same discrete frequency (no decimals) and at the same speed. This did leave some apparent duplicates, but the only difference was the recorded wpm speed. Since I had no way to figure out which skimmer had the "correct" wpm speed, I used all the speeds meeting the other criteria (same call, same frequency, same minute). I would end up using the "average" as a good figure of merit, so those "duplicates" should be normalized out across the board, since this happens to most stations being spotted via RBN collection.

Finally, I segregated the 1300z session from the 1900z session, at least initially, and I set frequency sectors as suggested by some of the posts made on this topic. I labeled "below 040" as "low" and 040 or above at "high."

## Results

The first analysis I did was at high level.

hour	hi/low	Ave speed	Min speed	Max speed	Number of spots
1300z	high	31.1	13	42	2,303
	low	34.5	26	46	7,636
1300z Total		33.7	13	46	9,939
1900z	high	32.9	11	45	3,776
	low	35.1	26	47	9,276
1900z Total		34.5	11	47	13,052
Grand Total		34.1	11	47	22,991

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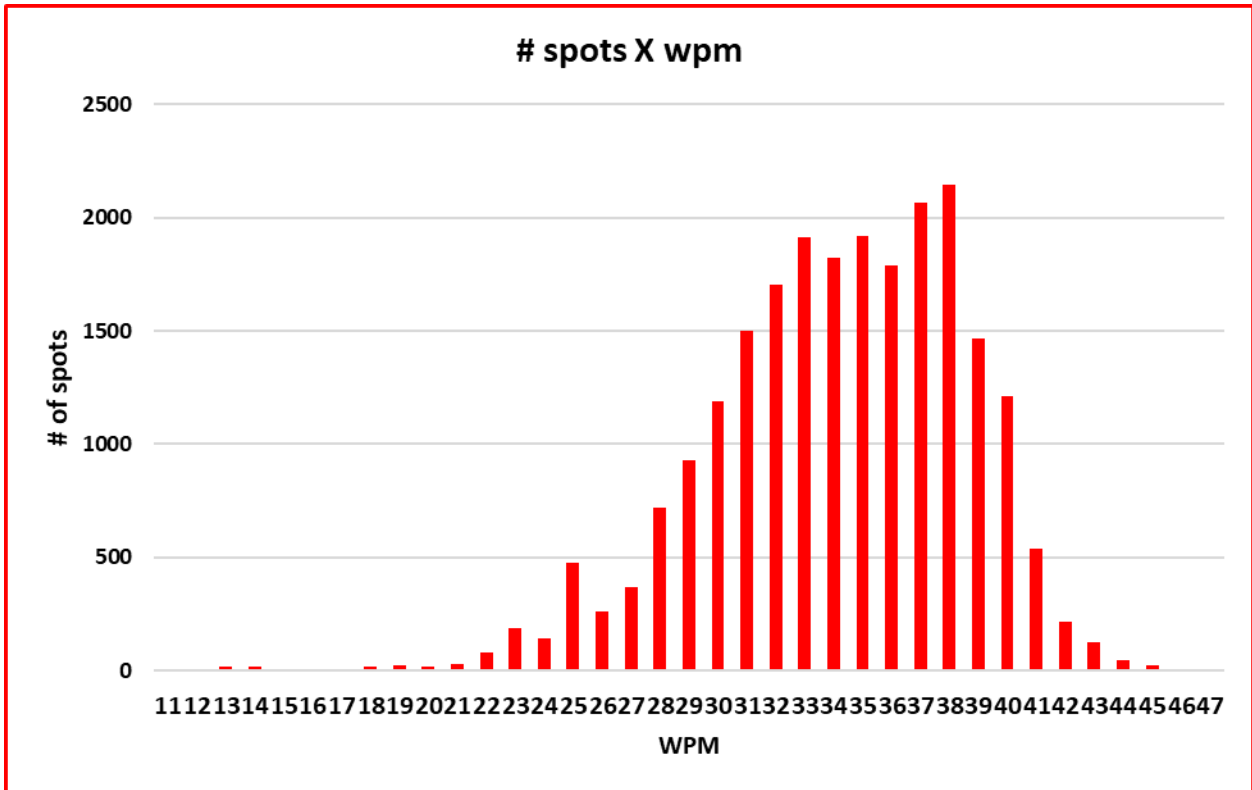


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Looking at the table under the "Ave Speed" column, the delta from "high" to "low" in the band is about 3 wpm. Not much. This column utilizes all of the available spots that met the criteria.

**A word of caution.** For the "minimum" and "maximum" speed columns, it only takes a single spot from a single skimmer to qualify. Looking at the previous table, you cannot determine how many times that wpm speed was actually spotted.

To help clarify the picture, please see the graphic below to get a visual perspective of what this means. In the graphic, both time slots (1300z and 1900z) and both frequency segments (high, low) are combined. Based on the RBN file, 38wpm is most common wpm speed during CWTs.



If anyone cares about breaking out the above graphic by time session and "high" versus "low" frequency, please contact me directly. I have that all done already. Shown below is a snippet of that file. It extends up to 47 wpm "on the right."

# of spots	WPM	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
hour	hi/low																				
1300	high			20	16	3	3	5	1	1	1	3	27	98	94	250	26	53	105	107	158
	low																115	140	306	385	414
<b>1300 Total</b>				<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>572</b>
1900	high	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	16	22	16	25	56	91	51	225	28	50	102	108	183
	low																90	125	206	330	432
<b>1900 Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>615</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>1187</b>

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## Speed Demons

Shown below are the “top 25” CWT ops, sorted by Average Speed, from high to low. Again, the “max” column might be indicative of just one skimmer/RBN spot, while the “average” is generated from the total number of spots. The highest average speed is 39.5 wpm, which is pretty far from the 50 wpm mentioned in one of the emails.

Call	Ave speed	Max speed	Number of spots
N3RD	39.5	43	387
EA1X	39.2	47	455
W1WEF	38.9	42	208
W8FN	38.8	42	123
N3OC	38.7	42	371
NA2U	38.7	45	115
NJ3K	38.7	41	109
VE3EJ	38.7	42	149
K7RL	38.7	41	220
W8FJ	38.7	44	166
K3WW	38.6	44	519
9A5MX	38.4	42	104
SE5E	38.4	46	340
SP2R	38.3	43	151
N5RZ	38.3	43	265
WA3AAN	38.2	43	177
K4RO	38.1	41	100
K7SV	37.9	41	123
AA3B	37.7	41	314
DK9PY	37.6	44	539
I2WIJ	37.5	39	104
PA3AAV	37.5	40	220
N2YO	37.4	44	272
N7US	37.4	41	172
WD6T	37.4	40	141

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### Please QRS champions

During the email postings, the concept of “please slow down” to match speeds was also mentioned. Shown, to the right, are the “top 25” calls of those spotted, sorted by their “minimum” speed. Again, both the “min” and “max” numbers might be due to only one QSO, with the average speed taken from the total number spots for that callsign. I also limited this analysis to 30+ spots, meaning the member was actually active during CWT, as opposed to making (or being spotted for) just a few QSOs. SE5E really stands out having the largest range of wpm speeds.

RBN data downloads available at [https://www.reversebeacon.net/raw\\_data/](https://www.reversebeacon.net/raw_data/)

Call sign	Min speed	Ave speed	Max of speed	# spots
SE5E	11	38.4	46	340
SM6F	13	30.0	36	80
K5MR	13	33.1	35	35
W2LCQ	13	13.4	14	33
VA3SB	14	31.3	38	98
W2ITT	14	18.4	20	34
K7SV	15	37.9	41	123
W1QK	15	36.2	42	42
AA3B	17	37.7	41	314
K8WWS	17	28.1	32	95
WA3AAN	18	38.2	43	177
ON7PQ	18	30.3	33	63
CO8NMN	19	31.4	36	98
K3WJV	19	36.3	40	88
AA9H	20	35.8	39	328
PA3DBS	20	29.3	32	120
M0NGN	20	27.9	31	87
N3RD	21	39.5	43	387
W7SW	21	25.4	33	295
KC7V	21	36.8	39	163
IK0YVV	21	35.5	38	100
VE2FK	21	33.4	36	35
K3WW	22	38.6	44	519
2E0OBO	22	29.3	33	137
K4RUM	22	36.9	39	116

#### Editor's Note

The following regular column is on hiatus this month:

CW Tests by Rich Ferch, VE3KI





# Welcome to FT-SHMATE!

[Victor Rosenthal](#), 4X6GP (CWops #5)

## A Modest Proposal

While waiting for VP6R to operate CW instead of FT-8 on 20 or 15 meters during his very short openings to the Middle East, I began to think that FT-8 might not be as bad as I'd believed. My thoughts turned to ways that it could be improved. And suddenly I got an idea that I think will revolutionize digital mode operation, amateur radio in general, and maybe even pay for my beer.

What is FT-8 except a massive online multiplayer game? And why can't some of the concepts familiar from the world of gaming be applied to ham radio?

I propose to set up a network of servers which would *simulate* the behavior of the ionosphere. A simple cross-platform client application would be available to access the network, with a user interface that looked exactly like WSJT-X or similar programs. Users could sign up for free, although there would be in-app purchases available (more about that later).

The system would initially simulate a 5-watt transmitter and a dipole antenna at a height of 10 meters above ground of average conductivity. When a user logged on to the server, an algorithm would calculate the probability of being heard at the locations of all the other users on the network, using VOACAP for propagation predictions, and taking into account the locations, power, antennas, SSN and A/K indexes, etc. "Contacts" would take place according to the probability computed by the algorithm. If multiple stations were calling one station, the caller would be queued appropriately by signal strength.

Welcome to FT-SHMATE, the ultimate digital mode! Operating FT-SHMATE will be indistinguishable from old-fashioned FT-8. But getting started is so much easier: you don't need a radio, a sound card, or even a ham license. All you need is a computer or even a smartphone. Anyone can do it! And given the permissiveness of ARRL with respect to things like remote operation and their support for digital modes, I am sure they would agree to allow FT-SHMATE QSOs to count for DXCC!

I mentioned in-app purchases. I envision a whole slew of accessories that you can purchase to enhance your FT-SHMATE experience. For several hundred dollars you can buy a 13 dB increase in signal strength, equivalent to boosting your power output to 100 watts. For a few thousand more, you can buy the equivalent of a 1500 watt signal. Antenna height and gain improvements are also available, at prices that are highly competitive with the cost of physical towers and antennas. You can even buy a quiet rural environment or a seaside location for several hundred thousand. And there are NO antenna restrictions in the world of FT-SHMATE!

That isn't all. For \$500,000, FT-SHMATE will give you a two-week "DXpedition" to Bouvet Island. You and 10 friends will be able to operate FT-SHMATE as though you are on Bouvet with a real 3Y0 call! Everything will be just like a physical DXpedition, except that there will be no engine trouble or weather problems. Want to operate from North Korea? For the estimated \$1 million

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cost of a bribe to Kim Jong Un, FT-SHMATE can make it possible.

But perhaps you are the kind who would prefer to stay home and just work everything you can hear. FT-SHMATE has you covered. Since all radio transmissions in FT-SHMATE are virtual, there are no pesky rules or regulations. If you can afford it, we'll set you up with a half-megawatt of power and huge dipole arrays for transmit, as well as a remote receiving site with acres of beverages in all directions.

Hmm, 20 should be open to VP6 now. I wonder if they are still on FT8?

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## The Magic Band – Six Metres

[Chris Chapman](#), VK3QB (operating at VK9NT) (CWops #2949)

**Norfolk Island, 23 March. 0501 UTC, local time +12 hours, 50.101MHz**

Last month I relayed a short story which I hope provided an insight into the pointy end of DX'peditioning (holiday style), with a focus on 17 metres. I promised a follow on story this month looking at our best run yet on six metres.

Luke VK3HJ had been relaxing with a beer and a book whilst I was preparing dinner. It was a chickpea and cauliflower curry from memory. Feeding four DX'peditioners all working to varying schedules isn't as hard as it may first seem.

A busy DX'peditioner is a hungry DX'peditioner. A busy DX'peditioner will most likely be working to unnatural schedules; sleeping odd hours; grabbing a cat-nap when the opportunity lends itself. And eating when food is on offer. Just about any reasonable meal sitting on the stove ready to serve at a moment's notice will be well received. The VK9NT cooks, Patrick VK2PN and I would start thinking about dinner options early each afternoon, in the high likelihood someone needed to make a dash into town for supplies.

Just before 5pm local time (0500 UTC) Luke settled into the chair in front of the Elecraft K3 with a small glass of American Honey Bourbon Whiskey and ice. The four-element beam was pointed in a westerly direction back towards the East coast of VK. We figured the band would be open and there would be a hoard of VK six-metre enthusiasts (nuts?) looking for an elusive QSO with Norfolk Island.

I went back to preparing dinner. Alan was working FT8 on 17 metres (the other magic band) and Patrick was pitching in with meal preparations.



**Luke VK3HJ going into battle on six metres.**

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I heard Luke mutter something about getting the party started (as he sipped at his glass) and then the all familiar dits and dahs drifted into the kitchen “CQ CQ de VK9NT VK9NT”.

Six metres. The magic band. We all waited. Silence. Where was the magic?

And then, at precisely 0501 and 51 seconds UTC the callsign JA1RFF literally blasted into the radio room, kitchen and surrounds. 599 plus. The band was open to JA. The beam was pointing to VK and we were open for business.

We all knew what was going to happen next. We’d prepared for this.

Patrick dropped the onion and knife and dashed out to swing the beam in a more northerly direction. Luke donned the headphones, adjusted his operating position, and I topped up my glass of red wine.

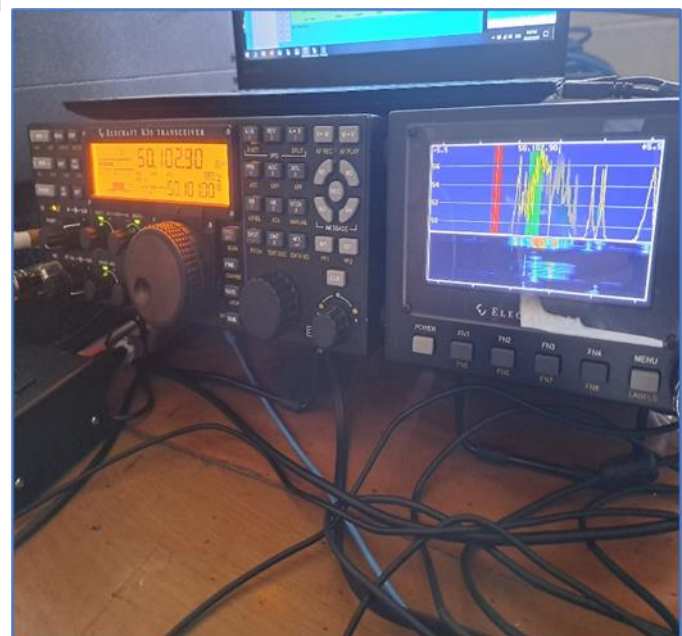
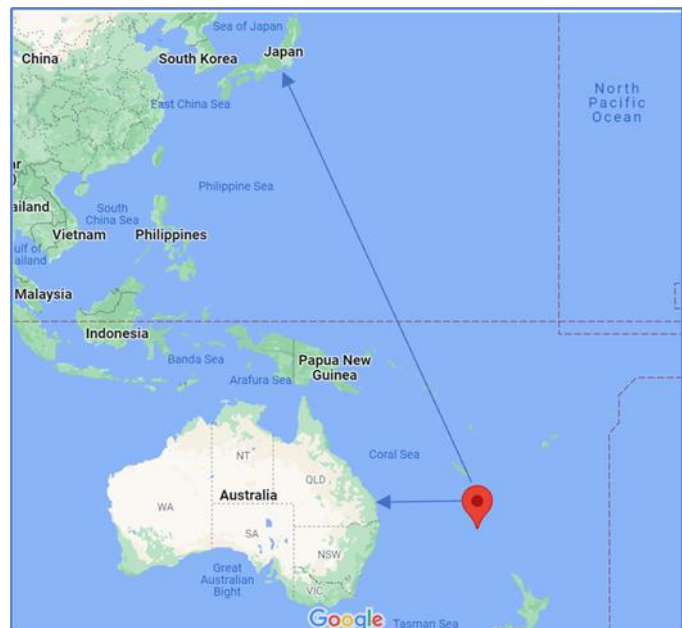
Alan looked up from his FT8 station and calmly announced to no-one in particular that six metres was open to JA.

(As you can see, our 4 element beam was pointed almost due West... well off its main lobe to attract JA. Such is the nature of six metres. We’d probably have done very well with a vertical or dipole!

For the next three hours and 24 minutes Luke held the rampart and added 339 QSOs to the VK9NT logbook on six metres. And they were all JAs! At 0825 UTC Luke finally announced he was hungry - and I suspect he needed a pee as well.

By 0827 UTC we had executed an operator changeover. Yours truly, VK3QB had swapped the headset, adjusted the seat and paddle position and was ready to (seamlessly?) continue working the pileup.

I picked up where Luke left off adding another 81 JAs to the log... and one HL. Thanks Kyu! By then we were well into darkness and the band had been slowly failing for some time... signals were becoming watery and QSB was aggressive. Finally at 0917 and 29 seconds I worked a very weak JG3IWL. Our last JA for that run.



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So, thanks JA1RFF Hiro-san and JG3IWL Hisao-san, and the 425 operators in-between for helping us have some fun and add 427 CW QSOs to the VK9NT magic band log.

As is always the case, JA operators (like all CW operators) are some of the nicest and most courteous operators you could meet. If we copied a partial and asked for confirmation the pileup would dutifully stand to one side and allow their fellow chaser to clarify his/her callsign. This short video demonstrates what it was like at the pointy end.

[https://youtu.be/0b35\\_6hvp-g](https://youtu.be/0b35_6hvp-g)

(Holiday) DX'peditioning is a load of fun. It's even more fun when you have a group of great people who work well together. Each operator was able to get quality time working pileups like this one. Or, as would be their desire, to work a longer shift with a slower QSO rate and more rest breaks.

Our DX'peditions are all about teamwork and ensuring everyone gets a fair go. And it goes without saying, we hone and develop our CW operating skills.

In next month's issue of *Solid Copy* I've written an article about how our team operates, our approach to DX'peditioning, and the formula that makes it a success.

Catch you 'round the bands...

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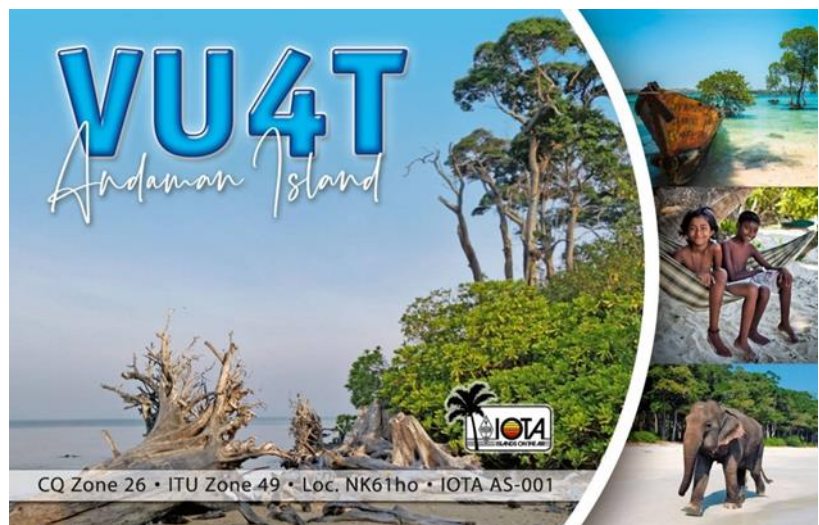
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## Andaman Islands Expedition

**Ram, VU2JXN & [Gopan](#), VU3HPF/M0XUU (CWops #2895)**

Sometime in January 2023, Gopan asked me about joining an expedition with him to the Andaman Islands. I wasn't completely sure whether I am qualified. So far, I have only participated in a few contests and that too, since I have a little pistol station, mostly on S&P. He convinced me that it could turn out to be a good experience. I agreed and we started thinking about applying for the license.

Gopan contacted Deepak VU2CDP, who had been to several such DXpe-



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ditions in the past. Deepak gave us all the contacts in Delhi.

On Jan 24, we applied to the WPC, Ministry of Communication asking for permission to operate as "VU4T", from March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup>. We were not planning to operate for 2 weeks, but some-time during that window. There was radio silence from WPC for the next couple of weeks. Gopan approached and requested another radio amateur Srikumar VU2OB who resides in Delhi to see if he can visit the WPC office and inquire the status. He confirmed that it will be acted upon "soon". We copied another person in WPC and sent another reminder email and got reply a couple of days later (Feb 8th) with the approval.



**(L) Ram VU2JXN and (R) Gopan VU3HPF/M0XUU at Chennai Airport**

We also started talking to other experts and our friends Prasad VU2PTT and Manoj VU2CPL who are contesters and expert operators. Together with Deepak VU2CDP, they were guiding us and sharing their expertise.

Gopan had been to a few DXpeditions before, notably VU7T. I have never been to any DXpeditions in the past. Based on the small size of the team, we were looking at 3-4 days of operations. Initially we planned to take our families to the Island, but that was quickly dropped. Gopan is

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quite active on QO-100 from UK and wanted to activate VU7 on QO-100. We also decided that we won't be doing any FT8. Both of us are mainly CW operators, so CW it is. SSB on 40m was also on our cards.

As for equipment, Gopan has a Kenwood TS-480HX that can give up to 200W. We decided on using linked verticals tied to the tall coconut trees just like VU4G that John G4IRN CWops #268 used.

Some previous DXpeditions had stayed at Sea Princess Resort at Wandoor beach. VU4G, VU4W etc went there. Deepak VU2CDP also had been there, so we decided to book our stay there. The next challenge was dates. We figured out that airports are closed every alternate week since Nov 2022 because of some renovation work happening in the Port Blair airport. So, we have a hard stop. We decided on March 2<sup>nd</sup> arrival and March 6<sup>th</sup> departure. Airport would close on March 7<sup>th</sup> onwards.

The time arrived for final preparation. We looked at the Google map of the location and figured out that we need approximately 100m of cables. Luckily Gopan already had some 80m of LMR-400. Additionally, we would need more cables for HF and for QO-100 setup.

Gopan made and tested the link dipole and tested it on his apartment terrace.

We decided to setup N1MM for logging. But we ran into a couple of issues. First, my laptop ran GNU/Linux. I bought a new SSD and tried to install Windows on it, but somehow the windows installation media wouldn't boot on this computer. So, I quickly gave up that option. After much effort I managed to install N1MM via WINE.

Two days before our trip, we decided to test both the laptops with the TS-480HX rig and found that the logger is not recognising the ports. We thought the cable is at fault, so we quickly procured an FTDI USB to serial cable with 6 pins taken out. This would allow us to make a cable ourselves. But that cable too did not work. Apparently, the COM port of the rig was not functional. We looked at the service manual and the given voltages were not matching. So, we decided to manually enter the frequency when we operate. This is an additional step that we should remember. Additionally, the N1MM on WINE was mostly unusable. We quickly decided to rent a Windows laptop. As soon as I got it, I installed N1MM on it and everything was up and running (of course, the TS-480's COM port still wasn't functional).

We made an urgent call to our friends and well-wishers (Deepak VU2CDP, Prasad VU2PTT, Manoj VU2CPL) and they suggested carrying a WinKeyer which we both didn't have. However, Manoj had one and he had just returned from another hilltop contest. We met him and Prasad at Prasad's QTH and got the WinKeyer.

We also noticed that on March 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> there is an SSB contest, so we also decided to carry an antenna for WARC bands just in case.

The day before the trip, we met again and measured each of the items in our packing list spreadsheet and measured the weight roughly and divided it among our check-in luggage. Only 15kg of check-in baggage per person was allowed in addition to 7kg of carry baggage. We carried TS-

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480HX, an LDG tuner, a couple of power supplies, an IC-705, all the gear for QO-100, a backup QO-100 setup with Adalm Pluto, a bunch of snap-on toroids (which were very useful at the setup), ethernet cables, LMR-400 cables (80 meters), RG-213 cable (~15 meters), another 10 meters of LMR-240 cable, patch cables, wires to make antenna, pre-made "linked" vertical antenna, 1:1 baluns, an extra End Fed antenna and the Unun for the EFHF antenna, A dipole for 17m, RigExpert antenna analyzer and a bunch of other tools. Since we had so much gear that could not possibly fit into the two check-in baggage, we had no choice but to pay for excess baggage.

A spreadsheet of the rough plan for each hour of the day was also prepared based on whatever we knew at that point in time. We also printed a few things like the station name and grid location and some operating procedures to be pasted on to the wall of our desks.

We left early the next morning and got everything checked in without problems.

Airport security asked us a few questions about the radio but we had all the documents with us so didn't have to explain a lot. First leg was Bangalore to Chennai with a short stop and then another two hours from Chennai to Port Blair.

Reaching Port Blair and retrieving our baggage, we headed for the Sea Princess Resort and asked for help at Reception for someone who can climb coconut trees; Mr Debashish, the manager, agreed to arrange someone.



**Sea Princess Resort**

There were several coconut trees on the facade to the beach and we zeroed in on two trees that we can use for the vertical that can also use other trees for radials.



**Our cottage and base of operations**

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A little while later a young man appeared. The main 'coconut tree climber' was unavailable, so Reception sent Sourabh. He was a bit afraid to climb the tall coconut trees all the way to the top. We requested him to try to go as high as we could and tie the pulley and get a rope through the pulley to the ground. Sourabh quickly climbed up and did the job. We got him to climb on another tree for the 17m dipole.

Now we had the pulleys ready although the height wasn't great. The 40m elevated vertical wouldn't be perpendicular all the way to the ground, so we decided to put it in a slanting fashion. We just had to make do with whatever we have. The bottom of the vertical was about 5.5 feet from the ground. We pulled two radials and tied it to two other coconut trees. Great! Now, time to measure the SWR. The match was found a bit below our desired frequency, so we would have to trim the wires. But we decided to not waste any time and instead use the LDG tuner.



**Sourabh, our coconut tree climber**

Back in our room, we setup the radios, paddles, put a few printed A4 sheet posters with our grid locations and a few reminders for ourselves. Our initial plan was to operate side by side. But that hope was quickly dashed when Gopan setup the tripod etc for the QO-100 and found that the trees are obstructing the satellite. We would have to quickly make another arrangement. We found a "gazebo" next to the beach that had power connection and we decided to set it up there. Only problem is that we would have to bring everything daily to and from the room.

We started and called CQ CQ CQ VU4T on 20m and our first QSO came in. The pileup started to build. I had a bit of a starting trouble but that was quickly overcome. It went fairly smoothly from then on. We took a short break to take a quick shower and dinner and again commenced the run and made tons of contacts.



**VU3HPF Rigging Antennas**

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We switched to 40m in the night and made contacts there too. At around 12.30AM or so, we were tired and ran out of juice and decided to take a quick nap, kept our alarms on the phone and again woke up at around 4.00AM and started operating. In the day time, we mostly operated on 10m. 17m was pretty disappointing, we only made a handful of contacts. However 10m and 40m turned out to be great and we made full use of it.



**VU3HPF running a QO-100 Pileup**



**VU2JXN operating HF**

Though Andaman follows Indian Standard Time, the sun rises and sets one hour early compared to the mainland. Our wake-up time was timed to take this into effect.

We were most disappointed with our lack of contact with NA stations on 40m during greyline time and our lack of contacts on 40m with our friends back in the mainland.

A surprising thing in the band was that in the mornings, we heard our friends in India on 40m loud and clear. But we were not being heard at all. We called our friends in the mainland via cell-phone for signal reports and we were not heard at all. But we heard them well. That was weird. The day we returned, we tried a horizontally tied EFHW antenna (we had UnUns for the EFHW) and that too had a similar experience.

We made a handful of QSOs with US radio amateurs on 40m during the mornings. 40m was good towards Europe in the late evenings too.

Our experience on 10m were amazing and that was where we made most of our contacts followed by 20m and 40m. We made tons of contacts with Japanese stations and European stations.

We had some surprise visitors Borut, S53BV and Andreja on Saturday even-



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ing. Borut was on [Havelock islands](#) on vacation and heard about the expedition and contacted us. However, Borut only had a day (or rather a night) left in Andaman Islands before boarding flights out from the islands back home. He convinced his wife and decided to book a room in the Sea Princess resort for a day. We had good fun with Borut and Andreja. Borut is into low-band DXing and has an [impressive setup](#)

On Sunday, we tried our best to have more QSOs on both HF and on QO-100. We knew we had to wind up by 6 pm or so and before the sunlight is low, we will have to bring down the antennas, roll the cables back and start packing. We managed to do around 630 QSOs on QO-100 overall and about 2400 QSOs on HF.

As the 10m bands were going quiet at around 6 pm, we decided to go QRT and wind up. We packed up everything and had our dinner and left Andaman the next day around 3 am.

We had decided upfront that we won't do any paper QSL cards as it is too much of a hassle printing them, writing addresses and so on and mailing them out, that too on a self-funded low budget DXpedition like ours. However, we got a lot of requests for QSL cards and a couple of QSL managers reached out to us with offers and card designs. After making sure that the charges on the QSL seekers are not too unreasonable (say within a couple of US Dollars), we decided to go ahead with Tim MOURX. The QSL request link is [here](#). Our QSL cards were designed and printed by [Max ON5UR](#)



Back home, we uploaded pending logs into LoTW and Clublog. There were a couple of corrections etc and then it was life as normal; though, not really as CW was ringing in our ears every day for a long, long time. Every bird sounded like CW for a while. It was an unforgettable experience, looking back. I personally learnt a lot from Gopan on planning and executing a DXpedition.

We thank everyone who helped make it happen, right from the folks who helped us get the approval, the officials at WPC who promptly acted on the application, the staff at Sea Princess hotel who helped us with antennas (and for leaving us alone with the radio!).

See the [VU4T QRZ page](#) for information and log updates.

# Giving Back Update

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

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

Here are the April results (GB hosts are shown in **bold**):

**AA0YY:** WA7WKY, W5NU (2), N9FGC, WA4MOH, W8RA, KA9FCZ, K5T, N9DDC (2), N8MXV, KO4KYN, WA3SCM, W0ZWS, KC5SAM, KE8UNW, WU4C, AE4GS

**E25JRP:** HS0ZPR, E25FUK, E25HGQ (3), HS2KWO, E24ZST (3), HS4QKN (2), HS0GWL (2), E25CRF, E20MWE (2), DU9JY, HS5TXB, YB3UUQ

**GW2CWO:** IZ2GPY, OM3YCA, M7TSM, PI4U, 2M0IAQ, EA7KGC, SP1UT, OK1ASW, G4CPA, G0FOZ, G3UDI, F4IHG/P, PA3HEN, PI4NTC

**JJ1FXF:** JG1BGT(7), JM1TBU, JK1DZT, JN1FAO(4), JA4IJJ(2), K3EST, N8UM, HL5JZ, JJ0SFV(2), JI1CSQ(2), JJ1VNV/6, KE7LOY, W7ZDX, 7N1OEX, JA7KED, JF5XPJ, DV3EA, JH2FAY, JR2IUB

**JJ1VNV:** JR2AWS

**JM4AOA:** 7L2VPL, 7N1OEX(4), JA4FVE/QRP, JA6JML, JA7IUX, JA9DAB, JE8OYB, JF2LNC(2), JF5XPJ, JG5POO/5, JJ0SFV, JJ1IZY(5), JJ1VNV/6, JK1FYU(4), JK1MVC, JK1PWT, JK7QJK, JM8QGN, JQ1JFW, JQ3FRX, JQ7CPP/QRP, JS2OCY

**JO1DGE:** HL5BLF, HL5JZ, JE6AJO, JF2LNC, JF5XPJ, JG1BGT(5), JI1CSQ, JI8PLY, JJ0SFV(3), JJ1TOE, JK1FYU, JK1PWT, JR2AWS, JS2LCO

**JR1WYW:** JR8KQS, VE7CI, JK3OTH, JM8QGN

**K6RB:** KE7LOY, WA6APN (2), VE7BGJ (3), K7SHR, WB5HOW, VE6VIC, KI7NRI, AA4MC, KE7AV, WB4DKF, WZ6T

**K7NJ:** VA3NIR, AA4NO, KC5THR, WU6X, N0DNR, K6DF, K4WM, W0ZWS, N5NF, W1CGI, LZ1ON, AA9MU, AF4QK, KA3WGE, N2EGA, W3KDB, WD8LSR, W7AQK, KF7YHB, WB5VEG, K0AMY, KY4BG, K8VBL, WD0BC, WA6APN, KC8YTV, K6PLE, KN6QER, N0IK, VA2DFD, W7FY, K9UCX, WA4EDE, W0DQ/7, W7ZDX, K7NNR, LU4KED, KG8DA, W2SH, KN6QER, W7RCS, WB6RVP, N2DA, KD7ZNC, W5SG, W8DXU, W7NNR, W0KOM, N2FJR

**KV8Q:** KI4K GK, AA5AD, VE3WH, K8MPH

**N4TMM:** KO4WEP, K9VKY, KE8PZN, KX0R

**W2XS:** KC9XL, NN0DM, K4EWG, NR8M

**N6HCN:** N7KM, AC6GZ, K7TXA

**W5DT:** AA2YO, K3DGR, W8BJO, W0GIB

**W7ZDX:** AB0WW, VE6VIC, KI7NRI, WA8APN, N7WET, AB0BM, KN6SWG, W6GEE, WQ6T, N5EFI

**W8OV:** AE7CG, K1HE, KN6EZE, KA4SCV, KO4CTM, W1AW/1, XE1YZY, W8HOM

**WE5P:** N3TM, W0ITT

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**7N2XZB:** JN1FAO, JA4GBD, JJ0SFV(3), JN1MET, JG1BGT(3), RW0LGR, JA4IJJ, JF2LNC, JQ7CPP, JJ1SWI, JK1PWT, 6DWAE, JA9DAB, BG2LHM, JF5XPJ, JQ3FRX, JI7KNV, HL5JZ, DS5RLI, JF2LNC, 7N1OEX, JA7KED

Giving Back Operating Schedule - 7 PM Local											
October - April: 40m & 80m   May - September: 40m & 20m											
Frequencies: 14.035 - 14.039, 7.035 - 7.039, 3.535 - 3.539 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
<b>MON</b>											
					G2CWO		W2XS	AA0YY		N6HCN	
<b>TUE</b>											
JR1WYW	E25JRP		SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N4TMM	W8OV	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
	7N2XZB						WE5P				
<b>WED</b>											
JM4AOA											
<b>THURS</b>											
	JJ1VNV		SV2BBK				KV8Q	N5OT	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
<b>FRI</b>											
JR1WYW			SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N2GSL	AA0YY		K6RB	
<b>SAT</b>											
	JJ1FXF										
JM4AOA											
<b>SUN</b>											
	JJ1FXF						W5DT			K6RB	
JM4AOA											

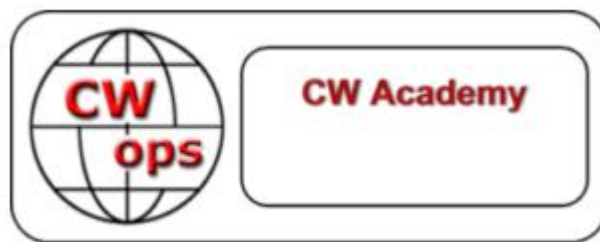


# CW Academy

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

Following is a small sample of reviews we receive from real students, not from a generative artificial intelligence computer program.

(The advisor), was very pleasant to work with. He was always on time and prepared for class. He encouraged me and gave me plenty of information and tools to learn from. I am looking forward to continuing my CW training and hope we can work together in the future.



(The advisor) is a really fun and engaging teacher. He was encouraging to the fast students and very patient and supportive to the slower students.

(The advisor) was very patient and understanding with all us beginners, a very effective teacher who really loves what he does.

I found the class very rewarding and enjoyable. I had tried to teach the code myself using online apps 2 or 3 times before. The class gave me fellow learners to learn with, but more importantly it helped me learn that I can communicate using CW even though I don't have perfect skills. I learned how to correct errors, ask for repeats, and got the confidence to get on the air while I was still learning, instead of waiting until I was 'perfect' to get on the air. The instructor was very patient and encouraging. It was a great experience.

(The advisor) was a great advisor. He was very welcoming, he had a low stress way of running our practice sessions. He was also very passionate about CW. I did not expect to do well in the class, but I feel like I did. I would happily take another class from (the advisor).

Excellent tutor and content, which has exceeded my expectations and I'm now working CW stations on the air. I don't think I will ever get to 25 wpm to be able to join CWOps, but look forward to using CW at my station. Thanks to all at CWops for giving me the opportunity to learn these new operating skills.

While I still have more work to do to copy more effectively, I did go from not knowing any Morse code to learning all of the alphabet and numbers. I am happy that I took the class. I would like to take the next level sometime later this year.

Class was awesome! When I signed up, I was wondering if I'd make it past the first week. But I quickly started to enjoy the class and chatting with my classmates before the class. Also, I did not expect to be doing as well at sending and receiving CW as I am. (The advisor) did an awesome job and I feel lucky to have him as my advisor.

(The advisor) was the right instructor for me, being new to CW. (The advisor) has a teaching style that makes the student feel at ease. He is aware of the pitfalls a new student faces and is encour-

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aging in his teaching style.

(The advisor) is a great mentor, teacher and coach for beginning CW. Very patient, encouraging and motivating. I would definitely take more classes under his tutelage. Outstanding class! Thank you! 73.

Want more testimonials? Usually, one can turn to the final section of *Solid Copy* and read some of the new member biographies, many of which come from students who became members.

We would love to see anybody who would like to learn Morse code and improve their CW skills to sign up for future sessions. There are no charges to register to be a student. We also encourage experienced CW operators to sign up as an advisor and help us train the next generation of CW operators.

**73, Joe, AA8TA** (CWops #1821)



## New Members

[Trung Nguyen, W6TN](#)

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

<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>
3352	VE7SK*	Bob	3356	CT7AUP*	David	3360	K4WG*	Gene
3353	NN1DX*	Bob	3357	N3RTW*	Sean	3361	WB5HOW*	Victor
3354	N5NA*	Alan	3358	GMØOPS	John			
3355	W4MSL*	Doc	3359	ZS5PG	Matt			

\* Life Member.

As of May 8, 2023

**Need Sponsors:** KP4PI, W4DL, ABØWW, GM5AUG, G3PLE

**Invitations Extended:** VK6LW/VK6T, N9NC

For more details about nominees and up-to-date status, check the [“Members only”](#) page on the website. For information about joining CWops, check the [“Membership”](#) page on the website.

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

Thank you.

**73, Trung W6TN** (CWops #1707) Membership Manager



# CWops Member Awards

[Bill Gilliland, WØTG](#)

## Monthly Update

During April, additional members submitted logs and the number of active participants in the awards program increased to 217 participants. The QSO totals and rankings for the first week of May 2023 have the same familiar calls in the top four positions with **KR2Q** remaining in first place and leading second place **AA3B** by 194 QSOs. The changes in the top ten rankings this month have **KG9X** moving into fifth place followed by **NA8V**, **K7QA**, **N5TJ**, **N5AW** and **N7US** in sixth through tenth place. The top ten this month are **KR2Q**, **AA3B**, **K3WW**, **N5RZ**, **KG9X**, **NA8V**, **K7QA**, **N5TJ**, **N5AW** and **N7US**.

With the addition this month of **F5SGI**, sixty-eight members have now contacted CWops members in 100 or more DXCC entities. The number of participants who have accomplished CWops WAS grew to 187 this month with the addition of **K1RF** and **K4GM**. You can see complete rankings for all award categories at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/scores>.

## CWops Award Tools Participation

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

At the end of 2022, we had 289 active participants in the Member Awards Program. As of May 5, 2023, we have 217 active participants. If you have not yet submitted any logs for 2023, 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.

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. View this webpage for more information about [CWT Participation Awards](#).

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## 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](#). 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 [online tools](#). 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

View our website for more information on the [CWops Awards Program](#). Send your feedback, questions or comments to [cwopscam@w0tg.com](mailto:cwopscam@w0tg.com).

## Current ACA Top 100 as of May 5, 2023:

Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ	Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ
1	KR2Q	1553	8330	168	50	57	37	13	OM2VL	961	6535	101	50	44	33
2	AA3B	1359	13144	131	50	49	38	14	K3WJV	951	7541	116	50	49	32
3	K3WW	1324	10347	134	50	50	38	15	K9WX	948	5482	109	50	44	32
4	N5RZ	1195	9040	127	50	46	37	16	N5ZO	946	8867	110	50	46	35
5	KG9X	1130	6475	97	50	42	31	17	K1VUT	914	5709	81	50	41	26
6	NA8V	1125	8356	113	50	47	35	18	W0UO	899	4303	71	50	38	25
7	K7QA	1052	6406	88	50	39	30	19	AA2IL	880	2813	63	50	27	27
8	N5TJ	1039	4032	84	50	42	30	20	K3QP	868	3493	81	50	40	26
9	N5AW	1016	6458	103	50	48	33	21	W8FN	854	4546	75	50	38	24
10	N7US	1014	6433	115	50	44	34	21	W1RM	854	8775	219	50	62	38
11	KY4GS	1009	2847	62	50	32	22	22	WT9U	844	5958	103	50	41	30
12	KC7V	969	6080	92	50	38	32	23	AA5JF	825	4433	94	50	44	31

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Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ	Rank	Call	ACA	CMA	DX	WAS	WAE	WAZ
24	K1DJ	815	5093	111	50	46	30	65	W4CMG	550	2122	48	50	24	19
25	N5KD	802	2974	93	50	42	33	66	VE3NRT	548	2280	63	50	35	24
26	K6NR	799	5113	70	50	34	29	66	SMOHEV	548	2790	112	50	49	33
27	K0WA	773	3018	45	50	21	19	67	VE3MV	547	3870	86	50	41	25
28	VE3TM	772	4115	93	50	44	28	68	AC6ZM	543	4373	66	50	36	22
29	WN7S	768	4656	80	50	39	26	69	MORYB	542	2610	86	48	46	28
30	VK2GR	766	2842	79	50	40	31	70	K1RF	541	1492	43	50	26	15
31	VE3KI	765	7534	142	50	53	37	71	W0GAS	538	2416	48	50	21	22
32	K8JQ	764	5405	70	50	35	23	72	AF4T	537	3155	72	50	36	26
33	CO8NMN	763	4663	74	50	35	24	72	9A1AA	537	4583	127	49	52	38
34	WA4JUK	750	4204	86	50	42	27	73	W0TG	512	3359	70	50	31	25
35	WS7L	740	3305	65	50	29	27	74	KW1X	511	897	18	49	9	9
36	NJ3K	736	3854	75	50	40	25	75	N2UU	507	5456	112	50	46	31
37	N4CWZ	735	3556	61	50	34	21	75	N2EIM	507	665	41	47	27	16
38	KK0U	725	2766	56	50	29	23	76	K2YR	504	2601	53	49	32	19
39	K3JT	724	5859	104	50	46	31	77	G4PVM	498	2976	105	50	49	33
40	K4WW	722	5385	84	50	38	29	78	VE7KW	497	2124	31	50	13	17
41	K3ZA	709	2789	55	50	34	21	78	PA0INA	497	2388	91	49	44	31
42	DL6KVA	686	7275	189	50	62	37	78	K3ZGA	497	2394	61	50	33	19
43	W0VX	680	6065	131	50	46	37	79	K0TC	488	3299	64	50	29	22
44	SM6CUK	671	5072	157	50	57	38	80	W9CF	479	1799	24	50	6	14
45	N5XE	660	3745	81	50	37	29	81	G3LHJ	473	1461	64	44	41	20
46	KT5V	658	3632	81	50	31	29	82	HB9ARF	472	2842	89	48	47	27
47	EA6BF	638	2485	77	48	43	29	83	N8BJQ	469	7582	133	50	48	39
48	OZ3SM	635	3255	105	49	50	35	84	W4WF	464	4935	94	50	43	32
49	K1SM	634	4409	132	50	46	36	84	K4GM	464	4062	85	50	37	27
50	WT3K	632	4550	84	50	42	27	85	W8EWH	458	1225	42	50	24	19
50	W9ILY	632	6420	135	50	45	36	86	AB7MP	451	2314	39	50	14	18
50	DF7TV	632	3204	105	50	49	34	87	OK1RR	449	4002	149	50	52	38
51	W1UU	631	4621	115	50	41	33	88	W2VM	444	2539	63	50	33	18
52	K3PP	630	5658	107	50	45	30	89	W3WHK	440	3267	76	50	37	21
53	N4FP	627	2992	60	50	32	20	90	N1EN	437	3559	129	50	47	35
54	N3CKI	622	2340	53	50	30	16	91	W7LG	435	1278	36	46	25	13
55	F5SGI	618	2599	100	50	50	32	92	SP4JFR	429	1123	56	40	37	21
56	K4TZ	609	2947	43	50	20	16	93	G4LPP	428	2345	90	49	46	31
57	W1AJT	603	4181	98	50	45	33	94	W0NF	423	1762	29	50	12	16
58	NA4J	600	3838	76	50	35	24	94	ON4CAS	423	1929	112	48	45	35
58	KV8Q	600	3091	69	50	35	23	95	KC4WQ	410	3502	62	50	29	25
59	WU6P	593	2128	39	50	20	18	96	K5VG	407	841	31	45	19	10
60	AF5J	584	2967	60	50	24	23	97	W2CDO	400	2891	66	50	37	22
61	KM4FO	581	3197	48	50	19	17	98	K2TW	399	3790	62	50	32	22
62	N9UNX	579	1398	21	50	10	12	99	KB8GAE	395	2035	58	50	26	24
63	W6AYC	572	3063	49	50	22	22	100	KC8J	394	2217	38	50	15	19
64	EA3FZT	571	2661	82	49	45	29								

**73, Bill WØTG (CWops #1873)**

CWops Operating Awards



# QTX Report: Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

[Enzo, MØKTZ](#)

April has been a fantastic month for our ragchewing gang, as collectively we have managed to pass the 2000 mark for the total number of QTX and the 1000 mark for MQTX. This amounts to at least as much as 950 hours of radio activity in the first quarter of 2023, or, on average, about 30+ hours of QSOs per participant, which is a heck of a lot of radio waves. Well done all! As a result, several fellows have already amassed the number of QTX needed for a Bronze Medallion, and others can already claim their first QTX-100 certificate.

On the note of awards and medallions, I have been discussing with fellow CWops members, including our dear Bruce K8UDH, our President Stew GWØETF, and several other people involved in this process. There will be a few improvements and changes to the awards system, with the aim to simplifying and streamlining the process of requesting a medallion or a certificate, and of recognizing the efforts of MQTX ragchewers as well. Discussions are currently ongoing, but I might be able to provide an update soon, so stay tuned.

As you know, the Dayton Hamvention is happening later in May, and when you read this column you might be already traveling to get there. CWops organizes a Club Dinner at the Hamvention on May 18<sup>th</sup> (you might have received a couple of emails about it), and I am pleased to announce that our dear Chuck WS1L, an accomplished and passionate supporter of the QTX/MQTX programme, will be raising the flag of ragchewers by giving a short presentation about the CWops QTX/MQTX activity during that event. So if you are going to the Club Dinner, be sure to be there to cheer and support Chuck's talk. I am sure that Chuck's passion will convince more fellow CW lovers to give it a try and take the plunge, so maybe expect some new entries in the score sheet of next month!

Just a clarification, as I have received a couple of emails about that: there are no special entry requirements to the QTX/MQTX programme, apart from the conversational nature of the eligible QSOs. We do not require the QSO to happen at any minimum speed, or using any specific key or device, except that you must adhere to your ham license conditions and you should be receiving code using only your ears and brain. We do not even require submissions to come from CWops members: you only need to be a current Club member in order to request certificates, medallions, etc., but anyone can submit their ragchewing scores, and we will publish them. I would encourage in particular any student of any class of our CW Academy programme to do that, and I will send an email to the CW Academy Advisors reflector, asking the advisors to encourage their students to give ragchewing a try.

I was very intrigued to read that some of our fellow ragchewers enjoy QRP activity (read through the soapbox!). That's fantastic, as many colleagues are generally skeptical about the possibility of having longer conversations at QRP power levels. As you know, I operate almost exclusively QRP, and I can personally report about one extraordinary QSO I had this month with Rumi LZ2RS, another inveterate QRP fan and a very skilled operator. We had a very enjoyable 25min+ conversation on 15 meters the other day, while we were both running 500mW (yes, milliWatt, anything below 1W is known as QRPp in the QRP circles), and milling along at around 27-28wpm. Signals

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were fantastic that afternoon, with 599 real and solid both ways throughout. But that's not really an exception, as QRP conversational CW is not just possible, but actually lots of fun. Perhaps you might want to give it a try, if you are looking for a thrill or a change? You might be surprised by the outcome HI

After my request to share feelings and images exchanged during QSOs, as appeared in the April's column, several fellows have reported on them, so please read through the soapbox comments below for some truly interesting ones!

Finally I would like to share with you a comment I received from John N6HCN, in a quite nice and unexpected email, where he enthusiastically said about conversational CW: *"...being transparent, sharing your heart with another human being, eyes closed, fingers and thumb on the paddles, the ionosphere bringing minds in touch, thinking not about the gear or the fist or the bands, just the other person and the slight hesitation while they think or the rush when they are enthusiastic... Romantic notions? Maybe. But could kings of old have any greater power? We can't ignore this thing, it's bigger than Samuel F. Morse ever imagined. It is no longer a job, but an art, a language, and a culture."* Yeah, maybe we are exerting more power with our fists than kings of old could ever imagine to wield with their mighty swords....

Now to the many interesting comments from your submissions, which are always a treat to read. Thank you, keep chatting on the bands, and HPE CU SN ON AIR.

**KB6NU:** I had a nice mix of QSOs this month, including 26 QTX, contesting in the MI QSO Party, and a smattering of DX.

**W8OV:** Most fruitful contact was with KO4CTM for 42 mins. He was unaware of CW Academy. I mailed him a QSL card with info about CWA, and he replied that he would look into it as he was interested in improving his code speed.

**YL3YD:** Had a QTX chat with an Old Timer 1933. He is a retired sparks in the merchant navy. Quality code is great to listen to. Many thanks to HB9YG.

**PG4I:** It's been a good month, partially thanks to the EUCW QRS week. QRS QSOs tend to taken a bit more time... One particular QSO worth mentioning this month was with G0AOE, a 25 minute ragchew which would have been much longer if I wasn't called out of the shack :-)

**W9EBE:** During a QSO, Jim/KK8A talked about motorcycling this summer in MN. It brought back not only images of being behind the handlebars and leaning into the curves, but also evoked memories of smells, sounds, and the feel of riding. Wonderful!

**KG5IEE:** Not as much time on air this month. Had a nice QSO with K5SFO on 10 meters. He was just licensed in August and still a Tech but working on his General. Good to hear a Tech on CW.

**VE3WH:** I had a respectable QTX rag chew with a ham who had been an inactive CW operator for while. He made my day when he said "Great to have a decent ragchew...just like when I 1st started 57 years ago."

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**AAØYY:** QSO with a YL, not everyday you come across a lady on CW. KC5SAM "Sam" was the name she went by.

**K5KXJ:** Most of my limited hamming time directed at study for Extra upgrade from my 50 year old Advanced class license. Haven't tested since then but glad to have better study materials now. Preping for the old licenses, novice, general, advanced, made me learn CW. THAT WAS A GREAT GIFT OF THE OLD FCC RULES. Thanks to Vic, WT9Q, for two great "chews" in April.

**AJ1DM:** Unfortunately I cannot claim to have received any images via CW this month - I don't think my mind is picturesque enough (hi hi)! However, in the vein of interesting ragchews, I had a very nice one with Tom DF7TV (CWops #2613) in April. We found we had a couple things in common: (1) we both had Christian W4ALF (CWops #1695) as an Advisor in CWA and (2) we're both interested in CW education. In fact, I'm going to using some of his ideas in my upcoming CWA Intermediate class for the spring semester. 73 es tnx fer all the Qs! John AJ1DM

**SV1DAY:** with Hector, KP4AMU, straight key, slow speed, weak signal but completely apprehensible and fully enjoyable!

**WB4IT:** My longest QSO this month was 56 minutes with Dave ND4K. Dave is an excellent op with whom I sked regularly. I've also been pushing speed and having QRQ skeds with Tony KB9LLD for practice. We had a 53 minute QSO where we stayed above 40 wpm the entire time, making lots of mistakes as we try to get faster, but we copy each other and have fun in the process.

**GWØETF:** A very slack month for ragchewing! I did have one notable and very enjoyable 25 minute QSO with Theo PA3HEN who emailed me later and described it as 'winning a battle'. He explained he had recently suffered a serious stroke and this was his first attempt at a 'real' QSO since then. I felt humbled. Best wishes for a full recovery Theo!

**KG5SSB:** During my Marathon QSO with Lee, I envisioned a nice area with pine trees and walking paths as he described his location in Virginia. Also, thanks to my former CW Academy classmate Jerome K8LF for a QSO this month!

**KK6CN:** Too busy for very many ragchews this month. My longest QSO was 96 minutes! Two ops who like to talk a lot. HI HI. Only now I can't remember what we talked about...

**K8UDH:** Last month I had several Marathon QSOs, with each one over 60 minutes. Great fun. I'm looking forward to getting my new Wolf River Coil on the air soon for portable operation.

**KF6NCX:** My longest QTX QSO in April was for an hour with Ted N6ZO on 40 meters with straight keys. This was a scheduled QSO. Ted and I first had a ragchew on Straight Key Night (Day) on New Years Day at the start of this year. We enjoyed it so much we connected on email, made friends and have had a few ragchews since then. Ted lives in southern CA.

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**N6HCN:** Enjoyed some short skip QTX on 40m with friends Vic WA6MCL, Jim K7TXA, and Jim N6VN. TXA's 4W QCX was 569 and armchair copy, a great example of successful QRP QTX!

### Awards and Medals for 2023

Gold – 400 QTX QSOs

Silver Medal – 300 QTX QSOs

Bronze – 200 QTX QSOs

### QTX for April 2023

<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>
KY4GS	46	N6HCN	17	W9EBE	6	W3WHK	2
VE3WH	41	F5IJ	17	W7JRD	6	PG4I	2
N5IR	36	MØKTZ	12	KK6CN	6	K5KXJ	2
K9OZ	34	KG5SSB	11	KG5IEE	5	YL3JD	1
WS1L	27	K5YQF	10	KØALT	4	GWØETF	1
KB6NU	26	AJ1DM	10	WT9Q	3		
WB4IT	24	K8UDH	8	KF6NCX	3		
AAØYY	18	WØGAS	7	W8OV	2		

### MQTX for March 2023

<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>
MØKTZ	55	YL3JD	17	KK6CN	4	K5YQF	2
KY4GS	51	WB4IT	17	GWØETF	4	AJ1DM	2
AAØYY	32	VE3WH	14	WØGAS	3	KF6NCX	1
PG4I	28	KG5SSB	11	N6HCN	3	K8UDH	1
SV1DAY	20	W9EBE	5	WS1L	2	AB7MP	1
KG5IEE	20	W8OV	5	W7JRD	2		

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### QTX Totals for 2023

Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX
VE3WH	219	K5YQF	76	KG5SSB	21	PG4I	5
KY4GS	170	N2DA	61	WØGAS	20	YL3JD	4
K9OZ	165	MØKTZ	47	KR2Q	19	WT9Q	3
N5IR	144	KG5IEE	44	KK6CN	18	WA9ZZ	3
WS1L	130	K8UDH	37	K4AHO	15	NØBM	2
KB6NU	117	K6DGW	37	WA2USA	14	GWØETF	2
F5IJ	110	AJ1DM	36	K5KXJ	12	SV2BBK	1
KCØVKN	103	KØALT	34	NEØS	10	AB7MP	1
WB4IT	99	N9EEE	30	W7JRD	9		
AAØYY	79	KF6NCX	26	W8OV	8		
N6HCN	77	W9EBE	25	W3WHK	8		

### MQTX Totals for 2023

Call	MQTX	Call	MQTX	Call	MQTX	Call	MQTX
MØKTZ	197	KG5SSB	53	WS1L	16	W3WHK	5
KY4GS	184	SV2BBK	41	KF6NCX	16	K4AHO	5
WB4IT	106	AJ1DM	28	K6DGW	14	N9EEE	3
AAØYY	100	W9EBE	26	AB7MP	13	W7JRD	2
VE3WH	81	K5YQF	23	WØGAS	12	NEØS	2
KG5IEE	81	GWØETF	23	N6HCN	12	KR2Q	2
YL3JD	65	SV1DAY	20	W8OV	9	NØBM	1
PG4I	54	K8UDH	17	KK6CN	7		

**73, Enzo MØKTZ** (CWops # 3206)

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



# My Story: New Member Biographies

Compiled by [Tim Gennett, K9WX](#) (CWops #1462)

## David Sarkozi, WB5N #3350

I got into Ham Radio via a science elective at New Braunfels High School (Texas) taught by my Elmer WA5VTT. The stated goal of the two semester class was to get your general class license. This was 1978 and CW was mandatory. Most of the class including myself passed our 5 wpm test and the written test for Novice in the fall of 1978 and I was licensed as KA5DXZ. Those were heady days of a solar cycle working DX from the club station during class easily and even more after school. There was a spirit of competition in the club and we were all working hard getting our speed up for our general exam in the spring.

The culmination of the class was a field trip to the FCC field office in Houston, TX to take our General Class exam. Long story short I got talked into trying for an Extra license. I passed the 20 wpm code but failed the extra module by 5 questions, but I passed my Advanced!

After high school I was active in the club at the University of Houston. Around 1985, I passed my Extra exam. I was still using my Novice call, KA5DXZ because I wanted a WB5 call and they ran out before I got licensed. I waited and finally put in for a callsign change in 1987 when the timing seemed right to get a 2x1 WB5 call and got my present call, WB5N. I also fell in with the Texas DX Society. While a member of TDXS I was very active at multi-op contest stations K5LZO and NR5M. I had my first taste of contest expeditions to Grenada, Belize, Jamaica, and Mexico.

From the mid 1990s to the fall of 2020 I was off the air but my radios were there on the shelf waiting for me. One day, my wife told me to use them or get rid of them, they were taking up space. I put up a 20 m dipole but it barely worked. I was delighted to find out the venerable Hy-Gain 4BTV was still available. So I got one and installed it. I worked more things. I thought I had retained my code skills but I could barely pick out a CQ anymore. I got involved in Parks On The Air. I kept seeing CW spots for park stations on CW I couldn't work and I got motivated to get my skills back. I used the CWops Morse code trainer online and in three weeks I was back on the air with CW. Slowly my speed picked up, 18 wpm, 20, 22, 25+. Now to tell the truth I don't feel like a new country is real till I have it in CW.

In 2016 I retired after 35 years from the University of Houston where I was manager of Public Safety Systems.



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In the twenty-five years I was inactive, I was very active in the Texas birding world and served 16 years on the board of the Texas Ornithological Society. I've been a freelance birding guide leading trips to Belize, Costa Rica and all over Texas. I have now made more than 35 trips to Belize. I actually invented a popular birding game here in Texas that is now sponsored by the Texas Ornithological Society that I based on County Hunters and DXCC. The goal is to record 100 species of birds in 100 counties in Texas. I of course called it the Texas Century Club.

### **Nat Davis, N4EL #3349**

My first license was as a Novice, WN4VPG, received in high school around 1971. Unfortunately, that 2-year license expired before I could upgrade it. College studies to be an electrical engineer got in the way! After graduating, getting a job, and getting married, I decided it was time to get back on the air. In the late 70s, I took the General and Advanced-class tests and came out as N4BTO. I have been licensed ever since.

After 12 years in the Army Signal Corps, I taught electrical and computer engineering at VA Tech for 16 years. While there, I fell in with a bunch of great operators that led me to join the Southwest Virginia Chapter of the Potomac Valley Radio Club (PVRC). PVRC's contesting activities spurred me to upgrade to my license to extra-class and then to my current call, N4EL – a much nicer call to send with CW. I am interested in both DXing and contesting and enjoy using SSB, RTTY, FT8, but, preferably, CW.



In 2005, I moved to the Dayton, OH area to be a department head at the Air Force Institute of Technology, the Air Force's graduate school. I retired in 2016 with plans to put down roots and put up a tower! My home station is an Icom 7610 feeding an Acom A-1000 amplifier. I use a Force-12 C3s tribander at 50' for 20 m and up and a 43' vertical antenna, remote tuned at the base, for 20 m and below. Despite fighting the Midwest propagation "disadvantage," my station does pretty well and I am very happy with it.

In the fall of 2021, I became active in Parks on the Air (POTA), both as a hunter and an activator and that has been a lot of fun. My POTA "station" is built around an Icom 705 (fantastic portable radio).

My wife, Jenny (retired RN) and I live a few miles north of Dayton in the small town of Tipp City. When not doing ham radio, I like to do woodworking, especially wood turning. Jenny is into oil painting and stained glass crafts. Together, we share a love of hiking, camping, and fishing.

I am a member of the ARRL, PVRC, the Long Island CW Club, and now the CW Operators Club!

### **Tim Vegh, VA3TMV #3345**

I decided I would like to be a ham while listening to my parents' Normende table radio as a kid.

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It had a great sound and was all band, AM broadcast, and FM, but also shortwave and longwave. Although it did not have an outside antenna, I could still hear VOA and the BBC and Morse code operators on shortwave. In Cub Scouts, I tried to get my communication badge but found no patience for the code (and no one to learn with). But I was interested in all things electrical and built many crystal radios and strung up many (useless) antennas. Radio communication was going to be part of my life somehow but learning code was not high on my list so I did not pursue ham radio. Well, life happens and although I attended a 3-year college course in electronics and specialized in communication, I never got very close to radio.



Fast forward to my last few working years as a high school teacher of electricity shop, and I expressed a desire to be a ham to my wife, and she gave me a Christmas present of a course to get my amateur radio certificate from my local amateur radio club. So, in 2019 at age 67, I was finally a ham.

I thought I was going to talk to hams all over the world as part of my retirement. Well, that did happen, but once I proved to myself it could be done with my equipment some of the shine wore off. As I learned at the course, there are many paths in using amateur radio. I did not think competitive radio was a thing but members of the club convinced me it was (thanks Vic VE3YT). I did not see myself as competitive but I am. And competing with Morse code also turned into something that interested me even though I had put off getting the certificate because of the code. So, you just never know what paths will open up if you keep an open mind. That challenge of learning code has been way more difficult/entertaining than I ever thought it would be. So lifelong learning is a "thing."

Because I very much enjoy building things both mechanical and electrical, this hobby suits me down to the ground (and puts things up in the air too). I like building and experimenting with antennas and I am fortunate that the neighbours don't complain and I have over a ½ acre to play in. I have two guyed towers, one with wires in a fan dipole for 40, 80, and 160 meter, and one that carries a three element tribander of 20, 15, and 10 meter. And there is a copper pipe J-pole for 2 meters. I own an Icom IC7300 and an Elecraft K3.

Since I like teaching, I have volunteered to help train new hams (in electronics) to get their Certificate of Proficiency in Amateur Radio in the course given by our club.

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### **Doc Lundy, W4MSL # 3355**

I was licensed as a Novice (WN5AUY) during high school through the encouragement of W5KDM. I never got comfortable with CW, the sole operating mode for Novice Class. I was not active long and didn't advance to a General Class ticket. But, I never lost the desire to return to ham radio and become competent with Morse code.

After a very long hiatus, intent and opportunity converged, and I was re-licensed in 2002 with a General Class ticket (KG4QWP, changed to W4MSL), and then moved to Extra Class. I made sure my first contact after getting re-licensed was with CW. During those days, the paltry 5 wpm code requirement was still in place. While I "mastered" the content of the licensing exams through a lot of study, working and re-working equations and using Smith charts, I doubt I would have gotten either the General Class or Extra Class ticket very quickly (if at all) had the old 13 & 20 wpm standards been in-effect. It felt like a bit of a "back door" return to ham radio with the lower code requirement. So, I determined to "earn" my tickets retroactively, so to speak, by pushing myself to become reasonably proficient at CW and get to at least 20 wpm. K7QO's (Chuck Adams) code course got me started, and I copied out drills from his MP3 files in cursive during long haul international flights. Much more progress came from great CWA instructors in Basic, Intermediate & Advanced CWA courses.



I have interests and responsibilities apart from ham radio, which limit my OTA time and Morse code progress, but I do participate in weekly CWT sessions, which provide a convenient and fun way to keep my finger(s) in the hobby. I did S&P with QRP for the first time recently, and was surprised by the fair number of contacts garnered, including an exchange with RM2D on 20 meters at 5 watts. Wow! Maybe I don't need either an amp OR even 100 watts to have fun. And maybe my 135 foot window-line-fed doublet is good enough for multi-band operation after all!

I read constantly, write some, garden (flowers—especially camellias—and vegetables) and have particular interest in Anglican Psalm Chant, along with other choral music, classical and modern. My musical talents and proficiency are greater than my CW skills, but still quite marginal, but good enough to almost enjoy singing challenging pieces. Kind of like CW: you have to achieve a certain level of competence to begin to enjoy either. I'm active as a chorister and Lay Reader in my local Anglican congregation. My reading is quite broad. I especially enjoy works by the "Inklings" and recently re-read all of Charles Williams' novels. Presently, I am reading Evelyn Waugh's war trilogy, "Sword of Valor" and slowly working my way through a seven volume commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews by 17th Century theologian John Owen. Sitting on my back porch affords both a venue for reading and CW practice as well as enjoying breathtaking and frequent appearances of bluebirds. A few weeks ago, a pair of migrating swans startled us

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with a day's visit on the lakefront.

I retired from a variegated career as a physician in 2019. In addition to my medical degree (Tulane 1983), I hold a BS in Chemistry/Math (University of Southern Mississippi 1979), and advanced degrees in Epidemiology (University of Iowa 1990) and Medical Informatics (Duke 1996). I consider myself a life-long student, and have taught and published in areas of expertise. But, I consider membership in CWops a fresh and welcome achievement and hope to make some small return by "giving back."

### **Alan Sewell, N5NA #3354**

My ham radio career started in high school when I joined a ham radio Explorer post two of my friends were in. They had their Novice licenses. I didn't want to mess with that Morse code stuff so I took and passed the conditional Technician test and received the call WB5GVE in 1972.



When it came time to upgrade my license, I found getting the Technician license was a mistake. There were no HF privileges with the Tech so I couldn't get on the air to practice my code. After listening to many records, tapes, and W1AW code practice sessions, I thought I was ready to take the 13 wpm test and upgrade. In 1974 I drove to Little Rock and successfully passed the 13 wpm code test but I distinctly remember the FCC examiner calling out "SEWELL, you passed...just barely". Just barely was close enough and I passed my General and Advanced written tests.

In 1976, my senior year in college, I went to the FCC office in Dallas and passed my Extra exam. Then in 1977, I applied for and received my current call, N5NA.

At the end of 1977, my employer sent me to London for four months training. I applied for a reciprocal license and received the call G5CFA. I took my Ten Tec Triton IV with me and was able to sneak a dipole on to the roof of my apartment building in downtown London.

In April, 1978, I was transferred to Norway. There I received the reciprocal call LA0CA. I was able to set up a 30' tower with a TA-33.

I moved to Midland, Texas, in 1988. Between 1995 and 2001, I lived in New Orleans and Oklahoma City then back to Midland in 2001 and have been there ever since.

I enjoy contesting and DXing. Over the years I've operated mobile in several state QSO parties including TX, NM, KS, AR, LA, MS, GA, SC, and FL. The last few years, I've concentrated on TX and KS. I try to make a good showing in SSCW every year since WTX can sometimes be a bit rare. The last few years I've been active on 6m working on the Fred Fish Memorial Award. I need 11 grids to finish.

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My station consists of an Elecraft K4D, KPA1500, and a 3 element SteppIR Yagi with the 30/40 m add-on mounted on an MA550 tubular crank up.

In addition to CWops, I'm a member of the Midland Amateur Radio Club and a Life Member of the ARRL.

In my professional life, I was a drilling engineer with Phillips Petroleum and later Halliburton. I designed and coordinated the drilling of oil and gas wells in the North Sea and West Texas. I'm now retired.

I would like to express my appreciation to W5LXS for nominating me for CWops membership and to N7US, NE5A, KB3FW, and KR2Q for sponsoring me.

### **David Palma, CT7AUP #3356**

Thank you Jim, N7US for nominating me and to all my sponsors.

I was born in 1965 and I live in a little town approx. 30 km north of Lisbon.

I got my license in 1993 with the callsign CT1EKU, and I was active in VHF and HF. In 1995, I stopped my radio activity and only resumed it 21 years later.

In a rainy day of 2016, I opened a closet and I saw my old Yaesu FT-77. I connected it to a power supply and, after turning it on, I saw black smoke coming from the inside. I think that was this smoke that activated my ham radio virus, because I have not stopped since then.



In the following years, I built and improved my station and experimented lots of new things which did not exist or which weren't as easy to do 21 years ago. So I tried RTTY, SSTV, SAT communications, digital modes, the QRZ, LoTW, lots of software applications for ham radio, SDR, Arduino and Raspberry pi in ham radio, SOTA, etc. I improved my license and changed my callsign to CT7AUP. I started to participate in contests, I chased entities, got the DXCC and other awards. I compressed the learning of the evolution of 21 years in 2 years. It was an amazing period.

In 2018, a close friend, Pedro, CT1DBS (SK), challenged me to learn CW. I attended a CW course where I learned the code, but the results were not very good. For the next 2 years, I tried by myself to learn CW without success. Therefore, I made the decision to attend the CWA and with the big help of my advisors Duncan, G3WZD and Hanz, YL3JD and the members of the class (OM5MI, PA2G, S55AC, SV1DAY), I concluded the CWA program, where I developed the needed skills to communicate in CW. It was a very fun time.

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Now my main mode is CW and it is, by far, the most complete and enjoyable mode.

I am happy to be a part of CWops and I am looking forward to participating in its activities, giving back and helping to promote the CW.

### **Sean Walberg, N3RTW #3357**

As a kid I was interested in radio but getting licensed just never happened. Fast forward to 2019, I was at a Jamboree On The Air station at a scout camp and I get told that getting licensed is easy and I should just go do it. Two weeks later I had my Technician license, and upgraded to General right before the pandemic hit. Like many, I got hooked in by digital modes, but decided I'd learn CW during the pandemic and it's become my main mode since.

I'm a husband and father of 3 boys, so my on-the-air time is sometimes pre-empted by family life. I enjoy some light contesting, mainly the weekly sprints, and also Parks on the Air. The highlight of my POTA adventures so far has been activating Lake Superior National Park while on a 12 day Boundary Waters canoe trip with my son's Boy Scout troop. My antenna and QCX mini got banged up while at the bottom of my dry bag all week so needed some fixing, but I got to enjoy the activation while enjoying the magnificent views.



I discovered CWops when I took the CWA intermediate class in 2022 which I thoroughly enjoyed. Since then I've been active in the weekly CWTs and have noticed how it helped my CW skills. As I type this, I am in my first week of the CWA Advanced class which promises to challenge and improve me.

Aside from on the air things, I'm active as a mentor in my son's FIRST Robotics team, and as an assistant scoutmaster in my son's Scout troop. Not only have these activities been a great way to spend time with my kids and help build the next generation of adults, but I've come to enjoy camping, scuba diving, and hiking among other things.

Professionally I'm a software engineer working in infrastructure automation. I live in Springfield, Virginia.

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