

Solid Copy



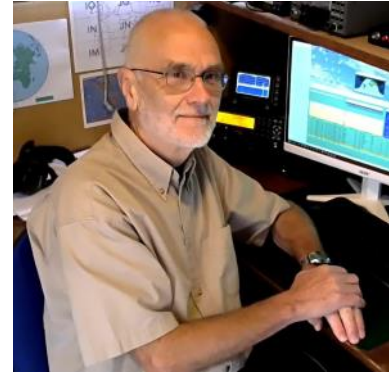
The CW Operators Club Newsletter
February 2024 — Issue 169

President's Message



A "penguin pileup." Read about Jim's, N3JT, escapades in Patagonia starting on page 27.

The smooth running of CWops involves a small number of members donating their time doing tasks which are probably not fully appreciated by the bulk of the membership. Maintaining the website and keeping the membership



(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 Coetzee, [ZS1C](#)
Director: James Brooks, [9V1YC](#)
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](#)

Table of Contents

President's Message	1
Editor's Notes: K6RB on DX Mentor	3
News and Notes	4
Info: CWops Activity Weekend	8
Info: Award for Advancing the Art of CW	9
Info: Dayton Hamvention CWops Dinner	10
How We Were: G3XTT	11
AEØQ: VOACAP: Geo-Targeting	12
AE5EZ: Making Ham Signs with CO² Laser	14
VE2KM: Impact of ICR	21
N3JT: Patagonia	27
New Members	40
Giving Back	41
CW Academy	43
CWops Tests (CWTs)	47
CWops Member Awards	48
QTX: The Art of Conversational CW	53
My Story: New Member Introductions	57



(Continued from previous page)

lists up to date for example can be taken for granted but don't happen by magic or AI – there's a real human lurking in the shadows doing all this. Being President I knew that when I wanted some information regarding current membership numbers Trung W6TN (CWops #1707) was my go-to contact. I was particularly interested in the relationship between the number of current paid-up members and the latest membership number issued which at the time of asking was 2665 and 3467 respectively. The information Trung supplied me with charted the progress of the club's membership from 2009 to the present in spreadsheet format and made me realise what a great job he does.

Any Silent Key or member who lapses their dues and effectively resigns still retains their CWops number. Naturally this means the latest membership number will exceed the total entries on the club roster. The roster shows the dues status of each member and there is also a link on the Membership page listing Silent Keys over the years (Jim N3JT sends a condolence card to the family of each SK, another example of someone working 'in the shadows' on behalf of the club: Duncan G3WZD also notes any recent passings in News and Notes). As can be seen the bulk of current members are Life-time payers and as I write this stands at an impressive 81.7%. Trung tells me that commonly 60-80 of the annual and 5 year payers won't pay on time but that figure will reduce as dues get paid (remembered?) through the course of the dues year. Thankfully the numbers of Silent Keys are regularly far fewer. We don't follow up on non payers; some will have specific reasons for defaulting, others may plain forget and will hopefully remember eventually. Maybe this might jog some memories?

I was pleased to read in last month's *Solid Copy* that Chris VK3QB (with others) is pursuing the idea of Activity Weekends that he discussed with me briefly. They will hopefully become a focus for an informal on-air get together where anything goes. With publicity and good numbers of members on air over a single weekend with the time to exchange meaningful information they could be a great way for wannabe new members to collect QSOs for nomination and sponsorships too. In addition to the Giving Back program they could be another place for learners and students to find a sympathetic ear. Please give them your support if you can.

A recent post to our CWops listserv grabbed my attention and got me thinking. In it VE7NZ used ChatGPT to create some custom letter and number groups for practice in the LCWO training program. I'd had a first experience of the power of ChatGPT over Christmas when our son decided to ask ChatGPT to write a poem for his 4 year old niece. Giving it some data like her name, where she lived, that she likes fairies, unicorns, volcanoes and planets it came up almost instantly with 3 long verses of quite acceptable poetry which was not at all cheesy and even almost sophisticated in places. So I couldn't resist asking it 'blind' to "Write a poem about CWops"! Would ChatGPT even know who or what CWops is without me passing it any clues? Incredibly (to me) it came back immediately with the following; I'll leave it to you to pass judgement....

*In the realm of airwaves, where signals dance,
A fellowship arises, a tale of chance.
CWops, the club of the rhythmic key,
Morse code whispers in a symphony.*

*Operators skilled, with dexterity so keen,
A worldwide alliance, united unseen.*

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*Dots and dashes in the radio breeze,
Echoes of history, carried with ease.*

*Amateur spirits, bound by a wire,
CWops unite, their passion on fire.
Morse code's language, timeless and true,
A melody in the air, a vintage hue.*

*Through the ether, signals persist,
CWops persist, in codes we enlist.
In this club of operators so wise,
Morse code echoes, connecting the skies.*

(ChatGPT - 2024)

Keep the passion burning....!

73, Stew GWØETF, President (CWops #919)

SC

Editor's Note: What You Didn't Know About CWops

If you haven't already listened to the podcast or watched the [YouTube](#) video of CWops' Rob Brownstein on the DX Mentor, pause here and do so. Podcast listeners will need to Google Search "DX Mentor" within their favorite podcast provider.

I listen to amateur radio-related podcasts while getting my heart pumping on a treadmill for an hour, which is a great distraction from the 30+ TVs mounted from the ceiling at the local fitness center. This is a near-daily occurrence, so listening to podcasts is my preferred mode. Recently, the DX Mentor has become one of my favorite podcasts, so I was very delighted to hear the episode with Rob K6RB, CWops #3. This hour plus interview was conducted by Bill Salyers, AJ8B, CWops #1567 who is the host/producer, as well as President for Southwest Ohio DX Association and sponsors this program. Being a CWops member, Bill was well prepared to facilitate Rob through the CWops story. And a good one it is.

It was intriguing to hear Rob's account of the history of the organization as well as its philosophy and underpinnings. This episode of DX Mentor also gives one a better understanding of where CWops is positioned in the plethora of CW amateur radio clubs, and why. When all was said and done between Rob and Bill, I couldn't help but have a greater appreciation as a CWops member. So a huge thank you to the organizers and 100 charter members who got this club off the ground in 2010.

73, Dick N9EEE, (CWops #3113)

Editor, Solid Copy (SolidCopy@cwops.org)



News and Notes

[Duncan \(Mac\) Fiskén, G3WZD](#)

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

Jim Stonecipher, KG9LB #2018 on 6th February, 2024

Bob Allphin, K4UEE #543 on 10th February, 2024

Condolence cards have been sent on behalf of CWops

Welcome to another News and Notes, and my usual thanks to all contributors for the varied selection of topics. Do keep the submissions coming, but please don't wait until the monthly call for articles or reminder (deadline for the next issue is 3rd March).

Ian, GWØKRL #2896 I am likely to be an even smaller signal than usual in the CWTs for a while as the storms we had recently have provided me with some work! Storm Isha managed to cause my A3S Yagi problems and it now has a 5:1 SWR on all bands. Then Storm Jocelyn followed up by busting my rotator by pushing it beyond its end-stop. I'm now trying to workout how I'm going to tilt my tower as I need to rotate the Yagi first to accomplish this. Never mind waiting for a break in the weather to do all that!

Hans, KØHB #231 It's official! 339/332. Only 12 are not CW. 339/332 means that a total of 339 are worked and confirmed, and that 332 are current entities worked and confirmed. 7 are deleted entities. There are currently 340 entities on the DXCC list. You must be within 10 of that (331 or more confirmed) to achieve Honor Roll status. (Only **current** entities count.) The recent VK9CY and VK9XY DXpeditions put me over the threshold.

(Congratulations, Hans; a FB accomplishment indeed! de N&N Ed.)

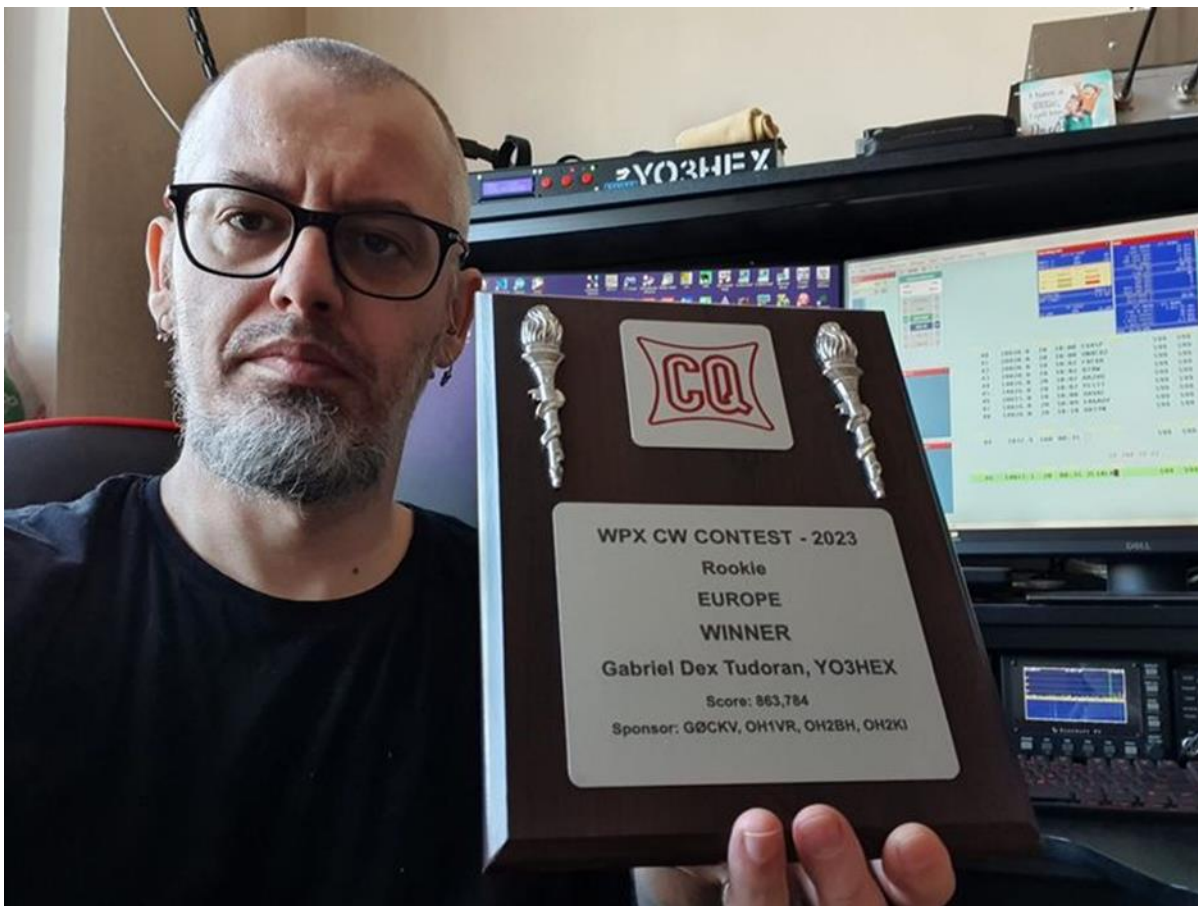


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Dex, YO3HEX/YP3X #3405 The biggest achievement as a HAM (first licensed in 2021 6th of June). Winner of Europe on my category.

(FB, Dex; very well done! de N&N Ed.)



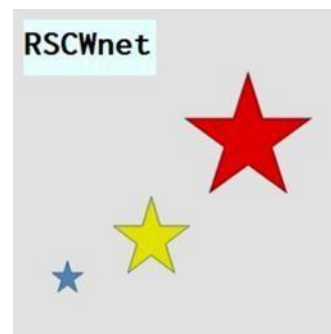
The above item was posted on the members-only [CWops Facebook Group](#). Consider joining as it is another great source of news about CWops members.

Tom, DF7TV #2613

RSCWnet (Rising Stars CW Net) on the Chicago iCW (Internet-CW) server is a net for CW operators interested in conversational QSOs, who are already proficient at 35 wpm and would like to improve further. *Listeners* are welcome.

These are the ideas for the RSCWnet:

- 1) Minimum Speed 35 wpm
- 2) Meeting times (UTC) Sunday 00:00, 06:00, 12:00, 18:00
- 3) Meeting point: iCW Chicago server (Mumble Address: 216.52.148.10, Port: 5360) in the first available general "CW Room"



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- 4) Duration of meetings: about 30 to 60 minutes
- 5) Listeners are welcome and should deactivate (mute) the "audio input/microphone", so they may be identified as listeners by the crossed-out microphone symbol and are not called.

Steve, K1RF #3003 I was the sole CW operator at our Winter Field Day under call sign K1WAS with operators from 3 local clubs. I recognized many of the CWops folks in the exchanges. We ran under class 3I using 3 IC7300s, a hexbeam, an 80 meter OCFD, and a 40 meter dipole at the Westport Astronomical Society site. I was one of the ops staying overnight and was able to make 588 CW contacts. A key point is to know the rules. We tried to get on as many bands as possible with as many modes as possible on each band, increasing our multipliers.



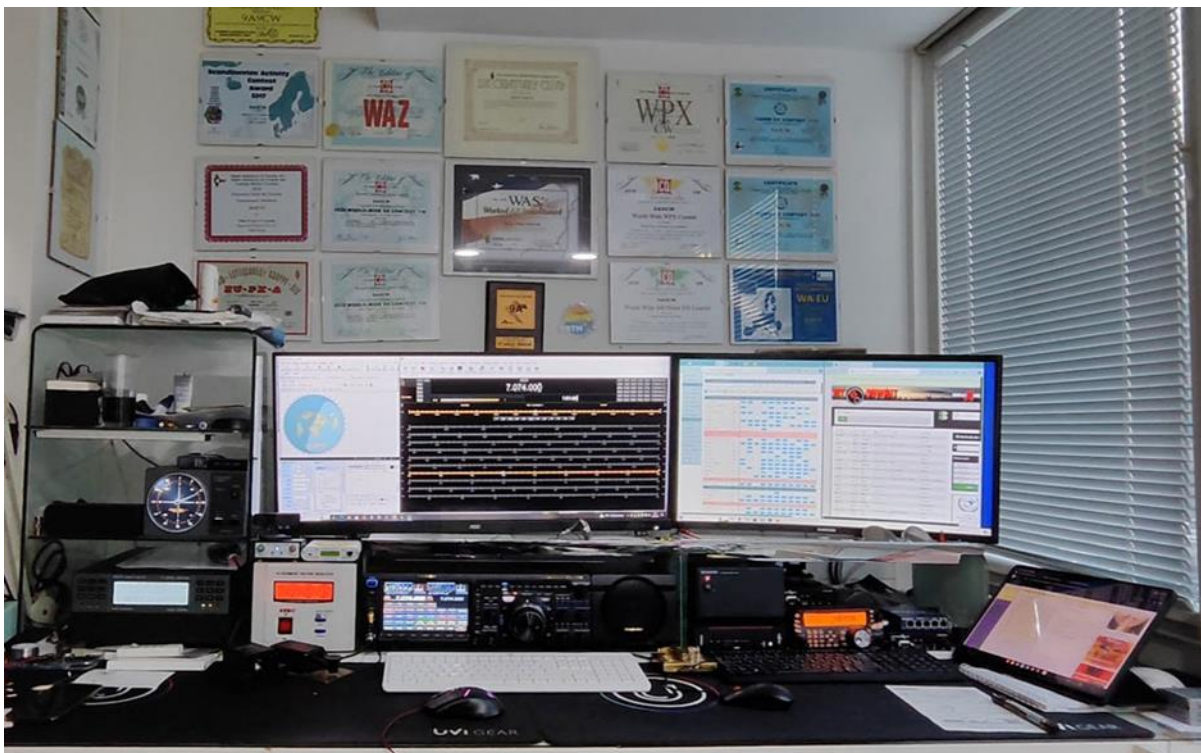
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Rif, 9A9CW #2576 It's nothing exclusive and what's new in the Ham world, but I still renewed my workplace with new equipment, new interfaces for pleasant communication between me and the device, so now I don't think about which antenna I use and for which bands.

Yaesu FTDX -101D with band-data, changes band on a Expert 1.3K FA, and also make change on a switch with modified GB SW-5 antenna switch (with new interface 9A5N), and change antenna for selected Band.

Much more comfortable and easier to work with devices. I also modified the MFJ-986 differential T tuner, with additional motors-reduction to tune the LW antenna on the roof, instead of manually tuning in the office (50m from the antennas, of course again with the 9A5N interface for step change and choice of band).



Of course, I worked every day, but now after 5-year reactivation I already have 301 done and confirmed DXCC from 24,250 QSOs and 14,560 confirmed on a LoTW and about 1,000 QSL cards.

You can see some of the devices that apart from Ham sport, I use for other purposes, also as a hobby, and that equipment and modifications because the size and clear picture, look at my [web page](#)

Rick, N6XI #4 Had fun working TX5S on 24 band-modes including all the CW, SSB and FT8 slots except 60M and 6M. They were very easy to work from CA, a great team of operators and a very well-run DXpedition.

(Awesome, Rick! de N&N Ed.)

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Tim, K9WX #1462 Congratulations to John K3TN #245, the new editor of the *National Contest Journal*. The January/February issue was his first and it's a dandy, ARRL members can read it at [ARRL Magazines](#). And, congratulations also to Lee KY7M #84, who had been the *NCJ* editor the past 3 years. Finally, this from the CDXC email reflector; a link to some [videos](#) of past DXpeditions. Who knows, you might even see yourself in one or more of them!

Until the next News and Notes.. dit dit!

73, Duncan, G3WZD (CWops #1979)

NewsAndNotes@CWops.org

SC

CWops Activity Weekend – February 2024

ACTIVITY DATE: 24 February 2024: 0000z to 25 Feb 2024: 2359z

PURPOSE: The objectives of the CWops Activity Weekends are to generate more on-air conversational QSOs between members, build skills, and foster camaraderie.

EXCHANGE: Participants are encouraged to exchange more details than just the traditional “RST, Name, QTH.” Share details of station, weather, pets, other hobbies, propagation, or projects.

BANDS: 80 through to 10 meters, around the .028 CWops watering holes.

SPOTTER: Use this very handy tool to look for activity from fellow CWops members: <https://rbn.telegraphy.de/>

CWO CALL SIGNS: VK1CWO and other “CWO” callsigns may be active.

PRIZES: There are no prizes, and this is **not** a contest.

LOG SUBMISSION: Members are asked to submit notification of their participation only. <https://forms.gle/FtHCeMEdfQk9ACqm9> .These results will be used to track activity and gauge participation.



The CWops Award for Advancing the Art of CW

CWops is pleased to announce that it is now accepting nominations for this prestigious award for the year 2024.

The purpose of the award is to recognize individuals, groups, or organizations that have made the greatest contribution(s) toward advancing the art or practice of radio communications by Morse code. Details about past recipients of this award can be seen at [CWops Award Winners - CWops](#).

Criteria

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

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

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

Nomination

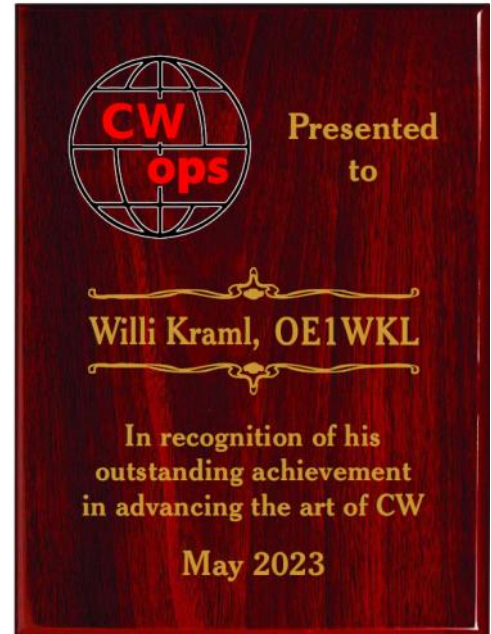
Nominations may be made by anybody (not limited to CWops members). Nominations should be emailed to <awards@cwops.org> with a copy to <secretary@cwops.org>. An email confirmation will be sent acknowledging receipt of each nomination. In order to be considered, a nomination should be received **by March 10, 2024** and include:

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

Presentation of Award

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

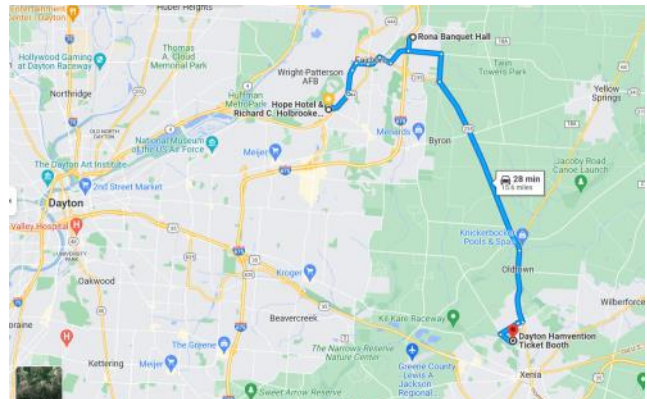
73, Riki , K7NJ (CWops #271)



The 2024 Dayton Hamvention CWops Dinner

Thursday, May 16 - 7:00 pm

Last year we held our annual Hamvention CWops dinner at a new venue, near Xenia and not far from the Hope Hotel and Conference Center. For many years before that we held it at the Spaghetti House in downtown Dayton, but our need for more space necessitated a new approach. Again in 2024 we will hold our gala event at the Rona Banquet Hall, 1043 Rona Parkway Drive, Fairlawn, OH 45324. There is space for 150 people with plenty of parking, and we will have our own caterer. Those who attended last year were very happy with the event and we expect this year it will be even better! During dinner we will have our usual interesting presentations and updates, with lots of opportunities for chatting with folks you have only met on the air – or maybe saw last year at this event! It is certainly the CWops social event of the year!



The Rona Banquet hall is ours from 10 a.m. until 11 p.m. on Thursday, May 16, meaning it will be possible to have private or group meetings there before the dinner, subject to coordination with W1UU for access. (Note that several of us will be busy on Thursday gathering supplies for the dinner.) Our buffet dinner will commence at about 7 p.m. (No alcoholic beverages will be available at the event). Soft drinks will be available with a donation request of \$1 each (via a basket that will be placed next to the beverages.)

The cost of the dinner is \$39 per person. You may make your reservation and pay by going to [CWops 2024 Hamvention Dinner – CWops](#) Gerry, W1VE, will manage the [list of attendees and track payments](#).

At the dinner we will have a list of those who have paid. There can be no refunds because we will be giving the caterer an attendance number that will be the basis for our club payment.

It is not too early to reserve your spot for the 2024 CWops dinner! See you there!

73,

Peter Butler, W1UU (#91)

Jim Talens, N3JT (#1)

How We Were

[Ian Capon](#), GWØKRL

G3XTT, Don Field, CWops #1874



“I became interested in amateur radio in the mid-sixties when I was chasing the various North Sea pirate broadcasters and came across radio amateurs on AM on the 160, 80 and 40m bands. I was licensed in 1968, starting with a Codar AT5 transmitter, a 10W AM and CW tx for the 160 and 80m bands. I quickly realized that AM would only get me so far but that CW offered opportunities to work farther afield. A year or so later I acquired a second-hand Heathkit DX-100U transmitter, 150W of AM and CW but for all HF bands. Contesting and DXpeditioning has taken me to various locations such as Jersey and Guernsey, the ITU in Geneva and, exceptionally, Walvis Bay and Namibia. But early retirement around the new Millennium gave me the opportunity to do much more and since then I have been on DXpeditions and contest operations in many and varied locations worldwide (see my qrz.com entry), as well as enjoying the chance to attend events such as Visalia and Dayton. I was delighted when I was invited to join CWops. I particularly enjoyed the weekly CWT events when we were all confined to home during the various lockdowns. Although retired from full-time work I currently edit Practical Wireless magazine, the only remaining independent amateur radio magazine in the UK, which in 2022 celebrated 90 years of publication.”

So now it's your turn, do you have a picture to share accompanied by a brief paragraph description, of your early days in radio, experimenting, exploring or just "being a ham". Please send it to [Ian Capon](#).

73, Ian GWØKRL (CWops #2896)

VOACAP Geo-Targeting

[Glenn Pladsen](#), AEØQ CWops #2878

It seems there are a few more CWops members working the CWTs while portable at parks in the WWFF / POTA programs. In the WWFF park program there are many DX stations in Europe that are really, really serious about working parks. They monitor the WWFF spotting page and will search you out on any of the higher bands. I always post my activations on their site to schedule ahead and let them know to look for me. A lot of them are getting on the POTA program, too, but of course WWFF pre-dates POTA by years, and is what POTA spun off from.

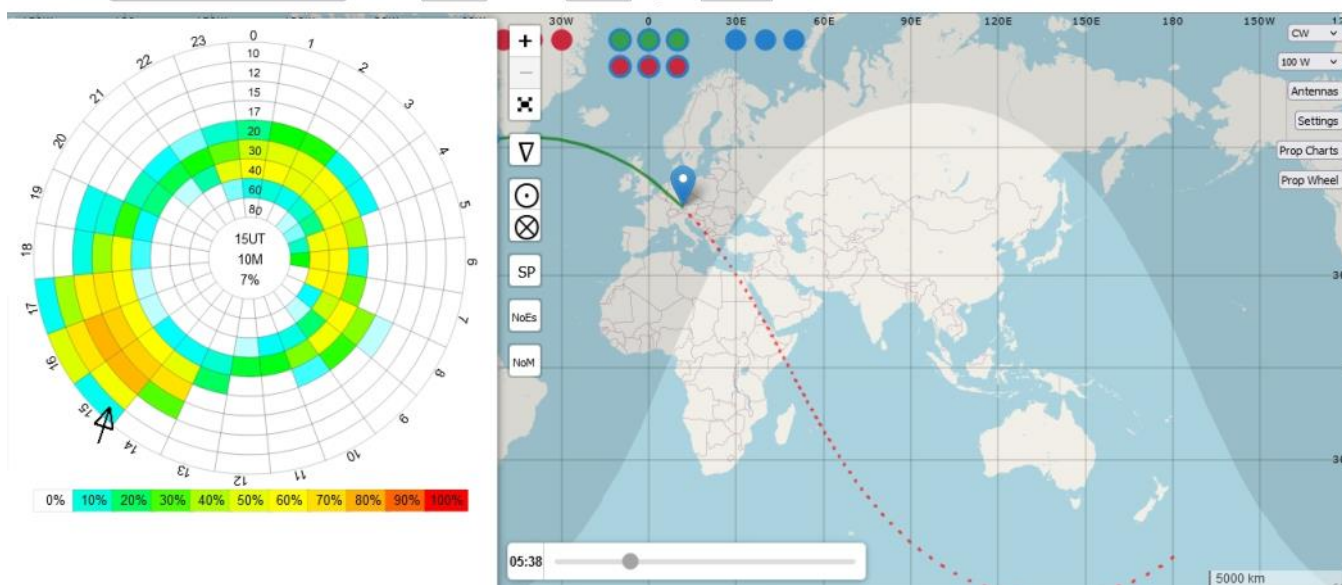
So to that end, I always try to time my CWT park activations around the openings to Europe from my location in Colorado, using the [VOACAP](https://www.voacap.com/hf/) online program (<https://www.voacap.com/hf/>) to check the propagation peaks on the bands for that day. You can get an easy-to-read circle chart by inputting the end points - I use my Grid square and Munich, Germany for a kind of central EU QTH - and set the power level. I also go to Settings and check the Dynamic SSN box to use the actual sunspot number.

Anyway, the Europeans really mob you if you're on the air when a band is open to them! I run them as fast as I can at 25 wpm on CW, listening for the weak stations. That seems to be about the top speed for many of the POTA participants. A band may only be open for an hour or two from Colorado. I go to parks to activate them for the park hunters, not for my list or count of activations, and the DX guys really appreciate working more US parks.

The center of the VOACAP "wheel" shows the percent of probability of the path being open between two points for whatever time and band you put the mouse on. This one for today shows that 10m is very unlikely to be open to EU at 1500Z but by 1600Z almost certainly will be. For the antenna variable, I selected verticals on my end and 3 element Yagis on the EU end. For the power output variable, I selected 100w.

VOACAP Online for Ham Radio – 5:45:41 UTC (10:45 PM)

Select TX QTH: << Select a location >> or set Grid: DM79ku or Latitude: 39.8540 Longitude: -105.1250
Select RX QTH: DL Munich or set Grid: JN58se or Latitude: 48.1800 Longitude: 11.5670



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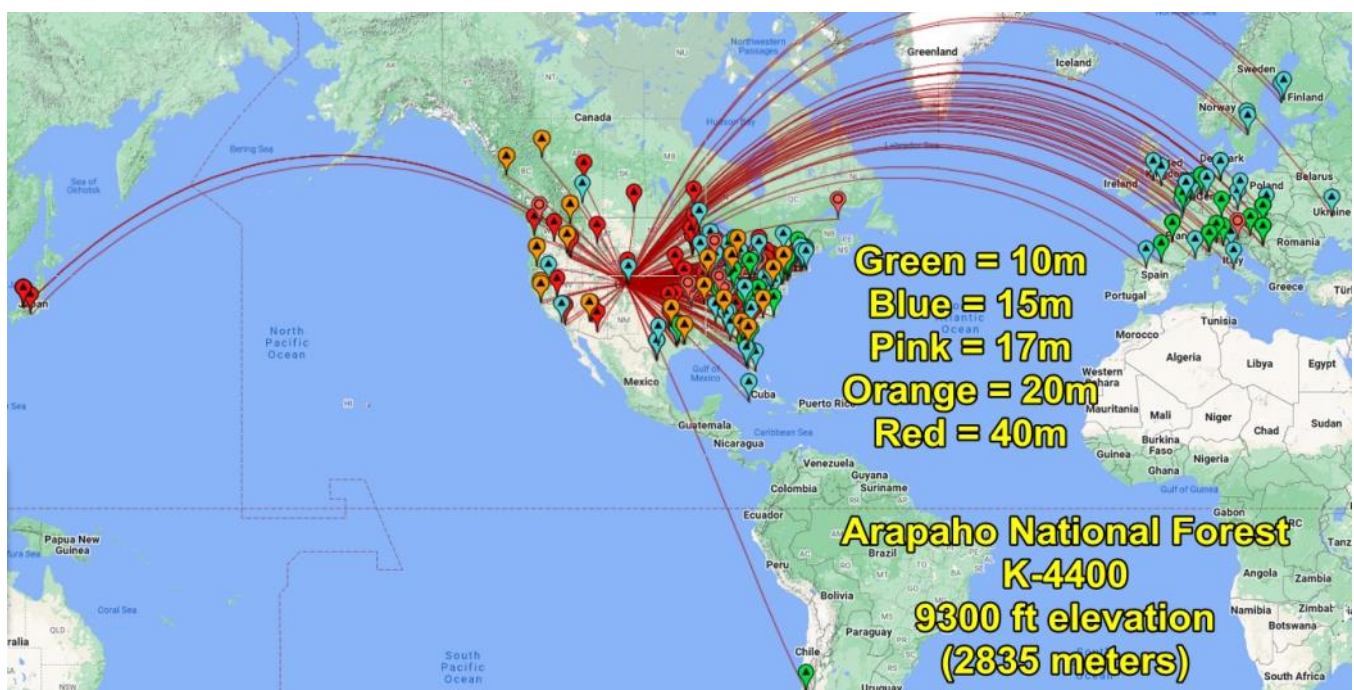
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An example of trying to optimize a park activation for working DX, is making the park available to as many of the WWFF and POTA CW crowd as possible.

I recently got up at 4:00 am (Mountain Time) and drove up to a National Forest west of Denver early in the dark so I would be set up and on the air by 1230Z (5:30 AM local time). I set up the 32 ft mast and rigged a 40m EFHW as an Inverted Vee by headlamp, and had to use the car dome light for logging for two hours. My station is a TenTec Eagle at 100w.

Each Wednesday morning there is the one hour Japanese AWT contest from 1200Z to 1300Z before the CWT and I wanted to work a few of them on 40m. The VOACAP circle chart above showed that CO to Europe should be open on 17m starting about 1400Z (7AM local, just before sunrise). I did work a few JAs on 40m, called CQ on 40 CW for the CWT and then went to 17m. Lowered my speed to 25 WPM and worked US stations but no EU for 30 minutes, went to 15m and the Europeans piled up on me. I stayed on 15m for an hour, then went to 10m and another pile-up of Europeans answered my "CQ POTA" alternating with "CQ FF" calls for an hour. I went back to 15m for a few contacts including EU, down to 17m with US and 1 EU, and then 20m for half an hour with a bunch of US park hunters answering the CQs. By then the bands were not great for Europe to Colorado and I had been on the air calling CQ and changing bands for almost 5 hours so I shut down, pulled down the mast, wound up the 66 ft of wire and headed home.

I worked 223 contacts from the park, giving out contacts from a park that hasn't been on CW much recently to park hunters in 17 DX countries, to as many Europeans as I could, by working lots of really weak signals (a low S0 to S1 noise level up in the mountains), calling CQ at 24-25 wpm the whole time (except for the CWT). I scheduled my activation on both the POTA and WWFF web sites. There is no cell or internet at the 9300 ft elevation location in the mountains so no self spotting is possible.



Using a CO² Laser to Make Useful Ham Items

[Roger Carver](#) AE5EZ, CWops #3413

I make items for Ham use using a OmTech CO² laser. A variety of items can be made using your imagination and your ingenuity. Base materials can be wood, acrylic, painted or anodized aluminum. Some are more whimsical or decorative or for bragging rights, such as the CWops ON THE AIR sign, or your call sign out of wood, either engraved or cut out, but most are signage related. Several of you already have your very own custom engraved acrylic CWops OTA sign. A few members have taken a picture of their sign in use and have given me permission to use their photos in this article. One of my favorites is KN4YTA Matt Wicks' use of the sign on a park table from the deep woods of NC. Matt is trying to activate all 244 parks in NC and is an ambassador for CWops along the way.



Figure 1 - CWops OTA sign in use for POTA op

To make the sign I start with 0.125" inch clear acrylic that has a protective paper adhesive film on both sides to protect against scratches. I buy the plastic in 4 x 8 ft sheets, custom cut to my specs, from Port Plastics in Fort Worth, TX. However, they have locations throughout the US. There are numerous other plastic suppliers in the US. Your mileage may vary.

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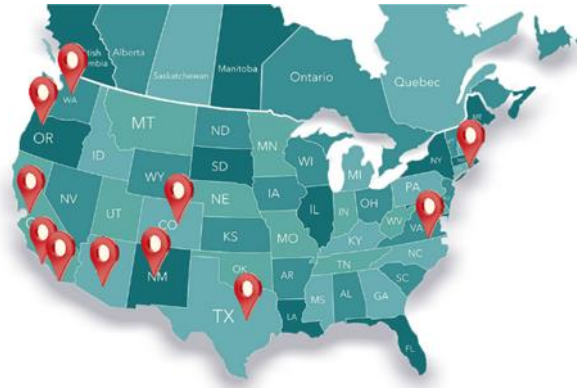


Figure 2 - Port Plastics locations

I use a cast acrylic as opposed to extruded acrylic for economic reasons.

Note: I want to state up front that I have included a number of suppliers that I use regularly on a purely retail level. I neither receive any remuneration, consideration, or benefit from mention of them in this article.

I have previously done a vector line drawing of the design to fit and operate with the LED base, using Autodesk Fusion 360 and exported it in a .dwg file to import into Lightburn software. Any drawing package may be used, as well as many free online packages, to create your art. I use Lightburn software for final implementation of the design and to control the laser. It allows me to assign different speeds and power settings to different lines or layers of the drawing. These can be seen in the Cuts/Layers pane to the right of the drawing window. For the CWops design, I use 250 mm/s & 25 W for the etch, and 9 mm/sec & 40W to cut out the sign. The reason I use such a slow cut speed is to heat polish the edge of the acrylic so that maximum light can enter from the edge. One very important step in making these acrylic signs is to reverse all text and any left to right non-symmetric portions of the design, so when viewed through the uncut side of the pane, your design is correct. This is evident in Figure 3.



Figure 3 - Lightburn template for CWops OTA signs

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One can achieve shading, if desired by assigning different colors or shades of gray in a drawing to different power levels. Side Note: Simple line drawings like the one for the OTA sign can be designed using only Lightburn. It has some useful functions, like curving the text to match a circle circumference. Whether designed in or imported into Lightburn, I assign various speed and power values to the parts of the design, depending on whether it is a vector line to be cut, or a letter line to be "filled" using a raster scan. I add the member # and call at the base of the sign to be cut and hit save. Since I rarely cut an entire sheet of signs in a run, I select the design to be cut/engraved, and click on the Cut Selected Graphics box just below the Pause / Start / Stop control buttons in the Laser tab/window.

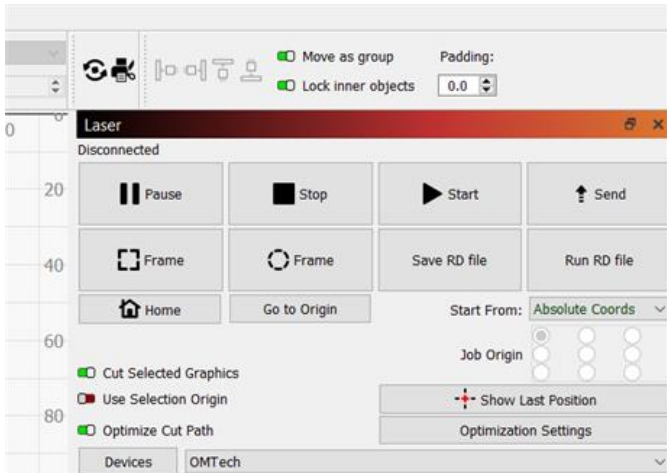


Figure 4 - Lightburn Laser Control Tab



Figure 5 - Dr. Adler NJ6Q sign

When all is completed in Lightburn software, I load a sheet onto the bed of the laser, check focus height of the head, and ensure that chilled water and air evacuation fan are running at peak. Acrylic can produce some nasty smelling fumes when cut or engraved. After performing a "frame" of the art to be cut or engraved (the "frame" just traces out the edges of the engraving/cut to ensure that when power is on the laser tube, your design is where it should be), I hit the start button in the Lightburn software and every 10 minutes or so, a CWops sign is completely etched and cut out of the sheet. The LED bases are programable and Jeremy NJ6Q tells me that he connects his to his power supply so that it comes on when his radio is on. I personally like the red light because it reminds me of the old studio ON THE AIR lights.



Figure 6 - CWops Sign on Laser Bed

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Figure 7 - OTA Sign w/ Club Logo & Call



Figure 8 - KK7RR OTA Sign

One of the trickier and time-consuming items I make are RF Exposure signs.



Figure 9 - Aluminum FCC required RF Exposure Warning Sign

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I start with 0.080 powder coated aluminum sheet, and paint two coats of flat black Krylon as evenly as possible across the area for the sign, plus a couple of inches extra for a test matrix. Next, I coat the sheet with two layers of Krylon Farm Implement Yellow. After the sign has dried for a couple of days, I lase a Lightburn software created Material Test Matrix (Figure 10) of power vs head speed in an area painted the same as the part of the sheet for the sign. This allows for determination of the optimal speed vs. power output for these particular signs. If you choose the proper setting it will get just through the yellow layers of paint, but not through the black layer to the white powder-coat layer.

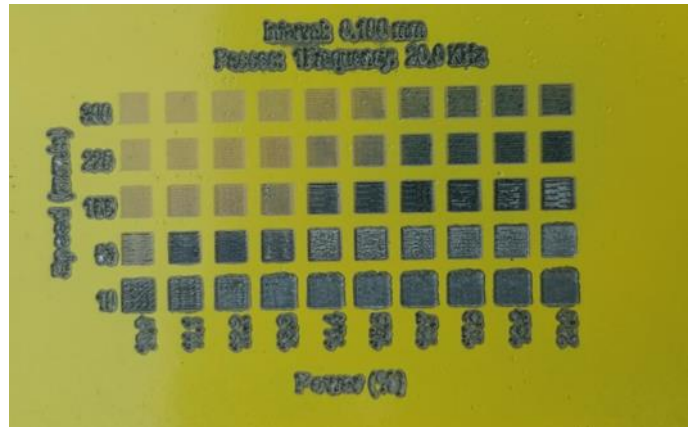


Figure 10 - Power vs. Speed Test matrix



Figure 11 - Lightburn Design for RF Exposure Warning Sign

As shown in Figure 11, after setting the software to the speed and power values chosen (in this case I chose 155 mm/sec and 16.7 W), we lase the sign(s). In retrospect, it would have been better to choose a higher speed and power, such as 220 mm/sec and 19.5 W. At that power the 100 W laser is still just loafing along, and the job would have been completed in about 25% less time. In the instance shown, there were two signs and it took just over an hour to complete the etch. I had previously etched the lines for the edges and holes. Lines for the holes and edges of the sign are “cut” using a head speed of 100mm/s and a power of 50 W. We like to keep the power below 80% to increase tube life. After cleaning off the soot, I use a hydraulic shear to cut the boundaries of the sign and drill/slot the holes to attach the sign. An alternative would be to send

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a drawing of the sign boundary and holes to a service like Send-Cut-Send and have them cut the aluminum blanks and then start the paint process. However, that is much more costly and only makes sense when there is a really large batch to produce. Lastly the sign is coated with a Krylon UV resistant clear acrylic matte coat, so that the colors will last. And you wonder why a simple sign costs a much as it does. If there were the demand, I would simply silkscreen black over yellow, but that is another adventure in and of itself.

Finally, probably the best-looking signage is using powder coated aluminum plate, with a black wrinkle finish, and lasering through the paint all the way to the bare aluminum plate. This gives a really good contrast and long-lasting finish to the lettering and/or lines. Figure 12 and Figure 13 are a couple of examples of this product. The text is engraved through the paint using a fill technique with enough power to completely burn away the paint. Line art is "cut" into the panel. I find that about 40 or 50 W will suffice at speeds up to 100 mm/s. On panels this large, that is still quite a bit of scanning time, so it is often best to group the text labels individually and as shown in Figure 14, set the Fill groups together box in the Cut Settings window.



Figure 12 - Faceplate for PERC/SAT GoKit



Figure 13 - Faceplate for PERC / JPS ACU-M 1000 - Interoperability Gateway/VoIP/RoIP - 4 radio bridge

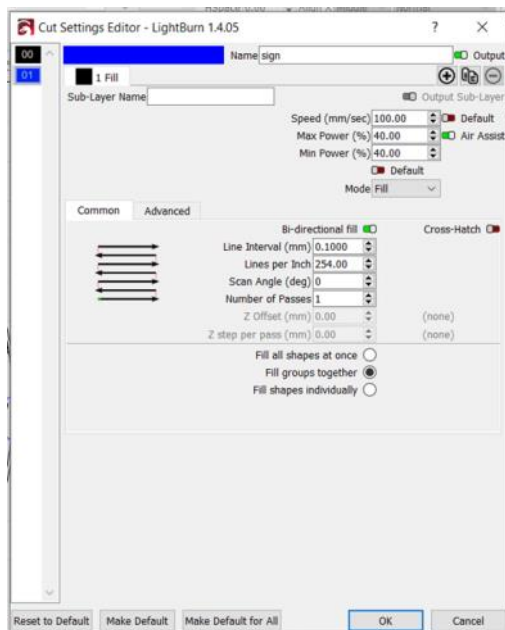


Figure 14 - Lightburn Software Cut Settings Window

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Figure 15 - PERC / JPS RSP-Z2 Interoperability Gateway; 2 radio bridge kit with acrylic faceplate with see through window

Figure 15 shows an acrylic face panel using a back painted, etched technique with a window to be able to see the annunciator lights on the embedded RSP-Z2 front panel. First the border around the window area is lightly lasered through the protective sheet and all but the sheet where the window is to be, is removed, and the entire sheet is spray coated with a flat black paint. After sufficient drying time, the panel is placed back into the laser and the labels are etched and openings for connectors, meters and such are cut. Lastly the etched areas are sprayed with flat or glossy white paint for a finished look.

If anyone is interested in more detail, or any signage, please email me at ae5ez.radio@gmail.com. I would welcome start of discussion on techniques or needs.

¹ OmTech Lasers; <https://omtechlaser.com/collections/omtech-laser-engraving-cutting-and-marking-machines>

² Port Plastics; <https://portplastics.com/acrylic-1/>

³ Fusion 360; 3D CAD CAM Cloud Based Software; <https://www.autodesk.com/products/fusion-360/overview?term=1-YEAR&tab=subscription>

⁴ Lightburn; Design & Laser control software; <https://lightburnsoftware.com/>

⁵ Send-Cut-Send; laser cut service; <https://sendcutsend.com/>

⁶ Krylon UV Clear Acrylic; <https://www.krylon.com/en/products/clear-coatings/uv-resistant-clear-coating>

⁷ JPS ACU-M 4 radio Interoperability Gateway; <https://jps.com/products/acu-m/>

⁸ JPS RSP-Z2 2 radio Interoperability Gateway; <https://jps.com/products/rsp-z2/>

CW - Two Journeys and the Impact of Instant Character Recognition

[Tony Pattinson](#), VE2KM CWops #2424

Learning CW is, in reality, learning to listen, understand, and speak another language. Just like learning French, German, Spanish, or any other language there are several ways to do it. To learn CW there are also many ways ranging from the very good to others that are so abysmally bad that using them will stunt your CW progress forever.

Some delivery methods are web based, some phone apps, some group classes in-person or online using video conferencing, some private with one-on-one coaching.

Here are some of the **METHODS TO AVOID**.

1. Associating a letter with a word or phrase. The presenter in this [video](#) is an enthusiastic memory coach. He describes two methods of learning CW:
 - Method #1 - The Quick & Dirty Way
 - Method #2 - The Masterful Way

If all you want to do is recite the characters these methods might work. For communicating by CW they are not only useless but will prevent you from achieving a speed suitable for use on the air. Imagine trying to have a conversation with your spouse where...

e v e r y w o r d h a s t o b e s p e l t o u t l e t t e r b y l e t t e r

..and between each letter you have to use a memorised phrase or associative word to be able to identify the letter and subsequently assemble the letters into a word.

IMPORTANT

One of my CW clients had used the above method to initially learn CW. He can recognise individual letters but cannot copy any words. He has explained his difficulties as follows:

"By the time I have gone through the phrase associated with the CW sound that I heard and have identified which letter it was I have missed what follows. I can get the first letter of a word and that's about it."

It is much harder to unlearn, or get rid of, a bad habit than to learn a good habit from the get go. Having said that, there are ways to get rid of bad habits but that is out of the scope of this article.

2. Counting dots and dashes (dits and dahs) from a chart showing letters and dots and dashes. This is a little like having to think of a letter B as 1 vertical stroke plus 2 semicircles one above the other on the right hand side of, and the open side of the semi-circle attached to, the vertical stroke. Perhaps you did learn to write this way; look how long it took you to learn.

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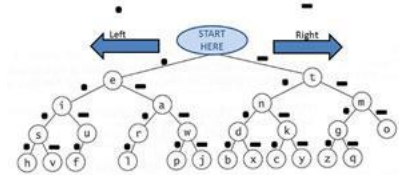
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Also you learned the sound of B and how to say it long before you learned to write it (more about this later).

3. Dot - Dash mapping. This method, illustrated, associates the dots and dashes with the physical positioning and layout of the associated letter. I believe this method was used by the US army at one point. There is also a [US Army Training Video](#) which, among other things, equates CW rhythms to soldier's steps. Go figure!



4. CW Tree. I think this is a brilliant way to illustrate the structure of the CW characters and an **absolutely useless** way to learn to copy live CW.



5. Listening to the CW character sounds and looking at letters on flashcards or on a screen. Of the baddies this is the least offensive of the baddies but it will slow your progress. When you are involved in a conversation with a friend in the pub you do not rely on mental pictures to be able to understand what he is saying. No. You recognise the words being said from the way they sound. Also you can continue the conversation despite the background noise from other conversations, TV, etc. You will put this skill into practice later in your CW journey. The best, and most cost effective CW filter is located between your ears.

If you are an absolute beginner the best way to learn CW is to use a sounds-only approach. No charts or look-up tables. Nothing visual, just recorded CW character sounds and the associated spoken letter, your ears, and the grey matter between them. At the beginning nothing should be written down. Writing letter by letter will impede your ability to progress to reading fast CW.

Beginners who use a good method can achieve 10 to 12 words per minute in 5 to 8 weeks. Anyone who has already learned the code using a good method can, by using a regular daily practice routine which includes an ICR exercise, increase their operating speed in a matter of 3 to 4 weeks. Later in this article you will see evidence that supports this statement.

Let's examine how you learned your native language and compare it to the various methods used to teach CW.

When you were a child you reacted to all the sounds around you. Eventually you realised that the larger bipeds were using something which you later came to know were words. You then found that by mimicking those "sounds" (i.e., words) you got lots of smiles and hugs.

Suitably encouraged, you learned to listen attentively and then utter the sounds you heard most frequently. Only after several years did you learn that words were made up of letters and, even later, to write.

Learning CW is just learning another language. If a CW course followed the above approach it would take years to become proficient. So instead we learn to translate. We already know our native language, its alphabet, and how to spell commonly used words and their sounds.

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So we start with learning the CW sounds of the most used letters of the alphabet (and numerals) we know and eventually transition to translating the sounds of commonly used syllables, prefixes, suffixes, and whole words not individual letters.

A good program is based on learning a few characters and words in small increments with feedback and evaluations at regular intervals. A layered approach is adopted. Advancing to the next segment can only occur when the content of the current segment has been mastered. An absolute beginner can learn CW in about 6 to 8 weeks as long as

- They use a good proven technique, and
- They practise 1 hour every day.

It has long been recognized that instantly recognising the CW characters and their associated letter in the alphabet is key to being able to copy CW at any useful speed greater than about 12 words per minute. [An article By Nancy Kott SK \(KZ8C\)](#) clearly explains why Instant Character Recognition (ICR) is so important. All the good CW courses are based on an approach outlined in her article. Beginners, having learned the alphabet using one of the good techniques, can usually operate at about 6 to 10 words per minute. With a little practice they can usually get to a slightly faster speed.

The next few paragraphs will detail two separate CW journeys, mine and that of John G0UBE.

My journey (G3YAQ, VE2KM, VA2XDX, VA2KCC, VE0XDX).

As a young man, I was taught CW by a UK Army Reservist. He could simultaneously chat with me, poke his budgie, and copy a CW QSO at 30 words per minute. Due to daily practice and his tutelage I had absolutely no problem passing the UK ham morse test at 12 wpm. I was awarded the callsign G3YAQ.

A couple of years later I relocated to another town in the UK and joined the UK Royal Naval Reserve as a communicator. As I already knew CW I was immediately put to work training absolute beginners and helping get them to the minimum required speed of 12 wpm. During this time I was able to advance through the ranks and eventually achieved the rank of Radio Supervisor (Comms Branch speak for Petty Officer). This was only achieved after passing a code test at 20 wpm.

Unfortunately, I never learned to touch type so all my code copying was done by writing down each letter as it was sent. Accuracy at the letter by letter level was important as on many occasions we were receiving messages that had been encrypted and sent in 5 letter code groups.

The years went by, a family was acquired, and a move to Canada occurred. I was active as a CW and SSB operator for a while but then my career got in the way and what was supposed to be a short break turned into a 30 year hiatus.

In 2018 the ham radio bug bit again. I reactivated now with callsign VE2KM. Not having touched a key or listened to CW in many years I was pleasantly surprised to be able to copy at about 15 wpm. With a little practice I was able to get to 18 wpm but could go no faster. I could not get to

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my former speed level no matter how hard I tried. This was when I joined the CW Academy (CWA) as a student and was very lucky to be assigned to a class with John AJ1DM as the advisor.

John immediately recognised the source of my problem. It was the pencil and copying letter by letter. He introduced me to the concept of head copy and ICR, especially Nancy Kott's article mentioned earlier. It took a lot of self discipline on my part to abandon the pencil - I removed them from my operating position during class sessions to avoid being tempted.

My problem was that I could no longer write as fast as I had in the past. He also introduced me to ICR and with daily application I was able to regain my former operating speed. Now, I was able to join CWops and become an advisor. Whoopie - I could start teaching CW again. In addition to CWA classes I also teach CW at all levels for Radio Amateurs of Canada (the national body) and SKCC.

John's (G0UBE) Journey

I started my journey into Amateur Radio back in the 1990's, after a short spell on the then Illegal CB radio.

I was first licensed in 1993. My main interests are QRP CW. Unfortunately, my home location is a bit of a challenge being both small and suffering from the ever increasing urban noise. My antennas are all home brew wires. In 2014, I bought my first Black Box rig Yaesu FT-817ND. Up until then I had been using HomeBrew CW rigs. I am a member of G-QRP, FISTS, SKCC, QRP ARCI and locally I am a member of S.P.A.R.C,s Staffordshire Portable Amateur Radio Club.

Back in the 1990s, the process to obtain a Ham Radio Licence was first to attend a night school class followed by a City and Guilds theory exam. On passing that exam you could apply for a "B" class licence that only allowed access to frequencies above 30 MHz. To be able to gain access to the HF bands you had to pass a 12 wpm Morse test that consisted of sending and receiving a passage of plain text.

It took 2 months for the results of the theory test to arrive so while waiting I started to learn CW using a set of cassette tapes from the G-QRP club by G8PG and with the help from my mentor / elmer John Badger G4YZO.

The format of the tapes and the Morse class with G4YZO went along the lines of "Speaking" the character, Speaking the "Sound" then "Hear the sound" .

Think FoxTrot; think Di-Di-Dah-Dit; then send the code on a Key.

When it came to sending you would say the character in your head while operating the key and use the words to "Time" your sending. You would literally tap out Di-Di-Dah-Dit. Having used this method of sending for such a long time it is now making it difficult for me to improve my sending speed.

I was ready to take my morse test after only 3 weeks of practice but had to wait a few weeks till

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an examiner from the UK Coast Guard was available. The time from starting to learn the code and passing the morse test was 6 weeks. I traded in my B class callsign (G7MUP) for an A class callsign G0UBE which I still hold.

Fast forward to 2020 and my retirement from the auto industry. As a retirement hobby I decided to become more active in ham radio. In attempting CW QSOs I discovered that the method of learning that I was originally exposed to had left me only able to decode the slowest of speeds on air as I was still going through a 5 stage process to read the code.

1. Hear the sound
2. Convert to Dits and Dahs
3. Look it up on my whiteboard in my head
4. Recognize the character
5. Write down the character

This coupled with saying the code in my head as I send is very limiting.

In September 2023 I posted a message on a FISTS UK Group site that I was not getting many replies to my CQs sent at 12 wpm and that on those occasions when I did get replies they came back too fast for me to copy. Even though I sent QRS. I came to the conclusion that QRS was an urban myth and that is what I posted.

Enter Tony VE2KM (ex G3YAQ) who sent me an email offering his coaching experience to try and help me. I did not know it at the time but my CW journey, which at this point had stalled at about 10 wpm, was about to take off in a completely new and different direction.

At first I was anxious about taking his offer as he mentioned CWops Academy. I had reservations as I had approached a UK CWA Adviser before who had put me off with talk of "Head Reading" and the use of a paddle.

So after a very frustrating period of struggling on air with no result I took up Tony's kind offer. He introduced me to Instant Character Recognition at 25 wpm character speed. "What!" I Said "25 wpm" to which he explained that I would not be able to hear Dit's and Dah's but hear the individual and distinct "Sound" of each character.

The first thing Tony did was to send me a link to an Instant Character Recognition application that had been designed by one of his friends and CW mentor John (AJ1DM) also a CWA advisor. I was very skeptical but with an open mind I tried it.

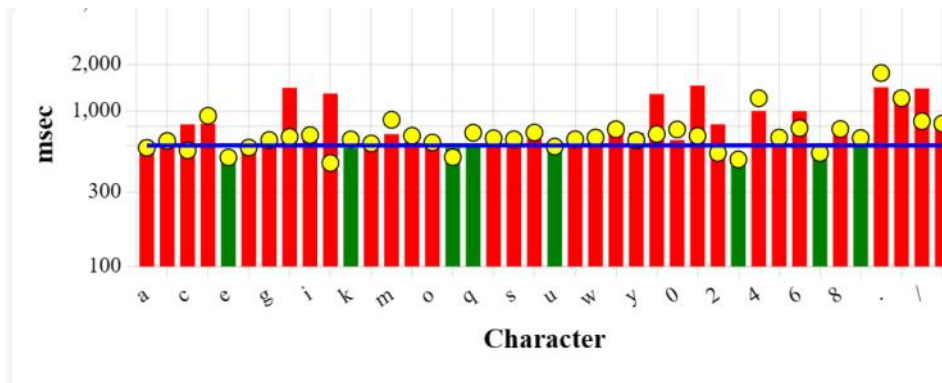
I found it to be a highly addictive and fun method to help improve ICR speeds; it's like playing a video game. You get to see your results and progress instantly.

Here is a screenshot of my very first attempt. This was recorded 23 Nov 2023.

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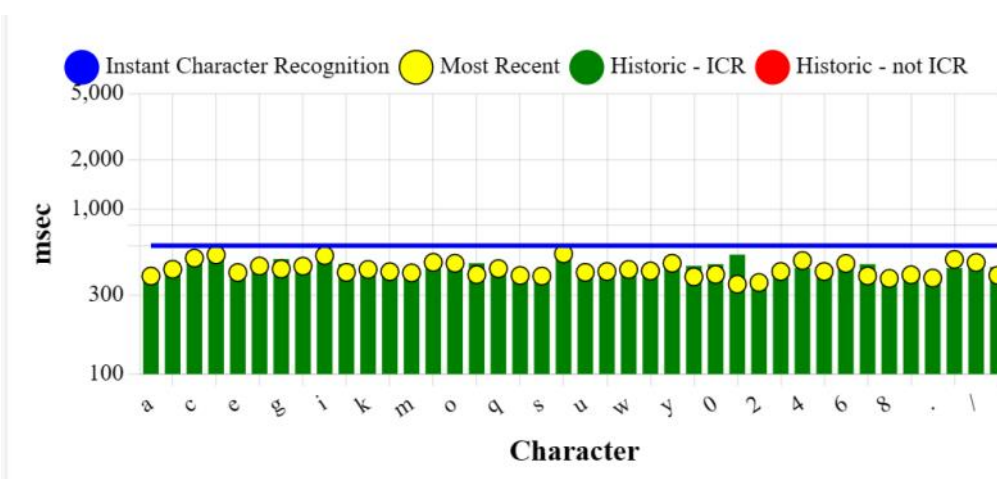
Tony looked at my result and told me that if I continued to use it daily I would be completely in the green in a week. So I incorporated the app as part of my daily practice routine.

Here is a screenshot after using it for only 2 days.



As you can see there has been a significant increase in the amount of green bars especially in the numbers and punctuation characters which I had been having trouble with.

Tony was wrong. Here is a screenshot taken only 2 days later.



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In the Nancy Kott ICR article she states, "The key to success is to say the letter within a half second of hearing it." The blue line is at 0.6 seconds and my average response is below that for all the characters.

Now if Tony (VE2KM) and John (AJ1DM) could come up with a way that I could similarly improve my urban noise level I would be a very happy radio ham.

Summary; If you are struggling to achieve your CW goals Tony will be happy to help you as long as it is during the winter months. He is too busy teaching sailing and navigation in the summer months. Use QRZ.com and VE2KM to find his email address.

You have to commit to one hour regular CW practice sessions broken into short periods of 10 to 20 minutes each and every day. If you cannot make this commitment don't waste your time or Tony's as you are not adequately motivated and you will not be successful.

sc

Patagonia in 2024

Jim Talens, N3JT CWops #1

Nina and I normally take our overseas trips these days in the form of organized tours to countries with large cities that feature great museums, have fascinating history – and where I know ham radio operators and can meet them astride the tour schedule. But Patagonia, which is essentially the southern part of South America consisting mostly of Argentina but also some of Chile, has little of any of those. It is a relatively desolate kind of place at first glance, with few cities, hardly any notable museums, and few hams. Sure, I have worked stations in Ushuaia (Argentina), El Calafate (Argentina) and Punta Arenas (Chile) over the years, but not in recent months.

So why Patagonia? Because it is reportedly filled with great natural beauty and the sorts of sights I could never experience elsewhere. Convincing Nina to go was a minor challenge because the tour description included Zodiac rides, hikes to glaciers and long mountain passes, and 4 days of possibly rough sailing through the fjords and waterways near Cape Horn. I could not understand why this did not attract her! What did convince her were the cool temperatures and her interest in seeing penguins, beautiful mountains, and glaciers. So off we went on January 7, 2024, flying nonstop from Miami to Buenos Aires, where our tour group of 21 would assemble and begin its adventure. I should mention here that a principal reason for preparing this article, apart from sharing our travel experience with others, is to record what we experienced for ourselves.

This trip, organized by Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT) for January 7-21, provided only two evenings free of organized activities, one in Ushuaia and the other in El Calafate, both within Argentina. All other evenings involved scheduled dinners with our 21-person tour group, one dinner with a local family in Ushuaia and the rest aboard our 200-passenger boat that would later take

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us to Cape Horn, into the Magellan Strait and through part of the Darwin Passage. In the weeks prior to departure, I tried to get in touch with several hams I had worked in these towns but schedules conflicted so we could not arrange any eyeball QSOs, though along the way I did spot two tribanders. More about that later.

Neighbors delivered us midday to a Tri-Rail train station near our home in Boynton Beach. The last stop is the Miami International Airport, which apart from some walking at the airport turned out to be an efficient and cost-effective option over a taxi or Uber. Our 9-hour non-stop flight from Miami to Buenos Aires left at about 8:30 pm. Sleeping on the flight proved elusive. The plane was a Boeing 787 and I think they reduced the seat spacing so that only a small child can find a comfortable position for so long. I guess I must have dozed off because I only got through the first third of Barbi when I awoke with a leg cramp a few hours later.

We arrived at our Marriott hotel in the early morning, too early to access a room and nap so we took a walk along the awakening avenues of downtown Buenos Aires. Adrenalin always fuels energy for the first day of such trips. By 5 pm the other members of our tour group had arrived, leading to the usual introductory meeting where each person notes how many trips they have made with OAT, their own backgrounds, and what they looked forward to seeing in Patagonia. There were 4 physicians in our group, which was unusual, and I was the only attorney (or engineer) among us. We began our acculturation with a tango lesson taught by a professional dancer and bandoneon player. I am not inclined to enjoy dancing, but this was actually rather fun. Soon, though, it was time for us to separate ourselves from our group and meet with Claudia, a museum tour guide we met in Buenos Aires 6 years earlier with whom I remained in contact. A featured cuisine in Buenos Aires is of course their beef, which is very tasty and half or less the cost we would normally pay. To illustrate, we chose a top restaurant in the city and ordered sizeable ribeye steaks, wine, sauteed vegetables, huge salads and dessert, all for about \$90 including tip. Claudia could never afford such a meal so we were pleased to liven her culinary experience. I tend to be a mafist (a person who does not eat mammal meat) so this was quite the excursion in cuisine for me.

The next day our group toured Buenos Aires, where I had been twice before, culminating in a dinner at a local family's home where we discussed Argentine economic and political issues. OAT makes its trips adventures in a variety of ways, including meals with locals. There would be another such meal in Ushuaia. The dinner in Buenos Aires was at a neighborhood apartment and consisted largely of salad, meatballs, and mashed potatoes, with alfajores (a sweet cookie) for dessert, and of course Malbec wine. One cannot help but feel sorry for the people in a country that experienced 200% inflation in 2023 and has a history of horrid dictatorships marked by some 30,000 missing political activists (Desaparecidos), most of whose bodies have not been found. Because of the economy and corruption, massive demonstrations, and the leading generals' incompetence in the Malvinas (Falklands) war, democracy was restored in 1985. But since then, there has been a succession of ineffectual leaders and a seemingly intractable economy. The recently elected president, Javier Milei, seems to produce a highly polarizing reaction among Argentines. From those we spoke with, mostly better educated people, Milei is a disaster. But the Peronistas did not have answers, either.

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The next morning, we boarded our Aerolineas Argentinas flight for a 3-1/2 hour flight from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia, Argentina, the southern-most city in the world located. The city is the largest in Patagonia and sits along the Beagle Channel on the Isla de Tierra del Fuego. See Foto 1.



Foto 1. Ushuaia, the southern-most city on the planet with a population of some 87,000

This was the beginning of our Patagonian adventure. We posed for photos in the dock area before a huge “Ushuaia” block structure, and later walked along the nearby Beagle Channel shore that consists of rounded, glacially-worn stones. A local guide provided us with more details about the Malvinas war, how ill-prepared the Argentine navy was, and the underlying reasons for starting the war (yes, for the generals in power to distract public attention from the Desaparecidos and the economy!). Some 600 Argentine soldiers died (and 255 Brits). Argentina remains less than pleased that Chile sided with Britain over this one, partly because Chile feared a possible Argentine attack for other reasons. Both Argentina and Britain have arguments for sovereignty over the Falklands but the British have been on the islands for the last 200 years. During the guide’s discussion we got our first taste of the strong winds that would characterize much of our Patagonia visit. Interestingly, the temperatures in summer do not go much below the mid 40’s (5C), and in winter rarely below 25 degrees (-3C), but the wind is worst during summer. We were then on our own until dinner so we visited the Maritime Museum, Prison Museum, Museum of Art, and 2 preserved early homes. The Maritime Museum had excellent displays of Patagonian

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birds and animals, dioramas of native cultures and history of the region, including stories about sea adventures like those of Shackleton. The Prison Museum was partially converted to art booths for sales and display. Some booths featured descriptions of notorious inmates with colorful histories.

That evening we had our second local-family dinner, this one offered by a couple long resident in Ushuaia. Their home was quite lovely, with multiple rooms and great views. But this was just the warmup because Ushuaia was the embarkation point of our Ventus Australis boat trip of four days, taking us to glaciers and waterways most of us had only read about in featured adventure stories and in our tour catalog.



Foto 2. Display in the ship's quarterdeck showing our path aboard ship from Ushuaia (Argentina)

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We were delayed in departing the port at Ushuaia by several hours due to high winds that made docking the incoming Ventus Australis vessel risky. We all walked together to a restaurant about a mile away and had a nice dinner. It is interesting that I cannot remember hardly any of the meals of our trip with greater specificity than that they were good. I always chose fish or chicken, sometimes pasta, but regret to admit that I always ate the invariably very tasty desserts. Later I will describe the one dessert I clearly remember, and why. By the time our dinner was finished the Venus Australis had docked and we boarded.

During the evening we sailed eastward in the Beagle Canal and then south through Murray Channel, and Nassau Bay toward Cape Horn, the southernmost point of South America, where so many ships were lost over the centuries. See Foto 2. It is very rough water because of the convergence of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the winds that are funneled by the Andes. We were fortunate that the weather was not bad, but it was bad enough to prevent us in the morning from boarding the Zodiacs (rigid inflatable boat used to transport people from cruise ships to land) and standing on Cape Horn. I remember trying to walk down the hallway of the ship and essentially bouncing from wall to wall with the waves. Fortunately, Nina and I had Scopolamine patches and so were never seasick, which we most assuredly would have been. See Foto 4 (lighthouse at Cape Horn).

Heading north again, we stopped at Wulaia Bay, where Charles Darwin stopped during his voyage with the Beagle. It is a stunningly beautiful area, lush with great views.



Foto 3. View of Wulaia Bay, and the Ventus Australis.

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The next day we took Zodiacs to two glaciers, Pia and Porter. There were 10 or 14 people aboard each Zodiac, and we approached quite close to the glaciers, different in their positioning in the mountains and the way they calved. Some glaciers are solely on dry land and so ice falls off them into the water; others are longer and extend into the sea, calving both from underneath and above. See Fotos 5, 6 and 7. We also visited the Condor Glacier, where we saw many condors. See Foto 8.



Foto 4. Cape Horn lighthouse from our ship

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Foto 5. Walking towards Pia Glacier.

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Foto 6. A typical view to the majestic Atlas Mountains (not the Andes)



Foto 7. Nina and Jim in front of a glacier. Either Pia or Porter, I cannot remember!!
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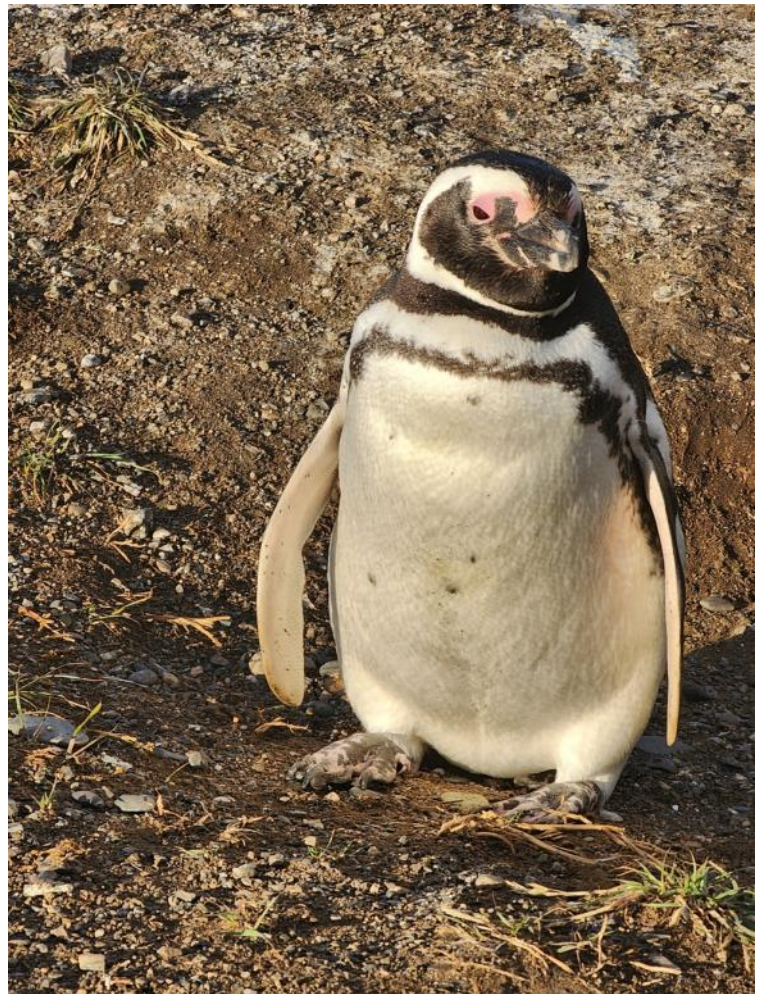
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Foto 8. Andean condors.

We made several additional stops at glaciers and overlooks, but of great interest was the stop on Magdalena Island in the Magellan Strait to see the Magellanic penguins. They are clearly not afraid of people and in fact will walk up and presumably challenge you as you get too close to their nests, though the path we had to follow is many feet away from the nests. There is no vegetation so they dig shallow burrows. See Fotos 9 and 10. Note that the penguins taste like chicken. (Just kidding; making sure you are reading everything!)

Foto 9. Magellanic penguin on Magdalena Island, in the Magellan Strait.



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Foto 10. A penguin pileup.

Our next stop in the Magellan strait was Punta Arenas, a city in Chile of about 125,000 people. It was the demarcation point of our sea voyage and the beginning of the final land portion of our tour, which would include visits to Torres del Paine National Park, Porto Natales, and El Calafate. Punta Arenas has a lovely, multiple-vessel outdoor museum (Museo Nao Victoria) featuring recreations of the Beagle (Darwin's ship), the Chilean Schooner Ancud that claimed the tortuous Strait of Magellan for Chile, and a replica of the lifeboat that saved Ernest Shackleton's team. See Foto 11.



Foto 11. Replica of Ferdinand Magellan's Nao Victoria.

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We left Punta Arenas and headed by bus north to Porto Natales, which borders Torres del Paine National Park, at its center the Cordillera del Paine, the series of tall mountains that give such majesty to the rivers, lakes, and overall landscape of this area. The park is a transition area between the Magellanic subpolar forests and the Patagonia Steppes. Our hotel was essentially a spa with a lovely indoor pool and fantastic views of the mountains. We hiked for about 90 minutes and saw a variety of wildlife, including condors, guanacos (cousins to llamas), rheas, crested caracara birds, and gray fox. See Foto 12. The Paine Massif consists of granite mountains that emerge suddenly from the Patagonia steppes and are capped by crumbling sedimentary rock. They are only some 12 million years old. The sedimentary rock and magma collided violently through tectonic motion and were thrust upwards, later worn to the current striking pattern by Ice Age melting.

One thing we missed here (and elsewhere on the trip, actually) was a view of the southern sky at night. Most of the Milky Way is visible only from the Southern Hemisphere and I had looked forward to seeing that sky, but we were either too tired to stay up so late (remember, there are only a few hours of darkness at night that far south in summer) or there was cloud cover. We also visited a sheep farm, ate lamb chops, and watched shearing. Warming temperatures have led to reduced grass for sheep so that the future of sheep farming is at great risk in Patagonia.

We stopped at Lago Pehoé, a beautiful place adjacent to a mountain river cascade. It is notoriously windy in that area and our visit was no exception. In fact, they closed the path to the overlook as we exited because winds were more than 60 mph. Several people had to crawl to safety, and one of our group (notably the tallest among us) fell, cutting his face in several places.

Our final stop was El Calafate on the northern edge of Patagonia. The area is named for the indigenous Calafate bush, which is a small, tart berry that produces the best dessert I think I have ever had. It was so good I dedicated a photo to it! See Foto 13. It is much like tartufo, the Italian dessert that consists of a round scoop of vanilla ice-cream with a maraschino cherry in the middle, all covered with dark chocolate. This Patagonian killer-dessert is a step up from tartufo. It is made from calafate ice cream (with berries in it) covered by dark chocolate. It is not available in Buenos Aires or anywhere else outside Patagonia. The route to El Calafate required us to change buses at the Chilean-Argentine border. We were now in Argentina again.



Foto 12. Torres del Paine Massif. A massif is a compact group of mountains.

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Foto 13. Calafate ice cream made from calafate berries (Magellan barberry, or *berberis microphylla*). I have a photo of the dessert untouched, but this gives you a better view!

We went by bus a few miles west of El Calafate in the Los Glaciares National Park to see the Perito Moreno Glacier, a pristine site some 200 feet above Lake Argentino. It was named after Francisco Moreno, a 19th-c Argentine explorer who played a role in resolving a border dispute between Argentina and Chile in this area. We watched calving (no, not the birth of cows!): large sections of ice falling into the sea; and we were able to walk along catwalks to see the glacier from different heights and angles. It was quite impressive. See Foto 14. We also took a horseback ride in the scenic area of our hotel. I even succeeded in picking a few calafate berries along the way from atop the horse. The woman riding the horse behind mine kept yelling at her horse to stop putting its nose up my horse's butt, but her horse apparently was not fluent in English.



Foto 14. Perito Moreno Glacier.

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The next day we headed to the airport and flew back to Buenos Aires. Several of us had luggage that weighed more than the 33-lb. limit for flights within Argentina, but our tour company paid the overage (which turned out to be about \$7 per person). The limit internationally is higher so that was no problem, of course. Include a few souvenir rocks from Patagonia and you can increase the weight of your suitcase easily! I am told they frown on smuggling Magellanic penguins into the luggage.

We had one final day in Buenos Aires. Our tour included an excursion by boat in Tigre, part of the Paraná Delta adjacent to Buenos Aires. There are dozens of interconnected waterways featuring vacation homes and secluded residences accessible only by boat. We had no notion of this aspect of life in Argentina so close to Buenos Aires. Nina and I enjoyed a final steak dinner and headed to the airport for our overnight flight home.

Now a word about ham radio during the trip: I saw two triband antennas, one in El Calafate and the other in Ushuaia, but no meetings ensued. We walked from our hotel to the house in Ushuaia where earlier I had seen a tower and beam from our bus, but nobody was home. The ham's next-door neighbor greeted us and told us the ham was out, which I could tell because his car was gone! I left my card on the front door with my email address but never heard from him. The neighbor further noted that the ham's wife just passed away and he was perhaps visiting his family. Between Google Maps and my walk, I think I found his call sign. The other antenna, in El Calafate, was on a street I recorded, but no El Calafate ham on QRZ.COM is listed with that street name. Nevertheless, a ham in El Calafate who was away at the time of our visit later told me his call sign. So it goes.

Unfortunately, one of our group tested positive for Covid at the beginning of the trip. He wore an N-95 mask and ate at a separate table. We still were in close quarters in the bus and when walking, however. By the end of the first week there were 4 members similarly situated, some with no symptoms but testing positive, others coughing. By the end of the trip at least half were coughing, though Nina and I seemed to have it the worst (despite having all the inoculations plus RSV and flu shots). We wore our N-95 masks but at the Buenos Aires airport several people moved away from us in reaction to our prolonged coughing outbursts. We took what medications we could and survived the flight to Miami, where we walked to the Tri-Rail train, rode to our local station, and took an Uber home. We have since fully recovered.

This trip was excellent, far more fascinating and fulfilling than we had anticipated. Part of that is due to the excellent program and tour-guides of the company we chose, but underlying it all is the land itself, filled with wildlife, desolation, beauty, glaciers, wind, and history. It is the "other part of the world" most people might never see, but should. Even if ham radio is not part of it!

For some fotos of the trip: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/5qDjHmVWN9zwn9p87>



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>
3468	M0MZB*	Matt	3472	K9HIM*	Dave	3476	K0DME*	Ben
3469	W7VC*	Jordan	3473	K7ROG*	Roger	3477	AG6CK*	Chris
3470	KQ7I*	Jeff	3474	VA4ADM*	Paul	3478	AE8Q*	Ed
3471	SM6DHF	Goran	3475	AA4SD*	Kraig			

* Lifetime member

As of February 8, 2024:

Need Sponsors: YB2DX, YE4FNN, K8YX, N7BAS, IZ4VSZ

Invitations Extended: DL1ROT

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 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.

73, Trung W6TN (CWops #1707) Membership Manager

— **SC** —

Did your **CALL SIGN** change recently?

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

Congratulations!

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

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

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 January results (GB hosts are shown in **bold**):

AA0YY	W4YAS AF4PX	W4MCX	WA4IAR	KG8DA	WB8LZR	WB9FMP	VE3IID
AF4PX	W0KM	KB4QNR	AA0YY	NX9Z	W0ITT		
GW2CWO	IU3EGK DJ9RT IU3QEZ	HB9DAX VK2BJ	UX2HB SQ3HLB	IK1VEK EA4CA	IK4EWX SM5HQN	F4HFJ OK1FND	SV3CKF SP3DGV
JJ1FXF	VK2DVA JA4IJJ(2)	BI4THF BX2AKP	VK3MJ HL1MIM	VK5AV(2) HL5BLF	JF5XPJ(4) VK1CT	JA5FGC VK3TBR	VK2GAZ
JM4AOA	JA6BZH JJ2KJN JS1MRM	JE2OUK JK1FYU(2)	JF1JDG JK1PIG	JF7URV JK1QYL(2)	JG1BGT(3) JL1CIL	JJ7KNV JM4RRC(2)	JJ1FFI JQ3FWC
JO1DGE	DS1STV JA6BZH JJ2KJN JR1TUE	JA1FCC JA7BWV JJ3LXM JS2HRC	JA2EMP JF1HMU JK1KDH	JA2MYA JG1BGT(2) JK1QYL	JA3LGF JG2AZS JK1UWK	JA4DCS JH2VEP JN1FAO	JA4HQF JI8PLY JR0KTF
K6RB	KD2FSH N5XE	W4EDE (3)	KY8D	K6TR	WJ7S	KI7NRI	VE6LK
K7NJ	NN0D G0UJK	W3MAC K3JT	N5XE WB2KMR	LU8VCC	WB4DKF	NU5DE	W8FJ
W7ZDX	K4WOP K7JHK	WG0Y	N0FIH	K8FN	KK7UT	VE7WD	AA6GA
7N2XZB	HL1MIM(2) JQ3FRX JK1MVC	JR4PDP JA4IJJ(2) HL5BLF	JH1XUP JK1QYL JM4RRC	R0LIQ(2) BA4II BH5HZG	JF5XPJ BH3AIP BI1JAD	JN1FAO JR6SBI	JA4DCS JL1CIL

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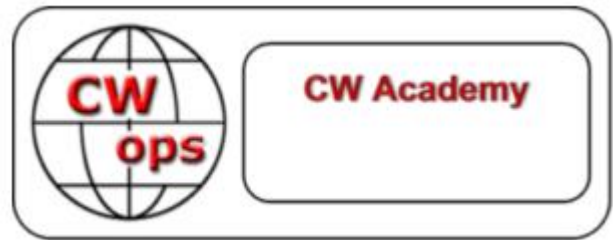
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Giving Back Operating Schedule - 7 PM Local											
October - April: 40m & 80m May - September: 40m & 20m											
Frequencies: 14.035 - 14.039, 7.035 - 7.039, 3.535 - 3.539 MHz JA - 7.028											
UTC+9	UTC+7	UTC+3	UTC+2	UTC+1	UTC/BST	UTC-1	EST UTC-5	CST UTC-6	MST UTC-7	PST UTC-8	Hawaii UTC-10
MON											
							W2XS	AAØYY			
TUE											
JR1WYW	E25JRP		SV2BBK		GW2CWO		WE5P	K8UDH	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
	7N2XZB									K6RB	
WED											
JM4AOA								AF4PX			
THURS											
JJ1VNV			SV2BBK				KV8Q	N5OT	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
FRI											
JR1WYW			SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N2GSL	AAØYY		K6RB	
SAT											
JJ1FXF											
JM4AOA											
JG1UQD											
SUN											
JJ1FXF							W5DT			K6RB	
JM4AOA											



CW Academy

[Bob Carter, WR7Q](#) and [Roland Smith, K7OJL](#)



CW Academy Morse Code Proficiency Assessment

When a prospective student registers for a CW Academy class they are asked to take a Morse code proficiency assessment to help the student get into the right class. The assessment has now been upgraded giving advisors the ability to request their students to take an assessment whenever the advisor desires.

The program is now on the CW Academy Advisor Portal:

Advisor Portal for K7OJL

Reminders and Actions Requested	Date Created
Advisor Programs	
<u>Manage Advisor Class</u> This program displays the current class makeup and allows the advisor to specify student's status, request replacement students, check Morse Code Proficiency Assessments.	
<u>View a Student's Morse Code Assessments</u> This program allows the advisor to view one of his student's Morse Code Proficiency Assessments.	
<u>Display Recent Reminders</u> Displays recent reminders starting with the most recent reminder. Displays 25 at a time	
<u>Sign up for an Advisor Class</u> This program provides the ability to sign up for an upcoming semester and specify what class(es) the advisor wishes to hold, and when those classes would be held. It also provides the ability for the advisor to update that information as needed.	
<u>Show Advisor Class Assignments</u> This program shows upcoming advisor registrations (if any), current class makeup, and all past students	
<u>Order Morse Code Proficiency Assessments</u> This program allows the advisor to specify the parameters for the assessment and which students are to take the assessment.	
<u>Advisor Resources</u> Use this link to access the advisor resources hosted on cwops.org	

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The program shows the advisors first class and the selectable assessment parameters:

CW ACADEMY

Guiding Better CW Operators

CWA – ADVISOR REQUEST STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Edit

Advisor Request Student Assessment

Indicate which of your students should do the Morse code assessment. Then select the parameters for the assessment

If you have more than one class, after you make the selections for the first class and send the assessment request emails, the program will then do the same for the next class

Class 1 Fundamental

Select Students for Evaluation

Student List

Include Advisor?

No

Yes

Submit

Select Speed Parameters

Characters per Minute:

18cpm

20cpm

25cpm

Effective (Farnsworth) Speed:

6wpm Effective

8wpm Effective

10wpm Effective

12wpm Effective

Select Questions Parameters

Number of Questions

3 Questions

5 Questions

7 Questions

How Many Callsigns to Include

No Callsigns

1 Callsign

2 Callsigns

The advisor can select which students should do the assessment. The advisor can also include himself and do the assessment as well. The Speed parameters and the Question parameters can also be set. If the advisor has more than one class, each class is displayed in turn. The available Speed and Question parameter choices are different for each of the class levels:

Parameter	Beginner	Fundamental	Intermediate	Advanced
Characters per Minute	15cpm 18cpm 20cpm 25cpm	18cpm 20cpm 25cpm	18cpm 20cpm 25cpm	20cpm 25cpm 30cpm 35cpm
Effective Speed	4wpm 6wpm 8wpm	6wpm 8wpm 10wpm 12wpm	13wpm 15wpm 18wpm 20wpm	20wpm 25wpm 30wpm 35wpm
Questions	3 questions 5 questions 7 questions	3 questions 5 questions 7 questions	3 questions 5 questions 7 questions	3 questions 5 questions 7 questions
Callsigns	No callsigns	No callsigns 1 callsign 2 callsigns	No callsigns 1 callsign 2 callsigns	No callsigns 1 callsign 2 callsigns

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The advisor can set the speed at which each character will be sent and the effective or Farnsworth speed that the words or callsigns will be sent. The questions consist of two words or one callsign sent at the speed the advisor specified. After each question a multiple-choice list of five answers is displayed and the student can select the answer corresponding to what the student heard.

After making the selection, the student is shown the selected answer along with the error information:

CWA Student Assessment

Choose the correct answer from the five options

? ? ? ?

pa cq

pa hq

za sq

pa sq

aa cq

CWA Student Assessment

Continue to the next question or quit

f d a g e t

fda get

fda gst

yea gst

nba dat

yea get

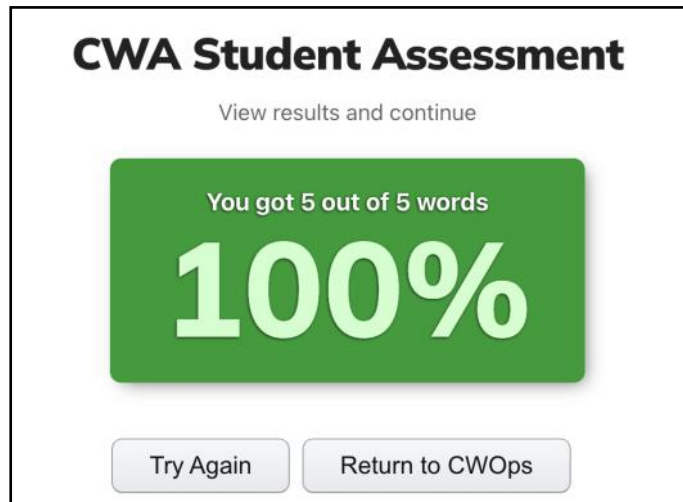
Next Question Quit

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When all of the questions have been answered, a score is calculated:



Upon completion of the assessment the results are shown to the student and delivered to the advisor:

CW ACADEMY
Guiding Better CW Operators
CWA – ADVISOR REQUEST STUDENT ASSESSMENT
Edit

Advisor Request Student Assessment

Morse Code Assessment Results

Assessment Details for

Score	Level	Date	Char Speed	Eff Speed	Qs	Words	Word Length	Callsigns	Answns	Vocab	Info	What Q Was Sent	What Was Copied	Points Gained
100	--	2024-02-09	20	8	3	2	4	1(3-4)	5	threek	Advisor Request	1 FOIN	FOIN	1
												2 chan ch	chan ch	2
												3 ld pace	ld pace	2

You have completed the Morse Code Proficiency assessment.

So far advisors have requested more than 40 students to perform an assessment. The average score for these assessments is 80%.

The assessment can be used during the semester to help advisors and students understand how the student is progressing. Further, the assessment results are another piece of information the advisor can use at the end of the semester when determining if the student has met the class objectives.

73, Roland Smith K7OJL CWA Advisor and System Administrator



CWops Tests (CWTs)

[Rich Ferch, VE3KI](#)

This column is a reminder about the certificates and medallions for the 2023 CWTs.

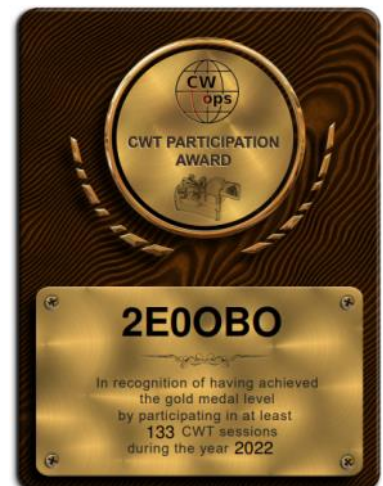
First, the certificates. If you submitted at least one qualifying claimed score for a CWT in 2023 (10 or more QSOs), then regardless of whether you were a CWops member or not you can download a personal certificate from DJ5CW's website at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/certificate/>. Just enter your callsign into the box and click on the button, and your personalized certificate will be generated as a PDF file ready for you to download it. If you were a CWops member in good standing at the end of 2023 and you reached the gold, silver or bronze medal participation level, your certificate will be gold, silver or bronze. If you were not a CWops member or if you did not reach the bronze participation level, your certificate will be a participation certificate. The certificate web page for the 2023 CWTs will be active throughout 2024.

CWops members in good standing as of the end of 2023 who reached the gold, silver or bronze medal participation level are eligible to order a medallion. There is a \$10 USD charge for each medallion as a partial contribution towards procurement and mailing costs. First, check whether you qualified for a medallion, either by looking for your callsign in the lists published in the January 2024 issue of *Solid Copy*, or by consulting the list in the files area for the CWops group at the groups.io website at <https://cwops.groups.io/g/main/files/CWTmedals2023.txt>. If your callsign is on the gold, silver or bronze medal list, you can order your medallion through the CWT page on the CWops website at <https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/> (near the bottom of the page). After entering your callsign, clicking on the "Add to Cart" button will take you to a payment processing page provided by PayPal. You do not need to have a PayPal account to order a medallion; PayPal is just acting as the payment processor.

The deadline for ordering medallions is the end of February. After February 29, the order list will be frozen and the medallions will be ordered from the supplier. Once the procurement order has been sent at the beginning of March, it will no longer be possible to add to the order, so you will need to get your orders in on time. Delivery of the medallions will be by post, as in previous years, in late spring or early summer.

Enjoy the CWTs and keep those reported scores coming!

73, Rich VE3KI (CWops #783)
CWT Manager



CWops Member Awards

[Bill Gilliland](#), WØTG



Announcements

This month we begin reporting QSO totals for the new Annual Cumulative Membership Award (**ACMA**). This award is like the Annual Competition Award (**ACA**) which counts QSOs with members only one time regardless of band, but ACMA counts QSOs with members on all bands, once per band. ACA and ACMA are annual awards and restart on January 1 of each year. The Cumulative Membership Award (**CMA**) is like ACMA but does not reset each year, instead counting QSOs with members on all bands, once per band, in perpetuity. We will report ACA, ACMA and CMA competitively each month in Solid Copy with a TOP Ten and Top 100 just as we did ACA in the past. The monthly update will also include new WAS and DXCC accomplishments. Complete current standings in all categories and totals for 2023 and past years are available at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/scores>.

Monthly Update

During January, 167 members submitted logs and the number of active participants in the awards program is currently 167.

The **ACA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of January 2024 have **KR2Q** in first place and leading second place **AA3B** by 155 QSOs. The top ten ACA totals this month are: **(1) KR2Q, (2) AA3B, (3) KY4GS, (4) NA8V, (5) KG9X, (6) K7QA, (7) KC7V, (8) N5RZ, (9) N7US** and **(10) N5ZO**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 456 QSOs.

The **ACMA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of January 2024 have **AA3B** in first place and leading second place **KR2Q** by 106 QSOs. The top ten ACMA totals this month are: **(1) AA3B, (2) KR2Q, (3) KY4GS, (4) K7QA, (5) NA8V, (6) KG9X, (7) N5ZO, (8) N5RZ, (9) KC7V** and **(10) N7US**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 1297 QSOs.

The **CMA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of January 2024 have **AA3B** in first place and leading second place **K3WW** by 3133 QSOs. The top ten CMA totals this month are: **(1) AA3B, (2) K3WW, (3) N5RZ, (4) N5ZO, (5) KR2Q, (6) W1RM, (7) NA8V, (8) DL6KVA, (9) F6HKA** and **(10) K3WJV**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 5925 QSOs.

The number of members who have contacted CWops members in 100 or more DXCC entities grew to **78** this month with the addition of **CT1DRB**.

The number of participants who have accomplished CWops WAS grew to **224** this month with the addition of **CT1DRB, N2EIM, VE9KK** and **K5VG**.

You can see complete rankings for all award categories at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/scores>.

CWops Award Tools Participation

At the end of 2023 we had 271 active participants in the Member Awards Program. As of January 31, 2024, we have 167 active participants. If you have not yet submitted any logs for 2024, please

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do so soon, and we can include your score among the participants.

The Top 100 and the Searchable and Sortable Scores Table show rankings and scores for active participants only. To be an active participant and be included in awards scoring including the ACA, ACMA and CMA competitions, you must have submitted a log during the current year. To see rankings and scores for both active and inactive participants please use the Score Overview Table where inactive participants are listed with ACA and ACMA scores of zero, but their scores in other categories are listed at the highest level that was previously submitted.

You can see the final 2023 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. For more information about CWT Participation Awards, please go to <https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/>.

About the CWops Member Awards Program

Several operating awards are available for contacting CWops members. These include **Annual Competition Award (ACA)** recognizing the total number of CWops members contacted during the current year, **Annual Cumulative Membership Award (ACMA)** counting QSOs with members on all bands (once per band) during the current year, **Cumulative Membership Award (CMA)** counting QSOs with members on all bands (once per 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.

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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.

Here are the Top 100 ACA, ACMA and CMA QSO totals as of January 31, 2024:

ACA

Rank	Call	ACA
1	KR2Q	1148
2	AA3B	993
3	KY4GS	886
4	NA8V	804
5	KG9X	787
6	K7QA	754
7	KC7V	744
8	N5RZ	712
9	N7US	700
10	N5ZO	692
11	W0UO	649
12	NJ3K	648
13	K1VUT	633
14	KO4VW	631
15	KOWA	610
16	K3QP	602
17	K9WX	580
18	K3WW	575
19	N5TJ	560
20	K3WJV	554
21	KM4FO	553
21	W4CMG	553
22	AA2IL	548
23	K6NR	538
24	WT9U	528
25	WN7S	524
26	VE3KI	514
27	N9UNX	512
28	KK0U	507
29	VE3MV	479
30	W9ILY	470
31	VE3TM	442
32	K1DJ	437
33	WA4JUK	426
34	W0VX	424
35	K1SM	421
36	N5XE	420

ACMA

Rank	Call	ACMA
1	AA3B	2576
2	KR2Q	2470
3	KY4GS	1790
4	K7QA	1761
5	NA8V	1637
6	KG9X	1617
7	N5ZO	1586
8	N5RZ	1578
9	KC7V	1559
10	N7US	1279
11	KO4VW	1267
12	K1VUT	1249
13	W0UO	1206
14	NJ3K	1124
15	KOWA	1099
16	KM4FO	1037
17	AA2IL	1032
18	K6NR	1017
19	K9WX	989
20	K3WW	958
21	N5TJ	952
21	VE3KI	952
22	WN7S	946
23	W4CMG	944
24	K3WJV	938
25	WT9U	933
26	VE3MV	926
27	K3QP	901
28	N9UNX	853
29	W0VX	837
30	KK0U	812
31	WS7L	772
32	N5XE	763
33	W9ILY	758
34	W0TG	750
35	K1RF	738
36	K1DJ	708

CMA

Rank	Call	CMA
1	AA3B	13802
2	K3WW	10669
3	N5RZ	9716
4	N5ZO	9625
5	KR2Q	9213
6	W1RM	9115
7	NA8V	8878
8	DL6KVA	8489
9	F6HKA	8034
10	K3WJV	7877
11	VE3KI	7804
12	KG9X	7106
13	K7QA	7059
14	N5AW	7019
15	N7US	6943
16	OM2VL	6840
17	W9ILY	6839
18	KC7V	6788
19	W0VX	6510
20	WT9U	6401
21	K1VUT	6262
22	K3JT	6241
23	K9WX	6014
24	K3PP	5859
25	K6NR	5581
26	SM6CUK	5560
27	K1DJ	5551
28	W4WF	5381
29	N5TJ	5242
30	WN7S	5148
31	9A1AA	5120
32	G4BUE	5082
33	WT3K	5064
34	AA5JF	4900
35	K1SM	4806
36	W0UO	4797
37	AC6ZM	4714

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ACA

Rank	Call	ACA
37	WS7L	417
38	K3ZA	409
38	W9CF	409
39	K1RF	394
40	VE3KIU	388
41	KV8Q	385
42	W2CDO	382
43	W4WF	377
44	AF5J	371
45	K4TZ	370
45	N5KD	370
46	AA5JF	365
47	N5AW	360
48	DL6KVA	357
49	K3JT	350
49	W1RM	350
50	K0TC	349
51	W0TG	348
51	W3WHK	348
52	W2VM	346
53	AC6ZM	337
54	WT3K	335
55	K4GM	330
56	N3CKI	329
57	N2EIM	326
58	VE9KK	322
59	W7LG	321
60	W8EWH	317
61	N5ER	299
62	EA6BF	288
62	F6HKA	288
63	SM6CUK	286
64	9A1AA	261
65	WB9G	256
66	F5SGI	250
66	KQ4DAP	250
67	VE3WH	248
68	KC8J	246
69	OZ3SM	244
70	W6AYC	238
71	W8OV	235
72	EA6EJ	223
73	K5VG	222
73	KW1X	222
74	AC3RA	215
75	G3LDI	214
76	KT4XN	211
77	AD4SA	210
78	SM0HEV	208

ACMA

Rank	Call	ACMA
37	VE3TM	698
38	W9CF	684
39	W4WF	678
40	DL6KVA	659
41	AF5J	652
42	W2CDO	646
43	K1SM	635
44	W1RM	622
45	VE3KIU	621
46	WA4JUK	618
47	K3ZA	606
48	W3WHK	592
49	AA5JF	590
50	KV8Q	579
51	K4TZ	570
52	K0TC	560
53	K4GM	558
54	W2VM	550
55	N5AW	541
56	EA6BF	533
57	K3JT	526
58	F6HKA	509
59	N5KD	492
60	SM6CUK	486
61	VE9KK	482
62	N3CKI	481
63	AC6ZM	478
64	W7LG	455
65	W8EWH	435
66	F5SGI	430
67	WT3K	425
68	9A1AA	423
69	SM0HEV	420
70	N5ER	409
71	OZ3SM	405
72	VE3WH	398
73	WB9G	383
74	W8OV	369
75	KC8J	363
76	G3LDI	347
77	F6JOE	341
78	N2EIM	330
78	W6AYC	330
78	EA6EJ	330
79	K5VG	317
80	WW3S	315
81	WJ0C	298
Rank	Call	ACMA
82	KT4XN	288

CMA

Rank	Call	CMA
38	VE3TM	4706
39	F6JOE	4606
40	GW0ETF	4571
41	NJ3K	4517
42	WA4JUK	4416
43	KY4GS	4346
44	N5XE	4280
45	K4GM	4237
46	I2WIJ	4172
47	NA4J	4134
48	VE3MV	4127
49	W6AYC	4112
50	K3QP	4022
51	WS7L	4010
52	AA2IL	3796
53	N1EN	3744
54	W0TG	3674
55	OZ3SM	3645
56	DJ5CW	3635
57	KM4FO	3627
58	K0TC	3621
59	W3WHK	3592
60	DF7TV	3561
61	VK2GR	3558
62	KO4VW	3474
63	N5KD	3428
64	AF5J	3416
65	KV8Q	3399
66	KOWA	3397
67	KK0U	3383
68	W2CDO	3375
69	AF4T	3326
70	EA6BF	3196
71	K4TZ	3129
72	F5SGI	3099
73	HB9ARF	3092
74	SM0HEV	3082
75	4X6GP	3049
76	K3ZA	3000
77	M0RYB	2949
78	W4CMG	2874
79	N3CKI	2869
80	W2VM	2857
80	CT1DRB	2857
81	IT9VDQ	2800
82	G3LDI	2794
83	W8OV	2776
Rank	Call	CMA
84	K3SEN	2741

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ACA

Rank	Call	ACA
79	NN7O	201
80	NA4J	195
81	K3SEN	191
82	F6JOE	190
82	KB8GAE	190
83	WW3S	189
84	G4IZZ	184
85	W4NBS	181
86	VK2GR	175
87	KC9YL	173
88	WJOC	170
89	KB4DE	169
90	HB9ARF	166
91	GW4MM	157
92	K9CPO	156
93	IN3FHE	154
93	K1IG	154
94	N1EN	151
95	M0RYB	145
96	SP7OGP	140
97	AF4T	135
97	KF6NCX	135
98	I5EFO	134
99	2E0OBO	132
99	WE4AUB	132
100	WS5D	131

ACMA

Rank	Call	ACMA
82	AD4SA	288
83	KQ4DAP	287
83	W4NBS	287
84	NN7O	286
85	G4IZZ	284
86	AC3RA	283
87	KW1X	260
88	K3SEN	248
88	SP7OGP	248
89	HB9ARF	244
90	2E0OBO	239
91	NA4J	233
92	KB8GAE	229
93	KC9YL	219
94	IN3FHE	215
95	KB4DE	214
96	SP4JFR	213
97	GW4MM	212
98	N1EN	204
99	VK2GR	201
100	M0RYB	199

CMA

Rank	Call	CMA
85	W7GF	2725
86	KT4XN	2671
87	KC8J	2567
88	IN3FHE	2532
89	WW3S	2318
90	KB8GAE	2308
91	G4HZV	2289
92	W9CF	2286
93	N9UNX	2284
94	W4NBS	2273
95	SP1D	2233
96	VE3KIU	2220
97	WE5P	2183
98	WA2USA	2169
99	KW1X	2160
100	I5EFO	2151

73, Bill WØTG (CWops #1873)
CWops Operating Awards

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



QTX Report: Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

[Enzo, MØKTZ](#)

Almost every month you report in the sopabox of having worked on air a new operator, somebody who has started learning CW recently, or who has come back to the hobby and has seen CW rekindling their interest for spending time in the shack. And almost invariably, all your reports are positive and energetic, as they show that CW is indeed seeing a renaissance. There is no doubt that concerted efforts to “teach CW to the masses,” like our own CW Academy or the Long Island CW Club, play a central role in that direction, together with a good dose of self-motivation and sheer “fascination for the code,” that brings more and more hams to the mode. The latter is definitely the case of Flor ON3FLD, a relatively new operator who got his ham license in 2023 and has been operating CW only and QRP only ever since. I have had a few long and pleasant chats with Flor in January, and I really hope to work him more often, as he has been making impressive progress with the code. I had a chuckle during one of our QSOs, when he eventually said something like “sorry I am now tired of keying” which is quite understandable after more than half an hour pounding brass! I am sure that all of you agree on the fact that this is a quite enjoyable and rewarding kind of fatigue, though, and one we ragchewers are very accustomed with HI!

Another strong drive towards learning the Morse code comes from international activation programmes like SOTA ([Summits on The Air](#)) and POTA ([Parks on the Air](#)) which give to many hams a concrete motivation for trying CW out: CW rigs are small and portable, and you can hardly feel them as a burden while hiking several miles up a remote SOTA reference. Moreover, there are many “hunters” in those programmes who routinely operate CW, so why not adding that mode to your activator’s arsenal and doubling the chances of a successful activation? I think the two new ops who have submitted their QTX/MQTX scores this month actually fall in this category. Indeed, Matthew MØMZB is a new CWops member, who is nuts for SOTA, while Simone IU3QEZ is a very active member of the [Italian Mountain Club](#).

The good news is that, after having bitten ops with the prospect of more activation fun, the CW bug often starts creeping in, as all the most insidious and dangerous of bugs do. And the result is often that a new CW operators starts using the code to chat on the bands, until they discover our QTX/MQTX programme, and their souls are lost forever HI.

That was just a long way to saying welcome to our new fellow ragchewers, and to express my gratitude to all of you folks, who spend so much time on the bands using our beloved mode, finding and making new friends, giving a helping hand to those who are starting off, and ensuring that CW not just survives, but thrives and prospers on the bands.

I want to remind you that the last weekend of February (24th and 25th) will see the first CWops Activity weekend. Any type of QSO, relaxed ragchewing encouraged; just get on the bands and report about your activity at <https://forms.gle/FtHCeMEdfQk9ACqm9>. See more detailed info on [page 8](#) in this issue of *Solid Copy*.

You might have noticed that I have retained the “total ragchewing hours” count and ranking (the usual 20 mins per QTX and 10 minutes per MQTX). I believe that is a fun way of keeping track of

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the amount of enjoyment we collectively get in ragchewing on the ham bands. If we did not have fun, we would not spend time there, right?

I expect your February reports by the 3rd of March, and I am looking forward to seeing what you have been up to in February.

72/73, Enzo M0KTZ CWops #3206



Total ragchewing hours in 2024 so far: not less than **285.7**

MØMZB: Enjoyable ragchew with GØDOZ on 80m, he was QRP on a kx3 and we talked about the new Elecraft KH1 (very expensive), and my ft818 (and the need for a now increasingly rare narrow filter in the ft818 to make it useable on CW). Several nice mQTX QSOs with GØGSY. A nice long QSO with SM5GLC on his Flex6600, we talked about times I have visited Nyköping in Sweden. Also a good mQTX with G7KSE on 40m who lives just down the road from me, including part of the QSO on my Clansman PRC320 using a straight key.

WB4IT: Lots of great QSOs this month. The most memorable one was with Jim K6AR – what a great op.

KG5IEE: Lots of mini-QTX but not as many full QTX and a lot of SKCC K3Y shifts. Had a really nice long QSO with KE8TBM who has only been a ham three years but has a really great fist. One of those arm-chair copy QSOs.

N7HCN: Well, my first faltering QLF CQs as a new ham are just now reaching the much-vaunted Super Earth exoplanet orbiting HD 4037, a mere 42 light years away. No doubt someone there is sending back "UP UP YOU LID!"

YL3JD: Quite some QTX-mini, lot of all most QTX just a few minutes too less, hi. A few DX ragchews and some more on the winter band 160 meters. For every one HNY and a lot of ragchews.

VK3QB: My first month recording and reporting mQTX/QTX. I'm really enjoying it and this award offers motivation and a reminder to stay active!

N2DA: Good sked QSOs this month with the usual gang, including AJ1DM and WA3JJT. Started the year with two very nice ragchews on Jan 1st - Derek, WBØTUA, and later one with Ron, WB2GAI.

N9EEE: What a coincidence and what fun! Two different stations, but same story. When the other station learned I was operating QRP on an IC-7300 (same radio they had) it piqued their interest since they had never operated QRP. So, they lowered their power to match my 5 watts. The challenge was on. We kept dropping power by one watt for each exchange until we hit 0% (400 mw?) and could still work each other hundreds of miles away. Those were two fun ragchews!

KB6NU: Had many great ragchews this month with CWops members, including WB4IT, KR2Q, WS1L, AA4MC, N8AI, and K2ZF.

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G4IVV: Just 3 QTX QSOs this month, but all very enjoyable. Busy radio month though with a new radio and a bit of a shack reorganisation, plus an overnight session in the CQWW 160m.

KG5SSB: I enjoyed making contacts during Bug Day (SKN) using my 1967 Vibroplex Original Standard. Also, I had a fine QTX later in the month with Dan, KB6NU. TNX & 73!

KR2Q: In the last year, my number of QTX and mQTX has been mostly growing each month.

AJ1DM: I'm pleasantly surprised to see my total up a bit from recent months. All thanks to my friends K2KRG, K1CHM, N2DA, WA3JIT, W4TG, and WA3PYU for the pleasant time spent on CW!
73 de John AJ1DM

KE4I: Just started keeping track of QSO's in December 2023. I enjoy connecting with someone I can talk to without struggling for words. Someone with common interest.

PG4I: Due to the SKCC Straight Key Month with over 400 QSO's not much time for Rag Chewing, sorry!

GWØETF: Away for first part of the month and and sparse operating since.,;-)

K6DGW: More time on the air with the holidays in the rear view mirror

WA4IAR: The weather has kept me in the house a lot. So more time to make new friends. Lots of nice QSOs.

AAØYY: Nice QSO with Bob WA2POW; said he was just getting back into CW. Great to see CW ops enjoying the mode again. Also Bill K4VSV, age 91! I hope I'm still pounding brass at that age, and thats IF I make it to that age.

VE3WH: Many new ragchews and many repeat fists. It's hard to pin down one as being special. Always a story to tell or new information from previous conversations. Three of my QTX/mQTX chats were in Europe. Theo PA3HEN, Michel F5PON, and Celso HB9TNW. So encouraging to see operators that can get by a quick exchange.

JS2AHG: Most of my on air time has been used for SKCC Straight Key Month event in January, 2024.

Awards and Medals for 2024

Gold – 400 QTX QSOs

Silver Medal – 300 QTX QSOs

Bronze – 200 QTX QSOs

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2024 Totals: Number of Hours Worked

(based on avg 20 min QTX, 10 min MQTX)

<u>Call</u>	<u>Hrs</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Hrs</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Hrs</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Hrs</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Hrs</u>
WA4IAR	39	KB6NU	10	AJ1DM	4.3	IU3QEZ	2	DF7TV	0.8
KY4GS	33	F5IYJ	9	KE4I	3.7	PG4I	1.8	JS2AHG	0.7
M0KTZ	28	AA0YY	8.8	N9EEE	3.5	G4IWW	1.8	W3WHK	0.5
WB4IT	22	KG5IEE	7.8	N1ZX	3.5	K7VM	1.5	GW0ETF	0.5
KR2Q	22	N7HCN	7.7	M0MZB	3.5	WT9Q	1.3		
VE3WH	15	N2DA	6	YL3JD	3.3	N5LB	1		
K9OZ	14	K6DGW	5.5	KG5SSB	2.5	VK3QB	0.8		
ND4K	14	AF4PX	4.5	W9EBE	2.3	K8UDH	0.8		
								Total: 286	

QTX for January 2024

<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>
WA4IAR	99	VE3WH	36	KG5IEE	10	N1ZX	4	G4IWW	3
WB4IT	52	KB6NU	31	K6DGW	9	KG5SSB	4	K8UDH	2
KY4GS	52	F5IYJ	27	AF4PX	9	PG4I	3	W3WHK	1
KR2Q	44	N7HCN	21	N9EEE	8	N5LB	3		
K9OZ	42	N2DA	18	KE4I	8	M0MZB	3		
ND4K	38	AA0YY	16	W9EBE	5	K7VM	3		
M0KTZ	37	AJ1DM	12	WT9Q	4	IU3QEZ	3		

MQTX for January 2024

<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>MQTX</u>
KY4GS	91	AA0YY	21	AF4PX	9	PG4I	5	JS2AHG	4
M0KTZ	91	YL3JD	20	ND4K	7	N9EEE	5	K7VM	3
KR2Q	43	VE3WH	18	KG5SSB	7	G4IWW	5	GW0ETF	3
WA4IAR	37	M0MZB	15	KE4I	6	DF7TV	5	AJ1DM	2
WB4IT	29	K6DGW	15	IU3QEZ	6	W9EBE	4	W3WHK	1
KG5IEE	27	N1ZX	13	VK3QB	5	N7HCN	4	K8UDH	1

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My Story: New Member Introductions

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

Goran Ostman, SM6DHF/SF6J #3471

First of all, thanks to Jens SM0HEV for the nomination and to SM1TDE, SM5AJV, SM5IMO and SM6MCW for sponsoring the nomination.

I was born 1947 and married to Gun-Mari since 1970 and we have one daughter and two grandchildren. Started as most hams did with BC-DXing and became later interested in amateur radio and got my call SM4DHF in May 1966. After a couple of years with CW only license I was able to upgrade and buy my first transceiver, a Galaxy GT550 in beginning of 1969 and now the real challenge of working DX started. Chasing DXCC has always been a thrill and in the end it was a chase on all bands and modes from 6-160.



XYL and I have always been interested in travelling and it is great way to also include some DX-operations. XYL has never mind carrying some radio stuff and it sometimes happened that she asked if it was not time to go on a radio trip again! Apart from 10 weeks with backpackers in South East Asia without radio, there has been operations from ZB2, VK, 3D2, YJ0, ZK1, SV3, TI2, CX, including some CQWW contesting with the highlight of my life, winning WW as CU2F on 20m CW LP in 2003. That operation as guest operator at a local ham where I could use the antenna with my rig from the best location I have ever operated!

I took early retirement in 2009 after working mostly for Ericsson with purchasing and logistics of production of Land Mobile Radio systems.

At retirement we moved to an old little cottage from 1790 in a small village at Lake Hjalmarén, way out on the countryside. The 12 years we lived there was a great location for radio. Quiet and with space for bigger antennas also on 80 and 160 m. The move from SM4 after 55 years of hamming to SM6 in 2021 was because we accepted to take care of daughter's and son-in-law's house while they were off to Ethiopia for three years work. It is interesting with life changes, so we accepted. Sold off tower and all antennas and later the house including all furniture and took off in a caravan for 6 weeks around Sweden. Free as birds! Activity changed a lot in SM6 as I got very interested in WWFF, working others but also as doing portable operations myself.

We have finally had to find our own living and now it was time for an apartment right in the city center of Skovde. Now I do all radio operating remote with just a simple Windom antenna

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outside town. All operating I do at the moment is working WWFF/POTA/SOTA and taking part in contests. CWT is real fun and I regret I never did it when I had big antennas!

Yoshiko Yamagami Lucy, JQ1LCW/KF7JXL #3288

Thank you to my sponsors N1DG, JN1THL, JF1UOX and JF1UOW for inviting me to CWops.

I was born in 1947 and got JA HAM Radio License in 1968 and got US Extra 2010. I live in the suburb of Tokyo, 25 km far from the center. I like CW of course, but besides that, to go to places where we can't usually go.

Dxpedition: 5T5YL, 3B9DX, J79YL, YB/JQ1LCW and 3D2/JM1YGG

Volunteer: I was a member of IARV (International Amateur Radio Volunteers) and setting up radio equipment for developing countries 5T, TZ, 7O and 6W. During the day, I worked as volunteer and at night I enjoyed CW.

ARDF: I have participated in many ARDF competitions and I got nice results of World Championship of UN, 9A, VK, YU, OK and HL.

Current: I am involved in youth development activities of JARL. When children are able to communicate using CW, their faces light up with joy.

I look forward to continuing to enjoy with many people around the world.

Thank you in advance, and I appreciate your support.

David Dell, K9HIM #3472

First, thank you to the men who sponsored me into the club: K4AEN, K1EBY, K5UV and NE5A.

The process began as it should. During a QSO with Tom K4AEN I was asked if I was a member of CWops. I replied "not yet," and the rest is history!

I was first licensed in 1971 as WN9HPM, Whiskey November Nine Hiram Percy Maxim. Great call! After 2 years I attempted to upgrade to General but failed the written exam after passing the 13 wpm code test. I tested for another Novice license in 1983, successfully, and was issued the callsign KA9QNN, another ham radio suffix that those involved in nets will understand! A few years later I upgraded to General and became N9LGP, and then a couple of years ago applied for and was issued the call K9HIM.



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All along my journey I've always preferred and enjoyed CW. I particularly enjoy putting on the headphones and immersing myself into the world of Morse code. Occasionally I will pick up a microphone or work a little FT8, but CW will always be my favorite mode.

By the way, I'm currently enrolled in an Advanced CW Academy class. My advisor, Buz AC6AC is an excellent advisor and mentor, along with Shirley MØWXG and Rich N4DPM. I highly recommend CW Academy for anyone interested in improving their CW skills, both head copy and sending. The structure is outstanding. Kudos to the developer(s)!

My favorite activities include working CWT, SST, contesting and chasing POTA as a hunter. I also love to ragchew while continually fine tuning my conversational skills. CW, as we all know, is a language in and of itself. That's what draws me to it, the art of conversation.

I've thoroughly enjoyed this great hobby for over 40 years and hope to continue enjoying it for many more, Lord willing. I'm grateful to join the CWops family and look forward to continuing the journey!

Jordan J. Shin, W7VC #

I was first licensed in December, 2020, after decades of wanting it; by contest definitions, I'm no longer a newbie!

I've been operating with some arbitrary, self-imposed limits. 99W max. Only SSB, CW, and RTTY; I do get on local VHF repeaters occasionally. No recorded contest CQs or exchanges in SSB or CW. I have no good, real reason for these limits, except maybe to limit myself somehow in this potentially limitless hobby. Maybe some delusions of old-fashionedness.

I seem to like sending and receiving CW at around 20 wpm. Head-copying is limited to about 10 wpm; if I seem confused during a QSO, probably means I wasn't ready to write down what you sent. Need to keep practicing!

See you on the air!



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