

# Solid Copy

The CW Operators Club Newsletter  
January 2026 — Issue 192



So much for "wireless", but it's tidy. AF8A offers his perspective in Less is More on page 25.

## President's Message

Happy New Year. This is my first letter to the membership as President of CWops. While I know many people within CWops, I'm not sure how many know me personally, so I'd like to begin with a some sharing of my personal life and my



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

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

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

**CWops Officers and Directors**  
President: Mark Wohlschlegel, [WC3W](#)  
Vice President: John Glover, [W2QL](#)  
Secretary: Jim Talens, [N3JT](#)  
Treasurer: Craig Thompson, [K9CT](#)  
Director: Bert Banlier, [F6HKA](#)  
Director: James Brooks, [9V1YC](#)  
Director: Raoul Coetzee, [ZS1C](#)  
Director: Allan Mason, [VK2GR](#)  
Director: Theo Mastakas, [SV2BBK](#)  
Director: Dick Strassburger, [N9EEE](#)  
Director: Ken Tanuma, [JN1THL](#)  
WebGeek: Dan Romanchik [KB6NU](#)  
Newsletter Editor: Dick Strassburger, [N9EEE](#)

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ham radio background. I promise to keep the message a bit shorter in subsequent editions!

My introduction to amateur radio goes back many years—about 63 to be exact. While I was in grade school, I was dating a young lady who invited me to her home to meet her parents. Her father was a mechanical engineer at the Caterpillar Tractor Company Research Center in Moshville, Illinois, near Peoria, where I was born. He took me down to his basement and showed me his amateur radio station. With the flip of a few switches, he was suddenly working stations in Russia, Europe, and beyond. I was absolutely amazed. In that moment, I knew I had to become part of this hobby

He guided me through the licensing process, and I received my Novice call sign, WA9JAC. The rest, as they say, is history. My father—who never had a college education but was truly a jack of all trades—bought me an *ARRL Handbook*, and together we soon built a 75-watt, CW only, crystal-controlled transmitter from scratch. Shortly thereafter, we found a used RME-4300 receiver at a local hamfest, strung up a dipole, and I was on the air.

For years, I operated from a small closet in my upstairs bedroom. Eventually, I upgraded to a Viking Valiant II, and life was good. My father then put up a tower attached to the house, we added a used TA-33JR, and I was in ham heaven. I operated CW exclusively for the first five to six years of my amateur radio journey.

Outside of amateur radio, I've been fortunate to enjoy a wide range of interests and adventures. I'm a keyboard player and have recently started both a jazz band and a rock band. I ride motorcycles and have made eight trips through the Alps on BMWs. I've raced and owned sailboats, and one of my favorite experiences was bareboat chartering—and serving as captain—on a 45-foot catamaran in the British Virgin Islands, an adventure I've enjoyed twice. I've flown airplanes for more than 50 years and hold private, instrument, and commercial ratings. And somehow, I still find time to play a lot of golf, and I most importantly I have always found time to be on the air.

Personally, my wife and I celebrated 50 years of marriage last December. We have two adult children, one in Denver and one in Boston and have been blessed with 3 beautiful grandchildren. My wife's call is W4PBG, and both of my children were hams but not much follow through today. We have lived in South Florida since 2005 preceded by Raleigh, NC, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and 22 years in Chester County, PA. I have held the Extra Class license for many years, and yes, I had to pass the code test!

Academically, I earned a degree in Electrical Engineering from Bradley University, followed by a combined MBA and master's degree in industrial engineering. I retired about seven years ago after serving as an Executive Vice President at a major corporation. I truly enjoyed the work, but upon turning 70, I decided it was time to slow down and "smell the roses."

A few years ago, I was asked to take over the DX Marathon program, and I accepted the role. In just a couple of years, after having put a number of initiatives in place along with over 100 zoom meetings with clubs in the last 18 months, participation has doubled. While we still have a long way to go, this growth has been especially encouraging at a time when our hobby is not seeing much expansion.

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Much to my surprise, a few months ago I received a call from Don, N1DG, asking whether I would consider serving as President of CWops. I had met Don through several DX-focused Zoom meetings, to which I had been invited by my good friend Bill Salyers, AJ8B. I was initially taken aback, but as a member who still considers CW my favorite mode, I decided to do some due diligence. I spoke with several members of the Board to better understand how the organization functions and what the role of President truly entails. What I discovered was an organization filled with outstanding contributors and exceptionally well-run programs and the extra workload would work in my retirement schedule.

My continuing love for CW has carried through my entire ham radio experience. For about eight years, I was fortunate to have a second home in Colorado, where I joined an outstanding club—the Rocky Mountain Ham Radio Club—led by my good friend John Maxwell, WØVG. The club operates an impressive Field Day setup in Jefferson County, perched on a mountaintop at over 9,000 feet of elevation. I've participated there alongside another good friend, Doug Sharp, K2AD for quite few years. Doug and I are normally the only CW operators at Field Day, and this past year that was indeed the case. The Club achieved first place in Colorado in the 4A category—and third place nationally! Doug and I operated CW at field day and logged more than 2,200 QSOs. That's the way I like it! I hope to back out next year.

Over the years, I've learned—and hopefully gained some wisdom—and have come to understand that the good Lord gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason: we should listen more and talk less. Over the past month, I've been conducting Zoom calls with many of the key leaders and contributors within CWops, including Stew, GWØETF; Don, N1DG; Jim, N3JT; Bruce, N1LN; Richard, VE3KI; Trung, W6TN; Dick, N9EEE; Craig, K9CT; Bob, WR7Q; Roland, K7OJL; Rob, K6RB; Dan, KB6NU; and several others. These conversations have been incredibly helpful and have given me a much clearer understanding of the organization and its programs.

So, what are my initial observations?

This is an exceptional organization that is doing many things right, and the leadership of those mentioned above is both strong and effective. While I am naturally biased toward action, I also recognize that when something isn't broken, it shouldn't be fixed. I firmly believe that effective leaders surround themselves with people who are smarter than they are and who bring deep expertise to their respective areas of responsibility—and that is clearly the case within CWops. I do believe in continuous improvement—it is essential for any organization to survive.

So where will I focus my initial efforts? Here are my thoughts, at least at the 30,000-foot level.

In my professional career over the past 20 years, I was responsible for multiple business units and was always a strong advocate for clearly defined mission and vision statements. Simply put, the mission answers the question *Who are we?* while the vision defines *Where are we going?* Without clarity and consensus among leadership in both of these areas, an organization is like a ship without a rudder: it may be moving quickly, but it lacks a clear destination.

Developing meaningful mission and vision statements is not easy. My plan is to work with key leadership in CWops to begin this process. Whether it takes one month, three months, or even six months, I believe this task is critical. Once we reach consensus on who we are and where we

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are going, the programs and the operational focus becomes quite clear. Without it, any organization pretty much just vacillates with no direction, and this will normally result in the failure of an organization.

There are two additional areas where I see significant opportunities for growth, assuming these emerge from our mission and vision statements. The first is the CW Academy, and the second is the Ambassador Program. Both are well positioned today, but each would benefit from focused attention to more fully realize their potential as effective recruiting pathways.

I expect that I will invest time and energy in strengthening both programs, working with those responsible to increase their effectiveness in growing CWops and advancing the art of CW.

Allow me to conclude by sharing a genuine concern I have for our hobby overall. I am very concerned about the future of our hobby. As part of developing a clearer understanding of DX Marathon growth and its long-term vision, I conducted an analysis to try to better understand the demographics. We have a significant skew in age in our hobby which is of concern. I looked at the average age of hams in the US and I don't expect it is that much different in other parts of the world. I applied general population mortality rates to those demographics. The resulting Silent Key projections and "drop outs" due to inactivity or diminishing lack of interest, weighted against the incoming new ham growth rates was quite sobering.

I firmly believe that organizations either grow or shrink over time—very few remain static. The data suggests that we are shrinking, and I don't like that. When the same analysis is applied specifically to CWops, the results are pretty much the same. So who are we and where are we going?

The obvious question is: *How do we reverse this trend?* I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I do believe that a clearly articulated mission and vision can help point us toward new ideas and actionable steps. You've probably gathered by now that I view growth as critically important to our organization. It is an area where I intend to focus my contributions, as it aligns well with my skill sets—both within amateur radio and my professional career.

I look forward to carrying out the responsibilities of this position and will do my very best to serve CWops well. With your support, I believe we can accomplish great things for our hobby—especially for the beautiful mode we call CW. I plan to kick off our effort on vision and mission with key leadership right after the first of the year. We will start with a private survey which I have already developed to get input from the leadership. We will work hard until we come up with a clear path forward.

Thank you in advance for your support and partnership as we work together to keep CW vibrant and exciting for generations to come.

Happy New Year, and have a great 2026. didididahdidah

**73, Mark, WC3W**, President (CWops #3525)

# **Editor's Notes:**

## **New Year's Resolutions – Time to “Cross the Road”**

As we roll into a new year, it's the perfect moment to step outside our usual operating habits and “cross the road” to try something different in the world of CW. Whether you're a contesting fanatic, a dedicated ragchewer, or somewhere in between, here are a few resolutions to broaden your CW horizons.

Below are suggested resolutions inspired by CWops' programs and mission, including activities such as CWTs, CW Academy, operating events, and club service roles.

### **Join More CWT Sessions**

The weekly CWTs are the heartbeat of CWops—fast, friendly, and fun. Resolve to join one more session each week or month than you did last year. Whether you're chasing personal improvement or simply enjoying the camaraderie, CWT participation strengthens both your skills and the club community.

### **Operate in the CW Open**

The CW Open is one of the club's signature events, open to all and designed to encourage high-quality CW operating. Make 2026 the year you enter a session—or all three. It's a great way to sharpen your skills and represent CWops on the air.

### **Ragchew More and Contribute to QTX**

CWops celebrates not just contesting but also the art of conversation. Set a goal to increase your ragchew time—and submit those QSOs to the QTX program — your ragchews help preserve the art of longer, more personal CW exchanges.

### **Volunteer as a CW Academy Advisor**

CW Academy is one of the most impactful educational programs in amateur radio. If you've benefited from it—or simply want to give back—consider becoming an Advisor. Helping new operators gain confidence at the key is one of the most rewarding ways to support the next generation of CW operators.

### **Support “Giving Back” On-Air Practice Sessions**

CWops sponsors structured on-air practice opportunities for learners. Volunteering as a practice partner helps students bridge the gap between classroom and real QSOs, and it strengthens the next generation of CW operators.

### **Activate a CWops Mini-Club Callsign**

CWops maintains special vanity callsigns for mini-clubs. Resolve to request and activate one for a contest, special event, or CWT. It's a fun way to represent your region and promote CW activity.

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## **Nominate a Worthy Operator for Membership**

CWops grows through personal connections. If you know an operator who embodies the spirit of CW—courteous, skilled, and active—make it a resolution to nominate them. Expanding the membership strengthens the club's global reach.

## **Serve on a Committee or Support Club Operations**

Behind every award, event, and program is a team of volunteers. If you've ever thought about helping with membership, awards, events, or communications, stepping into a support role is a powerful way to "cross the road" into deeper service.

## **Promote CW in Your Local Community**

Give a talk at your local club, mentor a new ham, or demonstrate CW at Field Day. CWops' mission includes advancing the art of CW worldwide, and local outreach is one of the most effective ways to do that.

## **Promote CW Locally**

Give a talk at your local club, display at a Hamfest, mentor a new ham, or demonstrate CW at Field Day. Sharing your enthusiasm locally helps advance CWops' mission worldwide.

## **Strengthen Your Own CW Skills**

Whether it's improving head copy, refining your sending, or pushing your comfortable speed, choose one measurable skill to develop this year. CWops celebrates continuous growth, and the new year is a perfect time to set a measurable goal.

## **Contribute an Article to *Solid Copy***

Our newsletter thrives on the experience and creativity of members. Resolve to write a technical brief, an operating report, or a skill-building piece for *Solid Copy*. Even a short article can spark ideas, help others improve, and keep the newsletter vibrant and useful.

## **Crossing the Road Together**

Resolutions are easier — and more enjoyable — when shared. CWops thrives on participation, encouragement, and the joy of Morse. Whatever resolutions you choose, each step you take rewards yourself, the club and the wider CW community.

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### **An additional note:**

We are launching a new recurring albeit occasional feature for *Solid Copy* called "My Other Hobby Is..." The idea grew out of a travelogue from Jim, N3JT with the realization that ham radio, as absorbing as it is, isn't our only passion.

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We're kicking things off with Jim's article "My Other Hobby is...RC Flying."

If you have another pursuit you enjoy -woodworking, glass etching, blacksmithing, motorbike touring, or anything else - consider writing a short article about it. Include a few photos and send your submission to [solidcopy@cwops.org](mailto:solidcopy@cwops.org) for inclusion in a future issue of the newsletter.

**73, Dick N9EEE, (CWops #3113)**  
**Editor, Solid Copy** ([SolidCopy@cwops.org](mailto:SolidCopy@cwops.org))

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## The 2026 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 2026.

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 [our](#) past recipients - including the 2025 winners - VK2KI, DJ5CW, and OK1RR - can be read 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](mailto:awards@cwops.org) with a copy to [secretary@cwops.org](mailto:secretary@cwops.org). All nominations will be confirmed by email. In order to be considered, a nomination should be **received by March 14, 2026** and include:

- Nominee's name, call sign (if applicable), and complete contact information including postal address, email address, and telephone number
- A detailed explanation supporting the nominee's qualifications according to the above criteria
- Complete contact information 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.

# CW Operators Club Financial Report

12/31/2025

## Bank Accounts

Bank of America -CWops	10,427.69
Hometown Community Bank	15,078.11
PayPal - CWops	2,638.42
<b>TOTAL Bank Accounts</b>	<b>28,144.22</b>

## Investment Accounts

CD Bank of Farmington	243,931.24
<b>TOTAL Investment Accounts</b>	<b>243,931.24</b>

**OVERALL TOTAL**

**272,075.46**

## INFLOWS

Club Dues	28,777.19
Hamvention Income	5,175.00
Medallions Income	1,425.00
IntlInc	10,332.37
<b>TOTAL INFLOWS</b>	<b>45,709.56</b>

## OUTFLOWS

Awards	7,483.24
Donation	1,500.00
Hamvention Expense	6,834.64
Marketing	2,611.78
Medallions Expense	4,825.50
PayPal Network Fees	785.61
<b>TOTAL OUTFLOWS</b>	<b>24,040.77</b>

**OVERALL TOTAL**

**21,668.79**

## Notes:

- 1.Hamvention is close to breakeven – expenses includes 2026 deposit
- 2.Medallion cost includes bulk purchase (shipping has increased dramatically)
- 3.Membership reserves for Life and future memberships should be \$244,180.
- 4.Donation was for Malawi CW project

Submitted by Craig Thompson, K9CT CWop's Treasurer

# Ops News and Notes

## Duncan (Mac) Fisken, G3WZD

Welcome to another Ops News and Notes, and thank you for the contributions. We look forward to receiving your personal news, achievements, and activities to share with others in this column. Feel free to send them to me at [NewsAndNotes@cwops.org](mailto:NewsAndNotes@cwops.org)

**Scott, N7JI #2348** I have to admit...I am not a good typist. I can copy by head much faster than 25 wpm, but to have been able to type solid copy at 25 wpm was really, really hard for me.



**Tim, K9WX #1462** I have been appointed to the ARRL's Contest Advisory Committee (CAC) as the ARRL Central Division representative. The CAC investigates such matters regarding ARRL-sponsored contests as referred to it by the ARRL leadership, making recommendations back to the League.

**Carl, K2YR #2567** I was uploading my log into the [CWops Award Tool](#) today, and discovered I finally got CWops WAS! I've been in CWops now for a little over 5 years now, and I have had 49 states for years, and all I was missing was Vermont! I can almost throw a rock into Vermont from my QTH! But caught Joe, K1VMT during the ARRL 160 test last month. At the time not realizing he was a CWops member, so a nice surprise today. Thanks for the Q Joe!

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**Glenn, VE1IJ/VE1AQF #457** Just to show the power of nature I am enclosing a picture showing just what befell my tower during last weekend's windstorm here in Southwest Nova Scotia. My beam is totally useless, my wires are at half-mast but I am still able to use 80 meters. Outside the picture is my 6-meter and 2-meter beams essentially resting on the ground after their mast snapped and their rotator is dangling held only by its control cable. Needless to say I am not a happy camper. Luckily the tribander does not appear to have sustained any visible damage.

**Fred, KG9X #1881** Just want to thank the CW Ops organization and Icom for the Low Power Region 2 award plaque. There were several good scores from our members. I was lucky enough to operate all 3 sessions and come out on top overall. I always enjoy the open contest and look forward to the next one.



**Chris, VK3QB #2949** As a former President of FISTS Down Under I tend to be the focal point for questions about Morse code from the press. I guess it's one of the hazards of the job.

Last month, I was contacted by an ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) looking for background to a general interest story about Morse code. The main thrust of the story related to the Morsecodians, a group of retired telegraph operators who maintain a presence of the old land-based telegraph stations. My involvement related to the future of Morse code with us amateur radio operators and our passion for keeping the code alive.

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The interview was by phone and ultimately the story was published in print and online. Not everything I spoke about was included in the article, and as often is the case, only snippets of what I said were used. Nonetheless, a great opportunity to talk about Morse code and include a reference to CWops. You can read the article [here](#)

Then on 2<sup>nd</sup> January I received a call late in the day from an ABC Radio producer asking me to join an evening presenter on ABC Sydney to talk about Morse code. I wasn't provided with much of a brief, so I went into the interview feeling somewhat under-prepared.

Nonetheless, the questions were open ended enough that I was able to provide general information about Morse code, its development in the 1830s by Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail and its reputation and contributions through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to the present day, where I provided a run-down of how we amateur radio operators keep the code alive with the magic of radio waves. I even managed to include reference to the CW Academy classes I'm running here in VK this semester.

We don't often get a chance to promote Morse code to the general public, so I'm always pleased to be able to speak with journalists when they get in contact.

**Don, 7Q6M #1375** Urgent 7Q6UJ has been QRV most days from 0300z to 0340z. Starting 2<sup>nd</sup> January, he will be QRV on 1832.00 CW. Check out this [video](#) of Urgent 7Q6UJ heard in Indiana by WD8DSB.



*L-R: Praise 7Q8P & Urgent 7Q6UJ  
(photo courtesy of 7Q6M)*

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**Joe, K9UR #2102** Reminder: the CWops Discord channel is a lively real-time gathering place for members and aspiring members to share conversation, mentoring, operating tips, and camaraderie among fellow CW enthusiasts. To join, simply request an active invite link from any member already on Discord or by contacting [me](#).

**Duncan, G3WZD #1979** I enjoy certain contests using QRP (typically single-band 40M). For those interested, Hans Summers of QRP Labs fame has been interviewed in this week's edition of Ham Radio Work Bench (HRWB). This is an absolutely fascinating overview of Hans's journey from beginning to CESSB, including development of his entire range. The show can be found [here](#). Hans Summers interview starts at approximately 1hr 25mins (though the whole show is worthy of listening too!).

Until the next News and Notes, wishing everyone this best for 2026 and QAC!

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

[NewsAndNotes@CWops.org](mailto:NewsAndNotes@CWops.org)

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## CW Open – September 5, 2026

**The session times will be as follows:**

**Session 1: 00:00 UTC, Sept 5**

**Session 2: 12:00 UTC, Sept 5**

**Session 3: 20:00 UTC, Sept 5**

# How We Were

Ian Capon, GWØKRL

K8VA, Mike Koralewski, CWops #2468



"About 1975 or 76..."

I think it is a Drake B Line at this point, upgraded to a "C" maybe a year later.

Using a Heathkit iambic keyer.

I was, let's see... 29 years of age? Those were the CW traffic net years!"

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)**

# CWTs Down Under

## Chris Chapman, VK3QB (CWops #2949)

*(Ed: this piece continues the original article started in the March 2025 issue titled "[CWTs Down Under.](#)")*

Well, that's a wrap for 2025 and now we prepare for a fresh year and new challenges.

A couple of years ago I took on the role as OC Ambassador for CWops. I'd only been a member for a couple of years and was yet to participate in many club activities. And I can say without hesitation that it has been an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. I've met and worked nearly every active OC member and introduced four new members to CWops.



As a part of promoting CWops and our activities in the antipodes, I want to provide members elsewhere with an insight into what CWTs are like for us down-under. It's worth noting that there are only 23 CWops members in the OC region and most weeks we only see five regular participants in CWTs. It's rare for non-members to participate. In order for us to make double digits, or even qualify for a CWT point (only 5 QSOs), we have to work DX – and I'm talking long-haul DX. NA or EU mostly. Sometimes just making the requisite five QSOs is a challenge, especially for those of us running 100 W into a wire antenna.

Presented below is a summary from five active VK members.

### **Chris VK3QB # 2949 (2N4N)**

The 1300z and 0700z CWTs are my preferred sessions. The 1900 is too early for me – being 6 am here in VK3. Then 0300z session is nearly always poor due to propagation conditions. 99% of QSOs are on 40 and 20 metres. I might have had one or two on 15 metres, and a few on 80 metres with the local guys.

2025: 74 sessions. Top session score - 528 points

2024: 26 sessions. Top session score - 576 points

Both high scores recorded in the 1300z sessions. In three sessions, I couldn't make the requisite five QSOs for a CWT point. Some weeks can be very challenging (frustrating).

Antenna: 40m doublet at 10 metres high.

### **Graeme VK5GG # 3397**

Due to work commitments my only weekly session is at 0700z.

2025: 48 sessions. Top session score - 196 points

Antenna: DX-Commander with 32 radials @ 3 metres long

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### **Andy VK3OU #3386**

The 1300z and 0700z sessions definitely bear most fruit. The 0300z session suffers from poor to non-existent propagation; this session can only really work for us with the participation of more VK ops. I am too much of a night-owl for the 1900z session 😊

My main goal with the CWTs in 2025 was to attempt a silver medal placement (>40 sessions), and improve my cw speed.

2025: 105 sessions. Top score - 960 points from 32 QSOs, 1300z session

2024: 13 sessions. Top score - 288 points from 18 QSOs, 1300z session

Antennas: 40m: Ground mounted 1/4-wave vertical over a ground mesh

20m: OCFD @ 7m high

15m/10m: Hexbeam @ 6 m

Goals for 2026:

- Continue to improve my CW speed
- Aim for a higher QSO rate within a CWT

### **Phil VK3VB # 3584**

My 2025 campaign began mid-year, so I was unsure I would achieve bronze. Working full time the hours in vk3 are challenging - midnight, 6am, 2pm and 6pm local. I managed a few weeks where I qualified all four sessions, and also connected to my shack remotely both while interstate, including via android phone from V8 supercars race. Local noise at my home QTH can be a major factor.

2025: 66 sessions Top session score - 256 points

2024: 18 sessions Top session score - 49 points.

This included several sessions where I did not qualify.

Both high scores recorded in the 1300 sessions.

Several sessions were only qualified due to the local CWT operators being prepared to move around the bands - huge thanks.

Main antenna is a multi-band dipole, often with a "sloper" as the receive antenna.

### **Allan VK2GR #3087**

The 0700z session is generally good with 40m and 20m often being open.

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The 1300z session near midnight is too late for me. The 0300z session is poor due to propagation to eastern Australia at that time.

2025: 104 sessions Top session score - 4,761 points

2024: 85 sessions Top session score - 6,400 points

Photo attached of the 15m monoband 3 element Yagi and the 4 element monoband 20m Yagi.



These results demonstrate what a difference a tower and beam make from this part of the world – and dedication of course. Allan VK2GR is fortunate to have towers, beams and real estate. Those of us limited to verticals, dipoles, and wires rarely crack 30 QSOs and 1,000 points in a single session, even with good conditions.

I think it would be fair to say that Allan VK2GR is the only VK op able to hold a frequency and run, and this is reflected in his scores. The rest of us tend to search and pounce, which is fun of course, but we simply can't get the QSO counts that Allan achieves.

It's about 10,000 to 15,000 km from VK to NA, and EU, depending on the path. Either way, multiple hops and fair propagation conditions are required. And once our relatively weak signals get there, we are competing with strong local signals compressed into the CWT portion of the bands.

So, to those NA, EU and JA operators who pull us out each week - we know who you are - thanks for your support. If you haven't yet worked any/many of us, please keep your ears directed down-under. We are all hoping to see our performance improve in 2026.

**73, Chris VK3QB** (and the CWTers down-under)

CWops OC Ambassador

# Vintage CW

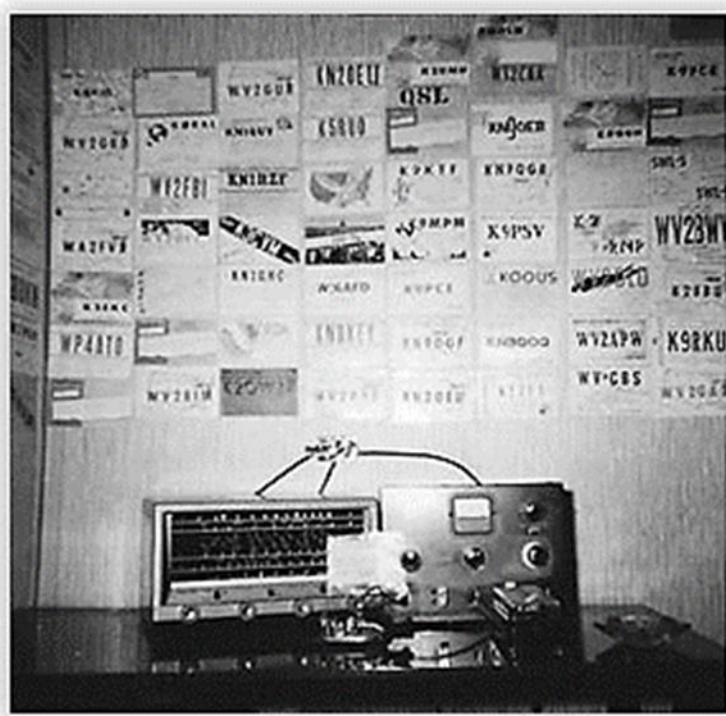
[\*\*Rob Brownstein, K6RB \(CWops #3\)\*\*](#)

## Prologue:

It was early 1993, my wife was pregnant with our first child, and I had had several years of fun with a modern, solid-state rig, QSK amplifier and yagis, doing contests, working DX, and rag-chewing. But, I knew that soon my days of butt-in-chair contesting on Saturdays and Sundays would be interrupted by years of parenting, play dates, little league, and soccer.

So, I decided even before the new arrival came that I would be preemptive. Assuming my radio hours would be confined to our son's sleeping schedule I decided to explore another aspect of ham radio – vintage restoration and operation.

As a kid of 12, with a Viking Adventurer and S38-E, on my trips to Lafayette Radio in Jamaica, Queens, New York, I often lusted after those NC-300s, Viking Valiants, and the like, on prominent display. It took me a year to save up to buy the S38-E, so I knew these big-boy radios were way out of reach. The lust got tucked away.



Then, in 1993, I saw a QST ad for a Viking Valiant from a ham in Ohio. And, I jumped. Sometime, later, a big box arrived with this monster transmitter. It had been years since I played around with tube-type gear. My last one was my HW-100 which was set aside in favor of a Ten-Tec Omni D in 1982. So, first I read the manual carefully and connected a suitable dummy load and began to explore the Valiant. It featured three 6146s in parallel in the final amplifier, a pair of 6146s in the plate modulator, mercury-vapor rectifier tubes and a built-in VFO.

Initial testing showed that when tuned as directed, the output was approximately 150 watts, well  
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below what should have been more like 235 or more. The VFO drifted – a lot – for the first 60 minutes – and the CW keying, as monitored on an Icom 761 was a bit clicky. The AM audio was very pinched. I knew I had my work cut out for me.

It took me weeks of part-time tinkering to figure out that the meter shunt in mine and all Valiants was more resistive than specified and the plate current readings were higher than actual. When I pruned the nichrome shunt to its proper resistance, the output rose miraculously to 240 watts according to my Bird wattmeter. When the Valiant was introduced, SSB was ascending, and people were looking for pinched audio a la SSB. So, in its infinite wisdom, Johnson engineers filtered the audio input to the 6146 pair to cut off the lows and highs and make it sound like a telephone – yuck. I took the filter out of the circuit, changed some resistor and coupling capacitor values, and soon had an AM audio that sounded like AM.

The drift VFO, however, was another story. Again, in their infinite wisdom, Johnson engineers had sealed the 6AU6 VFO tube and OA2 voltage regulator inside a closed metal box. It took about an hour before thermal homeostasis occurred and drift became tolerable – particularly on CW!

The keying was grid-block type, and by playing with the values of R and C, I was able to make the rise-and-fall times more moderate and reduce clicking to near zero.

So, there I was, transmitting on my Valiant, and listening on my Icom 761, and getting decent reports on both CW and AM. And, then I saw a QST ad for an NC-303 from a well-known radio store in Kansas, and I jumped. Soon I owned a nice-looking NC-303 that kinda worked but needed serious aligning. Here, the manual provided little in the way of guidance and I had to work my way through the circuits to identify which circuit elements corresponded to which bands. But, I persevered and brought the 303 to life. Now, I had a real vintage station – a Valiant and NC-303. I rag-chewed on CW; I ragchewed on AM (3870 KHz), and I played “Daddy” during Mitch’s waking hours.



As my son grew, so did my appetite for buying and restoring the radios I lusted for in 1958. Over a course of a few years – starting in 1995 with the advent of eBay – I managed to snag a Viking Ranger and HQ-170, an Eico 720/730 and Drake 2B/2BQ, a Viking Adventurer and HQ-110, a Collins S-Line, and (drum roll) a Globe King 500 and 75A-4.

All, today, are history except the Globe King/A-4 station. I still operate it frequently and rag-chew on CW. But, this station required the greatest amount of perseverance in getting it operational at a level that I could abide. So, here is the rest of the story.

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## **Globe King/Collins Early Days**

I bought the Globe King from a ham in California who had kept it looking good but did nothing to it, operationally speaking. In fact, I don't know if he ever put it on the air. The Globe King 500, which evolved from the Globe King 400, and is the ancestor of the Globe King 500 B, is an interesting transmitter.

It comprises three separate chassis, one atop the other, fitted into a standard RETMA rack (see photo). At bottom is the RF deck power supply, in the middle is the plate modulator with its own power supply, and on top is the RF deck. A VFO could be added as an out-board accessory.



The power supply was the heaviest by far comprising big iron HV and filament transformers plus choke. It also had oil-filled filter capacitors and a pair of mercury-vapor rectifiers for the HV line and smaller rectifiers for the lower-voltage plate-voltage supply. There were three incandescent operation indicator lights and four toggle switches.

The modulator section featured its own power supply, a modulation transformer and a pair of 5514 modulator tubes (more or less equivalent to 811As). It had its own current meter for monitoring audio signals, three toggle switches, and an audio potentiometer.

The upper chassis featured an oscillator section, a 6146 first RF amplifier, and a 4-250A final amplifier. It features a pair of meters and meter switching, ten rotatable controls, a VFO input socket, and a key input socket.

In the rear of the rack, there are connecting wires that tie all three chassis together, electrically.

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Like the Valiant, the Globe King 500 designers put in an audio filter to narrow audio bandwidth. I never switch it in. As I did with the Valiant, I redesigned the audio section so that the audio was full AM bandwidth. I did operate it on AM for years on 75 and 10 meters, but it has been at least a decade since I've done so. These days, it is 100 percent CW.

Speaking of which, the transmitter uses cathode keying (the 500B uses grid-block). That means that open-key voltage is significant (e.g. 75 volts), and the current switched with key closure is also significant. You will not succeed in keying this transmitter with a keyer having a solid-state switching output. It will get blown up. You need an old tube-type keyer such as an Eico or Hallicrafters where the switching can tolerate the voltage swings and transients. I have tried different keyers and settled on the Hallicrafters HA-1. More about that later.

The Globe King 500 designers rely on tube electrode impedances to provide key shaping. Bad choice. This transmitter in stock form is a click monster!!! I ended up having to put some serious L and C on the key line to tame the light-speed rise and fall times. I played with values to minimize clicking and avoid mushy sounding code. For the last quarter century, no one has complained about any clicking.

Another design issue is the power supply in both the main supply (bottom rack) and modulator (middle rack). In both cases, the filter capacity is 4 uF. That is way too little to avoid ripple, and there was ripple to spare. The capacitors are chassis-mounted, oil-filled types. So, an elegant solution would be to find higher value, 2000-volt, oil-filled replacement caps. Good luck with that.

Instead, I bought many 50 uF, 500 volt tubular electrolytics and fashioned series-parallel combinations that equal 2000 volts and 25 uF. This thing that resembles sticks of dynamite taped together is attached in parallel to the original oil-filled caps making a 30 uF filter value. The outcome? No ripple.

So, with the modifications to the key line and HV supplies, I now had a transmitter that produced essentially click-free, T-9 CW tones. But...next I had to deal with frequency drift issues.

### **Tube-Type VFOs**

During the years that my son was growing from an infant, to a toddler, to a pre-adolescent, I had had a chance to explore solving the tube-type VFO drift problem. First, I got hold of a Johnson outboard VFO (for the Viking I and II), an Eico 722 VFO, and a WRL outboard VFO. I did several tests of drift-versus-time from start up to 60 minutes and found that of the three, the Eico equalized soonest but all continued to drift right up to the full 60 minutes.

I did some homebrewing to see if I could come up with a lower-drift solution, and found that the best was to use variable L and fixed C frequency control (as Collins did), or to separate the frequency-control L and C components from the tubes so that the frequency-control components are not heated by tube heat. That worked well, too.

But, the best solution I found was based on a QST article where a fellow ham had designed a solid-state DDS VFO on a small PC board that could be used for vintage transmitters by outputting the necessary 1.8, 3.5 and 7 MHz frequency ranges. For most transmitters the unit's output was sufficient.

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For the Globe King 500, it was not. But...the Globe VFO I had used a 6AU6 VFO and a 6CB6 buffer to provide enough drive for the King. So...I removed the former analog frequency-control elements (6AU6, coil, capacitor), redesigned the enclosure, and replaced it with the DDS board and an encoder, display and operations switching. It works great!



Before

After

I can now operate CW on 28 MHz from start up without drifting out of someone's filter bandwidth. With the original Globe VFO, it might drift 500 Hz or more over an hour monitoring the 7 MHz output. On 28 MHz, where that is multiplied by four, it means in one hour's time, my frequency could drift from X to X+/\_ 2 KHz!!! Un uh. No good. Now, from start to 60 minutes, I may drift 15 Hz!!! That's good.

### **The TO-Keyer**

Sometime in the late 1950s, Hallicrafters came out with a tube-type keyer based on W9TO's design. It was aptly called "The TO-Keyer." It used dual triode 12 AU7s to create sequential flip-flops (they called them "astable vibrators" in those days). The flipping output was used to control a triode switch connected to the coil inside a mercury-wetted relay. The relay was single-throw, double pole. One pole keyed your transmitter, and the other pole keyed a speaker or headphone to an always running relaxation-oscillator audio circuit (the sidetone).

You had two ways to connect a paddle, through a phono-type connector on the front panel or through an octal socket/plug connector on the rear. What was missing, though, was a way to attach a straight key, bug, cootie, or what have you, and still key the transmitter while producing side tone.

I solved that problem by connecting the straight key line to the grid of the triode that drives the relay coil. When open, the voltage is -15. When you ground it, it switches the relay, keying the transmitter and producing steady sidetone.

I hate the tone of the sidetone generator. It uses a neon light as the relaxation-oscillator element and its oscillation frequency is determined by a resistor. On my HA-1, the sound is anything but sine-wave like. So, I found a small CW oscillator with adjustable audio and frequency. It runs on 9 volts, so I rigged up a resistor-zener-capacitor klooge inside the HA-1 to power it.

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Then, I disabled the relaxation oscillator and replaced it with a nice, sine-wave-like tone.

Now, I have exactly what I wanted. A Globe King 500 without clicks, an outboard VFO that didn't drift, and a tube-type keyer that sounded wonderful and could accommodate a bug, straight key, side-swiper, or whatever my heart desires. I use it with a vintage Vibroplex and an add-on that lets me actually key it below 25 wpm if needed. And, the best part of all is the 75A-4 and Globe King 500 were both built and sold in 1955, and it keeps my nostalgia juices flowing.

## Epilogue



My son is now 32 years old, and I have the freedom to do contesting all day long on weekends, if I choose. But, I find that CWTs satisfy my adrenaline needs and no longer sit for double-digit hours. And, I still enjoy ragchewing on CW with my GK500 and 75A-4. Also, I feel an inkling of pride when someone says "...a Globe King 500? Really? I hear no clicks or chirps, and your freq is stable."

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SC

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## CW Skimmer Is A Great Decoder Use it FOR YOUR NEXT ragchew [Chris Norris, N8AI](#) (CWops #1934)

### Introduction

Many of you have used CW Skimmer, written by Alex (VE3NEA), to decode the I/Q stream from modern SDR receivers. It displays an almost magically accurate display of callsigns, 599, and CQ/QRL? alongside a color-coded waterfall showing the entire band at a glance, including signal

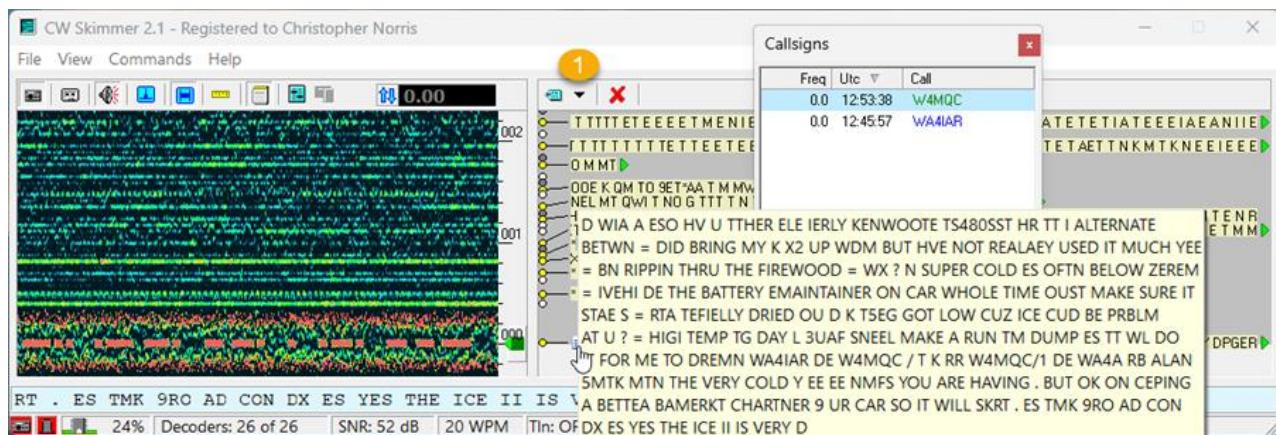
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strength and approximate speed. Even more valuable is the Reverse Beacon Network that it enables, performing instant propagation measurements over the Internet that even the Voice of American could not dream of of 50 years ago.

But I am writing about a much more mundane use for it, but still one at which it excels. CW Skimmer is the best CW decoder that I have ever seen. It will easily back up your ears and brain during a ragchew. Admit it, how many times have you wished you could confirm that call sign you thought you just copied? Or the guy's name or exact QTH, or what he just asked you when you were daydreaming or filling out your log? Most of the time, CW Skimmer has it ready for you to review with a simple mouse click.

## Single signal setup



Here is how I have my CW Skimmer window set up. The audio comes from a Y cable from my KX3 headphone jack and goes to the computer through a very clean external sound card in a DigiRig matchbox-sized gadget for VARAC and Winlink that I discovered was also very handy for this purpose. You don't need any CAT frequency data.

Instead of having CW Skimmer magically pick out just callsigns and a few other key text string, set it to display EVERYTHING by pulling down the menu at 1. Now you get a continuous display of both sides of your QSO to the right of the 000 scale, and also in the blue space just above the bottom information bar of the Window

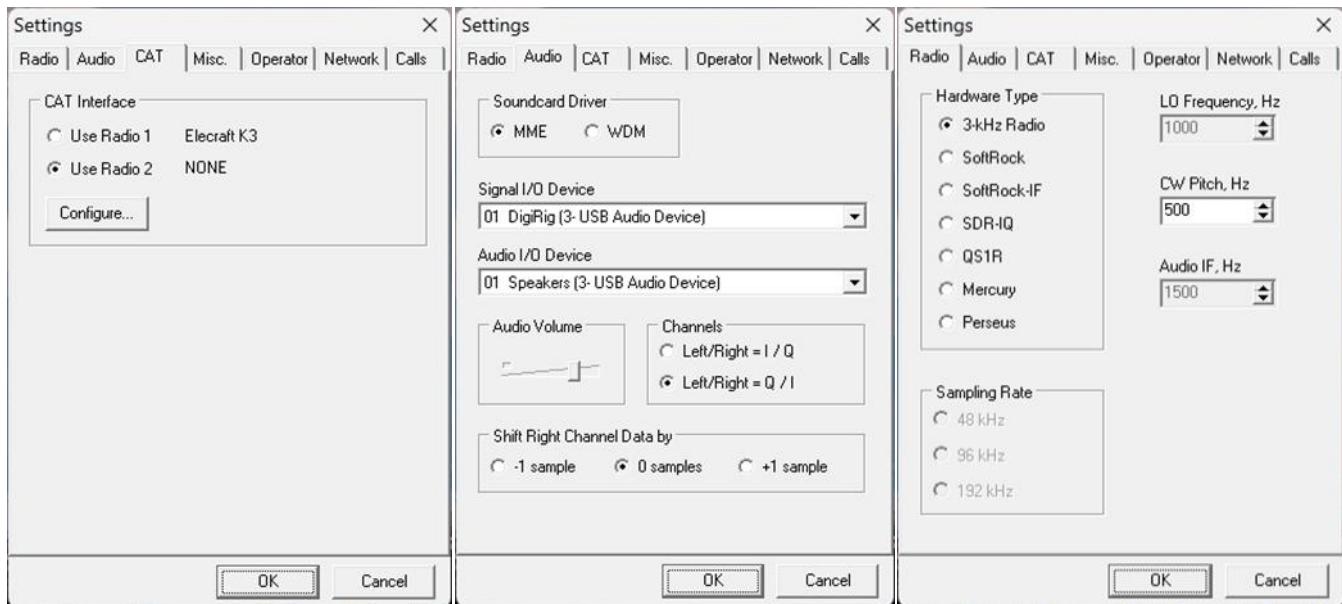
If you hover over the little green rectangle at 000, you can increase or decrease the audio filter width with the mouse scroll wheel. If you would like to go back a little further than one line, just double click on the little page icon just to the right (where the hand is) and it will pop up for a few seconds while you read it.

If you want clear everything and start over (maybe for a new QSO) click the red X near the top. The Callsigns box even works. I have it sorted by UTC here, and if the station was calling CQ it will be displayed in Bold.

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## Setting Up This “Crippled” Version of CW Skimmer



These are the three key Settings tabs in CW Skimmer, Radio, CAT and Audio. Radio and CAT (both on the left) are the easy ones, since you don't want to talk to the radio at all using CAT. CW Skimmer will just listen on the same center frequency you have your receiver set to.

The Audio tab (on the right) is a little trickier. I have always had a lot of trouble figuring out the Windows Sound Settings that allow you to figure out which of multiple USB devices is actually your little DigiRig matchbox. The simplest way I have seen it explained is to unplug the DigiRig USB from the computer, and when that USB sound device disappears, that is it! Then when you plug it back in, you can rename it DigiRig instead of Microphone so you will never be confused again. Except, I usually am.

## Using Skimmer to Copy Everything

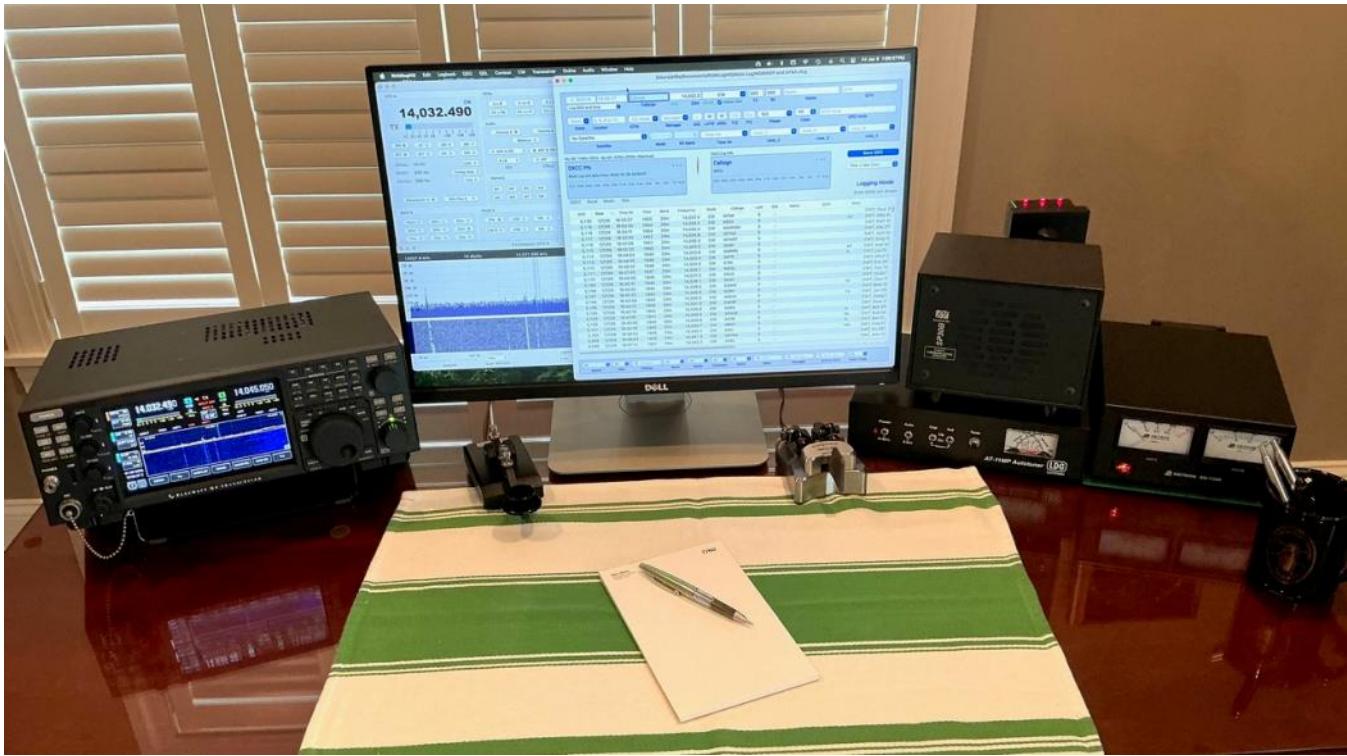
If you are listening to a Bug, CW Skimmer is not so hot. But for Keyboard with a good SNR, it is like reading RTTY. Paddle CW sent well also comes out good. It will also give you instant feedback on how good your own sending is. Or is not.

I find that it is a mistake to look at the decoded display very often. Your ears and brain will always be superior, especially when the SNR is poor. But when your brain is dyslexic on letters and puts in the wrong number for a call sign the first time like mine does, this setup can nail the right QRZ page first time!

But it will never turn you into a contesteer, not even K1USN.

# Less is More

[Gary Mikitin, AF8A \(CWops #2092\)](#)



**"Less is more" according to AF8A. The wireless keyboard and trackpad live in a pullout tray below the writing surface - both are moved up top during contests.**

**Less is more** is a principle whose basic meaning is to keep things simple. Frequently used in terms of architecture, it implies that simplicity and clarity lead to good design. The concept can be applied to many fields, including art, literature, music, and as demonstrated recently in my own shack, ham radio. This is a new revelation, coming from one who, like many of us, has spent 50 years accumulating 'stuff I just can't do without'. What led me to this new way of thinking?

One eye opener was a move from a house of 30+ years, with an attic full of tubing, wire, cable, antenna mounts (fixed, portable, mobile), parts galore (capacitive, inductive, resistive!) and even a few commercial antennas (HF and VHF) collecting dust. There was no point in moving most of it to a new home being constructed in an HOA (antenna restricted) neighborhood. One trip to the metal recycling shop and my future move was made easier and my wallet was \$75 to the good. (No, I don't get rid of everything. I foolishly/optimistically kept two HF verticals, a Butternut and a Mosely, which now reside in my new attic, gathering new dust.)

Another revelation occurred after my first HF rig purchase in 17 years, an Elecraft K4. It's a great rig, capable of doing just about anything on HF, given the proper cables to/from a computer and a key/set of paddles. I counted over 20 I/O 'ports' in the back, plus a few more in the front, covering all of the bases for me: CW, an occasional digital mode QSO or even something exotic (ie meteor scatter on 6 and 10 meters). As a result, relegated to the shack closet, was an outboard

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sound card interface, my LogiKeyer (sniff, sniff - I made a LOT of QSOs with it in 33 years) and a wattmeter. What's left in plain sight are the essentials: Power supply, speaker, autotuner, paddles, straight key and a computer monitor. Hidden from view are a WinKey Mini (essential for contesting) and an antenna switch. That's it!



***"We call our hobby 'wireless' but we still need a lot of wires. Note how the shack computer is on a shelf below the desk, completely out of the way"***

Lastly, I was asked by good friend K8MR to help with the decommissioning of two silent key stations, one of which took a crew of five guys well over a week to pull apart and haul to the garage for the benefit of a grieving family (and that didn't count the towers which were, best as we could tell, unreachable by crane, so no idea what became of them). Seeing all of that (and when carrying a lot of it up the stairs) made me wonder why we accumulate, accumulate and accumulate - rarely thinning the herd.

I decided I wanted a smaller 'herd' and now that I have one: a fixed station, a portable station, some mobile VHF/UHF stuff and that's it. My operating desk is clean and clear, as is my attic. The basement workshop might be the next place to focus...but I'm having too much fun operating my minimal stations to even think about starting down there.

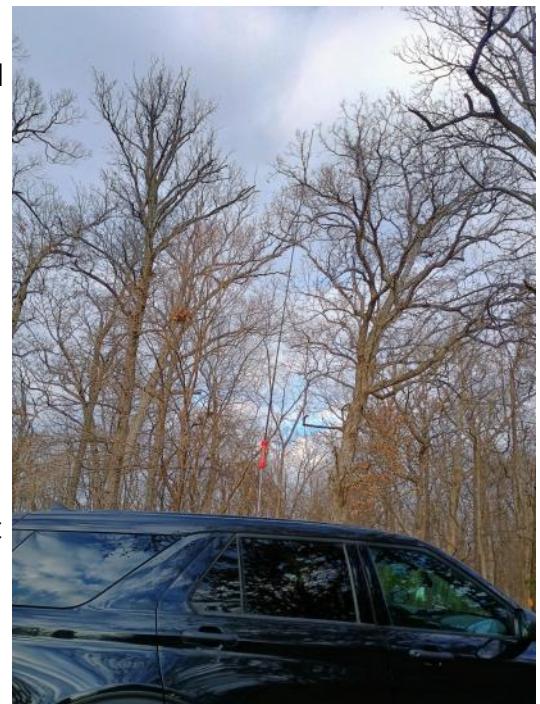
# Subzero POTA

Jared Corgan, W7AQB (CWops #3774)

November 30<sup>th</sup> was here and I hadn't gotten a Parks On The Air (POTA) activation in over the holiday. I had an uneasy feeling of less. Less being able to get out and on the air due to the escaping hours of daylight at parks after getting out of work. Less time to do it in with daylight saving cutting the window for activating before the UTC day rollover by an hour. It was below 0. Below 0 Celsius, hi hi. Not having grown up in a region with winter, cold weather still holds a bit of novel "why does the world turn into a refrigerator?" for me. I often recall a documentary on the arctic I once saw. Where the narrator pointed out that it often fell to -40 where they were filming, and it didn't matter what scale was used, because "they were the same." -40 is where the Fahrenheit and Celsius scales meet and read the same. I had never really had a need to notice the outside temperature before moving to Missouri at 17 years old. I know better now, however I resolved to get out and activate anyway.

I have some winter camping experience I gained while backpacking the Ozark trail, but it has been several years since I had done so. For backpacking my approach has been wool or synthetic base layers, no cotton against the skin, and layers on top of that with a shell or puffer jacket. I like a fleece vest as a next to outer layer to easily shed without exposing skin like you might when pulling shirts up over your head. I adjust the number of layers depending on how cold or blustery it is. One of my preferred features of the shell I use is that it has zipper vents I can open when I get too warm or begin to sweat. Sweat is a killer and will sap all your warmth away. Water-proof, insulated gloves seem to be a big help if you have to touch anything that has snow on it. I have a heavy wool sock cap I bought from a Finnish company that I am pretty fond of, to top it all off. For the activation, I felt it would be wise to do something lower impact to rediscover how I had found a way to go about enjoying being outdoors in the cold. I decided Powder Valley Conservation Area would do nicely.

I set out to prove to myself that what I thought I knew still worked. I stepped out of the car to setup the antenna, and was met with clear skies and low angle sunlight making everything bright with the light reflecting off the new snow. My antenna is a vertical loaded at 12" using a 10ft telescoping upper section. I mag-mount the assembled radiator to the roof of the car then adjust the coil until the radio is happy. The coil is a 3D printed one I made up in PETG, which can be adjusted between 40m and 15m without changing the fully extended telescoping section. The upper section is not in reach to me when the assembly is mounted atop the car. For my radio I used a Xiegu X6100 and usually do not have to use the built in tuner with this antenna. The X6100 runs pretty warm and I thought might aid in bringing the temperature up in the car a little. It never got more than slightly warm to the touch, I am guessing as a result of the cool ambient temperature in the car.



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20m looked pretty busy with the contesting in progress. I decided to start at 40m and move up skipping 20m until I felt like making a couple park to park contacts. That seemed to be where the other park activators were operating – CW operators crowded out into the 14.120's part of the band. After checking the frequency to be clear, and calling CQ for a while I got a hunter – KBØIWW, next was Jeff NØMII, more followed including Mark KB5YZY, and Tony KTØAA. Contacts came at a nice leisurely pace, eight in about 15 min.

I hopped over to 30m, picked up Jim KKØU, Tony KTØAA again, and about 22 others in about 30 min.



I thought, "I should be cold by now, but I'm not." The key I used is an NOSA RLP, which uses Richlite for many of the components including the paddles. I found it did not remove warmth from my hands and had the same action and feel as it does when operating in warmer temps. I usually hold the key in my left hand and operate the paddles with my right, so unfrozen hands were important to my continuing the activation. I moved my coil jumper to 17m made 12 contacts at an easy pace. I still wasn't chilled, but started to feel a little fatigue, so I decided to move over to 20m to get the P2P contacts. This ended up being a challenge given the pileups they were running. I quit hunting after 2 contacts, tuned up on 14.124 and started calling CQ myself. 27 contacts and 30 min later, I sent QRT, packed up the antenna, and headed for home. 71 contacts total, never uncomfortable or chilled, I had a blast.

Wool sock cap

<https://varusteleka.com/en-us/products/varusteleka-merino-watch-cap>

Base Layers

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/topics/clothing-mens/best-base-layer-men>

Sierra is a good place to find discounted prices on gear. Some may be seconds but if the discount is deep enough...

<https://www.sierra.com/>

# One of My Other Hobbies Is...RC Flying

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

You may recall when you completed your registration form for membership in CWops you were asked about other hobbies. Virtually everyone has them, some with many. Clearly, these avocational options pay tribute to our breadth of interests in life, as well as offer us alternatives for when the radio bands are kaput. One of my hobbies is flying radio-controlled (RC) airplanes. These are classified as "drones" under federal law, but I only fly fixed-wing aircraft.

First, I should note that my interest in model planes began when I was very young. I started with those cheap plastic models, but I was building balsa planes by age 10 or 11. I built them for and with "gasoline" (methanol, oil, and nitromethane) engines, but I never actually flew them. My largest project was a Fairchild P29 built of hundreds of pieces of balsa. It had a wingspan of 4 feet with a rather large and powerful Fox .19 gasoline engine. The plane was designed for free-flight, which means you hand-launched it under full throttle and it was supposed to do slow loops as it climbed -- and then somehow came down. Thinking back now I am not sure how that was even possible, but the plane was fun to build and show off to my friends. Maybe I was lucky there was no place near our row-house in Philadelphia where I could fly it without likely damage payments by my parents. During the plane's construction, the liquid glue used to attach tissue to cover the wing spars and give them the proper contour gave everybody in our house headaches and probably accounts for my occasional bouts of dizziness in my closed bedroom. (The same bedroom where, a few years later, I managed to get my hand across the B+ of my homebrew 811A amplifier while neutralizing it, but that story is for another day!) Thinking back about the glue fumes, I am amazed that my father, who smoked cigars, did not enter the room and cause the house to explode. By age 13 I was interested in ham radio so model airplanes disappeared from my hobby life.

But my model airplane interest resurfaced a few years ago when I happened upon a runway for RC airplanes located near the Boca Raton Amateur Radio Association club station in West Delray Regional Park, in Florida. I met a very experienced RC pilot who was willing to guide me in flying my first plane, a high-wing plane called the Apprentice. Steve was a retired fireman from Rhode Island, and this was his focal hobby throughout life so he knew everything and could fly anything. He attached his transmitter to mine (called buddy-boxing) so he could prevent me from destroying my brand-new plane by quickly compensating for my over-control tendency, common among neophytes. Flying straight and making smooth turns are the goals at the beginning. The first thing one must learn is that when the plane is aloft, has circled past you, turns and begins approaching you, the right-left perspective is reversed. At the outset learning to master this perspective change is difficult because it seems counterintuitive. The key is to imagine yourself in the cockpit of the plane, not easy to do when you are holding the transmitter while standing adjacent to the runway and there are several other planes zipping about above you. Eventually it becomes second nature, though I have discovered that when you are away from it for six months you have to think about it again.

There is almost an unlimited amount of technology and technique one can learn about flying these RC planes, from setting up the transmitter servo settings to adjust sensitivity (called expo setting) and extent of control (called dual rate); calibrating throw of the rudder, ailerons, and ele-

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vator; and using them together to fly the plane competently. Each plane is different and modern transmitters can accommodate probably 100 or more planes, each with different parameters. Even while flying there are trim adjustments on the transmitter to smooth the flight path. Also, each plane must have an FAA registration number, which is easily obtained and inexpensive. It apparently is intended to discourage terrorists from using drones.

When I was a kid the ham bands were used (only by licensees, of course) in addition to 27 MHz frequencies. Nowadays, it is all spread spectrum digital (2.4 GHz) so there is no need to post your control frequency on a big board so others can use different channels. Also, increasingly the planes are made of Styrofoam and the motors are electric, powered by Lithium-Ion batteries. In most places one must be a member of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, which provides liability insurance, offers education to RC flyers and serves as legislative lobbyist much like ARRL. In addition, there are clubs that support the hobby, and in some cases require membership to use the public fields they maintain for RC planes.

After not too long, I qualified to become a solo flyer, having succeeded without buddy-box intervention to fly a couple of loops around the local air field and land in one piece. Over the several years I have been doing this I have crashed all 3 of my planes, one so many times that it now weighs twice its original weight from the epoxy used to repair it. See Photo 1, the Visionaire.



Photo 1. The Apprentice, still flyable but twice its original weight!

Only once have I experienced a midair collision and that was not my fault. The other guy decided to climb to my altitude from under me -- and kaboom. His plane limped away but of course mine came down in pieces. Again, though, epoxy came to the rescue. There have been several times when I commanded the plane to go left and it went elsewhere. Once, I turned the stick left but the plane made a right turn away from the field and crashed onto the roof of the nearby viewing

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stand. Another time it flew behind a big tree beyond the viewing stand area but somehow came out on the other side and returned to normal flight without damage and under control. Two very experienced pilots noted that this was the most impressive recovery they had ever seen. Truth be told, I was not in control at all and was simply lucky to have regained level flight.



**Photo 2. The T-28 (on the left) and Apprentice (on the right), lethargic in our garage.**

I should add here that landing smoothly is probably the biggest challenge facing new pilots. Some planes, like the Apprentice (high-wing shown in Photo 2) floats in after cutting all power 50 yards from touchdown. Others, like the T-28 Trainer (also shown in Photo 2) need to be landed with some throttle to avoid damaging the landing gear or simply flattening the fuselage! There are guys on the weekends who fly RC model jet airplanes, which cost upwards of \$15,000. The pilots are remarkable and make it look so easy.

Several of the RC pilots I have met have flown or currently fly real airplanes, including military jets. They all say it is harder to fly these RC planes because everything happens so quickly. Experienced RC pilots say that if you have not crashed your plane, you have not flown it enough. That reminds me of the ham radio adage: if your tower and antennas are still up after a big storm, they were not big enough! I have flown in breezy weather, a significant challenge for these small (3-foot wingspan) airplanes made of Styrofoam. It is easy to get the plane off the ground into the wind, though I have tried to take off about 30 degrees off the wind direction only to have the breeze lift the Apprentice, a high-wing, and flip it over. Once airborne, though, planes seem to fly very slowly in one direction and just zoom by in the other. Landing safely requires no small amount of skill if the wind direction is not from directly ahead.

In flying, you always must be “two mistakes high” before attempting any trick maneuver, even a vertical loop. Again, it takes almost zero time to make a judgment error and find yourself with a

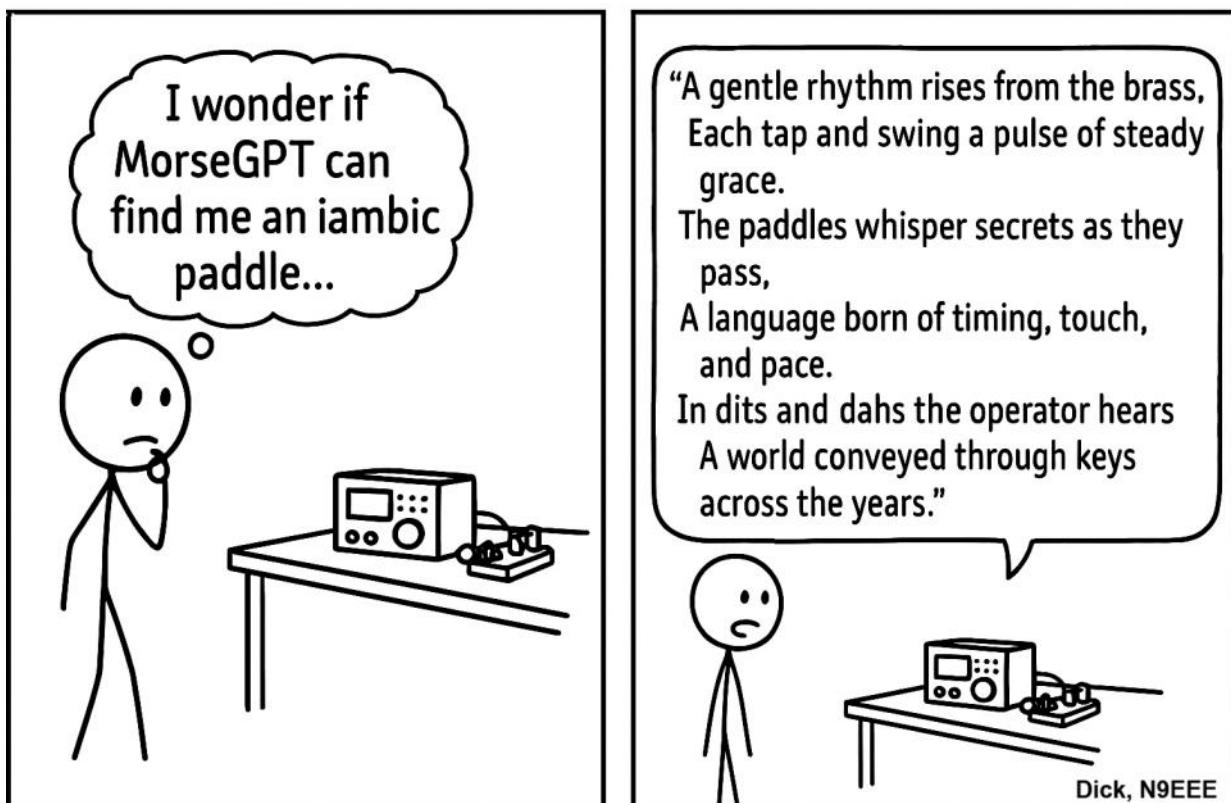
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pile of Styrofoam parts on the field. A cardinal rule of flying is never to take your eyes off your plane, no matter what happens around you. If somebody asks you something you must not look at them. If another plane crashes somewhere near you, no matter; just keep your eyes on your plane. There was one gentleman we called the Chairman because he brought a beach chair with him to sit on when flying, whereas everybody else stood. He had a bad habit of averting his attention from his plane to respond to somebody or look at something for a few seconds. That was all the time it took for his plane to disappear out of view west of the field over the Everglades or north over trees and into a pepper farm. He lost several planes that way.

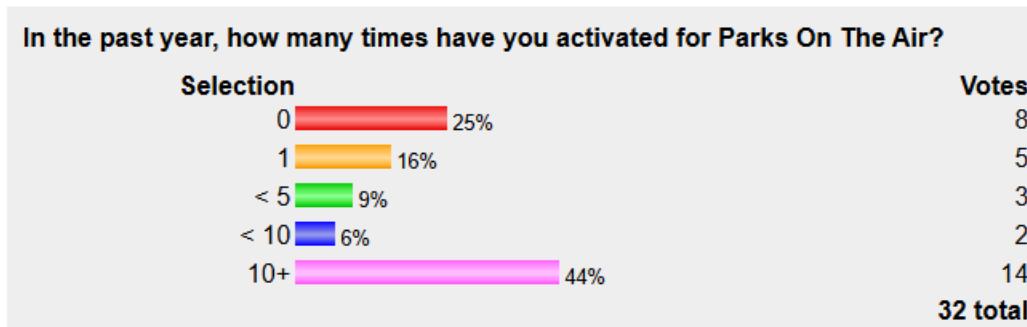
I have never been interested in developing my flying skills to do acrobatics, in part because I do not fly frequently enough, but also because I am too timid in view of my previous multiple crashes and my tendency to become upset when I do crash. Some flyers take it in stride but I am not so forgiving. In summer in Virginia, I am too close to Washington, DC and would have to drive 45 minutes to a field, too far for me. In Florida during winter, the field I use is only about 15 minutes away, but I have other activities in the morning when the air is still and suitable for these Styrofoam electric planes to fly reliably. So, I fly maybe once a week, and that is not enough to develop advanced skills. In fact, over the last season I find I am flying less often so perhaps this hobby is reaching its conclusion for me. But even if it does, I feel that I have completed a life cycle in that I began the hobby when I was a youngster, was interrupted by life, and then returned to it as a retiree (when I could afford it). We know this often happens in ham radio, too.

## Hamming It Up



# Keyed Up

## Last Month's Poll



### Soapbox: (selected comments)

K7KER: I had previously only participated in SOTA until I started operating, every other week, under the call W7SUB at the USS Blueback (SS581). The submarine is situated in 3 POTA sites, so I get triple credit for each activation. Then I stayed at the Lake District National Park, in England for a couple of weeks, in May, only intending to do SOTA activations and then realized I could do POTA activations everywhere I hiked! It was so beautiful and so much fun and I can't wait to go back!

MØLEP: Back in April, I was in Western Australia on holiday on Wajimup (Rottnest Island). The whole island and its surrounding waters is a park. Over a number of sessions I made 119 contacts, mostly CW, which have been logged on POTA and which also qualify for IOTA.

K4RLC: I try to combine SOTA and POTA whenever possible. This year, we were able to activate POTA sites in Edinburgh Scotland and in the Orkney Islands. Used an Elecraft KH1 which I packed in a camera bag, hung around my neck, and ready to go at a moment's notice.

NB7O: Toughest activation in 2025 was at the top of Diamond Head on Oahu, Hawaii. After the tough hike up carrying a backpack full of radio gear and antennas, 3 paddles (in case one failed like the visit to Hawaii in 2024). When I got to the top it was so crowded I could not deploy any of the antennas I packed up there except for the collapsible whip on my Elecraft KH1. I managed to get a SOTA activation but not a POTA activation; including a 1 watt contact with an OP in S. Carolina.

NØMII: POTA activation is a blast! Helps that I live 5 minutes from the closest park.😊 Thanks to all chasers listening for my QRP signal.

K4EAK: OK, so I have a serious POTA addiction problem. So far in 2025 I've done 121 activations, with 62 new-to-me parks, and over 3400 contacts, mostly CW.

## January Poll

**"If you had to choose only one key as your favorite, which key would you choose?"**

**Your choices are: Straight, Bug, Cootie/sideswiper, Paddle (single), Paddle (double)**

**Take the poll: <https://cwops.org/keyed-up/>. Leave a comment.**

**Check the results in next month's *Solid Copy*.**

# New Members

## Trung Nguyen, W6TN

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

<b>CWops</b>	<b>Call</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>CWops</b>	<b>Call</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>CWops</b>	<b>Call</b>	<b>Name</b>
3848	7Q6UJ*	Urgent	3852	K2MAS*	Matt	3856	KD6XU*	Barry
3849	KE8UEX*	Ram	3853	WI5D*	Steve	3857	W1SJ	Mitch
3850	W6JSV*	Jay	3854	W4DHW	Dave	3858	DA1DX*	Ben
3851	KN1MT*	Tyler	3855	W2DON*	Don	3859	KD4ZFS*	Jon

\* Lifetime member

As of January 8, 2026:

**Need Sponsors:** SM7WNM, SA4ZAB, W6GA, K6TTA

**Invitations Extended:** none

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

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

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

Membership Manager

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SC

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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 December 2025 results (GB hosts are shown in **bold**):

<b>GW2CWO</b>	OK1FHD IV3KOJ	HB9DAX YL2CQ	IK1YEV YU1ZH	OK1GOD EA1FCL	UA1ZZ VK7BO	OH8UBJ W4MQC/1	IZ1EGS 403RB
<b>JG1BGT</b>	JK1QYL	JO1DGE					
<b>JG1UQD</b>	JN6ILN	JH2KKG					
<b>JJ1FXF</b>	HL1MIM	VK3DBD	JR6SBI	JH1XUP	JA4IJ	BG2TFW	
<b>JK1QYL</b>	HL1MIM(3) JA2MYA	JN1FAO UA0CK	JQ3FRX JA4MRL	JL2SQK JI1CAZ	JF2FIU VK3XU	JR6ENL JR6SBI	JF1LXO JJ0SFV
<b>JM4AOA</b>	JE7RMT	JF7URV	JJ2KJN	JK1RTY	JN1NVQ		
<b>JO1DGE</b>	7L2VPL	HL1MIM(2)	JF1LXO				
<b>JQ3FRX</b>	JK1QYL	JA3JND	JA7JRC	JQ7CPP			
<b>K7NJ</b>	N6EED VA2EBI M0IYP	K8VBL K6TR OK2LA	K0CDJ K4JJW ON5REV	W7DZ K3MD	K7XU M0WDD	W6MVM G1HHU	5B4AGN IW1MM
<b>N7DZ</b>	K4JPN	AB5X	KF0TXA	WY0L	WA6BXV		
<b>W5DT</b>	AE4GS						
<b>W8OV</b>	K4WLO KE5AKL	KA9S KC3MIO	K9NO WA0JLY	KJ4KGK	WB4DKF	K8MDB	W3APA
<b>7J1ATG</b>	JA3EBL	JN1FAO	JS2OVO	JF7NWP	JA7WTH	JG7AJE	JE6AJO
<b>7L2VPL</b>	JO1DGE VK5IP VK3DA	BG2TFW BG2TFW JJ3LXM	BI1WJY JA4IJ	BI4THF JF6UZS/6	JA4DCS JA4DCS	HL1MIM JA4MRL	VK3MJ JS3UWJ
<b>7N2XZB</b>	JS6UVG JA6BZH JK1TCE	BG2TFW JH1RUT BI4JCR	HL1MIM BG2HE JA4IJ	BX2AMF 9V1ZV JR6SBI	BH4VUV JF1JDG BA4SE	JA6TSJ JE6AJO JK7UST	BI1TDC RA0FT

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## Giving Back Operating Schedule - 7 PM Local

October - April: 40m & 80m | May - September: 40m & 20m

Frequencies: 7.035 - 7.039, 3.535 - 3.539, 14.035 - 14.039 MHz | JA - 7.028 +/-

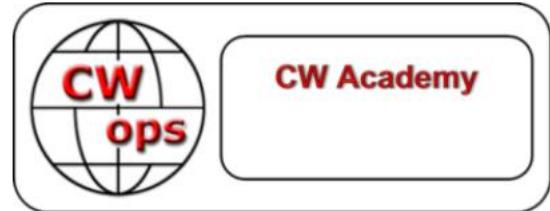
UTC+10	UTC+9	UTC+7	UTC+3	UTC+2	UTC+1	UTC/BST	UTC-1	New York UTC-4	Chicago UTC-5	Denver UTC-6	Los Angeles UTC-7	Hawaii UTC-10
MON												
VK1CWO	JØ1DGE							W2XS	W8OV			
	JG1GBT											
TUE												
	JR1WYW	E25JRP		SV2BBK		GW2CWO		WE5P	K8UDH	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
		7N2XZB										
WED												
		7J1ATG						N8DD			N7DZ	
THURS												
	7N2XZB		SV2BBK					KV8Q	N5OT	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
	JG1BGT							W7IY				
	JQ3FRX											
FRI												
	JK1QYL		SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N2GSL	AAØYY			K6RB	
					MØWDD							
SAT												
	JJ1FXF							W5DT				
	JM4AOA											
	JG1UQD											
SUN												
	JJ1FXF							W5DT				
	JM4AOA											
	7L1VPL											

# CW Academy

Bob Carter, WR7Q and Roland Smith, K7OJL

## FT8 – POTA – CW Academy

I have been doing Morse Code for almost 20 years now. As with most things in ham radio, there are always changes coming along. Some for the better and some not so much.



FT8 was introduced in 2017 and quickly becoming the most used digital mode on the air. I heard about it but was not interested as I was a die-hard fan of CW and certainly did not want to get involved with 'computer generated' QSO contacts. In addition to that, for several years I and many people were quite unhappy that CW was quickly disappearing from the air and being replaced by FT8.

After thinking about it a lot, I concluded that there were significant benefits:

- it brought a lot of new people into the hobby
- the bands were being utilized at a higher level
- the DXpeditions were able to make significantly more contacts, with a greater number of "hunters" having success
- there was more opportunity for the new hams to start making contacts without the fear of getting on the air

I also started to play with it and after learning the fundamentals, was able to use it to go after some of the rarer entities that I was missing in my ongoing DX chase.

But many people eventually get tired of watching grass grow and want to start doing something a bit more exciting and challenging. They now may want to embrace Morse code. If they can see a way to learn it without the painful experience they may have seen or tried in the past. This is one of the reasons CW Academy exists.

When the ARRL introduced the National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) in 2016, I like many other hams heartily got involved and had great success activating and/or working many of the parks; trials; monuments; etc. It was really a lot of fun...then it was over!!

Luckily several forward-thinking people put together Summits on the Air (SOTA) and Parks of the Air (POTA), not sponsored by any major organizations. They both have had enormous success and continue to do so.

SSB and CW have about a 50/50 split on SOTA, CW is highly favored by the activators especially when running QRP.

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The majority of POTA hunters are doing SSB, but many experienced 'activators' are moving to CW.

An interesting side note suggests that for signal effectiveness 5 watts on CW is roughly equivalent to 70-80 watts on SSB.

So, what does SOTA/POTA have to do with CW Academy?

Just like FT8, I believe this is an effective stepping stone to getting involved with CW.

As most of my experience in this area, has been with [POTA](#) I will use this as my focus.

I highly recommend that all advisors start getting their students to learn to send and receive their call sign as quickly as possible. Even if they are not at that point in the Beginner class. One of the things that I emphasize is you should know your call sign so well that it would wake you up when you hear it, even if you were dozing!

Many students are understandably nervous about making their first on-air contact, especially when calling CQ. POTA offers a supportive environment where beginners can practice in a low-pressure setting, gradually building confidence and skill.

### **For the Hunters (newbies)**

Listen on the air or look on the POTA website for an activator's call sign and frequency.

At first, listen a few QSOs to determine what exchange the activator may be expecting from you. (Only an exchange of call signs is required for POTA. Any other exchange such as RST and ST(ate) are optional). It's a courtesy to follow the activator's example.

Send your call sign, wait for his acknowledgement, and reply with the optional exchange or TU and you're done.

This is easily accomplished by logging into the POTA site; set the filter to CW and the band you're interested in working. The page lists all current activators; see who is operating, their park designator, location, frequency, and the last time someone contacted them.

Then get on the air and see if you can hear and work them.

There is nothing to fear as you already know everything first. Write it down so you can't forget.

All the hunter needs to do is send their call sign and an optional exchange, such as RST and STState, and they're done.

That is, it!!

Now, the best part...

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Hunters do not submit logs to the program. Only activators do. Hunters earn credit through the activator's logs.

### **For the activators**

Call CQ POTA de (your call sign).

Listen for the hunter's call sign.

Reply with their call sign, and an optional exchange such as RST and ST(ate).

Upload your log to the POTA site when you get home.

Some activators include their park reference in their CQ or the QSO. Providing your location helps hunters to aim their beam antennas.

Now, like FT8, at some point in time, the students may want to move to the next challenge of becoming an activator. This is also easy, but you must first develop the skills to be able to copy a call sign.

### **Practice Files**

We have modified the Intermediate and Advanced curriculums to utilize the "New Short POTA" files and will be adding them in more detail to the curriculums for the 2026 May/Jun Beginner and Fundamental levels as well.

Go to the Fundamental, Intermediate, or Advanced Practice Files and page down until you find the "New Short POTA" files. There are 10 iterations of these from speeds of 6 to 35 wpm. Going from simple to more complex and giving you a number of examples similar to what you may hear on the air.

Let's look for ways to incorporate POTA into your classes and help the students to get on the air and become better at CW operators in the process.

Thanks and good luck.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments please contact either Bob Carter WR7Q ([kcgator@gmail.com](mailto:kcgator@gmail.com)) or Roland Smith K7OJL ([rolandksmith@gmail.com](mailto:rolandksmith@gmail.com))

**73, Bob, WR7Q** CWops #1423

CWA Co-Admin

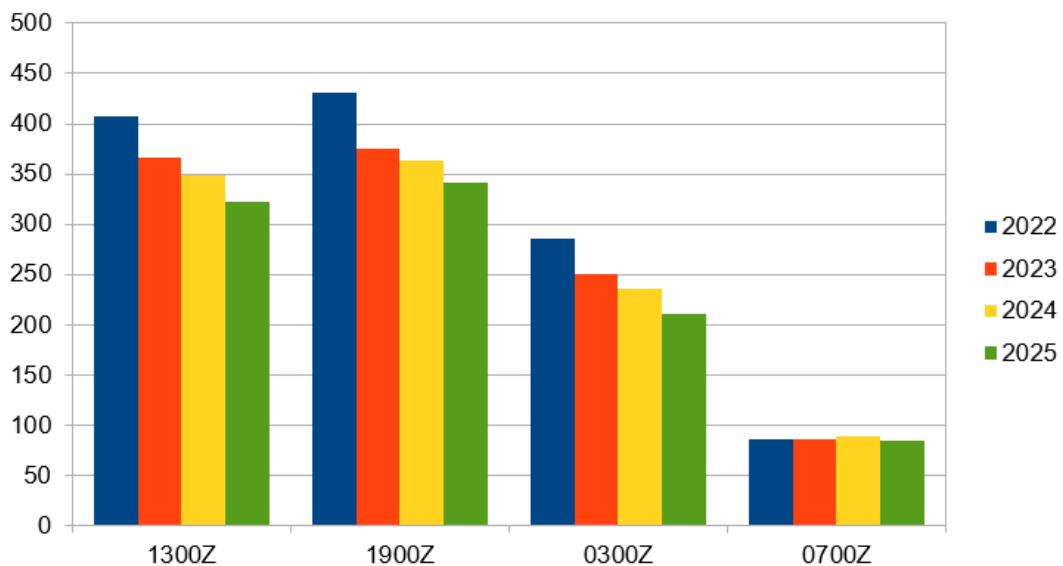
# CWops Tests (CWTs)

Rich Ferch, VE3KI

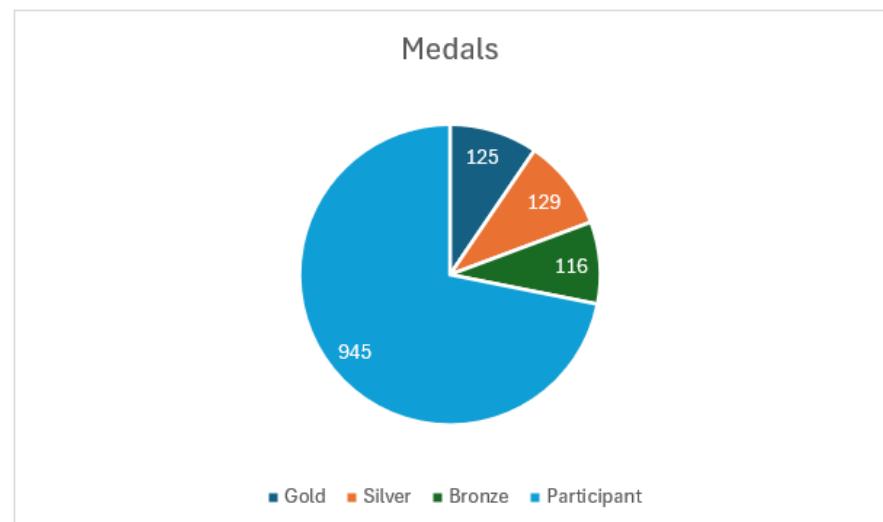
Here is the year-end report on the 2025 CWTs.

Participation in the CWTs continues its slow decline. The average participation overall this year in the four CWT sessions was 323 in the 1300z CWT (down from 348 in 2024), 341 at 1900z (363 in 2024), 211 at 0300z (236 in 2024) and 84 at 0700z (90 in 2024).

CWT Avg Weekly Participation



In total, there were 50,503 CWT scores submitted in 2025 by 1,315 operators (versus 53,921 and 1,392 respectively in 2024). This year there were 125 CWops members who qualified for the gold medal participation level, 129 at the silver medal level and 116 at the bronze medal level. There were a total of 210 CWTs in 2025, and Derek Brown WF4I participated in all of them. Congratulations, Derek! Phil Specht K4PQC was runner-up with 206 CWTs, followed by Roger Cooke G3LDI at 194. There will be 210 CWTs again in 2026.



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The lists of members eligible for medallions for 2025 appear below. If you are on one of these lists and you want a personal certificate, you can go to the certificate web page at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/certificate/>, enter your call sign and download your 2025 participation certificate as a pdf file. Your certificate will automatically reflect your gold, silver or bronze medal status. If you are not on any of the lists but you did submit at least one qualifying claimed CWT score in 2025 of 10 or more contacts (from NA or EU; 5 or more contacts from AF, AS, OC or SA), you can still download a personal certificate from the same web page, but you won't be eligible for a medallion. The participation certificates are available to non-members and members alike, whereas the gold, silver and bronze medallions are only available to CWops members in good standing as of December 31.

The medallions will be distributed to eligible members the same way this year as last year. This year there will be a \$15 USD fee for each medallion towards the procurement and ever-increasing mailing costs. First, you should check to make sure that you qualified for a medallion by checking the lists here (or in the Files area at the groups.io website, at <https://cwops.groups.io/g/main/files/CWTmedals2025.txt>). If your callsign is on one of the lists you will be able to order your medallion through the CWT page on the CWops website at <https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/#medpay> (the payment submission area is near the bottom of the page). The deadline for ordering medallions will be the end of February. Once the procurement order has been sent at the beginning of March, it will no longer be possible to add to the order, so you will need to get your orders in on time. To jog your memories, there will be reminder announcements on the groups.io reflector and in the next issue of this newsletter.

The medallions will be distributed by regular mail. The mailing addresses used for sending the medallions will be the addresses on file with the CWops Membership Secretary as of the time of mailing (May-June, 2026). If your mailing address has changed or will have changed from the mailing address you reported at the time you joined CWops, you should make sure that the address on file is up to date; you can contact the Membership Secretary at [membership@cwops.org](mailto:membership@cwops.org) to update your mailing address.



Enjoy the CWTs and keep those reported scores coming!

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

# GOLD

9A1AA	KC4WQ	N6CHU	WØGAS
AA3B	KC7V	N7US	WØTG
AD4SA	KC8J	N9FZ	W1QK
AF5J	KC9YL	NA8V	W1TO
AG3I	KD2KW	NB7O	W1UU
AH6KO	KG5U	ND9M	W2NO
AH7RF	KG9X	NF8M	W4CMG
DJ1OJ	KI7Y	NJ3K	W4IT
DL1NKB	KN4A	NS8O	W4SPR
E7ØT	KO4VW	OH1ZAA	W5AL
EA6BF	KR2AA	OK2NAJ	W5TM
G3LDI	KR2Q	PAØINA	W7PEZ
G4DYC	KY4GS	PA2TA	W8EH
G4IVV	LY2MM	PA3AAV	W8FJ
G4PFZ	MØRYB	PA3DBS	W8MET
HA6NL	MMØUM	PE2K	WA9LEY
JN1THL	H NØTA	SMØHEV	WA9MNF
KØPK	N1AU	SM4DQE	WB4HRL
KØTG	N1RO	SM5ACQ	WB4SON
KØVBU	N2EY	SM5IMO	WB7BWZ
K1DW	N3CI	SM6CUK	WF4I
K1RV	N3JT	SM7CIL	WJØC
K1VUT	N4BA	UX2HB	WT8P
K3JT	N4DPM	VA3PM	WU6P
K3WW	N4DT	VE3INE	WU8T
K4GM	N4DW	VE3KIU	YO4AAC
K4PI	N4FP	VE3MV	
K4PQC	N5ER	VE6RST	
K4TZ	N5KD	VK2GR	
K5GQ	N5NA	VK3OU	
K9CW	N5TJ	VK3QB	
KB4DE	N5XE	VK3VB	
KC3MAL	N5ZO	WØBM	

# SILVER

AA2AD	K1AJ	KV8Q	W2RQ
AA2IL	K1GU	KW7Q	W2VM
AA9WJ	K1IG	MØXUU	W3MA
AB7MP	K1RF	N2EIM	W3US
AD4EB	K1SEI	N2YO	W4LJ
AD8J	K1SM	N3OC	W4RKU
AE1T	K3ATO	N3QE	W5LXS
AF5DM	K3GG	N3RD	W6KC
AI5IN	K3MM	N3SD	W6SX
AI6O	K3ZA	N4BP	W7JET
CT7AUP	K4FN	N4KS	W7LG
DK9PY	K4IU	N4ZZ	W7RIP
DL3YM	K4RUM	N5RZ	W8EWH
DL6KVA	K5UV	N5TOO	W8FN
DM6EE	K5VG	N6HI	W8OV
EA1X	K7AZT	N7WY	W9ILY
EA6EJ	K7QA	NN4K	W9NXM
F5SGI	K8WWS	NN7O	WA3AAN
F6HKA	K9MA	OK2QA	WA5RML
G4BFG	K9WX	OZ3SM	WB5BKL
G4HLN	KA3LXM	SM5SIC	WB5N
G4KKU	KB3FW	SM6OEF	WE8L
G4LPP	KB9S	SP3FSM	WG3J
G4PVM	KC3M	SP4JFR	WJ9B
GMØLIR	KE4KY	SP7OGP	WM4Q
GWØKRL	KJ9C	VE3EJ	WM6Y
I2WIJ	KKØU	VE3FP	WN7S
I5EFO	KK4E	VE3KI	WS7L
IK3VUT	KM4FO	VE3MA	WT9U
IT9SSI	KQ4E	VE3TW	ZA1RR
JJ1FXF	KT4XN	VK5GG	
KØAF	KU9S	WØLPF	
KØII	KVØI	W1WEF	

# BRONZE

4X6GP	K0EJ	K7UT	LZ1ZF	NA4J	VE3NNT	W6TN	WT3K
AC3RA	K0ES	K8BZ	N0AC	NE2V	VE3TM	W7GF	WV1D
AE2DB	K0INN	K8MR	N0KO	NE5A	VE6JF	W8CAR	WW3S
AE4GS	K0TQ	K8PK	N1LN	NU3A	VE7KW	W8XAL	XE1AY
DJ5CW	K1BZ	K9VEG	N2PX	OH2BN	VE7ZO	W9CF	
DJ6QQ	K1MT	K9WO	N3KI	OK5MM	VE9KK	WA0I	
DL1VDL	K1TR	KA5M	N4AF	PA7RA	W0ABE	WA3AER	
EA3FZT	K2EJ	KA7MDM	N4GL	PC4H	W0UO	WA3GM	
F6JOE	K2YR	KC4M	N4GO	SA6BGR	W1KM	WA6URY	
G0OOD	K3MD	KE4CR	N4HAI	SM1TDE	W1RM	WA8KAN	
G4IZZ	K3QP	KE4EA	N4LSJ	SM6DHF	W3FV	WB5HOW	
G4RWD	K4HR	KJ4M	N4OI	SV1ME	W3WHK	WB7DND	
GW0ETF	K5AX	KJ5T	N5AW	VA3IK	W5LA	WB8JAY	
HA5BMS	K5OY	KK7A	N5MI	VA3SB	W6AYC	WQ3E	
HB9AJY	K6AR	KN6VQ	N6NT	VA3TAR	W6QX	WR7T	
HB9BJL	K6RB	KY0Q	N6TTV	VE3NE	W6RIF	WT3C	

## 2026 CWops Test (CWT) Schedule

**Wednesdays at 1300 – 1400z and 1900 – 2000z. Thursdays at 0300 – 0400z and 0700 – 0800z.**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Week 1</b>	1	4-5	4-5	1-2	7-8	3-4	1-2	5-6	2-3	1	4-5	2-3
<b>Week 2</b>	7-8	11-12	11-12	8-9	13-14	10-11	8-9	12-13	9-10	7-8	11-12	9-10
<b>Week 3</b>	14-15	18-19	18-19	15-16	20-21	17-18	15-16	19-20	16-17	14-15	18-19	16-17
<b>Week 4</b>	21-22	25-26	25-26	22-23	27-28	24-25	22-23	26-27	23-24	21-22	25-26	23-24
<b>Week 5</b>	28-29			29-30			29-30		30	28-29		30-31

# CWops Member Awards

[Bill Gilliland, WØTG](#)



## Monthly Update

**This January 2026 Member Awards summary reflects the final QSO totals for 2025.** Any updates you made to the Awards Website after January 3, 2026, are not included in the 2025 final scores reported here. ACA and ACMA QSO totals were reset to zero to begin the new year, and the Awards Website currently shows only QSOs since January 1, 2026.

During December, 54 additional members submitted logs, increasing the number of active participants in the awards program to 297.

The **ACA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of December 2025 have **KR2Q** in first place and leading second place **AA3B** by 140 QSOs. The top ten ACA totals this month are: **(1) KR2Q, (2) AA3B, (3) KY4GS (4) K3WW, (5) N5RZ, (6) DL6KVA, (7) N5ZO, (8) KG9X, (9) KO4VW and (10) KC7V.** The separation between first place and tenth place is 500 QSOs.

The **ACMA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of December 2025 have **AA3B** in first place and leading second place **KR2Q** by 740 QSOs. The top ten ACMA totals this month are: **(1) AA3B, (2) KR2Q, (3) N5RZ, (4) K3WW, (5) DL6KVA, (6) N5ZO, (7) KY4GS, (8) NA8V, (9) KC7V and (10) N5TJ.** The separation between first place and tenth place is 2337 QSOs.

The **CMA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of December 2025 have **AA3B** in first place and leading second place **K3WW** by 3559 QSOs. The top ten CMA totals this month are: **(1) AA3B, (2) K3WW, (3) N5RZ, (4) KR2Q, (5) N5ZO, (6) DL6KVA, (7) NA8V, (8) W1RM, (9) F6HKA and (10) VE3KI.** The separation between first place and tenth place is 6930 QSOs.

The number of participants who have contacted CWops members in 100 or more **DXCC** entities increased to **99** this month with the addition of **DL4KG** and **N1DG**.

The number of participants who have accomplished CWops **WAS** increased to 287 this month with the addition of **CO8ZZ, K0VBU, K2YR, KC9IL, N3JT, N4IU, N7JI, W0BM, W2GD, W7JET** and **WO2T**.

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

## CWops Award Tools Participation

At the end of 2024 we had 280 active participants in the Member Awards Program. As of December 31, 2025, we have 297 active participants. If you have not submitted any logs for the Awards Program, please submit them so we can include your scores 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

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other categories are listed at the highest level that was previously submitted.

You can see the final 2024 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/>.

### **CWops Member Awards Program Overview**

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.

If you are not among the CWops members who are currently participating, please join us! It adds a lot of friendly competition and fun to your operating.

### **More Information**

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

**73, Bill WØTG (CWops #1873)**

CWops Operating Awards

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Here are the Top 100 ACA, ACMA and CMA QSO totals as of December 31, 2025.

**ACA**

Rank	Call	ACA
1	KR2Q	1883
2	AA3B	1743
3	KY4GS	1692
4	K3WW	1569
5	N5RZ	1563
6	DL6KVA	1469
7	N5ZO	1411
8	KG9X	1389
9	KO4VW	1388
10	KC7V	1383
11	NA8V	1377
12	N5TJ	1376
13	F6HKA	1314
14	N7US	1305
15	AA2IL	1304
16	K7QA	1302
17	OM2VL	1297
18	W4CMG	1286
19	WT9U	1258
20	W8FN	1195
21	K1VUT	1180
22	VE3TM	1159
23	NJ3K	1146
24	VK2GR	1122
25	K1AJ	1117
26	KC3M	1105
27	W9ILY	1087
28	K3JT	1079
29	WN7S	1068
29	WT3K	1068
30	K3QP	1064
31	EA6BF	1052
32	K9WX	1048
33	K6NR	1040
34	KM4FO	1034
35	NE2V	1019
36	F5SGI	1018
37	EA1X	1009
38	N3JT	1005
39	K1DJ	996
40	K1SM	987
40	N1DC	987
41	NA4J	981

**ACMA**

Rank	Call	ACMA
1	AA3B	6347
2	KR2Q	5607
3	N5RZ	5125
4	K3WW	4837
5	DL6KVA	4536
6	N5ZO	4256
7	KY4GS	4248
8	NA8V	4158
9	KC7V	4012
10	N5TJ	4010
11	OM2VL	3882
12	KO4VW	3870
13	KG9X	3727
14	K7QA	3629
15	WT9U	3466
16	N7US	3282
17	AA2IL	3084
18	K1VUT	2988
19	F6HKA	2978
20	W4CMG	2912
21	K1AJ	2656
22	W8FN	2599
23	VE3TM	2569
24	NJ3K	2509
25	EA6BF	2482
26	WN7S	2477
27	K6NR	2433
28	K9WX	2430
29	W9ILY	2408
30	EA1X	2380
31	AD5A	2370
32	K3JT	2301
33	WS7L	2256
34	KC3M	2249
35	N5XE	2211
36	WØVX	2191
37	KW7Q	2155
38	VK2GR	2143
39	DM6EE	2130
39	W7JET	2130
40	N3JT	2123
41	KM4FO	2099
42	WØUO	2086

**CMA**

Rank	Call	CMA
1	AA3B	15273
2	K3WW	11714
3	N5RZ	10905
4	KR2Q	10782
5	N5ZO	10674
6	DL6KVA	10440
7	NA8V	9917
8	W1RM	9590
9	F6HKA	9306
10	VE3KI	8343
11	OM2VL	8313
12	AD5A	8288
13	K3WJV	8270
14	KG9X	8123
15	K7QA	8073
16	KC7V	8066
17	N7US	7960
18	W9ILY	7613
19	WT9U	7417
20	K1VUT	7145
21	WØVX	7099
22	KY4GS	6999
23	K3JT	6953
24	N4DW	6895
25	N5TJ	6828
26	K9WX	6788
27	K6NR	6418
28	N1DC	6249
29	K1DJ	6239
30	WT3K	6234
30	W4WF	6234
31	SM6CUK	6211
32	N2UU	6122
33	WN7S	6059
34	K4IU	6041
35	KO4VW	5824
36	9A1AA	5784
37	W8FN	5782
38	AA5JF	5664
39	VE3TM	5588
40	EA1X	5577
41	G4BUE	5552
42	WØUO	5523

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ACA			ACMA			CMA		
42	WØUO	978	43	N5KD	2073	43	AC6ZM	5485
43	AD5A	975	44	K1DJ	2053	44	NJ3K	5483
44	N5KD	973	45	NA4J	2051	45	K1SM	5396
45	KW1X	969	46	KW1X	2019	46	N5XE	5263
46	DM6EE	966	47	N1DC	2004	47	AA2IL	5249
47	N9FZ	962	48	WT3K	1991	48	NA4J	5234
48	W1RM	960	49	W4WF	1977	49	GWØETF	5211
49	KD2KW	956	50	EA6EJ	1971	50	K1AJ	5161
50	KW7Q	933	51	EA3FZT	1969	51	WA9LEY	5132
51	KT5V	932	52	F5SGI	1959	52	F6JOE	4950
52	ND9M	930	53	KD2KW	1945	53	WS7L	4903
53	W7JET	926	54	SM6CUK	1927	54	WA4JUK	4886
54	WØVX	907	55	WU6P	1925	55	K3QP	4848
54	W4WF	907	56	NE2V	1924	56	VK2GR	4782
55	WS7L	904	57	W1RM	1911	56	K4GM	4782
56	KC9IL	902	58	DL1VDL	1860	57	OK1RR	4780
57	N5XE	896	59	ND9M	1825	58	DM6EE	4759
58	EA3FZT	892	60	K1SM	1793	59	KT5V	4729
59	KV8Q	886	61	WA9LEY	1789	60	EA6BF	4671
60	DF7TV	883	62	W5AL	1782	61	DF7TV	4628
61	AA5JF	874	63	K3QP	1772	62	W1UU	4622
61	EA6EJ	874	64	N4DW	1761	63	WN4AFP	4593
62	WU6P	871	65	N2UU	1743	64	VE3MV	4589
63	K3ZA	868	66	N3CKI	1714	65	DJ5CW	4551
63	VE9KK	868	67	N9FZ	1699	66	OZ3SM	4540
64	KR3E	861	68	VE3KI	1686	67	KC4WQ	4494
65	N3CKI	859	69	AF5J	1681	68	W4CMG	4487
66	DL1VDL	855	70	N4LSJ	1680	69	KM4FO	4439
67	W5AL	846	71	DJ5CW	1655	70	I2WIJ	4406
68	WM4Q	837	72	W9CF	1635	71	N5KD	4386
69	K5OHY	835	73	AA5JF	1631	72	W6AYC	4366
70	AC6ZM	828	73	VE9KK	1631	73	F5SGI	4320
70	WA9LEY	828	74	DF7TV	1630	74	KØWA	4313
71	9A1AA	825	75	KYØQ	1600	75	KYØQ	4279
72	N4DW	818	76	KV8Q	1593	76	WØTG	4194
73	SM6CUK	808	77	MØRYB	1568	77	G4PVM	4158
74	KØWA	805	78	K3ZA	1563	78	WS1L	4147
75	VE3KI	797	79	VE3MV	1562	79	ND9M	4123
76	N2EIM	792	80	W2GD	1559	80	WU6P	4096
77	N2UU	789	81	WM4Q	1557	81	AF5J	4080
77	WØGAS	789	82	OZ3SM	1544	82	KØTC	4075
78	N4LSJ	778	83	KT5V	1526	83	KW7Q	4054
79	W9CF	769	84	DL5XL	1523	84	KV8Q	4040
80	AF5J	764	85	G4PVM	1520	85	N1EN	4027
81	KYØQ	762	86	WØTG	1514	86	EA3FZT	4011
82	K4TZ	760	87	AC6ZM	1501	87	NE5A	4006
83	KC4WQ	744	88	PA2TA	1485	88	W2CDO	3980
84	KKØU	735	89	WØGAS	1460	89	W3WHK	3976
85	W2GD	730	90	K5OHY	1443	90	KKØU	3961

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ACA			ACMA			CMA		
86	DJ5CW	729	91	K4IU	1440	91	MØRYB	3930
87	AF8A	723	92	NF8M	1413	92	NE2V	3842
88	KB8GAE	721	93	K9CW	1394	93	EA6EJ	3833
89	VE3INE	716	94	KC9IL	1392	94	WØGAS	3803
90	NF8M	712	95	KR3E	1391	95	NR3Z	3800
91	N9UNX	708	96	9A1AA	1390	96	AF8A	3760
92	DL5XL	705	97	VE7KW	1382	97	N4LSJ	3752
92	EA2KV	705	98	HA5BMS	1374	98	AF4T	3739
93	GWØETF	704	99	KKØU	1373	99	SMØHEV	3737
94	HA5BMS	703	100	WØBM	1345	100	KR3E	3685
95	OZ3SM	700						
96	MØRYB	697						
97	G4PVM	691						
98	WØBM	686						
99	VE3MV	683						
100	K9MA	676						

## XXT Schedule

SPEED	XST	DAY	TIME (UTC)	EXCHANGE	SPONSOR LINK
<b>20 - 25</b>	<b>MST</b>	Monday	1300 - 1400z	Name + QSO serial number	<a href="#">International CW Coun-</a>
<b>20 - 25</b>	<b>MST</b>	Monday	1900 - 2000z	Name + QSO serial number	<a href="#">International CW Coun-</a>
<b>20 - 25</b>	<b>MST</b>	Tuesday	0300 - 0400z	Name + QSO serial number	<a href="#">International CW Coun-</a>
<b>QRS</b>	<b>AWT</b>	Wednesday	1145 - 1200z	RST + Name	<a href="#">A1Club</a>
<b>20+ wpm</b>	<b>AWT</b>	Wednesday	1200 - 1300z	RST + Name	<a href="#">A1Club</a>
<b>25+ wpm</b>	<b>CWT</b>	Wednesday	1300 - 1400z	Name + CWops # (or S/P/C)	<a href="#">CWops</a>
<b>25+ wpm</b>	<b>CWT</b>	Wednesday	1900 - 2000z	Name + CWops # (or S/P/C)	<a href="#">CWops</a>
<b>25+ wpm</b>	<b>CWT</b>	Thursday	0300 - 0400z	Name + CWops # (or S/P/C)	<a href="#">CWops</a>
<b>25+ wpm</b>	<b>CWT</b>	Thursday	0700 - 0800z	Name + CWops # (or S/P/C)	<a href="#">CWops</a>
<b>&lt; 20 wpm</b>	<b>SST</b>	Friday	2000 - 2100z	Name + S/P/C	<a href="#">K1USN</a>
<b>&lt; 20 wpm</b>	<b>SST</b>	Monday	0000 - 0100z	Name + S/P/C	<a href="#">K1USN</a>

# QTX: Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

## Encouraging Newcomers

I recently got an email from Char Lewis, K8XCO, CWops #3543. She writes:

"I am just starting to learn the skill of ragchewing. I try to always answer anyone I hear calling CQ and am thrilled when the QSO moves beyond the basics but currently as I approach the ten-minute mark, I start to panic and my brain starts to turn to mush. I hope to push myself a little further each time until it becomes easier. In December I had a 10 minute ragchew with Mark, AAØYY" covering a variety of subjects. It was a lot of fun. I really appreciate his patience with me."

I think that this email from Char is educational on several levels. First of all, it points out that ragchewing is a skill that takes some practice. Having a conversation is difficult enough when speaking with someone. Having a conversation using Morse Code is even more difficult.

I told Char that I think that she's doing the right thing by pushing herself a little at a time. With practice, I think she'll get more comfortable with conversing in Morse Code and find that her contacts are getting longer and longer. I advised her to follow some of the tips in my September 2025 QTX column for turning a QSO into a ragchew.

Secondly, I would like to use this opportunity to encourage experienced ragchewers to be patient with newcomers. How are newcomers like Char going to get the practice they need if we're not patient with them? It can be sometimes difficult to know if someone is looking for a long QSO or not, but by making the opportunity available, you will help that operator get over their nervousness and show them how much fun ragchewing can be.

Patience pays off in the long run. Looking back in my log, I can see that some operators are now operating faster than they did previously, and our contacts are lasting longer as well. It's satisfying to note that I've helped other hams discover the joys of ragchewing.

Would you like to share a story about ragchewing or have some advice for other ragchewers? If so, email me at [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).

**73, Dan KB6NU** (CWops #1418)



**DK9HE:** This month I was at my QTH in France QRV and had a lot of very nice contacts.

**KB6NU:** The most memorable QTX I had this month was with a fellow who lives here in Ann Arbor, not more than 10 miles away from me. He was operating very low power, with a mag loop

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antenna, inside his apartment. A couple of days later, I met him at our club's Saturday breakfast, and we had a nice eyeball QSO.

**KG5IEE:** A lot of interesting rag chews again this month. Hope to make even more QTX QSOs in 2026. Happy New Year to everyone. 73.

**KN5EE:** This has been the first month that I've actively been calling CQ daily. I've enjoyed using this new skill I've worked on to converse with other like-minded (weird) folks. I'm shooting for QTX 100 this year!

**N9EEE:** New Year's Resolution: more QTX! HNY!!!

**AJ1DM:** Lots of nice conversations this month, but I was especially proud of a nice long ragchew with my former student Kyle, N4EWD. 73 es HNY.

**K6DGW:** Busy month both for me and apparently for many others. Three of my five mQTX were during SKN; my only 3 in fact.

**N7HCN:** I get at least one QTX every time I sit down at the rig. Often it's the "usual customers" but that's ok. Mixing up my operating times, I meet a wider number of ragchewers, but it's hard to break up my routine.

**N2DA:** Nice sked QSOs (including with Steve WA3JJT and John AJ1DM), plus ragchews with CWA buddy Randal, KG5IEE, who found me while I was testing my attic antenna, and with Bruce VA3ZB. HNY es 73!

**AA0YY:** Lots of folks seemed to be in holiday spirits. Found more ragchewers this month than normal. Plus, most areas seem to have warmer WX this season.

**DL5XL:** Totals for 2025: 27 QTX, 84 mQTX

**AB0WW:** Best wishes for a pleasant and healthy 2026.

**K90Z:** I finished the year strong with probably my best month. Lots of great ragchews, mostly on bugs.

**N8AI:** It was very hard to make 400 QTX this year. I really had to concentrate every day in December to make it.

**KW4NJA:** Continuing to improve my ragchew participation with great conversations with K4KDX, KO4WFP, and N4HAY this month. I really appreciate their patience!! Looking forward to a great 2026.

**N9FZ:** Lots of good rag chews this month. Several mobile, but many in the warm shack (unheated garage, so not really too warm). Happy Holidays!

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**KR2Q:** I caught a "bug" (not the key) and was out of commission for most CW activities during the last 2.5 weeks of Dec. HNY.

**KF9VV:** Very enjoyable month of ragchewing! I ran into several operators who said they were working on head copy. Hearing that made me try extra hard to choose common words and be as precise in sending as I can be. I finished those QSOs very excited.

**K8UDH:** I had a fun ragchew QSO with a ham who earned his Novice License in 1958. That's a long time ago. We have a lot in common, including our passion for vintage rigs. You just don't know who you will meet when you send CQ for a ragchew QSO.

**NØBM:** Another enjoyable month meeting hams on the air. Had a good QSO with W6ESE. He and a few friends, "the Warblers" (CW) get out in the field to have fun....SOTA, QRP, DX, some contesting. Here in the cold north, we're staying inside right now :>) HNY to all.



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### QTX - December 2025

Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX
K9OZ	55	KB6NU	27	N2DA	13	ABØWW	5	GWØETF	1
N7HCN	47	KF9VV	22	AJ1DM	12	kr2q	5	K6DGW	1
N8AI	44	KY4GS	21	N9FZ	12	KN5EE	3		
WS1L	41	DK9HE	15	K8UDH	7	KW4NJA	3		
KCØVKN	38	KG5IEE	15	G4KKU	6	N9EEE	3		
AAØYY	36	F5IYJ	14	W8OV	6	NØBM	2		

### mQTX - December 2025

Call	mQTX	Call	mQTX	Call	mQTX	Call	mQTX	Call	mQTX
KCØVKN	40	KG5IEE	24	F5IYJ	14	ABØWW	5	DL5XL	2
KY4GS	38	DK9HE	20	G4KKU	14	AJ1DM	5	KW4NJA	2
AAØYY	37	KF9VV	18	N7HCN	7	K6DGW	5	N9EEE	2
N8AI	35	KR2Q	18	GWØETF	6	N9FZ	3	W3WHK	1
WS1L	33	KB6NU	17	NØBM	6	W8OV	3		

### QTX - Total 2025

Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX	Call	QTX
WS1L	531	DK9HE	220	GØFOZ	84	GWØETF	19	N3JT	6
N8AI	405	KR2Q	181	N9FZ	58	AE4GS	15	KW4NJA	5
WA4IAR	394	KG5IEE	177	N9EEE	40	K6DGW	9	VK3QB	5
VE3WH	359	KF9VV	170	ABØWW	33	K7VM	8	DF7TV	4
N7HCN	338	F5IYJ	152	G4KKU	30	KE4I	8	K1NW	4
KCØVKN	322	MØMZB	136	NØBM	29	MØSDB	8	KN5EE	3
K9OZ	313	N2DA	113	N5LB	28	W6QX	8	SV2BBK	3
KB6NU	304	AJ1DM	97	W8OV	27	AI3A	7	W3WHK	3
KY4GS	278	N7HCN	93	DG5CW	25	K4LFL	7	KM4JEG	2
AAØYY	265	K8UDH	86	DL5XL	21	PE2V	7	PG4I	2

### mQTX - Total 2025

Call	mQTX								
KY4GS	610	GØFOZ	148	AJ1DM	48	KB4DE	24	W6QX	7
WS1L	397	KF9VV	140	ABØWW	47	K6DGW	23	K7VM	5
N8AI	291	GWØETF	128	NØBM	43	PG4I	23	KM4JEG	5
AAØYY	259	MØMZB	112	N9FZ	41	AE4GS	20	KW4NJA	5
KG5IEE	223	F5IYJ	99	DF7TV	40	MMØUMH	20	K1NW	4
KR2Q	223	G4KKU	80	N9EEE	40	W8OV	18	GWØKRL	3
KB6NU	188	DL5XL	65	VK3QB	40	MØSDB	14	W3WHK	3
DK9HE	167	DG5CW	63	K8UDH	34	K4LFL	9	N5LB	2
VE3WH	167	KCØVKN	54	PE2V	34	N3JT	9		
WA4IAR	158	N7HCN	49	SV2BBK	26	KE4I	7		



# My Story: New Member Introductions

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

## Jesus Gonzalez, K8CES CWops #3832

I discovered amateur radio in the summer of 2024 when my friends and I bought Quanshengs for our camping trip. Afterwards, I found myself asking, "What else is there to do with radio?" By August 2024, I passed my Tech test and got assigned the callsign KF8CES. In September 2024 I received my General. I later was granted the vanity callsign, K8CES, in November 2024.

I started by participating in POTA. Living in an apartment, portable ops was my easiest way to get on the air. And CW QRP transceivers are very portable. So in February 2025, I challenged myself to learn CW. I committed at least 15 minutes a day to practicing. I started with learning my call sign, then short codes and phrases. Before long, I was pretty comfortable with sending the alphabet at 25 wpm and could copy some characters at 20 wpm. I began hunting POTA on CW and was doing okay. In April of 2025, I decided I was ready to do my own CW POTA activation.



Now I operate almost exclusively on CW, mainly in POTA. I have started uploading my own activations to YouTube as well. I am also a member of the SKCC, NAQCC, and LICW. Some of my CW goals include proficiency in conversational CW, ragchewing, and contesting.

Outside of radio, I was born and raised in Elgin, Illinois in October of 1995. I moved to Denver, Colorado for about 4 years after graduating college before settling in East Lansing, Michigan, where I currently happily reside with my wife, Shirley. I have a lifelong connection to the automotive industry. I spent nearly 10 years as a Ford Service Technician, achieving the title of Senior Master Service Technician. In 2023, I transitioned to teaching, specializing in Automotive Electrical Systems Diagnosis and Repair as well as Electric Vehicles/Hybrids.

Thanks, Forrest, KI7QCF, for nominating me into the CWops, as well as being a great mentor and ambassador to the CW community. Special thanks to Tim, K5OHY, Jim, WBØRLJ, and Ryan, AC4NK for sponsoring me. It's always a pleasure to work any of you on the air! I look forward to continuing my CW journey and meeting all the CWops on the air at some point. Thanks!

## Steve Marquie, W8TOW CWops #3838.

It's my honor to receive the nomination to CWops by WS1L, Chuck.

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If we haven't worked on the air, I'll share a bit about me. I was licensed in 1974 as WN9TOW, my home was Lafayette, Indiana and my Elmer was Glen Rogers, W9ASX. Glen was a CW Op for both Illinois and Indiana State Police before WWII. During the war Glen was in the US Navy. By the time I met Glen, he was retired, collecting radios and teaching CW. By the time I was ready to visit the FCC office in Chicago to take my General Class exam, I was prepared to go for my 20 wpm element thanks to his tutoring. Walking into the exam room with a bug in the case raised a few eyebrows, especially since I was 15 or 16 years old! I passed the CW but not the written at that time for the Extra, going home with my General ticket. Eventually, I mastered the theory and passed the Extra.



The next 40 years were divided into initially working in broadcasting but then spending 26 years as an electronics lab instructor at Michigan State University. I served as a VE for 7 years while still in Indiana also teaching CW in Novice and General classes.

My radio interests always revolve around CW and vintage radios. Probably since, as a young ham, old stuff is all I could afford. Now that equipment is "collectable." Using a bug was just a natural thing too, as electronic keyers were expensive in those days. My first bug was a Vibroplex Lightning my dad bought me for my fifteenth birthday. Glen taught me to properly set it up and how to use it. Over the years, contesting was less attractive to me than just DXing or ragchewing, naturally on CW. In recent years, I dedicated some time to restoring and operating vintage AM equipment, but always migrated back to my first love, CW.

Currently, I'm assisting Laura MM7BFL with the RSGB CW initiative and have volunteered to be a CW0ps advisor.

I love to experiment with antenna designs, restoring bugs and homebrewing. My workbench is always messy, but I try to keep the operating positions clear enough for a key and a cup of coffee! Other memberships include FISTS, Bug Users Group, SKCC, Essex CW and RSGB.

### **Matthew Swint, K2MAS CWops #3852**

My amateur radio journey started back in 2014 in a roundabout way. I attended a local community college astronomy meetup at the college's observatory and spoke with a professor who was explaining how radio telescopes worked. He had an old satellite TV dish, like those that can be attached to a roof or a wall, mounted to a video camera alt-azimuth tripod. And connected to the dish, he had a signal strength meter. He showed us how the meter's needle would deflect when

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the dish was pointed at a radio source in the sky, like a satellite or even the Sun. This was fascinating to me at the time and so in the following weeks, I did a lot of internet searches on the topic of radio astronomy. Along the way, I stumbled upon an article about amateur radio which I found immediately interesting and so my exploration of the amateur radio hobby began there.

To make a longer story short, I quickly tested up to a General class license by the end of 2014 and then moved out of state to an urban part of the country where I was met by antenna restrictions. Suffice it to say that I did not do much radio operating in the years thereafter.

Fast forwarding to late 2024, I'd gotten my current vanity call sign and had been introduced to the HF digital modes and "stealth" antennas and other small form-factor ways to get on the air. I have to give credit to the WSJT-X digital modes for reigniting the spark of curiosity in amateur radio because once I was able to operate from my home, I was on the air every day. I reconsidered a license upgrade to Extra soon after the new year - earned in February 2025 - and FT8 started to become boring, so I gave learning the Morse code a considerable thought. As it turned out, it's not that difficult to learn! A few months of self-study got me to a point where I could recognize most of the letters and numbers, but not consistently. At this point, I started looking for formal education/tutoring solutions and came across CW Academy. I liked the CWA offering better than the other options I had found and so I signed up for the Fundamental level class and was placed into WJØC's, Steve Robbs, class. Steve is a phenomenal advisor and was instrumental in helping me overcome most of the practice hurdles I had faced during my self-study. After being given the green light from Steve, I moved on to Intermediate and got my paddles broken in with some CW contesting.

My secondary goal with this effort to learn the Morse code and become a CW operator was to secure an invitation to the prestigious CW Operators' Club and now that goal has been reached! I'd like to give a big thanks to my CWA advisors WJØC, Steve, and KK5NA, Joe, for their advice and encouragement and to KE9BHN, Paul, N9WF, Bryce, NE5A, George, AD4EB, Jim, AC4NK, Ryan, and WBØRLJ, Jim for offering to sponsor my CW Operators' Club membership.

In my professional life I'm an IT virtualization engineer and in my free time, when not fooling around on the radio, you can often find me in the garage doing some wood carving work.



### **Sriram "Ram" Seshan, KE8UEX CWops #3849**

I feel honored by the nomination and acceptance to CWops, a memorable milestone in my CW journey.

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The journey began in the early '90s when I was introduced to ham radio by a coworker. We got licensed together as technicians (Tech plus). Back then, I dabbled in VHF repeaters but never got interested in HF or CW. A few years later, I could not dedicate time for ham radio and let that ticket lapse. Decades later, COVID isolation made me take another look at ham radio. I got relicensed in 2022 jumped with both feet into HF and decided to test the CW waters.

From then on, my journey should look familiar to most CW operators. I had vague recollection of the Morse code characters from my 5 wpm test of the '90s. I brushed up by listening to on-air CW QSOs and the ARRL bulletins. It was a cacophony of dits and dahs at the beginning. By the time I could write a letter down, the code was a mile away! Soon, I was happy to catch a complete word or two in between. I supplemented these by listening to audio MP3s of classics such as Moby Dick transcribed into Morse code. Many other excellent resources for learning CW online also helped me make steady progress. Gradually, the cloud lifted and I was able to follow what was being transmitted. At this point, I was hooked onto CW.

When I was able to reasonably copy 13 wpm I decided I was ready. I still remember the panic when I put out my first CW CQ call and someone came back to me. I remember the patience that they showed when I was fumbling with my sending. I started off with the perfunctory QSO with the name/rig/QTHJ/WX exchange. I was glad when the 73s were exchanged. I was a nervous wreck at the end that QSO and many of the early CW QSOs.

I was always interested in manual keying, the quintessential straight key had always enthralled me. I joined SKCC and had many interesting QSOs with my multiple devices: bugs, cooties and straight keys. That helped me fine tune my rhythm and cadence. At this stage, I had to write down the copied transmissions. My shack floor would be strewn with paper copies of my CW exchange. As time progressed, I gradually was able to get rid of the need to paper copy. The journey is getting a little more comfortable . . . but I am under no illusion that there is no more work to be done.

Today, I enjoy any mode that allows for ragchew. However, I find myself gravitating towards CW most of the time. Paradoxically, for a ragchewer, I also like the short form QSOs of POTA activations. I find the confluence of operating CW in a natural setting immensely relaxing.

I remember the patience and encouragement shown to me during my CW journey by countless other operators. I look forward to bestowing the same to anyone aspiring CW proficiency. To anyone considering CW I say, "Come on in! the water is warm!"



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## **Barry Palmatier, KD6XU CWops #3856**

My interest in amateur radio began in the 1970s when my father, who was a merchant marine, called home one night through a ham radio operator while he was in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Hearing that connection made from half-way around the world captured my imagination, and not long after I began studying, earning my Novice license and soon upgrading to General and then Extra. From the very beginning CW was my favorite mode, and DX quickly became my main passion.

I am now retired and on a slow circumnavigation aboard my own sailboat. I'm currently in New Zealand and in recent years have spent time exploring and operating from remote locations throughout French Polynesia, the Samoan Islands, Wallis and Futuna, Tonga, and Fiji. Next year I plan to continue on to Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Australia. These travels have given me the unique opportunity to operate from many rare and interesting DX locations.

I also enjoy QRP operating and spend a lot of time with my QMX Mid-Band rig and simple wire antennas. When I'm on the air, POTA has become one of my primary activities, combining my love of the outdoors, travel, and radio.

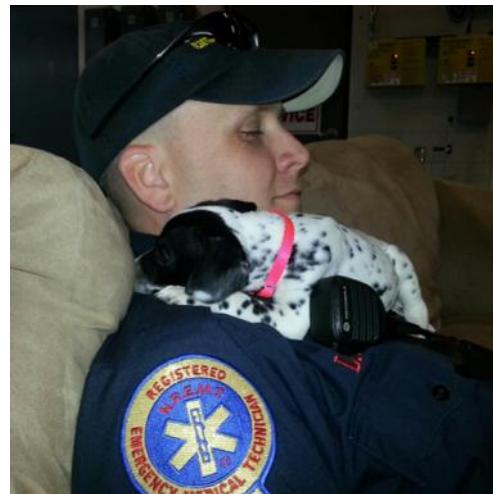
Outside of ham radio, my life is deeply connected to the ocean. My other interests include surfing, diving, fishing, and of course sailing single-handed. I especially enjoy long ocean passages and the sense of freedom and challenge they bring. CW continues to be my favorite mode and a reliable companion wherever my adventures take me.



## **Dave Wheeler, W4DHW CWops #3854**

I'd like to thank those that nominated and/or sponsored me for membership in CWops: N9HO, KR8P, K8CES and AC4NK. I would have never come into contact with these gentlemen if it were not trying to "re-learn" the code.

I was licensed in 2010 and for a while I was quite active in assisting with net control on 40m HF nets, net control for local 2m nets, some DX hunting and PSK31. That was fine at the time, but really didn't give me a need to stay in the hobby. I had a job change in 2018 and all but left the hobby as the new job is around radios all day. In 2019, I did one POTA activation, and while I understood the premise, didn't really explore it too much.



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In 2017, I took a CW Academy course. It was great; kudos to WØEJ for tolerating us, ha! But shortly after that was when I made the job change and never used it. I felt that as an Extra class license holder I should probably know many aspects of the hobby to entertain questions and demonstrate. CW was one of my weaknesses.

As many others here have indicated, POTA is a great outlet to practice. I used the early part of March 2025 to hunt and watch YouTube videos to work on sending and copying. Subsequently, I have been trying to get out into the field almost every day for some practice.

I appreciate the opportunity to be a member of CWops and look forward to learning from all of you.



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