

# Solid Copy



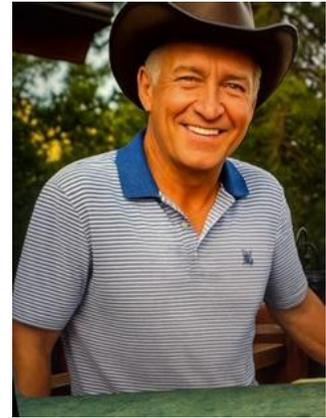
The CW Operators Club Newsletter  
February 2026 — Issue 193

## President's Message



The VP2VI DXpedition (left to right):DK9IP, Ann (our host), DL8LAS, DM6EE, DA1DX (all CWops members).

Well, a month has already passed—and it went quickly. As many of us have noticed, the older we get, the faster time seems to move, especially when our days are full and engaging. Like many of you, I am thoroughly enjoying retirement



(Continued on page 2)

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

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

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

### CWops Officers and Directors

President: Mark Wohlschlegel, [WC3W](#)  
Vice President: John Glover, [W2QL](#)  
Secretary: Jim Talens, [N3IT](#)  
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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and the freedom it brings.

I want to begin by sincerely thanking those of you who reached out after last month's President's article. Your emails and encouragement were deeply appreciated. CWops is an extraordinary organization, and nothing pleases me more than seeing the enthusiasm and engagement that exist within our membership today.

As promised, this article will be a bit shorter than last month's. My first article focused largely on background—who I am and where I came from. This time, I want to focus more squarely on CWops itself and the priorities I see ahead.

Before doing that, however, I would like to congratulate all CWops members who participated in the DX Marathon Program last year. As some of you may recall, at Dayton 2025 I approached the leadership of the three major CW organizations—CWops, SKCC, and the Long Island CW Club—with an idea aimed at increasing CW participation in the DX Marathon. My goal was simple: as both President of CWops and Program Administrator of DX Marathon, I wanted to see CW QSOs exceed their historical share of about 14% of all contacts. In 2025, CW QSOs exceeded 500,000, and my hope was to move that percentage closer to 20%.

To encourage participation, I proposed a friendly competition among the clubs, with a plaque awarded to the organization achieving the highest score. The claimed results are now in, and CWops emerged as the clear winner with nearly 10,000 points—achieved through broad participation by our members. I sincerely thank everyone who submitted logs and identified CWops as their affiliated club. We will run this program again in 2026, so if you did not participate last year, I encourage you to join in. DX Marathon is a year-long program where you simply work as many DXCC entities and CQ Zones as you can over the course of the year.

Turning now to CWops itself, I want to briefly address the role of the President. As many of you know, CWops is a 501c(7) nonprofit corporation organized around a purpose of member fellowship and shared interest in CW. All of our activities are focused primarily for the benefit of members. My intention is to follow this guidance.

As a corporation, we also have fiduciary responsibilities and must follow appropriate corporate governance practices. This does not imply bureaucracy or red tape, or decision making by a small select group of elected officials but it does mean that officers, the Board and membership at large have defined responsibilities that must be adhered to, and that must operate in accordance with the practices required of a corporation.

My role as President is not one of command-and-control. Rather, it is to:

1. Set tone, priorities, and urgency
2. Guide agendas and meeting flow for officers and the Board (including my intention to hold quarterly Board meetings to include minutes of these meetings available to membership)
3. Represent CWops publicly
4. Shape consensus and frame decisions—not make them unilaterally

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5. Recommend committees, task forces, and resolutions where needed
6. Ensure transparency and open communication from the Board to the membership, while upholding proper governance, fiduciary responsibility, and decision-making processes defined by our bylaws.

Leadership, in my view, is about influence, clarity, and alignment.

Let's now turn to the Officers and Board of Directors and their responsibilities.

### **Role of the Officers**

Officers are responsible for the execution of CWops operations and for carrying out the direction established by the Board.

- Implement Board-approved policies and decisions
- Manage day-to-day operations and programs
- Provide functional leadership and recommendations
- Ensure continuity, reliability, and service to the membership

In short: Officers turn policy and direction into action.

### **Role of the Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors provides governance, fiduciary oversight, and long-term stewardship of CWops.

- Establish mission, vision, policy, and strategic direction
- Oversee finances, assets, and legal obligations
- Approve budgets, major expenditures, and material changes
- Ensure compliance with bylaws and governance standards

In short: The Board governs; it does not manage daily operations.

One of the first initiatives I mentioned in my initial article is the effort to clearly define CWops' Mission and Vision. Why does this matter? A well-defined mission and vision give an organization shared purpose and long-term direction. Once agreed upon, they become the bedrock through which priorities are established within programs (such as CWT and CW Academy), leadership roles, and resource allocations.

Put simply, the mission defines who we are **and what we do**; the vision defines where we are going **and what we aspire to become**. Everything that follows—programs, priorities, leadership focus, and responses to opportunity or risk—must align with them.

This effort is now underway. A steering committee has been formed to guide the process, and a survey will be distributed to committee members as well as a cross-section of the broader

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CWops membership. The goal is to gather broad, representative input before the committee begins the work of synthesizing that feedback into clear, concise mission and vision statements.

Think of mission and vision as the rudder on a ship. Without a rudder, a ship may still move forward, but it drifts with the current and reacts to events rather than choosing its course. With a clear rudder, leadership can make steady, intentional corrections and keep the ship headed toward a chosen destination.

This effort is not about changing CWops' soul. It is about ensuring that it continues to survive and thrive. We are not trying to craft slogans; we are defining guardrails that will help CWops make sound decisions that will affect our future five and ten years from now.

Practically speaking, this process will also lead to clearer roles, accountability, and continuity. Key programs should have a defined purpose, a named owner, and a clear connection to the Board. This helps protect volunteers from burnout, ensures that institutional knowledge is not lost, and allows us to focus intentionally on challenges such as demographic trends and future growth.

Enough for now--see you next month. I am preparing for Hamcation in Orlando, where I have been able to schedule a CWops Forum. I hope to see many of you there during my visit.

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

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## Editor's Notes: Dits and Dahs

"My Other Hobby Is..." sparked such an enthusiastic response that we're eager to feature more stories from members who somehow manage to find time for another passion beyond CW (shocking, I know). Are there any stargazers among us? Maybe a few dedicated philatelists? If you've got a hobby you love, we'd enjoy hearing about it.

Last year I introduced a new monthly feature in *Solid Copy*: a short survey designed to spark interest and conversation by asking questions about amateur radio, CW operating, and CWops activities. So far, participation has been surprisingly low, which leaves me wondering whether the feature simply isn't resonating or if we've been asking the wrong questions. This month, I've got a fun question everyone can participate in. And should you have an idea for a future survey question that would be interesting to ask your fellow CWops members, my email is below. Remember, it must be legal, ethical, moral, harmless, non-binding, unobtrusive, and just for fun.

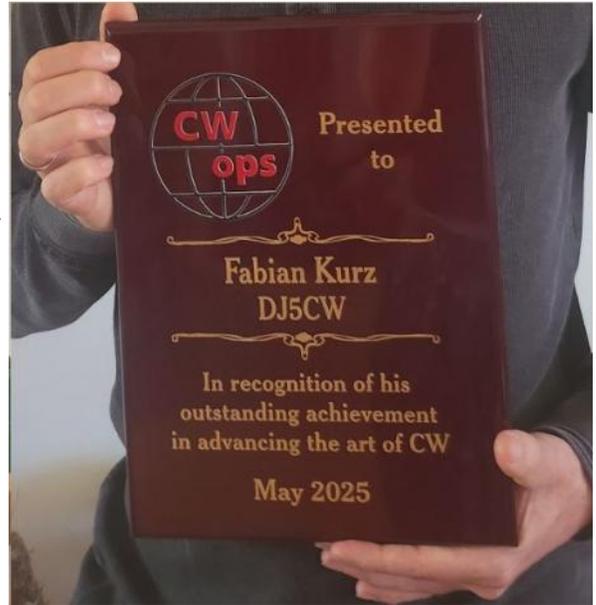
**73, Dick N9EEE**, (CWops #3113)

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

# 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.

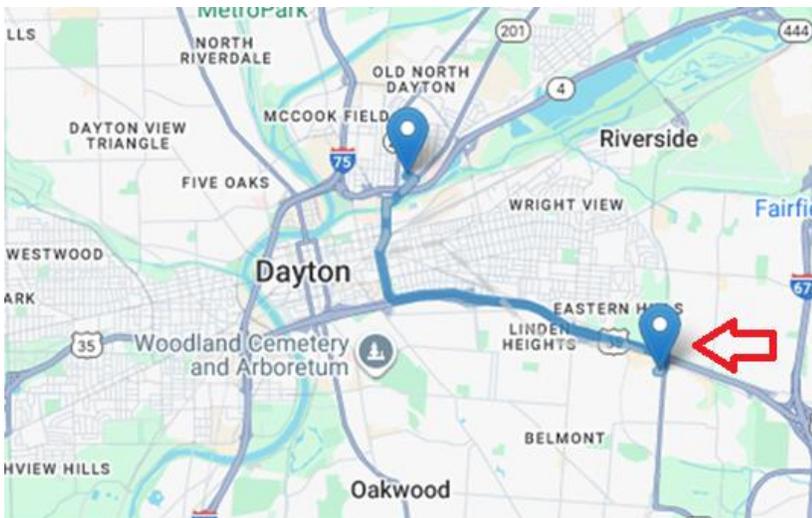
# OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

## 2026 Dayton Hamvention CWops Annual Dinner

### Thursday, May 14 at 7:00 pm

This is the major CWops social gathering of the year, where you can meet face-to-face many of the CWops operators you know from on-air contacts or know from other events over the years. This year we have a new, brighter, larger, more upscale venue for our premier CWops social event. It is **The Galleria Event & Conference Center**, 4140 Linden Ave., Rt 35 & Woodman Dr., Dayton, OH. We again will have our excellent caterer, Rob, who will provide us with an expansive and delicious buffet-style dinner!

There are photos of The Galleria at [www.thegalleriaevents.com](http://www.thegalleriaevents.com). It is a lovely facility that will be a delight for all who attend.



As you can see, The Galleria (identified by the pointer adjacent to "Linden Heights" on the map) is only a few minutes from the Hope Hotel and Conference Center, considerably closer than was the Rona Catering Hall in Fairborn last year. And of course there is plenty of parking at The Galleria.

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Many may recall we used to hold our CWops dinners at the Spaghetti Warehouse in downtown Dayton, but our need for more space necessitated a new approach, meaning something larger than a restaurant. We found the Rona Catering Hall, a private event venue in nearby Fairborn, Ohio, not very far from the Hope Hotel and Conference Center. Due to the continued success of the dinner, we decided to find a larger facility that could better accommodate our growing attendance. The Galleria fits the bill, and it is closer to the Hope Hotel and Conference Center. The additional good news is that the event price this year is only \$50, which covers our catering and facility costs.

Following dinner, we will feature what promises to be a terrific slate of speakers. Then, at the end of the evening, we will conduct our fabulous door prize program, thanks to donations from CWops members, manufacturers, and dealers.

The CWops Hamvention dinner at The Galleria is the CWops social event of the year! Feel free to invite guests! There will be room for everyone.

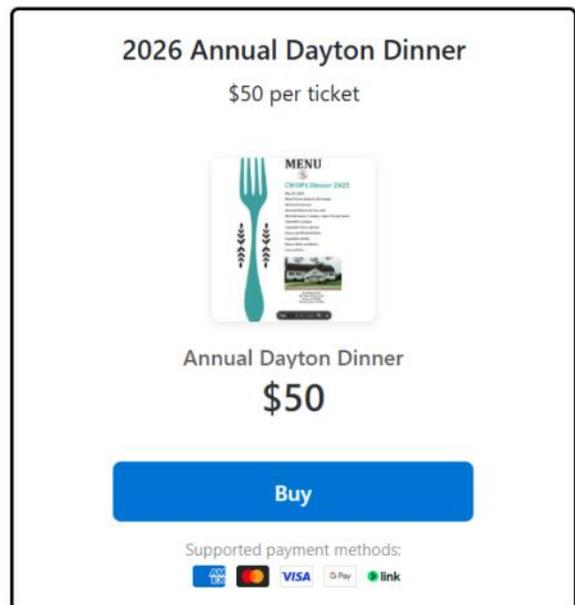
Folks are welcome to arrive at or after 6 p.m. Dinner will commence promptly at 7 pm.

(Note that The Galleria venue adheres to and enforces Ohio alcoholic beverage laws, which are quite strict. We are told that if beer or wine is brought into the facility, we either must have a bartender serve it or it must be consumed outside – and we will not have a bartender!)

The cost of the dinner is \$50 per person. You may make your reservation by clicking on the payment box to the right or the link below. A guest should be registered with a second registration purchase and designated with your call sign and the suffix -2 (for example W1HRB-2).

There are no physical tickets as such; we will have a list of those who have paid. You will see we are using Stripe rather than PayPal because it is vastly easier, handles credit cards and provides payment tracking. Gerry, W1VE, will maintain the list of attendees. While not preferred, PayPal can be used but please select “family and friends” when making your payment. Send payment to [paypal@cwops.org](mailto:paypal@cwops.org). There can be no refunds because we will be giving the caterer an attendance number that will serve as the basis for our club payment.

Payment link => [CWops Store](#)



2026 Annual Dayton Dinner

\$50 per ticket

MENU

Annual Dayton Dinner

**\$50**

Buy

Supported payment methods:

Apple Pay, Mastercard, VISA, DigiPay, link

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View our menu and registered attendees on the next page.

Here is our buffet dinner menu, which is even more expansive than last year:

Appetizers: Meatballs, cheese display

Meal: Mixed green salad (with 4 dressings)

Vegetable medley

Chicken parmesan

Roast beef (with gravy)

Vegetarian lasagna

Roasted baby potatoes

Dessert: Blueberry (sugar-free), apple, pecan, cherry pie

Beverages: Iced tea, water, coffee, lemonade (sweetened) – and sodas at \$1 each

It is not too early to reserve your spot for the 2026 CWops dinner! See you there!

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Registrants, as of February 10...

KJ5T	K1FV	K1SEI	N3JT
KM4CH	W4CMG	K8VAN	AJ8B
KM4FO	N3RD	NR4M	N1RM
AJ6V	K3CT	K7SV	K3WJV
KF7WX	AD8J	KO4VW	AA3R
K4EAK	K1ZJA	W1WEF	NF8M
KT1OK	AF1E	K2EJ	NR4P
K3GG	AF1E-2	K9WO	KE8EON
KV8Q	N2MA	N7TY	N8KDC
WA1NLG	WA3AER	K2GO	W2QL
NJ3K	K3WJX	N8EA	AJ1DM
K1MT	KC4D	N8DNA	W2GD
W8FN	AK4SQ	KP4DX	W2RW
WA4PGM	K6ZO	WA1VQY	N7US
KC9YL	K00O	KN2D	NM5M
W1HRB	WN7S	AG3I	K9GY
W1HRB-2	K9VEG	N3AM	
K4PI	K4QS	K9EZ	
K1SM	K1UI	K9WX	



# 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)

**Josep, EA6BF #3072** It happened again; too strong wind!



**Armin, DK9PY #2062** Hi all. I will be active from Jamaica (6Y) during February 14 until March 7th . During contests (ARRL and CWTs), I will use 6Y6N. Otherwise 6Y/DK9PY. Looking forward to many contacts.

**Dave, WB2PJH #3195** I enjoy getting up early and having long CW ragchews on 80 and 40 meters, and today after an hour-long chat at 25 wpm, I called CQ. The station who came back was sending a shaky 10 wpm so I QRSed big time and we had a nice QSO. He told me that he was teaching himself CW and I was the first CW ragchew he ever had. I told him about LCWO, CW Academy and gave him some operating tips, such as using Farnsworth spacing but adding time between letters and words so he could "hear" the letters. That's how I sent to him (I eat my own cooking) and boy, sending that slow is hard!

He emailed me later to thank me for being so patient and that he would be checking into CWA. Yes, I would have much preferred to spend an hour at a more conversational speed, but we all have to start somewhere. I hope that his experience today, plus the tips and hopefully checking into CWA will help him on his journey.

My motto is that I will QRS for anyone, even in contests. I have a lousy long contest call and a

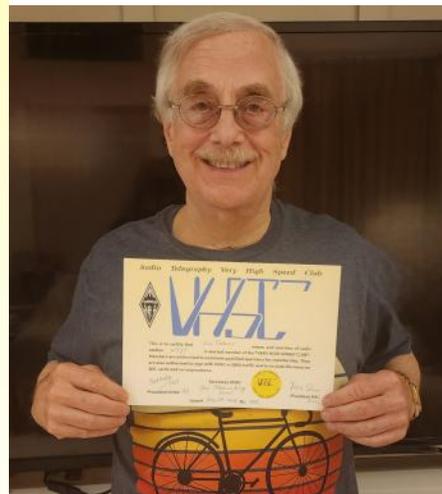
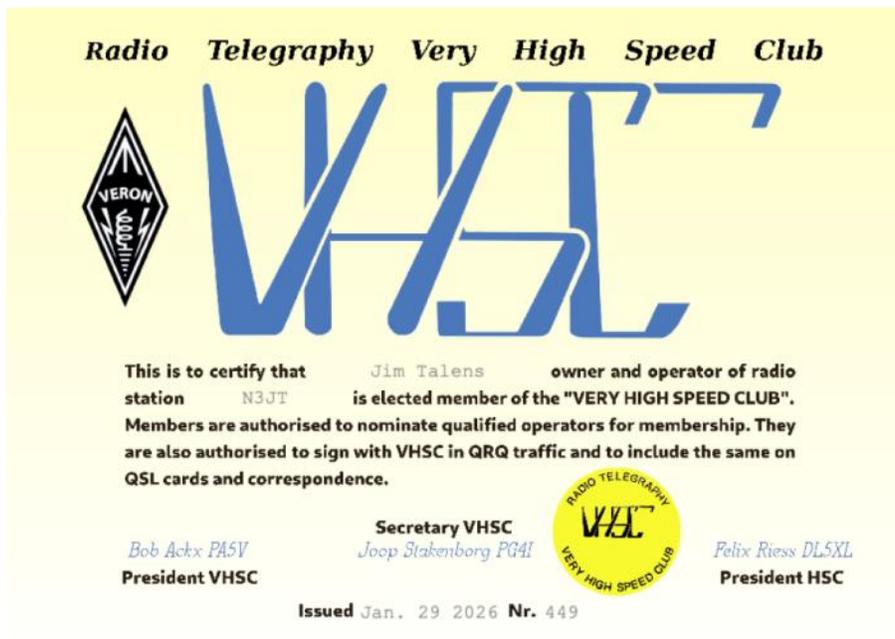
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modest station, but still am amazed that some ops come back to a 15 wpm CW at 40 wpm and expect a contact.

Just a bit of good news among all the bad stuff.

**Jim, N3JT #1** Very happy to become member #449 of VHSC (Very High Speed Club).



Now some less good news; I was second to last in the [2026 Marconi Club](#) MCD QSO party with 26 QSOs. I have nowhere to go but up!!!!

**Chad, N9UNX #3151** I made a new CW contest trainer, similar to MorseRunner (and others). It is cross-platform (runs on Windows, macOS and Linux), and is completely free and open source.

Here is the project link, with "quick start" instructions to download it and get started:

[https://github.com/chadsbrown/contest\\_trainer](https://github.com/chadsbrown/contest_trainer)

It's not perfect, and remains a work in progress, but I think it works well enough at this point for people to use for practice.

I've made many things user-configurable, so that the user can get the experience they are looking for. More details at the link above, and in the docs directory there. So far, there is support for 5 different contests (yes, of course the CWT is one of them!).

If you have feedback or ideas, please contact me directly. You can also submit issues on GitHub, but I'm not promising anything. 😊

Note: I do not have a code signing cert, and Windows Defender will give you a popup about SmartScreen not wanting to run an unrecognized application. If you choose not to run it, I completely understand. I have not fully explored all the options for how to make Windows happy, although I think there might be some that don't cost a ton of money.

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**Doug, KR2Q #438** Feb 2026 marks my 60th year in ham radio...Started as a Novice with a DX20 and Lafayette HA230 receiver...continuously active (no breaks). Still having fun. CU in the CWTs or SOTA/POTA or whatever.

**Dan, KB6NU #1418** I will be teaching my One-Day Tech Class at the [Southern California Linux Expo](#) (SCALE) in Pasadena, CA on Friday, March 6, and Saturday, March 7. You have to buy an Expo Pass for \$20 to attend the class, but the pass allows you to visit the exhibit hall and attend other free events. Go [here](#) for more information about the class, This class is made possible by a grant from Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC).

**Duncan, G3WZD #1979** I finally got around to completing a project that had been on the TDL for months; a Delta Loop for 30-metres. I decided to hang it between one of the lattice towers and a 12-metre telescopic tubular mast. The latter is simple to erect/collapse so I can fiddle with the alignment of the loop in due course, but for now it is oriented to radiate NW/SE.

The antenna is constructed from 3mm Kevlar-cored braid, lightweight but strong, and is fed at the apex via a Balun Designs 2:1 balun with the base leg roughly 1.5m agl. I had already run a spare coax feeder through the underground conduit when the tower was installed, so it was just a question of a coax run up the tower and along the marine rope catenary to the balun. I cut the loop about 20 cm longer than my calculated length of 30.148 m and careful trimming of the base leg resulted in almost 1.1:1 VSWR at 10.150MHz.



***(Far left: Base Leg ready for trimming; electrical wiring connector makes trimming & VSWR measurement simple)***



***(Left: Finished Base-Leg soldered joint)***

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(Far left: Lower corner insulator with rubber strain-relief strap)

(Left: Feed point and catenary)

The loop is, as expected, very low noise and proving to be 1 to 2 S-points up on the 30M mono-band dipole, which is similarly firing NW/SE.

Until the next News and Notes...QAC!

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

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

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SC

## 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

KA5M, Marsh Stewart, CWops #1433



"Here is a picture of me in 1960 (age 12) at my station. My callsign was KN5ZNJ.

The transmitter is a 6AG7 oscillator built on the end of a wooden apple crate I found behind a grocery store. The transformer for the PS is out of an old TV set I found on the street in the trash to be picked up.

My antenna was a 40M dipole up about 20 feet. The receiver was a National (I think) with a HeathKit Q-Multiplier. Didn't make many QSOs, but it was a start.

Today I'm KA5M with an Icom-7851, ACOM A2100, monoband Yagis for 10M, 15M, 20M and 40M, a vertical with a FCP for 80M, and an inverted L with one elevated radial for 160M.

Still havin' fun!"

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](#).

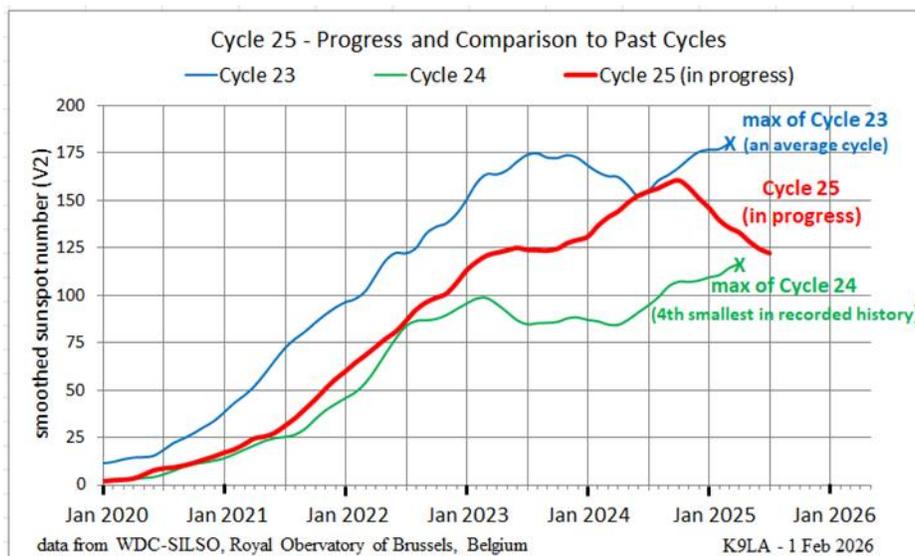
**73, Ian GWØKRL** (CWops #2896)

# Cycle 25: Winter 2026 Update

[Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA](#) (CWops #920)

This article will give a brief update on Cycle 25 and how it is likely to affect CWops operating events in 2026.

Figure 1 is the latest data on Cycle 25. We now have five and one half years of smoothed sunspot number data after solar minimum in December 2019. Cycle 25 appears to be in its decline, with no hint yet of a second peak. The probability of a second peak is quite low now for two reasons: only eight of our previous twenty-four solar cycles have had a second peak with a significant dip in between, and the second peaks have generally been around five years after solar minimum (based on historical data, it's getting late for a second peak).



**Figure 1 - Status of Cycle 25**

Let's look at expected propagation on the CWT and CW Open bands.

## The lower bands (160m and 80m)

On these bands, low ionospheric absorption is needed to hear/decode our signals. The MUF is usually high enough, so F<sub>2</sub> ionization is not an issue. Atmospheric noise and man-made noise are highest on these bands, but both noises decrease as frequency increases. As the decline of Cycle 25 continues, these bands should show slight improvement due to less absorption. Unfortunately, man-made noise has increased over the past decade or so due to more electronic devices in our society. Having low noise antennas for receiving will be an advantage. Keep your BIC.

## The middle bands (40m and 20m)

These bands don't need as much ionization as the higher HF bands and they can tolerate more ionospheric absorption than the lower bands. These bands should be good performers in 2026.

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### The higher bands (15m and 10m)

On these bands, enough ionization is needed to refract our signals back to Earth from the ionosphere. See Table I for my best estimate of how long these two bands will be productive, assuming a typical solar cycle decline (for example, using the NOAA forecast at <https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/products/solar-cycle-progression>). Ionospheric absorption is usually not an issue on these bands as absorption is inversely proportional to the square of the frequency.

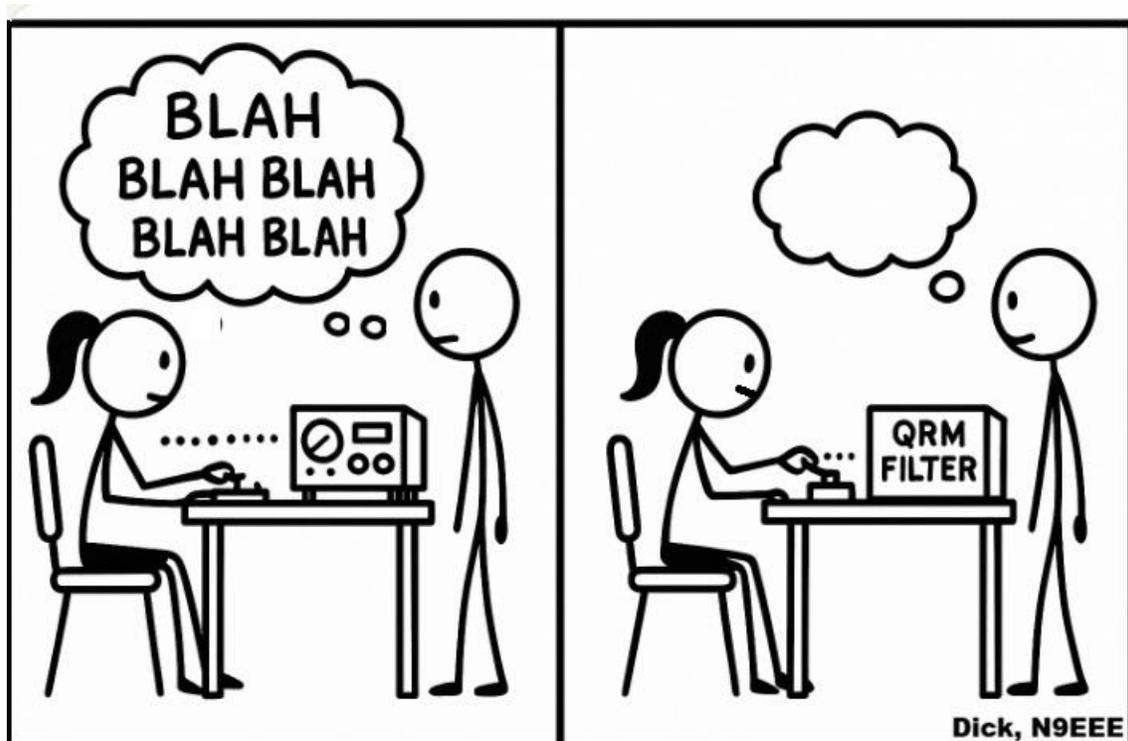
band	needed long-term 10.7 cm solar flux	good out to
15m	85	end of 2027
10m	100	end of 2028

Table I

Also be aware of two issues. First, coronal holes are most prevalent during the decline of a solar cycle (CMEs are most prevalent around solar maximum). Coronal holes adversely impact the F<sub>2</sub> region more than CMEs based on historic geomagnetic data. Second, remember that daytime MUFs in the northern hemisphere are higher in the fall and winter months. Hopefully, sporadic-E will come to the rescue in the summer months. Overall, these bands should be productive this year.

— **sc** —

## Hamming It Up



# Activation of W. Goodrich Jones State Park US-4422

[Mark Finkelstein](#), KB2PIZ (CWops #3219)

Every year when I come to Houston for a conference I manage to squeeze in an amazing eyeball QSO with Mark Tyler, K5GQ. Mark is my CWops Instructor and mentor who was instrumental in bringing my CW skills up to speed.

We had originally planned to meet on Sunday, but a major blizzard was headed towards Houston, and we decided to activate W. Goodrich Jones State Park US-4422 in the Woodlands earlier than planned.



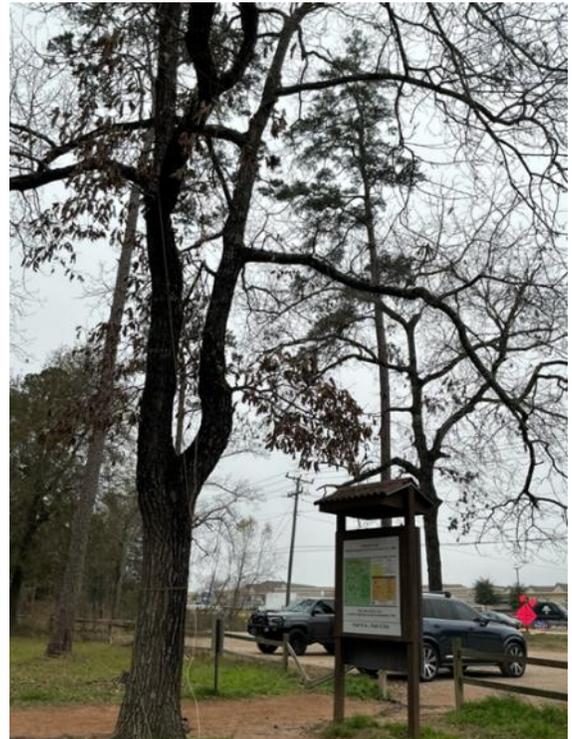
Located in Conroe, Texas, William Goodrich Jones State Forest is a state-owned forest that plays a crucial role in responding to wildfires in the region. With a dedicated team of firefighters and strategically placed equipment, they can combat dangerous fire conditions quickly and effectively. Additionally, they aid rural fire departments, offering training and equipment to help prevent and protect against wildfires.

William Goodrich Jones State Forest also focuses on sustainable land management practices, educating and informing landowners on how to manage their forestland responsibly. With the majority of forestland in Texas privately owned, they work to ensure that the trees and forests are well-maintained and provide the many benefits they offer. Furthermore, they collaborate with communities to plant and conserve trees, empowering local volunteers to make a positive impact in their surroundings.

We first met at Goodson's Restaurant, decided to activate the park first and then drove to the park. At the park we were lucky to find a picnic table near a tree and some open ground to run the Chameleon LEFS 40-10 Sloper. We arrived at the park, brought our gear to the picnic table, and then the fun began.

After more throws than I will mention, Mark took over throwing the Weaver arborist weight. Again, after another while, I got back in the batter's box and finally managed to get the weight over a branch up about 25 feet! We easily set the combined weight toss record for failed throws! At least no one was hurt!

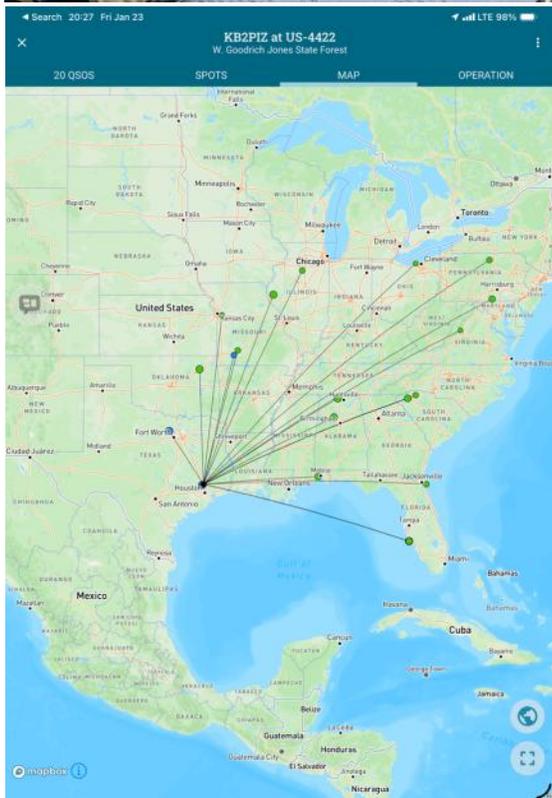
The antenna was the Chameleon LEFS 40-10 and it ran from West to East, with the feed-point at the West and high end of the wire. Signals varied from loud, a few miles away to faint. Mark then used his MFJ Antenna Analyzer to check SWR. On 40 and 20 meters the antenna was showing about a 1.1 SWR! Perfect!



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The station set-up after that was simple, connecting the SGC 2020 to the 6-amp hour Bienno Battery, my Bengali key, Mark's Bencher paddle, and a splitter for ear buds. We were on the air!



Band conditions were not the best, but we managed 20 contacts in an hour with one duplicate. We worked as a team using two operators. I was calling CQ and would repeat the calling station or question their call sign. If correct, I would call them back and give a signal report and state. After the calling station replied, Mark would answer with his call sign and his signal report. The hunting station then sent Mark his signal report. While Mark was exchanging reports, I logged the contact into the POLO app. We then went back to calling CQ and repeating the process. After 20 contacts we were getting cold and called it quits.

We then headed to Tomball to eat our delayed lunch at Goodson's. It does not get much better after activating a park with a good friend to have lunch! We had some good laughs about our lack of skills throwing the arborist weight and had a wonderful time catching up. I cannot wait until next year when Mark promises to bring his slingshot! To the left is a map of our contacts.

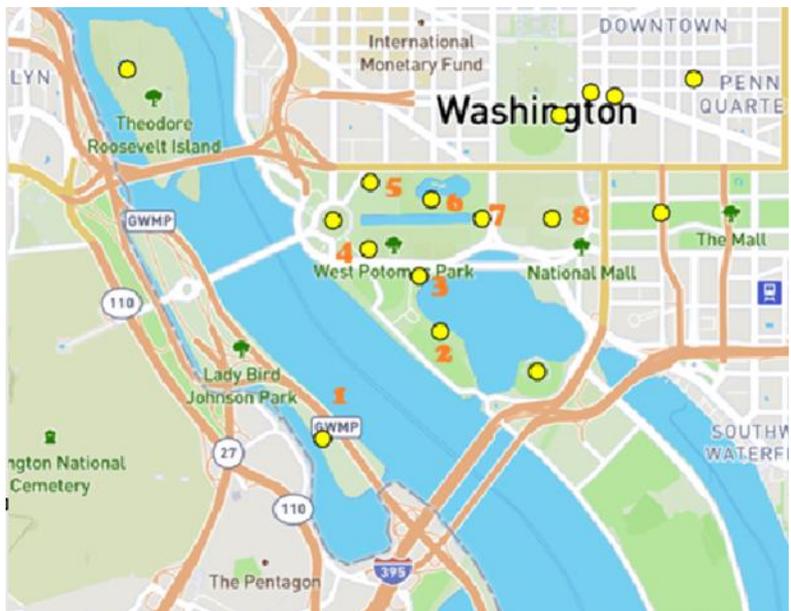


# Parks On The Air (POTA) in Washington, D.C. How to Earn the Cheetah Rover Award

[Carl Davis, W8WZ](#) (CWops #1660)

Some friends of mine recently move to Washington, D.C. and invited me to visit them just before Christmas. Knowing that a visit to the nation's capital is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy POTA due to the high density of national parks and monuments, I added a day to my visit dedicated totally to doing POTA. On 22 December 2025, the shortest day of the year, I spent 5 hours completing 15 activations using an Elecraft KX2 transceiver and two different telescopic whip antennas. Below is the plan I used. It is hoped that this article will help others interested in planning their own POTA rove to DC.

The big jackpot of doing POTA in D.C. is doing one activation that is a 7-fer. That means when the operator does an activation in that spot, he or she is actually activating 7 different POTA parks at the same time. This is possible because in this exact location several trails combine in proximity to other monuments in a park. So, if you set up in the exact right spot, your activation will be from 7 POTA parks at once. This spot can be a bit hard to find. I was fortunate that my friend John, K4EB had activated this location a few months before my visit, so he was able to give me exact guidance to set up in the correct location. This spot can be found by



viewing the webpage for each of the 7 parks to find their legal boundaries then using Google Earth to overlay the information from each of those webpages and find the spot where the overlap happens. Here are the best instructions I can offer. First, get to The Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac National Memorial. This is POTA Park number US-0784 and is labeled as park 1 on the graphic above. This can be easier said than done as this park does not have an address. If you type "Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac National Memorial" into the Uber app, it will insert the address of the park's administrative office in Virginia, not the address of the park itself. I learned this the hard way. To get around that, enter the name of a marina that is located in the park when ordering an Uber. Set your destination as "Colombia Island Marina George Washington Mem Pkwy, Arlington, VA 22202". Please note that even though that address says Arlington, VA the actual location of the Marina is on Colombia, Island in DC. Uber will drop you off in the parking lot. Apple Maps will also take you to this parking lot if you are driving yourself and ask it to take you to the marina. If you are driving your own car and want to activate from the parking lot, you can do so but you will "only" be activating 4 parks at once instead of 7. Also, if you get out of the car and operate from one of the picnic tables near the parking lot you will be doing a 4-fer. This is certainly not bad! It is very pleasant to operate from one of those picnic tables and doesn't require much walking at all.

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If you have mobility issues or just want to be as comfortable as possible, or your POTA gear is not super portable and you don't want to schlep it very far, then this is the best option. Operate from one of the picnic tables here, or from your car and do a 4-fer. However, if you want to activate 7 parks at once, then from the parking lot walk away from the marina towards the stone monument to LBJ. When you get to that stone monument, walk towards the Washington Monument, which you will see across the river, walk across the parkway and setup under a tree that stands between the parkway and the Potomac. In that spot you will be in 7 parks at once. You will need to bring your own chair. I use a great little chair made by a company called Helinox that is very light weight. The 7 parks that are activated from this location are: US-4581, US-9901, US-4567, US-0670, US-0784, US-9898, US-4564. Here I used my 16-foot telescopic whip vertical antenna with ground radials and held the radio on my knee using a kneeboard while sitting in the chair. In very short order, I had made 14 contacts on 20-meter CW and was ready to move to the next park.

I walked back to the parking lot and called an Uber to take me to the FDR Memorial which is located on the tidal basin and is park US-0776. It is labeled as park 2 on the graphic above. Here, after viewing the monument, which is very nice, I walked down to the tidal basin part of the monument and set up my station on a park bench. I put the antenna directly behind the bench where I sat and did not lay down ground radials. I sat on the bench with the radio on my knee using a knee board. I quickly made 18 contacts on 20 CW. This park (and every other park that I activated afterwards) is located on the National Mall meaning that it counted as a 2-fer as I was activating both it and US-0655. From this operating position, looking to my left, I could see the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial (US-0785). So, I walked over to it and set up on a bench there in the same way. This is labeled park 3 on the graphic. I quickly had another 11 QSOs in the log and had already got 10 new parks activated. This park had more foot traffic than the FDR memorial had, but I was able to find an unused bench.



Next, I walked across Independence Ave. SW and into the area around the reflecting pool. Here there are several more parks, labeled parks 4,5,6,7,8 on the graphic. They are very easy to get to. They are, Constitution Garden (US-0653), Korean War Memorial (US-0780), Vietnam War Memorial (US-0793), WW2 Memorial (US-0796) and the Washington Monument (US-0794). Also in this area is the Lincoln Memorial. However, the Lincoln Memorial was very crowded and had no bench near it that I could sit on, so I did not activate it. The monuments I activated all had park benches that I could sit on. Due to crowds in this area, I did not use my 16-foot vertical antenna. Instead, I used the Elecraft AX1 whip antenna connected directly to the BNC jack on the side of my radio with the radio on my kneeboard for those activations.

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I used headphones so I did not disturb anyone with sound as I sent and received CW. This was a low impact/low profile operation as I could manage, and it worked very well. I did not seem to bother anyone or raise any attention from anyone else in the park, including the police and National Guard troops who frequently passed by, and I was able to make plenty of contacts at each park. My final activation of the day was at 4:30 PM at the Washington Monument. The sun was starting to go down and it was getting cold when I had the activation at park 15 finished. I took an Uber back to the hotel and entered my logs into the POTA webpage that evening. Activating 15 parks in one day earns the Cheetah Rover award, which was my goal. Thanks to the 7-fer and 2-fer I only had to do 8 individual activations to activate 15 parks. The temperatures that day were in the low 30's. The tidal basin froze as I was activating the FDR monument and I could hear the sounds of the ice forming in the water, but it did not rain, and the wind was not bad. Even though less pleasant than being out on a nice day, being out when the weather was not perfect may have meant fewer other park users which made it easy to find empty park benches.

To activate all of the parks the way I did requires low impact radio equipment. There are no places for wires in trees along the Reflecting Pool and because there are many other people around, even vertical antenna systems need to be compact and close to the operator. The Elecraft KX2 and AX1 combo along with a kneeboard and plug in KXP2 paddle really made this easy. At one of the parks there was a picnic table, and I was able to operate from that which felt like a luxury after having been using the kneeboard until then.

There was a food truck near there so I got a pretzel so that as I sat at the table using the radio I would look more natural to the passer by if seen eating a pretzel (or that is my excuse at least). I also took advantage of that tabletop operation to plug in an external battery to preserve the built-in battery as much as possible. At that activation, I ran 10 watts. When using the internal battery, I limited output to 5 watts to conserve battery.

When I got back to the hotel, I had an e-mail from Chaise KQ4WJP saying that his contact with me when I was activating the Korean War memorial was his first CW contact! I put a paper QSL card in the mail to him as soon as I got home. Also, while activating that memorial I made a Park to Park contact with AC5XK who was activating the Washington Monument just across the reflecting pool from me! Some DX! I also worked N4FFF who worked me with a prototype QRP rig he is building. He was powering it with a 9 Volt battery. So, not only was I in interesting locations, but I also made interesting contacts too.



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Here are links to the gear I used:

Chair: <https://tinyurl.com/whr6d936>

Kneeboard: <https://tufteln.com/products/knee-board-field-desk>

Radio: <https://elecraft.com/products/kx2-ssb-cw-data-80-10-m-transceiver>

Key: <https://elecraft.com/collections/keyer-paddle/products/kxpd2-attached-precision-keyer-paddle>

Antennas:

A. Elecraft : <https://elecraft.com/collections/ax-line-antennas-1/products/ax1-antenna>

B. 16-foot whip Ground Mount: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/146597144123>

C. 16-foot whip: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/226768708847>

Battery: <https://www.bioenpower.com/products/12v-4-5ah-lfp-battery-pvc-pack>

While in Washington, DC I also took time to visit the Spy Museum <https://www.spymuseum.org/> This is an especially fun museum for radio nerds because it has several World War Two era spy radios on display including a paraset. It also has a display about the enigma and the work done at Bletchley Park during the war. Adding that to a POTA rove makes for a great radio vacation in the nation's capital. Using the little Elecraft KX2 after looking at the display of field spy radios from the 1940's certainly makes one appreciate the advances in technology!



# Not Your Normal POTA Activation

[Barbara Smith](#), N7BAS (CWops #3479)

January 31st is a Spring-like day, in the 60s. "Mom we're going to a new park for a POTA activation. Want to come along?" a text from my daughter W7QF.

"Sure" I text back, gather my stuff and head to my car. It's been a while since I've done a CW activation, and at a new park. We all head out, K7EUG, my son-in-law Brad, W7QF, my daughter Sue, and myself, N7BAS. Sitting in the back seat with me is Willow - Sue and Brad's dog. Driving 40 minutes, we pull into Park US-2810, Alderwood State Wayside, in the middle of nowhere, in the state of Oregon. There is a porta potty, a picnic table along a river, and parking for several cars.

K7EUG comes prepared with three antennas, radios, his lap top, and anything we might need, just in case. Spreading waterproof padding on the picnic table and seat, he puts a blanket over the padding. Sue ties Willow to the table, spreads a big rug for her to rest - now we're busy. Brad begins setting the three telescoping verticals up; has an interesting tripod, not for height, for stability. The three arms are spread out on the gravel surface - he screws in the first vertical. While he's busy with the antennas, I'm putting my IC-7300, key, ear phones, in my spot at the table. Sue's got her IC-7300, mic, lap top, etc. next to my set up. She's setting Brad's lap top, Xeiugu G90, etc. across from her on the other side of the table. We're going to work close together on three different bands, three different modes.



Antennas are about 30 feet out - spaced 15 feet apart. All three antennas are telescoping, each with four, 16 feet long radials. I have a piece of coax so the antenna will reach my radio, but I need an adaptor to connect the antenna to my radio. In Brad's go-bag of miscellaneous stuff, he finds the adaptor then hands me a bandpass filter for 15-meters. "Read the info on the filter Barbara", Brad says, handing Sue a 10-meter bandpass filter, then takes the 20-meter bandpass filter to his radio.

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"So what am I supposed to be reading Brad?", looking at the filter. "Oh I see." He identified the right side antenna, left side radio. No mistakes connecting.

This park is in a cell phone desert. We aren't able to spot ourselves, it's a matter of luck whether my signal will be picked up by a hunter.

Clicking out CQ POTA DE N7BAS, over and over. Sweeping up and down the CW portion of 15-meters with no results...over an hour passes by...I stop to see how W7QF and K7EUG are doing. Sue and Brad made their activation on FT8. "Not one contact on 15-meters," I say, a little discouraged. "We can't leave without you making an activation, Mom," Sue says.

Now here is the most unusual and fun POTA experience any of us has ever had. On 10-meters Sue scans for another POTA activation, and we begin. Not much heard, so we move to 20-meters, scanning again. Sue hears a 5-9 signal calling, with 6 operators. We look at each other, "sure let's do it", and send out W7QF PARK TO PARK a few times - we connect. This is how it went: The calling station sends his call, W7QF answers, Operator 2 sends his call, W7QF answers etc. till all 6 contacts are made. N7BAS takes her turn. K7EUG his turn. Within 10 minutes all three of us had 6 contacts each. Not only did we do multiple contacts, they had 3 operators with us. It was easy to wrap it up with the remaining 4 contacts for an activation.

I didn't get my CW contacts - I tried. Brad asked me, " why don't you program your CQ in the 7300, and just push a button?" Because I love hearing Morse Code when I send it manually - it's a beautiful sound.

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## **My Year with Dad**

### **100 Unique Florida Park Activations in 10 Months**

**[Art Peters, KØACP](#) (CWops #3806)**

Life is funny and the saying that you cannot script these events is really true!

Thru a series of unanticipated happenings, I found myself as primary caretaker for my 96-year old father last December. Part of these new-found responsibilities included finding my father a suitable Assisted Living facility and setting up a cadence visits to make sure all was copesetic. This presented me with a great opportunity to simultaneously do three of my favorite activities: spend time with my Dad; perfect my CW; activate new parks for POTA.



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My preferred POTA activation is a 10-15 Q (contact) quick CW in-and-out. This gives me practice in quick deployment, keeps the pace moving, and lets me see more beautiful sights. At the beginning of this adventure, December 2024, I was still a fledgling CWA student having just finished my Beginner and preparing for my Fundamental class. My code was painful to listen to, my unending gratitude to all of you who endured my QLF sending.

The POTA.APP was a great source of information and made it easy to lay out an afternoon excursion that would allow us to hit a couple to five parks in a single rove, and then end at either an ocean-facing seafood shack, or a BBQ joint. This was initially easy as Florida has over 450 parks and Orlando, where my Father was living, is rather centrally located.

My first challenge a good travel key. My Vibroplex Code Warrior Jr., has rather fragile paddles and left me high and dry when they broke on my initial activation forcing me to break out my microphone to successfully activate our first park, Wekiwa Springs State Park, US-1927, on Christmas day, 2024. This park will come back later as a CW activation.



At the time, my travel kit consisted of a pelican case filled with a KX3, KXPA100, PX3, key, microphone, a zillion cables, and a 12 AH Bioenno Battery. My antenna was, and remains mostly, a Chameleon TDL. Logging was accomplished using my MacBook Air and POLO.

Our next activation, I was prepared, thanks to Orlando's HRO, with a new key and as they say, the rest was history as all subsequent activations were accomplished via CW.

By my February trip, I decided to ditch the amp, pan adapter, and give QRP a shot. My back definitely liked the lighter kit! Plus, I was stunned to find out that with even a modest antenna, much less, the Chameleon TDL, CW, QRP was a bunch of fun! True, activations took 10 minutes longer, but I spent the time operating and not fiddling with cable and interconnecting a bunch of equipment. By now, I had invested in a second TDL that stayed in FL with my father, and my travel kit had considerably shrunk to just KX3, spare LIFEPO4 battery, headset, and key (in its own pelican case).



With the arrival of February, we had a bonus trip to FL to help celebrate my nephew's wedding, in Ponte Vedra / St. Augustine. This allowed for a second trip to FL and a new region to explore. But by now, I was starting to run into an issue of how to easily (and graphically) sort out where our activations had taken us. Fortunately, a bit of "Googling" led me to a site: [easymapmaker.com](https://easymapmaker.com). With this tool, I could download my activations in Florida and generate a map that shows which parks had been activated. There are a bunch of other options with this tool, but perhaps the easiest is just color coding my activations to blue and the orange dot represented parks we hadn't been to (yet).

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This tool, made it much easier to plan our activation outings and track outliers. It also lets you easily see if parks touch / overlap for 2-fer & 3-fer activation opportunities.

By the end of February, we had been to 25 unique parks in Florida and made some great memories. We also had developed a good rhythm for our activations. We would enjoy our morning coffee and layout a trip, then grab a bite of lunch and then off to the parks, usually ending up at a BBQ shack for dinner and back to the home for a relatively early evening. Being Florida, the weather was usually quite mild, but we did find our share of muddy trails, often returning the rental car looking like it had completed a Baja race.

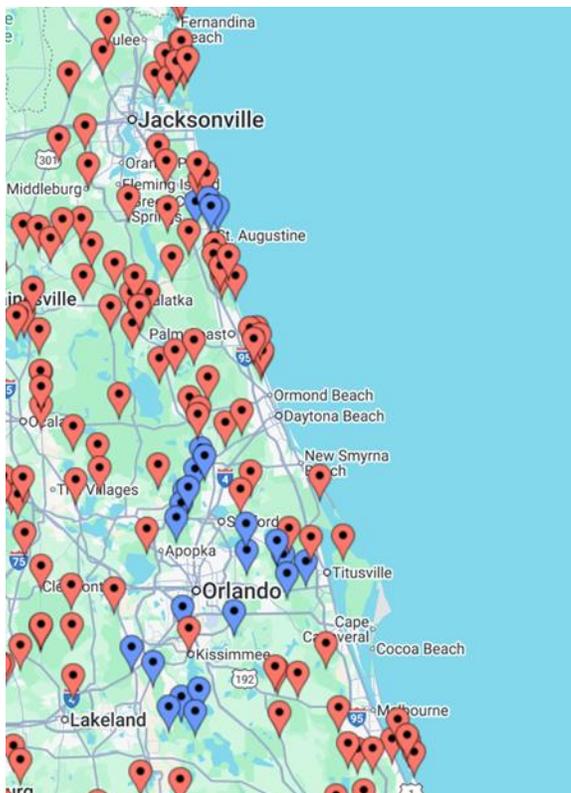
Monthly trips continued for March, April, and May, with us finding our favorite spot to activate, Canaveral National Seashore, US-0660, where I discovered it paid to be a senior as I got my Lifetime Senior *America the Beautiful*, National Park Pass, which paid for itself after our 2<sup>nd</sup> visit. Turns out one of the Rangers at Canaveral is also a ham, and pointed us to a place where on the South end of the park you could setup and get a two-fer with Merrit Island National Wildlife Refuge, US-0249. In addition to being our favorite spot to activate, this also was a great location to watch SpaceX Falcon-9 launches. During one visit, Dad and I were treated to a spectacular view. Unfortunately, we were taken by the sight and sharing the moment we forgot to get a picture. Still the memory remains.

June's trip was extra special as timing worked out that not only I got to spend Father's Day with Dad, we were able to meet up with my daughter, who lives near Clearwater, FL. We met in Lakeland and knocked out a 10-park rove while heading to see her and her husband for an Excellent Steak Dinner at the *Texas Cattle Company*, and got a great picture to cap off the evening.

By this time, I had finished my Fundamental and three quarters of my Intermediate CWA classes. Correspondingly, my code and operating proficiency had greatly improved. By now I was a fairly committed QRP CW POTA activator and found that I could decode signals that were previously just noise. My speed and proficiency had improved with my keyer now at a comfortable 20 wpm and using Farnsworth spacing to help slower ops complete the "Q".

Much to my surprise, I even started mini conversations with my contacts, doing my best to greet them by name, for regulars, and a "GUD TO C U" on occasion. I'm still not much of a rag chewer,

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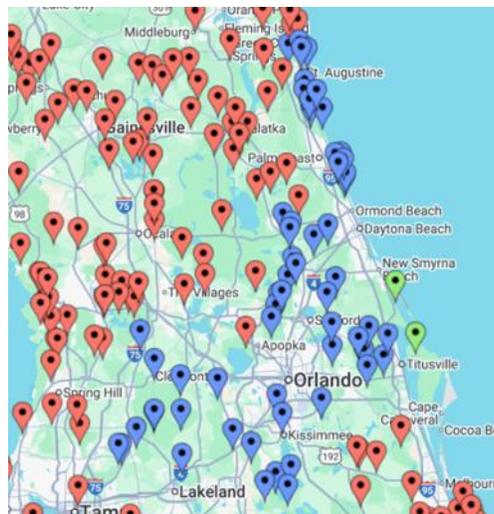


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but have caught myself in a couple of mini conversations.

Our coverage of FL parks continued to expand with Dad and I closing out June with 60 unique parks being activated. Somewhere along the way, we set ourselves a goal to activate 100 unique parks that year.

July and August in Florida was oppressively hot and our activations and roves frequently found either a shade tree to operate under or just let the car run with the AC trying to keep us cool. Because of the heat, our stops were as quick as possible and even included a few ice cream breaks to ease the summer heat.



By now my kit had further evolved, my key was one of Aaron's Modern Morse Nameless keys, and I had discovered USB C PD battery banks. This allowed me to get my whole kit into a single Maxpedition Beefy Pocket organizer. My back was happier still. As an aside, I am amazed that I can regularly get a whole weekend of operating on the KX3 and only use 50% of my battery bank. This new arrangement also meant that I pretty much always have a radio with me at all times.



September was a special month as my father celebrated his 97<sup>th</sup> birthday, and as you can imagine, we celebrated with a family get-together. Later, he and I had a 3-day POTA palooza where we worked 25 parks, 22 were new ones. On his birthday proper, we headed back to the Atlantic and one of our stops, Tomoka State Park, US-1923, was around the corner from a great Shrimp Shack - my name for the waterfront seafood restaurants - where Dad and I enjoyed ocean air, and fresh Chili-banger shrimp. The next day we headed North and activated Ravine Gardens State Park, US -1913 and over to Interlachen / Mannville where we activated Carl Duval Moore State Forest, US-4615. We finished our Palooza with a trek West where we activated Honeymoon Island State Park, US-1880, and Skyway Fishing Pier State Park, US-1916, to name a few.

October rounded out our 100-Park trek with a swing North where we activated Lake Griffin State Park, US-1889, capped off with BBQ dinner at a Fruitland Park local haunt. The following day, we revisited Wekiwa Springs State Park, US-1927, where we completed a CW activation of the park, thus completing our quest to activate 100 unique Florida Parks using CW.

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Shortly after the October trip, my father fell ill and future trips became more medically focused with no time or energy for POTA. Dad became a silent key, (passed away), peacefully in his sleep on December 10, 2025.

I will always remember this past year and our exceptional adventures.

Rest In Peace Dad.

73 es God Bless, Art KOACP



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## From FT8 to CW: A Modern Path Back to Morse Code

[Philomen Leonelli Jr.](#), WM6Y (CWops #2280)

I never thought I would become a CW operator.

I was introduced to amateur radio early, thanks to my father, Phil, WF6L, who was eager to share his love of radio with his ten year old son. I learned the basics young and earned my license after the FCC restructured the amateur licensing system in 2000. At the time, Morse code felt like the barrier between where I was and where I wanted to be as an operator. When the FCC later dropped the Morse code requirement, I celebrated, but life had already begun to pull me in other directions. School, work, and outside interests slowly took over, and before long I had faded from the airwaves and become an inactive ham.

Two decades later, my return to amateur radio came through FT8. My father reintroduced me to the hobby by showing me this weak signal digital mode at what was effectively the bottom of the solar cycle. By all conventional wisdom, propagation should have been poor. Bands were quiet, sunspot numbers were low, and many operators had resigned themselves to limited activity. Yet on the screen in front of us, signals were appearing from all over the world.

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What struck me immediately was not just that contacts were being made, but who was being worked. My father was seeing and working DX that he had not seen or heard in years. Stations that had been completely absent during traditional SSB and CW operating suddenly reappeared, decoded cleanly out of the noise. All of it was happening at power levels and signal strengths that would have been considered unusable before. Watching FT8 pull coherent exchanges from what sounded like pure static felt almost like cheating, but it was undeniably “real radio”.

The ability to make reliable contacts under objectively poor band conditions and with modest stations was fascinating. FT8 stripped away much of the mystery surrounding propagation. Gray line effects, band openings, signal-to-noise ratios, and path reliability became visible in real time. Instead of guessing whether a band was open, I could see it. Instead of wondering why a signal was not getting through, the data told me. That clarity reignited my curiosity and before long I was upgrading my license from Technician all the way to Extra.

FT8 did not replace real radio for me. It explained it. Understanding timing, synchronization, signal paths, decoding thresholds, and noise floors gave me a deeper appreciation for RF fundamentals than I had ever gained through voice operation alone. It forced me to think analytically about antennas, power, and operating strategy. That foundation, built during one of the quietest points in the solar cycle, would later become critical in my transition to CW.

My journey toward CW truly began in an unlikely place, Santa Rosa Island.

Santa Rosa Island is one of the eight Channel Islands off the coast of Southern California and part of Channel Islands National Park, administered by the National Park Service. The island sits roughly twenty six miles off the coast of Santa Barbara and is accessible only by boat or plane. What makes it especially interesting to radio operators is that it lies in the rare grid square CM93, making it a highly desirable location for grid chasers.

Around that same time, grid chasing, at least on HF, had taken on new life with the ARRL Grid Chase in 2018. It pushed operators to get creative, chase rare locations, and operate from places they might otherwise overlook. Looking back, I believe the Grid Chase played a meaningful role in motivating operators like me, and I think it would be wonderful to see it return someday.

I was first introduced to the Channel Islands by a friend on a camping trip. At the time, I had no intention of operating. I brought along only an HT for emergency use. Santa Rosa Island felt both familiar and alien similar to the mainland yet completely removed from it. The quiet, isolation, and raw beauty were unforgettable.

When I later realized the island sat in CM93, everything clicked. I knew I had to go back with HF equipment and operate from there.

Operating from Santa Rosa Island is an exercise in patience and planning. The trip involves a three and a half hour boat ride followed by a two mile hike to the campsite, carrying everything you need. There is no cell service, no power, and no safety net beyond what you bring with you. Winds occasionally exceed twenty-five miles per hour, sometimes making antenna deployment impossible. Emergency help is hours away. If you forget something, there is no turning back.

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Over multiple trips, I experimented with different radios, antennas, and modes. FT8 proved effective, especially for QRP and poor conditions, but it came at a cost. Power consumption was high. Running a laptop continuously and transmitting full fifteen second cycles drained batteries quickly. On one trip, I hauled an FT-891, an MP1 Super Antenna, and a Bioenno battery across that two mile hike. I learned a valuable lesson. Lightweight matters.

Those Santa Rosa Island trips forced me to re-think how I operated. I began reading extensively about QRP, minimalist field setups, SOTA, and POTA. A consistent theme emerged. CW enables simplicity.

CW equipment is lighter. Power requirements are minimal. No laptop is required. Fewer failure points exist in the field. For someone operating from remote unforgiving environments, CW was not just appealing. It was logical.

For the first time in my life, I wanted to learn Morse code.

Like many before me, my search for a starting point led directly to CW Academy. Every path pointed there, and the praise was universal. I can now say without hesitation that CW Academy changed my life as a radio operator.

CW did not come naturally to me. Progress was slow and often frustrating. But through structure, accountability, and encouragement, things began to click. My level one mentor, Buz, AC6AC, and my level two mentor, Ed, K6HP, were instrumental. They provided not only technical instruction but also perspective, patience, and motivation.



***A compact portable CW station featuring an MTR-3B QRP transceiver, a Palm Morse Code paddle, and a lightweight portable battery.***



***Philomen Leonelli Jr., WM6Y, operating at the NX6T contest station***

CW Academy taught me far more than just copying characters. It taught discipline, listening skills, and confidence. Through failure, repetition, and eventual success, I began to see CW not as a barrier, but as a craft.

Another pivotal moment in my CW journey came through contesting with NX6T.

My father brought me to the NX6T contest site in Fallbrook, California, affectionately known as "Nashville" in honor of Nash Williams, W6HCD. I was surrounded by experienced CW operators running at speeds that felt completely incomprehensible. I could not copy a single thing, but I was captivated. The rhythm, intensity, and teamwork were unlike anything I had seen in amateur radio.

My Elmer, Dennis, N6KI, sat next to me and patiently walked

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me through the basics of CW contesting. I understood it from a technical perspective, exchange structure, rate, and strategy, but I simply did not yet have the skills to participate. Still, that experience planted a seed. I knew this was something I wanted to do someday.

Today, I sit here copying CW comfortably at thirty five words per minute and participating in contests with confidence and joy. That still feels surreal to say.

Along the way, I was given the opportunity to give something back by teaching a CW Academy class. Stepping into the role of advisor allowed me to share not only technical knowledge, but also the lessons, struggles, and small victories that come with learning Morse code. Watching students progress from hesitation to confidence was incredibly rewarding, and it deepened my own appreciation for CW as both a skill and a community.

Teaching through CW Academy was an amazing experience, and one I am deeply grateful for. Serving as an advisor reinforced just how impactful the program can be. Anyone with an interest in CW, whether as a student or a future advisor, should strongly consider CW Academy as a place to start. While my current time commitments prevent me from teaching at the moment, the experience left a lasting mark on me, and I am thankful to have been a part of it.

Today, I do the best I can to operate CW. Like many hams, my time on the air is shaped by family commitments and the demands of everyday life. Operating is no longer about marathon sessions, but about making the most of the time I do have. I try whenever possible to jump into the CWTs, even if only for ten minutes, and focus on getting my ten contacts. Those short bursts of operating keep me sharp, connected, and motivated.

Much of my operating today is done remotely from my father's station, which allows me to stay active even when being physically in the shack is not possible. I also continue to participate in contests with NX6T to the best of my ability. ARRL Sweepstakes, in particular, holds a special place for me.

I continue to operate FT8 and other digital modes as well. They do not overtake my CW operation. They supplement it. I also make a point to work as many POTA stations as I can, fully appreciating the challenge and excitement faced by the operators activating those parks. Having operated in remote and demanding environments myself, I understand what it takes to make those contacts happen.

I want to be clear. FT8 is not the enemy. FT8 brought me back to amateur radio. It motivated me to upgrade my license. It led me to portable operations and ultimately to CW. Without FT8, I might never have returned to the hobby at all.

Now, CW has become my quiet, focused space. There is something deeply satisfying about sitting in a calm state, copying code, and making contacts. It is simple, elegant, efficient, and deeply hu-

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***Philomen Leonelli Jr. (PJ),  
WM6Y, operating from his father Phil Leonelli's home station, WF6L.***

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man.

If there is one message I hope others take from my journey, it is this. Do not dismiss digital modes. They can be a gateway, not a replacement. Sometimes the path to CW does not start with a key. Sometimes it starts with a computer screen.

Looking back, my path from FT8 to CW was not accidental. Each step built skills and understanding that made the next step possible. For anyone curious about CW but unsure where to begin, there is a practical and accessible path forward. For me, that path ultimately led to CW Academy, which provided the structure, mentorship, and encouragement needed to turn interest into real operating ability.

The path does not require abandoning digital modes or making a sudden leap into CW. Digital modes can build understanding. Portable operation creates motivation. Contesting builds fluency. Mentorship sustains progress. Taken together, they form a clear and repeatable route from curiosity to confidence.

Philomen Leonelli Jr., WM6Y, is an amateur radio operator, musician, and educator. Licensed since 2001, he is active on the air and enjoys continually improving his operating skills. He teaches math and science in juvenile hall and values education as a tool for growth and opportunity. Outside the classroom, he pursues music education and percussion as a hobby, blending technical curiosity with creative expression. He can be reached at pleonelli@fastmail.fm



## 2026 CWops Test (CWT) Schedule

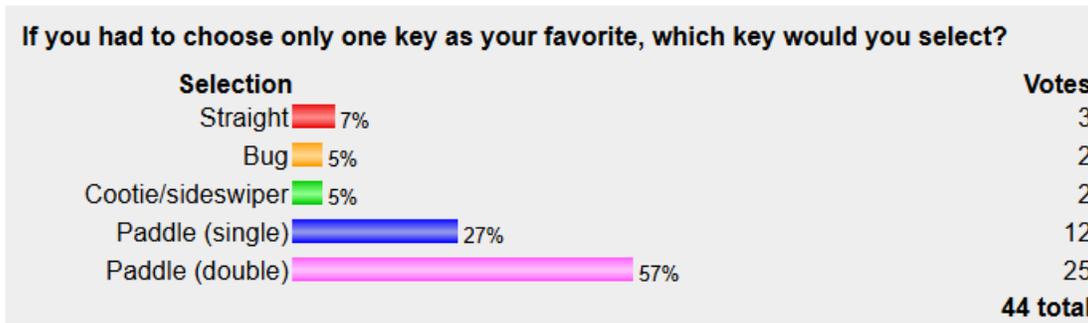
**Wednesdays at 1300 – 1400z and 1900 – 2000z. Thursdays at 0300 – 0400z and 0700 – 0800z.**

	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



# Keyed Up

## Last Month's Poll



## SOAPBOX

**Russ, WI5ARD:** My main key in the shack is a Begali Stealth iambic. I am in no way proficient with my Begali sculpture swing but it is my favorite. Definetly a different mind set with dits and dahs flowing from either side of the paddle.

**Char, K8XCO:** My Begali HST single lever is by far my favorite, followed by my Blade SK and In-trepid bug.

**Scott, WE5J:** Having just jumped into the single lever world, I don't see myself going back to dual lever iambic. It just feels so natural! Unfortunately that relegates my Dayton 2025 purchased Begali Pearl to a display piece.

**Bill, N7DZ:** My primary Elmer back in the 60s & 70s was Hank W8CHT, later N8XX. I loved the cadence and swing of his bug fist. I got a Vibroplex bug and shamelessly mimicked it. I was good and sounded good. At some point I got a keyer and dual lever paddle and never looked back. Though I occasionally plug in the bug, I'm not good on it anymore. But I miss the time when a fist was as distinctive as a voice.

**Graeme, VK5GG:** For my first 30 years I used a straight key only - navy and later amateur operating, before switching to an iambic paddle. For the last 2-3 years I've been using a Vibroplex Original Deluxe bug as my do-everything key. Vibroplex do make nice bug keys.

**Steve, W6QX:** I obtained my Begali Signature in person on a business trip to Italy. Since this was the first new paddle I would purchase, I asked Pietro his advice and he suggested the single paddle. No regrets. I really enjoy the Signature.

**Dave, W8OV:** My first electronic key was a dual touch-paddle key, but I'd never heard of iambic keying then. Next came a Bencher BY-1 I still have and use, and eventually an N3ZN single-paddle key for several years, but I felt something was missing. So I measured the Bencher spacing, ordered an N3ZN dual-paddle key to match it, and sold the single-paddle model. This one is a 'keeper'.

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**Glenn, VE1IJ:** For about the first 35 or so years of my ham journey I used a simple \$4.95 straight key, but as the years passed and my wrist got older I switched to an old navy bug that one of my Elmers had given me. More recently I acquired a Vibroplex Original Chrome from 1948 and I now have a new Vibroplex Original from 2019. A couple of years ago I tried sending using paddles but was hopeless with them. I am quite happy with my two bugs and a chrome straight which I got last year from a local ham when my old \$4.95 key finally gave up.

**Victor, 4X6GP:** If I could still do it as well as I used to, I would use a bug. Years ago I could operate an entire 2-day contest with my bug; but today it's a double-lever iambic paddle, an 9A5N solid-state key. I am also addicted to the Logikey keyer set to mode B. Using any other keyer is a struggle.

**Paul, KE9BHN:** I use an N3ZN ZN-9+, and I don't like using any other key.

**Cainan, N9FZ:** My station isn't decked out enough to have much else. One UR5CDX and a Vibroplex Original Bug. Then travel paddles for portable ops but they are all dual lever.

**Gary, AE4GS:** I had been switching between a Begali Simplex and a Schurr. Both excellent paddles, but I starting using a Kent single lever key and after a few days of getting used to non-iambic (kept screwing up my Y) I really like the Kent. Not a great key but it's working for me.

**Gert, PA3AAV:** 9A5N solid state paddle is my favorite

**Dick, N9EEE:** My Bencher BY-1 is my first paddle and still the one I compare others to.

## This Month's Poll

**"My favorite CW activity is..."**

**Your choices are: Contesting, DXing, Ragchewing, or Coaching/Training others**

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:

<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>						
3860	K6TTA*	Jeff	3864	KEØM*	Joe	3869	W9EN*	John
3861	W6GA	Gary	3865	SM7GVF*	Kjell	3870	IT9ORA	Gianni
3862	IK5MEL*	Tony	3866	N4UL	Vernon	3871	NW6V*	Chris
3863	NA7DO*	Aldo	3867	S53K*	Simon	3872	N2HC*	Ken
			3868	Z31RM*	Ted			

\* Lifetime member

As of February 7, 2026:

**Need Sponsors:** SM7WNM, SA4ZAB, DL2COM

**Invitations Extended:** WØEAS

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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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](#), K6RB (CWops #3)

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

Here are the January 2026 results (GB hosts are shown in **bold**):

<b>GW2CWO</b>	JA1IVV DK1KH	IT9GBE F5TIL	GW4MON	DL6YES	DJ3GS	IU1BOT	DL2LQC
<b>JG1UQD</b>	JA7DWM						
<b>JJ1FXF</b>	JM8QGN	JA4IJ(2)	BH2XBV	BI3AO			
<b>JK1QYL</b>	JJ2JVU JG1BGT	JR6SBI(2) JM8QGN	JA7KED(2) JJ4DQY	JE6AJO N6TI	JL2SQK	JE2HSH	BG2MCU
<b>JM4AOA</b>	HL1MIM	JA7KED	JE1FMZ	JH2ACP	JH2HTQ		
<b>JO1DGE</b>	BI3AHG	JA4IJ	JE6AJO	JM8QGN	JR6SBI		
<b>K6RB</b>	KJ6VU	KF8EXX					
<b>K7NJ</b>	KI5TLY W4BD	K6ZGN	KN1O	KE7IR	W8JAH	N8DXZ	W8FJ
<b>MØWDD</b>	CT2IMG	EA4HIA	EB1TR	GØVSK	MØIYP	SP7P	
<b>N7DZ</b>	WYØL	WA6BXV	WAØJLY	KO6LCW	AEØTN		
<b>W8OV</b>	KEØCU	KD7ZNC	W1TM	KEØM	KA1RVM		
<b>7J1ATG</b>	HL1MM	JR6SBI					
<b>7L2VPL</b>	JS2OVO VK4RT	HL1MIM JG1BGT	JH2WTQ JO1UFB	JA4IJ JA0KSB	JA4IJ JE6TVQ	JE3AIE VX2BPL	JJ0UTR
<b>7N2XZB</b>	HL1MIM(2) BG2MLR	JN3OHW	JR6SBI	BA4SE	YB9HXO	BG2BFG	BH5ELC

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<b>Giving Back Operating Schedule - 7 PM Local</b> <b>October - April: 40m &amp; 80m   May - September: 40m &amp; 20m</b> <b>Frequencies: 7.035 - 7.039, 3.535 - 3.539, 14.035 - 14.039 MHz   JA - 7.028 +/-</b>												
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
<b>MON</b>												
VK1CWO	JØ1DGE							W2XS	W8OV			
	JG1GBT											
<b>TUE</b>												
	JR1WYW	E25JRP		SV2BBK		GW2CWO		WE5P	K8UDH	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
	7N2XZB											
<b>WED</b>												
	7J1ATG							N8DD			N7DZ	
<b>THURS</b>												
	7N2XZB			SV2BBK				KV8Q	N5OT	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
	JG1BGT							W7IY				
	JQ3FRX											
<b>FRI</b>												
	JK1QYL			SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N2GSL	AAØYY		K6RB	
						MØWDD						
<b>SAT</b>												
	JJ1FXF							W5DT				
	JM4AOA											
	JG1UQD											
<b>SUN</b>												
	JJ1FXF							W5DT				
	JM4AOA											
	7L1VPL											



# CW Academy

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

In this edition of *Solid Copy*, we are highlighting two significant developments for CW Academy: a new communication feature for our users and a major step forward in securing the academy's future.



## New Feature: Dashboard Announcements

Communication is key, and we've identified a need for a better way to alert CW Academy users when changes occur on the website. To solve this, we have developed and implemented **Announcements**.

Now, when you log into CW Academy, relevant updates will appear directly at the top of the Student or Advisor portal. These announcements are designed to be purely informational — keeping you in the loop without requiring specific actions. The system is flexible, allowing us to set announcements to appear just once or to remain visible for a set period up to an expiration date.

## Securing the Future: The New CW Academy Support Team

CWops founded CW Academy over fifteen years ago. For the first decade, administrators managed students, advisors, and classes largely through Excel spreadsheets. However, by 2019, the program had exploded in popularity; the sheer volume of students and classes rendered spreadsheets insufficient.

That year, Bob Carter (WR7Q) and Roland Smith (K7OJL) volunteered to automate these processes, leading to the debut of the new CW Academy website for the Jan/Feb 2020 semester. Since then, the platform has evolved significantly, with more than a hundred new software features written to support our community.

## The "Bus Factor"

With this growth came a serious question: *What happens if Bob or Roland get hit by the proverbial bus?* And at our ages (Bob is 79 and Roland is 81), traffic isn't our only concern! It was time to establish a full development, maintenance, and support team to ensure continuity. We set three specific criteria for this new team:

1. **Passion for CW:** Since our core mission is telegraphy, team members needed to be competent operators, familiarity with the CWA classes, and genuinely passionate about CW.
2. **Technical Expertise:** The team required credible experience with our specific tech stack: WordPress, MySQL, and PHP.
3. **Commitment:** Members needed to be able to commit five hours a week to website support.

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## The Response

In January, we sent a recruiting email to over 8,200 current and former students and advisors. We received several dozen enthusiastic responses. From that group, a new support team of eight talented individuals has emerged.

They are currently onboarding—getting familiar with the system architecture and determining their specific areas of focus. We look forward to introducing them to you individually in future issues of *Solid Copy*.

Establishing this team is a milestone achievement. It ensures the future stability of CW Academy and guarantees the continued maintenance and improvement of the platform for years to come.

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, Roland, K7OJL**

CWA Co-Admin

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## CW Academy

### Session Dates

January / February

May / June

September / October

### Learning Levels

Beginner

Fundamental

Intermediate

Advanced

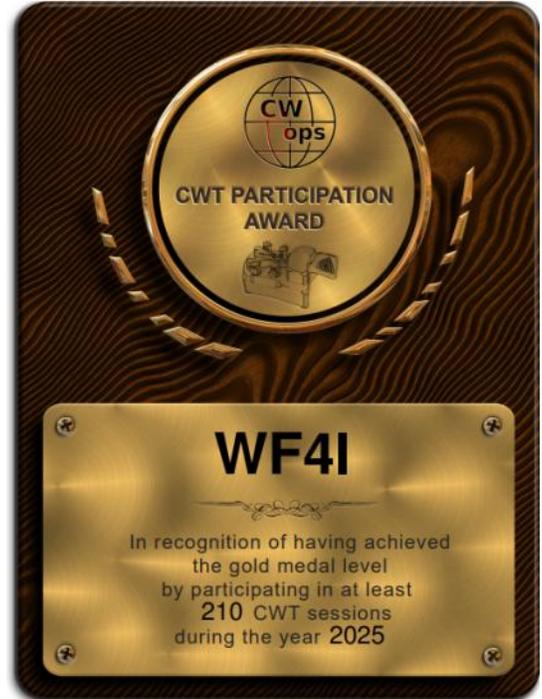


# CWops Tests (CWTs)

[Rich Ferch](#), VE3KI

This column is a reminder about the certificates and medallions for the 2025 CWTs.

First, the certificates. If you submitted at least one qualifying claimed score for a CWT in 2025 (10 or more QSOs during a one-hour CWT session for participants in North America and Europe, 5 or more QSOs for participants in other parts of the world), then regardless of whether you were a CWops member or not you can download a personal certificate from DJ5CW's website at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/certificate/>. Just enter your callsign into the box and click on the button, and your personalized certificate will be generated as a PDF file ready for you to download it. If you were a CWops member in good standing at the end of 2025 and you reached the gold, silver or bronze medal participation level, your certificate will be a gold, silver or bronze certificate. If you were not a CWops member or if you did not reach the bronze participation level, your certificate will be a grayscale participation certificate.



CWops members in good standing as of the end of 2025 who reached the gold, silver or bronze medal participation level are eligible to order a medallion. There is a \$15 USD charge for each medallion as a partial contribution towards procurement and mailing costs. First, check whether you qualified for a medallion, either by checking at the certificates website, by looking for your callsign in the lists published in the January 2026 issue of *Solid Copy*, or by consulting the list in the files area for the CWops group at the groups.io website at <https://cwops.groups.io/g/main/files/CWTmedals2025.txt>. If your callsign does not appear on the list, please do not order a medallion without checking first. If your callsign is on the gold, silver or bronze medal list, you can order your medallion through the CWT page on the CWops website at <https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/> (near the bottom of the page). After entering your callsign, clicking on the "Add to Cart" button will take you to a payment processing page.

The deadline for ordering medallions is the end of February. After February 28, the order list will be frozen and Rob K6RB will order the medallions from the supplier. Once the procurement order has been sent at the beginning of March, it will no longer be possible to add to the order, so you will need to get your orders in on time. Delivery of the medallions will be by post, as in previous years, in late spring or early summer. Rob posts medallions to US addresses directly; medallions for members in Canada, the UK and the rest of the world are distributed by other volunteers.

Enjoy the CWTs and keep those reported scores coming!

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

# CWops Member Awards

[Bill Gilliland, WØTG](#)



## Monthly Update

This February 2026 Member Awards summary reflects the initial QSO totals for 2026. 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. In addition, the tables include only active participants in the Member Awards program who have submitted logs in 2026.

During January, 162 members submitted logs, increasing the number of active participants in the awards program to 162.

The **ACA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of January 2026 have **KR2Q** in first place and leading second place **AA3B** by 106 QSOs. The top ten ACA totals this month are: **(1) KR2Q, (2) AA3B, (3) KY4GS (4) N7US, (5) KO4VW, (6) WT9U, (7) K3WW, (8) KC7V, (9) W4CMG** and **(10 tie) KG9X and NA8V**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 403 QSOs.

The **ACMA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of January 2026 have **AA3B** in first place and leading second place **KR2Q** by 365 QSOs. The top ten ACMA totals this month are: **(1) AA3B, (2) KR2Q, (3) KY4GS, (4) KO4VW, (5) WT9U, (6) KC7V, (7) K3WW, (8) N7US, (9) K7QA** and **(10) N5RZ**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 971 QSOs.

The **CMA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of January 2026 have **AA3B** in first place and leading second place **K3WW** by 3583 QSOs. The top ten CMA totals this month are: **(1) AA3B, (2) K3WW, (3) N5RZ, (4) KR2Q, (5) DL6KVA, (6) NA8V, (7) F6HKA, (8) OM2VL, (9) KG9X** and **(10) KC7V**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 7190 QSOs.

The number of participants who have contacted CWops members in 100 or more **DXCC** entities increased to **101** this month with the addition of **DL3YM** and **WA1S**.

The number of participants who have accomplished CWops **WAS** increased to 291 this month with the addition of **DL3YM, KC3MAL, KJ4M,** and **WA1S**.

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

## CWops Award Tools Participation

At the end of 2025 we had 297 active participants in the Member Awards Program. As of January 31, 2026, we have 162 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

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Table where inactive participants are listed with ACA and ACMA scores of zero, but their scores in other categories are listed at the highest level that was previously submitted.

You can see the final 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 [web-site](#). 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).

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**Here are the Top 100 ACA, ACMA and CMA QSO totals as of January 31, 2026.**

**ACA**

Rank	Call	ACA
1	KR2Q	1050
2	AA3B	944
3	KY4GS	836
4	N7US	737
5	KO4VW	733
6	WT9U	722
7	K3WW	717
8	KC7V	672
9	W4CMG	650
10	KG9X	647
10	NA8V	647
11	K7QA	641
12	N5RZ	621
13	K1VUT	563
14	N5TJ	559
15	KT5V	558
16	W4WF	523
17	W0UO	521
18	AA2IL	504
19	NJ3K	496
20	K1AJ	492
21	KM4FO	490
22	KC3M	485
23	K6NR	465
24	K9WX	463
25	W5AL	462
26	K1TR	442
27	WS7L	439
28	F6HKA	411
29	K4TZ	402
30	K3ZA	392
31	WN7S	389
32	W9CF	380
33	VE3TM	376
34	N2UU	374
35	N5XE	364
36	N5ER	357
37	K3QP	356
38	K1RF	352
38	K3JT	352
39	K9CW	348
40	VE9KK	337
41	KW1X	332

**ACMA**

Rank	Call	ACMA
1	AA3B	2390
2	KR2Q	2025
3	KY4GS	1624
4	KO4VW	1604
5	WT9U	1588
6	KC7V	1560
7	K3WW	1535
8	N7US	1488
9	K7QA	1426
10	N5RZ	1419
11	KG9X	1337
12	NA8V	1311
13	W4CMG	1176
14	K1VUT	1144
15	W0UO	1024
16	AA2IL	904
17	KC3M	903
18	N5TJ	895
19	KT5V	861
20	KM4FO	859
21	W5AL	845
22	W4WF	818
23	K9WX	808
24	K6NR	791
25	WS7L	785
26	K1AJ	752
27	NJ3K	748
28	K1TR	733
29	F6HKA	690
30	N2UU	686
31	N5XE	684
32	W9CF	667
33	K4TZ	657
34	N5ER	652
35	K9CW	632
36	K1RF	612
37	K3ZA	604
38	WN7S	597
39	VE3TM	590
40	W0VX	559
41	AA5JF	555
42	K4IU	552
42	AF5J	552

**CMA**

Rank	Call	CMA
1	AA3B	15333
2	K3WW	11750
3	N5RZ	10937
4	KR2Q	10872
5	DL6KVA	10450
6	NA8V	9968
7	F6HKA	9396
8	OM2VL	8375
9	KG9X	8188
10	KC7V	8143
11	K7QA	8137
12	N7US	8013
13	W9ILY	7644
14	WT9U	7492
15	K1VUT	7212
16	KY4GS	7160
17	W0VX	7146
18	K3JT	6975
19	N5TJ	6879
20	K9WX	6834
21	K6NR	6465
22	W4WF	6463
23	N1DC	6260
24	WT3K	6238
25	SM6CUK	6226
26	N2UU	6170
27	WN7S	6092
28	K4IU	6070
29	KO4VW	5905
30	AA5JF	5738
31	W0UO	5632
32	VE3TM	5623
33	G4BUE	5554
34	AC6ZM	5544
35	NJ3K	5530
36	K1SM	5414
37	N5XE	5315
38	AA2IL	5284
39	K1AJ	5249
40	GW0ETF	5228
41	WS7L	4966
42	F6JOE	4959
43	KT5V	4949

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**ACA**

42	K1SM	328
43	K4IU	327
44	AA5JF	324
45	VE3KIU	319
46	W0VX	314
47	KV8Q	312
48	W9ILY	310
49	AF5J	301
50	NE5A	295
51	EA6BF	280
52	N3CKI	279
53	WA4JUK	268
54	KB8GAE	267
55	W2VM	263
56	K4GM	257
57	W7LG	256
58	EA6EJ	251
59	KW7Q	246
60	VE3MV	243
61	AC3RA	240
62	W8EWH	237
63	KC3MAL	234
64	KM4JEG	231
65	KC4WQ	228
66	W2CDO	225
67	W0TG	222
68	KE4CR	219
68	KR3E	219
68	WM4Q	219
69	KT4XN	213
69	WA5RML	213
70	K9CPO	211
71	DL6KVA	209
72	AC6ZM	202
73	W6AYC	201
74	N2EIM	198
75	F5SGI	194
76	SM6CUK	193
77	G4PVM	177
77	KQ4E	177
78	N1DC	174
79	K5OHY	170
80	WA5LXS	169
81	KK0U	166
82	LY2MM	162
83	WJ0C	158
84	G3LDI	156
85	EA3NO	153
86	M0RYB	152

**ACMA**

43	K3JT	547
44	VE9KK	528
45	KW1X	502
46	W9ILY	483
47	EA6BF	475
48	VE3KIU	472
49	K1SM	469
50	VE3MV	445
51	K3QP	422
51	KV8Q	422
52	W0TG	416
53	K4GM	408
54	N3CKI	404
55	W2VM	399
56	WM4Q	398
57	W8EWH	395
58	KC3MAL	385
59	WA5RML	373
60	NE5A	371
61	EA6EJ	361
62	KW7Q	351
63	AC3RA	350
64	KB8GAE	347
65	W7LG	339
66	KC4WQ	333
67	KM4JEG	330
68	G4PVM	329
69	SM6CUK	327
70	WA4JUK	320
71	DL6KVA	316
72	WJ0C	303
73	K9CPO	297
74	LY2MM	294
75	KE4CR	292
76	W2CDO	287
77	F5SGI	281
78	W6AYC	280
79	KT4XN	271
80	KR3E	264
81	SM0HEV	263
82	M0RYB	231
83	KQ4E	230
83	WA5LXS	230
84	SP7OGP	222
85	AC6ZM	220
86	G3LDI	219
87	WB5N	211
88	G4PFZ	210
89	N1DC	204

**CMA**

44	WA4JUK	4909
45	K3QP	4879
46	K4GM	4808
47	OK1RR	4790
48	EA6BF	4705
49	DF7TV	4673
50	VE3MV	4614
51	W4CMG	4605
52	KC4WQ	4571
53	DJ5CW	4560
54	OZ3SM	4545
55	KM4FO	4492
56	W6AYC	4407
57	F5SGI	4335
58	W0TG	4204
59	G4PVM	4175
60	WS1L	4169
61	AF5J	4119
62	KW7Q	4104
63	K0TC	4084
64	KV8Q	4059
65	N1EN	4027
66	NE5A	4022
67	W2CDO	4008
68	W3WHK	3992
69	KK0U	3969
70	M0RYB	3937
71	EA6EJ	3869
72	SM0HEV	3753
73	KC3M	3739
74	KR3E	3734
75	N3CKI	3728
76	K4TZ	3688
77	HB9ARF	3642
78	K3ZA	3580
79	KW1X	3413
80	K2YR	3385
81	G3LDI	3324
82	W5AL	3241
83	W8OV	3206
84	W2VM	3194
85	W9CF	3174
86	W7GF	3161
87	IT9VDQ	3159
88	KC8J	3061
88	DL3YM	3061
89	VE9KK	3048
90	KB8GAE	3030
91	KT4XN	3000

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**ACA**

87	SM0HEV	149
87	WB5N	149
88	KC8J	144
89	DF7TV	143
90	HB9ARF	141
91	W8OV	139
92	K0TC	138
93	W3WHK	137
94	G4PFZ	130
95	KA0WWT	129
96	N3JT	127
96	WT3K	127
97	K1IG	124
97	SP7OGP	124
98	IT9VDQ	123
99	G4IVV	122
100	DJ6QQ	120
100	W0LPF	120
100	W7PEZ	120

**ACMA**

90	K5OHY	200
91	W8OV	199
92	N2EIM	198
92	EA3NO	198
93	KC8J	197
94	DJ6QQ	193
95	G4IVV	190
96	W3WHK	189
97	HB9ARF	188
98	K0TC	187
99	KA0WWT	184
100	KK0U	181

**CMA**

92	WA5LXS	2905
93	VE3KIU	2823
94	PA2TA	2810
95	K9CPO	2696
96	WW3S	2651
97	K1RF	2485
98	KB4DE	2443
99	W8EWH	2433
100	I5EFO	2415

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

## XXT Schedule

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



# QTX: Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

[Dan Romanchik](#), KB6NU

## QTX: Answers to Recently-Asked Questions

Since taking over as the QTX Manager, I've been asked several questions. I figure that if these questions have occurred to the folks who sent me the questions, that they might have occurred to others, too. Below are the questions, and my answers to them. If you disagree with my answers, please let me know.

*1. I worked an op who likes ragchewing so much that he often spends an hour or more on a ragchew. I think, why don't I split an hour into 3 sessions of 20 minutes and get 3 QTX points. Therefore, my question to you is, if someone likes to keep ragchewing, is it permissible to have another QSO with the same station on the same band and on the same day to count for more than one QTX points?*

A one-hour contact counts as only one QTX QSO, whereas three 20-minute QTX QSOs, even if they are with the same operator during the same day, would count as three QTX QSOs.

*2. On the QTX webpage, there are photos of 3 certificates — 100, 500 and 1000. Can the points be accumulated from year to year, or, must the 1000 points be obtained in one calendar year?*

My opinion is that these certificates are recognition for QSOs accumulated over the years. Indeed, it would be difficult to accumulate 1,000 QTX QSOs in a single year. Having said that, the certificates are self-awarded. That is to say, you can download them, add your name and CWops number and print them out yourself. There's nothing to prevent you from adding a year to the certificate when you reach the 100, 500, or 1,000 mark. Maybe I'll even add a certificate for reaching the 250 QTX QSO mark.

*3. Are medallions available for participants that reach a certain number of QSOs?*

I know that we've awarded medallions in the past for participants that have reached various levels. I have a few bronze medallions myself. For some reason, however, that practice was discontinued. I'm checking into whether we can start doing that again. Another approach would be to modify our certificates to allow for entering the number of annual QSOs, as I've noted above.

I'm open to modifying the awards structure. Are we OK with certificates, or should medallions also be available? Should I add certificates for yearly totals? Let me know. This is, after all, not my program, but all of ours.

Having said all that, let me take a step back and say that the whole idea of the QTX program is not to garner wallpaper or plaques, but to enjoy having long QSOs. Keep that in mind and have fun talking to other hams.

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**VE3INE:** This is my first month participating in this program. I hope I can have QTX QSOs with many CW operators, no matter they are a member or not.

**VE3WH:** Just relax and enjoy the conversation. Appreciated every QTX and MQTX QSO this month. CW is at its best when we take the time to enjoy it.

**AAØYY:** Lots of great signals this month. Even the DX was willing to ragchew. Worked Lutz DL6BBT for a long one and he has some very nice keys and fist.

**N7HCN:** All stateside QTX in January, mostly western states at that, but still fun.

**WS1L:** One of my highlights this month was a 25-minute QSO with Dave, W4CI in Florida. I was waiting for Stacie at a doctor's appointment in Pittsfield and was running my KX1 at 3 watts to a hamstick on the roof of the Jeep. Twenty meters was great, 599 both ways even when Dave reduced his output to 5W on his end.

**N8AI:** Great ragchew with Hank, K9LZJ, a 91 year-old retired engineer.

**WG9P:** I have had fun keeping track of just how much time I spend with each contact. Many of my QTX contacts were more than an hour long. I credit my participation in CW ops for this and it has made my time spent on the air more meaningful. It has also encouraged me to keep pushing myself to higher limits. I recently received my 35 wpm ARRL code proficiency award and have been participating on a weekly CW roundtable with several CW operators in my region.

**KR2Q:** Good start (for me) for the new year.

**N2DA:** In addition to some FB sked QSOs, also had ragchews with Mark AAØYY (a fellow CWA classmate), Shane N0QLR, and Dan AK4SQ. Shane is a local ham friend and CWA Intermediate student (of John AJ1DM), Dan (a local ham I hadn't met prior to this) joined us after about 30 minutes and we chatted another 30 minutes!

**K2MZ:** Had a 40-minute ragchew with NB5E and learned we had many things in common. Very rewarding chat.

**KF9VV:** Most interesting QSO this month was working an op running a complete homebrew station. He inspired me to consider pursuit of the home brew aspect of the hobby.

**KG5IEE:** Several fun rag chew QSOs again but one was really interesting. Had a nice QSO with N5EEI whose suffix is the reverse of mine. We got a good chuckle "hi hi" about that but also found it tough to send each others callsign. Tough to reverse letters we were so accustomed to.

**AJ1DM:** I've added VE3INE to my list of skeds. Always fun ragchewing with my friends, old and new.

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**AE4GS:** Need to work on my Ragchewing in 2026

**W1SIM:** Switched back to a bug and getting used to it while helping others increase their CW speed.

**KN5EE:** I reached my goal of two QTX/week. Very enjoyable QSOs.

**N9FZ:** Good start to 2026

**W8OV:** Two FB QSOs with KEØM (42, 51 mins.) and nominated him for CWops membership. May not be active for awhile as wife broke her leg and needs help.

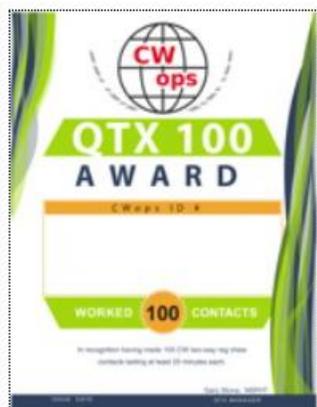
**ABØWW:** QTX with K4MW was Pete to Pete and K3 to K3. Longest QTX was with K9IUY whom I frequently hear on CW. KT5X in Santa Fe strongly urged me to restart jogging.

**KW4NJA:** Another fun month getting used to doing more ragchews. I have taken the top 10 QTX ops and put them in HamAlert, so it'll be easier to drum up a conversation. Slowed a little this month by the SKCC K3Y event, but hope to have several to post in March.

**N9EEE:** Winter lethargy has set in. New month. I need to shake it off and heat up the air-waves...as much as QRP will do :)

**NØBM:** Busy month with POTA hunting and NTS. Worked fellow member, Steve K8BZ, who greeted me with Hi Mac/Brian. Apparently, his log/history files caught me using my nickname in a CWT or other test. Al would be a good first name for contests, but didn't happen.

**GWØETF:** Back from a Vietnam Xmas vacation in time for Giving Back on 13th January. First QSO was a 10 minute chat with JA1IVV (40m, hand key). Nice way to start 2026..



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### QTX - January 2026

<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>
VE3INE	67	KCØVKN	37	KB6NU	22	AE4GS	11
VE3WH	56	WA4IAR	37	N2DA	18	W1SIM	11
AAØYY	56	N8AI	36	K2MZ	16	KN5EE	8
N7HCN	52	WG9P	31	KF9VV	16	N9FZ	6
KY4GS	44	KR2Q	29	KG5IEE	14	K8UDH	4
WS1L	37	K9OZ	27	AJ1DM	13	W8OV	4
						ABØWW	3
						W3WHK	2
						KW4NJA	2
						N9EEE	2
						NØBM	1

### mQTX - January 2026

<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>
KY4GS	70	VE3WH	26	N9FZ	6	W8OV	3
KCØVKN	47	KB6NU	20	GWØETF	6	ABØWW	3
WS1L	44	KF9VV	20	WG9P	5	N7HCN	2
AAØYY	38	KG5IEE	17	AE4GS	4	K2MZ	2
KR2Q	35	WA4IAR	14	KW4NJA	4	NØBM	2
N8AI	33	VE3INE	10	AJ1DM	3	KB4DE	2
						K8UDH	1
						N9EEE	1
						PE2V	1
						KM4JEG	1

### QTX - Total 2025

<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>
WS1L	531	DK9HE	220	GØFOZ	84	GWØETF	19
N8AI	405	KR2Q	181	N9FZ	58	AE4GS	15
WA4IAR	394	KG5IEE	177	N9EEE	40	K6DGW	9
VE3WH	359	KF9VV	170	ABØWW	33	K7VM	8
N7HCN	338	F5IYJ	152	G4KKU	30	KE4I	8
KCØVKN	322	MØMZB	136	NØBM	29	MØSDB	8
K9OZ	313	N2DA	113	N5LB	28	W6QX	8
KB6NU	304	AJ1DM	97	W8OV	27	A13A	7
KY4GS	278	N7HCN	93	DG5CW	25	K4LFL	7
AAØYY	265	K8UDH	86	DL5XL	21	PE2V	7
						N3JT	6
						KW4NJA	5
						VK3QB	5
						DF7TV	4
						K1NW	4
						KN5EE	3
						SV2BBK	3
						W3WHK	3
						KM4JEG	2
						PG4I	2

### mQTX - Total 2025

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



# My Story: New Member Introductions

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

## Don Reynolds, W2DON CWops #3855

Driven by a love of music and curiosity for wireless, I am grateful to have found CW. I returned to school in my late 20s through my mid-30s to earn an electrical engineering degree at night and was fascinated by electromagnetism and wireless communication. I spent over fifteen years as a musician and ten as a commercial recording studio engineer.



Conversing with Morse code feels like playing music and I enjoy the challenge of listening through bad conditions or pileups. This old mode gives me a new way to apply those skills I spent so many hours on. Being fully in the moment, over the airwaves, provides stress relief from my career at Tesla motors where I am a staff engineer working in speech processing, audio hardware and acoustics.

As a new radio amateur (first licensed KN6YGO, 2023), many mentors have shown me there's yet another level. I started learning CW in December 2024 on my own which continues as a daily effort though joining CWops represents a significant goal achieved. Thank you to my sponsors Chris, N6WM, Jim, WBØRLJ, Tim, K5OHY, Gary, NA6O, and David, WD6T as well as Roberto, K6KM and Peter, K4MW for their encouragement and teaching.

That list includes prolific POTA activators, and I could not be more grateful that they are on the air so regularly. With work and family life, structured classes are difficult to commit to so those friendly chaser QSOs are vital; if I'm not chasing or activating POTA/SOTA then I'm listening to ARRL bulletins during my long commutes. Idle moments in the day are spent with Morse Walker. While I can comfortably run POTA or contest at 25-30 wpm, conversational CW is something I want to improve.

I call CQ almost nightly once I close the work laptop after the wife and kid fall asleep. My home station is modest; just some dipoles in the backyard up 10m and a receive loop on the ground in front, sitting on the floor of the Livermore valley in the East SF Bay Area. Hope to hear you on the air and thanks for reading.

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## **Bernd "Ben" Och, DA1DX CWops #3858**

I was born in 1967. When I was 13, I had a broken arm from a bicycle accident. Then, I "discovered" that room in the attic where my dad, Karl, was hiding from time to time. He was DJ5ET and he introduced me to ham radio.

Back then, you had to be 14 to get a license in Germany. And you had to know CW... I learnt CW from Klaus-Dieter, DJ7JE, who lived across town. After I turned 14, I went for the exam and became DH2FAW, then DL6FBL. Forty years later, in 2024, I changed my callsign to DA1DX.

From the beginning I favored CW and developed my love for DX and contests. As a teenager, of course I was very fortunate to start with a Kenwood TS-820, a Heathkit SB220 and a 5-element Tribander on the rooftop, at home... My mom, Gertrud, had a license, too, but she never used it. She told me once, that when she was learning CW for her license, she was pregnant with me. So, I must have heard CW even before I was born... 🤔

In my business life, I built up a successful IT security firm. Now, I'm retired and have the time to concentrate on my passions, Contesting and going on DXpeditions.

Contesting: I'm part of the contest station DR1A, but it is still under re-construction. We make it partly usable for remote operation. If you hear me these days, I'll probably operate from there – either remote or on site. DR1A is designed for "Multi/Multi" operation, but we only have one radio per band yet.

Other contest operations in the past include CN8WW (1998-2000), for which I did a good part of the organisation. CN8WW still holds the CQ WW World Record for "Multi/Multi SSB". CN8WW also held the CW world record for many years, but that was recently taken over by another group. As a fun fact, they were operating from the same QTH as we did 20 years before.

2003 and 2004 I operated from 9Y4ZC, setting new CQ WW world records in the "Single OP Assisted" categories, both SSB and CW. The SSB record is still alive. The CW record was taken over last year, after 20 years. Skimmers and RBN have really changed the game. I don't complain, I like that operating style as well. (I'm also not demonizing Digimodes, btw.)

I was a WRTC competitor in 2000, 2002, 2006 and 2010. Best result was 3rd place and the bronze medal in Finland 2002.

DXpeditions: In the past, I was a team member of VK9DNX, VP6DX, ZL8X and VK9DLX.

When I retired in 2023, I began organizing DXpeditions and serve as team lead: 4W1A/4W8X (2023), 3G0YA (2024), PX0FF (2024), VP2VI (2025) – all made between 140,000 and 170,000+ contacts. The next trip is already booked for February/March 2026. As a fun fact, all five team members are CWops members: DK9IP, DL8LAS, DM5EE, DM6EE – and me, the newbie.

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### **Mitch Stern, W1SJ CWops #3857**

I find it an honor to be nominated and sponsored for CWops. Thank you all!

I got involved in ham radio 57 years ago, while in high school, after tuning around with a shortwave receiver and getting QSLs from many countries. But I wanted to talk back!

I am still super active, putting between 8 and 10 thousand QSO's into various logs during contests and activations. Strange as it seems for a new CWops member, I am primarily a phone operator and can tackle the biggest pileups known to hamkind. But I can also run 100 QSOs per hour on CW when suitably motivated, although it doesn't look very pretty. I do my best CW operating when half asleep! Besides 12 full-time contests and a few other part time efforts, I also engage in a few park activations each summer. My activations resemble DXpeditions with 500 watts of power, high dipoles and hundred of QSOs in the log. My motto is "Life is too short for QRP," but I have VUCC on the 13 and 9 cm bands with only 50 mW of power.



When not contesting, I am active in training new hams. Why do this? Because it generates more contest QSOs! For many years I taught 1-day Technician and General courses. These were done at various venues and hamfests including Hamvention. These days, classes are done online, allowing students to join in from a wider area. I also do forums on a variety of ham radio operating topics at various conventions. While everyone was doing very little during COVID, I was super busy running one of the earliest online VE testing teams.

Meeting hams on the air is great but visiting each other in person is even better. Besides being a regular at some national and division-wide conventions, I have volunteered at the last three World Radio Team Championship (WRTC) events in Boston, Germany, Italy and soon, England. I am amazed at the skill level of the competitors, especially on CW. Watching the skills of the best ops in the world has a habit of wearing off on you!

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I also provide support services for ham radio in Vermont. I am the manager of the Vermont QSO Party, W1AW/1, and HAM-CON, the ARRL Vermont State Convention in February. Keeping these events strong in a tiny state is good deal of work. I also organize the RANV W1NVT Field Day effort which takes the top spot in its category each year.

I am married to Debbie W1DEB, who, while not that interested in ham radio, provides support for all this craziness. It helps that the shack is not located in the family home and no RFI is given to entertainment devices. For work, I still dabble in broadcast engineering, teaching ham radio

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classes and teaching college courses in physics. For fun, Debbie and I travel, go dancing, go for long walks, and I also do Geocaching, which is a lot like chasing DX!

I look forward to joining the CWops community and the opportunity to meet you on the air and in person!

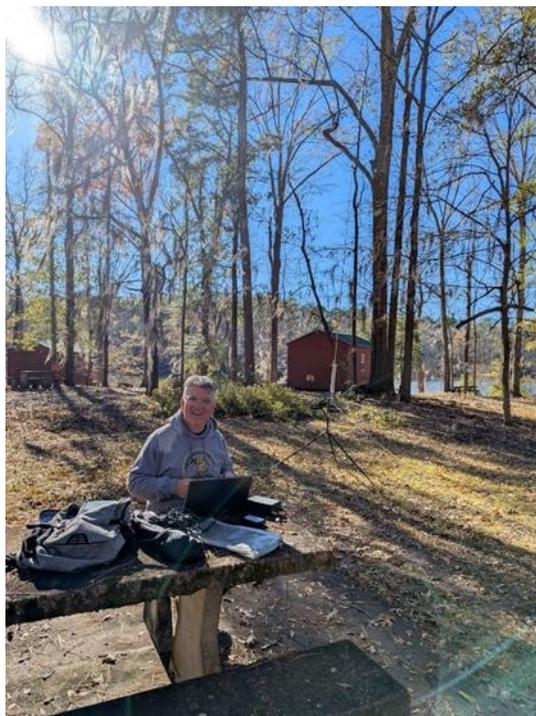
### **Jeff Driskill, K6TTA CWops #3860**

Both of my parents were hams, and I almost got my license in the late '70s when I was a kid, but events conspired and I never took the test. I think I was moderately proficient at 5 wpm back then but that was a long time ago. Learning CW back then was a different thing entirely and I'm so thankful for the many resources for learning CW we have today. I got my first ticket in 2007 and was somewhat active on 2m/70cm but grew disenchanted with it. Eventually my license expired and I started over in 2024 largely because I saw an ad for hacking the Quansheng radio, I never did buy one but I'm sure thankful that it reignited my interest in radio.

Learning CW was an unticked box for me and shortly after getting my ticket I started to learn the characters again on [AA9PW's](#) website. Once I could copy on paper OK, I joined the Long Island CW Club and things really took off for me with head copy. The classes there were invaluable and the club atmosphere was what I always hoped for from my local clubs but never found. It's been a great experience.

I enjoy POTA, cobbling together antennas, and fooling around with homebrewing. I still hope to get my first homebrew rig done and on the air. Mostly I really love CW, it scratches many itches for me. It's like working a puzzle and communicating all at the same time and it still makes me feel unreasonably smug that I can understand what someone is sending me.

I am very honored to be a member of CWops. It was something I hoped to achieve since I first heard about the club, and it means a lot to me to be part of this great organization. A huge thanks to Mark AAØYY for nominating me and more importantly for being my first real CW buddy. I appreciate the QSOs and the laughs, my friend. Thanks also to my sponsors Tim K5OHY, Keith K7MOA, Bud AA3B, and Gabe WN7JT, I so appreciate your support and our QSOs. Gabe especially has really helped me to improve my CW, a truly wonderful fist and is he ever not on the air? I have set a goal for 300 ragchews this year and I hope to get all of you in my log.



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## **Antonio Casini, IK5MEL CWops #3862**

Hello, I was born in Lucca, Italy, a town not far from Florence and Pisa, in 1966 and I've always been fascinated by antennas and signals transmitted through the airwaves.

My first impact with CW was as a child, with a medium wave radio and a piece of wire, trying to decipher PIS callsign at 379 kHz of the airport non-directional beacon, 20 km away from my QTH.

It was love at first hearing and the beginning of my radio adventure.

So, after graduating in electronics and telecommunications, I was licensed in 1988 as IK5MEL. At the time, to obtain the first class license in Italy, it was necessary to take the CW transmission and reception exam and thanks to my tutor Francesco IK5CKQ I passed the exams immediately.

My first real radio was an Icom 751A with a 500 Hz filter and multiple dipoles antennas, by which I started transmitting exclusively in CW - sorry! But to date, I still have a lot to learn about CW and I'll leave SSB for a later time.

At the end of the 1980s I worked for a few years in an electronic design and construction company until 1991 when I joined the Corpo Nazionale dei Vigili de Fuoco (national fire brigade) as firefighter, got married and started a family.

The 1990s were the testing ground for digital communications. After RTTY, PSK, and so on, 1200 Baud packet radio arrived with digipeaters and BBSs in the HF, VHF, and UHF bands. So, I became the first sysop for the amateur radio BBS in my town, call IK5MEL-8.

The change of QTH, family commitments and work decreed my suspension from amateur radio activity for a few years, until 2020 when I decided to resume CW transmissions on the HF bands.

I'm very excited to come back in radio ham, my focus has been on improving my CW skills and contest activity by participating in the CQ Worldwide DX Contest CW and ARRL Inter. DX Contest CW as an operator at IO5O station.

I'm a mountain lover and have even started doing SOTA activities by climbing the nearby mountains. Setting up an end fed on the summit and starting to call CW with only 5 watts is always exciting, especially when a radio ham from New Zealand answers on 20 meters.

I'm also an activator during World Wide Award with callsign I15WWA.

My shack setup includes an Yaesu FTdx10, Icom IC7300, Yaesu FT818 and QRPLab QMX+ (the last

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two are my main SOTA radios) with a paddle key Begali Simplex and a Kenpro KK-50 Vertical key.

In the shack inside my house I have an antenna an end fed for 80/40/20/15 meters bands, while for the shack in the backyard (when it's less cold), I set up some verticals antennas for the 40 and 80 meters and a 3 elements Spiderbeam for 20/17/15 m. All the antennas are homemade and currently I'm following the construction of a 600 W LDMOS amplifier.

Becoming a member of CWops was one of my goals and for that, I would like to thank I5EFO Emil for nominating me and AA3B Bud, N3JT Jim, PA3AAV Gert who sponsored my membership.

I am indeed proud to be new CWops member #3862.

After 35 years as a firefighter, I'm close to retirement (next September 2026), so I'll have more time to dedicate to my nephew Enea (one year old ), CW radio and I would really like (my dream) to find a way to join a team and participate in some DX expeditions.

### **Simon Sintic, S53K CWops #3867**

I also operate as CQ3A, CT9ABZ and NA3AA when operating from the U.S. or remote. I've been active in CW, SSB, RTTY contesting for many years, with a strong focus on building and operating high-performance contest stations.

I'm most active in Multi-Multi, Multi-Two, and SO2R operations. I especially enjoy designing, integrating, and continuously improving SDR-based contest stations, primarily using FlexRadio equipment, with attention to latency, automation, and repeatable operating practices.

Over the years, I've had the opportunity to operate with several well-known contest teams, including 4O3A, 9A1A, CR3A, CR3DX, taking part in major international CW, SSB, and RTTY contests. I enjoy both high-rate running and efficient search-and-pounce, always with an emphasis on clean signals and stable, reliable station performance.

By profession, I work in IT and technology, which fits naturally with my interest in SDR architecture, networking, automation, and system reliability in contest stations. Whenever time allows, I also enjoy participating in CWT QSO parties.

Away from the radio, one of my favorite ways to unwind is fishing. In my free time, my son and I enjoy spending time by the water — a great way to balance the intensity of contesting with some quiet time outdoors.

I'm honored to join CWops and look forward to being an active member, both on the air and within the CWops community.



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### **Uwe Greggersen, DJ6QQ CWops #3803**

Last spring, on a Wednesday afternoon I heard a lot of QRQ stations on 20m sending only their name and a number. Sometimes I had to listen twice or several times to identify the callsigns. So, I discovered the CWops and the weekly CWT. From now on I joined in the CWT, and I still have a lot of fun every time.

I was really surprised and grateful when Gert, PA3AAV nominated me and was sponsored only a few days later by Jim, N3JT, John, G4PFZ and Josep, EA6BF.

I am a retired police officer and was born 1960 in a very small village close to the Baltic Sea near the Danish border. At the age of 16 right after leaving secondary school I joined the former Federal Border Police, now Federal Police. Two years later, I passed the qualifying examination for a police radio unit and was set to the shortwave unit. This was the time I came in touch with CW when older colleagues hold their trainings lessons. CW in police radio traffic was just rarely used in 1978 and later, but I joined the lessons and learned the Morse code. From 1981 until 1997 I was an operator in the Federal Police short wave headquarter radio station near Bonn, the former Capital of Germany. There we used coded RTTY, CW just played an underpart. Then there was no more need for radio traffic on short wave, and the radio headquarter was closed. Still with the Federal Police, I was moved to the Railway Police in Cologne central station where I was appointed to the dispatch and control centre and I was on patrol duty until my retirement in 2021.



The first radio amateur I got to know was the father of my first girlfriend. I can remember his two element Quad and the wires in the garden. Sometimes I looked over his shoulder when he was operating on the bands, mostly in CW. It was fascinating to hear the signs and voices from so far-out parts of the world. And I was impressed of all the QSL cards on the shack wall. Now I caught the virus, I had to become radio amateur.

However, in addition to the job it took about nearly eight years and pouring much sweat by learning the technical skills until obtaining my radio licence in 1987. During this time my first love has gone one day, and my second love Christiane came. I became engaged to her, married her and moved to Gummersbach in the western part of Germany where she lived. We both still live there until today.

I am member of the local DARC chapter (DOK G07) and member of the International Police Association (IPA), where I am the manager of the annual IPA Radio Club contest. Beside this, I collect police patches - my collection includes about 1000 patches from all over the world. It was easier to collect all US states by patches than on the band...Take care and stay safe, I hope to meet you in CWT!

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## **Jonathan (Jon) Lofton, KZ5Z CWops #3842**

I was probably first exposed to CW as a Cub Scout many years ago but tried learning the characters out of a book and eventually gave up. It wasn't until many years later when I was finishing up just over 8 years in the Navy (submarine service) that a friend told me I should learn by sound. I purchased a code tape and never looked back.

After getting out of the Navy I moved back to Oklahoma and ordered a Heathkit HW-101 to learn some about radio and to push myself into getting a ham license. I put the radio together on a card table in the tiny house we lived in at the time. I finally found a ham, W5BLW who became my Elmer. Charles helped me align the transceiver and I was amazed when it worked.



I eventually got my Novice license and spent many hours on the air with a straight key working CW contacts. I still remember the call sign of my first contact. I was just barely copying 5 wpm, and he was probably sending about 7 wpm. I asked him to QRS, but he never did. I only got about half what he sent, and I thought I had failed! I kept at it though and when time for my General class exam came, I drove down to the federal building in Dallas and passed the tests. I returned to Oklahoma and attached the Electro-Voice microphone to the Heathkit HW-101 and started to make some SSB contacts. After a couple of weeks with the microphone, I decided I had stayed with the CW mode so much it was what I liked so I put up the mic and worked CW almost exclusively for the next 40 plus years.

I have had an interesting life with much of it involving HF radio and CW. About five years after my time in the Navy, I found work as a communications officer in the Diplomatic Telecommunications Service, a job which I held until my retirement. That work took me all over the world and I was able to operate ham radio from many other countries. Back then we still used a lot of HF radio and CW operations at work. It was a lot of fun for a ham radio operator. This was before the technology moved on to satellites and high-speed data networks. I survived the transition to modern times, but those days with HF and CW will always provide some of the best memories.

Some of my foreign amateur calls were VK1KZ, DA1LO, KZ5Z/DU1 and G0COB. When living in Manila, Philippines, I actually heard the FCC examiner who gave me my CW exam on the air. He had retired at that time, but I was able to give him a call and visit with him from the other side of the world.

I am now retired in rural southern Oklahoma. I have a radio building and a tower and also a HF radio in my dining room. Most of my transceivers are old.... up to 50 years old and some older, but I do have a new Icom in the dining room. Antennas include one HF tri-band Yagi at about 73 feet and several wire antennas. You will find me on the Region Five CW traffic net and Texas CW

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traffic nets where I am often net control. You may also find me on the 7290-traffic net from time to time. I probably operate about 50/50 CW SSB these days. I started using more SSB a few years ago, but CW is still the king!

Bottom line is that CW has been an important part of my life for many years. It truly becomes a new language once mastered. My wish is for all hams to become proficient in CW so they may experience the fun and satisfaction that this segment of the hobby brings.

## **Jon Marstrander, KD4ZFS CWops # 3859**

I'm delighted to become a member of CWops.

I worked in industry for nearly 17 years as an electrical engineer, designing aerospace, scientific, and medical devices. For the past 21 years, I've worked as faculty in the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the same school and department where my dad taught. I get to teach classes about signal processing, embedded systems, and radio communication theory. Sometimes I get to work on cool research with our neuroscientists.



I'm married to Veronica, and we have two college-aged children, Ashely and Oliver. I enjoy spending time with my family, hiking, and listening to and playing music. Life is very good!

I've been fascinated by Morse code since I was a small child. My dad bought me my first straight key when I was about 8 years old, and I still have it at my station. I was also obsessed with electricity and physics from a very early age. My dad was a professor of electrical engineering and my mom was a research chemist, so I had excellent teachers in house.

After I was out of college, I wrote my own computer program and taught myself Morse code. I decided to celebrate that accomplishment by getting my ham license. I bought some study books and got ready.

In November of 1993, I went to a local test session and easily passed my 5 wpm and 13 wpm tests, but I choked on the 20 wpm test. I took all the paper tests up through the Advanced license but didn't try the paper test for Extra class because I hadn't passed the 20 wpm code. I stayed with an advanced class license for decades, but I did not do much with the hobby.

In 2016, I was teaching at the university, and one of my colleagues, Larry N4LKY, had set up a ham station in a lab. He got me back on the air and I've been active ever since.

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After I got my on-air speed back up above 20 wpm, I thought it would be legitimate to become an Extra class, even though Morse was no longer a requirement. In August of 2020 I upgraded to Extra class.

In January of 2025 I earned my commercial radiotelegraph (T) license.

In June of 2025, I visited the Maritime Radio Historical Society station KPH in California. Because of my commercial radiotelegraph license, I was able to send Morse from the station! The picture of me was taken while I was operating at KPH.

Many thanks to Bill, W4MA for nominating me, and to Jim, N4TMM, Dan, KG5SSB and Rich, WB2WGX for sponsoring me as a member of CWops.

### **Kjell Jarl, SM7GVF CWops #3865**

Thank you for nominating and sponsoring me, SM1HEV, SM5AJV, SM1TDE, SM5IMO and SM6DHF, to a membership of CWops. I am very proud belonging to the CW community.

Already at the age of eleven I got interested in amateur radio, through a series of programmes on Swedish television in 1970, about our hobby. While DX-listening to AM radio, I also started to learn CW and by the age of 14 I got my license as SM4GVF (8 WPM), and built a 10 watt COPA transmitter from a kit.

I soon managed higher speed with the straight key, and went over to a tube bug that SM4DHF lent me. Soon, after being active on HF a couple of years, and full license, I discovered VHF after building a 2m transverter hooked up to my Drake C-Line. I put up a 4x16 elements array for 2m at my parents house, and built a W2GN amplifier with 1 kW, and started with EME in 1981 – K1WHS was my first EME QSO. 144 MHz was very interesting I thought for several years. The activity among members in our local club, SK4BX, was very high at that time. My father also became a ham, SM4GVR (SK).

After university studies at Chalmers in Gothenburg 1988, I moved to SM7-land, southern Sweden, and worked as an RF engineer with military frequency hopping VHF radio, and other systems. At that time I lived in apartments with only a wire antenna, but could work F2 on 50 MHz with a whip in 2001. In 2005 I bought to a house in the country where I still live, with few neighbours, where I started with HF, VHF and EME again. Chasing DXCC and expeditions.



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The last years as active on the work market I ran my own consultant company (no employees), till I retired. I have no own family. Recent activities include WWFF and Swedish lakes. I rediscovered CWops by hearing the CWT on Wednesdays, and joined the activity. Future activity includes to improve in contest, both operator vice and antennas, and being active on the HF bands. I need to improve in rag chewing.



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