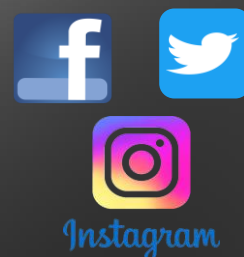


THE SIGNAL



Newsletter of the Bella Vista Radio Club



Vol. 1, No. 8 - November 2018

Weekly Nets: 3820 KHz Roundtable, Sundays @ 4 p.m. • 147.255 Repeater Net, Wednesdays @ 8 p.m.

Monthly Meetings: 1st Thursdays @ 7 p.m., Highland Christian Church, 1500 Forest Hills Blvd, Bella Vista

Club Call: N5BVA • Repeater: 147.255 +offset, pl 162.2 • Website: www.bellavistaradioclub.org

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- ★ **Apprehensive About Learning CW? --- Don't be!!!**

BVRC OCTOBER MEETING: REPEATER OPERATION 101

One of our area's foremost authorities on repeater operation graced BVRC's presence for our October program – Tem Moore, N5KWL. Tem has constructed and owns the largest and most extensive linked repeater system in NW Arkansas. He is also the current Chairman of the Arkansas Repeater Council.



He actually got started with commercial radio (trunk systems) 40-50 years ago. Tem said his first repeater project in amateur radio was installing a repeater at Mercy Hospital in Rogers for the NW Arkansas hospital region.



The Arkansas Dept. of Health is the largest entity that ham radio serves in the state of Arkansas. Supporting hospitals was the special area of concern that originally interested Tem. Tem's linked system has repeaters in Eureka Springs, Green Forest, Winslow, Springdale, Bentonville, and Rogers (hub). He gave us a pictorial tour of each of the stations. By viewing the photos of each repeater on his PowerPoint, it leaves no doubt in one's mind that Tem has put an enormous amount of work and effort into each installation.

Tem then explained the basic operating principles of a repeater, cavity duplexer, etc. He then closed his great program by discussing repeater etiquette:

- Ker-chunking: A "ker-chunk" is when an operator presses their PTT switch on their radio, usually to call-up the repeater to see if their breaking it, and what its signal strength is back to their radio. Doing this once before actually making a transmission through the repeater is acceptable. However, continuous "ker-chunking" is unnecessary and inadvisable. After you know if you're breaking (getting into) the repeater, go ahead and make your transmission.
- No CB lingo on repeaters (or any ham band/frequency for that matter). Amateur radio is an entirely different domain from that of Citizen's Band radio.
- No Q-Signals are needed on repeaters (QRZ, QSY, QTH, etc). It's crystal clear FM and completely understandable.

Thanks so much to Tem for a stellar program, and we hope to have you back again sometime!



**President Glenn-WB5L presents Tem Moore-N5KWL
with the BVRC Certificate of Appreciation
for his fine October program**

NEXT BVRC MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, November 1, 2018 – 7:00 pm

Highland Christian Church

1500 Forest Hills Blvd.

Bella Vista, Arkansas

NOVEMBER PROGRAM:

INTRODUCTION TO RADIO

ASTRONOMY FOR HAMS

Presented by Rick Marshall – KG5TOA, President of the Sugar Creek Astronomical Society. Rick is also part of the "NWA Space" group that is rebuilding a large refractor telescope donated by a northern university.

Although a relatively new ham, Rick holds an Amateur Extra license, and heads a special group of 'data scientists' doing analytics and statistical forecasting for Con Agra across the U.S., from Springdale. Don't miss it!

See www.BellaVistaRadioClub.org
for the location, a Google Map, and more.

BVRC Officers:

President

Glenn Kilpatrick, WB5L

Vice-President

Chris Deibler, KG5SZQ

Secretary

Wayne Patton, K5UNX

Treasurer

Marc Whittlesey, WØKYZ

Technical Officer

Steve Werner, K5SAW

Repeater/Club Call Trustee

Fred Lemley, K5QBX

Appointed Chair Positions:

Social Media Committee

Jen Kessler, KG5WOC

Emergency Communications Committee

Chuck Healy, WØCEH

Lorrie Healy, N1RNI

V E Testing Committee

Glenn Kilpatrick, WB5L

Membership Committee

Ron Evans, K5XK

Newsletter Committee

Don Banta, K5DB

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



As the immortal Walter Cronkite said so eloquently, "Amateur Radio truly is the best hobby in the World". I couldn't agree more.

I am honored and continuously blessed to serve you as President of the Bella Vista Radio Club in 2018. Over the last year, I have been so fortunate, as a member and on the Board, to come to know many of you. Among our diverse programs and presentations, our common journey is not only what we do for new amateurs in NW Arkansas, but what we aspire to do and where we take our future. We want to make a difference. We strive to help, to have an impact, and make the lives of others better. I sincerely hope and pray that your Radio Club meets these needs.

Beginning with each one of you, we have many good reasons to feel optimism about the future of the Bella Vista Radio Club. With more than 80 members from the four state region, the connections we make with each other whether on the air, in meetings, and during phone calls or email discussions and conversations, demonstrate the commitment we have to our hobby and our confidence in the future of the Club. As we continue to grow and serve, I hope that we continue to listen and understand each and every one of you. We will need much more help than in the past, as our numbers get larger and larger. Please consider donating some of your time to help us accomplish our goals.

We have accomplished a lot! However, there are some things we did not get done, as many of you have suggested – great ideas that just did not come to fruition. As we close-in on next year, I would like to take more time on social events, and less time on the business aspects of the club. One of my goals this year was to stop by and visit each and every one of you, and that just did not happen. I am just too busy, and I need more help. Keep those ideas coming, and let's make next year even better!

As the holiday season comes around this year so quickly again, slow down and enjoy your friends and family. Give thanks to all that God has done for you and have a Blessed holiday season!

73 – Glenn, WB5L

BUILDING AN IAMBIC KEY FROM A KIT

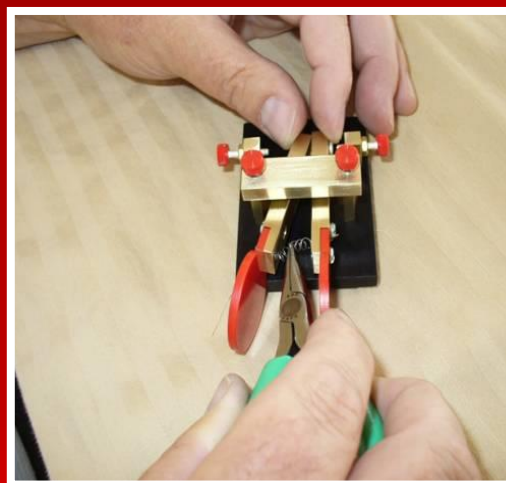
By Fred Lemley – K5QBX

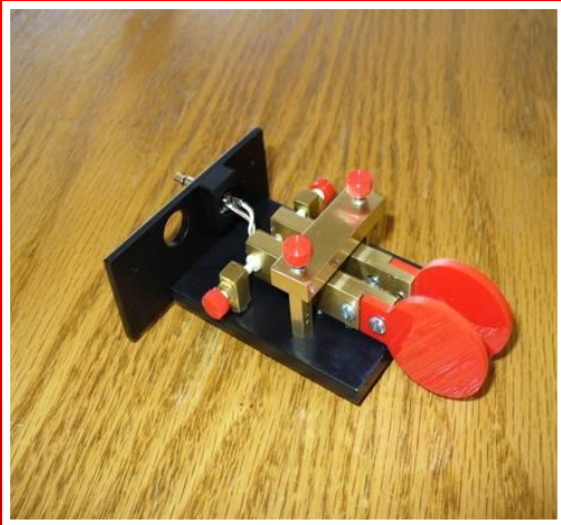
A while back, I purchased a QRP kit from a friend of mine, Jay, W5JAY, to dip my toe in the QRP world. The first thing I learned (the hard way, of course) was to find the correct instructions for the vintage QRP rig I had purchased. It took three times to get the correct assembly instructions which was due in part to the manufacturer/distributor changing hands several times, not to mention a redesign of the rig in the process. To make a long story short, I finally finished it, and it worked the first time after getting the correct assembly instructions.



I was amazed by that and count my lucky stars for that turning out the way it did. At this point I should point out that I had help from Steve, K5SAW, and his lab equipment in figuring out just what vintage of PFR3 I had.

I rocked along for a number of months using an old iambic key I had, but decided if I was really going to go portable with it, I needed something a bit smaller, but that wouldn't





move around while in a QSO, and would require less cabling to put it all together. While building the PFR3 QRP rig, I saw that there was an iambic key that would “bolt” to the face of the rig and would be the correct paddle height for me while the rig was sitting on a picnic table or other support.

Here’s where my friend Jay came in again, to help me along my QRP path. While at Ozark Con (a four state and more gathering of QRP minded folks) in Branson, MO, I saw Jay again and he asked if I was still using the PFR3 QRP rig.

I said I was, and he made a present of the very key that I had considered purchasing but hadn’t done yet. I was pretty happy that I was going to make the upgrade to the iambic key I wanted and that I would get to do another kit. By now it should be obvious that I like putting kits together and this one didn’t seem that it would be that difficult.

After gathering up a few missing parts from Steve, K5SAW, I started on the kit in earnest. It took about 3 hours to assemble it and another hour of fine tuning the spacing and paddle tension of the key. I now have a key that is firmly attached to the PFR3 QRP rig eliminating the need to carry a separate key and associated cabling. Below is a picture of the completed PFR3 and the matching iambic key.

Using a QRP rig is a real pleasure for me as it requires me to develop different skills that one would use in a hundred-watt (or more) world with fixed antennas. Working portable QRP with a linked dipole for 40,30, and 20 meters is a bit of a challenge. But when you do make contact, you realize that hamming with low power and minimal antennas is very

So, if you ever have had the urge to dip your toe into a different part of the ham hobby, try building an inexpensive QRP kit and building your own antenna (there kits for these, too) to go with it. Then go somewhere the scenery is really nice and enjoy a few hours of basic hamming and some fresh air. Who knows, you may catch me on the bands from deer camp, or a city park, or on just an outing somewhere.



BVRC Member Spotlight

BOB RAINBOLT WBØAUQ



Retired from printing trade in 2007, our BVRC member spotlight for this issue of THE SIGNAL falls on Bob Rainbolt – WBØAUQ.

Bob did a stint in US Air Force out of high school. He then worked a while for Western Electric, installing CO equipment across Kansas, then the Civil Service in Wash., DC. He was also a Linotype operator for weekly and daily newspapers in NE Arkansas.

Then, as now, proofreading was lax on all but the editorial page, and a bit boring, so he sought a more challenging job. He went to work for a company in Lawrence, KS who published scientific journals. Typesetting had to be letter-perfect and grammatically correct, even when typesetting a foreign language, which Bob tells us was a most enjoyable job.

Computers and "cold type" (offset printing) overtook "hot metal" (letterpress) printing in late 1970s, eliminating the Linotype, so Bob then transferred into maintenance and repair of the printing computer equipment. Bob then retired after 45 years in printing trade.

Bob's original Novice call was WNØAUQ. Upon acquiring his General license in 1970, his call changed to WBØAUQ. He then upgraded to Advanced, then Extra in 1980s but decided to keep the call. Being an original callsign, no one else has had this call except Bob.

Like many hams, Bob had an early interest in ham radio, but was too busy with family and work to pursue the hobby with a passion until later in life.

His first elmer was Ken-KCØGL (ex-WAØSEV). Ken was a co-worker and inspired him to get into ham radio. Ken stuck with him through getting his ticket and then introduced him to contesting.

Bob tells us, "I was fortunate to have four very patient elmers: Ken-KCØGL spurred my interest, suffered my learning CW, administered the Novice test, and was my first Novice contact. We operated several contests together. Ken still has a ham station but we now communicate via email. Another Ken-KØTLQ (now a SK) donated parts and technical knowledge for homebrewing my first transmitter. He was a valuable resource and elmer to dozens of us new hams as well as the old-timers. Then there was Wes-NØWU (SK) who was my CW mentor. We had a weekly chat on 40 or 80 meters for several years. Wes was always pushing up our speed in order to build my proficiency. Fortunately, he was a former Maritime operator and could copy my feeble CW. And last but certainly not least, was Dave-WØGI (also a SK). Dave was my contesting mentor. He and I spent many enjoyable Field Days working CW, usually QRP. Dave taught me that technique was more important than power."

Bob has always enjoyed tinkering more than operating. He spent many years collecting, restoring, and putting on the air dozens of old vacuum tube (boat anchor) ham equipment. His favorites were Drake and Heathkit, and had most of their models, as well as many other manufacturers, on the work bench.

In anticipation of downsizing and moving to Bella Vista, most of his old gear was passed-on to others.

CW is his preferred mode although during the hiatus of relocating to BV, he says his CW has become a bit rusty but he is working on building it back up. Of recent, He leans more toward operating QRP and ragchewing.

Bob station currently consists of mostly older HF solid-state gear – an ICOM IC-735 and IC-751A. He has several QRP rigs – a Heathkit HW-8, Elecraft K1, and Norcal20 transceivers. He uses an IC-28 for VHF. Bob also still possesses a couple vacuum tube rigs.

Bob's XYI, Rosalee, and HE enjoy square dancing and bicycling. At one time, the K1 mentioned above was bicycle-mobile on 30m. He has since sold the large recumbent bike so that is a thing of the past. It was a weird contraption, resonant on 30m with a hamstick, but he had many enjoyable QSOs while riding the rail-trails of the Midwest.

Bob, thanks for letting us spotlight you for this month's issue. It is a pleasure to have you in BVRC!

W5JAY HAS NEW ANTENNA SYSTEM

Recently, BVRC member Jay – W5JAY installed his new 3-element SteppIR beam atop his also new Rohn HDBX-48 free standing tower. Jay previously had a 4-element, but the 3-element is much lighter, easier for the tower to handle, less wind load, etc. Along with this FB antenna, Jay also installed a new controller and a high wind kit that he added to the beam. Congrats Jay! We're all green with envy, hi hi. It is a thing of beauty.





**FROM MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR
RON EVANS – K5XK**

KK6LNC – Jeffers had successful surgery recently at Vanderbilt Med Center in Nashville. However, he continues on dialysis and is awaiting the results of new tests. Please keep Jeffers and Sonndra in your prayers.

N5LML – Most of us are acquainted with Randy from our on-air and in-person, 'eyeball' QSOs. Although vision-impaired, Randy is amazingly resourceful thanks in part due to XYL Sue Ann, his guide dog (Oshee), and several good ham friends. Despite living in an antenna restricted neighborhood, Randy continues to inspire us with admirable signals on our weekly repeater net and on the 75 Meter Roundtable.

K5XK – Ron is 'going retro,' having acquired more Ten-Tec HF gear. After recently buying an OMNI 6 and Pegasus from an estate sale, he sold his Ameritron AL-80A and reacquired an older Ten-Tec Hercules II solid state HF amp capable of 550 Watts output.

W5W – That's the special "1x1" special event callsign activated in late October by Don, K5DB. W5W commemorated the 190th Anniversary of the founding of Washington County, AR. Don amassed over 725 phone and CW contacts consisting of 46 states, 7 Canadian provinces, and 14 DX countries worked during the W5W operation.

K0SNG – Former BVRC president and long time club member Bob Femrite is enjoying being back on the air from his new QTH in Texas. But Bob and Jeanne miss their NW AR friends and send greetings from near Fort Hood.

(Members: Please send us the latest tidbits of what you're doing with Amateur Radio. Email newsletter editor [Don Banta](#), [K5DB](#).)

K5FWM – Frank Majdan has a new callsign! (ex-KG5ANT)

K8KBW – New member Hank exhibited his 600 watt "homebrew" linear amp for show 'n tell at the October meeting. It features outstanding craftsmanship. Hank, who is 96, left his big home-made 4CX-1000 KW amp behind when he recently moved to Arkansas.

K5DB – Don is beaming that his teenage grandson, Damien/KG5MQJ (age 15), recently earned his Amateur Extra license at BVRC's October VE exams.

KEØQFO – Those tuning in to our 3820 "Roundtable" on Sunday afternoons are hearing new stronger signals from Alan's 'Buzzard Glory' community QTH, north of Pea Ridge. Alan has a new Ameritron AL-80B linear amp, and is enjoying putting it to good use on multiple HF bands.

AF5YM – Steve has a new fellow ham in Newton County. David/KA5IXE recently moved up from Louisiana, and is planning to install a new 2 Meter Repeater to serve their area of the Ozark National Forest. Steve hopes to bring David to our November meeting.

BVRC VE REPORT

October 13, 2018



Congratulations!!!

Clayton Hornsby – NEW TECHNICIAN!

Damien Stimson, KG5MQJ – NEW AMATEUR EXTRA!

Test sessions are conducted each 2nd Saturday of the month, 2 pm, at the Highland Christian Church in Bella Vista

Help promote the availability of the Club's monthly test sessions. Tell your friends and acquaintances!



BVRC EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE HEADS HAVE A GREAT TIME AT ANNUAL PREPAREDNESS FAIR

BVRC's Emergency Communication Committee Chairs participated in the annual PREPAREDNESS FAIR on Saturday, September 29, in Bentonville. Chuck and Lorrie

Healey (WØCEH & N1RNI) joined forces with three members of BCRO (Benton County Radio Operators) for a profitable and enjoyable day.

The fair was attended by around 1200 people, of which about 60 paid a visit to the BVRC / BCRO booth.



**Chuck and Lorrie converse
with some hams of the future (?)**

Lorrie tells us, "We had a lot of fun working with the kids. Children ages 3-14 years (and several parents) approached us and 100% of the children participated fully in the ham radio game we had devised for them."

"We showed them a copy of the phonetic alphabet and told them a



**Chuck – WØCEH makes a
contact on VHF**

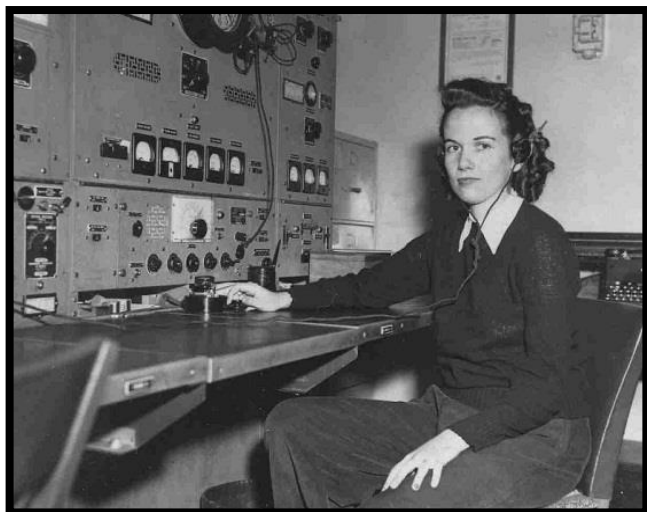
brief story and example of when and why ham radio operators use it. They were then invited to “decode” one of 6 sentences from words to letters. A few sentences included ‘It’s very cool to be a smart girl’, ‘It’s a very good morning’, and ‘If you can dream it, you can do it.’ ”

“We heard kids walking all over the Fair talking to each other in phonetic alphabet. Several children came back to finish all 6 sentences!”

Chuck and Lorrie, thanks so much for the FB job you did in representing BVRC, and serving as BVRC’s Emergency Communication Committee Chair-persons. You are appreciated!!!



Lorrie – N1RNI taking some youngsters through the phonetic alphabet adventure



AN ODE TO CW

In days of old, when ops
were bold,
And sideband not invented,
Words were passed by
pounding brass,
And all were quite contented.

(Contributed by Bob – WBØAUQ)

For this and the January 2019 issue of The Signal, I would like to submit two offerings as an encouragement for those of you who have possibly considered learning CW in the past, but you haven't had the time to tackle that objective, or you might be a little leary of learning and operating the mode. Here's my first offering for this month's issue. Enjoy, and hope it inspires you!

APPREHENSIVE ABOUT CW? DON'T BE!

By Don — K5DB



THE HISTORY

Morse code or "CW" (Continuous Wave) as it is called, was first used in 1844. Next year in 2019 it will celebrate its phenomenal 175th anniversary of existence.

On April 15, 2000, in their Report and Order #99-412, the FCC restructured amateur radio licensing. There were several elements in the R&O, two of which were:

- ▮ 1) A reduction of the number of operator license classes from six to three. The Advanced Class, Technician Plus Class, and Novice Class licenses were deemed redundant and would no longer be issued. However, existing licensees would retain their operating privileges and be allowed to renew (or upgrade) their licenses.
- ▮ 2) A reduction of the number of telegraphy examination elements from three to one. Both the 20 WPM (words-per-minute) and 13 WPM Morse code tests were removed in favor of a standardized 5 WPM as the sole CW requirement for both the General and Extra Class licenses.

In 2003, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ratified changes to the radio regulations to allow each country to determine whether it would require a person seeking an amateur radio operator license to demonstrate the ability to send and receive CW. The effect of this revision was to eliminate the international requirement that a person demonstrate Morse code proficiency to qualify for an amateur radio operator license with transmitting privileges on frequencies below 30 MHz. With this change of international rules, the FCC announced on December 15, 2006 that it intended to adopt rule changes which would eliminate the Morse code requirement for U.S. amateur operator licenses. Shortly thereafter, the effective date of the new rules was announced on February 23, 2007.



THE OUTCOME

When the FCC's history-making ruling was made to remove the code requirement, the ham internet forums and chat rooms went viral. Myriads of pros and cons as to the ruling being applicable/fair or not, jammed the internet by the thousands. Bigotry ensued. For example, when a person passed their Amateur Extra exam, some of the veteran Extra Class operators slandered and denigrated the new Extras by labeling them "Extra Lights" because they no longer had to pass the 20 wpm code element to acquire their Extra license.

I am proud to say that I did not associate myself with these idiots. First, I realized that if the governing radio body of our country decreed that CW was no longer required to obtain a license, then that's the way it was, regardless of my feelings either way...end of story. Second, I realized that as with anything else and the passage of time, things change – new modes were coming into existence, and the computer age was giving rise to a new breed of ham operators. Third, I was aware of the fact that even though CW had been removed from the requirements, that the THEORY exams still remained and these new hams had to (just as I did) study, calculate, and assimilate the areas of study needed to pass those exams. As a VE, I have reviewed those exams and they were (and still are) no less easy than the ones I passed. Indeed, I think the FCC increased the difficulty level of them somewhat. So, in essence, with or without code, these persons could be very proud, honored, and gratified in passing the exam for whichever license class they attained. I am very pleased to say that I was there many times to see the look of happiness and success on their faces at many VE test sessions.

So, regardless of mine or anyone else's opinion on the issue, CW disappeared.....as far as the licensing requirement was concerned.

THE PRESENT STATE OF CW

However, for those of you who have received non-code licenses, I want to *sincerely* encourage you to learn and use CW – and I don't mean to use a code reader to receive it, and a software program to send it – learn it for yourself in addition to your other favorite modes, because...

CW is still alive and well on the ham bands!!!

If you don't believe me, just start tuning-up from the bottom of any band (3.500, 7.000, 14.000, etc.) during a CW contest weekend and you'll see that it is FAR, FAR, FAR from reaching the point of extinction!



THE SPECIAL WORLD OF CW

I found this interesting list of reasons as to why CW is so special while browsing the internet recently. I'm not sure who the author is, but it's very deserving to be noted:

- It is a unique, intimate, concise and effective communications skill, still used by thousands throughout the world.
- It is still one of the most efficient mode in terms of power required for long distance communication, least susceptible to interference, and conserves the radio frequency spectrum.
- It involves no accent or pronunciation problems, therefore providing a widely understood international language.
- It employs simpler, more reliable and easily maintained equipment than other communication modes.
- It is **an equalizer** negating age, speech impediments, and dialectical differences; it provides for ready acceptance of youngsters in an adult environment.
- It is the only radio communications mode that is understood readily by both man and machine.



Moreover, for many non-English speaking amateurs, it is much easier to learn how to handle a basic CW QSO than it is to learn how to pronounce and speak English correctly! By not knowing or using CW, whether you realize it or not, you are *literally cheating* yourself out of an entire other realm of amateur radio that is really exciting.

But the foremost reason to get involved with CW, is that **IT.....IS.....FUN.**

In addition to really enjoying CW (and I do not go about "blowing my own horn" about it), I have the personal

and private satisfaction and pride of knowing that within myself I have a hidden talent that puts me in a select group of individuals that *know and use* a UNIQUE mode of communication that the bulk of the world's *billions do not!* I'm a fairly good keyboarder, if I do say so myself, and this "old timer" is on the brink of getting the required equipment necessary for him to enter-in to the realm of PSK, FT-8, etc...and I am heartily looking forward to that.

If I can get excited about something new to me such as the digital modes, how about you giving CW a try? I promise you, if you will earnestly strive to learn CW and use it faithfully in your ham radio experience, I don't give a flip how old CW is, **YOU WILL BECOME HOOKED!!!**

Now, you might be saying, "I hear what you're saying, but I just don't think I could ever learn CW. It's too difficult....."

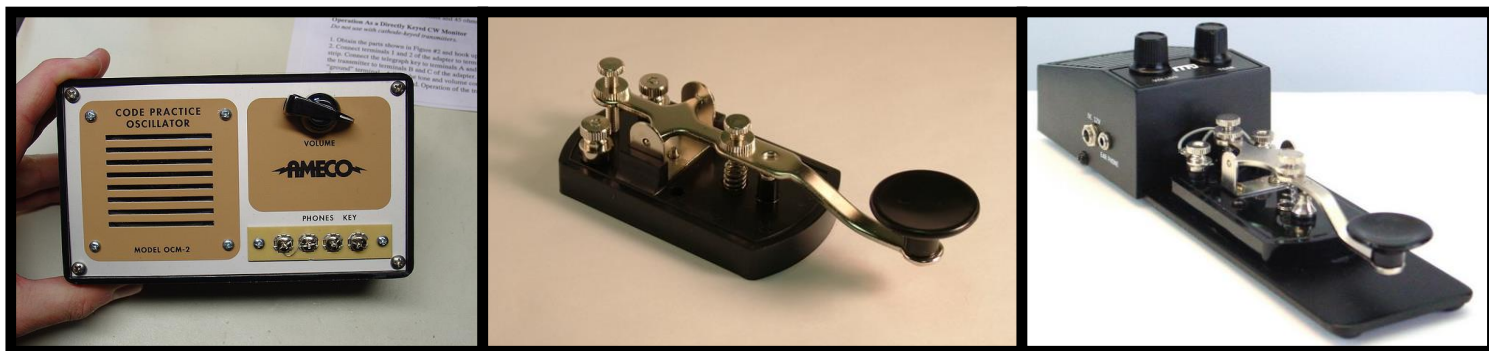
Fair enough – it does take time and effort to learn code – but then again, *doesn't anything worthwhile in life?* Now it's true, you will not switch your rig on when you complete your learning of CW and feel at ease about making QSOs. You'll be slow and clumsy.....

JUST LIKE ME AND EVERYONE ELSE THAT HAS STARTED-OUT!!!!

(We'll talk more about on-air beginning CW operation later in this article.) However, most people greatly **over-estimate** the amount of effort required to learn CW. After you learn your first 3-5 characters, you'll be hungry for more, believe me.

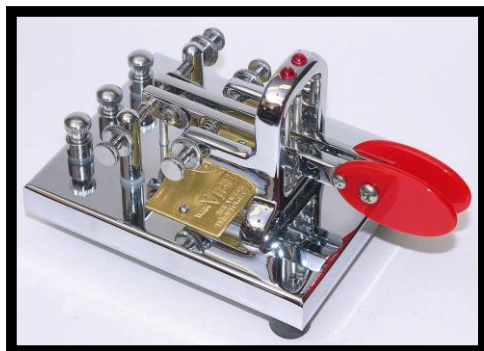
“OK, THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO THIS... SO HOW DO I GET STARTED?”

First, find you a good CW teaching course. There are many out there that you can use. Or...ask in your local ham club if there's someone available who could hold a weekly CW class. Or both. (In 1969, I attended a live class and I think that accelerated me in learning the code faster than anything. Perhaps for me personally, I do better in a classroom group atmosphere. Whatever the reason, it helped.)

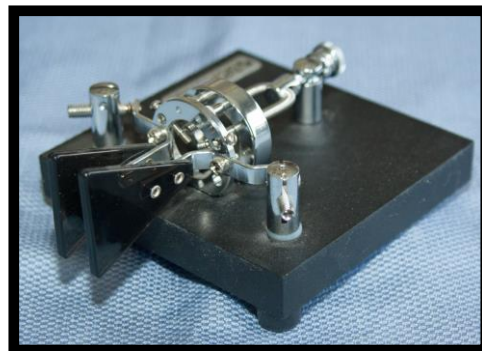


Then, purchase (or borrow from someone who has one if you can) a code oscillator and a straight key, or a combination unit. Don't become aggravated with the “buzzing” of the oscillator. Yes, they sound cheap, but you're learning code...you're not attempting to hear the code characters through theatre quality surround-sound Dolby.

And notice that when you first begin to learn code, the tool that you use with the oscillator: a **STRAIGHT KEY**...not a paddle...a **STRAIGHT KEY**. Not only are you learning how to **COPY** code, you're also learning how to **SEND** it. Beginning with a straight key will develop the fundamentals of your properly sending and *forming* dots and dashes. After you master the straight key, you can later move up to your “graduation diploma” – the paddle.



Using a paddle is a skill in its own right, and while you'll certainly want to learn how to use one sometime – especially if you do a lot of ragchewing or a lot of contesting – it's best to leave it alone until you're comfortable with the mode. *Learn with a straight key first.*



DEVELOP A CODE LEARNING METHOD

Use your code course (and/or attend a code class), and follow the methods set forth in the course. Or perhaps if it is more attractive to you, you can use the method I used in 1969: Learn about 3-4 letters, 1 numeral, and 1 punctuation mark per week. (The more commonly used punctuation marks are period, comma, question mark, hyphen (or “break”), and forward slash.) As for the numbers, you can learn those without much problem. Numbers are the easiest and fastest to learn, in my opinion.

However!.....**Do not do this with the letters.** *DO NOT learn the letters in alphabetical order!* Mix them up. They're going to be mixed up when you're copying them during a QSO anyway, so you might as well mix them up while you're learning them. For example, in your first week, learn K, S, and Z. In the second week, learn B, R, and V, etc.



Try to spend 30 minutes to an hour each night at home and in the quiet with your oscillator in sending the characters you are learning for that week (use headphones if your oscillator is equipped with a headphone jack or terminals...if not, do the best you can not to annoy family members while you're practicing). Then begin combining them with the characters you have learned in the previous weeks.

"Don, that sounds interesting from the sending aspect, but what about learning how to *copy* code?" Hang on.....we're getting to that.

IMPORTANT: Don't get over zealous and bite-off more than you can chew. Be patient with this.

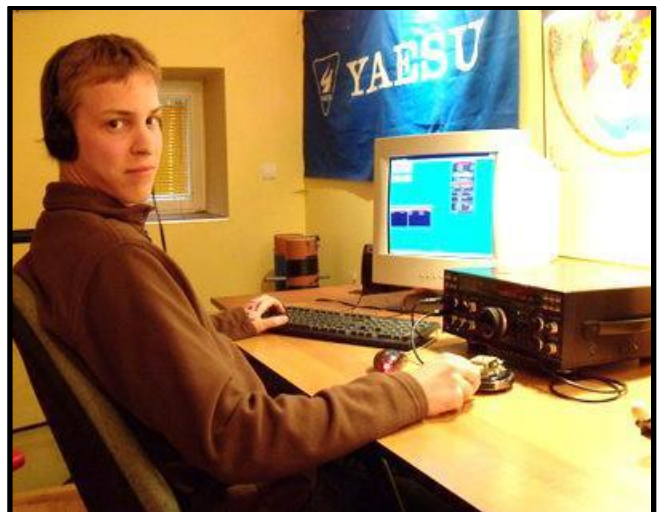
Learn all the characters at a *slow and easy* pace as described in the preceding paragraph. If you get impatient or falsely overconfident and try to learn 10 characters a week and "knock this out and have my code speed up to 15 words – per – minute in 3 weeks", you'll become frustrated and discouraged.

The more you practice sending, the more you will improve, and *also* the better you will be able to *copy* because you're hearing the characters more and more as you practice sending them. In learning Morse code, sending and receiving work hand-in-hand. This learning experience differs with each individual, of course. But as a general rule, in about 1-4 months you'll amaze yourself by realizing that you've enabled yourself to at least send and receive, with a fairly decent degree of efficiency, ALL of the characters!

Learning code is like learning a foreign language – the best way is to learn *THE LANGUAGE*...not the converting of everything from English. If you're learning Spanish, and you see that object hanging from the arm of a female, you don't say to yourself, "Ok, that's a purse...that would be a 'bolsa' in Spanish." The correct way is to bypass converting everything from English to Spanish and vice versa. Skip the conversion process – look at that object and say, "Es la bolsa!" You must THINK in Spanish.

It's the same way with code. You can regard CW as a "language" in itself. So, when you hear "dah-dit-dah" come through the speaker, you don't say to yourself, "Uh...ok...that was a dash, a dot, and another dash...that's a 'K'". You go by the way the character *SOUNDS*...not dots and dashes. Train yourself to *THE SOUND*. When you hear "dit-dit-dah-dit", your mind immediately shouts "F"! No converting. *THINK* in the "Language of Code".

This is basically the self-taught method I used, along with attending code class, when I passed my 5 WPM Novice code test in 1969. I was 13. I was so captivated and fascinated by CW at that time, I achieved my General ticket



a year-and-a-half later in 1971, passing 13 wpm and theory. But even though I was now licensed to use the microphone, I still used CW much more than SSB. With all due respects to Phone operation (yes, I still operate phone and enjoy it very much), on CW I was working more DX and having more fun than I'd ever had on SSB. In 1972, I was certified by the ARRL in code proficiency at 35 WPM. **AND IF I CAN DO IT, YOU CAN TOO! ABSOLUTELY!**

Everyone is different and learns differently, of course!

Now, let's quickly examine the potentially negative side of learning CW. We'll call it potential, because if you'll approach learning CW properly and with a positive, never-say-die attitude, you won't have any major problems.

However, if after about 3 months, you aren't making the progress like you think you should be, **DON'T GIVE UP!!!** There are two possibilities if you're encountering problems:

- 1) Your learning method might not suit you - seek advice from experienced CW operators. If someone is helping you, see if they know someone with a different style of teaching and using CW, who might be more attuned to how you learn. Again, we all learn differently.
- 2) You might simply lack confidence – **this is common!** If you are copying basic QSOs but don't feel your CW is up to par – *you are almost certainly wrong!!!* Get yourself on the bands, have a QSO or two, and eventually you'll begin to believe! It's like jumping into the ocean - once you get in, the water's fine.



ON THE AIR WITH CW

In the past, CW used to be taught to ensure people passed the 12 or 20 WPM exam solely for the sole purpose of gaining access to HF. This is rather a pity – CW should be taught to help people **use it on the air**. As most of you reading this will already have access to HF without CW, **that's exactly how you should use it.**

Before you're ready to actually take the plunge and make your first CW contact, find places where you can copy CW repeatedly: Beacons are a good place to start, as well as your local repeater(s), and contests. You will hear the same things over and over again, and you will now hear yourself with CW in a different way as you actually listen to the signals *through the radio*, instead of that trusty little oscillator you started with. (Oh, by the way, when you've completed your code learning, pass your oscillator on to another deserving soul who is interested in learning the code. Pass the CW torch and keep the fire going!)

And just about the best way to get free, on-the-air code practice copying is tuning-in to the W1AW code practice runs. W1AW was my mainstay when I was learning the code. You can find it in any issue of QST, or on the ARRL website. W1AW transmits its code practice runs simultaneously on all the main bands. So no matter what time of day or what time of year, you usually can find a frequency that will accommodate you with a good signal to copy from. This is one of the biggest learning aids that I laud the ARRL for. W1AW has been faithful with these code practice sessions for decades, and has helped thousands of amateurs in attaining their abilities in using CW. You can also listen to W1AW on your computer any time you want and at different speeds by using the W1AW .mp3 archive files from the ARRL website: <http://www.arrl.org/code-practice-files> .

If you're randomly listening on the air, find stations calling CQ - they will repeat their callsigns over and over again! Find slower stations on the bands and copy what you can - don't worry if you don't copy 100%. They will repeat their names and locations at least once. There's nothing like listening to code to whet your appetite to use it.

And.....here's the real *BEAUTY* of CW: The first time you hear that DX station tapping out a "CQ" on 20 meters *long after* the band has closed, and all you hear on SSB are scratchy sounds and carrier waves, you'll know what I mean!

"BUT I STILL MAKE A LOT OF MISTAKES!"

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THIS AT ALL!!!!!! Don't burden yourself with this – CW operators understand what it's like at the beginning. We've all been there, and we all still make mistakes. Get you a tall, cold glass of sweet tea, plop right back down in front of your rig, and pound-out that CW QSO!

"HOW FAST DO I NEED TO BE TO GET ON THE BANDS?"

5 words per minute **is fine** to start with. If the other station is too fast for you, simply ask them to "QRS QRS PSE I AM A NEW CW OP" (QRS is the Q-signal for "please send slower.")

Also, here's a very important tip in helping you get started on the air:

Start making your first CW contacts on "FISTS" frequencies. FISTS operators are some of the finest, nicest people you'll meet on the air. FISTS has been around for quite some time now, and have their own website. Please, check this one out...it WILL help you!:

<http://fists.org>



Believe it or not, once you are on the air your speed *will* improve dramatically and *without any special effort*. If you are making QSOs at 5 wpm, most people find their speed improves just by being on the air and having fun until they hit the next plateau, around the 12-25 wpm mark.

This is for real, folks. I'm not making this up. It WILL happen and it works.

AND FINALLY.....

I hope that all the members of BVRC and/or any other amateur operators whose path this might cross that do not presently know the code, will read it through at least once and be inspired to give CW a try. I hope it will *STIR* a desire in you (as it did me many years ago) that will propel you into becoming a class CW operator. And again, I can't stress this enough to you.....CW IS FUN.

Yes, CW has been around a long, long, long time. So has The United States Constitution. Neither is obsolete. Stay calm, relax, listen to those signals intently, and don't fear that first CW QSO. Once you clear that hurdle, the path to serious CW ham radio fun is wide open.

I know – I've experienced that fun for 50 years.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Dennis Wareham – KØDKL, Bella Vista

Clayton Hornsby – Callsign Pending

Siloam Springs



***The fastest growing
amateur radio club in
Northwest Arkansas***

***79 members and
counting!!!***

***C U at the next club
meeting!***

John Meredith – WØPQI

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of John, WØPQI. John passed away in Colorado Springs recently. He lived in NW Arkansas for many years and was an avid operator. He was well known for his mobile CW operation. RIP John.

(Thanks to Paul – KK5II for this information.)

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