



Solid Copy

The International CWops Newsletter

October

2014

Issue No. 57



Vic N4XR (SK) in the 1930s as W1EOB

CWops “CWT”

Every Wednesday

Regular Tests: Full Speed

Start times: 13Z, 19Z, 03Z (+1)

1-hour each session

Exchange: name/number (members)
name/SPC (non-members)

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

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President’s Message

I hope those of you who participated enjoyed one or more of the three sessions of our CW Open. I did all three and had a great time. I couldn’t tell if participation was up or down but I do know that I was able to keep making Qs for the full four hours of each session. I



hope more of you will participate next year because the success of a radiosport event is tied very directly to the number of operators who play in it.

This semester’s CW Academy is now about half way through. I have been advising two groups – a Level 2 and a Level 3. So, every Monday and Thursday evening I do back to back online sessions starting at 7 PM and ending around 9 PM. The time really goes by

quickly because of the enthusiasm of my students. And, all are making lots of progress. One recently emailed me that these first four weeks have helped him improve more than the previous 10 years of trying things on his own. That's, of course, music to my ears.

The CWops ambassadors are doing a great job of being our eyes and ears in their respective regions. I noted, for example, that one of the recent CW Academy signups thanked us for the presentation done by one of our ambassadors at a southeastern US ham event. In it, the ambassador highlighted CW Academy, and this person said it was just what he was looking for.

Our CWT, QTX and CW Open programs continue to be extremely well managed by Hank, John and Dean. Kudos to you all. And my very sincere thanks to Will and Jerry for helping me co-manage CW Academy. Without their efforts it could not be done.

For many of us October shepherds in the onset of colder weather. It makes it easier for us to opt to stay inside and operate because we're not as tempted by the sunny, warm days of Spring and Summer. But, remember to take care of yourselves. Flu season is right around the corner. And, remember to get exercise, too. If it's cold outside, go to a nearby mall and spend 30 minutes to an hour walking the floors. Or go to a gym.

Some of us are in the habit of checking out RBN or a spotting network before turning on our radios. If nothing's been spotted, we go do something else. Try reversing the process. Turn on the radio, call a CQ, and be the station that RBN's skimmers find. Access to our radio spectrum is a privilege, not a right. Our bands can be reassigned if licensing authorities find we are not utilizing them. So, step up your activity. Make some QTX points. Participate in CWTs. Keep the candle lit.

73,

Rob K6RB

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From the Editor



CWops is Growing!

Look at all those [new members](#)! It's another month of growth for CWops. We have 26 new members including eight who opted for lifetime membership and at least one that I know of is in for five years. We must be doing something right, so let's keep up the good work. Note new member Vic W7VSE who is 92 and still pounding brass. He authored an article on his 1995 experience at the Friendship Games in Russia that appeared in the August issue of *Solid Copy*.

In addition to our regular columns, this month's *Solid Copy* features a fascinating life story from Bill WOODS about his transformation from CW hater to professional Morse op and lifetime devotee. *How We Were* features John W9ILY with some comments and photos. And new member Mike VE9AA discusses his long-evolving mobile setup for CW and other modes we allow him to mention. ;-)

The 2014 international CW Open is now history, with great participation and fun for all. Family obligations kept your editor away from the key for most of the event, but I did manage a few hours in Session 1. How about you?

At risk of appearing risqué, here's a contributed photo from Bill W2CQ of a "CW shop" in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida:



The next photo courtesy of Jim N3JT brings back fond memories of Vic N4XR who passed away last February at 96 years of age. Vic is the one with his eyes open. For a younger image of Vic, see Page 1. He was a loyal member of our club and others and was still traveling around the country on his own well into his 90s. We miss him on the air and in our lives. RIP, Vic.



73,

Rick N6XI

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News & Notes

Jerry AC4BT

This is a column where members can report their activities, happenings and achievements, both radio-related and personal. Please send brief notes to Jerry AC4BT at jweisskohl@gmail.com

Jim N3JT: Jim and Nina are heading to Japan for two weeks. They expect to meet with several of the JA CWops members in Tokyo and Kyoto. Presumably the chatter will not be in CW!

Will WJ9B: Fellow CWops may enjoy knowing the following: I'm done, I'm done! After three years of work starting with the tower take-down and big move from Florida, I am pleased to report that the towers planned three years ago are now complete in Treasure Valley, Idaho!

I decided to retire "on time," (1) while I still had the physical ability to rebuild, and (2) to take up responsibility in the family transitions that lay ahead. Four towers are now up and populated with antennas: 78 ft (10M), 82 ft (15M), 110 ft (20M), and 125 ft (40M). A catenary between the 40M and 20M towers hold a 2L 80M wire beam at about 90 feet. 160M is on the 15M tower, shunt fed and phased with the switched open-wire feedline of the 80 meter wire beam. Four elevated radials are on each 160M vertical element. One 600 ft beverage points NE.

All on-tower work was done by yours truly: slowly, slowly, but safely, with my brother and tractor on the ground. I got inspiration from my years with the PVRC-NC guys, especially NY4A. Once PVRC, always PVRC!

Glenn VE3GNA: I think I mentioned in an earlier newsletter that I had implemented a two-year plan regarding our place of residence. Well that plan has gone out the window, mainly due to the efforts of my long-suffering XYL, who was adamant about not wishing to relocate to the east coast. I agreed not to push the issue any further and she agreed to remain by my side and in my life.

Suffice to say, we have purchased a building lot in a small village nearby and hope to commence building in the spring. The new lot is about a half acre and will be much easier to maintain than our current 2.5 acres. I have two necessities for this new home. One is a location for my shack, which will be in the garage, and the other is a concrete base for my tower. Both shall be provided. In addition there is an amplifier on my short list of purchases so that I can make myself heard more readily when the situation warrants.

Bob W0GXA: I'm a newly minted CWops member. Here's a brief spotlight on my background.

I've been licensed since 1976 when I lost the arguments with my Elmer, Don WB0GXA, as to which was a better radio service: Amateur radio or CB. Don was my high school guidance counselor and he was a diehard CW guy to the point that he never owned a mic for his radio. I took to CW right away. Don wouldn't let me buy a paddle/keyer until I was solid at 20wpm on a straight key. By the time I ran my first contest with a straight key (FD '77) I had met the requirement and

purchased a chrome Bencher that I still use today. I spent a lot of time in NTS traffic nets and ragchewing with other teens I found on the air. In my years on the air since, I've used my call on HF only during a short period of time where we used 10M SSB to hunt a local intentional jammer on VHF/UHF.

College and life got in the way and HF operating was set aside. In 2010 I decided it was time to get back into the hobby in a big way. I started by changing my call to W0GXA. I always liked the rhythm of Don's call. I have been steadily building my station, earning DXCC on 10-15-20 and nearly there on 40. I recently replaced my 21 year old Kenwood TS-50s with a more modern radio: Yaesu FTdx-5000 with matching amp. I've been very pleased and wondered why it took me so long to buy a new radio. My real love has been contesting. I'll never be a top 10 station but I enjoy improving all the elements of my operation to better my scores over previous years. Two local CWops members, W0EA and W00DS, suggested I participate in the mini-T's and the rest is history.



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Confessions of a CW Hater

Jeff Woods W00DS

This was the big one, the 13 WPM CW exam. It was only barrier between a 19 year old college sophomore engineering student and the magic of the 20M phone band. CSCEs for both the General and Advanced written exams were in my pocket, exactly where they had been for all four prior examinations. For a fifth time, The VEC took my answer sheet to grade. 7 of 10 seemed within reach today. Just like the last time.

Words can scarcely describe the contempt I held for Morse then. You see, at that moment in 1988 Morse was the only thing standing between yours truly and a beautiful new TS-440, with its PLL synthesizer, no-tune final and digital display. The rig was brand new and belonged to the Rose-Hulman radio club, W9NAA. The Technician-friendly and very hot 10M band had been great fun but I wanted more. The holy grail of 20 meters and its round-the-clock DX was strictly off limits to anyone who hadn't yet demonstrated 13 WPM code proficiency.

I'd mostly memorized the 13 WPM code tapes by the time of the fourth exam. On-air QSOs were coming fairly easily, yet somehow I was unable to write seven correct answers to ten questions on that fill-in-the-blank exam. The last test was oh-so-close: Missed it by one. The operator's son in the imaginary QSO's name was Raphael. Naturally, that was one of the questions. Raphael? Really? After the exam, the correct answer had been written on my exam sheet (along with the 6/10 failing grade) by the proctor. Looking at my copy sheet in retrospect, there it was plain as day, the letters R-A-P-H-A-E-L all in a row. I'd put down RALPH, assuming that I'd missed the L. Strike four.

By the fifth exam session, I honestly believed I was physically incapable of passing the exam. I held my breath as the exam was graded. The VEC's pen came out too many times. His head shook perceptibly. The result was clear even before he announced it: No. For the fifth time: No.

CW was Lucy to my Charlie Brown. No, not yours. Not today. Gathering my stuff, I shuffled towards the door with a hangdog look on my face.

"Wait!"

Startled, I looked up. It was the exam proctor. He wasn't giving up. "Hang on. I was watching you take the exam. You may have a minute of solid copy here."

What madness was this? A minute of solid copy? It came back to me before the VE could explain: At the time I took my Novice exam, a minute of solid copy at 5 WPM was required. In the intervening years, the rules had changed to allow a 10 question fill-in-the-blank exam. *Allow*, but not *require*, as this sharp-eyed VEC understood. Pulling a minute of perfect copy out of those chicken scratches seemed like crazy talk. But what did we have to lose?

He was circling words, grouping letters together, and the exam answers began to pop off the page. He continued, charitably interpreting a few ambiguous characters here and there. The final count showed nearly two minutes of solid copy. Two minutes! I was now an Advanced licensee and had access to that beautiful 20M phone band!

And no more CW. Ever.

Over the next year, I discovered that 20 and 15 were indeed great bands. 40 and 80 were somewhat disappointing. 40 was inundated with high-powered shortwave broadcasters and 80 was never open in the hours I was on campus. 20M was opening up well at night in those days. Unfortunately, in those hours I was usually off-campus in my rented room. Wouldn't it be nice to have my own rig, something that would bring those signals to my very own desktop every night?

Soon afterward, a tired but complete Heathkit SB-100 followed me home from the Peoria, Illinois hamfest. The seller said it "Worked the last time it was plugged in." He neglected to mention that this event had occurred some time during the Carter administration, and I didn't really care. For \$75, it was mine.

It mostly worked, too, after the dust demons were exorcised and tubes were reseated. There was one quirk though: The VFO was "jumpy." Due to dust or friction or some combination of the two, the VFO wouldn't tune smoothly. It was almost impossible to get a SSB signal tuned intelligibly. I found myself wandering more and more frequently into the CW sub-bands. First the Novice portion of 40, and soon after into the General area. With the wide 2.5 kHz filter, it was easy to get a CW signal (often several!) into the passband.

The key thing I'd missed after exam number five was that all that practice had actually stuck. Without the pressure of an exam, I found it easy to copy QSOs in my head, much easier than the differential equations homework I was supposed to be studying. One night a random spin of the VFO knob brought in a station sending with a great fist at a comfortable speed. It turned out to be W1AW, sending an 18 wpm bulletin.

The next day, I borrowed the club's 20 WPM cassettes and found that the plain text portions were easy head-copy. Why not go for the Extra license then?

The Extra written was quite a bit easier than the Advanced, and I breezed through the code portion. And failed.

This time around the exam was multiple choice. I had scored 3 of 10 correct. My copy sheet only had the barest notes – names, calls, and a few other pertinent facts. Writing at 20 wpm is difficult and I was accustomed to doing head-copy by that point. My request for a re-grade fell on deaf ears, even though I was certain I'd aced the test.

In an extremely fortunate turn of events, one of the exam proctors was also a professor of mine, and a fine CW op. He was aware of my CW proficiency and had also been head-copying the exam tape. With some prodding from Dr. Hoover, it was discovered that the wrong key had been used to grade

my test, and that I had indeed aced it. A lucky break for me, and it resulted in access to the DX portion of the bands where I hung out almost exclusively from that point.

Time passed. I studied engineering, operated CW, and played bass in a popular rock band. The Berlin Wall fell. Fall of my senior year came. Saddam invaded Kuwait. The economy tanked and jobs for newly-minted engineers were few and far between. The prospect of graduation and student loan repayment loomed large.

“Pack your seabag, Sparks!” the article was called. December, 1990 73 Magazine. I still have it to this day. The accompanying ad promised “Travel! High Income!” as a merchant marine radio officer. Intrigued, and more than a little desperate, I called. Rae Echols W7FF, answered. The questions flew:

“Education?”

“How’s your CW?”

Apparently my qualifications and vagabond status made me the ideal candidate. The US Navy was bringing merchant ships out of mothballs to send materiel to Kuwait in support of the Gulf War and there were fewer Radio Officers than there were ships. Qualified people who were able to deploy were scarce. Rae sent a photocopy of the 2nd Class Radiotelegraph Exam study guide and told me to call back when I was ready to sit for the exam. He also cautioned me to brush up on my copying skills, especially writing it down. The test was 16 WPM code groups and 20 WPM plain text, with a minute of legible, hand-written, solid copy required.

By early spring, I felt comfortable with the material. Rae arranged a testing session in Denver that coincided with my college Spring break. Denver was two days drive from Terre Haute, but Rae had a friend in the FCC field office there who was willing to test on request. Having no other job prospects at the time, I wasn’t in any position to object.

I passed with no complications this time. Rae had said to call him immediately after the test.

“Rae, it’s Jeff. I passed.”

“Great! Got something to write on?”

Rae dictated the address of a medical clinic in Denver. “Go pee in a cup there. I’ll be in touch.”

With Rae’s help, I got my Coast Guard paperwork in order at the St. Louis office. On May 25th I walked across a stage, receiving a BS in Electrical Engineering. On May 28 I found myself standing on a dock in Jacksonville Florida looking up at the hull of a big gray ship bound for Saudi Arabia.

Alex Hernandez NU1T was my co-operator and mentor. Both of us were considered “cadets” at that time. To be the sole radio officer on a US merchant vessel, one was required to have a Six Month Service Endorsement. Alex was nearly finished with his six months and had served aboard

some foreign vessels as well. Through a clever loophole in the law, two cadets were allowed to take a ship out to sea because neither of us would be a “sole” operator.

Alex taught me the ropes. Even though one could perform most of the duties of a radio officer through the satellite-based Inmarsat, Alex insisted we do it the old way. He taught me how to send weather and position reports via CW on both the 500 kHz MF band and the various HF allocations. Receiving weather was done almost entirely via the CW broadcasts from coast stations. Alex showed me his tape recorder with a motor speed control. He used it not to slow down the speed for copy, but to speed it up so it took less of his time to transcribe. The guy was (and still is) a machine!

For the next four years and 25 countries, I sailed the oceans blue gathering weather data and sending traffic. All military and company traffic used the satellite teletype by default. The remainder of routine position and weather reports, when it was feasible, were sent on the MF or HF CW bands. But mostly, I copied weather forecasts.

It’s difficult to over-state how critical the weather is to a ship alone on the high seas. On one winter Atlantic crossing we were tracking seven hurricanes or tropical depressions. Each weather system had its own time slot for updates. These time slots overlapped quite a bit, making it very difficult to keep current with them all. To pull it off, it was necessary to record a CW broadcast on my own tape-recorder, set my PK-232 to catch the RTTY broadcast for another, and copy in real-time yet another CW bulletin. Those days, I’d do 10 hours or more of CW transcription every day.

As with most tasks, that kind of repetition drives proficiency. One day I handed the latest bulletin to the mate on watch. He asked me for a summary. “Oh, I didn’t read it.” I blurted out. The mate shot me a quizzical look. It was true. By that point, there was a nearly automatic neural path from ears to fingers on the typewriter. My head could be somewhere else entirely as I copied 25 WPM CW.

Morse was a true second language at that point. It worked its way into my dreams. On more than one occasion my friend Paul K9OT woke me up halfway around the world just by sending my call sign on our sked frequency of 10.121 MHz.

25 years later, the fluency is still there. These days I spend most of my time chasing DX on 160M and enjoying weekends of flat-out contesting with the local guys at the NOMA club. But quite often, if you pull the headphones off me at work, you’ll hear 40 WPM CW from the W1AW code practice archives. It keeps me just insane enough to survive.

And all because of two volunteer examiners who didn’t give up.

73,

Jeff WOODS

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How We Were – W9ILY

by Hank W6SX

John Holmes W9ILY, CWops 471

In John's own words:

The photo is from 1960 at Field Day when I was K2YZI in Troy, upstate New York. The truck and generator were courtesy of my father and I believe it was all set up in my back yard. How about that generator mounting? You would not believe the hash caused by the generator! I did not know that it needed to be far away from the antennas and rig! Note the TWO VFOs and the Viking I (not a Viking II) with the cabinet top propped open for ventilation. I'm afraid that I don't remember that receiver. I must have borrowed it as mine was an S-38D (silver model) and the one in the picture is definitely not that one. I do remember the lamp, the clock and even the mic. I had a piece of sponge rubber (possibly off of a headphone) around the top of the mic to help make it more directional. Also, I recall the plastic-enclosed bug in front of the rig and a small audio preamp to the right of the rig as the Viking I did not have a lot of gain. Two VF-1's are a mystery. I remember having them but don't recall why I did that. This was back in the days when I didn't even know about a T/R switch...even a knife switch. I think I had both the rig (a Viking Adventurer that I assembled and it actually worked!) and the receiver connected to the antenna at the same time, at least in the very early days (late 1957 and 1958, not in 1960). In 60 I had the knife switch!

Now that's a *How We Were*. Please send me YOUR photos, everyone. w6sx@arrl.net



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Hints for Mobile CW, Contesting and DXing

by Mike VE9AA

Over the past 3½ decades I've nearly always had HF and VHF rigs in my vehicles. I've learned a few things and still need to learn more as every installation presents new and sometimes interesting



challenges. I hope to be able to give some general advice of what to expect when you run “/M” if you are not familiar with it.

Rigs. Where to start? At the beginning of course.

One of my first installs was an HW-101 with mobile power supply. That switching power supply really screamed (literally – around 1500Hz IIRC). I graduated to the FT-101E, IC-735, 736, 706, FT-100D, an array of inverters with 2M gear and have now settled on the unobtrusive FT-857D with narrow crystal filter for serious CW work (more on this rig later). Today's cars offer less space for the mobile inclined ham, but there are usually ways around mounting a rig if you are truly determined. I have taken glove box doors off to mount the bigger rigs and mounted them down by the passengers' feet for mind sides rigs.

The smaller rigs with remote heads are my new favorite however, simply from a space saving point of view.

The 857D is my choice until they come out with something better. I like it at the current price point of \$900. The fact I can add a CW filter (\$100) and the remote head is really small. The filter is needed for contests. I have used a homebrew mount using a large woodworking clamp onto a slide-out cup holder in the VW but currently use a pedestal mount that drops down into the cup holder of my MINI. It's nearly a perfect mobile rig. If it only had more buttons and fewer menus, but once setup for contesting, most everything you need is accessed via N1MM software, or a button or two on the rig.

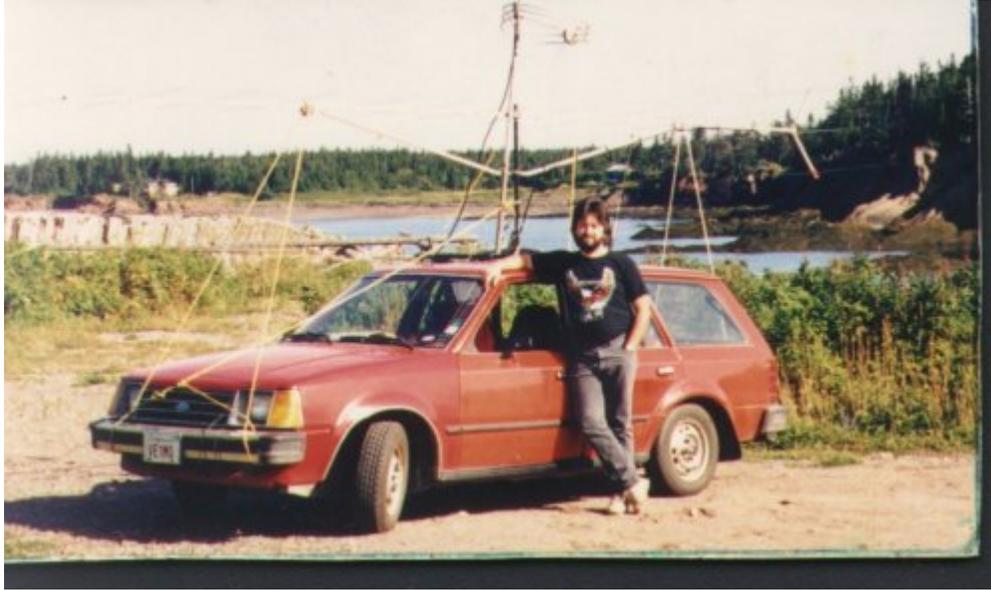


Antennas....ahhh, antennas.....the sticky wicket of the mobile ham. I guess the main thing in a competitive HF mobile setup has to be the antenna. It should be up as high as you can get it, grounded as well as you possibly can do it, and big physically – as large as you can manage without tipping your car over or knocking branches off trees as you drive by.

For everyday 2M FM use, you can put a coat hanger on your fender and it'll work. You'll never know the difference.

For VHF (SSB/CW) contesting, things get a little more complicated, but a vertical is not going to cut it, no matter how many dB the manufacturer claims it offers. (You lose 20 dB going from horizontal polarization to vertical polarization.) I have had Yagis bolted to my roof racks for 6M, 2M and 70cm and have turned the car to aim the beam. I have also made loops (halos and squalos) for a less extreme footprint that allow omnidirectional patterns if you are not into moving the car to “point the beam.” I have also had little Alliance rotors driven with an inverter for times when space was at a premium. (The top of Crabbe Mtn comes to mind.) Anyone can do VHF hilltopping or roving with some pretty good success. It's a lot like setting up a shack in your house.

The next photo shows **VE1MQ/R** (now VE9AA) in a VHF gridhopping contest, back before grey hair and bigger belly set in. The picture is faint, but it's a 6M 3-ring Halo above a 16el Yagi for 2m. Signals were awesome by the salt water near Blacks Harbour, NB.



The problems seem to come when you get below 28MHz. Oftentimes folks may try HF mobile once (if at all) then give up as they “aren’t getting out” or it’s too much trouble getting everything right.

I guess if you are using a Hamstick or some other very tiny antenna on your back bumper, you’ll quickly become disillusioned with HF mobile. HF mobile is not for the fainthearted, nor for folks bothered by unwieldy looking contraptions hovering above the roof of their car. You **WILL** have people approach you in the mall parking lots asking questions or have snide comments thrust your way by people walking by who may or may not know you are listening. It’s the life of a mobile ham with a weird looking device affixed to their car. (My wife has a solution for this. She plays the straight-man, telling folks a variety of stories, like we are chasing Russian spy satellites, or doing radon gas exploration or analyzing the Aurora zone for the FBI or other equally bizarre scenarios.) It’s always good for a laugh as we drive away from the store. This is not for everyone however. If you can’t deal with the questions or comments, perhaps a portable op is more for you.

Signal strength

Envision the ham with the diminutive HF vertical in his/her backyard with half a dozen short radials. Your signal will be about as strong as this at best, unless you go to a better location.*

Cars

To get to this point, your installation needs to be good and solid. Less than that and you will be disappointed. That means grounding your rig, grounding your antenna, locating it up as high as possible. (Roof racks or center of the roof are good spots.) Sometimes even bonding body panels, doors and exhaust together with copper braid is needed. You’ll also need thick power wires direct to the battery as you want to minimize $i2r$ losses when transmitting. No sense chucking watts out the window when you are already weak ! Then there is the receive side. The best vehicle is a diesel with few electronics. The ignition noises generated by some gasoline cars can drive you to drink (or to buy a diesel)!

So far the quietest car I’ve had has been a 2002 Golf tdi (SK).

Here it is with the HS-1800/PRO on the back end.

Perhaps my best mobile antenna to date.



Most modern gas cars aren't THAT bad however. You get used to it, and the weaker signals may not hear you anyway, so a little noise is a bit of an equalizer and can be partially helpful not distracting you to the weaker stations you'll tune across and wasting time on calling. You'll get used to not worrying about those 519 stations that usually cannot hear you.

My current summer setup is a SD-330 antenna, which is small, but mounting options on the MINI are limited and I accept the fact that I am weaker than when I had the '1800 on the Golf.



Plans are the remount the 1800 to the Subaru wagon, so when I contest, I can have a few more dB on tap. Antenna and mount are being rebuilt due to large amounts of salt corrosion. The Golf was my first mobile mount down near the road. All others have been roof rack or rear trunk lid. Lesson learned. Stay away from the road!

Mics/Keys: Since I do mostly mobile CW, a hand mic is what I use for SSB. The paddles are an important part of mobile operating, whether you are parked or mobile and even if you use an interface to send CW from the laptop during a contest. You'll always need fills, to ask questions or to take over when the computer or interface fails you. I have historically used a small set of paddles, affixed to something stationary, like an E-brake handle. Lately, I am leaning towards a large JONES-KEY paddle that would double as a wedge to keep your car from rolling down a hill if the brake gave way. Using something large keeps fatigue to a minimum and I have done 12 hours sending all manually.

Computer and related items:

Laptop all the way...in the old days it was always paper and pencil.

Location: Contrary to popular belief, the hilltop is not *always* the best place, especially for a vertical and a domestic contest but compared to most places it sure won't hurt! If I had a choice between a 400' hill and a spot right on saltwater I would choose the salt water QTH facing SW (MQP or most any QSO Party).

Misc.

I built a laptop stand not unlike a breakfast platter serving tray that goes over my legs and sits on the seat. This way the laptop is not burning my legs and the key is on a solid platform.

Test your DC/AC inverter (to charge the laptop) before the contest. I had one that was really RF noisy last time. Luckily, my spare was a little quieter. When gridhopping or changing county lines, this is when I do most battery charging.

Food: If you are serious, bring it all with you, including sandwiches, coffee, allergy or other meds. You don't want to stop mid contest to rush down to the local grocery. Hey, we're contesting!

Tools: Soldering iron and regular automotive tool kit.

Parts: PL-259s, coax jumper cable, scrap wire etc.

Clothing: This may sound silly, but wear a **DARK** T-Shirt. Most of your contesting will be in the summertime, where wearing dark may seem counterintuitive, however screen reflections from a white T-shirt are extremely distracting....especially after 12 hours!

Timing/strategy ! To be successful, the mobile op needs to be in tune with what's going on, even more so than the home station running a beam and a kilowatt. There's not much brute force operating in the mobile world. If you are running, are you on top or next to someone loud (that maybe you can't hear)? If S&P, are you sending exactly the same speed, or slightly faster than the DX or contest station you are calling? Sending slower will seldom get you through first. Sending your call twice when everyone else is sending once won't usually work. Is the station accepting tail-enders? When done right, this is where mobilers can shine ! There are some QSO parties where the mobile will work the same stations 15 or 20 times. Cranking your speed up is definitely allowed and will help you get through....especially when you are not zero beat with everyone else calling in the fray.



Now you know all my secrets ! Go get in your car for your favorite contest and we'll see you in the fray.



Mike VE9AA/M

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CW Academy

Rob K6RB, Will WJ9B and Jerry AC4BT

We are now more than half way through our Sep-Oct CWA semester. All the advisors report enthusiastic students and lots of progress. So far, two of our Level 3 students (WU7F and AB7MP) have joined the ranks of CWops, too.

As usual, new ideas are brewing. Our Level 1 has been our most structured program by its very nature. After all, many of our Level 1 signups have no Morse experience when they start, so all begin from scratch. But our Levels 2 and 3 programs have been more customized. Advisers have been trying a variety of exercises to help their students achieve improved CW skills.

This semester, we have been working on some new tools. We are developing MP3 files that include typical abbreviations and content that could easily be heard in conversational QSOs. In other words, we are making practice files that simulate reality. For years many of us used the W1AW Code Practice system as our way to improve our copying skills. As most of you know, the content is excerpted from the pages of QST magazine. Some of the files start with one word and a period, for example. Files from the same QST article have different content at different code speeds. So there is less benefit in pushing your limit, say, at 30 wpm and then listening at 25 because the content is completely different.

Our files-in-progress are all converted to MP3 files at 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 wpm. So, they may be used for both Level 2 and Level 3. For example, in Level 3, a file may be assigned at 35, 30 and 25 wpm with a set of questions. For many, at first, the 35 wpm is a blur; 30 wpm becomes somewhat recognizable, and 25 wpm becomes more and more readable.

We have also been using CWT as a learning exercise. It helps our students learn search & pounce technique while improving their ability to copy calls and numbers. Similarly, we are using Morse Runner's single call mode as an effective way to improve call and number copy.

Right now our backlog on CW Academy is nearly a year. We have managed to add some new advisors each semester but our demand has increased more than commensurately, so our backlog is

still nearly a year. One of two things will happen. We will solicit graduates of our Levels 2 and 3 classes to take on advisor roles and we will get more volunteers from our membership ranks; or our demand will dwindle due to long waits. Of course, we're hoping the first rather than the second becomes our reality.

If you have thought about joining our advisor ranks, please take the next step. Go to the CW Academy tab and fill out an advisor signup form. Thanks.

73,

Rob, Will and Jerry

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CWops Tests

Hank Garretson W6SX

A Wonderful Hobby

CWops Tests are one of the highlights of my ham radio week. I love working new guys who are trying a CWT for the first time. It's fun to slow down, greet them by name, and welcome them to our funfest. I take pleasure in working some of the new guys in subsequent weeks and watching how they improve. From tentative to accomplished, from an occasional session to almost every session, from nonmember to member.

CWops Tests are one of the highlights of my ham-radio week. I love working guys I work on traffic nets and in contests. It's nice to slow the pace down and sometimes chew the fat a bit. It's nice not to be in a hurry.

CWops Tests are one of the highlights of my ham-radio week. I take particular pleasure in working guys I handled traffic with and contested with fifty-eight years ago when I was twelve. Calls that come to mind include W1RM, W2RU, K4BAI, N4FP, and N6RO. All of us except K4BAI now sport Old-Timer two-letter calls. These guys are still friends after almost six decades. And, they are still first-class operators. Ham radio is a wonderful hobby.

CQ versus Search and Pounce

This is W6SX opinion – not everyone will agree. Received wisdom from on high says that new testers and signal-challenged testers should mostly Search and Pounce, particularly at the start of a contest. The rationale is that they are not experienced enough or loud enough to CQ. That trying to CQ will just be an exercise in frustration.

I have a different take. When you CQ, you set the speed. If you're comfortable at 25 WPM, CQ at 25 WPM. Most callers will be at your speed or lower. Why bang your head against a high-speed wall answering speed-demon CQs?

When you CQ, you set the frequency. You can CQ high in the band away from the frenetic goings-on in the low part of the band. CQ where you feel comfortable.

When you answer a CQ, you are competing against everyone else who is calling. And, if you are signal challenged, you are probably going to lose. Often you are going to have to call two or three or more times before you get through.

When you CQ, your only competition is signal-to-noise ratio. Call CQ on a clear frequency high in the band and you'll be in like Flynn. Guys who are uncomfortable low in the band will be eager to call you.

I sometimes think that "signal challenged should mostly answer CQs" is promulgated by hams who want plenty of stations to answer THEIR CQs. I say bunk.

There you have it. If you mostly S&P, try CQing more. I think you will be pleasantly surprised at how well you do. End, W6SX opinion.

Very Special Slow-Speed CWops Tests In November

Mark your calendars. Very Special Slow-Speed CWops Tests on 5 November. We will again be welcoming CW Academy graduates to the wonderful world of on-the-air CW. These guys and gals are the new blood and future of ham radio. Our job is to make them feel welcome and eager to come back for more. More details next month.

The first rule of CW is to have fun and to share the fun.

CW Exuberantly,

Hank W6SX

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CWops Awards

Pete W1RM and Peter W1UU

The Annual Competition Award (ACA) is based on the number of members worked each calendar year. You get one point per member worked, once per year. It resets to zero at the beginning of each year. The Cumulative Member Award (CMA) is based on how many members you've worked since January 3, 2010 on each band and continues to grow in perpetuity. The CWops Award Manager (CAM) software, available at no cost, will help you keep track of your ACA and CMA totals.

Here are the current totals for CWops awards:

Call	ACA	CMA	Call	DX Total	Call	WAS	Call	WAE
AA3B	643	4427	W1RM	132	N5RR	50	W1RM	43
F6HKA	575	2865	OH2BN	112	W1RM	50	OH2BN	40
W1RM	523	3232	F6HKA	111	W4VQ	50	AA3B	37
VE3KI	508	2755	W4VQ	111	F6HKA	50	N5RR	37
N5RR	501	3138	N5RR	93	AD1C	49	EA8OM	36
G4BUE	420	845	EA8OM	90	FG8NY	49	F6HKA	36
W0VX	380	1806	AA3B	85	K6DGW	49	W4VQ	36
AD1C	375	1465	DL8PG	83	VE3KI	49	KR3E	34
F5MNK	372	625	EA1WX	80	W1UU	49	KZ5D	34
K6RB	361	2584	VE3KI	80	K6RB	49	G4BUE	34
N1EN	358	844	PA7RA	79	EA8OM	48	DL8PG	33
FG8NY	402	1822	KZ5D	78	GW0ETF	48	PA7RA	33
K1ESE	337	1407	K1ESE	77	K1ESE	48	FG8NY	32
KZ5D	336	3239	W0VX	76	KZ5D	48	VE3KI	32
DL8PG	324	1424	W9ILY	74	NN6T	48	W9ILY	32
EA8OM	296	2126	G4BUE	73	W0VX	48	W0VX	31
GW0ETF	292	1162	KR3E	73	W6KY	48	K1ESE	31
W9ILY	254	1871	AD1C	71	W9ILY	48	EA1WX	30
W1UU	252	1452	NN6T	67	AA3B	48	NN6T	29
W6KY	208	1573	FG8NY	63	F5MNK	48	N1ZX	28
PA7RA	203	1094	GW0ETF	63	KR3E	47	W1UU	28
K0DTJ	162	417	W1UU	63	G4BUE	47	GW0ETF	27
NN6T	160	1444	N1ZX	62	DL8PG	46	F5MNK	26
K6DGW	130	1200	W6KY	54	EA1WX	46	AD1C	25
OH2BN	45	530	F5MNK	52	N1ZX	45	N1EN	22
N1ZX	26	688	4Z1UF	50	N1EN	45	4Z1UF	21
G0DJA	16	23	K6RB	49	K0DTJ	45	K6RB	21

SM6CNN	0	2392	N1EN	49	PA7RA	44	W6KY	16
N2UU	0	1774	K6DGW	29	OH2BN	42	K6DGW	8
W4VQ	0	1705	K0DTJ	23	4Z1UF	36	G0DJA	7
EA1WX	0	1426	G0DJA	10	G0DJA	8	K0DTJ	6
KR3E	0	1136						
PA4N	0	955						
OK1RR	0	893						
W5ASP	0	893						
WX7SJ	0	397						
PA1FOX	0	5						

73,

Pete, W1RM

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New Members

Colin Jenkins KU5B

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

1329	K4EU*	Steve
1330	KD4EE*	Scott
1331	IK4VFD	Rudy
1332	W7VSE	Vic
1333	SM7ATL	Uif
1334	W4NA	Nate
1335	N1CC	Jim
1336	W5TM	Ed
1337	A160*	Ed
1338	AB5OR*	Joe
1339	N8LA*	Lou
1340	N7IV	Joe
1341	K5TO	Wally
1342	W4FKM	Claude
1343	3B9FR	Robert
1344	K0SN	Tom
1345	NA6O*	Gary
1346	WT2P	Fred
1347	VE9AA	Mike
1348	W9NJY	Andy
1349	W0GXA	Bob

1350	AB7MP*	Mark
1351	WU7F*	Mark
1352	W5RZ	Dennis
1353	KM7Q	Bob
1354	HB9ARF	Phil

* = Life Member

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Current Nominees

As of September 29:

Need Sponsors: W6NEV, K6ZO, N7DXT, VE2BZO, K1QX, K8NYG

Invitations Extended: KA3DRR, VE7FO

For more details about nominees and up-to-date status, check the “Members Only” pages on the Website: www.cwops.org.

For information about joining CWops, check the Website under “Membership.”

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QTX Report

Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

QTX is a way of counting conversational CW QSOs. One point is awarded for each QSO of 20 minutes or longer. We have two ways to recognize QTX activities - the QTX Plaque and the QTX Achievement Medal.

QTX Plaque Standings

The QTX Plaque is awarded to the operator with the most QTX points at the end of the year. These are the standings at the end of August and year to date for 2014:

<u>Call</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>CY2014</u>
N5IR	101	427
KI4XH	98	645
K5LY	89	370
WB6BEE	58	473
NN6T	44	294
K5KV	43	396
N1ZX	32	241
IK0IXI	32	32
K4AHO	30	193
WA3NZR	13	102

N4SR	13	84
K0DTJ	9	71
KE6OIO	7	95
K6RB	6	53
JE1TRV	3	66
K8QI	3	41
K6HTN	3	25
W4VQ	2	7
W5JQ	2	21
K6HP		34
W6JMP		27
WA8IWK		69
N5RR		27
KC9EE		19
HB9CVQ		5
KC0VKN		5
K6RQT		4
K3GHH		3
ZS1C		2
N1EN		1

Bill N5IR jumped to the top of the hill with the first triple digit monthly total for 2014. His 101 is outstanding. Nipping at his heels was Fred KI5XH with 98, also a great score. Not far behind was Lee K5LY with 89. All three of these members were top flight rag chewers this month!

Personal bests for August were N5IR, KI4XH, and K5LY. They are also this month's top scores.

Total reported QSOs were a record 588. The old 2014 record was 515 back in. Reporting stations were 19, down two from June.

QTX Achievement Medals

QTX Medals will be awarded at the end of the year for 400 QTX points (Gold), 300 QTX points (Silver), and 200 QTX points (Bronze). We are up to eight QTX Achievement Award qualifiers:

Gold Achievement Level

KI4XH
WB6BEE
N5IR

Silver Achievement Level

K5KV
K5LY
K1ESE

Bronze Achievement Level

NN6T
N1ZX

Submit Your QSOs: Submit your monthly points by the 5th of the month to compete in the QTX Plaque standings. Submit your points anytime for Achievement Awards. There is still time to win an Achievement Award medal.

Thanks to all for your participation.

73,

John K1ESE, CWops #792

QTX Manager

QTX – All About Conversational CW

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Upcoming CW Operating Events

Joe Staples, W5ASP

This brief list of operating events is intended to provide members with options for using and improving their CW skills in less intense and more casual on-the-air activities.

In the previous issue of Solid Copy this column gave a brief overview of the NAQCC CW group and its activities. It also called attention to the open FOC QSO Party. There is yet another active group of CW operators, FISTS, and they will hold a CW only event in mid-October.

Like the FOC the FISTS club was originated by the Brits. The intent was to "support the use, preservation and education of Morse code". The North American group was formed several years afterwards. Like CWops, a primary goal is to assist established CW operators in helping newcomers and less experienced operators learn and improve their CW skills. Membership is open to all CW enthusiasts. There are "calling frequencies" on each band where members can seek out one another.

The FISTS Fall Sprint will start at 1700 UTC on Saturday, October 11th and run for four hours. There are two entry classes – QRP (5watts or less) and QRO (maximum of 100 watts). Complete details can be found at: <http://fistsna.org>.

Another all CW event coming up is the 10-10 Fall CW contest which is set to begin at 0001 UTC Saturday October 18th and run for 24 hours. Check <http://ww.ten-ten.org> for rules.

There are also quite a few state QSO parties scheduled for October – California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Arizona, New York, South Dakota, and Illinois. All will have mobile stations pounding away on CW as they trek from county to county. Check WA7BNM's [Contest Calender](#) for details.

October Events

Fists Fall Sprint
NAQCC Sprint
10-10 Fall CW

1700Z - 2100Z, Oct. 11th
0030Z - 0230Z, Oct. 15th
0001Z - 2359Z, Oct. 18th

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