



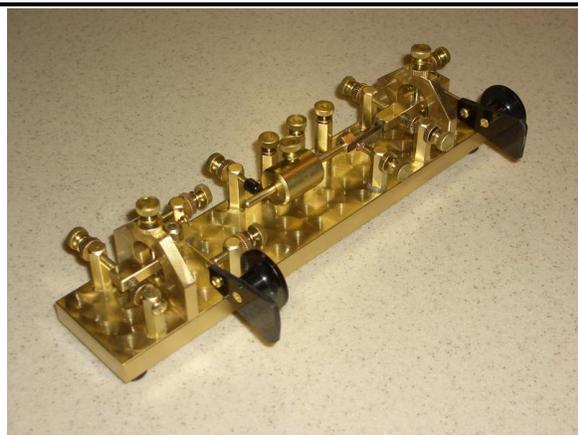
Solid Copy

The International CWops Newsletter

March

2014

Issue No. 50



Combo Key by K4VIZ at K5KV

CWops "CWT"

12, 26 March 2014

Start times: 13Z, 19Z, 03Z (9, 23 January)

1-hour each session

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

Special CWA CWTs (PSE QRS)

5, 19 March 2014: 1300Z, 1900Z, 0300Z(+1)

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

CWops Officers and Directors

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President: Rob Brownstein [K6RB](#)

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Secretary: Jim Talens [N3JT](#)

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President's Message



We're about mid-way into the 2014 contest season and it looks like several of our CWops members are having a great time participating. The

recent FT5ZM DXpedition also provided many of our DX-chasing members an opportunity to work a rare one on many bands and modes. CWops' treasurer, Craig K9CT, was one of the Amsterdam Island ops keeping that keyer humming, too.

...continued

The January/February CW Academy semester is almost over and we started the semester with about 80 students – our biggest group yet. We now have more than 20 advisors sharing the joy of CW with many veteran and newer hams who are motivated to learn and use Morse. Our largest proportion of signups are Level 1 (beginners) but the number of Level 2 and 3 signups is growing, and we're seeing a lot of students, having taken one level, signing up to take the next one.

I keep getting emails from hams telling me they want to learn Morse and their local clubs have no interest or resources for helping them. You should all feel proud that this club is filling a void in Morse training and helping to add new, competent CW operators to the HF bands. Our online training program is absolutely unique. No other programs offer the online convenience with the personal interaction between students and advisors.

The CW Open is still over a half-year away but we are already beginning the promotion process and have made a major change in the award structure in an effort to increase the already increasing participation of hams in all three ITU regions. Read Dean's section for more detail.

On the CWops' awards front, Pete W1RM is collecting inputs and passing them on to Peter W1UU, for inclusion in *Solid Copy* and for supporting the printable awards program (still in progress). In mid-March, we will be receiving the 70-plus CWT participation award medallions and begin sending them out to recipients. Beginning in 2014, John K1ESE will also be tracking QTX points toward achievement medallions, so make those 20+ minute QSOs and report your points each month.

As we've done for three years now, we will have an informal CW Enthusiasts weekend near Washington D.C., two weeks before Dayton. We get very favorable room rates, have many attractions to visit, and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow CW operators at a Friday night pizza bash, a Saturday morning breakfast gathering, and a great Saturday night dinner. As in prior years, Don W4ZYT has all the details, all of which have been posted on cwops@yahoogroups.com [and [later in this issue](#) of *Solid Copy*.]

We will again have a booth at the Dayton Hamvention. If you are planning to attend, please consider volunteering to do one or more two-hour stints at the booth. I'll post something soon, but meanwhile, if you know you'll be there, drop me an email (k6rb@baymoon.com) and let me know if you can fill a Friday, Saturday or both-day slot. Thanks in advance. We will have a lot to show this year, including the CW Open trophy and plaque, CWT participation medallions, and more.

In this issue I have also outlined the CWops Ambassador program. The Ambassador Program is a critical one for ensuring that CWops achieves true international presence. Since the club began back in 2010, we have been present at Dayton and the Tokyo Ham Fair. Last year I attended the Tokyo Ham Fair and met many JA operators who had an interest in CW. The Ambassador Program will start out on a modest footing and have appointed ambassadors in strategically important countries or regions whose task will be to be the local point of contact for hams interested in CWops, the champion for our club at local events, and the source of news to local media and ham clubs.

Here's hoping that our members east of the Rockies, in Europe, and even in Tokyo, see an end to the snow and cold weather, soon. You've all certainly had more than your share. In fact, we could use a lot of that precipitation west of the Rockies, so if you have any pull with the WX gods, put in a good word for us.

73,

Rob K6RB

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From the Editor

Solid Copy #50!



As creatures with ten fingers, we humans take satisfaction from celebrating multiples of that magic base. So I can't let this issue #50 pass without mentioning that we're half way to our centennial issue. That will be ten tens, even more powerful. OK, only half way, but thanks to our founding Editor and now President Rob K6RB for getting this newsletter off to a great start. Each month I fear we will lack sufficient material, but by the time I get to this point, writing my own comments, I am dismayed by the length of the emerging edition. So please, keep those columns and articles coming and *Solid Copy* will remain a source of reference and recreation for our nearly thousand members.

In addition to the usual and growing stable of columns and reports, this issue contains the conclusion of K6RB's magnum opus travelogue on his [DXpedition to Mozambique](#), a [photographic blast from the past](#) courtesy of W6SX, announcement of the [new tier of CW Open awards](#) by NW2K, and a sacrilegious piece by AC5K on [another mode](#) (!) of ham radio communication. Exuberant contributor W6SX treats us to a "blast from the past" with what I hope will become a regular or at least occasional [nostalgic photo](#) from ham radio past.

Take a look at the Page 1 photo of Benny K5KV's nifty Combo Key made by K4VIZ. It sports a single-lever paddle on the left and a side-mounted bug on the right! Custom keys like this are a specialty at [vizkey.com](#). I worked Benny a few days ago and listened to him alternating between bug and paddle without audible difficulty. I'm not as facile but I do try to give my Vibroplex some exercise now and then.

CWops members AA4FU, K2SX, K4BAI, K4QPL and N4AF operated ARRL DX CW from NY4A last month. Here they are right after the contest, with photo thanks to Howie N4AF:



Jim KA0IQT sends along a photo of a handsome membership plaque he ordered from Hamplaques.com.



I hope you enjoy SC #50.

73,

Rick N6XI

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CW Open Brings New Awards to All ITU Regions

Dean Faklis NW2K

Thanks to ICOM America, the CW Open awards are the finest in the business. Over the past three years, the expertly-crafted glass trophies and plaques have made their way into winning radio rooms across the globe. With worldwide participation way up in 2013, we decided to create a brand new award structure so that contesters in all ITU regions have a better shot at achieving one of these pieces of art.

The CW Open continues to have three primary classes, High Power, Low Power, and QRP and the new award structure stays true in recognizing top single ops in all three power categories. In addition, the contest continues its tradition of three separate 4-hour sessions over all six bands to help focus attention on each ITU Region. Given the appropriate session times, each ITU Region gets its share of sunshine!

The new awards are designed to bring regional competition to the forefront, while enhancing the worldwide nature of the three-session event. Here's the new award structure:

- Trophy for high score, each session, in each ITU Region (9 trophies)
- Trophy for high combined score in all three sessions in each ITU region (3 trophies)
- Plaque for high score in each of HP, LP and QRP, each session, each ITU region (27 plaques)

Here is the fine print:

- If the same entrant wins multiple awards, the awards may be combined.
- A minimum of 100 QSOs (after log checking) is required to win an award.
- Assistance is allowed.

We're working now with amateurs and organizations in all ITU Regions to continue to pump up participation for 2014. We're focused on strengthening competition in each region and building the team aspect of the event. It might be fun to start thinking about putting your team together as the summer is sure to fly by. And stay tuned to *Solid Copy* for news on *your* contest, the CW Open.

Mark your calendar for The 2014 CW Open, September 6, 2014. If you have a bit of time this spring or summer, please consider writing a short article for your local club's newsletter on the CW Open. If I can help, let me know. Let's continue to build this premier contest together.

Below are photos of some of this years awards.

Check out the new rules at <http://www.cwops.org/cwopen.html>. As always, please send me your



thoughts on the CW Open, [NW2K at arrrl.net](http://www.arrrl.net). And see you often in the CWTs!

How We Were

Hank Garretson W6SX

Wayne Brown N4FP, CWops 1090, shown in 1959 as W2TPV:



The box on the right looks like a Heathkit transmitter, right?

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My Ultimate Wireless Adventure

Rob Brownstein K6RB

[This is the final installment of a fascinating travelogue by our President K6RB. – Ed.]

Monday's noon to 4 PM shift

I think I had my most productive shift, yet, starting at noon. When I sat down, the previous operator had been running on 12 meters. The rate meter showed something like 50 QSOs per hour. So, I wasn't sure if the pileup had peaked. I sent 'new op' to let those waiting know that there was a shift change. Then I cranked up the code speed from 22 wpm to 30 wpm and sent my first CQ. Wham. I pulled a quick callsign out of the three that called me, sent the exchange, and within a minute, I was working a full-fledged pileup.

For the next 90 minutes, that 12 meter run was lots of fun. I was tuning between 1 and 2 KHz up from my transmit frequency and grabbing call signs as quickly as I could. I glanced at the rate meter at times and it was up to 170+ per hour. The average moved up from around the high 40s to over 80 by the time the 90 minutes was up. Suddenly, the band went from 100+ per hour to almost none. Signals were weaker and fewer, and I felt like I had run out the pile.

So, with two and a half hours to go, I switched to 10 meters. I gave a few CQs and quickly found a pileup forming. This was an interesting pileup because I was working stations in Asia, Europe and North America at the same time. I was not surprised to be working Asia and Europe because it was around noon in western Europe and a bit later to the east. It was after dark in Japan, though, so signals were weaker and fewer. The surprise for me was the few North American signals I heard because it was around 6 AM back east and 3 AM in California. But, there they were.

Well, that pileup lasted a full two and a half hours. Toward the end, it was late afternoon there and getting dark in eastern parts of Europe, but the callers persisted. The US and Canada began to increase in number from about one out of 10 to four out of 10 when I had run out my shift. At 4 PM in Xai Xai, it was 7 AM in California and 10 AM in New York, so there was a window of opportunity remaining for the operator who took over.

In anticipation of my 8 AM shift

At 8 AM in Xai Xai it is 6 AM in London and later to the east. The US is dark. It's 11 PM in San Francisco and 2 AM in New York. So the odds of working North America on 10 or 12 are nearly zero. I expect to start on 17 meters and work Europe and Asia at the start. After two hours or so, if the pile winds down, I'll probably go to 20 or 30 meters. I may also go to 15 meters. I'll see where the need is greatest.

Of course, things have not worked out as planned here. The propagation predictions said our best bands would be 15 and 17 meters. In fact, as of last night, our best bands were 12 and 30 meters for CW. No one had expected the great results on 12 meters. And during my last shift, that run on 10 meters probably added about 300+ to our CW total on that band. Ten meters had been expected to be hardly open.

That's one of the interesting things about radio. There's the physics of frequencies, propagation and times of day ... and there's the reality that can be quite different.

Reflecting on this shift

The 8 AM to noon shift should have been good on 15, 17 and 20 meters. It was a little early at the outset for 12 and 10 meters. So when I got to my station, I saw that the operator who preceded me had literally worked 20 meters to death during the prior four hours. There were no responses to my solicitations for the first 15 minutes. So, I thought I'd take a look at 30 meters.

On 30, there was a burst of noise that occurred about every seven seconds or so. It was high enough in intensity to obliterate any signals coming through. I tried to time my calls to periods of no noise, but the noise was erratic and unpredictable. So I went to 17 meters. It was less noisy but I had few takers during the next hour and a half.

I switched bands to 30 and even 15 but no joy. So, I ran out the first 90 minutes essentially on 17 meters with about 20 QSOs. Watching paint dry is far more exciting!

With 90 minutes remaining in my shift, I switched to 10 meters. This was a bit early for 10, but I figured I had nothing to lose. And after about five minutes of CQing, I ignited a manageable pileup with mostly Europeans and some occasional Japanese stations. It was about 6 PM in Japan at the time and darkness was setting in, making 10 meter signals weaker. During the last 90 minute run, my pileup was yielding a rate of over 100 per hour for the whole time. By now, many of the European call signs had become familiar to me having worked them on 12, 17 and 30 meters. A few minutes before noon, Tad came in to relieve me, and I handed off the pileup to him.

It's now about 12:30 PM and I'll be going for lunch soon. My next shift is 8 PM to midnight, tonight. Although I have been assigned the last shift of the DXpedition, on Wednesday morning from 8 AM to noon, it is likely that we will not bother and instead use the time to get everything disassembled and packed in anticipation of our early departure on Thursday morning at 4:30 AM. So my next shift is likely to be my last one.

From 8 PM to midnight should be an okay time to work Europe on 30 and 40 meters. We have had marginal success with 80 and 160 because of very high ambient noise masking any responding stations. So my last shift could be a prolific one ... or it could be four hours of calling and calling with either high noise masking responders, or no responders. I'll

Winding down

I think we all feel a strong sense of nearing the finish line. I probably need to reflect on the whole experience because right now it is a collection of episodes. I'm thinking about getting my stuff packed and wondering if the trip back to Johannesburg will be smooth or not. We will certainly be more careful about where we stop and what we do when we stop.

The road trip from Xai Xai to Johannesburg is a long one. We arrived on a weekend but will be driving back on a weekday. Will we hit traffic in Maputo?

Once we get back late Thursday, we will probably be exhausted and just want to hit the sack. On Friday we will need to converge at Tjerk's house and make sure the packages going back to JFK are all in order.

Friday night we will have a last dinner before we all go our separate ways. Several of us are on the same Johannesburg to Atlanta flight, and many will be home once they get there. Charlie is heading south to Panama City Florida, and I will be getting a non-stop from Atlanta to SFO.

I am slated to arrive around 10:30 AM on Sunday, and plan to go to work on Monday. It should be interesting to see if my body and mind can handle it.

I finished my last shift at 1 AM. It was neither frustrating nor exhilarating. I started on a run that Rusty had established on 17 meters, and after an hour and a current rate of 150+, Don asked me to go to a different band so that an operator in the SSB building could go to phone on 17 meters. That's when you find yourself conflicted. Personally, you are having a great run and want to continue ... but you know that the DXpedition is expected to provide opportunities on many bands using all three modes. So I bit my tongue and moved to 30 meters. Here again I established a decent pileup and was enjoying a 100+ rate when Ken came in to try to work Japanese stations on 80 meters at their sunrise time. Again, I gave up my position at the station.

When Ken came by my room about an hour later, he said he had worked no one on 80 meters. A part of me wanted to say "Sure, but it stopped a run on 30 meters that was making 100+ per hour," but I didn't say a word. I came back to my position and the operator in the other building was now working RTTY on 30 meters. So, I went to 40 meters where the going was slow at first and then picked up steam. When I finished my last shift, I had worked a bunch of European, Asians, South Americans and even some Australian stations on 40 meters.

Last full day

I awoke about 5:30 AM to a beautiful morning. The sun was shining, breezes were blowing, and for the first time in the last three mornings we were going to have breakfast outside. The stations are now quiet. Our plan is to converge on the beach at 8 AM and begin lowering and disassembling the Battle Creek and Titanex verticals. Once those are done, we will dismantle the stations and the remaining verticals and hex beam. Probably by noon everything will be packed or ready to be packed and placed on the two trailers. When we leave, there will be nary a trace of our having been there. The beach will no longer have those two tall verticals, and the compound will no longer have the two verticals and hex beam. The rooms will be free of radios, power supplies, headsets and keyer paddles. And only our bedrooms will still be occupied.

Tomorrow at 4 AM, we will all be finishing up our packing and ready to depart at 4:30 AM.

Reflecting on the experience

We arrived last weekend, and will be leaving after 9 nights and 8 days of operation. I find that I have lost all track of time. I have to think about it to remember it's Wednesday, October 23. It feels like I've been here for a year ... and only for a blink of an eye.

I think back about our arrival in that stiff windy night. I remember unpacking and setting up the radios, then joining the outside team to help with the antennas. I vividly remember making the first two-way contact of the DXpedition.

By the time we had arrived in Xai Xai, the team members had had a chance to get to know one another, somewhat, at the two guesthouses in Pretoria. However, during our time in Xai Xai we really got to know one another. My ears have been filled with twangy Georgia accents and that distinctive sound of South African English. Only Kevin speaks Californian, and my New York accent is unique.

We are 15 men from varying backgrounds who have one thing in common – our love of ham radio. And, that's enough. It is the pretext for our friendly and cooperative attitude towards one another for this whole time both before and during our time in Xai Xai. We all did what was expected of us in terms of cooperation and team spirit, and made do with the propagation hands we were dealt.

As I said at the outset, Don and Tom both knew that the one thing they could count on was unpredictability. And, we certainly had our share. I know when the final tallies are recorded we will have had a respectable number of contacts and thousands of hams worldwide will have added Mozambique to their lists of countries worked.

The organizers had said they would focus on the lower bands (160 and 80), and we did. But the propagation gods were not kind. Noise levels were horrendous and I'm sure the results will be less than amazing on those bands. But the results on bands like 10 and 12, where we had expected marginal propagation, will be outstanding.

Every DXpedition, in the final analysis, is a combination of personal and team goals. Each operator has his own idea of what floats his boat, and often each has to put that aside to assure the team's objectives are met. For me, there's nothing better than a sustained run where I am copying callsigns at a fast clip, typing them into the log on the fly and keeping a rapid pace of contacts. But, as I've written, sometimes I had to be on bands that were non-productive, and sometimes I had to leave productive bands so that other modes could be used on those same bands.

I feel a sense of pride in my own performance, and a sense of pride in the team's performance. I wasn't sure if I would ever do another DXpedition even before I left to join this one. Now, having done the deed, and experiencing the elation and depression that are part of every DXpedition, I believe I would do it again. A DXpedition for all the obvious qualities is also a triumph of the human spirit, facing many predictable as well as unpredictable challenges, and realizing that without a cohesive group of team members, the goals would simply be elusive.

This ends my blog. What remains is our trip back to Pretoria and my flights back to San Francisco. I'm sure the human aspect of this adventure will continue ... but the DXpedition part is now behind me (I think). Thanks for taking the time to read my musings.



Xai Xai Crew L to R: Tjerk ZS6P, Chris ZS6RI, Don N1DG, Kevin K6TD, Tom N4XP, Tad WF4W, Rusty W6OAT, Rob K6RB, Charlie NF4A, Wey K8EAB, Ray N9JA, Ken JN1THL, Neil VA7DX and Bill N4NX.

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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 jveisskohk@gmail.com.

Corrections from the February News & Notes column: Glenn's correct call is **VE3GNA**, not VE3GNS.

Rob K6RB: My jazz ensemble - Rio Frio - performed at Byington Winery in Los Gatos, California on January 26 and we have been asked to do a return engagement in April or May. If

you'd like to see and hear us, go to www.youtube.com and search on "Rio Frio plays Bossa." Music is my other passion.

Pete W1RM: At the end of December, I reached a goal that I never thought I could achieve. I made it into the DX Honor Roll for Phone (yeah, phone). That gives me mixed, CW (of course) and phone. Thanks to Dale, BA4TB, I worked my last zone (24) on 80 to achieve 5BWAZ. All in all, 2013 was a very good year!

Tom N4HAI reports that he recently bought a Flex 1500 so that he could participate in CWT while on business travel. The 40 story hotels in downtown Atlanta eliminate the need to string dipoles in trees, but finding a hotel that has windows that open is the real challenge. During the recent ARRL contest, N4HAI had QSOs with New Zealand - QRP, using only 5B vertical. The side-tone delay made it tough to send over 20 WPM. Using the Hamgadgets keyer helped, but Tom plans on adding a louder oscillator to it. Tom wants to know whether anyone else has any operating tips using CW on an SDR?

Tom W4BQF: My ham radio operations have recently and temporarily taken a back seat to a brand new 'hobby' - the acquisition of a 'Quadcopter', unfortunately, referred to by some as a Drone! The Quadcopter is capable of 20-25 minute flights with max heights of 400' and max range of about a half mile. It carries a decent quality camera which can take photos or videos, both of which are stored on an on-board SD card. The electronics on the Quadcopter include GPS, compass, altimeter (if you stop using the radio controller, the Quadcopter will hover by itself in the spot where you stopped controlling the craft). It also has 'Return-To-Home' capability where if you lose control signal or your battery drains down too low, it will automatically return to the exact spot from which it took off. Once you have enough practice flying (it practically flies itself!), you can use it to check out your Tower/Yagi's and other wire antennas. It is tremendous fun but really not as much fun as CW!!

Dave G0DJA: I've managed to get on the air recently and work a few more members in the CWT activities, but often I only have a few minutes to spare during the daytime session, due to work, and again in the evening, due to family commitments. I tend to be on low power, as I'm also in the G-QRP Club looking out for other QRP operators. On HF I usually use 3 Watts from a KX3 but hope to change the antenna from the current 40M OCFD to a larger doublet arrangement. On UHF (23cm) I use 10 Watts from a TS-2000X to a 38 element Yagi antenna. Contrary to what people on HF sometimes think, you can work quite long distances on UHF using CW even with relatively low power.

Alex PA1FOX: I just completed my first CWA as a Level I advisor. I've met a new friend, and my student has learned a new skill. Nice developments. Currently I am not on the air much due to my ATU band switch burning out while working on 15m. I plan to get a new one in March but, in the meantime I switch bands by using crocodile clamps. March 1st marks a special day for me, celebrating 25 years jubilee at work. I started working in a factory back in 1988. It was a long time ago. I have since become an IT professional and enjoy my free time and CWops very much.

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The North American CW Weekend

May 2-4, 2014

Washington, DC

Attention CW Operators! The North American CW Weekend to be held May 2-4, 2014, at the Fairview Park Marriott Hotel, 3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church, Virginia. All amateur radio operators and others with an interest in Morse code operation are invited. We have had good participation from FOC, CWOPS, FISTS, PVRC, CVCC, NCDXA, and several other Morse code-oriented and contest groups in the past.

Reservations at the Marriott can be made by calling the hotel directly [703-849-9400.] *We have obtained a special group rate of \$ 90.00 per night. Please specify you are with the "North American CW Weekend Group" when making your arrangements.* Guests can call [1-800-228-9290](tel:1-800-228-9290) and ask for the "North American room block" to make a reservation. For those who would like to make a reservation online through the [hotel's web site](#), the Group Code is NRTNRTA. *Directions to the Marriott are available on the web site. The hotel is readily accessible from the Capital Beltway, and there is easy access to area airports and public transportation.*

There is a modest registration of \$25.00 per person which is used to defray the costs of the hospitality suite. Registration can be paid by check to Don Lynch W4ZYT, 1517 West Little Neck Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23452-4717. Don's e-mail is w4zyt.don@gmail.com.

Here are the "Nuts and Bolts" of the Weekend:

- **There will be a hospitality suite in the hotel from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning. The room number, which will be assigned a few days before the weekend, will be available from the front desk. Ask for CW, or North American CW. This is where folks will congregate when not at another event. Please be sure you have paid W4ZYT \$25 per person to cover the hospitality suite, etc.**
- **Informal pizza dinner Friday at 6 p.m. at a nearby all-you-can-eat pizza emporium. It's a popular event and a good way to chat with folks! A map will be provided. Meet in the hotel lobby at 5:30 p.m. sharp.**
- **Saturday morning beginning at 9:00 a.m. there is brunch at N3JT's QTH, just minutes from the hotel. See the map to be provided.**
- **The informal dinner Saturday evening at Da Domenico's at Tyson's Corner begins at 7 p.m. There is a bar at the restaurant so some go there earlier, like at 6 p.m. Please be seated in the area designated for us at 7 p.m. There are no presentations or speeches! Everyone gets his own check for dinner. Ladies may choose to sit together.**
- **Sunday morning at 9 a.m. gather in the hotel restaurant for breakfast.**
- **For those who may want to visit W3LPL's super station, please contact Frank and make arrangements for Friday, Saturday or Sunday. 410.489.9826.**

This has been a splendid event in the past and is a great opportunity to connect with other CW folks face-to-face. We hope you can join us!

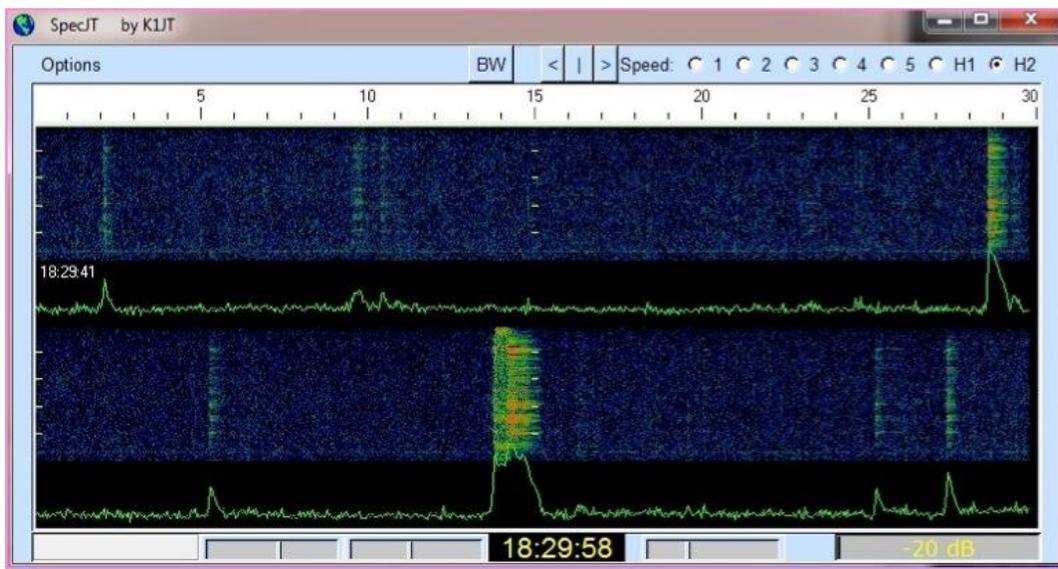
The Only *Other* Mode I Ever Liked

By Wes Spence, AC5K

I spent the first 40 or so years I was licensed as a strictly CW operator. I guess it was the combination of several things that helped me to discover the only *other* mode to ever hold my interest. Almost as soon as I became active on 6 meter CW a few years ago, I started hearing short pieces of CW characters randomly coming through the noise. I knew that they were probably from meteor scatter. Then, the last solar minimum was so severe, I wanted to find some way to still make contacts (independently of solar conditions). Lastly, a CW QSO with KB7Q where he told me about meteor scatter communication and how easy it was to set up my Elecraft K3 for that mode. All of that caused me to try meteor scatter communications using FSK441 for the first time.

In short, FSK441 is a fairly fast data mode, and part of the free WSJT software package. The way it works is that each minute is split in half. The station that is the most westerly transmits continuously on the first half-minute sequence and listens on the second half. There is a simple standard QSO protocol that is followed to assure valid contacts. The software is set up to follow the protocol.

I started off just downloading the free software and hooking up the speaker of my radio to the proper jack on the computer. Listening on 50.260 MHz (the MS calling frequency), I quickly started decoding “pings” from other stations bouncing their signals off the ionized trail of meteors. Distances of 600 to 800 miles are easy, but it is not at all uncommon to make distances of over 1000 miles on this mode. Even meteor *backscatter* is fairly easy! Here is a screen shot of a nice ping being displayed on the WSJT software:



Each half of the screen represents a 30 second period. The stronger pings are audible through the speakers of your radio, and some are amazingly strong. I *literally* thought my station had been hit

by lighting once when receiving a super strong ping when thunderstorms were in the distance! I finally looked at the computer screen and saw that I had decoded a very strong ping. WSJT can decode most of weaker pings too. Some longer distance QSOs can take a while to complete, but usually the process goes fairly quickly. You do not need a large station to be successful on this mode. 100 Watts and a small beam will get you 80% of what you could work with a larger station. My best with 100 Watts and a small Yagi was 1151 miles.

If you think this might be a second mode candidate for you too, here are some places to go for more information:

<http://www.meteorscatter.org/> The official website of the WSJT Group

<http://www.pingjockey.net/cgi-bin/pingtalk/> The site where QSO schedules are arranged and CQ frequencies are announced.

After so long as a CW-only operator, I am really not sure why meteor scatter has been so fascinating for me. I still get a thrill from every ping I hear. Perhaps it is my age group, where we grew up during the peak of the US space program and astronauts were our rock stars. You might find this is an interesting secondary mode for you too.

73,

Wes AC5K

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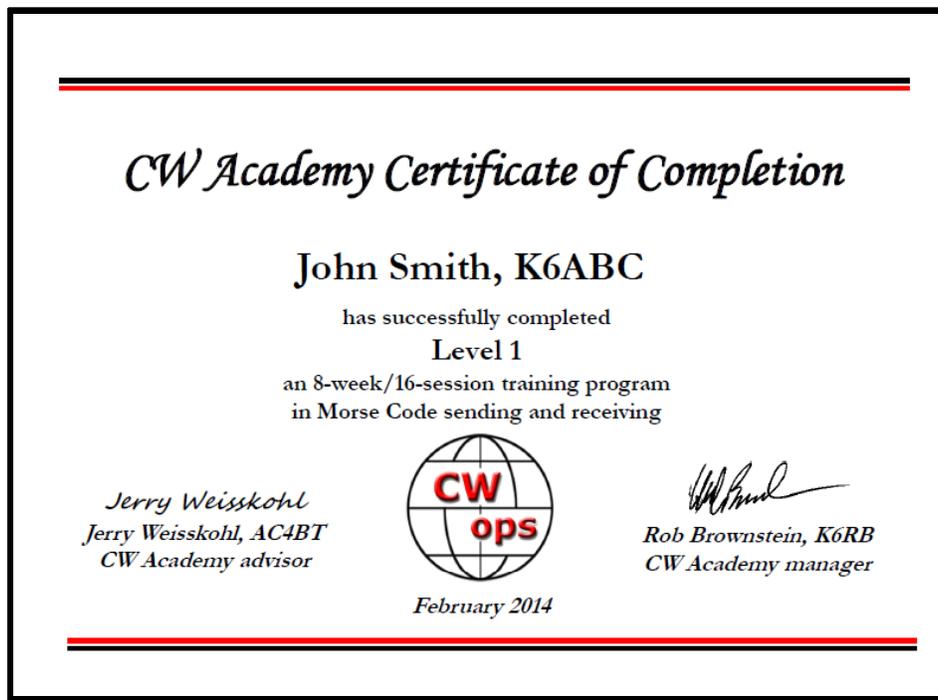


CW Academy

Rob K6RB and Will WJ9B

Our January/February semester is now ending, and we've trained the largest group of students we've ever had in a single semester. Something new, for now and going forward, is the Certificate of Completion we are now conferring on students who have completed the course and met the criteria.

Here is what these certificates look like...



During March we will be preparing for the April-May semester. We have a full list of signups for April-May and a nearly full list for Sep-Oct 2014. We are also instituting a 'utility advisor' program whereby some advisors work with students on a less structured schedule because of a big time zone skew or a lack of closer-in resources. One of our first such utility advisors is Vidi ZS1EL. We also have "J" up in the North West Territories (VY1JA) preparing to jump in and help out.

Any of you who would like to volunteer as advisors or utility advisors, please go to the [CW Academy area of the website](#) and fill out a signup form. In the comments section, indicate your preference. We can use a lot of such advisors in Europe, too.

73,

Rob and Will

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CWT Mini-Tests

by Hank Garretson W6SX

Very Special CWops Tests for March

Yee Haw! We are going to have **FOUR** CWops Tests in March. In addition to our regular tests on 12 and 26 March, we will have Special CWTs on 5 and 19 March, at the normal CWT times: 1300Z and 1900Z

Wednesday and 0300Z Thursday. The Special 5- and 19-March CWTs will celebrate the completion of CW Academy's January/February semester. Sixty eager hams will graduate. We are inviting and encouraging them to participate in the Special CWTs. Our goal is to hook them by providing a welcoming, friendly opportunity to use their new CW skills.

Guidelines for Special CWA CWTs:

1. Everyone please limit speed to 20 WPM maximum. Even when you are working someone you normally work at 30 WPM, please send no faster than 20 WPM. When you answer someone CQing at less than 20 WPM, answer him at his speed. When someone answers your 20 WPM CQ at a slower speed, match his speed.
2. Thank stations by name.
3. If appropriate, help stations by explaining CWT exchange.
4. Encourage band changes. Consider ending a contact by saying something like CU ON 15 NEXT.
5. If someone wants to rag chew, rag chew for a bit.
6. Send lots of FBs and other encouragement.
7. Us working us – we do that all the time. Please make a special effort to work the new guys.
8. Send a QSL card to each new station worked.
9. March Special CWTs will count toward CWT Participation Award points.

The graduates are our new blood. They are the hams who will carry on the CW tradition. Let's make a special effort to get on and make the graduates feel welcome. Let's infect them with the CW bug.

Of course, all, not just CWA grads, are welcome to join our Special CWA CWTs. Spread the word to your local club members. Tell them about a special opportunity to get on and do CW at their speed.

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

Yee Haw!

CW Exuberantly,

Hank W6SX

CWT Manager

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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.

ACA/CMA

<u>Call</u>	<u>ACA</u>	<u>CMA</u>
F6HKA*	368	2534
W1RM*	273	2962
N5RR	214	2873
VE3KI	205	2417
KZ5D*	197	3020

W1UU*	162	1351
K1ESE*	158	1256
N1EN*	152	355
K6RB	134	2356
FG8NY*	118	1412
W0VX	112	1443
AD1C	109	1098
PA7RA*	106	1014
W9ILY	95	1704
K6DGW	74	1149
NN6T*	66	1167
OH2BN	45	530
EA8OM/DJ1OJ/EF8O*	41	1896
G0DJA*	8	15
W4VQ*	0	1402

DXCC

<u>Call</u>	<u>Total</u>
W1RM	123
OH2BN	112
W4VQ	105
F6HKA	92
EA8OM	85
N5RR	83
EA1WX	80
KZ5D	77
K1ESE	75
VK3KI	74
KR3E	73
W9ILY	69
AD1C	65
NN6T	64
W1UU	61
FG8NY	59
W6KY	52
4Z1UF	50
K6RB	48
K6DGW	28
G0DJA	9

WAS

<u>Call</u>	<u>Total</u>
N5RR	50
F6HKA	49
W1RM	49
AD1C	48
K6DGW	48
K6RB	48
KZ5D	48
NN6T	48
VE3KI	48
W6KY	48
W9ILY	48
EA8OM	47
FG8NY	47
K1ESE	47
KR3E	47
EA1WX	46
W1UU	45
OH2BN	42
4Z1UF	36
G0DJA	5

WAE

<u>Call</u>	<u>Total</u>
W1RM	41
OH2BN	40
EA8OM	36
N5RR	36
F6HKA	35
KR3E	34
KZ5D	34
FG8NY	31
EA1WX	30
K1ESE	30
W9ILY	30
VE3KI	29
W1UU	28

NN6T	25
AD1C	24
4Z1UF	21
K6RB	21
W6KY	16
K6DGW	8
G0DJA	6

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Secretary's Report

by Jim Talens N3JT and Colin Jenkins KU5B

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

1255	WA4STO	Byron
1256	K7VM*	Craig
1257	N1DC	Rick
1258	CO8CY	Oriol
1259	KA7T	Don
1260	K4JAZ*	Paul
1261	NU7Y	Quinton

* = Life Member

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Current Nominees

As of February 28:

Need Sponsors: NS0R

Invitations Extended: W0JX, W2GN

For more details about nominees and status, check the "members only" 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 program for members who enjoy casual CW QSOs. Any time you have a QSO that goes over 20 minutes, jot down the call sign of the other station, and before the fifth of the next month, go to the [CWOps website QTX page](#) in the Members Only section and put in your total.

This year there is a lot of encouragement for rag chews of 20 minutes or longer. We have two ways to recognize member's efforts.

QTX PLaque

First is the annual competition run each year to see who had the most QTX points. Two years ago it was K1ESE and I retired from the competition after that. Last year it was Steve N6TT and he retired from the competition after that. So, again this year, the field is wide open. With just one month's tally under our belt, here are the standings for the QTX Plaque -

Call	January
KI4XH	73
N5IR	49
WB6BEE	48
K5KV	36
N1ZX	32
K4AHO	32
NN6T	31
K5LY	23
WA3NZR	20
WA8IWK	16
KE6OIO	14
K6RB	11
N4SR	10
K0DTJ	9
W5JQ	7
JE1TRV	6
K8QI	5
HB9CVQ	5
KC9EE	4
K6HTN	1

Everyone had a 'personal best' for the year so far.

QTX Achievement Medals

This year we are awarding medals for the following achievement levels –

Gold Medal - 400 QTX points

Silver Medal - 300 QTX points
Bronze Medal - 200 QTX points

Just like the Olympics ... well, sort of.

Unlike the QTX Plaque, you don't have to send in totals monthly. Just let me know when you have reached an achievement level and I will report it here. You will receive the medal for the highest level achieved in 2014. Yeah, just one medal and just for QSOs in 2014. In any event, it will be fun to see if you can accumulate the contacts needed to reach each level.

Like competition? Report your QTX totals monthly. Like working toward an achievement? Report when you have hit 200 or 300 or even 400 QTX QSOs. Or, do both. I hope you will.

Thanks to all for your participation.

73,

John K1ESE, CWops #792

QTX Manager

QTX – All About Conversational CW

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