

**The Central Texas Amateur Radio Club meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Bell County Communications Center, 798 West Avenue O, in Belton**

### The Prez Says...

*Priscilla Beauregard, KE5UES*



Well this is the beginning of a new year. I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and have a safe New Year's. As your new club president I want to wish all of you the very best for this next year. The last two years have been a great learning experience for me as the club secretary and I want to thank Kenneth Watkins for being there to help me. He will continue to be a great asset to the club as are the other officers, board members, and each club member. Without each one of you we would not have a radio club.

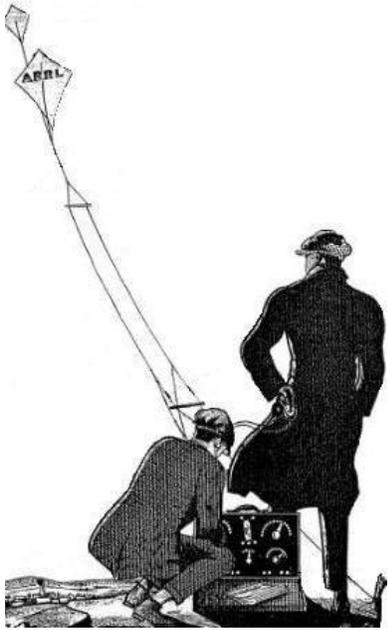
At this time each year we make New Year's Resolutions. Some that you may want to consider are attending club meetings on the first Tuesday of each month, joining ARRL (if you have not done that), checking into the weekly radio net on each Thursday at 8:00 PM, and planning to attend Skywarn training.

There will be basic weather spotter training this month in the following counties: Coryell, Falls, Hamilton, Limestone and Milam.

One item we need to remember is that January is the time that all members need to pay yearly dues. The dues are \$20.00 for the year.

January 19<sup>th</sup> is a state holiday in observance of "Confederate Heroes Day". Some state offices may be closed or at reduced staffing. January 25<sup>th</sup> is Texas Flay Day. The Lone Star Flag was introduced as a bill in the Texas Congress on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1839 and approved by Texas President Mirabeau B. Lamar on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1839.

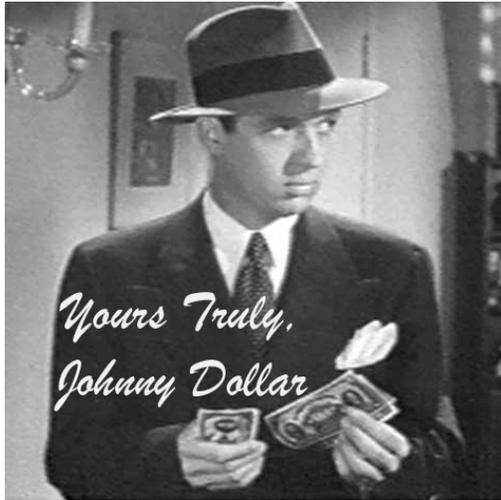
January 17<sup>th</sup> is Benjamin Franklin's birthday, so go fly a kite in his honor.



- 73 de Priscilla, KE5UES

# Strays

*"I'm an insurance investigator, my name is Johnny Dollar and I can pad an expense account with the best of them."*



*Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* was a radio drama of "the transcribed adventures of the man with the action-packed expense account — America's fabulous freelance insurance investigator." The name of the show derives from the fact that he closed each show by totaling his expense account, and signing it "End of report... Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar". Most of the expense account related to transportation, lodging, and meals, but no incidental expense was too small for Johnny to itemize, as in "Item nine, 10 cents. Aspirin. I needed them." The monetary amounts weren't always literal: the smallest line item Johnny ever recorded was "two cents: what I felt like" after a professional setback.

The show aired on CBS Radio from January 14, 1949 to September 30, 1962. There were 811 episodes in the 12-year run and more than 720 still exist today.

You can tune-in again to these 720 episodes by visiting:  
[http://www.archive.org/details/OTRR\\_YoursTrulyJohnnyDollar\\_Singles](http://www.archive.org/details/OTRR_YoursTrulyJohnnyDollar_Singles)



The Central Texas Amateur Radio Net meets every Thursday at 8:00 PM on the W5BEC repeater, on 147.140(+) PL 123.0  
Join Us!

## January NCS & Back-Up NCS Schedule

January 5 <sup>th</sup> : Net Control: KE5ISN Back-Up: W5VEX	January 12 <sup>th</sup> : W5VEX K6WXA
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January 19 <sup>th</sup> : Net Control: K6WXA Back-Up: AD5SK	January 26 <sup>th</sup> : AD5SK KE5ISN
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## Straight Key Night

Straight Key Night is held on January 1st from 0001-2359 UTC on all authorized amateur frequencies.

For more information on this event, visit: <http://www.arrl.org/straight-key-night> (...more information follows in this issue of the newsletter...) – Ed.



## Confederate Heroes Day



January  
19th



## North American QSO Party

Contest period is from 1800Z, Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> to 0600Z, Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 Meters.

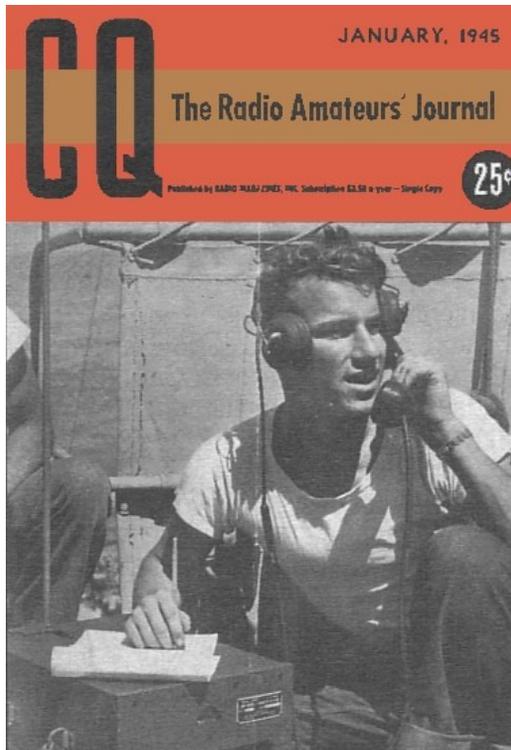
Complete rules and further info can be found at:

<http://www.ncjweb.com/naqprules.php>

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### First Issue of CQ Magazine

The first issue of *CQ* magazine was published in January, 1945. The editors set forth a magazine for the radio amateur, with a particular invitation to the newcomer.



However, not confined to the ABC's of ham radio, *CQ* magazine visualized that it would stick with the ham long after the parts of his first rig were dust-laden in the junk-box, and as a monthly refresher course for the old timer.

## Strays

A fellow who wrote the ARRL, says that because he is past the half-century mark his days are probably numbered. However, the only thing that bothers him about the future is that after he is gone from this vale of tears, his name and call will be listed under "Silent Keys." And this bothers him because he is strictly a phone man.

— *QST*, February 1959

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### Technique of Hand Sending

In 1944 the U.S. Navy developed a 9-minute training film on the technique of hand sending Morse Code.



Included in the film are points on the tension spring, adjusting the contacts and springs, elements of Morse Code, timing and parts of the body that function when transmitting the code.

You can view this film by going to: <http://www.archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.23735>

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### If You Understand the Code...

"I would imagine if you could understand Morse Code, a tap dancer would drive you crazy."

— *Mitch Hedberg*

## Special Event Stations

### HKØNA DXpedition to Malpelo



...an island located approximately 235 miles west of Columbia's Pacific coast, is scheduled for January 22 - February 6. They will be using SSB, CW and Digital modes on 160 through 6 meters.

QSL via N200 with S.A.S.E. For more info, visit: [www.hk0na.com](http://www.hk0na.com)

F6BLP will be active from Senegal as **6W7SK** between January 20th and February 3rd. His operation will be mainly CW. QSL to his home call.

PA8A will be active as **PJ4B** from the island of Bonaire, between January 8th and the 22<sup>nd</sup>. QSL direct to PA8A.

VE2XB will be active as **J79XB** from Dominica starting January 5th for several weeks. His operation will be on 160 through 10 meters and possibly 6 meters. QSL to his home call.

Operators from the U.S. and Canada will be active from Kiritimati Island between January 17th and February 2nd. The group will operate as **T32XX**. QSL via KB8TXZ.

AHØAJ will be active as **KG4AJ** from Guantanamo Bay for the next two years. QSL via his home callsign.

CX3AN and CX4CR will be active as **8Q7HU** from Maafushi Island in the Maldives between January 25th and February 5th. QSL as directed.

**KHØUY** and **KHØK** will be active from Saipan Island between January 7th to the 10th. QSL via home callsigns of JO3FRH and JE4SMQ.

## Postage Rate Increase

The US Postal Service has announced that as of January 22, 2012, the cost to mail first class letters, postcards and packages within the US will go up. The cost to mail a first class letter will be 45 cents, an increase of 1 cent. The cost of mailing a postcard will be 32 cents, an increase of 3 cents.

More information on all the postage rate increases can be found at:

[http://about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2011/pr11\\_factsht\\_pricechg\\_1018.pdf](http://about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2011/pr11_factsht_pricechg_1018.pdf)



**FROM THE  
EDITOR'S DESK**



What I "*normally*" like to do is send out the newsletter at least a couple of days prior to what would be the next club meeting. In the case of what will be the **February** issue of the *Wavelength*, that means that I would normally send it out between the 29th and the 31st of January.

However, we have an important meteorological event occurring on February 2nd and it just wouldn't be right to report it a month late or not at all. Therefore, I won't be sending out the February issue of our newsletter until say, around noon-ish on February 2nd.



## Skywarn Training



**Coryell County** (*Basic Spotter Training Only*) Monday, Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-9:00 PM, at the Gatesville Fire Dept., 109 South 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Gatesville.

**Falls County** (*Basic Spotter Training Only*) Tuesday, Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-9:00 PM, Golinda Volunteer Fire Dept., located at 104 E. Center St., in Lorena.

**Hamilton County** (*Basic Spotter Training Only*) Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-9:00 PM at the Hamilton Fire Dept., 115 W. Henry St., in Hamilton.

**Limestone County** (*Basic Spotter Training Only*) Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-9:00 PM at the Limestone County Courthouse, 200 W. State St., in Groesbeck.

**Milam County** (*Basic Spotter Training Only*) Monday, Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00-9:00 PM, at the Cameron Volunteer Fire Dept., 1505 N. Travis St., in Cameron.



### AO-51 Goes QRT

The AO-51 ham radio satellite has gone QRT. AMSAT-North America Vice President of Operations, Drew Glasbrenner - KO4MA, says that the bird has ceased transmission and is not responding to any commands from the ground.

Glasbrenner's announcement came on Tuesday November 29th. In making public word of the demise of AO-51, KO4MA, noted that the last telemetry data received had indicated that the third of six batteries that power AO-51 was approaching a short circuit condition.

## Nigerian Scammer Alert

Mark Stennett, NA6M

There is a Nigerian clown prowling amateur radio related web sites with intentions of ripping you off. The scammer is currently claiming to be M0CLN or M0MTD and is hitting up folks who post WANTED ads for equipment, claiming to have what they want in good condition etc. The scammer wants to be paid via Western Union and once you do that you will never hear from him again. Kiss your hard earned money goodbye.

Do your homework folks and buy local. Don't ever send money via Western Union or accept checks for more than your asking price with a request to wire back the difference.

### ARRL Warns of Email Scams

Many ARRL members with "arrrl.net" e-mail accounts have recently received bogus e-mails in a "phishing" attack. These are scams designed to scare people into e-mailing back personal information such as user names and passwords to the scammer at an unknown address. This particular attack was more sophisticated than usual.

If you receive an e-mail asking for personal information and it looks like it originated from ARRL, please do not respond to it. The best thing you can do when receiving bogus e-mails is to simply add it to the spam list in your computer's e-mail program and delete it.

There is never a time when the ARRL would ask via e-mail for user names and passwords of **arrrl.net** users.

Texans for the most part, love  
God, beer and Texas, but not  
necessarily in that order.

- Joy Pariente

## ARRL Straight Key Night: A Return to Amateur Radio's Roots

What are you doing New Year's? Join the celebration by pounding the brass! Journey back to the years gone by, when an aspiring young amateur was being coaxed by his Elmer to "go ahead, put your hand on the key and try sending a few letters."

For more than 40 years, ARRL Straight Key Night has long been the favorite event of many amateurs. Always on New Year's Eve and Day, Straight Key Night gives hams a chance to return to the time when Amateur Radio was just a bit simpler -- a time when a straight key or an old bug, along with a basic transceiver, was all that was needed to communicate around the world. In fact, that's still all that is needed. Keep the CW paddle or computer keyboard on the shelf this night and send CW the way it's been sent since the beginning.

"Morse code has been around longer than radio itself," said ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. "If you have a rusty fist, break out that key and make some QSOs with old friends and new. If your fist still works as well as ever, you might earn a 'Best Fist' vote or two! Many amateurs also bring out their older rigs for this night. Why don't you?"

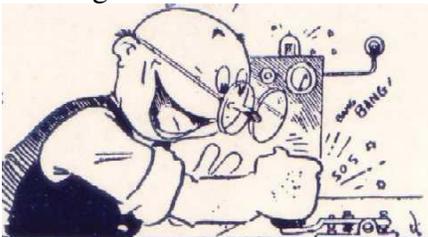
Straight Key Night is not a contest: no score is kept, no prizes are awarded, no fast exchanges of information are required. It's a chance to get on the air and make some leisurely QSOs. This event is about the enjoyment of radio at its most basic and provides an excellent opportunity for all amateurs to return to our roots, proving that simpler is sometimes better.

ARRL Straight Key Night is held on January 1st from 0001-2359 UTC.



Email [straightkey@arrl.org](mailto:straightkey@arrl.org) a list of stations worked -- along with votes for Most Interesting QSO and Best Fist -- by January 31, 2012. You can also submit your list by January 31st via postal mail to: ARRL Straight Key Night, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111

The number of entries has grown almost every year, even with the elimination of CW as a licensing requirement in the US. Participants have also used this popular annual event for more than just demonstrating their prowess pounding a brass key. Numerous participants use *SKN* to test out and "show off" their vintage equipment. Some will plug in their old CW "bugs" and join in. The common bond for all of them is to have fun in a more relaxed setting. You will even find CW enthusiasts who get on to enjoy the rag chewing.



When participating in *SKN* instead of sending RST before sending the signal report send the letters *SKN*, to indicate your participation, and to clue in passers-by who may be listening that *SKN* is going strong. More info on this event can be found at: <http://www.arrl.org/straight-key-night>



## Preliminary Estimates Show Hundreds of Millions of Trees Killed by 2011 Drought

**COLLEGE STATION, Texas** — As many as 500 million trees scattered across the Lone Star State have died this year as a result of the unrelenting drought, according to preliminary estimates from Texas Forest Service.

The numbers were derived by Texas Forest Service foresters, who canvassed local forestry professionals, gathering information from them on the drought and its effect on trees in their respective communities.

Each forestry expert estimated the percentage of trees in their region that have died as a result of the 2011 drought. That percentage was applied to the estimated number of trees in the region, a figure determined by the agency's Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) program.

Using this approach, an estimated 100 million to 500 million trees with a diameter of 5 inches or larger were estimated to have succumbed to the drought. That range is equivalent to 2 to 10 percent of the state's 4.9 billion trees.

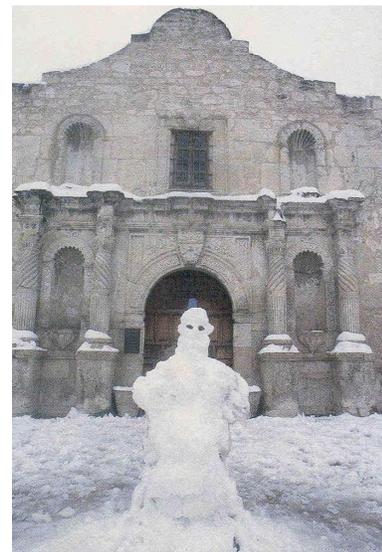
"In 2011, Texas experienced an exceptional drought, prolonged high winds and record-setting temperatures. Together, those conditions took a severe toll on trees across the state," said Burl Carraway, Sustainable Forestry department head. "Large numbers of trees in both urban communities and rural forests have died or are struggling to survive. The impacts are numerous and widespread."

The preliminary estimates indicate three multi-county areas appear to be the hardest hit. The area including Sutton, Crockett, western Kimble and eastern Pecos counties saw extensive mortality among Ashe junipers. The area including Harris, Montgomery, Grimes, Madison and Leon counties saw extensive mortality among loblolly pines. Western Bastrop and eastern Caldwell counties, as well as surrounding areas, saw extensive mortality among cedars and post oaks. Additionally, localized pockets of heavy mortality were reported for many other areas.

Texas Forest Service foresters plan to use aerial imagery to conduct a more in-depth analysis in the spring, which is when trees that may have gone into early dormancy — an act of self-preservation could begin to make a comeback.

A more scientific, long-term study will be completed as the agency collects data through its FIA program. Considered a census for trees, the federally-funded program allows the agency to keep a close watch on trees and how they're growing and changing across the state.

As part of the program, foresters are tasked with surveying certain, designated plots of land each year. Because the state is so big, it takes a decade to complete a full inventory cycle. Quantifying the impacts of a statewide drought on tree survival is no small task, as Texas is home to 63 million acres of forestland, much of which is in remote areas.



*The Alamo January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1985*

## This Business of Code

John Huntoon, WILVQ

Too little attention is paid by the average amateur to acquiring skill in this basic form of radio communication. We amateurs spend money on equipment, time in building it, care in designing antenna systems - all excellent policies to be sure - but why stop there? Too few of us realize that in communication, the basic function for which we have worked to gain our licenses, we are known to the world by the way we handle our signals . . . what listeners hear as well as what they see on the S-meter.



It is true that technical considerations enter into the production of a good note and clean keying, but I prefer to think that the fist itself, a direct product of the operator himself, is the main criterion by which the individual is judged. Good operating goes along with a good fist. It is important, then, that we amateurs give attention to how we send as well as to what equipment we use to send it. It is well to point out here one fundamental thing which is true of every art and

particularly so of code operating: real progress requires constant and applied practice. There are no shortcuts; we have to be willing to do it the hard way.

As far as radio communication is concerned, the code should be thought of in terms of sound - dits and dahs, rather than as they are pictured on paper as dots and dashes. One wishing to improve his ability to handle code, be he just beginning or well along in his study, will have made much progress the day he begins to think of code solely in terms of sound.

Perhaps you are one of those who are “stuck” at some speed and can’t seem to increase from that point. If so, the trouble doubtless is that you, whether you realize it or not, must take each code character and put it through a mental routine to get the letter for which it stands. You hear the sound “didah,” must mentally convert it into “dot-dash” (ugh!) and from there, into the letter “a.” You have to use this process because that is the way you learned it and you have not given conscious effort to overcome that fault.



Your mind should work like a telegraph printer: producing the letter simultaneously with reception of the code signal - just as if it were spoken. Get the feel of the code, and know how it sounds when sent correctly.

For reference, search out on the air, find a station or two sending just a bit below your maximum speed - i.e., so you can just read it (not necessarily copy it down) solid. Then stick to him by the hour; hang onto every letter, word and phrase. Listen as you would at a musical concert; notice the formation of each letter and the spaces left between letters and words.

Notice the proportion in length of dits to dahs; what seem like exaggerated spaces between words, and a score of other details where his sending is different than yours. Half an hour a night of just listening will work wonders with your code ability after a couple of weeks.

By such constant practice you will learn the proper rhythm and precision of perfect code. It's bound to work itself, subconsciously, into your sending.



Ideal practice can be obtained by using the W1AW official broadcasts. If you don't have and can't get an audio oscillator, whistling the characters aloud will accomplish nearly the same purpose. As far as the code goes, even today when driving alone in a car or walking alone, I subconsciously begin to whistle code.

I sometimes drive the household to near insanity by attempting to sing arias when shaving before the bathroom mirror; but just as often I pretend to be a big bad commercial sending V-wheels, or W1AW sending its nightly QST broadcast. Try it. You'll find yourself getting quite chummy with code.

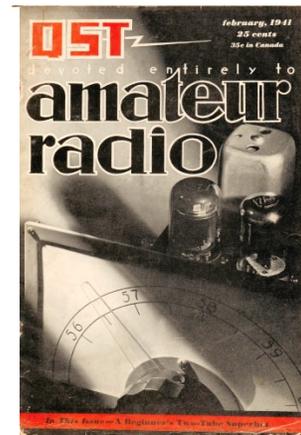
When sending with key or bug, whether with an audio oscillator for practice or when actually on the air, let your mind be thinking of the sound of each character as it is sent. This can be accomplished by softly whistling each character in synchronism with the key.

Practice of this sort will not only let you send better code, but shortly will increase your receiving and sending speeds. But don't rush it let it come naturally. Keep your sending speed well below your receiving ability; never under any circumstances send as fast as you can receive. Those who do so have a conception of the code that is mechanical rather than aural.

Direct copy at high speeds should be the eventual objective of every licensed amateur. For any speed in code reception, you have to be able to write automatically and without conscious effort. Practice copying at a steady speed. Don't listen and then write ferociously for a second \_ . \_ and listen . . . and write hurriedly again. Your writing must be dissociated, consciously, from code reception.

Often I've heard the question, "How can I learn to copy behind?" Too many such amateurs attempt to copy behind before their code ability reaches the necessary stage. I do not mean in rate of speed, but rather in manner of copying. That is, to successfully copy behind, an operator must have reached the point where he is reading word-sounds, and not letters. Furthermore, when an operator copies individual letters, he must set the text down in letter units, and that forces him to write with conscious effort - which completely blocks any attempt to copy behind.

You've got to make this language of code a word-language to your mind. You will know when you have reached this stage because suddenly you will automatically begin to copy so don't force the issue.



## Bugs

Brian Hoag, ACØUS

Ah technology. All the bells and whistles on all the devices we use are really something. As for me, I like old stuff. I don't have to figure out which menu item to go to on my smart phone ever, 'cause I don't own a smart phone and hope I never do.

What brings the above to mind is a Facebook note my Daughter made about Verizon starting to change their unlimited data service plan. She is not happy since I guess those "important" communications she has are going to start costing her more money.

New technology, new headaches.



*Vibroplex Mechanical Key*

Now about those bugs... I'm not talking about the creepy, crawly, or flying type you were probably thinking of. Nor is it about software issues often called bugs, information gathering devices called bugs, or likely any "bug" you have heard of before.

Nope, today I'm gonna go back in time a ways to the early days of communication technology. Telegraph operators spent a lot of time perfecting their craft, and the really old timers among us are

provide thanks to the telegraph.

Yeah, so what does that have to do with this "bug" you want to talk about? Well before all the fancy electronic gadgets we currently have were invented, telegraph keys were pretty basic. "Brass Pounders" as telegraph operators were often called, were limited in the speed they could transmit Morse code, and as we all know, time is money, so somebody decided to invent a new telegraph key that would allow significantly higher sending speeds.

The inventors came up with some pretty good ideas. One of the original designed mechanical keys I use myself is called a bug. Mine is manufactured by the Vibroplex Corporation, and this style of telegraph key has been made over 100 years. If there is an original working Ipad in 10 years I'll be surprised.

In the early days, brass pounders had to supply their own telegraph key, and these high speed devices were not cheap. An early bug could cost a telegrapher two weeks salary. Not only did these mechanical "bugs" speed up telegraphic communications, but they helped alleviate probably the first known cases of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. New technology, new headaches (or, arm aches)... Pounding thousands of words a day in Morse code took its toll on telegraph operators.

Morse code isn't dead, but it isn't exactly the most popular alphabet on the block. It might be noted by some that the world was saved in the movie "Independence Day" by Morse code that signaled when and how to attack the alien invaders. Morse code is used by radio amateurs around the world still, and Morse code used in radio applications has some distinct advantages over voice modes, especially when radio wave conditions are at their worst.

So as my daughter and millions of high speed data smart phone users complain about rising costs for less bandwidth, I'll be content to pound out my messages via amateur radio and my 100 year old bug technology.

## 9 Tips ( + 1 ) for Learning the Morse Code

*Chuck Adams, K7QO & Rod Dinkens, AC6V / SK*

- 1. Start!** Whether you use audio cassettes, CDs, computer software, or a partner to send and receive, you won't get anywhere until you get started.
- 2.** As a small child learns first to crawl, then to walk, and finally, to run, you, too, must learn in steps. Learning Morse code (CW) properly requires both self-study, and the help of someone sending CW to you.
- 3.** Learn each character as a sound. Morse code is a language of sounds. Never write dots and dashes.
- 4.** Repetition is the key to remembering anything, including Morse characters. Some folks master it in days, others in months. All who kept at it got it.
- 5.** The Farnsworth Method is recommended. With the Farnsworth Method, you learn each character at 15 words per minute with large spacing in between characters. This has been proven to be the best method for long-range development. Once the characters are learned, copying speed is easily increased by decreasing the spacing between each character.
- 6.** Practice, practice, practice. No matter if you learn quickly, or slowly, the key to learning is practice. With enough practice, just about anyone can learn Morse code. Sometimes, skipping a day or two of practice is helpful, and can get you back on track.
- 7.** You don't need to copy 100%. Being able to copy MOST of what is sent, usually results in a passing grade.
- 8.** Take advantage of all available practice. If you have a rig or shortwave receiver, you'll benefit from any CW you hear. Just listen and copy as many characters as you possibly can. The more you listen, the more you'll be able to

copy and understand. After a while, you'll be copying more characters than you are missing. While driving down the road, I would translate road signs to Morse code in my head - the faster the better.

**9.** One of the best ways to practice, is to use the "Buddy System." Get a friend, spouse, relative, or anyone willing to share their time, to learn along with you. Enlist the aid of an experienced CW operator for answering questions, and making sure you don't develop any bad habits.



**Plus 1:** Go directly to Ray Goff's web page at <http://www.g4fon.net> where you'll find the G4FON CW trainer. When you go to that website, look in the left margin of the screen for "Koch CW Trainer Version 9" and click on it. Then scroll down the right side of the screen and click on "Download Version 9" and set it up in your computer.

You start off learning the code at the speed you would like to achieve. You'll start off learning two letters at full speed and add an additional letter once you reach 90% proficiency until you have mastered them all. Since you are only learning one new letter or figure at a time, your frustration is significantly reduced.

# WIRELESS TELEPHONES FOR CHICAGO POLICE

*Every Patrolman Is to Have a Pocket Apparatus  
Connecting Him With Headquarters.*

*Special to The New York Times*

CHICAGO -- Every policeman traveling a beat in Chicago is to be equipped with a miniature wireless telephone, a small apparatus to be carried in the pocket, by means of which he can be in communication with headquarters every moment.

The wireless telephone is not exactly an untried experiment. It was employed to some extent by Secret Service men during the war, and since then great improvements have been made.

The patrolman will be able to receive a message, but he cannot send one. The instrument, which can readily be held in the hand, has a receiver and when properly "tuned in" with headquarters permits the holder to hear his message as distinctly as from a call box under the present system. The receiving antennae will be placed in the lining of the policeman's coat.

The signal that headquarters is calling him is given by a buzzing sound from the antennae, and he then places the receiver to his ear and receives the message.

The adoption of this system gives police headquarters instant supervision over the entire city. Policemen may be dispatched to any spot at any time without headquarters being obliged to wait until they "report in" at their patrol boxes, as at present. A few minutes gained in this manner will be of immense value in fighting crime.

Later, with more improved instruments, the patrolman will be able to send messages to his superiors. Patrol wagons and rifle squads are already being equipped with wireless telephones and can both send and receive from any point in the city.

The first pocket telephones will be distributed in two months and by the end of the year, it is said, the entire force will be supplied.

*In spite of this enthusiastic review of what appeared to be an impending introduction of the paging service, this innovative use of radio did not go into widespread use at the time.*



*Chicago Police experiment with wireless mobile radiotelephone, 1922*