

**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

Can you believe the year 2012 is half gone? I don't know about the rest of you, but the older I get, the faster the time fly's. On the 4th of July our nation will be 236 years old. We have seen some wonderful events take place in some of those years and some not so good. Also, remember to be extra careful with your outdoor fires and fire works on the 4th, with the temperature already in the 100's the grasses are going to be very dry.

More information concerning the use of fireworks and any prohibitions with them in our various counties, is contained further on in the newsletter.

Hurricane Season has started. "Chris" was the first hurricane of the 2012 Atlantic Hurricane Season. Remember when all other communications fail, the hams are always called on to fill the break.

I hope you all enjoyed Field Day and made many contacts. There is a CQ World Wide VHF Contest on July 21st & 22nd.

We need more people to do the radio net on Thursday nights. If you're interested, please contact Kenneth Watkins, KE5ISN at: ke5isn@aol.com.

I hope to see all of you at our monthly meeting July 3rd at 7:00 PM at the Bell County Communications Center. - 73 de KE5UES

Merle Kachenmeister - WA8EWW, Founder of SkyWarn Silent Key

Merle G. Kachenmeister, WA8EWW, became a *Silent Key* May 29th at the age of 82 in the care of Hospice of NW Ohio. He had lived most recently in Blissfield, Michigan.

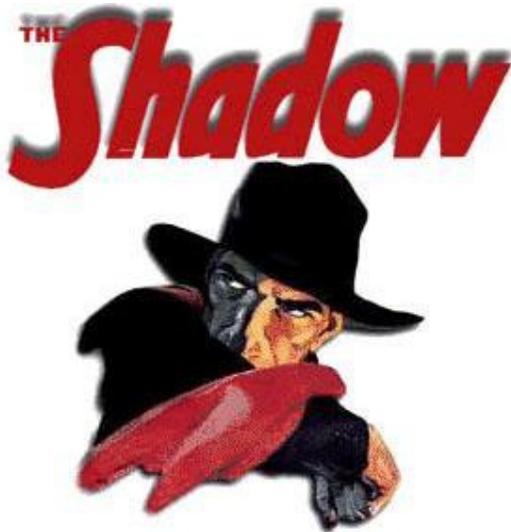


After a stint as a Navy firefighter in Tillamook, Ore., he learned meteorology and worked with Navy fleet weather stations in Seattle and on Guam. He then worked for the US Weather Bureau, later renamed the National Weather Service, where in 1974, he was awarded a bronze service medal from the U.S. Department of Commerce for organizing a network of volunteer amateur radio operators -- SkyWarn -- to inform the weather service of severe conditions. The network was put together after the devastation of the Palm Sunday tornado, April 11, 1965. He was a ham himself and was a former Toledo Radio Club amateur radio operator of the year.

Strays

“Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? ...the Shadow knows! The Shadow, Lamont Cranston, a man of wealth, a student of science and a master of other people’s minds, devotes his life to righting wrongs, protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty.

Cranston is known to the under-world as The Shadow; never seen, only heard, his true identity is known only to his constant friend and aid, Margo Lane.”



The Shadow became an invisible, amateur crime fighter, who had learned while traveling through East Asia, the mysterious power to cloud men’s minds so they could not see him. A handy tool for catching bad guys.

The show aired from July 31st, 1930 on CBS, and then later moved to NBC, then again to the Mutual Network where it aired until December 26th, 1954. There were approximately 740 episodes during its run. Sadly, most of those episodes have been lost to history. Those that have remained can be heard again by visiting:

<http://www.archive.org/details/RkoOrsonWelles-TheShadow-RadioRecordings>



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!

July NCS & Back-Up NCS Schedule:

July 5 th :	July 12 th :
Net Control: W5VEX	KE5UES
Back-Up: KE5ISN	AD5SK
July 19 th :	July 26 th :
Net Control: AD5SK	KE5ISN
Back-Up: KE5ISN	W5VEX

CQ World-Wide VHF Contest

Contest period is from 1800Z, July 21st, through 2100Z, July 22nd on 6 and 2 Meters.

For a complete list of rules, contest specifics and log submissions, visit:
<http://www.cqww-vhf.com/rules.htm>

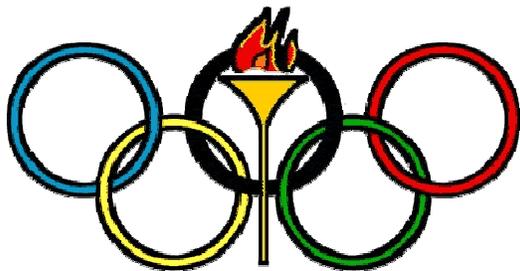
‘Radio Craft’ Magazine

Radio-Craft magazine was first published in July 1929 and was aimed at the professional in the radio field. The title was changed to *Radio-Electronics* in October 1948 and again to *Electronics Now* in July 1992. In January 2000 it changed names again to *Poptronics*.

The publication ceased operations in December 2002 and the January 2003 issue was the last.



Olympic Special Event Stations



Some special event call signs will be activated to celebrate the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Great Britain.

2012L -- will be active on 160 - 2 meters on all modes. The station will be located at the historic Eltham Palace in Southeast London, in the borough of Greenwich, one of the six host boroughs for the Games.

2012W -- will be active on 160 meters - 23 cm on all modes, including SSTV and satellite, and will be based on the seafront esplanade at Whitmore Beach on Barry Island, Vale of Glamorgan in Wales. The site is located just a few miles south west of Cardiff and the Millennium Stadium, home to the first football match that will open the Games in Wales.

Amateur Radio operators everywhere will be able to share in the Olympic experience by making contact with the stations and exchanging greetings and messages with visitors and Games participants who visit the stations.

Both stations will be on-the-air for the duration of the Games, July 27th through August 12th.



GJ2A will be active from the Isle of Jersey during the Radio Society of Great Britain's Islands on the Air Contest on July 28th and 29th. QSL via GJ3DVC.

ON8ZZ, **ON3JA** and **ON3NT** will be active as **MU** stroke **OT9Z** from Guernsey between July 16th to the 20th. QSL via OT9Z.

K4O will be active June 30th and July 1st in San Juan, Puerto Rico, celebrating the flag bearing of the Puerto Rico Delegation to the Summer Olympic Games in London. QSL via NP3O.



The Belton 4th of July Parade will be held on Wednesday, July 4th. This is a joint public service event of CTARC and the Temple Amateur Radio Club.

Volunteers are needed to assist with the line-up of 300+ entries and to direct them on to the parade route. The initial meeting place will be in the parking lot of the University of Mary Hardin Baylor, located at the intersection of West 9th and North Pearl in Belton at 8:00 AM. The parade will start at 10:00 AM and should end about noon.

If you'd like to assist with this event, please contact Darwin Geiselbrecht - K5DOA, at: k5doa01@gmail.com

For more information on the event itself, please visit:

http://www.rodeobelton.com/events_detail.aspx?id=5#eItem89

Caution Emphasized for Upcoming Fireworks Season

Wednesday, July 4th, is the nation's 236th birthday. With current high humidity and the U.S. Drought Monitor classification as abnormally dry but not in drought conditions, County Fire Marshals are reminding the public to exercise caution when using fireworks this season.

High winds, the lack of rain and dry vegetation increase the concern that fireworks could start a fire, so it is important to exercise caution. Some fireworks restrictions are in place as several counties remain under a burn ban.

BELL County remains under a burn ban. Aerial fireworks are prohibited but ground fireworks are allowed.

BOSQUE County has no word on any fireworks restrictions.

CORYELL County officials advise against projectile-type fireworks like missiles and bottle rockets. Fireworks with "sticks or fins" are prohibited, but ground fireworks are allowed.

FALLS County fireworks displays are allowed.

HAMILTON County has no restrictions on fireworks.

HILL County officials say there are no specific restrictions on fireworks.

LAMPASAS County officials advise that **ALL FIREWORKS ARE PROHIBITED.**

LEON County officials say there are no specific restrictions on fireworks.

LIMESTONE County remains under a burn ban but it was not clear if there were any specific restrictions on fireworks.

McLENNAN County officials say there are no specific restrictions on fireworks.

MILAM County officials say there are no restrictions on fireworks.

TRAVIS County has no restrictions on the sale and use of fireworks other than they are prohibited in county parks or parks managed by the county.

WILLIAMSON County has no restrictions on the use of fireworks at this time.

**Most jurisdictions have city ordinances prohibiting the use of fireworks within or near the city limits. If you are unsure of the ordinances, check with your city or local county fire department prior to the purchase or discharge of any fireworks.*





“Chris” First Hurricane of 2012 Atlantic Hurricane Season

Hurricane Chris, which first formed as a tropical storm in the northern Atlantic on June 19th, is acting like a “zombie” storm. The storm is alive, but it should not be, as the storm is in a region that is not prone to tropical development as water temperatures are in the low to mid-70s.

The storm further strengthened into the Atlantic Basin’s first hurricane of the season early June 21st with a pronounced eye showing up in satellite images.

The reason *Chris* is being labeled as a “zombie” hurricane is also why the system has broken a tropical weather record. Never before since record-keeping began in 1851 has a tropical storm system formed that far north in the Atlantic this early in hurricane season, according



to the National Hurricane Center. *Chris* first took shape at a latitude of 39.3 degrees north, the same latitude that southern New Jersey is on.

Chris is not expected to hit land as it moves east and away from the coast before it is expected to dissipate by the end of the week.

Crickets take over Austin

Warm weather and recent rains in central Texas are creating near-perfect conditions for cricket eggs to hatch, causing a cricket invasion in Austin. Usually about 75 percent of cricket eggs don’t hatch, but some recent rains have flipped that statistic.



Since the start of 2012, there has been nearly 1.5 times the normal rainfall for Austin. May rainfall was nearly 200 percent of normal.

Some complaints from Austin residents about the crickets include the noise and the smell of whole herds of dead crickets.

Crickets don’t cause any serious damage, unlike Austin’s other summertime pests like

fleas and mosquitos, which crickets actually include on their summer menu. But the brown hoppers are generally unpleasing to see piling up en masse outside of the sliding doors at the grocery store. The problem is so bad at the University of Texas at Austin that school officials are taking the unusual step of darkening the 307-foot-tall bell tower for three nights the next two weekends in hopes of keeping the insects away.



Night of Nights – The end of commercial Morse Code in the U.S.

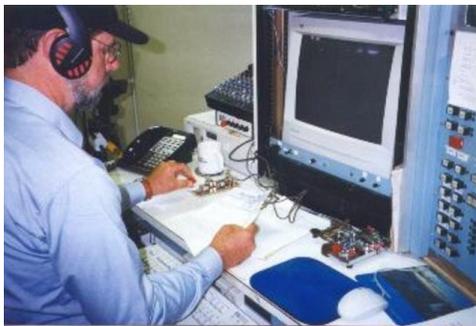
Richard Dillman, W6AWO

As you read, let the sounds of static on 600m at midnight and the dim light of glowing tubes in a dark room become real. Imagine the silence and smell the dust in the abandoned transmitter gallery of a once great station. And above all remember the men and women who came before us and made the profession of radiotelegrapher one of honor and skill.

KPH / KFS, a Point Reyes radio station, was established in 1905, at the dawn of the wireless electronics age. Owned by the De Forest Wireless Telegraph Company, it pioneered transpacific radio communication with foreign stations and with ships at sea for 92 years, using high-speed Morse Code and Sitor, a form of radio teletype. KPH had some of the best Morse operators in the country. The station would handle everything from sailing orders, personnel and cargo decisions to SOS calls from ships in peril.



Old-timers say the busiest time was during the Vietnam War when as many as 1,000 radio messages a day were sent to ships at sea. But new technology and changes in the shipping industry eventually took a toll, and by 1997 KPH was getting fewer than 100 messages a day. It was the oldest maritime radio station on the West Coast when it shut.



Richard Dillman - W6AWO at the key at KPH on that final night of nights in 1999.

*The end came... We knew it had to come. But the end had been predicted so many times for so many years while Morse soldiered on, paying no attention, providing good, reliable service for decades after it was declared dead... maybe some of us thought the day would never come. But when KPH/KFS signed off the air for the last time on **July 12, 1999** it was the end of commercial Morse in North America.*

Tom Horsfall {WA6OPE} and I were invited along with many others to be present at the Half

Moon Bay master station of Globe Wireless from which the final messages would be sent. I held in my hand two messages I hoped to have transmitted. They were messages of greeting and farewell typed of course with a mill on historically correct Mackay Radio radiogram blanks. I brought along my favorite straight key in its carrying case and my radiotelegraph license just in case.

I have visited KPH/KFS many times over the years. On my first visit the operating room had nothing but Morse positions. Over the years the number of computers steadily advanced as the Morse positions retreated to the west end of the building. When we walked in yesterday both sides of the operating room were lined with racks holding sleek black computers and monitors. And way down at the end was the one remaining Morse operating position.

Tom spotted him first... Paul Zell, the Morse operator on duty. We knew him by his green eyeshade. All real radiotelegraph operators seem to wear green eyeshades. Pictures I have taken at KFS and KPH decades ago show men in green eyeshades at the key. Pictures taken at those stations decades before show the same thing. I am convinced there is a secret ceremony of the green eyeshade in which the distinctive headgear is carefully placed upon the head of the operator newly



Paul Zell – Radiotelegrapher at KPH

welcomed into the fraternity. This is of course a ceremony we have not been permitted to witness, a ceremony that will never again take place.

I sat down next to Paul Zell as we listened to Russian and Cuban ships calling their respective coast stations. I realized that true to its nature, Morse will carry on in other parts of the world even after the keys in North America are finally silent. I had to ask Paul the question... "How are you feeling about today?" An impossible question to answer but he answered it. "CW was my life," he said and turned back to the receiver.



Denise Stoops – first female operator at KPH

More people started to arrive, a surprising number of reporters among them. But the real dignitaries in my eyes were the radio men and women who knew they had to be here on this day. Jack Martini, manager of KPH; John Brundage, manager of KFS in its golden age of Morse; Denise Stoops {KI6BBR}, the first female operator at KPH; Rex Patterson, chief engineer at KFS in its glory years. And many more. But our eyes kept glancing at the clock. It was now less than two hours to the end.

Now the final transmissions from WCC/WNU began. We copied them off the air. The room fell silent...

WCC CQ DE WCC IN 1901, CALLSIGN WCC WAS ASSIGNED TO THE SOUTH WELLFLEET MASSACHUSETTS WIRELESS TELEGRAPH FACILITY OPERATED BY GUGLIELMO MARCONI. MORSE CODE SIGNALS FROM WCC HAVE BEEN HEARD AROUND THE WORLD EVER SINCE. TODAY WE RETIRE WCC FROM WIRELESS TELEGRAPH OPERATIONS. WCC WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE THE MARITIME COMMUNITY IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE GLOBAL RADIO NETWORK OPERATED BY GLOBE WIRELESS. AR DE WCC SK

WNU CQ DE WNU BT PEARL RIVER RADIO/WNU NOW CEASES RADIOTELEGRAPH SERVICE AFTER EIGHTY SEVEN YEARS OF CONTINUOUS OPERATION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE THE MARINER THROUGH OUR ELECTRONIC MAIL SERVICE AS PART OF THE GLOBE WIRELESS NETWORK. AR 73 DE WNU CL

Paul Zell sent the first of the KFS/KPH sign off messages from his position. Again we were all silent...

CQ CQ DE KPH KPH KPH WE NOW CLOSE THE RADIOTELEGRAPH OPERATION OF STATION KPH. SINCE 1904, STATION KPH HAS DISTINGUISHED ITSELF AS ONE OF THE MOST WELL KNOWN AND RESPECTED CALL SIGNS IN THE WORLD, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO AS PART OF THE GLOBAL RADIO NETWORK / HF STATIONS BT NW CL DE KPH SK



Rory Davis sends the final message from WCC/WNU

When he finished there was a round of applause! Applause for a radiotelegraph operator! Well deserved applause, deserved by every radiotelegraph operator everywhere, applause unheard for 80 years. Paul made a small, embarrassed nod of his head, accepting the tribute for himself and for all the operators on all the ships and at all the coast stations over the years.



Liberty ship Jeremiah O'Brien

Then he copied the last commercial message KFS would receive, from the Liberty ship Jeremiah O'Brien / KXCH on 500kc. The op on the O'Brien said he would standby until 15 past the hour. Zell replied "better make that 18 past, OM." The operator on the O'Brien understood and said that yes, he would observe the silent period - which of course is no longer required by regulation but is absolutely demanded by tradition. Then Paul said that he'd standby "on 600". The crowd got a big kick out of that - 600 meters

instead of 500kc. Subtle, but all the more meaningful for that.

Then Tim Gorman sat down and proved himself to be much more than just a competent station manager. He sent the final message at 2359Z from KFS/KPH in meticulous Morse using the chrome-plated Vibroplex...

CQ DE KFS THIS IS THE FINAL CW TRANSMISSION FROM STATION KFS THE LAST COMMERCIAL RADIOTELEGRAPH STATION IN NORTH AMERICA. APPROPRIATELY, WE CLOSE CW AND EMBARK ON A NEW ERA OF COMMUNICATION WITH SAMUEL F. B. MORSE'S WORDS OF 155 YEARS AGO BT NW CL 73 BT WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT BT DE KFS SK

And then it was over. There were wet eyes in that room, mine among them. I heard more than one tough-looking old timer mumble, "I didn't think it would get to me, but..." and then turn away. After providing reliable communications for most of the century, commercial Morse code was officially laid to rest in North America.

Finally it was time to go. The transmitters were shut down and the station manager deliberately left the receivers on when he turned out the lights, so they would stand a symbolic watch over the ships at sea.



World's Champion Radio Telegrapher Theodore R. McElroy – W1JYN

Compiled by Neal McEwen, K5RW and Roger Wendell, WBØJNR

Theodore R. McElroy - W1JYN lives on, almost 50 years after his passing. His ability to copy code made him a legend in his own time and the keys he made serve as reminders of his accomplishments.

Born in Boston in 1901, Ted went to work for Western Union as a messenger boy at age 14. The telegraph operators taught him American Morse and by age 15 he was working the wires.

In 1922 McElroy entered his first code copying contest and won hands down, winning at a speed of 56 words per minute. From then on he was untouchable. He was beaten in 1934, but regained the championship in 1935. At his last official competition on **July 2nd, 1939** in Ashville, North Carolina, he won with a speed of 75.2 words per minute.

The legend is that Mac astounded the audience by not doing anything when the sending started except to take a drink of water, and light a cigarette. He didn't start typing until a full 15 seconds of code had gone by. When the tape finished, he kept typing for that same 15 seconds.



Ted "Mac" McElroy – W1JYN in 1962

And it's no coincidence that he also won touch typing contests. He could type 150 words per minute as recorded by his seventh grade typing teacher! He remarked once that he could type three letters for every letter that his secretary typed.

This Continental code record was untouchable for almost 60 years and was only recently challenged. For the record, there is an individual ham radio operator who claims to have beaten it, on the basis that 75.2 wpm in 1939 currency is only worth about 65 wpm today.



1934 "MAC-KEY"

In 1934, Ted started his own business manufacturing telegraph equipment. The first key to come out of the McElroy factory was called the MAC-KEY. The base, mainframe and posts were a one piece casting. This design helped to eliminate vibrations and the need for frequent adjustments. The key could also be turned on its side; once the pendulum was locked with the damper post clip, the MAC-KEY could be used as a hand key.

In the late 30's, McElroy traveled the country giving code copying demonstrations. One of his favorite tricks was to stop in the middle of a high speed run, drink a glass of water, and resume copy without missing any text.

Ted passed away in his native Boston in 1963, but as long as there are those that are interested in the code and keys, McElroy the man, the legend and his keys will be remembered.

West Coast to Hawaii on 144 Mc! W6NLZ and KH6UK Shatter 2-Meter Record

Some of the high spots in VHF history and other VHF firsts came about, in many instances, because hams were willing to try things that more learned people would have said were impossible.

Practically every known form of long-distance VHF, propagation was first discovered in this way, often by accident. The important factor was a willingness on the part of hams to *try anything!* The formula still works, and no better example has ever turned up than this feat: two-way communication on 144 Mc across more than 2,500 miles of Pacific Ocean. Nobody in his right mind would have given it a chance!



Ralph E. Thomas – KH6UK

On **July 8, 1957**, at 2130 PST, W6NLZ listened, as he had nightly for more than 9 months, for the 144-Mc test by KH6UK, 2,500 miles away at Kahuku, on the Island of Oahu. The signal was in there!

Then came the quick change, the breathless moments, the fumbling sending, as two old c.w. hands who ragchew easily at 40 w.p.m. fell all over themselves in a rush of buck fever that is familiar to any ham who has tottered on the brink of a really big break. But the two-way worked - and good!

Signal reports were exchanged, and a few fumbling attempts at felicitation, and then on to see what else could be done while the rare opportunity still held. The 5-minute transmission seemed hours long. How could a miracle like this be expected to last through 5 minutes? But it did, and much longer. W6NLZ replied at the appointed time, shaking with excitement, and the 7-year 1400-mile record was broken by a margin beyond most 2-meter men's fondest dreams.

The 2,540-mile 2-meter QSO across the Pacific did not "just happen." There were superb stations, big antennas and capable operators at both ends. Both stations ran kilowatt rigs. The antenna at W6NLZ was a 24-foot Yagi, 35 feet above a fine location at Palos Verdes Estates, with a clear view out over the Pacific. KH6UK had a large multiple-Yagi array.

How did it come about? The evidence points toward tropospheric propagation. Tape recordings from both participants show the signal to be essentially steady, with only the

slow, typical tropospheric fade. There are no bursts; no wild excursions in signal strength that would almost certainly characterize meteoric or ionospheric reflections. The locations at each end were close to ideal, and the equipment the best obtainable.



John & Maureen Chambers – W6NLZ and W6NTC