
W7TCK News

Capital City Amateur Radio Club

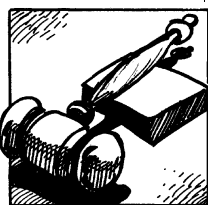
Helena, MT

John McDougall K7JM – Editor

February 2004

From The Pres...

Tonight I have severe writer's block, so this will probably be short, sweet, and perhaps ramble somewhat more than usual.



The last month has been an exciting time for those of us who are interested in human efforts to explore the solar system. The US has landed not just one, but two rovers on the surface of Mars and subsequently beamed back incredible pictures of the Martian landscape. The Europeans have also put a new spacecraft in orbit around Mars and attempted (apparently unsuccessfully) to land another probe on the surface. I look forward to watching these projects over the next few months to see what interesting things they discover about Mars.

For our club meeting this month, I have asked a couple of our club members to make a presentation on CW (Morse Code) operation, including what is needed and typical operations using CW. This should prove interesting to those (See **PRES.** p.2)

February MEETING

Monday
February 2nd
Salvation Army Church
1905 Henderson
7:00 pm.

You Might Be A Ham If.....

- You consider an ARRL repeater directory a necessary glove box item.
- You ever took a detour just to look at a new tower that has sprung up.
- You use your ham call as a computer password.
- You ever used your ham call as a part of an email address.
- You ever bought a ham study guide for another family member in hopes of getting them interested.
- You plan your vacation to take in as many hamfests as possible.
- You ever tapped out HI in Morse on your car horn to another ham.

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- Training: John Geach, KS7R
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PRES (Cont. from p.1)

(including myself) which who don't operate CW for various reasons.

In addition to the club meeting we will be holding our first weekend work meeting on Saturday, February 21st. I am still working out the specifics of where, but the time is set for immediately following our Breakfast meeting at Hardee's. If you want to attend, I'd recommend you drop by Hardee's for breakfast (or just to talk) that Saturday between 9:30 and 11:00a.m.

The agenda for this work meeting will be to assemble either the antenna or the circuit board for the direction finding kits which we have been talking about doing for quite some time. I have come up with a design for the DF antenna which is cheap (five dollars or less) and (hopefully) easy to put together. If W7MRI is available that weekend with enough kits to do the circuit board part we will be doing the circuit boards, otherwise we will be working on the antennas. I passed a list around last month at the club meeting asking people to indicate how many DF kits and/or antennas they wanted. If you didn't get your name on the list, please let me know at the coming club meeting and/or drop me a note via email at pres@w7tck.org.

I think that's all for now.
73's
Forrest
AC7DE

From The Editor

Unlike our beloved President, I do operate CW. It is my favorite mode and also one of the most efficient when you start comparing power vs bandwidth and such. A 5 watt 100 Hz wide CW signal is inequivalent to a 100 watt SSB signal that is 2000



Hz wide. Now, try boosting that CW signal to 100 watts. WOW! You don't need high power or fancy equipment or antennas to work the world on CW. Enjoy this month's presentation on CW at the February 2nd CCARC's meeting. If you might decide that you might enjoy CW, read this month's W7TCK News for part 1 on finding out more on learning the Morse Code at a speed higher than 5 words per minute. Have fun!!

God bless you all and 73,
John – K7JM Editor

ARES News

I recently went through the CCARC newsletters since I became a licensed ham radio operator in 1995. I was struck by the large number of events and organizations that have received communications support from ARES and CCARC over the years. To my dismay and to concern of many of you is the notion that we are often not called or involved until the "fir hits the fan." The recent table top and mass casualty drills here in Helena are examples of that.



K7EBL and I regularly attend the monthly Lewis and Clark County LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Council) meetings. Police, fire, emergency medical, transportation, utility, and health agencies are regular members. We participate as members, but often feel our participation is less than accepted. There are many sections of turf being protected by the agency representatives in attendance. Convincing them that we are not a threat and can be a positive asset is difficult and takes some doing to win them over.

The best way we can do that is to be prepared to respond to requests for assistance and then to do our part in a professional and timely manner. An example of that was responding to staff the sandbag stations during the floods last spring. We won over a number of doubters on that one. The response to

the Lincoln fires this past summer was another way we showed what we are capable of doing.

Please stay involved and prepared. Make sure your radio gear is in operating condition. Check into the Tuesday ARES net. Turn on your radio when you think there might be something of an emergency nature happening. You never know, we just may be called to help.

Bob K7HLN

ARES Emergency Coordinator



CCARC No-Code Technician Class



The 2004 CCARC No-Code Technician Class is scheduled to begin Thursday February 5. The classes will meet every Thursday for seven weeks from 7:00 to 9:30 PM at Hardee's restaurant. A Volunteer Examination session will be held on the final class on March 18th. The text book for the class is the ARRL "Now Your Talking", 5th Edition. The book is not available locally but can be purchased from John Geach KS7R for the cover price of \$19.95, saving you the cost of shipping from the ARRL. For more information about the class or to reserve a book contact John at 442-7107.



From Our Section Manager

New opportunity to enroll in ARRL's CED courses for Emergency Communications. See the League Website for further info. These are great courses and provide training for newcomers and OT's alike. Give them some consideration. At some point in the future, we'd like to see certification for ARES membership and RACES.

Please read the Section News and provide your SM with feelings on the future of NTS. Changes are in

the wind and some states are taking a hard line on "book traffic" in an effort to reduce or eliminate it.

New members on MTN have become proficient traffic handlers and some have also braved IMN. We'd always like to see more participate in our CW nets. Try 3647 at 0200Z, you might just enjoy it.

73

Doug, K7YD



Did You Get Your Dues In?

Just one more reminder that the yearly dues of \$20 are due for membership with CCARC. Dan KC7KKH will be happy to take them from you. \$20 a year is a great price to pay for all the benefits of membership which includes this news letter and a fine repeater system. If you use the repeater, you should be a member. Be involved, renew or join today!



SO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORSE CODE

How to Avoid Frustration, Minimize the Pain And Gain Full HF Privileges

By David G. Finley, N1IRZ

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Part 1:

Note: For complete information on Morse Code training, CW operating, and more, see the author's book, Morse Code: Breaking the Barrier, published by MFJ Enterprises, Inc..

A Personal Note from the author.

These ideas may sound very bold and unconventional, but I know they work, because they worked for me.

I fell in love with radio in grade school, but was kept off the air for 30 years because I found traditional code training just too frustrating. During

those decades, I tried several times to learn Morse, but every time gave up in frustration and disgust -- my progress was just too slow.

In 1991, I became one of the first 500 people to enter ham radio by way of the no-code Technician license. After becoming bored with repeaters and HTs, I decided to make one last attempt to master the code. Fortunately, I stumbled on information about Koch's method, and found that it was the only thing that would work for me. In 1993, after diligent work at my computer, I took my first code test and passed the 20 wpm exam on the first try.

I became very curious about why Koch's method had worked for me when all else had failed. That sent me to libraries to read the now-aging psychological literature about Morse training. I soon realized that the Koch method achieves its speed through directness; if you want to copy reflexively at 15 or 20 wpm, then just start building those reflexes from the start. I also realized that it provides much more positive feedback than any other method, so you can keep your motivation and a "can-do" attitude throughout your training.

This was knowledge I wanted to share with others, so I began giving lectures to amateur groups on the topic. I quickly found that, after my lectures, "old-timers" would come up and tell me that my ideas on the need for reflexes were absolutely right. Many said that the Koch method sounded similar to the intense code training they had received in military schools.

Probably the only reason Koch's method didn't become standard back in 1936 when he first published it was that the average individual had no way of implementing it. The personal computer has changed that, and the time has come for the Koch method to replace all others. I hope that the speed and positive-reinforcement aspects of the Koch method can cut down the code barrier to a much less formidable size.

Sometime during 1993, those who have not passed at least a 13-wpm code test became the majority of

radio amateurs in the United States. While the debate over the code requirement continues to rage, I hope that use of the Koch method can help many more people overcome the barrier and enjoy full HF privileges right now, instead of several years from now when the requirement may be lifted.

I cannot overemphasize my dislike -- even hatred -- for 5 wpm code. As I've outlined above, it is highly counterproductive to gaining proficiency at higher speeds. In order to go from 5 to 13 wpm, you have to start over again, even though you may not realize that while you're doing it. The worst aspect is that many people pass a 5-wpm test, then never go beyond that. They are trapped in the ghetto of the Novice/Tech HF bands. Why waste your time learning a skill (slow code) that has no relevance to real (13+ wpm) code proficiency? Why limit your HF operating to the most unattractive parts of the amateur bands?

Finally, as I was using the Koch method and building my code skills, I intended to forget the code as soon as I passed the test. My 30 years of frustration had built up a bitterness about CW. However, about two weeks after getting my first HF rig on the air, I looked at my straight key and decided to try a CW QSO "just so I can say I did it." Guess what? I enjoyed it. My second CW QSO was with a DX station, and I was hooked. With the encouragement of a CW Elmer, I continued to enjoy the bottom parts of the bands, and now my microphone isn't even plugged into the rig!

If the Koch method could overcome three decades of bitterness and turn me into an enthusiastic CW operator, I think it's certainly worth a try on your part. Have a go at it. Maybe I'll find you on the CW bands and we can have a ragchew.

Best of luck, and 73.
Dave Finley, N1IRZ

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individuals to download and print copies for noncommercial, personal use, provided that the article is transmitted, stored and printed unaltered and in whole, including this notice. For any other use, written permission from the author must be obtained.

Editors Note: Next month's W7TCK News will delve into the Author's article about what is called the Koch method of learning CW. Stay Tuned!



Worlds Smallest Code Practice Oscillator

One of the funnest gifts I received for Christmas this year was a \$6.00 code practice oscillator kit. This code practice oscillator is not your run of the mill CPO. This one happens to reside on a circuit board that is 1 (yes 'ONE') cm square. That is approximately this big.



The oscillator kit contains everything except a battery, a speaker, and a code key. The parts? They are VERY TINY surface mounted parts that must be soldered to the circuit board. A magnifying lamp, sharp soldering iron, small gage solder, and a steady hand are all necessary.

I used a bit of taped curled up and set under the board to hold it in place while soldering the components to the board. I first pre-tinned the board and one at a time, pre-tinned the components as I put them on the board. I held the parts with a hemostat while tinning the tiny leads.

I then placed the tiny tinned part on the tiny tinned board and pressed the soldering iron on the lead to melt the solder from the board to the solder on the component. I carefully placed the component on the board and held it in place with a dental pick tool. Then hoping that nothing slipped, I soldered it into place.

If you are interested in a beginners surface mount project with TINY parts, check out <http://user.gru.net/n4uau> for this and other projects.



My HUGE soldering iron tinning the leads of an IC



This is the blank tinned board taped to my work surface.



A lighted magnifier is an absolute must! Under it is the Author's Panivise Jr. holding the hemostat holding a tiny chip to be tinned.



The finished board. The huge looking wires are SMALL hookup wires.

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P.O. Box 1112
Helena, MT 59624

CCARC Web Page: www.w7tck.org
Editor's E-Mail: jdmcdougall@juno.com

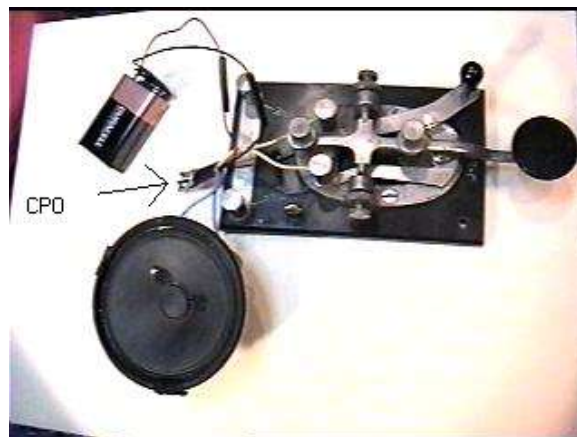
CCARC Regular meetings are at 7:00 pm on the first non-holiday Monday of each month at the Salvation Army Church 1905 Henderson.

The CCARC Volunteer Exam Team conducts sessions at 6:30 pm in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov, and at special times as announced.

W7MRI Repeater: 147.82 (-offset)

Net every Tuesday at 7:30 pm local time on the 147.82 (-offset) repeater.

Have Fun With CW



The World's Smallest Code Practice Oscillator. The arrow points to the complete CPO. See the article on page 5.

Return Address: Newsletter Editor
Capital City Amateur Radio Club
3841 Gradestake St.
East Helena, MT 59635

e-mail: jdmcdougall@juno.com

All expressions of opinions and all statements of supposed facts are published on the authority of the author and are not to be regarded as expressing the view of CCARC.

Biscuits and Gravy

Come to Hardee's on Saturday. Every Saturday morning between 9:30 and 11:00, as many as twenty hams show up for "EYEBALL" QSOs.

COME JOIN THE FUN!

First Class Mail