

The KeyNote



Newsletter of the Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club—The International Morse Preservation Society
Issue #1, 2015

The Worst Day of the Year to Operate

By Tim Carter, W3ATB

“This could go on record as the worst day of the year to operate,” proclaimed Jim, W1PID, “I used to do this on my own years ago just to see if I could operate in bad weather. I’m only out here today because you’re here.”

It was a raw day indeed here in central New Hampshire with a steady rain and the temperature hovering around 35° F. I worked outdoors for years as a homebuilder and have to tell you that days like this one simply chill you to the bone more so than single-digit days. Mother Nature would not disappoint us.

We decided to go to Profile Falls, which is just south of Bristol, NH. It’s a delightful place with a stunning waterfall, and it is very busy in the spring, summer and fall. But today, Jim and I would be the only ones brave enough, or foolish enough, to venture to this outdoor playground.

“I’d love it if we could find a place with a shelter and picnic tables under it,” I said to Jim as we drove in the rain. “There were many public parks like that in Cincinnati, OH, where I grew up. One in particular was close to my home. There was a grand stone and wood picnic shelter in French Park that even had a huge fireplace. Wouldn’t it be awesome if we could have a fire going today?”

“Well, I don’t think we’ll find anything like that, and we’ll have to operate in the car,” Jim said.

Within a few minutes we were turning off Route 3A onto a gravel road that leads down to the massive park area that’s managed by the US Corps of Engineers. Profile Falls is at the north end of a huge flood-control project that tries to tame Mother Nature’s water in the Pemigewasset River as it flows south towards the big New Hampshire population centers of Concord and Manchester.

“Look! There’s a shelter!”

I spied the shelter as we came down the park road just west of the parking areas at Profile Falls. It was exactly what I envisioned, and the picnic tables would provide a nice dry spot to operate.

It didn’t take long to set up. Jim threw his water bottle over a tree branch on the first try. It was a perfect throw and we had plenty of altitude to put up his resonant 20M dipole antenna. We set it up as a sloper with the other end tied to the water bottle in the snow.



Tim, W3ATB, working G3VBS with the HB-1B

(continued, page 15)

“When you’ve worked a FISTS, you’ve worked a friend.”

Information Page

When you have a question about FISTS, go to the source for the correct answer. Posting a question on a chat room or e-mail reflector may yield the answer, but your best bet is to ask a FISTS volunteer or look in the reference issue. Several volunteer contacts and/or e-mail addresses have changed from the last reference issue of *The Key-Note*. Please make note of the following listings.

When e-mailing a volunteer please put the word FISTS in the title of your e-mail. This will help the volunteer recognize that your e-mail is important and not spam.

Awards and Certificates

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, awards@fistsna.org
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536

QSL Bureau

Stan Reas, K4UK, k4uk@fistsna.org
1020 Long Island Dr., Moneta, VA 24121-1952

Club call, KNOWCW

Karl Zuege, KB1DSB, karl@fistsna.org
478 CR 53, Rogersville, AL 35652-3503

Membership Questions; Renewals; Call Changes; Name, Mailing, and E-mail Address Changes

Karl Zuege, KB1DSB, karl@fistsna.org
478 CR 53, Rogersville, AL 35652-3503

Membership Application or Sample KeyNotes for Friends

Jim Ramoero, AA9LS, aa9ls@turbotoads.com
33778 Rebecca Rd., Jingston, IL 60145

Website Changes (including getting your personal or club web page linked)

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, webmaster@fistsna.org
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536

Club Presentation Packets

Joe Spencer, KK5NA, kk5na@kkfna.com
3618 Montridge Ct., Arlington, TX 76016

Code Buddy Volunteers and Buddies

Nick Yokanovich, K3NY, k3ny@aarl.net
108 Brent Rd., Arnold, MD 21012

FISTS Sprints

Ed Wlodarski, N2ED, n2ed@fistsna.org
3 Shore Rd., Andover, NJ 07821-2240

Get Your Feet Wet Activity Day/G3ZQS

Memorial Straight Key Contest

Curtis Gidding, KC9UNL, feetwetlogs@fistsna.org
109-B West Tomaras Ave., Savoy, IL 61874

The KeyNote Newsletter

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, keynote@fistsna.org
1325 Orkney Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

FISTS Store, Supplies, Shirts, Mugs, Etc.

Karl Zuege, KB1DSB, karl@fistsna.org
478 CR 53, Rogersville, AL 35652-3503

Please check your *KeyNote* label for your renewal date. Dues are:

- Regular membership—\$15 a year with printed newsletter, \$10 with PDF version
- Ages 65–79 and college students—\$10 a year
- Under 18 and over 80—free

Checks should be payable to FISTS CW Club. Mail to: FISTS CW Club, c/o Karl Zuege, KB1DSB, 478 CR 53, Rogersville, AL 35652-3503, or via PayPal on our club website at www.fistsna.org/howdoi.html.

The KeyNote

The Newsletter of the Americas Chapter of FISTS

Issue #1, 2015



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Table of Contents

Information Page.....	2	North American CW Weekend, June 5–7, 2015	11
Editor’s Notepad	3	Sprint Information	12
Welcome New FISTS.....	4	FISTS Sprint Entry Form.....	13
QRZ FISTS DE KARL, KB1DSB	5	Social Media, Bulletins, and Reflector Info.....	14
3D Printed Key Makes Debut on Straight Key Night	6	FISTS Photos.....	15
FISTS Awards.....	8	FISTS Store.....	17
New for 2015: Slow-Speed Sprints	9	To Join or Renew Your FISTS Membership.....	22
Should You Choose a Single-Lever or Dual-Level Paddle?.....	10	FISTS CW Club Membership Application/ Renewal	23

Editor’s Notepad: Why CW?

If you’re like me, you take a lot of ribbing about being a CW operator. I don’t let that bother me, though. Instead, I encourage the no-code guys to at least think about learning the code, and am prepared with a list of reasons why they should do so:

1. It’s FUN! When I list the reasons that I operate Morse Code, this is usually the last reason on the list. It’s really the most important reason, though. If it wasn’t fun, I wouldn’t work CW, and I wouldn’t expect anyone else to do it either.
2. You’ll gain the adulation of your fellow hams. Many, if not most of the guys who give you a hard time about being a CW op are really jealous of your abilities. They’re giving you a hard time because they really look up to you. Enjoy that and be gracious. Instead of giving them the business in return, offer to help them learn the code and enjoy working CW just like you do.
3. CW is more efficient than SSB. Without a doubt, CW is more efficient than phone. The bandwidth needed for a CW contact is on the order of a couple hundred Hz versus a couple of kHz for a SSB contact. Be careful when using this argument, though. Digital modes, such as PSK 31 actually require less bandwidth than CW.
4. CW is more effective than SSB. It’s generally agreed that CW has about a 12 dB, or 2 S-unit, advantage over phone. That means that you can make CW contacts when it would be impossible to make SSB contacts.
5. You get more points in some contests. I don’t understand contesters who don’t operate CW. Many contests award more points for a CW contact than they do for a phone contact. Doesn’t it make sense, then, for contesters to know and operate Morse Code?
6. You’ll work more DX. I think it’s easier to work DX on CW than it is on phone. The pileups are generally smaller—although I’m not so sure that this was the case for the recent K1N DXpedition—and it’s easier to get through.

These are my reasons for working CW. What are yours? E-mail me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com and let me know. I’ll run some of your replies in upcoming issues of *The Keynote*.

73, Dan KB6NU, FISTS #9342

Welcome New FISTS Americas Chapter Members

Call	FISTS#	First Name	State	Call	FISTS#	First Name	State
NG2H	16869	Ken	VA	KX9DX	17111	Rick	IL
KY5V	16870	Len	TX	K0OT	17112	John	IA
KC3BJW	16871	Timm	PA	N7XHX	17113	David	UT
W4ZWO	16872	Bill	NC	K8EEE	17114	Ernest	OH
KC1RL	16873	Ric	MA	KF7ICN	17115	John	OR
KG7NFF	16874	Christopher	WA	NJ4F	17116	Dave	SC
KB1YZ	16875	James	MD	W5FEC	17117	Floyd	TX
AC8EG	16876	Don	MI	WB9TZY	17118	Kurt	IL
K3VYY	16877	J Richard	PA	K8RXB	17119	David	MI
N1NI	16878	David	MA	KD2HRN	17120	Ron	NY
W5MKT	16879	David	TX	NR4CW	17121	Ed	TN
K4CMT	16880	Michael	TN	K7ORG	17122	Gary	NV
KG5DYY	16881	Justin	TX	WD5KCQ	17123	Mike	AR
KD9BLO	16882	Jeff	IL	WA2HTF	17124	August	NY
KI6JD	16883	James	CA	N7NSL	17125	Ed	OR
K1BDR	16884	Edward	FL	AB9YC	17126	Anthony	IL
W4JBB	16885	Joel	AL	W3ZW	17127	Drew	PA
N6PG	16886	Scott	CA	WA2WAP	17128	David	NY
K0HEA	16887	Herb	CO	KC8SBV	17129	Ed	MI
K3BEQ	16888	Murray	MD	N5RGV	17130	Juan	TX
KP3IV	16890	Ivan	PR	W5WAG	17131	Ted	TX
W9JOP	16891	Bob	VA	K1NUH	17132	Ed	VA
K3NTD	16892	Kevin	PA	WB2TDT	17133	Frank	NY
K6JRO	16893	John	CA	KB3VAX	17134	Don	PA
N5XTC	16894	Scott	TX	KD8ZYH	17136	Rick	OH
W3TU	16895	Ronald	PA	K4CHC	17137	Carl	GA
AF7BN	16896	Ed	ID	KA1CFP	17138	Marshall	VA
W5CCM	16897	Colin	TX	K4OD	17139	Ben	NC
WD8NZP	16898	Mark	WI	KE6DUY	17140	Pat	MT
KE0CEB	16899	Julian	IA	KE6BXY	17141	Damon	CA
K4RZR	17100	Scotty	FL	KB0MEF	17142	Les	TX
AF5UO	17101	David	TX	WE2M	17143	Paul	VT
W9YX	17102	John	IL	N9NBC	17144	Andy	WI
WW3O	17103	Pete	PA	WB6ZJD	17145	Steve	CA
W4EAB	17104	Allan	NC	KJ6VMY	17146	Richard	CA
K3SWZ	17105	Glenn	PA	WD0CFH	17147	Jack	KS
WB1AJX	17107	Howard	RI				
KD8RNF	17108	Erik	OH				
WA2BQU	17109	Frank	NJ				
AC2IL	17110	James	NY				



QRZ FISTS DE KARL, KB1DSB

Hello, FISTS! Taking over as FISTS president has been a challenge, but a rewarding one. I want to thank all those members who have renewed and to welcome our new FISTS members to our chapter. We currently have over 2,850 active members in our chapter. You members are what make the chapter and the entire FISTS CW Club. We volunteers are here to support you the members. Now on to the chapter news:

Issue Issues

I apologize for the problems with Issue #2, 2014 of *The KeyNote*. For too many there was a shift in the address label, which cut off a portion of their expiration date. Thanks to those who alerted me to that situation. I have chatted with the printer and with a couple adjustments we are positive it will not happen again. Also, there was a problem with the color appearing washed out in the issue. Our graphic designer is working with the printer to prevent that from happening in the future.

PDF Version Now Available

We now offer members the option of downloading *The KeyNote* as a PDF file. More than 225 members have already opted to receive their *KeyNote* in this form. If you are interested in this option, please contact me. I can e-mail you Issue #2, 2014 in PDF form. This one will be the typical size of our issues. It is a try-before-you-switch offer. Sadly, those with dial-up internet service most likely will not be able to download the issue from our website, but you can give it a try with the sample file.

On the Internet

If you have not been to our website in a while, I suggest that you visit it again. Dennis, K6DF, our

webmaster has spent a great deal of time working on the site, updating some features and adding others. Some of these updates and new features have come from you, the members. For example:

- **Expiration date lookup.** (<http://fistsna.org/expdate.php>). Active members can type in their FISTS number and find out when their membership expires.
- **Events Calendar.** (<http://fistsna.org/calendar.html>). This page includes on-air events, such as our Sprints, the FISTS Tuesday and Get Your Feet Wet Activity Day events. It will also show the dates that KN0WCW, our USA FISTS Club call, will be operating. If your FISTS affiliated club wants to post an event to the calendar, e-mail Dennis, K6DF, (webmaster@fistsna.org) or myself, and we will get it on the calendar.
- **Comprehensive FISTS list.** It has been suggested that we provide a list on our website of all who hold a FISTS number, active and lapsed. That might be something we will look at doing in the future. But, to be perfectly honest, we are focusing our attention on our active members.
- **More member info.** It was also suggested that the active member list include members' city and state. This would allow members to more easily find and meet other FIST members in their area for eyeball QSOs or operating events, such as putting KN0WCW on the air. We are considering this, but want to insure the privacy of our members.
- **Americas FISTS Search.** (<http://www.wm7d.net/FISTS/>). Type in a FIST number, and if that member is active, it will tell you his or her callsign. Type in a callsign, and if that ham is an active FISTS member, it will tell you the ham's callsign. This information is generally updated daily, but honestly, time

(continued, page 16)

3D Printed Key Makes Debut on Straight Key Night

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, FISTS #9342

As you may know, I'm a bit of a Twitter user (@kb6nu). So, when one of the hams I follow, Matthew, W2MDW (@w2mdw), tweeted that he'd just made a straight key, I knew that I had to include an article about the key in the next *KeyNote*.

I interviewed Matt by e-mail about this project, and here's what he had to say:

Q. What prompted you to do this?

A. I've been following the 3D printer scene for the better half of a decade and am very interested in DIY type projects. The cost of 3D printers have finally hit the tipping point of being very affordable while getting very high quality prints off of them. It seemed very natural to start thinking creatively in ways I could work the 3D printer into amateur radio. There's a very small community of hams developing 3D models of things like FT-817 accessories, HT mounts, and simple antenna construction supplies, such as insulators and dipole mounts. You can find many of those models on a website called Thingiverse (http://www.thingiverse.com/tag:amateur_radio). The models are free to download, and if you have a 3D printer, you can print them for free.

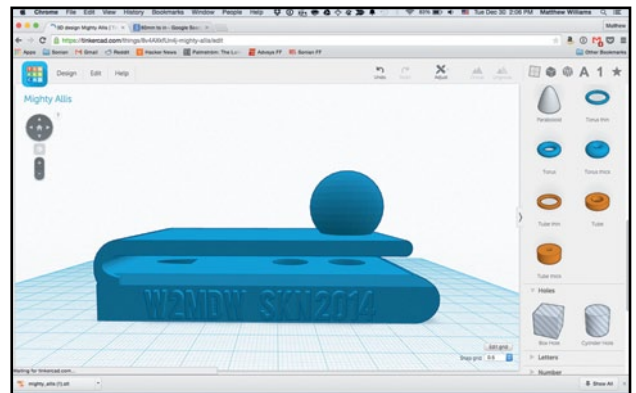
Q. What software and what 3D printer did you use to do the design?

A. The key was printed with a Da Vinci 1.0 3D Printer (<http://us.xyzprinting.com/product>). It can print an object as large as 7.8" x 7.8" x 7.8"—that's quite large for a printer under \$500.

The printer uses ABS plastic, which is the same plastic that's used in pretty much every commercially made item in your house that's made of plastic. The plastic comes in a strand on a large spool and feeds into an extruder that's heated to 212° C. The plastic is melted and extruded through a very small hole onto a hot glass surface. (The glass surface is heated to 90° C to keep the plastic from cooling too quickly, which could warp the print.) The printer builds an object layer-by-layer, with each successive layer printed on top of the previous layer.

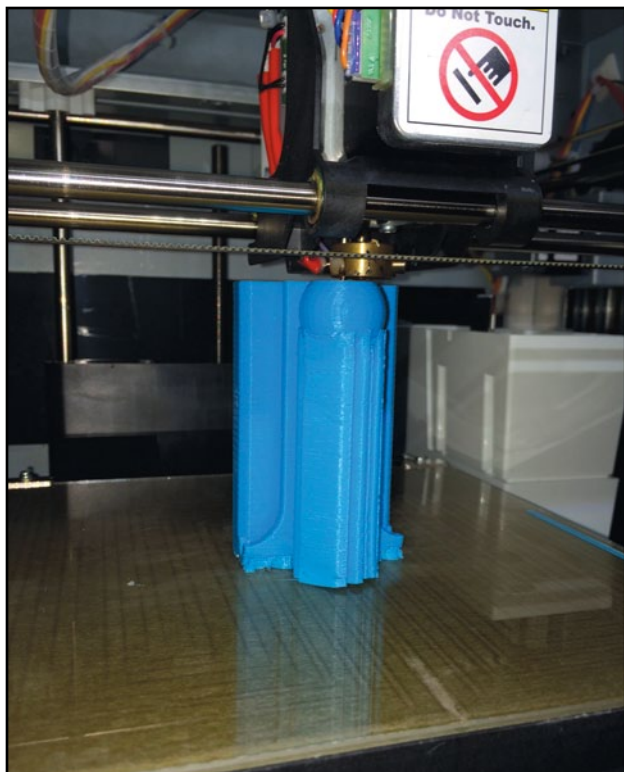
I modeled the key with TinkerCAD (<https://tinkercad.com/>). TinkerCAD is a free, online 3D modeling app. The program runs on the website, not on your computer, so you can use it even if you don't have a very powerful computer.

With the TinkerCAD app, I was able to very quickly prototype my key, print it, and figure out what was right and what was wrong about the design. After making some design changes, I printed out a second version that I was much happier with.



Key design in TinkerCAD.

The cost of plastic for each print is somewhere between \$0.75–\$1.75. That's pretty cheap, considering that I dreamt up the idea for a key and was holding it in my hand 3 hours later.



Key being printed.



Printed key on desk.



Printed key on rig.

Q. Have you made any contacts with the key yet? How does it work?

A. Yes, I have! My plan was to design a key I could use for Straight Key Night, and I did indeed make some SKN contacts with the key. I wired it up with a mono audio cable that I soldered to a few small metal clips I found in my junk box which I then hot glued to the key. I put a hole in the back of the key to easily route the cable.

I took a video of my first QSO with the key (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfhFqiTnQdQ>). Please pardon the sending. It was my first straight key QSO in more than six months, and I was pretty nervous.

Q. What other projects have you worked on or that you have planned for the 3D printer?

A. The printer was a birthday/Christmas gift from my wife. I opened it a few days before Christmas and printed a lot of ornaments for family members. I also printed a wall mount to hold the charger for my brother's electric car. The potential is limitless. I've hardly scratched the surface.

FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis Franklin, K6DF, FISTS #3076

I hope everyone enjoyed being with family and friends over the holidays. Did old St. Nick bring anyone a new rig, key, or antenna? He gave me my usual lump of coal—I guess that tells me he thought I was QLF sometime during the year, or I didn't get on the air enough during 2014. I hope to improve on that last item throughout 2015. As for the QLF, I may try using another key from my collection.

There are some interesting changes coming up this year for our North American Sprints. New "Slow-Speed Sprints" have been added to the Sprint line-up of events. Details and information about these new operating events can be found on the FISTS CW Club North American website, and on page 9 of this issue. Let's all try to operate these new Sprints as it will help those who are new to CW to get on the air and discover the fun of using CW, it will add new members in your award logs, and who knows, you may find some new CW friends in the process!

Our DX operators have really been pounding the brass as we can see by looking at the "FISTS Awards Issued" at right. Once again, the FISTS members in the European Chapter have been on the air making CW contacts. Congratulations to all of the award recipients listed below.

Sending in Your Logs

You may use the following e-mail address, (awards@fistsna.org) for sending in your award logs. Excel, Word, Open Office, and Text files are the only file types accepted. Please read the e-mail log rules on the FISTS web site (<http://www.fistsna.org/awards.html>) for details.

Send in complete logs for awards. That means all of the following information: call of station worked, date of QSO, band, FISTS #, and points

claimed for each QSO. Sending in incomplete logs will delay receiving your award.

Check the FISTS Web Page for additional information regarding current FISTS awards and how to apply for them: <http://www.fistsna.org/awards.html>.

If you have any questions about the awards that are not answered on the FISTS awards web page, feel free to e-mail your questions to me at awards@fistsna.org.

I will be looking forward to hearing and working a lot of our newer members throughout 2015 as well as many of our current and renewing members. I wish you good health, good DX, and a Happy 2015!

73, Dennis K6DF

FISTS AWARDS ISSUED: Oct 28, 2014–Jan 27, 2015

Century Award

G3XVL, EI6KH, KA3YNV

Silver Award

G0PNM, ZL2AIM, 1 X QRP, WA6OEF

WAS Award

G4LRG

Spectrum Award 40 mtr

G4MLW, WA6OEF

Millionaire Award

2E0DPH, MI0AHH

2 Million Award

M5ABN, G3YJQ

3 Million Award

G4KLE

5 Million Award

G4MLW, W4IHI

(continued next page)

(FISTS Awards continued)

6 Million Award

G4MLW, VE3HUR

7 Million Award

WA6OEF

8 Million Award

G4LHI

NEW for 2015: Slow-Speed Sprints

Did you ever want to participate in the Quarterly FISTS Sprints but felt like the speed was just too fast?

Well, starting in 2015 the Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club is adding four new Slow-Speed Sprints to the Sprint Program lineup. Sprints will be held on the first and second Saturdays. The first Saturday will be the Slow-Speed Sprint and the second Saturday will be the usual Sprint with no speed limit.

The Slow-Speed Sprint is a great opportunity for new members to experience the fun of operating FISTS Sprints and for our old hands to maybe brush off those straight keys, cooties, side-swipers, bugs, etc. and also join in the fun! In the Slow Speed Sprint, all operators should send no faster than 13 WPM and if someone is calling you or CQing at a slower speed, you should QRS to match their speed. That is the only change; all other Sprint rules, scoring, etc., will remain the same.

Certificates will be awarded to stations with the highest cumulative point totals in the QRO, QRP and Club categories for all Sprints (both slow speed and unlimited speed) in calendar year 2015. The award will be a special framed certificate acknowledging the achievement. To

win a certificate, operators must be active or life members.

If you participate in a Sprint, and submit a log showing a minimum of five (5) QSO's, you will have a chance to win a \$150 gift certificate at the end of the year. You get one chance for each Sprint log that you submit. There will be one gift certificate awarded to QRP entries and one for QRO entries. A random drawing will be held after the last Sprint of the year. Only active and life members are eligible to win the gift certificate, and winners can choose the amateur radio company from whom they want the gift certificate.

Go to <http://fistsna.org/operating.html#sprints> for full Sprint info.

Sprint Schedule for the Rest of 2015:

Spring Sprints

1700–2100 UTC

Slow-Speed Sprint 5/2/15

Unlimited Sprint 5/9/15

Summer Sprint

0000–0400 UTC

Slow-Speed Sprint 7/4/15

Unlimited Sprint 7/11/15

Fall Sprint

1700–2100 UTC

Slow-Speed Sprint 10/3/15

Unlimited Sprint 10/10/15

See you on the air!

Remember to use the FISTS frequencies:

1.808 MHz 3.558 MHz 7.028/7.058 MHz
10.118 MHz 14.058 MHz 18.085 MHz
21.058 MHz 24.908 MHz 28.058 MHz
50.058 MHz 144.058 MHz

Should You Choose a Single-Lever or Dual-Lever Paddle?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

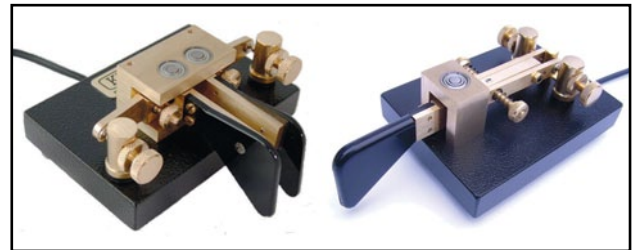
Once you've decided to begin using a paddle and electronic keyer to send Morse Code, the next thing that you must decide is whether to buy a single-lever paddle or a dual-lever paddle. The single-lever paddle has a single lever and finger piece that alternately makes contact with either the dit or the dah contact, but not both at the same time.

The dual-lever paddle, sometimes called an iambic paddle, has two levers and two independent sets of contacts. Both of those contacts can be closed at the same time, and this allows what is called iambic keying. When both contacts are closed, an iambic keyer will send alternate dits and dahs.

When one contact of a dual-lever paddle is closed, and the other is momentarily closed, an iambic keyer will insert a dit or a dah into a continuous series of dahs or dits. For example, to send a Q (dah-dah-di-dah), an operator would close the dah contact to send a series of dahs, but once the keyer starts sending the second dah, close the dit contact momentarily. When done properly, the keyer will send a dit between the second and third dahs.

So, which one should you choose? Chuck Adams, K7QO, has calculated that using a dual-lever paddle requires 11% fewer strokes than a single-paddle (http://morse-rss-news.sourceforge.net/keyerdoc/K7QO_Iambic_Paddle.pdf). If that's the case, then the choice is easy, right? After all, you want to be more efficient when sending, don't you? Maybe not.

Efficiency isn't the whole story. For one thing, it's easier to make mistakes with a dual-lever paddle. The reason for this is that the



The dual-lever paddle (left), a Kent TP-1, has two levers and two independent contacts. The single-lever paddle (right), a Kent SP-1, has a single lever, and only one set of contacts can be closed at one time.

timing of the contact closures is critical when using this kind of key. If you make a contact too early or too late, or hold down a contact for too long, the code that the keyer will generate will be wrong. For example, instead of sending a C (dah-di-dah-dit), you end up sending dah-di-dah-di-dah.

This is one reason that the winners of high-speed CW contests use single-lever paddles and not dual-lever paddles. They get penalized for making mistakes, and it's more difficult to make mistakes with single-lever paddles.

You might also want to choose a single-lever paddle if you are used to using a semi-automatic key, or "bug." Using a single-paddle key more closely resembles using a bug than does using a dual-lever paddle. If you take a look at the Vibroplex VibroKeyer, for example, you'll see how closely it resembles their semi-automatic keys.

My recommendation is to try both and see which one you like best. Some operators will prefer the single-lever paddle for its simplicity, while others will prefer the dual-lever paddle. Personally, I have several single-lever paddles and several dual-lever paddles and enjoy using both types, depending on my mood.

*Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, is the editor of **The KeyNote**, and the author of **The CW Geek's Guide to Having Fun with Morse Code**. This book is available from Amazon and from his website, www.KB6NU.com.*

North American CW Weekend June 5–7, 2015

The annual North American CW Weekend, organized by N3JT, N3AM, W4ZYT, W3LPL, and K6RB, will be held 5–7 June 2015 in the Washington, DC area. This is a month later than in previous years, to allow for more participation. The CW Weekend is for Morse Code aficionados of all stripes: members of FOC, FISTS, CWOPS, Straight Key Club, and Morse Telegraph Society, or any individual with a special interest in Morse Code communication. The weekend is predominantly a social event. There are no formal programs or presentations.

Rooms have been reserved at the Fairview Park Marriott in Falls Church, Virginia, at the special rate of \$99 per night. The special rate will be honored a day before and two days after the weekend for CW Weekend participants. A hospitality suite will be available at the Marriott for socializing and libations on Friday and Saturday evenings. Contact Marriott reservations at 800-288-9290 or 703-849-9400 and specify “The North American CW Weekend.” You may also make reservations via the web site at <http://marriott.com/wasfp/>. Enter “RIARIAA” in the space for the Group Code to obtain the special room rate.

The Weekend kicks off with an informal pizza dinner on Friday, followed Saturday morning by brunch hosted by N3JT at his McLean home. The afternoon is free for touring or shopping. Cocktails and dinner follow at 6 p.m. at Clyde’s Restaurant at Tyson’s Corners. We generally meet on Sunday morning at the Marriott for an informal breakfast before heading home. On Sunday afternoon, tours of the world-famous W3LPL station and antenna farm may be available by pre-arrangement with Frank.

The late spring is a pleasant time in the nation’s capital, and there are numerous sights, museums, and world-class shopping centers within easy access to the hotel. A modest registration of \$25 per person is requested to defray the cost of the hospitality suite and refreshments. Contact W4ZYT, Don, at w4zyt.don@gmail.com to register or for questions.

Last year, there were 32 attendees, including hams and spouses, and we’re hoping that even more will attend this year. Come and join your fellow brass pounders for a pleasant and memorable event!

CU at Dayton?

Dayton Hamvention 2015

May 15–17, 2015.
Booth N0136

We hope that you’ll stop by the booth for an eyeball QSO. If you need to renew your membership, we’ll do that as well. In addition, we’ll have items from the FISTS store available for purchase, although some items may be in limited supply. For those of you up for a challenge, we will be offering QLF certification, and there might even be a surprise or two for active FISTS members

Sprint Information

FISTS Sprints are a great way to meet other FISTS members, collect FISTS numbers, and have a lot of fun. I hope to work you in the next FISTS SPRINT.

OBJECTIVE:

To exchange specified information with as many FISTS members as possible using Morse Code only, and within the time frame stipulated.

PARTICIPANTS:

Any properly licensed amateur radio operator, FISTS member or non-member is invited to take part in the contest. At least one of the two stations in each QSO must be a FISTS member.

DATE AND TIME:

The Winter SPRINT will run from 1700 UTC to 2100 UTC on second Saturday in February.

The Spring SPRINT will run from 1700 UTC to 2100 UTC on second Saturday in May.

The Summer SPRINT will run from 2000 EDT to 2400 EDT on second Friday in July.

The Fall SPRINT will run from 1700 UTC to 2100 UTC on second Saturday in October.

BANDS:

Operation is limited to the following amateur bands: 3.5, 7, 14, 21, and 28 MHz amateur bands. Look for other participants around the FISTS frequencies: 3558, 7058, 14058, 21058, and 28058 kHz.

Work stations only once per band.

ENTRY CLASSES:

There are three entry classes: Club, QRO, and QRP.

QRO: Over 5 watts–100 watts output power. 100 watts is the maximum output power allowed.

QRP: 5 watts output power or less.

Club: (regardless of power).

Entry class **MUST** be shown on logs to be considered for entry in a particular class, or will be assumed QRO. An entry must be ONE class only, no combination of classes is allowed.

EXCHANGE:

The following information must be exchanged by both stations to count as a valid contest QSO:

For FISTS members:

RST, U.S. state/Canadian province/ DXCC country, first name, FISTS number.

For non-FISTS members:

RST, U.S. state/Canadian province/ DXCC country, first name, output power.

DX COUNTRY STATUS:

U.S. states and Canadian provinces are those states and provinces that are contiguous and found within the North American continent. DX are those entities listed in the current ARRL DXCC publication, other than the above.

MULTIPLIERS:

Each U.S. State and Canadian province counts as 1 multiplier. Count each only once, no matter how many times worked. Each DXCC entity counts as 1 multiplier. Count each no matter how many times worked.

SCORING:

Each QSO with a non-FISTS member: 2 points. Final score is total QSO points times multipliers.

CERTIFICATES:

Certificates will be awarded to the first, second, and third place finishers in each Entry Class.

LOG SUBMISSIONS:

All log entries must be received 30 days after the Sprint to be considered valid. Logs not sent to the proper address will not be considered for entry. The logs will be spot checked for accuracy and correct scoring procedures.

All logs **MUST** contain the following information to be considered for entry: Your name and call sign. Club name if entry is for a club. Your FISTS number if a member. Entry class. Your claimed score. List of claimed multipliers. The entry form is the best way to record this information.

ELECTRONIC LOGS:

We accept electronic logs in standard Cabrillo format or ASCII text files. If you're not sure about your format, please contact me before the contest entry deadline. E-logs are sent to n2ed@fistsna.org ONLY.

PAPER LOGS:

Send log and forms to: FISTS Sprint Log, c/o Ed Wlodarski N2ED, 3 Shore Rd., Andover, NJ 07821-2240.

FISTS Sprint Entry Form

Entry Class: QRO _____ QRP _____ CLUB _____

SCORING: _____ QSO points X _____ multipliers = _____ final score

CLUB Name _____ Club FISTS Number _____

Name _____ Callsign _____ FISTS # _____

Address (Street, City, State, Zip Code) _____

E-mail Address (optional) _____

MULTIPLIER CHECK-OFF LIST

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	VE	DX
CT	NY	DE	AL	AR	CA	AZ	MI	IL	CO	NB	NF/LB
MA	NJ	MD	FL	LA		ID	OH	IN	IA	NS	NT
ME		PA	GA	MS		MT	WV	WI	KS	PE	YK
NH			KY	NM		NV			MN	QC	BC
RI			NC	OK		OR			MO	ON	
VT			SC	TX		UT			NE	MB	
			TN			WA			ND	SK	
			VA			WY			SD	AB	

Please enclose paper logs ONLY, photos, comments, ideas, etc., with your entry and mail promptly to:

FISTS Sprint Logs

Ed Wlodarski N2ED
3 Shore Rd.,
Andover, NJ 07821-2240

I HAVE OBSERVED ALL FISTS SPRINT COMPETITION RULES AS WELL AS ALL REGULATIONS FOR AMATEUR RADIO IN MY COUNTRY. MY REPORT IS CORRECT AND TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE. I AGREE TO BE BOUND BY THE DECISIONS OF THE FISTS AWARDS COMMITTEE.

Date _____ Signature _____ Callsign _____

Comments:

Social Media, Bulletins, and Reflector Info

By Tim O'Conner, AC5SH, FISTS #5654,
Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club Social
Media Maven

In addition to the FISTS Updates mailing list (<http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/fists-updates>), which is available to all active (i.e., paid-up) members, FISTS offers the following to anyone who shares our love of Morse Code:

- mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/fists is our open reflector. We strongly suggest that you subscribe to this list and participate. We value your opinion! You can not only reply to posts there, but can even start threads if you wish. One must self-subscribe to participate here. Please join us on the open reflector.
- We have two Facebook pages:
 1. The page at www.facebook.com/pages/FISTS-CW-Club-The-International-Morse-Preservation-Society/343464550378 is for bulletins of interest to FISTS members. Only admins can post items to this page, but everyone can reply to them.
 2. The page at www.facebook.com/groups/FistsNA/ is our “group” page. Anyone member of the group can post an item of interest to this page. To join the group, simply click on the “Join” button.
- The K3UK Sked Page (www.obriensweb.com/sked/index.php?board=fists) is a place for FISTS members to arrange skeds for CW skill building, and seems to serve as kind of

a spotter board/short message BBS. It even has a built in private message function. This is not terribly active at this time but we are hoping ops will see its utility and that will change. This service can be used with just your callsign but it is strongly suggested that you set up a profile, that's a quick process that only takes about five minutes.

- Our Twitter handle is @FistsnaCWClub (twitter.com/FISTSNA CWClub).
- The LinkedIn FISTS group is at www.linkedin.com/groups?mostRecent=&gid=5117694.

Your participation in any or all of these forums is most encouraged. If you have or know of groups of interest to FISTS, please send me a link at AC5SH@aol.com so we can consider promoting them, and possibly becoming officially involved.

73 and hope to C U on the air soon,

Tim, AC5SH



The Worst Day *(continued from page 1)*

Jim got on the air first with his Small Wonder Labs DSW rig putting out a stout 2 watts. Within a minute he had snagged Ben, DL5ANT, in Germany. Jim got a 569 and Ben was into us with a booming 599.

I was next up because Jim only wanted to make one QSO.

I plugged the antenna into my HB-1B and immediately heard G3VBS coming in from England! He was right there on 14.058, the frequency I was on when I last used the HB-1B.

I had some trouble hearing him, but it was all me and my inexperience. I still have a long way to go on my CW journey. I did hear my RST at 549 and I gave him a well-deserved 599 as his signal was strong.

We packed up as soon as I finished and headed for a warm cup of coffee. It may have been the worst day of the year, weather-wise, but it was a pretty good day for me, ham radio-wise.

You can find a video of our adventure at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LQG-EgXDoE>.



The author and Jim, W1PID (left), were the only two hardy enough—or foolish enough—to brave the cold conditions at Profile Falls, NH.

FISTS PHOTOS

Bob, WC3O, FISTS #10933, sent us the photos below. He writes, “When I saw your e-mail address (cwgeek@kb6nu.com), I thought you might get a kick out my old license plate so I’m sending you a picture of it. I still have the plates, but I have since sold my faithful old Ranger and bought a new truck and got new plates. My new plate is “DIT DIT.”



Do you have any CW-related photos to share? If so, e-mail a high-resolution image (at least 966 pixels wide) to keynote@fistsna.org and put “FISTS FOTOS” in the subject line. Include some info about the photo (e.g., when and where it was taken, what’s in the photo).

QRZ FISTS DE KARL *(continued from page 5)*

does get away from us, so it might take a day or two to reflect some additions to the list. The Active Member List on our website (<http://fistsna.org/howdoi.html#memlist>) is updated only quarterly. The WM7D Search List provides an up-to-date list of our active chapter members.

- **Mailing list.** If you have e-mail capabilities, I wholeheartedly suggest you subscribe to our “FISTS Updates” e-mail list. To get on the list, send an e-mail to Tim, AC5SH, AC5SH@aol.com. Only official business and items of interest to members are posted to the list, to ensure you will not be bombarded with a lot of trash e-mails.

Slow-Speed Sprints and Other FISTS Events

Ed, N2ED, our Sprints coordinator, has set up slow-speed sprints for members who operate at a slower speed (see article, page 9).

The January Get Your Feet Wet Activity Day was great from my perspective. I had 13 great QSO's, five of which were with FISTS members. It's all about getting on the air, regardless of our operating skill level. Getting Morse Code on the air is a big part of what we are.

And, finally...

- We will be in Dayton for Hamvention 2015. See box on page 11 for more info.
- If your club has a FISTS number, consider putting the club call—KN0WCW—on the air during one of our on-air events, or any day, for that matter. These contacts give points for those seeking awards and can be a fun event to take part in. If there is enough interest, we might even schedule some special on-air events.

- Looking ahead to 2017, FISTS will celebrate its 30th anniversary and our chapter will celebrate its 20th anniversary. If you have any ideas on how to make 2017 something special for our chapter, please contact me. One idea already suggested would be to have KN0WCW operated from every state during the year and creating a “Worked KN0WCW in All States” award.
- Sadly, this will be the last issue some FISTS receive. We will only allow a member to be 6 months behind before they are removed from the mailing list. This is only fair to the dues paying members.

Until next issue, I wish you lots of time to get on the air, great band conditions, and fantastic QSO's.

73 de Karl, KB1DSB



Karl Zuege, KB1DSB

**We need articles and reviews for
*The KeyNote!***

**Send your Word or text files to
Dan Romanckik at cwgeek@kb6nu.com**

FISTS Store

Please, if ordering by mail, call Karl, KB1DSB (802) 558-2148 before ordering to ensure items you wish to order are in stock, unless you are paying by PayPal. If you pay with PayPal, the system will know if the items are in stock.

For mailed orders, make check payable to "FISTS CW Club." Mail your check along with your order to:

FISTS CW Club, c/o Karl Zuege KB1DSB, 478 CR 53, Robersville, AL 35652-3503.

All prices listed include shipping in US only. For Canada, Mexico, and DX contact Karl for additional shipping costs.

FISTS Store Close-Out Sale!

We are holding a close-out sale on the remaining stock of some of the store items. **When these items are sold, they are gone and will not be re-ordered.**

If you intend to order by mail, contact Karl, KB1DSB, to check item availability and to hold the item(s) for you. E-mail him at karl@fistsna.org or call him at (802)-558-2148.

The price of each item includes U.S. postage ONLY.

- **Gray "Know Code" Sweat shirt, sizes: XL and 2XL, \$10.00 ea.**

Sweatshirts are gray in color with blue lettering in the same front and back designs as KNOW CODE T-shirt. (Front: "I'm Proud to be a Know Code Ham," Back: FISTS Club Key and "Join the Code Crusade.")

SKU# NA004S

- **Black "Know Code" T-shirt, sizes: medium, Large and X Large, \$4.00 ea.**

Black T-shirt is printed in silver front and back. Same design as Gray sweat shirt.

SKU# NA003T

- **25th Anniversary T-Shirt. Sizes: Small and Medium, \$5.00 ea.**

Heather gray, Gildan® brand, ultra cotton, 50% cotton/50% polyester, preshrunk.



SKU# NA025T

- **25th Anniversary Polo Shirt. Sizes: Small and Medium, \$7.00 ea.**



SKU# NA025P

FISTS Store

Shirts

White T-Shirt with Color FISTS Key Logo



Gildan® brand, 50/50 preshrunk, white color, no pocket. Color FISTS logo on front only.

SKU# NA015T

Cost is \$11 each including postage

Sizes: M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

Light Blue Polo Shirt —FISTS CW Club Key Logo

Jerzees® brand, 50%cotton/50% polyester. FISTS logo embroidered over left breast, no pocket.



SKU# NA001P

Cost: \$15.50 each, including postage

Sizes: M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

The Original Digital Mode T-Shirt

Light sand color made by Gildan®. 100% Heavy-weight cotton, preshrunk, without pocket.



Front



Back

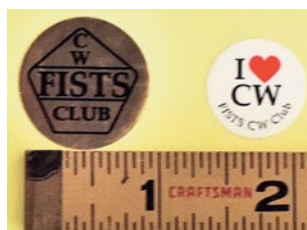
SKU# NA014T

Cost is \$9 each, including postage

Sizes: M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

FISTS Store

Stickers



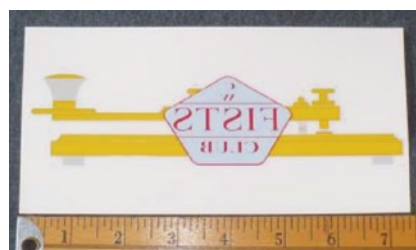
Metallic gold logo FISTS CW Club sticker (above-left)

SKU# NA007
200/package
Cost: \$3.50

I ❤️ CW Stickers/ 3/4" round sticker (above- right)

SKU# NA008
200/package
Cost: \$3.50

Reverse Vinyl Window Clings



FISTS CW Club Key Logo reverse vinyl window cling. 7 1/2" x 3 3/4"

SKU# NA009
Cost: \$1.00 each

I ❤️ CW, FISTS CW Club reverse vinyl window cling. 3" diameter



SKU# NA010
Cost: \$1.00 each

FISTS CW Club Key Logo Patch

Embroidered cloth patch. Can be ironed or sewn on.

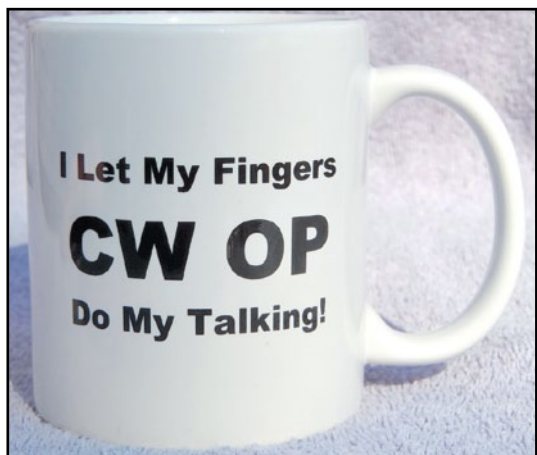


SKU# NA011
\$1.00 each

FISTS Store

Mugs

I Let My Fingers Do My Talking Coffee Mug (NEW!)



11 oz white coffee mug is dishwasher safe and has “CW OP” with “I Let My Fingers Do My Talking” on one side and “The International Morse Preservation Society” with the FISTS CW Club Key logo on the other.

SKU# NA016CM
Cost: \$14.00

FISTS Travel Mug



This 12oz Travel Mug says “ I ❤️ CW FISTS CW Club.”

This mug is perfect for portable CW operating.

SKU# NA013
Cost: \$5.50

Pins

FISTS CW CLUB Logo Pin



Pentagon, blue enamel, cloisonne/gold metal, with tie-tack-type pin back.

SKU#NA005
Cost: \$1.50

“I ❤️ CW, FISTS CW Club”



White 3/4” enamel cloisonne pin with tie-tack-type pin on back.

SKU# NA006
Cost: \$1.50

FISTS Store

Miscellaneous Items

The K7QO Code Course and K7QO Upgrade Project

Thanks to K7QO's generosity, FISTS has the distribution rights to the famous K7QO Code Course (Farnsworth method) on CD in MP3 format. When you complete the program by practicing two or three times a day for 10 minutes each session, you will soon be on the air at a comfortable conversational speed.

The Code Course CD starts out assuming the person is a total beginner and sends repetitive letters, numbers and words.

The Upgrade Training CD is the General Exam questions and answers sent in Morse Code. Since the K7QO Upgrade Training Project CD starts at a speed of about 10 wpm and is plain text, it is not for beginners. However, it is excellent practice for those who know the code and want to upgrade their skills. It is also a good refresher course in electronics for those who have been licensed a while. You may be surprised at how much of the General class information you have forgotten!

Please make sure your CD player or computer can play MP3 files!



SKU# NA012.

One 2-CD set \$3.50, 2 sets \$4.50, 3 sets \$5.50

We are always getting new items.

**Shop the FISTS Store to show your support and membership in Americas Chapter,
FISTS CW Club!**

To Join or Renew Your FISTS Membership

If you live in North, South or Central America, you may join the Americas Chapter of FISTS. Membership is open to all people interested in Morse Code, irrespective of their speed and ability. You can download a North American membership application from <http://fistsna.org/pdfdocs/nafists.pdf> or use the application form on the inside back cover of *The KeyNote*. You can also have an application e-mailed to you by sending your name and address to Jim Ranieri, AA9LS, aa9ls@turbotoads.com, or mail a SASE to Jim at 33778 Rebecca Rd., Kingston IL 60145 and Jim will send you an application via return postal mail.

The membership fee to join or renew is \$15.00 per year for regular membership or \$10.00 per year for college student. This includes having *The KeyNote* mailed to you. You may join or renew for up to 5 years at one time. Family members of a current dues paying FISTS member may join and receive a membership number without paying additional dues, but only one issue of *The Keynote* will be mailed to a household.

The membership fee to join or renew as a regular member and receive *The KeyNote* electronically (PDF file) is \$10.00 per year. Again, you may join or renew for up to 5 years.

FISTS numbers are not reassigned, so if you had a number in the past and renew your membership, you will retain the same membership number.

If you are 65 to 79 years old, regular membership is \$10 per year, and you may renew for more than one year at \$10 per year. Please note your date of birth on your application/renewal that you include with your check or money order if renewing by mail, or in the comments section if paying by PayPal (see right).

If you are age 80 and older, or under age 18, or have a family membership, membership is free. If you qualify for a free renewal, please drop Karl KB1DSB a note by email or by postal mail around the time of your renewal each year. Let us know you are still interested in CW and FISTS so we can update your membership info and keep you on the Active Members List.

To join or renew, send a check or money order with your membership fee, along with your membership application, to Karl Zuege KB1DSB, 478 CR 53, Rogersville, AL 35652-3503. Please make checks payable to "FISTS CW Club." Include your call sign and FISTS number (if you are currently a member) on the memo line.

If you wish to pay your membership fee using PayPal, go to <http://fistsna.org/howdoi.html>. Use the proper PayPal box (JOIN or RENEW) to select the number of years you wish to Join or Renew as a Regular, 65 to 80 year old member or Student member. Enter your CALL and NAME to JOIN or enter your CALL, NAME, and FISTS Number if RENEWING in the space provided. For the 65-79 age group also include your date of birth, please. Be sure to include your home mailing address if it is different from the one you use for PayPal. Then click "Pay Now."



FISTS CW CLUB Membership Application/Renewal



For North, Central, and South America including all territories and islands.

Callsign _____ FISTS # _____ Name on the Air _____

Mailing Name and Address:

The following info provides a synopsis of members' working conditions:

Rig(s) _____

Antennas _____

Other club affiliations (ARLL, RSGB, etc.) _____

*Birthdate _____ Phone _____

**E-mail address (if available) _____

Please check the appropriate box and enclose annual subscription in U.S. funds (pays for *The KeyNote* newsletters and awards).

Under age 18 or 80 & over—FREE*

College student or age 65 to 79—\$10.00*

Regular Membership with mailed *The Keynote*—\$15

Regular membership with PDF file download of *The KeyNote*—\$10.00**

Signature _____ Date _____

Please make checks payable to "FISTS CW CLUB" and send to:
Karl Zuege KB1DSB, 478 CR 53, Rogersville AL 35652-3503 USA

*Birthdate required
**E-mail address required

Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club
c/o Karl Zuege, KB1DSB
478 CR 53
Rogersville, AL 35652-3503
www.fistsna.org
karl@fistsna.org

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PLEASE LOOK AT YOUR RENEWAL DATE ON THE MAILING LABEL

Estimated Delivery of 2015 Issues

Issue #1: March 16, 2015
Issue #2: June 1, 2015
Issue #3: September 14, 2015
Issue #4: December 14, 2015

Send in your stories and photos for *The KeyNote!*



When you've worked a FISTS, you've worked a friend.