

The KeyNote



Newsletter of the Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club—The International Morse Preservation Society
Issue #1, 2020

From the Editor: Flying Blind

In the middle of fulfilling one of my New Year's resolutions for 2020—renovating my ham station—I heard the repeated, unanswered call for CQ on 40m. Although the transmitter and receiver were on and the straight key plugged in, my station was otherwise in disarray. My computer with electronic logbook and automatic QRZ.com lookup was off and to the side. I didn't even have a pencil and paper. Even so, I went for the QSO. I slid my straight key into position and answered the call for CQ.

The QSO went well. We exchanged the usual name and QTH, RST, some details on our equipment, and how long we had been in ham radio. In short, we had a very enjoyable exchange. When it was over, I picked up a pen and pad and wrote down the logbook information for inputting into a PC-based logbook later. And that's when it hit me. I actually enjoyed flying blind.

A typical, computer-enhanced QSO goes something like this for me: I hear a CQ, key in the call sign to my database/lookup program, and instantly view the operator specifics, such as photographs of the ham shack and perhaps the operator engaged in some other hobby, as well as membership in FISTS and SKCC. Then I decide whether to answer the CQ. Admittedly, it's a backwards approach to establishing communications with another ham, but it takes all of the spontaneity and focus out of the equation.

Now, with my ham station intact, I have the laptop on for logging after the fact. Although I've

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"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 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

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FISTS Store Manager

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

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Club Presentation Packets

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Code Buddy Volunteers and Buddies

<http://www.fistsna.org/codebuddy.html>

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Get Your Feet Wet Activity Day/G3ZQS Memorial Straight Key Contest

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The KeyNote Newsletter

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

**NOTE: Image files need to be high resolution
JPGs or 300 dpi TIF files at least 5" wide.**

**Send your Word or text files to
keynote@fistsna.org**

The KeyNote

The Newsletter of the Americas Chapter of FISTS

Issue #1, 2020

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Send articles to:

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Americas Chapter, President's Message

by Joe Falcone, N8TI

For some reason, I am really looking forward to Spring this year. Perhaps the reason is that we have not had a very cold and snowy winter in Michigan this year and we have had several warmer days that feel springlike. In addition, the groundhog has predicted an early spring and that is good enough for me.

With warmer weather comes the feeling that I should be outside engaging in some QRP ham radio in the park. I have a couple of QRP rigs, but my favorite has always been the MFJ 9040. That radio has a real nice receiver and easily puts out around 5 watts. I think that today you can still buy one of those little QRP transceivers for about \$200. If you look on eBay, it is easy to pick them up for less than \$100. That model radio, plus a simple dipole or a random length wire with a small antenna tuner will let you work all over the U.S. on 40 meters with CW and easily into Europe (using the MFJ 9020) on 20 meters. The only other equipment you need is your key and some sort of small battery that puts out around 12 volts to complete the setup.

Half the fun of doing QRP in the park is getting the equipment together, boxing it up and planning where and when you are going to do your little expedition. It always amazes me how five watts and a random wire antenna with a tuner can snag you contacts all over the U.S. on 40 meters on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

Of course, one of the nice aspects of the expedition to the park is that it is normally very nice to get

out in the good weather beneath the open sky and near the trees. Trees are nice, of course, because they double as antenna supports. However, getting a wire up 15 feet or so will easily do the trick. Some of my best memories of ham radio are the trips that I have made to the park for three or four hours with my MFJ 9040.

That is the nice thing about CW. The equipment can be simple and yet the challenges can be great. For example, there is nothing wrong with setting a goal of five or ten different states that you wish to contact. Admittedly, that is easier done when there is some sort of QRP contest going on, but as we know, your signal may sound very loud when it bounces up and down a couple of times and happens to come down right on someone who is seeking a contact. In addition, what a great way to use that key you normally have sitting around collecting dust because it is just not your favorite. The same goes for the manual antenna tuner you have not used in years. QRP CW ham radio is just a lot of fun, and I hope you give it a try this spring and summer.

There is another subject I would like to touch on. When I read what operators say on Facebook or on the various ham radio sites, I am always surprised how many complaints there are about rudeness on the air. It is no wonder why new operators are afraid to start broadcasting for fear that they will be harassed or insulted.

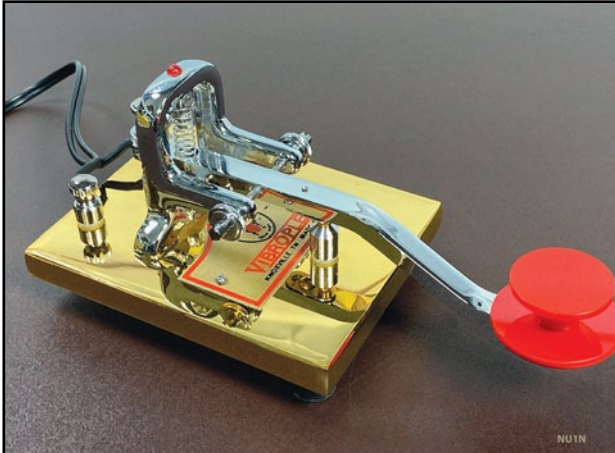
Luckily, this rudeness has not infected CW operators. The only thing I do not understand, however, is why the newer operators are still afraid to work CW when they are learning the code and are still very slow. I cannot imagine that there is anyone who does not have 15 minutes to help a new operator through his or her first few contacts. While there are CW

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From the Editor (continued)

been tempted at times of high QRM/QRN and QSB, I no longer look up particulars on QRZ.com until after the QSO is over. Flying blind, it turns out, is fun after all.

73, Bryan, NU1N



Vibroplex Straight Key
From the collection of NU1N

Presidents Message (continued)

operators that are natural CW operators and can read 45 wpm code and do their tax return at the same time, most of us have to spit out our gum and do nothing but concentrate on translating the code that is coming through the speaker or headphones. If there is an operator who is slow, it is our duty to help the guy or gal out by providing them with a non-judgmental contact. This is a big deal to that new operator. It also should be a big deal to the person on the other side of the QSO. We should be honored to be someone's first contact. I am sure we all remember our first contact. I do. My first contact was with Earl, N8LLA, a gentleman who is now a silent key. We took our code tests together and I still think of him fondly. (He had a great CW call sign, as you can see.) So, let's make sure that the memories that we give someone else are just as pleasant and long lasting.

73, de Joe

FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis K6DF

Congratulations to all who earned operating awards from December 1, 2019 to February 15, 2020.

Hopefully, by the time this *Keynote* reaches you the weather will be much better in your area. The bands have not been all that good during the winter months. There have been a few days here and there of some nice openings but most of the time the bands have been rather poor. When you do get on the air, try making some calls on the FISTS frequencies to work a few of our new members listed elsewhere in this issue of the *Keynote*. Help our new members earn their FISTS Key Patch!

New Members can earn a free FISTS Club Key Patch for making their first 10-minute CW QSO with any FISTS member on any band, so get on the air and make your first 10-minute QSO with a FISTS member to earn your free KEY Patch!

New Member Patches Earned:

KJ7GNB William—QSO with K6DF
KF0AX Phil—QSO with K1NIE
KA2GSM Carl—QSO with K6DF
K2MZ Robb—QSO with KA8HFN
AE6C Dennis—QSO with K6DF
N7HTS Gary—QSO with K6DF

Award certificates are available free of charge to all club members with current dues, so dust off those keys and get on the air and start making contacts. Try using the free "Log Converter" program to track your club awards, and it's also a good general logging program as well. The author of Log Converter, Graham G3ZOD, is constantly providing updates and improvements to the program. This program was last updated on Jan 25, 2020 to version 3.8.1. This FREE software will track your FISTS awards automatically and allow you to send in your award logs to the FISTS Awards Manager at the click of a button! The best thing about it is...it's FREE! Log Converter is available for download on the Americas Chapter web site.

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WELCOME NEW FISTS AMERICAS CHAPTER MEMBERS

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C	Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
AG7SU	19702	Tyler	WA	NJ3B	19745	Jim	PA
KK4ITX	19703	John	FL	W6KPJ	19746	Kevin	CA
KJ7GNB	19704	William	MT	N0KMO	19747	Jeremiah	CO
KC3OIV	19705	Matt	MD	K1KL	19748	Kevin	NH
K1ETA	19706	Michael	RI	KJ4BQS	19749	Derek	AZ
KJ7KKD	19707	Craig	MT	W9ESX	19750	Robert	IL
N3IOE	19708	Charlie	PA	WA6DDO	19751	Edward	CA
KE4MHP	19709	Tony	KY	N0MRK	19752	Mark	CO
KN4RD	19710	Russ	FL	AG6E	19753	David	CA
NS5W	19711	John	LA	WB7GR	19754	Greg	WY
KD2NFS	19712	Robert	NY	K5QR	19755	Andy	TX
NY9R	19713	Gary	IL	WB9SBD	19756	Joe	WI
KA2GSM	19714	Carl	NC	W9ET	19757	Club	WI
WB8JB	19715	Jim	OH	A14OO	19758	Cynthia	VA
AC9NW	19716	James	IL	NOCALL	19759	Jonathan	MD
N1GDO	19717	Frank	MA	KA1DTG	19760	John	CT
WF5J	19718	Mahlon	TX	W0OX	19761	Raymond	CO
AI7NN	19719	Casey	OR	VE9TS	19762	Mark	NB
K7ROT	19720	Ian	ID	WB4IR	19763	Robert	TN
K4OY	19721	David	GA	K5SAA	19764	Scott	AR
KM6OCN	19722	Thomas	CA	WB7DWF	19765	David	WA
KN4DOW	19723	Ken	FL	N0MII	19766	Jeff	MO
KD7BTY	19724	Paul	CA	K5YH	19767	William	AR
KB3SAR	19725	Jason	NY	KN6GFG	19768	Erin	CA
N1MHV	19726	Bob	GA	N4BA	19769	Frederick	VA
KT8G	19727	Jeff	MI	KA1YQC	19770	Mark	MA
N3WT	19728	John	MD	K7MTD	19771	David	MT
N4VT	19729	David	FL	K5VHC	19772	Thomas	TX
W1ZRZ	19730	Kerry	NC	KE4SKZ	19773	John	VA
AE6C	19731	Dennis	CA	N4TL	19774	Tom	NC
N7NS	19732	Tom	WY	KN4CFD	19775	Michael	FL
N1KWV	19733	Herbert	CT	VA2SOB	19776	Claude	QB
N5RTR	19734	Gene	TX	VA3KOT	19777	John	ON
W4ZW	19735	George	NC	KG5JEN	19778	Richard	NY
KJ7LMZ	19736	Cody	MT	N1CCK	19779	Nick	CT
AB4KA	19737	James	FL	KX4BE	19780	Peter	TN
VA3GSE	19738	Florea	ON	N8BEG	19781	Rob	MI
W2JVO	19739	Jonathan	NY	N4EII	19782	Al	NC
NC1A	19740	George	NJ	W3ZQN	19783	Robert	PA
KB7LRZ	19741	Robert	WA	KE4MD	19784	Jeter	FL
W4HTM	19742	Ray	AL	KC8OYE	19785	Tim	MI
KA8SBI	19743	Jeffrey	OH	KW6G	19786	Charles	CA
KJ6RVK	19744	Matthew	CA	W1FSH	19787	William	MA

(continued on page 6)

New Members (continued)

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
KD5ZCQ	19788	John	TX
W5WIZ	19789	Clint	TX
WR5E	19790	Jeffrey	CO
K1FR	19791	Jesse	VA
W9YY	19792	Jack	IL
AC4A	19793	David	NC
AA5XA	19794	Eddie	AR
W8NEE	19795	John	OH
KE9YK	19796	Chris	IN
AJ0V	19797	Richard	KS
KE8ICG	19798	Jeff	MI
NS7X	19799	Maryann	NM
K5WRL	19850	William	TX
W0ILC	19851	Dan	MO
N7HTS	19852	Gary	WY
N8ART	19853	Art	OH

December 1, 2019 to February 15, 2020

FISTS Awards (continued)

Look for the download link on the main web page just below the “Welcome New Members” list.

Be sure to check the Americas Chapter web pages for updated awards information and how to apply for them:

<http://www.fistsna.org/awards.html>

If you have any award questions or suggestions, send e-mail to me at: awards@fistsna.org

73, Dennis K6DF ... (30)

FISTS AWARDS ISSUED: Dec 1, 2019–Feb 15, 2020

Century Award: IU0AHC, LB6GG

Silver Award: LB6GG

Diamond Award: FG8NY

Millionaire Award: IU0AHC, JK7UST, LB6GG,
K3JHT

2 Million Award: JK7UST, LB6GG

3 Million Award: G4RHR, JK7UST

4 Million Award: WI5H, MI0WWB

5, 6 Million Award: WI5H

7 Million Award: WI5H, FG8NY

8, 9, 10, 11 Million Award: FG8NY

WAS Award: OK1KW

RCC 80M Award: IK

WAS 15M Award: F6HKA

Spectrum 15M Sticker: FG8NY

Perpetual Prefix Award: WI5H, PA0VLD

Prefix 50 Sticker: WI5H

My Roundabout Route into CW

by Joe Falletta, W6UD0

I didn't think I'd ever want to operate CW when I first got into ham radio. While my buddies were getting their Novice tickets and going on the air with rock-bound rigs like the Heath HW-16, I went for the Technician license and worked two-meter AM with a used Heath Two-er and a ground plane antenna. I had a great time yakking with the local hams.

That was all I felt I needed, until a little while later my good friend Con, then-WN6TGJ, talked me into joining him to work on our code and going for the Advanced ticket.

For me, that was love at first dit. After a month or so, my speed was up to 25 wpm. I got my license, and bought a new Ten-Tec PM-2 QRP rig.

I was a CW op!

By that time I was operating from my USAF barracks room at Offutt AFB in Omaha, NE with a homebrew dipole run out my window to a tree. I had some great ragchews back then with stations all over the U.S. and Canada.

Fast forward to around Y2K. I'd sold my gear and hadn't operated for some 20 years, save for the occasional SSB and AM QSOs from friends' or club shacks. CW was a distant memory.

Then a good friend found an old HW-16 he'd kept in his garage for years. We threw some wire up in his garage rafters and fired it up. We weren't even sure the tubes would light after all that time, so we

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My Roundabout Route (continued)

were both pleasantly surprised by the number of CW stations we picked up. More than that: I was actually able to copy some of them in my head!

A few months later a ham buddy, Kazuo, WA6BCC (SK), gave me a great deal on some ham gear he was getting rid of: I got everything I needed but wire for the antenna and a key.

Fast forward to now. My love for CW continues and has grown stronger with each passing year. Despite the poor conditions near the bottom of this solar cycle, there are still contacts to be made.

At 72 years old now, I'm hoping to be around and still working CW for the next solar peak.

Having a Mentor Can Make a Difference. It Did for Me!

Cameron Bailey, KT3A

Since I could remember, radio was magical to me. Today it seems to be taken for granted due to the massive connections we have with each other via the Internet and wireless technologies. It remains to this day a wonder in my mind.

In grade school, our class read a short story of a boy who was a ham radio operator who relayed a distress call coming from a ship and helped save lives because he passed on the distress call to the Coast Guard. I was impressed with the story and since I had been listening to shortwave signals and broadcast radio, I wanted to progress to the next level and become one of these ham radio operators.

Fast forward to High School, 1974, where I learned that one of the teachers had a Hammarlund HQ-170 receiver set up with a Marconi-type wire between two light poles outside the classroom. He was a ham radio operator and told us the first step was to learn Morse Code. We were already in an electronics program, so he felt we needed to overcome the skill of receiving Morse Code and then worry about simple theory. A fellow student and I decided to learn this strange language of beeps. We made out index

cards with dots and dashes and then wrote what they meant on the back of the card. We would quiz each other but it seemed you needed a special gift because we had a tough time learning with the cards and it was impossible for us to copy anything we heard over the radio. We both gave up and with it the dream to become ham radio operators.

Time went on after graduation and eventually I grew tired of uninteresting jobs and committed myself to find employment in the electronics field. I was lucky enough to find a company that produced programmable controllers for industrial automated assembly lines. I learned there were several of these ham radio operators working there. I was informed one of them was very active in the local club and on the air, although he was a Technician class. He got word I wanted to speak with him about his hobby. He asked me why I never tried to get my license and I told him about my brick wall of trying to learn the required 5 WPM Morse Code. When he heard how we were trying to learn, he said that he could teach me how to receive Morse Code. He said it is not hard if you learn the correct way.

True to his word, we sat over our lunch time together. He had a code practice oscillator. I had a pencil and paper. He would send a group of letters and numbers in bunches until I got them and then he would move to the next group of characters. You see, I was learning visually and trying to apply a visual process to one where it was an auditory process. With an auditory process you hear, and the muscle memory responds to move the pencil. No translation required. My brain was taking a visual picture, converting it to sound, and trying to translate that whole thing to move the pencil. All this after the character was sent!

In about a week, I was able to copy the entire alphabet, numbers, and some punctuation slightly faster than 5 WPM!

The mentor made the difference. I had the ability all along. I just needed him to help me discover it.

I wanted to start out with a Technician class, which meant going to the FCC instead of getting the Novice license with a local volunteer

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Having a Mentor (continued)

examiner. At that time, a volunteer examiner could give you the 5 WPM test and you took the Novice class written test that was sent to the examiner. Any upgrade had to be done at an FCC field office.

In 1979, I passed the two written tests for the Technician class license along with the required Morse Code element of 5 WPM. After about eight weeks, I received my first call sign, N3AUO.

I then got on 2m FM with a converted Gonset Communicator III using crystals. I built a Conar 2m FM transceiver and along with a few other commercial transceivers, I was an active Technician class Amateur Radio operator. I wanted more and the Extra class license was my goal. I plugged away at the code practice and in less than a year, I was an Amateur Extra class operator. I got on HF with an FT-101E using SSB and proceeded to have a blast. The sunspots were in very high numbers. Since I had one of the first "N" call signs issued I was often accused of being an unlicensed operator! I loved SSB and the bands were in great shape in the early 80's. But there was this guilty feeling inside of me that said, "Here is an Extra class operator who doesn't use Morse Code!"

I learned the Morse because I had to and not for any affection I had for the mode. After some thought, I decided I wanted to be a real Extra and get on the air with it. I think my key fright was worse than my mike fright. But I made my first CW contact two years after being licensed. It seems that I was pretty good at it and I found it to be FUN! It became more fun when I desired to hear and work QRP stations as a goal. I later became one of those QRP guys and my main mode of operating became Morse Code. It still is. I used a straight key for about 15 years and later learned to use paddles and even a semi-automatic keyer. I relearned to copy Morse with a keyboard. I am still learning today to copy directly in my head. You can always learn more when it comes to this wonderful mode. I find it very rewarding and relaxing.

I would have missed out on over 30 years of Amateur radio fun had it not been for a willing mentor to

step into my life and spend some time with me. Even if Morse is no longer a required element to obtaining a license, there is still a lot of interest out there to learn Morse Code. This is true among young people too. Be that mentor. This article is dedicated to my mentor (or Elmer), Ray Shaub, W3AXC as well as to the hundreds like him over the years who mentored others in the skill and art of Morse Code as well as Amateur radio.

Note: The ARRL has a program to recognize Elmer's for their mentorship. If you have an Elmer or mentor who made a difference for you, have them recognized. See <http://www.arrl.org/elmer-award>.

My CW History and Progress

by Paul Allen, K7VIQ

My interest in radio started as a licensed CB user (KBPN-1418) and I went by 'Little John.' I was rather discouraged by the language and lack of courtesy though, and wished for an alternative. Ham radio was the ticket, although it was several years until I got around to studying for a license I finally did it.

I have long wished to know Morse Code. As a young teen, I looked at the chart in our encyclopedia set trying to drill it in my head. I soon had a starter key along the line of an MFJ. My oscillator to go with it was a Heath Kit with a built-in amp and speaker. I also had a record set that I played, but I could never get into the swing of learning the code and only learned a few characters. Having a hard time learning more, I gave up. But from time to time when I thought of getting a ham license, so did the need of learning code, and that was something I thought I could never do. But the time came when code was no longer a requirement.

I was finally licensed as KB7VIQ on June 6, 1993, as a No-code Tech. When talking to my fiancé before marrying in 1999 I found she had also been interested in becoming a ham. It wasn't until March 14,

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My CW History (continued)

2007, that Kathy became KD7PJW and I took the call K7VIQ as we took and passed the General exam. A Kenwood FT-DX-450 and G5RV antenna we had never pulled in much, and we were never able to get out, so were solely on VHF/UHF. My Brother Cecil (KB7ZXH) and I had a backyard repeater for years but due to inactivity we took it down. After that, we did not get on the air anymore for years due to local friends moving on from ham radio.

To have another emergency radio option around, my Wife and I decided to get a couple GMRS radios (WQYS231) along with my new buddy Jay L., who decided to do the same. Jay also wanted to get a ham license, so in order to support him, I studied to take the Amateur Extra exam. Alas, although he has not given up, he has not been able to spend the time to get a license. Without my buddy Jay though, I would have never even tried for the Extra. Thank you, Jay! Having already put forth the effort to be ready, I decided to go ahead and take the exam. On March 30, 2019, I was able to become an Amateur Extra. Taking the Extra was definitely something I thought I would never do, but I did it. Never give up on a dream, fulfilling dreams leads to the confidence to fulfil more.

Now that I am an Extra, and even though it is no longer needed, that next elusive childhood dream to learn Morse Code still calls for me. I am now putting a lot more effort into actually doing it. I have apps on my phone, links to online training sites, I bought a Western Electric AT&T straight key, also 3D printed plastic dual-paddle key and oscillators. A shiny new brass Kent Dual Paddle is already on my radar as a self reward. I joined some FB and other online groups including joining FISTS (19640) to help with motivation to make it happen. I am still learning the basics, but I am learning. Now I have more hope than ever that it will happen, no not just to get my license, but because I want to finish that childhood goal. To be a 'know code' ham.



Bryan, Your Radio Prayers Have Been Answered

by John Jaminet, W3HMS

On page 11 of Keynote #4, Bryan NU1N stated: "...I think what might help to bring back the magic into CW and Ham Radio would be a class of operator that works strictly with home-brew or at least bare-bones transmitters, receivers, and antenna systems."

Well, Bryan, your prayers have been answered without the need of such a license class because if a person is General Class or above they can operate the new bands at 630 meters...472-479 Khz or 2200 meters at 135.7 to 137.8 KHz. I know this to be true for I have made 59 QSOs with under 1 watt ERP on 630 meters, mostly in JT9 but also in CW, FT8, and WSPR rcv/xmt from the same station.

The reason for this to be the case is the paucity or almost complete absence from the market place of ALL that we are used to buying like antenna matchers, both manual and automatic, SWR and RF power meters, field strength meters, sensitive receive converters, transceivers or transverters and linear amplifiers. Needed at LF are variometers, which are also absent from the ham market but home-brew is most effective and not that expensive.

Building the antenna system for these bands is a real challenge because even the 630 m band needs a full-size vertical to be just under 500 ft!! Imagine asking your XYL for the \$n million to build it in your back yard...not to mention the blessing of the Town Fathers!! Happily, better solutions exist for

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Bryan, Your Radio Prayers (continued)

my antenna as my lot is a standard size lot. The 475 Khz/1800KHz antenna is about 126 ft long working with only two radials.

This is a real challenge for me but I have been inspired by the fact that I built a 500 watt EME system for 1296 MHz starting when I was 72 yrs old that has made 864 QSOs with 188 different stations. There is good news here as well in that the EME station was costly but LF seems to be much more reasonable in cost.

The challenge for FISTS members could be two-fold:

1. Use more CW on the band and yes 7 KHz is enough unless FISTS is "too successful!!"
2. Use JT9 and take full advantage of the power of this very narrow data mode.

An additional impediment is that ARRL, unlike with the introduction of SSB, has provided no apparent technical leadership to help hams establish their stations by using such classic methods as QST articles, an LF Column, appearance of tech info in the ARRL Handbook, or all the above. Thus the default has become the Internet where Googling on "472 Khz.org" or specific items like VARIOMETERS will yield in-depth information for building variometers.

The RSGB has some books on LF and their monthly magazine often has an article on LF in addition to the monthly column on things LF.

There are some VK produced transverters for both bands available on the Internet and QST has reviewed each in the period 2017-2019.

As a summary, let me just say that LF ops on 475 KHz is a real but rewarding challenge for the technically-minded radio amateur .

73, John Jaminet, CAPT, SC, USN RET

Why CW?

by Joe Falletta , W6UDO

Bryan's "From the Editor" column in the Keynote 2019, Issue #4 really hit the nail on the head. Sure, digital is all the rage now, and voice modes are still as popular as ever. But there are even more reasons for the popularity of CW than the fine examples he mentioned.

Hikers and campers have been rescued because they either had a CW rig with them, or their HT had become damaged and they cobbled together something that could send out a CW message.

Many of us hold jobs where we talk all day, dealing with the public on the phone or in person. The last thing we want to do when we get home is use our voice! Listening to the music of Morse and working a key is a great way to relax.

Bryan mentioned that pulling bits and pieces of CW out of the QRM is good for the brain. It certainly is!

More than this, Morse is a great tune up for the old gray matter. A while back I realized my brain was feeling flabby; I needed something to challenge it. I hadn't operated CW in 20 years, and it dawned on me that learning CW again would be an excellent form of "mental pushups." I found an old copy of the ARRL Code tape and an excellent website, aa9pw.com, for a refresher. Soon after I got back on the air.

My old wrist wasn't happy using a straight key, so I worked at mastering a Bug. To me, (sorry Bryan) Bugs are works of art, pieces of history, like my Vibroplex 1941 Champion and 1944 Lightning Bug.

Some ops insist that you shouldn't get on the air until you can send perfect copy and receive at 25 wpm. But I can't agree. Making contacts is a great way to build confidence and skill. That is why FISTS and other organizations offer activities to that end. I'm grateful to FISTS and to the ops who had the patience to listen to me while I developed my own fist. Along the way I've had some memorable ragchews with ops who could only operate QRS.

Besides, how many CW ops would we have on the air now if only the perfect, solid ops were allowed on?

SPRINT RESULTS

FISTS Winter 2020 Slow Sprint Results

QRO Category

Call	Name	State	FISTS#	Points	Score
KE4COH	Bryan	SC	7678	82	1394
AF0E	Aleksey	CO	14416	91	1365
N9TMU	Clay	IL	8258	37	370
KNOWCW	Cody	NJ	10000	47	329
KA8HFN	Larry	OH	11631	42	294
K5YQF	Cecil	TX	8077	35	245
WB9TFF	Donna	WI	19625	22	110
K4BAI	John	GA	2158	5	5

Club Category—NO LOGS RECEIVED

QRP Category

Call	Name	State	FISTS#	Points	Score
K3JZD	Jody	PA	17513	29	174
AB9BZ	David	IL	8401	7	14

SOAPBOX

Call	Comments
N9TMU	<i>This is my first Sprint. Although I did not make many QSOs, I enjoyed the contest and look forward to further efforts.</i>

FISTS Winter 2020 Unlimited Sprint Results

QRO Category

Call	Name	State	FISTS#	Points	Score
WI5H	Curtis	TX	16705	62	682
KA8HFN	Larry	OH	11631	44	396
K5YQF	Cecil	TX	8077	37	296
W0KFG	Richard	MN	18041	36	288
N9TMU	Clay	IL	8258	25	150
AB9BZ	David	IL	8401	12	36

Club Category—NO LOGS RECEIVED

QRP Category—NO LOGS RECEIVED

Call	Comments
KE4COH	<i>40 and 20 were in pretty good shape—I had a blast at it.</i>
W0KFG	<i>My first FISTS Sprint so had to get a feel for it. Ended up with 3 non-member QSOs but delighted with the 6 members with whom I was able to make contact despite the QRM/QRN.</i>
WI5H	<i>A lot of activity on the bands, with multiple club Sprints running. 100W to a 95ft Vertical Loop on 20M and an OCFD Inverted Vee up 36 feet on 40M.</i>

SPRINT INFORMATION

FISTS Sprints are a great way to meet other FISTS members, collect FISTS numbers, and have a lot of fun. We 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:

SPRING SLOW SPEED SPRINT—runs from 1700 UTC to 2100 UTC on Saturday May 2, 2020

SPRING UNLIMITED SPRINT—runs from 1700 UTC to 2100 UTC on Saturday May 9, 2020

SUMMER SLOW SPEED SPRINT—runs from 1700 UTC to 2100 UTC on Saturday July 4, 2020

SUMMER UNLIMITED SPRINT—runs from 1700 UTC to 2100 UTC on Saturday July 11, 2020

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:

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

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 only once, no matter how many times worked.

SCORING:

Each QSO with a FISTS member: 5 QSO points.
Each QSO with a non-FISTS member: 2 QSO 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 within 14 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 kc21sd@fistsna.org ONLY.

PAPER LOGS:

Send log and forms to: FISTS Sprint Log, c/o Dave Bamford, W2DAB, 444 East 75th Street 16F, New York, NY 10021.

FISTS SPRINT ENTRY FORM

Entry Class: QRO _____ QRP _____ CLUB _____

SCORING: _____ QSO points X _____ multipliers = _____ Final Score

CLUB Name _____ FISTS Club # _____

Name _____ Call Sign _____ 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, photos, comments, ideas, etc., with your entry and mail promptly to:

FISTS Sprint Logs

Dave Bamford, W2DAB
444 East 75th Street 16F
New York, NY 10021

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 _____ Call Sign _____

Comments:

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 ability.

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.

Please Note: Changes to Americas Chapter Membership Dues.

1. A “one time” extension of two FREE years membership has been added to all expired memberships from Jan. 1, 2017 to Aug. 15, 2018, due to no *KeyNote* newsletters being produced during that time frame. This two-year extension started on Aug. 15, 2018.
2. All paid memberships as of Aug. 15, 2018 will receive a “one-time” FREE extension of two years membership.
3. Any previous members with lapsed dues (not included in item 1 or 2 above), who wish to renew their membership, will receive a one-time, two-year FREE extension of membership, with down-loaded newsletters.

4. If you wish to join FISTS as a “new member,” you will receive a FREE one time, two-year complementary membership with down-loaded newsletters.
5. If you are 80 years old and over, you will receive a FREE “Lifetime” membership.

Offers 1, 2, 3, and 4 above expire on August 15, 2020.

To take advantage of these offers, send an e-mail with your call, name, address, and telephone number to: Dennis K6DF, FISTS Membership Manager at membership@fistsna.org.

DO NOT SEND ANY DUES PAYMENTS!



FISTS CW CLUB Membership Application/Renewal



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

Call Sign _____ NEW Member or Renewal, Enter FISTS # _____

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ ZIP+4 _____ Phone _____

Rig (optional) _____

Other Club Affiliations (Optional—ARRL, RSGB, etc.) _____

A User Name and Password will be sent to the e-mail address you provide below to give you access to current On-Line Newsletters as well as Member Only Areas of the FISTS CW Club web site.

E-Mail _____

Regular Membership—**On-Line** Newsletters*

Family Membership—Please provide the Name, Call, and FISTS # of the member.

Name _____ Call _____ FISTS # _____

Under Age 18-FREE Membership—Birthdate Required mm/yyyy _____

Over Age 80-FREE Membership—Birthdate Required mm/yyyy _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Send application to:
FISTS CW CLUB
c/o Dennis Franklin, K6DF
4658 Capitan Dr.
Fremont, CA 94536 USA

*E-Mail required
01/01/2018

Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club
3000 Town Center, Suite 2370
Southfield, MI 48075
www.fistsna.org

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #229
ANN ARBOR, MI 48103

You Can Find Your Renewal Date On the Following Web Page:

<http://www.fistsna.org/expdate.php>

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

keynote@fistsna.org

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

