

The KeyNote



Newsletter of the Americas Chapter, FISTS CW Club—The International Morse Preservation Society
Issue 2, 2026

The Age of Disclosure

Bryan Bergeron Editorial

For CW operators, the interesting part of the current fascination with UFOs—or UAPs, as the government now prefers to call them—is not necessarily the blurry imagery or the endless speculation about propulsion systems. It is the recurring suggestion that communication in these encounters is somehow direct, instantaneous, and non-verbal. The message simply appears in the mind.

That idea led me down an odd but strangely compelling path: what would it mean to think natively in Morse code? Most of us who use CW still think in English first. We form a word in our minds, and somewhere between the brain and the fingertips it becomes a pattern of dits and dahs. Skilled operators shorten that delay. At higher speeds, the best operators do not consciously decode individual letters at all. They hear whole words, rhythms, even personalities. A good fist becomes as recognizable as a familiar voice. Still, underneath it all, there remains an English layer.

Morse is the transport mechanism, not the native tongue. But what if it were? Suppose a generation grew up with Morse not as a learned encoding system but as its first and primary language. What would happen inside the mind? When thinking about a tree, would the mental image begin with bark, leaves, and branches? Or would it begin with the rhythmic pattern of the word itself: dah, dit-dah-dit, dit, dit? Would meaning arise from sound-pattern first, with imagery attached afterward?

The question sounds whimsical until you consider how much language already shapes perception. Linguists have argued for decades about whether the structure of a language influences how its speakers experience reality. Some languages have dozens of words for snow. Others describe direction geographically rather than personally, using “north” and “south” instead of “left” and “right.” Language is not just a delivery system for thought. It partly organizes thought itself.

CW operators already inhabit a slightly different mental space. Anyone who has spent years on the air knows the curious transition that occurs somewhere along the road from 5 WPM to fluent conversational speed. Morse stops being translated consciously. The code ceases to feel like code. It becomes sound-shapes carrying immediate meaning. Experienced operators do not hear “di-dah-di-dit” and then mentally spell “L.” They simply understand. In that sense, Morse already bypasses one layer of cognition. Perhaps that is why CW retains such emotional power long after its commercial necessity disappeared.

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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 email 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 email addresses have changed from the last reference issue of *The KeyNote*. Please make note of the following listings.

When emailing a volunteer please put the word FISTS in the title of your email. This will help the volunteer recognize that your email is important and not spam.

Awards and Certificates

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, awards@fistsna.org
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

Club Call, KN0WCW

“Vacant”

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org

Membership Questions; Renewals; Call Changes; Name, Mailing, and Email Address Changes

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, membership@fistsna.org
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

FISTS Store Manager

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org
9880 Musch Road, Brighton, MI 48116-8215

Activities Manager

“Vacant”

If interested email to:

Joe Falcone, N8TI, store@fistsna.org

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

Dennis Franklin, K6DF, webmaster@fistsna.org
4658 Capitan Dr., Fremont, CA 94536-5448

Code Buddy Volunteers and Buddies

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

The KeyNote Newsletter

Bryan Bergeron, NU1N, keynote@fistsna.org

What's Your Story?

We need articles and reviews for *The KeyNote*!

Do you have a story to tell? Members would love to hear how you got interested in ham radio. Did someone mentor you as a child? Did you learn it in the service? What is an interesting experience you had using Morse Code? What is your favorite key/rig? Do you have an interesting QSO you'd like to tell members about? Or photos to share?

NOTE: Image files need to be high resolution JPGs (at least 1000 pixels wide).

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

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The Newsletter of the Americas Chapter of FISTS

Issue 2, 2026

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Send articles to:

keynote@fistsna.org

Production: Sandra Lindemann

President's message

By Joe Falcone, N8TI

I recently saw a YouTube video about how Ham Radio is dying. The video used statistics regarding the fact that the average age of Hams is very high, somewhere in the mid to late sixties. Even the new Hams have an average age in the mid-fifties.

On one hand, most of the Hams are older. On the other hand, there seems to be a large group of younger Hams, in their thirties or forties, that are involved in the CW part of the hobby. These newcomers seem to be into portable operations and/or QRP. I think one of the reasons for this is that the manufacturers have been reacting to the demand for smaller, but better QRP radios. This has been possible because of the falling prices, when compared to inflation, of radios.

Inflation has increased, during the last seven years alone, by 30%. Yet, for example, the IC-7300, a very popular radio, started out in 2016 with a list price of \$1,495. Now, the list price is \$1,499.95. The street price is \$1,039.00.

This radio has been unaffected by inflation, so, as a practical matter, it is 30% less expensive than it was ten years ago.

The fact that radios are becoming less expensive may be because it appears that manufacturers in China decided that Amateur Radio is a market they want to get into. All politics aside, when China decides to make something, it usually is less expensive than what it was prior to China getting into the market. This is why antennas and CW keys have gone down in price compared to items produced ten or fifteen years ago.

I have to disagree with the person who made the YouTube video. I think there are a lot of older Hams, but at least when it comes to CW operating, there has been resurgence in interest. The CW portions of the band are as busy as they were thirty or forty years ago. You have to get on the air. Just call "CQ" or get involved in Parks on the Air or some other activity. The bands are crowded and are waiting for you.

Joe Falcone, N8TI

FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis K6DF

Congratulations to all who earned operating awards from Feb 17, 2025 to May 15, 2026.

Award certificates are available, from the Members Area of the Americas Chapter website, for members to download to their own computer for printing. A list of awards issued to your call/member-number is available in the Members Area. FISTS members may log into the Members Area from the following web page:

<https://fistsna.org/memlogon.php>

New Members can earn a free FISTS Club Key Patch during the first year of their membership for making their first 10-minute CW QSO with any FISTS member on any band. Be sure to 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:

KF8FCC Eric—QSO with KA1RVM
KJ5GWV Gary—QSO with K8OIP

We have a list of new members shown elsewhere in this issue of the Keynote. Please listen for them on the bands and help them to earn their FISTS Key Patch!

Award certificates are available free to all club members, in PDF format, so get out your favorite key and get on the air. You can also use the free “Log Converter” program to track your club awards, 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 April 10, 2026 to version 4.9.4. If you are using a version older than this please update your program as older versions will not work properly due to recent server updates.** 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. 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:

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

If you have any award questions or suggestions, send e-mail to me at:

awards@fistsna.org

I wish you good DX during 2026.
73, Dennis K6DF ..._. ____ (30)

FISTS AWARDS ISSUED: Feb 17, 2025–May 15, 2026

Diamond Century Award: HK5NLJ

Prefix 100 Award: G0FOZ

9 Million Award: G0PNM

14, 15 Million Award: NA8S

19 Million Award: VP9KF

WAS Award: IK0IXI

WELCOME NEW FISTS AMERICAS CHAPTER MEMBERS

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C	Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
KQ4CZW	23262	David	NC	KK7X	23302	Dennis	ID
KF8FCC	23263	Eric	MI	AI5ZI	23303	Todd	TX
KE7IR	23264	Patti	AZ	AA8EA	23304	Kyle	MI
K0XV	23265	Jim	TN	VA2KFU	23305	Remi	QC
W4JOD	23266	Joe	NC	VA3EKR	23306	Scott	ON
KP4JCM	23267	Jorge	PR	AC6J	23307	Ryan	VA
K8RAZ	23268	Ray	MI	KD9ZMI	23308	Leslie	WI
KS5X	23269	Craig	OK	AK6GD	23309	Craig	CA
W7BRG	23270	Tyler	NY	K1KIG	23310	Kiki	AR
WI3M	23271	Erik	PA				
N4JP	23272	Eric	NC				
KE0CAL	23273	Chris	WI				
KE8ZLT	23274	Allen	OH				
AD9HW	23275	Joseph	IN				
NR4K	23276	Bruce	SC				
KI6PXV	23277	Rodney	CA				
AH6US	23278	David	HI				
AB2T	23279	Jordan	CT				
W4IO	23280	Rick	TN				
WV8IRD	23281	Seth	WV				
N4AKN	23282	Howard	FL				
VE3LMK	23283	Jim	ON				
W0ZRS	23284	Zach	NY				
K1FA	23285	Dave	MA				
AC2FU	23286	Jim	FL				
KD0CJS	23287	Brett	CO				
W7SUB	23288	Club	OR				
NI3N	23289	Mac	PA				
KA2KGP	23290	Tom	NY				
AD9EX	23291	Jim	IN				
WB6PIO	23292	Bernie	HI				
AG1D	23293	Terry	MA				
KW5CW	23294	James	TX				
W2FAS	23295	Frank	PA				
N1LHR	23296	Lance	AZ				
W3BBR	23297	Michael	SC				
W6AO	23298	Jeff	CA				
K5WXI	23299	Club	NM				
VA3TAR	23300	Ted	ON				
N9UUO	23301	John	WI				

Silent Key List

W2FB	1024	Howard	NY
WB5NKC	1986	Arley	OK
VE3EDR	2031	Brice	DX
W7UDZ	2064	Del	WA
WB2D	2071	Peter	WV
N7CPP	2075	Bruce	NV
KL7GN	2144	Gordon	AK
AB2FG	2174	Tom	NJ
W1WFZ	2366	Fred	RI
KK5IB	2416	Darryl	AR
W6QJZ	2425	Tom	CA
W5RUK	2440	George	MS
KE3VH	2486	Ralph	PA
AA0ZR	2496	Jane	CO
K8AJD	2544	Ken	MI
W0FU	2574	Tim	KS
N7RD	2714	Ronald	AZ
WA5ANF	2908	Dan	TX
VE1BBW	2919	Dave	NS
K1GUG	2965	Dick	MA
K2PG	2995	Phil	PA
W5HNS	3010	Henry	TX
VE3MIQ	3025	Bill	ON
WA4RA	3088	John	FL
K3KDC	3112	Jim	PA

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The Age of Disclosure (continued)

Voice communication contains enormous bandwidth. Tone, accent, pacing, emotion, hesitation, and personality all ride along effortlessly. Morse strips nearly all of that away. What remains is timing and rhythm. Oddly enough, that minimalism often creates greater intimacy, not less. A few minutes of CW can reveal patience, precision, nervousness, humor, arrogance, kindness, or fatigue. Veteran operators recognize old friends instantly from the cadence of their keying. The signal may be weak and fading through atmospheric noise, but somehow the human being still comes through. That is remarkable when you think about it. Morse is not speech. It is abstraction. Tiny timed pulses traveling invisibly through space. Yet the human brain reconstructs personality from almost nothing.

Now imagine removing spoken language altogether. Imagine a civilization where communication evolved around rhythmic symbolic patterns instead of vocal sounds. Their thoughts might not resemble sentences at all. Perhaps ideas would arrive as temporal structures, more like music than prose. Meaning could exist as cadence, duration, and relationship rather than vocabulary. In such a world, silence itself might carry grammatical significance.

CW operators occasionally glimpse something similar during long operating sessions. At high speeds, especially during contests or pileups, the conscious verbal mind partially steps aside. Recognition becomes immediate and almost reflexive. Callsigns emerge from noise before the operator can explain how they were recognized. The process feels less like reading and more like pattern intuition. The code flows through the operator rather than being manually interpreted.

This may also explain why learning Morse changes people in subtle ways. It teaches patience and attentive listening in a culture obsessed with

speed and interruption. Morse cannot easily be skimmed. It unfolds in time. You must remain present for every character. Miss a few seconds and the meaning evaporates. CW rewards concentration in a way modern communication rarely does.

For most people, CW is a hobby, a historical curiosity, or a useful emergency skill. But for those who have spent decades behind a key, it becomes something more intimate: a second cognitive landscape. Somewhere between language and music. Between sound and thought. Between symbol and meaning. And if one day communication ever does occur without spoken words, I suspect CW operators may adapt faster than most. We have been practicing abstraction for a very long time.

73, Bryan, NU1N

Get More Involved in FISTS-NA!

1. Enter one of the quarterly Sprints. If you are a new ham, it is a great way to practice your Morse Code. You can get on the air, meet other club members, and have some fun!
2. Submit an article, or articles, for the newsletter. We welcome all articles, photos, and experience levels. You don't have to be the great American novelist! Articles are lightly edited for typos and grammar.
3. Earn a free FISTS Club Key Patch when you make your first 10-minute CW QSO with any FISTS member on any band.
4. Volunteer! We are currently in need of an Activities Manager.
5. Submit suggestions about how FISTS-NA can be more relevant in 2024 and beyond.

Silent Key List (continued)

Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C	Call	FISTS#	First Name	S/P/C
N1MKE	3121	George	MA	K8JRE	4189	Joe	MI
AC4KD	3211	Harry	FL	AC5OC	4210	Dale	AR
W6EMT	3249	Roy	WA	N1MR	4212	Mark	VT
W4OGZ	3254	Lawrence	VA	AF4KL	4220	Roland	GA
W5ZDW	3285	Leonard	LA	AD4DX	4431	Willis	KY
N8CX	3301	Alan	OH	W3IA	4467	Tom	PA
N2XWA	3305	Laurie	NC	K4EQH	4511	Tom	AL
WB8SEA	3322	Jack	OH	N2YCW	4541	John	NY
VE3IKS	3334	Paul	ON	VE3SO	4559	Peter	ON
W9ISC	3340	John	WI	W6AQ	4698	Dave	CA
K8JWR	3375	Daniel	OH	K3ROJ	4754	Al	MD
VE3UKU	3379	Tom	ON	W6HPK	4905	Steve	WA
W9CBT	3417	Richard	IL	W9IM	5029	Les	IL
K6PZE	3451	Richard	CA	WR4Z	5322	Jim	FL
KB8ZEQ	3591	Danny	MI	N8FL	5351	Alan	WV
W3RZ	3606	Louis	TX	KB2JMJ	5395	Jim	NJ
W0BXS	3607	Don	CA	KC5MMH	5436	Steve	TX
KC5AN	3647	John	TX	KB8ZZX	5456	James	MI
AF8CS	3658	Edwin	MI	NA6E	5457	Mary	CA
VA1LW	3665	Larry	NS	KA1YHI	5479	Tom	MA
WA8DXD	3806	Thomas	FL	K7YM	5490	Bill	WY
W3HL	3861	Herbert	NC	W6RWI	5623	Jim	CA
W5RPJ	3863	B.A.	TX	W1IDL	5653	Vincent	MI
VE3MJD	3916	Brian	ON	W9VHL	5673	Ken	MO
N7XV	3955	Jim	CA	K2IYE	5680	Frank	NJ
KB3BOA	3958	Mike	PA	WA0GOZ	5696	Henry	MN
WB2TDJ	3960	Murray	NY	K2UPI	5697	Kenneth	NY
W6UT	4032	Dennis	CA	WB6SZZ	5703	Ray	CA
K2TSS	4062	Ed	NY	AB5J	5816	Frank	OK
K0XJ	4075	Charles	MN	W1HEO	11640	Dee	OH
W0JL	4103	Carl	MN	W0MQY	19078	Joe	KS
W9MAL	4161	Malcolm	IN	KF0MM	19233	Lawrence	KS
W9HMR	4163	Paul	IN	KD9LTN	20822	Mike	IL